

# Nifty Tidbits

By CHUCK RIGBY

Each spring, I look forward to the marvelous display of wildflowers that seems to be choreographed to appear at the right point in the show. Buttercups and shooting stars are usually at the introduction, and now dogwood and poppies are beginning to show on stage. Coming soon, after a brief intermission, will be, in my opinion, the stars of the show.

Rhododendrons and azaleas are large and colorful, and even have a noticeable aroma to brighten the woods and streambanks. Along with madrone, they are classified in the Health Family or Ericaceae, from "eric", the Greek word for a heath. This family also includes: huckleberries, cranberries, salal, manzanita, as well as some small woodland plants with no green leaves.

The wild rhododendron in our area has the name Rhododendron macrophyllum. This plant is also the Washington state flower and grows abundantly there also. The name rhododendron was originally used by the Greeks as the name for Oleander, the large colorful shrub common along some California freeways. "Rhodo" is Greek for rose and "dendro" is Greek for tree, therefore the name means rose tree. "Macro" is Greek for large and "phyllo" is the Greek word for leaf. Therefore the name means large leaf rose tree.

Rhododendrons are not native to England, but are found in many other parts of the world, from near-arctic to tropical rain forests. English horticultural societies sent many expeditions to collect species from around the globe. Today the commercial rhododendron is a hybrid combined from many varied native species.

When Carl Linnaeus began the plant classification system, he placed azaleas in a separate genus and species. Later, botanists placed azaleas in the same genus as rhododendron. The name azalea comes from the Greek word for dry because some grow in dry areas in Europe. The Western Azalea, found in our area, is usually found in very moist soil. It has such a pleasant aroma and has the scientific name Rhododendron occidentale. This is based on the Latin word "occidental," which means western.

Azaleas have many structures similar to rhododendrons, and horticulturalists have created hybrids between the two plants. However, azaleas are deciduous, shedding their leaves in the fall, while rhododendrons remain green all year and shed leaves as they produce new ones.

Both plants prefer acidic soil and wild azaleas grow best in moist serpentine soil as well. Both plants contain a toxin, andromedotoxin, which reduces blood pressure and causes vomiting. Most sheep and cattle growers keep their animals away from these plants as much as possible.

In Illinois Valley, wild rhododendrons are abundant along the road to Oregon Caves National Monument above Grayback Campground. They usually don't begin blooming until late May or early June. A good area to see wild azaleas is along Eight Dollar Road, where they also bloom in late May. Driving to the coast, both plants can be seen blooming along the highway near Jedediah Smith State Park.

And for azalea fans, Azalea Park in Brookings, near Memorial Day, is a treat not to miss. During this spring flower show, take lots of pictures, but leave the plants for others to enjoy. Commercial growers in the valley have wild plants which can be purchased.

Because of the great variety of habitats and soil types, Illinois Valley is rich in plant species, including some found nowhere else.

## Estimated \$720K worth of cocaine seized by OSP

Oregon State Police found nearly 80 pounds of cocaine with an estimated street value of at least \$720,000 during a traffic stop on Interstate 5 in Jackson County.

"I've been doing this for eight years, and quite honestly, I don't think we've ever seized this large a quantity of cocaine here," said Trooper Joey Pollard, who stopped the drug-laden vehicle on Saturday, April 19.

Pollard stopped a Ford pickup truck for speeding and having an obscured Oregon license plate at 7:18 a.m. on I-5 northbound between the Central Point and Blackwell Road interchanges. A man and woman in the truck gave written permission to search the truck, he said.

OSP Detective Dave Beck

and his drug-detection dog, "Beeper," searched the truck.

"Beeper" sniffed out the possibility of drugs hidden in the pickup's bed. Police removed a bedliner; noticed fresh cuts and welding in the bed; and found several hidden compartments, Pollard said. They found 36 kilos of cocaine packed into the compartments, he said.

The driver, Rene Aguilar-Cabello, 25, and his passenger, Florencia Alfaro-Rodriguez, 18, both of Orland, Calif., were arrested on charges of possession, delivery and manufacture of cocaine.

They were lodged in the Jackson County Jail, where they initially were held on \$65,000 bail. -- Medford Mail Tribune

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\$4.00 - Adults  
\$2.50 - Kids Under 12  
Saturday, May 3 - 8 to 11 a.m.

**11th Annual Amazing May 2003**  
GRANTS PASS

**SATURDAY, MAY 3**  
• Magical Merlin Parade & County Fair  
• Monte Carlo Night

**FRIDAY, MAY 9**  
• 25th Annual Home Show

**SATURDAY, MAY 10**  
• 25th Annual Home Show  
• EMS Week-Display of Emergency Vehicles  
• Native American Arts Festival & Mothers' Day Pow-Wow  
• 7th Annual Spring Tour of Homes

**SUNDAY, MAY 11**  
• 25th Annual Home Show  
• Native American Arts Festival & Mothers' Day Pow-Wow  
• 7th Annual Spring Tour of Homes

**FRIDAY, MAY 16**  
• EMS Week Golf Tournament

**SATURDAY, MAY 17**  
• Rogue Valley Kennel Club Dog Show

**SUNDAY, MAY 18**  
• Rogue Valley Kennel Club Dog Show  
• Annual Antique & Collectible Street Fair

**THURSDAY - MONDAY, MAY 22-26**  
• Boatnik Festivities

**FRIDAY - SUNDAY, MAY 30-JUNE 1**  
• Balloon Festival

**SATURDAY, MAY 31**  
• American Cancer Society Relay for Life

For more information on these events:  
[www.AmazingMay.com](http://www.AmazingMay.com)

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**Illinois Valley Garden Club**  
**Plant Sale**  
May 3  
10:00-12:00  
Front of County Building

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**CREATING OPPORTUNITIES**  
(in the Illinois Valley)

Get involved in the **IVCRT**  
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Board Meetings (1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays of month):

Board Meeting	County Building	7:00-9:00PM	5/1/03
Workshop Meeting	County Building	7:00-9:00PM	5/15/03

Committee Meetings (Held throughout the month, subject to change):

Quality of Life	Family Resource Center	4:30-5:30PM	Thur	5/1
Bus. Dev./Tourism	IVCRT	6:00-7:00PM	Weds	5/14
Coordinating Council	JoCo Court House	6:00-7:30PM	Tues	5/20
Education	Family Resource Center	5:00-6:00PM	Mon	TBA
Executive Committee	IVCRT Office	5:30-6:30PM	Tues	5/27
Infrastructure	IVCRT Office	5:00-6:00PM	Wed	5/28

The Illinois Valley Community Response Team (IVCRT) is a non-profit organization working to build community consensus around projects that aim to improve the quality of life and foster economic and community development in the Illinois Valley. Meetings are open to the public and Illinois Valley residents are encouraged to attend and participate.

Office hours are 8:30AM-5:00PM, Monday - Friday  
Please call 592-4440 for more information! Fax: 592-4106 TDD: 1-800-735-00  
IVCRT is an Equal Opportunity Provider  
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