



"Niagara Rhodo" Newsletter of the The Niagara Chapter, Rhododendron Society of Canada December 2010

Our Purpose: We are a non-profit organization whose aim is to promote, encourage and support interest in the genus *rhododendron*. 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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Word of Caution

By becoming a successful grower, the reader will be exposed to a contagion for which there is no cure. Once infected with an appreciation of rhododendrons and azaleas most gardeners spend a lifetime collecting these most beautiful of all plants.

H. Edward Reiley

President's Note

In closing 2010 the Niagara Chapter of the Rhododendron Society reflects on another successful year: an expanding membership, a strong financial position, a successful Annual Plant Sale and Speakers Program open to the public, the Plants for Members Sale and garden tours which are open to members only, garden projects in the Community, and ongoing outreach through partnering with other horticulture organizations. We continue to expand our Plants for Members Program with more varieties in the pipeline that are hardy for Niagara. Not only are we enhancing our own gardens, we are helping to beautify our neighbours' gardens and some Niagara public spaces.

Our latest project, that is just getting underway, depends upon members' involvement for its potential success. A steering Committee, chaired by Nick Yarmoshuk, will oversee a test program of rhododendrons developed by an Ontario hybridizer, Dr. Brueckner, whose activities were not fully appreciated before his death in 1994. Hence, there is considerable potential for "new discoveries" and the introduction of new plants into our members' hands.

In the coming year, we are offering a full program which will evolve as the year progresses. Your Board of Directors is always looking for your comments and suggestions. Please write to the editor of the Newsletter at postmaster@rhodoniagara.org with your comments and suggestions.

We wish you the very best for 2011! We hope to see you in early February at our next Speaker's Event.

Sandra Meis



Review of Meeting of November 7, 2010

[The Brueckner Hybrids and the Test Program](#)

Christina Woodward, Dr. Brueckner's daughter presented a well received review of her father's work. She used his records to inform members of (a) how he had become interested in developing [a hybridization project](#), (b) significant influences on him, (c) principles he followed in doing his work, (d) [rhododendron specie](#) and [hybrids](#) he worked with, and (e) significant [outcomes](#) from the [hybridization project](#).

Christina ended her talk with these words *In working through my father's notes I found comments in his stud book next to a plant's record such as, "Excellent," "Worth naming," "Remarkable," "Should be registered", enough to tip me off that his program was still very much in progress when he died and there was [much unfinished business](#). It would be a great shame to not share some of our recent findings and the opportunity for others of involvement and discovery. . . ."*

Nick Yarmoshuk, Secretary of the Niagara Chapter, then posed the question, "*So what can be done about this?*" In suggesting an answer, he reminded members of the founders of the Niagara Chapter, people who were committed hybridizers, growers and mentors; and he reviewed the reason for the Chapter's existence: "**to promote, encourage and support interest in the genus rhododendron**". He explained that this meeting was the culmination of 2 years of work and discussion with the Board of the Niagara Region Chapter of the ARS. During this time, the Board of Directors and Christina Woodward developed an understanding that a Brueckner Hybrid Test project could be developed as part of the Chapter's Plants for Members (P4M) program.

Nick then briefly described the [agreement](#) and invited member support for and participation in the proposed project.

He stated that the goals of the project would be (a) to preserve the product of Dr. Brueckner's work for future generations; (b) to disseminate information about Brueckner's hybrids as widely as possible;

(c) to make as many cultivars as possible available to members and rhododendron enthusiasts; (d) to test Brueckner hybrids for their viability and use in the climate of southern Ontario; (e) to involve Chapter members in a valuable testing project.

Elements of the understanding include the striking of a Steering Committee, which will report to the Niagara Region Chapter Board of Directors. The Committee's role would be to formulate principles to be followed in (a) selecting plants to be propagated; in (b) distributing the plants; in (c) evaluating the plants, i.e. to develop a set of criteria for observation of the plants. Ultimately, systematically collected evaluation data would be used to publish the results of the test program.

Also, the meeting was informed that [two sets of cuttings](#), totaling some 200 rooted cuttings, would be available for distribution to the testing program in Spring 2011. A further 150 cuttings were to be delivered to a propagator in mid November, 2010.

Members at the meeting were invited (a) to comment on the information presented, (b) to ask clarifying questions, (c) to express their potential interest in participating in the test project and (d) to volunteer to work on the Steering Committee.

The response of those present was supportive and volunteers to serve on the [Steering Committee](#) came forward.

To explore details of the talk and to read the basic project design, click on the highlighted phrases above or go to <http://www.rhodoniagara.org/index2.htm> and follow the links to the Brueckner Test Project.

Program 2011

As Sondra states in her note, our meetings program, for this period, plan to provide more information about Plants for Members, invites member involvement in a proposed Test Garden project, and offers tours of unique and innovative rhododendron gardens. Shown below are meeting dates and program listings for the next 11 months.

Please note that all meetings, unless otherwise stated, will be held at Rittenhouse Hall, Vineland Research & Innovation Centre (VRIC), Vineland Station, Ontario, starting at 2 PM.



Two Brueckner Hybrids

Sunday, February 6, 2011, 2 P.M.

A Serendipitous Garden: The MacDougall Garden

James MacDougall will talk about his garden and its evolution. It is located on the lakeshore at Beamsville. The garden was developed from scratch about 5 years ago and has evolved into an eclectic selection of plants with roses, peonies and of course rhododendrons. The emphasis in the garden is on landscaping with cutting beds, grapevines, fruit trees and vegetables all with a whimsical approach. James' description of the development of a unique cantilevered deck, overlooking Lake Ontario, using recycled bridge I beams, is a fascinating story in its own right. Mary, James' spouse was responsible for the many artifacts that are so well displayed in and around the garden. Finally, his lawn cutting techniques to develop a Union Jack pattern in the lawn provides interesting content.

Sunday, March 6, 2011, 2 P.M.

New Directions in Rhododendron Development.

Dr. Stephen Krebs, Director, David G. Leach Research Station, Holden Arboretum, will speak on his interest in increasing the popular appeal of new introductions of rhododendrons and azaleas by adding disease resistance and heat tolerance to them. These traits may improve their performance under challenging conditions and broaden their marketability to regions where rhododendrons currently have a limited presence.

Sunday, April 17, 2011, 2:00 P.M.

Slide Show, Description, Coffee, Sweets & Discussion

Description of varieties to be available at the Annual Plant Sale, April 23, 2011. Also, discussion and review of members' interests and questions. Review of critical factors in caring for rhododendron and azaleas during summer heat.

Saturday, April 23, 2011, 9:00 A.M. to Noon

Annual Plant Sale

Location: Vineland Innovation & Research Centre, Garage & Implement area, at the former (HRIO), Victoria Avenue, Vineland Station.

Note: Plant Sale closes before Noon when all plants are sold out.

Saturday, May 14, 2011. 10 A.M. to Noon.

Garden Tours, Rhododendron Gardens in Mississauga.

Members Only:

Tour 1: Mrs. Marta Brueckner's Garden in Mississauga. A 2 acre garden containing Dr. Brueckner's hybrids and rhododendron specie from which the hybrids were developed.

(Program details to follow in April 2011)

Tour 2: TBA

Saturday, May 28, 2011. 10 A.M. to 2 P.M.

P4Ms Plant Sale. For Members only. Venue TBA

Sunday, November 6, 2011, 2 P.M.

Speaker & Program TBA:

Destroying 50 Years of Growth

The Rhodo chat line on Yahoo.com was abuzz in early November with a report about the planned destruction of the Morrison Azalea plantation at the National Arboretum in Washington D.C.

On November 8, 2010, Aaron Cook, President of the Azalea Society of America, reported that *“Beginning in the summer of 2011 a large number of azaleas on the Mt. Hamilton hillside will be cut down and the stumps treated with herbicide.”* Later, Ted Stecki, President of the American Rhododendron Society, confirmed this information and lamented that, *“This is a big loss of azalea history.”*

A month later a story on this issue appeared in the Washington Post. This article started with the following . . . *“Nothing says springtime in Washington like the cherry blossoms. Except perhaps azaleas in bloom at the U.S. National Arboretum. Which explains why [last week’s surprise announcement](#) by the arboretum that it plans to destroy the most frequently visited section of the historic Azalea Collection and dismantle the entire National Boxwood Collection hit a horticultural nerve throughout the region. Countless fans, including members of the nonprofit Friends of the National Arboretum (FONA) and National Bonsai Foundation (NBF), have expressed opposition to the decision to eliminate one of nature’s most magnificent and scientifically important spring displays. The Azalea Collection has long been a landmark in Washington. The lesser known but nationally recognized Boxwood Collection is the most complete collection in the world.”*

Reasons for this planned destruction include loss of funding and assertions that there is little genetic value in this collection. The views of informed individuals, such as Don Hyatt, an internationally recognized authority on USA azaleas, strongly oppose these assertions and question the motivations and reasons for eliminating this collection.

At the end of December, members of the Congress have become involved, letters are being written and pressure groups are mobilized to lobby for protection of the azalea collection and a web site created to provide appropriate information. The final outcome is as yet unknown. Readers who wish to have current information about this are invited to follow the following links:
<http://savetheazaleas.org>
<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JARS/v22n4/v22n4-magruder.htm>

Or . . . sign up for the Yahoo Rhodo Group and follow the discussion of this and other topics on-line.

This story about destruction of a collection of azaleas while distant from Niagara and outside of our area of financial interest nevertheless resonates locally. All too often we see collections of interesting plants, remark on their beauty and then take them for granted until they disappear. Locally, interesting rhododendron and azalea collections have, over time, been depleted and the work of hybridizers who are no longer with us has been lost to future generations. Some of these are in the process of being resurrected. Some would suggest that it is important for administrators of such collections to be familiar with their history so that the products of early developers can be built upon by future generations. Members of specialist horticultural societies, such as those of the American Rhododendron Society, can be instrumental in furthering these goals.

Membership Matters



Membership in the Rhododendron Society of Canada, Niagara Region Chapter and the American Rhododendron Society (ARS) are valid for the calendar year.

The 2011 membership fees are now due.

The benefits of a \$5.00 local membership (RSC) are . . .

1. Newsletters/notices sent by email.
2. 10% discount at the spring plant sale.
3. Advance notice of plants available and able to pre-order for the Plant Sale.
4. P4M (Plants for Members) available only to members
5. Participation in the Brueckner Test program.
6. Garden Tours Open only to members.

Note: A \$10 Local membership fee includes Newsletters mailed by Canada Post to those so requesting.

ARS membership(\$35.00) includes all the above benefits plus

- (a) the quarterly *Journal of the American Rhododendron Society*;
- (b) Participation in the annual seed exchange;
- (c) Receiving discounts on books;
- (d) Eligibility to attend conventions;
- (e) Participation in the seed exchange.

Contact the Membership Chair, Lil Haworth

Azaleas at National Arboretum, Washington D.C.





**Niagara Region Chapter, Rhododendron Society of Canada
American Rhododendron Society**

Membership 2011

Membership fees for the American Rhododendron Society 2011 are now due.

To continue receiving *The Journal* all fees must be submitted to the membership secretary by November 15th for submission to ARS.

Please make cheques payable to RSC Niagara and send to

**Lillie Haworth
4 Deer Park Court
Grimsby, ON
L3M 2R2**

ARS & Local Fees for 2011:

- 1. **ARS** \$CDN 35.00 Individual or Family membership
- Commercial membership \$CDN 90.00

This fee includes all the privileges of ARS membership i.e. *The Journal*, seed exchange, etc. as well as the Niagara Region Chapter Newsletter via email. Please note there is a \$5.00 surcharge if you wish your Niagara Newsletter by Canada Post.

Additional Chapter Membership: (\$15.00 each) Toronto Atlantic

OR

- 2. **Local Membership Fees** e-mail only (\$5.00 Canada Post Mail (\$10.00)

Please return section below with payment

Name:.....Address:

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Telephone: Email:

ARS (includes Niagara Chapter Membership)

Additional chapter membership ~ Toronto &/or Atlantic

OR Local Membership e-mail Canada Post Mail

Amount enclosed: