



**1935 - 2010**  
**75 Years**  
**German Rhododendron Society**

**International Rhododendron Symposium May 18-20<sup>th</sup>, 2010**

**at the Swissôtel, Hillmannplatz 20, 28195 Bremen - Germany**

To celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the German Rhododendron Society, international speakers present a Rhododendron round-the-world trip. Interesting talks will take the audience to natural stands of Rhododendrons in Asia and North America or present the collections and activities in neighbouring and faraway countries. For this special occasion Rhododendron experts and enthusiasts from many countries will meet in Bremen, the city where the German Rhododendron Society was founded 75 years ago. All talks will be held in English.

Program:

- May 18 (7 p.m.): Evening Welcome Reception, Foyer Swissôtel
- May 19 (9 a.m. to 3 p.m.): International Symposium, Part I (Session: Rhododendrons in Europe):
- Marc Colombel (France): Rhododendrons in France: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow
  - Svend Hansen (Denmark): The "Danes" - New Rhododendrons from Denmark
  - Wilbert Hetterscheidt (Netherlands): Rhododendrons in the Netherlands: A Success Story
  - David Millais (England): British Hybridizers and Hybrids
  - Hartwig Schepker (Germany): The German Rhododendron Gene Bank Network
  - Philippe de Spoelberch (Belgium): Rhododendron and Azalea Cultivation in Belgium
- May 19 (4 - 6 p.m.) International Symposium, Part II (Session: Rhododendrons on the other side of the world)
- Robert Hatcher (Australia): Rhododendrons in "down under" under the Influence of Global Warming
  - Tony Fitchett (New Zealand): Strangers in a Strange Land: Rhododendrons in New Zealand
  - John Weagle (Canada): Rhododendron Breeding for Cold Climates
- May 19 (8 p.m.): Symposium Dinner in the Conference Hotel, After-Dinner-Talk:
- John Roy (Schottland): Plant Hunting in Arunachal Pradesh (North-East India)
- May 20 (9 a.m. to 1 p.m.): International Symposium, Part III (Session: Rhododendrons in their native habitats):
- George Argent (Scotland): Problems and Delights in Collecting Vireya Rhododendrons in SE-Asia
  - Steve Hootman (USA): Rhododendron Habitats in the Sino-Himalaya
  - Don Hyatt (USA): Deciduous Azaleas of North America
  - Kenneth Cox (Scotland): Woodland Gardening with Rhododendrons
- May 20 (1 p.m.) Book Presentation by Peter und Kenneth Cox, Book Signing Hour

Please note the abstracts and the speakers' references on the following pages.

**Conference Fee: 95 €.** This includes the talks, conference materials, 2x lunch, 3 x coffee & tea breaks (incl. mineral water). Other beverages are available at your own expenses. **Symposium Dinner: 34 €** (beverages not included).

**Registration:** Please register via the society's website [www.rhodo.org/2010](http://www.rhodo.org/2010). For organizational reasons the symposium can only be booked as a package, e.g. for and for all the meals and breaks offered. Rooms at the Conference Hotel (Swissôtel\*\*\*\*\*) are available for participants at special rates. International Guests from other Rhododendron Societies are welcome to join the additional anniversary program (see [www.rhodo.org](http://www.rhodo.org) for more details). The number of delegates is limited, early registration is therefore advisable.

**Contact** for further questions: E-Mail: [info@rhodo.org](mailto:info@rhodo.org) or phone: ++49 -421 -427 066 22.

## **George Argent (Scotland): Problems and Delights in Collecting *Vireya* Rhododendrons in SE-Asia**

Section/subgenus *Vireya* is the largest group in the genus *Rhododendron* with over 300 species. *Vireya* species are mostly occurring as epiphytes on the mountains of SE Asia. Most of them are plants of cool montane cloud forests, but a few species occur down to sea level in the tropics and some grow in alpine situations up to nearly 4.000m. The talk describes expeditions to several of the islands in SE Asia, including Borneo, New Guinea and the Philippines. Some of the beautiful areas in which these plants grow are illustrated with examples of successes and failures of collecting. The author presents species showing the beauty and range of form. He gives assessment of the value that can be derived from the observations made in the wild and the resulting cultivation of wild collected plants.

## **Marc Colombel (France): Rhododendrons in France: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow**

France has a long history of influential *Rhododendron* people. In the old days French missionaries like Delavay and David discovered many new species. Moser, Croux and Halopé amongst others raised the first French hybrids. Since 1950 the "old" English hybrids are the most frequently planted *Rhododendrons* in French gardens. The talk presents the special case of Trevarez and its influence in Brittany. Today mainly American hybrids are sold in France and there is a growing interest in species (e.g. Lennon and his collection). Future goals for French hybridizers are defined by the needs of French *Rhododendrons* growers.

## **Kenneth Cox (Scotland): Woodland Gardening with Rhododendrons**

The talk covers a brief history of woodland gardening, with examples from all over the world, particularly concentrating on the great Scottish gardens like Crarae, Arduaine or Inverewe. The talk examines how to bring a sense of drama and design to woodland gardens and advocates more imaginative planting combinations. Needless to say, there are a lot of rhododendrons covered in this talk. Issues such as shade and shelter are covered from a practical point of view.

## **Tony Fitchett (New Zealand): Strangers in a Strange Land: Rhododendrons in New Zealand**

New Zealand has no native *Rhododendrons*, but they have been grown and bred in the country from the early days of European settlement. The range of different climates in the long, mainly narrow country stretching from NNE to SSW means that the variety of *Rhododendrons* grown there include high altitude dwarf species, temperate zone large-leaved and other tender varieties, and tropical *Vireyas*. *Rhododendrons* are found in public and private gardens and in several special collections in many parts of the country. From the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, amateur and professional selections of seedlings and hybridising have produced a number of New Zealand-bred *Rhododendron* varieties, some of very high quality.

## **Svend Hansen (Denmark): The "Danes" - New Rhododendrons from Denmark**

Denmark has a very active group of *Rhododendron* enthusiasts particularly interested in species. The talk describes the long way from collecting species in China, raising thousands of seedlings from connoisseur species like *R. prunum*, *R. proteoides* or *R. bureavii*, and selecting the best clones - the "Danes" - for gardens in Northern Europe. The talk introduces these new *Rhododendrons* with references to their natural stands and their characteristics.

## **Robert Hatcher (Australia): Rhododendrons in "down under" under the Influence of Global Warming**

Climate and soils in most areas of Australia do not suit cultivation of ericaceous plants. Rainfall is not always reliable. Nonetheless, *Rhododendrons* do quite well in several places: Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia, NSW and Queensland all have groups of enthusiast growers. Climate change and global warming are affecting Australia. The El Nino effect and the La Nina cycle are becoming more ferocious and severe weather is more frequent. Consequences of these include bushfires and severe flooding, strong windstorms and even tornadoes. How are the *Rhododendron* collections bearing up? What solutions are Australian growers coming up with?

## **Wilbert Hettterscheidt (Netherlands): Rhododendrons in the Netherlands: A Success Story**

The talk examines the development of the Dutch *Rhododendron* "industry", from the early beginning with well-known hybridizers like Koster, Endtz or van Nes to the modern production centres like Boskoop. The talk introduces the Dutch *Rhododendron* Collection and several participating gardens, e.g. Belmonte Arboretum of Wageningen University, Arboretum Trompenburg, Von Gimborn Arboretum, Pinetum Blijdenstein.

## **Steve Hootman (USA): Rhododendron Habitats in the Sino-Himalaya**

The talk illustrates with images and discussion the various natural habitats of a wide range of *Rhododendron* species in their native haunts: Ranging from the high alpine ranges of the mighty Himalaya to the cloud forests of northern Vietnam. The topography and climate will be discussed as it relates to the occurrence of the various species and how this translates to our cultivation of these remarkable and varied plants. The talk includes the adventures involved in finding and documenting wild plants in some of the most remote regions left on the planet.

## **Don Hyatt (USA): Deciduous Azaleas of North America**

The rich flora of North America boasts seventeen species of native azaleas, and although many are familiar landscape plants or often used parents in hybridizing, most horticulturists are not aware of the genetic diversity that still exists in the wild. The author presents the range of flower colour and form he has observed in his investigation of these deciduous azaleas. The talk focuses on species that are growing in scenic wild places like the Appalachians, the Yosemite National Park in California or the Providence Canyon in Georgia and comments on the other native *Rhododendrons* and wildflowers that belong to these same biologically diverse communities.

## **David Millais (England): British Hybridizers and Hybrids**

British landowners and gardeners were in the forefront of sponsoring plant-hunting trips to the Himalayas by notable collectors such as Kingdon Ward and Forrest. Rewarded with hundreds of new *Rhododendron* species, the race was on for the landed gentry and their Head Gardeners to breed thousands of new hybrids in their hope of breeding the perfect hybrid. The talk reviews some of the best introductions from the great gardeners such as the Williams family at Caerhays, the Rothschilds at Exbury, and the Aberconways at Bodnant, and discusses their place in the modern garden. Do these historic plants exist in just a few large gardens, or are they still being grown throughout around the world? Bringing us up to date, some of the modern British breeders and their plants are also shown and considered.

## **John Roy (Scotland): Plant Hunting in Arunachal Pradesh (Northeast India)**

Arunachal Pradesh in Northeast India is one of the centres of biodiversity in the Himalayas. In many parts it is still untouched. A few years ago it was opened for foreigners and reveals now its immense wealth of rhododendrons. John Roy has been on four major plant trips in Arunachal and has witnessed the discovery of several new *Rhododendron* species/taxa and other attractive plants, like unknown *Arisaemas* or *Primulas*. The evening talk includes stories and images about the difficult way through virtually unexplored and extremely rugged terrain.

## **Hartwig Schepker (Germany): The German Rhododendron Gene Bank Network**

200 years of growing and breeding *Rhododendrons* in Germany have resulted in almost 2.000 "German" hybrids. A network of private gardens, public collections, nurseries and botanic gardens has been created to establish a German *Rhododendron* Gene Bank. Its main goal is to preserve rare German hybrids and create reference collections for future breeding including wild species. The talk guides through the participating collections and visualizes the enormous wealth of *Rhododendron* collections in Germany.

## **Philippe de Spoelberch (Belgium): Rhododendron and Azalea Cultivation in Belgium**

The development of Azaleas in the Ghent area during the 19<sup>th</sup> century has been the essential contribution of Belgian horticulture to the world of *Rhododendron*. Many of the old hardy Ghent Azaleas have been conserved in several reference collections. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Research Station for Ornamental Plant Growing in Melle has contributed to the development of *Rhododendron simsii* hybrids, which are sold the world over. Robert and Jelena de Belder (Arboretum Kalmthout and Hemelrijk) have hybridized extensively in their two estates. Arboretum Wespelaar and the garden of Herkenrode (30 ha) have established extensive collections of *Rhododendron* species and hybrids. Here, species and hybrids in the *Fortunea* section have been given special attention.

## **John Weagle (Canada): Rhododendron Breeding for Cold Climates**

Cool summers make Atlantic Canada one of the best areas in eastern North America to grow *Rhododendrons*. The talk concentrates on the progress made over the past 60 years to create hardy *Rhododendrons*. Since the early 1950's Nova Scotia was very fortunate to have several plantsmen like Craig, Steele or Brueckner who wanted to broaden the colour range, habit and hardiness of *Rhododendrons* for this area. Younger Canadian breeders now carry forth the torch. Interesting local gardens and *Rhododendron* cultivars are shown.

### **George Argent (Scotland)**

George is the world-leading expert on Vireyas. In 1974 he was appointed tropical botanist at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh to work on *Ericaceae*. Serious work on Vireyas began in 1977 whilst participating on the Royal Geographical Society's expedition to what became the Mulu National Park in Sarawak. Numerous expeditions and visits to SE Asia over the past 30 years have led to a great many introductions of new Vireyas to cultivation, sometimes new species. His work culminated in a monographic book on the group ("Rhododendrons of Subgenus Vireya"). George retired in January 2004 but still works part time as a Research Associate at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

### **Marc Colombel (France)**

Marc is the founder of the "Société Bretonne du Rhododendron" of which he was the president for 14 years. He made his first hybrids in 1985. At the end of 2008 he has achieved about 750 different crosses. He registered his first hybrid in 1992 and gave it the name of his house: 'Kernéostic'. In 1993 he published "Rhododendrons: Mode d'emploi". He wrote about 200 articles for the Bulletins of the Bretonne Rhododendron Society and opened his own Rhododendron web site in 1996. In 2000 he launched the first rhododendron show in France and in 2001 he helped John Nicollella to put the first ARS seed bank on the web. For his many contributions to the Rhododendron world he received the Silver Medal of the ARS in 2008.

### **Kenneth Cox (Scotland)**

Born in 1964 into a family of renowned plantsmen, Kenneth is grandson of planthunter, writer and nurseryman Euan Cox and son of Peter Cox VMH. The three generations were and are considered the world's leading experts on rhododendrons. Kenneth, himself a nurseryman and author of numerous books on rhododendrons, has carved out his particular niche in the world of plant-hunting in leading 9 expeditions to South and South-East Tibet and Arunachal Pradesh, India, 1995 - to the present. Kenneth is managing director of the family firm Glendoick Gardens Ltd in Scotland, a garden centre and mail order nursery specialising in Rhododendrons, Azaleas, Ericaceous plants, *Mecconopsis*, *Primula* and other plants collected by the Cox family around the world. Kenneth is author of 10 books on rhododendrons, plant hunting and gardens and gardening.

### **Tony Fitchett (New Zealand)**

Tony is a family doctor from Dunedin and Chair of Directors of the Mornington Health Centre, one of New Zealand's leading health centres. Together with his wife Bron he has established a woodland rhododendron garden, arboretum and woodlots in their 4-hectare property, much of which was originally covered in gorse. Both have a particular interest in the Rhododendron subsections *Grandia*, *Falconera* and *Maddenia*, in *Quercus* and *Pinus* varieties, and in New Zealand native trees. Tony has been a member of the Dunedin Rhododendron group and the New Zealand Rhododendron Association (NZRA) for about 35 years, and of the NZRA Council for 5 years.

### **Svend Hansen (Denmark)**

Svend is a professional landscaper, specializing in peat gardens. His interest in rhododendrons started at the age of 13. In 1994 he made his first trip to China. Five more journeys in 1996, 1998, 1999, 2000 and 2006 organized by himself in collaboration with the Botanical Institute in Kunming brought him to Yunnan and Sichuan. His world class collection of wild rhododendron species is located some 45 km north of Copenhagen and today contains about 30.000 plants, primarily from seed collected in China. His plants grow now in many Scandinavian gardens, often perfectly arranged in rock gardens. His best clones are available as "the Danes" in the Hachmann Nursery in Barmstedt, Germany.

### **Robert Hatcher (Australia)**

Robert is the Horticultural Supervisor of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide, Hills Botanic Gardens. He has a strong interest in Rhododendrons and educating various Rhododendron related topics. He is a member and past President of the South Australian Branch of the Australian Rhododendron Society, member of Hills Bonsai Club and current Vice President National Body of Australian Rhododendron Society and Public Officer.

### **Wilbert Hetterscheidt (Netherlands)**

Wilbert is the former scientific curator of Botanical Gardens of Wageningen and with this responsible for the Rhododendron collection. He is a member of the Dutch Rhododendron Society. He is also member of several international commissions dealing with nomenclature of cultivated plants. He is co-author of the International Code for the Nomenclature of Cultivated Plants (ICNCP) and advisor in nomenclatural matters of all cultivated plants traded in the Netherlands through the flower auctions. He published many papers on *Amorphophallus* (Araceae).

### **Steve Hootman (USA)**

Steve is Executive Director and Curator of the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden. He holds a degree in Public Horticulture from Purdue University. He serves as the principal scientific staff member and is responsible for the management and integrity of the RSBG's world-class collection of Rhododendron species and companion plants. Steve has participated in or led over a dozen expeditions into the remote regions of Asia looking for rare and new taxa of rhododendrons and other plants and is considered to be one of the world authorities on the genus. Steve has had numerous articles and photographs published in journals and books and lectures widely on various botanical/horticultural subjects.

### **Don Hyatt (USA)**

Although professionally a mathematics and computer science teacher in the local public school system for 33 years, Donald has always maintained a strong interest in plants. His educational background includes a Bachelors degree in Horticulture. Now retired, he has focused his efforts on varied horticulture interests including the documentation of various native azalea populations in North America. Don has served on the national boards of the Azalea Society of America and the American Rhododendron Society and has received national awards from both organizations. He is a frequent speaker at conferences, has authored a number of articles on azaleas and rhododendrons, and is an accomplished botanical illustrator.

### **David Millais (England)**

David comes from a family of keen Rhododendron enthusiasts. His great uncle J G Millais wrote the 2 volume books "Rhododendrons" in 1917 and 1924. David's father trekked extensively in the Himalayas and started Millais Nurseries in 1970, which David now manages. Millais Nurseries is now one of the UK's leading specialist nurseries and produces over 800 different varieties of Rhododendrons. Plants are supplied to customers throughout Europe, and the Millais Gardens are open daily in May. The nursery won Gold medal at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show in 2009.

### **John Roy (Scotland)**

John is a dentist from Ballachulish in Western Scotland. He is a member of the Scottish Rhododendron Society and the editor of the Society's publications. His garden is full of interesting plants like Rhododendron, Primulas, Arisaemas and many others, some like *Podophyllum auranti-caule* were discovered and introduced by him. He has been on eight Rhododendron trips to Yunnan, Tibet, Nepal and Arunachal Pradesh together with various rhododendron experts. During his four trips to the remote Indian state of Arunachal in 2002, 2004, 2006 and 2009 John has seen probably more natural Rhododendron habitats in different parts of Arunachal Pradesh than anyone else. Despite his unquestionable knowledge of plants, he likes to comment his botanic remarks with: "Well, I'm just a Scottish dentist".

### **Hartwig Schepker (Germany)**

Hartwig is the Scientific Director of the Botanic Garden and Rhododendron-Park Bremen, home of one of the largest Rhododendron collections in the world, including hardy and non-hardy species and hybrids. He is also the Secretary of the German Rhododendron Society and co-editor of the society's publication "Rhododendron und Immergrüne". Hartwig has been on several rhododendron trips in Asia and North America, including three journeys to Arunachal Pradesh in NE-India.

### **Philippe de Spoelberch (Belgium)**

Philippe is a retired director of Inbev breweries. He is a well-known botanist and plantsman with a keen interest in botanical expeditions to temperate forests, and in plant collecting and propagating. Philippe is the creator of garden of Herkenrode (10 ha) and Arboretum Wespelaar (15 ha) for a total of 10.000 woody species over 35 years. He is playing a vital role in international and national dendrology matters: Philippe is Vice Chairman of the International Dendrology Society, Chairman of the Belgian Dendrology Society and Non executive Director of the Arboretum Kalmthout, the Arboretum Wespelaar, the Polly Hill Arboretum, the Rhododendron Species Foundation, the Franklinia Foundation and the Magnolia Society International.

### **John Weagle (Canada)**

John has been gardening in Halifax, Nova Scotia since childhood. In the early 1970's his good friend Captain Richard Steele introduced him to the joys of hybridizing rhododendrons and azaleas. He has been breeding rhododendrons and evergreen azaleas since 1980. His main interest is the family *Ericaceae* which does so wonderfully well in coastal Nova Scotia. John belongs to many plant societies. He works for a wholesale horticultural company in Halifax and a nursery on the West coast of the USA. John is a well-known plantsman, writer and speaker, a recipient of the Leslie Hancock Award and The Hybridizer's Award of the Rhododendron Society of Canada. His main goal is to extend what can be grown in the challenging climate of Atlantic Canada.