



"Niagara Rhodo"



Newsletter of the Niagara Chapter,
Rhododendron Society of Canada,
District 12, American Rhododendron Society
Special Edition Newsletter, March 1, 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'

<u>Content</u>	<u>Word of Caution</u>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Richard Dionne – Montreal Botanical Garden 2. Richard Dionne Biography 3. Report on 2014-2015 Activities of the Niagara Region Chapter, Rhododendron Society of Canada. 4. Photos of Plants in winter storage 	<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> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>H. Edward Reiley</i></p>

Richard Dionne: Hancock Memorial Gardens & The Montreal Botanical gardens Sunday, March 13, 2016 2 P.M. **EDT**

Program

- 1400 Dionne Meeting Starts **Sondra Meis** welcomes audience to the meeting.
- 1410 **Nick Yarmoshuk** Introduces speaker & welcomes Richard Dionne to meeting.
- 1415 **Richard Dionne** Speaks
Questions and Answer period
- 1530 **Peter Hannam** Thanks the Speaker.
- 1535 **Raffle Draw & Koffee Klatch**
- 1600~ Meeting Ends

Richard Dionne Biography

Richard Dionne has been Horticulturalist-in-Charge of the **Hancock Memorial Garden (Éricacetum Leslie-Hancock)** at the **Montreal Botanical gardens (Les Jardin Botanique de Montreal)** since 1996; In 2002 he was given responsibility for the Shade Garden (**le Jardin d'Ombre (sous-bois)**)

At an early age, while on a family visit to Connecticut, Richard developed an intense love of rhododendrons. This led him to Horticultural studies at McGill University where he earned a degree in Plant Sciences. At **P'Institut de Technologie Agro-Alimentaire de Saint-Hyacinthe** he earned a diploma in Ornamental Horticulture.

Richard Dionne has worked closely with the Toronto Chapter of the ARS to publish with Willem Morsink, *RHODODENDRON HARDINESS ALONG THE NORTHERN EDGE: THE ONTARIO-QUEBEC SITUATION. Journal of the American Rhododendron Society, Vol. 56, No. 4, Fall 2002 .*

<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JARS/v56n4/v56n4-morsink.htm>

Richard Dionne is widely cited in Quebec horticultural circles for his expertise in rhododendron culture, an active horticultural speaker and is a strong supporter of La Société de Rhododendron de Quebec. He has shown a strong interest in the Niagara Chapter Brueckner Hybrid Testing Project.

Hancock Rhododendron Garden, @ Jardin Botanique de Montreal



Sunday, March 13, 2016. 2 P.M., EDT
Vineland Research & Innovation Centre
Vineland Station, Exit QEW north
(towards the lake) at Victoria Avenue

Richard Dionne is curator of the Leslie Hancock Ericacea Collection and of the Shade Garden at the Montreal Botanical Gardens.

Founded in 1974 this garden is dedicated to Leslie Hancock (1892-1977). Founder of Woodland Gardens in Mississauga, Hancock is credited with introducing rhododendrons and azaleas to the general public in the Toronto area and later to other parts of Ontario. A great rhododendron enthusiast, he was the driving force behind the creation of this garden in Montreal, which opened in 1976, and drew up the plans for it himself.

The Hancock garden's 1100 taxa are surrounded by conifers providing good winter protection from cold, drying winds and catch the snow, which forms a protective blanket. Oaks and conifers allow filtered sunlight to reach the garden; the fallen leaves form a natural layer of mulch each year and help nourish and acidify the soil as they decompose.



Richard Dionne

Members' Friends, All Gardeners and Friends of the Chapter are welcome at every meeting.

2015 Annual Report to the Board of Directors American Rhododendron Society

Editor's Note: The chapter has several projects in progress at this time, most of which have been identified to members, others are known about but have not been highlighted. In composing our (2015) Annual Report to the Board of Directors of the American Rhododendron Society, Sondra and I briefly and systematically described the various activities being pursued by members. We became aware that this Board Report would be of interest to the Chapter's members, particularly in view of the special speaker from the Montreal Botanical Gardens we have scheduled for Sunday, March 13, 2016. We wish to share our enthusiasm for the range of activity with you.

During 2015 The Niagara Region Chapter of District 12, American Rhododendron Society continued its active program of Speakers, Members' Pot-Luck Picnic, Hybrid Testing, Plant Acquisition and Plant Sales. Some 35 to 55 individuals attended at each of its events. Local membership was approximately 90 people while some 27 committed to membership in the American Rhododendron Society.

The Chapter is pleased to report that 3 new members were added to the Board of Directors and that we have a strong working relationship with 3 institutions: the Vineland Research & Innovation Center, Blue Sky Nursery, our supplier of rhododendrons for the annual General Plant Sale, and with South Coast Gardens, a boutique nursery. These organizations make it possible for the Chapter to conveniently receive and manage rooted cuttings, to obtain interesting plants for retail sale, to have a venue to hold periodic meetings with speakers of international stature, and to conduct the annual public rhododendron sale.

An active group of some 20 volunteers are involved in Board-committees: The Brueckner Hybrid Test Gardens Committee, the WWW-site redesign Committee, the Plant Selection Committee, the Annual Plant Sales Committee, and the Social Committee. A Newsletter Editorial Committee is being planned.

The chapter continues to disseminate its Newsletter to approximately 380 people via e-mail. Twelve copies of the Newsletter are distributed by Canada Post. The Chapter's WWW presence serves as an archive for all the past numbers of the no longer functioning, **Bulletin of the Rhododendron Society of Canada**, and for our Newsletters as well as a repository of information about the Chapter's history and as a source of information for the general public about growing rhododendrons. Both the Newsletter and the web site are important promotional tools for the Chapter's activities. <http://www.rhodoniagara.org/> Site activity varies from 1400 to 5800 visits (of 2 pages or more) per month.

The Chapter is conducting the Brueckner Hybrid Testing Program in association with the Chair of the **ARS Test and Display Garden Committee**. This program involves members of the Chapter and includes The Leslie Hancock Collection at the Montreal Botanical Gardens in Quebec, and the Leach Research Station in Ohio and 2 institutions in Ontario as test sites. The Chapter's Plants for Members Program (P4M) makes unique plants available to members at close-to-cost of rooting stem cuttings and transportation.

These initiatives, with their resultant activities, build member's interest, hold their enthusiasm and support the Chapter's program.

The Chapter currently holds an inventory of close to 1,000 plants as shown in the table below. All plants are lodged at South Coast Gardens.

<u>PLANT GROUP</u>	<u>NUMBER OF PLANTS</u>
Brueckner Collection for testing	654
Holly Springs Azaleas	145
Finnish Collection	109
Plants for Members (in house)	54

The Chapter was delighted to receive a contribution of rooted Holly Spring azalea cuttings delivered from Van Veen Nursery courtesy of Jim Fry of the New York Chapter. Currently being held in a semi heated hoop house, protected from possible impact of a polar vortex, these plants will be assessed in May for their readiness to be distributed to members in summer of 2016.

Late in 2013 Kristian Theqvist sent cuttings from his arboretum in Finland (on our behalf) to Van Veen Nursery. The rooted cuttings arrived in Niagara in September 2015, and are now being tended at South Coast Gardens pending evaluation for their readiness to be distributed during summer of 2016.

Niagara's P4M program has been much strengthened since it was first started (with the advice and support of John and Sally Perkins of the Massachusetts Chapter) by assistance from our associates in the ARS network. We are most appreciative of this help.

In 2016 we will mirror the 2015 activities and we will implement the final stage of the Brueckner Program.

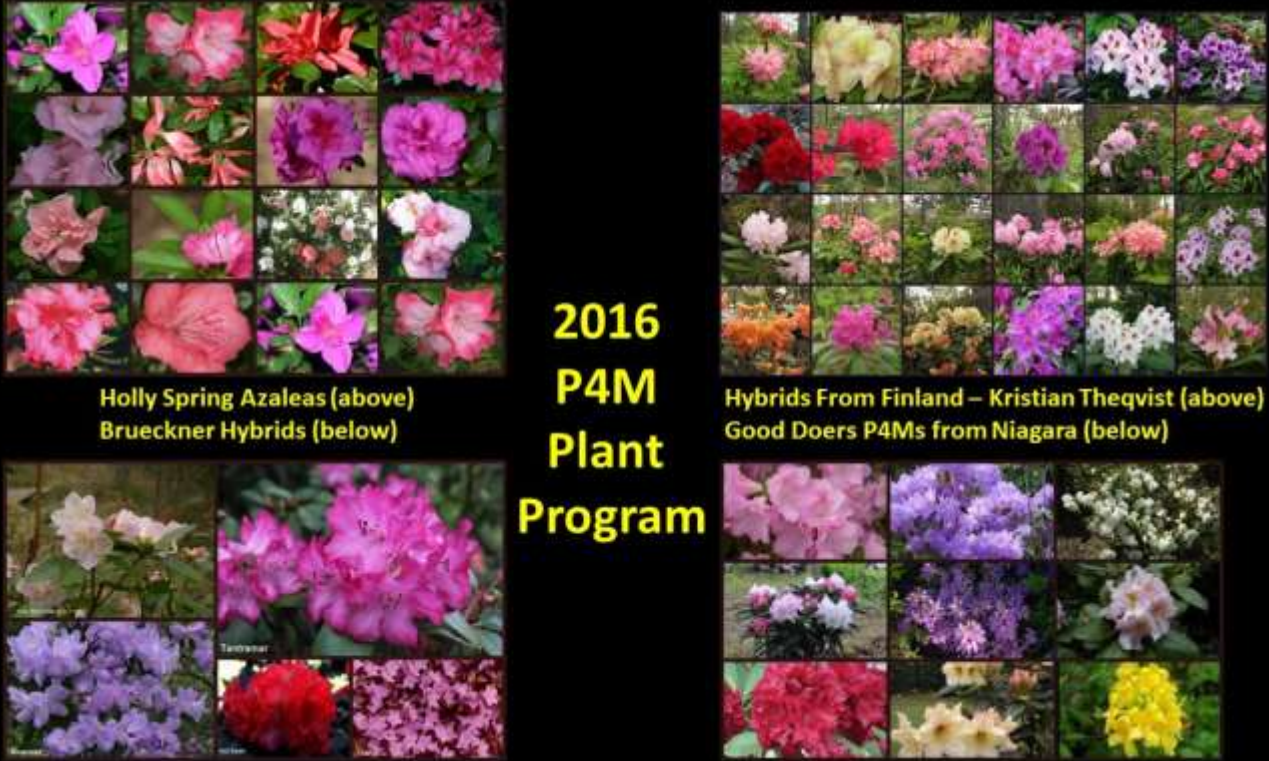
Prepared by:

Sondra Meis & Nicholas Yarmoshuk
President Secretary

February 19, 2016

Plant Projects Awaiting Evaluation and Plans for Distribution

Shown below are a sampling of cultivars that are waiting the warmth of spring to be evaluated so that they may be distributed to participating research institutions and to members as P4Ms and research plants.



**2016
P4M
Plant
Program**

Holly Spring Azaleas (above)
Brueckner Hybrids (below)

Hybrids From Finland – Kristian Theqvist (above)
Good Doers P4Ms from Niagara (below)

