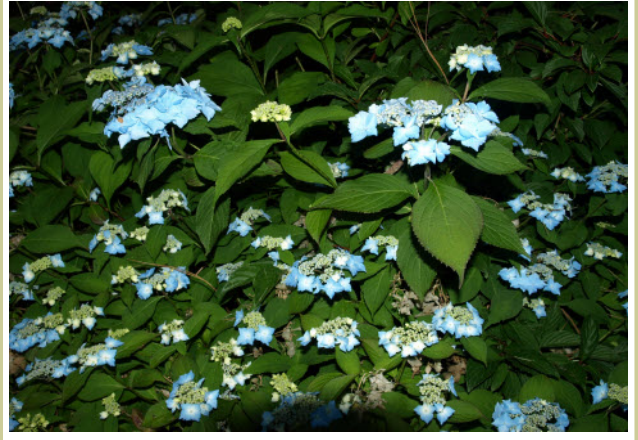


Eugene Chapter NEWSLETTER

Aug./Sept. 2009

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GARDEN GEMS OF THE NORTHWEST

At our meeting on September 10, Dave Eckerdt will lead off our program year with a presentation of "Garden Gems of the Northwest". Dave and his wife, Pat, live near Salem in a 117 year old home surrounded by a two acre "collector's garden". The twenty year old garden, known as Deerly Missed, has been featured on television and in newspapers. Scattered throughout the garden landscape are a large collection of rhododendrons, both species and hybrid, as well as a considerable amount of Pat's artwork. Dave is currently the program co-chair for the ARS Willamette Chapter and president of the Salem Hardy Plant Society.

In his presentation, he will tour us through the gardens, plants, and garden art of some 20 Pacific Northwest gardens including those of Oregonian writer Dulcy Mahar, "In The Garden" host Mike Darcy, garden personality Lucy Hardiman, and plantsman Dan Hinkley, as well as his own garden. Dave is a fine photographer and excellent speaker so you can look forward to a terrific program.

We have invited the members of the Willamette Hardy Plant Group to join us for this evening program, so come at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 10, for cookies, coffee, and social time with our guests. Again this year we will be meeting at the Campbell Senior Center at 155 High Street in Eugene.

Our speaker's dinner will be at at 5:15 p.m. at Mazzi's Restaurant at 3377 E. Amazon Drive in South Eugene (telephone 343-4720) where we have reserved the back room. All are welcome to join us for this no-host dinner. Please let Paula or Ted know if you are coming by Tuesday, September 8, by e-mail leat.hewitt@comcast.net or phone at 687-8119 so that we can notify the restaurant. T H

VISIT OUR WEB SITE AT: <http://www.eugene-chapter-ars.org>

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It's been a weedin', readin' summer, the latter made possible by many days in the 90s and some over 100 degrees. I found a decrepit book entitled *Rhododendron Pieth* the first book published by Margery Sharp (January 25, 1905 - March 14, 1991), a prolific English author of 26 adult novels in her long career. Two of her more familiar titles are *Brittania Mews* and *Cluny Brown*. Long out of print, the book refers twice to a children's pie, made of mud crust, presumably, and filled with rhododendron blooms -- mystery solved!

Another discovery this summer was that the only strawberry to plant as a groundcover among the rhodies is a runnerless variety from Europe with fragrant, delicious small berries. I had let grow willy nilly some lovely commercial plants that a dear friend gave me years ago in my pre-rhododendron days. The runners are prolific and soon I had a strawberry bed that had expanded boundlessly! In another bed I have a wild strawberry that does run, (and so long, farewell to them!) In still another bed, I noticed a smaller strawberry that never "runs". I had been pulling it up for years -- it gently persisted. Several clumps fruited and I was in for a pleasant surprise. Absolutely delectable and very manageable, these little gems can be purchased on the web. Known as the Alpine strawberry, their scientific name is *Fragaria vesca*.

Planted in the spring, they bloom from early spring through fall. They are lovely edging plants and can be divided to maintain individual plants. They can be found in meadows and woodland edges, which must be where mine originated. Call me a slow learner, I could have been enjoying these delicacies for years and years, had I not been pulling them up as weeds. One can use them in containers and hanging baskets, as well. Or just to be radical, make a berry patch out of them with 3 to 4 dozen plants. They prefer a moist, fertile, well-drained soil that is slightly acidic.

FAREWELL TO NOLAN AND CINDY BLANSIT

Though it was not a total surprise, it just happened sooner than expected. Our former board member and good friend Nolan Blansit and his wife Cindy sold their lovely garden and left on August 16 for Sparta, Missouri. Nolan built a lasting legacy with his rhododendron hybridizing. They will be missed! We wish them a very happy future in their new location. Nolan sent the following message for newsletter publication:

The terms of sale allow me access to all of the rhodie seedlings in beds, as well as a moderate number of plants that are in the landscape. So in October I will be coming back to meet with Don Wallace, Pat Osborne and Dan Meier (Briggs). I will be selling as many of the plants as I can. I will also be available for two days (October 8th and 9th) to sell plants to club members and collectors from the area. I hope to get as much of my material distributed as I can. Thirteen years of breeding should be given a chance to continue in some way.

You might know, the plants look terrific! There are approximately 1500 plants that are 3 ½ yrs old, and 1000 plants that are 2 ½ yrs old. There are also several hundred cutting grown plants. Many of the lower growing seedlings have small amounts of proteoides, recurvoides and/or repens in their background. *R. aberconwayi* also shows up in the pedigrees. Other plants that were used early on were Nancy Evans, Mindy's Love, September Song, Percy Wiseman, Naselle and several purple hybrids.

Jack Olson has agreed to help me with the plant sales and inquiries should be directed to him. The new e-mail address will not be working for a couple of weeks. Please extend my goodbyes to the club.

Nolan Blansit

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THE TUFA DUFERS AT WORK



Clockwise: JoAnn Napier, A.J. Giustina, Jack Olson, and Helen Baxter mix and measure.

Sunday August 16 a workshop on making hypertufa troughs was held before the chapter picnic at Dunroamin, home of Frances Burns and Mary & Douglas Furr.

Douglas Furr provided reusable wooden forms he made ahead of time, and a liquid polymer bonding agent, ACRYL 60 admixture for strength and a less messy process.



JoAnne, Helen and Galen Baxter watch A. J. Giustina pour in the admixture as Jack Olson stirs the thick mixture.

Douglas's recipe for the dry mixture was three parts perlite, three parts peat moss, and two parts Portland cement. Several different methods and each should be considered. A really large project, such as 3 feet by 5 feet, would require the use of chicken wire, wire mesh, or even rebar. Precautions include a mask when working with dry cement, remove jewelry, wear rubber gloves, be ready to use the leftovers, wait a minimum of 24 hours before removing form, allow pot to sit wet for as long as possible to help leach out the lime, wait two weeks before carving/shaping, and if you forgot to add drain holes, carefully drill with a mortar bit. Our forms were 14" long, 10" wide, and 6 inches deep with an easily removable center form.



The Ray Noonans measure the admixture to their mix as Beverly Smith works with her cart in the background. Douglas standing by.



Beverly Smith gets a helping hand from Douglas.

