



Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society

Newsletter

Volume 33:5 May 2022

Message from the President

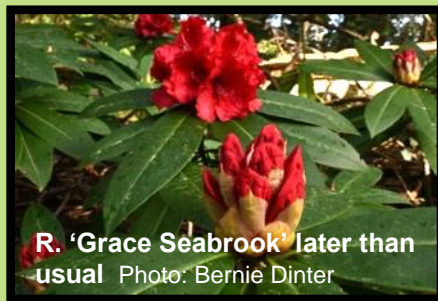
Spring has arrived and at times I find myself grumbling about how cold it is and mumbling about waiting for several hours in the morning until the frost lifts and my hands will be able to weed, rearrange plants, and plant a few new ones.

Then this week, I received two messages with photos from fellow CVRS members: one from my sister in Manitoba, and another from Bernie Dinter on the Malahat. Both messages are similar.

“Spring is a little late in coming this year”



Disappointing for Birds
Photo: Glenda MacPhee



R. 'Grace Seabrook' later than usual
Photo: Bernie Dinter

Spring is late for us and even later for restless gardeners in other parts of our country. And some blessings? Absolutely! As Bernie mentioned, the *Erythronium oregonum* show is simply spectacular. Despite any type of weather right now, walks along the Cowichan River cannot be rushed. It is impossible to hurry by the expanses of *Erythronium oregonum*, bowed, humble and delicate and stretched as far as a guest in the forest can see.

Continued on Page 2

CVRS May Meeting

Saturday
May 7, 2022, 2pm

Special Event
Outdoor Garden Meeting
Page 3

Blooming in Gardens	4
Greig Special Event	7
Why Choose This One?	6
Companion Plants for April	12
Upcoming Events	15
Useful Links	21

Banner Photo:

“I am having a lovely and extended show of the White Fawn Lilies (Erythronium oregonum) this spring in my back yard. They are looking better than normal, probably due to the cool weather.”

Bernie



Photo: Bernie Dinter



Photo: Mary Pike

Further along the trail, upright, proud and stockier in stature, are the *Trilliums*. Leaves are breaking open, and the forest fragrances tantalize and refresh our spirits. What wonders our Cowichan Valley offers us when we simply step out to take a look!

The stresses of drought and heat on our Rhododendrons last summer has convinced them that reproduction is important for their survival, and they are full of buds and flowers this year. The two 'Sir Charles Lemon' in my garden are displaying their best ever.

My one disappointment this spring is the disappearance of more than a dozen *Meconopsis* plants that, over the last four years, had been *supercalifragilisticexpialidocious*. All that has shown itself this month is one brave plant, and I have no explanation for the loss, except too much pride. I was too thrilled to show that patch of stunning blue to guests in my garden, as if I had held some kind of magic touch. Nature pointed out, that "You know nothing, Verna Buhler." Humbled now, I will try again, but perhaps, if I am simply fortunate, the remaining plant will decide to create some youngsters and take over on its own.

What a treat it will be to see you all on Saturday, in-person, in Tricia's lovely garden. Thank-you for hosting, Tricia!

Verna



Finally, In-person !!
CVRS MAY MEETING

Saturday, May 7, 2022 @ 2pm



*Outdoors in the Beautiful Garden of
Tricia Guignet
3861 Peach Drive
Cobble Hill (Satellite Park area)*

After a short business meeting, we will enjoy the beautiful gardens and chat with friends over coffee/tea and enjoy some treats provided by our club.

So, come gather together!

- Please let us know if you plan to attend so that we can prepare treats and beverages for everyone.*
- Bring a truss or two from your garden to share with others: A pre Plant-Sale Show and Tell*



Blooming thru April 2022 in Member's Gardens



In Janice McLean and Richard Kerr's garden: *Rhododendron* 'Princess Abkhazi' developed by BC hybridizer, Herman Vaartnou in 1970; also, species *Rhododendron racemosum* – tiny and delicate



Ali Morris's garden, once again, stars with uncommon companion plants:

"This is a rare double form of our native *Trillium ovatum*. In my garden it doesn't thrive, but at times it surprises me with some beautiful flowers.

The dwarf *Trillium rivale*, is native to the Oregon coast. Very easy to grow and also comes in a pink form. A real treasure in my garden. . .



The dwarf *Narcissus bulbocodium*, comes from Western Europe; it is happy with some warm sunshine. If happy, it will bloom for a long time. The black mondo grass makes a beautiful contrast.

This is a beautiful species *Bergenia omeiana*. The foliage is very attractive too; it looks like it's been polished."



Blooming reds . . .

. . .the most difficult colour to adequately photograph, whereas the first to catch everyone's eyes in gardens!

In Bernie Dinter's garden *R.* 'Grace Seabrook' blooms later than it normally does due to the colder spring temperatures.



Photos above and right: Rhoda Taylor

In Rhoda Taylor's garden *R.* 'Royston Red' grows happily in a pot.

The second photo *"is one of my two R. 'Taurus'. It is under a magnolia and tends to grow lower as a result. It also 'lies down' during heavy snow, so I have just let it choose its growth habit. It is not quite in full bloom.*

The second 'Taurus' is more upright and growing intertwined with two later blooming varieties. You might be able to see the slightly different leaves.

All three are growing forward, chasing light."

Thanks for submitting your photos!

~ Verna



Blooming reds . . .



David Annis's reds

~~~~~  
*Pulsatilla vulgaris* (Prairie  
Crocus red)  
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**Candice's tulips and anemones**  
Photos: Candice Feeny

## Loving the Blues . . .



**Candice's garden hums with the blues**  
(Photos above: Candice Feeney)



**Purple and mauves of *R. augustinii*, *R. 'Blue Baron'* and *Fritillaria melagris***

Photos: Verna Buhler



# Greig Rhododendron Species Garden

## Special ARS Open Garden Event

### An Amazing Species Garden!

If you were unable to get away to attend this Open Garden Celebration you might want to consider setting aside some time for a special road trip to Milner Gardens while the rhododendrons are in bloom. The overall design and layout of species *Rhododendrons* plantings have been artfully arranged to create a restful and magical experience. Companion plants arranged in drifts draw guests along winding paths.

Congratulations to the determined members of the NRS and MARS who spend hundreds of hours ensuring the mission and vision of this project is not only met but appears to be exceeding high expectations!

~~~~~

Along with almost everyone else in attendance, two individuals were unaware that they were about to be acknowledged for their outstanding contributions to the mission of the American Rhododendron Society over their many years of involvement.



ARS SILVER MEDAL AWARDS

*Congratulations to Douglas Justice of the University of British Columbia,
and Chris Southwick of the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society*

William and Mary Pike kindly offered a lift to Barrie and Verna to attend the special ARS Greig Rhododendron Species Garden Event on Tuesday, May 26th at Milner Gardens and Woodland.

Milner Gardens and Woodland in Qualicum Beach is a 70-acre waterfront estate that was gifted to Vancouver Island University in 1996 and has been open to the public since 2001.

In 2014, a partnership was formed between V.I.U., Milner and the five Vancouver Island chapters of the American Rhododendron Society, with the goal of establishing the first Canadian Rhododendron species garden. The intent was to highlight the tremendous diversity within the genus *Rhododendron*, while educating the public about conservation and where rhododendrons are found in the



Rhododendron davidsonianum 'Ruth Lyons'



Lovely companion plants form drifts around the species rhododendrons

Part Two

Choosing Rhododendrons

More Reasons Than Flower Variations and Colour

~ Verna Buhler ~

Last month we looked at the many variations in *flower features* that could affect our choices in selecting Rhododendrons rather than just flower colour.

We considered corolla forms, flower shapes and structures, flower details of pistils and stamens, flower and truss sizes, truss formations, and truss positions. All of these factors affect the overall appearance of a rhododendron in our garden.

Flower variations alone are mind boggling, but let's make choosing the perfect rhododendron even more exciting by considering foliage! This Glendoik photo depicts a stunning variety of colours of Rhododendron foliage.



Glendoik Photo

Special Rhododendron Foliage Features

Leaf size, shape, and structure:



Apart from the generous range in leaf colour, the sizes of the leaves of rhododendrons may be only centimeters in length or two feet in length.

Esther poses behind a big-leaved species rhododendron to demonstrate the heavy structure and length of its foliage.

The tiny foliage of a dwarf rhododendron, *Rhododendron pemakoense* is opposite in its presentation in a landscape.

Therefore, when you select rhododendrons with various foliage sizes you will find they present their blooms more dramatically in your garden.



Leaf shapes and how they are held on the branches add more elements of interest.

They may be lanceolate and lacey, round and stoic, thick and waxy, long stemmed and lax, or heavily veined, among numerous other variations.



Challenge:

**Describe this
Rhododendron
foliage to a friend!**

Foliage Indumentum



Foliage Photos: Carrie Nelson

Some of the most prized *Rhododendrons* are those with showy indumentums. The undersides of the leaves are of a variety of contrasting colours.

Some of these may be deep burgundy red, coppery bronze, or burnished platinum.

Some outstanding rhododendron specimens go beyond their incredible indumentum displays by also sending out unique colour and texture in the new growth that contrasts dramatically with their special indumentum.



Spectacular New Growth:

Both *Rhododendrons*, in the photos below, have beautiful dark indumentum, but the new growth on one is a soft warm bronze while the other is a fuzzy pale grey.



The new growth on the *Rhododendrons* below is shiny with a satin softness. One has lanceolate leaves on long red stems whereas the other's foliage is ovate with deep veining.

Photos: Carrie Nelson





Deeply defined leaf veins on very dark green, large-leaved *Rhododendrons* create nice texture



Below, one *Rhododendron* has vivid lime-green stems and leaf veins against burgundy-purple indumentum; another has bright blue-green leaves on burgundy-purple stems.

Photos: Verna Buhler



“To note foliage is to love foliage”

Since the evergreen foliage of *Rhododendrons* endures all seasons, while flowers dazzle several weeks of a year, you might wish to factor in the wonders of foliage when you select the *rhododendrons* for your gardens.

Lionel de Rothschild Visits the Garden of Al and Liz Murray



On Saturday, April 23rd, Liz and Allen Murray along with their son, Rodney and daughter, Vicky hosted an Open Garden Tour for the Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society and the Mill Bay Garden Club.

Their very special guest was Lionel de Rothschild. It was a pleasure to ask questions of him about rhododendrons named after family members and simply to chat with him while wandering about a beautiful garden.

It was a day for other special sightings as well – Salt Spring Island guests, *Rhododendron* 'Muncaster Mist' in bloom, unique *Cypripedium formosanum*, its white pouch with red markings above two pleated fan-like leaves, and shy Northern Alligator Lizards sunning on a rock wall.



The detour that Lionel de Rothschild made to Vancouver Island on his way to the American Rhododendron Society's Spring Convention in Oregon, was a special treat for us.



R. 'Elizabeth de Rothschild'



R. 'Mrs Lionel de Rothschild'



R. 'Jessica de Rothschild'



R. 'Lady de Rothschild'

Lionel has been to Vancouver Island before and does know the rhododendron enthusiasts in our area.

He also spoke at the ARS Spring Convention that took place in Sidney, BC, in 2015. It was good to hear from him then, but there was something extra special about wandering through the Open Garden at Liz and Allen Murray's last Sunday and simply chatting with Lionel de Rothschild in a casual manner.

I had specific questions for him about several de Rothschild rhododendrons that I have growing in my garden because I wasn't sure whether or not they were all different. Lionel explained how these plants were named.

Rhododendron 'Elizabeth de Rothschild' was named after his mother, he said, and he particularly loved that one.

Rhododendron 'Mrs. Lionel de Rothschild' was named after his grandfather's wife.

The background for *Rhododendron* 'Lady de Rothschild' was not perfectly clear to him and he felt he might want to follow up a bit more on that.

Rhododendron 'Jessica de Rothschild' was bred by Edmund de Rothschild in 1966 but not registered until 1996 and was first launched at the Chelsea Flower Show in 2019 by Millais Nurseries

The big leaf species rhododendron, *Rhododendron rothschildii* was named after his grandfather, Lionel de Rothschild (1882 -1942) of Exbury. Its natural habitat is in Yunnan



R. rothschildii



Special thanks to the Mill Bay Garden Club for providing hot drinks and tasty snacks for the garden tour at Al and Liz's.

Meeting with old friends around the cup of coffee and a few nibbles made for a very special day.



Thank-you so much, Al and Liz, for a lovely afternoon!



CVRS MEMBER VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

for the CVRS Plant Sale - May 14, 2022

- Plant divisions for the Sale (So much appreciated!)
- Friday evening set-up (Bonus – volunteers shop early)
- Saturday Tasks: Sign-Up List will be distributed soon

Many hands make lighter work and much fun!!

COWICHAN VALLEY RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

ANNUAL SPRING PLANT SALE

Saturday, May 14, 2022 10am – 2pm

Gibbons Road, Duncan

Contact: <http://cowichanvalleyrhododendronsociety@gmail.com>



- Hundreds of special *Rhododendrons* and companion plants
- Free books and journals (former Weesjes's library collection)
- Knowledgeable plant specialists to answer questions
- Suitable parking available





Companion plants: Huechera and Fritillaria

RHODODENDRON

Species Botanical GARDEN



PO Box 3798, Federal Way, Washington, USA 98063

Email: Info@rhodygarden.org

Website: rhodygarden.org

Phone: (253) 838-4646

Associate Member Benefits:

- Free year-round garden admission for each member (subject to change)
- 2 copies of the RSBG Yearbook, *Rhododendron Species*
- On-line newsletter
- On-line plant, pollen, and seed catalogs
- Use of Lawrence J. Pierce Library during business hours

Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society has an Associate Membership

Check out the webpage

Rhododendron Species Foundation and Botanical Garden

...is dedicated to the conservation, research, acquisition, evaluation, cultivation, public display, and distribution of Rhododendron species; provides education relating to the Genus; and serves as a unique resource to scientific, horticultural, and educational communities worldwide.

RSF Mission Statement



Companion Plants: Heuchera and Hosta

2021 – 2022

Calendar of Events

Contact CVRS:

cowichanvalleyrhododendron@gmail.com

Saturday, May 14, 2022 10am – 2pm

CVRS Plant Sale

3440 Gibbons Road, Duncan, B.C.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY EVENTS

May 4 - 8, 2022

ARS Annual Convention, Portland, Oregon More information <https://ars2022.org/>

2022:

ARS Fall Eastern Regional Conference, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Dates to be determined.

2023:

ARS Fall Western Regional Conference, Florence, Oregon. Dates to be determined.

2023:

ARS Annual Convention, Atlanta, Georgia. Joint ARS/ASA meeting. Dates to be determined.

USEFUL LINKS

Cowichan Rhododendron Society:

cowichanrhodos.ca/

Victoria Rhododendron Society:

victoriarhodo.ca/index.html

Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society:

marsrhodos.ca/

North Island Rhododendron Society:

nirsrhodos.ca/ws/

The American Rhododendron Society:

rhododendron.org/

Nanaimo Rhododendron Society:

nanaimorhodos.ca

Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden:

rhodygarden.org

Nanoose Garden Club:

nanoosegardenclub.ca/

Linda Gilkeson:

lindagilkeson.ca/

Vancouver Island Rock and Garden Society:

virags.com

Linda Chalker-Scott:

<https://puyallup.wsu.edu/lcs/>

Steve Henning:

rhodyman.net

Rhododendron, Camellia, Magnolia

<https://www.rhodogroup-rhs.org/>



Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society

A Chapter of the American
Rhododendron Society P.O. Box 904
Duncan, British Columbia V9L 3Y2

<http://cowichanrhodos.ca>

2020-21 Executive

President: Verna Buhler
Vice-President: Ali Morris
Treasurer: Wendy Willson
Secretary: Diane Allen
Director-at-Large: Barrie Agar
Director-at-Large: Candice Feeney
Director-at-Large: Carrie Nelson
Director-at Large: Mary Pike
Membership Chairperson: David Annis

Convenors

Sunshine: Mary Gale
Tea: Judeen Hendrickson
Raffle: Hilda Gerrits
Program Planning: The Executive Team
Fundraising: The Executive Team
CVRS Garden Tours: Candice Feeney
CVRS Bus Tours: TBA
Library: Verna Buhler