



Rhododendrons South Australia

Australian Rhododendron Society Inc. South Australian Branch

Issue 130 – November 2019

President's Message

Now is the time to really be thinking about next year and planning our various activities and events for 2020 and beyond. This year has presented challenges and opportunities which will be addressed and pursued in 2020. Most notably the format and venue of our annual plant sale are under serious review with alternative sites and plant sources being considered.

Concurrently our own propagating program is being reviewed, with the formation of a specific subcommittee assigned with the task of facilitating the production of a more consistent and reliable supply of plants directly from our membership. The terms of reference and objectives for this group are under development and any constructive input would be most welcome, along with willing participants, of course.

Even Neutrog looks to be changing the way it handles plant society group orders and distribution which is unfortunate, but hopefully a strategy can be developed to ensure that we can continue to benefit from the discounted products that they provide. We are also endeavouring to gain more effective lines of communication with national council with greater transparency and understanding of ours and their roles and commitments.

This year's end of year lunch will be hosted by Rob and Carrie Gilbert who are very much looking forward to welcoming us into their wonderful garden on December 1st. Details can be found elsewhere in the newsletter but for catering purposes it is important that those planning to attend register their intent. Both new and older members can look forward to a most enjoyable day of good food and jolly company in a delightful garden setting to cap the year off!

Last Meeting - October blooms night



Milton, Jeff & Bob displaying some spectacular blooms.

Winner of Rhododendron Black Prince - Peter Wiadrowski



Next Meeting

This will be held at the RSL Hall, Stirling, on Tuesday, November 19th at 8pm. This will be the second of our blooms night so please bring samples of your late flowering rhododendrons.

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 Arc Angel

Thanks to Barb Mynhart for supplying this photo of Arc Angel growing very successfully in her garden.





From the Propagating bench *by Richard Illman*

I have been thinking about the requirements that may be needed to successfully operate the newly proposed propagating group. The goal of this group will be to provide material for the pot luck stall and future plants sales. We will need pots for raising cuttings and seedlings, so if you have been buying seedlings or potted colour in the type of containers illustrated, please bring them to the meeting or let me know so that I can arrange to collect them.

How to protect your plants with the advent of hot weather.

We have started to experience a few days of high temperatures and new foliage on rhododendrons, maples, ferns and hydrangeas can be easily burnt.

I have found that prior to the hot days a spray of the anti-transpirant “Wilt Not” can be very effective in protecting the plants. I have bought a commercial quantity of concentrated Wiltnot at a very competitive price and am happy to share the product with members. Wiltnot can be purchased from garden centres in the diluted form at an approximate cost of \$22.00 for 1 litre. The cost of the concentrate to members is \$10.00 for 500ml. This makes 10 litre when diluted.



If you are interested in purchasing some from me please send an e-mail linwood4574@icloud.com or text (0412222567) and I will bring it to the November meeting.

Rhododendron Cuttings

The warmer weather means that you need to keep an eye on your cuttings and make sure they do not get too much sun. Give them regular dilute liquid fertiliser to support new growth. If your cuttings are ready to pot on choose a cool day and I recommend potting into blue berry mix. Take care not to over pot.

Crimson Chat

Epthianura tricolor Meliphagidae



A few weeks ago a flock of 11+ were seen near Monarto on two separate occasions.

It is likely that the drought has pushed them out of their normal area, which is more inland. Look for them in saltbush and bluebush.

The Crimson Chat is quite striking, with crimson on the top of its head, breast and rump, contrasting with a white throat-patch and a black mask and upper parts. Chats, unlike most small birds, walk rather than hop, and are most often seen on or near the ground.

One of its most interesting features is its ability to move when droughts affect the inland. Usually in groups they are quite spectacular. Droughts stop the saltbush from producing fruit, and insects and other invertebrates become less abundant, forcing the chats to move in search of food. At these times there are great influxes (or 'irruptions') of chats in areas nearer the coast, where they usually seldom occur.

Likely locations: Rocky Gully – Monarto – Callington.



Librarian's Report *by Ann & David Matison*

Your Librarians have recently returned from Overseas; we have been reading guide books rather than plant books so this month's report is about a garden – or rather several gardens that we visited on our way home.

I know that some of our readers will have also visited Garden by the Bay in Singapore; for us it was a highlight. The garden is an enormous public park within which are situated three large glass domes. The Flower Dome is full of Mediterranean plants; each of the five Mediterranean areas of the world are represented by their indigenous plants. We were however rather puzzled by the plant selection in the Californian area e.g. apples, citrus, tomatoes et al!! Maybe they just couldn't find many plants endemic to California and the Californian Redwood could not fit into the space!

As they say in the blurb they manage to keep the climate a perpetual spring so the plants are all blooming and in prime condition. There is obviously a nursery somewhere in Singapore that keeps the Garden supplied. A section that concentrated on Rhododendrons Azaleas and Camellias was present but with a little bit of horticultural license taken there also. Very few of the plants were named so unfortunately the pictures illustrating this report in most cases cannot be named by us.

Cloud Forest Dome is tall, with the garden designers having made an artificial mountain to demonstrate the plants that grow at different altitudes as one climbs. Here we saw some of the most spectacular vireyas that we have seen. At the end of the walk through there is a display conveying a very strong message about the dangers of climate change.

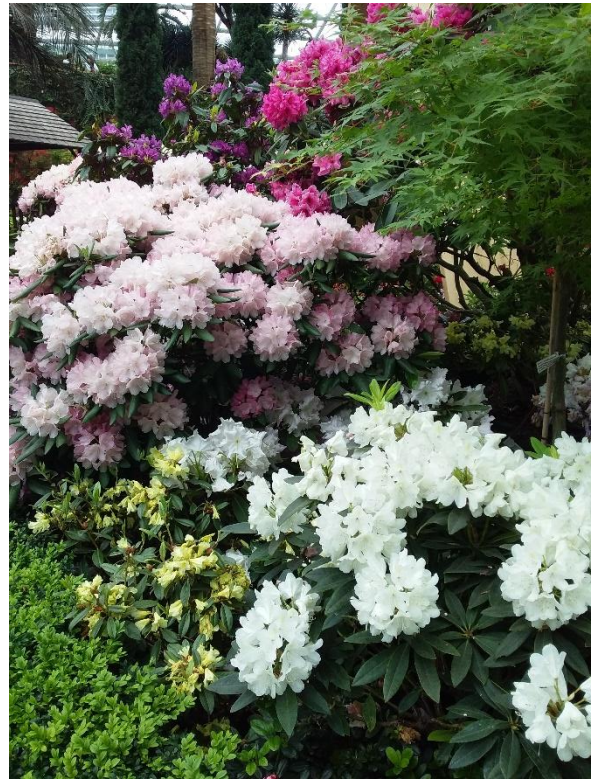
The third and smallest dome is Flower Fantasy which would be a floral artist's delight. As Halloween had just passed there were many references to that and to autumn in general. In there, the orchid displays were amazing.

Then of course there are the Super Trees shown here. They are the symbols of the garden, and a master of engineering and recycling. They have environmental technologies that mimic the



ecological function of trees, collecting water and photovoltaic cells harnessing solar energy. I did try to understand just how it works but failed. The general idea is that the super trees collect solar power and water. The air from the domes is extracted and cleaned then recirculated partly using the super trees. Using this technology they do not have to use air conditioning to keep the temperature and humidity constant within the domes. The super trees are covered with wall gardens which hide the pipes used for water and power; they also give the impression of moss and lichens on a real tree.

The whole park has only been open for seven years. It is very hard to imagine that it is reclaimed land that was recently part of the sea.



Massed Azaleas



Part of the Australian Garden

Notice Board

Christmas Party

The final event for the “Rhododendron Year” will be held at the home of Carrie and Rob Gilbert on Sunday, December 1st at 12.30pm. This is situated at 7A Snows Road, Stirling and is a beautiful garden with a stream running through it and large areas of lawn.

If you have not informed Ann Matison ann.matison@bigpond.com that you are attending please do so ASAP as catering needs to be arranged.

The society will provide a meat main course and a fish dish.

Tables, chairs, cutlery, crockery and glasses will be also provided.

Members are asked to bring a salad or dessert and drinks.

