

RHODODENDRON SPECIES BOTANICAL GARDEN

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BOTANICAL GARDEN

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Executive Director's Report

Steve Hootman, Executive Director & Curator

The leaves on the maples and azaleas are already beginning to show signs of autumn color as the summer of 2016 winds down and the nighttime temperatures begin their steady drop. Summers in the Pacific Northwest tend to be quite warm and dry and this was a typical year with many days beginning under the shadow of fog or a blanket of clouds and not clearing to blue skies until mid-day. We even had a spot of rain here and there! This was a pleasant change from the summers of the past two years which were the longest, hottest and driest in memory. In early summer of this year, when many of the big-leaf species (Subsections *Falconera* and *Grandia*) were unfurling their leaves, we had cooler temps and some precipitation which resulted in the new foliage emerging fully formed and in great shape. A pleasant change from the two and three-year old, contorted and wrinkled leaves with frayed margins and pinched tips that still hang from the stems as a result of the difficult growing seasons over the past two years.

It has been my observation that this pinched and contorted growth on the big-leaves results not only from drier soil conditions in the early summer when the delicate new foliage is first emerging, but also (and primarily, I think) from lower atmospheric humidity. In some years here in the northwest, our "summer" comes in much earlier, say mid-May to mid-June. In those years the soil dries out rapidly and we correspondingly are forced to begin regular irrigation in the garden and nursery sooner in the growing season. Typically however, at least in recent decades, what most people would consider to be summer (dry, hot and sunny days) does not begin until late June or even early July. I have many memories of sitting and watching the fireworks display on the Fourth of July here in the Pacific NW wrapped in multiple layers of Gore-Tex and fleece.

In the years with an earlier, drier beginning to the summer we have made sure to keep the plants well irrigated while the new foliage of the big-leaves was emerging, knowing that we and our visitors would be looking at crinkly, disfigured foliage for the next two years if we allowed

the plants to dry out at this critical time. However, as I have learned over the past twenty odd years, this does help but does not completely prevent the foliar damage. This has led me to conclude that the increased sunlight and thus resulting lower levels of humidity and regular precipitation play a critical factor in the distorted emergence of the large leaves. Remember that in their native monsoonal, temperate rainforest habitats, these big-leaf species are swaddled in cooling mist and are being bathed in daily rain showers as their new growth emerges.

Photo: Katie Swickard



Distorted foliage *R. falconeri* ssp. *eximium*

We continue to work with upper management of Industrial Realty Group, the new owners of the former Weyerhaeuser property where the garden is located in Federal Way, WA. Information about ongoing development and community issues relating to the overall 425 acre property can be accessed on the website of the *Federal Way Mirror*, the daily newspaper for the local community.

I am saddened to report the passing of a long-time member of the RSBG. Mr. Robert Franz of Vancouver, WA passed away in August. Bob was a long-time member of both the

Continued on page 2

Volunteer Corner

Carol Duke, Volunteer

Why not volunteer for an organization that truly enhances the beauty of our community!

Prior to our move to Washington State, we visited the Seattle area many times and whenever we were here in the spring we visited the RSBG. On one trip I even bought a small rhododendron plant from the Garden and carefully carried it back to Ohio where it died a slow and painful death from the extremes in temperature that it was forced to endure!

About three years ago my husband and I finally decided that there really was no reason to suffer through another hot and humid summer in Ohio. Little did I know that the home we purchased in Federal Way was close to the beautiful garden that I had visited on our many trips to the Pacific Northwest.

After getting settled in our new home, I filled the grounds with all the plants that I could never grow in the Midwest due the weather and the hungry deer herd that lived in the woods behind our old home. I then decided that it was time to look around for something else to occupy my time. I'd done volunteer work in Ohio but it was all related to my teaching vocation. Since I loved visiting the

RSBG I thought that it would be a great place to volunteer. I went to the website, filled out an application and almost immediately started working in the office. Most of my volunteer work has been related to the mailings sent out by the Garden. I also got to work at the Spring Plant Sale, which I loved. My volunteer work has been on an as needed basis because I live in Federal Way and my home is less than ten minutes from the garden.

Working in the office has been great because I have met all of the wonderful people who keep the RSBG running smoothly. In the future I'd also like to be able to help with plant related projects as well as do office work because I love to do anything that relates to gardening except weeding.

If you have some time to spare and want to use that time for a worthwhile purpose, think about volunteering at the RSBG. All small non-profit organizations rely on some amount of volunteer support to save money, which reduces the cost of their services. Why not volunteer for an organization that truly enhances the beauty of our community!

Photo: Katie Swickard



It takes a great deal of volunteer help to make the Spring Plant Sale function smoothly.

Photo: Steve Hootman



R. alborugosum

Executive Director's Report continued

board and the Executive Committee and was largely responsible for the success of our first major endowment fund-raising drive in the mid-1990s.

Representatives of the RSBG staff will be attending and enjoying the upcoming west coast meetings of the American Rhododendron Society including the Western Regional in Newport, Oregon on Sept. 30-Oct. 2 as well as the Annual Convention in Eureka, California late April of next year. We will be selling special RSBG plants at both events and hope to see you there! We will also have a fine selection of *Rhododendron* species and hybrids as well as assorted other inter-

esting plants for your garden available at our upcoming Foliage Festival and Plant Sale the week of October 15-22. Many outstanding plants will be on sale at half price.

Become a Friend of the RSBG on Facebook

Peek into the daily world of the Garden through photos and comments on our Facebook page. Learn about unique plants, special events and discover what's happening in the Garden.

<https://www.facebook.com/RhodyGarden>

Greetings from the Visitor Center

Pat Whempner, Visitor Center Manager

Bats!

We are delighted to have bats in our garden as they are an important part of our ecosystem. For instance Natural insect control is their specialty - one Little Brown Bat* can eat up to 1,000 mosquitos an hour. We wanted to find out which bats live herein the Garden, as well as learn about white nose disease** which is threatening our Washington bat population.

On August 3, Michelle Noe, Bats Northwest President, and her crew of four bat researchers (including a female spelunker) came to the Garden to identify our bats species. They were armed with hand held bat detectors in order to detect discover the presence of bats by their echolocation calls. Bats can vary their calls as they fly, locate prey, and communicate. Bats Northwest researchers are trained to recognize species according to the frequency ranges and repetition rates of the echolocation calls.

Bats Northwest roamed the Garden that evening and these are the bats they heard:

Hoary Bat (*Lasiurus cinereus*)

- Heavily-furred bats with lighter guard hairs
- During summer days live in the foliage of trees
- Normally have twins

Silver-haired Bat (*Lasionycteris noctivagans*)

- Prefer to roost in trees, often under loose bark
- Migrates to their hibernacula winter den to hibernate
- Normally has 2 offspring a year

Little Brown Myotis (*Myotis lucifugus*)*

- Weighs less than half an ounce
- Roosts in tree cavities or hot attics
- Can live 30 years or more (that's a lot of mosquitos consumed!)

California Myotis (*Myotis californicus*)

- One of the smallest bats
- Often hunts insects over water
- Roosts in rock crevices, trees, and buildings, and hibernates in caves and mines.

Interesting Websites

www.batsnorthwest.org
www.burkemuseum.org/blog/small-and-fierce-analyzing-bat-bite-force
<http://animals.sandiegozoo.org/animals/bat>

White nose disease and reporting dead or sick bats **

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/news/mar3116b/>
<http://wdfw.maps.arcgis.com/apps/GeoForm/index.html?appid=f719cf5190334c13b8224c5e9d7676b1>

Did you know:

- Bats belong to the taxonomic order Chiroptera, which means "hand wing."
- One out of every five mammals in the world is a bat.
- A mother bat can locate her pup by its scent and sound out of millions in a roost.

Photo: Alaska Dept. Fish & Game



Silver-haired Bat (*Lasionycteris noctivagans*)

Online Newsletter and Yearbook

The RSBG Newsletter is no longer mailed through the US Post Office. We now offer the newsletter's Spring, Summer and Fall issues on our website. Members are notified by email when the newsletter is posted.

The annual *RSBG Yearbook*, our scientific

journal, is produced in the winter. It is posted in the Member's Only section of our website. Members who subscribe to the "Digital Only" membership will not receive a printed copy of the Yearbook.

Please be sure to keep the office updated with your current email address.

Seasons Turn

Norm Jacobs, Arbutus Garden Arts



Norm Jacobs will be our special speaker on Fall for Maples day, October 16th.

Note: Norm will be our special speaker on Sunday, October 16 and will also offer specially selected, choice maples and dwarf conifers for your landscape.

It's mid-September, and we are all a-fever with gardeners' anticipation for the coming season. You might think us in the southern hemisphere, where perennials are just peeking out of their winter-blankets of mulch and the earliest blooms of spring are on display. But no, our eagerness is for the passing of the dog days and heat-waves of the summer, and anticipation of our left-coast version of the leaf-peeper season. Having a garden chock-full of Japanese maples on the verge of their Autumnal display puts us in the same mind as mid-March. Summer's heat or winter's cold may reduce our enjoyment of our gardens somewhat, despite cultivating plants which bloom in those seasons. But we're repaid twice over, with the glories of spring bloom and its first cousin: the foliage display of autumn.

Triggered by the first nights with temperatures dropping below 50F, the barely moderated green of late summer foliage, set off by a few plants of blue or purple will give way to hints of yellow, red, and orange. Conifers and broadleaf evergreens provide a backdrop for the coming fireworks. And when temperatures drop into the 40's, some prized conifers will change from green to gold; Chief Joseph Pine (*P. contorta*), Carsten's Wintergold Pine (*P. mugo*) and Moseri Pine (*P. sylvestris*)

and *Cryptomeria japonica* will take on shades of russet and purple. But the main show belongs to the maples. Green laceleaf varieties generally turn golden, except for Emerald Lace and Red Autumn Lace which evolve from orange to flaming red, while a red laceleaf which may have bronzed in August returns to red and on to purple. The full-moon maples (*A. shirasawanum*) and their hybrids are in their glory of gold, orange, red, and purple all at once. Variegated selections will show three or four colors all on a single leaf. And selections of *Acer palmatum* which were made for particular and often surprising fall colors bring a grin of satisfaction for landscape designers whose planting-idea comes to life.

Gardening is often an enjoyment of fleeting beauty, perhaps best recognized in the Japanese cherry-blossom festival in spring. The colors of autumn are no less beautiful, and no less ephemeral. Here in the Pacific Northwest, we may not have the custom of the "leaf peeper" of New England, following the fall foliage display through their deciduous woodlands. This doesn't mean we shouldn't.



Acer palmatum
'Ariadne'

RSBG CALENDAR 2016 - 2017

Foliage Festival & Plant Sale

October 15-22, 10am-4pm
Sat. 15 Opening Day Sale with Dan Hinkley's Plant Selections
Sun. 16 Fall for Maples
Mon. 17 Monday Open
Fri. 21 Fall for Bonsai
Sun. 22 Fall for Ferns

RSF Fall Board Meeting

November 19, 1 – 3pm

Volunteer Holiday Party

December 2, noon – 2pm

Rhododendron Species Symposium At the RSBG

April 7-9, 2017

Spring Plant Sale

April 14-15, 2017

Mother's Day Weekend in the Garden

May 13-14, 2017

Blue Poppy Day - Art in Bloom

May 20, 2017

Foliage Festival and Plant Sale

Celebrate the fall season with free admission to the week-long Foliage Festival and Plant Sale. The Festival features interesting speakers, demonstrations, and daily tours of both the RSBG's fall color and the Pacific Bonsai Museum. Visitors will also find excellent deals on outstanding species rhododendrons, companion plants and ferns. Shoppers will receive one free "Garden Pass" admission for every \$50 purchase of RSBG plants. In addition to the daily plant sales, enjoy special focus days throughout the Festival.

Rhododendron Species BOTANICAL GARDEN

FOLIAGE FESTIVAL & Plant Sale



Saturday Oct 15

Dan Hinkley's Windcliff Plant Selections

KC Deez BBQ Truck today only!

1PM Bonsai Tour, 2PM RSBG Fall Tour



Sunday Oct 16

Fall for Maples

Arbutus Garden Arts Plant Selections

1PM Speaker: Norm Jacobs, Arbutus

1PM Bonsai Tour



OPEN!

Monday Oct 17

1PM Bonsai tour, 2PM RSBG Fall Color Tour



Tues-Thurs Oct 18-20

1PM Bonsai tour, 2PM RSBG Fall Color Tour



Friday Oct 21

Fall for Bonsai

1PM Bonsai tour, 2PM RSBG Fall Color Tour

2PM Bonsai Demonstration & Lecture



Saturday Oct 22

Fall for Ferns, Rare Ferns for Sale

1PM Speaker: Jo Laskowski, Hardy Fern Foundation

1PM Bonsai Tour, 2PM Fern Tour

October 15 thru 22
10AM to 4PM



Endowment funds help support the many operational expenses of maintaining the RSBG.

Permanent IRA Charitable Contribution Act of 2015

Ian Walker, RSF Board Member

In year end 2015, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2016 finally made permanent qualified charitable deductions (QCD's) from Individual Retirement Accounts. Basically this Act allows direct contribution from an IRA account that is *non-taxable* to you; however, it is not *tax deductible* to you. The concept is that as you have not received the money that is paid directly to a charity, the dollar value of the income tax sidestepped is more than the tax saving by not being able claim the charitable contribution for the amount paid directly to a charity.

As with any of this sort of thing, talk with your investment advisor about the details and how best to implement this procedure if it fits with your plans.

While we are talking about charitable contributions and your year end tax planning, another way is to give appreciated property or stocks. As an example, you might have purchased a stock some years ago at a lower price than it

is today and you decide to gift it to Rhododendron Species Foundation. Let's say you bought the stock for \$5,000 and it is now worth \$10,000. You would have a charitable contribution of \$10,000 which cost you \$5,000 instead of \$10,000.

Again, talk with your investment or Tax advisor if are considering this approach.

The RSF has two areas of financial needs. The first is Garden Operations. This covers wages and other expenses which keep the doors open. The second is the Endowment Fund which builds for the future. We have income from this fund to augment income from sales, garden admissions, memberships and special gifts. The more the endowment grows the more yearly income.

You need to tell us where you would like your gift to go, to Garden Operations, Endowment or split between both. If you have questions, contact Grace Pham at the RSF office or contact Ian Walker at (206) 546-9145 or ianandjean@frontier.com.

Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden

The RSBG Newsletter is published in spring, summer and fall by the Rhododendron Species Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Submissions are due by the first of the month, 8 weeks before publication.

Email submissions to newsletter editor
katie@rhodygarden.org.

RhodyGarden.org

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Executive Committee

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Yvette Downs

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Stephen Smith

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Hung Vu

James Warner

DB & Manuela Watkins

Delaina Wong

Lai Ngai Wong

Darren Wood

Marcia & Klaus Zech

Contributions - Thank You! (6/1/2016 to 8/31/16)

Amazon Smile Founda-
tion

Walt Brooks

Carmen Grimes

Hans Hasche-Kluender

Peter Kade

Kate Read

David Short

The Benevity Community

Impact Fund

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Robert Mast

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Chip Muller

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Seattle Foundation- Give Big

Seattle Garden Club

George Weyerhaeuser

In Memory of Christa Mar- tensen & Joan Muller

Margaret Monitto

Legacy Circle Members

Anne Guelker

Deena Henkins

Donald King

Peter Norris

Ian Walker

Keith White

The Rhododendron Legacy Circle

The Rhododendron Legacy Circle is open to new members who have made provisions for the Rhododendron Species Foundation in their financial or estate plans. Established in 2013, the Legacy Circle enables the RSF to recognize and show appreciation for our friends' generosity during their lifetime.

Legacy gifts are an impactful and vital means to ensure the RSF's future success. There are many creative ways to provide a contribution to the RSF while enhancing and safeguarding one's own financial situation. Planned giving helps maximize the tax benefits of charitable giving, allowing people to provide a gift they may not have thought possible.

For more information and to access an enrollment form, go to:
<http://rhodygarden.org/cms/get-involved/planned-giving/> or contact
Grace@RhodyGarden.org.

Please let us know
if you have made the
Rhododendron Species
Foundation
a part of your
estate planning

We want to say thank you!

RHODODENDRON SPECIES BOTANICAL GARDEN

P.O. Box 3798
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Rhododendron Species Symposium 2017

Katie Swickard, Program & Outreach Manager

Did you miss the 2016 Rhododendron Species Symposium? From the Field Laboratory Horticulture Classes to the lively discussion at the Species Symposium to the casual conversations with other *Rhododendron* enthusiasts, the Symposium is educational, inspiring, motivating and just plain fun! This year's attendees would recommend that you mark your calendars for the 2017 Symposium, April 7th to the 9th and start planning your trip to the Seattle area.

Dr. Hartwig Schepker, the Scientific Director of the Botanic Garden and Rhododendron-Park in Germany will be the featured speaker. He is also the Secretary of the German Rhododendron Society and co-editor of the society's publication "*Rhododendron und Immergrüne*." Hartwig has been on several rhododendron trips in South East Asia and North America, including four journeys to Arunachal Pradesh between 2005 and 2012.

Lodging may be booked at our event hotel, the Federal Way Best Western Plus by calling 253-529-4000 and ask for the RSBG group rate of \$119. The deadline to book lodging at this rate is Friday, March 17, 2017. Watch our event page for updated details: <http://rhodygarden.org/cms/our-events/rsbg-events/>