

Macrophyllum

OCTOBER 2011

Siuslaw Chapter

American Rhododendron Society

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UPCOMING Chapter Events

Meeting topic- Finding Rhododendrons in Tibet and Sichuan, China . Dr. Keith White detailing his 2009 trip to China and Tibet visiting eight botanical and natural plant preservation areas. Travel in the Chinese mountains is much easier than 100 years ago, when plant explorers rode horseback and camped along the trail. Keith's travels take him to mountainous areas from 6000 to 12,000 feet to find tiny alpine rhododendrons and many native flowers. Many of the flowering plants we buy in the US are cultivated and hybridized from plant material collected in China.

Board Meeting- On Tuesday October 11th, there will be a board meeting at Jim and Sylvia Smiths home in Mapelton at 6:30 pm.

Chapter Meeting- On Tuesday October 18 at the Presbyterian Church of the Siuslaw, 3996 Highway 101, Florence, at 7 pm. Refreshments at 6.30 pm.

This month's dinner will be at the ICM Restaurant. Don't miss out! Dinner is at 5:00 before our meeting on October 18th. Call or email Rosemary by October 14th if you plan to attend dinner. 541-997-6167 or tonyrosemay@charter.net

Gallagher Park Work Party- Wednesday, October 19th from 10:00 until 12:00 noon. The park is at the corner of Spruce and Hwy. 126. Gene Cockeram, City Park Commissioner. flowerman@q.com .

Cookie Team - Sharon Samuelson, Carol Vetter, Mike Bones, Bea Vanderpool



The Presidents Message

by Larry Jensen

Fall is definitely the busiest season for me. The salmon are coming in so maybe I can sneak in a trip or two. After fishing Alaska so much, I've been spoiled. The rock garden I started this spring needs to be planted. Now is the perfect planting time. The hot weather is over, but the cold should be a couple months away. The weather at our house is normally colder and wetter than Eugene, and colder than the Florence area. I need to plant as early as possible in the fall or spring for that matter. My order from the Species Foundation should be here soon. Only 8 or 10 plants this time.

We went to the Southwest cutting exchange at Ann Drakes garden September 17th. Tom and Ann Drake built a wonderful home and garden. Tom passed away several years ago, and now their son Michael has moved home to help Ann. Their garden is very nicely presented. Maps of the plantings and a relatively complete list. Every time I start a list, I get distracted and start pruning, weeding, or something else more interesting. I lived in Coquille until I was 11 years old, so after the cutting exchange, we spent a couple hours driving around looking at the area. The downtown looks unchanged, but things have really changed out Fairview way.

Our grandchildren are all playing sports now so we have soccer and volleyball games several nights a week. Also, I took on a project and will be back to work for 4 to 5 months. Luckily for me Sandi does much of the telephone work and helps me stay organized with the rhodie society.

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PLANT OF THE MONTH

r. bureavii X Fabia HANSEL-
GRETZEL-MIKE & KATHY – FABUR

Halfdan Lem was a very prolific hybridizer beginning in the 1950s or perhaps earlier. His cross of bureavii x Fabia created a group of “sister seedlings”. Several of these were named and are still on the market today. It is mentioned of Lem, that he refused to sell

Hansel without a Gretzel. The bloom on all of these is a salmon orange with beautiful foliage with heavy cinnamon indumentum, indicative of bureavii crosses. They prefer a little shade and can be used for hybridizing orange colored rhodies, and many times, are fall bloomers. Who says you can't have it all?

Editors note: This is a picture of Hansel in our yard now. Larry says: “Hansel blooms heavier in the fall if we don't get an early cold weather event, but it usually saves a few bloom buds for the spring flower shows.” There is an interesting article about Halfdan Lem in an old ars journal that we will put in the newsletter at a later date.



Source: JARS V48:No.1:p10:y1994

How to Grow Rhododendrons from Seed

Allan and Shirley Anderson
Franklin Lakes, New Jersey

Growing rhododendrons and azaleas from seed is not difficult if one remains conscious of their physical needs, e.g., light, warmth, fertilizer and moisture. As long as these are provided at the proper time and in the right amount, many methods have been successful. Rhododendron seedlings are adaptable and can succeed with less than ideal environmental factors, but it is important to remember that whatever method issued the planting medium must *never* be allowed to dry out. Germinating seeds or small seedlings cannot survive even one such episode.

We grow our seeds on damp, slightly firmed milled sphagnum moss in small plastic “deli” containers. Screened peat moss and perlite mixtures have been equally successful. We drop the seeds on the surface and enclose the container in a polyethylene sandwich bag with the top folded under the container. Such an enclosure will usually keep the medium moist until the seeds germinate at which time the bags are gradually opened and medium watered carefully to be sure it doesn't dry out. Each container is labeled and contains seed of a single variety.

While seeds do not require light to germinate they do need light to photosynthesize and grow immediately after. We therefore put the containers on a bed of peat moss over the heating cable and suspend a light source over the top. A fluorescent shop light about 8 inches over the containers works well. A time switch is used to provide about 16 hours of light each day. In the past years we handled fewer containers by placing them on a serving tray on top of the refrigerator for warmth. A desk lamp with a time switch provided light. We have also used old aquariums using an automatic heating cable in the bottom with a layer of damp peat moss under the deli containers.

While some seeds, especially *yakushmanum* hybrids, may germinate unpredictably, most other hybrids and species seed germinates in 10 days to 3 weeks time. In 4 to 8 weeks more the small seedlings will have two or four true leaves in addition to the original cotyledons. Now we transplant them into flats containing a screened peat-perlite mixture and

fertilize every other watering with one-third strength soluble acid type fertilizer (Miracid[®] or equivalent). About 50 seedlings are planted in each flat. We still maintain the 16-hour days with overhead light.

We place the flats on the bench in a small greenhouse, but other hybridizers have used basement tables under suspended fluorescent lights, sun porches or various types of light stands. Just remember the basic requirements which are moisture, weak fertilizer, light for 16 hours a day and warmth, about 70°F if you can provide it.

When weather permits and natural days become longer the flats are placed outdoors in a moderately shaded area. Supply with one-half strength soluble fertilizer and water as needed to prevent drying. The seedlings will grow through the summer. We stop fertilizing about the middle of July, and in the fall we transfer the 3 to 6-inch plants into individual containers for winter protection under plastic. In earlier years we left the seedlings in the original flats and wintered them over in cold frames for planting out in the spring.

At this point seedlings are much like other small plants such as mericlones* or rooted cuttings. They will still need some protection outdoors from wind and too much sun. Windbreaks and partial shade from high trees or snow fencing, etc., are described in many books.

Whether you want to try a few or many, the growing of rhododendron seeds is great fun and an absorbing pastime. We recommend it!

*At this stage of growth the seedlings may be handled as if they were rooted cuttings or like the mericlone propagules sometimes sold at plant sales and supplied by tissue culture labs.

Help your club! An easy, fun, little time commitment job. What could be better? Be the dinner Coordinator every other month. Contact Rosemary Rebello for more details. 541-997-6167

Siuslaw Chapter ARS Mission Statement

The mission of the Siuslaw Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society is to promote the genus Rhododendron by:

- ✓ **Creating enthusiasm for the genus Rhododendron through meetings, shows, publications, and social activities that provide the opportunities for members to share experiences and build friendships.**
- ✓ **Providing educational opportunities to successfully grow and enjoy these wonderful plants.**
- ✓ **Encouraging propagation and hybridizing of species and hybrid rhododendrons.**
- ✓ **Furthering the planting and use of rhododendrons in home, business, and public landscapes.**
- ✓ **Advocating the conservation and preservation of superior plants of our native rhododendrons and the habitat along the Oregon coast.**
- ✓ **Advancing and supporting the mission of the American Rhododendron Society.**



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DANS LATE STATE OF CONFUSION

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It is almost time for the Vireya's to move back into the greenhouse. I have to watch the weather carefully. In the spring after all danger of frost is past, I move them under a large Macrophyllum. They like bright light without direct sunlight. Many of the plants with large foliage sunburn easily. Outdoors they seem to appreciate the ventilation, plus I can use the fish fertilizer and not have to smell it. Several of the vireya's have set bloom buds, but not all of them are easy to see until they are nearly ready to open.

Vireya radians is one of these. It has been blooming for about a month, and looks as though it may have another 15 or 20 trusses yet to go.

We will have fertilizer delivery at the October meeting so make sure you have your order in. On the coast you can fertilize year round. At my house, I usually fertilize in February when the cold is mostly past and then again in May or June. Fertilizing later in the summer may encourage late growth which could be in danger of freezing. LJ

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Vireya rhododendron 'Tuba' at Bovee's Nursery

Show me a person with their head held high,
and I'll show you a person who can't get used to bi-focals

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