

November 2014

# Rhodo News

Newsletter 369



Official Newsletter of the  
*Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden Inc*

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## Spring in the Garden



### Calendar

NB: NO MEMBERS' MEETING THIS MONTH—EVERYONE'S TOO BUSY!



## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Visiting senior international Vireya Botanist and Author, George Argent, speaking on ABC radio described Emu Valley as a "Jewel" and amongst the top 5 Rhododendron gardens of the world.

What a pleasure it was to welcome back to Emu Valley the world's leading authority on Vireya rhododendrons, Dr George Argent. It was indeed a treat for those who were able to attend George's presentation highlighting many of his early field trips, and our catering team excelled again.

Although now retired from "plant hunting" and building his Edinburgh Royal Botanical Gardens collection, George is still writing books on Vireyas. George's visit was of considerable value to EVRG and Maurie with the valuable knowledge imparted and his ongoing commitment in helping to raise our international profile. We sincerely thank you George for taking the time to visit us during your Australian visit.

What a spring season we are enjoying. Visitors from far and near, bus groups and functions, all leading to an enormous work load for EVRG volunteers, but so valuable in building "our brand" and helping to underpin our financial position. So busy have we been with visitors and our increasing catering commitments it has become necessary to cancel our monthly meeting in November. We'll make up for it with a bumper Christmas function on December 14<sup>th</sup>.

At the moment our volunteers are also working on our Garden Cottage with a major redevelopment of both the garden and house. This is a much larger challenge than we had anticipated, but so important to get it completed as soon as is possible because of its important role in garden administration.

Welcome back and thanks to Pete and Doreen Stratford, who so ably represented EVRG at the recent International Rhododendron Conference in Dunedin, New Zealand. Again Pete was able to promote and successfully raise the Emu Valley profile internationally. We look forward to hearing of some of the conference highlights at our December meeting.

We are currently, in conjunction with our Advisory Board, mapping a very important future and succession plan for EVRG. This is a major work in progress and will take some time to complete, but so vital that we develop a "road map" for future office bearers, thus ensuring a continuing and vibrant future for Emu Valley.

Our sincere thanks to David Stubbs & Wayne Licht of Stubbs Construction for their assistance in erecting our signage at the Surrey Road/Bass Highway junction. Your much appreciated help reflects the continuing community support that underpins Emu Valley. Well done fellows!

And thanks to all who have helped shoulder the load in what has and continues to be a very demanding but rewarding flowering season. The benefits I'm sure will reward us all.

Enjoy the garden at its best. *Ian Chalk*



*Dr George Argent in the garden.*

## WELCOME

A warm welcome to new members Janet Robson, Nancy Munday, Peter & Trish Brumby, Richard Harding & Else Carey Harding, Neil & Jan McInnes, Heather Bakes, Trish & Vin Hindmarsh, Dianne & Hans Christensen, Keith & Margaret Jones, Ann & Geoff Clarke, Jennie & Michael Davis, Bill & Marleen Ambrose, Angela Hansen, Mavis Abell, Lillian Williams, Vivienne & Gordon Dunn, Maureen Gale, Yvonne Chugg, Fay & Trevor Martin, Helen Williams, Kay Sims, Bev Madden, Geoff & Helena McLean, and Glenys Bounday.



*Exochorda "The Bride"*

## SEPTEMBER MEETING

During an abbreviated social meeting which followed on from the AGM, Maurie Kupsch showed us a selection of lesser known flowering plants from the garden. His brief description of each plant was very interesting and informative. A couple of those beautiful blooms that he spoke about are shown here.

Certainly a highlight of the day was the presentation of Life Membership to recognise the dedication and the invaluable support to the garden from four of our long serving members.

From a good array presented for the Flower voting, top placed was an attractive hybrid rhodo from Audrey Weeks's garden, with a vireya from Kay Shadbolt taking second placing.

Frank and Beris Medwin's garden produced both top choices in the cut flowers,

while an unusually coloured *R. ririei* grown by Ivan Johnston attracted a lot of interest and comment. Voting raised \$30-40.

Anne Jones held the winning raffle ticket, the event raising \$44-50, while the Sales Table added another \$25-50. The door prize went home with Val Andersen.

*Pete Stratford*



*Camellia yunnanensis*

## AROUND THE GARDEN

We have had a very busy time with visitors to the garden – so many visiting for the first time and they come from near and far. Our friendly and efficient volunteers play a big part in visitors overall impression and the majority seem to be delighted with the experience and make some glowing comments in the visitors book – always nice to hear.

The flowering cherries performed better than expected this year – early on the buds seemed to be disappearing for some reason – possums or parrots perhaps! *P. yedoensis* performed beautifully as an entrance to the Japanese tea house. Talking of the tea house – it is finally being finished off as originally planned thanks to Pete Stratford making doors and to Rudy Bader for putting his special talents to work in the painting department. Don't forget to check it all out for yourself. *Prunus sargentii* followed with its pale pink flowers, then came *P. 'Ukon'* with greenish cream double flowers, and then the familiar white flowered *P. 'Mount Fuji'*, *P. 'Shogun'* with its deep pink flowers and *P. 'Kanzan'* all performing very well and much admired and photographed.

There is still some to see despite all the recent strong wind and rain.

If you wish to walk along the Noel Sullivan walk at this time of year you will see some rather spectacular blooms – in particular *R. lindleyii*, *R. sinonuttallii*, and later this month you should be bowled over by the red leafed *R. sinonuttallii*. When you come to Hubei the delicate blue *R. augustinii* is at its best at the moment – just above the Chinese pavilion – also a new addition to this area, *R. molle* is flowering displaying its orange yellow blooms on small bushes.

Wander down into Japan and marvel at the interesting collection of *R. yakushmanum*, follow the track through these Yaks and over the reflecting pool bridge and up to the Japanese wisteria – you may have to dodge bumble bees and honey bees but it is worth the trip. Walk by the deciduous azaleas and onto Lake Pearl and admire the newly painted American gazebo – again thanks to Rudy – then on up the walk to admire the deciduous American azaleas, some of which are highly perfumed. What a wonderful time to spend half an hour, an hour or even the whole day wandering the paths, relaxing with a good book, enjoying a cuppa whatever you like to do to unwind.

*Maurie and Pam.*



## *R. rufohirtum*

One of the less common evergreen azaleas to be flowering in the garden at the moment is *R. rufohirtum*.

*R. rufohirtum* is a many branched shrub growing to under one metre, the new shoots are covered with dense reddish bristles. The leaves, which are clustered at the ends of slender branches, are dark green and covered with brown bristles which lie on the upper surface with the margins bristly. The under surface is pale green and also bristly. The flowers are located on the ends of the branches and are usually in clusters of 3-4 deep rose in colour 2cm long and 2cm across with a tube 4-5mm long with 10 unequal stamens.

*Rhododendron rufohirtum* was discovered by Handel-Mazzetti in March 1914 near Hsinlung, Yunnan growing in sandy soil at 2000m. At Emu Valley it is a bushy shrub to 600mm in 6 years from seed and is flowering well in our Yunnan section. The flowers on some plants are deep rose while others are quite pale. Rabbits and Rufus Wallaby seem to be quite partial to the leaves and small branches but no other pests seem interested. *Maurie & Pam*

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



**Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden Inc.**  
PO Box 39 Burnie, Tasmania 7320