

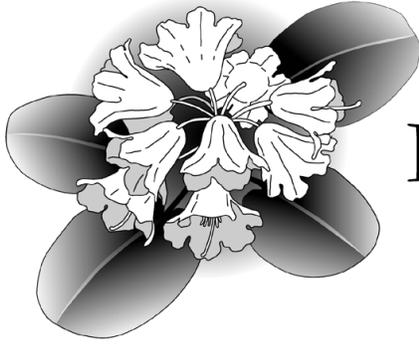
AtlanticRhodo

www.AtlanticRhodo.org

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Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society

Our Mission

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

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

Membership

Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society.

The current membership period is September 1, 2021 to August 31, 2022. The membership fee is \$30.00. For benefits and to download a membership form see ARHS website www.atlanticrhodo.org

American Rhododendron Society: ARHS is a chapter in District 12 of the American Rhododendron Society.

Combined ARHS and ARS membership cost is \$84.00 Canadian. For benefits and to download a membership form see www.atlanticrhodo.org

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

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

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

Editor: Dennis Stuebing
dennis.stuebing@hotmail.com

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Calendar of Events

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

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

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

Sunday, June 5, 2022 from Noon - 4PM Spring Garden Tour, Windsor Forks/Fall River area
Garden locations and descriptions will be sent to members in May.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



A very warm welcome to our new members who have joined ARHS since February.

**Joyce Coles
Donald Presse**

**Bea Renton
Peter Zale**

**Brookside, NS
Halifax, NS**

**Halifax, NS
Kennett Square, Pennsylvania**



President's Report

Jim Sharpe

As we look forward to the peak of the *rhododendron* blooms this spring, it is an exciting time to be a gardener in Atlantic Canada. During the last two years of COVID-19 restrictions, more have turned to growing plants and gardens than ever before, with a tremendous increase in demand for seeds, ornamental plants and horticultural services. In spite of only meeting in person a few times in the last two years, using Zoom we have been able to reach our members with our monthly presentations, and continue our plant sales and garden tours. Our membership is stronger than in the past few years with over 120 who have paid their fees this membership year.

We need assistance with the work of ARHS, especially volunteers for the positions of Treasurer and Volunteer Coordinator. If interested, or you know of someone to approach, please send me a message at sharpe@ns.sympatico.ca. I would like to thank all the volunteers who contribute to the important work of ARHS in outreach, seed exchange, plant sales and communications. We have a very vibrant organization with a lot of knowledge of plants, gardening and landscaping to share with the public of the Atlantic Provinces. Thanks so much to all our members.

I'm looking forward to attending the American Rhododendron Society Convention from May 4-8 sponsored by the Portland and other Oregon ARS chapters. Portland was the site of the first ARS Convention in 1955 and is one of the world centres for *rhododendron* gardens and hybridizers. I'm especially looking forward to the bus tours to the Puget Sound gardens in Washington and the gardens south of Portland and along the Oregon coast.

It is a busy time for ARHS members, with our plant sales, our June garden tour in the Fall River/Oakfield area, and just enjoying the rhodo blooms. I want to mention two events from other gardening associations this summer and one planned for next year. The Nova Scotia Association of Garden Clubs will host its first convention since 2019, June 10th and 11th, at the Inn on Prince in Truro with the theme "2022 – Year of the Garden." On July 6th and 7th, the Atlantic Master Gardeners Association will host its annual conference on the theme "Learning From Nature" with speakers including Gerald Gloade, Keith Williams, Paul Manning, Frances Dorsey and Julie Moir Messervy at the Dalhousie Agricultural Campus in Bible Hill. The full program for both events is available on their websites. Next June 8-11, the Nova Scotia Rock Club will host the North American Rock Garden Society's annual conference also at the Dalhousie Agricultural Campus. Information on this conference will be available in future newsletters.

Happy Gardening and enjoy the *Rhododendron* blooms. ☘

Announcements:

Gardening Conferences June and July 2022

Jim Sharpe, ARHS President

With the lifting of public health restrictions on meetings, we want to advise you of two conferences that will occur in Truro in the coming months.

The **Nova Scotia Association of Garden Clubs**, of which ARHS is an associate member, will host its first conference since 2019 at the Inn on Prince in Truro, June 10-11, 2022. The conference theme is "2022 – Year of the Garden". Details are available on the Association's new website: <https://www.nsagc.com/>

The **Atlantic Master Gardeners Association** will host its annual conference, July 7-8, 2022 at the Dalhousie Agricultural Campus in Bible Hill (Truro). The theme is "Learning from Nature." Speakers on July 7 include Gerald Gloade, Keith Williams, Paul Manning and Frances Dorsey. On July 8 acclaimed international garden designer Julie Moir Messervy will lead a workshop on "Home Alone, Garden Design." Details and registration can be found at <https://www.atlanticmastergardeners.ca/2022-amga-conference> ☘

A Word from the Editor

Dennis L. Stuebing

May has arrived and it's as if a switch has been flipped in my garden. Everyday something new is emerging from the soil including this year's bounty of horsetail and yarrow, which always appear where they are not invited. There's no use complaining. Removing them provides me with more time to discover what survived the repetitive cycle of freeze-thaw-freeze that occurred this winter across Nova Scotia. Thus far, I'm thrilled to report that we've had a great display of bulbs (*Hyacinthus*, *Narcissus*, *Iris reticulata*, *Scilla*, and a single *Galanthus*) with my favourite spring ephemeral, *Dodecatheon meadia* and a host of *Primula* now making their appearances.

In this Issue, Bob Howard will share a great overview of some of his favourite spring and summer *primula*, Joe Harvey will provide insight into Botanical Latin, and Nancy Lewis has summarized a lecture on solutions to the pervasive challenge of damage caused by deer. Thanks to all of them for their efforts! You will also find, the second of two articles I have written based on interviews with representatives from Nova Scotia nurseries on "What to Expect in 2022". Thanks to Jim Sharpe, our President, Program Director, and acting Treasurer, for preparing an introductory Message as well as an update on the 2022 Program. Thanks to Rebecca Lancaster, acting Membership Coordinator, for providing the update on our members. Thanks to Sterling Levy once again, for the beautiful layout and design of this issue of AtlanticRhodo.

If you are interested in submitting an article for the next, or future issues of AtlanticRhodo, please contact me at dennis.stuebing@hotmail.com ☞

A New Book by ARHS Members

Acidic soils are widespread throughout North America, especially in humid regions or areas with high precipitation such as the eastern seaboard and the Pacific Northwest.

However, little assistance is available on how to garden specifically with acidic soils. In fact, most advice concerns how to make acidic soil *less* so. Todd Boland and Jamie Ellison take a different approach; they believe in working with nature, rather than trying to change it. ☞

**NOW AVAILABLE
FOR PRE-ORDER!**

Gardening for Acidic Soils
WORKING WITH NATURE TO CREATE A BEAUTIFUL LANDSCAPE

TODD BOLAND and JAMIE ELLISON

Gardening for Acidic Soils

Indigo  amazon

BOULDERBOOKS.CA

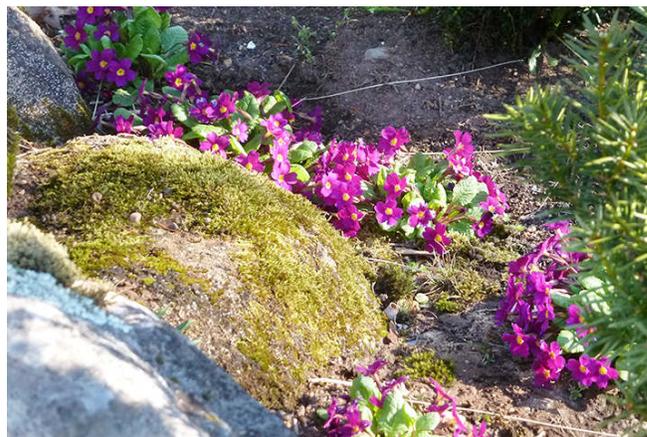
Some Primulas for April to July

Bob Howard

With over 500 species and thousands of hybrids, the *primula* clan is too big to even begin to describe in this article. I will stick to the small collection of species and varieties I grow in southwest Nova Scotia, a group of plants that give us charming flowers from spring to mid-summer. Assume that all the plants I describe want reliably moist, rich soil with plenty of organic matter, good drainage, bright light, and no hot, drying sun. Species originating in Europe will take more sun and ordinary garden soil while the Asiatic species require a shadier position and moister, acidic soil, with more humus mixed in. Roaming the garden in my mind, I find all my primulas on the east or north side of some sun-filtering shrub, rock or tree. I have included thirteen photos, one for each plant discussed.



P. denticulata



P. 'Wanda'

My earliest blooming is *P. denticulata*, the drumstick primula. Ranging from eastern Afghanistan through northern India into China, including the Tibetan plateau, this is the most common Himalayan primula. Easy and vigorous even in normal garden soil, *P. denticulata* wants moist roots. This primula begins flowering in April with ball-shaped inflorescences, of red, purple, lavender, pink or sometimes white.

Toward the end of April, *Primula x pruhoenicensis* 'Wanda' opens its radiant magenta flowers with yellow eyes. This compact, two to five inch tall plant forms a spreading clump of fresh crinkly leaves gathered into small tufts that are easy to tease apart and replant, to increase the display. 'Wanda' is the most popular (and now-a-days just about the only) variety locally available of the cross (*P. juliae* x *P. vulgaris*). Known as the Julian primroses, in the early 1900's they were offered in innumerable colour forms, such as whites, yellows, reds, and blues. I'd love to see someone bring back more of these easy and reliable beauties.

Also flowering in late April, *P. allionii* 'Wharfdale Ling' is a diminutive alpine which I grow in a sloping gravelly crevice between two boulders. I added well-rotted manure, peat moss and sharp gravel into the soil mix which I top dress with a little lime. Many primulas, like this one originating in Europe, like neutral to basic soil. My six-year-old plants of *P. 'Wharfdale Ling'* are only about three inches high and five inches wide. As the plants mature, the basal stem pushes up one and a half to three inches in the air like a post, holding a miniature crown of leaves and flowers in the air. The flowers are tiny jewels of pale pink at the edges turning white and yellow in the throat.



P. allionii 'Wharfdale Ling'



P. marginata 'Alan Jones'



P. auricula - selected colour



P. veris

May opens with *P. marginata*, a species of limited distribution in nature, found only near the Mediterranean coast of southeastern France and northeast Italy, in shady limestone or dolomite cliffs and slopes. It likes good drainage. The variety I have is 'Alan Jones', and it is purplish-blue. I have it in a gravelly "shelf" in the rock garden.

In the same month, *P. auricula* "Bear's Ears" (in reference to the leaf shape) joins the flowering progression. This species has been a popular garden plant in Europe for over 500 years, for bedding, borders, and flower shows. The fancy-show auriculas are an old-fashioned enthusiasm with ongoing popularity. For example, Wrightman Alpine Nursery lists 64 varieties and forms of this species. I have my plant on a boulder-framed gravel "shelf" for closer examination in my rock garden. This breeder's art plant is hard to place in a naturalistic garden, but it is so rich in gardening history, I love seeing it. It reminds me of allotment gardens and old potting sheds.

Also in May and flowering for most of the month is the common cowslip, *P. veris*. I've provided four images. Often associated with England and Shakespeare, the cowslip is nevertheless extremely wide-spread—from Norway to Spain and east through the Caucasus and Siberia to the Amur river north of north-eastern China, in moist grassland, shrub, and light woodland, in neutral or basic, well-drained soils. The first image of this plant shows the yellow flowers with four Darwin hybrid tulips. The baggy calyxes behind the flower petals are characteristic. The clumps of leaves at the base are easily divided. This whole patch is made from dividing one plant several years ago, growing the divisions to form clumps, then dividing those clumps and so on. The second image of *P. veris* shows the yellow flowers with purple Ramapo *rhododendron* and pink Darwin tulips. I find that primulas associate well with many other garden subjects, from *meconopsis* to woodland wildflowers to dwarf conifers. The third image of a cowslip shows 'hose-in-hose' flowers, a curious mutation with one corolla emerging from another. The fourth image of *P. veris* is a picture of an escapee that seeded in my unkempt weedy lawn. I think it's *P. veris* because of the baggy calyx. The reddish flowers suggest that this may be a 'Canadian cowslip', a presumed backcross to red forms of *P. vulgaris*. If any reader recognizes this plant, I would be delighted to learn what it is.



P. veris with 'Ramapo'



P. veris - 'hose-in-hose'



'Canadian cowslip'?



P. frondosa

Another May-flowerer is the Lilliputian *P. frondosa*, seedlings of which Stephen Archibald and Sheila Stevenson gave me several years ago. For years, this plant has seeded itself around in areas where I don't weed. However, I do not see it in the garden yet this year. Many primulas are short-lived and need to be reseeded from time to time.

P. japonica begins flowering for me in early June and continues through the month. This plant seeds itself prolifically in a wet area of my woodland border, in a wide range of colours, mainly red, pink, and white. I'm showing it mixed with columbines, ferns, forget-me-nots, mayapple, with one *meconopsis* flower in the background.



P. japonica

P. sikkimensis x *bulleyana* is a terrific cross that I got thanks to the generosity and good taste of Walter Ostrum. Like *P. japonica* this is a "candelabra" *primula*, which means the flowers are in tiers, with clusters of flowers along the stem grouped one above the other. These are tall (two to three foot) hardy perennial plants that like moisture and top-dressing with compost. I have these plants in a bright but lightly shaded area with *rhododendrons*, ferns, *hydrangeas* and martagon lilies. This plant divides successfully. It flowers for a couple of weeks in mid-July. I'm suspicious about my label. I doubt that *P. sikkimensis* is really one of the parents. Looking at Pam Eveleigh's photo gallery (see website below), my guess is that *P. beesiana* and/or *P. aurantiaca* are more likely to have contributed genes to this plant. Does anyone recognize it?

P. vialii blooms last of the primulas that I have, putting up dramatic spikes of lavender and red flowers on long stems in July. There is a risk of damaging the emerging buds while gardening since the leaves do not emerge until late May. This is another species from western China that likes humus-rich, moist but well-drained soil, and bright light--but not hot sun. It's another good companion for *rhododendrons*.

I've had no disease or insect problems with any of these *primulas*. With appropriate soil, light and moisture, admittedly a bit of a trial-and-error proposition, they bring lively colour and cheerful green foliage to the spring and early summer garden.



P. sikkimensis x *bulleyana*



P. vialii

References

Eveleigh, P. (n.d.) *Primula World: A Visual Reference for the Genus Primula*. Can be accessed at: <https://primulaworld.blogspot.com/>

Klüber, D. (1966). *Primroses and Spring*. New York: M. Barrows and Company, Inc.
An easy-to-read, practical, classic that is encouraging to read.

Richards, J. (2003). *Primula*. Portland: Timber Press Inc.
This is a complete treatment of the genus with beautiful photographs.

Seeds

Visit the Jelitto Perennial Seed website at www.jelitto.com. On the website, there are twelve pages of seeds of species whose first letter is 'p', and at least one primula is found on every page. However, (and this is weird) there is no alphabetical order! The print edition of the catalogue lists, alphabetically, 80 - 90 species and varieties of primula.

What's New in 2022: What to Expect at some of Nova Scotia's Nurseries this Spring

Second in a series of two articles

Dennis L. Stuebing

May is upon us. Successive waves of plants are breaking dormancy with new foliage and vibrantly coloured blooms now on show. We may not have yet passed the last possible frost date for all areas of the province, but it won't be long till that milestone is behind us. I suspect many readers are already planning modifications to their garden designs and/or dreaming of new acquisitions to include this year. To aid in those efforts, I have prepared this article to give our readers insight into what some Nova Scotian nurseries will have in stock and what has been recommended for the year ahead. This is the second of two articles; the first was included in *AtlanticRhodo* Volume 6, Issue 2 (February 2022).

For this article, I contacted two of the many nurseries in Nova Scotia and asked if they would participate in a short phone interview. A summary of the responses provided, has been included below. Each representative was asked the same four questions:

- What are the top 5 new plants (shrubs, trees, perennials, annuals) you are most excited about for the upcoming season?
- What are the top 3 'tried-and-true' plants you recommend everyone should have in their gardens?
- What 3 plants do you recommend for gardeners concerned with climate change?
- Given our audience, what is your favourite or the most popular *Rhododendron* at your nursery?

Michael Weir from Scotian Gold "Country Garden" (Coldbrook) highlighted the following new plants that he is most excited about for the coming year:

- 'Show Off Starlet' *Forsythia* (*Forsythia* x), which flowers from the base up and is bright yellow. It is more compact than older varieties
- 'Quick Fire Fab' *Hydrangea*, which is a panicle hydrangea with lace-cap blooms
- Petite Knock-Out Rose, which is a good option for mass planting or in containers as it is a dwarf variety that does well in smaller spaces. It has vibrant red flowers

As for 'tried-and-true' plants, Michael recommended:

- Bridal Wreath *Spirea*, a beautiful cascading shrub covered in white flowers in spring
- 'Dart's Gold' *Physocarpus* (ninebark) due to the nice chartreuse colour
- *Paeonia*, especially Japanese tree peonies, and in particular the 'Shima Nishiki' variety (*Paeonia suffruticosa* 'Shima-Nishiki')
- The original, *Hydrangea* 'Quick Fire' which has great winter interest and structure

By way of climate change, Michael suggested using ground covers to address bare patches in the garden and help keep carbon in the soil. He also encouraged planting lots of trees and shrubs, which can help to cool garden spaces. Maples in particular sell well at Scotian Gold Country Garden. They are a native species that pull carbon out of the atmosphere and have a large canopy, which helps with the noted cooling affect. Using a chip metaphor, Michael explained why he promotes the use of organic fertilizers versus synthetics to customers. Chips, like other junk food will fill you up, but eating vegetables, will fill you up and provide nutrition that aids in better health. Likewise, organic fertilizers feed the microbes in the soil that then feed plants rather than synthetics, which will directly feed plants but don't build soil health.

Michael's favourite *Rhododendrons* are the PJM varieties due to their size and the number of blooms they produce.

I also had the opportunity to discuss the aforementioned questions with Jill Covill at Bunchberry Nurseries (Upper Clements). Jill described Bunchberry as a destination nursery with lots of harder-to-find plants for collectors including a wide range of heaths, heathers, and Japanese maples, alongside old standards for newer gardeners. In response to the question about exciting new plants on offer at Bunchberry, Jill said:

- Conifers are a personal favourite. She is always adding to the collection and propagating more

- Heathers and heaths are plentiful at Bunchberry with between 40 and 50 varieties now available
- Japanese maples
- Carolina Allspice, Sweet Shrub (*Calycanthus*)

Jill noted that supplies are low this year in part due to the high demand during the pandemic, the impact of COVID-19 on production, as well as reduced availability from Western wholesalers because of excessive heat, which has literally fried young Japanese maples and magnolias in the field. The flooding last year in British Columbia will also likely affect the supply chain further in the next couple of years.

In response to climate change, Jill recommended the following options:

- Plants that have deep root structures to deal with stronger than normal winds
- Many ornamental grasses, especially those that originate in the mid-west, are more tolerant of heat
- Alpines, which can handle more extreme climates and sell well at Bunchberry
- *Cornus kousa* (dogwood) perform very well despite increased temperatures

Jill suggested these ‘tried-and-true’ plants for Nova Scotian gardeners:

- Spring heath, which survive winters better than heathers, in particular, *Erica carnea* ‘Springwood Pink’
- Dogwoods are proving to be a good option, even beyond their heat tolerance as they have great colour and provide three seasons of interest. Jill mentioned “Satomi” as an all-around good performer
- And, as for a perennial option, *Echinacea* (purple coneflower) is great, especially the simple, single types. Of the newer varieties, ‘Cheyenne Spirit’ and ‘Pow-Wow Wild Berry’ were reference positively

Jill’s favourite *Rhododendron* is ‘Ramapo’ and acknowledged that she should be promoting and propagating more Nova Scotian types. The older and dwarf varieties, as well as those with different colours, sell as fast as she can stock them, most notably ‘Capistrano’ and ‘Percy Wiseman’.

I want to extend my gratitude to Michael Weir and Jill Colvill for their time and assistance with this article. May is an incredibly busy time for those who work at nurseries and their willingness to talk with me while dealing with the competing priorities of the season is deeply appreciated. ☘



Rhododendron vaseyi ‘White Find’

Effective Solutions for Dealing with Deer: A Lecture by Brad Roeller

Nancy Lewis

Although deer have their admirers, most of them are not gardeners. These beautiful creatures can wreak utter devastation in the landscape. Exponential increases in the deer population have occurred over the last twenty years due to encroachment on their habitat, loss of their natural predators and fewer hunters. In addition to the destruction they cause in the urban landscape, these voracious herbivores have also had a negative impact on the environment, driving many indigenous plant species close to extinction in some areas. Recently I attended a Zoom lecture by Brad Roeller, part of the 2022 Innisfree Lecture Series, *Romanticism at Innisfree: Nature as Muse*. Brad has held top horticultural positions at the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies in Millbrook, New York, the New York Botanical Garden, and a private estate. He is currently a trustee at the Innisfree Garden in Millbrook, New York. Brad has spent over 40 years studying the effect of increased populations of white-tailed deer on the landscape, including a 10-year research project funded by Cornell examining strategies which affect their behaviour in a 'Deer Browse Garden'. Hundreds of popular herbaceous and woody ornamentals were evaluated for resistance to deer browsing.



Who me?

Brad advises taking a consistent, year-round approach to deer deterrence. The first thing to consider is proper plant selection and there are hundreds of lists of deer resistant plants available. It is important to remember that what works in one area may be ineffective in others and hungry deer will eat almost anything. Things like gray foliage, woolly or hirsute textures, and aromatic or poisonous plants all help reduce deer grazing. It is a good idea to front your garden beds with these deer resistant species and plan on protecting vulnerable plants by locating them in the centre of your garden. Design your garden beds to facilitate the construction of physical barriers such as netting or burlap.

Evaluate the size, health and vigour of the local deer herd as fall approaches. Things like whether it has been a drought year in which the quality of grass and herbaceous plants is poor, and whether there is a good mast (acorns and nuts) crop, can affect browsing patterns. Other biological and environmental factors that determine winter browsing include the size of the local deer herd, snow cover, and hunting pressure and success.

Another important strategy is to "know the deer" in your neighbourhood. Are they passing through, or do they seem to be around at all hours of the day and night? Once deer have found your landscape, your plants will become a regular stop on nightly feeding forays. It is important to try to break this pattern through timely and consistent use of repellents and physical barriers to protect vulnerable plants. Typically deer roam in matriarchal groups that may include several generations of does. Observe patterns of how they move through your property and consult with your neighbours on what plants work for them then adopt a unified approach to deer protection. When and where do you see deer and are there new deer in the neighbourhood? On larger, rural lots, Brad suggests putting food out to lure deer away from landscape plantings however this strategy will most likely attract deer in smaller residential settings.



Think your holly is safe?

Throughout the year, deer food preferences change. In spring and summer, they graze on grass and herbaceous plants then they shift to browsing on twigs and buds during the dormant season. Broad-leaved evergreens and conifers are almost never selected except during the winter season. Physical barriers such as burlap, netting, snow and deer fencing, can be 100% successful in protecting plants over the winter. Choose substantial netting. Poultry netting is better than the type sold as deer netting which is too flimsy. Barriers should be at least six foot tall (preferably seven and a half foot or more) and secured to stakes or posts with cable ties and staples. Ensure the netting is placed at least six inches past the bottom of the plant(s) as the first attempt at breaching the barrier is typically from below. If boxing individual plants, cross-brace the tops of the stakes (common one inch by one inch by six foot stakes (1" x 1" x 6') are available at most hardware stores or garden centers) to add rigidity to the structure. If you are using burlap make sure it is stapled securely to stakes. Wrapping the burlap directly onto plants, especially evergreens, will often lead to winter injury. Deer will try to breach the barrier but if they can't see the plant they will often bypass it. Standard four-foot snow fencing, properly secured and using a perimeter of 18 to 20 inches from the longest branches can be used to protect plants too large to box and burlap. Any larger perimeter and the deer can jump inside the barrier. Deer fencing, at least seven and a half feet high can be used to secure large areas. Solar powered



Rhododendron damaged by deer browsing

electric fences are available but must be maintained to remain secure. Double-perimeter fencing or slant fencing can also be very effective in deterring deer from entering a landscape. It is essential to have barriers functioning after the first hard frosts. Once you have mowed your lawn a few times in the spring, it is typically safe to remove physical barriers. Animal repellents can be used throughout the winter as long as the temperature is four degrees Celsius or warmer for the complete drying time of the product. If applied when the temperature is not optimal, or if it drops below freezing before the product dries, you may encounter winter damage on some plants, especially broad-leaved evergreens.

Even during the growing season, deer may choose to eat the new growth of woody plants such as hydrangeas, weigelas, deutzias and of course, our beloved rhododendrons. Odour and taste-based repellents such as Bobbex or Plantskysdd¹ can be very effective in deterring deer. Hot pepper sauces² or blood derivatives can also be used but should be tested as they can damage new growth on plants. Spray repellents should be reapplied frequently to maintain effectiveness as the claims on the label are somewhat exaggerated. Finally, consider alternating repellents to enhance effectiveness so the deer do not become used to one scent. ☘

¹Anecdotal evidence reported from an ARHS member suggests that Plantskydd is superior to Bobbex

²Please note that this was information relayed during the lecture. There is information available online that indicates negative impacts are experienced by other wildlife species when hot pepper sauce is used. Readers are encouraged to consider additional research and the ethics of using hot pepper sauce since it has been identified as an unintended form of animal cruelty.

Latin Without Tears – Plant Names Are Easy

Joe Harvey

Classical Latin, the lingo that Julius Caesar yelled at his troops as they conquered Gaul and landed on British soil in 55BC, “*Veni! Vidi! Vici!*” (I came, I saw, I conquered) he bragged, was the international language in Europe and for over 1000 years. Nearly all books and manuscripts were written in it. Latin eventually evolved into many Southern European languages but remnants hung on in the church, law, and medicine, while in the sciences the vocabulary, together with classic Greek, is still mined on an ad hoc basis, to generate new words and phrases.

A universal language is useful (music notation) and I remember when I was a student at Durham University, in the UK, I was given the job of driving a visiting Polish scholar to see the rare alpine flowers at the former Widdybank site in Teesdale. He had little English, I had no Polish, but we chatted away just fine in Botanical Latin. To regulate the official scientific names used for animals, plants, and microorganisms independent international committees were set-up to layout the rules to provide a unique name for each species. Long ago I knew most of the then plant committee members.

I claim that Botanical Latin is the world’s easiest language and I shall teach it to you shortly. It is quite distinct from Classical Latin, which caused me considerable pain at school. I should explain why, how it shaped my life, and got me to be who I am.

Joe’s Biography

I come from Doncaster, England, a Yorkshire town halfway between London and Edinburgh. The name Doncaster itself was coined by the Romans from the name of the river Don and Latin *castrum*, camp. ‘Don’ derives from an ancient root meaning ‘moist’ or ‘wet’ (cf Danube), hence Doncaster was ‘damp camp’. Sited at a transport crossroad the town became a trading and manufacturing centre and received a charter for its weekly market in 1284.

Doncaster items of note:

- The oldest horse races (Doncaster Cup 1765, St Leger 1775)
- First aircraft factory and aerodrome
- Fastest steam locomotive (Mallard)

- Birthplace of Sir Godfrey Copley who left a legacy in 1731 to the Royal Society to fund an annual medal presentation which is the oldest scientific award, and
- More imaginatively, home to both Ivanhoe and Robin Hood (Robin Hood's Well, scheduled monument)

My First Garden

Just before World War 2 (WW2), my recently widowed grandfather came to live with us (me, mother, father - sisters came later) and he took on the task of keeping the garden tidy, and amusing pre-school me. Finding a small steel-rimmed wooden wheel my grandfather made me a little wheelbarrow (a photo exists), dug up about a meter square of ground as my very own garden, supplied packets of seeds (2 pence each from Woolworths) and showed me how to sow them in rows marked with a twig pushed through the empty packet. I even remember the names of the seeds: *Clarkia*, candytuft, night-scented and Virginia stock, love-in-a-mist, 'French Breakfast' radishes, and 'Tom Thumb' lettuce. I still grow the lettuce.

At about age eight, I got interested in science and begged my father to buy me a 'chemistry set' from the local toyshop. Yes, I wanted to make gunpowder, but the accompanying booklet suggested experiments and these just fascinated me. I read every book on chemistry in the Doncaster Public Library and as a result, I am still at heart, a chemist.

Grammar Schools

After the Romans left Britain in 440AD, the Dark Ages descended and literacy largely became the purview of monasteries with the Bible, written in Latin, as the centre of study. Some monasteries set up 'grammar schools' to teach boys the rules of Latin grammar in order to read the Bible and become monks. Later, larger centres also set up similar schools to not only teach Latin and Greek but other subjects such as Euclidean geometry, algebra, French and English grammar, history, literature and poetry.

Doncaster Grammar School was established in 1347 or 1348 or maybe ... 1350. What is certain is that we celebrated the 600th anniversary in 1947, but very frugally (WW2 left Britain short of everything). The date uncertainty was not mentioned at the time, and only later when I took microbiology did it occur to me that 1347 was the year of the Second Plague (Black Death, Bubonic Plague). It was introduced to Europe, killing an estimated 50% of the population of London, which at the time was the world's largest port. The carrier of the plague was the black rat (*Rattus rattus*, plague rat, ships' rat, rigging rat, roof rat) with rat fleas transmitting the plague bacterium to humans.

Doncaster is well away from London, but Britain's second largest port was Hull, and the first stop for imports – Doncaster. Not mentioned in local publicity is that the largest plague pit outside London was in Doncaster. The possibility comes to mind that the uncertainty of the founding date of the grammar school is that pupils may have delayed enrolling.

The aim of Doncaster Grammar School was to produce all-round scholars. That meant one should be well-spoken, good at debating, play rugby and/or cricket, be well-versed in literature, ancient and modern, good at languages including Latin (required at the time for admission to the top universities), French, possibly classical Greek, also geometry, algebra, arithmetic, with the science stream requiring physics and chemistry. Standards were proudly high. My big problem was with classical Latin, nouns were OK but verbs were endlessly tedious. One day we were covering the Pluperfect Subjunctive – this is the tense that poets used to envision alternative lives – and my little 14-year old mind snapped. This was stupid! I remember the moment. I stopped learning Latin and my life changed.

There is a degree of irony in the above in that I was a failure in classical Latin but have some claim to be an expert in a derivative but entirely independent modern language Botanical Latin. And some years after I left, the school closed; it had a good run but was no longer relevant.

Botanical Latin

It takes under a second to learn the rules of grammar of Botanical Latin although slow learners may want to take the whole second. Rule 1: repeat after me, "Noun, adjective".

Congratulations you passed! There are no other rules. To explain a little further, plants have a scientific name consisting of two words (a 'binomial' it is called in Latin and since it is its own language the words are in *italic* or underlined). The first word is a noun and is written with a capital letter, the second word is an adjective and written in lower case. If there is a varietal name that is added as a third name, also an adjective, also lower case. You want to write a sentence? Start with a noun and add as many adjectives as are needed. Example translated: 'Leaf, green lanceolate, toothed, hairy, rough, smelly'. To me the beauty of Botanical Latin is that there are no verbs.

Now there are other Codes of Nomenclature. Animals and microorganisms have their own rules, as now do cultivated plants. In the latter, 'Cultivar Names' are not in Latin but may be in any modern language, are not underlined or italicised, but are proper names with capitals and with inverted commas, e.g. lettuce 'Tom Thumb'.

The zoological rules are different, for instance the plague rat (black rat) is *Rattus rattus* (rat rat), which is two nouns, but the Norway rat is *Rattus norvegicus*, noun plus adjective (also known as the common, brown, lab or pet rat). I mention rats because the black rat (which is not particularly black) is now an extremely rare animal having been outcompeted by the common rat, (which makes burrows), everywhere except for a few remote areas in Europe and North America. Thus I was delighted and charmed when we moved from Halifax with its abundant common rat population to Sooke in 1990, to find our Sooke outbuildings liberally over-run with black rats. There were also droppings in the insulation of the roof of the main house, sure sign of the roof rat. This didn't stop me trapping the little buggers but I thought of it as a privilege of sorts to do so.

Now Botanical Latin may have almost zero grammar but it has a big vocabulary that has accumulated from ancient times and also incorporates modern names. This is too much to deal with here, as is the problem of pronunciation, so I shall probably do a follow up article. However there are several books you might find useful.

Books

Allen J Coombes, **Dictionary of Plant Names**, Timber Press. I was at Kew in the same year that Allen was working on his manuscript and he kindly acknowledged our discussions in the book. This is a small handbook.

W T Stearn, **Dictionary of Plant Names for Gardeners**, Cassell. This is a much more comprehensive coverage of the subject, very complete. I had many conversations with Bill Stearn, one of the most scholarly persons I ever met and I learnt much from him. He lived at Kew but worked at the British Museum, never went to university but received several honorary degrees. He was so good and generous with his knowledge.

Postscript

Every now and then, in our lovely Oak Bay cottage, Victoria, as I am falling asleep at night, I sometimes wonder, what life I might have had, if I had the Pluperfect Subjunctive. ☘

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Photo Album - A selection of Primula photos by Sterling Levy



Primula 'Lady Greer'.



Primula 'Quaker's Bonnet'



Primula rosea.



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