

Rhododendrons South Australia

Australian Rhododendron Society Inc. South Australian Branch

Issue 90 - July 2015

Coming Events

Next Meeting, 15th July 7:45pm

There will be a presentation by Simon Begg from the Victorian branch regarding the future role of the National Council. Simon is the current president of National Council. If there is time there will also be a report on the gardens visited by members on their recent trip to Italy, France and the UK.

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



June Meeting

Members were treated to an entertaining talk from Robert Hatcher concerning his and Jackie's recent trip to Singalila Ridge in Sikkim. Robert certainly appeared to be the authority on the trip identifying many of the rhododendrons that were in spectacular flower.

Even though they experienced some of the aftershocks of the Kathmandoo earthquake and needed to evacuate their accommodation, Robert highly recommended the trekking and camping experience.

The raffle winner was Janet Rice - the rhodo was Mrs Charles Pearson.

Ian Smylie welcomed two new members, Dr Henri Hancock from Torrens Park who has a keen interest in Vireyas and Gary Seifried from Glenunga.

Bronwyn.





By Bill Voigt

Culture Notes

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

A drier than usual winter gives more opportunities to work outside in the garden, in this tidying up time. Roses and hydrangeas need to be pruned and perennials such as cannas and day lilies can be trimmed. When rainy days return, try a visit to the book shed at Stirling, as they have quite a selection of low priced gardening books.

Apart from the Correa "Dusky Bells" there are now several orange flowered hybrids available and these provide a welcome splash of colour during the winter months.

Well-rotted old cow or horse manure makes a very good mulch under Rhodos.

Compost can be enriched by adding comfrey, which being deep rooted, supplies minerals sourced from the sub soil. If available, pigeon manure is very beneficial also as pigeons feed on a great variety of seeds and berries.

Now is the time to add alum to the soil around hydrangeas to keep them blue. Water it in well, but only apply it when the plants are dormant.

A small, not too spreading tree suitable for small gardens is the Formosan Cherry. *Prunus Campanulata* has small bell shaped rose-red flowers in late winter.

To prevent birds from uprooting newly planted seedlings, cover them with pieces of gutter guard.

Pull rather than dig weeds out close to azaleas to prevent damage to the fibrous roots.

Most herbaceous perennials can be divided now.

The foliage of Grape Hyacinths (*Muscari*) often becomes very long, but it can be shortened to enable the flowers to show.

Rhodos, especially *Vireyas* and Azaleas benefit from foliar spray every six to eight weeks.



Prunus Campanulata



Daphne odora



Espaliered Flowering Quince



Some Camellias provide large numbers of buds so removing some will result in larger, better shaped blooms.

Annuals to plant now include Cornflowers, Lobelias, Violas, Pansies, primula Malacoides, Calendulas, and Linarias.

One of the first trees to flower in June and July is the Flowering Apricot, Prunus Mume. The hybrid “Geisha” is the earliest.

The Flowering Quince, usually just referred to as Japonica, is flowering now. There are white, pink and red varieties, all of which bloom over a long period. A very effective wall covering when espaliered.

Daphne odora which is flowering now, provides a wonderful scent in the garden. There are white, pink and almost red forms. Often regarded as difficult to grow, it is best planted in a semi shaded position and then left alone- just watered during summer but not tampered with. Most Daphne’s seemed to be killed by well-meant kindness.



Disbudding camellias



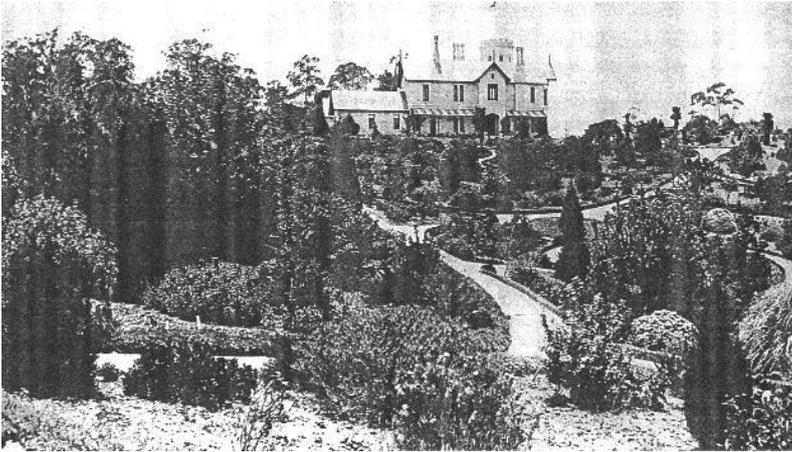
viola and lobelia

Rhododendron purchases 2015

Members will find the Toolangi and Boulter’s Nursery Catalogues attached to this newsletter. The opportunity for members to purchase rhododendrons at cost has been an advantage of membership for the past two years. The process will operate as in the past i.e. members select the plants they require and send the list to Bronwyn (e-mail richwyn@optusnet.com.au or phone 83391501). A confirmation of their order will be sent to the member. Robert Hatcher will include the plants ordered by members when he places the order for the plant sale. Transport costs for the total order will be shared amongst members. Please contact Bronwyn if you have any queries regarding the process.

Bronwyn

Tales from Forest Lodge



June 2015 has been an unusual month, the weather has been cold but not frosty, and the rainfall has been infrequent and light. We have only received 37mm whereas the long term average for June is 183mm. I hope that the rains come in the next few months so that the tanks fill and the soil moisture is adequate for summer.

Some of the early rhododendrons have started to flower, and a few of the camellias are starting too. There has

been little wind damage to the trees but there are a lot of fallen leaves to keep me busy.

Milton



Bird of the Month

Black Shouldered-Kite

Elanus axillaris

33-38 cm; span to 90 cm. Beautiful pale grey hawk with pure white head, body and tail, black shoulders and red eyes. Cere and legs yellow. A black 'comma' mark in front of eye extends over and to rear of eye.

Juvenile: deep-buff head and upper breast; back and wings mottled buff or brown, with prominent white tips; eye brown. Becomes progressively whiter, with buff zone around breast.

Singles, pairs, family parties: perches conspicuously on dead and living trees, fence-posts; hovers near roadsides. Flight direct, with quick, shallow wingbeats broken by sailing glides on upswept 'gull' wings; underwing white except for bold black mark near 'wrist', and blackish wingtip.

Hovers frequently, often with feet dangling: parachutes onto prey, wings held up in a deep V.

Habitat: grasslands with trees; farms, cereal stubbles, market gardens, roadsides, sewage farms, overgrown vacant land, suburban paddocks, coastal wastes.

We have them fly daily at Nairne on our adjoining vacant block.

Chris Thomas





From the Propagating Bench

Nerine Seeds

If you have had a good flower display from your Nerines this year you may have lots of seeds on the dying stalks.

These can be collected and sown in a pot so that the fleshy seeds can be protected from slugs and snails and they should all germinate in the late spring and flower in three to four years.



nerine seeds

Notes on Propagation by Seed

The following text is courtesy of Marcus Harvey who is an avid propagator from Tasmania.

The advantage of increasing bulbs by seed is that a larger number can be raised. The resulting seedlings will be young and healthy and offer the gardener a range of possibilities from which to choose. Some individuals will be superior to their parents in beauty and vigour and occasionally they may be very different representing a “break” within the species. This is the age-old process by which better garden forms have emerged and one that hopefully will not be lost from the competent gardener’s repertoire. Raising plants from seeds enables the gardener to get to know better his/her subjects’ needs and requirements and this experience fosters a higher degree of confidence and eventually mastery over the process of growing them well.

Finally on a personal note, seeds embody the hopes and dreams of our future gardening explorations – little packages that can bring big surprises. With wild provenance seed - they are like exotic postcards from far-off foreign climes that take a little time to arrive, and like a much awaited message are savoured just that much more.

Seed Suppliers

Richard and I have recently come across a number of very good overseas seed suppliers who are able to send their products to Australia. I would encourage members to examine their web sites and place some orders. It is a very economical way of raising many plants that are great companions to our rhododendrons and azaleas.

Swallowtail seeds - Swallowtailgardenseeds.com

Plant world seed - Plant-world-seeds.com

Marcus Harvey - mhillview400@hotmail.com

Speak to Richard about the design of a simple “hot box” that enables you to germinate seeds in a very short time. (our latest seed came up in less than a week!)

Richard

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Early Rhododendrons currently in flower



Rhodoendron Rosamundi



Rhododendron John Waterer



Vireya Irian Jaya



Article Submissions

The news editors welcome submissions for the monthly newsletter. In addition to Problem Corner, Recipe of the Month, and Bloom of the Month, members are welcome to submit articles on any topic that will be of interest to the Society's membership.

We have a deadline of the 1st of the month to allow time to prepare the newsletter for distribution a week before the meeting.

Submissions can be made directly to Michelle or Bronwyn, or emailed to; news.editor@sarhodo.org.au

Michelle & Bronwyn



Vireya Red Mountain



Vireya Star Shower



Vireya Peach Dream



Vireya Silver Thimbles



Vireya loranthiflorum

Bloom of the Month



Goldflimmer.

Hybrid, *sport of ponticum*. A nice landscaping rhodi with its variegated foliage and compact mounding habit.

Currently in flower in members gardens.



Editors Tip : Where possible images for articles in this Newsletter are sourced from members. Where this is not possible, images are sourced from the internet. Due to deadlines it is not possible to seek permission to use each image, so we hyperlink each of the images in acknowledgement of their source. This has an additional benefit, if you click on these images you may be able to find information in addition to that in the article.