

Rhododendrons South Australia

Australian Rhododendron Society Inc. South Australian Branch

Issue 92 - October 2015

August Meeting – Annual General Meeting



The AGM of the society was held on Wednesday, August 19th, 2015. It was a well-attended meeting which, could perhaps be attributed to a changed format. The evening commenced with drinks and savouries which created a most convivial atmosphere prior to the main meeting. Ian Smylie presented the President's report (a copy of which is printed below) followed by the Treasurer's report that was presented in Peter Wiadrowski's absence by Jeff Betcher. The returning officer, Jeff Jenkinson, announced the nominations for all vacant positions and asked for further nominations.

The following members were elected unopposed:

President (2015-2016) *Robert Hatcher*
Vice president *Belinda Cullum*
Secretary *Milton Bowman*
Treasurer *Peter Wiadrowski*

Executive Committee:

Web master *Michelle & David Woolford*
Librarians *David & Ann Matison*
Newsletter editors *Bronwyn Illman & Nataliya Popova*
National Council delegate *Jeff Jenkinson*
Committee member *Robyn Wall*

The meeting plant sale. The evening concluded with a very successful plant sale. The plants had been provided by the Raywood nursery at Delamere.

President's Report ARS (SA Branch) 2015

It is my great pleasure to present this annual report and I am happy to say that we have welcomed new members to our society.

The monthly meetings have been well attended (despite the weather) and it is fair to say that there has been a great collegiality of members.

At any AGM there are many people to thank, particularly the members of your committee of management.

Special thanks to Milton as secretary, Peter as Treasurer, Bron, Michelle and David as newsletter editors and web masters, David and Ann as librarians, David as Vice president, Jeff Jenkinson as our National Council delegate and Bron, Robert et al (very successful plant sale).

Rob Hatcher's hard work is worthy of special mention and does not go unnoticed- especially as our "in house" guest speaker and along with Jacqui in covering the absence of the President and secretary in May.

Our speakers this year included Rob (presenting on Sikkim, India and Singapore) Peter, Bron and Jeff (on the NZ conference) and Richard (on some great gardens of England). Richard was also the driving force behind our very successful cutting day.

We were all saddened by the death of Ray Giles, our oldest member and a wonderful man, but all delighted by the life membership of Peter Wiadrowski.

There has been some angst about the role and future of ARS, prompting the Federal President, Simon Begg, to visit our branch in July. It appears that a consensus will be reached to maintain a much leaner federal body and the "return to the fold" of all rhododendron societies in Australia.

The Christmas function at Beverina was a classic afternoon in a fairyland setting. The 2015 Christmas function will be at Wensleydale on 5th of December.

There will not be a meeting in September when the Grant Memorial lecture will be delivered.

I believe we have had a good year and I have decided to step down after three years (following the example of national rules). Thank you for allowing me the privilege of representing you all. I have enjoyed it.



Ian 'Thank you' gift

Grant Memorial Lecture 'The conservation of Vireya Rhododendrons'



The lecture was presented by Andrew Rouse from the Victorian branch and was attended by a significant number of our members. Thanks must go to Rosemary Thomson and Tania Thomas for the wonderful arrangements of flowers that graced the library tables and to all members who supplied delicious savouries.

Andrew presented an extremely interesting lecture covering topics that included the current geographical range of Vireya rhododendrons, the role in conservation of the Vireya house at Olinda, and specific growing conditions of these plants. His presentation was enhanced by some wonderful photographs which served to inspire many of the attendees.

The door prize of a Vireya 'Coral Flare' was won by Rob Field.



The death of Mary Grant

Members will be saddened to learn of Mary Grant's passing. Mary was a life member of our society and passed away peacefully on October 8th. Her passion was for old world roses and perennials but she supported her husband Allan Kerr Grant in his love for rhododendrons and in particular Vireyas. Mary was a past president of the society and on Allan's death she bequeathed a generous donation to the society for the purpose of education and the Grant Memorial Lecture remains her legacy.

Annual Rhododendron Plant Sale

The weather on the morning of the predicted and all were grateful that we energetic band of members arrived arrange the numerous plants in time. As usual there were "early birds" bargains were snapped up in the first visitors and potential customers filed and successful sales were made



sale day was much better than did not need to change venue. An early to set up the canopies and preparation for the 10am opening lined up at the gate and many beautiful hour. A steady stream of interested through the display throughout the day following enthusiastic encouragement

and expert advice from members. The day proved to be most enjoyable with many members catching up with friends and sharing gardening knowledge with one another.

From the Propagation Bench

Artificial pollination of desirable plants

There are numerous desirable garden plants that need intervention for pollination. In our garden at the moment are Erythroniums, species Tulips, miniature daffodils and fritillaria. These varieties do not have natural pollinators and require artificial pollination. A fine camel hair brush is ideal for this task. Keep a watchful eye on your plants after pollinating so that you can collect and sow the seed.



By Richard Illman

Time to propagate your summer vegetables

The soil temperature is rising but not yet warm enough to plant tomatoes and other summer vegetables into the ground. It is a good time to sow tomatoes, pumpkins, cucumbers and other summer vegetables in small punnets or individual pots and keep them in a warm sheltered spot. By the time the soil is warm enough you will have some strong healthy seedlings to plant. Don't forget to grow some blue flowering plants near your tomatoes, e.g. lavender. They attract the blue banded bees which increase the pollination of tomatoes.



By Bill Voigt

Culture Notes

Azaleas come in many colours these days and while most seem to blend in together, the reds do clash with the predominant pinks and purples. One solution is to plant whites and reds together. The red azalea "Fire Magic" looks good when placed next to a pure white variety.

Warmer temperatures bring out the dreaded Lace Bug, so an early spraying with Confidor should check any possible infection.

Epimediums provide a very good ground cover for partially shaded areas. The new bronze foliage is very attractive and the spring produced flowers, most of which are spurred, come in shades of white, red, cream and yellow. One very hardy and easy to grow variety is "neo-sulphurem" which has bright yellow flowers (these are not spurred as are most others).

Aphids have already appeared on the roses. If only a few are found they can easily be rubbed off with your fingers, or squirted with a hose. Heavier infestations will require an insecticide spray. If you are fortunate enough to have birds such



as silver eyes or thornbills in your area, you will notice they quickly dispose of any aphids. Black aphids are still attacking new leaves on camellias and if not eradicated will cause the new leaves to be distorted and curled.



When daffodils have finished flowering there is a temptation to remove the old foliage, but this should be avoided as the leaves are producing food which will be drawn down into the bulb where the next year's flowers are formed. Ericas provide colour during the dreary months of winter, but they soon become untidy shrubs if they are not pruned after flowering. Most Australian native shrubs can also be kept shapely by pruning immediately after flowering, e.g. Boronia, Olearia, and Grevillea.

The new shoots on roses are very attractive to Rosellas and they nip off the soft growths which contain the flower buds. One way to deter them is to attach a few long strips of aluminum foil to the bushes. This usually frightens them away.

Any potted plants standing on the soil or gravel should be lifted to break any roots from growing into the soil below. If not checked periodically the plants can be firmly anchored and hard to move.

A long, hot summer is forecast, so mulching will be helpful in preventing moisture loss and in keeping the soil (and roots) cool.

Apart from the huge varieties of petunias available for summer colour, try phlox, ageratum, zinnias and coreopsis. Of all the flowering trees in bloom now, "Malus Floribunda" is one of the most spectacular and trouble free ones to grow.



Enjoy the wonderful spring.

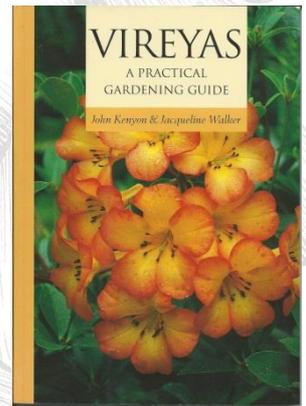
Bill



By Ann & David Matison

As some of you will have attended the recent Grant Memorial Lecture and heard Andrew Rouse's talk we thought it timely to review a book about Vireyas. There are a few books which touch on the subject of Vireyas, but the one we have found the most informative is a small book in our Library named "Vireyas - A practical gardening guide" by John Kenyon and Jacqueline Walker.

Some years ago when we joined this Society we were unaware of Vireyas. For long standing members of the Society that may seem inadmissible, but for those of us who have spent our gardening lives on the plains it is not surprising. If someone had shown me a Vireya Flower I would have wrongly assumed that it was a Rhododendron, but having read "Vireyas" I realize that although they are related they have many differences. The book covers topics such as description, history, growing the plants in gardens and in containers and landscaping with Vireyas. It also contains a comprehensive list of Vireya Hybrids and Species.



For those who are as ignorant as I was, this is a good book to fill in the gaps. Or if you are thinking of planting these very versatile plants, a good book to consult.

Now that spring has arrived the Rhododendrons, Azaleas and Vireyas are at their best. As we have said before, ours is a new hills garden and it is giving us great pleasure watching our new hills specific plants grow and flower.'

Bloom of the Month – Vireya 'Tuba'



Bird of the Month – Australian Spotted Crake *Porzana Fluminea*



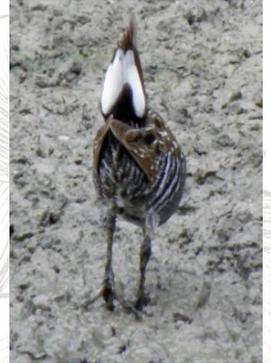
Fairly common in swamps and wetlands. Classified as shy. The most likely location in our hills is Laratinga Wetlands at Mount Barker.

The “giveaway” is the white tail from the rear. Look for them in the shallows and the edges.

There are other Crakes and Rails to be seen, but this one is the most likely with the white tail.

If the waters are too full they are hard to find, as they hide in the undergrowth.

Chris Thomas



Tales from Forest Lodge



September continued the trend of being cold and whilst there was some rain we continued to fall behind on total rainfall and the year is starting to look like a relatively dry one. However there were a few highlights, and in particular the 16th was an exciting day. After a short burst of light hail it poured with rain for 1/2 an hour and dropped 22mm, whilst lightning and thunder added to the spectacle. That was the last of the rain for the month and the total was only 90.5mm, well short of the average of 124mm.

Ominously, October has started with extreme heat and we have already had fire bans declared. I hope that this is not the start of a long and hot summer.

On a positive note, the rhododendrons have responded to the heat by suddenly opening up the flower buds and blooming, and the garden looks a treat. Time to check the watering systems and to spray for the lace bug before it gets the drop on me!!

Milton Bowman

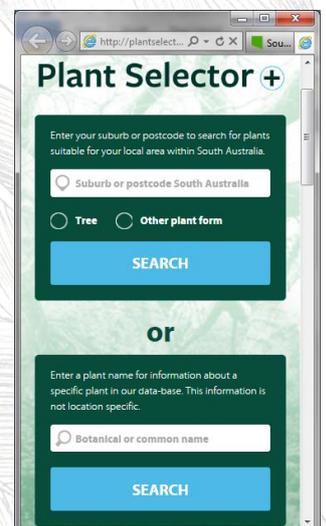
Interesting Facts & Resources

Plant Selector+ <http://plantselector.botanicgardens.sa.gov.au/> is a comprehensive, relevant and user-friendly online resource to help achieve more sustainable urban landscapes through improved plant selections.

Plant selections include Australian native and exotic species that are non-invasive and require minimal supplementary water once established.

Detailed information is provided about each plant including suitability for different landscape types, soil and light preferences, physical appearance, growth habits, attraction for native fauna, common landscaping uses and other qualities and cautions. Additional information about trees includes suitability for a variety of urban placements and purposes.

For more information about how to use Plant Selector+ please refer to the [Plant Selector+ User Guide](#).



Notice Board

This is a new section where members can get information about next meeting and forthcoming events, e.g. conferences, open gardens, etc.

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on October 21st at the Crafers Hall commencing at 8pm. It will be a blooms night so please bring representatives of the rhodos blooming in your garden. We are also interested to see how the cuttings planted in March are progressing. We encourage members to bring their cutting box to the meeting so we can discuss the next step in the propagating process.

A reminder from our Treasurer that annual subscriptions and payments for purchased plants are due.

Please remember to bring a plate for supper and something for the plant stall.

Neutrog Spring Order

As a benefit to members Neutrog allows us to have an autumn and spring order of their products. Please find attached a copy of the spring order form. The procedure to be followed is:

1. Print two copies of the order form and complete.
2. Send one copy with payment to Neutrog before October 30th
3. Retain a copy for your records and to be used when you collect the order.
4. You will be notified when the order has been delivered to MLBG.

Travel Matters

You may be interested in information supplied by Trevor Nottle regarding a trip he is hosting next year. It is entitled Garden Views and includes visits to gardens in France, England and Wales as well as a full day at the Chelsea flower show. More information can be obtained from the following web address. www.facebook.com/JulieReeceTours.