

Maintaining Healthy Rhododendrons: how to deal with Iron Deficiency, Winter Injury and Root rot. By Harry A. J. Hoitink, Stephen Nameth, and Jim Chatfield, the Ohio State University

Iron Deficiency



The yellowing of leaves is typical sign of iron deficiency. The yellowing is between the veins and more severe on younger leaves. This problem generally results from plants growing in soils of

improper pH. Rhododendrons must be grown in acidic soil that is high in organic matter. If the pH is above 6.0, soil amendments such as sulfur, iron sulfate or ammonium sulfate must be incorporated into the root area to lower pH. It will be difficult to overcome the deficiency problem in soils high in lime or calcium, even with soil amendments. In such cases, mulch the plant heavily with a good grade of sphagnum peat. Bark mulch mixed with the peat provides a mulch with good aeration and drainage. It also suppresses root rotting organisms. If kept moist, plants will root into this mulch. Use a complete, acid fertilizer that contains iron.

Winter Burn



Leaf drying and browning can occur on rhododendron leaves as a result of winter exposure (Figures 2). The leaves, even though they may be "rolled up" at times, are subject to drying out in dry winter air. The solution is to protect the plant from the drying wind. Plant rhododendrons behind buildings or other plants that can serve as wind shields. Put wind shields in place around

the plants during the winter months. Mulching is critical to preventing winter injury.

Phytophthora Root Rot (Rhododendron Wilt)

This disease is caused by a soil-borne fungus (*Phytophthora*

spp.). Generally, it is a problem where wet (saturated) soil conditions occur frequently. Early symptoms of the disease consist of retarded growth, drooping of foliage (perhaps on one



or two branches only) and yellowing of leaves. Infected roots appear dark and "mushy." As the disease progresses, a browning discoloration of the wood may extend upward from the base on affected branches. Plants in poorly drained soils are very subject to waterlogging which makes them highly susceptible to this disease. If this occurs, plants may die quickly. Whereas infected



plants cannot be cured, root rot may be tolerated by the plant if improvements in soil drainage and aeration are made as soon as possible. Young plants can be lifted and replanted. Before replanting, improve the drainage and aeration of the soil. Use tile drainage or add porous materials in a layer beneath the root zone. Plant in a raised bed and do not mound the soil up around the crown. Mulching with tree bark provides biological control. The

mulch must be applied to a depth of two inches and reapplied as it decomposes.

If plants cannot be lifted and replanted, try to improve drainage and lessen the occurrence of over watering by redirecting rain runoff, placement of drain tiles, and changes in irrigation programs. If the plants die from root rot, it would be unwise to replant another rhododendron in the site without considerable improvement in the soil conditions. Caroline and English Roseum are rhododendron cultivars with some resistance to this disease.

BRAGS Tour

BRAGS members are invited to take part in a group tour of the Greenroof Research Program at the Centre for Architectural Ecology (BCIT) on Saturday, Oct 3rd from 10am to 12noon.

The Centre is a world-class multi-disciplinary facility conducting research & education in the field of green roofs and walls in the coastal BC region. The Centre is located at 555 Great Northern Way in Vancouver.

Anyone interested in booking a space on this tour should contact Heather MacKay at by email at grunzel@shaw.ca

Detailed information about the Greenroof Research Program is available at www.greenroof.bcit.ca

Thank You,
Thank You,



Many thanks to David Forsyth who put together the wonderful slide show of 2009 Garden Tour. The slide show was presented after the September meeting.

Wednesday, October 7, 2009 **Monthly Meeting features** **Brenda Falk of Tanglebank Gardens** **"Grasses & Their Companions** **- Great Fall Gardens"**

When eating a fruit, think of the person who planted the tree. ~*Vietnamese Proverb*
Gardens, like money in the bank, accumulate interest as they grow. ~Unknown
The trouble with gardening is that it does not remain an avocation. It becomes an obsession.. ~Phyllis McGinley
The gardener's hands are black with earth but his loaves are white. ~Albanian
He that plants trees loves others besides himself. ~Unknown
Don't knock the weather; nine-tenths of the people couldn't start a conversation if it didn't change once in a while. ~Kin Hubbard

Out and About

Farmers' Markets:

Wednesday until October 21:

3 – 7 p.m. Thornton Park, across from the VIA Rail Station and near the Main St Skytrain Station, Vancouver.

Saturdays until October 10:

9 a.m. – 2 p.m., Trout Lake, Victoria Dr & E 15th Ave, Vancouver

Saturdays until October 24:

- 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. outside City Hall, Burnaby.
- 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. 1100 Block of Comox Street across from Nelson Park at Mole Hill, Vancouver.
- 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Lonsdale Quay, North Vancouver.

Sundays until September 27:

11am - 3pm, Gastown, 200 Block of Carrall Street - between Water and Cordova.

Sundays until October 25:

- 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Bellevue Ave, between 13th and 14th, West Vancouver.
- 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., 10th Avenue and Larch Street, Parking Lot of Kitsilano Community Centre
- 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Dogwood Pavilion parking lot (Poirer and Winslow Streets), Coquitlam. Events:
September 20 - Kids Day and Kids Market
September 27- Pie Contest
October 25 - Halloween Celebration

October 3-4, Saturday & Sunday, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.:

Dried Flower Sale in Van Dusen Entrance Pavilion. Sale of dried flower centre pieces for Thanksgiving and autumn wreaths of vibrant Fall colours made from materials gathered in the Garden.

October 4, Sunday, 10 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Mid Autumn Moon Festival at Dr. Sun Yat Sen Chinese Garden. Open by Donation. Join us for this popular festival celebrating abundance and togetherness! Mid-Autumn Moon Festival is one of the two most important holidays in the Chinese calendar (the other being Chinese New Year). Farmers celebrate the end of the summer harvesting season on this date. Traditionally, on this day, Chinese family members and friends will gather to admire the bright mid-autumn harvest moon, and eat moon cakes together. The Garden will celebrate this festival with an array of family-friendly activities, story-telling and music. Moon cakes will also be served.

October 4, Sunday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Salt Spring Island's 11th Annual Apple Festival at Fulford Hall, Salt

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STANDING COMMITTEES**Fund Raising**

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Membership

Anne Forsyth
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435-2801

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Publicity

Lindsey McCann
439-1129

Rhododendron Festival

Wendy Thompson
420-6513

OTHER**COMMITTEES Garden Contest**

Vacant

Garden Tour

Faye Kilpatrick
434-5921

Plant Sale

Lanny Hui
415-4564

Newsletter

Lanny Hui
415-4564

Anne & David Forsyth
298-6350

Raffle & Greeting

Sheila Chowdhury
298-1196

Refreshments

Helen Vaughan
299-2014

Speakers

Heather MacKay
438-1342

Website

David Forsyth
298-6350

Spring Island. Celebrating Heritage Apples: Travel Back in Time. Heritage apples are apple varieties grown since before 1900. These apple varieties were all chance seedlings and as such grew without any human intervention. Festival highlights include: display of HUNDREDS of apples all grown organically on Salt Spring Island, tasting of more than 100 apple varieties at just one farm (Apple Luscious); theatrical performances by Johnny Appleseed, Theodore Trage, the Queen and Captain Apple; a rich history of apples going back to 1860; educational information on organic apple growing; apple identification services; orchard bee and honey bee experts available; apple art by local artists. Tickets: \$10 each, students \$5, kids under 12, free. Tickets are available only on Festival day at Fulford hall and outside the Ganges tourist info centre. Contact info: Harry Burton, 250-653-2007, burtonh@saltspring.com, www.saltspringmarket.com/apples/

October 9 -11, Friday – Sunday, 10:00 am- 4:30 pm, Ikebana Exhibition at Dr. Sun Yat Sen Chinese Garden. Come and experience the art and joy of Ikebana, the Japanese art of flower arrangement. Today, there are about 3,000 ikebana schools in Japan and thousands more around the world. The Ikenobo school alone has some 60,000 teachers worldwide. Ikebana is practised by about 15 million people in Japan, mostly young women. Ikebana Exhibit is included with Garden admission ticket.

October 17 - 18, Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m., UBC Apple Festival, located throughout the grounds of the Botanical Garden, Admission fee – \$2 for adults, under 12 free. Every year, between 11,500 and 13,500 kilograms of apples are sold to a hungry public. Over 60 varieties of heritage, new and "tried and true" varieties are available, grown both conventionally and organically. These include the heritage apple 'Grimes Golden' and 'Ambrosia', recently discovered in Cawston, British Columbia. Also available for sale are many varieties of apple trees grafted onto dwarfing root stock, perfect for the home garden or patio. The Vancouver Island-based BC Fruit Testers Association mounts a display of the nearly 200 apple varieties still grown in British Columbia. Members of the association are on-hand to give demonstrations of grafting and cider-pressing.

October 17 – 18, Saturday 9 a.m. — 5 p.m. & Sunday 10 a.m. —4 p.m.: Fraser Valley Orchid Society 2009 Show & Sale at George Preston Recreation Centre (42nd Ave and 207th St, Langley, BC). Admission \$7. Fraser Valley Orchid Society is also hosting Canadian Orchid Congress Annual Meeting and Symposium. Friday night Pre-View Dinner Tickets (\$13.00 per person) please e-mail Monica at tickets@orchidbc.ca. For more information about the show, symposium, and pre-order from vendors check www.canadianorchidcongress.ca/agm09.html

October 24-25, Saturday & Sunday, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.: Dried Flower Sale in Van Dusen Entrance Pavilion. Sale of dried flower topiaries, wreaths, bouquets and arrangements made from materials gathered in the Garden.

October 25, Sunday, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.: Vancouver Mycological Society Mushroom Show, Floral Hall, Admission \$3. Information: Brian Didier 604-619-5060 brian.didier@telus.net

October 31 – November 1, Saturday: 12 - 4 p.m., Sunday: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.: Pt. Grey Chrysanthemum Association Show of Late Varieties, Information: Marie Ogryzlo 604-261-9219 ogryzlo@chem.ubc.ca

