

November 2022

# Rhodo News

Newsletter 455



**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

## The Governor & Victoria League Visit



*Emu Valley member and friend of the Victoria League Peter Weldon and our Curator Maurie Kupsch welcome distinguished visitors: Tasmania's Governor, Her Excellency the Honourable Barbara Baker AC, together with Victoria League members Marilyn Quirk, Lorraine Busscher, Beverley Vincent, Elizabeth Singleton, Marie Smith, Carol Clifford and Maggie Harris. The occasion was the unveiling of a bench seat commemorating the League's 100 years of community service, and 36 years of magnificent support for our Garden.*

### Calendar

**Saturday 26th November**  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
at EVRG 1pm (new time)

**Saturday 11th February**  
Music Amongst the Rhodos Concert  
More info next month

**Saturday 22nd April**  
Autumn Spectacular  
At EVRG

## General Manager's Report

In September's newsletter I talked about the upcoming Cruise Ship Season and now all of a sudden it is with us. By the time you read this the first ship, *Coral Princess*, will hopefully have arrived and departed with lots of passengers leaving with fond memories of Emu Valley Garden.

The majority of ships coming into Burnie have a passenger and crew capacity that means we need nine volunteers. The City of Burnie Brass Band has come on board with us to help make the numbers up. It is great being able to work with the local community. Speaking of which, it was an honour to be presented with a thankyou gift from Burnie's Hellyer College.



*Amy-Rose Simpson and a group of her students*

Throughout the year a group of year 11 & 12 students have made visits to the garden where they gained experience working in our kitchen and out in the garden. It was great seeing them not just develop skills but really enjoying themselves.

### **What else has been happening?**

In September Maurie Kupsch, along with John Englund and Mary McConnell, welcomed and hosted the Dendrology Society to our garden. It is always good when such passionate groups visit and share their knowledge.

It was with fingers crossed that the Spring Festival took place. Right up to seven in the morning it was getting down to a toss

of the coin as whether or not to cancel. Brave hearts prevailed — weather and bridge closures kept the numbers down but it finished up being a good day.

The highlight of the day was the unveiling of a bench seat donated by the Victoria League to commemorate their centenary. It was an honour to have our Governor, Her Excellency the Honourable Barbara Baker, perform the ceremony. The rain stayed away!!!!

### **Forest Therapy Walks**

About two years ago we entered into an arrangement for Elspeth Brock to conduct guided Forest Therapy walks at Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden and they have increased in popularity. A number of members have asked me what this is all about. So here it is!!

The aim of a guided walk is to help people slow down and become more present in their body and the environment. When people book into a Forest Therapy walk they seem to give themselves a window to just be in the garden, to notice things they wouldn't normally see - to literally stop and smell the roses! Elspeth helps people to do this through various activities like gentle stretching, guided meditation and sensory activities. Sound mapping is a popular one in the garden, the more you listen the more you hear - the trickling water, birds, frogs and swaying leaves. Participants explore the landscape through the writings of poets and scientists to deepen the observation.

Elsbeth is a certified guide with the International Nature and Forest Therapy Alliance who collect research on how nature can improve physical and mental well being, such as lessening stress hormones and improving mood.

In September in partnership with Elspeth we were advised by the Minister for Community Services, Nic Street, that we were successful in applying for funding under the Small Grants Program. This enabled a Therapy Walk and Morning Tea for a group of carers, who do so much.

Keep an eye out on the Garden's and Elspeth's Face Book and Webpages for upcoming walks — especially during daylight saving.

### **Another Distinguished Visitor!!**

On Saturday October 29th, we had a visit from Colin Crosbie. Who is he, you ask? Well, here's his card:



If you Google Colin you will be as blown away as he was on his visit to us. Colin lives in Scotland and is hopefully planning to bring a garden group to visit in two years time. He made one stipulation — “make sure the scones are still on the menu” - he loved them!

You can read below, what Colin wrote about us on his facebook page.

Geoff — [geoffreywood@me.com](mailto:geoffreywood@me.com) / / / 0427722060

## *Praise from an Expert*

“I have visited many great gardens throughout the world during my horticultural career.

Yesterday I visited what I would describe as possibly the world's finest rhododendron garden, Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden at Burnie in Tasmania.

Maurie Kupsch, the honorary curator, spent the morning guiding me round the garden. Maurie has been involved with the creation of the garden from its first conception in 1981. He has an encyclopaedic knowledge of rhododendrons and seemed to know every individual plant in the garden.

I have never visited a garden where the climatic conditions allow such a wide range of rhododendrons to be grown so well, from the tropical vireyas to the large leaf species. What makes the garden more incredible is the fact the garden is run and managed by volunteers.”

**Colin Crosbie**—*visiting Scottish horticulture consultant and tour leader.*

*Note from Pam:* Colin thoroughly enjoyed the lunch - scones with plunger coffee. He claims to be quite a connoisseur when it comes to scones around the world, and rated ours with the best! The service was a credit to our girls in the tearoom too - well done everyone!

## *Alterations—An Update from Ant Dry*

We have been talking about re-furbishing our facilities at the Garden for years. We have three main problems with the existing building:-

- A. There is nowhere to store our excess furniture, which means that it is piled on top of itself at the back of the function room, hidden behind screens, but still ugly and taking up too much space.
- B. We have nowhere (apart from our small cabinet) from which to sell merchandise. If we had sufficient space, we could stock a range of suitable merchandise to add to our income stream.
- C. Our-tea-room is too small, and the preparation space very cramped. A perfect solution to our “problem” would be to build on to the existing premises, creating the spaces we need. The problem with the “perfect solution” is one of funding, and one which (despite negotiations with pollies around election time) is insoluble in the short to medium term.

After considerable consultation with various users of the spaces, we have come up with the following solutions to the three problems listed above:

1. ***The storage of furniture.*** We have purchased a freight container and it is being fitted with a roller shutter door. This will be placed just outside the rear door of the building. It will have sufficient space for all of our excess furniture and will be easily accessible when we need said furniture. This will free up all the space at the rear of the function room, previously obscured by the screens. The container will be in place within a few months.
2. ***Retail area.*** We have instigated the purchase of a separate demountable cabin to be placed in the car park between the plant sales area and the tearoom. This will be stocked with merchandise and will also provide a place at which entrance fees can be paid. This demountable still has to be built and will be available next year. In the meanwhile, we shall have set up a temporary retail area in the entrance passage, where the library and display cabinet currently sits. This temporary retail area will be ready for the beginning of the cruise ship season.
3. ***The tea-room.*** With the removal of the furniture to the container, and with retail sales outside, the tea-room will be remodelled. The interior wall between the current tearoom and the entrance passage will be removed. The entrance passage external door will be closed and moved to the west of the building. The tea-room counter will be moved so that it backs onto the big kitchen, which will then become the new preparation area for the tea room. This creates a much larger tea-room area. The plans for this are with the engineer now, and once approved, our builder will start work. Due to the red tape involved (and there is a lot of that), this will be unlikely to happen before the middle of 2023. In the event of our hosting a function at the same time as we have the tea-room open, we shall erect a barrier using demountable, plant filled screens.

***Ant Dry***  
Chairman

### **Our Resident Traffic Controller**

This wee fellow (on the right) is often seen wandering along the driveway just inside from the automatic gates.

He has the right of way!



*Our Curator Maurie showed visiting expert Colin Crosbie around. Our distinguished guest took many photos of things that impressed him. Some of those from his facebook page are reproduced here...*



## *Around the Garden with Neet*

Wow! Wow! And wow! The garden is looking just a picture at the moment.

There is plenty to see and enjoy no matter where you look and explore. I am really enjoying the feedback from our visitors, who have just been totally blown away by our amazing garden and our wonderful volunteers for their passion and enthusiasm that they have for this place.

This month I'd like to dedicate my space as an 'appreciation post' more than anything else.

The outside crew have been extra busy especially the last few weeks with projects on the go and some have now been completely ticked off and finished! The pictures below just don't do them justice and you really need to see it for yourself for the full experience. This is just to give you a bit of an idea of what we've been up to.

I know I say it every month, but I cannot thank you nor praise you enough for the amount of time and dedication that you all put into this amazing garden to make it what it is today. From weeding, mulching, chipping, spraying weeds and pests, pruning, planting out, potting up, plant ID, track maintenance, ditch cleaning, fencing repairs, water way improvements, rock walls, plant health, maintaining existing features and of course creating exciting new ones, I just cannot thank you all enough! You guys are all amazing and my team is the best team going around and super proud of it!

We now have a boot wash station!



*Our amazing volunteers now have a boot washing station!*

The outdoor crew work in rain, hail and mud, and it has been a request to get a boot wash station so that we can stop walking muddy footprints all over the place. Even my little helper is getting in on the action now! It works a treat and we've even been a little bit fancy and have running water to it! Thank you volunteer tradies who never seem to say no to my requests, you are amazing and worth your weight in gold..... or dark coated tim tams 😊.

Moon gate update – On the next page we have one of our work horses hand-pouring the cement into the boxing, which was mixed by the two great minds behind the project.

In the righthand photo we have two trainees giving the big thumbs up on what has been a fantastic job so far! This now needs to sit and cure for at least a month until part 3 takes place. Watch this space for more updates, exciting times ahead.



*The moon gate project is taking shape!*

And below is our extra large version of the garden map outside the plants sales area. You will see it as soon as you drive in. It looks fantastic and I am really happy to see it in place, as it's another job complete. Again, this wouldn't have happened nor look as good as it does without the amazing outdoor team that yet again couldn't say no to one of my suggestions. The frame work was built off site and took 4 men to carry it to its final position. Thank you also to one of our sponsors, 'Design Eye' for creating the artwork and bringing it to life. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Blooms a plenty so come and check them out, you won't be disappointed!

Happy gardening! Neet 😊





## Rhododendron hyperythrum

Rhododendron hyperythrum is one of the few rhododendrons native to Taiwan. The species was first described by Hayata in 1913 from plants collected on Mt. Shichisei. Northern Taiwan growing to 2.5m in broad leaved forests.

R.hyperythrum was first introduced into western gardens by Lionel de Rothschild in the 1930s.

In cultivation it is usually a compact shrub to 1.5m high with oblong or lanceolate leaves with recurved margins, upper surface dark green, under surface pale green usually covered with minute spots and short hairs along the midrib, these leaves are retained for a number of years making for quite a dense shrub. The pink or white flowers are funnel- campanulate and present themselves in a formed truss comprising 7-12 flowers.

At Emu Valley Garden we have only one large plant in our Taiwan area growing rather well at the beginning of the Noel Sullivan walk across the roadway from the two birch trees *Betula costata*. The pure white flowers began to show themselves in mid-September.

*Maurie*

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



**Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden Inc.**

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