



Southwestern Oregon Chapter

AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

WWW.SWOREGON-ARS.ORG/



OCTOBER 2011

Meeting Time/Place

October 20 —7:00 pm
N. Bend Housing Authority
1700 Monroe Street
North Bend

Pre Meeting Dinner— 5:00 pm

Tai's Dynasty
1388 Virginia, North Bend

RSVP to Jan Lee—

fogline1@frontier.com or call
541-267-4176

Meeting Refreshments:

Ann Drake

October Board Meeting

October 12th, 9:00 am
Minute Café, Bandon

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October Program

Mike Stewart of Dover Nursery will introduce us to some new dwarf rhododendrons.

President's Message

Ray Lee

Summer Picnic

– Summer is such a fun part of the year because the dry season is here and there's not a lot of yard work to be done. Thank you to Jack & Wanda Hackett for hosting the chapter's summer picnic. This time of year there aren't many rhododendrons blooming but Jack did show me a big, tall Occidentale that was still in flower. It was too tall to get up and smell the flowers but they still looked nice. I asked Jack what he does to make his barbecued ribs so good and his answer was "nothing special". They sure tasted fine to me. I believe I went back more than once.

Cutting Party –

The cutting party at Ann Drake's home was a big success with most of our members there either for cutting or for lunch. Ann, thank you for opening your beautiful home & gardens to us and generously sharing cuttings of any of your plants. Many of our

members brought cuttings from their favorite rhodies to share.

What a huge variety to draw from. Last year I took several cuttings of the very late Twilight Pink from Ann's yard. None of my cuttings from last year survived so this was my chance to try Twilight Pink again. I've done two things differently from my attempts last year, both suggested by Bob MacIntyre. After firming the planting medium in around the cutting I used a watering can to water around the base of the cutting. I have a miniature green house to keep the cuttings in with a heating pad under it and a grow light above. Bob suggested I may not be keeping the greenhouse humid enough. His solution was to soak enough perlite to cover the bottom of the greenhouse to a depth of an inch. Drain the perlite then put it in the bottom and set the potted cuttings on the perlite. This has certainly created a lot more condensation inside of the greenhouse. I do know that if I depended on my propagation skills to get rhodies I wouldn't have many in my

yard. Maybe I'll have better success this year.

ARS International Convention – Jan and I decided to take in our first Convention since joining the ARS. Vancouver is so close that we took our fifth wheel trailer and stayed for a week. The garden tours we signed up for were fabulous with so many flowers in bloom. We helped with set up of the plant sale as well as were cashier and cashier assistant for people paying for their plants. We each also introduced the speaker at two of the seminars we attended. Interesting seminars, great garden visits and the Saturday evening banquet made for a memorable week. We were so impressed with the tour of Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden in Portland that we spent the afternoon there on Monday after the Convention was over.

Next meeting – October 20th is our first meeting after our summer break. Please come join us to talk about our favorite garden plant, the rhododendron.

Ann's Corner

Ann Drake

When a bit of sun peeks through the rain, it is a good time to walk in the garden and see how next year's buds are doing. Rhododendrons produce buds between July and September. The difference between a flower bud and new leaf growth is fairly apparent now. Flower buds are larger of course and more rounded. They will grow larger through October and then wait for spring. One exception is the big leaf rhododendrons. Quite often the growth buds are more rounded and you think you are getting a bloom that you have waited for a long time for only to find it was just new leaves. *R. macabeanum* always fools me. Big leaf rhododendrons take a long time to bloom. We have yet to have a bloom on the ones we have and I can't see the tops of them anymore. Oh well.

The small rhododendrons have smaller buds of course but they are a little more rounded. They usually have an abundance of bloom. They are a real joy every year.

Light is very important for blooms. This garden has a lot of shade and rhodies need at least filtered light. We have pruned the lower branches of the conifers and cut down some trees. All the fertilizer in the world won't help if there is not enough light in your garden. Trees take a lot of moisture from rhododendrons planted too close to them so that is something else to consider.

Plants grown in containers will usually produce a lot of foliage when first put in the ground so you might have to wait a while for blooms. Feeding your plants on a regular basis about 3 times a year helps insure blooms. A guest speaker gave out a little tip and Tom has done this: when a plant continually does not do well dig it up and elevate it by putting more soil in the hole. Some of our plants we play musical chairs with. Microclimates are found in everyone's garden and there is a perfect spot for every plant. Now we just have to wait for another spring.

It is time for dues. Every chapter has a newsletter and you can receive new information about programs, rhododen-

drons and events by becoming a associate member of that chapter for only \$10.

WARREN BERG HYBRIDIZER



Ginny Gee—photo by Jens Birk, Katsrup, Denmark

Warren Berg's hybrid contributions to the rhododendron world have been a joy to many a collector. Hirsutum.info lists 21 of them. A number of them are dwarf and always full of bloom. Even the names are colorful: Dad's Bee, Jan Bee, June Bee, King Bee, Must Bee, Patty Bee, Too Bee, Wanna Bee and Wee Bee to name a few. Many cuttings have been taken from Ginny Gee in our garden. Golfer, named for his wife Patty Berg, is one of those rhododendrons with beautiful foliage as well as a nice yak type bloom. There is a nice recollection of his life in the memorial listing in the fall issue of the 2006 Journal. A remarkable man.

FROM THE ARCHIVES:

Since we just had a successful propagating session here is a thought from an old chapter newsletter: A woman in Pennsylvania wrote: "If you strike ten cuttings and only one takes, that's 100 percent success. Why? It's one more plant than you had before so that makes it 100 percent. If two plants take, it's 200 percent and so on. Things are looking up. It would be nice to keep track of our success. Remember the couple who took their cuttings to Arizona with them in their motorhome?"

Annual Dues are Due

Just a friendly reminder to let you know that your annual dues are due. If you have not mailed them in and would like to save on the postage, bring them to the October meeting. Please do not send them directly to the ARS—just makes bookkeeping complicated.

Across the Kitchen Table

Bob MacIntyre

Welcome back to all of you to the start of our new year. Our first speaker will be Mike Stewart of Dover Nursery in Sandy, OR. Mike has a large commercial operation producing thousands of plants a year for the wholesale market, especially on the east coast. He is Past ARS President, Past District 4 Director and Gold Medal recipient. Mike has been very active as a frequent speaker and co-host with Harold Greer on a number of rhododendron conferences.

There is still time to take cuttings, especially on some of the later flowering hybrids and species.

Gardenwise, don't fertilize until President's Day in February. It is a good idea to remove dead and fallen leaves

from under the plants and discard them. This removes hiding places for slugs and insects and may remove any sources of fungus problems.

If plants are newly planted and are in their present location for less than 3 years, you may want to add an inch or two of mulch such as coarse sawdust, woodchips or straw, but stay away from the main stem. Cover to the feeder root zone at the drip line, but not close to the base of the plant. If you have potted tender plants, move them to a protected area and be prepared to cover them at night to protect them from frost. Plants in the garden can be covered by tarps during heavy freeze conditions.

Good gardening, - *Bob*

Finding Rhododendrons in Tibet and Sichuan, China

The public is invited to a free presentation by Dr Keith White detailing his 2009 trip to China and Tibet visiting eight botanical and natural plant preservation areas. Travel in the Chinese mountains is much easier than 100 years ago, when plant explorers rode horseback and camped along the trail. Keith's travels take him to mountainous areas from 6000 to 12,000 feet to find tiny alpine rhododendrons and many native flowers. Many of the flowering plants we buy in the US are cultivated and hybridized from plant material collected in China.

The Siuslaw Chapter will host Dr White on Tuesday October 18 at the Presbyterian Church of the Siuslaw, 3996 Highway 101, Florence, at 7 pm. Refreshments at 6.30 pm. Call 541-997-7573.

Gardening Memories—or Not an Arm, Just a Leg

Doggerel by Jan, Lee, June 2011

An foolish old lady from Coos Bay
 Helped her husband with transplanting one day.
 The Rhodie they found
 Threw her down to the ground,
 And the ambulance took her
 to x-ray.

"Your femur is broken," Doc
 said,
 "We'll fix it and put you in
 bed."
 Now I'm up and walk-
 ing,
 The Rhodie's not talking
 But I think she wanted me
 dead.

The Rhodie is Honorable Jean Marie
 Who seems like a nice old girl, doesn't she?
 She now is tied down
 With stakes all around
 In case she is planning a killing spree.

We nick-named the dear Rhodie "Killer,"
 She almost put me in the chiller.
 I could give a talk
 Titled "Watch where you walk."
 Gardening is always a thriller!



Jean Marie and I have just made
 up,
 It isn't her fault I was laid up.
 She's my friend again
 But she wasn't when
 My hospital bill wasn't paid up.

I like Rhodies - if you ask why
 We were wrestling with this big
 guy.
 What matters is size,
 So I'm getting wise,

I think I will take up Bonsai.

Future Events

2011

October 21-23—Eastern Regional Conference, Richmond, VA

2012

May 4-8—ARS Annual Convention, Asheville, NC

Sept. 21-23—Western Regional, Coast Bastion Inn, Nanaimo, BC