

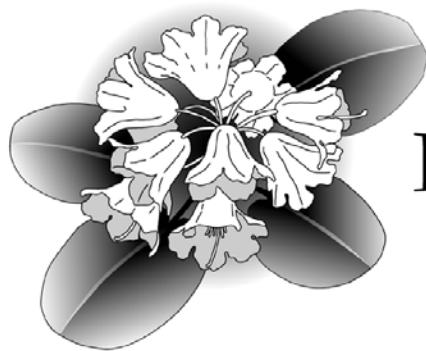
# AtlanticRhodo

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

Volume 37: Number 2

May 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

- Sharon Bryson's "Behind the scenes at the ARHS Seed Exchange"
- Ian Christie's "Mecanopsis punicea"
- Iain Jack's list "World of Ferns for Canadian Gardens"
- Ruth Jackson's report on her visit to Frasers' Thimble Farm Nursery on Salt Spring Island
- Sterling Levy's 3 Portraits: Primulas denticulata, japonica, and sieboldii
- Invitation to the ARS Eastern Fall Rhododendron and Garden Conference, Oct 4-6
- Chapter Reports for District 12 ARS (American Rhododendron Society)
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## 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.

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## 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.

### Saturday May 4

**Members` Pre-ordered Plant Sale. (10am - 2pm) New location,** Petal Pushers **957 Prospect Road** (also the site of the Goodwood Enviro-Depot). If you are unable to pick up your plants that day, either make arrangements for someone to pick them up for you, or be sure to let Liz know that no one will be picking them up by emailing [liz.anne.naylor@gmail.com](mailto:liz.anne.naylor@gmail.com) or call 902-429-0557.

### Tuesday May 7

**Members-to-Members Plant Sale** 7:30 pm 6141 Watt St., Halifax. LeMarchant-St Thomas School gym. To buy or sell you must be a paid up member. Plants should be unusual or choice in some way. Please donate any of the more common plants to the Public Sale. Known sellers at press time include Ken Shannik, Roslyn Duffus, ARHS (Cora Swinamer), NS Rock Garden Society (Darwin Carr and Jeff Morton). And there will be a Society mixed table where members can place a few plants to be sold. Each plant must have two labels—one with the plant name, and one with your name and the price. This is so we can give you your money after the sale. Please bring plants by 7:00 pm.  
Contact Bob Howard if you plan to sell. [mayflowergardens@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:mayflowergardens@ns.sympatico.ca)

### 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). Your perennial division are happily accepted. Please label each plant

### May 31, June 1, 2.

2013 NSAGC Convention, Dartmouth, NS Registration closes on May 15, 2013  
<http://www.nsagc.com/images/Convention2013.pdf> May 31, June 1, 2. (If you go, you can help Cora sell some plants)

### Saturday June 8

**Annual Garden Tour and Pot Luck Supper**. Details on page 5- 6 in this issue

### Summer:

Remember the Seed Exchange. Collect seeds

### Tuesday Sept 3

**Meeting, Carole Otteson** will talk to us about "Moss Lawns". She is a garden writer for the American Horticultural Society and spends some of the summer in Cape Breton. Check out her website: <http://www.murderinthegarden.com> M NH 7:30

### Tuesday Oct 1

**No meeting**

### October 4 – 6

**ARHS hosts the 2013 ARS Fall Rhododendron and Garden Conference**, Holiday Inn, Dartmouth. See details elsewhere in this issue.

### Tuesday Nov. 5

**Nina Newington**, Hampton NS gardener and a design consultant at Tangled Garden, will talk about design questions and plant choices at this Grand Pre garden. MNH 7:30

### Tuesday Dec 3

**Members' Night. . MNH 7:30**

### Tuesday April 1, 2014.

Mark your calendars already for our April 1, 2014 monthly meeting, when **Ian Christie** will visit from Scotland to talk about "Meconopsis and Woodland Plants", including trilliums and cypripediums. Here's a link to a seed sowing tutorial by Ian that you might enjoy: <http://files.srgc.net/s#148715E> See the article and the striking red image of Meconopsis punicea, courtesy of Ian Christie, elsewhere in this issue.

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

# Special Notices

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## Editor's Notes

A few messages from the content in this issue are worth noting here.

One is that our seed exchange chair, Sharon Bryson, would love to hear from those of you who order seeds. Do you plant them? How do they do? Do any of you now have any sizeable plants that give you joy? Do you have photos? And to those of us who do not collect and donate seed or buy seed, what will it take for us to participate? As you will see in her photo essay, it is no small effort that she and Bill Wilgenhof expend on behalf of this program, so some feedback would be nice.

xxx

The second message is that we have lots to look forward to: the May 4 pick-up in the new location for members` pre-ordered plants, the June 8 garden tour organized by Ralph Pineo, the Oct 4-6 ARS Eastern Fall Rhododendron and Garden Conference organized by many members, and the monthly program that Bob Howard is putting together, including the visit next April of Scottish plants man, Ian Christie.

xxx

And here is something from another part of our NS horticultural sector for you to consider: Jen Greenberg at [heliotrust.org](http://heliotrust.org). started a small winter wheat trial last fall at her Hants Co farm. She planted 10 varieties, including the heritage and tasty baking wheat, Red Fife, to find out if it might be a good winter wheat. But, it's Galician Spring, the even more disease-resistant 'grandmother' of Red Fife, that has her most excited. Says Jen, "We're testing her for overwintering as well. Wintered-over wheat is so much better for the farming system. I figure these old wheats are more biologically plastic than the new wheats." To see the results, we will check her website in about a year.

xxx

We were charmed and enthused at the April meeting as Iain Jack, proprietor of Fernwood Plant Nursery in Hubbards NS, introduced us to the natural and cultural history of ferns, a group of about 12,000 species of plants belonging to the botanical group known as Pteridophyta. Lucky for us, he brought along a plant list that considerably narrows the number we can consider for our gardens.

Fernwood Plant Nursery, a young specialty mail-order nursery, <http://www.fernwoodplantnursery.ca/> was inspired by a passion that was clear to us and described on the website "for growing, talking about and sharing plants, a love of woodland gardens of all sorts, and a deep desire to have plants that are left alone by deer (mostly ... !)". Iain says the goal is to explore and promote the diversity and landscape value of native and hardy exotic ferns, offering Canadian gardeners the best hardy ferns and, occasionally, unique fern companions.

The Fernwood plant list appears elsewhere in this issue.

xxx

**Help us to remember and celebrate our friend Diana Steele who passed away March 12, 2013. Please send your words of tribute to [atlanticrhodo@gmail.com](mailto:atlanticrhodo@gmail.com)**

Follow this link [http://www.atlanticrhodo.org/hybrids/Steele/Diana\\_Steele\\_Main\\_Tribute.html](http://www.atlanticrhodo.org/hybrids/Steele/Diana_Steele_Main_Tribute.html) to access our tribute site to Diana.

- Ed.



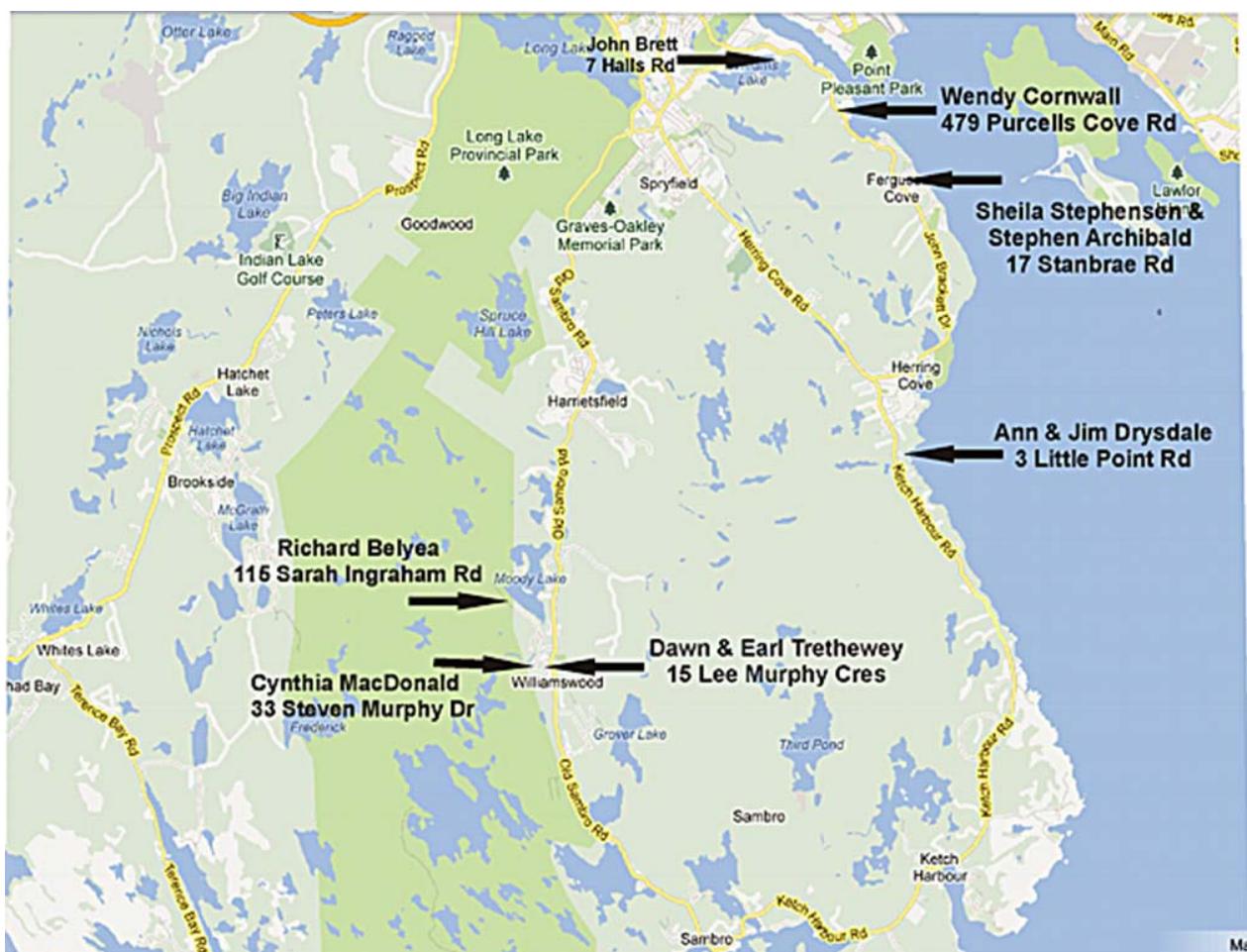
A very warm welcome to our new and returning ARHS members who have joined since the February Newsletter.

**Bonnie Conrad  
Jeff Morton**

**Dartmouth, NS  
Truro, NS**

## 2013 Garden Tour and Pot Luck Supper

This year we visit gardens in the Halifax areas of Purcells Cove Rd (Hwy 253), the Herring Cove Road (Hwy 349), Williamswood Area (Hwy 306), and the Old Sambro Road. All gardens open at 1 pm.



Please:

- heed parking information wherever noted.
- remember that a Pot Luck works only if everyone brings something.

### Pot Luck Supper

Anne and Jim Drysdale, 5 Little Point Lane, Herring Cove, have kindly offered to host our Pot Luck after the tour. Little Point Lane is a narrow private road with no room for parking on the road itself. The driveway at 5 Little Point Lane can accommodate approximately 10 cars. For easy escape it is best to park car facing out. Additional parking is available on the Ketch Harbour Road. Things to note about this section of the Ketch Harbour Road

1. Little Point runs off this road near the bottom of a valley between 2 hills and cars come over these hills at a good clip.
2. Shoulders are reasonably wide but there is a steep incline falling from the shoulders.
3. It is a 1 - 2 minute walk to 5 Little Point.

## Gardens

### 1. Dawn and Earle Trethewey, 15 Lee Murphy Crescent, Williamswood.

This  $\frac{3}{4}$ -acre garden was established around the year 2000 and features rhodos, roses, hostas, and a natural bedding of ferns.

### 2. Cindy Macdonald, 33 Steven Murphy Drive, Williamswood

On approximately one acre, this is a plant collectors' garden, closely planted with many rhododendrons, azaleas, magnolias, Japanese maples, hydrangeas, weeping trees, and perennial plants, as well as a number of garden troughs with alpine plants and a woodland garden in the beginning stages. This is an ever changing garden, and Cindy says, "The neighbors joke that the plants that I acquire all come with wheels."

### 3. Richard Belyea, 115 Sarah Ingraham Rd, Williamswood

A large and ambitious woodland garden (approx 1.5 acre) created over the last 10 years with over 500 hosta varieties, 70+ rhodos, 40 types of hydrangea, and natural ferns, mosses and granites.

### 4. John Brett, #7 Halls Road. Boulderwood.

John's predominately rhodie garden continues the style established in the late '50s and '60s by former neighbourhood resident, the late Captain Dick Steele, whose plantings of rhododendrons, azaleas, magnolias and Japanese maples are now mature. John and other residents also created the Dick Steele Garden, a work-in-progress adjacent to Halls Road and opened in 2007 to further demonstrate the possibilities for woodland gardening and the value of the genus Rhododendron in Atlantic Canada. Park on Purcells Cove Road. (John's driveway, 2nd on the right, may be used to turn around or drop off visitors.)

### 5. Wendy Cornwall, #479 Purcells Cove Rd. Purcells Cove.

This is a mature garden on granite, started in 1984, featuring species and hybrid rhodos, magnolias, pieris, azaleas, and other ericaceae. Park on either side of Purcells Cove Rd.

### 6. Stephen Archibald and Sheila Stevenson, Rockburn, 17 Stanbrae Rd, Fergusons Cove.

The garden, on a  $\frac{3}{4}$ -acre sloping site, consists of numerous rhodies, deer-chewed azaleas, deciduous shrubs and trees (some native), moisture-loving perennials, food plants, a stream, a compost yard, and rock work by Stephen. Be sure to check out the view from the cemetery, just one minute beyond # 17. Park either at top (entrance) of Stanbrae Rd or on Devils Hill Rd., the street to the north of Stanbrae. Not on the main road please. Drop offs only at #17. Turn around at bottom of Stanbrae. It's a short walk from the top of the road.

### 7. Anne and Jim Drysdale, 5 Little Point Lane, Herring Cove Rd. Herring Cove.

Still in its development stage, this 10-year old garden, which faces outer Halifax Harbour, has approximately 80 rhododendrons and azaleas complemented by companion plants, evergreen shrubs, and perennials. There is also a rock outcropping for heaths and heathers. Anne and Jim have kindly offered to host our Pot Luck after the tour. Note parking info above. ☀



*Primula marginata* - An early flowering European Mountain plant

**The Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society invites you to the  
ARS (American Rhododendron Society) 2013 Eastern Fall Rhododendron and Garden Conference  
Oct 4-6, Holiday Inn Harbourview, Dartmouth NS.**

**Your Hosts:** The Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society is celebrating our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2013. Our mission is to support and promote 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. The program for this conference reflects the diversity of our interests.

With the late Don Craig and the late Captain Richard Steele as founding members, we began in 1976 as RSCAR, the Rhododendron Society of Canada Atlantic Region, one of the original three RSC Regions, the other two being Niagara and Toronto. We continue to exist as the Atlantic Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society. With Niagara and Toronto, we now form ARS District 12.

We are delighted to host the 2013 Eastern Fall Rhododendron and Garden Conference and hope to see you here in Nova Scotia at that time.

**Thanks to our sponsors: Rhodo Land, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario and Briggs Nursery, Elma, Washington state, USA.**

**Registration:** By early May, you can access the registration form for printing from the ARHS and the ARS websites. **Registration fee is \$50 until Aug. 31; \$65.00 after that.** The fee is **payable** in Canadian or US dollars, by cheque or money order **to ARS Convention**. Our conference registrar, Anitra Laycock, will accept mailed payments only. There will be no online payment. Send completed registration form and payment to Anitra at 9 Brennan's Branch Lane, Prospect Bay, NS B3T 2A2.

**Bus Tours:** There will be tours on Friday afternoon, Saturday afternoon, and all day Sunday.

**A. Friday, Oct. 4 Historic City and Boulderwood Garden (4-hour tour)**

This tour will take you through the historic sections of the City of Halifax, then stop at the Halifax Public Gardens where you will have time to wander through this wonderful and interesting space opened in 1867. In true Victorian fashion, the Gardens boast ornate cast iron fountains, a bandstand, statues, urns and magnificent wrought iron gates. There are numerous rhododendrons and azaleas at this garden, over 100 species of trees, including some rare and some centenarian specimens. The serpentine, scroll and carpet beds guarantee a bounty of colour and fragrance throughout the season.

Following your stop at this garden you will travel off the peninsula of Halifax and arrive on the west side of the North West Arm to visit the gardens at Halls Rd.

As you enter Halls Road you will immediately notice mature rhododendrons, azaleas, magnolias and Japanese maples. Glimpsed among them are eight private residences, all built in the '50s and early '60s. There are no apparent boundaries between the properties. It's a park-like setting, a patchwork of open sunlight and dappled shade cast by tall red oaks, white pine, and other trees both native and exotic, a suburban landscape unique in Nova Scotia.

Major plantings on Halls Road were started in the late 1950s and 1960s under the guidance of one very enthusiastic resident, Dick Steele, who introduced new rhododendron species and hybrids to Nova Scotia from all over the globe. Dick later received an ARS gold medal for his work. Dick was fortunate to have cooperative neighbors, who spread his thousands of seedlings around their properties, cared for them, and monitored their progress. Many, many different species and hybrids were tried with a view to growing those best suited to the local maritime conditions. The results are what you see today – a local landmark that draws hundreds of visitors during the spring bloom, and inspires them to create more varied and beautiful gardens, wherever they live.

In addition to the eight private gardens on Halls Road, the current residents, with the assistance of the ARS Endowment Fund, created the Dick Steele Garden as a collective effort. It is adjacent to Halls Road and will also be open for you to view. The Dick Steele Garden is a work-in-progress. It was opened in 2007 with the purpose of further demonstrating the possibilities for woodland gardening and the value of the genus Rhododendron in Atlantic Canada. All are welcome to visit. A box lunch is included in this tour.

## **B. Saturday, Oct. 5 Peggy's Cove Route Tour (5-hour tour)**

Your first stop will be for a Nova Scotia maple lunch at Acadia Maple Products. From there it's a short ride to the former Walter Ostrom garden. Here you will see how, by judicious use of shelter and niche plantings, a wonderful collection of dwarf rhododendrons and other garden plants have flourished within the barrens habitat. ( see Sonja Nelson, *Rhododendrons in the Landscape*, p 48).

Then on to the Barrens near Peggy's Cove where you will enjoy a guided walk led by Todd Boland. The barrens are a diverse and fascinating habitat – a miniature Acadian forest. There is a multitude of shrubs such as Blueberry (*Vaccinium angustifolium*), Huckleberry (*Vaccinium parvifolium*), Sheep Laurel (*Kalmia angustifolia*), Bearberry (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*), Canadian holly (*Ilex verticillata*). One of the most common plants on the barrens - along with the prostrate junipers - are the crowberries - primarily *Empetrum nigrum*, but also *Empetrum eamsii* - the pink one. Our very own Rhododendron example, *R. groenlandicum* (Labrador Tea), also features prominently. As well there are large patches of bog with their own flora, including pitcher plants and orchids. There is much to be gleaned about these plant communities in articles by Dr Jeremy Lundholm, Associate Professor, Biology Department, Saint Mary's University, [www.smu.ca/faculty/jeremylundholm/documents/coastal.doc](http://www.smu.ca/faculty/jeremylundholm/documents/coastal.doc) and by Oberdorfer and Lundholm, 'Species richness, abundance, rarity and environmental gradients in coastal barren vegetation', Biodiversity and Conservation (2009) 18:1523-1553.

Once you depart the barrens, it is a very short drive to Peggy's Cove Lighthouse. There will be a short stop here for picture taking before returning to Dartmouth.

## **C. Sunday, Oct. 6 Annapolis Royal Historic Gardens, Acadia University's Irving Botanical Gardens, and Grand Pre Winery . All Day (7 ½ hour tour) Tour:**

En route to Annapolis Royal, you will stop for an hour at the Irving Botanical Gardens at Acadia University in Wolfville. Six acres show off the native plants of the Acadian Forest Region. The signage is superb, bilingual, and gives an illustrated and clear explanation of the various ecological communities in Nova Scotia. Natives (many ericaceous) are brilliantly used to replace the standard boxwood, yew and ivy in a formal, classical courtyard, integral to a building by Robert A M Stern. The voluminous Garden Room is a delight. [botanicalgardens.acadiau.ca/](http://botanicalgardens.acadiau.ca/)

Then on to the Annapolis Royal Historic Gardens. After lunch in the Elm Tree Café, *you can choose to roam on your own or join a guided tour*. The Gardens feature a wide range of plant collections and display gardens illustrating the long history of the area, dating from French settlement with Samuel de Champlain in 1605. From magnolias and rhododendrons to roses, maples and conifers, the plant lover will not be disappointed. As well, themed areas demonstrate historic gardening styles including a 17<sup>th</sup>-century Acadian-style potager, a knot garden, an 18<sup>th</sup>-century-style Governor's Garden, and a full-out color riot in the Victorian Garden. [www.historicgardens.com.webloc](http://www.historicgardens.com.webloc)

Open since 1981 with ten acres of cultivated gardens and seven of dykeland, the Gardens has received many awards, most recently in 2012 as one of the "5 North American Gardens Worth Traveling For" from the Canadian Garden Tourism Council. Walking the path, one turns a corner into an opening, looks out across the dyked lands to the distant hills, and feels something special. This is a stroll garden. A park-like setting of intimate gardens in a quiet corner of eastern Canada, adjacent to a tidal river influenced by the Bay of Fundy's world-highest tides that somehow evokes a deep feeling.

By early October, fall color will be dramatic. Japanese maples, witch hazels, parrotia, disanthus, smoke tree, dogwoods, and tupelo are highlights during foliage season. Herbaceous perennials, annuals, hydrangeas, and ornamental grasses will be in flower accompanied by fruits and berries from beautyberry, euonymous, hollies, and rosehips. Even the rhododendron collection, though not in flower, presents a beautiful composition with over 120 species and cultivars arranged under oaks in an area of pools and a waterfall. There are hybrids from Dexter, Steele, Muntz, Craig and Weagle, among others.

On the return to Dartmouth, we will stop for a break at Domaine de Grand Pré Winery outside Wolfville. Set in the midst of a vineyard, you will find hand-built masonry walls, an extensive stone terrace, and the shade of a pergola. Wine tasting, a light snack of locally-grown produce, or just a glass of water and a leg-stretching walk around the grounds are on the menu. [grandprewines.ns.ca](http://grandprewines.ns.ca)

**Self-guided Tours: Sunday, Monday.** Some private gardens in the Halifax region will be open to people who have their own transportation.

**Plant Sale: Saturday, Sunday morning.** The primary theme for the sale is plants that have been developed in this part of the world. Some of the plants are R. "Barbara Hall" (R. "Road Red" x R. "Prelude") by Capt Steele, R. "Nancy Steele" (R. aureum x R. "Prelude") by Capt Steele, Azalea "Steele's Late and Lovely", R. Bellefontaine (R. fortunei x R. smirnowii) by R.B.Pike, R. "Minas Grand Pre" (*R. catawbiense* var. *compactum* x *R. williamsianum*) by George Swain, R. "John T. Meagher" (*R. brachycarpum* Tigerstedtii Group x 'Mrs. T.H. Lowinsky') grown by the late John Meagher from a cross donated to the RSCAR seed exchange by Dave Hinton; *R. canadense* (white form), A. Scotian Breeze (*kiusianum* Berg x 'Lady Louise') by John Weagle, A. Scotian Mist {'Lady Louise' x ['Lady Louise' x (*nakaharai* Orange Form x *kiusianum* 'Mt. Fuji')#1-1]} by John Weagle.

Suppliers include James Ellison, Ken Shannik, Walter Ostrom, Jack Looye, and the late Diana Steele, among others.

**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.

**Tim Amos** trained at Niagara Parks School of Horticulture. He owned a landscape business in Nova Scotia's Annapolis Valley for 15 years before founding the Landscape Technician Program at Nova Scotia Community College Kingstec Campus in Kentville where he heads the department. In his talk, "Turf Tales: Confessions of a Barefoot Gardener", Tim will urge you to relax, take your shoes off, and enjoy that green sward. With the rejection of pesticides, gardeners are learning that the organic way isn't necessarily difficult and doesn't mean the lawn is full of weeds. Our gardens are in balance and less work if our soils are understood, healthy, and respected.

**Todd Boland** is Research Horticulturist at Memorial University of Newfoundland Botanical Garden in St. John's. He is a prolific writer and lecturer. His superb plant photos are all over the web. Todd's Field Guide to Trees & Shrubs of Newfoundland and Labrador is excellent - and useful here in NS too. He is well regarded as an alpinist, and was a speaker at the 2011 International Rock Garden Conference. Todd has a specific interest in breeding and selecting new hardy plant varieties, especially dwarf rhododendrons and selections of our native flora. He will introduce us to many of these plants and how they are used at the Botanical Garden in his Friday evening talk, "Native Plants as Companions in Your Garden."

**Jamie Ellison** graduated with a degree in Environmental Horticulture from N.S. Agricultural College. He worked at Memorial University Botanical Garden in St. Johns, NL and at Jack Drake's Alpine Nursery in Aviemore, Scotland. Today he instructs in the Landscape Technician Program at NSCC Kingstec in Kentville. Some of his specialties include plant propagation, alpine and ericaceous plants, landscape design, and a little plant breeding. He is an accomplished photographer of natural landscapes and macro images of plants and animals. In his talk "Photographing Your Gardens and Flowers", Jamie will take you on a photographic journey through some of the premier gardens of Nova Scotia. See some of these fabulous collections through the camera lens as Jamie sees them.

**Steve Hootman** is the personable Executive Director and Curator of the Rhododendron Species Foundation and Botanical Garden in Federal Way, Washington. He has played a determining role in making this one of the premier gardens in the world. He is an international plant hunter and an extraordinary lecturer and educator. His talks for us, "The Rhododendron Species Foundation Garden: some history, recent changes and new introductions" and "Highlights of Plant Hunting Expeditions in the Wilds of Asia" will be an enthralling combination of plants, cultivation, and adventure.

**Niki Jabbour** is a Nova Scotian horticulturist, prolific garden writer, blogger, broadcaster, food grower, and author of *The Year-Round Vegetable Gardener*, Storey Publishing, 2011. Her next book, with a release date set for Dec/Jan, is 'Groundbreaking Food Gardens: 73 Plans That Will Change the Way You Grow Your Garden'. Niki has been described by the founder of Kitchen Gardeners International as "an important voice of the new generation of garden writers [in] a new crop of gardeners pushing the limits of their climates and sharing their findings." Her talk "Crops in Pots", will focus on growing vegetables in containers. This method has its advantages as well as challenges, and is definitely easier on your back!

**Dr Bernard Jackson** founded, and for 22 years was Director of, the Memorial University Botanic Garden in St John's, NL, where he built a magnificent rock garden from scratch. Upon retiring to Truro, NS he created an even bigger rock garden on the campus of what is now the Agricultural campus of Dalhousie University (and formerly the NS Agricultural College) using only private funding. This magnificent garden is an inspiration to everyone who visits. In his talk, "Growing Alpines in Your Garden", this well-known and admired plants man will explain the requirements of alpine plants and how we can provide the correct conditions to succeed with this appealing part the floral kingdom.

**Walter Ostrom**, plants man, famous potter and former ceramics teacher at NSCAD University, and garden maker at Indian Harbour NS made the difficult decision to leave his beloved garden and relocate to the town of Lunenburg. In his talk, "Making a New Garden (when we are older)", Walter will tell us of the new possibilities he embraced, the heart-aches he endured, and lessons he can pass on when undertaking work on a new property.

**Christina Woodward**, daughter of hybridizer, Joe Brueckner, is the curator of her late father's studbooks. Since 2004, she has assumed care of the valuable horticultural inventory of over 500 named and unnamed Brueckner hybrids on her mother's 2-acre property in Mississauga, Ontario. In partnership with her mother, they revived an ailing garden and renewed interest in Joe Brueckner's rhododendrons.

**Nicholas Yarmoshuk** and his wife have been growing rhododendrons and azaleas on a 100' x 125' plot in downtown St. Catharines, Ontario since 1973. To see the gardens as they have evolved, go to <http://www.rhodoniagara.org/yarmoshuk.htm>. Since 1979, Nick has held numerous positions in the Niagara Region Chapter of RSC (Rhododendron Society of Canada) as well as President RSC and Chapter President and Co-Chair of the 1998 ARS Convention in Niagara Falls, Ontario. He received the Leslie Hancock Memorial Award in 1998. Currently he is an ARS director, representing District 12 (Niagara, Toronto, and Atlantic Chapters).

Christina and Nick will do a two-part presentation "Testing the Limits: Old Plants, New Methods, Enterprising Gardeners" in which the authors will describe Joe Brueckner's work, trace the east coast roots of the Brueckner hybridizing program, and speak to the contributions made by local and international specialists. They will also describe in detail the evolution of a rhododendron testing project in Niagara Region of which the Brueckner hybrids are an integral part.

**Hybridizers' Roundtable:** Saturday at noon.

**Conversation about the ARS:** with Laura Grant, ARS Executive Director: pre-dinner, Saturday evening.

**Dinner and a Show:** Saturday night. Live with Steve Hootman "... a consummate plantsperson, with a wide-ranging horticultural expertise. His talk was a first rate presentation - humourous and very inspiring." - Nick Yarmoshuk after Steve Hootman spoke to the Niagara chapter. ☺

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### Meconopsis punicea



M. punicea. [Photo Ian Christie]

We have grown *Meconopsis punicea* here for many years. The bright scarlet flowers attract many admirers, unfortunately the flowering plants usually die soon after flowering and even with hand pollination raising new plants from seed is not easy. We have however always had several plants which ensured continuity for this classic beauty.

I have been very fortunate to be able to go to Nepal and China 5 times with small groups of enthusiasts. We never saw the Fabled Big Blue poppy in flower as our visits were usually in Sept, Oct or November when I could afford the time to be away for around one month. These trips were very valuable to me as it showed just how versatile plants are growing in such a harsh element and in some severe inhospitable terrain and to see how plants could emerge from winter then produce superb flowers is a real triumph. We did see several Meconopsis species: *M. punicea*, *M. quintuplinervia*, *M. integrifolia*, *M. paniculata*, *M. wallichii*, *M. simplicifolia*, *M. gracilipes*, with many variations of *M. pratii*, *M. horridula*.

In 2003 we made a trip to Sichuan and the Tibetan plateau. A few plants of *M. punicea* grown from seed collected that year did not flower until 2005. One very unusual looking plant was to prove most interesting indeed, the flower spikes were taller and flower petals longer and often 6 to 8 petals, perhaps not such a striking red but I watched this plant with great care. As the season extended towards Autumn I noticed that the plant had produced runners all around the established crowns more like its close relative *M. quintuplinervia*. I waited for the plant to emerge in spring and to my great delight not only did it appear but many more small runners came up as well. I removed several and potted them up. They survived growing well so were planted out. A few were given away as a safeguard to friends who I knew would look after them. I have now propagated this plant for seven years and several well established clumps flower in the garden, these set seed without hand pollination. Seed or young plants have been donated to enthusiasts world-wide. I exhibited a large plant at the SRGC show in Aberdeen in 2011 which was judged by The Joint Rock Committee and awarded a P.C. At that time I decided to name the plant Sichuan Silk. Only plants divided from the original can have this name. All seedlings are sold as *M. punicea* as I have no firm evidence that all seedlings will be perennial, several planted out here have established well and continue to grow.

- Ian Christie



R. 'Great Eastern' in 2008



R. 'Great Eastern' in close-up. [Photos Stephen Archibald]

### ***Rhododendron 'Great Eastern'***

*This portrait appeared in the October 2003 Newsletter.*

*Rhododendron 'Great Eastern'* was in bloom in Wendy and John Cornwall's garden during the YWCA Garden Tour on the second Sunday in June about six years ago. It had a big effect on everyone that day. We acquired one in anticipation of the same result. After two years it looked nothing like the Cornwalls' specimen, so we moved it from a sunny location to a shadier and more protected spot amidst Indian Pear (*Amelanchier canadensis*, also known as Shadblow), False Holly (*Nemopanthus mucronatus*), and Hobblebush (*Viburnum alnifolium*). Three years later, it's a much happier plant.

The 'Great Eastern' in our garden is quite dense in habit. The new growth is occurring uniformly and everywhere there are branches. It looks as though it may be broader than it is tall. It now is about five feet high, and it's about 8 to 10 years old. Harold Greer, in *Greer's Guidebook to Available Rhododendrons*, third edition, suggests that a ten year old plant reaches about five feet. The smooth oblong foliage is an unexceptional-but-pleasing mid green. This plant is not in the high-performance foliage-plant category like a yak, *bureavii*, *oreotrephe*s or 'Golfer', but during the period of bloom and new growth, it may be peerless in our garden.

It puts on a joyful show that runs for about a month. The pink funnel-shaped florets appear in a tight truss that sits upright on the leaves. The flowers are deep pink at the slightly ruffled edge and graduate to a light pink with a yellow green blotch in the throat. At one point in the show, the pink blooms and the pale new leaves appear together. As the petioles and leaves emerge, the red stipules fall away like ribbons, so that the overall effect is reminiscent of a be-ribboned female Ukrainian dancer.

According to Greer, 'Great Eastern' is a *Fortunei* subsection hybrid developed in 1943 by the Massachusetts hybridizer Charles Dexter but was only registered in 1983 by the Scott Horticultural Foundation. The bonus with this plant, given its *Fortunei* lineage, is its fragrance. 'Great Eastern' started to show colour this year (2003) on June 13, at the same time as 'Bikini', 'Nova Zembla', 'Janet Blair', 'Polaris', and R. *kiusianum*.

- Sheila Stevenson

*The plant's current size is (10+ feet wide x 6.5 feet high) now that we've had it for 15 years or so. I look forward to seeing the Cornwall Great Eastern on the June 8 garden tour. - Ed*

## Primula Portraits

Our 2012 Steele lecturer, Pam Eveleigh, stirred up a lot of primula interest with her lecture and Truro workshop. These three portraits by our own primula enthusiast, Sterling Levy, originally appeared in 1993 editions of the ARHS Newsletter. Sterling generously provided candelabra seed to the workshop. As a result, some of us are thrilled to see an emerging crop of candelabra seedlings. Planted in the last week of December, the seeds sat as a frozen mass in a lidded tray in the garage window throughout the winter, and lo and behold, seedlings appeared around mid-April! - Ed

## Primula Japonica



A mixture of *P. japonica* seedlings. [ Photo Sterling Levy]

This primula is one of a group often called ‘candelabra primulas’. The name comes from the arrangement of the flower stems. The flowers are arranged in layers or tiers around a tall stem. Each layer blooms in turn from the bottom to the top. Some have as many as six levels which spreads the bloom period over several weeks.

*Primula japonica* is the best known and most common of this group. A Japanese species, it is hardy and easy to grow. It likes moisture and grows best in a rich acid soil with lots of organic matter. It is a good plant for damp woodland or a shady border.

The plants are large and vigorous, leaves can be over a foot long, and the flower stalks may be more than two feet tall. A fully mature plant might cover a two-foot circle. If you grow them leave lots of room between the plants. They may need to be divided every few years to maintain good health.

The most common flower colour is a purplish-red with flowers up to an inch wide. A good white form ('Potsford's White') and some selected red strains ('Miller's Crimson' or 'Valley Red') are available from seed suppliers. Seed labeled as *Primula Japonica* may yield plants with many colour variations. They self sow freely in the garden and seedlings will pop up each spring. Once you have this plant it will continue to replace any winter losses with new seedlings. Only the best shades should be saved and allowed to set seed. A clump of these primulas will add a splash of colour to the early summer garden.

In the winter the plant dies back to a large bud. As the weather gets cold, the thick roots contract and actually pull the bud below the soil surface. These buds are likely to rot if they are subjected to too much wet during the winter. Planting on a slope, where excess water can run off, will help them to survive our early spring freeze/thaw cycles.

Other candelabra to try are *P. chungensis*, *P. bulleyana*, *P. burmanica* or *P. pulverulenta*. During their growing season these plants like quite a lot of moisture. In fact, they are often called ‘bog primulas’ and are a prominent feature of what British gardeners call the damp garden. However, they will grow in quite dry conditions if they have some shade. You can still enjoy them without a bog in your back yard.

Many of the candelabra species will cross-pollinate so if you are growing a variety of them you may end up with hybrid seedlings in a wide range of colours. ☺



*Primula sieboldii* showing some of the various forms grown from seed.

### **Primula Sieboldii**

This is one of a group of primulas known as the ‘Asian woodland primulas’, so called because they are commonly found in open woods where they enjoy the shade and moist conditions.

*Primula sieboldii* is one of the most common and one of the best in this group. It is native to Korea, Japan, and Manchuria. In Japan it has been cultivated for centuries; many different forms have nurseries that specialize in growing only this primula.

The plant will form clumps of crinkled, heart-shaped leaves covered with fine hairs. It grows from a thin rhizome that creeps underground and will make a large plant if conditions are good. These clumps can be divided to produce new plants; small pieces of the rhizome will root and make a new plant as long as they are kept watered.

It often goes dormant in late summer, especially if the weather is hot and dry. In fact, it will look as if it is dying; the leaves turn yellow and may shrivel up. It is also slow to start growth in the spring so you must be careful not to dig it up during early spring cleanup. It is a good idea put some sort of marker in place to remind you.

The usual flower colour is a mauve-pink but there are excellent white, pale pink, and bi-coloured forms available. Blooms are often one colour on the face of the flower and a contrasting colour on the back. Also there are strains that have flowers with lacy petals which look very much like snowflakes. The flower can be up to an inch wide and grow in clusters at the top of stems that may be a foot tall.

*P. sieboldii* will thrive in good garden soil with lots of organic matter and ample moisture during the growing season. They will also grow in less than ideal conditions, even in a dry sunny spot although the blooms will not last as long. They prefer to have some light shade. They seem to be tough plants, winter hardy, and able to tolerate neglect and abuse. I have transplanted plants in full bloom without any problems. Seedlings have been left in very small pots for two years without regular watering or feeding. They suffered no apparent ill effects and grew normally when planted in the garden..

Garden plants may produce seed and it is not difficult to grow plants from seed. The seedlings usually bloom in their second year if they are kept moist, cool and well nourished. Although I have grown *P. sieboldii* in my garden for five or six years and now have seedlings from my own plants I still buy seed from various seed sources hoping for new and better forms of this lovely plant. ☺

## **Primula Denticulata**



Typical plant of *P. denticulata*

After a long winter we look forward to the first spring flowers. The snowdrops, crocus and aconites provide splashes of colour throughout the garden. Those of us who grow primula can look forward to the early flowering species. *Primula denticulata* is one of the best early flowering types.

It is an Asian species from the mountainous areas of Afghanistan through to western China.

*P. denticulata* is not a difficult plant to please. It will grow in ordinary garden soil as long as it is reasonably fertile and has a regular supply of moisture during the growing season. Like most primulas, it does not like drought.

The plants are deciduous in that they drop all their leaves and spend the winter as a large dormant bud sitting on the soil surface or just below. When the snow has gone and growth begins you can see the tight cluster of flower buds surrounded by a collar of small pointed leaves. The flower stem emerges first and as it elongates the flowers will open. The bloom stem will reach about 10 inches tall with a round ball of flowers on top. You can see where the common name of 'Drumstick Primula' comes from.

The common flower colour is purple but white, red, and pink strains are available. It grows readily from seed that is available from commercial sources as well as Plant Society seed exchanges.

In the garden you may get seed to set on your plants. Since they bloom so early however, often a late frost will damage the flowers and little or no seed is set. Also, some clones are self-sterile and need to be hand pollinated using pollen from another plant - especially if there are no pollinating insects.

The leaves eventually grow to about a foot in length and a mature plant will be a foot or more in width. Multiple crowned plants can be separated either very early in the season or after flowering. Keep the divisions well watered.

The plants are cold hardy but excess wet during the winter may cause problems with rotting. Choosing a sloped planting site where water can drain away is a good idea. ☀

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## **A Visit to Fraser's Thimble Farms**

**By Ruth Jackson**

One day in early March 2013, John Stanton and I arrived at Richard and Nancy Fraser's Thimble Farms on Salt Spring Island, one of the Gulf Islands not far from Victoria, B.C. Their plant nursery is located on the north end of the island and is nestled under towering conifers. Rows and rows of pots are tidily arranged over the site and there is not a weed.

Many of you may have ordered from their extensive 88-page catalogue that is loaded with treasures. Not only do they have an extensive inventory of native plants, but they also have many rare and hard-to-source plants. I am not sure where to begin to describe the possible choices from this nursery. Are you interested in obtaining hellebores, hardy orchids, hepaticas, trilliums, ferns, early flowering ephemerals, perennials, bulbs? You can find them in this nursery. It is particularly fortunate for us that Fraser's Thimble Farms with so many coveted offerings is in Canada; therefore, it is not necessary to obtain costly phytosanitary certificates in order to obtain their plants.

We arrived rather early in the season and on a cool day to find that there were hundreds, perhaps thousands, of hellebores blossoming. They call this profusion of bloom 'Hellaborganza'. The colours of the plants on offer ranged from deep purples almost black, pink, apricot, pale green, custard, and yellows - with singles and double forms. They have selections that are white and white spotted, as well as those that exhibit a picotee pattern. In addition to the wide selection of new strains of hybrid hellebores, they offer species. To see the amazing range you look at their website <http://www.thimblefarms.com>. In conversation with Richard he mentioned that he once ordered 1000 hellebore seeds at \$1.00 each hoping for a yellow seedling and did not get one. This incident provides a little insight into the dedication and trials required to operate a rare plant nursery.



Thimble Farms Nursery - Plant Display

Also in bloom early in the season was their selection of hepaticas that include a range of Japanese double flowering hepaticas. Although they are costly, up to \$145.00 for a large (for a hepatica) double pink with white centre, I learned this is a bargain basement price and that the prices have dropped substantially since the tsunami in Japan. They have moderately priced single blue flowered varieties and others with white flowers and blue stamens that non aficionados like me actually prefer.

In the nursery there is a large selection of hardy terrestrial orchids that seem to do well in our gardens. They even offer advice in their catalogue for looking after our native lady slipper, *Cypripedium acaule*. They suggest feeding regularly with a weak acidifying fertilizer. This fertilizing regime has worked well for me.

Nancy, who looks after the plant orders, was pleased to meet one of her customers from the east coast and wondered if I was Donna Evers. I had to disappoint her in this and reveal the truth. I learned while we were chatting how much they appreciate our business from the east. Nancy mentioned that they had never been to the Maritimes and were quite interested in traveling here. Richard revealed that he was working on a presentation on hellebores. I am sure the ARHS would enjoy meeting them and learning from their extensive experience with a wide range of plant material. Bob Howard has sent them an invitation to speak to us next year and Donna Evers plans to contact them offering them a place to stay. I am sure they will enjoy seeing what happens to the plants they have shipped east. Nancy says she often wonders about their fate. ☾



Hepatica



Helleborus hybrid

## Behind the Scenes at Your Seed Exchange

By Sharon Bryson, ARHS Seed Exchange Chair

We have been dealing with the annual Seed Exchange since 2002. The years certainly go by quickly. We thought it might be time to give some glimpses into the day-to-day functioning of the Exchange.

The really busy time is after the seed list has gone out to members and orders arrive to be filled. The actual process starts much earlier with reminders to donors in the summer that seeds will be required for the upcoming exchange. Each year we try to get seeds sent to us by early December, so that the list can be put together before January first. We have pretty much followed the same format for the list year after year. I hope the wheel doesn't need to be reinvented. The 2013 Exchange was a bit different with the distribution of the list electronically for the most part. If anything, this may have improved efficiency.

Donated seeds are organized, repackaged and labeled. Stock packs of seed usually go in a glassine envelope which then may have another external envelope for labeling and easier filing. Occasionally seeds need to be cleaned, a job Bill dutifully fulfills.

In the last several years we have been trying to give cold and or warm treatments to some varieties that need special treatment. The time lapse between seed gathering and dispensing is quite long and having this step hopefully helps in getting reasonable germination.

Getting seeds from disparate sources makes for a certain amount of grateful optimism.

Magnolia seed was the first recipient of special treatment, since it has quite stringent requirements for moisture and cold periods. Bill has been looking after many of these seeds, cleaning and packaging them up when orders are received. We have quite a little stash of moss packed bags in a plastic bin in our spare fridge. Our arrangement isn't very hi-tech. Empty plastic storage or freezer bag boxes are about the proper size for the packs.



The boxes also fit in an empty plastic salad green container which has a tightly fitting cover. This guards against a spill and it can also be stored in the fridge in the “off season”. Those pesky leftovers get saved, at least for a reasonable period. As the list gets put together, a new database with all the pertinent information for each seed lot is created. A second companion database gets used for orders as they come in. Labels for the seed packs and mailing labels are generated from these two files. The software used is from PrimaSoft and is actually called PhotoOrganizer Deluxe, but is totally adaptable for many purposes.

The search feature means we can find what was ordered years ago.

For the last few years I have created an online version of the Seed List. It is hoped that some of the extended information available there is helpful when members are making up their orders. It also allows posting which seed lots have become unavailable – important for later orders. <http://www.willowgarden.net/page2/2013%20webSeedList.html>

Filling orders is always quite a little task. There is nothing very difficult, but many little steps seem to be involved. All the orders are dated and numbered as they arrive and the lots are added to the tally. After a reasonable period labels are printed, placed on the glassine envelopes, arranged numerically and then seeds are added.

An excel file also contains order information, a tally for seed lot numbers, a record of expenses incurred and a page for generating a list of payments sent to our treasurer along with funds.

#	QTY								
001	3	003	3	004	2	005	2	006	2
007	4	008	3	009	3	010	5	011	4
012	3	013	1	014	2	015	2	016	2
017	3	018	1	019	1	020	3	021	8
022	2	023	1	024	1	025	3	026	2
027	2	028	2	029	1	030	2	031	2
032	3	033	3	034	2	035	2	036	2
037	2	038	1	039	1	040	3	041	2
042	2	043	2	044	2	045	2	046	2
047	3	048	1	049	2	050	2	051	3
052	2	053	2	054	1	055	3	056	1
057	2	058	1	059	1	060	1	061	1
062	2	063	4	064	2	065	3	066	1
067	2	068	1	069	2	070	3	071	1
072	2	073	2	074	1	075	1	076	1
077	2	078	1	079	1	080	1	081	1
082	2	083	1	084	1	085	2	086	1
087	2	088	1	089	1	090	1	091	1
092	4	093	4	094	2	095	2	096	4
097	4	098	4	099	2	100	3	101	4
102	2	103	2	104	1	105	1	106	1
107	4	108	4	109	2	110	2	111	4
112	4	113	4	114	2	115	2	116	4
117	4	118	4	119	2	120	2	121	4
122	4	123	4	124	2	125	2	126	4
127	4	128	4	129	2	130	2	131	4
132	4	133	4	134	2	135	2	136	4
137	4	138	4	139	2	140	2	141	4
142	4	143	4	144	2	145	2	146	4
147	4	148	4	149	2	150	2	151	4
152	4	153	4	154	2	155	2	156	4
157	4	158	4	159	2	160	2	161	4
162	4	163	4	164	2	165	5	166	1
167	4	168	4	169	2	170	5	171	1
172	4	173	4	174	2	175	5	176	1
177	4	178	4	179	2	180	5	181	1
182	4	183	4	184	2	185	5	186	1
187	4	188	4	189	2	190	5	191	1
192	4	193	4	194	2	195	5	196	1
197	4	198	4	199	2	200	5	201	1
202	4	203	4	204	2	205	5	206	1
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212	4	213	4	214	2	215	5	216	1
217	4	218	4	219	2	220	5	221	1
222	4	223	4	224	2	225	5	226	1
227	4	228	4	229	2	230	5	231	1
232	4	233	4	234	2	235	5	236	1
237	4	238	4	239	2	240	5	241	1
242	4	243	4	244	2	245	5	246	1
247	4	248	4	249	2	250	5	251	1
252	4	253	4	254	2	255	5	256	1
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272	4	273	4	274	2	275	5	276	1
277	4	278	4	279	2	280	5	281	1
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377	4	378	4	379	1	380	3	381	1
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462	4	463	4	464	1	465	3	466	1
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472	4	473	4	474	1	475	3	476	1
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547	4	548	4	549	1	550	3	551	1
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562	4	563	4	564	1	565	3	566	1
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572	4	573	4	574	1	575	3	576	1
577	4	578	4	579	1	580	3	581	1
582	4	583	4	584	1	585	3	586	1
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592	4	593	4	594	1	595	3	596	1
597	4	598	4	599	1	600	3	601	1
602	4	603	4	604	1	605	3	606	1
607	4	608	4	609	1	610	3	611	1
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622	4	623	4	624	1	625	3	626	1
627	4	628	4	629	1	630	3	631	1
632	4	633	4	634	1	635	3	636	1
637	4	638	4	639	1	640	3	641	1
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672	4	673	4	674	1	675	3	676	1
677	4	678	4	679	1	680	3	681	1
682	4	683	4	684	1	685	3	686	1
687	4	688	4	689	1	690	3	691	1
692	4	693	4	694	1	695	3	696	1
697	4	698	4	699	1	700	3	701	1
702	4	703	4	704	1	705	3	706	1
707	4	708	4	709	1	710	3	711	1
712	4	713	4	714	1	715	3	716	1
717	4	718	4	719	1	720	3	721	1
722	4	723	4	724	1	725	3	726	1
727	4	7							

I set up all the necessary odds and ends on the table when filling packages. The cat is optional.



Once the required number of packs are done, individual orders are put together and readied for mailing.

The lag time between when I receive an order and when the seeds are shipped is based upon several practical reasons.

- it is more efficient to print off multiple labels
- less manipulation of stock seeds is required when doing several packages
- better allocation of seeds by quantity

This year saw the list and orders get out quite a bit earlier. Later orders are usually filled on a one by one basis since they arrive in dribs and drabs. As shocking as it may seem, I do believe we may have to make a slight increase in handling costs in the coming year. Postage and envelope costs have both increased over the years.

One rather distressing aspect of these many years doing the Seed Exchange is the minimal amount of feedback I have been able to obtain. No amount of persuasion seems to have much influence.

The process for 2013 seems to be pretty well over. We have dispensed close to 450 packets with a dollar value of ~\$750.00. This was accomplished with ~35 orders. It is unfortunate that there will be many leftover seeds for which we never seem to find a very satisfactory solution. I continue to welcome any useful ideas for these “orphans”.

A reminder that the success of the Seed Exchange has as much to do with the continued participation of members as seed donors and purchasers as it does with the “administration”. ☺



R ‘Goldfort’

## **Chapter Reports for District 12 ARS (American Rhododendron Society)**

### **Atlantic Rhododendron and Horticultural Society. Report by Cora Swinamer, President**

The Atlantic Chapter has focused on preparing for the ARS Fall Conference this coming October 4-6th. We have secured a fabulous line-up of guest speakers and some great tours of both horticultural and historic significance. In addition, we continue with our annual plant sales including a members pre-ordered and a large public plant sale that receives wide spread attendance. The ARHS hosted an impressive speaker line up this past season including a great talk and workshop on Primula by Calgarian Pam Eveleigh, Nova Scotian Bruce Clyburne on Hybridizing Rhododendrons and Nick Turland speaking on Plant Hunting in China. We have continued to work on plotting plant hardiness information of various Rhododendrons in our member gardens using the Geographical Information System (GIS). The website is now live but still requires some fine tuning and additional plotting of plants. ARS membership in this Chapter totals 35 members.

### **Niagara Region Chapter Rhododendron Society of Canada Report by Sondra Meis, President**

The Niagara Region Chapter had another successful year, building on the foundation put in place over a number of years, emphasizing value to the members across a spectrum of initiatives including:

- 1 Affordable, desirable plants at the Annual Plant Sale;
- 2 Plants for Members (P4Ms) that are Niagara proven performers;
- 3 Opportunity to participate in the Brueckner Hybrids Evaluation Program;
- 4 Bringing in outstanding speakers that are passionate and engaging about their field of specialty; and
- 5 Social events held at members' gardens that provide a glimpse of how experienced gardeners have developed their rhododendron/azaleas beds and private oases.

ARS membership today stands at 30 members. The Briggs Plant awards for increasing our ARS membership last year over year by 10% were distributed to our ARS members. They were delighted to receive them. It seems like a virtuous circle, as, early in 2013 we were told that we had won the award for a second year.

By inviting Steve Hootman as a speaker, we strengthened our relationship with The Species Foundation. Some adventurous members are taking it to the next level by ordering RSF plants to see how they fare in Niagara. We also donated \$1,000. to that organization to encourage their plant expeditions and plant dissemination.

The Niagara Chapter also values its relationships with owner-managed plant nurseries that are helping to supply the local market by importing and/or growing rhododendrons, azaleas and companion plants.

These accomplishments were achieved by a seasoned Board and an expanded group of committed volunteers who are the life blood of any successful not-for-profit group.

### **Toronto Region Rhododendron and Horticultural Society Report by Kris Vikmanis, Past President**

2012 was another successful year for the Toronto Society of ARS District 12 according to many measures.

The work that we undertook three years ago to assist the Toronto Parks Department with the renovation and rejuvenation of a badly flood-damaged rhodo bed in Toronto's largest public park – Edwards Gardens – has become our major public gardens project. The 21 beds containing Toronto's largest collection of rhodos had been neglected, overwhelmed by uninvited weeds, shrubs and trees, accelerated by the change in drainage patterns and soil conditions post flood.

Our initial foray into the most badly damaged of the beds has gained momentum, as our partnership with the parks

department has evolved. It has become a visible manifestation of the public service contribution of our society, attracting new members as well as stimulating long-standing members to contribute work hours to this long term project.

Last year, we received grants from both the Ontario Horticultural Association (OHA) and the OHA District 5 (our local district) totaling \$750, in support of both our work systematically rejuvenating beds and, interestingly, the relocation of a few lonely rhodos from an area that had essentially become a bog and replacing them with appropriate, wet-feet loving native plant materials.

While the latter was somewhat a departure from our society's mission, it was an interesting manifestation of "the right plant in the right location". The most frequently asked question at plant sales, garden shows and other venues where we speak to the public is "My rhodo did well for, oh, five or six years, but now it's not blooming anymore. It's not dead or anything, but it just isn't performing. What's wrong? ". The answer is often: "Has its environment changed?". We experienced and remedied the same situation, but on a much larger scale basis.

One benefit of getting our society on a more viable financial footing, largely due to more effective and profitable plant sales as well as cost reductions due to the shift to electronic communications, has been the freeing up of modest funds to support our work in the public gardens. It has also improved our visibility both among the gardening public and the general public who visit Edwards Gardens. However, as all gardeners know, the initial cost of planting (or replanting) a garden is just the beginning. As we extend the number of beds we take care of, a higher percentage of available funds (and available energy) is taken up by maintenance.

Membership continues to be roughly at 100 members, with new members offsetting attrition. We added an additional meeting to our calendar. We also reintroduced the popular pot luck dinners at member homes after two society meetings last year – we had lost sight of the fact that if people share an interest AND become friends, they develop a stronger bond to the society. ARS membership totals 17 members.

Clearly holding meetings in interesting locations also has drawing power – the Toronto Rhododendron Society was represented in record numbers at the convention in Asheville, NC last spring.

Our Executive held a two-day retreat in June 2012, to step back from the regular executive meeting agenda items and focus on longer term issues: mandate refresh, membership attraction and retention strategies, public education, public gardens, etc. We came back from the two very busy days at the magnificent summer home of board member Larry Lundy with new energy and focus, ready to take on new and refine age-old challenges. ☰



Seedlings from open pollinated *R. poukhanense*, a hardy evergreen azalea . [Photo S. Levy]

## **Positions of Responsibility 2012 - 2013**

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

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

### **Other Positions of Responsibility**

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

## **Evergreen Ferns**

Asplenium trichomanes – Maidenhair Spleenwort  
Blechnum spicant – Deer Fern (acid soil only)  
Dryopteris marginalis – Marginal Wood Fern  
Dryopteris erythrosora – Autumn Fern  
Cyrtomium fortunei – Fortune's Holly Fern  
Polystichum acrostichoides – Christmas Fern  
Phyllitis (Asplenium) scolopendrium - Hart's Tongue Fern (alkaline soils)  
Polystichum acrostichoides – Christmas Fern  
Polystichum braunii – Braun's Holly Fern  
Polystichum setiferum – Soft Shield Fern

## **Sun Tolerant Ferns<sup>1</sup>**

Asplenium trichomanes – Maidenhair Spleenwort  
Athyrium filix-femina – Lady Fern  
Athyrium x 'Ghost' – Ghost Lady Fern  
Dryopteris affinis – Male Fern  
Matteuccia struthiopteris – Ostrich (aka Fiddlehead) Fern  
Onoclea sensibilis - Sensitive Fern  
Osmunda regalis – Royal Fern  
Polypodium spp. – Rock Polypodies  
Woodsia spp. – Cliff Ferns

## **Ferns for Deep Shade**

Adiantum pedatum- Maidenhair Fern  
Phyllitis (Asplenium) scolopendrium - Hart's Tongue Fern (alkaline soil)  
Athyrium filix-femina - Lady Fern  
Blechnum spicant - Deer Fern (acid soil only)  
Cyrtomium fortunei – Fortune's Holly Fern  
Dryopteris dilatata - Broad Wood Fern  
Dryopteris filix-mas - Male Fern  
Gymnocarpium dryopteris - Oak Fern  
Polystichum acrostichoides - Christmas Fern  
Polystichum braunii - Braun's Holly Fern  
Polystichum setiferum - Soft Shield Fern

## **Ferns for Wet Soils**

Athyrium filix-femina – Lady Fern  
Dryopteris carthusiana - Spinulose Wood Fern  
Dryopteris clintoniana – Interrupted Fern  
Dryopteris goldiana - Goldie's Wood Fern  
Matteuccia struthiopteris - Ostrich Fern  
Onoclea sensibilis - Sensitive Fern  
Osmunda cinnamomea - Cinnamon Fern  
Osmunda regalis - Royal Fern  
Woodwardia areolata – Netted Chain Fern

## **Drought Tolerant Ferns<sup>2</sup>**

Athyrium filix-femina - Lady Fern  
Athyrium niponicum 'Pictum' cvs. – Japanese Painted Fern and cultivars  
Dryopteris filix-mas - Male Fern  
Dryopteris intermedia – Fancy Wood Fern  
Polystichum acrostichoides - Christmas Fern  
Woodsia spp. – Cliff Ferns

## **Ferns for Colour**

Athyrium 'Ghost' – Ghost Lady Fern  
Athyrium filix-femina forma rubellum (Lady in Red)  
Athyrium niponicum 'Pictum' cvs. – Japanese Painted Fern cultivars  
Dryopteris erythrosora – Autumn Fern  
Onoclea sensibilis – Sensitive Fern  
Osmunda regalis 'Purpurascens' – Purple Stemmed Royal Fern  
Woodwardia areolata- Netted Chain Fern

## **Groundcover Ferns**

Dennstaedtia punctilobula – Hay-scented Fern (very assertive – needs space)  
Gymnocarpium dryopteris 'Plumosum' – Plumed Oak Fern  
Matteuccia struthiopteris - Ostrich (aka Fiddlehead) Fern  
Onoclea sensibilis - Sensitive Fern  
Theypteris decursive-pinnata – Japanese Beech Fern

## **Ferns for Containers**

Adiantum pedatum- Maidenhair Fern  
Phyllitis (Asplenium) scolopendrium - Hart's Tongue Fern  
Asplenium trichomanes - Maidenhair Spleenwort  
Athyrium niponicum 'Pictum' cvs. – Japanese Painted Fern cultivars  
Cyrtomium Fortunei – Fortune's Holly Fern  
Dryopteris affinis - Male Fern  
Dryopteris dilatata cvs. – Broad Wood Fern  
Dryopteris erythrosora - Autumn Fern  
Osmunda regalis - Royal Fern  
Polystichum setiferum cvs. - Soft Shield Fern

## **Ferns for Rock Gardens**

Asplenium trichomanes – Maidenhair Spleenwort  
Cheilanthes lanosa – Hairy Lip Fern  
Cryptogramma acrostichoides – Parsley Fern  
Polypodium spp. – Rock Polypodies  
Woodsia spp. – Cliff Ferns

## **Xeric Ferns**

Cheilanthes lanosa – Hairy Lip Fern

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<sup>1</sup> If soil is kept moist and mid-day sun is avoided.

<sup>2</sup> Once well established for 1-2 seasons.

# REGISTRATION FORM

Hosted by District 12 Atlantic

ARS Eastern Regional Fall Conference, October 4-6, 2013



Please PRINT – Names should be as you wish them to appear on your conference badge

Registrant #1 \_\_\_\_\_

Registrant #2 \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip/Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_ (for confirmation of registration)

ARS Chapter\*: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Garden Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

\*Please indicate if you are an ARS Board Member, District Director or Chapter president

Day	Item	Details	Reg. #1	Reg. #2	Price	Total
	Registration	Postmarked up until Aug 31			\$50	
	Late Registration	Postmarked after Aug 31			\$65	
Fri Oct 4	Tour A: 4 hours	Historic City & Boulderwood Garden			\$40	
Sat Oct 5	Tour B: 5 hours	Peggy's Cove Barrens & former Ostrom Garden			\$45	
Sat Oct 5	Dinner	Buffet Banquet with two hot entrees			\$48	
Sun Oct 6	Tour C: 7.5 hours	Annapolis Royal Historic Gardens Tour			\$80	
<b>Total Amount Due</b>						

## Registration Procedure:

1. To attend any conference activity you must be registered.
2. Your payment is refundable, in case of cancellation, up until August 15, 2013
3. Registration forms postmarked after August 31, 2013 must pay the late registration fee.
4. Please provide an e-mail address, if you have one, in case of any questions.
5. Confirmation will be sent by e-mail, or by post, if no e-mail is provided.
6. You may pay the amount due in either Canadian or American dollars.
7. Make your cheque/money order payable to **ARS CONVENTION**
8. Send your completed form with a cheque or money order to:

**Anitra Laycock, Registrar  
9 Brennan's Branch Lane,  
Prospect Bay, Nova Scotia, Canada, B3T 2A2**

**Questions?** Contact Anitra Laycock : e-mail [alaycock@eastlink.ca](mailto:alaycock@eastlink.ca) or by phone at (902) 852-2502

**Hotel:** A block of rooms has been set aside at the conference rate of \$129 at the Holiday Inn Harbourview in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. To make a booking, contact the hotel directly at [reservations@hiharbourview.ca](mailto:reservations@hiharbourview.ca), and specify you will be attending the ARS Fall Conference. You may extend your stay pre or post conference at this same rate.