

WHIDBEY ISLAND CHAPTER



ARS Whidbey Island Chapter NEWSLETTER

Website: whidbeyrhodies.org

Meets the 4th Wednesday of each Month
Fire District 5 Headquarters Station
215 East Race Road, Coupeville, WA
Refreshments: 7:00 Meeting: 7:20

Sept 2008

Next Meeting: Sept 24

Program: *Ellie Sather*

My Garden Favorites: Rhododendron and Companion Plants

Ellie Sather from Whitney Gardens & Nursery in Brinnon WA will share her favorite plants for today's garden. Whitney Gardens was established in 1955 by the Whitney family and purchased by the Sather's in 1970. It encompasses 6.8 acres, 2.5 dedicated to the Gardens, and the remainder dedicated to propagation, growing, testing and sales. Ellie is the hands-on person who keeps the Gardens/Nursery running.

Originally dedicated to hybridizing rhododendrons, Whitney Gardens & Nursery has expanded its stock to include maples, conifers, perennials, shrubs, trees and more. However, they still nurture their rhododendron roots by working with hybridizers from around the world testing new hybrids for hardiness and to expanding the bloom season.

Ellie will be bringing plants for the raffle including a 'Double Flimmer' which has a variegated leaf like 'Gold Flimmer' but with more dramatic yellow variegation.

I'm going to be sure to buy a few raffle tickets for this one, how about you!

Calendar of Upcoming Events

- Sept 25-28 ... Western Regional Conference
Hilo, HI
- Oct 22 Chapter Meeting
- Nov 19 Pie Social/Annual Meeting
Election of Officers
- Dec 10 (Wed) Holiday Dinner
@ Christopher's in Coupeville

Another Fun Picnic, yay!



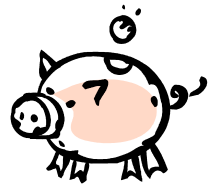
Thanks **Jack** and **Norma Lounsberry** for hosting yet another fun picnic (and **Mary** and **Geoff Wyman** for help at the grill!). The salmon was great and there's no room to complain about those 'grill your own' steaks!

Thanks **Bill Stipe** who kept the auction moving right along, selling off an assortment of rhododendrons and companion. Great job Bill!

And a big thank you to all of *you* who brought salads, desserts, plants for the auction and friendship to share.

Dues, Dues, Dues

By now you will all have received your renewal notices for your 2009 membership in our Whidbey Island Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society. Please fill out your renewal envelope and get it in the mail *today* or bring it to the next chapter meeting (see **Marilynn Wright**). The cutoff date for dues renewal is November 15. If your membership is not renewed by then you may miss the January issue of the ARS Journal.



Can You Serve?

It is time once again for you to consider holding a position on the Board of Directors of our chapter. President **Bill Stipe** and Director **Paul Loudon** will be stepping down from their posts of 2 and 3 years. We need any one of you to step forward, to fill one of these offices and be our guiding hand.

You don't have to be a rhododendron expert to fill these positions, just the willingness to serve. You will have Bill Stipe, as Past-President, and the entire Board to assist you with the nuts and bolts of your office.

Please contact John Marshall to volunteer for these, or any other, position on the Board.

*Nature goes her own way and all that to us seems
an exception is really according to order.*

Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe



Cookie reminder:
Kathy Dickerson & Mary Stipe



From the Prez

Bill Stipe



WELCOME BACK. Our summer is almost over, and what a summer it was. We didn't get the hot, dry summer we usually have on Whidbey Island. The rains came at just the right time and everything is growing and looks great.

Mary and I went on a cruise through the Netherlands, Denmark, the fjords of Norway, and Scotland. We visited castle gardens, botanical gardens, and private gardens. We were most impressed with the gardens of Denmark. We stayed in Denmark three extra days and were escorted to the private gardens of Jens Birck, Carl Adam Lehman, and Sven Hansen. We saw a lot of new rhododendron hybrids these gentlemen are producing and were impressed with the foliage combinations. I am hoping to import some to add to our collection. It was interesting to see the way they grow them. They have ample supplies of peat and they grow their rhododendrons in raised beds of straight peat, one foot deep. They receive the peat in 1 foot square blocks cut out of the bogs, with no further processing.

Back home, there are some fall chores we need to attend to. Root weevil damage is starting to show on the rhododendron leaves. I am applying TALSTAR™ (*bifenthrin*) to the soil beneath the plants that are affected. I am also trying a new biological control, a fungus that inhibits the root weevil larvae. I don't know how effective it is, but we will see.



A new pest that is starting to appear in the Northwest is Lace Bug. They are tiny little bugs, about 1/8th inch, that suck the juices out of the leaves. The first symptom is tiny yellow spots on the top of the leaves. Looking under the leaves you can see black spots and the tiny critters. Insecticidal Soap is said to kill the bugs but the entire leaf must be covered, especially the underside where the bugs are.

Another suggested control is to drench the root zone with a systemic insecticide. The lace bug has shown up in several gardens and nurseries in the Seattle area, and will probably show up on Whidbey Island eventually. (See page 3 for more Lace Bug info).

Fall is an excellent time to plant rhododendrons or to move ones that are too big for their location, or need to be moved for some other reason. It will soon be time to collect seeds from your garden plants, including rhododendrons that you made crosses on. Store the seed pods in a paper bag in a dry location for planting in the spring.

The Fall Western Regional ARS Conference will be held in Hilo Hawaii, Sept. 24-28. I will be going to represent District 2 at the Board of Directors meeting. There is still time to make last minute reservations if you want to attend.

Don't forget about the spring 2009 ARS Convention to be held in Everett. Our chapter is responsible for planning the tours. We will need volunteers for garden and bus guides. Each District 2 Chapter will also be putting together a basket of garden related items to be used as silent auction prizes. Contact **Stephanie Rodden**, 678-1896 or sfrodde@comcast.net, if you have anything to contribute.

Meerkerk Gardens Autumn Rhodie Sale

October 4th-5th, 9am to 4pm

"Beautiful Your World"! Meerkerk Gardens announces its Autumn Rhododendron Sale: Mature hybrids from the test garden and fantastic Meerkerk Grown specialty rhodies are ready to beautify your gardens! All proceeds benefit this peaceful woodland garden.

Whidbey ARS: please volunteer for the sale to answer rhodie questions and assist folks with their plant purchases and promote the membership benefits of the ARS. We'll have the soup and coffee on for you!

Meerkerk Notes

Join our dedicated group of volunteers who tend the Gardens year 'round. Come and share your talents in gardening, propagation, plant cataloging, education, fundraising, special events and more...

- ♦ **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 in the Gardens, 9-noon.
- ♦ **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: Penny@meerkerkgardens.org

Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden Annual Fall Plant Sale

Saturday, September 20nd, 9am to 2pm

Weyerhaeuser Corporate Campus
West Middle Parking Lot

33663 Weyerhaeuser Way South, Federal Way, WA

Sale proceeds benefit the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden. Choose from a wide variety of trees, shrubs, perennials, grasses, vines, groundcovers, alpines, natives, ferns, bamboos, rhododendrons, and much more!

Parking and admission to the garden are *FREE* on the day of the sale.

Don't forget the dollar table!

Rhododendron Lace Bug, A New Threat

Sharon Collman, WSU Extension Educator, has invited us all to embark on a bug watch expedition in our own backyard. Read through the information she has provided below then send her your findings via email or US mail. You are also invited to mail her lace bugs you find on the underside of leaves sealed in a plastic bag in an envelope. **Please include your name, the date collected and the cross streets where they were found.**

The following information provided by Sharon Collman, Extension Educator, Horticulture and IPM, 600 128th St. SE, Everett, WA 98208. collmans@wsu.edu Please respond to her directly.

The **Rhododendron and Azalea Lace Bug** (there are two species) has hit epizootic proportions in the Bellevue area. The insect infestation has been bad enough to kill azaleas or make them so ugly that people are pulling them out. If you are inclined to become a WSU Bug-Watcher, I'd like to get a handle on this insect in our county. There is also a leafhopper that causes stippling, but does not have the tar spots.

Biology: The rhododendron lace bug causes stippling on the upper surface of the leaves, and deposits crusty or tar-like excrement on the lower surface. Adult insects are whitish-tan and approximately 1/8" long with lacy-looking wings. Nymphs grow to about 1/8" and are spiny. Infestations are more severe on plants in the sun. Damage is usually apparent by early to mid-July. Adults and nymphs suck chlorophyll from the underside of leaves. which causes the upper surface to appear stippled with minute white spots. Later, these small spots merge and the leaves turn yellow. While almost never fatal, repeated infestations of rhododendron lace bugs may result in yellowed, sickly plants.

Lace bug Symptoms (Physical damage caused by pest):

- Leaves look speckled from the top with little yellow spots

Lace bug Signs (Direct evidence of pest):

- Small flat insects on the underside of leaves
- Tar-like spots of gooey excrement (excess sugars) also on the underside of leaves.
- Eggs are nearly microscopic and laid in clusters along the vein they look like little black disks with a fuzzy edge

Do you have the tar spot and speckled symptoms on any of your rhododendrons or azaleas?

If you do find lace bugs, please list the cultivars that they ARE on and are there some they are NOT on?

What stage are you observing:

- Damage only

- Adults (not usually present in spring but we don't really know for here)
- Eggs but no immatures
- Immatures just hatching

Gardener's Notebook:

battling bulb pilferers with oysters

Tovah Marti, Horticulture Magazine

For those of us tormented by chipmunks, voles and other bulb pilferers, try this trick. Buy crushed oyster shells (or try chicken grit or bonemeal) from the grain store* and toss it liberally into the hole when planting tulips, crocuses, lilies and other bulbs that furry critters devour. I put a layer of shells below and above the bulb-like a sandwich. It's an inexpensive solution and it works. Why? Apparently the little pests don't like their pedicure ruined by the gritty oyster shells. They leave the bulbs in place.

**Editor's note: Try Skagit Farmers Supply, AKA Cenex*

A Bit of Fun With Common Names

Northwest Horticulture Society 'Garden Notes'

"Kiss me over the garden gate¹," whispered the black dragon² to Molly the witch³ as he tread softly⁴ on the dead man's hand⁵. "Oh, sweet heart of Jesus⁶," came her retort. "Not for all the bells of Ireland⁷, you devil-in-a-bush⁸, you bastard toadflax⁹! Reel in your painted tongue¹⁰ and touch me not¹¹, or I'll make sure your love lies bleeding¹² when the queen of the night¹³ arrives. She'll doff her ladies mantle¹⁴, crack out the devil's horsewhip¹⁵ and stuff you full of hellweed¹⁶. Then her destroying angel¹⁷ will finish you off with his Spanish dagger¹⁸, bury you with St. Anthony's spade¹⁹ and you'll be pushing up stinking corpse lilies²⁰ before you know it."

1. *Persicaria orientalis*
2. *Dracunculus vulgaris*
3. *Paeonia mlokosewitschii*
4. *Solanum carolinense*
5. *Scleroderma geaster*
6. *Caladium bicolor*
7. *Moluccella laevis*
8. *Nigella damascena*
9. *Comandra umbellata*
10. *Salpiglossis sinuata*
11. *Impatiens balsamina*
12. *Amaranthus caudatus*
13. *Selenicereus grandiflorus*
14. *Alchemilla mollis*
15. *Achyranthes aspera*
16. *Cuscuta europea*
17. *Amanita virosa*
18. *Yucca gloriosa*
19. *Sansevieria* sp.
20. *Rafflesia arnoldii*

Please submit articles of interest for Sept Newsletter by **10/10/08**

Gail DaPont, editor

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