



NEWSLETTER OF THE SEATTLE RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

Seattle Rhododendronland

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November 2008

November Meeting

Hands-on night

November 5, 2008
Donald Graham Visitor's Center beginning at 7:00PM.

Note change in venue!

President's message

This next meeting will be something different. We're going to learn some new skills to apply to our rhododendrons. We'll have a series of speakers giving short presentations on pruning, growing rhodies in containers, and how to propagate by cuttings on a small scale. This is handy information in case you want to just make extras of a few of your favorite rhododendrons. Be sure to read Jeff's article for more details. For November only, we will be meeting at the Graham Visitor's Center in the Arboretum, rather than at the CUH.

I've said this before but fall is the best time for planting. The still-warm soil and abundance of cool rainy weather help the plants to get their roots established before the pushing of new growth in the spring followed by our droughty summers. Another advantage is that that is one less thing to do in the spring when there are so many other gardening pleasures (and yes, chores) to do. This afternoon I was planting the many ferns that I bought at our October 4 plant sale. The Hardy Fern Society provided us with a good selection, and I couldn't resist them. They are ideal to plant under and around rhododendrons. Some of my rhodies are tall and "leggy" and benefit from skirting with ferns and other woodlanders. The variety of size, texture, and form make them very interesting and they may become one of my next plant passions. Its good to get the ground covered so that weeds haven't a chance to get enough light to grow and ferns won't interfere with rhododendron roots like some aggressive ground covers may do.

The *Cyclamen hederifolium* have been blooming for the last few weeks and are putting on quite a show. They do well in well-drained, even dry locations, going dormant through the summer before re-emerging in autumn. Its mid-October as I write this and the trees are just starting to get hints of fall color. The *Franklinia* is coloring well but I haven't seen any flowers this year. I've been planting out a number of the *R. quinquefolium* that I grew from seed and its interesting to note the range of coloration a number have become bright red, others are more orange, and a few show little color. This range of coloration within a species is a good reason to buy deciduous trees and shrubs in the fall so you can select a good form. Its disappointing to

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buy a plant known for good autumn color and end up with a dud!

Our plant sale at the CUH on October 4 had a great selection of plants. Unfortunately, the weather was rainy and windy, and despite good signage, the buyers weren't as abundant as we would have liked. The Board will have to re-think whether fall is a good time for our sale. Many thanks to those of you who showed up to help and to buy! I will bring some extras of these plants to the November meeting just to tempt you!

Happy gardening and see you at the Graham Visitor's Center on November. 5!

—Jeanine Smith

It's Elsie's Birthday!

A little reminder that our sweet and generous friend Elsie Watson will turn 95 on November 6. She is doing very well at her group home in Kirkland. She loves the people who take care of her and has a friend who visits each week day to take her places, read to her, and take her for walks. Her focus has become orchids. She has many, and they thrive in her east-facing window. Her daughter has provided books on how to take care of them and Elsie takes great pride in the results!

I have continued to take care of her garden, but that is soon ending. It has become harder to manage it, and arthritis in my hands is concerning. So, it's time to move on to a different kind of joy. It has been a real pleasure getting to know Elsie in this way over the last number of years. It is a beautiful garden and provided lots of joy and satisfaction. The young man living in her home, did the yeoman's task of watering this summer. Elsie's daughter, Anne, will now take responsibility for maintaining the garden.

Elsie would welcome your birthday greetings in either a card or a phone call. She has her own phone. The number is 425 821 2152 and her address is 11722 N.E. 134TH Street, Kirkland, WA. 98034. Visitors are welcome too!

—Karen Swenson



November meeting

Note change of venue for this time only!

On Wednesday November 5, The Seattle Rhododendron Society presents a "how to" workshop by some of our local experts. The workshop is at the Washington Park, Graham Visitor Center from 7-10 PM. Come see a bonsai demonstration, learn how to prune rhododendrons, and how to grow rhododendrons from cuttings and seeds. Bring your small potted plants to prune and any leaves that you may have problems with because our expert on rhododendron pest and diseases will also be there. The Graham Visitor Center is located at 2300 Arboretum Drive East, Seattle, WA 98112. For more information visit seattlerhodo@comcast.net or call Jeff Bell at 206-363-1417.

—Jeff Bell



November treats

In this month of Thanksgiving, we must give thanks that we live in a country where each citizen is allowed to freely vote for the candidates of her or his choice, in a secret ballot.

We must also give thanks for these fine people who will be treating us to some specialities of their warm kitchens: Laura Kentala and Eleanor & Dan Laxdall.

—Stan H.

SRS Officers and Board Members

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Watts with the species— *Rhododendron concinnum*

Lynn Watts

This species was first reported in 1886 by the Reverend Ernest Faber who found it on Mt. Omei in Sichuan province, China. It has also been reported as growing at elevations of 5,200 feet to 13,600 feet in western Yunnan, Shaanxi and Henan provinces but not in the numbers found in Sichuan. A variable species, *R. concinnum* is described as “a broadly upright shrub or small tree 3 1/3ft to 15ft high.” (H. H. Davidian, *The Rhododendron Species*, Volume 1.) As evidence of its variability J. Cullen in his Revision of *Rhododendron* (“Notes from the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, Volume 39, Number 1) lists ten names which have been given to variants of this species.

Bearing some resemblance to the broader-leaved forms of *R. augustinii* it can, however, be readily distinguished from the former by the leaves which are oblong-lanceolate and generally broader and not as long as those of *R. augustinii*. The underside of the leaves of *R. concinnum* are covered with brownish scales more closely spaced than *R. augustinii* and having a puberulous (minutely fuzzy) mid-rib rather than hairy. The flowers of *R. concinnum* generally range in color from lavender-pink to ruby red in the form commonly referred to as pseudoyanthinum. (In the opinion of the author the most vivid and striking flower color in the genus.)

An interesting note for our Pacific Northwest readers:

“The best deep colored forms are often grown under the Pseudoyanthinum Group and vary from deep purple to ruby-red and are attractive garden plants. There are two American named clones of this: ‘Purple Flake’ and ‘Chief Paulina,’ the latter a compact form with royal purple flowers. (Peter Cox, “A Larger Species of *Rhododendron*.”) You students of Northwest history may recall that Chief Paulina was one of the crafty, intelligent, and cunning chiefs of the Paiute who outwitted the u.s. Army for so many years in the 1850s and 60s.

H. H. Davidian (*The Rhododendron Species*, Volume I, *Lepidotes*.) describes five flower color forms of *R. concinnum* in cultivation : Form 1 Deep Purple. Form 2 Purple. Form 3 Deep pinkish. Form 4 Creamy-white tinged purple. Form 5. White. However, Cullen in “Notes from the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh,” Volume 39, Number 1, states “The varieties recognized by Davidian have no significance other than in horticulture.”

If you do not have *R. concinnum* in your collection and have space for *R. augustinii* then, by all means, you should add *R. concinnum* var. *pseudoyanthinum*.



The Seattle Rhododendron Society

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ADDRESS CORRECTION AND FORWARDING REQUESTED

Coming Up

November 5, 2008 7:00PM
Monthly Meeting at Donald Graham
Visitor's Center—this one time only
(see story inside)

Meerkerk Work Party
Second Saturday of every month