



Satsuki Azalea donation to the Society

The society recently received a very generous donation of a superb collection of satsuki azaleas from Margaret Smith, a colleague of Alan Keper and a long-time collector of these beautiful plants. She has donated 25 varieties including Hakurei, Juko, Wakaebisu, Komei, Chiyo-No-Homare, Koryu and Benzikari; some of them imported long ago from Japan.

The plan is to keep these potted specimens as stock plants and propagate them to build a permanent display in the Japanese section of DRBG.



Passing of Barry Stagoll

Sadly, life member of the Rhododendron Society and Society medal recipient Barry Stagoll passed away last month. Barry was chair of the editorial committee producing the Rhododendron for many years until Andrew Rouse took over in 2017. He served as secretary on the National Council from 1995 to 2002 and started the National Council's first website. Barry and Gay built their lovely garden at "Mirrabooka" at Park Orchards, Victoria. What members may not realize is that Barry was an avid fern enthusiast also and he and Gay were foundation members of the Fern Society of Victoria.

A full obituary is being prepared for our journal The Rhododendron.

Committee							
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Rhododendron in focus: *Rhododendron arboreum* ssp. *delavayi*

Subsection Hymenanthes

This was originally regarded as a separate species but due to overlapping of its characteristics with *R. arboreum* it was moved by Chamberlain (Edinburgh) to subspecies status. It is found in NE India, Burma, Thailand, and SW China at 1500 to 3000 metres. It is regarded as frost-tender in England.

We have around 100 planted in the garden mostly towards the north end in the *arboreum* bed or along the fence along Falls Road. If you feel like a healthy walk in late September or early October you can see a magnificent show of blood red flowers (see photo)

Alan Keperť.



Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting was held at DRBG on 16th November. It was the 60th AGM and that must be some sort of record. Office bearers were re-elected as follows:

President John O'Hara

Vice-President Andrew Rouse

Treasurer Prue Crome

Secretary Mick Hare

Three **Committee** positions became vacant and the following were elected as committee members

Peter Grose

Graham Price

Francis Crome

Following business Neil Puddey from Woolgoolga NSW gave a fascinating presentation on his work in suppling vireyas for the Cloud Forest display in Singapore.

Thanks Neil.

Reports of office bearers can be obtained from the secretary (addresses on first page)

ARSV garden visits 20/10/19

Over 30 members of the Society joined together on 20th October for garden visits in the Dandenong Ranges. First in the morning was the garden of Norm and Jill Brown at Ferny Creek. Norm has developed a beautiful 1 acre garden on a steep block and it is over 30 years old. The Rhododendrons were magnificent and there were botanical surprises everywhere including ground covers of native orchids. Next was the garden of Prue and Francis Crome in Kallista where we all stopped for a BBQ lunch. The vegetarian options were rapidly consumed by the meat eaters as usual. Prue's garden has magnificent views over Western Port and Port Phillip Bays and, like Norm and Jill's place, has some large trees to give structure. Bulbs were out in force with lovely displays of tulips not to mention the hundred or so Rhododendron species, mostly young yet. Enthusiasts also went down to the creek where Prue has been restoring the native forest and fights a continuous battle with rabbits.

The afternoon was spent at the amazing garden of Don and Sue Teese in the Patch. Don has been collecting unusual plants, particularly trees for decades and was co-owner of Yamina Rare Plants. His garden is filled with plants you won't see elsewhere. It was hard to tear ourselves away.



ARSV coming events – save the date

2019

Sunday 16th December - Xmas BBQ this year's Xmas get together will be held at DRBG on Saturday December 14th. We are asking members if they would come along in the morning to help with maintenance and inventory of plants in the vireya house. It is overgrown and in need of tidying and sorting. This will be followed by BBQ lunch. The Society will provide meat, vegetarian options and salads. If you could bring a plate of dessert or nibbles to share. BYO drink but we provide tea and coffee. Kick off 10:00 for the vireya house and 12:30 for lunch.

2020

April 8th to 27th 2020 - Yunnan trip. A reminder of the trip to Yunnan. Visiting Cangshan, the Salween Gorge, Dulong Valley, Lake Ximatan and Jiaozhi Snowy Mountain to explore the plant diversity and local culture. There may still be room so if you want to come contact Francis Crome francis@crome.net.au. **Cost** of the trip is approximately \$6000 which includes airfares from Sydney, Melbourne or Adelaide, all accommodation, meals and travel.

North Queensland project progress and the Simon Begg NQ display bed

The Society recently reported progress on the North Queensland project to James Cook University to whom we are contracted. We have successfully met our first milestone with supplies purchased for cultivation and housing of the potted collection and materials for the outdoor bed.

There has been an excellent survival rate of wild-collected cuttings of *R. viriosum* and *R. lochiaie* collected during 2016 & 2017, with 43 of 47 accessions established in cultivation at DRBG, including at least one accession from every mountain. Some of the wild-collected rhododendrons are within a year of flowering and trusses will be collected for herbarium specimens as they come into flower.

Two wild-collected cuttings from each accession will be kept as potted specimens so as to ensure a well-labelled reference collection. Surplus plants and new cuttings from the wild collected plants will be used to establish the public display. ARS-Vic is currently bulking up plants for eventual establishment in the permanent display bed.

The society is photographing the plants as they develop with photos uploaded to Dropbox accessible to ATH (Darren Crayn) and Plant and Food NZ (Sue Gardiner). This site will be updated as accessions come into flower.

In consultation with Parks Victoria management, a site has been identified at DRBG for a North Queensland bed to permanently display *R. viriosum*, *R. lochiaie* and companion plants. The Society has received a generous bequest from the Estate of Simon Begg that the society proposes to allocate to the establishment and maintenance of the bed and we will propose to Parks that the bed be named in honour of Simon who was the driving force behind this project.

The site is in the newly acquired block of land which was part of the former Olinda Golf Course that has been added to the DRBG. The bed has not yet been designed however the site is approximately 60m x 20m providing ample space for the rhododendrons and their companion plants.

The backbone of the bed will be large granite boulders reflecting the geology of the NQ mountain tops. Some have already been purchased and delivered using the grant money from JCU.

DRBG has applied for funds through a Victorian Government grant program, that if successful, will fund a garden masterplan and a deer-proof fence, and relevant to this project, irrigation infrastructure for the recently acquired land. Parks Victoria are waiting to see whether they have been successful.

The society and Parks Victoria are liaising with Warren Worboys, RBG Cranbourne regarding the companion plants wild-collected during 2019 that are being propagated at RBG Cranbourne. A list has been provided to Warren Worboys of species the Society and Parks Victoria believe could be suitable for outdoor display at DRBG.

Establishing Simon's North Queensland bed will require some of the work to be sub- contracted. Parks Victoria must hold the contracts for work undertaken within the gardens, so project funds held by the society for the establishment of Simon's North Queensland bed will be paid, under an agreement, to Parks Victoria to contract the works.

