



Rhododendrons South Australia

Australian Rhododendron Society Inc. South Australian Branch

Issue 125-June 2019

President's Message

We wouldn't even be here today as a society if it wasn't for our pioneering horticulturalists!

Jeff Jenkinson's presentation at our May meeting provided a fascinating insight into the early years of horticultural development of South Australia, with a particular focus on the endeavours of Professor EC Stirling and how rhododendrons were first introduced into SA and the Adelaide Hills. The depth of Jeff's research was very impressive and serves to remind us of the importance of preserving and perpetuating the history in which surely the foundations of our society were established. If it wasn't for Edward Stirling and his pioneering counterparts pursuing their passions and rivalry (there exists quite comprehensive records of horticultural shows indicating this) Adelaide Hills rhododendron cultivation would not have developed to where it is today.

It is beholden to us to ensure that our historical records are maintained, and it's people like Jeff Jenkinson, Alan and Mary Kerr-Grant, and Milton Bowman who immediately spring to mind, with not only Jeff's historical account, but also the Waterer/Whibley story which forms a crucial part of our local rhododendron history.

Mount Lofty Botanic Gardens and, in particular Rhododendron Gully, has become a vital living botanical record of where this history has led us and at our June meeting we can look forward to hearing more about this from Rob Hatcher and Stephen Kingdon.

Last Meeting



Henry Hancock won Eldorado as the raffle prize.

Next Meeting

This will be held at the Stirling RSL Hall on Tuesday, June 18th at 8pm. Robert Hatcher and Stephen Kingdon will be speaking about the history of the Mt Lofty Botanic gardens and their roles within the gardens.

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

Winter is here!



Standard Sasanqua camellia Fuji-No-Mene. Sasanqua camellias are ideal plants to bridge the gap between Autumn and Winter. Some Sasanquas will even flower into Spring.

Chimonanthis praecox (below) is a wonderful, fragrant, deciduous shrub.



The ground hugging **Camapanula muralis** has produced its first blooms which will eventually smother the plant and continue through spring to early summer.



Satsuki azaleas, like Meicho (below) will flower on and off from late summer through autumn/winter and finally put on their best show in Spring.



Bloom of the Month – Vireya Pacific Shower

This is a good example of a Vireya in full bloom. Thanks to Heather Waddy and Steve Jones for sending in the photo when they were visiting the Sydney Botanic Gardens.





From the Propagating bench *by Richard Illman*

This is the time to take hardwood cuttings of deciduous perennials such as Deutzia, Weigela, Philadelphus, Berberis and Hydrangeas.

The cuttings can be placed into the usual cutting mix of Perlite & peat or placed directly into a raising bed in the garden

Good selections of Liliams are available now via mail order from nurseries such as Lambleys, Tesselaars or Van Diemens in Tasmania. When they arrive it is now the ideal time to propagate more of your favourites from scales. Carefully break one of the scales as illustrated at the basal plate before planting the parent bulb. The separated bulb scales are then placed in a small zip-lock bag containing some just moist peat and kept in the dark until later in the year. By the beginning of summer there should be new small bulbs growing at the edge of the basal plate on the scale. They can be left to enlarge and then transferred to a pot containing good quality potting mix and grown through the rest of the summer and planted in the garden next winter.



Breaking a scale from the basal plate

New liliam bulbills
growing from the basal plate.



Grafting Maples & Other plants

Rick will run workshops in August. Interested members can see the details of the workshops in the noticeboard section.

Plants you may not know - *Omphaloides cappadocia*, *Rodgersia*, *Enkianthus perulatus*

Omphaloides cappadocia- this is a delightful small woodland plant that thrives in shade and performs well at the front of a rockery or garden bed. In spring it is covered with small, “gypsophila” like blue flowers.



Rodgersia aesculifolia – according to Woodbridge nursery in Tasmania it is a native of Myanmar and Tibet. Extremely cold hardy. Best grown on a pond margin or part shaded woodland. It associates well with Filipendulas, Astilbes, Gunneras and Primula. The Rodgersia is named after US Admiral John Rogers who discovered the plant in the 1850's.

Enkianthus perulatus - A beautiful plant in the spring when it bears attractive cream bell shaped flowers. It is reputed to be very difficult to propagate and grows in a limited area of the Dandenong Ranges. Its Autumn foliage is spectacular and can be seen in all its glory in the gardens of Cloudehill. Yamina Rare Plants has a few plants for sale.



Magpie-lark

Grallina cyanoleuca



Male



Female

Dense forests and the driest of deserts are about the only places that you won't find them. Around your place, you'll see Magpie-larks as they visit parks, ovals, road verges, lawns and backyards.

Magpie-larks find most of their food as they walk through short grass or patches of bare, soft ground. They have a distinctive walk moving their heads back and forth.

Listen out for the Magpie-lark calling 'Peewee, peewee' or 'doodit doodit'. Peewee mates sing complicated duets - one sings 'Peewee' and its partner responds 'wit!' - and they both raise their wings above their heads as they call.

A male and female will stand together in their favorite spot and sing a duet as a territorial display. Scientists have discovered that the more synchronized and harmonious the pair is, the more likely they are to signal a threat to other Magpie-larks.



Their nest is made of mud and sticks and grass- lined with grass, fur and feathers.

This bird may been used in an earlier copy of our Newsletter.

I recently "lost" most of my Data files and it is guess work on what birds have been done.

Chris

Librarian's Report by Ann & David Matison

In our Society Library we have a small collection of what I would call coffee table books. The book I have been reading recently is one of those. This one has beautiful illustrations, as do all coffee table books, but it also has a fascinating story as well. The book I am referring to is "Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker: traveller and plant collector." By Ray Dalton.

Joseph Hooker, born 1817, grew up in a botanical environment. His father, Sir William Hooker was professor of botany at Glasgow University and later became the first Director of Kew Gardens. It was thanks to his father's influence that Joseph was able to join some important expeditions before following in his father's footsteps to become Director of the Gardens

He studied medicine at Glasgow University and with his degree he was able to obtain a position as ships surgeon on James Ross's journey on the *Erebus* to Antarctica in 1839-43 to find the South Magnetic Pole. This journey included visits to The Falkland Islands, New Zealand and Tasmania, where he collected plants including many mosses and lichens that he sent back to his father at Kew Gardens. He also carried out an extensive correspondence with his close scientific friends Charles Darwin and H.T. Huxley. Darwin was supposed to have said that his letters from Joseph were *like a honey pot*. Hooker in turn was guided and inspired by Darwin

Other journeys were to Sikkim and Assam in India. In Sikkim Hooker collected over 600 different Rhododendron specimens, among many other plants. Although he had clearance from the local Rajah to trek through the mountains, often through hostile villages his journey was difficult. His ambition was to cross the border from India into Nepal. This he did. In Assam he was joined by Thomas Thomson, a collector sent to India by Veitch's Nursery at Exeter. The terrain and climate of Assam bred a profusion of plants and the collectors sent thousands of plants, ferns, mosses lichens and trees back to England.

On his return to England he eventually followed his father as director of Kew Gardens. During this time he worked to produce publications of his notes and drawing from each of his journeys, sometimes with a collaborator, but often on his own. Among the illustrations in the book there are many of Hooker's drawings, some of which were made into lithographs by Walter Fitch

While at Kew he did more collecting Journeys, firstly to the Middle East and later to Morocco.

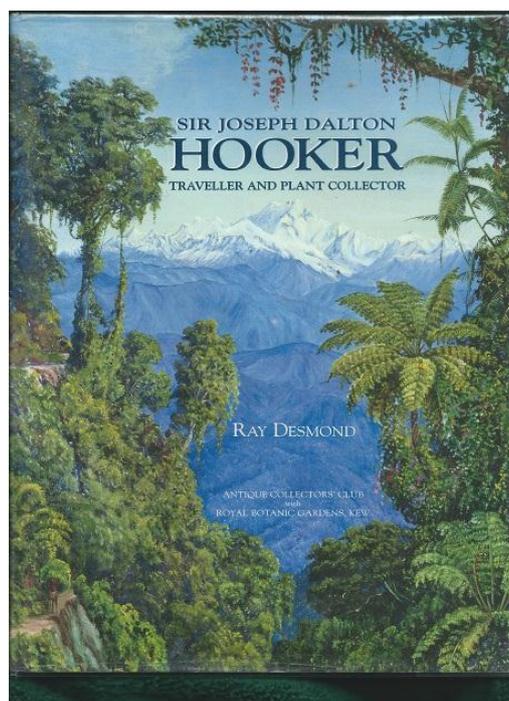
Among his many accolades he became President of the Royal Society and he obtained a knighthood for his work and influence in Natural Science

After 30 years as Director of Kew Gardens Hooker retired, but that was far from the end of his involvement with natural science. He continued and editing his meticulous notes and drawings, producing a number of books and portfolios. He also communicated with other explorers. He died in May 1911 at the age of 94.

Hooker was an eminent Victorian scholar, a dedicated collector, a competent artist and he was also a very competent geologist and mineralogist. One of his interest was studying plant geography and the distribution of plants; an interest that he shared with Darwin.

Ray Dalton obviously researched his subject very well. It is beautifully illustrated, well laid out and easy to read, but don't try reading it in bed. It is heavy.

The book was donated to our Society by the Victorian Branch of the Australian Rhododendron Society in 2001. It might be old, but the story has not changed in the 20 years since it was written.



Start Saving! Conferences in 2020 are on the way.

In fact there are a number of conferences that may interest members.

The first is the 75th conference of the American Rhododendron Society (ARS)- Portland- Vancouver Chapter

American Rhododendron Society

75th Anniversary

**20/20
VISION**



Looking forward, reflecting back

Portland-Vancouver, April 29-May 3, 2020

You're invited to the celebration!



World-renowned Keynote Speakers

Kenneth Cox • Jens Nielsen • Steve Hootman
Lionel de Rothschild • Steve Krebs • Valerie Sosa

**Tours to the Northwest's
Outstanding Gardens & Nurseries**

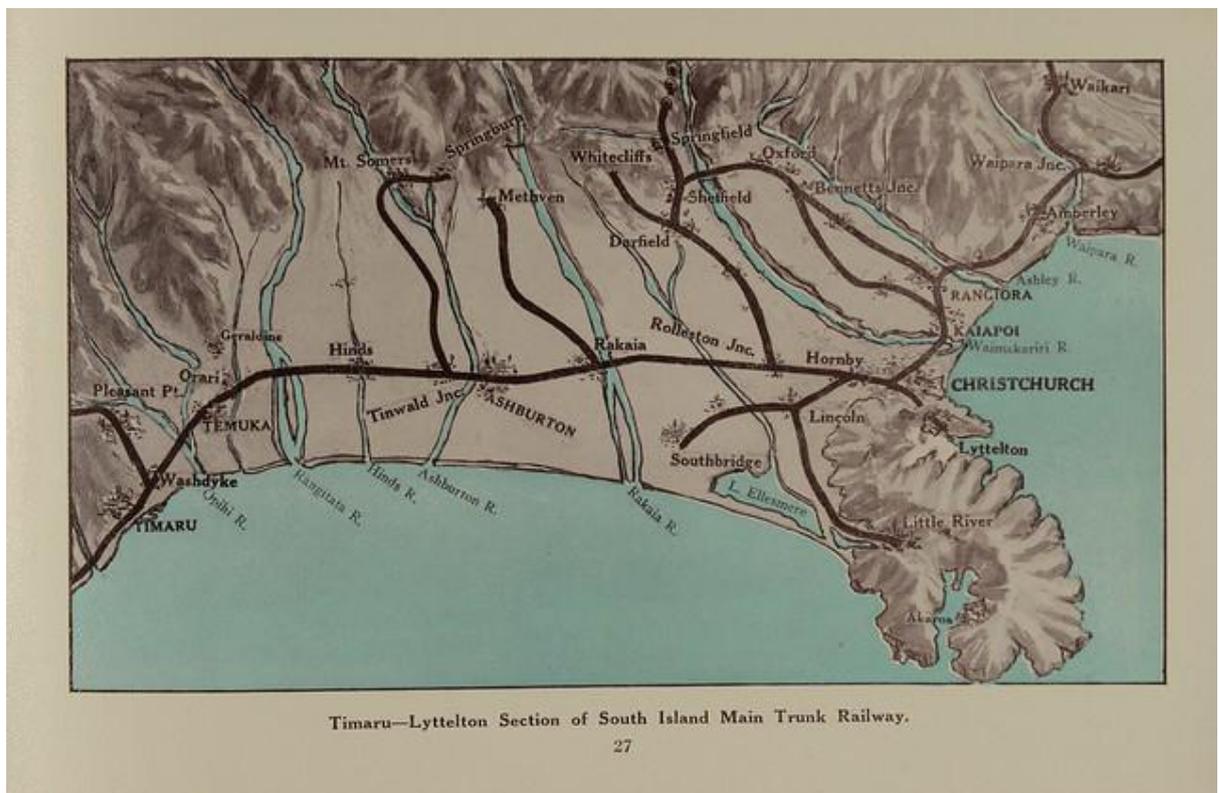
New Zealand Conference

This will take place in Timaru in the South Island at the beginning of November 2020. The Australian Rhododendron Society is working closely with our New Zealand counterparts to plan this conference and to share the main presenter, David Millais, who is a renowned rhododendron nurseryman.

If previous New Zealand conferences are anything to go by this will be a very worthwhile event and will precede our own contribution which will take place in Tasmania in the week following the Timaru convention.

There appears to be quite a lot of interest in these conferences from many of the Germans, Dutch, Swedes, Danes and Americans who attended the German/Scandinavian conference in 2018, so it would be wonderful if many Australian rhododendron enthusiasts were able to attend.

Not only are these gatherings educational but the social networking that occurs is invaluable and it is also an opportunity to gain access to some of the best private gardens in the world!



Penny's success

Congratulations, Penny!



time to think about planting some Australian species in your garden, especially if you live in an area that has had good autumn rains. Moist soils and a will work best in your garden.

Are you planning a garden event you'd like to share? email deborah.bogle@news.com.au

NATURE WATCH

ARTISTS share their passion for nature in the 10th Solar Art Prize Exhibition at the Royal South Australian Society of Arts.

Founder, organiser and creator Pip Fletcher of North Adelaide launched the prize in 2010, the Year of Biodiversity, "to bring the plight of the environment to the public and help artists to do their bit to combat climate change".

Each year, the prizes have included vouchers for solar products from Natural Technology Systems at Prospect.

This year, 66 artists entered a total of 106 works and, of these, 68 works are on show, featuring plants, animals and people, landscapes and seascapes, in every medium.

Heathfield artist Penny MacLaren won The Hangers Choice prize for her oil painting "Resting in the shade, Monarto" (pictured). She is also a frontrunner in The People's Choice prize, which is announced on the final day of the exhibition, this Sunday, following Ms MacLaren's artist demonstration from 2pm to 4pm.

- Clare Peddie

THE 10TH SOLAR ART PRIZE EXHIBITION IS FREE AT THE ROYAL SOUTH AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY OF ARTS, IN THE INSTITUTE BUILDING ON THE CORNER OF NORTH TERRACE AND KINTORE AVENUE IN ADELAIDE UNTIL SUNDAY AT 4PM

VI - ADELAIDE2014

Maple & other plant grafting workshops

As mentioned in the Propagating article Richard Illman is offering grafting workshops to members of the society. In previous years, members who attended have grafted maples and these can be attempted again but also there will be the opportunity to try Medlars, Ginkos, flowering Cherries, Crab Apples and even rhododendrons. The workshops are usually run with about 4 people and occur on a variety of dates throughout August. If members are interested please let Richard know (0412222567 or linwood4574@icloud.com) so that dates can be suggested. He also needs to know if members are bringing their own rootstock or if they need to be sourced (minimal cost). Remember those seedling palmatum maples that self-sow in gardens can be dug in winter and are very suitable for grafting if they are pencil thickness or greater.

Those members who put their names on a list at the May meeting do not need to notify Richard.

