



"Niagara Rhodo"

Newsletter of the Niagara Chapter,
Rhododendron Society of Canada,
District 12, American Rhododendron Society
October 29, 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>
1. 2016-2017 Program.	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.
2. Recap of 6 hot, dry, yet active months.	
3. November 12, 2016. Rhodos in Newfoundland.	
4. Watering Rhododendrons.	
5. Welcome to Horticultural Associations.	
6. Membership Matters.	

H. Edward Reiley

2016-2017 Program

- Saturday, Nov. 12, 2016** Rhododendrons in NFLD
- Wednesday, November 30, 2016.** Deadline for ARS Membership renewals to Lil Haworth; in order to receive all 2017 mailed Journals.
- Sunday, February 5, 2017** TBA
- Saturday, March 4, 2017.** Brueckner Project Symposium. Participants & Audience
- Sunday, March 5, 2017,** Steve Krebs
Phytophthora & Recent Developments in Krebs's Rhodo Hybrids
- Sunday, April 9, 2017.** Kavanagh & Yarmoshuk
Plant Sales Introduction & Review
- Friday, April 21, 2017.** Last day for delivery of Pre-Orders to Lil Haworth.
- Saturday, April 29, 2017.** Annual Plant sale.
Vineland Innovation & Research Garage.

Recap of 2016 & six hot, dry, active yet months

The 2016 year may be divided into two periods, speakers during the cold fall & winter months, attention to gardens and projects during the growing season. The speaker's season ended in late April with a very successful annual plant sale which delivered close to 500 plants to enthusiastic members. In late spring members mourned the passing of two members: Gord Polych an active, behind the scenes, contributor to the work and development of the Chapter, and of Marjory Hancock,

daughter of Leslie Hancock and the principal person at Woodlands Nursery in Mississauga. Marjory, with her dad, were pioneers in the introduction of rhododendrons and azaleas to Ontario. The Hancock contribution to rhododendron development is memorialized in the Hancock Rhododendron Garden at the Montreal Botanical gardens. Sadly, the era of plant sales and gardening advice distributed by the Hancock family ended with the closing of Woodlands Nursery. The property is now under the control of the City of Mississauga as Hancock Woodlands. Members who were visitors and customers at Woodland Nurseries will be interested in a new organization, with a presence at

<https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofHancockWoodlands/>

The introduction of Niagara's new Website with a more modern image is moving ahead slowly but effectively. <http://www.rhodoniagara.org/2/> links to the new site and reveals its current state of development. The original site is still fully active <http://www.rhodoniagara.org>.

We note with pride the number of Chapter members who each year retain their ARS membership and the addition of two new members. Our members' interest in retaining membership in the ARS attests to the success of the Chapter's dual category membership practice.

An innovation this year was a 2 day Open House in late August at South Coast Gardens.

Chapter Board Member, Kevin Kavanagh provided guided tours of his On-the-Edge collection of unusual cultivars including some 250 different cultivars of rhododendrons. This was also an occasion for a distribution of Plants for Members of Finnish Hybrids donated by Kristian Theqvist, Holly Spring Azaleas donated by Jim Fry of the ARS Long Island Chapter and of the Brueckner Hybrids as part of the Brueckner test project being conducted and supported in part by the budget of the ARS test & Display Garden Committee.

Finally, the test garden sub-Committee of the Chapter was deeply involved in caring for the Breuckner Plants, identifying plants for distribution to test sites and for distribution of individual plants to members who wish to participate in the test project. The Chapter is grateful to the ARS Test Garden Committee for support of this project. We note with pleasure that the Riverwood Conservancy in Mississauga Ontario, the David G. Leach Research Station of the Holden Arboretum, The Humber Arboretum, The Mississauga Brueckner Rhododendron Garden, the Montreal Botanical Gardens and members of Le Société de Rhododendron de Quebec are participants in this Project in concert with members of the Niagara Chapter.

Distribution of Plants in Brueckner Project

The following are Groups participating in the evaluation project. Numbers show the number of plants being tested by each institution individual or group.

Leach Research Station, Madison Ohio	84
Montreal Botanical Garden	90
Riverwood Conservancy Mississauga	56
South Coast Gardens, St. Williams ON	91
Humber Arboretum, West Toronto	20
Paul Chafe, Near Kingston ON	56
Christina Woodward Mississauga ON	21
Société Rhododendron de Quebec.	62
Niagara Region ARS Chapter.	33

95% of these plants have now been distributed. Plans are being developed to hold a discussion forum of all participants in the test project on March 4, 2017. This meeting will be open to all participants, members of the Chapter and interested gardeners.

Saturday, November 12, 2016, 2 P.M.

Growing Rhodos in Newfoundland

“Rhododendrons on the Edge.....the Collection at the MUN Botanical Garden”



Todd Boland
Research Horticulturalist

Growing Rhododendrons on the Edge

The Collection at Memorial University of Newfoundland Botanical Gardens

Todd will share Challenges, Successes & Failures with

More than 200 taxa of Rhododendrons Growing in

Woodlands, Peat Bogs & Rock gardens and

Will reveal the first generation of his new hybrids

Saturday, November 12, 2016 2 P.M.

**Rittenhouse Hall, Vineland Research & Innovation Centre
Victoria Avenue, Vineland Station, Ontario**



Rhododendrons on the Edge...the Collection at the MUN Botanical Garden

Preview of a talk by Todd Boland

“The Memorial University of Newfoundland Botanical garden has over 200 taxa of rhododendrons in their collection. Plants range from a few centimetres to over 4 m, growing in woodlands and peat-beds to rock gardens. We have had many successes but more than a few failures. Gardening is a challenge in Newfoundland at the best of times, perhaps more so with rhododendrons. Despite that, we have begun a breeding program for compact rhododendrons”. Todd Boland, the horticulturist, will share with you the collection and first generation of new hybrids.



Todd Boland was born, and currently lives, in St. John’s, Newfoundland, Canada. He graduated from the Memorial University of Newfoundland with a Masters of Science in 1992 with his discipline being Plant Ecology. Todd started gardening at the age of 10 with his own vegetable garden but that soon graduated to flowers. With the rigorous climate in Newfoundland, alpines seemed the ideal choice, so he built his first rockery at age 18. He has been cultivating alpine and woodland plants ever since.

Todd joined the Newfoundland Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society (NARGS) in 1994 and is currently the chair.

Todd has worked in many different fields of horticulture including working at a local nursery, landscaping, then teaching horticulture at a local community college. For the past 6 years he has worked as a research horticulturalist at the Memorial University of Newfoundland Botanical Garden. Part of his work is caring for their ex situ collection of three endangered, endemic, Newfoundland plants. He also breeds ornamentals, mainly beardless iris, Primula and Dianthus. He is currently the Newfoundland representative for the Canadian National Invasive Alien Plants Council.

Todd recently finished a three year position as a director with the NARGS. He is actively involved in the NARGS website development, publishing the “Plant of the Month” feature and administering the NARGS image gallery. He also acts as one of 5 moderators for the NARGS forum. Indoors, he cultivates orchids to maintain his sanity during the long Newfoundland winter.

Todd's other passion is bird watching. He has travelled to many parts of the world to see birds, taking the opportunity to ‘capture’ flower images wherever possible.

Tips on Growing Rhododendrons in Newfoundland

Todd Borland has an article that bears the title TIPS ON GROWING RHODODENDRONS IN NEWFOUNDLAND. While that article is directed at Newfoundland gardeners, any advice provided in that article is readily applicable to growing rhododendrons anywhere in Canada. Niagara readers will find it useful. For the full article see the link:

<https://www.mun.ca/botgarden/gardening/gardennl/rhododendrons.pdf><https://www.mun.ca/botgarden/gardening/gardennl/rhododendrons.pdf> In what follows we abstract a few passages by Todd that we hope will provide an interesting introduction to what we can expect on Saturday, November 12.

Native Rhododendrons: Newfoundland and Labrador has four native rhododendron species; Rhodora (Rhododendron canadense), Lapland Rosebay (R. lapponicum), Labrador Tea (R. groenlandicum, formerly known as Ledum groenlandicum) and Northern Labrador Tea (R. tomentosum ssp. Subarcticum, formerly known as Ledum palustre).

Rhodora is common throughout most of the island, except on the Great Northern Peninsula. Labrador Tea is province-wide but the Lapland Rosebay is limited to serpentine and limestone barrens of western Newfoundland, the Great Northern Peninsula, and Labrador. The Northern Labrador Tea is found only in northern Labrador. All of these shrubs put on a beautiful display each spring in our flower garden area. They are related to blueberries, partridgeberries, sheep laurel, heaths and heathers.

The MUN Botanical Gardens has introduced Elepidotes, Lepidotes, Deciduous and Evergreen Azaleas. Some elepidotes are shown below. They are not named here. Todd will remedy that situation in his talk.



Todd comments on siting, soil preparation, planting methods, care and maintenance, fertilizing, pruning and winter preparation reinforce messages regularly received but he has many interesting new perspectives based on experience in a harsh climate.

Comments on Watering Techniques by Nick Yarmoshuk

Long before our experiences of drought and cold of the past 3 years, I had noticed that several of my 300+ rhododendrons occasionally showed signs of stress. I wondered whether they were diseased, not properly fertilized or were not suited to the climate. Careful examination of these plants revealed that while most plants in their part of the garden were doing well, as were similar cultivars, these continued to show loss of vigour, drooping leaves and some branches having fewer leaves than others. I discounted lack of moisture because, after all, I had been watering well, providing at least an inch of water every 5 to 6 days. My summer water bill attested to my apparent care in watering. This year I noticed that a few plants appeared to be dead. The last 3 years of drought and cold had done in not only these plants but a dozen others as well. I soon realized that my plants had become victims of **rain shadow**, a condition where closely planted shrubs shield each other so that rain water and overhead watering prevents water from reaching the root ball, even though gallons of water may have been applied through a watering system. In a recent post on the Yahoo chat line, Ron Rabideau writes . . . ``water from a sprinkler system can be unreliable as to coverage. Each plant needs to be checked to make sure it gets enough. I would guess that for newly planted shrubs with the heat we've had 20 min every other day was not enough. That amount of water is probably fine for established plants. Very

often water applied to newly installed plants, especially from an automatic system, fails to wet the actual root ball and runs off into the surrounding soil. Once a root ball gets very dry it can be difficult to re-wet it. The best method is to put a hose on a very slow trickle right next to the trunk for an hour or so.

Welcome to all Members of Niagara Horticultural Associations

As a specialist horticultural society, the Niagara Region Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society has as its goal the dissemination of information about rhododendrons and azaleas to the community. Its members come from an area bounded by northern New York State, Chatham, London, Ailsa Craig in Western Ontario, Kingston in the east, Toronto, Oakville and Mississauga to Fort Erie. Meetings with speakers are regularly held in the fall, winter and early spring. Some 40 to 50 people attend these meetings. A few special events are usually held during the demanding 4 month summer season

It may not be well know that the Chapter welcomes all gardeners from all Niagara Horticultural Associations to its meetings and to various events planned during the year.

All folks interested in gardening are invited at no charge to all of our meetings.

In addition to interesting and knowledgeable speakers with International reputations, our fall and winter meetings provide an opportunity for members of the widespread Niagara community, and beyond, to meet, to exchange ideas, and to learn what others are doing, all within a warm social context of coffee tea, and home-made sweets. A regular raffle draw focusses on unusual rhododendron and other cultivars that are rarely available commercially. April is a time where those present learn about the performance of various cultivars and how best to grow them; while the annual plant sale provides a collection of plants at prices not otherwise available.

Rhododendrons International

Rhododendrons International is a **new** journal, available online at no cost. It contains articles of interest to rhododendron enthusiasts world-wide. Volume 1 has descriptions of all of the world's rhododendron societies in articles prepared by the respective societies. It is now on-line in 3 Parts and may be accessed at <http://www.rhododendron.org/ri-index.htm> it contains detailed descriptions of each known Rhododendron Society.

Rhododendrons International: Part 1 – North American Rhododendron Organizations:

Rhododendrons International: Part 2 - European Rhododendron Organizations

Rhododendrons International: Part 3 - Southern Hemisphere and Asian Rhododendron Organizations: Leach

Research Station – Krebs's Research

During our recent visit to Steve Krebs's research site we had the good fortune of a guided tour of his test fields. In a climate similar to Niagara's but perhaps more severe in the winter and somewhat hotter in summer, we learned that Krebs tests his new hybrids under full sun and does not irrigate during the summer. Not only does he breed for plant shape, bud formation and attractive colour he has a central concern for developing plants resistant to phytophthera. Shown below is a test site and a lovely shaped plant covered with flower buds. We will have more to say in the next Newsletter as will Steve Krebs on March 5, 2017





Membership Matters

2017



ARS & Local Membership fees for the Niagara Region Chapter

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

We ask that all ARS fees be submitted to the membership secretary, Lille Haworth, as soon as possible, but before November 25, 2016. The ARS membership office requires that fees be transmitted to the International office late in November so that Journal deliveries can be expedited reliably and so that members receive all of the following year`s journals..

Local Membership entitles members to:

1. Newsletters/notices sent by email; this is for a \$5 membership fee. OR Newsletters/notices sent by Canada Post; this is for a \$10 membership fee.
2. 10% discount at the spring plant sale.
3. Advance notice of plants available.
4. Ability to pre-order for the Annual Plant Sale.
5. P4M`s (Plants for Members) available only to members. These are specially acquired plants available to members at or near cost.
6. Participation in Research Projects such as evaluation of the Brueckner hybrids.
7. Garden Tours Open only to members.

Please return section below with payment made payable to ARS Niagara to:

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

Bring your cheque for payment at the meeting on Saturday November 12, 2016.

Name:Address:

Telephone:Email:

ARS or Niagara Local Membership) (\$5 e-mail or \$10 Canada Post or \$45 ARS)

NOTE: Membership in ARS (\$45.00 CDN) entitles members to all Local Chapter benefits shown above Plus

1. The quarterly, colourful and informative *ARS Journal*.
2. Access to special plant acquisitions made by the Niagara Chapter for ARS members.
3. Priority access to plants from Species Foundation.
4. Free Entrance to Species Foundation Gardens in Seattle, Washington.
5. Priority access to the seed exchange.
6. Discounts on books.

If you chose ARS membership, please provide the information requested above and send your cheque for \$45 CDN to Lillie Haworth.