AtlanticRhodo

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Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society

Positions of Responsibility 2005 - 2006

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| Director - Communications | Mary Helleiner | 429-0213 | May- Public Plant Sale | Duff & Donna Evers | 835-2586 |

Membership

Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society.

Fees are \$ 15.00 per year, due January 1, 2006. Make cheques payable to Atlantic Rhododendron and Horticultural Society. ARHS is a chapter in District 12 of the American Rhododendron Society. For benefits see ARHS website www.atlanticrhodo.org

American Rhododendron Society

Fees are \$50.00 Canadian per year and include ARHS membership. Make cheques payable to American Rhododendron Society District 12. For benefits see www.rhododendron.org

Cheques should be sent to ARHS Membership Secretary, Betty MacDonald, 534 Prospect Road, Prospect Bay NS B3T1Z8

Please include name, address with postal code, e-mail address and telephone number (for organizational purposes).

AtlanticRhodo is the Newsletter of the Atlantic Rhododendron and Horticultural Society. We welcome your comments, suggestions, articles, photos and other material for publication. Send all material to the editor.

Editor:

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Published three times a year. February, May and October.

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Cover Photo: R. canadense ('Rhodora'). [Photo Sterling Levy]



Calendar of Events

All ARHS meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month, from September to May, at 7:30 p.m. in the Nova Scotia Museum Auditorium, 1747 Summer St., Halifax, unless otherwise noted. Paid parking is available in the Museum lot. Friends, guests and anyone interested in rhododendrons, azaleas or companion plants are always welcome at meetings or events.

Saturday, April 22 Workshop, Coastal Queen's Place. Separate mailing.

Saturday, April 29 Work Day at Kentville Research Station. Contact Chris Hopgood.

Saturday, April 29 Members' order pickup. See Special Notices in this issue.

Tuesday, May 2 7:30 p.m. May Meeting . The Flowers of Mount Halla. Lloyd and

Barbara McLean have spent many years working in Asia. Lloyd will show us the flowers he photographed on the volcanic mountain of the

Korean Island of Jeju.

Members' Plant Sale. See Special Notices

NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE. This meeting and sale will be held at LeMarchant-St. Thomas School at the corner of Watt and LeMarchant Streets, one block north of Coburg road, three blocks west of Robie St.

Saturday May 13 Public Plant Sale at LeMarchant-St.Thomas School. See Special Notices.

Tuesday, June 06 6:30 Sharp. Special Tour of Hall's Road. See Special Notices.

Saturday June 10. Garden Tours and Potluck.

Potluck Kings Tech, Kentville. See Special Notices.

Please Note: Some members, who have environmental sensitivities, are asking their fellow members please to use no perfumes, scented soaps, etc., on the days or evenings of ARHS events, in order to minimize the risk of allergic reactions.



A very warm welcome to our new and returning ARHS members who have joined since the February 2006 Newsletter:

Marilyn Abramson Helen & Ray Buckland Karen Chabot Sue Dexter Gilbert Egamino Halifax Hammonds Plains Beaconsfield, QC Dartmouth Montague Gold Mines Gail MacGee Bill Mercier Ruth Ann Moger Fazal Rahman Lindo & Christopher Tyler Lower Sackville Chester Boutiliers Point Bridgewater Halifax

Special Notices

Tissue Culture Pickup

Tissue culture plants will be available for pickup on **Saturday April 8, 2006**, at 2:30 p.m. at St. Andrews School, 6955 **Bayers Road**, **Halifax**. For more information contact Audrey Fralic at alfralic@excite.com.

Pickup for Members' Advance Sale

Plants are to be picked up at **5 Sime Ct.**, **Halifax**, on **Saturday**, **April 29**, 2006 between **10:00 am and 2:00 p.m.** Sime Ct. is in the Kingswood subdivision off Hammonds Plains Rd. Take Kingswood Dr. (between Kearney Lake Rd. and Farmer Clem's) to Brenda Dr. (the first street on the right) and follow it to the first left which is Sime Ct. Plants are to be paid for when they are picked up. Plants will not be shipped. Any plants not picked up on this date will be offered for sale at the public May Plant Sale.

Please note that the mark-up on these plants is minimal. For this reason we are not able to provide a warranty with plants.

Members' Plant Sale After the regular May meeting, Tuesday, May 2.

An annual event where members are invited to bring plants to sell. These plants should be unusual varieties that are not commonly available. Please save any ordinary plant material you may have for our May 13 public fund raising sale.

Note that this meeting and sale take place at **Le Marchant-St. Thomas School,** corner of LeMarchant and Watt Streets. (6141 Watt Street).

Public May Plant Sale Saturday May 13, 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Le Marchant-St. Thomas School, 6141 Watt Street

This sale is one of our major fund-raisers and it relies heavily on donations from our members. In addition to the nursery stock we bring in, we hope to have a good selection of tree and shrub seedlings and rooted cuttings, perennials, annuals, etc. donated by you. Please keep the sale in mind this spring when you are seed sowing, transplanting and dividing. Your donations are greatly appreciated. Members are requested to drop off any donations between 11:00AM and 12:00 noon.

Many varieties of rhodies that were not available in the advance sale will be offered. They include: RR. 'Bluenose', 'Landmark', 'Wren', 'Francesca', 'Haaga', 'Helsinki University', 'Vinecrest', 'Mist Maiden' and many others. Donors and sale volunteers will be able to select two plants prior to the sale opening. This will *not* include nursery grown stock. Plants must be selected, paid for, and taken to your vehicle a minimum of one hour prior to the sale opening. This rule will be strictly enforced! No exceptions!

Plan to attend and bring your friends. This event is always popular and the line-up to get in is usually long. For the best selection we recommend that you plan to arrive earlier than the 1:00 p.m. opening time. While you are waiting, a handout with descriptions of the nursery stock will be available.

For more information contact, Duff & Donna Evers at (902) 835-2506 or devers@eastlink.ca

Special Tour of Hall's Road, Tuesday, June 6, 6:30 p.m. sharp.

Because there has been an exceptionally good bud set this year, John Weagle will conduct a tour of the rhodos on Hall's Road for us. Hall's Road is in Boulderwood, off the Purcell's Cove Road. Please do not park on Hall's Road; leave your car on the Purcell's Cove Road.

Watch your e-mail for any change in date.

Special Notices

Garden Tours and Annual Potluck Saturday, June 10

This year the tours will be in the Annapolis Valley where there are some interesting and spectacular gardens.

11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Wolfville area.

- 1. Rosaleen MacDonald, 1261 Forest Hill Road, Gaspereau Mountain. Take exit 9 off Hwy. 101, follow the sign Gaspereau Valley to the Shell Station, turn right up the hill, go approx 2 km. to a cross road. Forest Hill Road is on the right. Many unusual plants, many raised from seed.
- **2. King and Ruth Butler**, 185 Main St., Wolfville (next to Blomidon Inn), east end of Wolfville. This garden was featured in our February issue.
- **3. Wayne Phillips**, Woodland Ave. Wolfville.Turn south from Main St. at the Anglican Church onto Sherwood. Turn right off Sherwood onto Woodland. This is close to King Butler's in the east end of Wolfville. We can eat a picnic lunch here; washroom facilities.
- **4. The Moores**, 654 Main Street, Wolfville, near the western end of town. Rhodos, azaleas, troughs. Sculptures.

2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Kentville area.

- 1. Kentville Research Station. Open to the public all day.
- 2. Jamie Ellison, 10 Klondyke Street, Kentville

4:30 to 6:00 p.m.

Don Craig and Sue Gunn's garden. In Kentville drive past Cornwallis Inn and turn right, continue straight and over iron bridge. Come to stop lights, go straight up the hill from there, pass the North End Grocery in under half a mile, continue on, you will see signs, go towards Cunard on route 341. Pass Ultramar garage and ½ mile past this cross a bridge over a creek, go left at the warning lights on Lakewood road. Continue straight ahead, soon you will see a white fence and Dr. Craig's well kept property.

6:00 p.m. Annual Potluck at Kingstec, Belcher Street, Kentville. Host Jamie Ellison.

Bring easy to eat food—appetizers, salads, cold dishes, desserts. Please do not bring anything that requires heating; there are no cooking facilities at Kingstec.

Nurseries to visit.

Blomidon Nursery, Greenwich (west end of Wolfville).

Gerry's Garden Centre, Centreville (Highway 359 from the centre of Kentville)

The Briar Patch, old Highway 1, Berwick

Springvale Nurseries at Wheaton's

Canning Daylily Gardens, 165 Pereau Road, Canning. (Take road to Canning near Blomidon Nurseries.)

Corrections to February Issue

The captions for some of the back page photos were accidentally switched. The top two should be **R. elegantulum** and the one labeled **R. elegantulum** is **R. thayerianum**. Our apologies for the mix up.

ARHS Activities

It has been pointed out that we have many members outside the Halifax area who are not able to get to many of our meetings, some living as far away as New Brunswick or Newfoundland or even farther. These members have only the Newsletter for information about the ARHS; the Newsletter, the Seed Exchange and, for members in the Atlantic Region, the Tissue Culture Sale, are the only benefits they get from the Society. We will print a brief information column on ARHS activities in each future issue, hoping that this will fill some of the gap.

January. Jeff Bray, landscape architect for Halifax Regional Municipality, spoke about the Halifax Public Gardens. He described the work that had been done repairing the duck pond, draining one area, restoring Horticultural Hall (the small brick building on the Spring Garden Road side of the Gardens) as a community building, and other infrastructure projects. After his talk many hard questions were addressed to him by the members. Sheila Stevenson will continue to be our contact with HRM regarding the Public Gardens.

February. Chris Hopgood and Ken Shannik gave an illustrated talk on their progress in developing Chris's very attractive garden.

After the talk Ken Shannik showed slides of some of the plants in the members' plant sale. (Note: the captions on the back of the February Newsletter for *R. elegantulum* and *R. thayerianum* were reversed.)

The auditorium at the Museum of Natural History was crowded for this event and extra chairs had to be brought in. However, this was permissible under the new fire regulations. The executive have been considering the problem of overcrowding at the Museum for certain events, and may decide to hold exceptionally popular programmes elsewhere.

March. There were 78 members and guests at this meeting; once again extra chairs were brought in.

Jane Blackburn spoke about creating meadow gardens; her resource list is printed elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Captain Steele told us about the plans for a revitalized Rhododendron Foundation Garden in Queen's County.

A surprise programme on Spring 2005 in the Wilgenhof garden was shown by Sharon Bryson; this skilful Power Point presentation showed many of the Wilgenhofs' seed raised rhodos in spectacular bloom.

The president, Penny Gael, read a warning about low priced bark mulch which may contain termites; this was created from trees downed in Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans.

April. The meeting was too late to meet the newsletter deadline. ¤

The Rhodora*

This poem, by the New England transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803 – 1882), is printed here by special request.

On being asked, Whence is the flower?

In May, when sea-winds pierced out solitudes, I found the fresh Rhodora in the woods; Spreading its leafless blooms in a damp nook, To please the desert and the sluggish brook. The purple petals, fallen in the pool, Made the black water with their beauty gay; Here might the red-bird come his plumes to cool, And court the flower that cheapens his array. Rhodora! If the sages ask thee why This charm is wasted on the earth and sky, Tell them, dear, that if eyes were made for seeing, Then beauty is its own excuse for being: Why thou wert there, O rival of the rose! I never thought to ask, I never knew: But, in my simple ignorance suppose The self-same Power that brought me there brought you.

^{*} Rhododendron canadense

Plant Portraits

Glaucidium palmatum



Glaucidium palmatum. [Photo Todd Boland]

It seems the choicest garden plants hail from Japan or China and that does indeed seem to hold true! They have hosts of spectacular rhododendrons, magnolias, maples, etc. It's hard to get a more exotic-looking plant than *Dicentra spectabilis* (bleeding heart)! For alpine and woodland enthusiasts, another choice Japanese plant is *Glaucidium palmatum*.

I've seen and coveted this plant for many years. A Google search will reveal sites that describe this plant as a "rare Japanese woodlander", "not easy to grow", "one of the most highly prized plants in horticulture". Prices range from \$20 US for the normal species to \$60 US for the white form! Even the seeds sell for upwards of \$4.79 US for just 10 seeds.

Glaucidium palmatum is native to northern Japan, primarily Hokkaido. There, it grows as a woodland plant in montane to sub-alpine forests. They emerge quite early in spring, growing to 40 cm in height. Each stem produces a pair of bright lime-green maple-like leaves. The 8 cm diameter flowers are solitary with 4 petal-like sepals and a dense fluff of yellow stamens in the centre. The overall effect is decidedly poppy-like, hence the common name horned poppy. They flower locally from late May through June. The flowers are often somewhat small when they first open but increase in size as they age. The standard colour is mauve to lilac-purple but a pure white form also exists.

Being a woodland plant, it thrives in moist, humus-rich soil. Both the RHS and AHS list it as hardy from zone 6-9, but I know gardeners in zone 4 who are successfully growing it. On the other hand, continental areas of zone 6-9 will have difficulty with this plant since they prefer rather cold soils. Ideally, the Pacific NW, Atlantic Canada and the immediate coastal areas of New England have the best success with this species.

Taxonomically, *Glaucidium* has had a confused past. It was originally placed in the Poppy Family, *Papaveraceae*, then into the Buttercup, *Ranunculaceae*. More recently, it was separated, along with the Peonies, into the Peony Family, *Paeoniaceae*. A few years ago, taxonomists decided that *Glaucidum* didn't really fit comfortably in the Peony family, and now has been placed into its own family, *Glaucidiaceae*. I'm sure the plant could care less!

As for my personal experience with this plant, I was given a pot of three seedlings in 2000 by one of our local Newfoundland Rock Garden Society members. She said to plant them as one as they resented disturbance. I was so delighted to finally have one that I would do whatever she suggested! I planted them in deep, humus-rich soil in a part of my garden that only gets late afternoon sun (incidentally planted under Magnolia sieboldii and Chamaecyparis pisifera, both which also hail from Japan-China). The next spring, the three plants reappeared along with 4 additional seedlings! Obviously, there were some ungerminated seeds from the original sowing. In spring, 2002 I was rewarded with a single lavender bloom. It fulfilled my every expectation. In 2003 I had two lavender blooms and one white! I didn't expect to luck into the rarer white form but by then the plants were so intertwined that I didn't dare attempt to separate them. In 2005 I was rewarded with nine lavender blooms and three white. The plant is obviously happy in its site and I have been delighted with its performance. Since then I have collected and germinated my own seed; quite easy if you sow them fresh and leave them outside for the winter.

Glaucidium may be difficult to buy locally and if available, may be pricey. However, they are reasonably easy from seed if you have patience. If you can find a seed source, then I highly recommend you grow this fantastic woodlander quoted as being "one of the most highly prized plants in horticulture"!

- Todd Boland

Campanula chamissonis

There are so many campanulas or bellflowers that I am sure that all gardeners have at least a few in their flower beds. You may even have some that are trying to take over your gardens. This little sweety is not going to run rampant on you and does not appear to set copious quantities of seed as some of the others do. In fact, the only way I have been able to spread it around has been by division.

Campanula chamissonis (syn. C. pilosa, C. dasyantha) is a neat little crevice plant for the rock garden. The leaves are mid green and grow not much more than 2-4 inches high. The bell-shaped flowers are held facing up on short, stiff stems just above the foliage and are maybe one inch long on

my plants. They are a light purple with a white throat and some white streaking on the petals. Mine flower in mid to late June. I got them originally from Phyl Donnelly, so it may be one of the named hybrids. It has flowered every year although some years much better than others. It seems to grow best where it is confined in a crevice of stone or concrete bricks in soil that is composed of approximately one third each of loam, leaf mould and grit. It has full sun and a little late afternoon shade, is very well drained but is not allowed to become parched. Sometimes I give it a little light feeding of compost or leaf mould scratched into the rather gritty soil. An occasional light feeding with liquid fertilizer would probably be okay too after it has been in place for a few years.

Campanula chamissonis is a delightful little plant for the rock garden or trough but may be a little too vigorous to trust in a trough with other more precious slow growing alpines. It looks lovely smothered in bloom and may treat you to some modest late summer reblooming.

- Roslyn Duffus

Pulsatilla vulgaris

Pulsatilla vulgaris or pasque flower is a plant that is well worth having in the garden. Originating in Europe, it is quite easy in this part of the world. Flowering takes place in May and is extended over a few weeks. This is followed by a period of time when the fluffy seedheads make quite a nice show themselves. The flowers are generally a lovely amethyst shade of purple and are covered with downy hairs and the foliage is finely dissected. There are hybrids of white or reddish tones. There are also hybrids with more deeply cut foliage and flowers with more petals than the species. The plant in flower will not be much over 14 inches high and stays as a neat clump.

I have found the plants to be very long lived in the garden placed in full sun and in fertile but very well drained soil. I cut back the dead foliage in the spring and top dress with a little compost. These plants do not like to be moved when



Pulsatilla vulgaris seed heads. [Photo Roslyn Duffus]

mature so it is best to start with small plants and leave undisturbed. I have had self seeding from my original plants and, because they are a little slow to grow in their first couple of years, have often only found them in the lawn when they came into flower as still quite small plants. This can be avoided if you deadhead before the seedheads ripen.

There is a pulsatilla native to North America. *Pulsatilla patens* is, I believe, known as the prairie crocus in Manitoba. Some of the other species are a little more demanding and a bit more of a challenge to grow; however, *P. vulgaris* should do well for everybody.

- Roslyn Duffus

Clematis macropetala

I love the various members of the genus *Clematis* and have many in my garden. With the right selections, you can have clematis species flowering from May to October. Some will even give you flowers on the previous season's growth in the spring and then a second flowering on the current season's growth in the fall.

I have a particular fondness for the small flowered varieties that seem more closely related to the species than their large flowered hybrid cousins. I am particularly happy with some I have grown from seed, C. macropetala being one of them. This plant came from a seed lot that originated with a hybrid C. macropetala 'Maidwell Hall' and I don't know how close to its parent my plant is. It is an early bloomer, flowering on last season's growth in late May or early June. If pruning is done, it should be done immediately after flowering in order to allow good growth through the summer; this will result in good flowering the following spring. According to the Reader's Digest Encyclopedia of Garden Plants, "flowers appear semi-double, having four long sepals with shorter petaloid stamens within; the outer stamens are blue and the inner ones cream." This is a pretty good description of my plant.

Every spring, as the garden is coming back to life, I have to remind myself to leave the vine strictly alone. Even though the stems look shredded and dead at first, they usually come into terrific growth and flower beautifully. The plant should be placed as recommended, in good humus rich, well drained soil with a little lime added. Compost spread around the base in spring is helpful and a little more feeding could be done after flowering. The seed heads are attractive in the garden after the flowers have faded and last well into the summer. I have planted some of the seed from my plant and had one seedling produce pure white flowers. If there had been room to plant more, who knows what other colours I might have got.

- Roslyn Duffus

Rhodos Sent Far and Wide

By Donald Craig

Members may have read in the *American Rhododendron Society Journal*, Volume 59, Number 1, Winter 2005, the article "Fifty Years of Testing and Breeding Rhododendrons in Nova Scotia". If so, you will know that we at the Kentville research station felt comfortable enough to hold an open house on the 25th of June 1967, some 15 years after having made the initial rhododendron and azalea plantings at the Kentville Station.

We knew very little about the culture of rhododendrons at the time of making the decision to initiate a breeding and testing programme. In time it became obvious that the programme was progressing very well and therefore an "open house concept" was in order – to this day the tradition goes on – thousands of people have enjoyed the rhododendron plantings on Rhododendron Sundays in early June.

It was also at the time of the first rhodo Sunday that it occurred to me that we should share our surplus plant material with interested participants. My records for 1969 to 1982 show 23 groups received surplus rhododendron and azalea species, cultivars and seedling selections from the Kentville programme. I could not duplicate the feats of Johnny Appleseed but I must have had him in mind. I must admit that the dispersal motivation really came from my desire to spread the good news. In any case, the surplus plants were widely circulated for viewers to enjoy.

I will not detail all 23 surplus plant recipients. A short list will express the distribution spectrum.

In 1969 a flat-bed truckload was delivered to the Digby Pines Hotel as well as a similar shipment to the Keltic Lodge Hotel, Ingonish. Most of the plants in the shipments were from crosses made in 1958 between *Rhododendron smirnowii*, *R. catawbiense* var. *album* 'Glass' (aka.Catalgla) and *R*. 'Dr. H.C. Dresselhuys'. The 527 seedlings lined out in an unprotected field plot had flowered well and grown well.

The Fredericton Research Station and the Vineland Horticultural Station received plants in 1969, 1971, 1974, 1975 and 1976. The Department of Forestry, St. John's, Newfoundland was also a recipient. In 1975 and later, a large number of plants went to the Department of Agriculture at Truro, Nova Scotia. In 1982 the Annapolis Royal Historic Gardens received a 32 plant collection of Knaphill deciduous azalea cultivars. In 1982 the former RSCAR Species Garden received a collection of species that had been growing in the Kentville Nursery.

We now know that some of the plantings performed well (e.g. Fredericton) and others not so well. There was very little feedback from the recipients to the Kentville Station. In fairness to the recipients we did not have the resources to directly assist them. We take solace in the fact that we made

an attempt to spread rhododendrons further into our northern climate; we had some success and this is better than not attempting to expose others to the beauty that we were enjoying at Kentville.

Distributions (1969 to 1982) of Kentville Research Station rhododendrons and azaleas cultivars, seedling selections and species.

1. 1969 Digby Pines Hotel

174 plants including 16 species and 17 seedling selections from the *R. smirnowii* x 'Dr. H.C. Dresselhuys' cross.

2. 1969 Keltic Lodge, Ingonish, Cape Breton

A shipment similar to the Digby Pines one above.

3. 1969 Ray Forrester, Vineland Station, Ontario

2 plants each of 3 *R. smirnowii* x 'Dr. H.C. Dresselhuys' seedling selections.

4. 1970 Leslie Hancock, Woodland Nurseries Mississauga, Ontario

3 plants of *R. fortunei* x *R. smirnowii* cross, 3 plants of *R. smirnowii* x 'Dr. H.C. Dresselhuys' (seedling selections???)

5. 1971 Research Station, Fredericton, NB

4 plants each of azaleas 'Golden Dream' and 'Knaphill White', 4 plants each of 'Dr. H.C.Dresselhuys' x *smirnowii* seedling selections, 2 plants of *R. fortunei* x *R. smirnowii*, 2 'Nova Zembla'.

6. 1974 Research Station, Fredericton, NB

1 plant each of 'Roseum Elegans', 'Boursault', 'Gabriel', 'Fundy', 'Catawbiense Album' and 'Ramapo'.

7. 1975 Research Station, Fredericton, NB

17 rhododendron cultivars and 20 Knaphill azaleas

8. 1975 Richard Morton, Department of Agriculture, Truro, NS

62 plants of 14 rhodo cultivars, 71 plants of 15 Knaphill azaleas, 17 plants - 4 *R. calendulaceum*, 5 *R. mucronulatum*, 3 *R. japonicum* and 5 *R. russatum*. Note: these plants were for 3 test sites.

9. 1975 Walter Schmalscheidt, West Germany

9 cuttings – 3 'Acadia', 3 'Bellefontaine', 3 'Fundy'.

10. 1976 Research Station, Fredericton, NB Plants of Knaphill azaleas, 12 'Gallipoli Red', 8 'Old Gold', 4 'Scarlet Pimpernel', 4 'Fireball' and 8 'Gibraltar'.

11. 1976 Montréal Botanic Gardens

Plants of rhododendron selections KRS71-11, KRS71-22, KRS72-01, KRS72-04, KRS73-06, KRS74-02, 'Fundy' and 'Bellefontaine'.

12. 1976 Research Station, Charlottetown, PEI

Knaphill azaleas – 1 'Fawley', 3 'Gold Flake, 3 'Old gold', 1 'Corneille', 1 'Sylphides'. Rhodos – 2 'King Tut', 2 'PJM', 2 *R. catawbiense* 'Roseum', 1 *R. fortunei x smirnowii*.

13. 1976 R.J. Traverse, Department of Forestry and Department of Agriculture, St. John's

26 cuttings from 7 rhododendron cultivars.

14. 1977 Research Station, Charlottetown, PEI

27 plants of 11 Knaphill azalea plants.

15. 1978 Allied Nurseries, Windsor, Ontario

30 cuttings from 5 Kentville cultivars

16. 1978 Morii Nurseries, Ontario

Plants – 3 "Acadia', 1 'Fundy', 1 'Gabriel'. Cuttings - 6 'Grand Pré', 6 'Bellefontaine', 6 'Cornwallis', 6 'Fundy', 6 'Gabriel'.

17. 1978 Al Smith, Vineland Horticultural Station

5 KRS selected seedlings plus rhododendron cultivars

'Bellefontaine', 'Gabriel', 'Cornwallis' (as 'Acadia'), 'Fundy' (as 'Evangeline'), and 'Grand Pré'.

18. 1980 Austin Kenell, ARS, Middle Atlantic Chapter

6 cuttings each of 'Bellefontaine', 'Fundy', 'Minas Maid', 'Grand Pré' and 'Acadia'.

19. 1982 D.M. Bezzant, Spruce Arbor Ltd, Sussex, NB

10 rhododendron cultivars, 39 plants, 3 selected seedlings, cuttings from 12 rhododendron cultivars, cuttings from 5 KRS selected seedlings.

20. 1982 Nappan Experimental Farm

9 rhododendron plants, KRS seedling selections.

21. 1982 Town of Wolfville, NS

5 large azalea seedling plants.

22. 1982 Annapolis Historic Gardens

A 32 plant collection of 22 Knaphill azalea cultivars.

23. 1982 Via R. Steele for the RSCAR Species garden

3 R. metternichii (Suzuki), 7 R. brachycarpum (Suzuki), 5 R. yakushimanum (Suzuki), 3 R. metternichii v. brevifolium, 6 R. metternichii v. hondoense, 2 R. metternichii v. micranthum, 1 R. brachycarpum (creeping form), 1 R. makinoi, 10 R. fortunei 'Lu Shan'. ¤

The Birds and the Bees

By Norman Todd

Reprinted from the Newsletter of the Victoria Rhododendron Society.

At the American Rhododendron Society convention held in Victoria this last spring two of the world's great rhododendron gurus participated in a short but significant ritual. Peter Cox, plant explorer, author, hybridizer had traveled from the UK to present the Royal Horticultural Society's Loder Rhododendron Cup to Warren Berg of Washington State, plant explorer and hybridizer.

Both men have made outstanding contributions to the knowledge of the Asian flora and to the cultivation of Asian plants in Western gardens. For many gardeners it is the creation of new hybrid rhododendrons that ensures their lasting renown. For a hybrid to be a success it must be significantly better or markedly different from its parents. There are now in excess of 30,000 registered rhododendron hybrids. It is probably safe to say that a mere 10% of that number meets these two criteria.

Both Cox and Berg have demonstrated a ruthless scrutiny in the protracted assessment of the new progeny of their hybridizing efforts. A hybrid from Cox or Berg is almost always worth growing. Cox is the creator of a series of hybrids of small stature to which he gave the names of birds. Berg's most well known hybrids contain a 'Bee' in their bonnet. There are more Birds than there are Bees. Several of these plants have been around for about 25 years but it is not easy to find commercial sources for some of them. They are more easily available in British nurseries than they are in British Columbia and consequently are seen in more gardens over there. I recall admiring several of the Birds in a plot that was probably not more than 100 square feet behind the iron railing of a Georgian terrace house on a busy street in the centre of Glasgow. It was a tasteful tribute to Peter Cox's efforts.

Here are the names of the Birds* known to me, 'Chiffchaff', 'Chikor', 'Curlew', 'Egret', 'Eider', 'Grouse', 'Merganser', 'Phalarope', 'Pipit' (a natural hybrid), 'Razorbill', 'Snipe', 'Wigeon' and 'Wren'. These are all lepidote rhododendrons, i.e. the undersides of the leaves and often other parts of the

plants have scales. Whether a rhododendron has scales or not is an important factor in determining its botanical classification. Berg's Bees are comprised of both lepidote and elepidote rhododendrons. Here are the names of the Bees that I know, 'Ginny Gee', 'Golden Bee', 'Honey Bee', 'Jan Bee', 'King Bee', 'Patty Bee', 'Too Bee', 'Wanna Bee' and 'Wee Bee'. I grow a plant called 'Queen Bee', however, I suspect someone preferred the title Queen to King (maybe an ardent feminist) because the 'Queen' and the 'King' are to my eye identical. Furthermore, the name 'Queen Bee' is officially given to a plant that was registered by another hybridizer in 1962 and I am sure that Warren Berg would nor endorse a name, even in a casual way, which was already taken.

A small area would accommodate all of the above for a period of say 20 years. If my memory is correct there is a bank in the Cox garden/nursery at Glendoick, Scotland with some, or maybe all, of the original Birds and some of these plants are now taller than a human. I have a plant of 'Egret' that is over 30 years old and it is almost shoulder height. Albert de Mezey, of local horticultural fame, and recently deceased at the age of 102, once advised me "To grow rhododendrons one needs a physical age of 30 and a longevity of 300." This is true but one also needs a garden that is ever expanding as the darn things can become quite big during that period of time.

It is always satisfying to give one's prejudiced opinions an airing, so I offer some comments on the worthiness of some of these plants. In this age of governance by opinion poll one cannot ignore the preference of the buying public. The winner is without doubt 'Patty Bee'. 'Patty Bee' is a cross between keiskei 'Yaku Fairy' and fletcherianum. It passes the test of being better than either parent in several characteristics — although I would not like to be without either. 'Patty Bee' is more floriferous and reliably so from an early age; it is easier to please; the yellow flowers are of deeper intensity and of greater substance. Given a well drained but never dry, fairly open location, it will flourish and not outgrow a 75 cm. space for many years. The runnerup in the sales department is 'Ginny Gee'. I can hear the protests already; "This is not a Bee". Warren Berg introduced both hybrids about the same time (1970s). I suspect he had not settled on a line of Bees at that time and perhaps now he wishes he had perfect continuity. But perhaps not: 'Ginny Gee' is clearly a commemorative name and for that reason is cherished both by Warren and the chosen honouree. It grows in the same fashion as 'Patty Bee'. Its leaves are not so glossy and the flowers are pale pink and white. They both bloom in April. Having dwarf narcissus or other bulbs as companions solaces the sensibilities, even of those with acutely refined tastes.

My personal favourite is 'Razorbill'. Peter Cox writes that this is a chance seedling of *spinuliferum*. Imagine being so fortunate as unexpectedly discovering such a treasure! The flowers on 'Razorbill' are most unusual being up facing tubes of rosy pink grouped in sizeable clusters. They are produced in profusion in March.

Cox's most famous dwarf is probably 'Curlew'. This won the Cory Cup at the Royal Horticultural Society for the best hybrid of any genus (1980?). It has proportionately very large flowers for the size of the leaf. It is surprisingly robust given the miffiness of both parents, *ludlowii* and *fletcherianum*. I have seen the first parent only at the Cox nursery and brought back two plants to Victoria. One I gave to a much better grower than I but neither of us was able to satisfy its temperamental needs. 'Curlew's' flowers are a bright yellow with deeper shading and greenish brown spotting. Its bark is attractive and it has a somewhat open but interesting architecture. It does not like a hot site and resents too much fertilizer.

'Chikor' is a tiny bushy plant with soft yellow flowers in profusion — if well grown. This is one plant that certainly does better in the cooler Scottish summers. Gardeners who like the challenge of growing the higher elevation Asiatic primulas will enjoy 'Chikor'. Chikor is a partridge-like Asian bird.

I really like Berg's 'Wee Bee'. It is very similar to 'Too Bee' being a sister seedling. Warren tried to register it as 'Not Too Bee' but evidently this was not allowed. The flower buds of 'Wee Bee' are of quite a dark hue; some call the colour turkey red. They open to a rose pink on the outside and pale yellow on the inside. If I had space for only one plant I would choose 'Wee Bee' over 'Ginny Gee'. Thank goodness they are dwarfs so this seldom becomes a gut wrenching decision.

Most of these plants are described in *Greer's Guidebook to Available Rhododendrons*, third edition. This book is recommended as an inexpensive reference. However, the best reference is to see thrifty plants in a local garden. The easy ones pay their rent every month; the more difficult ones boost the ego and give a muted reward when a whimsical name like 'Too Bee' or 'Wanna Bee' rolls subtly off the tongue of a showing off gardener.

* Some of these hybrids are probably not hardy in Atlantic Canada. See the article "Lepidotes and the Cox Hybrids in Nova Scotia" by John Weagle in *AtlanticRhodo*, Vol.27, No.1, February 2003. ¤

Transformation

By Chris Hopgood

It was in 1996, back in that other millennium, that I bought the property near the Dingle. It was not in the best of condition: the driveway was disintegrating, there was no real garden, just remnants of an old rock garden, and the house itself was in need of major renovations.

I had known of John Weagle and one of my friends, Paul Collins, had said that John was an expert with regard to rhododendrons and azaleas. As a child I was always fascinated by how rhododendrons stayed evergreen during the winters, and when it got really cold curled up against the cold. And, since I am a golfer, I always watch the Masters Golf Tournament from Augusta Georgia in April, where the display of azaleas is amazing. I thought that I better get in touch with John and see what he might recommend. John told me about Ken Shannik, who was a landscape gardener, and thus I asked Ken if he would like to undertake the project. Ken said yes, and I thought as time when on that perhaps he really didn't know what he was getting into, and I am sure that he spilled a few words in vain about the project.

The lot is about 100 feet wide on the street and slightly less at the rear. It goes back about 300 feet, so there was ample room and the property had good potential. From the main road, the elevation rises about five feet or more to the lower parking area and lower garden area, then you continue up the driveway where there is a berm on the right and on the left an original large Pfitzer juniper, with a steep sloping area that used to be a rock garden. The second part of the garden is the area around the house that was not developed at all as far as a garden was concerned. The third part of the property is the upper area that is in back of the house. This is slightly higher than the area around the house, and at the time of purchase was mainly woods with a bog area.

Planning

Soon after the purchase of the property, the small house was enlarged by about one third of its square footage. Part of that job involved excavating for the basement, and what came out of the excavation was about 80% rock and the rest was earth. In planning, Ken Shannik prepared plans noting stages for the landscaping and construction of the garden. The first stage was the lower area, started in the summer of 1997. This involved a massive job of getting rid of all the grass that had grown in to the old front bank, and the west side of the driveway, the berm area. Then there was the building of the dry walls, using the stone that was dug up from the excavation for the new addition to the house. Also constructed were railway tie steps going from the upper parking area to the walkway to the entrance of the house, as well as the construction of the flagstone walk from the railway tie steps to the steps at the front door entrance.

Planting

After that came the planting of the shrubs and perennials around the house, the plantings at the lower parking area and the berm. This stage took most of Ken's 1997 summer. Plantings of rhodos 'Wyandanch Pink' and 'Mist Maiden', 'Crete' and 'Ken Janeck' were made at the east side of the lower parking lot area. Ken also used perennials such as *Heuchera* 'Chocolate Ruffles', 'Stormy Seas' and *Iris cristata*, *Lychnis chalcedonica* 'Maltese Cross', pinks, and lungwort.

On the road side of the parking area dwarf variegated bamboo *Arundinaria viride-striata* was planted, to provide good colour in this difficult area. In the area above the road itself, Ken planted bearberry, English ivy, *Magnolia x loebneri* 'Leonard Messel' and *R. carolinianum*. The *carolinianum* has proved to be an excellent choice, because this area beside the roadway can be quite dry, and this species has done very well considering the conditions there.

The west side of the driveway, the berm area, was difficult as well, as this garden receives a good deal of sun. It was quite dry because of the raised berm and the driveway. Some of the plants used there were bearberry, golden false cypress, broom, globe thistle, red hot poker, lavender, creeping Norway spruce, prickly pear cactus, juniper 'Nana', *Lithodora diffusa* 'Heavenly Blue' and *Genista pillosa* 'Vancouver Gold'. The plant that has been a very pleasant surprise was the 'Vancouver Gold'; there are six specimens of it, and recently another three were added. What a show they provide, completely covered in yellow bloom in late May and early June! The creeping Norway spruce, and the juniper Nana have also enjoyed their residence on the berm.



The Hopgood Garden. [Photo Chris Hopgood]



R. 'Mist Maiden'. [Photo Chris Hopgood]

Springtime Show

At the back of the house, Ken built a deck, and cut a number of trees in the wooded area, as well as sodding and over seeding the existing lawn. This area beside the house needed a great deal of attention, as the plan was to provide for a very impressive springtime show. The effort spent was worthwhile. On the east side of the house there are numerous evergreen azaleas planted in the border next to the adjoining property. This area has been named The Azalea Walk, with such varieties as 'Hino Red', 'Frosty', 'Kathleen', 'Komo Kulshan', 'Lady Louise', 'Stewartstonian', 'Wintergreen', 'Wombat', 'Elsie Lee', 'Flat White', 'Wendy's Panda-Like', and 'Wendy's Wall Plant'. They all have made a home there.

This area also has a few rhodos: 'Manitou', 'Lionel's Redshield', 'Scarlet Romance', 'Teddy Bear', 'April Mist', and last but not least, 'Mist Maiden'. 'Teddy Bear' looks very, very healthy, but has yet to produce bloom; perhaps it needs some Mozart at a full moon.

Also planted in the area around the house are a few other plants that provide enjoyment, such as *Pieris* 'Brouwer's Beauty', which provides a lot of beauty during winter, with its orangey red buds waiting patiently for spring, also *Daphne x burkwoodii* 'Carol Mackie', and *Cornus kousa* v. *chinensis* 'China Girl'.

Perennial Garden

A perennial garden was planted next to the house, and provides good cover through the planting of numerous hostas, such as 'Patriot', 'Invincible', 'Bressingham Blue', and other plants such as Oriental poppy, *Iris cristata*, *Iris sibirica*, and others. Also a few late blooming plants for effect in the fall were planted, such as *Cimicifuga racemosa* 'Atropurpurea' (Black Snakeroot), a few dwarf Asters and a few other items. For very early colour, Ken planted some hellebores: the Lenten rose, Corsican Hellebore, Christmas rose, and others. That kept Mr. Shannik busy for the year 1997!

Natural Bog

The third part of the garden is the upper area, where there is a bog, and a natural woodland area. The work in this area was started in 1998. First a path had to be built around the bog area, and the rock left over from the excavation provided the material for this project. Then a circular walk was built around the bog, with a little footbridge over the natural draining ditch area. A number of trees were taken down, and the mulch from the branches (the wood was cut and stacked for firewood) was used to provide a soft medium over the rocky foot path, so being economical, the by-products of the excavation and the tree felling were used to do the job. This area is very natural; there are many natural Cypripedium acaule (ladies slippers), as well as Osmunda cinnamomea (cinnamon ferns), Amelanchier, (our native Indian pear), Gaultheria procumbens, (wintergreen), blueberry and moss and lichens on and around the granite rocks. A number of rhodos were planted among the trees, a s 'Dora Amateis', carolinianum, 'Bellefontaine' (which is coming along very well indeed), Eastern', 'Pohjola's Daughter', 'Sunsheen', 'Calsap' and others. A few deciduous azaleas such as 'Homebush', 'Klondyke' and 'Cheerful Giant' were planted; some have done fine, others have had mildew, and perhaps should be moved to full sunlight. Hostas such as sieboldii, and others, and bearberry, mayapple, Vinca minor and lowbush cranberry, have mixed in well with the native plant varieties.

The bog was an area of real potential, and Ken thought it would be a good idea to try a *Gunnera* as a main focus of interest, and with winter protection it has been able to flourish there. Some of the other plants used were *Lysichiton americanum*, (skunk cabbage), and *Helleborus hybridus* (Lenten rose), *Caltha palustrus* (marsh marigold), *Arisaema triphyllum* (Jack in the Pulpit), as well as bearberry, lily of the valley and others.

In 1999 further plantings of rhododendrons, azaleas and magnolias were completed, and in 2000, a wire trellis fence on the west side of the property was built by Mr. Shannik, and further plantings were made.

Since that time, there have been no major projects, only the ongoing maintenance of what is becoming a very beautiful property. Not to say there have not been any irritants: the deer come about the second week of May and eat the tulips, so these bulbs are not planted anymore; there also a gall that I get in late June on the evergreen azaleas, that I would love to know how to get rid of. There are also the irritants of my own making, like the plant sales, and the tissue culture sales that continue to wreak havoc on my garden. It seems that I have become a rhodo freak, and can't stop buying the plants, even though this place is getting full to the brim.

We hope that with another ten years of growth, this part of Halifax, like Boulderwood, may be something to see during late May and June. ¤

Story of a Tissue Culture...Before I knew Audrey Fralic

By Carley Agnew

R. 'Morgenrot', a Hachman hybrid is a cross between degronianum ssp yakushimanum 'Koichiro Wada' and 'Spitfire'. The flower, while considered predominantly red, is a strong purplish red ruffle that shades to a pale purplish pink in the throat with a dark red blotch on the dorsal lobe reflecting the colours of a beautiful sunrise for which 'Morgenrot' (Morning Red) is named. The flower is openly funnel-shaped, 1 3/4" to 2 3/8" across, held in conical trusses of 16-18 flowers, very large relative to the size of the plant. The foliage is elliptic, dark green with light indumentum. The plant habit is round and compact, reaching 4 feet in ten years. It blooms in midseason and is rated hardy to -21C.

I first met my 'Morgenrot' as a little tissue culture about 3 inches high at one of the first Canada Blooms shows. I had no idea what the bloom looked like, nor who Hachman was. Never having seen "baby" rhodos before, I thought they were charming. Needless to say the plants were a bit stressed in the dry atmosphere of the convention hall with hundreds of people poking at them. I took the little thing home in a blizzard and gently placed it on a south facing window sill in full sun! It didn't enjoy the best of living conditions in a hot and dry house, but I did move it around, in and out of the sun, depending on how terribly sad it looked.

Come spring, it was still alive, and outside it went. I did keep it in shade for a couple of days but that was more a time stall while I looked for a suitable place in a packed city garden for where to plant it. Spending the summer in the Toronto heat under the dry shade of a giant maple tree did not do much to make my 'Morgenrot' thrive. In fact, it looked very unhappy. I knew it wasn't going to survive in that garden and having heard that rhodos grew in Nova Scotia, I dug it up, stuck it in a pot and plastic bag and put it in my suitcase. So off to Nova Scotia it came.

And now where to plant it? Our acreage was just woods and swamp, and I had no idea what might befall my little plant during a Nova Scotia winter. Locating a spot where there might be some soil and shelter beside a wood pile, I stuck little 'Morgenrot' into the ground, heaping pine needles around it. Next spring, I searched for it, with so many trees who knew where to look, but finally... there it was, still alive and maybe looking a bit stronger?

My 'Morgenrot' lived in the woods, unprotected and uncared by me for four years, each year putting on new growth, maybe a bit stunted, but always a lovely dark green. Finally, it was moved to a new home up by the front of the brand new house, out of the shade into full sun, with a southern exposure. By then it was about a foot around, still no buds, but a lovely round, dense plant with nice deep green leaves with a light rust indumentum on new growth. And then I waited. Nothing but new growth the first year... finally a couple of buds. What anticipation for six months, waiting to see the blossom. And what a bloom it is! Since its first blooms, my 'Morgenrot' has been a consistent performer, maintaining a dense round shape, now about 3 feet tall. It suffers no winter damage without protection and, in fact, remains an attractive plant in the cold unlike some other rhodos. And to date, it is the only rhodo I have been able to propagate by cuttings. Truly a little miracle plant.

Thanks to Audrey's lecture and writings about the care of tissue cultures, I no longer treat my "baby rhodos" with such disregard for their well being. But my 'Morgenrot' will always be a favourite plant, having survived and thrived in spite of me. I highly recommend 'Morgenrot' to any rhodo fancier. \square



Dianthus pavionus. [Photo Chris Helleiner]

Book Review

Winter-flowering Shrubs, by Michael W. Buffin Timber Press, 2005, 232 Pages, \$54.95

Your non-gardening friends are likely to ask, "Are there really winter-flowering shrubs?" Members of our society can answer: Yes! Even in Nova Scotia we can grow a few shrubs that flower in winter. As I am writing this in early February, the orange-flowered witch-hazel, *Hamamelis x intermedia* 'Jelena' is in full bloom, an astonishing sight. And under the snow that fell in last night's blizzard, there is *Erica carnea*, also in bloom. What about other kinds of plants for winter bloom? Most of us are keen to try to grow plants nobody has grown before, and here is a guide to help us choose. Buffin's definition of winter is based on his experience in southern England – from the end of November, when the last leaves fall, to the beginning of March, when new growth starts. His concept of a shrub is fairly broad – any woody plant from dwarf heaths (*Erica*), which he prunes with a lawn mower, to small, and sometimes not so small trees. For example, he includes accounts of *Cornus mas* (to 6 meters) and *Parrotia persica* (up to 15 meters).

Approximately a third of the book is devoted to a discussion of the design of a winter garden. Very sensibly, Buffin takes the view that one should consider the overall structure of the plants (not forgetting that we are also going to be seeing them during the rest of the year), and that the flowers in winter are just an added bonus. He is particularly interested in the scents of the flowers, and suggests that winter-flowering shrubs should be located in sites with still air, where their fragrance can be enjoyed best. The rest of the book ("A-to-Z of Winter-flowering Shrubs") is a comprehensive list of plants, with descriptions, pictures and personal preferences of 32 genera, many of them including numerous named varieties. The most extensive sections deal with *Camellia, Hamamelis, Magnolia, Mahonia, Rhododendron* and *Viburnum*. Each account concludes with a paragraph entitled "Cultivation Tips", including in most cases estimates of hardiness in North America (using the USDA zone map, about to come out in a revised version with 15 zones instead of the present 11), as well as heat tolerance, seldom an issue here in Nova Scotia.

What are the prospects for growing more winter-flowering shrubs here? The author makes the point that the majority of the plants he describes prefer an acid soil, an advantage we have. Many of the plants that flower in January and February in England (for example *Cornus mas, Rhododendron mucronulatum,* and various kinds of *Corylopsis*) come into bloom here in late March or early April. Under our conditions the flowers are less likely to be demolished by hard frosts in late spring, a fairly common occurrence in England. Other plants that can be grown in England or on the West Coast are not likely to succeed here at all. The pictures and descriptions of many of the exciting plants in this book are tantalizing. Probably we're foolhardy, but we keep on trying to grow the impossible, and once in a while, against all expectations, we come on something that really succeeds. Buffin has provided us with a list of possibilities to consider. mathodological mat

- Chris Helleiner

Resource List

This resource list was provided by Jane Blackburn for her talk "Creating Meadows". She owns Woodlands and Meadows Perennial Nursery and Gardens near Truro. Call 902-895-8727 for information.

www.americanmeadows.com (ships seed only)

www.GrowWildflowers.com (Canadian)

www.prairienursery.com (ships seed only)

www.wildflowerfarm.com (Canadian)

www.wildseedfarms.com (does not ship outside the U.S.) excellent pictures

www.blessedbee.ca (Canadian honey products) excellent pictures

www.wildflowermix.com (does not ship outside U.S.)

www.american-natives.com (ships seed only)

www.herbdatanz.com (Information only)

Canadian Gardening, Natural Gardens

Johnson, Lorraine, Grow Wild

Westcott-Gratton, Stephen, The Naturalized Garden

Ortho Books, Landscaping with Wildflowers and Native Plants

Oslund, Clayton, What's Doin' the Bloomin'

Roland, A.E. and E.C. Smith, The Flora of Nova Scotia

Agriculture Canada, Weed Identification Guide. ¤

Photo Album



 ${\it Campanula\ chamissonis.}\ [{\it Photo\ Roslyn\ Duffus}]$



Pulsatilla vulgaris. [Photo Roslyn Duffus]



Glaucidium palmatum. [Photo Todd Boland]



Trillium grandiflorum. [Photo Chris Helleiner]



'Gabriel'. [Photo Don Craig]



R. canadense album. [Photo Don Craig]



'Satan'. [Photo Don Craig]



'Klondyke'. [Photo Don Craig]