



AUSTRALIAN
PLANTS SOCIETY
— Geelong —

Correa Mail

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PLANT SALE 2013

April 6/7

We are very pleased to announce that the annual Plant Sale is on again in 2013. Please put April 6th and 7th aside, and be prepared for a busy weekend. All hands on deck! The venue will be Arthur and Linda Pape's property at Lovely Banks. More details to follow in next month's newsletter.

BBQ GET-TOGETHER

16TH February

Our first 'meeting' of the year is always a BBQ and this year mine hosts are Frank and Tina Scheelings. Please be at their house at 7 Admiral Place, Highton at 5.00 pm on Saturday 16th February. This is a BYO EVERYTHING event. Frank and Tina are providing their house, and a BBQ on which to cook the meat you bring. Everything else is up to you. See you there.

TITAN ARUM

Roger Wileman

On the 29th of December Sheila and I went to the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne to see, along with 20,000 other people, a flowering phenomenon the - Titan Arum, *Amorphophallus titaum*.

Amorphophallus titanum was discovered by Italian botanist Odoardo Beccari in the Padang province of Sumatra 1878. The tuber of this plant was removed and sent to England where it flowered in the orchid house Kew in 1881.

In nature the flower is pollinated by flies and beetles. To attract the insects it releases a smell similar to rotting flesh, hence the common name Corpse flower. When the first plant flowered in Kew it was described as a smell like rotting fish and burnt sugar making a visit to the orchid house unendurable.

Prior to 1989 this plant flowering was a very rare event with only 21 having flowered worldwide. Since then approximately 80 have flowered.

The tuber in the Melbourne gardens was donated by the Sydney gardens in 2006. The largest tuber ever recorded weighed 117 kg, but, during flowering the tubers can lose many kg in weight. The flower may reach as high as 3 metres and is the largest unbranched inflorescence.



Just as fascinating is the single leaf that grows beside the flower, which may reach 5 metres in height and have a spread of 8 metres. The leaf acts as a food supply for the tuber and will grow and die sometimes for many years until the tuber has enough energy reserves to send up the enormous flower.

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The nursery staff has been collecting pollen to be stored and used to pollinate other flowers worldwide. To collect the pollen a hole is cut near the base where the yellow male flowers are sitting above the larger red female flowers. The pollen is dried and frozen to minus 20 degrees and remains viable for several years.

Amorphophallis titanum is only one member of a genus of 170 species. I have another, *A. Abyssinicus* growing in my orchid house. It has a rich, dark purple flower. Although it has not flowered yet, if I talk to it nicely it may flower sometime in the future.

WHAT'S IN THE BUSH

Hyacinth Orchids

Hyacinth orchids are large, very showy orchids which flower mostly in the hotter months of the year. There are two species found locally – the very common *Dipodium roseum*, and the less common *D. pardalinum*.

Dipodium roseum, the Rosy Hyacinth orchid, is found across most of Victoria flowering from November to May, but mostly December –January. It is also found in N.S.W, South Australia and Tasmania. The flowers, often up to fifty, are clustered at the top of a metre high, rich burgundy stalk. They are a delicate pink, with darker spots on the petals and sepals, and striped labellum. They are quite common at this time of year throughout the Anglesea bushland, and add a spot of colour to the otherwise dry-looking summer bush.



***Dipodium roseum* – Rosy Hyacinth orchid**

Dipodium pardalinum, the Spotted Hyacinth orchid, is less common around Geelong, but widespread and abundant elsewhere in its range. The flowers are white to pale pink with spots of reddish pink. The

labellum is spotted. The tall stalks, up to 1 metre, may be deep purple red or green.



***Dipodium pardalinum* – Spotted Hyacinth orchid**

Hyacinth orchids are a delight in the bush, but are not suitable for cultivation due to their saprophytic nature. They require a relationship with a mycorrhizal fungus, and have not been grown in a pot with any success.

CONGRATULATIONS

Wedding Bells?

Our heartiest congratulations and best wishes to Sheila Deakin and Roger Wileman, who became engaged on Christmas Eve. We wish you both every happiness for the future ☺



The Happy Couple – Roger and Sheila