RORAIMA NURSERY

Newsletter No 12 **Winter 2014**

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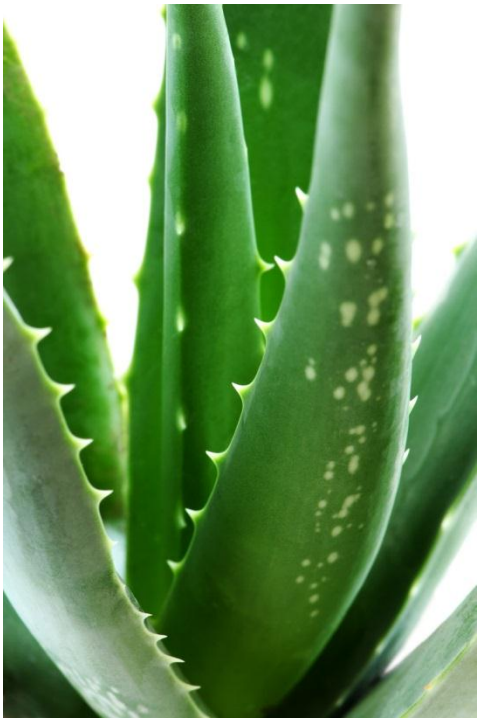


Welcome to the Winter 2014 edition of Roraima Nursery's quarterly Newsletter. Inside you will find interesting articles on some of the special plants to be found at the Nursery, including those stunning Winter-flowering Aloes that add such brightness and cheer to the garden at this time of the year.

RORAIMA PLANT PROFILE

Beaucarnea recurvata

Commonly known as the **Ponytail palm**, this prehistoric-looking plant is drought tolerant once established and is very easy to look after in many conditions. Native to Eastern Mexico, Beaucarnea recurvata can reach up to 10m in height and 3m in width over a lengthy period of time. The mature 5m tall Beaucarnea recurvatas pictured above are growing in the Huntington Botanic Gardens, California. The largest one is 102 years old. Their large swollen bases attract much attention because they are so different to other trees. Whether grown singly or in groups, Beaucarnea recurvata is an interesting plant that is bound to be a feature of any garden.

At Roraima Nursery we have several mature plants in our garden. One of our older plants is 30 years old and is currently 3.5m tall with a base of 1.2m in diameter. This male plant, located in the front entrance car park, has just flowered, producing masses of cream flowers on 3 spikes. Beaucarnea recurvata don't usually flower until they are 10 to 15 years old, after which they generally display yearly. You can only tell the difference between male and female plants when they flower. Both male and female produce stems with masses of tiny cream flowers, but female plants will also have small seed pods present whilst in flower.

Beaucarnea recurvatea prefer full sun/part shade and a free-draining soil, so if situated in a clay area, it is best to build up the garden bed to encourage drainage during the wet months. They can handle extreme temperatures and did not show signs of burning even when the temperature reached 46ºC here. On the other extreme they can survive in areas that have temperatures as low as -4ºC. They have very similar requirements to Yuccas, making Beaucarnea recurvata a welcome plant in all gardens. They can also be successfully grown in pots outside, or as an indoor plant until they reach a large size, after which they would need to be moved out into the garden. Please note that if grown indoors the foliage will have a droopy appearance.

They are available in two sizes as pictured to the right, 20cm pots for $24.95 and 40cm pots for $120.

WINTER WONDERS

Aloe-Aloe Aloes

If you have ever wanted an Aloe plant that has lots of flowers each year, you cannot go past the range of Aloe-Aloe Aloes that are around today. Ranging in height from 25cm to 2m, and also varying in width, these Aloes provide much nectar for the birds and endless viewing for the owners and visitors. Pictured left and right are just some of the varieties available which vary in age from 2 to 4 years. They produce masses of flowers in such a short time! There are cream, red, orange, yellow, pink, and several bi-colored varieties. They flower at various times of the year with the majority blooming in Winter and Spring and a small percentage in Summer and Autumn. There may not be lot of flowers in their first couple of years until their multi-stemmed flowers grow to their full capacity. These lovely plants are available in 13cm pots for $24.95 as pictured to the right. Have a look at Aloe-Aloe's facebook page www.facebook.com/AloeAloeHorticulture?_rdr for more images.

Lachenalia aloides

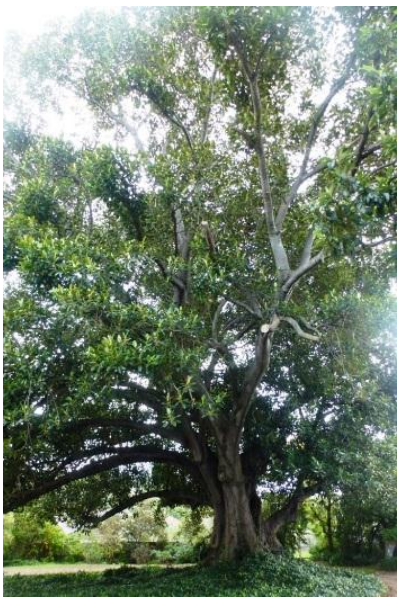
Lachenalia is a genus of bulbs generally found in South Africa and Namibia. There are over 100 species, 80 of which are found in the Cape region. They are a very good bulb for clay soils and can be left in the ground year-round provided they are not in a moist position. The Latin word aloides means "aloe-like", as the flowers are very similar to Aloes. Requiring a frost-free and full sun/part shade position, these late Winter-flowering bulbs provide bright colours to the garden or patio. Reaching a height of only 10-15cms they are the perfect flower with their long lasting blooms that can also be cut for indoor displays. Pictured to the left is a Lachenalia species that is growing in Roraima's developing display garden. Very little attention is given to it and yet it flowers beautifully each year. As pictured to the right, red and quadricolour Lacenalias are available in 10cm pots for only $7.95.

Phymosia umbellata

Native to Mexico and commonly known as Mexican Bush Mallow, this evergreen shrub can reach 3m height and width. It prefers partial shade/full sun and even tolerates a light frost. Its vibrant pink/red flowers with pale centres are 5-8cm in width. Easy to maintain, it just needs a regular prune to keep a bushy appearance. This is best done in late Spring. It is available in 20cm pots for only $14.95 as pictured to the right. Smaller pots will be available late Spring for $8.95. Please contact us if you would like a smaller pot to be put aside for you.

Senecio medley-woodii

This very appealing South African succulent offers a silvery foliage with white felty stems and 2cm wide bright yellow daisy-like flowers in Winter. The word Senecio is derived from the Latin word ‘senex’ which has the meaning of old man. This particular species is named after John Medley Wood who was a South African botanist. It can reach up to 1 to 1.2m in both height and width. Senecio medley-woodii can be grown in all soil types, but prefers a well-drained soil in full sun/part shade. It can tolerate light frosts. It is a drought tolerant plant once established. Providing both colour and texture contrast in the garden, this is an extremely easy plant to grow and an asset for any low maintenance gardens. It is available in 10cm pots as pictured to the right for only $5.95 each



Ficus macrophylla

Commonly known as the Moreton Bay Fig, this large evergreen tree is native to the upper east coast of Australia. Pictured to the left is a superb specimen of Ficus macrophylla, a heritage-listed tree in Highton, Geelong. It is approximately 120 years old. Ficus macrophyllas are generally found in parks or on large properties as a feature tree that provides massive areas of shade. Being one of approximately 45 species native to Australia, Ficus macrophylla has interesting features such as aerial roots that grow down from branches and absorb the moisture in the air, and masses of glossy green leaves with a brown underside. It prefers full sun/part shade and rich free-draining soil, but can tolerate most soils. It is available in 60 cm pots as pictured to the right for only $250.

Dudleya brittonii

Native to Mexico, and possessing the common name of Giant Chalk Dudleya, this lovely plant is known to reach a diameter of up to 45cm. Its light chalky silver-grey rosette and brightly colored flowers appearing in late Spring/early Summer are what make this Dudleya a must in any garden. The white dusty wax on its leaves is said to have the highest measured ultraviolet reflectivity of any plant. Dudleya brittonii is best grown in a well-drained soil in full sun. It is available in 14 cm terracotta pots for only $29.95 as pictured to the right.

Cycas revoluta

Native to southern Japan, this is a slow growing ornamental plant. Sago is produced from several species of Cycas which gives them the common name Sago Palm. Also known as "Cycad", it is a very slowly growing plant to a height of 3.5m. Cycas revoluta, whether planted singly or in clusters, is an architectural plant with a tropical appearance. It is a low maintenance plant that prefers part shade/full sun and a rich well-drained soil. The removal of old fronds is the only regular maintenance required. Pictured to the left is a 30 year old specimen we have in the Nursery. Its trunk only measures 1.2m in height! Cycas revolutas are available in 20cm pots as pictured to the right for only $29.95.

WINTER GARDENING

At the beginning of the cooler season, it is always best to prepare for those cold nights ahead. For those of you in areas that receive frosts, it is suggested you prepare your tender plants like Brugmansias, Tradescantia purpurea, Crassula ovata etc. by spraying them with a protectant such as Yates Drought Shield which coats the plant with a fine film of protective cover that helps repel light frost.

Don't forget to have a look at us on facebook. Keep your eyes open for new plants and **special offers**.

We hope you enjoy your Winter gardening and should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us at Roraima Nursery. Be it in person, online or by phone, we will do our very best to look after you and your gardening needs.

Happy gardening,
From all at Roraima Nursery