

Eugene ARS meeting Wednesday, March 14th at The Springs.  
Join us for Dinner at 5:30 PM and/or meeting at 7:00 PM.

## John Weagle 175 Years of Rhododendrons in Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia, or Acadia as it was then known, was first settled by the French in 1605. For 150 years the Acadians developed the rich interior farmlands, reclaiming much tidal land by an ingenious system of dikes, many of which are functional to this day.

In 1748 the Treaty of Aix-La-Chapelle ceded Acadia to the English. Coastal Nova Scotia, with its cool, foggy summers, is surprisingly a haven to rhododendrons. Once established they require little maintenance and no irrigation.

We will trace the quest of the native *Rhododendron maximum* and cultivation of Ironclads in the early days from 1850 onward. The climate of Nova Scotia, but primarily the work of our pioneer rhododendron hybridizers from 1950 to the present day, will be our focus, even a glimpse of what the future might possibly have in store.

### Biography:

John Weagle has been gardening in Halifax, Nova Scotia, since childhood. He says his passions were reasonably controlled until a friend introduced him to trees in 1971 - then all hell broke loose. For years the books told us what could not grow in the Maritimes, and painted a very grim picture of horticulture on this wind-swept fogbound coast. This would not do as John wanted to grow all the exotic things he was reading about. The big turnaround came when he decided to ignore all the books. In the early 70's his good friends and gardeners Walter Ostrom and Captain Richard Steele introduced him to even more exotic plants and the fateful joys of hybridizing rhododendrons and azaleas. He has been breeding rhododendrons and evergreen azaleas since the late 70's. His main interest is the Family Ericaceae which does so wonderfully well in coastal Nova Scotia. John belongs to many societies and his interests include bamboos, cyclamen species, nerines, magnolias, hellebores, asarums, alpines, sempervivums, snowdrops, winter-flowering South African bulbs and especially *Shortia* spp. - you get the picture. With the help of his skilled partner Ken Shannik, who operates Insigne Gardens, they maintain four gardens - two city gardens, a woodland garden 60 miles from the city and are starting a new one in a very mild area on an island near Yarmouth - and a vast collection of plants, hardy and tender which at last count totaled 75 pages of fine print! The whole collection he owes to the great generosity of his many illustrious contacts worldwide. For nearly 30 years he terrorized PacificNorthwest nurseries as a buyer for horticultural companies in BC & Halifax; now retired he can be found re-potting, digging, guerilla planting or stumbling over far too many plants, tubs, troughs and coldframes. John is a recipient of the Leslie Hancock Award and The Hybridizer's Award of the Rhododendron Society of Canada. A well-known plantsman he has spoken across Canada, the USA, at the International Rhododendron Symposium in Bergen, Norway, and at the Botanic Garden in Tromsø, Norway.

## Small Rhododendrons for Small Gardens

by Ted Hewitt

In the recent Winter 2018 ARS Journal, Chris Southwick of the ARS Nanaimo Chapter writes an article on *My Favorite Dwarf Rhododendrons* in which she realizes that it is difficult to choose just three so she lists three hybrids and three species. The hybrids are ‘Ginny Gee’, ‘Patty Bee’, and ‘Scarlet Wonder’ and the species are *R. campylogynum*, *R. lepidostylum*, and *R. forrestii*. She limited her choices to ones that she felt are reasonably available and that she grows in her garden. Since I joined the ARS and became more aware of the large variety of plant types in the Genus Rhododendron, I also have been interested in the smallest of the rhododendrons, perhaps because one can grow more of these in a small garden and they tend to be interesting garden plants on a four season basis. Chris also mentions that so many wonderful small rhododendrons have been hybridized by Warren Berg of Port Ludlow, WA, and the Cox family of Glendoick, Scotland, that are suitable for the small garden and it is these that I would like to explore in this article.

Warren Berg enjoyed choosing rather whimsical names for his hybrids, many of which include the word “Bee” such as ‘Patty Bee’. A plant, which I acquired at our annual plant auction at the Spring Rhododendron Show and Banquet a few years ago, that has found its way into our new garden is ‘Berg’s Queen Bee’ which is a cross of *R. degronianum* ssp. *yakushmanum* x *R. tsariense*. This gem will be a little larger than some of the dwarfs at 2’-4’ in 10 years but is a nicely compact plant with the beautiful orange-brown indumentum of *R. tsariense* and the pink fading to clear white flowers of the *yak*. The new foliage emerges white with a silver tomentum for added interest.



R. ‘Berg’s Queen Bee’ photo by Coen Zonnevald



R. ‘Golfer’ photo by Staffan Bodén

Perhaps my favorite of Berg’s hybrids is ‘Golfer’ with its silver indumentum on both the lower and upper sides of the leaves that is retained most of the year. It is a cross of *R. yak* x *pseudochrysanthum* (Exbury form). In April, the flowers open to a pale purplish pink with strong



R. ‘Golfer’ photo by David Fischer

purplish pink stripes on the outsides. This is a slow grower and not often found in nurseries but will get to be about 2’ in 10 years. What a handsome plant.



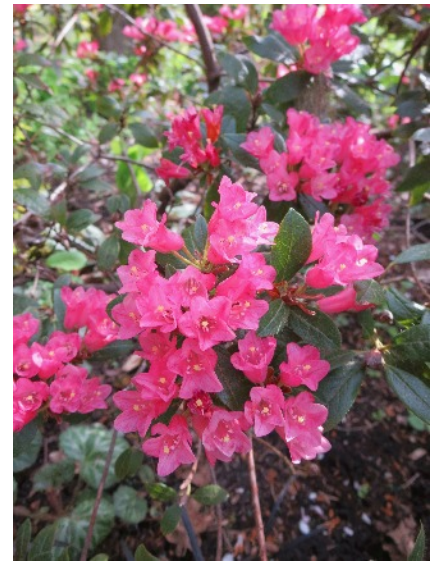
R. 'Peter Bee'  
photo by Dennis McKiver

Though I have not grown 'Peter Bee', it is a cross of two of my favorite dwarf species rhododendrons, *R. hanceanum* *Nanum Group* x *R. keiskei* 'Yaku Fairy' so offers a beautiful yellow for the front of a border. Getting only to about 1' by 2' in 10 years (and Maria Stewart states 3' by 3' in 33 years), it sports its yellow flowers in late April. It's only fitting to state that it was created by Warren Berg and named for Peter Cox.

To further explore the many small hybrids created by Warren Berg, read the article *Let's Talk Hybridizing: 40 Years and Counting (Playing Bee)* by Warren Berg in the Winter 2004

ARS Journal at <http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JARS/v58n1/v58n1-berg1.htm>

Over a good many years, Peter Cox has also created many nice plants for the small garden, naming many of them after a species of bird. Let's start with one that has a decidedly unusual flower with the florets of the small trusses pointed outwards toward the viewer - 'Razorbill'. By the way, a razorbill is a black and white seabird common in the northern Atlantic Ocean. The unusual flower of 'Razorbill' comes from the seed parent of *R. spinuliferum* though the pollen parent is unknown. Mark Bloom describes it as "Clusters of conical mid-pink flowers with darker highlights. Looks like a mass of trumpets all pointing skyward as if signaling someone's arrival." It will get to be 2'-3' in 10 years and the soft hairy leaves similar to *R. spinuliferum* offer a different texture in the garden.



R. 'Razorbill' photo by Ted Hewitt



R. 'Wren' photo by Staffan Bodén

What a cute little bird  
a wren is flitting  
around the shrubs in the garden and R. 'Wren' is also a cute little rhododendron at the front of a border but especially in a rock garden. 'Wren' will be only about 1' high and a bit wider in 10 years and is a delicate low grower. The yellow flowers stand out erectly above the plant in early April and the glossy dark green leaves may turn bronze in winter.

Among the other "Bird" rhododendrons are 'Curlew', 'Egret', 'Eider', 'Merganser', 'Phalarope', and 'Ptarmigan'.

It's fun to explore these and one can find a list on the website [www.hirsutum.info](http://www.hirsutum.info). I'd encourage you to write a short article about any of these dwarfs that you have grown.

**News from Hendricks Park**  
by Emily Aune

Rhododendrons blooming at Hendricks Park prior to the freezing temperatures, just in case you missed them. Many of these are in the pink range, but there was a nice, unlabeled red blooming just up hill of Skyline Blvd. I'm suspecting it has *R. strigillosum* in it, based on bristly hairs on the petioles and the early bloom time.

R. 'Airy Fairy'



*R. oreodoxa* var. *fargesii* 'Barto Rose'



*R. mucronulatum*



*R. sutchuenense*



*R. ririei*



*R. strigillosum?*





Another wonderful meal with fellow ARS members and soon to be new friends.

At the beginning of the February meeting, Bob and Pat Siegmund presented the Eugene ARS Chapter with a gavel made from rhododendron wood that Bob's father, Ed Siegmund, used while president of the Eugene ARS Chapter from 1977 to 1979. Harold read a note from the family explaining the provenance of the gavel.

Thank you Bob & Pat for the thoughtful gift.

Thank you – Steve Hootman

Great photos and history two nights in a row.



Janice Gerdemann

A special visitor from the Siuslaw Chapter. Janice and her husband, Jim, developed the very special Gerdemann Garden in Yachats, Oregon, over the course of 34 years. Janice now lives in the Mennonite Village retirement community in Albany. Her phone number is 541-917-1265 and she enjoys talking to rhododendron lovers.

Thank You - visiting members from out of town. Ed and I had the pleasure of meeting our member Dean Stout from Medford, Oregon. Dean had also had the pleasure of hearing Steve Hootman's talk the previous evening at the Siuslaw ARS Chapter meeting. Years ago, Dean was one of our few members who had the experience of plant hunting in the Himalayas with Steve.

We met **Christina Bentrup** the new volunteer coordinator for Tuesday mornings at **Hendricks Park**. She has different ways that you can help volunteer at Hendricks Park and would love to have your help. She can be contacted at [Christina.R.Bentrup@ci.eugene.or.us](mailto:Christina.R.Bentrup@ci.eugene.or.us)

Our Past President, Ali Sarlak, will be giving his talk *Flora of Iran* on April 26th, 2018, to the Eureka Chapter. You can find the Eureka Chapter's wonderful newsletter with all the details at:

<http://www.eurekaarhody.org/newsletter.php>



## North America Meets Europe



The 2018 ARS Convention will be in Bremen, Germany. It will start around May 7, 2018, with optional tours before the convention and after the convention. The schedule may and probably will change slightly in the next couple months.

- 1st Pre-Tour: Optional 5 days visiting Dutch Gardens including Keukenhof Gardens
- 2nd Pre-Tour: Optional 2 days at RHODO 2018 Rhododendron Festival and Bremen
- 3rd Pre-Tour: Optional 6 days public and private garden visits in Denmark & Sweden
- Convention: 7-day convention in Bremen from May 20 to 26 including 3 tour days
- Post-Tour: Optional 4 days visiting gardens in Finland.

Calendar this now! It is a do-not-miss event. You can choose to start in Holland or Germany with one of the 3 pre-tours or start with the convention. Then you can choose to finish in Germany after the convention or in Finland after the post-convention tour. That means there are 8 possible combinations ranging from 7 days & nights for just the convention to 24 days & nights if you do everything which includes the 3 pre-tours to the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark and Sweden; the convention; and the post-convention tour to Finland.

Find LOTS of information about the convention at:

[www.ars2018.org](http://www.ars2018.org)

In December of 2017 the 3<sup>rd</sup> pre-tour was sold out. Don't know what is and isn't still available. I did find this :

**Alert! Registration Closes, Thu. Mar. 15**

**All Payments are Due Fri., Mar. 30**

| <b>Officers</b>       | <b>The Board</b>  | Term    | Phone        | E-mail                       |
|-----------------------|-------------------|---------|--------------|------------------------------|
| <b>President</b>      | Terry Henderson   | 2016-18 | 541-953-9316 | jentersruger@aol.com         |
| <b>Vice President</b> | Jack Olson        | 2016-18 | 541-988-9133 | rhodyjack@msn.com            |
| <b>Secretary</b>      | Sherlyn Hilton    | 2017-19 | 775-846-1950 | sherlynhilton@gmail.com      |
| <b>Treasurer</b>      | Nancy Burns       | 2017-19 | 541-342-1946 | nancyinor@msn.com            |
| <b>Past-President</b> | Ali Sarlak        | 2016-18 | 541-758-9190 | asghar@q.com                 |
|                       | Gordon Wylie      | 2017-20 | 541-895-2864 | lgwone@gmail.com             |
|                       | Helen Baxter      | 2015-18 | 541-461-6082 | galen.baxter@comcast.net     |
|                       | Grace Fowler-Gore | 2015-18 | 817-975-4936 | GraceLovesBirds1@gmail.com   |
|                       | Emily Aune        | 2017-19 | 541-255-5315 | emily.r.aune@ci.eugene.or.us |



## **Committees**

- \*Shows:** Helen Baxter, Sherlyn Hilton, Terry Henderson
  - \*Nominating:** Available
  - \*Welfare:** Nancy Greer and Harold Greer
  - \*Hospitality:** Helen Baxter and Nancy Burns
  - Programs:** Board of Directors
  - Newsletter Editor:** Grace Fowler-Gore
  - Newsletter Printing & Mailing:** Harold Greer 541-686-1540 hgreer@greergardens.com
  - Webmaster:** Ed Gore webmaster@eugene-chapter-ars.org
- ARS chapter websites can be found at [www.rhododendron.org](http://www.rhododendron.org)

You can join Christina Bentrup Tuesday mornings at **Hendricks Park**. She'd love to have your help. She can be contacted at [Christina.R.Bentrup@ci.eugene.or.us](mailto:Christina.R.Bentrup@ci.eugene.or.us)

## March is Election Time for our group.

Officer Positions: President - Terry Henderson & Vice President - Jack Olson

Regular Board Positions: Helen Baxter & Grace Fowler-Gore & two vacant positions available

At the March meeting these terms will be voted upon. Please let us know if you are interested and wish to be a member of the board. The terms are for three years. We meet once a month to coordinate the group's activities.

## Hendricks Park Tour Guides Needed

Hendricks Park staff receives a large amount of requests for garden tours, especially during the spring months. The staff will take on some of these tours, and members from the Friends of Hendricks Park are sometimes available too. Still, we are looking to grow our numbers of possible tour guides and I think that Rhododendron Society members would be perfect candidates. These are unpaid tours to the community, usually school groups, garden clubs, and assisted living homes. Tour lengths would generally be about an hour. If you are interested in joining the tour group list, let our volunteer coordinator Christina know at [Christina.R.Bentrup@ci.eugene.or.us](mailto:Christina.R.Bentrup@ci.eugene.or.us). We are also hoping for additional tour guides on Mother's day, between the hours of 10-3pm.

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

## Event Calendar 2017 – 2018

**Chapter Dinner 5:30 & Meeting 7 @  
The Springs at Greer Gardens, 1282 Goodpasture Island Rd, Eugene, Oregon**

- March 14** John Weagle from the Atlantic Rhododendron Society  
(**PLEASE NOTE** - This is the SECOND Wednesday, NOT the THIRD Wednesday)
- April 18 John Stevens & Steve McCormick – Rhododendrons of Chile
- May 5 Flower Show and Banquet
- May 12** Willamette Valley Hardy Plant Sale @ Eugene Fairgrounds (Please correct date on your calendars.)
- June 3 Spring Picnic at Hendricks Park

### **Pre-Meeting Dinner RSVP**

Please contact **Harold Greer** by phone at 541-554-2342 or by e-mail at hgreer@greergardens.com, so that Harold can let the staff at The Springs know how many will be in our party.