

Southwestern Oregon Chapter

AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

WWW.SWOREGON-ARS.ORG/

JANUARY 2016



Meeting Time/Place

January 21 —7:00 pm
N. Bend Housing Authority
1700 Monroe Street
North Bend

Pre Meeting Dinner— 5:00 pm

Tai's Dynasty
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North Bend, OR 97459

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Distribution
Marjene MacIntyre

January Program

Your cuttings have rooted and your seedlings are growing—Now What Do You Do?

Robin, Liz and Bob will talk about transplanting cuttings and seedlings.

President's Message

Robin Hansen

Rain, and more rain – to native Oregonians, this is pretty familiar winter behavior. Gushing windy storms with thunder and lightning, hail, flooding and mudslides – for those of us who've been viewing our gardens between storms, it may have been too little, too late. I appear to have lost two dwarf rhododendrons, but won't know with any certainty until spring or summer.

The alternative (none or little rain) is worse, so in the future soldier on and keep up the mulches, be more careful about positioning your rhododendrons to take advantage of afternoon shade, if needed, and shelter from summer winds.

All this rain will naturally leach nutrients from your soil but there is no point in fertilizing until daytime temperatures reach at least 50 degrees F, but there are other important things to take up your time: pick limbs and other litter out of your shrubs, pay attention to drainage so your plants aren't sitting for hours or days in boggy soil and pruning damaged limbs as soon as possible to prevent further damage such as tear-downs.

I'm not sure I believe my rain gauge although I have been diligent about checking it and keeping it clean so that it reads accurately. NOAA Weather seems to think we've had in excess of 17 inches in North Bend. My rain gauge at Saunders Lake has recorded more than 27 inches! Who is right? Good question – my mother (who is six miles south of me) also has a rain gauge. Often there will be a variance of tenths of an inch or more. We've both made sure we have our gauges out in the open and securely anchored with no overhanging plants and away from buildings that might create a rain shadow.

We have passed the Winter Solstice and sunrise is definitely earlier, if only by a few minutes. Another sign that the days are marching on is the catalogs I've been receiving in the mail, although so many now are only available online. I've been placing my seed orders and I can't help the gradually developing eagerness for winter to be over.

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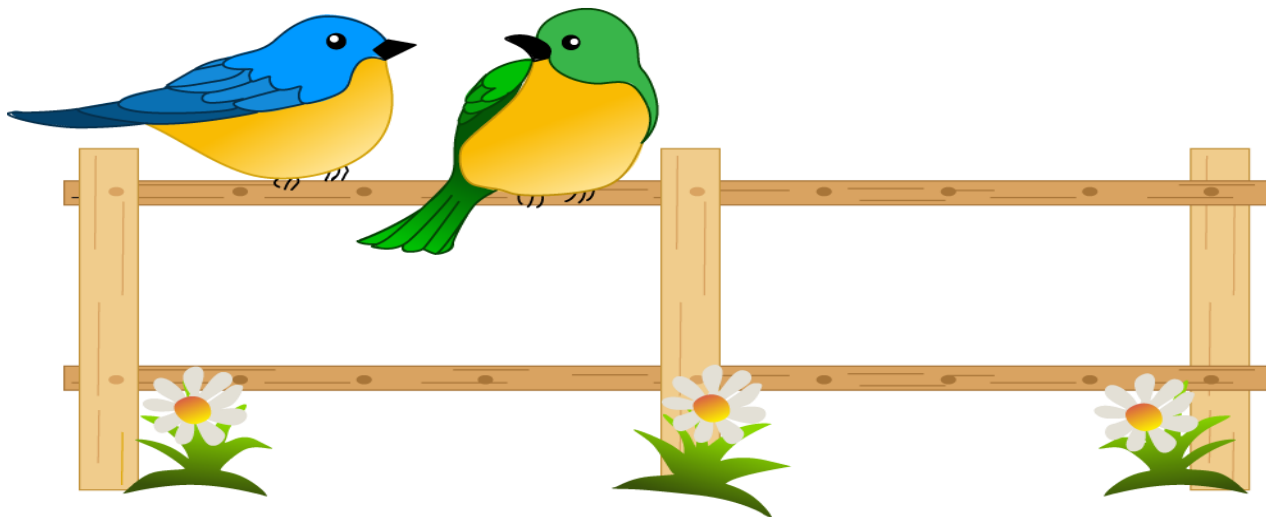
President's Message (continued)

To keep us all from stir crazy, Bob and I will be presenting a seed sowing and transplanting program at our January 21st meeting.

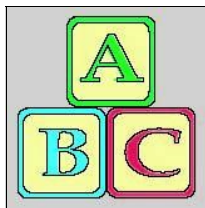
By now, most of your cuttings should have rooted, so Bob will be demonstrating what to do with them, the types of soils and pots needed, and other aftercare including fertilizers and watering. We'll also include some seed-sowing and transplanting tips for those of you who are patient enough to try growing rhododendrons and other plants from seed.

I strongly encourage you all to continue supporting seed collectors. Year by year, there are fewer collectors in the field. Freshly-collected seed, even of familiar species, is essential to preserve and maintain diversity, especially of plants lost over the years in cultivation, habitat destruction and illegal harvesting. Seed collectors are an endangered species in themselves and a number of well-known collectors are no longer willing or able to spend weeks and weeks every year in the field, often under extreme conditions. Seed exchanges such as those of the Rhododendron Species Foundation, North American Rock Garden Society, Scottish Rock Garden Society and others are becoming ever more important as a source of unusual and rare varieties, so please consider donating as often as you can.

Happy New Year and Good Growing!



Dave Goheen's ABC's



Transplanting Young Rhododendrons

Rhododendron ABC's #14

As we continue our discussion on growing new rhododendrons from seed, we come to the third and probably most critical part of the process. This critical period occurs when the seedlings are two to three months past germination and have developed several sets of leaves. Until this time, they have been grown in a crowded, but still very protective situation. Now they must be weaned and allowed to grow in a less protective environment to the point where they can be set out and, more or less, fend for themselves. The analogy to the weaning and development of children from early childhood through their teenage years is striking.

The new and tender seedlings need to be transplanted into bands or pots and given enough room to expand into sturdy individuals. Several things must be considered for this all important event. Choosing the right growing medium is crucial. I do not recommend the use of prepared commercial potting mixtures, as these may contain enough alkalinity to stunt or even kill the seedlings. I rather prefer to use the two-layers (see [ABCs # 12](#)) and make the upper layer of "Nodamp-Off" sphagnum thicker than for the seeds, about 1/2 to 1-inch thick. This allows formation of vigorous roots with little danger of losses due to damp-off and other fungal diseases. The next important procedure is to "tease" individual seedlings from the germinating mixture. This must be done very carefully, as the rootlets are extremely fragile and it is very easy to break and destroy them. I have found it helpful to use a pointed object, such as a sharpened pencil, to loosen the seedlings from the medium. Care should be taken to try to retain some of the medium on the rootlets, if at all possible. Also remember to block off a section of the seedlings and transplant from the block without any regard for selection. Don't just take the largest. Remember you are playing a lottery and chance is all important! At this point, there is no way to tell which seedlings contain the best traits.

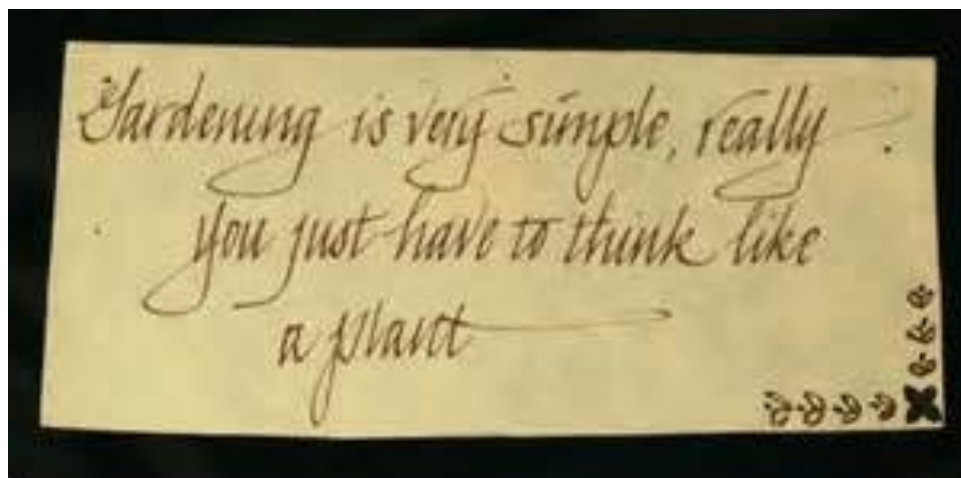
After the seedlings are imbedded in the sphagnum they should be lightly pressed in and watered to settle the new growing medium around the roots. From this point, the seedlings can be treated as new plants. Flats containing the individual containers should be kept warm and provided with good illumination. Don't let the temperature rise too high, 70 degrees F is about optimum and never let the medium dry out. Weekly or biweekly watering with dilute soluble fertilizers work very well. I prefer to use about 20 percent of the strength recommended on the fertilizer

container for mature plants. Try to keep a balance between over-watering and letting the mixture dry out.

If everything goes well, one should have sturdy plants several inches high within five or six months after removal from the germination mixture. At this point, the plants can be either transplanted to gallon, or larger, containers or can even be set out to selected spots in the garden. They are now on their own and one can sit back and, using usual maintenance, watch them grow and hope that at least some of them prove worthy of the care that has been lavished on them. Be patient! It may take 2, 5, or even more years for them to bloom but the satisfaction of seeing something brand new is worth the wait. You may even be lucky and grow a winner!



Elsie Fry—December 19, 2015
MacIntyre front yard



Future Events

Chapter Events

2016

Thursday, January 21

Southwestern Oregon Chapter

Your cuttings have rooted and your seedlings are growing—What Now?

Conferences & Shows

2016

April 9 & 10—Siuslaw Chapter Early Show

April 23 & 24—Southwestern Oregon Chapter Flower Show

April 20-24—**ARS/ASA Annual Convention**, Williamsburg, VA

A joint meeting of the American Rhododendron Society and the Azalea Society of America
www.arsasaconvention2016.org

Sept. 30—Oct. 2—**Western Regional Conference**. Newport, Oregon. Watch for more details later.