

# Whidbey Rhodies News

whidbeyrhodies.org

May 2010

Meets the 4th Wednesday of each month ❖ Race Road Firehouse, 1164 Race Rd, Coupeville WA  
7pm Refreshments, 7:20 Meeting & Program

**Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 26th**  
**Program: Shirley Rock**  
**Hardy Fuchsias, All You Need to Know**

**Shirley Rock** is a member and past president of each of the Northwest Fuchsia Society, North Cascades Fuchsia Society, and Pilchuck Fuchsia Society and a certified judge for fuchsia shows. She is the editor and charter member of the ARS Pilchuck Chapter, Treasurer of the ARS Komo Kulshan Chapter, and membership chair for the American Rhododendron Society. Gardening is her second love, family comes first. Her presentation will illustrate the many varieties of hardy fuchsia in her gardens, how she plants new ones, fertilizes, winterizes, and propagates more. These lovely plants grow right along with rhodies, and bloom when the rhodies are resting in preparation for winter and spring.

Shirley will also be bringing plants for the raffle and plants for sale!



**Calendar of Upcoming Events**

- May 26 ..... Chapter Meeting  
Shirley Rock: All About Hardy Fuchsias
- August ..... Annual Picnic
- Sept 22 ..... Chapter Meeting  
Judith Jones: Ferns as Companion Plants
- Oct 27 ..... Chapter Meeting  
Dennis Bottemiller: Big Leaf Propagation
- Nov 17 ..... Pie Social/Annual Meeting  
Election of Officers
- Dec 5 (Sunday) ..... Holiday Party  
@ Christopher's in Coupeville

**The Ultimate Rhododendron Conference - Vancouver, BC**

*Don Smart*

You heard me announcing this Vancouver conference for several months. Well, it is now past and I was very impressed with the programs they put on. It was organized by Ron Knight, ARS District 1 Director and Douglas Justice, Associate Director and Curator of Collections at UBC Botanical Garden. Ron is a retired teacher and Doug teaches both the Agro-ecology and Masters of Landscape Architecture programs at UBC.

The conference was held at the UBC Botanical Garden which is right along Puget Sound in SW Vancouver. It is a beautiful and diverse garden. Having the classes there allowed the instructors to say “Instead of looking at this in the book—let’s take a walk in the garden.”

Friday morning we had an extensive tour of the UBC garden guided by Douglas. In the afternoon we toured Vancouver’s VanDusen Botanical garden guided by Ron Knight, Roy Forrester, one of the original designers of the garden and Todd Major, and local plantsman.



*Ron Knight on bench. Todd Major and Roy Forrester on left. Photo: Don Smart*

On Saturday and Sunday the classes were split into 2 skill or interest levels. Ron Knight taught the Level 1 participants, and Douglas taught the Level 2 classes which I attended.

It was a great 3 days and I will be giving you more detail in future issues on what I learned.



Cookie Reminder:  
Joan Bell & Ann Lee

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*Have you deadheaded a rhodie today?*

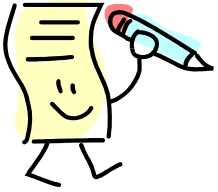
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## From The Prez

Pat Sasson



Hello all my fellow rhodie lovers!

What a beautiful season we have had for the rhododendrons! We did something right on Whidbey Island this year as the rest of the country has had terrible weather.

I still have rhodies that are just coming into bloom, so the season goes on and on. But I also have those who have finished blooming and now need deadheading. I have a friend who says he only deadheads those rhodies he likes; the general feeling, however, is that the removal of flowers when finished blooming will not only make the plants look nicer but also will insure a better bud set. So I am being a good girl and deadheading. Thank heavens they do not all bloom at once.

I just read something interesting in the Eugene Chapter's newsletter. The editor, Frances Burns, went to the April Conference in British Columbia and came back with this suggestion that I think worthy of passing on. "For root weevil, in addition to nematodes, we were encouraged to welcome ground-feeding birds. Birds, frogs, toads, shrews, ground beetles and hedgehogs munch on root weevils. A root weevil by any of 5 names in the PNW is still a root weevil that can adapt to insecticides – some weevils are resistant to all insecticides used for their control. In addition, insecticides kill the weevils' ground beetle predators and are counterproductive."

Any comments? We can talk about this briefly at the meeting next week but in the meantime, does anyone know where I can purchase a copy of hedgehogs to put up in my woods?

I hear congratulations are in order to Mike and Emily Munzo who were married this past Saturday at Trinity Lutheran Church.

Thanks to all who worked on the Big Leaf Valley yesterday. Unfortunately, I had prior family plans and was not able to be there.

Looking forward to seeing you at the meeting. Bring friends!

Pat

## Dollar Table... don't forget!

You've been out in the garden dividing and cutting back those plants that have gotten a bit out of hand. Now what to do with those divisions that you just can't find another place for but can't bear to toss on the compost heap... Keep **the dollar table** in mind for these cast-offs! What you're discarding may be just what another club member is looking for. All the proceeds from the dollar table go directly to our fun activities. And don't forget to share any spare seedlings as well.



## Meerkerk Notes

Meerkerk Gardens is cared for by a dedicated group of volunteers. Friends from the American Rhododendron Society, local garden clubs, Island County Master Gardeners and our community assist throughout the year. There are many ways you can volunteer to help at the Gardens:

- **Every Thursday in Spring: Grateful Deadheaders** Join the Meerkerk Gardens' *Grateful Deadheaders*, 9am to Noon, and receive a hand made tie-dyed T-shirt! Bring your favorite pruners and gloves and team up with us as we deadhead the rhododendrons and beautify the world.

- **Work Parties:** Join us for monthly work parties the 2nd Saturday of each month, 8:45-12:00. We share a potluck lunch at noon.

- **Wednesday Construction Team:** Join our crew in building and repairing structures as needed in the Gardens, 9-noon. Add your name to the call list 678-1912.

- **Thursday Mornings: Hands-on-Horticulture** Enjoy working with gardening volunteers and the Meerkerk staff on horticultural projects in the Gardens.

- **Independent Opportunities:** Work on your own schedule on a solo or team project in the Gardens or your home office. Contact Kristi: meerkerk@whidbey.net.



### Rhododendron Care & Pruning Workshop

Friday, May 21, 1-4 pm

Are your rhodies looking a bit wild? Do you lack confidence to give them a hair cut? Fear no more ~ Learn from the Pros!



Frank Fujioka, Don Lee, Lisa Irwin and Kristi O'Donnell will lead workshop participants through basic rhodie care: planting, soil and situation, fertilization, and pest management in the volunteer cottage then take them out to the garden for a some hands-on pruning. *Please bring your pruners.*

Cost: \$10 - Friends of Meerkerk members  
\$20 - non-members

Payable by cash, check or credit card when you arrive.

To register: Lisa Irwin (360) 331-4065,  
Meerkerk office (360) 678-1912  
Email meerkerk@whidbey.net

### Meerkerk Gardens 2010 Events

August 8 Billet Deux Gypsy Jazz Concert  
August 28 Bluegrass Festival  
October Autumn Rhododendron Sale

Visit [www.meerkerkgardens.org](http://www.meerkerkgardens.org) for event updates.

# Nematodes Control Pests—

if you use them the right way

YOU HAVE A PEST PROBLEM, but you don't want to waste time with something ineffective or, worse, toxic. One chemical-free option for ridding your garden of loathsome insect pests is beneficial nematodes. These naturally occurring, microscopic, soil-dwelling roundworms cause disease to insects, infecting and killing them. They do not, however, infect plants, animals, earthworms, or humans. Of the thousands of species of nematodes, beneficial and nonbeneficial, only a small number are useful to farmers and gardeners. Most are considered innocuous, harmlessly feeding off bacteria and fungi in the soil or dwelling at the bottom of the ocean. Beneficial nematodes, the type sold commercially, may also be referred to in research or on product labels as entomopathogenic nematodes (EPNs). You can't just buy any of these nematodes, however, and toss them down. You need to find the right ones and apply them correctly.

## NOT ALL NEMATODES ACT THE SAME

Nearly 10 of the more than 75 EPN species are sold as beneficial nematodes, but before purchasing them, it helps to understand differences in their behavior. Not all EPN species, for instance, find insects in the same way, which affects the insect pests these nematodes can effectively be used against. For example, one commercialized species, *Steinernema carpocapsae*, searches for hosts on the soil surface by lifting 99 percent of its body from the surface as it awaits a passing insect. The products that contain this species as an active ingredient are, therefore, most effective in controlling mobile, surface-dwelling insects, like cutworms. They would be unlikely to find sedentary, underground insects, like white grubs, because they would be looking in the wrong place. On the other hand, species like *Heterorhabditis bacteriophora* search by crawling through the soil. If white grubs are the target, this would be a good species to apply. The labels of most products list the species of EPN and likely targeted insects, but you can save valuable shop-ping time by visiting the following Web site of The Ohio State University: [www.oardc.ohio-state.edu/nematodes](http://www.oardc.ohio-state.edu/nematodes), which contains a full list of beneficial-nematode sources and other consumer information.

## APPLY THEM DIRECTLY TO THE SOIL

To achieve the best results, you need to know that nematodes have six life stages, but it is during only one of these stages that a nematode can exist without a host.

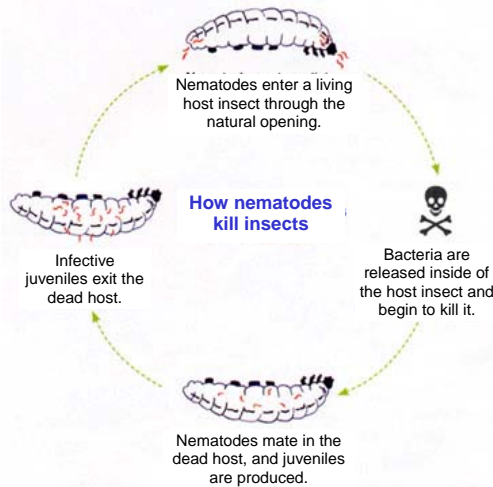
This means EPNs and the products that contain them have a limited life span. EPNs are also susceptible to temperature extremes, so be sure to follow product-label instructions about storage and shelf life or you might apply dead nematodes to your garden. Beware of products that you find in retail outlets that are stored at room temperature; nematodes that are refrigerated have the longest shelf life.

Because little is known about what happens to EPN applications after they hit the ground, it is best to apply them when targeted insects are present. Preventive treatments are risky because the nematodes may perish before the pests arrive. EPN products work best when applied to the soil. There are some other uses, such as applying them to the trunks of trees afflicted with boring insects, but applying them to foliage is generally a waste of time, energy, and money. For the best results, only buy nematode products that specifically list the type of pest you are combating.

Knowing your pests and being mindful of the product you buy and how you apply it can greatly affect the outcome of your nematode pest-fighting experience. When done right, beneficial-nematode applications can be a safe alternative for curbing your insect infestation.

Article by Edwin Lewis, a professor of entomology and nematology at the University of California, Davis.

Fine Gardening Magazine: [www.finegardening.com](http://www.finegardening.com)



## Nematodes have needs

Beneficial nematodes are living creatures susceptible to environmental conditions and require the right setting to survive. For the best results, follow four simple rules:

1. Make sure the area of application is moist when you apply the product.
2. The soil temperature should be at least 60°F for most products to be effective.
3. To avoid exposing EPNs to ultraviolet light, apply them toward the end of the day and irrigate the area immediately after application to wash them into the soil.
4. Match the EPN species to the pest that you are trying to control.

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Please submit articles of interest for Sept Newsletter by 9/10/10

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