

INDUMENTUM

TAM



VANCOUVER
Rhododendron
SOCIETY

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GENERAL MEETING:

OCTOBER 18TH - 7:30 P.M. AT THE VANDUSEN BOTANIC GARDEN IN THE FLORAL HALL.

LECTURE PROGRAM:

CHRIS WOODS,

DIRECTOR OF THE VANDUSEN BOTANIC GARDEN
SPEAKING ON "THE MAGIC OF THE GARDEN"

Chris Woods is the new (as of September, 2006) Director of the VanDusen Botanic Garden. In a sense, then, he is our host when we have our meetings. He is also the first real horticulturist since Roy Forster, the primary builder of the garden over 25 years, to be Director of the Garden, and thereby the first Director since Roy that I could ask to speak to us. It was with great pleasure that I did so.

Chris is a native of England, but has worked many years in the United States and is now a U.S. citizen. He started his career, like so many distinguished horticulturists, including Roy Forster, at the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew, where he worked as an apprentice. Following his apprenticeship at Kew, he worked in three gardens in the U.K.—Portmeirion in Wales, Bateman's in Sussex, and Cliveden in Buckinghamshire—before going to the U.S. in 1981 and becoming Director and Chief Designer of the 35-acre garden, Chanticleer, 'one of America's most vibrant public gardens', in Wayne, Pennsylvania. A private garden at the time, it was opened to visitors as a public garden in 1993.

'More recently, he was the Vice President for Horticulture and External Operations for the Santa Barbara Botanical Garden and then Executive Director of the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy in Ojai, California. He is the author of numerous articles and was a guest editor of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden's handbook *Perennials and Their Uses*. In April, 1992, Facts on File published his book *The Encyclopedia of Perennials*.

'In 2003, he was awarded the Professional Citation for significant achievements in public horticulture by the American Public Garden Association, and in 2007 the Distinguished Achievement Medal by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society.'

It is expected that Chris will be doing very good things at VanDusen, including the turning back to an emphasis on its being a real botanic garden.

A primary interest of Chris's is garden design, and this will be the subject of his lecture to the VRS the evening of October 18th, entitled 'The Magic of the Garden'.

By Joe Ronsley

See Page 2 for a brief overview of Chanticleer Garden in Wayne Pennsylvania.

A Visit to Chanticleer Garden in Wayne, Pennsylvania

Chanticleer was the estate of Christine and Adolph Rosengarten, Sr. Mr. Rosengarten was head of the pharmaceutical company Rosengarten and Sons. Their son Adolph, Jr., left the property to be enjoyed as a public garden. The garden opened to visitors in 1993. Originally, the estate was known for its majestic trees and verdant lawns. Today, the trees and lawns remain, but the focus is on plant combinations, containers, textures, and colors, often relying on foliage more than flowers. The garden is located in a suburb outside of Philadelphia near the Pennsylvania Railroad.

Tens of thousands of bulbs clothe the ground in spring, followed by orchards of flowering trees with native wildflowers blooming in the woods. A vegetable garden complements a cut-flower garden. Courtyards are a framework for unusual combinations of hardy and tropical plants. Vines grow in nooks and crannies, trailing and twining. A serpentine of cedars, boulders, and agronomic crops undulates through a mown hillside. A woodland garden carpeted with Asian groundcovers and full of rarities leads to a water garden surrounded by exuberant perennials. A ruin plays with indoor/outdoor relationships and contrasts the light and dark sides of gardens.

Sculptural, homemade seats, benches, wrought iron fences, and bridges highlight the uniqueness and personal nature of the garden. Chanticleer is indeed a pleasure garden, offering an escape from the rush of every day life and a place where one can feel like a personal guest of the Rosengarten family.

Minder House, built in 1925, is where Adolph Rosengarten, Jr. lived most of his life. In 1999, under the vision and direction of Chanticleer's Director Chris Woods, the house was razed and construction of the Ruin Garden began. Originally the plan was to use the partially dismantled house as the ruin, but for safety reasons the only part left of the original house is the foundation and the tile "rug."

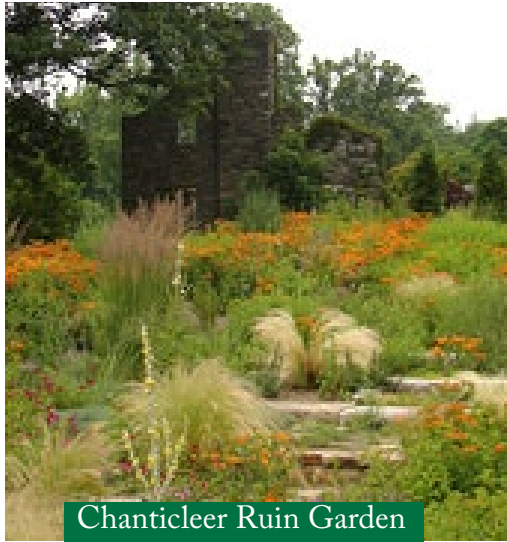
With the help of landscape architect Mara Baird the new ruin was built on the foundation of Minder House where carved marble, granite and other stone pieces sculpted by Marcia Donahue define the ruin's various spaces. The Minder Ruin Garden was unveiled to the public in April, 2000.

All photos and text courtesy of the The Chanticleer Foundation / Chanticleer Garden. For more information visit their website at the following link

www.chanticleergarden.org/index.html



Chanticleer Main House



Chanticleer Ruin Garden



Chanticleer Gravel Garden



Chanticleer Pond Garden

Chanticleer Cut Flower & Veggie Garden



Chanticleer Stream Garden

President's Message

First, a thank you to **Douglas Justice**, for arranging for our use of the UBC facility for our September meeting, and for his excellent talk. Then thank you to **Gerry Gibbens** for filling in so effectively for Douglas in the plant presentation. Gerry will be back doing it again in October, when Douglas will be away.

Thank you to **Radojka Harris** and **Jacquie Clayton** for joining me in making phone calls to announce the change of meeting venue to people for whom we had no email addresses. And also for obtaining the email addresses where they were available as well as receiving permission for us to send the *Indumentum* electronically, a big financial saving as well as labor saving for the VRS. And to our team: **Carole Conlin**, **Heidi Schneider** and **Suzanne Spohn** who stepped in to organize the coffee and sweets, a special thanks for doing a great job.

Many thanks to **Barbara Forsythe**, who for the past couple years has been working with Jacquie Clayton to organize our refreshment table. Family obligations now require Barbara to relinquish this responsibility, but we are most grateful for her good work. Heidi Schneider is kind enough to be joining Jacquie in the future.

We hope to be back at VanDusen for our October meeting, but if the civic strike is still continuing, we have reserved UBC for October. If that should be the case, it is somewhat ironic that our guest speaker will be **Chris Woods, Director of VanDusen Botanical Garden**. Ironic or not, we welcome him.

Joe and I attended the western regional meeting of the ARS in Newport, Oregon, and are just home overnight as I write. **Sean Rafferty & Brenda Macdonald** were also there, as was **Garth & Avril Wedemire**, all representing the VRS. I was surprised to learn that there were as many as 36 representatives at the conference from B.C. It was a very good conference, extensive plant sales and good lectures but especially in our being able to meet and reunite with so many special and interesting people. And the town of Newport, while a little touristy, is a picturesque fishing village, at least in the neighbourhood of the harbour. And the conference hotel was located on an extremely beautiful and expansive beach. It is remarkable how enriching, in so many ways, the garden can be in one's life. It is one thing to cultivate and enjoy our gardens alone, but quite another to make a point of reaching out to others with similar interests and to make friends, through the garden, with people around the world who have all kinds of interests beyond horticulture. Being a chapter of the American Rhododendron Society makes the VRS much more than simply a local garden club. More of you should take advantage of this when renewing your membership for 2008.

Whether at VanDusen or UBC, I look forward to seeing everyone on the evening of October 18th with

contributions to the raffle and refreshment tables and with non-VRS members who still manage to be your friends, and who you will be bringing along.

Joanne Ronsley
VRS President

Rhodos to Grow By Ron Knight



Yellow Hammer (*R. sulfureum* x *R. flavidum*)

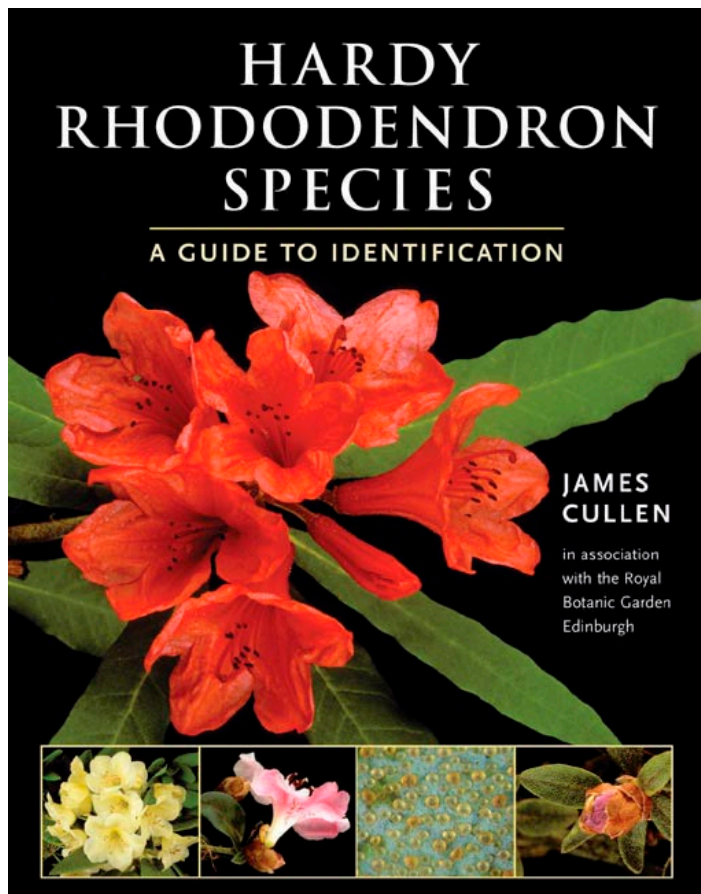
This hybrid has an upright but compact growth habit and adapts well to sunny and windy areas. It grows four to five feet tall in ten years. Flowers (rated 4/5) appear in April and often there is another reasonably full bloom in September. It may be obtained from VRS member growers Sue Klapwijk or Les Clay. (Photo by Ron Knight)

Letters to the **INDUMENTUM**, news, pictures and anything rhodo or something just for interest, can be e-mailed to Todd and Shannon Major at 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.

Todd & Shannon Major,
INDUMENTUM Editors

Books on Rhododendrons

Hardy Rhododendron Species; A Guide to Identification, By James Cullen. Photography by Debbie White and Frieda Christie. Sold By Timber Press, 496 pages \$49.95



Published in association with the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, on the basis of its extensive research. For the amateur or experienced rhododendron grower, this landmark reference provides the keys to the accurate identification of the nearly 300 rhododendron species widely in cultivation. An extensive introduction places the work in context as it examines the history of Rhododendron classification and gives a full survey of plant structures throughout the many species. Species are listed in systematic order, so that similar species occur close to each other in the text. These are fully described, including complete citations of previous references and notes on the occurrence of wild-origin specimens in cultivation. Beautiful photographs include close-up shots of flower and leaf, microscope images of leaf surfaces, and easy-to-use diagnostic keys, describes subgenera per their growth habit, parts, distribution, flowering time, hardiness zone, and wild and cultivated species. Summary tables, and plant characteristic lists (e.g., scaly vs. nonscaly species) are additional identification aids.

Anyone for "E-gardening"?

With the approaching rainy season, and given the ever increasing use of the electronic medium for all kinds of communications - shopping, paying bills, banking, writing e-mails to friend, invitations and cards, debates and discussions, polling, surfing the web, etc etc, I wonder if any of our VRS members who don't normally use the "electronic medium" would like to try "e-gardening" from the indoor comfort of your living room???

What I have in mind is to give a few mini-lessons at your home, using my laptop computer, showing you how to access a limited number of websites, such as the websites of UBC Botanical Gardens, the ARS, the VRS, the Species Foundation, and possibly a few others. The UBC Botanical Forum, where gardeners present all kinds of problems and receive expert advice, is particularly interesting.

Call me for more info, Louis Peterson 604-921-7260. The fee for a regular session is tea, with milk and sugar, please. For the deluxe session, a cookie would be appreciated.

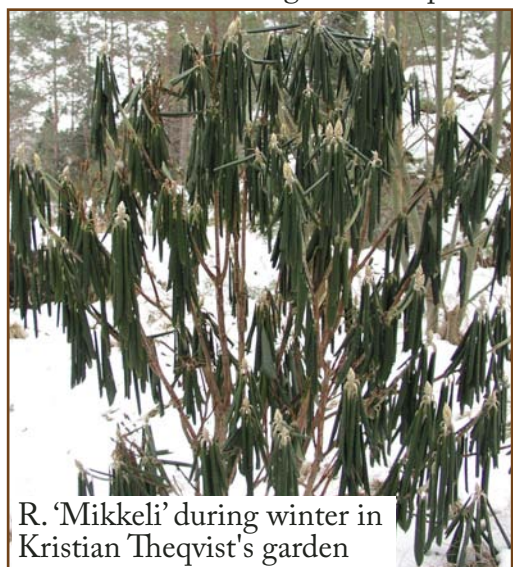
Louis Peterson

Just For Interest The Spring Garden Photo by Clive Justice



Finnish Rhododendrons

Here in on the rainy westcoast of North America we often take for granted how mild our climate is compared to other parts of the world where temperature extremes really do test the limits of rhododendron growing. While we may complain about the loss of flower buds on big leaf rhodos like *R. macabeanum* or *R. falconeri*, we really do not have a clue about what it takes to grow rhodos where severe temperature extremes exist, such as the Scandinavian countries of Sweden, Finland and Norway. Photo right shows rhododendrons covered by snow in the garden of Kristian Theqvist. His garden is located near Turku, Finland (southern Finland next to the Baltic Sea) where the term "freezing winter" really means something, average low temperature in winter can get as low -25°C to -35°C. All photos on this page by Kristian Theqvist.



R. 'Mikkeli' during winter in Kristian Theqvist's garden

This article begins a two part series on the breeding and growing of Finnish rhododendrons. Before you scoff at the thought of growing anything less than an aristocratic rhodo, read on and learn how adversity drives real innovation in rhodo breeding. The Finns are actually investing resources in a concerted long term effort to breed new rhododendrons for commercial use in their climate and beyond, perhaps we can learn something from them. These Finnish rhodos have real potential to provide gardeners in the colder parts of North America the opportunity to grow rhodos where there was no chance before.

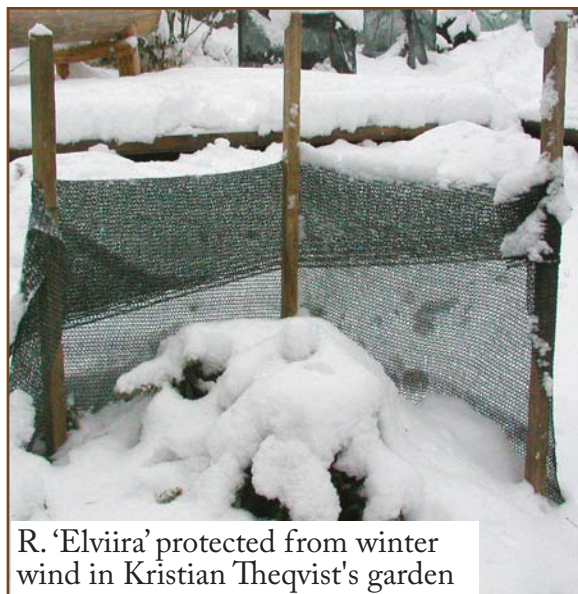
Finnish Rhododendrons are an interesting new group of large-leaved rhododendrons developed at the Department of Plant Biology & Plant and Tree Breeding at the University of Helsinki in Finland, where Dr. Peter Tigerstedt used a very tough Korean species to produce what may well be the best large leaf rhododendron for harsh climates.

Finnish breeding of rhododendron and azalea is a long-term project in plant breeding that started in 1973 for rhododendron and 1988 for azalea. The basis for all hybridization involved is to deploy winter-hardy maternal genotypes in large-scale hybrid production with genetically widely divergent paternal genotypes. After 5-10 years of field testing of hybrids in "hybrid orchards" selection of superior individuals takes place. Selected plants are then micropropagated to clones and tested in 2-5 environments for additional 5-10 years. This testing of clones forms the basis for the release of new cultivars. The program has so far resulted in 8 new cultivars launched on the European and North American markets. As a spin-off of the model breeding program, several pilot research studies take place, including:

- 1) The effects of growing season a temperature and photoperiod on growth and cold hardiness.
- 2) Polyploidization
- 3) The effect of polyploidization on growth, form and hardiness.

Researchers include Anu Väinölä, Peter Tigerstedt at HU, Marjatta Uosukainen at MTT Laukaa Research Station

Finnish rhodo cultivars are sold in Finland and Scandinavia, but also in the United States and Canada. They like moist, rich, well-drained, acidic soil and protection from winter sun and wind. Wind and sun protection may be less of a concern in Vancouver's mild climate. These Marjatta hybrid rhododendrons as they are sometimes called, have broad evergreen leaves and large showy flowers and their flower buds are hardy to an amazing -30 to -35 °F. Several Finnish hybrids have begun to appear in garden centers across Metro Vancouver.



R. 'Elviira' protected from winter wind in Kristian Theqvist's garden

Continued See "**These new Finnish varieties**" on Page 6

Finnish Rhododendrons

These new Finnish varieties are gradually becoming available in our region, those available are Elepidotes, the selection is currently limited to 'Elviira', 'Haaga', 'Helliki', Helsinki University', Mikkeli' and Pojola's Daughter'. They are usually sold with the word "Finn" in front of the hybrid name, i.e. R. Finn 'Haaga'.

Pictures of some of the locally available Finnish rhodos are below. The pictures below are provided courtesy of Kristian Theqvist, from his garden in southern Finland.

Common Trade Name: Rhododendron Finn 'Elviira'
(*R. forrestii* var. *repens* hybrid 'Elviira')

Parentage: *R. brachycarpum* ssp. *tigerstedtii* x (*forrestii* var. *repens* hybrid).

Breeder: Marjatta Uosukainen / Arboretum Mustila, Finland.

Habit: Dense, well branching compact habit. Grows wider than tall, height less than 1 m in ten years.

Flowers: Deep red flowers with faint dark spotting.

Flower size: 3.5 to 5 cm.

Leaves: Bright deep green, slightly curved leaves are heavily textured. Size 4.5 to 7 cm long.

Cold Hardiness: -29°F, -34°C Needs protection from the early spring sun.

The first Finnish rhododendron was named 'Elviira' in 1986. It usually flowers in late May and is the first rhododendron to come into bloom in Finland. It forks prolifically to form dense growth. When fully grown, it is only about one metre in height and about the same in width. The bushes should be protected from the glare of the late winter sun. 'Elviira' was named after its breeder Marjatta Uosukainen's grandmother.



Common Trade Name: Rhododendron Finn 'Haaga'
(*R. brachycarpum* ssp. *tigerstedtii* hybrid 'Haaga')

Parentage: *R. brachycarpum* ssp. *tigerstedtii* x (*catawbiense* hybrid '*Atrosanguineum*' x *arboreum* hybrid 'Doncaster')

Breeder: Dr. H. C. Dresselhuys, Marjatta Uosukainen / Arboretum Mustila, Finland

Habit: An upright, well branching plant, reaching 1.5 to 2 m height when fully-grown.

Flowers: Bright pink flowers, red-orange freckled.

Flower size: 5.5 to 7.0 cm.

Leaves: Leaves are glabrous, dark green and 12 to 14 cm long.

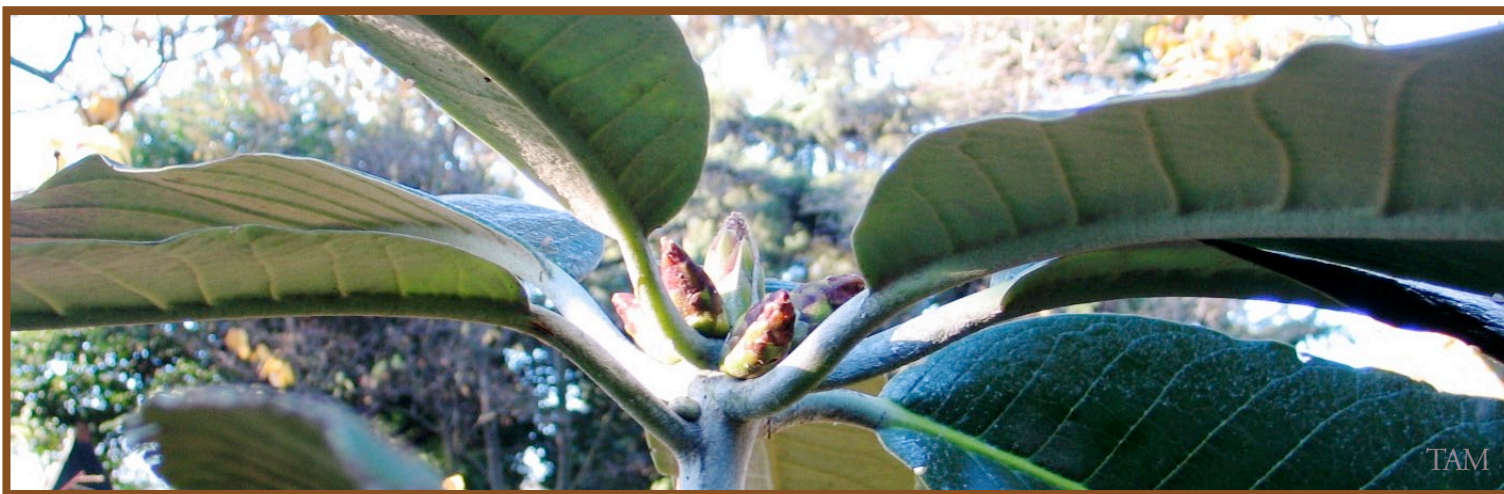
Cold Hardiness: -33°F, -36°C

'Haaga' is an upright growing bush that forks well. It has round crowns and the pink flowers feature easily distinguishable darker blotches. 'Haaga' flowers around mid-June in Finland. It was named after the city district in which Laajasuo Park is located.



In the November issue of the **INDUMENTUM** we shall have a look at more of these hardy Finnish rhododendrons and see more of Kristian Theqvist's garden in southern Finland. Information and pictures in this article are provided courtesy of Kristian Theqvist from his website http://www.rhodogarden.com/main/index_800_en.html, the Finnish Rhododendron Club and Helsinki University. All pictures are copyrighted by Kristian Theqvist.

Article Compiled by
Todd Major



Rhododendron Species Workshops in Vancouver Registration Form (Print and Submit)

At the UBC Botanical Garden in Spring 2008
Instructor: Douglas Justice
Coordinator: Ron Knight

Your name: _____
Street: _____
City: _____ Postal Code: _____
Telephone: _____ Email: _____
Member of which rhodo club? _____

Costs -- Check which sessions you will be attending

March 1 – rhododendron anatomy; environmental needs; classification	\$35
March 22 – lepidotes and azaleas	\$35
April 5 – elepidotes	\$35
April 26 – photography; pests, diseases, and other problems	\$35

Total before discount: \$ _____

Discount – Applies if you meet all 3 of these conditions:

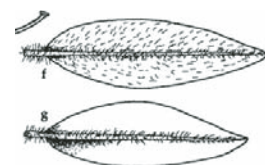
- 1) You are a member of a District 1 rhododendron club.
- 2) Your registration will be mailed before December 1.
- 3) You are registering for all 4 sessions.

If you meet all three conditions, subtract \$20, for a subtotal of: \$ _____

Payment -- Total amount owing is: \$ _____
(Hint: For all 4 sessions with discount, enter \$120.)

Please mail a cheque payable to:
Ron Knight
2710 Walpole Crescent, North Vancouver, BC, V7H 1K8.

Note: 25 spaces will be assigned on a first-come-first-served basis with priority given to rhodo club members who have paid for all 4 sessions. You will be notified before January if your registration is accepted.
For more information contact Ron Knight at: rcknight@telus.net





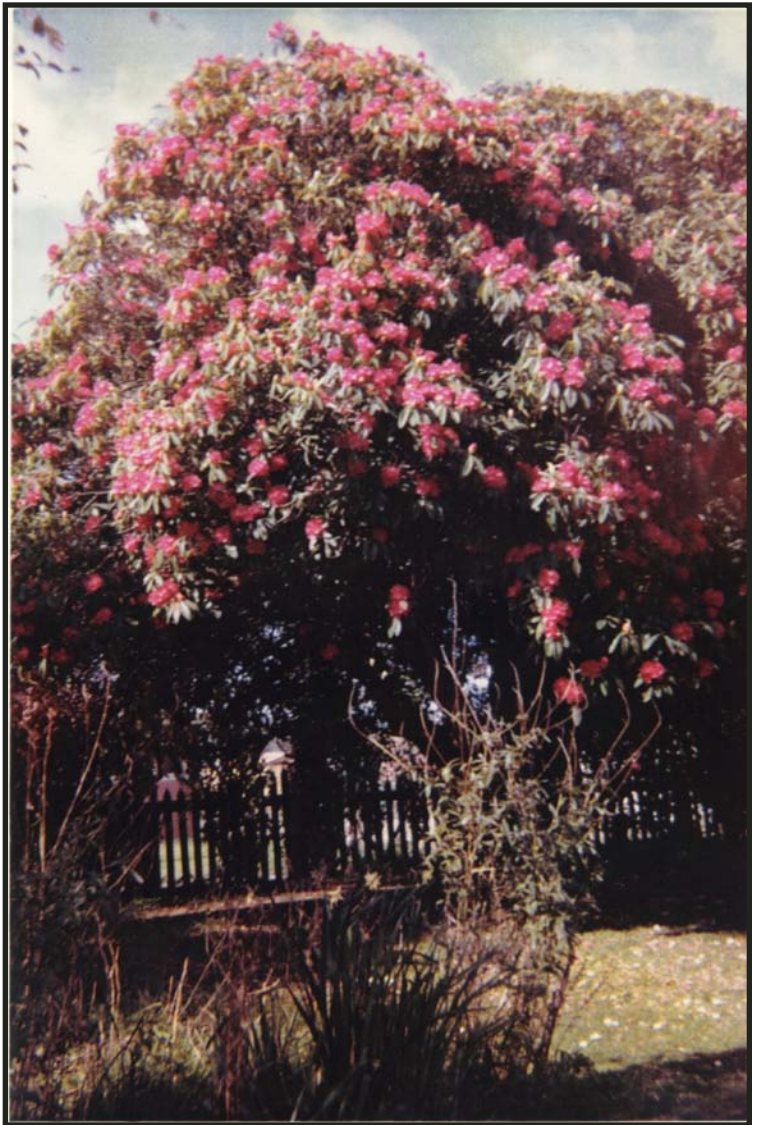
Rhododendrons the Beautiful By Barbara Cook

A poem of Thomas Hood begins 'I remember, I remember the house where I was born'. Although but six years old when I left mine, in 1932, details of it remain sharply clear. It was a large, New Zealand country house, built about 1880 and it and the landscaped garden were my joy. A first memory is of feeling brave enough to toddle alone, through a tree-fern archway, into the rhododendron walk. A little distance from the house and beyond the drying-green, the walk led to a gap in the Lawsoniana windbreak, where I could farewell my father as he rode away.

Those rhododendrons then were 40-50 years old and the masses loomed on either side of little me. There were pinks and reds, mauves and one spectacular, fragrant white one, which looked straight into my face. The delight and enchantment of that walk, lives vividly with me today.

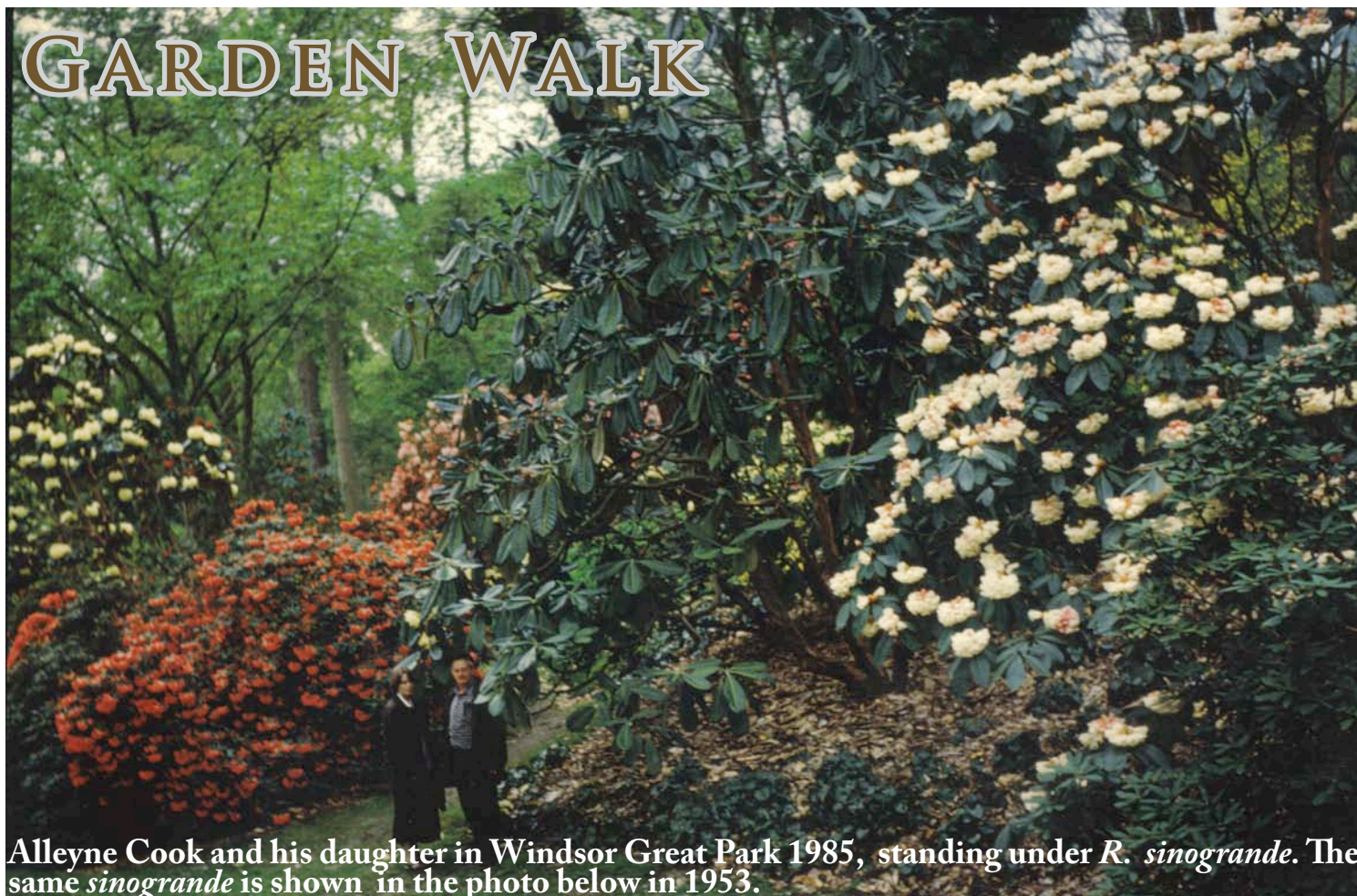
Four years later, my family settled for good in another old family home. In that garden was one very large Rhododendron Sir Robert Peel, which stood freely in the lawn outside the front door. Never having been pruned or crowded, it thanked us with a great rounded canopy reaching some 30 feet. It stood to the east and when in full, bright pink flower and then richly undercarpeted, the rising sun shone through it. That sent a soft, rosy glow all the way down the hall and 35 feet into the kitchen. Every year my mother would give the same glad cry, "Oh, dear old Robert Peel". J. Waterer, U.K., lists it as 'before 1865'. It was widely planted throughout N.Z. because of its beauty, hardiness and availability. Wherever I travelled I was sure to see the plant that I loved so much.

The real Sir Robert Peel was Home Secretary in 1829, when he formed The London Metropolitan Police Force. It was not a popular move which is shy the policemen were then given the derogatory names of Peelers and Bobbies.



Continued See "Later on when walking the lanes of Southern England and Ireland" on page 9

GARDEN WALK



Alleyne Cook and his daughter in Windsor Great Park 1985, standing under *R. sinogrande*. The same *sinogrande* is shown in the photo below in 1953.

Later on when walking the lanes of Southern England and Ireland, I gasped at the loveliness of miles of *R. ponticum*. I did not know of its nuisance factor and low-class reputation, I just delighted in the happy sight and do to this day!

Those were some of the many rhododendrons I discovered for myself, but in 1953, Alleyne took me into Sunningdale Nursery and Windsor Great Park. Heavenly days they were, of heavenly sights. What an impact came when standing first by *R. sinogrande* and the *R. fictolacteum*. The former is never happy here but to have *R. fictolacteum* thriving in our garden is thrilling. Surely there is no more beautiful leaf or a stronger plant personality. Its white flowers, maroon streaked, are entirely satisfying.

Later still and with huge surprise and joy, I saw *R. macrophyllum* cheerily blooming from Manning Park, B.C., to Whidby Island Wa. and the sand dunes of Oregon. Its sharply pink flowers' peeping out of evergreens was ever a surprise. Once in Oregon we were taken to see a pure white form and I chuckled that it was off 'Seven Devils Road'. In Oregon too, every *R. occidentale* with so many varied colours and its heady fragrance made my heart skip a beat. I never, never thought to see rhododendrons in the mountains hereabout. At high altitude, one's perceptions are sharper and clearer and so when I think of *R. albiflorum* now, with its bright green foliage and dear little white flowers, I always see it in my mind with especial clarity.

After eight decades, rhododendrons with their varied sizes, their shapes, their colours, their fragrance of leaf and flower, continue to afford me as much joy and pleasure as on that first brave, little exploration.

By Barbara Cook



Barbara Cook in Windsor Great Park 1953, standing in front of *R. sinogrande*.