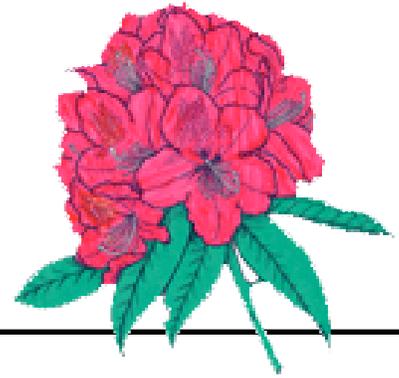


Noyo News

Noyo Chapter

American Rhododendron Society
March 2012



Tuesday, March 13, 7:30
Presbyterian Church
367 So. Sanderson Way, FB

New Boss at MCBG

The Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens has a new executive director. She is Mary Anne Payne. She served as Interim Director and before that volunteered as a consultant to the Board of Directors. Mary Anne has a background in management and fundraising in public research universities and not-for-profits. Rancho Navarro has been her home since 2010.

Come and meet her and find out what's going on at the Gardens and what her vision is for the Gardens.

Show Business

The Show Com. will be deciding whether or not the bonsai, photography, and floral arranging classes will be included in the Sweepstakes Award. Tell the committee members how you feel, or come to the meeting at 6:30 before the regular meeting Tues., March 13.

Meeting on Mar. 23 ???

Steve Hootman to speak

At this writing your Board is deciding whether or not we will have an extra meeting on Friday, Mar. 23. Steve Hootman, the Executive Director of the Species Foundation will be returning from Eureka to the Bay Area. Your Board has to decide if the Chapter will fund Steve's program. Part of their decision will be based on how interested our membership would be.

Following is an excerpt from the Cal Chapter describing his program.

"This year Steve will be reporting on his 2010 plant hunting foray into barely accessible regions of Southern China, to the mountains on the Vietnamese border, searching for, and finding, several elusive rhododendron species which have not been seen by westerners for decades, if at all. This expedition was undertaken together with the eminent Peter Cox, of Glendoick, Scotland, Kelly Dodson and Sue Milliken of Far Reaches Farm Nursery, and Dr. Keith White, RSBG Board Member.

The accounts of their adventures exploring incredible, yet dauntingly difficult terrain; Steve's beautiful photographs showing us these last wild habitats of rhododendrons; and not least, his broad knowledge of the genus, comprise a trove of information which is not otherwise available.

Also, this will be a glimpse of what we have to look forward to growing in our gardens! These are seed collecting trips and it won't be long before the fruits of his efforts will be offered by the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden plant list.

Steve Hootman is the Executive Director and Curator of the Rhododendron Species Foundation and Botanical Garden, in Federal Way, Washington. The RSF maintains the largest collection of species rhododendrons in the US."

Call a Board member if you'd like to express an opinion about this possible meeting.

If the Board decides to have this meeting the ***emailers will be notified by email.*** ***If you receive a hard copy of the newsletter you must contact our president, Frank Celeri (367-1554) if you're interested in knowing whether or not this meeting will occur.***

All's Well in La La Land

Chet Boddy reports that his dad, Bob, is doing well and made the news. Check it out at <http://www.oeregister.com/articles/ladine-342540-says-room.html>

In Memory

We are sad for the loss of part of a team that has been so much a part of the Noyo Chapter. Eleanor Philp died peacefully on Feb 12, 2012.

Eleanor was instrumental in getting the Noyo Chapter started. She injected her zeal for life into her love of the whole endeavor, the plants, the gardening, the photography, the people, and the Society.

Eleanor was a friend and mentor for most of us. She was so generous about sharing her knowledge and liked hearing our views and gardening experiences.

We can take comfort knowing that she and Bruce enjoyed their lives together pursuing what they loved.



PRUNING

Submitted by Dennis McKiver

To prune or not to prune, that is the question. If you need to prune, it's time to think about what pruning you may want to do on your rhododendrons. First you need to decide what your objectives are. If your objective is landscaping or garden design then your pruning requirement would be different than my objective, which is to create flower trusses and sprays for the show.

I would like to take this opportunity to state my philosophy in selecting and planting rhododendrons for landscaping and garden design. If that's your main goal and you select your landscape rhododendrons properly, you should never have to do any heavy pruning. If your objective is to have rhododendrons that are short rounded bushes, don't buy and plant rhododendrons which want to grow into trees. I think it's a crime to buy a tree and then continually prune it into a bush. You wouldn't plant a redwood tree and then try to turn it into a redwood bush and you wouldn't plant an apple tree and try to make it an apple bush. Likewise don't buy a tree form or large growing rhododendron and then try to keep it a small bush, unless you like doing a lot of pruning. Instead, just buy the bush form rhododendron and it will stay a bush without pruning. If you want a small compact bush then, buy rhododendrons which grow in a small compact bush form. For example if you want a yellow Saffron Queen, but don't want it to grow 10 feet tall, and don't want to have to prune it to keep it small, then buy Lemon Mist instead. You will get the same flowers and foliage in a compact plant that will stay round and compact about 3 feet tall without pruning. Likewise if you like Arboreum type flowers and foliage, don't buy the tree form *R. arboreum*. By one of the several Arboreum X Yak crosses that have a compact form, such as Noyo Dream or Noyo Brave.

Most plant descriptions in catalogs give the height in 10 years. If it says 6 feet in 10 years, remember that also means 12 feet in 20 years and 18 feet in 30 years. When landscaping look for foliage and form before looking at flowers. Many people buy a plant because they like the flowers, and never consider the plant form until it's too late.

I like trees, large bushes, small bushes, dwarf bushes, and ground covers. I collect all these forms of rhododendrons. I let the tree rhododendrons grow into trees and under and around the trees I plant the bushes, stepping them down to the dwarfs and ground cover forms. Many of my dwarf rhododendrons may live their lives in containers as bonsai.

Now, back to the pruning. The pruning I do is to shape and improve flowers for show entries. When is the best time to prune? The best time to prune rhododendrons (and most other ericaceous shrubs) is while they are blooming, or right after, before they put out new growth. This is a good reason to cut flowers and sprays for the show or just for flowers for your house. If you can't bear to cut your flowers off of your blooming plants, then prune as soon as the flowers wilt and before the new growth emerges.

You can do light pruning to shape the plant anytime of the year, but save any heavy pruning until spring, just before the new growth emerges. Especially don't prune your evergreen rhododendrons way back where there is no green foliage left. You may get away with this in the spring just after they bloom, but I caution you not to do it in late summer or fall when they don't have time to put out new leaves before winter. Rhododendrons don't have tap roots and they don't store energy in their roots, at least not enough to make it through a long winter. That's why they are evergreen. They need to make food year round. If you take away all their food making leaves, some may live through it, but many will die.

My pruning schedule is as follows:

I start in the fall when the buds start to form. Since I'm pruning for show flowers I prune off any excess buds (hammer heads) and any leaf buds under the flower bud that may push the flower bud over from a straight vertical position. Then if I have a nice terminal flower bud with good leaves, that looks like it could make a good entry truss, I may prune off any branches on that stem that may not have buds. I want all the energy to that branch to feed the one flower I'm going to enter. I also start looking for potential sprays and again I

prune off any extraneous branches and foliage that I don't want in the spray. In other words, I start choosing and grooming my trusses and sprays for the show, in the fall and through the winter and early spring.

Then, as the flowers start blooming in the spring I start taking cut flowers to shape the plant for next year. After the plants finish blooming, I prune off the dead flowers and prune to shape the plant and encourage new branches. When the new growth starts to emerge, I may do some pinching of the new growth to encourage branching to make the plant denser with more flower buds. Don't wait too late to pinch or you may not get any flower buds forming next year.

If on the rare occasion I have a large plant that I want to make smaller, I may do some more aggressive pruning. If I want to bring the height down to where there is no foliage, I don't like to do it all at once. Some rhododendrons can handle this, but some won't. Most ponticums, such as our native *R. macrophyllum* originated from fire maintained plant communities. They have adapted to being burned to the ground and will sprout new growth from the remaining roots. This also applies to most ponticum hybrids. Because of this, they respond well to heaving pruning. Still though, if you prune it too late in the year you may risk killing it. Others, such as *R. arboreum*, are like pine trees. If you cut off all the foliage they will most likely die.

If it's a rhododendron I don't care about, then I may go for it, but if it's one I wouldn't want to loose then I will be more conservative. In that case I like to stage my pruning. I'll take off 1/3 of the plant. This will most likely open it up and stimulate some new growth coming out of the lower branches. Then the next year I will take it down the next 1/3, reducing the plant size by 2/3 over two years. This method will also allow you to continue to have some blooms over this time. Otherwise if you take off all the foliage in one fall swoop, you may not have any blooms on it for the next two or three years. I did this on one large rhododendron and it grew back to its original size before pruning, before it bloomed again three years later. I have

since had better luck with staging the pruning.

Many of my rhododendrons seem to be self pruning. They often prune themselves way back without asking me. Many of my rhododendrons are growing under large redwood trees. During the winter they have a tendency to drop large branches. Many of these

crush my rhododendrons. Last year a large branch fell square on top of my Dr. Arnold Endtz. There was absolutely nothing visible left. It broke off the plant at ground level and pounded the stump into the ground. This was in December and I thought for sure it was a goner. To my surprise it sprouted a new shoot from the roots and is now growing back. I've even had branches

come down and split a plant straight down the middle. I ended up with two separate plants as a result, that are growing just fine now. The point is that some rhododendrons can survive and thrive through some major pruning. So, go for it and don't be afraid to cut away to get your plants to look the way you want.

March Featured Rhododendron 'Bibiani'

Submitted by Dennis McKiver



'Moser's Maroon' x arboreum

6', 5°F, E, 4/4/4

Growth habit is full-foliaged and upright, with large, glossy, heavy-textured, deep green leaves. Bell shaped flowers, to 2 1/4" wide, are a bright, waxy red, held in cone-shaped trusses to 15. A very vigorous, easily grown plant hybridized by Lionel de Rothschild, at his Exbury Nursery, in England, introduced in 1934. It was awarded the prestigious Award of Merit.

This is one of my favorite rhododendrons. It has glowing deep maroon red flowers with sparse purple spotting contrasted with white stamens and deep green heavy textured arboreum type leaves with silvery undersides. Plant habit is large, but symmetrical and rounded.

The plant is relatively heat-tolerant, but doesn't like the wind. Because it flowers early in late February and March, the new growth comes out in April. At the Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens there are some planted near the ocean with no wind protection. These plants regularly get their new growth wind pruned by the April winds. So, give it a site sheltered from strong winds.

It has proved to be a tough and adaptable plant and with age it can become a large shrub or small tree.

Noyo Chapter, ARS Officers & Chairpersons

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Treasurer	John Winding	937-2140
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	Sam Foresman	964-6399, foresman@hughes.net
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	Phillip Johnson	964-1426, philsabsession@gmail.com
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	Frank Celeri	367-1554
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Editor	Dick Jones	964-4353, dic@mcn.org

Mark Your Calendars

2011-2012 Meeting Schedule

Meetings typically are at the Presbyterian Church in Fort Bragg starting at 7:30 pm. **Show Com.** meetings are at 6:30 preceding each general meeting.

- Tuesday, March 13
- Friday, March 23 ??????????
- Tuesday, April 10

- Saturday & Sunday, May 5 & 6

Noyo Show & Plant Sale

- Saturday, May 19 - Spring Potluck

Other Northern California Shows

- Cal Chapter, Oakland, April 14 - 15
- Eureka Flower Show, April 28 - 29

Western Regional Conference ARS
Nanaino, B.C. Sept 21-27, 2012

Noyo Chapter

American Rhododendron Society
P.O. Box 1068
Fort Bragg, CA 95437-1068

**ARS+ASA Joint
Convention**

***APPALACHIAN
SPRING 2012***

**Asheville NC • May 4-7,
2012**

. . . a visit among the Blue
Ridge Mountains . . .

See your Journal or click
here for information for this
year's Convention.