

The Victoria Rhododendron Society

Newsletter



Box 5562 Postal Station B, Victoria BC Canada V8R 6S4

February 2011 Thirty– First Year of Publication

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web page – <http://victoriarhodo.ca>

MEETING 7:30

MONDAY, February 7, 2011

GARTH HOMER CENTRE, 811 DARWIN STREET, VICTORIA, B. C.

Speaker: Phillip MacDougall, “Temperate Flora of Taiwan,”
Ten minute speaker: David Mackas, “Marie Selby garden in Florida”

Phillip MacDougall is a student of plant biochemistry and has a lifelong commitment to gardening. He is program chair of the Rhododendron Society of Vancouver. He lectures on botanizing many of the world's diverse habitats and has recently visited Taiwan.

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REFRESHMENTS

Please let Betty Gordon know at 250-479-0210 if you are coming to the meeting and bringing goodies.

Nadine Minckler, Bonnie Moro, Karen and Burns Morrison, Allan and Liz Murray, Patricia Murray, Carrie Nelson, and Florence Newcombe.

Please wrap your cookies or snacks. Coffee and tea are supplied. Assistance in setting out the food, milk and sugar, napkins and helping Betty in the kitchen cleanup is really appreciated.

A report on Agnes Lynn's Talk, “Subalpine Flowers of Vancouver Island and Nearby” in January

By Theresa McMillan

Agnes Lynn's talk on subalpine flowers, illustrated by photographs taken by her husband, Dave, was an informative presentation that brightened a cold, dark, snow-threatening January night.

After the Victoria area's crop of wildflowers has faded, naturalists can extend spring by going north, Up Island, or to higher elevations in the hills or mountains.

Some of the areas Agnes has visited are Mount Prevost in Duncan, Harewood Plains

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near Nanaimo, Nanoose Hill, Shawnigan Lake, Mount Washington, Manning Park, Hurricane Ridge and San Juan Ridge.

Dave has taken many pictures, including a dwarf form of yellow glacier lilies, shrubs like Kinikinick and Manzanita, a field of moisture loving yellow mimulus in a meadow, "Prickly Pear" cacti with their yellow blooms, oddities like the pink, leafless broomrape or the exotic "Candystick" or Indian Pipe.. Highlights were the mid-June mauve-pink blooms of rhododendrons (*R. Macrophyllum*) at Shawnigan Lake. They continue to flourish, as evidenced by baby rhodies springing up in sheltered locations.

Agnes is a birder as well as a botanist, so she noticed all the sapsucker holes on some of the conifers in the Mount Washington area.

In various locales, there were gentians and wild ginger, the small white orchid known as "Ladies' Tresses", sundews in flower, pink heathers and penstemons.

Agnes's talk reminded us that in a few months (depending on the weather), we'll be able to see our early wildflowers once again.



Naked broomrape *Orobanchi uniflora*



Candystick *Allotropa Virgata*

Indian Pipe or Ghost Plant
Monotropa uniflora



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Victoria Natural History Botany Outings from Agnes Lynn

The VNHS web address to let people know about Botany outings follows. This website is updated every two months, starting with beginning of January, March, etc.

<http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca/calendar.html>

Look at the Website in March, April, May and June for wildflower outings.

**Glendale Gardens Year-End Update
by Bill McMillan, Curator**

Thanks in large measure to the support funding from VRS and donations of plants, we have modestly expanded the plant collection in the garden. General maintenance is ongoing with the help of volunteers Calvin Parsons, Theresa McMillan, Dorothy Griffin and Ray Yole.

Health issues have forced other volunteers, Eileen Yole, Gail Aitkens and Lennie Dixon to 'retire' from the garden.

A major, long planned undertaking this year saw us install micro-irrigation for about 90% of the garden. Funds we hope to receive for 2011 will enable us to complete this project. We hope to control the location of watering better, to avoid watering paths and to reduce water consumption by more than half. The volunteers are there virtually every Wednesday morning.

The display in the spring and early summer is awesome. Why not come on out and enjoy your garden?



R. "Lee's Scarlet" blooming in mid-January at Glendale Gardens

**PICTURES FROM THE
HIRSUTUM WEBSITE:**

One of the first rhododendrons I wanted to see on the new HIRSUTUM Website was the rhodo the site was named after. When I typed in "hirsutum", several pictures appeared:



R. hirsutum is a lepidote rhododendron which originated in the European Alps, on or adjacent to limestone.



A close up picture of *R. hirsutum* blooms

NOTES from the VRS BOARD THE AGM

At the March 1st meeting, after Harold Fearing as speaker, the annual AGM will be held and the new Board is elected. Nominations should be forwarded to Jacq Bradbury (jacqbradbury@shaw.ca).

THE SHOW and SALE

Remember the VRS Show is on April 30 at the Hillside Mall, and the Sale is at Abkhazi Gardens on May 7. A Volunteer Sign up form will be passed around in the next few monthly meetings.

Heavy Snow-inflicted Damage to Gardens

From the Journal of the American Rhododendron Society, Number 1, Winter 2010 (an excerpt from an article by Steve Why-sall, Vancouver Sun, Jan. 7, 2009)

Many evergreen shrubs such as *Rhododendron* will also be showing signs of cold damage on leaves, which will appear discoloured with noticeable brown patches. The damaged leaves can be removed in late winter and the shrub will, in most cases, produce new growth in spring.

One of the biggest problems, however, in coastal gardens over winter is the damage caused by recurring freeze-thaw cycles. Mois-



ture in the ground freezes, then thaws, then freezes again, causing damage to root systems. This is one of the main reasons plants die. Shrubs and perennials in poorly drained ground are most prone. Unfortunately, the damage is not always evident until spring or early summer when the plant fails to thrive.

Also, if the freezing is early in the winter before plants have sufficiently hardened off, the sap in exposed trunks may freeze and split the bark, which can kill this portion of a plant.

One of the good aspects of the heavy snowfall is that snow acts as an insulator to protect plants such as perennials that are dormant in the ground. The temperature under the carpet of snow stays around freezing whereas plants above ground are often exposed to subfreezing temperatures. Sometimes, the part of a plant above the snow will die, while the trunk beneath the snow will survive and be able to throw up new shoots in the spring. This is why many plants in gardens on the Prairies manage to survive the extremely cold winters there.

The temptation after snow has left plants damaged is to want to prune early and as much as possible. However, it is not a good idea to leave plants with open wounds that are exposed to moisture in the middle of winter. This can lead to fungal diseases. It is best to let winter do its worst and then assess the damage in the garden nearer to spring. Annual pruning and clean up in general is best left until a mild spell in late winter.

OPEN GARDEN FEB. 13, 2011

Carol Dancer will have her garden open on Sunday, Feb. 13th from 1 to 4 pm for members of the Hardy Plant group. She has extended an invitation to members of the VRS to come and see her snowdrops and hellebores. Her address is: 3950 Sherwood Rd.

DID YOU KNOW?

The **Victoria Rhododendron Society Newsletter** is available to our members in two forms:

1. By Email. This form comes on line, with larger print and coloured pictures.

We do consider people and flowers look their best in colour! There is minimal direct cost to the VRS to send the newsletter in this form..

2. By mail. This form comes to members in the regular mail. It has smaller print and black and white pictures.

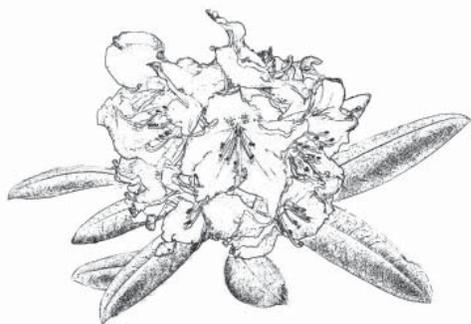
Aside from the time it takes and the gasoline Calvin uses to pick up copies and mail them, there are several other costs:

- paper and printing at Staples
- envelopes
- stamps (this cost seems to rise every few months)
- name labels, which are stuck to the envelopes

These costs average \$1.77 per copy per issue. There are 10 newsletters each year so it costs the club \$17.70 annually for each newsletter sent by regular mail.

Like other garden clubs, we would like to lower our costs and lower our carbon footprint.

If you have a computer and Email, please consider getting your newsletter on-line.



The World in Your Garden ***Rhododendrons 2011***

65th Annual International Convention of the AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

Vancouver, Washington May 11-15, 2011

The District 4 chapters invite you to attend the ARS's annual spring convention, scheduled for May 11 - 15, 2011. Distinguished speakers invited from around the world will provide valuable and interesting information. Tours of outstanding public and private gardens and nurseries are planned, including Portland's Japanese and Classical Chinese Gardens, the Bishop's Close Garden and the well-known Dover Nursery.

Meeting talks and banquet events will be held in Vancouver WA at the Heathman Lodge. Non-members are welcome to attend. For more information, check our Website, www.victoriarhodo.ca.