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Rhodo News

Newsletter 468



**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

A Long Dry Summer



Cold, fresh, crystal clear water pouring out of the bore into Lake Grebe this week. Needs a top up in the lakes as we are constantly irrigating, and there hasn't been any rain. Extremely thankful that we went the extra mile to add a bore to the garden as part of the long-term conservation plan.

Calendar

*Saturday 13th April
Autumn Spectacular*

See us at: emuvalleyrhodo.com

Chairperson's Report



THE ADVOCATE – 9TH FEBRUARY

On the 9th of February, the Advocate ran a story, “Rhodo garden’s desperate plea”.

I was quoted as saying, “We need recurrent, regular funding...because if we don’t get that then I don’t think there’s going to be much chance of survival in the long-distance future.”

Firstly, this was a very small portion of what was discussed. Most of the interview covered the new facilities, our intention to hold additional fundraising activities, and the need for additional volunteers. At the end I was asked what the worst-case scenario could be, so I said that as with all businesses, if there is no revenue and no staff, we would be forced to close. Of course, that, as the newsworthy bit, was all that they reported! Secondly, while the new report is entirely true, we have been working on (and continue to work on) avoiding this eventuality. Our revenue figures are good, plant sales are up, and the tearoom and functions are all performing well.

The fact remains though, we do have a problem.

Our volunteer numbers have been dwindling over the years.

Changes to legislation in December meant that compliance has become stricter. By law, we have to be a lot stricter to “make food service safe”. These new rules appear to be ridiculous, but there is nothing we can do about it. The legislation states we have to have qualified food “supervisors” on duty at all times. This has been very onerous to our volunteers, and we have now arrived at a point where we cannot operate the tea-room using only volunteers. To alleviate the problem, we have had to take on some paid staff. This means we have to generate more revenue to cover the costs of the staff. While the increased revenue mentioned above is very encouraging, it is still short of what we need.

We are working on plans to further increase revenue, and are combining our efforts with West by North-West, the peak tourism body on the North-West Coast. We plan to hold more events, fund-raisers, and festivals. We hope to have a programme of upcoming events to share with you next month.

We have also advised the politicians of our plight and have requested recurrent funding.

Please rest assured that the Garden will not close. In the event that the new events, and the government funding do not generate sufficient funding to allow us to operate at a surplus, we shall re-engineer our operations to ensure that we at least keep the basic operations flowing.

CRUISE SHIPS

The end is nigh!! After hosting thirty ships to date, we only have twelve cruise ships to visit in March. Next year, due to our port facilities not being up to scratch, we are to lose a number of ship visits. Additionally, Richard Branson’s “Resilient Lady”, which visited us seven times this year, will not be coming to Australia at all next season “due to heightened tensions in the Middle East.”

There may be new cruise ship lines that will visit. At this stage we have no idea how all this will affect us. We shall have to wait and see. It has been an interesting season. Ships have cottoned on to fact that they can make money from selling tours directly from the ship, so more passengers are being collected from the wharf this year and sent on tours. This has left fewer passengers to move into town, so fewer are available to visit us.

Around the Garden

Not sure about you, but I know I am hanging out for the sky to open up and drop a nice amount of rain! We've had to buy in another truck load of drinking water for the use in the café as we are flying through it, and we couldn't just sit back and wait for the rain to fill up the tanks.

Autumn is my all-time favourite season! Not too hot, regular rain falls which equals less stress, and not to mention so many fantastic colours that continually change every couple of days. A photographer's delight! So..... With a new season comes new photos for you to have a look through rather than a page full of words. Enjoy these photographs and imagine you are here seeing these with your own eyes in person. 😊



Rhododendron laetum



Rhododendron 'Big pink #4' vireya

The hot bed is almost full!

I have roughly 1440 cuttings on here already and could grow possibly another 630 cuttings.

This is my aim over the next month to have this full and growing well. It makes me very happy 😊 😊 😊

Enjoy the first month of Autumn!

Neet 😊



A Platypus With a View



A platypus with one heck of a view! Neet found one of our local residents admiring his ancestral acres from atop the moon gate. What a great picture, Neet. Come and check out these guys and their new home!



Rhododendron javanicum

This is one of the more colourful Vireyas we have in the garden, but unfortunately its pedigree is so colourful as to go to the lengths of utterly confusing! But just let us enjoy it for how it looks and performs.

This species came to us as *R. javanicum* ssp. *Brookeanum* from Dr. Noel Sullivan, and was one of the first to be planted in our Vireya Section. So that is about 30 years ago.

About the confusion: there are at least 10 different subspecies. *R. brookeanum* is described as “leaves in tight to loose pseudo-whorls, flowers mostly uniformly coloured.” No prizes for guessing where it comes from though – Java obviously, and Sumatra and Borneo – the Indonesian archipelago in fact.

There was great excitement at the time of discovery, as orange flowers were a rarity. Ours could be described as orange-pink with a cream centre, but the full truss looks more like *R. javanicum* ssp *javanicum* and the leaves also more like J/J—being narrowly elliptic initially laxly scaly both sides, losing them on top pretty quickly, while more persistent underneath and eventually spotted brown after the scales have gone. Anyway, whatever the name, it is growing quite well and flowers are delightful as you will agree, usually produced in November. *Maurie*

The Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden is proudly sponsored by:



Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden Inc.
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