



Rhododendron News

Newsletter of the Portland Chapter vol. LII no 10 October 2007
American Rhododendron Society www.rhodies.org

November 2007

- 13- METHRO Study Group
7PM, Van Veen Nursery
- 15- Chapter Meeting, the usual time and place
SPECIES AUCTION FOLLOWS

- 20 – Board Meeting
December 2007
- 20 – Christmas Potluck

HAIKU

*By Peter Kendall
The inscrutable
way of the wind; a leaf
without direction*

*In the slanting sun
the slanting of the dragonfly
the slant of the wind*

*From the bamboo flume
each drop adding to the whole
of the tiny pool*

*Beneath the ruffle
the water strider's shadow
has grown once again*

*Daybreak – the shrill call
of the jay – an autumn world
about to wake up*

TABLE OF CONTENTS” - HYPERLINKS

- P.1 MOLLY SMITH OBITUARY
- P.2 [PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE](#)
- P.3. [NOVEMBER PROGRAM](#)
- P.5 [WESTERN REGIONAL IN REVUE](#)
- P.6 [ASK THE EXPERTS](#)
[FOLLOWUP FROM VIRGINIA RICHARDS](#)
[DONATIONS ENHANCE CRYSTAL SPRINGS](#)
- P.7 [LARRY STANLEY'S OCTOBER PROGRAM REVIEWED](#)
- P.8 [REALLY MINIATURE GARDENING](#)
- P.11 [CHAPTER OFFICERS AND OFFICIALDOM](#)

Thank you Toshi, the hostess for the October meeting, for bringing all the delicious snacks for the meeting

'Molly' Mary Latimer (Beaty) Smith died November 3, 2007 at the age of 93. Molly and her husband Cecil were the founders and developers of what has become the internationally renowned Cecil and Molly Smith Garden.

Molly was born in Fergus Falls, Minnesota. She and Cecil were married in 1941—one week after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

They started collecting rhododendrons in the late 40's at their old house that was adjacent to the Newberg garden property.

Cecil was an early member of the American Rhododendron Society in 1947, several years before he owned the garden site.

In 1951 they had obtained their garden property, finished their new house and started the garden. The area had been logged in 1915, but by 1951 had reestablished its growth of Douglas fir and native plants.

Several Rhododendron Loderi planted near the house were among Molly's favorites. Cecil pruned the large-growing rhododendrons into the present-day tree-like forms.

“Although never taking much credit for the garden, Molly Smith contributed through the years in the garden upkeep and maintenance. When the Smiths lived at the garden, they freely shared their garden with others and hosted many garden tours. No one interested in rhododendrons was denied a visit in the garden. Cecil and Molly each received ARS Bronze Medals, Portland Chapter’s highest award. ‘Molly’ humorously commented that no one had ever received a Bronze Medal for baking cookies.”

Molly was always the gracious hostess, welcoming her guests to her home with freshly baked cookies and to the garden.

1983, after more than thirty years of devoted stewardship, Cecil and ‘Molly’ Smith reached a point in their lives where they could no longer care for the garden. The Portland Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society found itself in a position to purchase the garden property after Cecil and Molly Smith made it possible by selling their land to the ARS at half of it’s appraised value. The Portland Chapter along with the help of Willamette and Tualatin Valley Chapters assumed its care and management.”

After Cecil died, Molly continued to visit the garden on the Monday Morning Workdays and Open Garden Days and she always brought the crew cookies. She enjoyed helping in the garden and continued as long as her health permitted.

Her two sons survive Molly: Allan and Sid; along with three grandchildren, Sheri, Tiffany and Nicole; plus two great-grandchildren, Sydney and Asher.

Services will be held on Saturday, November 17th at 2 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church in Newberg. The church is located at 1205 Deborah Road at the North end of Newberg, about three blocks off of 99W.

Molly’s wishes were that remembrances be made to the Smith Garden.

They may be sent to:
Cecil & Molly Smith Garden
Ginny Mapes, Smith Garden Chair
25185 NW Svea Drive
Hillsboro, OR 97124

[Return to main index](#)

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE:

WESTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE

This conference was a most stimulating experience. The conference was put together on short notice, but I do not know how they could have done a better job even if they had had a year to get organized. Maria and Mike Stewart together with Nancy and Harold Greer were the Chairpersons who put this event together. They had many helpers including Steve Krasik and Anne Gross from our Chapter. Anne organized events and introduced speakers while Steve was the audio-visual wizard for the entire event. Loni Welsh did an incredible job with

the registration and then acted as cashier for book sales and the silent auction. Donna Sell from the Portland Chapter did a fine job on publicity. There were 244 people in attendance; more people than attended the last Western Regional in San Francisco. Vickie Molina, there as R. Newsletter roving reporter also helped us understand how to control pests, mainly the insect variety. Mike Stewart spoke about rhododendron hybrids. Dick Cavender quietly set up the props for the photographic exhibit.

Eamon Hughes of Hughes Water Gardens showed us the most stunning water features I have ever seen. We are working on getting him to speak at our May meeting. I could sit through his presentation a dozen times. I thoroughly enjoy rhododendrons, but have always viewed azaleas as the poor stepchildren of the rhododendron family. Jeanine Smith from the Seattle Chapter changed my mind. She showed us a very lovely array of 145 different azaleas. Now I have a whole long list of azaleas I want to grow.

We have eight Japanese maples in our garden, and they are stunning, particularly this time of year. However, I learned from Tricia Smyth of Mountain Maples in California that we have barely scratched the surface. There are hundreds of other Japanese maples that we could use to paint the garden with a calliope of colors and textures. Steve Hootman took us to southern China and northern Vietnam, an area of the world which is the cornucopia of the world's plant species. He showed us all sorts of wonderful native rhododendron species, many of which he had for sale at the plant sales area.

My only problem was that I could not attend all the presentations I wanted to hear. I will need many more years and a lot more space to grow all the interesting plants I saw and learned about.

Oh, and did I tell you? Jan Snyder won the people's choice first prize for her photograph titled "Stairway to Heaven." This shows the stone arch she designed in our garden

Many thanks to all who treated us to such a successful and rewarding three days

---Juv Snyder

[Return to main index](#)

THERE WILL BE A SPECIES AUCTION FOLLOWING THE NOVEMBER PROGRAM

WHICH IS

BOB DENMAN:
TOOLISH TALKS

Or

From ball weeders to hazel hoes,
rock picking forks and bulb lifters;
From proper hoeing and digging
techniques to tool care and sharpening:
A program about garden tools by a
blacksmith, tool designer and
garden writer.

Want to know the difference between a muck rake and manure drag? Or what the "lift" of your shovel is and why having the wrong lift causes backache? Do you know the differences between a garden trowel, transplant trowel, rockery trowel and potting trowel and do you need one of each?

At the November 15 Chapter Meeting Bob Denman will answer those queries and tell you what do you need to know about ergonomics before you buy a hand pruner, what the best

tools are for grabbing out blackberries, turning a compost heap, removing weeds from the seams between bricks, stripping thorns from the stems of roses and root pruning. He can tell you how long your rake or hoe handle should be. The answer: Too short and you're courting a backache; Too long and you'll whack yourself in the head.

When you attend Bob Denman's Tool Talk on November 15 you will hear those answers and more. You will enjoy playing "Name That Tool" wherein Denman tests the tool acumen of the audience using strange and wonderful gadgets from his collection of horticultural implementia.

As far as he knows our speaker is the only blacksmith in the United States specializing in garden hand tools. He crafts more than 75 different garden tools and accessories at his recently established smithy and is also a tool designer, inventor, writer and purveyor of fine implements and recent immigrant from California.

He and his wife, Rita, are the proprietors of **Red Pig Garden Tools** in Boring, Oregon, a "toy store for gardeners" offering hundreds of familiar and uncommon tools for horticulture, agriculture and silviculture. Previously located in Orange, California, where it was also known as Denman & Company, their store is the only one of its kind in the entire United States which produces hand forged implements for home gardeners, nurserymen, landscapers and farmers. He crafts more than 75 different garden tools and accessories at his recently established smithy in Oregon. They sharpen non-power pruning and other edged tools, and offer re-handing, restoration, repair and custom tool making.

Among the more than 1000 items offered by Red Pig are some 20 different patterns of hoes; steel rakes ranging from 6 to 24 tines; cultivators with 1 to 5 tines; ball weeders; hand ploughs; rock picking forks; root hooks; cradle forks for overhead pitching; mangle cutters; weed spuds; wood tine rakes; hot bed weeders and hundreds of other unique or rare implements.

Among inventions by Denman are: garden pants with built-in knee pads; forged, solid socket trench clean out shovels with flat bottoms and turned up sides; a combination diamond file, screw driver and multi wrench for tool maintenance; pruning tools maintenance oil; an improved ball weeder; a pruning tool bolster with pockets for a file and bottle of maintenance oil; a heavy duty watering wand and a line of hand tools with screw on handles. Several of his inventions have been awarded U.S. patents.

In addition to being a blacksmith and tool monger, he also served as a product development consultant to Corona Clipper Company, America's leading manufacturer of professional pruning tools. He provided specifications, conceptual designs, field testing and evaluation for Corona's new generation of hand shears, loppers and hedge shears. He played a critical role in developing Corona's complete range of garden, landscape, agricultural and construction hand tools when the company expanded its offerings in the early 2000's.

A former journalist and copywriter, Denman is a regular contributor to *Fine Gardening* and *Garden Compass* magazines. His articles have appeared in *Small Farm Today* and *Gardener's Companion*. He provided the text basis for the tools section of the most recent edition of the **Sunset Western Garden Book**.

Bob and Rita Denman have been the subject of many articles in national and regional magazines including *Horticulture*, *Sunset*; *Garden Design*, *Los Angeles* and *The Los Angeles Times Magazine*. In 2005 they were the subjects of a segment on PAX television's *People Places and Plants* program.

While living in Southern California, Bob Denman served on the advisory board and long range planning committee of The Fullerton Arboretum and as Executive Vice president of the Orange County Horticultural Society. He is a frequent and popular lecturer at botanical gardens, arboreta, garden clubs, plant societies and garden shows.

The Denmans started their business as a mail order operation called Denman & Company in 1986. They founded Red Pig Tools in 1989 and opened their California store in 1994, then relocated to Oregon in late 2004. The past two years have been spent tearing down two old barns near Eagle Creek and using the lumber to build the barn which houses their store in Boring.

Prior to 1989, Bob and Rita operated an advertising and graphic design studio. A former journalist, college football linebacker and motocross rider, Bob now confines his physical activities to the smithy and the garden, feeling that there is danger and excitement enough at home.

In addition to Red Pig's uniquely exhaustive inventory of tools, the store offers dozens of tools hand forged on the premises, custom handcrafting of garden tools and accessories and modification of off-the-shelf tools to suit the intended user.

You will want to be sure to listen to **Toolish Talks** then buy some plants at the **species auction** following this Chapter meeting and program on **November 15**.

See you there!

[Return to main index](#)

WESTERN REGIONAL REVUE BY VICKI MOLINA

Kudos to all those who helped to make this year's Western Regional a success. 244 people were in attendance for the talks, the fun, the food (and oh, was it good) and the plant sale.

The diverse group of speakers came from many different backgrounds and presented thought provoking ideas.

I really enjoyed Nolan Blassit's talk on growing rhododendrons from seed.

Harold Greer lectured on rhododendron psychology and let us into the minds of our rhododendrons for what was a delightful and comical evening.

John and Sally Perkins dazzled us all with their presentation on rhododendrons of the East Coast of the USA and flowers galore.

John Hammond was on hand from England to show us the wonderful gardens there.

There were many knowledgeable and wonderful speakers who presented information and gardening excitement.

One of the things I found so much fun was the chance to meet and converse with so many members from other chapters.

Willamette Chapter was there in force, so was the Siuslaw Chapter. Of course we all enjoyed the 30+ members from British Columbia.

Many thanks go to the heroes who made possible this Western Regional which was such a delight. Many people performed behind the scenes to make it all work out while proving their dedication and loyalty to the ARS. We are very lucky to know these people as fellow rhododendron lovers.

The name game had us finding other name tags with matching flowers. It helped us meet new people and reconnect with old friends.

The banquet tables presented a festive air with some wonderful table favors. They were little rhododendron and azaleas starts in pots that were beautifully decorated by hand. Whoever did that deserves congratulations!

Mike Bones was ... well... he was himself and what any rhododendron meeting be without him? We love ya, Mike!

Portland Chapter's President Irv's wife, Jan Snyder won the photo contest. Lovely picture of the stone arch she designed for their garden.

So much to do and say, so much to say and do, it was all so much fun.

---Vicki

[Return to main index](#)

ASK THE EXPERTS:

When is the best time to move rhodies?

Anytime. However, the end of September and the beginning of rainy season is best- unless your plant enjoys its permanent home in a wheelbarrow.

What is the best rhody for a making a rhody hedge?

R. augustinii

A NOTE OF REPLY FROM VIRGINIA RICHARDS

You really did a very nice write up on my experience with the brachycarpum. I certainly enjoyed it and hope others will as well. I am glad that Bill Whitney never knew that his cross developed problems. Ann Sather said that the Washington State department that looks after such problems made her take all of them out of her nursery.

What has puzzled me is that I was able to buy a couple of Virginia Richards for my grandson from a local nursery. They said they never had to do anything to their plants to keep them disease free. I am going to be interested in seeing those blooms as I wonder if they are a different one of the three crosses which might have escaped being so susceptible. The mix up occurred when Van Veen, Sr. sent his crew out to Bill Whitney's place to get some cuttings. The two men got so interested in talking that they neglected to watch the crew and that is how the cuttings got mixed up.

---Virginia

[Return to main index](#)

DONATIONS ENHANCE GARDENS AT CRYSTAL SPRINGS

By *CAROL BARRETT*

For many years Betty Sheedy, former volunteer coordinator at Crystal Springs, added Trillium ovatum each spring. They have naturalized and are spreading nicely. She still donates trillium as well as encourages spreading seeds of both erythronium and cyclamen.

Recently Betty has made contributions to a woodland path on the island overlooking the low bridge. Among other shady plants, look for a spreading patch of Disporum sessile 'Variegata.' All are treasures.

This summer CSG was fortunate to receive a donation from Dan Heims of Terra Nova Nursery.

Volunteers planted astrantia, Athyrium filix-femina, campanula, Carex siderosticha 'Island Brocade', farfugium, several varieties of Terra Nova's famous heucheras, Polemonium 'Stairway to Heaven,' three varieties of pulmonaria, tricyrtis, and Verbascum 'Plum Smokey.' Beverly Watkins, Bob MacArthur, and Phil White dug 150 three-year old hostas from their trial

garden. We appreciate Dan Heims' generosity and the labors of volunteers who have settled the plants in their new homes.

The next time you visit CSRG, notice the rich textures of understory plants enhancing our beds of rhododendrons.

---Carol

[Return to main index](#)

REVIEW OF THE OCTOBER PROGRAM PRESENTED BY LARRY STANLEY

SMALL AND MINIATURE CONIFERS

Larry Stanley presented us with a delightful program on small conifers that are in cultivation in Europe for our October meeting

As he said himself, it was the trip of a lifetime. His trip of the summer of 2006 concentrated on Holland, the Czech Republic and Austria. He visited the nurseries so fast and saw so many new conifer cultivars that it's remarkable that he remembered them all: But he had help. He accompanied his photo taking -- over 4,430 pictures in 10 days -- with audio recordings to remind him of what he saw and where he was. Even with all that he didn't photograph all of the places that he visited. After he got home it took him another six months to label all of the pictures.

Larry propagates some 350,000 conifers every year. He saw that some of the Dutch nurseries are using a two-tiered growing system with short miniatures growing below tall dwarfs. Maybe now he can increase the plant density in his show garden to reflect all of the new material becoming available (available to him, anyway). Miniatures grow a maximum of 1 inch a year, while the dwarfs grow between one and six inches.

Most European nursery plants are grafted but some don't dwarf when they are on an understock so the nurseries graft them for fast, long growth then take cuttings on the resultant new growth, which will revert back to a dwarf habit.

Our region has a phytophthora infestation that has become endemic. It preferentially affects Port Orford cedars (also known as Lawson's Cypress) and Scotch Pine. Stanley found one European nursery that has developed an understock that is phytophthora resistant. We hope that soon Stanley's plants can be grafted onto this understock if only to help some of our area plants live longer.

Most European nurseries specialize in a narrow aspect of conifer propagation, often only propagating one particular genus. One Czech grower specializes only in "witches brooms". He and his friends select *Pinus uncinata* (mountain pine) and now have 1000 named broom cuttings - out of 1000 collected.

Stanley said that the brooms in most parts of the world are genetic sports and will propagate true: But the Pacific Northwest witches brooms are an exception because they are virus-induced and don't propagate true.

Larry even brought a few small conifers for sale. He specializes in conifers that are rarely found in the corner garden store. The ability to add some of these to our gardens after such a delightful presentation was a real treat.

---Suurt

[Return to main index](#)

REALLY MINIATURE GARDENING

TEXT AND PICTURES BY LUURT NIEUWENHUIS

Today's graphic expansion doesn't contain much about rhodies. The Regional Conference was well attended by Portland Chapter members, but they all left their cameras at home so no pictures of this event were delivered to this newsletter.

But harkening back to Larry Stanley's talk about miniature conifers brings up the topic of how much interesting life can be crammed into a small scale. I bought some of his little plantlets. Six inches high and sixteen inches wide in ten years means that I won't have to dedicate a lot of space to their growth. Now if I just remember not to plant them underneath the *Pawlonia tomentosa*...

There's stuff growing under the rhodies and in the lawn. Raking the leaves up in the yard this fall, I've seen at representatives of at least twelve genera of mushrooms. I even went to the Oregon Mycological Society's annual mushroom exposition in October. Talk about creating miniature gardens for small spaces, here's something to occupy your time during the wet fall days when only a few silly rhodies try to bloom before the frost.



A *Chantarellus* on the left and *Continarius* (purplish) at bottom left, *Lepiota rachoides* on the right, and others (commonly identified as LBM's or little brown mushrooms).

The *Amanita muscaria*'s appearance is distinctive, but look at the orange specs below it- not pollen because the *Ammanita* produces white pollen, and not fragments of the orange-red *amanita* cap.



This is a close-up of the orange spots in the previous picture. Shades of things happening on different scales- there are very miniature mushrooms amidst the orange. The spheres are just under one millimeter in diameter. Call it about 0.04 inch.

These are the sporangia of a myxomycete, also known as a slime mold

Time to turn up the zoom on the viewer again and look a little closer. Here is a close-up of the base of the right-hand stem from above. Note that the stalks seem to have an orange core running through them and the clear outer layer seems to cover the entire sporangium.



As the sporangium ages, it turns yellow and dull. Different myxomycetes turn different colors as they ripen- red, yellow, blue. Grey, white, almost black. The one red sporangium in this picture is about three days younger than the rest.

The orange-spored pictures were taken at the OMS show, the later ones were photographed in my sanctum sanctorum.



The initial sporangium is smooth on the outside. The disintegration followed by the distribution of the spores can be an identifying characteristic. These ones open and split on the end and peel back in several pieces. The blade shape on the right is about a quarter of a fir needle. And the round hole on the bottom right is even more unusual.

But first...

All of the other pictures were taken with camera and lenses. These two used a microscope



at 400X magnification. If you look real close at the sporangium at the bottom of the previous picture, you'll see very thin threads. On the left is a thread and a number of spores. On the right is a close-up of one thread which in itself is made up of three strands of about 0.2 millimeters diameter, with some spores on the right hand side



The hole in the picture at the top of the page is made by a "slime beetle", one who feeds on the spores. The larva moved too fast to photograph, but this adult was persuaded to hold still. Its less than 1/3 the length of one of the sporangium.



[Return to main index](#)

CHAPTER OFFICERS

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Secretary: Carol McCarthy 245-3533
Treasurer: Dick Cavender 625-6331
Past President: Kathy Van Veen 777-1734

BOARD MEMBERS

Through 6/30/07

Ray Clack, Mike Stewart, Kath Collier, Dave Collier
Mike Domaschofsky

Through 6/30/08

Steve Hopkins, Brenda Ziegler, Steve Kaminski
Donna Sell, Maria Stewart

GARDEN CHAIRS

CRYSTAL SPRINGS RHODODENDRON GARDEN

Bob MacArthur 360-256-2522
Beverly Watkin 503-244-0537

CECIL & MOLLY SMITH GARDEN

Ginny Mapes 503-647-2896

PORTLAND CHAPTER WEB SITE

www.rhodies.org/index.htm

Membership and ownership

The Portland Chapter is a local chapter of the American Rhododendron Society. Combined annual dues to both the Society and the Chapter are \$35 for one person, \$40 for family. Annual subscription price to the 9+ times yearly newsletter *Rhododendron News* is included in Chapter membership

Online Discussion Group

<http://groups.yahoo.com> and look for rhododendrons. Participants include renowned hybridizers, growers and hobbyists.

Tualatin Valley Chapter

Regularly scheduled meetings on the **second Monday of the month at 7 p.m.** - at the:

First Baptist Church
177 NE Lincoln Street
Hillsboro, OR.

Phone: **Ginny Mapes** 503-647-2896
Email: ginny@coho.net

Siuslaw Chapter

Meets on the **third Tuesday of the month at 7 pm.** at the:

Presbyterian Church of the Siuslaw,
3996 Hwy 101 N.
Florence, OR

A pre-meeting dinner is held at a different restaurant each time at 5 pm. Visit www.siuslawars.org to find out where.

[Return to main index](#)

Newsletter

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Newsletter article and idea deadline is at the Chapter meeting. Items received after that time might not be included in the current issue.

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Questions concerning delivery should be directed to **Maria Stewart** (503) 668-7565

Meeting time and place

Regular meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month except in June, July, and August, starting at 7 pm with a social half-hour which precedes the main meeting.

For location, see

www.rhodies.org/pdx/pdx_meeting.htm

All Saints Episcopal Church
at the corner of SE 40th and Woodstock
(a little east of the Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden) in Portland, OR

Vireya Vine Newsletter

Receive a newsletter about Vireya Rhododendrons. Submit your Subscription request to:

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