

February 2022

Rhodo News

Newsletter 448



**Sustainable
Tourism**
Accredited
Business

Official Newsletter of the

Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden Inc

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Patrons: (International) Kenneth Cox, (Tasmania) Her Excellency the Governor of Tasmania, Barbara Baker AC

Completing our Irrigation System



Fitting the automatic sprinklers, operated from a mobile phone app. Well done to Geoff and Sam from Irrigation & Dairy Solutions, who got in and got the job done with no issues, on some of the hottest days that we've had this summer.

Calendar

Tuesday 8 March
Social Get Together
10am at EVRG

Saturday 26 March
Armchair trip to Japan
12noon at EVRG

Saturday 23 April
Autumn Spectacular
Details to follow

Thursday 9 June
Social Get Together
10am at EVRG

See us at: emuvalleyrhodo.com

General Manager's Report

What a roller coaster couple of months we have had but my goodness don't let anyone tell you Emu Valley is not moving ahead. Without stealing Juanita's thunder it is great seeing the completion of phase two of the automated irrigation system and how wonderful when we needed additional water the recently installed bore water system was up and running.

It would not be me, if I did not put out another SOS for more volunteers. We have lost a few both out in the garden and indoors and a couple of volunteers who have been with us as part of the Horticulture Team for a number of years will be leaving us soon. Then there are those who have taken off for a few months to see parts of our magnificent country (yep, I am envious). 😊

I understand that sometimes things can be stressful and the cramped conditions in the Tea Room do not help but we are fast heading towards March when visitor numbers start to pick up. You do not have to have five star service credentials and on the whole it is enjoyable and rewarding. The Tea Room being open from Boxing Day has again been a success. It might not seem so on some days but for the 8 days from 26 December 2018 we took \$800 with only the garden open and since then for the same period (2019/2020/2021) we have taken in excess of \$4000.

Calendar

1. Saturday 26 March — Armchair Travel to Japan. We are lucky to again have Murray Giles giving his entertaining "All Things Japan" presentation. In addition those coming along will be able to listen to some wonderful music from Tasmanian harp group known as the Glissandos. The cost is \$20 per person and includes afternoon tea. The day starts with the Glissandos' from 1200 with the presentation commencing at 1. Tickets will soon be advertised on line. Members and volunteers can book by contacting Geoff at geoffreywood@me.com.
2. Social Get Togethers. These proved popular last year and holding them on different days of the week hopefully allows for volunteers to attend. The first two for this year will be Tuesday 8 March and Thursday 9 June from 10am. The days have no formal agenda and are simply an opportunity to catch with others and to hear what has been happening or is planned.
3. Autumn Spectacular Saturday 23 April



Graeme Milburn and Paul Agar bracing the big manfern at the beginning of the walk.

Visitors love taking photos of the huge manfern at the entrance to the walk. It has slowly been dropping and needed bracing. When he heard of the problem, member Graeme Milburn got straight onto it — Thanks Graeme.

Graeme and fellow member Paul Agar worked hard in the hot sun putting the brace in place — now the artistic minds are deciding on what to do so it blends in with the surroundings.

And thanks to volunteer Paul Tippett our rubbish bins are no longer in view of visitors - a great job Paul.

Geoff — 0427722069
geoffreywood@me.com



Geoff noticed a mother and baby swallow on our balcony. The bub was learning to fly and took off a little later.

Around the Garden

With the last month of summer now upon us, it certainly hasn't slowed the growth speed of the wretched weeds around the place and I know it's the same issue everywhere. Problem is that there's just not enough of us out in the garden to get everything done all in one hit. I must sound like a broken record but it's a credit to the team that do give up their time to make the garden the attraction that it is today, so thank you.



You may see some new improvements around the garden on your next visit. Here is a preview of what you will see when arriving at the garden in the main carpark. The bins are always unsightly and have been something I have wanted to do something about for a while now. When you have a team of clever and creative handy people, you may as well use them to the best of their ability right?! Not everyone has a green thumb but all contributions go so far and you will see this in the photo on the left. Thank you for making this happen team! 😊

We have had Geoff and Sam from Irrigation & Dairy Solutions in the garden last month hot wiring the existing irrigation lines and fitting them with the solenoids which are all connected to an app on the phone - the same set up as we have had connected in the top half of the garden last year. There are still

a handful of solenoids to be fitted in the Japanese section which will take place in the upcoming weeks and then this will be another job completed. All solenoids will be on a map and the times in which the irrigations turns on can be altered at any time and so easily. It is then just a matter of taking time to walk around them individually making sure they are all working efficiently and that there aren't any growing plants obstructing the water output which obviously happens in a garden that is continually growing.

Another team are currently working on the highly anticipated moon gate which will be a fantastic addition to the already unique constructions that we have in and around the garden. Without giving too much away, it will be the first attraction not to be built from timber here at EVRG so watch this space as I will bring you up to speed on progress in the following months.

We had a working bee Tuesday a fortnight ago as it was suggested from one of our outdoor volunteers that we all work in one country and spread out in order for a quick fix with many hands making light work. There were 8 of us and we all picked a patch in Japan and quickly got to it. Brush cutting, weeding, spraying, pruning, mulching, chipping, the works! Great team effort and I think we will do this again when we have the numbers to do so.

And last but not least, we have had several loads of chips/mulch delivered and donated to the garden prior to Christmas. I would just like to say a massive thank you for this as we are forever needing some sort of weed suppressant as well as brightening and tidying up areas which are in much need of some TLC so it looks good as well which in my eyes is always a must.

Well I think I have waffled on enough for this first edition to the newsletter of 2022 so just remember any time that you may have spare and you would like to help out in some way, shape or form, just get in touch with one of us and we'll slot you into a position with your name on it.

Happy gardening, Neet



Rhododendron dalbousiae var. *rhabdotum*



Rhododendron neriiflorum ssp. phaedropum

Early in its life this plant was known as *R. phaedropum* but has now become a subspecies of *R. neriiflorum*. This ssp. differs from *R. neriiflorum* in the variety of flower colour and usually longer leaves.

The plant was discovered by Farrer in May 1920 north-east Myanmar (Upper Burma.) Later it was found by him and other plant hunters growing in south Tibet, on the Myanmar-Tibet border, Assam and in Bhutan growing in mixed forests, alpine woodland and in thickets on cliffs. It was introduced by Kingdon-Ward in 1922 and two forms are in cultivation, one with very narrow lanceolate leaves, the other with large broad oblong or oblanceolate leaves.

Our plants at Emu Valley are the first form with crimson tubular-campanulate flowers, but the flowers of ssp. *phaedropum* can be either crimson, scarlet, salmon-rose, tawny- orange or straw-yellow. These plants can be seen growing in our Tibet area, and in Bhutan and Assam along the Noel Sullivan Walk in late October early November. *Maurie*

The Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden is proudly sponsored by:



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