

# Newsletter of the ARSV



## Renewal of Subscriptions for 2019/20

**A final reminder for those who haven't done so yet renewals are due.**

## 20<sup>th</sup> October - Garden visits in the Dandenong Ranges



There will be a garden visit day on 20<sup>th</sup> October visiting three lovely gardens in the Dandenong ranges. The schedule is as follows.

- 10-11:30 The garden of Norm Brown at Ferny Creek. Norm has been developing his one-acre garden for 30 years and it is a fascinating mixture of exotics with numerous Rhododendrons.
- 11:45 - 2:00 The garden of Prue and Francis Crome in Kallista. Prue has been developing a garden for the last 3 years based on a good backbone of mature trees and lots of Rhododendrons. We will have a BBQ lunch provided by the society.
- 2:30 - 4:00 The garden of Don Teese in the Patch. Don has a collector's garden of an acre and over 30 years old filled with unusual plants.

If you wish to come please email or phone Francis Crome ([francis@crome.net.au](mailto:francis@crome.net.au); 04177302910)

## ARSV PLANT SALE

**DATE : Saturday 26<sup>TH</sup> October 2019 10am - 4pm**

**WHERE : DANDENONG RANGES BOTANIC GARDENS, THE GEORGIAN ROAD  
 OLINDA, VIC 3788** (formerly Nation Rhododendron Gardens)

**CONTACT : SECRETARY - 0418 340 240**

**Loads of stunning Asiatic, vireya and deciduous rhododendrons for sale including both species and hybrids**

The sales tables will be just along the road from the café. We will have extra stock available in our shade houses which are close by.

<b>Committee</b>							
John O'Hara	President	<a href="mailto:johnohara@optusnet.com.au">johnohara@optusnet.com.au</a>	0444 552 212	Peter Grose		<a href="mailto:pgrose@bigpond.com">pgrose@bigpond.com</a>	04 8877 3577
Andrew Rouse	Vice-President	<a href="mailto:awrouse@bigpond.com">awrouse@bigpond.com</a>	0424 750 406	Francis Crome	Newsletter editor	<a href="mailto:francis@crome.net.au">francis@crome.net.au</a>	0417 730 291
Michael Hare	Secretary	<a href="mailto:vicrhodo@gmail.com">vicrhodo@gmail.com</a>	0405 403 607	Dan Macleod		<a href="mailto:dan.macleod@parks.vic.gov.au">dan.macleod@parks.vic.gov.au</a>	0400 594 319
Prue Crome	Treasurer	<a href="mailto:prue@crome.net.au">prue@crome.net.au</a>	0419 659 741	Alex Pottage		<a href="mailto:niceplants53@gmail.com">niceplants53@gmail.com</a>	03 5786 1595
Graham Price		<a href="mailto:lithic01@bigpond.net.au">lithic01@bigpond.net.au</a>	0409 639 448	Walter Lobbezoo	Librarian	<a href="mailto:wlobbezoo@parks.vic.gov.au">wlobbezoo@parks.vic.gov.au</a>	03 9751 1704

# Annual General Meeting

DATE : Saturday 16<sup>TH</sup> November 2019

TIME : 2 – 4 pm

WHERE : DANDENONG RANGES BOTANIC GARDENS

This year's AGM will be held in the Parks Victoria/ARSV tearoom. Park in the gardens car park and walk down to the tearoom, which is en route to the public conveniences.

A nomination and proxy form have been emailed to you or are included with this newsletter.

## Companion Animal – Wondiwoi Tree-kangaroo

There are up to 14 species of Tree-kangaroos (*Dendrolagus*), two in far north Queensland and the rest in New Guinea. They are rainforest dwellers, herbivorous, and are both arboreal and terrestrial. Tree-kangaroo habitat is mostly in the mountains and uplands rich in Vireya species, but we do not know if these animals actually eat Rhododendrons. Interestingly it is known that one of the Australian species Lumholtz's Tree-kangaroo (*D. lumholtzi*) can eat leaves which are poisonous to other animals such as lantana, (*Lantana camara*), stinging trees (*Dendrocnide photinophylla*), and wild tobacco plants (*Solanum mauritianum*). Most are very poorly known and one, the Wondiwoi Tree-kangaroo (*D. mayri*) is known from only one specimen collected in 1928 from the remote Wondiwoi Peninsula on the Birds Head of West Papua province, Indonesia. It's connection with vireyas is that a British naturalist, Michael Smith, photographed one in 2018. He had been hunting vireyas and orchids in West Papua in 2017 and decided to make another expedition to look for the Tree-kangaroo on the Wondiwoi Peninsula the following year. I do not know if he found any new vireyas while looking for the Tree-kangaroo although I am sure he was looking. This photograph is not of a Wondiwoi Tree-kangaroo but of the similar Ifola or Western Tree-kangaroo (*D. notatus*) in the western highlands of PNG. The Wondiwoi Tree-kangaroo and Ifola are sometimes considered subspecies of Doria's Tree-kangaroo *D. dorianus*.



## Still a few places left on the 2020 Yunnan trip



A reminder of the trip to Yunnan being arranged for 2020. There are still a few places left. Just to tempt you – the Gaoligong mountains where we are going has a flora of over 5000 species

**Dates:** April 8th to 27th 2020. The timing is to enable us to get to the Dulong Valley before the monsoon hits.

**Cost** of the trip is approximately \$6000 depending upon numbers of participants and includes airfares from the departure city, all accommodation and meals, all travel and permits.

Interested? Email or call Ben Wallace on [benwallace@bigpond.com](mailto:benwallace@bigpond.com) (0402 470 379) and copy in the membership secretary ([francis@crome.net.au](mailto:francis@crome.net.au))

**Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> October** Melbourne Friends of Royal Botanic Gardens, Victoria, Growing Friends 2019 Spring Plant Sale. Saturday 10:00 am - 4:00 pm, Sunday 10:00 am - 3:00 pm. Entry is FREE. Acmena Bed Lawn Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne Enter via E Gate. [https://www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org/FRBGM\\_Content/Plant\\_Sales\\_Folder/plant-sales.aspx](https://www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org/FRBGM_Content/Plant_Sales_Folder/plant-sales.aspx)

## Rhododendron in focus: *Rhododendron impeditum*

Subsection Lapponica.

This species comes from Yunnan and Szechwan in the Himalayas at 2700 to 4900 metres and is common where few other plants can grow. It is generally less than 30 cm. high. It is an excellent rockery plant at Olinda but does not survive long in Melbourne suburbs during our hot summers. It is often confused with *R. tapetiforme* which has smaller leaves and deeper blue flowers, at least with the clones we have. *R. impeditum* can be seen flowering in the main rockery around early October. (see photo).

**Alan Kepert**



## Some interesting uses of Rhododendrons in Sikkim

In a review of rhododendron conservation in the Sikkim Himalaya, Onkar Tiwari and U. K. Chauhan reviewed the often interesting and varied uses that local people make of several Rhododendron species. Did you know that according to some local beliefs, a sip of the juice of *R. arboretum* flowers dissolves fish bones stuck in the throat and some people keep this flower at home for an emergency? Many rhododendrons are poisonous, so we suggest you do not try any of the local uses reported below, including shoving *R. campanulatum* leaves up your nose to see if it emulates snuff. However, if you need a new handle for your kukri by all means chop down your 60-year-old *R. falconeri* and start whittling.



Photo by Roger Hyam from Creative Commons

The vegetative parts of *R. thomsonii* are highly poisonous and the boiled extract is used as insecticide in the Lachung area of Sikkim.



Photo by Uleli from Creative Commons

The leaves of *R. anthopogon* are mixed with juniper leaves and used as incense in Buddhist monasteries.



Rhododendrons are among the first plants to colonize wasteland thus helping prevent soil erosion and acting as pioneers for regeneration of vegetation. This is a mined area in eastern Sabah covered in pioneering vireyas.



The leaves and pollen of *R. cinnabarinum* (above) and *R. grande* (right) are known to be poisonous to grazing animals but “head Lamas and Tibetan” aristocrats reportedly make jam of their corollas. The authors note that children in some localities eat the corolla of *R. cinnabarinum* and people also fry it to a supposedly tasty delicacy.

The tiny leaves of *R. nivale* are fragrant and can be used for perfumes. *R. setosum* emits a strong heady aroma that causes painful headaches at high altitudes.



Trees of *R. fulgens*, *R. falconeri* and *R. hodgsonii* have many uses. The wood is used to make cups, spoons, ladles and Kukri hafts. The leaves are used for packing apples, yak butter and cheese and provide attractive wrapping for presentation and transport.

Leaves of *R. campanulatum* are exported to the lowlands, where they are “grouped up” with tobacco and used as snuff.