



University of Victoria

University Finnerty Garden Friends

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Fall 2007

Dear Friends,

When our editor, Sam Macey, phoned a couple of weeks ago to remind me that it was time I started to think about the next newsletter, I suddenly realized that summer was drawing to a close. It has been an odd summer — more rain than I can recall for a long time and two of the hottest days in years. The tomato plants are late with few ripe fruits yet, the fruit crop appears to be about normal, but with some varieties almost barren. I wonder what the fall and winter will bring? I have had a number of firs removed—almost all of them with substantial rot showing. One large tree had a termite



nest some 40 feet in the air. We have also had about 40 dead cedars removed. Some are still standing, and will remain for the birds. Most of the rest were close to the road and hence were a danger. Most of them have been dead for several years, but are still sound so will be sawed into lumber.

A number of you asked about a wind up report on the hummingbird study. The last banding day here was July 16 when 21 birds were banded. All were juveniles. A few birds were around until early August. I mixed up 297 litres of syrup this year, using about 150 pounds of sugar. This was a substantial increase over 2006 when the last of the birds had left by the end of June. The syrup total for 2006 was 204 litres. All stations on Galiano showed an increased number of birds. All of the birds banded here were Rufous. A few Anna's were seen on the Island, but none here, I am sorry to say. As more years are added to the study, some interesting data is beginning to come in about migration routes. One bird banded on May 23, 2007 on Gabriola



Island was captured in mid-July in Montana! And one of the birds banded here in 2004 was caught in July 2007 on the Idaho-Montana border. Over time, the hope is that their migration routes will become known. Another question we are all asking is whether or not their routes are based on the availability of feeders in certain sites. Time will, I hope, provide answers to many of these questions.

The Finnerty Gardens are beginning to show their fall colours. There has been a steady succession of bloom all through the summer, and at the moment, the hydrangeas are getting ready to show their fall finery. Rabbits are still a problem and they will probably have to be trapped. Sometimes gates are left open, and they probably come in quickly once given the opportunity. There are many treats available for them. The deer appear to respect the fence. Do visit the Gardens and enjoy the fall displays.

*Betty Kennedy
University of Victoria
Finnerty Garden Friends*



My Favourite Plants

Margaret deWeese

I have to admit to a definite weakness for rhododendrons although usually for established rhododendrons in public gardens and in other people's gardens where they always are bigger, better and more stunning than in my own garden.

There is one rhododendron which I value above all others. It is a *Vireya*, one of those tender rhododendrons making up one third of the genus, and mainly found in the islands of Sumatra, Java, Sulawesi, Borneo, and Papua New Guinea. My favourite rhododendron was discovered by Keith Rushforth in Vietnam. It is named after him and it is called *R. rushforthii*.

Keith gave a talk in Vancouver a few years ago in which he rather deprecated the leaf colour of *R. rushforthii*. I think it is absolutely gorgeous as it is a pale celadon green and has small yellow flowers. I keep mine in a wire frame hanging basket. Keith is a rhododendron trekker and he has since discovered another new species rhododendron, which he called after his wife, Heather. Of course, I had to have it. This is not a tender rhododendron but belongs to the hardy big leaf variety. Keith wrote to the Vancouver Rhododendron Society: "I am pleased to announce the publication of *Rhododendron heatheriae* in *The New Plantsman*, Volume 8(4), 248-250, December 2001." He de-



R. rushforthii

scribes the new species as "similar to *R. arizelum*, but differing in the oblanceolate leaves, which are more than three times as long as broad with the base narrowly cuneate and with the leaf blade narrowed into a short winged petiole." The species is described from a photo of a 5m tall tree at 3850m, Keith Rushforth in the Showa La, in southeastern Tibet.

My little plant of *R. heatheriae* does not yet show its potential and I may not be around to see it bloom. No matter! I have great admiration for plant explorers, and to have met one who has discovered two new species, and to have both rhododendrons in my garden is to me the ultimate!

A Progress Report

*R. Bentley Sly, Manager, Grounds
Curator, Finnerty Gardens*

Newsletter article time again! Where does the time go? On that note, where has the summer gone? The level of construction and improvement activity across the entire university campus has never been as great. As I write, the Ring Road has just re-opened from being partially closed for the summer. Many of the planned projects scheduled to be completed by the end of August are now either completed or winding up. The major faculty building projects are beginning to take shape and Grounds is gearing up to begin the landscaping of these areas. Students are streaming back onto campus and the pedestrian corridors around the residences are buzzing again. Ahhh, the beginning of September and another academic year at UVic.

Speaking of cooler temperatures, wasn't August a touch milder on the average this year? And now, with the evenings also getting shorter and cooler, it brings one to realize that fall will soon be upon us. Time to start the annual ritual of preparing the Gardens for the winter months ahead. Rhonda is getting her bulb orders placed and reviewing the fall preparation check-list is well under way. This fall she will be joined by

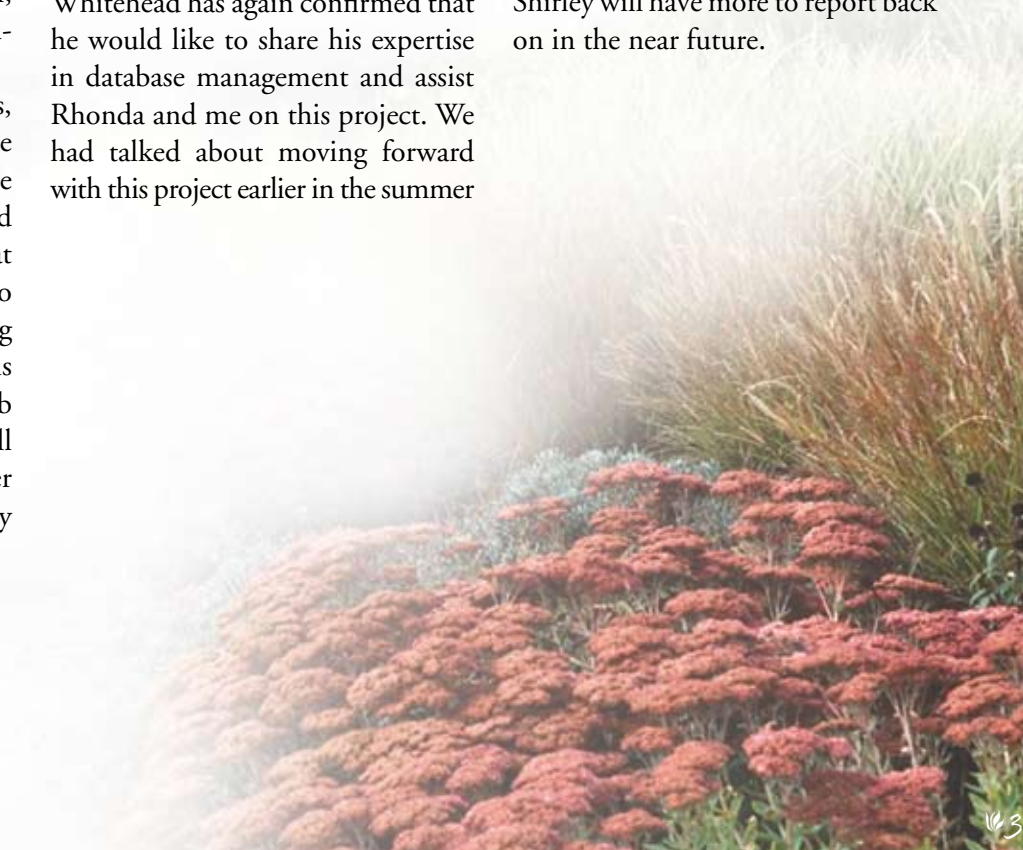
Pat Green, who was recently assigned to the Gardens on a regular basis. He will be working with her on organizing the needed details. Pat is a very knowledgeable plants man and is keen to continue to transform the Gardens with his horticultural expertise.

Please say "hello" to him when you are next there and by all means, I invite you to test his knowledge with any questions you may have regarding our practices and future plans for the Gardens. If he can't deliver an answer on the spot, I am sure he will get you one pretty quickly.

Carmen and the Advisory Board will be meeting shortly to review plans for 2008. Among the items of business on the agenda will be the cataloguing of the plant inventory. This is a significant undertaking. The Board is keen to see it entered onto a computerized database for ease of management and future planning. Advisory Board member Dave Whitehead has again confirmed that he would like to share his expertise in database management and assist Rhonda and me on this project. We had talked about moving forward with this project earlier in the summer

but the lack of time and other pressing commitments prevented us from meeting our original schedule. I thank Dave for his continued interest. My understanding is that he may be adding his words to the newsletter on the subject. We look forward to Dave updating us on the future progress of the project.

Finally, Shirley Lyon, Rhonda and I have been meeting to look at developing a more presentable self-guided tour map for the Gardens. The current view is that it would be nice to produce a brochure style of guide which can be distributed at the main gate to the Gardens as well as through other marketing channels. The consensus seems to be that it should look professional if we are going to proceed with this initiative. Shirley will be meeting with the University Graphics Department shortly to get further input from them on design and cost. However, it isn't expected to be a huge expense. Shirley will have more to report back on in the near future.





Bulbs in Finnerty Gardens

Rhonda Rose
Supervisor, Grounds Horticulture

This year marks a milestone for Finnerty Gardens. With the new fence now in place, we are going to try and plant tulips and lilies. Having enjoyed great success with the species tulips in the past, we will continue to plant them. This year I ordered some of the early and late double peony type, and with some luck we will have tulips in the spring. Lilies are a real summer treat, and I am looking forward to having the sweet smell of lilies in the Gardens next summer. We now have a nice clump of orange tiger lilies and they seem very happy in the Gardens.

Since I like to build on the success of the past, last fall we planted large drifts of anemone De Caen, allium Schubertii and allium Azureum. They gave us lots of colour along the paths and provided many inquiries from the public. With large open areas we are able to plant good examples of bulbs that can naturalize in our mild climate—Fritillaria, Eranthis, Chionodoxa, Muscari and anemone blanda to name a few.

There are still many challenges in choosing from the bulb catalogue: will we get what we ordered? will the yet uncaught rabbits eat them in the spring, or the squirrels dig them up this winter? Whatever happens is a part of nature and we will continue to plant for the future and wait and see how the spring unfolds.



Two Peas in a Pod

Margaret deWeese

By way of explaining my title: Today I entered a new world of podcasting and I am enchanted with this technology. Now I can be out in the garden, inspecting my opening rhododendron buds, while at the same time, clipped onto my jacket is a tiny transmitter smaller than a book of matches, and a voice is speaking to me, it seems personally, about sociology in North America in the present day work force.

Now some might say they escape from the real world into the solace of their gardens to tend, plant and be gladdened and therefore, they do not want such a tool in their ears. But I like it! My plants, for as much as I love them, are silent, and they

are only able to show me when they are thirsty, needing nutrients, or would approve of a trimming. Most of us can manage observing and listening, and should another person come into the garden, the press of the button enables me to stop the podcast. When I press the button again it comes on in just the same place as before.

I can still hear the birds singing, the frogs croaking, feel the wind but the voices I am hearing have been selectively downloaded from a large podcast selection of presently twenty-six free series from the CBC Radio Two. I see on the computer 'iTunes' site there are many more: the BBC, KCTS, and other stations which offer not only music of all genres but interesting broadcasts. Probably some are not so interesting, but the off switch or the advance switch similar to a miniaturized DVD player, enables one to change the program. This iPod



Shuffle can store nearly a gigabyte of audio material which covers a lot of shuffling round the property. I am entranced for it adds to my lifelong learning with no pain, and in a place I love to be best. Living in this age of computer miniaturization is pure enchantment.

On Enlarging the Audience for Finnerty Gardens

Anne Mace

Finnerty Gardens grows more beautiful each year and is becoming a popular destination for many Victorians as well as for visitors to our city. This season there have been several tours led by Advisory Board members and there is an increasing demand for this service to be expanded.

As a result, a brochure is currently being developed containing a self-guided tour for visitors, and this will be available at the Chapel entrance. In addition, plants of seasonal interest will be featured on the Finnerty web site and the web site will be prominently publicized in the brochure.

We are also exploring the possibility of having monthly tours of the Gardens during the growing season and perhaps enlisting the help of the Victoria Master Gardeners Association to provide tour guides.



The Finnerty Gardens Advisory Board will continue searching for ideas that attract more visitors to our unique garden.



Why It's Important to Keep Records

Dave Whitehead

The Advisory Board along with Bentley Sly and Rhonda Rose have felt the need to undertake a major updating of our inventory of all shrubs and trees in the Finnerty Gardens. This is a large task to say the least and it will take some months to completely check all beds for plant material. We have started checking numbers in most of the beds radiating out from the Chapel and hopefully will have most plants accounted for by late fall. Of course, we are finding plants that are not where they should be or numbers that don't match the plants. This is an inevitable outcome after years of moving plants that have become too large or perhaps lost because of extreme weather, for which last winter was a good example. It is hoped that a Global Positioning Scheme will be used for the new records and this will be a more feasible way to keep track of the many plants in the Gardens.

Records can be a valuable resource for noting the history of gardens. The purpose of records is just that, records provide us with a glimpse into the past. The longevity and the pace of gardens, are natural characteristics of this type of establishment. Records assist us to appreciate aspects of gardens that change slowly over time.

How clearly we are able to glimpse into the past is directly proportional to the accuracy and



completeness of the records that we keep. Some careful planning and preparation is required, as well as answers to questions concerning the ongoing maintenance of these records.

It would be interesting to learn the origins of the Finnerty Gardens collection of plants by their history. Learning if they were donated and if so by whom, and when, and why? Also, some details about the donors would provide additional education as well as insights.

This project is a timely undertaking as we have received a request from the Council and Mayor of Lake Cowichan for some plants that were donated from the original donors—the Buchanan Simpsons. Lake Cowichan is in the process of creating a memorial garden and would like some of the rhododendrons to

enhance this new project. Rhonda and the Advisory Board looked over our records and sourced out some possibilities. Given the many years some of these rhododendrons have been in Finnerty Gardens, you can imagine the size of them. However, there are some smaller rhodos and azaleas that Rhonda has tagged and which will be moved later this fall.

Checking the records against the actual plant material is also a very good way to access some of the plants that have perhaps outlived their time. I think we have to be vigilant as plants are not always at their peak and some really can't recuperate no matter how much feeding and pruning they may receive.

Garden Legacies

Margaret deWeese

Are population demands making private gardens extinct? I thought I had seen the future when, under the auspices of the University of Victoria and Dr. Ted Owen, I was in post-Mao Shanghai. Sidewalks and streets were crowded with people walking, sitting or sleeping by grimy walls, while above, tiny balconies with flowerpots competed for space with the wash. It was a hot summer in 1988 and people slept outside on mats as it was unbearable inside. As did many others, I slept in a wet nightie on a woven mat with the fan blowing air over me. China, through its incredible industrial boom has transformed that city into glass, marble and air conditioned skyscraper architectural wonders of the 21st century.

But—since private gardens take up badly needed space—in Chinese cities public parks are well used by everyone, including the caged canaries, the infants, the workers and the seniors.

This is happening in our own garden cities. New houses take up the majority of the lot with little space left for anything but tidy border plants. Demands for water in the summers are drowned out by the splashing in large pools and our horticultural needs try to be satisfied by public gardens. That is why the Finnerty Gardens, the Glendale Gardens, Government House Gardens and Beacon Hill Park are so important to our Victoria residents. It is important to save some wilderness areas in the cities without them becoming just a place for the homeless and the addicted to use .

But, as well, I think we need to preserve private space for gardens to allow people that personal connection to the earth. To create and

maintain a garden is for me both a great privilege and a solace. Perhaps these feelings came from my father who created many gardens, even in a place where a flower garden was a mystery, on Minstrel Island, near Knights Inlet, almost seventy years ago. The Union Steamship arrived only once a month, and with it came what one needed for basic living. During the Depression, flowers did not feed the family, but raising chickens and eggs did. The chicken manure helped the flowers grow in the rockery and the garden, fed with kelp, bordering the sea, kept the connection with large beautiful gardens in other parts of the world.

Those of us who have private gardens should appreciate that we are the privileged few in today's world, and perhaps in tomorrow's world, private gardens will be only a memory.





Upcoming Event

On the arbour to the Finnerty Gardens at the Chapel entrance there is the inscription: *Ed Lohbrunner, Plantsman and Pioneer Nurseryman*. Come and find out more about this benefactor of the Finnerty Gardens at a presentation by Rex Murfitt.

“Ed Lohbrunner – A plantsman’s eye influences the gardens of Victoria”

Rex Murfitt was born in England where he trained as a nurseryman. Rex has worked with some of the most famous names in alpine gardening including Will Ingwersen, Graham Stuart Thomas and Frank Cabot. His work experience in Victoria includes Superintendent of Grounds at UVic at which time the Simpson rhododendrons were moved to Finnerty Gardens. Rex formed a strong friendship with the remarkable plantsman Ed Lohbrunner. He will talk about their shared love of plants and Ed’s influence on gardening in Victoria with anecdotes about this most remarkable gardener.

Date: Wednesday, October 24, 2007
Time: 7:30 pm
Location: Abkhazi Garden
1964 Fairfield Road, Victoria BC

Tickets are \$8 and space is limited so please call 598-8096 to reserve a space.

For more information, contact Valerie Murray by phone at 598-8096 or by email at valerie@conservancy.bc.ca.

An Invitation to Submit Articles for the Finnerty Gardens Newsletter

All Friends of Finnerty Gardens—including present and past Members of the Advisory Board—are invited to submit articles of interest to horticulturists for publication in the newsletter. The purpose is to maintain the eclectic range of horticultural interests that the newsletter has espoused in recent years.

Ideally, articles should be of 500-1,000 words in length, and should be emailed to the editor as soon as they are ready. When articles are accepted, they will be published as quickly as space becomes available. Since the editor is an English professor rather than a horticulturist, authors must hold themselves responsible for the accuracy of the horticultural content.



MEMBERSHIP:

Membership in the Friends of Finnerty Gardens is \$10 per year (single or couple). Membership includes an informative newsletter published four times a year. Funds raised through membership support enhancements within the Gardens which would not be possible otherwise.

This newsletter is also available on the University of Victoria’s website at: <http://www.external.uvic.ca/gardens/>. If you would prefer to view it electronically rather than in hard copy, please let us know and we’ll update our mailing list accordingly.