

Portland Chapter, American Rhododendron Society

Calendar

November 13, 2019
Dormancy Luncheon
CSRG Volunteers &
Parks Personnel
Starts at Noon
Double Mountain
Brewery
4336 S.E. Woodstock

November 21, 2019
Regular Meeting
Social Time 7:00 pm
Meeting 7:30 pm
Speaker: Bill McNamara
Program: The Trials &
Tribulations of Plant
Hunting

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



November 2019 Program

As we approach the 2019 holidays, we invite you to attend a very special meeting on November 21st—with guest speaker Bill McNamara. Bill has had a remarkable career and gives gripping talks with remarkable photography. We were fortunate enough to experience Bill providing two presentations at last year's Rhododendron Species Foundation Forum; he will repeat one of them for us.

Bill's talk will focus on a particular aspect of collecting plants in the wild. While human beings have moved plants around the globe for thousands of years, this activity has not been without problems. Usually it has provided great benefit. Today the little-mentioned but severe extinction-crisis has generated particular urgency to get plants and their seeds to botanic gardens and seed banks. Thus, his title:

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: The trials and Tribulations of Plant Hunting

Bill recently retired from the Quarryhill Botanical Garden, a private research garden in Glen Ellen, California. He began work there in 1987 and became Executive Director in 2007. In company with horticulturists from Kew, the Howick Arboretum, and others, Bill has botanized extensively in the wilds of Asia, venturing into the mountains of China, Japan, India, Nepal, Vietnam and Myanmar. Among other accolades and appointments, Bill became an Associate Member of the joint Chinese-American Committee for the Flora of China. He has published numerous articles and lectured widely. His talks are well-known for featuring his exceptional photographs of both the plants he has botanized and the local cultures where they are found. He has received widespread recognition, including the prestigious Garden Club of America's Eloise Payne Luquer Medal in 2009, the 2010 Scott Medal and Award from the Scott Arboretum, the California Horticultural Society Annual Award, the Award of Excellence from the National Garden Clubs, and, in 2017, both the Veitch Memorial Medal from the Royal Horticultural Society and the Liberty Hyde Bailey Award from the American Horticultural Society. He welcomes interactions during his presentations, but for our more confrontational members, please remember along with his master's degree in Conservation Biology, he holds a third-degree black belt in Aikido!

The November meeting will take place on Thursday the 21st from 7–9 pm, at All Saints Episcopal Church, 4033 SE Woodstock Blvd, in Portland. You're welcome to meet Bill and other members who assemble, starting at 5 pm, at the Woodstock Wine & Deli, across the street from All Saints. We encourage you to attend and please consider inviting a guest who might enjoy this engaging talk. This is the stuff new members are made of! We look forward to seeing you there.

By Steve McCormick

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 December, 2019

November 13, 2019

**Dormancy Luncheon for
Crystal Springs Rhododendron
Garden Stalwart Crew of Volun-
teers and Parks Personnel
Starts at noon at Double Mountain
Brewery, 4336 S.E. Woodstock
Don't miss it!**

November 21, 2019

**Regular meeting
Social time 7:00 pm
Meeting 7:30 pm
Speaker: Bill McNamara,
Quarryhill Botanical Garden
Program: The Good, the Bad, and
the Ugly: the Trials and Tribula-
tions of Plant Hunting.**

December 19, 2019

**Winter Solstice Potluck and Gift
Exchange with Decorated Tables
Social Time 6:30 pm, set-up and
decorate tables
7:00 pm Dinner**

**Program: Members' presentation
of their Slides and Digital Images**

December 22, 2019

Winter Begins

January 16, 2020

**Regular meeting
Social time 7:00 pm
Meeting 7:30 pm
Speaker: Chip Muller, Executive
Committee, RSF**

Haiku

Into a canyon
of twists and turns, a river's falls—
beyond description

The path through the woods,
revealing more of itself,
in every step

The ongoing rain
Why can't this deluge, offer
an end?

The drop-laden leaf
awaiting the next round
of showers

Measuring shadows
as they flex in the wind
and coming up short

By Peter Kendall



Bill McNamara, our November speaker

President's Message for November, 2019:

Ode to Fall:

For the gardener, surely Fall is the finest season. How do I love thee, let me count the ways:

Return of the rain, and the end to hauling hoses: Enough said. Fall marks the change from keeping the garden alive to moving ahead.

Plants in the ground: We all buy plants in the Spring. Who can resist, after all those months with nothing more entertaining than seeds? Who can turn away from those gorgeous plants at the Mothers' Day Sale? Mothers' Day may also be just about the worst time to put plants in the ground. With remarkable regularity, our dry summers turn our latest pride-and-joys into crispy critters. Our Spring purchases now stay in their pots through the Summer so that we can keep track of them. Fall then becomes the time of furious planting, and the joyous return of space on the patio. Every one of our purchases is now in the ground, right down to Jay Lunn's *R. keiskei v. cordifolia* and Dick Cavender's "Cannon's Double", purchased at the species auction. Yes, we are bragging.

Goldilocks: No longer too hot, not yet too cold, just right for working in the garden. That goes for daylight, too. Sunset no longer makes us feel guilty for not being out in broad daylight at 9 PM. We are not yet shut down at 4 PM by lack of light. Just right.

Hunting season: No, those of us living within the city limits can't go after the voracious beasts who have eaten the leaves on our *R. macabeanum* back to the stems. But when it comes to the enemy, we are not squeamish. Just as we celebrate the mice that our cat presents as trophies, so it warms the cockles of our hearts that somewhere, someone is enjoying venison stew.

Weeds: Your garden is probably like ours. In Summer, we have no weeds. "I just don't tolerate weeds," says Dot Dunstan. The corollary, of course, is that if you do have weeds, it's because you tolerate them. So we have no weeds, at least in Summer. Which is just as well. When our clay soil, just down the street from the former brick yard, loses its moisture, it turns to concrete. Any weeds would be inextractible. We do have Sweet Willams and native (somewhere) geums scattered throughout the garden. That's because we like them. Comes the Fall, we are always alarmed to find an army of Stinking Billies and invasive species that wish to call our garden home. But with a little rain, those weeds relinquish their hold on the soil willingly. Fall is prime time for weeding. The way to have a weed-less garden is to pull the weeds before they go to seed. Their flowers may be far in the future, but if you pull them now, those weeds won't be back.

The flowers: Fall is the season of flowers: the mums, with their gorgeous range of colors and opulent shapes; the reblooming rhododendrons that answer the question you have harbored all summer: what color was that blossom?; that particular shade of pink common to two completely different genera, *Cyclamen (hederifolium)* and *Colchicum*, making you wonder what they know that we don't about how to attract pollinators at this time of year.

The foliage: Eat your heart out, Spring. Surely you can't match the exuberance of foliage at its finest. Foliage in the Pacific Northwest can be disappointing. Our dry summers often leave our foliage desiccated rather than colorful. All the leaves are brown. This year, with the earlier return of the rain, the foliage has been spectacular. Fall is for fluorescence, with *Stewartia*, *Parrotia*, and *Acers* and all of those azaleas, especially *schlippenbachii*. Even big-leaf maples have been trying to claim that they have value beyond firewood. And speaking of maples, the horticultural *Acers* have been plants on fire. The Companion Plant Auction is just a few months away. Remember then what you are seeing now.

By Caroline Enns

A Species From the Mountains of Eastern Europe: *R. myrtifolium*

By Maria Stewart

Imagine our delight, while hiking in the rocky Carpathian Mountains of Romania, to come upon dwarf rhododendrons growing at about 7,200 feet in elevation. Their shiny, dark green leaves with rust-colored scales underneath drew our attention. Their dwarf form, created to withstand the harsh environment in which they live, is attractive, also. Hidden alongside small rock outcrops and shielded by scarce remains of elk moss and native grasses, this beautiful gem of a rhododendron stands alone representing its genus in the Carpathians. To find it elsewhere, you will need to travel to the mountains of Bulgaria, Macedonia, Slovenia and southwestern Russia at elevations of 5,000 to 8,000 feet.

Here is more about *R. myrtifolium*:

Classification: *Section*: Rhododendron *Subsection*: Rhododendron (This subsection is very different from other subsections and is found only in Europe's high mountain ranges. The other two members of the subsection are *R. ferrugineum* and *R. hirsutum*.)

Its name: Formerly named *R. kotschyi*. Not to be confused with the hybrid *R. Myrtifolium*.

Flowers: narrowly tubular and spreading lobes; rose pink or pinkish purple, rarely white; blooms in late May or June.

Foliage: shiny, dark green on top and reddish-brown scales covering the bottom side; very small leaves are 1/8 inch wide and 1/2 inch long.

Structure: low growing dwarf to less than one foot in height.

Hardiness: -5 degrees F. Siting in your garden: full sun and fast-draining soil.



Photograph of *R. myrtifolium* in the Carpathian Mountains of Romania by Mike Stewart.

OCTOBER MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

It was 'Trick-or-Treat' night at the Portland Chapter on the 17th, so there were sweets galore on the display tables. The tastiest treat of the night, however, was the excellent presentation by Jeanine Smith of the Seattle Chapter (former District Director, Western VP, Chapter President twice, etc.). She was with husband, Rex, and showed us her spectacular garden full of well-grown species and hybrids—like R. 'Rex'—on their acreage in Woodinville, WA. It's obvious she's got a green thumb and a serious knack for growing beautiful combinations with layers backwards and forward, and up and down in perspective. Her presentation was eloquent and visually stunning. She's been at it for several decades and it was obvious she knows the best features and growing habits to make a great rhododendron show in the garden. Some standouts included R. 'Avalanche', 'Cinquero', 'Double Winner', 'Biskra' and 'Rosevallon' (with its standout purple indumentum). Her waves of primula were enchanting. I'm betting we could easily entice a bus full of Portland Chapter members to make the trek for a visit. A+ for Jeanine. No tricks to report, unless there were any behind-the-scenes shenanigans.

The other treat of the night was the annual Species Auction. Dick Cavender described the 20 or so specimens that had been donated (thank you, members)—some real beauties, including one of *R. hyperythrum* the Taiwanese species that Steve Krebs (Holden Arboretum, Leach Experimental Station, Portland Chapter speaker in February '18) is using for root stock to breed his new hybrids for both disease resistance and heat tolerance. Dick reports that the auction raised \$326 for the Chapter.

John Stephens gave a quick report on the Western Regional Conference in Parksville, BC, that took place the last few days of September. Excellent speakers, great display of rhododendron foliage, exceptional table centerpieces, 250(!) in attendance. Congratulations to Linda Derkach and Glen Jamieson. And David Anderson did a short explanation of the poster he brought to display his photos of *R. albiflorum*—one of our three local natives—taken on his recent hunting expeditions in the area.

As usual, the evening got off to a strong head start at the Woodstock Wine & Deli. The tables started to look like a crossword puzzle as more and more members showed up. Jeanine and Rex met everyone in the room and the socializing spilled over into All Saints ahead of the business of the evening.

By Steve McCormick



Jeanine Smith's cross, R. 'Apricot Fantasy' ('Hotei' x 'Tropicana'). Please turn to page 8 for more images of her garden.

You're invited to the celebration!



World-renowned Keynote Speakers

Kenneth Cox • Jens Nielsen • Steve Hootman • Juliana Medeiros
Lionel de Rothschild • Steve Krebs • Valerie Soza • & more!

**Tours to the Northwest's
Outstanding Gardens & Nurseries**

The American Rhododendron Society to hold its 75th Anniversary Convention

Hosted by ARS District 4,
April 29-May 3, 2020,
at the Heathman Lodge, Vancouver, WA.

The 2020 ARS International Convention—*2020 Vision, Looking Forward, Reflecting Back*—will feature a renowned group of **international speakers**, including Kenneth Cox from Glendoick in Scotland, Lionel de Rothschild from Exbury in England, Jens Nielsen from Denmark, Steve Krebs and Juliana Medeiros from the Holden Arboretum, Steve Hootman from the Rhododendron Species Foundation and Botanical Garden, Valerie Soza from the University of Washington, and more. **Garden tours** will include visits to Crystal Springs Botanical Garden, Cecil & Molly Smith Garden, Portland Japanese Garden, Lan Su Chinese Garden, Iseli Nursery, Woodburn Nursery and the Stewart Garden. The convention will also feature a **plant sale** and a **photo exhibit and contest**, as well as **pre - and post - tour options**.

The American Rhododendron Society is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to encour-

age interest in, and to disseminate information about, the genus *Rhododendron*. The organization has a membership of some 2,500 members worldwide. The ARS was incorporated in Portland, Oregon, in January of 1945. The first annual rhododendron show was held on Park Avenue in front of the art museum in downtown Portland. 75 years later, the 2020 convention returns to the Portland area, home to many of the major nursery suppliers in the country. To this day, *Rhododendron* is celebrated as a diverse and fascinating genus, with hybridizers continuing to create new crosses and plant explorers continuing to locate and identify new species.

Registration for the 2020 convention will open on December 2, 2019 and will be available online at ARS75.org. Registration forms will also be available as an insert in the Fall quarterly edition of *Journal American Rhododendron Society*. Information on the ARS, including membership, is available at www.rhododendron.org.

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Convention Website: www.ARS75.org

American Rhododendron Society

75th Anniversary

**20/20
VISION**



ARS75.org

Looking forward, reflecting back

Portland-Vancouver, April 29-May 3, 2020

Smith Garden Workday:

The turnout was good, the represented Chapters were multiple, the sun shone, Tom Gressler's preparation was considerable, and the work accomplished was prodigious. On the East side, several beds were transformed; the weeds gone, the perennials cut back, the beds pristine and ready for next Spring. Along the mid north-south axis, the weeds and dead wood disappeared. On the West side, the dead magnolia is down, felled by a chain saw and gravity with direction from Steve Hall., Arek Mazur, and Ray Clack; a major tree removed without damage to personnel, and despite its location in the middle of several rhododendrons without the loss of any major branches of these plants.

Awards: furthest traveled to participate, Bev Smith, the perennial winner; farthest to travel after the workday, Anne Gross, headed to Hawaii; longest hours, Tom Hoffman; best multi-tasker, Andrew Stern; best smiles at the end of the day, the Smith Stalwarts, Tom, Anne, and Dick Cavender; honorable mention for best smiles, everyone else.

By Caroline Enns.

Dick Cavender adds: "The workday was a real success. Many thanks to everyone who attended. The garden looks great. Extra thanks to the small crew that took down the dead Magnolia. Great job and you saved us a big expense."



The Smith Garden Spring Work Day is scheduled for March 21st, 2020.

Photographs by Jeanine Smith
from her garden in Woodinville



Images: Garden Path;
R. 'Avalanche';

Jeanine's cross of
R. 'ApricotFantasy' x
R. 'Buttermint' ; R.
'Biskra';

R. 'Cinquero' ; R.
'Rosevallon' in a
stump.

Citizen Science needs YOU!

By David Anderson

About a year ago I wanted to know what organisms lived in my garden and started to post photographs of them on the website iNaturalist. Frankly I had no idea how many organisms were really in my garden, other than the birds, a few **butterflies, honey bees and 'yellow-jackets', a few moths, and the occasional skunk, possum, raccoon, neighborhood cat** and rats. After a year of recording I am really surprised at the variety of insects and other organisms that take advantage of my small urban garden. There are things like a European moth, buffalo tree hoppers, ichneumonid wasps, quite a few bee species, and a millipede described 100 years ago from Portland and not mentioned for a hundred years!

In addition to all the insects from my yard, I credit iNaturalist with introducing me to both *Rhododendron albiflorum* and *R. menziesii* because it was during hikes around Mount Hood that I saw plants that had azalea like leaves. I knew **enough about the distribution of *R. occidentale*, our only west coast azalea, to know that I shouldn't be seeing azaleas** on Mount Hood. So, what were these plants with azalea type leaves? iNaturalist helped me find out! Now Andrew and I are out hiking around Mount Hood and Mount St Helens looking for our now favorite native rhododendrons and other organisms.

What is iNaturalist, and how does it work? iNaturalist began as a joint Masters final project in 2008 between three people, and eventually a joint initiative of the California Academy of Sciences and National Geographic. As of September 2019 there were 27 million observations worldwide of biota on iNaturalist. Nineteen million of those are from North America. To submit observations to the ever-growing database you first need to register. It is free! Once you see something you have never noticed before, and learn what it is, you may never stop looking for something else you have never seen or to see where else you might find something new and exciting. All of the observations you and the 802 thousand other observers make add to our current knowledge of organisms and help scientists and biogeographers. People with curious minds see something and start to ask more questions. Like, where are *R. albiflorum* found around Mount Hood, and are they seen somewhere else, and what insects live on them, and how are they doing, and why are they so hard to grow in gardens, and the list of questions keeps growing! Curious minds are like sponges that soak in more and more information. It is like travelling to a new place and wondering what is around the next corner.

Photos of organisms can be added to iNaturalist directly from a cell phone, or from a laptop/tablet. Enabling the **gps capability of your phone so photos' exif information will be geocoded will make listing observations much easier since you won't have to locate it on a map. The program will give you the chance to identify what you have seen by making suggestions, or you can add the identification if you already know it.** The program is generally pretty good at the suggestions it gives, but it does have limitations though! Unfortunately it will identify hybrid rhododendrons as our native *R. macrophyllum*. Other iNaturalist users will come along and verify what you have seen.

What can you do? You don't have lacebugs yet on your rhododendrons? Get a photo of them when they infest your garden and help record their spread in the region. What insects pollinate your flowers? By recording pollinators, you have a record of their occurrence. Do you travel the state? Record where you see our five native rhododendrons! Record the insects you see on those plants; they could be pollinators, pests, or something else. And, who knows? You could have taken the next grand prize winner in the local chapter's photo contest!

Portland Chapter of
the American
Rhododendron
Society

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Treasurer: **Dick Cavender**

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David Anderson, Ann Clack, Ray Clack,
Joanne Turner, Brenda Ziegler

(Through June 30, 2021):
Betsy Soifer, John Stephens, Andrew
Stern, Maria Stewart, Mike Stewart

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Chair: Dick Cavender

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