

AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

Eureka Chapter

The next meeting
Thursday January 26, 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
for a reservation so there will be enough seating and food. Fixed Price \$23



Eureka Chapter
American Rhododendron Society

Rhododendrons
in the Redwoods

January 2017

Tropical Rhododendrons? YES, Vireyas

*The Eureka Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society will meet on Thursday, **January 26, 2017**. The meeting and program will be held at the Eureka Woman's Club 1531 J Street in Eureka beginning at 7:00 P.M. Pre-meeting dinner will be at Kyoto at 5:15, fixed price \$23, be sure to call Nelda (707-443-8049) for a reservation so there is enough seating and FOOD!*

Christy Hartsell will give a program about growing tropical rhododendrons. Christy lives in Palo Alto, CA and is a member of the De Anza Chapter. This will be a great opportunity to learn about Vireyas; how to take care of them and changes in flowers caused by cold.

He will show how he grows his Vireyas and how the flowers are different depending on the Season. Christy has been growing Vireyas for 25 years and rhododendrons for 40 years in his small yard in Palo Alto, CA. At one time he had over 500 different Vireyas, but he has since scaled back to a little under 250 plants. Christy has given talks to interested groups on Vireyas including the Hawaii Chapter and the California Chapter over the last 5 years. It will be interesting to get Christy's perspective on our recent drought-breaking rain followed by cold. Both of which seem to have stimulated your editor's Vireyas to bloom!



Vireya 'Evita', photo by Christy Hartsell



Christy Hartsell in his Palo Alto yard
Photo by J. Walsh

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.



Thank you, A. Nonny Mouse (aka anonymous) for the donation of funding to purchase a new digital projector for Eureka Chapter's programs. In December the digital projector the Chapter purchased about 10 years ago decided to project everything with an olive grey-green tint, which made the beautiful pictures our speaker was showing to be very dull instead of vivid and colorful.

For the January meeting we will have our new state-of-the-art projector for Christy Hartsell's Vibrant Vireya program.

Thank you, shy benefactor, for your generosity!

"I awoke this morning with devout thanksgiving for my friends , the old and the new".

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY:

Our lives are like islands in the sea, or like trees in the forest. The maple and the pine may whisper to each other with their leaves ... But the trees also commingle their roots in the darkness underground, and the islands also hang together through the ocean's bottom.

William James, psychologist and philosopher (11 Jan 1842-1910)



These happy Eureka Chapter members attended the Western Regional Conference in Newport Oregon last fall.

You won't have to travel that far to join the group of happy Rhodo lovers when the 2017 American Rhododendron Convention shows up in Eureka April 27 through 30th. Sign up now to participate and volunteer. Be prepared for a big white tent at the Red Lion to be filled with delectable plants ready to take home and plant.

www.EurekaRhody.org

WORD OF THE MONTH – ANTIFREEZE

By Bruce Palmer

Have you ever wondered how the leaves of evergreen broad-leaved plants survive the cold weather we have been having this month? Deciduous plants solve the problem by absorbing the useful molecules in the leaves, sending them to the stems and roots and dropping their leaves, but evergreens can't do that. One of the answers to the problem is that many of them produce antifreeze (the word is a recent combination of the Greek *anti*, against, and the Old English *freosan*, to burn like cold). The problem with surviving freezing temperatures is that as water molecules aggregate to form ice crystals the sharp crystals break cell membranes, thus killing the cells. That's a problem for all organisms but plants can't move under shelter like we can.

We add ethylene glycol, an alcohol, to our car radiators to lower the temperature at which water will freeze. Plants produce glycoproteins that prevent freezing by a different method.

Glycoproteins have carbohydrates attached to the protein chain, a logical process given that carbohydrates are the primary

by-products of photosynthesis. The antifreeze proteins don't lower the freezing temperature in leaf cells but instead hold onto water molecules tightly and prevent them from clumping together to form ice crystals that break cell membranes.

Evergreen plants have at least two additional ways to prevent internal freezing. The carbohydrates produced by photosynthesis help somewhat in the same way as car antifreeze. More importantly, the plants



are carrying on transpiration, a process by which water is transported from the soil to all parts of the plant. To keep the water moving everywhere it is evaporated through pores, usually at the margins of leaves. Transpiration continues at night as well as in daytime. Notice that the leaves at the center of the photo (taken several years ago on a colder morning than we had this year) have lots of ice crystals at the margins but fewer on the surfaces. That's because the plant kept the faucet running all night as you might have done in your yard earlier this month.

In case you're wondering how animals that live in very cold areas take care of the problem, the solution is similar. Fish in the Arctic and Antarctic such as Cod, Flounder, Smelt and Herring produce antifreeze proteins. Some insects such as beetles and moths do also. Animal glycoproteins are slightly different from those in plants, but act similarly.

As usual, when we study nature closely, we find that life is quite persistent. Whether conditions are moderate, as we are accustomed to or extremely cold or hot, living organisms have found ways to cope. Let's hear it for glycoproteins and antifreeze.

Plant of the Month

By Don Wallace

Many years ago I was in Fort Bragg getting cuttings of rhododendrons for my nursery. I went to Trillium Lane Nursery, located on Highway 20 just outside of town, and owned by Bruce and Eleanor Philp (shown below with Tim Walsh).

Eleanor was very knowledgeable and had many opinions about which rhododendrons were the best varieties to collect and grow. Her very favorite early blooming, red flowering rhody was 'Red Admiral', which blooms about the same time as 'Cornubia' and 'Bibiani'. I didn't know the plant, but took her word for it and was given many cuttings. We planted one at the back of our nursery and it has proven to be a top notch plant. It grows large, like 'Cornubia', but is more of a blood-red color, while 'Cornubia' is a bright pink-red color. The plant stays full all the way to the ground and has handsome foliage. Our plant is starting to bloom now, in early January, which is about right for its bloom time. The plant prefers a bit of shade, and will become 10-12 feet tall x 8-10 feet wide over time.



Rh. 'Red Admiral'



American Rhododendron Society 2017 International Convention will be held in Eureka, CA hosted by the Eureka Chapter, April 27-30, 2017

The Eureka Chapter will need to have our members volunteer for the many tasks that need to be done to make this event a big success. Contact rhodyhostel@suddenlink.net to volunteer!

We already have registrations coming in from around the world, including Japan, France, Scotland and Canada. What a great opportunity to meet other Garden Geeks and Rhodo-holics. There will be tours and world class speakers.

Get more information and registration forms at www.EurekaRhody.org

Protecting Western Azaleas by Carol Ralph, California Native Plant Society

Head-high shrubs laden with large, ruffled flowers in fresh, clean whites and pinks, wafting heavenly fragrance into the spring air-- Western Azalea (*Rhododendron occidentale*) is definitely among our charismatic megafauna.

Its well-deserved attention has inspired its protection in parks and reserves. Here in North Coast Humboldt County we have two azalea reserves, the Azalea State Natural Reserve (2 miles east of Highway 101 on North Bank Rd, just up Azalea Rd. in McKinleyville) and the Stagecoach Hill Azalea Management Area (at the left end of Kane Rd. north of Big Lagoon). Both are managed for azaleas by California State Parks. we visited both. (Read about our May 23, 2015, field trip in the Summer 2015 issue of *Darlingtonia*, viewable at www.northcoastcnps.org)

The challenge in managing for azaleas is in preventing other shrubbery and eventually trees from overgrowing them. In the natural process of succession, native, woody plants sprout and grow among the azaleas, eventually shading them out. Natural “disasters” such as fire can return the upper hand to azaleas, which are adapted to fire and readily sprout from the base. When non-native, aggressive plants like Himalaya Blackberry are added to the mix, the need for fire or fire-equivalent is especially urgent. In other words, azaleas live in a high maintenance environment.

State Parks, which operates in a low budget environment, has worked with this challenge. The Azalea State Natural Reserve still has azaleas after more than 70 years in State Parks care. Everyone would like them cleaner and pruned, but at least many are still there. This was also the state of things in 1960, when a speaker to the American Rhododendron Society reported the plants and trails overgrown in the Azalea State Reserve (E.P.Breakey. 1960. J. American Rhododendron Society 14(3)).

The North Coast Chapter NPS is joining the California Garden Clubs and the Eureka Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society in assisting State Parks in restoring the azaleas. Drawing on a fund just established by California Garden Clubs (which was instrumental in the original purchase of the Stagecoach Hill Azalea Management Area), State Parks has established the Stagecoach Hill Western Azalea Propagation and Restoration Project, which is raising seeds and cuttings from this remarkably diverse population to plant back in the reserve. The project also will remove encroaching trees at this population this winter.

With articles, field trips, lectures, and displays we are raising the profile of the reserves, hoping to attract a core of local volunteers to help with the hand-clipper work of maintaining the azaleas. The combination of big machinery clearing big areas with volunteers doing hand work has been successful in restoring an azalea population on Hooper Bald in the Nantahala National Forest in the Appalachian Mountains of North Carolina (different species of azalea, same habits). Publicity can also help attract money. A fund will soon be established, possibly with Redwood Parks Conservancy, to which people can donate money that will be spent only for azalea reserve maintenance. The Eureka Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society is hosting the American Rhododendron Society annual meeting, 27 - 30 April, 2017, and including a field trip to Stagecoach Hill www.EurekaRhody.org

If you love azaleas, if you love walking in the Azalea State Natural Reserve, if you wish you were closer to either reserve and want it to be there when you eventually get there, consider lending a hand...and money. Tell Mary Lou Goodwin (707-442-1387); mlgoodwin@outlook.com) that you could help at azalea work days. Donate to the California Garden Club Incorporated azalea propagation fund (Mail check to Mary Lou Goodwin, 1312 Gates St., Eureka, CA 95501-2627). Donate to an Azalea Reserves Maintenance Fund as soon as it is established. (Watch this space!). If you know of a wild azalea plant or population that is disappearing under larger plants, clear out the bullies. The azaleas will reward you immediately with renewed vigor.

Editor's note:

Over November and December the California State Parks has done extensive undergrowth removal at Stagecoach Hill. These efforts were led by Michelle Forsys, Environmental Scientist and Amber Transou, Senior Environmental Supervisor, North Coast Redwoods District, California State Parks. Manpower was provided by Cal Fire Inmate Crews transported from the Alder Conservation Camp.



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Rhododendrons
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Eureka Chapter/American Rhododendron Society
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www.EurekaRhody.org

Eureka Chapter Newsletter is published monthly except during July, August and November. Submissions from members are encouraged and should be mailed to June Walsh, Newsletter Editor, 2050 Irving Drive, Eureka, CA 95503-7022. Or by email RhodyHosiel@suddenlink.net Membership information and applications available from Ellen Gill. Higlanderg@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

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|----------------------------|---|--|
| January 26, 2017 | Christy Hartsell | Vireya Rhododendrons |
| February 23, 2017 | Jack Olsen | Growing from Seed |
| March 23, 2017 | Elaine Sedlack | Westonbirt Arboretum, England's National Arboretum |
| April 27 to April 30, 2017 | Eureka Chapter Hosts the Annual American Rhododendron Society Convention, Sign up to volunteer and attend this World Class Event http://eurekarhody.org/convention.php | |
| May 25, 2017 | Member Only Mini- Show | |
| June 4, 2017 | Members' Garden Tour and Picnic | |



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Thank you Mollie Smith and Coastal Business Systems for doing our Newsletter printing for our non-computer users. Mollie has also printed our Convention 2017 color brochures.

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