



Macrophyllum

June 2003

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

Dear Dr. Rhody,

I was present at your presentation on growing Rhododendrons from seed during the 2001 Eugene Convention. I ordered seed from the seed exchange and began to grow seedlings.

The first year everything grew fine and I had no problems. This year I have noticed many, many little gnat like bugs crawling all over the containers of seedlings and flying around the area. Are these bugs a problem? Will they damage my seedlings?

Fellow Grower

Dear Fellow Grower,

Indeed, you do have a problem! Fungus gnats are what you are describing. They are a major pest. Although they appear small and harmless, they can destroy your seedlings.

Fungus gnats eat the roots of small seedlings. Unfortunately, I learned the hard way. I grew seedlings for several years and had good success. The year I ordered and planted some very unusual and hard to find species selections, I lost over half of what I planted thanks to the fungus gnats. I almost gave up growing seeds.

There is hope for you. There are some steps you can take to reduce your problem. Sticky yellow tags are a good trap and a good indicator of fungus gnats. I believe (not everyone will agree) peat moss contributes to the proliferation of fungus gnats. I think the gnats really love peat moss. Moisture is also a factor which encourages fungus gnats, and of course moss and fungus help too. I am better able to control these variables with coconut fiber. It works for me.

In order to eradicate fungus gnats there are a variety of chemicals that will help. *Dursban* will help kill adults if you choose to use it. *Gnatrol* is a product that is very safe, but you have to use it very frequently. Cleanliness in your seed room can also help to cut down on gnats. There also are some new insect growth regulators available that will work if you are certified to use them.

Be vigilant, get rid of the gnats and your seedlings will grow to become beautiful Rhododendrons some day.

Dr. Rhody

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JUNE CALENDAR

June Chapter Meeting

What: Picnic

When: Sunday, June 8
Meet at noon; eat at 1 pm

Where: Yurt at West Woahink
in Honeyman State Park. See
page 4 for a map.

Bring: Two dishes, your table
service and beverage.

Action: Bring a plant and play
our plant game.

June Board Meeting

(2nd) Tuesday, June 10
7 pm at Eileen McKenney's

The Summer

Water, fertilize and enjoy!



Judges doing their work at the Early Show

With apologies to Shakespeare, judging is such sweet sorrow, but a task for which we are all most grateful.



We need your help!
Gallagher's Park is the site of Siuslaw Chapter work parties at 10 am on the last Saturday of each month.



Plant of the month: *R. lindleyi*

Rhododendron lindleyi is one of my favorite species and I believe that it is one of the most beautiful. It is easy to grow and blooms from seed or cuttings when young. Although usually epiphytic in the wild, it grows well in a well-drained sandy loam soil in our garden.

R. lindleyi is in the subsection Maddenia and is native to Nepal, S. E. Tibet and Manipur and may grow as tall as five feet. It has large trumpet shaped flowers that are white, often tinged with pink. The flowers have a strong, sweet-spicy fragrance.

If it is such a great plant why isn't it grown more often? Why is it so seldom seen in gardens? I believe that there are several reasons. 1) It is generally assumed to be very tender and not hardy on the central Oregon coast. I have grown it here for 22 years and only once, in 1990, were the plants severely damaged. They froze back nearly to the ground, but quickly recovered and bloomed the following year. I don't believe that I have ever lost a plant from freezing. 2) It is difficult to obtain as few nurseries carry it. This is certainly true. I suppose the reason is lack of demand. However, it is easily rooted from cuttings or grown from seed. 3) The growth habit is different, open growing with few branches. Attempts to make it grow into a tight rounded plant are usually futile. It wants to produce stems from the ground with few side branches. This generally earns it pejorative descriptive words such as "straggly" or "leggy". I think that a clump of upright stems with leaves and flowers at the top adds variety and interest in a garden. A garden with all of the plants having the same growth habit tends to look monotonous, especially when not in bloom.

If your garden is in a fairly mild area, *R. lindleyi* is certainly worth trying. Select a protected location. Avoid frost pockets. A slope where there is good cold air drainage with well-drained soil is ideal. Some over head protection to reduce heat radiation to the sky will help prevent damage on cold nights. However, avoid full shade, as it tends to make plants less hardy. A mulch placed around the plants will help to protect the roots and lower portions of the stems from extreme cold.

Jim Gerdemann



From the VP

Our annual picnic will be held June 8th at the Honeyman Yurt meeting hall on Woahink Lake. We start gathering at noon and usually begin our feast about one o'clock. Some of you may not have directions on how to get there so, go south on Highway 101 to the intersection of Honeyman park, only instead of turning right into the park, turn left (east) on Clear Lake Road. Cross the first bridge and turn right at the next driveway. There will probably be a sign out. (**Editor's note:** If words fail you, look at the map on page 4). Bring a main dish and a salad, dessert, or appetizer. We like to eat! Bring your own table service and drink (coffee will be provided by the chapter) and a plant for our fun plant game. After our dinner we always have our short business meeting and then play our game.

The ARS convention in Olympia was very enjoyable. Some 30 of our members and associates were able to attend. The garden tours were all very good. We saw some beautiful gardens and lovely Washington scenery, especially in the Hood canal area. The workshops were interesting, educational, timely and well attended. The ARS and Regional conventions are well worth attending. In addition to the garden tours and workshops they offer a great opportunity to renew old friendships and make new friends with people who share our wonderful hobby.

Our chapter won an award at the convention for getting the most new members in the 40 to 75 member category. In fact, we now have enough members that we've moved into the 76 to 150 member category. A word of warning may be in order to the other chapters in our new category: They have just been joined by a chapter on the move and next year we intend to win the award in our new category. So look out!

There are many things to do in our gardens now that summer is arriving. I'll try to list a few to remind you. Our mild winter didn't kill many pests that like to munch on our plants so look for damage to new growth for signs of damage and take appropriate action to control it. If you are uncertain of what to do, give a quick call to Dr. Rhody at 541-268-6821. He will always find time to answer your concerns. Perhaps not at that very moment, but he will call you back if he is busy at that moment.

Slugs can be a problem now and there are several ways they can be brought under control. A number of methods, including barriers, attractants, aldehyde-containing products, etc., may be effective in your garden.

As your plants finish blooming, it is time to 'dead-head'. Not only will deadheading make plants look better but it prevents the plant from putting energy into unwanted seed development.

Your plants are putting on new growth now so it's a good idea to fertilize them and give them the extra nourishment they need at this time.

Don't forget to water your plants. We are about to go into our annual drought season. One word of caution, established plants of *R. macrophyllum* don't need, or want, additional water during the summer. In fact, it could be detrimental to their well being. But the rest of our rhododendrons, with the exception of our native azalea, *R. occidentale*, mostly have their origins in parts of the world where summer rains are usual, so they require summer watering. Weeds like to grow at this time of the year, so eliminate as many of them as possible. Not only are they unsightly but they compete with the rhododendrons for food and water.

Mulching our rhododendrons is not as important here in the central Oregon coast area as it is in many other places, but mulching does make our plantings more attractive and helps to conserve water.

If you have plants that need pruning, do it now while the plants are in active growth. Remember to cut just above a dormant bud. If you are unsure of how to do it, give a quick call to any of the more experienced members who will be glad to give you good advice on how to go about it.

A few months ago Galen Baxter talked to us about propagation of rhododendrons including grafting. Remember he told us the best time to graft was during the months of May, June and July. So if you want to graft a plant (or plants) now is the time to do it.

You can still set out potted plants of rhododendrons and azaleas but if you have to transplant a plant be certain that you keep the roots wet all summer. It is best to wait and transplant in the fall, if you can wait until then.

I'll see you at the picnic. Don't forget your plant for the game.

Everett Hall, Vice President



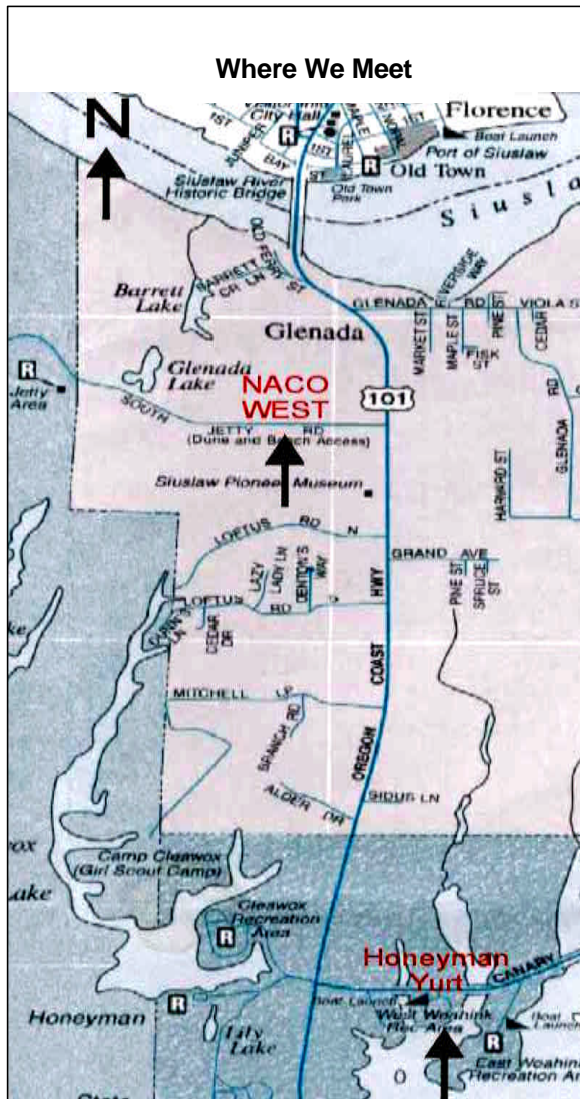
The Siuslaw Chapter Extends a Warm Welcome to New Members:

Bill Evans, Florence, OR
Steve & Tammy Jeffries, Florence, OR

R. 'W1' (left)

R. 'Sunspray' (right)





Secretary's Report: May 13, 2003 Siuslaw Chapter ARS Board Meeting

A nominating committee has been formed to fill the member at large spot being vacated by Eileen McKenney. Eileen has served long and faithfully on the chapter's board and generously allowed the meetings to take place in her lovely home. We thank you, Eileen!

Books will be available at the show this weekend for members to purchase at a 40% discount. You also may buy beautiful note cards with a rhody picture on the front created by Elaine Williams. The chapter will get a percentage of these sales. Get an early start on your Christmas shopping! Also, check out the displays showing the contest winner and the bronze medal information on Saturday at the Event Center after 1:00 PM. Set up for the show will be at 3:45 PM on Thursday, May 15, at the Event Center. The new category, Rhododendron Simulata, will be a must see at the show. We need someone to go with Gene Cockeram to set up and take down the show signs to "learn the ropes" in the event Gene is unable to do this some time. Volunteer to a board member!

The newsletter welcomes Jim Gerdemann as an occasional writer for the plant of the month column. Martin Anderson has volunteered his talent, too! Don't be shy! If you'd like to help, contact Charles King, newsletter editor.

The work party for Gallagher Park has been moved to Thursday, May 22, from 10 AM to noon, in hopes more people can show up to help. The group will go to lunch afterward. The board is looking into the possibility of applying for a grant to enhance Gallagher Park.

Watch the journal for an article by our own Jeannie Shields about the search for the native rhododendron. A follow up on the results will be published in the future.

Don't miss seeing the Outstanding Achievement Award our Chapter won at the ARS convention. It will be brought to the next meeting and on display at the show along with the certificate for the rhododendron, Siuslaw Pioneer that the chapter named.

Kathy Bones, Secretary



Upcoming Rhododendron Events

August 23, Saturday, Chapter Picnic

September 16, Tuesday, Chapter Meeting

October 2 - 5, 2003

ARS Western Regional Conference
Seaside, Oregon

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

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

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

American Rhododendron Society:

<http://www.rhododendron.org>

Rhododendron & Azalea News:

<http://www.rhododendron.org/news/home.htm>

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>