

Eureka Chapter

The next meeting
Thursday February 25th , 6:55 p.m.

By ZOOM
See page 2 for details



Eureka Chapter
American Rhododendron Society

Rhododendrons
in the Redwoods

February 2021

Rhododendrons in Finland

The Eureka Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society will meet on Thursday, February 25th via ZOOM beginning at 7:00 P.M. John Stephens and Steve McCormick from Portland Chapter will be our Zoomers. Their program will be “Rhododendrons in Finland - Finnish Persistence & Creativity vs. Latitude”

Finns are known for their stoicism, forbearance, persistence, tenacity, gumption, perseverance, resourcefulness—or, as they call it, “sisu.” It’s a trait inherent to a nation living in high latitudes and extremes of temperature and light. That *sisu* has fostered generations of horticulturalists who, against all odds, have successfully grown, hybridized, and propagated the rhododendron. Steve and John will relate their discoveries in the country of Finland, based on their experiences on the post-tour following the 2018 ARS Spring International Convention in Bremen. They’ll share some history, views of rhododendron gardens and parks, and introduce you to some of the notable personalities that have championed the scientific work in rhododendrons there. As an introduction, they will share brief highlights of the convention week in Bremen.

John’s early professional career was devoted to university level research and instruction in geography and cartography, followed by management in two major publishing companies and his eventual position as Senior Director of Professional & Continuing Education at the University of Washington. Steve’s professional life encompassed promotional marketing in the Los Angeles music industry, followed by account management for major broadcast companies, eventually as Senior Account Executive at CBS Broadcasting in Seattle. John and Steve retired

to Washington’s Long Beach Peninsula in 2013. They had begun developing a retirement property on Willapa Bay which had been part of a rhododendron nursery created by Dr. J Harold Clarke, the third ARS President and founding member of the Rhododendron Species Foundation. John is currently ARS Western Regional VP; Steve is currently President of the ARS Portland Chapter.



**COME ZOOM to FINLAND
WITH**

John Stephens and Steve McCormick

Topic: Rhododendrons in Finland

Time: Thursday February 25, 2021 6:55 PM Pacific Time

You may join us as early as 6:30 to know that you have a good connection with the meeting, get settled in and have a chance to visit with other guests before the presentation. Bring a rhody to share your screen.

The meeting will begin at 7:00 sharp, so please be sure to be joined in no later than 6:55 pm .

To Join The Zoom Meeting click this link:

<https://zoom.us/j/99120170578>

Meeting ID: 991 2017 0578

One tap mobile

+16699009128,,99120170578# US (San Jose)

By Phone Dial :

+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

Meeting ID: 991 2017 0578

Links to this meeting and more are available at

www.EurekaRhody.org

If you need a pre-meeting Zoom practice session call June 707-443-0604

Mom Said “Go Look It Up”

As a University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) Master Gardener I often have to do some research to be able to answer client's questions. The three web sites below are tremendous research tools for all kinds of garden questions. In addition to answering specific questions these sites are like putting the old Encyclopedia Britannica or World Book (with which I grew up) on your computer screen instead of your lap.

In my family of Mom, Dad and 6 children most meals included at least one admonishment to “look it up”, and often after reading the subject that prompted the ‘look it up’ we would find another subject that caught our interest. These science-based gardening web sites will do that. BUT they are not time wasters! The articles are usually very well written, albeit scientifically oriented, peer reviewed and accessible to all of us. So “go look it up”.

<https://puyallup.wsu.edu/lcs/>

<http://gardenprofessors.com/>

<http://ipm.ucanr.edu/>

<https://www.gardenmyths.com/>

Virtual Plant Sale

The Eureka Chapter will be taking delivery of rhododendrons, azaleas and companion plants from Log Cabin Nursery in time for our annual PLANT SALE.

This year our tech guru, Wyatt Ledbetter, will be making a plant sale inventory list available on our web site www.EurekaRhody.org. The list will include the plant names, brief description and a picture. You will be able to make your selections on a first-come-first-chosen basis OR come shop in person.

The plants will be at Walsh's Rhody Hostel again this year. If you choose plants through the web inventory we will get them ready for you to pick-up. Or we will let you know when you can come to the Walsh's Rhody Hostel to shop in person. Social distancing will be employed, you will pick out the plants you want, load your vehicle and we will give you an invoice to be paid with cash or check.

A plant list will come with the Sale announcement so you can choose your plants ahead of time and we will collect them and arrange for your pick up. Special arrangement may be made for delivery.

Prices will be just enough to cover the Chapter's costs...so BUY, BUY, BUY!!!

“Good morrow, Benedick. Why, what's the matter,
That you have such a February face,
So full of frost, of storm and cloudiness?”
—William Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*

“Friends are the most important
ingredients in this recipe of life”.
- Dior Yamasaki

Plant of the Month
Rhododendron
'Helsinki University'
 By Don Wallace

A lot of work has been done in **Finland** to create super hardy rhododendrons. These plants can survive and flower well in USDA zone 4, and even to zone 3, which dips down to -40 degrees F. *Rhododendron* 'Helsinki University' was the first of the Finnish hybrids, introduced in 1990, to commemorate the Helsinki University's 350th anniversary. The

female parent was the Mustila Rhododendron (*R. brachycarpum* var. *tigerstedtii*), but the pollinator is not known. The flowers come out on this one in mid June, which is late for the rhododendron bloom, and can be a 'season extender'. *Rhododendron* 'Helsinki University' grows to 6 ft. tall in 10 years, the foliage is attractive and lush all year round. Rhododendron hybridizers have used this cultivar to attempt to create various colors of super hardy rhododendrons. Over 15 cultivars have been named so far.



R. 'Helsinki University'



Eureka Chapter members Frank Bickner, Darci Short and Tim Walsh are shown here working on the plant labels that Frank and Darci have made to identify the rhododendrons, camellias, magnolias, gaultheria, irises and many companion plants in the Moss Family Temperate Woodland Garden at Humboldt Botanical Garden. Next time you visit you will be able to identify most of the plants that grace this beautiful garden.

Check out garden open hours at www.hbgf.org

Word of the Month–Taiga

By Bruce Palmer

This month our Zoom program will cover rhododendrons in Finland. What could be more appropriate for the word than a discussion of Finland's dominant ecosystem, the **Taiga**? Here, finally, is a biological word that does not derive from Latin or Greek. **Taiga** is a Russian term, derived from Mongol languages used to describe the vegeta-



CYLINDRICAL SPRUCE TREES IN
SCANDANAVIAN TAIGA



TAIGA IN EUROPE WITH FINLAND NEAR
CENTER

tive zone
(biome)
between about
50° and 70°

North Latitude. The winter days are short and cold, but the short summer season has very long days which allow fast plant growth and attract migrant birds for nesting and rearing of young, both here and farther north on the Tundra. The **Taiga** is part of what in ecology is often termed the Boreal Forest (boreal derives from the Latin *boreas, north*). The **Taiga** is one of the youngest biomes on earth, having emerged only after the continental glaciers melted away about 11,000 years ago. The temperature in the **Taiga** rarely gets above 50° F. The forest is dominated by conifers; Spruce (*Picea spp.*) are often the most abundant trees. Probably because of the heavy winter snows the branches of the conifers do not spread more broadly toward the bottom, but tend to give the trees a cylindrical shape to help shed snow. If you have been to Alaska or northern Canada you may have noticed these odd shapes. The conifers in the **Taiga** are shorter and younger than those farther south. In addition to climate, this is caused by fire. Large swaths of the **Taiga** burn every year. Last summer the fires in the Siberian **Taiga** were so widespread and severe that the smoke reached our shores.

The vegetation in the **Taiga** is not restricted to conifers. A number of members of the family Ericaceae, to which Rhododendrons belong, thrive in the understory and in open spaces in the forest. Several *Vaccinium* species (blueberry relatives) are found in the understory and farther north on the Tundra. The best known rhodie is probably *Rhododendron lapponicum*, the Lapland Rosebay, often described as the most spectacular flower on the Tundra.



FIRES IN SIBERIAN TAIGA
SUMMER 2020

Most of Finland is either **Taiga** or Tundra, but the coastal shores that abut the Baltic Sea, especially in the southwest corner of the country, have a climate softened by the more temperate sea breezes. Here it is possible to grow a number of Rhododendrons and, believe it or not, we have a Finnish Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society with 28 members. Steve and John will give us a great program. Let's be sure to Zoom in on February 25 at 6:55 p.m.

Eureka Chapter/American Rhododendron Society
2050 Irving Drive
Eureka, CA 95503-7022

Eureka Chapter Newsletter is published monthly except during July, August and November.

Submissions from members are encouraged and should be sent to June Walsh, Newsletter Editor, by email RhodyHostel@suddenlink.net
Membership information and applications are available from Ellen Gill. Htg1anderg@suddenlink.net

Eureka Chapter is a member of the **Humboldt Botanical Gardens**, 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.

www.EurekaRhody.org



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Future Programs

All in-person meetings and programs are suspended as we deal with the health concerns of Covid 19. We will be bringing you some online programming and live meetings using ZOOM and will keep you posted. Please check www.EurekaRhody.org for updates, informative articles, old newsletters and hopefully a program or two.

The Eureka Chapter Telephone-tree callers will be on the phone to keep you up-to-date with anything new. Tell them thank you for their calls!

ZOOM Programs

February 25, 2021	Steve McCormick and John Stephens, Rhodos in Finland
March 25, 2021	Marc Colombel, our friend from France, Propagation by an Amateur for Amateurs
April 22, 2021	Atsuko Gibson, Four Seasons at the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden
May 27, 2021	Mike Stewart, Dwarf and Small Leaf Rhododendrons
June 6, 2021	Members' Gardens Tour and Bring-your-own-Picnic

All programs subject to change



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