



"Niagara Rhodo"



Newsletter of the Niagara Chapter,
Rhododendron Society of Canada,
District 12, American Rhododendron Society
October – November 2018 NEWSLETTER

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'

Content

1. 2018 Review
2. **Dr. Juliana S. Medeiros:** Speaker, Sunday, November 11, 2018, 2 P.M. :
3. **Roy Forster,**
4. Fall 2018 Weather from Weather Network
5. Membership Matters.

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

WELCOME To The Start of the 2019 Program

The 2018 program of the Niagara region Rhododendron ended with a flourish at Shiela Hirsch Kalm's garden picnic in Niagara on the Lake. This spectacular event was preceded (in earlier months) with interesting speakers and with a plant sale in April that featured a considerable number of rarely available rhododendrons and azaleas, as well as some routinely available cultivars and a number of carefully selected companion shrubs and perennials. For the first time large sized rhodos were available this year and will continue to be available, by request, for those who wish to repair their gardens damaged by dramatic changes in our weather.

Looking forward to our plant acquisition program, we must meet the challenge to easily procure interesting, new or old rarely, publicly, available cultivars. We recognize difficulties presented by having only one local well developed wholesale nursery within several hundred kilometres.

Since this nursery deals exclusively with source materials from south of our borders, the impact of currency values and potential longer term consequences of difficult international trade relationship are likely to make acquisition of desirable new cultivars a seriously difficult for our Chapter. Our own ability to source relevant fine new plant materials, for our members, from boutique nurseries is exacerbated by the decreasing number of such nurseries (within a comfortable driving distance of our base), and the high costs involved in privately transporting plants through such distances and across the border. Our members have traditionally enjoyed obtaining interesting non-commercially available plant material at low cost. Clearly, Chapter members in southern Ontario must be prepared to obtain knowledge and experience in plant propagation, i.e. rooting and seed germination in order to acquire plants that are interesting, and

available at reasonably low cost. With members' support we plan to launch programs in plant propagation, i.e. growing from seed and rooting stem cuttings.

We begin this year's speaker's program with a researcher's discussion of roots.

Rittenhouse Hall
Vineland Innovation and Research Centre
Victoria Avenue, Vineland Station
(Just North of the QEW, toward Lake Ontario)
Sunday, 2 P.M. November 11, 2018

The Secret Life of Rhododendron Roots



Dr. Juliana S. Medeiros is the principal investigator at the Holden Arboretum's Medeiros laboratory. The lab focuses on understanding the complex relationships between plants and their environment, and the evolution of plant physiological adaptations.

The laboratory's staff employ techniques from eco-physiology and evolutionary ecology to investigate:

- leaf, xylem and root adaptations
- whole plant co-ordination of function
- the effects of habitat alteration and climate change
- plant responses to stressful events and environment

Juliana grew up in the desert southwest, with no clue what a Rhododendron was. Her PhD work on the physiology of desert shrubs took her to desolate areas of Mexico and Argentina for research, and travelling to see new and interesting plants around the world has been a long-term fascination. Today, her research lab at the Holden Arboretum focuses on Rhododendron as a model system to understand how plant traits evolve in response to the environment, and she is also actively involved in outreach programs for adults and K12 students. In her spare time Juliana likes to pet her dogs, make reproductions of historical clothing, folk dance, and play board games.

A Dramatic tale of Diversity, Divergence and Disease resistance

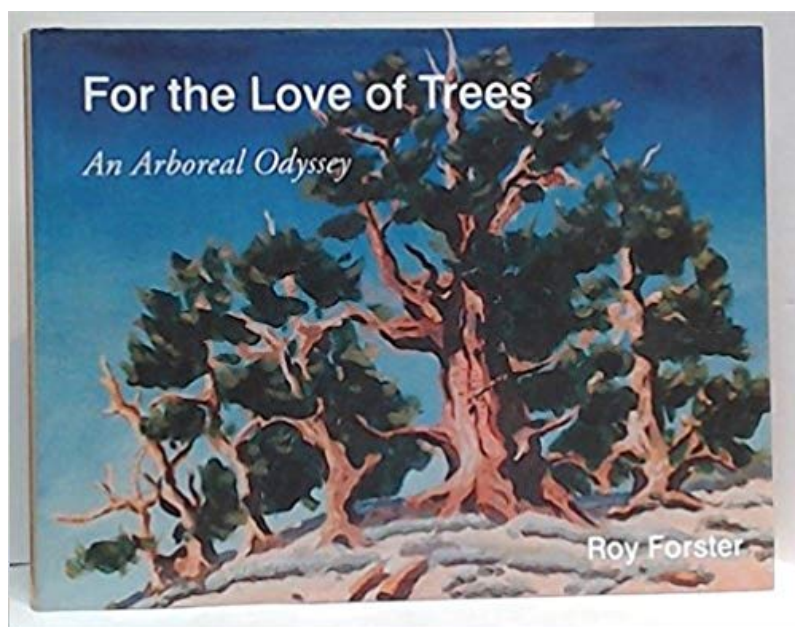
Roots don't catch your eye like a beautiful flower, instead they work silently and secretly underground, gathering water and nutrients to support plant growth. In order to optimize growth, root traits are closely matched to particular climates. But, roots don't work alone, because the soil is home to billions of microbes, both friend and foe. In this talk, I will provide a background on the role of roots and soil microbes in plant health, highlight discoveries made in our lab about the dramatic diversity of roots within genus *Rhododendron*, and discuss how this root diversity relates to ecological and evolutionary processes. I will show evidence that major clades of *Rhododendron* have diverged in their root foraging strategies over the past 65 million years, and that different ecological factors have likely shaped root traits in each clade. Lastly, I will discuss the implications of these findings for native ecosystem conservation and restoration, as well as for plant propagation and breeding for disease resistance.

Early *Rhododendron* Pioneer at Horticultural Research Institute of Ontario Remembered. Roy Forster Died, September 7, 2018

VanDusen Botanical Garden Founding Director Passes Away

From: <https://www.publicgardens.org/news/article/vandusen-botanical-garden-founding-director-passes-away> Provided by: The American Public Gardens Association

VanDusen Botanical Garden's founding Curator and Director Richard Roy Forster, C.M., passed away at 85 years of age on September 7, 2018 at his home in Vancouver after being diagnosed with lung cancer.



With training both in horticulture and fine arts, Roy brought a unique skillset to the design and curatorial integrity of VanDusen's remarkable collections. The beauty of VanDusen is appreciated by all, but Roy's artistry became even more apparent to the botanically knowledgeable visitor.

Roy Forster was appointed Curator and Director of VanDusen in 1972 where he

served for 24 years until his retirement. He had also previously spent 14 years at the Horticultural Research Institute of Ontario where his work in breeding rhododendrons resulted in the introduction of hardy, award-winning hybrids.

Roy authored two books—The Woodland Garden (with Alex Downie) and For the Love of Trees, a book featuring his own paintings of trees. In 1999, Richard Roy Forster was made a member of the Order of Canada for his exceptional accomplishments at VanDusen, and in 2003, he was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal for his outstanding and exemplary contributions to Canada.

Rh. Holden: Misidentification Discussed at April 2018 Plant

Rarely do we experience committed controversy about correctly identifying a rhododendron cultivar during our preview discussions of rhododendron cultivars while showing photographs of trusses. But this past April, we experienced just such an event. Nick displayed a photograph of a cultivar identified as Holden. Relying on various sources for accuracy in description, your colleagues described the growing characteristics and virtues of the cultivar. Almost at the end of the description, a firm voice called out from the back of Rittenhouse Hall to announce. . .“No, Holden is not pink. It is red”. Yet our sources insisted in pink. We let the discussion rest and promised to explore this controversy.

We followed with questions to the Yahoo rhododendron chat line. There, too, our knowledgeable commentators were mixed in their assertions. It occurred to your dogged researcher to consult the original registration in the rhododendron registration bible. Mystery decoded

Holden

International Rhododendron Register Second Edition Volume 1 A-Lel FOR WEBSITE, Page 608.

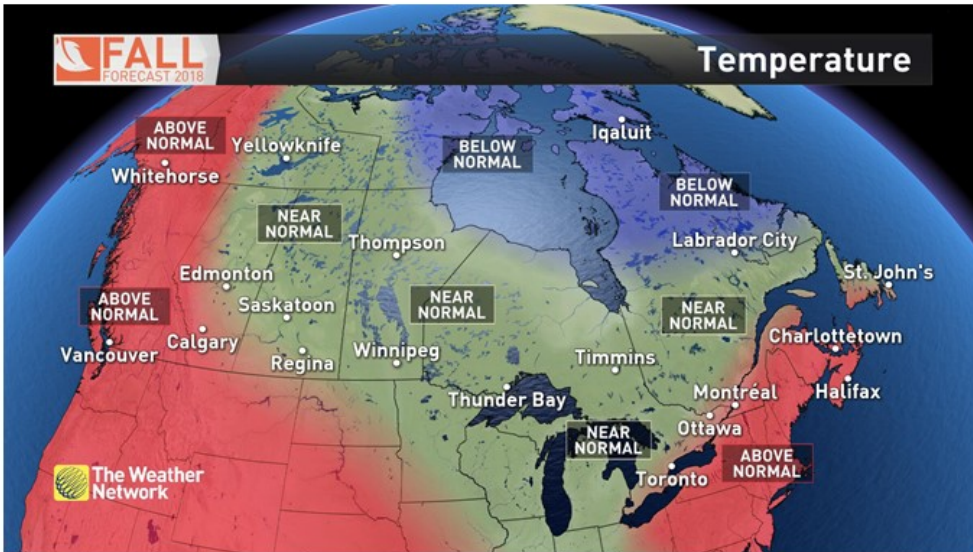
(r) ‘HOLDEN’ cv. Elepidote Rhododendron
‘Cunningham’s White’ (s) X red *Catawbiense* seedling. R: A.M. Shammarello. I:
A.M. Shammarello, INC: ICRA (1958) Flowers in a conical truss, 65 mm wide,
luminous red, with a dark red blotch. Lvs 100 x 50 mm, dark shiny green, shrub
under 1.0 m.

**Photo by
Harold Greer**



PRELIMINARY LOOK AHEAD TO WINTER

With rumors of a developing El Niño, many are asking if the mild fall pattern will continue through the winter. For those in Western Canada, we do expect a milder than normal winter, but from the central Prairies to Atlantic Canada a more traditional Canadian winter is expected with near normal temperatures. Across this region, we expect the upcoming winter to bear some resemblance to last winter with periods of harsh winter weather that should be offset at times by significant periods of milder weather





Membership Matters

2019



ARS & Local Membership fees for the Niagara Region Chapter are now due.

Membership in the American Rhododendron Society (ARS) & in the Niagara Region Chapter, Rhododendron Society of Canada, are valid for the calendar year.

Local Membership entitles members to:

1. Newsletters/notices sent by email; for a \$5 membership fee. OR Newsletters/notices sent by Canada Post; for a \$15 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

Name: Address:

Telephone: Email:

ARS or Niagara Local Membership) (\$5 e-mail or \$15 Canada Post or \$40 ARS)

NOTE: Membership in ARS (\$40.00 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 payable to ARS Niagara for \$40.00 CDN to Lillie Haworth.