

Newsletter of the ARSV



President's Report

by John O'Hara



The 2021/2022 financial year was mainly a year of preparation for activity. The ongoing COVID pandemic reduced our activities both in groups and in the garden at Olinda prior to Christmas, with much of the time after that just catching up.

The building of the new shade house and refurbishment of the old one was organised but did not take place until after this reporting period. This work is now being finished off and we will soon shift all the plants back into an excellent, spacious and efficient nursery, better able to produce a greater range of plants at a high quality. The ARS (VB) and Parks Victoria negotiated a donation arrangement which was mutually agreeable for the funding of the Australian Cloud Forest Garden (the North Queensland project). This sees the ARS (VB) contributing \$180,000, made up of \$100,000 from the Simon Begg bequest, \$20,000 from the Ian Potter grant and \$60,000 from ARS (VB) funds to meet the \$280,000 total project cost. This contribution will be paid as project milestones are reached, thereby protecting our funds, but also ensuring that this important project proceeds. It is currently envisaged that the garden will begin construction after the Phillip Johnson Garden and its access track are completed, probably about February 2023.

The Tuesday Olinda group have continued their excellent work both in the nursery and in the Garden. The quality of the plants for the Garden at Olinda and for sale is improving with up-dated automation of the nursery and increasing experience of our members. This is vital as we go forward with our attempts to preserve the range of plants available to us in Victoria within the genus Rhododendron. Prue Crome's work on the refurbishment of the Australian hybridisers bed is reaching its conclusion, with the bed very much improved and the survival of the various cultivars now much more assured. Elizabeth Xipell's decades of work in the rock garden at Olinda is now really bearing fruit with Parks Victoria dedicating a staff member to help her with her work each Tuesday and between the two of them, the rock garden is now returning to the major garden asset that it should always have been.

With that time of the year fast approaching, the executive committee and I wish all of the Society members a safe and enjoyable festive season spent with family and friends and travels. We sincerely thank you for your ongoing interest and support with the Society.

ARS (VB) 63rd Annual General Meeting

The 63rd Annual General Meeting of the ARS (VB) was held on Saturday 27th of November in their lunch room at DRBG. A number of proxy forms were received in addition to attendance, enabling the meeting to proceed with a quorum. The result of the office bearer election was that all executive committee positions were filled for the new term with the same elected members from the previous term.

Committee						
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Prue Crome	Treasurer	prue@crome.net.au	0419 659 741	Ray Weeks	rayweeks@optusnet.com.au	0408 351 934
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Membership Reminder – ARS (VB) Annual Membership Renewals 2022-2023

By Richard Florey, Membership Manager

Again, thank you to our members who have paid their annual membership renewals, but also for the generous donations made to enable our ongoing efforts at the Dandenong Ranges Botanic Garden. A reminder to everyone that the annual membership renewals were due prior to 30th of September 2022. The ARSV (VB) membership form was included with the August newsletter, a month later than usual. The ARS (VB) communicate to members via the website, social media and hard copy publications. Please let us know your preferred method of receiving information whether via post or email. The ARS (VB) Newsletter is published bi-monthly with news and activities, items of local interest and the calendar of forthcoming activities. Event dates are on the website as well as in the newsletter. The ARS (VB) national journal, The Rhododendron, is published yearly as a high-quality colour publication featuring articles on the genus from contributors throughout Australia and overseas. It is sent to members and released at a later date on the website.

ARS (VB) Facebook Group for Members Only

By Richard Florey, Newsletter Editor



We recently created a Facebook Group for ARSV (VB) members only. This group allows for members to engage with each other on their love of rhododendrons and gardening. This idea was instigated by Roy Bilbie, a long standing member of the Society. Thanks Roy! I followed through with the Committee approval to create the group and become the administrator. This

is a great place to share stories, field trips, photos, triumphs and failures, and to help each other by sharing knowledge, and the benefit of getting to know other members. Questions intended for the ARS (VB) to answer should continue to be made on that public Facebook page. The Society encourage you to join the group. I may even ask you to share articles for the bi-monthly newsletter of the ARS (VB).

Falls Road Deer Fence completed

Terence Moon, Parks Victoria Ranger Team Leader, Dandenong Ranges Botanic Gardens

With deer numbers on the increase in the Dandenong Ranges and increasing impact on the garden's horticultural collections, a 1.6km deer exclusion fence was funded as part of the State Government's 'Chelsea Australian Garden at Olinda' project. This new exclusion fence has just been completed, with the contractor moving directly into June 2021 storm repairs along the garden's existing fence line. With all of these repairs now complete Parks Victoria is actively monitoring whether there are any deer left within the Dandenong Ranges Botanic Garden.



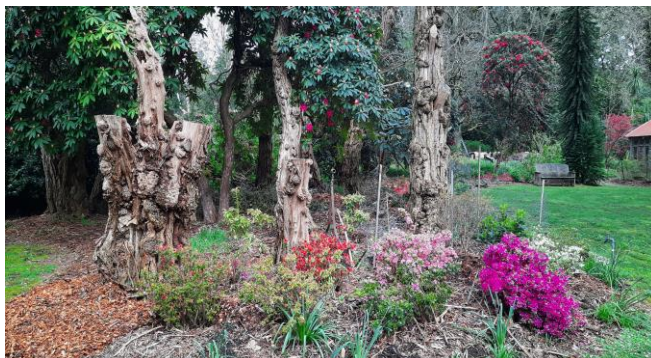
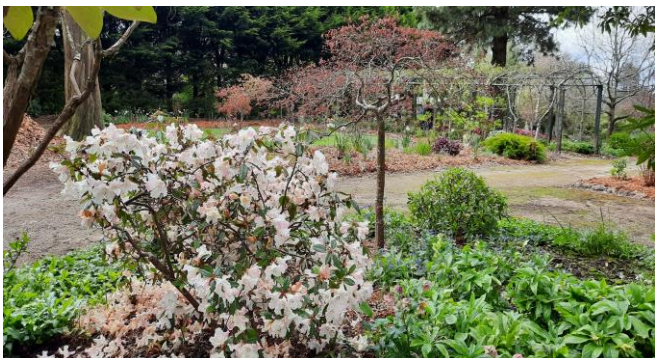
ARS (VB) 'gardens visit day' – Arthur Streeton's (former) Garden

By Richard Florey, Newsletter Editor

We had attendance of around twenty ARS (VB) members at our 'gardens visit day' held on Saturday 8th of October. This consisted of two gardens in the Dandenong Ranges south east of Melbourne.

The first garden was 'Longacres', the former garden of great landscape painter Arthur Streeton. Located in Olinda, it comprises a two-storey timber bungalow and caretaker's cottage, studio/shed, sheds and the garden. It is of State historical and aesthetic significance being the only remaining property as he left it when he died in 1943. He planted much of the garden himself and used it as inspiration for his still life paintings of plants. Longacres was often visited by eminent artist, academic and musician friends including Tom Roberts and Dame Nellie Melba.

History - http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/yarraranges/result_details/115498
Photo - <https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/artists/streeton-arthur/>
Gardens visit day photos - courtesy of Richard Florey, Newsletter Editor.



ARS (VB) 'gardens visit day' – Prue Crome's Garden

By Richard Florey, Newsletter Editor

The second garden was Prue Crome's, located in Kallista. Prue is the Treasurer of the Australian Rhododendron Society (Victorian Branch).

ARS (VB) members had a BBQ feast followed by desserts with tea and coffee, restoring their energy before looking around the garden. Despite the threat of rain which luckily didn't eventuate, our members had a wonderful time catching up with each other whilst wandering through Prue's garden. The flowering was delayed due to the extended cold but there were sufficient plants in flower to keep our members happy. The storm events in 2021 took out loads of natives but gave rise to new plantings which should be looking good in a few years' time. The rhododendrons, of which she might have 500, have loved all this rain and withstood all the weather events...such hardy plants in the Dandenong Ranges!!!

Gardens visit day photos - courtesy of Richard Florey, Newsletter Editor.

