

# The Victoria Rhododendron Society

## *Newsletter*



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

November 2012 Thirty-Second Year of Publication

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web page – <http://victoriarhodo.ca>

**MEETING 7:30**

**MONDAY, November 5, 2012**

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

### **Photography Night**

Photography night is based on pictures of rhododendrons, their flowers, foliage, companion plants, and gardens taken by VRS members in the last year. Brighten a dark November night with pictures of the last growing season.

#### **REFRESHMENT LIST**

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

**Sharon Joseph, Sigi and Maria Kemmler, Thurston Lacalli, Arthur Lightburn, and David and Agnes Lynn**

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

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#### **OCTOBER'S TALK**

By Theresa McMillan

Bill Terry's talk on "The Perfect Garden: Plant Hunting in Tibet" entertained us with a variety of pictures, exotic scenery, some awful mountain roads, and wonderful flowers (usually wet with rain).

The "Perfect Garden" occurs only in nature. Our gardens, no matter how artfully planted, cannot compete with wildflowers, ferns, grasses and mosses tumbling down

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an alpine slope or covering an alpine meadow.

For Bill Terry and many others, the highlight of Tibetan alpine scenery is a sprinkling of the elusive wild blue poppy, meconopsis.

The Asian poppy is not always blue; there are some in yellows, white, pink, mauve, red... But the deep blue is the most prized, with its contrast of a big clump of yellow stamens surrounded by the corolla.

Plant hunters had great hopes of bringing this plant to English gardens. But, meconopsis is tricky to grow and although it is a perennial, it is often short lived.

Bill grows meconopsis successfully in his garden in Sechelt. His books provide detailed instructions. At the meeting, he offered members seeds if they sent him a self-addressed, stamped envelope.



The beautiful meconopsis flower

## A prisoner in my own compost bin

John Noakes, secretary of the Alpine Gardener Society's Chiltern Local Group, recalls an embarrassing episode at the bottom of his garden.

(This article was first published in September, 2012, in *The Alpine Gardener*, the journal of the Alpine Garden Society in Worcestershire, United Kingdom.)

I would guess that 25 per cent of our home-made compost derives from household vegetable waste. We like to pride ourselves on our contribution to a better environment. Every time I empty the bucket from under the sink I feel virtuous. Even alpine gardeners like to make compost.

However, I become less virtuous and less pleased when a bin full of mature compost has to be emptied. Work is involved! Even before this stage we are told that the compost should be regularly turned over. This advice is often given by smart TV gardeners who I strongly feel have never been near a compost bin. It's mucky work.

Several years ago I constructed two bins, but both of them are beginning to disintegrate, eventually to self-compost or end up on the front-room fire. Two new bins need to be produced. More work! I may leave them for one more year, but by then I will be another year older and feebler.

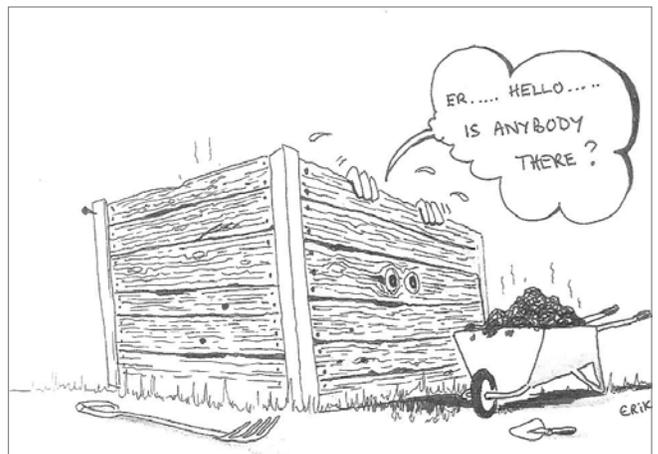
The real work starts when both bins are full, which happens once a year. One has been maturing with no further material added for a year while the other has been topped up regularly. The matured bin now has to be emptied.

It's wonderful to discover how all the compost ingredients have rotted down to a friable mix that can be spread around the garden as a soil-improving mulch. This derives from a combination of grass cuttings, weeds and vegetable

waste, to which is added a volume of shredded confidential and sensitive documents such as bank statements. All this material generates a lot of heat, as did some of the shredded documents in their past life, too. One disadvantage is that the heat is not sufficient to kill off all the weed seeds, which later germinate prolifically in an unwelcome manner when the material is spread around.

Fortuitously the emptying operation uncovered a long-lost kitchen knife half way down the pile. It brought back memories of chopping off the roots and green leaves of leeks on a cold winter's day. Then I spotted a gleaming piece of steel – a very special trowel which I treasured and thought I had lost for ever. It had been replaced at some cost. Can I now use two trowels at once?

Emptying the compost bin resulted in an unexpected problem. As the pile inside diminished I had to climb into the bin to dig out the remainder. As I neared the bottom I could still toss the material into a wheelbarrow but realised that I couldn't get out myself. I was stuck! How ignominious to be marooned in a compost heap at the end of



one's garden. Would help arrive? Where was my wife? Would anyone bring me a cup of coffee?

I resorted to idle daydreaming and looking at small plastic labels with 'Jaffa from

Israel' printed on them, which had survived in the heap without degrading. So had the vacuum cleaner bags which I thought would have rotted down. I tried to calculate how many tea bags had been deposited in the bin to be spread around the garden. On average we have about six cups of tea per day between us. This adds up to more than 2,000 tea bags over the course of a year. What effect would this have on the plants? Maybe there is a research project to be done here. We seem to be all right with this indulgence, so presumably it doesn't worry the plants.

Suddenly I was woken from this day-dreaming when I spotted some movement at my feet. It was a family of voles. Even if I didn't like it here, they did. They had been cosy, with a good supply of worms, but now their home had been destroyed.

I scooped them up and popped them over the side so they could seek out new accommodation before the owls found them. Would anyone scoop me out? Have paramedics or the fire brigade ever been asked to extract a geriatric from a compost bin? If so another bin, the loony bin, might be the destination.

I do have rather long legs but was never good at hurdling. Then I decided that I just couldn't be found like this. It would be too humiliating and the talk of the village. So with one supreme heave I managed to get one leg over the edge of the bin. A second heave propelled me out, straight into the half-full wheelbarrow.

I landed on my back on a cushion of well-rotted compost and lay there for several minutes, staring up at the sky. This was just as humiliating as being stuck in the bin. It was as though I had decided to have a crazy mid-morning nap. Just then a red kite, with chestnut wings and forked tail, flew whistling above me. Perhaps he had spotted the

voles. Clearly I was not yet dead and of no interest to him and he wheeled away.

Fortunately I found it easier to escape from the wheelbarrow than the bin itself, rolling off on to the ground. I distributed the compost around the garden and cleaned up the bread knife and the trowel. Finally I put the lid back on the bin – and the lid on my embarrassing escapade.

## FROM THE EDITOR

Next month, Bill McMillan will report on the Vic R. Society's very successful Propagating Workshop held at Ken Webb's on October 13.

Many members of our Society went to the ARS Western Regional Conference in Nanaimo on Sept. 21-23. One of our contributions to the Conference was more than a hundred rhododendrons grown from seed or cuttings to be used as gift plants for attendees.

"Rhodos in Paradise" was very well attended and very well done. Our only regret was that we could not attend all the talks or all the tours!

Congratulations to the Nanaimo Chapter.



Calvin and Jeannie, Lois and Roy at the Nanaimo Convention, Sept. 2012

# People's Choice Photography

## Evening Nov. 5, 2012

The entries will fall into 2 categories. **Hard Copy and Digital Color Entries.**

### **Hard Copy or prints**

The hard copies will be the same format as was used in the past shows. Namely a **black and white** section, along with a **color** section. All entries to be 5"x7" mounted on a black mat, no frame. Mounted pictures to be entered the night of the show, November 5, 2012 rhododendron meeting. Subjects can be rhododendrons or garden scenes in color or black and white. Place a sticker on the mat with your phone number and title of the photo. These photos may be taken home at the end of the evening.

### **Digital Color Entries**

Electronic entries will have a **2 megabyte size limit in the jpeg format.** Most pictures shown at our club meetings don't exceed 1 megabyte. If your photos are larger than 2 megabytes they will take a long time to upload and will use up too much data space. **Limit 2 pictures per category.** We would like electronic entries in as early as possible, entry deadline November 1.

To enter:

Log onto

<http://victoriarhodo.ca/plogger/plog-admin/plog-upload.php> **username: vicrhodo**  
**password: uploader1**

### **Click on Login Button**

Ensure that you are on the **Upload screen**

Go to **Existing Album** and highlight one of the categories listed below that best describes your entry.

- 1. Plogger Test Collection Single Truss Rhodo 2012**
- 2. Plogger Test Collection Whole Plant Rhodo 2012**
- 3. Plogger Test Collection Foliage Rhodo 2012**
- 4. Plogger Test Collection Companion Plant 2012**
- 5. Plogger Test Collection Garden Scene 2012**

Go to **Filename** and click on **Browse Button**

Find the photo you want in your files, click on specific photo and then click **Open**

Click on **Picture Caption** and enter your **7 digit phone number**

Click on **Description** and enter a **title** e.g. Haida Gold, Butchart Garden

Click on **Upload Button** and your picture and data should upload. You should receive a confirmation message that your upload was successful.

Click on **View** and then click on a portfolio to see your entry or the entries of others

Please do not try and delete pictures.

**Judging**

Judging will be done by the whole membership with a People’s Choice format using the attached excel form. The name of the photographer will be hidden similar to the flower show. The date is November 5, 2012 at the regular club meeting.

**Vote for one picture in each category.**

First, second, and third place ribbons will be awarded plus an aggregate winner rosette ribbon based on a total point format and best in show rosette. Ribbons will be awarded at the Christmas Pot Luck Meeting.

If you want, you can clip out this ballot, view the entries before the show and start making your choices for the on-line digital pictures.

Ballot form:

<b>Digital Slides</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>	<b>Title</b>
<b>1. Single truss</b>		
<b>2. Whole plant</b>		
<b>3. Foliage</b>		
<b>4. Companion plant</b>		
<b>5. Garden scene</b>		
<b>Prints Mounted 5x7 Black Matte</b>		
<b>Color</b>		
<b>Black and White</b>		
<b>Best In Show</b>		



R. “Kiwi Magic”, Glendale Gardens

## Membership Renewal This Month

Membership renewals are due this month. This is a great time to give a gift membership to a favourite niece or nephew or avid gardening friend. Only \$30 full membership for 2013.

## The Rhodo Exchange

**Contact Bob, rlkreiss@shaw.ca, for the following rhododendrons being given away. They are on Lot 8.**

Susan - 15' - lilac color

Etta Burrows - 16' healthy - large groups of deep red

Roman Pottery - 10' - very pale yellow

Medusa - 9' needs TLC

Alison Johnstone - 7' - small amber

Honeymoon? - 9' healthy

Haida Gold - 10' - large yellow

Olympic Lady - 10' - white

Whitney Yellow? - 4' healthy

Whitney Orange - 7' - salmon color

Black Sport - 6' healthy - blackish red with darker blotch

Helene Schiffner - 4' - large white

Lee's Dark Purple - 13' healthy - large purple trusses

Sweet Sixteen - 7' - large pink with red trim

Yellow Pages - 11'

Percy Wiseman - needs more than TLC

Macabeaum - 20' healthy - large trusses with light cream-yellow flowers

Carita - 13'

Markeeta's Prize - 11' healthy - large red

Arboreum Cinnamoneum - 15' healthy

Loderi King George - 13' healthy - large white

Bo Peep - 6' needs TLC - small softly-yellow flowers, about 1" in length

Airy Fairy - 6' healthy - small whitish-pink flowers with a few red dots

**Contact Nadine, deaners@telus.net, for a free camellia.**



Water feature from Roy and Janet Taylor's garden on the Nanaimo North Tour of the Conference, Sept. 22

**VRS REGISTRATION FORM FOR NEXT YEAR 2013—**

Please mail in the dues or pay the dues at or before the NOVEMBER 5 monthly meeting.

**Mail to: The Victoria Rhododendron Society, P.O. Box 5562 Station B,  
Victoria, B.C., V8R 6S4**

I wish to receive my Newsletter by E-mail

I agree to be on the circulated club membership list

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City and Province: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle one of the following: Regular Member \$30\*    Local: \$25    Associate \$10

If Associate, which chapter do you belong to? \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Paid by Cash \_\_\_\_\_ or Cheque \_\_\_\_\_

\* subsidized by VRS



Tom Widdowson, Rose Garlinski, Norma Senn and Keiko Alkire at the Nanaimo Conference "Rhodos in Paradise"