

AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

Eugene Chapter

October 2012 Newsletter

*A Magnificent
Magnolia Finale*

*Photo by Alan Trott
of New Zealand,*

*Life Member, Eugene
Chapter*



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EUGENE CHAPTER MISSION STATEMENT

Encourage the culture &
interest of rhododendrons.

Use our meetings for
educational opportunities &
building friendships.

Grow both species & hybrid
rhododendrons in our gardens.

Educate ourselves & the
community about the world
of rhododendrons.

Nurture the idea of garden
design with rhododendrons.

Exhibit our knowledge & the
beauty of rhododendrons to
the community.

OCTOBER 11 - GROWING RHODODENDRONS SUCCESSFULLY

Eugene Chapter will present a panel discussion that can make a difference in your contentment as gardeners. A few simple but important steps can make the difference between a plant with a long life of beauty or one that fades away, as is often the fate of a poorly planted rhododendron.

Panel members are three men of considerable experience whose plants reflect the best in rhododendron culture:

HAROLD GREER, noted author, hybridizer, nurseryman, former President of ARS national, double Gold Medal Winner.

NOLAN BLANSIT, experienced northwest rhododendron hybridizer and developer of a yellow African violet.

TERRY HENDERSON, owner and operator of Log Cabin Wholesale Nursery, and chapter board member.

Don't miss this opportunity to tune in on years of cumulative knowledge. Bring your questions, notebook and pen, and enjoy this discussion.

The meeting is held on the usual meeting night, second Thursday of the month at Campbell Center, 155 High Street, Eugene. Cookies, coffee and conversation with old friends and new will kick off the evening at 7:00 p.m. The program will begin at 7:30; door prize drawings will be the final attraction before buttoning up the evening at 9.

Because the September board meeting is after the newsletter deadline, the president, Ali Sarlak made the restaurant choice for the 5:00 p.m. informal pre-meeting no-host dinner honoring the speakers, to which all interested are invited: the Bai Khao Restaurant, serving especially fine Thai food in Value Village, 541 West Centennial Way in Springfield. Please call Helen Baxter 541-461-6082 (leave message) or e-mail galen.baxter@comcast.net by October 6 so that she can make arrangements for the group at the restaurant. Bai Khao food is FRESH! Our attendees are predictably fresh, too, which makes for an enjoyable prelude to the evening program. Hope to see YOU there!

"You ought to know that
October is the first Spring month."

- Karel Capek

SUNNY OASIS USING SUN-TOLERANT PLANTS REPLACES MISSING AUTUMN LEAVES

There is nothing like a 50% off sale on plants and shiny pots to stir the gardening soul. Like a kid in a candy shop, mouth watering, I reconned the vast plant selection at the Little Red Farm Nursery for colors to perk up the sawdust skirts of the felled oak tree stump - a new look for a sunny bed in the midst of a shady woodland garden. Three trips to the plant emporium and the vast circle to began to fill, and the more gems I stuck in, the sooner they would fill in. By now totally reckless, I lugged a New Zealand Flax taller than I to the car - careful not to poke my eyes out on the sharp pointed leaves.

It was joined by an equally tall 'Plum Crazy' Hibiscus with mauve red blossoms large enough to cover ones head at the Australian Cup races. Wherever would THAT go? Not to worry - it's ecstatic on the dry sunny south side of the house.



The Mad Mad Sunny Oasis on one of Oregon's Rare Cloudy Summer Days

There were pots of *Perovskia atriplicifolia*, coveted for years in the gardens of others, to join the variegated iris given to me by Nancy Beck - and 'Caramel' Coral Bells because the late afternoon suns lights them up so irresistibly. 'Mariposa Violet' *Scabiosa* set the pace for the dazzling helianthemums and tall 'Purple Emperor' sedums. Of course, we needed "small" - a little variegated Sedum, perfect in a shiny azure blue pot to set on the stump beside the flax. *Dianthus Cheddar Pinks* and 'Frosty Fire' joined *Elijah Blue Fescue* around the circle.

Creeping zinnia *Sanvitalis* 'Sunbini', and *Calibrachea* were poked into filled pots of mums to trail over the sides - maybe we'll have a Zone 9 winter - and *Agastache* for the very busy bees! Some little pots of small dahlias and chrysanthemums were among the last to go in. Petite little deer-resistant *Geranium* hybrids 'Bertie Crug' were planted in the crevices of the stump. A rock hound forever, I found a stash buried under grass that I'd once collecte, and used them to define the new bed.

Finally, I remembered a Mothers' day 50 years ago - celebrated with glee by my 4 munchkins on a sunny May morning on a deserted Oregon beach - with the miracle of a 5 a.m. incoming tide bearing glass fishing floats of all sizes and shapes from Japan, and the fun of catching them before they broke on the rocks. I've been saving them all these years, waiting for just the right debut into the garden. Out they came to conclude the learning experience that evolved from the loss of our treasured California Black Oak tree. May the plants prosper and fill in the sunny "oasis" centering a woodland garden.

Before heading out to clean the greenhouse for winter, I want to mention a couple of special plants - bought years ago at the original Siskiyou Rare Plant Nursery - that Ted and Nolan asked about at the picnic. My memory failed, but my records did not: *Allium thunbergi* 'Ozawa' from Japan blooms in late September, brightening up my little rock garden of lepidotes. The other was a native plant - *Lewisia columbiana* ssp *rupicola*. Blooming along with the allium is my favorite dwarf aster...but let's not go there. Asters, the "last flower of summer", are mostly just too pushy! Seeking those that don't flop at the drop of a hat, I locate them a lonely sunny dry spot with room for exponential expansion...In spite of it all, I need a fall "fix" of the fetching flippant felicity that only asters provide - a finality to the futile "foo foo" of summer's sizzling dayz... [Ed. Note: Sorry, but actually, factually, the devil made me do it!]

SUMMER OF 2012 LINGERS ON

THE EUGENE CHAPTER PICNIC AT DUNROAMIN: A FINE FAREWELL TO SUMMER

September 9, 2012

When I sat down to review my day, which was not very hard, I thought to myself, though I could not speak for each and every one of you, but my senses were complete, from hearing in the back ground the sound, soothing and gentle, of the McKenzie river, the lovely breeze, the silhouette on the lawn, fresh air and the smile and anticipation of foods when the clanging farm bell on the front porch rang...

Certainly we all recognize there is whole a lot of work and organization behind putting on an event of such scale and seeing it going smoothly - Nancy, master of organization, everybody enjoyed the ham and fish you prepared. Frances, Mary and Doug, you did a marvelous job, as did all the attendees who prepared the tasty food, and I thank you for all of us for what you did!

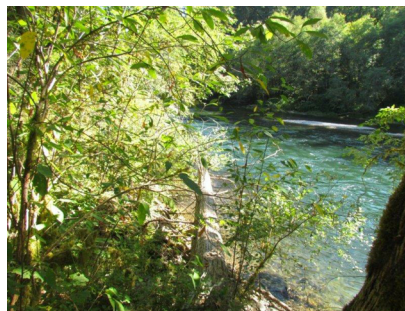
The yard was wonderful; even if it is not the prime time for showing Rhododendrons, but Frances's place doesn't matter what time you see it has the different beauty of the season - now the rhody's varying foliages are very attractive, especially when there is some sun shining on them, and of course the plants have been chosen very carefully. Another thing offered was Doug's invitation to pick some tasty blueberries to take home, which made everyone happy. One thing I'd like to know is how Doug and Mary keep the McKenzie River birds off the bushes! *[Ed. Note: We have 6 bushes of early blueberries - the birds eat ALL of them before heading to the mountains for the summer. We call it our "tithe". After the chapter picnic, the crows arrived to eat the final 4 per cent!]*

I cannot close this note without thanking the visitors from other chapters who joined us; and our members who made it - we are all certainly glad they did, for we had a wonderful time!

In closing I should say we not only visited a rhody park but also we were treated to an oasis garden bed where the beautiful old oak tree used to cast its shade. Ali Sarlak



Larry & Ted Heading for Seconds



The McKenzie River Rippling By
Photos by Ali Sarlak



Bogie Flashing His 'Magnificent
Ears' for Linda & Frances

Hello to All.

Many thanks to those of you who attended our September picnic at Dunroamin in the beautiful McKenzie valley. We had perfect weather, a gorgeous setting, plenty of excellent food and lots of good company.

A special thank you to Frances Burns for sharing her home and gardens and to her daughter Mary and husband Doug Furr for executing picnic arrangements and setup with great finesse. The cutting and plant exchanges were once again appreciated. For many of us that is one of the highlights of our picnics.

Hope to see you all at our first meeting of the year on October 11th at the Campbell Senior Center.

Nancy Burns, Eugene Chapter Board Member

PLACES TO GO, PEOPLE TO SEE

Notes on Nanaimo

Ali Sarlak was very impressed with the Nanaimo City Hall design and landscape. For chapter frog fans he included the photo of a scholarly frog on its way to school. Other pleasures: the harbor, Milner Gardens with its tree Rhododendrons and fall colored native dogwood trees. Pictures at right by Ali.



Store-bought or home-baked, there will be cookies at the October meeting. Thank you, Helen Baxter!

Volunteers needed for November, January, February and March

Please call JoAnn Napier at 541-746-0828

PLEASE SEND YOUR DUES TO TED, ASAP!!!!!!!
Time gets away from all of us; but it helps the record keeping immensely if dues are paid in October!

THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY HARDY PLANT GROUP will present Harold Greer of Greer Gardens on Tuesday November 13, 2012 at 7 p.m. at the Campbell Community Center, 155 High St., Eugene, OR.

Harold is a true expert in all fields regarding rhododendrons and azaleas. He authored one of the most famous reference books, 'Greer's Guidebook to Available Rhododendrons'. He has received the coveted Gold Medal award from the American Rhododendron Society and served as the Society's International President.

Harold will speak about Rhododendron Diversity. From tiny alpine varieties to tree rhododendrons, hardy to tropical, lepidote to elepidote, oldest to newest. He will give us real insight into this extremely diverse genus.

Doors open at 6:30 for book sales and viewing botanical samples. Admission is \$5 for non-members and free for members. Membership in the Hardy Plant Group is \$20 annually. There is ample parking in the parking lot at the corner of 2nd Ave. and High Street. For more information about the group or this event, visit the web site at or call 541-344-0896.

New Book!

FROM PASTURE TO PARADISE: THE STORY OF TROTTS GARDEN

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALAN TROTT,
TROTTS GARDEN PUBLISHING, \$50.00 160 PAGES, HARDBACK.

**Cheers to
Alan Trott,
Life Member
Eugene
Chapter**

This book is about one man's dream and how against all odds he with Catherine, his wife, converted a flat paddock near Ashburton into one of this country's most exciting gardens. It also features probably our only genuine knot garden and some beautiful garden structures. Alan Trott is not content with making an outstanding garden; he has also mastered digital photography producing some breath taking images. The book opens with an account of the couple's early struggles accompanied by old photographs of the birth of the garden. It then portrays its differing parts, all lavishly illustrated – woodland, pond and damp, a red garden, formal and a border garden concluding with a chapter on a chapel they transported in to the garden. While the photographs are superb, the text is well worth reading containing a wealth of plant lore written in the authors direct first person style. This book sets new standards not only for content but also for Quentin Wilson's classic design and crisp layout. My guess it will shortly find its way into many Christmas stockings – it is outstanding.
Gordon Collier

AN INTRODUCTION TO MY NEW "BEST FRIEND" - THE VOLE

Give me your coyotes, foxes, skunks, and snakes, and while you're at it, some owls, hawks, cats, weasels and even a great blue heron or two. Considering the fact that my garden has been invaded by a legion of short-lived tiny critters that can breed at one month of age, have several litters a year, from spring to fall, with up to 9 babies in a 21-24 day gestational period, I need all the help I can get.

In pursuit of knowledge I learned that Prairie Voles in the Midwest have "family values" - they are monogamous for life, both parents provide superb parental care, and the kids are allowed to hang around for several weeks after weaning. On the other hand, the Montana Vole, with a genetic difference of only 1%, is a perennial bachelor in a relentless chase of any and all female voles, taking leave immediately after conquest, having no desire for family ties. To quote information from Emory University researchers, Doctors Inslee and Wang, "there are subtle differences in their hormone systems that when manipulated lead to these good values / bad values differences. Their research may lead to treatment for people with social disorders. So while we may be ruining the voles in our gardens, we should tip our hats to the Midwest prairie voles that may show us a way to a better future." Now that's forgiveness!

Washington State passed a bill in 2000 that made body-grabbing traps illegal; and the state registers no rodenticides for homeowners. We two-legged creatures create ideal habitats for the voles, and if we like what we have created, and the voles like them as well, it's apparent we just have to learn to get along. Alternatively, California declared war on the California meadow vole, allowing fatal consequences.

Despite a resident coyote cruising the fields and four cats bringing home their catches for our examination and praise, we have a problem with voles slowly killing rhododendrons - favorites such as 'Razorbill', *Roxianum oreonastes*, and *quinquefolium*, plus a beautiful unknown variety. Fortunately, I was able to get cuttings before they died. The plants had small borrows threading through the roots and evidence of thirst, and no amount of water made a difference. I knew it wasn't moles - there were no mounds of soft soil and moles don't eat roots or bulbs. *Voila!* Voles! This will require closer inspection of the corpses the cats' drag home.

In the Pacific Northwest two vole species are prominent; both belong to the same family Muridae as Mice and Rats - not the same family as moles, who are insectivores in the Family Talpidae.

The Oregon Meadow Vole, *Microtis oregoni* or Creeping Meadow Vole, likely to be found in forested areas, is small, short-haired, and brown with a silver belly. They range from 4.75 to 6.25 inches including the 1 to 2 inch tail. With a gestational period of 23 days, they have four or five litters of 3 or 4 babies a year. They love conifer trees and clean cut and grassy habitat on higher slopes. They dine on green vegetation, blueberries and other berries - Oregon Grape, Salal and Salmon Berries come to mind - and subterranean fungi. Their shallow burrows can be seen outlined here, there and everywhere. They nest underground, and sometimes in hollow logs, bark or piles of garden debris and are found from the coast to the Cascade Mountains. I suspect I have a melding of both species, since we are so fortunate having both habitats, likely developed since gardening and irrigation were introduced to a dry savanna with a small wetland area some 60 years ago.

Townsend's Vole, *Microtis townsendi* is found primarily on the coast and in the Coast Range in wetlands. Dark brown, with some black on top, perhaps, and gray or grayish brown on their belly, their tail is longer as voles go, and dark, as are their feet. Their big ears stick up above their rough fur. Including tail, they range from 6.5 to 9.25 inches; with the tail 1.75 to 3.25 inches long. Their body depth from belly to back is one inch or less. Marshes, and thick moist vegetation provides their homestead as they raise several litters annually of up to nine, gestating 21 to 24 days. Their preferred diet consists of grasses, horsetail, alfalfa, clover, rushes, sedges and buttercups, with stored small bulbs for winter. If summer vegetation is thick enough to hide and nest in, they don't go underground. (Hence my knee-high rubber boots when on safari in tall grasses, accompanied at times by well-tuned shrieks of "Eeeeeek!")



Oregon
Meadow Vole

Information in this article was obtained online at <http://www.austingwatson.com/mg/voles.htm> where other sources of vole information are listed.



Townsend
Vole

American Rhododendron Society
 Eugene Chapter
 PO Box 7704
 Springfield, OR 97475

Knot Garden Designs

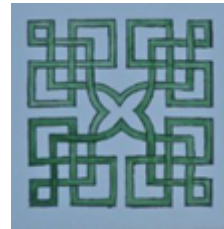
from the new book by Alan Trott entitled

FROM PASTURE TO PARADISE: THE STORY OF TROTTS GARDEN

Visit our Chapter Web Site
<http://www.eugene-chapter-ars>



October 2012 Newsletter



2012 CHAPTER CALENDAR 2013

- Oct 11 Chapter meeting and Panel Discussion - *Growing Rhododendrons Successfully* - Details on page 1.
- Nov 8 Chapter meeting and Program - *Companion Plants for the Rhododendron Garden* Roger Gossler
- Dec 13 Christmas Potluck
- Jan 10 Chapter meeting and program: *Rhododendron Diversity*, Harold Greer
 Showing all of the different types of plants that exist in the Genus Rhododendron -
 An amazing diversity that most people do not realize exists in the Genus Rhododendron.
- Feb 14 Chapter meeting and program, *Western North American Rhododendron Species Project* - Clarice Clarke
- Mar 14 Chapter Annual meeting and program, *Hydrangeas in Your Garden* Kristen Van Hoose
- Apr 20 Spring Show and Awards Banquet, Program - *Species Azaleas of North America* - Mike Stewart
- May 11 Plant Sale with the WVHPG
- June Picnic

Robert 'Bob' Lewis Ticknor, 85, born Oct. 26, 1926 passed away Sept. 24, 2012. A noted Oregon research horticulturist, Bob is survived by wife, Ruth; two children; five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. One son preceded him in death. A Celebration of Life will be held at 2 p.m. Oct. 7 at Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden in Portland.