



Rhododendrons South Australia

Australian Rhododendron Society Inc. South Australian Branch

Issue 127 – August 2019

President's Message

With the forthcoming AGM, this month's message should really focus on rallying members to commit to serving a term on the committee, but I've banged on about this before and you all know and understand the importance of rotating committee members in order to keep things fresh and vibrant.

Instead, I'd like to follow a more positive and broader discourse because I'd prefer to celebrate (and I've done this before too) how fortunate we are as a society but, in the bigger picture, how lucky we are to live where we do and be able to enjoy the lifestyle we all appreciate, especially as gardeners in this beautiful part of the world. Unfortunately, these days the media tends to be dominated by stories of political unrest and dysfunction in many parts of the global society. Reassuringly as a group we have many commonalities and the civility and willingness to come together and share the objective of encouraging and furthering the knowledge and cultivation of the genus *Rhododendron*. We have a good, solid, well-functioning society that needs to remain as the foundation for continuing our achievements in upholding the objectives of the national society.

Back to the AGM, another important item on the agenda will be the need to increase our membership fees. They have remained the same for many years and, particularly in light of recent changes in the usage of these fees, a rise is required. Membership benefits include end of year luncheon catering, Neutrog product discount, propagation materials, and access to purchase rarer and harder to obtain plants, annual journal, as well as the benefits of attending monthly meetings.



A cold, wintry, July evening, but a well-attended meeting



Kristina Bowman eagerly awaiting her raffle surprise



The endangered Carpenter Bee

Next Meeting

This will be held at the RSL Hall, Stirling, on Tuesday, August 20th at 8pm. It will be the AGM and we will have a report from our President Belinda Cullum on her recent trip to New Zealand.

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

Bloom of the Month – Vireya Sylvonia

Sylvonia is one of our new Vireyas and has a most unusual colour scheme, opening a deep apricot and fading to a much paler shade with pink edges.



Members may be aware that Vireyas are prone to frost damage (some of ours were badly affected recently) but the use of Wiltnot, typically used to protect from heat also works well as a frost shield.

Wiltnot is an anti-transpirant that is available through horticultural outlets. We have a supply of concentrated Wiltnot that can be purchased at a reasonable cost.

Richard & Bronwyn Illman

Spring is around the corner!



Brunnera like shaded woodland positions and reward the gardener with charming Gypsophila like blue flowers in late winter and early spring. They are low growing and need to be positioned near the edge so that their beauty can be enjoyed.

Fragrant
Daphne





From the Propagating bench by *Richard Illman*

Maple Grafting Workshops 2019

Twenty two members enrolled for the Maple Grafting sessions conducted in the first week of August. It was pleasing to note that members who had previously attended enrolled again and new members also took the opportunity to learn how to do a side veneer graft suitable for Maples. Besides the opportunity to learn a new skill it was also a chance to meet other members in a casual setting. Hopefully, many will experience success with their grafts and they will be encouraged to try grafting other desirable plants. Members who would like to try summer grafts of Maples are invited to express their interest to either Rick or Bronwyn Illman so that a session can be organised early 2020.



Knowledge Injection!

The latest ARS (American Rhododendron Society) journal contained a very interesting article on Stomata and Lenticels by Susan Clark, a member of the Massachusetts chapter. Most members would be aware of stomata (a Greek word meaning “mouth”) which are the pores found on the outer surface or epidermis of plants, particularly on the under surface of leaves. Their primary function is to allow gas exchange between the atmosphere and the plant which is essential for photosynthesis.

Lenticels (Latin for small window) are the other structures that facilitate gas exchange between the cells just under the bark and the exterior. They are most easily seen in Winter on deciduous trees such as cherries and Maples like *Acer griseum*.

The full article is available in the

Summer 2019 ARS journal which should be available in our library. Borrow it – there are many excellent articles.



Laratinga Wetlands

Mount Barker



The Laratinga Wetlands, constructed in 1999, is a wetland located in Mount Barker, South Australia. It is named after the Aboriginal Peramangk peoples' name for the Mount Barker Creek, "Laratinga". The wetlands occupy an area of 16.7 hectares, of which 10.7 hectares is underwater.

Over 150 bird species have been recorded at this wetland, with up to 61 species at any one time.

Migratory and nomadic are seen at certain times of the year.

Car park on Bald Hills Road. Toilets available. Picnic areas.

One of the best wetlands in South Australia.

Three walking trails –

Chestnut Teal Trail	0.75 km	walking time 15 minutes
Rosella Trail	2.00 km	walking time 35 minutes
Sacred Ibis Trail	2.60 km	walking time 45 minutes



Bird Watch Trails



CHESTNUT TEAL TRAIL Trail Distance: 0.75km - Walking Time: 15mins

ROSELLA TRAIL Trail Distance: 2.0km - Walking Time: 35mins

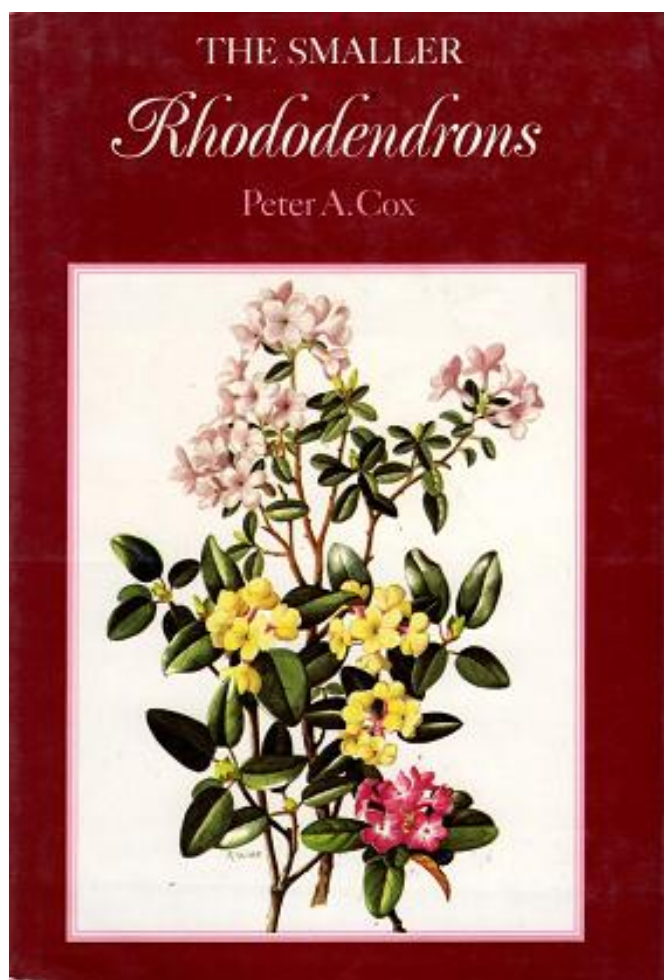
SACRED IBIS TRAIL Trail Distance: 2.6km - Walking Time: 45mins



The Smaller Rhododendrons by Peter Cox, published in 1985.

This month's report is about a book that I grabbed out of the library cupboard without looking too carefully. It is not a book that I would choose for myself as it is quite technical. With that disclaimer I have to admit that I have copied much of this from the blurb on the dust cover.

"The author surveys smaller rhododendrons in their natural habitat, their distribution, ecology and



introduction into cultivation, and then moves into garden cultivation, examining shelter, shade climate and hardiness. The chapter on planting and maintenance covers soil preparation. Planting, feeding, pruning, diseases and pests. One of Peter Cox's strengths is the personal experience he brings to the subject, and this is reflected in a description of the climate and conditions of Glendoick, Perth, where a large percentage of the plants mentioned in the book have been grown with some success."

Having said all of this there were a few sections of the book that I did find interesting. Firstly: Chapter One Dwarf Rhododendrons in the Natural Habitat which covers distribution of species, ecology and introduction into cultivation. In this chapter Cox has included maps which show the distribution of native Rhododendrons throughout the world.

Secondly in his section of classification he has drawn diagrams which make identifying the various species easier to identify.

Two thirds of the book is devoted to species descriptions which are very detailed and he finishes the book with various ways of propagating.

This book was donated to the library in 1905 by Gail Barth.

Library Borrowing

We always encourage members to borrow from our Library. If you have not borrowed before all you have to do is choose your book. Remove the card from the pocket at the back, write your name and the date on the card and place it in the small box provided.

When you return the book leave it on the top of the cupboard so that we can replace the card and re-shelve the book.

At the last meeting I discovered a few books missing along with their cards. Hopefully they have just been put into the wrong place. If you have borrowed a book please return it so that when we do an audit in the near future we can account for all of the items in our collection. We will of course count the cards in the box during the audit.

Tales from Forest Lodge by Milton Bowman



The last month has been a busy one with garden cleanups and pruning but things are looking neater and we are ready for Spring. Many bulbs are either shooting up or flowering and the jonquils are lovely. Camellias are starting to flower and we are having quite a few blooms for the first time. One in particular had not flowered, and I thought that it was a seedling of a white type. It has now surprised us by producing lovely red blooms with a central boss of yellow stamens. Clearly I had the wrong identity and it reinforces the need for me not to rely on memory and instead to permanently label things. The best permanent label for us is the soft aluminium labels that can be inscribed with a biro or a sharp point and then tied onto the plant with copper wire. The only trick is to ensure that the tie is not too tight because twigs grow into branches with a little bit of time and there is the risk of strangling the limb.

Christmas Cheer is just starting to bloom, Sir Robert Peel is doing the same, and Seta is covered with pink flowers and is a lovely sight. Many other rhododendrons are full of buds and we are waiting for October when the Borders should be a picture.

The July rainfall has been lighter than average and it totalled 115.5mm with 6 good days of rain, and whilst this is enough to keep the ground moist and we have not needed to water the main beds, some of the pot plants have needed attention. Overall we have had 492mm this year which is 200mm below the long term average. I hope that August will be wet but we will see how it goes.

Keep warm and dream of Spring





Get ready for a Giant **Spring** with **GYGANIC** for Veggies, Fruit & Citrus

Gyganic has been specifically developed to enhance the yield, quality and taste of your fruit, citrus and veggies.

It is a premium organic based, chemically boosted complete fertiliser with the full range of nutrients in an organic form, coupled with boosted levels of nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, iron and magnesium. Gyganic's unique organic base of manure, humates and rock phosphate is composted and blended with the biologically-active GOGO Juice (containing kelp and seaweed). This produces a very nutritious organic base product high in organic carbon.

Following extensive trials by members, Gyganic for Fruit and Citrus is now recommended by the Rare Fruit Society.



NEUTROG
Biological Fertilisers

Freecall 1800 65 66 44 www.neutrog.com.au



Neutrog Spring Orders

Members can now place their Spring Neutrog orders. Please complete the attached order form, keep a copy for yourself and send the order to Lisa Greenstreet (gstreet@internode.on.net) along with payment to the Treasurer, Barb Mynhart. If you are paying by EFT please make sure that you indicate who is paying for Neutrog.

Bank details - BSB 735080 Account No 070793

Rhododendron Society South Australia Grant Memorial Lecture

Guest Speaker:

Jim Fogarty, International award winning Landscape Architect and Garden Media personality

Friday 6th September, 2019

6:30 – 9:30 pm

Coventry Memorial Library

63 Mount Barker Road, Stirling.

\$20 entrance includes wine and cheese.

Please book for catering purposes:

Phone: 0417 819 677 Email: ann.matison@gmail.com

A gentle reminder that The Grant Memorial Lecture is on Friday 6th September at 6:30pm. At The Coventry Library. We are expecting a big crowd and we do not want our members to miss out.

Jim Fogarty's CV is impressive. He is an AILA registered Landscape Architect and gardening media personality based in Melbourne. With over thirty internationally recognised design awards including sixteen gold medals, Jim is passionate about raising the profile of Australian garden design both in Australia, and overseas.

In May 2009, Jim won the award for Best Design for his Australian Show Garden at the World Garden Competition in Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan. At the Chelsea Flower Show in 2011, Jim designed an Australian Show Garden for the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria that won a Gold medal on the Main Avenue. At the 2011 Gardening World Cup in Japan, Jim was awarded 'Best in Show.' Jim has been awarded Gold Medals at the Singapore Garden Festival in 2006, 2008, 2010, 2014 & 2018 (with Andy Sturgeon) and has received the Award for Horticultural Excellence in 2006, 2010 & 2014. Jim was awarded a Gold Medal for his Gallipoli Garden at the Australian Garden Show Sydney 2013.

In 2014 Jim designed 'Essence of Australia' for the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria that was the first Australian themed garden at the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show and was awarded a Gold Medal as well as the Tudor Rose Award for the Best Show Garden.

In 2015, Jim became the first Australian to exhibit a garden at the Philadelphia Flower Show USA, winning a Gold Medal.

Jim has been a regular garden design writer for various publications in Australia and is the current National President of the Horticultural Media Association Australia.

Jim will speak about Garden design. Whether you are designing a new garden, altering a small section of you garden, or want to hear about garden planning there will be something of interest for you and your friends.

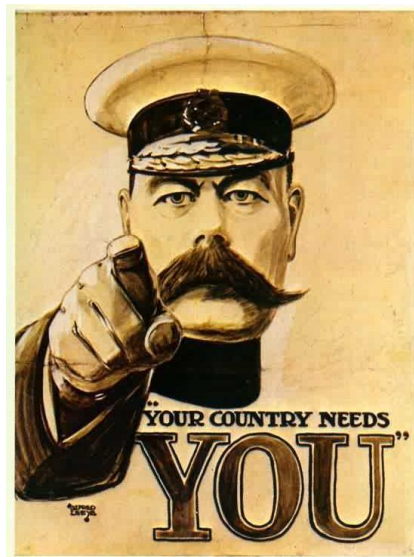
Judging from personal experience I know that Jim is a good speaker and he is very interesting to listen to.

Members can pay the \$20 admission fee at our August meeting or get the money to our Treasurer, Barbara Mynhart. If all else fails you can pay at the door on the night but do please register. The talk will start at 6:30 pm with wine and cheese to follow.

Ann Matison

Members SUBSCRIPTIONS are NOW DUE

Payment may be made either EFT or in cash at the next meeting. Forms are available from the Treasurer and we ask that ALL sections of the form are completed clearly to update our records.



Annual Plant Sale

Our annual fund raising event will take place on Sunday, October 13th at the Mt Lofty Botanic gardens (if no Fire bans). Please keep this date in your diary and consider helping at the sale. It is a very social occasion and a great way to learn more about Rhododendrons. You can also help



promote the society and secure new members. There is always someone there who can help with advice but there are lots of task to be done other than selling the actual plants. Even an hour of your time to help set up, pack up or participate in the actual selling period would be greatly appreciated. If you have been a member for a few years you may have some struck cuttings

from the March cutting day to offer for sale. These smaller plants usually sell well, particularly to people who want a hardy variety to begin their collection. Please let a member of the executive committee know if you have plants for sale. Plants other than Rhododendrons also sell well as companion plants.

Looking forward to another successful and enjoyable day. Please help make it so.

