



# Rhododendrons South Australia

Australian Rhododendron Society Inc. South Australian Branch

## Last Month's Meeting

Our special guest was Bill Voigt, our resident, long term contributor to the newsletter. Bill led the panel Q&A discussion at the meeting and provided great insight into the growing of rhododendrons. Members contributed many questions as well as adding their own experiences to the discussion. All in all, the consensus was that it was a most useful and informative section of the meeting.



Thanks must also go to our Secretary, Milton Bowman, for his involvement in the panel discussion and his clear presentation on the history of the Waterer and Whibley hybrids.

The raffle of Rhododendron Jeanette Clarke was won by Robyn Wall.



## Member's advice arising from the Q& A panel:

### Lace Bug treatment –

Bill Giles suggested that Confidor tablets placed around rhododendrons gave extended control. Purchasing them via the “net” was a much cheaper option than buying from garden centres.

Ann Matison's recipe – natura soap or paraffin + detergent applied every few weeks from the start of new growth.



## Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held at the Crafers Hall on October 19<sup>th</sup> at 8pm. As it will be peak Rhododendron flowering time it will feature a display of blooms. Please bring a sample of any rhododendrons that are in flower in your garden (named or un-named) and consider whether or not these plants would be suitable for propagating next year. We hope to display the flowers that are brought by members and to provide the opportunity for everyone to indicate whether they are interested in getting particular plants propagated.

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

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## Plant Sale

The plant sale, held on Sunday, September, 25th was a great success, with many plants being sold even before 10.00am. The propagated plants from members were in demand, probably because they were local, hardy varieties and very reasonably priced. We had about 60 propagated plants available and all but one were sold. The Toolangi rhododendrons and remaining Boulter's stock sold well considering that many were not in bloom and the remainder have been made available to members at the reduced price of \$25.00.



Members should have received a list of the leftover rhododendrons and are requested to notify Bronwyn if they wish to order some. Thanks must go to all members who gave of their time to help on the day. Without your support we could not run such successful events. Special thanks to Rob Hatcher for arranging the use of the MLBG and to Jacki for her generosity in providing members with hot soup for lunch.

### **New members enrolled at the plant sale:**

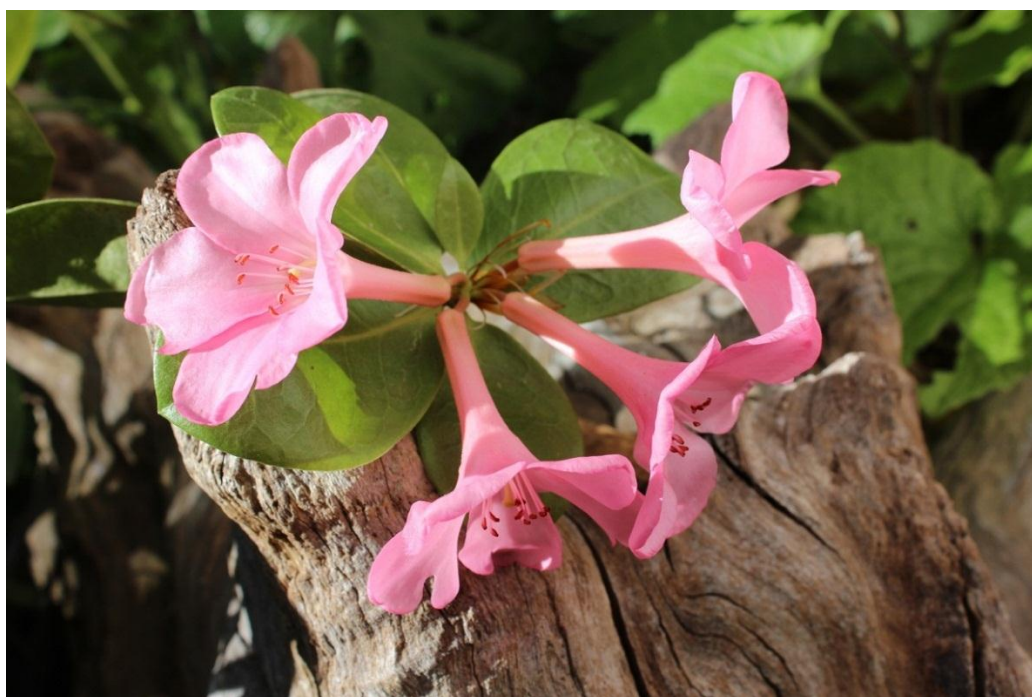
We welcome two new members to the society. They are Lynley Keynes and Jane Sabey. We trust that their association with the society is rewarding and educational and look forward to meeting them at the October meeting.



**Bassian Thrush- Zosterornis lateralis**

Olive-backed ground-thrush with prominent black scallops on back and rump. Voice: high pitched “seep”; extended warbling song like a blackbird’s. Nesting: untidy, decorated bowl of bark and rootlets in a low fork of tree or stump. 2-3 freckled greenish eggs. Habitat: Common in damp gullies or forest, moving to woodlands in winter.

**Bloom of the Month – Vireya Rhododendron Highland Arabesque**



Vireya Highland Arabesque was bred by John Rouse and registered in 1983.

It is R. Orbiculatum X (LateumX Aurigeranum).



## From the Propagation Bench by Richard Illman

This is the time when the propagator sits back and watches with anticipation what develops from his grafting activities in the winter.

New maples, cherries, crab apples, conifers, camellias and rhododendrons are all possibilities. If success is apparent samples will be on display at the next meeting.

However, at this time of the year it is important to examine your over-wintering Tuberous Begonias for emergence of new buds but avoid the temptation to water until the new growth is at least 50mm tall. By then new root growth should have been initiated.

Tuberous Begonias should become available at nurseries in the next month. They are usually available in punnets of 4 plants. They will provide colour in your garden from January to April.



There is an informative resource for begonia enthusiasts available online at <http://www.bradsbegoniaworld.com>. Instructions and illustrations of different begonia propagation technics can be found here: <http://www.bradsbegoniaworld.com/prop.htm>. Members who are interested in growing and propagating beautiful begonias may find this website useful.

Don't forget at this time of the year to keep an eye on your cutting box. Many cuttings taken in February this year will have started to shoot. A foliar spray with a dilute solution of "Seasol" will encourage further growth. Given the success of our propagated plants at the sale this year it will be good if we can have an extensive range and supply for the plant sale in 2017.

## The Month Ahead by Bill Voigt



The unusual wet and windy conditions have spoiled the flowers on many flowering shrubs and trees. Normally there is more sunshine and drier weather during spring when we can enjoy the wonderful display of blossoms. Crab apples are very useful, hardy small trees that have few pests to worry about.

One of the most floriferous is “Floribunda” which has masses of pink buds that open into white flowers. “Gorgeous” has many white flowers that are followed by bright red small apples, that as well as making a fine autumn show, are also great for making delicious crab apple jelly. “Echtermeyer” is a weeping variety with bronze-red leaves, pink flowers and purple fruit. The last to flower, and so useful for extending the blossom season is “Ionensis”, The Bechtel Crab, where the individual flowers resemble small roses.



“Floribunda” Crab apple



Fruit for Crab apple “Gorgeous”



As the days become warmer roses will be affected by fungus diseases such as mildew and black spot. If the rain continues and the degree of humidity rises, a cheap and safe spray to use is milk- one part milk to ten parts water.

Bulbous irises, often known as Dutch Iris make an outstanding display in September and October. Blue Dutch iris with yellow tulips makes a great combination.





Ajuga is a low growing perennial that provides excellent ground cover, and a fine display of blue, white or pink flowers. There is also a variety with variegated foliage. As summer approaches ageratum and dwarf bedding begonias can be planted for decorative edges to garden plots.



Dwarf pomegranates are excellent as container plants to grow in open positions.

Lewisias make lovely little pot plants for sheltered positions or for crevices in rockeries. They need good drainage and can easily be propagated by cuttings.

Lewisias

As the various spring bulbs finish flowering there is a temptation to tidy the garden by removing the foliage. This should be left until it dries off, as the food produced by the leaves is drawn down into the bulbs to provide energy for the next season. Any seed heads that form can be removed.

As camellias and Rhodos finish flowering new growth appears, and that is a good time to apply fertiliser—either slow release or well-rotted animal manure. It is better to be sparing rather than too liberal when fertilising.

If you have space for a larger growing rhodo, try “Anna Rose Whitney”. This is a vigorous, well proportioned, tall grower with large leaves and conical spikes of deep rose pink.



Rhododendron Anna Rose Whitney



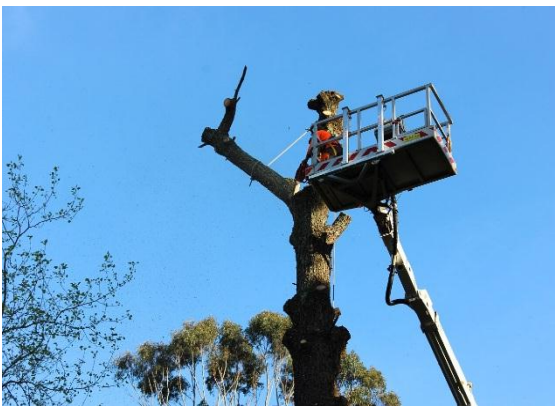
## Devastated Gardens – sympathising with members



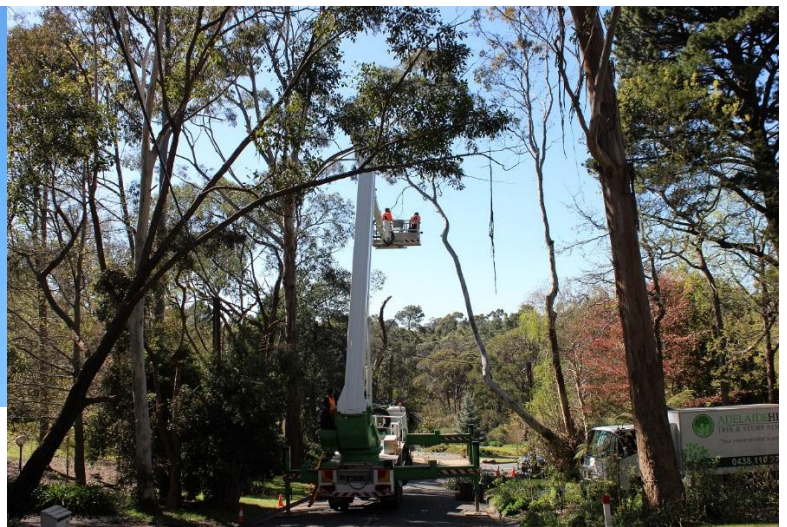
*Sue Antel's flooded garden –plants on the way to Mt Bold*



*Fallen Pine tree across the drive – Illman's*



*One less Pine tree*



*A giant operation!*



## Tales from Forest Lodge by Milton Bowman



In my last report I mentioned the early signs of Spring, and was looking forward to warm and sunny days and the bursting forth of the Rhododendrons. Well, it has not happened!! - September 2016 has been cold, wet, and the storms have continued with great vigour.

The bare statistics show what has been happening. Rainfall this month has been 340.5mm, there have been less than a handful of days where the maximum temperature has been above 11C, and the storms have been bowling trees over throughout the Hills. I hope that none of our members have had damage to their houses but know that many have lost trees and their gardens have been damaged! - Forest Lodge is no different from the rest of the district in that the property is covered with tree debris and another big pine fell in the last storm, taking the total number of trees lost this year to 7. There is a lot of work to be done but this can only be done once the weather settles. I have repaired the back drive several times already, only to see it washed back into Pine Street and so I will wait for Spring before trying again!! - The total rainfall for 2016 is now 1306mm, another 80mm has already fallen in October, and this makes it by far the wettest year since 2002 when we first moved here. We are looking forward to Summer!



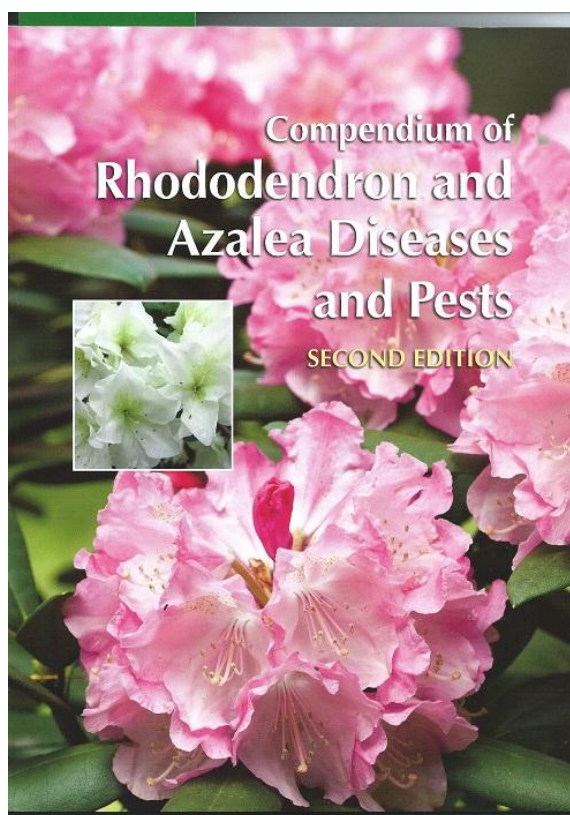
## Library Report by Ann & David Matison



Our Library has obtained a new book. "Compendium of Rhododendron and Azalea Diseases and Pests. Second Edition." Edited by Robert G. Linderman, Plant health, LLC, Corvallis, Oregon and D. Michael Benson, Department of Plant Pathology, North Carolina State University, Raleigh. Published by the American Phytopathological Society. 2014

As can be seen it is a North American publication and all of the content is relevant to growers on that continent. It does however have some relevance to us in South Australia. The book is divided into four parts. Those are part one, diseases caused by infectious agents, for example fungi, bacteria, viruses and other organisms. Part two covers diseases caused by non-infectious agents, for example heat and cold stress, mineral deficiencies and toxicities. Part three goes on to detail disease and pest management. This covers topics such as exclusion, eradication and quarantine regulations sanitation and chemical control. Finally, part four covers Insect and mite pests, including several pages about lace bugs. The book concludes with an extensive glossary.

It is a quite technical book, designed to be of use to growers, consultants and researchers. As a new rhododendron grower I found it interesting, especially as it is very well illustrated. It does however make a person wonder sometimes why they would want to grow these plants when there is so much that can go wrong!



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*Just a reminder that the cupboards at Crafers Hall are not big enough to house the Newsletters and Journal owned by the Society. If anyone wishes to read any of these publications please contact us and we would be happy to give you access.*

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# Notice Board

## Secret gardens of the Dandenongs

'The Secret Gardens of the Dandenong Ranges' is an exclusive event from October 17 – 21, bringing together some of the finest gardens in Melbourne. Passionate garden lovers will experience first-hand a selection of beautiful, privately owned gardens throughout the Dandenong Ranges, not normally accessible to the general public.

Check [The Secret Gardens of the Dandenong Ranges](http://www.secretgardensofthedandenongranges.com.au) website for details of this event.

