

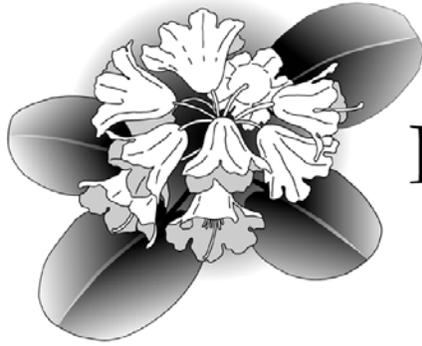
# AtlanticRhodo

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

Volume 37: Number 1

February 2013





# Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society

## Our Mission

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

## Inside this Issue

News about the 2013 Seed Exchange, the Tissue Culture, Pre-ordered, and Public Plant Sales, the ARHS Library, the Monthly program, the ARS Eastern Fall Conference, and more

Book Review by Chris Helleiner *Seed Germination, Theory and Practice*

Plant Portrait by Mary Helleiner “Hobblebush *Viburnum lantanoides*”, & Witch Hazels

Plant Portrait by Ann Drysdale *Dipladenia* “Rio – Pink” in Summer and Winter.

Bruce Clyburn. “A Little Dab of Pollen”

James Ellison “Hamamelidaceae and The Town of Wolfville Arboretum Project”

“Transforming A Town into an Arboretum” reprinted from ICLEI’s (Local Governments for Sustainability) The Cities and Biodiversity Case Study Series

Carol Dancer. Letter From The West Coast

Stephen Archibald. Visiting Gardens on Mount Desert Island, Maine

## Membership

### Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society.

Fees are \$20.00 from September 1, 2012 to August 31, 2013, due September 2012. 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 & 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 & 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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17 Stanbrae Rd.  
Fergusons Cove, Nova Scotia. B3V 1G4  
902 479-3740

Cover Photo: *R. williamsianum* - [Photo Jens Birck]



## Calendar of Events

ARHS meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month, from September to May, at 7:30 p.m. usually in the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History 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 March 5

#### **“Yes, you can grow that from seed”**

Sharon Bryson and Bill Wilgenhof, from “The Willow Garden” in Marysville near Antigonish, will highlight some of the plant forms they have grown from seed over the years. The wide assortment has a strong lean towards Rhododendrons and Azaleas, but will include many trees, shrubs, and perennials. Within various categories, they will give some hints regarding culture and show the end results. ARHS members Sharon and Bill are long-time “seedaholics” and have administered the ARHS Seed Exchange for several years. MNH, 7:30 pm

Ken Shannik will show us images of some of the plants being offered on the May sale list.

### Tuesday April 2

**“A World of Ferns for Canadian Gardens”**. Iain Jack will explore the unique and ancient history of ferns, the many ways of growing and using ferns in the landscape, and the diversity of ferns suitable for Canadian gardens.

Iain operates Fernwood Plant Nursery in Hubbards, NS. The mail order nursery was inspired by a passion for growing plants, a love of woodland gardens, and a deep desire to have plants that are left alone by deer (mostly, at least!). The goal of Fernwood is to explore and promote the diversity and landscape value of native and exotic ferns, and to make them available to Canadian gardeners. There are currently over 45 varieties of hardy ferns in its collection. MNH, 7:30 pm

### Saturday April 6

**Tissue Culture Sale Plant Pick-up 1:30 – 3 pm** St. Andrews’s Recreation Centre, **3380 Barnstead Lane**, Halifax . (See article by Jon Porter)

### Saturday May 4

**Members` Pre-ordered Plant Sale** Petal Pushers **957 Prospect Road** 10am- 2pm (See details by Ken Shannik and Liz Naylor)

### Tuesday May 7

**Members-to-Members Plant Sale** 7:30 pm **6141 Watt St.**, Halifax. LeMarchant-St Thomas School gym

### Saturday May 11

**ARHS Annual Public Sale** 1:00 - 3:30pm LeMarchant - St. Thomas School gym, **6141 Watt St.**, Halifax. (same location as previous years)

### May 31, June 1, 2.

2013 NSAGC Convention, Dartmouth, NS Registration closes on May 15, 2013  
<http://www.nsagc.com/images/Convention2013.pdf>

### Saturday June 8

**Annual Garden Tour and Pot Luck Supper** . 1 pm start. The tour includes 7 Halls Rd (John Brett), 479 Purcell’s Cove Rd (Wendy Cornwall), 17 Stanbrae Rd (Archibald and Stevenson), 115 Sarah Ingram Dr (Richard Belyea), 33 Steven Murphy Dr (Cynthia MacDonald), 14 Lee Murphy Dr. (Dawn and Earl Trethewey), 25 Steven Murphy Dr (Adrian Maynard). End anytime after 4:30 at 5 Little Point Lane (Anne and Jim Drysdale) for the pot luck. [Look for more details and map references in the May Newsletter.](#)

### Tuesday Sept 3

**Meeting, TBA** MNH 7:30

### Tuesday Oct 1

**No meeting**

### Friday Oct 4 – 6

ARHS hosts the 2013 **ARS Eastern Fall Conference**, Holiday Inn, Dartmouth. Begins Friday evening.

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

## Positions of Responsibility 2012 - 2013

Officers and Directors of the Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticulture Society for 2012-13  
Elected at the AGM, Nov. 6, 2102.

President:	Cora Swinamar	902-826-7705	<a href="mailto:support@underthearbor.ca">support@underthearbor.ca</a>
Past President:	Ruth Jackson	902-454-4681	<a href="mailto:Ruth.Jackson@nrca-nrcan.gc.ca">Ruth.Jackson@nrca-nrcan.gc.ca</a>
Vice-President:	vacant		
Secretary:	Susan Boyd	902-835-8916	<a href="mailto:Susan.Boyd@msvu.ca">Susan.Boyd@msvu.ca</a>
Treasurer:	Jim Drysdale	902-431-0223	<a href="mailto:jimdrysdale@eastlink.ca">jimdrysdale@eastlink.ca</a>
Director, Education:	Bob Howard	902-532-0834	<a href="mailto:mayflowergardens@ns.sympatico.ca">mayflowergardens@ns.sympatico.ca</a>
Director, Plant Material/ Horticulture:	Wendy Cornwall	902-477-6121	<a href="mailto:wacornwall@gmail.com">wacornwall@gmail.com</a>
Director, Social:	Ralph Pineau	902-454- 9056	<a href="mailto:ralphpineau@gmail.com">ralphpineau@gmail.com</a>
Director, Communication:	vacant		
Director-at-Large:	Ann Drysdale (Membership coordinator)	902 431-0223	<a href="mailto:anndrysdale2@gmail.com">anndrysdale2@gmail.com</a>
Director-at-Large:	Sheila Stevenson (acting Communications coordinator)	902 479-3740	<a href="mailto:sheilastevenson17@gmail.com">sheilastevenson17@gmail.com</a>

### Other Positions of Responsibility

Website:	Bob Pettipas	902-462-5654	<a href="mailto:pettipas@ns.sympatico.ca">pettipas@ns.sympatico.ca</a>
Library:	Jean Henshall	902-477-2933	<a href="mailto:jphenshall@hotmail.ca">jphenshall@hotmail.ca</a>
Newsletter editor:	vacant (Sheila Stevenson, acting )		
Newsletter layout:	Sterling Levy	902-861-1176	<a href="mailto:levvstr@ns.sympatico.ca">levvstr@ns.sympatico.ca</a>
Seed Exchange:	Sharon Bryson	902-863-6307	<a href="mailto:sbryson@ns.sympatico.ca">sbryson@ns.sympatico.ca</a>
Plant Sale, Tissue Culture:	Jon Porter	902-350-0010	<a href="mailto:jonporter@eastlink.ca">jonporter@eastlink.ca</a>
Plant Sale Members' Pre-ordered:	Ken Shannik	902-422-2413	<a href="mailto:InsigneGdn@ns.sympatico.ca">InsigneGdn@ns.sympatico.ca</a>
Plant Sale, Public:	Elizabeth Naylor	902-429-0557	<a href="mailto:liz.naylor@ns.sympatico.ca">liz.naylor@ns.sympatico.ca</a>
Technical Support at Meetings:	Rachel Martin	902-425-3779	<a href="mailto:rachelmartin@ns.sympatico.ca">rachelmartin@ns.sympatico.ca</a> ,
Gardens Care Outreach:	Chris Hopgood	902-479-0811	<a href="mailto:rhodohop@hotmail.com">rhodohop@hotmail.com</a>
District 12 (RSCAR) rep, American Rhododendron Society (ARS):	Nick Yarmoshuk, Niagara Chapter	905-684-4703	<a href="mailto:rhodorus@gmail.com">rhodorus@gmail.com</a>

## Invitation to 2013 ARS Eastern Fall Conference Oct 4 – 7.

The Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society and the American Rhododendron Society invite you and all other gardeners and plant lovers to the 2013 Fall Conference.

Where: Holiday Inn, Dartmouth NS

Registration: Early Discount by Aug. 31. Details by email and in April newsletter. (Anitra Laycock, Registrar.)

Bus Tours: Friday afternoon, Saturday afternoon, all day Sunday. (Anne Drysdale, Tour Coordinator)

Self-guided Tours: Sunday, Monday. Still only an idea. (Needs coordinating!)

Plant Sale: Saturday. The primary theme for the sale is plants that have been developed in this part of the world (Chris Hopgood, Sale Coordinator)

Speakers:

Friday night: Todd Boland;

Saturday: Steve Hootman, Nick Yarmoshuk, Christina Woodward, Walter Ostrom, Jamie Ellison, Niki Jabbour, Tim Amos, Bernard Jackson; Saturday night: Steve Hootman. (Jenny Sandison, Speakers Coordinator.)

Hybridizers' Roundtable: Saturday at noon.

Dinner and a Show: Saturday Night, live with Steve Hootman

ARS Information and Conversation: Sunday morning. ☞

## Steve Hootman coming to Nova Scotia in October.

We look forward to meeting Steve Hootman in Nova Scotia when the Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticulture Society hosts the 2013 American Rhododendron Society's Fall Convention. Steve will speak twice during that event.

Steve is one of the foremost international plant hunters of the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. He is the Executive Director and Curator of the Rhododendron Species Foundation and Botanical Garden in Federal Way, Washington. He is a popular speaker and educator always with new information and images. He was awarded the American Rhododendron Society's highest honor, the Gold Medal, in 2007 for his internationally significant scope of work with the genus Rhododendron.

Since 1985 Hootman has been making forays into various (and often barely accessible) parts of China, India, Tibet, Vietnam, and the US doing botanical surveys and collecting seed, becoming an authority on which rhododendrons and associated plants grow where, while helping to develop the Species Botanical Garden into one of the premier gardens of its kind in the world.

The Rhododendron Species Foundation <http://rhodygarden.org/cms/> and its gardens are devoted to conservation and distribution of many ericaceous plant species and to informing gardeners of their beauty and versatility. The RS Botanical Gardens maintains the largest collection of species rhododendrons in the United States and is committed to disseminating information, as well as plants and seeds, to further understanding of this large, complex, and fascinating genus.

When Hootman spoke recently to the Niagara chapter, Nick Yarmoshuk observed in the Niagara Newsletter that "*Steve is a consummate plantsperson, with a wide-ranging horticultural expertise. His talk was a first rate presentation - humorous and very inspiring.*"

So everyone, we have a treat in store. In the meantime, you might enjoy searching for images of the many plants that the 2012 China Expedition found, as listed in this piece by Steve Hootman from the Rhody Species Foundation website:

### **Final posting for 2012 China expedition**

<http://rhodygarden.org/cms/final-posting-for-2012-china-expedition/>

*We have just returned from a very successful seed and plant collecting expedition to China. Thanks to a great seed year, excellent timing and the fact that we covered a tremendous amount of territory in our three weeks of field work, we managed to find seed on a tremendous assortment of material. This botanical bonanza ranged from lofty conifers (including Abies, Tsuga and Fokienia) to beautiful flowering trees and shrubs. A sampling of the trees collected would include around a half dozen different species of Magnolia (incl. Manglietia and Michelia), Sorbus, Acer, three species of Rehderodendron*

(amazing!), *Alniphyllum*, two species of *Styrax*, *Gordonia axillaris* and the primitive and very rare *Diplopanax*. Among the fabulous shrubs collected are such treasures as three species of *Daphniphyllum*, *Schefflera*, *Dendropanax proteus*, several species of *Hydrangea*, etc.

In addition to the great variety of trees and shrubs collected are a wide array of herbaceous perennials and groundcovers including an exciting *Epimedium* and an exquisitely variegated *Asarum*. The highlights of course are six or seven beautiful new rhododendrons that we have finally managed to introduce into cultivation. Most exciting among these are the new and very disjunct *Taliensia* from southern China – *R. dachengense*, the stewartia-barked *R. guihainianum*, *R. brevicaudatum* which looks as different from what one expects in a rhododendron as any other species I have seen, *R. brevinerve* and a hardy Chinese *vireya* – *R. poilanei*.

Did he say “an exciting *Epimedium* and an exquisitely variegated *Asarum*”? How to drive us crazy!

<http://rhodygarden.org/cms/our-plants/expeditions/steve-hootman-expeditions/> ☞

- Sheila Stevenson, with thanks to Anitra Laycock

## Plant Portrait

### Hobblebush *Viburnum lantanoides* (*V. alnifolium*)



Hobblebush is one of four viburnums native to Nova Scotia; it is a genuine native, not like the so-called “natives” we are often urged to plant. The blossoms consist of a ring of fairly large sterile white flowers surrounding a centre of fertile flowers. Its red berries can be spectacular and the fall leaves often turn shades of yellow, orange and red.

According to the *Flora of Nova Scotia* this shrub is found “scattered in rich woods and shaded ravines. Characteristic of deciduous forests”. I have often seen it growing on stream banks and other damp places, so presumably this is what it likes, although it seems to do well in partial shade in ordinary gardens. Being a native, it is entirely winter hardy. It needs acid soil, preferably with a good humus content, and not too dry.

I have never found this plant listed in a nursery catalogue, although it is mentioned and pictured in the Phillips and Rix book, *Shrubs*. I have been given small plants by a friend who dug them up on his own property, but these did not prosper, probably because they arose from suckers and did not have adequate roots.

*V. lantanoides* - Flower bud. [C. Helleiner]

Because of this, I decided to try to produce some plants from seeds which I collected in the fall.

The berries were first soaked for a few days to remove the pulp and then the resulting seeds were washed daily in detergent as Deno directs. (See book review in this issue.) The seeds did not germinate the following spring, but in the second spring two seedlings appeared. These little plants were cherished and after a couple of years planted out in good woodland soil under a witch hazel. They grew, slowly; the fall colour was not spectacular, being yellow with a hint of orange. Finally, after ten years, the larger bush produced a flower bud, easily visible in the fall, and bloomed in June. The following fall (2012) this bush produced five buds. We are waiting for these flowers to appear in the spring of 2013.

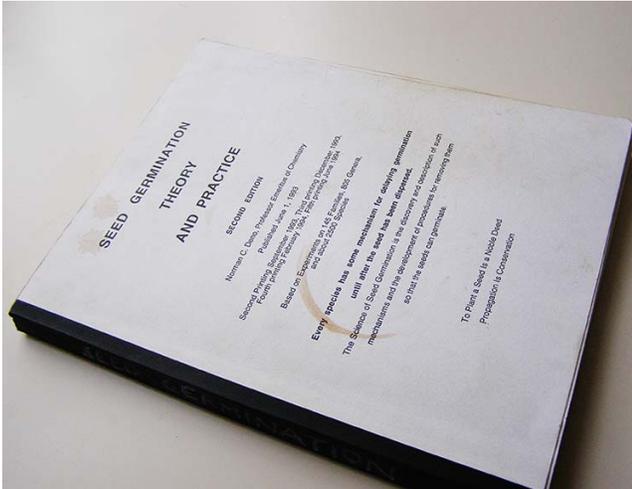
I am pleased to have two specimens of hobblebush, since, coming from seed, they are two different clones with different DNA, and it is well known that berrying shrubs perform best when the flowers are cross pollinated.

- Mary Helleiner

## Book Review

*Seed Germination, Theory and Practice* Norman C. Deno, Privately published, Second Edition 1993

The real value of this work is in the list of species and the conditions for ensuring the germination of their seeds. It represents a truly massive amount of work.



[Photo Chris Helleiner]

On the front cover of the book is the following summary of its contents: “Every species has some mechanism for delaying germination until after the seed has been dispersed. The Science of Seed Germination is the discovery and description of such mechanisms and the development of procedures for removing them so the seeds can germinate.”

The author has investigated the conditions required for germinating seeds of around 2500 species of plants, from *Abeliophyllum* to *Zizia*. The seeds, either fresh or stored dry, were placed on moist paper towels kept in plastic baggies, and kept under a variety of conditions of temperature (steady or fluctuating), light, and with or without giberellic acid. The percentage of seeds seen to germinate at various time points was recorded, and the results presented in a summary form. Conditions for

successful germination were discovered for all but a very small handful of species tested, and the results are listed in Chapter 20 (pages 81 – 233).

The earlier chapters discuss the principles of seed germination in considerable detail. The author is a physical chemist, and is at some pains to explain the theory of reaction rates. He urges the reader not to skip this section, but frankly I doubt if it is worth the effort for most gardeners. I’m a chemist, and I found it rather tough going. I suspect that his may be an oversimplified approach to a complex biological problem. The real value of this work is in the list of species and the conditions for ensuring the germination of their seeds. It represents a truly massive amount of work.

Once the seeds have germinated, the first step in raising plants has been successfully achieved. Then we have to learn how to nurture the tiny plants. Professor Deno discusses this briefly in Chapter 14, but this is not really his aim.

Many of our members are experts at raising plants from seed; they hardly need a book like this. But for the rest of us, it provides very valuable information. Obviously it is not a new work, but it seemed to me useful to write this review to draw it to the attention of the society. The book has been on our shelf for so many years, and has been consulted so often that it is falling apart. We bought it from the author, but unfortunately it is no longer available. However, the good news is that you can now read it on line, even print it out if you really want a paper copy – 241 pages of it. Just use your search engine to find Norman Deno Seed Germination. There are two supplements, dated 1993 and 1998, providing more up to date information.

At the bottom of the front cover is the following statement: “To Plant a Seed is a Noble Deed. Propagation is Conservation.”

Amen to that.

- Chris Helleiner

# Special Notices

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## **The Pre-ordered Members Pick-up and Sale 2013 (aka ADVANCE SALE) Sat May 4 10-2 pm**

**Ken Shannik** writes “this year’s plant list is now available on our website ([www.atlanticrhodo.org](http://www.atlanticrhodo.org)). As usual, a presentation on the plants offered will be made at the March 5 meeting.

As usual there will be a large selection of rhododendrons - some new and some old favourites. Of interest this year is a selection of larger-leaved, early blooming hybrids - 'Spellbinder', 'Babylon' and 'Holden's Spring Herald'. We are also pleased to offer a good supply of R. 'Barbara Hall', a beautiful Captain Steele hybrid named for one of our founding members.

Rounding out the list will be a good selection of other plants. Amongst them are a number of magnolias in larger sizes, hostas, and named hellebore hybrids. In the Other Ericaceous section, watch for *Leiophyllum buxifolium* (Box Sandmyrtle) with its striking clusters of round pink flower buds and a couple of edible Vacciniums.”

**Liz Naylor**, our brave new May sales coordinator, writes “When you set out on Sat May 4 to pick up all those new plants that you ordered from Ken’s list, remember that you are heading for the new pick up location, Petal Pushers, 957 Prospect Road (also the site of the Goodwood Enviro-Depot). So find out how to get to Prospect Road from your home and look for #957. The signage is quite visible from the road. There are some details still to sort out about our new space, so please look out for emails or announcements at the March and April meetings.

But mark your calendars now ensuring you have some time to pick up your plants or help out. Pick up time is between 10am- 2pm. If you are unable to pick up your plants that day **please** either make arrangements for someone to pick them up for you, or let me know by emailing [liz.anne.naylor@gmail.com](mailto:liz.anne.naylor@gmail.com) or call 902-429-0557.

**The ARHS Annual Public Sale** will be held on May 11, 2013 at the LeMarchant - St. Thomas School gymnasium, 6141 Watt Street in Halifax from 1:00 - 3:30pm. (same location as previous years)

## **Call for Volunteers**

“As usual,” says Liz, “we will be needing our lovely and eager volunteers for both sales. Volunteering for either of these events is the way to get to know other members of our society and the wonderful plants that seasoned members talk about as if they were old friends. New members: Please join us!!! Past volunteers please note: Donna will be sharing her volunteer list with me, however, it would be great if you would send me an email or call to let me know if you would like to continue helping out as in previous years. Phone 429-0557 or email [liz.anne.naylor@gmail.com](mailto:liz.anne.naylor@gmail.com) or speak to me at the March or April meeting. Thanks everyone.”

## **Care for Tissue Culture Plants**

REMEMBER: THE PLANTS HAVE NOT BEEN HARDENED OFF. WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU GIVE THEM A GOOD WATERING AND AS SOON AS POSSIBLE POT THEM UP IN 4” POTS. A mixture of one part peat, one part perlite, and one part commercial mix makes a nice light mix for these small rhodies. DO NOT OVERWATER. Keep them inside under lights in a cool place until all risk of frost is past (at least late May). On nice days you can place them outside in a shady spot (the leaves get sunburned very easily) so they can begin hardening off, but do not leave outside overnight until the risk of frost is over. In June put them in the ground in a cold frame or other well sheltered spot. Mulch to keep the moisture and temperature stable, and water as needed. The first winter provide some protection: a cold frame, burlap, or conifer boughs, and make sure they are mulched well. Do not use clear plastic as it will cause burning and may even kill them. Shade cloth (which can be purchased at Lee Valley among other places) provides excellent shade and wind protection.

Good luck with your little plants and make some notes on how they do. We would really appreciate feedback on their performance.

- **Audrey Fralic**

## **Annual Garden Tour and Pot Luck Supper**

On Saturday, June 8 we will visit members’ gardens in the areas of Williamswood and Purcell’s Cove Rd (highway 253) and Herring Cove (highway 349). Start the tour at 1 pm and visit in any order you like: 7 Halls Rd (John Brett), 479 Purcell’s Cove Rd (Wendy Cornwall), 17 Stanbrae Rd (Stephen Archibald and Sheila Stevenson), 115 Sarah Ingram Dr (Richard Belyea), 33 Steven Murphy Dr (Cynthia MacDonald), 14 Lee Murphy Dr. (Dawn and Earle Trethewey), 25 Steven Murphy Dr (Adrian Maynard). End anytime after 4:30 at 5 Little Point Lane (Anne and Jim Drysdale) for the pot luck.

-**Ralph Pineau** [ralphpineau@gmail.com](mailto:ralphpineau@gmail.com)

# Special Notices

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## News from the Library

Some kind soul has donated four copies of *Gardens East* to the library. They are Vol. 02 No 04 May 2011, No 05 June 2011, No 06 July/August 2011 and No 09 November/December 2011. They all feature gardens by members of ARHS and are written by our own Niki Jabbour. The May issue has an article on a lovely Liverpool garden: visit Liverpool in the spring to see over 700 kousa dogwoods in bloom. In June Jenny Sandison's garden is featured. Chris and Mary Helleiner's shady Halifax garden is written about in July/August. And a lovely Sackville garden is in the November/December issue. Niki has done a wonderful job with these articles. They are well illustrated with gorgeous photos by Adam Gibbs and Niki. A planting map is shown for a border in each garden. Be sure to check these out.

Just as I was writing these words the doorbell rang. Four of the new library books for ARHS had arrived. The thrill of opening the parcel and handling the new books! The books are *Snowdrops* by Gunter Waldorf, Frances Lincoln Limited; *The Year Round Vegetable Gardener* by Niki Jabbour, Storey Publishing; *Why Grow That When You Can Grow This* by Andrew Keys, Timber Press; and *The Layered Garden* by David Culp, Timber Press. They will be available at the next meeting.

There is still some money in the budget for two or three new books. If you have any ideas let me know.

- Jean Henshall [jphenshall@hotmail.ca](mailto:jphenshall@hotmail.ca)

## Rhododendrons 101

Rhododendrons 101 is an hour-long program of images and practical information about choosing and growing rhododendrons in this part of the world for presentation to garden clubs and other interested groups. Developed by AR&HS board member, Cora Swinamer, the slides feature proven plant performers as grown in several Nova Scotian gardens. To request and schedule the program, contact Cora Swinamer by email: [support@underthearbor.ca](mailto:support@underthearbor.ca) or by mail: 390 Masons Point Rd. Head of St Margarets Bay, NS B3Z 1Z4 . If a group is unable to provide a projector, the ARHS presenter can bring one.

## Website update

Over the next while we will be reviewing the structure and content of our website with the aim to make it easier to find all the great information already there and to plan for and produce new material. In the meantime, make a visit to see what's there and to think about what else you would like to see. For those of us who have lost track of plant names or what year we acquired a plant, Bob has uploaded many of the lists from prior tissue culture and May sales in an Archives section under the kiosk section. You will also find a partial list of library books. Have fun poking around at <http://www.atlanticrhodo.org/>

## Find ARHS on Facebook

Our Facebook page is a great way to share plant interests, questions, and adventures. We're looking for more friends to lurk and to post. PLEASE find us and befriend us, Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticulture Society, on Facebook.

## Thanks

- to all of our contributors

- to our seed collectors: Jens Birck, Copenhagen, Denmark, King Butler, Wolfville, NS, Bruce Clyburn, New Waterford, NS, Wendy Cornwall, Halifax, NS, Donna Evers, Halifax, NS, Mary Helleiner, Halifax, NS, Frances Howard, Halifax, NS, Jack Looye, Niagara on the Lake, ON, Philip MacDougall, Vancouver, BC, Liz Naylor, Halifax, NS, Bob Pettipas, Dartmouth, NS, Ed Reekie, Wolfville, NS, Ken Shannik, Halifax, NS, Kristian Theqvist, Finland, Arnold Trachenberg, Leonia, NJ, John Weagle, Halifax, NS, Bill Wilgenhof, Antigonish, NS, and to Sharon Bryson, Willow Garden.

- to our tissue culture sales crew: Audrey Fralic, Faye Brunet, Cora Swinamer, Lyla Mac Lean, Liz May, Heather Wildsmith, Bill & Doris Mercier, Chris & Mary Helleiner, Ruth Smith, Peggy Brewster, Bob Pettipas, Jill Colvill, Jon Porter, and any other helper who has been missed inadvertently.

*Ed Note: For more details on Bruce Clyburn's work see "Breeding Large Leafed Rhodos for Zone 6 on the AtlanticRhodo Website. [www.atlanticrhodo.org/hybrids/f\\_hyb.html](http://www.atlanticrhodo.org/hybrids/f_hyb.html)*

## Plant Portrait

### *Dipladenia* “Rio™ Pink”



Photo courtesy of Garden Crossings

I had opportunity to buy this plant as an annual in the spring of 2012. The plant flourished in a couple of containers and I received many compliments on the plant and queries as to what it was and where I had gotten it.

I decided to attempt to overwinter the plant and to do some follow-up research on it. Following is what I discovered.

The *Dipladenia* or *Mandevilla* is a genus of plants belonging to the dogbane family, Apocynaceae. It consists of about 120 species, mostly tropical and subtropical flowering vines. It is native to South America but flourishes in Southern United States, Mexico and Central America as a perennial in zones 9-11. It does very nicely as an annual in zones 3-8. *Mandevilla* & *Dipladenia* are absolutely confused botanically and taxonomically; however, from a horticultural perspective they are treated the same.<sup>1</sup>

*Dipladenia* “Rio™ Pink” “is a compact, slow-growing plant with gorgeous 4” trumpet-shaped lovely medium pink flowers. Plants have a compact, well-branched habit with minimum vining.”<sup>2</sup> The plant grows to a height of 45 – 60 cm with a spread of 30 – 35 cm in an upright form. The foliage is a shiny dark green with an elongated shape and heavily veined. It likes bright light (not direct sunlight) or semi-shade. It prefers moist conditions without drying out. It does best in temperatures ranging from 18 – 26° C. Note that low intensity light levels leads to “vining” and branch reduction.

It was my experience that this plant grew very well in containers in my Zone 6 area. It continually bloomed all summer and into the fall. It took minimal care and one plant situated near the porch railing actually trellised itself to the railing. This plant received partial shade. The plant in the container in the open area (more hours of sunlight) did not have any “vining”.

I attempted to take these plants indoors to overwinter. Each container held 2 plants. One container was moved indoors without any intervention. The plants in the other container were separated and replanted into pots. All 3 containers were placed in the same area with east-southeast exposure. As the days grew shorter the green glossy leaves on 2 of the containers gradually turned yellow and dropped off with the exception that one of these plants still has 5 green glossy leaves. The plants, however, remain with green stems; and, I am hoping they are in dormancy. The plants in the undisturbed container continued to bloom through mid-January. As of late its leave are starting to drop as well. In my quest for knowledge for this plant I discovered the correct method of propagation. I am hopeful I can still do this with the “surviving” plant.

References:

1. [http://www.gflora.com/index.php?cmd\\_body&genus\\_id=33](http://www.gflora.com/index.php?cmd_body&genus_id=33)
2. <http://www.naturehills.com/Dipladenia-riotm-pink>
3. Wikipedia.org

- Ann Drysdale



A very warm welcome to our new and returning ARHS members who have joined since the Fall Newsletter.

**Todd Corey  
Dalton & Celeste Derrah  
Linda Gaudet  
Susan Hunter  
David Osborn  
David Siegel  
Bonnie Snow  
Kristian Theqvist**

**Allison, NB  
Hammonds, Plains NS  
Upper Tantallion, NS  
Halifax, NS  
Kingsville, ON & Sable River NS (Summer)  
Ormond Beach, Florida, USA (returning)  
Lawrencetown, NS  
Finland**

## 2013 ARHS Seed Exchange

**Sharon Bryson ... Seed Exchange Chair** [sbryson@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:sbryson@ns.sympatico.ca)

There are tons of seeds which need good homes this year. Many interesting plants can be added to our gardens by simply growing a few seeds. There is an interesting selection of shade-loving perennials, plus many lily seeds. There is quite a selection of Magnolias, which have been quite popular with members over the last few years.

Hopefully the popularity of growing rhododendron species is improving and we certainly have an excellent representation in this year's list. The offering of hand pollinated hybrids is very unique. The hybridizers have chosen interesting parents in their quest for great foliage, increased hardiness and wonderful blooms.

We again encourage people to try growing rhododendrons and azaleas from seed. 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.

For information on growing rhododendrons from seed, check out the CD from the ARHS library. Online information is available at both the Atlantic Rhodo and the Willow Garden websites. If you need further planting instructions, please ask!

The seed list is available on the Internet with a full complement of links to many images and information to help in your decision making. Visit The Willow Garden website <http://www.willowgarden.net/page2/2013%20webSeedList.html> . (The Atlantic Rhodo site also has a link). **Print a copy of the order form and have fun filling it in with your choices.**

We have tried to give several seed lots their prerequisite cool treatment, but haven't done so for all. Some of the peony seeds will need to have both a warm period followed by a cold period before being set out to garden spaces.

Please remember that the seeds go out on a "first-come, first-served" basis dependent on seed quantity. 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 again thank the faithful contributors who have made this possible. Plant enthusiasts outside of our regional society have again made valuable contributions to our annual exchange. 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.

The Seed Exchange is now open to the world at large as well as to members and will end April 30, 2013. Please bring the Exchange to the attention of your gardening cohorts who may not be ARHS members.

At the end of each Seed Exchange there are left-over seeds. We still have found no predictable or useful method to make good use of these seeds. Where should they go?

Stories of your past successes and/or failures with seed growing are most interesting and welcome. As are comments and suggestions regarding the Seed Exchange. Send a note with your order or email [willowgarden\\_ns@hotmail.com](mailto:willowgarden_ns@hotmail.com) ☞

*[Ed Note: Don't miss Chris Helleiner's book review in this issue.]*

## 2013 Tissue Culture Plant Sale

**Saturday, April 6. St. Andrews's Recreation Centre, 3380 Barnstead Lane, Halifax 1.30pm - 3pm**

Everyone who has ordered plants needs to pick them up (and pay for them!) between 1.30 and 3 pm, or make arrangements for someone else to pick up your plants unless you have already provided shipping instructions. For those who are ordering tissue culture plants for the first time, there are attached instructions on how to look after them.

Our tissue culture plants are bought from Brigg's Nursery in Washington State, USA ([www.briggsnursery.com](http://www.briggsnursery.com)). There is a great deal of information on their website, including their catalogue and information on the plants they propagate.

We will begin working on the 2014 tissue culture order shortly after the 2013 sale is complete. The cycle starts with looking at the "availability list" from Briggs and selecting plants to add to our order. Audrey Fralic's advice is invaluable at this stage as she understands what will grow well in our area, what has been popular in the past, and what members are asking for. **It is really helpful if members let me know what they are interested in.** We try to find a combination of rhododendrons, azaleas, and companion plants. To minimise shipping costs, we tend to order the smaller "L2" size plants which have to be ordered in multiples of 50 so we are always looking for plants that will be popular.

Through the summer and early fall we monitor the list, as plant availabilities from Briggs tend to change and a plant we originally selected in the spring may no longer be available by fall. Plants drop off the list and new ones are added. For example, last year by the end of September a total of 6 plants that we had ordered were no longer available. In September/October the list is “finalized” and sent out to members and the orders start coming in at meetings, by mail and predominantly by email. Most orders are from members in Nova Scotia but we also get orders from New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Ontario.

Orders are entered in a spreadsheet as they arrive since we follow a “first come, first served” basis. We ask for orders by the end of December although can usually accept orders as late as February. If a plant is very popular and we get more than 50 orders, we add another 50 plants if they are available and we think we can sell them. This year we added extra *Agapanthus* ‘Summer Skies’, *Hakonechloa macra* ‘Beni-kaze’ and *Primula marginata* ‘Mauve Mist’ which were all very popular. On the other hand, if we receive very few orders for a particular plant and don’t think we can sell the balance on the day of the sale, we may remove that plant from the order. It is only when we have the papers confirming the shipment that we know exactly what plants are coming as plants can be dropped from the order by Briggs at the last minute!

Things get busy the week of the sale. We try to have the shipment leave Briggs on the Monday before the sale and sent by air to Halifax. During this week, Bob Pettipas’ help is crucial in ensuring all the necessary forms and approvals are in place for importing the plants into Canada. Last year, there was a problem and the plants were sent by air to Montreal and then shipped the last leg of the journey by truck! It is a nerve-wracking time until we know the plants are actually in HRM and ready to be picked up. They need to be held in a cool place and then brought to Halifax on the day of the sale.

Jill Covill at Bunchberry Nurseries prints labels for us and an individual sheet is prepared for each customer showing what they ordered and what is available for them. On the day of the actual sale we are very fortunate to have a group of about one dozen volunteers to ensure everything runs smoothly. Prior to the start of the sale, they unpack the plants, put a label in each pot, and assemble the orders. Orders that need to be shipped by air/bus/courier are packaged up. Then they help members pick up their orders and encourage them to buy additional plants from the “extras”, they take orders to the bus station and airport and finally they clean up the room. We could not do it without them!

It is always interesting seeing the new plants that are available each year and hearing from members what they would like us to bring in. Your suggestions are always welcome! It is disappointing when we have lots of orders for a plant and then it is no longer available from Briggs. Unfortunately, that has happened this year with the Rhodie “Pink Parasol”. It is also frustrating when members do not come to the sale to pick up their order and don’t make alternative arrangements.

Looking forward to seeing you on April 6!

- **Jon Porter** [jonporter@eastlink.ca](mailto:jonporter@eastlink.ca)

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*Leiophyllum buxifolium*. One of the plants in the Spring Plant Sale. [Photos Ken Shannik]

# A Little Dab of Pollen

By Bruce Clyburn

(Abridged version of the Nov. 6, 2012 talk to ARHS)



*R. glanduliferum* – new leaves

Throughout the 1990s I developed an avid interest in the possibility of hybridizing rhododendrons. This was fueled by 1) a desire to create more interesting hardy garden plants 2) frequent talks with veteran ARHS hybridizers, Dick Steele and John Weagle, who lent encouragement and assurances the process can be easily accomplished with a little care and patience.

The first crosses carried out in 2000 used pollen from the species *calophytum*, a favourite because of its long luxuriant leaves. Suitable seed parents proved to be two popular hybrids, ‘Calsap’ and ‘Connecticut Yankee’. Predictably the progeny from these crosses were early blooming, long leaved rhododendrons. ‘Calsap’ as a parent gave white flowers with heavy purple spotting. ‘Connecticut Yankee’ as a parent gave a range of pinkish shades. Hardiness hasn’t been lacking in either group. The success in 2000 encouraged me to plan additional crosses for 2001. This time the pollen parent selected was the species *rex*. I used ‘Calsap’ again in the program, along with the *catawbiense* white form, aka ‘Catalgla’, selected by plantsman Joseph Gable. Not all of the seedlings from the 2001 crosses have flowered yet. The ‘Calsap’ blotch has appeared in the first group, some of which flowered after 5 years. All plants have large leaves and bullate texture (impressed veins).

Making annual rhododendron crosses has become a significant activity since 2000/01. Planning the crosses, acquiring interesting pollen, facilitating the breeding program, harvesting the seed, and growing the plants all takes time but the rewards are huge.

With the exception of a couple of years when I was renovating my ‘grow op.’ I averaged 50 crosses each spring/summer. If choice pollen comes my way this can quadruple.

Several categories of crosses interest me and each year I try to add a few more new hybrids:

**Fragrance:** People are most appreciative of this quality in a truss. I did a number of crosses with the expressed purpose of producing fragrant flowers beginning in 2004. The out start used two proven and favourite hybrids with scented flowers, ‘Janet Blair’ and ‘Bellefontaine’, as seed parents and pollen from three Charles Dexter plants famous for their broadcast fragrance in gardens but not hardy enough for Cape Breton: ‘Dexter’s Spice’, ‘Dexter’s Honeydew’, ‘Dexter’s Peppermint’. A few lesser-known fragrant John Wister hybrids, ‘Glenolden’, ‘Edgemont’, and ‘Chalfont’ were used too. So far the results have provided zone 6 plants with much richer olfactory qualities compared to the seed parents.

**East – West Hybrids:** For the past three years I’ve had the great fortune to collaborate with a prominent US hybridizer who is interested in developing improved rhododendrons by combining eastern hardy plants with less hardy but choicer west coast plants. In 2010 I was provided with pollen of some of the finest western hybrids and I carried out crosses on to eastern proven performers. In 2011-12 we reversed the direction of the crosses. I supplied the pollen and it was applied to the west coast hybrids. In another 5 years we’ll see how well that worked!



‘Calsap’ x *R. calophytum*



‘Calsap’ x *R. rex*



'Sandra Hinton x *R. rex*



Babylon x *R. sutchuenense*

**Zone 6 Big Leaf Hybrids:** Continuation of the crosses from 2000-01 where the objective is to produce reasonable facsimiles of the 'big leaf' species and hybrids: there are 2 groups, those with glabrous leaves and those with indumentum. Anything with leaves larger than 9 inches qualifies. *Calophytum*, *sutchuenense*, *rex/fictolacteum*, *macabeanum*, *montroseanum*, *sinofalconeri* and *kesangiae* are some of the pollen parents. Using a reasonably hardy large leaf cross and carrying out a back cross with a different species not used in the first cross has been a very promising strategy. An example is Babylon = *calophytum* x *pravernum* crossed with *sutchuenense* (glabrous leaves). 'Sandra Hinton' x *rex* represents a hardy hybrid with heavy indumentum.

**Summer Flowering, Big Leaf, Scented Hybrids:** What a combination of interesting features. Key to the first group of these crosses which are still in the early stages of growth was the late flowering *auriculatum*. This has been combined with a range of later hardy hybrids with the purpose of achieving a trinity of terrific traits. Next summer a new phase is planned; it will highlight a newly-introduced species *glanduliferum*, growing around 8,000 ft. in NE Yunnan, China. This one has many features in common with *auriculatum* but it flowers even later. It has the most arresting new red growth one could ask for. The plan is to use two of the July flowering David Leach hardy hybrids as seed parents. 'Summer Snow' (maximum x *ungernii* x *auriculatum*) and 'Summer Summit' (maximum x (*auriculatum* x *discolor*)).

**Purples:** Few of the purple flowered rhododendrons have been good performers here. 'Wojnar's Purple' is one of the better. Deeper purples like 'Azurro' and 'Polarnacht' have leaf burn and bud blast most years. In 2011 a breeding program was started with the objective to improve on available eastern purples. Hardier weaker colored purples were chosen as seed parents and pollen of some of the west coast purples was used:

I'll mention that 20 crosses carried out using polyploidy hybrid/species pollen last year overall was not a success. Efforts were expended with orange/yellow flowers and indumentum/tomentum foliage; perhaps something on these another time. This concludes my summary of some breeding objectives that I've pursued the past 12 years. ☐



'Holli's Hope'



'Night Music'

# Witch Hazels

By Mary Helleiner

[ This article is reprinted from the February 2001 Newsletter ]

As I write this, on the 28th of January, 'Jelena', our earliest witch hazel, has just started to bloom. This is its second try this year; the same flowers began to open three weeks ago but stopped when a very cold spell came along. Now they are opening again. If the thaw lasts for a week or so, the whole bush will be in full bloom and will continue, the flowers shrinking or expanding according to the weather. They look particularly charming when the open blooms are shining through blobs of wet snow. By late February all the flowers will be out regardless of weather. It is surprising, and heartening, to come on such an unlikely sight in winter in Halifax.

'Jelena' is the earliest of the Hamamelis we grow, in some years starting to flower well before Christmas. When I cut some branches (the little tree is now big enough for large scale picking) and bring them into the house, they open within a day. At first the flowers are a brilliant orange scarlet as the four ribbon-like petals unfurl from their neat coiled pack. When they open fully they become bronzy orange and, before they fade, a pale amber. Our plant is about twenty five years old, fifteen feet high and as much across.

We now have only two other varieties of witch hazel in our Halifax garden: 'Arnold Promise', a bright yellow, and 'Ruby Glow', a red that fades to a russet brown. Both of these flower later than 'Jelena', opening in February in most years, or early March if we have a very hard winter. All three witch hazels are forms of *Hamamelis x intermedia*, a cross between the Chinese witch hazel *Hamamelis mollis* and the Japanese witch hazel *Hamamelis japonica*. Nowadays there are several others on the market which we have not tried for lack of room, but 'Diane', another red intermedia, is highly recommended.

*H. mollis* was the first witch hazel we grew, and my favourite. It has large soft yellow flowers and a very sweet scent. *H. m. 'Pallida'* is a particularly large flowered, free blooming form. Unfortunately our *H. mollis* died many years ago, either killed by a very hard winter or possibly by graft disease. As far as I know, all witch hazels (except the native *H. virginiana*) are grafted. We also grew *H. mollis brevipetala* which has stubby wide petaled flowers of a bright orangey yellow. Our plant never grew well and I did not feel badly when we lost it. Probably *mollis* itself is somewhat more tender than its hybrids with *H. japonica*.

If one asks for a witch hazel at a nursery without specifying which variety one is very likely to be sold our native *H. virginiana*. It can be a very satisfactory garden shrub IF you get a good form. There is an enormous difference in floriferousness and in flower size among the various plants. The showiest types lose their leaves, which turn a brilliant yellow in the fall, before they flower, so that the flowers show up nicely. However, many of them have tiny flowers hidden in leaves and really are not worth the space they occupy. The one we have had for many years hardly counts as a flowering shrub at all. Early November is the time to look for wild witch hazels in Nova Scotia; they grow in Point Pleasant Park in Halifax and Shubie Park in Dartmouth, and even along the railway cutting in the south end of Halifax. The best one I know of in this area is near the Dingle tower but there is an even better specimen growing in the Arnold Arboretum in Boston. It is a huge sprawling thicket of a bush, probably suckering, and is spectacular with a dense crop of large and bright yellow flowers. *H. vernalis* is another native North American, found in the southeastern United States. It also has very tiny flowers, and is a spring bloomer. I know nothing about its hardiness.

The culture of witch hazels seems very simple. They are supposed to need acid soil, although I have seen *virginiana* growing wild in a Toronto park where the soil is very unlikely to be acidic. We have mixed peat and compost into the planting holes and watered the plants while they were getting established, but nothing more. We don't even fertilize them, although perhaps we should. The more sun they get the better; our 'Jelena' in almost full sun has a nice compact, though large, shape, blooms heavily every year and sets lots of seed. The hard nutlike seed pods are attractive and last for more than a year. (*Hamamelis* means "with fruit"; the flowers and fruit are on the plants together.) 'Arnold Promise' grows in part shade and has become very tall, so much so that it really requires a ladder to cut the branches for the house; however, it blooms well every other year and lightly in the years in between. 'Ruby Glow' gets even less sun and is tall and never blooms heavily, though it always flowers. Of course these differences may be due to variety as well as conditions. *H. virginiana* seems to manage in shadier places, but the best plants are always in fairly sunny spots. None of our plants have been bothered by insects or diseases.

All the witch hazels are best when they are planted where the western sun can shine through them, making the colours glow, and this particularly applies to the reds, which can be somewhat too dark to make a show although they are excellent for cutting. All look well against an evergreen background or blue sky, and the reds in particular show up well against snow. Bare ground underneath also makes a good background for all witch hazels. This can be seen at its best in the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh, where a large collection of a dozen or more varieties of large mature witch hazels are planted in soil which is deliberately kept free of ground cover, to show them off at their best.

The other very attractive feature of these plants is their spectacular fall colour. Some, like our wild *virginiana*, turn a very impressive golden yellow. Others are a mixture of bright yellow and orange, and some are flushed with red. All of them make a wonderful end to the garden year. ☺

# A Letter from The West Coast

By Carol Dancer

Most members of the club will not know me so let me introduce myself. I was not a charter member of the society but did join in the very early days when we thought we had a crowd if ten or twelve people arrived for a meeting. At that time (in 1979-80 I joined the Rhododendron Society of Canada Atlantic Region and the American Rhododendron Society in 1982), we were meeting in one of the smaller rooms in the museum on Summer Street before moving to the main lecture hall so we could accommodate our growing membership.

This was a time when we were consumed by our passion for plants and gardens. It was also a time when the choice at the local garden centres was usually between R. Nova Zembla or R. Cunningham's White. (Do they sell them anymore?) Anytime we got our hands on a new plant there would be long discussions on its merits and most important would it prove to be hardy through our maritime winters. For me it was probably the most exciting time to be a gardener in the many years that I have been gardening in no small part due to the people I met after joining the society.

As with most organizations there was a core group that led the way. Of course our leader was Captain Steele who was the most generous of leaders sharing plants, knowledge, and time with us, especially his time. One would arrive at Bayport Plant Farm to be greeted with: "Lets take a walk up the hill to see what is in bloom". The walk would be followed by cups of tea, drunk out of the dirtiest cups one could imagine, and long talks about plants. The discussions were not just about rhododendrons but encompassed whatever took our fancy that day: magnolias, primulas, gentians, you name it. We always left full of enthusiasm.

However when it came to a thirst for new plants, John Weagle was our leader. I think it is safe to say that John was determined Nova Scotian gardens would no longer consist of R. Nova Zembla and a forsythia. I wonder if garden centers still have their Midnight Madness Sales. John and would set up an area at these events to first of all tell people about rhododendrons and then how to properly plant a rhododendron. John's trips to various meetings were always followed by a sharing of the plants he brought home. I often think of his mother who would return home to find her kitchen floor covered in plants and soil.

This satisfied our want list for a while but then John and I thought why not expand our club sale, which usually consisted of Captain Steele bringing a few plants up from Bayport, by bringing in new material in the form of tissue-culture plants from Brigg's Nursery in Washington. John knew the people and they were willing to accommodate us. ... Remember for a large firm like Briggs we were very small potatoes.

It was about this time the club really began to expand and grow. I credit this to two things. First was our increasing knowledge of plants but it was also our enthusiasm to share the knowledge. I still remember Bob Pettipas phoning me one evening – this was after a trip to Kentville for Rhododendron Sunday - to ask if he could grow a purple rhododendron from seed. I immediately invited him to join the society after dashing his hopes of achieving a purple rhododendron that easily. Bob has gone on to create a beautiful rhododendron garden in Dartmouth and for many years was the backbone of the plant sale.

I think the plant sale was the second reason the society began to grow. We were fortunate that the museum allowed us to hold it there so we had an assured site that was also central with good parking for the general public to attend and most importantly buy. The rule was that club members who worked on the sale had first choice. It was a bonus for sorting, labeling, and storing. The general membership was then allowed to buy, followed by the general public. By this time we were bringing in several thousand plants, not all of them rhododendrons, and there was always the worry that we wouldn't sell all of them. This would mean confessing to Barbara Hall, our very careful treasurer, that we had lost money. Fortunately this never happened and we were able to accumulate enough money to sponsor a speaker for the first Steele Lecture. We had always wanted to honour Captain Steele in some way and so thought what better way than inviting someone from the gardening community to give a lecture. It would expand our knowledge of plants and pay tribute to Captain Steele.

Our first speaker was Alleyne Cook, curator of the Ted and Mary Greig Rhododendron Garden in Stanley Park, Vancouver. He was Captain Steele's choice, as none of us had ever met Alleyne. He turned out to be a great choice and Alleyne became a life-long friend who was very generous with his plants, but that is another story. Alleyne actually gave two lectures. The first was on rhododendrons, most of which we hadn't a hope of growing but it was the start of friendships with fellow gardeners on the west coast. The subject of the second lecture was on the genus primula.

At this point may I say everything old is new again? I would have loved to have heard Pam Eveleigh's Steele lecture last autumn. Alleyne's talk on primula was held in a little upstairs room in the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic. We thought not that many people would be interested. Were we wrong! As the room filled it became warmer and warmer. It was one of those rare warm, dare I say hot, June evenings. We emerged very enthused about the world of primulas but also very hot and thirsty. I think Mrs Cook spent all of Alleyne's speaker's fee buying us cold drinks.

One person I haven't mentioned yet is Dr. Don Craig. Don, along with Dick, were the two people who really started the Atlantic Chapter - which at that time was part of the Rhododendron Society of Canada. Don used to tell the story of taking trusses to Ontario for display at the annual meeting. They took turns fanning the flowers to try and keep them from collapsing. It was Don, along with a man called George Swain, who started and looked after the rhododendron collection in Kentville. These are important names that are fading in the history of the rhododendron in Nova Scotia. They should be remembered along with the name of Captain Steele and honoured by the Society maybe at the upcoming autumn meeting.

I actually bought my first rhododendron from George: R. Ramapo. We went out into the field behind his home in Wolfville and dug it. Those were the days when a grower was willing to give away his precious soil. George, as I knew him, was a quiet, gentle man who loved plants. He put in many unpaid hours looking after the plants at Kentville Research Station and thousands of Nova Scotians have gone on to plant rhododendrons in their own gardens after a visit to Kentville on Rhododendron Sunday.

I will always remember the first time John Weagle took me to see Walter Ostrom's garden in Indian Harbour. His garden opened my eyes to how one can plant a garden using non-native material and yet be in harmony with native plants that surround the garden. Walter is one of those fortunate people who can combine aesthetics and plant knowledge. He was also one of the group who shared his knowledge and his plants. One never left his garden without some tiny treasure. Elaine, Walter's wife, thought all of our plants looked alike and we only had one plant that we took turns sharing. Walter no longer gardens in Indian Harbour but that garden remains a mecca for many gardeners.

When one starts to put down thoughts about the history of the society so many memories come flooding back. I think of Ruth Wainwright and Aileen Meagher, both of whom were artists. To say that these two ladies planted their gardens with flare is an under-statement. Aileen's brother John, a man of few words, quietly worked on his own hybridizing program and planted his excess plants around the city. Many of you probably have some of Dr. Joe Harvey's plants in your garden. Joe went from being someone who thought rhododendrons couldn't be grown in Nova Scotia to someone who started a breeding program. He wanted to breed rhododendrons with exceptional foliage. He still occasionally plugs away at that here on the west coast. For those of you who might be interested, his latest love affair is with tree paeonies.

This is a society with a history. [Since 1976] we, the collective members, have raised the standard of horticulture in Nova Scotia and not under the easiest of circumstances. With a small population base and few people at that time interested in gardening, the garden centers had little incentive to stock new plants. Credit John Weagle with changing that as he made his rounds of the various garden centers in the Atlantic Provinces. Secondly, the climate is not the easiest to deal with - plus ten degrees one day, minus ten the next - but by experimenting members found what would work and are still discovering what will grow and thrive. I am constantly amazed when I visit and see what is growing in your gardens.

I am looking forward to seeing you all at the October meeting, and to seeing some of the new gardens friends tell me about, and maybe seeing some old gardens that I knew way back when. ☺



'Babylon'. [Photos Stephen Archibald]

## Visiting Gardens on Mount Desert Island, Maine

By Stephen Archibald

At the January ARHS meeting, John Brett, Sheila Stevenson, and I talked about our visits to a group of gardens in Maine. For those who attended this is a reminder of the gardens and some visiting advice. For those who were not there it will be a brief introduction to some wonderful garden experiences and inspiration just on the other side of the border.

These gardens are all on Mount Desert Island – think Bar Harbour. The core group is clustered in or near Northeast Harbour a few kilometers along the coast from Bar Harbour. All but one have strong associations with Beatrix Farrand (1872-1959), noted garden designer of the first half of the 20th century. Farrand had great affection for Mount Desert Island where her parents had a seaside summer house and where she honed her gardening skills at a young age. At that time Bar Harbour was a gilded-age summer colony, the shore lined with the estates of the wealthy who each summer escaped the heat and pollution of the city for fresh ocean breezes and forested mountains.

### Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Garden, Seal Harbor



Rockefeller Garden, Seal Harbor . [Stephen Archibald]

elements are the huge mats of native moss that stretch into the forests. Eight full-time gardeners achieve an amazing level of maintenance. Crews with backpack blowers had been out for several hours before we arrived at 9:00 am to ensure the moss beds were perfectly groomed.

When we visited at the beginning of September the mixed borders of annuals and perennials had lots of colour. It didn't look that much different from John Brett's photos taken a month earlier when the beds are designed to be at their zenith.

### Asticou Azalea Garden



Asticou Azalea Garden. [Stephen Archibald]

To visit this private garden takes advance planning. For a decade or so we had been aware it was possible to visit but had never been able to fit it into trip plans. That's because it is open only on Thursdays in July, August, and early September and only with an advance (and highly-sought-after) reservation. If you can make this timing work, go to their web site and learn the details. <http://rockgardenmaine.wordpress.com/> . If you get one of the free reservations you will be sent the "secret" instructions and directions. They offer two-hour visiting sessions from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. or from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

The effort is well worth it because this is a special garden. Designed by Farrand and built in 1926-30, it also bears the imprint of Abby Rockefeller and later Rockefeller stewards of the garden. The centre of the site is a large walled garden where deep, stepped borders surround a perfect lawn. Outside the wall, oriental sculpture and plantings blend into carefully nurtured native vegetation. Perhaps the most extraordinary

Just down the road from the Rockefellers in Northeast Harbour are some gardens that are easier to visit. Right beside the road is the Asticou Azalea Garden created in 1956 by Charles K Savage, then owner of the Asticou Inn just across the road. The garden was a wonderful way to rescue plant material from Beatrix Farrand's family property, being abandoned at the time. Savage created a landscape inspired by Japanese stroll gardens: a path winds along the shore of a pond, bridges streams, passes contemplative vistas. This well pruned and clipped and ordered landscape feels very at home on the Maine coast. We have visited twice in early September with great pleasure. Anitra Laycock from the Society has visited several times in bloom season and reports that it is very special then as well. I have great affection for this garden and highly recommend a visit. It has been a muse for my own gardening practice. We have visited early in the morning (open from 7 to 7) and had the garden to ourselves. Admission is by donation.

## Asticou Terraces and Thuya Garden and Lodge.



Thuya Garden . [John Brett]

A couple of hundred meters up the road is another garden experience. The oldest elements were designed by its owner, Joseph H. Curtis, a landscape engineer who started summering in the area in 1880. He designed and created the Terraces that lead from a public boat landing up a hillside to what are now gardens. Beautiful rustic stone steps with scenic look outs ascend through the forest. At the top, his small and elegant Lodge is surrounded by the 1958 gardens.

Like Asticou, these gardens were designed by Charles Savage (who was the trustee of a foundation set up by Curtis) and also contain material from Farrand's garden. Here the approach was perennial beds along a narrow lawn and reflecting pool. The brochure describes the gardens as "in the style of England's famous designer and author, Gertrude Jekyll, as interpreted for coastal Maine by Beatrix Farrand."

Like Asticou, this site is admission by donation, open from 7 am to 7 pm, and now owned and managed by the Mount Desert Land and Garden Preserve. You can park above the boat landing and walk up the terraces or drive up a narrow (perhaps unmarked) road to a parking area at the gardens. <http://www.gardenpreserve.org/>

## Garland Farm



Garland Farm. [John Brett]

The last garden completes the Beatrix Farrand theme: Garland Farm is where she spent her last years. It is located close to the bridge connecting Mount Desert Island and the mainland. Her small garden has recently been restored by the Beatrix Farrand Society. Visiting hours should be checked on The Beatrix Farrand Society web site <http://beatrixfarrandsociety.org/>.

Individually these are all good garden experiences. They become even more alive if you are of a mind to read up on the Beatrix Farrand story. There seem to be endless resources on the internet and we found ourselves enchanted by the interconnections that became evident. Also note that Martha Stewart's summer house is next door to the Rockefeller estate so she has posted many details about her feelings for the area. We enjoyed reading her description of a visit to Asticou and comparing it to ours! ☘



Asticou Terraces. [John Brett]

# The Town of Wolfville Arboretum Project and Hamamelidaceae

By James Ellison [James.Ellison@nsc.ca](mailto:James.Ellison@nsc.ca)

*An arboretum is a place where trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants are cultivated for scientific and educational purposes....Essentially a living collection of plants....*

## The Town of Wolfville IS the Arboretum

The Arboretum project idea was developed through a series of formal and informal discussions between faculty from the Horticulture Program at the Nova Scotia Community College Kingstec Campus in Kentville and Town of Wolfville representatives. In 2007, the Town of Wolfville and the Nova Scotia Community College formed an innovative partnership and signed a Memorandum of Understanding to combine municipal ecological protection efforts with active education. The Town and College are working towards seeing the entire Town of Wolfville as an Arboretum.

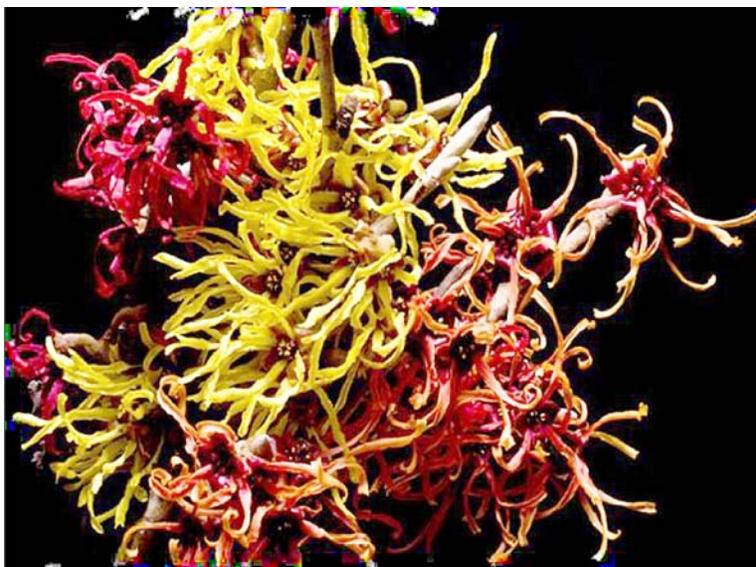
This project became part of the personal portfolio of NSCC Horticulture Faculty member, Jamie Ellison, supported by the Nova Scotia Community College and managed by David Slabotsky, Town of Wolfville Parks Dept. The project has been initiated over a 5-year time period, with the following goals:

- To acquire a substantial piece of green-space land for an arboretum, and to create a master plan featuring unique botanical genera with a spring and autumn focus.
- To develop a permanent “one of a kind collection” to be used in training horticultural students as well as in provincial and municipality training, as an interpretation centre for surrounding public schools, and for the pleasure and education of local residents and tourists.
- To enhance existing green spaces
- To plant desirable woody plant species and cultivars for educational and ornamental purposes.
- To document and catalog the plantings, also the existing trees within the town, and to record interesting horticultural artifacts called the “Trees of Significance”, using Geographic Information System(GIS) technology,

## International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI)

In 2010 the Wolfville Arboretum Project was selected by the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) as one of 11 case studies across the country and profiled as a Biodiversity Case Study. The Cities and Biodiversity Case Study Series serves as a collection of municipal best practices in urban biodiversity management and protection. These local governments have gained knowledge of biodiversity management, and these case studies should serve as a learning tool for other local governments interested in engaging in biodiversity actions (ICLEI, 2010).

The case study was presented in Japan in the autumn of 2010 and published by the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI). We have been given permission to reprint that article in this issue of the ARHS newsletter.



## Adopting the Hamamelidaceae as the official Tree Family for the Town of Wolfville

At an April 2010 Strategy and Policy session, David and Jamie initiated the proposal to adopt the Hamamelidaceae, the witch and winter hazel family, as a premier collection and logo for the Wolfville Arboretum Project - the idea being a late winter celebration of this group around the “Brand” of the official town tree.

In 2011, Wolfville Town Council approved the recommendation that Hamamelidaceae be the official tree for the Town of Wolfville. This culminated in two substantial plantings by Kingstec Horticulture and The Town of Wolfville when approximately 60 witch hazels were planted in full view along Main Street in two designated parks.

### Hamamelis Plantings



*H. x intermedia* ‘Arnold Promise’

The first park, Clock Park, was planted in the fall of 2012 with 25 of our native *Hamamelis virginiana* and selections including *H. x intermedia* ‘Jelana’, *H. x intermedia* ‘Arnold Promise’ and *H. x intermedia* (aka *H. mollis*) ‘Feuerzauber’ (Fire Charm).

The estate of the late Raymond Jefferson bequeathed \$2000 to purchase witch hazels for the Seymour Gordon Quiet Park. In the fall of 2012, Kingstec Horticulture and the Town of Wolfville developed a winter garden and planted 40 witch hazels : *H. x intermedia* ‘Arnold Promise’, *H. x intermedia* ‘Jelana’, *H. x intermedia* ‘Diane’, and *H. x intermedia* ‘Pallida’ and other notable plants: *Prunus maackii* (Amur chokecherry, chokeberry), *Magnolia* ‘Daybreak’, *Oxydendron arboretum* (Sourwood), *Davidia involucrata* var. *vilmoriniana* (Dove tree) and *Cercis Canadensis* (eastern redbud). Another 20 will be planted in the spring of 2013.

### Future of the Project

The project will need a critical mass of witch hazels for the Town and business community to begin marketing for a late winter festival or celebration. This will happen in a couple of ways:

- Continued plantings by the Town focused along the Main Street in full view (80 in total for 2013)
- “Osmosis plantings”: as the residents see what’s happening, many will purchase witch and winter hazels for their own properties so that a critical mass is achieved.

### Goals on the Horizon

- Attain Botanical status and link with other arboreta, botanical gardens
- Further develop “Trees of Significance” and use it as a marketing tool
- Continue to plant rare and interesting plants in the Town, via donations and propagation labs at Kingstec
- Collect environmental data
- Promote sustainable horticultural practices
- Have a celebration of witch hazels in late winter as a “Branded” horticultural event
- Continue to plant witch hazels and add a substantial winter hazel planting (Corylopsis).

For more information check out our Wolfville Arboretum Facebook page at

[https://www.facebook.com/jamie.ellison.92?ref=tn\\_tnmn#!/photo.php?fbid=10152322921250521&set=o.119100661444223&type=1&theater](https://www.facebook.com/jamie.ellison.92?ref=tn_tnmn#!/photo.php?fbid=10152322921250521&set=o.119100661444223&type=1&theater)

Trees of Significance:

<http://www.kingscountynews.ca/Living/Environment/2010-05-19/article-1127919/Wolfville-trees-tell-tales-/1>

ICLEI Biodiversity Case Study:

<http://www.icleicanada.org/component/k2/item/5-biodiversity-case-studies> ☒

# Transforming a Town into a Community **Arboretum**



## ABSTRACT

The Town of Wolfville and local higher education institution, Nova Scotia Community College, formed an innovative partnership to join municipal ecological protection efforts with active education. The Town and College are working towards building seeing the entire Town of Wolfville as an Arboretum.

### MUNICIPAL PROFILE

Location: NOVA SCOTIA

Population: 3,772

Area: 6.45km<sup>2</sup>

The Town of Wolfville is a small community in the north-west region of Nova Scotia situated along the shores of the Minas Basin of the Bay of Fundy. Dykes built in the seventeenth century separate the City from the shores, and the tides of the Bay of Fundy are considered some of the highest in the world.

Acadia University and Nova Scotia Community College make Wolfville a student town, as the population changes from 3,772 to over 7,000 during the academic year. These educational institutions have great influence on the social and economic fabric of the Town, bringing in new perspectives and industries.

The Town and Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) formed a unique partnership, working towards establishing the entire Town as an arboretum. Together, their goals are geared towards scientific study, educating residences and students, enhancing quality of life, and promoting large-scale sustainable practices in the pursuit of protecting the rare forest ecosystems..

The Town is marketing the project as the “Town is the arboretum” model. Implementing this concept has been a project-in-the-making since 2007, through a series of formal and informal discussions between faculty from NSCC’s Horticulture Program and Town staff. In October 2007 an MOU was signed to formally adopt the undertaking, and the project is currently in the second year of a 25 year plan. Though new, the project has already seen progress in the establishment of strong commitments and support from community members and college students.

**“Wolfville IS the Arboretum, within which the Towns people live. A unique perspective which we continue to foster”**

-David Slabotsky, Town of Wolfville



For many years there has been a mutual relationship between the Town and the Horticulture Program at NSCC Kingsfield Campus; past projects include: initiation and planting of the Town’s street planters and hanging baskets; design and development of green spaces within the Town; design, development and planting of Willow Park (a local public space); and mentorship and employment for students by the Town’s Parks and Recreation department.

### Background of the Arboretum Plan

The Town is located within the Acadian Forest System, which is nestled within the Temperate Forest Biome. The forest system is one of the rarest regions of the biome, identified by the co-existence of many different tree species. Many of the trees live an average of 150 years, with undisturbed old growth trees living 400 or more years. The forests in the Town have high value and establishing the Town as an Arboretum will protect future trees and preserve this rare ecosystem. The abundance of trees improves air quality, reduce stormwater, provide cooler summers, and reduce wind speed in the winter.

The Town will become an extended laboratory for the faculty and students of NSCC, with joint projects between both groups. NSCC offers programs in Horticulture and Landscape Technology, and seeks projects that will challenge students to use their surroundings, as there is great hands-on potential in the arboretum and Town area. Students from the program provide a source of help and expertise, as the arboretum plan will require students to plan, propagate, and grow trees. The Town is working to incorporate more local school systems into future initiatives.

Working alongside educational institutions has benefited both partners as an arboretum provides the opportunity for Town residents and students to both improve and maintain the local diversity of the environment, while learning more about the rare forest ecosystem within the Town.

### Merging Science and Conservation

The *Trees of Significance* project integrates the learning opportunities of the arboretum with technology. This

project will produce a database of fauna, which will include details on each tree species, their locations, and photographs. A second component of the initiative is to utilize GIS sampling techniques to determine areas of concern and high sensitivity. This technique will help to identify habitat diversity, condition of wildlife corridors, and sites of erosion.

### Ecosystem Based Design

The site of the arboretum was selected to protect the greatest forest area, increase wildlife corridors, and enhance local biodiversity. The designated natural space will connect the Reservoir Park and Millennium Trail System. Connecting these systems has great potential for housing a wide collection of trees and shrubs as it will link two established environmental centres; the Robie Tufts Centre and the Harriet Irving Botanical Garden hold extreme importance to the community as they promote ecosystem awareness, information on local natural history and bird watching opportunities.

As the project is still in its infancy, the Town is currently conducting studies to assess the Town's watersheds, waterways, ecological corridors and riparian zones. The arboretum will also require a re-evaluation of the existing trail systems to determine their impact and traffic flows. These details allow for the Town and NSCC to create trails away from highly sensitive ecosystems, and create connectivity among different ecosystems for species to move freely. Considerations of the ecological, and also social and recreational gains of the arboretum all influence the design of the forest. It is also important for the Town to know which groups are using the space and how their experiences can be enhanced with the establishment of an arboretum.



Millennium Trail, Reservoir Park, Robie Tufts Centre and the Harriet Irving Botanical Garden, will all be connected by the arboretum to create an ecosystem designed to be a corridor for species and a learning tool for students and residents

### Connecting a Town through Community Learning

The Town arboretum project is one that is exciting local residents. The initial reaction to the project from residents and businesses has been positive, as all will benefit from the arboretum; residents get the benefit of trees being planted on their property, and businesses receive increased customer traffic from tourists coming to experience the trees and Town. Both resident and local businesses have been active in seeing it through as they participate in tree planting activities throughout the year.

At the end of the 25-year arboretum plan, the Town's tree density will dramatically increase, giving it a feeling of a town located within a forest. By making this dramatic change in the ecological diversity of the Town, the Arboretum will establish a connection to the surrounding landscape as residents will feel they are part of something unique and special. Residents can connect to an ecosystem they can see, understand, and live within, knowing it is a protected space with multiple long-term gains.



Horticultural students from NSCC participating in one of the many tree planting projects.