

AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

Eureka Chapter

The next meeting
Thursday October 25 , 7:00 p.m.
Woman's Club
1531 J Street
Eureka, California

Pre-Meeting No Host Dinner 5:15
Marcelli's , 1323 5th Street, Eureka
Pre-Fix meal at \$18 all included
Eureka, Call Nelda, 707-443-8049
To ensure enough seating



October 2012

Sam Polly Succulent Soils for Robust Rhodies and Edibles

The Eureka Chapter American Rhododendron Society will welcome **Sam Polly** as our **Thursday October 25th** presenter. The meeting will begin at **7:00 p.m.** at the Eureka **Woman's Club, 1531 J Street**, Eureka. We will meet at **5:15 at Marcelli's for a pre-meeting family style Italian meal, the cost will be \$18 each including tax and gratuity.** Beer, wine or soft drinks will be an extra charge.

Sam Polly works for Streamline Planning Consultants where he performs wetland delineations, erosion control and storm water (SWPPP) planning to keep development projects moving forward through regulatory barriers that often delay projects. He also specializes in cutting-edge edible landscaping and wildlife habitat design to add elements of unique character and enhanced functionality to both commercial projects and residential clients. Sam draws from his bachelor's degree in soil science and master's degree in agricultural education, both from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, in addition to several years as a Bay Area arborist, to help create successful projects. He is a Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control (CPESC) and Qualified SWPPP Developer and Practitioner (QSD/QSP). Sam's current project is to pioneer the Third Corner Movement which involves maximizing the functionality of idle spaces and landscapes throughout the county by incorporating unique edible plantings to create a more sustainable community.

Whether driven by rapidly increasing food prices and an uncertain economic outlook, or simply the sheer joy of harvesting your own fresh, healthy ingredients, incorporating food-bearing plants into your landscape adds an entirely new dimension to the functionality of your land. Not only are many edible shrubs attractive and low maintenance, a low price of \$6 per pound for blueberries makes berry and nut shrubs a worthwhile investment. Locally dubbed the Third Corner Movement, widespread edible landscaping completes the unfulfilled third corner of the triangle representing food sustainability, food independence and food security, where the first and second corners are composed of commercial agriculture and traditional home gardening, respectively. This program will present some of the exciting edible plant varieties now known to grow behind the Redwood Curtain, as well as some of the soil basics to maximize success for all of your planting efforts.

Photos are those of the Newsletter editor, June Walsh, unless otherwise noted. Permission is granted to reprint any portion of this publication provided credit to the author and Chapter is given.

Christmas is Coming!

The Eureka Chapter has “Rhododendrons in the Redwoods” shirts for everyone on your list. Short and long sleeved tees and Long sleeved sweat-shirts in sizes from Medium to XX-Large. Ellie Gayner will have a great selection at the October 25th and December 6th meetings. If you are not able to attend the meetings you may call Ellie at 707-443-1291 for personal assistance.

Short-sleeve tees	M-XL	\$ 18.50
	XXL	21.00

Long-sleeve tees	M-XL	22.00
	XXL	24.00

Sweats (no hoodies)	M-XL	24.00
	XXL	27.00



Plant of the Month: *Rhododendron* ‘Nancy Evans’, by *Don Wallace*

If you are looking for a rich, yellow-flowering rhododendron, this is as good as it gets. Hybridized by Dr. Ned Brockenbrough of Bellevue, Washington by crossing R. ‘Hotei’ x R. ‘Lem’s Cameo’, this rhododendron has won its way into the gardens of many collectors. The buds begin to open a dark orange-red, but then as it unfolds, the yellow emerges. When fully open it is yellow with peachy edges, but as it ages it darkens to butter yellow. The plant will be 4-5 feet tall and 5-6 feet wide in 10 years. One of R. ‘Nancy Evans’ winning characteristics is

its precociousness to bloom young, even sometimes as a rooted cutting. Small plants will almost always have flower buds on every terminal. This cultivar has been used by many hybridizers in the last 10 years to create new yellow flowering rhododendrons, and will no doubt continue to be used in hybridizing into the future. The foliage is a nice medium-green and has slightly rounded leaves, adding to its attractiveness. R. ‘Nancy Evans’ blooms in late April or early May, so will be blooming with many of the purple flowering rhododendrons. If you want a really stunning display, plant R. ‘Nancy Evans’ with R. ‘Peter Alan’, R. ‘Tall Timber’, or R. ‘True Blue’, and you will have your neighbors talking. *Photo by Don Wallace*



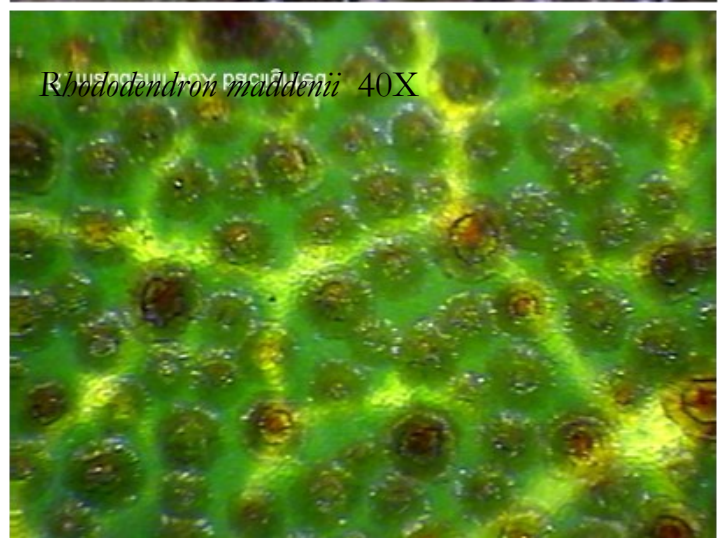
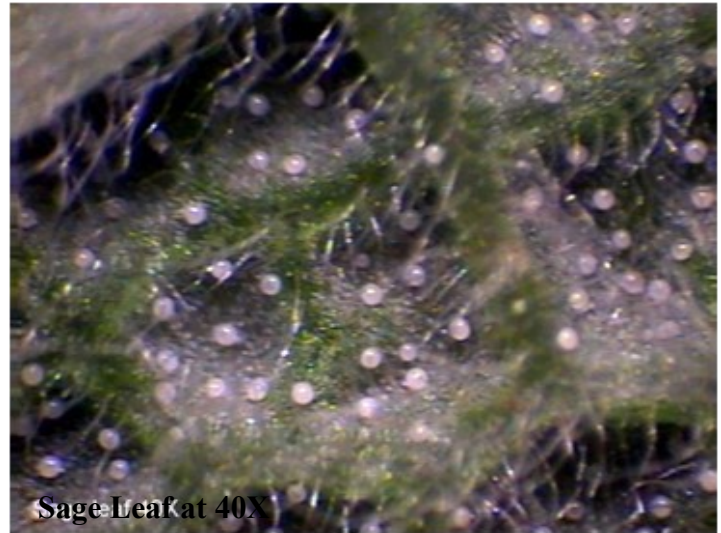
Rh. ‘Nancy Evans’

The Word is Trichome, *By President Bruce Palmer*

The word for this month is **Trichome**. It's from the Greek for hair, *trichos*. Sam Polly is going to talk to us this month about edible gardens. It should be very interesting. My mind wanders from edibles in the garden to Italian dinner at Marcelli's this month to Rhododendron leaves. They're all connected because of trichomes. A few months ago I was taking photographs for a talk on leaves. One of the photos is of a magnified sage leaf, shown in the top picture. In the photo you see small bubbles. Those are trichomes containing the volatile, smelly good stuff we identify with sage, an essential ingredient in Italian cooking. The plant isn't producing that stuff for our benefit; it's using the fact that plants don't have kidneys to get rid of waste products and at the same time inhibit browsing animals. The same holds for the other ingredients in Italian seasoning, such as marjoram and basil.

Both the hairs we call indumentum on Rhododendron leaves and the scales on lepidote rhodies are trichomes. The specific functions, if any, for scales and hairs isn't clear. We know that the hairy covering on the upper surfaces of some rhodies protects the new leaves from the sun and conserves water. We don't know for sure what the dense indumentum on plants like R. "Sir Charles Lemon" does. One suggestion is that it protects from insect damage, but our "Sir Charles" isn't much less bug eaten than its neighbor R. "Loderi Venus" which has no hairs. The same thing is true for rhodie leaves with scales. The bottom photo shows the lower surface of a leaf from *Rhododendron maddenii*. The scales are so distinct that it seems as if they must be good for something. Two ideas are prevalent: either they inhibit insects or they protect the openings called stomata that control the entry and exit of gases for leaf function. Whatever hairs and scales are for on our rhodies, they certainly add to our appreciation of our plants during this season when they aren't flowering.

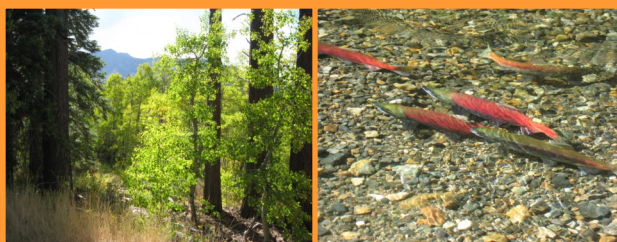
So, Sam's talk, the dinner before the meeting and our rhodies are all connected. Maybe Francis Thompson was right when he wrote in the Victorian era: "All things by immortal power, Near and far, Hiddenly to each other linked are, That thou canst not stir a flower Without troubling of a star." In any case, you can't go far wrong if you reserve the evening of October 25 for our usual fun and educational meeting. Hope to see you there.



*Fall, leaves, fall; die, flowers, away;
Lengthen night and shorten day;
Every leaf speaks bliss to me,
Fluttering from the autumn tree.*

–Emily Brontë (1818–48)

Photos Lake Tahoe *Populus tremuloides*, *Quaking Aspen*
Kokanee spawning in Taylor Creek



Groom Early for Bigger and Better Flower Trusses

By Dennis McKiver

It's fall and most of our rhododendrons that will be blooming for the flower show have set their buds. It's not enough to just wait for spring and the week of the show to go out and find flower trusses that may be winners. Now is the time to start looking for buds that could open into winning trusses and grooming these buds and leaves to make bigger and better flower trusses. We are always striving for creating that perfect truss and leaves combination that will win 'Best of Show' or at least a blue ribbon. Here is how to do that.

First thing to do is to protect your plants, flower buds and leaves from the pests that want to eat them up. In my yard the biggest enemy of winning trusses is slugs. First they chew on the new leaves as they emerge, then the new fully open leaves and then they like to chew on the flowers as they open. There is nothing worse than having a winning truss then come out to pick it for the show and find that it has been eaten on by a big banana slug. There are a number of things you can do to control slugs, but I find that physically removing them from my yard works best for me. The second big enemy is the black vine weevils. They like to chew up the edges of the leaves. Weevil serrated leaves don't score well with the judges. There are a number of biological, physical and chemical controls you can use to combat weevils. There are other minor pests and diseases that can cause problems, most all of which can be controlled by a periodic spraying of horticultural oil.

The second thing to do is get those leaves greened up to where they are supposed to be. Don't fertilized too much now, or you could turn those buds into a late spurt of growth resulting in no flowers and possibly new young leaves that could be damaged by frost. I like to apply 'Ironite' now to green up the leaves and fight chlorosis caused by a lack of iron or soil that is not acidic enough. You could also do a light foliage feeding with a quick acting fertilizer such as Miracle Grow. Rhododendrons need acid soil conditions to be able to uptake and make use of the iron in the soil. If you have chlorosis in your leaves that is not fixed by the addition of iron and soil acidifiers then you may have a bigger problem with that plant. Chlorosis may also be shock-induced by damage to the roots from root rot, severe cutting of roots, root weevils or even root death due to over fertilization. Below is an example of a rhododendron suffering with chlorosis.



The third and probably most important thing to do is to find those potential winning buds and groom them now for the biggest and best trusses. When I was a kid, one of my summer hobbies was raising bigger than normal pumpkins. The way I did that, was to create a planting mound well away from other plants, so it has nothing else to compete with. I would mix in lots of organic mater and fertilizer then plant several seeds in the mound. When the seeds sprouted and started to grow, I'd pick out the biggest and best plant, save it and eliminate all the others. Then I allowed it to grow and start to set pumpkins. When the seeds sprouted and started to grow, I'd pick out the biggest and best plant, save it and eliminate all the others.

Then I allowed it to grow and start to set pumpkins. There would be 4 or 5 runners with several pumpkins each starting to grow. I would pick the biggest best looking pumpkin on a runner and eliminate all the other pumpkin starts. Now all the energy the plant produces is going into its one remaining fruit. I would even cut off the runner just past the pumpkin and cut off all the ends of all the other runners, so that all the energy flowing down the runner was ending in the one and only pumpkin and not trying to grow more runners. The plant has no choice but to put all its reproductive energy into its one remaining fruit. This would result in a larger than normal pumpkin.

I now like to apply this same principle to growing rhododendron trusses for show entries. First I find potential upright truss buds with good leaves. I then eliminate any extra buds. Some stems may sport several flower buds (we call them 'Hammer Heads') and multiple leaf buds. I take off all the extra flower buds, leaving the central terminal bud and I take off all the leaf buds and minor excess, damaged or deformed leaves. See the before and after photos below.



Then I remove any additional branches on the same stem that don't have flower buds that I want to keep, forcing all the energy to this branch into the last remaining stem and flower. See Below.



IT IS MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME

If you haven't renewed your membership yet bring it to the meeting October 25th. All renewing members will be entered in a drawing for rhododendron plants! If your ticket isn't drawn at the next meeting it will stay in the bucket for subsequent drawings at the December meeting!





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

Eureka Chapter

Eureka Chapter is published monthly except during July and August. Submissions from members are encouraged and should be mailed to June Walsh, Bulletin Editor, 2050 Irving Drive, Eureka, CA 95503-7022. RhodyHostel@suddenlink.net Membership information and applications are also available from Trish Ortiz, tgiddingortiz@gmail.com Eureka Chapter is a member of the Humboldt Botanical Gardens Foundation, Eureka, Calif., and The Rhododendron Species Foundation, Federal Way, Wash. Eureka Chapter is a chapter of the American Rhododendron Society.

Future Programs

- October 25, 2012 **Sam Polly, “Edible Plants as Companion Plants for Rhododendrons and Making Better Soil”**
- November **No meeting, Enjoy Thanksgiving with family and friends**
- December 6, 2012 **Bruce Palmer, “What Leaves are all About”**
And Holiday Potluck
- January 24, 2013 **Paula Trinoskey, “Asian Garden Design”**
- February 28, 2013 **Kathy Van Veen, “History of Van Veen Rhododendron Nursery”**
- March 28, 2013 **Judy and Bob Mathey “Building a Stone Bridge and Garden Wanderings at Harmony Woods”**
- April 25, 2013 **Don Selcer, “Plant Hunting in China”**
- April 26, 27 & 28 **Rhododendron Festival Flower Show and Plant Sale**
- May 23, 2013 **Members’ Mini Show and Pizza**
- June 2, 2013 **Members’ Garden Tour and Potluck picnic**

Programs and Program dates are subject to change.

**Eureka Chapter Officers and Board Members
 September 2012 to June 2013**

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|--|--------------|--|
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