

Easter...Spring

By Cheryl Fiddis

By the time you read this article, we will have celebrated Easter, which for most of us, signals that Spring is upon us. Having a late March birthday myself, I remember as a child, often having an Easter themed birthday party. Over the past few years however, Easter it seems, has fallen mostly during the month of April.

But did you notice how early Easter was this year? As you may know, Easter is always the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring Equinox (which is March 20). This dating of Easter is based on the lunar calendar that Hebrews used to identify Passover, which is why it moves around on our Roman calendar. Based on the above, Easter can actually be one day earlier (March 22) but that is pretty rare. Here's the interesting part. This year is the earliest Easter any of us will ever see the rest of our lives! And only the most elderly of our population have ever seen it this early (95 years old or above!). And none of us have ever, or will ever, see it a day earlier!

The next time Easter will be this early (March 23) will be the year 2228 (220 years from now). The last time it was this early was 1913 (so if you're 95 or older, you are the only ones that were around for that!). The next time it will be a day earlier, March 22, will be in the year 2285 (277 years from now). The last time it was on March 22 was 1818. So, no one alive today has or will ever see it any earlier than this year!

Regardless of when Easter falls, both March and April are the months when we, and our gardens, begin to wake up and celebrate new beginnings. The days become longer, the weather a little better, and we become anxious to get outside and see what greenery is poking up through the wet earth. Even the birds seem extra busy as they check out potential nesting spots and vie for space in the birdbath! And don't forget, - now is the

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Rogue Rhodo

By Lois Brown

Naturalists in Britain are battling an invasion by a particular rhododendron, *R. ponticum*. This plant was introduced in the late 18th and 19th centuries, carried from its native habitat in Spain and Portugal to embellish Victorian country estates. It quickly adapted to the moist, acid conditions in parts of the United Kingdom with devastating effect. Wales, the west highlands of Scotland, and the southern English heathlands are under serious threat. *R. ponticum* spreads both by seeding itself and by lateral spreading. Where a branch touches the ground a new plant is set.

Because of its dense canopy of tough leaves, its lateral growth habit, and, as some suspect, the toxic effects it has on neighbouring plant life, *R. ponticum* prevents plants from developing beneath it. Grazing animals are repulsed by the tough leaves; it is resistant to natural insect pests of the area; and so it spreads unchecked. There is a poisonous substance on tender new buds that can cause illness in any animal that is driven by hunger to feed on it. In fact, the honey produced by bees frequenting rhodo blossoms can cause "Mad Honey Disease" in humans -- not a fatal illness but one that may result in cardiac problems and/or problems of the digestive tract. The showy flowers seduce the honey bees causing them to neglect native flowers, thus reducing opportunities for pollination and perpetuation. As native plants diminish in numbers, the native fauna loses habitat. The dormouse, for example, is already classed as an endangered species in Britain and is steadily losing habitat to the rogue rhodo.

Clearly this is just one more example of injudicious introduction of foreign plants to an area by thoughtless human agency (think of Japanese knotweed and purple loosestrife in our area). However, it does show a rather dark side of our celebrated and beloved rhododendron. (Gleaned from an "Offwell Woodland and Wildlife Trust" report)

RhodoFest 2008

20th Annual Burnaby Rhododendron Festival

Sunday, May 4, 9³⁰ am – 4pm

New this year – Gardening Guest Speakers

Carolyn Herriot of "Get Up & Grow"

"Food Gardening for the Future-The New Victory Garden"

Alan Reid of Gardenworks

"Companion Planting" – plants that love shrubs

Cypress Tip Moth

By Diane Allison

If your junipers or cedar hedge is turning brown even though you are taking good care of it, look for the Cypress Tip Moth!

Order: Lepidoptera

Family: Yponomeutidae

Species: *Argyresthia cupressella*



Larvae:

- long, thin worm-like, green caterpillars
- 3-4 instar stages
- approx 1.5mm long when first hatched and are a greenish-yellow, pale green when mature, up to 7 mm long



Moth:

- tiny, silvery-tan moths, about 5mm long
- narrow body
- narrow wings, wingspans of 5-30mm

Life Cycle:

- one year cycle
- moths are active during the late spring and early summer – dependant upon environmental factors, particularly temperature
- moths lay scale-like eggs in plant's tips and between leaf scales – an average of 20 eggs are laid individually
- eggs hatch after about 3 weeks
- larvae that emerges, burrows into foliage to feed

- larvae feed within the leaf tissue through to the next spring
- the larvae overwinter as a fourth-instar larva – continues to feed on warm winter days
- larvae only bore in 9-12 scales from hatching until late winter ie less noticeable damage
- larvae feeding increase as the weather warms in late winter/early spring – larvae will then bore into shoots about 1" from the tip and tunnel another 1" down the branch, sometimes branching off – 4-6 shoots may be eaten by each larva – this is when the damage really starts to show
- the larvae matures in mid-spring (April/May) - they leave the twigs and spin a papery, white cocoons, on the foliage and pupate inside the cocoon – cocoon is about 5mm long
- moth emerges after a few weeks (June)

Damage:

- larvae are the damaging stage of this insect
- distinct circular exit holes in tips of dead/dying twigs
- feeding causes discoloration, first yellowing (in early winter) then browning and ultimately twig dieback
- exit holes in the bracts of the twigs become noticeable
- plants showing heavy infestation will appear brown in late spring – new growth may cover the damage
- repeated defoliation may stress and/or kill the plant

Control:

- provide proper care to maintain strong healthy plants
- control is often attained by light shearing the plant in August – this will cut off a lot of the foliage containing larvae
- replace plant with species less susceptible

Highly resistant to infestation

Juniperus chinensis cv. Kaizuka

J. chinensis var. *sargentii* cv. Glauca

J. scopulorum cv. Erecta Glauca

Thuja plicata

Moderately resistant to infestation

J. chinensis cv. Pfitzerana Aurea

J. sabina cv. Arcadia

J. sabina cv. Tamariscifolia

J. virginiana cv. Prostrata

Highly susceptible to infestation

Chamaecyparis lawsoniana cv. Allumii

J. chinensis cv. Pfitzerana

J. chinensis cv. Robust Green

J. virginiana cv. Cupressifolia

Thuja occidentalis

Out & About

April 5

Seedy Saturday. Historic Stewart Farm's annual seed & plant sale. Purchase heritage vegetable, flower & herb seeds, fruit trees & nursery plants. 13723 Crescent Rd., Surrey, 11am-3pm. Info: 604-592-6956

April 7

"Botanic Gardens, Plant Diversity & Living with Global Change" A special lecture by Stephen Hopper, Director, Royal Botanic Garden, Kew. A fundraising event for VanDusen Botanical Garden. St George's School, 4175 W 29th Ave., 730pm. Tickets 604-878-9821 \$25 VBG members, \$35 others.

April 12-13

Alpine Garden Club of BC Spring Show. VBG Floral Hall, 10am-4pm. Free admission.

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perfect time to put out that hummingbird feeder. My hummers usually arrive mid-March and I hate to see them arrive and go away hungry.

Another spring tip: save the lint from your clothes dryer and attach it outside onto an eye level bush or shrub.

Those little guys you see checking out potential nesting spots? Well, they love that dryer lint to add to their nests! Yes, after what has seemed to be a long harsh winter, there is hope on the horizon, light in the sky, and green sprouting on those bare branches. Spring has sprung! Enjoy!

April Meeting

Wednesday, April 2

Speaker:
Candyse Roberts of GardenWorks
"Water Features"

Thank You

To Diane Allison, Cheryl Fiddis, & Lois Brown for contributing articles to this edition of the BRAGS Newsletter. Contributions from Members are always welcome. DF

Plant Sales

BRAGS

Sunday, April 20, 9am to 1pm

Our own BRAGS Plant Sale will again be held at the Burnaby Village Museum parking lot. This is a great opportunity to get lots of plants for your spring garden renovations.

South Burnaby

Garden Club Sunday, April 27 at the Buy-Low parking lot at Royal Oak & Rumble. Plants (flowers, herbs, vegetables) and used garden tools.

VanDusen Botanical

Garden Sunday, April 27, 10am-4pm. 30th annual plant sale. 40,000 plants for sale. Catalogues \$2 from April 1st. Free VBG admission this day.

New Westminster Horticultural

Society Sunday May 4, 10am to 4pm. Glenbrook Middle School Gymnasium, 701 Park Cr. (nr. 8th & McBride) New Westminster.

Nominations! Nominations! Nominations!

by Cheryl Fiddis & Lois Brown,
Nominations Committee

As previously mentioned, over the next few months we will be providing details by newsletter and by handouts, of the positions that will be available for nomination at the year end.

In this article, we spotlight the Executive roles. Please do not hesitate to ask if you have any questions!

President

- The primary role of the President is to chair 10 meetings per annum, including the AGM. Involves preparing an agenda in advance, confirming with and allocating time for those committees which require floor time, reviewing correspondence received, communicating future relevant community events, and presenting requests for "Gifts to the Community" to the membership.
- Represents the Club at any required functions, or assigns a delegate.
- Provides support and guidance to the various committees and groups within BRAGS.
- Ensures the By-Laws of BRAGS are followed.
- Performs sundry duties such as picking up the Club's mail at Shadbolt and attending to any enquires by mail or by phone.
- Ensures the annual agreement is completed for the monthly meetings at Burnaby Village.

Vice-President

- Fills in as President during any absences, and provides support as needed to the President and other Committee members.
- If necessary, assume the role of the President, should this role become unexpectedly vacant.

Treasurer

- Is responsible for the maintenance of all financial records of the club, keeping all accounting up to date and in order and available for audit.
- Issues cheques as needed for any dues, insurance, club expenses, disbursements or reimbursements to members for expenses incurred. Completes deposits for all funds received and issues receipts as required.
- Ensures the Society Annual Report form 11 is completed and forwarded to the Ministry of Finance within 30 days of the date of the AGM.