

Portland Chapter, American Rhododendron Society

Calendar

February 14, 2020
Valentine's Day

February 20, 2020
Regular meeting, with
Companion Plants
Auction and Sweets for
the Sweet potluck

March 19, 2020
Regular meeting
First day of Spring, as
well!

March 21, 2020
Spring Work Day at
the Smith Garden

Meeting Info

Regular chapter meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month (except in June, July, and August which have other events).

Meetings start at 7 pm with a social half-hour preceding the main meeting. We clean up and exit by 9:30 pm.

Location: All Saints Episcopal Church - At the corner of SE 40th and Woodstock, Portland, Oregon



FEBRUARY 2020 PROGRAM

Guest Speaker: Bob Zimmermann

Arunachal Pradesh, Wilderness Untouched (with Rhododendrons)

Come and be our valentine! Bring some sweet treats and join us for the monthly meeting of the ARS Portland Chapter on Thursday, February 20, at All Saints Episcopal Church, 4033 SE Woodstock Blvd. Along with our Valentine's potluck, there are two special features in store: (1) we'll conduct our annual Companion Plant Auction and (2) we'll experience one of the Northwest's most successful growers of species rhododendrons as our guest speaker.

Bob Zimmermann fell in love with rhododendrons over fifty years ago. He began propagating on his kitchen stove and now grows species rhododendrons from seed in his greenhouse at Chimacum Woods on Washington's Olympic Peninsula. Some 300 species populate the collection in his garden, providing a reliable source of seed for the plants he makes available to gardeners in both the US and Canada. Bob first joined the ARS as a member of the Portland Chapter in 1973 and is a past president of the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden.

Bob is one of those intrepid plant explorers who has endured adverse weather, leeches, rugged hiking and mountain climbing conditions to study the plants he loves. He has traveled with botanists, five times to China, once to Tibet, once to Japan, and, most recently, to Arunachal Pradesh in NE India. He will share his experiences from that trip – the botanical, cultural, political and spiritual.

We'll start at 7pm, as usual, and hope you might consider joining some of the members across the street at the Woodstock Wine & Deli any time after 5. This is our regular optional get-together for a light dinner or beverage. Join us—bring a friend—this promises to be another great meeting! Reminder: doors at All Saints don't open until 6:30. We'll conclude by 9, and, who knows, your sugar high from the Valentine's goodies might last you right through to the end!

Steve McCormick

Purpose

To encourage interest in and disseminate information and knowledge about the genus *Rhododendron*.

To provide a medium through which all persons interested in the genus may communicate with others through education, scientific studies, meetings, publications, and other similar activities.

The Portland Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society is registered in Oregon as a 501 (C)(3) non-profit organization. Dues and donations are qualified charitable tax deductions.

Chapter Calendar through March, 2020

February 14, 2020

Valentine's Day

February 20, 2020

Regular meeting

Social time 7:00 pm

Meeting 7:30 pm

**Speaker: Bob Zimmerman,
Chimacum Woods**

**Program: "Arunachal Pradesh,
Wilderness Untouched (with Rhododendrons)" and, our annual
Companion Plant Auction and
Treats for the Sweet Potluck!**

March 19, 2020

Regular meeting

Social time 7:00 pm

Meeting 7:30 pm

**Speaker: Glen Jamieson, Editor,
JARS**

Program: "Highlights of the Danish/Swedish/German 2018 Tours"

March 21, 2020

**Spring Work Day,
Smith Garden**

April 4-5, 2020 Sat-Sun

Early Show & Sale

**Crystal Springs Rhododendron
Garden**

April 16, 2020

Annual Business Meeting

Hybrid Rhododendron Auction

Speaker: Ella May Wulff

Program: "Heathers for Year-round Color"

Haiku

A gusty east wind
—partner to a leaf strewn lawn
and other travelers

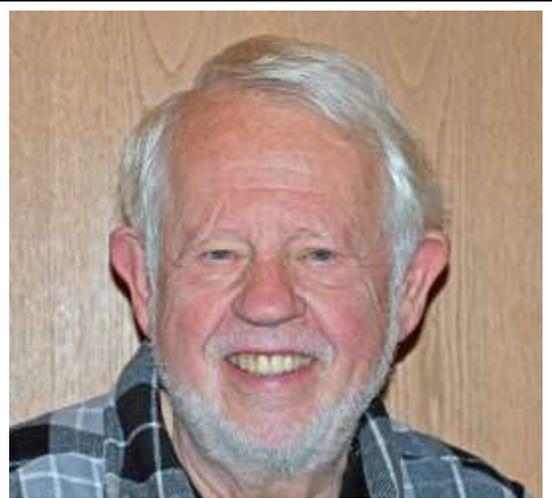
The sound and resound
of chimes in the tree; only
the wind knows for sure

Contrails surmounting
stratus clouds, each at
the dictate of the wind

December dewdrops
On the move, a congregation
of bush tits

A damp December
All is still and soundless
except for my breath

By Peter Kendall



Bob Zimmermann

Our speaker for February's meeting

President's Message for February, 2020:

February is the cruelest month

March gets all the hype about coming in like a lion, but in fact February is the cruelest month, especially here in the northwest. In February of 1899, the "The Great Arctic Break" brought 9°F temperatures to Portland for two weeks. More recently, in 1996, the last week of February featured the worst flooding in 30 years. The weather started out as a snowstorm that turned into an ice storm followed by the Pineapple Express. Some of us walked into work with crampons and ice axes, and came home in 4" of slush with the hillsides spouting water like fire hydrants. The Willamette River flooded parts of Portland and much of Oregon City. For gardeners geared up and ready for the Spring-onslaught, events such as these can be heart-rending. Valentine's Day may celebrate the hot-blooded, but February's weather can be decidedly cool. But for the most part, the plants seem more resilient than the people. The early blooming rhododendrons, with their buds happily coated with snow, look unperturbed. The aconites and galanthus are emerging unscathed from this January's thin coating of white. The daily appearance of the primula, daffodils and all those small bulbs that you planted in the garden and forgot about gets the blood pumping. Hooray for February, in spite of its cruelty.

Speaking of Valentine's Day, remember to bring in 'sweets for the sweet' for the meeting. Survey your garden and green houses and decide what interesting plants you can bring to the 'Companion auction' and what places in your garden would benefit from purchases at the auction. Better yet, check your inhibitions at the door, bring your check books and let your heart tell what lovely plants to bid on. They are our major source of income for the chapter.

Caroline Enns

From the Membership Committee:

Thanks for your renewals! We had a 94% carry-over of members for 2019 to our 75th Anniversary year of 2020.

There is always room for new recruits, so please remember to invite friends to the meetings.

That's the best way to stimulate new interest from gardeners, whether they're experienced and in love with the genus Rhododendron yet or not.

Let's keep the ARS alive and well!

John Stephens & Steve McCormick

ARS Portland Chapter Membership Co-Chairs

January Meeting Highlights

Last-minute surprise: Chip Muller couldn't make it down from Seattle—bad cold and, to make it worse, a predicted snowstorm, which came true and would have made for a very difficult journey for him. Serendipity smiled on us, however, and we were able to reach our Humboldt County friend, Bruce Palmer, who had spoken to the chapter with his “What's in a Name” talk to kick off the 2018-2019 season. Bruce had teased us then with his intent to develop a talk about Joseph Rock. And, as fate would have it, he had just given the debut of that talk at the Eugene chapter the night before. He accepted our invitation to repeat the talk, filling in for Chip, and it worked out splendidly.

Bruce called his talk *The Plant Hunting Tradition and Joseph Rock, Polymath, ARS Sine Qua Non* (translated: without which wouldn't have happened). It turns out that Bruce and Joseph Rock had Maui in common—Bruce having been a teacher at Maui Community College and Joseph Rock having spent many years there botanizing in the cloud forests. Among Bruce's findings: Rock landed there in 1907, following time in San Francisco immediately following the big quake, and was sent by the USDA to Burma to collect the Chaulmoogra Tree. The species was known for its healing powers treating leprosy, for which a colony had developed at Kalaupapa on Molokai. Taking the opportunity to explore in China, a life-long ambition, Rock started his plant hunting there with Burma as the entry point. Rock became an expert on the Na-khi tribe and was famously pictured in Na-khi wardrobe. Rock's collecting in China was fortuitous for the ARS. As the Society was being founded, Joseph Rock had been the only plant hunter who replied to the ARS in Portland's request for seeds back in the late 1940s, although others had been asked. Many of the rhodies in Crystal Springs and elsewhere are from seeds Rock sent back to Portland from China.

A very timely subject, just ahead of our celebrating the 75th anniversary of the ARS, Bruce's talk made the compelling argument that the ARS might not have succeeded (*sine qua non*) without the kick-start from the seeds that Rock sent to the Portland Chapter in 1947. Bruce began with a lively graphic trip through plant-hunting history all the way back to the Pharaohs and then turned his focus on Rock and his mysterious persona. Was “Dr. Joseph Rock” truly a doctor? We don't know. Was Rock from Vienna, which he claimed? There was no evidence! Joseph Rock was awarded the ARS Gold Medal in 1954, Bruce Palmer in 2015.

Thanks again to Bruce and his wife, Nelda, for extending their journey from Eureka and saving the day by providing the Portland Chapter with a fascinating and well-presented address dealing with one of the most unique characters in rhododendron lore. And thanks to Katy Averill for lavishing us with her treats. As usual, prior to the meeting, a large group of members got their socializing done during the informal get-together at the Woodstock Wine & Deli. This provided the ideal opportunity to greet Bruce and Nelda and catch up with our rhody friends. It might also be noted that the social time at All Saints was brief, so the talk got underway earlier than usual and we were wrapped up and out of there by 8:45!

Steve McCormick



The star of the evening, Joseph Rock



Arek & Mariola Mazur

Peter Kendall



Mike Domaschofsky and Ellen



Bruce Palmer



Bob & Gretchen O'Brien



Merilee and Bob Mannen, Brenda Ziegler in between.



Dick Cavender and Luurt Nieuwenhuis



David Anderson & Andrew Stern

A Rhododendron to Brighten Our Cold and Rainy Days: *R. barbatum*

By Maria Stewart

In the very early spring, even before the official start of spring on March 20th, *R. barbatum* will brighten the gray skies with its scarlet flowers. These compact trusses beautifully adorn the branches of dark green leaves making *R. barbatum* a show-stopper in your early garden. Furthermore, the bark of this species will peel to reveal a smooth, reddish-purple surface that will add beauty to the tree-like structure of this fine rhododendron.

Here is more about *R. barbatum*:

Classification: *Subgenus:* Hymenanthes *Section:* Hymenanthes *Subsection:* Barbata (There have been discussions about whether *R. fulgens* and *R. sherriffii* belong in this subsection, also. Currently, they are both in Subsection Fulgensia.)

Distribution in the wild: Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan at 8,000 to 12,000 feet in mixed forests.

Its name: The stems and petioles have bristles. Even if there are no bristles, as sometimes is the case, the flowers, leaves and bark classify the rhododendron as *R. barbatum*.

Flowers: light scarlet to crimson-scarlet; compact trusses of 10 to 20 corollas; corollas are tubular-campanulate shaped; calyx is medium to large.

Foliage: dark green; elliptic and somewhat convex; glabrous; bristles on petioles.

Bark: peeling and revealing a colorful surface of reddish-purple.

Structure: grows like a small tree to six feet in ten years.

Hardiness: about 0 degrees F.

Finding a place in your garden: Although *R. barbatum* is fairly hardy, you need to protect it from the wind. Also, because it blooms so early, it needs protection from frosts.



R. barbatum flowers; photographer unknown.



R. barbatum in Nepal, photo courtesy of Mike Stewart.

American Rhododendron Society

75th Anniversary

20/20
VISION



ARS75.org

Looking forward, reflecting back

Portland-Vancouver, April 29-May 3, 2020

ARS Spring International Convention Update:

Registrations have now surpassed 200.

Plant sale [vendors](#) are now listed at the website.

The [Post-Tour](#) is SOLD OUT, with a wait-list being taken for a second bus.

The current tally on all tours is available on the [registration page](#) .

Room availability at the Heathman Lodge is already getting tight, so please [reserve](#) a.s.a.p.

The Winter edition of JARS is out with a full convention insert and printed registration form; otherwise online registration and print options are available at the convention [website](#).

Steve McCormick

Smith Garden Open Days and Spring Work Day

By Dick Cavender

I am amazed at how quickly the open garden season is approaching for Smith Garden. We have only a couple of meetings before our first open weekend on April 4th & 5th. So, this is the time of the year that I start begging for volunteers to work at the Smith Garden on open garden days, selling plants and/or taking admissions. It is only for 5 hours from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM on a Saturday or a Sunday in April or May. It is easy. The plants usually sell themselves and there is a copy of Greer's Guide in the gatehouse for reference. We are open to the public only 14 days out of 365. Please help me out and volunteer.

We only need 2 people a day minimum, but 4 people is nice as it is a good time to enjoy visiting with another person or couple. Sometimes it is so busy that you hardly have time to visit, but, talking with customers is fun and maybe you could talk them into joining the Rhododendron Society. Bring a sack lunch if you like and enjoy the day. The Smith Garden is gorgeous in the spring. To volunteer, please contact Anne Gross agross@teleport.com or Dick Cavender ph 503-625-6331, red@redsrhodies.com.

Our Spring work day is March 21, 2020.

The Smith Garden Spring work day is March 21, 2020. We will start around 8:00-9:00 am, or whenever you can manage, and work as long as you want. Bring gloves and your favorite hand tools. There are chores for all skill levels. Lunch will be served. We would really appreciate all the help we can get. I will be doing my sun dance but this will be a rain or shine event, so come prepared. It is also a good opportunity to visit the garden. We are expecting around 200 people to visit the Smith Garden on April 29th on one of the Convention tours, so we want it looking its best!

If anyone would like more information, please give me a call at 503-625-6331. Directions to the garden can be found at www.rhodies.org, and on the adjoining page of this newsletter.

Ginny Mapes has been doing some great work on our FaceBook group. We have about 80 members and seem to be adding one or two each day. It would be great if we could encourage some of them to join in the fun either at the work day or staffing open days. Thanks, Ginny!

Thank you,

Anne Gross & Dick Cavender

Smith Garden Directions:

From Portland:

Take I-5 south to Exit 278 (Donald exit)

Go West (right) at exit, onto Ehlen Road for 7 miles to end of road at Hwy 219.

Turn right onto Hwy 219 for 3/4 mile and look for the blue Heirloom Roses sign.

Follow Heirloom Roses sign, going left onto Champoeg Road.

Go straight onto Raybell Road at dairy barn where Champoeg Road turns to the right.

Smith Garden is at 5055 Raybell Road NE, about 1/2 mile on right side .

Parking and entrance are just past the house with the garden address.

From 99W:

Go north or south on 99W to Newberg.

Turn south onto Hwy 219 just north of downtown Newberg.

Go south for 3 miles to the Willamette River bridge.

At less than 1/2 mile past the river, look for the blue Heirloom Roses sign.

Follow Heirloom Roses sign right onto Champoeg Road,

Go straight onto Raybell Road where Champoeg Road turns to the right.

Garden is at 5055 Raybell Road NE, about 1/2 mile on right.

Parking and entrance are just past the house with the garden address.



Smith Garden in the early spring.
Photo by Ray Clack.

Portland Chapter of
the American
Rhododendron
Society

PO Box 86424,
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CHAPTER OFFICERS

President: **Caroline Enns**
Vice President: **Steve McCormick**
Past President: **Dennis O'Malley**
Secretary: **Steve Hopkins**
Treasurer: **Dick Cavender**

BOARD MEMBERS

(Through June 30, 2020):
David Anderson, Ann Clack, Ray Clack,
Joanne Turner, Brenda Ziegler

(Through June 30, 2021):
Betsy Soifer, John Stephens, Andrew
Stern, Maria Stewart, Mike Stewart

GARDEN INFO:

Crystal Springs Rhodo. Garden
Chair:
Dan McLaughlin,
dvmclau@comcast.net
Volunteering:

csrgvol@gmail.com

Gatehouse: Tours, Photoshoots:

gatehousecsrg@gmail.com

Stephanie Kress, 503-267-7509

Friends of Crystal Springs:

Dan McLaughlin,

dvmclau@comcast.net

Events:

Rachael Moloney, 503-975-6743

Cecil & Molly Smith Garden
Chair: Dick Cavender

Newsletter, membership, and
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tor, at: **tjhoffman56@vahoo.com**, or
via mail to: 4765 SW 38th Place,
Portland, OR 97221

Delivery: Questions should be di-

rected to: **Maria Stewart** at 503-668-
3522

Website: **www.rhodies.org**; web
masters: **Steve Hall and Caroline**
Enns

Membership Updates: John
Stephens & Stephen McCormick,
Membership Co-Chairs
e-mail:
jd.stephens@outlook.com
ssmccormick@outlook.com