

# Rhododendron News

Newsletter of the Portland Chapter – Volume LIII, No. 4 – April, 2009

## April

4 Early Show at CSRG  
16 CHAPTER Meeting, E.  
White Smith & Kathy Van  
Veen  
16 am PDX Garden Club:  
Stone Soup: Sculpture is  
what every garden needs  
21 Board meeting  
30 Western Regional,  
Everett, WA

## May

9-10 Mothers day show  
21 CHAPTER MEETING -  
Awards Banquet & Book  
signing with Harold Greer  
26 Board Meeting

## 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 no later than 9:30 pm.

**Location: All Saints Episcopal Church** - At the corner of SE 40<sup>th</sup> and Woodstock, Portland, Oregon

*Please feel free to join us at the Deli across the street for dinner before the meeting – several members routinely meet there.*

## In This Issue...

>>May Awards Banquet  
>>Member info  
>>Show & Garden Updates  
>>Developing Objectives for the CSRG Master Plan  
>>President's Message -  
**Membership**  
>>Surfing the Board  
>>In The Garden...101:  
**Planting**  
and more!

## April Program

On April 16, **Kathy Van Veen** will be the "warm up act" presenting a short educational program on **How to Present Your Trusses in Shows**. This presentation will undoubtedly include tips on how to pick the best blooms, how to groom them to perfection, and how to navigate through the classification process.

The main act will feature **E. White Smith** discussing **Propagation at the Rhododendron Species Foundation**. As you can imagine the RSF takes propagation pretty seriously and have upgraded their facilities and are doing some pretty exciting things. These two speakers always put a great program and you won't want to miss this or the **HYBRID AUCTION** either!

## May Banquet Choices

A ballot will be distributed at the April meeting to ask members what kind of banquet they would like to have in May. Last year, we switched to a potluck format, from a more formal catered dinner. The board had concerns that the expense may be more than members would be willing or able to pay. We would like to get as many people to the event as possible. Three options will be offered:

- (1) a catered dinner which will cost somewhere between \$25-30 (like 2007 and before);
- (2) a potluck (like 2008); or
- (3) a potluck (like 2008) plus a small contribution to cover the main dishes (like \$3-5 a head). **Let us know what you think at the next meeting or via email to [talk2write2@wildblue.net](mailto:talk2write2@wildblue.net).**

## Hybrid Auction

**A great opportunity to purchase some choice plants!! Bring your check books! Members and nonmembers 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, the focus will be on hybrid Rhododendrons.

This will be a great opportunity to purchase those rare and unusual rhodies you won't find in the garden center. Remember these auctions are what pays for our hall rent, newsletter printing and mailings, and other chapter activities. The Chapter was \$1,500 in the hole last year so we really need your support. **Dick Cavender**

## Early Show

Get ready! The Early Show at Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden is right around the corner on **Saturday April 4**.

Several hundred plants have been brought in for the sale including several new hybrids such as 'Killer Diller,' 'Super Dog,' 'Pride of Roseburg,' and variegated 'Unique.' You will find plants from the late **Ted Anderson, Dan Bones**, and several other well respected hybridizers...if you get there early that is! The plant sale will be in the lower parking lot from 9 am to 5 pm.

Showing off our plants is a big part of the show. Many people received cold weather damage. Please bring as many entries as possible so we can make this a spectacular show. Entries accepted 8-9:45 am; judging begins at 10 am. in the exhibit hall.

There are still a few opportunities for folks to help out. Please give **Linda Rumgay** a call or find her at the show.

## March in Review...

# Rhododendron Hunting In Alaska

## HAIKU

Peter Kendall

Within winter's grip  
--a scattering of robins  
from the old hawthorn

Wings held back, talons  
outstretched, the red-  
tailed hawk  
to its winter's perch

Ah! Detectable  
through a veneer of March  
snow  
the first primrose

## Wag More, Bark Less

--Bumper sticker

NOTE: An expanded color  
version of the newsletter  
typically containing more  
photos (at the end) is posted  
on the chapter's website:  
[www.rhodies.org](http://www.rhodies.org).

**C**larice Clark  
took us on an  
Alaskan adventure  
which not only  
included looking  
for rhododen-  
drons but coming  
across some  
stunning vistas  
and BEARS! She  
and her husband



**Jerry** are currently working on the  
Western North American Rhododen-  
dron Species Project (WNARSP) and  
mapping locations of several plants.

WNARSP was formed in 1995 by a  
group of rhodo enthusiasts from  
Washington State interested in native  
rhodos. The mission of the Project is  
to research and identify all locations  
of the indigenous rhodo species of the  
western U.S. and Canada and create  
an electronic archive of this informa-  
tion. Even though a large volume of  
rhodo data has been compiled over  
the years, the information was  
diffused among various entities and  
not readily accessible to anyone.

WNARSP members have been  
gathering information (such as loca-  
tion data) and creating maps that help  
track where these fascinating plants  
grow. WNARSP members recently  
rediscovered a population of the  
Pacific rhododendron (*R. macro-  
phyllum*) in the Cascade Mountains  
that had not been seen in over 30  
years.

WNARSP meets monthly under the  
auspices of the Rhododendron  
Species Foundation at the Foundation  
library. For more information, see:  
[www.wnarsp.org](http://www.wnarsp.org).

**Bob MacArthur** provided a fabulous  
short program on identifying mildew  
and how to treat it. He brought in  
several samples from his garden for  
members to examine. Mildew doesn't  
look the same on all plants and can be

tricky to diagnose the  
first time. All rhodos  
are susceptible to  
mildew damage –  
including vireyas!  
Several members  
chimed in with their  
mildew remedies,  
observations, and  
other tips. **Thanks Bob  
that was a great little program!**



## In the garden 101...

## Let's Get Planting

Kath Collier

**S**pring is here and it seems that  
everyone is ready to get out in the  
garden and plant things. But hold up,  
there are a few things you might want  
to consider before digging a hole in  
that blank spot in the garden and  
throwing a plant in.

One of the biggest mistakes people  
make with all plants is to simply plant  
them where ever there is a blank  
space in the garden. Just a little bit of  
thought can save you a great deal of  
work later.

For instance, did you notice this  
winter where the water puddles up? If  
so, you will need to plant most things a  
little 'high' which means that you would  
mound the soil up perhaps 3-6 inches.  
This does two things: the soil you just  
dug will settle down as it is watered and  
planting 'high' will keep the plant from  
literally drowning during our 'wet  
season.' According to Roger B. Swain in  
"Groundwork A Gardener's Ecology"  
roots will not grow into soil that is  
periodically inundated because of the  
lack of oxygen. In addition, he suggests  
that giving plants enough room to  
develop large root systems will mini-  
mize the amount of water needed  
during dry seasons. He also suggests  
that using large amounts of partially  
decomposed organic matter can double  
(or more) the soil's water-holding  
capacity (along with several other  
benefits).

(Continued on page 4)

*In Memory of...*

## **Dan Beasley**

We were saddened on April 1<sup>st</sup> to learn that **Dan Beasley** had passed away earlier in the day. A remembrance reception is scheduled for **April 11** from **2-5 pm** in the **Exhibit Hall** at Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden.

Dan has been a very active member in the chapter and the Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden for many years. He was always cheerful and willing to help... a friendly beacon to all. He had helped with potting plants for the upcoming sales just days before his death.

We are hoping to put together a more fitting obit for the newsletter for next month.

## **Changing your address?**

Contact **Ray Girton**, Membership Chair for questions or assistance.

# **CSRG Master Plan Objectives**

**Kath Collier**

**Goal -> Objectives -> Measurable results**

One of the most difficult challenges in creating any type of planning document is keeping them simple, understandable, and readable (not just in terminology but in length!). This is the third installment of a process description and suggestions for updating the Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden (CSRG) Master Plan. So far we have a goal statement:

***The goal of the Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden is to provide a tranquil sanctuary that serves as a first class educational resource and botanical garden featuring rhododendrons, azaleas, and companion plants.***

It should be noted that the term "botanical garden" (used in the original Master Plans) is not well defined. I would suggest that it could be interpreted to mean a place where the focus is on plants, particularly named plants, and educational types of activities. Such a garden would be different say from a park, or rock garden, or garden with a focus on something other than plants. Such as the Rose Garden stadium focuses on basketball and not plants at all.

We began in the last issue to talk more about objectives and how to revise some of the previously suggested objective-like statements so that they were SMART (Sensible, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound). One revised objective was suggested:

**1. Continue the development and maintenance of a large and varied public display of rhododendrons, azaleas, and companion plantings.**

This revised objective recognizes that the garden has been in place for awhile and that we need to continue with the efforts to provide the public with a

varied display. The challenge now is to develop objective statements that might embody the other previous six objective-like statements (listed last month). I have combined related activities and reduced the overall number of objective-like statements from seven to four:

**2. Develop and maintain a peaceful, tranquil refuge away from the hurried pace of urban living.**

Not much change in the objective other than to recognize past efforts and that this type of environment must be developed (which can be somewhat disruptive). Some of the detailed measurements might be how we manage the activities of large groups in the garden, design considerations, and perhaps the signage that would minimize the risk of kids climbing the waterfalls and plants.

**3. Offer educational opportunities in a natural setting that demonstrates year round beauty to horticulturists, amateur gardeners, and local schools. Examples of educational activities typically include shows that include a wide variety of plants, garden plantings that include companion plants, demonstrations, etc.**

This statement begins to blend the previous 3, 4, and 5 statements. And finally, a blending of 6-7 to address the facilities within the garden:

**4. Develop and maintain facilities and structures that will accommodate the public and groups. This includes both pathways, restrooms, and an exhibit hall that could support educational activities, as well as other activities that would provide public benefit or support special occasions.**

This statement mashes facilities and overall garden structures together as important keys for supporting educational activities mentioned in #3. It also allows the use of those facilities and structures for public benefit (such as providing a location for Master Gardener Training, our chapter meetings, or other programs) and special  
**(Continued on page 4)**

## Looking for something?

Surplus copies of past journals and bulletins are available for **FREE** from Kathy Van Veen at (503) 777-1734 (or [vanveennursery@hotmail.com](mailto:vanveennursery@hotmail.com)).

## PDX Garden Club Events

All presentations are free and open to the public and held at the Portland Garden Club, 1132 SW Vista, Portland. Coffee served at 9:30 a.m. For additional info call: 503-222-2845 or [www.portlandgardenclub.org](http://www.portlandgardenclub.org)

**Thursday, April 16, 2009,**  
10:15 am

**Stone Soup: Sculpture is What Every Garden Needs.**  
D.J. Garrity, former sculptor-in-residence at Mount Rushmore, talks about using art to enhance the landscape.

## CSRG Objectives

(Continued from page 3)

occasions (such as the volunteer banquet).

The next step in developing the master plan would be to review these draft objectives for ways to make them **SMARTer**, while keeping them as simple as possible. **Then comes the fun part.** Details regarding the kind of activities that would be included under each of these objectives need to be identified. All of the previous Master Plans, for instance, identified the need to rebuild the cool house (exhibit house) so that it could be used year round for a variety of activities. This desire is still valid today, although a project this large is a bit daunting for many. Several members are working on researching the ground work for such a project. The paperwork for such a project, as you can imagine could be fairly detailed and massive. It would behoove us to keep our Master Plan fairly short, simple, and readable so we can get through the public review process the city will require. The project plan for a new exhibit house is on a bit slower timeline different from the master plan.

**Stay tuned.** We're now getting into the 'meat' of the plan which will greatly benefit from your review and comment. Your comments should be provided to **Kath Collier** at a meeting, via phone (503) 663-7917 or electronically through [talk2write2@wildblue.net](mailto:talk2write2@wildblue.net).

**Kath**

## 101 (Continued)

Excess water can also lead to root rot which will cause plants to wilt, and roots too look like lettuce that has been left in the refrigerator way too long. Once rot sets in it can be very difficult to treat and control, especially if the soil conditions are not modified (through improving drainage, and potentially chemical treatments).

Soil texture will affect the drainage in your garden. Soil texture refers to the proportions of sand, silt, and clay present in the soil. There are 12 different types of texture categories. These categories start with the most coarse particle size and end with the

most fine. You can find out about your garden by looking into soil survey maps (available from the county). Categories include: clay, sandy clay, silty clay, clay loam, sandy clay loam, silty clay loam, silt, silt loam, loam, sandy loam, loamy sand, sand.

The structure of each of these soil textures vary. Some drain very quickly (and some too quick) facilitating the movement of water, air, and nutrients. Others cause water to puddle. The structure is made up of horizontal layers that form a soil profile which can be analyzed, along with other compounds, to determine the quality of the soil and how well plants will grow in it. Your local County Extension Agent can help you learn a lot about how your soil will perform.

Before planting, one needs to also look for other environmental elements that can affect the plant such as wind, sun, and shade. It may be difficult to imagine the impact of shade at this time of the year but it can make a major impact on plants that tend to get leggy such as *R. President Roosevelt* and *R. Sappho*.

Both wind and sun can dry a plant out, particularly when the roots have not had a chance to get established. The other day I saw some small barriers next to some small trees that helped block the wind. The barriers were made by stapling a sheet of weed fabric stretched between two poles—simple and effective!

Typically, plants need a bit of extra protection, careful watering, and a little TLC the first year or so in the garden until their root systems get established. After that many will provide you with years of enjoyment and be relatively carefree. To find some special plants for your garden, join us at the Early Show on April 4 or at the Mother's Day Show in May. There are always some fabulous plants available that Bob and the other guys can help you find! (Reference: Nursery News, February 2009, "The dirty truth about soil" by Scott Rose)

## Member Benefits!

Order your books through the ARS Portland Chapter and receive 10-25 percent discount off the list price. Contact **Loni Welsh** via:

- email – [oregon1853@yahoo.com](mailto:oregon1853@yahoo.com)
- phone – 503-663-6987
- ARS Chapter meetings

The following publishers and book sellers offer discounts to us:

- **Princeton University Press - 25% discount** (<http://press.princeton.edu/catalogs.html>)
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- **Timber Press Publishing - 25% discount** (<http://www.timberpress.com>)
- **Workman Publishing - 25% discount** (<http://www.workman.com>)
- **Southern Oregon book dealer - 10% discount** (catalog listing available on request)
- **Rain or Shine - 10% discount** (any other books they have in their store)

## Alpine Rhodos

Are you interested in growing some of the alpine rhododendrons? If so, there is a program in Eugene on April 7, 2009 that you will be interested in. The meeting is at the Eugene Garden Club, 1645 High Street at 7:00 pm. The North American Rock Garden Society will be discussing the specialized conditions, such as better drainage, these plants require.

The title of the program by Mr. Loren Russell is "How to Build a Successful Rock Garden." Mr. Russell will explore the basics of rock garden design in the Willamette Valley, and how to create friendly habitats for an exciting range of rock plants. He will touch on siting your garden and plants, selecting locally available rock and soil materials, techniques of rock handling, and the effective placement of rock to create naturalistic garden features. Examples are drawn from rock gardens in Oregon and across the US and from rock garden type plants growing in the wild.

**Paula and Ted Hewitt** of the Eugene Chapter recently attended a winter study weekend for the North American Rock Garden Society in Portland. According to Paula they came home very excited about the numerous examples of small rhododendrons grown in a rock garden habitat. If you can make it down to Eugene this could be a great program to catch!

## Surfing the Board

Topics discussed at the board meeting included membership (local and national), garden projects, auctions, nominating an outstanding PGE volunteer, and the election of officers (which it looks like we will be completing next month). Mike Domaschofsky will be following up on doing another Garden display at the 2010 Home and Garden show.

## CSRG Path & Wall

The stairway project at CSRG is well underway. Several large rhododendrons and excess dirt have been moved and the new path is finished except for the rock work on the sides.



Steps are also being cut in and ferns will soon be added on the slope above the path. This slope (by the fern wall) has been aerated and covered with mulch already.



The first course of rock for the upper bench has been put in place by the masons. An Egan azalea garden is also being constructed with left over dirt from this project.

**Special thanks to all of the volunteers and helpers... Bob MacArthur** looks like he is having fun in the mud!





*R. falconeri* RSF 75/124  
19800672

## HELP WANTED!

**Do you dream of being a writer?** We've got just the job for you! We need a Newsletter Editor.

**Qualifications:** Depending on your skill level, the process may take as little as 8-10 hours per month. Average computer and word processing skills will make the job easy and interesting. You will need to provide your own computer and printer; some writing and photography possible.

If you are interested, please contact **Kathy Van Veen**, 503-777-1734 (vanveennursery@hotmail.com) or **Kath Collier**, 503-663-7917 (talk2write2@wildblue.net).

# Smith Garden

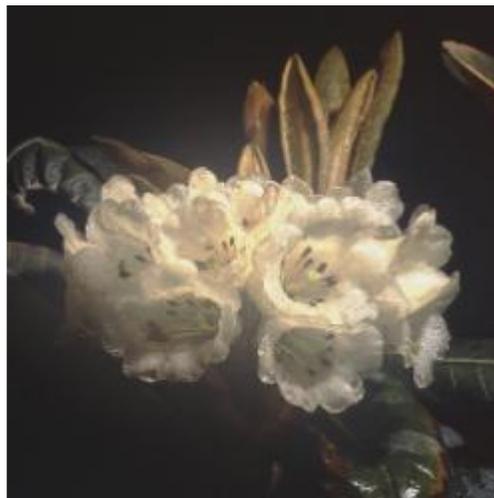
By Herb Spady

Spring seems like a child enjoying Christmas. The anticipation is intense, the joy is great, the experience is fulfilling, but the end is too soon.

That is the way I feel about *R. falconeri*. I had a small plant, perhaps 18-inches high in my garden in 1972. That was the winter of the 50-year record cold weather. It was -18° F in my garden. Needless to say, *R. falconeri* did not survive. I never expected to see it blooming in the Willamette Valley.

So, I watch with anticipation the swelling buds on the plant in the Smith Garden. The same feeling existed regarding a large flower bud on *R. sinogrande* in late winter, but it has since turned dark and is not expanding. That is a bad sign. Since it made its first flower bud last season, maybe it will produce one or more next year.

*R. falconeri* will likely produce large white or slightly yellow effloresces perhaps tinged with a little pink. We don't know just how it will look, but here are a few pictures from the Rhododendron Species Foundation: ***The Smith Garden, like Christmas is filled with gifts that you should come and enjoy.***



*R. falconeri* RSF 75/124 19800520

## President's Message

Kath Collier

The economic doom and gloom seems to be lifting a bit, but the effects of the recession can be seen every-where. Both people and organizations are watching their budgets more carefully and spending less for all non-essential activities. We feel the pinch in the society as fewer people renew their memberships, and as fewer people are able to volunteer as frequently as they have in the past. Again, some of this is lifting—we have a new member as of last meeting!

Still it is challenging to find folks who are able to help with the various jobs in the chapter. We need a newsletter editor, board members, and could use a bit of help with the website. If you are interested or able to help in any of these jobs please let me or any of the board members know. If we are unable to fill these positions, the quality of life within the chapter may change in the near future.

Board members are key to keeping the chapter organized. This group meets monthly to discuss issues, both national and local, that may be resolvable. This saves the average member a bunch of time and effort. They often volunteer to help with a project or two such as bus tours, finding speakers, etc. The newsletter editor is also a part of the board, and a new editor is sorely needed. Often the work of the board involves just a few extra hours out of the month. The benefits of serving on the board can include a look behind the curtain, always being on top of the newest policies, events, and activities, and just having the benefit of working with other dedicated chapter members.

Let us know if you are interested in helping with one of our projects. We can use your help!

## Smith Garden Committee Report

### Current Draft Mission Statement

*"The Committee shall operate the Cecil and Molly Smith Garden exclusively for scientific and educational purposes relating to the preservation, maintenance, dissemination and addition of rhododendron and other appropriate plant material."*

You might be wondering what has been happening at the Cecil & Molly Smith Garden. There are several projects planned and ongoing to update the Garden, according to **Ginny Mapes**, Garden Chair.

**Herb Spady** has been evaluating unknown rhodies in the garden and replacing those that are not in good condition or stressed with choice new hybrids. The Garden Site Plan will be updated with changes.

Several trees will also be removed or thinned to bring more sun into the garden. In addition, there is a need to thin out the trees and brush from the lower section (poison oak, English Ivy, and blackberries, OH MY!).

The open dates and hours have also changed. Beginning in April, and continuing through May, the garden will be open Saturday and Sunday from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM. **Donna Sell** will design a flyer that has the new days and hours—including a map that we can give out at chapter meetings, the Garden Gate House, and also leave at the Home and Garden Shows and other garden centers.

There are plans to update the website with new garden photos and updated plant lists. There are also plans to update the Mission Statement (draft appears in the side bar), goals for garden preservation, promotion of rhododendron education, and to encourage public garden enthusiasts.

The committee will meet in June to reflect on past projects and plan new directions for garden.

There are thoughts that the garden may be able to be open more in the future (and once the garden is in shape). It has also been suggested that a small propagation area be cleared out in order to grow plants for the plant sale.

One of the more difficult things will be attracting new volunteers, especially youth. There are plans to check with the local Future Farmers of America (FFA) and 4-H groups for possible roll in propagation and growing on of plants on site.

**Extracted from Ginny's annual report.**

## Rhodo Stamp Collectors

In March, Canada released two 54-cent stamps that depict rhodo trusses of 'Mist Maiden' and 'Minas Maid.' 'Mist Maiden' is a cultivar of *R. yakusimanum* selected by David Leach in 1958. 'Minas Maid' is a 1966 cross of 'Nova Zembla' x *R. yakushmanum* by George S. Swain.

The stamps were designed by Isabelle Toussaint from photographs taken at the 2008 Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada exhibit. Approximately 13 million booklets of 10 stamps were printed and are for sale. (Thanks to C. Cerinin of Tapan Zee Chapter).

Post Master: Time sensitive mail; please deliver before April 7, 2009

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## American Rhododendron Society - Portland Chapter - Rhododendron News - April 2009

### E. White Smith - Rhododendron Species Foundation Propagation

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#### CHAPTER OFFICERS

President: *Kath Collier* Past President: *Irv Snyder*

Vice President: *Mike Domschofsky*

Secretary: *Carol McCarthy*

Treasurer: *Dick Cavender*

#### BOARD MEMBERS (Thru June 30, 2009) *Steve*

*Hopkins, Brenda Ziegler, Steve Kaminski, Donna Sell, Ray Glack*

(Thru June 30, 2010) *Kathy Van Veen, Dave Collier, Ray Girtton, Maria Stewart, Mike Stewart,*

#### GARDEN INFO:

Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden Chair:

*Bob MacArthur* and *Beverly Watkins*

Ticket booth: *Rose Kress*, (503) 654-4318

Friends: *Kathy Van Veen* (503) 777-1734

Cecil & Molly Smith Garden Chair: *Ginny Mapes*

#### Newsletter membership and Ownership: *Ray*

*Girtton*, Chair, (503) 659-7275. The Portland

Chapter is a local Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society. Combined annual dues to both the national society and local chapter are \$40.

Membership benefits include nine or more newsletters. Rhododendron news is mailed by non-profit class postage (permit #1134, Portland).

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**Articles:** Deadline is the chapter meeting. Send materials to either: *Kathy Van Veen*, Interim Managing Editor, at: (email) [vanveenursery@hotmail.com](mailto:vanveenursery@hotmail.com) or via mail to: 4201 SE Franklin, PO Box 86424, Portland, Oregon 97286, or to Kath Collier at: [talk2write2@wildblue.net](mailto:talk2write2@wildblue.net), or via mail to: *Kath Collier*, newsletter production, 37235 SE Lusted Road, Boring, OR 97009. Portland Chapter Delivery: Questions should be directed to: *Maria Stewart* (503) 668-7565.

**Website:** [www.rhodies.org](http://www.rhodies.org) – web team: Steve Kaminski, Ray Girtton, Dave Collier, Kath Collier

