



The Victoria Rhododendron Society Newsletter

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June 2019
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Thirty-Ninth Year of Publication
<http://victoriarhodo.ca>



Annual Picnic
SUNDAY, June 23, 2019
starts at NOON

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Sunday
June 23
Salmon
BBQ Picnic

12 Noon at the Blackmores'
758 Walfred Road

- Bring your chair
- Bring your eating utensils
- Bring your plates and cups
- Bring a plant for the auction
- Bring your appetite
- Bring savories A-M - members
- Bring desserts N-Z - members

Upcoming Events

2019	Event	Place
Jun 17 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting Call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Jun 23 Noon	Sunday VRS Summer BBQ Picnic at Lois and Roy Blackmores'	<u>758 Walfred Road</u>
Sept 2 7:30	General Meeting - The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Sept 16 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting Call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Sept 27-29	<u>ARS Fall Conference - Parksville</u>	Parksville, BC
Oct 7 7:30	General Meeting - The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Oct 21 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting Call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Nov 4 7:30	General Meeting - The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Nov 18 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting Call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Dec 2 5:30 pm	Christmas Potluck Dinner	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Jan 6 7:30	General Meeting - The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Jan 20 Noon	Propagation Group Meeting Call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Feb 3 7:30	General Meeting - The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Feb 17 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting Call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Mar 9 7:30	General Meeting - The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Mar 23 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting Call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Apr 6 7:30	General Meeting - The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Apr 12 TBA	PLANT SALE	
Apr 20 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting Call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Apr 30-May 3	<u>ARS Annual Convention - 75th Anniversary</u>	Portland, Oregon

One gardener's view of her local bumblebees

Gardeners always become aware of the different seasons and their attendant insects. In very early spring, when new rhododendrons start to bloom, I often notice--or rather, hear-- a big noisy insect circling around my head. I suspect it could be a type of bumblebee, but it never stops and checks me out or even (worrying) stings me.

My next noticeable insect is the bumblebees noisily crawling around in the rhododendron flowers. They vary in size and colour. I especially like the black and yellow striped ones. And lately (mid-season) there have been some huge "bumblers", who are so big that the whole truss sags and individual flowers quiver.

And when I go in to the house to have lunch, there's a new American Rhododendron Society Newsletter (Spring 2019) on the table, which I always read. And-- delight! -- an article on bumblebees! It is by Ian Efford, one of our ARS members from Duncan. Its name is "Are Bumblebees important as Pollinators of Rhododendrons?"

Besides some very fine pictures of bumblebees on flowers, the article is filled with fascinating facts. For example, "after a very cold night, bumblebees will be close to the ambient temperature (5 degrees C), but as soon as day breaks, they can disconnect their wings, vibrate their wing muscles to generate a high thoracic temperature, then be off to visit flowers to obtain the necessary nectar to maintain their body temperature and ... pollinate the flowers."

Bumblebees living in sub-Arctic habitats are covered in thick body "hair", and in tropical areas they have fewer hairs, and cannot survive a maximum of 44 degrees C.

Ian Efford also reminds us of the importance of "untidy gardens". Bumblebees make their small nests in the ground, so piles of shredded leaves or bark or leaves in dry-ish conditions are good over-winter habitats.



**Photo Credit: Rich Hatfield,
The Xerces Society**



**occidentalis-west
Courtesy of Friends of the Earth**

I enjoy the presence of bumblebees in rhododendrons. Many people are afraid of them, thinking they will sting. But, watching and listening for them so that you do not accidentally squeeze them while deadheading the spent flowers will lead to an enjoyable time with bumblebees in the garden.

NOTE: becoming aware of a wasp or hornet nest nearby is MUCH more important than worrying about peaceful bumblebees.



President's Remarks

June 2019

Things have gone swimmingly lately.

We had two very successful Plant Sales – the first at Webbs' on Sunday, April 14, and the second at Marquardt's on Sunday, May 12. A big round of applause is due to all those who helped organize, set up, man the sales tables, and help with general inquiries from the buyers, as well as all those club members who turned up in order to purchase "just one more" rhodo for their gardens. These sale days are a wonderful way to generate income for the club, as well as increase our visibility to the general public.

We had the dinner at Fonbo's Chinese Restaurant with the Danish/Norwegian Tour contingent, as well as another dinner at Webbs' following a number of garden visits for the tour members. It was a wonderful example of the relationships that result from the networking that can occur within this large and international community of rhododendron aficionados.

We had a most successful plant-up of the many Barlup hybrids that various club members have been nurturing over the past months. Lots of Victoria Rhodo Society volunteers, lots of Esquimalt Parks volunteers, lots of digging and shoveling and moving and planting, lots of bonhomie and a nice lunch to boot. And at the end of it all, a lovely Barlup rhododendron garden at the Esquimalt Gorge Park in Esquimalt. We will be holding a club function there in the spring of 2020 for everyone to marvel at what has been created.

There were many well-attended, informative and enjoyable Open Gardens on the weekends of May 4-5 and May 11-12. It is always such a joy to see other gardens, both for their beauty and for the ideas one can glean on how to manage one's own plot of land.

And the Truss Show! What a gorgeous display! It was well attended, and I do believe, well enjoyed by everyone. Congratulations to all the winners!

And coming up we have our last function for the 2018-2019 club year – our Annual Picnic on Sunday, June 23, at the Blackmores'. Full instructions are printed elsewhere in this newsletter, but be assured, we will all have a swell time.

And that will be it for the summer! I look forward to seeing everyone at the first meeting of the 2019-2020 year, on Monday, September 2, at 7:30, at our usual meeting venue of the Gardens at the HCP, 505 Quayle Road, Victoria.

Happy gardening!

Brenda Macdonald

Sincere Appreciation from The Township of Esquimalt

Rick Daykin, Manager of Parks and Facilities of The Township of Esquimalt has asked us to share his communique to the VRS members for the collaborative planting at Esquimalt Gorge Park, as follows:

“...please pass on the Township’s sincere appreciation for all the work that was accomplished on April 27th in the planting of the 70 hybrid rhododendrons at Esquimalt Gorge Park.

It was truly a strong team effort and everybody seemed to really enjoy working together. I am very impressed on how well the plan was executed by your group. Delivering the plants, laying them out to show their best side, planting them, and then placing the leaf mulch and wood chips.

Well Done! ”



MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK

By Lois Blackmore

On Saturday, April 27, volunteers from the Esquimalt Parks Department and the Victoria Rhododendron Society came together to begin the planting of the Jim Barlup Garden at Gorge Park. The search for an appropriate setting for such a garden ended quickly when Calvin approached the township of Esquimalt with such an offer. It was immediately accepted and within one week, the parks department had installed a new garden path. The following week, the irrigation system was installed so the planting could begin. An army of volunteers came to help and a new garden was established which will promote and educate the public about the genus rhododendron.



Photos by Nadine Minckler



Congratulations Ken Webb



by Lois Blackmore

On Saturday, May 18, 2019, Ken Webb, one of our own, officially became the president of the American Rhododendron Society. He accepted the presidency from Ann Mangels, the outgoing president. Ken is a well-known and respected promoter of the genus rhododendron. He works cooperatively with other chapters throughout the world and is known for his generosity in sharing plants and information. The Victoria Rhododendron Society congratulates Ken on this special accomplishment.



Norway



Denmark

by Lois Blackmore

What makes 'rhododendron lovers' a special breed of human beings? Not only is it our love of the genus rhododendron, but it is also the many friends we make along the way as we gather these beautiful plants to display in our gardens. Recently, this was the case when rhododendron lovers from Norway and Denmark came to Victoria to see new and old friends and visit some members' gardens as well as public gardens in the greater Victoria area. A special gathering was hosted by the Webbs to celebrate this friendship and to enjoy a BBQ in their honor.



Photos by Nadine Minckler



Successful May 12th Plant Sale

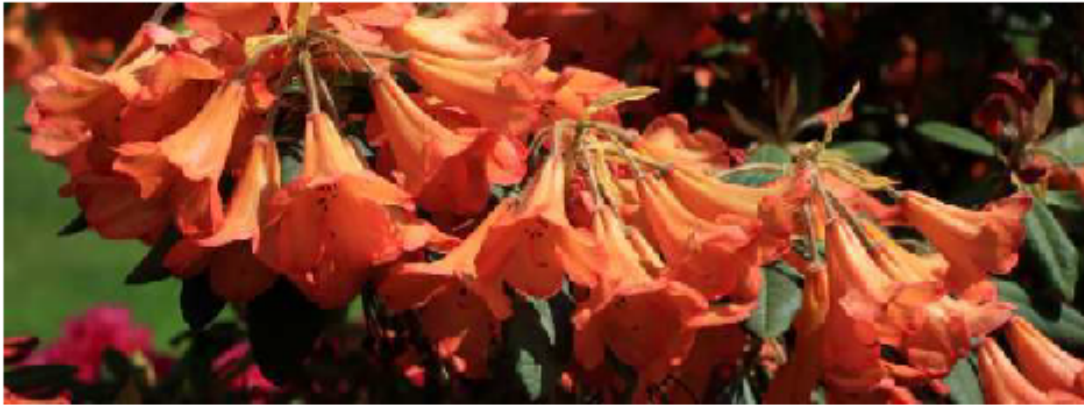




Photos by Tanya

Announcements

2019 Fall Rhododendron Conference **A Vancouver Island Celebration of Gardening**



The Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society (MARS) is bringing hundreds of gardening enthusiasts together for the fall conference of the American Rhododendron Society.

Rhododendrons by the Seaside

September 27 to 29, 2019

Parksville Community and Conference Centre

Register at www.marsrhodos.ca/ars2019/

With the theme of “Rhododendrons as the World Warms,” the lineup of speakers, workshops and tours promises a busy and exciting weekend for everyone. This conference is one of the biggest bargains of the year. An early registration fee of \$95 will entitle you to 10 speakers over three days, including two workshops, the choice of one of three bus tours, two continental breakfasts and lunch on Saturday. As well, there’s access to a plant sale, a display of international rhodo photos throughout the facility and a silent auction.

The evening banquets on Friday and Saturday night will have two keynote speakers each night after a full course buffet dinner, for an additional \$50 for each night.

The conference theme relates to climate change implications, but the context is for all gardeners who are interested in growing healthy plants of any type in our area. Speakers include a wide range of local and internationally-recognized experts in their fields, including Dr. Richard Hebda, Curator Emeritus from the Royal BC Museum; Dr. Linda Gilkeson, author and entomologist; Mike Stewart, rhododendron nurseryman; Steve Hootman, Executive Director of the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden (RSBG) in Federal Way, Wash; Dr. Nancy Turner, UVic ethnobotanist; Marc Colombel, author and hybridizer, France; Ron Long, botanist and wildflower photographer; and Nancy Moore, landscape designer and horticulturist. Bulb and seed propagation workshops will be conducted by Bernie Dinter, nurseryman and Dennis Bottemiller, propagator extraordinaire recently of the RSBG.

For those who need a place to stay, the MARS website has a list of various accommodations near the conference site. For best choice and best price, we suggest booking early as late September is still busy with tourists.

Denman Island Home and Garden Tour June 15-16, 2019

Tickets are now on sale for this enchanting Tour, deemed by the Globe & Mail as "one of Canada's top six horticultural events." Every two years this idyllic island throws open its garden gates, inviting the public for a rare up-close look at the creativity, skill and passion Denman residents pour into their properties.

The Denman Conservancy has declared 2019 to be The Year of the Wetland, and many of our extraordinary properties offer natural and man-made water features, creating complex, lively ecosystems. The famous Des Kennedy Garden is a major attraction again this year, and other highlights include an organic vineyard (with tasting room), a home built from creatively recycled components, a modern homestead and market garden, a couple of oceanfront west-coast architectural delights, and an island-style chocolate factory. Bloom lovers will not be disappointed, either - roses, lilies, and a whole host of other blossoms will be found in abundance.

This weekend event provides an unforgettable experience for lovers of gardens, homes and rural charm. Many people return year after year, and are never disappointed. Join them! Come for a day trip or book into a cozy B&B and stay for the weekend.

Early bird tickets are \$18, which you can purchase online at <http://www.denman-conservancy.org/home-and-garden-tour/>.

You can also find us (and Like us) on Facebook: www.facebook.com/DenmanIslandHomeAndGardenTour. Please help us spread the word about this great event.

Katarina Meglic
Media Coordinator
Denman Island Home & Garden Tour
778-557-7429
www.denmanconservancy.org/
[Find us on Facebook!](#)





Can you help identify this plant? It was sold as *R. annae* but that does not appear to be correct. The plant is open and 'sprawling'.

If you recognized it, please contact Ian at efford@telus.net. He would really appreciate the help.

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