

Portland Chapter, American Rhododendron Society

Calendar

February 18th, 2016

Regular Meeting

Social time 7:00 PM

Meeting 7:30 PM

Speaker: Truls Jensen

Topic: Growing mountain plants in the garden

Companion Plant Auction - and -
"Sweets for the Sweet" desserts
potluck

Meeting Info

Regular chapter meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month (except in June, July, and August which have other events).

Meetings start at 7 pm with a social half-hour preceding the main meeting. We clean up and exit by 9:30 pm.

Location: All Saints Episcopal Church - At the corner of SE 40th and Woodstock, Portland, Oregon



Our February Program: Growing Mountain Plants in the Garden

By Dennis O'Malley

The Portland Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society will hold its February meeting on February 18th, 2016 from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM.

Our program will focus on companion plants, plants that give variety and diversity to our gardens and coexist well with our favorite rhododendrons.

We are pleased to present as our speaker Truls Jensen, co-owner of Wild Ginger Farm in Beavercreek, Oregon. Truls has entitled his program "Inherent Nice: Mountain Plants in the Garden". He will be presenting techniques of rock gardening that allow mountain plants to grow alongside more conventional plants in our gardens.

Truls is a scientist by training, specializing in the fields of biology and ecology of medically important mosquitos. After receiving his Ph.D. from U.C. Davis and his MPH from U.C. Berkeley, he conducted field research throughout the U.S. for the University of California, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Illinois Natural History Survey. After a number of years, he and his wife, Emma Elliott, decided to pursue a different career, following their life-long love of plants to found the Wild Ginger Farm nursery in Beavercreek, Oregon in 2003. They have a broad interest in plants, but have chosen to emphasize alpine, montane and woodland plants from around the world but especially natives of western North America.

The speaker's program will be followed by a Companion Plant Auction featuring plants that do well in the company of rhododendrons, sponsored by the Chapter. And, Truls Jensen will also be bringing plants from Wild Ginger Farm to sell at the meeting, so be sure to bring your checkbooks!

We also have a "Sweets for the Sweet" potluck at our February meeting, so please bring your favorite Valentine's Day dessert treats to share.

This program is open to members and nonmembers alike. Please join us and invite all your mountain hiking and gardening friends.

Free. Sponsored by the Portland Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society.

Meeting place: All Saints Episcopal Church, 4033 S.E. Woodstock Blvd., Portland, Oregon.

Purpose

To encourage interest in and disseminate information and knowledge about the genus *Rhododendron*.

To provide a medium through which all persons interested in the genus may communicate with others through education, scientific studies, meetings, publications, and other similar activities.

The Portland Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society is registered in Oregon as a 501 (C)(3) non-profit organization. Dues and donations are qualified charitable tax deductions.

Meeting Calendar through April, 2016:

February 18th, 2016

Regular Meeting

Social time 7:00 PM

Meeting 7:30 PM

Speaker: Truls Jensen, Owner, Wild Ginger Farm

Topic: Companion Plants for Rhododendrons

Companion Plant Auction and 'Sweets for the Sweet', Valentine's Day Desserts Potluck

February 25-28, 2016

Spring Home and Garden Show

Portland Expo Center

Marine Drive, Portland, OR

March 17th, 2016

Regular Meeting

Social time 7:00 PM

Meeting 7:30 PM

Speaker: Kathy Lintault

Topic: Garden Touring

March 19th, 2016

Spring Work Party at Smith Garden

Start: 8:30 AM

End: Early afternoon

Weather permitting!

March 22nd, 2016

Board Meeting

7:00 PM

Van Veen Nursery

Haiku

By Peter Kendall

Smatterings of snow

The two dimensional fir
is suddenly three

Winter's crumpled leaves

Their cracks and crannies; the first
small catchment of snow

The first snow flurry

The first to show its whiteness
-- the top of the fence

Meeting Calendar, continued:

April 2nd - 3rd, 2016

**Early Show and Sale, Crystal Springs
Rhododendron Garden**

April 21st, 2016

Annual Meeting

Social time 7:00 PM

Meeting 7:30 PM

Hybrid Rhododendron Auction

April 26th, 2016

Board Meeting

7:00 PM

Van Veen Nursery

President's Message for February

By Brenda Ziegler

Hello Everyone !

Please join us for our February meeting on Thursday, February 18th!

Our **Companion Plant Auction** will be right after our speaker, Truls Jensen of Wild Ginger Farm. We couldn't ask for a better match!

We encourage each of you to bring a plant or several plants to donate for the auction. Your incentive is that the more plants there are, the better chance you have of getting what you want! It also means **money** for our Chapter.

The Valentine's theme will continue with "**Sweets for the Sweet**" which is a potluck of delicious goodies. This event was started a few years ago by our then-President Mike Domaschofsky. It is back by popular demand...because we know our members are amazing at potlucks.

Social time starts at 7:00 P.M. so be sure to join in the spirit and share and enjoy treats while catching up and getting to know other members and guests.

February also brings our Chapter many opportunities to socialize, share and volunteer.

An activity going on this month is our ARS Portland Chapter Exhibit at the **Spring Home and Garden Show** taking place February 25th-28th at the Portland Expo Center.

Also, Crystal Springs is already starting **Volunteer Days**. The 2016 Volunteer Season begins on Wednesday, February 10th at 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM. The volunteers work in the garden through rain, snow or shine **every Wednesday** morning.

We are also gearing up for our **Early Show and Sale on April 2nd and 3rd**. This year, in addition to the Daffodil Society joining us, we will be featuring artists from Cracked Pots. The artists will be at Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden Saturday only. These artists from Cracked Pots will be there to sell garden art made from upcycled materials. The hours are currently being worked out, so, stay tuned.

I hope this year is off to a great start for each of you. I look forward to seeing you. As always, if you have any questions or suggestions, please call or email me. My phone number is 503.314.5834 and my email is bzgift@aol.com.

Highlights of the January Meeting

By Tom Hoffman

We were treated to an entertaining and educational presentation by Mike and Maria Stewart on their recent trip to Sikkim with a small group from the RSF, searching for species rhododendrons in the Sikkim Himalaya. Sikkim is a tiny country, bordered by Tibet on the north, Bhutan on the east, Nepal on the west, and West Bengal on the south. Resembling Yunnan, China farther to the east, Sikkim has thousands of species of plants, and has made major efforts to protect and preserve that heritage, setting aside large tracts of land as national parks and conservation areas.

What does it take to go trekking in Sikkim? According to Mike and Maria, the average preparation stage is 2 years, with a large number of immunizations, for all sorts of diseases, some of which we've never heard; visas are an exercise in bureaucratic frustration, requiring much patience. One bright spot: modern medicine has developed anti-altitude sickness pills, which is a good thing if you're hiking in Sikkim.

It is worth remembering that so many rhododendron species are found at considerable elevation in the Himalayas; generally the higher-elevation plants are the more hardy, here, though not necessarily easier to grow. Mike pointed out that the rugged, steep, narrow canyons in the mountains served to isolate rhododendron populations and promote the evolution of new species and sub-species over time.

Mike and Maria's wonderful photographs of the rhododendrons they saw in Sikkim, of the high mountains and of the friendly people they met, together with their narration, made for an exceptional program. We hope there will be many more adventures in search of rhododendrons in their future.

On a different note, one good reason to show up for our monthly meetings is our raffle; some very choice items are contributed for the raffle, you never know. Someone introduced a plant of *Cortusa matthioli* var. *pekingense* into the mix at our January meeting and your editor didn't have the winning ticket. Please remember to wear your name tag to meetings - you get two raffle tickets instead of just one and you could be lucky!

This just in, courtesy of Robin Hansen, President, Southwestern Oregon Chapter, in their February, 2016 newsletter:

(The) Eureka Chapter will host (the) American Rhododendron Society 2017 ARS Spring Convention, "Rhododendrons in the Redwoods".

"Mark your calendar now for April 27 through 30, 2017 for the American Rhododendron Society's annual spring Convention."

"For more information call or email June Walsh, 707-443-0604 or RhodyHostel@suddenlink.net or on the Web at <http://EurekaRhody.org/>"

An Early Bloomer To Enjoy: R. 'Seta'

By Maria Stewart

When February arrives, our thoughts turn to early blooming rhododendrons and companion plants. It's always uplifting to wander the garden; to breathe in the fragrance of *Sarcococca* and *Viburnum x bodnantense* 'Dawn'; to enjoy the perky pink blooms of *Cyclamen coum* and the varied colors of the stalwart Hellebores; to see the swelling buds on *R. 'Cilpinense'*, *R. moupinense*, *R. calophytum* and *R. sutchuenense*; and to maybe see a little color on the dwarf *R. mucronulatum* and the *R. mucronulatum* 'Cornell Pink'. Another rhododendron that catches our eye in February, even before Valentine's Day, is *R. 'Seta'* because it is blooming in a greenhouse. Its tubular, light and dark pink flowers remind us that spring is not too far away.

Here is more about *R. 'Seta'*

It is a lepidote, which means that it has scales on the undersides of its leaves.

The cross is (*R. spinuliferum* x *R. moupinense*). It blooms in late March outside. *R. spinuliferum* blooms in late April and is hardy to +5 degrees F. *R. moupinense* blooms in February or March and is hardy to 0 degrees F. (Ed.: it is in bloom now at Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden.)

Flowers: tubular funnel-shaped; combinations of light pink and darker pink; three to four corollas per each lax truss; very floriferous..

Foliage: dark green, oblong, about 2 inches long and 1 inch wide.

Height in 10 years: about 4 to 5 feet; pruning helps to create more branches.

Hardiness: +5 degrees F.

Placement in your garden: Needs protection from frosts, but also some sun to bloom well

Here is a photograph of *R. 'Seta'*, courtesy of Dick Cavender:



A Rewarding Opportunity: The A.R.S. Seed Exchange

By Ray Clack

One of the benefits of your ARS membership, the ARS 2016 Seed Exchange just opened mid-January. Being a member gets you FIRST access. What's a seed exchange? Rhododendron lovers around the world send Rhododendron seed to the ARS Seed Exchange. Then, hard-working members, like Norman Beaudry and his East Coast teammates, package that seed and make it available to the membership (and after March 15th, purchases open to the general public.)

You could, for example, try seeds of a wild, involved cross like: [(**'Janet Blair' x Phipps #32**)x(**'Orange Marmalade'x'1000 Butterflies**)] x {[(**'Apricot Fantasy' x 'Bud's Yellow'**) x (**'Brasilia' x 'Viennese Waltz'**)] x (**'Off-Shoot' x 'Capistrano'**)} x **'My Jane'** What are these plants/flowers going to look like? Your guess is as good as mine, but it sure would be fun to see!

Or, how about some species seed collected in the wild, like: *arborescens*, Tucker County, West Virginia, or, *taliense*, 3930 m, BE 15-27, Location date 30.10, End of Laowo Valley West side Yunnan, China

Spend a couple of minutes online on our own ARS national website and you will see the possibilities are huge! You will find seed for evergreen azaleas, deciduous azaleas, Rhododendron species and hybrids, even a few companion plants. Check it out here: http://www.rhododendron.org/seed_exchange_list_2016.htm

Find your favorite and get started. The seed is super-easy to start. The hardest part may be selecting which of those little baby plants look like the ones you want to grow on. Yes, getting the plants mature enough to bloom takes a bit of time, but when they set flower buds you can hardly wait for spring to see what is going to appear.

I've been growing seed (Ann says too much seed) off and on for a few years. I have some plants that are going to flower for the first time this spring. I'm looking forward to being surprised. Educational tidbit: Did you know that seedlings of *R. vaseyi* are very unique? Neither did I, until I started some seed. As soon as they get their first real leaves, they're very pointed at the tip, like a little green slice of pie. You can spot them immediately.

You can start with just one or two favorites. You don't have to go collector-crazy like I have done some years. Just check out the seed being offered this year and you will find many tempting varieties to try. You don't have to worry about planting 20 plants of the same cross, either. Sending garden visitors home with a teenage rhody works well and remember, your fellow Chapter members are always looking for something new...

Join in the fun and take advantage of the rewarding opportunity offered to each of us through the seed exchange. Order some seed and see what grows! Now, I've got to go pare down my order and get it sent off.

See you soon,

Ray

Coming Events

By Dick Cavender, Treasurer

February 18, 2016

Companion Plant Auction

A great opportunity to purchase some choice plants!! Bring your check books! Members and non-members are WELCOME!

We will also need plants! Bring those extras that are taking up space in your shade house or greenhouse. All plants are welcome, but the focus will be on companion plants for Rhododendrons. Remember these auctions are what pays for our hall rent, newsletter printing and mailing and other Chapter activities. Your auctioneer would really appreciate it if you put 'pants', bags, on all plants as that helps keep both the auctioneer and the floor clean.

February 25-28, 2016

Spring Home and Garden Show

Portland Expo Center, Marine Drive, Portland, OR

The Society will have a booth and garden at the Spring Home and Garden Show again this year. **We need people to set up the garden, staff the booth, and take down the garden.** Garden set-up will be Wednesday, 2/24/2016 and take down on Monday, 2/29/2016. **Bring your truck or trailer and take home a free load of mulch.** We will need several willing workers to stack the wall, move bark and install plants. Booth shifts will be 3 or 4 hours and I hope to have at least 2 people in the booth per shift. That will allow you to take turns looking at the show during your shift. I will have a signup sheet at the January and February meetings. Remember, working in our booth and display allows you into the Show for free; otherwise, general admission to the Show is \$10.00, so this will be a bargain. On-site parking is \$8.00 and unfortunately I can't do anything about that. However, MAX does run out to the Expo Center.

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

Show hours are 11:00 AM to 8:00 PM Weds-Fri; 10:00 AM to 8:00 PM Sat and 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM Sunday.

For best selection of shift time and day, call Mike Stewart at 503-668-7565 or email him at mike@dovernursery.com .

Portland Chapter of
the American
Rhododendron
Society

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CHAPTER OFFICERS

President: **Brenda Ziegler**
Vice President: **Dennis O'Malley**
Past President: **Maria Stewart**
Secretary: **Carol McCarthy**
Treasurer: **Dick Cavender**

BOARD MEMBERS

(Through June 30, 2017) **Caroline
Enns, Steve Hall, Steve Hopkins, Bill
Zanze, Dave Collier**
(Through June 30, 2016) **Bud Bowen,
Ann Clack, Ray Clack, Mike Stew-
art, Kathy Van Veen**

GARDEN INFO:

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Cecil & Molly Smith Garden
Chair: **Herb Spady**, 503-874-1445

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