

Rhododendrons International

The Online Journal of the World's Rhododendron Organizations



Vireyas



Rhododendrons



Azaleas

Volume 4, 2019, Part 2 (This volume has been split into two parts because of large file size.)

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“Rhododendrons International” (RI) is an online journal distributed free to all the world’s known rhododendron associations for their internal distribution. It can also be accessed on the American Rhododendron Society website at <https://www.rhododendron.org/ri-index.htm>. This fourth issue of RI includes five articles, some modified slightly from those printed initially, that I have extracted from various rhododendron publications that I feel are worthy of wider world-wide distribution. Articles in this volume are from Rhododendron Species 2018, the journal of the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden in Federal Way, WA; Rhododendrons, Camellias & Magnolias 2018, Royal Horticultural Society Group; and the Journal American Rhododendron Society. I regularly search botanical publications for worthwhile rhododendron articles I deem to be of international significance for wider distribution through RI issues. I also welcome submissions from authors of such material that I might not be aware of, so please feel free to bring such material to my attention

Exceptional Plants

Russell Beeson
Broadstone, Dorset, UK



Photos by the author

(Reprinted from Rhododendrons, Camellias and Magnolias 2018 Royal Horticultural Society Group, 100-111).

Gardening can be a solitary occupation, which is why so many gardeners like to come together for shows or to visit other people's gardens. These events enable long-term friendships to form, views to be exchanged and, let's be honest, a bit of harmless showing off as well. Not all members are able to participate in these activities, so our Yearbook is the key means of communication which every member can feel a part of, and reports of Group events are a way of vicariously taking part even if physical attendance is not possible.

Rather than being a comprehensive set of reports, these notes present a fairly random and entirely personal selection of exhibits and plants seen by the author at shows and on garden visits during 2017. Some are rare, some commonplace, but all struck me as exceptional or memorable. 2017 was a year full of riches, so the difficulty was what to leave out.

SHOWS

Rosemoor Early Spring Flower Show

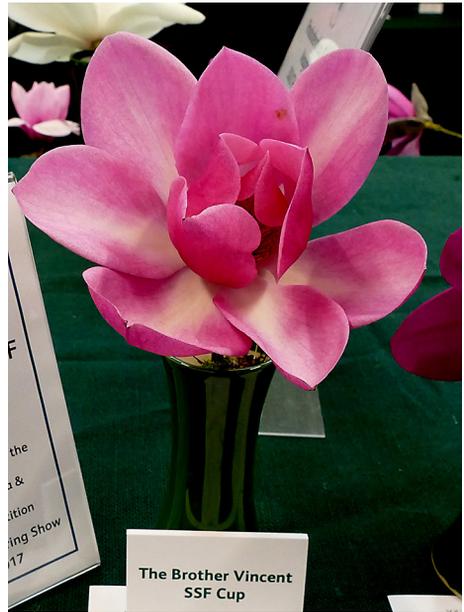
The season kicked off in the South West, with the Early Spring Flower Show held at RHS Rosemoor in Devon. This show combines two RHS National competitions—those for Early Camellias and Daffodils—with competitions for Rhododendrons, Magnolias and Spring Ornamentals organised by the RHS, but with the help of the South West branch of the Group. Put all these plants together in one venue and, given favourable weather, a spectacular show usually emerges to delight the public, many of whom are astonished to see so many flowers in early March.

Some of the magnolias exhibited had not fully survived a warm night after being staged the evening before the show, and it was unfortunate that the extraordinary

exhibits from Caerhays suffered the most in this respect. Those who had staged their exhibits early on the morning of the first day of the show fared better, and the Lamellen Cup was awarded to Botallick's notable spray of *Magnolia* 'Tyler James', with huge creamy flowers showing a slight pink tinge. There was a new award this year, the Brother Vincent SSF Cup for the best single bloom. This was won by the South West branch Chairman, Dr. John Marston, with a sumptuous flower of the Blumhardt variety *Magnolia* 'Aurora' which originates from a cross between 'Star Wars' and *M. sargentiana* var. *robusta*. The pink cup-and-saucer-shaped flower was a worthy winner and Brother Vincent himself presented the cup.

Another unusual magnolia was a spray of the Chinese *Magnolia maudiae*, formerly included in the genus *Michelia*, shown by Trewithen. The fragrant white flowers emerging from brown furry buds were characteristic of this group of plants, which are becoming quite widely grown in the milder areas of the country and are particularly popular in New Zealand.

The Tremear Cup for the best rhododendron in the show was awarded to Barry Starling for his fine spray of *Rhododendron luteiflorum*, a yellow flowered species in the subsection *Glauca*, and closely related to the better known *R. glaucophyllum*. This early flowering species is seldom seen at its best, as it is rather vulnerable to frost damage, but this exhibitor has a remarkable record of



Magnolia 'Aurora'.



Magnolia maudiae.



Rhododendron luteiflorum.



Rhododendron vialii.



Rhododendron barbatum.

producing floriferous specimens of some of the more difficult rhododendrons, as also exemplified by his superb spray of the deep red *Rhododendron vialii* in the *Azaleastrum* subsection. This somewhat tender species is considered to be difficult to flower well except when grown under glass.

The late Edward Needham's garden at Tregye has become an outstanding exhibitor of rare and special plants over recent years, drawing on the Needham legacy as built upon by John Lanyon, who now manages this unique garden. A good example of what it can produce was a perfect truss of an excellent form of *Rhododendron barbatum*, with large glowing red flowers.

Savill Garden, early April

The RHS Early Rhododendron Show has been held at Wisley for the last few years but, owing to redevelopment taking place there, a new venue was needed in 2017. Fortunately the facilities of the Savill Garden in Windsor Great Park were offered and this proved to be a perfect venue for a superb show, which also included the RHS Main Camellia and Spring Ornamental Competitions.

The Crown Estate and Exbury were among the most prolific exhibitors of rhododendrons in particular, but other famous gardens as well as several skilled amateur growers also picked up prizes. Among the wealth of outstanding rhododendrons seen, I will select just a few which caught my eye.

Firstly, a most striking rich orange flower, labelled *Rhododendron horaeum* F21850, from that fine grower of rare species, Rod White. This perhaps should more correctly be considered a variety of *R. citriniflorum*. I can find no record of this plant being used as a parent, which is surprising given its unusual colour.

The Boscauens of High Beeches have a fine record of growing the very best forms of rhododendron species and hybrids, and their exhibit of a beautiful clear pink *Rhododendron kesangiae* was a case in point, as the flowers of this quite recently introduced large-leaved species from Bhutan can often be a rather muddy purple. This exhibit deservedly won the John Hilliard Cup for the best truss in the show.



Rhododendron horaeum.

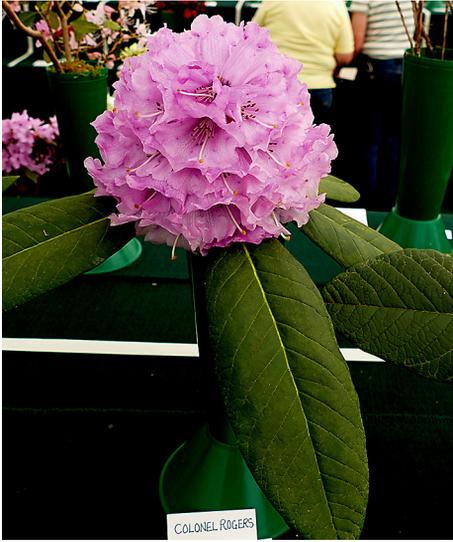
Amongst the Crown Estate's many fine exhibits was a truss of *Rhododendron glischrum* subsp. *rude* 'High Flier', with flowers of a beautiful shade of pale pink, with a dark red throat. There is some ambiguity over the exact identity of this plant. Firstly, some authorities regard *R. rude* as deserving specific rank and secondly, the *International Rhododendron Register* refers to 'High Flier' as a selection made at Windsor from *R. vesiculiferum* KW 10952; whatever the exact



Rhododendron kesangiae.



Rhododendron glischrum subsp. *rude* 'High Flier'.



Rhododendron 'Colonel Rogers'.



Rhododendron primuliflorum.



Rhododendron 'Anne Teese'.

nomenclature may be, all these are very closely related forms within the *Glischra* subsection. This selection received an Award of Merit in 1968.

Exbury picked up one of many first prizes with an outstanding tightly-packed truss of *Rhododendron* 'Colonel Rogers', a well known hybrid between *R. niveum* and *R. falconeri*. This seemed to display the fine foliage one would expect from the latter and a paler form of the unusual flower colour of the former species – perhaps not everyone's favourite colour but it certainly appealed to me.

Amongst the lepidote species, High Beeches excelled again with an amazingly floriferous spray of *Rhododendron primuliflorum*, showing off the daphne-like flowers characteristic of the *Pogonanthum* subsection, to perfection. Such a superb specimen of this dwarf species is rarely seen.

Finally in the rhododendrons, we saw an unusually large selection of "tender" species and hybrids, from the subsections *Maddenia* and *Edgeworthia*. An outstanding example was a spray of *Rhododendron* 'Anne Teese' exhibited by Caerhays. This is a cross of *R. ciliicalyx* with *R. formosum*—evidently a richly coloured form of the latter species, giving this fragrant hybrid an unusually deep pink shading.

The show was much enhanced by some wonderful exhibits in the Spring Ornamentals Competition. I will mention just one remarkable exhibit here, Judy Hall's magnificent vase of that

most coveted conifer, *Wollemia nobilis*, quite recently discovered in Australia in exceptionally interesting circumstances, bearing a profusion of cones at the end of each shoot.

Rosemoor April Spring Show

At last, the new Garden Room at Rosemoor had been completed, and we were able to hold the late April show in this fine new building, a great improvement on the old marquee, though it proved to be too small for the staggering number of exhibits submitted for the various competitions held on this occasion, and we had to spill over into the nearby lecture theatre for additional space. The show encompassed several competitive events: the RHS Main Rhododendron Competition and the South West branch Main Magnolia, Camellia and Floral Display competitions.

As usual, Caerhays dominated the magnolia competition, and this is a marvellous showcase for them at this time of year, though the private garden of Botallick ran them a good second in number of exhibits. Amid all the spectacular blooms, it was one of Botallick's which particularly caught my eye. The yellow flowered hybrids, based originally on *M. acuminata*, have become increasingly popular over recent years, and new hybrids appear every year,

with better and deeper colours. One of the most striking of these is *Magnolia 'Lois'* and Botallick's lovely vase of this showed it at its best. In the more traditional colour ranges, Caerhays exhibited a large vase of *Magnolia 'Margaret Helen'*, a fairly recent introduction from New Zealand with large rosy-red campbellii-type flowers. This superb exhibit won 1st prize in its class.



Wollemia nobilis.



Magnolia 'Lois'.



Magnolia 'Margaret Helen'.

There were many exceptional rhododendron species to be seen here and I have selected just a very few from the many which impressed me. *Rhododendron cinnabarinum* has gone through phases over recent years of being difficult to grow because most forms of the species and many of its hybrids are prone to more or less serious damage by powdery mildew. This disease seems to be on the wane at the moment, one result of which is that we are seeing these plants in good fettle more and more frequently on the show bench. This particular spray from Exbury was notable for its compact habit and the multitude of vivid hanging orange flowers. The judges were clearly looking for something else, because this exhibit was unplaced in its class.



Rhododendron cinnabarinum.

Rhododendron pingianum is treated as a form of *R. argyrophyllum* by some authorities and the similarity is obvious. The *Flora of China* separates the two mainly by the number of flowers in the inflorescence, and this specimen from Exbury had well over 20 flowers in the truss, loosely spaced on long pedicels and of a beautiful clear pale pink—a very distinctive exhibit.



Rhododendron pingianum.

One often reads that *Rhododendron niveum* is an acquired taste; apparently not everyone goes for the colour of the flowers (which is inherited by several hybrids). The colour is actually quite



Rhododendron niveum.

variable and has been described in many terms: deep lilac, mauve, smoky blue, rich purple, magenta and Parma violet, to name but a few. It is certainly unusual and judges at competitions do seem to like the best forms of it. The one exhibited by Trewithen, which received 1st prize in its class, was by any standard a beautiful colour, perhaps at the

paler end of the range, with a perfectly formed and tightly packed truss, and showing off the dark nectar pouches to good effect.

Finally amongst the rhododendron species, the tropical vireyas have long been the Cinderellas of the rhododendron world. This is perhaps not very surprising, given their often delicate constitution and need for protection and warmth, so today the most important collection by far resides at RBG Edinburgh, though a few great gardens, for example Exbury, are trying to revive their collections. Still, it falls mainly to a small band of amateur growers to keep the tradition alive and to show the public what these plants are like. Pam Hayward is one of that band, and she has also played an important role in championing the vireyas and encouraging more people to grow and propagate them. She exhibited the only vireya species in this show, a delightful specimen of *Rhododendron*



Rhododendron jasminiflorum.



Rhododendron 'Anchorage'.

jasminiflorum, which was a good example of the exotic appearance of these plants, with its fragrant, long-tubed white flowers, with a touch of pink in the throat. One can only hope that visitors who saw this went away wondering how they can get hold of one; sadly, the answer is “with the greatest of difficulty.”

Many fine exhibits were displayed in the classes for hybrids and the result was a spectacular demonstration of the flower-power of these plants. I will select just one of the many superb varieties on show. Exbury is of course renowned for its hybridisation programmes over many decades and many of the most popular hybrids in commerce are from their stable. However, there are many more wonderful Rothschild hybrids which, for one reason or another, have never made it into the nursery trade: perhaps there are just too many of them. A good example is *Rhododendron* 'Anchorage', a hybrid of *R. fortunei* with 'Idealist' (another Exbury hybrid involving the yellow *R. wardii*). The substantial spray showed off the result, the flowers being an unusual and restrained shade described as light yellow-green, shading to greenish white. The well-

shaped and full truss made it a worthy winner of the 1st prize in its class.

Wisley

Although RHS Wisley was taking a break from being able to do our major shows, it did host the Centenary Cup Competition on 13th May. This is a rather small and simple show, with many fewer classes to enter, the idea being to make it less technical and therefore more accessible to the public. Judging by the number and enthusiasm of visitors, this seems to have worked well. The show has been quite fully described in the Bulletin for August 2017, including a record of the lovely unnamed yellow deciduous azalea with which Brian Long won the Cup. My purpose here is once again to present some brief notes on my personal selection of exhibits which I found particularly interesting.

To have a national show in the South of England in mid May is a rare treat for those who are able to attend, as it is an opportunity to see late flowering plants not generally available at the earlier shows. This applied to magnolias as well as to rhododendrons. In fact, as described in the Bulletin referred to above, the season was unusually advanced and many of the “Wilson 50” evergreen azaleas were too far gone to exhibit, though we were still able to see a comprehensive photographic and documentary exhibit on the subject, including a few of the plants themselves.

We are used to seeing the early and mid-season magnolias at our earlier shows and the rather different but still fascinating late spring and summer flowering forms were a welcome sight here. One of the most admired of these is the Japanese *Magnolia obovata*, named after the shape of its large and handsome leaves. The bloom exhibited by the Crown Estate was a perfect example, and looked almost tropical in its magnificence. The flowers are a good 20cm in diameter, and the powerful fragrance has been likened to that of a cantaloupe melon, though I have heard some more disobliging descriptions.

Turning to rhododendrons, Robin Whiting won 1st prize for his vivid bicoloured



Magnolia hypoleuca.



unnamed vireya rhododendron.

vireya hybrid, and this has been illustrated in the Bulletin, but I would not like to omit mention of the other **unnamed Vireya** he exhibited, as it is almost equally as striking as the winner and has that characteristic “vireya-look” about it which makes these plants impossible to confuse with any others.

I hesitate to include one of my own exhibits in these notes, but *Rhododendron nuttallii* is so seldom seen at our shows that I feel it may be of interest. This tree forming species has the largest flowers in the *Maddenia* subsection, indeed some of the largest flowers found in any rhododendron. It is not particularly difficult to grow, needing a little protection only if severe sub-zero temperatures are experienced. Patience is necessary as it does not flower until it is a sizeable shrub, though that patience is rewarded in full measure by the sumptuous, heavy-textured flowers which have a rich spicy fragrance.

Among the many excellent hybrid rhododendrons on display, one in particular attracted me. There have been many crosses made between members of the *R. cinnabarinum* clan and forms of the tender *R. maddenii*. One of the most famous is ‘Royal Flush’, a Williams hybrid from the 1950s, which is reputed to be particularly prone to powdery mildew. More recently, Bodnant has made crosses in a similar vein, and one of the finest of these is a cross between *R. cinnabarinum* and a selected form of *R. maddenii* subsp. *crassum*. The result is *Rhododendron* ‘Waterfall’, a beautiful truss of which was exhibited by Andy and Jenny Fly. The flowers have the characteristic funnel-shaped cinnabarinum form and are a nice shade of pale purplish pink, with other colours also present in a subtle way. The plant appears to be quite hardy and is thought to be resistant to powdery mildew. This is one that deserves to be much more widely grown.



Rhododendron nuttallii.



Rhododendron ‘Waterfall’.

GARDEN VISITS

White House Farm, Kent

A chance to visit Maurice Foster's extraordinary garden should never be turned down and my first visit, with members of the Wessex branch in April, was a real eye-opener. As many members will be aware, Maurice is not only a renowned authority on and exhibitor of magnolias and camellias, but also a grower and raiser of many trees and shrubs in a wide range of genera, including a number of fine hydrangeas in particular. His garden has been much written about, and in this brief note I will confine myself to mentioning just one very special plant with which he is associated. Walking through the glades of superb magnolias and other woody plants, my eye was attracted to a large bush of a most spectacular pink rhododendron. This proved to be *Rhododendron* 'Charlotte Foster', a seedling selected by Maurice from a batch of seed of 'Lady Rosebery', growing cheek by jowl with *R. yunnanense*, which is thus assumed to be the pollen parent. The hanging, funnel-shaped flowers of a delightful light purplish pink shade are presented in a most elegant fashion. It seems that this variety has occasionally been in commerce, but not currently—a shame as I think all who saw this plant felt it would be a good addition to their own gardens.

Gorwell House, Devon

The Group's AGM coincided with the Main Rhododendron Show at Rosemoor in late April and a spare morning presented a rare opportunity to visit the garden of Dr John Marston, chairman of the South West branch. Like Maurice Foster, John is one of those plantsmen who does not confine himself to our three genera, and his climatically favoured garden near the coast of North Devon allows him to grow a wide variety of rare trees and shrubs from many genera, so walking round with him is bound to be an education for any keen gardener. Once again, I am going to limit myself to just one plant out of the many fascinating, and in some cases unique,



Rhododendron 'Charlotte Foster'.



Rhododendron edgeworthii.

specimens to be seen in this most wonderful garden. *Rhododendron edgeworthii* is one of those plants which everyone loves once they have seen it, and is therefore deservedly popular among enthusiasts. It is a “plant that has everything”: highly decorative rugose leaves with a more or less thick brown indumentum on the underside, a good bushy, low-growing habit if in an open position and, above all, good-sized white flowers, often very attractively tinged with pink (as in this case), with one of the best fragrances in the genus. To cap it all, even when the flowers have fallen they leave behind a large red calyx which is attractive in its own right. This form, which was grown from seed collected some years ago in the Li Ping Valley, Yunnan, is one of the finest I have seen, and is one of the hardier forms, generally surviving unprotected in the open garden and flowering freely.

Russell Beeson is an enthusiast for rhododendrons, camellias and magnolias, and is the independent examiner of the Rhododendrons, Camellias and Magnolias Group's accounts.

Notes from the International Rhododendron Registrar, 2017

Alan Leslie
International Rhododendron Registrar
Cambridge, UK



(Reprinted from *Rhododendrons, Camellias & Magnolias 2018, Royal Horticultural Group, 96-99*)

There is no doubt that 2017 has been the year of the evergreen azalea so far as the International Rhododendron Register and Checklist is concerned. In my last Notes I indicated that Yoko Otsuki was translating for us some of the text of the most recent editions of the Japanese Satsuki Dictionaries. This work was delivered early in the year and I am now over half way through adding the information to the nearly 1300 entries involved. The data comprises, where this information is known to the Dictionary compilers, not only parentages, but the names of raisers and the identity of individuals who have registered these names with one of the local Satsuki societies in Japan, together with the relevant dates. I have then been adding as detailed a description as I can, derived from the images published in the Dictionaries; in some cases these supplement descriptions already listed, but in many cases this is the first time we have listed such data. The 2014 Satsuki Dictionary also has a significant number of entries where we have had no previous record of the name, so the Checklist has grown significantly in this respect as well. I now learn that the 2017 edition of the Dictionary has information on several hundred new cultivars and these will need to be added to future lists of work to be done.

In addition to this Satsuki data, I have for some time been working through the text of Jozef Heursel's work *Azaleas*, published in 1999. This lists mainly the so-called Indian azaleas (actually *simii* hybrids) and other pot plant cultivars, which have been raised, or at least have been grown commercially, in Europe in recent times. It deals with some 700 names and once again has been an invaluable source of new or revised information about these plants, as well as proving information on a number for which we have previously had no record.



Rhododendron chamaethomsonii 'Little Vixen'. Photo by S. Hootman.



Rhododendron 'Kyllikki'. Photo by K. Theqvist.

All this activity, as well as the results of delving in other sources in nursery catalogues and journals has resulted in well over 500 new entries on the database, which now has well over 34,000 entries. In the year to date (this is written in November) there have been eighty-three new formal registrations in 2017, compared to a final total in 2016 of ninety-nine new registered names. For a second year there were more from Europe than from North America, but as is usual most are elepidote rhododendrons, with only one new registered vireya and 14 new azaleas. At least 21 species are directly listed in parentages, with *chamaethomsonii* ('Little Vixen') and *kesangiae* ('High Beeches Dochula') being more unusual entries in this respect. Indeed, the latter is the first time this species has been mentioned in the Register and Checklist and represents a highly-rated selection raised at High Beeches from a seed collection made on the Dochula pass in Bhutan.

Amongst this year's novelties there is a welcome selection of nine more plants raised by Kristian Theqvist in Finland, which almost needless to say are mostly very hardy cultivars, and often dense low shrubs. Several of these (such as the purplish pink 'Stina' and the purplish pink, fading to white 'Kyllikki') have curious curved hooks at the top of the stamens, derived from growth of the connective tissue between the anthers; the filaments in 'Kyllikki' are also broadly winged, which give the flowers a distinctive appearance, and this is a character the breeder is seeking to develop further in new cultivars.

Two new cultivars commemorate individuals who made notable contributions to the rhododendron world and who sadly died this year. The first of these, 'Donald H. Voss', is named for a man who was highly respected in the world of azaleas in particular and who received the Azalea Society of America's Distinguished Achievement Award in 1993. He was the son-in-law of Robert Gartrell and did much to document the

Robin Hill cultivars raised by Gartrell, registering the names of a dozen of these evergreen azaleas himself. He wrote widely on other issues to do with azalea cultivars and was always keen to pursue nomenclatural problems and to challenge aspects of the Cultivated Plant Code. He edited the American Rhododendron Society's influential 1984 publication *A Contribution towards Standardization of Color Names in Horticulture*, still used today by the RHS in rhododendron



Rhododendron 'Prof. Kondratovičs'. Photo by G. Riekstina.

registrations. The second commemorative cultivar recognises the achievements of Prof. Rihards Kondratovičs, who set up and ran the University of Latvia's Rhododendron Nursery Babīte. He was himself responsible for raising and naming well over 100 new rhododendron and azalea cultivars, for virtually all of which I have received impeccable registration forms over the years. His contribution to the world of Latvian rhododendrons was unequalled.

I was sad too to learn of the death of the Walter Schmalscheidt, who had been a valued correspondent for as long as I have been involved with the Register. His books on rhododendron and azalea cultivars raised in Germany have been the ultimate source for much of what is now listed about these cultivars in the Register and Checklist, to which he also contributed a great deal as one of my principal advisors in the course of preparations for the second edition in 2004. He could be a challenging correspondent (especially if one was at all dilatory or inaccurate in responding), but it kept one up to the mark and I was so pleased to have finally met him two years ago, at home in Oldenburg, where we shared tea and icecream cake!



Rhododendron 'Velzeide'. Photo by G. Riekstina.

Registrants have, as ever, been keen to name their new cultivars after many other, usually living individuals, and I noted examples this year coined for grandmothers, mothers, mothers-in-laws, wives, sons and daughters, granddaughters and grandsons, sisters, nieces, partners, old girl friends, other friends and even a favourite teacher. Of the plants themselves a number have stood out, although I must emphasise



Rhododendron 'Sweet Talk'. Photo by J. Barlup.



Rhododendron 'Sweet Talk'. Photo by J.Barlup.

this is inevitably a very personal choice: 'Velzeide' ('Niobe' × 'Hexe') is a hose-in-hose evergreen azalea from the Kondratovičs stable which really packs a punch with its very wavy-edged, vivid purplish red flowers; 'Sweet Talk' (a complex hybrid involving 'Yellow Saucer', 'Anna's Ripplet', 'September Song', 'Bambi', 'Grand Recital' and *proteoides*) and 'Winding Road' ('Lois Blackmore' × 'Plum Passion') are two further contributions from Jim Barlup in the USA. The former has the most lovely combination of shades of purplish pink, in very broadly funnel-shaped flowers, with rounded lobes and a prominent green stigma, whilst the latter has very neat-looking, tightly wavy-edged flowers, shading out to a strong reddish purple margin from a paler centre. There were also some striking plants amongst the broad selection registered this year from the Hachmann nursery in Germany. 'Hachmann's Lullaby' ('Fantastica' × *dichroanthum* subsp. *scyphocalyx* Herpesticum Group) has strongly bicoloured, wavy-edged flowers, strong salmon pink at the margins and with an orange-yellow centre, whilst 'Amber Kiss' ('Meteorit' × 'Goldzauber') has deeply lobed, rather narrowly funnel-shaped white



Rhododendron 'Hachmann's Lullaby'. Photo by M. Oppenrieder.



Rhododendron 'Amber Kiss'. Photo by M. Oppenrieder.

flowers, with a very conspicuous blotch of red markings on the dorsal lobes.

Finally, I must mention Svend Askjaer's 'Lunorask', a deciduous azalea, grown from ARS seed exchange as *prunifolium* (but perhaps crossed with *arborescens*) and raised in Denmark: this has upward pointing, starry-faced tubular funnel-shaped flowers of a yellowish white, with a conspicuous vivid yellow blotch and even more prominent purplish red filaments. I should also mention that Svend has been generous in sharing with the Checklist the further work he has been doing in tracking down and



Rhododendron 'Lunorask'. Photo by S.A. Askjaer.

checking information on the range of new Danish cultivars which all incorporate "Dane" in the name ('Sticky Dane', 'What a Dane', 'Woolly Dane' etc). Most of these have not been formally registered, but at least we have the data now for future reference, when one day (perhaps not too far off) the database is available for all to access.

This will be my last Notes from the Registrar, as by the time the next set is due I shall have retired from this role and indeed from work entirely. Since 1983, when I took over the position of Registrar from David Pycraft, a grand total of 7741 names has been formally registered, with the 1980s/1990s representing a peak period, with yearly totals then often over 200 and rising in one memorable year (1999) to 566! Present volumes now match the pre-1980s levels. New Checklist entries have hugely exceeded these totals, especially recently as I have pressed to improve our records of both vireya and azalea cultivars. I have been most fortunate in dealing with a wonderful range of individuals, keen to pass on their knowledge about this very varied group of plants. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to be able to share in some of that enthusiasm and to assist in ensuring that the plants are accurately recorded for posterity and future reference, and above all to ensure their names are acceptable!

Alan Leslie, now retired, has been the RHS International Rhododendron Registrar since 1983 and was responsible for the compilation of The International Rhododendron Register & Checklist published by the Society in 2004. He is currently secretary to the ISHS Special Commission for Cultivar Nomenclature and a member of the IUBS International Commission for the Nomenclature of Cultivated Plants.

Growing Rhododendrons in Iceland

Kristian Theqvist
Turku, Finland



Photos by the author unless noted.

(Reprinted from Journal American Rhododendron Society 72: 115-122.)

Growing rhododendrons in Iceland has not been well documented and there are not any native *Rhododendron* species growing there. The eroded volcanic soil is challenging for many plants and high winds limit the sizes of plants as there are not now many trees to give wind shelter. However, the situation is gradually changing because of human activities, and many pine and birch forests have been reestablished during the past decades. People have also established small home gardens and made plantings in the surroundings of their summer cottages. Rhododendrons have been imported from European nurseries and sold in local garden centers or plant shops, but unfortunately



Typical scenery in the lava fields, light colored woolly fringe-moss (*Racomitrium lanuginosum*) and in front crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum*).

there is still a lack of information on how best to grow rhododendrons there. Many of the purchased cultivars did not thrive well and quite a few even died.

Where Have the Forests Gone?

Iceland's climate is the 64° N temperate zone and it is strongly maritime. The climate should be quite favorable for forests but there are presently few. Based on fossil findings, *Sequoia* (redwoods), *Magnolia*, *Sassafras* and *Pterocarya* (wingnuts) trees were growing there 5 - 15 million years ago, and at one time *Fagus* (beech) trees were common. 5.3 - 2.6 million years ago, Iceland's forests consisted of *Pinus* (pine), *Picea* (spruce), *Betula* (birch) and *Alnus* (alder) trees. The number of species present, however, declined during the ice ages. Pine forests disappeared 1.1 million years ago and the last record of alder trees was 500,000 years ago. The only surviving forest tree after the last ice age was *Betula pubescens* (downy birch), and much more rarely, *Sorbus aucuparia* (rowan, or mountain ash) and *Populus tremula* (aspen). These grow nowadays in Iceland as small trees not more than 15 m (49 ft) high. The low growing *Salix phylicifolia* (tea-leaved willow), *S. lanata* (wooly willow), *S. arctica* (arctic willow) and *S. herbacea* (dwarf willow) are common ground cover plants.

At the time of first human settlement almost 1150 years ago, birch forests and woodlands covered 25 - 40% of Iceland's land area. The settlers cut down birch for their needs and sheep grazing in large fields prevented birch forest regeneration. The forests thus disappeared gradually and only 5% of them now remain. Volcanic eruptions have also had an effect on the decline of forested area, but to a lesser extent.

The situation has changed much in recent decades when people in Iceland began to understand the great importance of forests. Forestation projects have yielded good results and even the natural spreading of trees is now occurring in areas where sheep grazing has been prevented by fencing. The most noteworthy planted species in addition to birch have been spruces (*Picea abies* and *P. sitchensis*), pines (*Pinus sylvestris* and *P. contorta*) and the Siberian larch (*Larix sibirica* var. *sukaczewii*).

Climate

Iceland's climate is not very cold, though many may think so, as the Gulf Stream gives warmth! The minimum winter temperatures since 1950 have been in Reykjavik, and are typically 5-10° C, rarely below 13-15° C. However, due to its maritime climate, summer temperatures are low, rarely up to 20° C. The July average temperature is about 12° C. If you look at summer temperatures and their effect on growth, one can argue that they may be compared to USDA 4-5, so there has been a tendency to select Canadian plants that are hardy at USDA 2-3. However, the USDA zones are based purely on the average annual minimum temperature for a period of 30 (or

sometimes 15) years. The system has flaws and one of the major one is that it does not take into consideration summer temperatures. I think it is therefore quite misleading to use USDA 4-5 (or even 2-3) for Iceland when selecting plants. Of course it would be on the safer side, but it would unnecessarily eliminate numerous potential plants from climates that occur, for example, in the mountains of China or in Japan that also have a maritime climate.

In recent years, both warmer winters and summers have occurred. It rains in Iceland every month of the year, with an annual rainfall ranging from 300 to 700 mm (12 to 28 in) in the north and from 1270 to 2030 mm (50 to 80 in) in the south. Mountain areas are even wetter, so there is enough rain for plants.

My Invitation to Iceland

Vilhjálmur Lúðvíksson, a retired Director (CEO) of the Icelandic Research Council and a past president of the Icelandic Horticultural Society from 2007 – 2013, emailed me in August 2016 and told me that a small group in their garden society had started to be interested in rhododendrons. He expressed his hope that I could come to Iceland and give them information on how to best grow rhododendrons there. He is very active in the Horticultural Society of Iceland (Garðyrkjufélag Íslands) and has imported a lot of plants to Iceland, mainly various trees and shrubs. He has especially imported many roses, some from Finland, and had also ordered rhododendron plants and seed from Arboretum Mustila, Finland. Since the beginning of the 1960s, Vilhjálmur Lúðvíksson has been reforesting 17 ha (42 acres) of land close to Reykjavik.

Vilhjálmur wanted to know what species and cultivars would be worthwhile to cultivate in Iceland and how they could amend Icelandic soil to suit rhododendrons better. When they promised to pay the cost of my trip and other expenses, I easily accepted their invitation. I had never before been in Iceland and I saw this as a good opportunity both to see Iceland and simultaneously to convey useful information on rhododendron culture. In addition to a three-hour presentation, I was asked to give a one-day practical demonstration in sowing, planting, fertilizing and other activities related to the cultivation of rhododendrons.

Day One, May 17

I arrived in Reykjavik on an Icelandair flight on Wednesday afternoon, May 17, 2017, where I met Vilhjálmur Lúðvíksson at the airport. After having a tea break at the terminal, we went to the office of the Horticultural Society, where I checked that the video projector was compatible with my laptop. I donated to Erna Rós Aðalsteinsdóttir, the chairwoman of the Evergreens Group, a thick seed envelope, consisting of 214 seed packets from 35 batches, to be used in rhododendron sowings by the members of the



Sólveig Jónsdóttir shows her rhododendrons. Vilhjálmur Lúðvíksson discusses with Sólveig's husband in the background.

Society. Most of the seeds were from my crosses and some were species seeds from the seed bank of Arboretum Mustila. The seeds were gladly received.

In the evening we went to visit Sólveig Jónsdóttir's home garden. She had been interested in rhododendrons for several years and had a beautiful small city garden, consisting mostly of rhododendrons accompanied by coniferous plants. The plants received good shelter from buildings and trees against high winds, and the largest rhododendrons were 1.5 m (5 ft) high, although most were still under a meter (3 ft) high. Sólveig's hobby had started small but it had overpowered her, and she was now planning to plant many rhododendrons in the area surrounding their summer cottage in the countryside.

R. oreodoxa var. *fargesii* was flowering beautifully in Sólveig's garden and the flower buds of 'Great Dane' were just opening. Sólveig had imported rhododendrons from the Schröder Nursery in Germany, and as a planting soil, she had used Kekkilä's peat (imported from Finland) to which she had added pine needles. She fertilizes her rhododendrons in the spring with rhododendron fertilizer and during the summer once or twice with liquid flower fertilizer.

Her rhododendrons looked healthy, and in just a few older rhododendrons I noticed

some chlorosis in the leaves, which may be indicating some soil problem for her first plantings in the garden. Sólveig had started her first sowing of rhododendron seeds the previous winter, and the potted plants in her conservatory looked great.

In the evening, Vilhjálmur took me to his home, furnished in style with a great number of Icelandic artworks. It was a pleasure for me to stay at his home and everything went really well. Daffodils were flowering in Vilhjálmur's garden, tulips were starting to open, and the birches had small, new leaves. Spring had arrived there and was at roughly the same stage as in southern Finland. Night temperatures were 3 to 4° C (37 to 39° F) and daytime temperatures were 8 to 10° C (46 to 50° F). On open areas close to the seashore, the wind was typically blowing so hard that I had to use force to get the car door open!

Day Two, May 18

On the morning of the second day, we drove to the Botanical Garden of Reykjavik (Grasagarður Reykjavíkur, <http://grasagardur.is/>), founded in 1961. About 5000 plant species are planted there, and Hjörtur Þorbjörnsson, the director of the Botanical Garden, and Pálína Sigurðardóttir, the gardener, welcomed us and showed us the garden's rhododendrons. Other plants got less of our attention because of our busy



Hjörtur Þorbjörnsson (left), Pálína Sigurðardóttir and Vilhjálmur Luðvíksson at the Botanica Garden of Reykjavik in front of *R. oreodoxa* var. *fargesii*.



A handsome *R. brachycarpum* at the Botanical Garden of Reykjavik.

schedule, and in general, the Botanical Garden looked like a beautiful park where the citizens of Reykjavik could spend their leisure time.

R. oreodoxa var. *fargesii* plants were also flowering well at the Botanical Garden, some already in their late stage, while the flower buds of other rhododendrons were still tightly closed. The origin of the rhododendrons was from open-pollinated seeds received from other botanical gardens, so the authenticity of some species was questionable. The collection was not very large and no special attention had been paid to the soil. However, I saw pine needles on the soil of a handsome leaved *R. brachycarpum*. Also, the yak hybrid 'Dreamland' and the lepidotes *R. ferrugineum* and 'Blumiria' looked healthy. In contrast, *R. brachycarpum* subsp. *tigerstedtii* (now referred to as *R. brachycarpum* subsp. *brachycarpum*), *R. smirnowii* and *R. adenogynum* were suffering badly from a nutrient deficiency, possibly because of too alkaline soil.

The latest attempt to grow seedlings in the nursery of the Botanical Garden had failed totally and only a few plants were still alive. I grabbed one miserable-looking lepidote that had only a few leaves left, and it came out of the ground without any roots. The gardener was aware of a soil problem, and she was thankful for receiving advice on what constituted a proper soil for rhododendrons.

We then drove to Vilhjálmur Lúðvíksson's summer place, located about 20 km



The unpaved road fords the river to Vilhjálmur Lúðvíksson's summer cottage.

(12 miles) from Reykjavik at Lake Hafravatn along the Seljadalsá River. Vilhjálmur's parents-in-law had purchased 4.5 ha (11 acres) of land in 1958 and later he rented an additional 12.5 ha (31 acres), from both sides of the Seljadalsá River. Sheep and cattle had in the past destroyed the vegetation, and erosion of wind and water had further depleted the earth. Tree plantations were started there in 1959 and an area of 17 ha (42 acres) is now fully reforested.

Various species of *Pinus*, *Picea*, *Abies*, *Populus* and *Betula* now grew there, along with many Himalayan and Chinese *Sorbus*, *Syringa*, *Acer* and even a few *Quercus*. Vilhjálmur has raised most of his trees from seeds or cuttings. He has participated in the reforestation projects of Iceland and has also collected material from his travels, for example from eastern Russia. In addition, he has imported fruit trees from Finland and a large number of roses. Rhododendrons belong to his latest plantings. The road to Vilhjálmur's summer home passed through a planted forest and across a river where there was no bridge, and the four-wheel drive car forded through the river to the other side.

Vilhjálmur showed me his rhododendron seedlings in his greenhouse. Some seedlings were really good looking, but many had died because of too wet soil. He told me he is still learning about the needs of rhododendrons. Rhododendrons planted in the

vicinity of his cottage seemed to be suffering from a nutrient deficiency, apparently caused by soil that was too alkaline. Vilhjálmur had mixed into the local fine erosion-based silt soil both horse manure and one quarter volcanic sand, which in my later measurements proved to be strongly alkaline.

Vilhjálmur had recently begun to use woven landscape fabric in his rhododendron plantings and he had sliced openings in the fabric for the plants. I warned him of the dangers of such fabric as it can gradually create a closed, almost impenetrable barrier, influences water supply and



Vilhjálmur Lúðvíksson shows his rhododendron seedlings.



Kristian warns about the dangers of fabric on rhododendrons. Photo by Vilhjálmur Lúðvíksson.

temperature, and inhibits the future mixing of organic materials into the soil. As an example, I told about the usage of that kind of fabric at the Kumpula Botanic Garden in Helsinki. Major rework had to be done to remove the fabric that had caused serious problems. I advised Vilhjálmur to use natural mulching, as it more easily allows the passage of air, water and nutrients.

We were supposed to visit some garden centers that afternoon, but we decided to leave them off our schedule as Vilhjálmur told that the plant assortments there were mainly imported from the Netherlands and Germany. The owner of the nursery we did visit had asked me to visit and to see what could be done to revitalize the numerous unsold rhododendrons from the last season. Some plants were suffering as a thick layer of alkaline garden soil had been added to the pots, and some rhododendrons had yellowish autumn growth or dead branches. I recommended that she remove the alkaline soil topping, apply some rhodo fertilizer and remove the dead or bad-looking branches.

In the nursery, there was no peat or any proper soil for acid plants for sale, and the seller could not advise on how to plant rhododendrons. Information was clearly missing. This situation will hopefully become better over time if members of the Horticultural Society provide information to nursery staff and publish information on their own cultivation experiences in articles in Icelandic magazines and gardening forums.

We then stopped by for coffee at Þorsteinn Tómasson's home. He has a great passion for the breeding of red-leaved birches and he had from his crosses numerous birches with various shades of red leaves in his garden and the greenhouse. He hoped to get pollen next spring from *Betula pubescens* f. *rubra*, a red birch from Finland. (Þorsteinn Tómasson has an article on red birches in *Gaðyrkjuritíð* 2017, the Yearbook of the Horticultural Society of Iceland.)

In the evening I gave my talk to the members of the Horticultural Society. Several dozen members of the society were present, and during and after the talk there were a lot of questions asked. Only a few members had any experience or knowledge of rhododendrons. I got to know that several garden centers sell rhododendrons but they do not give proper advice and they do not sell peat or acidic soil. As an exception, Bauhaus, a German originated garden center, sells rhodo soil "Rhododendronjord" in expensive sacks. The substance seemed to have good texture but the pH was extremely low, 4.5 – 5.2. Aluminum in the soil starts to affect rhododendrons negatively at about pH 5.0, and growth gets weaker. The Bauhaus rhodo soil should not be used alone but rather be mixed, for example, with the local silt. I gave permission to give the pdf-file of my talk to all who had come to the event, so that they would get a comprehensive information package for the cultivation of rhododendrons in Iceland.

Day 3, May 19

On the morning of the third day we headed east of Reykjavik to visit Nátthagi, a special plants nursery in the countryside at Ölfus, a small municipality 45 km (28 miles) away.

Along the way we stopped by at the mixing site of a garden soil production company for use, among other places, in the city parks of Reykjavik. The most common product was a mixture of silt, volcanic sand, peat from ancient birch forests and horse manure. The purpose of the volcanic sand was to give better airiness and to increase the pH, but this made this soil mixture unsuitable for acid-loving plants such as rhododendrons.

Ólafur Njálsson welcomed us to his Nátthagi (<https://natthagi.is/>) nursery, where he had a large selection of rhododendrons, along with other plants, imported from Denmark. Ólafur had in his small arboretum many good-looking rhododendrons, both species and cultivars, all planted in Icelandic silt. There were several choice species, including *R. roxieanum* var. *oreonastes*, *R. bureavii*, *R. pachysanthum*, *R. degronianum* subsp. *yakushimanum* and *R. brachycarpum* subsp. *brachycarpum* (previously referred to as subsp. *tigerstedtii*).

He was proud, for good reason, of his rhododendrons and his unique method of growing them. The surface of the earth at his site was hard, totally impenetrable to



Ólafur Njálsson tells Kristian about his methods to culture rhododendrons. Photo by Vilhjálmur Lúðvíksson.

my fingers, and yet the rhododendrons seemed to thrive excellently! This was contrary to my knowledge, but Ólafur told that he fertilized the rhododendrons with diluted urine and at the time of planting, added horse manure. He layered in the planting hole silt and horse manure, without mixing them. There was no sign of chlorosis on the leaves. In his view, the reason for the success was the very high iron content of his silt. I was suspicious, but lately I have come upon experimental results that show that adding ferro sulphate (sulphate of iron) helps when the root system is not capable of taking enough nutrients from the soil. (Ólafur Njálsson has an article on cultivation of rhododendrons in *Garðyrkjuritið* 2017, the Yearbook of the Horticultural Society of Iceland.)

Next, we drove to the summer place of Pétur Jonasson, the current president of the Horticultural Society. His property, named Klumba, was located on the shore of Lake *Pingvallavatn*, about a 60 km (37 mile) drive from Reykjavik. Pétur had prepared a tasty lunch for us of oven-baked speckled blunt-nosed fish (unknown to me, but likely the Spotted Ocean Catfish (*Anarhichas minor*)). After lunch, we took a stroll in his arboretum on his 3.5 ha (8.6 acre) property.

Pétur started the reforestation of his place in 1989, and I would call it an arboretum as he grew a wide selection of species of *Abies*, *Picea*, *Sorbus* and many other taxa, all clearly



Pétur Jonasson introduces to Kristian his arboretum on the shore of lake Pingvallavatn. Photo by Vilhjálmur Lúðvíksson.



Trying to identify rhododendron species in Jónas Snæbjörnsson's arboretum. Photo by Vilhjálmur Lúðvíksson.

labeled. Rhododendrons were missing but Pétur asked me for advice on a suitable place to grow them close to the firs. The soil was strongly volcanic, dryish and prone to erosion, very challenging for growing trees, but Pétur's secret of good results was an abundant supply of sheep manure from the farm of his brother.

I avoided common tourist attractions during my travel, as there was not much extra time, but we stopped briefly at Þingvellir (anglicized as Thingvellir), the old national parliament of Iceland. It is also geologically a significant attraction, as the separation of the Eurasian and North American continental plates can be seen in the vertical ruptures of the cliffs.

Then came the biggest surprise of the day. We visited Jónas Snæbjörnsson's arboretum that was established by Jónas's father in the 1960s on a steep slope, on the shore of Hvalfjörður Fjord. No one had managed the arboretum for the latest 20 years and it was heavily overgrown. The trees were mostly the same species as seen elsewhere but what amazed me was that there were about twenty different rhododendron species present, all healthy looking. I saw *R. brachycarpum*, *R. brachycarpum* var. *fauriei*, *R. smirnowii*, *R. fortunei* Lu Shan form, *R. degronianum* subsp. *yakushmanum*, *R. concinnum*, *R. augustinii*, *R. wardii*, *R. wallichii*, *R. przewalskii*, *R. vernicosum*, *R. uvarifolium*, *R. aureum*, *R. traillianum* and *R. caucasicum*. Who had said that Iceland is too difficult for rhododendrons! Jónas's father Snæbjörn Jonasson had planted the rhododendrons in

the 1970s and 1980s, and the plants had all grown with no one to take care of them. I could not identify all the rhododendrons, specially the lepidotes with no flowers, but the species seemed to be real and not hybrids.

The soil in his arboretum was pure silt, running water from the above hill kept the soil very moist, and winter temperatures had rarely been below -15°C (5°F) on his well-sheltered property. Jónas asked me to plant a new rhododendron in the arboretum, a 'Nova Zembla' cultivar, an easy task as a small hole in the ground, the soil mixture and a bucket of water was waiting for me on the slope. (Jónas Snæbjörnsson has an article on the rhododendrons of his arboretum in *Garðyrkjuritið* 2002, the Yearbook of the Horticultural Society of Iceland.)

The day ended with a dinner with Pétur Jónasson and Vilhjálmur Lúðvíksson. Past lunches and dinners had been fish, but now I was served a delicious Icelandic lamb meal. After dinner, Vilhjálmur showed me his collection of 100 roses in a park outside the Botanical Garden. Roses are Vilhjálmur's passion and he had just received a big shipment of roses from Finland the day before.

Day 4, May 20

I woke up early on Saturday morning (5:30 AM Icelandic time) and we left at dawn to visit Vilhjálmur's summer cottage, where we made preparations for a demonstration course on rhododendron culture. Initial preparations included measuring the acidity of the materials available with a pH test kit, with the following results:

- Light brown fine graded silt, the common soil all over Iceland, formed from the erosion of volcanic soils. I measured the pH to be 6.5, i.e., slightly acidic.
- Black volcanic gravel, pH 7.5 - 8.0. Being alkaline, this material is not suitable for rhododendrons but it is commonly used in mixtures for lawns and garden plants.
- Red volcanic gravel, pH 8.0, alkaline. Erna Rós Aðalsteinsdóttir told me that she uses the gravel for her *Sedum* plants to give good drainage.
- Kekkilá's Professional peat for forestation, pH 4.5 - 5.0. This material alone is too acid for rhododendrons and it is also very poor in nutrients.
- Bauhaus rhodo soil "Rhododendronjord", specified pH 4.5 - 5.2. Measured pH 5.5 with a measurement accuracy of ± 0.5 .
- Horse manure, three-years old, measured pH 6.0.
- Compost from restaurants of Reykjavik, containing some spoons, five years old, measured pH 6.5.
- Wood chips, composted for five years, measured pH 6.5.
- Pine needles of *Pinus contorta*, pH not measured, assumed to be acidic.



Demonstration on growing seedlings. Photo by Vilhjálmur Lúðvíksson.

The following mulches were available.

- *Pinus contorta* needles from the forests of Danielslundur and Heiðmörk.
- Wood chips, composted for five years.
- Tussocks of *Ericaceae* plants (*Calluna vulgaris*, *Vaccinium uliginosum*, and *Empetrum nigrum*) and of *Ajuga reptans* 'Atropurpurea'.
- Volcanic gravel. This was left unused because of its strong alkalinity.

More than 20 people had arrived by 9:00 AM for the demonstration course, in which I showed how to grow rhododendrons from seed, nurture seedlings and to propagate from cuttings. I also made soil mixtures that we later used to plant rhododendrons.

The following Icelandic soil mixtures mixed from available materials were in my opinion the best suited for rhododendrons:

- 50 % local silt, 50 % Bauhaus rhodo soil "Rhododendronjord",
- 40 % local silt, 40 % horse manure, 20 % pine needles, and
- 35 % local silt, 35 % Kekkila peat, 30 % horse manure.

The texture of all the mixtures felt good by "hand" and their scents seemed right.

The demonstration lasted a total of six hours and at the end, we planted three rhododendrons in the above-mentioned soil mixtures. For mulch, we used pine

needles, wood chips and tussocks of ericaceous plants, as mentioned above. Vilhjálmur has promised to report on the growth of the rhododendrons to me, and to write an article on progress for the Yearbook of the Horticultural Society.

In the evening, we went for a “tourist drive” in the middle of Iceland’s lava fields and caldera, on rough driving tracks for which access by regular cars was prohibited. The landscapes were awesome and we stopped many times to study various plants. Woolly fringe-moss (*Racomitrium lanuginosum*) covered large areas and crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum*) seemed to be the most common of the ericaceous plants.

We strayed a bit on the lava field, when suddenly, the almost impassable drive track ended at the steep edge of the valley. It was a good place to drink the coffee that we had brought with us in thermos bottles and eat sandwiches made that morning. We then drove back to the main road, arrived at the restaurant in good time for dinner and then drove to the airport. My flight departed at night 1 AM Icelandic time (4 AM Finnish time), and I was home in Turku in the morning ready to start preparations for my next journey.

Short summary

The trip was memorable and I believe I gave a good boost to the culture of rhododendrons in Iceland, and possibly there may be in the future be Icelandic ARS members? After seeing Snaebjörn Jónasson’s old rhododendrons and Ólafur Njálsson’s fine collection of rhododendrons, I do not doubt that it would be possible to grow most of the temperate zone rhododendrons in Iceland if they are provided with proper wind shelter.



Demonstration on how to open the roots.
Photo by Vilhjálmur Lúðvíksson.



A breathtaking view to the valley while having a coffee break.

Web sites for information on the flora and vegetation in Iceland

https://www.nat.is/travelguideeng/flora_iceland.htm
<http://en.ni.is/botany/vegetation/vegetation-types/>