



# *Rhododendrons South Australia*

Australian Rhododendron Society Inc. South Australian Branch

*Issue 129 – October 2019*

## **Vice-President's report**

What a busy time members have had since the August meeting. It started with the Grant Memorial Lecture which was a great success because of the efforts of Ann Matison, Lianne Healey and Barb Mynhart who together organised the event. Thanks also go to Kevin Trenouth, Robyn and Ian Wall and Andrew Waterman for their help on the night and, of course, special thanks to the staff of the Coventry Library Stirling who were on duty that night.

The library was redolent with flowers from member's gardens which Kristina arranged beautifully. The audience filled the lecture space and not a sound was heard during Jim Fogarty's presentation which showed his development as a garden architect and landscaper through his displays in competitions held in numerous countries. I learnt so much as I hope those of you who attended also did. Who'd have thought of wrapping plants in blankets to keep them protected from snow?

Jim is an excellent speaker who also makes himself available to his audience. It was a pleasure to meet him, his charming wife Victoria and their two delightful daughters Rose and Lily.

Not all of September has passed smoothly. Unfortunately due to reviews within the Botanic Gardens of South Australia, Lucy Sutherland has suggested that relationships with garden clubs be suspended. This has led to the Rhododendron Society Executive Committee cancelling the plant sale for this year as we cannot access the MLBG, either to store plants or for the sale. The other problem that occurs from this is that if we bring in plants from interstate the Rhododendron Society will have to have a permit, \$98, and pay for a PIRSA officer, \$150/hour, to inspect all plants. Also, we are not sure whether we can take propagating material next year.

I believe there is a saying that 'One door closes, another one opens'. This is a great opportunity for members to think about allowing propagation from rhododendrons in our own gardens.

Please become a rhododendron and azalea propagator as it isn't that difficult. If your success rate is only one plant that is fantastic! A lot of room is not needed and the plants do not need that much looking after. I think I've drowned more plants than dehydrated them.

Our club needs help, so please pass on your ideas, expertise and time.

Before I sign off, thank you to Bronwyn who took over as secretary for the last meeting while Milton was away.

Welcome back to our President, Belinda.

*Olivera Waterman*

## **President's Message**

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As we move into Spring, with the end of another year looming, we can reflect that the second half of this year has somewhat diverged from what should have been a predictable series of activities in the events calendar for our local branch of the Rhododendron Society. This has its good and bad points, with one of the good things being the success of the Grant Memorial Lecture with the last minute support of the Mount Lofty Districts Historical Society. It would seem that legislative changes, of which we have only recently been made aware, have rendered aspects of the formerly useful collaboration with the Mount Lofty Botanical Gardens no longer feasible, with quite challenging ramifications. As a result, delivery arrangements for Neutrog orders have had to hastily be re-organised and unfortunately it has also meant that the usual plant sale format has been thwarted. So that the reputation of our successful plant sales is not compromised in the public eye it has been decided to cancel this year's event. A positive aspect of this is that it allows us to rethink the plant sale format with exciting possibilities for 2020.

I for one am not great with changes and challenges and seek comfort and reassurance, to be found in those aspects of life which are consistently reliable and predictable, such as the seasonal changes in our gardens. Having enjoyed the blossoming of camellias and bulbs early in Spring we can now reliably look forward to the annual show of rhododendrons and roses. The anticipation and fulfillment of these garden happenings is very comforting indeed and fortifies we garden lovers for being able to confront the stressful and unpredictable aspects of our lives!

## **Next Meeting**

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This will be held at the RSL Hall, Stirling, on Tuesday 15th, October 8pm. It will be the first of our popular blooms nights so bring along your favourite flowers.

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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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## Spring is here



Tulipa Clusiana



Flowering  
Cherry

Kojo-no-mai



Exocorda Macrantha "The Bride"



The Showy Crab Apple

### Some interesting information:

In the past there has been some speculation about the existence of a rhododendron known as "Waterer's Victoria". Thanks to Stephen Kingdon from the Botanic gardens for doing some research into this plant and finding the following information:

*"Waterer's Victoria" cv Parentage unknown L:T. Methven & Son (1868), INC:ICRA(1958) Fls deep claret (1958 register); fls violet, spotted black(V.J. Boulter cat., pre-1970)*





## Bloom of the Month – Rhododendron Maurie’s Delight

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### **From the Propagating Bench** *by Richard Illman*

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#### Maple Grafting Workshop Update

Members who attended the Maple Grafting workshop should have removed the freezer bag tape from their plants. The plants should now be watered regularly and kept in dappled shade. The grafting tape should not be removed until next year.

#### Propagating Group

The formation of a propagating group was proposed and accepted at the September meeting. This group was proposed because of the changes pending about our plant sale and also to provide material for the pot luck stall. Such a group could also be responsible for organising the cutting day. The details concerning the operation of this group will be discussed initially by the executive and finalised at a future meeting. If you are interested in participating in this group please speak to Richard or Bronwyn.

#### Cutting Box Check

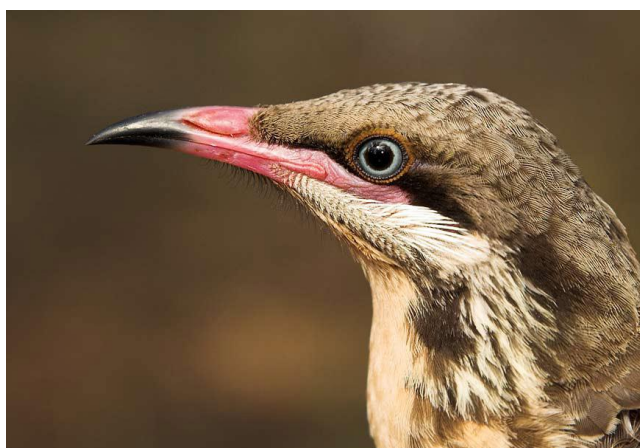
Rhododendron cuttings taken in March 2019 should now be ready to acclimatise. Raise the lid slightly on your cutting box and begin watering your cuttings with a dilute liquid fertiliser fortnightly. Seamungus or Seasol can be added to the fertiliser.

## Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater

*Acanthagenys rufularis*



Medium to large honeyeater of inland Australia. Its heavily streaked plumage, large pale cinnamon throat patch and upper-chest are notable. Also note the dark tip to an otherwise pale pinkish bill. A fairly common species across the drier inland parts of Australia including parks and gardens in towns. Its loud and smooth calls are a characteristic sound over much of inland Australia



Seen in most of the drier Conservation parks in the Adelaide hills

Monarto - Callington - Sandy Creek - Kaiser Stuhl

The Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater is heard more often than it is seen. The jerky, musical call of the species has been described as a “liquid and guttural gurgling jumble”, which may stop abruptly, almost as though the bird has run out of breath, and then it suddenly starts up again. Sometimes Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters sing ‘antiphonally’, with one bird singing a snatch of song, which is immediately followed by another bird nearby singing another phrase, so that the song sounds as though it is being sung by a single bird.



## Tales from Forest Lodge *by Milton Bowman*



Spring has arrived and every day there are new things happening in the garden. The cherry and crab apples are flowering, the other deciduous trees are either starting to green up or their buds are looking very plump, and in a few weeks they will be in full leaf.

Our Camellias are still flowering and I can report that this year has been very good for them. It has been somewhat dryer and this has resulted in minimal petal blight with the result that the blooms last longer and the plants look bright and healthy. There have been a number that have flowered for the first time and as per usual the labels have disappeared and we are guessing who they are. Fortunately we have friends who can help sort this out and permanent labels will be placed.

Rhododendrons have now well and truly started their display and the borders are lighting up. Jeanette Clark is looking great and Dame Nelly Melba has huge trusses of pink. Ann Teese is covered with fragrant soft pink flowers and Max Sye is a picture. This rhododendron is amazing and consistently flowers in the Autumn and again in Spring. There are many more to come in October and November and we are looking forward to seeing how the Spring shapes up.

Whilst we do spend a lot of time walking around and watching things happen, there is ongoing work with replacing gravel on paths around the lawn and more plantings are going in near the new ponds. I need to set up a pump to circulate water through the ponds and there are a few dozen other jobs waiting to be attended to.

The weathers been kind in that the days are warming up and it is very pleasant in the sun, but the rain has been light and this has meant that watering has started already. We recorded 61mm of rain for the month for a total rainfall of 667mm for the year. BOM tells us that it is going to be a dry end of year.

Despite this enjoy the garden and the Spring.

*Milton Bowman*



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

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Another treasure for our library: *The Complete Australian Gardener* kindly donated by Janie Smylie.

This is a big 915 page book with ten authors plus help from the editor of the Encyclopaedia of Australian Gardening and two prominent horticultural Academics.

For someone starting a new garden from scratch this would be an ideal reference. It covers everything from planning and design, including hard surfaces, walls, decks, pergolas, and barbecues to choosing individual plants. I like that there is not only a description of the plants, but also their needs. At random I chose snapdragons (*Antirrhinum*) and learnt that they grow in most climates, providing the ground is well drained and they are watered during dry periods. This explains why, when we started our garden I planted snapdragons to fill in an empty space and they thrived. For many years they kept coming back as a pleasant surprise.

The first chapter is about starting a garden. All common sense for an established gardener as it covers topics such as knowing your climate area, the soil, dealing with slopes, establishing a lawn planning where to put hedges and trees, planning your irrigation and so much more. Chapters that follow concentrate on trees, shrubs, bulbs, container plants, ferns food crops, and herbs. There is also a chapter that delves into propagation

Although published in 1980, the content is very practical and relevant today, written in a polished and easily readable manner. Allowing for the technology at the time, the illustrations are excellent and plentiful.

In spite of its length, it is well worth browsing; whether you are a beginner or you have been gardening for a long time there is always something new to learn.

*Your Librarians*

*David and Ann*

## Notice Board

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There is a wonderful display of Rhododendrons and Azaleas in Mount Lofty Botanic Garden this year.

This Spring's cold weather has been delaying the burst of flowers until recent days. And now the blooms are at their best! The blooms show may last for another week.

It is the perfect time to have a nice walk or a picnic at MLBG!

