



Rhododendrons South Australia

Australian Rhododendron Society Inc. South Australian Branch

Issue 104-March 2017

November Meeting, Christmas party & Cutting Day reports

Another “Blooms night” was held in November and proved to be just as spectacular as the October meeting. Members were generous in their provision of a wealth of blooms which were again displayed after the meeting. The range of blooms generated much interest and many members requested cuttings of the plants to be available for our cutting day at the beginning of 2017. The raffle of a Winsome rhododendron was won by Gill Jenkinson.



Collection of blooms



Rob Field with his magnificent Blutopia



Lyn Edwards



Belinda's big pink



Sue Antel - pretty in pink



What a beaut, Rob!



Milton and a Waterer



Some of Jeff's delights



Gill with the winning Winsome

Christmas party

The last event for the 2016 year was the society's Christmas party, held at the home of Peter and Rebecca Kennedy. The weather was perfect and the setting stunning. Peter and Rebecca had worked incredibly hard, after recent storms, to have their beautiful garden in peak condition and all members enjoyed a wonderful day. We were very pleased that nearly every member attended and everyone appreciated the contribution made by the society to the cost of the catered lunch. Our thanks must go to Rebecca and Peter for their generosity in hosting the event.



The view from the lunch table



Bill, Tania, and Chris enjoying a pre-lunch chat

The Cutting Day

This was our third cutting day and it turned out to be even more successful than the last two. There was nearly 100% attendance and our new members turned out in force. We were very fortunate to have a wonderful day in terms of weather and our cuttings, as a result, should be very successful. Thanks must go to Milton and Kristina for providing the ideal venue and to Rob Hatcher and the MLBG for allowing the society to collect cuttings on the Friday. Thanks also to the team of willing helpers who took the cuttings of the Whibley hybrids.



Cutting day – a frenzy of activity



Is this the way we do it? -Robyn & Henry

Next Meeting

This will be held at the Crafers Hall on Wednesday, March 15th at 8pm. Our guest speaker will be Rob Hatcher from the MLBG, who will provide an update on the expedition to North Queensland to look for our native rhododendron species.

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

From the Propagation Bench by Richard Illman

Following our successful cutting day, members may be interested in furthering their range of cuttings. The prolonged period of mild weather will enable cuttings to be taken for at least another month and this can include plants such as camellias, pieris and daphne as well as more rhododendrons and azaleas.



Bloom of the Month – Vireya Rhododendron Viriosum Bush Baby



Bird of the Month – Sacred Kingfisher *Todiramphus-sanctus*



Populations in the southern two-thirds of Australia migrate northwards at the end of breeding season to New Guinea, east to the eastern Solomon Islands and west to Indonesia becoming uncommon to very sparse as west as Sumatra. Birds move south again to Australia in August to September.

Sacred Kingfishers forage mainly on the land, only occasionally capturing prey in the water. They feed on crustaceans, reptiles, insects and their larvae and, infrequently, fish. The birds perch on low exposed branch on the lookout for prey. Once prey is located, the Sacred Kingfisher swoops down and grasps it in its bill, returning to the perch to eat it.

The most commonly heard call of the sacred kingfisher is a rapid, noisy series of four to five repeated notes, described as 'kik-kik-kik-kik-kik' or 'kek-kek-kek-kek'



Although we have experienced a mild, wetter than normal summer, we have had just a few days of well above average temperatures, which have resulted in scorching of some Rhodos, azaleas and camellias. The plants may look unsightly, but it is better to resist the temptation to trim off the offending foliage until all the hot weather has passed, as the burnt foliage will protect the undamaged foliage beneath.

Deciduous azaleas will soon show autumn colours, if they haven't been infected with mildew which turns the foliage a nasty grey. If not yet infected, a fungicide as used for roses will safeguard them from mildew.

If you intend planting trees or shrubs for autumn colour, visit the nurseries during this time so that you can select the colours of your choice. Liquidambers particularly, vary greatly in their autumn colouring, so you can choose the colours you prefer.

Fronds from bracken or tree ferns can be used to shade delicate plants on days of fierce heat. Seeds and seedlings planted now while the soil is warm will quickly make growth before colder days. Sweet peas are best planted during the first weeks of March. The dwarf sweet pea, usually sold as "Bijou" is useful for growing in containers or as a bedding plant.

Dwarf cyclamen, Iceland poppies, Lobelias, anemones, Daffodils, scillas, and bulbous iris can all be planted now. Crocus are very suitable for small containers.



Autumn crocus

If you find that your clematis and dahlia flowers are being chewed, the culprits could be snails which operate at night. An inspection at night using a torch will soon determine if the felons are slugs or snails. A constant reminder is to lift or rotate pots that are standing on gravel or soil to ensure that the roots haven't invaded the soil beneath. Plants that have grown too large for their containers should be repotted or possibly planted in the garden.

Sasanqua camellias will be in bloom very soon, and although the flowers are not as large as Japonicas and Reticulatas, they make a wonderful display. The flowers usually drop rather than turning brown on the bush, and the foliage is more willowy: more sun tolerant too.



Sasanqua camellia – Hiryu



Sasanqua camellia – Apple blossom

Indica azaleas usually have an early autumn flowering before their main flowering season in spring, so you can often find a variety you like with blooms at this time of the year in the nurseries.

Recommendations:

Azaleas

“Agnes Neale” – mauve

“Balsaminae flora”- double pink flowers,
low growing

“Phyrne”- white with frilled petals

Sasanqua Camellias

“Red Willow”- dark pink, tall weeping growth
Dark Pink

“Yuletide”- orange red, compact growth

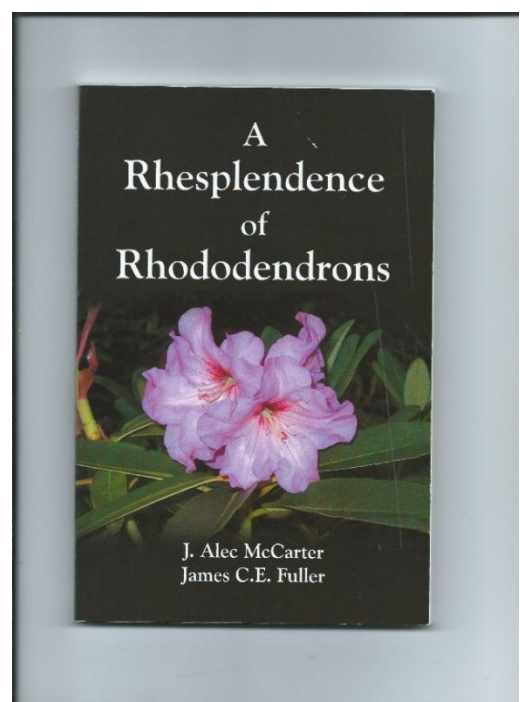
“Hiryu”- rosy pink, makes a good hedge

The wonderful season of autumn is upon us - enjoy it.

Librarian’s Report by Ann & David Matison

During the Summer holidays I picked up one of the books donated to the Society by Peter and Jill Wiadrowski. It is a comparatively short book consisting of a number of short articles, collected from the Newsletters of The Victoria Rhododendron Society, Canada. Published to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Society’s founding. The book is named *A Resplendence of Rhododendrons*, published by the Society in 2005, edited by J Alex McCarter and James C.E.Fuller. The Victoria Rhododendron Society is a chapter of the American Rhododendron Society.

There is so much about the Victorian Society that is similar to our South Australian Society. They have the same number of meetings, they pursue similar activities and the highlight of their year are the visits to private gardens, many of which are written about in the articles.



The book is divided into three sections Rhododendron Favourites, Good Breeding and Culture, Of Good Companions. Given the different climate and conditions some of the information is not relevant for our environment, but much of it is. Unfortunately the pictures are in black and white, but there are a few beautiful sketches.

I did enjoy reading the book, particularly the article names Halfdan Lem. Lem was a Norwegian who went to Alaska in 1912 to become a fisherman. He loved plants and rhododendrons became his first love. We worry about where we are going to keep our cuttings. He kept his in his fishing boat. When he retired from fishing, he and his wife established a nursery in Seattle. He bred rhododendrons from cuttings and seed and many of his plants are common plants today.

Tales from Forest Lodge by Milton Bowman



2016 was a remarkable year!

Total rainfall was 1700mm, which is way above the long term average. The result of this is the fact that the hills are still green at the end of February, the rainwater tanks are still full, and the garden at Forest Lodge is overgrown with both desirable plants and weeds. I have never seen the seedling black berries grow so fast and the grasses germinate overnight and are a meter high 2 days later. (I am exaggerating but only slightly! ! The dark side to the weather were the storms which were frequent and powerful. The wet soil and the huge amount of young growth on the deciduous trees combined to create havoc in the storm after Christmas with trees falling over roads and power lines, and wrecking many gardens. Forest Lodge lost yet another 3 trees and was littered with large branches torn out of the tops of oaks, elms, and liquidambar. I am still cleaning up the mess but I am lucky compared to the destruction in some gardens and to some houses!

2017 has been benign so far, the hot days have been few and there have been some good summer rains. January had 62mm and February had 44mm, and with a bit of luck we may avoid serious heat waves this Summer!

The cutting day at Forest Lodge was a great success due to the marvellous planning and efforts of Rick and Bronwyn Illman, and Kristina and I enjoyed the cutting exercise, the BBQ, and meeting new members!

Happy gardening and enjoy the Autumn months!

Milton Bowman

Notice Board

Proposed Meeting Program for 2017

March 15 th	Developments in Queensland concerning our native rhododendron	Rob Hatcher from MLBG
April 19 th	Composting	Tim Marshall
May 17 th	Future Directions	Lucy Sutherland - Director of MLBG
June 21 st	Trip to Bhutan	Belinda Cullum
July 19 th	TBA	
August 16 th	AGM and Quiz	
September 20 th	Panel discussion	
October 18 th	Blooms night	
November 15 th	Blooms night	
December 2 nd	Christmas Event	

New Chemicals

Initiator tablets

An Imidacloprid insecticide in tablet form. Controls aphids on roses, Azalea Lace Bug on Azaleas and Rhododendrons, Pysyllids on Lilly pilly species and other common ornamental pests. It is a systemic insecticide. It consists of 80% fertiliser to attract roots to the tablet area and 20% Confidor which lasts 12 months to protect plants from sucking insects. It is available in 750g or 3 Kg packs.

WiltNot

This is a liquid, acrylic polymer which reduces damage caused by climate extremes. It is ideal for most trees, vines, turf, flower and vegetable crops. It is a water emulsifiable polymer which forms a semi-permeable, biodegradable film and assists in the reduction of transpiration caused by climate extremes, transplanting and post-harvest stress. Available in 5L, 20L and 200L size.

Payback

This is a systemic growth regulator that reduces internodal length of new shoots and causes earlier formation of terminal buds and controls plant height in a range of ornamental plants. It is most suitable for orchards where trees are near to filling their allocated space. It is not suitable for old or unhealthy trees.

This product can also be used in the production of pot and container grown flowers and foliage plants, including rhododendrons. It is only supplied in 1L containers but requires a 1:100 dilution to prepare a stock solution.

Conferences on offer - 2017 & 2018

Emu valley in Tasmania will host a conference in November 2017. More information will be presented in future newsletters.

The American Rhododendron Society (ARS) will present a conference in May 2018 in Bremen, Germany. Some of our members attended a similar conference in Bremen in 2010 and reported that it was a most enjoyable event. More information can be obtained from [the ARS website](#).

Autumn Neutrog Orders

Members are entitled to purchase Neutrog products at a discounted rate for Autumn and Spring. Please consult the attached product list and submit your order to Bronwyn no later than **the end of March**.



Kahoona

Kahoona is an organic based, chemically boosted fertiliser, specifically developed to enhance the growth and flower development of acid loving plants such as Camellias, Gardenias, Azaleas and Rhododendrons.

The higher potassium to nitrogen ratio within Kahoona, plays a crucial role in enhancing flower development, whilst the boosted levels of iron and magnesium help maintain healthy green foliage, aiding in preventing the yellowing leaves which are often seen in late winter and early spring.

Kahoona is manufactured into a pellet form – each pellet contains the full range of macro and micro plant nutrients along with good levels of organic carbon. This organic carbon helps in retaining the water soluble nutrients within the soil, and aids in regulating their uniform uptake by plants.

Following successful trials, Kahoona has been endorsed by Camellias South Australia, the Australian Rhododendron Society (SA Branch) and Camellias Illawarra. These endorsements provide confidence to use and recommend Kahoona.

Directions for use
Apply evenly to pre-soaked soil around the drip line of the plant, avoiding contact with foliage or flowers. Water again well. Apply after signs of new season growth and thereafter every 8-10 weeks throughout the growing season – Spring to Autumn. In Winter apply Seamungus.

Established plants:
100g per plant.

Established potted plants:
15g per 150mm size pot then at 5g per 25mm pot size increase.

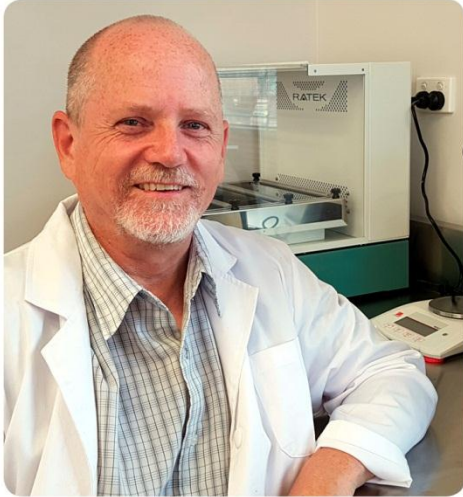
Planting:
Apply Neutrog's Seamungus at 100g per plant.

Analysis (dry weight basis)		%w/w
Nitrogen (N)	as Organic	2.98
	as Ammonia	3.42
Total Nitrogen (N)		6.4
Phosphorus (P)	as Citrate Soluble	0.86
	as Citrate Insoluble	0.08
	as Water Soluble	1.02
Total Phosphorus (P)		1.96
Potassium (K)	as Organic	0.84
	as Sulphate	7.36
Total Potassium (K)		8.20
Calcium (Ca)	as Organic	3.40
Magnesium (Mg)	as Organic	0.30
	as Sulphate	0.50
Total Magnesium (Mg)		0.80
Sulphur (S)	as Organic	0.95
	as Sulphate	7.62
Total Sulphur (S)		8.57
Iron (Fe)	as Organic	0.09
Total Iron (Fe)	as Sulphate	0.22
		0.31
Zinc (Zn)	as Organic	0.0003
	as Sulphate	0.0355
Total Zinc (Zn)		0.0358
Copper (Cu)	as Organic	0.0003
	as Sulphate	0.0252
Total Copper (Cu)		0.0255
Manganese (Mn)	as Organic	0.0245
	as Sulphate	0.0637
Total Manganese (Mn)		0.0882
Molybdenum (Mo)	as Molybdate	0.003
Boron (B)	as Borax	0.07
Humic Acid		1.0

In WA product analysis may vary

I like humans and animals, plants

Research Scientist Dr Uwe Stroehler appointed to Neutrog



Australian owned biological fertiliser manufacturer, Neutrog Australia, has recently appointed research scientist, Dr Uwe Stroehler Ph.D., to head up its Research and Development team.

Announcing his permanent appointment, Neutrog Managing Director Angus Irwin said Dr Stroehler's background as a highly regarded scientist together with his expertise in molecular biology will allow Neutrog to continue to be at the forefront of biological fertiliser development.

"Innovation is central to Neutrog's strategic agenda and by employing a research

scientist with the right combination of knowledge, skills and curiosity, we will further strengthen our position as a leader in the development of biological fertilisers worldwide," Mr Irwin said.

Dr Stroehler will play a pivotal role at Neutrog, conducting field research and running trials on which to base further development of biological products that are able to pinpoint, extract and proliferate specific soil bacteria which are known for their roles in the soil such as unlocking phosphorus and fixating nitrogen.

Dr Stroehler's background ensures Neutrog's manufacturing methodologies and processes, like batch and DNA testing of raw materials and finished products, providing customer reassurance by far exceeding mandatory safety standards.

Dr Stroehler has consulted to the company for the past ten years, initially during the concept stages of GOGO Juice (a liquid probiotic for soil). He's been involved in developing processes and technologies aimed at maximising the beneficial microbiology in all of Neutrog's fertiliser products.

