



Niagara Rhodo



Newsletter of the Niagara Region Chapter

*Rhododendron Society of Eastern Canada,
District 12, American Rhododendron Society*

September 2021 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

A Message from the President

Fall is a wonderful season to enjoy our gardens, with warm days and low humidity; ideal weather for putting our gardens "to bed" and enjoying late season flowering such as autumn crocus. Mine takes center stage at this time of year. At the time of purchase, it was an extravagance, but my, how they have paid dividends year after year. As I subdivide the groups of bulbs, they make great gifts for gardening friends.

We have become even more appreciative of our gardens during the COVID socializing restrictions. As much as we long for a return to the congenial atmosphere of in-person gatherings we must oblige the current protocols to hasten the conditions that will allow it to happen. So Zoom has replaced some of our former activities and has positioned itself as an inescapable enabler. Let's make the most, and the best of it.

Our recent (virtual) Board meeting placed emphasis on planning for acquiring new rhododendrons and azaleas for the Chapter Plant Sale and how to work around the issue of the US - Cdn border crossing. We favour joining the growing trend to share Zoom speakers. There is the prospect of an ARS Society-wide resource for speakers to be put in place. We will keep you informed on how that rolls out. In the meantime:-

We look forward to seeing each and every one of you, and your guests, at the next Chapter Meeting, featuring four of our members sharing their best tips on "Growing Rhododendrons Successfully." I can't wait to get a glimpse of their gardens through their carefully selected photographs.

Please note the change: the October meeting takes place on WEDNESDAY, Oct. 6, 7:00 pm. via ZOOM.

Your Board is always open to suggestions and new ideas --- to add value to your membership; thereby, strengthening both our existing membership and to attract new members.

Sondra Meis

Speaker Meeting - on Zoom

WEDNESDAY 7:00 pm

October 6, 2021

Growing Rhododendrons Successfully

In response to questions the Niagara Chapter Board frequently receives about the basics of growing rhododendrons we thought it would be of interest to get 4 of our own members who represent different gardening areas to talk about their own experiences in succeeding (and sometimes failing!!! LOL) with growing rhododendrons in Ontario.

Kevin Kavanagh brought this idea forward and we thank him for arranging the evenings' presentation with our four presenters.

Each of the four climate zones and environments in which these speakers grow their ericaceous wonders present their own challenges and advantages. They will explain what works, what doesn't. They will share their best advice based on many years of experience and current best practices.

Some of the topics our speakers will touch on include:

- Basic description of their garden (Shade/Sun, soil, where located, etc.)
- How they approach selecting and siting plants within the garden
- Planting methods and getting the plants established
- Techniques they use to get them through winter
- Soil amendments and/or feeding
- Design considerations (flower colour, foliar texture, companion plants)

Our speakers will share many tips and tricks, describe the finicky preferences of particular rhodo varieties and suggest cultivars suitable for specific Ontario climates. Many of us have attended garden tours which included South Coast Gardens and Tom Laviolette's acreage. We look forward now to "seeing" Liz's magical garden and Paul's farm and startup Nursery, vicariously through their descriptions and photographs.

Join us on Zoom October 6th, a midweek evening, as we resume Chapter activities within the limits of the Pandemic restrictions. **ZOOM link will be posted for participating sites.**

Looking forward to seeing everyone. Here are the Speakers and a glimpse from their gardens and rhododendron collections:-

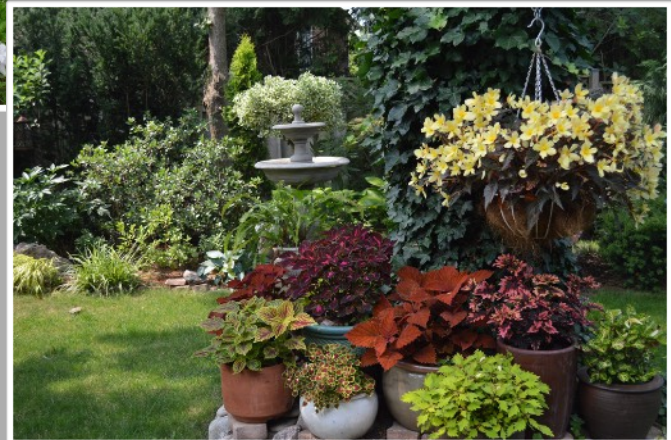


Kevin Kavanagh. Owner, South Coast Gardens Nursery & Landscaping.
St. Williams, ON. Norfolk County.
Zone 6B.



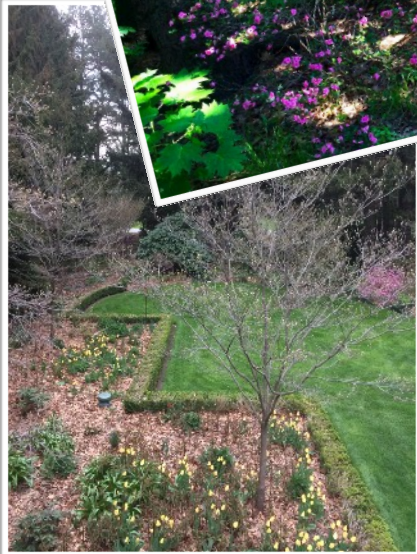


Liz Malicki. Award winning gardener, speaker, rhododendron enthusiast. Southwest Mississauga, ON. Zone 6B.



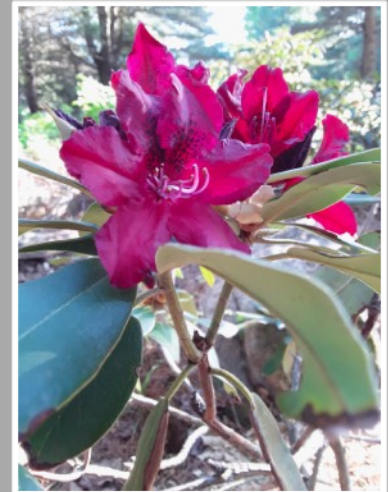


Tom Laviolette. Director (Retired) Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens, Niagara Parks School of Horticulture.
St. Catharines, ON. Niagara Region.
Zone 7A.





Paul Chafe. Nursery Owner, College Professor, Rhododendron Hybridizer. Parham, ON. North of Kingston. Zone 4A.



Research Resources:

RA - Leafy

Expanding community science tools in Rhododendron

Now, a new way to share the joy of Rhododendron research with the public.

R-RN member Dr. Jean Burns was awarded funding through the *Case Western Reserve University Expanding Horizons Initiative* to support development of new data tables and new user interfaces for the RA-Metrics database.

RA-Metrics was originally created to support the Brueckner Rhododendron Project, a community-based research program evaluating the performance of Rhododendron hybrids created by Dr. Joseph Brueckner. The RA-Metrics database includes standardized forms that facilitate accurate data entry, along with a cell phone interface for ease of use by home gardeners.

***R. atlanticum* has low disease susceptibility and little leaf damage**

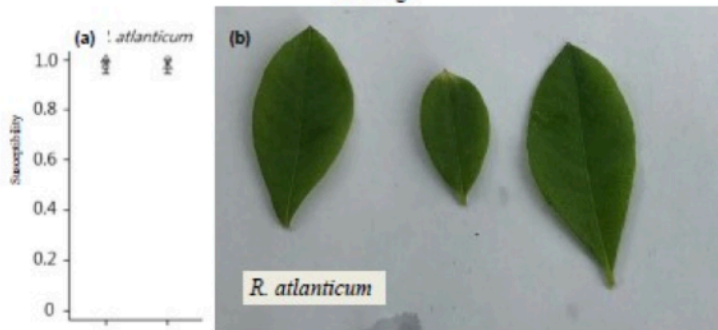
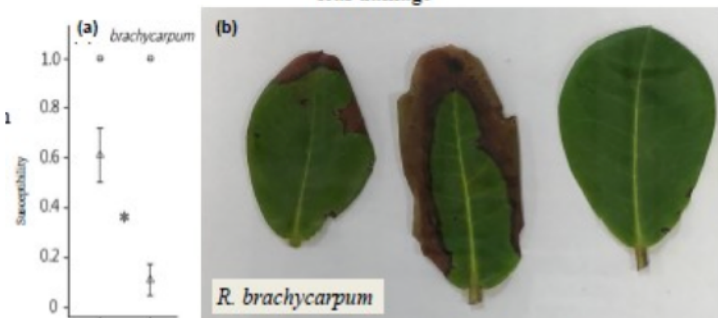


Figure 2. *R. atlanticum* exhibits (a) low disease susceptibility in a greenhouse experiment and (b) low leaf damage at Holden Arboretum.

***R. brachycarpum* has high disease susceptibility and visible leaf damage**



The new database, named RA-Leafy, is being developed by Dr. Burns in collaboration with technology company VCOMP Inc., and will expand on the original RA-Metrics database by adding the ability to track leaf morphology and leaf health. RA-Leafy will be incorporated into a community-based science research project led by Dr. Burns and will include opportunities for the public to participate in the research by collecting data on plants growing in their own home gardens.

The RA-Leafy expansion of RA-Metrics represents the first step in a long-term plan by members of the Rhododendron Research Network to develop data tools and projects that engage members of the public in Rhododendron research.

From *Rhododendron Research Network Newsletter, July 7, 2021. Reproduced with permission.*

Recent Rhododendron Introductions



'Madison's Morning'. Photo: Darrell Grant.

'Madison's Morning'

Elepidote rhododendron: 'Tony' (s) X unnamed *R. fortunei* hybrid. H (1999): Madison Grant, St. Catherines, Ontario; G (2005), N (2020), REG (2020): Darrell Grant, St. Catherines, Ontario. Flowers: 14-16 per dome truss, funnel, 2.2 inches (55mm) long x 3 inches (75mm) wide with 5 rounded lobes, wavy margins. Bud: strong purplish red (63B). Inside: strong purplish red (63B) shading to whitish ivory in throat; with dorsal throat flare, moderate red (185B). Outside: strong purplish pink (63C) shading to deep purplish pink (67C) at margins. Calyx: 0.1 inch (1mm) long, light to strong yellow green (145A-145B). 10 white stamens; white style; magenta stigma radially segmented by orange lines. Truss: 4.3-5.5 inches (110-140mm) high x 5.1-6.3 inches (130-160mm) wide. Fragrance: faint, lily-like. Leaves: 3.1-4.7 x 1.4-2.2 inches (80-120 x 35-57mm), oblong, slightly convex, rounded base, obtuse apex, flat margins, moderate yellow green to moderate olive green (146B-146A); semiglossy. Shrub: 2.6 feet (0.8m) high x 4.6 feet (1.4m) wide in 20 years; intermediate habit, leaves held 2 growing seasons, freely branching, floriferous. Hardy to -10°F (-23°C). Flowering midseason (late May in southern Ontario). Etymology of name: for the hybridizer, who was 2 years old when, with guidance, she applied pollen to stigma.

Journal American Rhododendron Society (JARS), Vol.75, No.3, 2021, p.157.

Congratulations Darrell!



CHAPTER NEWS

You're invited to a PROPAGATION SPREE!

Let us know a few of your favourite or best performing rhododendrons in your garden, and we will arrange to take a few cuttings for rooting. In view of declining interest and selection at Nurseries, this is one way of expanding availability of rare, hard-to-find rhododendrons for our Membership Plant Sale.

Please contact Nick Yarmoshuk over the next couple of weeks, when cuttings are normally taken: rhodosrus@gmail.com



2021 Virtual ARS Fall Conference *“Fall into Gardening”* *October 23 and 24, 2021*



This virtual conference is FREE and open to all interested gardeners, members and non-members.

To Register use this **more recent** link

<https://mailchi.mp/9151e79e2a98/fall-conference-2021>



We remember Wendy Fletcher of Grimsby, ON, long time member of the Niagara Chapter and Board of Directors, who passed away on September 6th, 2021. Wendy faithfully assisted at the receiving table at Chapter meetings, always with a welcoming smile. Our sincere condolences to Wendy's family.

