



NEWSLETTER OF THE SEATTLE RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

Seattle Rhododendronland

Volume 32 Number 2
www.seattlerhododendronsociety.org

March 2009

March Meeting

March 4, 2009, Center for Urban Horticulture at, beginning at 7:00PM

Program: Bill Hicks talks about Lepidotes

President's message

It's always a pleasure to get a balmy week or two in February to entice us outside to the garden. Winter cleanup of downed branches and debris can be tackled, and we see signs of spring, which raise our hopes. Despite the cold and transient snowfalls, some hardy plants are appearing. The snowdrops are in bloom and hellebores are pushing their buds skyward. I like to cut the old foliage off the hellebores at this time so the display is more obvious and to prevent any possibility of diseased leaves spreading to new growth. A few early bulbs are timidly poking their heads out as well as species tulips, miniature daffodils, and crocus. We're cutting back our ferns now as they were miserably flattened by December's snows. Tattered epimedium foliage should be cut back as well before the delicate flowers and new growth start to emerge. I will be starting to fertilize the rhododendrons soon so it will be available to the roots in time for bloom and new growth. I don't usually get everything fertilized every year. If the plant has been putting on good growth, blooming, and has good leaf color, it may not need it. However, some heavy-blooming hybrids seem to benefit from annual fertilizing, and mulching is very beneficial for replenishing the soil with organic material, providing a cool root run, squelching weed seedlings, and helping to maintain soil moisture. We chip our fallen branches and prunings and use this as mulch, preferably after a few months of composting.

Many of the early-blooming rhododendrons in our gardens are lepidotes, which we associate with smaller leaves with scales on the undersides. *Rhododendron dauricum* is one of the earliest, with purple flowers (there's a white form too). Others are *R. mucronulatum* (pink to lavender), and hybrids like 'Tessa,' 'BoPeep,' 'Cilipinense,' 'Snow Lady,' and 'PJM.'

We're fortunate that on March 4 there will be a program on Lepidotes presented by one of our own members, Bill Hicks. Here is a great opportunity to learn more about these special rhododendrons and what they can add to our gardens in beauty and variety. Bill and his wife, Carole, live in Burien and are regulars at our meetings. In April, in place of a meeting at CUH, we will be going on a garden tour to see the Hick's newly-renovated garden. The date is April 18, so mark your calendars to save the date! Details will be in the April newsletter, along with driving directions.

Inside

What did you miss?	2
From the Book Lady	2
Refreshments	2
Learning Something New (from Stan Hungerford)....	3
March program.....	3

Continued on page 2

If you haven't already done so, please send in your registration for the ARS Convention being held in Everett April 30 to May 3! The registration form is in the latest ARS Journal, or you can go to the convention web site: www.ars-2009-convention.org. Also, if you think you would like to stay at the hotel, the deadline for the special rate is 3/29/09. This is a great opportunity to hear great speakers, shop at a fabulous plant sale, meet and socialize with fellow rhodoholics from other parts of the country and the world, and tour some interesting gardens. There will be a rhododendron truss show and we will need our local members to bring in cut trusses so we can have a great display. It won't be a judged show, but there will be a People's Choice Award. Since the SRS, along with four other chapters in District 2, is hosting this event, we will be needing volunteers to help out with some conference tasks. Please let me know if you're willing to sign up for a job!

Happy gardening,

—Jeanine Smith

What did you miss?

Was it Thomas Gainsborough's painting, "Blue Boy," which hangs in the Huntington Museum in Pasadena where my cousin worked in the 1950s-1960s? Was it a display of paintings from Pablo Picasso's "Blue Period?" No, it was a program, "Summer in the Wolong, Sichuan," presented by Chip Muller detailing two trips he took to the region of China west of Guanxian, famous for the Giant Pandas of the Wolong Natural Preserve. Chip had visited the area with his father in 1986, and was reliving the experience 20 years later in 2006.

Most notable in his display of floral images was the color blue—from the intense blues of Gentian to the lighter blues of Meconopsis. He showed pictures of *Corydalis* 'Blue Panda,' several blue *Primula*, a blue *Fritillaria*, blue *Iris*, blue *Omphogramma* and, of course, blue rhododendrons, *R. augustinii* and several blue lepidote *Rhododendron* species in series/subsection *Lapponica*. The color palette did include white and pink *R. prattii*, yellow and red *Meconopsis*, a yellow *Clematis* and several interesting terrestrial orchids.

The scenery of the region he visited was quite variable, from the lowland forests of the Panda Preserve to the rolling Tagong Grasslands and rocky-shored Mugecuo Lake set amongst lovely glacier-capped mountains. The villages clinging to mountainsides and the colorful horses in the grasslands, and the multi-hued costumes of the children gave us a taste of the culture.

Prior to the show, Jeanine sold four of her plants via the raffle, *R. linearifolium*, *R. orbiculare*, *R. 'Richard Cree'* and *R.*

'Violetta Song,'—the latter two, Elsie Watson hybrids. There was much discussion of the winter's effects in our gardens with suggested remedies including patience... emphasizing that those plants which may look dead, will, in many cases, revive during the spring and early summer. Bill Hicks brought a small bouquet of little rhododendrons from his garden, *R. dauricum*, *R. moupinense* and *R. 'Cilipinense'*, which had buds showing color, but not yet opened—a two-week delay in his garden.

Don King's delicious, chocolaty, (is this a real word?) cookies were snapped up so quickly, that I got the very last one! Diane Thompson's chocolate cupcakes with Valentine sprinkles on the white frosting were meltingly tender.

—Stan H.

From the Book Lady

Come and visit the book table and check out the new books. These are the first you will have seen for over a year. Remember you might want to find something special for early spring reading.

—Laura Kentala

Refreshments

The NCAA may bring us the March Madness college basketball tournament, but this month Carole & Bill Hicks and Stan Hungerford will be bringing us their "Sweet Delights" to enhance the social hour before the meeting.

—Stan H.

SRS Officers and Board Members

President	Jeanine Smith	425.483.8272
Vice President	Jeff Bell	206.363.1417
Secretary	Karen Swenson	425.775.0863
Treasurer	Deena Henkins	206.284.6978
Past President	Chip Muller	206.368.7868
Board Member (08-10)	Loretta Goetsch	206.525.4714
Board Member (08-10)	Open position	
Board Member (09-11)	Prudence Holliger	425.837.8760
Board Member (09-11)	Katherine Thompson	206.932.4518
Book Chairperson	Laura Kentala	425.822.6269
Membership	Loretta Goetsch	206.525.4714
Honors	Gwen Bell	206.932.6016
Programs	Jeff Bell	206.363.1417
Nominations	Open position	
SRS Webmaster		
District 2 Director	Don Smart	425.333.6178
Newsletter	Prudence Holliger	prudenceholliger@mac.com

Learning Something New (from Stan Hungerford)

A few days ago, while fooling around with Google, I ran across the name of an unfamiliar plant in the Ericaceae: *Woollisia pungens* of southeastern Australia. This entry resulted in my doing a tad of research on the web. I learned that a group of around 30 scientists had been studying the relationships between the genera of plants, and the results of this group's findings resulted in a reclassification of the Angiosperms. The study was published by the Angiosperm Phylogeny Group II in *Botanical Journal of the Linnean Society* 141:399-436 (2003). The Ericales are in the clade Asterids, and the families Empetraceae, Epacridaceae, Monotropaceae, Prionoteaceae and Pyrolaceae are all included in

Genera of Empetraceae (3gen, 10spp)

Ceratiola, Michaux
Colema, Rafinesque
Empetrum, Linnaeus

Genera of Epacridaceae (31gen, 400spp)

Acrotriche, R Brown
Andersonia, R Brown
Archeria, JD Hooker.f.
Astroloma, R Brown
Brachyloma, OB Sonder
Choristemon, HB Williamson
Coleanthera, SS Stschegleew
Conostephium, G Bentham
Cosmelia, R Brown
Cyathodes, JJH de Labillardier.
Cyathopsis, AT Brongniart & JAA Gris
Decatoca, FJH von Mueller
Dracophyllum, JJH de Labillardier.
Epacris, AJ Cavanilles
Lebetanthus, SFL Endlicher
Leucopogon, R Brown
Lissanthe, R Brown
Lysinema, R Brown
Melichrus, R Brown
Monotoca, R Brown
Needhamia, R Brown = *Needhamiella*
Needhamiella, L. Watson

the family Ericaceae. This increases the number of genera and species in the family by about 40 genera and 460 species.

For those of us who don't keep up with the latest in botanical literature, I thought I would list the information about the genera as listed by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. The website of the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) reveals many details of the genera and species, giving many more generic and specific names, which are no doubt, most if not all, published synonyms. Maps of the distribution of many of these plants are also available on this site.

Oligarrhena, R Brown
Pentachondra, R Brown
Prionotes, R Brown
Richea, R Brown
Rupicola, JH Maiden & E Betche
Sphenotoma, R Brown ex R Sweet
Sprengelia, JE Smith
Styphelia, JE Smith
Trochocarpa, R Brown
Woollisia, FJH von Mueller

Genera of Monotropaceae (12gen, 21spp)

Allotropa, Torrey and A Gray
Hemitomes, A Gray
Hypopytis Hill = *Monotropa*
Monotropa, Linnaeus
Monotropastrum, Andres
Monotropsis, Schweinitz Ex Elliott
Pityopus, Small
Pleurocospora, A Gray
Pterospora, Nuttall
Sarcodes, Torrey
Schweinitzia, Elliott ex Nuttall = *Monotropsis*

Genera of Pyrolaceae (4gen, 30spp)

Chimaphila, Pursh
Moneses, Salisbury ex A Gray
Orthilia, Rafinesque
Pyrola, Linnaeus

March program

Join us Wednesday, March 4th at the Center for Urban Horticulture for *Lepidote Rhododendrons*, presented by Bill Hicks.

This year, 2009, is Bill's 40th anniversary as an active member of The Tacoma Chapter ARS. He has served as Chapter President, Vice President (9 times) and Show Chairman (8 times) and is currently the Chairman of the Rhododendron Garden at Pt. Defiance Park in Tacoma.

Bill has always had a strong preference for the smaller rhododendrons and azaleas especially the lepidote rhodies (those

that have scales and tend to have smaller leaves and flowers). He also appreciates the beauty of many of the Japanese azaleas both evergreen and deciduous. He believes that the ultimate rhododendron experience is acquiring new plants to add to his collection. The program is less than an hour consisting of fewer than 100 slides. The images are a sampling of the subgenus lepidote rhododendrons that are tall, short, blue, pink, white, yellow and almost red ones. Some lepidote rhododendrons are tender, others marginally so and include both species and hybrids. Vireyas are lepidote rhododendrons but are not included in this program.

The Seattle Rhododendron Society

Seattle Rhododendron Society
Loretta Goetsch
6209 30th NE
Seattle WA 98115
ADDRESS CORRECTION AND FORWARDING REQUESTED

Coming Up

March 4, 2009, 7:00PM

**Monthly Meeting at the Center for
Urban Horticulture (see story inside)**

April 30—May 3, 2009

ARS Convention, Everett, WA

Meerkerk Work Party

second Saturday of every month