



Membership News

March 2010

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Greetings VRS Members

With the absence of the *Indumentum* over the last few months, and with a continuing need to keep in touch with the membership, Jo and I have decided to try a pilot project : the 'Membership News' . This is not intended to replace the *Indumentum*, but merely to 'fill the gap' until it can be re-established with a new editor. We plan to include meeting announcements, including other chapters in the lower mainland, introductions of new members, and other items of gardening interest.

To give this newsletter more 'substance', we propose to have a section called the Members Forum, which will be a cooperative effort on the part of all of you. If you have questions, ideas, or just things that you would like to say to the membership at large, this will be the place to do it. We have no intention of filling it with our ideas ... this is *your* forum, and we intend to act only as compilers, not columnists. You may see the odd photo to illustrate some idea, but we don't plan the glossy, professional look that the other chapters have achieved ... So put your thinking caps on, and keep an eye out for items of interest to your fellow members.

We plan to email this newsletter to the membership early in each month, and will mail a hard copy to people without email. We hope that all of you will make a genuine effort to make *your* newsletter work, by sending either emails with attachments, or letters. Short questions or ideas could even be contributed by phone call. If you feel compelled to contribute a lengthy paper of the sort that appeared in the *Indumentum*, we will, of course, make every effort to include it in the newsletter, but the editing might be a bit dodgy. Don't just steal ideas from the other lower mainland chapter newsletters ... I plan to do that ...

Upcoming VRS Meeting

The next meeting will be at 7:00 PM, on Thursday, March 18, at the Van Dusen Floral Hall. The following was sent to us by Joe Ronsley:

Speaker ... is **Don Martyn**, whose subject is not rhododendrons at all, but magnolias. We have decided to take the risk, on the grounds that most people who like rhododendrons also like magnolias. So Don's title is '**Magnolias, the Latest and the Greatest**'. Despite this title, the lecture promises to be an interesting and engaging one.

I do not, certainly, offer this optimistic anticipation on the basis of the horticulture cv which Don has sent me, and which reads in its entirety as follows: 'Member of the International Dendrology Society, amateur hybridizer of Magnolias and Rhodos, currently cultivating a small garden in the valley emphasizing maples, flowering trees and shrubs'. Rather, I offer it because Don is a very old friend who I know to be extremely knowledgeable not only on magnolias, but on rhododendrons and other woody plants as well - as his membership in the International Dendrology Society suggests. I also know him to have an engaging personality and considerable charm. He has been an important element in the horticultural scene throughout this part of British Columbia for many years, and will certainly have many good friends attending his lecture.

One word of caution, not concerning Don Martyn himself, but concerning the magnolias about which he will speak: Any gardener who sees magnolias as mature plants in their flowering season in a nursery, say Paul Reimer's magnolia nursery especially, will find them absolutely irresistible. Beware. They usually become large trees that require considerable sunshine to flower, while blocking out that sunshine for everything growing under or near them. But they're absolutely gorgeous. What's one to do? Attending Don Martyn's lecture may be a serious hazard, then, but there is always a thrill in living dangerously.

Les Clay will be selling plants at the meeting. Les specializes in hybrid and species rhodos, as well as Japanese maples. A percentage of sales goes to the club, so don't miss this opportunity to benefit the club, Les, and yourselves ... We hope to see all of you there ...

Other Chapters

- **Fraser South**, Wednesday, March 17, at United Church Hall, 5673 - 200 Street, Langley ... Speaker: **Mark Turner** - author of a recent guidebook to wildflowers of Washington State ... Topic: "**Photo Composition**" - 7:30 pm
- **Fraser Valley**, Monday, March 22, at St. Andrew's Heritage Hall, 22279 116th Avenue, Maple Ridge (Just off the Haney by-Pass) ... Speaker: **Rosemary Pruffer**, associate member of the VRS ... Topic: "**The International Plant Propagators Society (IPPS) Conference in San Diego**" - 7:30 pm
- **Peace Arch**, Tuesday, March 23, at Cranley Hall, 2141 Cranley Drive, White Rock ... Speaker: **Garth Wedemire** ... associate member of the VRS ... Topic: "**Lu Zhu - A Plant Collector's Passion**" - 7:30 pm

Jeff Bell, president of the Seattle Chapter, has sent the following, forwarded by Ron Knight:

Ken Cox has agreed to speak at the Seattle Rhododendron Society meeting on April 7, 2010. We don't know the topic yet since he is actually just visiting friends on Bainbridge Island and Steve Hootman at RSFBG asked if he would give us one night. We have reserved the NHS Hall at the Center for Urban Horticulture. We would like to invite the BC chapters and anyone else in driving distance who would like to meet him and hear him speak. The meeting is at 7 PM Wednesday April 7, 2010.

Anyone interested in attending, or requiring more information, could phone Jeff at (206) 363-1417 ... or contact jeffnbell@comcast.net

Next month, we will list the upcoming sales in the area, including the **VRS Spring Plant Sale**, May 1, 2 at Park and Tilford, North Vancouver

Ultimate Rhododendron Conference

As most of you are aware, Douglas Justice and Ron Knight are hosting a rhododendron workshop/conference at UBC on April 9, 10 and 11, and will include tours of the UBC and Van Dusen rhodo gardens. Looks to be an excellent opportunity for both novices (like ourselves) and experienced members to hone their skills, and network with other rhodo aficionados. For more information, call Ron Knight at (604) 929-5670, or contact rcknight@telus.net

New Members

We hope to have this section every month!

- **Susan Nath**, who originally joined the club in 2001, has rejoined us after a long absence. We welcome her back, and hope that she will become a 'regular'.
- **Teresa Stancioff** and **David Clayton** have just joined us. Teresa is an experienced gardener, with a beautiful city lot-sized garden in East Vancouver, on one of those beautiful, cherry blossom-filled streets. David is not a gardener, but we hope to coax him out to the pot luck, at the very least.
- **Justine Murdy** and **Gregory Kozak** are next door neighbours of Teresa and David. Their garden contains quite a few rhodos, and like ours, is still under development. Some of you may, unknowingly, have seen them, when their percussion ensemble, ScrapArtsMusic, performed at the very end of the Olympic closing ceremonies!
- **Milton and Christine Bowman**, in Adelaide, Australia, have just joined us through the ARS. Milton reports that they were "bitten by the rhododendron bug since moving to Forrest Lodge 7 years ago. Forest Lodge is one of the old "Hill Station" gardens in the Adelaide Hills and the original owners imported a large number of rhododendrons from Waterers Bagshot nursery in the UK. Of probably 100 hybrids about 30 have survived the last 120 years, these are truly "Hardy Hybrids", having coped with drought, heat, and generally marginal conditions. My main hobby is propagating these old rhodos and spreading them around the gardens of other members of the local branch of the Australian Rhodo. Society, hence helping to preserve their genes. The other thought is

that if it does get hotter and dryer these old plants will be the ones that have the best chances of success. “

Please introduce yourselves at the meeting and make them feel welcome

2010 Membership Directory

By now, many of you should have received your directory. We plan to issue an addendum page, by email, listing a few stragglers, and our 3 new members. We will compile an updated directory with the addendum names, and print up hard copies for those of you without email, or who were unable to open the pdf files that were sent out last month.

Membership Cards

New membership cards have been issued for all 2010 members. Many of you picked them up at the January and February meetings, and some were mailed out to out-of-towners who can't get to meetings. The remainder will be available at the March meeting, after which the (hopefully) few stragglers will be mailed out.

Member News

- Martie Irwin has come through her back surgery with flying colours, and on behalf of all of you, we wish her a speedy recovery, and look forward to seeing her at upcoming meetings.
- Alan Cheung has suffered a back injury, and been unable to attend regular and executive meetings for the last few months. We wish him a speedy recovery, and look forward to seeing him soon.

Darts Hill Garden Tour

A tour of the Darts Hill Garden in Surrey, in May, is being arranged by Alan Cheung, manager of the garden. The garden is open by appointment only, so this is a rare opportunity to visit one of the outstanding gardens in BC. Members interested in details should contact Alan at acheung@surrey.ca ... or phone (604) 501-5050 (the number listed in the Darts Hill website) ... Once numbers have been determined, carpooling can be arranged.

Garden Tours

We are going to try to organise garden tours this Spring. In the past, a structured approach was taken, garden owners went to considerable trouble preparing for an onslaught of visitors, only to have no one show up. We thought that a more informal approach might be worth trying, in which members indicate, through the newsletter, when they will be home, working in the garden, and willing to receive visitors. This way, if no one shows up, no one is particularly inconvenienced. If the host wants to arrange refreshments, that is up to them. We will include a contact phone number with each listing, so that people can phone ahead, 'just in

case' .. If you are interested in having visitors, please send us your names, with dates when you will be available, or if you prefer, the number at which you can be reached, to arrange visits in the next month or two.

To start the ball rolling, visitors to our 'garden' will be most welcome any time. If you are going to be in the Lions Bay area, just phone ahead, (604) 921-9370, or email rj_wright@telus.net, preferably 24 hours in advance, and we will be pleased to give you a brief tour. A word of caution: our garden is under construction, and is consequently somewhat neglected at present, in fact, it has all the aesthetics of a works yard. Don't be surprised if we extract more ideas from you than you get from us (unless it's what-not-to-do ideas).

The June meeting is a potluck, to be held at the Mossakowski's in Lions Bay. We will try to arrange for some of the other Lions Bay gardens to be open earlier in the day (not during the potluck).

MEMBERS' FORUM

Looks a bit bare at the moment ...

To get the ball rolling, we offer the following ideas for discussion ...

Declining Memberships ... as most of you are aware, memberships are declining at gardening clubs everywhere, including the VRS ... we could discuss why you think this may be happening, but more importantly, what can we do to turn things around ... what activities could we be doing to attract and retain members?

Field Trips ... some of the local chapters have successfully undertaken field trips to commercial nurseries, or to gardens ... how about an overnight trip to the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden, with a guided tour by Steve Hootman and/or Dennis Bottemiller? ... or Lu Zhu (see talk, above) ... or Darts Hill ... or ?

Root Weevils ... Chuck Floyd, of the Peace Arch Chapter, tells me that he controls weevils by spreading birdseed under his rhodos (he recommends a non-sprouting variety, but garden centres don't seem to know what that is) ... the birds are attracted to the seed, and eat the weevils and other pests at the same time ... sounds worth trying ...

Virginia Creeper ... We have a *Parthenocissus quinquefolium* growing up a cedar tree. The lead shoots do not attach themselves to the tree, but form long, arching branches which hang down. We are concerned that, with additional growth, they will become too heavy, and detach from the tree, pulling the entire plant down with them. Is there some safe and simple way to attach the vine to the tree, so that it won't damage the tree, and won't require constant attention for readjustment as the plant grows? Any suggestions? ...

Please send your contributions to: rj_wright@telus.net

Or by mail to Box 266, Lions Bay, BC V0N 2E0 ...

Or by phone to (604) 921-9370

Attribution will be given for all contributions, unless anonymity is specifically requested ...
contributions may be edited for spelling, grammar, and length.

Bob & Jo Wright

Remember, if no one contributes to this cooperative newsletter, the experiment will fail, and
we will return to a one-page monthly notice format ... it's up to YOU ...