



Rhododendrons South Australia

Australian Rhododendron Society Inc. South Australian Branch

Issue 120 - October 2018

President's Message

At last month's meeting our intrepid vireya adventurer, Henry Hancock, regaled us with a marvellous presentation embellished with Greek tragedies and awe-inspiring photography. In late May, earlier this year, a group of Australians, including Henry (and a token Italian) all sharing a common passion for Vireya Rhododendrons, embarked on an harrowing expedition into the mountainous region of Sabah in north Borneo, intent on identifying as many of the vireya species indigenous to the region as possible. Henry put many hours of preparation into delivering this most entertaining account and is to be commended for his efforts.



"And then there were five"- Dr Henry Hancock's entertaining presentation of his trip to Kalamantan

At a more sedate and civilized pace, as well as a much less hostile environment, we will be enjoying gardens of a different kind but hopefully still with Rhododendrons on show, before our October meeting. Robyn Wall has managed to organise an afternoon of exclusive garden visiting for Society members involving three properties along Sturt Valley Road, including Wensleydale, the spectacular garden belonging to Janie Smylie. Afternoon tea will be enjoyed within Janie's recently restored heritage-listed garden gazebo. It should be a wonderful afternoon.

Thankfully Sunday, September 23rd provided us with favourable weather for our annual plant sale at Mount Lofty Botanic Gardens. We had a great selection of plants from Toolangi and also those proudly propagated by members, as well as a steady stream of customers throughout the day. Members were very generous with the time they devoted to assisting with setting up early in the morning, managing the sale, and packing up at the end of the day. Many hands make light work as they say! As well as healthy plant sales several new member recruits were achieved so a special

“welcome” to those who are new members. We look forward to getting to know you and including you in our activities



Our new Treasurer, Barb Mynhart, presenting her first financial statement.

Philip presenting some wonderful colour combinations



Our two raffle winners.

Janie Smylie and Andrew Waterman



2018 Plant Sale



Next Meeting

This will be held at the RSL Hall, Stirling, on Tuesday, October 16th at 8pm. This will be the first of two “bloom nights” so please bring some of your early flowering rhododendrons to display.

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

Garden Visits



Afternoon tea in the historic gazebo at the home of Janie & Ian Smylie





The gardens at KinCraig, the home of John & Lyn McDonald and Berkeley Vale, the home of Penny & Tom Gosse



Ned's story



Having been so warmly welcomed as the first macropod member of the Rhododendron Society, I thought you might be interested in my story. I was born at Roxby Downs and after being orphaned (road kill) was rescued by a passer-by and handed in to a member of the Native Animal Network. NAN is a state wide organisation that has been working for 30 years caring for injured and orphaned wildlife and providing information to the community.

As I was only about 6 months old, weighed only 1kg and needed high level care, I came down to Adelaide to NAN headquarters at Little Hampton, was assessed and a suitable carer (Heather W) found.

I spent the next 6 months in a warm pouch having 4 hourly feeds of Wambaroo, a lactose free formula designed for joeys. I didn't like to be left alone so went to all sorts of places in my bag including Writers Week in the Adelaide Festival where the international visitors made quite a fuss of me. I also enjoyed riding in the pocket of Heathers golf bag.

I was a good feeder and put on weight rapidly. I started to get out of my pouch for short periods and found my feet. Initially I just jumped up and down on the spot but eventually got the hang of it! I found 3 more of my type in the garden and made friends with them, two girls Gemma and Fern, and a bloke from the Flinders Ranges called Flynn. They taught me all about being a kangaroo and were very concerned when I broke my arm. Flynn even helped me remove my cast one night when Heather wasn't watching!



I am now 18 months old and weigh about 7 kg. I am part of the mob and spend most days in the garden playing with the other roos, chasing ducks, and eating Heather and Steve's garden. I eat lucerne hay, kangaroo pellets and love sweet corn, apples and pears. I hate carrots and Flyn has told me that mangoes are his favourite. I look forward to moving up to Aldgate next year and hope you will come and visit.

Cheers Ned.



Bloom of the Month – Azalea Cherry Ice Delight





From the Propagating bench *by Richard Illman*

Vireya Rhododendrons

It is pleasing to note that there has been a growing interest from our members in Vireya rhododendrons, and a significant number have recently collected their orders mailed from Neil Puddey (Vireyas worldwide). The advantage of growing this variety is that they flower on and off throughout the year and provide quite a different range of colours for our gardens.

Propagation of Vireyas generally tends to be easier than other rhododendrons and cuttings can be taken at any time of the year when the shoots have firmed sufficiently. Striking mix used is the same as for rhododendrons. If members have questions regarding growing these wonderful plants please speak to Rick Illman or Henry Hancock.



Peat Trial

Following our visit to the International Conference in Germany earlier this year we have been trialling the use of coarse raw peat (not pH adjusted) for growing rhododendrons. It has a low pH (4.0), remains moist but drains well and appears to be very useful for inclusion in our garden planting mix. We also use coarse perlite in our mixes which helps to keep the mix open and free draining. Perlite is also a major part of the cutting mix provided on the cutting day.

We have been purchasing perlite and peat when required but given the amounts required for the cutting day we are considering whether there may be interest from members to purchase larger quantities. We will raise this as a proposal at the October meeting so have a think about whether this may be of interest to you, because buying in bulk is more economical.

Cutting Boxes

As the weather warms keep an eye on the plants in your box. Make sure they are not getting too much sunlight and water fortnightly with dilute fertiliser.

Black-Tailed Native-Hen

Gallinula ventralis



Adapted to arid conditions. Follows rains and floods, appearing on newly filled swamps in hundreds and leaving when they dry out; travels at night. Flies well, if heavily, with steady and silent wing-beats, taking off and landing with a run. Breeds rapidly after rain in semi-desert; forming large new flocks foraging around pools or green patches of ground.

Probably breeds at any time of the year depending on rainfall. The nest is a cup of plant material on or near the ground close to water, usually in a thicket, sometimes with a partly woven roof of reeds. Usually five to seven eggs, oval, 44 millimetres by 30 millimetres, glossy, pale-green with red, brown or purple blotches and small spots. Found throughout inland Australia, mainly in areas of unpredictable rainfall. Highly nomadic. Common, but population varies with conditions. Often found in SA mid to lower north. You can stop at dam, see nothing and 5 minutes later a flock of 100 will stroll out from the bushes on the dam's edge, and a few minutes later they have gone back to hiding again.

Librarian's Report *by Ann & David Matison*

Thanks to Peter Wiadrowski our Library holds an attractive, but also very useful book simply named 'Rhododendrons and Azaleas' by Kenneth Cox. It is a Hamlyn Care Manual and for a first time Rhodie gardener it would make very good reading.

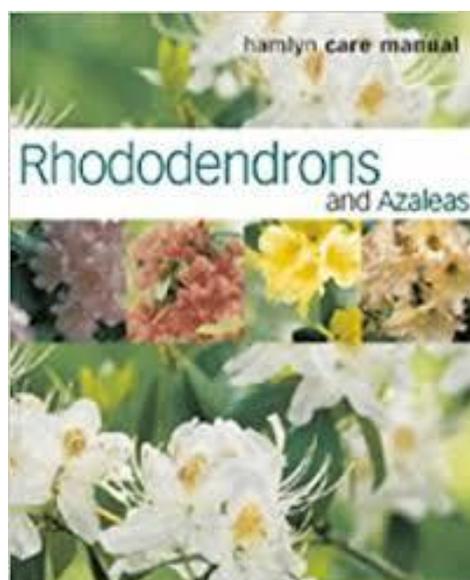
The book starts with an introduction, which briefly introduces the reader to the story of Rhododendrons, then proceeds to cover the following topics: site preparation, landscaping, soils and planting, maintenance, propagation, pests and diseases, buying and collecting; the final chapter being a plant directory.

The book was published in Great Britain and is focused on that market. Nevertheless, it is of a general nature and much can be learned by people who grow rhododendrons in other places. I even found some of the plants that we consider common in the plant directory although many are not available here. Fortunately we do not have to bother about some of the pests and diseases that Cox mentions, but there are others that are, unfortunately, very familiar. Most of the rest of the information is quite appropriate for our local growing conditions.

This is a very attractive book. It is clearly illustrated and any instructions, e.g. propagation, are easy to follow.

The author, Kenneth Cox is a plant hunter and nurseryman. The Cox family nursery Glendoick in Scotland is well known to Rhododendron and Azalea lovers. Some of you may have read my brief history of the family in a previous newsletter.

Happy reading.



Notice Board

2018 Christmas Party

Our final event for this year will be our Christmas function to be held on Sunday, December 2nd at 12.30pm at the home of Robyn and Ian Wall, Cricklewood Road, Aldgate.

Members will need to provide their own chairs, drinks and glasses. Food, Tea and Coffee will be provided by the society.

It is essential for catering purposes that members notify Milton Bowman at (bowmanmilton09@gmail.com) before November 1st if they intend coming. If members have particular dietary requirements please include information regarding these in your e-mail.

2019 Cutting Day

Plans for the cutting day are already underway and members will be notified by e-mail when a date has been decided. (Usually end of February /beginning March). This has proved to be a very social and educational event as well as contributing plants for the subsequent plant sales.

Next year we will be looking to propagate other varieties of Rhododendrons as well as the Whibley hybrids. This may help to offset the difficulties we are experiencing in acquiring plants from interstate rhododendron nurseries.

Information for new members - the society provides a propagating box, cutting mix and rooting hormone free of charge to all new members. There is a nominal cost to existing members who may require additional boxes and or cutting mix.

The morning propagating session concludes with a BYO BBQ and all members are invited to attend.

We are very grateful to Milton and Kristina Bowman who generously provide the venue for the cutting day at their home, Forest Lodge, 19 Pine Street, Stirling.

Speakers for 2019 meetings

Your executive committee would appreciate any recommendations for speakers for meetings in 2019. Please speak to any of the executive if you have ideas.

Emily's Open Garden



Minutes of meeting - 18/9/2018

Apologies- D Matison, M Bowman, K Bowman, J Jenkinson, P McClaren, L Greenstreet, V Popov,
D Cullum

Minutes of July meeting- accepted by R Hatcher

Business Arising- Neutrog orders will arrive during the week beginning 24th September

Spring garden visits – thanks to R Wall for organising the visits for the 7th October to Wensleydale, Kincaig and Berkley Vale.

Correction to information printed in the newsletter – Kincaig is the home of Lyn and John MacDonald.

L & B Barker's garden at Mylor has changed hands but the new owners are willing to host a visit in autumn.

Librarian's report

Ann Matison reminded members about the borrowing process. Take the card from the back of the book, sign and place in the flowery box.

Treasurer's report- B Mynhart

Balance at the beginning of the new financial year- \$9357.56

Debits – library cupboard \$300.44

Closing balance - \$9057.12

Accepted- R Hatcher

New Business

October 13th – R Hatcher appearing with M Keelan on Ch7's Out of the Blue

Plant Sale –Sunday Sept 23rd

Members requested to complete the roster

Bring propagated plants to MLBG at 8.30am

Fliers dealing with cultivation and membership available for customers

Librarians have arranged for a folder of good quality photos of the Wibley hybrids

New members to receive a welcome e-mail and newsletter

Members requested to bring blooms for a display on the day

Tables & gazebo to be delivered by Illman's

Plant pricing – 8" \$30.00 – members \$25.00

6" pots - \$15.00

Member propagated plants \$10.00

Radio advertisements, Newspaper advert, fliers- B Cullum organised

National Council AGM – Tasmania in November- Gill & Jeff Jenkinson, Rob & Jacqi Hatcher attending

Christmas lunch- December 2nd –Robyn & Ian Wall's garden. Members need to notify M Bowman if they are attending and any specific dietary needs.

Blooms presented - P Sampson, R Illman, R Hatcher

B Cullum noted that use of confidor tablets over 2-3years had resulted in lace bug resistance and healthier plants

Raffle winners- J Smylie – won Ross Maud

A Waterman- won German secateurs

Guest Speaker- Dr Henry Hancock addressed the meeting about his trip to look at Vireyas in Kalamantan.

Meeting closed 9.50pm.

