RORAIMA NURSERY

Newsletter No. 2 **Summer 2011**

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The Staff and Management at

Roraima Nursery

Would like to wish all our customers a

Very Merry Christmas

and a Happy New Year in 2012

Christmas Trading Days: The Nursery will be closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day, and New Year's Day. We will be trading as normal from 9am till 5pm all other days.

SUMMER GARDENING

Summer is now upon us. It is a very picturesque time of the year and wonderful to see so many cacti and succulents in full flower. Cacti have been flowering since October and are still opening up their impressive blooms that make Summer so enjoyable. Each day in the garden a new variety exhibits their finely detailed flowers.

We have large quantities of unnamed cacti and succulents available at the Nursery for very low prices. 5cm pots are just $2.50ea, or 5 for $10; 10cm pots are $3.50ea or 5 for $15.

There is so much to do in the garden before the heat in January/February arrives! Ensure that sufficient mulch is around all plants – approx. 10cm think for best results - and apply water saving liquid/crystals where necessary to help the plants cope with the heat of Summer. It is an excellent way to assist your plants with good health through the hot months.

It is important to check moisture levels in soil over Summer. Grouping plants with similar water requirements is an added advantage and saves time in testing soil moisture levels in so many locations.

When watering in Summer, it is always better to thoroughly water plants (and less often) than regularly watering plants lightly. Longer watering ensures the plants roots have received plenty to help thrive through our hot Summers.

If designing a new garden, Summer is a good time to take note of different areas and how many hours of sun is received throughout the garden. Knowledge of the hottest/coldest areas in both Summer and Winter will allow you to plan your garden with better effect and plant health. Plants survive best in similar conditions to where they originated from. For example:

1. Euphorbia grandicornis is from Natal and up through east Africa, which is a hot and dry climate. When planting in your garden, find a hot and dry place such as a north-facing position to receive the maximum amount of heat. Under an eave, or in a protected and sheltered position, ensures that it does not receive a lot of rain, especially important during our cold Winters. A freely draining soil would also be an ideal spot. Alternatively a hot house is very useful for this sort of plant.

2. Brachychiton rupestris (the wonderful architectural Queensland Bottle Tree) is native to areas from central Queensland through to northern New South Wales, where it receives both rainy and dry seasons. It grows naturally in a large range of soils from heavy clay through to sand and volcanic rocks, and can tolerate cold temperatures and extremely hot weather, which means it will literally survive in most climates as it can handle frost, rain, heat or cold.

3. Sansevieria trifisicata is a good example of how a tropical plant may still be grown in Southern Victoria. As it originates from tropical West Africa, our Winters are too cold for it to succeed in the open garden, and we have too much Winter rain. However, growing it in a hothouse or indoors in well-draining soil will simulate West African conditions very well, and the Sanseveria makes a popular house plant.

Some plants may be grown in almost any location, but the majority require similar conditions to their origin. Studying where your plants come from and the conditions of that area has many advantages when creating your garden.

OTHER THINGS TO DO AROUND THE GARDEN:

Weeds – Keep weeds to a minimum to avoid moisture being removed from your garden.

Deadheading – removing finished flower spikes not only improves the look of your plants but promotes more flowers.

Pests - Whitefly/Aphids

Treat Whitefly with Rogor, which is 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.

Attention to recently added plants that are experiencing their first Summer in the ground is very important. Their roots may not have had a chance to become established prior to Summer and the plants will therefore will need just a little bit more assistance withstand the hottest days.

Watering early morning or early evening will allow the water to stay in the ground longer before drying out in the heat of the day, making watering more effective.

Moving pot plants that are sensitive to heat into a cooler location will allow those tender plants to better survive the hot weather.

SUMMER SELECTIONS

Tylecodon x paniculatus

Thank you to Bihrmann.com for this image of Tylecodon paniculatus.

A Pachyform is a plant that naturally develops a thick body or tuberous roots, known as a caudex. A fine example of this is the genus Tylecodon, from the Crassulaceae family. Tylecodons can range in size from dwarf to large, 2 metre-high succulent shrubs.

Native to Namibia and South Africa, Tylecodon x paniculatus is slow growing and can reach up to 1m in height. It is a Winter-growing, Summer-dormant plant and therefore **does** require water in Winter. It can survive Summer without any watering at all, just as it would be in its native habitat. It is best suited to be grown in pots under protection in full sun.

As pictured on the right, Tylecodon x paniculatus is available at the Nursery in a 10cm pot for $14.95

Euphorbia woodii (caput –medusa group)

Thank you to Gerda Beusselmann for this image.

This caudex-based succulent grows up to 15cm in height and 50cm across. The caudex generally grows underground and can reach 12–15cm in width. Its small yellow/green flowers bloom in late Spring to early Summer. It likes a position in the full sun.

Euphorbia woodii is available at the Nursery in two sizes: in a 26 cm terracotta pot, top right, for $19.95, or a 14cm plastic pot, lower right, for $9.95.

Parodia mammulosa syn. Parodia roseolutea

The spherical form of this cactus can reach 18cm in diameter and height. Its coppery-green crown is covered with white "wool" which is pierced by the new spines.

Parodia mamulosa has a beautiful bell-shaped salmon-coloured flower with a yellow centre that can reach 8cm in width. It is available at the Nursery in two sizes as pictured on the right – 14cm pots for $9.95 and 20cm pots for $14.95.

Kalanchoe pumila 'Quicksilver'

This eye-catching succulent is a creeping perennial with oval, powdery, grey-white leaves and indented margins. Its tubular lilac-pink flowers are 1cm in length and width, and bloom in Spring and Summer. The plant can reach 10cm in height and is of indefinite width. It likes a full sun or part shade position and is frost tender. In colder areas, it would make an excellent plant for a hanging basket. It is available in 10cm pots as pictured to the right for $5.95.

Crassula perfoliata var. minor - Propeller Plant

As the common name suggests, the silver/green leaves of this plant resemble a propeller. Native to South Africa, the propeller plant is an easy-to-care for succulent that has bright clusters of orange/red flowers in Summer. It can reach 80cm height over time and prefers free-draining soil in a full sun to part shade position.

Crassula perfoliata var. minor is available for $7.95 in a 14cm pot as pictured to the right.

Miscanthus is a very hardy ornamental grass known for its architectural form and long lasting flowers appearing in Summer. It grows well in both clay and free draining soils.

Miscanthus sinensis 'Zebrinus' – pictured on the left as a mature plant in the early stage of flowering, this cultivar is striking in groups or as a sole plant provided it has enough room to show its form. Its leaves have yellow/white horizontal lines. It can reach 1.5m height with the flower another 50cm above the foliage.

Miscanthus 'Roraima stripe' – Similar to 'Zebrinus', this cultivar has yellow vertical lines. It can reach 1.2m in height, and 1.5m when in flower.

The picture to the right shows these two grasses in 14cm pots at the Nursery for just $5.95 each. **We currently have a wide range of grasses that are $5.95 for a 14cm pot and some in 20cm pots for $14.95**.

Agapanthus – variegated

Dwarf variegated – An attractive plant all year round, with Summer flowers that brighten a garden bed or pot. Agapanthus readily multiply in time providing more blooms to admire. The flower stems grow to approximately 40 cm in height, and the foliage can reach 20cm in height and up to 40cm wide.

Agapanthus Medium variegated – Similar in appearance to the dwarf variety, Agapanthus medium variegated foliage grows to 30cm height and 50cm wide, with flower stems that reach 50cm in height. Pictured above is the striking foliage of Agapanthus medium variegated.

Both of the above Agapanthus are available at the Nursery in 14cm pots for $7.95

RORAIMA PLANT PROFILE

Botanical Name: **Yucca desmetiana**

Reaching 1.2m in height, this elegant Yucca features well as either a single plant or in a group. It is particularly appealing to those who don't have the space for tall plants. Keeping its lovely colour throughout its life, Yucca desmetiana brightens up the garden all year round, adding contrast in colour and form.

Yucca desmetiana is best in full sun, capable of handling winds, heat and drought conditions (once established). It grows well in clay soil, so long as there is sufficient drainage to ensure that the soil is not boggy. If in doubt about your soil, then raise its level above ground to allow free drainage. Yucca desmetiana can be at ground level in free draining soils (i.e. sandy soil).

As pictured to the right, this plant grows well with succulents that require similar amounts of food and water at the same time of the year.

Roraima's Yucca desmetianas, pictured below, are available for sale in 20cm pots at $24.95 each.

CARING FOR CACTI

Cacti are known for surviving long, hot, dry periods but do however, still require watering during Summer. It is their growing season and with sufficient watering during the hot months, your cacti will return the favour by displaying colourful flowers and fresh growth.

Sufficient watering for cacti is achieved by making sure the soil dries out before the next water.

If for some reason their health does not look good, try applying a seaweed extract or Charlie carp at half the recommended rate.

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