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Rhodo News

Newsletter 461



**Sustainable
Tourism**
Accredited
Business

Official Newsletter of the

Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden Inc

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Vale Eric Weeks—A Pioneer of our Garden



*Eric in 2011, building our drystone walls.
As we walk around the Garden, we will remember him.*

Calendar

Saturday 29th July

Christmas in July!

12 noon at the Garden

Saturday 7th October

Spring Festival

Friday 13-15th October

ARS Conference

See us at: emuvalleyrhodo.com

From the Board



Vale Eric Weeks

Very sadly, Eric Weeks died on 26 June.

He was a Life Member, Treasurer for many years and the sole creator of all the dry-stone walling within the garden (a huge feat on its own). He was a generous, kind, and patient man, much respected and loved by all. He always helped with hay carting, and he would supply members with tomatoes from his garden. He supported Essendon and loved the horses.

When Eric was awarded Life Membership in 2014, Maurie Kupsch had this to say:
“Eric’s contribution to Emu Valley has been nothing less than outstanding.

His involvement spreads over a period of 25 years, with the last 17 years carrying the responsibility of Treasurer. A quite incredible contribution which has involved many hours work, particularly when the Tea Room is operating. It is Eric who collects and counts the days takings then returns with the float each morning to have all in readiness for the volunteers that day. He never even complains when the wrong numbers are pressed to produce the most unlikely results on the till.

The early days saw Eric working closely with the late Terry Shadbolt during the tree felling and clearing of the original block. Using their 4WDs, they collected rocks, pine bark, hay bales, in fact just about anything needed in the garden. Many loads of firewood were produced for raffles.

But there has been much more. Eric has become the Garden’s stone wall builder extraordinaire. Since his early days in the Garden under the tuition of the late Peter de Bomford, Eric has literally built Kilometres of stone walls and gone through thousands of tonnes of stone. His last haul consisted of 10 to 12 truckloads of stone which was expected to last him 2 years, but they are quickly disappearing.

Mention a BBQ at the garden, and it’s always Eric who will be the Chef.

Eric has always been a dedicated promoter of our Garden, and the hospitality offered by the Weeks allow many guests from interstate and overseas to be able to spend time at Emu Valley.

Eric’s contribution has been crucial to the Garden’s success, and he is a very worthy recipient of Life Membership of the Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden.”

You always knew when he did not approve of something in the garden as he would preface what he was about to say with, “if it were my garden...”



Eric and Audrey in 2014, receiving Eric’s Life Membership

Our condolences to Audrey and his family. He will be missed.



Quiet July??

Traditionally, June and July are our quietest months. It's winter and the weather is miserable, and prospective visitors seem to prefer to stay inside next to their fires rather than venture out to visit our Garden. Weird.

Hopefully those of our volunteers who did have a break in June will now be back, refreshed, and easing slowly back into the swing of things. Thanks to all, it's good to have everyone back!

Xmas in July

Of course, Christmas in July is the exception when talking about our quiet period! It's on Saturday 29th July at 12.00. The cost is \$40 per head, (children under 12 half price. Pre-schoolers free.) There are still places, so book either via the website or directly through the garden, advising of any special dietary requirements when purchasing tickets.

Australian Rhododendron Society (ARS) Annual Conference

A further reminder that this conference is to be held at the Garden from Friday 13th October through Sunday 15th. Additional information in respect of this Conference will be sent out as an addendum to this newsletter.

Remember, this is a prestigious event, and the invitation to host it should be seen as a compliment to the Garden and testament to the years of hard work put in by all our volunteers. Thanks to Geoff Wood and Nicole Maxwell for initiating and co-ordinating this in conjunction with the ARS.

Please register to attend and support this great opportunity.

And anyone who might be able to billet one or more delegates for two or three nights, please contact Geoff Wood — 0427722060 // geoffreywood@me.com

Spring Festival – 7th October.

Please keep in mind that one of our two main fund-raising events is approaching – 7th October – it will be upon us sooner than we think.

Renovations - internal

The expected start date of 21st August is still looking good, in fact the builder may be able to do some work before that date (we have a function on 19th August so the main function room will not be touched until after that). We shall keep you updated.

Renovations – external

Members will have noticed that the renovations to the plant store have been started. The builder has been called away so these will only be completed later, but please be patient, this will look magnificent when complete.

ANT DRY Chairperson



Burnie Council has kindly paid for the hire of this lovely pavilion for us to use over the week of the conference. Well done Burnie Council!

A Tribute to Eric

What a great sense of loss we are all feeling at the passing of our friend and mentor Eric.

Eric's contribution to EVRG was absolutely huge and never likely to be replicated.

Where to start... "If it were my garden"...but then IT WAS HIS GARDEN. Miles and miles of rock walls as a lasting tribute to his exceptional skill – even going back over his early efforts to improve them. Picture him putt-putting along on the power cart with loads of stones. Back-breaking work serenaded by his radio.

Though he spent so much time at Emu Valley he never neglected his own fantastic garden with rare and unusual shrubs and trees in the front and a large and productive fruit and vegetable garden beyond the house.

Then out of the mire to be a very competent Treasurer for many years (with the neatest writing). Every day, who was the first to arrive with the float for the till and collect the takings at the end of each shift? Eric of course! When he retired as Post Master at the Burnie Post Office he was able to keep his own special parking spot in central Burnie for some time – very handy for doing the banking!

Not forgetting his skill with the chainsaw helping us to be rid of unwanted trees and keeping his home fires burning.

Talking of burning who was the BBQ king at every festival held at the garden – himself naturally.

Very fittingly made a LIFE MEMBER along with wife Audrey -a great team!

The list of people they knew between them was colossal with Eric being in the post office and Audrey a school teacher and their various postings around Tasmania.



Then we come to another great passion and another attribute in which he excelled—his gem collection and lapidary work. Every winter would see he and Audrey off fossicking and camping all around Australia making many friends wherever they went. All were assured of a warm welcome and stay if they came to Tassie....which they did!

And did you know he was a brilliant badminton player in his youth? A man of many talents!

Our sense of loss is tremendous, but how much more will his wife Audrey and daughters Joanne, Belinda and Susan, son-in-laws and grandchildren be feeling now, and we send them all our sincerest sympathy.

Pam & Maurie Kupsch

Eric often used the fine motor skills he developed in polishing sapphires! Naturally he filed a detailed OH&S plan before commencing the delicate work above.

Meet Rita and Ed Edwards

After retiring from hair dressing full time, Rita found that she was missing the people contact.

She saw an article on social media about how the garden was looking for volunteers, the accompanying photos showed a beautiful garden and so she thought, well, why not give it a try! That was 12 months ago, and she is now a valued member of our team and is world famous as “The Ferrari Driver” on the golf buggy. (So far, all her passengers have come back in one piece and wanted selfies with the driver!)

For Rita, the best part of volunteering is the opportunity to make someone’s day better, be it by an extremely funny buggy ride, a first-time platypus encounter or a wonderful cappuccino in the tea room. Her customers leave with happy, smiling faces and offers of accommodation all over the world. Bucket list tour in the planning! Rita enjoys the beauty and tranquillity of the garden. If she arrives feeling grumpy, she takes off into the garden and comes back feeling like a new woman. Rita has also developed amazing platypus whispering skills which she will not share with her fellow volunteers!



Rita’s husband Ed joined the team about 6 months ago at the start of cruise ship season. A call went out for shuttle bus drivers and Rita told him to do it, but he refused. She got Geoff Wood to phone him, and he sweet-talked him into saying yes. Ed is now a shuttle bus driver and an old hand at cruise ship days.

Ed enjoys interacting with the passengers, meeting repeat visitors from the cruise ships and going the extra mile by putting in visits to Campbells lookout when time permits on the shuttle run. He helps out around the garden and is very handy in the tea room, under his wife’s supervision of course!

A Star Lineup for the International Conference!

Make sure you book for the Conference in October. An information booklet is attached.

Some amazing speakers have been lined up, coming to see us from lands far and wide! There are:

- ◆ Seamus O’Brien of Kilmacurragh, the National Botanic Gardens of Ireland
- ◆ Stuart Worboys of the Australian Tropical Herbarium at James Cook University, Queensland
- ◆ Sue Gardiner - Principal Scientist at the Plant and Food Research Institute, University of Otago, New Zealand
- ◆ Dr Marion MacKay - Senior Lecturer in Environment Management, Massey University, New Zealand
- ◆ Andrew Brooker - Project Officer of the New Zealand Rhododendron Conservation Project at the Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust.

Don’t miss it!



Rhododendron anthosphaerum

Subsection Irrorata contains a number of unique species including R. anthosphaerum.

R. anthosphaerum was discovered by the Abbe Delavay in 1897 at Mo-so-yn, Tali valley, Yunnan. In 1906 Forrest collected it on the Sungkwei Pass north-west Yunnan, later more collections were made by him and other plant hunters in Myanmar (Upper Burma) and south-east Tibet showing the wide geographical distribution of the species. Forrest introduced it in 1910.

R. anthosphaerum can be a low shrub or a small tree 4.5m high with oblong, obovate to oblanceolate dark green leaves, the lower surface mainly glabrous. The flowers are presented in tight trusses of 8-15 and are tubular- campanulate with dark nectar pouches and can be pale pink, rose, lavender, lilac to deep magenta, they can be blotched or spotted.

Our plants at Emu Valley are tall growing, with new growth a dark red, the flower colour ranges from rose to lavender- purple and can be located on the top side of the middle road in Myanmar and Yunnan. *Maurie*

The Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden is proudly sponsored by:



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