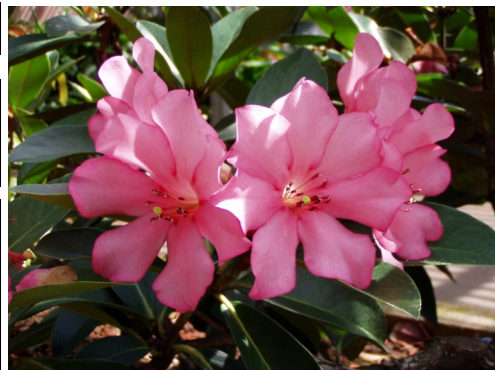


## AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

### Eureka Chapter

**The next meeting**  
Thursday March 22, 7:00 p.m.  
Woman's Club  
1531 J Street  
Eureka, California

Pre-Meeting No Host Dinner 5:15  
Kyoto, 320 F Street Eureka,  
**Call Nelda, 707-443-8049**  
Meal will be served family-style to appeal  
to all fixed price \$20 per person.  
**Reservations required.**



Rhododendron 'Aleksandr' a Vireya outside on Walsh's back porch

## March 2012

## Steve Hootman—Modern Day Plant Hunter



Hunting the Elusive Bigfoot of China: The Chongqing, Guizhou & Guangxi Expedition to China, 2010  
All Photographs by Steve Hootman unless otherwise noted.

1. Dayao Shan, Guangxi, China.
2. *R. platypodum*, Glendoick (Kenneth Cox).
3. *R. fortunei* on the Leigong Shan, Guizhou, China.

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### Hunting the Elusive Big Foot of China; From Chongqing to Guizhou and Guangxi

If you attend only one meeting this year let it be this one! The Eureka Chapter will meet **Thursday March 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at the Woman's Club 1531 J Street** in Eureka. This is the meeting we have been eagerly anticipating as **Steve Hootman of the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden** brings us news of his latest collecting trips to Asia. He 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 in Washington, and Dr. Keith White, RSBG Board Member (who visited us in March 2011).

Steve will tell us of their adventures exploring incredible, yet dauntingly difficult terrain, some of the climbing on this trip was straight up thousand foot cliffs! Steve's beautiful photographs (*Continued Page 2*)

*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. Page 57 from the RSF Yearbook used with permission.*

**Hootman**, *Continued from page 1*,

will show us these last wild habitats of rhododendrons. His broad knowledge of the genus which he so generously shares with Eureka Chapter members, comprise a trove of information which is not commonly available.

This will be a glimpse of what we have to look forward to growing in our own gardens! These are seed collecting trips as well as botanical surveys, and it won't be long before the fruits of his efforts will be offered as young plants on the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden plant distribution list.

Steve Hootman is the Executive Director and Curator of the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden, in Federal Way, Washington. Over the past 26 years Steve has become a foremost international authority on Rhododendron taxonomy and distribution. He was awarded the American Rhododendron Society's highest honor, the Gold Medal, in 2007 for his internationally significant scope of work with the genus Rhododendron.

The RSBG maintains the largest collection of species rhododendrons in the United States and is committed to disseminating information about them, as well as plants and seeds, to further understanding of this large, complex and fascinating genus.

The Eureka Chapter is a member of the RSBG which entitles chapter members to visit the garden in Federal Way and order from their extensive catalogue. Many of the plants in the Moss Family Temperate Woodland Garden at Humboldt Botanical Garden began their lives as seeds collected or cutting from plants sourced on one of Steve's expeditions, including maddenii Rhododendrons, Agapetes and Gautheria. HBG has the perfect growing environment for these tender species.

Thanks to Eureka Chapter members **Bruce Palmer** and **Max Abrahamsen** labels are being made and plants are beginning to be identified at Humboldt Botanical Gardens. Bruce and Max were instrumental in writing grant applications for labeling, signage and visitor maps.



The Endowment Fund of the American Rhododendron Society was one of several grants awarded for this project. Come see the labels and all the blooming rhodos and flowering trees.



**This is the root of all weevils!**

Borrowed from Sandra Jensen, March Macrophyllum, Siuslaw Chapter ARS



## Plant of the Month: Rhododendron 'Roy Hudson'

By, Don Wallace



Rh. 'Roy Hudson'

R. 'Roy Hudson' was hybridized by California Chapter member the late Howard Keegan in 1970. It is a cross of *Rhododendron burmanicum* x *Rhododendron nuttallii*, probably as an attempt to create a hardier *R. nuttallii* plant. Several other rhododendron hybridizers have made this, or similar crosses and they are all nice plants. R. 'Roy Hudson' has smaller flowers and leaves than *R. nuttallii*, as one would expect, as *R. burmanicum* has small leaves and small yellow flowers. The flowers of

'Roy Hudson' have a "creamy" appearance, coming from the *R. burmanicum* influence. The fragrance is light, but on a warm day is easily noticed. This cultivar will appreciate a partially shaded, or morning sun, location in the garden, and will grow to 4-5 ft. tall and 5-6 ft. wide. Roy Hudson was the Director of Strybing Arboretum in Golden Gate Park in the late 1960's into the 1970's. He was especially interested in the maddenii rhododendrons. I received my cuttings of R. 'Roy Hudson' from Eleanor Philp (who passed away in February) who owned Trillium Lane Nursery in Fort Bragg. R. 'Roy Hudson' has won Top Award Trophies, including Best of Show, at both the Noyo Chapter's show as well as the Siuslaw Chapter's show.

## The Vernal Equinox

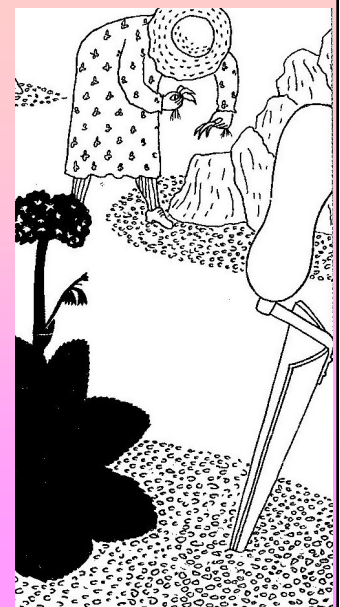
Ah, spring! This season brings increasing daylight, warming temperatures, and the rebirth of flora and fauna. Spring begins in the Northern Hemisphere on March 20, 2012.

The word *equinox* is derived from the Latin words meaning "equal night." The spring and fall equinoxes are the only dates with equal daylight and dark as the Sun crosses the celestial equator. At the equinoxes, the tilt of Earth relative to the Sun is zero, which means that Earth's axis neither points toward nor away from the Sun. (However, the tilt of Earth relative to its plane of orbit, called the ecliptic plane, is always about 23.5 degrees.)

### Gardening Lore

Cabbage seeds are often planted today, and old-time farmers believed that to make them grow well, you needed to plant them while wearing your nightclothes. (If you see your editor in her garden in her nightie you will know what she is up to.)

From The Old Farmer's Almanac



## The President's Musings for March – What's a Species?

This month we are very privileged to have Steve Hootman as our speaker. Steve is the Executive Director of the Rhododendron Species Foundation and its Plant Hunter in the tradition of J. D. Hooker, George Forrest and Joseph Rock. We are in for a real treat. The question for this month, asked several times at meetings, is “what is a species”? Well.....It's not an easy question to address. The term species in biology is both singular and plural; specie is money. The definition is a bit fuzzy. Basically, organisms belong to the same species if they interbreed freely and produce fertile offspring in nature. In nature, members of the same species usually don't interbreed with other groups (species) that may be somewhat similar.

Under cultivation, two similar species can often be crossed artificially. The result is called a hybrid. Hybridizing is relatively easy in our favorite genus *Rhododendron*, a rather promiscuous bunch of plants compared to some others. That ease of human-assisted cross-breeding is what has produced the multitude of beautiful hybrids we enjoy so much.

The problem of defining a species has produced some heated discussions among biologists. They are divided into two camps, dubbed “lumpers” and “splitters”. Splitters believe that small differences between groups should define a species. Lumpers think that small differences are not definitive and that similar species should be lumped together. There is a tendency in recent years to combine plants that used to be in separate species into one and designate sub-species and varieties. The fragrant species *Rhododendron maddenii* is a good current illustration. Most of us have a specimen or two in our gardens with labels that predate the decision to lump species and call the various forms subspecies of *R. maddenii*. All of this goes to show that our attempts to make sense of nature don't always reflect what's going on in the real world; the plants didn't ask us for our opinions.

Having thoroughly muddled the waters with fuzzy definitions, let me assure that Steve's talk won't be like this. He will be extremely interesting and informative. You won't want to miss Steve's talk; mark the 22<sup>nd</sup> on your calendar. *Bruce Palmer*

## Rhododendron Show and Sale April 27 to 29, 2012

### **Show Rule Change**

The Board approved the Rhody show committee recommendation not to limit the number of entries for any exhibitor. An exhibitor is still limited to one cultivar in any group or sub-group. An example would be in Class 2, Hybrids, trusses and sprays; Group I Deep Red, an exhibitor could enter a truss of 'Arthur Osborne', 'Black Prince' and 'Baden Baden'. The show is less than 6 weeks away, let's hope for nice weather so all our trusses and sprays look fantastic for the show!

### **Green Champagne Bottles Needed!!**

The Rhody Show needs your help in collecting green champagne bottle for our truss displays. The champagne bottles have a wider base, stronger glass and hold more water than wine bottles making them safer to use in our show. If you have any connections to restaurants and stores that would save the bottles and boxes for the Chapter that would be a great help. In the meantime, if you drink champagne, please save the bottles.

For more information call Mary Marking at 839-2073

## ***We need your photos for the Rhodo Show April 28 and 29***

*To help you capture some great images we honor the legacy of one of the grand ladies of rhododendrons and of photography – Eleanor Philp, of Noyo and Eureka Chapters, who passed away in early February. Eleanor wrote this article some years ago; it has been reprinted in several Chapters' Newsletters. You will note that Eleanor used film at the time she wrote this article, however most of her comments translate well to digital photography and it is much less costly to "destroy" unwanted evidence.*

When I pick up my camera to photograph for the day, I feel certain that this time I will get 'A BETTER IMAGE.' The equipment decide to use at any given time depends on my plans for that day. For me there is not just one camera, or one lens that would be right for all jobs.

**EQUIPMENT:** Know your equipment. This ranks at the top of my list of rules. Take time to study your camera, including the lenses and accessories. When you become familiar with these pieces, they treat you like old friends, doing their best for you.

**COMPOSITION RULES:** Composition rules are not hard and fast but rather guidelines, which can often be successfully stretched. Know the rules and consider them carefully when looking through your viewfinder. Think of using other choices before releasing the shutter. Composition means the arrangement of all elements in a picture, including shapes, colors, and shades. In the end you must learn to trust your own eyes and judgment. Learning the techniques of photography is much easier than training yourself to see good photographs. Composing well takes time and practice.

**LIGHTING:** When used with thought and care, lighting adds dimension to your photos. I prefer sun on my subject if doing close-ups. For garden scenes I like diffused light. It spreads evenly, giving a softening of texture not found under bright light. If the sun shines too brightly, the sunny areas look too light and shady areas too dark. If using subdued lighting, the whole scene comes together with better balance.

**NATURAL LIGHT:** The sun at a 45 degree angle provides the most versatile light. Front light, sidelight, or backlight are available simply by changing where you place your camera. When doing close-ups in my own garden, I find I need to consider conditions other than just light. The sun doesn't rise over the trees until mid-morning, and, by early afternoon, the wind starts rising. To use sun for close-ups, I must work within the fairly short time span of late morning. Getting the garden scenes is much better then. The early daylight, with no wind, provides ideal time for this type of photography. You need to work within the conditions available to you when you do your own work.

**FRONT LIGHTING:** Front lighting works well for showing all the details on the surface of your subject.

**SIDELIGHTING:** This is an excellent light, whenever possible, that adds depth and drama, bringing out texture. It is the most useful type of light when texture is important.

**BACKLIGHTING:** Backlighting is the most dramatic light of all when used for showing hair on flowers, leaves, and insects.

**CLOSE-UPS:** Macro lenses close focus and give you a flat field photograph. Using a standard lens can distort the edges if you get too close to your subject. A macro lens does not make a close-up or any photo look different. It does, however, keep everything in focus right to the edges. For extreme close-ups of flowers or other subjects, this is important.

**TRIPOD:** Using a tripod improves almost any photograph, especially close-up photography. With your camera mounted on a tripod, carefully check the viewfinder, to ensure that you are getting what you want, because what you see is what you're going to get. Remember that when you magnify anything on film you also magnify camera vibrations and subject movement. Use a tripod heavy enough to stop any movement in the wind, but light enough for you to carry. Use your tripod to crop your picture before you release the shutter. You can slowly adjust the camera, mounted on the tripod, to ensure you see exactly what you want.

**THE EYE OF THE CAMERA:** (HOW THE CAMERA SEES) The camera sees objects differently than the human eye. Our eyes mentally correct distortions while the camera does not. Avoid a background that is distracting, or the wrong color. You may not notice while you concentrate on the main subject, but the camera sees and remembers all. Become accustomed to looking at everything in your viewfinder.

**IN CONCLUSION:** As important as anything said here, I urge you to enjoy! Photography is a hobby that enhances your enjoyment whenever you use it. It continues to give pleasure as you go over your pictures in years to come. You share it with friends and family. Memories flood back as you remember details otherwise forgotten. It teaches you to look with a closer eye, seeing more of what surrounds you. It provides something that can't be done with most hobbies: If the results don't satisfy you, learn from the error and destroy the evidence. HAVE FUN!



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

March 22, 2012, 7:00 PM  
April 26, 2012, 7:00 PM  
April 28 & 29  
May 4 to 7, 2012  
May 24, 2012, 6:00 PM  
June 10, 2012  
September 21 to 23, 2012

**Steve Hootman**, Rhododendron Collecting in the Wild  
**Rhodo 101**  
**Rhododendron Festival Flower Show and Plant Sale**  
**ARS Annual Convention**, Asheville, North Carolina  
Members' **Mini Show** and Potluck  
Members' **Garden Tour** and Potluck picnic  
Western Regional ARS Conference, Nanaimo, BC

*Programs are subject to change.*

### Happenings at Humboldt Botanical Garden

Education Seminars

March 17th **Bruce Palmer** "What's in a name?" How did plants get their names?

April 21st **Tim Walsh** "The plants of the Moss Family Temperate Woodland Garden"

Plant sales

May 5th and May 12th

All events take place at Humboldt Botanical Gardens for more information or to register (707) 442-5139 or [hbgf@hbgf.org](mailto:hbgf@hbgf.org)

### Eureka Chapter Officers and Board Members September 2011 to June 2012

Bruce Palmer, President	707-443-8045	bnpalmer@humboldt1.com
Betty Bottemiller, Past President	707-822-4935	bbbettybotts@gmail.com
Tim Walsh, Vice President	707-443-0604	timwalsh1@suddenlink.net
Gail Ledbetter, Secretary	707-822-9678	luvchoc@pacbell.net
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