

Newsletter of the ARSV



Society visit to Kinglake - Toolangi region Saturday 23rd March

On 23rd March, two ARS Members kindly opened their garden for Society members, their friends and families. Early autumn is rarely the best time of year to display a garden, particularly after a hot, dry summer, so the Society is particularly appreciative that Peter & Irene Leonard, and John & Alex Pottage, agreed to open their gardens for us. 24 members met at Peter and Irene Leonard's property at Toolangi, and after morning tea, had a guided tour of the garden. The garden started as a nursery in about 1917, and when Peter and Irene moved in, it was overgrown with mature rhododendrons; today it is a stunning collection of mature trees, including oaks, beech, redwoods and other conifers, rhododendrons and other shrubs. It was untouched by the Black Saturday fires that passed just south of the property. We hope to revisit the garden in spring to assist the Leonards with identification of some of the old Rhododendron specimens.

After lunch at the Kinglake pub, we visited John and Alex Pottage's garden at Kinglake. This is a more recent garden; established prior to the 2009 Black Saturday fires, and sadly burnt out by those fires. John and Alex have re-established the garden, and today it is an extraordinary and diverse collection of plants in a bush garden under a canopy of eucalypts. The garden is a labour of love and reflects Alex's passion for plants. Part of the front garden has been set aside for a collection of heritage apples.

The Society is thankful for the warm hospitality and generosity of our hosts, and we hope to be able to offer a Spring tour of Members' gardens. Watch this space!



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Rhododendron in focus: *Rhododendron nudipes*

Subsection Brachycalyx.

This species is one of the Japanese deciduous azaleas and is closely related to the more common *R. reticulatum*. The name refers to the naked branchlets which are bristly in *R. reticulatum*. The flowers are an attractive rose-pink compared to the purple flowers of *R. reticulatum*. It is found in Honshu and Kyushu at 200 to 1000 metres, near winding stream beds.

Peter Cox complains that it is not successful in Scotland and needs a warmer climate, which we can easily provide in Australia. We have several of this species in the Main Rockery which flower in October (see photo.), and it is not difficult to grow in East Ringwood.

Alan Kepert



New species of Rhododendron from Papua, Indonesia



Rhododendron meagaii was recently described from Papua by Yasper Mambrasar and Prima Hutabart of LIPI at Bogor, the centre for plant taxonomy in Indonesia. It is in the section Hydranthe, which includes such species as *R. konori*, *R. superbum*, *R. gardenia*, *R. phaeochitum* and *R. delicatulum*. *R. meagaii* is distinctive in having elliptic leaves, irregular lengthened stamens, a glabrous corolla and dendroid scales on long stalks. Like most vireyas it is a shrub to 2m high. It was found in mossy forest and montane shrubberies on Mt Salju in Yalimo Regency in 2016. As yet it is not known beyond the type locality.

Mambrasar, Y. M. & Hutabarat, P. W. K. 2018. *Rhododendron meagaii*, a new species of *Rhododendron* subgenus *Vireya* (Ericaceae) from Papua, Indonesia. *Reinwardtia* 17(2): 97-100.

Want to enter in the Ferny Creek Horticultural Society Autumn Show?

For those ARSV members who would like to exhibit in the Ferny Creek Horticultural Society Autumn show there are five categories calling for Rhododendron entries.

Pot Plants

- G117 1 Vireya Rhododendron in an appropriate container
- G118 1 pot flowering shrub, other than Vireya Rhododendron

Foliage (not autumn coloured)

- A15 1 container Rhododendron foliage

General Exhibits

- C57 1 container Vireya Rhododendron, 1 small flowered species or cultivar, less than 40mm diameter
- C58 1 container Vireya Rhododendron, 1 large flowered species or cultivar, more than 40mm diameter

Entries can be made by phone or letter and have to be with the Entry Secretary by 18th April – please see the show schedule for details. The show schedule can be downloaded at <http://fchs.org.au/wp-content/uploads/SHOW-SCHEDULE-AUTUMN-SHOW-2018-A4.pdf>.

Other coming events

Saturday and Sunday April 27th and 28th Ferny Creek Horticultural Society Autumn Show 2019. Times Sat 12 noon - 4pm, Sun 10am - 4pm. Entry: adults \$5, concession \$3, children free. BYO bags. Location 100 Hilton Rd (East End), Sassafras (Up behind the Ferny Creek Recreation Reserve). <http://fchs.org.au/events/>

Saturday 6th to Sunday 28th April Tesselaar's KABLOOM – Festival of Flowers. 10am - 3pm. 337 Monbulk Road Silvan. www.kabloom.com.au

Saturday 13th April Australian Plants Society Yarra Yarra Inc. native plant and book sale. 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Location Senior Citizens Centre, 903 Main Road, Eltham. <https://apsyarrayarra.files.wordpress.com/2019/03/plant-sale-leaflet-jpg-resized-863px.jpg>

Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th May Melbourne Friends of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, Growing Friends 2019 Autumn Plant Sale. Saturday 10:00 am to 4:00 pm, Sunday 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Melbourne Botanic Gardens. Enter the Gardens through Gate E on Birdwood Ave. Entry free.

Saturday 18th and Sunday 19th May 32nd Australian Association of Bonsai Clubs Convention hosted by the Victorian Native Bonsai Club Inc, Australian Natives Breaking Through the Bonsai Ceiling. 9:00 am to 4:00 pm both days. Cost Adults \$5, children U16 free. An exhibition and convention focusing solely on Australian Natives as Bonsai. Australian natives and bonsai related items for sale. BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL. Location Mantra Bell City, 215 Bell St Preston. Contact secnativeclub@gmail.com.

A new species of Rhododendron - this time from India

I missed this species in earlier issues of the newsletter. It is in the Pontica subsection of the Subgenus Hymenanthes.

Rhododendron abhaya was described from Sikkim in 2014 by L. K. Rai and grows to 3m high. It is similar to *R. arboreum* in bark and foliage and to *R. niveum* in floral characteristics with dark green leaves with a thick fawn tomentum below. The flower trusses are lax with 10-12 flowers and there are no nectar pouches, suggesting it is wind pollinated. It has a rather unusual habitat growing on flat ground in open forest close to streams never under the canopy of the silver fir subalpine forests. The ground they occupy is wet for ¾ of the year and under snow for the rest and apparently incessantly windy. It does not undergo leaf curling during winter. Other rhododendrons in its association are *R. campanulatum*, *R. thomsonii* and *R. glaucophyllum*.

Rai, L. K. 2014. *Rhododendron abhaya* (Ericaceae), a new species from Sikkim Himalaya, India. *NeBio* 5(2): 27-29.



To all “Agapetes” lovers

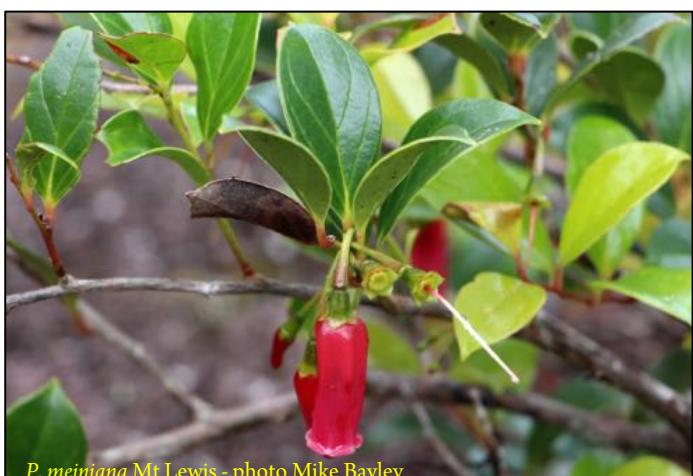
Agapetes and Rhodos often grow in the same communities on mountaintops and are well worth considering growing. However, advances in taxonomy over the last 20 years has complicated nomenclature. Originally *Agapetes* included plants distributed from Fiji and New Caledonia through Queensland and New Guinea to Southwest China and the Himalayas. However, recent analysis has suggested the species from Malesia and Australasia, previously in the subgenus *Paphia*, should be in their own genus *Paphia*, leaving *Agapetes* as the genus for the species from the eastern Himalayas to Southeast Asia. In fact, species of *Paphia* are more related genetically to *Dimorphantha* than to *Agapetes*. To complicate things further *Paphia* is also a genus of marine snails so looking *Paphia* up on the web gives a strange mix of results.

There are over 20 species of *Paphia* and over a 100 of *Agapetes* and we have one in Australia - *P. meiniana* in North Queensland which we have growing at DRBG. *P. meiniana* is still usually offered as *Agapetes meiniana* from specialist nurseries who sometimes also have the Asian *Agapetes* species such as *A. smithiana* and *A. serpens* from the Himalayas.

Recently there have been a range of new species of *Agapetes* discovered in southwest China and Myanmar thanks to the work of Yi-Hua Tong of the South China Botanic Gardens.

Yi-Hua Tong, Bing-Mou Wang, Nian-He Xia 2019. *Agapetes yingjiangensis* (Ericaceae), a new epiphytic species of A. ser. *Longifiles* from Yunnan, China. *Nordic Journal of Botany* 37(1):e02171. DOI: 10.1111/njb.02171

Shi-Shun Zhou et al. 2017. *Agapetes brevipedicellata* (Ericaceae), a new species from Putao, Kachin State, Northern Myanmar *Phytotaxa* 331 (1): 117-



P. meiniana Mt Lewis - photo Mike Bayley



The Himalayan *A. incurvata* - photo of garden plant by Tim Waters