

Indumentum

Newsletter of the Vancouver Rhododendron Society

Volume 34, Number 1, January 2002



The
Vancouver Rhododendron Society
is a chapter of the
American Rhododendron Society

2001 Executive

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Vice President: Penny Pearse

Past President: Joe Ronsley

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Newsletter: Douglas & Karen
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Refreshments: Mary Dorsey

This Month's Meeting: Thursday, January 17th 7:30 PM
Annual General Meeting and Members' Slides

President's Message

Happy New Year to all our members. The January meeting will be the Annual General Meeting and the election of the 2002 Executive. I would personally like to thank all executive members for their hard work and dedication over the past year. Many thanks also for the efforts of members who have volunteered in one capacity or another. It is those efforts that have made the year so successful.

In reflecting over the past year, I feel that as an organization we have succeeded in bringing our interest in rhododendrons to a broader audience. Through our monthly meetings, plant sales and shows, and sharing our experiences and the results of our individual efforts by opening our private gardens to visits by members and non-members, we have broadened the interest in, not only rhododendrons, but in all plants.

I would hope, as I am sure many of you do, that the business portion of the January meeting will be short. Our program will be of members' slides. Please bring 10 to 20 slides of gardens or plants that you would like to share. Perhaps there are plants that you would like identified or some that you would warn others of. The more members who participate, the better the program will be.

I have approached several members hoping that they might volunteer in one capacity or another. One area that the society requires support in is education. **Ron Knight** has organized and run the education component of our program for many years, but will leave that to take on other duties in the coming year. I would encourage any member who may be hesitant to step forward to reconsider this opportunity. We on the executive are ever willing to give guidance and support to those actively involved in the society.



Another area that will require volunteer support this year is our Show and Sale. We have returned to VanDusen and anticipate increased attendance. In order to make this a successful event, we require support from every member. Though there are, to be sure, other commitments we are obliged to, please recognize that a few hours of members' time can make the difference between success and failure. Please support your society in its efforts.

Again, let me express thanks on behalf of the Executive for your support and effort over the last year. I look forward, as do all executive members, to serving in the best interest of our members.

Gerry Gibbens



photo: Keith Rushforth

News and Notes

Plant hunter, botanist, author and rhododendron collector **Keith Rushforth** writes ... "I am pleased to announce the publication of *Rhododendron beatheriae* in *The New Plantsman*, Volume 8(4), 248-250, December 2001." Both VanDusen and UBC Botanical Garden have *The New Plantsman* in their libraries.

Keith describes the new species (pictured at left) as "similar to *R. arizelum*, but differing in the oblanceolate leaves, which are more than three times as long as broad with the base narrowly cuneate and with the leaf blade narrowed into a short winged petiole."

The species is described from a 5 m tall tree at 3850m, in the Showa La, in southeastern Tibet.

Good Reading – No Need to Cut Down Trees. If you're a VRS member and you'd like to receive the *Indumentum* electronically (with colour pictures, no less), all you need is a computer with an internet connection; it's then just a matter of downloading the newsletter from a secure website (we'll tell you where, privately). Please contact membership to sign up.

⇒ Speaking of newsletters, the Vancouver Rhododendron Society receives a number of **ARS Chapter Newsletters** from other clubs across North America in exchange for the *Indumentum*. A binder containing the most recent issues is available to members at the monthly meeting.



⇒ **Oops.** Please note that the November 2001 issue of *Indumentum* Volume 33 Number 9 was printed as Volume 33 Number 4, in error. And for those who are really fastidious about filing, Vol. 33 Number 1 wasn't even a newsletter, but the 2001 Membership Directory.

VRS member **Karen Shuster** writes that she is interested in purchasing the following CD ROM and would like to know if others are interested, as well. The information below was adapted from the June 2000 edition of *Rhododendron and Azalea News*, the online newsletter of the ARS.

CD ROM of Rhododendron Hybrids, 3rd Edition

by Homer E. Salley. 1,408 color illustrations. \$US35.95 plus \$5 shipping.

Order from Offshoot Publications, 1280 Goodpasture Island Rd., Eugene, OR 97401 or email GreerGardens@uswest.net. ARS chapters can buy 5 at once and get 40% off with only \$5 shipping for the packet of 5. At the author's request, eight dollars of the money for each CD sold is being refunded to the Rhododendron Research Foundation, the organization who originally funded the work.

SAMPLE ENTRY: HERB'S CHOICE

-degronianum ssp. yakushmanum Koichiro Wada 1/4
 -unnamed hyb
 - - -dichroanthum 1/8
 - -Fabia-
 - -griersonianum 1/8
 HERB'S CHOICE
 -rex ssp. fictolacteam 1/2

4ft(1.2m) x 5ft(1.5)(10yrs) 0F(-18C) Flowers in flat trusses of 15, open funnel-shaped, with 9 wavy-edged lobes, strong purplish red in bud, opens outside strong purplish pink, inside pale purplish pink with a small dark red blotch. Leaves with moderate orange felted indumentum below. Probably C.C. Smith, cross; H. Spady, reg.1995. Photo by Dr. Herbert Spady.



◆ Contributions to the Raffle Table help offset the rental of the Floral Hall. Plants, seeds, books, pots, fresh eggs, etc. are always welcome!

◆ For the Refreshment Table, donations of cookies, cakes, cheese, etc. are greatly appreciated.

2002 VRS Executive Nominations

President: Gerry Gibbens
 Vice President: Ron Knight
 Past President: Joe Ronsley
 Treasurer: Martie Irwin
 Secretary: Bill Spohn
 Membership: Carole Conlin
 Newsletter: Douglas & Karen Justice
 Program: Joe Ronsley
 Director: Jim Hall (1 year)
 Director: Louie Peterson (2 years)
 Director: Todd Major (3 years)



Membership

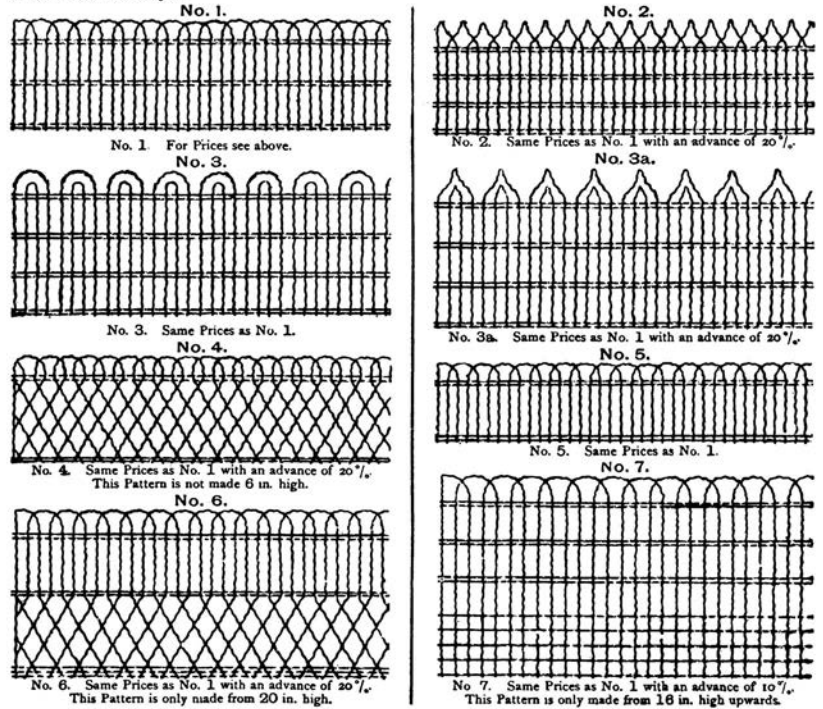
This is my last report as VRS Membership Chairman. As I step down from this position, I want to thank everyone for making my job so rewarding. One of the primary benefits of the work has been to come into direct contact with so many VRS members, even if it was in the process of reminding them that their renewals were overdue. I have enjoyed the people aspect of the work enormously, and working with the members of our Executive. Thanks so much to all of you. **Carole Conlin**, who will succeed me, will, I know, be outstanding as your Membership Chair. She possesses charm,

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8 in.	0 6	0 7	0 7½	—	—	—	—	—
10 in.	—	—	0 9	0 9½	0 10	0 10½	0 11½	1 0½
16 in.	—	—	—	—	1 0½	1 1	1 2	1 3
20 in.	—	—	—	—	1 3	1 4½	1 4½	1 5½
24 in.	—	—	—	—	—	—	1 7	1 8

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sensitivity and grace, in addition to computer skills and dedication to bring the VRS to new heights. There is no doubt in my mind that membership will increase considerably under her direction, and I send her my very best wishes.

Joanne Ronsley

More Fuel for the Fire: How to Pronounce Those Accursed Scientific Names Part II

Pronunciation of Botanical Latin by Peter Ommundsen (reprinted with permission)

A convenient benchmark for pronunciation of plant Latin names in Canadian speech is the traditional English pronunciation, which has been in use for centuries. This differs from a reconstructed Roman pronunciation, used by some botanists, in which Cicero is "kickero," Caesar is "kysar," and Vaccinium is "wak-keenium." The English method conserves the classical stress accent but employs English speech sounds, and thus varies with dialect. The following description includes some modification of conventional syllabic divisions for the purpose of phoneticizing words.

Letter sounds are as in English, with the digraphs **ae** and **oe** pronounced as the letter **e**.

Amoenum = a-mee-num
 Oenothera = en-oth-ee-ra
 Ericaceae = e-ri-cay-se-ee
 Caeruleus = seer-yew-le-us
 (note soft-c)

A word of two syllables is stressed on the first syllable. The vowel of that syllable is short if followed by two or more consonants; otherwise the vowel is long.

Tectum = TECK-tum
 Ledum = LEE-dum
 Pinus = PIE-nus
 Cistus = SIS-tus
 Malva = MAL-va
 Fagus = FAY-gus
 Crocus = CRO-cus
 Hosta = HOS-ta

Continued on page 6

Plants in bloom - *Rhododendron hanceanum*

Just inside the entrance to the David C. Lam Asian Garden at UBC Botanical Garden, a group of small rhododendrons can be seen lining the path. Like a number of more commonly grown species and hybrids, *R. hanceanum* often opens a few flowers precociously. This unseasonal exuberance is always checked by the first frost, however. At the time of this writing (mid-December), we have had no appreciable cold at UBC and the pale yellow flowers are dotted here and there on the shrubs.

Plants normally produce flowers in March or April in small trusses from small, but attractively conspicuous buds. Flowers are funnel-shaped and mildly fragrant, and flower colour ranges from pale yellow to near white. Despite the flush of purple on the leaves of photograph below (taken at the Rhododendron Species Foundation Botanical Garden), *R. hanceanum* leaves are usually a solid dark green. The colour of the emerging foliage is bronze.



Rhododendron hanceanum

Photo by S. & J. Perkins, Massachusetts Chapter, ARS.

Rhododendron hanceanum is reputed to grow to 5', but the forms more commonly cultivated (including those at UBC) are very compact, flattened domes growing to probably no more than 12" in sun to 24" in shade, opening up in the centre after a few years. Plants of this stature are now correctly known as *R. hanceanum* Nanum Group, but are most often listed as either var. *nanum* or as a cultivar, 'Nanum'. Hybrids derived from the Nanum Group are more commonly grown than the species and probably more adaptable as garden plants. Both *R.* 'Princess Anne' and the dwarf 'Shamrock' are hybrids with *R. keiskei*, while the very choice dwarf, 'Chiff Chaff', is a *R. hanceanum* × *R. fletcherianum* hybrid.

The species is named for Henry Fletcher Hance (1827 to 1886), eminent English botanist, plant collector, linguist and consular official in China. Hance's extensive collections (over 22,000 specimens) are now housed in the British Museum. *Rhododendron hanceanum* was "discovered" on Mt. Omei (Sichuan, China) by Rev. E. Faber in 1886 and introduced into cultivation by Ernest Wilson in 1907. Wilson returned to China and recollected seed in 1910 from different, smaller plants, which, according to W.J. Bean, are probably the original source of the dwarf forms.

Douglas Justice

The Sense of the Sleight-of-Hand Man

One's grand flights, one's Sunday baths,
One's tootings at the weddings of the soul
Occur as they occur. So bluish clouds
Occurred above the empty house and the leaves
Of the rhododendrons rattled their gold,
As if someone lived there. Such floods of white
Came bursting from the clouds. So the wind
Threw its contorted strength around the sky.

Could you have said the bluejay suddenly
Would swoop to earth? It is a wheel, the rays
Around the sun. The wheel survives the myths.
The fire eye in the clouds survives the gods.
To think of a dove with an eye of grenadine
And pines like cornets, so it occurs,
And a little island full of geese and stars:
It may be that the ignorant man, alone,
Has any chance to mate his life with life
That is the sensual, pearly spouse, the life
That is fluent in even the wintriest bronze.

Wallace Stevens



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Associate Membership (member of another ARS Chapter in Canada)	\$10.00
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	1 month	3 months	8 months
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$\frac{1}{4}$ page	\$25.00	\$67.50	\$160.00
$\frac{1}{2}$ page	\$40.00	\$108.00	\$256.00
full page	\$70.00	\$189.00	\$448.00

Questions and Answers

More in a series of questions submitted by VRS members. Your co-editor, Douglas Justice, responds.

Q: Are there different *R. williamsianum* clones in the trade? I've seen one that is much more compact growing than the one I own.

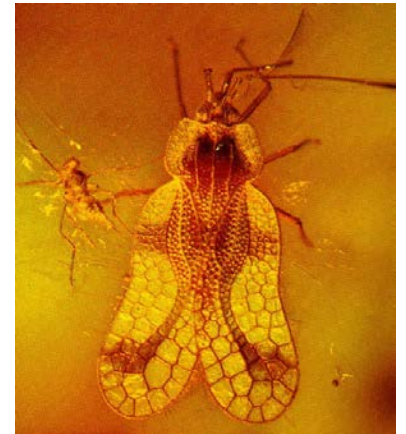
A: According to member **Peter Wharton**, curator of the David C. Lam Asian Garden at UBC, differences are probably due to shading, soil moisture and other site-related factors. He also mentions that repeated vegetative propagation may have an effect on vigour of specimens. UBC has a number of accessions, including a Hu Yu form, Tang form, a "special form" from Glendoick (Peter Cox's nursery), a white flowered form and one from from Caerhays, England. With the exception of the white form, which is more open with less cordate, darker emerging leaves, Peter says one would be hard pressed to see any significant differences among them.

Q: I notice that one of my rhodies has speckled leaves. When I turn the leaves over, they seem to be covered with a brown, sticky substance. What is the problem?

A: A few rhododendrons seem to be particularly susceptible to the ravages of rhododendron lacebug (*Stephanitis rhododendri*), a relative of andromeda lacebug, a similar, but more common species found infesting *Pieris formosa* var. *forrestii* and its hybrids. Lacebugs, so named because of their flattened lacy wings, are aphid-like insects that feed by piercing and sucking phloem (sap) from the midrib and larger veins on the lower surface of leaves. Red-brown blobs of excreta are deposited on the under surface, while the upper surface appears blotchy and speckled, as whole groups of cells die off. Birds and other predators are probably put off by the sticky excreta. Insecticidal soap and summer oil sprays may be effective, but spraying is difficult because it has to be directed at the undersides of the leaves. Locally, lacebugs of all sorts appear to prefer a dry atmosphere. Infestations are most often found on plants close to buildings, under overhangs or under large conifers, such as *Thuja plicata*.



Damage to azalea by azalea lacebug. Photo by Daryl Hensley, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.



Pictured at right: Lacebug in amber, 25 to 40 million years old (evidently, rhodies were infested in the Oligocene, too). Photo by Dr. George Poinar, from *The Quest for Life in Amber*.

Q: If my rhododendron plant is infected with a root disease, can it be cured by moving it to a better location?

A: Most people used to say that if a rhododendron was infected with phytophthora root rot (*Phytophthora cinnamomi*), it was a death sentence. A number of people I've spoken with lately, however, claim that infected plants will improve if moved to a better environment. This makes some sense. If an infected plant is losing roots to the disease, it will wilt. If the plant is dug up while it still has the capacity to produce food and grow roots, and it's moved to a position where conditions for the pathogen aren't favourable, but where conditions for root growth are good, and especially where there are microbes that are competitive with or antagonistic to the pathogen, the plant should be able to recover.

Questions and Answers, continued

The other question that just won't go away is "What is 'Fabia-Bureavii'?" VRS member **Ken Gibson** responds:

I'm no scientist, but I have looked at a variety of these plants. In my opinion it's the variety of *bureavii* that makes the difference. In the USA or Seattle area, Half-Dan's *bureavii* is considered "one of the best." Hence, 'Hansel' and 'Gretzel'. I suppose, R. 'Teddy Bear' is here somewhere also, and a more straggly one that appears in the Fraser Valley, too. The most superior is the Greig's 'Fabia-Bureavii'. Here again, the Greig form of *bureavii* is in my opinion the finest form available. Bruce Briggs concurred with this shortly before his death. The Greig 'Fabia-Bureavii' is easily recognized. It is more compact, but its main feature is its shiny leaves, which look like they have been painted with plastic paint.

About 15 years ago, we were touring Thompson's Nursery south of Astoria, Oregon. It was here that I saw rows and rows of these fine plants. I said to Mr Thompson, "I've only seen a form like that up in Canada before." He replied, "Where the hell do you think we got it? We were at Greig's in 1937." The mother *bureavii* went to UBC or Vancouver about 1975. I feel fortunate to have known Mary Greig and I'm proud to grow both of these fine plants. [That isn't the end of the story, either. Ken has generously supplied the Botanical Garden with cuttings of the Greig 'Fabia-Bureavii'. Once rooted and potted on, we'll make them available to VRS members. Thanks, Ken!]



Rhododendron bureavii

From The Book of Rhododendrons
By Marianna Kneller

Pronunciation of Botanical Latin - continued from page 3

A word of three or more syllables is stressed on the second to last syllable if the vowel is followed by two or more consonants, making the vowel short.

Rhododendron = ro-do-DEN-dron
Melissa = mel-LIS-sa
Cryptogamma = crip-to-GAM-ma
Syringa = sy-RIN-ga
Potentilla = po-ten-TIL-la
Macrophyllum = mac-ro-FIL-lum

A word of three or more syllables is stressed on the second to last syllable if its vowel is long – this must be determined from a dictionary.

Anthropogon = an-throp-OH-gon
Pentanthera = pen-tan-THEE-ra
Agetum = a-JEE-tum
Nivale = ni-VAY-lee
Equisetum = ek-wi-SEE-tum
Occidentalis = oc-sid-en-TAY-lis
Reticulatum = re-ti-cu-LAY-tum
Auriculata = o-ri-cu-LAY-ta
Digitalis = dij-i-TAY-lis
Crataegus = cra-TEE-gus

In other cases the stress is on the third to last syllable.

Glandifera = glan-DIF-fe-ra

Saxifraga = sax-IF-ra-ga
Oxalis = OX-al-is
Physalis = FIS-al-is
Clematis = CLEM-at-is
Nubicola = nub-IC-ol-a
Erigeron = er-IG-er-on
Stomata = STOM-at-a
Stigmata = STIG-mat-a

Some double consonants (and "mute" consonants followed by l or r) are treated as single consonants (e.g., th, ph, ch, br, dr, tr, pl, qu). The letter x functions as a double consonant.

Cedrus = SEE-drus (long-e)
Clethra = CLEE-thra (long-e)
Nigra = NYE-gra (long-i)
Hydra = HY-dra (long-y)
Veratrum = ve-RAY-trum (long-a)
Callitriche = cal-LIT-rik-ee (stressed second syllable)
Taxus = TAK-sus (short-a)
Chionodoxa = ki-on-o-DOX-a (short-o in stressed syllable)

Conformity to pronunciation rules may aid in clarity of communication, but usage varies widely among individuals and continues to evolve. Hybrid English-classical pronunciations are common, shortening of the English long-a is epidemic (Digitalis), and anomalous stress accents are well entrenched (Arbutus, Anemone). Further information and references can be found at www.saltspring.com/capewest/pron.htm.