

AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

Eureka Chapter

The next meeting
Thursday April 21, 7:00 p.m.
Woman's Club
1531 J Street
Eureka, California

Pre-Meeting No Host Dinner 5:15
Roy's Club at 2nd and D Streets,
Old Town Eureka **Call Nelda, 707-443-8049** For a reservation so there
will be enough seating



April 2011

Special Meeting Date this Month **Thursday April 21st**

The Eureka Chapter will meet a week earlier than usual on **Thursday April 21st** at 7:00 p.m. so that we can bring you a very special program. The meeting will take place at the Woman's Club at 1531 J Street in Eureka. The guest speaker will be **Bill Hicks** who has been an active member of The Tacoma Chapter or the American Rhododendron Society for over 40 years. He and his wife Carole belong to various plant societies and reside in Des Moines, WA. Their ½ acre garden (plant collection) is situated on a west facing steep hillside overlooking Puget Sound and exposed to prevailing winds from the south.

Bill believes the ultimate experience is acquiring new plants to add to his collection and has strong preference for the smaller rhododendrons, especially the lepidotes. Lepidotes are distinguished by tiny scales, usually seen on the underside of the leaf; they also tend to have smaller leaves and flowers (see related story in *Word* page 3). He contends that the lepidotes are often overlooked in landscape planning and should receive more consideration for inclusion in the garden.

He will describe both the diversity of these plants and the characteristics many share: beautiful foliage, hairy leaves and stems, and stunning flowers (blues, yellows, whites, pinks and almost red). The program will also include a sense of the growth habit, expected size, blooming period and hardiness.

He also makes a case for propagating and perpetuating the nicest things in our gardens and making them available to each other. By way of proof he will be bringing rooted cuttings of his special favorites to share with the membership.

Here is an opportunity to learn more about these special rhododendrons and what they can add to our gardens in beauty and variety.

*Photo of Bill Hicks provided by Bill.
R. Camphygynum, a beautiful lepidote
Rhodo at Humboldt Botanical Garden*



Humboldt Botanical Garden Honors Eureka Chapter Members



Irene Van Natter Award – in honor of HBGF's founding visionary, the Irene Van Natter award is given to volunteers with longtime service to the Humboldt Botanical Gardens Foundation. The 2010 Irene Van Natter award recipients are **George and Kathy Burchett**. The Burchetts have volunteered many years both in the Garden and in the HBGF office and every spring they stain the signs at the entrance to the Garden along with the benches in the Garden. (HBG President Evelyn Giddings makes the award to Kathy and George Burchett)



Larry E. Moss Award – Larry Moss served as HBGF board president from 2000 to 2006. His award is given to recognize volunteers with long term service to the Humboldt Botanical Garden. **Bruce Palmer** is the 2010 award recipient, heading up the HBGF Plant Health Committee for several years, as well as helping to write grants for the organization. He is also a past Board Member. (HBG Board member, Jim Sessa and Board President Evelyn Giddings present the award to Bruce)



The Humboldt Botanical Gardens Plant Health Committee meets monthly at the Gardens. The members are pictured from left to right, Steve Sandeen, Eureka Chapter members **Tim Walsh, Nelda Palmer, Colette Beaupre** and Eureka Chapter member Chairman **Bruce Palmer and June Walsh, behind the camera.**



On March 31 Humboldt Botanical Garden had 60 + volunteer students from Humboldt State University come work in the garden. **Tim and June Walsh, Bruce and Nelda Palmer** had the pleasure of planting 20 10-gallon *Rhododendron auriculatum* with the students pictured at left. This group of students had shovel-ready shoes so were put to work digging the big planting holes. The rhodos, which were planted in the **Moss Family Temperate Woodland Garden**, were a gift from **Briggs Nursery** to the Eureka Chapter and **Humboldt Botanical Garden.**

Winter's done,
and April's in the skies.
Earth, look up with laughter
in your eyes! Charles G. D. Roberts (1860–1943)



WORD OF THE MONTH: LEPIDOTE

By Bruce Palmer

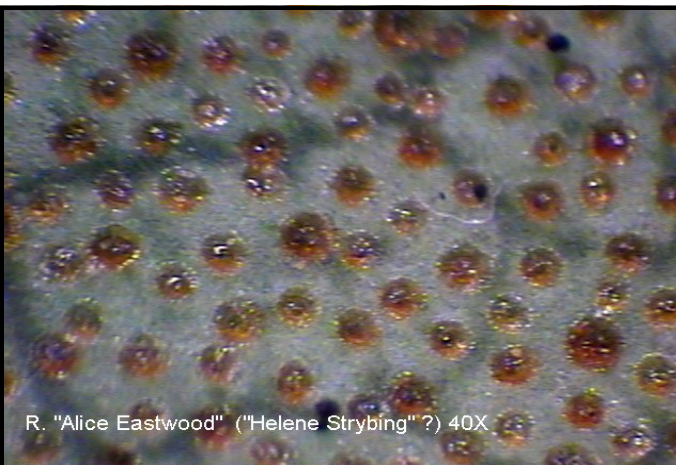
Our speaker for this month, Bill Hicks, will talk about **lepidote** rhododendrons, so we should probably review what they are before the meeting. So the word, related to leaves, is **lepidote**. Most of the flowers are in full bloom now, so the leaves are of secondary interest. Rhododendron leaves, though, do have interesting features that we enjoy at other times of the year. Among the more interesting leaf structures are those that give the surfaces of the leaves distinctive appearances. Preparing for the program, we need to concentrate on one type of structure: scales. Rhododendrons with leaf scales on their undersides are called **lepidote**. It's from the Greek *lepidos*, scale. Originally the term applied to the scales of snakes and fish. The prefix is used in a number of places in biology. Lepidoptera (scale wing), for example, is the order of insects to which butterflies and moths with their scaly wings belong. Lepidodendron (scale tree) is used by paleontologists to describe a long extinct group of large primitive trees whose poorly developed conifer-like leaves left scars on the fossil surfaces that resemble snake skin. The fossil scale marks were so distinctive that early collectors mistook Lepidodendron fossils for fossilized snakes. Lepidodendrons made up a large percentage of the plants that became the coal deposits in Pennsylvania and elsewhere.

Scales are one of many types of structures on the surfaces of leaves. They fall in a category collectively called trichomes (Greek, *trichos*, a hair). Trichomes come in various shapes and have a number of distinct functions. Many aromatic leaves such as rosemary, sage and geranium carry their scent inside swollen hairs that burst open to release the smell. Nettles have hairs containing an irritant. The trichomes that we rhododendron enthusiasts are most familiar with are those hairy leaf coverings we term indumentum (Latin: hair covering).

Scales on **lepidote** rhododendrons are trichomes. They are less conspicuous than indumentum and don't contribute a great deal to the appearance of the leaves. Scales are very small and can't always be seen without a magnifying glass. The illustration of R. 'Alice Eastwood' shows them magnified on the underside of a leaf. Their function is not known for sure (they may repel insects), but they are important in classifying rhododendrons. Classification of the genus is the next best thing to a nightmare for taxonomists but the presence of scales (**lepidote**) or lack of them (**elepidote**, as shown in the photo of R. 'Ivory Ruffles') stands out as a distinct characteristic. **Lepidote** and **elepidote** rhododendrons, each category comprising roughly half of all Rhododendron species, are dramatically different. Their genes are sufficiently different that it is extremely difficult to hybridize between the groups. The seeds are different. The flowers open differently. Nearly all of the beautifully fragrant rhododendrons we grow in our benign coastal climate in northwestern California are **lepidotes**. In summary, **lepidote** rhododendrons are a distinct grouping from **elepidotes** and our gardens would be seriously impoverished without them. Let's appreciate those scales and other leaf embellishments even as we enjoy the beautiful displays in our rhodie beds **and as all of us prepare to enter our trusses and plants in the show on April 29, 30 and May 1.**



R. "Ivory Ruffles" 20X glabrous underleaf



R. "Alice Eastwood" ("Helene Strybing" ?) 40X

**Eureka Chapter, American Rhododendron Society
General Meeting Minutes for March 24, 2011**

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 pm by Vice President, **Tim Walsh**. **Betty Bottemiller**, President, is home with family commitments.

Two free plants were given out to the members who brought guests: **Molly Eggel** brought two guests, **Bob Stanley** and **Ron Gilliland**; **Dorothy Dilling** brought **Laura Moore**. **Bob and Ron became members, too! Welcome!**

Members shared the trusses they brought in.

Plants for sale at the back of the room were: 'Wind Song', 'Blue Baron', 'Horizon Serenity', 'Seaview Sunset', and Polarnacht (\$6 each).

Next month's general meeting will be on April 21st, instead of the usual 4th Thursday.

Annual Show.

Setup will be on the Friday April 29th beginning at 3 p.m.. Entries will be accepted Friday beginning at 6 p.m. and continue to 9 p.m. On Saturday April 30th entries will be accepted from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m., and judging will begin at 10:00 am. The Show booklets have been printed and are here for distribution. Books and Tags will be available at the April 21st meeting. Don Wallace and Tim Walsh are in charge of plant sales. Please return trophies from last year as soon as possible. Every member is asked to enter at least three trusses, plants, photographs, plants and arrangements, to make the show more interesting for the public. There will be a pruning demonstration Saturday and Sunday at 1 p.m.

Gayle Teter reported on volunteers: greeters are needed for 9-noon on Saturday and 10-noon Sunday. This is an easy job – just smile, welcome people, and hand out voting ballots.

Jerry Reynolds demonstrated how to groom trusses for the Show. Look for upright trusses; you need one complete whorl of leaves; leave the stem as long as possible to reach deep in the water bottle; split the bottom of the stem to allow for more water absorption; remove debris or bugs; remove damaged leaves if they are beyond the first whorl; break off any extra buds coming out from the base of the flower. Make out your tags in advance, if possible -- use the book to help you find the proper classification. If you don't know the name of the plant, go by it's color. You can bring in whole plants, bonsai plants, photography featuring rhododendrons and/or azaleas, or floral arrangements.

Don presented a slide show of the plants available for auction and raffle.



Dr. Keith White, from Oregon, is an expert on species rhododendrons. He shared slides of his trip to China and Tibet. Thanks to him and his family for making the trip down to do the presentation.

Tim called for any members who might be interested in becoming a Board member. Please contact any Board Member to find out how you might become more involved. Names and phone numbers are on your newsletters.

Refreshments were provided by **Paula Grabowski** and **Trish Ortiz**. Thank you, Paula. Respectfully submitted by Trish Ortiz, Secretary



Rh. 'Black Sport'

Plant of the Month: R. 'Black Sport'

By Don Wallace

A "sport" is variation from the normal characteristics of a certain plant. However, little is known about this plant, other than its name, so we do not know which cultivar of rhododendron it is a sport of. I wouldn't say the color is black, but it is a very dark burgundy, setting it off from other flower colors. In full bloom, it looks great against yellow or orange flowering rhododendrons like 'Nancy Evans' or 'Seaview Sunset' or 'Orange Marmalade'. It is a vigorous grower with excellent foliage, and seems to be hardier than most. The leaves are a nice dark green, and the plant will be full all the way to the ground. 'Black Sport' would be an excellent choice for someone just starting to grow rhododendrons, as it is not fussy about the soil conditions, and will thrive with little care.

The 39th Annual Rhododendron Show and Plant Sale

By Nelda Palmer

My gosh! Is it that time already?? Our rhodies are just beginning to show color. We may have some of those early bloomers like 'Else Frye' and 'Snow Lady'. Lots of buds but not much time left. We would really like to have at least **3 trusses from each member**. Can you imagine how wonderful the tables will look??

Location: Miles Hall, St. Bernard's Elementary School at 115 Henderson Street, Eureka, California. Open to the public: **Saturday April 30th from 10 to 6 and Sunday May 1st from 10 to 4**. There will be **demonstrations of pruning at 1 PM on both days**. The public is encouraged to enter trusses.

Trusses will be accepted for display from 6 PM until 9 PM on Friday and from 7 AM until 9 AM on Saturday. No entries will be accepted after 9 AM.

Set up will begin at 3:00 PM on Friday the 29th for those of you who are planning to help. We will need the most help with filling the bottles for the trusses. You can also bring your trusses at that time but they will not be accepted for display until 6 PM. Be sure they have plenty of water and the stems are cut long enough to allow the most water to get into the truss. Sheets will be ready for covering the tables and risers.

For the sale: helping hands will be needed to unload the trailer full of plants. Tim and Don will be there to unload and supervise. First thing Saturday AM the plants will be put out front and organized by name.

Anyone can **enter trusses and plants**. If you have a **special plant** that can be dug or is in a pot, bring it in. Also, don't forget there is an **Education category**. We have had some really interesting ones in the past. The **photography** has been a well-filled section. Be sure the **photos are matted and not framed**. Carol Dunning will be happy to receive any and all entries for the **flower arrangements**. We should have that table at the front of the hall simply full of arrangements. Remember, that if you don't believe your flowers are "good enough" for judging, bring them anyway. They will look great as examples of the type of rhododendron they are. They can also fill in the spaces on the tables after the judging. We need all we can get.

The **Bonsai Society** will be sharing our show space again this year for added appeal.

This is a great time for every one to participate, bring your family, friends and neighbors.

People who join will be able to have their choice of a free one-gallon plant from the plant sale for their paid membership!

Photos are those of the Newsletter editor, June Walsh, unless otherwise noted. Permission is granted to reprint any portion of this publication provided credit to the author and Chapter is given. The picture of R. falconeri (?) on page one was provided by Abby Wasetis.



Eureka Chapter/American Rhododendron Society
2050 Irving Drive
Eureka, CA 95503-7022

Eureka Chapter is published monthly except during July and August. Submissions from members are encouraged and should be mailed to June Walsh, Bulletin Editor, 2050 Irving Drive, Eureka, CA 95503-7022. Membership information and applications are also available from June Walsh. Eureka Chapter is a member of the Humboldt Botanical Gardens Foundation, Eureka, Calif., and The Rhododendron Species Foundation, Federal Way, Wash. Eureka Chapter is a chapter of the American Rhododendron Society.

Eureka Chapter

Future Programs

April 21, 2011 (This is a date Change)

April 29, 30 and May 1

May 11 –15, 2011

May 26, 2011

June 5, 2011

Bill Hicks, “Lepidote Rhododendrons”

Rhododendron Show and Sale

ARS Annual Convention, Vancouver WA

Mini– Show and Pizza

Garden Tour and Potluck Picnic

July and August...weed and dead head we will meet again September 22 , 2011 for Pizza and Salad. Programs are subject to change.

Nominations for Eureka Chapter Officers and Board Members

September 2011 to June 2012

President, Bruce Palmer

Vice President, Tim Walsh

Secretary, Gail Ledbetter

Membership, Trish Ortiz

Treasurer, June Walsh

Publicity, Ellie Gayner

Past President, Betty Bottemiller

Directors at Large, Doug Batt and Jerry Reynolds

Programs, Don Wallace

Show Committee, Bruce and Nelda Palmer, Tom and Mary Marking

Nominations from the membership are open from now until the election at the June 5th potluck.

Eureka Chapter Officers and Board Members

September 2010 to June 2011

Betty Bottemiller, President

Tim Walsh, Vice President

Trish Ortiz, Secretary

June Walsh, Treasurer, Membership, Newsletter

Don Wallace, Programs

Bruce and Nelda Palmer, Show Co-Chairs

Ellie Gayner, Publicity

Jerry Reynolds, Director

Doug Batt, Director

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