

AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

Eureka Chapter

The next meeting
Thursday March 27 , 7:00 p.m.
Woman's Club
1531 J Street
Eureka, California

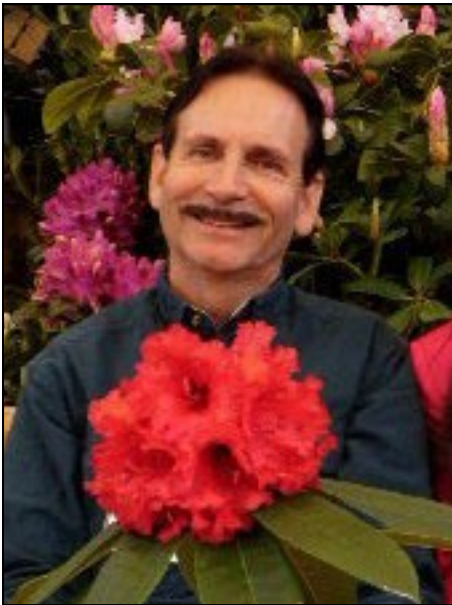
Pre-Meeting No Host Dinner 5:15
Sea Grill 316 E Street, Eureka
Call Nelda, 707-443-8049
For a reservation so there will be enough
seating in the Banquet room



Feed me, Seymour!~

March 2011

Mendocino Coast Botanical Garden Tour in Pictures



The Eureka Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society will meet Thursday March 27th at the Eureka Woman's Club 1531 J Street in Eureka. The guest speaker will be Dennis McKiver from Noyo Chapter in Fort Bragg.

Dennis McKiver has been a member of the Noyo Chapter American Rhododendron Society since 2001. He grew up with a family of gardeners on a small family farm. His father raised and sold peaches, plums, raspberries, boysenberries, and gladiola bulbs. His father showed his prize-winning gladiolas at local flower shows. His grandmother also raised prize-winning Hydrangeas, so he had some good teachers on how to grow prize winning flowers from a young age. As a child he raised and sold vegetables to earn money and enjoyed the challenge of growing giant pumpkins, tomatoes and banana squash.

When he and his wife Valerie bought their house in Fort Bragg in 2001, it had a number of large rhododendrons growing on the property. They love the area wildlife, so they didn't want to fence them off their property. They loved the beauty of the rhododendrons and with the added benefit that the deer didn't want to eat them, and because they came in a wide variety of sizes and forms, they chose to make rhododendrons their primary landscape plantings. In addition, the Forest Lane neighborhood they lived in was a noted rhododendron area, with many wild rhododendrons growing along the road, and being the home of the late Dr. Len Charvet, a noted local rhododendron hybridizer and presently the home of many other Rhododendron Society members. After joining the Noyo Chapter, in addition to reading every rhododendron book he could get his hands on, he learned from many local rhododendron growers and hybridizers like Ken Jones, Phil Johnson, Bob Boddy, Len Charvet, Jim Celeri, Eleanor and Bruce Philp, Bill and Loraine Fee, Polo de Lorenzo, Kathy Love and Peter Schick to name a few. Peter Schick got him interested in rhododendron species and Dennis is currently a member of the Species Foundation and his rhododendron garden contains many species. Presently Dennis has over 1,000 varieties of rhododendron hybrids and species growing on his property.

Dennis and Valerie became members and volunteers at the local Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens because of the large variety and number of rhododendrons growing on the property, over 1000, many of which are over 50 years old. Dennis used the named varieties at the Botanical Gardens to identify the unnamed rhododendrons growing on his property. He has since helped the Botanical Gardens identify numerous unnamed rhododendrons growing on the property. Dennis and Valerie regularly volunteer at Botanical Garden's fund raising and other charitable events. Each spring Dennis leads weekly tours of the gardens with an emphasis on how to plant and raise rhododendrons and which ones will do the best in different climatic zones. During this month's program Dennis will lead us on a photo tour of the Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens Rhododendron Collection. *Photo submitted By Dennis McKiver*

WORD OF THE MONTH; TRUSS

By Bruce Palmer

The Rhododendron blooming season is upon us, so this month's word is **TRUSS**. I used that word a few years ago, but it bears repeating, given that our flower show is next month and many of our newer members don't know that's what we call most of our rhodie flower groupings. Besides, we should all be thinking about what trusses we will bring to the show. The word is from the Old French *trousser*, to pack into a bundle. In botany it does not mean something that holds up a bridge or a hernia or is related to the Thanksgiving turkey when it's ready for the oven, nor is it related to trousers, which comes from the same root. Botanists use a variety of terms to describe how flowers are held in groups, including spikes (as in foxglove), umbels (as in fennel and dill), panicles (as in Delphinium), catkins (as in willow), and heads (as in sunflowers). If a plant bears its flowers in a truss, there is a group of fairly large flowers whose buds are packed in a bundle at the end of a branch, referred to as a terminal inflorescence rather than a truss in the current RHS Rhododendron Handbook. The truss is classed technically as a raceme (Latin for a bunch of grapes). An open truss doesn't look like a bunch of grapes, but when you deadhead the spent stem, the rhachis (Greek for spine), looks like what is left over after you ate the grapes. Despite the resemblance, grapes don't bear their flowers in racemes. Grape inflorescences are called cymes.

Not all members of the genus Rhododendron bear their flowers in trusses, but almost all of the rhodies we have in our yards are in the subgenus Hymenanthus (Greek: hymen, a membrane and anthos, a flower), all of whose members bear trusses. Because of that, most of the rhodies in our annual flower show are in trusses. We've gotten away from calling our show a truss show, possibly for public relations reasons. Flower show is probably better given that the viewing public isn't familiar with the term in its botanical context and not all of the displays are trusses. With or without trusses, the season is here when we can go out every day to enjoy the many members of the genus Rhododendron showing off in our gardens.



With or without member participation the show will go on at the end of April, but we have been blessed in the past with very high percentages of member entries and help. Please remember to save the dates of April 25, 26 and 27 for the big event. Bring flowers and plan to help. We always have a great time.

Photo provided by Bruce is a 'ball' truss of Rhododendron nivium



Where is Max? Max Abrahamsen, our wandering-on-leave-of-absence-membership-chief is roaming the country in a newly acquired RV. Here he is in sunny Florida visiting one of many botanical gardens on his route of discovery.

We hope that on his return he will give a travel log program of the best botanical gardens he has seen and maybe some pointers on attracting new members to botanical gardens and the American Rhododendron Society. Happy Trails, Max.



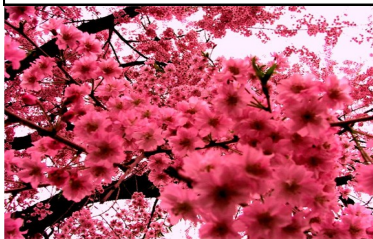
R. 'Kimberly'

Plant of the Month: *Rhododendron* 'Kimberly'

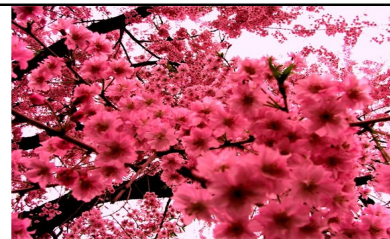
By Don Wallace

One of my very favorite rhododendrons is R. 'Kimberly'. Hybridized by Harold Greer of Greer Gardens in Eugene, Oregon. The parentage is R. *williamsianum* x R. *fortunei*. This "mouse x elephant" cross has the round leaves of R. *williamsianum* and the purple leaf petioles of R. *fortunei*. The flowers take after R. *williamsianum* more, as they are lax bell-like in appearance. The plant has other redeeming qualities. It grows into a

very attractive mound approximately 2 ft. tall x 4 ft. wide in 10 years with roundish leaves that contrast with other rhododendrons or other plants nearby. The flower buds are a dark purplish color, matching the leaf petioles and are pleasing to the eye. R. 'Kimberly' grows slowly, but will never outgrow its space either. Due to the R. *fortunei* in its bloodlines, there is a slight fragrance to the flowers, which is another plus. When in bloom, the foliage completely disappears giving the appearance of a large bouquet. Lovely!



*So many memories
flood my mind
cherry blossoms
Bashō*



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 42nd Annual Rhododendron Show and Plant Sale

By Mary Marking

It's that time of year, the temperature is starting to warm up, rhodies are starting to bloom and the annual Rhodie show and plant sale is just a month away!!!

Location: Miles Hall, St. Bernard's Elementary School at 115 Henderson Street, Eureka, California.

Open to the public: Saturday April 26th from 10:00 to 3:00 and Sunday April 27th from 10:00 to 3:00.

Set up will begin at 3:00 PM on Friday the 25th for those of you who are planning to help. You can also bring your trusses, plants, educational displays, flower arrangements and photos at that time but they will not be accepted for display until 5 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

Trusses will be accepted for display on Friday April 25th from 5 PM until 8:30 PM and Saturday April 26th from 7:30 AM until 9 AM. No entries will be accepted after 9 AM on Saturday. Your friends, relatives, neighbors and the public are encouraged to enter trusses.

This year we will have the hall all to ourselves. In order to have a great show we need everyone to participate by bring at least 3 trusses. Can you imagine how wonderful the tables will look? We will need the most help with filling the bottles for the trusses.

Anyone can enter trusses and plants, Photography, Educational and Flower Arrangements. 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 displays in the past. The **Photography Exhibit** has been a well-filled section. Be sure the photos are matted and not framed. New this year there will be a **Youth Class**, for youngsters 15 years old and younger, encourage all the young people you know to participate!

Margaret Cole will be happy to receive any and all entries for the **Flower Arrangements**. This year we have changed and added categories. Please see the rules for the changes. We would love to have that table at the front of the hall simply full of arrangements. To ensure that there is enough space please call or email Margaret (707-822-8353 or mscole2002@suddenlink.net) to reserve your space by the end of the Chapter meeting April 24th. All arrangement entries will be assigned a space on the arrangement table Friday during setup.

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.

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

Tear Down will begin at **3:00 Sunday April 27th** after which all participants will be served pizza for their diligent hard work.

Volunteers are still needed for the show. This is fun work for great pay (you will be thanked profusely). If you haven't signed up for a shift please see Diane Larkin at the meeting.

"In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt."-- Margaret Atwood



Urtica dioica, Stinging Nettle is abundant this time of year, even with our paucity of rain. If you have nettles in your garden you know the painful sting of touching it. The sting is caused by hollow stinging hairs on the leaves and stems called trichomes which act as hypodermic needles injecting a cocktail of histamine into any human or animal passing by. It is reported that if you are stung you can find a leaf of dock (*Rumex* sp), which often grows in the same patch, crumple the leaf and rub the juice onto the affected area...I am not going to do the experiment...on purpose.

Interesting facts;

- Nettles are dioecious, meaning there are girl plants and boy plants.
- They have 25% protein, many vitamins, and taste like a spinach/grass/cucumber cross when cooked
- Grows across North America and Mexico but is most abundant in the Pacific Northwest
- Steep 10 minutes in boiling water for a spring tonic, the water deactivates the sting
- The Brits have a raw nettle eating contest, whosoever may eat the most in 1 hour wins...and can stick out their tongue, which will be black,

as proof.

- Mowing increases plant density, tilling can reduce the number of plants.
- Several moths and butterflies spend their larval lives eating nettles, with blackened tongues (?)
- Plants are high in nitrogen.



Former Eureka Chapter secretary William G. "Bill" Furst died Feb. 21, 2014, after a five-month battle with cancer.

Bill was born in Flushing, Queens, New York, on March 5, 1947, and lived there for the firsts 47 years of his life. After college, Bill taught high school English in New York City, but eventually switched careers to become a legal secretary.

He began a correspondence with William Troiano of Santa Barbara, Calif., in 1993, and the year following he moved to Santa Barbara. He continued his legal career in Santa Barbara until 2004 when "the Bills" moved to Eureka.

Bill worked for the Humboldt County Superior Court until his retirement in April 2012. He joined the Eureka Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society shortly after moving to Eureka and served as secretary for two terms. He was also active in the Fuchsia Society and the Bonsai Society.

He is survived by his life partner of 20 years, William Troiano of Eureka, and by a number of cousins scattered across the country. Plans for a celebration of life will be announced in the near future.



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 27, 2014

Dennis McKiver, Mendocino Coast Botanical Garden

April 24, 2014

Jack Olsen, Companion Plants for Rhodos

April 25 to 27, 2014

Eureka Chapter Rhodo Show and Sale

May 10 and 11, 2014

Noyo Chapter Show and Plant Sale, Fort Bragg

May 16 to 18, 2014

ARS Spring Convention, Cleveland, Ohio

May 22, 2014

Mini Show and Potluck

June 8, 2014

Member Garden Tour and Potluck Picnic

July and August

Weed and Water!

September 18, 2014

This is a date Change! Bruce Palmer, native plants of Hawaii, Potluck Luau, Hawaiian shirt contest

Sept. 26-28, 2014

Western Regional Conference, Everett, WA

October 23, 2014

To Be Announced

Programs are subject to change

Eureka Chapter Officers and Board Members

September 2013 to June 2014

President, Bruce Palmer

Publicity, Ellie Gayner

Vice President, Jerry Reynolds

Past President, Betty Bottemiller

Secretary, Gail Ledbetter

Programs, Don Wallace

Treasurer, Tim Walsh

Membership, Ellen Gill (Max is on leave)

Director at Large, Nelda Palmer

Show Committee, Tom and Mary Marking

Newsletter Editor, June Walsh

For board member contact information or if you are interested in attending a board meeting, call or email June Walsh 707-443-0604