

Portland Chapter, American Rhododendron Society

Calendar

**December 2nd, 2019
Registration Opens for
2020 Vision 75th Anni-
versary ARS Interna-
tional Convention**

**December 19, 2019
Winter Solstice Potluck
and Gift Exchange with
Decorated Tables
Social time 6:30 pm, set
up & decorate tables
Dinner 7:00 pm
Program: Members'
presentation of their
slides and digital imag-
es**

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



**You're invited! It's the annual Portland ARS Chapter
Holiday Potluck Supper & Gift Exchange
Thursday, December 19, 2019**

Location: All Saints Episcopal Church, 4033 SE Woodstock Blvd.

Doors open at 6:30 PM for Social Hour, Set-up, Table Decoration

Dinner at 7:00 PM

Bring your favorite dish to share and invite a friend! Guests are always welcome. The main course, plates, plasticware, and napkins will be provided. Also, **please bring one or more inexpensive wrapped gifts** to share.

This December meeting will continue the tradition of featuring **member slides and digital images**. Consider sharing with us some photos of your garden or other favorite memories of the past year. We will provide the laptop, projector, sound, and screen. Just bring your thumb drive, keeping to a maximum of 12 slides, please. If you need a slide projector, you'll need to bring your own, or let us know what you need, and we will do our best to get it for you. As a special feature of this slide session, Mike Stewart will share some photos of the recent developments of the Van Veen Nursery, so you won't want to miss it!

Come one come all! This is our warm and wonderful way to share some special time with our treasured friends and fellow rhododendron enthusiasts.

Regards, 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 February, 2020

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: Charles H. Muller, PhD;
2nd Vice President, RSF**

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

February 14, 2020

Valentine's Day

February 20, 2020

Regular meeting

Social time 7:00 pm

Meeting 7:30 pm

**Speaker: Bob Zimmerman,
Chimacum Woods**

Program: "Arunachal Pradesh, Wilderness Untouched (with Rhododendrons)" and, our annual Companion Plant Auction and Treats for the Sweet Potluck!

Haiku

A tumult of leaves
The wind — taking so little
to sound so large

October sunrise
the distant horizon
a stark silhouette

The reluctant leaf
falling to earth with measured
deliberation

With a low-slung sun
those pronounced shadows more pronounced
than ever

Leaf following leaf
Rhythms of the wind, barely
discernable

By Peter Kendall



President's Message for December, 2019

A Giving of Thanks:

The problem with these Presidential notes is the temporal disconnect. Tom Hoffman, the tyrannical editor of the newsletter, insists that we submit our material way in advance of publication. (OK, reality check: Tom, the intrepid editor, once suggested that getting our documents in on time would be helpful.) That constraint means that comments are always written three-to-four weeks before you see them. Why, you might ask, should that matter? The calendar hasn't lied in the past, and it is unlikely to do so in the future. We know the setting in which you will receive the newsletter, and can project accordingly. Perhaps some of you have experienced an adventure comparable to mine when visiting San Diego for Christmas from Syracuse, New York. The temperature at my departure was -20°F and upon arrival was in the mid-80's, exactly as predicted. My long underwear, quilted parka, and many, many layers in between contrasted sharply with everyone else's T-shirts and shorts. For some of us, breaking free of the immediate circumstance to project into a different environment can be difficult.

For this month, perhaps the disconnect is not so bad. When the newsletter arrives, you will be fully immersed in the frenzy of the holidays. This note comes to you from preparations for Thanksgiving. Most countries have such a holiday to celebrate the harvest. Ours is set back a bit, which has its advantage. The Octoberfest sounds like great fun, but the quieter time of late November allows a more global perspective. A moment of reflection for the Chapter is not a bad thing.

For what should we give thanks? We all have our lists, and all are too short. Here's an incomplete version for the Chapter:

The plants: Rhododendrons are a genus of such exceptional variety with genetics that tolerates hybridization among so many of its species. The variety provides a solution for just about any need in our gardens. The flowers are what make the plants famous, but for some of us, the foliage can be even more desirable, and in many cases, toxic to critters that feast on everything else around.

The climate: Here in Portland, we can't rival the folks on the coast who claim that Christmas Cheer is misnamed because it blooms before Christmas. But the show put on by the early bloomers is now just weeks away. What's not to like about a place where we can enjoy our gardens year-round, and where composting is effortless.

The expertise of our members: The Chapter has carried within its membership such a body of information for such a long time. Not just the luminaries featured in the *Pacific Coast Rhododendron Story*, but also the individuals who preferred a lower profile, such as Ernie Metcalf, the Beasleys, the Patricks, the Kraxbergers and the many others who have formed the solid core of the Chapter.

Our benefactors: The Smiths and the Van Veens cared enough about the Chapter to leave us substantial resources. These gifts come with the responsibility to see that they are not squandered, but the possibilities that they provide are exceptional. (Continued on page 4)

(President's Message, continued)

Our Volunteerism: Dennis O'Malley celebrated this aspect so eloquently a year and a half ago in his presidential presentation on the State of the Chapter. Our members contribute in manners large and small. The effort put in by some of our members, in many cases largely unheralded, is phenomenal. The volunteers at Crystal extend from such prior stalwarts as Dot Dunstan, Kathy Van Veen, Ernie Metcalf, Dan Beasley, and Bob MacArthur to the current group who carry on that tradition. Our mantra remains valid: every time we visit, the Garden looks better than the time before.

The calendar: These monthly comments have, no doubt, tested your patience even more than mine. The calendar says that you can count the number remaining on your fingers, and soon, on one hand.

By Caroline Enns

ARS Renewal Reminder and Convention Registration Announcement

Greetings!

Most memberships due to expire in 2019 have been renewed. Thank you!

We're still missing some renewals, which need to be received by December 15th, in order to be included in the mailing of the winter issue of *JARS* (*Journal American Rhododendron Society*.) This edition is especially important as it will include the 8-page insert describing all the details of the 2020 Convention, celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the Society.

Registration opened Monday, December 2nd. The Convention website—www.ars75.org— will also offer a printable version of the registration form along with an opportunity to register online. We encourage you to register early to reserve participation in your chosen convention activities—garden tours, banquets, etc—some of which have limited space.

Your membership is particularly important going into this landmark year of 2020. Thanks again for your support of the American Rhododendron Society.

Steve McCormick and John Stephens
ARS Portland Chapter Membership Co-Chairs

The American Rhododendron Society 75th Anniversary Convention



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

20/20 Vision will include these international speakers and more:

- Kenneth Cox from Glendoick in Scotland
- Lionel de Rothschild from Exbury in England
- Jens Nielsen, plant explorer from Denmark
- Steve Krebs and Juliana Medeiros from the Holden Arboretum
- Steve Hootman from the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden

Garden tours will include:

- Crystal Springs Botanical Garden
- Cecil & Molly Smith Garden
- Portland Japanese Garden
- Lan Su Chinese Garden
- Iseli Nursery
- Woodburn Nursery
- The Stewart Garden (formerly Dover Nursery)
- Sebright Gardens

- Around the Sound [pre-tour](#)
- Willamette Valley and Oregon Coast Excursion [post-tour](#) including members' gardens

Plus plant sale, photo contest, poster session, special clinics, plus:

ars75.org

Registration Now Open!

An Early Bloomer With Handsome Foliage: *R. fulgens*

By Maria Stewart

To celebrate Christmas, my tradition is to write about a red blooming rhododendron. Certainly, *R. fulgens* fits nicely into that theme. With its deep red to scarlet trusses and rounded leaves decorated with fawn-colored indumentum, this rhododendron is attractive! Furthermore, if given enough light, its form is fairly compact.

Here is more about *R. fulgens*:

Classification: *Section*: Hymenanthes *Subsection*: Fulgensia as the only member, or placed in a combined *Subsection* Fulgensia/Barbata which includes *R. argipepelum*, *R. barbatum*, *R. erosum*, *R. exasperatum*, *R. fulgens* and *R. succothii*. All these species share glowing red flowers, colorful bark and early blooming times.

Where it grows in the wild: Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, Tibet at 10,500 to 14,000 feet; not commonly found.

Its name: means "shining" Both the flowers and the tops of the leaves have a shine.

Flowers: 10 to 15 tubular bell shaped corollas form a compact and rounded truss; deep blood red to scarlet corollas with dark nectar pouches; blooms in middle of March, the beginning of April or the first of May. Needs frost protection.

Foliage: dark and shiny green on top with fawn to reddish-brown indumentum on the undersides; oval to oblong-shaped leaves.

Structure: If given enough light, grows slowly into a fairly compact shrub or small tree; grows to about 3 or 4 feet in 10 years.

Hardiness: 0 degrees F.

Siting in your garden: needs good drainage and the early blooms need frost protection.

Photographs of *R. fulgens* taken by Mike Stewart, in Sikkim:



NOVEMBER MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Bill McNamara is a serious plant person. Bill was the guest speaker in a condensed Portland Chapter meeting that featured no plant auction, cuttings exchange, potluck or other major agenda items. So, the focus was on Bill's presentation and the meeting ended a little early, making up somewhat for the overtime session the month before(!). Leading into Bill's talk, President Caroline Enns detailed the few business items; raffle tickets were announced; and winners got their choice of several nice foliage specimen plants donated by Ray Clack and a couple of potted "sticks," as he called them, from Paul Rogers (young deciduous plants out-of-season). Then it was on to the main event.

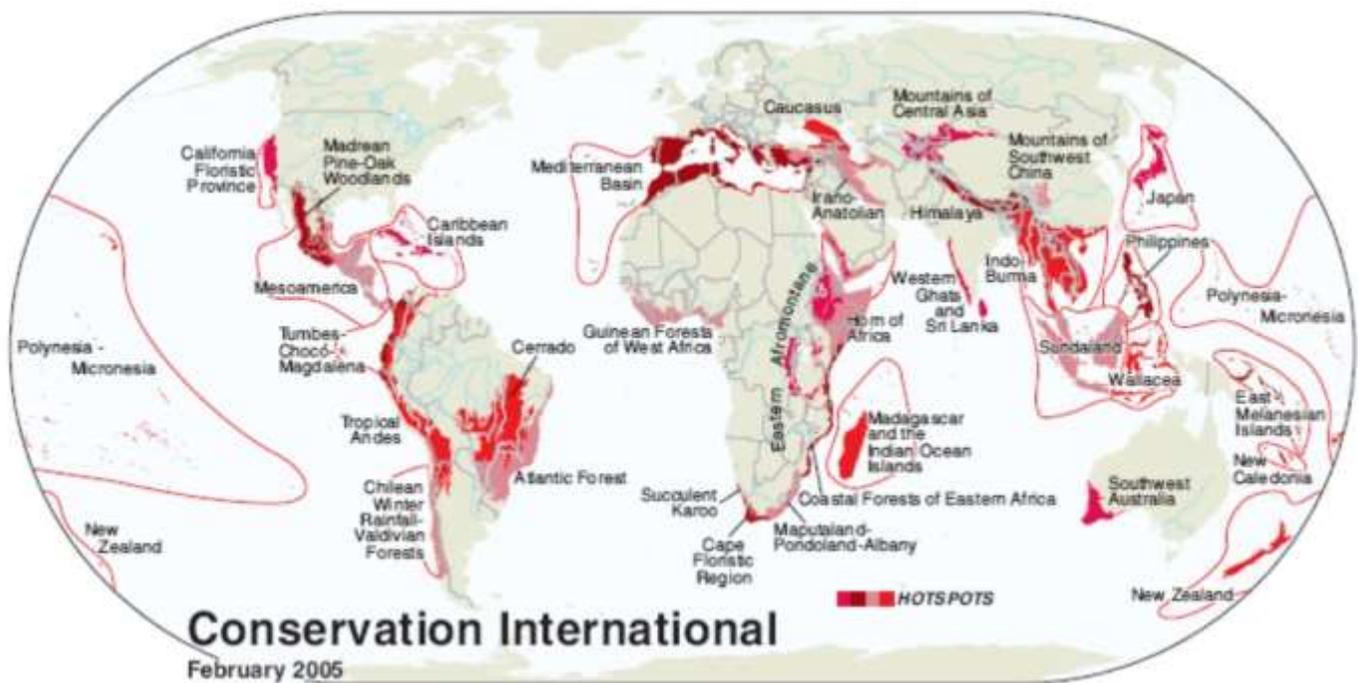
The list of Bill's accolades and awards is lengthy. His 32 years as Director at Quarryhill Botanical Garden in Sonoma have provided him a platform from which to travel the world learning about, and collecting, a great variety of species—rhododendrons among them. Bill's talk, "The good, the bad, and the ugly of plant hunting," gave an excellent glimpse into the origins of how plants have moved around the world. We think of chili peppers, for instance, being an inherent flavoring in various Asian and Indian cuisines, not being aware that the plant was endemic to Mexico and spread from there. The sugar cane plant, so identified with the early Americas and Caribbean islands where it changed history, generating slave trade, etc., actually originated in New Guinea and moved on from there.

Having collected for a botanical garden for many years, Bill also reminded us that these resources are the homes of great biodiversity while many species are going extinct in the wild. He pointed out that 2.3% of the earth's land surface holds more than 50% of the world's plant species and 77% of the world's terrestrial vertebrate species. So those are the "hot spots" where the focus of our protection should be. Finally, Bill shared with us some of his favorite plants, while pointing out the remarkable number of plant species found in China and the high percentage of endemic plants there, e.g., 409 of the 571 species of rhododendrons found in China are endemic.

We thank Bill for a thought-provoking and enlightening presentation. And we acknowledge, once again, those members who collected for the informal pre-meeting social time at the Woodstock Wine & Deli. As usual, it was a nice opportunity to meet Bill, enjoy some casual light dining, and extend the brief socializing time allocated to the meeting itself.

By Steve McCormick

Biodiversity 'Hotspots' Map from Bill McNamara's talk



Stewartia pseudocamellia



Schima sinensis

Photographs on this page and on page 9 by Bill McNamara.

I believe several members grow *Stewartias* and *Franklinia*; is anyone growing any of the *Schima* species? Several of us are growing *Magnolia wilsonii*, and the Van Veen collection and Crystal Springs have *Illicium* species; the *Callerya* and *Emmenopterys* are new to me. (Ed.)

More of Bill McNamara's "Favorite Species" photographs:



Callerya dielsiana



Emmenopterys henryi



Illicium simonsii



Magnolia wilsonii

Credit for the photographs on the first page : Mike Stewart.

The plants are: *R. haematodes*, which won the President's Award for Best Species at the Mother's Day Show in 2013, grown by Peter Kendall, and the yellow flowers belong to: *R. cinnabarinum* subs. *xanthocodon*.

Portland Chapter of
the American
Rhododendron
Society

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Vice President: **Steve McCormick**
Past President: **Dennis O'Malley**
Secretary: **Steve Hopkins**
Treasurer: **Dick Cavender**

BOARD MEMBERS

(Through June 30, 2020):
**David Anderson, Ann Clack, Ray Clack,
Joanne Turner, Brenda Ziegler**

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

GARDEN INFO:

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

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