



Macrophyllum

February 2003

Newsletter of the
Siuslaw Chapter
American Rhododendron Society
Post Office Box 1701
Florence, OR 97439-0111

From the VP

Now that the heavy winter rains are mostly over, it is time to give your rhododendrons and azaleas their first fertilizing of the year. I prefer to use the 'Greer' mix and obtain it from a farm store located in Harrisburg.

For the next five or six months our favorite species will be putting on a rather spectacular show. I hope you will take the time to visit public and private rhododendron gardens and that when you, do you pay special attention to the various species that you will see in bloom there. Take your camera with you and take pictures of those plants you particularly enjoy. If you get a really good picture, let me borrow it so we can include it in one of the issues of our newsletter. The Hendricks Park Rhododendron Garden is an excellent place to see many beautiful well-maintained plants, so when you are in Eugene allocate an extra hour or so and go visit the park.

In our own area, all of our local rhododendron nurseries that give us discounts on our plant purchases also grow some very beautiful specimen plants and you are welcome to drop in on any of them and admire these plants without being pressured to buy. These nurseries are, of course, Roadside Rhododendrons in Mapleton, Shepherds Rhododendrons south of Dunes City, Bones Rhododendrons north of Florence, Thompson's Rhododendron Nursery just east of Waldport and the Three Bs Nursery in Coos Bay.

Our speaker for our next meeting will be Ann Drake. As much as we enjoy visiting speakers from other chapters, it's rather special when one of our own members volunteers to do the program, and Ann makes her presentations very enjoyable indeed.

Everett Hall, Vice President

Recent issues of the ARS Siuslaw Chapter newsletter *Macrophyllum* may be accessed at:

<http://www.oregonfast.net/~jpwilson/SiuslawARS>

Other interesting information on rhododendrons is to be found at these net sites!

American Rhododendron Society:

<http://www.rhododendron.org>

Eugene Chapter, ARS:

<http://www.eugene-chapter-ars.org>

Rhododendron Species Foundation:

<http://www.rhodygarden.org/index.html>

Oregon State University:

<http://www.osu.orst.edu/dept/hort/dpd/index.htm>

President: Mike Bones

(541) 997-3082

mailto:rhodies@harborside.com

Vice President: Everett Hall

(541) 997-3605

mailto:evhall@msn.com

Secretary: Kathy Bones

(541) 997-3082

mailto:rhodies@harborside.com

Treasurer: Sandi Huffman

(541) 997-3082

mailto:sandi@cardinal-services.com

Board Members:

Jim Smith, Past President

(541) 268-6821

mailto:Rhody1@presys.com

Eileen McKenney (03)

(541) 997-2222

mailto:egmc@oregonfast.net

Dave Shepherd (04)

(541) 997-2283

mailto:drshepherd@oregonfast.net

Jeannie Shields (05)

(541) 902-8358

Newsletter:

Charles M. King

(541) 902-0469

mailto:kingcm@presys.com

Paul M. Wilson

(541) 902-9780

mailto:jpwilson@oregonfast.net

Book Chairperson:

Marianne Horney

(541) 997-6626

mailto:maribob@oregonfast.net

FEBRUARY CALENDAR

February Board Meeting

(2nd) Tuesday, February 11
7 PM at Eileen McKenney's

February Study Group

(3rd) Monday, February 17
7 PM at Mike Bones
90379 Oregon Coast Hwy

February General Meeting

(3rd) Tuesday, February 18
➔ 7 PM at NACO West ◀
Campground, So. Jetty Road

Program

New Zealand Color

Ann Drake

Coquille, Oregon

Pre-Meeting Dinner

Bliss Restaurant at 5 PM

Important-for reservations!

Contact Eileen McKenney at

(541) 997-2222, or

mailto:egmc@oregonfast.net

Cookies

Vicki Caldwell Fran Darrah

Diane Gilmour Gail Petty

Gallagher Park Work Parties

(Last) Saturday, February 22
10 AM



R. kendrickii, 'Crarae' form (Left & above)
(Photos courtesy Everett Hall)

Plant of the Month

The plant of the month is *R. kendrickii*, a member of the Irroratum family or sub-section. This attractive rhododendron was first described in 1853 from a specimen collected in Bhutan. It was found subsequently by other collectors in Bhutan, south Tibet and Assam.

In its native home it will grow to be a large shrub or small tree up to 25 feet tall, but in cultivation will probably never get that large. My plant is about 25 years old and is about five feet tall and six feet wide. The leaves of *R. kendrickii* are six to eight inches long, narrow and pointed with wavy slightly down-curved edges. They are dark green and rather shiny on top and lighter colored on the underside of the leaf.

The truss is composed of eight to twenty bell-shaped flowers. The flowers are between one and two inches long and are rose, scarlet or crimson in color. They are quite heavily spotted with red or deeper colored spots and have darker colored nectar pouches.

In our area *R. kendrickii* starts coming into bloom about the first of February and will remain in bloom for at least two months. The new growth that follows the blooming period is an attractive bronzy color that lasts for several weeks before turning dark green.

R. kendrickii is not especially common here in the central Oregon coast area, but it is becoming increasingly popular because of its early blooming season, attractive foliage and ease of growth. *R. kendrickii* is not nearly as particular about its soil conditions and will grow in heavier soil than will many species rhododendrons.

If you are going to add *R. kendrickii* to your collection, seek out one of the better-selected forms. My plant is the 'Crarae' form and is one of the rose colored clones, however there are also red and crimson forms that can be obtained.

Plant *R. kendrickii* in a location where the frost won't damage the flowers and you can enjoy a beautiful early spring display that will enliven our gardens and brighten our spirits.

Everett Hall. Vice President



Upcoming Rhododendron Events

April 5 - 6, 2003

Early Rhododendron Show
Siuslaw Chapter ARS
Florence, Oregon

April 12, 2003

Early Rhododendron Show
Eugene Chapter ARS
Eugene, Oregon

May 1 - 4, 2003

ARS Annual Convention
Olympia, Washington

Some meeting brochures were omitted from the ARS Journal. Call Dee Daneri if you need a copy (707 650-0771) or mailto:deedaneri@aol.com

May 17 - 18, 2003

Siuslaw Chapter Rhododendron Show
Rhododendron Festival
Florence, Oregon

October 2 - 5, 2003

ARS Western Regional Conference
Seaside, Oregon



Beauty is in the Eye of the Beholder

In the spring the hedgerows of northwest Ireland are aglow with an amalgamation of *R. ponticum* and gorse as shown in the above photo. As breathtaking as this sight might be, we on the northwest coast of the United States have been conditioned to admire the display of our rhododendrons and to bemoan the problems associated with the bright yellow gorse. The people of Bandon don't forget the accidental burning of gorse that led to extensive destruction in their Oregon city. This potential, and other concerns, has motivated great efforts to limit the spread of gorse.

In contrast, while blessed with impressive rhododendrons in their gardens, there is a feeling in Ireland, as expressed in a sign observed in Donegal, that their naturalized rhododendron is more of a problem than a blessing. *R. ponticum*, which was first introduced into Ireland in the 1790s, "has become a serious ecological problem.....In fact this weed may be a garden hybrid which was so vigorous and prolific that it escaped from gardens. Because it is poisonous it is avoided by deer, sheep and other grazing animals and is now a pest in western Scotland and Wales as well as Ireland."

Rather than permit this concern to weaken our positive attitude towards rhododendrons, we should recognize that our conclusion that gorse is to be avoided at all costs is apparently in direct opposition with that of the Irish. A sign at Newgrange suggests that gorse was, without exception, beneficial to society, in that it "had a multitude of uses, fencing, fodder, firing, bedding, thatching, etc.," and "enriches the soil by fixing nitrogen from the air."

Less we fear that our enthusiasm for rhododendrons might lead to a scenario reminiscent of a science fiction plot, we should recognize that *R. ponticum* has served us well as a species and in the development of many beautiful hybrids without displacing us. With respect to gorse, maybe we should appreciate the color in a show of tolerance that is analogous to admitting that even blackberries taste good.

CMK

Dear Dr. Rhody,

I have a question concerning some of my Rhododendrons. Last summer I watered and fertilized my plants faithfully. They were very healthy and really looked great. During the fall I was pleased to see many, many flower buds for the next spring.

Last week as I was cleaning up some branches from a wind storm I noticed several flower buds had turned brown and looked bad. What caused the buds to become discolored? Were the buds diseased or attacked by a bug? Is it possible the buds that are brownish will bloom?

Help!

Budding Gardner

Dear Budding Gardner,

It is possible some pests have attacked your flower buds. However, I believe that once again the weather is the cause of your problem.

We had a very early cold spell this autumn. The temperature at my house dropped from 65 degrees Saturday afternoon to 25 degrees on Monday morning. The plants were actually trying to produce growth and winter dormancy had not begun. I believe the plants had no chance to become winter hardy and the sudden drop in temperature actually destroyed the flower buds.

When this occurs you don't always become aware of it immediately. It takes some time for the damage to become visible.

If I have correctly guessed the cause of your problem there is very little you can do to prevent future occurrences. If only a few varieties of your plants were affected you might consider moving them to a more sheltered spot such as under a tree canopy.

If the plants were newly planted this year they may not have been acclimated to the area and needed more time to become winter hardy.

To improve the look of your plants now you can certainly remove the dead bloom buds. If part of the stem is dying too, cut it back and it will improve the look this year and will cause your plant to be bushier next year.

Good Luck,

Dr. Rhody

PS Remember if you have questions or problems send them to Dr. Rhody.
mailto:rhody1@presys.com

PPS Greer's Rhododendron Fertilizer is now available at H & E Feed at 29315 Awbrey Ln. in Eugene (off Highway 99N a couple of miles north of Jerry's on the east side of the road. The barn is blue and visible from 99)

Siuslaw Chapter ARS Board Meeting: January 14, 2003

- Jim Smith and Jeannie Shields related their plans to publicize our early show that will be April 5 and 6.
- A few of the "favorite rhodies" lists have been returned. The Monday study group will add more to the list before making a report to the club members.
- Dates of area rhododendron events, including activities of the Southwest and Eugene Chapters, will be shown in our newsletter. They will be separated from our own dates to cut down on possible confusion.
- For experimentation purposes, microphones will be used at the next meeting.
- The Honeyman State Park Yurt has been reserved Sunday, June 8 and Saturday, August 23, 2003 for our picnics.
- The District would like to have all Chapters submit donations in memory of Betty Spady to the Endowment Fund. It was decided to "pass the hat" for donations rather than spend chapter funds.
- A discussion was held about creating our own web site. The advantages, requirements and potential costs will be identified and presented at the next board meeting.
- Everett Hall will lead the February board meeting in Mike Bones's absence.
- Confusion on the membership list sent from District headquarters is currently being resolved.
- Everett Hall requested that when anyone has a species in bloom to let him know so he can collect photos for our newsletter.
- Dave Shepherd will bring the plant for the next meeting. The income from the plant raffle has been great! It pays for the use of the building.
- Jeannie Shields showed all-occasion cards with pictures of rhodies on them. A discussion was held on getting the Monday study group involved in creating our own cards for selling purposes. We need to identify a "design" person to head this up. Jeannie will research costs of buying the cards and reselling them.
- Gene Cockeram wants as many people as possible to come to the last Saturday of the month work party at Gallagher Park.
- Jim Smith suggested we add enough plates for engraving the winner's name to the early show grand trophy "surf board" to last until the 100 anniversary. By then the trophy will be full.
- Mike Bones told us that the Chapter, as a member of the Florence Chamber of Commerce, might be able to use space on their web site to advertise our club. It could contain information about the club, ads for the early and late show, press releases, etc. Mike will find out how much space could be made available and how it might be used.
- Jeannie Shields presented the Development Fund proposal and questionnaire. Because of Jeannie's absence at the next regular meeting, Kathy will present this proposal to the club members for their input and request that everyone fill out the questionnaire and turn it in that night.

Kathy Bones, Secretary



Plant Raffle

At each of our Chapter meetings we have a plant raffle. Tickets are sold (\$1 each or 6 for \$5) to provide for the opportunity to win a rhododendron or azalea that you might not have previously considered for your garden. This educational activity is uniformly greeted with interest and enthusiasm. Importantly, it effectively supports the rental of our meeting room.

Need Fertilizer?

As mentioned by both Everett Hall and Dr. Rhody, it is now the time to start fertilizing our rhodies. Plants grow by absorbing soluble inorganic compounds from their environment to provide for both their structure and biochemical processes. Our "abundant" rainfall tends to wash away these chemicals and makes it necessary to replace them periodically to provide for optimal growth.

One product used successfully by many of our members is Greer's Rhododendron Fertilizer. This formulation contains 20% nitrogen, 12 % phosphate, 8% potassium, and 8% sulfur. Additionally, in contrast to many fertilizers on the market, this product also has significant quantities of the important trace metals, magnesium, copper, iron, manganese and zinc.

Fifty-pound bags can be purchased from H & E Feed in Eugene. To make this product more readily available to our members, we are considering the purchase of a larger quantity that would be delivered to Florence.

We will determine, at the February 18 Chapter meeting, whether there are enough individuals interested to make this feasible. Although the cost is not yet known, past purchases on individual 50 lb. bags have been approximately \$15.

If you would like to buy one or more 50 lb. bags of fertilizer, but cannot attend the meeting, please contact one of the board of directors and let them know how much you need.