

Indumentum

Newsletter of the Vancouver Rhododendron Society

Volume 33, Number 9, May 2002



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

2002 Executive

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Vice President: Ron Knight

Past President: Joe Ronsley

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Newsletter: Douglas & Karen Justice

Program: Joe Ronsley

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Todd Major (3 years)

Education: Louis Peterson

Advertising: Joanne Ronsley

Library: Sue Liem & Louis Peterson

Publicity: Martie Irwin,
Kathy Poole & Ray Talbot

Refreshments: Mary Dorsey

This Month's Meeting: Thursday, May 16th 7:00 PM

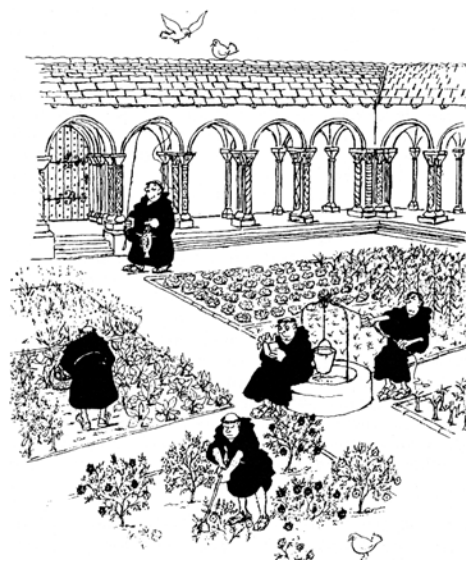
**Location: UBC Botanical Garden, 6804 SW Marine Dr.
Vancouver**

Program: A Walk in the Asian Garden with Peter Wharton

President's Message

We have had a great month of fine weather. Many of our plants have recovered from the snow and cold that has been with us up until mid April. The rhododendrons at VanDusen have been flowering profusely these last few weeks. I am particularly pleased with the abundance of flowers on *R. forrestii*. The waxy, deep satin-red flowers were massed on all our plants. *Rhododendron thomsonii* is one of the best plants, with wonderful deep red flowers and peeling bark that leaves a jigsaw pattern on trunks and older stems. It is a choice plant for a protected area in the garden.

May I remind the members that the monthly meeting in May will be held at the David C. Lam Asian Garden at UBC Botanical Garden. Please feel free to come early and bring a picnic dinner to enjoy in the garden. The Curator, **Peter Wharton**, has created one of the finest collections of Asian plants outside of China. The rhododendrons have been amassed from material originating from collections made in the 1930s and 40s by those such as Kingdon Ward and Forrest. There are also several rhododendron species new to cultivation that Peter is growing, which will be the highlight of collections in years to come. We welcome the opportunity to enjoy and benefit from the knowledge and hard work of a superb plantsman.



Joe Ronsley has organized an excellent selection of members' gardens for this year's garden tours. Many of us use this opportunity to gather ideas and exchange our knowledge with others who have like interests. I understand that Joe has also requested that the weather co-operate throughout the tours.

Please remember that our June meeting will be a pot luck dinner and garden tour of **Margaret Charlton** and **Charlie Sale's** garden. Directions and times will be posted in the June issue of *Indumentum*.

I look forward to seeing members at the **VRS Rhododendron Show and Sale** this month. Thanks to all those who have made a great effort in volunteering to make this an excellent event.

Gerry Gibbens

Don't Forget the VRS Spring Rhododendron Show and Sale!

Saturday, May 4
Hours: 10 – 4



Sunday, May 5
Hours: 12 – 4

VanDusen Gardens Floral Hall, 37th and Oak, Vancouver

Admission is free, and visitors can see a fine display of award-winning rhododendrons and azaleas, including rare species, new hybrids and a stunning bonsai display. The Plant Sale features a wide selection of rhododendrons, azaleas and companion plants, including some unusual and rare specimens unavailable commercially.

VRS members and growers will be available to advise on plant selection and culture and free handout sheets on rhododendron care will be available. Special Educational Seminars will be held on Saturday, featuring:

- **Garden Design** by **Todd Major**, Director of Park & Tilford Gardens (12:30 - 1:00)
- **Bonsai** by **Roger Low**, bonsai expert (2:00 - 2:30)
- **Planting and Caring for Your Rhododendrons**, by **Gerry Gibbens**, Gardener in the VanDusen Sino-Himalayan Garden (2:30 - 3:00)

Plant raffles, pottery and book sales are also planned. For details call Show Chairman **Ron Knight** at 604.929.5670.

May Program

The VRS monthly meeting on May 16th will take place at UBC Botanical Garden, and will be comprised of a walk through the David C. Lam Asian Garden, guided by its Curator **Peter Wharton**. We will meet **at the entrance to the garden, by the Shop-in-the-Garden, at 7:00 pm**. We will not meet again at VanDusen until September, since our June meeting will be a pot luck supper at the home of **Margaret Charlton** and **Charlie Sale**.

Joe Ronsley



Rhododendron hodgsonii. One of the hundreds of rhododendrons on display in the UBC Botanical Garden



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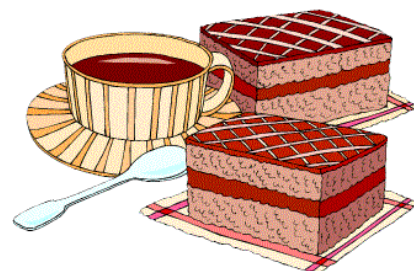


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- ◆ **Contributions to the Raffle Table** help offset the rental of the Floral Hall. Plants, books, fresh eggs, etc. are always welcome!
- ◆ **For the Refreshments Table**, donations of cookies, cakes, cheese and other snacks are greatly appreciated.



The rhododendron is a very ancient plant, and fossil remains show that certain species date back to the Miocene Era. The first rhododendrons mentioned in old texts are *R. ferrugineum* and *R. hirsutum*, both indigenous to Europe. During the 16th Century, botanists use numerous other names to describe rhododendrons, such as *Ledum* or *Cistus*; and *Chamaecistus* was used by Clusius. The name *Rhododendron* appears to have been given to the genus by Andrea Cesalpino in 1583.

— From *Flowers, A Guide for Your Garden* by Pizzetti and Cocker.



Annual Mother's Day Perennial Plant Sale

Sunday, May 12th
10:00 am to 4:00 pm

The **Shop in the Garden** features the latest and greatest in gardening books, seeds, tools, exquisite giftware and more.

The **Plant Centre** is blooming with a fabulous selection of choice perennials, shrubs and vines.

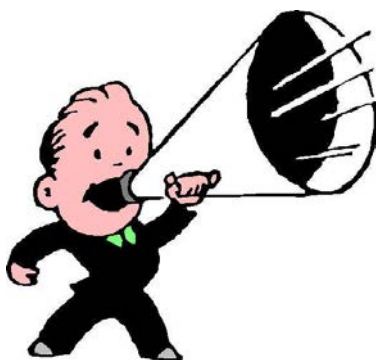
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News & Notes



Thanks to member **Alleyne Cook** for his contribution to the April issue, King George's letter to the Countess of Stair (timely, given the Queen Mum's recent passing). The editors enthusiastically invite any and all submissions to *Indumentum*.

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Membership

Please make the following changes to your copy of the Membership Directory:

Please add:

PURY, Gerard
86 West 40th Ave., Vancouver, BC V5Y 2R1
Telephone: 604.325.0111; Fax: 604.324.6515

Please amend:

GILL, Jasbir & Amarjit – Email: jasbirgill@shaw.ca
TREMBATH, Margaret & James – Email: empty@shaw.ca

Please advise Membership of Email and other changes.
Contact:

Carole Conlin, VRS Membership Chair
Telephone: 604.921.7260
Email: conlin@sfu.ca



Here are two more in a series of digital photographs from **Jill Ronsley** (pictured above, on left with her friend, **Turiya**) in the Kandi Pass, Himachel Pradesh, India. Below, the photographer, **Jannaca Chick**, at 11,000' with *Rhododendron campanulatum*



Subscription Rates

VRS + ARS Membership (US & Overseas)	\$50.00 \$US 28.00
VRS Membership (no ARS Quarterly Journal)	\$25.00
Associate Membership (member of another ARS Chapter in Canada)	\$10.00
Associate Membership (member of another ARS Chapter outside of Canada)	\$US 10.00

Advertising Rates

	1 month	3 months	8 months
Business card	\$10.00	\$25.00	\$50.00
$\frac{1}{4}$ 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

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Jean and Phil Hausermann, Proprietors

Please contact **Joanne Ronsley** for information on
advertising in *Indumentum*
jrjr@techwest.com Fax and Phone: 604.921.9444

News & Notes *continued*

We are saddened to learn of the deaths of
two past members:

Melba Johnson, on April 16th, of kidney
failure. Melba was a regular kitchen helper at
VRS meetings in the past. She was the
widow of Harold Johnson, VRS Past-
President.

Long-time member Len Bengough died April
19th, after a difficult battle with cancer. Len
was a past Book Chairman for the VRS. Our
condolences go to his widow, Joan, a VRS
Past-President and ARS bronze medal
recipient who recently broke her leg.

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News & Notes *continued*

Deborah Butschler has a large rhododendron that she wants to donate. She doesn't know what it is, but would be happy to speak with anyone interested in hauling it away.

Deborah Butschler
11161 - 64A Avenue
Delta (Exit 64, off Hwy 91)
Tel. 604.596.3496



Rhododendron parvifolium 'Ocelot'

Photo by Justin Moore, UBC Botanical Garden
See page 8 for a description of the species.

VRS Open Gardens, 2002

11 May, Saturday

Bill and Suzanne Spohn 11-4
Ron Feicht/Derek Hoffman 11-4

12 May, Sunday

Gordon and Vern Finley 10-4

18 May, Saturday

Lies Ganske 12-4
Richard and Heather Mossakowski 10-3
Joe and Joanne Ronsley 10-2

19 May, Sunday

Francisca Darts 10-4

20 May, Monday, Victoria Day

Glenda Powroznik/Mark Lamont 12-5

25 May, Saturday

Fred Ganders/Helen Kennedy 12-5

26 May, Sunday

Michael and Pattie Bale 10-4

8 June, Saturday

Alan Turner (tree collection) Tours at 10 and 2

9 June, Sunday

Larry Wick (tropical) 10-4

Directions to Lions Bay Gardens:

For all three gardens, turn off the Squamish Highway (Hwy 99) at the second turn-off in Lions Bay, where the sign points to Oceanview Road.

For the Mossakowski and Ronsley gardens, follow Oceanview Road up and to the right, to the T, with Highview Place going to the left and Oceanview continuing to the right. Left for Mossakowski, to 155, right for Ronsley, to 250.

For the Ganske garden, cross the little bridge to the left soon after turning off the highway. At the T, turn right on to Centre Road. At the next T (very short distance), turn left on to Bayview Road. Continue on Bayview for a considerable distance to the next T, which is Mountain Drive. Turn right to 360.



The April Sisters by Bill Spohn

There is something especially pleasant about the early blooming hybrids that bring cheer and hope to the garden after the long winter. This note is about two hybrids, both of which are rated by Greer as triple 4's (1 is the lowest, 5 the highest, and they indicate flower, plant and performance, in that order), in other words, he likes them!

They are both hybridized by Mehlquist, from *R. minus* var. *minus* × *R. mucronulatum* 'Cornell Pink', in one case using the Album or white form of *minus*, and in the other the pink. Both have double flowers, giving them a softer look.



Pictured at left is 'April Rose'. Below right is 'April Gem', in this case showing not pure white, but a pinkish form (it could be a mislabelled 'April Mist'):

If you want a tour of some other Mehlquist hybrids, take a look at: <http://www.rosebay.org/chapterweb/mehlquistgt1.htm>

There are others including 'April Mist' (pink), 'April White', and 'White Surprise', all produced by Dr. Gustav A.L. Mehlquist, a founding member of the Connecticut Chapter of the ARS. 'Gus' Mehlquist, by

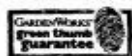
occupation a biologist, produced many hybrids, winning the Society's Gold Award in 1975. He passed away in 1999 at the age of 93, having given us several plants to remember him by.

Both 'April Rose' and 'April Glow' can be found in BC, and are actively propagated by Allouette Nursery. These plants are low growing (3 foot rating at 10 years) and have small leaves, which, in the case of 'April Glow', turn a very nice burnished red in the fall.



er·i·ca·ceous (ĕri'keſes) **1.** of or relating to the Ericaceae, a family of plants with typically bell shaped flowers: includes heather, rhododendron & arbutus. **2.** often used in conjunction with *compulsion* to describe common affliction of rhododendron lovers. See also *ericaceous compulsion*.

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1. Select What to Show (don't be embarrassed - something is better than nothing)

- ♦ Know what's typical for this rhododendron
- ♦ A truss from the top usually presents better than one from a side twig or branch
- ♦ Stem must be at least 3" long (or you'll be sorry)
- ♦ Tight is better than too open (no dropping petals!)
- ♦ Water spots on petals is not desirable, but is sometimes unavoidable
- ♦ Leaves are important; rosette should be symmetrical and in good condition
- ♦ A spray should be large enough to make an impression (not always possible)
- ♦ A few unopened flowers are ok
- ♦ Beware of double-trusses
- ♦ No flowers on your plant? Foliage plants is a category
- ♦ Pick a category with not much competition

2. Prepare Your Entry

- ♦ Cut early in the day
- ♦ Crush the stem
- ♦ Place in water right away
 - Container:
 - florist tubes
 - beer bottles in a 6 pack holder
 - a bucket
 - Water additives:
 - Sprite
 - sugar
 - copper penny
- ♦ Tidy the truss
 - You can take away as much as you like, but adding is a no-no
 - Clean the leaves if necessary
 - Leaf-shine is not allowed
 - Remove bracts (use tweezers)
 - Only single rosette of leaves
 - Remove bad leaves where feasible
 - Remove aborted and spent flowers
 - If a pot plant, clean outside of pot and surface of soil, remove dead twigs (a plastic pot is perfectly acceptable – there are no points for a fancy container)

3. Prepare to Enter

- ♦ Identify the truss, spray or plant
 - Use alphabetical list
 - Use schema together with reference books
 - Look at what's on display
 - Ask a knowledgeable club member
- ♦ Choose the appropriate category (e.g., Novice)
- ♦ Fill out card **top and bottom**



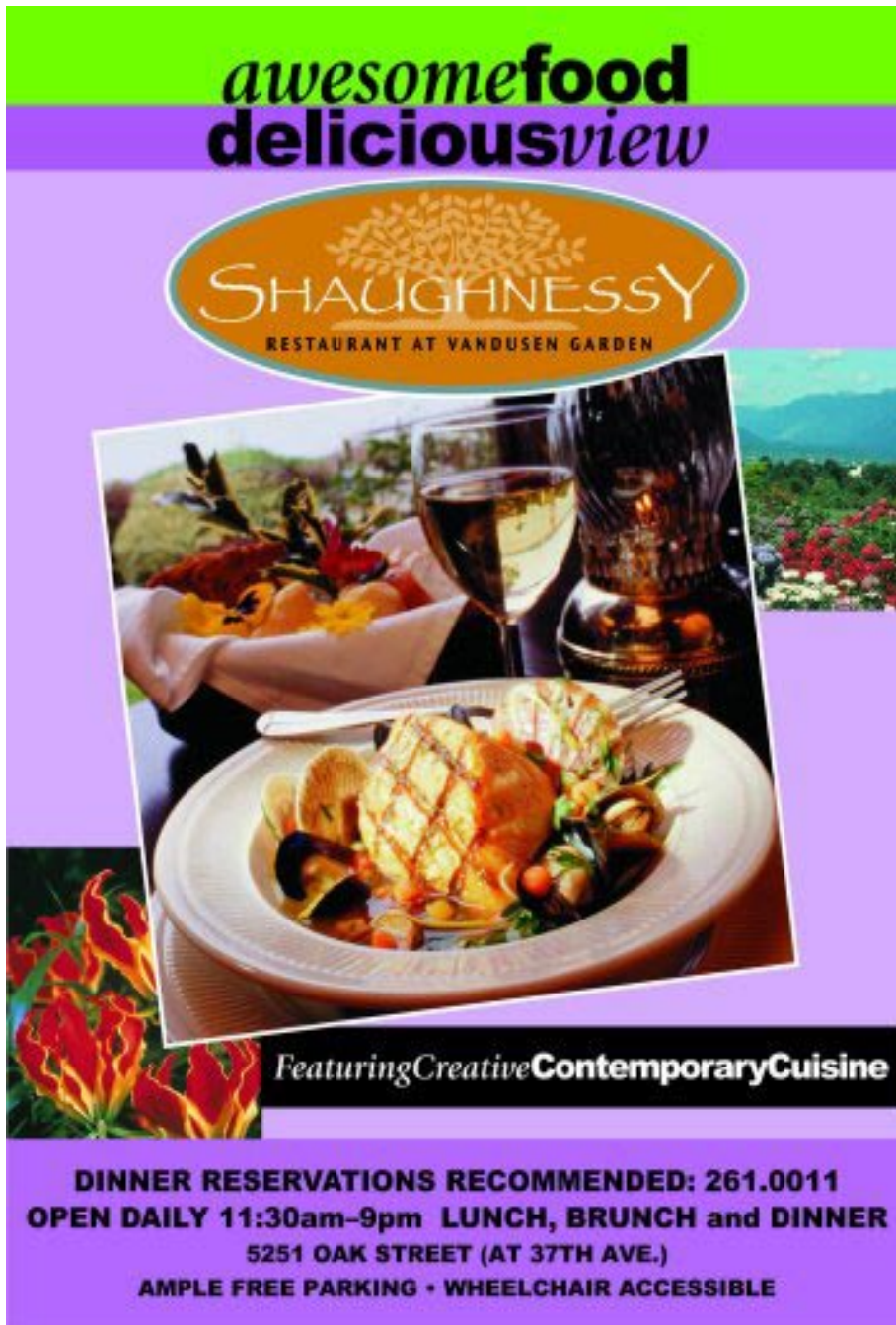
Rhododendron calophytum

Photo by Justin Moore, UBC Botanical Garden



Plants in Flower – *Rhododendron parmulatum*

Rhododendron parmulatum is a seldom encountered species in Section Neriiflora. It was discovered by Kingdon Ward in 1924 growing in very wet conditions on steep slopes, cliffs and rocks at 10,000 to 12,000 feet in SE Tibet. Not surprisingly, the species requires excellent drainage. In the Botanical Garden, a handsome specimen of the cultivar 'Ocelot' (pictured on page 4) was flowering in late April in a lightly shaded part of the David C. Lam Asian Garden. The cultivar won an RHS Award of Merit (AM) in 1977. The **Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden** in Federal Way, Washington (www.rhodygarden.org/), has sold both the species and 'Ocelot'. Check their website for availability and descriptions.



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II

Gently gripped by the
avenues, left and right,
led by the beckoning
of some persistent wave,

you step all of a sudden
into the meeting place
of a shadowed water basin
and four stone benches;

in a separated time
that dwindles past alone.
On damp marble bases
where nothing any longer stands,

you raise a deep
expectant breath;
while the silver dripping
from the dark basin

already counts you among
its own and talks on.
And feeling yourself among stones
that listen, you don't stir.

– Rainer Maria Rilke
Translated by Edward Snow

