

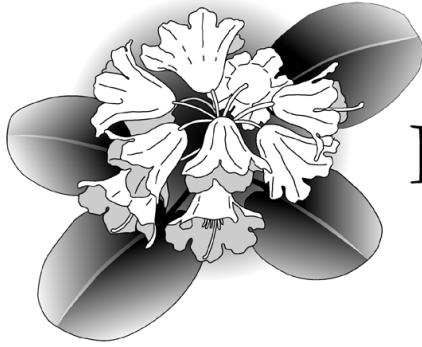
AtlanticRhodo

www.AtlanticRhodo.org

Volume 45: Number 3

November 2021





Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society

Our Mission

ARHS supports and promotes the development and exchange of expertise and material relating to the creation and maintenance of year-round garden landscapes featuring rhododendrons and other plants.

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Photos in articles are by the authors, unless otherwise identified.

Membership

Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society.

The current membership period is September 1, 2021 to August 31, 2022. The membership fee is \$30.00 if paid between September 1, 2021 and November 30, 2021, and \$40.00 after Nov. 30, 2021. For benefits and to download a membership form see ARHS website www.atlanticrhodo.org

American Rhododendron Society: ARHS is a chapter in District 12 of the American Rhododendron Society.

Combined ARHS and ARS membership cost is \$84.00 Canadian. For benefits and to download a membership form see www.atlanticrhodo.org

Cheques, made payable to Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society, should be sent to **Jane Plant, 1950 Preston St, Halifax, NS B3H 3V9. Payment may be made by e-transfer to atlanticrhodo@gmail.com**

AtlanticRhodo is the Newsletter of the Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society. We welcome your comments, suggestions, articles, photos and other material for publication. Send all material to the editor.

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Cover Photo: Exbury Rhododendron 'Hawk Crest' FCC (R wardii x Lady Bessborough), 1984 [Photo Don Craig]



Calendar of Events

The Nova Scotia Museum Auditorium is now open for meetings. *Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer St. Halifax, Nova Scotia Canada*

Meeting notices will include a sign-up form for those who wish to attend in person. Space will be limited due to social distancing requirements as posted by Public Health at the time. The ARHS will continue to offer our programming by zoom for those who cannot attend in person. Details and link will be sent to members.

- December 7** **Annual Christmas Party & Member Slide Show 2021 @ 7:30 pm - 8:30 pm** NS Museum and Zoom Tuesday December 7th is our annual Christmas Party. Members are invited to submit 4 to 5 photographs to show.
- January 4, 2022** **ARHS Meeting: @ 7:30 pm - 8:30 pm** NS Museum and Zoom
Kate Kerin, Innisfree Garden, NY, A Study in Slow Gardening
Explore timeless design ideas and timely landscape management techniques at Innisfree—an iconic mid-twentieth century landscape in Millbrook, New York—that can be adopted by gardeners and designers anywhere. Innisfree is primarily the work of Lester Collins, thought by his peers to be one America’s great if unsung landscape architects. Working on a massive site with a tiny staff and budget over many decades, Collins drew on a deep understanding of ecology, light, and form in this landscape.
- February 1** **Meeting: @ 7:30 pm - 8:30 pm NS Museum and Zoom** “Ericaceae Plants of Tibet”
Panayoti Kelaidis, Denver Botanical Garden and North American Rock Garden Society
- March 1** **Meeting @ 7:30 pm - 8:30 pm NS Museum and Zoom** “ TBA
- April 5** **Meeting @ 7:30 pm - 8:30 pm NS Museum and Zoom**
“Panel Discussion: Rhododendron Propagation”
- May 3** **Meeting @ 7:30 pm - 8:30 pm NS Museum** Member to Member Plant Sale
- June** Garden Tour and Social

Thank you for avoiding the use of perfumes and scented products when you come to ARHS events.

Welcome **A very warm welcome to our new members who have joined ARHS since May.**

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Brenda Dean | Upper Sackville, NS |
| Brian Keith Hall | Halifax, NS |
| Maureen Summers | Halifax, NS |
| Stephen Cushing | Dartmouth, NS |
| Raissa Petriw | Port Williams NS |



A Word from the Editor

Jean Henshall

When Jim Sharpe asked me to become the editor of *Atlantic Rhodo* I decided to take on the challenge. This is a new venture for me as I have never been an editor before.

It was suggested that articles on the culture of rhododendrons would be welcome so John Weagle kindly agreed to a rerun of his article on the winter care of rhododendrons.

In preparation for the task of developing this issue I have read many old *Atlantic Rhodos*. There has been much useful information published over the years but it is not easy to find. So, when Frances Howard suggested that preparing an Index would be useful, I agreed. Look for an Index to the 2020-21 volume in an upcoming issue. Frances has agreed to help. The Index will be similar to the one for the *Journal of ARS*. If anyone has expertise in indexing and would like to help their aid would be most welcome.

Please send suggestions for future articles to me. My email is henshalljp@gmail.com

I would like to thank Janet Alsop and Linda Christiansen Ruffman for their help in proof reading and Sterling Levy for doing the layout. Any errors must be laid at my door. ☘

President's Report

Jim Sharpe

2021 was a banner year for ARHS. We hosted over 160 participants from across North America and Europe in the first virtual American Rhododendron Society Convention, providing an opportunity to feature the unique rhododendrons from our region as well as presentations and discussions on breeding hardy rhodos and featuring our world class gardens. As well our membership increased and with new board members we are looking forward to stimulating and informative programs in the new year. Thanks so much to all the volunteers, board members and gardeners who have contributed to the success of our programs.

As the COVID-10 epidemic canceled meetings and restricted travel last year, the ARHS used Zoom computer conferencing to meet and promote the cultivation of rhododendrons and gardens. The lock down and travel restrictions over the last eighteen months has increased interest in gardening. Although we were not able to meet in person except for our fall garden tours, we had record attendance for our ARHS meetings, especially when many from outside the Atlantic region joined us on Zoom.

At the ARS Convention two of our members, John Weagle and Jack Looye, received the ARS Gold Medal, the highest award only given for those who have made a significant national or international contribution to the genus *Rhododendron*. The Convention program started with an "Introduction to Mi'kma'ki" by Gerald Gloade and our history of rhodo breeding by Sheila Stevenson, explaining our unique region and our contribution to rhodo breeding, cultivation, and enjoyment. Outstanding speakers from Canada included Todd Boland, Diane McLeod, Freeman Patterson, Ken Shannik, Christina Woodward, Nick Yarmoshuk and Phil MacDougall. International speakers included Ken Cox from Scotland, Joe Brusco from Massachusetts, Kristian Theqvist from Finland, and Julie Medeiros from the Holden Arboretum in Ohio. Also included were videos of garden in Kings County, Annapolis Royal, Hall's Road, Indian Harbour, and the coastal barrens. The rhodo breeders roundtable, organized by Jamie Ellison and John Weagle, had a great following on Zoom, compared to the few who usually attend such a meeting. A great thank you to everyone who made the convention such a success. We also held a virtual plant sale with over \$10,000 in plants sold from three local propagators.

In addition to planning and conducting the June 3-6 ARS 2021 Convention, we had eight monthly programs by Zoom: Dennis Crouse in October on Fall Gardens, David Patriquin in November on Chebucto Barrens, "Slides from our Gardens" in December, Todd Boland in January on New Zealand gardens, Jeff Jabco in February on Clematis, Steve Hootman in March on plant exploration in Vietnam, Jamie Ellison in April on his Pereau garden, and featured plants from the plant sale in May. We had garden tours in both September 2020 in the Halifax area and September 2021 featuring members gardens in Prospect, Boutiliers Point and Bayport. Thanks so much to all who opened their gardens to our members and to Lynn Rotin for organizing.

The ARHS Board of Directors met six times since last November's AGM. At the AGM we welcomed two new Directors, Carol Morrison, and Dennis Stuebing. Special thanks to all the work of our Directors including those continuing with the Board -- Jean Henshall, Rebecca Lancaster and Dennis Crouse -- and those finishing their terms -- John Brett, Sandy and Syd Dumaresq and Lynn Rotin. Special welcome to our new Director and Secretary, Nancy Lewis and Jane Plant who has volunteered for Membership. I also want to thank the many members who contribute to the work of ARHS through our projects: Sharon Bryson for the ARHS Seed Exchange, Chris Hopgood for the Garden Outreach, Bonnie Conrad and Frances Howard for the library and Trudy Campbell for the Passionate Plant Person Awards at Kingstec and the Dalhousie Agricultural Campus.

I want to thank Jean Henshall who has served as Secretary for seven years. She is continuing on the Board and editing the Atlantic Rhodo newsletter. Also thanks so much for all the work that Sandra Dumaresq has given to the Society as Treasurer, especially with the ARS 2021 Convention. If you are interested or know of someone who I can ask to be Treasurer, please contact me by e-mail sharpe@ns.sympatico.ca.

Special thanks to Bob Howard who has organized the ARHS programs for the last ten years. He is retiring from this position but has provided wonderful suggestions for speakers for the upcoming year. In addition to Lionel Rothschild who gave the Steele Lecture in October and Donna Evers/Roslyn Duffus who provided the presentation on Meadow Gardens in November, we have the annual Christmas party and garden pictures in December, Kate Kerin from Innisfree Garden in NY on "Slow Gardening" in January, Panayoti Kelaidis from Denver on "Ericaceae Plants from Tibet" in February, Rodger Evans from Acadia in March, a rhododendron propagation session in April, our members plant sale in May and hopefully our Rhododendron garden tour and potluck in June.

In closing I want to thank John Brett for his leadership over the last number of years. John is passionate about rhododendrons as you can see from his gardens on Hall's Road in Halifax and Morris Island in the District of Argyle. As well as being President, he has done an outstanding job of editing the AtlanticRhodo, the ARHS Newsletter. As the District 12 Representative on the ARS Board, he brought us the opportunity to host the 2021 ARS Convention. He organized the plant sale for the June Convention until he suffered a stroke in March of this year. John is making an amazing recovery and was able to participate in the ARS 2021 Convention on-line. John, thanks so much for your contribution to the genus Rhododendron in Atlantic Canada.

I'm looking forward to a great year for ARHS, as we are extending our opportunity to participate in our monthly meetings by Zoom as well as meeting in person at the Nova Scotia Museum. With the opening of international travel, I plan to attend the ARS 2022 Convention in Vancouver WA organized by the Portland Oregon chapters of ARS from May 4-8, 2022. If you are interested in the event, please view the program at ARS2022.org. Registration is open on December 1, 2021. It would be wonderful to have a contingent from Atlantic Canada attend this 75th Anniversary Convention of our rhododendron society, the ARS.

Thank you for your support of ARHS! ☘

American Rhododendron Society Bronze Medal

Citation for Award of ARS Bronze Medal to Sharon Bryson

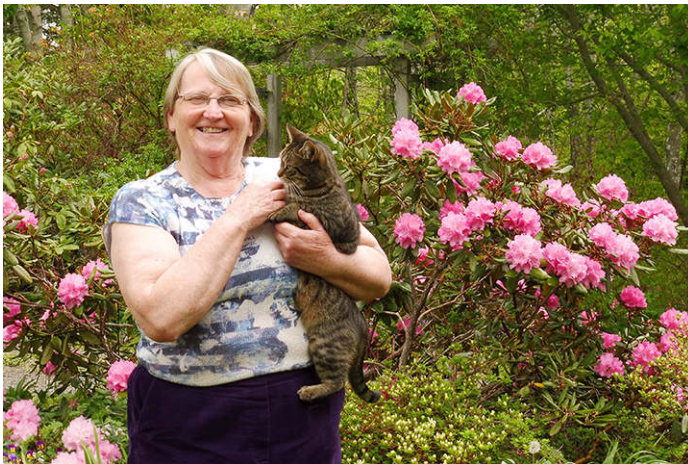


Photo John Brett

Sharon has made important contributions to the Atlantic Rhododendron and Horticulture Society, especially with managing the seed exchange and encouraging members to grow and plant rhodos. She worked with her late husband, Bill Wilgenhof, to germinate, grow and nurture many rhodos at their rural property, The Willow Garden near Antigonish, Nova Scotia (see www.willowgarden.net). She excelled at documenting the many seedlings, crosses and hybrids and has continued to use her management skills to run the ARHS seed exchange. She is very active in many gardening societies and always has welcomed visits from gardening groups, including ARHS, at Willow Garden. Thank you Sharon for your significant contribution to promoting rhododendrons in Nova Scotia and around the world through your

work on the seed exchange. We are pleased to honour you with the presentation of the ARS Bronze Medal. ☘

ARHS Outreach work party May 2, 2021, the John Meagher garden at Regatta Point, Halifax

Christopher Hopgood



Mary Stephenson: Great work done. [Photo Eileen Pease]



Jim Bruce: Best Pruner 2021 [Photo Eileen Pease]

The work party was planned for Saturday, May 1, but sometimes in Nova Scotia the weather tends to alter our plans occasionally. With the threat of rain, the work day was postponed to the next day, Sunday the 2nd of May. There were four stalwart members of the society that put in a great morning's work in this garden.

John Meagher was a long time member of the ARHS, and as this area of the city was developed into townhouses and condominium buildings in the late 1980's and 1990's, he planted a fine garden of rhododendrons and azaleas. The residents of the area really appreciated our efforts and their love of the Meagher garden was very apparent. Our four ARHS members were Eileen Pease, Mary Stevenson, Jim Bruce and Christopher Hopgood.

The main effort was pruning, as this has not been done in a number of years, it consumed most of the morning's work and produced a good deal of pruned material for the HRM personnel to pick up. If we were to nominate the best pruner of the year it would be Jim Bruce, with a sturdy pair of loppers he attacked the plants from top to bottom, and at times, on his belly and on his knees. Well done! All four did a very creditable job, and we should see good results in the way of new growth next year. When considering the number of years that these plants have been there, it is not surprising that a few had bit the bullet, and this year a few new plants were added. If I can remember correctly two deciduous azaleas were both purchased and planted, A. 'Arneson's Gem' and A. 'Northern HiLights'. They were all purchased from Baldwin's Nursery in the Falmouth area. These were to replace azaleas originally planted by J. Meagher.

It was a very productive day, many thanks to the volunteers !

At Baldwin's Nursery, four juniper plants were also purchased, these were for the garden at the Stratford Way Park, This park is a concern to the undersigned, as the microclimate is not conducive to rhodos and azalea. It is dry in the summer, cold and windy in the winter, the deer graze freely in that park and generally the hard work and genuine efforts of the Outreach volunteers has not found good success because of these conditions. This explains why evergreen junipers were planted, as they may help retain some moisture in the gardens there. This ARHS Outreach ongoing project will be continued to be monitored and further recommendations will be forthcoming. ☺

The American Rhododendron Society 2021 Gold Medal Awards

2021 ARS Gold Medal Citation for Jack Looye



You have been a most generous nurseryman. You have selflessly disseminated new hybrids, rare and unusual Rhododendrons as seeds, cuttings and potted plants to friends, members and the public throughout North America. You diligently salvaged many a collection from oblivion. You are a vast & faultless repository of information on the hybridizing of the likes of Delp, Pride, Tom Ring, Gable and many others, sharing without hesitation. You have expanded the diversity of rhododendrons grown across Canada and Eastern North America.

For your generosity and dedication to the Genus Rhododendron the American Rhododendron Society is pleased to present the Gold Medal to Jack Looye - June 5, 2021 Nova Scotia.

2021 ARS Gold Medal Citation for John Weagle



Your passion for the Genus Rhododendron and your activities related to that passion have embodied ARS purpose and spirit. For almost 50 years you have been The Pollinator Extraordinaire: figuratively, by making and sharing connections and horticultural information with rhododendron enthusiasts around the globe through hand written letters and phone calls, then emails, photographs, social media, articles, and presentations to ARS chapters and international conferences; literally, through your hybridizing work -- in particular your evergreen azalea 'Scotian' series -- and by supporting others with pollen, cuttings, and seeds via annual contributions to the ARS

and other seed exchanges. Your curiosity coupled with your generosity in sharing material and expertise and in supporting and crediting the work of others has enriched our rhododendron knowledge, collections, and networks.

For these many contributions, the American Rhododendron Society is pleased to award the Gold Medal to John Weagle - June 5, 2021 Nova Scotia

Reprinted from the Journal of the American Rhododendron Society Vol. 75 Number 3 pp 136, 137

Winter Protection for Rhododendrons

By John Weagle

With the recent 10 year bout of mild winters it hardly seems appropriate to speak on this subject. The lesson of the last 30 years is that the winter of our nightmares will appear when we are least prepared. So pre-emptive action is in order as another winter like 1992/93 may be just around the corner.

For well-established plants hardy in your zone little need be done unless conditions are somewhat short of ideal. I need not lecture anyone on planting a wind-sensitive rhodo in a windy spot; if the site is quite windy plant a rhodo that will tolerate wind-the old right plant / right place scenario. Why plant a rhododendron intolerant of wind and look at burlap all winter long? Now if the burlap is up just until a suitable rhodo gets established that's quite another matter. Here are a few of the concerns I have about my rhodos as winter approaches, including a few misconceptions. Our past newsletters contain zoning information for most of the plants we have brought in for members. If in doubt don't hesitate to ask other members on a zone rating or conditions suitable for your plant.

Wind. As mentioned there are plenty of rhodos for super windy sites. *Lepidotes* like *impeditum*, 'Ramapo', 'L'abeille, 'Karen Seleger' and most of the really small leafed species (and their hybrids - all with leaves fingernail sized) along with *R. kiusianum* and *R. yakushmanum* revel in open, windy sites when established. If you feel your plants are not quite settled in then by all means erect a burlap or spruce bough screen to cut the wind. Boughs can be stuck cut end first into the ground in early December but it can be a race against frozen ground. The screen should not touch the plants. Snow fencing is another possibility - plastic or wooden, but be sure your stakes are deep enough in the ground and stout enough to take a hurricane. Screens which crash onto the plants are another unforeseen hazard.

Anti-desiccant/Anti-transpirant Sprays. There are plenty on the market these days. In a word, avoid them. Rhododendrons have evolved mechanisms to deal with winters. By losing a bit of water through transpiration they roll their leaves and hence protect themselves from greater winter water loss and sunburn. In my experience these sprays seem to restrict their ability to roll somewhat and this can result in increased injury.

Snow and Snowload Damage. There is a common misconception that snow on your plants is bad, that is: snow equals cold. Rather the opposite. Snow can keep frost out of the ground or more importantly, keep the ground from freezing and thawing repeatedly. Mulches of bark, pine needles, oak or beech leaves are excellent mulches and help minimize freezing of the ground until it gets really winter-like. (This is in addition to the necessity of mulching when properly planting rhodos to keep the soil cool, moist and furnish a slow supply of nutrients to those shallow roots of rhodos). This mulch, combined with snow, is very beneficial. A word of warning: evergreen azaleas should be mulched sparingly and **NEVER** excessively, especially in the fall. Serious bark-splitting can occur. So, screens or structures should never be arranged in such a way that a roof is formed to prevent snow covering the root area or the whole of the plant if the snow is deep. Plants under snow can hover at or just below freezing while the air temperature above plummets. (I can be frequently seen shoveling snow onto my plants in winter!). One problem we all faced in the winter 2000/2001 was deep snow that persisted from late January till early April. In many areas each snowfall was followed by rain or brilliant sunshine which caused a layer of ice to form in layers between each successive snowfall. The net result was tremendous weight bearing down on branches causing breakage. Cape Breton and Newfoundland rhodos were particularly hard hit with rhodo's central stems being snapped. Short of building a large lath house over big plants there is really not much you can do to protect large plants from such devastation. The aforementioned dwarf *lepidotes* seem quite immune from such damage; this is not surprising considering they originate at high, snowy altitudes in their homelands. Only when grown in shade do their structures become too weak to withstand such pressures; grown hard in sun and wind they can withstand a steam roller. A few hybrids susceptible to breakage come to mind; 'America', the ironclad red, is very susceptible to breakage until it gains a height of about 2 meters. 'Olga', the bright pink PJM look-alike, is very brittle as a young plant. Smaller more delectable plants can be protected by sturdy lath structures sufficient to take the weight; these again must be open enough to allow snow to fall on the soil beneath AND over the plants. Spruce boughs can be used to cover smaller plants to protect from sun and wind: early December seems to be the time to apply though I often wait till the spent Christmas trees are put out. Another favorite item is the hefty plastic milk crate with which many are familiar. They measure about a foot by a foot - perfect for covering those choice dwarf seedlings. The top mesh is a bit too dense to allow snow penetration though it bears weight perfectly. These are often found at yard sales.

Winter Sun: the Big Culprit. Sun on a borderline or poorly established plant in winter combined with frozen ground is a killer. Consider these points: the ground is frozen, the plant cannot take up water because the roots are frozen and the sun bears down causing the rhododendron leaves to unroll and lose water. The net result is burnt leaves. How many times have we boasted this or that hybrid has come through the winter after a stroll though the garden in early March? The ground is still frozen, the warm March sun - we are at the same latitude as Milan, Italy and Eugene, Oregon! - seems so harmless even though the temperature may feel miserably cold. Then to our horror burnt leaves appear in April or later and, even worse, the plant is dead as a nit by May. The culprits: March sun and/or drying wind; most likely sun. The dilemma: most

rhodos need sun to grow and bloom here, we plant early and they are in part sun in June, but by November the leaves fall and suddenly the plants are in full sun in winter. With careful siting – this involves watching where the winter sun falls – you can choose a spot for that borderline or young plant where it gets spring, summer and fall sun but misses the winter sun entirely with the aid of buildings or evergreen trees. Note: early blooming plants are best planted to avoid the rising sun – such frosted blossoms can survive nicely if they have time to thaw the next morning before the sun hits them. Western sun – the setting sun – is the worst scenario in winter: the leaves can be warmed by day and then the temperature suddenly plunges after sunset; the result - burnt leaves, bark-split or death.

Loss of Flower Bud Dormancy. Another concern with extremely early bloomers is that the January thaw or the March sun will cause the buds to start moving too early; should that happen a mere frost down to -4° to -7° or lower can kill those buds which have survived lower dead-of-winter temperatures. A winter covering of boughs can avoid this; it seems strange that *R. lapponicum* rated to Zone 1 or 2 is one very early rhodo that I routinely cover to avoid late bud blast!

Water. The books tell us water evergreens heavily before the onset of winter. Since our wettest month is November in coastal Nova Scotia – and I'm talking monsoon-like – I doubt that anyone has ever bothered to gout with the hose in mid-November. Indeed the only dry fall followed by a dry snowless winter I have ever witnessed here was in 1992-1993; perennials were particularly hard hit. It would have helped immeasurably to have watered that year. The lesson: if it is dry by mid-November don't hesitate to give precious plants a good drink even if neighbours look on thinking you're mad as a hatter. I wouldn't water too early as plants need a little stress to harden off for the winter. A fall drought this year will be especially important after the coast's very cool, foggy summer of 2020!

Heaving. A notorious problem here on the coast of Nova Scotia. Many low pressure systems pass by this way in winter; cold followed by melting or the reverse. An event every 3 to 4 weeks is to be expected. Heavy rains and freeze –thaw - freeze. After the first good hard freeze in the fall it is wise to check small or newly planted rhododendrons to make certain they have not been heaved out of the ground. In my garden the first hard freeze causes the most dramatic heaving, after that all's usually well; in other gardens I've seen repeated heaving the entire winter. By April you may very well have replanted several times, replanting is very difficult if you discover this problem after a good freeze. The only remedy is to throw some bark (if the pile hasn't frozen solid!) over the roots and hope for the best.

Plants in Pots / Tissue Culture Plants / Very Tender Plants / Young Seedlings of Unknown Hardiness. Obviously these plants will need to go into a coldframe for the winter. A coldframe is ideally situated where no winter sun falls. Usually coldframes are built where the sun falls. Remedy: If the plants are planted in the coldframe a lath lid and solid sides are recommended. A lath lid should have the lathes arranged running north-south so the winter sun moves over the plants; running east-west you can sometimes see burnt leaf stripes where the sun shines through. Potted plants must be heeled into wood chips to the brim; a light covering over the soil surface helps as well. Roots in the ground rarely go below -7°C , and if snow covered are much less cold. Potted plants will be killed dead if their roots freeze sitting above grade. To assure complete (well almost) success cover the entire frame in white plastic around early to mid December and seal it tight after the plants have had a good drink. This is how the professional nurserymen deal with their leftover stock in winter and you will find the results amazing. A large lath house can achieve the same results; Walter Ostrom near Peggy's Cove routinely grows and blooms Zone 8 plants in his large walk-in lath house.

Root Damage. Although this was discussed earlier the question often arises on how to handle rhododendrons received bareroot in early spring, since such bare-rooting is mandatory for importation from Europe. I doubt that these plants will be fully established for a Maritime winter outside. Having avoided direct sun from March till November, the only winter remedy is to store them in a ($+1^{\circ}$ to $+7^{\circ}\text{C}$) cold greenhouse. After mid-November the plants can be safely acclimated to full sun in the cool greenhouse and planted out the next spring. There is little chance they would survive without such treatment.

Cold Temperatures. Not much to be done about that aside from saying that the lath house and white plastic covered coldframe certainly can minimize the rapid temperature fluctuations for which the Maritime are notorious. If extreme cold is prolonged nothing can ameliorate that aside from a cold heated greenhouse. The intelligent gardener will maximize the plants' requirements and pray a lot.

Deer/Vole Damage. Accelerating lead for deer seems to be the best remedy but there are countless deer – at least in Nova Scotia. Not one of them has read that rhododendrons are poisonous. Keep in mind they are omnivores and can eat small quantities of many poisonous plants with no ill effects. On some rhododendrons they will eat the leaves and not the stems one year and do the reverse the next – even lepidotes are prone to spectacular damage. In my woods they never touched the lepidotes for years and now that's all they eat. Electric fencing is said to be rather effective. Any other type of fencing should be 3 meters tall! Voles will eat very tender growth on small plants and chew bark on older plants causing leaves to flag in summer. Various baits are available but these sometimes tend to be eaten by the wrong critters. Small plants in rural (cold) frames must be protected with .8 cm wire mesh – top and bottom – if a vole problem exists. Voles are a serious problem every few years and particularly in Prince Edward Island and in mainland areas with dense underbrush which

defies flying predators. **A small amount of waterproof mouse bait should be placed in the frame before sealing.** Small plants can be protected from rabbits foraging with chicken wire. None of the expensive foliar sprays for deer, voles or rabbits have proven very effective.

Removal of Screens, Boughs, Plastic, etc. In the early days I'd rush out in mid-March when the temperature warmed a bit and remove all the boughs. Shortly thereafter the plants would fry. In fact I had just removed the boughs when they were starting to do what they were meant to do: protect from the brutal March sun. Better to wait till the ground is thoroughly thawed and during a period of cloudy, overcast weather that is predicted to persist for a week or longer. Plants shaded by boughs and screens can be suddenly fried when exposed to sun after a long winter in the dark. Snow of course lets plenty of light through if not meters high.

In summary: the right plant in the right place – optimum cultural practices for the rhodo in question. If you have to look at ugly screening all winter then your plants are too tender. N.B. Some of my favourite plants are tender plants. ☐

My Garden in Boutilier's Point: getting ready for the ARHS Garden Tour

Dennis Crouse

When the call was put out for members to offer their gardens for the 2021 ARHS fall garden tour I naively said yes. The ARHS quickly accepted my invitation. Immediately I was met with anxiety and motivation. Does this sound familiar to you? Since I do not regularly open my gardens to groups, I asked myself, where should I prioritize my time?

Over the next few weeks, on most weekends and evenings I spent my time weeding and mulching the beds. The last few nights before the tour were spent doing this work using a headlamp in the dark. I am sure my neighbours thought I was crazy. So, did I.

I kept reminding myself that this was worth it because I had neglected to stay on top of weeding. All the mulching of the beds would help with future bed maintenance.

Quickly realizing that I would not be able to get all gardens 'show' ready, I focused on the areas where people would enter the property, around the house and on a few feature gardens that people would be drawn to naturally.

Most gardeners have ongoing projects, so I thought that members touring the property would appreciate seeing gardens in progress. For example, gardens not completely carved out, sod still to be lifted, weeds left un-pulled, some beds left un-mulched and a huge pile of wood chips with a mulching fork prodded in the pile as if it would be used again. (I am still working on that mulch pile and have since lifted more sod and made another garden bed). The landscape continues to evolve.

I was surprised to see so many people turn up throughout the day and appreciated all questions and compliments. I should also give special thanks to the two other tour guides and helpers; my wife and mother-in-law because only one tour guide on this size of property would have been impossible. Being it was a busy day; I sincerely apologize to any guests that did not have a good experience. A garden is all about the experience. ☐



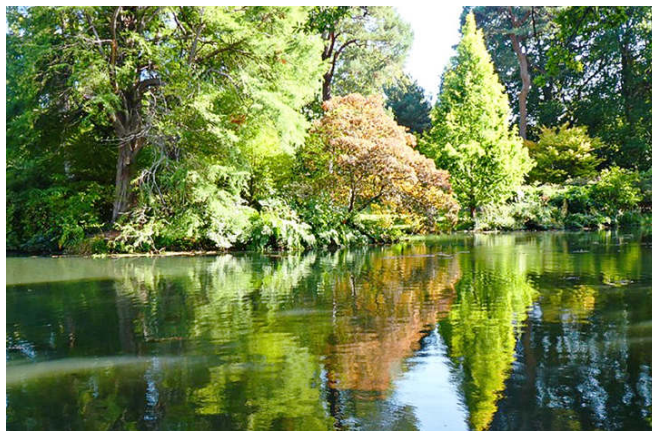
The landscape continues to evolve.

Exbury Gardens Past and Present

Bob Howard



Exbury House. [Photo Jenny Sandison]



Exbury Lake. [Photo Jenny Sandison]

Our 2021 Steele Lecture was presented by Lionel de Rothschild, grandson of his namesake, the banker Lionel de Rothschild (1882 -1942), who purchased the Exbury estate in 1919 and developed it intensely until the outbreak of WWII. Ken Cox identifies this garden project as requiring “the largest gardening team ever assembled for a woodland garden: 200 men constructed a village to house Exbury’s staff, while 150 men set to work digging peat into the sandy soil.” That earlier Lionel de Rothschild planted and hybridized on a grand scale. He made over 1,200 crosses of which more than a third of the hybrids have been named. The gardens range over 200 acres.

Our presenter, the contemporary Lionel, told the story of this almost unimaginable richness with down-to-earth modesty. I found his style witty and authoritative. I loved that the Zoom presentation was streamed from the working offices of the garden team and that the head gardener, Tom Clark, was on hand for comments as well. This is a working garden, one that is concerned with visitors, honey fungus, weather, and rainfall. Lionel’s easy and authentic affection for the plants, garden scenes and his family’s history at Exbury charmed me. A big-money grandeur that might have left me cold turned instead into the warmth of specific scenes, people, plants, and garden ideas. For example, it was fun to see Queen Elizabeth in raingear riding in a model steam train—much like the small train we had in the amusement park here at Annapolis Royal!

As to plants, the Exbury list is enormous. Early in the talk, Lionel shows us yellow *R. macabeanum* brought back from India by Frank Kingdon-Ward. The early Lionel received plants from many expeditions of Kingdon-Ward, Reginald Farrer and George Forest. Plants grown from the original collections are still grown and maintained at Exbury. Moreover, the early Lionel de Rothschild was an avid hybridizer. ‘Crest’ is perhaps his



R. ‘Hawk Crest’, Exbury circa 1950. [Photo Alleyne Cook]



Exbury Azaleas circa 1950. [Photo Alleyne Cook]



Exbury azaleas 1984. [Photo Don Craig]



Exbury azaleas 1984. [Photo Don Craig]

best yellow. The Exbury range of deciduous azaleas are still popular today. ‘Drury Lane’ is a favourite of our speaker.

Of particular interest to me is the collection of *Rhododendron augustinii* and the hybrids made at Exbury. I bought a plant of *R. augustinii* at our June Convention plant sale. It’s a tall-growing plant with smallish leaves and flowers of a pale purple-light blue colour. Ranked as borderline hardy (6b-7), it’s a large, mature plant at the AR Historic Gardens, so maybe it’s a bit hardier than listed. I’d like to find and test the hybrid that the earlier Lionel made, called ‘Electra’, which is supposed to be a more intense blue.

I ordered Lionel’s new book, ‘The Eighth Wonder of the World’: Exbury Gardens and the Rothschilds, a couple of months ago. By curious coincidence the book arrived just this afternoon as I was writing this article. It’s a fascinating and lovely book. Filled with many historic and beautiful garden photos, more details about the rock garden and plant hunters, and enriched with stories of the legendary garden, this is a book I will read and refer to with pleasure for years to come. Here’s one example: In 1934, Koichiro Wada of Yokohama Nursery in Japan sent two small plants of *R. yakusimanum* to Lionel at Exbury. In 1945, Exbury’s head gardener, Francis Hanger, took one of these plants along with him when he became Curator at the RHS garden at Wisley. This plant won a First-Class Certificate (FCC) in 1947 and was subsequently given the varietal name ‘Koichiro Wada’. In 2016, “Yak” was elected the number one rhododendron of the 20th century by the Rhododendron, Camellia, and Magnolia Group. This little, but important story started because Lionel de Rothschild wanted to find the highest quality plants and was corresponding in the 1930’s with Professor Wada in Japan.☐



Exbury 1984. [Photo Don Craig]



R. augustinii 1984. [Photo Don Craig]

Glimpses Into Your Seed Exchange

Sharon Bryson, ARHS Seed Exchange Chair

I have been dealing with the annual Seed Exchange since 2002. The years certainly go by quickly. I thought it might be time to give some glimpses into the day to day functioning of the Exchange. This is an update of a similar report done in 2013, so some references may seem archaic(a bit like me).

The really busy time is, of course, after the seed list has gone out to members and orders arrive to be filled.

The actual process starts much earlier with reminders to donors in the summer that seeds will be required for the upcoming exchange.

Each year I try to get seeds sent to me by early December, so that the list can be put together in early January.

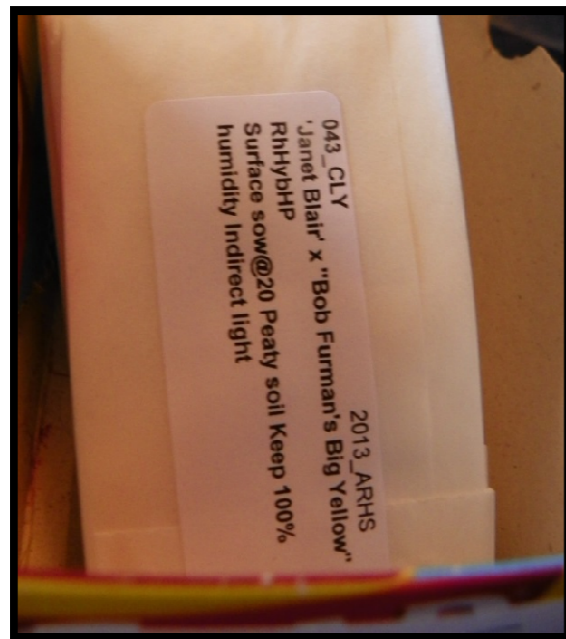
Donated seeds are organized, repackaged and labelled. Stock packs of seed usually go in a glassine envelope which then is inserted into external envelope for labelling and easier filing. Occasionally seeds need to be cleaned, a job which was done much better by my late husband Bill.

In the last several years I have been trying to give cold and or warm treatments to some varieties that need special treatment. The time lapse between seed gathering and dispensing is quite long and having this step hopefully helps in getting reasonable germination.

Magnolia seed was the first recipient of special treatment, it has quite stringent requirements for moisture and cold periods. Various other seed lots are treated in a similar fashion.

I usually have quite a little stash of moss packed bags in a plastic bin in the spare fridge. Getting seeds from disparate sources makes for a certain amount of grateful optimism.

The arrangement for the seed lots isn't very hi-tech. Empty plastic storage or freezer bag boxes are about the proper size for the packs.



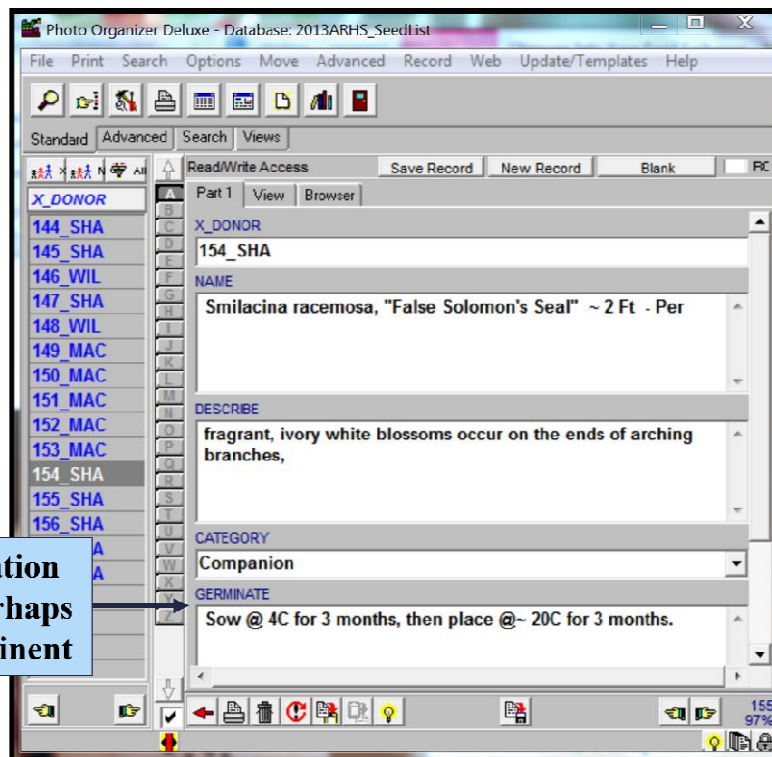
The boxes also fit in an empty plastic salad green container which has a tightly fitting cover. This guards against a spill and it can also be stored in the fridge in the "off season".



Master Storage

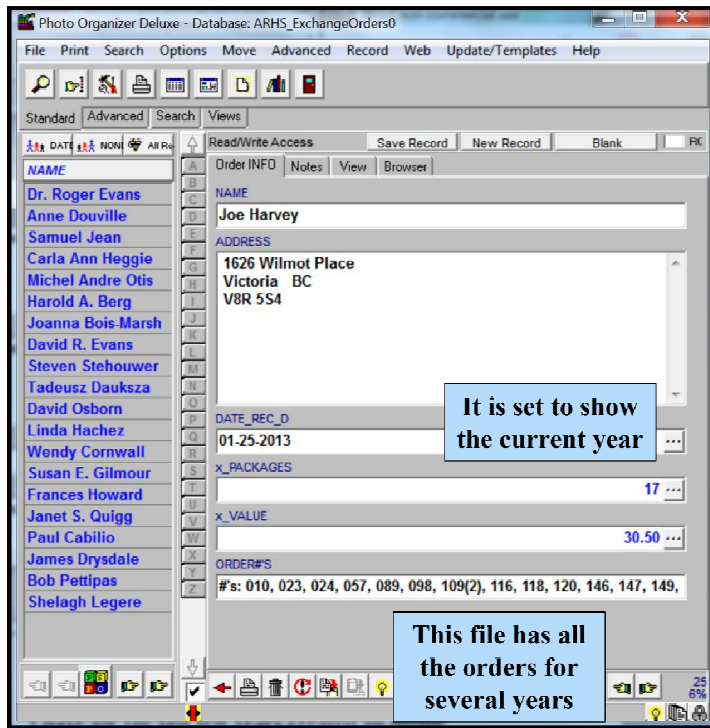
Those pesky leftovers get saved, at least for a reasonable period.

As the list gets put together, a new database with all the pertinent information for each seed lot is created.



Germination info is perhaps most pertinent

A second companion database gets used for orders as they come in. Labels for the seed packs and mailing labels are generated from these two files. The software used is from Prima Soft and is called Photo Organizer Deluxe, but is totally adaptable for many purposes.



The search feature means I can find what was ordered years ago. An excel file also contains order information, a tally for seed lot numbers, a record of expenses incurred and a page for generating a list of payments sent to our treasurer.

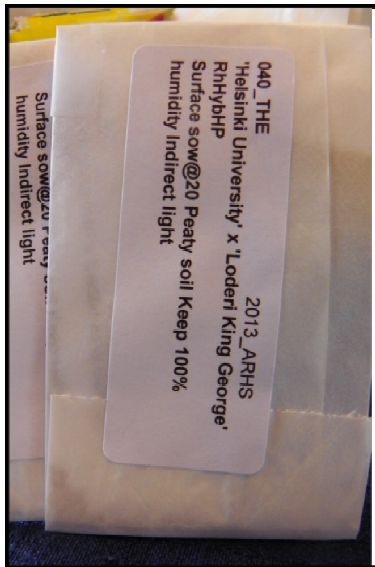
Colored boxes indicate sold out lots

#	QTY.	#	QTY.	#	QTY.	#	QTY.	#	QTY.	#	QTY.	#	QTY.
022		043	3	064	2	085	2	106		127			
023	4	044		065	3	086	5	107	4	128	1		
024	3	045	1	066	3	087	2	108	2	129			
025		046	1	067	1	088	3	109	8	130			
026		047	2	068	1	089	2	110	2	131	2		
027		048	3	069	2	090		111		132	2		
028	2	049		070	2	091	2	112		133	2		
029	3	050	1	071	4	092	2	113	3	134	1		
030	5	051	2	072	2	093	4	114		135	5		
031	4	052	3	073	3	094	3	115		136	4		
032	1	053	2	074	1	095	1	116	3	137	4		
033	2	054	4	075		096	3	117	1	138	1		
034	1	055		076	2	097	3	118	4	139	2		
035		056	2	077	2	098	4	119	1	140	2		
036		057	4	078	5	099	2	120	4	141	4		
037	3	058		079	2	100	3	121	1	142	4		
038	2	059	1	080	1	101	3	122	3	143	2		
039	4	060	1	081	2	102	2	123	4	144	2		
040	2	061		082	2	103	1	124	3	145	1		
041	4	062	2	083		104	2	125	3	146	1		
042	1	063	4	084	3	105	5	126	1	147	6		
57		39		36		43		54		47		46	

For the last many years there has been an online version of the Seed List. It has become the accepted mode for seed order selection. It also allows posting which seed lots have become unavailable – important for later orders.

It is listed on the Willow Garden website. It is still preferred to have the orders sent as hard copies, but sometimes an email order is accepted. A hard copy of the order is a failsafe in case some computer misadventure should occur. Recent years have also allowed for payment to be done via e-transfers as well as traditional cheques.

Filling orders is always quite a little task. There is nothing very difficult, but many little steps seem to be involved. All the orders are dated and numbered as they arrive and the lots are added to the tally. After a reasonable period labels are printed, placed on the glassine envelopes, arranged numerically and then seeds are added.



Dispensing seeds is rather an “eyeballed” approach. It seems that with a bit of practice one can estimate the amount to be placed in each pack. I try to be reasonably generous in the quantity whenever seed amounts allow. Some donors will include a seed count when I receive seed.

Have you ever wondered what ~750 rhododendron seeds looks like?

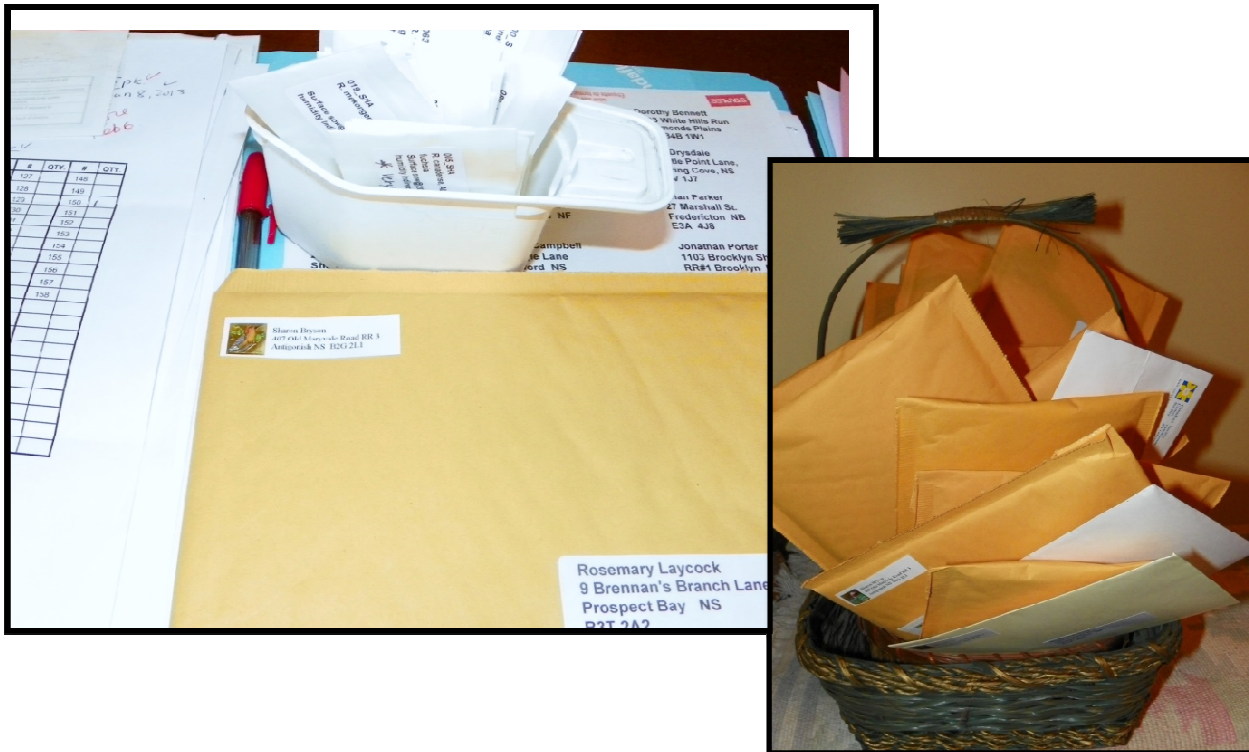


Every year a package of free Azalea seed is offered to anyone who may want to try growing from seed.

All the necessary odds and ends are set up on the table when filling packages. The cat is optional.



Once the required number of packs are done, individual orders are put together and readied for mailing.



The lag time between when I receive an order and when the seeds are shipped is based on several practical reasons.

- it is more efficient to print off multiple labels
- less manipulation of stock seeds is required when doing several packages
- better allocation of seeds by quantity

Later orders are usually filled on an individual basis since they arrive in dribs and drabs.

Postage and envelope costs have both increased over the years, so there has been a slight increase in handling costs.

The price of individual seed packs was increased in the year 2021 for the first time in over twenty years.

The 2021 Exchange was quite successful with close to 500 packages ordered resulting in a net income of approximately \$1000.00.

One rather distressing aspect of these many years doing the Seed Exchange is the minimal amount of feedback I have been able to obtain. No amount of persuasion seems to have much influence.

It is unfortunate that there will be many leftover seeds for which I never seem to find a very satisfactory solution.

I continue to welcome any useful ideas for these “orphans”.

A reminder that the success of the Seed Exchange has as much to do with the continued participation of members as seed donors and purchasers as it does with the “administration”.

A future consideration is that it should be time for someone new to takeover this annual pursuit. It would be wonderful to have a volunteer from our current members who would step into this task. I, or anyone on the ARHS executive, would be happy to answer any questions pertaining to the “job”.

Reprinted from AtlanticRhodo Volume 37: Number2, May 2013 as Behind the Scenes of Your Seed Exchange and revised by author in October 2021. ☼



Grasses: *Pennisetum alopecuroides* 'Hameln', *Schizachyrium scoparium* 'The Blues', *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Morning Light', *Deschampsia cespitosa* 'Northern Lights' Perennials: *Heliopsis* 'Red Shades', *Rudbeckia triloba* 'Prairie Glow', *Helenium* 'Ruby Tuesday'.
[Photo Dennis Crouse]

My Late Summer-Autumn Garden

Dennis Crouse

Once the Rhododendron floral displays have climaxed, they leave us on a high. Meanwhile, some ARHS members have worked hard making crosses among their rhododendrons and realized after harvesting those seeds in fall that they have too many seeds. Yes, this is a plug to donate your seeds to the ARHS Seed Exchange. Please contact Sharon Bryson to see if it is not too late. After the rhododendrons finish their floral show we are treated with lush new foliage that can give us another tapestry of colour. Foliage is also important! But fall too has its charms.

Since September I have had people stop and ask, 'what is that plant?' My perennials have really benefited from the best growing season in years with the right amount of rain and sun. So here are photographs of my fall garden,



Front: *Calluna vulgaris* 'Katja' is a newer cultivar found in 2010 and is registered through the heather Society. An outstanding plant! Long blooming and very showy.
Back: *Calluna vulgaris* 'Silver Knight' is an old standby introduced in 1966. Lavender colour blooms and silver foliage that gives a smoky effect when planted en-mass.



Grasses: *Pennisetum alopecuroides*, *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Little Zebra', *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Morning Light'.
Perennials: *Perovskia atriplicifolia*, *Symphyotrichum novae-angliae* 'Purple Dome', *Symphyotrichum novae-angliae* 'Andenken an Alma Pötschke', *Sedum* 'Autumn Joy', *Veronicastrum virginicum*, *Solidago canadensis*.

What a Global Pandemic taught me about Gardening

Dennis L. Stuebing, Ph.D.

It's hard to think of a single aspect of life that hasn't been affected by COVID-19. Over the past two years the ways we work, the ways we meet - even as a horticultural society - and the ways we garden, have all been impacted by the global pandemic. Over the past few months, I've reflected on the latter and wanted to put to words what I've learned during this unprecedented time. I suspect my experiences are not unique and hope what I have to share resonates with others reading this article.

The garden is a shelter

Above all else, my garden has been my refuge. My partner and I moved back to the traditional and un-ceded territory of the Mi'kmaq – Mi'kmak'i - also known as Nova Scotia, in August 2019. We moved into our home in North Kentville, after seven years of living in apartments in Macao, which has a population of nearly 700,000 people confined to approximately 30 square kilometres of land. To others, our yard may seem small, but given our recent past, the land is vast and welcoming. I empathize with those who have struggled during public health lockdowns especially those confined to small spaces. For me, the restrictions justified my desire to spend time walking around our yard, planning, planting, and considering all the opportunity that lay beneath my feet. On days that I felt overwhelmed by what was unfolding on the news, I could step outside and distract myself by digging, transplanting, pruning, or...weeding, though I never seem to spend enough time weeding. All the usual benefits of gardening persisted during the pandemic like getting fresh air, increased activity and exercise, artistic expression and a sense of accomplishment after completing much-needed tasks. But it's the sanctuary that my garden offered from prevalence rates, numbers of new cases, and lists of exposure sites, that I most valued.

Here are a few other things I've learned about gardening during the global pandemic:

Gardeners are creative and resilient even when global supply chains fail

I have become very aware of how reliant I am on the globalized economic system. During the height of the pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns, like most things, gardening resources were in limited supply. When stores were allowed to open, be it box-stores, nurseries or garden centres, the number and types of plants available, were minimal. Timber prices skyrocketed and plastic sheeting was out of stock, everywhere. Trying to source seeds online was an equally frustrating endeavour due to high demand and "sold out" labels plastered across many websites.

The silver lining is that gardening seems to have experienced a resurgence in popularity. I saw neighbours and family members build cold-frame structures and plant fruit trees. An employee of a local landscaping company told me that garden soil sales had increased tenfold from the year prior to the onset of the pandemic. I turned to YouTube to learn how to up-cycle discarded wooden pallets for raised garden beds. I collected seeds and shared cuttings. I also made long-term gardening commitments by growing trees and shrubs from seed, including mixed deciduous azaleas and *Rhododendron qiaojaense*, available through the annual ARHS Seed Exchange. Hope eventually replaced the vulnerability I felt when our systemic fragility was initially realized. I have been able to make choices and to continue gardening despite my entanglement within the decaying economic structures around me.



R. auriculatum grown from ARHS seed.



Up-cycled cold frame in need of repairs.

We can create a more sustainable future

COVID-19 has revealed how unprepared we are to respond to global existential threats. Prior to the pandemic, it would be hard to imagine all that we have now collectively experienced. Yet here we are on the other side of it, or approaching the other side, I hope. What choices can we make now to better position ourselves before the next crisis occurs? Can the actions we take in our gardens contribute not only to our own personal well being (healthier, more relaxed, better fed, etc.) but also contribute to our collective well being?

This year, I added a second rain barrel to my garden. I have continued to compost and to use mulch. I have planted more native species as well as fruits and vegetables so that we have elderberries flanking a dwarf *R. impeditum* and other interesting permaculture combinations. I have shared canned salsa, jam, and jelly with family, friends, and neighbours. I know that personal action is important. Yet, as someone who has lived abroad and been to the heart of international manufacturing, I have witnessed the industrial scale of the problem.

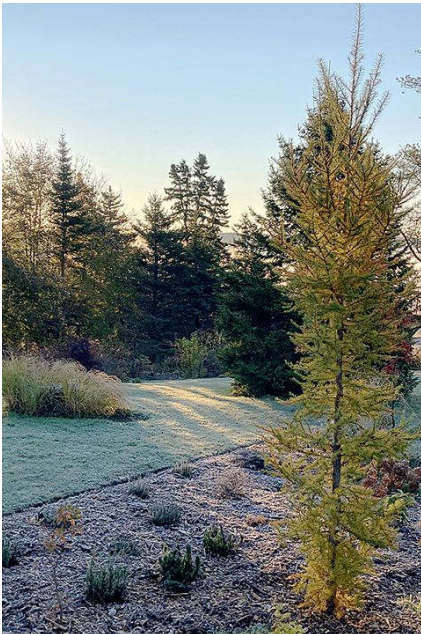
Preparedness and sustainability are of course not 'either/or' scenarios. The choices I make in my garden may feel disconnected from something as huge as climate change but as demonstrated during COVID-19, my consumer habits connect me to international supply and demand. Since I was able to successfully garden through the constraints of the pandemic, am I able to continue to make choices that limit over consumption and/or use my role as consumer to reduce harmful production practices? Can I build more community connections and prioritize collaboration over competition?

Conclusion

COVID-19 has been difficult. It will likely take years to truly understand how much the pandemic has affected us. In the meantime, we can learn about ourselves, and how we can adapt our gardens and communities into better places. ☘

Autumn Garden Colour - A Photo Essay

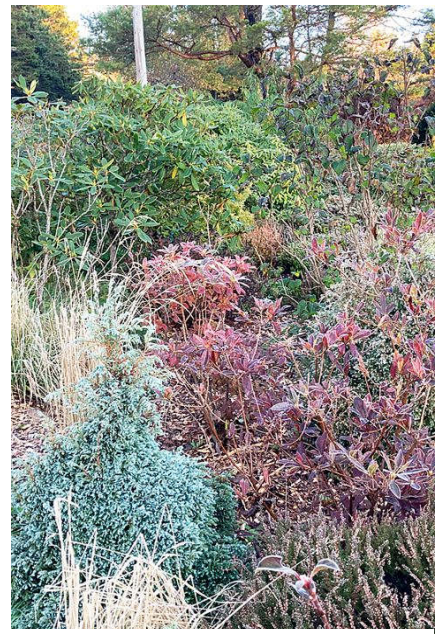
Dennis Crouse



Larix kaempferi 'Paper Lanterns' transitioning into its golden foliage on a frosty morning.



A great example that our indigenous flora can have great attributes. For example, this low growing blueberry bush is bluish with frosted leaf margins.



The red foliage of the deciduous azaleas pairs well with the blue from the *Chamaecyparis*

Autumn Garden Colour - A Photo Essay

Dennis Crouse



The cooler start to late autumn mornings create the perfect setting for this perennial bed.



Larix 'Pendula'



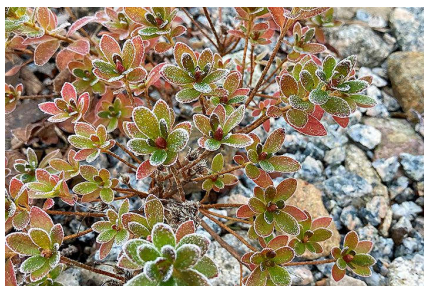
Not only does *Acer griseum* have stellar exfoliating cinnamon coloured bark, it has exceptional fall foliage.



Leucothoe fontanesiana 'Scarletta' with some frosty leaf margins.



Rhododendron 'Ribbon Candy' with frosty leaf margins. The foliage shows more colour in autumn like this in full sun.



Rhododendron 'Mangetsu' looks delightful with frost.



The soft texture of *Amsonia hubrichtii* complimented by *Lavandula angustifolia*.

Positions of Responsibility

Officers and Directors of the Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticulture Society for 2021 – 22

President :	Jim Sharpe	902-425-6312
Vice-President:	Rebecca Lancaster	902-453-0251
Secretary:	Nancy Lewis	902-453-4284
Treasurer:	Position Available	
Director and Plant Sale Committee	Dennis Crouse	902-826-7165
Director at large and Editor AtlanticRhodo:	Jean Henshall	902-477-2933
Director at Large:	Carol Morrison	902-860-0101
Director at Large :	Dennis Stuebing	902-385-1370

Other Positions of Responsibility

Newsletter Layout:	Sterling Levy	902-861-1176
Website:	Rebecca Lancaster	902-453-0251
Library:	Bonnie Conrad/Frances Howard	902-463-7582/902-463-6659
Coordinator, Seed Exchange:	Sharon Bryson	902-863-6307
Coordinator, Membership :	Jane Plant	902-425-6040
Garden Care Outreach:	Chris Hopgood	902-479-0811
Administrator, Passionate Plants Person Awards:	Trudy Campbell	902-835 9389
Spring Garden Tour and Potluck	Lynn Rotin	902-346-2018
District 12 ARS Rep (American Rhodo Society):	Christina Woodward	email: canadacaw@yahoo.ca

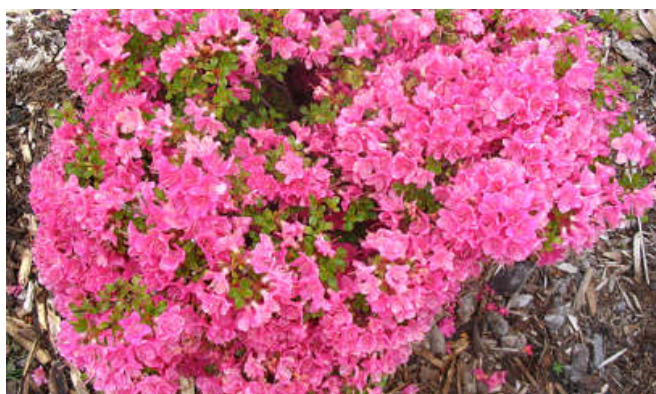
Photo Album - Photos from AtlanticRhodo Archives, submitted by former and current ARHS members.



Daphne cneorum. [Photo Roslyn Duffus]



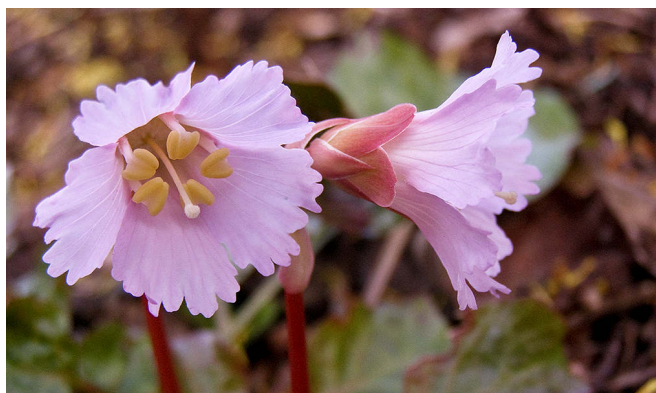
Kalmia 'BullsEye'. [Photo Roslyn Duffus]



R. kiusianum Pink Form. [Photo Donna Silver]



R. catawbiense 'Boursault'. [Photo Donna Silver.]



Shortia uniflora. [Photo Chris Helleiner]



Helleborus thibetanus. [Photo Chris Helleiner]



R. 'Barbara Hall'. [Photo Bob Pettipas]



R. 'Percy Wiseman' [Photo Bob Pettipas]