

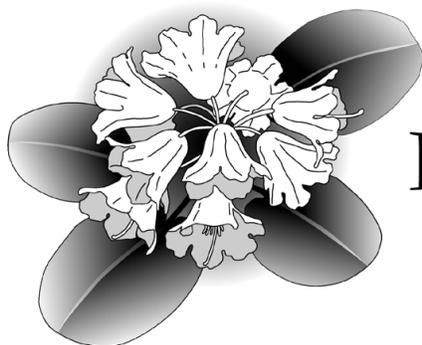
# AtlanticRhodo

[www.AtlanticRhodo.org](http://www.AtlanticRhodo.org)

Volume 36: Number 1

February 2012





# Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society

## Positions of Responsibility 2011 - 2012

<b>President</b>	Ruth Jackson	454-4681	<b>Director - Horticulture</b>	Audrey Fralic	683-2711
<b>Vice-President</b>	Vacant		<b>Director</b>	Cora Swinamer	826-7705
<b>Secretary</b>	Susan Boyd	835-8916	<b>Director</b>	Wendy Cornwall	477-6121
<b>Treasurer</b>	Jim Drysdale	431-0223	<b>ARS Rep.</b>	Anitra Laycock	852-2502
<b>Membership</b>	Ann Drysdale	431-0223	<b>Newsletter</b>	Mary Helleiner	429-0213
<b>Past President</b>	Sheila Stevenson	479-3740	<b>Website</b>	Bob Pettipas	462-5654
<b>Director - Education</b>	Jenny Sandison	624-9013	<b>Library</b>	Jean White	477-2933
<b>Director - Communications</b>	Mary Helleiner	429-0213	<b>Seed Exchange</b>	Sharon Bryson	863-6307
<b>Director - Social</b>	Shirley McIntyre	835-3673	<b>May - Pre-Ordered Plant Sale</b>	Ken Shannik	422-2413
<b>Director - Outreach</b>	Chris Hopgood	479-0811	<b>May- Public Plant Sale</b>	Duff & Donna Evers	835-2586

## Membership (Please Note Changes)

### Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society.

Fees are \$20.00 from September 1, 2011 to August 31, 2012, due September 2011. 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](http://www.atlanticrhodo.org)

### American Rhododendron Society

Combined ARHS and ARS membership cost is \$50.00 Canadian. For benefits see [www.rhododendron.org](http://www.rhododendron.org)

Cheques, made payable to Atlantic Rhododendron and Horticultural Society should be sent to **Ann Drysdale, 5 Little Point Lane, Herring Cove, NS B3V1J7.**

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

*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.

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

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Cover Photo: 'Nova Sunrise' - Dr. Don Craig hybrid.. [Photo John Weagle]



## 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.

- Tuesday January 3** Stan Kochanoff: Trees, Urban and otherwise
- Tuesday February 7** **Niki Jabbour:** Food Plants and Ways to Grow them.  
ARHS member and author of the brand new book *The Year Round Vegetable Gardener*, Niki will do a presentation with “oodles of photos” to illustrate a number of ways to grow edibles in your garden. Check out her blog at <http://yearroundvegetablegardener.blogspot.com>
- Tuesday March 6** TBA
- Tuesday April 3** TBA
- Tuesday May 1** **Annual Members’ Plant Sale.** (Buying and Selling Frenzy).  
See spring Newsletter for more information.
- Saturday June 9** This year we’re off to the Annapolis Royal area, where we’ll get a guided tour and see some interesting specimens at the Annapolis Historic Gardens, with some visits to private gardens and to Bunchberry Nurseries in Upper Clements. We’ll conclude with a potluck chez our tour organizer and host Bob Howard, at his new house and garden project in Granville Beach. We’re planning a start time of 10:00 a.m. See spring Newsletter for more information.

**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 October Newsletter.

Peggy Brewster  
 Rodney & Margaret Caley  
 James Ellison  
 Carol Knowles  
 Michelle LeClair  
 Myrah Murphy  
 Aleksandra O’Connor - Sustainable Landscape Design  
 Freeman Patterson  
 Ed Reekie  
 Janet Robertson  
 Societ  des Rhododendrons du Qu bec  
 Anita & Patrick Sulley (renewal)  
 Fred Wendt

Hammonds Plains, NS  
 Halifax, NS  
 Kentville, NS  
 Hammonds Plains, NS  
 Halifax, NS  
 Saint John, NB  
 Halifax, NS  
 Kingston, NB  
 Kentville, NS  
 Halifax, NS  
 Montreal, QC  
 Bedford, NS  
 Chester Basin, NS

# Special Notices

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## Pre-ordered Plant Sale (members only)

Once again the list of plants for sale will be placed on the website [www.atlanticrhodo.org](http://www.atlanticrhodo.org) in late January, along with a down loadable order form. Anyone who does not have access to the website should call Ken Shannik, 902-222-5927.

## Tissue Culture Pickup (members only)

The 2012 tissue culture pickup will be held on March 31, 2012, at St. Andrews Centre, 6955 Bayers Road, Halifax. Plants will be sorted into orders and ready for pickup by 1:15 p.m. There will also be extra plants available at that time.

## Rhododendron State Park

Sheila Stevenson suggests that members might be interested in visiting this park in Fitzwilliam, New Hampshire, where hundreds of bushes of *R. maximum* bloom in mid July. This is the species that was once found in Nova Scotia; Dick Steele spent many hours on an unsuccessful search to find it in the wild. ☐

## Looking for an Editor

We need a new editor for AtlanticRhodo starting with the October 2012 issue.

The editor finds information about ARHS activities, commissions articles, finds some photos, edits the material, sends it to Sterling Levy who does the layout, then takes his disk to the printers and, with help, carries out the mailing.

Some basic computer skills are required.

If you are interested contact Ruth Jackson or Sheila Stevenson.☐

## Presidents Report 2011

**By Ruth Jackson**

The Atlantic Rhododendron and Horticultural Society (ARHS) is indeed a fortunate group. We have an enthusiastic membership of 223, a dedicated board of 13 individuals and assets of \$49,293.53 as of August 31. The club members have the opportunity to attend a monthly lecture series, enjoy a three times a year newsletter of exceptional quality and attend our annual garden tour. Our principal funding raising events, the sale of plants (Tissue Culture, Pre-ordered Members' and Public Sales) are of core interest to our members. The profits from our sales have allowed us to give two annual student awards of \$750: one at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College (NSAC) and the other Kingstec. The awards are called the Passionate Plant Person Awards. We also have given a sum of \$1500 to the Captain Richard Steele Memorial scholarship at NSAC. Plants have been donated to the Annapolis Royal Garden, NSAC rock garden and to Stratford Way garden. About a dozen volunteers spent a day preparing and planting the beds at Stratford Way; as well a group has worked to restore a bed of rhododendrons planted by one of our former members, John Meagher at Regatta Point. We have a Director for Outreach now, Chris Hopgood, and a new policy this year.

The annual Pre-ordered and Public Plant Sales are brilliantly run by Donna and Duff Evers and Ken Shannik. All our members look forward to getting the lists of exciting new plants. The organization of these plant sales is an enormous effort. I am pleased to say that they are willing to carry on for at least another year. Many volunteers regularly support these sales and are deeply appreciated by the team leaders. However, it would lighten their load significantly if some one could step forward to manage the Public Plant Sale from the point where the plants are delivered to the place of sale to disposing of the unsold plant material.

This year there have been significant changes to the ARHS board. Jenny Sandison has stepped down after 15 years of service as Program Director. After this exceptional service both in quality and length it has not been easy to find a replacement. After a thorough search of the membership by Sheila Stevenson, a team has been put together to temporarily fill this position. The Social Director, Shirley McIntyre, has stepped down after organizing many successful Christmas parties and garden tours. We have a candidate for the position. The position of Vice-President has been vacant for a number of years and we are fortunate to have an individual willing to step into this position. We also face vacancies come spring in communications/newsletter and horticulture, when Mary Helleiner and Audrey Fralic have said they will step down.

The American Rhododendron Society (ARS) has asked us to host their Fall 2013 meeting. I realize this will be a lot of work. However, after careful consideration the Board has voted unanimously to support holding the event. In November we will have a meeting devoted to ARS including a slide show on the activities at the Spring 2011 ARS convention, followed by a discussion of the reasons for making the considerable effort to hold it here. A vote will then be taken on whether the ARHS should or should not support this initiative. In spite of a large and enthusiastic membership of our society ARHS, it has proven difficult to find individuals to take posts of responsibility. The ARHS must find ways to renew its membership, encourage and inspire members, develop expertise for its members and make new contacts to continue the high standards of horticulture that have been synonymous with the club. Holding the Fall ARS convention could help us achieve these goals.

President: Ruth Jackson, to fall 2012

Vice President: Cora Swinamer, to fall 2012 when Cora will take on the presidency.

Secretary: Susan Boyd

Treasurer: Jim Drysdale

Past President: Sheila Stevenson, to fall 2012

Director- Education (Programming): liaison with board: Sheila Stevenson, Walter Ostrom, Jenny Sandison

Director - Communications: Mary Helleiner, until spring 2012

Director - Social Ralph Pineau

Director - Horticulture: Audrey Fralic, until spring 2012.

Director - at large Wendy Cornwall

Director - Membership: Ann Drysdale

Director - Outreach: Chris Hopgood

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## Passionate Plants Person Award



Annie Jivalian, Lawrencetown, NS, a 1st year B.Tech. Environmental Landscape Horticulture student, was selected as the 2011 recipient of the \$750 Passionate Plants Person Award. Cora Swinamer, representing the Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticulture Society, is shown with Annie. The award is presented to a NS student in the Environmental Horticulture diploma program. Preference is given to students whose passion for plants is infectious and who will most impact the way we regard and understand plants in both public and private environments. Other criteria include communication and leadership abilities and financial need. [Photo NSAC]

## Dr. Donald L. Craig 1923-2011



Dr. Craig [L] with Baron Edmund de Rothschild

The Rhododendron world has lost yet another of its pioneering breeders. Dr. Donald L. Craig, PhD, LLB – 87, Nova Scotia's first rhododendron hybridizer, a man of great significance to horticulture and agriculture alike passed away 11 October 2011. He was a founding member and past president of both the Rhododendron Society of Canada and the RSC Atlantic Chapter. He was an honorary life member and past president of the Canadian Society of Horticultural Science and former vice-president of the American Pomological Society. He was inducted into the Atlantic Agricultural Hall of Fame in 1988 and in 1990 received the Wilder Medal from the A.P.S. He was a man of quiet persistence, the scientific rigour with which he brought to his fruit, berry and rhododendron breeding paid off in spades. His strawberry selections are grown worldwide and the parents of many of the newer varieties; he was solely responsible for the establishment of Nova Scotia's now vibrant and lucrative wine industry. Yet rhododendrons were his true passion.

His mentor, Dr. Radcliffe Pike of the University of New Hampshire, was a keen rhododendron grower and breeder. Rad frequently led Don through his extensive plantings, explaining his breeding methodology along the way. The seeds were sown in Don's mind. Don started at the Kentville Research Station in 1947 and soon became fascinated with the old ironclad rhododendrons planted on the grounds, noting their reliability in the Nova Scotian climate. Initially, in his words, "the idea was to make the vista more presentable when approaching the Kentville Research Station building complex". In 1953 seed was received from Goteborg Botanical Garden and the potential for increasing the collection was

duly noted. Plants were imported from Baldsiefen Nursery, Bovee's Nursery, Greer Gardens, Goldsworth Nursery, Knaphill Nursery, David Leach, Tony Shamarello, Capt. Richard Steele, Tingle Nursery, Van Veen Nursery, Woodland Nurseries and by 1957, 545 rhododendrons had been planted; 20 years later that number would double. Don soon concluded the colour range could be improved and flowering times extended in Nova Scotia. Pragmatically, with smaller home lots, he reckoned the habits could be easily reduced. With his extensive breeding background and pollen in hand he did his first rhododendron cross in 1958 - pollen of the ironclad 'Dr. Dresselhuys' was placed on *R. smirnowii*, the very hardy latter from Rad Pike. Thus the programme began. Seedlings were lined out in windswept fields with no protection, special care, water or mulch - perform and prove yourself or get tossed was the procedure. Their mantra was "generous to save but quick to discard". The annual Rhododendron Sunday was a hit that attracted thousands every year. By the time he retired he had grown 16,500 seedlings, selected 94 for further assessment and named 14. They were tough plants that could take anything the climate could throw at them. Don propagated these plants and made certain they were tested by others in both the milder and colder areas of the Maritimes, Ontario, Québec and Europe. The success of the Kentville rhododendron project was achieved through the volunteered time and efforts of all those involved.

He knew the potential of the genus and quietly sought the opinions of others. One day Baron Edmund de Rothschild, who was working in Nova Scotia at the time dropped round to see Don. As he was led through the plantings the Baron stopped in his tracks as he spied 'Minas Peace'. Later Don received a letter asking if it would not be possible to have a few cuttings of this exceptional hybrid. Don dispatched them straight away. Shortly thereafter there was a call from Air Canada freight saying there was a container of Exbury's Solent azaleas at the Halifax airport for him and Agriculture had a problem - they were not bare-root but balled and burlapped! Finally Ag. Canada allowed them to be quarantined at their KRS branch; they were subsequently released and planted out. The Baron shared our enthusiasm for 'Minas Peace' but Don, well he wanted a better root system on it as a young plant.

I first met Don in 1973 during one of our outings to Rhododendron Sunday at the Station. His quiet reserve belied his enthusiasm. It seems like yesterday that seven of us - Don Craig, George Swain, Dick Steele, Aileen Meagher, Barbara Hall,

Walter Ostrom and myself - met at Don's house in the summer of 1977. He deemed it time to form an Atlantic Chapter of the Rhododendron Society of Canada. Don's organizational skills were exceptional - our first meeting would be in the autumn, Don agreed to be our first president and we were delegated to various positions. We left infected with excitement and enthusiasm. Our chapter's strength can be traced back to Dr. Craig.

Of the named Kentville rhododendrons he considered 'Bellefontaine' and 'Minas Grand Pré' to be the best of them all. Hardiness, performance and beauty were his criteria. 'Bellefontaine' is still propagated in Germany and considered to be the best expression of *fortunei x smirnowii*. 'Minas Peace' was his secret favourite.

His enthusiasm and breeding continued after retirement. From 1986 to 2005 he did a further 82 crosses, mainly at Sunnybrook Farm. During this period I would visit Don frequently, walk around the garden with him and discuss breeding possibilities. We decided we should get his records digitalized. This was a distinct pleasure; his record keeping was impeccable, everything was recorded in minute detail, and there were accurate photos, superb plot plans and no mislabeling. It was once suggested that 'Bellefontaine' was not a Kentville grown plant but one of the same mating donated from Ontario; irrefutable data back to day one in the life of 'Bellefontaine' ended that short debate. Of particular note was his last named plant 'Nova Sunrise', a mating of a dwarf Kentville yellow with a dwarf Steele yellow, a superb plant; a fine tribute to the working relationship between our two most esteemed hybridizers.

We last walked round the Sunnybrook garden in May, on my last two visits he was too fragile to go outdoors but we looked out onto the garden and discussed rhododendrons including the newer Finnish ones. How fitting that Don's last rhododendron season would be the most spectacular perhaps that Nova Scotia has ever seen. I fondly remember his pride of and enjoyment in the garden that he and daughter Sue created at Sunnybrook Farm. There was no boasting, no bragging, and no one-upmanship; amidst the splendor it was his smile as we approached a fine plant that indicated a success. A smile was all he expected from his plants; his legacy will bring many smiles to Nova Scotia gardens for years hence.

He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Mary, sons, William and Colin, daughter, Suzanne and a number of grand & great-grandchildren. Son, David, predeceased him. □

--John Weagle

## Remembering Stan Dodds 1925 -- 2011

I first met Stan in 1996 the year we hosted the American Rhododendron Society Annual Meeting. He was a member of an enthusiastic group from the Massachusetts Chapter. I struck up a conversation with him during a field trip to the Kentville Research Station. He told me of his plans to move to Nova Scotia, find some land in a good growing area. He had been taking plant propagation courses at the Arnold Arboretum with a view to starting a small nursery.

After his move to Nova Scotia he eventually found and bought a farmhouse and land in "suburban Bridgetown". Subsequently he became an enthusiastic member of the Atlantic Society eventually serving a term as President. All the while his plant acquisition continued through the society's plant sales, tissue culture and cutting exchanges. He established a friendship with Captain Steele and was a regular member of the Steele expeditions to Newfoundland and Labrador. His trips back to the US usually involved import permits and returning with a trunk full of new plants.

He was also involved with his community. He was a supporter of the Annapolis Historical Gardens and the Annapolis Royal project to get folks to plant magnolias throughout the town. He had a good singing voice and was a member of a choir.

Because of the commuting distance to and from Bridgetown, Josette and I invited Stan to stay with us on meeting nights. We quickly developed a routine. After the meeting we would open a bottle of wine (usually an Australian Shiraz) and talk. We talked about plants of course, our latest finds, seed germination or his problems with managing an ever growing collection of plants, many of which were in pots. We also talked about current affairs, his boyhood in Montreal, his children, a new book or TV program that caught his fancy. He had a wide range of interests.

We knew about his health problems but he was positive and optimistic so we really did not know he was so ill. His passing was a shock.

ARHS has lost another valued member and we have lost a friend. □

—Sterling Levy

## Robbie Robinson 1921 -- 2011

S.C. Robinson, known to his friends and colleagues as “Robbie”, died on December 22, 2011. He was one of the earliest members of the Atlantic Rhododendron and Horticultural Society, an important contributor of plants and advice to our society. Robbie was born in 1921, in Japan, the son of a missionary family. He lived there until 1939, spoke Japanese fluently and returned to visit repeatedly over the years. By profession he was an obstetrician and gynecologist, with a special interest and enthusiasm for the education of medical doctors. After he retired from the Dalhousie Faculty of Medicine, he spent several years in Pakistan, helping the establishment of medical education at the Aga Khan University. To us, however, he was best known as a member of the community who lived and gardened along Hall’s Road, a wooded enclave off the Purcell’s Cove Road. The rhododendrons and magnolias he and his neighbours planted, many of them the result of Dick Steele’s work in hybridizing, are now fully mature. They make a spectacular display each year. From time to time, the members of the Atlantic Rhododendron and Horticultural Society have been invited to tour the gardens, but anyone who showed an interest was welcomed by Robbie, who proudly showed visitors around. In the early years of our society, plant auctions were held at Robbie’s house; he was a witty, capable auctioneer. Some of the outstanding plants growing in his garden include *Rhododendron albrechtii*, a hybrid of *R. fortunei* x *smirnowii*, and *Magnolia* x *loebneri* ‘Jennifer Robinson’, named in memory of his youngest daughter. Robbie’s garden will continue to delight us with its magnificent display every spring, and remind us of the great gardener that he was.

-- Chris Helleiner



The Robinson Garden [L] with Magnolia Jennifer Robinson in the background and a close-up of the blossom. [Photos John Weagle]

## 2012 ARHS Seed Exchange

### Sharon Bryson ... Seed Exchange Chair

Welcome to the 2012 Seed Exchange for the Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society.

We again wish to thank the faithful contributors who have made this possible. The overall success of our Seed Exchange depends upon seed contributions by our members, so please make a “mental note” to save some interesting seeds for next years’ Exchange. There is always an interest in the Companion Plant section as well as the Azalea and Rhododendron sections. Hints for collecting seed are readily available. Bill and I are happy to assist when we can.

Plant enthusiasts outside of our regional society have again made valuable contributions to our annual exchange.

Our list this year seems a bit scanty in some categories so this reinforces the necessity for regular member participation. It is noteworthy to mention the relatively large selection of Magnolia seed donated this year. Bill Wilgenhof is also very conscientious in seeing that all the magnolia seed is well cleaned, packed and refrigerated until time for packaging (he usually does that as well).

Magnolias are interesting and not especially difficult to grow from seed. Predicting germination success is difficult, but all are worth a try. We are not sure why some seed germinates better than others, but maturity at harvest could be a factor. Growth is fast and blooming often happens quite soon compared to many tree species. *Magnolia sieboldii* matures especially quickly. There are very generous quantities of these and of the *M. stellata*.

The deadline for submitting the members-only order is Feb 28, 2012.

Please remember that the seeds go out on a “first-come, first-served” basis dependent on seed quantity. Get your orders in early and you have a very good chance of getting everything on your list. It is VERY helpful to list second choices on the order form. If none are listed, we have to make a small “editorial decision”!

We are again anxious to encourage people to try growing Rhododendrons and Azaleas from seed. Anyone who needs information on Growing Rhododendrons from Seed is encouraged to check out the CD from the ARHS library. Online information is available at both the Atlantic Rhodo and the Willow Garden websites.

To this purpose we are offering a FREE package of seed to anyone interested, whether or not you order any other seeds. This is noted in the seed list. Please send the order form and \$2 to cover postage in the usual way. If you need further planting instructions, please ask.

At the end of each Seed Exchange there are inevitably left-over seeds. We still have found no predictable or useful method to make good use of these seeds, but welcome suggestions.

Once again we will post the Seed List on the Internet and insert many images and links to help in your decision-making. Check this out at. <http://www.willowgarden.net>

Follow the links for ARHS Seed Exchange.

A link to the list will be inserted on the Atlantic Rhodo site. [www.atlanticrhodo.org](http://www.atlanticrhodo.org)

The Seed Exchange will be open to “the world at large” after our Feb. 28 member’s-only dead line, and will end April 30, 2012.

Stories of your past successes and/or failures with seed growing are most interesting and welcome.

Comments or suggestions regarding the Seed Exchange are also encouraged. You can send a note with your order or email [willowgarden\\_ns@hotmail.com](mailto:willowgarden_ns@hotmail.com) . ☺

# ARHS 2012 SEED EXCHANGE

## INSTRUCTIONS

Seed packets are \$2.50 CDN each for collected wild, \$2.00 CDN each for hand-pollinated and \$1.50 CDN each for open-pollinated seed. One packet per lot per person. More may be ordered but are subject to availability. **All orders must be on the form provided and should be received by February 28, 2012.** Save this seed list for some of the footnote information.

Send all orders to: **Sharon Bryson, #407 Old Maryvale Rd., RR#3 Antigonish, Nova Scotia B2G 2L1 CANADA** Please make your cheque or money order payable to 'Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society'. Add \$2.00 CDN for postage & padded envelope. Please list substitutes as quantities for some lots are small.

US regulations now require an import permit and a phytosanitary certificate. Seeds sent to the US will be shipped without a phytosanitary certificate and at the orderer's risk.

## SEED LIST

**DONORS:** **BIR** - Jens Birck, Copenhagen, Denmark **CLA** - Chris Clarke, Liverpool, NS  
**CLY** - Bruce Clyburn, New Waterford, NS **COR** - Wendy Cornwall, Halifax, NS  
**EVE** - Donna Evers, Halifax, NS **HIN** - Brent Hine, Vancouver, BC **SHA** - Ken Shannik, Halifax, NS  
**STE** - Dennis Steubig, Timberlea, NS **THE** - Kristian Theqvist, Finland **WEA** - John Weagle, Halifax, NS  
**WIL** - Bill Wilgenhof, Antigonish, NS

### **Rhododendron Species - Collected Wild - \$2.50**

001 THE *R. tomentosum* †1

### **Rhododendron Species - Hand Pollinated - \$2.00**

- 002 CLY *R. brachycarpum* v. *tigerstedtii*  
RSF 82/109 ex. Mustila Arboretum
- 003 WEA *R. camtschaticum*, pink-purple, vigorous form  
(2010 seed)
- 004 WEA *R. carolinianum* (Barbara Hall's best),  
Sibbed (2010 seed)
- 005 CLY *R. luteum* 'Lindquist' form via Donald Craig

### **Rhododendron Species - Open-Pollinated - \$1.50**

- 006 WIL *R. albrechtii*, early deciduous species  
Bright cherry red bloom
- 007 CRA *R. calendulaceum* (2010 seed)
- 008 CRA *R. cumberlandense* 'Top of the Mountain'  
(2010 seed)
- 009 BIR *R. dendrocharis*
- 010 SHA *Rhododendron diversipilosum* 'Milky Way' OP  
(was *Ledum palustre*)
- 011 THE *R. hypoleucum* †2
- 012 WEA *R. kiusianum*, mixed selections light pink, dark  
pink, purple, lavender, red/orange, white.  
Fairly isolated so a high percentage will be  
*kiusianum* itself (2010 seed)
- 013 COR *R. luteum*, early yellow, fragrant azalea
- 014 WIL *R. maximum*, pinker form
- 015 WEA *R. minus*, Carolinianum Group, Bayport robust  
ex Jackson's, isolated so should come true.  
(2010 seed)

- 016 WEA *mucronulatum* v. *taguetii* (Cheju), quite  
compact
- 017 WIL *R. mucronulatum*, pink
- 018 WIL *R. mucronulatum*, white form
- 019 SHA *R. schlippenbachii*, good pink form
- 020 SHA *R. vaseyi* 'White Find', doesn't cross with other  
species (2010 seed)

### **Rhododendron Hybrids - Hand-Pollinated -\$2.00**

- 021 BIR ('Bambi' x *proteoides*) #15 x 'Gedser Gold'  
(aim yellow)
- 022 CLY *R. catawbiense* Boursault x 'Holli'
- 023 CLY 'Flautando' x 'Bohmen'
- 024 CLY *R. fortunei* x *R. discolor* RSF 82/140
- 025 CLY *R. fortunei* x 'Great Eastern'
- 026 BIR 'Goldsprengel' x ('Bambi' x *proteoides*) #15  
(aim yellow)
- 027 BIR *R. hanceanum* v. *nanum* Rowallane x  
'Tessa Dane'
- 028 BIR *R. hanceanum* v. *nanum* Rowallane x  
*R. trichostomum* (pink)
- 029 CLY 'Hardy Giant' x 'Babylon'
- 030 THE 'Helsinki University' †3 x *R. fortunei* 'Best  
Form' †4 (2010 seed)
- 031 CLY 'Janet Blair' x 'Christina Dee'
- 033 CLY 'Janet Blair' x 'Goldprinz' †5
- 034 CLY 'Lavender Princess' x 'Holli'
- 035 CLY 'My June' x 'Nancy Steele' †6
- 036 BIR 'Nancy Evans' x ('Bambi' x *proteoides*) #15  
(aim yellow)
- 037 BIR ('Top Banana' x *proteoides*) x *citriniflorum*  
ssp. *Horaenum* (aim yellow/orange)

- 038 THE 'Mikkeli' †7 x 'Bohmen' †8 †23  
 039 THE 'Mikkeli' x 'Cherry Kiss' †9 †23  
 040 THE 'Mikkeli' x 'Goldsworth Orange' †10 †23  
 041 CLY 'Sandra Hinton' x 'Barbara Cook' †11  
 042 CLY 'Sandra Hinton' x 'Christina Dee'  
 043 CLY 'Sandra Hinton' x 'Goldprinz'  
 044 CLY 'Sandra Hinton' x 'Night Music'

**Rhododendron Hybrids - Open-Pollinated - \$1.50**

- 045 WIL 'Nepal', hardy white from pink buds  
 046 WIL 'Red River', very late red, *R. maximum* hybrid  
 047 WIL seedling from ARS92#608, aka "Best Yellow"  
 048 WIL seedling from ARS92#765, aka "Ruby Lemon"  
 ('Janet Blair' x 'Barbara Cook')  
 049 WIL seedling from ARS97#671, complex 'Cat's,  
 Pajamas' cross, compact apricot/yellow,  
 some doubling. †12  
 050 WIL seedling from ARS00#555, 'Janet Blair' x  
*R. pachysanthum*, early blooming, great foliage  
 051 WIL seedling from PW#3, 'Janet's Fantasy' x  
 'Barbara Cook' Vivid yellow with dark  
 burgundy blotch  
 052 THE *R. tomentosum* x *R. groenlandicum* †13  
 053 THE *R. tomentosum* x *R. diversipilosum* 'Milky  
 Way' †14

**Azalea Hybrids - Open-Pollinated - \$1.50**

- 054 WEA 'Baby Dane', evergreen azalea, crossed with  
 various dwarf Weagle hybrids  
 055 WIL Unnamed azalea seedling from ARHS'01#74  
 (*R. arborescens* x *R. cumberlandense*),  
 Late blooming pink, very fragrant  
 056 WIL Unnamed azalea seedling from ARS2001#539,  
 (*R. cumberlandense*) scarlet/orange, late  
 057 WIL Unnamed seedling from 'Homebush' x 'Mt. St.  
 Helen's', raspberry with golden blotch  
 058 WIL Unnamed seedling from 'Homebush' x  
 unnamed yellow, large peach florets  
 059 WIL Unnamed azalea seedling small yellow florets  
 vivid fall foliage (likely luteum mix)  
 060 WIL seeds from a variety of unnamed pink azaleas  
 ('Homebush' x unnamed pink)  
 061 WIL Deciduous azalea, mix - FREE

**Companion Plants - Open-Pollinated - \$1.50**

- 062 SHA *Aconitum fischeri* (a few only) blue flowers in  
 late fall, sturdy - Per  
 063 SHA *Aconitum japonicum*, blue flowers on arching  
 stems in late summer - Per  
 064 SHA *Allium beesianum*, diminutive blue species for  
 trough or rock garden, 4" - Bulb  
 065 SHA *Allium cernuum* - clusters of nodding pink  
 flowers, 12-16" - Bulb  
 066 SHA *Allium lineare* - pale pink flowers in tight balls,  
 12-14" - Bulb  
 067 SHA *Aquilegia clematiflora* - pale pink,  
 multipetalled and spurless, 18" - Perennial  
 068 WIL *Aquilegia* sp. 'Black Barlow' Dark  
 purple ~30" - Per

- 069 SHA *Arisaema triphylla*, Jack-in-the- Pulpit - Bulb  
 070 SHA *Beesia deltooides*, evergreen groundcover  
 Likely zone 6 - Per  
 071 STE *Belamcanda chinensis*, Leopard Lily - Bulb  
 072 WEA *Brimeura amethystine*, Brimeura is a small  
 bulbous genus in the Hyacinthaceae family  
 - Bulb  
 073 SHA *Clematis flammula* - white, late summer,  
 fragrant. Can be cut back hard. - Vine  
 074 SHA *Clematis viorna*, small, thick, purple-pink  
 urn- shaped flowers Herbaceous - Per  
 075 WIL *Cornus kousa chinensis*. Pink, early flowering  
 Beautiful burgundy fall foliage - Small Tr  
 †15  
 076 WIL *Cornus kousa*, (? var.) white early flowering  
 - Small tree †15  
 077 WIL *Cornus kousa*, (? var.) white, late flowering  
 - Small Tree †15  
 078 SHA *Cornus mas*, Cornelian Cherry- yellow flowers  
 in early spring followed by red fruit. - Tree  
 079 SHA *Deinathe bifida*, Blue, 18"(.45m), part shade,  
 hydrangea relative - Per  
 080 SHA *Diphylleia cymosa* Bold foliage plant for moist  
 part shade. Small white flowers followed by  
 dark blue berries held above foliage - Per †16  
 081 COR *Enkianthus campanulatus*, upright ericaceous  
 shrub, brilliant fall colour - Shrub  
 082 SHA *Fuschia thymifolia*, tiny pink flowers, tiny  
 foliage. - Shrub (tender)  
 083 HIN *Gaultheria ovatifolia* (Western teaberry) BAH#  
 11-060 c.w Manning Park, BC ~12" -Per  
 084 WEA *Gunnera manicata*. Gigantic perennial,  
 requires winter protection - Per  
 085 COR *Halesia monticola* (Mountain Silverbell)  
 White flowers followed by winged  
 Fruit - Tree to 30Ft.  
 086 SHA *Helleborus argutifolius*, green flowered, may  
 grow quite large compared to other Hellebores  
 Probably zone 6 - Per †17  
 087 SHA *Hippophae rhamnoides* - (Sea-Buckthorn)  
 Yellow-orange berries - Shrub †18  
 088 SHA *Iris graminea* - (Plum Iris) - Perennial  
 089 WIL *Kalmia latifolia*, OP pink - Shrub  
 090 WIL *Kalmia latifolia* 'Pinwheel' OP - Shrub  
 091 WIL *Leucothoe fontaneisiana* (Drooping leucothoe)  
 Handsome evergreen shrub, broader than tall  
 Small white flowers in spring - Shrub  
 092 EVE *Lilium canadense*, Orange, downward facing  
 blooms, whorled leaves- Bulb †19  
 093 WIL *Lilium canadense*, Orange, downward facing  
 blooms, whorled leaves- Bulb †19  
 094 SHA *Lilium kesselringii*, - Bulb †19  
 095 WIL *Lilium martagon* White drooping recurved  
 blooms, earliest lily - Bulb †19  
 096 WEA *Lilium mackliniae* Pink, fading to white, ~30"  
 Plant deep, avoid drought - Bulb †19  
 097 WIL *Lilium*, Oriental Hyb.ex 'Barbaresco'  
 Dark burgundy flower - Bulb †19

- 098 WIL *Lilium*, Oriental Hybrid, white/yellow stripe Tall - Bulb †19
- 099 WIL *Magnolia loebneri* hyb. ex. 'Ballerina', pink, mid-sized Tree †20
- 100 WIL *Magnolia loebneri* hyb. ex. 'Leonard Messel', pink, mid-sized Tree †20
- 101 CLA *Magnolia macrophyllum* sp Asheii, huge leaves and blooms - Tree †20
- 102 WEA *Magnolia 'Mazeppa'* o.p. - Tree †20
- 103 COR *Magnolia sieboldii* (selfed) white with pink stamens, vigorous - Tree †20
- 104 WEA *Magnolia sieboldii* 'Colossus', flowers are large, often 5 to 6 inches in diameter with 10 to 17 heavy-textured tepals, and very fragrant. The tree flowers profusely - Tree †20
- 105 WIL *Magnolia sieboldii* ex Korean (selfed) white with pink stamens, vigorous Long bloom period - Tree †20
- 106 SHA *Magnolia sieboldii* ex cw Korea White with pink stamens, vigorous. - Tree †20
- 107 EVE *Magnolia sieboldii* ex Shannik cw korea white with pink stamens, vigorous - Tree †20
- 108 WEA *Magnolia sieboldii* (Halifax Hardy), white with pink stamens - Tree †20
- 109 WIL *Magnolia stellata*, compact form, white bloom -Tree †20
- 110 COR *Magnolia stellata*, bushy shrub with many multi-petalled fragrant white flowers in early to mid-spring -Tree †20
- 111 COR (*Magnolia stellata* rosea x 'Leonard Messel') bushy shrub or small tree; many petalled pale pink flowers in spring -Tree †20
- 112 WIL *Magnolia tripetala*, large leaved, exotic appearance, upright form, ivory bloom - Tree †20
- 113 CLA *Magnolia virginianum*, creamy white flowers, vanilla scented. Shiny foliage, may be evergreen in mild climates. ~30Ft. - Tree †20
- 114 SHA *Menziesia ciliicalyx* (dwarf form) pink urn-shaped flowers, 24" - Ericaceous shrub
- 114 SHA *Menziesia* hyb. 'Spring Morning' -[ciliicalyx 'Buchanan's Dwarf' x ferruginea (blue leaf form)] - peach-pink - Shrub
- 115 STE *Nicandra physalodes*, Shoo-fly plant - Annual
- 116 STE *Physostegia virginiana*, Obedient Plant, White - Perennial
- 117 WIL *Pieris japonica*, 'Dorothy Wycoff' Compact pink variety. - Shrub
- 118 COR *Pieris japonica*, 'Valley Valentine' Upright plant, deep pink bloom - Shrub
- 119 WIL *Pterocarya stenoptera* (Wingnut Tree) compound leaves, attractive bark - Tree
- 120 SHA *Scilla scilloides* - spikes of fluffy pink flowers in summer, 12-16" - Bulb
- 121 WEA *Soldanella alpina*, blue-violet rock garden plant <6" - Per
- 122 WEA *Sorbus americana* c.w. Outer Cove, NL one of the best *Sorbus* species, with clusters of berries 8" across. - Small tree †21
- 123 SHA *Styrax japonicus* (*Japanese Snowbell*) - Tree †21
- 124 SHA *Vaccinium praestens* - suckering groundcover with large red berries, 4" - Sub-Shrub
- 125 WEA *Viburnum betulifolium*, spectacular red fruit, appears to be self-fertile - Shrub †22
- 126 WIL *Wisteria floribunda* 'Lawrence', blue-violet flowers, vigorous vine. Seems to bloom at a young age. Hardy in Antigonish - Vine

### FOOTNOTES

- †1. *R. tomentosum*, a species from Ledum subsection, cw from Turku Archipelago, Finland.
- †2. *R. hypoleucum*, Ledum subsection, plant from ARS 87/2004
- †3. 'Helsinki University' is a super hardy Finnish hybrid with pink flowers.
- †4. *R. fortunei* 'Best Form', aka 'German Form', found from Hobbie Rhododendronpark.
- †5. 'Goldprinz' syn. 'Goldschatz', good yellow, ('Festivo' x 'Alice Street'), cross by H. Hachmann.
- †6. 'Nancy Steele', formerly BPT#80-5, yellow
- †7. 'Mikkeli' aka 'St. Michel' is a hardy Finnish hybrid.
- †8. 'Böhmen' is pretty hardy and probably a form of *dichroanthum* ssp. *scyphocalyx*. Selfing should give variation as the orange flowered 'Böhmen' is a suspected hybrid.
- †9. 'Cherry Kiss', one of the best hardy reds from Hachmann
- †10. 'Goldsworth Orange', *dichroanthum* x *fortunei* ssp. *discolor*, cross by W.C. Slocock.
- †11. 'Barbara Cook' = 'Mary Belle' x 'Goldsworth Yellow'
- †12. ARS97#671, 'Cat's Pajamas' (Delp) x {Janet Blair x [(wardii x hemsleyanum) x Autumn Gold] #1/95}
- †13. (*R. tomentosum* x *R. groenlandicum*), a very floriferous cross between two tetraploid *Ledum* species.
- †14. *R. tomentosum* x *R. diversipilosum* 'Milky Way', a vigorously growing and well flowering *Ledum* cross.

- †15. *Cornus* seed has been stratified. Store in fridge in plastic packet as received until March/April then sow in warm soil.
- †16. *Diphylleia cymosa*, seed has been stratified. Store in fridge in plastic packet as received until March/April then sow in warm soil.
- †17. Hellebore seed may take 6-18 months (or more) to germinate; however, if you start with fresh seed and sow it soon after harvest, then your chances of achieving high germination percentages are quite good. For example, sowing fresh seed in damp media at room temperature for eight weeks followed by a cool period in the refrigerator for another eight weeks or so will yield good results. We shall try to ship “treated” seed.
- †18. *Hippophae rhamnoides*, seed has been stratified. Store in fridge in plastic packet as received until March/April then sow in warm soil.
- †19. Liliium seeds may require a warm/ moist period followed by a cold period if there is no germination. Plant cold treated pots outside in spring.
- †20. Magnolia seed has been stratified. Store in fridge in plastic packet as received until March/April then sow in warm soil.
- †21. Seed has been stratified. Store in fridge in plastic packet as received until March/April then sow in warm soil.
- †22. *Viburnum betulifolium*, seed has been stratified. Store in fridge in plastic packet as received until March/April then sow in warm soil.
- †23. cp = Controlled Pollination, where stigmas have been protected before and after pollination.

## NOTES

1. Open-pollinated species, with the exception of a very few, may not come true from seed. Cultivars, with the exception of a few perennials do not come true. Plants from these seeds should be labelled as being “ex” that species or cultivar.
2. The 2012 Seed List will be posted on the Internet with insertion of images and links to help in your decision-making. <http://www.willowgarden.net>
3. Also see the ARHS website for an article on growing rhododendrons from seed.
4. When sowing rhododendrons on peat we recommend you sterilize it first. Microwave it for 15 minutes or pour boiling water through it several times. Allow to cool.
5. We would like to thank the seed donors for their time and effort making crosses, collecting and cleaning seeds. We highly encourage members to attempt their own hybridization of rhododendrons. Seed of uncommon trees, shrubs and perennials is always most welcome. ☺

## More Favourite Rhododendrons

**John Brett:** *oreodoxa* var. *fargesii*, ‘Mist Maiden’, *calophytum*, *thomsonii*, ‘Nancy Steele’ (Bpt 80-5).

**Sharon Bryson and Bill Wilgenhof:** ‘April Rose’, *schlippenbachii*, ‘Sue Gunn’, ‘Blue Heaven’ (yak x *pachysanthum*), ‘Red River’.

**Jeff Chown:** *yakushmanum* x yak ‘Koichiro Wada’, *camtschaticum*, *kiusianum*, *vaseyi* ‘White Find’, ‘Teddy Bear’??.

**Bruce Clyburn:** ‘Spellbinder’, ‘Hardy Giant’, ‘Babylon’ x *sutchuenense*, ‘Great Dane’ x *rex*, ‘Sandra Hinton’ x *rex*.

**Wendy Cornwall:** ‘Gartendirektor Rieger’, ‘Great Eastern’, ‘Augie Kerr’, ‘Brown Eyes’, ‘Golfer’.

**Donna Evers:** ‘Barbara Hall’, ‘Tantramar’, ‘Nancy Steele’ (Bpt. 80-5), ‘Steele’s Late and Lovely’, ‘Fantastica’.

**Duff Evers:** ‘Barbara Hall’, ‘Spellbinder’, ‘Consolini’s Windmill’, ‘Vinecrest’, ‘Nancy Steele’.

**Judy MacLean:** Superstore No-Name, ‘Mist Maiden’, ‘Percy Wiseman’, ‘Mary Fleming’, ‘Spicy Lights’.

**Bob Pettipas:** ‘Ginny Gee’, Steele’s 80-1, ‘April Mist’, any Yak, ‘Babylon’.

**Ken Shannik:** ‘Manitau’, ‘Sarled’, ‘Vinecrest’, ‘Spellbinder’, ‘Mist Maiden’.

**Ruth Smith:** ‘Golfer’, ‘Nova Sunrise’, ‘Sproeten’, ‘Teddy Bear’, ‘Scotian Breeze’.

**John Weagle:** *camtschaticum*, ‘Joseph Brueckner’, *rex*, *trichostomum*, ‘Wren’.

**If any other members would like to contribute their five favourites, this is the last chance. Deadline March 31.**  
cmhelleiner@ns.sympatico.ca ☺

# Three Ways to Prune Rhododendrons

By Charles W.G. Smith

I learned to prune rhododendrons by destroying my prized rock garden. I had a 30-foot-tall pine that stood straight as an arrow by uncomfortably close to the house, so I decided to cut it down. It missed the house by a wide margin, but it didn't miss the rock garden, which I had lovingly tended for years. My eyes were wide with horror as I surveyed the splintered wood and tangle of needles.

When the last of the pine tree was removed, I discovered that the damage was surprisingly slight, except for the garden's cornerstone plant, a beautiful *Rhododendron* 'Roseum Elegans' whose 6-foot frame was now a 2-foot mound of broken branches and torn foliage. I thought of removing the battered bush, but I was curious to see if the shrub would recover on its own. I trimmed it back a bit, cut back the scaffold of branches to as pleasing a shape as possible, and waited to see what would happen. Four years later, the rhododendron is one of the most eye-catching shrubs in the yard, with a beautiful shape, dense branches, and plentiful flowers.

The incident illustrates how responsive rhododendrons can be to even severe pruning. Though there are notable differences among types of rhododendrons, the guidelines for pruning them are remarkably consistent. There are three common reasons for pruning rhododendrons – maintenance, shaping, and rejuvenation – and the pruning method for each is easy to learn. The result is a shrub with dense branching, plentiful foliage, and abundant flowers. And you don't have to drop a pine tree on your shrub border to learn how to do it.

## Maintenance pruning removes old flowers and dead wood

Maintenance pruning consists of the removal of spent flower clusters, called trusses, and also of any dead or diseased wood. The trusses are not only unsightly but will eventually form seed, which uses precious energy that would otherwise be available to the plant for vegetative growth. Maintenance pruning is the easiest type of pruning and is the only one that needs to be done every year. To remove old flower trusses on rhododendrons, use a pruning shear to snip the truss at its base, about ½ inch above the emerging flush of new growth. Some folks just grasp the stem with their thumb and forefinger and snap the truss from the plant. This works well most of the time, but occasionally the truss breaks off, taking some of the new growth with it. By using a pruning shear, such accidents are avoided.

Wood damaged by storms or a harsh winter should be clipped from the plant. Diseased stems, often identified by their wilted, curled yellow-green leaves should also be removed. Make the cut below the damaged portion of the plant, taking care to cut into healthy wood right above a dormant bud. Be sure to disinfect the shears with rubbing alcohol between cuts. Maintenance pruning is best done when the flowers have faded and before the flush of new growth rising beneath each truss is more than an inch or so tall. Many types of rhododendrons can benefit from maintenance pruning, including some deciduous azaleas, like Knap Hill-Exbury hybrids, and most broad-leaved evergreens, such as the popular hybrids of mountain rosebay (*R. catawbiense*). Some varieties of rhododendron, most notably small-leaved cultivars like 'Elite', 'Northern Starburst', and 'PJM Regal', rarely set seed and do not require maintenance pruning. If your flowers and flower stalks simply shrivel up and essentially disappear in the weeks after flowering, then your variety doesn't set seed and doesn't need to be deadheaded.

## Pruning for shape enhances the plant's natural habit and form

As the name implies, shaping involves altering the shape of the plant, and it can be done for many reasons, from encouraging denser branching to controlling plant width or height. It differs from other shaping techniques, like topiary, in that shaping of rhododendrons is designed to develop the most aesthetically pleasing aspects of the plant's natural habit and form. Conversely, topiary and other more formal shaping techniques prune a plant into a shape it would not naturally assume. Shaping should not be done on leggy or very large plants, as their open habit requires more a drastic technique called rejuvenation pruning.

Shaping improves the appearance of a plant by encouraging increased branching at its growing points. Since many evergreen rhododendrons hold their leaves for about three years, a branch will have a series of leaf whorls, each representing a year's growth. The whorls of foliage are separated by sections of leafless stem, called internodes. In general, broad-leaved rhododendrons have much longer internodes than small-leaved and deciduous types and benefit most from shaping. To shape a rhododendron, follow the branch from the end down to the last whorl of leaves you want to keep. Make the cut about ¼ inch above the topmost leaf in this cluster. Repeat as needed.

Shaping is most easily done in late winter, when the plant is dormant. Although this sacrifices some of the flower buds, it ensures a complete growing season for the new stems to emerge.

## Rejuvenation pruning calls for drastic cuts on old wood

Rejuvenation pruning is best used to restore shrubs that have become leggy, overgrown, or otherwise unattractive. Many rhododendron species and hybrids can be severely pruned and come back as good as new. Rejuvenation pruning removes most of the branches of the plant, initiating the rise of vigorous flushes of new growth from previously leafless old stems. The new growth matures into a new framework of branches that can be shaped over the years to produce a stunning shrub. It's best to perform this type of pruning in winter while the plant is dormant.

Rejuvenation pruning involves the careful cutting back of each primary branch of the plant's framework. Rhododendrons often have three or more main branches rising from the crown of the plant. These branches, called primary branches, form the basic scaffold of each shrub. Each branch is cut at a different height to produce a staggered arrangement that will look natural when the new shoots mature.

Another type of rejuvenation pruning consists of cutting the entire plant to within 6 inches of the ground. It is a quick method, but not all rhododendrons survive the treatment. In some circumstances, an apparently healthy plant may be weakened by disease or poor nutrition and cannot recover from the stresses of hard pruning. To see if your shrub can handle such hard pruning, cut only one of the main branches back to 6 inches. Cut the others back to a height you are sure is healthy, say 2 feet. If new growth emerges from the 6-inch cut, you can cut back the rest of the shrub the following year and be confident in its return.

Regardless of the method, rejuvenation pruning works because of a special trait of rhododendrons. Look at the bark on a stem or main branch of many rhododendrons and you will see tiny buds, little pink dots about the size of a pinhead that pepper the surface of older branches. These little pink buds, called latent buds, are the key to successful rejuvenation pruning, as they will give rise to the new framework of branches.

Once you've determined how far back the plant needs to be pruned, take a moment and examine the area for a nice healthy bud (one that is firm and appears to be filled out) and cut  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch above that bud. Pruning above a cluster of two or three buds is better than pruning above just one bud, as this often produces multiple branches.

All three of these pruning methods are easy to do and result in a healthier and more attractive shrub. Don't worry about making mistakes. Rhododendrons are forgiving – even if you drop a tree on them. ☐

*Charles W.G. Smith is a horticulturist from Mill River, Massachusetts.*

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*Thanks to Ruth Jackson for drawing this article to our attention.*

## Book Review

### **Planting the Dry Shade Garden – The Best Plants for the Toughest Spot in Your Garden. By Graham Rice, Timber Press, 2011, 192 pages, \$24.95**

Shady areas become common as gardens mature. And although Nova Scotia's climate has generally quite adequate rain, we often experience dry spells, and particularly under trees, some parts of the garden are frequently quite dry. Dry shade presents a challenge for the gardener. The subtitle of this book puts it in a nutshell: "The best plants for the toughest spot in your garden." Graham Rice is a well-known gardener and garden writer, who works both in North America and Britain. His experience shows in his writing, as well as in the numerous, beautiful photographs, apparently all taken in his own gardens.

The author begins with sections on how to plan a garden which will include shady areas, if you are starting from scratch. If you already have dry, shady areas, he provides suggestions for improving the situation by amending the soil, mulching and judicious pruning of trees and shrubs. The bulk of the rest of the book then consists of descriptions of plants that are likely to succeed, if not always to thrive under these adverse conditions. These chapters deal with shrubs, climbers, perennials, ground covers, bulbs and annuals and biennials. Under each species, particularly useful varieties are listed. From time to time, he makes the point that a plant which may be rampantly invasive under more favourable conditions can become a "well-behaved" addition to the garden in a dry, shady location. Perhaps inevitably, many of the plants listed are not likely to be winter hardy here. (The hardiness zones are often listed as 6 or 7). But quite a few of them are already growing in dry, shady parts of our garden in Halifax, and we are encouraged to try some of Rice's other suggestions. The author tells us that this is the first book about plants for dry shade, and it provides solutions for a common problem. I recommend it without reservation. ☐

– Chris Helleiner

## Members put their backs into it for Stratford Way Park

By Jenny Sandison



[Photos Chris Helleiner]

Some of you may remember that Therese Delorme, who is a Landscape Architect working in planning for HRM, has on a few occasions done short presentations to the Club, on her hopes for developing a piece of land in Clayton Park into a really nice city recreational area. It lies across from the Keshan Goodman Library, on Stratford Way.

She was working with a very small budget so our offer of some money to buy plants and some help with planting them was important to the realisation of this dream. I am not even quite sure when Therese first approached us for help, and it may well have been back in 2009.

I remember in 2010 popping in to see the park out of interest. It is quite a large area, surrounded by apartment buildings and there is some original forest that has been preserved. However the most part was a level grassy field, not too attractive, and surrounded by chain-link fencing. The best part was the memorial to the Korean War, which is sited here, and some planting done by the Korean community near it, and a gazebo.

Therese had health problems over the course of the summer of 2010 so she was hoping to get started with us last spring. However you may remember what a wet spring it was and getting the paths laid in the park and the beds created took longer than anticipated. Eventually we decided it would be just as well to defer planting to the Fall, which is a great time of year for shrub planting, and much less stressful than in the middle of a hot, dry summer. The plants which we had put aside from the Plant Sale spent the summer in a holding area in my garden. They were close to the faucet and mostly shaded and looked fine by the Fall

So, we set a date for the middle of September and hoped some of the members would turn up. There were 12 of us that came to plant and the first job was a little daunting. Our beds had been prepared maybe 2 months earlier using organic soil and had grown a fine crop of weeds. It was down on the hands and knees and the line of gardeners made steady progress down the beds. After the placement of the plants it was all hands to get them in the ground. We had to use some ingenuity. The water-bomber that had been promised never materialised and we didn't have much of a tank, but 2 volunteers went off and found water somewhere and the job got done. Then we started to mulch the beds. The idea was to cover the ground between the plants with newspaper and place the mulch on top. This is a great way of dealing with shrub beds and is very effective at suppressing weeds for at least 2 years. It is easiest if you can wet the paper before you put the mulch on top. This has the effect of making the layers stick together, but we had very little water and it was windy!!! The two beds we were planting were also quite large. Having finished the first one we had a conference and decided we would just mulch the second large bed. It was now about 2.00 pm and people were tiring and using the paper just was taking too long

However we did it and the photos show you what we did and it looked very nice when we had finished. Since then Therese has let us know that other areas of the park have been planted. She has also found that there has been some theft of plant material. Fortunately none of our Rhodies have gone. Theft is always a problem in public parks. We have had the same problem in Lunenburg but have found that once the plantings are established that is usually an end to the problem. The other important thing about theft and vandalism is that if the area looks cared for and attractive there is less problem. I remember talking to a Parks Officer from Winnipeg about this and he said the other thing is to replace things that go missing quickly so that people don't get the idea that it's a free-for-all.

With that in mind we are planning to be back in the spring to do some maintenance as part of our Outreach Program and I am hoping some of the local Master Gardeners may lend a hand occasionally. We shall be able to monitor the difference between the 2 beds and use of the newspapers in only one of them! I believe the people living in the apartment buildings should consider themselves fortunate look down on all our work. ☺



## Garden Techniques:

By Jenny Sandison

### Problems with early snow falls.

Writing this on January 10th it seems quite ironic as so far the ground is bare and I am cutting up the Christmas trees to cover up some vulnerable little treasures to protect them. I am always grateful for a nice snow blanket over the garden.

However you may remember we did have quite a significant snowfall back in November that caught a lot of people without their snow tires on and gave them some problems. It also gave some of our deciduous shrubs and trees problems as they hadn't shed their leaves and that heavy, wet snow just pulls the branches down. What should one do?

Oddly enough the best advice is to do nothing! I usually find that I am not exactly out there at the height of the storm. What happens is that after the storm clears I go out and find damaged plants. Having said "do nothing" of course there are a few things you should do. If there is a branch broken on the Magnolia by all means cut it off. You should probably use a pruning saw and make a clean cut where the branch is attached to a major branch or the main stem. Do not leave a "stub" or a piece of the branch sticking out from the main stem. If a major limb is half broken you should probably cut it right off. If you leave it, there is that broken branch thrashing around in the next windstorm doing more damage to the plant. If the break is ragged it is also important to use a sharp implement to make sure the sides of the cut are clean so it can heal properly next season.

I do believe the main thing to avoid is trying to get the snow off the plants even if it is weighing them down. I hate to think how often I have tried to get the snow off something only to find that because the plant is cold and brittle I break it! If I leave it alone I find that in most cases the snow melts away and there is no damage to the plant. It's quite hard to do nothing as one's instinct is to try and help. The only exception is with large limbs that are weighed down with snow, and here if you use something like a ski pole and gently lift the branch and shake it from below, you may be able to dislodge the snow.

Probably it is best to evaluate your plants every year. I have some upright evergreens where I find the snow can really pull the branches down. With this kind of plant I use twine and tie the whole thing together well before that first snow fall. With other small, brittle plants like Rhododendron Wren, I make a pile of small evergreen branches and heap them over the plant. The other real problem that occurs is with the snow sliding off the roof in a big avalanche and burying things and really squashing them. Here, if you find you are continually having branches broken, you may have to resort to building some kind of structure that protects the plant, and have it in place early. You could also consider moving anything that is continually damaged and just use perennials in this position.

It's a challenge! If anyone has anything to add to this topic please let our Editor know. ☺

## Book Review

### Alpines from Mountain to Garden

By Richard Wilford, Kew Publishing, 2010, 260 pages, \$52.54

This book is one of the series of Kew Botanical Magazine Monographs. Author Richard Wilford is the Collections Manager in the Hardy Display Section at Kew Gardens. In this capacity, he is responsible for the wide range of alpine plants that are successfully cultivated and propagated at Kew, and now displayed to best advantage in the new Davies Alpine House. Like his earlier book on tulips (*Tulips: Species and Hybrids for the Gardener*, Timber Press, 2006), this book has grown out of the author's wealth of experience with these plants, both in the wild in their natural habitat, and in the garden.

A couple of short introductory chapters examine the general characteristics of alpine plants, and the requirements for their cultivation at low altitudes. Recognizing that an important characteristic of alpinists as a group is their worldwide distribution, Wilford has arranged the major part of his work by geographical region, covering in eight chapters every continent save Antarctica. The mountain systems in each area, and their associated climatic conditions, provide a background for a discussion of the history of plant exploration, and key species native to each region that have been introduced into cultivation. Each of these chapters is introduced by a full-page colour map of the region that highlights the major mountain ranges, and, in a nice touch, cameo photos of notable species.

The book is informative and very well written. The text is abundantly illustrated with beautiful colour photographs both of plants and their native environment. There are in addition more than 30 full-page reproductions of relevant plant portraits taken from Curtis's Botanical Magazine, which since 1787 has been describing and illustrating new plant introductions. A number of the plant portraits included are by Walter Hood Fitch who is familiar to us through his celebrated illustrations of Joseph Hooker's Himalayan rhododendrons.

This is a splendid book, one to be enjoyed, not only by the dedicated alpinist, but also by the photographer, travellers (both active and vicarious), and gardeners of every level of interest.

--Anitra Laycock

## Five Favourites from New Brunswick

By Harold Popma (one of our five New Brunswick members.)

I really like the idea of having the members of the ARHS list their five favourite rhododendrons but I would like to have the additional information of "why".

So I will start with my reasons. I will say at the outset that without established criteria, the selection is not necessarily easy. For example, how can *R. lapponicum* NOT be a favourite when I travelled all the way to Labrador to collect seed and then managed to bring the germinated babies to the stage of small flowering "bushes" ten years later?

Anyway, here is my list and my reasoning.

### *catawbiense* 'Boursault'

This was the first rhodo I bought our first summer in this house 35 years ago. It turned out to be a real ironclad with a penchant for multiplying through layering. I took full advantage of this ease of propagation and now have at least six plants in the garden which have grown to be ten feet tall, and had some spares to give away.

### 'R.A.S.'

A wonderful plant with excellent foliage which is not tasty to bugs and has an attractive flower. It was sold to me as Bwd 72-2 and embodies a bit of the rich history of Bayport Plant Farm and Company. (Named after Captain Steele's son).

### 'Orange Ruffles'

In the fall of 1990, the year that marks the beginning of my rhododendron/garden diary, a regular-sized and rather insignificant looking envelope arrived as a Christmas present. Dick Steele had placed a sampling of rhodie (including azalea) seeds together with cryptic instructions for germination. I was to share the treasure with Paul Bogaard and Sandy Burnett, the other members of the three member Sackville Rhododendron and Azalea Society. 'Orange Ruffles' was the azalea hybrid. It proved to be user friendly to the inexperienced propagator and provided us with many plants which now give their distinctive colour to the June garden show.

### **‘Grand Pré’**

One year when we were travelling from Sackville N.B. to Bayport and the other Nova Scotia nurseries we decided to stay at a Bed and Breakfast near Mahone Bay. The area was unfamiliar but in the weirdest coincidence the house was located directly beside that of Dick and Nancy Steele’s. One of the plants outside our bedroom window was ‘Grand Pré’. Mine is now a favourite...lovely red bells and open trusses.

I would like to have access to more of the plants bred at the Kentville Station. I’m told that there were at least fourteen *named* varieties. In my garden ‘Grand Pré’ has unique foliage, is a compact 4 x 6 foot bush and is dependably disease free.

### **Finnish Hybrids**

I like the hybrids from Finland. What an interesting finding that plants that were bred in that far away place should be so compatible and easy to settle in our backyards. I have most of them but the one named ‘Peter Tigerstedt’ is big, tall and beautiful. As an aside, I have grown *R. brachycarpum* var. *tigerstedtii* from seed and they have been welcome additions to the garden. □

## **Growing Alpines:**

The photos show two methods of growing alpine plants in the Rock Garden at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College in Bible Hill, N.S. On the left is a limestone boulder with holes drilled to provide planting spaces. On the right is a stone trough planted with a suitable soil mixture and mulched with stone. Either method will work for the home gardener.



Photos Sterling Levy

# Photo Album - Featuring Dr. Don Craig's Azalea Seedlings



88-31. [Photo Don Craig]



92-12. [Photo Don Craig]



92-52. [Photo Don Craig]



Solent Seedling #14. [Photo Don Craig]



Solent Seedling #6. [Photo Don Craig]



Solent Seedling #2. [Photo Don Craig]



1992 Selection. [Photo Don Craig]



1992 Selection. [Photo Don Craig]