

# INDUMENTUM



VANCOUVER  
Rhododendron  
SOCIETY

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## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:

JANUARY 18, 2007, 7:30 P.M. AT VANDUSEN GARDENS

## LECTURE PROGRAM:

STUART SCHOLEFIELD - GARDENS IN WINTER

Stuart Scholefield was born in Vancouver and grew up in and near the Endowment Lands and UBC. He writes: "The forest was our home as kids. I remember a very early visit to a UBC Open House, which included a walk through the old Arboretum. My interest in horticulture began with my early experience in the Endowment Lands and under the influence of my biologist mother. During my high school years, I worked at Keith Dewer's Southlands Nursery Gardens and, after university, I worked as grounds crew at UBC, under Nick Weesjees.

"Although I have a degree in Commerce from UBC, my career was teaching English as a Second Language at King Edward Campus of VCC. In 1974-75, I taught English in Nara, Japan. In Japan, I saw gardens and gardening in a new way. Living near Kyoto, we were able to visit the temple gardens at different times of the year. Ryo-anji and the stone gardens were particularly striking, as were the impressive moss gardens. One night in November, after 10 p.m., while walking home from the train station I passed the local Bonsai nursery. I stood fascinated as I watched a worker slowly turn a tree on a potter's wheel, his concentration and close observation of the tree was incredible. He very carefully reached in and trimmed a single branch and then repeated the process over and over as he completed the pruning of the tree. Later the next spring, gardeners came to work on a nearby garden and I watched as three men on ladders worked for hours hand-plucking needle bunches from a small pine, shaping the tree to emphasize the branch structure by leaving only those needles that pointed upwards".

When Stuart returned to Vancouver in 1975, VanDusen Gardens was just beginning to take shape. Stuart was an early volunteer, spending many hours in the garden working with and learning from Gerry Gibbens and the other gardeners, observing the gardens grow and change. "My children spent many hours of their early lives at VanDusen. I met Frank Dorsey at the first sale. Through the VanDusen Plant Sale committee, I became aware of the Alpine Garden Club and have been a member for over 20 years. I joined the Rhodo Society just a few years ago, though I have had an interest in Rhododendron since my early years working at Southlands".

In 2004 Stuart retired from VCC and moved to a home on South Pender Island where he grows rhododendrons and many other plants. "Many will know that this requires considerable vigilance as the DEER and water shortages provide huge challenges to the gardener". His "Gardens in Winter" talk is most appropriate for our January meeting.

By Louis K. Peterson

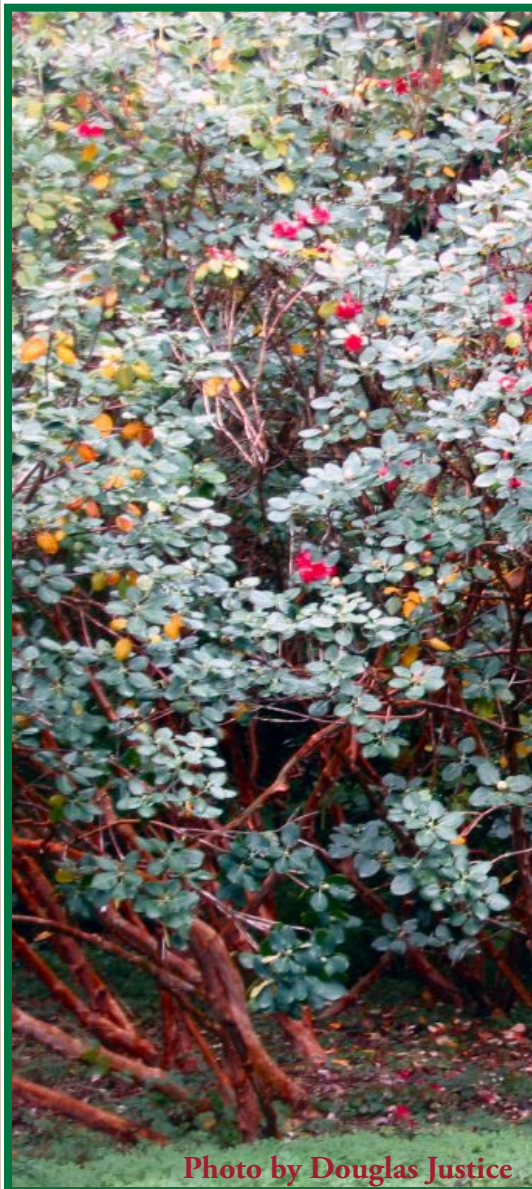


Photo by Douglas Justice



## Changing of the Guard

Each year we say goodbye to members of the executive who have diligently served the cause and we say hello to new members who offer to serve. What will the new year bring for the VRS? One thing is for sure, it will not bring us more contributions in leadership positions, from some of our most valued VRS members. This year we say goodbye to outgoing members of the VRS executive; Louis Peterson (President), Lothar Mischke (Vice President), Carole Conlin (Membership Chair), John Priestman (Director) and Bill Herbst (Director). Each of these individuals has made a contribution to the improvement of the VRS, and their contribution of time, energy and humour, we thank you.

Louis Peterson has worked hard to improve the communications and the involvement of our members within the Society. His tireless phone calling and cajoling of members to participate in VRS functions has helped improve the VRS. Louis is a fountain of ideas and he was always willing to offer these ideas to the executive for scrutiny. His personable demeanor and light hearted approach to working with the executive was appreciated and will be missed, not to mention his quick wit.

Lothar Mischke, our outgoing Vice President, was a great sounding board for all things VRS. As right hand to the President, Lothar's quiet approach was applied in the just the right measure to settle our sometimes passionate executive meetings.

Carole Conlin has served as our Membership Chair for the past several years. Her tireless work ethic and excellent organization of all things membership was always appreciated even if we did not tell her. Carole's cheerful smile was always at the membership table, at every meeting and VRS event, ready to greet members and the public alike, to provide a warm welcome and to offer assistance. We shall miss Carole's sense of humor and her smile at the membership table. She leaves big shoes to fill, hopefully someone will volunteer to take her place.

John Priestman also leaves the executive this year to pursue other passions. John's positive take on all VRS business provided clarity to our sometimes worrisome thought processes. His lively, upbeat and friendly demeanor has helped to make new and old members feel at home during plant sales and other VRS functions.

Bill Herbst completes his term as director this year and moves on to other opportunities. As well as providing directional guidance to the executive, Bill has been our VRS grower coordinator for the past three years. His work with our growers brought us the grower's fine plant selections at our general meetings and plant sales. Bill has been a tireless contributor to the VRS over many years, including coordinating with Doug Justice to revamp our burdensome plant classification system for the Show and Sale.

By Todd Major

## A President's Greeting

To all our members, a Happy and Fruitful New Year - may all your plants prosper and may all your weeds wither! As my two-year term is ending, I hope that our members have found much of interest in our Thursday meetings and other gatherings, in our Indumentum and in our Website. I thank our executive that has worked many long hours in many capacities for the benefit of our Society; the growers who provide quality plants for our gardens; the speakers who educate and entertain us with stimulating talks; the "mini-show" and "Francisca Bouquet" experts; the donors of raffle and door prize gifts; the refreshment team that sustains us with much needed calories; the picnic hosts and the event organizers; and all other supporters with suggestions and ideas that my poor memory may have overlooked at this moment. It has been a good time!

Do your best to come to our first meeting of 2007 - January 18th - to welcome the new executive at our AGM, to hear Stuart Scholefield on "Gardens in Winter", to present a 5-10 minute show of your own favourite slides (it is Members night - call me 921-7260 to make arrangements), and last but not least, to enjoy a Special Dessert event!

By Louis K. Peterson

## 52 New Species Found in Borneo, By John Roach for National Geographic News

A miniature fish, a tree frog with bright green eyes, and a catfish with a sticky belly are among 52 new species discovered within the past year in Borneo, according to a report released today. The Southeast Asian island is shared by Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei. The island's newfound species include 30 fish, 2 tree frogs, 16 ginger plants, 3 trees, and a large-leafed plant. "I have no reason to doubt we will continue adding new species [from Borneo]," said Mark Wright, science advisor for Surrey, England-based WWF-UK, which released the report. "In the last ten years we've been finding three new species every month, month after month," he added. Wright explained that Borneo, like South America's Amazon Basin and Africa's Congo Basin, lies in the equatorial belt, which is known for rich tropical biodiversity. Borneo's geography is also extremely diverse, making for hundreds of unique habitats that house unique creatures adapted to these niches.

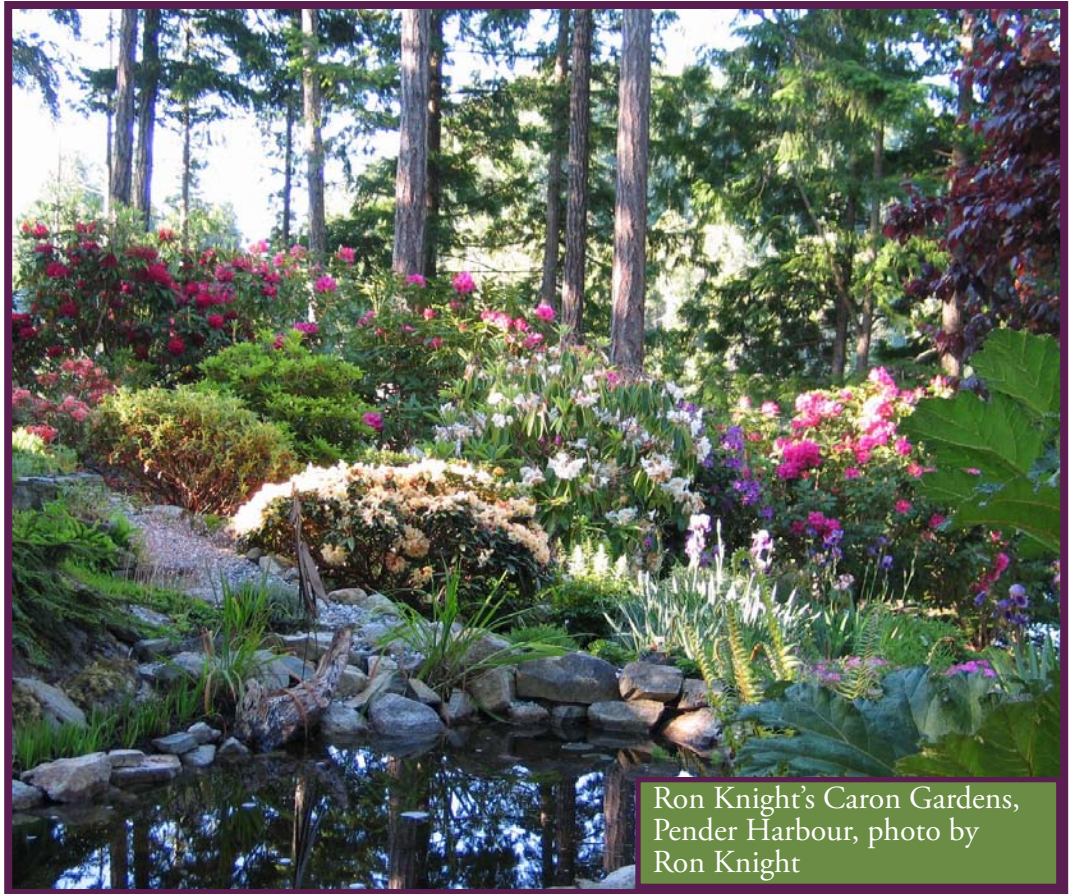
Many of the new species are isolated to a single river or a side of a mountain. For example, a 0.35-inch-long (8.8-millimeter-long) fish called *Paedocypris micromegethes* was found in the island's acidic backwater peat swamps. The translucent fish is the second smallest vertebrate, or animal-with a backbone, in the world, scientists said. It's beat only by its even smaller cousin in Sumatra, *P. progenetica*, which measures 0.31 inch (7.9 millimetres) long.

Continued see "The newfound Ginger" on page 4



As they say, the more things change, the more they stay the same. I would have to disagree with that sentiment when it comes to the Back to Basics feature column in the Indumentum. November 2006 marks the end of Back to Basics, written by Ron Knight. Ron is a retired biology teacher and school administrator whose rhododendron collection is displayed at Caron Gardens on the Sunshine Coast. Ron is a past-president of the Vancouver Rhododendron Society and now serves as Alternate-Director for the American Rhododendron Society's B.C. Division. He has been the author and photographer for Back to Basics. When I first became a member of the executive, Ron was President. He and I used to lament the lack of purposeful and targeted educational information for VRS members.

Through mutual collaboration, his column was born. It pays to be in the right place at the right time and have the eyes to see opportunity. Ron's written contribution to the Indumentum over the last three years has been educational and invaluable for our members. For those of you who have not been editor of a newsletter, you may not appreciate the value that writers



Ron Knight's Caron Gardens,  
Pender Harbour, photo by  
Ron Knight



make to the enhancement of a newsletter, that alone is enough contribution, but Ron also provided 99% of the photographs for Back to Basics (photo left, *R. augustinii*, by Ron Knight). I asked Ron early on during the infancy of Back to Basics, to write more, to provide more information for our members, he would say "in my experience, people learn better from pictures." Collaboration is great when someone has a great idea, and his suggestion combined with his excellent photography skills produced a great learning tool that was informative and inviting to read.

They say in life you can't go back, how true, and so Back to Basics will not return as a feature in the Indumentum. For me, the collaboration with Ron, and the virtue with which Ron has contributed, can not be copied, substituted maybe, but it will never be the same. Ron, I thank you for your friendship, the collaboration and your contributions to the VRS.

By Todd Major



## Holly Trees Hobbled by Smog By Andy Coghlan

Of all the trees that are in the wood, the holly may well bear the crown. Sadly, it's a crown that is now tarnished by ozone pollution. All 400 species of the Christmas favourite could be affected, says Jonathan Ranford of Staffordshire University, Stoke on Trent, UK.

Holly trees in northern temperate zones across the US, Canada and Europe are especially vulnerable, he adds. Ranford and his colleague Kevin Reiling dosed European holly saplings (*Ilex aquifolium*) with 70 parts per billion of ozone - typical of peak summer levels in Europe - for seven hours a day, over a month. The plants grew fewer new leaves and shed more existing ones than usual. The pollutant - a component of smog - also weakens holly trees' ability to withstand cold in winter.

Ranford and Reiling performed two growth experiments. In the first, they planted ozone-dosed saplings outside alongside untreated saplings and monitored them for over two years. In their first year outside, the ozone-treated trees produced 40 per cent fewer leaves than the other saplings, and in the second, 30 per cent fewer, showing that the impact of the ozone exposure persisted beyond any immediate damage. Although holly is evergreen, it does shed some leaves in winter, and the team found that the treated plants lost half their leaves up to four months earlier than the untreated trees. "As well as losing more leaves, they didn't grow as many, so they suffered a double whammy," says Ranford. The lack of leaves stunted the ability of the treated trees to create sugar through photosynthesis for root and shoot growth.

In the second experiment, treated and untreated saplings were grown in refrigerated chambers, in temperatures as low as -15 °C. The ozone-treated trees were "leaky", says Ranford, because water drains away through holes punched in cell membranes by ozone. And the stomata, the leaves' pores, can't close properly to retain water because of damage to their guard cells. As a result, 35 per cent more of the treated trees died at -5 °C with 20 per cent more perishing at -10 °C. The results of both studies appear in *Environmental Pollution* (Vol. 145, p 171 and 355). This story from Issue 2583 of *New Scientist* magazine, Dec. 2006, page 6.

Courtesy of The New Scientist, [www.newscientist.com/home.ns](http://www.newscientist.com/home.ns). This story at link <http://environment.newscientist.com/article/mg19225833.200-holly-trees-hobbled-by-smog.html>



## Tall Trees Once Topped Tibet

The roof of the world should be covered in trees. Today, Tibet is mainly covered by desert pasture, but it was likely once adorned with cypress forest, which was destroyed by local inhabitants over the past 4600 years. Georg Miehle of the University of Marburg in Germany and colleagues analysed climate data, pollen records and ancient soil samples from around Lhasa. They suggest that not only is the climate, with plenty of rainfall, little permanent frost or snow and good mean temperatures through the growing season, most suited to forest growth, but that people burnt down trees to make way for barley cultivation and grazing animals. (*Palaeogeography, Palaeoclimatology, Palaeoecology*, Vol. 242, p 54). From Issue 2579 of *New Scientist* magazine, 29 November 2006.

Courtesy of The New Scientist, [www.newscientist.com/home.ns](http://www.newscientist.com/home.ns) This story at this link <http://environment.newscientist.com/channel/earth/mg19225795.400-tall-trees-once-topped-tibet.html>

## The Newfound Ginger on Borneo

The newfound ginger plants more than double the number of the attractive and diverse *Etilingera* species found to date. Ginger roots are used around the world as food, spice, medicine, and decoration. But, Wright said, the discovery of three new tree species is what really puts the wealth of Borneo's biodiversity into perspective. "One fish the size of a fingernail can hide away. Trees don't move and they are really big—and we are still finding those," he said. "Heaven knows what else is there." Since 1996 Indonesia has lost an average of nine million acres (two million hectares) of forest a year.

Today only half of Borneo's original forest cover remains, according to WWF. Wright said that Borneo's lowland forests are primarily cleared for oil palm plantations. In the mountains the rain forests are rich in coal seams, and several mining companies already hold access rights. Many of the species were discovered in an 85,000-square-mile (220,000-square-kilometer) mountain rain forest in a central region of the island that conservationists call the Heart of Borneo. The region is increasingly pressured by human development, so WWF is working with local officials in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei to develop a series of protected areas and sustainably managed forests. Stuart Chapman, international coordinator WWF's Heart of Borneo Program, said in a media statement: "The remote and inaccessible forests in the Heart of Borneo are one of the world's final frontiers for science."

Courtesy of the National Geographic Society. [http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2006/12/061219-borneo-species\\_2.html](http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2006/12/061219-borneo-species_2.html)



## Membership Report

Benefits change: Please note that Murray Nurseries, Vancouver, is no longer in business. Please amend your list and I will update the benefits change. **Many thanks to Murray Nurseries** for supporting the Vancouver Rhododendron Society over many years. Membership



### Vancouver Chapter

Renewals are still being accepted. You can see me at the Membership Table on January 18th or mail your renewal to me. The 2007 Membership Cards have been mailed to those who have renewed to date. If you change your name or address or email or telephone, please let me know so our records can be updated. Thank you and all the very best in 2007! See you at the Meetings!

Carole Conlin,  
VRS MEMBERSHIP CHAIR  
PO Box 91, Lions Bay, BC V0N 2E0  
Telephone: 604-921-7260  
Email: cconlin@alumni.sfu.ca

## Nominations for the VRS Executive

The Nominations Committee has recommended the following nominations for the positions to be voted on at the January 2007 Annual General Meeting. The Executive has accepted the report with thanks.

President, **Joanne Ronsley**  
Vice President, **Sean Rafferty**  
Secretary, Radojka Harris,  
Treasurer, Barbara Sherman  
Newsletter Editors, Todd & Shannon Major  
Membership Chair, **Vacant**-No nomination received  
Program Co-Chairs, Joe Ronsley and Louis Peterson  
Director: Tony Clayton (to 2009)

The Ongoing Positions on the Executive are:  
Past President, Louis Peterson  
Director to 2007, Iain Forsyth  
Director to 2008, **Don Haslam**

Respectfully submitted by Louis Peterson on behalf of Iain Forsyth, Nominations Committee Chair. Names in semi bold print are new to the executive.

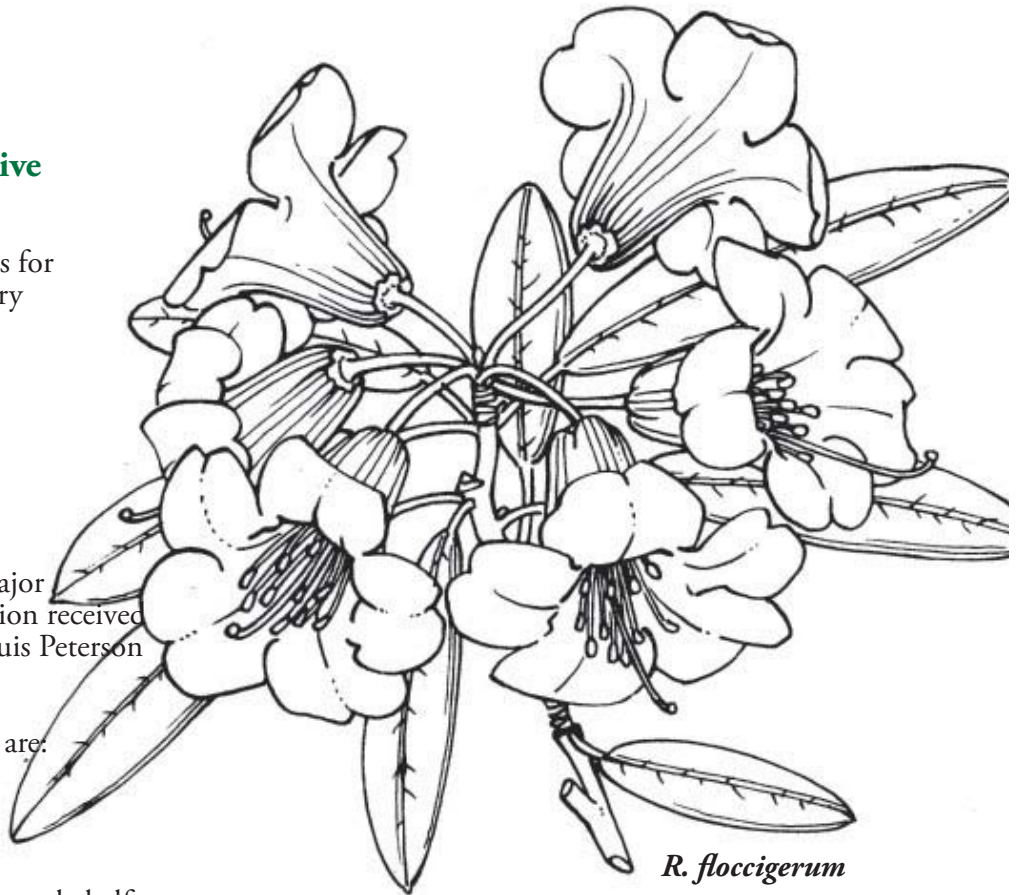
## Do You Have Some News or a Picture?

Letters to the **INDUMENTUM**, news, pictures and anything rhodo or just for interest, can be e-mailed to Todd & Shannon Major at [stmajor@shaw.ca](mailto:stmajor@shaw.ca). If you wish to mail us an article or some pictures (which we will return to you) please give us a call at 604 941 7507 to obtain our mailing address. We need pictures! The larger the picture file size the better the result on screen and in print. If you don't send something, then you will have to live with what we print, so get involved!

Visit our online repository for past **INDUMENTUM** issues, hosted by the UBC Botanical Garden and Centre for Plant Research at this link: [www.ubcbotanicalgarden.org/vrs](http://www.ubcbotanicalgarden.org/vrs)

Visit our website at link [WWW.RHODO.CITYMAX.COM](http://WWW.RHODO.CITYMAX.COM)

Todd & Shannon Major,  
**INDUMENTUM** Editors



*R. floccigerum*



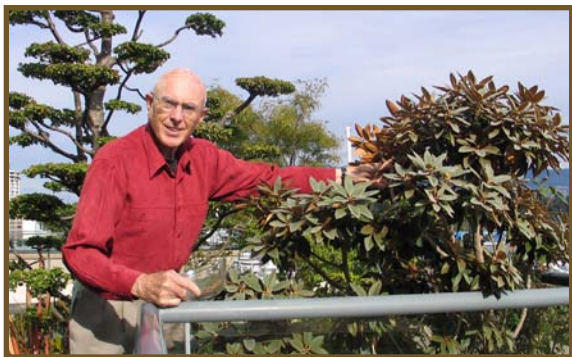


## Glen Patterson's Rooftop Garden

"It can't be done" was the incredulous response by architects and builders to Glen's plan to move his garden from a  $\frac{3}{4}$  acre West Vancouver shore front property to a rooftop at a new condominium home in downtown Vancouver. Glen was not to be outdone, and perhaps his story tells us why. He and his guests can now enjoy the sweeping view of the North Shore Mountains, Stanley Park and the Vancouver Harbour from his 3rd floor apartment on Jarvis Street, a view that includes his exquisitely created Japanese-Alpine garden in the foreground.

Glen was born in the prairie town of Calgary. As a city lad, he witnessed the great difficulties faced by families during the depression years. As a teenager, many of his summers were spent on a farm, long 12 hour days, sleeping in a barn, as stable boy, horseman and labourer, working alongside as he says "good fellows, strong, hard workers". In 1939 came the War, "many of my classmates went to Europe, never to return" he says. Glen studied Commerce at the University of Edmonton, despite his father's wish for a teacher in the family and graduated in 1942. He then enlisted, first in the army and later the airforce. Years of his life were given to the drudgery and bureaucratic demands of the military existence, moving from one cold, austere station to another, but with a consolation of seeing much of Canada as a trumpet player with the RCAF.

Demobbed in 1945, Glen's first job had slight horticultural undertones, but from the confines of his new office, Glen could see blue skies and puffy white clouds and the outdoors were calling. Forestry was a means to the outdoors for Glen. Following further training at UBC, Glen and his wife Isobel soon found themselves at a remote forestry camp on Vancouver Island, as he says, "no roads, full of loggers and very few women, and the pay wasn't great at \$150 per week versus the union rate of \$500 per week". After nine years in the bush, Glen and Isobel with a family of three returned to the beautiful city of Vancouver in 1955, Glen to an office job and Isobel to raising a young family.



Soon the Pattersons were on the move again, to Grande Prairie, Alberta, Glen as Manager of an ailing plywood company. Glen's idea to change from poplar to pine plywood production was a very profitable success and Glen was appointed as a vice president of Canfor to further develop the wood products in Northern BC. Fortunately Glen was able to do much of his new job from an office in Vancouver, where yet another new home was built. Photo left, Glen on his new roof top garden.

Glen says, "gardening has deep roots in my background". He recalls, at age 5 or 6, the colourful flowers and fresh vegetables that his father managed to grow in Calgary. His parents gave produce to others in need. He spent many happy hours helping his much beloved grandparents in their garden in Calgary. Gardening was a passion shared by Isobel, such that all of their homes, even in hostile climatic environments, were places where plants of various kinds were nurtured.

Continued see "Glen's home in West Vancouver" on page 7



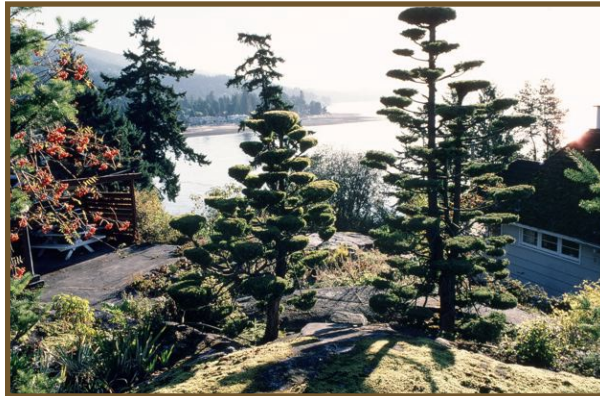




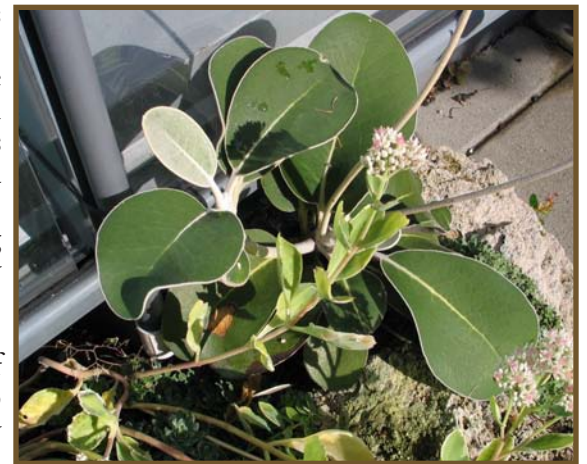
**Glen's home in West Vancouver** stood in an English style garden. To remodel to an Oriental style, Glen and his daughter – a graduate in landscaping - traveled to Japan, returning with many ideas and plans. By good fortune, Jim Nakano a garden designer trained in the Japanese philosophy, was discovered – the ideal employee. “we soon discovered he wasn't doing things we had planned, but his ideas were much better”. The collaboration between Jim and Glen led to a sustainable use of the land's natural rock outcroppings, wet areas and existing trees. The new garden lost its formal Englishness and soon contained microcosms of plant palettes from around the world set into specific conditions on his property that mimic natural plant habitats. Glen's genius is his knowledge of what conditions plants grow in and where those conditions exist or can be created in his garden. Photo right, Glen's

previous garden in West Vancouver showing rhododendrons in bloom by the front patio which sits atop a massive rock outcropping; photo right, Bonsai pines and atop a giant rock outcropping behind his home.

It was a further microcosm of this West Van garden that Glen was resolved to re-create on a 2000 square foot rooftop. Photo below, Bonsai transplanted from his West Vancouver garden to Glen's new roof top garden in downtown Vancouver.

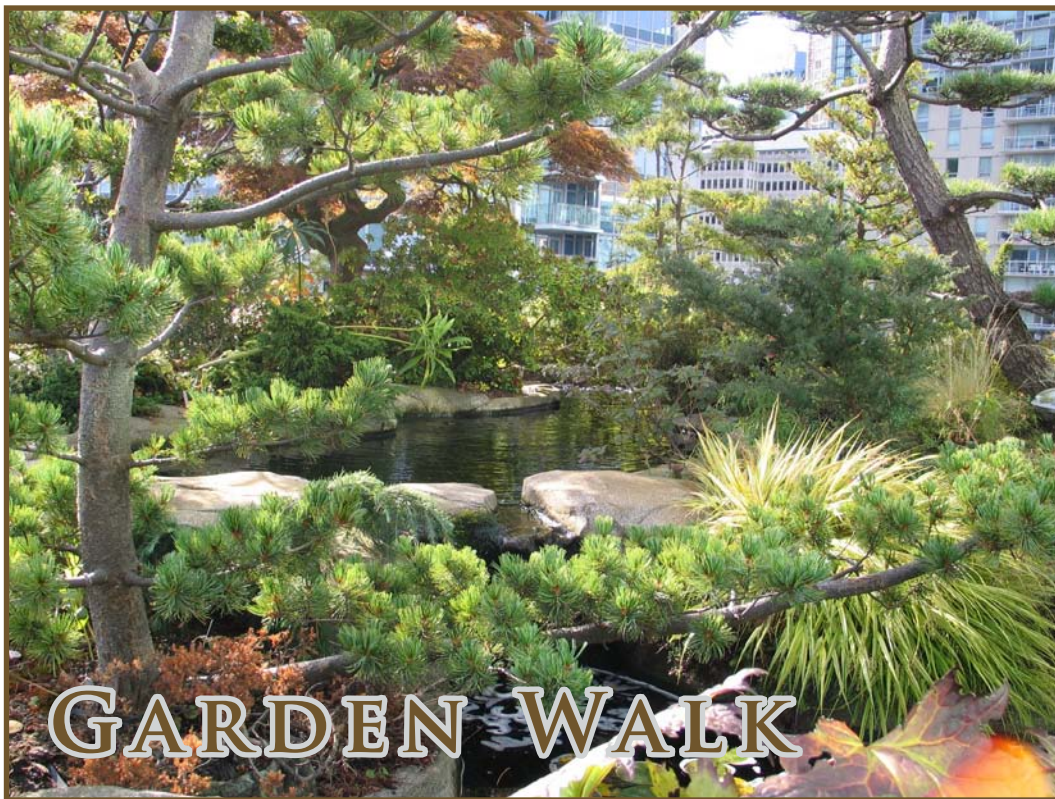


Approaching age 75, the search for a more manageable space began in 1997. As with all new ideas the hardest part is convincing everyone else of the merit of the project. As Glen says “the rooftop concept presented many formidable challenges, to persuade the developer, architects, engineers and City regulators, that it could be done”. Normal rooftop design is less substantial and less complicated. Glen was proposing a scale not normally done. Photo right, packystegia insignis growing in the roof top garden. Photo top of page, Glen's new roof top garden.



Continued See “**To Design**” on page 8





To design the structural characteristics of the new roof top garden, Glen enlisted help from the building's project architect James Cheng, architect Sabina Hill and engineer Richard Mossakowski. The new structure would have to accommodate 40 tons of rock, 40 tons of wet soil, 15 tons of water for ponds and waterfalls, and 35 tons of trees, shrubs and plant. So the load bearing capacity was increased from 100 pounds to 250 pounds per square inch.

The fishponds and waterfalls totaling 4,000 gallons (photo above), are kept clean by a biological filter system, with supplementary ultra-violet irradiation and forced aeration.

Glen devised a sustainable soil mix consisting of crushed black pumice, coarse sand, shredded coconut fibre, and the volcanic mineral zeolite. 15 Large trees from Glen's previous garden (photo below right, *Acer palmatum dissectum*), many over 50 years old, were prepared two years before the move by root pruning and a binding of the root balls to restrain growth, a bonsai technique done by his gardener Jim. The large plants are secured against wind forces by below surface straps attached to hidden hooks anchored in the concrete walls. Photo left, rock walls and pathways around the garden.

Continued see "**Glen is a Keen Advocate**" on page 9



Photo left, the rare and tender *Mahonia gracillipies*.







Photo left, a mature *Acer palmatum dissectum* transplanted from Glen's West Vancouver garden stands on his rooftop garden in Coal Harbour, Vancouver. The exquisite branching composition is shown backlit by early morning sunlight. The tree stands 9 feet tall and 15 feet wide and forms a focal point beside the pond. The garden is visible from the myriad of balconies on surrounding highrises.

**Glen is a keen advocate** of green roofs in our cities. He says "they offer huge environmental, social and economic benefits. Green roof tops absorb carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide, produce oxygen, and absorb rainfall lessening the burden on storm sewers". An article – "Vancouver Vistas", by Ditmars and Tessler in *Western Interiors and Design*, May/June 2004, describes Glen's garden as model for rooftop gardeners everywhere. It is a green oasis amidst a concrete jungle of high-rise condominiums and office towers, as Glen puts it, "a perfect place to live for my eighties".

Photo below left, Glen uses Tufa rock to form "natural" containers which form edges, beds and walls in his roof top garden. Photo below right, one of the meandering pathways in Glen's roof top garden. The end of the path leads to the roof top edge and a view of Coal Harbour, Stanley Park and the North Shore mountains.

By Louis Peterson and Todd Major,  
Photographs by Todd Major.

