

Portland Chapter, American Rhododendron Society

Calendar

March 15, 2018
Regular meeting
Social time 7:00 pm
Meeting 7:30 pm
Speaker: John Weagle,
Topic: "175 years of Rhododendrons in Nova Scotia"

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



March Meeting

Caroline Enns and Steve Hall

The Portland Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society will hold its March meeting on Thursday, March 15, 2018 from 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm.

Our March meeting will feature John Weagle of Halifax, Nova Scotia and the Atlantic Rhododendron and Horticultural Society, speaking on "175 Years of Rhododendrons in Nova Scotia." This should be a special presentation that you will not want to miss.

Our speaker for the March meeting has been gardening in Halifax, Nova Scotia since childhood. Nova Scotia, or Acadia as it was then known, was first settled by the French in 1605. For 150 years, the Acadians developed the rich interior farmlands, reclaiming tidal land by an ingenious system of dikes, much of which remains functional to this day. In 1748, the Treaty of Aix-La-Chapelle ceded Acadia to the English. Coastal Nova Scotia. With its cool, foggy summers, is a surprising haven for rhododendrons. Once established, they require little maintenance and no irrigation. He will trace the early quest of the native Rhododendron maximum and cultivation of ironclads from 1850 onward. The climate of Nova Scotia, but primarily the work of pioneer rhododendron hybridizers from 1950 to the present, will be his focus, with a glimpse of what the future might have in store.

John Weagle worked for nearly 30 years as a buyer for horticultural companies in B.C. and Halifax. His big advance as a gardener came when he decided to ignore all the books that painted a grim picture of horticulture on the wind-swept, fog-bound coast of Nova Scotia. In the early 1970's, good friends introduced him to hybridizing rhododendrons and azaleas, which he has been breeding since the late 1970's. His interests extend generally to the Family Ericaceae, which does well in coastal Nova Scotia, and specifically ranging from bamboos to Shortia. With the help of his skilled partner Ken Shannik, who operates Insigne Gardens, they maintain two city gardens, a woodland garden 60 miles from the city, and a new garden they are starting in a mild area on an island near Yarmouth. He owes their vast collection of plants, hardy and tender, to the generosity of his many contacts worldwide. Now retired, he is a well-recognized plantsman and source of insightful information, such as "(T. camtschaticum) is more difficult to spell than it is to grow." He is a recipient of the Leslie Hancock Award and The Hybridizer's Award of the Rhododendron

* Continued on page 3 *

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.

Chapter Calendar through May, 2018:

March 15, 2018

Regular meeting

Social time 7:00 pm

Meeting: 7:30 pm

Speaker: John Weagle, Atlantic Rhododendron and Horticultural Society / Atlantic Chapter, ARS
Topic: "175 years of Rhododendrons in Nova Scotia"

March 20, 2018

Vernal Equinox: Spring Begins in the Northern Hemisphere

March 24, 2018

Smith Garden Spring Work Party

Start 8:00 - 9:00 am

Finish mid-afternoon

Lunch will be served!

April 7 & 8, 2018

Early Rhododendron & Daffodil Show & Sale

Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden

April 19, 2018

Annual Business Meeting

Social time 7:00 pm

Meeting: 7:30 pm

Speaker: Mike Stewart, Dover Nursery

Topic: "Dwarf Rhododendrons"

Followed by our

Auction of Hybrid Rhododendrons

May 12—13, 2018

Mother's Day Show & Sale

Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden

Haiku

At every turn

A matrix of branches
obscuring the sky

The forgotten fir limb
by the side of the road
waiting in limbo

Sound of the winter wind
all but covering, the sound
of the bell clad tree

Peter Kendall

May 17, 2018

Annual Awards Banquet

Set up 6:30 pm

Potluck supper 7:00 pm

Meeting: 7:30 pm

Speaker: Dennis O'Malley

Topic: "The State of the Chapter"

President's Message for March: Spring is a Volunteer Time of Year

As of this writing, it is March 1st. We already have the Portland Home & Garden Show under our belt and have so many of our most important activities and events coming down the road at a breakneck speed. It seems to me to be a good time to talk about the fun and enjoyment of volunteering with the Portland Chapter of the ARS.

Like many of our activities, our booth and garden at the Portland Home & Garden Show are only possible because we can marshal the turnout of volunteers necessary to collect the plants for display, to lay the blocks for the display garden, to plant the plants, to staff the booth with enthusiastic rhododendron lovers for four straight days, and perhaps hardest of all, to come back afterwards on Monday and take it all down again. We thank not only our own members for volunteering, but our compatriots from other chapters around the state as well.

The point I want to make, though, is not about diligent, selfless volunteering, but about having fun doing what we enjoy. During my shift, there were typically four or more of our volunteers at the booth, not just the two who had signed up for that particular shift. Talking with the people who stopped by, and among ourselves, kept us busy and engaged. Time passed so quickly that I was surprised when the new shift arrived. It didn't feel like a chore—it was fun!

As you can see from the rest of the newsletter, there are so many opportunities to share in the spirit of doing what we do just ahead. There is the Cecil and Molly Smith Garden workday coming up on March 24th. There are regular workdays at Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden. We have a very special program coming up on March 15th, with well-known plantsman and hybridizer John Weagle coming out from Nova Scotia to share a different perspective on rhododendrons in North America. Of course, very soon we will be presenting the Early Show and Plant Sale and the Mother's Day Show and Plant Sale.

Each of us can find a spot in the organized chaos of all those events packed into the blooming season. Look forward to it. Turn out in numbers to get the jobs done. But have fun while you are doing it. Watching that happen is ultimately what brings new people into the fold and makes it possible for the Portland Chapter to continue doing what we love to do and do so well.

Dennis O'Malley

March Program

Society of Canada. He has spoken across Canada, the USA, at the International Rhododendron Symposium in Bergen, Norway and at the Botanic Garden in Tromso, Norway.

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

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

Please feel free to bring a friend; guests and non-members are always welcome.

February Meeting Report:

A cold and dark evening was warmed by Loren Russell's talk on Oregon's own *Kalmiopsis*, first discovered in what is now known as the Kalmiopsis Wilderness in the southwest corner of our state. Loren is a retired entomologist but by no means is he inactive. His expertise extends beyond Kalmiopsis to terrestrial orchids and competitive bicycling. Fortunately, Loren chose to drive rather than to cycle to the meeting from his home in Corvallis on that freezing night in February.

He entertained us with the discovery of Kalmiopsis in 1930 when Lilla and John Leach and their two burros, Pansy and Viola set forth on the primitive trails in this region of the Siskiyou. We also found out that Kalmiopsis is related to rhododendrons and Kalmia, but has even more closely related counterparts in the inhospitable regions of the northern hemisphere. Kalmiopsis thrive on harsh serpentine soils high in iron and magnesium and are also able to repopulate fire-ravaged areas and thus don't have many competitors.

Smith Garden Spring Work Day: Volunteers Needed!

It is getting to be that time of year when we start thinking about work days and open garden days at Smith Garden.

This year's Smith Garden Spring Work Day is March 24, 2018. We will start around 8:00 am or 9:00 am, or whenever you can manage, and work as long as you want. Bring gloves and your favorite hand tools. There are chores for all skill levels. Lunch will be served. We would really appreciate all the help we can get. I will be doing my sun dance but this will be a rain or shine event, so come prepared. It is also a good opportunity to visit the garden. If anyone would like more information, give me a call at 503-625-6331. Directions to the Smith Garden can be found at www.rhodies.org.

Dick Cavender

P.S. The Smith Garden is open every Saturday & Sunday of April through May 21st, 2018, 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Admission is still just \$3.00 for the general public.

More Opportunities to Volunteer:

Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden work days started February 7, 2018. We meet in the Cool House, near the service yard, south end of the garden, between 8:30 am and 9:00 am and work until noon every Wednesday until mid-November. For more information about volunteering at Crystal Springs, please email csrgvol@gmail.com. Directions to the garden: www.rhodies.org. The #19 Woodstock/Glisan TriMet bus has stops close to the garden. Garden address: 5801 SE 28th Ave, Portland, OR 97202.

RHODODENDRON & DAFFODIL SHOW AND SALE
AT CRYSTAL SPRINGS RHODODENDRON GARDEN



SATURDAY, APRIL 7TH - SUNDAY, APRIL 8TH

9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

CRYSTAL SPRINGS RHODODENDRON GARDEN

will host the

Portland Chapter American Rhododendron Society and the Daffodil Society

Joint Annual Early Show & Sale

The Garden is located at:

5801 SE 28th Avenue in Portland, OR

Free Admission

Sale starts at 9:00 AM on Saturday and Sunday

Show opens at 12:00 PM on Saturday and Sunday

TO ENTER YOUR OWN FLOWERS IN THE SHOW, please bring them to the Exhibit Hall, 6:00PM - 8:00 PM Friday evening or 7:00 AM - 9:30 AM Saturday morning. For more information: www.crystalspringsgarden.org or 503-771-8386

Presented by the Portland Chapter of The American Rhododendron Society

Three Magnificent and Early Blooming Species: *R. calophytum*, *R. praeevernum* and *R. sutchuenense* var. *geraldii*

By Maria Stewart

During those two weeks of cold and snowy weather in late February, one of the rhododendrons in our garden continued to swell its buds and to look as if Spring was approaching. The cold weather does not faze our hardy *R. sutchuenense* var. *geraldii* and you can count on *R. calophytum* and *R. praeevernum* to be just as hardy. Keep in mind, however, that all three species will prefer being sheltered from strong winds that might break the leaf petioles of their attractive long leaves. All three will command rather large spaces with *R. praeevernum* growing somewhat smaller and more slowly than the other two. Adding to their grand stature are their early and large flowers, prominently displayed on the tips of their strong branches.

Here is more about each of these species which are all members of Subgenus *Hymenanthes*; Section *Hymenanthes*; Subsection *Fortunea*:

R. calophytum var. *calophytum* is the most cultivated of the *R. calophytum* varieties. (As a side note, variety *R. openshawianum* is considered by some to be an inferior form of *R. calophytum*.) It will eventually become a beautiful tree, showing off its large, light pink flowers, each one displaying a deep red blotch. Considering that *R. calophytum*'s medium green leaves can be as long as a foot, you will want to plant it out of strong winds in your garden. When a hint of spring comes, watch for *R. calophytum* buds to swell and bloom as early as February. We have a photo of a *R. calophytum* blooming with snow on the ground. It is hardy to -15 degrees F. You will find it in the wild in Szechwan and NE Yunnan at 6,000 to 13,000 feet in elevation.

R. praeevernum is slower and lower-growing than *R. calophytum* and *R. sutchuenense*. Its lance-shaped leaves are smaller than the other two species, also. You should still place it out of strong winds for the sake of the leaves. Some experts consider *R. praeevernum* to be closely related to *R. sutchuenense*. With its handsome form, it eventually becomes a small tree in a more compact manner than the other two species. And its large white or pink flowers with wine-red blotches, decorate it wonderfully. Blooming as early as February, you will want to site it slightly under a tree to protect its flowers. The leaves, stems and roots, however, are quite hardy, to -5 degrees F. You will find it in the wild in W. Hubei and E. Szechwan at 5,000 to 8,000 feet in elevation.

R. sutchuenense var. *geraldii* seems to be related to *R. praeevernum*. This fine and hardy rhododendron originated from E.H. Wilson seed and he considered it to be "midway" between *R. praeevernum* and *R. sutchuenense*. It grows into a very large shrub with foot-long, medium green, lance-shaped leaves. Each clear pink corolla has a large dark red-purple blotch. The overall effect is spectacular. Blooming as early as February, some frost protection is desirable. Its hardiness is -10 degrees F. You will find it in the wild in Western Hubei and Eastern Szechwan at 5,000 to 8,000 feet in elevation.

The distinguishing feature that separates *R. sutchuenense* from *R. sutchuenense* var. *geraldii* are corollas that have a few red spots *but no blotches*. Also, *R. sutchuenense* has a range of colors from very light pink to mauve pink. Both species are magnificent!

R. calophytum, *R. praevernum*, and *R. sutchuenense* var. *geraldii*:

(1)



(2)



(1) *R. calophytum* var. *calophytum* (Garth Wedemire)

(2) *R. praevernum* (Garth Wedemire)

(3) *R. sutchuenense* var. *geraldii* in bud (Mike Stewart)

(4) *R. sutchuenense* (Coen Zonneveld)

(3)



(4)



Portland Chapter of
the American
Rhododendron
Society

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CHAPTER OFFICERS

President: *Dennis O'Malley*
Vice President: *Caroline Enns*
Past President: *Brenda Ziegler*
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BOARD MEMBERS

(Through June 30, 2018), **Ann Clack,**
Ray Clack, Betsy Soifer, Mike Stew-
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(Through June 30, 2019) **Steve Hall,**
Steve McCormick, John Stephens,
Maria Stewart, (Open)

GARDEN INFO:

Crystal Springs Rhodo. Garden

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Rachael Moloney, 503-975-6743

Cecil & Molly Smith Garden

Chair: Open

Newsletter, membership, and
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