



# Rhododendrons South Australia

Australian Rhododendron Society Inc. South Australian Branch

*Issue 135 - July 2020*

## President's Message

Dear friends and rhododendron lovers, I am writing this newsletter message feeling optimistic that as we move into the second half of 2020 the outlook bodes well for better times to be had for the remaining months of this year. Simultaneously, along with the early flowering bulbs and camellias and the swelling of magnolia, ornamental fruit trees and rhododendron buds, our gardens are also offering the promise of greater things to come.

As our government and health authorities relax restrictions surrounding gatherings, community and social activities it allows us to hold our first Rhododendron Society meeting for the year. Naturally this will be conducted with the appropriate social distancing and hygiene protocols in place, but of course there will be those within the membership who will choose to take a more cautious approach and elect to stay away rather than expose themselves to a potentially risky situation. It is entirely a personal decision to choose whether to attend or not.

Also, from a business perspective this will be a rather important meeting with the process of dissolution of the National Council up for discussion. A paper ballot will be conducted in order to provide a fair and equal opportunity for absentees to be able to also have their say and vote, apart from the fact that we need to facilitate at least a 75% membership representation in order that this process be valid. Nomination forms for committee positions will also be provided as another important business matter is the election of office bearers and committee representatives at the AGM in August.

There will be no guest speaker at July's meeting so that there can be greater opportunity for informal fellowship. Please feel free to share gardening exploits, achievements, failures, discoveries, etc. The pot luck stall and library will be available as well as supper so I'm hoping things will feel more or less normal, albeit with an aura of caution. Looking forward to seeing you all soon!

## Next Meeting

This will be held at the RSL Hall, Stirling, on Tuesday, July 21st at 8pm. Covid19 protocols will be in place, i.e. social distancing will apply and hand sanitiser will be available.

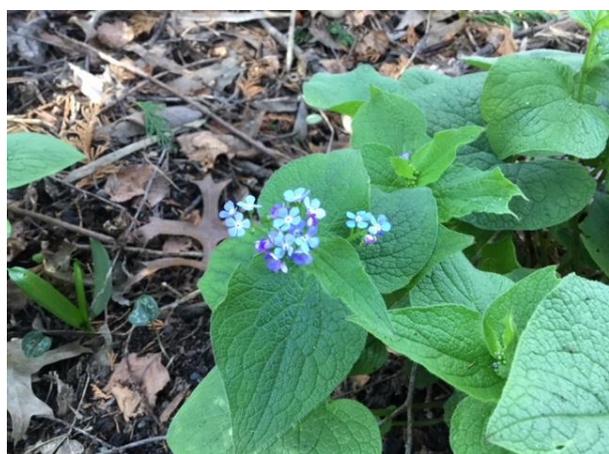
Members are requested to consider attending if they have recently been in Victoria or are feeling unwell due to respiratory symptoms. The meeting will be an opportunity to raise questions regarding the dissolution of National Council (see email sent by Milton Bowman earlier this month).

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

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## Mid-winter delights



Brunnera like shaded woodland positions and reward the gardener with charming Gypsophila like blue flowers in late winter and early spring. They are low growing and need to be positioned near the edge so that their beauty can be enjoyed.



Fragrant Daphne



Hellebores are just starting to show their blooms. Cut back the leaves to reveal the downward facing flowers.



Luculia Pink Spice



Lapageria scramble through other trees and shrubs and are best viewed from underneath.



Pieris japonica



Fuchsia thymifolia



Camellia San Dimas



Camellia Great Eastern



Rhododendron Christmas Cheer



Streptocarpus plant keeps flowering for Lianne despite of cold weather outside

## Bloom of the Month – Vireya Blaze of Glory



Members may be aware that Vireyas are prone to frost damage (some of ours have been badly affected in the past) but the use of Wiltnot, typically used to protect from heat also works well as a frost shield.

Wiltnot is an anti-transpirant that is available through horticultural outlets. We have a supply of concentrated Wiltnot that can be purchased at a reasonable cost.

*Richard & Bronwyn Illman*



## From the Propagating bench *by Richard Illman*

### Maple Grafting Workshops 2020

Richard will offer grafting workshops to members of the society again this year. In previous years, members who attended have grafted maples and these can be attempted again but also there will be the opportunity to try Medlars, Ginkos, flowering Cherries, Crab Apples and even rhododendrons. The workshops are usually run with about 4 people and occur on a variety of dates throughout August. If members are interested please let Richard know (0412222567 or at linwood4574@icloud.com) so that dates can be suggested. He also needs to know if members are bringing their own rootstock or if they need to be sourced (minimal cost). Remember those seedling palmatum maples that self-sow in gardens can be dug in winter and are very suitable for grafting if they are pencil thickness or greater. Members may prefer to speak to Richard and register their interest at the July meeting.

Members who have attended in the past are most welcome to come again and plants that did not graft successfully can be re-used.

A range of maples, including upright and standard varieties will be available for members to graft.

### Gardening Tasks for this month

Hard wood cuttings taken in winter: Hydrangeas, Fuchsias, Philadelphus, Berberis, Flowering currant, Wigelia, Viburnum, Rose and apple root stock.

Frost Prevention: Many of our prize plants can be affected by frost. Vireyas, Clivia, ferns, and many annuals such as Cinerarias are just a few. We have mentioned "Wiltnot" as a product that can be used to protect against hot weather but it is also useful as frost protection. If there is a forecast of fine cold weather there is an increased probability for frost and plants can be protected if they are sprayed with the Wiltnot a couple of days before. Wiltnot can be obtained through garden centres and some Mitre 10 stores. It may be sold as an anti-transpirant, rather than a frost protector.

Fungal Prevention: At this time of year it is useful to pre-empt curl leaf on stone fruit by spraying every month with a copper based spray such as liquid copper. This form of copper tends to adhere to the bark much better than normal Bordeaux (copper oxychloride). Azaleas can also suffer from Azalea petal blight, a fungal disease, that can be treated with Bayleton or Copper based fungicides.

Citrus gall wasp: This insect attacks all citrus plants, and unless controlled, will cause the plant to deteriorate. Covering the tree with insect standard netting will help prevent the insect entry and spraying with eco oil will deter them. Remember to remove the netting when bees need to pollinate the flowers. Galls can also be successfully cut open with a vegetable peeler. The larvae will then die.



Fertilising Rhododendrons & Azaleas: Early winter is a good time to fertilise your acid loving plants. The recommended fertiliser is Neutrog's Kahoota - an organic based, chemically boosted fertiliser, specifically developed to enhance the growth and flower development of acid loving plants such as Camellias, Gardenias, Azaleas and Rhododendrons.



## Member's Gardens - Olivera and Andrew Waterman

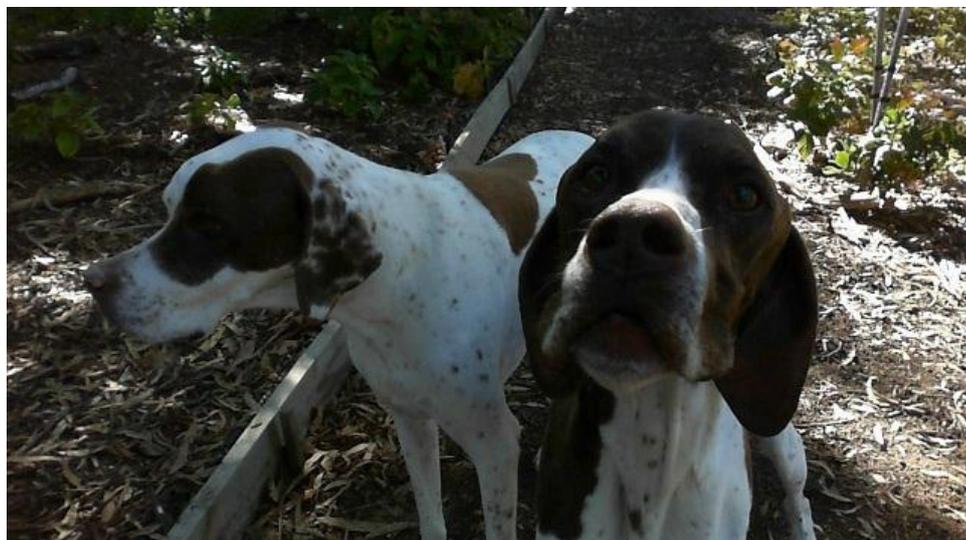
Bergenia & Early azaleas



Azalea Meicho & Vireyas Pink Organdy & Jasminiflorum



Olivera's two gardeners – Hunter & Barca



Years ago when I joined the Rhododendron Society I had never heard of Vireya Rhododendrons. I quickly learnt that they are approximately one third of the Rhododendron family.

This month's book is "Vireya Rhododendrons" by J. Clyde Smith, written on behalf of The National Rhododendron Society in 1989. Kindly donated to the South Australian Branch by Janie Smylie.

The book contains sixteen short chapters which cover everything you ever wanted to know about Vireyas. From their introduction into cultivation, their description, their native habitat, growing conditions, propagation and much more.

Having seen them growing at Olinda in a hot house I realised that they must be tropical plants. Which indeed they are: the largest number of species plants coming from New Guinea. There is one native to Northern Australia.

Several of our members have successfully grown Vireyas in their gardens despite their tropical origin.

The book is well illustrated with photos of these beautiful flowers and diagrams to help the reader identify different types of flowers.

The book ends with a list of registered hybrids.

If anyone wants to learn more about Vireyas this is a very good place to start.

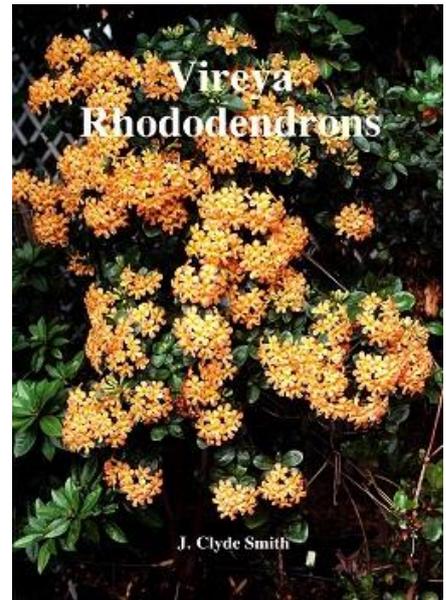
Thank you also to Barbara Mynhart for her donation to the library of "The Rhododendron Story – 200 Years of Plant Hunting and Garden Cultivation" Edited by Cynthis Postan. More about that in next month's newsletter.

### Library Borrowing

We always encourage members to borrow from our Library. If you have not borrowed before all you have to do is choose your book. Remove the card from the pocket at the back, write your name and the date on the card and place it in the small box provided.

When you return the book leave it on the top of the cupboard so that we can replace the card and re-shelve the book.

If you have borrowed a book please return it so that when we do an audit in the near future we can account for all of the items in our collection. We will of course count the cards in the box during the audit.



## What's in bloom at Mt Lofty? *by Rob Hatcher*

Rhododendron Arboreum ssp Delavayi





# Get ready for a Giant **Spring** with **GYGANIC** for veggies, fruit & citrus

Gyganic has been specifically developed to enhance the yield, quality and taste of your fruit, citrus and veggies.

It is a premium organic based, chemically boosted complete fertiliser with the full range of nutrients in an organic form, coupled with boosted levels of nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, iron and magnesium. Gyganic's unique organic base of manure, humates and rock phosphate is composted and blended with the biologically-active GOGO Juice (containing kelp and seaweed). This produces a very nutritious organic base product high in organic carbon.

Following extensive trials by members, Gyganic for Fruit and Citrus is now recommended by the Rare Fruit Society.



Freecall 1800 65 66 44 [www.neutrog.com.au](http://www.neutrog.com.au)

## The August 2020 AGM

*Dear Members,*

*Our AGM will be held on Tuesday 18th August at the Stirling RSL hall at 8p.*

*An important part of this meeting is the election of the Executive Committee, where a number of current members will be standing down.*

*Any Member of SA ARS who wishes to be on the Executive is encouraged to nominate and nomination forms will be available at the July normal meeting.*

*Could those that nominate please let me know, and present the form at the AGM prior to the election.*

*Thank you,*

*Milton Bowman*

*Sect. SA ARS*

## Members SUBSCRIPTIONS are NOW DUE

*Dear Members,*

*The new financial year is upon us which means **subscriptions are now due**. Please see the Members Subscription form attached to the newsletter.*

*Blank forms will be available at the next meeting(s).*

*Please complete one with your details and give it to me.*

*Thank you,*

*Barbara Mynhart*

*Treasurer SA ARS*

**IT'S TIME TO  
RENEW YOUR  
MEMBERSHIP!**

## **Future Conferences- time to start saving again!**

Several of the conferences that we were hoping to attend this year have now been rescheduled. The first to occur will be the New Zealand Rhododendron conference in late October 2021. In all likelihood it will take place on the west coast of the North Island. Visits to the wonderful gardens at Pukeiti will be on the agenda. This will be followed by our own Australian conference at Emu Valley in Tasmania. We encourage members to consider supporting our conference.

Conferences are a wonderful way to learn more about Rhododendrons, visit gardens that are not normally open to the public, and to forge new friendships with people who share our interests.

Members who would like more information can visit the New Zealand Rhododendron Society web site.

The American Rhododendron Society (ARS) has rescheduled their Portland 75th Anniversary conference for late April 2022. Hopefully International travel will be available by then. This conference promises to be exceptional with International speakers and a huge array of world class, both private and public. The ARS web site is a most worthwhile one to visit. A number of our members have joined the Mt Arrowsmith (MARS) chapter of the American society. This is an extremely successful and active chapter who have provided regular communication with the Australian members. Some of us are planning to attend the 75th Anniversary conference in 2022 and have been informed that we would receive a very warm welcome from the MARS chapter if we travelled to Vancouver Island as a post conference trip. Anyone who would like more information is welcome to speak to Richard or Bronwyn.

## **Newsletter from New Zealand – Bronwyn Illman**

One of the benefits of attending conferences is that you meet interesting people and often make lifelong friends. Such is the case with Joy and Bernie O’Keefe from New Zealand. Joy is the National President and has been a regular correspondent with Richard and myself and often sends a copy of their newsletter. The most recent one was exceptional and contained a lot of information (including an article on the Australian bushfires) that I thought may be of interest to members. You can access the latest newsletter by going to the New Zealand Rhododendron Association website <https://www.rhododendron.org.nz/>.

