



Rhododendrons South Australia

Australian Rhododendron Society Inc. South Australian Branch

Issue 100-August 2016

Welcome to our 100th issue

Throughout this issue we have tried to commemorate the work of past newsletter editors and to celebrate the achievement of this milestone.

History of the SA Rhododendron Society Newsletter

Chris Thomas was the driving force behind the inaugural newsletter and continued in the role of sole editor for 8 years. Chris handed over the reins to Michelle and David Woolford, who with the assistance of Bronwyn Illman further developed the newsletter. A new format was introduced and the inclusion of different sections produced a substantial document that was enthusiastically received by members. It was also at this time that the majority of members opted to receive the newsletter electronically. In the latter part of 2015 Nataliya and Bronwyn assumed responsibility for producing the newsletter and have continued as editors in 2016.

Thank you to Chris, Michelle and David for all the creative energy and time they gave to the production of this monthly document. It has proved to be interesting, educational, and a source of communication for all members.



Bloom of the Month – Rhododendron New Century



New Century has been chosen to herald the beginning of the next 100 issues!

This rhododendron is a cross of a catawbiense hybrid with a hybrid of Bristol Cream. It was bred by R.W.Mezitt in the 70's. It is a compact grower, achieving 60cm in ten years.

Vireya Graham's gift has bloomed for the first time in our garden and appears to be a strong plant with large, perfumed apricot-pink blooms. It is another Vireya that has performed particularly well in a hollowed tree fern stump. Graham's gift was named in honour of the Vireya hybridist Graham Snell.





Chris suggested the Crescent Honeyeater (*Phylidonyris pyrrhopterus*) as it is an Australian bird with “cent” in its name.

This bird is a member of the Yellow-winged Honeyeaters group with a crescent on the side of the breast. It has a loud, cheery call – ‘egypt’. The nest is a deep cup of bark, dry grass, spider webs and plant down placed in the fork of a low bush or shrub. The female lays 3 spotted pink to reddish eggs. The range of the Crescent Honeyeater includes woodland, forest, and heaths in Mt Lofty ranges, the south east and Tasmania.

From the Propagating Bench by Richard Illman

For those members who prepared a cutting box this year, now would be a good time to check the cuttings and give them a watering with Seasol or Seamungus that will hopefully encourage stronger root growth. However, still keep the box closed until new growth is well established.

You may have recently received Liliium bulbs in the mail. If you carefully break off a scale or two from the bulb and return it to the small bag of peat moss that they arrived in then by Christmas there should be 3 or 4 new bulblets on the basal edge of each scale. These can be carefully snapped off and potted.

As mentioned last month, now is the time to start thinking about planting seeds for your summer vegetables.





The severe winds and copious rainfall have certainly had dramatic effects on many gardens in the hills. The strong winds have blown over many shrubs and trees as the very wet soil has loosened the roots. Any shrubs or small trees that have been pushed to one side should be firmly staked and the foliage trimmed back to make the plant more stable. Old stockings are excellent for tying plants as they do not cut into the bark of the staked plants and have great elasticity.

Stagnant water can be fatal to Rhodos, so after these very wet conditions ensure that no plants are sitting in water. Apart from draining any excess water away by using furrows or pipes, it is often possible to lift smaller plants (using a fork or spade) to a level above the water. Where the soil is clayey or badly drained, a good idea is to make raised beds containing friable soil and mulch.

Instead of spraying to kill weeds, use mulch. When you have weeded a section, or if the emerging weeds are still small, cover the area with mulch such as finely chopped pea straw which is readily available in most hardware shops. As it rots down it also provides nutrients for the soil. The layer you apply does not need to be very thick.

The inclement weather may have prevented all your pruning from being done but it is still not too late. The days are lengthening so there is more daylight later in the day to spend outdoors.



Ceratostigma willmottianum is a delightful little deciduous shrub grown for its intense blue flowers and brilliant autumn foliage. At this time the plants are usually covered with the spent flower heads or seeds. These should be trimmed off to tidy the plant and give it more vigour.

Early plantings of Iceland poppies and anemones will be sending up their first blooms. Remove the spent flowers to keep the plants blooming.

Although it may seem too cold and wet for many insects woolly caterpillars seem to thrive during winter. They seem to be especially partial to cinerarias and acanthus leaves. Watch out for them. They can be removed by hand, or if in great numbers, any low toxicity insecticide will get rid of them.



Another pest to look out for on Cinerarias is leaf miner which feeds beneath the surface of the leaf, leaving winding paths in the green of the foliage. They are easily eradicated with any insecticide of your choice.



There are many Yakushimanum hybrids available. For the most part they are low growing, very floriferous and immune to lacebug, so well worth including in your collection.

Any rhodos that have indumentum on the undersides of the leaves seem to be protected from Lacebug.



After the recent drab and stormy days, won't spring be appreciated all the more.



The librarian(s) having hibernated this cold winter, have little to report for the month.

We have however been reading and recommend a highly interesting beautifully illustrated book in the library, *Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker, traveller and plant collector*, written by Ray Desmond a chief librarian and archivist at Kew Gardens.

Hooker, a trained botanist and skilled artist who extensively illustrated his own works, was a close associate of Charles Darwin and admired by Von Humboldt.

The book begins with the start of his travelling career as assistant ship's surgeon with the well-known James Clark Ross Antarctic expedition of 1839-43. This was followed by much plant collecting in India and the Himalayas, often in unmapped hazardous terrain where he found Rhododendrons and Orchids, which he illustrated in several publications. Some of these illustrations are reproduced in our book.

There was additional exploring in the Atlas Mountains, Syria, Lebanon and the Rockies/California.

In summary, a well-illustrated coffee table book presented to us by the Victorian Branch of the A.R.S. in 2001 and a very good read.

As an addendum, we must thank Peter Wiadrowski for recommending a book which we might purchase, from the American Society website.



Last Month's Meeting

Cameron Peoples generously gave of his time to deliver the second part of his presentation involving his trip to China. Members were very interested to see the contrast between the area in Autumn and his previous visit during Spring. Highlights included wonderful scenes of Ginko biloba in full autumn dress, giant varieties of hydrangeas and hillsides clothed with conifers. We are truly fortunate as a society to have access through the Mt Lofty Gardens, to a group of young, enthusiastic gardeners who are willing to share their knowledge and travel experiences with us.

Rob Hatcher informed the society about his impending trip to Queensland to further the knowledge about the range and diversity of the Australian native rhododendrons, Lochiae and Viriosum, and we look forward to another entertaining presentation at a future meeting.



Next Month's Meeting

Our next meeting will be the AGM of the society and held at the Crafers Hall on August 17th at 8pm. There will be a quiz organized by Robert Hatcher which will cover a range of questions and photo identification. Members will be organized into teams so that the expertise in the society is evenly distributed. An additional advantage for members at this meeting will be a sale of a wide range of plants supplied by Quentin Woollaston of Raywood nursery at Delamere and donations to the pot luck stall would be appreciated Please come and support your society and have an enjoyable evening.

Celebrating member's gardens



Early rhodo –Sring Song in Janie & Ian's garden



Crocus E.A Bowles & Iris reticulata Harmony



Struck Rhodo. Cuttings in Nataliya's garden



Hellebores in Nataliya's garden



Vireya Wattle Bird growing at Tania & Chris's garden.



Happy Rhodos. and Hellebores at Nairne

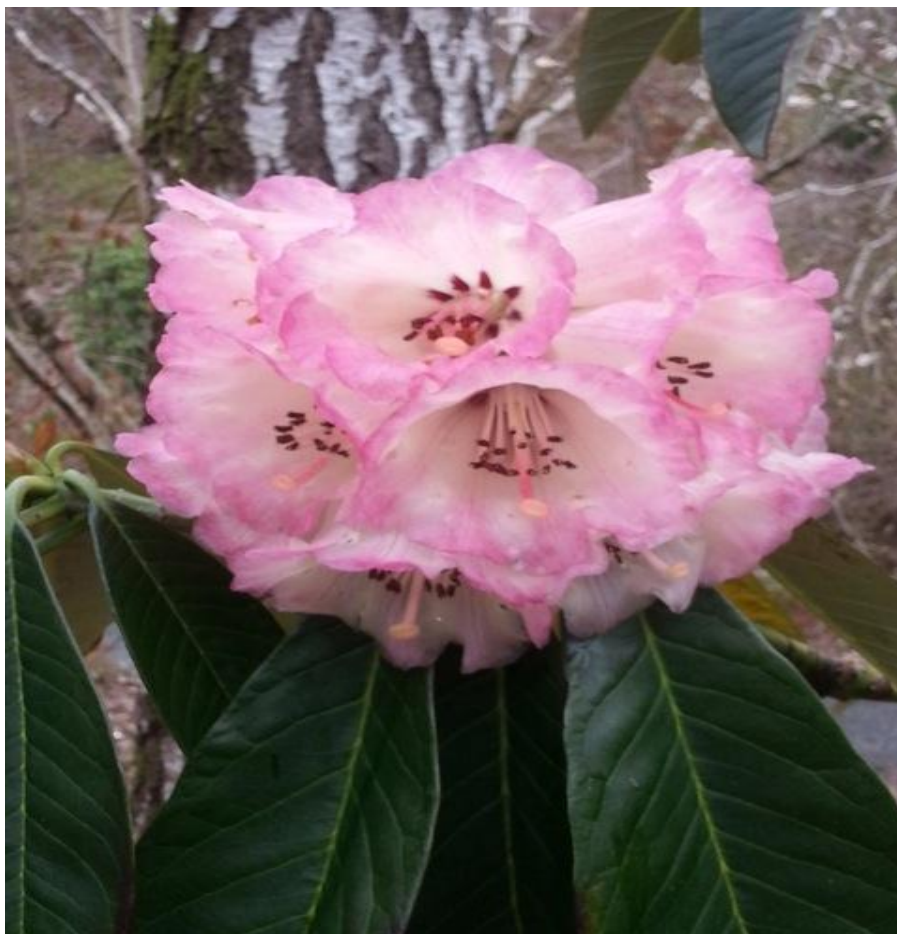
Tales from Forest Lodge by Milton Bowman



Winter has really happened this year, it has been cold, windy and very wet. There have been a steady succession of cold fronts moving over the Continent, resulting in storms once or twice a week, the associated winds have taken branches off trees and spread debris throughout the garden and have made keeping paths clean and tidy a futile task. However the rain has been a blessing and the soil is now saturated. There has been 254.5mm this month, bringing the rainfall for this year to 843mm, which is very close to last year's total of 854mm. We can look forward to a good spring.

The Camellias are blooming, the bulbs are starting to flower, and Sir Robert Peel is looking lovely bright rose against all of the greens in the garden. Today is beautiful and sunny and there is plenty to do and enjoy, tomorrow another front is due to come through and so the rains will hopefully continue through into spring.

The spectacular *Rhododendron magnifica* is in the Rhododendron gully at MLBG, and it is worth a few hours walking through there.



Notice Board

Open garden



Sue's Spectacular English Garden

Still changing, trees fall down and more walls go up

10 Aldgate Valley Road Aldgate

Parking can be difficult, so feel free to drop off people in the garden and if possible park in the IGA supermarket or at the Aldgate Pump Hotel.

Sunday 11th September, 2016

11am - 4pm

£10 entry

In support of
Scriptmistis International
Murray Bridge

Discover the changes, map in hand, buy a pot plant from our garden and enjoy complimentary tea, coffee and tasty treats

Directions



Rear entrance to property:

1. At Aldgate roundabout take Kingsland Road
2. Turn left on to Rugby Road
3. Keep left on Rugby Road past 'No Thru Rd' sign
4. Turn right into private lane at exit 'No Thru Rd' sign
5. Driveway ends at house

Sue Antel would like to notify all members about her pending open garden event. Her garden opening will support a local Murray Bridge organisation. Sue's garden is a delight to behold and a wonderful way to spend a morning or afternoon.

Annual Plant Sale Arrangements

The annual plant sale will be held at the lower car park of the MLBG on Sunday, September 25th from 10am to 4pm. Please keep this date free on your calendar as members will be asked to assist with the running of the day. **Details of rosters etc. will be arranged at the September meeting but the most important component of this meeting will be to have members bring the plants they have successfully propagated from the 2015 cutting day that will be available for sale.** Once the range of plants is known we can produce a photographic record to be available for the public to peruse on the sale day. Remember we are trying to promote these hardy varieties as ones that will be successful in the Adelaide hills.

Cornus florida for sale

Tania and Chris Thomas have been growing a large Cornus florida in their garden at Nairne but have found that the summer conditions have been unsuitable for it to thrive. The plant has been successfully removed and potted in a large grow bag. They would like to give it to the society to sell but the unanimous decision of the Executive meeting was that the proceeds of the sale would be passed to Tania and Chris. The plant is in good health, budded up, and approximately 2 metres tall. The Executive took the decision that the price of the plant would be \$150.00. Any member interested in purchasing this plant can see it at Rick and Bron's as it is too large to bring to the meeting. Please ring Rick on 0412222567 to arrange a time.

Master Classes at the MLBG

The following Master classes will be held at the MLBG on the dates listed.

Flowering Shrubs for a cool climate	Sunday, August 21st (focusing on Magnolias & Camellias) 9.00am-12.30pm	MLBG nursery
	Sunday September 25th (focusing on Rhododendrons & Camellias) 9.00am-12.30pm	MLBG nursery
The Art of Bonsai	Sunday, September 4th (limit of 10 students) – 10.00am-3pm	MLBG nursery
Ferns for your Garden	Monday, September 26th- 10.00am-12.30pm	MLBG lower car park
Unfurling the inner beauty of Ferns	Wednesday, October 12th- 10.00am-3.00pm	MLBG

