

April 2020

Rhodo News

Newsletter 428



Official Newsletter of the

Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden Inc

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



On the left are two of our very regular visitors to the garden — Doreen & Carolyn. And on the right are Jill, John, Lynette & Leah—how many does it take to open a packet of wipes, Geoff asked???

Calendar

LATEST NEWS: REGRETFULLY, ALL EVENTS CANCELLED AND THE GARDEN HAS BEEN CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE—no social meetings either, sadly.

See us at: emuvalleyrhodo.com

General Manager's Report

As I mulled over how to kick off this month's newsletter I saw an email from a link I have —

“UNPRECEDENTED — That one word seems to sum it all up right now.”

How true this is and how the coronavirus is affecting Emu Valley is certainly unprecedented! I had notes put aside to tell you what is planned for our Autumn Spectacular in April. Not anymore, as like so many events around the country, this is cancelled. Add the Autumn Spectacular to bus groups, weddings, cruise ships and the many pre booked functions that are no longer happening and we have taken a big kick in our money box!

We have had to cut back on expenditure but at the same time be realistic. Garden maintenance has to proceed as when things get back to normal we need Emu Valley looking its splendid best to encourage visitors. We are also taking this, unwelcome as it is, time out to look at future prospects for revenue earning ideas. It has been encouraging to receive emails of support and I thought I would include the following——

From member Alwyn Friedersdorff who has moved interstate:-

“I must regretfully offer my formal notice of resignation from my position as Volunteer at the Gardens.

I will always be grateful for the beautiful escape to such a pleasurable place and for the genuine friendship and care offered between the other volunteers. You are all an amazing group of dedicated and enthusiastic people!

I wish you all continued fellowship and fun as happy owners of the best Rhododendron Gardens in the world.

Many good wishes and thanks for allowing me to be a small part in the bigger most beautiful picture... And for incredible Conferencing!

Warm regards,

Alwyn”

(Unfortunately the planned Rhododendron conference for November of this year has also been a victim of the need for cancellations. A lot of work and planning had been undertaken and hopefully 2021 will see it happen.)

“Hello Geoff,

I just wanted to express my condolences that you have had to cancel the conference.

From my experience (only as an attendee), with the Rhodo conference in Brem, Germany in May 2018 and the (now postponed) ARS conference in Portland, US, I get a sense of how much effort goes into organising such events.

I hope you get a chance to resurrect the conference when all this corona business is over.

Regards - Kevin Trenouth.”

I asked Kevin if I could print his email and this was his reply ——

“Hello again Geoff,

Yes, feel free to use my email (thanks for asking) but prior to doing so, would you please correct my spelling of "Bremen" which I incompletely typed as "Brem" (probably due to too much back spacing). You can leave it in if you like, it might cause a giggle which would be a good thing.

Barbara and I visited Emu Gardens in 2017, she is the passionate gardener in our house, I just like them. Anyway, it was fantastic, not just the actual plants and blooms but the pleasure in walking around the undulating site, although large, it had an intimacy about it, a series of discoveries. It is a real credit to everyone concerned.

The other big hit with me were the delicious coffee, hot chocolate, scones, jam and cream we had there and the charming ladies on duty - it ended our visit perfectly.

We hope you all weather this storm and emerge re-invigorated.

Sincere regards from Barbara and Kevin.”

Better Homes & Gardens

If you missed the segment aired on Friday 20 March you can download “Graham's guide to Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden”. ‘Breathtaking’ was the description used by Graham Ross. Wonderful Autumn colours and no doubt visitors would have flocked to the garden after seeing the program had it not been for the coronavirus.

Also the huge feature spread in the Better Homes and Gardens magazine is brilliant. The April issue is in shops now!!!!

Garden Access

We had hoped to leave the garden open for people to wander around. Unfortunately this has not worked out and the Garden has closed.

Please keep safe: Geoff geoffreywood@me.com 0427 722060



Around the Garden

Well I am not really sure where to start with all that is going on around the world at the moment but I will try to keep it upbeat if only just to take your minds off it all for a short time.

The wonderful team of volunteers that we have working out in the garden during the week are all worth their weight in gold! We have a few of them working on irrigation lines—yes Summer may be over, but we will always have maintenance and upkeep on these all year round. We also have 3 or 4 handy tradies and painters who have put their time and skills into giving the North American Gazebo, and most recently the main gazebo, a freshen up and all the right safety requirements have been met to get these jobs ticked off the infrastructure list. General weeding and pruning is ongoing, as are track upgrades, mulching with wheat and barley straw around the slopes. Eric is still finding areas that need his fine eye and attention to detail for dry stone rock walls. His latest area is the little slip lane on the way down to Japan opposite the row of camellia sasanquas.

Nursery work is also ongoing and our new potting mix seems to be just what we need, as we have had issues in the past with poor drainage, which causes the plants to pass over into the next life before they even make it out into the garden. Fingers

crossed, but we seem to be onto a winner there!

Autumn would have to be my favourite season, and for those who know me, you'll say 'Neet you sound like a broken record' BUT this Autumn is going to be different.. I will pretty much have the garden all to myself, and won't be able to enjoy the wonderful colours that it will be displaying with visitors who would normally be wandering around at this time of the year. It is a known fact that gardening is good for the soul, relaxing, increases our physical wellbeing and can help with the healing process. I know that times are hard and there's every chance it's going to get a little more bumpy before we can see the light, but please remember that fresh air is free, support the locals where possible, be kind and look out for one another. I will try and post Autumn pictures on Facebook weekly for those who have access to it. Others who are able/local, please drop in for a visit. At the time of writing the garden is still open for enjoyment. Happy Gardening! Neet 😊

Memberships

An email received this week —

"The garden is facing hard financial times. Restrictions on large gatherings, together with the loss of cruise ship customers, will have a big effect. Today I have paid my annual fees for the 2nd time. Our garden is twice as good as any other in the world! I am hoping small gestures will help keep us afloat until life is more normal again. Please feel free to mention this (but not my name) in your next newsletter. Maybe others may want to do the same..."



This was very much appreciated and should you wish to pay your subscription in advance this can be done by:-

Direct Deposit

Commonwealth Bank

Account Name - Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden BSB — 067 400

Account Number — 28047242

Please, as the reference put "membership and your name"

Posting a cheque to Emu Valley — PO Box U33, Upper Burnie 7320

As the tea room is closed cash payment will be difficult. Presently the office is remaining open between 10 and 2, please call Sophie on 6433 1805 or Geoff on 0427 722060



Rhododendron crinigerum Var. crinigerum

At Emu Valley we have been growing a pale pink form of *R. crinigerum* for many years in our Yunnan area, but so delighted when the last seed lot produced some darker colours, even striped flowers.

R. crinigerum forms a spreading shrub to around 1.5m high, with new growth very glandular, the lanceolate leaves are sometimes bullate with their stalks very bristly, the underside usually covered with a cinnamon indumentum.

Flowers can be cream, white, white with rose stripes pink, pale-pink or reddish-purple with or without a dark crimson blotch, and are produced in trusses of 8-10 flowers.

This species was discovered and introduced by George Forrest in 1922 from the Salwin-Kiu Chiang Divide, south-east Tibet, later plant hunters located it in Burma, Arunachal Pradesh and Yunnan usually growing at the margins of conifer forests. The later plants are mainly in our Tibetan area, even without flowers these plants are quite distinct and should be easily located. *Maurie*

The Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden is proudly sponsored by:



Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden Inc.
PO Box U33 Upper Burnie, Tasmania 7320