

Willamette Chapter American Rhododendron Society Newsletter

Volume 3

December 2021

Issue 8



Willamette Chapter ARS
Rhododendron Hillside Garden
Bush Pasture Park

CHAPTER MEETINGS: Due to Covid-19, our current chapter meetings are held online via Zoom on the 2nd Wednesday of the month from September through May. Socializing begins at 6:30pm, with the meeting and speaker at 7:00pm. The Zoom link is sent via email and listed in the newsletter. This form of meeting will continue until in-person meetings can safely be resumed.

Willamette Chapter ARS Potluck

Saturday, December 4, 2021

At the Home of Wally Reed

Full Details on Page 6



October and November Minutes



**Keith White -
Substitute
Secretary
(in the "broad
sense of the word")**

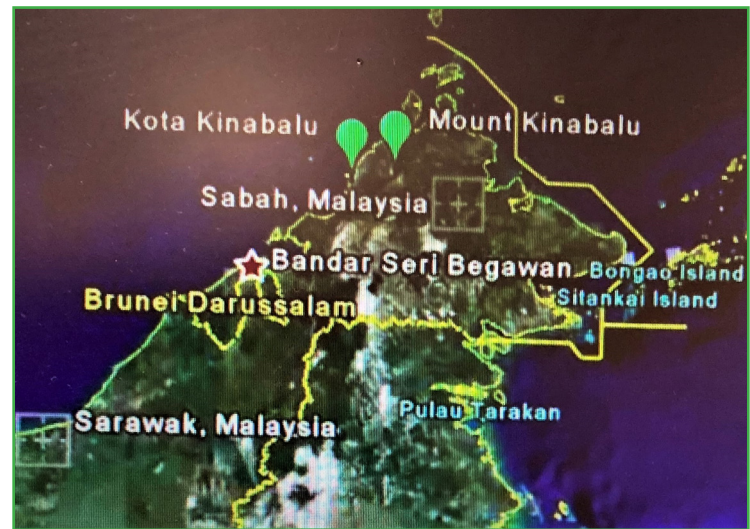
I, Keith White, am doing the minutes because, at the time of this program, our genuine secretary, Mary Crofts, had not yet gotten her WiFi straightened out at her new apartment in Albany.

We started chatting at 6:30 PM on Wednesday, Oct 13. Amongst the topics was whether or not to have an in-person December potluck. We all agreed that it would be impossible to eat dinner with masks on. That is all we agreed on.

Our speaker was Dr. (PhD) Glen Jamieson. The central topic was Glen's trek up Mt. Kinabalu on the Island of Borneo in 2008 in search of adventure and vireya rhododendrons, for which this mountain is famous. However, Glen took us on a great travelogue of the several spots in SE Asia that he visited. He also educated us on the geography and the placement of vireyas in the various nations that make up this region (see maps).



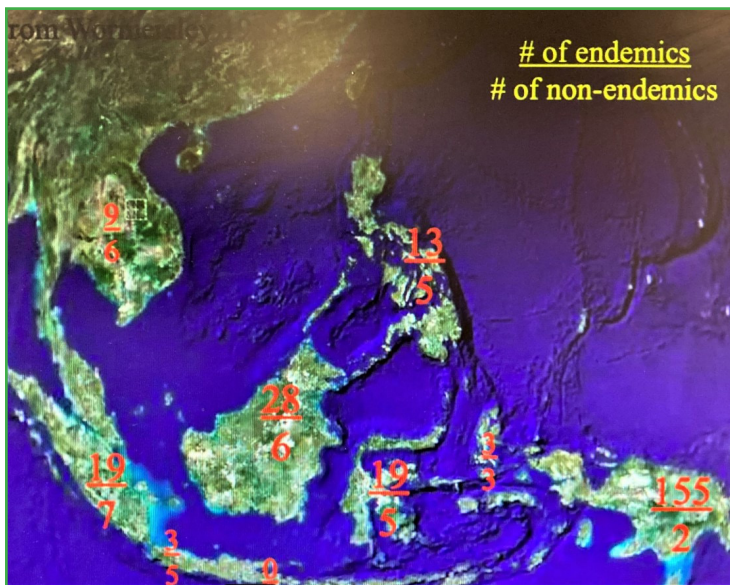
S.E. Asia, depicting location of Mt. Kinabalu

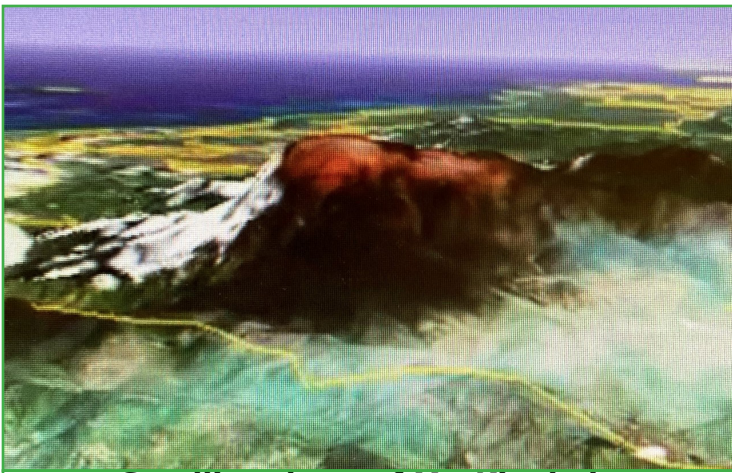


Geographical area of Glen's trek in Borneo

Glen took extra time in Hong Kong to see the skyscrapers and gardens and travel the side streets where there were beautiful impromptu one person markets. He even found a mobile taylor.

Glen's entrée' into the Malaysia part of Borneo was an international fisheries conference. Glen's day job is as a fisheries scientist for British Columbia (or maybe the Canadian Government). His destination was a beautiful resort on the coast, not far from Mt. Kinabalu. As you can see from the satellite photo, Kinabalu rises much higher than the surrounding country (from near sea level to 14,000+ feet). Kinabalu is a volcanic intrusion where molten lava pushed up through the softer earth, then over the millennia the surrounding softer hills eroded away, leaving this monolith.





Satellite photo of Mt. Kinabalu

After the conference Glen made his way up to a resort at the base of the mountain. He met his National Park Service guide there and proceeded to scout around a couple of days before ascending part way up to a crowded guest house with a cosmopolitan mix of trekkers



Glen and his Park Service Guide

From there Glen and his guide ascended the next day up to the tree line, botanizing all the way. They saw and photographed many vireyas (apprx. 31 species on Kinabalu) and countless orchids (1000 species on this mountain). He showed us a table with elevation on the vertical axis and the many vireya species on the horizontal, arranged as to show their elevational ranges. As one ascended different species would fill the ecological zones.

Altitudinal distribution of Plants on Mount Kinabalu, Sabah (from Meijer, 1963)	
Zones	Selected Vireya Species
Summit (3300-4200 m)	• <i>R. buxifolium</i> var. <i>robustum</i> , <i>ericoides</i>
Upper montane (2000-3500 m)	• Moss forests, ferns, orchids, many vireya species (<i>R. stenophyllum</i> , <i>fallacinum</i> , <i>cuneifolium</i> , <i>lowii</i> , <i>acuminatum</i> , <i>rugosum</i> , etc.)
Lower montane (1000-2000 m)	• Oaks, chestnuts, figs and gymnosperms (<i>R. brookeanum</i>)
Hill (< 1000 m)	• Dipterocarp trees (local,

Glen showed a lot of photos of his vireya finds. He said that without the sharp eyes of his guide, he would have missed several species, given that the vireyas here are epiphytic, living on trees or rocks, often overhead.



Guide pointing out *R. buxifolium*

As they ascended the weather got windier and rainier. They had been hit by the tail end of a cyclone. They just made it to the tree line. The top of the mountain was closed due to the high winds, rain and fog.



R. fallacinum



R. ericoides

After that trek, Glen traveled to the low lying jungles on the east side of Borneo. There he was lucky enough to see a *Rafflesia keithii* in bloom....The world's largest flower. It can grow to be a little over 3 feet in diameter. Check it out in Wikipedia.



Rafflesia keithii, parasitic on the roots and stems of host vines of *Tetrastigma* (Vitaceae)

Glen appreciated the slow moving muddy river systems and the many tropical flowers and plants there. And, as always, Glen got to know the local people, as he does wherever he goes (I have travelled with Glen several times since we first met in 2005). This was a superb show.

If you did not see the program the first time or would like to see it again, please contact Keith at 503-559-5796 or email at: rhodoc@msn.com and he will hook you up.

Our November WCARS Zoom meeting commenced on Wednesday, Nov 10 at 6:30 PM with chat until the program start at 7PM. I am still doing the minutes because Mary is recovering from an injury. She plans to join us at the potluck on December 4.

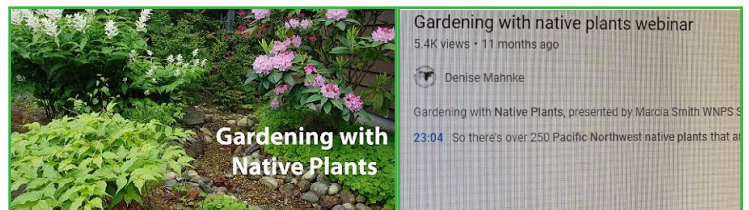
The consensus was that we should have a live, in person, potluck at Wally Reed's house. Mary Ellen and I and hopefully some of you are going over early to help get everything set up (give us a call 503-559-5796). Vaccinations will be required to attend in order to provide for the safety of the group. The main course will be rare-ish London Broil beef. Individual servings can be cooked a little more in the microwave.

The back story on the program is that I sold my adjacent 2 1/2 acres of property to my neighbor who wanted to make sure that the property was kept brushy for wildlife and never developed. However, now the center is being cleared to build a new house, thus depriving the critters (quail, bunnies, deer, countless bird species) of habitat. So, Mary Ellen and I, after talking about it for several years, are planting native plants that specifically nurture insects and wildlife. I searched for 2 months to find a speaker on landscaping with pro wildlife expertise on native plants but could not dredge up anyone. YouTube to the rescue! There were many programs on PNW Natives in the garden. I chose two that had more plant talk and pictures and less droning lecture on the administrative aspects. I diced and sliced the two talks, each over an hour, such that we got the meat of the talks without the long introductions, etc. I did not record the November program because it is on YouTube already.

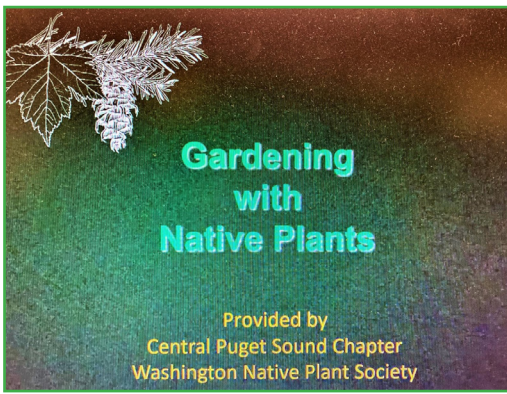
NOTE: If you are not familiar with YouTube, each program begins with an advertisement. Please disregard or click the "Skip Ad" button when it appears.

If you click on the blue printing with each description it will take you directly to the video.

The first talk was "Gardening with Native Plants Webinar" with Denise Mahnke. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qdzi2Xv-XU4>



Once the program opens, the first frame is titled, "Gardening with Native Plants Provided by Central Puget Sound Chapter, Washington Native Plant Society"

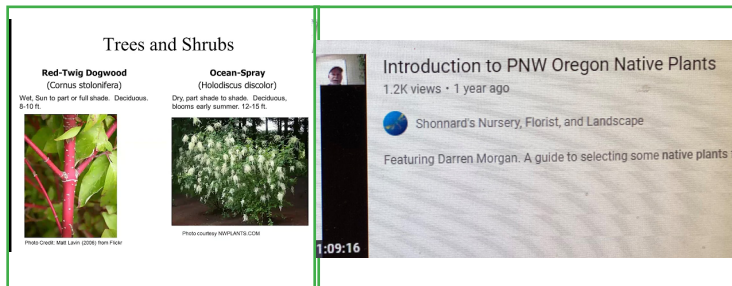


For the second talk I switched to "Gardening with Northwest Native Plants: An Ecological Approach" with Eric Butler, Oregon State University Extension Service <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xl6QcYrw9kQ&t=160s>



I did not show but would direct you to two other programs from YouTube. First is "Introduction to PNW Native Plants" Shonnards Nursery, with Darren Morgan https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ODGIX_p1mI&t=83s

This is what you see on YouTube:



This is what you see once the program opens:



The other program I thought started out well, because it directs you to a grant program for installing native plants titled "Cornell Farm Presents Backyard Habitat Program, with Susie Peterson" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gjg4PEnHbbQ&t=655s> I suggest that you watch the talk until you get the info for the Backyard Habitat Program. The rest was disappointing to me because there were very few native plants presented.



In order to see other programs, if you put "Pacific Northwest Native Plants" into the YouTube search bar, you will get some relevant ads at the top then a series of related programs below, which then degenerates into a series of gradually more whacky programs that have no relation to the topic. To get back on track with the subject at hand, you just need to re-click on the little magnifying glass at the right end of the search bar.

The meeting was a little long because of the combination of talks. All this is probably TMI = too much information. But it serves to introduce members to the "Ways of YouTube".

I hope that everybody has had a relaxed Thanksgiving. I also hope to see you at the Dec. 4th potluck.

Respectfully submitted,
Keith White, Pseudo Secretary.

WCARS December Potluck

NOTE: The executive decision was made that only vaccinated members should attend. This is for the health and safety of all of us. But even if you are vaccinated, if you have been exposed to Covid in the past 14 days you should not attend. That is because vaccinated people can rarely be reinfected with a mutated virus, such as the delta strain, and have no symptoms, and thus spread the virus. Those at most risk from this are ones who are not vaccinated or those who are immunosuppressed.



Mouthwatering display of food before we devoured it at our last Christmas potluck in 2019. (Minus the dessert table)

The gathering will begin at 12:00n on December 4th to allow for a social time to “reconnect and catch up” with one another. Feasting will begin at 1:00pm. The Chapter will provide the roast beef (rare for those like Anne Gross, to medium rare, to done for those that don’t like a Moo). Your job, should you accept it, is to provide a companion dish to the roast beef. You can also provide a main dish if you don’t like roast beef.

The Chapter will provide tableware and water but please bring what you would like to drink, such as wine, beer, cider, etc. Please bring a bottle for yourself and to share.

Please RSVP to Keith White at rhodoc@msn.com or 503-559-5796 so we know you are coming and have enough roast beef for the meal and enough tables for places to sit.

The address to Wally Reed’s house is: 940 Leffelle St. SE in Salem.

Wally’s home faces the SE corner of Bush’s Pasture Park. This is the lower portion of the park by the open fields and Phillips Softball Field.

To get to Wally’s house take Cross St. which runs between 12th St. and High St. Turn on Davidson St. to the North. Davidson runs perpendicular to Leffelle. There are parking spaces on Leffelle (bordering Bush Park) in front of Wally’s house. The front of Wally’s house is bordered by bushes, so park in front and enter through the walkway entrance.

Should you need further directions, call 503-588-3666 or e-mail is: wallacereed@comcast.net.



A Gathering of Friends Poetry by Andrew Pell

How beautiful it is when Friends share a meal together

We wish that precious moment would last forever.

Talking and laughing sharing special thoughts. These moments of happiness could not be bought.

Let the memory linger and never fade in our mind.

Such peace and happiness do you rarely find. Capture each moment store it close to your heart.

Friendships that are created through love and respect will never part.

Smith Garden Fall Work Day

Since I did not publish a November newsletter, I hope you will indulge my regression back to the Smith Garden work day in October. There are a number of hard working individuals who show up time and time again that need to be acknowledged and thanked.

In the words of Dick Cavender:

"Many thanks to everyone who helped put the Garden to bed for the winter. Lots of things pruned and debris hauled, new planting holes dug, roof cleaned and other chores taken care of. The beds of Cyclamen were a real treat. On Tuesday Mike Stewart and his crew will install about a dozen large new plants. They will be a great addition to the garden."

The day at the garden started like many fall days - foggy, damp and cold - but that didn't stop the enthusiasm of the work crew. When we arrived, several of the volunteers were already busy digging holes for the new plants that would arrive at the beginning of the week, while many other hands were making light work of the weeding and trimming needed throughout the garden. Our volunteer efforts 2 days a year would barely be noticeable without the year round care from Jane Mays, Tom Gressler, Anne Gross and Dick Cavender. Many thanks to them and all the volunteers from the WCARS and Portland Chapters.



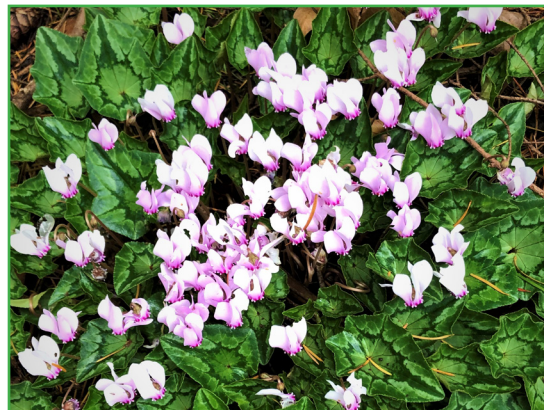
Our Prez-4-Life, Wally Reed (I) and our Treasurer, Dana Malby trimming away. Looks like they have the "right stuff".



Caroline Enns (I) and Karen Cavender - 2 Beauties in the Garden.



I wanted to get a picture of Dick before he fell off the ladder - Fortunately he never fell and the roof got cleaned



Cyclamen



One of the few times I saw Roger Lintault upright. He must have a back made of steel because he was always bent over weeding.

The Decision Makers



Tom Gressler (I) and Dick Cavender



Ali Sarlak is a "Jack of All Trades", as he did numerous activities in the course of the morning.



Anne Gross



Jane Mays and Keith White showing off the tools needed to clean out the hellebore patch



Jane Mays and Mike Stewart



Bill Vagt has taken on a lifetime project - freeing tree trunks of their ivy.

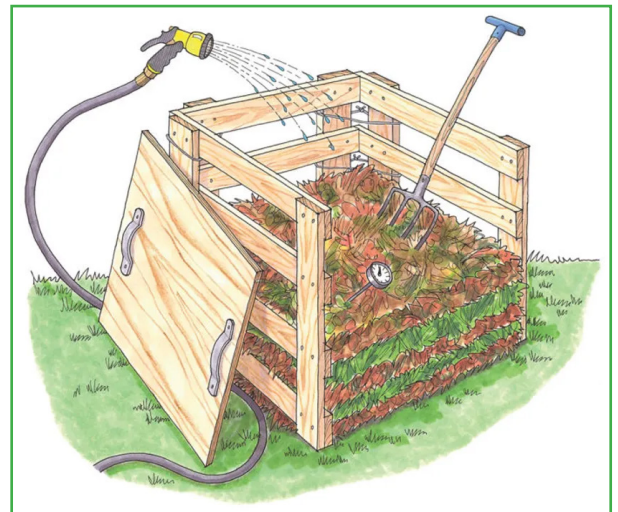
Get Serious About Compost: How to Make More, Better, Faster

The following information comes from **Fine Gardening - Issue 138**, and is written by **Peter Garnham**, who runs a 5-acre composting program as the manager of the **East End Community Organic Farm** in **East Hampton, New York**



Emily Aune, from the Eugene Chapter, and her friend Garrison spent the morning digging numerous holes. They were on their way to Portland, had never been to the Smith Garden, so decided to stop and help out. They dug holes faster than my Dachshund granddogs!

Hard working volunteers from the Portland Chapter (whose pictures I've not included) were Ann and Ray Clack, John Griffith, Steve Hall, 95 year old Dot Dunstan (she can work circles around me) and her daughter, Donna Guarrera.



Compost is not fertilizer. The sooner a gardener embraces this reality, the better. But gardener's gold does have an undeniable importance in the garden: to feed the billions of critters in the soil whose activities create plant nutrients. Think of it as pet food for the legions of decomposers that eat it—and each other—and in the process add to the fertility of the soil. Compost also helps hold moisture and improves soil tilth. The problem most gardeners face is that we don't have nearly enough compost—ever. I like to add about a 2-inch-deep layer of compost to every part of my garden, twice a year. That means that I need more than 6 cubic yards of compost for every 1,000 square feet, and this is five or six times more than a normal compost bin, pile, or tumbler can produce.

If you want enough compost to make a real difference in your garden, then some advance planning is required. Most compost piles get

built—and increase their volume—from ingredients that are available only at specific times: leaves in fall, grass clippings in summer, kitchen waste here and there. And this, usually, does not amount to much. Here's what you need to do to make sure that you'll always have enough top-quality compost on hand.

1. Stockpile before you start



The first step to increasing the amount of compost you reap this year is stockpiling large quantities of dead leaves, the compost ingredient that is most freely available in many regions. Dead leaves are the principal source of carbon for my compost pile. I make big wire-mesh pens every fall in which I store my own—and my neighbors'—leaves. Most raked leaves come with twigs or bits of broken branches, which is good because they stop the piled leaves from collapsing into a matted mess. These leaves will be on standby until the following spring, when more compost components become readily available.

2. Become a ferocious chopper



Compost is a mix of carbon (the fuel) and nitrogen (the fire), with help from oxygen and water. When the green stuff (which provides nitrogen) is freely available come spring and summer, it gets mixed with the brown stuff (which provides carbon). But first, everything should get chopped. The more surfaces that you can expose to the decomposers' hungry jaws, the faster you will get usable compost. The best way to do this is to shred the material. A chipper/shredder is ideal, but a bagging lawn mower works almost as well. My neighbors, who already think I'm nuts for gathering their leaves every fall, are convinced of my mental instability when they see me casting vast armfuls of dead leaves over the weedy and grassy area I jokingly call a "lawn." But by running my bagging lawn mower over the whole mess, I get bags full of chopped leaves and grass, nicely combined, that make super-fast compost.

3. Forget the perfect ratio



Many books and articles on composting lay down strict rules about the ratio of nitrogen (green stuff) to carbon (brown stuff). I'm sure that most of them are, technically, correct. But my advice is not to go crazy measuring the ratio. By volume, aim for six parts carbon to one part nitrogen. That's the target, but don't worry—a pile with too much carbon will just kind of sit there, not doing much. A pile with too much nitrogen may smell bad until you stir in some dry dead leaves or sawdust to correct the balance.

4. Turn only when it's cool

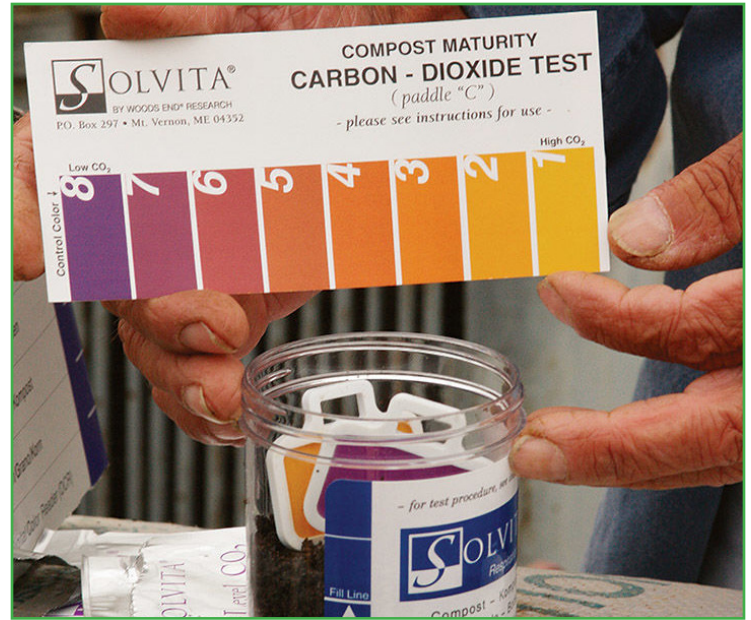


Compost is the result of decomposition by billions of little critters that compete for the food you have so thoughtfully provided. They compete by eating each other, just as their kin do when you add compost to the soil. A compost pile is a war zone where genocide is an ongoing process. All this activity creates heat, which tells you that the war is going well. Over a period of two days, a good compost pile can heat up to about 165°F (when measured with a soil thermometer), which helps kill weed seeds and pathogens.



Things calm down after about a week, when the pile cools to about 80°F to 100°F. That's the time to turn the pile with a pitchfork or compost fork. Mix things up so that what was on the outside of the pile moves into the center and what was on the inside shifts to the outside. By mixing the pile, you add oxygen and provide fresh food for the organisms that just finished eating each other in the middle of the pile, which is why it cooled down. You'll end up turning a pile two or three times before it remains consistently cool. This signals that all your tenants have eaten their fill and that you have lots of finished (but not yet fully mature or usable) compost.

5. Do a maturity test



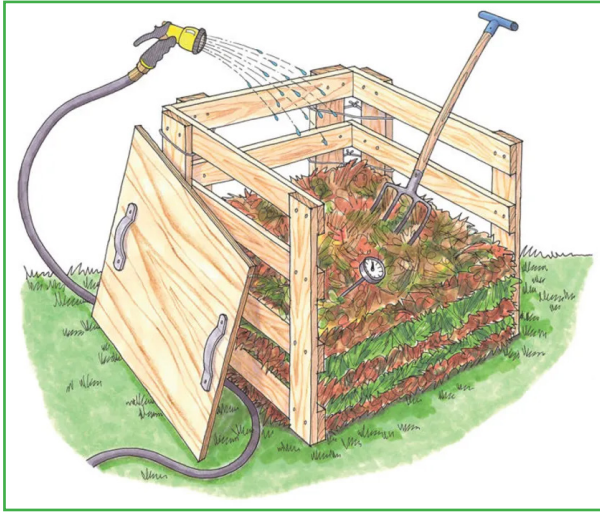
If you spread compost that has not yet fully decomposed to the point where it is biologically stable, it will continue to decompose in your garden soil. Over winter, this might not be a problem, but during the growing season, you might wonder why all your plants have turned yellow. This is because the organisms that ought to be providing nutrients to your plants are too busy dealing with the immature compost, thus sucking up nitrogen that your plants need. A quick measure of maturity is when a well-turned and properly managed pile cools down for the last time and has sat for a month or so, nicely fluffed up and covered to protect it against the rain. A better method is to use a laboratory-style test kit, such as Solvita, available from Woods End Laboratories (solvita.com). It tests for carbon dioxide and ammonia, which at high levels signal that a pile is not mature and that the nitrogen has not stabilized. The kit comes with test strips, incubation jars, and instructions.

Now what do I do with the compost?

It is a mistake to spread compost, then till it in. This mixes it too deeply into the topsoil and leaves much of it deeper than you want it. Spread it, instead, fairly evenly and then scratch it into the top 3 or 4 inches of soil. My favorite tool for this is a three-tooth cultivator. It puts the compost where plant roots live so that they will get the benefit of the nutrients and moisture-holding capacity it contains.

How to Step-by-Step: Build the Pile

Before doing anything else, choose a location that is easy to access with a cart or wheelbarrow. During the piling process, you'll need to transport materials in and compost out. The compost pile, ideally, will be near the garden and within reach of a water source so that you can moisten it when necessary. Here's my foolproof plan for the perfect compost pile.



1. Construct the enclosure.

This pen can be wood pallets standing on end and fastened together, wire-mesh fencing attached to steel fence posts, concrete blocks laid to form an open-front container, or a custom-built wood bin. It can be square, rectangular, round, or oval. There are two basic necessities: It must be at least 3 (preferably 4) feet high and wide, and it must have some sort of cover to protect the pile from rain, which leaches nutrients out of a pile.

2. Build lasagna layers.

Toss in six buckets of shredded leaves and spread them out (creating a brown layer), then sprinkle one bucket of grass clippings on top (creating a green layer). If you are using a chipper/shredder, you can tip the materials into the machine and shovel the chopped-up materials into your enclosure—no layers necessary. Carbon sources can also include sawdust, straw, and shredded paper. Popular nitrogen sources are grass clippings, kitchen waste, and animal manures; bear in mind, however, that chicken and rabbit manures are higher in nitrogen than horse or cow manures.

3. Moisten.

Wet down each layer with a hose as you go. The pile should not be crackly dry or sopping wet; the goal is the dampness of a wrung-out sponge. Too much water drives oxygen out of the pile, which will make it stink.

4. Toss it gently.

After every two or three layers of green and brown, use a pitchfork or compost fork to stir the ingredients together.

5. Keep piling, and cover.

Add layers until the pile is 4 feet deep. End with a layer of leaves, and give the pile a general stirring and light sprinkling of water. You don't need to cover the pile at this stage, although some gardeners say that a cover helps hold in the heat. I worry about a cover, such as a tarp, melting or being set on fire by too much heat (really, it can happen). I prefer a piece of plywood laid on top of the enclosure because it keeps off most of the rain while allowing the pile to breathe.

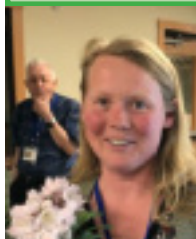
6. Check the temperature.

After about 12 hours, you can use a long-stemmed compost thermometer (\$26; johnnyseeds.com) to measure the temperature at the center of the pile, or you can (carefully) push your hand into the pile to feel the heat. If the pile has not heated up after 24 hours, it either is too dry (and, thus, needs to be moistened and stirred) or doesn't have enough nitrogen (so add a little and mix it in). A sprinkling of dried blood is an easy way to add nitrogen, although it may attract rodents or other unwanted critters.



Registration opens December 1
Website: [ARS2022.org](https://www.ars2022.org)

January Program



The History of Hendricks Park and the Rhododendron Garden

Please join us Wednesday, January 12, 2022 for a Zoom program from Emily Aune on the History of Hendricks Park and the Rhododendron Garden. Emily is the Garden Manager at Hendricks Park and the Secretary of the Eugene ARS Chapter. Look for all the details, along with Zoom links in our January newsletter.



Hendricks Park and the Rhododendron Garden



Wishing you all a most Merry and Blessed Holiday Season!

Click on the link below:

https://www.americangreetings.com/pickup?r=r=y&m=&token=r590cb9ef-1f34-4ac0-8422-d3c76eef-4fe7&pn=prod3482970&utm_medium=pickup&utm_source=share&utm_campaign=receiver

Christmas Cheer is the Flower for December



Photo by Stuart Imrie

Extremely early pink flowers attract plant enthusiasts to this rhododendron. Tough, medium size leaves densely dress the well-shaped plant. Please note that it doesn't bloom at Christmas time as the name might indicate. Its blossoming is closer to the roaring of the March lion.

Predominant Flower Color: Light to medium pink but the same plant will vary in color from year to year and from location to location. Some years it will flower almost pure white

Flower/Truss Description: Flower openly funnel-shaped, 2" across, pink in bud, opening white flushed pink, fading to very pale pink.

Fragrant: No

Bloom Time: Very Early to Early

Foliage Description / Plant Habit: Tough, medium size leaves. Low and mounding, very dense habit. Drought tolerant.

Height: 4 feet in 10 years.

Cold Hardiness Temp: -10°F (-23°C)

Parentage (Seed Parent x Pollen Parent): caucasicum x unknown

Elepidote (E) or Lepidote (L): E

Online Shopping and the ARS Store - A Reminder to Help

Anytime you shop online for just about anything, please consider first going through the American Rhododendron Society Online Store. The ARS Online Store is reached by the link <http://arsstore.org/>

On this **site you will find** a range of merchants who have agreed to give the American Rhododendron Society a referral fee back on each sale "referred" by ARSStore.org. Just use a link from the ARS Online Store site to go to a merchant's site and buy something like you normally would. You get the same low price and help the ARS.

MONTHLY CHAPTER MEETINGS

EUGENE CHAPTER

Third Wednesday from Oct to March at 7:30pm
The Springs at Greer Gardens, 1280 Goodpasture Island Rd, Eugene, OR

PORTLAND CHAPTER

Third Thursday from Sept to May at 7:00pm
All Saints Episcopal Church, 4033 SE Woodstock Ave, Portland, OR

SALEM HARDY PLANT SOCIETY

First Tuesday from Oct to May at 7:00pm
Dye House at Willamette Heritage Center, 1313 Mill Street SE, Salem, OR

SUISLAW CHAPTER

Third Tuesday at 7:00pm
First Presbyterian Church, 3996 Highway 101, Florence, OR

TUALATIN VALLEY CHAPTER

First Tuesday from Sept to April (except for Jan) at 6:45pm
Washington County Fire District 2, 31370 NW Commercial Street, North Plains, OR

DISTRICT 4 CHAPTER WEB SITES

Willamette Chapter arswillamette.com
Eugene Chapter eugene-chapter-ars.org
Portland Chapter rhodies.org
Siuslaw Chapter siuslawars.org
Tualatin Valley tualatinvalleyars.org

All other web sites can be found on rhododendron.org
Under "chapters" under web sites

ARS BULLETINS are available online at:
<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JARS/>

WILLAMETTE CHAPTER ARS AWARDS HISTORY - 1978 to 2019

GOLD ---

Herb Spady	1991
Betty Spady	2001

SILVER ---

Richard "Dick" Cavendar	2003
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BRONZE ---

June Brennan	1987
Jason Ashford	1990
Constance Hansen	1991
Betty Spady	1991
Bob Grasing	1997
Sharon Leopold	2002
Wilbur Bluhm	2006
Chuck and Maxine Dehn	2006
Keith White	2007
Helen Malby	2008
Anne Gross	2009
Dick and Carol Lundin	2011
Wally and Kathy Reed	2012
Syd and Don Werminger	2013
Dick and Carol Lundin	2019
Mary B. Crofts	2019
Roger and Kathy Lintault	2019

WILLAMETTE CHAPTER OFFICERS

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