



VANCOUVER
Rhododendron
SOCIETY

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:

JANUARY 17TH - 7:30 P.M. AT THE VANDUSEN BOTANIC GARDEN, IN THE FLORAL HALL.

LECTURE PROGRAM:

ELECTION OF THE NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & MEMBER SLIDES BY DANA CROMIE, JACQUIE CLAYTON, CLIVE JUSTICE AND DOUGLAS JUSTICE

President's Message

First, I hope you all had a very Happy Christmas and New Year, and that the coming year will bring only good things. Our last meeting of 2007, on November 17th, was a particularly lively and enjoyable one, even with our meeting bar set as high as it is.

Our speaker **Steve Hootman**, who always sends expectations high, did not disappoint. And of course, as usual, **Douglas Justice** did his stuff. The raffle was a highly unusual one in that it offered only two prizes, but prizes of considerable attractiveness and value. And they weren't even plants!

Many thanks to **Mary Comber Miles** for her contribution of an exquisite watercolour of *Rhododendron williamsianum*. **Tony Clayton**, the winner of the painting, was beside himself with delight. As it turned out Jacquie couldn't attend the meeting, but it was easy to see Tony's pleasurable anticipation for the time he would surprise her with the painting.

Mary Berg won **Ron Feicht's** beautiful ceramic pot, and the smile on her face was no less than that on Tony's. Thank you so much, Ron. The other winner, of course, was the Vancouver Rhododendron Society, which, between the raffle and the sale, not only of Mary's cards and Ron's pot, but also of the late **Frank Dorsey's** books, bequeathed to the VRS and offered for sale, beautifully displayed, by **Louis Peterson** and **Carole Conlin**, recouped several months rent at the Floral Hall. Really, it was a wonderful end of the year evening.



Continued see "The first meeting of 2008" on Page 2

The first meeting of 2008, the evening of January 17th, will as usual be devoted to our AGM, election of new Executive Committee members, and the showing of members' slides. The evening slides will include brief presentations by **Dana Cromie** of his own unusual and compact garden, **Jacque Clayton** of her visit to Marrakesh, and the Majorelle Gardens, **Douglas Justice** of special areas of interest at the UBC Botanic Garden, and **Clive Justice** of some of the gardens in different parts of the world that he designed as an internationally renowned landscape architect.

On this occasion, too, we will celebrate the beginning of the new year with a more elaborate than usual refreshment table, actually it will be a party, to celebrate the resumption of VRS activities, and the lengthening daylight. This is an ancient VRS tradition, now in its second year, organized last year by **Louis Peterson** and **Carole Conlin** with, of course, the help of several other members. So there will be many compelling attractions in January, even beyond the fun provided by an AGM. We'll then get down to business in February—interesting speakers, beautiful bouquets by Douglas, and more.

One further note: **Iain and Barbara Forsythe** have been housing our equipment for the show and sale, but they no longer are able to do so. On a holiday Monday, November 12th, **Sean Rafferty, Louis Peterson, Carole Conlin, Tony Clayton**, and I met at the Forsythes' and loaded the stuff on to Sean's van and Tony's truck and moved it all to **Kathy Lau's** home in Vancouver, quite close to Park and Tilford, an excellent accommodation. At Kathy's house we had, in addition to the original "movers", Kathy and her son Paul to help unload. The move was accomplished with great efficiency, ease, a few laughs and many smiles. Thanks to everyone involved. And with special thanks to Kathy for taking over.

Happy New Year Everyone,
Joanne Ronsley

Species Profile: *Rhododendron strigillosum* Franch. By Steve Hootman

One of the classic species in the genus *Rhododendron* must surely be *R. strigillosum*. The large deep red flowers in early spring set against the characteristic whorl of dark green leaves with distinctly bristly petioles make this species a must for every collection.

Known in its native China as "mang ci dujuan" (prickly rhododendron) this species was first described in 1886 by the French systematist M.A. Franchet from material collected several years earlier in Sichuan, China. It was introduced into cultivation by Ernest Wilson (W#1870) in 1904 during his plant hunting days as an employee of the Veitch Nursery.

R. strigillosum is typically a plant of open shrubby thickets and woodlands. It occurs at elevations of 7,000 to 11,000 feet (2100 to 3400m) in the mountainous regions of southwestern China, specifically the Provinces of Sichuan and adjacent northeastern Yunnan. I was able to observe this species many times during the fall of 1995 while exploring that region of China. It grew as a large shrub or small tree up to 25 feet in height and often made quite an impressive specimen. Unfortunately, due to the season, we did not see any flowers, but I was quite taken with the overall quality and beauty of the foliage. We noted that it grew in association with a wide variety of plants including several rhododendrons, maples (*Acer* spp.), *Viburnum* spp., and hollies (*Ilex* spp.) to name but a few. A sampling of the rhododendrons found growing with *R. strigillosum* in the areas visited would include 1) *pingianum*, *argyrophyllum*, *rubiginosum*, *racemosum* and *augustinii* 2) *lutescens*, *argyrophyllum*, *huianum*, *asterochnum* and the closely related and extremely rare *ochraceum* 3) *calophytum*, *longipes* and *denudatum*. The first two associations were observed in the fairly rugged mountainous country of southern Sichuan near the Yunnan border at 10,000 (3048m) and 9,300 (2835m) feet respectively. The third occurred at 8,500 (2590m) feet in the low hills of northeastern Yunnan.

Rhododendron strigillosum is a member of Subsection Maculifera (Subseries Maculiferum). It is probably most closely related to the species *ochraceum* and *pachytrichum*, the latter merging into *strigillosum* and probably hybridizing with it where the ranges overlap. These hybrids probably account for the reports of pink or even white-flowered forms of *strigillosum*. The taxon *R. strigillosum* var. *monosematum* ("*R. monosematum*") is probably actually closer to *pachytrichum* and may be nothing more than a natural hybrid arising where these two species occur together.

The distinctive foliage of *R. strigillosum* is easily recognized and at first glance can only be confused with that of the closely related *R. pachytrichum*. However, closer study will reveal the distinctive differences between the two. The lower leaf surface of *R. strigillosum* is typically covered with short glandular or branched hairs and will have a more or less bristly midrib. In contrast, the lower leaf surface of *R. pachytrichum* is typically smooth except for short hairs on (and sometimes near) the midrib. The petioles and younger branches of the former are also quite bristly-glandular (strigillose) while typically only tomentose (shorter, softer hairs) in the latter. The leaves of *R. strigillosum* are elliptic to oblanceolate in shape with a wedge-shaped to somewhat rounded base and a short sharp tip (cuspidate) at the apex. They are three (7.6cm) to six inches (15cm) in length and up to two inches (5cm) wide with a more or less recurved margin.

Continued see "**In the early spring**" on Page 3

In early spring, the sticky flower buds open to reveal brilliant crimson, scarlet or deep red flowers nestled beautifully on a whorl of dark green bristly leaves. Although the flowers appear in late February to mid-March here at the RSBG, they are relatively frost resistant and so escape serious damage most years to put on one of our most spectacular early exhibitions. The tubular bell-shaped flowers are

up to 2.5 inches (6.35cm) long and occur in an inflorescence of eight to twelve flowers. The bright red color is nicely highlighted by the five black nectar pouches at the base of each flower for a truly spectacular floral display. In cultivation *R. strigillosum* forms a large dense evergreen shrub often as wide-spreading as it is high (Photo right new *strigillosum* leaves, photo by Garth Wedemire). Being a plant of forests and thickets it prefers



some protection from full exposure to the sun but is not really a difficult species to accommodate. We have found that the foliage tends to yellow if planted in too much sun. It grows splendidly for us exposed to the east in the partial shade of adjacent tall conifers. This species is relatively hardy (-5F (-20C) to -10F (-23C)) but the new foliage tends to emerge rather early so it is best to avoid low areas or other frost pockets.

With its ease of culture and beautiful flowers, *R. strigillosum* is often used as a parent in *Rhododendron* hybrid breeding programs. Some very popular and well-known hybrids have arisen from crosses using this species including 'Etta Burrows', 'Grace Seabrook', 'Matador' and 'Taurus'. A clone of this species with rich blood-red flowers received an Award of Merit when exhibited by Bodnant in 1923.

Accessions in the collection of the *Rhododendron* Species Foundation:

- 1965/277 Leonardslee. Large red flowers.
- 1969/836 Lyons: Walker. Flowers red.
- 1973/269 Greig. Flowers a rather "bleached red".
- 1973/270 Robbins. Large red flowers, a good form.
- 1973/271 Greig. Flowers bright red, a good form.
- 1975/159 Greig. Large red flowers.
- 1975/178 Greig. Red flowers, a good form.
- 1975/282 Nelson: Pierce. Red flowers.
- 1976/081 Phetteplace: Berg. Red flowers, a good form.
- 1976/222 Brodick: Berg. Blood-red flowers, one of our deepest clones.
- 1977/627 Greig. Red flowers.
- 1977/791 Crarae. Long crimson flowers.
- 1982/125 RBGE: Bender. Blood-red flowers, "Davidian's favorite".
- 1983/012 Greig. Rather poor crimson flowers.
- 1983/142 Caerhays.
- 1984/047 Strone. Deep red flowers.
- 1995/256 U. of CA. B.G. From seed collected in Sichuan, China as "var. monosematum".

NOTE: We have also accessioned many new plants grown from seed collected in the wild. These young plants have yet to be fully evaluated but the striking foliage characteristics and very large, deep red flowers hold great promise for their horticultural potential.

REFERENCES CONSULTED:

Chamberlain, D.F. 1982. "A Revision of *Rhododendron*. II. Subgenus *Hymenanthus*." Notes from the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. Vol. 39(2):

Cox, P.A. & Cox, K.N.E. 1997. *The Encyclopedia of Rhododendron Species*. Glendoick Publishing. Scotland.

Davidian, H.H. 1989. *The Rhododendron Species*. Vol. II. Timber Press. Portland, OR.

Hootman, S.E. 1995-2006. Unpublished field notes.

Rhododendron Species Foundation: Records - 1964 to present.



Small but Interesting

Photo Left : Lichen - *Cladonia cristatella*

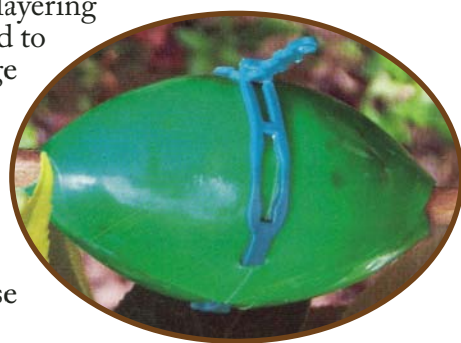
Copyright Credit: Vernon Ahmadjian

Institution: Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts Department of Biology

To see more images from the Botanical Society of America follow this link : www.botany.org/plantimages/Lichens.php

Air Layering Tip By Stephen Lyus

During the RCM group's visit to Mount Congreve we noticed they had a novel approach to air layering their Camellias. Michael White said they had to find a better way for their staff to undertake large amounts of propagation without endangering their sanity. They had found that a small hollow plastic toy sold at WH Smith was ideal. As can be seen from the picture, this rugby shaped toy has the ends removed and is slit lengthwise to enable it to be fitted over the branch. A standard plant tie is then introduced to provide the secure closure over the usual moist sphagnum moss. Finally the ends should be sealed with grafting wax. I could not find any of these objects in my local store, maybe they are sold only in the Eire market? Please keep a look out for suitable objects in your area.



Article courtesy of the July 2007 Bulletin - 94 of The Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia group of the Royal Horticultural Society of England. Photo by Stephen Lyus. Visit thier site at: <http://www.rhs.org.uk/index.htm>

Rhodos to Grow By Ron Knight

Rhododendron 'Medusa'
(*R. scyphocalyx* X *R. griersonianum*)



Medusa is an oldy but a goody, having been hybridized by Aberconway in the 1930s from two interesting species parents. The flowers are a true orange colour and hang downwards on long pedicels, very different from your average garden-variety rhododendron. The buds open late in May and last well into June. Medusa seems to thrive in a reasonably sunny location, reaching about one metre tall in ten years. This plant can be obtained from VRS growers Les and Bev Clay. (Photo by Ron Knight)

The Vancouver Rhododendron Society Executive Committee Nominations for 2008

The Nominating Committee presents the following Executive slate for 2008, to be ratified at the Annual General Meeting on January 17th.

President
Vice President
Secretary
Treasurer
Director, 3rd year
Director, 2nd year
Director, 1st year
Past President
Membership Chair
Programme Chair
Newsletter Editor

Joanne Ronsley (second year of two year term)
Sean Rafferty*
Jasbir Gill
Dana Cromie
Tony Clayton*
Don Haslam*
Norah Hall
Louis Peterson*
Philip MacDougall*
Joe Ronsley*
Todd and Shannon Major*

* Incumbent

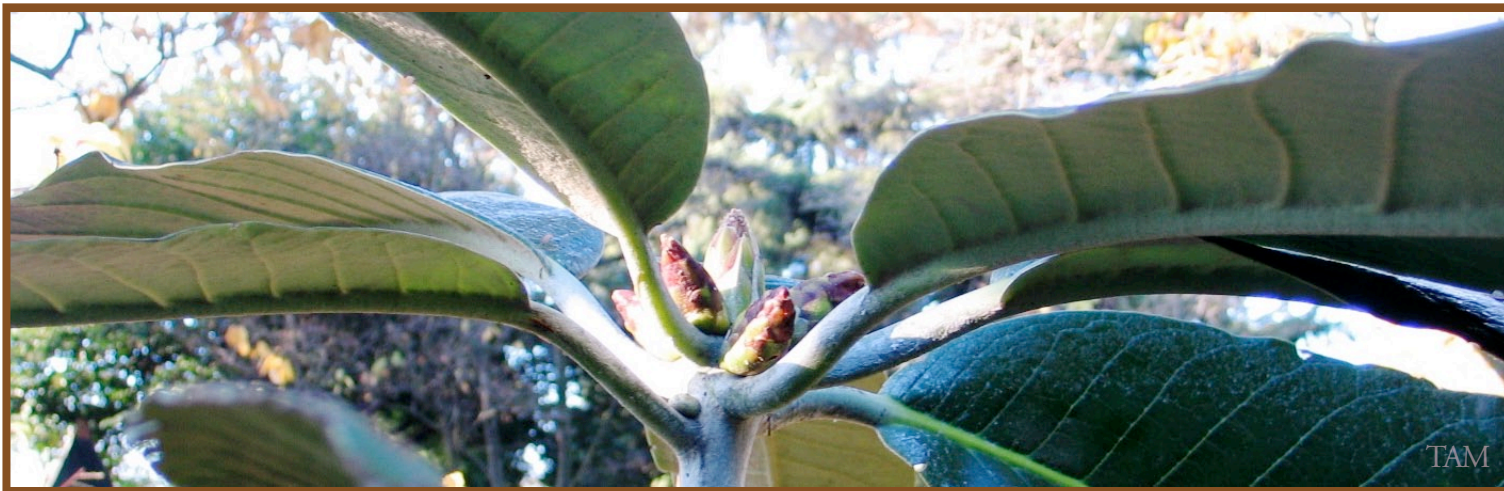
Any VRS member wishing to make further nominations for any of these positions should submit the name of the nominee, along with his or her acceptance and the endorsement of five VRS members, in writing before January 10th, 2008 to:

Brenda Macdonald
Email: macdobr@shaw.ca,
Post: 4440 Marion Road, North Vancouver, BC, V7K 2V2,



An Interesting Idea - Azalea Hedge

This long walkway is bordered by a sheared azalea hedge in an unknown garden. The idea is quite beautiful in the garden but it is labour intensive. Photo by unknown.



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 8 – Rhododendron anatomy; environmental needs; classification	\$ 35.00 (New Date)
March 22 – Lepidotes and azaleas	\$ 35.00
April 5 – Elepidotes	\$ 35.00
April 26 – Photography; pests, diseases, and other problems	\$ 35.00

Total Before Discount: \$ _____

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

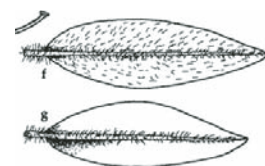
- 1) You are a member of a District 1 rhododendron club.
- 2) Your registration will be mailed before January 31, 2008. (New Registration Deadline)
- 3) You are registering for all 4 sessions.

If you meet all three conditions, subtract \$20, Less Discount \$ _____

Total Payment : \$ _____

Please mail a cheque payable to: Ron Knight
Mail payment and application form to:
Ron Knight at 2710 Walpole Crescent, North Vancouver, BC, V7H 1K8.

Note: **Only 7 spaces remain** of a total of 25 spaces and these will be assigned on a first-come-first-served basis with priority given to rhodo club members who have paid for all 4 sessions.
For more information contact Ron Knight at: rcknight@telus.net



Vancouver Rhododendron Society

Membership Report

I look forward to meeting you all, please come and meet me at the Membership Table at the monthly meetings.

Membership dues for 2007 are now due and I will be pleased to renew your membership (and welcome new memberships) at the meetings or by mail.

Guests are always welcome!

Philip MacDougall
VRS Membership Chair
14776 90th Avenue
Surrey, BC V3R 1A4



Vancouver Chapter

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 or 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. 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

Visit our website at www.rhodo.citymax.com

Todd & Shannon Major,
INDUMENTUM Editors

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Director

Iain Forsythe



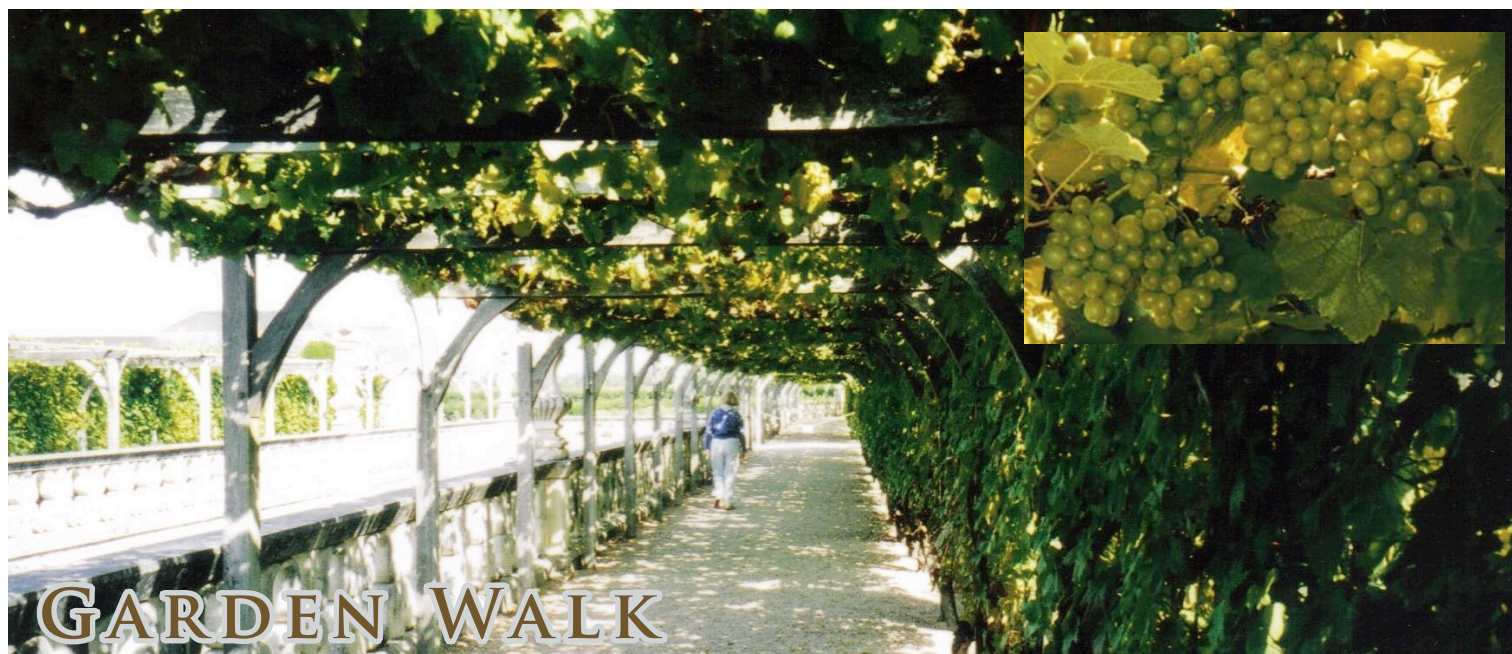
GARDEN WALK

The Garden at Villandry, France By Iain Forsythe

Each year, as we travel in Britain, Barbara and I try to visit three or four more of the over 3000 gardens that are open to the public. This year was no exception and The Lost Garden of Heligan, Dartington Hall, Holehird in the Lake District (one of the most popular in the U.K. and maintained entirely by amateurs), Inverewe, reckoned to be the most beautiful garden in Scotland and finally the garden at the Castle of Mey, (made famous as being the home of the late Queen Mother) were added to the list. These represent some of the best of British gardens with woodland walks, the ubiquitous “you know whats”, walled vegetable areas, various water features, roses and of course sweeping lawns up to the house. One has to be honest and say people like them. How else could they be maintained? They are full of paying visitors, old and young, from all over the world, but noticeable change is in the wind.

For something different, and spurred on by a quick glimpse in pouring rain, of the “French style” garden at Dunrobin Castle we decided to head South to see the Chateau and gardens at Villandry just West of Tours in the Loire valley. The Chateau was the last of the huge houses built in the Touraine and completed between 1533 and 1545. During the 18th and 19th centuries many of Europe's classical gardens, based on earlier Italian designs were replaced by examples of “le jardin anglais” which were all the rage for over a century. Villandry did not escape and the original renaissance garden was replaced by a park. In 1906 when the Chateau was acquired by a wealthy Spanish scientist and physician Dr Joachim Carvallo, the grandfather of the present owner, the house was dilapidated and the park offended his sense of order. With the help of New World money from his American wife, the house was restored to its original grandeur and now probably looks exactly as it did when completed. Using the existing terraces and watercourse, he also set about building, perhaps a romantic dream of, an ideal French Renaissance garden, although no plans of the original gardens remained for reference. In that context, it is really a new garden. Continued see **"What the visitor sees"** page 9





What the visitor sees today is beyond “extraordinary” and my first words were “Good heavens”! It consists of a series of colourful geometric patterns in an area of about 12 acres. Cutting and trimming the 11 miles of box hedges takes 10 men 2 weeks solid every September (photo left). There is a hugely long vine arbour, with the grapes hanging down above ones head (photo above). In the potager garden, low espaliers of fruit trees and standard roses enclose patterned beds of every French vegetable (photo

below), apart from the potato, which was unknown in the 16th century, making up the design. In other areas shaped shrub borders interspersed with pink, red, yellow and blue flowers, represent the various faces of love: tender, unfaithful, sweet, tragic and crazy. A tranquil pool in a mirror shape, surrounded by beautiful lawns, acts as a reservoir for watering, and promenades are set above to view the spectacular whole.

It was particularly interesting to see what appeared to be IPM techniques, as this is a “hot topic”, being used to maintain this labour of love. The *Rosaceae* family were flawless and seemed to have traces of spray on the leaves, but on the other hand, biological methods of control had been introduced to eliminate spider mite in the avenues of over 1,200 lime trees. Planting herbs and vegetables mixed with fruit trees and flowers is perhaps not a bad idea in today’s world. But this garden in its architectural design and immaculate formality must be hugely labour intensive. Nevertheless it is world class and well worth seeing.

Last week we were viewing Park and Tilford garden and happened to see early photographs of the garden and its own formal design plans. Could it be I sensed a little *deja-vu*? All Photos by Iain Forsythe.

