



# Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden

## Fall Newsletter—Vol. 44, No. 3

- P1 Table of Contents
- P2 Executive Director's Report by Steve Hootman
- P3 Fall Foliage Festival & Plant Sale
- P4 Bugs by Dennis Bottemiller
- P5 Planting in Fall by Assistant Horticulturist Jillian Demus;  
New Employee Will Clausen
- P6 Docent Recruitment
- P7 New Members; Donor Recognition
- P8 Spring Garden Campaign Donor Recognition
- P9 RSBG Board & Executive Committee

# Executive Director's Report by Steve Hootman

We have enjoyed a fantastic growing season this year with cooler temperatures and even a bit of rain at the end of the summer, a very welcome change from the record-breaking heat and drought of the last several years. Although this seemed like a very abrupt “change” in our weather pattern, it was actually simply a return to what would have been considered normal just a decade ago. In the end, we were all just very thankful for a welcome break in the non-stop watering that typically keeps us fully occupied well into late September.

We welcome to the RSBG team two new staff members – Will Clausen is our new gardener and Colette Lambert is joining as our new horticultural intern. Will has a great deal of valuable experience in horticulture, including employment at various public botanic gardens and Colette is a new graduate from Oregon State University with a Bachelor's degree in Botany and Plant Pathology with a focus in Cellular, Molecular, and Genomic Studies. We look forward to working with them and sharing in our experiences.



We had a rather exciting event in the garden this September when we had our first flowering of the newly introduced (2010) species *Rhododendron faithiae*. The first flowers opened about mid-September (yes, a fall blooming rhododendron) on a couple of plants that were planted out three years ago. The plants are about six to seven feet in height and grown from seed sown in 2010. This species is a member of Subsection Fortunea and bears huge glossy foliage which is quite striking on its own accord. The flowers are also

very impressive as they are among the largest I have seen in any species. They are white with a bit of red in the throat and quite fragrant. This species looks to be a real winner. In addition, we have news of another new species in Subsection Fortunea that has recently been named by botanists in China. This species – *Rhododendron leigongshanense*, is currently known to occur only at the type location of Leigong Shan (mountain) in Guizhou Province. It differs from its close relatives *R. glanduliferum* and *R. magniflorum* in having long stipitate (stalked) glands on the lower surface of the leaves which the other two species lack. When I learned of this new species I checked my own collection of “*glanduliferum*” from the very same mountain (under the collection # CDHM#14658) and sure enough, the bottoms of the leaves are covered with glandular hairs. This collection has been sold and distributed in the RSBG catalog as *R. glanduliferum* so you will want to change your labels if you have purchased this from us in the past year or two. All other collections of *glanduliferum* (under PW#s and SEH#174) have checked out to be the real *glanduliferum*.

Negotiations with Industrial Realty Group (IRG), the development company who purchased the Weyerhaeuser campus a few years ago, are ongoing. We have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with them and are working on what we hope will be a very inexpensive 99 year lease which will allow us to stay in our current location and to continue our very important work in conservation, education and plant distribution. IRG has made a [public commitment](#) ensuring that the RSBG remains an important community resource and asset in the newly named Woodbridge Corporate Park.

# FALL FOLIAGE FESTIVAL & PLANT SALE



**RHODODENDRON SPECIES BOTANICAL GARDEN  
PACIFIC BONSAI MUSEUM  
FEDERAL WAY, WA | OCT 19–20**

## Fall Plant Sale—Members Get Early Access!

Join us for our annual Fall Foliage Festival! Current RSBG Members are invited to shop early on Saturday, October 19 from **9am to 10am**. Grab your top picks before we open to the public.

Fantastic fall foliage is just minutes away. Celebrate autumn with this FREE weekend festival that features plant sales, tours, a photo station, and activities for kids and families.

**Saturday:** FREE admission to the Garden

10am—2pm—Viewing Stones Petting Zoo, with the Puget Sound Bonsai Association; pet and polish stones, see daizas (viewing stone stands) in progress, and learn about viewing stone displays at Pacific Bonsai Museum.

11am—Rhody Care 101 Mini-Workshop

1pm—Fall Color Tour

3pm—Rhody Care 101 Mini-Workshop

Special Vendors—Windcliff Plants, Bryan’s Rare Japanese Maples, and Degro Flower & Garden

-Activities for kids and families—paint your own mini pot, science station, and more!

-Alaskan Dumplings food truck

**Sunday:** FREE admission to the Garden

-11am—Native Plants Tour

-12pm—Rhody Care 101

-1pm—Fall Color Tour

-3pm—Rhody Care 101

Special Vendor: Degro Flower & Garden

BeanWater coffee truck and Stacks Burgers food truck

Activities for kids and families—paint your own mini pot, science station, and more!

## Bugs by Dennis Bottemiller

The 9<sup>th</sup> “Birthday” of the Rutherford Conservatory has come and gone and the passage of time has brought with it many changes to the garden inside. At the grand opening in September 2010 all the plants were spindly and small and the bark in our soil mix was new and shockingly orange in the pictures. A full decade of growth has resulted in an impenetrable jungle and thankfully the orange of the bark has decomposed to a softer more soil-like color further softened by mosses, lichens and rogue ferns.

We knew the garden inside would require more attention with age and in the beginning all we had to do was apply water and fertility and it mostly took care of itself. Over time the plants have grown, and the insects have found their way in and decided they like this warm stable environment. One of them has become downright problematic, thrips. Until a couple years ago we had never seen thrips though we knew they are a problem in the warmer climates of California and elsewhere. Thrips are minute piercing / sucking bugs that feed on the contents of individual cells of the leaf and leave the cell empty and silver or bronzy-colored. When repeated over the entire leaf they can rob each cell of its chlorophyll and finally they get to each leaf on the entire plant and the whole plant becomes silver or bronze. It is not a good or healthy look for the plants!

Because this garden is a high public contact area of the garden overall and I regularly see little kids fondling the plants, I have chosen to manage the pest population without the use of hard pesticides. Plus, as I learned in my Navy years; “if there’s anything worth doing, it’s worth doing the hard way”. With help and advice from the good people at Sound Horticulture in Bellingham WA, I developed a management plan for the robbers of green. First, we alternate sprayed with horticultural oil and then soap a couple of times, using water jet blasting between sprays to knock the little beggars off, breaking their mouthparts as they are struck by the water jet, depriving them of the ability to re-insert their straw into another cup of chlorophyll. I like this gruesome image even though I’ve never been able to independently verify the microscopic event, but I’m told it’s so.

After this initial assault, we planned timed releases of predatory insects including lacewing larvae, minute pirate bugs and two species of mites, one that feeds on adult thrips and one that feeds on a larval soil dwelling stage in their life cycle.

Another tactic we have used is the removal of some plants that have been severely affected by thrips. This helps in two ways. It removes a percentage of the thrip population quickly and it creates open space allowing better air circulation and light exposure. Plus, it has become too crowded anyway and the plants look better if they are not perceived as one big green mass. Change is good. We knew at the outset that plants in a closed space limited environment could not be permanent.

So, on we go. Without doubt the insect problems will ebb and flow but I think we are at least one step ahead of them.... for now. The micro-life in the conservatory is endlessly fascinating and if you look closely there is a small infinity of creatures in a universe we hardly acknowledge let alone understand. It will give us something to do during the second decade!

## Why plant in the fall? By Jillian Demus

Fall is a wonderful time for buying plants and putting them in the ground! It is actually the *best* time to plant for those of us in USDA zones 7-11. This is because there is less stress for the plant to endure during establishment in its new location. The plant has fall and spring to send out new roots and establish before the heat and drought of the following summer. By planting in the warm soil of autumn the plant still has time to sprout new roots and become established before it goes dormant for the winter. Because of the cooler weather and the presence of rain, plants will not need as much watering to become established. Also, summer conditions can be stressful with greater risk of pests and diseases attacking these vulnerable plants. With fall planting this is less of a problem as the temperatures cool. You can plant almost anything in the fall including spring-blooming bulbs, trees, shrubs, perennials and winter food crops.

Aside from making it easier on the plants, it is easier for the gardener as well. Digging holes may be easier for you in cooler temperatures. Also, you won't have as much work to do during the always busy spring season since you have already planted most of

your plants in the fall. Buying plants can be more ideal because plants have had all summer to put out new growth and are larger than what they were last spring. This also makes sure they have a better chance of flowering next spring! You also get to see the fall color preview as you shop. Lastly, time and money are saved because you won't need to apply fertilizer in the chilly fall weather. Make sure to plant some rhododendrons this fall! Stop by for our fall plant sale October 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> or order from our fall catalog before October 23<sup>rd</sup>!



## Meet Will Clausen—New RSBG Gardener

I am interested in the meeting of horticulture and ecology. I have worked at public gardens in Minnesota, Massachusetts, Alaska, and Washington along with fieldwork for the US Forest Service and the Nature Conservancy. I am excited to be here at the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden. In my free time I love to hike and photograph plants in the wild.

## Seeking New Docents



### **We are recruiting for a new crop of 2020 docents!**

Are you:

- a garden enthusiast
- comfortable with public speaking
- looking for opportunities to learn more about plants

What does being a docent entail?

- Facilitating 1-hour tours for adult groups primarily in spring and summer (dates/times variable)
- Two half-days of training in February 2020 with RSBG staff
- Some independent research and preparation
- Regular communication through email and phone

We hope that you'll consider joining our small but passionate crew of facilitators!

If you are interested in learning more about the docent program or registering your interest, please email Britt Board, Program & Outreach Manager, at

[Britt@RhodyGarden.org](mailto:Britt@RhodyGarden.org).

# Welcome New Members—6/1/2019—9/30/2019

Melisa Nisius  
Alyson Ellsworth  
Vanessa & Noah Bershatsky  
Bob Anderson  
Richard Frishholz  
Benjamin Ziomek  
Justin Williams-Ruth  
Gabriel Maki

David Rountree  
Connor Ryan  
Ralf Bauer  
Margaret Cashman  
Jerry Rifkin  
Robert Pulatie  
Cathy Higgins  
Elizabeth Evans

Shelly Palomaki  
Leslie McIntosh  
Theresa Chen  
Marie Churney  
Anita Hamel  
Sherri Wilson

## Restricted Contributions

ARS Greater Philadelphia—Internship Program  
ARS Olympic Peninsula—Internship Program  
Walker Foundation  
Garratt Richardson

## Extraordinary Gifts

Robert Mast

## General Operations

AmazonSmile Foundation  
ARS Willamette Chapter  
Karen Chraska  
Hans Eiberg  
Joshua Green  
Carmen Grimes  
Carol Morrison

Elizabeth Odsen  
Canfield Smith  
Scott Stowell  
The Benevity Community Impact Fund  
Carol Wall  
Edwin Wells



# Spring Garden Campaign

Margaret Adams

Rollo & Winnie Adams

Robert A. Bartlett Jr.

Joan Buhler

Don Butler

Edward & Carolyn Cale

Keith Carlson

Carol F. Chapen

Neil B. Christianson

Patrick J. & Jean L. Cummins

Philippe de Spoelberch

Yasuyuki Doi

Carol Duke

Ruth Enticknap

Kenneth Everding

Kylie Faccenda

Maria Germinario

Honore Hacanson

Hans Hasche-Kluender

Deena J. Henkins

Clem Hertz

Katherine Lintault

John Marshall

Kevin McIntosh

Robert & Katherine McLean

Michael McLeod

Mendocino Coast Botanical Garden

Nany Meyer

Suzanne Morgan

Percival Moser

Chip Muller

Sue Olsen

James Olson

John Parker

Pam Perryman

Beverly Pierson

Seattle Garden Club

Ramona Soule

John Stephens

Michael & Maria Stewart

Karen Swenson

Tacoma Garden Club

Diane & Paul Thompson

Laurus Traas

Peg Van Patton

Ian P. Walker

Joy Wannamaker

Conrad Watne

Withey Price Landscape & Design

Marcia & Klaus Zech



## 2019 RSF Board and EC

## 2019 RSF Board Continued

### Executive Committee:

President: Sean Rafferty

1st Vice President: Ian Walker

2nd Vice President: Charles Muller

Treasurer: Robert Gust

Secretary: Garratt Richardson

Immediate Past President: Mike Stewart

### EC Members-At-Large:

Anne Gross

Jean Muir

Paul Thompson

### Board of Directors:

Jerry Ackerman

Rollo Adams

Chris Brickell

Al Campbell

David Chamberlain

Ken Cox

Susan Davies

Harold Greer

Anne Gross

Robert Gust

Benjamin D. Hall

Henry R. Helm

Don Hyatt

Douglas Justice

### Board of Directors continued:

Donald E. King

William Lindeman

Robert Mast

Stephen McCormick

Jean Muir

Charles Muller

Peter Norris

Tom Nosella

Sean Rafferty

Garratt Richardson

Joseph Ronsley

Charles Sale & Margaret Charlton

Hartwig Schepker

Don Smart

Valerie Soza

John Stephens

Mike Stewart

Diane Thompson

Paul Thompson

Ian Walker

Tim Walsh

Garth Wedemire

Keith White

Martin Wilkie