

Portland Chapter, American Rhododendron Society

Calendar

Online via Zoom
September 17, 2020

Meeting: 7:00 pm
Speaker: Chip Muller,
ARS, Seattle

Online via Zoom
October 15, 2020

Meeting: 7:00 pm
Speaker: Glen
Jamieson, ARS,
Parksville, BC

Online via Zoom
November 19, 2020

Meeting: 7:00pm
Speaker: Mike Stewart,
ARS, Portland

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 are temporarily online via Zoom, until in-person meetings can be resumed safely.

Meeting invitations sent to membership list via email

Or contact:

pc.ars@outlook.com



President's Letter

I hope this newsletter finds you well and coping with the continued restrictions due to Covid-19 yet inspired by the time you're spending in your own garden. The news is encouraging that there's a blitz in progress to produce a successful vaccine, which is what we'll need to have the confidence to regain our world and to resume our in-person meetings.

To catch up, where do we begin? First, it's been devastating not to be able to get together with the gang. It was with great reluctance that we had to cancel the Spring speakers, awards banquet, plant auctions, etc. The Woodstock Deli and All Saints miss us and we miss them! And here we are in a summer without the usual Smith Garden Soiree, Stewart Garden Party and Hopkins-Ziegler get-together at Oxbow Pointe. Disappointing.

Then came the convention cancellation. With so much wonderful work done by a dedicated committee, we're fortunate to pick up where we left off, come 2022.

Meanwhile, we're grateful that Portland Parks authorized Crystal Springs to re-open and that there's been a highly successful online plant sale at the Garden (see Dan McLaughlin's update). Thanks to all of you who made the effort to pick up plants and get new rhodies into your gardens. Events are occurring once again at this renowned Rhododendron destination and most of the weddings that were postponed have happily rescheduled for next Spring/Summer.

Nearby, the Van Veen Heritage Garden and Van Veen Nursery are still making great strides in their renovation and expansion, under Mike Stewart's management. The new Vireya collection is healthy, bloomed beautifully, and is even expanding to a second 'house.' Past President Caroline Enns successfully landed an award grant from the Hardy Plant Society of \$900 "for special soil mix, educational materials, and signage for the Van Veen Heritage Garden and Rhododendron Vireya Collection". The Smith Garden also continues to thrive under the care and direction of Dick Cavender, with Tom Gressler and Jane Mays as the resident caretakers and volunteer help from Anne Gross and others.

First order of business for our new season is to keep contact with our members—so vital to maintaining our mutual interests. To that order, as a fallback to having in-person meetings, we have arranged with our first speakers of the Fall to present their talks online – via Zoom. It's a very simple, *free* process, ideally utilizing your basic computer components of a speaker and camera. Zoom, however, allows you to participate on a laptop, desktop, tablet, smart phone or even a land line. It's the go-to "app" that has allowed friendships and businesses to carry on face-to-face. For our 3rd Thursday meetings, after a one-step download of Zoom, you will just click on a link that will come in the emailed invitation to join the group. Our subscription accommodates up to 100 participants so there will be room for all. Once the meeting starts, and a few other items of business are handled as usual, our speaker will turn the screen over to his/her presentation and we'll watch and listen. Please see the "Zoom basics" article, in this newsletter edition, with information about our first speaker in the Fall lineup and dates for a couple of practice sessions ahead-of-time to help with orientation. (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 November, 2020

August, 2020

The Summer Soiree at Smith Garden has been canceled, due to the Governor's Executive Orders and the need to protect our members .

September 17, 2020

Our first Virtual (online) meeting, in place of our regular in-person meeting at All Saints Episcopal Church.

Speaker: Chip Muller

Program: "Sikkim Himalaya Revisited: Family, Friends and Rhododendrons 1943-2015"

October 15, 2020

Online via Zoom

Speaker: Glen Jamieson

Program: "Highlights of the Danish/Swedish/German 2018 ARS Tours"

November 19, 2020

Online via Zoom

Speaker: Mike Stewart

Program: "Botanical Gems and their Journey to your Garden"

Haiku

One more sunny day
The frenetic hummingbird
chasing its shadow

Lighting up droplets
of dew - the morning sun -
outdoing itself

The dancing maples
rhythmically following
their hapless shadows

By Peter Kendall

Late-breaking News:

The ARS Seed Exchange has been looking for a new home. This is a project that has been run, single-handedly, by Norm Beaudry of the Potomac Valley Chapter for the past ten years. Having been initially spearheaded by Mike Stewart as a program that Van Veen could support, Portland Chapter board members Ann and Ray Clack have generously stepped up to head the program—still needing final approval from the ARS. You can see the basics of the program at the ARS website under "Seed Exchange":

<https://www.rhododendron.org/seedexchange.htm> .

Steve McCormick

President's Letter August 2020

(continued from page 1)

Finally, this is the first alert that we would love for you to continue your membership in the ARS. It's essential, more at this time than ever, to maintain our core and keep our organization thriving. John Stephens and I, as continuing Co-Chairs of the Membership Committee, will be mailing renewal letters in late September. We're counting on your continued support and always encourage you to "spread the wealth" and invite friends. We may not be able to mingle over snacks, but we will be able to participate in online meetings from home—physical challenges, night-driving, distance to travel, traffic, etc., not getting in the way.

As we begin a new season, the organization has gone through its usual evolution. The Portland Chapter welcomes Gretchen O'Brien as our new Vice President, in charge of programs. We're delighted to have Bob O'Brien joining the Board of Directors, along with Dennis O'Malley, who transitions to the Board following his two years as "Past President". Dennis has most recently contributed crucially to the organization of plant procurement for the Spring sales events. We offer our sincere appreciation to the tireless efforts of departing Board member Brenda Ziegler. She has had immeasurable input on the accounting side of the Chapter—writing checks, supervising our accounts, supporting Treasurer Dick Cavender, etc. She served as a Portland Chapter President and she has provided a significant service as primary liaison to Crystal Springs. We also thank Joanne Turner for her two-year term on the Board. Joanne brought an honest and fresh approach to discussions and meetings and could always be counted on for bringing an array of plants from her garden as door prizes. May that custom resume soon!

Please be aware that we always welcome your input. Do you have a topic or a speaker you'd like Gretchen to consider? Is there a feature you'd like to see in the Newsletter? Do you have photos to contribute that might be fun for the rest of us to see? Please, feel free! We'll resume the "Our Gardens" supplements when the bloom season is upon us again.

We extend our sincere gratitude for your continued relationship with the ARS and your support of the Portland Chapter. It's more important now than ever. Soon we'll be back to the old routines and happy to have this challenging time behind us. See you soon.

Virtual hugs to everyone!

Steve McCormick

How to ZOOM:

The ARS Portland Chapter will be presenting its usual monthly lineup of guest speakers for the 2020-2021 season. To begin: Chip Muller for September, Glen Jamieson for October, Mike Stewart for November (see programs descriptions at www.rhodies.org). Since we can't meet in person, we'll be meeting on Zoom. This is the online platform that has become a national lifesaver, offering visual contact for person-to-person, group, business and all means of interaction online.

Zoom is a free download with an easy learning curve. Zoom offers access to meetings via computer (desktop, laptop, tablet) or smart phone. And you can even join, just to listen, via a land line. To become more familiar with how it works, we'll be hosting two practice sessions ahead of the September meeting, so you'll have the chance to familiarize yourself beforehand. We'll announce those two advance meeting times with the September newsletter.

You'll find various tutorial videos on YouTube with step-by-step instructions. Or you can just join a meeting and explore the options once you're there. After you have downloaded Zoom, you'll have the opportunity to schedule and start your own meetings. So you can be the one to send the invitation links and conduct your own sessions.

(Continued on page 4)

How to **zoom**

Here's a brief guide that will help get you started:

To **join a meeting**, click on the link you'll receive from us in the emailed newsletter cover letter. There will also be a link posted with each speaker's talk description online at rhodies.org (Our Chapter). And you can always email your request for a link to pc.ars@outlook.com

Select **open**, if prompted, to join the meeting. If you have not already downloaded the software, click on "download and run Zoom"

If nothing prompts from browser, [download & run Zoom](#).

You'll be prompted to input your name, which is what will appear on screen:

Then click "Join Meeting" and turn your volume up to listen and watch. You'll see all other participants who are attending the meeting. If your device doesn't have a camera, only your name will be displayed.



The layout of the meeting on your screen will vary depending on your device. It will look slightly different on an iPad vs. a PC or Smart Phone. The control options (icons) are the same, however.

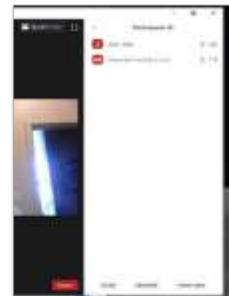


Turn on the **Participants** button to see a list of attendees on your screen.

The **Video** button turns your camera on and off. Video should be turned on so other attendees can see you.

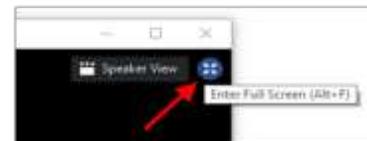
The **Mute** button turns on and off your computer's microphone. You'll be asked to Mute yourself when the speaker is making a presentation. You can unmute yourself when asking a question or making a comment.

Click on **Raise Hand** if you wish to ask a question or make a comment. You can also **Mute** or unmute yourself here.

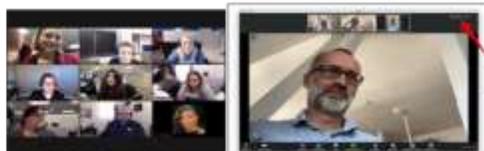


At the top right of your screen, you will see the words – **Gallery View** or **Speaker View**

- **Gallery view** – your screen will be filled with the participants at the meeting
- **Speaker view** – your screen will be filled by the person who is presenting



Gallery View



Speaker View

The **Chat** option allows you to write a note to the Host or to everyone. It will likely be disabled during the meeting.

The **Share Screen** icon will be limited to the Speaker whose presentation will be displayed full-screen.

A Trio of Beautiful Foliage Rhododendrons: 'Whid Bee', 'Cherries and Merlot' and 'Wine and Roses'

By Maria Stewart

Through the years, you have probably admired R. 'Rosevallon' for its leaves with red undersides. Joining R. 'Rosevallon' are three more special rhododendrons with those colorful leaves. Warren Berg hybridized R. 'Whid Bee' to further add to the interest in fine foliage hybrids. We have Frank Fujioka to thank for R. 'Cherries and Merlot' and Ken Cox created R. 'Wine and Roses' for us to enjoy.

R. 'Whid Bee', cross (R. 'Rosevallon' x R. 'Rubicon'), grows wider than tall and its handsome leaves are dark green with red undersides. When the buds are swelling before blooming, the red bud scales predict the beautiful red trusses that are soon to appear. Protect 'Whid Bee' from severe cold and the hot afternoon sun.

Frank Fujioka carried on the quest for fine foliage rhododendrons by creating R. 'Cherries and Merlot'. Its parentage is ('Pretty Baby' x R. pachysanthum) x 'Whid Bee'. Its light red flowers go nicely with leaves of dark green on top and reddish purple on their undersides. It grows to 3 feet in 10 years. Some light shade is desirable.

The third member of this trio is R. 'Wine and Roses' and Ken Cox hybridized it. The glowing pink trusses are set against dark green leaves. Furthermore, the undersides of the leaves are reddish purple! It grows to about three feet in 10 years and blooms in April. Plant it out of the hot afternoon sun.

(1)



R. 'Whid Bee' Photo by Mike Stewart

(2)



R. 'Cherries and Merlot'

Photo by Mike Stewart.

(3)



R. 'Wine and Roses' Photo diary.caerhays.co.uk

Update from Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden

2020 has been a trying and stressful year for everyone, and we at Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden were not exempt from it either. The garden closed in March and didn't reopen until July 6. There were, however, two positive aspects of the garden being closed. The landscapers restoring the Jane Martin Memorial Garden could work undisturbed without visitors, and we took advantage of the closure to power wash all the benches, walls, walkways, plaza areas, the exterior of the gatehouse, the coolhouse (inside and out), and every part of the bridges. This cleaning was unbelievably amazing: it shows us how everything looked when it was new. The inside of the coolhouse even looked good and some of us never thought that was possible.

The Jane Martin Memorial Garden was finished in June while we were still closed. It looks incredibly beautiful and peaceful with all the new plantings and landscaping. Landscaper Michael McQuiggin, of McQuiggin's, Inc., designed and completed the project. If you haven't seen it yet, be sure to make some time when you're in the area to see it.

The online plant sale for Mother's Day has done well. 947 plants were promoted on our website, crystalspringsgardenpdx.org. We now have fewer than 50 plants left. Stephanie, the garden's gatehouse manager, will take some up to the gatehouse and see if she can sell them. Last year she sold all of the leftover plants from the sale.

In order for the garden to open, Multnomah County had to have its Phase 1 plan approved by the Oregon Health Authority. In June Portland Parks & Recreation told us that we would be able to open once we had a plan for allowing people into the garden. The plan needed to show Portland Parks how we would manage the garden and maintain the parameters that were set forth by the Oregon Health Authority. Portland Parks approved our plan three days after we submitted it. Then the work began with the purchasing of supplies, signage, sanitizer, six-foot distancing markers, and lots of incidentals to direct and manage the public. One-way paths were set up throughout the garden.

The portions of the garden open to the public are the Jane Martin Memorial Garden, the peninsula, and the fern wall area. The island is unfortunately closed because the low bridge is a wildlife viewing area and a popular gathering point where appropriate distancing cannot be maintained.

Hand-sanitizing stations have been placed in convenient areas throughout the garden. There is a handwashing station near the gatehouse that is also available to the public. The maximum number of people allowed into the garden had to be calculated by the square footage of the pathways that were going to be used. The number of people is limited to 80 and no groups larger than 10 are allowed. The employees at the gatehouse keep track of the number of people going in and out of the garden. Keeping ahead of all the rules and regulations has been at times stressful and challenging for gatehouse employees and volunteers.

The garden has had for some time a family of beavers living in it. In 2019 we started to see damage to a number of rhododendrons and trees. Last year the beavers stripped the bark off the big Cryptomeria at the end of the peninsula. We checked with arborists to see if there was anything we could do to save it and the answer was no. Earlier this year the Cryptomeria just turned completely brown in a matter of days. A number of rhododendrons have been destroyed or removed by the beavers. The latest causality has been the old Japanese maples on the island at the end of the low bridge. They were spectacular in the fall because each of them displayed leaves of a different color.

In late July Heather and Bill from Portland Parks, Stephanie, and I met with the Bureau of Environmental Services to discuss what we could do about the beavers. We spent a morning with them looking over the damage done in the garden. We were given a couple of options that would only be temporary fixes, including relocating the beavers. There are beavers all up and down the Johnson Creek Watershed and it would be just a matter of time before another family moved in. We've been fencing off large areas from the beavers where it's too difficult to put fencing around the tree or rhododendron. The old practice of wrapping chicken wire around the trees and rhododendrons is no longer considered sufficient protection. The beavers pull it down or chew through it and start chewing on the plant. It's a lot of work to fence plant beds or the actual plants because of all the ways the beavers have adapted to the barriers. What used to be somewhat simple and inexpensive (Continued on page 7)

(Update from Crystal Springs, continued)

has now become a lot of work and more expensive. Portland Parks is helping us with the fencing of areas and plants. The garden as a whole looks great. Five volunteers who worked through the winter months came in every Wednesday while the garden was closed to care for the garden. Bill, the horticulturalist from Portland Parks, worked in the garden from March through May, fixing the garden's sprinkler system. His repairs have made a very big difference in how much better our plants look. Our devoted CSRG volunteers came back to work in the garden on a weekly basis beginning in June.

Dan McLaughlin

Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden Chair

Here are three recent photographs of the Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden:

“ Crystal Springs in August “ (Photographs by Rachael Moloney)



President's Profiles

Here's a new feature of *Rhododendron News*, allowing us to get to know our fellow members a little better. We'll feature a couple of members each month—their backgrounds and interests. For August, here's some background on your new President and Vice President.

Gretchen O'Brien, new Vice President, Portland Chapter

Bob O'Brien, new member, Board of Directors

Bob grew up in the San Francisco Bay area and Gretchen grew up in northern Florida. They met at the University of Florida, where Bob completed his doctorate in chemistry. From there they moved to California for a couple of years and then to Damascus, Oregon. Bob taught at Portland State University for 33 years, specializing in atmospheric and environmental studies, and went on to run a small business for 10 years doing contract monitoring of air pollution measurement.

Bob and Gretchen raised sheep on their property for 15 years and Gretchen was into all aspects of wool: carding, spinning, weaving, knitting, selling her hand-woven articles at craft fairs, etc. Their interests grew to focus on unusual trees and shrubs. Gretchen went through the Horticulture Program at Clackamas Community College and became a Master Gardener in the 2nd year of the program. She was introduced to the Rhododendron world at Crystal Springs where she volunteered at a Mother's Day sale. Gretchen especially appreciates the sequential bloom time of the rhodies on their property. Although appreciating Rhododendrons, especially species and the smaller leaf varieties—in particular for bonsai—her plant interests are broad. With Bob's help, she developed and runs River Rock Nursery, which specializes in unique trees and shrubs. You might have seen Gretchen selling her interesting plants as a vendor at Mother's Day events at Crystal Springs. They also travel to other sales and farmer's markets. They joined the ARS back in the 80's and have participated in Society meetings since then, while also being members of the Portland Bonsai Society and Rock Garden Society.

The O'Brien's raised six kids who have diverged into interesting fields of their own. One son is now a professor of Biological Chemistry at University of Michigan. Another has a degree in archaeology from University of Oregon and is with the U.S. Postal Service in Burley, Idaho. A third retired from Intel as a computer engineer at 40 and now lives and wind surfs in Hood River. And a fourth runs a small organic farm in Oregon. One of their two daughters is a physical therapist in Portland while the other teaches in the North Clackamas School District.

Bob and Gretchen O'Brien



President's Profiles

Steve McCormick New ARS Portland Chapter President

Steve grew up in West Hartford, Connecticut, and was always involved in music. He was swept into the radio and record industry before finishing college and spent the years from 1970 to 1983 in Los Angeles, specializing in national record promotion. He met his partner, John Stephens, at the end of this period and they moved together, several times around the country, following John's career in higher education, while Steve developed a career in radio advertising sales. After some years each in western Pennsylvania, Miami, and San Antonio, Steve's career culminated with 15 years as a Senior Account Executive at CBS Broadcasting in Seattle and John retired from the University of Washington as Director of Professional and Continuing Education. They retired together in early 2013 and moved to Long Beach, Washington, on Willapa Bay, where they had been commuting during their final five years in Seattle to a weekend retreat that became their full-time home. The property was part of the former Clarke Nursery, which had been developed by the 3rd President of the ARS, Dr. J. Harold Clarke. The connection to Rhododendrons was obvious and their interest in learning about the history of the property and the featured species led them to become members of the Portland Chapter. Having always enjoyed the hobby of developing landscapes in the various climate zones where they had lived, they began planting and eventually developed most of the five-acre property into lawns and garden beds, featuring Rhododendrons.

Steve McCormick with *R. macabeaum* at Crystal Springs
Early Show 2019.



**Portland Chapter of
the American
Rhododendron
Society**

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CHAPTER OFFICERS

President: *Steve McCormick*
Vice President: *Gretchen O'Brien*
Past President: *Caroline Enns*
Secretary: *Steve Hopkins*
Treasurer: *Dick Cavender*

BOARD MEMBERS

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

(Through June 30, 2022):
**Ann Clack, Ray Clack, Bob O'Brien,
Dennis O'Malley, David Anderson**

GARDEN INFO:

Crystal Springs Rhodo. Garden
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Dan McLaughlin,
dvmclau@comcast.net
Volunteering:

csrgvol@gmail.com
Gatehouse: Tours, Photoshoots:
gatehousecsrg@gmail.com
Stephanie Kress, 503-267-7509
Friends of Crystal Springs:
Dan McLaughlin,
dvmclau@comcast.net
Events:
Rachael Moloney, 503-975-6743

Cecil & Molly Smith Garden
Chair: **Dick Cavender**

**Newsletter, membership, and
ownership:** The Portland Chapter is
a local Chapter of the American Rho-
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dues to both the national society and
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Website: **www.rhodies.org**; web
masters: **Steve Hall and Caroline
Enns**

Member ship Updates: **John
Stephens & Stephen McCor-
nick, Member ship Co-Chairs**
E-mail: **pc.ars@outlook.com**