

April 2017

# Rhodo News

Newsletter 395



Official Newsletter of the  
*Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden Inc*

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Chairman: Geoff Wood Newsletter Editor: Nigel Burch

Patrons: (International) Kenneth Cox, (Tasmania) Her Excellency the Governor of Tasmania, Kate Warner

## *Meet Our New Member Edgar—He's an Emu!*



*Many members will know that the original name for Burnie was Emu Bay—hence Emu Valley Garden. Sadly, the Tasmanian emu disappeared many years ago, or so we thought! Our new membership officer, Jill Charles, has returned Edgar to his native habitat, and positioned him where he can welcome visitors. You are invited to come and see, but please do not feed him, and remember that though friendly, he is a wild animal!*

### Calendar

**Sunday 23rd April (NB changed)**

Social Meeting  
At EVRG 2pm

**Sunday 21st May**

Social Meeting  
At EVRG 2pm

**Saturday 27th May**

Brainstorming/Think Tank session at 10am  
Final Business Briefing for Members:11am

See us at:

[emuvalleyrhodo.com.au](http://emuvalleyrhodo.com.au)

## Sue's Corner

It's been a busy month in the Garden! You will recall that our volunteers manually uplifted and downloaded 1907 bales of straw in February? Well, the gardening volunteers, ably assisted by six Work for the Dole guys, have already spread most of them as mulch around the garden, leaving only 100 bales to accompany the "newbies" when they are planted out after we receive some decent rain. The mulch has been left in straw "biscuits", with the effect that large swathes of the garden look like they are snuggled down for the winter under a lovely thick blanket. Looks quite cosy, doesn't it?



Yet another example of there being no end to the talents of our members! Our new Membership Officer, Jill Charles, also happens to be a very creative artist. Late last year, she made and donated a full size sculpture to the Garden, which now resides on the balcony. Christened *Edgar the Elegant Emu*, he is proving very popular with our visitors. Check him out next time you visit!



Many thanks Jill (pictured on left), for your generosity in sharing your creativity with so many.

### Up Coming events for your Diary!

- Mother's Day lunch - Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> May at 12.30pm. BYO. \$28pp Booking essential please.
- Christmas in Winter Dinner – Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> August 6 for 6.30pm BYO. \$30pp or \$25pp for members. Bookings essential, please.
- Opening of the 2017 Flowering Season – Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September at 11.00am
- Cherry Blossom Celebration – Saturday 21st October 2017 10am to 3pm.

May you enjoy all that this special season brings.

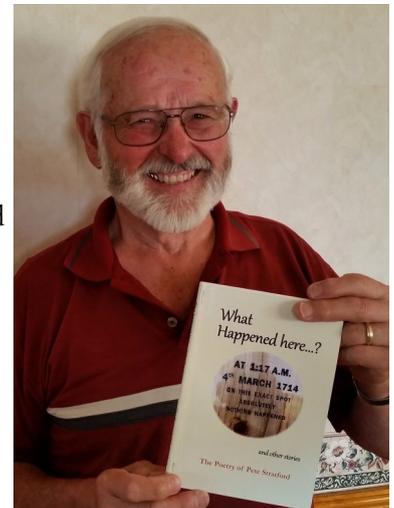
*Sue Johnson*

## New Book

Our Social Meeting reporter Pete Stratford has a new book out. It's a second volume of his best-selling (in Burnie) poetry. When the rest of the country realises what a talent we have, they'll be gone in a flash! Available at the Garden or from Pete.

## Welcome

A big warm Rhodo Garden welcome to new members Cynthia & Robert Stevens.



## *Social Meeting Report for 16th March*

Members met again and heard Maurie impart more information about our amazing garden. Currently of particular interest is a seedling vireya that was pictured in last month's Newsletter. While tentatively named as *R. syringoideum*, there are differing opinions from those asked to identify it for us. However, in the meantime we are privileged to have enjoyed the attractive and delightfully fragrant blooms despite the jury being unable to agree on a name. To quote dear old Shakespeare: "a rose by any other name would smell as sweet"! Also shown and described was a flowering specimen of *R. monanthum*, which is late flowering, and having small single yellow blooms, makes it a rather interesting plant in the Emu Valley collection.

Some very attractive blooms were tendered for the flower voting, the rhododendron section of which Kay Shadbolt succeeded in dominating. Both first and second went to her entries. A spray of mixed lewisia blooms gained top spot for Doreen Stratford, with Melvie Moore's mauve daisy truss close behind for second spot. Thank you to those who bring along their blooms making an attractive array to be judged by "peoples choice".

Melvie added to her trophies by also winning the raffle, while the Door prize was taken out by Bev Vincent. The proceeds of these two activities, combined with the Trade Table, was \$ 55.20. Thanks to all our very supportive members.

To avoid clashing with Easter weekend our next Social meeting will be one week later than usual, to be held on **April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2017**. *Pete*

## *Chairman's Report*

As part of the implementation of the Tasmanian Visitor Economy Strategy 2015-2020 Destination Action Plans to identify priority actions that can make a difference and achieve the aspirations of key visitor destinations a workshop to discuss the Burnie Region was held at the Cradle Coast Authority. Fellow member Kathy Gordon and I attended. Along with three other senior members of Burnie Council Mayor Anita Dow attended which highlighted how important the day was.

To me one of the most glaring things to come from the workshop was how essential it is for Emu Valley to work in closely with not only other tourist operators but the community as a whole and to become recognised as a major contributor to Burnie's future. A second workshop is scheduled for Wednesday 10th May and will be held at Emu Valley which will give us an opportunity to showcase what the Garden is all about and our function facilities.

Our business review is certainly heading to a most important stage and this is the appointment of a Board of Directors. I encourage you to try and come to the final briefing session for members to be held on Thursday 27 April. Business Consultant Warren Moore will be there to explain the process and there will be an in depth explanation of proposed changes to our constitution and for members to express their views. The next step after this will be a General Meeting for members to vote.

Finally a big thank you to those members who have contacted me with suggestions. They are all followed through. As well as the briefing session mentioned above we also have on 27 April the second of our brain storming sessions. Why not try and make it to both meetings?

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## *R. phaeochitum*

*R. phaeochitum* is one of our more reliable and most striking of vireya rhododendrons, producing pink curved flowers usually in summer and again in winter.

Originating from the highlands of Papua New Guinea where it forms a shrub one metre or more in height the plants here at Emu Valley have grown well with some attaining a height of more than two metres.

One of these plants started life as a cutting planted into a section of man fern (*Dicksonia antarctica*). It now stands over two metres tall, flowers very well and shows no sign of slowing down. It can also be

moved to any area in the garden that suits its charm.

The branches and leaves of *R. phaeochitum* are densely covered with brown stellate scales which add to its appeal. These scales usually disappear from the upper surface in time but the whole plant has a sandpaper roughness to the foliage. Our picture shows pink flowers but red and cream flowers have been recorded with the cream ones being quite spectacular with the brown foliage. *Maurie*

*The Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden is proudly sponsored by:*



**Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden Inc.**  
PO Box 39 Burnie, Tasmania 7320