TAM

INDUMENTUM

VANCOUVER Rhododendron SOCIETY

General meeting:

October 16, 2008 at the Vandusen Botanic Garden
In the Floral Hall at 7:30 p.m.

Inside this Issue of the Indumentum:

Visit the Vancouver Rhododendron Society Website
at www.rhodo.citymax.com

Newsletter Volume 40, Number 2, October 2008 cover

Lucile Whitman is the proprietor of a rare, ornamental, tree nursery in Oregon. She is a dynamic speaker whose very title is engaging: 'Trees to Make You Smile'. She writes about herself probably better than I could, albeit with undue modesty. As she tells it, she

> . . . grew up on a farm in Georgia where she made every effort to keep her hands clean. She could pretty reliably tell a Pine Tree from a Magnolia grandiflora, but that was the extent of her botanical expertise. Forward 25 years to Salem, Oregon, 1980, where she found herself unable to find a job teaching Latin and Greek. (Who knew the powers that be had dropped those subjects from local college curricula?) Is starting an unusual plant nursery not the obvious next step? Well, perhaps not, but it is a complicated story. Suffice it to say, Lucile has a wonderful life which she loves, even if she can't tell a male flower from a female flower.

Whitman Farms began in 1980 as an informal nut tree and small fruit adjunct to a large bareroot nursery next door in Salem Oregon. It was a one-woman show and mostly for fun. However, Lucile Whitman (pictured), the owner, got sidetracked; she became enamoured of unusual ornamental trees and started planting any weird and wonderful woody plants she ran across, using root control bags, a new plant-friendly technology.

It was still a hobby and not a problem when she had to give away plants no one would buy because they were unknown. By the end of the decade, the nursery was no longer just a hobby, no longer one-woman (employees- yes!!), and Lucile had become known as a producer of hard-to-find trees and shrubs.

Most of this material in root control bags is sold to retail nurseries and landscapers in the Washington, Oregon, California corridor who are amazed that such large trees can be produced with such a small light root ball which roots out so quickly into a pot or landscape situation. As the wholesale business developed, Lucile still maintained a small retail/mail-order business selling gooseberries, currants, other small fruits and nuts.

At the suggestion of her son Josiah, designer of web pages, she realized that since she was shipping anyhow, she could send most of her specialty landscape trees UPS also. Hence she is offering on the web a unique item: trees of good caliper and up to 6' tall that won't be found at the local garden center.

Perhaps we'll learn more about those complications in that 'complicated story' when she speaks to the VRS the evening of October 16th.

In any case, even if Rhododendron is the only plant genus in which you have an interest—and I hope this describes very few of you—you will want to hear Lucile Whitman speak about her special, and evidently amusing, trees. Photo above ***Clerodendrum trichotomum*** at Lucile's nursery in Oregon. Visit Lucile Whitman's website at this link: **http://www.whitmanfarms.com/default.asp**

By Joe Ronsley
VRS Lecture Program Chair

Rhodos To Grow By Ron Knight

Maxine Childers (***R. strigillosum*** X Elizabeth)
Most rhododendrons that bloom in March are white, pink, or lemon yellow. Maxine Childers is an exception; the flowers are a bright scarlet red. Moreover, they have such a heavy wax-like coating that it's hard to believe they're real. The plant does well in filtered shade and in this kind of location forms an attractive jade-green mound about a metre tall in ten years. It's a suitable choice for a small gardens. Maxine Childers may be purchased from VRS growers Trevor and Doreen Badminton. (Photo by Ron Knight)

VRS President's Message

Our first meeting of the season, in September, had all the vitality, plants for sale, raffle, and excellent speaker that we usually have. But unfortunately the attendance, small for us, I should say, though not for most ARS chapters, was not quite up to what we are accustomed to. This, evidently, is not all that unusual in September. Some of our members are still clearly in summer mode. We hope that will change October 16th, when our speaker **Lucille Whitman** will be somewhat unusual (see Joe's comments on her). None of us believes that a good garden is possible using only rhododendrons, and while this plant genus is our central interest, it is not our only one. The unusual and exotic trees about which she will be speaking are all excellent in combination with rhododendrons.

But our last meeting was special in that **Mary Comber Miles** was awarded the ARS Bronze Medal, the highest award that an individual ARS chapter can give. As I said in presenting it, the awarding of the medal was especially complicated on this occasion, since it is Mary who does the painting on the chapter's certificates. We had to get her to do the artwork—anyone else's would have been inferior, especially to Mary's discriminating eye, though she never would have mentioned it—and we had to have her paint her favourite *Rhododendron, augustinii*, without her knowing to whom the medal was being awarded. Only by extreme, and creative, subterfuge, on the part of our calligrapher **Ann Irwin** and myself, were we able to pull it off. If in fact we did—we think we did, but we shall never know for sure. At any rate Mary did appear to be astonished on the occasion. I think everyone in the club is delighted about Mary receiving the award.

Finally, I must urge you all to renew your VRS memberships as soon as it is convenient for you. The earlier you renew, the better it is for the VRS and the easier for people handling memberships. This year it is easier than ever before: you can renew at the meeting of course, as usual, but because we now accept VISA, you can call either **Dana Cromie**, (604) 733-7566 (until **Philip MacDougall** returns from Korea), or me, 604-921-9444, to do so. You can renew, then, on the phone, so long as you have your VISA card handy when you do so. The rates, just slightly increased, alas, and renewal form appear elsewhere in this Indumentum.

By Joanne Ronsley
VRS President

ARS Research Grants

Grants are awarded to research projects that yield practical benefits for growing or enjoying rhododendrons or yield new insights into the biology, geographical distribution or history of species or hybrid rhododendrons.
ARS 2008 Grant Awards (partial list):

Nonanoic Acid and Trichoderma Isolates for Management of Botrytus Petal Blight and Phytophthora Dieback Thomas J. Gianfagna Department of Plant Biology and Pathology, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ.

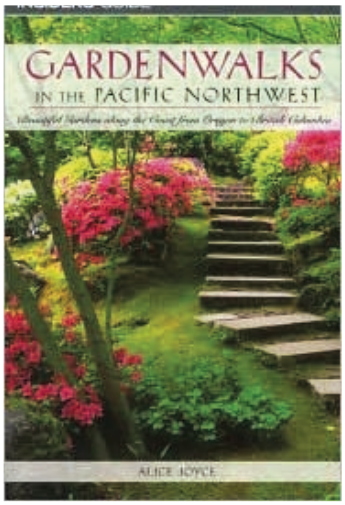
It has been discovered that some microorganisms have antibiotic control of fungal pathogens. The research involves isolation of specific compounds from specific kinds of bacteria and testing their effect on two kinds of fungal disease under controlled greenhouse conditions. The anticipated benefits to rhododendron growers are a potential biofungicide that will be cheaper than currently registered conventional fungicides and which is environmentally friendly.

Identification and Classification of Rhododendron Powdery Mildew in the Pacific Northwest Dean A. Glawe College of Forest Resources, University of Washington, Seattle, WA.

Powdery mildew is a serious disease of susceptible rhododendron cultivars and species causing leaf spotting, defoliation, and reduced growth. This is more of a problem in different regions of the country, but particularly in the Pacific Northwest. The taxonomy of powdery mildew is very complex involving many different species. This project will characterize the morphology of powdery mildew fungi on Rhododendron species using light and scanning electron microscopy and will assess relationships among these fungi using nucleic acid sequences. The objective is to use this classification information to determine the correct names of the North American powdery mildews on Rhododendron species. This research will enable plant pathologists and rhododendron breeders to target more effectively their efforts in controlling powdery mildew.

Genome Sizes in Rhododendron ssp. Leen Leus Institute of Agricultural and Fisheries Research, Melle, Belgium.

The numbers of chromosomes, also known as ploidy levels, are of interest for plant breeders as polyploidy (extra sets of chromosomes) can influence characteristics of growth vigor or in the case of ornamentals, the ornamental value. The analysis of the DNA content can give more information than just the ploidy level. Although a lot of information is available about the number of chromosomes among certain genotypes of rhododendrons, little information is available about the genome size. Genome size is important from a phylogenetic point of view and also important for plant breeding.



Gardenwalks in the Pacific Northwest: Beautiful Gardens Along the Coast from Oregon to British Columbia

By Alice Joyce

Explore the Pacific Northwest with expert author Alice Joyce as she visits a vast variety of garden destinations in Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia. Within these pages you'll find such gems as a collection of unusual plants and ornaments in Vancouver's Southlands Nursery; perennial borders awash with blooms in Bellevue Botanical Garden; and the theatrical setting of the Little & Lewis Garden Gallery, boasting exotic plantings amid colorful sculptural installations and compelling water features.

Each delectable garden is described in detail, giving readers a glimpse into the lives of those who created the garden, as well as tips on what spectacular plants are in bloom when. As an added feature, Gardenwalks in the Pacific Northwest also recommends select lodging -- accommodations with extraordinary gardens.

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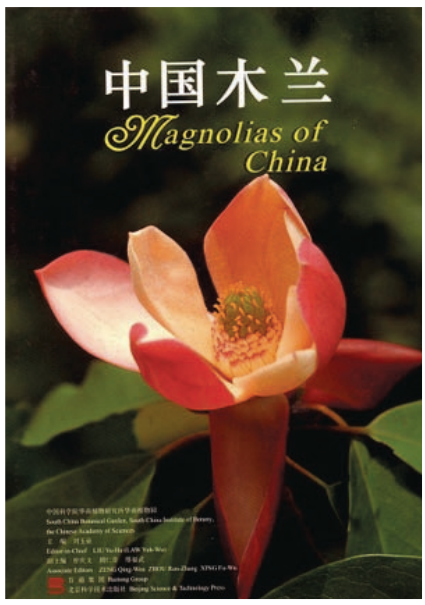
ISBN 0762738189 ; 9780762738182



Magnolias of China

Edited by Yu-Hu Lui, Beijing Science and Technology Press.

Beautifully presented, this comprehensive and well-organised study on magnolias presents invaluable photographs and scientific data, with the aim of increasing people's understanding of these plants and the importance of nature conservation. Complete with colour photographs, line drawings, text in English and Chinese. 391 pp.
ISBN/EAN: 9787530427651

Controlling Rhododendron spp. in the Turkish Black Sea Region

By Derya Een, Oktay Yildiz, Semsettin Kulaç and Murat Sarginci.
Düzce Orman Fakültesi (Faculty of Forestry),
Abant Izzet Baysal Üniversitesi, Konuralp Yerlekesi, Konuralp, 81620 Düzce, Turkey.

Rhododendrons (***Rhododendron ponticum*** L. and ***Rhododendron luteum*** Sweet) dominate the understories of the mesic forests of the Black Sea Region (BSR) of Turkey. They dramatically reduce forest growth and regeneration and local plant diversity. This paper reports the results of a large rhododendron control experiment established on two different sites in the western and eastern BSR of Turkey 5 years after treatments (YAT). The paper also presents the second-year results of a second experiment in which the foliar herbicides of the previous experiment were tested on rhododendron at much lower rates on a western BSR site. Five YAT, grubbing and foliar spraying were still the best rhododendron control methods in the first experiment. Cut-stump spraying provided an intermediate level of woody control. Hand-cutting was ineffective on ***R. ponticum*** and did not significantly differ from the control treatment in rhododendron basal area 5 YAT. The performance ratings of foliar triclopyr ester and imazapyr for woody control in both experiments were rate dependent. At high rates ranging between 2.6 and 5.8 kg ae ha–1, foliar imazapyr controlled both rhododendron species significantly better than foliar triclopyr ester in the first experiment, suggesting enhanced imazapyr translocation to the roots. Some off-target damage was observed in the beech overstory for imazapyr at high rates. The performance ratings of these foliar herbicides were significantly reversed in the second experiment 2 YAT, where much lower rates were used (0.3–2.0 kg ae ha–1) than in the first experiment. Insufficient imazapyr accumulation in rhododendron roots might account for the poor impact of this herbicide. No beech damage was apparent from any of the herbicides in the second experiment. The low-rate foliar triclopyr ester is recommended for effective and cost-efficient rhododendron control.

Corresponding author email: guzelfethiye@yahoo.com

Article courtesy of Institute of Chartered Foresters, Oxford Journals - Oxford University

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Read more at this link:
http://forestry.oxfordjournals.org/

Vancouver Rhododendron Society Membership Form

(Please Print)

For renewals indicate name, date, type of membership, and changes.
All memberships are for immediate families.

Dr. / Mr. / Mrs. / Ms. / Miss Date_____

Last Name_____First Name_____

Street Address_____

City_____Province or State_____

Country_____ Postal Code_____

Phone_____Fax _____Email_____

(*Membership information will be used only for Society purposes, and not shared.*)

Please Circle Type of Membership: Renewal or New Membership

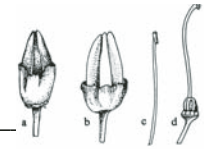
Please Check One Membership Category:
(*ARS/VRS indicates membership in the American Rhododendron Society and the Vancouver Rhododendron Society*):

☐ **ARS/VRS** (*includes the quarterly ARS Journal*).....$55.00 (US$)

☐ **VRS Chapter** (*does not include the ARS quarterly Journal*).....$30.00

☐ **Associate Canadian** (*already a member of another Canadian ARS chapter*).....$15.00
Base Chapter_____

☐ **Associate International** (*already a member of another non-Canadian ARS chapter*).....$15.00 (US$)
Base Chapter _____



Payment Method:

VISA Number_____Amount:_____ Expiry Date_____

Cash: Amount Enclosed _____ Cheque: Amount and Cheque #_____
(Make Cheques payable to the Vancouver Rhododendron Society)

Special Interests or Skills:_____

Please send membership correspondence to the VRS Membership Chair:
Philip MacDougall
14776 90th Avenue
Surrey, BC,
Canada, V3R 1A4

If you have membership questions contact Philip at:
Ph: 604-580-3219
Email: philipmacd123@hotmail.com

Further information on VRS programs and member benefits is available at http://www.rhodo.citymax.com
Guests are always welcome at our meetings.

Print Form and Mail Paymnent to Membership Chair

Bronze Medal for Mary Comber Miles

Mary is one of the world's most distinguished botanical artists, having painted in exquisite water colour many species and hybrid rhododendrons, but also flowers and plants from a very wide range of genera. The daughter, and granddaughter, of prominent horticulturists—her grandfather, James Comber, was Head Gardener at Nymans for many years, and her father, Harold Comber, ALS, is widely known for his plant introductions from the wild, especially from South America and Tasmania—she combines an accurate and precise knowledge of a great many plants with the artistic sensibilities of the true artist that she is.

Mary has also over many years now been a devoted and most generous member of the Vancouver Rhododendron Society, where she has contributed her paintings and served with a dedication and selflessness that is exemplary.

It is with pleasure and pride that the Vancouver Rhododendron Society awards the Bronze Medal of the American Rhododendron Society to a wonderful colleague and friend of us all—Mary Comber Miles.

Learn about Rhododendron Phytophthora

The Phytophthora ramorum issue in Britain and Canada has resulted in destruction of infected plants in many gardens as well as government management actions to deal with the three species of this disease.

Learn about UK experience directly from expert Ian Wright of the National Trust, as well as what the BC ornamental nursery industry is doing to minimize the risk of this disease moving into gardens of BC. Also included will be an informative review of the biology and life cycle of Phytophthora, the species that is of concern to West Coast Gardens as well as symptoms and effects of this disease.

Topics and speakers include:
'P. ramorum Biology and Symptoms' - Dave Woodske, Nursery Specialist BC Ministry of Agriculture & Lands
Phytophthora: 'A Wake-Up Call' - Ian Wright, Special Advisor for the National Trust, Britain

Date: Thursday October 30, 2008 7:00 PM – 9:15 PM
Location " Floral Hall at Vandusen Botanical Garden
Register by email: ichang@bclna.com

Generously Sponsored By the Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society

In Search of Nepal Rhododendrons

The Nepal rhododendron trek was a wonderful journey! Walking through rhodo forests in full bloom with snow peaks towering above is an unforgettable experience It over-whelms me everytime, and makes me eager to share this beauty with others.

I am returning next spring with a shorter trek of sixteen days. We will still visit the Annapurna Sanctuary and still have the same number of days in "Rhodoland". This reduces the cost considerably and also reduces the number of days away from Canada to twenty-seven. Hopefully this will make the journey more available to rhodo lovers. Conatct me if you are interested in joining me on this journey. I appreciate the journey every time I visit Nepal, as might those who have dreamed of such an experience.

Sincerely,
Tom Carter and Marci Lyon
Tel. 250-954-2345
Email: **mailto: carter@Islandnet.com**
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Ecuador's Flowering Plants – Blooming Beauty Beyond Belief

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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!

Philip MacDougall,
VRS Membership Chair
14776 90th Avenue
Surrey, BC V3R 1A4
Email:
philipmacd123@hotmail.com

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,
INDUMENTUM Editors

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TAM

The Finnerty Gardens - University of Victoria

One of Canada 's finest collections of rhododendrons, many of which were started from seed obtained from famous plant explorers, is on display in the University of Victoria - Finnerty Gardens. The garden contains more than over 4,000 different trees and shrubs with more than 1,500 rhododendron and azalea plants, including 200 collected rhododendron species, and a spectacular range of companion plants – ferns, vines, bulbs, groundcovers, ornamentals – artistically displayed on a 2.6 hectare site at the southwest corner of UVic's campus. Complementing the plant life are three tranquil ponds (photo below by Daphne Donaldson), an inviting network of winding paths

and dozens of benches, each with its own distinctive view of the gardens' ever-changing beauty. The gardens have been carefully planned and developed to provide a rich and changing array of colour, scent, form and texture all year found. In April and May, you will see the rhododendrons at their best.

The University Gardens were developed when, in 1974, the estate of Mrs. Jeanne Buchanan Simpson of Cowichan Lake was left to the University. She and her husband George, beginning in the 1920's, built up a notable collection of Rhododendron species at their Lake Cowichan home. Many plants were grown from seed obtained directly or indirectly from famous plant explorers of the day. Theirs was the largest collection in British Columbia.

The Buchanan Simpson's gift transferred to the University the responsibility for the well-being of a significant collection of a popular genus among Victoria gardeners. The University decided to move many of the rhododendrons to the campus where they would form the nucleus of a new garden that was created on nearly three acres of land at the south end of the campus.

Several local rhododendron enthusiasts were asked to help plan and develop the gardens. This group formed the Friends of the University Gardens. They and their successors have continued to guide and finance the development of the Gardens.

The Simpson plants were up to 50 years old and presented a challenge to the transplanters. After the death of her husband, Mrs. Simpson had been unable to maintain her garden properly. The rhododendrons had to struggle for survival without the benefit of summer watering and in competition with the invading "jungle". You will recognize these sometimes distorted giants in the garden today. Most of them are ***R. decorum*** or ***R. fortunei***. In their growth-form they resemble these species growing in their native mountains of Asia.

As the gardens took form, several nursery people and private gardeners gave hundreds of azaleas, rhododendrons, magnolias and other companion plants to help the University achieve its objective of providing a garden that was attractive and informative. The Finnerty Gardens were to be gardens for all seasons that took advantage of the usually benign climatic conditions offered by Victoria.

The initial plantings were an approximately 1.5 acre site inside the Ring Road. As the first stage reached completion, an adjacent area across the Ring Road was opened up. Environmental diversity was improved by the development of four ponds.

Continued on see **" By 1988"** on page 8

Garden Walk

By 1988, it had become apparent that the soil conditions in the first section were not suitable for rhododendrons. These conditions proved impossible to improve. That summer it was decided to move the rhododendrons from the wetter areas to a nearby space that was well drained and attractively wooded. The move was begun in September. In three months the site had been prepared and more than three hundred rhododendrons, companion shrubs and trees had been transplanted.

The move was a major task undertaken jointly by Anthony James, Curator of the University Gardens, and Dr. Herman Vaartnou, a valuable member of the Garden Friends. That portion of the new garden area is now complete and the area from which the plants were moved has been replanted with trees and shrubs more suitable to the moist conditions. About a hundred rhododendrons were left inside Ring Road. They were on better drained locations and were thriving.

The collection now includes more than 200 rhododendron species and azaleas along with an extensive planting of hybrids, most of them of early origin. The accession list includes about 1600 entries for trees and shrubs. All are catalogued and identified by a number that refers to a master list which is available.

In the garden rhododendrons may be seen in flower from mid-January until late June,also extensive collections of spectacular perennials from July onwards. Companion plants such as ***Garrya***, ***Chimonanthus***, ***Hamemalis***, ***Mahonia*** and ***Eucryphia*** extend the season through most of the year.

The Finnerty gardens are maintained by many local plant enthusiasts known as the Friends of the University Gardens. The Friends hold an annual plant sale on the first Sunday in May in the McKinnon Building at UVic.

Photo below of the Finnerty Garden rhododendrons by ngawangchodron - website: **http://flickr.com/photos/ngawangchodron/491043596/**
For more information about the Finnerty garden contact: Curator - Bentley Sly at Email: **tjames@fmgt.uvic.ca**

Visit the Finnerty Garden website at: **http://external.uvic.ca/gardens/**

Information courtesy of the University of Victoria - Finnerty Gardens.

Photo top of this page courtesy of Tourism Vancouver Island - website: **http://www.vancouverislandgardentrail.com/gardentrailmap**