



Information Contacts:

Linda Charvat
1.616.822.1620
info@rosebaynursery.com

John Peters
269.857.2967
jppubrel@gmail.com

MAY 13 HISTORICAL SOCIETY PROGRAM
TOURS LOCAL RHODODENDRON NURSERY

DOUGLAS (MI), MAY. 1, 2015 -- Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society's next monthly program reveals the secret life of rhododendrons with a field trip to Rosebay Nursery, 6394 Old Allegan Road in Saugatuck Township, on Wednesday, May 13, starting at 7 p.m. Admission is free and public attendance is invited.

Rosebay owner Linda Charvat will host a walk-and-talk tour explaining how new plants are propagated from cuttings and rooted in "cold frames" to toughen them for local winters, how soil is prepared for planting and what care the plants require through their 3- to 7-year growing period until sale. If rainy weather precedes the meeting, she recommends boots.

A native of the Detroit area, raised in a four-generation family floral business there, Charvat originally envisioned an artist career but upon graduating from MSU with a fine arts degree, decided to return to MSU's "Nursery School" to pursue a landscape and nursery management degree. Those studies brought her into "placement training" with nurseries in the Fennville area where she became interested in the challenges and opportunities of growing rhododendrons here, then discovered an old 20-acre Christmas tree farm outside Saugatuck that offered an ideal mix of sandy soil and sheltering rows of mature pines.

Founded in 1977, Rosebay now raises azaleas, pieris and rhododendrons as supplier to other nurseries, landscapers and retailers throughout Michigan, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. Known primarily for its focus on "rhodies", the company not only cultivates around 80 varieties but researches new varieties, optimal techniques and growing conditions to help landscapers with garden design and retailers with planting information for their customers. Although exclusively wholesale, Rosebay maintains a locally popular tradition of opening to the public briefly once each year -- this year targeting May 16 through Memorial Day. For more information, visit www.rosebaynursery.com.

For general information about the Historical Society, its History Museum in Saugatuck, Old School House History Center in Douglas, programs, social activities and volunteer opportunities, visit www.sdhistoricalociety.org.

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Rosebay Nursery's Linda Charvat to host rhododendron field trip for May 13 Historical Society program.