



Rhododendron News

Newsletter of the Portland Chapter – Volume LIV, No. 1 – January, 2010

FALL CALENDAR

January

21 – Chapter meeting
26 – Board meeting
TBA – proposed Classification meeting

February

TBA – Classification meeting
18- Chapter meeting
23 – 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 by 9:30 pm.

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

Please feel free to join us at the Woodstock Wine & Deli (across the street) for dinner or beverage before the meeting – several members routinely meet there.

In This Issue...

- >>CSRG Master Plan, **More 'World Class'**
- >>**Smith Garden Update**
- >>**Rhodo Growers Workshop**
- >>**Program Reviews**
- >>**President's Corner**
- >>**and more!**

Other articles for this issue: Merle Sanders – Eugene Chapter died 11/25

January Program

Eastern Azaleas!

Come join us as we explore the eastern azaleas in the Great Smokey Mountains in North Carolina and Tennessee with Mike and Maria Stewart. They recently made a 10-day trip along with **Don Hyatt**, who is considered to be one of the leading experts in the U.S. for eastern azaleas, along with **Jim Brant** and **George McLellan** who have been instrumental in protecting these rhododendrons from the invasive plants. These three dedicated researchers go back in and study the plants and record changes to them and the area every year.

The goal of the trip, Mike said, “was to learn as much as they could” about these plants, particularly since they are currently growing almost all of them at the Dover Nursery. He indicated that they have never seen these plants in the wild and it was an educational to see how and where they grow. During their backwood hikes, they also managed to find some nice forms never recorded before.

According to **Donald Hyatt** (see his online article “*East Coast Native Azaleas Tips on Identification*”) there are 15 native eastern azalea species in the United States, and just one west coast native *R. occidentale*. Eastern native azaleas are classified by color into three general groups: White, Pink, and Orange.

Examples of the predominantly white group (which are primarily white with occasional pale pink or pink tinged flowers) include: *R. alabamense*, *R. arborescens*, *R. atlanticum*, *R. viscosum*, and a newly discovered species from South Carolina, *R. eastmanii*.

Examples of the predominantly pink group (which ranges from pale pink, to deep rose, to almost cherry red) include: *R. canadense*, *R. canescens*, *R. periclyminoides*, *R. prinophyllum*, and *R. vaseyi*.

Finally examples of the orange group (which ranges from yellow, through gold, to deep orange or scarlet) include: *R. austrinum*, *R. calendulaceum*, *R. cumberlandense*, *R. flammeum*, and *R. prunifolium*.

This should be a very interesting program that might spur you on to planning your next vacation on the east coast – perhaps take in these great plants and the May 2010 ARS Annual Convention in Long Island, New York!

December in Review

Christmas Party Extravaganza!

Wow did we have fun! There was great food, fabulous company, great pictures, and gifts for everyone! The decorated tables glittered with floral arrangements fit for kings, with room for everyone to enjoy visiting and chowing down! Everyone brought home a gift (who wanted one), and there were a few leftovers to add to the door prize cache for January.

It was hard to bring the festivities to an end. Everyone managed to linger, exchanging holiday greetings and enjoying talking with friends...the sign of a good company, great fun, and a fabulous party!

Haiku

by Peter Kendall

*The patter of rain
That stretch of fence with
it vine
almost gone*

*Acorns underfoot
The mountain in cloud; a
swirl
of leaves in the wind
has erased the sun*

*December cold snap
The sun struck
rhododendron
--its leaves tell the tale*

*From the east-chill gusts
The wind chimes-the only
sound
All the birds—long gone*

*Those gales from the east
freezing the last cast off
leaf
and the sun itself*

President's Message

Happy New Year

Kath Collier

Happy New Year... What kind of New Year's resolutions did you make? There are so many possible resolutions that one can make, which may not necessarily match the ones that people keep. There was a talk show host the other day that suggested folks create resolutions that were, let's say a real stretch. That way when next year rolls around, they could say that they at least made progress. And that people usually made some kind of progress.

Did one of your resolutions include something for the Portland Chapter, our gardens, or the American Rhododendron Society? It is not too late to add another resolution to your list. A few suggestions might include volunteering to help out at one of the gardens for two days. This might include helping out at one of the special work days or perhaps at an event. Another great idea would be to invite two friends or neighbors to one of our meetings and bringing them back for a second.

Consider resolving to treat yourself. Set aside a day or two to come and visit the gardens and let the beauty that results from the hard work of many of your friends soak in and soothe your soul. We are pretty lucky to have such fabulous gardens close enough to visit at nearly any time. It is way too easy to be overcome by events and not take a little time for yourself and enjoy something really special.

Finally, resolve to have a safe and happy holiday season. I understand a couple of our members were caught in the late December snow storm and some were involved with fender benders on the road. Let's keep our fingers crossed that the rain will hold the snow and ice off this year. Happy Happy. **Kath *<#:-)**

Smith Garden News

Herb Spady

There was not much activity at the garden during the very cold weather, but a few things are happening. Following planting all the new plants, we are working toward a new guide for the Spring visitations. A new guide is necessary. In addition to the new plants many of the old plants have died or been removed for other reasons. Bed 10 which contained more plants than any other bed has been split. The lower section will be given a new number.

Keep in mind that we will have a Spring work party in late February or early March.

Rhodie Growers Forum

Each December, Clackamas Community College hosts a one-day Rhododendron Growers Workshop. This workshop is open to growers and others interested in rhododendrons. The modest course fee covers the cost of the speakers, lunch and snacks (about \$25.00).

This year Robin Rosetta, Oregon State University Extension Entomologist provided a 'low down' on the azalea lace bug (for more information on the bug see last month's Smith Garden article). Michael McMahan, from Fisher Farms talked about their experiences with the Grower Assisted Inspection Program and the training they obtained to participate in the program.

One topic that is of great interest to many gardeners is how to create plants and manage your soils to avoid *Phytophthora* root rot. Jennifer Parke, Oregon State University, Dept. of Crop and Soil Science provided a very interesting program and answered questions throughout the lunch break. There is a free online course through the Oregon State Extension Service for *Phytophthora*

(Continued on page 5)

HELP WANTED!

Do you dream of being a writer? We've got just the job for you! Time is running out and we need a replacement!

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 access to a 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)

Outback Adventure

Rhododendrons in Australia

**Golden Jubilee Conference
October 17-20, 2010**

in the Dandenong Ranges
one of Victoria's top
tourist attractions

To learn more about the world class national rhododendron garden (featuring a 15,000 plant collection), the international and local speakers, and other attractions see www.vicrhodo.org.au

CSRG Master Plan – More Comments on World Class

Kath Collier

Goal -> Public Comment

This is the eleventh article related to building an updated master plan for the Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden (CSRG). This article summarizes and discusses a second letter that provided feedback on the definition of a 'world class' garden, particularly in light of maintenance issues.

The letter suggested raising the garden admission fees. The idea of raising the admission fee has been discussed by several folks over the last several years. There are folks who don't think we should charge admission; those who think we should retain the current fees, those that want to raise the fees, and others who think we need to reconsider how and when we charge, as well as, how much we charge.

We currently charge \$3. As a comparison I researched what other gardens charged. Almost all of these sites had discounts for seniors and children. The Missouri Botanical Garden, the oldest botanical garden in the U.S., charges \$13. Several other large gardens back East charged \$18. More locally, the world class Japanese Garden charges \$8 (with one free day each year); our world class Suzhou-style Chinese Garden charges \$8.50 (see the article on page 4 however for information on free admission); Berry Botanic Garden charges \$5 (admission by reservation only); and the Oregon Garden charges \$5-8 depending on the time of year.

In the past the Long-range planning committee helped develop the original garden fee schedule and helped with other projects such as the Master Plan, maintenance and project development, etc.

The letter also suggested different ways to use the money. Some ideas were maintenance-related such as improving the pathways (leveling walkways and removing puddles),

installing a people-counter so we know how many people visit the garden and can evaluate the impact on the resources (such as the restrooms), and improving the back access road. They also suggested that we could expand the interpretative signage by adding kiosks with educational information and create a docent program to help steward visitors in the garden. They also suggested adding places where people could gather such as a tea room/café/gift shop, creating little bowers that are not only great for photos, but can provide a little extra private space.

The letter also mentions the water fowl (maybe we need to restate it as water foul) issues. It wasn't too many years ago that the waterfowl were seen in a very positive light. Now, with over population, soil compaction problems caused by the birds, and other issues, we might need to rethink feeding. Things are always changing and demanding that we rethink how we do business.

Take the new threats from invasive plants such as *Iris pseudacorus* that is literally choking the way water flows through the garden and, for that matter, the golf course. Resolving this problem will be a challenge and require new techniques and technologies due to the tenacity of the plant (it has earned its claim to being an invasive!).

All of these are great ideas and could improve the garden. All of these great ideas cost money, along with other major projects such as replacing the exhibit hall with a building that might be used year around...a dream that was identified in the original 1992 Master Plan and still continues as just a dream today.

The comment letter suggested a variety of ideas regarding admission and improvements that are needed in the garden to ensure that it presents a well maintained and cared for persona. In the next issue, we will explore more maintenance issues, roles and responsibilities as they relate to maintenance, and the further development of the master plan.

*<#;-) Kath

Get in Free— Chinese Garden

The Portland Classical Chinese Garden will be celebrating the tenth anniversary of its opening throughout the coming year. NW Natural will sponsor the Anniversary Year, and they will kick things off by hosting the general community to free admission into the Garden for ten days, January 2 - 11.

Come and enjoy the Garden and the various cultural programs. The Garden and its enchanting Teahouse will be open daily, as usual, from 10 am to 5 pm. An engaging line-up of events and exhibits are scheduled throughout the year. Please look for updated information at: www.portlandchinese-garden.org

The Garden has always greeted visitors with the three Chinese characters “Lan Su Yuan” inscribed above the entry plaza doorway. Lan Su can mean “Portland-Suzhou” alluding to the sister city relationship which created the Garden. The final word, “Yuan” means garden. The garden has decided to more fully embrace their Chinese heritage and call itself by its Chinese name, Lan Su Chinese Garden.

In the Garden...

I like iris. We have more iris varieties in our garden than rhodos and azaleas combined. Like the rhododendron genus, irises also have their own noxious weed, *Iris pseudacorus*. You might have seen the ‘yellow flag’ iris blooming in wet, boggy areas, or along stream beds or ponds. You may have seen it for sale or at the Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden where it has become a major nuisance.

But *I. pseudacorus* wasn’t always a bad guy. Back near the end of the fifth century, the Franks lived along the lower part of the Rhine and were at war with the Goths. During a battle King Clovis of the Franks became hemmed in and was, as the story goes, shown by the iris where to safely cross the Rhine. Afterwards King Clovis took the iris as a mascot. In the 12th century, the iris was incorporated into the royal coat of arms by the French King Louis VII and renamed the ‘Fleur-de-Louis’. During the 14th century, the English King Edward III also added the iris to his royal coat of arms during the battles to gain the throne from the French king Phillip VI. The iris remained as part of the British coat of arms until 1801.

As you might have guessed, this iris grows so thick that one could cross over portions of the Crystal Springs Lake area. It grows so thick that it will impede water flow and cause drainage problems. *I. pseudacorus* appears to have been the primary culprits in the death of several of the large *R. ‘Cynthia’* plants near the meadow and has hampered water circulation in several areas of the garden and on the golf course.

The plant grows very fast and reaches a height of four feet’ or more. It will grow just about anywhere, soggy or not, and in the process suffocates surrounding natural wild plants. In addition to mechanical removal, there is a chemical that can be used on the plant in the fall. It spreads by seed (which can float

down water ways) and portions of the root.

It is not totally bad. There are varieties of *I. pseudacorus* that are sterile and non-evasive. There are different color/structure forms: white, a brighter yellow, and a hose-in-hose type, a variegated leaf. And is one parent of the new ‘Eye Lash’ irises from Japan.

Several folks from CSRG will be meeting with specialists from the Portland Parks and Recreation staff this month to talk about how to control the iris and hopefully develop some next steps to help us get back control.

Reference: *Irises, A Gardener’s Encyclopedia*, by Claire Austin

Rhodie Growers Workshop (Continued)

at ecampus.oregonstate.edu/ phytophthora (there is a charge for certification but this also provides some additional services and products).

After lunch, Dennis Bottemiller, Nursery Manager/ Plant Propagator for the Rhododendron Species Foundation provided a talk on variables in rhododendron propagation. It is always interesting to find out how other people do things...and how successful they are at it!

Mat Gold, from Midas Nursery Solutions, gave a presentation on opportunities for automation in the nursery which really perked up a lot of overworked folks in the audience. I really liked the potting machine! The last presentation was **Harold Greer**, Greer Gardens, who presented a program called “New and Exciting Rhododendrons.” Not all of the plants were ‘new’ but they were worthy of mention; others were very new and of interest. Harold does such a good job at his presentations – great photos, great stories, and great plants.

If you are interested in finding out information about the 2010 workshop (which should occur in December) contact **Bruce Nelson** at CCC.

The Ultimate Rhodo Conference

Ron Knight

The 100 available spaces are going quickly!

The April 9-11 conference will be held at the University of British Columbia Botanical Garden and Centre for Plant Research in Vancouver (see www.ubcbotanicalgarden.org). The UBC is Canada's premier rhododendron garden and it's the perfect environment to learn about rhododendrons. The Ultimate Rhododendron Conference is the first in North America to be designed on a double-track classroom learning model. It features classroom and field experiences at two learning levels, tours of three world-class gardens, rhodie sales, on-campus suite accommodation, and free time in evenings to visit beautiful Vancouver, site of the 2010 Olympics.

Veteran rhododendron collectors will enjoy **Douglas Justice's** advanced (Level 2) classes with their emphasis on species, and **Ron Knight's** novice (Level 1) classes will be a great place for newer club members to learn all the basics of rhododendron gardening. In fact, you could use this conference as a way to introduce gardening friends, who are not yet members of your chapter, to the wonderful world of rhododendrons.

The registration fee of \$155 is all-inclusive for activities at UBC Botanical Gardens:

- Six 90-minute learning sessions taught by professional teachers in high-tech classrooms
- A folder of notes
- Saturday and Sunday lunches and coffee breaks
- Free admission to the Asian and Alpine Gardens
- Complimentary parking

Registration is limited to 100 rhodophiles and over 50 percent of available spaces are now taken. Level 2 classes are filling up especially quickly. Please register now to ensure that you get the learning level you want.

If you need hotel accommodation, make your reservation soon because the conference committee has not pre-booked any blocks of rooms in the three recommended hotels.

Conference details and a printable registration form may be obtained from the ARS District 1 website: www.rhodos.ca (click on "registration form" and "information" halfway down the page, under April 9 – 11). If you have questions, please contact **Ron Knight** at: reknight@telus.net.

Surfing the Board

The Board took a break in December, as the meeting would have been held just days before Christmas. We will have many things to look at in January including grants that we might want to apply for, website progress, policy of the board updates, and much more. Stay tuned!

Changing Addresses?

If you are changing your physical or electronic mail address, be sure to let **Ray Girton**, Membership Chair, know so that we can continue to get the newsletter to you!

Host List

There are a few months left! If you would like to be a chapter meeting host, please contact Barb MacArthur at 360-256-2522.

Book Exchange Table

In December, we tried something new in our Chapter meeting. Members were invited to participate in a book exchange. Members brought excess books, picked up a few, and contributed a few bucks to the speaker fund. The table will be set up again in January. Be sure to pick up a couple and consider donating some that you are no longer interested in keeping.

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Vice President: *Mike Domschofsky*

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BOARD MEMBERS (Thru June 30, 2010):

Kathy Van Veen, Dave Collier, Ray Girtton, Maria Stewart, Mike Stewart; (Thru June 30, 2011)

Steve Hopkins, Brenda Ziegler, Donna Sell, Ray Clack, and Carol Barrett.

GARDEN INFO:

Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden Chairs:

Bob MacArthur (360-256-2522) and

Donna Giguere (503-777-1177)

Tours: **Barbara Keller**, 503-775-5205

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

Friends: **Kathy Van Veen**, 503-777-1734

Events: **Rita Knapp**, 503-503-256-2483

Cecil & Molly Smith Garden Chair: **Ginny Mapes**

Newsletter, membership, and ownership: Ray Girtton, Membership 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). Photographs and images may only be reproduced with permission from the creator or owner.

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