



"Niagara Rhodo"



*Newsletter of the Niagara Chapter,
Rhododendron Society of Canada
District 12, American Rhododendron Society
December 2015-January 2016*

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.

Inside This Issue:

1. Program: February 7 2016
2. William Roman: Master Beekeeper – Bio
3. Recent Events & Activities: **(a)** 2016 Program dates **(b)** Bronze Medal Award **(c)** Rhodo Species Foundation Membership **(d)** The Brueckner Project
4. The Blob and Godzilla: A Review

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



Best Wishes for 2016

Although this is the last week of January and this Newsletter is some three weeks late, it is never too late to wish everyone the very best of good wishes for the New Year.

**Program: Sunday February 7, 2016. 2 P.M.
Rittenhouse Hall, Vineland Research & Innovation Centre
Victoria Avenue, Vineland Station. Just North of QEW @ exit 57**

Program: 2 P.M. to 4 P.M.

1. Coffee Klatch: Whenever you arrive.
2. @ 2 PM Welcome & Introduction
3. Description of Plants in Raffle
4. Introduction of Speaker: William Roman
5. Discussion with Speaker
6. Raffle Draw
7. Sales of Honey and Beeswax Candles

Sondra Meis
Brief slideshow
Nick Yarmoshuk
Audience & William Roman
Sondra Meis
Rosewood Winery.

Buzz at Rosewood Winery: A Year in the Life of a Beekeeper

Sunday, February 7, 2016, 2 P.M.

Vineland Research & Innovation Centre
Vineland Station, Exit QEW north
(towards the lake) at Victoria Avenue



William Roman

Items for Discussion ???

1. Diversity of Species
2. Biology of Bees and their colonies
3. Native bees vs Introduced Bees
4. Caste Structure in a Colony
5. World Distribution & Habitat History
6. Honey's Use as a Food & Drink
7. Bees and their Enemies
8. Bees and Rhododendrons



Three bees are pictured in the panel to the left of William Roman. Clockwise from the top are shown (a) The crow bee (*Halictus ligatus*) which favors sunflowers and black-eyed Susans, Experts suggest that the yellow pollen is almost certainly sunflower pollen. (b) Some bees are naturally iridescent. The green bee, known as *Augochloropsis metallica*, is one such example. It is related to the *A. sumptuosa* that lives in sand dunes, *A. metallica* is a more common find. This bee was collected from a tomato plant in the grower's back yard. (c) The blue bee, known as *Augochloropsis sumptuosa*, is a sand specialist. It hangs out [on the] sand hills of North Carolina. They are seen on the Eastern Shore in the dune areas. This species forages for pollen from flowers located on the edges of those sand dunes. (Source: National Geographic.

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/features/140114-bee-native-macro-photography-insects-science/#.vqVWfEJ5LVI>) Click on this link for the original story. Or copy URL to your browser.

William Roman is Operations Manager & Beemaster at Rosewood Estates Winery on Mountain Road in Beamsville, Ontario. He oversees operations and production of handcrafted estate vinifera wines, meads (honey wines), honey and beeswax products. Together with his parents Eugene and Renate and his sister, Krystina, this 3rd generation family of beekeepers are committed to practicing sustainable and natural beekeeping and vineyards, with the intent of achieving balanced vines and stronger hives, which are better able to tolerate pests, disease and seasonal variation.



William came to bee keeping naturally; following in the footsteps of his grandfather William and father Eugene. He joined the family firm in 2009 after completing University and the Viticulture and Oneology program at Niagara College. While at Niagara College, William worked harvest with Matt Mavety, of Blue Mountain Vineyards and Cellars, in the Okanagan, British Columbia. It was through this experience that William developed and honed his cellar and harvest skills. In preparation for his current responsibilities he has worked with various wineries on Niagara, gained additional valuable insights into field management and wine production in New Zealand, and in the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia. His technology skills were honed at Bell Canada. William earned a Business degree at McMaster University.

Chapter News

Rhododendron Species Foundation (RSF)

The RSF has been acclaimed as “probably the best species botanical garden worldwide, devoted to searching for rare species, delivering plants to North American gardeners, propagating and making these rhododendrons available to members at reasonable cost. Steve Hootman, the intrepid plant explorer and Denis Bottemiller the garden’s plant propagator have both been our guests and have provided us with entertainment, valuable insights into their work as explorers and also sharing their expertise in plant propagation.

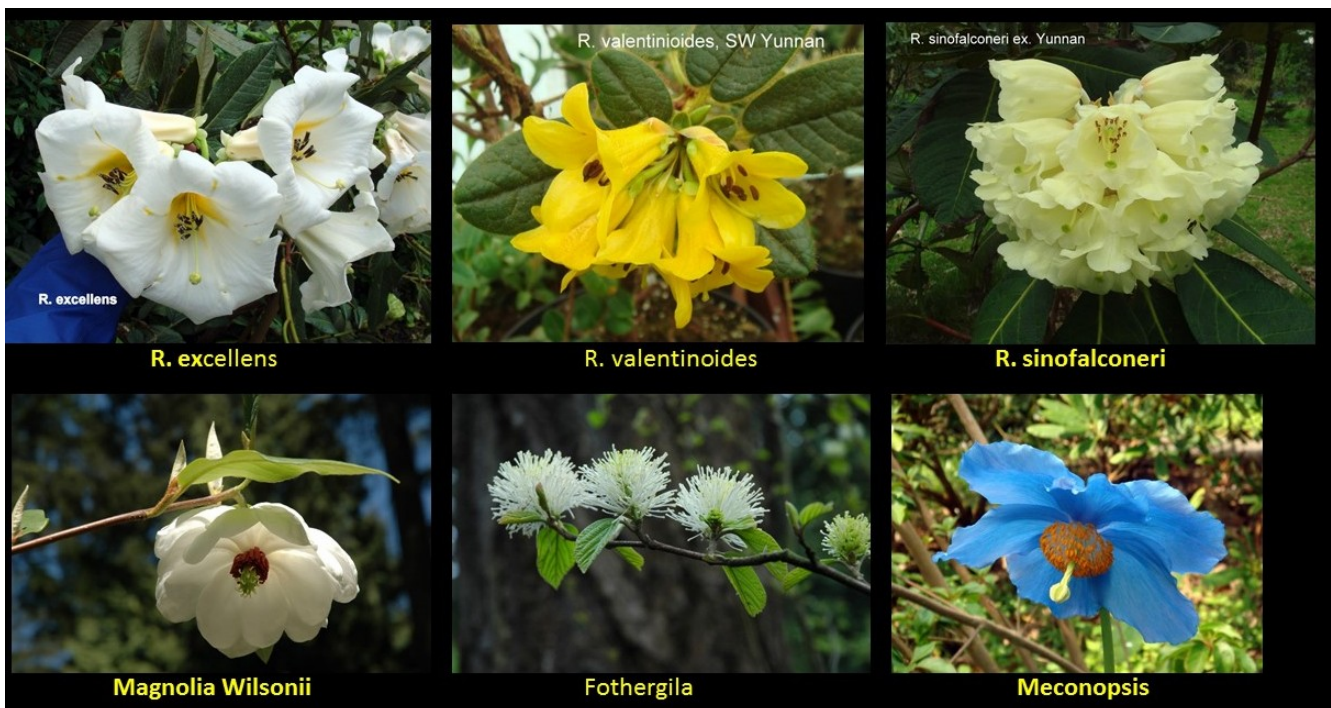
The Niagara Region Chapter has been a member of the RSF for many years. Our membership has been renewed for the 2016. One of the principal benefits of membership in the RSF is that we have access to the list of rare species propagated at the gardens and we may place orders for available species. Several of our members have expressed an interest in obtaining some rare

rhododendron species. Because the RSF finds it difficult to ship into eastern Canada we have suggested that the Chapter could act as a clearing house for member’s requests. The plants, with a phytosanitary certificate would be shipped to the Clarence, New York Post Office, a volunteer would collect the shipment and distribute the plants to those who placed an order.

Members interested in this source of rare species are invited to check out the plant list at the link shown below.

<http://www.rhodoniagara.org/RSF2016.pdf>

The collage below shows 6 of many species available from the RSF. We remind enthusiasts that not all species at the RSF will succeed in Niagara. Please let Nick Yarmoshuk know if you have any interest in obtaining plants from this source.



Bronze Medal Award to Gordon Polych

The American Rhododendron Society (ARS) has for many years recognized individuals who have contributed significantly to the development of the Society and of its Chapters. Four levels of special recognition have been identified: Gold and silver medals are awarded to Society members for significant contribution over a period of time to either the Society or to the genus *Rhododendron*, or both. **Gold awards** are for contributions that have national or international impact. **Silver awards** recognize significant regional contributions. **The Pioneer Award** recognizes pioneering and original achievement in the advancement of rhododendrons. The **Bronze Medal Award** is the highest award any Chapter may bestow on one of its members without assessment by an appropriate committee of the ARS. This award honors a member's significant contributions to the Chapter.

The Board of Directors of the Niagara Chapter is delighted to announce the awarding of a Bronze Medal to Gordon Polych of Vineland, Ontario.



Sondra Meis, NRC President with Gordon Polych

The citation reads: The Bronze Medal is awarded to Gordon Polych in recognition of many years of devoted voluntary service to the Niagara Region Chapter (NRC). Your assistance in the work of the Niagara Chapter has contributed significantly to effective production of plants for the P4M program and for the Brueckner Test Project. You were always there for us, participating and assisting with various organizational activities, thereby helping to improve efficiency, encouraging interest in rhododendrons and creating a congenial group environment.

Time Table for 2016 Events

Meeting: Dates & Speakers:

Sunday,	February 7, 2016	William Roman
Sunday,	March 13, 2016	TBA
Easter Sunday	March 27, 2016	
Sunday,	April, 10, 2016	Annual Meeting & What's in the Plant Sale
Wednesday	April 20, 2016	Deadline to submit pre-orders
Saturday	April, 30	2016 Annual Plant Sale, Vineland Station:
Saturday	?? September	Annual Pot Luck Picnic – Date TBA

Recent Events & Activities

Meeting November 15, 2015

Jeopardy by Kevin Kavanagh was the featured presentation of our last meeting. Kevin's creative composition, as a take-off on the popular quiz show, provided an excellent review of horticultural lore and ideas that included identifying a wide range of rhododendron companion plants, their appropriate siting and culture. We promised Kevin to not give away the program answers and questions, but shown below are a few of the companion plants that were included in the fun talk. Included in the *Jeopardy* program was the following item:

Answer: Despite going extinct in the wild more than 200 years ago, this small tree is, quite frankly, the perfect companion plant for the Rhododendron garden.

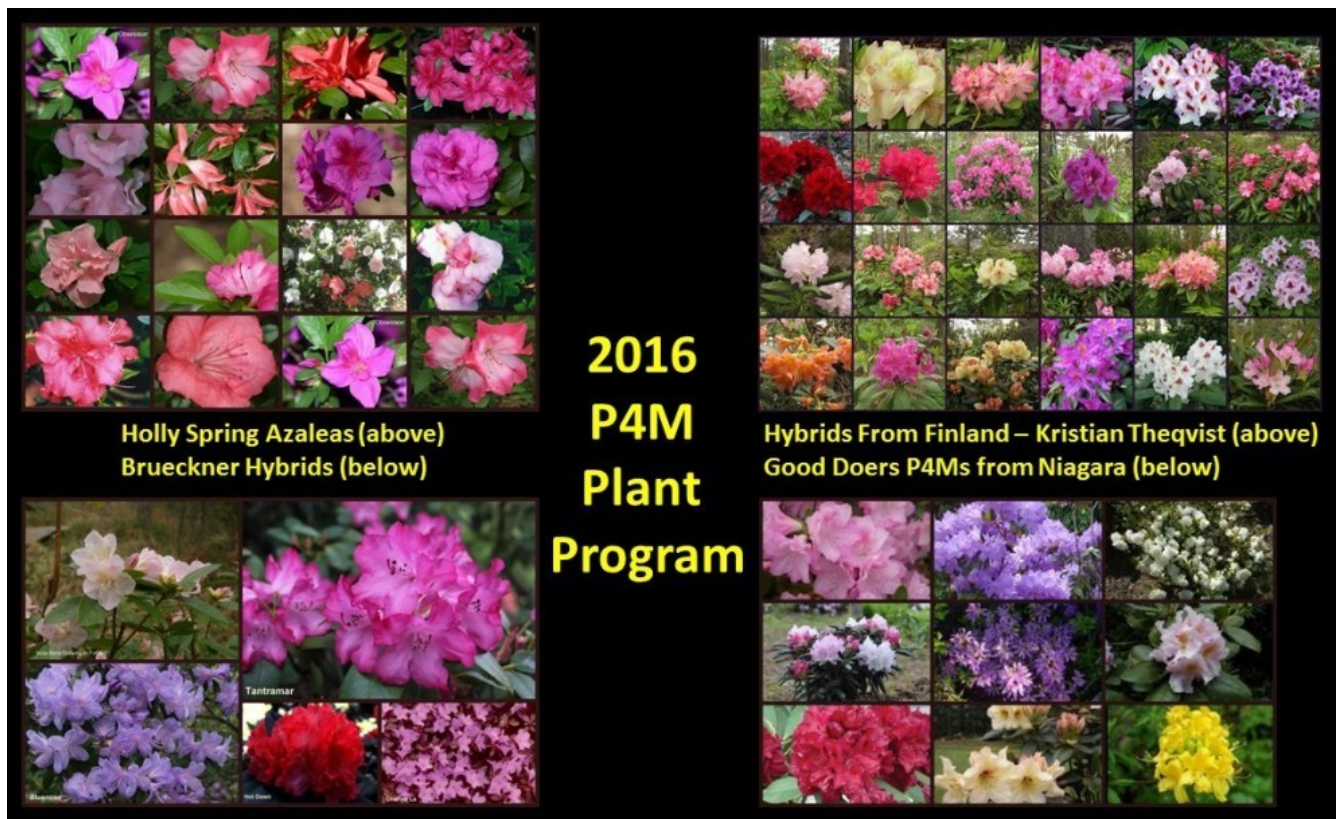
What is _____? The correct answer is included among the cultivars shown below. Each cultivar in the montage is identified on the last page of this Newsletter.



Work in Progress: Plants for Members

The Plants Acquisition Group reported on the work during the past summer on preparing for members. Unrooted cuttings had been delivered to Van Veen Nurseries in stages since late in 2012 to be rooted by experts in their facilities. These cuttings had been provided to the chapter by friends of the Chapter in the United States and Finland. Some cuttings had been acquired from local sources. After varied time periods these cuttings were ready to be returned to Niagara to

be potted and readied to be made available to Chapter Members. Included in this group of rooted cuttings were several hundred cultivars which had been identified for use in the Brueckner Hybrid Evaluation Project. (A report on the project follows below.) All rooted cuttings are now being cared for by Kevin Kavanagh at South Coast Gardens. Shown below is a montage of some of the blossoms included in this collection of almost 1000 rooted cuttings.



Shown Below is a selection of rooted cuttings in pots cared for by Kevin Kavanagh at South Coast Gardens. Chapter members who participated in various stages of these projects are Gordon Polych, John Calixto, Christina Woodward, Nick Yarmoshuk and Kevin Kavanagh. Blue Sky Nurseries in Beamsville assisted immeasurably with the potting and preliminary care of the

potted cuttings while the Postal Authorities in the Clarence, New York Post Office facilitated convenient delivery of the packages from Oregon. Kristian Theqvist sent cuttings from Finland while Jim Fry from the New York Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society sent almost 200 cuttings to Kathy Van Veen at Van Veen Nurseries in Portland Oregon for successful rooting.



Notes: from Christina Woodward's Review of Brueckner Test Project November 15 2015

An update, as we move forward to Phase 2 of the project in 2016.

Begun in 2011, 132 plants (rooted cuttings from 36 Brueckner hybrids) were distributed to 20 participants in 6 different environments in Ontario, BC, MI. The objective was to evaluate plant performance and adaptability in these environments. Annual evaluations, loosely performed, were completed by our participants, and summarized in a final report of the Project in November 2014. Thank you to participants!

The Steering Committee for this Project examined the evaluation results and among its recommendations going forward were:

1. Make available a larger number of plants from fewer cultivars to allow for better comparative value
2. Prepare the rooted cuttings in a more controlled and uniform environment prior to distribution
3. Distribute only larger, sturdier plants
4. Build more scientific rigor and enhance monitoring in the evaluation process

The following steps were agreed on, and acted on, in an effort to address the above shortcomings:

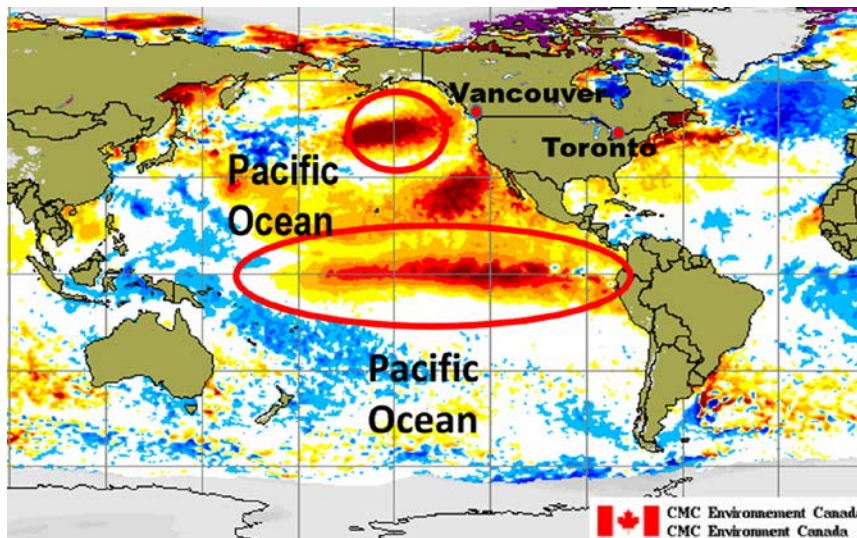
1. To ensure robust plants for distribution, cuttings sent for rooting to Van Veen Nursery in Oregon were kept on for 2 instead of 1 year. Rootballs and stem growth from these shipments are almost double in size to previous batches. Naturally, the cost of this extended stay has also increased.
2. While we have benefited greatly from Blue Sky Nursery's generosity in making room in their hoop houses for our young plants from Van Veen Nursery for up to a year prior to distribution, we have moved all plants to new accommodation at Kevin Kavanagh's South Coast Gardens in St William. Kevin is willing and able to closely monitor the plants, accommodating their individual needs in response to weather changes, nutrition, disease, pests, etc. We are grateful for his generous offer to do this and have already reaped the benefits of this move as we have lost few plants in the past year.
3. The last 3 batches of cuttings taken from the Brueckner hybrids concentrated on increasing the number of cuttings from many hybrids. This should allow for an equal number of rooted cuttings from the same hybrid to be distributed to more locations so that better comparisons can be drawn from plant performance in very different environments. At present we have approx. 600 plants for distribution, from cuttings taken in 2011, 2012 and 2013. Kevin is evaluating the readiness of the plants for selection for distribution which will be phased in over the coming year.
4. The evaluation process will be tightened up. The evaluation form itself requires revision and this is yet to be determined.
5. Lastly, to enhance the evaluation process, we have invited four highly respected institutional participants to the project:
 - . Leach Research Station, Holden Arboretum, Ohio
 - . Montreal Botanical Gardens, Montreal
 - . Quebec Rhododendron Society, Montreal
 - . The Riverwood Conservancy, Mississauga

Member participation will continue with some modification, also to be determined.

As a postscript, the Steering Committee decided to extend Phase 1 of the Project for one more year, to confirm the findings obtained thus far. Only those participants who have plants which are most likely to give useful results will be contacted for further evaluation. Stay tuned.

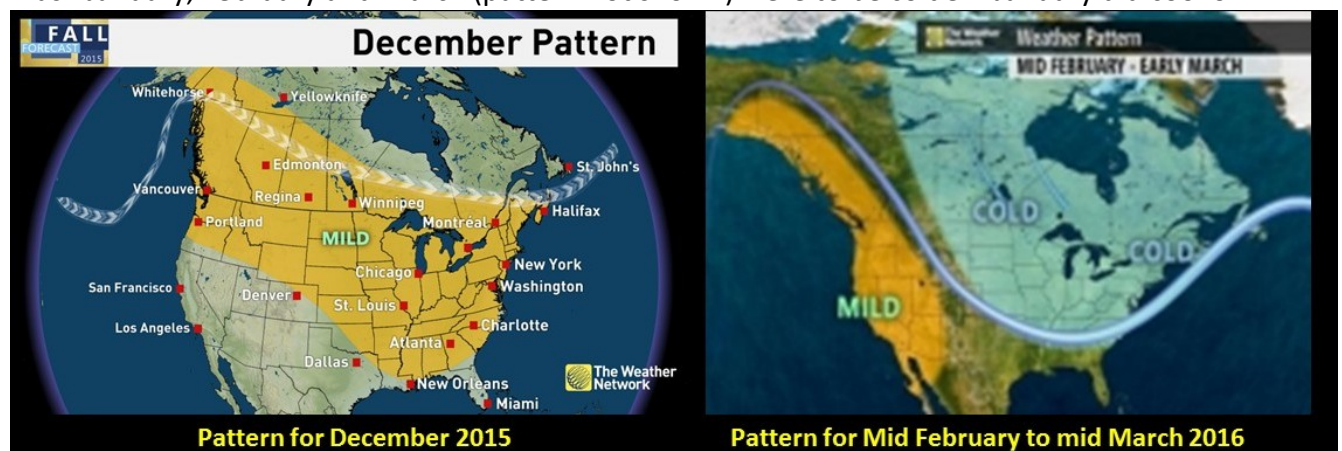
More on Godzilla vs the Blob

As we basked in almost 20C weather during Christmas week it is doubtful that we would have been thinking about Blobs and Godzillas. Now that we have returned to somewhat usual temperatures, we doubt that folks will be lamenting the absence of the usual mucky January thaw. Nevertheless the weather is with us and some of us may wonder whether what was said



about the weather for December 2015 and for January 2016 bore any reality for the two past months. Recall that we had the Blob and Godzilla as shown in the scenario on the left. Godzilla is the NINO in the Pacific lying between New Guinea and the top of South America. The Blob is red (warm) patch of Pacific Ocean just to the west of Vancouver. It was predicted that the weather

pattern would be dictated by these two masses of warmth. December was to be mild. And so it was. January, February and March (pattern not shown) were to be colder. January did cool off.



The map on the RHS is the predicted weather pattern for Mid-February to Mid-March 2016. Meteorologists are stating that the coldest “record breaking temperatures will appear starting on Friday February 5, 2016. We hope these temperatures will not prevent members from coming to hear about the wonderful world of bees and a “Year in the life of a beekeeper”.

Winter Sun Protection



But . . . equally important is how to care for a prize rhodo when the roots are frozen, and the sun drenched leaves are crying for water? . . . Here’s a photo from Kevin Kavanagh with a suggestion The strategy here is to keep the sun’s rays off the leaves of the plant. Simply create a wooden frame around the plant and drape an old bed sheet on the frame to cover the plant from the sun’s rays. BTW . . . We have used this technique in May to safeguard blossoms of Rosebud from late spring frosts.

Plant names for *Jeopardy* puzzle on Page 5: Plants clockwise from top left: Bloodroot, halesia carolina ‘Arnold Pink’, hosta, Mountain Laurel, peony, franklinia. (answer is underlined)