



Merry Christmas

# Newsletter of the ARSV



## Passing of Simon Begg 4/5/1934 – 23/10/2018

The Society is saddened at the passing of Simon Begg, one of its most esteemed members. Simon joined the Society in 1992, and served on the ARSV Committee for 18 years from 2000 to 2018. He took on the role of newsletter editor from 2013 to 2016.

He singlehandedly shifted the culture in the society away from collections being tightly held, to a higher purpose of making species and hybrids available to anyone interested in them, thus making a lasting contribution to safeguarding many species and hybrids in Australia. As an exhibitor he collected innumerable prizes and trophies, keeping rhododendrons in the public gaze.

Simon donated dozens of plants to the vireya species collection at the DRBG, including the only *R. goodenoughii* that could be tracked



down in Australia. One of his outstanding contributions has been his engagement with AQIS in rationalising and expanding the list of Rhododendron seed permitted for importation. Simon and Marcia travelled extensively, representing our Society at conferences in Europe, NZ and America, along the way developing enduring friendships around the world.

However, possibly his greatest legacy is the 'North Queensland project'. Simon was the driving force behind the recollection of *R. viriosum* and *R. lochiaie*. Simon developed the relationship with the Australian Tropical Herbarium (ATH), helped secure philanthropic funding for ATH to establish a project, and made a personal financial contribution towards the project. During 2016-2017, the ATH led a series of expeditions to North Queensland, including a week-long trip in September

2016 when Simon and Marcia, along with seven other Society members, visited many rhododendron populations in North Queensland. Simon and Marcia's dedication to the trip was apparent when they decided to drive with their caravan from Melbourne to Cairns, a return trip of nearly 6,000km! The project was a huge success, with *R. viriosum* and *R. lochiaie* from nearly all locations recollected and successfully established in cultivation at the Dandenong Ranges Botanic Gardens (DRBG). The collection of *R. viriosum* and *R. lochiaie* held at DRBG, and managed by the Society, represents the most complete ex-situ collection of any vireya Rhododendron species held in the world.

Our sympathies go to Marcia, who continues as an active Life member, and all his family.

The vireya pictured is *R. agathodaemonis* in the field in the Baliem valley, Papua Province Indonesia described by Frederic Danet in 2008. It flowered in the vireya house at DRBG for the first time at the time of Simon's funeral. A fitting tribute.



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## Rhododendron in focus: *Rhododendron canescens*

Subsection Pentanthera.

This is one of the American deciduous azalea species and should be more widely grown. It is found across a large area of the South-Eastern U.S.A. in woods, on rocks and besides streams. In some places is regarded as a weed. It is unlikely to become a weed in our climate and I find this is an excellent plant for Melbourne gardens, with its masses of small pink flowers perfumed with a sweet spicy scent.

We have a number of plants in the garden at Olinda, and one in the rockery flowers profusely every year in October (see photo).

**Alan Kepert.**



### 2019 Rhododendron wall calendar available for purchase.



The Blue Mountains Rhododendron Society has produced a 2019 wall calendar that is available for purchase. It is a hanging 'flip' calendar i.e. a full-page image above with the month beneath. The cost is \$11.00 inclusive of postage. To order:

- a) Email their president Alan Lush at [president@rhodogarden.org.au](mailto:president@rhodogarden.org.au) stating you are about to place an order for a calendar. Provide your name and delivery address. If you're ordering more than one calendar, BMRS will need to check additional postage costs.
- b) EFT \$11.00 to the BMRS: BSB: 062507, Acc: 10012075, Please add 'Cal' in the description.
- c) Cheque payable to "Blue Mountains Rhododendron Society", the postal address is 'The Treasurer, BMRS, PO Box 238, Blackheath, NSW 2785'. Include your name and delivery address.

## ARSV nursery and garden tour 27/10/18

18 members had a thoroughly good time on the SRSV garden visit. The day started with a tour of member James Pethybridge's Blackwood Ridge nursery and a lovely lunch at his café/restaurant. James gave a tour of his beautiful landscaped gardens and well laid out and stocked nursery. Then we headed off to Mt. Macedon where we toured a stunning private garden "Lisnacrieve". Here the owners had a stunning display of deciduous rhododendrons, large vigorous peonies and extensive woodland plantings. It was then on to the property of our new member Helen Franklin. Helen is establishing a garden in Heskett on a large acreage on the northern face of Mount Macedon. Initial foundation plantings of trees and shrubs have been made. Projects currently underway are the first plantings for a winter walk and also the clearing of a substantial area for a planned garden of rhododendron and other woodland plants.



## ARSV coming events – save the date

### 2018

**Sunday 16th December - Xmas BBQ** This year's Christmas gathering will be on at the DRBG starting at 12:30. Meet at the Olinda ARS lunchroom. We'll supply the meat and bread; bring your own drinks and salad.

### 2019

**Saturday 23 March 2019 - Kinglake-Toolangi Garden Tour** We are organising a tour of gardens of ARSV members in the Toolangi-Kinglake region. 10am-4pm. Cost: no charge, BYO lunch. ARSV Members, family and friends are invited to register by emailing Andrew Rouse on [arouse@bigpond.com](mailto:arouse@bigpond.com) or call 0424 750 406.

**April 2019 - Tesselaar's Show** – date to be confirmed, volunteers will be needed.

**October 2019 - Public Rhododendron display** The Society is exploring putting on a major public display, possibly at Mt Waverley to generate more membership and advertise ourselves more widely. Further information as this develops and volunteers will be needed. Contact the newsletter editor if you think you may be able to help organise or help on the day.

**October 2019 - Garden visits in the Dandenong Ranges** to be confirmed.

### 2020

**May/June 2020 - Yunnan trip.** We are looking at organising a botanical trip to Yunnan. More information will be made available later. If you think you may be interested contact the newsletter editor.

**October 2020 - National Conference** at Emu Valley

**October 2020 - NZ conference**

## The Bilbie's garden at Mt Tamborine

Larraine and I have lived on Tamborine Mountain now for over ten years. We have a gently sloping 1/3 of an acre facing the Pacific Ocean at 550 m elevation in the Gold Coast Hinterland. Our climate is on average 4° cooler than sea level and could be described as Subtropical/warm temperate. Vireyas are very much at home of course and we grow numerous Hybrids and a few species such as *R. tuba*. We have to be more selective with Asiatics and after years of trial and error, we have seven which grow and flower well including the beautiful NZ hybrid "Kaponga". We have had good success with a number of Maddenia species and hybrids (Pictured *R. veitchianum*). We grow about eleven deciduous azaleas both species and hybrids (pictured *R. Knaphill Red*). Also amongst our Azalea collection there are eight of 'Wilson's Fifty'. There is a gallery of our garden on instagram [ellbee65](#) for further viewing

**Roy Bilbie**



*R. veitchianum* against a backdrop of Kurume Azalea 'Shin Seikai'



*R. rarilepidotum* Yellow form



*R. periclymenoides*



"Knaphill Red"



"Kaponga"