



## Rhododendron time at BMN

With a passion for plants since 1932, Blue Mountain Nursery produces over 2,500 varieties of plants and specializes in the propagation and growing on of hardy trees and shrubs, rhododendrons, azaleas, conifers, climbers, natives, perennials and pleione orchids. Right now, we're in full swing for rhododendron production.

Denis Hughes, our horticultural expert, has just got back from a field trip. He has returned with some fabulous rhododendron cuttings. This is the beginning of the life story of our famous rhododendrons. Head propagator, Pat Masters and Denis carefully research all the new varieties and get the cuttings ready for their journey through the glasshouses (see below right), tunnel houses, hardening off areas and then into the fields before they are potted up for you- our customers- about a 4-5-year process.

Not all Rhodo varieties make the grade and Denis directs an intensive breeding program to get the right plants for the right growing environments and in colours that will be on trend just when you want them!



## Featured plants for March; the smaller garden

### **Rhododendron fastigiatum "Blue Steel;"**

Don't just think of rhododendrons gracing a sweeping large expanse of garden- there are so many varieties suitable for the smaller garden and even pots. This tough dwarf compact rhododendron (50cm x 50cm) has striking deep lavender blue flowers which smother the plant in October and attractive foliage with pale green scales on the upper surface. Water well before planting in soil that is rich in organic matter (try adding leaf mould, peat or a good quality ericaceous compost) and keep damp until established or when conditions become dry. They prefer acidic (pH 5.5 or lower) to neutral soils. <http://www.bmn.co.nz/product/species-6/>



### **Rhododendron yakushmanum FCC**



This is one of the most popular of rhododendrons and is well suited to smaller gardens. For something really special- we have been cultivating a yak FCC as a standard- very rare indeed. Yak FCC has pink buds opening to dainty pink rounded trusses that fade slowly to white when fully open. Flowers in October. Green leathery leaves are also interesting with rolled edges and a heavy indumentum (the "furry" finish on the underside of the leaf). This evergreen rhodo prefers a loose, open, acidic soil with plenty of organic matter added to retain moisture. Mulch regularly. Part-shade and hardy. See <http://www.bmn.co.nz/product/syn.-yak-koichiro-wada/>

### **Pseudowintera red leopard- pepper tree or horopito**



Another star performer for the smaller garden. A very hardy New Zealand native shrub ideal for planting in gardens where slow growth and tolerance to wind and exposure is an advantage. A super evergreen plant for winter colour. Foliage is a deep red colour with a dense bushy habit. Great in a container or as a colour statement in a border or for low hedging. An evergreen bush growing to 75cm-1m.

<http://www.bmn.co.nz/blog/pseudowintera-colorata-red-leopard/>

### **Dichroa versicolour**

Plant this shrub as you would for hydrangeas in a woodland type setting and shelter from frost. A great compact plant (trim to 1m) for a smaller garden with spectacular iridescent blue flowers that bloom for months and months. <http://www.bmn.co.nz/product/dichroa-versicolour-2/>



### **Ask Denis**

Denis won't be answering questions this time- after months of limping around the nursery he's finally off to get a super new knee fitted! He'll be bounding about in no time. If you have a question for Denis or you're looking for a plant for a particular spot contact us on 03-2048-250 web [www.bmn.co.nz](http://www.bmn.co.nz) and



<https://www.facebook.com/BlueMountainNurseriesTapanui/?pnref=lhc>

## **Specials for March**



- Hydrangeas- large grades \$24.99 each or 3 for \$59.99
- Lavender Blue Mountain 90's \$6.99 and 140's \$12.99
- Pittosporum large grades (8 litre) \$19.99
- Sophora Quick Silver- a kowhai developed by Blue Mountain Nurseries. Flowers in late winter and is great for feeding tuis and bellbirds
- Myrtus Black Beauty- a stunning feature plant in a smaller garden with standout dark foliage. Medium grade \$14.99.

## **In the Garden for March**

March is a fabulous time of year in the garden – it's harvest time for a wide variety of vegetables and flowers, including tomatoes, beans, beetroot, broccoli, cabbages, courgettes, lettuces, peas and sweetcorn.

Replant beetroot, broad beans, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, leeks/onions/spring onions, silverbeet and swede. Keep an eye out for slugs, caterpillars and snails and consider laying bait. The autumn edition of Go Gardening has an article on page 28 for options for fighting caterpillars <http://www.pressreader.com/new-zealand/go-gardening>. Replant herbs, in particular, coriander, parsley, rosemary, sage and thyme. Re-plant lettuce; it is possible to grow lettuce throughout winter particularly the red-leaf and cos varieties. Try putting potted

lettuces under the eaves of the house. March to May are also ideal sowing times if you're considering a new lawn.