

October 2023

Rhodo News

Newsletter 464



**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

We're



Open Again!

Outside Our Redesigned Plant Hut

Calendar

Saturday 7th October
Spring Festival

Friday 13-15th October
ARS Conference

See us at: emuvalleyrhodo.com

From the Board



Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 4 November at 2.00 p.m. All members and non-members are welcome to attend.

Renovations - internal

Bar a few items, such as the kitchen splashback and a bit of bricklaying, the renovations are complete. Everything moved with military efficiency, and the builder did us proud. D & J Crawford Builders come highly recommended and thanks to them for their excellent work.

The new furniture is mostly in place too and it looks very good. We have armchairs, break out areas, and quirky display areas that give the whole place a lift. Most of the members and visitors who have seen the renovations have been complimentary. They like the new spaces and the general feel of the place.

Teething problems & complaints

Inevitably there will be teething problems with the new build and the new layout. With teething problems come complaints. (Actually, I have my first complaint before the builder had moved on to site!!) Could I ask that anyone who identifies a teething problem, please first approach me, and let me know the perceived problem. There may already be a solution on the way, or even in place. If not, I'm sure that together we can come up with a brilliant solution.

Renovations – external

The windows for the refurbished plant store were delivered late. These will be fitted in the first week of October. Otherwise the external renovations are complete too, and the outside area looks magnificent – colourful, vibrant, welcoming, and exciting for any prospective purchaser of our products.

Spring Festival – 7th October.

The Spring Festival is upon us too! On 7th October we celebrate once again, and the event will serve to be a mini launch of our refurbished site. It is on the same day as the Burnie Show, which could work in our favour as there will be visitors in the area for the show who may well come on down to us as well. As usual, there will be stalls, music, food, coffee, and plenty of beautiful blooms to enjoy. We look forward to seeing members and visitors there.

Cruise ship planning / experience / slight change

The first Cruise ship of the season will be docking in Burnie on 19th November. We are planning to hold a pre-season briefing on Friday 27th October at the Garden at 10 a.m. Anyone with any suggestions to make on the running of these visits, please attend and put in your tuppence worth. This is the only way we learn how to improve the experience we provide the visitors.

I suggested in the last newsletter that one way to make the day easier on volunteers would be to end the shuttle bus service, this being replaced by the tour buses that already go to the City Lookout, Guide Falls, the Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden, and then Hellyer Road. The thinking was that we will lose very few, if any, visitors. The advantage is that we would have to find six fewer volunteers (3 drivers, 2 people at the City Centre, and one cashier taking entrances fees). We may even get more revenue as the bus operators have agreed to pay us for every person on the bus, and not only for those who visit the garden.

This would free up 6 volunteers and allow us to lighten the burden on the others so that we can concentrate on giving our visitors the best experience they could get! This is especially important as there is one week in January where we have 9 cruise ships in 8 days. Enough to drive any volunteer to drink.

The only feedback I have had from anyone is positive, tinged with a bit of relief. Bar any further feedback then, this is the way will proceed.

Australian Rhododendron Society (ARS) Annual Conference

This time next month it will have come and gone. The ARS Annual conference is to be held at the Garden from Friday 13th October through Sunday 15th. This is a prestigious event, and the invitation to host it is 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.

Event organiser & Café Manager

Last month I advertised for an Event coordinator and a Café Manager. There were two responses, which reduced to one on further enquiry by one of the responders. Lynne Kershaw, who is qualified for both positions, has joined us, initially as the Café Manager. We felt, since we have a flashy new Café, that it was more important to have a new menu in place and operational, than to have an event planned. The thinking is that she may be able to do both jobs. Of course this will depend on the workload and on her availability, and it may transpire that we have to rethink this. We shall follow the “wait and see” route before progressing further.

ANT DRY

Chairperson & Acting General Manager.

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Around the Garden

What a crazy couple of weeks we have had at the garden! Actually, now that I sit here and think about it, the word 'crazy' doesn't really cut it!

Our wonderful volunteers along with the dedicated employees have all pitched in and worn many hats these past few weeks. I just can't get over how well we have all rallied together to get so many jobs completed and help keep one another sane! The renovations to the function room, as well as the transformation of the plant sales shed, which is now known as the 'Plant hut', has definitely been a talking point amongst the volunteers and it is pleasing to hear that majority are on board and excited for the next chapter ahead.

The moon gate is almost complete. The small dedicated team that has been working on this project have got it to the stage that it is safe to walk through the area now and have unblocked the walking tracks leading to it. It is not finished but won't be far away so if you get the chance to visit the garden, make sure you go and check out the amazing work of art that has been created by our talented volunteers. It's going to be picture perfect!

Alan has been busy spraying and getting the step banks to a manageable level and, where possible, mulching is to follow. These areas have always been harder to maintain but it's looking respectable and you can definitely see where he has been. Great job!

Weeding, mulching, mulching, weeding... it's on going just like the pest control. We know we have problems with both, but believe it or not we are doing the best we can with the small team that we have. Some plants in the garden that have never been nibbled in the past have all of a sudden become fine dining! It is impossible to cage absolutely everything, not to mention how ugly it would look and ruin the overall aesthetically pleasing surroundings if everything was to have a cage around it. We don't always get it right, but isn't that part of gardening, learning as you go? What works best and what doesn't?

We have had the tree doctor in for a few days cutting back the branches that act as a highway for the possums from the bush side and into the garden. We hope that this eliminates a large portion of the problem. If only it was that easy to fix other problems!

Summer is well on the way and we will need to make time for checking each automated section ready for watering. This is a job that I am not a massive fan of but I know it's one that must be done. Luckily we have yet again a dedicated volunteer or two who has taken on the irrigation maintenance system and they don't mind getting wet on those warmer days to fix the problems. It is a massive undertaking and I will be forever grateful as are the plants and shrubs, so thank you ☺.

I better wrap it up here then.

If you haven't visited yet, there is still plenty of time left to visit whilst the garden is at its peak.

Happy Gardening, *Neet*







Rhododendron coriaceum

Rhododendron coriaceum was a very early species to be planted at Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden. The single plant is located in the hybrid section because Yunnan and Tibet were not cleared until much later. Nevertheless it has formed a large shrub and in mid September produces many large trusses of white flowers with a deep maroon blotch and a ray of dots inside the top petals of the same colour. We have now planted a number of seed-grown plants in their native areas.

R. coriaceum was first discovered by Abbe Soulie in March 1895 at Tsekou, north-west Yunnan, later collected by many plant hunters in west Yunnan and in south-east Tibet, growing near conifer and other rhododendron species, at elevations of 3000-4000m.

This species was first introduced by Forrest in 1918. There are two main colour forms, white and pale pink. If you wish to look for these plants the easiest one to find is on the right-hand corner of the road up to the main gazebo. *Maurie*

The Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden is proudly sponsored by:



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