

Rhododendrons South Australia

Australian Rhododendron Society Inc. South Australian Branch

Issue 85 – November 2014

Coming Events

Next Meeting, 19th Nov. 7:45pm

The next meeting will be a Blooms night.



Members are invited to bring blooms from their garden to display and identify.

Please 'bring a friend', a plate, and an item for the Trading Table.

Christmas Gathering

Our annual Christmas gathering will be held on Saturday the 29th of November
12pm midday, at
'Beverina'

2 Silver Road, Bridgewater.

The usual barbeque, bring your own meat, shared salad and dessert. Don't forget to bring your own chair.



Final Newsletter of the Year

As this is the final Newsletter before our summer recess, the editorial group would like to take this opportunity to wish all members a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Thank you to all members who contributed to the Newsletter.



October Meeting

We welcomed a new member Nataliya Popovic and a guest Tina Comely. Both attended the plant sale at MLBG and expressed an interest in coming to the meeting. Robert Hatcher spoke about the upcoming conference and National Council meeting in Victoria on October 25th & 26th. He explained the proposal to be voted on at the meeting concerning funding for research by the Australian Tropical Herbarium into native species. Members were treated to a plethora of beautiful early blooms.

This month's meeting promises to provide another extravaganza of later blooms so please bring along some of those beauties in your gardens. The nights raffle was won by Belinda Cullen.



The Trading Table

The results of the trading table for October was \$29 "Thank you" to all members who contributed. As November is the last trading table of the year, I am hoping for big things. I am asking all members to 'dig deep' in their gardens and bring along a plant for the table. Let's make our final trading table of the year a bumper table.

Michelle

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By Bill Voigt

Culture Notes

"What you should be doing with your rhodies and garden this November"

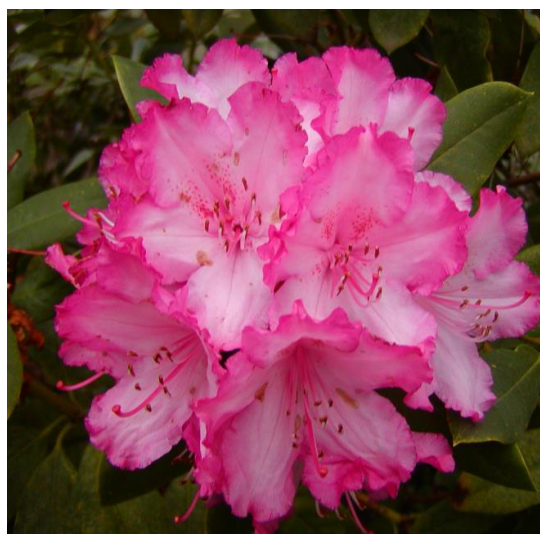
We usually think of rhododendrons and azaleas providing a great show of colour in October and November, when most hybrids and species flower, but there are plants in bloom at other times of the year as well. Vireyas, especially our own "Lochiaie", flowers during February and March, while the indica azaleas often provide an early show of flowers during Autumn. "Advent Bells" regularly flower very early. The rhododendron "Max Sye" is notorious for blooming out of season and this plant is then followed by "Christmas Cheer", "Nobleanum", "Marion", "Cornubia", "Sir Robert Peel" and "Unknown Warrior". After these comes the dozens of species and hybrids until December, when probably the latest to flower is "Maddenii Virginalis" with white lemon scented trumpets. Hence it is possible to have a rhododendron or azalea in flower almost any time of the year.

With early hot, dry weather, watering is important, especially for new plantings. Mulch certainly helps to keep the soil moist and cool but there are a few traps to avoid. Mulch for azaleas and low growing rhododendrons should be of sufficiently fine texture as to not smother the foliage, which can happen, particularly if there are active blackbirds present. Well rotted oak leaves make excellent acidic mulch. Sometimes a layer of mulch becomes so compacted that it forms an impenetrable barrier for water to enter the soil from overhead watering. A garden fork is very useful for breaking up such layers. It is important to check watering systems e.g. drippers, mini jets etc. to see that no plant is left unwatered.

Too much fertilizer can burn the fine feeding roots of plants. Avoid fresh animal manures and large doses of artificial manures. The soil should be damp before applying fertilizers and they should be well watered in. Perhaps the safest strategy is to use slow release fertilizers, old, well rotted manure, or weak solutions of soluble fertilizers sprayed on to the foliage during early morning or late evening.



Nobleanum



Marion

Sun scorch from too much sun and leaf damage from lace bug are the two things to watch for in the coming months.

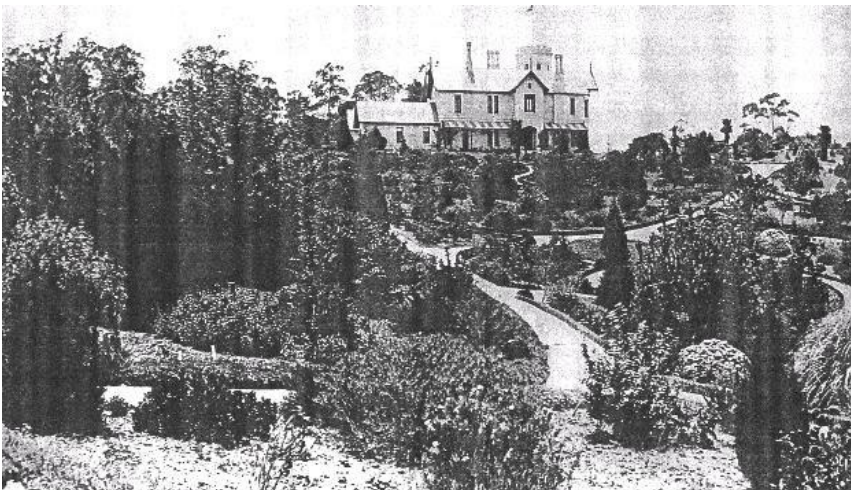
For additional colour during the summer , apart from the ever present petunias , try cosmos, zinnias, carnations and marigolds. NB. Snails and slugs love marigolds.

Happy summer gardening.



Cornubia

Tales from Forest Lodge



Weather Report

I have been away in the Tropics for several weeks and so my report relies a bit on hearsay, but the indications are that it has been both warm to hot and dry. There was 7 mm in the gauge on my return but my caretaker tells me that most was the result of her watering and possibly only 1 or 2 mm came from the sky. If that is so then there has been only 20mm

for the month, most of which fell during the thunderstorm on Sunday evening.

Thus the last 3 months have been dry, and we are falling behind the average year, having had 885mm compared to the historical average to this time of year of 1078mm.

The bonus of a dry year is the absence of blossom blight and the Rhododendron flowers are lasting much longer than usual. However it would be good to have a few downpours between now and Christmas.

Milton Bowman



Bird of the Month

Australian Magpie

Gymnorhina tibicen

The Australian Magpie is a large butcherbird. Found over almost all of Australia, and there are 5 races.

In most of SA we have the "White-backed Magpie" but as you go North East you may find the "Black-backed Magpie."

A great vocalist but the interesting aspect is why they sometimes sing right through the night. Not their loud call but a soft warbling, especially on a full moon. No reason known.

Notorious for "swooping" on humans at nesting time.

The three most seen birds in Australia are the Magpie, the Willie Wagtail and the Magpie-lark. All black and white.

Chris Thomas



Gymnorhina tibicen

Plant Sale

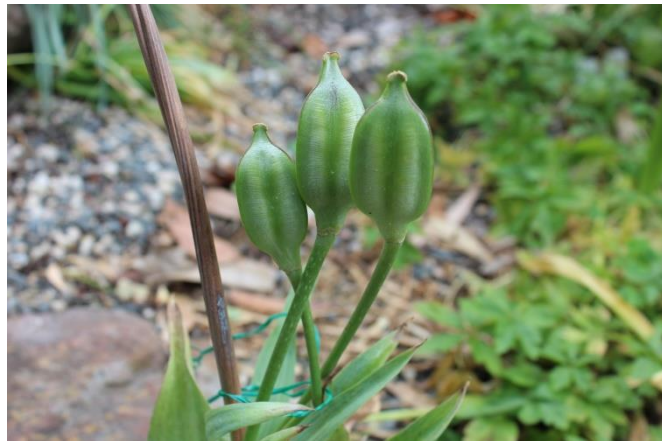
Once again our annual plant sale ran like a well oiled machine. Members turned out in force to set up and others came with their retail skills to the fore. Tanya, as usual manned the cashbox (arisen from a sick bed to do so!). A successful day all round with the Society making a profit of \$1525.00.





From the Propagating Bench

In a previous newsletter we encouraged members to watch out for seed pods on crocus and tulips. If they have been successfully pollinated they will have become quite swollen and changed in colour as they dry. Keep an eye on these pods as they can unexpectedly release their seeds and you will have to wait another



Tulip pod

By Richard Illman
year. One suggestion is to place a brown paper bag over the pods so that the seeds are not lost. Gathered seeds can be sown reasonably soon after collection by scattering them over the surface of some seed raising mix and covering with 1cm of fine gravel. Germination can be expected in about 6 months.

Time to take Clematis cuttings

If you have a vigorously growing clematis and you can bear to remove a flower, the remaining stem can be divided into a number of cuttings to increase the number of your favourite plant. The same box method as used for rhododendrons would prove suitable. Internodal cuttings bearing one leaf stem are inserted at an angle (to keep the leaf away from the cutting media) in the usual cutting mix (perlite & peat ratio 3:1).



Clematis cutting



Librarians Report



by Ann & David Matison

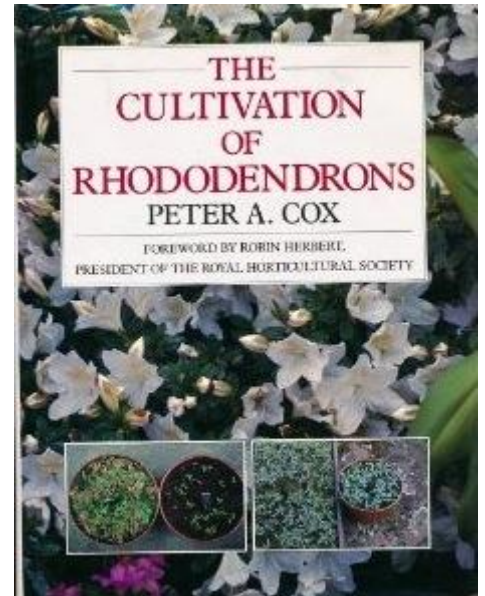
This month we have started to familiarise ourselves with the books in the SA Rhododendron society's Library. The first one I have brought home is "The Cultivation of Rhododendrons" by Peter A. Cox. Having bought more Rhododendrons at the recent plant sale, this book provided us with some timely

information regarding the planting of our purchases.

The book, written by an expert from Great Britain, was published in 1993, but is, I am sure still relevant today. It has a world-wide perspective and refers to most of the Rhododendron growing areas of the world. It covers climate, cultivation, maintenance, propagation, pest and diseases and the recommended species and hybrids for the chief rhododendron growing areas of the world.

For a beginner it was full of useful information. For those of you who have been growing Rhododendrons for many years there is useful information that can either add to your knowledge or confirm that you are as knowledgeable as you are.

Happy reading.



Update on Cutting Day

Propagating Day 2015 – the proposal presented in the last newsletter was voted on at the October meeting and accepted unanimously. Members are asked to indicate their interest to Bronwyn via e-mail so that propagating boxes can be purchased and propagating mix organized. Members are entitled to one box per couple but are welcome to order more which would be at the member's cost (about \$15.00). Bronwyn will notify members during February concerning the date and location of the propagating day. Members may like to take a note of favourite rhododendrons that are doing well in their gardens and that would have sufficient material for removing cuttings in Feb/March. Remember, this day will be an educational opportunity as well as potentially providing plants in two years for the plant sale. Members can also keep some of their propagated plants and may share some through trading tables. The day will conclude with a BYO BBQ.

New Zealand Rhododendron Conference

Dunedin- October 20th-October 24th 2014

Six members of the South Australian branch and two MLBG representatives attended the international conference held in picturesque Dunedin. Delegates, numbering 250, represented many countries, namely Germany, Canada, UK, USA and Japan. The conference was exceptionally well organized with a variety of educational and entertaining speakers balanced with private and public garden visits.



Similarly, the catering for all activities was of an exceptional standard and even the German contingent was prompted to say “they were out-Germaned”. Dunedin provided a wonderful display of both species and hybrid rhododendrons planted in many streetscapes as well as in the Botanic and private gardens. Delegates can thoroughly recommend attending such conferences as they provide a wealth of information, the opportunity to network with other rhodophiles and the chance to see wonderful gardens. Future meetings in 2015 may provide the opportunity for members to hear more about this conference.

Dog of the Month

Brutus Thomas

Brutus is 12+ in dog years, or 85 in human years. He is a regular attendee to the Rhodo meetings, but sits in the car for the meeting.

When he moved to Nairne his big disappointment was no local mail deliveries by the bright yellow postie. He used to go ballistic at the fence at the old house when the mail came.

He hates the big rubbish trucks and missed being run over by a couple of inches and the truck left a 30 foot skid.

Probably needs a hearing aid as he has selective hearing when called.



Article Submissions

The news editors welcome submissions for the monthly newsletter. In addition to Problem Corner, Dog of the Month, and Bloom of the Month, members are welcome to submit articles on any topic that will be of interest to the Society's membership.

We have a deadline of the 1st of the month to allow time to prepare the newsletter for distribution a week before the meeting.

Submissions can be made directly to Michelle or Bronwyn, or emailed to; news.editor@sarhodo.org.au

Michelle & Bronwyn

Bloom of the Month



Markeetas Prize



Editors Tip : Where possible images for articles in this Newsletter are sourced from members. Where this is not possible, images are sourced from the internet. Due to deadlines it is not possible to seek permission to use each image, so we hyperlink each of the images in acknowledgement of their source. This has an additional benefit, if you click on these images you may be able to find information in addition to that in the article.