



"Niagara Rhodo"



Newsletter of the Niagara Chapter,
Rhododendron Society of Canada,
District 12, American Rhododendron Society

January, 2015

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'

<p>News</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Rhododendron Culture in Australia & New Zealand: A Canadian's Experiences. Liz and Chris Malicki Niagara Chapter's 2015 Program Implications of Distribution of Rhododendrons Global warming, New York Times, Jan. 17, 2015 	<p>Word of Caution by H. Edward Reiley</p> <p>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.</p>
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1. Rhododendron Culture in Australia and New Zealand: A Canadian's Experiences.

Rittenhouse Hall. Vineland Research & Innovation Centre. Victoria Avenue, Vineland Station. February 1, 2015

Liz and Chris Malicki travelled to New Zealand and Australia in November 2014 to pursue Chris's interest in solar eclipses. Liz, a consummate gardener and a member of our Chapter, of course took the opportunity to explore her horticultural interests during the southern spring's rhododendron blooming season.

Coming Event

Liz & Chris Malicki

Sunday, February 1, 2015
2 P.M.

Vineland Research & Innovation Centre
Victoria Avenue, Vineland Station
Just North of the QEW on Victoria Avenue



Rhododendron culture in Australia and New Zealand: A Canadian's Experiences

Liz and Chris first visited Australia in 2012 to experience and view a total eclipse, where Liz accidentally discovered the rhodie paradise east of Sydney. The yen to see more firmly established, they focused their recent New Zealand trip exactly for that reason. But, it had to be planned around star observing and dark skies i.e. Chris' passion. There was no eclipse at this time so, as "the good wife", she had to compromise.

Liz was very careful in planning their trip. She wanted to see as much of the truly interesting areas as possible and to obtain an intimate sense of horticulture as it is practiced in the areas they were to visit. Weeks before the

trip, she contacted district leaders in the New Zealand Rhododendron Society who generously provided her with advice on flowering locales, private gardens, botanical gardens, and several nurseries. She hoped to focus on garden design

using rhodies and their companion plants. As well, she hoped to learn from homeowners and gardeners about their successes and challenges.

Liz reports, "During our trip we were able to catch blooms all over. Specific areas had more blooms, other areas less, but we were certainly rewarded. And New Zealand has so much more to offer horticulturally than just rhodies. In fact it is a botanical paradise that just blew me away. No pictures will be able to capture this magnitude there was so much to see and so little time was available."

Liz has prepared a slide show, a short video and a talk through which she will share her and Chris's experiences. Chris will briefly discuss the solar eclipse and star gazing as a general point of interest and as background to their travels. Liz and Chris are a dynamic couple whose presentation will inform and entertain.

Liz lives and gardens in Mississauga. A sampling of images from her gardens is shown below.

Liz Malicki has won several prizes for her Lorne Park garden, notably 2013 Streetscape Mississauga Garden of the year award, chosen from first place winners in all classes. Her focus on rhododendrons, in particular low growing small leaved varieties, integrated with an array of rare or unusual companion plants, shrubs and trees speaks to her diverse horticultural interest.

Liz is one of the founding members of the Brueckner Rhododendron Gardens Stewardship Committee in Mississauga. From the Committee's inception in 2007 she was a vital force in planning appropriate plant selections, planting practices, garden design, contributing to a vision for the park, and advocating for its volunteer efforts.



2. Niagara's 2015 Program

Sunday, February 1, 2015 Liz & Chris Malicki
Rhododendron Culture in Australia & New Zealand: A Canadian's Experience.

Sunday, March 8, 2015 Douglas Markoff
The Riverwood Conservancy, A living laboratory along the banks of the Credit River.

Sunday, April 19, 2015 John Brett, Halifax, N.S.
Breeding for Hardiness: Niagara's & Atlantic's Experiences with Brueckner Hybrids

Sunday, April 19, 2015 Nick Yarmoshuk
Discussion & Description of "What's in this Year's Plant Sale".

Sunday, April 19, 2015 *Deadline for Members' pre-Sale orders*

Saturday, April 25, 2015 *Annual Plant Sale*

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2015 *Annual Picnic & P4M sale*

Sunday, November, 2015 *Date and Speaker TBA*

3. Implications of the Origin and Distribution of Rhododendrons

In the December issue of Niagara Rhodo we published an abstract of an article written by E. Irving and R. Hebda of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. Journal of the American Rhododendron Society. V47: No3: p139: 1993. <http://www.rhododendron.org/v47n3p139.htm> The authors asserted two features of the distribution of various rhododendron species, ". . . First, the overwhelming majority of rhododendrons occur either on the slopes of the very deep valleys that border the eastern Himalayas and southeastern Tibet, or in the mountain ranges that form the backbones of the archipelago stretching between mainland Asia and Australia - the islands of Java, Sumatra, Borneo, New Guinea, and the Philippines. The second feature is that the remaining species, although far fewer in number, are spread much more widely over the northern hemisphere, occurring in pockets that, to a considerable degree, are isolated from one another - Japan, northwestern North America, the Appalachian, and Caucasus Mountains. This prompted us to offer the following comparison between the natural growing environments of this genus and that generally available to growers in southern Ontario. Some pictorial evidence of their natural environment follows.

Native Environment

- Mountains and on Mountain Slopes
- High altitude – cool night temperatures
- Moderate range of temperatures
- Lots of moisture
- Excellent Drainage
- High Humidity - Morning Fog
- Direct sun in cool temperatures

Southern Ontario Environment

- Rich clay soil on relatively flat terrain
- High July and August temperatures
- Freezing Winter Temperatures
- Summer Drought, Unreliable snow cover
- Suspect Drainage – Must be monitored
- Low Humidity - Rare Morning Fog
- Direct sun – Hot summer temperatures

Examples on the following page are rhododendron habitats in the mountains of Europe, China, Turkey, Mt Washington (New Hampshire, USA), Roan Mountain (Tennessee, USA) and Pisgah National Forest (Western North Carolina, USA).

It is from these areas, and similar others, that species rhododendrons and azaleas are derived and mated to result in the delightful plants that are offered to gardeners and collectors in Niagara. The implications of this plant heritage are suggested on Page 5.

**Where They Grow Naturally
The European Alps**



Yunnan China at 5000 ft +



Azalea Luteum in Turkey



Lepidotes "Scaly leaf" "Small leaf"
Rhododendron lapponicum on Mt. Washington



Rhododendron on Roan Mountain



Azalea Calendulaceum on Roan Mountain



Azalea Vaseyi in Pisgah National Forest



Consequences of Differences in environment

Some would label the Southern Ontario Rhododendron environment as one hostile to rhododendrons. We note that there are no known native rhododendron in Ontario except for some ledum that may exist in some northern areas. Using the Characteristics we describe in the tables on Page 3, we suggest the following Consequences of such a "hostile" environment.

Implications for growing these plants in our gardens

Ideally one would wish to fully replicate the conditions of the rhododendron's natural environment in one's own setting. Of course that is impossible. We attempt, as much as possible, to replicate those conditions that are critical to the plant's survival and development.

Consequences of a Hostile Environment

- Warm - Hot soil at night
- No cool root-run in summer
- Rain & Fog comes in fall but required in summer
- Little or No Rain plus hot temperatures results in leaf desiccation leading to plant death
- For most Rhododendron, hot summers may contribute to slow death through phytophthora or other disease
- Extreme cold temperatures with bright sun results in sunburned leaves and/or flower bud death

Critical Factors

Critical factors in siting

- General site drainage
- Drainage at the plant's root ball
- Soil texture
- Soil pH
- Avoidance of direct noon-day and hot afternoon sun - Provide east exposure
- Providing as cool a root run as possible
- Providing appropriate moisture

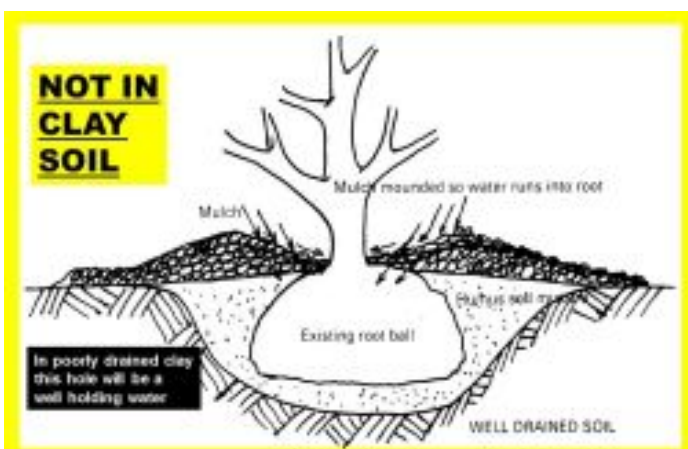
Planting Recommendations

Shown below are suggestions for planting rhododendrons (and azaleas) in both clay soils and sandy loam soils. These procedures address the first 2 critical factors listed above: **General Drainage & Drainage at the plant's Root Ball.**

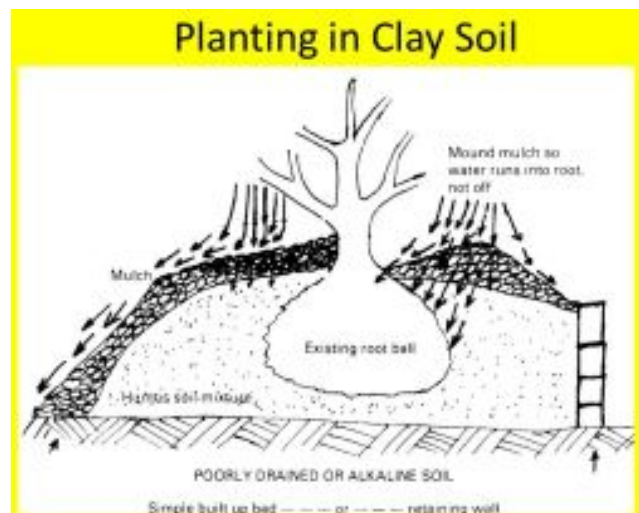
We are reminded of the Late Hank Schannen's (*Founder of Rarefind Nursery in New Jersey*) exhortation that the 10 most important factors in rhododendron growing start with "Drainage" as #1, continues through numbers 2 to 9 with "Drainage" as each of those factors and ends with "Drainage" as Factor #10.

We will continue with this theme in the next issue of this Newsletter with a review of appropriate soil amendments, details about fertilizing and discussion of how to deal with potted plants.

Planting in clay soil will drown the root ball



Planting in Clay Soil



4. January 17, 2015 story about Global Warming from the New York Times.

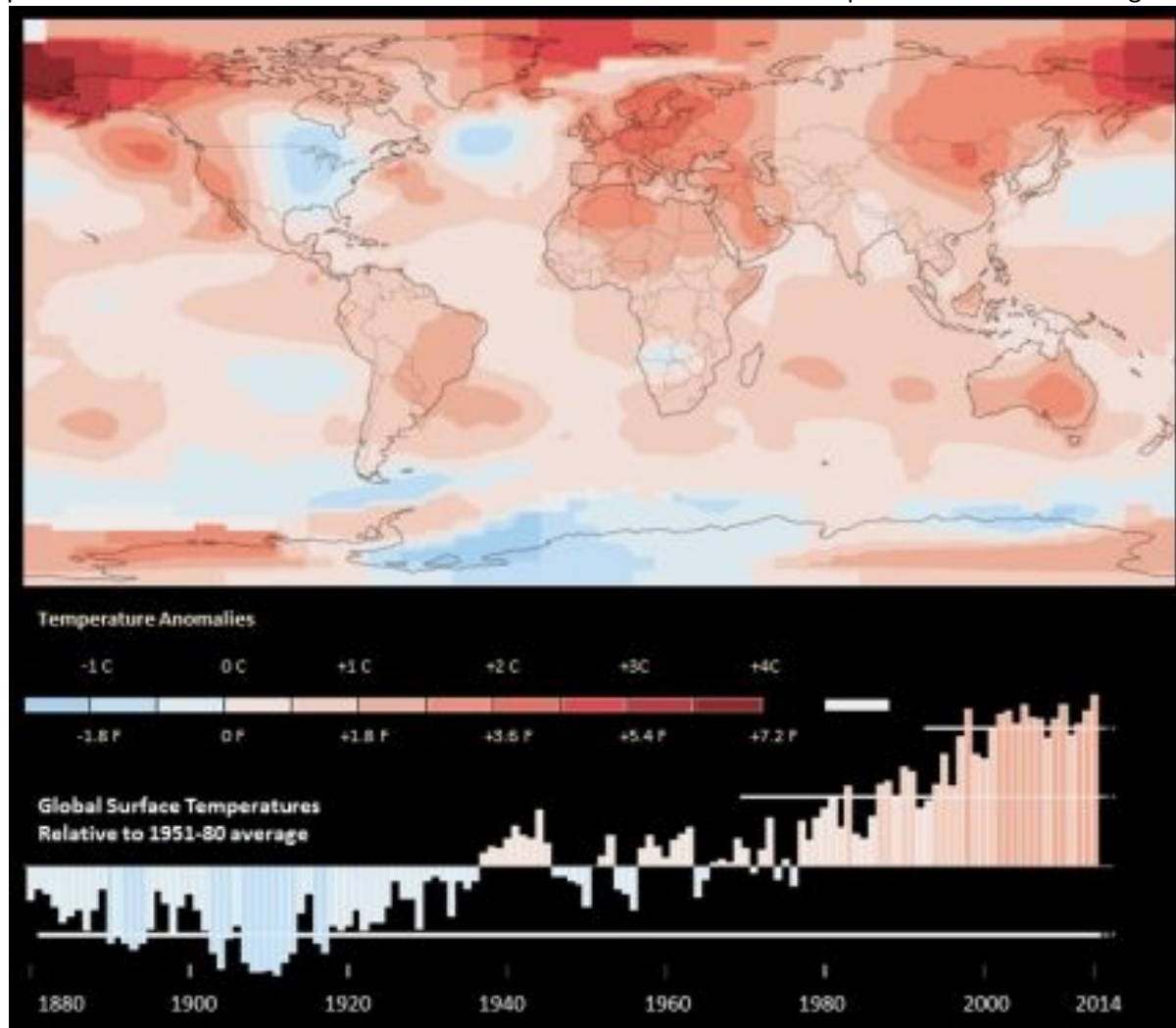
While we froze in the Polar Vortex, for the rest of the world, 2014 was the hottest Year on record, surpassing 2010.

Last year was the hottest in earth's recorded history, scientists reported on Friday, January 17, 2015, underscoring scientific warnings about the risks of runaway emissions and undermining claims by climate-change contrarians that [global warming](#) had somehow stopped.

Extreme heat blanketed Alaska and much of the western United States last year. Several European countries set temperature records. And the ocean surface was unusually warm virtually everywhere except around Antarctica, the scientists said, providing the energy that fueled damaging Pacific storms.

In the annals of climatology, 2014 now surpasses 2010 as the warmest year in a global temperature record that stretches back to 1880. The 10 warmest years on record have all occurred since 1997, a reflection of the relentless planetary warming that scientists say is a consequence of human emissions and poses profound long-term risks to civilization and to the natural world.

Of the large inhabited land areas, only the eastern half of the United States recorded below-average temperatures in 2014, a sort of mirror image of the unusual heat in the West. Some experts think the stuck-in-place weather pattern that produced those extremes in the United States is itself an indirect consequence of the release of greenhouse gases,



though that is not proven.

Several scientists said the most remarkable thing about the 2014 record was that it occurred in a year that did not feature El Niño, a large-scale weather pattern in which the ocean dumps an enormous amount of heat into the atmosphere.

Longstanding claims by climate-change skeptics that global warming has stopped, seized on by politicians in Washington to justify inaction on emissions,

depend on a particular starting year: 1998, when an unusually powerful El Niño produced the hottest year of the 20th century. With the continued heating of the atmosphere and the surface of the ocean, 1998 is now being surpassed every four or five years, with 2014 being the first time that has happened in a year featuring no real El Niño pattern. Gavin A. Schmidt, head of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies in Manhattan, said the next time a strong El Niño occurs, it is likely to blow away all temperature records. Read the full story at

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/17/science/earth/2014-was-hottest-year-on-record-surpassing-2010.html?emc=eta1>