



Macrophyllum

May 2005

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

Web Site: <http://www.oregonfast.net/~siuslawars/>

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Presidents Report

Right now our gardens are filled with color as the rhododendron blooming season hits it's peak. Bloom time also means show time. Our early show was a big success and there was a nice article about it in the Siuslaw News. Chapter members all worked together getting the racks and tables in place before the show, doing all of the many tasks required during the show and then, after the show, taking it all down again and putting everything away until our next show. Everyone had a good time and we are all looking forward to our next show.

We always hold our main show during the annual Rhododendron Festival, this year May 21–22. We anticipate a big crowd of people, some of whom drive from hundreds of miles away, coming to enjoy our beautiful flowers on display. We hope each of you will enter trusses, and we hope each of you goes home with lots of ribbons and trophies. That's all part of the fun. Please bring your trusses to be entered in the show to the Events center early. Entry submission opens at 7:00 a.m. and close promptly at 9:00a.m. It really helps when we don't receive lots of trusses coming in at the last minute.

We often have requests to identify varieties of rhododendrons especially from people who are not chapter members. We are very willing to try to identify these plants for them if they will bring a truss in to us during the hours the show is open to the public.

The weekend after our early show the Southwest chapter and Eugene chapter each had shows and several of our members were able to enjoy attending them. The Eugene chapter main show will be held on May 14th and 15th a week ahead of our big show. It will again be held in the Oakway mall on Coburg Road. If you are in Eugene that weekend be sure to stop by there and see it, or better yet, enter some of your trusses. It's a good opportunity to see trusses of plants we may not see in our own show, as their blooming season is slightly different than ours.

Please continue to be alert for superior plants of *R. macrophyllum*: those with large trusses 20 or more flowers, red or nearly red flowers, white flowers, or 'apple blossom' flowers [white / light pink combination] and late blooming plants that extend the season. We have been finding some really outstanding plants but we know there are many more yet to be discovered.

If any of you have a hybrid rhododendron you would like to register with the ARS, both Jim Smith and I have the RHS color charts that are used to identify the colors of the plant and flowers. Both of us are willing to come to your home and help you with the paper work required to register the plant.

Our phone tree system is to be used to notify members of some event that happens after the newsletter has been sent and before the next one arrives. To activate the system call Freda Ziegelmaier.

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CALENDAR

MAY

Chapter Meeting

When: Tues., May 17, 7PM.

What: Plant auction

Where: Presbyterian Church,
3996 Hwy 101, Florence, OR

Pre-meeting Dinner:

5 p.m. at NACO Campground,
South Jetty Road. See map,
page 5.

Call Eileen McKenney, NLT
May 14, at (541) 997-2222, or
<mailto:egmc@charter.net>,

Reservations are needed.

Cookie bakers:

1. Jan Woodford
2. Sandra Huffman
3. Lorall Woerner

JUNE

When: Sunday, June 12, Noon

Where: Honeyman Yurt

What: Potluck Picnic

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As you all know, there is a board position coming open this year. The nominating committee will make its report at our May chapter meeting and we have the election to fill the position at our June picnic business meeting. If you would like to be one of the nominees for the position, call Paul Wilson before the May chapter meeting.

At our next meeting we will have our annual auction. This is our primary fund raising effort of the year and this is how we finance chapter activities. We all bring plants and other plant related items to donate for the auction, not just rhododendrons and azaleas. In fact, Devern Pinnock, the first president of our chapter, is intending to again donate one of his beautiful rhododendron paintings. Mike Bones and Jim Smith will describe the plants and conduct the auction. Come early and have dinner with other chapter members at the NACO campground on South Jetty Road. Dinner is at 5:00 p.m. Please call Eileen McKenney 997-2222 if you are going to dinner so she can make our group reservations. After dinner we all move to our regular meeting place – the Presbyterian Church of the Siuslaw for cookies, coffee and a fun filled evening. Don't forget your checkbooks. We operate on cash and carry.

Everett Hall, President

Secretary's Report

The board was pleased to welcome guests to their last meeting. Remember, you are all welcome to attend any board meeting and stay as long as you want. They are held every second Tuesday at 7:00 PM at the home of Mike & Kathy Bones.

Marianne Horney was doing book chairman business by clarifying the amount of money she can spend on books. Her table at the meetings is well worth the time spent visiting! She has a wonderful variety of books at very good prices so take advantage of this opportunity to increase you library or purchase a gift for someone else!

Dave Shepherd has an alternative jacket for our chapter that is longer than the original one. See Dave about our Chapter logo and your name being added to your forest green jacket, too.

The grant writing committee met and had an informational meeting. It was decided that the board needs to identify a need and the money be pursued from the ARS.

E-mail was received from Frances with LapelPinz.com offering to create a lapel pin for our Chapter. If you are interested in heading this committee or doing it on your own, talk to a board member. If no one is interested, the project will be dropped.

Cheryl Prchal will be contacting the Presbyterian Church to renew our contract for use of their facilities for our general meetings again for the year 2005/06.

It was decided that when the Chapter sells any item, it needs to be on a cash and carry basis. No credit will be offered and you should receive a receipt.

A newsletter editor is needed. If you are interested, contact Everett Hall and he'll connect you with our current newsletter editors Chris and Ellen Atkin. The Atkins are willing to help the new editor get started.

Watch for the Rhody Days insert in our local paper next month! There will be an advertisement for our Chapter listing the benefits of being a member.

Jim Smith handed out a quick review of the early show. He was very pleased with the results and thanked all who made it such a success. Now on to the May show!

Your board is working on a mission statement for our Chapter and hopes to have it finalized by the next board meeting.

Kathy Bones, Secretary

Rhododendron Events

Sept 9-12, 2005: 25th Western Regional, Newport, OR

Nov 4-6, 2005: NE Regional, East Windsor, NJ

May 12-15, 2006: ARS National Convention, Washington, DC

Dear Dr. Rhody,

Hi Rhody Fans,

This month I will include a couple of quick and easy topics. My supply of questions is running very low. I need your input and questions to make this a good column.

Dr. Rhody,

Is there an easy way to remember the feeding schedule for the year?

This question can be answered several ways. It depends on the type of fertilizer you use and the soil conditions where you grow your plants.

I will refer to the fertilizer of choice for our immediate area CENCO - 20/12/8/8. Sometimes referred to as Greer's Rhododendron Fertilizer or as North Willamette Mix. This fertilizer has some immediately available nitrogen and time released Nitrogen plus some micronutrients that Rhododendrons need to look their best.

I would fertilize lightly, a small handful around the drip line, starting in early February and repeating every 2 months. February, April, June, August, and October. I believe this schedule works well for our area. We have lots of rain and generally porous soil conditions, large applications frequently are leached from the soil without being absorbed by the roots. Frequent, light feedings prevent excessive leaching.

Some people believe our climate is such that we can feed all year around. I personally prefer to stop during November through January.

Your plants will definitely survive without frequent feeding, but they won't be the best they can be!

Dr. Rhody,

What is the lowest growing Rhododendron that does well in Florence?

I have two answers for this question. Patty Bee and Wren are both lovely low growing yellow hybrids. They stay very small, usually less than 12 inches, and do exceptionally well in our climate.

Good growing.

Dr. Rhody

Plant of the Month

I love the 'big leaf' rhododendrons and I wish I had more space in my garden to grow more of them, but most of them will eventually become rhododendron trees.

However I have one plant of *R. praestans*, a 'big leaf' in the Grandia subsection, that I purchased from the Rhododendron Species Foundation about twenty years ago that is less than ten feet tall and is six or seven feet wide. This is actually smaller than some of the vigorous hybrids I planted at about the same time.

The name 'praestans' means 'excellent' and this plant lives up to it's name with large trusses of cream colored flowers and large lovely leaves that can be 18 to 20 inches long and 8 inches wide.

R. praestans was first collected in 1914, by plant explorer George Forrest. It is native to the mountains in northwest China, southwest Tibet and along the Tibet/Burma frontier. Joseph Rock, another famous plant explorer, described one plant he found as being 25 to 30 feet tall with a trunk nearly two feet in diameter. It is unlikely to ever reach that size in cultivation.

R. praestans can be found in several colors: white through creamy-pink to magenta rose. The individual flowers are about two inches long; bell shaped and held in trusses of 18 to 20 flowers. It comes into bloom early in the season- my plant usually flowers in March unfortunately before our early show so I do not have an opportunity to enter it.

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R. praestans is hardy here in the central Oregon coast area. My plant went through the hard winters of 1989/1990 without any damage to foliage or flowers.

This is a plant to be enjoyed every season of the year and if you have room for a small rhododendron tree you might want to consider acquiring one. I recommend you obtain your plant from a reliable source as *R. praestans* will readily cross with other 'big leaf' varieties and there are probably many plants being grown as *R. praestans* that could easily be hybrids.

All of the large leaf rhododendrons, including *R. praestans*, require good drainage and summer irrigation, unless your garden is in the fog belt along the coast. A well-grown plant of *R. praestans* is sure to add interest, beauty and variety to your garden.

Everett Hall



Pre-Meeting Dinner Map

