

Blue Mountains Rhododendron Society of New South Wales Inc.

www.rhodogrdn.org.au

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NEWSLETTER

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PO Box 238, Blackheath, 2785.

General Meeting Saturday 18 June 2011 at The Lodge 12 noon for a 2:00 pm start

We welcome all members, especially those who have recently joined us, to this our midwinter meeting, where, from 12 noon, we will serve HOMEMADE SOUP with crusty bread or sandwich, tea or coffee. Cost \$5

Come early to browse the range of pre-loved books we have for sale at various prices. Choose your purchases from books on Roses, Indoor Plants, Herbs, Annuals, etc., with a number of novels thrown in for good measure!

The general meeting will begin at 2:00 pm, and be followed by our usual delicious Afternoon Tea.

June Guest Speaker

Deb Milne

Deb comes to us from Neutrog Fertilisers and will give us a Powerpoint presentation on how Neutrog and its products can benefit we home gardeners. During her talk, Deb will explain the Pooh Bah Club and invite us to join to receive the benefits of regular updates for new products, catalogues, newsletters and samples.

There will be a free sample box of Neutrog products for everyone attending the meeting.

The Society has already received a copy of Neutrog's book "From the Ground Up", written specifically for NSW by Linda, Sandra & Graham Ross. It now resides in the Library, and is well worth a look.

Neutrog's website is www.neutrog.com.au

Annual Membership Fees Due

Please note that the ANNUAL membership RENEWAL fees (for 1st July 2011 to 30th June 2012 are due, so there will be an opportunity to pay at this meeting.

The membership form is attached to this newsletter.

Advance Notice for August

The Society's 42nd Annual General Meeting and election of committee members for the year 2011-2012 will be held at The Lodge at 2:00 pm on Saturday 20th August 2011.

The guest speaker at this meeting will be announced in the next newsletter.

From the President - (Rob's Ramblings)

The finer weather allows us once more to take long walks through our Gardens and marvel at the autumn colours, which were at their best for our Jazz In The Gardens afternoon in April. Jim Mills and His Sweet Violets jazz band gave us great hot jazz until a quarter to four when their fingers got too cold to continue playing! Geoff and Elaine added to the amusement by falling backwards, seated, over the dam wall. Great mirth for all the folks seated with them who didn't fall over! The fine weather made for an excellent afternoon's entertainment. I hope we see more of you at next year's event.

The work to repair the service road and surface the road passing the lake and up to Wentworth Street continues with the involvement of Blue Mountains City Council. Terri Hamilton raised a Councillor's Service Request and we were told this week that it will be responded to by the 3rd of June at the latest, such being Council's defined response times.

Work continue too, by Garden Volunteers at the recent Saturday Working Bee, to prepare the Gardens for the burning off of ground based rubbish to make the Gardens less likely to catch fire during the Bushfire season.

We must start preparing for the Open Days in October, and I am asking you all to volunteer to help serve Devonshire Teas, sell souvenirs and raffle tickets for both the quilt (which was created by the ladies of the Quilts & Coffee Group of the Upper Blue Mountains Ladies' Probus Club), and the Local Produce Hamper, even if for only a couple of hours a week. Your short contribution can make a big difference to our major fund raising activity for the year. It's not hard work and everyone agrees it is a fun way to spend their time. We are already receiving tentative bus and coach bookings for the October Open Days. You can contact me at any time to volunteer.

A very big Thank You to the Probus Club ladies for this gorgeous quilt - it will be on display at our next General Meeting.

I look forward to seeing you all then.

Rob Emanuel – President

New Members

We warmly welcome new members Debbie Wells & Tony Morgan of Blackheath and invite them to join in all the Society's activities.

A Personal Note

Some VIP members are reaching important birthdays this year, and we send our congratulations and best wishes to all of them.

Firstly to Norm Campbell who will be 95 on the 16th June, and who enjoys being cared for at his Bodington hostel.

Slightly younger is Rill Gibson, that well-known and still active Blackheathen, who was 94 in May.

Laurel Phillips and Sam Black reach 94 on the 25th June and 20th July respectively. Laurel is currently in Katoomba Hospital recovering from a fall last April. Life Member Sam Black is well known from his volunteering days in the Gardens as a versatile Mr Fix-it mechanic/carpenter, etc., etc. His other half Beryl will reach a significant milestone in November, and to both of them we send our fondest good wishes.

Reg Byrnes, a Life Member and a long-time volunteer, is also reaching 90 (more or less?) and has recently moved to a retirement village in Eastwood.

But pride of place goes to Georgie Jeffries, who is 104 this year.

Congratulations to these VIPs and all the others, un-named and over 80.

Jeannette Adrian

Changes to Website

Since the introduction of the Society's website (www.rhodogarden.org.au) there have been many favourable comments made about the details contained therein. To provide even more information to the wider community, all newsletters for the last year and a half have now been made freely available and accessible from the home page. Just go to the Newsletters link under the main News section.

There was an ulterior motive for making the newsletters available online – some members may prefer to receive their copy in this manner, instead of being posted a paper copy. The information will be the same in both formats (although there may be a photo or two included in the online copy at some stage).

As you will see on the Membership Form included with this newsletter, there is a question asking if you would prefer to be notified when each newsletter is made available on the website. If you so desire, please tick the 'Yes' box and include your email address – we will then send you an email each time a new newsletter has been published and is ready to be accessed.

Garden Report – May 2011

The last few weeks have been taken up with general maintenance. Peter has brought his own whipper-snipper, and brought most of the paths back to their original width. He has also started to clear around the Rhododendrons in the north east corner that were getting badly overgrown with ferns, etc. We even found 2 dwarf Rhodos that were completely covered.

At our Autumn working bee we also cleared behind the top lot of Rhodos that will act as a fire break and will also be the starting point for our hazard reduction burn. Thanks to those who turned up for the working bee.

The girls have continued to prune the long growth from the Azaleas as well as dodder & perform a general tidying up.

We have located all the points where we can isolate the water in case of leaks. Many of these were overgrown, but we will now mark them with a brightly coloured paint.

More labels have been put out identifying Rhododendrons, some natives & some Azaleas. I will have to wait for Spring to identify some of the Azaleas when they flower.

The garden in front of The Lodge has been weeded & any fresh germination sprayed. We have either pulled out or sprayed any small hollies, blackberries, privet, etc. in the area where we poisoned all the big holly.

Martin has also been poisoning large holly in the north eastern corner and I have been treating montbretia in the valley area.

I am blessed with the wonderful volunteer group we now have. It is quite a large group and we all work well together. I can now send them off to repair bridges, weed, prune, etc., and know it will be done properly – and indeed they often come up with things that need doing. The stone bridge once again can be seen, as well as reflecting in the lake, thanks to the volunteers asking could they do it. A big thanks to all the volunteers!

Dick Harris – Garden Supervisor

Our Thanks

Our thanks go to new members Debbie Wells and Tony Morgan for their generous donation of an office desk and return, and a 2 drawer filing cabinet. These have been set up in the Library, with the desk and return being put to immediate use as the home for the PC, printer and engraver.

A Common Question

A common question in the spring is ‘how can you tell the difference between a rhododendron and an azalea?’

1. All Azaleas are in the genus Rhododendron. Azaleas belong to the subgenus Pentanthera (deciduous azaleas) and the subgenus Tsustusti (mostly evergreen azaleas) by the revised classification, or to the Azalea Series by the Balfourian System.
2. All azaleas are Elepidotes – they never have scales on any part of the plant. Some rhododendrons have scales (minute disc-like dots that occur on many parts of the plant), and are known as Lepidotes.
3. All azalea flowers have five lobes, while most rhododendrons (but not all) have a larger number. Azaleas usually have one stamen for each lobe, making five stamens to each flower. Most rhododendrons have two or more stamens for each lobe, making ten or more stamens for each flower.
4. Azaleas have a maximum of two flowers per bud, while rhododendrons have a truss of up to thirty flowers per bud.
5. Azaleas tend to have hairs that grow parallel to the surface of the leaf (appressed hairs). This is particularly true along the midrib of the undersurface of the leaf, and is easily seen in the so-called ‘evergreen’ azaleas. Rhododendrons have hair, called indumentum, which, when it does exist, may be long or short, thick or thin, matted or upright.
6. Azaleas have tubular-funnel or funnel shaped flowers, while rhododendrons are more varied in the flower shapes and sizes.

Management Committee 2010 – 2011

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