

AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

Eugene Chapter

December 2012 Newsletter



R. balfourianum var.
balfourianum

Photo by Frances Burns

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Webmaster Ted Hewitt

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EUGENE CHAPTER MISSION STATEMENT

Encourage the culture and interest of rhododendrons.

Use our meetings for educational opportunities and 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 and the beauty of rhododendrons to the community.



HOY!

WHAT: 2012 HOLIDAY POTLUCK

WHERE: CAMPBELL SENIOR CENTER

WHEN: THURSDAY DECEMBER 13TH

TIME: 6 PM to 9 PM

CHAPTER WILL PROVIDE: TURKEY, HAM & COFFEE

6:00 PM Arrive with a dish to serve **12** or more – a side dish, a salad or a dessert. *Please remember a serving utensil.*

Be sure to bring your own dishes, napkins, utensils, glasses and drink of choice.

6:15 PM Be seated for Dinner

ENTERTAINMENT:

Bring garden related pictures to share. They will be presented using a computer with the Campbell Center projector.

Have your pictures on a CD or flash drive.

Anyone willing to help setup the room please arrive at 5:00 PM.





A TRIED AND TRUE BEST FRIEND- THE GREAT HORNED OWL



At the sight of this a Great Horned Owl perched on a crate in the small pasture last week, I knew my wish for a wise old owl had been granted. With the invasion of Oregon Field Voles, the thought of owls to control their population was my silent prayer. Here he was all afternoon in one spot, his head swiveling from front to back, presumably hunting for dinner or looking for a mate despite repeated attacks by territorial crows and stellar jays. By morning he had disappeared. We've neither seen nor heard him since, but now that the moon is waxing, he is hunting by night or has found a mate and they've left on their nuptial flight. I hope they took a few voles on which to snack. But then if wishes were horses . . . traffic would be even worse.

Moderate weather made Fall 2012 a great year for late gardening. Crab grass worked insidiously into a bed sorely in need of rejuvenation. Working smarter not harder, I covered the bed with double-layers of thick cardboard, shoveled mulch on it and am fertilizing it with coffee grounds – one pot at a time adds up! The grounds, regardless of “blend”, are an excellent nitrogen source, which bacteria need to digest organic matter into compost. Earth worms love coffee grounds and the grounds are also a safe substitute for manure. Fast forward to next spring...*Voila!* A new planting field created while I tatted the winter away.

Actually I fight a compulsion to clean the garden beds to bare ground, leaving no shelter for wildlife. We often have a covey of quail in a swale of blackberries, wild plum and corkscrew willow. We also have a native Oregon white oak tree with a supply of acorns for them to feed on in the winter. This year the quail succumbed to the stealth of the resident coyote or were afraid to come down to the oak because in my zeal in removing too much ground cover in the surrounding azalea bed. I am reminded of my thoughtlessness every time I walk up the driveway and note its superabundance of crushed acorns. Many creatures eat them, however, so hopefully I won't have a zillion young oak trees with tap roots to China to pull up come summer. Then there's the black walnuts for the jays to plant in the garden; I wouldn't mind so much if they'd come back and eat them, but I don't think they can crack them. If anyone wants some black walnuts – delicious! - give us a call and come and pick them up to crack while watching football. It requires a hammer and chopping block.

The Royal Horticultural Society online newsletter this month focused on deciduous trees and hedges, particularly natives. More so than conifers, they provide shelter, nesting sites and food for birds and other wildlife by providing many insect breeding sites, and supporting plant life underneath them, such as bulbs, annuals and perennials, all benefitting wildlife.

If one waits an extra couple of weeks before pruning hedges such as *Viburnum opulus* means food availability to wildlife for that extra period. Don't deadhead roses that produce hips; delay their pruning as long as is possible. The colourful hips are decorative as well as a source of food for wildlife, Snow-berries, *Symphoricarpos albus*, a delicate-in-looks only, unique, stoloniferous native shrub with white berries on a 5-foot, easily grown shrub that thrives in dry or moist conditions and in sun or shade. It provides cover, and clusters of pink flowers that emerge as white berries in late summer. Not a stand alone plant, it blends well with fuschias, grasses, red osier dogwood stems or the leathery dark green leaves of low oregon grape..

Leaving perennials uncut once they have finished flowering provides shelter; their seedheads provide food for wildlife in the winter and have a certain decorative appeal. Deciduous ornamental grasses left uncut until late winter or early spring continue to add beauty and provide shelter for wildlife over the winter. Little mammals, who shall remain unnamed and who are not welcome in the house, find shelter there (they are SO cute!)

You may leave a suitable part of the garden untouched for a wildlife area. A small patch behind a shed is perfectly fine if you're worried about the looks. I have found Mother Nature to be quite good at designing her rock gardens, particularly in the Cascades and the Kalmiopsis Wilderness area.

If you have them, do watch out for toads hibernating and sheltering in compost heaps, mounds of leaf litter or log piles during autumn and winter. These are ideal locations for toads; they prey on slugs and snails when they come out of hibernation. If you have bull frogs in the area, sadly, there'll be no toads for daughters to kiss and make a wish..

MANY THANKS FROM THE PRESIDENT, ALI SARLAK



Ted & Paula Hewitt



And One of Their Best Friends



Visits Their Home & Garden

The Eugene Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society has a great bunch of dedicated people who love rhododendrons and plants as a whole and the Hewitts are no exception.

I have known Ted and Paula for some years; my original acquaintance was with Paula through the Rock Garden Society. We talked about common themes and plants. Later I saw them both on other occasions, perhaps at a rhododendron seminar somewhere. I felt Ted's enthusiasm for growing rhododendrons, his love of nature and his willingness to share his passion with anyone who had an interest .

Ted and Paula have been very instrumental in keeping Eugene chapter in top shape, They both contributed infinite time and plants for the sake of keeping the society running well. I have witnessed on so many occasions Ted patiently spending many hours with other members on society tasks and doing it so well. Having the background as a good teacher comes handy even in retirement – well done, Ted!

One of the beauties of raising and having a lovely garden is sharing it with others; Ted and Paula have each year opened their colorful garden for several for several different plant societies and, of course, generously serving wine and hors d'oeuvres!

In the end, I cannot finish this note without expressing my appreciation to them both. What great and wonderful jobs as elected officers and members as a whole they have done and keep doing for all of us. Ali

Rhododendron balfourianum var. *balfourianum*

Section Ponticum, Subsection *Taliense* Group 3

Based on description by H. H. Davidian

Named after Sir Isaac Bayley Balfour (1853-1922), a former Regius Professor of Botany at Edinburgh, this plant is at least 20 years old, 3 ½' tall, with interesting foliage. It has yet to bloom (pink or rose) because it wants more sun? To cut the tree or move the plant, or wait! That is the question. Apparently it's right up there with my *bureavii*, age 25+, when it comes to blooming speed. These "turtles" of the rhododendron genre are in a race to bloom. For interesting odds and an opportunity to avoid the rush, place bets now . . . FB



O. HOWARD HINSDALE GARDEN FALL 2012

It's time for an update to Oregon rhododendron enthusiasts after a mid September visit to the garden and, also, checking out reports of naked ladies cavorting on the lower Umpqua. As often true during the seasonal transition period marking summer's close, the date chosen proved particularly pleasant with clear skies, moderate temperatures and the beginnings of fall color seen as we drove south from Creswell and then turned west toward Reedsport.

Our long time BLM associates, Archeologist Steve Samuels and Botanist Jennie Sperling, greeted us as Linda and I arrived around 10:00. Dennis Turowski and Glenn Harkleroad, Field Manager and Assistant Field Manager of the BLM Umpqua Office, soon joined us. Also present and new to the project was Mike Kelly, a Park Manager representing the recreational side of BLM efforts. We formed a loose circle to talk over aspects of past, present and future reclamation efforts. Major projects in the near future include installing the bridge spanning the slough between the main and east garden/parking area, and gradually removing the house in a manner it is hoped will encourage resident bats to move to the barn down river from the garden.

Mainly, though, we focused on a means to assure the long term future of the garden via a non-profit "Friends of Hinsdale Garden" organized under Oregon law. With its roots in nearby Reedsport and adjoining coastal areas, this entity would assure longevity. It would not supplant the ARS District 4 partnership agreement with the BLM; rather, the latter would continue with our group acting as expert advisors and providing other sorts of plant related assistance to the garden and its supporters. Of course individual ARS members could also join the Friends organization.

After lunch it was time for the real fun: touring the garden. The Northwest Youth Corps has continued working at the garden each year doing general clean up, spreading mulch and other such tasks. They had completed their final efforts this year a few days before, and it was a real pleasure to be able to see and walk freely through an increasingly weed free environment. Steve and Jennie worked with a local supplier installing a drip irrigation system for donated rhododendrons and those purchased with the ARS Endowment grant, which were planted by our members over the last couple of years. As a result those plants are becoming well established, there have been only a few minor losses. And, I'm delighted to report, all the often difficult big leaf species are doing fine.

Oh, yes, the naughty ladies...quite a good number of the South African native, *Amaryllis belladonna* with their late appearing pink flowers atop naked stems nodded to us from a driveway island bed. In prior years I noticed only one or two stems; now many more signaled yet another reward from cleaning up and rejuvenating the garden.

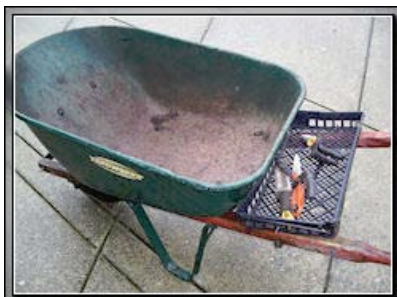
Gordon Wylie

PLACES TO GO, PEOPLE TO SEE, AND THING TO DO

Some nifty ideas on **TOOLS** from the North Island Rhododendron Society Newsletter, thanks to Noni Godfrey, Editor.

When you are finished your fall cleanup of the garden, don't forget to clean your small garden tools, rakes and shovels, and sharpen secateurs and shovels before storing for the winter. Those with hinged parts, such as secateurs or pruners give them a squirt of WD 40 or silicone spray to keep them lubricated and ready to go for next spring.

Finally, a handy way to carry your garden tools from place to place around your garden is to strap one (or doubled up) of those nursery trays to the handles of your wheelbarrow. We use a small bungee cord which works great. Doubled up, the tray keeps all your tools within easy reach. Just remember to remove them before dumping the contents of the wheelbarrow on the burn pile, or you'll be searching through all the clippings to find them.



Easy and Delicious McKenzie River Hazelnut Pie

3 eggs, lightly beaten **½ teaspoon vanilla extract**
1 cup dark corn syrup **Pinch of salt**
¾ cup sugar **1 ¼ cup Hazelnuts, toasted & chopped**
1 9-inch unbaked pastry shell.

- 1. Blend well together eggs, corn syrup, sugar, butter, vanilla and salt**
 - 2. Stir in hazelnuts and pour into crust**
 - 3. Bake at 350° for 45 to 55 minutes or until set. To prevent over browning, cover edge of pie with foil.**
 - 4. Cool on wire rack**
- Serves 8.**



Rhododendron Growers Meeting Friday Nov. 30

Clackamas Community College Horticulture Department
Clairmont Hall, Room 133
19600 Molalla Ave., Oregon City

FEE \$20 & you must register - Contact Bruce Nelson 503-594-3296

Check in 8:15 - 9:00

Speakers: 9:00 - 3:00

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Water rights including rainwater collection
- Grow Assisted Inspection Program and Rhododendron Nurseries
- Update on *Phytophthora ramorum*
- Routine watering practices
- Varieties, variegated., colorful buids
- Azalea lace bug

Course. Reg.# 226881 Section # HOR-008-02 Course Title: Rhododendron Growers

This information provided by Portland Chapter, ARS

Scotland

EDINBURGH OPPORTUNITY

Despite a wonderful autumn season lingering beyond its usual date, recent rainy days remind us we must now face up to several months of dull weather with overcast skies and ever present umbrellas. For garden enthusiasts that means more time spent indoors, where one may be sure some time will be spent dreaming of and planning activities for next spring. Here's an enticing possibility for your list.

On Saturday and Sunday, April 20 and 21, 2013, the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE), the Rhododendron Species Conservation Group (RSCG) and Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) are sponsoring a conference with speakers from around the world to discuss issues related to plant species that are threatened or endangered.* Of course we know the RBGE as the long time home of rhododendron classification, research and record keeping which, along with its stunning gardens, will enhance the experience.

Registration limited, so if seriously interested make your request now to:

Margaret R. Hammond, Conference Registrar RSCG

Postal: The Three Chimneys, 12 Cockey Moor Road,
Starling Bury BL8 2HB, England.

E-mail: hammondsrhodies@supanet.com.



* For Red List Rhododendrons (threatened/endangered), please see www.globaltrees.org/downloads/RhododendronRedList-lowRes.pdf

\$\$\$ WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO? \$\$\$

For those of you who are interested in where our money comes from and where it goes, a summary of the financial report presented to the Board follows. A detailed accounting is available from Treasurer Ted Hewitt.

Eugene Chapter American Rhododendron Society

Financial Report Fiscal year end 8-31-2012

<u>Income</u>	<i>Current year</i>	
Membership deposits		\$ 1,440.00
Plant Sales		1,685.10
Meeting auctions	149.00 net	
Show auction	274.20 net	
Plant Sale	1,261.90 gross	
Interest		36.27
Spring Show		660.00
Miscellaneous	2011 ARS Convention Profits	<u>3,077.50</u>
Total Income		<u>\$ 6,898.87</u>
 <u>Expenses</u>		
ARS Membership (dues, forms, awards)		\$ 1,482.96
Postage (includes NL)		377.28
Food (speaker, dinners, meetings, picnics)		49.76
Insurance - ARS		164.00
Newsletters (does not include postage)		583.00
Spring Show (dinners)		900.28
Plants for plant sale		676.00
Speakers (dinner, honorarium)		620.85
Rent - Campbell Center		475.00
Website expense - GoDaddy.com		80.91
Miscellaneous		
RSBG Assoc membership		\$ 100.00
State of Oregon fees		60.00
Trailer repairs		199.00
Truss rack repairs		30.36
500 Bookmarks		22.50
etc.		<u>81.67</u>
Total Expenses		<u>\$6,104.27</u>



ROOM EARLY FOR BIGGER AND BETTER FLOWER TRUSSES

Dennis McKiver

Many thanks to the Noyo Chapter News and the author for permission to print this article. Follow this advice and you will win a trophies with some of your entries. Photos by author.

It's fall and most of our rhododendrons that will be blooming for the flower show have set their buds. It's not enough to just wait for spring and the week of the show to go out and find flower trusses that may be winners. Now is the time to start looking for buds that could open into winning trusses and grooming these buds and leaves to make bigger and better flower trusses. We are always striving for that perfect truss and leaves combination that will win 'BEST IN SHOW' or at least a blue ribbon. Here is how to do that.

First thing to do is protect your plants, flower buds and leaves from the pests that want to eat them up. In my yard the biggest enemy of winning trusses is slugs. First they chew on the new leaves as they emerge, then the new fully open leaves and then they like to chew on the flowers as they open. There is nothing worse than going out to pick a winning truss and finding that it has been eaten on by a big banana slug. There are a number of things you can do to control slugs, but I find that physically removing them from my yard works best for me.

The second big enemy is the black vine weevil. They like to chew up the edges of the leaves. Weevil serrated leaves don't score well with the judges. There are a number of biological, physical and chemical controls you can use to combat weevils. Check out the JARS article: "*Practical Black Vine Weevil Management*", on the ARS website <http://www.rhododendron.org/v57n4p219.htm>. Use of beneficial nematodes works well for me. There are other minor pests and diseases that can cause problems, most all of which can be controlled by a periodic spraying of horticultural oil.

The second thing to do is get those leaves greened up to where they are supposed to be. Don't fertilize too much in the fall, or you could turn those buds into a late spurt of growth resulting in no flowers and possibly new young leaves that could be damaged by frost. I like to apply 'Ironite' now to green up the leaves and fight chlorosis caused by a lack of iron or soil that is not acidic enough. You could also try a light foliage feeding with a quick acting fertilizer such as *Miracle Grow*. Rhododendrons need acid soil conditions to be able to uptake and make use of the iron in the soil. If you have chlorosis in your leaves that is not fixed by the addition of iron and soil acidifiers, then you may have a bigger problem with that plant. Chlorosis may also be shock induced by damage to the roots from root rot, severe cutting of roots, root weevils or even root death due to over fertilization. Figure 1 is an example of a rhododendron suffering with chlorosis.

The third and probably most important thing to do is to find those potential winning buds and groom them now for the biggest and best trusses. When I was a kid, one of my summer hobbies was raising giant pumpkins. The way I did that, was to create a planting mound well away from other plants, so it has nothing else to compete with. I would mix in lots of organic mater and fertilizer, then plant several seeds in the mound. When the seeds sprouted and started to grow, I'd pick out the biggest and best plant, save it and eliminate all the others. Then I allowed it to grow and start to set pumpkins. There would be 4 or 5 runners with several pumpkins each starting to grow. I would pick the biggest best looking pumpkin on a runner and eliminate all the other pumpkin starts. Now all the energy the plant produces is going into its one remaining fruit. I would even cut off the runner just past the pumpkin and cut off all the ends of all the other runners, so that all the energy flowing down the runner was ending in the one and only pumpkin and not trying to grow more runners. The plant has no choice but to put all its reproductive energy into its one remaining fruit. This would result in a larger than normal pumpkin.



ROOM EARLY...CONT.

I now like to apply this same principle to growing rhododendron trusses for show entries. First I find potential upright truss buds with good leaves. I then eliminate any extra buds. Some stems may sport several flower buds (we call them 'Hammer Heads') and multiple leaf buds. I take off all the extra flower buds, leaving the central terminal bud and I take off all the leaf buds and minor excess, damaged or deformed leaves. See the before and after photos below, Figures 2 and 3.

Then I remove any additional branches on the same stem that don't have flower buds that I want to keep, forcing all the energy to this branch into the last remaining stem and flower. See below, Figures 4 and 5.



Fig. 1. *Chlorosis*



Fig. 2. *Extra bud & small leaves*



Fig. 3. *Bud and leaves removed*



Fig. 4. *Before branch removal*



Fig. 5. *After branch removal*

Then I watch it grow through the winter and spring. If any additional leaf buds develop along the way I remove them, especially if they arise at the base of the terminal bud. These leaf buds will often push an otherwise upright terminal bud over to the side. This may result in a flower truss that is not perfectly upright and what would have been a trophy winner is now something less. On the left, Figure 6 is an example of a leaf bud under the flower bud that is starting to push the bud over to the side, along with one bad leaf that when removed makes the whole truss look much better, Figure 7. Now is the time to remove things like this and not wait until you pick the truss for the show.



Fig. 6. *Before leaf removal*



Fig. 7. *After leaf removal*

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

FOR VERY LATE FALL COLOR

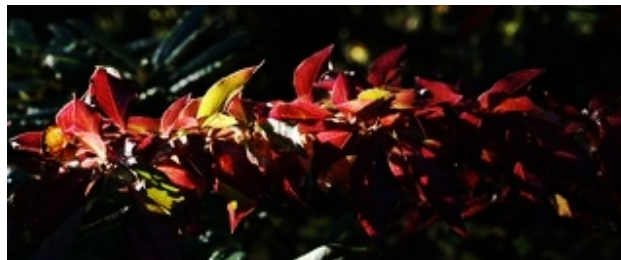
STEWARTIA *sinensis*

A SLOW GROWING COLORFUL TREE WITH ALL THE
ACCOUTREMENTS – COLOR, APPEALING BARK AND
LOVELY SPRING FLOWERS



December 2012
Newsletter

Photos by Frances Burns



2012 CHAPTER CALENDAR 2013

- Dec 13 Christmas Potluck 6:00 p.m. Campbell Center, 155 High Street, Eugene
- 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.
- 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 WHPG
- June Picnic

CONFERENCES 2014

- April 20 -21 Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, Scotland
- May 1 - 5 ARS Annual Convention, *A Journal of Discovery*, Seatac Airport
- Sept, 27-29 ARS Western Regional Conference, Newport, OR

CONFERENCES 2014

- May 16-18 ARS Annual Convention, Cleveland, OH
- Oct 3 - .5 ARS Western Regional Conference, Everett, WA

Visit our Eugene Chapter Web Site

www.eugene-chapter-ars.org