



Rhododendrons South Australia

Australian Rhododendron Society Inc. South Australian Branch

Issue 131 – March 2020

President's Message

Welcome to a new and exciting year for the Rhododendron Society, especially to new members who have now experienced the bustle and enthusiasm associated with our annual propagating morning. For existing members this continues to be a highlight of the year with yet another opportunity for growing new rhododendron plants and adding to their collections as well as contributing material for future plant sales.

Propagation day, on a very practical level, embodies the Rhododendron Society's objective to encourage interest in and disseminate information and knowledge about the genus Rhododendron. More importantly it provides the impetus for cultivating less widely recognised hybrids, particularly from our local historical gardens where there lies the potential risk of losing this unique plant material. A number of us are effectively custodians of a niche Adelaide Hills collection of hybrids which engenders a sense of responsibility for their ongoing prosperity.

In the aftermath of the bushfires around Australia during this past summer, there are now massive plant propagation efforts being undertaken around the country involving huge numbers of people and diverse collections of plant material for the revegetation of native forested areas and commercial agricultural and horticultural pursuits. Even though we were fortunate in our local area to have avoided direct fire catastrophe it has certainly served to remind us of the fragile nature of our unique environment. As a consequence, we can appreciate that there's certainly a place for ornamental plant propagation in order to hopefully insure against future plant collection loss with these potential disasters in mind.

The upcoming meeting will continue to serve to inspire propagation efforts within the membership but, in the meantime, I feel a certain thrill in envisioning all of these plastic boxes sitting around in various different gardens potentially full of hundreds of future plants!

Christmas party 2020 – hosted by Carrie & Rob Gilbert



The Gilbert's wonderful garden



Rob & Carrie Gilbert



Cutting Day February 22nd - Educational, Social and great fun for all!

An intrepid group of volunteers met at 9am at the MLBG in order to collect and prepare cuttings for the event. In excess of 700 cuttings were provided to a very enthusiastic group of participants. We welcomed the new members: *Jayne Knowler, Adrian Camac, Tina and Wayne Gallasch*, and hope that their association with our society is a very rewarding one.

Thanks must go to:

Rob Hatcher and the Botanic Gardens for the opportunity to collect cuttings.

Milton and Kristina Bowman, Jeff and Gill Jenkinson, and Janie Smylie for providing cuttings from historic hills properties.

Jeff and Gill Jenkinson for hosting the event at St Vigean's.



Volunteers who collected cuttings - *Barb Mynhart, Kevin Trenouth, Andrew and Olivera Waterman, Sue Beckoff, Meg Prince, Bob Graham, Belinda Cullum, Henry Hancock and Richard Nesbit.*



New members enjoying learning propagation techniques.

Next Meeting

This will be held at the RSL Hall, Stirling, on Tuesday, March 17th at 8pm. Following on from the cutting day there will be a discussion by a panel of “expert members” including variations on the standard propagating procedures, new products available, potting on cuttings of rhododendrons, azaleas and Vireyas and finally transferring plants to the garden. A short talk on the background of the historic properties from which cuttings were taken will be presented. This will be a very informative meeting so bring your pen and paper.

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

Red-browed Finch

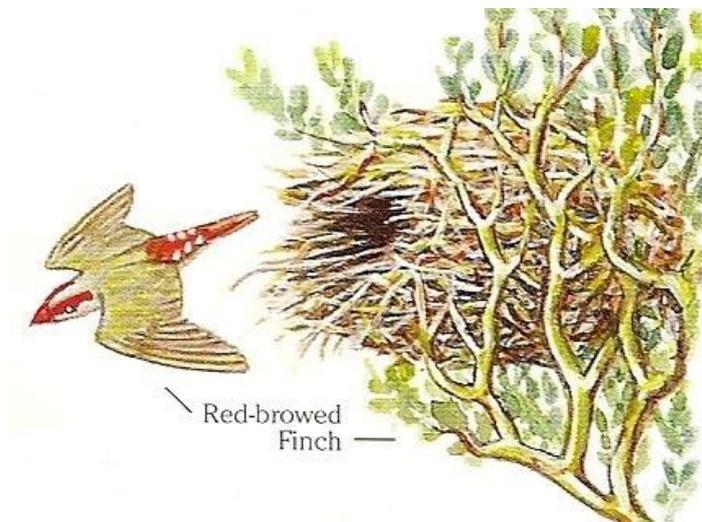
Neochmia temporalis



Perhaps the most common bird in our hills gardens.

Usually in small groups or flocks of 20 or more.

Very easily attracted to a seed feeder, with small seed in it.



Bloom of the Month – Vireya Great Scentsation



From the Propagating bench *by Richard Illman*

Following on from the cutting day, members should check their boxes to see if there is condensation on the lid. If not, you will need to give the plants a drink so that there is sufficient water to create a humid environment. Boxes should be placed in an area of the garden where they receive good light but not direct sun. Check the boxes occasionally over the next few months to ensure that they have humidity and light. If cuttings drop their leaves they will probably not strike and they can be discarded. Further information about dealing with the cuttings will appear in subsequent newsletters. As mentioned earlier, our March meeting will continue the theme of propagation with an emphasis on Azaleas, Vireyas and other plants that can be propagated at this time of year. I look forward to catching up with members at that meeting.

Richard Illman

Formation of a Propagating Group

A representative group from the Executive committee met in late December 2019 to formulate objectives for the newly proposed Propagation Group. The objectives were:

1. To propagate and raise suitable plants for the Pot Luck stall.
2. To propagate and raise suitable plants for the annual plant sale.
3. To increase the diversity of plants available to members.
4. To acquire and raise plants in the Genus *Rhododendron* that are not available to members through the usual channels.
5. To educate interested members in the techniques of seed- raising, grafting, and propagation by cuttings.

It was also decided to propose an initial budget to cover the costs of some of the activities proposed for 2020. These activities would be offered to members at optimum times throughout the year and include seed raising and grafting workshops. Some activities may have limited numbers depending on the amount of plant material available.

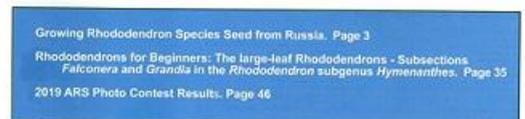
Librarian's Report *by Ann & David Matison*

It is sometimes difficult to find literature to review for the March Newsletter, with the Library locked away in the RSL Hall and I have no key.

Fortunately, before I had to bother someone to let me in, the latest edition of the American Rhododendron Society Journal arrived. Problem solved.

As usual, this edition of the Journal is full of wonderful information including an article named *"Botanical Exploration of Australia's Tropical Mountains: how the hunt for Australian rhododendrons turned into a major win for conservation in North Queensland"*. The article is written by Stuart Worboys from Cairns and Andrew Rouse from Melbourne. Some of our members would have heard the talk by our society's member, Henry Hancock, who had accompanied his cousin Andrew Rouse on plant hunts in Northern Queensland.

Also included in this issue is a memorial article to Sir Peter Craft Hutchison. Peter was a plant hunter, completing sixteen excursions to China, Tibet and Turkey with the well-known Rhododendron personality Peter Cox. The two Peters as they were known wrote an account of their journeys named *"Seeds of Adventure"*, which I for one would love to read. The two Peters also established the Baravalla Secret Garden on the west coast of Scotland, so that they could grow specimens that needed a more temperate climate than that prevailing on the East coast where they both lived. Among many other positions that Sir Peter held during his lifetime was first Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh.



By far the largest section of the Journal is the promotion of the next American Rhododendron Society Convention to be held from April 29th to May 3rd 2020 in Vancouver. It looks to be a very full program with interesting speakers from around the world including Jeff Jenkinson from Adelaide, plus pre and post tours to some amazing gardens.

I was saddened to receive an email recently announcing that the convention will go ahead despite the Covid19 scare. I do hope that it does not affect them too badly.

The Journal contains more than I have mentioned here. As usual it is a very full and interesting publication. Look out for it in our Library.

Thank you Stavroula Raptis for donating *Garden Style* by Penelope Hobhouse. This is a beautiful book with lots of amazing pictures of English Gardens.

We do appreciate your donations, but please keep in mind that we are a Rhododendron Society and our books should reflect our prime interest. Being about English Gardens Stavroula's book does include Rhododendrons and Azaleas so thank you again.

Ann Matison

Ed. David Matison

Notice Board

Neutrog Orders – Autumn 2020

As a benefit to members, Neutrog offers the Society the opportunity to purchase their fertilisers at a reduced cost. A writable order form attached to this newsletter. Please complete the form and e-mail it to Lisa Greenstreet by March 28th (gstreet@internode.on.net).



Please pay for your order, either by bank transfer or pay Barb Mynhart (Treasurer). Make sure you retain a copy of your order for yourself.

Bank Details are: BSB 735080 Acc# 070793

Note: Make sure you indicate that the payment is for the Neutrog order and who is paying. Members will be notified when the orders are available for collection and the venue.

Garden Visit – Raywood Nursery

Following a very enjoyable visit in 2019 to Raywood nursery at Deep Creek it is proposed to go again in April this year. This would probably take place on Sunday, 19th of April. The nursery has

picnic facilities available and their new season stock of deciduous trees should be available to order. An e-mail describing directions and time will be sent to members closer to the date.

Proposed Speaker Programme 2020

Please note that some dates and speakers are yet to be finalised. Accurate details will be published in newsletters.

March	Panel presentation following the cutting day
April	Dr Henry Hancock – The story of the Rouse Family
	Garden visit to Raywood nursery in Deep Creek, Sunday, April 19th – details to follow
May	Neutrog speaker
June	American Conference report
July	Gardens of Vancouver island
August	Annual General Meeting (AGM)
September	CFS presentation
October	Blooms night
	Annual plant sale – details to follow
November	Blooms night
December	Christmas Party

