

October 2023

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# Newsletter of the ARSV



## Seamus O'Brien – Talk at Royal Botanic Gardens – 6pm-7pm 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023 By Andrew Rouse, ARSV Vice President



Seamus O'Brien, Head Gardener at the National Botanic Gardens, Kilmacurragh in Ireland, our ARS conference key note speaker, will be speaking at the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, on Tuesday 17 October at 6.00pm.

The title of his talk is "The National Botanic Gardens, Kilmacurragh: The Evolution of an 18th century Irish garden."

Note that bookings are essential via the link below and require members to advise ARSV as to whether there are attending and whether they plan to join us for dinner.

Contact Andrew Rouse if you plan to join us for dinner on 0424 750 406 or [awrouse@bigpond.com](mailto:awrouse@bigpond.com).

The talk will be held at Mueller Hall (entry via Oak Lawn Gate). Refreshments will commence from 5.30pm.

The entry cost is \$20.00 for Friends members and \$30.00 for non-Friends members.

This is the link to the talk and booking.

<https://rbgfriendsmelbourne.tidyhq.com/public/schedule/events/54443-the-national-botanic-gardens-kilmacurragh-the-evolution-of-an-18th-century-irish-garden-talking-at-mueller-with-seamus-o-brien>

## ARSV 64<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting – 2:00pm Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2023

The Australian Rhododendron Society, Victorian Branch will be holding its 64<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting at their workshop located at the Dandenong Ranges Botanic Garden. All members are invited to attend and participate in election nominations and discussion on general business. The meeting will be followed by an afternoon tea.

Enclosed with this newsletter edition are the notice of the Annual General Meeting, meeting agenda, previous minutes, ordinary member committee nomination form, and proxy form should you need another member to vote on your behalf should you be unable to attend. Forms need to be returned well in advance of the meeting to allow for acceptance by the current committee.

**The ARSV are seeking members to become future committee members in various roles.**

Committee						
John O'Hara	President	<a href="mailto:johnohara@optusnet.com.au">johnohara@optusnet.com.au</a>	0444 552 212	Graham Price	<a href="mailto:lithic01@bigpond.com">lithic01@bigpond.com</a>	0409 639 448
Andrew Rouse	Vice-President	<a href="mailto:awrouse@bigpond.com">awrouse@bigpond.com</a>	0424 750 406	Peter Grose	<a href="mailto:pgrose@bigpond.com">pgrose@bigpond.com</a>	0488 773 577
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Prue Crome	Treasurer	<a href="mailto:prue@crome.net.au">prue@crome.net.au</a>	0419 659 741	Ray Weeks	<a href="mailto:rayweeks@optusnet.com.au">rayweeks@optusnet.com.au</a>	0408 351 934
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Walter Lobbezoo	Librarian	<a href="mailto:wlobbezoo@parks.vic.gov.au">wlobbezoo@parks.vic.gov.au</a>	03 9751 1704			



## ARSV 'garden visit day' – 11:00am to 2:00pm Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2023

By Andrew Rouse, ARSV Vice President

A 'gardens visit day' is set for Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> of November from 11:00am to 2:00pm at the Otway Ridge Arboretum owned by ARSV members Alistair and Julie Watt. The Arboretum is located in Lavers Hill approximately 150km south west of Melbourne, Victoria, in the coastal hills of the Otway Ranges.

Alistair authored the following article and included photos.

We are at almost 500m above sea level; however, the temperature range is ameliorated by the closeness of the arboretum to the ocean, and frosts are infrequent and light. Prevailing winds from the South-West bring rain-fronts nearly all of the year, hence the most unusual (for Australia) average annual precipitation of around two metres. Light snow falls occasionally.

The area of the garden itself is now only two hectares and emphasis is being placed on quality, with most of the plantings from known wild-source provenance.

The temperate climate allows us to develop three main themes - Rhododendron species, Conifer species and Gondwana plants.

We are particularly proud of the conifer collection, with approximately three hundred species in the ground or the nursery, with a range from *Abies delavayi* to *Papuacedrus papuana*. These thematic collections are supplemented by selected ornamental plants, particularly Rhododendron, Camellia species and many endangered species. The Gondwana collection is designed to show the principal Southern hemisphere relationships e.g., *Nothofagus* from Australia, New Zealand, Chile: *Lomatia* from Chile and Australia: *Weinmannia* from New Zealand and Chile etc.



Aerial photo by Iain Watt





*Dimorphanthera alpina*



Garden view with Tree House



*Lomatia ferruginea*



*R. ericoides*



*R. jasminiflorum*



*R. lindleyi*



*R. rhabdotum*



Wollemi Pine  
(from original release sale)





Latua pubiflora



Metrosideros laurifolia

### CLIMATE & GEOGRAPHY

Longitude 143deg 23' East Latitude 38deg 40' South Height asl 460-490m

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean max deg: C	19.9	21.0	18.5	15.0	11.9	9.4	8.6	9.7	11.2	13.6	15.8	7.9
Mean min deg: C	10.6	11.6	10.7	8.8	7.3	5.2	4.2	4.6	5.3	6.6	7.9	9.3
Av. rainfall mm:	85	79	105	77	216	204	236	247	208	183	149	120

Extreme maximum: 39.4 deg C and extreme minimum: -0.6 deg C

Average annual rainfall 2009mm

Although we moved here in 1976, main plantings date from 1986 and are continuing to this day. Plantings are made straight into grass paddocks as we find that the matted grass holds the plants in the ground when the soil becomes saturated in Winter, and the winds are strong. Soil is medium to heavy clay and acid (around 5.5pH), but the sub-stratum is broken sandstone, which allows good drainage. Other than rabbits, there are no major pests, but problems include mist shrouding for some months of the year, strong Equinoxial gales and bird damage, especially parrots breaking off leaders of conifers! There are few insect pests. Plants are watered for their first year and then have to manage for themselves.

On Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> of November 2022, ABC Ballarat published an online article titled "Tree hunter Alistair Watt nurtures rare plants in his garden in Victoria's Otway Ranges".



This article also features a video titled

"Tree hunter grows the rarest plants in a rare garden"

The video discusses and showcases Alistair's amassed collection that started 40 years ago from a vacant block of land that wasn't in the best of condition. This is definitely a worthy watch.

Here is the article link.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-11-20/gardens-trees-otways-rare-collection-royal-botanic-gardens/101499128>



# What's in flower in the DRBG glasshouse August 7<sup>th</sup> 2023

By Ray Weeks, ARSV Committee Member



*R. rousei*



*R. inconspicuum*



*R. aequabile*



*R. konori*



*R. herzogii*



*R. sessilifolium*



Vireya *R. brassii* (bi-coloured species)



## Member's garden – Dale Schubert, Currumbin Valley, Queensland

By Richard Florey, Newsletter Editor

Dale has a specimen of *R. leucogigas* coming into flower. This species is hard to grow and flowers infrequently, but is worth it when it does, having the largest flowers in the genus.

Here is some background to this species:

- Cuttings were originally collected by Professor Sleumer in the Cyclops Mountains, West Papua in 1961. Seed was widely distributed from in the late 1960s from specimens that flowered in cultivation.
- Lyn Craven received seed and grew plant/s to maturity, one of which I received in the 2000s when Lyn scaled back his collection
- I gave Dale a cutting which is the plant now coming into flower. My mature plant went into decline (poor conditions at my place) so I donated it to the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne – no idea as to whether it is still alive.

It is very reassuring that Dale is growing it so well.



This is the last of the flower before it began to fade.

Interestingly it only releases pollen once it reaches this less aesthetically pleasing stage.

It is also the most fragrant.

Dale laughingly adds that bats obviously have different values!