

Newsletter of the ARSV



NQ PROJECT SUCCESS – Congratulations Australian Tropical Herbarium

In the February 2018 newsletter we announced that work was progressing with the Australian Tropical Herbarium (ATH) for the next phase of the NQ project whereby the many other endemic plants on the NQ mountaintops will be surveyed and propagation material collected. This material will be used to ensure survival of these species should climate change irrevocably change their montane niches.



Mt Lewis Tableland population of *R. viriosum* growing along edge of escarpment

Darren Crayne of the ATH put together a major collaboration of the ATH, ARS, Brisbane Botanic Garden, Cairns Botanic Garden, Mossman Botanic Garden, Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria (Cranbourne), Wet Tropics Management Authority and the artist Donna Davis and applied to the Ian Potter Foundation for funding. It was announced this week that the project, now titled “Securing the future of Australia’s threatened tropical mountain flora for science and society” has been successful in its application and the Foundation has awarded the project the entire requested budget of \$500,000 over 5 years.

This is a fantastic result and the society congratulates Darren for his tremendous effort and also to Andrew Rouse for his continued support to Darren in achieving this result.

For ARSV the long-term aim for these “companion plants”, together with the vireyas already propagated, is that they be a permanent ark for the montane plant community of Queensland’s tropics at the Dandenong Ranges Botanic

Garden and the intent is that they be displayed in a “NQ mountaintop bed” - reproducing the communities on these mountains.

This all started with Simon Begg pushing the need to get the NQ vireyas into cultivation and our first tentative trips to the NQ mountaintops. The role of ARSV will be minor as it is the ATH’s other collaborators who will do the hard yards of learning how to cultivate what are likely to be difficult plants. The various botanic gardens involved will ensure the plants will be in their core collections and our role is to back that up at Olinda in the “mountaintop beds”.

So once again congratulations.

As a first cab off the rank the ARSV will be running a “design” day for ARSV members on 7th October.

Garden Design Day

In the December 2017 newsletter we informed members of the addition of approximately 6 ha to the DRBG as part of the Olinda Golf course Precinct Plan. No specific design for this area has been developed yet but the ARSV want an area where we can showcase conservation of Rhododendrons and their habitats and a possible site for development of the NQ mountaintop beds amongst other things.

On Sunday 7th October we will be having a society get together to develop a planting design plan as to what we would like the ‘annex’ to develop into. We can then make the appropriate suggestions to Parks Victoria to see it realized.

This is a hands-on activity with maps and on-site investigations of the area and we would like members to be involved and help with their botanical and design expertise and intuition.

Kick off time is 9 am at the tearoom that is located near the toilets. Tea and coffee will be provided but BYO lunch. If parking in the DRBG parking area is full, park near the clubhouse and walk down the track through the back gate (see map page 2).

Final reminder for renewal of Subscriptions for 2018/19

PLEASE RENEW NOW

Committee							
John O'Hara	President	johnohara@optusnet.com.au	03 9593 1323	Simon Begg		simonwbegg@gmail.com	03 9728 4466
Andrew Rouse	Vice-President	awrouse@bigpond.com	0424 750 406	Francis Crome	Newsletter editor	francis@crome.net.au	0417 730 291
Michael Hare	Secretary	vicrhodo@gmail.com	0405 403 607	Dan Macleod		dan.macleod@parks.vic.gov.au	0400 594 319
Prue Crome	Treasurer	prue@crome.net.au	0419 659 741	Alex Pottage		niceplants53@gmail.com	03 5786 1595
Graham Price		lithic01@bigpond.net.au	0409 639 448	Walter Lobbezoo	Librarian	wlobbezoo@parks.vic.gov.au	03 9751 1704
Peter Grose		pgrose@bigpond.com	04 8877 3577				

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 59th Annual General Meeting of the Australian Rhododendron Society, Victorian Branch Inc. (A5896Z), will be held on Saturday, 17th November 2018, at the Club House Dandenong Ranges Botanic Gardens, Olinda-Monbulk Road, Olinda (Melway Ref: 66 J7), commencing at 2:00 pm. (see adjacent map)

The business of the meeting shall be:

- to confirm the Minutes of the 58th Annual General Meeting held on 11 November 2017;
- to receive from the Committee reports upon the transactions of the Branch during the last Financial year;
- to elect Officers of the Branch, and three (3) Ordinary Members of the Committee;
- to receive and consider the Statements of Income and Expenditure and Assets and Liabilities for the last Financial Year;
- to elect an Auditor;
- to conduct such other business of which notice is given in accordance with the Branch Rules.

All positions of officers of i.e., President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer, fall vacant under Rule 55 and are to be filled by election.

Three positions, numbers 1, 2 and 3, of ordinary Committee Members fall vacant by rotation, each for a two-year term in accordance with Rule 44. Retiring Officers and Ordinary Members of Committee are eligible to stand for re-election. Nomination forms and proxy voting forms are included with this newsletter if you have not been sent them by email.

Following business there will be light refreshments and a presentation of the recent ARSV trip to Sabah.

Nominations close with the Secretary, ARS, Vic Branch, P.O. Box 296, Olinda, Victoria, 3788, or by email to vichodo@gmail.com by 5.00pm on Friday 9th November 2018.

A copy of the "Rules of the Australian Rhododendron Society - Victorian Branch Incorporated (A5896Z)" including the "Statement of Purposes", may be obtained from the Secretary.

Michael Hare

Secretary

Please consider nominating yourself or someone for one of the office bearer or committee positions. We are very keen that our Society thrives and we always need new souls to maintain the energy and drive.



Vale Karl Van de Ven

We are sad to announce the passing of one of our life members Karel (Karl) Van de Ven who was laid to rest at Lilydale on September 18th 2018. Karl was a noted hybridizer and produced such stunning plants as "Maria's Choice" and "Bloodline" shown here.



Rhododendron in focus: *Rhododendron edgeworthii*

Subsection Edgeworthia.

This species has a surprisingly wide distribution in the Himalayas, from Sikkim, Bhutan, Yunnan, and Tibet. It is generally epiphytic, growing on trees, rocks and cliffs at an altitude of 1800 to 4000 metres. We have some excellent plants in the main rockery in the DRBG growing on the steep rocky slopes that put on a great display in October. The flowers are white, slightly ruffled at the edges, and are strongly perfumed. They also have a conspicuous beige calyx at the back of the flower. (see photo). The leaves are also attractive with a shiny bullate upper surface and a rich brown indumentum below.

I am not sure if this species could be easy to grow in Melbourne suburbs, but there are two excellent hybrids that can be grown instead:

Fragrantissimum (*edgeworthii* x *formosum*) F.C.C. 1868.

Princess Alice (*ciliatum* x *edgeworthii*) F.C.C. 1862.

Alan Kepert.



Save the Date: ARSV excursion to Blackwood Ridge

James Pethybridge, an active member of ARSV, owns and runs a nursery and café near Daylesford. On Sunday 27th October 2018 the society will be touring the nursery and having lunch at James' excellent café. We may also be visiting another garden that afternoon but we are awaiting confirmation of that.

Meet at 10:30 at Blackwood Ridge Nursery, 812 Greenhills Rd, Blackwood (accessed via Bacchus Marsh, Trentham or Mt Macedon).

Members will have to buy their own lunch at the café and, since seating is limited, James needs to know a week in advance how many of us are coming.

SO PLEASE email Andrew Rouse (awrouse@bigpond.com) or text to 0424 750 406 so he can pass on numbers for catering to James.

LINKS: http://blackwoodridgecafe.com.au/to_eat/

https://www.tripadvisor.com.au/Restaurant_Review-g10771413-d10375498-Reviews-Blackwood_Ridge_Cafe_Larder-Blackwood_Victoria.html

Companion animal - Wisent

The Wisent or European Bison, *Bos bonasus*, is the European counterpart to the American Bison *B. bison*. Originally it was widespread in Europe but by the mid 18th century it was reduced to two populations one in Poland and another in the Caucasus. The Polish animals were protected, under pain of death, in the primeval Białowieża Forest. In WWI German troops killed most of these leaving only 9, the last of which was shot by someone in 1921. The last Caucasus wisent was poached in 1927. This left only 50 or so zoo animals of which only 12 were pure bred. From this original nucleus there are now about 4500 animals in the wild and another 2000 in captivity thanks to major efforts by individuals and governments in Eastern Europe and Russia, particularly Poland. The wild populations are mostly in Eastern Europe, Russia and the Caucasus. Half are in Poland and Belarus, many back in the Białowieża Forest. They are now being reintroduced throughout Europe. Germany, for example, introduced wisents to the Ritharsteig Natural Reserve. However, in 2017 hunters, under orders from the local government, shot a wild wisent that migrated from Poland to Germany, the first wild one for 250 years.



Wild wisents inhabit deciduous and mixed forests with grassy glades, ascending in summer to alpine meadows. It is likely that they



originally inhabited a whole range of habitats including plains and coastal dune areas. Many of the forest herds are maintained by free feeding by land managers. Wisents browse more than the America bison and are known to eat the bark, leaves or fruit of over 30 trees and shrubs including *Rhododendron ponticum* and *R. caucasicum*.

The latter is an interesting species. It is a beautiful shrub growing at 1,800 to 3,000 m in the high mountains of the Caucasus. While wisent may only nibble the bark, Russians consider it a serious anti-aging tonic. Extracts of this, and the herb *Rhodiola rosea*, supposedly reduce stress and depression, improve memory and physical capacity, prevent diseases and treat a range of illnesses. It is reputedly the key to Georgians' famous longevity.

Other Upcoming Events of Other Societies

Saturday and Sunday October 21st and 22nd Melbourne Friends Royal Botanic Gardens spring plant sale at the Botanic Gardens Melbourne. 10:00-4:00 Saturday 10:00- 3:00 Sunday. Entry free. Plant list available on-line 1 week prior to sale. Contact 03 9650 6398 or friends@frbmgmelb.org.au. Birdwood Ave, South Yarra opposite the shrine MW2F K12.

Saturday and Sunday October 27th and 28th Cactus and Succulent Society of Australia's show. 10:00 to 5:00 Saturday and 10:00 to 3:00 Sunday at Mount Waverley Community Centre 47 Miller Crescent, Mount Waverley. Adults \$7.00 and Children free.

Saturday and Sunday October 27th and 28th Ferny Creek Horticultural Society's Flower Festival 100 Hilton Road, Sassafras. 12:00 to 4:00 Saturday and 10:00 to 4:00 Sunday. Entry \$5. <http://fchs.org.au/events/>

Sunday November 4th Iris Society of Australia (Victorian Region Inc.) - Main Show. 11:00 to 4:00 at Mount Waverley Community Centre 47 Miller Crescent, Mount Waverley. Adults \$6.00 and Children free.