

# AtlanticRhodo

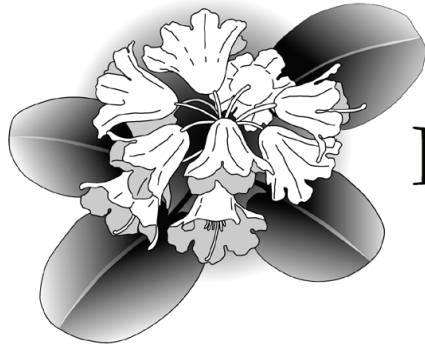
[www.AtlanticRhodo.org](http://www.AtlanticRhodo.org)

Volume 35: Number 3

October 2011







# Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society

## Positions of Responsibility 2010 - 2011

<b>President</b>	Ruth Jackson	454-4681	<b>Director - Horticulture</b>	Audrey Fralic	683-2711
<b>Vice-President</b>	Vacant		<b>Director</b>	Cora Swinamer	826-7705
<b>Secretary</b>	Susan Boyd	835-8916	<b>Director</b>	Wendy Cornwall	477-6121
<b>Treasurer</b>	Jim Drysdale	431-0223	<b>ARS Rep.</b>	Anitra Laycock	852-2502
<b>Membership</b>	Ann Drysdale	431-0223	<b>Newsletter</b>	Mary Helleiner	429-0213
<b>Past President</b>	Sheila Stevenson	479-3740	<b>Website</b>	Bob Pettipas	462-5654
<b>Director - Education</b>	Jenny Sandison	624-9013	<b>Library</b>	Jean White	477-2933
<b>Director - Communications</b>	Mary Helleiner	429-0213	<b>Seed Exchange</b>	Sharon Bryson	863-6307
<b>Director - Social</b>	Shirley McIntyre	835-3673	<b>May - Pre-Ordered Plant Sale</b>	Ken Shannik	422-2413
<b>Director - Outreach</b>	Chris Hopgood	479-0811	<b>May- Public Plant Sale</b>	Duff & Donna Evers	835-2586

## Membership (Please Note Changes)

### Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society.

Fees are \$20.00 from September 1, 2011 to August 31, 2012, due September 2011. Make cheques payable to Atlantic Rhododendron and Horticultural Society. ARHS is a chapter in District 12 of the American Rhododendron Society. For benefits see ARHS website [www.atlanticrhodo.org](http://www.atlanticrhodo.org)

### American Rhododendron Society

Combined ARHS and ARS membership cost is \$50.00 Canadian. For benefits see [www.rhododendron.org](http://www.rhododendron.org)

Cheques, made payable to Atlantic Rhododendron and Horticultural Society should be sent to **Ann Drysdale, 5 Little Point Lane, Herring Cove, NS B3V1J7.**

Please include name, address with postal code, e-mail address and telephone number, for organizational purposes only.

*AtlanticRhodo* is the Newsletter of the Atlantic Rhododendron and Horticultural Society. We welcome your comments, suggestions, articles, photos and other material for publication. Send all material to the editor.

Published three times a year. February, May and October.

**Editor:**

Mary Helleiner  
834 Marlborough Ave.  
Halifax, NS, B3H3G6  
(902) 429-0213  
[cmhelleiner@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:cmhelleiner@ns.sympatico.ca)

Cover Photo: *Clethra barbinervis* . [Photo Chris Helleiner]



## Calendar of Events

All ARHS meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month, from September to May, at 7:30 p.m. in the Nova Scotia Museum Auditorium, 1747 Summer St., Halifax, unless otherwise noted. Paid parking is available in the Museum lot. Friends, guests and anyone interested in rhododendrons, azaleas or companion plants are always welcome at meetings or events.

**Tuesday September 6**

**St. Mary's Green Roof**

**Tuesday October 4**

**Annual General Meeting**

**Steele Lecture: Alpines for Small Gardens, Harvey Wrightman** of Wrightman Alpine Nursery in south-western Ontario will speak on this most delightful group of plants and he will also be conducting a workshop on the clay crevice method of planting.

**Tuesday November 1**

**American Rhododendron Society Convention in Oregon, Spring 2011**

**John Brett** will coordinate a show of members' photos from this wonderful convention in May. There will also be a small informal discussion around the topic of our association with the ARS and the benefits it brings.

**Tuesday December 6**

**Christmas Party and Members' Photos.** Our annual party is always a favourite with good things to eat and plenty of wine. Members are encouraged to bring a few photos of their gardens, or someone else's garden, or travel photos of plants or gardens around the world. Members are also asked to bring finger foods. Wine will be provided by the Society.

**Please Note:** Some members, who have environmental sensitivities, are asking their fellow members please to use no perfumes, scented soaps, etc., on the days or evenings of ARHS events, in order to minimize the risk of allergic reactions.



A very warm welcome to our new and returning ARHS members who have joined since the May Newsletter.

**Suzanne Bonnington  
Helen Buckland  
Cameron Dommer  
Gladys Gates  
Steve Lane  
Douglass Mott  
Lynn Patterson  
Amanda Peters  
Krista Rudic**

**Granville Ferry, NS  
Hammonds Plains, NS  
Bedford, NS  
Hackett's Cove, NS  
Halifax, NS  
Halifax, NS  
Williamswood, NS  
NSCC, Kingstec, NS  
Halifax, NS**

# Special Notices

---

## The Steele Endowment Fund

Efforts continue to raise money for this scholarship fund dedicated to the memory of Captain Richard Steele.

Jodi De Long opened her garden in the spring for the cause and raised \$3200. Walter Ostrom continues to encourage contributions and has a wine raffle in the offing.

To contribute, contact the Development Office of the Nova Scotia Agricultural College in Bible Hill. ☐

---

## Outreach 2011

By C. Hopgood

The Atlantic Rhododendron and Horticultural Society again visited the John Meagher garden at Regatta Point this past April 23. This was the fourth year that the society has held a work party at this site.

The volunteers that were in attendance were Ann and Jim Drysdale, Jenny Sandison, Doug Bamford, Chris Hopgood and new member Krista Rudic. We were fortunate in having a fine day of weather, with sunshine and pleasant temperature for a spring work day. Human energy was spent cleaning up the garden, pruning and weeding, and of course, not to forget our annual effort in attempting to eradicate the dreaded Japanese knotweed. This is one ornery weed, those roots go deep and



Photo Chris Hopgood

are so difficult to get out, especially when the roots get into the roots of the rhodos and azaleas. It appears as if the knotweed will have us returning to this garden for years to come; we will never give up the fight.

Audrey Fralic's plants that she donated to this garden in 2009, RR. 'Ginny Gee', 'Nancy Steele' (Bpt. 80-5), 'Isola Bella', 'Purple Gem', and *maximum* were in fine form that Saturday morning. The present writer added another 'Purple Gem', this little one from a larger plant that had to be moved in my own garden and had layered itself where a number of its branches had touched the ground, so it was pruned off, replanted and a year later found itself a new home.

The cleanup produced about twenty garbage bags, all of which were placed by the curb for the regular city pickup, and again the pickup didn't happen, so instead of making calls to the city, which the last time I did it took a call to the area councillor to get any action, I called member David Johnson to come by with his truck and take them to curbside at my place. That worked and it was the way we will handle it in the future. Many thanks David.

We had an extra treat this year as we were invited to drop by Mrs. John Meagher and daughter Gail's garden on Armshore Drive. This is quite the garden, so many plants on a piece of property that with its slope in the back is not so easy to work in. Thanks for the invite folks.

That's the report to date for 2011; stay tuned as there may be more outreach opportunities coming up for our members to contribute to the beauty of our community.☐



## Plant Portraits

### *Rhododendron* ‘Pohjola’s Daughter’

This rhododendron seems to get very mixed reviews, in fact most comments I have heard have been disparaging, not very complimentary. This is completely opposite from my experience.

In the 2007 pre-ordered plant sale description in the AtlanticRhodo newsletter it is described as follows: “large flowers open lavender-pink with a paler centre quickly ageing to almost pure white with a yellow-green flare. Very striking. Low compact mounding habit to 3.5’ high and spreading wider. Hardy to -29F (-34 C). An extremely hardy Finnish hybrid.”

It’s the spreading aspect of this plant that causes me to write this Plant Portrait; in my garden this rhodo is among boulders, and sits beside one in particular—the way in which the plant sits and almost embraces the boulder creates beauty enough. The plant foliage is decent, nothing to write home about, but it looks quite handsome with its upturned manner. The location is on a bit of a rise, with some shade, and it quite enjoys its surroundings, in fact the plant is just about six feet wide now at its ripe old age of twelve years or so.

The bloom is quite prolific and puts on its show in late May, early June, only one year did it not bloom well; can’t remember the year—we had a prolonged cold period in winter that did in a lot of buds.

So don’t listen to all those disparaging comments about ‘Pohjola’s Daughter’; turn your ears away and remember what your mother might have told you “If you can’t say anything nice, don’t say anything at all”.

- Chris Hopgood

### *Phlomis russeliana*

One of the plants that always attracts attention in my garden is commonly known as Jerusalem sage. The leaves are very hairy which may be one reason for the folk name and the flowers have a similar structure. However *Phlomis russeliana* is a large perennial with great presence. The mid-green basal leaves may be twelve inches long and from the crown in early summer arise tall square stems which bear the flowers. The flowers are remarkable for being arranged in clusters up the stem. Each stem, which may be 36 inches tall, will have three or four balls of flowers spaced up the stem, and the flowers are soft yellow and hooded. Even after the flowers have faded their structure remains and at the end of the season the tall stems still bear rounded balls. This can be most effective in dried flower arrangements.

There are several plants which are known as Jerusalem sage and most are not hardy for us. *Phlomis russeliana*, however, has never failed me and has been divided and passed around. It does well in well-drained ordinary garden soil in sun or semi-shade. Although not readily available in ordinary garden centres look out for this most appealing plant.

- Jenny Sandison

### *Haklonechloa macra* ‘All Gold’

In the last few years grasses, along with bright coloured heucheras, have become the darlings of garden writers. Unfortunately many of these grasses are very tall, require full sun to do their best, and a few are not hardy. One that stands out, my favourite, is golden Hakone forest grass, *Haklonechloa macra* ‘All Gold’. This is not the yellow variegated ‘Aureola’, but a solid colour. In spring it is a yellow-green which in summer changes to a soft lime green and then in the fall turns to a clear yellow.

This grass flourishes in the shade and probably requires at least some shade. It takes several years to get into its stride, but once it does it has a most attractive form of cascading growth which shows off best on a wall or steep slope. However, it is attractive on the level too, possibly edging a shady bed. It grows only about a foot high. It increases enough to provide divisions but is not invasive; seed heads are occasionally seen but this grass does not seem to seed around.

It was offered by the ARHS as a tissue culture plant in 2004.

- Mary Helleiner

## **Magnolia Grandiflora – Will it Survive in Northern Nova Scotia? - Addendum**

**By Bruce Clyburn, New Waterford**

This article originally appeared in the AtlanticRhodo May, 2011 issue. I had suggested overwintering containerized *M. grandiflora* 'Bracken's Brown Beauty' in an unheated garage. Based on recent experience I must recommend against this. Containerized magnolias cannot stand having a frozen root-ball above ground (unlike most rhododendrons). Acceptable overwintering options include a cool basement/greenhouse (5 to 15 °C), or an outdoor cold frame with pots buried in deep mulch. ☐

### **ARHS 2012 TISSUE CULTURE – Advance Sale Information**

It's time again to order your Tissue Culture plants for Spring 2012. This year again we have some new varieties and also some older ones that our newer members may not have. The cost of each plant will be \$5.00. we try to keep the price as low as possible.

**DO NOT SEND ANY MONEY WITH YOUR ORDER. YOU WILL BE BILLED WHEN YOUR ORDER IS PICKED UP OR SENT.** (Special shipping charges may apply.)

These plants will be available for pickup in early April. The time and location will be announced at a later date. All members will be advised of the date and location once confirmation is received of the plants arrival date. In addition to your order you may be able to purchase leftover plants on the day of the pick-up.

Plant descriptions and an order form are included with your newsletter. Please make sure your phone number and if possible, your email address is included in the order form. This sale is only available to paid-up members in the Atlantic Region.

Orders that are not picked up in Halifax on the sale date will be shipped collect by whatever method you have indicated on your order. Where shipping options are limited the parcel will be shipped by Canada Post.

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO MAKE A COPY OF YOUR ORDER. THE DEADLINE FOR THE 2012 ORDER WILL BE DEC. 15, 2011.**

Please send your order to ARHS,  
c/o Jon Porter  
RR 1, Brooklyn, NS  
BOJ1H0  
902-354-2387  
E-mail [jonporter@eastlink.ca](mailto:jonporter@eastlink.ca)

**REMEMBER THERE PLANTS HAVE NOT BEEN HARDENED OFF. WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU GIVE THEM A GOOD WATERING AND AS SOON AS POSSIBLE POT THEM UP IN 4" POTS.** A mixture of one part peat, one part perlite and one part commercial mix makes a nice light mix for these small rhodies. **DO NO OVERWATER.** Keep them inside under lights IN A COOL PLACE until all risk of frost is past (at least late May). On nice days you can place them outside in a shady spot so they can begin hardening off, but do not leave outside overnight until the risk of frost is over. In June put them in the ground in a cold frame or other well sheltered spot. Mulch to keep the moisture and temperature stable and water as needed.

The first winter provide some protection. Use a coldframe, burlap or conifer boughs and make sure they are mulched well. Do not use clear plastic as it will cause burning and may even kill them. Shade cloth (purchased at Lee Valley) provides excellent shade and wind protection.

Good luck with your little plants and make some notes on how they do. We would really appreciate feedback on their performance.



**ARHS 2012 TISSUE CULTURE ADVANCE SALE**

**RHODODENDRONS (all rhododendrons are elepidotes unless otherwise stated)**

Descriptions are primarily from Brigg's website ([www.briggsnursery.com](http://www.briggsnursery.com)) where photographs of many of the selections can be found. More details can also be found at [www.rhododendron.org](http://www.rhododendron.org).

VARIETY	HYBRIDIZER	DESCRIPTION
R. 'Anne Goss'	Joe Parks	Dark pink in bud, opening light pink. Reliable, heavy bloomer with glossy leaves. An improvement over its parents, 'Scintillation' and 'Roseum Elegans'. 8 ft. x 15 ft. in 10 years. Hardy to -29F.
R. 'Cocheco Lavender Lady'	Joe Parks	Frothy lavender frilled trusses amid rich green foliage on strong scaffold limbs. Blooming in late May. This tough, hardy plant was hybridized in New Hampshire, a cross of Dexter's Purple x Florence Parks. A slow, deliberate grower, 5ft. x 4ft. in 10 years. Hardy to -29F.
R. 'Fantastica'	Hachmann	An impressive combination of color, form, and hardiness; considered one of the best Hachmann hybrids. Wavy-edged flowers are shiny, light red at the edges, and creamy pink in the center. Dense, compact habit. AGM winner. Briggs 2002 Plant of the Year. Midseason to late midseason bloom. 3 t. x 4 ft. in 10 years. Hardy to -15F.
R. 'Ginny Gee'	Berg	A little shrub that's vigorous and tough and blooms like there's no tomorrow. Its early-midseason flowers are pink and white, turning all white with age. The leaves are dark green, taking on red tones in winter. Low, dense habit. AGM winner. <b>Lepidote</b> . 2 ft. x 3 ft. in 10 years. Hardy to -10F.
R. 'Holden's Spring Herald'	Leach	Pinkish white flowers with burgundy red nectar pouches welcome you in early spring. R. rex parentage gives this plant exceptionally large leaves and R. catawbiense gives it hardiness. 7 ft. x 8 ft. in 10 years. Hardy to -20F.
R. 'Midnight Ruby'	Weston Nurseries	This may be the best of the black-leaved rhododendrons introduced by Weston Nurseries. The very early flowers are reddish-purple with a distinctly wavy edge. They are set off by winter foliage that is so dark it looks black. Less susceptible to root rot than some of the other black-leaved hybrids. Compact, upright habit. <b>Lepidote</b> . 3 ft. x 3 ft. in 10 years. Hardy to -29F.
R. morii		The plant is most interesting in that the foliage maintains a symmetrical "collar" around the stem and truss. Leaves are glossy and lance-shaped. Flowers are 2" long, bell shaped, white blushed rose, erupting from some pink buds. Early midseason to midseason bloom. 4 ft. x 4 ft. in 10 years. Hardy to -5F
R. 'Nova Zembla'	Koster	A tried-and-true standard in the nursery industry. Dark red flowers in ball-shaped trusses sit upon healthy, deep green leaves in midseason. Sturdy, bushy growth habit. 5 ft. x 6 ft. in 10 years. Hardy to -25F.
R. 'Pearce's American Beauty'	Pearce	The compact full truss sits closely on a tight collar of leaves. Dark green foliage is especially wide. Magenta flowers on large trusses of 15-20 flowers. Robust grower. Very late bloom. 5 ft. x 4 ft. in 10 years. Hardy to 0F.
R. 'Sapporo'	Hachmann	One of Mr. Hachmann's personal favourites. The flowers open pale purple in late midseason and quickly turn white with a strong blotch of deep purplish-red. Compact, somewhat open habit. 5 ft. x 5 ft. in 10 years. Hardy to -10F.
R. 'Scintillation'	Dexter	Midseason flowers of heavy substance, pink with green and bronze markings. The foliage is especially handsome: large, dark green, glossy. Broad, well-branched habit. 5 ft. x 5 ft. in 10 years. Hardy to -15F.
R. 'Teddy Bear'	Briggs	Large, but delicate pink flowers appear in tall conical trusses in early midseason. The compact plant is covered with glossy, deep green foliage and the underside of each leaf is covered with a teddy-bear-brown indumentum. 4 ft. x 5 ft. in 10 years. Hardy to -10F.

VARIETY	HYBRIDIZER	DESCRIPTION
R. 'Wind River'	Barlup	Buds are dark red opening to a cool yellow with pink, wavy edges and dark red spotting on the three dorsal lobes. Early midseason bloom. 4 ft. x 4 ft. in 10 years. Hardy to 0F.
R. 'Winter Spice'	Barlup	A cross between 'Hachmann's Charmant' and 'Dreamland'. The flower is a nice, soft pink to white with an attractive twin red flare. Late midseason bloom. 5 ft. x 5 ft. in 10 years. Hardy to -20F.

## COMPANION PLANTS

Daphne x transatlantica 'Summer Ice'	A choice evergreen Daphne with variegated foliage and a propensity to bloom from spring until fall. The leaves have a fine, creamy white edge, less prominent than that of 'Carol Mackie', and the fragrant white flowers appear in clusters that dot the bush right through summer. Rounded, shrubby habit. 3ft. x 3ft. Zone 6.
Erica carnea 'Springwood Pink'	Abundant pale pink flowers from winter to spring. Deep green foliage. Spreading habit. 8-10" x 20". Zone 5.
Ilex crenata 'Sky Pencil'	Dark green foliage clothes a columnar plant. Excellent as an exclamation point in a mixed border, and a pair (in pots or in the ground) make fabulous evergreen sentries for a doorway or gate. 8ft. X 2ft. Zone 6.
Pieris japonica 'Katsura'	'Katsura' has bright, glossy leaves with deep wine-red new growth changing to green with age. The flowers, born on rose-colored racemes, are lilac-white with a lilac skirt. Habit is a broad upright bush. 5ft. x 6ft. Zone 5.
Primula 'Dawn Ansell'	Double English Primrose. Extra long, fluffy white petals resembling a rose, bloom January-April. The leaves form a jazzy collar around the flower. Part sun. 4-6" x 6-8". Zone 3-8.
Primula 'Ken Dearman'	Double English Primrose. Irresistible copper orange, double flowers last throughout spring. Part sun. 4-6" x 6-8". Zone 5-8

## Favourite Rhododendrons

Each member of the ARHS Board was asked to list his or her five favourite rhodos. Here is the list. In the next issue we want to print a list of every member's five favourites. Please send them in, to [cmhelleiner@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:cmhelleiner@ns.sympatico.ca).

**Ann Drysdale:** 'Calsap', 'Vernus', 'Pohjola's Daughter', 'Bravo', 'Scotian Reef'.

**Jim Drysdale:** 'Hot Dawn', 'Album', 'New Century', 'Weston's Pink Diamond', 'Sugar Puff'.

**Audrey Fralic:** *pachysanthum*, 'Taurus', 'Golfer', 'Jenny Talbot' hybrid, 'Mardi Gras'.

**Mary Helleiner:** 'Golfer', 'Percy Wiseman', *mucronulatum*, 'Virginia Delp', 'Festivo'.

**Chris Hopgood:** 'Pohjola's Daughter', 'Bayport Beauty', 'Great Eastern', 'Winter Green', 'Pancake'.

**Ruth Jackson:** 'Mist Maiden', *schlippenbachii*, 'Ramapo', *kiusianum* 'Joe's Broom', 'Bellefontaine'.

**Anitra Laycock:** *yakushmanum* 'Kochira Wada', *praevernum*, *cephalanthum*, 'Golden Star', 'Ginny Gee'.

**Jenny Sandison:** 'Komo Kulshan', *oreodoxa* v. *fargesii*, 'Patti Bee', 'Connecticut Yankee', 'April Rhapsody'.

**Sheila Stevenson:** *oreodoxa*, 'Babylon', *fortunei* v. *discolor*, *fortunei*, 'Stocatta'.

**Cora Swinamer:** 'Brian's Red', 'Sunshen', 'Rosy Lights', 'Blue Peter', 'Isola Bella'. ☐



# Garden Techniques: Transplanting

**By Jenny Sandison**

Getting plants established in your garden is an essential skill and although pretty basic there are a few pitfalls along the way. Maybe understanding what is happening to your new potted purchase will highlight these problems.

I expect most of us have returned home on a sunny day to find the six pak of petunias sitting on the patio has fried in the sun. Amazingly, if plunged into a basin of water and put in the shade these flowers will revive and do well for you. However, this is a very bad thing to let happen to your plants. Plants are always transpiring – taking water up from their roots and releasing it from their pores. Pretty much the same thing we do on hot sunny days. If they cannot take up water they wilt and will eventually die. There are in-between stages where the plant will suffer damage to the leaves resulting in brown edges or completely brown leaves.

Planting small plants like annuals from a six pak into the soil of your flower bed is perhaps the most difficult transplanting task. Because the rootball is small and will be near the surface of the soil it is going to dry out fast. If the day is very hot and sunny, and even worse, there is a strong warm wind blowing, the plant may be toast by the evening. I cannot remember the number of times I have set out annuals only to find next day a few miserable, unidentifiable brown things at the edge of the bed. I guess that's why I don't do many annuals! What you really should be doing is bringing the watering can along every morning and who has time for that? And what if the only time you have is the weekend?

## Planting Perennials

I do plant a lot of perennials and they are easier as the rootball is larger and some roots will be deep down in the soil where things will be damper. Even here there are a few problems mostly to do with getting the roots in good contact with the soil so they can begin to take up water from the ground. Having removed the plant from the pot do check the state of the roots. Many times the plant has been in the pot too long and the roots have grown down and around. If you just take the plant as it is and place it in the soil there is little root contact with the soil. Unless you water religiously the plant will suffer. I always pull the rootball apart with my fingers. If it is very tight you may have to use the points on some scissors to do this. I shake off a lot of the potting soil, as it is very peaty, and I force the roots to spread outwards. Then I place the roots in a good size hole I have prepared, trying to keep the crown, the bit where the stem starts, at the same level as the ground. Then I push soil around and over the roots and I firm the soil. I do this by pressing down quite hard on the soil, even with my heel sometimes. I also try to create a small saucer of soil around the crown of the plant which will hold the water I pour over the plant from the watering can. I try to be patient. I know I need to let the water seep in and then add more and do it again. You can admire the plant and dream of its flowers while you are waiting! If it is a good sized perennial I know I need to get about a half can of water into the rootball and not just have it all running away. I also know that unless it rains in the next few days I will have to be doing this again soon.

Soil type will also affect what happens to your new acquisition. If your soil is sandy and free draining you will have to pay more attention to watering. Gardening is all about observation and you can train yourself to zero in on plants drooping before it becomes a crisis. Clay soil on the other hand can sometimes be so water retentive that the hole you place the plant in becomes waterlogged. Freezing temperatures in these conditions can kill the roots.

## Moving established perennials

Moving established perennials to a different place in the garden is something we all do from time to time. Maybe we have just decided the plant will look better next to another with a complementary colour. I have found that I never remember what I intended so I keep a notebook of where I want to move things. Spring is the best time when the soil is damp and the growing season stretches ahead. With perennials it pays to take as much of the root system as you can. Certainly you will have to insert the shovel at least a few inches away from the crown. Cut straight downwards carefully all around the plant before getting the shovel under the rootball and you will find the whole thing will come up quite easily and you can move it on the blade of the shovel to the suitably sized hole that you have already prepared. Remember you will have severed some of the roots so you will have to water the whole thing in well before you leave it, and again it may need more water in a few days if the heavens don't oblige. Fall is also a good time to reposition perennials and also to divide and replant, just don't leave it too late as the roots need to grow and reestablish before the soil cools down.

## Transplanting shrubs

Shrubs are easily transplanted too using exactly the same techniques. Here the main problem may be the size of the shrub and the weight of the rootball. I have often been asked by clients to just move a shrub which has outgrown its position. However the amount of time it would take and the effort involved usually means that it would be cheaper to just start again.

If you have a shrub you really want to save and move, again you have to preserve as much of the root system as you can. Usually the roots extend outwards from the stem as far as the edge of the foliage. You may also have to preserve a depth of ten inches. That may add up to a lot of weight. Often the easiest way of moving this kind of rootball is on a tarpaulin. You will have to lever up one side of the roots to get the tarp under and then pull the plant onto the tarp. It is fairly easy to slide the plant using the tarp.

Trees that aren't too big may also be candidates for transplanting using the same technique as for shrubs, but if they are quite large and you still want to move them you need some special techniques such as David Veinotte uses in his tree nursery.

The last thing to consider is whether fertilizer will help the transplant. With the small annuals I do think several applications of Miracle Grow when you are watering will help. With perennials as long as the soil of the flower bed has been built and maintained all should be well. However if the perennial was divided and then replanted I think a soluble fertilizer which incorporates phosphorus to stimulate root growth is good. There are specific products for this. Transplanting shrubs and trees does not usually call for any fertilizer.□

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What does “tetraploid” mean?

*Ploidy* refers to the number of chromosomes in a cell. The chromosomes are thread-like structures in the nucleus of the cell; this is where the genes are located. In most plants and animals, each cell contains two sets of chromosomes, one from the pollen parent (the father) and one from the seed parent (the mother). A plant with the normal two sets of chromosomes is *diploid*. Occasionally an accident may occur in the process of making a pollen grain or an egg cell, so that it contains two sets of chromosomes instead of the normal single set. When such an abnormal pollen grain fertilizes an egg with two sets, the resulting cell, and the plant which grows from it will have four sets of chromosomes. Such a plant is *tetraploid*. Tetraploid plants are often larger and more robust than normal, diploid ones, and are also more likely to produce viable hybrid offspring. For these reasons, plant breeders are interested in producing tetraploids. Various treatments have been discovered that increase the frequency of accidents in the development of pollen and egg cells which lead to doubling their sets of chromosomes. These then result in tetraploid plants.

### What is meant by “the pH of the soil”?

The pH scale is a measure of the degree of acidity of the moisture in the soil, or any other watery liquid. A neutral soil has a pH of 7. Soils with pH lower than 7 are acidic, those with higher pH are alkaline, or basic. A pH of 5 is ten times as acidic as a pH of 6, and a pH of 4 is a hundred times as acidic. Many vegetable crops do best when the soil pH is above 7. If your soil is acidic, it can easily be made more alkaline (the pH raised) by adding lime. Rhododendrons and most related plants require an acidic soil (pH 5 – 6). In most Nova Scotia gardens this is already the condition; we can grow rhododendrons without doing anything to change it. If the existing soil is alkaline, rhododendrons do poorly unless the pH is lowered. This is not as easy as adding lime to raise the pH. The usual method is to add powdered sulfur. Bacteria in the soil slowly convert the sulfur into sulfuric acid, which lowers the pH.

- Chris Helleiner

### How can one keep deer from demolishing rhododendrons?

This question has been asked many times. Here are some of the answers sent to our website this summer:

1. Try Bobbex, a spray that makes rhodos unpalatable to deer,
2. Spray with a cheap hair spray from the dollar store,
3. Protect each plant with wire attached to strong stakes,
4. Get wire or wooden deer fencing and fence the entire area,
5. Get flexible black fencing (almost invisible) and fence the entire property,
6. Get a gun,
7. Plant *Cornus kousa* instead.



# Shady Gardens in Summer

By Mary Helleiner

Shady gardens are at their best early in the year: snowdrops are followed by primulas, trilliums, epimediums, erythroniums, orchids and many other spectacular spring ephemerals. I'm talking about gardens with shade from deciduous trees or shrubs, that receive dappled sunlight part of the time. Gardens shaded by evergreen trees are another matter; evergreen shade is so dense that it presents a different problem. In springtime, before the deciduous trees leaf out, the early bloomers have lots of sun for a few weeks. Most of them take advantage of this to grow, bloom and disappear. After this, the shady garden quiets down. Yes, there is wonderful foliage out there, making a marvelous tapestry of shapes and colours. Personally, I think a few bright coloured or variegated leaves are very effective, but they can be overdone. I want flowers, and I have been looking for plants that flower in the middle and late summer. Hostas will be flowering, but I find it hard to love their blooms.

One discovery (new to me) is *Anemonopsis macrophylla*, a plant which requires shade and shelter. It is a retiring plant and needs to be placed where it isn't too crowded by others. The flowers, in shades of mauve, are interesting and intricate; they tend to face down and need to be supported, perhaps on another plant or with an unseen stake, to show off their blooms. They like nice moist friable soil. Another is *Roscoea*, the only member of the ginger family that I know of that is hardy here. I was afraid this might be winterkilled in my Halifax garden, but it has come through half a dozen winters with no damage. *Roscoea cauleoides* is yellow, with a rather orchid-like flower and *Gladiolus*-like leaves. It blooms for me in late July. *Roscoea purpurea* is a deep rich purple with similarly shaped flowers; ours opened in mid -August.

Another shade-flowering perennial that is becoming more common is *Ligularia*. It doesn't seem to require shade, although it does require moisture, but blooms well in shade anyway. The one I particularly like is *L. stenocephala* 'The Rocket', which has bright yellow spikes that shine out brightly in the shade and last for several weeks. Recently I bought a couple of 'Little Rocket' which is similar but somewhat smaller. The flowers are the same. 'The Rocket' blooms for me in late July-early August. Like all ligularias, these have handsome leaves.

I have tried several species of hardy cyclamen, all shade growers, but the one which does best for me is the August flowering *Cyclamen purpurascens*, formerly *C. europaeum*. It is easily grown from seed and corms are also available from one or two mail-order nurseries. The flowers are the usual cyclamen magenta pink (for me this colour is forgivable in cyclamen) or occasionally white. They like humusy soil but otherwise are not fussy.

Then we come to late-flowering shrubs and trees. *Clethra barbinervis* (Japanese clethra) came from one of the ARHS's Pre-ordered Sales in 2001. It is growing in a very shaded spot, and for a few years had only a few flowers. Now however, perhaps because of the sunny summer in 2010, it is covered in bloom. The flowers are similar to those of the better known *Clethra alnifolia*, (summersweet) also a summer flowering shrub, but this one is a larger shrub or small tree. Ours is at present about ten feet (3.5 meters) high and shows no signs of stopping. It makes a very open small tree, perhaps because of all the shade. The fluffy white flowers have a slight sweet scent, not as strong as that of its relative. The leaves turn a very attractive burnt orange in October. *C. alnifolia* is also a late summer bloomer that will take lots of shade; 'Hummingbird' is a well-known variety.

Hydrangeas also bloom in quite a bit of shade. Those I like are the lace caps, forms of *Hydrangea macrophylla* which have a ring of sterile flowers surrounding a centre of fertile ones. They are usually blue in acid soil (which most of us have) or pink in alkaline, and mauve when the soil is somewhere in between. Blue hydrangeas have been showing up all over Halifax in the last year or so; I put this down to the warm winter. Hardiness can be an issue.

Stewartias have been written about in this newsletter before; they are also very good summer bloomers in shade, starting in late July and pattering on through August. They have marvelous bark, red leaves in the fall and wonderful camellia-like flowers in summer; they can turn into large trees.

After the shady garden has achieved some summer bloom, it's time to think about the fall. That's another interesting problem with lots of potential for the shady garden. □

# Photo Album -



*Roscoea purpurea*. [Photo Chris Helleiner]



*Anemonopsis macrophylla*. [Photo Chris Helleiner]



'April Dawn'. [Photo Bob Pettipas]



'Festivo'. [Photo Bob Pettipas]



'Scintillation'. [Photo Bob Pettipas]



'Lee's Dark Purple'. [Photo Chris Helleiner]



'Hello Dolly'. [Photo Bob Pettipas]



'Kochira Wada'. [Photo Chris Helleiner]