

AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

Eureka Chapter

The next meeting

*Thursday October 23, 7:00 p.m.
Woman's Club
1531 J Street
Eureka, California*

Pre-Meeting No Host Dinner 5:15

***Marcelli's , 1323 5th Street
Eureka, Call Nelda, 707-443-8049***
*For a reservation so there will be enough
seating and food. Fixed price / menu*



*Rhododendron nuttallii at
Humboldt Botanical Garden*

October 2014

'California Rhodo Hybrids, Old & New'



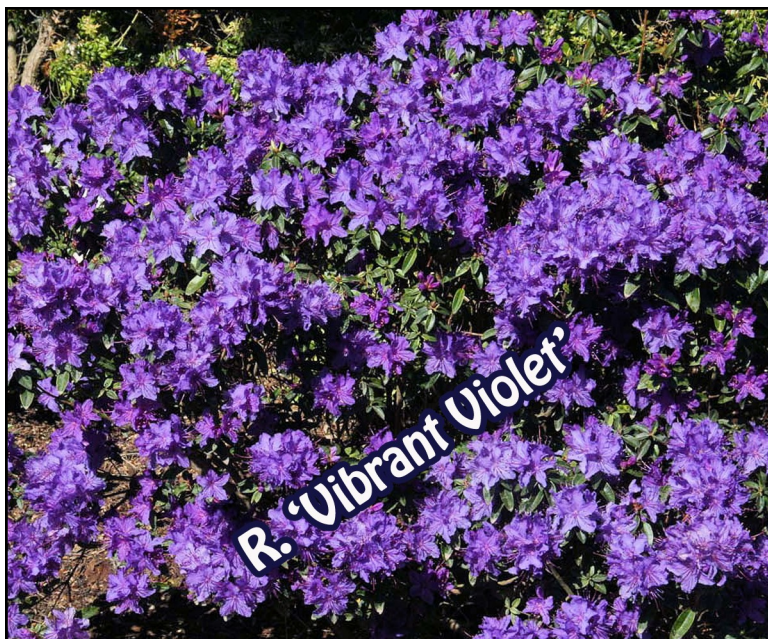
The Eureka Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society will have its October meeting on Thursday, October 23, 2014. The meeting and program will be held at the Eureka Woman's Club 1531 J Street in Eureka beginning at 7:00 P.M..

Our guest speaker will be American Rhododendron Society Silver Medal honoree **Parker Smith**, who was the speaker at the first meeting of the Eureka Chapter that Tim and June Walsh attended back in the dark ages. Parker will discuss and illustrate older Northern California created hybrids that have proven their worth, with some personal notes about their creators. These will be his choices as the best created by each hybridizer over the past 50 or so years and ones that are interesting, dependable and improvements over their parents or similar hybrids. Most of the photos used to illustrate these will be taken from Parker's recent book **'Rhododendrons for California'** (copies will be for sale at the meeting). In addition to these older hybrids, he will show some that may have been overlooked and deserve, in his opinion, being better known. Parker will also discuss some newer ones that are just being introduced and, hopefully, will become available in the near future.

Parker is from a small town in Massachusetts. He arrived in California in 1962 to attend UC Berkeley where he received his Masters Degree in Landscape Architecture in 1965. He has been licensed in California and designing landscapes for over 40 years, throughout California but primarily in the Sonoma and Napa Areas. Parker and his wife Sharon live in Santa Rosa now after many years in Sebastopol, and about a year on Maui. They grow most of their rhodies in containers now since their outdoor space is limited and the tree roots too competitive. Parker still attempts some hybridizing in hopes of creating a new and exciting member of the always expanding Rhododendron family.

This will be a great program to bring a guest to...and get a free plant. If you guest joins the Eureka Chapter, they too will get a free plant!

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.



Plant of the Month *Rhododendron* 'Vibrant Violet'

A favorite of the purple lovers, this small leaved Lepidote rhododendron is better than most of the rest of this type. The plant will make a compact shrub that is wider than tall, and will not be taller than 3 ft. in 10 years. Also, the shiny green leaves hold well, making the plant full and lush. The hybridizer is Frank Fujioka of Whidbey Island, off the coast of Seattle, Washington. Frank has given us many of the best rhododendrons including R. 'Seaview Sunset', R. 'Glowing Gold', R. 'Starbright Champagne', R. 'Silver Skies,

R. 'Saffron Silk', R. 'Pink Pinwheels', R. 'Elsie Watson', and many others. Frank wanted a smaller, more compact purple rhododendron, so he crossed one of the smallest rhododendrons, *R. impeditum* with the taller *R. augustinii*, of which there are many hybrids. The name is very appropriate, as they are truly "Vibrant Violet" flowers! *By Don Wallace*

It is Membership Renewal time!

If you haven't yet renewed there is a stamped and addressed envelope on you desk waiting for your renewal, please send it or bring it to the October 23rd meeting. And, think about what a great time it is to *bring a new friend or family member* to a meeting and *get a free plant*. If your friend or family *becomes a member*, they *too will get a free plant!*



Everything you wanted to ask but were afraid to!

Do you want to have any particular Rhododendron questions answered? How and when to fertilize? Summer irrigation? Thrips, weevils, caterpillars? When and how to mulch? To prune or not to prune...or pinch?

The December 4th Holiday meeting will feature a Rhodo 101, so let us know now what subjects you would like to have covered.

Email or call June Walsh, Rhodyhostel@suddenlink.net or 707-443-0604

WORD OF THE MONTH

By Bruce Palmer

This month's word is NEMATODE. The word is from the Greek *nematos*, meaning thread. Nematodes are often called thread worms. The word comes to mind because we spread a few million beneficial nematodes around our rhodie beds last week hoping to cut down on the weevil damage done to leaves. The idea is far from original; Paula Trinoskey tried this approach in 2005, the last time I wrote about nematodes. Root or vine weevils are those insects that chew holes in your rhodie leaves so you can't win a prize at the show in April. The photo of leaves from R. 'Anah Kruschke' shows how bad it can get.

The phylum Nematoda is by far the largest in the animal kingdom. Most nematodes are microscopic but intestinal round worms can exceed a foot in length. It is estimated that about 80% of all animal species are nematodes and that their collective weight may exceed the total weight of all other animals on earth. Nematodes are the most primitive animals with a straight-through digestive system; more primitive animals must eat and get rid of waste through their mouths. Most nematodes are really bad actors, causing in humans such things as elephantiasis, roundworm infections in little kids, trichinosis, heartworms and hookworms. In plants they cause serious galls on roots that can set plants back and even kill them.

We can take advantage of the parasitic tendencies of nematodes to control insect pests. A number of nematode species are sold as biological controls for insects. The life cycle of *Heterorhabditis bacteriophora* is a typical illustration of how this works. The worms play host to a bioluminescent bacteria, *Photobacterium*, which is harmless to nematodes but toxic to insects. The nematode larvae invade a weevil and inject the bacteria into the insect. The insect acts as a petri dish, allowing the bacteria to multiply, then dies. Meanwhile, the nematodes inside the insect eat the bacteria and the insect tissue and reproduce, continuing the nematode life cycle. Entomopathogenic (insect killing) nematodes are sold by a number of companies in the larval form for biological control of insects. We bought ours from Don Wallace. There are roughly a million nematodes in a small plastic bag. The accompanying photo from one drop of water shows how many of the little critters there are. You dilute them in water and apply the water to the soil around the plants that are being attacked by weevils. The nematodes like moderate temperatures, so our benign climate here on the North Coast of California should work for them. Don says his trials worked for five years. We will now sit back and hope that the massive invasion of nematodes will set back the weevil population far enough that we can win some prizes at next year's flower show.



Leaf damage by weevils on R. 'Anah Kruschke'



Beneficial nematodes in a drop of water magnified 40 times

President Jerry's Message

The Western Regional Conference in Everett, Washington was most interesting and informative. The **Eureka Chapter** was represented by five members – **Tim and June Walsh**; **John Winding**, an associate member whose home chapter is Noyo; **Dr. Paul Anderson**, one of the founders of Eureka Chapter and now an associate member whose home chapter is California; and me, **Jerry Reynolds**.

The break-out sessions on Saturday were both informative and entertaining. I found **Bob Zimmerman's** "The Siren Song of Species" to be really informative and I thoroughly enjoyed **Tim Walsh's** presentation on the development of the **Humboldt Botanical Gardens**.

Especially enjoyable was **Lois Blackmore's** tribute to hybridizer **Jim Barlup** on Friday evening. Her slides of some of the 192 hybrids Jim has registered were outstanding. And we can expect more, because Jim is still going strong at 81.

Eureka Chapter's board is considering hosting the 2017 national ARS convention and we will be forming a committee to explore the idea with the goal of making a decision by May. If you are interested in serving on the committee, please contact me by email (jerry_reynolds@suddenlink.net). And don't be surprised if I call you sometime between now and the end of the year.

I will be missing again at the Oct. 23 meeting and **Vice President Pat Chaney** also will be traveling, so **Tim Walsh**, a past president, will be running the meeting. **Landscape Architect Parker Smith** will be the speaker. He'll be talking about "Designing with Rhododendrons and Azaleas."

I'll see you in December for the Christmas potluck!



*Through golden noons and purple eves, and shadows
cool and tender,
From scenes of tranquil happiness and dreams of
deep delight,
October like a princess in her oriental splendor
Comes down the valley singing with her retinue of
light.*

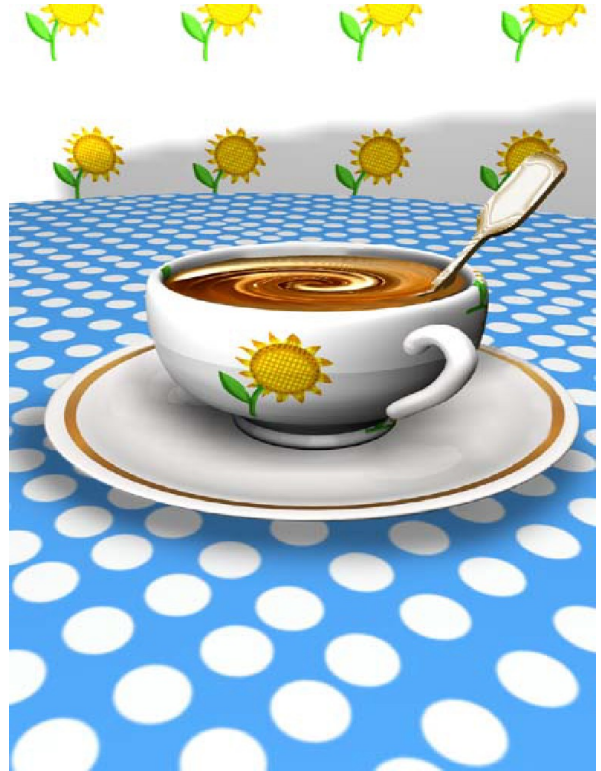
—Katharine Brownlee Sherwood, American poet (1841–1914)



Weed, Friend or Foe?

We would not too often think about the plants of our favorite beverages as being weeds...but now they are mostly grown where they did not originate and have supplanted native plants. I am talking about *Coffea arabica*, *Coffea canephora*, *Coffea liberica*, *Camellia sinensis* and *Theobroma cacao*. These plants seem to have all evolved to produce Caffeine but each uses a different set of genes. Researchers believe that since they use different genes to produce Caffeine that these plants evolved Caffeine at least twice. The plants did not have your cup of morning Joe in mind though; instead caffeine is **allelopathic**. Which means that the leaves and litter of the plant have chemicals that suppress or eliminate germination of other plants (Rhododendrons leaves are also **allelopathic**). Our morning cup of comfort, or Caffeine chemical addiction, has another purpose for the plants and that is, "Caffeine also habituates pollinators and makes them want to come back for more, which is what it does to us, too." according to Victor Albert a genome scientist at the University of Buffalo New York.

Resource Scientific American September 2014



Fall projects for the Rhododendron Garden

October is the best time to plant, use low nitrogen fertilizer like 2-10-10
November, More planting. Enjoy family and friends over Thanksgiving
December, Sprinkle some dolomite, hang ornaments in your Rhodos





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.

Future Programs

October 23, 2014; Parker Smith (ARS Silver Medal Honoree) will talk about Designing with Rhododendrons and Azaleas

December 4, 2014; Holiday Potluck and Rhody 101...*tell us what topics you would like us to cover...NOW!* So we can begin preparing.

January 22, 2015; Paul Anderson (ARS Silver Medal Honoree, ARS Director At-Large) will talk about his recent rhodo trip to Northern Germany and Denmark, lots of pretty pictures of the gardens he visited.

February 26, 2015; Harold Greer, the King of Rhodos (ARS Gold Medalist and Past President of ARS) will talk about, well... Rhododendrons!

March 26, 2015; Tim Walsh (ARS Silver Medalist, ARS District 5 Director) will talk about the '*WEEDs*' of Humboldt Rhodos, the *Maddenii* Rhodos.

April 23, 2015; Mike Stewart (ARS Gold Medalist and Past President of ARS) will talk about Plant Explorers and the plants they introduced into our gardens. Mike's programs are always a hot ticket!

May 21, 2015; will be our ever popular and fun in-house Mini-Show...you be the judge, win cash prizes.

June 7, 2015; Member garden tour and picnic.

Put these dates on your calendar now so you won't miss any of these great programs. Watch for the Eureka Chapter Newsletter for more info.