

# Rhododendrons South Australia

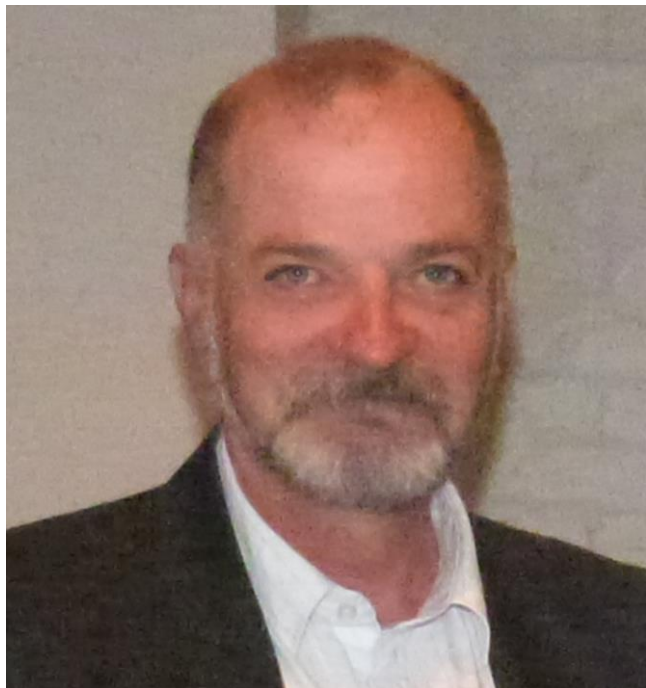
Australian Rhododendron Society Inc. South Australian Branch

Issue 83 – September 2014

## Coming Events

### Next Meeting, 17<sup>th</sup> Sept 7:45pm

The next meeting will feature Robert Hatcher, Horticultural Supervisor, Mt Lofty Botanic Garden, and Australian Rhododendron Society President.



Robert's topic will be 50 Years of the Rhododendron Species Foundation.

**Please 'bring a friend', a plate, and an item for the Trading Table.**

### Garden Visit, 13<sup>th</sup> September

Our garden visit to Lianne Healey's beautiful garden has been organised for Saturday 13 September 2014 at 2.00 pm. (members only) Address available from Lianne or Secretary.

Lianne's garden is 8 acres and has a Japanese stroll garden as one of the many points of interest.

There is no street parking but room for 20 cars on the property so members may need to double up.

### Plant Sale, 12<sup>th</sup> October

Save this date for the Annual Plant Sale at Mt Lofty Gardens. All hands on deck!



## Grant Memorial Lecture

An audience of over 80 people enjoyed a very lively and entertaining lecture from Stephen Ryan. Stephen's obvious comfort and ability to engage a large audience was evident as he delivered a very entertaining lecture on rare plants. He also included examples of exotic plants which he had ticked off his 'bucket list' of plants he wanted to see in his lifetime. Those present were treated to an engrossing and enjoyable evening.



*A shy retiring type*

The evening's raffle of a daphne was won by Emily Giles and a number of door prizes were drawn.

Michelle



*Welwitschia mirabilis – a rare plant seen by Stephen on a visit to Namibia*

## A Mixed Bag: Stephen Ryan's Recommendations

### Companion Plants for Rhodos. & Plants for Small Gardens.

Many of Stephen's weird and wacky plants are suitable for growing with small rhododendrons as well as being most suited to small gardens. The range of oxalis can provide interest and colour from autumn through to spring and unlike our common soursob, the majority do not become aggressive. *Oxalis versicolour* is a wonderful species that forms a small mat with the "Barber's pole" flowers covering the foliage from late winter into spring. A great ground cover oxalis is *Oxalis purpurescens*. It is not invasive but will cover a large area fairly quickly. Oxalis love a sunny free draining spot that is dry in the summer, so is a great water saving plant.



*Oxalis versicolour*



*Oxalis purpurescens*

Species tulips like *T. turkestanica* and *Ranunculus* "Brazen hussy" also provide interest at this time of the year. Tulips are particularly useful as they look charming in small terracotta pots and require a moist, but free draining situation if planted in the ground. "Brazen Hussy" has outstanding glossy foliage with yellow flowers that appear to be lacquered.



*T. turkestanica*



*Ranunculus* "Brazen Hussy"

Similarly, the range of spring crocus provide great colour accent at this time of the year. They

too are waterwise, preferring sunny positions that are dry in summer. They can be grown in pots which enable them to be brought undercover if inclement weather beckons. Crocus are great candidates for pollinating so get out there with a fine brush when the pollen is free and you will be rewarded with a seed pod in about 3 months. Members who would like to purchase some of these delightful plants will find a good source by mail order in the autumn catalogues from the likes of Tesselaars, Lakes and Pen Lan plant nurseries.



*A selection of Crocus from Richwyn*



*Narcissus cyclamineus*

Stephen recommended *Narcissus cyclamineus*, a charming little daffodil that will brighten any small garden or special focal point near small rhododendrons. Again, it is easy to grow in a pot or in the ground in a sunny position. Make sure that, like other narcissus it is relatively dry during the summer months.

Other useful plants in flower in early spring are *Primula obconica* and *Ribes sanguineum*. The

former are currently available at Bunnings and provide great early spring colour when placed in borders or under deciduous plants. They can be easily grown as perennials in the cooler climes. Let them die down after flowering and guard against snails and slugs when the first shoots appear next spring.

The *Ribes* is a medium shrub that produces its flowers on bare wood and makes an attractive addition to any size garden.

Bronwyn



*Primula obconica*



*Ribes sanguineum*

## BBQ at Forest Lodge

On Saturday morning following the Grant lecture, members were invited to share a barbecue at Forest Lodge. Although due to circumstances, Stephen Ryan had to return to Victoria it was decided that the barbecue would still go ahead.

Members left the warmth of the fireside and ventured out on a cold August winter day in Stirling. Fortunately the rain kept at bay and we all enjoyed the company of like-minded enthusiasts. Our generous host Milton Bowman conducted a guided tour around his historic garden and it was a delight to experience a garden which is rarely open to the public. One and all had an enjoyable day thanks in no small part to our host.

Michelle



*By Bill Voigt*

## Culture Notes

### "What you should be doing with your rhodies and garden this August"

Because we are experiencing warmer than usual days, it is probably appropriate to spray your rhododendrons and azaleas with "Confidor", a safe

spray which controls lace bug and the pear and cherry slug which attacks the foliage of pears, cherries, hawthorns and amelanchiers in late spring and summer.

Containers situated on gravel or bare earth should be lifted or rotated several times a year to prevent roots from trees invading via the drainage holes.

The camellia "Zambo" is much admired for its purple colour, but it is often not a very vigorous grower. A far more robust variety is "Tamzin Coull", not such a deep purple but a very attractive camellia.

The general rule when planting trees and shrubs that are grafted onto a root stock is to keep the site of the graft above the ground. One exception to this rule is the planting of grafted lilacs.



*Tamzin Coull*

They are usually grafted onto privet stock, but unlike other grafted shrubs, the grafted area should be buried to enable the lilac to develop its own roots. Of course any suckers of privet that appear should be removed. For late spring and summer colour seedlings of dianthus, antirrhinum, lobelia, pansies, violas and stocks can be planted now.

It is time too to divide most herbaceous perennials and replant in new positions.

Ribes, the flowering currant, and forsythia are two very showy shrubs that flower in early spring. Forsythia and daffodils are great for floral arrangements.

As roses begin to send out tender shoots they can be mutilated by Rosellas which partly sever the soft shoots, leaving them to dry off. A few strips of foil hung on the bushes being attacked will usually frighten the birds away. It needs to be in place for just a few weeks until the new growth hardens, because by then the roses have lost their appeal for the feathered vandals.

"Chrysomanicum" is a lovely dwarf yellow rhododendron flowering now. It is very suitable for growing in a container, especially as the flowers mark very easily with the rain or hail, so the plant can be moved under shelter while the flowers are out. It is a rhododendron well worth growing.

Another larger growing yellow is "Odee Wright". The trusses are large and beautiful. An old very hardy purple rhododendron is "Purpureum Elegans". It has very good foliage and produces many flowers.

The vireya "Javanicum" was shown in last month's newsletter, this is an excellent, strong growing vireya. If you manage to find one, take the plunge and buy it, as it is a wonderful colour.

Visits to nurseries will reveal lots of different Boronia in bloom or about to flower. Most do well here in the Hills.

The days are lengthening, the temperatures are rising so there will be lots of opportunities to work in the garden, getting a good dose of vitamin D.



*Chrysomanicum*



*Odee Wright*



*Purpureum Elegans*

## Librarians Report



by Ann & David Matison

Having only just taken over the Library, and not having a chance to see the books, we are unable to report; however let us introduce ourselves.

Ann has been a keen plains gardener for as long as we can remember. She had always dreamed of having a big garden in the Hills. Retirement seemed a good time to start so in 2003 we bought our Aldgate property.

When we took it over, it had a lot of bush, a lot of pine trees, two big oaks and a dilapidated cottage. We loved the bush so that stayed. We do try from time to time to get rid of the woody weeds that dominate some areas. It's a losing battle but we try.

We removed about thirty of the pine trees, renovated the cottage and then started in earnest. The first plantings began in 2007, so as you can see it is a very new garden.

Over time David has taken up the challenge. He calls himself the Chief Under Gardener and maintenance man. He has learned how to distinguish a weed from a precious plant that we want to keep and has become an irrigation expert.

Our love of Rhododendrons started, during the few years that we lived in Great Britain. In fact it can be traced back to a walk through the gardens of Kenwood House in London. Our visit there must have been in the Spring because the Rhododendrons along the drive were in full bloom and they were magnificent.

Hopefully we will have had time to study some of the books in the Rhododendron Club's collection and provide a useful library report by next month.

## Bird of the Month

### Rainbow Lorikeet



*Trichoglossus haematodu*

by Chris Thomas

A large, brightly coloured bird - bold, noisy, never confused with other birds. A bit smaller than a Rosella.

Thirty years ago it was uncommon in our gardens, but now is a regular visitor, often in flocks of 20 or more.

Always calling as it flies, and reveals vivid red armpits as it flies over you.

Will come to a domestic feeder and will take nectar, apples and seed, especially sunflower.

When challenged at a feeder, it aggressively jumps or hops to push away bigger birds such as rosellas.

Nests from July to January in hollow limbs fairly high up.



By Richard Illman

## From the Propagating Bench

Last month's newsletter contained photos of the process of winter grafting of Japanese maples and now, one month later the top of the root stock has been removed and the scions are making new growth.



*Maple scions*



*grafted retic. Camellia*

### Finding a *Camellia reticulata*?

Reticulata camellias are becoming more and more difficult to purchase because they are difficult to propagate on their own roots and they do not represent a cost effective product. If you have a seedling camellia then perhaps next winter you should consider grafting your own. Many of our members' gardens have wonderful aged specimens of *Camellia reticulata* that could, with permission from the member provide suitable grafting material.

This month started with a downpour of 39mm and then the rains almost stopped. To this point there has been a total of 47.5mm which makes it a very dry August.

However it has been very cold until the last week and this morning there was frost on the ground but it is good to see the sun.

In summary, a dry end to winter but hopefully we will see more episodes of rain in Spring.

Milton Bowman

## Tales from Forest Lodge





## Your Committee

At the recent AGM held at the Stirling Coventry Library, on Friday the 15<sup>th</sup> August 2014, prior to the Grant Memorial Lecture, the following Committee was elected.

- 🌸 President : Ian Smylie
- 🌸 Vice President : David Rice
- 🌸 Treasurer : Peter Wiadrowski
- 🌸 Secretary : Milton Bowman
- 🌸 Newsletter : Bronwyn Illman and Michelle Woolford
- 🌸 Librarians : David and Ann Matison
- 🌸 Public Officer : Rob Hatcher
- 🌸 National Delegate : Jeff Jenkinson
- 🌸 Web Masters : Michelle Woolford and David Woolford

We note the sad passing of

### Fay Abbott

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of August 2014. Fay was a former Secretary of the Rhododendron Society of Australia, South Australian Branch.



**RIP**

## Dog of the Month

Scruffy is the inaugural Dog of the Month. At the Forest Lodge BBQ he endeared himself to members with his woe begotten expression and ingratiating manner.

Scruffy is a wire haired Jack Russell.

We are happy to accept nominations for future Dog of the Month recipients.



## Neutrog Spring Order

It's as easy as 1,2,3

Members will find the Neutrog spring order form attached to this newsletter.

Step 1 – Complete the order form.

Step 2 – Make 2 copies of the completed form- one for yourself and one to send to Neutrog.

Step 3- Send your order with payment to Neutrog before September 30th.

Members will be notified when the delivery takes place and orders can be collected from Peter Wiadrowski's home. Please take your copy of the order when you collect the products so that mistakes are not made.

Bronwyn

# NEUTROG™

## The Experts' Choice

### Plant Orders

Update : Robert has informed me that the orders from Toolangi & Boulsters will be at Mt Lofty in the last week of September.

Some plants were not available or not available in the requested size so I will register this when I send out the final invoice to members.

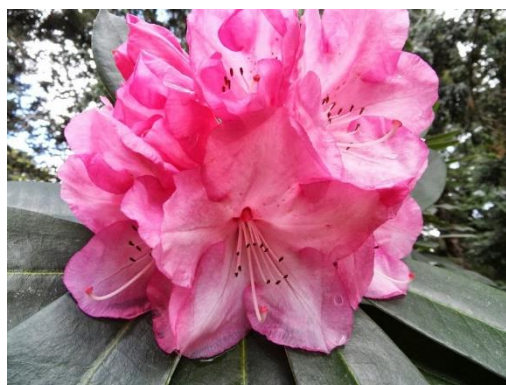
Richard and I will sort the orders and notify members when they can be collected. If collection is difficult please let me know and I can arrange delivery.

Members will be issued with an updated invoice that will detail the plant and transport cost and are requested to settle the account with Peter Wiadrowski. Peter will have a copy of all final invoices.

Bronwyn

### Bloom of the Month

This month's Bloom of the Month featured in the Newsletter heading is Dame Nellie Melba (photo from Forest Lodge).



### Stop Press

Bunnings at Mile End have their Encore azaleas at a reduced price of \$7.89. Plants are a good size and appear very healthy.

Bronwyn

