AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

EUGENE CHAPTER

DECEMBER 2013 NEWSLETTER

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[Reserved]

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HOLIDAY PARTY

WHERE: Campbell Senior Center
WHEN: Thursday December 12
TIME: 6 pm to 9 pm

DINNER

The Chapter will provide Turkey, Ham & Coffee

At 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 on a disk or flash drive. Images are best if formatted as [image].jpg. They will be presented by Harold Greer using his computer and projector.

THANKS TO DOUG AND MARY FURR

Doug and Mary Furr have graciously agreed to prepare the main dishes, create decorations and supervise the room set-up. Anyone willing to help set up the room please arrive at 5:00 PM

EDITOR'S NOTE

This time of year, on a drippingly melancholic but moonlit night, you can see and hear the lichen hum, for this is the season of their great happiness.

L. pulmonaria from lichen.com

In addition to the incorporation of algae within their boddies (thalli, *sing.* thallus), some lichens, including the familiar *Lobaria pulmonaria*, also incorporate colonies of cyanobacteria - nitrogen fixers, so these lichen improve soil fertility.

Lichen are often described by reference to their general appearance or growth form. The growth forms include: *crustose*, *squamulose* (as if a *crustose* lichen grew overlapping scales), *foliose* (fluted lobes) and *fruticose* (threadlike). *Crustose*, *Squamulose* and *Foliose* lichen have a top or dorsal surface and a bottom or ventral surface. *Futicose* lichen, usually seen hanging from tree branches, have a radial structure.

My favorite lichen is the f*ruticose* lichen *Usnea longissima*, aka Old Man's Beard ("*Usnea L*"). Strands of *Usnea L* can be over three meters in length. I first discovered it while walking through my own yard. I tore part of a strand from a tree. It has a central cord that is quite elastic and strong enough to tie one's hair up. It doesn't wilt or disintegrate. I was immediately enamored with it. But then I noticed that there were only two areas within my lot that had any of this lichen at all, and I began to suspect that it might not be so good to just take it off the trees for my own amusement.

I have since learned that *Usnea L* used to be a circumboreal species, but that it has been extirpated by pollution and habitat destruction in Europe. Lichens in general are sensitive to pollution, but *Usnea L* is rated as one of the most highly sensitive species. Therefore, *Usnea L* cannot live in most urban and industrialized areas. In addition, even where conditions are ideal, *Usnea L* is slow to spread. It rarely forms fruiting bodies, or spores - its' sole means of propagation seems to be by having broken pieces drop or blow from one branch to another. Therefore, the species is sensitive to loss by logging. Forest biologist are now recommending that logging operations avoid the removal of trees that host *Usnea longissima*.

One of the chemicals produced by Usnea species (and other lichen) is usnic acid. Usnic acid protects lichen from ultraviolet radiation and has extremely potent antimicrobial, antiviral, anti-protozoan and ani-inflammatory activity. (See, for example, *Potent activity of the lichen antibiotic usnic acid against clinical isolates of vancomycin-resistant enterococci and methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus*, Elo, H. et al (2007), Naturwissenschaften 94:465-468.) Usnic acid is a common ingredient in cosmetics, deodorants, sunscreen products and as a preservative. Herbalists report many uses of Usnea for making poultices and tinctures for wounds.

Despite the fact that lichens are sensitive to air pollution, they are designed to survive quite adverse climactic conditions including freezing, draught, heat and ultraviolet radiation. In 2005, two species of lichen were placed in orbit in space, where they were exposed to extreme temperatures, vacuum pressure and unprotected solar and cosmic radiation for fifteen days. When the lichen were returned to earth they resumed normal healthy growth. If there is a Gaia mechanism, it involves lichen. They sure are spooky.

NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

We have all heard that one of the advantages of going to the Western regional is making acquaintance with other rhododendron lovers and this was true for me this year. During the stormy days of the Western regional conference a few of us, you might say crazy folk, got out and went to the Newport Oregon garden tours.

While enjoying the stormy gardens, I met fellow "crazy folk" Carolyn Brooks and her husband, Walter Books, from Puyallup. Walter and Carolyn are president and secretary of the Tacoma Chapter of ARS. I happened to meet them at the Connie Hanson garden and after a few words were exchanged they invited me to contact them for a garden tour when I was next in their area.

As it turned out I was going to be in their area in a short time, so when I was heading over there I contacted them and asked if they would like to join me for a tour of the Species Botanical garden, where the Brooks have been volunteers for quite a while. I found it very interesting to take a tour with people who are experts and know the wonderful Species Gardens well.

We went to the most highly technologically advanced glass house to see Vireyas in bloom. Included is a picture of one of the Viryeas.

The day of my visit also happened to be the same day their chapter meeting so when offered the chance to go I went. The meeting was in the evening at the Library in town of Puyallup - it is a very nice arrangement if you know your way there. The speaker for the evening **Clint Smith** who might known to some of Rhody people. He talked about his trip to Scotland and England, which reminded me of my trip to Oban Scotland almost 13 years ago and seeing large tree sizes rhodys.

Before the meeting, I was invited to go to dinner with some of the chapter members at a wonderful Greek restaurant and I am including above a picture of people who were there.

My conclusion of the story is: it is always a good idea to take advantage of these opportunities and if you can make an effort and go to other chapters meetings - they always welcome the new comers; and by seeing how other chapters run their meetings you might be inspired with new ideas for our own chapter.

I thank you, Tacoma chapter, for including me in your meeting and hope to return in the future again.

Ali Sarlak, Eugene

Growing Seedlings

By Jack Olsen

One of the most interesting things about growing seedlings is crossing two different plants, to make a hybrid. One has to choose the two parents, and have an idea as to what the outcome can be. Are you after fragrance, size of truss, color, form, shape of plant, foliage, or even the size of the plant? There are so many variations that one can get, that many times the result can be a complete surprise.

Seedlings at six months. *Photo by Jack Olsen*

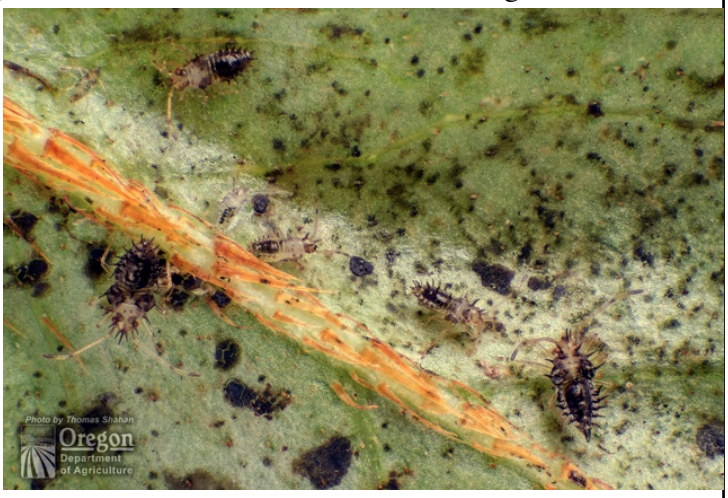
I crossed R. Simspray with R. Lems Cameo. All the seedlings were different. I got light pink to golden yellow, with this cross. I have a dozen of these plants, which now are over fifteen years old. Two of them I have named: R. Kahlua (a coral pink hose and hose, with plenty of fragrance) and R. Mead (a golden yellow). Both have unusual color in the new foliage. R. Kahlua's new foliage comes out dark brown then fades to green. R. Mead's new foliage comes out a dark golden color and also fades to green. I had not even thought about new foliage color before this cross. Now it is something I try to get incorporated in my crosses. Also fragrance is an extra plus, but it is hard to keep in my crosses. I think there are certain plants that can be used as parents, and the result will always be good, but are they worth naming? I will not name a plant that does not win a trophy at a flower show. I personally feel there are too many rhododendrons that get named, and that are not worth the name that has been given.

I make all my crosses when the flower is in bloom. Collecting pollen from the anthers and placing it on the pistol of the mother plant usually results in a seed pod. I collect the seed pods around the first of October. It is important that each cross is recorded and labeled on the pod. I pick the pods and place them in a paper envelope to dry until they split. I then sprinkle the seeds over some ground up sphagnum moss that has been dampened and microwaved. The mixture is placed in a plastic container. I get the containers when I purchase vegetables at the local market. The seeds sprinkled over the mixture is sealed in the container, and placed under lights. The container should be kept around 70 degrees. The heat will germinate the seeds and the light will keep the seedlings from being too leggy. I keep the light on the plants and watch for any damp off. The light will make the seedlings strong, and give them a better chance to survive. They will also get a better root system. It is very important that the sphagnum moss has been ground or shredded - this is to protect the seedling roots when they are removed from the container. The less damage to the roots, the better the survival rate. I then take the seedlings from the container (very important to make sure the seedlings are labeled), and place them evenly in a flat. I use bark, peat and perlite for the medium. I usually have about 50 seedlings per flat. I place the flats under light, 24 hours a day. I foliar feed the plants every day, spraying with a light fertilizer (Miracle Grow™ mixture). With the lights on 24 hours a day, the plants are growing all the time. I get from two to six inches of growth in six months. I have then found that by taking cuttings, the cuttings all root because they are in fast growing mode.

I have Terry Henderson, of Log Cabin nursery, grow the plants for a year. At the end of a year they are over a foot tall (as in my photo above) and ready to bloom. So from a year and a half to two years from seed, I have some blooms that show me the results of my efforts.

More On Azalea Lace Bugs
by Ted Hewitt

At the November 14 chapter meeting we began a discussion of the azalea lace bug including how to identify it and how to deal with it. Both Dick Cavender and Harold Greer brought samples of rhododendron foliage showing the stippled appearance of the leaves from the loss of chlorophyl due to the sucking of the lace bugs and the mottled brown specks of fecal deposits on the backs of the leaves. On a couple of leaves (encased in plastic bags) there were even a few mature lace bugs so we could see the actual size of about 1/8 inch. About a month ago when I examined the affected plants in Hendricks Park, the excrement dots that cover the eggs embedded in the leaf tissue were a shiny, tar-like black but now they appear brown. When Ali Sarlak and I examined the plants in Hendricks Park on November 15, we found several live adult lace bugs but no nymphs, either because they are too small to see or the egg hatching has stopped due to the cool weather. A magnifying lens helps to see the small insects better.



Best view of nymph is at the bottom right of this photo.


Chlorotic stipling of Azalea Photo from Willamette University, October, 2013

Over the past several months there has been a series of e-mails circulating among ARS members in the Willamette Valley that indicate that the lace bugs are being seen in various degrees in the Portland area, in Salem, in Eugene at Hendricks Park, a few private gardens, and at least one nursery, and near Reedsport with an isolated sample at the Hinsdale Estate Garden. It would be a good idea for all of us to spend some time looking at our own plants for the tell-tale stippling of the leaves due to chlorosis and then the brown or black fecal deposits on the undersides.

In the Willamette Valley, the eggs that have overwintered in the leaf tissue will hatch between mid-May and early June and the cycle will begin again. The nymphs molt several times becoming adults in about 6 weeks depending on the air temperature. At the November 14 meeting, we distributed copies of an article on *Lace Bugs* from the August 2006 University of California publication of *Pest Notes* that were printed and distributed by the ARS Portland chapter for education purposes. We also distributed copies of an article on *Azalea Lace Bug* written by Robin Rosetta from OSU and published by the OSU Extension Service in July 2013. If you missed the meeting, these are available online at www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7428.html and at http://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1957/40424/em9066.pdf. They are very informative and deal with identification, life cycle, and management of lace bugs including biological, cultural, and chemical control methods.

If the damage is not severe, effective control can be achieved with the use of insecticidal soap or horticultural oils applied particularly to the undersides of the leaves. More severe infestations may require the use of contact insecticides such as the pyrethroids or carbaryl or the use of systemic insecticides such as

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acephate or the neonicotinoids though these need to be applied carefully as they have detrimental impact on beneficial insects such as bees and other pollinators. Harold indicated that he has used the Imidacloprid based *Adonis 75 WSP* insecticide effectively at Greer Gardens Nursery. This and a liquid form *Adonis 2F* are available to home gardeners via the internet. An ARS member in the Tualatin chapter has indicated that he has had success with another Imidacloprid based systemic product, *Bayer Tree & Shrub Protect & Feed* granules that is available in local garden centers. However, there are several natural enemies of lace bugs including assassin bugs, earwigs, green lacewing, lady beetles, and spiders that may prove very successful in keeping small populations under control.

Azalea Laebug

With the naked eye or with a hand lens, the adult lace bug has wings that appear to be patterned in black and white but, with powerful magnification, the wings and thorax have a lacy pattern filled with incredible colors. Tom Valente, an entomologist in the Insect Pest Prevention and Management Program of the Oregon Department of Agriculture, has shared the photos included in this article that were taken by their lab imaging specialist, Thomas Shahan. Included here are photos of the azalea lace bug which is a rather recent (2008) immigrant to the Pacific Northwest and the rhododendron lace bug which has been in the region for many years.

As you check your azaleas and rhododendrons, it would be wise to look at the other members of the Ericaceae family such as vaccinium, andromeda, and mountain laurel to see if the lace bugs are living on them as well. At this point the Oregon

Rhododendron lacebug

Department of Agriculture and other Willamette Valley gardeners are interested in the extent of the spread of the azalea lace bugs and the damage caused and would be interested to hear from us. Look for the yellowish to whitish stippling on the tops of the leaves and the brown to black fecal deposits on the bottoms of the leaves especially in the late spring when the eggs begin to hatch.

EUGENE CHAPTER ARS
January Board Meeting

The Eugene Chapter Board of Directors meeting will be held in the second floor conference room of the Umpqua Bank located at 1377 Mohawk Blvd., just north of its intersection with Centennial.

The meeting wil begin at 1:00 PM on Tuesday, January 7, which is two days prior to our January chapter meeting.

All members are welcome to attend.

Hendricks Park Denizen *Photo by Ali Sarlak*

DUES REMINDER

Chapter Dues in the amount of $40.00 are due this December.

Oregon State Extension Service Moves to New Location

The OSU Extension Service in Lane County is moving. Our new home will be in the Kaufman House, located at the corner of 10th and Jefferson. This historic property has been vacant for a couple years, which prompted the Jefferson Neighbors to encourage the City of Eugene to find a renter. All agreed that the OSU Extension Service was a perfect match for the house and the community neighbors. The house will be the new home for Master Gardeners, 4-H, Master Food Preservers, Nutrition Education, and our Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources programs.

Doors will open December 2, 2013. The main entrance will be up the ramp on the 10th Avenue side of the house. Hours will continue to be 10 a.m.-1 p.m. and 2-5 p.m. Monday – Thursday.

Please bear with us as we make the move from the Rainbow Valley Design & Construction building. We are very grateful to their hospitality over the past three years. The 783 Grant Street office will be closed during the move November 25-29, 2013.

Rhododendron pronum by Ted Hewitt

Rhododendron pronum

by Ted Hewitt

One of the first interesting rhododendrons that I added to our garden was the dwarf elepidote *Rhododendron pronum*. Over the years it has grown slowly - it is now about 10" high and 24" wide and hugs the ground closely but is a beautiful plant twelve months of the year. Its narrowly elliptic leaves (linear-lanceolate) are stiff and recurved, accentuating the compactness of the shrub, and the leaf stems are yellow making it look like there is a yellow star in the center of each whorl of blue-green leaves. If one carefully looks at the underside of the leaves, one finds a dense fawn colored indumentum, typical of the Taliensia subsection. P*ronum* is happy planted in a rock terrace to assure good drainage.

The 2-1/2 inch leathery leaves feature a nice pattern and a well-defined midrib making each leaf interesting in addition to the overall appearance of the compact plant dotted with yellow star shapes. They say that, in due time, it may even bloom with creamy-white or pink flowers dotted with crimson or purple spots and arranged in trusses of 6-12 florets. However, for me, the attractive leaves and plant is enough.

In its native area of Yunnan, it is found at an elevation of 12,000 to 15,000 feet growing on moist rocky slopes and humus covered boulders in alpine moorland and on cliffs. It was first introduced to horticulture by Joseph Rock in 1923 and again in 1932 as well as by George Forrest in 1930. In terms of classification, it is placed in subgenus Hymenanthes, section Ponticum, and subsection Taliensia showing that it is closely related to a large number of species including *bathyphyllum, bureavii, elegantulum, proteioides, roxieanum, and wiltonii*. The name *pronum* comes from the Latin word "pronus" indicating the prostrate form of the plant similar to the English word "prone" meaning a prostrate position.

American Rhododendron Society
Eugene Chapter
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This Month's Mascot - the Pen Flourished Deer

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December 2013 Newsletter

2013-2014 | EVENT CALENDAR | 2013-2014

CHAPTER EVENTS

December 12	Holiday Potluck and Slide Show
January 9	Growing Rhododendrons from Seed WORKSHOP by Jack Olson
February 13	The Shady Rock Garden, with Truls Jensen & Emma Elliot of Wild Ginger Farm Nursery, Beaverton, OR
March 13	The Humboldt Botanic Garden, with Tim Walsh Officer and Board Member Elections
April 19	2013 Spring Rhododendron Show & Awards Banquet at Hilton Garden Inn

CONFERENCES 2014

April 25-26	Rhododendron Species Foundation 50th Anniversary Celebration, Federal Way, WA
May 16-18	ARS Annual Convention, Cleveland, OH
September 26-28	ARS Western Regional Conference, Everett, WA

CONFERENCES 2015

Spring	Annual Converntion	Victoria B.C.