

The "Niagara Rhodo"

The Niagara Chapter,
Rhododendron Society of Canada
November 2008 Newsletter



Website: <http://www.rhodoniagara.org>

Our Purpose

We are a non-profit organization whose aim is to promote, encourage and support interest in the genus *rhododendrons*, including *azaleas*. **Our goal is to encourage gardeners to grow and appreciate these plants, by providing educational meetings with knowledgeable speakers, access to topical publications and hosting joint meetings with other chapters.**

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Sondra Meis

It's not yet time to pack away your digging and cutting tools for the winter; there is still work to do in the garden. Come out to our November 2nd meeting to share your experiences and interests regarding rhodos and azaleas. Perhaps you may get useful answers or observations to dilemmas you face in your garden. Come to learn of some current thinking about growing rhodos and azaleas, what you are doing right in growing rhodos and azaleas, and what you could do better. Perhaps gain some ideas to implement this Fall, to improve your garden's visual impact in 2009. Share your rhodo & azalea experiences with others in the community.

If you happen to be in the vicinity of Niagara College, check out the Rhodo Demonstration Garden, our Joint Project with Niagara College, (located on the slope near the back entrance).

Phytophthora: A new Pocket Diagnostic Kit

(Adapted from H. Edward Reiley. *Success with Rhododendrons & Azaleas*, Revised Edition. Timber Press. 2004).

Root rot (*Phytophthora Cinnamomi*), commonly called rhododendron wilt, because the entire plant wilts, can be one of the most serious diseases of rhodo and azaleas. The same disease organism also affects Cornus, Pieris, Taxus, Camellia, various laurels, Juniperus, Vaccinium and Pinus. It is most active at soil temperatures (20°C -22°C) and affects plants of any size planted in poorly drained conditions. Another form in which Phytophthora exhibits itself is in the form of dieback. In **DIEBACK**, leaves fall off after showing typical v-shaped browning of the central axis of the leaf from the stem toward the middle along the central vein of the leaf. In **ROOT ROT**, leaves roll downward toward the midrib, eventually wilt and the entire plant wilts. Leaves and stems may not show spongy rot for weeks. Cultural solutions to this problem will be discussed at the meeting on November 2.

A simple test to confirm diagnosis for *Phytophthora* is available. The test package is available from Horti International Services, 31471 Ponderosa Place, Abbotsford BC V2T 5G3, Phone: 604-504-8035. The kit which has 4 tests costs \$33.00 including shipping by Canada Post.

A description of the package is available on the Niagara Region website at <http://www.rhodoniagara.org/phytophthora.pdf> This PDF file is the work of Marc Colombel, founder of the Rhododendron Society of Breton (France). While the written description is in the French language the photographs and labels on each photograph provide full description to allow the reader to fully understand the simple steps that the test requires. We will attempt to provide a similar file entirely in English in due course. The use of this test will be described at the Open Forum on November 2, 2008.

Open Forum: Sunday, November 2, 2008

Sunday, November 2, 2008. 2:00 P.M.
Rittenhouse Hall, VRIC (Vineland Research and Innovation Center)
Formerly HRIO (Horticultural Research Institute of Ontario)
Victoria Avenue, Vineland, Ontario

Home gardeners view Spring as the time for planting and for enjoying the blooms of early spring flowers and shrubs. As winter approaches many of us may start to think about protecting our plants from winter's blasts. Other's may have a myriad of unanswered questions from the previous Spring and from watching their plants throughout the summer. But Fall is a time for preparing Spring bloom and repairing summer damage.

The meeting on Sunday, November 2, features a number of speakers, each briefly dealing with a different topic.

A talk and slide show about Rhodos and Azaleas in the fall and winter will be the first topic: varieties of rhododendron and evergreen azaleas; colours of companion trees; range of fall & winter colours for various varieties; effects of temperature on parts of plants above and below ground; is there need for protection; when, how much, and with what to mulch; pruning rhodos and azaleas. We will also discuss the advantages of Fall planting and explore the possibility of a Fall Plants 4 Members Sale.

Lil Haworth will talk about planting bulbs for spring colour; what goes well with rhodos and azaleas and why some bulbs should not be planted with rhodos and azaleas.

Marian Little of Nettle Creek Nursery will provide examples of interesting companion perennials and will offer suggestions for varieties that may interest you. Examples of indumentum on rhodos will be discussed.

A fourth speaker will offer suggestions for taking cuttings of rhodos and azaleas for rooting under fluorescent lights during the winter. Open pollinated seed of some rhodos and azaleas will be available for those wishing to start a tray of seedlings during the winter.

Now is the time to plant any rhodos and azaleas or companion shrubs. A small number of 2 year old Cornus Kousa Chinensis seedlings will be available as free door prizes to be distributed to members. Because fewer plants will be available than participants, plants will be allocated at random by numbered ticket available at the door. This will be open to members only . . . annual memberships will be sold at \$5 each for membership with an e-mail address and \$10 for those who prefer to receive newsletters via Canada Post.

Sunday November 2 at 2 PM will be a time for a free for all discussion of what interests you about Rhodos and Azaleas that you haven't had an opportunity to share. Come and share your interests and viewpoints. **All gardeners are welcome.**

Demonstration Rhododendron & Azalea Garden: Niagara College, Glendale Campus

The Rhododendron & Azalea demonstration garden last month celebrated its first birthday. This is a collaborative project funded in part by the Niagara Chapter, Rhododendron Society of Canada. Members of the Chapter provided advice on selection of cultivars to be planted, information on site preparation and appropriate planting techniques. This collaborative work will continue into the foreseeable future.

One year ago 130 rhododendrons and azaleas were planted on the slope at the rear entrance to the main academic building. The construction work on the retaining walls and on the flagstone covered paths is completed, the beds are well mulched and existing Plum trees are well trimmed. Companion plants are now being ordered as are replacement plants for those few estimated at 10% of the total planted - that, for one reason or another, did not survive transplanting and the tender care they received at the hands of the horticultural students. The varieties represented in the garden are listed below: Images of the Demonstration Garden are available at: We hope to have bloom-time photos available next Spring. <http://picasaweb.google.com/rhodorus/NiagaraCollegeOctober92008#>

Lepidotes:

Rh Midnight Ruby
Rh Karin Seleger
Rh Ramapo
Rh Olga Mezitt
Rh Cornell Pink
Rh PJM 'Compact'

Evergreen Azaleas:

Elsie Lee
Bixby
Joe's Broom
Corsage
Kiusianum Mangetsu

Elepidotes:

Rh Anna h. Hall
Rh Calsap
Rh Capistrano
Rh Cat Boursault
Rh Cat Album
Rh Nova Zembla
Rh Vernus

Deciduous Azaleas:

Arneson Little Gem
Golden Lights
Orchid Lights
Weston's Innocence
Weston's Lollipop

Deciduous Azaleas:

Weston's Lemon Dream
Schlippenbachi
Gibraltar

Work on the site will continue in the Spring of 2009 when some plants may be moved to afford better organization, dead plants will be replaced and companion plants will be installed.

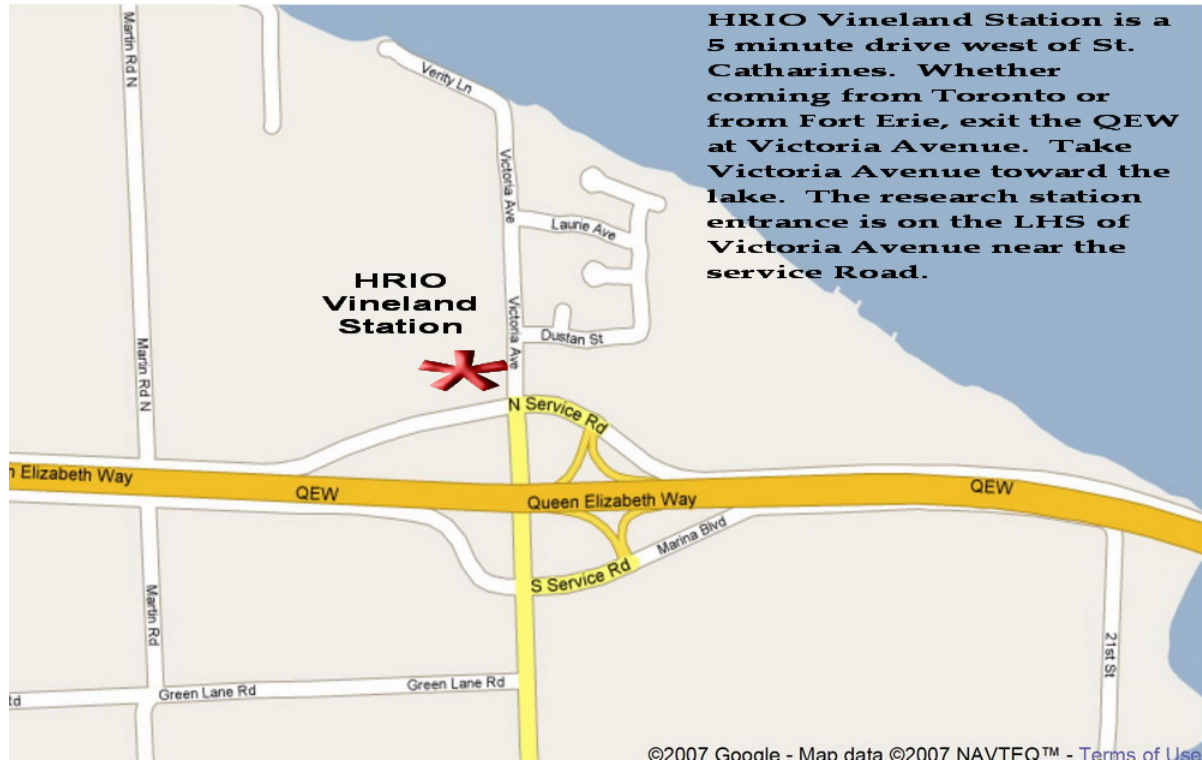
Plants for Members

Members were busy last spring potting up rooted cuttings that had come to us, for our members, from Dave Hinton in Orono (just 10 km north of Hwy 401 off Hwy 35) and from John Perkins in New Hampshire. These cuttings were rooted by Kathy Van Veen at Van Veen Nurseries in Portland, Oregon. Cuttings were shipped by the Perkins to Kathy who rooted them and then she shipped the cuttings to Marian and Mike Little who with Neil Miles, Peter Phelps and others potted up the rooted cuttings. These potted plants were then left under the care of Blue Sky Nursery who have done a great job of looking after our plants-for-members as well as their own. While it may, generally, be difficult to obtain certain interesting cultivars, being part of this network of growers and propagators allows us to provide rare cultivars at low prices. In particular it helps to alleviate the need for large expenditures of energy on the part of volunteers who are committed to sharing their enthusiasm for rhodos and azaleas with all Chapter members. The 200 +/- rooted cuttings as they appeared in mid October, 2008, after a summer's growth, may be seen at <http://picasaweb.google.com/rhodorus/P4MBlueSkyOctober92008#>

Enhancing the Woodlot at the Former HRJO Vineland

Steps are afoot by volunteers to enhance and rebuild the spring floral displays in the Woodlot at the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre. Rumour has it that a significant number of Vineland's deciduous azaleas have been rooted and may be provided for use at Vineland. Our own Niagara Chapter, RSC, is identifying sources of Vineland introductions to reintroduce to the Woodlot. Most significantly, a few weeks ago, the Lincoln Garden Club planted over 1000 daffodils in the Woodlot. The ages of volunteers spanned several generations of enthusiasts. The show in Spring 2009 will be magnificent.

Map to Vineland Research and Innovation Centre formerly HRIO, Victoria Avenue, Vineland



Map to Niagara College, Glendale Campus

