



Rhododendrons South Australia

Australian Rhododendron Society Inc. South Australian Branch

Issue 118 - August 2018

President's Message

Our next meeting is the AGM with presentation of annual reports and election of office bearers for the following year, namely president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. Typically positions of office are occupied for three years unless someone is exceptionally committed and dedicated. Notably, this year Peter Wiadrowski will be standing down as treasurer after a very long term of office of more than 20 years! For some years during this time he also served as treasurer on the National Council. His dedication and commitment warrant specific acknowledgement and celebration and so it is with much pleasure that I proudly and very gratefully thank Peter, who can now continue to enjoy his life membership as an ordinary member of the Australian Rhododendron Society.

Notwithstanding Peter's contribution over the years, it is good to refresh the committee with new and varied input by members willing to step up to the plate. As I've said before, this extra commitment doesn't need to be burdensome and in fact can be rewarding and fun! If not prepared to do this, members' help is always welcome and appreciated at special events such as the plant sale looming later next month.

Barbara Mynhart is the presenter at our August meeting and will be capping off a wonderful series of presentations revolving around the garden visit experiences of those members who made the journey to Europe earlier this year for the ARS conference in Bremen. Thank you to Barbara, Richard Illman and the Watermans for sharing their experiences and wonderful photography with us!

Next Meeting

This will be held at the RSL Hall, Stirling, on Tuesday, August 21st at 8pm. It will be the AGM of the society and there will be a presentation on growing Rhododendrons in Finland by Barb Mynhart.

Please wear your name tag. We have new members who find it much more welcoming when they can refer to people's names. If you have misplaced your name tag or don't have one please let Chris Thomas know so that he can produce a new one.

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

Photos from the July Meeting- our lucky raffle winner was Lianne Healey, winning a stunning plant of Sinogrande and a pair of German secateurs.



Spring is around the corner



Miniature Daffodil Topolino



Dwarf Iris



Camellia Dr.Clifford Parks

Bloom of the Month – Belinda’s Seta “On Ice”





From the Propagating Bench *by Richard Illman*

Grafting workshops were run during August and attended by 16 members who took home maple roots stocks grafted with a variety of upright and weeping varieties. The technique of veneer grafting was demonstrated as well as its application to grafting conifers, ginkos, beeches, liquidambers, rhododendrons and stone fruit.

We look forward to hearing about the success of the grafting process.



The following article is reprinted with the kind permission of Joy O'Keefe, current President of the New Zealand Rhododendron Society. The article supports many of the ideas expressed by Ken Cox of Glendoick Nursery in Scotland. Members may recall that Glendoick, in recent years, has been focussing its Rhododendron production on foliage colour.

Rhododendrons for All Year Round Appeal

From August through to December we tend to focus on the colourful blooms rhododendrons produce. What about January to July?

By selecting plants with attributes other than just flowers, one can have rhododendrons with all year round appeal. Their leaves and buds can add interest to the summer, autumn and winter garden. Rhododendron leaves are produced in a huge range of greens, they can be glossy or dull, textured or smooth, huge or tiny, indumented, tomented, rounded or narrow and pointed.

Foliage, especially the new growth on some rhododendrons can be almost as attractive as the flowers.

When thinking of excellence of foliage, *R. yakusimanum* and *R. pachysanthum* are two plants which come to mind. *R. yakushimanum* is a densely foliated plant, with dark green, curled down leaves heavily indumented, fawn in colour. Silvery tomentum covers the surface of new growth. This attribute can also be seen in many of the hybrids bred from it, two NZ hybrids *R. 'High Society'*, *R. 'Superman'* being examples. *R. pachysanthum* has showy indumentum, more tan in colour. Its tomentum is silvery tan and persists all summer. *R. 'Yak Pac'* is a combination of the two forming a most attractive plant.



R. yakushimanum



R. pachysanthum

Blue-green leaves provide an interesting variation, the species *R. campanulatum* ssp. *aeruginosum* being the bluest foliage plant I have seen. The miniature *R. fastigiatum* 'Blue Steel' has tiny glaucous blue leaves which provide the perfect background for its blue – purple flowers in spring.

R. 'Osbo's Red Elizabeth' produces distinctive red new growth, the red tone remaining for several months. Examples of others putting on red new growth are *R. 'Elizabeth Lockhart'* and '*R. Warlock*'. The buds of *R. nuttallii* and some *R. nuttallii* hybrids are an amazing purplish red as they start to open, the leaves gradually turning to green. Variegated leaves appeal to some, to others they are a definite "no". A few years ago we were given cuttings of what was believed to be a sport of *R. 'Cornubia'*. I have read it has been named *R. 'Red and Gold'* after the red flower and bold, lime

green leaf edges. Because the foliage of this plant is so different and stands out amidst plain green plants, it sells very well. Even R. 'President Roosevelt' is still asked for.

Dark green, glossy leaved plants are always in demand, R. 'Rubicon', R. 'Sheila McLeod', R. 'Elizabeth Hobbie' and *R. maddenii* hybrids to name a few.

Then there are those rhododendrons with textured leaves that are also very appealing such as *R. edgeworthii* with swollen, puckered foliage, and several of the *R. nuttallii* hybrids.

Look under the leaves of several rhododendrons and the indumentum can be quite spectacular. R. 'Neato', R. 'Cinnamon Bear' and 'Sir Charles Lemon' being a few examples with brilliant tan indumentum. *R. macabeum* has creamy white and quite woolly indumentum.



R.edgeworthii



R.macabeum

The range of leaf shape and size is huge, so plant selection on these two factors alone can provide much interest in the garden all year round. The large leaved rhododendrons never fail to impress.

Denis Hughes considers *R. macabeum* to be one of the best for foliage. New growth on the large leaved rhododendrons can create an impressive sight. The leaf buds about to burst open stand up like tall candlesticks. When visiting 'Mt Congreve' garden, Water-ford, Ireland some years ago, the huge plants of large leaved rhododendrons were at this stage, a sight we have never forgotten. The fact flowering was finished did not bother us, the new growth was a sight to behold.

The colour of flower buds often provides contrast to the green leaves through autumn and winter. In our garden R. 'Taurus', R. 'Crossroads', R. 'Firedance' and several *R. williamsianum* hybrids all have prominent red buds, R. 'Helene Schiffner' dark purple buds, adding to the attractiveness of the plant.

Several northern hemisphere plant hybridisers are focusing on breeding for foliage, some of which look very exciting. A pity we in NZ no longer have easy access to these newly developed treasures, however we do have available a wide range of rhododendrons which provide all year round interest in our gardens.

Joy O'Keefe

Red-necked Avocet

Recurvirostra novaehollandiae



Size is 40-48cm. The ginger head and the upturned bill make it easy to identify.

Like many water birds found in Australia, the red-necked avocet is highly nomadic, due mainly to the high variation in rainfall, moving around the continent in search of suitable habitat. It has a very wide range in Australia but is comparatively rare on the northern and north-eastern coasts.

The birds have a preference for salt or brackish water and are generally found in shallow wetland areas that are either fresh or salt, or on [estuarine mudflats](#).

Seen at Laratinga wetlands at Mt Barker, Lake Alexandrina, and on the coast from St Kilda northwards. Often in large numbers in either salt water or fresh lakes inland.

Apology: *The newsletter editors wish to apologise to Ann and David for omitting the final segment of their article on the Cox family published in the July edition. This has been published below.*

Kenneth and his wife Jane have two boys; one wonders whether they will be the next generation of rhododendron experts.

Between them, the three generations of Cox men have written many garden books. Not only about rhododendrons, but others as well. Kenneth's latest book is Woodland Gardens published this year which we hope to be able to add to our library soon. At the last count we already have eleven books by either one or the other of the Cox family or written as co-authors.

What a family!

This report is a précis of a longer article found on the Glendoick House website. For those who are interested do look it up.

This month's book

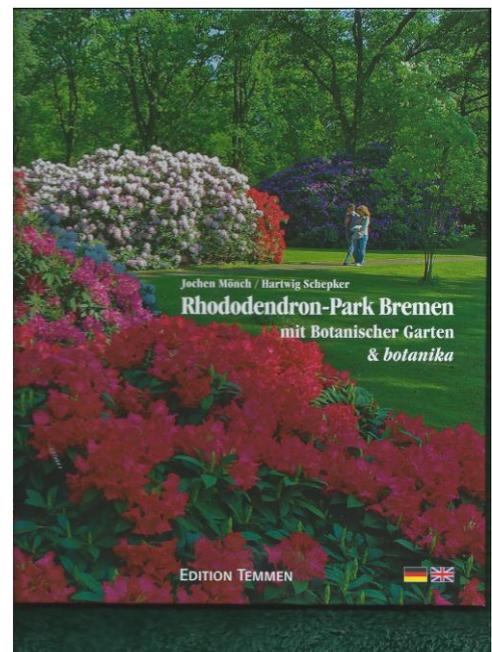
We have just finished reading a most delightful book, which made us wish that we had been a part of the Adelaide contingent to the recent Rhododendron Conference in Bremen. Bronwyn and Richard Illman have very kindly donated their copy of "Rhododendron-Park Bremen", a book they received at the conference.

According to the Preface the park *'is a horticultural history book. When everything is in full bloom it is transferred into a delight for the senses and all year round it serves as a living museum.'*

I consider that the book is a picture book, but there is enough text to give the reader a very clear idea of the beauty and magnitude of this amazing park. The illustrations are photographs that are obviously taken during the spring when the rhododendrons are at their most magnificent. The park contains the second largest collection of species, and cultivar rhododendrons plus azaleas and vireyas in the world, but there are many other plants as well, including a formal rose garden, a beautiful looking Japanese garden and many big trees.

The Park started by the German Rhododendron Society on land provided by the city of Bremen in 1937, was integrated with the Botanic Gardens after World War II. The most recent addition in 2003, the Botanica, which sounds like a like a delight to a parent, grandparent or teacher, contains interactive exhibits and displays on plants and provides children opportunities to become explorers of the plant world.

The book is definitely worth looking at. It is an attractive book about a truly beautiful park. If you are in Germany, in or near Bremen, it would be worth a long visit.



Tales from Forest Lodge by Milton Bowman



July started with reasonable rain but then things slowed down. In fact we had some Spring like weather when it was quite warm and we all started to think that winter had finished. Fortunately August has really started well and we already have had more rain in August than in the whole of July. Rainfall in July was 114.5mm, taking the total for the year to 490.5mm, well below average. August

might make up for the deficit. We have continued to work on the new beds and have moved many Rhododendrons into them and we will continue with the fill in plantings over the next month or two. This whole venture is an experiment for Forest Lodge but we think that it will work and will mean that a large number of flowering plants will be close to the house where we can look after them more easily and where they can be appreciated from and around the house. We have found out that rhododendrons that get adequate water, good fertiliser, more sunshine, and much less competition from big trees actually grow rapidly and look healthy. In contrast those that live in the main garden struggle along and were badly infested with thrip during Autumn. I checked our cutting boxes yesterday and then potted up 27 new Rhododendrons which will be ready for next year's plant sale. I was pleased with their progress and have included some photos of them. The cold and damp weather is the ideal time to acclimatise them to life outside of the cutting box, and they have been potted on into a mixture of acid potting mix and peat, and hopefully they will power along from here. Happy Gardening

Milton Bowman



Notice Board

Spring Neutrog Orders

Members will find order forms for the spring order attached to this newsletter. Please complete your order and return it via e-mail to Bronwyn. Make sure that you keep a copy for yourself.

(Note – new e-mail Linwood4574@icloud.com)

When you have placed your order please pay the treasurer, indicating who is making the payment and what it is for. ***The final order cannot be placed until all monies have been paid.***

Payment details:

The Australian Rhododendron Society –South Australian branch

BSB 735080

Account nos. 070793

Details for payment are printed on the order form.

The final date for submitting orders to Bronwyn is August, 31st.

Members will be notified when the order is delivered and how to collect their order.

The following article is sourced from Neutrog's August newsletter



Winter Fertiliser Guide

Like humans and animals, plants require regular feeding throughout the year. Read our fertiliser guide for happy, healthy plants that are more resistant to pests, diseases, heat stress and frost.

Lawns:

Aerate lawns with a fork or lawn aerator now and remove broadleaf weeds like capeweed before they flower - you don't want to fertilise the weeds too! Then top dress your lawn with

Blade Runner or Seamungus Crumble to help improve root growth over the winter period when leaf growth tends to be slower.

Flowering Plants:

After pruning winter dormant plants such as roses and fruit trees, feed the root zone with an application of 100g of Seamungus per plant. This will help prepare the roots for the coming spring. Move cymbidium orchids into a spot so they receive maximum sunlight and feed monthly with Strike Back for Orchids. The cooler months are the best times to relocate plants or divide clumping perennials. Mix some Seamungus through the new planting site and water in with GOGO Juice to stimulate new root growth for good establishment.

Fruit Trees:

Winter is a great time to plant bare rooted fruit trees and ornamentals. When digging the hole for planting, make sure the soil is turned and loosened to two spades depth. Then mix some Seamungus through the soil in the hole when planting and water in well with GOGO Juice.



Grapevines:

Fertilise with Sudden Impact for Roses towards the end of July - this hit of potassium will help ensure an abundant crop.

Natives:

Winter is a great time for planting natives. Use some Seamungus in the bottom of the planting hole to get them started, and water in with GOGO Juice. If you need some winter colour in the garden consider planting the colourful climber Hardenbergia violacea (commonly called Happy Wanderer) or flowering shrub Alyogyne huegelii (commonly called Native Hibiscus).

Vegetables & Herbs:

Established asparagus fronds will be bright yellow in colour by now. Prune them back to ground level and generously apply 2-3 handfuls of Rocket Fuel per square metre over the soil. Then mulch well with pea straw or sugar cane and stand back for delicious asparagus spears appearing with the arrival of spring.

Plant strawberry runners in raised beds or pots now. They like a slightly acidic soil, so use Seamungus when planting and then feed with dose of Kahoona fertiliser at the start of spring.

Annual Plant Sale

This will take place on Sunday, September 23rd. Please keep this date free as we will need the assistance of members to make this day a success. There are many jobs to do and if the load can be shared it does make it easier. Many people may feel they don't know enough about specific plants to be useful as a sales person but it is the best way to increase your knowledge, and there are many members on hand to ask.

At the AGM please come prepared to indicate how many plants propagated in 2017 you will be able to make available for sale.

