

Southwestern Oregon Chapter

AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY



FEBRUARY 2010

Meeting Time/Place

February 18 —7:00 pm
N. Bend Housing Authority
1700 Monroe Street
North Bend

Pre Meeting Dinner 5:00 pm

Benetti's—5:00 pm
260 S. Broadway, Coos Bay

RSVP to Jan Lee—
fogline1@verizon.net or call
267-4176

Refreshments

Refreshments will be provided by Wanda Hackett and Lee Vincent

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February Program

Pat Osborn from Thompson's Nursery

He will be telling us about soil amendments to use in the garden

President's Message

Liz Hultin

Chaos is upon me. My husband and I are moving to North Bank Lane and downsizing almost 600 sq ft. The amount of excess stuff we have accumulated is embarrassing. When we finally get the household moved, I must then consider the rhododendrons. Some are still in pots, but I have about thirty in the ground in a new bed that is both sandy and weedy. I am reluctant to leave them to dry out or be over run by black berries. Fortunately they are small enough to move without resorting to a back hoe. Then there is the problem of where to plant them. The soil is goo along the river, but in many locations the drainage is very poor, calling for raised beds or drains. They may not

get moved this year.

Mike Bones gave a very instructive and entertaining presentation about rhododendron care beyond the basics most of us already know. One aspect of it was about moving large rhododendrons. The root ball may be very modest compared to the size of the plant and branches may be tied like a harvested Christmas tree, if not as tightly, to avoid damage and make access to digging easier. The thing that caught my attention the most was his recommendation about fertilizing lightly around the year rather than more heavily 3 or 4 times. He recommended this because our rains leach nutrients out of the soil. This is especially true in my current yard because I have so much

sand. Heavier soils may not drain as well, but they do hold the nutrients.

I thank those of you who brought plants to share to the last meeting. When I was looking over my greenhouse with sharing in mind, I realized that many of the plants were in no condition to bring. The cold in early December was really hard on many of the plants. Many will survive, but the top growth has been killed back and they look dead. I will try to bring some Dahlia tubers to the next meeting. They will be freshly dug and a mixed, unknown bag, but they are all pretty.

See you at the next meeting
February 18th

January Recap

Ann Drake

Mike Bones, president of the Siuslaw Chapter was our speaker for the evening. Rhododendron 202 was a collection of helps for the rhody gardener. The rhododendron yakusimanum is difficult to propagate and it was suggested to take cuttings right now instead of in September and to remove the indumentum from the stem.

The moving of large plants was demonstrated. He suggested that in order to avoid this job to consider how large the plant you are planting is going to get before you plant it. Our climate favors rhodies and they really grow. Tying the foliage on a large plant together in order not to damage it when moving it protects the foliage. Use a square point shovel and root prune very large root balls, grasping the plant by the main stem and rocking it back and forth will usually loosen it as rhododendrons do not develop tap roots and are shallow rooted. Pruning

was discussed. He had a selection of pruning equipment and demonstrated the use of a very clever small saw. Don't leave stubs when pruning.

He demonstrated pruning on a plant of *R. yunnanense* which he donated to our plant auction.

The condition of plants after the long freezing spell we have had including bud blight, bark split, and dead limbs was severe this year. There isn't much help for a plant with split bark. This usually happens when cold comes when the sap is still up. To avoid this don't water too late in the fall. Wait until the new growth starts before pruning heavily.

Solutions for pests, especially root weevils (Tempo Ultra) is good but is difficult to find locally. Cryolite, which cranberry growers, use is a safe solution. Deadline Blue used sparingly is good for getting rid of snails and slugs.

Coming Event

Ann Drake

Master Gardeners Seminar this year will be on March 27 at SWOC. Southwestern Oregon Chapter has hosted a rhododendron information table for at least 3 years. Last year we also donated 2 rhododendrons for a drawing. Subjects this year will include: strawberries, raising chickens, mason bees, container gardening with edibles, and basic coastal gardening. This is just a par-

tial listing. An all day meeting there are opportunities to take part in several of the 45 minute sessions. There is a coffee hour early in the morning with sweet rolls. More later.

Bob MacIntyre is very generous with his time and has been asked by the Master Gardner group to put together a 2 hour presentation on rhododendrons. This is another meeting not connected with the seminar.

District 4 Meeting

Bob MacIntyre

All Chapters in Oregon are in District #4. A meeting was held on Saturday, February 6. It was attended by all the Chapter President's, several past ARS Presidents and District Directors. A copy of the minutes will be available at our February meeting for those interested.

Each chapter reported on current and past 6 month activities. Mike Bones gave a report on the Western Conference to be held in Florence in Oct, 2010. Gordon Wylie gave a report on Hinsdale Estate project. Harold Greer and Mike Stewart updated everyone on the 2011 ARS Convention that will be hosted by District.

Ann's Corner

Ann Drake

Early Bloomers

Even though it has been a very cold spring there are rhododendrons blooming. *R. mucronulatum* "Cornell Pink" is a reliable bloomer. It was discovered in a batch of seedlings at Cornell University in 1946. It will survive at minus 20 degree covering itself with lovely small pink flowers before the foliage comes out. Peter Cox says it takes well to pruning.

Seta (*spinuliferum* x *moupinense*) is a very early hybrid. It has been blooming for at least a month. It is a Lord Aberconway cross of 1933 winning an A.M. award in 1933 and a F.C.C. award in 1960. A welcome lovely two toned pink bloomer. *Seta* and Cornell Pink are open growers 5 to 8ft. tall.

Pretty Baby is a cross of (*Cornubia* x *degronianum* ssp *yakushmanum*) Very nice. It is a very bright pink almost red bud and flower with a picotee edge around a whiter center with good foliage. Sometimes the cold damages the flowers because it is so early. Can't find out who is the hybridizer. Jay Murray says Pretty Baby is not registered.



Bodega Crystal Pink is another early bloomer. The cross is (*cilipense* x Cornell Pink) Carl G. Heller, MD, Bodega Rhododendron Nursery, Poulsbo, Wa. Is the hybridizer and it was registered in 1976. It is a reliable bloomer and hardy to at least 5 deg.



Lee's Scarlet (*caucasicum* x unknown) hybridized in 1851 is the earliest bloomer sometimes flowering before Christmas in England. A rosy crimson fading to bright pink it grows to a height of about 4 ft. in 10 years. Because of the thin plastered indumentum on the underside of the leaf Harold Greer thinks the 'unknown' is probably *R. arboreum*. It does well here and in Florence. Gene Cockerum usually brings a bloom to Siuslaw's meeting.



Plant Giveaway

A new addition to our meetings is the plant give away exchange table. This includes house plants or anything to share. We have had orchids, bulbs, house plants, etc. New member Bill Russell brought some Monterey cypress cuttings which were snapped up right away.

Across the Kitchen Table

Bob MacIntyre

Well, after a very early and cold to the late fall and early winter, we now have had a very warm and moderately wet January for the beginning of 2010.

Our January started off with Christmas Cheer blooming followed closely by R. Ririei and Bodega Crystal Pink which is still in bloom. Late January and early February we have Praecox, Mucronulatum, Cornell Pink, Valaspis and R. Oreodoxa var. Fargesii. Both Snow Lady and Lucy Lou are just about halfway open. R. Beanianum, one of the neriflorum group, is opening with its small waxy red flowers. Many Maddenii species and hybrids have bud blast due to the prolonged Nov-Dec 09 freeze.

Some plants are now showing the effects of the freeze with R. Taronence, R. magnificum odoriferum starting to drop leaves that were killed by the cold.

Well on to the new year and hopes for better weather. However remain alert, this is only the first part of February and we frequently get freezes in February and March. Remember the snow we had at our flower show 2 years ago? So, remain cautious if cold or freezing weather is predicted and plants are in flower or buds swelling. Cover the plant with a tarp or some form of protection.

Well, we jump from freezing to fertilizing. President's Day is when you should start to fertilize your plants with a rhody/azalea type fertilizer for acid loving plants. I also will add a small amount of dolomite lime which is a small amount of Mg and CA that rhody's like and need. Remember to fertilize at the drip line, not at the base of the plant.

What's Coming To The Plant Auction

Ann Drake

A new feature in the newsletter is What's Coming to the Plant Auction so members will know ahead of time what the selections will be

1. **Peach Charm**— Peachy - Pink Flowers with yellow throat and red nectaries
2. **Sun Blush 4'** Mid bloom (Scintillation x recital) - Pale greenish yellow buds that open to ruffly white flowers. They are flushed with greenish yellow on the dorsal lobe. Also on the dorsal lobe are red spots and rays - like a sunrise in your yard. Sounds like a must have plant. This is a Jim Barlup Cross.

3. **Many Moons 4'** Mid bloom (Nancy Evans x Rockhill Ivory Ruffles) - Sunny Yellow flowers with wavy edges. The Calyx is almost as large as the flower, giving the bloom the appearance of a double flower. A upright grower with forest green leaves. Has grown well in the Baumer's yard through all the heat and cold. This a Evelyn Thompson Cross.

4. **Earl Murray's Sister 5'** Mid bloom (Kubla Khan x Lem's Cameo) - Wavy flowers of light yellow and pink. With strong darker pink margins. Lax ball trusses that open from dark pink buds. Currently growing in the Baumer's yard in full sun and has handled all the weather..

Future Events

April 17 & 18—Southwestern Oregon Flower Show, Pony Village Mall

April 24 & 25—Siuslaw Early Show, Florence Event Center, Florence, OR

May 14-17, ARS Annual Convention, Long Island, NY

May 21 & 22—Siuslaw Late Show, Florence Event Center, Florence, OR