





chapter, and gardens is a task that really takes commitment by everyone. The good news is that marketing can be a fun and easy thing to do. For instance, do you have a Portland ARS embroidered sweatshirt? It was amazing how many people stop Dave and me when we travel and ask us about the ARS when we wear our vests and sweatshirts. Talking about the society, gardens, and our local chapter can make a long flight go by rather quickly.

Several years ago a small ad hoc committee was formed (Vicki and Victor Molina and Kath and Thomas Collier) to begin the process of drafting a marketing plan for the Portland Chapter. The embroidered clothing was just one idea suggested in the report. Another idea was also pilot tested from the plan--that is the idea of using a host to help new members successfully navigate the gauntlet of entering their trusses in a show.

The pilot test for this idea was a big success. Not only did it make the process much easier and friendlier for new folks to participate in the show, but it also made the process a bit easier for those who routinely enter the show. How? Imagine not knowing how to do basic grooming, where to find the bottles and cans, or how to fill out the registration form, and then having someone help you? Imagine trying to help a newbie with A LOT of questions, while desperately trying to process your own entries on time. The idea of using a host was a win-win and worked great! It is something that can easily be done at any show. If the process of participating in a show is easy and fun, we might just snag a new member or two, or give away a ribbon to someone who just might want to come back and help in the gardens or join the chapter.

The nice thing about this host job was that it did not require a lot of personal experience and knowledge. Just about anyone who has participated in the show could do the job which includes sharing a few tips on grooming, helping fill out the entry form, finding bottles, supplies, and tags... you know the basics. If you are interested in helping to host at one of the shows be sure to contact one of the show chairs. I'm sure they would be thrilled if someone could help out a bit on Saturday morning when most of the newbies proudly bring in their best bloom to compete.

A follow-up meeting of Region 4 Chapter representatives is scheduled for 11 a.m., August 2 at Papa's Pizza Restaurant in Eugene, Oregon. Chapter officers are most welcome to attend. Please feel free to send me any comments and suggestions. THANKS!

---Kath

## JENKINS ESTATE DAMAGE

*Well, it was exciting, when it happened, but now it is a mess. On June 19, during coffee break, a huge old red oak fell in the Jenkin's Estate Rhododendron Garden, taking another sizable fir tree down with it. They were over 50 feet high and the red oak tip ended up in the driveway. The Tualatin Valley Parks and Recreation Department (which owns the garden property) came in with equipment, including a crane, to cut up and remove the trees. A third tree, a dead fir, was removed at the same time--as it was not safe. The volunteers could not work in the garden until June 26, when we had a meeting with the head gardener and an administrator for the Parks Department.*

*Many rhodies were crushed, dozens were partially de-limbed. TVARS volunteers have taken dozens of cuttings to prevent loss of specimen plants. Pruning, raking and picking up debris are our current big jobs. We plan to re-plant this fall.*

*Our volunteer group meets at the Jenkins Estate Garden Thursday mornings Nine to Noon, with a coffee break. Anyone who has time to help us out with the mess would be most welcome. Directions: Go west on Farmington road from Beaverton to Grabhorn road signal, which is about 10 blocks past the 200 block. Turn left up the hill and take the first turn on the right. We will be organizing a week-end workday in the second or third weekend in July. Call 503-297-2805 (Helen) for details, after July 4.*

---from Vicki Molina

## --SITTING BACK AND WATCHING THE GARDEN GROW:

---*Luurt Nieuwenhuis*

We first saw our present home site 18 years ago. It was late spring and grass and weeds were growing with wild abandon. Actually, it was an empty lot and the weeds were as high as an elephant's eye: But it had potential.

We borrowed a couple of lawnmowers (gas powered walk-behinds) and went to inventory what we had bought. With two people mowing it took 15 hours. The entire place had one 60 year old fir tree a small Japanese plum tree and nothing else older than the current season's growth on it. The mowing process was repeated a number of times during the first summer while we struggled to get all the various permits necessary to subdue the property. Eventually we moved in on what was still totally bare ground.

We have several times had a yard full of rhododendrons. Just before moving to this present location, we had rescued a number of large rhododendrons from a local shopping center that was undergoing renovation. So we moved what we had available onto our new property.

I have a tendency to wear out just thinking about digging up massive sections of rocky ground in order to plant large specimens of botanicals. One of our earlier gardens had taught us that rhodies can be very happy in pure bark dust or sawdust. So we would put as big as a 300 pound root ball into the back of the pickup truck, drive over to the property, and slide it out onto the ground. After a couple of days work there was a line of rhodies on the ground along one of the fence lines. Then we ordered delivery of a load of bark dust and covered all of the root balls in a deep layer of bark. Now, 18 years later, only two of these original rhodies have died (of old age, perhaps); they were never dug into the ground and only once in the intervening years did they ever receive a booster of bark dust burial.

The transformation of a bare lot of wasteland to a soul-satisfying garden has been a learning experience. The whole yard has been an exercise of get-

ting the most out of a small investment. We got some trees, mostly two year old bare rootings from the local arbor society, and put them in various places with the hope that eventually they would provide shade for the rhodies. We laid out several areas for planting rhodies, areas that looked more like strip plantings than English landscape gardens. And we left enough room between the rows that the riding lawnmower (which was the first essential garden tool that we bought) could cut the grass in two passes. Rhodies were planted several feet apart. Any further and the plantings looked so barren that we could get discouraged just looking at the little plants.

The greater Portland area has two distinct climate seasons; nine months of wet and three months of dry. Unfortunately the dry seasons correspond to the summer months and that means constant watering. If you have many plants and have to pay the prevailing city water rates then you can't afford to water everything. That leaves installing a massively complex drip irrigation system or spending hours of hose watering. But eventually little plants grow up to be big plants and the watering schedule becomes a little more flexible but none the less essential.

There are two main ways to expand your rhody landscape. One is to buy plants but that means that you are limited to the variety of plants commonly available in the commercial market. The other is to grow your own. Early on I discovered the ARS seed exchange and also found a few friends who really wanted someone else to grow the seeds that their crosses produced. Seeds are a time consuming way of expanding your plant collection, but there are a lot of seeds in a handful of seed pods. We still have a dozen occidentales (they smell so good) from one seed collection and a number of some other crosses that were exceptionally good looking or exceptionally hard-to-kill.

I also tried rooting cuttings and grafting some onto understock. Our first propagation attempts involved wooden boxes with plastic tents over the top to keep them from drying out. Once a day the box would be opened up and get a dose from the hose. We also made

a number of rooting attempts using gallon jugs, similar to the dome-pot technique that was given in the March 2007 newsletter. Many things failed to root and rotted but fortunately some varieties are very easy to root so there were enough



COUNT THEM --7 petals per floret. This rhody blooms seven petal flowers consistently from year to year

successes to keep me propagating. Grafting had an even lower success rate but that skill has also improved with time. The next to last cutting bench was in a shady place, 3 by 8 feet and 3 feet high. The spray was on a fixed timer, 5 seconds per hour. The success rate went up significantly but root and stem rots were an ongoing problem with many varieties. This bench finally developed terminal disintegration after 10 years and now has been replaced with version 3 of salvaged materials construction.

The current construction consists of three railroad ties covered by various layers of mesh with 10 inch sides. Topping this are salvaged sliding windows so that the bench can be accessed from any number of locations and roofed with more salvaged windows. Water is provided by very fine mist nozzles (yard sale items) and several time delay switches set to provide several seconds of

mist every few hours. I've decided that most of my rotted rootings can be blamed on too much water in the medium and not enough water in the air above the medium. The rooting mix consists of mostly perlite and a little peat moss mixed in.

The main reason that I've found for grafting is that sometimes cuttings become available when the timing for successful rooting is less than optimum or that the cutting is of one of the difficult to root varieties. My grafted calophytum is five feet tall and has flowered for the last two years while the roxianum oreonastes is now four years old.

As the yard developed new growing beds were laid out with lawnmower paths between them and just enough space between the plants to keep the bed from looking too bare. Now that a lot of these small plants have grown to huge size, some of these paths are so narrowed that it is hard to walk through them and the ground gets so little light that grass no longer grows in them. Additionally, some of the beds did not get thinned out in a timely manner. I remember early on, visiting Gordon Wylie while he was still running the ARS seed exchange. He showed us one of his seedling beds where a three foot by five foot bed had over 30 three foot tall rhodies



A different grex from the same cross also has 7 petals

growing in it. Now I have some beds that show the same density of plants. When they were small, I would fit in a plant wherever there was a little space. Now that they have grown up, there is no place to replant them elsewhere and they look too scrawny to give away. Besides, the

shredder is not a good home for a rhody unless it has bloomed and been evaluated for at least three years; and by then I've grown attached to each of them...

up into a 40 foot tall *Pawlonia tomentosa* with a trunk diameter of over two feet. The flowers are so fragrant and fascinating that when I saw a seed offering in the 1993 ARS seed exchange for "*Pawlonia excelsis*" I thought that I would like to see what other varieties of this Chinese Empress Tree looked like. I still haven't found any reference in any horticultural books for *P. excelsis*, and the seeds grew up into *P. tomentos*. There is now a garden task scheduled for several times a year to weed out blackberries, maples, pawlonias, and other volunteer trees and plants that try to sneak into the garden plan.

The animal world must also be considered in the growth of a landscape. It is a truism that the insects will always be with you and they will always try to eat your plants. We put up squirrel feeders that masqueraded as bird feeders and attracted lots of finch-sized birds as well as the squirrels and less desirable rodents looking for free meals: Possums had a disgusting habit of crawling under the out buildings and dying smelly deaths: Raccoons dined on figs with an occasional koi for dessert; And then there were the rabbits. It took a few years before the leftover Easter Bunny-rabbits from the surrounding neighborhood finally discovered us. They eat azaleas, tulips, lilies, roses and just last month chopped a 3 year old seedling of *Magnolia hypoleucum* in two, but they look so cute



The 7 petal plant in full bloom last year.  
The cross is Top Banana x Sunspray

When I first started planting the rhodies, I'd look in the books and saw descriptions such as "five feet tall in ten years". I believed them and planted accordingly. Now after fifteen years the Sir Charles Lemon, planted four feet from the house, is twelve feet tall and leans eight feet into the yard. A seedling *augustinii* of the same age is even taller and spreads just as much. I have often admired the old rhododendron gardens with their giant *Loderis* that one could walk under. Now I see that it is only a matter of time and a willingness to sacrifice the smaller rhododendrons that are crowding out the base of the future giants. One of the most important skills a gardener can exhibit in a maturing garden is the possession of a powerful and effective leaf and branch and stem shredder and an unwavering willingness to use it (I offer my personal thanks to Peter Kendall and his careful application of the CSRG chain saw for this insight).

Plants seem to abhor a vacuum and will try to fill in any unoccupied spaces. A few years after we moved onto the property we saw what looked like a giant sunflower growing up through the frame of a boat trailer. It didn't look quite right, so we decided to let it mature and moved the trailer. Now, after fifteen years it has grown



A vulcan-like red throws an occasional 6 petalled flower

that they have been granted endangered and protected status (except when dealing with the dog: His dispensation is that if he can catch them he can keep them). As the garden matures, more and more wildlife moves out of the developing neighborhood and into our rhododendron sanctuary.



A young magnolia shows severe leaf burn. An entire spring of cloudy weather and temperatures not higher than the mid-70's did not prepare this plant to withstand ONE day of sunny 100 degree sunshine. This picture was taken the following day. Rhody new growth suffered similar damage in one day too.

More can be said. Any long-time rhodoholics can talk at length about their gardens and the personal histories of the plants that inhabit them. But the point of this tale is slightly different. Turning a wasteland into a garden is a constant and determined battle to beat back the forces of untamed savagery.

Enjoyable reading is available on the topic of the development of the European architectural gardens and later the English landscape gardens. Capability Brown and Harry Repton and many others showed that delightful gardens could be created by determined efforts to overcome the forces of chaos and putting the stamp of man's efforts on the landscape. In a small way, I feel that I've been doing this on my own place.

## WATCHING THE GARDEN GROW PART 2

I know of another example of the process of the taming of nature. This one is demonstrated at large public rhododendron garden. The project started at about the same time as the American Rhododendron Society was founded, and in fact started as the society's rhody test garden. The city leadership[ at the time agreed that the society could have the use of an underdeveloped park and lake area for its activities.

There is a long history of famous names in the early ARS that worked at this garden- planting, weeding, pulling invasive blackberry vines, building paths, shoring up the edge of the waterways to make walking paths that would not sink away as well as the usual garden upkeep that any garden needs to have done. They replaced the native weeds and brush with rhododendrons of all manner and description. The



result was a showplace of man's mastery over his environment and his ability to create an oasis of beauty and delight.

Here let me interject a short dissertation drawn from geomorphology and limnology. A lake starts out as a dip in the landscape that fills with water. The soil around the shores of the lake stay wetter throughout the seasons and as a result plants that like the higher moisture content thrive on the shores of the lake. The water that flows into the lake carries a load of sediment, sediment that settles out when the water movement slows down in the lake. The same sedimentation process can also be seen in lakes created by man-made dams.

With the "maturing" of the lake come plants which grow at the water's edge and in shallow water. Rushes and reeds are prime examples of

this. Generations of plants live, die, and decompose at the shoreline and with their decomposition add their organic remains to the deposited sediments.

The lake shrinks and becomes shallower, marshes increase and water-loving shrubs and trees invade the shore areas, and eventually the lake is entirely filled in and disappears. This process happens all over the world. Left to its own, this is the progression of nature.



Now we end our digression and return to the topic of taming nature and creating the garden of our desires. Our beautiful show garden represents the vision of a number of the giants of the rhododendron community who saw the opportunity to create a garden that would be pleasing to the eye, bend nature to the aesthetic enjoyment of man, and thwart the forces striving to establish an untamed wilderness.

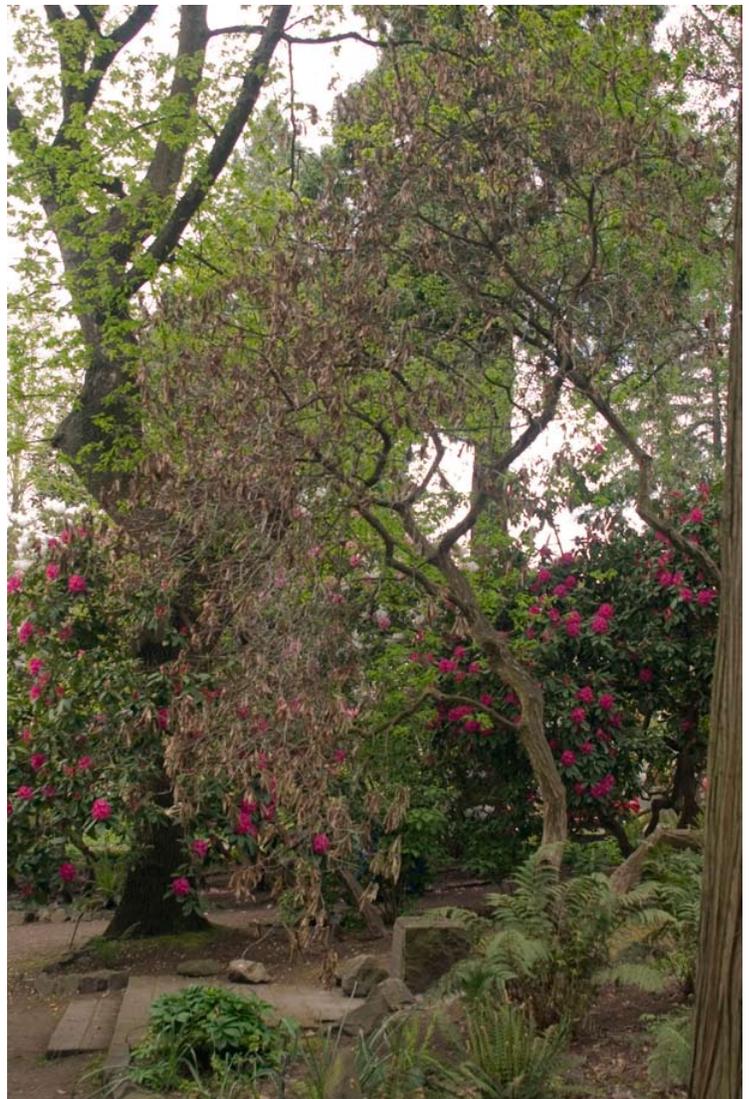
They did this by removing certain plants that did not fit into their garden vision and by removing alien invading pest plants. They did this by removing certain forms of animal life that were not consistent with that garden vision, life such as mosquitoes, root weevils, nutrias and skunks. They created a beautiful garden that was a delight for people to visit.

A garden such as this represents a conscious effort to stave off some of the 'natural' forces that tend to destroy a landscape garden. Constant effort is required to sustain that vision.

A nihilistic movement has entered the world stage that asserts that anything that man does in nature is undesirable. The impact of this movement has also been felt at CSRG. Now trees, and especially "native" trees, are declared to have rights. Most of the rhodies are not native and as

such have fewer rights. The banks of the lake and the creeks flowing into it must now have "native" plants growing along them. The reeds and rushes along the lake's edge must be allowed to grow and spread and fill in the lake because that is "natural". Trees along the water's edge that fall into the water must be allowed to stay there because it is "natural". The nutrias that live at the lake's edge must be allowed to live and chew at the base of the trees until they fall down into the water.

The banks of the lake were once stabilized through many hours of hard work and the recycling of many pieces of old concrete paving slabs, a reuse that is now officially unapproved. The insects that eat on the rhodies and the fungi that kill them must be allowed to run their course because we "mustn't harm the working of the natural world"; no spraying is permitted because something might be killed or the spray might reach the water and harm the non-existent fish. What little garden is



left must be wheelchair accessible no matter what has to be cut down and paved over to make that possible.

The bogginess in parts of the garden must be allowed and is considered to be a natural process and thus cannot be alleviated. As a result, one of two rhododendron *Cynthias* that were 40 years old when they were moved into this showplace at the beginning of the garden development in 1950 and had lived for almost 100 years has died from the effects of poor drainage.

The vision of the show garden, once the purvey of plantsmen who loved rhododendrons and desired to create an aesthetic presentation of what man could accomplish for the common enjoyment, is slowly being turned into a vision of people who desire to see that no evidence of man's handiwork remains to "mar" the natural order. Least of all a garden of beautiful non-native plants that many people strive continually to make beautiful in



Note that there is a person at the lower left corner of the picture, next to a plaque dedicated to the *Cynthia* plantings. The brown tree above and to the right of the blooming *Cynthia* is the larger now-dead *Cynthia* that has graced the garden for so many years.

If you haven't ever read the dedication on this plaque on the left side, here is the text



spite of the "natural" order of things

The moral is this: Create your showpiece garden for your own enjoyment while you can. Build your fences high and hide behind them. When others can dictate what you must do, your vision of what you can achieve will likely be curtailed.

To paraphrase Benjamin Franklin wrote, "The price of gardening is eternal vigilance."

----*Luurt*

#### DEDICATION

Here in the charm of this exquisite garden living beauty may ever dwell in full glory.

While world wars flared and flagged there grew and flourished in Eastmoreland two handsome rhododendron specimens of the variety named *Cynthia*.

In their resplendent beauty they had responded to the sentiment of joyous living of a gracious lady whose home they had adorned, and annually they were a delight to thousands; they who lived nearby and they who sojourned from afar to behold.

On the twenty-first day of October, 1950, when these plants were forty years old, they were transplanted hither and were accorded the distinctive honor of marking the initial planting and establishment of this featured rhododendron garden.

American Rhododendron Society  
Claude I. Sersanous, president

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sic transit gloria mundi

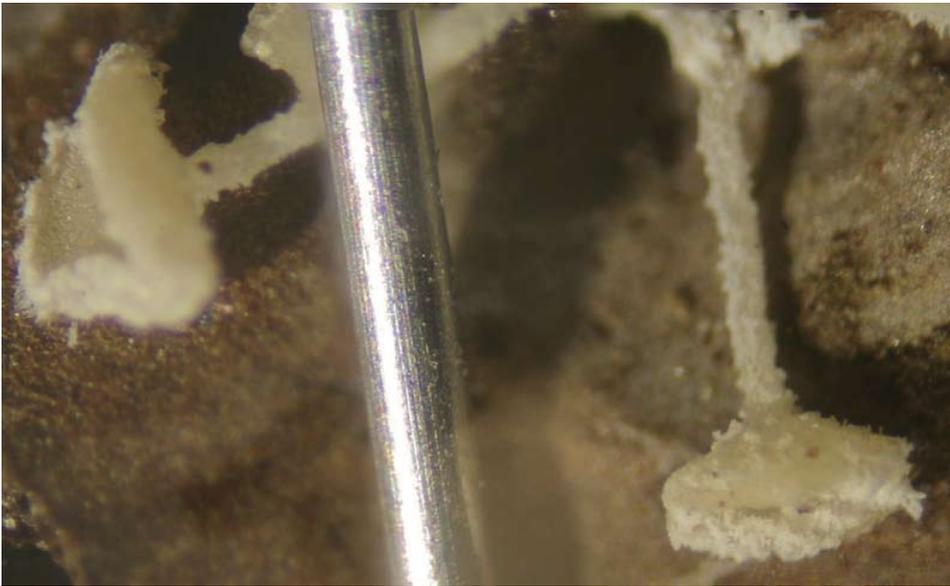


Now its  
time for the  
closing  
pictures



The top picture shows a 1/4 inch diameter branch of a rhododendron with minute mushrooms growing on it.

The picture on the right shows a closeup of one of the mushroom clumps



The metal spike in this picture is 0.25 millimeters in diameter (about 1/1000 of an inch).

The cap diameter is about 1/2 millimeter diameter.

The mushroom is probably *Dasyscyphus vrigineus*

all photos by

Luurt Nieuwenhuis, © 2008





## CHAPTER OFFICERS

(All area codes are 503 unless noted)

President: Kath Collier

Vice President: Mike Domaschofsky

Secretary: Carol McCarthy

Treasurer: Dick Cavender

Past President: Irv Snyder

## BOARD MEMBERS

Through 6/30/10

Maria Stewart, Mike Stewart, Dave Collier

Ray Girton, Kathy Van Veen

Through 6/30/09

Steve Hopkins, Brenda Ziegler, Steve Kaminski

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## GARDEN CHAIRS

### CRYSTAL SPRINGS RHODODENDRON GARDEN

Bob MacArthur

Beverly Watkins

### CECIL & MOLLY SMITH GARDEN

Ginny Mapes

### 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.

contact: Ginny Mapes

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.

## Newsletter

Rhododendron News is the newsletter of the Portland Chapter and is mailed by non-profit class postage 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 articles

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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Maria Stewart ([maria@dovernursery.com](mailto:maria@dovernursery.com))

### 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 map, 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)