RORAIMA NURSERY

Newsletter No. 3 **Autumn 2012**

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A Happy Easter to our valued customers from the staff and management of Roraima Nursery

Easter Trading Days: The Nursery will be closed on Good Friday only, and will be trading as normal from 9am till 5pm all the other days of the Easter Holidays.

AUTUMN GARDENING

Cool and colourful Autumn is now here, the perfect time to spruce up the garden after Summer.

Cut back perennials (eg Salvias) by 1/3 to 1/2 when they have finished flowering.

Dead Heading & Pests: Treat Whitefly with Rogor, a systemic spray.

Aphids may be treated several ways:

1. High pressure hose on the infested areas of the plant, keeping an eye on the plant in case they return;
2. Pyrethrum spray is a natural contact spray, therefore regular inspection is required;
3. Rogor kills the aphids when they consume parts of the plant after spraying.

Bulbs – Spring flowering bulbs are planted in Autumn. Ensure the soil/potting mix is rich and free draining to allow the bulb to produce a stunning, top quality flower.

Composting – Autumn leaves make excellent compost so spread them on your garden beds instead of placing them in the Council's green bin.

Feeding is best done in March, being the warmer month, to allow the fertilizers/manures to breakdown and decompose prior to Winter.

Autumn is an excellent time for planting trees and shrubs, allowing 6 months for your plants to establish some roots before experiencing the heat of Summer. Remember to dig your holes twice the width of the pot (that your plant is in) and 11/2 times the depth. Backfill 1/3 of the depth with loosened soil. This procedure allows easy access for the plants' roots to become established.

It is always beneficial for the newly planted to be watered with seaweed extract. This helps relieve the shock of transplanting from pot to ground.

RORAIMA PLANT PROFILE

Hesperaloe parviflora

A native of northern Mexico and Texas, Hesperaloe parviflora can tolerate extreme weather conditions ranging in temperature from -5°C to over 45°C, making it a very adaptable plant for all localities. When looking at it from a distance you might assume it has spines on the ends of each leaf, rather like Agaves. However, the foliage is spineless and the plant is suitable to being placed along paths and in garden beds near pedestrian traffic – there is no need to worry about children or pets being hurt.

Requiring a full sun to part shade position, Hesperaloe parviflora can reach up to 60cm in height and 80cm in width. In time it will clump and can eventually be divided and replanted elsewhere. It has narrow, dark green arching foliage with wispy white filamants. Its deep pink-to-red inverted bell-shaped flowers rise on a red spike to 1–1.5 metres above the foliage in late Summer to mid-Autumn, and is very attractive to nectar eating birds.

Hesperaloe parviflora will tolerate most soils. If planting in clay soils, raise the soil level enough to allow excess water to freely drain away from the plant. It is an extremely easy plant to maintain. Removal of dead flower spikes, feeding in Spring, and minimal watering from Spring to Autumn, is all that is required to give maximum growth.

As pictured above, these are available in 14cm pots for $15.00.

AUTUMN ARRIVALS

Washingtonia robusta

Mexican washingtonia – Thread Palm

Named for George Washington, this is a fast growing palm bearing cotton-like threads when young. Known to reach 25 metres in height and 5 metres in width, Washingtonia robusta can be grown successfully in both sandy and clay soils so long as the clay soil is raised to provide sufficient drainage.

Washingtonia robusta is a spectacular tree for street or feature planting. Whether you choose one or many, these palms are drought tolerant when established and are very easy to take care of. One of the characteristics of this tree is the "petticoat" that forms when the fronds are not trimmed. They adhere to the trunk and over time can form a solid column as thick as 2metres.

Pictured from left to right, they are available in 20cm pots for $25, 45 litre bags for $95, & 200 litre bags for $450.

<u>Crassula'Isabella'</u> is a colorful ground cover forming a solid mat with a height of 5-10cm and endless width. Forming a brilliant red colour when receiving minimal watering and feeding, this plant also grows well in hanging baskets, making it a versatile and attractive plant.

Crassula cv. 'Isabella' is available in 10cm pots as pictured to the left for only $5.95.

Aloe haemanthifolia -

similar with its fan-like appearance to Aloe plicatilis, this stemless Aloe with its strapped-shaped leaves originates from the French Hoek Mountains in South Africa. Growing at altitudes of 1,200 metres on ledges and rock faces, it experiences 2,000 mm of rainfall per year, mainly during the winter months.

Each flower stem bears up to 30 tubular orange-red flowers. Flowering can occur from September to December.

Aloe haemanthifolia grows best in cool, free-draining acidic soils. This is a challenging Aloe to grow. It is available in 10cm pots as pictured to the left for $9.95

Pseudobombax ellipticum syn. Bombax ellipticum

is a member of the Bombacaceae family. Native to Mexico, where it can grow to a height of 10m, Pseudobombax ellipticum (commonly known as the Shaving Brush Tree) is only suitable to be grown in an undercover/sheltered area as a Caudiciform plant in southern Victoria. The trunk displays stripes of greens, yellows, browns and white. Flowers have silky rose-pink stamens topped with yellow pollen. Pictured to the left is a 10 year-old specimen which is currently 1m tall. Roraima's Psuedobombax ellipticums for sale are $30 in 24cm terracotta pots as pictured to the right.

Kedrostis africana

is a pachyform from Southern Africa. With age it can form a large flat or globular type caudex. The caudex can reach up to 50cm in diameter. Dark green dissected palmate foliage is accompanied by a delicate 5-10mm star-shaped yellow flower that makes an appearance in late Summer to early Autumn.

To obtain a large caudex, it is recommended that you allow it to grow buried for a few years before raising it above soil level. It is best grown in part shade, avoiding afternoon sun. It can tolerate mild frosts.

Roraima's Kedrostis africanas are in 14cm pots as pictured to the right for $19.95.

Scadoxus pol-evansii - Inyanga Fireball

Previously known as Haemanthus pole-evansii, this late Summer/Early Autumn flowering bulb is an eye-catcher with its 15cm-wide group of fiery red flowers that erupt at the end of the stem. With its attractive foliage, Fireball grows best in part shaded/well mulched areas. It can be left in the ground during dormancy, provided the soil/mix is free draining, allowing a dry resting period for the bulb.
Available in a 20cm pot as pictured to the right for $24.95.

CARING FOR CACTI

Making sure that your cacti are in a free draining soil is critical when Winter arrives. With the Autumn weather cooling, it is imperative to reduce the amount of water that your cacti receive. If cacti are in the garden beds, ensure that they are in raised beds with free-draining soil around their roots to avoid damage from the cold weather and rainfall.
Avoid over mulching as this will retain too much moisture in the soil over winter. A light sprinkling of stones/pebbles around the cacti will present it well without retaining too much moisture.

We hope you have enjoyed the Newsletter and welcome your comments and feedback. If you have any queries please contact us at enquiries@roraimanursery.com.au or by phone on 5282 8704.

Happy gardening,
From all at Roraima Nursery