

Rhododendron News

Newsletter of the Portland Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society Volume 53 number 2, February 2008

February 2008

12 – METHRO Rhody study group
at Van Veen Nursery
21– Chapter
meeting: E.
White Smith –
Vireyas are
rhodies too
20-24 Home and garden show
23 Smith Garden Work Party
26 - Board meeting

March 2008

11 – METHRO Rhody study group
at Van Veen Nursery
20 – Chapter meeting:
25 Board meeting

April 2008

5 – Early Rhody Show at CSRG

Bring trusses!

HAIKU by PETER
KENDALL

*The cold, the wind
--in the curled leaves of the
rhododendron*

*Through the trees
through wisps of cloud,
winter moon
giving flame to the night*

*The white camellia
has unfolded its flower
for the hummingbird*

Table of contents"

[Click on items to go those topics](#)

p.1 Haikiu
p.1 President's Message
p.2 [Commentaries](#)
p.6 [Carol Barrett's Cookies](#)
p.6 [January meeting Review](#)
p.7 [RSF annual sale](#)
p.7 [Internet site links](#)
p.8 [Raymond Evison - cl ematis](#)
p.9 [closing picture](#)
p.10 [Official ese and meeting place](#)



President's Message
By Irv Snyder

EXCELLENCE

As a young man when I started out working, I had an excellent supervisor. One day in a job performance review, he gave me a suggestion. You should select some field of expertise, some area of technology and become the most knowledgeable person, the leading expert in your selected field. Choose something of a manageable size that you can really get your hands and mind around. That is some of the best advice I have ever had.

We have some world-class experts in our Chapter, and I am happy to see that we are taking advantage of their knowledge. We were privileged to hear Dick Cavender in January talking on our native rhododendrons, *R. occidentale*. In February, we will hear from E. White Smith extolling the virtues of *Vireya* Rhododendrons. People come from all over the world to see the *Vireyas* at Bovees Nursery, and we have this expertise right here in our Chapter.

There are other areas of expertise that I would like to know more about. I would like to hear a presentation on a total

program for plant nutrition. What do you feed a rhododendron, when and how much? What trace elements are important? What is the effect of each trace element? Is it important to sample your soil? How do you sample it? How often? Where do you send the samples? How do you interpret the results?

How about an open meeting where we all help design a garden with let's say 30 rhododendrons? Which rhodies would you select? I want the garden to be insect resistant, drought tolerant and blooming at least seven months of the year.

We had a excellent session a few years ago when Elsie Skinner taught us how to trim rhodies. How about an advanced trimming course which includes rhodies, maple trees, fruit trees and conifers?

Some of you with special gardening talents please volunteer to speak about them at Chapter Meetings (*and/or write it up for the newsletter...ed*). We would like to hear from you. And if you do not have a special talent, how about developing one? I would like to talk to the expert on Lem's hybrids. I would like to hear more about dwarf rhodies. I would like to learn more about watering systems. I would be willing to tell you about my computer controlled irrigation system that I built in part. I would like to know more about irrigation nozzles. We cannot possibly do this with the few remaining meetings we have this year.

There's so much to learn and so little time. That is what keeps me going.

---Inv Snyder

[Return to the main index](#)

“‘Tis a tale told by an idiot;
Full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.”

■ William Shakespeare
ramblings by Luurt Nieuwenhuis

I was sitting next to the wood stove, stuffing it with dry, low-smoke wood and thinking thoughts about the February newsletter. The news reported that the air quality was stagnant and the temperature outside was 20° F. above zero. My environmentally conscious heat pump was having a great deal of trouble keeping the inside temperature at a livable level. Of course I ... stayed warm.

It did lead me to some thoughts for this month. My R. Yellow Hammer has been flowering on and off all winter. Every time there was a frost the flowers browned and every time it warmed up a little some more flowers would open up. Their demise is the closing picture in the electronic version of this month's Rhododendron Newsletter. <http://www.rhodies.org/newsletter/2007february.pdf>

New York snow birds travel to Florida for the winter and the warmth: Rhody snow birds migrate to Australia and New Zealand for the winter because the southern hemisphere rhody blooming season is just opposite ours--and they grow vireyas outside.

There is a sequence of vireya pictures scattered through the newsletter. The pictures are of a hybrid marked "Taylori x konori (or superbum" that I've had for 20 years in a small pot. This plant is oozes the most nectar of any plant in my meager collection but rarely presents a good photograph of the nectar. There is an American dime in several of the pictures (0.7 inches in diameter) for scale. These pictures were taken over a period of only three days.



I have vireyas too, but I winter them in a greenhouse that is just warm enough to keep them from freezing most years. When I looked in on the plants last week there were 10 big vireyas in bloom. There were bright oranges, pinks, and yellows with a few blooming fuchsias. Vireyas make a nice touch to carry this Northwest rhody lover through the winter when there is little blooming in the yard.



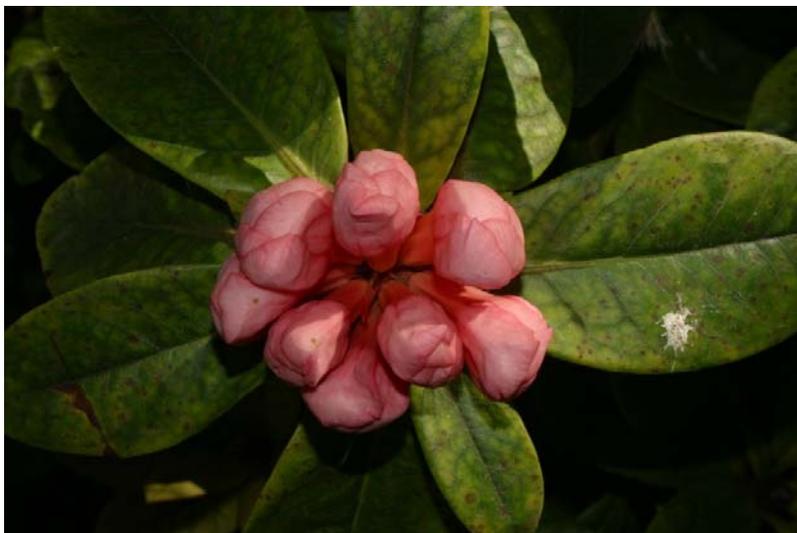
Last night I looked outside. A full moon was low in the crystal-clear sky. Only one thin oblong cloud was visible, all backlit and luminescent, racing in front of the moon in an icy breeze. I noticed some white flakes resting on frozen buckets of water. No, not snow; the sky was clear. They were seeds blown from the Pawlonia tomentosa 100 feet away. The outside thermometer said 14° F and all the rhody

leaves looked drought-shriveled and drooping. With such a cold wind some of the more tender plants are bound to suffer a little but I won't know that until spring arrives. One can't check on how the greenhouse vireyas are doing because frost heaving has frozen the greenhouse door shut.

This brings us to the hardiness ratings of rhododendrons and how those numbers could be based on the wind chill temperatures rather than static thermometer readings. Your thoughts on this topic may be published in this newsletter as soon as you submit them.

With a good weather eye and a grasp of historical trends we gardeners tend to think about the coldest winters, the biggest storms





or the hottest summers and rarely ponder the last year or two. I'm writing this during the cold spell in late January and remember that we usually have a cold spell in the middle of February, shortly after you read this newsletter. We won't get excited about a forecasted hot, dry summer until we're watering the garden during the three months of summer when there is no significant rainfall in the Portland area.

Way back when I was a child, it was colder in the winter and warmer in the summer than now, and I sometimes had to walk a mile through the snow to get to the grade school. That was in the days before the currently popular "global climate change" was upon us.

Right now I could stand a little global warming, or at least a little regional warming. I'd love to get into the greenhouse and admire the vireyas a little bit just to carry me over until the spring blooms open, the garden tours start and the rhody shows arrive. But the door to the greenhouse is frozen shut so I'll just have to satisfy myself with presentations at the chapter meetings.



Note the dime in the center of the flower

E. White Smith's February Portland Chapter meeting topic will be interesting: vireya rhododendrons! Vireyas LIKE to bloom in the greenhouse in the winter. And vireyas have qualities that endear themselves to the rhodaholic. They are brightly colored with intense yellows, glowing oranges, reds and bright pinks and some are extremely fragrant. The working motto is "Global warming? No problem: Just plant vireyas". He has a long history with vireyas and is one of the country's leading experts on their cultivation and propagation. He

and Lucy Sorensen-Smith operate the Bovees Nursery and ship their plants and new introductions world-wide. White has a long history of working with the Rhododendron Species Foundation and Botanical Garden and their vireya collection. This promises to be a very colorful and informative program that no one should miss. It might even persuade you to add several vireyas as house plants. Not enough of our local rhododendron enthusiasts are knowledgeable about vireyas. Come and learn what you've been missing: Come to the February chapter meeting on Thursday, February 21.



Remember, bringing your own name tag to the meetings gets you a second ticket for our plant drawings. But you don't need to have any ticket at all in order to enjoy the refreshments and cookies: You only have to show up. Sometimes, when we have a truly exceptional hostess, you don't even have to show up; the recipes come to you.

---Luurt

[Return to the main index](#)



CAROL BARRETT'S COOKIES were so good that lots of people have requested the recipes and she has been happy to oblige. One of the recipes follows below; the other will be in next month's newsletter.

Princess Bar (Poulsbo Bakery, Washington)

4 cups pastry or all-purpose flour
1 1/4 cups granulated sugar
1 cup brown sugar
1 t salt

1 1/3 cups vegetable shortening
1 t vanilla
1/2 t maple flavoring
2 C shredded coconut
1 egg, slightly beaten
2 cups Date Filling (recipe follows)
1 cup chopped walnuts

Combine flour, sugar, brown sugar and salt in a large bowl. Cut in shortening, vanilla and maple flavoring until mixture resembles coarse crumbs, Stir in coconut. Set aside one third of mixture.

To the remaining two-thirds, add egg and stir until combined. Pat dough into a lightly greased 17 1/2-by-11 1/2-inch jelly roll pan. Spread carefully with Date Filling. Sprinkle walnuts, then reserved crumb mixture.

Bake at 350 degrees for 24 to 28 minutes, or until lightly browned. Cut into bars when cooled. Makes approximately 4 dozen bars.

Date Filling:

3 cups chopped dates (one pound)
3/4 cup brown sugar
2 T corn syrup
Pinch salt
1/2 cup water

Combine dates, brown sugar, corn syrup, salt and water in medium saucepan. Heat over medium heat, stirring often, until dates are soft and mixture has a paste-like consistency. Cool. Eat.

Recipe supplied by Carol Barrett

[Return to the main index](#)

The reviews are in and... A Review of the January program

By Vicki Molina

I think all the critics can agree that Dick "Red" Cavender did a great job. From the first sunset photo Dick had us. He spotted his first *R. occidentale* while driving along Hwy 101 in southern Oregon wowed.

After learning that what the garden centers around the area were calling a weed was *R. occidentale* he knew he was hooked. Indeed he was; this hobby turned into a passion and has gone out of control.

R. occidentale are grown easily from seed and that didn't help to curb his appetite for more, bigger, better and more colorful plants. The fact that they like serpentine soils (which typically start at higher locations) means he had to go to the more out-of-reach areas, but this didn't curb his appetite either. For more on serpentine soils see Mike Oliver's article in the Winter 2007 ARS journal.

It was a treat to see that once upon a time a long while ago (since Dick himself claims to be older than God) he really did have red hair.

His talk took us on a journey into the world of *R. occidentale*, *R. macrophyllum* and *R. ledum*. Not all three appeared in the same photo but there will be more opportunities for Dick to get the elusive photo (especially when he gets proficient in Photoshop - ed.). We saw natural hybrids of *R. macrophyllum* that included a white flower, several beautiful *R. occidentales* and even a natural cross between the two.

Overall, we are able to appreciate and experience some of Dick's enthusiasm for this wonderful species. Thank You Dick! We enjoyed it.

---Vicki Molina

[Return to the main index](#)

THE RHODODENDRON SPECIES FOUNDATION AND BOTANICAL GARDEN is having its annual plant sale on Saturday, April 5, 2008 from 10 AM to 3 PM. I know that none of you are going to be there because that is the day of the Early Show at Crystal Springs, but you can go on Sunday, April 6 from 10 AM to 2 PM. The sale is held in the Corporate Headquarters Parking Lot, and I'm sure that there will be signs to direct your travels.

You can also order plants and seeds by mail. Their distribution lists are on the internet at

<http://www.rsf.citymax.com/catalogs.html>

THE VICTORIA BRANCH of the Australian Rhododendron Society maintains a frequently changing collection of pictures on the internet. The site is worth visiting on a regular basis.

<http://picasaweb.google.com/ARSVic>

ANOTHER INTERESTING, eclectic site worth visiting is

<http://mysite.verizon.net/pnwma/>.

There is a pronunciation guide for Latin names (oriented toward mycological terms), a key for mushroom identification, and bits and pieces of many other nature topics. You can see that some organizations are actively trying to inventory the occurrences of the objects of their affection.

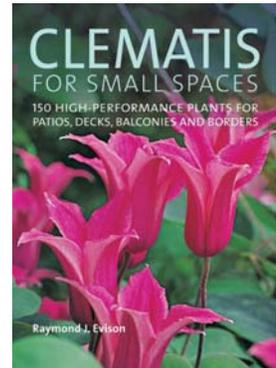
RAIN OR SHINE/LANDSCAPE USA, where our member Vicki Molina now works, is having the following special program at the premises of Rain or Shine on February 22,

2008 at 3 pm. Mr. Evison's schedule precludes his speaking at a chapter meeting, so this will be your only chance to see him.

As Vicki reports:

WE ARE PLEASED TO HAVE Raymond J. Evison from Guernsey Island, United Kingdom on hand at Rain or Shine to talk about his new book: 'Clematis for Small Spaces.'

Raymond Evison, O.B.E., V.M.H., is the owner of The Guernsey Clematis Nursery Ltd. which is the leading producer of young clematis plants in the world. He is also the owner of Raymond J. Evison, Ltd. which has a joint venture with Poulsen Roser A/S for the breeding and development of new clematis for both indoors and the garden.



His work with clematis started at the age of 16 and since then he has introduced more than 100 clematis species and cultivars, which he has developed or bred, to gardeners around the world.

His exhibits at the world famous Chelsea Flower Show have gained him numerous Royal Horticultural Society Gold Medals over many years. In 2004 he was awarded the Society's Reginald Cory Memorial Cup for developing new clematis cultivars.



In 1995 he was awarded the Society's Victoria Medal of Honour (V.M.H.) for his outstanding service to British Horticulture and he was made an Officer of the Order of The British Empire (O.B.E.) by Queen Elizabeth II in 2000 for his services to Horticulture in Guernsey. The Royal Horticultural Society made him a Vice President in 2005, a position which he still holds. He is currently the President of the Guernsey Botanical Trust and is involved with horticultural conservation

work, both on the island of Guernsey and in the U.K.

He lectures widely throughout the world but his greatest passion is to search for clematis in the wild, especially in China.

The presentation will be given at the premises of Rain or Shine on February 22, 2008 at 3pm.

Rain or Shine is located at 13126 NE Airport Way in Portland Oregon 97230. Cookies and Coffee will be provided, but RSVP if possible for this free event with: vicki.molina@malloryco.com or phone (503) 255-1981."

[Return to the main index](#)



THE HOME AND GARDEN SHOW is this month. If you haven't signed up to help at the Portland Chapter ARS booth, contact Dick Cavender. Details on this event are in the January Rhododendron Newsletter.

E. White Smith, the speaker for the February chapter meeting. White just loves vireyas and he's going to tell you why on Thursday the 21st of February.

Be sure to come and see all the pretty pictures!



Rime-rimmed rhododendron Yellow Hammer [Return to the main index](#)

CHAPTER OFFICERS

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Vice President: **Kath Collier**

Secretary: **Carol McCarthy** 245-3533

Treasurer: **Dick Cavender** 625-6331

Past President: **Kathy Van Veen** 777-1734

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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

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CRYSTAL SPRINGS RHODODENDRON GARDEN

Bob MacArthur 360-256-2522

Beverly Watkins 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.

Newsletter

Rhododendron News is the newsletter of the Portland Chapter and is mailed by non-profit class postage from Portland, OR. *Rhododendron News* is sent to current members in good standing. Articles may be copied or reprinted with credit given to the author(s) and *Rhododendron News*. Views expressed herein do not imply Portland Chapter or ARS endorsement. Staff:

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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:

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

[Return to the main index](#)