



Rhododendrons South Australia

Australian Rhododendron Society Inc. South Australian Branch

Issue 103-November 2016

Last Month's Meeting

What a blooming night!

The Crafers Hall was decked out with baskets, trays and vases, all containing numerous rhododendron blooms. Members were most generous in providing the best their gardens could offer and everyone enjoyed the spectacle. The flowers were displayed for members to view during supper. A list of plants that could provide material for next year's cutting day was compiled during the meeting and, closer to this event, members will be approached to provide some cuttings from their plants. An additional benefit of the evening was that many members brought plants that they wanted identified and by discussion with other members this was achieved.

Items of business included a discussion about the End of Year function and a welcome to three new members. They are Linley Keynes, Jane Sabey and Michael Anschutz. We hope that their association with the society is both educational and enjoyable.

The raffle of a deciduous azalea, Les's Penny, was won by Michael Anschutz.



Raffle winner- Michael



Tina, Lianne and Rick discussing the identity of blooms



Barb Meinhart's blooms



Rob's basket



Display of member's blooms

Next Meeting

This will be held at the Crafers Hall on Wednesday, November, 16th at 8pm. This will again be a blooms night showcasing the later flowering rhododendrons. We look forward to having another wonderful display of later varieties so please look around the garden and bring along any of your flowers.

Please remember to bring a plate for supper and something for the "pot Luck Stall". Friends and new members are always welcome.

Urgent Reminder

A reminder to any members who may have forgotten to renew their membership to pay their subscription to our treasurer, Peter Wiadrowski. Members who are not financial at the beginning of 2017 will no longer receive the newsletter nor the benefits afforded to members of the society.

Bloom of the Month – Rhododendron Max Sye



This wonderful specimen is growing in Lynn Edward's garden. Max Sye has parentage from Chevalier Felix de Sauvage and an unknown pollen parent. As a mature plant Max Sye produces blooms in both autumn and spring although the autumn ones can sometimes be early bud burst.

Bird of the Month – Australian Magpie *Gymnorhina tibicen* by Chris Thomas

The Australian Magpie is a large butcherbird. Found over almost all of Australia, and there are 5 races.

In most of SA we have the "White-backed Magpie" but as you go North East you may find the "Black-backed Magpie."

A great vocalist but the interesting aspect is why they sometimes sing right through the night. Not their loud call but a soft warbling, especially on a full moon. No reason known.



Notorious for "swooping" on humans at nesting time.

The three most seen birds in Australia are the Magpie, the Willie Wagtail and the Magpie-lark. All black and white.

From the Propagation Bench by Richard Illman

This is the time of the year when members should keep an eye on their cutting boxes. New growth should be underway and plants will benefit from an application of dilute Seasol or Seamungus and also an application of a liquid fertiliser. If the lid has not yet been removed it should be gradually raised over a period of a few weeks. Plants may also need additional water particularly if they are now getting more sun.



For anyone interested in a spectacular show for late summer or autumn you might consider planting some tuberous begonias. These should be readily available from Bunnings in four cell punnets.





After a very long wet winter, the weather now has warmed considerably, the daylight hours are greater, and the rain that has been falling recently is much lighter, so those areas of the garden that are well drained, and plants growing in containers very soon feel the need of a drink. Lower, not so well drained areas are still very damp and in some cases, almost a swamp, but don't overlook the places that are drying out quite rapidly.

Cornus florida, the flowering dogwood, is a beautiful small tree that has magnificent autumn foliage. The variety "rubra" is a very spectacular sight when covered in bright pink flowers in mid to late spring. Both the pink and white forms are well worth growing for their autumn colour.



Cornus florida "rubra"

The last crab apple to flower—"ionensis" is usually grafted onto an apple root stock, and very often suckers emerge from the stock just above or below ground level. If not removed they can completely overwhelm the ionensis top growth.

As summer approaches birds will be looking for water. A bird bath placed high, (as in a tree) and in the shade is a must (high, out of the reach of cats). Unfortunately, some larger birds can spoil the watering hole for the smaller birds by having vigorous baths and splashing out all of the water. A large stone placed in the centre will still allow the birds to drink and will save the water for the shy, smaller birds.



Crab apple "*Malus ionensis*"

If you have clumps of bearded iris that have not produced many flowers this year, they probably need lifting and dividing. This is best done in January. Work some well-rotted animal manure and/or blood and bone into the soil before replanting. Carnations are easily grown from cuttings at this time. Simply pull off the short lateral growths and plant directly into the ground just as if they were seedlings.



Three weeds that appear at this time of the year are seedling blackberries, ivy and cherry plums- all spread by birds. They are easily removed now before they become established. Milk thistles are spread by wind, and in wetter seasons, such as we have just experienced, will germinate on top of mulch. Again, easily removed while small, but they quite quickly develop a strong root system that penetrates deep into the soil. Milk thistles are excellent food for pets such as rabbits, guinea pigs and poultry too.



Milk Thistle



Blackberry



Cherry Plum

Dahlias now emerging should be staked. They will benefit from a mulch of old cow manure.

A low growing, November flowering rhodo. With mauve blue flowers is "Anica Bricogne". Useful for filling a small space in the rhodo. Garden.

"August van Geert" is a larger rhodo with flowers of a very distinctive cerise shade. It is hardy and found in several old, established gardens in the Adelaide Hills.

An evergreen azalea that flowers for a long period is "Elsa karga", a deep, glowing red of medium height and a bushy appearance.

One of the best deciduous azaleas for autumn colour is "Hugo Koster". It has salmon, orange flowers with a flush of red.

Here's hoping for a not too hot summer. Enjoy our late spring.

Garden Visit

On the Sunday, 16th October, members were fortunate to visit two private gardens on Waverley Ridge road. Even though the weather was inclement to say the least, members decked themselves in wet weather gear and braved the strong winds and hail in order to enjoy the spectacle of “Seaview” and “The Chestnuts”. Peter Weir, the owner of Seaview greeted us warmly with a welcoming glass of red and when the rain eased we ventured on a tour of the garden. It was a real treat to be accompanied by the gardener who offered an insight into the design and structure of the property. The multiple levels in the garden were perfect for displaying self-seeding herbaceous peonies, mature rhododendrons and many prostrate flowering rock plants.

The second garden, “The Chestnuts”, owned by Lynne Edwards and Robert Bryce was a real treat for members. It contained a spectacular example of the Rhododendron Max Sye and a bank of Hino di Giri azaleas that prompted a lot of discussion amongst members about propagating azaleas. The garden also boasted a fine example of a Cork Oak (*Quercus subur*). Lynne and Robert generously provided a delightful venue for afternoon tea where members enjoyed a delicious spread and convivial conversation. Despite the weather everyone enjoyed the afternoon and expressed sincere thanks to Lynne, Robert, Peter and Julie for making their impressive gardens available to our members.



Members on the road

Several of our members have had the opportunity to travel interstate in the last month and they have kindly shared their photos and experiences with the society.

Robyn and Ian Wall travelled to the Dandenongs with Richard and Bronwyn Illman to visit the Ferny Creek show and the National Rhododendron gardens at Olinda.



The gardens at Ferny Creek



Display at the Ferny Creek Show



Cloud Hill Gardens



Cloud Hill Gardens



Azalea bowl at National Rhododendron Gardens Olinda



Gardens of the Coonara Springs restaurant

The Woolrich retreat at Olinda proved to be a most comfortable B&B, and as guests, we were entitled to wander in the gardens of Cloud Hill. This world renowned garden is now for sale and it is hoped that new owners will maintain it in the same state. Another beautiful garden visited was the one of the Coonara Springs restaurant. This property has been recently renovated and we attended the restaurant on Saturday evening where we had a delicious meal and were treated to a high level of service. The following morning we returned to visit the garden where we were impressed with the recent landscaping and could see the potential for the remaining section of the garden. Both the Woolrich retreat and the Coonara Springs property can be highly recommended if any members want a wonderful spring experience in the Dandenong ranges.



Gardens at Coonara Springs restaurant- Olinda

THE BLUE MOUNTAIN GARDENS AT MT. WILSON – Sue Antel

I have wanted to visit the gardens at Mt. Wilson in the Blue Mountains for many years but it is a little out of the way and not in the tourist area of the Blue Mountains so it takes a bit more effort to get there but we had to visit Kurrajong which is reasonably close. I thoroughly recommend making the effort. There are a number of gardens to visit and they are all within a couple kilometres.

We went to Nooroo, first planted in 1880 by William Hay, as I had seen it on Gardening Australia when it was owned by the Valder family, who acquired it in 1917, Peter was a regular presenter on the program. Our timing was very good, third week in October, as the many azaleas, both Mollis and Indica, were in full bloom and absolutely enormous plants and the variety of Japanese Maples were perfection. We were about a week or 2 too early for the extensive collection of Wisteria but they were in full bud and it was easy to appreciate the imminent display. The internet site for Nooroo is worth visiting.



Nooroo entrance



Nooroo Dogwoods

The other garden worth mentioning is Merry Garth. Keith, the very delightful owner, is no longer young but passionate about his incredible collection of rare plants and bulbs. He has trained a number of wisteria to be self-supporting and they make a very interesting small tree in a sort of twisted Japanese style. Having been a good friend of Peter Valder they joined forces to bring interesting plants to the region.



Nooroo area of future development



Nooroo summer house

We also had time to visit the Blue Mountains Botanic Garden at Mt. Tomah. I was expecting to see very similar plants but to my amazement they had a section of ground cover daisies as well as wall flowers. Too basic to be in such a rarefied atmosphere I thought but there were quite a few daisies I had not seen before. There were some interesting looking bog plants but we struggled to find the names. In the main building there is a gallery which had a very impressive exhibition of items made from grasses. This garden is also well worth a visit and is about 10 Kilometres from Mt. Wilson.

Celebrating member's gardens



Water feature in Belinda's garden



Belinda working at night!



Waterfall in Lianne Healey's Japanese garden



Clematis Westerplatte



Clivia thrive in dappled shade



Rhododendron Tyermanii in Rob & Jacki's garden. It is a cross of Nuttallii, with wonderful foliage but no perfume. Cuttings may be available next year.

Our Very Own Mount Lofty Botanic Gardens (MLBG)

A walk through the Mount Lofty gardens at this time of the year is a wonderful experience, with many of the rhododendrons and azaleas at their peak.



Looking down upon a beautiful white rhododendron in Rhododendron Gully



Maples and deciduous azaleas near the lake.

Librarian's Report by Ann & David Matison

It is obvious that the Library of a Rhododendron Society is going to have a large collection of publications relating to the subject of our Society. In fact approximately seventy five percent of our books deal specifically with Rhododendrons, Azaleas and Vireyas. We do however have a small collection of other books.

For example we have a book on Fritillaries, one on Camellias, another on Narcissus and Japanese Maples, to name just a few. Your neglectful Librarians have not recently checked the collection to ensure that those books are currently on the shelves, but if they are not a member must have them.

Which reminds me: if you would like to borrow a book from the cupboard in the Crafers Hall, just take the card out of the back of the book. Write your name in the borrowers' column and the date in the Out column. Then place the card in the borrowers' box, kept in the cupboard. When you return the book, find the card where you left it and we would be pleased if you could write the date in the "In" column before placing the book back into the cupboard.

Tales from Forest Lodge by Milton Bowman



I have heard a rumour that Spring is going to happen sometime in the near future, but it has not really happened yet! October continued the theme of rain, cold, and recurrent windstorms. Another two trees were blown over, adding to the mass of firewood for next year and to the work that has to be done. However the core of the garden is intact and some of the old Rhododendrons are starting to colour up. The Rose Garden area looks beautiful and is quite a sight

from Pine Street. There are 2 Cynthias, a Pink Pearl, a Cunningham's White, and a Ponticum all in flower. The Iris have just started to flower as well and will be a feature over the next month, and the old Rhododendron cultivars will probably go through to Christmas, which is almost unheard of!

I did mention that it had continued to rain in October and we had a further 193.5mm. This took the year's total to 1499.5mm, and we have a bit more this month. Thus we have had a good 1.5 METRES of rain this year, and if it does not rain at all for the rest of the year it makes it a very above average year.

The consequence of all of this is that everything is growing, the season is late, and we are well placed for Summer because the ground has plenty of moisture.



Notice Board

End of Year Function

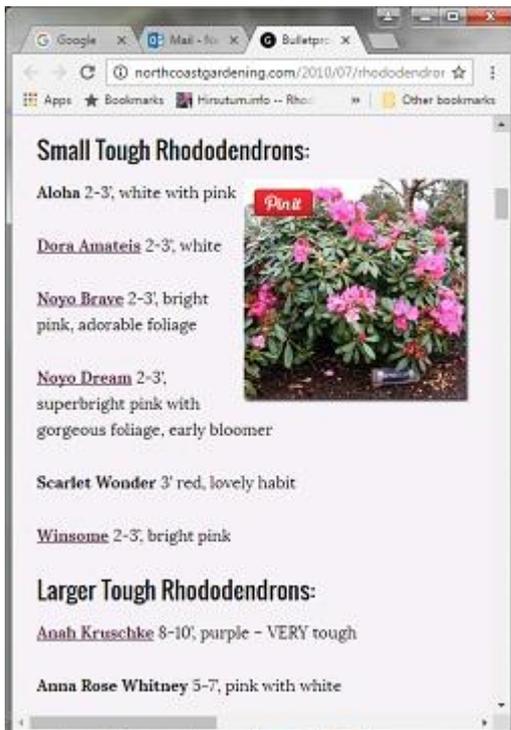
Our annual Christmas gathering will be held in the garden of Peter and Rebecca Kennedy at 10 Snows Road, Stirling on Saturday the 3rd of December at 12:30pm.

Some parking is available opposite in the child care car park.

The society will provide the main course of meat, salads, desserts, tea and coffee.

Members are asked to bring their own drinks and a chair. RSVP to Milton by 18th November.

Article on 'Hardy Rhododendrons'



“...Recently, I asked Don Wallace of [Singing Tree Gardens](#), our local Rhododendron expert, for suggestions of “bulletproof” Rhododendrons that I could use in tough spots where other plants might not thrive – like in windy areas, or in poor soils. He came up with a great list of tougher-than-usual Rhodies, which I have found so useful I wanted to share it with you here.”

Read full article [Bulletproof Rhododendrons: Rhodies for Sea Coast Wind and Other Tough Conditions](#)

