

# EUGENE CHAPTER

## AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

Newsletter

January 2011

### FROM THE PRESIDENT

The holidays are over, the days are getting longer, and we turn our thoughts to the new year, but, first, I want to go back to the Holiday Potluck Dinner and thank all the members who helped make this event such an enjoyable evening for so many of our members. The hall was beautifully decorated, the food was delicious, there were many people dressed in reds and greens adding to the festive atmosphere, but, best of all, was the camaraderie shared by members and the wonderful photos of members enjoying their gardens and travels. Thank you to all who contributed to this joyous chapter event.

As we look ahead to the next six months, we will have many opportunities to enjoy times together and I ask that you, as members of the chapter, find ways to share these times as well as help with them. The programs at our chapter meetings will be of interest to all in the rhododendron community with Jack Olson leading it off with his "Rhody Insights" on January 13, a program you will not want to miss. At the March meeting, we will have the annual elections with the offices of Treasurer, Secretary, and one Board position being elected. I would like you all to think about becoming active in a leadership role and feel free to nominate yourself or someone else for one of these positions by contacting Harold Greer or Frances Burns who are on the Nominations Committee. The officer positions are

two-year commitments and the Board position is a three-year commitment. In April, we will be moving the Spring Rhododendron Show to Mookie's Northwest Grill which provides a larger venue with more possibilities. More information will be coming soon. When your Winter 2011 ARS Journal arrives in the mail, you will find the registration information for the 2011 ARS National Convention to be held May 11-15 in Vancouver, WA. Not only will you want to attend this conference that is so close to home but also we will need people to help with different parts of it. This is a chance for our chapter to share in the convention profits based on our participation. Of course, April and May will be the height of the rhododendron season and there will be places that we will want to visit at their peak.

At this time in our winter garden, the seed pods on the *Cardiocrinum giganteum* are drying and splitting open, the buds on *R. racemosum* are swelling and have a nice dusky pink color that contrasts well with the bluish-green leaves, the swelling buds on *R. 'Pink Snowflakes'* are turning a bright reddish color, the buds on the large *R. 'Christmas Cheer'* are showing pink getting ready for their February opening, and the deciduous *Viburnum grandiflorum* is in full bloom. One of the delights of gardening in western Oregon is having interesting things happening in the garden all year.

Ted

VISIT THE EUGENE CHAPTER WEBSITE  
[eugene-chapter-ars.org](http://eugene-chapter-ars.org)

R. 'TRINA'



Hybrid & Photo by  
Jim Barlup

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### OFFICERS

<b>President:</b>	<b>Ted Hewitt</b>
<b>Vice President:</b>	<b>Douglas Furr</b>
<b>Treasurer:</b>	<b>Rick Reed</b>
<b>Secretary:</b>	<b>Paula Hewitt</b>
<b>Past President:</b>	<b>Helen Baxter</b>
<b>Membership Chair:</b>	<b>Rick Reed</b>

#### BOARD MEMBERS

<b>Frances Burns</b>	<b>2008 - 2011</b>
<b>JoAnn Napier</b>	<b>2009 - 2012</b>
<b>Leonard Frojen</b>	<b>2009 - 2012</b>
<b>Gordon Wylie</b>	<b>2010 - 2013</b>
<b>Terry Henderson</b>	<b>2010 - 2013</b>

#### STANDING COMMITTEES

<b>Nominations</b>	<b>Harold Greer</b>	<b>686-1540</b>
<b>Hospitality</b>	<b>JoAnn Napier</b>	<b>746-0828</b>
<b>Welfare</b>	<b>Nancy Greer</b>	<b>686-1540</b>
<b>Honors</b>	<b>Rich Aaring</b>	<b>485-6013</b>

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**Ted Hewitt** 541-687-8119

There was much drama to be observed in Australia. While sitting in the crowded cafe at the lovely Heronswood Garden on Court Phillip Bay west of Melbourne several things occurred with lightning speed. The menu was a panoply of exotic food, all eaten in the British manner – knife in right hand, fork in left, and never the twain shall change hands. An item on the menu was a few giant olives and a *gigantic* crusty roll for \$8.00. A large tray of the rolls was behind me on my right from which they were served. Suddenly a waitress gasped and a big to-do ensued at my elbow. An unsupervised pre-schooler had accidentally knocked one of the princely, pricey rolls on the floor! The stricken waitress picked it up in disbelief and toted it off to a trash can .... And that's all I know about that!

Out on the patio, a mother, toddler, baby and grandmother were enjoying lunch, when suddenly they went berserk...a big spider (they grow very big down under!) appeared under their table among their purses and diaper bags! A brave waitress rushed out with a broom and dustpan and the rodeo began. The spider had legs about 4 inches long and leaped around like a bronc that didn't want to be ridden. My duck, mango and greens salad was forgotten. After several rounds between dustpan and spider, it was eventually taken to the perimeter of the property. What happened then I can't say. Normalcy resumed, the duck/mango/greens salad was divine and so was the Tamarillo Hazelnut Apple cake. The garden was lovely, I must add, and I thoroughly enjoyed my day with Neilma Wallace, who had one more surprise on the way home....a concoction of lemonade and vanilla ice cream — so very refreshing on a warm sunny day. I think it was called a Spider!

**NEVER GO TO A DOCTOR WHOSE OFFICE PLANTS HAVE DIED.**

**Erma Bombeck**



**An Australian native ground orchid.**

They love the mulch pathways and grow abundantly on their own.

I am right now up to my neck in writing the eight page insert for the Journal ARS and tying down prices for buses, caterers and meals! Oh, why do I volunteer for these jobs? Yes, actually I like doing it if it produces something people will enjoy.

All of the speakers are now firm. I finally caught up with the last one this morning and positively got a yes to speaking. Things will still change in this and of course there is still lots to add, but it gives an idea of the concept we are working with. Please know that I am not taking credit for all of this work, Mike and Maria Stewart are just as busy with putting this together. But there is plenty for ALL OF US TO DO.

*(ED. NOTE: These conferences we so enjoy don't come about by osmosis!)*

**Eugene Chapter Mission Statement**

**E**ncourage the culture and interest of rhododendrons.

**U**se our meetings for educational opportunities & building friendships.

**G**row both species and hybrid rhododendrons in our gardens.

**E**ducate ourselves and the community about the world of rhododendrons.

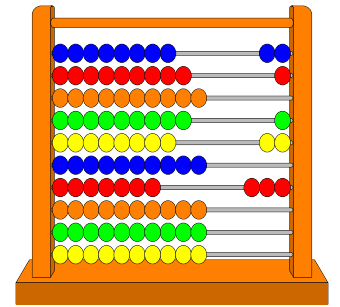
**N**urture the idea of garden design with rhododendrons.

**E**xhibit our knowledge and the beauty of rhododendrons to the community.

## Yakkin' at the Old Tool Shed Douglas Furr

**"Roses are red,  
Violets are blue,  
But they don't get around  
Like the dandelions do!"**

*Slim Acres*



How many times have you looked up from gardening and wondered what time it is? Well, one way to get a good estimate, if the sun is shining and the day length is about 8 hours, is to face south and observe the sun's location. If the sun is directly overhead, it is high noon. If the sun is on your left arm, then it's before noon. If the sun on your right arm, then it's afternoon. Given that there are 45 degrees on your left and 45 degrees on your right, you can estimate the time more precisely by raising your arm and observing where the sun is within the 45 degrees. Each 22.5 degrees (half of each side) towards the right indicates a 2-hour passage of time. Of course, you can always look at your cell phone, but information like this is good to know.

Another good thing to know is how to make stepping stones. When you walk in your garden, **you** know where to step, but your visitors may need a stepping stone path so's not to cause damage. It's easy to make personalized stones by creating molds from plastic buckets. Cat litter comes in square buckets, while laundry soap comes in round ones. The standard square bucket has an 8" diameter, and the round buckets have an 11" diameter. To create the stepping stone mold, cut the bucket off 2" above the bottom. Spray the mold with a good coating of cooking oil spray to ensure that you can remove your stone easily. Then put on your gloves, mix some Quikrete, and pour it into the 2" bucket bottom mold. When the mixture has set, you can push broken tiles, pottery, marbles, whatever catches your fancy into the mixture. You can also purchase colors to add to the Quikcrete if you wanted to be fancy. If there's interest, I'll volunteer to provide a demonstration at one of our picnics.

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

### **Tips From The Old Tool Shed:**

There is a simple tool that many households have, called a *steel*. They look similar to a file but the grooves run parallel to the rod. To sharpen a knife touch the cutting edge to the steel at a 45° angle, divide that in half (22.5°) and sharpen one side up the entire length of the blade and down the other way to get both sides. Be very careful until you get the hang of it and do it slowly. Test it on a piece of paper and be prepared for quick results. After practice your garden toolkit will love you!

To work in the garden is to be brought into contact with the elements of botany, geography, ecology, genetics, chemistry and entomology—not to mention ornithology, bacteriology and meteorology—and interest may develop in any of these directions.

Alice M. Coats

## MAKE IT COUNT!

**"Make what count?"** you ask. Your very own membership in the American Rhododendron Society, of course – from helping new members with their rhododendrons, providing goodies or setting up chairs and taking them down for meetings, volunteering for committees, to running for office or the camaraderie of a board position.

This historic chapter, over a half century old, was started by gardeners with a burning curiosity for rhododendrons and camellias.

Think about what you can do to keep the standards high, the joy of gardening with rhododendrons alive, and best of all, finding new friends with a similar passion for gardening with rhododendrons.



## HINSDALE GARDEN REPORT

Gordon Wylie

Larry the Cable Guy's "Git 'er done!" perfectly describes the attitude of twenty enthusiastic District 4 ARS members recently gathering for a late fall planting of rhododendrons along the lower Umpqua River. The weather proved ideal, serving up a rain free and temperatures in the mid fifties day for 'just right' warmth from our labors. Plus a ready appetite for the goodies and visiting that followed.

This garden of about five acres, located on the south bank of the river opposite the popular Dean Creek Elk Viewing Area, was built around the Hinsdale family home some sixty years ago. O. Howard Hinsdale went to extraordinary lengths in accumulating what is likely the first large private collection of rhododendrons in the Pacific Northwest. A fine assortment of magnolias—many now large trees—and camellias complemented the rhododendrons, while a mix of deciduous and evergreen trees provided overhead protection. Beginning in 1955 the family offered open garden days, and by three years later the annual events were featured in a Roseburg newspaper as hundreds of visitors enjoyed the explosion of bloom.

By century's end the property had passed into the hands of the US Bureau of Land Management and, following an outside assessment incorrectly concluding the garden did not represent any particular style, little or no care found the garden invaded with undesirable growth and in decline. Nevertheless, a solid foundation of established trees and many mature rhododendrons persisted and, with input from ARS members over the past eight years, the BLM reversed its earlier position and is actively supporting refurbishment. An important part of the restoration is replacing rhododendrons lost from the original planting, and in 2008 our Society Board approved a grant of \$3000 from the ARS Endowment Fund to purchase replacement plants for those lost from the garden.

Members planted the first group of those replacements in the fall of 2009 and all appear to be doing well in their new environment. A year later it was time to tackle the second round of plants purchased with grant funds. So in mid November members arrived at the garden to apply shovels and their expertise in settling over thirty plants into the ground. They include ten different named cultivars of the *Loderi* grex, probably the largest such collection in a single North American garden, and are arranged as a mass planting to provide a stunning display of color and scent. Among the others are both lepidote and elepidote species, with a number of big leaf examples such as *falconeri*, *rex ssp fictolacteam* and *sinogrande*.

Several staff members of the BLM Umpqua Field Office were on hand at the planting party, and in a later e-mail Assistant Manager Glenn Harkleroad summarized "...a good time for all involved. This partnership seems to be on really solid footing with interested and active membership involvement." We are delighted to have this recognition of the members' participation in the garden's restoration. Each of you is due a real 'pat on the back' for generous hours of work and expert advise which, coupled with the ARS endowment funds, has the project well on its way to success.

We're now in the final stages of acquiring evergreen and deciduous azalea replacements with remaining grant funds, and tentatively plan for planting them early next spring. Be on the look out for more information about planting and garden visits to be circulated among our chapters as next season approaches.

Coupled with major investments by the BLM, the latest being a great new access road over the slough to the main garden, real progress continues toward the goal of fully re-opening the historically important and fascinating Hinsdale Garden. Our membership has a continuing part to play in reclaiming this representative from the early years of the ARS showcasing how and why rhododendrons became important garden ornamentals in the Pacific Northwest.



## PLACES TO GO ~ PEOPLE TO SEE

For our first meeting in the new year, we will enjoy hearing Jack Olson share some of the “Rhody Insights” he has gained from his long experience with the genus. Please join us for cookies, coffee, and conversation at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 13, at the Celeste Campbell Community Center, 155 High Street in Eugene, with the program following at 7:30.

Jack bought his first rhododendron in 1961 and has been growing, propagating, and hybridizing them since. Many of you have visited his beautiful garden over the years and have enjoyed other presentations that he has given, but this one particularly shows off his wonderful photography and illustrates the wide variety within the genus. Though we all know that Jack loves large beautiful trusses, he also likes plants with outstanding foliage or that grow in his new rock garden beds. Rarely do we get a speaker with Jack’s long experience of growing rhododendrons, so this will be a treat that all will enjoy.

Prior to the meeting, you are invited to join us for a no-host speaker’s dinner at 5:30 p.m. at Bai Khao Thai Restaurant, 541 W. Centennial Blvd in Springfield. Please RSVP to Paula or Ted Hewitt at 541-687-8119 or [ted.hewitt@comcast.net](mailto:ted.hewitt@comcast.net) by Tuesday, January 11, so that we may notify the restaurant as to how many to expect. Directions to Bai Khao from Eugene: north on Coburg Rd; east on Martin Luther King Blvd. which becomes Centennial Blvd when it crosses I-5 into Springfield; right at the light on Prescott Lane (just past Value Village Center); right into the parking lot. Ted

## Hardy Plant Society January 11 Program

### Meadows by Design

John Greenlee’s illustrated talk Tuesday, January 11, 2011, at 7 p.m. at the University of Oregon, Agate Hall, Agate Street at 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Eugene, will give a good introduction to the creation of meadow-like spaces in urban and suburban settings. You will come away with new ideas for designs and specific planting advice. Known as the “Grassman” in horticultural circles, John Greenlee is an internationally known horticulturist, landscape designer, and an advocate for sustainable lawns and meadows. He specializes in the cultivation and study of grasses and grass like plants. John Greenlee founded Greenlee Nursery of California in 1985. The nursery is the oldest and largest specialty ornamental grass nursery on the West Coast. His best selling book, *The Encyclopedia of Ornamental Grasses* (Rodale, 1992), is considered by many to be an indispensable reference. Copies of the book will be available for sale and author signing. Doors open at 6:30 for book sales and viewing botanical samples. Admission is \$6 for non-members and free 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, visit [www.thehardyplantgroup.org](http://www.thehardyplantgroup.org) or call 541-344-0896.



## 2011 Calendar

- Jan. 13 Program "**Rhodie Insights**" presented by Jack Olson.  
Campbell Center 155 High Street, Eugene, 7:00 P.M. [See details, Page 5](#)
- Feb. 10 Program "The BLM Hinsdale Garden Project" by Steve Samuels, BLM
- Mar. 10 Annual Meeting - Election;  
Program: Panel Discussion: Prepping a Truss for Show and Judging
- Apr. 9 -10 Siuslaw Chapter Early Show, Florence
- Apr. 16 Early Show and Banquet at Mookies
- May 7 HPG Plant Sale, (May 6 setup)
- May 11-15 ARS Annual Convention, Vancouver, WA, <http://www.heathmanlodge.com>
- June 26 Picnic at the Sarlaks' garden in Corvallis