AtlanticRhodo

www.AtlanticRhodo.org

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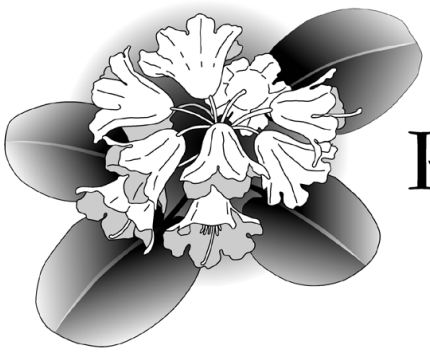


Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society

Our Mission

ARHS supports and promotes the development and exchange of expertise and material relating to the creation and maintenance of year-round garden landscapes featuring rhododendrons and other plants.

Inside this Issue

Photos in articles are by the authors, unless otherwise identified.

Membership

Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society.

Membership renewals are due next month. The current membership period is September 1, 2022 to August 31, 2023. The membership fee is $30.00. For benefits and to download a membership form see ARHS website **www.atlanticrhodo.org**

American Rhododendron Society: ARHS is a chapter in District 12 of the American Rhododendron Society. Combined ARHS and ARS membership cost is $84.00 Canadian.

Cheques, made payable to Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society, should be sent to **Jim Sharpe, 6231 Watt St, Halifax , NS B3H 2B9. Payment may be made by e-transfer to atlanticrhodo@gmail.com**

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

The Society is working on an on-line payment system. All details will be available on the Website when the new system is ready.

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

Editor: *Dennis Stuebing*
dennis.stuebing@hotmail.com

Published four times a year. February, May, August and November

Cover Photo: R. 'Lee's Dark Purple'. [Photo Chris Helleiner]

Calendar of Events

Meetings are normally held in the Nova Scotia Museum Auditorium. *Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer St. Halifax, Nova Scotia Canada*

Meeting notices will include a sign-up form for those who wish to attend in person. Space will be limited due to social distancing requirements as posted by Public Health at the time. The ARHS will continue to offer our programming by Zoom for those who cannot attend in person. Details and link will be sent to members.

ARHS is following all guidelines from Public Health on public meetings and gatherings. You may need to show your proof of vaccination. All arrangements are subject to change if guidelines do not allow for public meetings.

Tuesday, September 6, 2022 7:30 PM in the Nova Scotia Museum and via Zoom

Panel Discussion on Propagating Rhododendrons Interested in propagating rhodos but don't know how to start? This panel discussion, chaired by Jamie Ellison and including Sharon Bryson and Bob Pettipas, will provide short introductions to propagation by seed, cuttings and hybridizing followed by a question and answer session on all issues which you may have encountered or may want to avoid.

Tuesday, October 4 2022 7:30 PM in the Nova Scotia Museum and via Zoom

2022 Captain Richard Steele Memorial Lecture: Latest Trends in Breeding Rhododendrons

Kristian Theqvist, President of the Finnish Rhododendron Society since 2010, President of the ARS Finnish Chapter since 2012, and Associate member of the ARHS since 2012

We are pleased to welcome Kristian Theqvist to Nova Scotia and to present the 2022 Captain Richard Steel Memorial Lecture. Kristian was one of our keynote speakers at the 2021 ARS Convention. He is a prolific breeder of hybrid Rhododendrons and has been President of the Finnish Rhododendron Society. He is a frequent contributor to the ARS Seed Exchange. His hybrids and gardens can be viewed on his website: www.rhodogarden.com

Tuesday, November 1, 2022 7:30 PM in the Nova Scotia Museum and via Zoom

Native Companion Plants for Rhododendrons Melanie Priesnitz, Conservation Horticulturist, Harriet Irving Botanical Garden, Acadia University.

The Harriet Irving Botanical Gardens at Acadia University features plants native to Nova Scotia and the Acadian Forest region. Conservation Horticulturist Melanie Priesnitz will present on native plants that make great companion plants for the genus Rhododendron and talk about why growing indigenous species is beneficial.

Tuesday, December 6, 2022 7:30 PM in the Nova Scotia Museum and by Zoom

Members Photo's of Plants, Gardens, and Garden Tours Choose the six best photos from this year's blossoms, your garden or gardens you have visited. We must limit the number of photos from each person to allow for all to contribute.

Thank you for avoiding the use of perfumes and scented products when you come to ARHS events.

President's Report

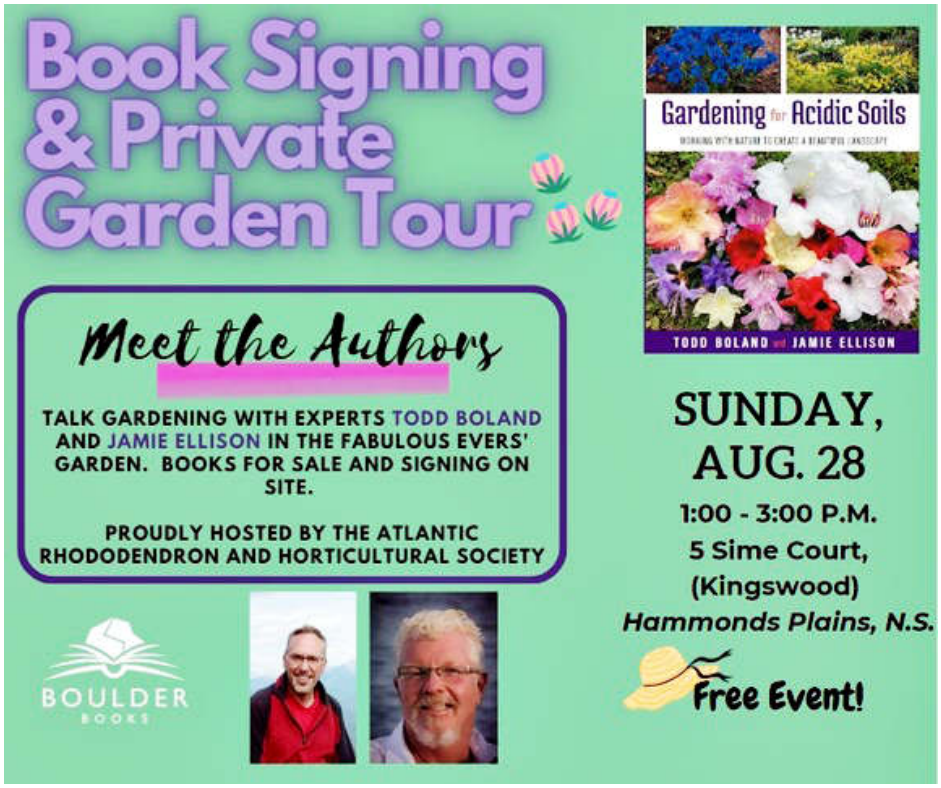
Jim Sharpe

I hope you are enjoying your garden this summer. Welcome to our new August issue of AtlanticRhodo edited by Dennis Stuebing and produced by Sterling Levy. With the increased activity of our Society, we have decided to boost the number of issues from three to four per year. Special thanks to Dennis and Sterling for producing this issue during the busy gardening season!

This spring, with the lifting of COVID-19 travel restrictions, I was able to attend two gardening conferences. The first was the American Rhododendron Society (ARS) Convention in Vancouver, Washington from 2 – 11 May and the other was the North American Rock Garden Society (NARGS) Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Conference in Ithaca, New York from 12 – 16 June. My photo essay on the ARS Convention is included in this issue of AtlanticRhodo. I attended the NARGS meeting to promote its 2023 Conference, which will be held at the Dalhousie Agricultural Campus in Truro, Nova Scotia from 8 – 11 June 2023. The Planning Committee for the NARGS Conference includes ARHS members Roslyn Duffus, Darwin Carr, Jamie Ellison, Rebecca Lancaster, and me. The Convention website, including Jamie's inspiring promotional video with bagpipe music from Roslyn's Pipe and Drum Band can be viewed at nargs23.org. There will be many opportunities to volunteer for Convention. If you are interested, please contact me at sharpe@ns.sympatico.ca

Starting in September, we will return to the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History for our monthly meetings at 7:30 PM on the first Tuesday of each month. With the success of our virtual programs during the pandemic, we will continue to broadcast our meetings on Zoom for ARHS members unable to travel. Details are available on the ARHS website, atlanticrhodo.org, as well as in this newsletter. I am especially pleased to welcome Kristian Theqvist, President of the Finland Rhododendron Society to Nova Scotia in October to present on "*New Trends in Breeding Rhododendrons*" for the 2022 Captain Richard Steele Lecture. Kristian will be in Nova Scotia at the start of October, visiting *Rhododendron* breeders in Halifax, the Annapolis Valley, Antigonish, and Cape Breton.

The ARHS Board is planning the winter programs for the Society. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please contact me. Happy Summer Gardening. ¤



A Word from the Editor

Dennis L. Stuebing

Welcome to the inaugural August Issue of the AtlanticRhodo. I've been reminded that adding an additional issue in our annual schedule is a new venture in the ARHS' long history. My deepest thanks to Sterling Levy for the additional hours he has voluntarily contributed to make this a reality. My additional thanks to all of our contributors, without whom, this additional issue would not be possible.

In this issue you'll find a number of interesting articles: Bob Howard has prepared an in-depth look at Lacecap *hydrangeas,*Sheila Stevenson has described her experience nominating Dr. Donald Craig for the ARS Pioneer Award, Jim Sharpe has compiled an overview of his experiences at the American Rhododendron Society's 2022 Convention, Carol Morrison continued Jim's theme by reviewing the 2022 Nova Scotia Association of Garden Clubs Convention, and Dennis Crouse summarized the ARHS spring Garden Tours, all of which include great photos to keep our avid readers glued to these pages. Additionally, we are grateful to *The Griffin* and the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia for the opportunity to reprint an article by Joan Butcher entitled "A Snapshot of the Kentville Research and Development Centre". There's more to be found in this Issue, but I won't spoil the opportunity for you to turn the pages and discover it all for yourself! I will however encourage our readers located in the Municipality of Kings County to participate in the Year of the Garden interactive map as it could result in a prize of $100, which you could use to renew your ARHS membership (due next month – don't delay).

YEAR OF THE GARDEN

Municipality of the County of Kings – Garden Map

Calling all gardeners! The Municipality of the County of Kings has proclaimed 2022 the "Year of the Garden" in Kings County. Come and celebrate with us through the use of our interactive garden map! You can share photos of your garden(s) Here:

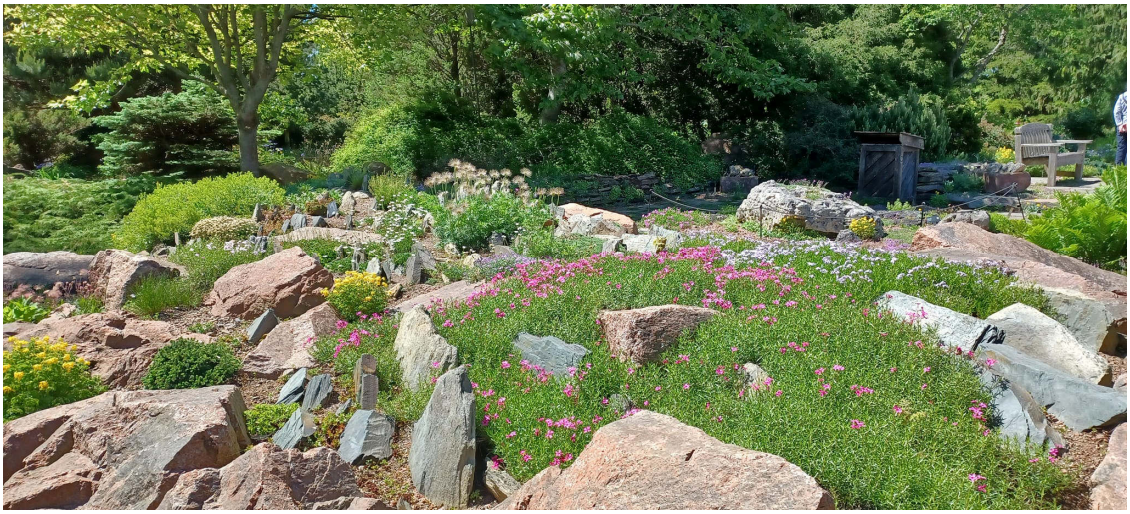
https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/1e941a8a613c4d289debfc4ac9b457c5

Or use this code:

Additionally, participants may choose to opt in on a draw to win prizes through the submission of their garden information! The contest will close on Friday September 2nd, 2022 and the draw will take place on Tuesday, September 6th, 2022. Prizes include a gift card of your choice in the following amounts: 1st prize = $100, 2nd prize = $50 and 3rd prize = $25.

Nova Scotia Association of Garden Clubs Convention

Carol Morrison



The Nova Scotia Association of Garden Clubs (NSAGC) Convention was held 10 – 11 June 2022 at The Inn on Prince in Truro. Entitled "2022 Year of the Garden" the Convention was very special, since we could not hold in-person events during the pandemic, and many of our members were not comfortable using zoom! It was a great opportunity to see people we had not met for a couple of years.

In advance of the Convention, each club was asked to provide plants to be given to each participant, donations for a silent auction, photographs, and floral arrangements for competitions. The photographs were projected on a screen during the breaks and the banquet in the meeting hall, and we were asked to vote on the floral arrangements.

On Friday afternoon we had self-guided tours of the two rock gardens and the Alumni Garden in Truro, as well as a spectacular private garden close by. It was sad to see all the deer damage; the owner of the private garden had it completely fenced in!

Andrew Hebda gave a very entertaining and interesting talk on several topics of interest to gardeners including how to deal with ticks. The Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held Saturday morning, and a number of vendors selling everything from daylilies to seaweed fertiliser, herbs, and floral arrangements were open for business. In the afternoon, presentations were given by: Cecil Dunlap on daylilies, Barb McLaughlin from the Nova Scotia Bird Society, the herbalist Lynn-Marie Mattie discussed a variety of herbs, Frank Cochrane of Cochrane Family Farm, and Lloyd Mapplebeck of Hillendale Perennials. The evening speaker was Michael van den Hoek of Lowland Gardens in Great Village. All of the speakers did a great job of answering questions, exemplified by one to Cecil Dunlap about the daylily gall midge, which is becoming common. In his response he said that he now only sells daylilies with the soil washed off, since that is how the midge is transmitted. Barb McLaughlin was also a wealth of information and provided many suggestions on how to make our gardens more bird friendly.

Hopefully there will be no problems having a Convention next year! ¤

American Rhododendron Society 2022 Convention

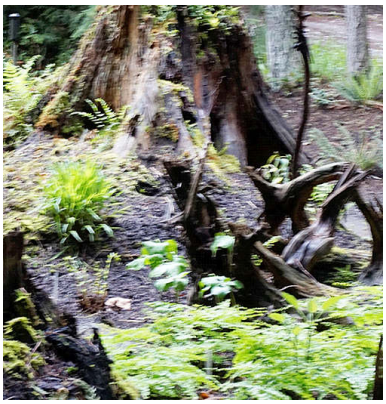
Jim Sharpe

After a two-year delay due to COVID-19, the Oregon Chapters of the American Rhododendron Society (ARS) hosted the first in person ARS Convention since 2019. It was at the Heathman Lodge in Vancouver, WA from 2 – 10 May 2022. And what a Convention it was! Twenty speakers, a very extensive plant sale, three days of garden tours, workshops, banquets and pre-and-post Convention tours, all in celebration of the founding of the ARS in 1945. In total I was able to visit 24 gardens, nurseries and public parks, which was quite an education in *Rhododendron* culture and gardens.

The ARS Portland Chapter maintains two gardens and a nursery. Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden in southern Portland is maintained by the Chapter in partnership with the City of Portland. For more information, see: www.crystalspringsgardenpdx.org

The 9.5-acre garden includes ponds, fountains, paths, waterfalls, birds, wildlife and lots of *azaleas* and *rhododendrons*. It is an especially good location for bird watching, with over 80 different species sighted. The garden has over 2500 *rhododendrons*, *azaleas* and companion plants. During the conference days it was in its glory, in full bloom.

The pre-Convention tour was a two-day bus tour "Around the Sound" to gardens in Washington State. On the first day we visited Hersonswood for a tour by Dan Hinkley of plants he has collected from around the world. He started in the 1980s and originally operated as a mail order nursery. In early 2000s, it was bought-out by Burpee Seeds in an unsuccessful attempt to diversify their business. It was sold at auction in 2012 and bought by the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, which is restoring the plantings to reflect the Pacific Northwest, as well as the wonderful plants collected by Dan. Heronswood is a woodland garden and uses the stumps of old-growth trees as a fernery, seen in the adjacent photo.



On the next day we visited the Bloedel Reserve. On a tour guided by horticulturalists, we learned about its history and how it is being turned from a formal garden into a refuge for wildlife and a location for humans to build relationships with nature. The photo below shows strips of moss on a log, creating a sustainable moss garden.

After a ferry ride across Puget Sound from Bainbridge Island to downtown Seattle, the trip continued with a tour of Washington Park and its collection of rhodo hybrids from state breeders. Below, is a rhodo in bloom from the Breeder's Garden, which celebrates the over 2000 rhodo hybrids produced in the area between 1950 and 1990. The plaque commemorates the hybridizing work of the "Rum Dum Club" and Halfdan Lem.

The day ended with a banquet at the Rhododendron Species Foundation and a tour given by Steve Hootman.

The first day of the Convention included a visit to Molly and Cecil Smith's Garden, twenty miles southwest of Portland. The garden is the second public garden managed by the Portland ARS Chapter. Large thirty-foot high *rhododendrons* were nestled in a forest of even larger West Coast trees.

The next day's tour included the Iseli Nursery, one of the largest dwarf conifer and Japanese maple nurseries in the world. The extensive display gardens included many rare dwarf conifers including *Thuja plicata* 'Haley Bop,' a sport created by the cosmic rays of the Haley Comet (see photo below). I was able to take many pictures of the extensive gardens in the rain, as well as bring home nine free 'samples.'

For lunch, Mike Stewart ARS Conference Co-chair set up a tent at his Dover Nursery and in spite of the pouring rain, served over 200 conference participants a wonderful Italian luncheon. The rain made for great rhodo pictures like this one of *R.* 'Sparkling Stars'.

The second day bus tour ended with a visit to the Lodge at Mount Hood in the snow and a return through the Columbia Gorge. As Portland had received a record amount of rain in April, the waterfalls, especially Multnomah Falls, were quite spectacular. Unfortunately, the rain and lack of time prevented us from stopping.

The speakers for the conference were excellent, including Tom Clarke, Chief Gardener at Exbury Gardens (England), Dan Hinkley on "Windcliff", his current garden, a PowerPoint on "Rhododendron Foliage" by the late Harold Greer, three presentations by research scientists Steve Krebs, Valerie Sous, and Juliana Medeiros, a poster session on *rhododendron* research and gardens, workshops on *rhododendrons* for bonsai and propagation, Lionel de Rothschild who gave the 2011 Steele Lecture for ARHS, and Steve Hootman and Jens Nielsen on rhodo exploring in Asia. I also enjoyed the breeders' presentations by Ken Webb, Jack Olson, and Chris Trautman, the panel on West Coast botanic gardens including Humbodlt Garden, the Rhodo Species Foundation, and the new proposal for a Portland Botanic Garden.

On Saturday afternoon I visited Van Veen Nursery, which is now being developed by the Portland ARS Chapter as a public garden and *rhododendron* propagation centre. The propagation greenhouse was over a hundred feet long, with tens of thousands of rhodos being rooted with moist, bottom heat.

At the closing banquet, I was pleased to accept the "ARS Pioneer Award" on behalf of Donald Craig, for his work hybridizing *rhododendrons* at the Kentville Research Station.

After the convention ended on Sunday, June 8, we began a three day "Willamette Valley and Oregon Coast Excursion". On the first day we visited a garden in Salem, Hendericks Park in Eugene, and the Greer Gardens Retirement Home established by the Greer Nursery.

On Monday we drove to the Oregon Coast, with a stop in Florence for lunch. As you can see the road sign, they provided directions to Nova Scotia.

After lunch we visited Chris Trautman's Mowbray Nursery with his brilliant yellow and orange hybrid rhodos. Here is a picture of one his hybrids, 'Musica Celeste'.

On the final day of the tour we visited the community-run Connie Hansen Garden in Lincoln City, as well as the Evergreen Air and Space Museum that houses the largest airplane ever built, the Spruce Goose. We also stopped at Monrovia Gardens, a six hundred acre nursery, which sends plants across North America.

I was able to return to Nova Scotia the next day, after almost two weeks of visiting gardens of the Pacific Northwest. A very inspiring experience! ¤

American Rhododendron Society recognizes Donald Craig with the Pioneer Award

Sheila Stevenson

Craig The young plant scientist.

My first foray into the Kentville *rhododendron* story was to produce the Society's interpretive panels in 2017-18 for the Agriculture Canada grounds in Kentville, NS. I had a wonderful source for that project in John Weagle and relied heavily on numeverous articles about the program by the late Dr Don Craig. In the short Kentville rhodie story presented on those panels, I saw three main characters: Don Craig, Captain Dick Steele, and George Swain.

Working with new information and new informants for the story, "How the Rhodies Came Down East", and piecing together the chronology and cast of characters, I saw Don Craig in the leading role. He was initially the youthful, small-fruit hybridizer/plant scientist with a large passion for *rhododendrons* and *azaleas*, who made the most of his position and network in a not-altogether supportive bureaucracy, to eventually realize a serious breeding and selection program that included George Swain and Captain Steele in major roles, and put the genus *Rhododendron* on the ornamental plant radar and into garden landscapes of eastern Canada.

His passion never abated; his achievements and legacy not recognized at the time by the American Rhododendron Society (ARS) because that doesn't 'just happen'! So I submitted a nomination package in October 2021 to the ARS Honors Committee and asked them to recognize the late Dr Donald Craig with the ARS Pioneer Achievement Award. They did at the 2022 ARS Spring Conference, during which ARHS President Jim Sharpe was present to receive the citation, and I am thrilled; as is the Craig family, said Colin Craig, Don Craig's youngest son who I met through his work as a stone carver. Colin served as a go-between informant for me with his mother, Mary Craig, and provided three photos. We are all pleased that the citation will be accepted to hang in some appropriate place on the campus where Craig was an undergrad student and later received an honorary degree from Dr. Gefu Wang-Pruski, Head of the Plant, Food and Environmental Sciences Department and a Professor of Molecular Biology at the Dalhousie Agricultural Campus.

The case for recognition was strong, but for sure what clinched it was the great supporting letters from Christopher Clarke, Jamie Ellison, Walter Ostrom, John Weagle, Nick Yarmoshuk, Peter Hicklenton (retired Kentville Research Station scientist and one-time Craig colleague), and Garth Nickerson (Crop Development Specialist – Nursery / Floriculture / Tree Fruit at the New Brunswick Department of Agriculture and Aquaculture). I hope to share in the future some of what they said, just as I hope to present "How the Rhodies Came Down East" to an ARHS audience one day.

I am grateful to Christina Woodward, ARS District 12 Rep. for her support. And to Wolfville writer, Wendy Elliot, for doing the story that appeared in some publications of the Saltwire network found at:
https://www.saltwire.com/atlantic-canada/communities/don-craig-of-upper-dyke-ns-posthumously-honoured-by-american-rhododendron-society-for-his-leadership-commitment-100747007/?fbclid=IwAR0umMYG-3bhALBiMANVTNkMh3-HhPE9mMnhb2j3p0jUtHnHFBWkb92XGLs

Craig and Captain Steele on the bank at KRS.

P. Hicklenton, D. Craig, G. Swain, A. Brydon - July 1983.

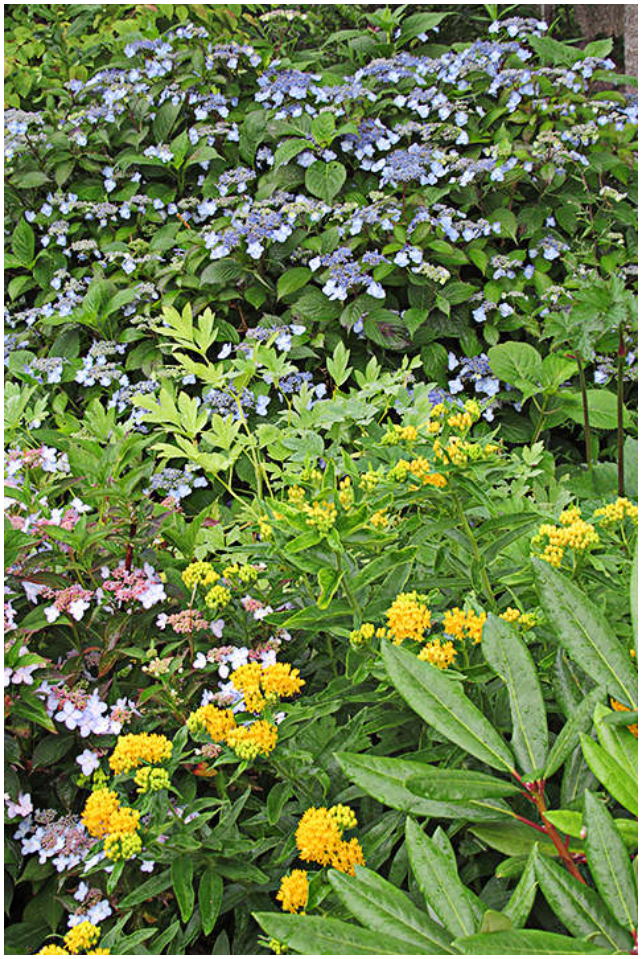
Update on Lacecap Hydrangeas

Bob Howard

1. *H. macrophylla* 'La Vicomtesse de Vibraye'.

2. H. paniculata 'Great Star'.

I would like to update you on my adventure growing lacecap *hydrangeas*. I wrote an article entitled "*Hydrangeas: What's Possible in the Maritimes?"* for the May 2018, issue of this newsletter. Then in September 2018, Maurice Foster, who gardens at White House Farm in Kent, England, presented the Steele Lecture on "*Hydrangeas: Summer's Delight*". I reported on that talk in the November 2018, issue of AtlanticRhodo. This article intends to explain what's been happening since then.



3. *H. serrata* 'Blue Billow'.

According to iNaturalist there are 70 – 75 species in the *Hydrangea* genus. Four species are available and reliably hardy in Nova Scotia: *H. arborescens* (e.g., 'Annabelle'), *H. quercifolia* (oak leaf hydrangeas), *H. paniculata* (panicle hydrangeas, for example, "PeeGee"), and *H. anomala* ssp.*petiolaris* (climbing hydrangeas). For gardeners, there's a very important fifth species to consider. *H. macrophylla*, the big leaf or mophead *hydrangea*. It is one of the top-selling shrubs in North America, for both outdoor gardens and for potted plants gifted on Mother's Day and other holidays. However, in general, they are very unreliable flowerers for us outdoors. An early fall frost or a late spring frost will kill the flower buds.

Furthermore, we need to also consider a little-known sixth species, *H. serrata*, or mountain *hydrangea*, which some botanists still treat as a subspecies of *H. macrophylla*. This is the species I am most interested in. The mountain *hydrangea* is hardier than *H. macrophylla* and has a much wider distribution with more genetic variation. *H. serrata* is found at higher elevations mainly in Japan and Korea and extensively from the Kuril Islands to south China and Taiwan. *H. macrophylla*, to the contrary, is limited in the wild to a restricted area around Tokyo Bay.

In my garden, I focus on learning about, collecting, and growing lacecap forms of the mountain *hydrangea*. While millions of *H. macrophylla* plants are sold every year, we are hard-pressed to find any *H. serrata* cultivars in our local nurseries. Yet these varieties are most popular in Japan. The Japanese Hydrangea Picture Book (2010) shows 210 different cultivars. These varieties have been selected by the Japanese over several hundreds of years. I think they are exquisite in flower and their smaller plant size works well in contemporary gardens. We just

4. H. serrata 'Blue Billow'- Fall colour.

5. H. serrata 'Blue Bird'.

need to find the right options and follow good design principles to add a wonderful new (old) plant to our late summer and fall gardens.

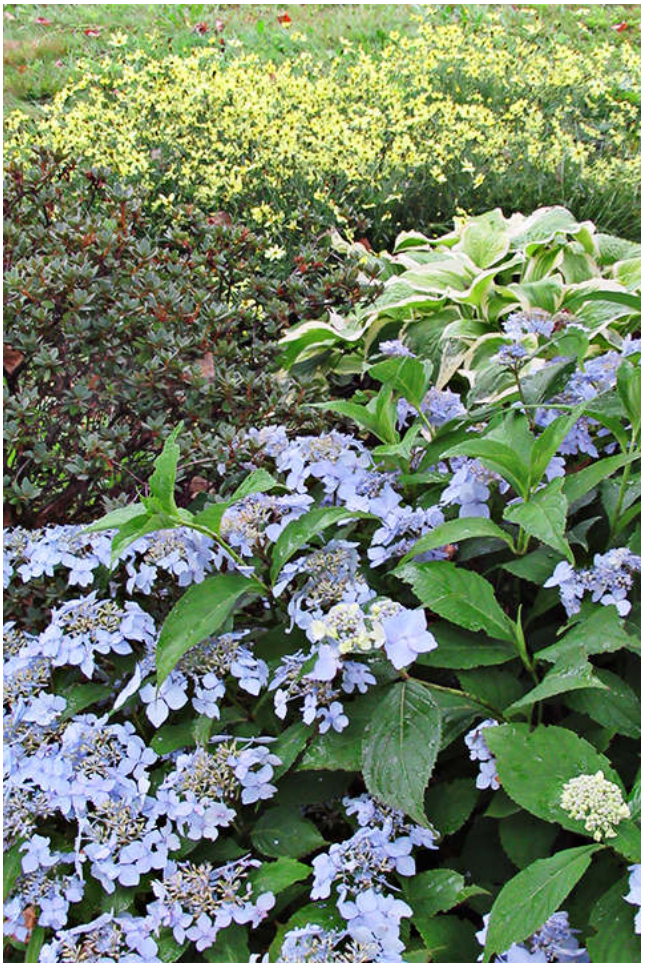
Michael Dirr, in partnership with Bailey Nurseries, introduced the *H. macrophylla* cultivar 'Endless Summer' in 2004 to extraordinary commercial success. He has said that *H. serrata* lacecaps just cannot compete with the 'Oomph!' and 'flower power' of the big mophead blooms of *H. macrophylla*. While I also like some of the big leaf *hydrangea* mopheads, I prefer the elegance and reliability of the mountain *hydrangeas*. Please take a look at the images that accompany this article and see what you think.

The first image, to show you a mophead flower, is of *H. macrophylla* 'La Vicomtesse de Vibraye' in my garden. It is an old French variety introduced in 1908 by Mouillère. This is not as reliable a bloomer as 'Endless Summer' but it's a better blue, and has bloomed fairly well even after last winter's lows between -24 to -27C.

Regarding picture #2, I mentioned that panicle *hydrangeas* are reliable for us. "PeeGee" is a well-known variety. With intensive breeding in recent years, there are now many new cultivars of this species. This image shows *H. paniculata* 'Great Star', which is also known as 'Le Vasterival', the name of the garden in Normandy where it was created. I also like 'Quick Fire' a lot. Flower colour starts pure white changing to pink and then dark rose. Panicle *hydrangeas* are hardy to zone 3.
Now we come to *H. serrata* (image #3). I believe the most reliable and available flowerer for us is *H. serrata* 'Blue Billow'. It fits into many garden styles, unlike the large-flowering *hydrangeas*, which are often set off on their own. The lacecaps integrate handsomely in perennial borders, in shrub groupings, or in woodland plantings. This picture (#3) shows 'Blue Billow' in July with a *rhododendron* nearby, and some perennials. The yellow flowers are *Asclepias* 'Hello Yellow'.

Image #4 shows the same 'Blue Billow' three months later, in late September. The long period of bloom and foliage colour is a big positive for *H. serrata.* There's some late flowers of *Anemone hupehensis* 'September Charm' on the right.

The fifth picture presents *H. serrata* 'Blue Bird', another reliable variety that has long been in the trade in Nova Scotia. It blooms the same time as yellow daylilies, but the bloom and foliage give a show that lasts much longer.



6. *H. serrata* 'Blue Deckle'.

7. *H. serrata* 'Blue Deckle' close-up.

8. *H. serrata* 'Mikata Yae'.

Image #6 is of *H. serrata* 'Blue Deckle', introduced by Michael Haworth-Booth, an English *hydrangea* expert, in 1950. Perhaps it's an old Japanese variety that he renamed in English? Here it is with a variegated *hosta*, *Rhododendron 'Ramapo'*, and *Coreopsis* 'Moonbeam'. I got this variety from HydrangeaPlus, an online seller based in the United States. It cost more for the phyto and shipping than for the plants. They have an extensive selection.

Photo #7 is a close up of 'Blue Deckle', showing the elegant flowers.

The eighth photo, features *H. serrata* 'Mikata Yae'. I bought this plant from our Society plant sale in 2013. Japanese forest grass contrasts with the blue of 'Mikata Yae', while the last blooms of pink foxgloves and white Fair Maids of France flowers add a little sparkle.

H. serrata 'Mont Aso' is covered in blooms in image #9. I grew this plant from seed sown in 2019. Even a newly germinated plant needs to spend some time in local soil to take-up aluminum, which turns its flowers blue. This plant was born pink, is now violet and is on its way to becoming blue. I'm not sure how large it will grow. This is an open-pollinated seedling from the variety 'Mont Aso'.

In picture #10, *H. serrata* 'Shiro-fugi' is another plant I got through our Society plant sale. It changes colour through the season, a common characteristic of the subspecies *angustata*. It opens pure white, with double, star-like blooms and will turn completely deep matte red by fall, except for a few new white flowers, which keep opening as the season advances.

Photo #11 is an open-pollinated seedling of *H. serrata* ssp *yezoensis*. I sowed the seed in spring 2019. This may prove to be the hardiest *H. serrata* I grow. The subspecies *yezoensis* occurs in the wild in Hokkaido, the northern-most island of Japan. It forms flower buds on the tip and along the stem of the plant. Even after the unusually cold 2021 – 2022 winter, no stem tips died-back. It's growing in the shade of a large lilac with *Carex* 'Ice Dance' and maidenhair ferns. It is about 18" tall now. I expect it to be a small shrub, not more than a metre tall. Its flowers also become bluer with each passing year.

9. H. serrata 'Mont Aso'.

10. *H. serrata* 'Shiro-fugi'.

11. *H. serrata* ssp *yezoensis seedling.*

12. H. serrata 'Blue Billow'

The last image (#12) is of *H. serrata* 'Blue Billow' with white *astilbe*. In 2018, I began sowing seed of 'Blue Billow' looking for variation: deeper, longer-lasting blues, better flower heads, and maybe smaller or larger plants. I've seen a lot of variation and hope to be surprised in some way. Also I've planted some r*hododendron–hydrangea* groupings. The plants need to get bigger to have a good effect, and yield good photos. I look forward to reporting again on these experiments in a few years. ¤

In Memorium

Faye E., BRUNET — Tantallon

Published: May 10, 2022

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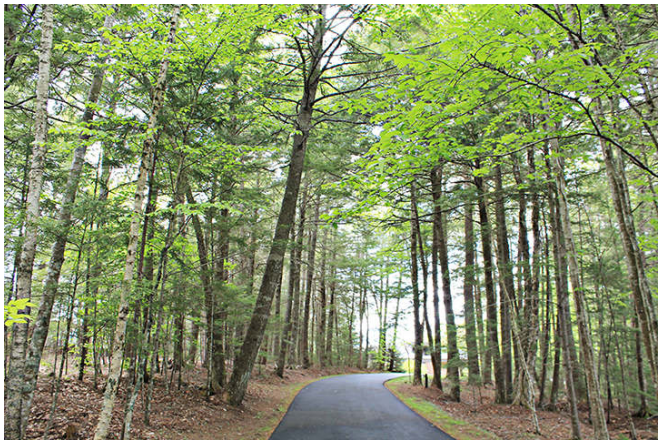
We are heartbroken to announce the passing of Faye Ethel Brunet, age 79, on May 3, 2022. Born on October 8, 1942, to Ina and Dewayne Redden of New Ross. She leaves behind husband Yvon; daughter, Colleen Baker (Ray) Simpson; stepchildren, Linda Brunet Hervias and Dean Brunet; Her pride and joy, grandson, Khylan Thomas; step grandchildren, Dean Brunet Jr., Chad Brunet, Nicolas Hervias, Alexandra Hervias; sisters, Joan (Percy deceased) Boehner, Donna (Wendell) Crossley, Barb (Don) Beardsall; nieces, and nephews. She was an educator in so many ways. Teaching elementary school in Halifax County for 33 years before retiring in 1995. She attended St. Mary's University BA/ED. She was and will be known for her gardens and great knowledge of plants. She was so humble about being published in East Coast Gardening twice. Faye was also a very talented botanical watercolor artist. She loved her weekly painting friends. Everything she touched was like a warm blanket around us. This is reflective in her art, her gardens, and the life she created for herself and her family. Faye was an overwhelmingly compassionate person and had nothing but the utmost love in her heart for everyone. She saw the beauty in everything that surrounded her. She had a smile that could warm your heart while lighting up the room, making everyone feel so special. She was truly an incredible human being and the love she had for us has made a mark upon our souls that will never fade or be forgotten. Cremation has taken place, entrusted to Ronald A Walker Funeral Home, Tantallon. In leu of flowers, donations may be made to her favorite garden club.: Rock Garden Club/Darwin Carr (treasurer), 2987 Highway 236, Old Barns, NS B3L 1K1. E-transfer: darwincarr@eastlink.ca. A private memory walk will take place in Faye's gardens at a later date, and she will be laid to rest alongside her parents at the New Ross Baptist cemetery. Online condolences can be made to: www.rawalker.ca "A MA CHERE EPOUSE"

ARHS Spring Garden Tour: A Summary

Dennis Crouse



Congratulations to the organizers Carol and Lynn on a very successful June Garden Tour! Also, a sincere ‘thank you’ to the pleasant and welcoming hosts for sharing their gardens with the ARHS.

The June 2022 Garden Tour drew members from the Society to the Fall River/Oakfield area and it was stellar! Those who made it out were treated to a variety of naturalistic and manicured garden landscapes that suited each space.

Here are a few descriptions of gardens you may have missed:

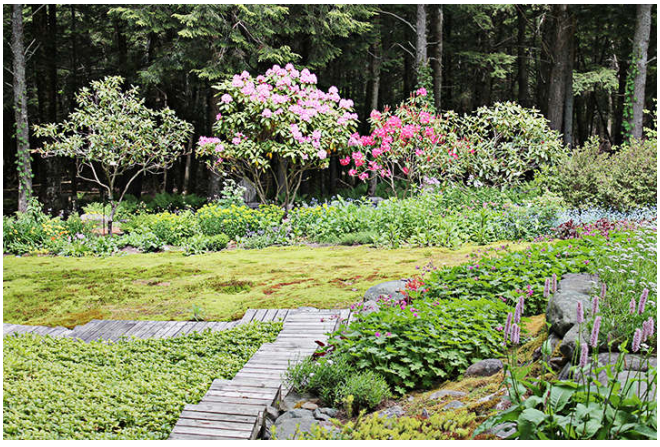
- An extensive property with a long driveway lined with mature trees, under-planted with *Rhododendrons*. There was a diverse mix of trees and *Rhododendrons* that have been collected over the years

- A cathedral woodland/ravine filled with mature hemlock, white pine, ferns, an array of *Rhododendrons* and many other wonderful companion plants. It also had an amazing thyme lawn!

- A calming walk into a driveway canopied with huge hemlocks, yellow birch, and white pines. While meandering through the wooded area you got glimpses of subtlety planted *azaleas* amongst the giant trees

- A naturalistic garden with a beautiful mix of native and ornamental plants suited for the space. Plants were chosen to take advantage of the light conditions and arranged in a way that was pleasing to the eye

Finally, all of the gardens shared three things in common, they were all cared for, loved, and admired! ¤



Editor's Note

We are honoured to re-print "A Snapshot of the Kentville Research and Development Centre" by Joan Butcher, thanks to *The Griffin* and the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia. The original version can be found online in the June issue of *The Griffin*, at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IatwWfPB4Zu2gtJA3ncTprwwYSuPhS0o/view?usp=sharing

A Snapshot of the Kentville Research and Development Centre

Joan Butcher

Nova Scotia has a proud history of scientific investment and innovation, from the seabed mapping led by J.F.W. DesBarres from his estate at 'Castle Frederick' in the 18th century, and the discovery of kerosene by Nova Scotia medical doctor Abraham Gesner in the 1840s, to world-leading marine science advances, spurred by establishment of the Bedford Institute of Oceanography in 1962, among others. Less well known, perhaps, are the investments by the then Dominion government in agricultural development, by creation of the experimental farms system in 1886 and the designation of the Nappan Experimental Farm in 1887. The experimental station in Kentville, established later, came to be the largest centre of agricultural and horticultural research in the region. In this article, the author takes us behind the scenes of this important heritage site and cultural landscape.

An early view of the grounds, showing several of the early buildings, including the Main Barn (source: Farm Reports 1913, courtesy of Agriculture and Agrifoods Canada).

The Kentville Research and Development Centre was established in 1911 near the eastern limits of the town of Kentville, in Nova Scotia's Annapolis Valley. It was one of the sites in a network of agricultural stations, first established in 1886 by the Government of Canada, to develop new agricultural methods and crops. The goal was to provide expertise to farmers so they could grow a greater range of products, raise better livestock, and increase agricultural output. The Kentville location was originally designed to be a horticultural research station that emphasized enhancing Nova Scotia's apple production.

Over the years, it has had various names, e.g., Dominion Experimental Research Farm, the Kentville Research Station, the Kentville Experimental Station, and the Atlantic Food and Horticulture Research Centre.

In 1910, two hundred and fifty acres of land were purchased by the Province of Nova Scotia and provided to the federal government to be the site of the Station. During the winter of 1911 and 1912, lumbering operations were carried on. Considerable timber for the dairy barn and the superintendent's house came from a forested ravine located on the site. This area now is frequented by walkers and nature lovers, who enjoy hiking through its forest trails and along its stream. There are hemlock trees here that are over 250 years old, as well as a waterfall, and rare plant species.

Two Notable Buildings

Construction on the site began in the summer of 1912, with a building boom that resulted in the raising of eight structures – the foreman's house, a double tenement house for a herdsman and gardener, a dairy building, a poultry building, a greenhouse with a potting and workroom attached, a carriage house, a barn to accommodate horses and cattle, and the superintendent's residence. The latter two buildings are Recognized Federal Heritage Buildings because of their historical associations and architectural and environmental value.

The Blair House

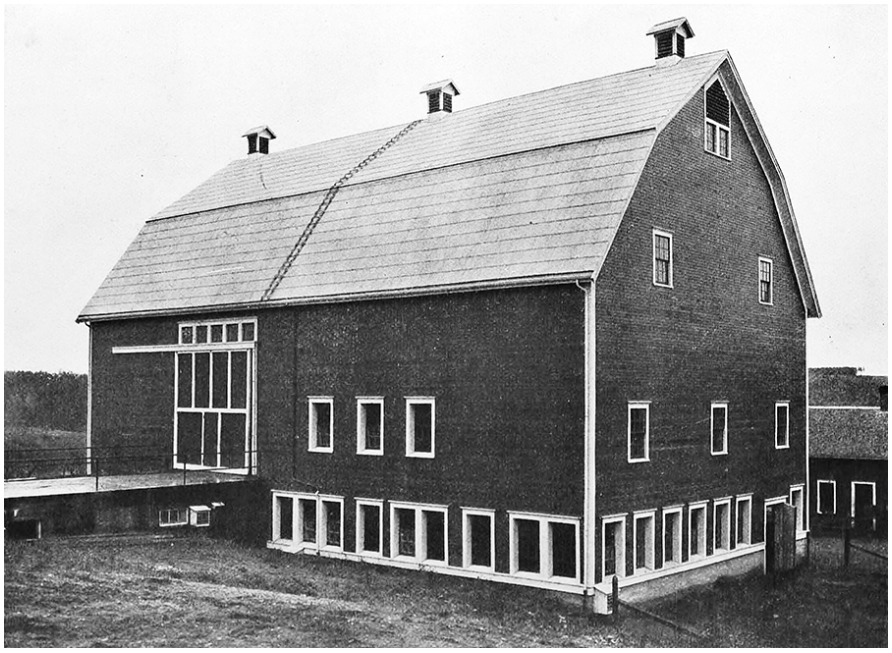
This charming residence was constructed for Dr W. Saxby Blair, Director of the Station from 1912 to 1938. The house was built in the Arts and Crafts style. It is a white, two-storey, wood-frame house, with a hipped roof featuring large dormer windows on three sides. Its design is that of a typical foursquare, with a symmetrical main façade that includes the central entrance, and a wide veranda on two sides. Inside, the house has maintained some of its original features, including a fine staircase. The wood trim and panelling on the main floor still features a natural blonde oak finish. With 400 m^2 of finished floor space, the residence cost $8500 to build.

Blair House, also known as Building 18, 1912 (author photo).

The Main Barn

Originally used as a dairy barn, this landmark to Nova Scotia agriculture was built into the sloping terrain at the Station. It is a large, timber-frame structure, with a metal, gabled roof and shed-roofed additions on one side. The building features a striking red-painted exterior of narrow-gauge clapboarded pine siding, small six-over-six wood sash windows and white trim. Originally, the barn had an upright silo and a root cellar.

Its type is known as a bank barn, commonly built in Ontario at that time. These barns tended to be constructed into a north-facing hillside (or bank) for increased insulation. As a further advantage, the different elevations at the front and the back of the barn allowed the upper storage level and the lower floor area to be accessed from ground level, i.e., one entrance at the top of the hill and the other at the bottom.



The Main Barn, also known as the Research Station or Building 5, upper side, as built in 1912 (source: Farm Reports 1913, courtesy of Agriculture and Agrifoods Canada).

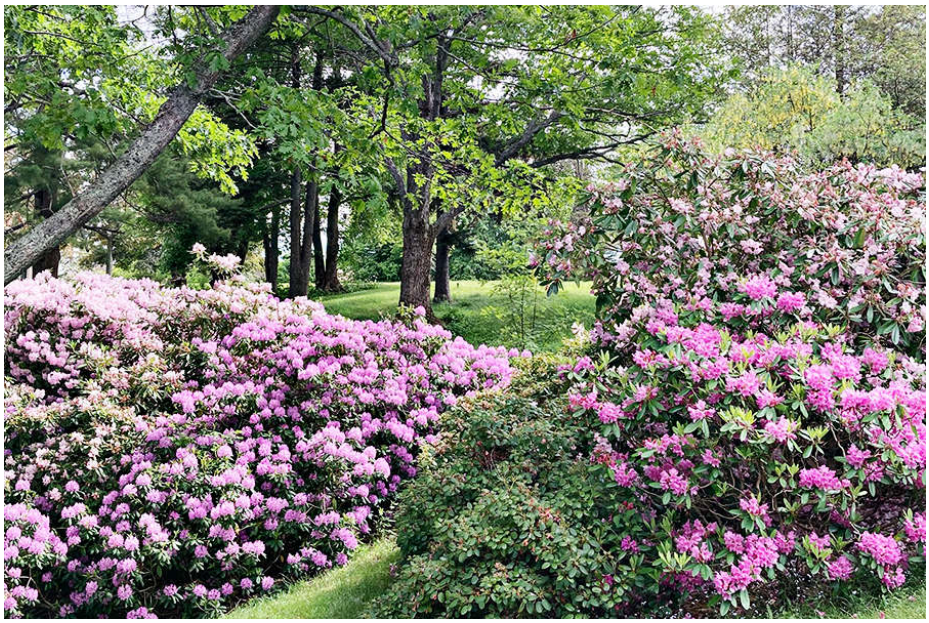
The Grounds

In January 1912, William T. Macoun, the Dominion Horticulturist, assured members of the Nova Scotia Fruit Growers Association, an organization instrumental in the establishment of the research station, that ornamental plantings would be a prominent feature of the farm. In an address entitled "The Work of a Horticultural Station, With Special Reference to the Station at Kentville, N.S." he said "Experiments should be tried at Kentville to determine what ornamental plants will succeed best, and the grounds should also be laid out so that they will offer suggestions for their own places to farmers and fruit growers who visit the Station."

The Station was fortunate in its first superintendent, Dr. Saxby Blair, who was an outstanding horticulturist with great expertise in landscaping and a love for ornamentals.

Hard labour was required to transform hilly brushland and fields full of tree stumps into the park-like research centre grounds that are now such a notable feature of the town of Kentville. Although teams of oxen were used for ridding the ground of roots and rocks, some dynamite also had to be employed. By 1913, staff had two hectares cleared and seeded for lawn. Shrubs and trees were sent from the Central Experimental Farm in Ottawa. The tree plantings included butternut, heartnut, Phellodendron (cork tree), Japanese maple, and catalpa.

Clearing land with oxen and a "brush breaker", Kentville experimental station, c. 1911 (source: ?).



The grounds today, with just a few of the rhododendrons and azaleas (author photo).

By 1915, the grounds were beginning to flourish and grew to feature beds of perennials and roses, as well as shrubs and hedges. These were not only ornamental; they helped separate the residential section of the station from the working farm. These plantings are largely gone now, but the beautiful native and non-native trees and the extensive lawns remain. The hillside at the front of the centre is like a mini-arboretum and the display gardens highlight the station's horticultural achievements.

The grounds feature Atlantic Canada's largest collection of rhododendrons and azaleas. First planted by Saxby Blair in the 1920s, the collection was enhanced over the years as the result of the extensive and painstaking research into ornamentals that took place at the station for nearly 40 years. Flowering shrub research officially began at the station in 1958 under acclaimed plant breeder, Donald L. Craig. The varieties developed in Kentville went on to win 16 major awards and 200 ribbons at national and regional flower shows.

For many years, on Rhododendron Sunday (the second Sunday in June[1]), thousands of people flocked to Kentville to admire the showpiece collection of rhododendrons and azaleas that include more than a dozen varieties developed in Kentville. The flower colours range from vivid oranges and reds to softer pinks and whites.

The Centre is no longer involved in ornamentals research, now that this activity has been transferred to the horticulture industry. But the annual Kentville display is a testament to the research program that provided the hardy, flowering shrubs that to this day beautify Canadian gardens. ¤

Joan Butcher is an active member of the Friends of the Central Experimental Farm in Ottawa and Publications Chair on the Board of HTNS

[1]There is no official Rhododendron Sunday in 2022 because of increasing unpredictability of bloom date, but a visit to Kentville at this time of year is likely to be rewarding.

Source material: *Advancing Agriculture, A History, Kentville Research Station 1911-1986.* (Agriculture Canada, 1986).

KRS Barn Present Day. [Photo Joan Butcher]

Atlantic Rhododendron and Horticultural Society
Board Members and Other Roles

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES	NAME	CONTACT INFORMATION
President, Program Director, and Acting Treasurer	Jim Sharpe	sharpe@ns.sympatico.ca
Vice-President, Website and Communications	Rebecca Lancaster	thelancasters62@gmail.com
Secretary	Nancy Lewis	nancy.lewis56@gmail.com
Plant Sale Coordinator	Dennis Crouse	denniscrouse0@gmail.com
Editor, AtlanticRhodo	Dennis Stuebing	Dennis.stuebing@hotmail.com
Garden Tour Coordinator	Lynn Rotin	lynn.rotin@gmail.com
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Seed Exchange Coordinator	Sharon Bryson	sharon.bryson@ns.sympatico.ca
Membership Coordinator	Vacant	
Garden Outreach	Chris Hopgood	cpher111@gmail.com
District 12 ARS Representative	Christina Woodward	canadacaw@yahoo.ca

Photo Album - A selection of photos from our archives.

Jeffersonia diphylla. [Photo Chris Helleiner]

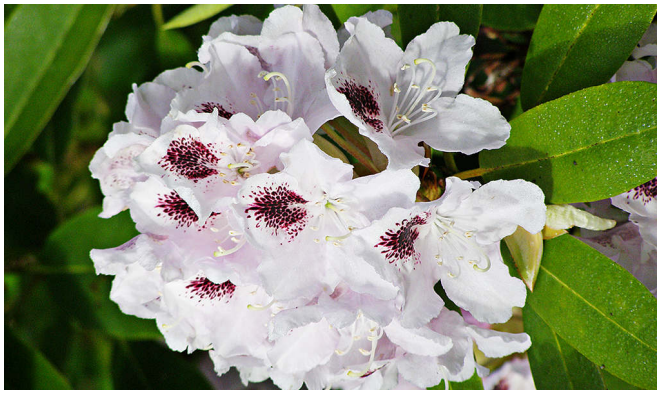
Jeffersonia dubia. [Photo Roslyn Duffus]

Shortia uniflora. [Photo Chris Helleiner]

Cypripedium parviflora v. pubescens. [Photo Roslyn Duffus]

Helleborus thibetanus. [Photo Chris Helleiner]

R. lapponicum White form. [Photo J. C. Birck]



R. 'Calsap'. [Photo Chris Helleiner]

R. 'Virginia Delp'. [Photo Chris Helleiner']