

Indumentum

Newsletter of the Vancouver Rhododendron Society

Volume 34, Number 4, January 2003



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

2002 Executive

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

Directors:

Jim Hall (1 year)

Louis Peterson (2 years)

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: January 16, 7:30 pm:
Annual General Meeting and Elections; Members' Slides**

President's Message

It has been a privilege to serve this organization as president for the last two years. As president, my concerns have been to ensure the continued growth of our membership and the enhancement of the benefits to our members.

The effort of our Secretary, **Bill Spohn**, in developing the VRS website, is a tremendous contribution to the ongoing endeavour to attract the interest of the public in our organization. Our newsletter, under the editorship of **Douglas** and **Karen Justice**, has become an even more valuable tool in reaching our membership. Our ability to reach members through the use of e-mail has allowed the VRS to direct monies that otherwise would go to mailing costs to other worthwhile uses.

I would like to commend **Louis Peterson** for his efforts in developing a broader scope in our Education Programs. Building on the achievements of our previous Education Chair, **Ron Knight**, I believe that we will see more outstanding programs offered in the future. We are most fortunate in having as our Programs Chair, **Joe Ronsley**; in the years that he has served in this role, Joe has arranged for some of the most outstanding speakers at our general meetings. It is no wonder that our membership has increased to what it is today.

During my tenure, both previous Membership Chair **Joanne Ronsley** and current Chair **Carol Conlin** have made positive contributions to their role. The members often do not see much of what these people do; however, without their efforts our society would not be as vibrant or run as smoothly. I particularly wish to acknowledge Treasurer **Martie Irwin**. It is thanks to Martie and previous treasurers that we find our finances in such good order.

Though most members do not see his contributions, **Todd Major** has added greatly to executive discussions concerning the future of the VRS in his first year as Director. I believe we can expect even more positive contributions in the coming years.



Continued next page...

President's Message, continued...

Finally, let me acknowledge the efforts of **Jim Hall**, who has made sure that the small but necessary and often overlooked matters were taken care of. There are few who work with such diligence and humour. I hope that in the coming years I may be able to continue to contribute to the well being of the VRS. I would encourage the members to support the slate of officers presented at the AGM in January. These members have committed themselves to the betterment of the VRS and serve the members to the best of their ability.

Again, let me thank the members for their support over the years. It has been very rewarding to serve as a member on the Executive of the Vancouver Rhododendron Society.

Gerry Gibbens



Rhododendron forrestii subsp. *forrestii* by Lilian Snelling. From Curtis's Botanical Magazine, 1927.



WINTER

January Program

The January meeting is a time to share slides of gardens, recent hikes or trips abroad that feature rhododendrons. Members are invited to bring up to a dozen slides to the meeting.



Rhododendron racemosum, Zhongdian, Yunnan

Photo from *Highland Flowers of Yunnan*, Yunnan Science and Technology Press, 1998.

Calendar - January

What's happening rhodo-wise around southwestern BC.

Thursday January 9

[Victoria](#) regular meeting

Speaker: O'Byrnes of Eugene, Oregon

Topic: "Foliage in a Woodland Garden"

Thursday January 9

[Nanaimo](#) regular meeting

Panel + Question and Answer Session

Panel: Richard White-Moderator, Bill Hardy, Ward Porter, Dick Beamish and Craig Clarke

Topic: "The Most Successful Rhododendron In My Garden" and "The Most Pleasant Surprises"

Wednesday January 15

[Fraser South](#) regular meeting

AGM & Awards night

Slides & talks: Norma Senn & Dave Sellars

Monday January 20

[Peace Arch](#) regular meeting

Speaker: TBA

2002 VRS Show Trophy Winners

Species Trusses

Greig Memorial Trophy for best Species Rhododendron Truss or Spray in Division 2100	Vern and Gordon Finley	<i>R. schlippenbachii</i>
Triflora Early Show Trophy for best Species Rhododendron Truss or Spray in Subsection 2112.25	Vern and Gordon Finley	<i>R. augustinii</i> 'Playfair'
William M. Stephens Memorial Cup for Highest Aggregate Points in Division 2100	Vern and Gordon Finley	

Hybrid Trusses

BC Nursery Trades Trophy for Best Hybrid Rhododendron Truss in Divisions 2200, 2300, 2400 and 2500	Lilli Ann and Ed Hemminger	<i>R.</i> 'Trewithan Orange'
Teamster's Joint Council #36 Best Red Rhododendron in Division 2200 and Classes 2310.08 and 2320.08	Vern and Gordon Finley	<i>R.</i> 'Queen of Hearts'
Claydian Cup for Best Blotched Rhododendron Truss in Class 2320	Lilli Ann and Ed Hemminger	<i>R.</i> 'Cheer'
Doreen Lawson Trophy for Best Previously Unexhibited New Hybrid Truss in Division 2400	Vern and Gordon Finley	<i>R.</i> 'Idealist' × <i>R. lacteum</i>
Harold Johnson Memorial Trophy for Best Rhododendron Mega-Truss in Division 2500	Lilli Ann and Ed Hemminger	<i>R.</i> 'Avalanche'
Wally Zeglat Memorial Trophy for Highest Aggregate Points in Divisions 2200, 2300, 2400 and 2500	Lilli Ann and Ed Hemminger	

Novice

Ron Round Memorial Trophy for Best Novice Entry in Class 3110	John Priestman	<i>R. oreotrephes</i>
Dr. Walter Otto Memorial Trophy for Highest Aggregate Points in Classes 3110 and 3120	John Priestman	

Plants

Baker-McGarva-Hart Trophy for Best Species Plant in Division 1000	Lilli Ann and Ed Hemminger	<i>R. linearifolium</i>
E.J. Trayling Award for Best Rhododendron Plant in Division 1000	Lilli Ann and Ed Hemminger	<i>R. concinnum</i>
Patio Plant Trophy for Best Container-Grown Plant in Division 1600 (not open to commercial growers)	Doug Kitts	<i>R.</i> 'Countess of Haddington'
Park & Tilford Trophy for Highest Aggregate Points in Division 1000	Lawrence and Priscilla Yung	



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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

Plants in Bloom- *Rhododendron* 'Elizabeth'

A common sight in the Vancouver area is the more or less regular, but usually sparse, fall and winter flowering of *Rhododendron* 'Elizabeth'. Normally blooming heavily in March or April, 'Elizabeth' sets flower buds easily; some of the buds that develop early in the season begin to open soon after it becomes cool in the autumn. Given mild weather (as we are having now) we can expect flowers periodically through the winter months.

From the grower's point of view, 'Elizabeth' is an excellent cultivar because of the ease of rooting cuttings, and its rapid growth and precocious flowering (a heavily-flowered 2-gallon can be produced in less than two years). The cultivar is sensitive to soil fertilizer salts and powdery mildew, however, and thus demands a high level of grower expertise for optimal growth. It is characterized as "low growing" in much of the rhododendron literature; however, around Vancouver, it easily tops 1.5 m in 10 years. Luckily, like a number of hybrid rhododendrons, 'Elizabeth' suffers the saw well, rebounding admirably from renovation pruning—an excellent trait for the small garden.

The cross (*R. forrestii* × *R. griersonianum*) was made in about 1933 by F.C. Puddle at Bodnant. 'Elizabeth' is a spreading shrub, growing eventually to around 3 m tall in the Pacific



Rhododendron 'Elizabeth' Photo: UBC Botanical Garden

Northwest, with narrow, dark green, lightly indumented leaves and yellow stems. The freely-borne flowers are large, waxy, tomato-red funnels that are held in lax trusses. From *R. forrestii* (the seed-parent—the female is always listed first), 'Elizabeth' acquired its spreading habit and cold-hardiness (illustration on page 2). Thankfully, it possesses little of the phytophthora susceptibility that characterizes *R. forrestii*. That species, also known under the synonym *R. forrestii* var. *repens*, commonly produces adventitious roots whenever its stems touch the ground, and this trait has also been transferred to 'Elizabeth'.

The elegant pointed leaves and large funnel-shaped flowers are inherited from the pollen-parent, *R. griersonianum* (left). That species is a common parent of a number of familiar red-flowered hybrids ('Fabia', 'May Day', 'Vulcan', etc.), but it is rarely cultivated. 'Creeping Jenny' (page 6) is a seedling of the reciprocal cross (*R. griersonianum* × *R. forrestii*). It is similar, but less hardy and more spreading. 'Elizabeth' is still considered to be one of the finest compact red hybrids and is grown widely.



Rhododendron griersonianum by Lilian Snelling.
From Curtis's Botanical Magazine, 1924.

Douglas Justice

Membership

Happy New Year! Membership renewal for 2003 has been progressing well and I thank you! Your receipts and membership cards are being mailed with the January *Indumentum* (or separately, if you download), if you have not already received them.

Reminders for renewal will be included in that mailing, as well, and I will be ready with membership cards and receipts at the January meeting for those who wish to pay at that time.

Our membership currently stands at 199, with more than 65% having renewed by early December. If you would like to review the benefits of membership, you can contact me or check the website: <http://www.rhodo.citymax.com/>

See you at the January meeting.

Carole Conlin, VRS Membership Chair

Email: conlin@sfu.ca Telephone: 604-921-7260

2003 VRS Executive Nominations

President	Ron Knight
Past President*	Gerry Gibbens
Vice President	Louis Peterson
Secretary	Bill Spohn
Treasurer	Barbara Sherman
Membership	Carole Conlin
Newsletter	Douglas & Karen Justice
Program	Joe Ronsley
Director (3 years)	Bill Herbst
Director (2 years)*	Todd Major
Director (1 year)	Joanne Ronsley (to complete Louis Peterson's term)

*Ratification not required

◆ For the Refreshment Table, donations of cookies, cakes, cheese, and other snacks are greatly appreciated.



◆ Contributions to the Raffle Table help offset the rental of the Floral Hall.

Plants, books, fresh eggs, etc. are always welcome!



Rhododendron 'Creeping Jenny' Photo by Peter & Kenneth Cox, from *Cox's Guide to Choosing Rhododendrons*, Timber Press, 1990.

WINTER

When icicles hang by the wall
And Dick the shepherd blows his nail
And Tom bears logs into the hall
And milk comes frozen home in pail,
When blood is nipp'd and ways be foul,
Then nightly sings the staring owl, Tu-whit;
Tu-who, a merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

When all aloud the wind doth blow
And coughing drowns the parson's saw
And birds sit brooding in the snow
And Marian's nose looks red and raw,
When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,
Then nightly sings the staring owl, Tu-whit;
Tu-who, a merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

-- William Shakespeare

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