

Eugene Chapter

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2009

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CHRISTMAS PARTY - DECEMBER 10

Time to gather once again for the Annual Christmas Party



Thursday Evening December 10



Campbell Center

155 High Street in Eugene

Many thanks to Sandy Olson and Linda Wylie for the ambience of greens and holiday tables. And to Rudy Fecteau, who, with his usual care, will cook the ham to perfection.

Members bring your favorite hot dishes, salads or desserts accompanied by serving forks and spoons. Please bring your own silverware, plates, cups and napkins. Coffee will be provided.

Setup will begin at 4:30 p.m, dinner will be served about 6:00. Pleasant background entertainment will be provided for our pleasure during dinner.

The perennial entertainment of choice, a member slide show, will begin about 7:00 p.m. Each member is allowed ten (10) slides to show, which may be on CDs or loose for carousel viewing. Subject matter is up to each individual: gardens, pets, vacations, Aunt Maude's visit, etc. Be forewarned, the president will wield the gavel if slides exceed the limit of ten!



Visit our website <http://www.eugene-chapter-ars.org> to enjoy our newsletter in color.

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Vice President	Ted Hewitt	687-8119
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Leonard Frojen	2005-2009
JoAnn Napier	2006-2009
Terry Henderson	2007-2010
Douglas Furr	2007-2010
Frances Burns	2008-2011

Standing Committees

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Hospitality	JoAnn Napier	746-0828
Welfare	Nancy Greer	686-1540
Honors	Rich Aaring	485-6013
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Do you ever really know your neighbors? Or perhaps you lived beside them way back when, and many years later realized you didn't know that much about them after all, but time and life experience make you wish you had known then what you know now. Thanks to the internet I came across a book that made me wish just that: *Yrs, Ever Affly, the Correspondence of Edith Wharton and Louis Bromfield*. (Edited by Daniel Bratton; published by Michigan State University.)

Louis Bromfield, Pulitzer prize winner for his novel, *Early Autumn*, and his family lived four miles from our dairy farm in near Mansfield, Richland County, Ohio in the early 1950's. His Malabar Farm, with its 6,000 book library, works of art and lovely gardens, was a grassland dairy farm that led him to write *Malabar Farm*, expounding on soil conservation and good farming practices. Lauren Bacall and Humphrey Bogart were wed at Malabar when I was in high school half a continent away -- little did I dream I would one day be raising Holsteins *anywhere*, let alone decades later, reading of his magnificent gardening life in France between the World Wars.

Bromfield often spoke to area farmers of the value of grassland farming. [(My husband, the "Head Gardener" in later years, was awarded the Grassland Farmer of the Year Award for Richland County.) He milked the herd, spread manure on the fields, and baled tons of hay while I raised Toulouse goslings and turkeys, and gathered the eggs. I learned the art of growing radishes, rhubarb and cucumbers -- unaware that rhododendrons existed! Bromfield once gave us 17 banty eggs and a broody hen -- 21 days later we had 17 banty chicks. It was a very long time ago!]

Edith Wharton, a prolific author, was the aunt of one of America's great landscape designers, Beatrix Farrand. Edith chose to live in France far from her roots on Long Island. There were many chapters in her life,

Henry James and Bernard Berenson were two of them. Her charity work during WWI was a third. Louis Bromfield, 34 years her junior, was another. During the same period, he dropped out of Columbia University to enlist in the Army Ambulance Service in France, a country that during his youth was "the very apotheosis of all that was romantic and beautiful." Louis returned to the New York in 1919 to pursue a writing career. In 1925, he returned to France with his wife, Mary. Weary by 1931 of Parisian life, the milieu of Hemingway, Gertrude Stein and Scott Fitzgerald, Bromfields took a long-term lease for the three century old Presbytere de St. Etienne, an ancient stone house with gardens on either side of the Nonette River in Senlis 35 miles north of Paris. Despite constant family activities, entertaining Hollywood friends Mary Astor, Billie Burke, Nigel Bruce, Kay Francis, Humphrey Bogart and others, traveling widely, painting in oils (his garden the subject), and keeping track of Rikky, his pet mongoose, he still found time to write a continuous stream of books and to "outdo the French at gardening." His Presbytere de St. Etienne became so famous that it was a favorite destination of visitors from all over. It was in this time period that Wharton and the Bromfields met. He could not remember "when or how" they came to meet, but immediately shared "the carefully modulated harmony between culture and agriculture."

She owned two homes with magnificent gardens. The Pavillon Colombe, in the village of St. Brice-sous-Forêt, was "a place of ineffable tranquility" inside and out. Wharton resurrected an abandoned garden into a work of art. Among many features, it had a rhododendron walk, well placed "apple, pear, plum, cherry, quince, and peach trees", a grape arbor, a pergola of climbing roses, etc. Her second home was the Saint-Claire le Chateau, an old nunnery in the south of France. In Bromfield's words, "I had imagined that Sainte Claire was a lovely place but the reality exceeded any of my imaginings. It seemed to me . . . a paradise".

With that, I leave you to contemplate their correspondence. They "silently--indeed telepathically--communicated 'in the way people talk to each other who have a passion and an understanding of the earth and the plants born of its fertility'. The bond between them was rooted in the soil. . . a shared reverence for the land."

In later years the beauty "he created at Malabar proved more and more at odds with what the world was becoming"... "swept away by a torrent of mediocrity and uniformity...worse than those of the ruined and decayed Roman Empire." (We anticipated the drop in milk and dairy cattle prices, sadly sold our herd and moved back to Oregon in August 1953. Bromfield kept his and lost a great deal. He died in 1956 where he was born, Mansfield, Richland County, Ohio. Edith Wharton died in 1937 in France.)

Yakkin' at the Old Tool Shed

A person born to be a flower pot will not go beyond the porch.

Mexican Proverb

Over the past year, two guest speakers at our monthly meetings, Terry Henderson, and Mike Bones, covered similar, yet different, topics. Last February Terry spoke of growing rhodies in pots, and in March Mike shared the beauty and challenge of growing *bonsai* rhodies. I became interested in plant pots and soon uncovered a surplus of information, so I decided to focus on *bonsai* pots to figure out why they are very expensive. And then I discovered that the more I learned, the more I needed to learn. The following is a synopsis of my discoveries thus far.

Bonsai containers are typically wood, plastic, mica, terra cotta, earthenware, stoneware, porcelain, and bone china. Plastic and mica are usually used as training containers. Mica pots are made of 80% mica (mineral), 15% polyethylene (plastic), and 5% graphite, and are an attractive, inexpensive choice if one does not intend to exhibit at shows. Terra cotta is not frost-resistant, and earthenware fired at a low temperature may not be frost-resistant. Thus, long-lasting bonsai pots of appropriate quality for treasured *bonsai* plants are glazed earthenware, stoneware, porcelain, or bone china, and that is why they are very expensive. What distinguishes earthenware, stoneware, porcelain, and bone china from one another is the kind of clay used and the firing process.

Earthenware is a coarse and opaque ceramic ware which is fired at a relatively low temperature. It is made of kaolin clay that when fired is porous and opaque. It is always slightly porous, whether it is glazed or unglazed. If fired at a very high temperature, it is somewhat frost-resistant. From a horticultural perspective, it is good for a pot to be porous, so if you're not going to have your *bonsai* collection outdoors, earthenware may be the best choice.

Stoneware looks like earthenware, but is made of a higher quality kaolin clay and is fired at a higher temperature. Because of this, the strength and durability of stoneware is much closer to that of porcelain. It is impervious to water and absolutely frost-resistant. For these reasons, a stoneware pot, glazed on the exterior only, with a drain hole, is often considered the best choice.

Porcelain is made from a white, high-quality kaolin clay. Bone china is made from translucent white clay containing at least 25 percent bone ash. Both are fired at extremely high temperatures and are frost-resistant. However, the pots themselves may be artistically viewed as too "feminine" for displaying many types of *bonsai* plants.

Most ceramics are made following a few basic steps. The manufacturing process begins with dry clay, which is ground up and mixed with water. This is referred to as *blunging*. This mixture is blended to form *slip*, then pressed to remove excess water, placed into a pug mill and chopped, then cut and molded to shape, called *leather*, or *cheese*, then fired. The first firing in the kiln is the *biscuit*. The fired pieces are then glazed and fired a second time, which is the *glost*. Once polished, the pieces are complete.

Don't get me wrong, you can put *bonsai* plants into anything with a drain hole, but the suggested container is any container that does not compete with the beauty of the plant. Plain drab colors are better than bright flowery ones, and earth tones are highly recommended.

Questions? Comments? E-mail me at garden.projects@hotmail.com

TIPS FROM THE OLD TOOL SHED:

Garage sales, rummage sales, bazaars and second hand stores are good flowerpot sources. When you get your "treasure" home, the first thing you should do is clean the pot/planter. If it is fiberglass or a resin, mild dish soap and a good scrub brush should do the trick. If it is concrete or terra cotta, a 1:10 bleach and water mixture (e.g. 1 part liquid bleach to 10 parts of water) and a good stiff brush will clean out the pores well. Always wear gloves and a mask if using bleach. Rinse the pots well with clear water, and then make sure the pot/planter is completely dry before storing it until used.



The season of wind and rain is here but gardening goes on in the greenhouses, potting sheds and our imaginations. Galen spends hours in our small greenhouse, monitoring the heat cable, babying the cuttings, sometimes putting in a few new cuttings just to see if they will root.

We had quite a windstorm recently, but no damage. Did anyone have any damage?

The three vireya rhododendrons living in the house are doing okay. One is doing great, thriving, branching and putting out new growth, the second is growing, but slowly and the third puts out a little growth, then just sits there.

Thanks to Douglas Furr for filling a vacancy on the board and to Rich Aaring for accepting appointment as our new Honors Chairman

The Christmas party on December 10th is in works. Linda Wylie and Sandy Olson have agreed to do the decorations and setup. Rudy Fecteau will cook the ham and the rest is potluck. Checik out the front page for details.

I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving and ate just enough.
Helen

Nolan's Blansit's Hybridizing Records

For those interested in the parentage of the plants you purchased from Nolan Blansit's breeding program, the information is now available on our chapter website at www.eugene-chapter-ars.org. From the Homepage, click on the green button "Nolan Blansit's pollination database". This can be quite an adventure to take a plant back several generations to the species level.



Siuslaw Chapter January Program

On Tuesday, January 19, the ARS Siuslaw Chapter Program will be on the restoration of the Hinsdale Garden presented by the BLM folks. They meet at the Presbyterian Church located at 3996 Highway 101 on the north end of Florence at 6:45 p.m. Visitors are always welcome.

**I hate to be reminded of the passage of time...
and in a garden of flowers
one can never escape from it.
It is one of the charms of a garden
of grass and evergreens, that there,
for a while one is allowed
to hug the illusion that time carries.**

E. V. Lucas

Older ARS Journals Available

A couple of chapter members have been cleaning off their bookshelves and have donated some older ARS Journals for us to use to fill in our missing issues. They have suggested that we might use these as a small fundraiser, so if you would like to fill in the missing issues of your collection here is a good chance for only 50¢ per issue or five issues for \$2.00. These will be available at the December meeting on December 10 and the February meeting on February 11. After that they will be added to the chapter library. For newer members these are an excellent source of information on the genus *Rhododendron*. Available issues are:

Quarterly Bulletins:

Vol. 27, No. 4 (October 1973)
Vol. 28, No. 4 (October 1974)
Vol. 29, No. 1 (January 1975)

Journals:

Vol. 40, No. 4 (Fall 1986)
Vol. 41, No. 2, 3, 4 (1987)
- Vol. 42, No. 2, 3, 4 (1988)
- Vol. 43, No. 1, 2, 4 (1989)
- Vol. 44, No. 2, 3, 4 (1990)
- Vol. 45, No. 1, 3 (1991)
Vol. 46, No. 2 (Spring 1992)
Vol. 51, No. 1, 2, 3, 4 (1997)
Vol. 52, No. 1, 2, 3, 4 (1998)
Vol. 53, No. 1, 2, 3, 4 (1999)
Vol. 54, No. 1, 2, 3, 4 (2000)
Vol. 55, No. 4 (Fall 2001)
Vol. 56, No. 1, 3, 4 (2002)
Vol. 57, No. 2, 3 (2003)
Vol. 58, No. 2 (Spring 2004)
Vol. 61, No. 1, 2, 3 (2007)
Vol. 62, No. 1, 2, 3, 4 (2008)

If you have questions, contact Ted Hewitt at 687-8119 or e-mail to ted.hewitt@comcast.net.

Monday morning. An early start under overcast skies, the sort which in Western Oregon Novembers often produce rain, or intermittent teasing rays of sunshine, or sometimes simply obscure the sun all day. Only time would tell which this day would bring. Driving south on the freeway one speculates idly about where all the stuff in the many freight trucks is going...and who will buy it in this economy? Escape the heavier traffic at the I 5 turnoff to Drain. Their chlorophyll gone, many leaves still cling to deciduous trees, contrasting nicely among the predominant green of Douglas firs. Oh, oh, a light smattering of rain on the windshield just out of Drain. After breakfast in Elkton the rain became a constant presence. A dozen good-sized rhododendrons waited planting in the garden. How many gardeners would show up?

All older hybrids no longer readily available, the plants were obtained through Greer Gardens with Harold's expert assistance. Ten were purchased with funds from the ARS Endowment Grant, plus two large plants were donated to the restoration by Greer Gardens. All were delivered to the site a few days earlier courtesy of Terry Henderson, who generously donated his time, truck and enclosed trailer transporting them from Eugene. Another plant was on its way from the Florence area with Gene Cockeram; a rare Rose Mangles probably propagated from the same cultivar at Hinsdale many years ago, but which had been lost at the garden. 'Rose' (*R. cinnabarinum* x *R. maddenii*) was brought in for auction at Siuslaw Chapter, whose members kindly purchased it as a chapter contribution to the restoration project.

So, shortly after nine o'clock cars began funneling into the parking lot east of the garden. Arriving from coastal locations were Norah Roadman, Sven and Alice Blomquist, photographer Bill Johnson with his wife Judy, Dan Nickell, Gene Cockeram, Bob and Marjene MacIntyre and Alton Dohner. Anne Gross came from Salem, Ted and Paula Hewitt, Leonard Frojen and Jack Olson from Eugene and, traveling the farthest, Neill and Bev Smith from Jacksonville. Bureau of Land Management staff on hand were Steve Samuels, Bob Golden and Jennie Sperling. After making their way to the larger 'island' portion of the garden across a low footbridge (tides have to be considered), these folks began enthusiastically digging

at staked locations, making short work of securing the rhododendrons in their new home. Afterwards all enjoyed homemade chicken soup, sandwich makings and hot coffee provided by the MacIntyres, and a poppy seed cake brought by Steve Samuels.

Here's a quote from BLM Botanist Jennie Sperling's message the next day: "It is heartwarming to see folks pulling together in the effort of getting plants adequately settled in the garden environment and doing their best to be as helpful as they can given the weather and time constraints. Please extend our appreciation onward to all folks involved, as I do not have all emails. I am very happy to have met more folks in the ARS that are willing to come out and work even in our typical Oregon sunshine and they added their own sunshine to the day with their can-do attitude."

There will be opportunities for ARS members to visit Hinsdale during the flowering season this next spring, and to add their special expertise in nurturing the garden. Replacements for species lost at Hinsdale are reserved for planting next year, when access will be greatly enhanced by completion of a vehicular bridge to the main garden. Stay tuned for other opportunities to enjoy this historical garden and the camaraderie of fellow enthusiasts during the increasing momentum of restoration underway in our partnership with the Bureau of Land Management.

Sure, we got a little wet and muddy, and then found welcome shelter in the still mostly dry garage at the former Hinsdale home. Some were seeing the garden for the first time, and there was much friendly chatter about it and all the other subjects gardeners find interesting. And though there was one good natured assault upon a member by another—you had to have been there—in the end no plant or animal species were harmed or injured at the planting party!

**Oh, what a blamed uncertain thing
This pesky weather is;
It blew and snowed and then it thawed,
And now, by jing, 'tis friz.
Philander Johnson**

On a rainy Monday morning in November about 20 ARS members representing the Southwestern, Siuslaw, Eugene, and Willamette Chapters gathered at the Hinsdale Garden along the Umpqua River near Reedsport to plant a number of rhododendrons to replace a few that have succumbed to the neglect of the past 40 years. Since this was my first visit to the garden, I found it remarkable how beautiful this rhododendron garden from yesteryear looks. Considering that much of this garden was planted in the early 1950's with plants that were, at that time, already mature specimens, the spacing of these large, old plants offers a view of a mature garden that one seldom sees. Throughout the garden are many mature trees that provide not only shade but also structure for the garden on a large scale, including a tall ginkgo tree still sporting its yellow leaves of autumn. The muted tones of the fading fall color of the deciduous plants in the garden and the surrounding forest along the river contributed much to the beauty of the day.

For many of us, it was a new experience to dig in sandy loam soil rather than clay and we were spoiled by having a handy pile of gravel for drainage, bags of mulch, and a new rhododendron placed near each pre-marked planting spot. The BLM has done a fine job over the last few years in removing a great deal of underbrush and limbing up the surrounding trees to allow more light to reach these old plants. After the planting, we were treated to a tasty lunch with soup made by District 4 Director, Bob MacIntyre, sandwich makings, cookies and coffee. It was a fine day of camaraderie, fresh air, and beautiful surroundings. Paula and I will certainly look forward to returning in the spring to see the rhododendrons in bloom. Watch the newsletter for announcements of public visit days for the Hinsdale Garden.

HINSDALE CUTTINGS

Thanks to Bill Johnson of Siuslaw Chapter for some great pictures, well worth viewing in color at eugene-chapter-ars.org



Left to right:

01. Steve Samuels, BLM
02. J C Booth, Booth family member Siuslaw Chap
03. Bob Goldman BLM
04. Jennie Sperling, BLM, SW Oregon Chapter
05. Alice Blomquist, SW Oregon Chapter
06. Gene Cockeram, Siuslaw Chapter
07. Gordon Wylie, Eugene Chapter
08. Bob MacIntyre, SW Oregon Chapter
09. Leonard Frojen, Eugene Chapter
10. Nora Roadman, SW Oregon Chapter
11. Paula Hewitt, Eugene Chapter
12. Ted Hewitt, Eugene Chapter
13. Dan Nickel, SW Oregon Chapter

HURRY BACK, RODNEY!

Compost has an almost mystical quality. It is made up of anything that is or was alive and is biodegradable--straw, spoiled hay, grass clippings, animal remains, manure, garbage, flesh, table scraps, etc. A compost heap represents immortality. Nothing dies as such. All living things complete their cycle and return to the pool of life. There is neither beginning nor end, only the inexorable turning of the great wheel: growth, decay, death and rebirth. William Longgood

Because our projector was incompatible with Rodney Bluhm's intended November program on traditional composting, he presented instead a slide program on vermiposting with red worms. Those in attendance at the November meeting were amazed and delighted with the depth of scientific facts and knowledge he explored with us. He had more slides and information to share than time allowed, leaving us wanting more. Some expressed desire to have Rodney back next fall for his regular program presentation, possibly in September when composting weather is still good. Thank you, Rodney, for a fascinating program!

The speaker was followed by our annual November plant auction. Harold Greer showed pictures of many of the plants offered. Gordon Wylie, auctioneer, kept the bidding going and the audience laughing. The highest bidders went home happy with their investments. We sold 19 plants - 18 rhododendrons and 1 calicarpa - for a total of \$174.

Many thanks to Douglas Furr for the yummy cookies and to Jack Olson for the fresh, crisp veggie tray for all to enjoy. And thanks to JoAnn Napier keeping the coffee pots full. It was good to see the Noonans in the audience, as well as Jim Robertson, member of the Emerald Rock Garden Society.

SUBGENUS HYMENANTHES

Section Ponticum

Subsection Fulva

R. fulvum

Balfourianum and Sir W. W. Smith

Hardy to 0° F.

First collected by Forrest in 1912 in west Yunnan, later by Farrar, Rock and Yu in eastern Tibet, southwest Sichuan and northeast Upper Burma.

Grown in fir, rhododendron and deciduous forest, on cliffs and rocky slopes and rocky situations in side valleys at 8,000 -13,000 feet.

R. fulvum



Drawing by
David Williams, MD
Eugene Chapter

This species has spectacular foliage: shiny dark green leaves with the finest suede-like bright cinnamon indumentum. The leaves curl in very tightly in very cold weather, less so in very warm weather.

Flowers are white blushed pink to deep rose, open funnel shaped, 8 to 20 in a truss. The calyx is very small.

This is not widely seen in gardens, but those who have it know a treasure when they see it. To my surprise, it bloomed for the first time in my garden last April.

Frances Burns

Resource material:

Publications by

H. H. Davidian

Ken Cox

Harold Greer

This species is variable in habit, height and leaf size. Small, medium or large shrub or tree 3 to 40 ft. high. A fine plant. When mature it is very free-flowering. Blooms March - April.





December 2009

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

2009 CHAPTER PROGRAM SCHEDULE 2010

- Dec 10** Holiday Party, Campbell Center, 4:30 Setup; 6:00 Eat (See Page 1 for details)
- Jan 12** Steve Hootman on “PLANT EXPLORATION IN THE HIMALAYAS”
Tuesday night 7:00 p.m. with Hardy Plant Group at Agate Hall,
18th and Agate Streets, Eugene
- Feb 11** Wilbur Bluhm on “THE KALMIOPSIS WILDERNESS”, Campbell Center
- Mar 11** Keith White on “PLANT HUNTING IN SICHUAN”, Annual Meeting & Election, Campbell Ctr.
- Apr 10** Early Rhododendron Show; Honors Banquet at The Electric Station, Eugene
Speaker Mike Stewart on “HYBRIDS & HYBRIDIZERS OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST
- May 1 & 2** May Rhododendron Show, Location in progress
- May 8** Plant Sale, Fairgrounds
- May 14-17** ARS annual Convention, Long Island NY
- Jun** Chapter Picnic ~ To be announced

