



# *Rhododendrons South Australia*

**Australian Rhododendron Society Inc. South Australian Branch**

*Issue 122-March 2019*

## **President's Message**

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Well, here we are already in March of the New Year, but I must admit to feeling rather relieved that the year has progressed so far already as it means that summer is now behind us, and hopefully with it, the end of heatwaves and the dearth of rain!

Our end of year celebration at Ian and Robyn Wall's was very well attended and enjoyed by all. Thank you to our generous hosts, including the lovely Daisy-May Goldilocks (I am particularly fond of golden retrievers) for welcoming us into their beautiful garden. Having owned this garden for many years the pride, care and effort of Ian and Robyn was obvious to all and to be admired.

By the time you receive this newsletter the annual cutting day at Forest Lodge will be behind us and there should be many propagation boxes prepared and ready to do their "stuff" in various peoples' backyards and gardens. As a group we have the system and process down pat, but with a number of new members and therefore potentially inexperienced rhododendron propagators, as well as other members who appreciate being reminded of tips and techniques to successful rhododendron cultivation, it was decided that the first meeting of the year should focus on practicalities to ensure the success of growing these plants. A meeting not to be missed!

## **Family Bereavements**

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Members will be saddened to note that during our summer recess several of our members experienced a family bereavement.

Belinda Cullum's father, Olivera Waterman's mother and Rob Hatcher's father passed away.

We extend our condolences to Belinda, Olivera and Rob and to their families.

## November meeting, Christmas party & Cutting Day



A very well stocked "pot Luck" stall at the November meeting



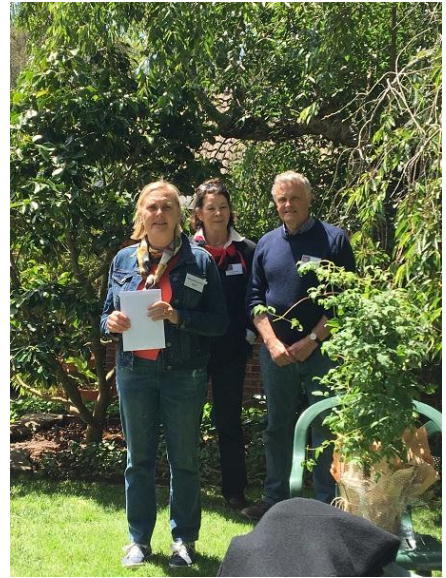
Barb Mynhart showing some of her very successful cuttings.

One of the blooms tables at the November meeting.



### 2018 Christmas Party

This was held at the home of Robyn and Ian Wall at the beginning of December and was well attended by members. The garden setting was delightful and many people took the opportunity to wander through the gardens and enjoy the extensive plantings. Thanks must go firstly to Robyn and Ian for providing a stunning venue, to Milton for organising the catering and to Barb Mynhart for all her efforts in providing artistic floral table decorations.





## **2019 Cutting Day- Educational, Social and great fun for all!**

An intrepid group of volunteers met at 8am at the MLBG in order to collect and prepare cuttings for the event. In excess of 700 cuttings were provided to a very enthusiastic group of participants. We welcomed the following new members and hope that their association with our society is a very rewarding one:

Ann Williams  
Meg Prince  
Pamela Tonkin  
Bob & Lynn Graham  
Mike Beckoff

*Thanks must go to*

Rob Hatcher and the Botanic Gardens for the opportunity to collect cuttings.

Milton & Kristina Bowman for hosting the event at Forest Lodge.

Volunteers who collected cuttings: Rick & Bronwyn Illman, Barb Mynhart, Kevin Trenouth, Andrew & Olivera Waterman, Sue Beckoff, Nataliya Popova, Rob Hatcher and Gary Seifried.



## The amazing chequered cuckoo bee spotted at Cloudehill



The image was snapped by Lucy Ahrendt, of the Cloudehill Diggers Shop, just this morning and show a moderately rarish native bee, the Chequered Cuckoo Bee, *Thyreus caeruleopunctatus*. (Now doesn't that name roll off the tongue?) This dashing little bee **really is** a cuckoo, in that it sneaks into another bee's hive and lays eggs in its honey cells and the cuckoo youngster quickly hatches out and gobbles up all the honey and leaves the legitimate occupant of the cell to starve. So despite its pretty colours, this is not a nice bee at all.

Now it's interesting to notice what this handsome scallywag is doing. It is feeding from the freshly opening flowers of a *Sedum Autumn Joy*. And if you look closely you will spot yet another native bee tucking in nearby. I find the sedums fabulous for bee spotting. I counted three different species of natives going for their lives, feeding from our many sedums this morning. And then there are the European Honey Bees, and no arguments between the species that I could see, it seems plenty of pollen for all.

*This is a particularly interesting article as we have secured Katja Hogendoorn (Adelaide's very own bee expert) to speak to members at the July meeting.*



## Start Saving – The 2020 Conference is on the Way!

In fact there are a number of conferences that may interest members.

The first is the 75<sup>th</sup> conference of the American Rhododendron Society (ARS) - Portland- Vancouver Chapter.

### American Rhododendron Society

75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

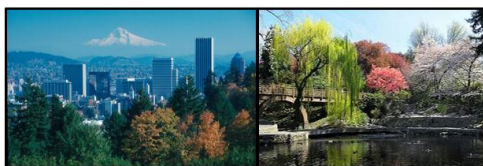
20/20  
VISION



*Looking forward, reflecting back*

Portland-Vancouver, April 29-May 3, 2020

*You're invited to the celebration!*



#### World-renowned Keynote Speakers

Kenneth Cox • Jens Nielsen • Steve Hootman  
Lionel de Rothschild • Steve Krebs • Valerie Sosa

**Tours to the Northwest's  
Outstanding Gardens & Nurseries**

## New Zealand Conference

This will take place in Timaru in the South Island at the beginning of November 2020. The Australian Rhododendron Society is working closely with our New Zealand counterparts to plan this conference and to share the main presenter, David Millais, who is a renowned rhododendron nurseryman.

If previous New Zealand conferences are anything to go by this will be a very worthwhile event and will precede our own contribution which will take place in Tasmania in the week following the Timaru convention.

There appears to be quite a lot of interest in these conferences from many of the Germans, Dutch, Swedes, Danes and Americans who attended the German/Scandinavian conference in 2018, so it would be wonderful if many Australian rhododendron enthusiasts were able to attend.

Not only are these gatherings educational but the social networking that occurs is valuable and it is also the opportunity to gain access to some of the best private gardens in the world!



## From the Propagating bench *by Richard Illman*

Following on from the cutting day, members should check their boxes to see if there is condensation on the lid. If not, you will need to give the plants a drink so there is sufficient water to create a humid environment. Boxes should be placed in an area of the garden where they receive good light but not direct sun. Check the boxes occasionally over the next few months to ensure that they have humidity and light. If cuttings drop their leaves they will probably not strike and they can be discarded. Further information about dealing with the cuttings will appear in subsequent newsletters. As mentioned in the President's message, our March meeting will continue the theme of propagation with an emphasis on Azaleas, Vireyas and other plants that can be propagated at this time of year. I look forward to catching up with members at that meeting.

*Richard Illman*



## Plants You May Not Know

### Perennial Sweet William

This plant makes a colourful border.

Seedlings will be available at the March Pot Luck stall.

*Rick Illman*



### Myrtus Ugni

It is somewhat sobering to recount that it is more than three decades ago since I first came across Myrtus Ugni.

Kevin and I were in Victoria on a nursery crawl and came upon a unique cottage garden containing rare and interesting plants. It was there that I saw a neatly clipped shrub with bright red little berries the size of a cranberry.

The owner invited me to taste the fruit and elaborated that the berries made Queen Victoria's favourite jam. So, of course, if it was good enough for royalty, it was good enough for me to try!! To my taste buds it was like eating a little toffee apple. Delicious! And so, we bought a couple of plants which grew well at home until I neglected them in the mayhem of a busy working life.

Now that I have retired, I have recently purchased another two bushes and hope to harvest some fruit in the near future. This shrub is also known as Chilean Guava, grows to approximately one metre by one metre, has small dark green waxy little leaves, responds well to clipping and grows readily in a fertile sunny position. It has attractive pale pink bell shaped hanging flowers and the bush has a strawberry aroma. Well worth trying something a little unusual that can be eaten too!!



*Barbara Mynhart*



## Next Meeting

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This will be held at the RSL Hall Stirling on Tuesday, March 19th at 8pm. Following on from the cutting day there will be a discussion by a panel of “expert members” outlining the methods employed by the Mt Lofty Gardens, variations on the standard propagating procedures, new products available, potting on cuttings of rhododendrons, azaleas and Vireyas and finally transferring plants to the garden. This will be a very informative meeting so bring your pen and paper.

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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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## Bloom of the Month – Vireya Peach dream

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## *Spotted Dove*

*Streptopelia chinensis*



Until recently this bird was called the Spotted Turtle-Dove, but is now known officially as Spotted Dove.

Introduced from the 1860 era into Eastern Australia from Asia and China, but was found in Adelaide after a storm in 1931 when a number escaped from the Adelaide Zoo. They spread rapidly and became established in the state. They are very common in Adelaide suburbs. Usually seen on the ground and often in pairs. Rarely found in native bushland.



## Librarian's Report *by Ann & David Matison*

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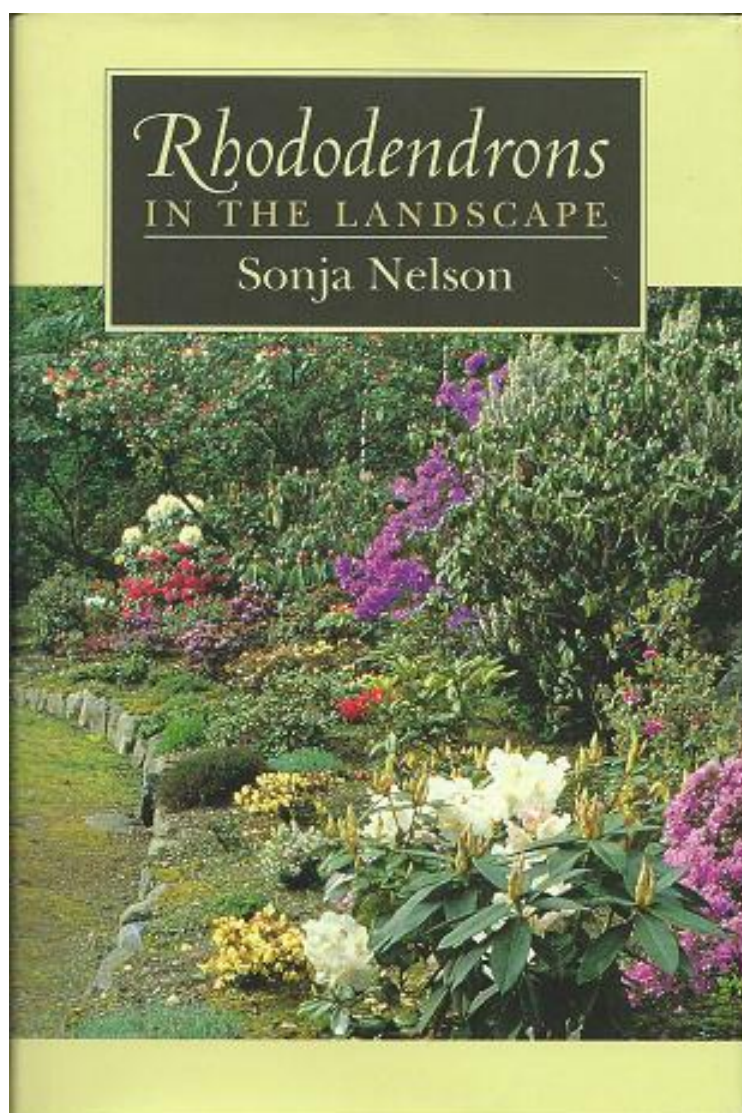
Thanks to Elisabeth Ganguly for donating a book to our library: "Rhododendrons in the Landscape" by Sonja Nelson, an American author and at the time of publication in 2000 was editor of the Journal of the American Rhododendron Society. Needless to say the book is focused a lot on American horticulture.

It is a comprehensive overview of the construction of a garden incorporating rhododendrons in the landscape to best effect; focussing in particular on the minutiae of combining harmony, aesthetics and emotional impact in the design process.

The book covers the establishment of many styles of garden for example the woodland garden, the rock garden the collectors' garden and some others; each the subject of a chapter.

There are some illustrations, but basically it is a scholarly book of guidelines and suggestions for establishing a new garden, written by a knowledgeable landscape designer.

To my mind therefore, its focus on starting a garden from scratch may not necessarily appeal to some of us with established gardens. I find that it is less adaptable to the South Australian situation than many of the other books in our collection; however we do thank Elisabeth Ganguly for a book that can challenge us and maybe provide us with a new and different perspective on landscaping.



## Tales from Forest Lodge by Milton Bowman



Time rushes by and now we are in Autumn after what has been a dry Summer. We have had an occasional very hot day, the highest temperature here was 43C and there have been several days at 35 to 36C, which is hot enough for Stirling. The real problem has been the lack of meaningful rain since 16th December, with the exception of a total of 20mm falling in mid February over 2 days.

We established a series of borders last Spring and they have done well, and even Hydrangeas seem to cope with only mild leaf burning despite being in the afternoon sun. "Wiltnot" and some umbrellas certainly helped prevent damage, but the real secret was keeping the plants well hydrated with regular watering and having them in a good rich soil with ample mulch. We did transplant a number of 1 to 2 Metre rhododendrons and they have really powered on. They relish regular and even watering, regular light fertilising, and an acid soil with plenty of compost in it. We have found that whilst rhododendrons will survive in a relatively dry situation and in the shade, they do brilliantly when in the sun with regular water and food. Initial soil preparation is vital. Rapid Raiser, Seamungus, and compost will make even yellow clay into a good soil for our plants.

Kristina and I decided to complicate our life by adding another member to the Forest Lodge pack. Bridget joins Tomba, Scruffy, and Bruce and our life has changed as a result. We get out of bed at 6am, and then try to get back to sleep. This usually fails because the other dogs decide that they need to be fed, and by the time that this has been sorted out we may as well get on with the day. However their company makes it all worthwhile. We are looking forward to the cooler days with autumn rains, and another season of transplanting.

Happy gardening

*Milton Bowman*



## Notice Board

### Autumn Neutrog Orders

As a benefit to members, Neutrog offers the Society the opportunity to purchase their fertilisers at a reduced cost. This offer is available for Autumn and Spring. Members will find a writable order form attached to this newsletter. Please complete the form and e-mail or post it to Bronwyn Illman by March 31st (Linwood4574@icloud.com or 3 Linwood avenue Aldgate, 5154).



Please pay for your order, either by bank transfer or pay Barb Mynhart (Treasurer) at the April meeting. Make sure you retain a copy of your order for yourself.

Bank Details are: BSB 735080 Acc# 070793

Note: Make sure you indicate that the payment is for the Neutrog order and who is paying. Members will be notified when the orders are delivered to Mt Lofty Gardens (MLBG).

### Proposed Speaker Programme 2019

Please note that some dates and speakers are yet to be finalised. Accurate details will appear in newsletters.

March	Panel discussion covering propagation techniques, potting on struck cuttings, planting out mature plants and new gardening products
April	Dr Ewe Stroer - Microbiologist from Neutrog
	Garden visit to Tupelo Grove nursery in Mylor, Sunday, April 14th – details to follow
May	Geoff Jenkinson - historical focus
June	Rob Hatcher – Mt Lofty Botanic Gardens
July	Dr Katja Hogendoorn – latest research into native bees
August	Annual General Meeting (AGM)
September	Jim Foggarty - Grant Memorial lecture - International garden show preparation
October	Blooms night
	Annual plant sale Sunday, October 13 <sup>th</sup> at Mount Lofty Botanic Gardens
November	Blooms night
December	Christmas Party at Rob & Carrie Gilbert's Snows Rd, Stirling
	Pre- lunch garden visit Peter & Rebecca Kennedy's garden

## SA ARS MINUTES OF ORDINARY MEETING 20 NOV 2018 AT STIRLING RSL HALL

Meeting opened at 8.15 pm

31 attendees

Apologies: J and G Gauvin, B and R Field, D Matison, J Smylie, C and T Thomas, R Gilbert, R Wall, S Renneissen, V Popov

Minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated, B Cullum moved accept, B Mynhart seconded, minutes accepted

### MATTERS ARISING

1) Christmas Lunch, To be held on Sunday, Dec. 2nd at 35 Cricklewood Road, parking available in paddock near house, details to be circulated by email in near future. Committee to set up facilities before lunch.

2) Cutting day to be held at Forest Lodge, in late Feb/early March. New members encouraged to attend, and to order complimentary supplies from R and B Illman. Full details will be notified by email closer to the day.

### TREASURER'S REPORT

B Mynhart noted some Subs due and she would contact those members. The term deposits were rolled over for 6 and 12 months, pot such was returning \$289 in Oct. Working account closed at \$7935 Treasurer moved accept, P Wiadrowski seconded, meeting accepted

### NATIONAL DELEGATE REPORT

J JENKINSON had attended with R HATCHER at Emu Valley. Hoping to have a conference in Hobart in 2020, probably in November. Aim to follow NZ conference at Timaroo and to cooperate with invited speakers. David Mills is probable guest speaker. The Rhododendron magazine to be financed to each member.

### NEW BUSINESS

1) Donation of the book "Rhododendrons in the Landscape" by Elizabeth Ganguly and will be in library #1 Tuesday, 12 March 2019

2) Speakers programme Jim Foggarty has agreed to be the Grant Memorial speaker in Sept 2019, subject to be international garden show preparation

3) Plant Sale, Executive has suggested move back to October when more plants will be in flower, and have a contingency plan if fire risk too high for MLBG. Meeting happy with the change

4) B Illman spoke re growth modifier hormone preparation, she is experimenting with it and it may allow members to have more compact plants.

5) B Illman proposed that we rejoin the American RS at \$50 pa. This will give access to their Journal and information re events and other developments. Meeting accepted on a show of hands.

6) B Mynhart demonstrated Azalea cuttings taken in April which would be suitable for sale on October. She uses Phosphogen to encourage growth. O Waterman has had good success with Magnolia seeds which had a very high germination rate after stratification in the fridge. L Healey had seedling Acer Palmatum for members to grow on.

The raffle was drawn, won by R Illman, a specimen of Jean Marie de Montague

Meeting closed at 9.15 followed by a Blooms Exhibition and supper.

