

ARS Whidbey Island Chapter NEWSLETTER

Website: www2.whidbey.net/dapont/ARS

Meets the 4th Wednesday of each Month
Fire District 5 Headquarters Station
215 East Race Road, Coupeville, WA

April 2007

Wed, April 25th - Potluck 6pm Greenbank Progressive Hall

Program: *Richie Steffen*

Righteous Rhodies and
The Plants That Love Them

Richie Steffen of the Miller Botanical Garden will make a slide presentation focusing on one of his favorite groups of plants: Species Rhododendrons. This show is filled with colorful shots of the wonderful flowers and foliage of this genus as well as his favorite woodland plants and planting combinations.

Richie is also working with the nonprofit Pacific Northwest Horticultural Conservancy whose current goal is to purchase the old Heronswood Nursery property in order to preserve the plant collections. He will give us an update on the progress of the project.

An auction will follow the program so don't forget your wallets loaded with cash!

Calendar of Upcoming Events

April 21 Chapter Garden Tour/Plant Sale
April 25 Meeting/Potluck/Auction
Richie Steffen, Species Rhododendrons
May 1-3 Vancouver Island Garden Tour
May 23 Chapter Meeting
August Chapter Picnic
Sept 26 Chapter Meeting
Oct 12-14 ARS Regional Conference
Cleveland, OH
Nov 14 Pie Social/Annual Meeting
Dec 8 Chapter Holiday Dinner

Plant Sale Revisited



We're having *another* Plant Sale at the Greenbank Farm! We thought we'd give a new location a try with the plants left over from last month's sale so we're teaming up with the Greenbank Garden Club for their spring sale.

Help is needed at the sale from 8:30am – 2pm. Please contact **Stephen Schwarzmann**, 678-1948 or sschwarzmann@msn.com if you can assist... AND be sure to drop by to pick up a plant or two as well.

A Rhododendron Day, April 21st

You had better pack a bag lunch so you can eat on the run and not miss any of the rhododendron happenings on April 21st.

1. Five gardens will be open to you for our **Garden Tour**. Spend the day visiting all five or just visit one or two.

Doug Kirk

3830 Goldfinch Lane, Clinton
Open: 9:30AM-Noon

Frank Fujioka

4636 Rhodie Lane, Freeland
Open: 9:30AM-Noon

Bill and Mary Stipe

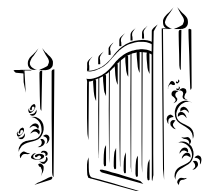
2970 S Smugglers Cove Rd, Greenbank
Open: 9:30AM-noon 1:00PM-3:30PM

Kate and David Dickerson

270 Kineth Point Place, Coupeville
Open: 1:00PM-3:30PM

Marjorie and John Bachert

15 N. Fawn Run Drive, Coupeville
Open: 2:30PM-4:30PM



2. Rhododendrons that were not sold at our **Plant Sale** last month will be on sale at the Greenbank Farm from 10am-2pm in unison with the Greenbank Garden Club's plant sale.

3. **Meerkerk's Festival of Flowers** will be in full swing. Stop by for a garden stroll, learn about flower traditions around the world, and hear the Trinity Bell Choir ringing-in the Gardens in bloom.

Potluck – 6pm – Greenbank Progressive Hall

From the Prez

Bill Stipe



We have lots of interesting things coming up: our Members Garden Tours April 21; Plant sale at the Greenbank Farm also on April 21; the Vancouver Island Garden tour, May 1,2,3; our Chapter Potluck dinner and meeting April 25 and it's time to start deadheading.

So many things to do and so little time! There is still time to plant rhododendrons and fertilize established plants. Weeds need to be pulled and rhodies need to be pruned.

Don't forget the Seattle Rhododendron Society is having their truss show at the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden on Mother's Day weekend. If you have never visited the Species Garden this would be a good time to see it.

Don't forget we will pick our candidates for "Rhododendron of the Year" at our next meeting. Try to invite a friend, neighbor, associate, or relative to the meeting. They might win one of the raffle prizes and get started in the wonderful world of Rhododendrons.

Vancouver Island Garden Tour

Need a little holiday... then set aside May 1-3. Vancouver Island's North Island Rhododendron Society has invited us to tour their private gardens in the Courtenay and Comox area. Tuesday and Thursday, May 1st and 3rd, will be spent as travel time with garden tours on Wednesday the 2nd. Currently 15 people have signed up to carpool in 4 cars. A BBQ is planned for arrival day, Tuesday. Contact **Bill Stipe**, wstipe@whidbey.com or 678-8740 for travel and accommodation details.

More Sales & Shows!

Diane Thompson

The Seattle Rhododendron Society invites you to participate in their May Show and Sale at the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden on May 11-13, 2007. This is a new site for the show and the Garden has lots of visitors for the Mother's Day weekend.

Entries will be accepted on Friday, May 11 from 1-4 PM and Saturday, May 12 from 8-9:30 AM.

The show will be open on Saturday and Sunday until 4 PM.

Please enter your trusses, foliage, species plants, plants, photographs, floral displays and educational exhibits for ribbons and trophies.

There will also be plant sales and a raffle.

If you would like to help host and explain rhododendrons to the public it would be appreciated.

SRS is very pleased to be able to have our show at the RSF this year and we hope you will participate with us in showing the beauty of rhododendrons to the public!

Any questions, contact Diane Thompson, Show Chair email: paulanddiane@earthlink.net or 425-481-9075

Meerkerk Invites You

to the dedication of the
New Entry Gatehouse
Sunday, May 6th 1:00 – 3:00 pm

Thanks to Friend of Meerkerk and Major Gift Donor, Nancy Nordhoff, the Gardens are graced with a new gatehouse inspired by the garden house in the Secret Garden of Highgrove, England.

Schedule of Events:

- 1:00 Meet with Friends at the Main Entry
- 1:30 Gatehouse Dedication
- 2:00 Friends Annual Meeting and Pie Social at the New Gazebo near the nursery
- 3:00 Enjoy the Gardens, visit the Nursery, enjoy!

Meerkerk Gardens 2007 Events

April-May	PEAK BLOOM!	Open Daily 9-4
April 21	Meerkerk Magic, A Festival of Flowers	Noon-4
May 13	Mother's Day Harp Concert	Noon-4
August 4	Meerkerk Medley	4:30-9
October 6	WI Farm Tour, Harvest Celebration & Autumn Rhododendron Sale	9-4



Busted Myths

Myth: Roses need to be pruned heavily each year, down to 1-foot stems.

Fact: Know the type of rose before reaching for the loppers. Climbing roses, old shrub roses, and many modern roses bloom best when lightly pruned.

Myth: Roses require lots of chemicals.

Fact: Selecting disease-resistant roses such as Rosa rugosa will reduce problems. Plant them in sunny spots.

(Written by Mary Robson and Holly Kennel, Washington State University Cooperative Extension/King, Snohomish and Pierce counties. Seattle Times)

Meeting Reminder

Bring...

- Potluck dish, Potluck dish, Potluck dish
... and friendship to share!
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Successes Measured by Smiles *Boris Bauer*

How do we measure our rhododendron successes and experiences? To the beginner it might be "it's two years old and still living." Or "I got three bloom buds this year on the same plant!" Don't snicker at this. We all were there at some point in this floral journey. Here are some personal thoughts that I bet have put a smile on other gardening faces:

-Remember when your one-gallon plant had grown so much that you had to scrounge under the plant's limbs to move the identification tag out from its original position so that one could read the plant label's identity? The more you did this as the plants grew, the more fun growing rhododendrons became.

-Remember the time when your plant finally got big enough to support its first bird nest and you sat and watched in amazement the parent birds frantically flying in-and-out of your rhododendron maintaining your newest gardening family?

-Remember when you hurriedly planted that rhododendron in the dim of evening's light stating to yourself "oh, this is just temporary" and "I'll move it later?" It's ten years later, the plant is a healthy 7' x 8', and you're still mentally stating "oh, this is just temporary. . ."

-Remember planting that rhododendron which Greer's book stated M and you thought that was for "medium growth habit" and you placed the plant near the path? Now you know that M stands for "mid-season bloom." Your path is obliterated by branches reaching north, east, and west.

-Remember planting two or three plants close together because of the color combination you wanted and you now know that the vivid orange Exbury azalea, "Gibraltar", doesn't combine with anyone except himself?

-Remember planting that rhododendron right outside your kitchen window knowing that you'll "be able to trim it back if it ever gets too large?" Today you have to turn on the kitchen lights, night or day, just to find the refrigerator.

-Remember giving your favorite rhododendron away to a special friend who just had to have that certain plant only to learn later that she/he really meant they wanted a Southern Magnolia! #\$\$%&!??

-Remember how you removed some broken branches and just for the heck of it rammed them into the ground in a moist remote part of the garden? A few years later the mother plant died and these "branchlets" are now ready for transplanting.

-Remember not being able to find your identification pen, but planting the rhododendron knowing that you'll never forget such an easy-to-remember name? Ten years later you are still repeating to garden guests "oh, I know the name, it just slipped my mind."

-Remember being realistic with the available space you have to maintain a rhododendron garden and selecting just the plants you really wanted and needed? They are all planted now, but what about the eight new plants you just unloaded from the van, the twelve you ordered from a catalogue and the ten unique plants you discovered on the Internet.

-Remember purchasing a unique garden reading chair just because of the wonderful cooling shade provided by that nine-foot rhododendron? You planted it not understanding that the book's referral to 5' was only the "first 10-years growth". It's fun experiencing the years fly by when you own a rhododendron garden!

-Remember seeing that beautiful black & gold rhododendron floral display glistening in the afternoon's sun only to realize upon approach that it's a King snake sun bathing and displaying herself for all to see?

-Remember getting all those nursery rhododendrons at such good prices wondering "how do they do it"? Three years later they bloom and you find out that R. x John's Neon Red is R. Roseum Elegans, R. x Purty Peppermint Patty is R. English Roseum, and R. x Big White Daddy is R. maximum. Yes, labels do get crossed. Likewise, we also get some wonderful nice positive surprises.

-Remember thinking you had the "only plant of its kind" in your chapter, only to find the same plant, but twice as big, in a new member's garden two miles away from your house?

-Remember telling friends that R. Catawbiense Boursalt is a nice rhododendron, but for some reason your plant of this cross is somehow uniquely bigger and better than anyone else's? So an expert



from far, far away travels to your garden and states upon seeing your plant "Yep, yours is bigger and somewhat better since where you planted it is obviously right at the end of your septic field drainage line."

-Remember going to a rhododendron plant auction and preparing yourself to get that special variegated North Korean deciduous fragrant azalea with the peppermint striped flowers? You stick a twenty-dollar bill in your pocket reassuring your spouse that this will be your only purchase of the day. Then the bidding starts at \$40.00 and quickly passes the \$70.00 mark.

-Remember receiving a plant from a friend with only a "2" bloom rating and you planted it in your garden strictly "for friendship or out of guilt". Today it's very special because you now realize that it's not necessarily how pretty the bloom, but recognize how beautiful the bloom is - when it blooms. Those #2's sometimes bloom when nothing else is appearing in the garden, and you appreciate your friends even more.

You have more examples of what made you smile, I'm sure. Continue planting, roaming your garden on day's evening light, and remember what's best about your gardening experiences.

(Reprinted from the William Bartram Chapter Newsletter)

The Importance (or not) of Spelling

If you can read the following paragraph, you have an exceptional mind. Only 55 people out of 100 are able to read this. Can you?

I cdnuolt blveiee taht I cluod aulacly uesdnatnrd waht I was rdanieg. The phaonmneal pweor of the hmuan mnid, aoccdnrng to a resechrear at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it dseno't mtaetr in waht oerdr the ltteres in a wrod are, the olny iproamtnt tihng is taht the frsit and lsat ltteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can sitll raed it whotuit a pboerlm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteer by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe. Azanmig huh? And I awliyas tghuhot slpeling was ipmorant!

...and the translation is...

I couldn't believe that I could actually understand what I was reading. The phenomenal power of the human mind, according to a researcher at Cambridge University, it doesn't matter in what order the letters in a word are, the only important thing is that the first and last letter be in the right place. The rest can be a total mess and you can still read it without a problem. This is because the human mind does not read every letter by itself, but the word as a whole. Amazing huh? And I always thought spelling was important!

(Reprinted from the North Island's Newsletter, The RhodoTeller)

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*The man in the wilderness said to me,
How many strawberries
grow in the sea?*

*I answered him as I thought good,
As many red herrings as grow in the wood.*



Mother Goose

Please submit articles of interest for May Newsletter by **5/11/07**

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