



# FRhodo



*The newsletter magazine of the Fraser Valley Rhododendron Society*

*See us on the web at - [www.FVRS.rhodos.ca](http://www.FVRS.rhodos.ca)*

## A Message from your Board of Directors

Dear members, you may notice that there are a few differences to this month's newsletter. The first thing you may note is that there actually *is* a newsletter at all! It's December & historically we haven't issued a newsletter in December.

Well... your new board of directors thought it may be a good idea to do so in order to try to connect with you, our members at this special time of year. We are all quite excited as for the first time in some years we have a complete Board of directors, all executive director positions are filled & we also have a full complement of regular directors too.

So... thank you to the stalwarts who have put themselves forward once again for another year of hard work & welcome to the new board members who have stepped forward in the hopes of assisting to make this club a successful & vibrant one.

One thing we'd like to stress, is that this is not *our* club. We, your board are willing to work hard to make this club successful but it is *your* club & it can only be as successful as you the members make it! To that end we want to encourage you to let us know the type of activities you would like to see or take part in. If we don't know where your interests lie it's difficult to organise speakers or activities that you may enjoy.

So come on speak up, but please remember that these things may not happen overnight, speakers are often booked up months in advance & scheduling speakers & activities can become a full time job.

We'd like to close this "message" by wishing you and your families a very Happy Christmas with good health, luck & happiness throughout the coming New Year.

We hope to see you all at our first meeting of 2009!

### *Your Board of Directors*

Merry Christmas

**Next Meeting**  
**MONDAY JANUARY 26TH, 7:30 PM**  
 St. Andrew's Heritage Hall  
 22279 116th Avenue  
 Maple Ridge  
 (Just off the Haney by-Pass)



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## FRhodo's Chat

By David H Kretzschmar - Editor



**Hello Everyone!** Art Pearson indicated in the November issue that I would be taking over as newsletter editor in January 2009. Well, here I am one month early! It was decided to issue a December newsletter (albeit a shortened one) to connect & keep you apprised with happenings in our society.

First I would like to thank Art for the sterling work he has done in Editing this publication over the past years, as well as carrying out the role of Treasurer... in addition to acting as Secretary (are there no ends to this man's talents?... ) no wonder he looks worn out (just kiddin' Art!) *Seriously* thank you for your dedication to the Society which I know is very dear to you. I hope I can do justice to your legacy!

As a "new guy" on the "board" I would like to welcome fellow newcomers who like me are probably wondering what they've let themselves in for! Details of your new board of directors is given later in the publication. I hope as editor to introduce a few new items to the newsletter & I would welcome suggestions of what you the members would like to see.

You may have noticed I've given the "newsletter" a title "FRhodo" (my apologies to J.R.R.Tolkien) I hope over time FRhodo will take on a certain life of its own, hopefully driven by you the members & that we'll all look forward to FRhodo's visit each month.

Whilst FRhodo will *always* first & foremost be about Rhododendrons & our society's activities in general I would in future issues hope to include perhaps "FRhodo's gardening tips", "FRhodo's recipe's", "FRhodo's comments" on what's happening in our club. But for these things to work, "FRhodo" will need your help, do you have any gardening tips? Do you have a favorite recipe pertinent to a particular season? Please help, e-mail them (or write them on a piece of paper & hand to me) FRhodo's e-mail address is for newsletter submissions only is: [FRhodo@shaw.ca](mailto:FRhodo@shaw.ca)

**Last but by no means least** I would like to express my grateful thanks to *Noni Godfrey* editor of "Rhodotellen" the North Island Chapter's newsletter, for giving me permission to reprint the excellent & very topical article on the selection & care of Poinsettias written by *Nadine Boudreau*. Thank you ladies! I'm sure the readers of "FRhodo" will enjoy the article immensely. Check out the N.I.R.S website at [www.nirs.rhodos.ca](http://www.nirs.rhodos.ca)

*David H Kretzschmar - Editor*

### **FRhodo's Observations on the November AGM (Christmas Dinner) meeting...**

Those who missed the November meeting missed a **fabulous** night, from the excellent food prepared by many of our members (I'm not silly enough to single out any one person or dish!) the quality & choice of dishes was wonderful. The table "dressings" The splendid quiz hosted by Garth & Avril (& hardly a Latin name in sight!) there were laughs, fun & the handmade table decorations provided by our new Secretary Anne Bone were sold & raised \$76 for club funds. We also managed to make a fair sized donation to the local food bank, from the 18 members present. Well done all! A HUGE thank you to all the members whose efforts made for such a great night!

*FRhodo*

Merry Christmas

# Poinsettias

.... By Nadine Boudreau

As December arrives and the holiday season is upon us, we start to see the most popular Christmas plant - the Poinsettia. The botanical name is 'Euphorbia pulcherrima', meaning "very beautiful". As with many plants of the Euphorbiaceae family, it has a milky sap.

Poinsettias are native to Mexico; the Aztec people called them 'Cuetlaxochitl'. During the 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries the sap was used to control fevers, while the bracts (coloured modified leaves) were used to make a reddish dye.

In the 1820's, Joel Roberts Poinsett was the first United States Ambassador to Mexico. He had a keen interest in botany and wandered the countryside looking for new plant species. In 1828 he found a beautiful shrub with large red flowers growing next to the road. He took cuttings from the plant and brought them back to his greenhouse in South Carolina; thus introducing the Euphorbia to the USA.

As the Euphorbia pulcherrima became more popular, William Prescott a historian/horticulturist was asked to give the plant a new name, so he named it Poinsettia in honour of Joel Poinsett's discovery.

John Bartram is credited with being the first nurseryman to sell Poinsettias. The Ecke family from Southern California started growing Poinsettias in the early 1900's, at first as outdoor landscape plants and cut flowers. Later they started greenhouse production. Today, they are the largest producers of the plant and are credited with having 90% of the world's Poinsettias getting their start at the Ecke Family Ranch.

Now that we know some history of the plant, we come to the practical - **Selection and Care**. This year, I plan on really focusing on these aspects, as many years my plants barely make it to Christmas before dropping half their leaves! There are many types and colors available, from traditional reds to whites, pinks and corals. Large leaf, curly leaf and spotted leaf varieties, etc.

## Whichever one catches your interest, here's some pointers to look for:

- A plant with dark green foliage down to the soil line.
- Check the plants maturity, true flowers at the centre of the colored bracts. These should be green or red tipped tight little buttons and fresh looking. They will last longer than if yellow pollen is covering the flower.
- Bracts (the modified coloured leaf) should be completely coloured- no green on the edges.
- Plant should be full, good on all sides, balanced and approx. ½ times taller than container.
- No wilting, drooping or yellowing of leaves
- Check that soil is not soggy, as this could lead to root rot.
- Do not purchase plants that are displayed in paper or plastic sleeves. These plants will deteriorate quickly.
- Do not purchase plants displayed or crowded close together, this can cause premature bract loss.
- Do not purchase plants displayed near entrances where they are exposed to drafts.
- Do have your plant sleeved, or even better placed in a large paper bag, to protect it from sudden temperature fluctuations or drafts when transporting it home.

## Now that you have your Poinsettia home, treat it well. Here are some guidelines to remember:

- Remove the plastic sleeve.
- Pick a spot away from door drafts, vents, fireplace, or TV.
- They would like about 6 hours of indirect sunlight a day, but don't let them touch cold windows.
- Temperature should range from 20 to 22 degrees C during the day, and between 16 to 18 degrees C at night.
- Allow your Poinsettia to dry out slightly between watering; soil feels dry to touch. Water just enough for water to come through the drainage holes. Don't overwater or let it sit in water. If in foil or decorative container make sure you remove plant when watering.
- No fertilizer is needed when in bloom.

Following these guidelines, your Poinsettia can reward you with its beauty for many months, often from November until March. The milky sap can cause skin irritation, but there is a misunderstanding that they are poisonous. There have been many studies. However, the Ohio State University showed that a 50 pound child would have to eat more than 1¼ pounds of Poinsettia bracts (500-600 leaves) to exceed the doses that found toxicity. Of course, we all discourage the eating of ornamental plants!!

What to do at the season's end? I must admit that my Poinsettias have always ended in the compost soon after the holidays. With patience and time, you can however, have your Poinsettia for following years.

The leaves will fall in March or April, at which time cut your plant back to 8" in height. Continue watering as above, and fertilize with 20-20-20. By May, you should have vigorous new growth. Continue with the watering and fertilize every 2 to 3 weeks during the growing period. You can place your Poinsettia outdoors when the overnight lows are above 13 degrees C. You can pinch your plant to keep it bushy, but stop pruning by September. Now the hard part starts. **LIGHT CONTROL** – from October 1<sup>st</sup>, the plants needs to be in complete darkness for 14 hours at night. You have to cover it with a box, black bag, or place in a closet. Ensure no light is provided. During the day provide 6 to 8 hours of bright sunlight. Night temperatures need to be between 15 and 21 degrees C. Following this regime for eight to ten weeks should provide a flowering Poinsettia for the Christmas season!

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## *FRhodo's Gardening Tips*

What would you like to see here? Any tips you'd like to pass on? It can be Rhodo specific or just something that you think is a good idea, something you do in your garden. Something you've seen someone else do. mail your tip me at [FRhodo@shaw.ca](mailto:FRhodo@shaw.ca) (or give it to my friend David (the editor) & he'll pass it on!)

Dianne, John, Garth, Dan, Art & all you other knowledgeable people **Heelllll!**

- Whenever possible try to plant trees & shrubs in early spring before the sap begins to rise in about March, you'll have more success & stress the plant less.
- Don't forget! If you haven't done it already, winterize your watering systems, drain hoses, store away from frost before our really cold weather arrives.
- Light pruning, trimming & shaping should be done each year at the same time you deadhead (remove spent flowers) which we all do without fail! .... Right?



## *FRhodo's Seasonal Recipes*

Come on people! I know there are some wonderful bakers & cooks out there! Will you share your recipes with an eager public? (not to mention a hungry FRhodo!) mail your recipe to me at [FRhodo@shaw.ca](mailto:FRhodo@shaw.ca) (or give it to my friend David (the editor) & he'll pass it on!). Food!.. anything from artichokes to zucchini, seasonal salads, refreshing drinks, the list is endless!

To all the wonderful cooks amongst our membership... Anne, Art (see... I said he was a talented guy!), Avril, Hannah, Sheila, Dianne (& anyone else) come on I need help here for the next issue! Please remember not too long! Here are a couple to be going on with!

### *Cranberry Shortbread (makes 40 cookies)*

1 cup (250ml) unsalted butter, at room temperature  
 1/2 cup (125ml) icing sugar  
 1 1/2 cups (375ml) all purpose flour  
 1/2 tsp salt  
 1/2 cup (125ml) chopped dried cranberries  
 1/2 cup (125ml) pecan pieces

Preheat oven to 325°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Beat together butter & sugar in large bowl. In a small bowl mix flour & salt & gradually stir into butter mix.. Stir in Cranberries & Pecans.

Pinch off about 1 tbsp (15ml) dough & roll into a ball, place on sheet & flatten slightly.

Bake in center of oven until tops are light golden brown, 12-15 min. Let cookies cool for 5min. Before transferring to wire rack. Cool completely. Refrigerate in airtight container for up to 1 week or freeze up to 2 months.

Nutrients per cookie: Fat 6g, Carbs 7g, calories 77

### *Really simple Cranberry Sauce*

4oz (100g) light muscovado sugar  
 3 1/2 fl.oz (100ml) orange juice fresh or from carton  
 8 oz. (250g) fresh or frozen cranberries

Tip sugar & orange juice into a pan, bring to the boil. Stir in the cranberries & simmer until tender but still holding their shape - this will take about 5 min if using frozen cranberries or 8-10 min if using fresh.

The sauce will thicken as it cools. Will keep in the fridge for up to 1 week. On the day bring to room temp before serving.

*...Enjoy!*

### *Merry Berry cocktail (per serving)*

1 1/2 oz Vodka  
 1 1/2 oz Cranberry Juice  
 1/2 oz Collins mix

Mix all in an old fashioned glass, add ice & serve

*...Cheers!*



Photo credit: Finnerty Gardens. UVic, Saanich BC

## Rhododendron—Christmas Cheer

### *Quote from Greer's Guidebook to Available Rhododendrons*

*(Caucasicum hybrid) 4', -10°F VE-E, 3/4/4*

*Extremely early pink flowers. Tough medium sized leaves densely dress this well shaped plant. It should be noted that this plant does NOT bloom at Christmas as the name might suggest. Its blossoming is closer to the roaring of the March Lion. Several different plants go by this name. It appears that the "true" Christmas Cheer has slightly more bullate foliage & it generally flowers before "Rosamundi".*

*It is a light to medium pink, but the same plant will vary in colour from year to year & in location to location. Some years it will flower almost pure white.*

*One I think I'd like to see in my garden... Especially flowering in March!... Ed*

## YOUR NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2008/ 2009

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS:

President	Jill Futros
Vice President	Rosemary Prufer
Past President	John Gardner
Secretary	Anne Bone
Treasurer	Art Pearson

### NON EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS:

Director - Programs & Speakers	Garth Wedemire
Director	Joe Robinsmith
Director - Newsletter	David Kretzschmar

### YOUR COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Dollar Table & Education	John Gardner
Hospitality	Dianne Vernon
Library	Hannah Schlagintweit
Membership	Jill Futros
Whonnock Lake Garden	Scot Henney
Education	John
Phone Team	Dianne Vernon
	Sheila Wade
Webmaster	Art Prufer

**FRhodo will soon be ordering**

**A limited number of copies of**

**"Greer's Guidebook to Available Rhododendrons"**

**Don't miss out! Get your order in early!**

**Price: only \$25.00**

**E-mail your order to: [FRhodo@shaw.ca](mailto:FRhodo@shaw.ca)**

## **CONTACT US**

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