



“Niagara Rhodo”



The Niagara Chapter,
Rhododendron Society of Canada
District 12, American Rhododendron Society

Inside This Issue:

1. President's Note
2. Program 2012 & 2013
Membership Matters
3. From ARS (2012) May & September Meetings
4. Impact of Weather & Plants for Members

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

Members of the Niagara Region Chapter participated in a very full and successful winter and spring 2012 program. Our Annual Plant Sale in April was one of the most successful in recent memory, thanks to the huge support of members who assisted at the sale, and the generosity of repeat customers. Since this is our major fund raiser of the year, it serves as a vote of confidence of our members. Having a well-stocked treasury allows the executive to invite accomplished speakers who have new ideas and experiences to share with our Chapter's members. It also allows for development of a unique collection of plants to be propagated for future distribution to members, and it keeps wolves from the door and allows your executive to sleep at night. That might sound a bit extreme, but an effective strategy has evolved over time by your Board constantly striving to deliver greater value to our members.

Dan Meier, our speaker in March, delivered some 34 plants from Briggs Plant propagators that had been awarded to the chapter in recognition of the Chapter's growth in the previous year. These plants were distributed to ARS members as recognition of their support. This resulted in a further increase in ARS membership, so that there are now 38 ARS members in the Chapter. This increase will again be recognized in the spring of 2013 by Briggs who will again provide plants for distribution to the Chapter's ARS members.

Members of the executive maintained close relationships with gardeners in wider Rhododendron Society venues.

With their presentation on the Breukner project, Christiana Woodward (Dr. Brueckner's daughter) and Nick Yarmoshuk delivered an interesting and well received talk at the ARS Convention in Asheville, North Carolina.

Christina described the work of Dr. Brueckner with material that she had earlier delivered to Chapter members in 2010. Nick described the evolution and current state of the of the Breukner evaluation project. Following the talk, our Breukner Steering Committee has now morphed into an ARS committee, requiring some paper work to distinguish the local group from this new entity. More importantly, Wendy Fletcher, John Perkins and Chas Wagner have become members of this committee.

Recently, we have received several highly desirable, new plants for members (P4Ms) from Briggs nursery: R. Luteum "Golden Comet" a yellow azalea, R. Mucronulatum "Cornell Pink", R. Holden's Solar Flair, R. Tapestry and Fargesia dracocephalia "Rufa", clumping, non-invasive bamboo from Oregon. These cultivars will be available to members in spring 2013 at very attractive prices.

At the RSF Botanical Gardens



The Niagara Region Chapter is now a member of Rhododendron Species Foundation and Botanical Garden. Chapter members will benefit by having preferred access to plants offered by the Foundation and will have free access to the grounds of the Botanical Gardens in the event they travel to the West Coast. *(President's Note continued on Page 2.*

The winter 2013 program will continue to be of broad interest to all gardeners. While close attention is given to rhododendron topics we include information relevant to a wide range of gardening topics. The theme for this year's Speakers Program is "Evaluating Rhododendrons: Deciding on how to select cultivars economic to produce, and, of interest to gardeners." Our program will include: (a) Discussion of evaluation criteria for selecting rhododendrons. (b) A talk by Steve Hootman, Director of the Rhododendron Species Foundation and renowned plant explorer in New Guinea, Western China and the Himalayas. He will discuss criteria for selecting plants and describe recent discoveries. (c) A talk by Bob Feller and his spouse Marianne, organizers of Rhododendron Truss Shows and well known judges of rhododendron trusses. They will discuss criteria for deciding on quality of floral trusses with examples and comments about the Brueckner hybrids. We expect that ideas presented at these meetings will have direct relevance for all gardeners.

Our search for desirable, interesting and low cost plants continues. This will be reflected in the April General Plant Sale to which any and all gardeners in the region are welcome. Furthermore, it is anticipated a special P4M's event coinciding with distributions of rare plants will be held in May, 2013.

We look forward to seeing you in November and at subsequent meetings as this year's program unfolds.

Sondra Meis

Events Program, 2012 & 2013

Meeting dates and program listings for the next 12 months follow. All meetings, unless otherwise stated, will be held at Rittenhouse Hall, Vineland Research & Innovation Centre (VRIC), Vineland Station, Ontario, starting at 2 PM.

Sunday, Nov. 18, 2012, 2 P.M. Panel discussion: Evaluating plants. Peter Hannam, Kevin Kavanagh, Christina Woodward, Nick Yarmoshuk (moderator)

Sunday Feb. 10, 2013, 2 P.M. (To be confirmed) - Steve Hootman, Director & Curator, Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden. Irrepressible plant collector. **Topic:** The plants I collect and how I decide on what I select.

Sunday Mar. 10, 2013, 2 P.M. Bob Feller and Marianne Feller. Flower show organizers and judges. Bob Feller is Eastern Vice President, American Rhododendron Society. **Topic: Evaluating Rhododendron Trusses.**

Easter Sunday, March 31, 2013

Saturday, Apr. 6, 2013, 9 A.M. Annual public meeting at which plants available for distribution later in the month and in May will be described with a slideshow.

Events Program, 2012 & 2013 (Continued)

Saturday Apr. 27, 2013, 9 A.M. Annual Plant Sale. Garage, Vineland Research & Innovation Centre. Sale Closes when plants sell out.

Sunday, May 12, 2013. Mother's Day

Saturday May 2013. P4M Sale & Distribution – Pot luck Picnic. **Date and venue TBA**

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2013, 2 P.M. **Program TBA**



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 **2013 local and ARS** membership fees are now due.

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

1. Newsletters/notices sent by email.
2. 10% discount at the spring plant sale.
3. Advance notice of plants available.
4. Ability to pre-order for the Plant Sale.
5. P4M (Plants for Members) available only to members.
6. Participation in Research Projects such as evaluation of the Brueckner hybrids.
7. Garden Tours Open only to members.

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

Membership in ARS (\$35.00) entitles members to all the above benefits **plus**

1. The Quarterly, colourful and informative *ARS Journal*.
2. Access to special plant acquisitions.
3. Priority access to plants from Species foundation.
4. Discounts on books,
5. Priority access to the seed exchange.

Please use the form on **page 5** to send in your renewal to:

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

OR

=====

Plan to renew your ARS or Chapter membership at our November 18, 2012 meeting.

=====

Notes from the 2012 ARS Meetings, Asheville, North Carolina & Nanaimo, British Columbia

Report by: N. Yarmoshuk. District 12 Director

The ARS Annual Convention was held in early May 2012. Of course Asheville is in the heart of the area where native eastern deciduous azaleas grow in the southern Appalachians. Fortunately, the unusually warm spring that the east coast experienced this past year had a positive impact on the flowering date of the native azaleas. In their mountain range they would normally come to bloom at a time later than the early Convention date. This year they came to bloom earlier and it was possible to view some of the native azaleas in the wild. What a wonderful experience. The early spring was not as kind to the rhodos in the magnificent gardens noted for their beauty, originality, hybridizing and cultural history. Growing at lower elevations most blooms were past their best date. Nevertheless the tours were very rewarding. A list of these tours with descriptions and photos may be found at the following link. <http://www.azaleas.org/convention12.html>

Don Hyatt's keynote talk about the native azaleas, including great photographs, growing in the southern Appalachians and along the Blue Ridge Parkway was well received . . . as his talks always are. A written version of that talk is available at the following link. <http://www.azaleas.org/images/12.ChasingTheBloom-05-edited-illustrated.pdf>

The ARS Nanaimo Fall meeting was held in late September. Discussion at the ARS Board meeting continued to focus on matters important to the Society's well-being: Establishing ways of encouraging younger membership in the Society; adapting the ARS to digital technologies and members' changing reading practices; means of improving the efficiencies of Societal operations. Members will be pleased to learn that a new Chapter based in Finland has been added to the roster of ARS membership. Details about conclusions reached at these meetings will be reported in the next Newsletter.

"Rhododendrons in Paradise", the title for the Nanaimo meetings, is not an overstatement of the beauty of horticultural on Vancouver Island. This area (as Horticultural Zone 9) including a temperate rain forest presents opportunities to see rhododendrons and azaleas that we can only read about. Speakers spoke eloquently about gardens we visited following the talks. Check out this link for more: <http://arsnanaimo2012.ca/programme.shtml>

The Nanaimo plant sale made one's mouth water; but unfortunately, most of the plants would not likely survive in our climate, and the prospect of transporting a number of plants by air limited one's appetite for testing plants in Niagara. Nevertheless, Wanda and Nick returned with eight *R. augustinii* hybrids. Some of these will be offered in the plant raffle at the Chapter meeting on November 18.

After the Nanaimo conference, during a side trip to Tofino

we discovered the Gibson Garden virtually in the middle of town. Readers would be entranced with the range, quality and size of the plants and will find a link to a story about this garden very interesting.

<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JARS/v41n1/v41n1-gibson.htm>

As at previous ARS National meetings there were opportunities to meet interesting growers to discuss their interests and to explore their availability as speakers at Niagara meetings. It is a pleasure to report that our tradition of introducing superb speakers to Niagara members will continue this year. Consistent with our theme this year to focus on plant evaluations for the collector and the home gardener we have invited the Fellers and Steve Hootman.

Marianne Feller and Bruce Feller are flower judges, landscapers and organizers of flower shows. Bruce Feller is the current eastern region ARS vice-president. They will be our speakers in March 2013. Steve Hootman is director and curator of the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden as well as a dynamic and knowledgeable horticulturalist. Steve Hootman's adventures in horticultural exploration and plant collection were briefly described by Dennis Bottemiller during Dennis's talk last year. We have invited Steve to be our guest speaker in February 2013.

The following is a recent blog by Steve Hootman written, just a few days ago, from mountainous, south central China.

"China 2012 - Have just returned from Leigongping... October 19, 2012 @ 11:44 AM"

*"Have just returned from Leigongping mountain where I enjoyed one of my finest days in China. On a crisp, clear day (following hard rain on the climb up the day before) we hiked through the best preserved deciduous forest I have ever witnessed in my 17 years in Asia. A remarkable assemblage of trees dominated by massive old beech (*Fagus longipetiolata*) up to 150 ft. high. Under these beautiful trees were imposing 30 ft. high specimens of the large-leaved *Fortunea - Rhododendron glanduliferum*. At the end of our 15 km hike, we exited the mountain through a beautifully maintained ethnic Miao village. A truly remarkable day.*

*Previously, we found a substantial population of the rare and virtually unknown *R. breivicaudatum*, a great find and a new one for all of us. Next we attempt to locate the newly named *Taliensia - R. dachengense* on the rugged Dayao Shan of Guangxi Province."*



Impact of Warm Spring & Summer Drought

Early in April of this year I was delighted to see that *R. sutchuenense* that I had been nurturing for more than 10 years finally showed a beautiful blossom. Not one but several. Two days later, the blossoms were brown and limp, victims of a hard frost that followed an unseasonably mild March.



Gardeners enjoyed the opportunity to get started on their favourite spring past-times. But the unusually mild and early spring devastated fruit crops in our region by freezing out early blooming flower buds. The same process also had considerable impact on flowering of many varieties of rhododendron.

The summer drought brought enforced watering. Our Chapter's P4Ms were well cared for at Blue Sky Nursery and showed good growth. Although plants in your editor's garden were watered reliably, 8 large plants succumbed and two azaleas that lost their leaves late in the summer still have green cambium. Whether or not they survive the winter remains to be seen next spring. Early in the drought, in June a number of potted plants were found to have fully brown leaves. Examination showed a green cambium layer. The dried plant was immersed in water for several hours and then placed in shade and watered carefully. A full set of new green leaves developed by early August. Perhaps the lesson to be taken is that **plants that lose their leaves during drought may not be dead but may revive with care.**

Another apparent impact of the hot summer was the size of new growth. While taking cuttings for transmission to Van Veen's for propagation, Christina Woodward and your editor noticed that the length of stems of this year's new growth was much shorter than had been the case in previous years.

Notable for Raffle at Meeting on November 18

R. "Jeanne's Favourite" is a lovely little lepidote that was made available to registrants at the Nanaimo Conference. We are still trying to get full parentage information about this hybrid. We do know it is an *R. augustinii* hybrid.

The other parent is unknown to us. We hope to learn of the entire parentage before the November 18 meeting.

According to Greer's catalogue, *R. augustinii* is a delightful, not to be forgotten, radiant blue color. A strong grower that flowers in abundance, and reported to be hardy to -15°C. We will try to provide more information in the next newsletter.



R. luteum "Golden Comet" ... a P4M

In her earlier comments Sondra reported on our being able to obtain a significant number of *R. luteum* "Golden Comet". This cultivar will likely be made available to members in some of the spring events. *Luteum* in its yellow form is a lovely scented azalea that blooms in mid-season at the same time as *Mist Maiden* and other *R. yakushimanum* hybrids. Harold Greer describes this cultivar as "*R. luteum* is a great species. It is hardy, fragrant and is tolerant of many conditions including heat or cold. If I had to choose 10 rhododendron species, it would be in that list. The cultivar 'Golden Comet' is a very good form. I have had it for years and it is a superb plant. I have found no problems with it and it flowers heavily without fail even in a shaded location where mine is planted". Leaves turn a lovely bronze in the fall.

R. luteum "Golden Comet"





**Niagara Region Chapter, Rhododendron Society of Canada
District 12, American Rhododendron Society**

Membership 2013

Membership fees for the American Rhododendron Society 2013 are now due.

To continue receiving *The Journal* all fees must be submitted to the membership secretary by November 18th for submission to ARS.

Please make cheques payable to **RSC Niagara** and send to **Lillie Haworth**
4 Deer Park Court
Grimsby, ON. L3M 2R2

<u>ARS (& Local) Fees for 2013</u>	<u>Local Membership Only for 2013</u>
<p>1. ARS Individual or Family membership \$CDN 35.00</p> <p>2. Commercial membership \$CDN 90.00</p> <p>This fee includes all the privileges of ARS membership i.e. <i>The Journal</i>, seed exchange, etc. as well as the Niagara Region Chapter Newsletter via email. See page 2 for details of ARS benefits</p> <p>Please note there is a \$5.00 surcharge if you wish to receive your Niagara Newsletter by Canada Post.</p> <p>Additional Chapter Membership: (\$10.00 each) Toronto Atlantic</p>	<p>Fee: e-mail only (\$5.00) Canada Post Mail (\$10.00)</p> <p>This fee includes all the benefits of local membership described on Page 2 of this Newsletter.</p> <p>Local members who have already subscribed for the 2013 year and who wish to upgrade their membership to ARS membership will have their local membership applied to the ARS membership fee.</p> <p>Please contact Lil Haworth for further information on this option.</p>

Please return section below with payment

Name:..... Address:

Telephone: Email:.....

ARS (includes Local Niagara Chapter Membership) (\$35)
 Additional chapter membership ~ Toronto (\$10) &/or Atlantic (\$10) **OR**

Local Membership only e-mail (\$5)..... Canada Post Mail (\$10)

Amount enclosed: