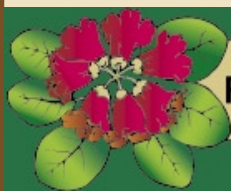




NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2006



VANCOUVER
Rhododendron
SOCIETY

www.rhodo.citymax.com

Editors: Todd and Shannon Major
Email: stmajor@shaw.ca

General Meeting:

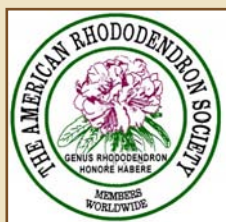
Thursday Feb. 16, 7:30 p.m.
Vandusen Botanical Garden

Lecture Program:

Sean Rafferty
VRS Members in Yunnan'

Growers:

Margaret Charlton



Vancouver Chapter

VRS Members in Yunnan

For those of you who are unsure, Sean Rafferty and Brenda McDonald are a couple. They participated in a plant viewing expedition to Yunnan led by Steve Hootman, co-Director of the Rhododendron Species Foundation, in May, 2005. This trip will be the subject of their lecture the evening of February 19th, entitled 'VRS Members in Yunnan' (photo below Mountains of Yunnan by Bob Moseley of the Nature Conservancy). Upon asking for information on their horticultural backgrounds, Brenda's response was such that I don't think it can be improved upon:

Basically both of us have just been interested in gardening for most of our adult lives, both apart and together. I did take a few years of Agriculture at UBC, but the only really lasting benefit that provided was a fascination with botanical nomenclature and a deep appreciation of the complexity and variety of horticultural specimens out there.

It was actually Sean who developed the passion for rhododendrons. We grew a number of them at our house in West Point Grey in Vancouver, but it was only when we moved to North Vancouver that he truly became fixated. Rumours that it was because it was one of the few genera – besides Lungwort - we could grow successfully are probably quite valid. We live on a very precipitous acre, right on Lynn Creek, with parkland surrounding us on virtually all sides. It is very nice, but almost as rainy as everyone suspects, and also fairly heavily forested. Of course in the current era of political correctness we were prohibited from cutting any of the existing trees, so for a number of years we grew rhododendron leaves quite successfully. It was only after limbing up and spiral cutting a number of the larger conifers that we began to grow more blossoms. Sean continued to refine his interest to species rhododendrons, of which we now have a moderate collection, some in pots, some in the ground, and some in the rhododendron cemetery. I tend to like the small things, Sean tends to like large things. I like campylogynum, he likes montroseanum.



See "Since initially joining the VRS" on Page 2

Since initially joining the VRS at the Spring Sale in 1999, we subsequently joined the FSRS, from there began to participate in the RSF Study Days, and ultimately trekked off to western Yunnan with Steve Hootman and a number of other obsessives in the spring of last year. We will be attending our fifth RSF Study Days in early spring and expect to return to China (northeastern Yunnan, possibly Sechuan) with Steve later this May. I have been the editor of the FSRS newsletter "The Yak" since late 2002.

Sean wishes to have me add: "Sean has a small garden maintenance business which allows him to play in other people's fine gardens, and is able to rely on the vast repository of knowledge of Brenda for all things horticultural."

Brenda and Sean's story should be a warning to you all of the dangers of becoming addicted after only a little innocent experimentation. In fact, reports from other members of the Yunnan expedition indicate that their enthusiasm was universal among the participants.

Steve's classes in the RSF garden began a few years ago, and have become very popular. His guided trip last May to Yunnan was the first of its kind, and was so successful it will be repeated, in a different part of Asian rhododendron habitat, this coming spring, and may very well become an annual event. Both the classes and the expeditions are open to RSF members, although the latter should be undertaken only by able-bodied ones. Steve Hootman will be our April speaker this year, speaking about one of his more research-oriented, and arduous, expeditions.

By Joe Ronsley

Remembering Mike Trembath

She touched our lives, making a positive impact, and likely we were not even aware of it. She was, well, just always there, assisting in many ways at nearly every meeting. She got in at the ground level, so to speak. It was the early 60's and the American Rhododendron Association, Vancouver Chapter (as it was known in those days) was in its infancy. Mike Trembath's infectious enthusiasm for the genus rhododendron could be observed by her involvement in the newly formed horticultural Society. Officially, her given name was Margaret, but anything other than "Mike" was foreign territory to her friends. If you called her Margaret, you did not know her.

Mike's presence at meetings of the Vancouver Rhododendron Society was as expected, welcomed and reliable as a fresh spring shower. It felt right to be greeted by Mike at a rhodo meeting. Ever the eager learner, she was also adept at teaching and tutoring, reveling in the opportunity to share her considerable knowledge with neophyte gardeners. She was never too busy to aid in another's quest to learn. She willingly shared her horticultural passion and opinions. (Continued above).

Mike's comfort zone required her to stay in the background, encouraging, supporting, advising, teaching, and ever ready to assist meeting any need in the society. I cannot remember our first personal introduction, but I recall her rabid interest in the annual competitive shows. Her eyes sparkled as she excitedly and efficiently aided the various show committees.

She was at her best at Vancouver's annual show. Few could measure up to the high standards Mike set for classification of the trusses for showing. In fact she was

instrumental in revising the classes and reorganizing them in a more reasonable fashion.

A subsequent paper listing the diverse offerings of rhodos for showing is unparalleled, and used by many other show committees. She carefully ensured proper placement of the plants and trusses, both



R. 'Lionheart'

for equitable judging and for the best viewing. When requested to judge in a show, she did so with her customary fairness and expertise that brought credit to the judges and exhibitors alike. Her thorough knowledge of species and hybrids alike enabled Mike to understand the nuances of the competitions.

Mike was born in Cobourg, Ontario in 1924. She studied at the University of Toronto and U. of T. medical school in preparation for her profession as a physician. Her marriage to James took place in 1950 at Bracebridge, Ontario. They moved to British Columbia, settling initially in Mission before moving to Surrey; and finally to Langley. Her medical skills as a General Practitioner were demonstrated in Surrey and at Surrey Memorial Hospital. Mike retired nine years ago after a fulfilling career as a family physician.

Continued See "Fraser South Rhododendron" on Page 3

In 1989 the **Fraser South Rhododendron** Chapter was formed, and Mike eagerly became one of the twelve charter members. The subsequent success and growth of this group is due in no small way to Mike's constant encouragement. For many years Mike capably served as the editor of our newsletter. Her literary skills coincided with her love for rhodos, to produce a first-class publication of society news. She understood the significance of maintaining communication with all members in the Society. Later, she edited and produced "The First Ten Years," a year-by-year history of the society which meets in Langley. Few monthly, regular meetings took place without Mike in attendance. She was also a fixture at executive meetings of the society, often hosting us in her home, and of course leading us on a garden tour. *R. 'Lionheart'* (photo below and on page 2) was one of



several of Mike's own hybrids, of which she was justifiably proud. Unfortunately the gorgeous yellow trusses show their obstinacy by reluctantly appearing too late for entry to most of our shows. When *R. 'Lionheart'* was in bloom, visitors to her garden were able to experience, with her, the joy of her personal accomplishment. Other wonderful hybrids she registered are *R. 'Ellalikabetta'*, *R. 'Canadian' Kaleidoscope*, *R. 'Nameless Beauty'*, and *R. 'Milton's North Star'*. Mike was as creative in naming plants as in hybridizing. To walk through her garden is to wonder at the varieties and great sizes of many plants. Most of our gardens are younger with less mature stock. Her diverse garden is a testimony to Mike's many years of carefully nurturing her plants.



R. 'Lionheart'

Herself a bronze medal winner, Mike knew the importance of recognizing the contributions of others and joyfully served on awards committees as a way to extend that thankfulness. Mike was a great encourager to others, particularly as they intersected her areas of interest. She was involved in supporting an association called Pacific Riding for Developing Abilities. Her role as medical director was invaluable to the health and safety of the disabled. She was able to raise awareness of the needs of disabled people of all ages working with this association using horse riding as a means of therapy.



R. 'Nameless Beauty'

Mike was supportive of the elephant sanctuary in Hohenwald, Tennessee, the home of Tina, the elephant who was transferred there from Aldergrove. Mike was part of the support group network caring for elephants in both countries. She was also involved, for many years with the United Way.



R. 'Nameless Beauty'

On January 1, 2006, we lost a friend. Margaret, "Mike" Trembath is survived by her husband James of 55 years and her daughters Ann, Margaret, and Catherine. At this time there is no scheduled service of remembrance, however, the family is planning an open house sometime in the future as a celebration of Mike's life.

By Dr. Bobby Ogdon

President's Report

Dear VRS members, at the AGM on January 19, 2006, you acclaimed many of the "old gang" back on to the executive, suggesting that we may be doing some things right! Bill Spohn and Bill Herbst concluded their terms in office, and we thank them for their contributions of time and effort on behalf of the Society. Both of them will continue to be active for the VRS – Bill S. as webmaster, and Bill H. as growers' rep and coordinator.

We welcome Radojka Harris as our new Secretary and Sean Rafferty as our new Director. The other continuing positions are: Lothar Mischke as Vice President, Barb Sherman as Treasurer, Carole Conlin as Membership Chair, and Iain Forsyth as Director.

Due to other pressures, Todd Major and John Priestman are leaving the executive, but we are most fortunate that Todd (and Shannon) will be able to continue their excellent work as Editors of the *Indumentum* until the end of the year, and John will be closely involved with VRS activities outside of the executive.

To guide us as we look ahead in 2006, I thought it would be useful to reflect upon "Who, What and Why we are", and the good things we should be doing, the limitations on our resources, and the framework we try to work within as a Rhododendron Society. There are of course no guarantees in a "wish list", but with everyone's help we may achieve most of them. New ideas and suggestions are always welcome.
By Louis K. Peterson (Photo above by Bill Spohn)

VRS Wish List 2006:

1. Interesting and enjoyable programmes.
2. Collegial, cooperative, enjoyable affiliations with UBC, BC Council of Garden Clubs, Rhododendron Species Foundation, the Alpine Club, VanDusen, Garden Centres, Magazines, Horticultural Institutes, Municipalities. Are there other ideas?
3. No increase in dues (may not be financially viable).
4. Lowering rental costs.
5. Reducing the "80:20" Burden.
6. Improved fundraising activities.
7. Increasing Membership
8. Improved "Outreach" such as a VRS Horticultural Scholarship; Youth and Community Activities.
9. Hosting the next Western ARS Convention. Other?
10. Members Wishes? - Let us know!

Species Study Days 2006

The Species Study Days (SSD) will be held again in 2006 for the 5th consecutive year at the Rhododendron Species and Botanical Garden in Federal Way, Washington on the following Saturdays: February 25th, March 25th, April 29th & May 13th.

The programme is personally directed by Steve Hootman, Co-Director at the garden and plant explorer, extraordinaire. The format will follow that of previous years but will introduce new material for the benefit of past participants. No prior knowledge of the subject is necessary as the course begins with the fundamentals and progresses in detail at each session.

The sessions begin promptly at 10:00 a.m. and end at approximately 4:00 p.m. The mornings are generally spent reviewing various topics of general botanical interest relative to the study of rhododendron species, followed by keying of plant material currently in bloom in the garden at that time. A short break is taken for lunch between 12:00-12:30 and the afternoon spent touring the RSBG garden and identifying and discussing the wonderful collection of rare and exotic plants.

The course fee is \$35.00 for each session (x 4) and the entire proceeds are used to provide a stipend for instruction and a donation to the garden. A nominal sum of \$5.00 is charged for lunch for those wishing to participate.

In past years, participants from Vancouver Island have traveled to the mainland on Friday prior to the session and stayed with a host overnight, returning Saturday evening.

In previous years we have found it desirable to cross the border before 7:00 a.m. on the route to Federal Way in order to avoid a delay at the border and the early a.m. Seattle traffic. This has permitted a leisurely drive to Federal Way with arrival about 9:15 and time for breakfast at the location of choice but for most of us at the Country Buffet. Arrangements for car pooling will be made. The facilities at the RSBG are limited and a maximum of 28-30 people can be accommodated.

In order to avoid disappointment, please confirm your interest and forward payment to the undersigned:
Mike Bale, 33623 Wildwood Drive Abbotsford BC V2S 1S2
Ph.(604) 853-8839, Email: lu_zhu @telus.net

By Mike Bale



The VanDusen Renaissance Campaign

An exciting, multi-million dollar rejuvenation is planned for the VanDusen Botanical Gardens. After thirty years as an important urban botanical garden, the VanDusen Botanical Garden Association (VBGA) and the Vancouver Parks Board (VPB) have undertaken the exciting task of revitalizing the Gardens, to become "a vibrant place of botany, horticulture and environmental learning."

We will hear a lot more about this challenging project at our meeting on February 16th. The Director of the Campaign, Mary Butterfield, is bringing two other people with her, Jill Cherry and Dick Mackenzie. Mary writes: "I started at the Garden in 1976 in the 2nd guide class; toured kids for many years and then got involved in the Administration of the VBGA. I was President of the Association in the mid 1980s. I have been involved with the Plant Sale, the Flower and Garden Show etc and started the Fund Raising Department and was Chair for ten years. Now I am the Capital Campaign Director and will be able to answer any questions in the fund raising area."

Jill Cherry has been the director of VanDusen Botanical Garden since the year 2000. Prior to this, she was a regional director of Parks, Forestry and Recreation with the City of Toronto for seven years. She has a diploma in horticulture, a bachelor's degree in landscape design and environmental studies, and a master's degree in landscape architecture. She was a director on the board of governors of the American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta for three years. Congratulations Jill on your new appointment to the RHS in Britain.

Dick Mackenzie will speak on the history of the Garden. Dick was a teacher and after retirement he came to VanDusen as Education Coordinator. After he retired from that position, he became the President of the VanDusen Botanical Garden Association. (VBGA) He still volunteers with Festival of Lights and is on the Campaign Committee.

We look forward to hearing about the exciting developments that lie ahead. In the meantime you may wish to view their website at www.vandusen.org and click on Capital Project.

By Louis K. Peterson



How well do you know your Rhododendrons?

What is the name of Rhododendron below? (photo by Bill Spohn) Send your guess to the **INDUMENTUM** Editor via email at stmajor@shaw.ca, I will publish the results next month.



Membership

Welcome to new Members: Elizabeth Topham-Larsen, Bruce Larsen, Corrine Mounce, Byron Henry, Paul Kristof, Sherrin Wasson, John Rak and Mun Kwan Tham. Guests are always welcome at our meetings. Check the website at www.rhodo.citymax.com for a list of speakers.

Membership Renewals are still being accepted. You can see me at the Membership Table on January 19th or mail me your renewal. Membership Cards have been mailed to those who have renewed.

Membership rates:

- a) Vancouver Rhododendron Members \$25.00 per year (borrow ARS journals from the VRS library)
- b) ARS/VRS Members \$50.00 per year (includes 4 ARS journals a year)
- c) Associate Members - \$10.00 per year – must be a member of another ARS Chapter to be eligible for Associate membership.

If you change your name, address, email or telephone, please let me know so our records can be updated. If you have any questions about membership, please contact me.

Join Us As We Celebrate 50 Years! (June 1955 to June 2006) See you at the general meetings!

Carole Conlin
VRS Membership Chair
PO Box 91, Lions Bay, BC V0N 2E0
Telephone: 604- 921-7260
Email: cconlin@alumni.sfu.ca

NEWS AND NOTES

New VRS Executive for 2006

At the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in January 2006, the following people were elected to the VRS Executive:

President:

Louis Peterson

Vice President:

Lothar Mischke

Past President:

Vacant

Secretary:

Radojka Harris

Treasurer:

Barbara Sherman

Newsletter Editor:

Todd Major (Resigned from the Executive after the AGM, will continue as editor until the end of 2006)

Membership Chair:

Carole Conlin

Director:

Sean Rafferty

Director:

Iain Forsyth

Director:

Vacant (John Priestman resigned from the Executive after the AGM)

Vacancies may be filled by recruitment of willing and qualified members of the Society. Members may also be nominated by other VRS members to fill vacant positions.

Committees

Webmaster:

Bill Spohn

The Programme Committee:

Louis Peterson supported by Joe Ronsley.

Refreshments:

Jackie Clayton and Barbara Forsyth

Growers' Liaison Committee:

Bill Herbst

Publicity Coordinator:

Vacant (Carole Conlin to fill in temporarily)

Garden Tours:

Lothar Mischke

Show & Sale Committee:

The entire Executive Board in sub-committee roles, together with help from the membership.

Library Committee:

Jasbir Gill, Iain Forsyth, and Pamela Whitehead.

Potluck Dinner Coordinator:

Vern Finley

Education Committee:

Vacant

A new "Rhodo Rescue" Committee:

Lothar Mischke, Sean Rafferty and Louis Peterson.

Do You Have an Opinion? Who Doesn't?

Maybe a Picture of Interest? Or even something boring! Share Some News or an Announcement?

Letters to the **INDUMENTUM** Editor, news, pictures and anything rhodo or otherwise can be sent to Todd or Shannon Major at stmajor@shaw.ca. Please send all letters in MS Word, Notepad or Wordpad. We need pictures too! The larger the picture file size the better the result on screen and in print. If you don't send something, then you will have to live with what I like to print, so get involved!

By Todd Major.

Name the Rhododendron below (photo by Bill Spohn), if you can! Send your guess to the **INDU** Editor at stmajor@shaw.



New Internet Link and Discount

VRS members can enjoy a reciprocal Webpage link with HOLLYFIELDS Garden Shop in Vancouver. VRS Members will receive a 10% discount with a membership card. They offer a quality range of unique products for the home and garden. Located on Granville Island, their retail location has been described as "gorgeous" by the local press and noted as a "must see" in Vancouver's Best Places.

For those who want to decorate their home, garden or balcony, HOLLYFIELDS proposes a comprehensive range of unique products in the following principal categories; Potting Shed, In the Garden, Canadian Showcase, Gardening Supplies, Landscaping, At Home, Outdoor Living, Clothing and Birds.

HOLLYFIELDS is located in the middle of the city, at Granville Island on the south shore under the Granville Street Bridge at 1535 Johnston Street Vancouver, BC. Phone: 604-688-2929. Visit their Website at www.hollyfields.ca

Members Asked The **INDUMENTUM**: Will I have problems bringing rhododendrons back from the United States?

At the ARS Regional Conference in Newport, Oregon last September several delegates from B.C. decided not to purchase rhododendrons because they had heard there would be “problems at the border”. When I asked for details, I was directed to the two Canadians who had experienced these “problems” and then shared their stories with other delegates.

One of them had attended a rhododendron conference in Scotland and had brought a few small plants back to Canada in her luggage. Her problems with Canada Customs stemmed from the fact that plant materials from off-continent are much more harshly regulated than those from the U.S.A. In her case, the rhododendrons were in regular nursery pots containing soil, a planting medium that is not allowed with plants imported from Europe.

The second individual, a keen collector, appeared at the Peach Arch border crossing last year with a pickup truck full of rhododendrons which had been purchased in Washington State. His problems occurred because customs officials suspected he was importing the plants for commercial use. When plants are imported as part of a business venture, a “Permit to Import” is required from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA).

However, importing rhododendrons from the U.S.A. for personal use is not difficult. It does require a bit of planning, paperwork, and additional expense, but in my experience the minor inconveniences have been worth the trouble. The main advantage to cross-border rhododendron shopping is that there are species and hybrids available in Washington and Oregon that are impossible to find in British Columbia.

For example, over the past decade, I have had a rhododendron called, “Faggetter’s Favourite” (photo above right by Ron Knight) on my wish-list. It’s a highly rated *R. fortunei* hybrid with flowers of white, pink, and cream. I’ve tried, without success, to find it at specialty rhododendron nurseries in Greater Vancouver and on Vancouver Island. Then, last winter, I saw the plant advertised in a catalogue from Greer Gardens in Eugene, Oregon. In addition, I discovered that Harold Greer had several other superb hybrids that I had never seen for sale in Canada. Since I was driving down to California anyhow, I decided to place an order.

I telephoned Greer Gardens before leaving Canada and arranged to pick up the plants on the way back from California. I knew that the nursery needed at least a week’s advance notice so that they could call in an Oregon Department of Agriculture inspector to issue a phytosanitary certificate. The document’s cost was twenty-five U.S. dollars and it certified, “that the plants... have been inspected and/or tested according to appropriate official procedures and are considered to be free from quarantine pests” (such as snails and sudden-oak-death fungus).



See “Phytosanitary Certificate” on Page 8

Similarly, at the ARS Western Regional Conference, a **phytosanitary certificate** was issued with my purchases, under Greer Gardens' name. In both cases, the documents were accompanied by a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) shield which identified the nursery as having been certified to provide disease-free plants for export.

In summary, garden plants are classified by the Canadian government as "restricted goods" and therefore a phytosanitary certificate with attached USDA shield is required when they are purchased in the U.S.A. Without this certificate, plants may be seized by Canadian border officials. Moreover, not declaring plants at the border can also result in seizure and a fine of up to \$400. Plants may be imported from the U.S.A. (but not from off this continent) in regular nursery pots containing soil and related materials.

No phytosanitary certificate can be issued until an application is completed (7 CFR 353)		See reverse for additional information
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE PLANT PROTECTION AND QUARANTINE		FOR OFFICIAL USE
PHYTOSANITARY CERTIFICATE		PLACE OF ISSUE SALEM, OREGON
TO: THE PLANT PROTECTION ORGANIZATION(S) OF CANADA		NO: FPC 8023129
		DATE INSPECTED September 10,
CERTIFICATION		

Advance notice is required by a nursery in order to have a USDA inspector issue the proper documents. Also, separate phytosanitary certificates must be issued by each nursery where you purchase plants and there will be extra costs associated with each set of documents. As an alternative, you can take all the plants you purchase in the U.S.A. to a USDA office to have them inspected, and according to the people at Greer Gardens, the cost is much less.

Visit the Canada Border Service Agency (CBSA) website (www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca) before you leave Canada to check if the U.S.A. nurseries you plan to visit are in specially regulated areas. For example, in 2005, rhododendrons and azaleas could not be brought back to Canada from several counties in California and from County Curry in Oregon because of concerns about sudden-oak-death disease. Import permits are required only for commercial use and as specified in special policy directives issued by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (www.inspection.gc.ca).

As a final note on my own experience, I have brought back rhododendrons from the U.S.A. on two separate occasions. Each time, I had my phytosanitary certificate ready in my pocket and my rhododendrons sitting in plain view on the back seat. However, both times I was waved through without the customs official making any mention of the plants I was importing or asking to look in the trunk. As my wife says, "That's what clean living does for you."

By Ron Knight

