

INDUMENTUM



START OF SEASON GENERAL MEETING:

SEPTEMBER 18, 2008 AT THE VANDUSEN BOTANIC GARDEN
IN THE FLORAL HALL AT 7:30 P.M.

PLANT SALES AT THIS MEETING
BY LES CLAY

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VISIT THE VANCOUVER RHODODENDRON SOCIETY WEBSITE
AT WWW.RHODO.CITYMAX.COM



Our first speaker of the new year is **Garratt Richardson**, who will be with us the evening of September 18th. Garratt's lecture title is '**Back Roads of South Central Sichuan, Spring 2007**'. He is a retired physician living in Seattle, who has gone on a great many plant expeditions to Asia, over many years and dating back to 1989, with many different groups and leaders. He has been particularly involved in expeditions connected to the Rhododendron Species Foundation, on the Board of which he serves.

He is most personable, and certainly knowledgeable about rhododendrons and other genera associated with them. He speaks of himself as an amateur, and technically he is one, but he is closely associated with top professionals, at the RSF and elsewhere, and his enthusiasm is reflected in his own words, that 'there is the thrill of being present when the real plant-hunters discover new species and forms of plants, especially rhododendrons'.



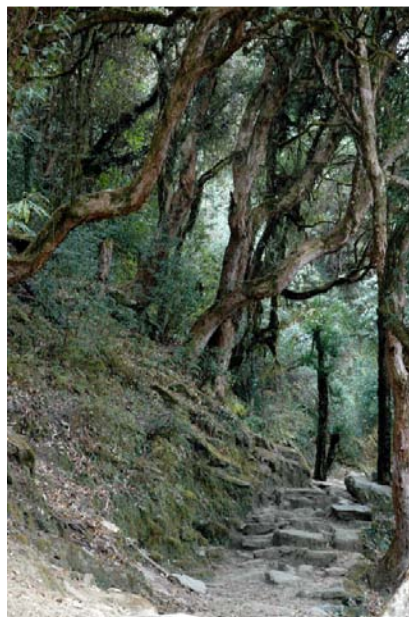
About his lecture to the VRS he writes:

"In May last year Peter Cox organized a plant-hunting trip to the southern part Sichuan province in central-west China. The high mountains in the western part of the province have only partially been explored over the past 150 years. It was an epic trip. We visited some of the new national parks as well as drove over several back country roads encountering waterfalls, gorges, old and new sites of environmental destruction. Many rhododendrons were in bloom as well as a number of other high altitude perennials and shrubs. We were able to visit out-of-the-way cities and villages, visiting the markets, suffering the roadblocks, dining on wonderful local cooking and enjoying the camaraderie of ethnic peoples and our team."

See you at the usual time in the usual place—7:30 at the VanDusen Floral Hall—the evening of September 18th.

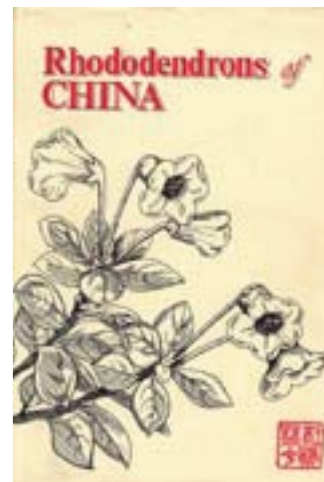
Joe Ronsley
Lecture Program Chair

Just For Interest-Images of China



Trunks of old rhododendrons in a forest in China.
Photo by Jon.
Visit his blog to see more fascinating pictures of China. @ <http://jonsequitur.wordpress.com/> Scroll down the page to read his story and see the pictures.

A book from the American Rhododendron Society



Frost covered rhododendrons at sunrise in Tibet.
by Jon.
Visit his blog to see more fascinating pictures of China.
@ <http://jonsequitur.wordpress.com/>



President's Message

Welcome back, everyone. I hope you've all had a wonderful summer, and that your gardens are flourishing, with much flower budding due to the sunny weather. Now we want a winter that doesn't do those buds any harm, and gives us that great sense of anticipation which often is as exciting as the flowers themselves.

And we also look forward to another good year for the VRS. It begins with our meeting Thursday, September 18th, at VanDusen. Come early! Many of your friends will be there talking about the plants that are for sale and catching up on the summer that was. Yes, all of us want to see all of you! And do encourage your friends to attend, especially those who are not VRS members but who are gardeners. Everyone is most welcome! Whether or not they join the VRS, they can decide at the time, or later. We expect a raffle table full of treasures. And I know from experience **Garret Richardson's** presentation and slides are exceptional. **Douglas Justice**, with his traditional 'bouquet', will show us the real thing—some remarkable plants which are at their best right now at UBC, always including some that we don't have at present, but must have before long.

Please be sure to back me up by bringing for the raffle table. And, for other reasons, for the refreshment table.

Joanne Ronsley
VRS President



Virginia Green Industry Council
Rhododendron of the Year

The Rhododendron of the Year program seeks to educate the public on the wide range of rhododendrons that can be grown with success. "These varieties have performed well in specific geographic regions" says Lin Diacont, president of the Virginia Green Industry Council. Awards for Rhododendron of the year are given for four categories. These categories are Elepidotes or large leaf rhododendrons, lepidotes, smaller leaf rhododendrons, evergreen azaleas and deciduous azaleas.

Performance of these plant evaluations may be affected by soil conditions, moisture, heat and cold, disease and insect populations. Breeders are working to develop hardier and showier plants.

Rhododendrons of the Year for the North Eastern area are: 'Ken Janeck', 'Manituou', 'Gibraltar', and 'Red Red'. For the Mid Atlantic Region, 'Bellringer', 'PJM Elite', 'Homebush' and 'Elsie Lee'.

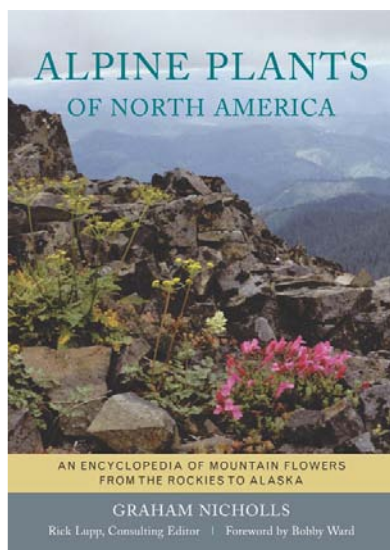
Rhododendron can be a wonderful enjoyment in the spring. Their beautiful blooms are a source of added color and excitement to your landscape. Before planting these in your landscape you will need to consider several things. Your first consideration should be the location of your plants. For the most part the plants prefer partial shade. The ultimate size that your plant will obtain will be important. Rhododendrons like to be planted in raised beds for good drainage. They also like acidic soil that is high in organic matter.

The variety of rhododendron will be important. You will want to select plants that are recommended for your area. Your local reputable garden center or from a good mail order source will be able to help you choose. It is important to select varieties that are hardy in your area also.

When planting the top root ball should be at the same level as the soil level. If your rhododendron was purchased in a container, be sure to check for any encircling roots and remove the. After planting, water in your plant. Through the summer new rhododendrons should be watered well on a regular basis during the summer to avoid any drought stress and to allow the plant to develop a root system that will extend into the established soil. A shallow mulch is recommended to keep the roots cool and moist. Dark course aged mulch is best. Fertilizers for acid loving plants should be applied in late winter or early spring. Follow directions on your fertilizer container. After the rhododendron has bloomed, the plants may be 'deadheaded' by removing spent flowers. This is also a good time to look at the plant and decide if pruning needs to be done.

The Virginia Green Industry Council is the voice of the horticulture industry in the Commonwealth and is dedicated to enhancing the beauty of the state's environment, the well-being of our citizens, improving our state's economy, and improving the health and wellness for everyone in Virginia. The Council is made up of providers and consumers of horticultural products and services. The Council works to provide public and industry education, environmental guidelines and other information that will keep Virginia green and growing.

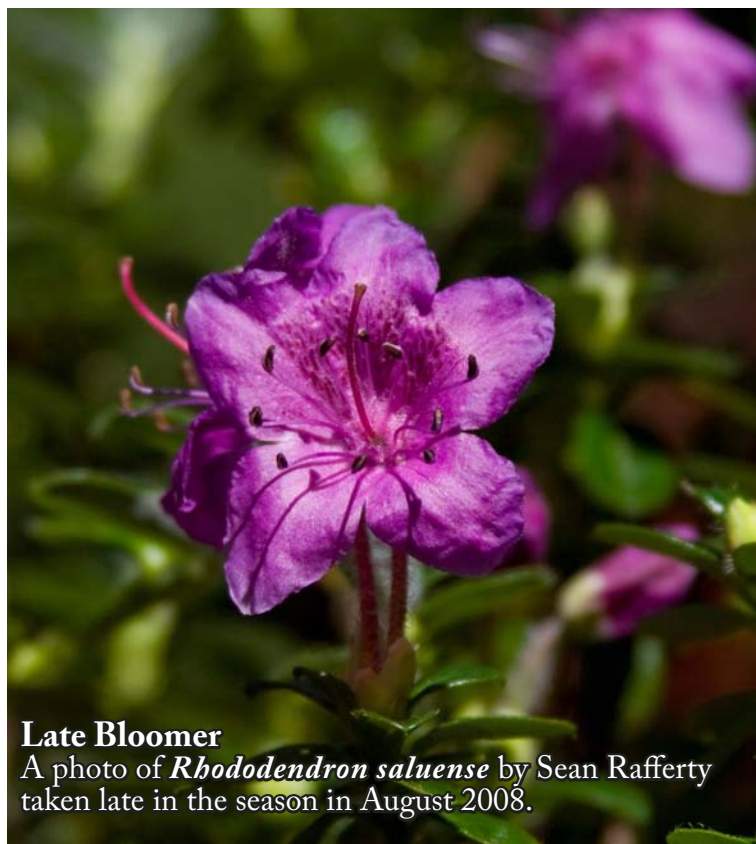
For more information click on this link
<http://www.rhododendron.org/>



Alpine Plants of North America: An Encyclopedia of Mountain Flowers from the Rockies to Alaska. By Graham Nicholls. Rick Lupp, Consulting Editor, foreword by Bobby Ward.

This is the first comprehensive pictorial look at the American mountain flora from the southernmost Rocky Mountains to the Brooks Range of Alaska. Approximately 650 species in 54 genera

are discussed, with many subspecies, varieties, and hybrids also described. Intended to be as useful for the gardener as the traveler, each entry concludes with a discussion of propagation and cultivation information, as well as warnings about pertinent pests and diseases. The 495 color photographs are not only lovely but they also give the reader an idea of the range of alpine plants growing in North America. 344 pages, 495 color photos and 2 maps
ISBN-13:9780881925487
ISBN-10:0881925489



Late Bloomer

A photo of *Rhododendron saluense* by Sean Rafferty taken late in the season in August 2008.

Stone By Design

In Stone By Design, more than 125 gorgeous photographs showcase the beauty of award-winning stonemason Lew French's work in eight different homes, illustrating how rounded fieldstone, gray slate, rough granite, and even curvy driftwood can be incorporated into stunning pieces of functional art. French provides charming narration for each project: how an idea came to be; how a stone-splitting technique is executed; even how one of his most difficult pieces, a three-year-long project, was saved from ruin the day it was completed.

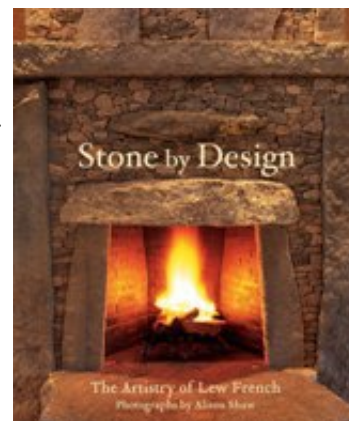
With its contemporary hearths of rustic slate, sculptured walls of both great granite slabs as well as stacked and rounded fieldstones, Stone By Design: The Artistry of Lew French will inspire design lovers to incorporate this material in home interiors and exteriors, whether as an artful writer's studio, a playful fireplace, or a carefully crafted garden pathway. More than just a stunning tribute to the work of Lew French and his unique vision and craft, this book celebrates both the function and form of stone. It's the perfect inspiration for anyone interested in adding the beauty of stone to their home or landscape.

Lew French started to work with stone when he was just nineteen years old. He moved to Martha's Vineyard twenty years ago and has worked on his own stone designs exclusively since. His work has been featured in the New York Times, House Beautiful, The Boston Globe Magazine, Architectural Digest, and Metropolitan Home. He has also been featured on HGTV's Modern Masters and most recently appeared in an eight minute segment on CBS Sunday Morning. To view a video clip of the segment, please visit: http://www.cbsnews.com/sections/i_video/main500251.shtml?id=3486147n and click on "Stone Artist Has Careful Eye."

The book has reached the number 10 spot on bn.com and peaked at number 4 on the Amazon.com bestsellers list.

Publicist - Courtney Rottgering, Publisher - Gibbs Smith.

Visit the Gibbs Smith, Publisher Book Blog for breaking news on book awards, author interviews, media appearances, and more at <http://gibbs-smithbooks.blogspot.com/>



The Frank Dorsey Memorial Raffle Box

Frank Dorsey, as many of you know, was "rafflemeister" at VRS meetings and Show & Sale events for many years. His booming voice and humorous turn of phrase were never to be ignored! Following his passing, Mary Dorsey donated many of Frank's books to the VRS. The sale of these books raised sufficient funds for the VRS to consider a memorial tribute to Frank - a new raffle box became the acclaimed choice. The box has now been made by artisan Alden Sherwood, on Cortes Island. It is an excellent piece of craftsmanship, described by Alden:

"The inside of the box is maple, the dark trim and handle are walnut, and the four side panels are spalted broad leaf maple. The piece is finished with varnish. The money compartment has a divider for keeping the \$'s sorted, but if wished the divider can be discarded". The box is almost too good to use! It will



shortly have a brass plate proclaiming: "Frank Dorsey, 1927-2006, a master gardener of many parts". Alden has requested compensation in the form of rhododendrons for their garden on Cortes.

Louis K. Peterson
VRS Past President

Children in Daehongdan Die from Eating Azalea

There are children who died after eating azalea in Daehongdan County. In Sambong Middle School, 9 students were dead from azalea poisoning. Adults know what to eat and what not, but young children can't tell and just put anything in their mouths because they are hungry. After eating three or four potatoes, they are still hungry and they run up to the mountains and pluck anything to eat. This spring, they ate fistful of azalea petals several

times and they died of poisoning. Chang Mi-oak (38) says, 'They pick basketful of azalea petals and eat them, but if they eat too much at one time, it causes gastrospasms. If they eat them when their stomach is empty, they will die foaming in their mouth. I suffered gastrospasms when I ate azalea. Adults like me cannot control (the hunger); it is needless to say in case of children.'

Lee Sung-ja (37) says, 'I warn my older child everyday. The older one would not do, but my younger one may eat flowers while I am not around. So whenever they go out together I admonish the older one, 'don't let your brother eat flowers.' My older one tells me that many of his classmates die and asks me, 'Mother, what can I do?' It pains me greatly. Children who have no parents die so easily.' Watching the children die makes her recall the suffering of the Arduous March and she shakes her head thinking of the horror.

Article courtesy of the Research Institute for North Korean Society of Good Friends. We at Good Friends hope to be a bridge between the North Korean people and the world.

Italian Rhododendron Honey

With production concentrated mainly in the Alpine area, rhododendron honey has a particularly delicate flavour and is not too sweet. It is made by bees who mainly draw their nectar from two types of plant: Rhododendron Ferrugineum and Rhododendron Hirsutum, which grow in acid and limestone soils respectively. As it crystallises easily, the colour of the liquid honey changes on crystallisation, going from a straw-yellow to white. Before sugar was extracted from beets and sugar cane, honey was the only sweet substance available.

Used in ancient times for sweet and savoury dishes alike, (or even as a medicine), it is one of the oldest known foods. Whole jars of it were found in the tombs of the Pharaohs, still perfectly preserved after 4000 years.

R. luteiflorum - Rhododendron Species Foundation



Join the Vancouver Rhododendron Society

Come out and enjoy our monthly lecture programs with insightful speakers working in the fields of horticulture, botany and plant preservation. Share with others the knowledge of rhododendrons and acquire plants from member growers. Receive monthly email issues of the **INDUMENTUM**.

Guests are always welcome at our monthly meetings!

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Contribute to the **INDUMENTUM**

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, you'll have to live with what we print.

Visit our website at www.rhodo.citymax.com
Visit our online repository for past issues of the **INDUMENTUM**, hosted by the UBC Botanical Garden and Centre for Plant Research at this web link:
www.ubcbotanicalgarden.org/vrs

Todd & Shannon Major,
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TAM



Great Britian Forestry Commission Rare Rhododendrons the Stars of Westonbirt

Visitors to the National Arboretum, Westonbirt this past spring enjoyed a rare treat. A recent study of the rhododendron collection has revealed previously unidentified specimens that were introduced by the great Victorian plant hunters.

The giant flowering shrubs are one of the highlights of the spring flowering spectacle at the arboretum, which is managed by the Forestry Commission. The discovery of these rarespecimens is very exciting for plant lovers and there are likely to be still more great findings - the study by Lear Associates has only just scratched the surface of the historical collection, with just 76 out of 825 listed plants researched so far.

The very rare *R. arboreum* hybrid with *R. fortunei* called 'Eric Gill' is described by curator Simon Toomer as a "real treasure".

"This one, and some of the others mentioned in the report, are precious relics of the period in which they were created by selective breeding and planted by enthusiasts such as Sir George Holford, who inherited the Westonbirt estate in 1892. "They are very exciting from an historical point of view and this makes their propagation and replanting very important. You could relate this to restoring an historic building after discovering long-lost artefacts and features within it." Author of the report, Michael Lear, worked closely with Westonbirt's plant records officer Sally Day. He says: "There's a wealth of information in the Westonbirt archives about the rhododendrons that used to be grown, sometimes with locations telling us where they were once planted. The challenge is knowing what is in the garden today when old labels have fallen off and maps weren't drawn."

He calls for a systematic resurvey of the rhododendrons throughout the collection interpretation to enhance

public enjoyment and an assessment of priorities for conservation and future management.

Curator Simon Toomer believes that this invaluable report could herald the start of an exciting long-term rhododendron project for the arboretum:

"We have been aware for some time of the potential treasure in the collection of rhododendrons and have had a long-held ambition to get to grips with its identification, propagating and replanting. Thanks to a grant for the report from Friends of Westonbirt Arboretum this has become possible and it's hoped that over the next two or three years the project will continue, allowing full identification. "This will lead to propagation by our team of experts and a major re-planting project in Main Drive - once known as Rhododendron Walk - that will return Westonbirt's superb spring display of rhododendrons to its former glory. "

Other important discoveries highlighted by the report include:

- Best collection of van Nes hybrids including the important 'Britannia' grex that were introduced in the 1920s and include 'Trilby', 'Mrs C.B. van Nes' and 'Bulstrode Park'.
- Excellent white *R. arboreum* hybrids including 'Duchess of Portland' and 'Clivianum'. Interesting *R. griffithianum* hybrids such as 'Daphne Millais'. *R. calophytum* and *R. praeevernum* (possibly of wild origin).
- *R. glischrum* - probably from seed collected by R. Farrer in upper Burma in 1919.

Rhododendrons start flowering in April and peak throughout May.

See "Westonbirt - The National Arboretum" on Page 7



GARDEN WALK

Westonbirt - The National Arboretum, is managed by the Forestry Commission and renowned worldwide for its tree and shrub collection. It contains nearly 16,000 specimens, including almost half of those woody plants known to grow in the world's temperate climate zone, and covers 600 acres of beautifully landscaped grounds. Its importance is recognised by English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historical Interest as a Grade 1 registered Landscape. Visitor numbers are just under 350,000 per annum with a membership of over 22,000.

Westonbirt Arboretum was established in the 1850s by wealthy landowner Robert Holford, and later developed by his son, George Holford. Much of Westonbirt's renowned autumn colour is often credited to Sir George's plantings of Japanese maples between 1875 and 1900, many of which are still alive today. Unlike many arboreta, Westonbirt is laid out according to aesthetic appeal rather than scientific or geographical criteria, and the Holfords' legacy is open for all to enjoy - a beautiful, relaxing and unique day out amongst some of the tallest, oldest and rarest trees and shrubs in Britain.

Westonbirt is home to the National Japanese Maple (*Acer*) Collection, with over 300 different types in the collection. The Forestry Commission opened Westonbirt Arboretum to the public in 1961, and in 1966 a new Acer Glade was established alongside the original one planted by Robert and George Holford in 1875. Today we are in the process of creating the world's best collection of maples.

Westonbirt Arboretum is three miles south west of Tetbury on the A433 (Tetbury to Bath Road). It is 10 miles north-east of Junction 18 of the M4 and south-east of junction 13 of the M5.

The Forestry Commission is the government department responsible in England for protecting, expanding and promoting the sustainable management of woods and forests and increasing their value to society and the environment. Forestry makes a real contribution to sustainable development, providing social and environmental benefits arising from planting and managing attractive, as well as productive, woodlands.

Michael & Beverley Lear are Directors of Lear Associates Ltd, in Oxford, (01865 725046). They carry out plant surveys in gardens and have a particular specialism in rhododendron identification and work in heritage collections throughout Britain and Ireland.

For further information or images please contact Charlotte Hazelby or Alison Jennings at Email info@cspr.uk.com ; Email: kellie.lovett@forestry.gsi.gov.uk . Or visit their website at <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/westonbirt>

Original Press Release by the Great Britain Forestry Commission on 14 APRIL 2008, News Release No: 10503 . For more information click on this link: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/>

