

AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

Eureka Chapter

The next meeting
Thursday February 25, 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
So there will be enough seating
Call Nelda, For a reservation
707-443-8049



Eureka Chapter
American Rhododendron Society

Rhododendrons
in the Redwoods

February 2016

Grow and Show Quality Rhodos

The Eureka Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society will meet on Thursday, February 25, 2016. The meeting and program will be held at the Eureka Woman's Club 1531 J Street in Eureka beginning at 7:00 P.M. The guest speaker will be Dennis McKiver the President of Noyo Chapter in Fort Bragg. Dennis will talk about growing, selecting and showing Prize winning flowers.

Dennis 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 gladiolus bulbs. His father showed his prize-winning gladiolus at local flower shows. His grandmother also raised prize-winning Hydrangeas, so from a young age he had some good teachers on how to grow prize winning flowers. As a child he raised and sold vegetables to earn money and enjoyed the challenge or growing giant pumpkins, tomatoes and banana squash.

When Dennis and his wife, Valerie, bought their house in Fort Bragg in 2001, it already had had a number of large rhododendrons. 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 live in is 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 hold prize winning trusses from the Noyo Chapter Show





GETTING READY FOR THE RHODO SHOW AND SALE—SAVE THE DATE

By Mary Marking

This year's Rhododendron Show and Plant Sale is **April 29th, 30th and May 1st**. Again this year we will be at Miles Hall along the parade route. Sign up for volunteers will begin at the February meeting. There will be many ways you can help; meet and greet visitors, help set up, help place entries, clerk for the judges, sell plants, clerk for the plant sale, and help clean up at the end. Sign up early to get your preferred time and occupation.

After a break to reorganize, the **Humboldt Bonsai Society** will be joining us with displays and workshops.

Start saving your money for the fabulous **Member Only** off-load-the-truck plant sale on Friday night, April 29th. Non-members may rectify that situation by becoming a member before shopping at this sale. **New Members will receive a free plant.**



Sunday May 15th at Humboldt Botanical Garden in the Moss Family Temperate Woodland Garden the Eureka Chapter and Jerry Reynolds' many friends, colleagues and students will celebrate his friendship and his many contributions his community. Keep the date and watch these pages for more details. If you have any questions call June 707-443-0604

WORD OF THE MONTH: BRACT

By Bruce Palmer

Our rhodie truss buds are just beginning to swell, with a few of them in bloom. They should be on time and in great abundance this year if we can judge from the buds. Most of the buds are still tight and are covered and protected by **BRACTS**, the word of the month. **Bract** in this context is a modern botanical Latin term but it derives from the Latin *bractae*, a term used by the Romans to describe a very thin sheet of metal such as gold leaf. **Bracts** are modified leaves used for purposes other than photosynthesis. **Bracts** usually, but not always, tend to be smaller and thicker than photosynthetic leaves. Typically their function is to protect tender buds, either leaf or flower buds. In our Rhododendrons, leaf and flower buds form shortly after the plants bloom. The buds need protection from drying while they are very small and from winter weather as they grow bigger. Most Rhododendrons display multiple flowers at the ends of branches in groupings we call trusses. Until the flowers open, each one is protected by a thick **bract**. In fact each developing flower is protected from both sides with the bracts overlapping to keep the cold out and the moisture in. Once the flower is fully open, the bracts are no longer needed. Some drop off and some persist inside the trusses. Those are the things we “clean” out to make the trusses look better for the flower show.

There are some other purposes for bracts. One of the more obvious ones was on display at Christmas time. The big red things on Poinsettias are not flower petals. The flowers are very small yellow, red and green objects with no petals in the center of a whorl of red **bracts**. The large red **bracts** are there to attract pollinating birds and to furnish landing platforms for the birds.

Both **bracts** and flowers are modified leaves. Johann Wolfgang Goethe, best known for his writing of *Faust*, but also an avid botanist, got it right when he wrote “Everything is leaf, and through this simplicity the greatest diversity becomes possible.” We’re beginning to see that diversity as our rhodies come into flower. It should be a great bloom year.



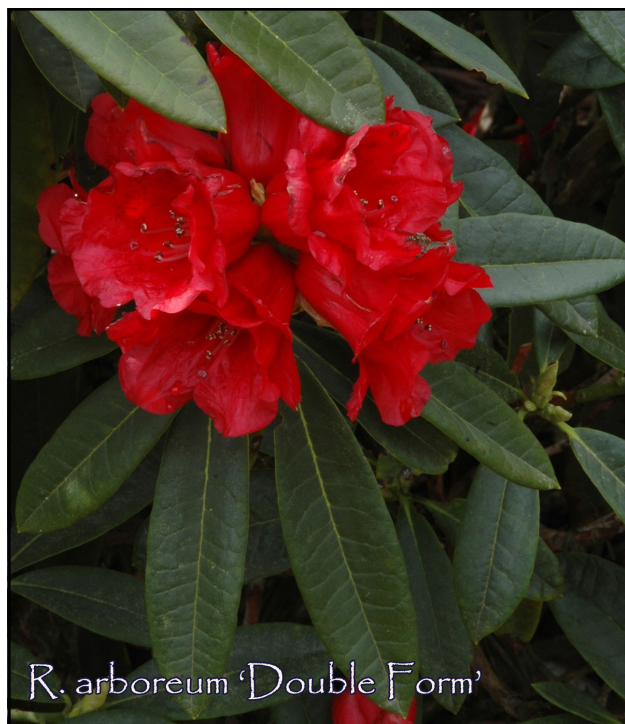
Rhododendron nuttallii

The reddish bracts are protecting the truss before it displays the largest flowers in the genus Rhododendron.



Euphorbia pulcherrima (Poinsettia)

The bright red bracts around the tiny flowers attract bird pollinators.



R. arboreum 'Double Form'

Plant of the Month

Rhododendron arboreum 'Double Flower Form'.

By Don Wallace

Starting around Christmas time, this lovely red flowering rhododendron begins to show its color. Each blossom is a fully double, hose and hose flower. The plant grows slowly to 5 ft. tall in 10 years and has lush, attractive medium green leaves. I was given cuttings of this plant many years ago by the late Peter Schick of Fort Bragg. I remember as if it was last week seeing this interesting rhododendron in his garden. I said I liked it and was then given cuttings. Peter had so many unusual plants in his collection as he was sent seed from plant collectors living all around the world. These plant enthusiasts knew Peter would grow the seed and if something turned out special, he would plant them in either in his own garden, or the Mendocino Botanical Garden. As a

result, the Mendocino Botanical Garden has benefited greatly from Peter's generosity over the years. The Maddenii collection alone has hundreds of species or hybrids that came from Peter.



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

Urtica dioica, Stinging Nettle will be abundant soon, especially with all this lovely 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
- It 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.

Selections for Home from the Moss Family Temperate Woodland Garden at Humboldt

Toona sinensis (syn. *Cedrela sinensis* , **Chinese Toon**, or Red Toon is a species of *Toona* native to eastern and southeastern Asia, from North Korea south through most of eastern, central and southwestern China to Nepal, northeastern India, Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, and western Indonesia.

It is a deciduous tree growing to 82 ft tall and columnar. The bark is brown, smooth on young trees, becoming scaly to shaggy on old trees. The flowers are produced in summer in panicles at the end of a branch; each flower is small, with five white or pale pink petals.

The young leaves of are extensively used as a vegetable in China; they have a floral, yet onion-like flavor, attributed to volatile organosulfur compounds. Plants with red young leaves are considered of better flavor than those where the young leaves are green



Camellia reticulata A large, winter-blooming, evergreen shrub (or small tree) from south-central China, *Camellia reticulata* has long been admired and cultivated for its profusion of large, single, rose-pink flowers. This relatively hardy camellia is native to upland forests in western Guizhou, southwestern Sichuan, and Yunnan .

Located at the branch tips, the flowers appear in various tints of red and pink, approaching white in some of the cultivars. Individual petals may be indented or somewhat crinkled, giving a variety of forms to the flowers. The fruit is a light brown, three-segmented capsule, about two inches in diameter. *C. reticulata* grow particularly well on the coast and are fairly resistant to petal blight.



Rhododendron maddenii Subsection *maddenii* is a large and widespread group of approximately forty lepidote (scale-bearing) species. Members of this diverse group are found terrestrially or as epiphytes from the eastern Himalaya (Nepal) in the west to southeastern China and adjacent regions of Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand in the east. With a few notable exceptions, species in this subsection are tender to semi-hardy. They typically have large, often highly fragrant flowers and a straggly or open growth habit. Many have beautiful smooth and ex-foliating bark and/or colorful and interesting foliage. Some are in full flower now, but many forms flower quite

late in the season, well past the rush of spring. These rhododendrons grow "like Weeds" on the coast.



Ligularia dentata 'Britt Marie Crawford' (**leopard plant**) is a genus of robust Old World herbaceous perennial plants in the sunflower family. They have yellow or orange-gold composite flower heads with brown or yellow central disc florets, and are native to damp habitats mostly in central and eastern Asia, with a few species from Europe. There are about 120 to 140 species in the genus, and over half are endemic to China. The name *Ligularia*, is from Latin for "strap", refers to the shape of the ray florets. Slugs and snails love the large, fleshy purple leaves so gardeners will have to pick for escargot or bait.





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2050 Irving Drive
Eureka, CA 95503-7022

Eureka Chapter

Eureka Chapter Newsletter is published monthly except during July and August. Submissions from members are encouraged and should be mailed to June Walsh, Newsletter Editor, 2050 Irving Drive, Eureka, CA 95503-7022. Rhodyhospel@suddenlink.net Membership information and applications available from Ellen Gill. Htg1anderg@suddenlink.net Eureka Chapter is a member of the Humboldt Botanical Gardens Foundation, Eureka, CA, and The Rhododendron Species Botanical, Federal Way, WA. Eureka Chapter is a chapter of the American Rhododendron Society a 501 (c) (3) charitable organization.

Future Programs

February 25, 2016, Dennis McKiver, Growing Show Quality Rhododendrons

March 24, 2016, Gisele Schoniger, Soils

April 28, 2016, Jack Olsen

April 29 to May 1, 2016 Rhododendron Show and Plant Sale

May 26, 2016 IN-House Mini Show...win BIG BUCKS when you show us your bloomers

June 5, 2015, Member Garden Tour and Potluck 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.

EUREKA!!!!

THE RHODO WORLD WILL FIND US APRIL 27 TO 30, 2017

THE AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY ANNUAL CONVENTION WILL BE HOSTED BY THE EUREKA CHAPTER. THE RED LION HOTEL AND THE SEQUOIA CONFERENCE CENTER WILL BE OUR VENUES.

CHECK OUT THE EUREKA CHAPTER WEB SITE FOR MORE INFORMATION

WWW. EUREKARHODY.ORG

Eureka Chapter Officers and Board Members

For board member contact information or if you are interested in attending a board meeting, which are held the first Wednesday of the month at 7PM, call or email June Walsh 707-443-0604