

November 2023

# Rhodo News

Newsletter 465



**Sustainable  
Tourism**  
Accredited  
Business

Official Newsletter of the

*Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden Inc*

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Chairperson: Ant Dry Newsletter Editor: Nigel Burch

Patrons: (International) Kenneth Cox, (Tasmania) Her Excellency the Governor of Tasmania, Barbara Baker AC

## *On the Rhododendron World Map!*



*The Australian Rhododendron Society Annual Conference last month was an outstanding success, and cemented our respected position in the international rhododendron community. Tasmanian Premier Jeremy Rockliff opened the proceedings, while Burnie Mayor Teeny Brumby added gravitas to the farewell dinner. Above we see the Premier (blue jacket) talking to our Curator Maurie Kupsch, with Leonie Hiscutt (Member of the Legislative Council) and Seamus O'Brien of the National Botanic Gardens in Ireland looking on.*

### Calendar

**Friday 10 November**  
AGM at EVRG 4pm

**Wednesday 15 November**  
First Cruise Ship arrives

See us at: [emuvalleyrhodo.com](http://emuvalleyrhodo.com)



## *From the Board*

### **Annual General Meeting**

Apologies to all for the change in date for the AGM. The Annual General Meeting will now be held on Friday 10 November at 4.00 p.m. All members and non-members are welcome to attend. This is an opportunity for members and visitors to find out how we are doing, what the plans for the future are, and to seek clarification on any matters that

may be of interest or concern.

### **Renovations**

As reported last month, the refurbishment of the premises is complete, and we were able to open on time on 2<sup>nd</sup> October. Comments from visitors are most favourable, with many comments being made on how fresh and contemporary the place looks. Inevitably the refurbishment has led to some concerns. Some of these are:

1. The new placement of the main café door was a trip hazard and had no wheelchair access. We purchased some gym mats, and this has sorted out the problem.
2. Visitors can see into the kitchen. This has been sorted out by hanging up the chain curtain.
3. Tearoom staff observed that there was nowhere to place their personal effects, so we built them an additional cupboard in the kitchen next to the ovens.
4. The new room carries an echo.
  - a. To a degree this has been sorted out by the soft furniture.
  - b. Additionally we purchased an acoustic room divider, which does make a difference. It is a dull grey in colour, and I have asked our local printer to give me a quote to have the panels covered in canvas printed with photos of the garden.
  - c. And were visited by a sound engineer on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup>, and his report is pending.
  - d. The room can no longer be used as two separate rooms.
  - e. We have the room divider to sort this out.
  - f. For major events we can close the tearoom and serve coffees through the serving hatch.

As a result of the volume of concerns, we placed a suggestion box on the tearoom counter. A number of suggestions were made. These are all being followed up and will be actioned where possible.

### **Cruise ship planning / experience / slight change**

The first Cruise ship of the season will be docking in Burnie on 15<sup>th</sup> November. We held a pre-season briefing on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> October at the Garden. The meeting was dominated by the knowledge that our volunteer numbers are severely reduced (as is the case in all volunteering organisations across Australia), and that we have a huge number of ships arriving this year. Amongst other things, we agreed that we would no longer be providing a shuttle bus service, and instead would rely solely on the tour operators. We are also, following on from a brilliant suggestion from Roy, investigating the use of traffic lights for the driveway, which will save on volunteers and provide safe passage to visitors. On first enquiry this is hugely expensive, so we are looking at alternatives.

### **Platypus project**

We have had cameras on the deck and under the Olympus Bridge for a while now, capturing images of the platypus in the lakes. The original idea was that we would then live stream these images to the world. The live stream has not been successful until recently, and only after our internet was upgraded by Tasnetworks, with the assistance of Justin McErlain from Business Northwest. It is now up and running. Last weekend we were visited by James Macgregor, the Vet in Ulverstone, who did his Ph.D. in the study of platypus, who arrived with a team to capture, tag, and release the platypus we have in the lakes. This will allow us to follow them and to place cameras in more strategic places to capture better images. The power of this live streaming is immense. We already have visitors to Burnie, who's sole purpose for coming to Burnie is to see the Penguins that are currently being live streamed.

ANT DRY

*Chairperson & Acting General Manager.*

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## REGIONAL TOURING IN JAPAN 9<sup>TH</sup> MARCH – 3<sup>RD</sup> APRIL 2024

**DATES CAN VARY TO MEET YOUR WISHES**

**LATEST START DATE** Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March = reduced time & cost  
**EARLIEST FINISH DATE** Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> March = reduced time & cost

**LOCATIONS INCLUDED IN THE COMPLETE ITINERARY ARE:**

NARITA [1] – HAKONE [2] – KAWAGOE [1] - NIKKO - KINAGAWA [3] – KARUIZAWA [1] – YUDANAKA [1] –  
MATSUMOTO [2] – SHIN HOTAKA [1] - TAKAYAMA [3] – KISO VALLEY [1] – KAWAGUCHI KO [1] –  
HAKONE [2] – ATAGAWA [2] – YOKOHAMA [3] – NARITA [1]

**Starts on your arrival at Narita airport Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> March-pm**

**Finishes at Narita airport on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2024-pm**



*Mount Fuji – Fuji san - about 20 km away!*



*Sacred Bridge at Nikko*

*Murray and Barbara Giles have been to Japan 47 times and have assisted as a travel companion to many people wishing to experience the culture of Japan at their own pace and making their own decisions on activities.*

- **INCLUDED all accommodation** ranging from 3 to 5 star Japanese Ryokans or Japanese/Western style hotels – also some full Japanese holiday house stays
- **all meals** – ranging from hotel or self-catered breakfasts, lunches in local restaurants/cafes, dinners at local pubs [Izakaya] or full kaiseki dinner
- **all land transport** using a people mover
- **visiting heritage sites** – cultural enrichment

Airfares, Insurance, entrances and personal expenditure eg alcohol are NOT INCLUDED

***THIS EXCLUSIVE TRAVEL NOW HAS ONLY 4 PLACES AVAILABLE.***

***COST - TWIN SHARE is \$9750 per person***

***FOR DETAILED INFORMATION CONTACT MURRAY on 0418 113 301 or***

***[murray\\_giles@bigpond.com](mailto:murray_giles@bigpond.com)***

***PLEASE NOTE: Murray and Barbara will be in Japan until 11<sup>th</sup> November so will not be able to respond to requests for information until 11<sup>th</sup> November.***

## *Around the Garden*

On the 6<sup>th</sup> September we had the tree doctor in to remove most of the blackwood outside the workshop, as it has been dying and becoming dangerous, and in the 'unknown' category where bits could drop at any time. So we had it down to the barrel, where I hope to get someone in to carve something into what has been left. It could become our first official garden sculpture, so I hope to look into this soon.

The tree doctor then came back a few days later to clear the fence line as the trees on both sides were becoming a 'highway' for the possums. This isn't the first time you have all heard me mention this, but we have had too much possum and wallaby damage now, so we hope that this fence line clearing will slow them down. We are still setting traps and I feel like this will be ongoing into the future. (And just to make a note about the traps, we relocate the little sods many miles away!) Dogs have been in to thin out the wallabies as well so fingers crossed we are on the right track now.

The 'Plant Hut' has been a really popular place to come in and wander around and buy buy buy! I am continually bringing plants down from the nursery as well as buying in plants at wholesale prices just to keep up with the popular demand. Everything is working out really well and we have some excellent help out in the plant hut with watering, arranging stock, and talking to garden enthusiasts alike. Our visitors are really enjoying our new space and we have had some really positive feedback.

'Spring Celebration' in my opinion was a huge success as far as the plant sales are concerned. Purely based from the amount of people I assisted and spaces that were left on the plant shelves on that one day alone, I feel like we have definitely done the right thing by pushing on with the outdoor area. Of course there are always going to be a few hiccups along the way, but nothing that should be too detrimental to what we are trying to achieve. **EXTREMELY PROUD OF THIS SPACE AND COULDN'T BE HAPPIER.**



- I need to really buckle down now on taking cuttings. It is extremely important that I take even more, seeing as though the demand is definitely there for Rhodos and the likes. Some big leaf Rhodos need taking now, vireyas and then next will be the mollis azaleas followed by all Rhodos so it's go go go! I really enjoy this part of my job! 😊
- Mulch is getting shovelled off the back of the ute as fast as we can move it. The garden is really looking fantastic at the moment, so well done to the entire outdoor crew, proud as punch to have such an amazing team to work with. We are spraying pathways and the hills are looking neat and tidy. Mulch to put on over the top of the zones soon after it has been sprayed is best practice. Lawns have been fed and mowed weekly now that Spring is here and they are all looking lush. The grassed area at the Chinese pavilion will take a bit more TLC as it mainly consists of moss, not turf. Our lawn extraordinaire is on the case though! Our famous Japanese section of the garden is an absolute stand-out at the moment. It is just a picture where no words are needed.
- The last section that Eric Weeks was working on before he passed away has now been tackled. A team of us went up towards Nepal and we sprayed, mulched, gravelled the pathway and finished the rock edging off, pruned back some over grown shrubs and it is now an area that looks a little more cared for. I would like to dedicate Eric's last track to him, where we could make a seat with a plaque and have this as his most recent area.

Plenty more I could go on with but that will do for now 😊

Happy Gardening, Neet

## Australian Rhododendron Society Annual Conference

The ARS Annual conference was held at the Garden from Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October through Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> and was a great success.

It was a prestigious event. It was opened by the Premier, The Honourable Jeremy Rockliff, and the closing dinner was attended by the Mayor, Teeny Brumby. We are definitely on the world Rhododendron map!

Andrew Rouse, Chairman of the ARS wrote,

*"I've had very positive feedback from delegates, and on behalf of the ARS and the delegates, I'd like to thank you and the EVRG members and volunteers for all the work that made the conference such a success.*

*It has been a great pleasure working with you over this year with the planning of the conference, and Nicole, a particular thank you for everything you have done to ensure a successful event.*

*It's abundantly clear that the members and volunteers are devoted to the garden they have created, and I hope that the conference will help to reinforce the importance of the collection and contribute to a bright future for the garden."*

Once again, thanks to both Geoff Wood and Nicole Maxwell for initiating and co-ordinating this in conjunction with the ARS.

### Spring Festival – 7<sup>th</sup> October.

The Spring Festival was an unqualified success. We had more than the usual number of visitors, helped by the fact that we had just re-opened, and people were curious about our renovations, and by the fact that the Burnie Show was on the same day, and just next door!

The effect of our new plant sales area was immediate. In previous Spring Festivals we have sold up to \$750 worth of plants. This year, thanks to the refurbished plant sales area, and having plenty of stock on hand, we sold some \$ 3,500 worth of plants! *Ant Dry*





## Rhododendron luteum

Early October sees the first deciduous azalea species flowering at Emu Valley. This sweetly scented yellow flowered plant is *Rhododendron luteum*. The native home for this species is the western Caucasus, northern parts of Turkey, Georgia and Ukraine where it can be found growing in mixed conifer forests and on open hills and on river banks.

*Rhododendron luteum* is quite a vigorous plant in the wild reaching up to 4m., but only around half that in our garden, the leaves are oblong-lanceolate and turn delightful shades of reds and oranges in autumn.

*Rhododendron luteum* produces terminal tubular funnel shaped flowers which open before the leaves, these bright yellow flowers are produced in abundance and create a show which is hard to miss. *Rhododendron luteum* was discovered on the east side of the Black Sea in the early 1700's and first introduced from the Caucasus by Pallas in 1792.

It is quite a robust plant at Emu Valley and many examples can be found in full flower at present. *Maurie*

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



**Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden Inc.**  
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