

# Southwestern Oregon Chapter

AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

[WWW.SWOREGON-ARS.ORG/](http://WWW.SWOREGON-ARS.ORG/)

MARCH 2016



## Meeting Time/Place

March 17—7:00 pm  
N. Bend Housing Authority  
1700 Monroe Street  
North Bend

## Pre Meeting Dinner— 5:00 pm

Benetti's  
260 S. Broadway  
Coos Bay

*RSVP to Marjene MacIntyre*  
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541-347-7269

## Meeting Refreshments:

Pete & Candy Baumer

## President:

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## Newsletter:

Distribution  
Marjene MacIntyre

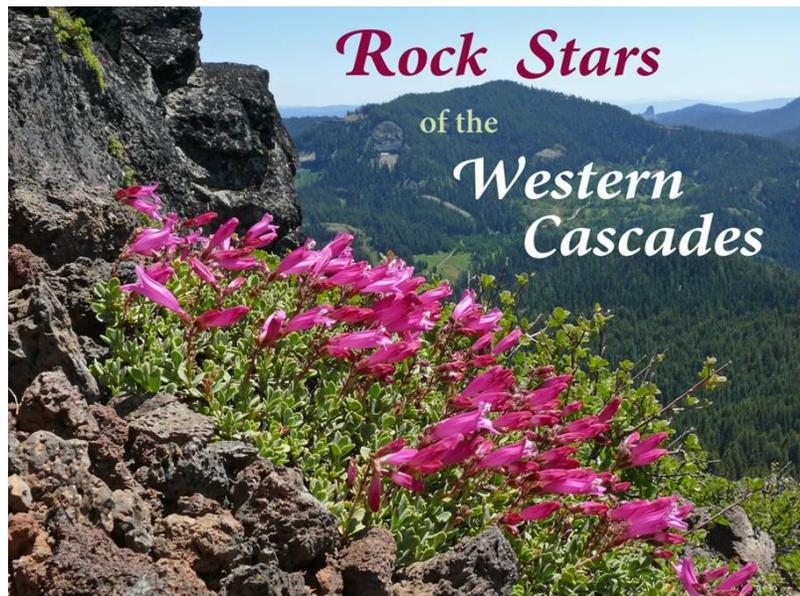


Everyone's Irish  
On March 17th.

## March Program

*Tanya Harvey*

**R**ock Stars of the Western Cascades. Tanya Harvey will show photos of rock-loving plants that grow in Oregon's Western Cascades. She will talk about the different types of rocky habitats and will share some good locations to look for them. For information about her plant explorations, visit her website, [www.westerncascades.com](http://www.westerncascades.com). Tanya will bring her art and photo cards and bird ornaments for sale, see [www.tanyaharveydesign.com](http://www.tanyaharveydesign.com).



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## President's Message

*Robin Hansen*

I hope everyone is preparing for an early spring and warm summer, because wet or not – here it comes! Perhaps because I'm semi-retired and home more in the mornings, I hear a multitude of birdy twittering from every direction in the trees surrounding my house. I'm sure they've been there all along, but I now have time to step outside for a few minutes in the morning and just listen.

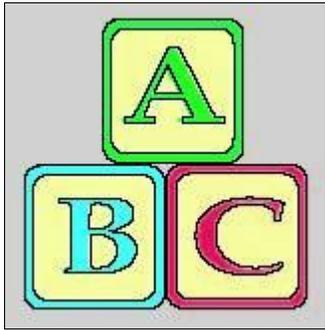
Our March speaker Tanya Harvey is a professional photographer and graphic designer with years of hiking and botanizing in the Cascades, Rockies, Chile and elsewhere. She is working on a book covering the southern Cascades which will serve as a planting and hiking guide and will be loaded with gorgeous photos. She also produces greeting cards from her photographs and pastel drawings, and her birds are anatomically correct, hand-sewn when there's no hiking in winter. Tanya has been working on the Oregon Flora project as editor, designer, and illustrator and has in the past done editorial and graphic design work for Gossler and Greer Gardens catalogs, among others. I hope you'll be able to join us for dinner and the meeting.

Bob MacIntyre and I met with Jacob Ward, the Grange Co-op store manager, and two of his staff to see whether we could jointly offer an informational opportunity to the public at the store. Grange Co-op will be having a rhodie sale April 1-10, so our chapter will be involved in a presentation on April 2 and we'll be asking for volunteers to answer questions and assist the public. More information will be given as we finalize the details. This is a great opportunity to let the public know about rhodies and give them information that will help them choose and grow them.

A reminder that the Master Gardeners' 'Fertilize your Mind' seminars will be held at the Hale Center for Performing Arts at Southwestern Oregon College the last Saturday of March. The Southwestern Oregon Chapter will have an informational table there with brochures and a rhodie display, and will be donating one or two plants for the door prizes. I've learned all sorts of useful things at these seminars and would encourage people to go if they can. Even though a number of these talks are focused on vegetable and fruit gardening, many of the same principles and information apply to gardeners in general. We do have some specific gardening conditions here on the south coast that we learn to cope with, such as exposure to salt air and high winds, poor soils, waterlogged soils, even lack of water, and the more we can learn the more we can enjoy growing whatever we want.

Most of us have now turned our thoughts to the Spring Rhododendron Show to be held at the end of April at Pony Village Mall. I hope you'll all be thinking of volunteering in some capacity no matter how large or small. It takes a lot of preparation to put this show on and our best reward is to show up on Saturday and Sunday and enjoy the results, which always seem to me to be spectacular. That there can be so many gorgeous flowers in bloom and displayed for everyone to see is something I always find stunning. Pete Baumer is Chair of the sale and if you haven't contacted him about volunteering, I can guarantee he'll be contacting you!





## Taxonomy of Rhododendrons

Rhododendron ABC's #4

By now, with 3 Rhododendron ABC's under our figurative belts, it is time to bear down and really try to find out how taxonomists have divided our large and delightfully diverse Genus into groups or related species, so that one has at least a fighting chance of identifying and naming a specimen with which one is not familiar. (*Don't give up, the whole subject is complex and authorities are still not completely satisfied that they can agree with each other!*)

I will try to review what is now known and leave it at that. I then promise to shift to cultural requirements, siting of plants, pest control, pruning, etc.

It must be remembered that the modern general botanical naming system has been based on the scheme first proposed by Linnaeus about 200 years ago. This so-called natural system is based on the study of many traits but, in the main, is based on the reproductive nature of the plants collected in the wild. In so doing, taxonomists have come to arrange plant families in a natural order starting with those with 'primitive' traits and on to higher and more developed plants that have resulted from the passing of many, many thousands of generations. This system has worked well and there are now available numerous taxonomic 'keys' that allow one to identify pretty well most floral species found in the wild.

Nature, however, being sublimely indifferent to most human foibles, has presented us with some really tough classification problems with certain flowering plant families and genera by forming hundreds of species that are recognizably related, but which are obviously truly separate entities and are entitled to their own specific names. So it is with the Genus Rhododendron.

Until about 100 years ago, there was no real problem. Only a handful of rhododendron species were known and their identification was easy. Then came a period of the 'plant explorers'. Scores of obviously new species were collected by each exploration expedition and were sent back to herbaria (places that maintain collections of plant specimens for research and reference).

Most of the new collections were sent to herbaria in the UK. In order to maintain some logical and systematic control, Balfour devised what he called the series concept. Almost (but not quite) arbitrarily, Balfour divided the Rhododendron Genus into some forty or so series, each named for a species which he felt was representative of each series. Then, by comparing vegetative traits, he was able to assign species to their appropriate series based on their apparent affinities.

This scheme worked surprisingly well and it has endured even though it was not a natural, Linnean-type



system. The series concept is still widely used by enthusiasts and one often sees references assigning a certain species based on its general resemblance to the key species of the series. Certain taxonomists have come to believe that the Balfourian system is too artificial and too simplistic. Starting with Dr. Sleumer in the Netherlands, newer and more systematic schemes have now been devised and these are becoming more and more accepted. A complete description of the development of the newer systems is beyond the scope of our discussions, but in the next ABC's a short summary of the modern divisions of the Genus will be attempted.

Dave Goheen



Photos in this issue courtesy of Robin Hansen, Ray Lee and Bob MacIntyre



## March Auction Plants

Pete Baumer

ARS auction plant of the month – Mango Salsa

Other auction plants

Winning Post

Marionberry Marvel.

## Calendar of Events

### Chapter Events

2016

March 15th Siuslaw Chapter Meeting. Presbyterian Church of the Siuslaw, 3669 Highway 101 in Florence, at **6:30** for refreshments Sylvia Smith will be showing how to pick, clean and enter a truss for the upcoming Rhododendron Flower Shows.

March 17th—Southwestern Chapter Meeting. Tanya Harvey will show photos of rock loving plants that grow in Oregon's Western Cascades

March 26—Fertilize Your Mind Master Gardeners at Southwestern Oregon Community College, Coos Bay

April 2—Rhodie plant sale and information booth at Coos Grange

2016

### Conferences & Shows

2016

April 16 & 17—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](http://www.arsasaconvention2016.org)

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

2017

April 27-30—ARS Spring Convention, Eureka, CA

For more information call or email June Walsh, 707-443-0604 or

[RhodyHostel@suddenlink.net](mailto:RhodyHostel@suddenlink.net) or on the Web at <http://EurekaRhody.org/>