

# Rhododendron News

American Rhododendron Society  
newsletter archive:

web site: [www.rhodies.org](http://www.rhodies.org)  
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## RESIDENT'S MESSAGE BY IRV SNYDER



## HAIKU

by Peter Kendall

*A cold, windless night  
The last clattering leaves have  
broken their moorings*

*The moss draped maple  
added to its fabric  
this cold, rainy day*

*Drops in the downspout  
have resounded once again  
with the shifting storm*

What a marvelous evening! I really enjoyed the Christmas party this year. The table decorations were magnificent. Each one was different, but they were all beautiful, each in its own way. I am sure glad I did not have to select the most elegant table. Many thanks to the people who volunteered to set a table.

I do not know how we do it, but we always seem to end up with the right amount of food and a wonderful diversity of offerings. We all need to thank each other for the tremendous dinner. One quiet person did a yeoman's job of making sure everything

went smoothly, and that was Barb McArthur. Right at her side was Bob McArthur giving her lots of assistance. Jan and I did this one year, and there is a lot of preparation before the evening of the dinner, and then a whole lot more before the start of the dinner. We really appreciate what you did Barb and Bob.

The slide presentations were excellent. No one seriously violated the 12 slide rule, and again the diversity of the presentations added spice to the evening. I think I enjoyed Luurt's bugs and slugs the best, but there were many other good presentations.

Thanks to all the people who brought gifts for the drawing. A special thanks to some people who brought far more than their share of gifts. The biggest gift of all came from Edie Spadie who donated two incredibly magnificent wreaths that she made. We had lively bidding for these works of Christmas art, and after the bidding was done, Eadie's prizes had contributed \$200 to the Chapter treasury. Edie, thank you for this great Christmas gift.

In addition, the most fun for me was the smiles, the laughter, the merriment, the cheers, the greetings, the warmth, and, in short, the feeling of Christmas that filled the room. Thanks to one, thanks to all for making this a special evening.

*Irv Snyder*

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## BRITT SMITH

A LONGTIME AZALEA and rhododendron aficionado in the northwest died this last December. Below is his obituary, as published in the Seattle Times newspaper, followed by several reminiscences.

*Britt M. SMITH Married December 7, 1940; died December 7, 2007 on his 67th wedding anniversary. Survived by wife, Jean, and three children: W. Britt Smith (Karen); Gary L. Smith (Pam); and Adrienne Mangan. Also a brother, Dr. David D. Smith (Marge) of Pueblo, Colorado, and a brother-in-law, Robert B. Brown of Hoquiam. Four grandsons: Ryan Mangan (Liana); Jeremy Mangan; Joseph Mangan; Derek Smith (Chrisy). Also many nieces and nephews. Britt was born in Portland, Oregon on August 15, 1916, to Lloyd and Effie Smith. He graduated from Oregon State College in 1938 and went directly to work at the Boeing Company as an engineer. During World War II he left Boeing to work for Waco Aircraft in Troy, Ohio and Goodyear Aircraft in Akron, Ohio. In 1951 he returned to Boeing, retiring in 1979. Britt felt the importance of a hobby after retirement and his was a consuming interest in collecting, exploring for, photographing and hybridizing rhododendrons. Correspondence with a resident of Sikkim, India led to seven trips there to view and photograph the many species of their native rhododendrons. Three times he planned and led groups of plant lovers on treks in the Sikkim Himalayas to 14,000 ft. with native, profession guides. On the last trek in 2000, Fred Whitney, international president of the American Rhododendron Society, was a member of the group. Here*

*at home, he and a dear friend, Dr. Frank Mossman of Vancouver, WA spent 16 years exploring and collecting our native rhododendron, R. occidentale, along the Oregon-Calif.coast.*

*Much of the collection can be seen at the Lake Wilderness Arboretum in the Smith-Mossman Azalea Garden. Britt also gave many programs in England, Scotland, New Zealand and the U.S. He was an active member of The American Rhododendron Society, and the Rhododendron Species Foundation at Federal Way. He was awarded the Gold Medal of the A.R.S., as well as the Pioneer Award. Britt was a member of the First Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Renton, where the Memorial Service will be held on Thursday, 20 Dec. at 2:00 p.m. Remembrances may be made to the Alzheimer's Association.*

From Dick Cavender:

I went on several of the occidentale hunting trips over the years starting in the mid 70's. I grow a fair number of the Smith-Mossman R.Occidentale selections and am still looking for plants in the wild. 2007 was our 42nd year using their chronology. I have also registered several of the names that Britt & Frank had assigned to plants. Their articles in the Bulletins of the early 70's helped addict me to Rhodes and especially R. occidentale. I have grown seed from crosses made by Britt.

Britt was always very generous with plant material and I have taken cuttings in his garden a number of times. My photo of Britt & Frank was used in the 'Pacific Coast Rhododendron Story'.

We met only a few times over the years and were able to visit with Britt and Jean at the Occidentale Garden at the Lake Wilderness Arboretum a couple of years ago

***Dick***

From Luurt Nieuwenhuis:

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*I met Britt several times over the years, going back to the late 70's. I can remember being impressed by the rows and rows of azaleas growing at his place in Kent, before the move to the Lake Wilderness Arboretum. I still grow a dozen occidentale which came, by way of Bob Badger, from a cup full of cleaned seeds from his Kent garden.*

***Luurt***

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## A RHETORICAL QUESTION ON RESEARCH INTO RHODIES:

Have you ever wondered where the current research into rhododendrons is taking us? Or maybe you haven't because you wanted to avoid becoming confused? Possibly you don't like passive past tense scientific reporting. Nevertheless, here is an abstract of one recent report:

Title: *Lack of prezygotic reproductive isolation between *Rhododendron eriocarpum* and *R. indicum*; Overlapping flowering phenology and cross compatibility*

Author Full Names: *Tagane, Shuichirou; Hiramatsu, Michikazu; Okubo, Hiroshi*

Source: *JOURNAL OF THE FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE KYUSHU UNIVERSITY, 52 (2): 345-348 OCT 2007* Language: English

Abstract:

*Flowering phenology in *Rhododendron eriocarpum* and *R. indicum* in Yakushima Island and its surrounding islands and cross compatibility between the species were investigated. We found that their flowering periods partially overlapped from May to early June. The flowering peaks of the riverside populations were variable and longer than those of the seaside populations where the flowering patterns synchronized. In artificial intra- and inter-specific outcross experiment, >60% crosses were successful. Weak self-incompatibility was observed in the both species. Their cross compatibility has been maintained in their presumptive hybrids. These results indicate that there is little prezygotic reproductive isolation between the two species and the lack of such reproductive isolation is likely to have contributed the diversification of 'Satsuki' cultivars.*

What are we to conclude from an article such as this? It seems like crosses between some species, at least with these two parents, are common and easy to achieve. The ready occurrence of natural crosses in the wild makes for greater variability in the gene pool and a greater possibility of generating more species at a future time. Of course, without being two isolated breeding populations, these two species might actually be only one with some subspecies variation. Start viewing the differences in reported wild collections in Malaysia (for the vireyas) or the greater Himalayan region and how often the reports stress the uniqueness rather than the continuous variability and inter-gradations that can be found in the distribution ranges. But then (tongue in cheek), being a biology specialist leads one into more speciation.



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## DONATIONS AT SMITH GARDEN:

THERE HAVE BEEN MANY SMITH GARDEN donations. Several people have noted their thanks to the keeper of the garden. Others have made donations to the garden in memory of the passing of Molly Smith

*Enclosed is a gift in memory of Molly Smith. She was a delightful person who will be sorely missed. I have many happy memories of time spent in the garden with her... (The garden) is such a delightful place, we are very fortunate to be able to continue there what Molly and Cecil began.*

*Adele Jones*

*Please accept the enclosed gift for the Smith Garden in memory of Cecil and Molly Smith. It is a beautiful garden and it is great that the Rhododendron Chapters are taking care of it.*

*Clara Ottaway*

*I am enclosing a check for the Smith Garden, in memory of Molly Smith. Molly and Cecil were long time family friends. It is wonderful the garden they developed and loved is being maintained by the Rhododendron Society.*

*Isabel Gill*



THE SMITH GARDEN WORK PARTY is scheduled for Saturday, February 23, 2008. The time will run from 8:00 am until whenever participants want to leave. Morning snacks and lunch will be provided. Mark your calendars.

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THE JANUARY PROGRAM will feature Dick Cavender and his favorite rhododendron plant, *R. occidentale*. But there is more to Dick than just azaleas. He has been an avid collector, hybridizer and grower of plants for some 40 years.

He has been an American Rhododendron Society member since 1969, and is a Life member of Portland Chapter, an associate member of Tualatin, Willamette, Hawaii and Eugene chapters. Treasurer and past President of Portland Chapter. Past Director of Dist. 4, Oregon State. He received the Silver Medal from the American Rhododendron Society and the Bronze Medal from the Portland Chapter. In addition, he received an HCC from the American Orchid Society for *Pleione aurita* 'Karen', and is also the breeder of *R. occidentale* 'Frank Mossman'.

As if that isn't enough, he also has memberships in the Sedum Society (England), the Berry Botanic Garden, the Hardy Plant Soc. of Oregon, the Friends of Connie Hanson Garden, and the Rhododendron Species Foundation.

Red's Rhodies is a hobby that gotten severely out of control. The focus has changed over the years as his tastes and interests have evolved; his first love was and still remains the genus *Rhododendron* and especially the native Western Azalea, *R. occidentale*. He grows some 30 to 40 selected clones and is carrying on a long term hybridizing program to develop bigger and better (and mildew resistant) *R. occidentale*. One focus has been to combine a small double flowered clone with some of the large flowered clones to produce large doubles. Another effort combined the fragrance of *R. occidentale* with the color and late blooming season of several of the Eastern Native Azaleas such as *R. bakeri* and *R. calendulaceum*.

His collection of *Vireya* (tropical) *Rhododendrons* fills most of an 800 square foot greenhouse and there is always something in flower. Two





additional poly houses shelter other tender rhodies and are used for growing a wide variety of material.

In his own words: Our home property encompasses about 5 acres of which about 1 acre is garden. Another 2 acres is dedicated to growing Rhododendrons from seed. I grow several hundred crosses from seed I have produced or purchased from seed exchanges. Our garden

contains some 400 species and hybrid Rhododendrons. Our Rhododendron flowering season starts in January and runs until August or September. I also collect Maples, Magnolias and other flowering trees. My Embotrium flowered the last 2 years. A wide variety of herbaceous material fills any vacancies.

About 25 years ago, a friend gave me several flats of Pleione Orchids. This gift expanded to fill a good sized shade house and we had one of the largest collections of Pleione in the U.S. The Pleione will grow in our garden among the Rhododendrons and have led me to other terrestrial Orchids. We now grow European native orchids such as Dactylorhiza and Orchis and some of the Asian terrestrials including Bletilla, Cypripedium & Cymbidium Orchids as well as North American Cypripedium. I made a number of Pleione crosses over the years and have registered several with the RHS.

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WE ASK YOU TO PLEASE USE and wear you name tags when you come to the monthly meetings. Use name tags you already have, from work, church, other plant societies, other ARS meetings, etc. This saves the Chapter from buying paper name tags. AND IF you wear your own name tag you will get TWO door prize tickets at the meetings. So put a nice name tag in the glove box of your car to use at the next meeting and increase your odds of winning the prize.



At the November meeting we had lots of door prizes and sold tickets for a raffle. Raffle money helps the Chapter pay the bills and buys better raffle prizes. Thanks to Dave Collier for selling the raffle tickets, and providing some small azalea plants. Thanks to Vicki Molina for providing some of the items from her greenhouse supply store, 'Rain or Shine: Greenhouse, Nursery & Landscape Supplies'. And to Bovees Nursery for providing some interesting Vaccinium plants. This appeared to be popular undertaking at the November meeting. We skipped the raffle for the December potluck, though the 2 tickets per name badge policy was applied. The raffle resumes in January.

A large and very fine wreath was auctioned off at the December potluck and sold for \$80. That should keep the chapter in coffee money for a couple of months! Thank you one and all



The annual potluck was a great success once again. Small door prizes and gifts for everyone; more food than we could eat, and for entertainment, pictures, both slides and digital computer projections. Bill Robinson, the chapter's only remaining charter member from the founding of The American Rhododendron Society, presented more pictures from his extensive collection of decorative

mailboxes photos. Yakosuki Doi, of Japan, was present in his pictures of his 2006 Bhutan expedition. Luurt Nieuwenhuis presented some extreme close-up pictures of myxomycetes while Peter Kendall presented some of his nature photographs. Rhododendron pictures were also shown, of course.

*Luurt*

THE FEBRUARY MEETING will be E. White Smith, of the Bovees Nursery, speaking on his favorite topic, Vireya Rhododendrons. More next month on this program.

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THE UPDATED MASSACHUSETTS Chapter web site is officially open. The portal part can be accessed directly using <http://arsmc.org>. Another site to put in your "favorites" for viewing rhody stuff.

AFTER MANY YEARS of painstaking work on the part of Herb Spady to scan and digitize close to 140 old ARS quarterly Bulletins, things are finally showing up at the Virginia Tech University digital library; It's a great start, hopefully more Quarterlies' will follow;  
<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JARS/v26n4/>  
Look at the names of the contributors and you will find both Frank Mossman and Britt Smith in the 1972 bulletin.

The Frank Mossman article on *R. occidentale*, entitled *With Camera, White Umbrella, and Tin Pants In R. occidentale Heartland*, is particularly relevant to the January speaker's program and is worth reviewing before the January meeting. The Britt Smith mentioned in the obituary was a participant in this and other expeditions with Dr. Mossman.

## BOOKS AT A DISCOUNT FOR ARS MEMBERS -

THE PORTLAND CHAPTER has an arrangement with Rain or Shine to order books from three publishers and a Southern Oregon bookseller. Any book published by Storey Publications, Timber Press, and Workman Publications can be ordered at a 25% discount. Any book listed on the Southern Oregon bookseller's list can be ordered at a 10% discount. Please check our website at

[www.rhodies.org/pdx/books/booklist.htm](http://www.rhodies.org/pdx/books/booklist.htm)

for a list of books and links to more information at the publisher's websites. If you would like to order, please send an email to [oregon1853@yahoo.com](mailto:oregon1853@yahoo.com), phone Loni Welsh at 503-663-6987, or see her at the monthly chapter meeting.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: February 20-24, 2008

*Home and Garden Show.* Portland Expo Center, Marine Drive Portland  
The Society will have a booth at the Spring Home and Garden Show. We need people to staff the booth. Shifts will be 3 or 4 hours duration and we hope to have 2 people in the booth per shift. This will allow you to take turns looking at the show during your shift. Dick Cavender will have FREE admission tickets and a sign up sheet at the January & February meetings. General admission to the show is \$8.00 so this will be a bargain. On site parking is \$7. Sorry; we can't squeeze out special privileges for that expense.

This is a great opportunity to meet new people, hand out information and sign up new members. No experience is necessary!

Hours are 11 to 8 PM Wed through Fri,  
11 AM through 8 PM Sat, and  
11 AM through 6 PM Sunday.

For the best selection of time and day, call Dick Cavender at 503-625-6331 or email him at [red@redsrhodies.com](mailto:red@redsrhodies.com)



Your intrepid newsletter editor,  
gleeful at  
completing another  
issue

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And finally, a closing rhododendron picture. And not just another rhody! This is Yellow Hammer, a lepidote that often throw a few flower during the winter. This year was special. This picture was taken on Christmas Day, December 25, 2007 The background is white because it was SNOWING at the time the picture was taken.



## CHAPTER OFFICERS

(All area codes are 503 unless noted)

President: Irv Snyder 509-427-7738

Vice President: Jan Snyder 509-427-7738

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](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.siuslawars.org) to find out where.

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## Newsletter

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Luurt Nieuwenhuis managing editor

Vicki Molina editor in chief

Jeanette Nieuwenhuis copy editor

Loni Welsh hardcopy printing

Maria Stewart hardcopy mailings

## Newsletter articles

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

## E-mail contacts:

Luurt Nieuwenhuis [editor@rhodies.org](mailto:editor@rhodies.org)

Vicki Molina: [enforcer@rhodies.org](mailto:enforcer@rhodies.org)

Jeanette Nieuwenhuis [copy@rhodies.org](mailto:copy@rhodies.org)

[kudus@rhodies.org](mailto:kudus@rhodies.org) for compliments

[kudzus@rhodies.org](mailto:kudzus@rhodies.org) for gripes

[ideas@rhodies.org](mailto:ideas@rhodies.org) for future newsletter ideas

for newsletter articles via snail mail, send to:

Luurt Nieuwenhuis, Managing Editor

P.O. Box 2353

Vancouver, WA, 98668-2353

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](http://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:

E White Smith,

% Bovees Nursery

1737 SW Coronado

Portland, OR 97219

4 issues a year. Send \$10 to join - that's one ten dollar bill that lasts forever or until you want to send another to keep it company.

[info@bovees.com](mailto:info@bovees.com)