



Macrophyllum

November 2002

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

Dear Dr. Rhody,

Last spring I purchased a very nice compact rhododendron. The leaves were dark green and it had lovely pink and white blooms.

Late in the summer new leaves started to form and they had a fuzzy white coating on the top. Is this normal? Is the white covering a disease? Do I need to do anything to the plant?

"Worried"

Dear Worried,

First of all, relax. You are very fortunate to own a rhododendron that is prized by those of us known as Rhodoholics.

The growth you describe is actually natural on some of the most highly prized rhododendrons. The white covering is presently called indumentum. In the past botanists used to call the "fuzz" on the bottom of the leaf indumentum and the "fuzz" on the top tomentum. Recently, the term indumentum was chosen to describe both.

The condition you mentioned occurs in some of the very special rhododendron species. Fortunately the trait is frequently passed on to some of their hybrids.

Your concern is certainly normal. There are many stories of customs officials and plant inspectors actually requiring people to scrub off the indumentum before allowing the plants into the country. Hopefully they are now better educated.

Do nothing. Sit back and enjoy your unusual plant. The indumentum will gradually disappear as winter progresses and will gratefully return on the new leaves next fall.

Dr. Rhody

Our Best Performing Rhododendrons and Azaleas

The ARS Public Education Committee has asked that the chapters identify those rhododendrons and azaleas that are particularly well suited to their growing areas. On the 4th page of this issue of the *Macrophyllum* is a questionnaire, derived from discussions of the October Rhododendron Study Session, of how we might provide this information. Please help us by telling the chapter about your favorites. Fill out the form and turn it in at the November or December meetings, or mail it to the chapter at the address shown above. Use more than one form if you wish. The data that you provide will be assembled, summarized and used to compile lists of those plants we hold in greatest regard for our coastal growing area. You will be provided with this information at the conclusion of this process. Thanks for your help.

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NOVEMBER CALENDAR

November Board Meeting

(2nd) Tuesday, November 12
7 PM at Eileen McKenney's

November General Meeting

(3rd) Tuesday, November 19
7:15 PM at NACO West
Campground, So. Jetty Rd.

Program:

*"Rhododendrons on the
Oregon Coast"*

by Mike Bones

Pre-Meeting Dinner:

Chinese Buffet at 5 PM

Important! Contact Eileen
at 997-2222, or

mailto:emgc@oregonfast.net
for reservations

Cookies:

Helen Baxter
Doris Cockeram
Cheryl Prchal

November Study Group

(3rd) Monday, November 18
7:00 PM at Mike Bones
90379 Oregon Coast Hwy

Gallagher Park Work Parties

(Last) Saturday, November 30
10 AM

From the VP

If you have rhododendrons to plant or transplant, now is the best time of the year to do it. By spring the plants will be established in their new location almost like they had always been there. When you plant or transplant be sure you make up a good planting mix with lots of organic material incorporated in it (like bark) and that you don't set the plant too deep. Also be sure that you will have water available for it when we once again will have our hot dry days of summer.

Now is also the time of year to clean up the garden litter around your plants. Those old leaves, and other debris, provide cover and give protection to a number of pests that can, and will, damage your plants. Critters like root weevils and slugs just love garden litter where they can hide after having a good meal on your plants.

We had a great turnout for our last meeting. Forty-five of us had dinner together before the meeting and almost seventy of us learned about propagation of our favorite species from Jim Smith, Galen Baxter and Mike Bones. A good time was had by all. In fact, it was fun.

For our program next month our president, Mike Bones, will give us his slide presentation on "Rhododendrons on the Oregon Coast". Mike always puts on a good show and you won't want to miss it.

Our annual Christmas party will be held on December 8th in the meeting hall at the Odd Fellows campground, which is just west of where our monthly meetings take place. Our meetings are always fun, but our Christmas party is really special. Of course, we will have one of our wonderful potlucks. I'm convinced that the best cooks in Oregon belong to our chapter. Then we will have a gift exchange. Please don't give something expensive. It should be something garden-related, such as bulbs, plants, pruners, gloves, birdfeeders, etc. The list is endless. Whatever pleases you is sure to please the recipient of your gift. So mark your calendar - December 8 - for one of the best get-togethers of the year. You definitely will want to be there.

For the plant of the month I've selected *R. niveum*. *R. niveum* was first described by plant hunter J. H. Hooker when he was exploring in Sikkim in 1849. It was later found by other plant explorers in Sikkim and Bhutan. It is now rarely found in the wild as its habitat is increasingly being destroyed. In the wild it will become a broadly upright or rounded bush or tree to twenty-five feet tall.

In cultivation it will grow to become nine to twenty feet tall. The leaves are about five or six inches long and are dark green with the underside covered with that felt-like covering called "indumentum". This indumentum is white on the young leaves but becomes gray or fawn colored as the leaf matures. The leaves are retained on the plant for up to three years. The tubular bell-shaped flowers are about two inches long and are held in an upright truss composed of twenty to twenty-five flowers. They are a very distinctive color, frequently described as smoky-blue or purple-lilac. They have darker nectar pouches at the base of the flower where the hummingbirds love to stick their little bills and get a drink.

Some people don't like the color of this rhododendron but I do and so did the judges at the 2002 Eugene Chapter show. Jim Gerdemann, a long-time member of our chapter, entered a truss of it, the only truss he entered in the show, and won the trophies for "Best Species Rhododendron" and "Best Truss in the Show". Jim's plant was started by Galen Baxter from seed he obtained from England several years ago. This plant is not hard to grow and if you want to add beauty and interest to your garden, this is a rhododendron that will do it for you.

Everett Hall, Vice President



Jim Gerdemann and his *R. niveum* (Above)

R. niveum (Below)



Photos courtesy of Everett Hall

Board Meeting Mini-Minutes: October 8

- The Treasurer reported balances of \$3346.27 and \$1492.05 in the checking and savings accounts. The higher than usual checking account balance reflected the recent payment of annual dues. A modest increase in dues is by scheduled for 2004.
- Everett Hall reported on the Western Regional Conference: 215 people attended.
- Distribution of a list of rhodies hardy for our area to local landscapers was suggested. Preparation of an updated list of rhododendrons that are particularly suited for the Oregon coast is currently in progress, as requested by the American Rhododendron Society. *(Please see the questionnaire on page 4 of this newsletter)*
- Volunteers to serve on a gift fund committee were discussed. *(Interested individuals should contact Jeanie Shields)*
- A list of things to be done at Gallagher Park is to be prepared. The city is supposed to pave the paths. It was recommended that the tags at Gallagher Park be replaced. Galen Baxter was identified as one who could aid in identifying the plants.
- Program discussions concluded that Anne Drake will speak at the March meeting. Don Wallace will be asked to make a presentation on fragrant rhodies for the February meeting.
- It was recommended that an article about "plant a rhody month" be published in the Journal American Rhododendron Society.
- For press releases, the newspapers need the information 2 to 3 weeks in advance. This is for all newspapers contacted.
- The Honeyman Yurt is to be reserved for the '03 picnic.
- The monthly plant drawing is the primary mechanism used to pay for the meeting place. The chapter will continue to purchase one superior plant for each drawing. It is anticipated that additional donated plants will provide for the selections that will continue to make this fund raising activity successful.
- Plans for disposition of seed from the "Special Macrophyllums" were discussed.
- Sufficient volunteers to provide for a "calling tree" were identified at the September picnic. This will provide for rapid communications in those cases where there is not enough time to send out notices in the mail.
- Mike Bones and Rich Arring are working on putting together people and jobs for the Western Regional 2003 Conference. The active committee will include people from all of the Oregon Chapters.
- Jeannie Shields has agreed to continue doing the press releases.
- Marianne Horney has agreed to be the Book Chair!

Kathy Bones, Secretary



ARS Annual Convention Olympia, Washington May 1 - 4, 2003

- Attend lectures featuring speakers from the Pacific Northwest, Germany and New Zealand
- Visit rhododendron gardens including the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden, Lakewold Garden, Whitney Garden and Nursery and several private gardens not generally open to the public
- Enjoy the natural beauty of the Pacific Northwest



Nametags

If you need a nametag, please send a note with the correct spelling to:

Siuslaw Chapter
American Rhododendron Society
P.O. Box 1701
Florence, OR 97439

What are the best rhododendrons and azaleas to grow on the Oregon coast?

Periodically the American Rhododendron Society attempts to identify those rhododendrons and azaleas that are best suited for the various chapter areas. The Siuslaw Chapter is undertaking this task by asking our members to tell us which 5 rhododendrons and/or azaleas they like best for the Oregon Coast. To help you make these decisions, we ask that you consider your candidate plants with respect to the characteristics given below. Just provide the names of your favorites and indicate those attributes that motivated you to pick these plants. Circle the characteristics (up to three) that most influenced your decision. **DO NOT "DESCRIBE" THE PLANT IN DETAIL.** Use extra sheets if you have more than 5 favorites.

Plant Name					
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Bloom

Color					
Number					
Size					
Truss type or shape					
Bloom period					
Durability					

Foliage

Color					
Indumentum					
Leaf Size					
Leaf Shape					
Leaf Texture					

Plant Growth

Upright					
Spreading					
Compact					
Open					
Density					
Tree-like					

Other Characteristics

Fragrance					
Bark character					
Wind resistance					
Sun resistance					
Low sun needs for blooms					
Use as screen					
Resistance to disease					

Please return to the November or December chapter meeting, or send it by mail to:

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