



Rhododendron occidentale

OCCIDENTALE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DE ANZA CHAPTER,
AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

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The Newsletter of the De Anza Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society

Volume 1, Issue 7

Website: <http://www.deanza-ars.com/>

March 2006

Welcome to the March issue of the De Anza Chapter of the ARS. I am seeking your input on what articles and topics you would like to see covered in the newsletter. Full color copy of the newsletter is available on the De Anza website, or via email subscription.

This issue of *Occidentale* offers some information on pruning rhododendron, as suggested by Tom Wynn. If the rain ever stops, maybe we will be able to shape our plants for next year.

Next Meeting: Wed., March 15th, 2006
7:30 p.m. Hillview Community Center, Room 12
97 Hillview Ave, Los Altos, CA
Note: Room 12 is in the "Los Altos Senior Citizen Center" building.

Topic: Wild Rhododendrons in China
Speaker: **Sonja Nelson**

"Sonja Nelson is the current editor of *Journal American Rhododendron Society*, and is a member of the Komo Kulshan Chapter in Washington.

The rhododendron landscapes in our modern gardens were first inspired by the sight of rhododendrons growing in the wild"--Sonja Nelson. Author of Rhododendrons in the Landscape and The Pacific Coast Rhododendron Story, Ms. Nelson will be speaking at our March 15 meeting! She will tell us about her trip to Yunnan, China (with Steve Hootman) and will show us her slides of the wild rhododendrons growing there. Ms Nelson is a recipient of the ARS Gold Medal.

Come, and get inspired!

Upcoming Events

Reminder: Volunteers for SF Flower Show. Bob Weissman is mailing packets to the volunteers this last week.

Next Month's Meeting (mark your calendars!):
April 19 **Hawaiian Vireyas:** Jean Frances, et al.

2007 ARS Convention Call for Volunteers

Dear Rhodo Friends,

Our first full-fledged ARS April 12-15, 2007 Conference planning session is coming up soon. We will meet: **SATURDAY** March 11th at 10:30 for a site tour followed by a working lunch@

Embassy Suites, 250 Gateway Blvd, South San Francisco (just north of the airport)

Issues for discussion are:

Division of proceeds and costs between Chapters.
Registrar – Bob Weissman has agreed to take on this HUGE task!
Treasurer/Budget
Plant Sale committee

Tour Committees

De Anza Chapter
California Chapter
Photo show committee
Truss and education show committee
Volunteer coordinator
Publicity
Journal Article
Flyers for May Conference and September Conference
Web hosting and posting
Speakers
Audio/Visual support
Any thing I have forgotten.
Come with your thinking caps on!
Cheers,

June E. Walsh
RhodyHostel@cox.net

Organizing a DeAnza Chapter Bus Trip

Hi Mike--If you haven't finished the newsletter yet & need some filler, maybe you could add a very short piece on our proposed Ft Bragg trip & ask members to send Dianne or me an email indicating interest (1)in the trip (2)sharing a bus (3) going up independently.(4) booking a motel for overnight. (5) Skipping the whole thing.
We need a head count pretty soon if we are to make reservations, esp. from those members who want to go on the trip but don't come to meetings.

Thanks --erika--

Noyo Chapter Show and Plant Sale

Mike, If you have some room in your next newsletter we'd like it if you'd put in the dates for our Show and Plant Sale. It's May 6 & 7 in Fort Bragg.
Thanks,
Dick Jones, editor, Noyo Ch newsletter

Tips for Beginners: How to Prune Evergreen Azaleas

Tom Hughes, Oak Ridge, Tennessee

Source: JARS V47:No.3:p136:y1993

Many evergreen azaleas never experience the pruning shears, since, for the most part, these plants are naturally well behaved. If they are carefully selected, carefully sited, carefully planted, and properly tended, there is usually little need to prune them in the informal garden. Nevertheless, there are some situations in which pruning can be useful, enough to justify a look at the subject.

Evergreen azaleas have a big advantage over some other garden shrubs when it comes to pruning - lop off the end of most any branch or twig that is not heavily shaded and a healthy plant will soon activate new buds (called adventitious buds) below the cut end. For good results, however, it's best to prune with a plan that takes other factors into account.

Why prune? First of all, to remove dead wood. Branches may be killed by cold over the winter or die in mid-summer after girdling by a hard frost in the spring. They may die back as a result of fungus attack, shading, borers, and lack of water or improper fertilizing. Cut out the dead wood back to sound wood, i.e., where a nick with the fingernail reveals a layer of green cambium under the outer bark. If the cut end is more than a quarter of an inch across, I zap it with some aerosol wound dressing to discourage new invasion by fungus or borers. (Incidentally, when fungus is involved, the pruning shears should be sterilized after each cut by dipping in a fairly strong [20%] solution of sodium hypochlorite [Clorox] in water.

One of the most common reasons for pruning evergreen azaleas is to scale back an exuberant bush that is beginning to cover a window or crowd a walkway. Pruning would be unnecessary if a smaller-growing variety had been selected initially and positioned properly when planted. It is possible, however, to keep ambitious plants in bounds by regular judicious pruning. The secret here is to reach below the surface - follow projecting branches back a suitable distance into the bush to functions with other branches and cut them off flush. In this case don't leave stubs, which would probably die from lack of light and could invite fungus invasion. The overall effect is to reduce the size of the plant without destroying its symmetry. The surface of the plant will not be as dense at the outset but should fill in quickly.

Another common reason for pruning is to improve the appearance of tall leggy plants with ugly bare shanks and knobby knees. In these cases major surgery is often

needed. Judgment is called for, but in serious cases I usually cut the offending stalks back to within a foot or so of the ground in spring (and spray the cut ends with wound dressing), leaving some low branches intact. Cutting so early will destroy the current year's flowers, of course, but new shoots will start earlier and recovery will be quicker. Strong-growing new shoots should be pinched once or twice up to early August to encourage branching.

Also, some varieties send up suckers from the base of *established* plants. These usually are shaded out eventually, so it's best to prune them away while they are still small. When the plant is young, however, I like to make sure that it will develop a bushy habit rather than a single trunk like a tree. This means that at least three main branches should be left growing from the base of the plant. That way, if a major calamity such as a borer strikes, all is not lost.

Another reason for pruning is to increase the density of twigs and flower buds on plants of naturally rather open growth. This is accomplished by pinching or shearing the new growth during the growing season to induce branching. Timing is rather critical if optimum results are to be achieved. Not all shoots on a plant are ready for pinching at the same time, and not all varieties ripen at the same time. If the new shoots are pinched too early, while they are still soft, the likely result will be a single new branchlet replacing the nipped growing point, and nothing is accomplished. If pinching is done at the right time, however, several buds will break below the point pruned. I usually wait till late June or early July, depending on variety, when the new shoots tend to snap when bent double. This is also the time to take cuttings for propagation, doubling one's reward for waiting.

Selective pinching of the terminal buds to increase branching can continue up until about the first week of August (later in the South). Pinching or shearing must stop while there is still enough of the growing season left to allow the plants to set flower buds for the next spring's show. Late pruning will take away the flower buds for the following year.

In formal garden, like some Japanese gardens, evergreen azaleas are often sheared to smooth rounded shapes. This is fine and gives results that are pleasing to many people, but, as we indicated earlier, shearing must stop in time for the plants to set flower buds.

In summary, the first rule of pruning is to select the right varieties in the first place and plant them where they'll do what you want without a lot of pruning. There are hundreds of varieties to choose from, dwarf, medium and tall, in many colors, blooming early and late. The second rule is to stop pruning while there is still time for the plant to set flower buds for the next year: around the first of August in the Mid-

Atlantic region, and late August in the South. Third, don't leave stubs when pruning larger branches; cut them off flush

with another branch.

Source: JARS V47:No.2:p79:y1993

Tips for Beginners: Pruning Large-Leaved Rhododendrons

Warren Baldsiefen

The article appeared in the Rhodieview, Vol. III, No. 3/1991 and was reprinted from the Baldsiefen Nursery catalog.

Any rhododendron is suitable for woodland or informal use where a reasonable amount of space is available. Here it is only necessary to arrange the planting so that the robust growers do not over-crowd those of relatively restricted growth.

It is around the foundations of the home, spots of limited area or the rockery that the choice is limited to the smaller-leaved and dwarfed types. Wise selection in the beginning will eliminate the need for most of the pruning. There are, however, times when pruning is justified and essential.

Large-leaved rhododendrons are the most difficult to prune but only for the lack of understanding. These plants put out their first growth in a flush that terminates with a rosette of leaves. Generally in the colder areas of the East and North the flush varies from 4 to 10 inches, but more often around 6 inches. On young plants, two flushes per year are the rule. On older plants that set flowers freely, it is the rule that one flush is made followed by a flower bud. This latter is due to both a natural reduction in vitality after the juvenile stage is passed and the use of tremendous energy in blooming which delays the commencement of growth.

Large-leaved rhododendrons may be pruned anytime without harming the plant, but there are times that are more expedient. These plants, with few exceptions, retain their leaves two years. This means that on young plants there will be four rosettes of leaves and fewer on older plants. It is permissible to prune back to any of these rosettes,

depending on how drastically it is desired to prune. Always make the cut about a quarter of an inch above the rosette. The flush of growth will burst out from the auxiliary buds of the rosette.

The most favorable time to prune when there are no flower buds is in the early spring just before growth begins. If done at this time, the growth cycle is least disturbed, and bud set the same season will be uninhibited. In so pruning, it is important to cut back every terminal or watch when growth begins. The terminals left uncut commence growth earlier usually with a long single shoot. These single shoots should be pinched off when the new growing tips are about an inch long. This will encourage multiple branching from that terminal. This step is important in shaping or reshaping a plant. Cutting back develops a heavily branched, sturdy shrub. If this is done when the plant is about 3 feet or less, it can eliminate future need for pruning.

Pruning old rhododendrons presents a different problem. When old rhododendrons become unthrifty in appearance, the cells in the vascular bundles have become hardened or plugged and no longer function normally. Any revitalizing to be accomplished must be done on new wood, supplied by drastic pruning. This is best done in the spring or early summer but spring preferred.¹

One method is to cut the plant down to several inches above the ground. This is more successful with those having multiple stems coming up from the ground. In hybrids, which often have one stem, they may sometimes die from this. A less drastic means is to reach down into the shrub and cut out about one-third of the old wood. Do this for a period of about three years. In this way, there remains sufficient leaf surface to supply nutrients for reestablishment of new shrubs.

¹Editor's note: the best time is right after flowering when new growth is beginning.

PRUNING GUIDE

From: http://www.plantamnesty.org/pruning_guides/pg_nv_reno.htm

Reno, Nevada USDA Zones 4, 5a, & 5b

DON'T: Ornamental trees should never, ever be topped. And shrubs should rarely be sheared (except real topiary and formal hedges). Stripping all of the side branches off of a mature pine or any other tree or shrub, is also a no-no. Stripping is not to be confused with selective thinning, which can also make shrubs and trees look open and Oriental.

DO: Prune to enhance a plant's natural beauty; to make it feel less oppressive, tidier, cleaner; to reduce size somewhat, depending on the of plant. Selective pruning will reduce the bulk of the plant and taking off a few lower limbs of a tree is okay.

How: The two types of pruning cuts are thinning and

heading. A heading cut is basically cutting off the tip or end of a branch, twig, or stem. Heading creates bushiness. The next spring growth is stimulated at the tips of cut branches. Shearing, topping and pinching are heading cuts. Not good for most shrubs and trees.

A thinning cut removes the branch back to another branch or twig, or to the ground. Most pruning consists of thinning cuts. It forces new growth in existing branches and spreads new growth more evenly throughout the plant. Thinning cuts will let light into the interior, allowing for green



HEADING CUT
Cutting back of the tip



THINNING CUTS
Cut to a branch, twig or bud

branches to cut to if you choose to reduce the size of your shrub. It stays "done" longer and looks natural.

PRUNING BY HABIT

Prune to enhance the plant's natural shape or "habit". Plants have one of three basic habits.

I. CANE GROWERS

Plants that renew themselves by sending up new branches called canes from the base. Forsythias, roses, bamboo, kerria, weigela --- very tough plants --- you can hardly hurt them.

Stare at your shrub.

Take out all dead wood. Always do this first.

Take out some (1/3 to 1/8) of the biggest and oldest, as well as a few of the puniest canes, to the base. Do this every year to keep the size controlled.

Pick out a few of the worst canes that rub or cross each other, that look sick or go the wrong way (that is, start at the outside, head back through the center and out the other side), and ugly branches (usually too straight).

Generally prune to open up the center.

Tidy up the top with thinning cuts. Cut back anything hanging on the ground and cut to a side branch or bud.

Prune with vigor!



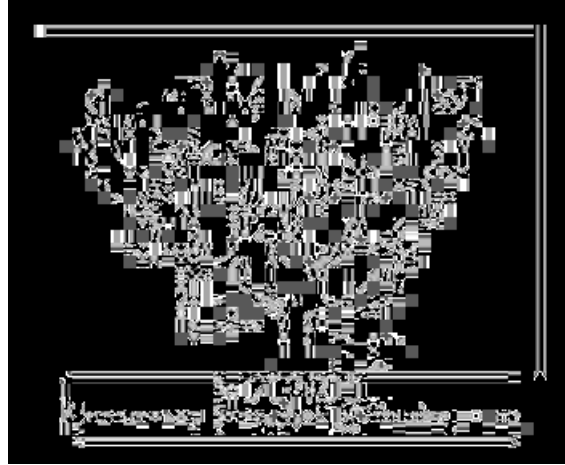
CANE GROWERS
Take out canes at base

II. MOUNDS

Look like mounds and are medium-tough plants, found in mass plantings. They have small leaves and supple branches. You usually just want to tidy them up or reduce their size. People like to shear these -- don't you! Examples of mounds are abelias, escallonia, barberries and Mexican orange. These are easiest to make and deep small.

Locate the longest, most unruly branch. Grab the tip with your left hand. Follow the branch down into the interior of the plant with your right-hand pruners, and snip it off two inches to one foot below the general surface level of your shrub. Cut to a side branch or bud, if possible.

These shrubs often benefit from taking out some of the old canes to their base. This opens up and renews the shrub. Any dead wood or weeds should also be removed.



III. TREE-LIKES

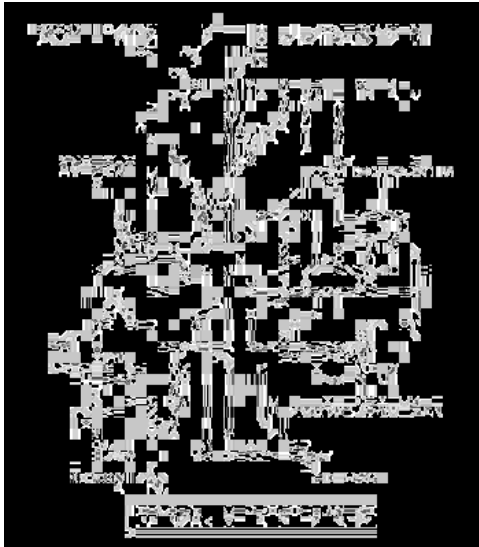
Best let to get big. Not to be pruned heavy-handedly. Good selective pruning can open them up and make them look less oppressive, can train branches around gutters and off of houses, and can bring more beauty out of your plant. These shrubs are the hardest to do. Never remove more than 1/8 total leaf surface in one year. It stresses them or it can cause a watersprout-rebound effect --- ick! Tree-likes have stiffish branches, generally. Examples of tree-likes include rhododendrons, andromeda (pieris), magnolias, deciduous Viburnums, camellias and witch hazel.

Most tree-likes just need to have all of the dead wood taken out.

If you still want to do more:

Take out suckers (straight-up, skinny branches from the base and trunk of the shrub or tree.

Take out any big crossing, rubbing branches and double



leaders (two main top branches with a narrow branch-crotch angle) on trees.

Take back or remove any branches hanging on the ground, if only up 1/2".

Take out the worst of the smaller crossing, rubbing branches --- choosing the healthiest and best placed branch to remain.

Prune to shorten or completely remove the worst wrong-way branches that start from the outside of the shrub, and go the wrong way back into the center and out the other side. Sometimes a side branch has a smaller branch that heads too far up into the next "layer", or goes too far down. You can cut some of these off to add more definition to your shrub's branches.

If you have two parallel branches rather close together, it may look better to remove one. If you have three parallel branches you may want to remove the center one. This will make things look nicer.

Before you finish, stand back and observe. If necessary, you may sparingly shorten some branches on tree like shrubs (not trees). Cut back to a side branch.

HINTS & TIPS

On many shrubs and trees, especially tree-likes, you want to fix things slowly over three -to five years. Do some now, come back next year.

"Wander, ponder; and prune," the old saying goes. Pruners, always stare at their shrubs, trying to locate unwanted branches, imagining their shrubs without this or that branch, seeing how it will grow next year --- seeing what needs to be done. Much like a haircut, it's easy to take it off, hard to put back on. Know when to quit.

If a plant is really too big, you may want to move it, remove it (go ahead, be ruthless!) or renovate it (not dealt with here). But try real selective pruning first!

<u>Mounds (Grab & Snip)</u>	<u>Cane Growers (Cut canes to the ground)</u>	<u>Tree-Likes (Thin-out, many small cuts)</u>	<u>Water sprouts easily, therefore thin lightly:</u>
Acuba Abelia Rock Rose Boxwood Snowberry Evergreen Azaleas Barberries (Some canes) Dwarf Sand Cherry Burning Bush Potentillas (Cane-like, too) Evergreen Vibernums (Somewhat tree-like as well) Spiraeas Hollies Scotch Broom Japanese Holly Box Honeysuckle	Roses Oregon Grape Lilac Weigelas Wild Oregon Grape Nandina (Heavenly Bamboo) Red-twig Dogwood Buddleia (Butterfly Bush) Hydrangea Dwarf Flowering Almond Deutzia Forsythia	Elderberry Manzanita Kalmia Deciduous Azaleas Pieris (Andromeda) Rhododendrons Enkianthus Mugho Pine Lilac Viburnums: Leatherleaf Double-file Highbush Cranberry Winter Snowball Spindletrees	Cotoneaster Hamamelis Cherry Crabapple Filbert (Hazelnut) Fig Parrotia Magnolia Plum Dogwood <u>Takes heavy thinning or arborizing:</u> Laurel Pine Photinia Mature Rhododendrons <u>Tough Tree-Likes</u> <u>(Can be headed into hedges or let go natural)</u> Photinia Pyracantha Yew Privet Laurel

Help Lists of Pruning Types

Our Plant of the Month



Elepidote Rhododendron: 'Point Defiance'

Description of Rhododendron 'Point Defiance'

Photo by: Don Wallace

Seed Parent x Pollen Parent:

Anna x Marinus Koster

Predominate Flower Color:

White

Flower / Truss Description:

Flower widely funnel-shaped, of

heavy substance, 4 1/2" across, white in center, edged red on all lobes, age to nearly pure white. Compact trusses of 15-17 flowers.

Bloom Time:

Midseason

Height (ft.) in 10 Yrs:

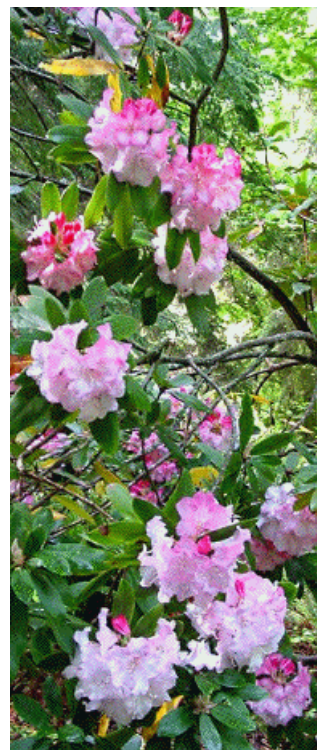
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Cold Hardiness Temperature: -5°F (-21°C)

Foliage Description / Plant Habit: Leaves elliptic, mucronate apex, rounded base, 7 1/4" long, recurved edges, leathery, impressed mid-rib, dull, dark green. Upright grower.

Elepidote

Hybridizer: Lem



[Registration](#) Reference: ARS 703

Note: Bloom time and 10 year height information are approximate and can vary dependent on local climate and soil conditions. Hardiness temperature is also an approximate guideline.

Flower white in center, edged purplish-red on all lobes, fading in time to nearly pure white, of heavy substance, widely funnel-shaped, 4-1/2" across. Buds are strong red colored. Held in trusses with 15 to 17 flowers. Blooms midseason. Leaves elliptic, mucronate apex, rounded base, 7-1/4" long, recurved edges, leathery, impressed mid-rib, dark green. Upright plant habit. Grows to a typical height of 6 ft. in 10 yrs. Cold hardy to -5°F (-21°C). Hybridized by Lem.



This is Lem's original plant of Point Defiance Rhododendron, now close to forty years old. Lem made the cross in the 1960s, and it was registered by the Metropolitan Park District in 1970.

Point Defiance is a cross between Anna, a 1952 Lem hybrid named after his wife; and Marinus Koster, a 1937 Koster cross.

The original Point Defiance is now fifteen feet tall. It has grown thin and rangy because of heavy shade, but should fill out as the canopy is opened up. It does still flower, but not as fully as it should in more open shade.

Point Defiance Park, the largest city park west of the Mississippi River, integrates old growth forest, several miles of saltwater beach, and extensive bluffs with spectacular views of Puget Sound islands. It contains a world class zoo and aquarium, Fort Nisqually historical site, and a museum of the early days of logging. Besides the Tacoma ARS Chapter rhododendron garden, the park is

home to a Japanese garden, rose garden, and native garden. A five-mile drive winds through the remote parts of the park, and is complemented by additional miles of hiking and jogging trails.

THE RHODODENDRON GARDEN (1956)

Although the birth of the current Rhododendron Garden was in 1968, members of the Tacoma Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society remember when there was a smaller version planted in 1956 along a slope above the Rose Garden.

A zoo expansion in 1968 relocated the garden to its current site along Five Mile Drive, said Bill Hicks, a longtime member of the Tacoma chapter, which conceived the notion of a public rhododendron species garden.

A far-flung group of rhody enthusiasts saw the garden to fruition.

"It was a few telephone calls here and there and people would bring their trucks down and donate all the plants we wanted," said Hicks.

One of the most revered of those rhody gardeners who showed up with truckloads of donations was Seattle grower Halfdan Lem.

Lem was a flower enthusiast who developed unusual hybrid rhododendrons at his Aurora nursery. In 1970, he developed a stunning white rhododendron – edged in red that fades to nearly pure white – that he named the Point Defiance in honor of the garden he loved.

"That rhododendron he developed is still in the garden," said Hicks.

Recently, society members began a revival of the 5-acre garden.

"We decided three years ago to do an in-depth assessment of the garden. One of the immediate things we took on was a general cleanup," Hicks said. "Since then, we've planted over 170 deciduous azaleas, and we put in a pathway where you enter the garden. We've received grants from the American Rhododendron Society for a number of projects."

Ultimately, the garden will take an educational role, said Hicks: "One of the purposes of the garden is to help the general public identify rhododendrons and help gardeners find a purpose for their garden with the different species of rhododendrons."

After that mission is completed, society members hope to become accredited by the American Rhododendron Society as a display garden. Last month, the local chapter hosted a rededication of the garden by planting another Point Defiance rhododendron.

<http://www.eskimo.com/~enumclaw/Tips/Tacoma%20ARS%20Chapter/Point%20Defiance/Original%20Point%20Defiance.html>

California Chapter (San Francisco & Oakland California); USDA Zones 9b, 10a
[Plant descriptions \(Elepidotes and Lepidotes\)](#) [Plant descriptions \(Deciduous and Evergreen Azaleas\)](#)

<p>Elepidotes:</p> <p>'Anah Kruschke' 'Arnold Piper' 'Blue Jay' 'Brittonhill Bugle' 'Bruce Brechtbill' 'Colonel Coen' 'Dreamland' 'Elsie Watson' 'Etta Burrows' 'Exbury Naomi' 'Frank Galsworthy' 'Golden Torch' 'Gomer Waterer' 'Horizon Monarch' 'Kilimanjaro' 'Lem's Cameo' 'Loderi King George' 'Loder's White' 'Markeeta's Flame' 'Markeeta's Prize' 'Midnight' 'Mount Everest' 'Mrs. G. W. Leak' 'Noyo Brave'</p>	<p>'Noyo Chief' 'Noyo Dream' 'Noyo Snow' 'One Thousand Butterflies' 'Point Defiance' 'Red Walloper' 'Rubicon' 'Senator Henry Jackson' 'Taurus' 'Tahitian Dawn' 'The Hon. Jean Marie de Montague' 'Unique' 'Warlock' 'White Swan' <i>R. arboreum</i> <i>R. degronianum</i> ssp <i>yakushmanum</i> 'Koichiro Wada' <i>R. falconeri</i> <i>R. grande</i> <i>R. griffithianum</i> <i>R. irroratum</i> <i>R. macabeanum</i> <i>R. moulmainense</i> <i>R. protistum</i></p>	<p>Lepidotes:</p> <p>'Bill Massey' 'Else Fry' 'Fleurette Evans' 'Forsterianum' 'Fragrantissimum' 'Lemon Mist' 'Little Imp' 'Mi Amor' 'My Lady' 'September Snow' <i>R. cinnabarinum</i> <i>R. davisonianum</i> <i>R. edgeworthii</i> <i>R. johnstoneanum</i> 'Dr. Bowman' <i>R. keiskei</i> var. <i>ozawae</i> <i>R. lindleyi</i> <i>R. nuttallii</i> 'John Paul Evans' <i>R. veitchianum</i></p>	<p>Vireyas:</p> <p>'Aleksandr Isayevich' 'Harry Wu' 'Kurt Herbert Adler' 'Meris' 'Moonwood' <i>R. aequabile</i> <i>R. burttii</i> <i>R. laetum</i> <i>R. leucogigas</i> <i>R. paucifolium</i> <i>R. stenophyllum</i> <i>R. womersleyi</i></p> <p>Deciduous Azaleas: <i>R. schlippenbachii</i></p>
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OUR 2005-2006 Calendar

March 15	Wild rhododendrons in China: Sonja Nelson's slide show from her trip this year.
Mar 15-19	SF Garden Show
April 19	Hawaiian Vireyas: Jean Frances, et al.
April 22	Cal Chapter Show & Sale
April 29	De Anza Chapter Plant Sale
May 6,7	Show and Plant Sale, Noyo Chapter, Fort Bragg
May 17	Bob Gould on Satsuki Azaleas (Note change in Program!)
June	Summer party meeting -TBD



Mike Ekberg
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