



Macrophyllum

MAY and JUNE combined issues 2010

Newsletter of the
Siuslaw Chapter
American Rhododendron Society
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UPCOMING Chapter Events

Meeting Topic- AUCTION THIS MONTH – EARLY START

May Chapter Meeting – Tuesday, May 18 at 6:00 p.m. Meet at the Presbyterian Church, 3996 Hwy 101 N in Florence. Pre-meeting dinner will be at 4:00 p.m. at the Three Rivers Casino. Contact Rosemary Rebello for reservations (541) 997-6167 or tonyrosetsemmary@charter.net

Gallagher Park Work Party – Wednesday May 19 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. The park is at the corner of Spruce and Hwy 126. Gene Cockeram- City Park Commissioner. flowerman@q.com

Cookie Team- Freda Ziegelmaier, Rosemary Rebello, Sharon Samuels, Judy Johnson

Florence Rhody Festival and Flower Show- the weekend of May 22/23.

ARS Annual Convention – May 14-17 in Long Island New York; info in Winter issue of the ARS Journal.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *There will not be a June 1 summer issue sent this year.*

Look for the Western Regional Conference registration insert in your summer issue of the ARS Journal. The conference will be held in Florence Oregon this fall.

JUNE 2010 PICNIC

Our Annual June Picnic will be held on Sunday, June 6 at the same great spot, Honeyman State Park Yurt.

This is the month for the year end chapter business meeting and a new slate of officers will be presented; any board members finishing their term(s) will be announced. Nominees will be discussed.

What to bring:

1. A table setting for yourself and guest (plate, silverware, napkin, drinking cup)
2. Your favorite beverage(s)
3. Plant or other garden gift for the "gift game" (if you want to participate); see game rules below.

4. Meal item- you can bring a hot dish, dessert or salad

Other business at the picnic will be the election of officers for the 2010-11 chapter year.

AUGUST 2010 PICNIC

Same setup (except for year-end business meeting) as the June Picnic and the date is Sunday, August 1.

THE NAME OF THE GAME IS.... HAVING FUN AT OUR PICNICS!

The "game" instructions go like this.....If you bring a plant or "something" to add to the game, you're in. Mike and Jim often bring extra so "forgetters" can still play. Tickets are handed out with the other half of the ticket going into a hat. The numbers are called randomly.

The person with the first number called goes out to the circle of items and chooses one to stand behind. The person with the second ticket called has the choice of "stealing" the first one's item or choosing any of the remaining items. This goes on with each additional number called.

Now when a plant is "stolen" the victim has 30 seconds to find a new item. This means anyone being bumped has to hustle to another plant if they intend to steal. When the time runs out, the last person without an item must choose something that no one is behind.

When all numbers have been called the first number has the option to keep his item or "steal" since he never got the opportunity to do that. Sometimes the game goes fast with little stealing and sometimes the game takes a long time with everyone stealing!!!

Everyone has fun! We hope you will join us at the summer picnic at Honeyman Park.

Fertilizing Rhododendrons the *Organic* Way

Terry Richmond
Port Alberni, British Columbia

Article from the National ARS website

When fertilizing rhododendrons we should look to nature to show us the way. In nature mulching and fertilizing is a continuous process with the current year's mulch being gradually transformed in subsequent years to usable fertilizer. Nature's rhododendron food begins with a leaf, needle, twig, petal and fruit fall - in short, any and all matter that falls to earth or flows into their area in ground water.

Rhododendrons, because of their environment and the shallow layer of organic matter in which they grow, have evolved a massive root system consisting of literally thousands of tiny, shallow running feeder roots. These roots are extremely efficient in extracting life sustaining plant nutrients from their immediate area. Root systems will be much smaller in a benign climate because a smaller amount of nutrients is required to maintain plant health. Conversely, rhododendrons in exposed and/or harsh conditions will have a vastly increased root system to extract every ounce of nourishment from their surroundings.

So how do we fertilize rhododendrons in our garden? First, any literature on fertilizing rhododendrons assumes that your plants are growing in the correct medium. Again, as in nature, this medium should be extremely high in organic matter, well drained, well aerated and moderately to slightly acidic. Fir and pine bark, composted oak leaves and evergreen needles, decayed wood, well rotted sawdust, coarse peat moss, reed sedge and topsoil high in organic matter are some of the materials that can be combined in endless combinations to provide excellent growing mediums. Growing medium acidity or pH value is not nearly as critical when growing plants in an organic medium using primarily organic fertilizers. One good, quality compost for rhododendrons contains oak leaves, evergreen needles, alfalfa and washed seaweed. Between the various layers organic nitrogen such as canola meal, fish meal or blood meal can be added.

My base organic fertilizer and filler recipes in volume parts are as follows:

Fertilizer Recipe:

2 parts fish meal
2 parts canola meal
2 parts alfalfa
1 part worm castings
1 part dolomite lime
1/2 part rock phosphate
1/2 part bone meal
1/2 part kelp meal
1/2 part green sand

Filler Recipe:

5 parts sand
5 parts double screened fir bark or 5 parts composted fish waste.

The filler, equal in volume to the fertilizer total, is used to prevent clumping of the meal type fertilizers and to minimize the dust problem associated with mixing finely ground or powdered materials.

Some fertilizers in the following list contain up to 34 trace elements, while seaweed is reported to contain every element presently known.

Blood meal: nitrogen and trace.
Bone meal: phosphorus and calcium and trace.
Fish meal: complete N-P-K and calcium and trace.
Canola meal: complete N-P-K and trace.

Cottonseed meal: complete N-P-K and trace.
Powdered alfalfa: complete N-P-K and trace.
Worm castings: complete N-P-K and trace.
Powdered rock phosphate: phosphorus and 32 trace.
Green sand: potassium and 34 trace.
Kelp meal: potassium and all trace.
Dolomite: calcium and magnesium.

A word of caution! Rhododendrons, because of their previously mentioned tiny feeder roots, can be easily damaged through over-fertilization, especially when using high analysis chemical fertilizers. Elements to be cautious using include nitrogen, iron, sulfur, boron, sodium and calcium. Contrary to popular belief, rhododendrons do not hate calcium. In actual fact the reverse is true. They will gorge themselves on available calcium until they make themselves sick. With respect to iron, a few years back a respected rhodo grower suggested I supply more iron to help combat the effect of full sunlight in my exposed garden. He was undoubtedly right, but I supplied so much iron sulfate that severe leaf scorching occurred. A little fertilizer goes a long way, especially with small plants.

I fertilize in early spring around the end of March using all the organic fertilizer and soil amendments that I can obtain. When I combine ingredients I try to duplicate natural fertilizer

analysis. For instance, in canola meal (6-2-1) and in fish meal (3-2-1) the nitrogen is two to three times that of phosphorus and three to six times that of potassium. Three advantages of organic fertilizers over their chemical counterparts are in their trace element and humic content and in their extended time release of nutrients.

Not the *African Queen*.... the **UMPQUA QUEEN!**



Source Information: from the Kemper Center at the Missouri Botanical Garden.

General Culture:

Best grown in acidic, organically rich, humus, medium moisture, moisture-retentive but well-drained soils in part shade. This plant prefers a sun dappled or high open shade. Morning sun with afternoon shade is also acceptable. Tolerates a fair amount of sun in cool northern summers, but leaves may scorch in hot afternoon sun in the St. Louis area.

Plant in a location protected from strong winds. Plants perform well on north or east facing slopes. Do not site plants within or near the drip line of trees in the walnut family (most rhododendrons and azaleas are sensitive to toxic juglones produced by

roots of walnuts, butternuts, pecans and hickories). Good soil drainage is essential (plants do not like "wet feet"). Poor drainage inevitably leads to root rot, therefore raised beds/plantings should be considered in heavy clay soils such as those present in much of the St. Louis area. Shallow, fibrous root systems (do not cultivate around plants) will benefit greatly from a mulch (e.g., wood chips, bark or pine needles) to help retain moisture and stabilize soil temperatures. Roots must never be allowed to dry out. Acidify soils as needed (plants generally like soil pH in the range of 5.0 to 5.5). Add sulfur or iron sulfate to soils to lower the pH. Add limestone or lime to soils to raise the pH. Clip off spent flower clusters immediately after bloom as practicable.

Noteworthy Characteristics:

'Umpqua Queen' is a deciduous azalea (Knap Hill hybrid) that features double, saucer-shaped, bright yellow flowers on a rounded shrub which typically matures over time to 4' tall and as wide. Each flower has a yellow blotch on the dorsal outer lobe. Flowers (to 4" across) bloom in clusters (trusses to 12 flowers) in mid-season (May). Yellow-green leaves (to 5" long) turn yellow-bronze in fall.

Problems:

Rhododendrons and azaleas are susceptible to many insect and disease problems, including but not limited to canker, crown rot, root rot, leaf spot, rust, powdery mildew, aphids, borers, lace bugs, leafhoppers, mealy bugs, mites, nematodes, scale, thrips and whitefly. A healthy plant in the proper environment with proper care should have limited problems, however. Chlorosis (yellowing of leaves) will occur in alkaline soils.

Uses:

Mass this plant in a group or as a specimen. Shrub borders, mixed borders, woodland gardens and shade gardens. This plant is also effective in foundation plantings or as a hedge. This plant is good for Woodland margins. This plant attracts hummingbirds and butterflies. It has good fall color, as well.

Seed Parent x Pollen Parent:	unknown x unknown
Predominate Flower Color:	Yellow
Bloom Time:	LM Late Midseason
Height (ft.) in 10 years:	4
Cold Hardiness Temperature:	0°F
Hybridizer Unknown	
Registration Reference:	ARS 743



Hand Pruners –
An indispensable tool for
gardeners!

Hand Pruner Tip passed on by Mike Bones

... One of the questions this evening was posed by a gentleman who wanted to know if I had a secret as to how to get the hand pruner from being too tight or too loose to just right. I answered "Patience." Upon reflection I realized what might be causing it to be too tight or too loose. If there is dirt or corrosion between the moving parts it may be impossible to have anything between too loose or too tight. Either disassemble the pruners and clean all parts or get some graphite or other lubricant between the moving parts. Then it should be relatively easy to obtain the appropriate adjustment.

Coming soon....

Your editor has researched the local historical museum archives for information about rhododendrons in Florence. Starting in September 2010, our chapter newsletter will have tidbits of information about the subject of Rhododendrons in Florence history.

Can you guess the date that the Gallagher Park "sign" was erected? That... and more about the park and the *Macrophyllum* in Florence will be in the 2010-11 issues of the newsletter.

Chapter Elections This June

Elections for chapter officers and one of the three board positions will be held at our June annual meeting (potluck at Honeyman State Park). The nominating committee will be contacting chapter members who would like to run for a position. There are 3 board members who have staggering renewal dates, one expiring each year. Board position #1 will open this June.

If you are interested, please contact the liaison officer, current vice-president, Bill Hennig, if you would like to run for a position. His email and phone number are listed on the last page of this newsletter.

2-year positions:

President
Vice-President
Treasurer

3-year position:

Board Member #1

Better Roots for Rhodos

Rhododendrons have a major problem: the majority of them are highly susceptible to a root rot caused by the soil fungus *Phytophthora einnamomi*. Good drainage is absolutely essential, and experts often advise planting rhododendrons on mounds of soil so water will drain away quickly from their shallow roots. Also helpful in suppressing the disease is mixing composted pine bark into the soil.

The David G. Leach Research Station at the Hokden Arboretum (in Kirtland, OH) is developing rot-resistant hardy rhododendrons. The researchers have focused on an obscure species from Taiwan, *R. hyperythrum*. This species was used by a hobbyist, Dr. John Thornton in southern Louisiana, to breed rhododendrons with both root rot resistance and heat tolerance.

In addition to good health, *R. hyperythrum* has "excellent foliage, a dense mounded habit, and a very floriferous nature." It has been bred at the Station with many cultivars having similar ornamental values, a wide range of flower colors, and Zone 5 hardiness. Over a dozen fine hybrids resulted, and six are now being tested at many sites in Zones 5 to 8 where root rots are common. The best should begin to be available to gardeners in a few years.

Thanks to chapter member Shirley Wilson for this great article from *The Avant Gardener periodical*.

Florence Rhododendron Festival

One of the most exciting weekends on the Pacific Northwest Coast is happening this month in Florence. May 21-23 is this year's date for this annual event which has been a yearly celebration of our native *Macrophyllum rhododendron* since 1908.

The local Siuslaw Newspaper will present the weekend activities in their Festival supplement, but I would like to encourage our chapter members to visit our chapter website (link is on the front page of this newsletter) for pertinent information about the chapter flower show which will commence on May 22-23 (Saturday & Sunday). So, after you've danced your heart out on Friday and watched the Rhododendron Queen being crowned, then you can donate a few hours to the chapter by volunteering to help in some capacity.

Our flower show is one of the highlights of the festival weekend. It won't happen unless all of our chapter members can give a few hours of their time for one of the many small jobs that need to be done. To the right on this page is the list of officers and board members. You can call any one of them right now and they will help you sign up for one or more small jobs that will only take a couple of hours of your time. Then you can spend the rest of the weekend having lots of fun eating cotton candy with your grand kids, checking out the sea of motor cycles in town or spending your retirement \$ at the flower show plant sale!

Let's make this year's flower show one of the best yet! Your involvement will make it happen. THANKS!



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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 and azaleas in home, business, and public landscapes.
- Advocating the conservation and preservation of superior plants of our native *Rhododendrons* and their habitat along the Oregon Coast.
- Advancing and supporting the mission of the American Rhododendron Society.