

Newsletter of the Portland Chapter of the
American Rhododendron Society
Volume 53 number 8 August, 2008

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luck
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mation

ITS SUMMER
only a few events are scheduled

Tualatin Valley chapter potluck
At the house of Dr. Forrest Bump
August 10

Smith Garden potluck
At Smith Garden
August 21

Hardy Plant Society sale
At the Portland Expo Center
September 20, 21



*Past President's
---Irv Snyder---
Message*

*HAIKU
by Peter Kendall*

*The buzz of insects
engulfed by a summer's sun
and the chickadee
A soft morning light
from the lifeless snag, the shriek
of its hawk*

SOME THOUGHTS from the Past President

By Irv Snyder

This year we had some extraordinary rhododendron blossoms. I am not a fertilization expert, but something we did must have worked. I fertilize in late February or early March with Lilly Miller Rhododendron, Evergreen and Azalea Fertilizer, 10-5-4. I apply the same fertilizer about mid June. Then in September I spray the leaves with Alaska Morbloom liquid fertilizer, 0-10-10. To this liquid spray I add a small pinch per gallon of Scotts' Peter's Professional Soluble Trace Elements Mix, also known as STEM. STEM is not available in most garden stores, but you may find it in professional nursery supply stores. I found it at the Wilbur-Ellis Company store in Woodburn. One bag will last you for a lifetime.

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In February I spray the mildew susceptible rhodies with the following baking soda formula I was given by Bob MacArthur:

For one gallon of water:

2 tablespoons of baking soda

Make a paste of this mixture and then add to about half the water in the sprayer and mix.

Then add 1 ½ tablespoons of white vinegar to the water in the sprayer.

Add the remaining water and mix.

Mix with one tablespoon of canola oil and one tablespoon of Murphy oil

Spray this mixture on the leaves, trying to get both sides of the leaves. Spray these rhodies again in a month with the same baking soda formula. Then a month or six weeks later spray them again with a systemic mildew spray. This is easy to find since all the rose sprays for mildew seem to work. This is all I seem to need to keep the mildew down. I was rewarded this year with thirteen magnificent white blossoms on a four year old R. rex which was three feet tall. These blossoms alone made all this work worthwhile.



President Roosevelt
photo by Irv & Jan Snyder 2008

With all these beautiful blossoms, let's say you decide to enter the flower show held each Mother's Day. No, with all these handsome blossoms you must enter the flower show. You win several ribbons, but each year one of your Jean Marie blossoms looks most gorgeous but someone enters a larger, even more gorgeous Jean Marie blossom. Soon this becomes a challenge. O.K., here are some tips. It helps a lot if you have multiple Jean Marie plants. Sometime about the end of July after the new growth is mature, select some areas on the sunny side of the plant, some others on the shady side of the plant, some near the top of the plant, and some near the bottom of the plant. Trim the plant so that you will have only one truss near the end of the branch. You do this at multiple locations on the plant so that you will have areas of the plant that are in their peak bloom early and other areas are at their peak at a later time. Then next spring as your prize buds are starting to fatten up, if another less worthy bud looks like it is going to infringe upon your prize trusses, cut them off. With a little luck, you will be rewarded with some trophy winning trusses.

---Irv

The Tualatin Valley Chapter annual August Potluck Picnic and Cutting Exchange

PC ARS
August 2008



will be held Sunday, August 10 at 1 pm

Dr. and Rosemary Bump's Home

3749 NW Thatcher Road

Forest Grove, OR 97116

We will hold our traditional post-feast cutting exchange. Please bring a selection of your favorite, unusual or latest rhododendron cuttings. Please write your name along with the plant name on the plastic bag. (It is good to know the source of the cutting after memory fades.) A dash of water with three cuttings in a plastic sandwich bag helps keep them fresh and cool until they reach home.



Etta Burrows

photo by Irv & Jan Snyder 2008

A quickie round-table tutorial will be offered on propagation techniques as a refresher or as confidence reinforcement. Other ARS Chapter members, friends and prospective members are especially welcomed.

If there is a special rhody you have always wanted, Dr. Bump probably has it and might be willing to give you cuttings.

For further answers to your questions contact ginny@coho.net.

--Ginny Mapes

Smith Garden Potluck

Thursday August 21, 2008 - 6 PM

Cecil & Molly Smith Garden - St Paul, OR

for driving directions see:

<http://rhodies.org/smith/directions.htm>

Bring a dish to share and enjoy a leisurely evening at the garden. Portland Chapter - this is your garden, and this is the closest thing to an August Chapter meeting that we hold. So come out and have a good time.

--Donna Sell

The Hardy Plant Society of Oregon

is holding its annual Autumn Plant Sale & Garden Festival

September 20th & 21st, 2008

Portland Expo Center

Saturday & Sunday 10 am - 3 pm

The new location means twice as much floor space with nearly 100 vendors: unique plants from uncommon nurseries garden artists with functional and ornamental art demonstrations at our education stage garden community resources with advice and ideas discounted books access by MAX...

.Free admission

For more information contact Linny Stovall by

Phone: 503-245-5280

Email: linnydesign@coho.net

Web Page: www.hardyplantsociety.org

Western Region District 4 Meeting,

June 21, 2008

Marjene MacIntyre reporting

Attendees: Ann Gross (district director), Helen & Galen Baxter, Ann Blizzard, Mike Bones, Liz Hultin, Jim Smith, Linda and Gary Swarz, , Bob & Marjene MacIntyre, Wally Reed, Shirley Rock, Don Smart

Ann Gross introduced the new Chapter Presidents:

Eugene: Helen Baxter

Portland: Kath Collier (not present)

Southwestern: Liz Hultin

Tualatin Valley: Bronson Adams (not present)

Shirley Rock, ARS Membership Chairperson was introduced.

Distribution of Chapter Newsletters

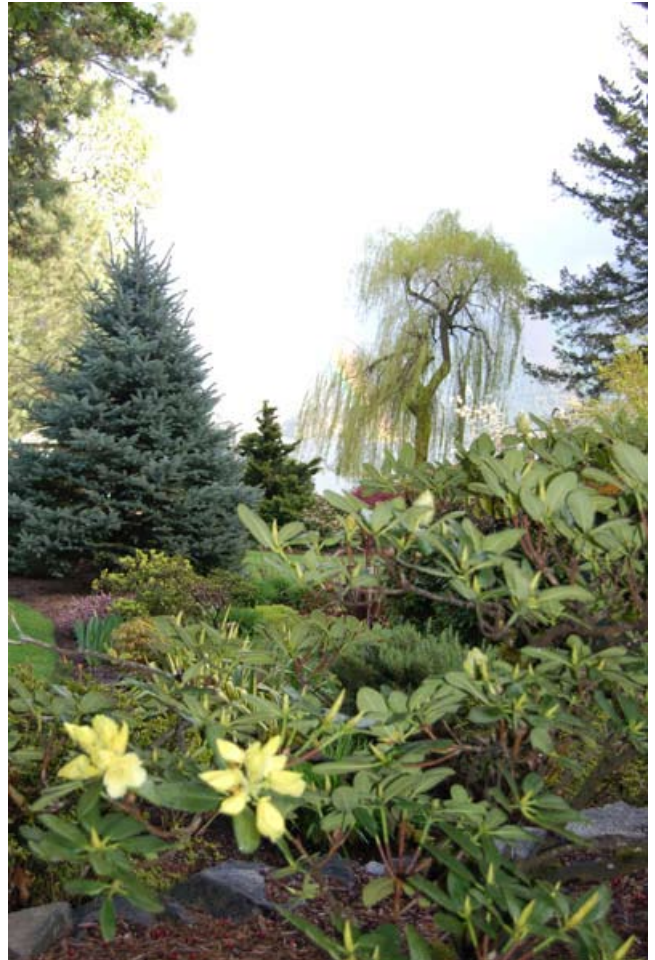
Remind members that they can access newsletters of many other ARS Chapters through the ARS website www.rhododendron.org

Membership

Shirley Rock is currently gathering information from different chapters to get ideas on what has worked for membership. There are 70 chapters within the ARS and she has heard from chapters throughout the country. Shirley would like to put together an information packet that will be distributed to chapters that includes ideas and examples.

There are two phases of membership.

1. Gaining new members
2. Retaining the existing members



A view of Snug Harbor, the residence of Irv & Jan Snyder (its a big place that's for sale)

In order to stay alive, organizations and their members must be willing to change. Following is a summary of the ideas shown by Shirley and those discussed in an open forum regarding membership:

- It is important to be visible in the community
- Have information booths at local fairs and Home shows
- Provide speakers for local organizations
- Have New Member Packets which include By Laws, Membership Lists, schedule of future meetings and events for the chapter and information particular to your chapter
- Assign a mentor to new members to remind them of events, etc.
- Feature new members in the Newsletter – write a bio
- Feature long time members in the Newsletter
- Hold an Art Show: Siuslaw Chapter coordinated with their local schools and had a children’s art show at the Rhododendron Show. Each child was asked to draw a picture of a rhododendron. All the pictures were displayed on a wall at the show. It was a huge success.
 - Contact FFA, Scouts and other local youth groups to get the youth involved
 - Siuslaw Chapter has a Rhody Patch for recognition of Scouts that participate in events
 - At the show, have a table where people can ask questions of an expert
 - Have a hand out available at the shows and anywhere you have an information booth
 - Give each member a bookmark that has the year’s schedule of activities
 - Keep the meetings fun and educational
 - At the meetings include activities that encourage audience participation
 -
- [Ed note: Portland Chapter Newsletter will welcome any submission generated in response to the above suggestions. Please fatten our news pages.]

Show Judges

There was a discussion on the lack of training and consistency for judges from chapter to chapter. Consistency is needed. Training is needed. Is this something that can be done at the Regional and National Level?

Participants liked the idea of Certified Judges.

The next meeting will be held Saturday, August 2, 11:00 am at Papa’s Pizza. 1577 Coburg Road, Eugene

Another Editor’s Rant

By Luurt Nieuwemhuis

Last month’s electronic newsletter showed pictures of the flowers of two grexes of a cross of Top Banana x Sunspray, both yellows. What made these two plants interesting is that both had flowers with seven petals. I checked the photo archives and found that the one plant that flowered last year had seven-petal flowers in all of its trusses. This is interesting. Has it happened before? Will it happen again? Is this a

genetic change that is inheritable? Only time will tell

What is going on here? My book collection is large but finite and doesn't always provide all the answers. I looked in the large technical "Flora of the Pacific Northwest" by Hitchcock & Cronquist (1973) and it mentions the five-lobed petals that we're used to seeing in our flowers. The "Hardy Rhododendron Species" by Cullen (2005) mentions that petals sometimes appear in other than five-fold patterns.

But why does the number of petals change? Especially when I look at successive years and I see the seven-petal flowers each year in different grexes I have to wonder whether there may be something genetic going on. Then this year the last bud to open on the plant had "only" six petals on each flower.



immature seed capsule
5-lobed
R. occidentale
photo ©LGN 2008

Previously I have mentioned that my petaliod double azalea flowers would sometimes throw large single flowers. In addition, our greenhouse has several vireyas in it that like to bloom in early spring. There are usually a few laggard buds that open during the heat of the summer and quite often these flowers have sharply divided and deformed flower petals, something that I never see on these plants in the early spring bloom.

July is a little bit early to collect seed capsules, but with a razor blade and a microscope I could still tell how the internal structure was going to develop. R. Cameo, several others and the seven-petal flowers all showed the development of ten divisions in the developing ovary. I saw no correlation between the number of petals and the number of divisions in the ovary. Boy, that was close. No. Wait. Oops.

According to Cullen, the seed capsule doesn't always have ten compartments either.

Okay. It's time for more field work. It's easy to come up with the wrong result when that's the answer that you're expecting. I checked half a dozen different occidentale plants and they all had five-fold divisions. Then I looked at a few different triflorums. These ovaries were very nice pentagrams with five capsules in a star shape. A difference appeared in the elepidote capsules. Here the number varied even between different capsules collected on one plant.

Remember Gregor Mendel, the good monk who supplied his fellow supplicants with many variations of pea soup? He was credited in my high school science class with discovering the laws of inheritance via discrete characteristics. He grew tall pea plants and short pea plants and sometimes crossed the tall with the short. He showed that tallness in pea plants is a dominant characteristic and shortness is a recessive characteristic. Cross tall with tall and you get tall offspring. A cross with two shorts produces short offspring. Cross a tall with a short and you get all tall plants: But cross two of these

immature seed capsule
5-lobed
various triflora varieties
note the scales on the outside
photo ©LGN 2008



offspring (what we would call F1) and the output is three tall and one short. The explanation is that shortness is a recessive characteristic and only expresses itself if the contribution from each parent includes the recessive (shortness) characteristic. Mendel dealt with traits because an understanding of genes and chromosomes had not yet been developed. Shorthand notes like Tt crossed with Tt produces TT, Tt, tT, and tt with the presence of a dominant T controlling the results became a way of looking at crossbreeding.

Now for the bad news: Mendel lied. Well, that may be a little strong; let's just say that he fudged his study results to come up with such a neat relationship. If you ever played mix and match coin flipping games you will have seen that the results will eventually approach the statistical predictions but only after a great number of trials.

Set your hearts at ease. I still believe in genetics and not much in the inheritance of acquired characteristics (also known as Lamarkianism): But as can be seen by the appearance of five, six, or seven-petal flowers on the same plant and the occasional single and double flower on the same plant where those variations are NOT consistently confined to the same branch on a plant in successive years, something is going on other than Brother Mendel stirring the pot of dominant and recessive characteristics

Actual development from embryo to full-grown adult at anything above the bacterial level involves a much more complicated scenario. It's still controlled by genetics but further studies have shown that with more chromosomes and genes a whole extra layer of complexity emerges. This is the realm of gene masking and gene activation or promotion.

Every cell except sex cells and lymphocytes in an organism contains a full complement of chromosomes and genes and that complement is the same for all the cells in the organism. But an eye is not

the same as a nerve
is not the same as a liver. What is missing is the mechanism whereby genes are activated and deactivated. Development starts, then stops and a different gene process takes over the development. It might take the presence of three or four genes to activate a fourth gene. Sometimes a gene fails to get turned on or turned off in a timely manner. This is a very complicated process described in more detail in advanced texts on embryology. As an aside, those who wish for more technical quotes can find them at the end

immature seed capsule
8-lobed pod from a petalled flower
of Top banana x Sunspray
note that the outside of the pod is covered with sticky glands but not scales photo ©LGN 2008



immature seed capsule
elepidote hybrids
6 compartments in upper pic
7 compartments in lower
photo ©LGN 2008



Okay, flower petals may have variation. How about seed pods? Again, the references are there but they don't make a big deal out of it; most of you probably never noticed that there was anything unusual going on. There was a minor challenge in checking with the rhodies in our yard: Once you deadhead, there is no way that you can really tell what the seed pods were like. Fortunately, deadheading is a summer long enterprise at our house so there were still some seedpods scattered around: they were green and immature and sometimes sterile but still possessing internal structure.



immature seed capsule
 10-lobed elepidote
 photo ©LGN 2008
 for ease of viewing, let the
 cut pod dry out for sev-
 eral hours first

There were some surprises: Six occidentale plants all had five-lobed seed pods; several other azaleas did too: Some triflorum lepidotes all had five-lobed seed pods and the external pod shape showed a distinct five-fold symmetry. Then I got to the elepidotes. Here variation abounded. Two trusses with a total of twelve seed pods from a fortunei had seven compartments in each pod except one which had eight! Six pods from Maryke x (fortunei x Loderi "Pink Diamond") trusses had ten each. Several other plants produced a six-compartment pod. Mars and Mrs. E.C. Sterling had eight compartments and still another plant had eleven divisions. One six-petal late blooming flower hybrid had eight compartments in the pod.

At the moment and without further investigations, it would appear that the elepidotes (no scales) have the greater potential for multiple flower petals and unusual seed pods while both the azaleas and elepidotes have the potential for petaloid doubles. But the lepidotes (scales) are not totally left out of the potential for variation (even though we haven't discussed it in this article).

Finally, I went for the hard-core data search. H.H. Davidian, in his monumental four volume tome "Rhododendron Species", 1989 mentions in the identification keys that in the lepidotes, the capsule divisions for the cameliaflorum series ranges from five to ten compartments and for the maddenian series the range is five to twelve. In the elepidotes the ovary ranges from six to eighteen compartments in the fortuneis. Davidian says that the williamsonianums and degronium heptamerum have flower lobes of six or seven: Falconeri and grande series have eight to ten lobed flowers and six to eighteen compartments in the ovary. Most of the rest of the elepidotes have five lobed flowers and five to ten compartments to the ovary. It would be interesting to take a large number of grexes from one of the crosses of complicated parentage and see whether the compartment count in the capsules stays consistent or varies from year to year and plant to plant.

This all just goes to show you: You can always find new and amusing ways to entertain yourself with your rhododendron hobby. We'll be happy to print the results of your research!

immature seed capsule
 11 lobed elepidote
 photo ©LGN 2008



Some technical quotes for those who prefer to have their science more masochistically presented. These are from the college textbook "Developmental Biology" by Scott Gilbert, sixth ed., 2000.

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August 2008



Only a small percentage of the genome is expressed in any particular cell.

Genes are usually repressed. Activation of a gene usually means inhibiting its repressor. ... Activation is often the inhibition of its inhibitor; repression is the inhibition of the inhibitor of the inhibitor. ... Enhancers can act as silencers to suppress the expression of a gene in inappropriate cell types

There are at least four different mechanisms for transferring genetic information into its expression.

Plants have tremendous developmental plasticity.

Plant development is highly regulated by the environment. ... Meristem cells are similar to stem cells in animals and persist long into maturity.

Plant genomes can carry a much greater load of mutations than animals before the phenotype is affected.

--Luurt.



What does this picture have to do with this newsletter? Five brownie points to whoever recognizes the source of this graphic. The answer will be revealed ...in the next month's edition of the Rhododendron News

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

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Bob MacArthur

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CECIL & MOLLY SMITH GARDEN

Ginny Mapes

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.

contact: Ginny Mapes

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

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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.

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Maria Stewart hardcopy mailings

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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 (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

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

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