



Niagara Rhodo



*Newsletter of the Niagara Chapter, Rhododendron Society of Canada
District 12, American Rhododendron Society
Our website: www.rhodoniacara.org*

February, 2020 Edition!

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.

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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

Important Message From The Board of Directors

Members and Friends,

In early January, Nick Yarmoshuk, our friend and colleague and our long-standing Secretary, announced his retirement from the Board and the termination of all related activities due to health issues. Nick has been advised by his doctor to eliminate all stress (good and bad) and avoid sedentary activity.

Nick's generous involvement and activity, in all aspects of the Chapter operations, will be greatly missed during this period of recovery.

His long standing dedication to our organization and his substantial contribution to the ARS, not to mention his intimate knowledge of Chapter and ARS history, have contributed immensely to the good name of this Chapter. Although Rhodo Niagara members are geographically dispersed, we are a fairly close knit community, bonded by our passion for growing rhodos and azaleas, a zeal for gardening, and our recognition of good fellowship.

Your Board is currently focussing on the successful delivery of programs and activities, with a longer term goal of ensuring sustainability. Your input, feedback, and support are very important to us during this period of transition. We are likewise indebted to Wanda Yarmoshuk for continuing to head our most appreciated "Cookie Brigade" and the welcoming environment it creates for us.

We wish Nick a speedy recovery and extend our affectionate well wishes.

Sondra Meis
President
On Behalf of The Niagara Chapter Board

(PS. We hope to see you at our next meeting on February 2, 2020, 2PM, Rittenhouse Hall, Vineland Research & Innovation Centre, Victoria Avenue, Vineland Station, just north of the QEW)

Meetings & Plant Sale



Sunday, February 2, 2020, 2PM. Julie-Anne Côté, Senior student, Niagara Parks School of Horticulture, Member ARS and NRC, RSC. Topic: ***“The Rhododendron Story of the Arnold Arboretum: an intern’s journey”***



Sunday, March 8, 2020, 2PM. Kevin Kavanagh. ***What’s in the Plant Sale? Describe for each cultivar -- its strengths, weaknesses & appropriate growing conditions.***

ANNUAL MEMBERS PLANT SALE

Repeat of last year’s pre-order. Opens on March 8, 2020, Deadlines for order April 15, Wednesday. Pick-up orders on April 25, Saturday, 9 - 11AM. Equipment Shed, Vineland Research & Innovation Centre Victoria Ave., Vineland Station, ON.

The Emerald Necklace

by Christina Woodward

Boston’s Park System, informally referred to as the Emerald Necklace, is a 7-mile linear stretch of interconnected parks and parkways. Conceived and designed by visionary Frederick Law Olmstead in the late 19th century, the arrangement was intended for the recreation and health of all people amidst the bustling urban environment. Mont Royal in Montreal and Central Park in New York are but two other acclaimed designs among the myriad achievements by Olmstead, America’s first and most famous landscape architect.

Begun in 1878, the work on the Boston Park System completely reshaped the existing topography. Sewage-clogged swamps were turned into parkland, carriage paths were converted to tree-lined parkways, marshlands were drained, farmlands were transformed into living museums of horticulture, historic buildings were restored and integrated. All linked into one comprehensive park system, while preserving the site’s natural look. It was largely completed in 1898, but has been ongoing with more recent additions and several conservation and restoration projects.

Today the Emerald Necklace includes nine individual parks, and receives over a million visitors annually.

The Arnold Arboretum:

The Arnold Arboretum is one of the nine parks that make up the Emerald Necklace. Its origins can be traced to 1842, when the estate of Benjamin Bussey, a Boston merchant, was donated to Harvard University to be used for “instruction in agriculture, horticulture and related subjects.” At the time, James

Arnold was an eminently successful whaling merchant and a distinguished intellect. He had settled in New Bedford, near Boston, where, as a lover of trees and gardens, he realized his ambition to build a grand estate. The mansion and its grounds occupied 11 acres; the gardens were renowned and received national recognition.

Arnold died in 1868. In his will, one of the bequests for \$100,000 was expressly for “the promotion of agriculture or horticultural improvements.” One of the estate’s trustees was Arnold’s nephew, an authority on trees and shrubs, who recognized the potential value of an arboretum. The bequest was ultimately transferred to the then Harvard College upon an agreement to create an arboretum, and with the proviso that 120 acres of Bussey’s estate be allocated for the purpose. The “Museum of Trees and Shrubs” was born.

In 1882 the Arboretum was incorporated into the Emerald Necklace. Harvard University was given a thousand year lease.

Today, the Arnold Arboretum occupies 281 acres. It is managed through a public/private arrangement by the City of Boston and Harvard University, with funding from the endowment, various granting agencies and contributors. The annual budget is in excess of \$7m.

The Arboretum is internationally recognized as one of the finest living museums in the plant world. It is open freely to the public, while at the same time offering a renowned research facility, full library resources, archives, educational opportunities, and a suite of prestigious internships.

(References: *A Clearing in the Distance: Frederick Law Olmstead and America in the Nineteenth Century*, Witold Rybczynski, Scribner, New York, 1999. And assorted online sources.)

Julie-Anne Côté

Guest Speaker for February 2, 2020



Julie-Anne Côté got her first job in horticulture at 14, working at a fruit and vegetable farm in Orléans, Ontario, where she enjoyed learning about the cultivation of crops. While obtaining a bachelor’s degree in Communication Studies at Carleton University, she remained keen on working at the farm whenever she could. Having a plant-related job sparked an interest in her to further explore plant life in a formal setting. She is now working towards a diploma in Ornamental Horticulture at the Niagara Parks School of Horticulture in Niagara Falls, Canada.

A few weeks into the program, Julie-Anne came across a newspaper article detailing the plan of the Canadensis Botanical Garden Society to establish *Canadensis – The Garden of Canada* in her hometown of Ottawa, Ontario. Helping in the creation of a botanical garden in the heart of Canada’s capital soon became her long-term life goal. Her exposure to practices used for the management of botanical collections instilled in her a desire to pursue work at a public garden, with responsibilities typical to a curator.

Through an internship at the Arnold Arboretum, Julie-Anne was given the unique opportunity to test drive this area of knowledge and to practice valuable skills that relate to plant collection development, use, and conservation.

The Rhododendron Story of the Arnold Arboretum: an intern's journey



After spending time in 2017-2018 helping in the building, documenting, and preserving the Rhododendron collection at the NPC botanical gardens, Julie-Anne rapidly gained a new appreciation for the aesthetic use of woody plant collections along with their scientific uses.

Later came along the opportunity to study and work for a summer at the Arnold Arboretum in Boston, Massachusetts, to learn a side of public garden management that she had not been introduced to previously. The last Niagara Parks School of Horticulture student to have completed the one-of-a-kind "plant curation" internship used his experience to set him on a career path, where he eventually became a Manager of Plant Records at a reputable botanical garden. This was good motivation for Julie-Anne. She was confident that adventures awaited her on this journey.

The Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University is the oldest public arboretum in North America and one of the world's leading arboretum for the study of woody temperate species. Its 281 acres are in the

neighborhoods of Jamaica Plain and Roslindale of Boston, Massachusetts. This university-based arboretum is also part of the series of urban parks known as the Emerald Necklace (the 7-mile-long network of parks and parkways that Frederick Law Olmsted laid out for the Boston Parks Department between 1878 and 1892), and is a unit of the Boston Parks and Recreation Department.

While the overall USDA climate zone of the Arboretum landscape is in Zone 6b, there are a number of microclimates that offer slightly warmer lows. This gives curatorial and horticultural staff areas to cultivate plant species that would typically perform best in Zone 7+.

Quick Facts about the Arnold Arboretum

- has over 15,000 living woody plants from around the world, representing over 4,500 different kinds of trees, shrubs and vines.
- the collections are mostly arranged according to the Bentham and Hooker classification system, with some exceptions made for the cultural requirements of some plants.
- the collections are dynamic, with new acquisitions entering the Arboretum all the time. A 10-year initiative called the “Campaign for the Living Collections” began in 2015 to boost plant exploration and collections development.
- has an herbarium with over five million dried specimens.
- has a state-of-the art research institution on Weld Hill, where Arboretum scientists conduct research at the forefront of plant biology. 75 full-time staff work at this facility.
- has 8 plant collections accredited by the Plant Collections Network: Forsythia, Ginkgo, Acer, Carya, Fagus, Stewartia, Syringa and Tsuga.
- The Horticultural Library contains more than 25,000 titles, 60 thousand photographs, and 350 archival collections.

One of the main takeaways that Julie-Anne took with her during the first week of her summer abroad was that New England has some magnificent rhododendrons. They seemed to be a much-loved landscaping element everywhere and complemented the colonial-style and Georgian houses present in the area. A lot of New England soils are naturally acidic, which explains one reason why Rhododendrons seemed to be flourishing everywhere.

While learning about the multi-layered curational process involved in maintaining the Rhododendron Dell of the Arboretum, Julie-Anne learned about interesting historical figures, who contributed greatly to the Rhododendron story and who were all connected to the Arboretum.

On February 2nd, Julie-Anne will provide the findings of her systematic review and observations on how three selected historical figures influenced the shift from “Rhododendron” as being uniquely observed in the wild to being commercially grown for gardens in North America.

Ernest Henry Wilson (1876 – 1930): A great plant collector and explorer of the early twentieth century. He is credited for introducing fifty of the best cultivars of azaleas from Kurume, Japan to North America during what is considered his most important expedition.

Horatio Hollis Hunnewell: A pioneer of rhododendron culture in New England with many links to the Arboretum and who practiced horticulture for nearly six decades on his estate in Wellesley, Massachusetts.

Beatrix Farrand (1872-1959): A landscape designer and one of the eleven founding members of the American Society of Landscape Architects. She loved using azaleas in her work and designed the plan for the azalea border at the Arnold Arboretum.



MEMBERSHIP MATTERS



Membership in the Rhododendron Society, both ARS and the local Niagara Chapter, is by calendar year.

The ARS fee is \$40.00 and gives you privileges as noted on the ARS website. It includes a subscription to the ARS Journal as well as the benefits of local membership. Local members receive the Niagara Chapter Newsletter several times a year, the opportunity to purchase plants from the members only plant sale, attend members only garden tour /picnic, and enjoy any P4M (Plants-for-Members) opportunities.

Local membership is \$5.00 for email Newsletter, and \$15.00 if wanting the newsletter by Canada Post.

Meetings are open to the public, but membership gives you advance notice and information about the speaker and topic, as well as the growing of rhododendrons.

Fees for the year or multiple-year fees may be paid at meetings or by cheque (payable to ARS Niagara) sent to **Lillie Haworth, 4 Deer Park Court, Grimsby, L3M 2R2**



Looking Foward, Reflecting Back

by Christina Woodward, Director - ARS District 12

Our Niagara Chapter has put in a great effort over the years to offer its membership an enviable and varied program over the years. It has brought you speakers who represent expertise in rhodoculture, the thrill of exploration and plant hunting, the discovery of new species; scientists who connect us with the latest findings; climatologists and environmentalists to sound the way of the future; and importantly, the hybridizers who develop the exquisite new varieties we urgently seek to complete our garden collections.

Membership has supported these programs well. On average, 45-55 seats are taken at our meetings, and as many as 70 something on several occasions. Of course, the pleasant social milieu, a chance to chat with the speakers, and the interesting conversations with old and new friends contribute greatly.

But consider this. The ARS Convention provides all this and more. This year the ARS is celebrating its 75th Anniversary, and the program is exceptionally spectacular. It is appropriately located in the Portland, Oregon area to where ARS traces its origins, and its theme is also appropriately "Looking forward, reflecting back." The organizers have created a framework which offers a retrospective look at the ARS, as well as a window into its future.

Featured guest speakers hail from Denmark, France, Scotland, Great Britain, South Africa, Russia, Seattle, and several we have hosted here at home: Steve Krebs, Juliana Medeiros, Steve Hootman. In addition, a number of concurrent "clinics" or workshops, a poster session and display, and three science talks are scheduled on a variety of topics, each presented by well-known experts in the field.

Garden tours? Oh my, nine tours to famed gardens and nurseries in the area. A 2-day pre-tour north of Oregon and a 3-day post-tour southwest of Oregon are offered. Each includes an amazing selection of destinations, such as Greer Gardens and the Rhododendron Species Foundation, all taking place during peak blooming time for the entire region ... not to mention the photo exhibit and contest, and the plant sale!

Explore the Convention website for further and more detailed information <https://ars75.org> and be seduced by the stunning photographs and enticing detail of the program.

Registration is easy, and you are free to sign up for as much or as little as you wish:

<https://ars75.org/register-now/>

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