

# Rare Rhodos vandalized

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A shocking case of vandalism was discovered Oct. 25 in Sechelt's Hidden Grove, where a patch of rare rhododendrons were torn up.

In 2005, loggers discovered a patch of native rhododendrons in the Community Forest, which turned out to be a distinct genetic variation of the Pacific rhododendron. It is otherwise found only outside of Nanaimo and near Manning Park. This is the most northerly stand in North America.

Four years ago, the Sechelt Groves Trailbuilders planted some tiny four-year-old plants raised from seed by Ron Knight of Caron Gardens in an effort to establish populations elsewhere on the Coast. They have been carefully tended ever since, especially during extended dry periods. They are very slow growing, reaching less than two feet (60cm) tall in eight years. Their energy has gone into creating an extensive root system to protect themselves from drought.

All that effort was lost in an instant when one of the patches was wantonly attacked by some idiot. They were yanked up by their stems and cast aside. The remaining root balls are slightly bigger than golf balls. A valiant effort is being made to save them, despite the poor odds.

For a community that claims to be environmentally aware and desires to preserve our natural world, it is hard to comprehend this vandalism. If anyone has any information on this vicious act, please contact the Sechelt Groves Society. ([www.secheltgroves.com](http://www.secheltgroves.com))

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