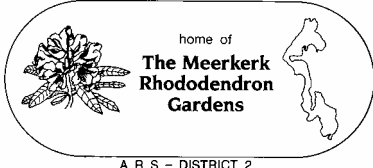


WHIDBEY ISLAND CHAPTER



ARS Whidbey Island Chapter NEWSLETTER

Website: www2.whidbey.net/dapont/ARS

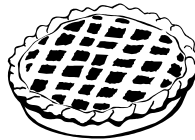
Meets the 4th Wednesday of each Month
Fire District 5 Headquarters Station
215 East Race Road, Coupeville, WA

November 2006

November 15th, 6:30pm, Don't be late!

**Note: This month's meeting is at the Greenbank Progressive Hall
(Behind the Greenbank Store, enter on Bakken Road)**

Pie Social!



All you pie fans better get to the Greenbank Progressive Hall at **6:30** on the dot to line up with your pie shovels and plates. You don't want to be the one at the end of the line at this meeting! AND there's more than just pie to be had. **Steve Hootman** will be talking about his latest trek and we'll be electing our new officers as well.

We've invited the Pilchuck chapter to 'come on down' and join us. They are hardly strangers after joining us at last month's meeting so don't be shy about welcoming them.

Your meeting assignment is a simple one: Bring a precut pie, a serving utensil and you pie appetite!

2006 Holiday Party

Mark a big **X** on your calendar for Saturday December 9th for this year's holiday party. It will be held at *Christopher's* in Coupeville at their **new location** on the corner of Coveland and New Alexander St. I've had a preview of the menu Chef Andreas has put together for us... Yum, you don't want to miss it!



'Santa Bill' and his dancing hat will keep us amused through another rowdy Chinese auction gift exchange. Bring a gift to put under the tree then sit back and enjoy the entertainment this gift exchange always provides.

Watch for a flyer in the mail later this month with all the details.

Election of Officers 2006

We will be voting on the following Officer and Board nominees. The floor will be open for any others who are interested.

President:	Bill Stipe
Vice-President:	Pat Sasson
Secretary/Treasurer:	Marilynn Wright
Director (3yr term):	Stephen Schwarzmann

We also need someone to orchestrate the chapter plant sale in March. If this is **you**, please contact one of the board members.

Next Meeting: Wed, Nov 15

**Program: Steve Hootman
The Arunachal Pradesh, India Trek**

Steve Hootman, Curator of the Rhododendron Species Foundation, will share his trekking adventure to Arunachal Pradesh, India. Travel in this remote area of India is very restricted requiring special government permits. As you might expect, this expedition was grueling, fraught with danger, inclement weather and leeches... *what fun!*

Was the quest to find new rhododendron species and other unique plants and the breathtaking views of the Himalayan mountain ranges worth the struggle? Join us for Steve's perspective.

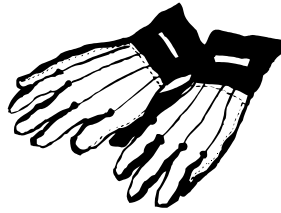
Calendar of Upcoming Events

Nov 15 Annual Pie Social/Meeting Steve Hootman
Dec 9 Holiday Dinner/Gift Exchange @ Christopher's in Coupeville
Jan 24 Chapter Meeting
Feb 28 Chapter Meeting
Mar 28 Chapter Meeting

In the Garden

November Rhododendron tips: *(Bill Stipe)*

Now that we had the first frost of the fall, everything is slowing down. The flower buds on the rhodies have already set and the foliage has stopped growing, however, the roots will continue to grow as long as they are not frozen. This is an excellent time to transplant those rhodies that you were planning to move to a new location.



The cold weather may have slowed down the rhododendrons, but the weeds, particularly the shot weed, will continue to grow, flower and set seeds. You may want to put on some warm clothes and walk through your garden pulling those weeds before they spread their seeds for next year's crop of weeds.

The cold weather has also driven the root weevil underground for the winter. If you were planning to use the beneficial nematodes to kill the weevil, don't do it now, the nematodes will not survive the cold weather. However, you may want to consider applying the insecticide Talstar™ to any rhododendron that was decimated by the weevil. Talstar™ is an effective way to eliminate both the larval stage and adult weevil as they hide in the duff beneath your rhododendrons.

If some of your rhododendrons tried to bloom out of season this fall, you could remove those blooms now just to tidy up the plant. When walking through your garden, observe the plants that did not do well. Sometimes a move to a shadier location will help. If you have already tried that and it didn't help, maybe you should just remove it and replace it with a better plant.

General gardening tips:

(Mary Robson, author of "Month by Month Gardening in Oregon and Washington" (Cool Springs Press, 2006), and Sandy Dunham, Seattle Times desk editor)

Soggy soil dooms more of our plants than freezing temperatures, so check drainage during rains. To be safe, make plans for the occasional freeze by moving container plants to a protected spot.

- Fertilize your lawn with a 3-1-2 formula between Thanksgiving and Dec. 10.
- Lift and store summer blooming bulbs such as dahlias, gladiolus and cannas after frost nips their leaves.
- Rake deciduous leaves and spread them 3 inches deep on shrub and tree roots, or add them to your compost.

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:



2nd Saturday: Work Party

We share coffee and rolls at 8:45 and embark upon Garden projects at 9:00 am. A potluck lunch is served at noon.

Thursdays: Hands-on-Horticulture

Work with the Island County Master Gardeners, local garden clubs and the garden manager on projects in the gardens. Park in the volunteer's parking lot and meet in the Volunteer Cottage for hot coffee and tea at 8:45 then into the Gardens to dig up some dirt.

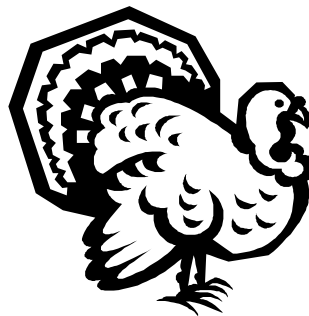


Did you know?

GardenGate Magazine

Beautyberry insect repellent: Mississippi farmers used to place the crushed leaves of American beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*) under an animal's harness to keep biting insects away. New research from the Agricultural Research Service has found several insect-repelling compounds in beautyberry. One is especially effective against mosquitoes and shows promise as an organic mosquito repellent for humans. The scientists have applied for a patent and have more testing to complete before a beautyberry repellent is available.

Happy Thanksgiving



Rhododendron edgeworthii

Hook. f.

Steve Hootman

*A Species Profile reprinted from the
Rhododendron Species Foundation newsletter.*

Species rhododendrons are grown for their attractive or fragrant flowers, their interesting and even beautiful foliage, or their smooth and glossy peeling bark. *Rhododendron edgeworthii* is one of the exceptional species in which all of these desirable characteristics come together.

This species is the best-known and most of-ten grown member of subsection Edgeworthia, a small group of lepidote (scaly-leafed) rhododendrons which also includes *pendulum* and the rare *seingkuense*. These three distantly related epiphytic species are placed together in this subsection because they all possess a feature unique among the lepidotes - a dense woolly indumentum on the young stems and undersides of the leaves.

R. edgeworthii was introduced into cultivation by Joseph Hooker in 1849. He collected this ornamental species in the lush forests of the Himalaya Mountains during his travels through Sikkim. It was named for Mr. M. P. Edgeworth, then the Commissioner of Multan with the Bengal Civil Service. In 1887, a species similar to *edgeworthii* but with a scaly style and pubescent (hairy) calyx was found by Pere Delavay far to the east in the mountains of northwestern Yunnan Province, China. This plant was given the name *Rhododendron bullatum*, and introduced into cultivation by Scottish plant hunter George Forrest in 1904. It proved to be equally as fragrant and beautiful but substantially harder than its Himalayan cousin. In 1917, the name *R. sciaphyllum* was given to a specimen collected by Kingdon-Ward in eastern Myanmar (Burma). Subsequent collections throughout the eastern Himalaya, southwestern China and northern Myanmar made it obvious that all three "species" merged and that the original collections were just extremes from the edge of the large range of a variable species. Thus, all specimens were reassigned to *R. edgeworthii* with the names *R. bullatum* and *R. sciaphyllum* reduced to synonymy.

Rhododendron edgeworthii is typically found at elevations of 6,000-13,000 feet where it occurs in a wide range of habitats. Rapid drainage at the roots is the common denominator in all situations. It can be quite common on cliffs and rocks in forests but is usually seen as epiphyte in the tops of large trees and old snags. I have observed this species many times in many different regions during my travels in the Sino-Himalaya. It is often quite common where it occurs, especially in the mountains on either side of the Salween River along the Yunnan/Myanmar frontier. In the lush temperate rainforests of this region, *R. edgeworthii* is abundant, it is commonly seen hanging from the highest branches of the giant conifers that dominate the high mountain forests in this region, its large flowers seemingly suspended in midair.

The incredibly wide range of this species, both in altitude and geographically, results in tremendous variation in its identifying characteristics. It can be very leggy in habit ranging to relatively compact in some forms. The younger branches are attractively covered with a dense indumentum. While the lower leaf-surface always consists of both scales and the woolly indumentum characteristic of subsection Edgeworthia, leaf shape may vary a great deal. Leaves range from two to six inches long and can be elliptic to oblong-lanceolate or oblong-ovate but always with the distinguishing dark shiny-green bullate (heavily puckered) texture above. The reddish-brown to tawny woolly indumentum completely covers the tiny golden scales on the leaf's lower surface, yet the upper surface is glabrous (without hair). A superb form that we found colonizing

a mass of huge boulders thrust from the surrounding forest on the Shweli-Salween divide in 1997 (CCHH#8016) had the thickest and darkest orange-brown indumentum that we had ever seen. It is a strikingly beautiful form, not only for its stunning foliage but for its very large waxy flowers.

The rose-colored flower buds of *Rhododendron edgeworthii* open in mid- to late spring to reveal wonderfully fragrant white, white flushed pink or pink flowers, sometimes with a yellow blotch near the base of the tube. Each inflorescence typically contains 2-3 flowers with the individual funnel-campanulate corollas up to three inches in length and up to five inches in diameter. The large and often deeply lobed calyx ranges in color from pink to green flushed with red. It is usually covered with a more or less dense indumentum of silky hairs.

In cultivation, *Rhododendron edgeworthii* requires similar conditions to those in which it occurs in the wild, with excellent drainage being the most critical factor. When planted in the ground it is a good idea to add generous quantities of course organic and mineral material. A sandy soil in a raised bed works well as does a well-rotted old log or stump to mimic the natural epiphytic habitat. With most forms hardy to about 10°F., *R. edgeworthii* is often grown as a container plant in areas that drop below this temperature with regularity. A very coarse media is essential if the roots are to be restricted in a container. An orchid or vireya growing mix or similar material is ideal to keep the roots healthy. Frequent pinching when young will result in a fuller, more bushy container-grown specimen. When grown in a poorly drained soil, this species tends to develop spotting on the foliage which can become serious enough to defoliate or even kill the plant. Since it is not reliably hardy in all areas it is a good idea to keep a back-up plant or two in case of disaster. Fortunately, it roots readily from cuttings so the lack of bone-hardiness should not prevent anyone from growing this special rhododendron.

Siting is not as critical as drainage but you will tend to get a very leggy plant if planted in too much shade. In full sun you get a bushier specimen but the foliage may burn and the flowers will tend to fade quicker. Light shade from tall coniferous or deciduous trees would be ideal with the added bonus of extra protection from late spring frosts under the conifers. This is one of the few rhododendrons resistant to weevil attack due to the natural production of chemicals in the foliage which repel the adults.

Rhododendron edgeworthii has been used as a parent plant in producing many outstanding hybrids that share its remarkable flowers and fragrance. A few of these include 'Floral Dance', 'Lady Alice Fitzwilliam', 'Sylvania', 'Fragrantissimum' and 'Silver Wedding', it has also received a number of awards for its excellent flowers and foliage. A white-flowered form received an Award of Merit when exhibited by T. H. Lowinsky of Sunninghill in 1923 (Farrer#842 as *bullatum*). A blush pink form (as *bullatum*) exhibited by Lord Aberconway, Bodnant, in 1946 also received this award. This species has won the prestigious First Class Certificate an astounding three times. This honor was first bestowed in 1933 to a clone with white flowers exhibited by Lt.-Col. L. C. R. Messel, Nymans, and again in 1937 to another white clone shown by Mr. Lionel de Rothschild, Exbury (Forrest No. 26618 as *bullatum*). The third FCC was awarded in 1981 to clone named 'Red Collar' grown from KW#20840 (as *bullatum*) and exhibited by Loder.

Please submit articles of interest for Jan Newsletter by 1/13/07

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