

# Indumentum

## Newsletter of the Vancouver Rhododendron Society

Volume 35, Number 7, April 2004



The  
Vancouver Rhododendron Society  
is a chapter of the  
American Rhododendron Society

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This Month's Meeting: Thursday, April 15<sup>th</sup> 7:30 pm  
Floral Hall, VanDusen Botanical Garden

Program: Hugh Angus: 'A Look at Westonbirt Arboretum'

Education: Truss Preparation for Novices and Experts  
by Vern Finley

Plant Sales: David Shantz and Diane Kehoe

### Plants in Bloom – *Rhododendron ochraceum*

Only recently introduced from China, *Rhododendron ochraceum* is a species in the Maculifera subsection of section Barbata, closely related to the larger *R. strigillosum*. Like that species, *R. ochraceum* is a rounded, crimson-flowered shrub with recurved, sea-green leaves. Both species display a characteristically drooping leaf posture, and have bristly stems and petioles, but whereas the better known *R. strigillosum* is relatively glabrous under



*Rhododendron ochraceum* PW 35  
photo by Daniel Mosquin

(except for the indumented midrib), *R. ochraceum* has a loose, woolly, yellowish indumentum over the back of its comparatively smaller leaves. The name *ochraceum* means "like ochre" (i.e., being pale yellow).

Flowers are produced relatively early in the year and, assumedly, would be vulnerable to hard frost, but like those produced by other species in the section, they are seldom damaged

by our winter weather. Individually, the flowers are exceptionally waxy, deep crimson-red, and held in tight, flat-topped trusses of between 8 and 12. Peter Wharton, Curator of the David C. Lam Asian Garden at UBC Botanical Garden, brought back seed of this species (pictured above) from a collecting trip to the Dashaha Cathaya Reserve in Guizhou, China in the early 1990s. Much of the locally grown *R. ochraceum* is derived from a Cox and Hutchison collection in the Yunnan–Sichuan border area. Whichever the source, this is a very handsome species and one destined to become much more popular.

Douglas Justice

## President's Message

Isn't B.C. great at this time of year? There's nowhere else in Canada that can match it for the magnificence of colour in spring-flowering plants. Each day, I can hardly wait to get out into our garden to take pictures with my new digital camera of the latest rhododendron blooms. Below is one example, a photo of *R. ciliatum* taken early on a March morning. I'm really pleased in general with digital photography compared to the single lens reflex system in my old Pentax camera, and will tell you more in another edition of *Indumentum*.

For now, I'd like to highlight our 2004 Sale and Show. It provides a perfect opportunity to introduce your friends to the wonderful world of rhododendron collecting. You might wish to remind them that:

- The dates are **Saturday, May 1<sup>st</sup>** from 10:00 to 4:00 and **Sunday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>** from 12:00 to 4:00.
- The location is beside UBC's Botanical Garden and there is ample free parking.
- The VRS Sale and Show is the largest of its kind in British Columbia.
- On sale will be dozens and dozens of rhododendron varieties that cannot be found at retail garden centres.
- The prices are amazingly low and the quality of plants outstanding.
- Our show will feature a room full of the finest rhododendron and azalea blooms, as well as a bonsai display.
- VRS experts will be available to answer any questions about gardening.



- Free pamphlets on rhododendron planting and care will be available at our membership table.
- There will be a raffle for several large rhododendrons.
- Come early on each day for the best selection.

Our Sale and Show is a huge undertaking and the VRS executive members need your help. Please telephone or e-mail me if you have not been contacted about volunteering at our Sale and Show and would still like to offer assistance (604-929-5670 or [rcknight@telus.net](mailto:rcknight@telus.net)). Also, please post or hand out at least 5 VRS Sale and Show flyers in your community. Copies will be available at our April VRS meeting.

Please don't forget to bring rhododendron or azalea trusses for the show. This year, we are featuring competitive and non-competitive displays. Even if you have only one or two rhododendrons in bloom on May 1<sup>st</sup>, these trusses will be most welcome. For the competitive

section, you will need special identification cards which will be available at our April VRS meeting. However, for the non-competitive section, simply bring your trusses to UBC with labels showing the plant name and your name (optional).

And finally, a huge thank you to **Louis Peterson, Carole Conlin, and Todd Major**, who organized and staffed a VRS booth at the North Shore Garden Show in March. Thanks also to **Sue Klapwijk, Les Clay, and Frank Dorsey** for providing rhododendrons to display at the booth.

*Ron Knight*

To advertise in *Indumentum*, contact Tony Clayton 604 921 7947 [tclayton@telus.net](mailto:tclayton@telus.net)

## Subscription Rates

VRS + ARS Membership (US & Overseas)	\$50.00 \$US 28.00
VRS Membership (no ARS Quarterly Journal)	\$25.00
Associate Membership (member of another ARS Chapter in Canada)	\$10.00
Associate Membership (member of another ARS Chapter outside of Canada)	\$US 10.00

## Advertising Rates

	1 month	3 months	8 months
Business card	\$10.00	\$25.00	\$50.00
¼ page	\$25.00	\$67.50	\$160.00
½ page	\$40.00	\$108.00	\$256.00
full page	\$70.00	\$189.00	\$448.00

## Open Gardens & Garden Events – Spring 2004

Spring is upon us again and gardeners everywhere are working hard to prepare their gardens for nature's fantastic display. The much anticipated splendours of the season are as much a credit to nature as to the vision, labour and intimate plant knowledge that gardeners bestow upon their creations and are ever so ready to share with others. Below is a list of events and open gardens which have generously been made available for the enjoyment of the membership. Most are in the Vancouver area while others are a little further afield. I urge you not to miss the opportunities to visit these fine gardens, so pack a lunch, call a friend and have some great outings! If the open garden dates are not suitable for you, then a private tour may be arranged by contacting the owner directly. For additional listings of events and tours, please refer to the VRS website [www.rhodocitymax.com](http://www.rhodocitymax.com), or the District 1 website [www.rhodos.ca](http://www.rhodos.ca), where events in District 1 chapters are listed. If you require more information on the gardens, please don't hesitate to call me. I hope you have a great spring and enjoy your tours.

Lothar Mischke

MAY 1 & 2

**VRS Flower Show and Plant Sale**  
UBC Botanical Garden Reception Centre  
6804 Southwest Marine Drive, Vancouver  
Saturday 10 AM to 4 PM  
Sunday 12 PM to 4 PM

MAY 9

**The Glades Garden - Mother's Day Open House**  
561 - 172<sup>nd</sup> Street, White Rock  
10 AM to 4 PM

**Vern & Gordon Finley's Garden**  
10476 - 125B Street, Surrey  
12 PM to 4 PM

**Perennial Plant Sale – UBC Botanical Garden**  
6804 Southwest Marine Drive, Vancouver  
Free entry to the Botanical Garden  
10 AM to 4 PM

MAY 15

**Bucket Hill - Margaret Charlton & Charlie Sale Garden**  
5414 Indian River Drive, North Vancouver  
1 PM to 5 PM (see directions on page 5)

**Cindy & Lothar Mischke Garden**  
330 Sasamat Lane, North Vancouver  
1 PM to 5 PM (see directions on page 5)

**Elizabeth & Ross Bligh Garden**  
810 Beachview Drive, North Vancouver  
1 PM to 5 PM (see directions on page 6)

**Darts Hill - Francisca Darts' Garden Open House**  
170<sup>th</sup> Street and 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Surrey  
10 AM to 4 PM

Have you seen the VRS website? Go to  
<http://www.rhodo.citymax.com/>  
to see up-to-date news, views and more!

The ARS website,  
<http://www.rhododendron.org/>  
has rhododendron news  
with a more international flavour

MAY 16

**Suzanne & Bill Spohn Garden**  
2950 Palmerston Avenue, West Vancouver  
10 AM to 4 PM

**Joanne & Joe Ronsley Garden**  
250 Ocean View Road, Lions Bay  
11 AM to 4 PM

**Heather & Richard Mossakowski Garden**  
155 Highview Place, Lions Bay  
11 AM to 4 PM

**Glenda Powroznik & Mark Lamont Garden**  
17918 - 68<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Surrey  
11 AM to 4 PM

MAY 20

**Ted & Mary Greig Rhododendron Walk**  
Stanley Park - A walk led by Alleyne Cook  
(see May *Indumentum* for time and meeting place)

MAY 29 & 30

**Dot & Ken Gibson Garden**  
Tofino B.C. (see directions)

**Susan Bloom's Stubbs Island Garden**  
Clayoquot Island, Tofino, B.C. (see directions)

MAY

**North Shore "ART IN THE GARDEN" Tour**  
North and West Vancouver artists display works of Art, visual and performances in select North Shore gardens. Locations will be announced in local papers in May.

JUNE 5

**Carla & Ron Knight's Caron Garden**  
4622 Beaumont Road, Garden Bay  
Pender Harbour (see directions in May *Indumentum*)  
11 AM to 4 PM

JUNE 13

**Ron Feicht & Derrick Hoffman Garden**  
6080 Eagleridge Drive, West Vancouver  
Potluck Picnic and Tour (see details in May *Indumentum*)

## April Program

“After reading a book about trees at the age of seven, Hugh Angus decided he wanted to make them his career,” according to *The Garden* of August 2002. Hugh Angus began his horticultural work on a small private estate in North Yorkshire, before going on to study forestry formally at Newton Rigg College in Cumbria. He then went to work for the British Forestry Commission, first in Wales and then for ten years in Northumberland. It was evidently here that he had his real education, “covering all aspects of modern forestry.” So successful was he that in 1988 he was appointed Curator of the famous Westonbirt Arboretum.

As Head of Collections, Hugh is currently responsible for the management of the National Tree Collections both at Westonbirt in Gloucestershire and at Bedgebury in Kent. “These collections are well recognized as two of the outstanding tree collections in the world today.” Both are owned by the British Forestry Commission and are open to the public the year round.



Approximately 25,000 numbered woody plants representing some 4,200 taxa are represented between the two sites. Westonbirt covers 600 acres, while Bedgebury will cover 350 acres once present expansion plans are implemented. Westonbirt, especially, has become famous for its collections, and is a special destination for tree lovers, particularly in the fall. I understand its collection of Japanese maples is outstanding. But “‘Westonbirt is more than just a collection of trees,’ says Hugh,” as also quoted in

*The Garden*. “‘The insect life, the birds and fungi, and everything else it has to offer make it such a special place’, he says. If asked to pick just two things that appeal to him about his job, it would be the plants and the people. ‘You could be on this planet for 1,000 years and there would still be something to learn about plants. Their names, where they come from, what conditions they grow best in—it’s a fascinating world and you can never know it all.’”

Hugh has participated in plant exploration both in North America and in China, and of course has visited “many of the beautiful plant collections throughout the UK,” but this is his first visit to the Pacific Northwest. Since he obviously has a very special interest in trees, we certainly ought to be able to entertain him successfully here! And his lecture the evening of April 15th on the trees at Westonbirt, even without the rhododendrons, but actually including them, should be of interest to us all.

Joe Ronsley

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**Don't miss the following events:**

Pacific Northwest Native Plant Sale, April 17, 11-3.  
Collector's Plant Auction, April 21, 6:30 pm at the Roundhouse (tickets 604 822 3928).

Open 10:00 am – 4:30 pm daily  
Free parking

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## Membership

Welcome to new members **Allan and Kim Cheung**. The Membership Committee is looking forward to more new members in the months ahead. Thank you to those who have recommended VRS membership to their friends; we grow because you share. New members who join at the May 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> 2004 Show & Sale at UBC will have the benefit of 20 months membership for the price of 12. Membership dues are:

- \$50 for ARS/VRS (includes 4 journals a year)
- \$25 for VRS members (no journals but you can borrow copies from the Library)
- \$10 for Associate members (must be an ARS member of another Cdn chapter)
- \$10 US for Associate members from the USA, members of an American Chapter.

Please check your wallet and ensure you have your 2004 membership card. If you need a list of nurseries that offer us discounts or a replacement membership card, please contact me.

### Carole Conlin

VRS Membership Chair [conlin@sfu.ca](mailto:conlin@sfu.ca) 604 921 7260

## Open Garden Directions

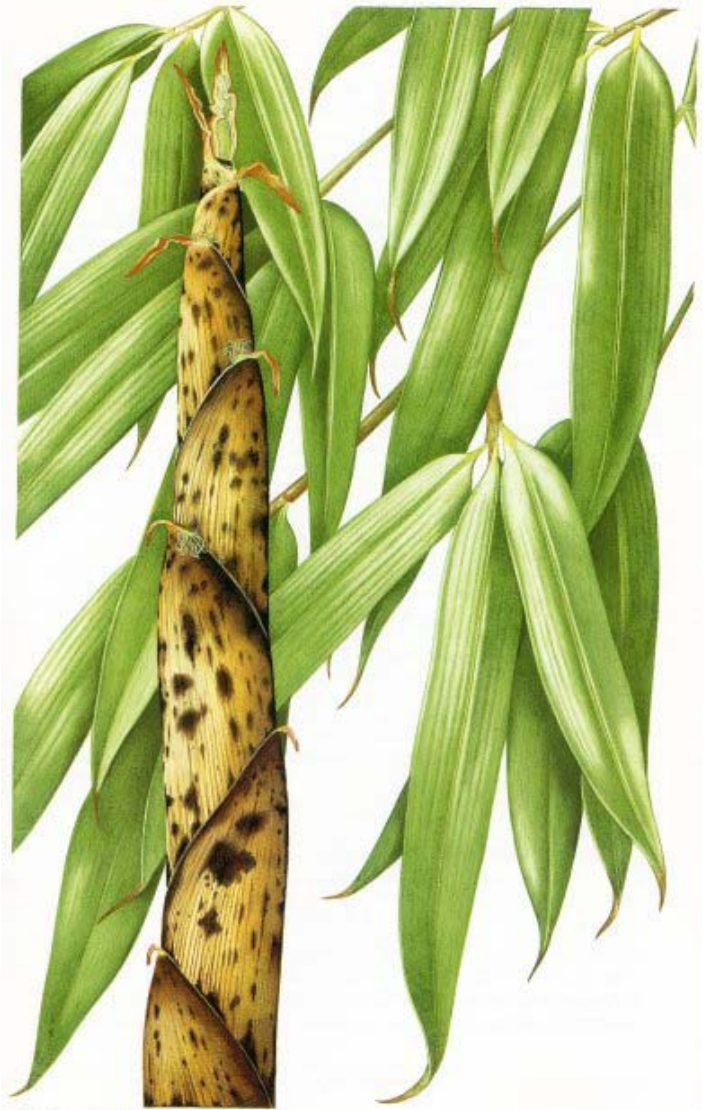
### Bucket Hill, Margaret Charlton's & Charlie Sale's Garden

1. Westbound on Hwy 1: Follow Hwy.1 across the 2<sup>nd</sup> Narrows Bridge. Stay in the centre lane. (The highway becomes 2 lanes just before you exit.)

Exit from Hwy.1 at the sign for Mt. Seymour Prov. Park. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> off-ramp after crossing the bridge. After exiting, turn right at the traffic light on to the Mt. Seymour Parkway.

2. Eastbound on Hwy.1: Take the 1<sup>st</sup> exit at the bottom of "the cut" — the very long hill leading to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Narrows Bridge. Stay in the centre lane of the off-ramp, turning left at the traffic light. Proceed around the curve then turn right on to Mt.Seymour Parkway.

Follow the Parkway until you reach (on your left) the Parkgate Shopping Mall. Turn left just past the Mall at the sign for the Park (there is a traffic light at this turn) and then turn right at Indian River (just before the road curves). Take the 2<sup>nd</sup> left (at the sign for "Woodlands") and drive almost 5km (3 miles) to Fire Lane 6 (The fire lanes are not in complete sequence—Fire Lanes 7 & 8 come before 1 through 6). You will know you are close when you come to a stop sign at the top of a steep hill. Turn left at Fire Lane 6. At the white gate it may be



*Phyllostachys dulcis*

adapted from an illustration by Ann Farrer,  
in Curtis's Botanical Magazine, February, 1995

necessary to open the gate (push the button on the left-hand side). You will see the garden on your left as you proceed up the lane. Our driveway is the 1<sup>st</sup> on the left and requires a 3 point turn to proceed up it.

There is parking part way up the driveway and also at the top. There is also room for two cars beside the tie wall just inside the white gate, and two more down the 2<sup>nd</sup> turnoff on the right—the driveway to house #101 (only use the 1<sup>st</sup> flat spot on the right).

### Cindy and Lothar Mischke's Garden:

Follow the directions to Bucket Hill until you reach 3.5km on Indian River Drive. Turn left through the chain link gate and follow the signs to Fire Lane 8 (Sasamat Lane). Turn left at the "Y" junction and follow Sasamat



aphid brush

Lane over two bridges until you reach a residence surrounded by a cedar fence. The entrance may be found on the turn around just past the fence. Please park on uphill side of road only. All signage is quite clear so you shouldn't have any problems.

**Elizabeth and Ross Bligh Garden:**

Follow Mount Seymour Parkway east across Dollarton Highway to Beachview Drive. Turn right on Beachview Drive to #810. Ross Bligh's father was president of the

V.R.S. in the early to mid sixties, and his residence still has many of his father's rhododendrons.

**Dot and Ken Gibson Garden and Susan Bloom's Stubbs Island Preserve Garden:**

As part of the 'George Fraser Days' celebrations in the Ucluelet/Tofino area and due to the fact that "rhodos peak here on the last weekend in May," according to Ken Gibson, Susan Bloom is opening her pristine island preserve to the public. Stubbs Island (formerly known as Clayoquot Island) was settled by pioneers over 100 years ago and its 44 acres of old gardens and pristine wilderness promise to make it an entirely fascinating place to visit. Susan has arranged for several 'ferry' vessels to transport visitors from the government dock (foot of First Street, Tofino) starting at 11 AM Saturday and Sunday. The boats will ferry people back and forth all day. More info will be forthcoming. Of course, Dot and Ken Gibson's garden should be the icing on the cake. If anyone is interested in carpooling, please get in touch.

Lothar Mischke (604 929 8509)

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Spring has arrived, and so have the bugs. Accurately identify insects you find in your garden before you become nervous about their potential impact. All insects are beneficial to some degree, particularly when you view them as food for other insects. Food is necessary to maintain pest and predator populations in your garden, and balance and tolerance are the keys to healthy, sustainable pest management. A strong magnifying glass is a helpful tool for identifying insects. The following list describes some of the common beneficial and predatory insects for the Vancouver area.

### ASSASSIN BUG

This aptly-named, vicious-looking bug is a voracious predator of many garden pests including flies, mosquitoes, beetles and large caterpillars. Adults measure 12 to 25mm long and have a cone-shaped head and wide curving beak. They can cause a painful bite to a human if captured. If caught, some species are known to squeak audibly, while others emit a strong apple-like odor. Females lay single eggs in cracks, under rocks or in other sheltered spots in summer, and new adults emerge around the following June. There is only one generation per year. Photo: Michael Bates (michaelbates@mbatesphoto.com)



### BALD FACED HORNET

These insects resemble a yellowjacket but are larger, up to 6mm in length. They have large heads with black and white markings and long wings that extend to the end of their abdomen. These "insect hawks" are fascinating to watch as they pounce upon many pests, including crane flies and other flies. Bald-faced hornets may also act as pollinators of some plants.



These insects build large paper nests that can measure up to 40cm in diameter and 60cm long! If disturbed, these hornets will sting humans. Photo: Miami University.

### CENTIPEDE

These fast moving, 12 to 75mm long, many-legged creatures are light brown to black in colour. Frequently confused with millipedes, centipedes have only one pair of legs per segment, while millipedes have two. Centipedes prey on soil-inhabiting pests, such as slugs, worms and fly pupae. They prefer moist areas in the garden, especially compost piles.

### GREEN LACEWING

Lacewing larvae are slender, legless and usually mottled green to brown. They are voracious feeders of aphids and other small insects, insect eggs, and spider mites. The adult is green to yellow-green with transparent wings, about 18mm long with long wispy antennae. Eggs are laid singly atop slender hair-thickness stalks. Attract them by planting pollen and nectar producing flowers. Photo: University of Kentucky.



### GROUND BEETLES

These very common garden insects feed on many soil-inhabiting pests such as cutworms and root maggots. Some types eat slugs and snails. While shapes and colors may vary widely, they are usually shiny. Black is a common color, sometimes with a metallic sheen of another color on their wing covers. Most ground beetles feed at night and hide in the soil or under debris during the day.

### HONEY BEE

Adults are fuzzy, with gold and black stripes and transparent wings, and measure about 18mm long. Honey bees can often be identified by the balls of yellow pollen they carry on the backs of their legs. Honey bees are important pollinators of many plants.



## LADY BEETLES

Lady beetles are one of the most popular natural predators found in the garden. Adults are about 5mm long, oval and convex in



shape and coloured red or red-orange with black spots. Larvae resemble rove beetles, and range from aphid-sized to 4 or 5 mm in length (pictured above). Eggs are orange and usually laid in clusters on the undersides of leaves. To keep them around, avoid spraying chemicals and allow them to do their work. Lady beetles feed primarily on aphids, mealy bugs, scale insects and spider mites. One lady beetle female may eat 2,400 aphids during her lifespan. Photo: University of Nebraska.

## MASON BEE

Smaller than a honeybee, mason bees resemble houseflies more than honeybees. They are deep, blue-black or brown in color and have no stripes. Mason bees are native to North America. The adults are active pollinators between cherry blossom and apple blossom season, but they die out by summer. Attract mason bees by providing them a home. Drill holes exactly 5/16" (4.7mm) in diameter into wooden blocks and mount these facing the morning sun before the start of cherry blossom season.



## MINUTE PIRATE BUG

So small (6mm) they often go unnoticed, these little black-and-white checkered insects are fast-moving and prey upon thrips, spider mites and small caterpillars. Grow goldenrod, daisies, yarrow and alfalfa to attract minute pirate bugs to your garden. Photo: University of California

## PARASITIC WASPS

Too small to be particularly noticeable, these tiny wasps don't bother people or pets. They are usually seen dancing in an "up and down" pattern in shade. These parasites (technically, *parasitoids*) reproduce by laying their eggs in a host (pest adult or egg). The immature wasp feeds inside and kills its host, causing the insect or egg to turn dark brown to black and then light brown. A round hole can be often seen where the adult parasite has chewed its way out. Different species attack aphids, whiteflies and butterflies or moths, such as cabbage loopers and hornworms.

## PREDATORY MITES

Adult mites are tiny, about 0.5mm in length, and are beige to reddish tan. They resemble pest mites but are faster moving and have fewer hairs. Predatory mites are valuable predators of pest mites such as spider and citrus mites.

## ROVE BEETLES

These shiny black insects may resemble a tiny scorpion when they hold the tip of their abdomen up in the air. They are fast moving and measure 2.5 to 25 mm long. Depending upon the species, rove beetles prey upon aphids, springtails, mites, nematodes, slugs, snails, fly eggs, worms and maggots. They also eat and help break down decaying organic material.

## SYRPHID FLIES

Often called "hover flies" because they can hover in place like helicopters. They look like miniature bees and have bodies with black and yellow stripes. While they look like bees, they have only a single pair of wings (bees and wasps have two pairs), and they don't sting. Adults must feed on pollen nectar before they reproduce, so they are good pollinators. They lay eggs, which are about the size of the head of a pin, white in colour and ovoid shaped. Eggs are usually laid amongst the pest host population. Both adults and larvae are about 12mm long. Syrphid fly larvae prey on aphids, mealybugs, and other small insects.

## TACHINID FLIES

Resembling house flies, tachinid flies are 8 to 12 mm in length and may be brown, grey or black in color. There are many species, some of which are



predators of pest caterpillars including cutworms, codling moths, tent caterpillars, cabbage loopers and gypsy moth larvae. Attract these valuable flies by planting umbelliferous flowers and herbs, such as dill, parsley and Queen Anne's Lace. Photo: University of Maryland.

## YELLOW JACKETS

Adult wasps exhibit characteristic yellow and black stripes and transparent wings. Yellow jackets are often feared for their sting, which is a hazard to people who are allergic. However, they are beneficial as predators of caterpillars, flies and beetle grubs. Nests need not be removed if they are not interfering with people.

**Todd Major**

Some information in this article was taken from - *Insects and Mites of Economic Importance In the Northwest* by Ralph E. Berry, Oregon State University.