

VANCOUVER
Rhododendron
SOCIETY

Membership News

November 2010

Vol 1, No 7

Greetings VRS Members

Well, the last meeting was a great success, with 57 members and guests in attendance. The speaker, **Mike Stewart**, from Dover Nursery, in Sandy, Oregon, gave a beautifully-illustrated talk on the well-known hybridizers of the Pacific Northwest, with photos of many of their successful introductions ... some so recent that they are not yet named. We were particularly pleased to see that more attention is being paid to foliage and plant form, and not just flowers ... a common complaint of the „purists“, who limit their interest to the species. New hybrids like „Laramie“ [*macabeanum* x *yakushmanum*], that produce foliage similar to *R macabeanum*, with flowers similar to *macabeanum*, but in only 3 or 4 years, are a welcome addition to the rhodophile’s world ... hopefully, more will follow.

And a special thanks to **Harold Fearing** for his sale of species rhodos ... plant sales are an essential part of a successful meeting.

The highlight of the evening, however, was the awarding of a Bronze Medal to **Mike Bale**, for his many years of dedicated service to the club. Credit must also be given to Patti Bale, and to their son, Geoff, and their daughter-in-law, Brittany, for orchestrating Mike’s arrival at the meeting, completely unaware of the planned event ... apparently, the promise of food was involved ...



... photo by Justine Murdy

On a more serious note, the **deadline for ARS membership renewal** has now passed, which means that the ARS cannot guarantee uninterrupted delivery of the Journal to those who have not yet renewed ... their so-called „journal jeopardy“. Late ARS members are still welcome to send in their renewals to us, and we will forward the appropriate funds to the head office, but, if the winter issue of the journal fails to arrive, they will have to pursue the ARS and

purchase a back issue. Please note that, every time the treasurer has to send in money on behalf of a straggler, the club absorbs a \$6 money order cost ...

The VRS is much less constrained, and the delivery of the *Membership News* will continue through December [yes, *there will be a December issue*] at which time „newsletter jeopardy“ will occur, ie, the January newsletter and membership directory will be sent only to paid-up members.

Category	2010	2011 to date
ARS/VRS Members	36	27
Chapter Members	49	31
Associate Members	21	16
Life Members	8	8
Independent Members	1	0
Totals	115	82

The adjoining table shows the numbers to date ... thanks to all of you, for making this year's renewal process less painful. Unfortunately, this reduction in pain has been accompanied by a significant decline in membership renewals ...

Upcoming VRS Meeting

The next meeting will be on Thursday, November 18, at the Van Dusen Floral Hall. We generally gather at around 7:00 pm, the meeting starts at 7:30 pm. Guests are always welcome.

The speaker this month will be our very own **Charlie Sale**, who will talk about "**Some Gardens of Cornwall and Southern Ireland**" ... for those of you who do not know Charlie, he sent along the following :

Charlie Sale has been gardening seriously for more than fifty years. He currently gardens with a much better gardener, Margaret Charlton, his wife of 15 years, on over two acres of steep mountainside on Indian Arm near Deep Cove in North Vancouver, BC. Their garden mainstay is rhododendrons; they have over 200 species rhododendrons and 150 rhododendron hybrids. At heart, though, they are generalists, with a love for any good plant.

Charlie was very active in Eastern Canadian garden societies, serving as President of the Rhododendron Society of Canada, and the Toronto Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society. He was also a member of the Board of the American Rhododendron Society. Charlie was a member of the Board of The Royal Botanical Gardens at Hamilton, Ontario. He is now an active member of The Friends of the Garden at The University of British Columbia and sits on the Board of the North American Rock Garden Society, serving on their Administrative Committee.

Please join us on the 18th, in welcoming Charlie, who has proven to be an excellent speaker ... and don't forget those items for the refreshment table and the raffle table.

Les Clay will be selling plants at the meeting. Our club depends on the support of our local growers ... so let's support him by buying a plant or two, and by helping with the setup, and unloading and loading of plants. A percentage of sales is contributed to the club, so helping Les (and Harold, and Sue, and ...) helps us all.

Other Chapters

Guests are always welcome at these other chapters, and, as a member of the VRS, you can get a year's associate membership for \$ 10 or 15 ... a bargain !



- **Fraser South** ... Wednesday, November 17 ... 7:30 pm
United Church Hall, 5673 - 200th Street, Langley
Speaker ... Bill Bischoff
Topic ... Bill will give a talk on his visit to both June Sinclair's Garden, and the rare plant nursery of Far Reaches Farm



- **Fraser Valley** ... Monday, November 22 ... **6:30 pm ... note time change**
St. Andrew's Heritage Hall, 22279 - 116th Avenue, Maple Ridge
Event ... **Christmas Turkey Pot-luck Dinner**, Annual General Meeting and Elections



- **Peace Arch** ... Tuesday, November 23 ... 7:30 pm
Cranley Hall, 2141 Cranley Drive, White Rock
Event ... this evening will be the annual **Christmas party**, with pot-luck appetizers and dessert, and a speaker, to be announced.

Conferences

The 2011 ARS National Convention will be held in Vancouver, Washington, from May 11 to 15, at the Heathman Lodge, a luxurious inn, modelled after the national park lodges. May 11th, a Wednesday, is reserved for directors' meetings, the 12th and 13th will be tours of gardens in the Vancouver-Portland area, and the weekend will feature talks by notable speakers, a banquet, and plant sales [*phytocertificates will be available*]. We will bring you more details as they become available.

Proven Performers List

Since we sent out the compilation list in the spring asking for comments; we have had no response ... zip, nada, not a bean you get the idea ... so, the executive will compile an appropriate list, approve it, and that will be that.

New Members

We had no new members this month. Please remember that we encourage guest visitors, so make an effort to invite friends and fellow gardeners to our upcoming meetings. As always, if you give us their names a day or two before the meeting, we will prepare guest nametags, to facilitate their full enjoyment of club hospitality.

Member News

Ken and Madeleine Webb, and the Victoria Propagator's Group, hosted a very successful workshop on Saturday, October 30th, which we attended. Other VRS members in attendance were Garth Wedemire, and Bill MacMillan ... more to come next month

Member's Garden Tours



We had two responses to October's mystery garden photo ... Jennifer Lamb and Rob Talbot correctly stated that it was **Wakehurst Place**, in Surrey, UK ... which is part of Kew Gardens. They have an impressive collection of mature species rhodos in their Himalayan Glade.

This month's mystery garden is a bit closer to home. If you don't recognize it, we highly recommend a visit. [*hint ... this is the first 'Member's Garden' in this series that is actually a member's garden*]



ARS Bronze Medal awarded to Mike Bale

"For ongoing service well beyond the ordinary in so many different ways - for organizing garden tours in Tofino, on Vancouver Island, in Washington and in Oregon, for organizing species study days at the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden on at least six occasions, for hosting many tours by many different groups through your own garden Lu Zhu, and for doing all this with exceptional grace and generosity, for Chairing the 2006 Fall Western Regional Conference of the ARS in Harrison Hot Springs, for being Vice President and then President of the Fraser South chapter of the ARS while always maintaining an active membership in the Vancouver Chapter, for extreme generosity in donating many plants to various ARS chapters as raffle offerings and prizes even when it was not possible for you to attend the meetings, and for creating one of the most beautiful and important private gardens in British Columbia through tireless work and creativity while at the same time maintaining an active medical practice - the Vancouver chapter is pleased and proud to present Dr Michael Bale with the American Rhododendron Society Bronze Medal. "



Patti, Geoff, Brittany and Mike Bale

The October Bouquet ... by Douglas Justice

... notes by Don Haslam

1. ***Enkianthus campanulatus*** (Ericaceae Family) – deciduous shrub suitable for open spaces in woodland gardens. Grows to 20 feet with a 10-12 foot width. Prefers partial shade and is shy flowering. It is characterized by whorled leaves on branches.



In Vancouver, fall colours are not always consistent, but are often a striking orange-yellow to red.

The *Enkianthus* genus is taxonomically characterized by upside seed capsules; the capsule goes down and then up.

This shrub flowers in late spring and early summer, with pendant, corymb-like racemes, and five to fifteen creamy white, small flowers which are veined pink to red.



2. ***Tetradium glabrifolium*** is related to the Amur Cork Tree and flowers late, typically September through to frost time in Vancouver. The seeds are born on wire-like threads. It is mobbed by bees in September. *Tetradium glabrifolium* is native to the Himalayas and East and Southeast Asia. It usually has opposite pinnate leaves and prefers full sun or partial shade. *Tetradium evodia* is an older taxonomical name. The plant was subsequently renamed “*euodia*” and now “*glabrifolium*”. The plant is contained in the Rutaceae or “Rue” Family. It typically has a bit of smell.

3. ***Neolitsea sericea*** is a member of the Laurel Family (Lauraceae) the members of which share the common attribute of prominent veins running parallel to the outside of its leaves.

It matures as a large shrub or small tree. All of the leaves emerge at the same time and are covered above by copper coloured silky hairs when young, and the tops of the leaves become deep green and mauve or glaucous beneath. In late summer, this plant produce small, star-shaped yellow flowers on stalk-less umbels, followed in autumn by red berries. This plant is now in flower at UBC Botanical Garden and has, to Doug’s knowledge, never been damaged by frost in that garden.



4. ***Disanthus cercidifolius*** is a member of the Witch Hazel Family (Hamamelidaceae). Its natural habitat is in the woodlands and mountains of China and Japan, and in the Lower Mainland grows well in shade and colours strikingly in fall. It is unusual for a woodland plant to have such striking coloration even when grown in shade. It has great red rose flowers in mid-autumn, and smells of “wet dog” as one of our members observed. It is very shrubby with numerous horizontal branches, glaucous blue-green leaves (10 cm long) and in the fall turns yellow, orange and red.



5. ***Aconitum*** commonly known as “Monk’s Hood” or “Wolf Bane”. It is a member of the Aconitaceae Family. At the date of our meeting, and presentation of the bouquet, *Aconitum* had already been flowering for three weeks. Doug expected it to flower for at least another two weeks. Doug cautioned that the flower and other parts of the plant are very poisonous. The flower shape and colour are caused by the prominent upper sepals and the petals are converted to nectaries under the “hood” of the upper sepals. *Aconitum* is ideal for woodland gardens and borders in the GVRD. I have a purple *Aconitum*



carmichaelii in my border which is more than 2 meters tall and has been spectacular throughout October when there are so few plants flowering.



6. ***Meliosma oldhamii*** is a member of the Sabiaceae Family. “Meliosma” is derived from the Latin word for honey smelling, but Doug observed that sometimes this plant smells like sour milk. *Meliosma oldhamii* originates from Southern China. It flowers heavily in late August to September and Doug pointed out that its flower is similar in appearance to our native *Holidiscus* (commonly known as Ocean Spray). The flowers turn into berries in the Fall. It has a pinnate compound leaf. Unfortunately this plant is not available in the trade and one must commonly grow it from seeds. It can grow to a small tree of 3 metres tall.

7. ***Sorbus* “Joseph Rock”** is a member of the Sorbus family. This is a hybrid, broadly upright tree growing to 10 metres tall. It has white flowers in the Spring in corymbs. Its leaves are initially bright green turning to orange and red. Leaves are pinnate (15 centimetres long). The flowers turn into a yellow fruit which later takes on tinges of orange and red. Cole says it is prone to fire blight. A prime example of *Sorbus* “Joseph Rock” is located immediately outside of the UBC Botanical Garden entrance.

8. ***Acer shirasawanum palmatifolium***. This Japanese maple is related to *Acer shirasawanum* “Aureum” or golden full moon maple. A beautiful example is located in the Lower Asian Way. It has attractive foliage during three seasons. In the Spring, bright green, almost translucent leaves emerge. In Fall, colours are bright blends of yellow and gold which are mottled and shaded with crimson. Leaves are 8 to 10 centimetres in diameter. It is a sturdy, upright small tree growing to 8 metres high and is adaptable to a variety of cultural conditions.



In the October Garden ... a new feature

The following is a new monthly feature, intended to complement Douglas’ Bouquet [*Douglas focuses on trees and shrubs ... we will consider everything else*]. Members are encouraged to send in digital photos of features of interest in their own gardens, or in gardens they have visited, during the current month. It is hoped that this will be a useful resource for members wishing to add colour or interest to their own gardens, and also as an outlet for members wishing to share their gardens with other members. Contributions can be sent by email ... deadline is a few days before month end ... max 10 Mb per email ... no limit on the number of pictures ... if we have an excess, we will save them for the same month next year. If we get contributions in June and July, we will issue July and August newsletters, with an extended photo gallery, plus any summer gardening news that can’t wait until September ... after all, gardening is a 12 month-a-year passion, so why not share our interests for 12 months?



Crinodendron hookerianum

.....Beamish garden, Nanaimo



Cyclamen sp ... UK



Colchicum 'Waterlily' ... UK



Sternbergia lutea ... Kew, UK

If you don't have a digital camera, or are not sufficiently conversant with computers to send .jpg files, but still want to share features of interest in your garden ... just contact us, and we will drop around to take suitable photos

To get things rolling, we offer these photos ... all taken in October ... in our garden, and in English gardens. November will be more of a challenge ... so grab your cameras, slip on your wellies, and see what you can find ...



Kniphofia sp ... UK



Hesperantha coccinea ... UK



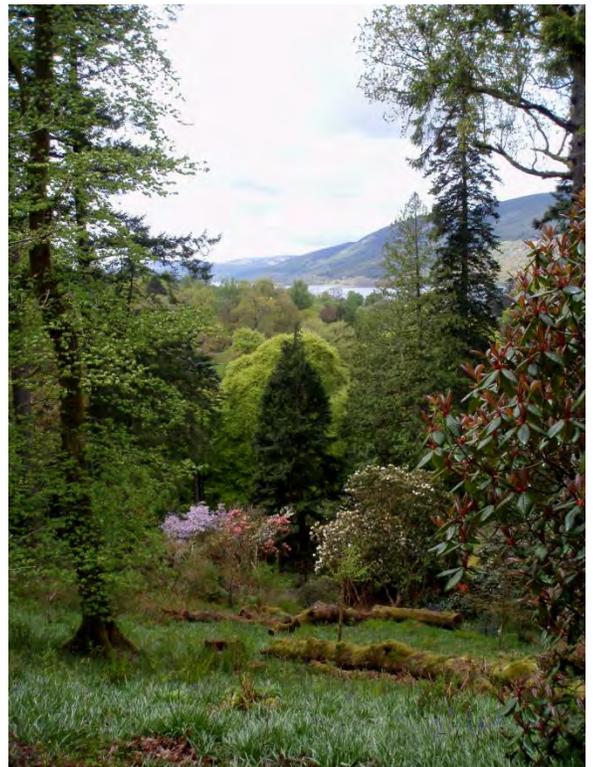
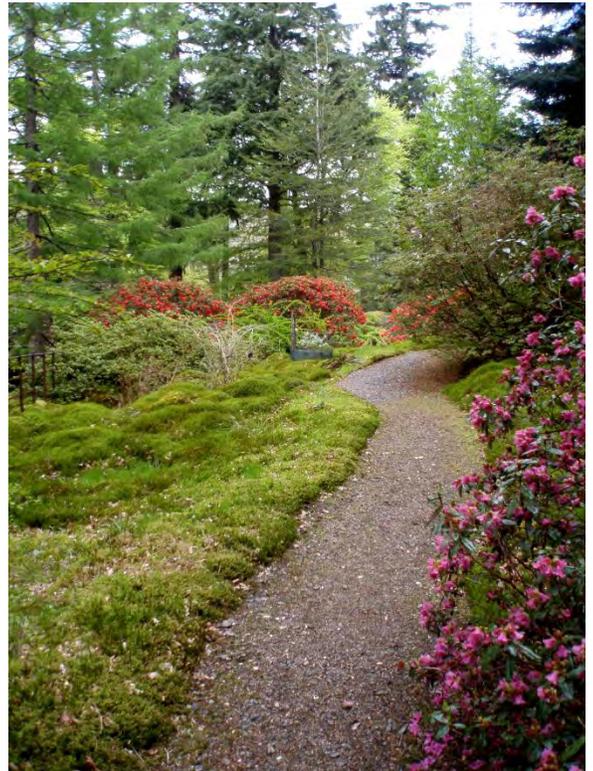
Hesperantha coccinea ... Lions Bay

A Grand Tour of Scotland ... by Rob Talbot

Rob was born and raised in Vancouver and studied Ornamental Horticulture at UBC. His parents, Brian and Ray Talbot, are long-standing VRS members. In 1991, he went to England to work in Windsor Great Park for a year. When his year was up he decided to find another job there and has been there ever since. Since 2001, he has been working in the Arboretum at the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew.

For many years, my partner and I have holidayed with friends who live on the Isle of Skye off the northwest coast of Scotland. This year rather than take the train up to the Kyle of Lochalsh as we normally do, we decided to drive. This gave us the opportunity to visit more of Scotland on the way up.

We set off on our holiday on May 15, 2010. On the first day we drove from London to Moffat and stayed in a Bed & Breakfast. This is about half-way to Skye from London. On the second day we drove to Oban via Loch Lomond (but did not see Nessie). This is a much shorter journey and gave us time to see **Ardkinglas Woodland Garden** (<http://www.ardkinglas.com>). Ardkinglas is a 12,000 acre estate, located near the head of Loch Fyne, in a steep-sided valley. With its temperate climate and high rainfall, the rhododendrons and conifers grow like mad. In fact, Ardkinglas has the largest Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) Western Red Cedar (*Thuja plicata*) and Grand Fir (*Abies grandis*) in Britain. This was like coming home for me. Here in London we can grow these conifers, but the low rainfall means they do not luxuriate as they do in Vancouver. At the top of the gardens are the ruins of an old watermill. We were there on the 16th of May and were able to see many rhododendrons in full flower. There are many nice views from the gardens across Loch Fyne as well as up the hill into the Highlands. A slightly worrying sight on the day of our visit was a foot bath to



cleanse your shoes to prevent the spread of Sudden Oak Death (*Phytophthora ramorum*). This disease has been found nearby and they are hoping to prevent it entering the gardens. From Ardinglas it was on to Oban for the night. Some of you may remember there was a rhododendron conference there many years ago. I was not able to attend but I can tell you that Oban is a very picturesque port and there are many gardens, hikes and islands to visit from there. You could spend a whole holiday in Oban.

From Oban the next day it was an easy drive to Mallaig to take the ferry to Skye. Once settled in with our friends, we like to do lots of walking, hiking and garden visiting while we are there. The weather was with us for once, and although a bit cold, we had sun for all our garden visits.

The first garden we visited on Skye was at **Dunvegan Castle** (<http://www.dunvegancastle.com>). Dunvegan is the seat of the Clan MacLeod. We have been visiting this garden for many years now and it was a bit run down, but recently a new Laird has taken over and is rejuvenating the gardens. The walled garden is particularly notable for its



Dunvegan Castle Garden

improvement. A jumbled pile of slate that may once have been some sort of

sculpture has now been

cleared away and replaced by a water lily pond. Once again the main woodland garden is full of rhododendron and their companion plants. Additionally, this garden has a good display of Broom (*Cystis*). On the day we visited, the smell of the Gorse was overpowering. This is fine if, like me, you like coconut, but our group of four was evenly split as to loving or hating it.



Dunvegan Castle

The second garden we visited was a small privately-owned garden called **The Braes** (<http://braes-retreat.co.uk>). The owners are friends of our hosts and invited us for a look around.



They have a self-catering cottage attached to their house and guests are welcome to make use of

the garden. The garden is set into a precipitous ravine and looks across the water to the island of Raasay. Although the area surrounding the property is very windswept and barren, tucked down into the ravine the plants are quite safe from the ravages of the gales that frequently sweep across the island.



**Rob Talbot and Nicky Macpherson
... at Attadale**

to London from South Africa in order to study art. This love of art is evident in the sculpture she has placed in the gardens. The contrast between the cultivated garden and the wild highland and lochs surrounding it is striking. The garden is a little oasis from the wilds of the Highlands, and yet you feel that if (Heaven forefend) the garden and house were to be abandoned, in a few short years it would all disappear into the wilderness. If you like the idea of staying in this little paradise there are self-catering cottages here too. [the Attadale website lists *arboreum* as the toughest and healthiest *rhodo*, as well as *yunnanense*, *davidsonianum*, *griersonianum*, *oreotrephes*, *cinnabarinum roylei* and *xanthocodon*]



Attadale House and Gardens

The next garden on our tour was **Armadale Castle** (<http://www.clandonald.com>). Armadale is the seat of the Clan Donald. This garden is a bit different from others on the Island in that it is on the sheltered southeastern corner of the island and trees can grow to a great height. Elsewhere on Skye, anything over 20 feet tall is likely to blow down in the next winter gale. It is sheltered enough here for Chilean Fire Bush (*Embothrium coccineum*) to grow. The great house burnt down in 1855. For many years the gardens were allowed to languish. Now they are gradually being restored and new bits



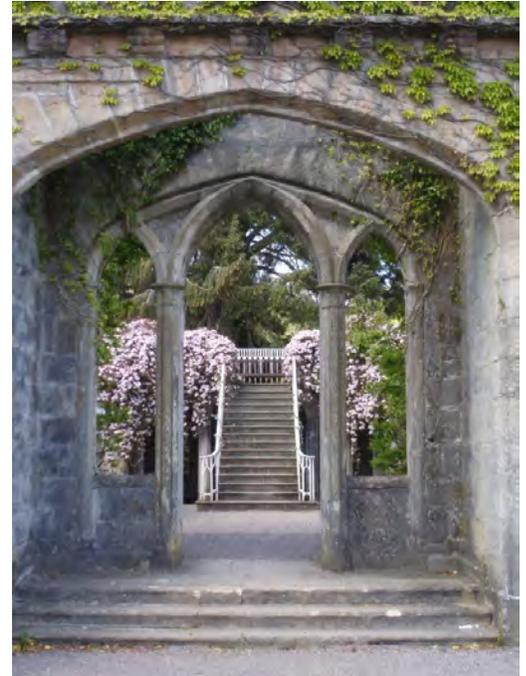
Embothrium coccineum

added as well.

Finally, I should mention our hosts' garden. Our hosts have lived on Skye for 16 years and took over a modest-size front garden with rockery, beds for annuals and some tough shrubs such as *Olearia x haastii* that can withstand the winter gales dumping salt spray on them. Living on the exposed northwest side of the island means they get the full brunt of the storms, although the effects of the Gulf Stream mean that it does not get very cold. A hedge of spruce (*Picea*) keeps the worst of the wind and salt off the front garden but does nothing for the back garden which was, until five years ago, a croft (field). This part of the garden has a more natural feel to it. Every time we visit, I am anxious to see what has survived, what has thrived and what has died. Success in this garden is all about finding microclimates, either shelter from the wind or from too much water. We brought two *Tamarix* with us this year as a present. They will be fine with the salt spray but the difficulty was in finding somewhere where the ground was not waterlogged. Once these are established they will create

some shelter for more plants behind them. Because of bedrock near the surface and constant rainfall running off the croft behind the house, many parts of the garden have shallow, constantly wet soil. In one spot just outside the guest bedroom, a naturalistic pond was created simply by digging a hole. The water running off the croft keeps it full except in the driest part of the summer. The local wildlife soon found the pond and during our visit it was full of tadpoles as well as caddis fly larvae feeding on them. Earlier this year a hen harrier was spotted eating a rock dove next to the pond.

I hope this gives you a feel for the west coast of Scotland and especially Skye.



Armadale Castle



Tamarix

News from Oz ... Springtime in Australia ... Part II ... by Milton and Chris Bowman

The following was sent to us by Chris and Milton in mid-September, but, due to space restrictions, could not be published in the October Membership News ...

These were all taken in our garden this morning [19 Sept 2010]. Spring is late this year so not much is out yet. Stand by for many more when the rhodos come out in a month or two.

The daffodil patch is in the pony

paddock hence the electric fence! The ponies are enjoying breakfast and not presently attracted to daffodils. These have been here for over 50 years & never lifted. They were originally used for Red Cross fundraisers each spring. Now they are just a pleasure to look at and pick for family & friends. The large camellia is „Tiffany“, and is smothered in blossom. The small rhodo is „President Roosevelt“ variegated. We planted it 2 years ago and it is coming along nicely.



Later when the season improves we will keep you supplied with photos of our big old rhodos which usually turn on a spectacular display. They won't flower until November and December, and because the season is late, we will still have some of the really late ones for Christmas ... you

may have some early ones by then!

Cheers, Chris & Milton



Rhododendron 'President Roosevelt'

Camellia 'Tiffany'

Joe & Joanne's Enhanced Woodland ... Part 1 ... by Joe Ronsley

A few months back, we twisted Joe's arm, gently of course, to write something for the *Membership News*. To our great delight, he has sent us a series of 7(!) articles on the planning and philosophy that went into their garden in Lions Bay ... so now we can put our feet up and relax for the next 7 months ...

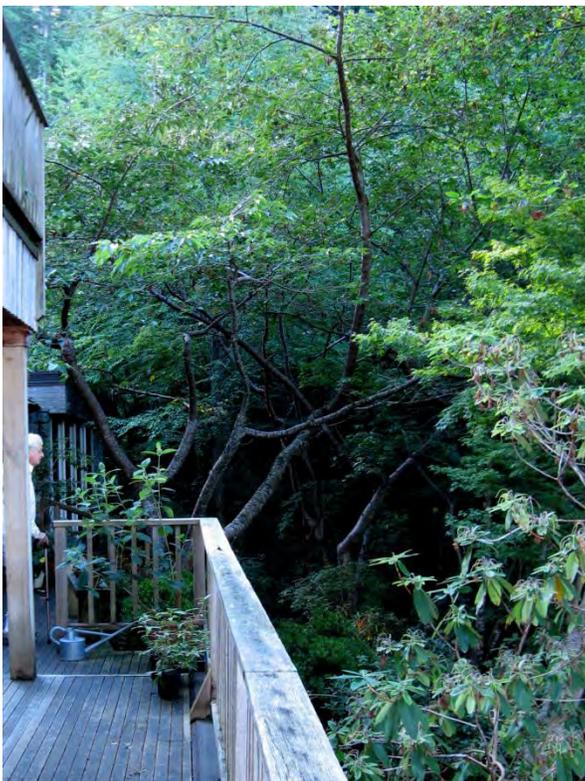
There are a few principles, or guidelines, concerning our garden in Lions Bay that were in place from the start, and that continue to hold, if at times in modified form. Bob Wright asked me to write something for the *Membership News*, and since I know more about our own garden than about anything else horticultural, I'll write about these principles in a series over the coming months.

The first principle was that it should be a woodland garden, and this dominates all the other plans. We wanted to preserve as many native conifers, dogwoods, and even the larger big-leaf maples as possible. As the years went by, however, we learned that the trees had to be thinned more than we thought, and that they would need other attention. They couldn't simply be left in their natural state if there was to be any garden at all.

There was no issue about removing nearly all the alders. We must have removed nearly a hundred of them. The alder, *Alnus rubra*, is a pioneer tree, thickets of which develop where logging has



taken place. It is not an unpleasant tree, the way a cottonwood can be, but it is not very interesting either. Alders, along with blackberries and other „undesirables“, fill in newly-exposed areas and have an important ecological function in injecting nitrogen into the soil ... at least, so I am told. We also cut out most of the native cherries, and some of the big-leaf maples. This maple, *Acer macrophyllum*, is not as beautiful as the sugar and red maples in eastern North America, *Acers saccharum* and *rubrum*, and certainly not anywhere near as beautiful as many Asian maples. It is larger than any of these, however, and though it will multiply in the sunshine, becoming something of a weed, the occasional large tree in the woods is wonderful, with its rough, rugged-looking bark, much of it covered by moss, and with licorice ferns growing out of the crevices. With a little pruning, big-leaf maples make a distinctly positive contribution to the woodland garden, if for nothing but the huge mass of their lower trunks and buttresses. The leaves turn a good golden yellow in the fall.





There are also several madrones, *Arbutus menziesii*, on the property, mostly in the far southwest corner. I'm not sure if they were in place from the beginning, or if they are the result of my scattering a couple of handfuls of seed that I collected on Gabriola Island. They do populate the immediate surrounding area, growing in substantial colonies primarily on exposed banks and from rock crevices facing the sea, so it may be that ours predate my seed scattering. This is pretty close to the northern end of their range ... close, that is, but not at it. We found them growing plentifully in the area of Desolation Sound, and an old commercial fisherman told Randal Drader, a charter boat operator there, who told me, that the single most northerly *Arbutus* tree grew 42 kilometres north of Lund, BC. *Arbutus* are notable for their striking, smooth red trunks and shiny evergreen foliage, and are of

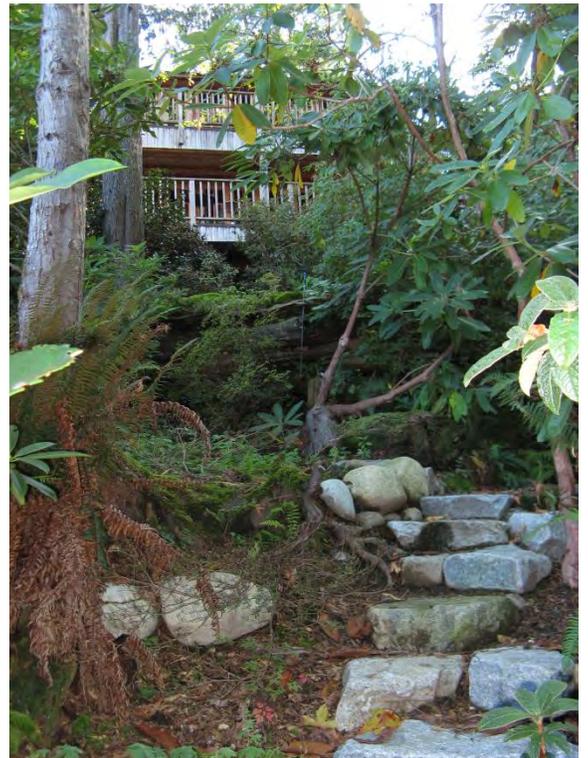
considerable interest to visiting European horticulturists. The old leaves drop in mid-summer, which habit can be a nuisance if the tree is growing in the middle of a lawn, but is perfectly acceptable in a natural setting, or the woods.



Our native dogwoods, *Cornus nuttallii*, have, with a couple of exceptions - cutting out one or two aberrant stems from a clump - all been left in place. Of course! When freed from excessive competition, and opened up to light and air, they make a spectacular display in early May. They are our best native flowering trees by far, and we now see large masses of the beautiful white bracts on our many dogwoods as they branch out across the paths and creek. The bracts begin opening a kind of creamy yellow late in April, and as they develop turn to pure

white, glowing luminously, especially on darker days, or in the dim light of dusk. The trees themselves tend to sucker, and will sprout from a fallen or cut tree, so that along with single trunks we have clumps of as many as seven. They are best viewed from above or at an angle rather than from below, since the „flowers“ face upward from the branches.

It is the conifers, of course, that comprise the dominant trees of our native woodland. Over the years we removed many of the smaller ones, but no large ones. This is second-growth forest - the area has evidently been logged twice, once early in the 20th century, and again, in the 1920s or „30s. The logging that was done was selective, and many of the larger trees growing on the property now were probably too small to be cut at the time. Western Red Cedar (*Thuja plicata*) and Western Hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*) dominate, followed by Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) - the firs following after the other two only because they were the first choice to be selectively logged - a few relatively young Grand Firs (*Abies grandis*), and three western, „Pacific“, yews (*Taxus brevifolia*). Each of these species has its own special aesthetic features: the buttresses of the mature Western Red Cedar, the grace and fine texture of the hemlock, the bark and stature of the Douglas Fir, the beauty of the foliage and the narrow spire formed by the Grand Fir, the picturesque shape of the yew.



No really significant, mature conifers have been cut down, despite a letter from Thomas Pakenham, author of three beautiful books on „Remarkable Trees“, thanking us for his stay in our home, which he says „was perfect“, and then goes on to say, very kindly, „I don't think I've ever stayed in a private house where the owners had taken such trouble over the details of the building“, but then spoiling it all by concluding with „And I left with the strong conviction that you would be cutting down all the Douglas firs, Hemlock spruces [sic], et al. which hide the most poetic view in the world“. Of all people! I know he couldn't mean it, at least the part about cutting down the trees, even though none of them is „remarkable“. I accept fully, however, as a sign of a refined and discriminating taste, all his compliments! One can never be too selective in interpreting and



accepting criticism from one's friends. In places where the option exists, there are in the world, as they say, two types of people, those who love trees, and those who will wreak whatever havoc on nature necessary in order to have an uninterrupted, distant view. Granted, the wording does skew the issue slightly. Nevertheless, it sounds fair to me!

But to be even fairer, Thomas does raise an important and relevant issue. It is true that the Village of Lions Bay overlooks what must be one of the most beautiful natural scenes anywhere. We overlook the water, broken by islands and with snow-capped mountains in the distance on the other side. But as Thomas suggests, for us to have an uncompromised view we would have to cut down our trees. Not only our own trees, actually, but also those of several of our neighbours! Our choice, then, to the extent that the choice was ours, was whether to have an uninterrupted distant view of sea and mountains, or a partial view with a woodland garden in the foreground. Since the length of our property is in the direction of the view, and is downhill as well, in order to have the

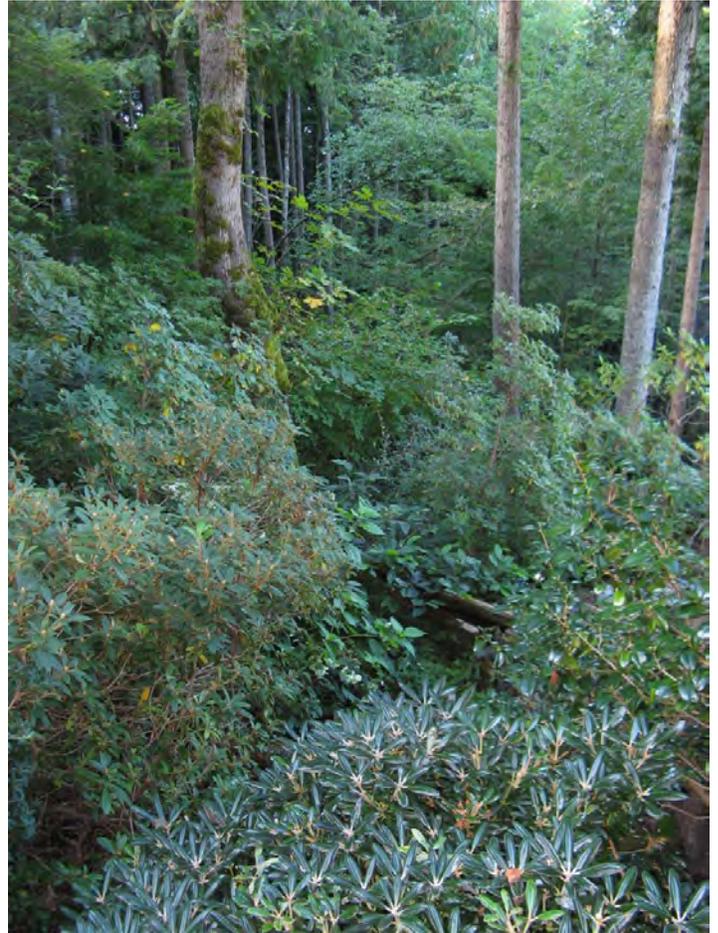
uninterrupted distant view an awful lot of trees would have had to be removed, amounting to considerable devastation of the forest. The distant view would be spectacular, but what would we have at our feet? Certainly not the kind of garden we've been talking about.

Then again, the operative word here may be „distant“, since a view into an open woodland is really not very unpleasant, to say the least, and there is also much to be said for the aesthetics of the distant view seen through the trees. While an unobstructed distant view may be had easily from upper floors of high-rise condominiums, we get a deeper and more lasting pleasure in being able to walk among the trees, literally to take a walk in the woods. The distant view is of a world far away, a world to look at rather than to live in, while we actually do live in the world that provides our scenic foreground, and in all its beauty it becomes our world. In compensation for the loss of the distant, spectacular panorama of sea and mountains, moreover, the view into our woodland offers a scene more filled with life, which consequently provides a more sustained interest. So for us the distant view, while not undervalued or entirely eliminated, has had to be compromised. And, taking the „high road“, I think we are being more ecologically responsible in preserving our wooded environment. After all, there does seem to be something basically wrong about moving into the woods only to cut down the trees.

Thinning, however, was crucial. By removing smaller trees we gained a greater sense of depth into the woods, and the remaining larger trunks took on more prominence and stature. It would be a mistake to remove all the smaller trees, since it is important to have trees of different ages as well as different species to keep the place from looking like a tree farm. But the wall of green was replaced by a deep view into the woods as most of the small trees were removed, many of which actually had no future anyway, because they could never reach the light. If not us, nature would have done the thinning.

Having native trees on the property should be considered a blessing. Too often, it seems, people who find themselves living in a place rich in natural beauty are determined to „clear“ and „landscape“ it in order to make it look like an ordinary dull suburban square plot, without large trees and with typically inappropriate lawn and bedding plants. It is much better, it seems to me, to work with nature, than to work against it. So the trees remain, and we love them. In fact, I might be what is called a „tree hugger“. Actually, I am not a „card-carrying tree hugger“ though, because I have never hugged a tree in protest. I am only one in spirit. I suppose I could be called an „armchair tree hugger“.

But preserving the trees does not necessarily mean leaving them alone.



... to be continued



Editor's note ... for those of you who have not been to Lions Bay, this is the view to which Joe refers ... looking south, with West Vancouver and Horseshoe Bay on the left, and Bowen Island on the right

MEMBERS' FORUM

The following question was sent to us recently by a lady in Alberta ... any suggestions?

- Hello ! ... I live in Cold Lake, Alberta. (300kms NE of Edmonton). I saw a TV program with regards to Capt. Dick Steele [*from Nova Scotia*]. I am interested in rhododendrons. They are so beautiful !. Can you put me in contact with someone who lives in Alberta (if possible), or closest to my district/area. I would like to either write, email, or phone (toll free) for a catalogue of the type of rhodos that would grow in our area. Thank you very much ... *Bunny Ayers*
 - You certainly do like a challenge, don't you? ... most of the rhodos that we grow in the Vancouver area would not be suitable, as they are only hardy to about -15 C ... there are, however, a number of small-leaved rhodos that grow in places like Labrador and northern Ontario/Quebec, and Siberia, that are good to -30 C or more ... this is assuming that you want to grow them outside all year round ... if you want to grow in containers, that can be moved indoors during the winter, and protected from freezing, then the sky is the limit ... the only constraint being that they don't grow too large, so they don't become too difficult to move ... We will ask the membership for ideas, and get back to you in a few weeks ... in the meantime, I recommend the following website, to investigate rhodos www.hirsutum.info ... enjoy ... *Bob Wright*

On our way down to the conference in Florence last month, we passed through this town, just east of Portland, Oregon ... not far from Mike Stewart's Dover Nursery ... very appropriately named.

Thanks to the following, in alphabetical order, for contributing to the *Membership News*: Milton and Chris Bowman, Don Haslam, Douglas Justice, Jennifer Lamb, Justine Murdy, Joe Ronsley, Charlie Sale and Rob Talbot



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Please send your contributions to: rj_wright@telus.net

or by mail to Box 266, Lions Bay, BC V0N 2E0 ...
or by phone to (604) 921-9370

Attribution will be given for all contributions, which may be edited for spelling, grammar, and length.

Bob & Jo Wright