RHODODENDRON
SPECIES BOTANICAL GARDEN

SPRING NEWSLETTER
VOLUME 47, NUMBER 1

P1 - TABLE OF CONTENTS
P2 - PRESIDENT'S CORNER
P3 - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT & POP-UP PLANT VENDOR WEEKENDS
P4 - ARS SPRING INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION
P5 - SPRING GARDEN UPDATES BY STEVE HOOTMAN
P6-8 - SPECIES PROFILE: R. OREOTREPHES BY STEVE HOOTMAN
P9-10 - DONOR ACKNOWLEDGMENT
P11 - RSF BOARD AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President's Corner by Ian Walker

This year we are trying something new, and maybe a bit radical. As many of you are living outside of the Puget Sound area and are also members of ARS, it may be difficult for you to attend west coast functions of both groups. So, we worked out an arrangement with ARS where we could have our annual Membership Meeting and the Spring Board Meeting in conjunction with the ARS Spring International Convention during the first week of May which is being held in the Portland-Vancouver area. We also welcome ARS members to sit in on our membership meeting to "look us over." This will be an exciting opportunity to see old friends and make new ones.

The RSF meetings will be on Saturday morning, May 7, from 9 to 11:30 am, and if you are coming just for those meetings, there will be no cost.

The conference pre-tour will include a stop at the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden so you will be able to see all the new activity. So, get on the ARS site, make your reservations and we will see you there! See page 4 for more information.

If you have any thoughts you would like to share, please send me an email!

Ian Walker
lanwalker-rhodyfdn@att.net

Spring Catalog - shop from your couch.

The Spring Catalog closes on April 27! While we sell a diverse selection of plants in our onsite nursery, our biannual catalogs provide an opportunity to purchase some of our rarest species rhododendrons and companion plants. All plant purchases directly support our mission. See below for some of our favorite offerings.

Left: *Rhododendron polytrichum*
Right: *Petrocosmea cryptica*

Executive Director's Report by Steve Hootman

What a crazy year of weather we have endured here at the RSBG. A week of record-breaking high temps in June of 2021 caused a great deal of damage in the garden and throughout the Pacific Northwest. This stretch of extremely abnormal heat was topped with an all-time high record of 108 F one day here in the garden. This heat would have been bad enough if it had occurred when we typically get our hot temps (80s rarely to low 90s in late July or early August) but coming in mid-June when many plants were just flushing their new growth only added insult to injury. This freak event was followed in December by a solid week of below average temps with a low of 16 F one evening and with temps not climbing above freezing for more than a week. Again, the timing of this rather unusual event was problematic as we had not had very much cold weather in the autumn season leading up to December and so many plants had not really "shut down" and hardened off.

The extreme swing of 92 F between the low and the high temps in a single growing season was unprecedented and almost too much fun. Let us hope we do not see these extreme events becoming too common in the future as they are greatly impacting the health and even survival of not only the *Rhododendron* collection but even the native flora and fauna of our region.

On a positive note, we have recently planted out in the garden several species of Rhododendron that are new to cultivation. Among these are *guihainianum* – a large tree in subsection Irrorata with colorful peeling bark: *huidongense* – an extremely rare species in the wild placed in subsection Parishia; *hypoblematosum* – a relatively newly named evergreen azalea with tiny leaves and a mounding habit; *jinchangense* – a large-growing member of subsection Fortunea with large pink flowers; and *brevinerve* – a member of subsection Irrorata with flattened flowers in shades of blue-purple.

I hope we will see many of you in the garden this spring!

Throughout spring, the garden will host featured vendor weekends in partnership with local nurseries. You'll have an opportunity to buy from boutique and wholesale vendors, providing a unique selection that you won't find anywhere else. The season kicks off on March 26 and 27 with Botanica and Lee Farm and Nurseries! Visit our website for a full schedule.

AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

ARS2022

RETURN TO THE NORTHWEST

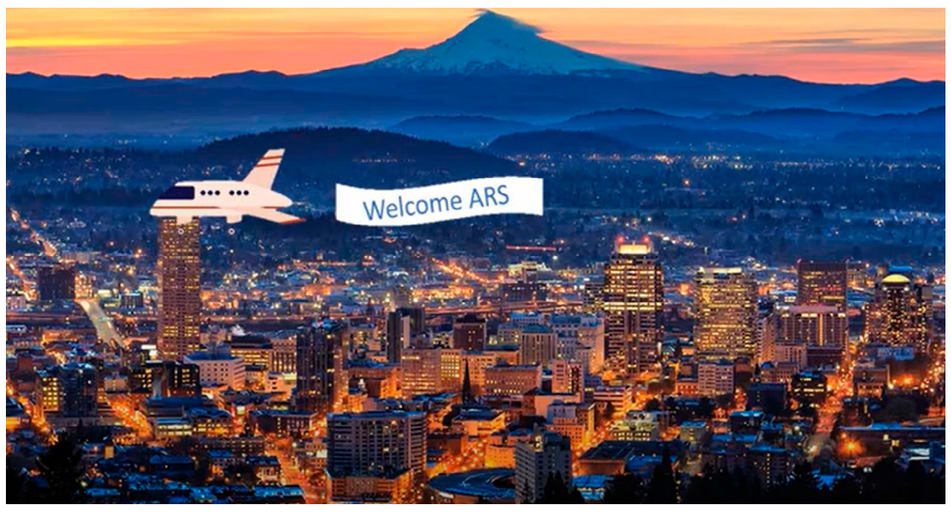
SPRING INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

PORTLAND-VANCOUVER | MAY 4 – 8, 2022

After a two-year delay of the scheduled 75th Anniversary celebration, the American Rhododendron Society is excited to announce a reunion of the ARS in its founding city, Portland, Oregon. Here you will find all elements of the planned 2020 convention, including the Pre-Tour (new dates: May 2-3) and Post-Tour (new dates: May 8-10), while including even more enhancements to the original features. Membership in the ARS is not required to attend. For membership information, please see details HERE.

Register today: https://ars2022.org/register-now/

Check out a comprehensive video highlighting the convention presenters, the city of Portland, and the history of the ARS.



Spring Garden Updates by Steve Hootman

Above: *Rhododendron calophytum*

Our peak spring blooming season is well underway in the garden with classic early *Rhododendron* species such as *sutchuenense*, *calophytum*, *strigillosum*, *lutescens*, *irroratum* and *barbatum* all in glorious full bloom. In addition, the big leaf species *R. montroseanum* (deep, solid pink) and *R. macabeanum* (yellow) are showing color. The month of March is also the prime time of year to see the *Magnolia* species collection in full bloom. Prominent among these are the large tree species from China that bear massive white to pink or purple flowers before the foliage emerges. The display of stunning flowers on species such as *sargentiana*, *dawsoniana*, *campbellii* and *sprengeri* is especially fine this year.

Another genus in prominent full bloom in March is *Corylopsis*, also known as the winter hazels. These are closely related to the more familiar witch hazels that are commonly cultivated in gardens. The winter hazels differ in having long pendulous racemes of bright yellow flowers that hang in absolute masses from the outspread branches of these deciduous shrubs. The yellow flowers are a nice contrast to all of the early pink and red-flowering *Rhododendron* species. They are incredibly fragrant and are definitely one of the highlights of the early spring garden here at the RSBG. Our substantial collections of *Pieris* and *Camellia* are also a floral highlight at this time of year.

Above: *Corylopsis veitchiana*

We have also recently completed the construction of a new connecting path in the garden. This path, which links the big leaf garden with the blue poppy meadow, also connects with the path we call "Fortune's Way", just completed last year, which then leads on to the pond garden. These two new paths (actually one path that is connected at the back of the blue poppy meadow) have been in the works since we first installed the blue poppy meadow in 2008. Great thanks to gardener Will Clausen and intern Castle Hootman for doing most of the hard labor to finally make this exciting addition a reality! The section of path just completed takes one on a woodland walk beneath towering douglas fir trees underplanted with mature and very large specimens of *Rhododendron* species such as as *rex* ssp. *rex*, *asterochnoum*, *glanduliferum*, *serotinum*, *glischrum*, *huanum*, *crinigerum* and *maoerense*. This whole new set of paths at the lower end of the garden has already received rave reviews for the new views provided as well as for the close-up access to some of the most beautiful species of *Rhododendron*. Be sure to check it out the next time you have a chance to visit the garden!

Species Profile: *Rhododendron oreotrephes* W.W. Sm. 1914 by Steve Hootman

I often write about obscure, rare or difficult species in this quarterly column in an attempt to introduce people to a wider selection of ornamental garden plants. Occasionally, I will highlight a better-known or even common species as there are always new rhododendron enthusiasts looking to add some of the best all-around species to their gardens. One of the finest of these is *Rhododendron oreotrephes* (meaning "mountain bred"), a highly ornamental and easily grown plant for most rhododendron growing areas. A variable species, the brightly glaucous blue-leafed form with pale to deeper lavender or pinkish flowers is the plant most often seen in cultivation.

Rhododendron oreotrephes was first collected for science and introduced into western horticulture in 1910 when it was found by the Scottish plant hunter George Forrest (F#5873 – the type number and collection) in the Yulong Shan of western Yunnan, China. It was subsequently collected by him and many other collectors over the following several decades from various populations throughout its large range. It is now known to occur from southeastern Tibet into Myanmar (Burma) and southwestern China (Sichuan & Yunnan) at elevations ranging from 9,000 to 14,000 feet. *Rhododendron oreotrephes* inhabits a wide range of habitats but is often found growing in forests, preferring openings and margins as is typical for most woodland rhododendrons in the wild. It is extremely common and even abundant where it occurs.

This species is a member of subsection Triflora and shares the floriferousness, adaptability and vigorous growth of its relatives. *Rhododendron oreotrephes* differs from the other members of this subsection in its close links to subsection Cinnabarina although it lacks the obvious nectar (at the base of the flowers) of the cinnabarinas. As reported by Peter and Kenneth Cox, plants of *R. oreotrephes* from the western end of its range (SE Tibet) have a more funnel-shaped corolla (flower) than the typical form. This population (and thus this species) would seem to form a link between subsection Cinnabarina (mostly occurring to the west of this region) and the bulk of subsection Triflora (mostly to the east of this region). Indeed, plants grown from seed of both species collected from this western region can be very difficult to distinguish from one another out of flower.

Rhododendron oreotrephes varies tremendously in several features. It ranges in size from a low mounded shrub to a small tree up to 25 feet in height. Its typical habit in cultivation (with good light) is as a densely branched, rounded or upright evergreen shrub. The foliage is also quite variable and may be fully evergreen to partially deciduous and up to three inches in length, typically elliptic but quite variable in shape. The leaves are often attractively glaucous blue-green on their upper surface although many plants exhibit deep or olive-green colored leaves. The lower surface is waxy glaucous to pale glaucous green with distinct rounded reddish to purple or gray scales. The flowers are arranged in both terminal and axillary inflorescences of up to ten, but more commonly with three or four blossoms in each inflorescence. They range from widely funnel-shaped to funnel-campanulate (in the western end of its range) and can be whitish-pink to pink, rose or pale to darker purple, often with spots. Indeed, its cumbersome list of synonyms are a testimony to its variability in the wild (including such former "species" as *R. timetum* and *R. exquisitum* which are both occasionally seen labeled as such in gardens).

In cultivation, this species is a perfect choice for almost any garden. To quote the late H. H. Davidian "All these forms are extremely charming plants. It should be noted that in hardiness of constitution, freedom of flower, beauty of habit, of leaves, and flower, in general adaptability to various situations, and in ease of cultivation, this species and its forms have all the essential qualities of ideal garden plants and deserve the widest possible recognition." I will agree with Mr. Davidian and would add that the bright blue-green or purplish new growth in combination with the masses of beautifully colored flowers make this an outstanding plant in the landscape.

Rhododendron oreotrephes is easily grown in most climates favorable to the cultivation of rhododendrons and the majority of forms are probably hardy to −10°F. It has proven to have some tolerance of summer heat as well with reports of success even on the eastern coast of the US. While it is tolerant of full sun in our maritime climate, as with most species, better health and appearance are obtained with some light shade, especially during the hottest part of the day. As always, good drainage is essential.

This species has been used in hybridizing to produce such clones as 'Goldstrike', 'First Love' and 'Olive Judson' among others. This beautiful species has deservedly won at least four Awards of Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society including – a clone from Exbury with rosy-purple flowers in 1932; a clone from Embly Park with bright pinkish-mauve flowers with darker spots in 1935; a clone from Exbury (from F#20489) with light mauve-pink flowers spotted red in 1937; and in 1990, a clone originally from the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh exhibited by Glendoick called 'Pentland' with large compound trusses of purple flowers.

Above: *R. oreotrephes* photo by Will Clausen

ACCESSIONS IN THE RSF COLLECTION:

1966/625 F#20489:Windsor. White flushed rose-purple flowers with gold-green flecks.
1970/027 RSF. Our best form, comparable to 'Pentland", with purple flowers and a compact habit.
1973/208 Walker. Pastel rose-purple flowers with gold-maroon flecks.
1973/211 ("*exquisitum*") Exbury. Pastel rose-purple flowers.
1975/261 Exbury. Pastel rose-purple flowers.
1975/296 Barto. White flowers with a purple blush.
1976/335 ("*exquisitum*") Phetteplace. White flowers flushed rose-purple with gold flecks.
1977/776 Crarae. White flowers with a rose-purple blush and gold-maroon flecks.
1978/013 Frye. White flowers with a rose-purple blush.
1980/081 ("*timetum*") Castle Howard. Tubular pink flowers.
1980/122 Hergest Croft Gardens. Pastel rose-purple flowers with gold-green/magenta flecks.
1987/005 Huey. Pure white flowers.
1991/002 'Pentland' Glendoick. An Award of Merit form (1990) with purple flowers and a few green and red-brown flecks.

NOTE: Most of the above clones have bright glaucous blue-green foliage. In addition to these selections from gardens, we have accessioned numerous seedlings grown from wild collected seed over the last several years. As they mature and begin to flower these will be evaluated for garden worthiness. Several have dark olive-green foliage in contrast to the more typical blue-green.

REFERENCES:

Cox, Peter A. & Cox, Kenneth N.E. 1997. *The Encyclopedia of Rhododendron Species*. Glendoick Publishing, Perth, Scotland.

Cullen, J. 1980. A Revision of Rhododendron I. *Notes from the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh*. Vol. 39(1).

Davidian, H.H. 1982. *The Rhododendron Species*. Vol. I. Timber Press, Portland, OR.

Rhododendron Species Foundation: Records – 1964 to present.

Left: *R. oreotrephes* photo by Will Clausen

Endowment Support - Fall Campaign

Anonymous
Adams, Rollo and Winnie
ARS Peninsula Chapter
Avalos, Tess
Bailey, Thomas
Bartels, Frederick
Bartlett, Robert A. Jr.
Bell, Dianne
Benjamin & Margaret Hall Foundation
Bland, Don
Bland, Thomas C.
Buchholz & Buchholz Nursery
Cale, Edward and Carolyn
Camesano, Theodore E.
Christianson, Neil B.
Dahlgren, Ruth
Davis, Laurel
deSpoelberch, Phillippe
Ecklund, Earl
Everding, Kenneth
Everding, Kenneth
Flavell, Richard A.
Gross, Kenneth W.
Gust, Robert
Hall CLT
Hasche-Kluender, Hans
Henkins, Deena J.
Hertz, Clem
Holt, Wayne
Hultin, Elizabeth
Joseph, Clyde
Keck, Ian
Kentala, Laura
Lamont, Marilyn
Lintault, Katherine
Love, Ralph
Luginbill, Leila
Lyons, Richard
McGill, Patricia
Muir, Jean
Muller, Chip
Olsen, Sue
Parker, John
Petersen, Robb
Ray, Nan E.
Read, Kate
Robbins, Martha
Smith, Canfield
Soderstrom/Purdy
Soule, Ramona
Swenson, Karen
Ungewitter, Ronald
Walker, Ian P.
Ward, Elizabeth
Weaver, Jean

Restricted Contributions- 9/1/2021 - 12/31/2021

Internship Program:	ARS Greater Philadelphia Walker Foundation
Education Fund:	Anonymous
Undesignated Gift:	Stan Hungerford's Estate Anonymous

Engraving Program - 9/1/2021 - 12/31/2021

Campbell, Clinton L.
Kronlund, Terry
Williams, Florence

General Operations - 9/1/2021 - 12/31/2021

AmazonSmile Foundation
ARS Eugene Chapter
ARS Southwestern Oregon Chapter
Barry, Robert J.
Bostic, Lana
Candiotta, Patty
Chapen, Carol F.
Enns, Caroline
Enticknap, Ruth
Giustina, A. J.
Goetsch, Loretta A.
Gwynne, John
Harrold, Venessa J.
Hasche-Kluender, Hans
Hewitt, Frederick
Hewitt, Ted
Hill, Melinda
Hixson, Joan
Joshua Green Foundation, Inc.
Kendall, Peter
Keyser, Judi
Lofthouse, William
Lumsden, John
Morel, David R.
Nelson, Margaret & Allen
Okazaki, Eileen
Ramik, Robert
Russell, Craig
Subramaniam, Bhuma
Tellefsen, Vivian R.
The Blackbaud Giving Fund
White, Dr. Keith A.
Willard, Loretta

Legacy Circle

Anne Guelker
Deena Henkins
Jean Muir
Peter Norris
Ian Walker
Keith White

A planned gift is a way to extend your support of the RSF beyond your lifetime. This kind of long-term provision ensures that the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden will be here to share the inspiring stories of the natural world with generations to come. Visit our website to learn more and enroll.

RSF Executive Committee and Board

Executive Committee:
President: Ian Walker
1st Vice President: Mike Stewart
2nd Vice President: Charles Muller
Treasurer: Robert Gust
Immediate Past President: Sean Rafferty

EC Members-At-Large:
Anne Gross
Jean Muir
Peter Norris
Chris Southwick
Paul Thompson

RSF Board of Directors:

Rollo Adams
Chris Brickell
Al Campbell
David Chamberlain
Ken Cox
Susan Davies
Anne Gross
Robert Gust
Don Hyatt
Douglas Justice
William Lindeman
Stephen McCormick
Jean Muir
Charles Muller
Peter Norris
Tom Nosella
Sean Rafferty
Joseph & Joanne Ronsley
Hartwig Schepker
Stephanie Sallaska
Don Smart
Chris Southwick
Valerie Soza
John Stephens
Mike Stewart
Paul Thompson
Ian Walker
Tim Walsh
Garth Wedemire
Keith White
Martin Wilkie

Board of Directors - Honorary:

Peter Cox
Honore Hacanson
Patricia McDowell
June Sinclair
Herbert Spady
Philippe de Spoelberch
George Weyerhaeuser