

The Oak

Newsletter of
the Fraser South
Rhododendron
Society

Volume 25 Number 8
October 2011



www.flounder.ca/FraserSouth

Fraser South Rhododendron Society
is a chapter of the
American Rhododendron Society

Meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the
third Wednesday of each month
(except June, July and August) at:
United Church Hall
5673 - 200th Street
Langley BC

This Month's Meeting

Date: Wednesday, October 19, 2011
Topic: "Seed Collecting - Somewhere Over There"
Speaker: Steve Hootman
Plant Sales: Colleen Bojczuk

2011 Officers

President:	Bill Bischoff	604-589-6134
Past Pres:	Harold Fearing	604-857-4136
Vice Pres:	John Dodd	604-530-0153
Secretary:	(Margaret Hodgson)	604-541-2382
Treasurer:	(Harold Fearing)	604-857-4136
Directors:	Arlene Darby	604-597-1849
	Matt Groves	604-856-2624
	Kathy Delory	604-576-1172
Programme:	Sean Rafferty	604-990-5353
Membership:	(Ginny Fearing)	604-857-4136
Newsletter:	Brenda Macdonald	604-990-5353
Librarian:	Joan McGiveron	604-538-9347
Website:	Chris Klapwijk	604-581-0925

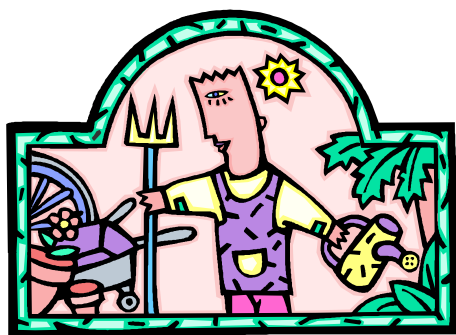
Quick Hits

The nights draw down and we no sooner roast and eat one turkey and it is time to start thinking about roasting and eating another.

Here is your first reminder that our annual Christmas Feast and Fest is galloping towards us with all the speed of buttercup stolons. Be sure to mark your calendar for December 14th right away. More details next month.

And another reminder that we need to get our 2012 dues into the ARS by the end of the month. A detachable Enrolment form is included at the back of the newsletter. Additional copies will be available at the meeting.

Notes From the Chair



FROM THE PRESIDENT

We are well into fall by now and our rhododendrons plants produce an abundance of yellow, dark-red and brown leaves which brighten up our garden beds with colourful patterns. One almost feels torn between hasty clean-ups or “just let things be as they are”. My feeling is to let things linger a bit, even if a voice is telling me to go ahead and clean up. Try mixing leaves of different colors on the floor or a table and taking pictures of them. Do that with wet or dry leaves. The result will be pictures worthy to decorate any wall in your home.

Several positions on our club's executive roster had to be filled due to vacancies left by our treasurer, secretary and membership director. Please join me to say “thank you” to these three members for giving us their time and talent, especially so in the case of Alan March, who served for a considerable length of time. “Thank you” again to Alan, Sandy Procter and Mai Swan. Also our gratitude to Harold Fearing, Ginny Fearing and Margaret Hodgson for filling these positions at least until our election next January. It is a good feeling to know that there is always someone in our club to step in when needed. Harold Fearing will be calling shortly on our members to fill several positions on our executive board. When called, please give it a fair consideration. It might be an interesting learning experience if you have never been part of a society's ruling class.

Arts Nursery in Port Kells had their yearly summer celebration on Saturday and Sunday, September 24th and 25th. The FSRS manned a table on Saturday only, due to not having volunteers for Sunday. On Saturday, Karen Linton, Larry Morton, Carla Bischoff and myself were there from noon until 4:00 pm. It was a very nice and sunny day with many visitors. We handed our club information out, and talked to interested parties about joining our club. Apart from our colourful pamphlets and rhododendron literature we also had a thick binder of rhododendron pictures to show to visitors. Thank you to the volunteers for being part of this event. There were several large ground-floor displays from local Garden Clubs to be admired. Overall the whole affair was well orchestrated and well appreciated by all the visitors we talked to. We can already now invite you to be part of this event next year. Bad weather is no excuse; we now have our own tent.

Our annual Christmas Party is fast approaching, only two meetings away. More details will be available in November. If you have any suggestions on what we could add to this festive occasion, please let me know. Our Society will again be part of the fall meeting of the BC Council of Garden Clubs to take place on Saturday, October 15th at Our Lady of Sorrows Church in Vancouver. The address is 555 Slocan Street. Coming from the east on Highway 1, just before the 2nd Narrows Bridge, go west onto Hastings, past the PNE grounds and turn left (south), onto Slocan. The Church will be on your right. As a member of our society you will be a most welcome guest. There is no entrance fee. Lunch and refreshments are available for a fee of \$30, to be paid at the door. This year there are four very interesting presentations planned. There will also be plants for sale as well a draw for plants. Overall it will be a day to be remembered.

I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting.
Happy gardening to all.

Bill Bischoff



A gauntlet thrown ... well, they may look like a pair of gardening gloves, but they represent a challenge nevertheless.

It is now time for me to retire from the position of Editor of The Yak. It has been a good run, (it has been a nine-year run! - where did the time go?) but it is time to pass the keyboard on to someone with a fresh outlook and new ideas.

Here is your chance to put your own stamp on our monthly newsletter. I am sure there are a couple of closet scribblers out there who just need a little encouragement. Nominate a friend, nominate yourself! Just speak to me or any member of the Executive if you would like to give it a whirl.

Brenda Macdonald



FROM THE EDITOR

Last Month:

Last month we all enjoyed something a little different as Janis Matson led us through some hands-on exercises and thinking about suitable companion plants for the rhododendron garden. It was all quite different from our usual programme, and we thank Janis for an very informative and enjoyable evening.

This Month:

This month Steve Hootman, Executive Director of the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden, returns to speak to us on something. To tell you the truth, I fudged a bit on the title of his presentation “Seed Collecting

- Somewhere Over There” because Steve was not able to advise a specific topic before the newsletter went out. What I do know is that it will probably involve travel, it will probably involve seed collecting, and it will probably involve locations far, far away. What I also know is that it is bound to be a great presentation, crammed with information, much humour, and a great many fabulous images.

Come and help us welcome Steve back to our club. This is an excellent opportunity to bring a friend to introduce them to the world of the FSRS.

The Business Stuff:

- What I hope is a full and accurate listing of all our current members, including our new ex-PARS members is attached. Please review your entry (or entries, for those members with separate email addresses) and advise me of any changes or corrections. I do try my hardest, but maintaining a complete and correct listing of Chapter members always turns out to be way trickier than it has any right to be. If I have made an error, I send my apologies in advance. Still, let me know and I will get it sorted.

- Don't forget about our FSRS website, at www.flounder.ca/FraserSouth. There is a wealth of information there, for tyros and mentors alike. Chris Klapwijk, our tireless WebMaster recently reported that we have now surpassed the half-million unique visitors count. Quite an accomplishment!

- Keep in mind that the ARS Spring Convention will be held in Asheville, North Carolina, next spring, from May 4 to May 8 inclusive. North Carolina is located within of the Carolinian Life Zone, and is filled with the native azaleas and many flowering deciduous trees that Philip MacDougall spoke to us about in his presentation last February. This might be a perfect time to visit the area.

OTHER DUTIES AS ASSIGNED: .

- The Ladies Joan (Bengough and McGiveron) are listed as the November tea crew . The rest of us need to remember to bring in some goodies now and again to help the Tea Staff in their efforts.

THE CALENDAR:

Wednesday, Oct 19	Fraser South Chapter Steve Hootman - Seed Collecting
Thursday, Oct 20	Vancouver Chapter Steve Hootman - TBA
Wednesday, Nov 16	Fraser South Chapter TBA
Thursday, Nov 17	Vancouver Chapter Andy Hill - Collecting for UBC in China
Wednesday, Dec 14	Fraser South Chapter Annual Christmas Potluck - early start @ 6:30



The Book Cart

Margaret Hodgson wore many hats during her years as an active and supportive member of PARS, one of which involved writing a number of marvelous book reviews about some of the books in the PARS library. It is a privilege to be allowed to reprint some of these in our own newsletter now.

Seeds of Adventure

by Peter Cox and Peter Hutchison

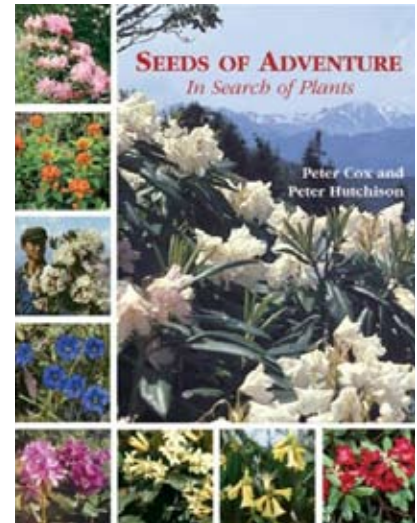
Garden Art Press, The Antique Collectors' Club, Suffolk, England, copyright 2008.

\$53.98 Cdn.

415 pages, approx. 700 colour photos, and four pages of coloured maps outlining the various trips of the adventurers. The appendix of place names, glossary, and bibliography is followed first by a plant index and then by a very good general index.

Hardbound,

ISBN 978-1-870673-58-7 (hardcover)



Peter Cox, VMH, was brought up with plant hunting in his blood and with its influences all around him. He is a world authority on rhododendrons, has run the famous Glendoick Nursery near Perth, Scotland, and with his son has written more books on rhododendrons than anyone else. These include *Encyclopedia of Rhododendron Species* and *Cox's Guide to Choosing Rhododendrons*. For his achievements in horticulture, Peter Cox has been awarded the Victoria Medal of Honour, the Gold Medal of the American Rhododendron Society, The Nurseryman and Garden Centre Lifetime achievement award, and awards from the Institute of Horticulture and Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society. In June 2005 he was awarded an honorary doctorate of Science from St Andrews University.

Peter Cox's early life was much influenced by his father, Euan H.M. Cox, a prominent botanist and famous plant collector in the early 1900s. Among his father's colleagues were such famous names as Joseph Rock, Frank Kingdon Ward and Reginald Farrer. Peter was also fortunate to have friends such as H.H. Davidian and Dr. John Cowan at the Royal Botanic Garden.

Sir Peter Hutchison is a keen gardener and plantsman who became the first Chairman of Trustees at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, and was later Chairman of the Forestry Commission. His particular enthusiasms are rare trees and primulas. Both Peters come from the East of Scotland but share a wild garden, Baravalla, in Argyll on the mild western coast where they grow plants they have collected. Peter Hutchison claims that although he did not grow up surrounded by the famous names of Peter Cox's background, the main influence in his path to a love of gardening and plant collecting came from growing up with a Victorian walled garden. The head gardener was a kindly man who was not in the least disturbed by having a small child tag along after him, watching him do everything in the greenhouses or the vast gardens. Also, his mother was a keen gardener who passed on this enthusiasm to her son. She had a wide knowledge of plants and an instinctive eye for putting them together.

Seeds of Adventure tells the story of the extensive travels made by Peter Cox and Peter Hutchison in search of hardy plants. They describe sixteen journeys – often arduous, sometimes dangerous, and occasionally funny - that resulted in the collection of seeds from plants high in the peaks of the Himalaya, western China, and Turkey. On many of these trips they travelled to places so remote and rough that no western explorers had ever been before to botanize the plants. The two Peters, as a result of their work, introduced many plants, especially rhododendrons, new or lost

to cultivation, often saving them from extinction by growing seeds on in the temperate climate of Scotland following their trips, and introducing their finds to Europe, New Zealand, Australia and Temperate zones of North America.

After their first trips in 1962 to Turkey and 1965 to India, they suffered a long gap before their next trip in 1981 to China because of many setbacks to their plans caused by political difficulties in so many countries during the intervening years. In 1967 they tried to get back into North-East India without success, and in 1973, they had no success in planning a trip to Bhutan. They received discouraging reports against going into Chile during the 1970s, and nothing came of their attempts to get into Burma (Myanmar). But they never stopped planning, and, turning their focus towards China in 1978 a trip finally came to fruition in 1981. From the year 1981, the trips quickly multiplied and they managed a total of sixteen trips, finally getting to Bhutan in 1988, Tibet in 1998 and Arunachal Pradesh in 2001. The last trip described is to Subansiri, India, in 2002. The organization of the book basically follows one chapter to one trip. It is a very interesting book to read and the pictures are superior.

Margaret Hodgson

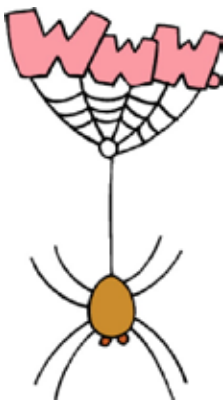
Report from the Library

The P.A.R.S. library is to be amalgamated with that of our own F.S.R.S. library. The books and cart will be brought to our October meeting and with the help of Margaret Hodgson, P.A.R.S. librarian, we will begin to sort through these on Wednesday. Once an amalgamated list of books is prepared this will be made available to all club members, hopefully by the November meeting.

Margaret has kindly offered to share P.A.R.S. book reviews that she has written over the past few years and these reviews will slowly be included in The Yak. Thank you, Margaret, I know our club members will enjoy this additional information.

If you have any outstanding loans, please be sure to return these on Wednesday. If you are unable to attend this meeting I would appreciate a phone call at 604-538-9347 or an email at jmcgiv@telus.net advising me which books you have.

Thank you - Joan McGiveron



www.rhododendron.org/blog/default.asp

The ARS has launched itself into the world of social media!

They have a new blog on their website entitled "All About Rhododendrons". This new feature is designed to act as a public forum for all things rhodie and should provide a nice variety of viewpoints and different levels of information.

Recent posts include one on Deciduous Azaleas, and another on Pruning. It is well worth taking a look at.

R. sanguineum

What a mess. Subsection Neriiflorum, notoriously variable, hard to pin down, and taxonomically challenging, is well represented by *R. sanguineum* ssp. *sanguineum* var. *haemaleum*. Originally described as a distinct species, it was sunk not only to subspecies but eventually to varietal status.

As well it should, as it differs from the typical *sanguineum* really only in its flower colour.

But what a colour it is. One of the very deepest reds, its somewhat glaucous dark crimson colour makes it appear almost black under some conditions.

Not particularly vigorous, *sanguineum* var. *haemaleum* grows to a compact (except in shady conditions) 3 - 5 feet, with slender branches and variable leaf indumentum. It is perfectly hardy in the Pacific Northwest, and is apparently somewhat more tolerant of damp conditions than many other rhododendron species. The blossoms are almost fleshy, with the typical Neriiflorum nectar pouches, and with a slightly glaucous surface that adds to the unique colouration. A bit shy to flower in its early years, it eventually matures to put on quite a show. It can look quite spectacular particularly when back lit or in the late afternoon sun, a light source that seems to make all the red rhodos almost quiver with colour.

First collected by Forrest in the Mekong-Salween watershed in NW Yunnan and SE Tibet sometime in the early 1900s, it has



Engraving by Lillian Snelling, 1929
Curtis's Botanical Magazine

Species and their Hybrids		pollen ♂	
		B	b
pistil ♀	B	BB	Bb
	b	Bb	bb



been collected many times since, found in rhododendron scrub and open rocky moorland, along with other *sanguineum* subspecies.

Although the amazing colour must have been a strong incentive, hybridization activity has not been particularly strong. Perhaps the colour was not sufficiently dominant to justify diluting it with other species or hybrids, when the other characteristics of the plant were not particularly compelling.

One of the best hybrids was the *R.* 'Oporto' mentioned last month as a hybrid with *R. thomsonii* ssp. *thomsonii*. There have been a number of other hybrids created over the years, but they have mostly been lost from cultivation. *Brenda Macdonald*



top left *R. sanguineum ssp. sanguineum*
var. didymoides- another near relative of *var. haemaleum*, the flowers on *didymoides* are smaller but attractively two-toned

middle left *R. 'Impi'* - this was another early cross, by Rothschild in 1945, only this one is with *var. haemaleum's* near relative *ssp. didymum* crossed with *R. 'Moser's Maroon'*

middle right *R. 'Crimson Pippin'* - a *yakushimanum x var. haemaleum* hybrid done by Larson in 1982, its currant-red blossoms are accentuated by the substantial frilled calyces



bottom right
R. sanguineum
ssp. sanguineum
var. haemaleum,
glistening after a
rainfall

All photos harvested from
the wonderful "Hirsutum"
site
[www.hirsutum.info/
index.html](http://www.hirsutum.info/index.html)



Membership

As in previous years it continues to be the intent of the Chapter officers to ensure that membership fees be kept as low as feasible in order to make our club accessible to all who wish to join.

It is through the ARS umbrella that many of the educational activities and sharing of information and resources is made possible. A strong ARS, supported by Full Memberships all across the continent, is what makes our rhododendron community possible.

All membership questions should be address to our Acting Membership Chair, Ginny Fearing, or any other of the FSRS officers.

Fraser South Rhododendron Society 2012 Membership

New Membership - \$15.00

Renewal Membership - see below

Date _____

Name _____

Partner or Spouse's Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Province (State) _____

Postal (Zip) Code _____

Telephone Number _____

Fax Number _____

Email Address _____

All personal information collected by FSRS is for Society use only. Chapter members who would like their name and address to be included in the FSRS Member List - to be distributed to FSRS members only - must indicate their consent by marking this box:

Please indicate the type of membership below, and enclose your payment with this registration form.

All cheques should be made out to: **Fraser South Rhododendron Society**

If mailing, send to: c/o 5376 Ross Road, Abbotsford, BC V4X 1Z2

Full Member (includes ARS membership and quarterly ARS Journal) \$35.00

Associate (full member of other Canadian ARS chapter) \$10.00

Please indicate name of primary membership chapter _____