

EUGENE CHAPTER

November Newsletter 2010

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NEXT CHAPTER PROGRAM

NOVEMBER 18

THIRD THURSDAY OF NOVEMBER

**PLEASE JOIN US FOR COFFEE, COOKIES &
CONVERSATION AT CAMPBELL CENTER, 7 P.M.**

THE DIRT ON DIRT

PRESENTED BY DOUG FURR,

FOLLOWED BY

FABULOUS PLANT AUCTION

**Galen
Baxter**

Grand Old
Wizard
of
Grafting
&
Tales of the
Good Old
Rhodie Days



Photo by Bill Johnson

NOVEMBER 18TH PROGRAM

MEMBER FOCUS

Doug Furr will present "The Dirt on Dirt." He tantalizes us about the topic in his monthly column, "Yakkin' at the Old Tool Shed," on Page 3. Last year we learned how to compost and raise worms to produce soil amendments from our kitchen scraps, leaves, and garden left-overs. This year we will learn how to evaluate soil quality using simple low tech observations that every gardener will benefit by learning.

Galen Baxter, that quiet gentleman in the back of the room, is a husband, father, WW II veteran, American worker, world traveler, plantsman, and to our good fortune, a member of the Eugene Chapter. His tutorials on grafting are always well-attended, and rhododendron newbies find that he is always approachable and generous with his vast knowledge of rhododendrons.

Galen was born in 1925 in the Oklahoma panhandle. Like many rhododendron *(continued on Page 4)*

FROM THE PRESIDENT TED HEWITT

What a beautiful October this has been with clear blue skies and warm, sunny days that make being in the garden so enjoyable. The late-flowering perennials—bright purple-pink asters, light pink and yellow chrysanthemums, blue salvias, small, multi-colored and strangely shaped blossoms of the *Tricyrtis* (toad lily), white and pink variations of the Japanese anemones and, of course, fuchsias—are putting on quite a show. But also the unusual, brilliant violet beautyberries, the blue berries backed by red bracts on the *Clerodendron*, and the red berries on the *Cotoneaster* and the *Skimmia* contribute interest to the autumn garden. The *Cardiocrinum giganteum*, which bloomed in June, has swelling seedpods and the huge, heart-shaped leaves are turning yellow—what an interesting plant. Of course, next spring's blossom buds are forming on the rhododendrons.

I commend the ARS Siuslaw Chapter for their fine Western Regional Conference. Besides good programs, wonderful plant sale, and profitable silent auction and raffle, everything was organized well—right down to the handmade little bird house table favors at the banquet. Another enjoyable conference aspect was meeting rhody enthusiasts from the East Coast and Canada; renewing acquaintances, such as Bill and Carole Hicks from Tacoma and Ron Knight from Vancouver, BC; and spending time with our District 4 chapter members.

With October being Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Gene Cockeram introduced his new hybrid 'The Pink Ribbons' ('Paprika Spiced' x 'Jezebel') by offering it for sale for the first time and donating all money to breast cancer research. The blossom color is similar to the breast cancer pink ribbons and the pink worn on football uniforms this year. **Note:** We will have one in the plant auction at the November 18 chapter meeting. *(continued on Page 3)*

OFFICERS

PLACES TO GO, PEOPLE TO SEE

PRESIDENT: Ted Hewitt
VICE PRESIDENT: Douglas Furr
TREASURER: Riek Reed
SECRETARY: Paula Hewitt
PAST PRESIDENT: Helen Baxter
MEMBERSHIP CHAIR: Riek Reed

BOARD MEMBERS

	Term
Frances Burns	2008 - 2011
JoAnn Napier	2009 - 2012
Leonard Frojen	2009 - 2012
Gordon Wylie	2010 - 2013
Terry Henderson	2010 - 2013

STANDING COMMITTEES

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EUGENE CHAPTER WEBSITE
www.eugene.chapter-ars.org

Emerald Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society—On Tuesday, November 2, 2010 at 7:00 p.m., chapter members Loren Russell and Holly Helton talk about attending the NARGS Annual Meeting in the Colorado Rockies this summer. The talk will be held at the Eugene Garden Club, 1645 High St. and is sponsored by the Emerald Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society. The meeting is free and open to the public. For more information contact Tanya (president@nargsemerald.org or 541-937-1401).

The Willamette Valley Hardy Plant Group—On Tuesday, November 9, 2010, at 7 p.m. guest speaker Mark Turner presents “Photographing Your Garden Through New Eyes” at the University of Oregon, Agate Hall, Agate Street at 18th Avenue, Eugene, OR. Doors open at 6:30 for book sales and viewing botanical samples. Admission is \$6 for non-members and \$3 for members. Membership in the Hardy Plant Group is \$20 annually. There is ample parking next to Agate Hall. For more information about the group or this event, visit the website at www.thehardyplantgroup.org or contact Pam Perryman at (541) 344-0896.

O. Howard Hinsdale Garden Planting Party—On Wednesday, November 17, 2010 at 10:00 a.m. volunteers meet to plant rhododendrons at the O. Howard Hinsdale Garden. More information, including directions and contact information may be found on Page 4.

PLEASE NOTE!

Our November 18th meeting is on the third Thursday of November, not the second Thursday!

TEMPORARY EDITOR'S BYTE

MARY BURNS FURR

Becoming a rhododendron fancier has a wonderful side-effect: Meeting new people and traveling far and wide. This month Frances Burns, our chapter newsletter editor (and my mother), is visiting with fellow rhododendron lovers in springtime Australia. In her absence it is my honor to serve as temporary newsletter editor. Not to worry, however—Frances will be back at the editor's desk for the December edition!

ARS EUGENE CHAPTER BOARD OF DIRECTORS ADOPTS MISSION STATEMENT

Encourage the culture and interest of rhododendrons.

Use our meetings for educational opportunities and building friendships.

Grow both species and hybrid rhododendrons in our gardens.

Educate ourselves and the community about the world of rhododendrons.

Nurture the idea of garden design with rhododendrons.

Exhibit our knowledge and the beauty of rhododendrons to the community.

In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt.

Margaret Atwood

Here it is autumn, and I'm thinking of spring, because it's my temporary job to care for all of the rhody seedlings, cuttings, and transplants while MIL is traveling abroad in springtime Australia. It's also time to plant garlic, which, in turn, reminds me of the flower bulbs I agreed to plant. Daffodils, lilies, and garlic! Oh my!

My apologies to the Wizard of Oz.

I'm also thinking of our November plant auction. This is all adding up to one thing: It's time to plant...and plant starts with P, and P rhymes with D, and D stands for Dirt, Dirt in River City!

My apologies to the Music Man.

However, speaking of dirt, I've been wanting to learn more about soil to improve my gardening and farming skills, so I have been studying Oregon State University (OSU) Extension Service's Soil Quality Card. This gem of a publication provides a wealth of knowledge about soil structure and tilth gathered from Willamette Valley farmers. I will share my learning with you at our November 18 meeting in a presentation entitled, "The Dirt on Dirt." Demos will include:

- Checking water infiltration rate using homemade tools (helps with setting up sprinkler systems and watering routine)
- Testing soil compaction (to learn if stepping stones are necessary)
- Gauging the amount of sand in your garden soil
- Measuring the temperature of the garden soil using equipment commonly found in many homes
- Counting the number of worms in the soil (my favorite—the mustard test)

If you apply liquid fertilizers, pesticides, or herbicides, you may want to test the pH of your water. When I attended an OSU Extension hazelnut growers' workshop in Monmouth earlier this fall I was astonished to find out that sampled Willamette Valley water varied in pH from the low 5's to the mid 8's! Water pH recommendations are sometimes included on container labels precisely because this value, which can vary from location to location, can impact chemical performance.

If YOU would like to give a presentation (you don't have to be a subject matter expert) or know someone who can, please contact me or any board member with information.

Questions? Comments? E-mail me, Douglas Furr, at garden.projects@hotmail.com.

Tip from The Old Tool Shed—In many kitchens, workshops, garden sheds and garages one can almost always find an item common to the laundry. A clothes pin. The modern spring loaded clothes pin was invented by David M. Smith of Springfield, Vermont, in 1853. In the garden as well as other places they have unlimited uses, such as clipping seed packages to your workbench, clamping rags to your shirt for quick access during a messy job, holding wet gloves upside down to dry, maintaining your place in a book on a breezy day, even temporarily holding grafts in place while wrestling with a roll of pesky tape. In the military they refer to a can opener as a P-38, in movie production they refer to clothes pins as C-47's, and they use them regularly. Keep a good supply on hand and watch the children...clothes pins can stretch the imagination!

FROM THE PRESIDENT *(continued from Page 1)*

The final talk at the conference featured many of the spectacular new hybrids that have been developed by Northwest hybridizers recently, and our chapter will feature some of these as 2-gallon plants in the November 18 plant auction. Bring plenty of extra cash from under your mattress so you can be the first person in your community to bloom these beautiful creations. Good foliage goes right along with spectacular flowers on many of these rhodies.

Ted



FALL 2010 PLANTING

DATE: Wednesday, November 17, 2010

TIME: 10:00 a.m. until done

WHERE: Garden is approximately five miles east of Reedsport on north side of Highway 38, opposite the elk viewing area. Participants may be left off at new entry road to main garden; car parking will be in lot reached by driveway immediately east of garden.

QUERIES: Gordon Wylie at (541) 895-2864 or lgwone@gmail.com.

Hot soup and snacks will be provided.

Join in to support the ARS Endowment Grant funding of plant purchases and restoration of this historic garden.

Best of all, help make short work of the task while enjoying the camaraderie of fellow enthusiasts!

Member Focus *(continued from Page 1)*

buffs, he was interested in growing plants from seed by the age of 6. Life took a different turn, however, when he joined the Navy in 1943 to become a Signaller and ended up spending 18 months in the Solomon Islands. **Note:** Signallers were responsible for transmitting, receiving, encoding, decoding, and distributing messages obtained via the visual transmission systems of flag semaphore, visual morse code, and flaghoist signalling.)

After the war, Galen stayed on the West Coast and eventually moved to Grants Pass, where the following significant events occurred: He met and married his wife, Helen (1952); their first child, Roger, was born (1953); and Galen bought his first rhody ('J. H. Van Ness'). The family, including J. H., moved to Florence in 1955, where, in the same year, second child Donald was born.

In 1957/58 Galen joined the ARS and started raising rhodies from seed, most obtained from the Royal Horticultural Society and the ARS. Soon after, he started a nursery and began to work weekends at the Hinsdale Garden. Lee Weltzheimer (Charleston, OR) and J. Harold Clarke (Long Beach, WA) were two of his early mentors. In 1961, he built a large greenhouse, and, for a brief time, grew fuchsias as well as rhodies. The fuchsias went by the wayside, but a long friendship with Willard and Margaret Thompson started in the early '70s when they stopped by to talk a little about rhodies. Willard had grafted trees, and he taught Galen how to graft. Galen is a founding member of the Siuslaw Chapter, for which he served as program chair, two terms as president, show judge, and general Rhody Advocate to all. For his contributions, the Siuslaw Chapter awarded him the Bronze Medal.

Galen and Helen love to travel. They've been to many rhododendron conferences, including one in New Zealand. They've traveled to over 20 different countries and in 1995, after selling their plants and property, traveled for nine months around the United States. In 1997, Galen and six others joined Steve Hootman on a rhody trek in Sikkem.

Later in 1997 Galen had a serious illness, and Galen and Helen moved to West Eugene. They have a place on Hwy 99, known as The Jungle, because the property is filled with rhododendrons.

What's truly amazing is that Galen accomplished all of the above while working for 34 years for International Paper, which is a significant achievement in itself!

BZ.

And if you don't know what that means, just ask Galen!



Emerald Chapter NARGS Meeting

Eight years ago, Peter Korn started carving his 5-acre garden out of a spruce and oak forest in southern Sweden. Today he has an extraordinary garden that accommodates plant habitats that range from alpine to bog to woodland.

In his talk to the Emerald Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society in October Peter described how he uses large mounds of trucked-in coarse glacial sand to create most of the beds. He positions various-sized rocks on the mound, and then places plants needing a drier location near the top of the mound and the ones needing a damper location toward the bottom. Finally, he mulches with gravel and smaller rocks to retain moisture. Apart from an initial heavy soaking, he relies on natural precipitation (which may include an 8-week drought period in late spring) to water the garden.

Peter also spoke about some of the 10,000 species that he grows—nearly all grown from seed, much of which was collected in the wild from around the world.

Of special interest were the small rock garden rhododendrons that he grows in sand: *R. radicans*, *R. keleticum*, *R. albiflorum*, *R. 'Chikor'*, and *R. 'Egret'*. When planting them, he rinses as much soil off the roots as he can to encourage them to expand and seek moisture. The newly-planted rhododendrons languish the first year, become stronger in the second, and flourish in the third. Usually he finds that the rhododendrons become very compact plants or mats. *R. Wren'*, for example, becomes a profusely blooming 3-inch mat.

In the woodland garden, he amends the soil with peat and horse manure and grows some of the larger rhododendrons in the shade of oak trees.

What an interesting field trip it would be to visit his garden.



ARS Western Regional Conference

Chapter member Harold Greer started the conference Friday evening with a talk on “Tried and True Hybrids” from the past, which laid the groundwork for succeeding talks on more recent hybrids. Tried and true hybrids such as ‘Lem’s Cameo’ and ‘Nancy Evans’ came up again and again in conference sessions.

On Saturday there were four sessions, each with multiple offerings. A talk by Paul Wilson on “How Can Computers Benefit You and Your Chapter.” provided tips for using group e-mails and an up-to-date website for chapter communications. He also explained how to use a database to keep track of your rhododendrons. Bill Johnson took us on a virtual bus trip to the Hinsdale Garden, Jim Smith’s Garden, “Ziggy” Ziegelmaier’s Garden, and the Gerdemann Botanical Preserve—a pleasant way to spend a rainy morning. After lunch, Pat Osborne gave a wonderful presentation on 52 rhododendrons developed over three generations by the Thompson family. Wrapping up the afternoon, Kath Collier talked about “Companion Plants for the Rhododendron Enthusiast,” which dealt with using color, shape, line, and texture in garden design. A session which I did not personally attend was a hands-on workshop in which each participant made an evergreen azalea bonsai to take home. Following the Saturday evening banquet, Steve Hootman of the Rhododendron Species Foundation brought us up to date on the happenings at the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden (RSBG), including the recent opening of the new Rutherford Conservatory, which is a grand display of vireyas and other exotic plants. Of course, Steve has also been busy hunting for new plants in southern China and Viet Nam, so we got to travel vicariously with him to these wonderful locales.

On Sunday morning, Mike Stewart ended the conference with a beautiful presentation of many spectacular new hybrids from Northwest hybridizers, including Don Wallace, the Thompson family, Jim Barlup, and Frank Fujioka. These plants will be featured in our November 18 plant auction, so come prepared to bid high and often.

I have read somewhere that no Japanese child will instinctively pick a flower, not even a very young child attracted by its bright color, because the sacredness of flowers is so deeply imbued in the culture of Japan that its children understand the blossoms are there to look at, not to pluck

Katharine S. White

**November 2010
Newsletter**



Rhododendron Burning Embers'

Hybridized and photographed by by Jim Barlup

Rhododendron Calendar

- Nov. 18** Program "The Dirt on Dirt" demo by Douglas Furr and Plant Auction
- Dec. 9** Holiday Potluck, Campbell Center
- Jan. 13** Program "Rhodie Insights" by Jack Olson.
- Feb. 10** Program "The BLM Hinsdale Garden Project" by Steve Samuels, BLM
- Mar. 10** Annual Elections and Program "Prepping a Truss for Show and Judging"
Panel Discussion
- Apr. 9** Early Show
- May 11-15** ARS Annual Convention, Vancouver, WA, www.heathmanlodge.com
- June** Picnic at Jensen's Garden (date to be established)

EUGENE CHAPTER WEBSITE

www.eugene-chapter-ars.org