

# Eugene Chapter

## AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

### MARCH 2009

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Allan Trott's

Red Border

### FROM THE PRESIDENT

### MARCH 12 PROGRAM

March has arrived and thoughts of flowers and bushes abloom “dance in our heads”. We want warm weather and no weeds.

Thanks to John Fry and Leonard Frojen for our goodies at the February 12 meeting. A lot of information on rhodie propagation was presented: There was a lot of discussion on cutting boxes; taking cuttings; rooting media and soil mixtures; grafting; and raising in pots. Thanks to Ted Hewitt, Jack Olson, Galen Baxter and Terry Henderson.

Lots of rhodie things are happening in March, April and May: Our two shows, and the shows in Florence and Coos Bay. Our own yards will be bursting at the seams.

The March 12 meeting will include election of two board members, a secretary and a treasurer. Thanks to Harold Greer, Nominations Chair, for presenting a slate, presented elsewhere in the newsletter. Mike Bones will speak on “Rhodies Rock”. Mike loves rhodies and is a good speaker. Our pre-meeting dinner will be at Bai Khao Thai restaurant with lots of good food and good talk. We need to let them know how many are coming, so call me at 541-461-6082 if you can come.

*Helen B.*

“Ye prez” of the Rhododendron and Eating Society

Mike Bones of Siuslaw Chapter will be the speaker and those who have heard Mike know he is a spirited and knowledgeable presenter of Rhododendron lore. His topic is **RHODODENDRONS ROCK!** He will also show us **HOW TO PREPARE AND PRESENT A WINNING SHOW TRUSS.** Bring your questions March 12 to Campbell Center, 115 High Street, Eugene.

#### **7:00 PM Refreshments and socializing**

JoAnn Napier and Ray Klein will provide goodies.

#### **7:30 PM Short election and then the Program**

In addition, a no-host dinner to honor the speaker will be held at 5:00 p.m. at Bai Khao Thai restaurant located in Value Village at 541 W. Centennial Blvd in Springfield. Their menu is varied, reasonable, and unfailingly delicious.

**Call Helen at 541-461-6082 if you plan to attend so Bai Khao has an idea of how many they will be serving.**

**All members, guests, and interested parties are invited to meet Mike Bones and enjoy a friendly interchange with folks who share your passion for all things pertaining to rhododendrons.**

How fair is a garden amid the trials and passions of existence.

*Benjamin Disraill*

TO SEE NEWSLETTER IN COLOR~VISIT OUR WEB SITE AT: <http://www.eugene-chapter-ars.org>

President	Helen Baxter	461-6082
Vice President	Ted Hewitt	687-8119
Past President	Jack Olson	988-9133
Secretary	Paula Hewitt	687-8119
Treasurer	Richard Reed	747-6221

Directors & Terms

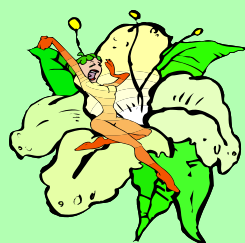
Leonard Frojen	2005-2009
Gordon Wylie	2006-2009
Terry Henderson	2007-2010
Nolan Blansit	2007-2010
Frances Burns	2008-2011
District 4 Director	Bob McIntyre 541-347 7269
Alternate Director	Dave Collier 501-663-7917

Standing Committees

Nominations	Harold Greer	686-1540
Programs	The Board of Directors	
<b>Hospitality</b>	JoAnn Napier	746-0828
Welfare	Nancy Greer	686-1540
Honors	Gordon Wylie	895-2864
Auction/Door Prizes	Rich Aaring	485-6013
Historian	Michael Robert	344-4391
Show Chairman	Leonard Frojen	485-0560

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ARS NL	<a href="http://www.rhododendron.org">http://www.rhododendron.org</a>	
ARS web site	<a href="http://ars.office.org">http://ars.office.org</a>	



WHEN USING INSECTICIDES, KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR  
FAIRIES IN YOUR FLOWERS!

Coming in from working in the garden, I found a message on the phone. It was a familiar voice from Olinda, Australia. "Victoria's on fire, I'll catch up with you later!" I called Ian and Neilma Wallace, dear friends from OZ who have visited us three times in the last decade. The temperature in Melbourne was 117 degrees F; at that point 94 people were dead. Before it was over, 200 were dead, many incinerated to ash before they could escape. Flames moved faster than vehicles could travel. Some of the fires were deliberately set. Thankfully, our friends were safe.

Their beautiful garden was another matter. The searing temperatures killed many of his rhododendrons, especially lepidotes -- their leaves brown and brittle. Only time will tell the extent of the damage; but how fortunate their lives and homes were spared. It's Count Your Blessings time! Our area was completely burned over about 1900. I often find charcoal when digging in the ground. My little *R. forrestii* is planted in one of the old burned-out stumps.\

An hour ago a wild windstorm hit, sending the large fir tree limbs into a frenzied dance and the birds into hiding. A torrent of rain fell in sheets! We have lots of rain, but I don't recall seeing it come down in sheets before. The lights flickered off and on for a moment. All is calm and peaceful again, the birds are back feeding on their millet and sunflower seeds, ducks are diving in the shallows of the river, and two geese just flew down river like shooting stars. It was a tempest in a teapot -- and Mother Nature letting us know who's really in charge!

**THE RHODODENDRON GUIDE ~ A book on CD**

By Dr. Bruce Duffy

[Version 1.12 is now available]

**Price \$29.95 Order from [rhodyguide@yahoo.com](mailto:rhodyguide@yahoo.com)**

This is a book you should have

**First:** for the photographs.**Second:** for practical and sound advice and technical glossary;**Third:** for commentary and advice of the experts on species and hybrids;**Fourth:** for Dr. Duffy's mastery of the digital form -- navigation and cross referencing information is very easy;**Fifth:** pricing -- US price is \$29.95. Dr. Duffy has pledged a significant portion of profits to the Rhododendron Species Foundation -- Each time a new edition comes out, send him your older edition and receive the newer edition for a reduced price.**FERNS IN YOUR LANDSCAPE**

The Willamette Valley Hardy Plant Group will present Richie Steffen giving an illustrated talk on Tuesday, March 10, 2009, at 7 p.m. at the University of Oregon, Agate Hall, at 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Agate Street, Eugene.

Richie Steffen is the curator for the Elisabeth C. Miller Botanical Garden in Seattle where he manages the rare plant collections and heads acquisition of new plants. His work has focused on the redevelopment of the alpine collection and the expansion of an extensive fern and woodland plant collection, and he has developed a breeding program based on the garden's phenomenal hepatica collection. He is currently president of the Hardy Fern Foundation and a board member of the Rhododendron Species Foundation.

His talk, *Beyond the Sword Fern* will offer many ideas for expanding our use of native and other ferns in our landscapes. He will also be bringing a sample of the hepaticas currently blooming at the Miller Garden.

The evening includes a mini clinic by members of the Walama Restoration Project talking about habitat restoration projects in the Eugene area. They can answer questions about native habitat in your garden.

Doors open at 6:30 for refreshments and book sales. Admission is \$6 for non-members and \$3 for members. Membership in the Hardy Plant Group is \$20 annually. There is ample parking next to Agate Hall. For more information about the group or this event, contact Pam Perryman at (541) 344-0896.

# YAKKIN' at THE OLD TOOL SHED

“Almost every person has something secret he likes to eat.”

*M. F. K. Fisher*

It's getting to be the time of year to really catch the “garden bug.” Some of the first spring things I am planning to do are evaluate the soil in garden patch, build some cloches to lengthen the growing season, start some vegetable seedlings, and to help those seedlings when they're transplanted, I'll going to experiment feeding them weed tea. The suggested technique for making a weed tea is to drown collected weeds in water for six weeks to ensure that they are dead and unable to re-sprout. Many weeds commonly found in the garden, such as chickweed, have a high mineral content. Drenching the soil near desired plants with a diluted weed tea recycles the minerals.

Once while studying rodents, I read about the mountain beaver, *Aplodontia rufa*, also called boomers or the sewellel beaver (so named by Lewis and Clark who were given cloaks made of fur by some Indians, and when they asked what animal provided the fur, the Indians said it was sewellel, which actually was the type of clothing article, not the animal). Anyway, I was given an article about these odd animals, and it seems they eat a variety of things, including rhododendrons. So, if you notice your rhodies are being girdled and consumed, it might the work of one of these illusive boomers! Oh, by the way, they are not related to beavers, and they do not always live in the mountains, but one thing is for sure, they only live in the Pacific Northwest.

Questions? Comments? E-mail me at [garden.projects@hotmail.com](mailto:garden.projects@hotmail.com)

**TIPS FROM THE OLD TOOL SHED:** There are multiple ways to build a cloche, but what I'm trying this year will require purchasing two foot pieces of ¼ inch rebar, some hard black neoprene hose, and some plastic sheeting. I'll cut the neoprene to the desired length (say, six feet), hammer two pieces of rebar about four feet apart, and leave six to eight inches of it above ground. The plan is to then slip each end of the neoprene over the rebar, and after doing several sections spaced about two feet apart, lay the plastic sheeting over the hoses, and weigh down each side a sheet with a plastic jug filled with water, a brick, or even some rocks. The size of the cloche can be made bigger or smaller depending on our needs. I hope we'll be enjoying fresh vegetables weeks earlier than last year.

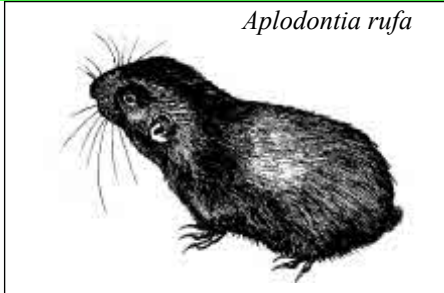
## SO WHAT'S A MOUNTAIN BEAVER LOOK LIKE?

Drawings and information by Dan Campbell of the Olympia Field Station, Denver Wildlife Research Center

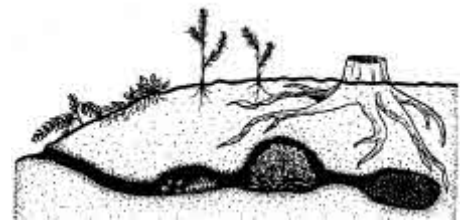


FEEDING POSITION

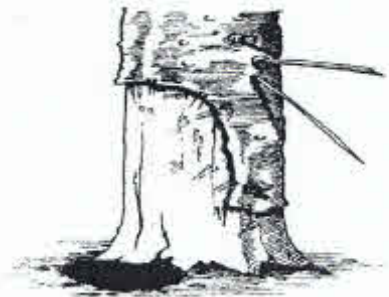
*Aplodontia rufa*



The mountain beaver is the only species in the Aplodontiidae family, and only it's only found in the PNW, northwestern California and a bit of southwestern Canada. They are greyish or reddish brown. The average adult weighs 2.3 lbs. They will eat bracken fern, Douglas-fir, hemlock, western red cedar, red alder, vine maple, cascara, salmon berry, huckleberry, salal, and, yes, an occasional rhododendron.



THE BURROW



MOUNTAIN BEAVER-GIRDLED TREE

# THE SPRING SHOWS ARRIVE

## EARLY SPRING SHOW APRIL 11

The details for our Early Show are falling into place and we hope that you will be able to participate in an evening of fun on Saturday, April 11. We will need some help setting up at the beginning and taking down at the end, but, in between, it will be a time for some good camaraderie at the Oregon Electric Station at 5th and Willamette in Eugene.

We will need several people to help set up the truss racks at 3:00 p.m. as well as some volunteers to help get the truss entries in the right spots so that judging can begin promptly at 5:00 p.m. Please bring your trusses between 3:30 p.m. and 4:45 p.m. so that we can see what is blooming in your garden. Dinner will follow the judging at 6:00 p.m. with the speaker at 7:00 p.m. This year we have arranged for Don Wallace, the owner of Singing Tree Gardens Nursery in northern California, to show us some of his wonderful hybrids and more. (You might want to check out his website at [www.singtree.com](http://www.singtree.com) and sign up for a free e-newsletter.)

After the speaker, we will again have a very special auction of some outstanding plants so bring your check book or the cash from under your mattress. Finally we will need some of you to help take down the racks and get them stored away. At the March 12 Chapter Meeting, Ted will have sign-up sheets so that everyone can pitch in with a few chores and contribute to an enjoyable evening.

## MAY SHOW MAY 8, 9, & 10

This year we are returning to the center court of Valley River Center for our May Show on Mother's Day Weekend, May 8, 9, and 10, and will again need your help for a big show for the community. Valley River Center is supplying the tables and table covers but we will still need to set up the truss racks at 9:00 p.m. on Friday evening, May 8. Truss entries can be brought to the show from 7:00 a.m. to 9:45 a.m. on Saturday morning so we will need several people to help place these in the correct classes as we are inviting the public to join us as well. Judging will begin promptly at 10:00 a.m. and Leonard will need several of you to be clerks for the judges. Throughout the day until 9:00 p.m. on Saturday and from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, we will need people for the hospitality table and to answer questions about rhododendrons so we hope that each of you will sign up for at least one 2-hour shift.

Finally, we will also need some of you to help with the take-down of the racks at 6:00 p.m. on Sunday. The May Show is certainly our largest activity of the year and we need each member to pitch in somewhere. Thanks in advance for your help from Leonard Frojen and his committee.

We are not able to have our plant sale in conjunction with the May Show at Valley River Center this year but the Willamette Valley Hardy Plant Group has offered us space at their annual sale at the Lane County Fairgrounds on Saturday, May 9. We will be selling plants from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. so a few volunteers to help will be appreciated. Hint: When you are not helping out at VRC come to the fairgrounds for some great deals.

For a couple of great spring shows, now is the time for you to get out and talk to your rhododendrons (you might even sing to them in the privacy of your own garden) so they will be putting on their best flowering season of the new century. Remember, it's the people of this organization that make it so much fun so come and enjoy. TED HEWITT

## NOMINATIONS FOR ELECTION MARCH 12

SECRETARY PAULA HEWITT

TREASURER RICHARD REED

2009-2012 BOARD POSITION LEONARD FROJEN

2009-2012 BOARD POSITION JOANN NAPIER



## VOLUNTEERS FOR GOODIES IN MARCH

March Volunteers: **JoAnn Napier and Ray Klein**

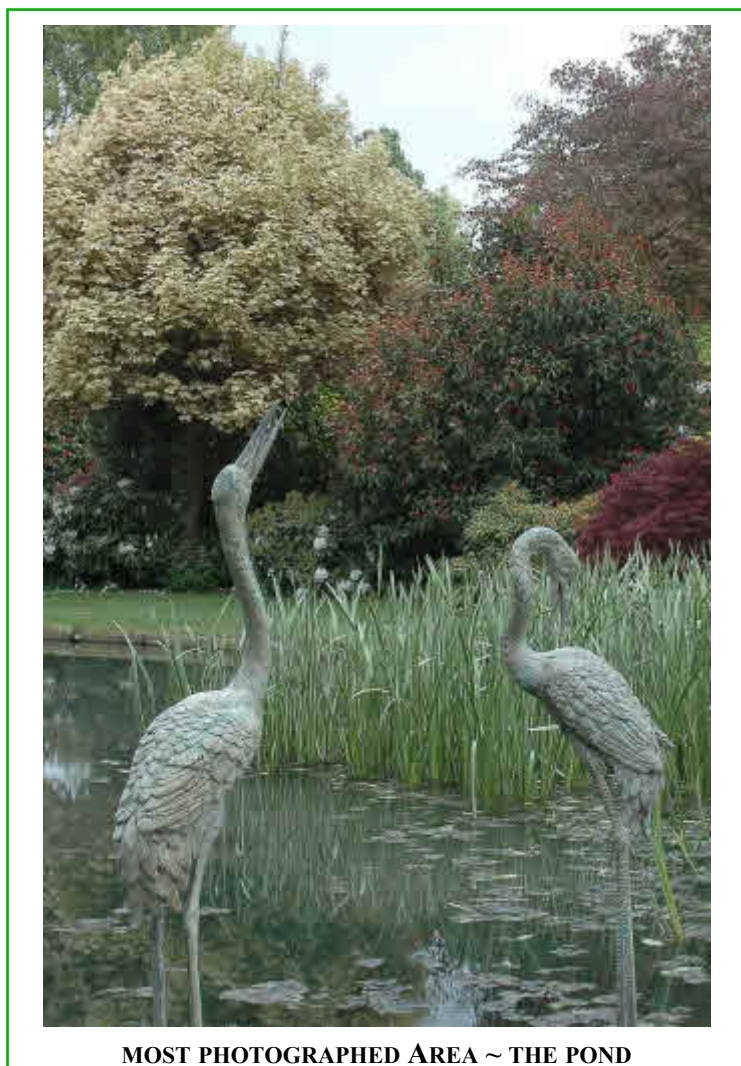
*Thank you, Leonard Frojen and John Fry for the great February treats!*

Eugene Chapter has had for many years a Life Member in faraway New Zealand. As editor I have sent Alan Trott the newsletter for as long as I remember. Late last summer I received an e-mail from him requesting that we send his newsletter by e-mail to save the chapter money. A photographer, Alan sent along some spectacular pictures of his garden. Here they are with a brief introduction to their garden. It is a story that tells itself.

Born in Ashburton, New Zealand, Alan and his wife Catherine grew up only 50 kilometers apart. When Alan left school, he was “encouraged in all things horticultural” by a retired couple, Helen and Graham Holmes, who had a large garden that specialized in the Rhododendrons of their day. Their enthusiasm was infectious and they shared their plants and cuttings with the young couple; which in due time formed the basis of a commercial nursery for the young couple.

Alan joined the New Zealand Rhododendron Association, of which he is a Past President, and in 1968, he joined the American Rhododendron Society. They quickly learned a great deal about cultural processes from the ARS Journal.

In 1978 they purchased 14 hectares (9.884 acres) of land with 13 trees, an old barn and house. They developed 7.4 acres into a garden and opened a nursery. By 1985 it was full time work for both of them. And it shows!



TROTT'S GARDEN AND NURSERY

Website: [www.trotts.co.nz](http://www.trotts.co.nz)

*Continued on page 6*

# A NEW ZEALAND GARDEN ARTIST AT WORK



**FORMAL GARDEN PERENNIAL BORDER & CHAPEL  
OUTLINED WITH TALL BOX HEDGES**

The old Ashburton chapel was purchased and moved to the garden. It came complete with pews, altar and organ.



**CHAPEL INTERIOR**



**LIME WALK IN THE SPRING**

The pond, stream and bog are cardinal features of the garden. Above the bog is an Italianate belvedere providing a peaceful resting spot.



**THE BOG GARDEN WITH WOODEN WALKWAY**



Rare and unusual tree species are Alan's treasures -- magnolias, maple, birches hold the form, structure and beauty of the garden together, providing beauty even in winter.



**24 HILLIERS *BETULA* 'SILVER SHADOW' TREES  
ACCENTED BY MACROCARPA HEDGES**

Continued Pg 7

# A NEW ZEALAND GARDEN ARTIST AT WORK



**THE RED BORDER WITH *BERBERIS* 'HELMOND'S PILLAR' PROVIDING ACCENT AND STRUCTURE**

The Trotts were awarded the Canterbury Horticultural Award for A Garden of Excellence some years ago. In 2008 they were awarded the Garden of National Significance from the New Zealand Garden Trust.



**THE BELVEDERE ACROSS THE LAWN**

Alan's loves working long hours caring for his garden, and doing most of it himself.



Alan dreams of an aviary and topiary in the future.



**ALAN'S BEST FRIEND IN THE FOREFRONT AND HIS FAVORITE BLUE BENCH IN THE BACKGROUND**



**THE FOUR KNOT GARDENS IN WINTER ARE SURROUNDED BY BOX HEDGES**

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AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY  
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EUGENE, OR 97401

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## 2009 CHAPTER CALENDAR 2009

- MAR 12 EUGENE CHAPTER MEETING**  
**5:00 p.m. No Host dinner for Speaker (all invited) at Bai Khov Thai Cuisine**  
541 W. Centennial Blvd, Springfield (in back on east side of Value Village)  
*Please let Helen know you are coming so she can reserve a large enough table. 461-6082*  
**7:00 p.m. Refreshments at regular meeting, Campbell Center, 511 High Street, Eugene**  
**7:30 p.m. ANNUAL MEETING - NOMINATION & ELECTION OF OFFICERS**  
**Program: "RHODODENDRONS ROCK"**, a slide show presentation by Mike Bones, Siuslaw Chapter  
**Mike will also give us a demonstration on preparing trusses for showing.**
- APR 11 EARLY SHOW & AWARDS BANQUET**  
**The Electric Station, Fifth and Willamette**  
**Speaker Don Wallace, Singing Tree Nursery Eureka**  
**Details on page 4**
- APR 30 - MAY 2 ARS CONVENTION, EVERETT, WASHINGTON SEE ARS WINTER JOURNAL.**  
**REGISTER BY APRIL 1 AND SAVE.**
- MAY 9-10 SPRING RHODODENDRON SHOW -- VALLEY RIVER CENTER**  
**MAY 9 ONLY 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. PLANT SALE - FAIRGROUNDS**  
**Details on page 4**