

Eugene Chapter

American Rhododendron Society

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- **Nominating:**
- **Welfare:** Nancy & Harold Greer
- **Hospitality:**
- **Programs:** Board of Directors

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March Chapter Meeting Thursday, March 12

Companion Plantings at the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden

Dennis Bottemiller, RSBG Propagator

Over the past decade, many of us have seen the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden expand the variety of companion plants that grow among its fine collection of rhododendrons and Dennis Bottemiller indicates that many people have suggested that he create a program that includes these interesting plants. So, on Thursday, March 12, Dennis will be in Eugene to do exactly that.

I would imagine that we will see *Cardiocrinum giganteum* var. *yunnanense*, the extraordinary blue Himalayan Poppy, *Meconopsis* 'Lindholm', *Paeonia mairei* that grows well in the shade, *Arisaema taiwanese*, and a variety of hardy ferns in the stumpery. Of course, there are also larger plants like the many Japanese maples, stewartia, magnolias, and the interesting *Rehderodendron macrocarpum*.

Dennis Bottemiller is the Nursery Manager and Propagator for the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden in Federal Way, Washington, which is home to the largest collection of species rhododendrons in North America. The garden is presented in a beautiful naturalistic display setting and is also a unique resource for botanic and horticultural research institutions worldwide.

Join us for coffee, cookies, and conversation at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 12, at the Campbell Community Center, 155 High Street in Eugene with the program at 7:00. There will also be a small auction of special plants and door prizes as well.



R. sinofalconeri

photo by Ted

Pre-Meeting Dinner

Prior to the meeting you are invited to join us for a no-host dinner at 5:00 at Bai Khao Thai Restaurant located at 541 W. Centennial Blvd in Springfield. Please RSVP to Helen Baxter at 541-461-6082 or by e-mail at galen.baxter@comcast.net by Tuesday, March 10. 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. Look for Bai Khao on the left.

Cookie Team News

Thank you Nancy Burns and Gary Parent for the scrumptious goodies you provided for us at the February meeting.

Next up are Terry Henderson and Ali Sarlak who have volunteered to bring treats for the March 12 meeting. Thank you.



We need your help with the **Annual Plant Sale on May 8 & 9.**

- On Friday, May 8, set-up will be at the Lane County Fairgrounds. Plants need to be arranged on the tables and we need a person or two at the table from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. for dispensing information about plants to the Hardy PLant Group Sale Volunteers who are allowed to shop at a Pre-Sale. Can you spend a couple of hours? This is also a great time for you to be able to shop at the many vendors' tables.
- On Saturday, May 9, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., we need two people at the table to answer questions about rhododendrons for a very interested public who come to buy at this well-know sale. This is a fun day with lots happening at this busy sale. At 2:00 we need a couple of people to help return the unsold plants to the truck and clean up our booth area.
- Please contact Helen Baxter at 541-461-6082 or by e-mail at galen.baxter@comcast.net to sign up for a 2 or 3 hour slot. This is our major fund raiser for the year and is important to the financial welfare of the chapter. Thanks.

From the President

How and Why to Prunes Rhodies

I will start by saying I love rhododendrons for a variety of reasons and one of them is that there is no need for pruning which is the opposite for other landscaping shrubs and plants. I call rhodies the lazy man's choice of plants since I am in the business of taking care of yards for clients.

First of all, if you choose the right plant for the right spot, you never need to prune. It is always a good idea to read the label that comes with the plant as it usually tells you where to plant: shade, light, and zone and how big the plant will eventually get maybe not 100% right but usually close. It is a general mistake for many home owners who don't pay attention, or can't imagine in 10-20 years time what will be the size of the rhodos they plant in the small spot that they choose. I always want my rhodies to get as large as they would in the natural habitat from which they came, mostly Asia and parts of India. When I watch the presentations given by plant explorers in the natural habitat the plant sizes are often as large as trees, and that's the way they show the best.

One of the best examples which I have experienced was visiting The Scotland National Trust's gardens in Scotland, and have seen rhododendrons there as big as large Chinese plum trees or even bigger. So it is my suggestion to pick up the right plants for your landscaping sites so there is no need to do much pruning afterward.

To me the rhododendrons are like the ancient plants, such as Filbert trees. I will share one of my early experiences of pruning on a job in my landscaping business. A client asked me to prune her rhody to a small size and my solution was to cut it very close to the ground. After

doing that I felt that I not only killed the plant, but also lost the client.

However, in a year, I found neither was the truth as the plant starting growing from it's roots and the client stayed with me. So what I found was that if you need to prune rhodies by the chain saw style, it is okay as they will bounce back in 2-3 years time. On similar plants and trees such as filberts, which are ancient trees, you can find trees that are growing on the same roots for hundreds of years. On Crete, one of the islands of Greece, I have seen filbert farmers cutting old trees back to the ground and, in a few years, the younger shoots become a new trees. It is the same for rhododendrons.

In my own yard, I have been watching my rhododendrons become mature, almost 20 feet high, and now I have noticed they are starting to take care of themselves by way of pruning themselves and exposing their lovely trunks which I have never seen before, providing year round interest. My recommendation for when your plants come to the stage of thinning themselves is to plant some lovely groundcovers to add interest, keep the weeds from invading, and help the plant roots stay cool . My choices of groundcovers under rhodies are: wild gingers, lily of the valley, cyclamen and pachysandras.



photo by Ali Sarlak

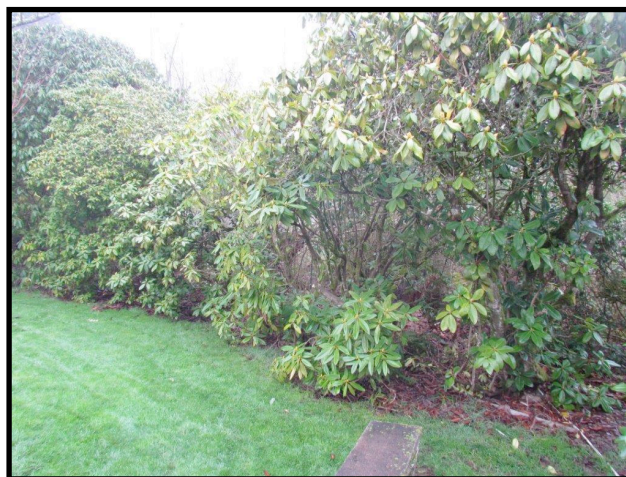
Now, being totally against pruning rhodies, I might allow some pruning for various purposes such as safety around the house, showing trusses to flower shows, approaching walkways, and preventing insects from climbing's the shoots on the ground.

(continued on p.4)

How and Why to Prune Rhododendrons (cont. from p. 3)

You might say that this is not much of a guideline on pruning but it is my philosophy and the way I treat my love of rhododendrons.

Ali Sarlak



Sarlak Garden

photo by Ali Sarlak

Hendricks Park Volunteers

We have all walked through the Rhododendron Garden at Hendricks Park and admired the beauty of the garden set amongst large trees. However, it is a big place for the small park staff to maintain so the Friends of Hendricks Park has a once a week work party to help the park staff. Each Tuesday morning from 9:00 a.m. to noon between March 3 and mid-November, volunteers gather to help with pruning, weeding, sheering the groundcovers, raking the paths, picking up storm debris, etc.

If you would like to help, you will be warmly welcomed to join the group when you can or to

make it part of your normal Tuesday routine. Perhaps you have a favorite bed that you would like to maintain or would like to help with the renovation of the rock garden or have some other particular job with which you would like to help. Show up on Tuesdays at 9:00 a.m. and meet Mieko Aoki, the volunteer supervisor, and make your wishes known.

You will find that just being in the park is a wonderful experience and a pleasant place to be while helping out. Of course, in the next few months, the Rhododendron Garden will be at its most colorful, but it has an incredible beauty throughout every season.

*ARS Eugene Chapter
Spring Rhododendron Show and Banquet*

SATURDAY, APRIL 25

3:00 P.M. TO 9:00 P.M.

HILTON GARDEN INN, SPRINGFIELD

Flower Show - Plant Auction - Raffle - Dinner - Program

Start looking for that winning truss on your rhododendrons, save your pennies for buying some great new plants for your garden, mark your calendar to save the date, and plan for an evening of fun with friends.



Ted's Notes

- In the past few years, some of you have asked to receive only the electronic version of the chapter newsletter to save paper as well as printing and mailing costs. I am updating the membership list to indicate who would like to receive only the electronic edition, so could you please let me know if you would like to receive only the electronic edition or if you would like to receive both the electronic edition **and** the printed edition. E-mail me at ted.hewitt@comcast.net or phone me at (541) 687-8119. Thanks.
- Recently John Hammond e-mailed me a response to my comments in the January newsletter about replanting my *R. prunum* to provide better drainage. He indicated that a few years ago, in a conversation with Peter Cox about planting difficult species rhododendrons, that Peter had been experimenting with a method that would provide excellent drainage but which would also retain moisture for the roots. *"Peter had prepared a planting hole in the usual way on an area of slightly sloping ground, then filled the hole with beach pebbles to provide a very high-level of drainage. He then placed a thick layer of sphagnum moss over the pebbles and positioned the root-ball immediately on top of the moss. The root-ball and any moss that was showing was then covered with a mixture of soil and bark, so the end result was a well mounded planting. This area on the West Coast receives at least 60 inches of rainfall per annum, so the pebbles will enable the water to run quickly through the area below the root-ball to give a good level of aeration, whilst the moss retains sufficient moisture to provide for the needs of the plant."* John continues by mentioning that he has tried this method with a *R. lacteum* for a couple of years and that with 85 inches of rain in 2014 and despite a cold and very wet fall, the plant is looking healthy. I appreciate hearing tips from you readers and encourage you to share your successes and failures with us.
- As March arrives, it means that the busy and beautiful spring season of our gardens is not far behind. On p. 7 of this newsletter you will find a list of some of the many activities that will be coming

up in the next couple of months. There is always so much to do in the spring and this includes time in our own gardens. You also might note on the chapter calendar on p. 8 that there is a field trip / garden tour being planned for May 21 that will visit the beautiful garden of Cassandra and Bryan Barrett near Dexter and the garden of Jack and Sandie Olson at its peak. Be sure you mark your calendars for these events.

- At the March 12 chapter meeting, we will have the annual business meeting that includes the election of leadership positions for the chapter. Those of you who step up to help plan and carry out the activities for chapter members are very much appreciated. Please see the article on p. 6 and come to the meeting to cast your vote and to acknowledge your appreciation for these leaders to whom the chapter is indebted.
- With such a mild February so much of the garden is springing to life early and it is delightful to see the flowering trees around town. *R. 'Christmas Cheer'* has been at its peak for much of the month and now, at the end of February, *R. erubescens* is sporting its beautiful soft rosy pink blossoms. Of course, the hellebores are at their finest and many of the newer varieties have much more color and interesting flowers. We have cleared the leaves from most of the beds in anticipation of seeing signs of the return of some of the new perennials that we planted last year. Most of the trilliums are up and some are in bud though none are in flower yet.
- I am always interested in seeing the annual ARS Rhododendron of the Year awards for the different areas of the country but was disappointed with the four for the Northwest, all of which have been around for a very long time - Elepidote *R. 'Taurus'* (1972), Lepidote PJM Group (before 1960), Deciduous Azalea 'Strawberry Ice' (1947), and Evergreen Azalea 'Everest' (prior to 1957). All are nice but how about some newer ones. While you are reading this, could you e-mail me (ted.hewitt@comcast.net) with three of your favorite rhododendrons and I will publish some of these. Thanks.



Ted

March 12 ARS Eugene Chapter Elections

The March chapter meeting is the annual business meeting at which elections for leadership positions are held. The board has prepared the following slate of candidates:

- **Treasurer:** Nancy Burns 2015-2017. Nancy brings two years of successful experience as treasurer and 4 years experience as a board member. She offers many fine leadership skills and keeps close track of our money.
- **Secretary:** Sherlyn Hilton 2015-2017. Sherlyn has been serving as secretary for almost two years, has excellent computer skills, and has brought new ideas to the board. Her minutes of board meetings provide an outstanding record of what we discuss.
- **3-Year Board Position:** Helen Baxter 2015-2018. Helen brings stability and experience to the board having served many years as President, Past-President, and board member. We are very lucky to have her.

There are also two more 3-year board positions that will be vacant as the board was not able to find candidates. We would greatly appreciate having you step into one of these leadership positions. Thanks.

O. Howard Hinsdale Open Garden

Never been to the garden? Been there for a visit, but weren't able to have a close look at the east side because of the long and rather unpleasant walk inside the highway guardrail? Been to both parts of the garden but wondering how they may have changed? Want to see how the house fit into the garden one last time? Or maybe just want to enjoy an informal woodland garden with lots of mature rhododendrons, camellias and magnolias?

The Friends of Hinsdale Garden organization is generously hosting three open garden days this year. All are Saturdays: April 18, April 25, and May 9 from 10 in the morning until 2 in the afternoon. Please park at the Elk viewing and interpretive center about a mile west of the garden. Transportation will be provided to Hinsdale Garden, which you may then explore at your leisure before catching one of the shuttles for returning to your vehicle.

The largest change visitors who've been there before will immediately notice is a gracefully arched footbridge between the main garden and the east garden. Definitely a far more pleasant experience—and much shorter journey—than the walk next to the highway. Not only that, it provides a brand new perspective of the entire garden; one that invites pauses to look and perhaps capture a few pictures with your smart phone or camera. This year will also be the last chance for a nostalgic look at the Hinsdale residence, as demolition and removal is scheduled for later this summer after the flowering season has passed. Other plans include re-establishing irrigation to the entire garden, enabled through the Friends having helped secure an adequate water supply from the City of Reedsport.

There's no charge or entry fee, but please consider a donation to the Friends to aid their efforts in supporting improvements to the garden and opening it to the public.

Group visits may be possible at other dates. Please contact Gordon Wylie at lgwone@gmail.com or (541) 895-2864.

Places to Go and Things to Do

- March 10 6:30 p.m. Willamette Valley Hardy Plant Group Meeting, Campbell Center
Lesser Known Plants with Kelly Dodson from Far Reaches Farm Nursery, Port Townsend, WA
- March 11 6:30 p.m. ARS Willamette Chapter Meeting, First Methodist Church, Salem
Tune-Up on Our Techniques with Dennis Bottemiller
- March 12 6:30 p.m. ARS Eugene Chapter Meeting, *Companion Plantings at the RSBG*, Dennis Bottemiller
- March 16 6:30 p.m. Avid Gardeners Meeting, Eugene Garden Club on High Street
Touting Trillium - Getting to know the Western Species with Russell Graham
- March 17 6:30 p.m. ARS Siuslaw Chapter Meeting, Presbyterian Church, 3669 Highway 101, Florence
Alpine, Mountain, and Woodland Plants; Speaker: Truls Jensen from Wild Ginger Farm Nursery
- March 28 9:00 to noon Cecil & Molly Smith Garden Work Party, 5055 Ray Bell Rd NE, St. Paul
- April 4 & 5 11:00 to 4:00 Cecil & Molly Smith Garden open each weekend through May 17
- April 8 6:30 p.m. ARS Willamette Chapter Meeting, First Methodist Church, Salem
Speaker: Don Wallace from Singing Tree Nursery
- April 11 8:00 - 4:00 GardenPalooza, Fir Point Farms, 14601 Arndt Road, Aurora 40 vendors
- April 11 & 12 ARS Siuslaw Chapter Early Show
- April 11 & 12 9:00-6:00 Open Garden at the home of Pat & Dave Eckerdt, 4539 Riverdale Rd. S., Salem
E-mail Dave at patanddave@mac.com for driving directions. This is a great garden.
- April 11 & 12 ARS Portland Chapter Early Show with the Oregon Daffodil Society at Crystal Springs
- April 17 & 18 Great Plant Sale at the RSBG in Federal Way, WA unusual plants from NW vendors
- April 18 10:00-2:00 Hinsdale Open Garden Day. Umpqua River east of Reedsport
- April 19 1:00 p.m. Hendricks Park Rhododendron Garden Walk with Michael Robert
- April 20 6:30 p.m. Avid Gardeners Meeting, Eugene Garden Club on High Street
Sharpening Your Garden Photography Skills with Doreen Wynja
- April 25 3:00 to 9:00 ARS Eugene Chapter Spring Rhododendron Show and Banquet
- April 25 10:00-2:00 Hinsdale Open Garden Day. Umpqua River east of Reedsport.
- April 26 1:00 p.m. Mosses and Ferns Walk in Hendricks Park with David Wagner



Annual Plant Sale at the Fairgrounds

Saturday, May 9

Each year the largest income producer for our chapter is the plant sale that we do in conjunction with the Willamette Valley Hardy Plant Group Plant Sale at the Lane County Fairgrounds, which this year will be on Saturday, May 9. We hope that you will be able to help us either on the set-up day, Friday, May 8, or on Saturday. Helen will have a sign-up sheet at the March 12 chapter meeting and at the April 25 Spring Rhododendron Show and Banquet for you to volunteer for a 2 or 3 hour shift. Your help in answering rhododendron questions for the gardeners is much appreciated and you do not have to handle the money at all.

2014

EVENT CALENDAR

2015

CHAPTER EVENTS:

- March 12 Chapter Meeting - *Companion Plantings at the RSBG*
 Speaker: Dennis Bottemiller, Propagator and Nursery Manager at RSBG
Annual Meeting with officer elections
- April 25 Spring Rhododendron Show and Banquet, Hilton Garden Inn, 3:00 - 9:00 p.m.
 Program: *History of the Rhododendron Species Foundation - the First 50 Years*
 Speaker: Harold Greer
 Plant Auction, Raffle, Silent Auction, Dinner
- May 6-10 ARS Convention, Sydney-by-the-Sea, B.C.
- May 9 Chapter Plant Sale, Lane County Fairgrounds, 9:00 - 2:00
 Set-Up on May 8, 10:00 - 3:00
- May 21 Chapter field trip and garden tour. This year we will be visiting the beautiful 2-1/2 acre garden of Cassandra and Bryan Barrett near Dexter and the 2 acre garden of Jack Olson near Fall Creek. Watch for details in future newsletters.
- June ?? June Picnic, details TBA

American Rhododendron Society
 Eugene Chapter
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*March 2015
 Newsletter*

**2015 ARS Convention**

Sydney-by-the-Sea, British Columbia
 May 6 - 10, 2015