

Rhododendron Basics: Pinching, Deadheading and Pruning (part 3)

Pinching Rhododendrons, by Michael J. McGroarty

Pinching is a low impact form of pruning that is very effective for creating bushy plants when you are growing small plants from seeds or cuttings. Typically, a Rhododendron forms a single new bud at the tip of each branch; this new bud will develop into another new branch. If left alone this will produce a very lanky plant with a lot of space between the branches forming a very unattractive plant.

So if you are starting with a plant that is nothing more than a rooted cutting all you have to do is pinch off this new growth bud as soon as it is about 3/8" long. Just grab it between your fingers and snap it completely off. When you do this the plant usually responds by replacing that single bud with two, three, or even four new buds in a cluster around the bud that you pinched off. Each one of these buds will develop into branches and eventually a single bud will appear at the tip of each of these branches, and of course you should come along and pinch each one of those off forcing the plant to produce multiple buds at the end of each of these branches.

The more often you pinch off these single buds, the more branches the plant will form, making a nice, tight, bushy plant. This is especially helpful with young plants such as rooted cuttings or young seedlings.

Deadheading Rhododendrons, by Kenneth Cox

Rhododendrons are not perpetual-flowering flowering, so deadheading does not prolong the flowering season. Deadheading encourage vigorous new growth and a good flowering season in the following year. Young plants, especially those planted while flowering, will benefit from deadheading.

Pruning Rhododendrons, source: American Rhododendrons Society

Large-leaved rhododendrons may be pruned anytime without harming the plant. These plants, with few exceptions, retain their leaves two years. This means that on young plants there will be four rosettes of leaves and fewer on older plants. It is permissible to prune back to any of these rosettes, depending on how drastically it is desired to prune. Always make the cut about a quarter of an inch above the rosette. The flush of

growth will burst out from the auxiliary buds of the rosette.

Pruning old rhododendrons presents a different problem. When old rhododendrons become unthrifty in appearance, the cells in the vascular bundles have become hardened or plugged and no longer function normally. Any revitalizing to be accomplished must be done on new wood, supplied by drastic pruning. This is best done in the spring or early summer but spring preferred.¹

One method is to cut the plant down to several inches above the ground. This is more successful with those having multiple stems coming up from the ground. In hybrids, which often have one stem, they may sometimes die from this. A less drastic means is to reach down into the shrub and cut out about one-third of the old wood. Do this for a period of about three years. In this way, there remains sufficient leaf surface to supply nutrients for reestablishment of new shrubs.

¹Editor's note: the best time is right after flowering when new growth is beginning.



Rhodo²⁰⁰⁹*fest*

shadbolt centre for the arts
6450 Deer Lake Avenue | Burnaby

Sunday, May 3
9:30am-4:00pm

Cure For Honey Bee Colony

Collapse? Source: www.sciencedaily.com

ScienceDaily (Apr. 14, 2009) — For the first time, scientists have isolated the parasite *Nosema ceranae* (Microsporidia) from professional apiaries suffering from honey bee colony depopulation syndrome. They then went on to treat the infection with complete success.

In a study published in the new journal from the Society for Applied Microbiology: Environmental Microbiology Reports, scientists from Spain analysed two apiaries and found evidence of honey bee colony depopulation syndrome (also known as colony collapse disorder in the USA). They found no evidence of any other cause of the disease (such as the *Varroa* destructor, IAPV or pesticides), other than infection with *Nosema ceranae*. The researchers then treated the infected surviving under-populated colonies with the antibiotic drug, flumagillin and demonstrated complete recovery of all infected colonies.

The loss of honey bees could have an enormous horticultural and economic impact worldwide. Honeybees are important pollinators of crops, fruit and wild flowers and are indispensable for a sustainable and profitable agriculture as well as for the maintenance of the non-agricultural ecosystem. Honeybees are attacked by numerous pathogens including viruses, bacteria, fungi and parasites.

For most of these diseases, the molecular pathogenesis is poorly understood, hampering the development of new ways to prevent and combat honeybee diseases. So, any progress made in identifying causes and subsequent treatments of honey bee colony collapse is invaluable. There have been other hypothesis for colony collapse in Europe and the USA, but never has this bug been identified as the primary cause in professional apiaries.

"Now that we know one strain of parasite that could be responsible, we can look for signs of infection and treat any infected colonies before the infection spreads" said Dr Higes, principle researcher.

This finding could help prevent the continual decline in honey bee population which has recently been seen in Europe and the USA.

Thanks to Diane Allison for suggesting the article



BRAGS would like to thank our April speaker Laura Ralph for presenting the update on Eagles Estate Heritage Garden.

The restoration of the Garden presents opportunities for volunteers in a variety of gardening and maintenance jobs. Be a part of the renewal of this outstanding historical Burnaby garden. The regular work days for volunteers are Wednesdays and some Saturdays.

ATTENTION ALL PICNICKERS!



Dust off the mosquito nets! After a short hiatus, the BRAGS picnic is making a comeback! The plan is to have a picnic on a Sunday in August, locally, preferably at a members garden, and in the 'pot-luck' format.

At this point we are looking for a member with a large, 'crowd friendly' garden, who is willing to open up their garden for an afternoon of visiting with club members and their significant others. As we are in the planning stage, options and suggestions are welcome.

If you think you have the garden suitable for this function, and would be willing to 'host' the picnic, please contact Cheryl Fiddis to discuss further. Please note the 'garden host' will not be expected to feed the group!

As in the past, everyone will bring a dish to share, and a chair to sit on.

Let me know what you all think and if you are interested in attending this gala event!

Cheryl Fiddis

Happy Mother's Day

One early morning, a lady went in to wake up her son. "Wake up, son. It's time to go to school!"

Son: "But why Mom? I don't want to go."

Mom: "Give me two reasons why you don't want to go."

Son: "Well, the kids hate me for one, and the teachers hate me, too!"

Mom: "Oh, that's no reason to not to go to school. Come on now and get ready."

Son: "Give me two reasons why I should go to school."

Mom: "Well, for one, you're 52 years old. And for another, you're the Principal!"

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Out and About

May 2, 10 am – 3 pm Fraser South Rhododendron Society Annual Plant Sale, Langley United Church, 5673 - 200th St., Langley . Plants for sale include rhododendrons & azaleas, maples & specimen trees, companion plants. Plants are locally grown. Growers will be available to help you choose the right plant for your garden conditions.

May 2, 1 – 4 pm, The Vancouver African Violet & Gesneriad Society Annual Show and Plant Sale, Floral Hall at VanDusen Botanical Garden . Admission: \$2.00

May 2, 9 am - 2 pm, Coquitlam Dogwood Garden Club Plant Sale, Scout Hall at Blue Mountain Park, Porter St. & Winslow Ave., Coquitlam Great selection of perennials, heirloom tomatoess, & hanging baskets.

May 3, 10 am – 4 pm, New Westminster Horticultural society Annual Plant Sale, Glenbrook Middle School Gymnasium, 701 Park Crescent, New Westminster (near 8th Ave. & McBride). Info: Carole 604-515-1927 or carole.forsythe@shaw.ca.

May 6, 11 am – 2:30pm, SFU 12th Annual Plant Sale, Town Square by the Cornerstone building and SFU Burnaby bus loop. More info: www.sfu.ca/campus-activity/plantsale/

May 9, 10 am – 1 pm, Lynn Valley Garden Club. 10am to 1pm. St. Clement's Anglican Church, 3409 Institute Rd, North Vancouver. Cash only. Information Joyce 604-987-1933 or jpage@shaw.ca.

May 9, 10 am – 4 pm, UBC Botanical Garden 19th Annual Perennial Plant Sale
Looking for hard-to-find plants? Seeking quality stalwarts that will launch a new garden successfully? Searching for “just the right” plant to fit that garden trouble spot? The annual Perennial Plant Sale at UBC Botanical Garden has what you are looking for. UBC Botanical Garden, 6804 SW Marine Dr. Further information: 604-822-4529.

May 9 - 10, 10 am – 4 pm, Canadian Geranium & Pelargonium Society Annual Plant Sale & Show, Floral Hall, VanDusen Garden

May 16, 9 am - 5 pm and **May 17**, 10 am - 4pm Vancouver Orchid Society show and sale, Richmond Curling club, 5540 Hollybridge Way. Preview night party and advance plant sale on **May 15**, 6pm-9:30pm order your tickets at info@vancouverorchidsociety.ca

Late Notes

- **Mugs for Meetings.** Please remember to bring your own mug for refreshments at our meetings and avoid the use of disposal cups.

- **Living Roofs Tour.** If you are interested in the tour but haven't yet signed up, please contact Heather MacKay at 604-868-5770 or email grunzel@shaw.ca. Tour will be arranged soon for sometime in June

Next speaker at the meeting on May 6

John Gibeau, President of the Honeybee Centre in Surrey, will present "Bees & the Latest Bee Issues". The Honeybee Centre provides bee colonies for agriculture and a honey producer, beekeeping supplies, bee livestock, and beekeeping services including honey extraction, honey filtering and bottling, hive inspections, and beekeeping courses & seminars.

BRAGS Plant Sale this year...

For the time and efforts put into the Plant Sale, I would like to express my gratitude to the wonderful volunteers, plant donors, Master Gardeners, Scouts Canada, Burnaby Village Museum, and Shadbolt Centre of the Arts. Together, we were able to raise \$1971.25 (gross).