

# AtlanticRhodo

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

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# Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society

## Our Mission

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

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Photos by Stephen Archibald, Sharon Bryson, Trish Fry, Tracy Jessens and John Weagle.

## Membership

### Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society.

Fees are \$20.00 from September 1, 2014 to August 31, 2015, due September 2014. For benefits see ARHS website [www.atlanticrhodo.org](http://www.atlanticrhodo.org)

**American Rhododendron Society:** ARHS is a chapter in District 12 of the American Rhododendron Society. Combined ARHS and ARS membership cost is \$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 **Gloria Hardy 47 Melwood Ave. Halifax, NS B3N 1E4**

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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Cover Photo: *Magnolia sieboldii* at The Annapolis Royal Historical Gardens. [Photo Trish Fry]



## 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. We welcome anyone sharing our interest in plants and gardens'.

**Tuesday, May 5**

***Members-to-Members Plant Sale*** 6141 Watt Street, Halifax. LeMarchant-St. Thomas School  
7:30 sale starts.

In addition to 'unusual and choice' plants, we want to broaden the variety of plants on offer this year, for members who are still establishing their gardens or are extending or renewing their plantings. We encourage members to bring divisions of their 'good -doers' and favourites. Photos of your plants, if available, will be much appreciated by potential buyers. Each plant should have two labels, one identifying the plant, the other naming the seller and the price. Members are reminded that they keep the proceeds of their sales.

Tables are available at the School, but sellers should arrive early to help with set-up, and be prepared to assist with clean-up at the end.

**Saturday, June 13.**

***Annual Garden Tour and Potluck Supper*** Hosts: Frances and Tom Howard, Dartmouth.  
Sunday June 14 Rain date. Details are elsewhere in this issue.

**Wednesday, Sept 16**

***Hollies for Nova Scotia: The neglected genus*** David Osborn

David Osborn has been growing and hybridizing hollies in Shelburne County for 10 years. His breeding goals include more hardiness, more interesting leaf colour and plant form, and heat and wind tolerance. He says, "There are a surprising number of holly species that could be grown in Nova Scotia but are not. The presentation will detail what is available, with photographs and some plants in pots". His gardening interests are eclectic from hollies to rhododendrons to rock gardens to hardy cacti to zone denial-with-monkey puzzle trees, *Magnolia grandiflora*, Osmanthus etc. ... "In short", he says, "all plants".

**Tuesday, Oct 6.**

***Pruning: a practical workshop*** A Panel of Sharp Gardeners

**Tuesday, Nov 3.**

***Steele Lecture*** George Woodard

George Woodard is the Superintendent at the Howard Phipps Estate in Old Westbury Long Island, an important horticultural estate on Long Island. He is a long-time member of the New York chapter of the American Rhodo Society and former chair of the ARS Seed Exchange. He received the ARS bronze medal for his service to the chapter as well as 30 years of rhododendron hybridizing to combine the colors and superior truss sizes of the west with the hardiness of the eastern hybrids. With a connection to family and friends in Halifax, he knew and knows our rhodo heroes here in NS, and feels honoured to give the Steele lecture.  
<http://oldwestburygardens.org>

**Tuesday, Dec 1**

***Christmas Party***

- ◆ When weather conditions require us to cancel a meeting, you will be notified by email, ARHS facebook page, and online at the CBC Storm Center <http://www.cbc.ca/stormcentre/> Check before heading out!
- ◆ It helps so much to have an up-to-date email address for each of you. Be sure that Gloria Hardy, our membership coordinator, has your current phone number and email address. Connect with her through <http://atlanticrhodo.org/contact-us/> or by phone at 902-477-4411
- ◆ Bob Howard is keen for you to have ideas about topics and speakers . Phone 902-532- 0834 . Or <http://atlanticrhodo.org/contact-us/> .

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

## Editor's Notes

- ◆ Now 211 individuals in the Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society Facebook group (up from 95 one year ago). Post and see questions, events, and plant and garden photos on the page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/340130989363045/>
- ◆ It's not so great when the food at our June pot luck starts to run out before everyone has had a chance at the buffet table. ... Enough said?
- ◆ A great quote from the late Christopher Lloyd used by Jenny Sandison in her March presentation, as she took us on a delightful visit to several English gardens, "*Low maintenance means not interesting.*"
- ◆ Berwick-based plant lover and wetland ecologist, Nick Hill, delivered a fascinating presentation at the April meeting, featuring *Geum peckii* on Brier Island. aka the Eastern Mountain Avens, this native plant is now endangered. <http://www.speciesatrisk.ca/SARGuide/download/Eastern%20Mountain%20Avens.pdf>
- ◆ I hope we can recount more of the story in a future issue. In the meantime, check out (and promote) these summer 2015 wetland field courses offered by the Fernhill Institute with Acadia University's KC Irving Environmental Science Center & the Harriet Irving Botanical Garden. <http://fernhillns.ca/fernhillnsWP/http://botanicalgardens.acadiau.ca/news-reader-5899/items/id-2015-wetland-field-courses-5487.html>
- ◆ The ARHS Passionate Plants Person award at NSCC Kingstec in Kentville will be presented at their Awards Night, June 12. Congratulations and best wishes to this year's recipient, Aaron Staples. We hope to see his passion at work in Nova Scotia.
- ◆ Our sympathy to the families of Robin Lee and King Butler, two ARHS members who recently passed.



Seizing the moment at a recent meeting to officially present John Weagle, at last, with his ARS Bronze Award of Merit for all he has done over the years, for us in the region and beyond. [Photo: Stephen Archibald]

## 2015 ARHS Members' Garden Tour

Our social coordinator, Ralph Pineau, says:

**You may visit the gardens in any order and at any time between 1pm and 5 pm Saturday June 6**  
(rain date June 7)

**The potluck supper at 5 pm is being hosted by Frances and Tom Howard, 55 North St, Dartmouth.**

**Bring picnic food and seating.** Non-alcoholic beverages will be provided. BYOB if you like.

### The GARDENS

1. John Casavechia **2560 Lawrencetown Rd** An ocean side garden with over 80 rhodos, azaleas, and magnolias.
2. Kit Hood **526 West Lawrencetown Rd.** Member Bonnie Snow has arranged for us to visit her neighbor's garden. Kit Hood's garden was originally planted about 40 yrs ago by Admiral Landymore, an associate of Captain Steele, with stock from Hall's Rd and Bayport Nurseries. Bonnie also has the original planting journal and will be on hand during the tour.
3. Mary Jane Scott **1150 Cow Bay Rd, Eastern Passage** This seaside perennial garden has evolved over the past 15 years. A large property consisting of 20-plus beds, diversely planted with a variety of shrubs and trees, and scattered plantings of rare and unique perennials. Perennials include collections of epimedium, hemerocallis, hosta, iris, and peonies.
4. Bob Pettipas **12 Edmond Dr, Dartmouth** A small garden about 25 yrs old featuring a collection of rhododendrons, magnolias, and dogwoods grown mostly from tissue culture. (Bob managed the tissue culture sale for the society in the '90s)
5. Lyla Maclean **13 Hawthorne St, Dartmouth** A specimen garden, which includes a pond and very mature rhododendrons. The plantings include many ARHS purchases: rhodies, azaleas, bamboo, grasses, magnolias, Japanese maples, hostas etc. Due to many changes over the years there are both mature and new gardens beds.
6. Sullivan's Pond **Crichton Avenue and Hawthorne St, Dartmouth.** The survivors in a collection of 11 rhododendrons moved to the park in 2004 from the Alex Muntz woods in Upper Clements, Annapolis County. Bob Pettipas has the story: *The year they were planted was followed by that exceptionally cold winter and six plants died. Only five remain and only one of those is a Muntz cross. The other four I believe are - Grand Pre, County of York, Coe, and possibly a Bellefontaine. Four are on the North West corner end of the Sullivan's Pond area and the County of York across the road by Lake Banook.*
7. Jeff Chown **37 Jamieson St, Dartmouth** This relatively new garden on a corner city lot includes a series of dry-stack stone retaining walls, a terraced area, raised beds for young ericaceous shrubs and dwarf conifers, and a four -square garden for food production.
8. Bonnie Purcell **254 Prince Arthur Ave, Dartmouth** An 8-year-old garden with shrubs, perennials, native trees, and pond.
9. Frances and Tom Howard **55 North St, Dartmouth** An informal cottage garden with Japanese and wood anenomes, michaelmas daisies, azaleas, and a cottage that started life the year before Franklin sailed to the Arctic.

## May 16 - 17 Annapolis Royal Rare and Unusual Horticultural Weekend

Reserve tickets via email: [jill@bunchberrynurseries.ca](mailto:jill@bunchberrynurseries.ca) Space is limited, especially for the Saturday Social.

### Saturday Seminars 12:30pm – 5:00pm.

St Luke's Hall, 342 Saint George Street in downtown Annapolis Royal

Three talks, each about one hour

- Harvey Wrightman of Wrightman Alpines. *Alpines and Rock Gardening*
- John Brett. *Gardening with Rhododendrons in Coastal Nova Scotia*
- Jill Covill of Bunchberry Nurseries. *Intriguing Trees and Shrubs for Atlantic Canada*

Seminar Tickets include all three presentations \$45. Reserve via email [jill@bunchberrynurseries.ca](mailto:jill@bunchberrynurseries.ca)

### Saturday Social

A Rare and Unusual Horticultural Social will follow the seminars at the historic Hillsdale House.

Enjoy some wine and hors d'oeuvres while you mingle and talk plants with the featured speakers.

Social Tickets \$15. Reserve via email [jill@bunchberrynurseries.ca](mailto:jill@bunchberrynurseries.ca)

### Sunday's 6th Annual Sale 1 - 4pm

Farmer's Market, downtown Annapolis Royal across from the wharf.

Entry is free; plenty of parking. 15+ vendors and the plants they think are their best and most suitable for our Maritime region, and a crowd of plant enthusiasts eagerly browsing the tables and hoping to see that special plant.

**The whole weekend** is filled with fun things for gardeners

- ◆ Over 100 specimens and 28 varieties of magnolias are on show throughout the town. For a downloadable plant list and map, [https://celebratingmagnolias.files.wordpress.com/2010/04/magnolia\\_tour\\_2013.pdf](https://celebratingmagnolias.files.wordpress.com/2010/04/magnolia_tour_2013.pdf)
- ◆ The Annapolis Royal Historic Gardens is full of spring-blooming plants and will be open for strolling.
- ◆ May 16 is opening day for the 2015 season of The Annapolis Royal Farmers' and Traders' Market, 8 am to 1 pm, right across from the wharf and King's Theater
- ◆ For info about where to stay and eat, Explore Annapolis Royal at <http://www.exploreannapolisroyal.com/> ☒

## Garden Portrait

### The Dartmouth Garden of Frances and Tom Howard

This house was already a year old when Sir John Franklin set off for the Arctic. It was originally a very small cottage built and lived in, side by side, by two carpenter brothers, but has had additions such as a staircase in the 1860s when new owners found going upstairs via a ladder and a hole in the ceiling very awkward.

I think most of the time the garden was just a useful yard for the pony and cart and building materials; we found pony horseshoes and the drive was unusually wide, just right for turning a horse pulling a cart.

We inherited some excellent raspberries and rhubarb and a few shrubs but nothing more, so nearly all the plants and plans are relatively new. We have tried to keep the layout cottagey and Victorian.

We have several walking paths edged with narrow beds but most of our rhododendrons are fairly new, as we are to this society. We find azaleas do better here and don't mind the winter wind which sweeps up from the harbour and which causes the rhodos much distress, we have had them blown out of the ground. Azaleas are tougher and so bright and colorful.

We like to have flowers from the first crocus and wood anemones to the last michaelmas daisies and Japanese anemones, the favorite food of hundreds of bumblebees, and other plants get tucked in here and there in haphazard and untidy and unruly fashion. It is not a very formal garden. ☒

- **Frances Howard**

# My Time at Kew

By Tracy Jessens (Photos by Author)



My project is heavily inspired by this visit to the London Wetlands

If you're a gardener, you love plants. But have you ever considered the positive influence you have on the environment, on your communities, and the economy through gardening? We know the benefits of plants: they generate the air we breathe, prevent run-off and erosion, are our food, our clothing, our medicine. And sometimes we need to be reminded of how important plants are to our survival.

In May 2014, I got a chance to spend five weeks at London's Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, learning how reliant we are on plants, how ecosystems are being threatened, and how we can protect the plants we love and depend on through education. With financial support from my employer, the Municipality of Halifax, and a scholarship from the Chanticleer Foundation Botanical Gardens in Pennsylvania, I was able to attend a course on Botanic Garden Education.

The first part of the course, and the most rewarding, was getting to know my fellow students and their respective horticultural experience. We were 9 participants coming from 7 different countries including Latvia, Greece, Norway, Oman, China, and a fellow Canadian from British Columbia, with educational backgrounds varying from bachelor degrees to doctorates. Some were educators, but all studied biology and plants.

Our classroom was in the Herbarium and Library building on Kew property. <http://www.kew.org/visit-kew-gardens> We were fortunate to get a tour of the facility and even got to see herbarium specimens from Darwin himself! Getting to walk to Kew everyday with its Palm House and conservatory, Kew Palace, and Pagoda seemed surreal and I tried to treasure every moment. Each day we would have many presenters: everyone an authority in their own field. Topics ranged from international legislation and policy, science, and fundraising to communication, interpretation, creative arts, and storytelling.

We kept a daily journal, made several presentations, participated in group work, and had a final project to keep in mind. In order to receive the International Diploma in Botanic Garden Education each participant must propose and complete a final project in their home gardens.

During the 5 weeks we visited 8 gardens, to speak with their educators and see first-hand their education programs:

- ◆ Chelsea Physic Garden, the oldest garden in London
- ◆ Wakehurst Place, Kew's sister garden and the home of the Millennium Seed Bank
- ◆ Thrive, a National Horticulture Therapy program at [Battersea Park](#)
- ◆ Oxford Botanic Garden, England's oldest Botanic Garden
- ◆ The Eden Project, Sir Harold Hillier Gardens, and The Lost Gardens of Heligan in Cornwall

We were busy to say the least, but it was tempting to do as much sight-seeing as I could on the weekends. One Saturday I challenged myself to see all of Kew, a mission I did not achieve; it is simply too large at 300 acres. (Halifax Public Garden is 17 acres.) I took a train to see the color-themed beds at Sissinghurst to get inspiration for the color-themed beds at home. Then, during my final weekend in London, I visited the Hampton Court gardens of Henry VIII. There were so many other gardens that I wanted to visit that I will have to return one day.

Back in Halifax, I had four months to complete the written component of my final project, parallel to a lot of planting responsibilities in the Public Gardens. In February I found out my paper had been accepted and I was awarded the Diploma in Botanic Garden Education!

As my project, I chose to renovate a small wetland area in the Halifax Public Garden because it is

- ◆ underutilized
- ◆ not a high priority for maintenance; therefore it has become run down.
- ◆ important to shed light on wetlands as they are essential, and the Earth's most threatened ecosystems after rain forests.
- ◆ a wetland naturally fed by the historical Fresh Water Brook.

I chose my target audience based on the observation that no one enjoys playing in water more than a child. Also, from being in the Garden every day, I saw a need to offer something to younger children and their caregivers. I've spoken with most of the day care operations within walking distance of the Gardens and they were very pleased to hear that there is interest in developing programming in the Gardens for children.

The Wetland project will be the first of its kind in the Halifax Public Gardens. Using the Gardens as a tool for environmental education will require a paradigm shift from the more traditional way of thinking of the Gardens as a place for passive recreation or a 'look but don't touch' experience. It will offer an opportunity for adults and children to interact and learn about wetlands outside the classroom.

My time at Kew is now a wonderful memory but I must make the most out of this great learning opportunity. My goal is to implement and share the many ideas I saw and learned about during my time at Kew. The Wetland Project in the Halifax Public Gardens is one way to engage people with plants in our city, but there are many examples around the world where people are making a difference in their communities. Garden clubs, seed exchanges, and sharing gardening tips are all ways that we can share our love of plants. So, here is a challenge to myself and to my fellow gardeners: what can we do in our community or our own backyard to reconnect people with plants?

**Editor's Note:** Tracy has a BSc in Biology, a Diploma in Landscape Horticulture, and has been working as a gardener for HRM for the past 13 years. Now she has this great 5-week experience and I want to hear and see more. ☞



Plant fun



More London Wetlands

## Magnolias of the Historic Gardens

By Karen Achenbach



*Magnolia tripetala*. [Photo Trish Fry]



Magnolia 'Elizabeth' [Photo Trish Fry]

The Annapolis Royal Historic Gardens is home to over 25 species and cultivars of magnolia, many of them donated to us over the years by the Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society.

Our oldest magnolias, located in the Spring Colour Collection, were planted in the early years of the Gardens, so approaching forty years of age. These include *Magnolia x loebneri* 'Merrill', *Magnolia stellata* (Star magnolia), and *Magnolia x loebneri* 'Leonard Messel'. Having reached a height of 35 feet, the 4 Merrills, along with a trio of stellatas, form a veritable wall of silvery grey-barked branches full of fragrant snowy white blossoms in early spring. The crimson purple buds and delicate pink flowers of *M. 'Leonard Messel'* join this display soon after.

It's been difficult to predict exactly when this group of trees will come into bloom; it can be anytime from mid-April to early May, depending on how quickly winter relinquishes its grip and lets spring commence. This year, the flowers were just starting to show colour the last week of April.

*Magnolia 'Legacy'* (*M. sprengeri* 'Diva' x *M. denudata*), with its huge 9-11" flowers, blooms next. This truly gorgeous tree was donated to us by the ARHS in 1996. Each flower is purplish red at the base, gradually lightening to pale pinkish-white near the outer edges of the petal-like tepals. Flowers are white inside.

Also in the Spring Colour Collection: specimens of *M. x soulangeana* and *M. stellata* 'Royal Star'.

One very special magnolia is *Magnolia 'Jennifer Robinson'*. This is a beautiful cultivar of *Magnolia x loebneri*, bred by the late Captain Steele. He donated this specimen to the Gardens, so it is especially valuable to us. It has flowers of white/pale pink aging to white, with up to 32 strap-like petals.

*M. 'Galaxy'*, with its sweetly fragrant, dark reddish-purple blooms that can reach 8 to 10 inches in size, was donated to us by the ARHS in 2003. It has grown to be a gorgeous, twenty-foot-tall specimen located in front of the Gardens House. It comes into bloom two to three weeks later than *M. 'Merrill'* and *M. stellata*, extending the bloom season into late May.

*M. liliiflora* 'Nigra' is across Saint George St. in our parking lot area, along with four *Magnolia 'Spectrum'*. The flowers of *M. liliiflora* 'Nigra', a deep purplish maroon with 8-10 petals, are produced in spring and intermittently into autumn. 'Spectrum' is a sister to 'Galaxy', with the same parentage, but with a deeper colour and perhaps fewer, but bigger, flowers. These specimens were donated and planted by the Magnolia Society of Annapolis Royal in 2001.

*Magnolia 'Wada's Memory'*, another ARHS donation, is one of my favourites. It usually comes into bloom the second or third week of May. It has a strongly pyramidal form with upwardly curving branches, and the pure white buds are slightly curving. The young leaves are red, becoming green as they mature. We planted this in 2001. It has reached a height of around 15 feet, and become a lovely tree.



Magnolia 'Wada's Memory' [Photo Trish Fry]

Another of my personal favourites is *M. sieboldii* or Oyama Magnolia. This flowers in May and June and repeats throughout the summer. It has lovely egg-shaped buds that open to nodding fragrant white flowers with red stamens. The oval red fruit continues the show into autumn against the golden fall-coloured leaves. Set on the front lawn of the Gardens, this magnolia does well in the shade of our large trees.

The flowers of *M. virginiana*, the Sweet Bay Magnolia, are borne over several weeks starting in late May, often into the fall, and the delicate cream-coloured flowers have a heavenly lemon fragrance. The red orange fruit provides interest in the fall. This small tree is located in the Knot Garden.

*M. tripetala* (Umbrella Magnolia) blooms in June. Leaves that reach up to 2 feet long give it a very tropical look. The leaves are clustered at the end of the branches, looking like 'umbrellas'. The white upright flowers are large, 6 to 10 inches across, and unfortunately have an unpleasant fragrance when you're up close. This magnolia is located in our lower pond area.

*M. virginiana* (Sweet Bay Magnolia) and *M. tripetala* (Umbrella Magnolia) are both native to North America and grow in the southerly areas of the United States, with the Sweet Bay Magnolia as far north as Massachusetts.

*Magnolia* 'Yellow Lantern' (*M. acuminata* var. *subcordata* x *M. x soulangeana* 'Alexandrina') is a hybrid magnolia with fragrant tulip-shaped creamy yellow flowers. It was donated by ARHS in 2007. Now only twelve feet tall, it will hopefully grow to a height of 25 to 30 feet.

*Magnolia* 'Elizabeth', donated by ARHS in 2009, has luminous 6-inch cup-shaped, pale yellow flowers. It is the result of a cross between *M. acuminata* and *M. denudata*, and is one of the first yellow magnolias to be widely available. It will grow to 25-30 feet tall.

In the late nineteen-nineties, a group of enthusiastic plantspeople undertook to develop a magnolia collection throughout Annapolis Royal. To date there are over one hundred specimens in town, including those in the Historic Gardens. To enjoy and celebrate our magnolias, visit us through the month of May and beyond. We offer a self-guided walking tour of the town's prominent magnolias, and you can pick up a map at the Historic Gardens.

You can find out what's in bloom in the Gardens at any time by signing up for the weekly Bloom Report at [http://www.historicgardens.com/explore\\_bloom.php](http://www.historicgardens.com/explore_bloom.php)

**Editor's Note:** Karen is the horticultural manager at the Annapolis Royal Historic Gardens. She and her crew were deeply involved with Bob Pettipas and the ARHS in moving some sizeable rhodies of interest from the Alex Muntz woods in Upper Clements to the ARHG and to Sullivan's Pond in Dartmouth some years ago. See the Itinerary for the 2015 Garden Tour and Pot Luck

# The Peony

By Carol Dancer



A species peony at the Willow Garden. [Photo Sharon Bryson]



A Bhutanese tree peony. [Photo Stephen Archibald]

Whenever I see a peony I think of the old gardens found in the towns and villages of Nova Scotia. Every flower garden had a peony, usually three: a pink one, a white one, and a red one. They were often added to the vegetable garden, along with gladiolus, as flowers for the house or the church.

The peony is a flowering plant in the genus *Paeonia*. The name comes from Greek mythology. One story has it that the physician Paeon received a plant from Leto, mother of Apollo. Paeon used the plant to cure the god Pluto of wounds inflicted on him during the Trojan War. Pluto, in gratitude, saved Paeon from the fate of a mortal death by changing Paeon into the plant that had cured him, meaning Paeon would live forever as a peony. The peony since then has borne Paeon's name.

We know from records that peonies have been grown in gardens for over two thousand years, in both eastern and western cultures. Originally they were grown not for their beautiful flowers and stellar foliage but for medicinal and culinary purposes. Pliny the Elder in his *Natural History* (77 AD) gives us the first detailed description of a peony, and lists 20 ills and diseases which he claims it will cure. Most interesting to me is his assertion it is a cure for delusions---the mind boggles.

Asia is home to numerous species of the herbaceous peony and several species of the tree peony, including the stunning *Paeonia suffruticosa*, known in China as *P. moutan*. Before the beginning of the second millennium, the herbaceous peony was being used for ornamental purposes and was called 'Sho Yo', meaning 'most beautiful'. During the Tang Dynasty (AD618-906), the tree peony became very popular and was placed under the protection of the Emperor. The tree peony was known as 'Hua Wang', 'king of flowers'. It was eulogised in verse and painted on silk. Still revered today in China, the peony is the national flower. The annual Luoyang Peony Festival, celebrating the beauty of peonies from mid-April to mid-May, is very popular among Chinese tourists and peony enthusiasts the world over.

All through the Middle Ages, European monks grew peonies for domestic use in their herb gardens and later in apothecary gardens. By 1731 there were seven kinds of herbaceous peonies at the Chelsea Physic Garden, London, England, used by the Worshipful Company of Apothecaries. One has to remember peonies were not native to England and travel was difficult in those times.

Tree peonies in Europe remained rare, although traders in the Dutch East India Company saw them growing in the gardens of the cities they visited. It wasn't until the great plant hunter, Robert Fortune, returned from China in 1846 with 25 different varieties that the tree peony became widely available.

Peonies in the wild are found only in the northern hemisphere. One species, *P. brownii*, is found on the Pacific coast of North America and is rather drab. To quote a well-known gardener, it is 'more curious than beautiful'. Species peonies grow in the hot and dry conditions of southern Europe, across the grasslands of central Europe, into Siberia and the mountains of China. Hybridizers have used these species to create the beautiful plants available to gardeners today. Most of these peonies, including tree peonies, like a temperate to cold climate with adequate moisture, so most are very adaptable to our gardens.



'Bowl of Beauty' [Photo Sharon Bryson]

Peonies have very few problems but, like all plants, will only perform at their best if given a good start. They should be planted in a rich, well drained soil. Plant them so the eye is only two to three inches below soil level. Like rhododendrons, if planted too deep they often won't bloom. Every autumn I give my peonies a side-dressing of bonemeal. In spring they are given a weak drink of a balanced fertilizer. Like roses, peonies need about six hours of sun each day. The biggest problem I have with peonies here in Victoria BC is late frost. If the buds are frosted they will shrivel and won't open up.

I grow both species peonies and hybrids. The species have been grown from seed, usually the only way to acquire them. The flowers of the species are fleeting but very beautiful. Also species of all plants are disappearing at an alarming rate, so always think you may be saving a species. (Pandas have tons of saviours.) My favorite species is *P. mlokosewitschii*, known as

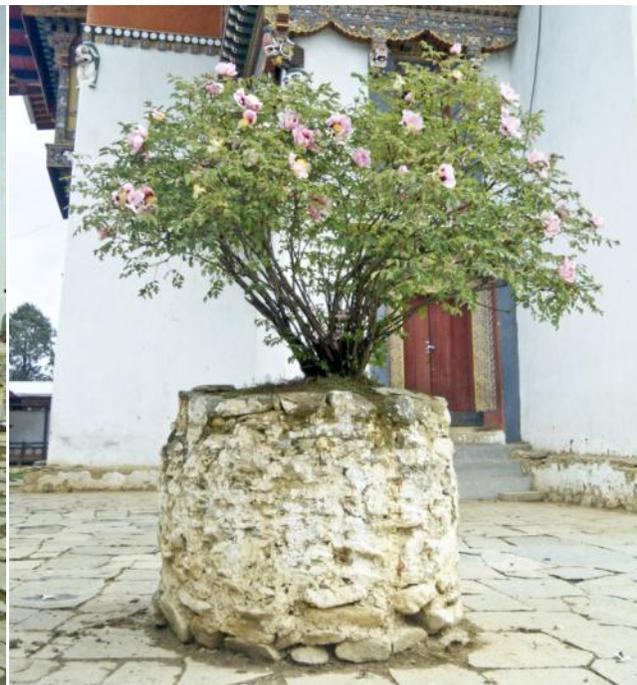
Molly the Witch. It has lovely golden-yellow flowers and great foliage. I grew it in my Dartmouth garden and distributed it at plant sales. Friend Joe Harvey has been busy hybridizing tree peonies so many of these grace my current garden.

I think peonies went out of fashion because gardeners remember the old cultivars that needed staking to prevent their heavy flowers from falling over onto the ground. Many of the new hybrids have strong stems and remain up-right. ... Try 'Bowl of Beauty'. Colours go far beyond pink, red, and white. Among my favorites are the corals: 'Coral and Gold', 'Coral Charm', 'Coral Sunset'. Some peonies are scented and many are wonderful as cut flowers. And an added reason to grow peonies is that deer do not eat peonies, at least our deer shun them.

I recommend two websites: The Canadian Peony Society <http://www.peony.ca/> and Ferncliff Gardens, where I have purchased very good plants, <http://www.ferncliffgardens.com/Peonies.php>



Protection for a young tree peony at a Bhutanese monastery



Tree peony in a Bhutanese monastery. [Photos Stephen Archibald]

# Documented Health and Environmental Benefits Derived from Ornamental Horticulture Products

**Editor's Note:** Thanks to Michael Devanney, Senior Economist in the NS Department of Agriculture, for bringing this report to my attention. Although it was prepared for the nursery and ornamental horticulture industry, it speaks to the point Tracy Jessens raises at the beginning and end of her article, *My Time at Kew*, elsewhere in this issue

## **FINAL REPORT of the Literature Review March 15, 2007**

Prepared for: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Markets and Trade and directed to the AAFC Value Chain Round Table Secretariat on behalf of the Ornamental Working Group of the Horticultural Value Chain Round Table

Prepared by: Cher Brethour, Garry Watson, Beth Sparling, Delia Bucknell, and Terrilyn Moore

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Canadian ornamental horticulture industry, with a 2005 farm gate production of approximately \$2.2 billion, is one of Canada's best kept agricultural secrets and success stories (Watson, 2006).

However, the domestic market for ornamentals has remained relatively flat, despite the increased interest in gardening and landscaping over the past two decades, because flowers, indoor plants and landscaping have to compete with many other luxury items for the Canadian consumer dollar. The recent slowdown in the Canadian industry has been mirrored around the globe as a result of higher energy and labour costs, increased competition and depressed consumer spending. To survive, the industry has to sell more plants or flowers and obtain higher prices. The four ways to increase ornamental sales are:

- ◆ Increase the number of purchasing households and younger customers
- ◆ Increase the frequency of purchases by existing buyers
- ◆ Increase the transaction value per buying occasion
- ◆ Create a popular culture of personal use and enjoyment of ornamentals

All of these require new and collaborative marketing schemes that promote ornamental flowers and plants in different ways than have been used in the past.

The purpose of the project was to provide the Ornamental Working Group of the Horticulture Value Chain Round Table, through its secretariat in Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, with a summary of the current state of scientific knowledge related to the benefits from plants and flowers in one's daily life.

A review of the literature demonstrated that ornamental horticulture has a wider suite of benefits than expected. Plants can provide multiple benefits in terms of the economy, environment and human lifestyles. Many of these benefits, however, are not well known or understood within the general population. As a result, there is a considerable opportunity for the ornamental horticulture industry to sell more products based on the benefits identified throughout this literature review. The following is a summary of the benefits as outlined in the literature review:

#### **Economic**

- ◆ Reduce energy costs (heating and cooling)
- ◆ Improve property values (residential and business)
- ◆ Enhance beauty of buildings and communities
  - Aesthetic contribution
  - Improved privacy and security
- ◆ Assist municipalities in reducing maintenance costs and deriving new economic benefits including economic spin-offs from parks, sporting facilities, and increased tourism

#### **Environmental**

- ◆ Moderate urban climate extremes
- ◆ Mitigate urban heat islands
- ◆ Produce oxygen
- ◆ Sequester carbon
- ◆ Ameliorate pollution:
  - Improve air quality (indoor and outdoor)
  - Remove contaminants from soil (phytoremediation)
  - Improve water quality
  - Treat sewage and wastewater

- ◆ Improve water management (flood control) and erosion control
- ◆ Reduce impacts of weather through windbreaks and shelterbelts
- ◆ Reduce noise pollution
- ◆ Control urban glare and reflection
- ◆ Attract birds and other wildlife

### **Lifestyle**

- ◆ Reduce stress and improve productivity (workplace, schools)
- ◆ Introduce calming effects and reduced discomforts
- ◆ Quicker recovery (hospitals)
- ◆ Practice horticultural therapy to improve mind, body and spirit
  - Long term care facilities
  - Prisons
- ◆ Increase human health (e.g., use in medicine)
- ◆ Improve life satisfaction and well-being:
  - Increase positive emotions
  - Improve general quality of life in urban settings
  - Create pride in community through community gardens and allotment gardens
  - Attention and concentration improvements for children
  - Reduce aggression and violence
- ◆ Provide space for recreation
  - Enhance sport field safety
  - Encourage healthy active and passive lifestyle pursuits

## **Report for 2014-15 to the ARS from District 12 The Atlantic Chapter.**

**By Sheila Stevenson with Gloria Hardy**

- registered in Nova Scotia since 2002 as the Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticulture Society
- Our interests include rhododendrons but range beyond. See survey results, Feb 2015 Newsletter

Currently there are 29 District 12 ARS members, 12 Associate ARS members, 6 (relic) RSC members and 138 local ARHS members, for a total of 185 members – most of whom seem to be in an older demographic. The lack of younger members is a concern, as noted in the survey results, but there is a younger demographic among the 203 followers on our Facebook page! We also have a new website at <http://atlanticrhodo.org/> that has development potential.

This past year we've had a concentration of excellent rhodie presentations with

- Steve Krebs re What's Current in the Leach Program
- John Brett's Breuckner report, which he just presented to the Niagara chapter
- John Weagle's chronicle of 50 years of rhodie hybridizing in our region.

We were terribly pleased to see Minas Grand Pre on the ARS Journal cover and to know it is getting out and around. It's a special plant!

Although we've had to cancel the public plant sale that's been running for 25 years due to a diminished volunteer force + market, there is lots of plant-focused activity in the province – The Rare and Unusual Plant Sale in Annapolis Royal, the native plant sale at the Harriet Irving Botanical gardens in Wolfville, the new e-book Nova Scotia Plants download at <http://museum.novascotia.ca/books> and the new NS Garden Road Trip at [nsgardens.com](http://nsgardens.com), developed by the emerging NS Garden Travel Coalition. ☺

## Positions of Responsibility

### Officers and Directors of the Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticulture Society for 2014 -15

<b>President:</b>	Sheila Stevenson	902-479-3740
<b>Vice-President:</b>	this position available!	
<b>Secretary:</b>	Jean Henshall	902-477-2933
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Rachel Martin	902-425-3779
<b>Past President:</b>	Cora Swinamar	902-826-7705
<b>Director, Communication:</b>	Sheila Stevenson	902 479-3740
<b>Director, Education:</b>	Bob Howard	902-532-0834
<b>Director, Plant Material/ Horticulture:</b>	Wendy Cornwall	902-477-6121
<b>Director, Social:</b>	Ralph Pineau	902-454- 9056
<b>Director at Large and Membership Coordinator:</b>	Gloria Hardy	902-477-4411
<b>Director at Large:</b>	Roslyn Duffus	902-861-3831

### Other Positions of Responsibility

<b>Newsletter Editor:</b>	Sheila Stevenson	902 479-3740
<b>Newsletter Layout:</b>	Sterling Levy	902-861-1176
<b>Website:</b>	Cora Swinamar	902-826-7705
<b>Library:</b>	Bonie Conrad	
<b>Coordinator, Seed Exchange:</b>	Sharon Bryson	902-863-6307
<b>Coordinator, Tissue Culture Plant Sale :</b>	Jon Porter	902-350-0010
<b>Coordinators, Members' Pre-ordered Sale:</b>	Wendy Cornwall & Antitra Laycock	902-477-6121
<b>Tech Support at Meetings:</b>	Rachel Martin	902-425-3779
<b>Gardens Care Outreach:</b>	Chris Hopgood	902-479-0811
<b>District 12 ARS Rep (American Rhodo Society):</b>	Lynne Melnyk, Toronto	705-835-0372

# Photo Album -



A tree peony from Bryson-Wilgenhof stock [Photo Stephen Archibald]



A Joe Harvey Halifax single. [Photo Stephen Archibald]



A Joe Harvey double. [Photo Stephen Archibald]



*Paeonia mlokosewitschi* [Photo John Weagle]



*Paeonia mlokosewitschi* [Photo John Weagle]



In the Evers' garden. [Photo by John Weagle]



Species Peony buds. [Photo Sharon Bryson]



Sharon Bryson's 'Bowl of Beauty' [Photo Sharon Bryson]