



Pukeiti NEWSLETTER

Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust Inc.

www.pukeiti.org.nz

A visit to the Valley of the Giants

Usually at this time of the year the Members' Committee arranges a Soup and Roll Day which includes a guided walk to see the large leaf-rhododendrons which begin blooming in late winter. Covid level 2 rules which required groups of no greater than 100 and social distancing at cafes and restaurants meant it was prudent to cancel the event. The rhododendrons, of course, were totally oblivious to the comings and non-goings of the humans and continued to open their magnificent flowers.

The gardens though are still open and members and the public free to visit. This time of the year 'The Valley of the Giants' walk is the route to follow. This year the rhododendrons are flowering well and in places the large-leafed varieties are quite spectacular. The tracks are well maintained and the clearing of under-growth and the opening up of vistas in the valley have made this part of Pukeiti a real showplace. The bush which is on the margin of lowland and sub-alpine forests is dominated by a canopy of Tawa with Miro, Hinau and tree ferns dotted amongst them. This 'rain forest' provides a background for the large-leafed rhododendrons, some 10-15 metres in height, which viewed from the track across the valley are really magnificent. In August the main species in flower is various forms and hybrids of *R. protistum* and *R. magnificum*, the flower colours ranging from various pinks to creams. The most outstanding is the pink-flowered species named *R. protistum* 'Pukeiti'. The original plant has been lost to the fungus disease phytophthora, but a layer still under the Giant Rata was covered in flowers, and in different places seedlings and cutting grown plants, taken from the original, grace the garden at this time of the year.

There are plenty of big-leafed species and hybrids still to flower and the 'Valley of the Giants Walk' is well worth a special visit at any time during September.

Lynn Bublitz



Alan Jellyman admires a layer of the original *R. protistum* var *magnificum* 'Pukeiti'



R. protistum



Ling Hu, PhD Student collecting specimens for DNA analysis

Rhododendron Conservation Project

The rhododendron conservation project continues. The team led by Dr. Marion Mackay has identified and collected species and their variants from a number of gardens throughout New Zealand. Successful conservation requires establishing a species population and its variants originating from different localities in the wild. Many species in New Zealand gardens have been grown from seed collected from plants distributed across their native habitat range and provide a good basis for conservation. Some are endangered in the wild.

Experts studying the distinguishing characteristics of a species sometimes classify those with persistent and recognisable differences, particularly if they are found in different locations, as varieties, i.e. *R. protistum* var. *giganteum*, or sub species, *R. maddenii* ssp. *crassum*. In some cases extreme variants are elevated to species level. Often further research 'sinks' one species into another e.g. *R. cubittii* is now included in *R. veitchianum*. This naming of plants often leads to conflicts among botanists.

Studying the genome, the DNA, provides another tool to assist in determining relationships between different species and their varieties and thus enables us to further understand and define which the 'true' species are.

The Maddenii group of rhododendrons is well represented in New Zealand collections, particularly at Pukeiti. The group includes many similar species represented by a number of forms.

Under the supervision of Dr Marion Mackay and Dr. Susan Davies, Ling Hu is undertaking research for her PhD by extracting the DNA of the types within the Maddenii group. The results should provide further evidence in establishing relationships between species and their affinities, perhaps making Maddenii species classification more definitive and thus help in their conservation.

Lynn Publitz

*R. cubittii* now reclassified as a form of *R. veitchianum**R. veitchianum*

Rhododendron blackii

Subgenus *Vireya*: section *Schisthanthe*
– subsection *Euvireya*

Rhododendron blackii is flowering beautifully in the covered walkway now. This form was collected by Graham Smith in Papua New Guinea in 1983.

It is found from 2500-3300m in Western and Southern Highlands. It is epiphytic in mixed montane forest and terrestrial on forest margins.

In the garden it is relatively slow growing but has lovely rounded leaves and beautiful dark red flowers.

Peter Catt



From the Members' Committee

Anne said in her last email to members that "Covid continues to make it a bit difficult to plan ahead" and that is certainly very true, as illustrated by the need to cancel our last three planned lunches. Planning however will continue, because without planning for events to happen they will not occur even if conditions are such that they could proceed.

During those 65 halcyon days between lockdowns we were able to quickly organise a relatively impromptu Post Lockdown Potluck Lunch which was well attended by members who enjoyed the ability to again socialise with their

Pukeiti friends. David Lawrence's talk on his trip to New Caledonia was most interesting and went some way to satiate the pent up wanderlust some members are experiencing.

We have also held our propagation day. Wendy and four members beavered away for the morning and we now have a nice selection of perennials for our 2021 Plant List.

Coming up we have the annual visits to gardens, Spring Members' Day, and the Christmas BBQ.

Heather Robson

GARDEN VISITS SUNDAY SEPT 27

9.30am: Meet at the Audrey Gale Park, Mangorei Rd. New Plymouth and then drive to the first garden.

10am: Visit the garden of Jim Rumbal, Matarikoriko Rd, Waitara. Jim is a plant enthusiast and former nurseryman and his garden has many interesting plants.

11am: Visit the Swan Rhododendron Nursery. Ian supplies many garden centres with rhododendrons and propagates plants for our annual plant sale's list.

12am: Picnic lunch at the garden and vineyard of Colin and Jocelyn Clarke, 48 Kairau Rd West.

Bring your own picnic lunch. Hot water will be available and a wine tasting has been arranged.

1.30 pm: We will be welcomed at Vince and Ann Naus' garden, 365 Corbett Rd. Ann is a former executive member of the Trust and she and Vince own and run Big Jim's Garden Centre.

2.30: Visit Brent and Barbara Jury's extensive garden which includes a large rock garden established on an old lahar mound, a collection of mature cycads planted on a slope to the Waiongona River and many other garden features.

Following this visit you might wish to pop into the Big Jim's Garden Centre and then to Robin and Lynn Bublitz' place, 27 Durham Ave, New Plymouth for a social occasion to end the day.

Bring drinks of your choice and nibbles to share.

It should be a great day. Members are welcome to bring friends.

SPRING MEMBERS' DAY AND AGM SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17

10.00am: Tea and coffee available in The Lodge.

10.30am: Andrew will take a walk around the garden concentrating on the new features including the start of the cycle track to Oakura. Craig will be available to take members in the buggy.

12 noon: Members are invited to a potluck lunch in the Douglas Cook Room. **Please bring finger food for a shared meal.** Tea and coffee will be provided.

1.30pm: Annual General Meeting in the Rata room, Rainforest Pavilion.

2.15pm: At the conclusion of the AGM Peter Catt will give an illustrated talk titled 'Our Great Ape Odyssey, Parts I & II set in Borneo and Uganda'.

Board Elections 2020: Nominations have been received from Gordon Bailey and Doug Thompson. The Constitution requires Board Members to be confirmed at the AGM.

TARANAKI GARDEN FESTIVAL OCTOBER 30 - NOVEMBER 08

Volunteers are needed to assist Pukeiti Staff with hosting duties and plant sales at The Lodge and for membership promotion.

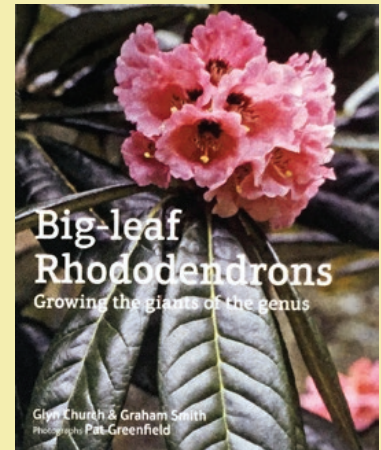
END OF YEAR BBQ SATURDAY DECEMBER 12

You are invited to the Pukeiti Christmas Barbeque at 12:00 noon at The Lodge. The Trust will be providing the BBQ, meat and buns but please bring a salad or a small plate of finger food for dessert to share with others. RSVP by Thursday, December 12 to Diane (06) 7522800 or email jordy@primowireless.co.nz

SPECIAL OFFER

Special discounted cost to members of \$45.00 including p&p within NZ.

For the cost of postage outside NZ please contact the Secretary.



A book covering all species of big-leaf rhododendrons.

Rhododendrons have always been regarded as the elite plants of the garden, and the big-leaf rhododendrons are the giants of the family, both literally and figuratively.

This book explores how these amazing plants were discovered, provides practical tips on propagation and cultivation, and looks at conservation in a garden situation as well as in the wild.

It covers all species of big-leaf rhododendrons known to date, with chapters on the introduction of rhododendrons from their native habitats in Asia, and public and private gardens with the best collections.

Superbly illustrated, including over 200 colour photographs, this is a fascinating journey into the world of rhododendrons.

RRP \$59.99 (incl. p&p within New Zealand)



HAVE YOU PAID YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?

If this has been over-looked it would be appreciated if prompt payment could be arranged. We delete from the contact list the names of members whose subscriptions are not paid, along with those of Members in Perpetuity who are no longer with us.

Please mark
these dates on
your calendar

Members' Activities

2020

ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

Garden Visits

A selection of Taranaki gardens will be open for members to visit.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17

Spring Members' Day & AGM

FRIDAY OCTOBER 30 –
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 08

2020 Taranaki Garden Festival

Volunteers needed for hosting in the Lodge and membership recruitment.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12

End of Year BBQ

RSVP Thursday, December 10.

Volunteering in the Garden

On any Wednesday that suits, meet up with the regular Wednesday volunteers outside the staff quarters at 9:00 to help with the garden maintenance. Any help is very welcome.

Members' Committee Meetings

Tuesday, November 17 – 9:30am - The Lodge

Board Meetings

Saturday, October 17 – 9:00am, Board Room, The Lodge

The South Canterbury Rhododendron "Great Escape"

Tuesday October 27 - Friday October 30, 2020.

The organising committee extends a cordial invitation to members and friends of South Canterbury. Programme includes:

- Visits to town and country gardens.
- Castle Visit – an optional extra.
- Visit to the studio and gallery of a Bronze Sculpture Artist.

Accommodation can be booked in motels close to the venue. Contact the convener Rosie Morten for further information and registrations forms.

Ph: 03 6939058 email: orariest@xtra.co.nz



Bookings for The Lodge facilities and Studio can be made on the TRC website

www.trc.govt.nz/gardens/venue-hire-and-tours/pukeiti-studio-accommodation/

Studio Accommodation in The Lodge is available to members of the Trust for \$50 per night (a 50% discount). It is heavily booked through to December but there are still 11 days available in October and 2 weeks in November. Currently there are no bookings for December or January.



Pukeiti

Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust Inc.



Taranaki
Regional Council

Postal address: PO Box 1066
New Plymouth 4340

Location: 2290 Carrington Rd. RD4

Secretary
Anne Howard Phone 021 0831 5444
pukeiti@pukeiti.com

Chairperson
Gordon Bailey gordon.bailey@codc.govt.nz

www.pukeiti.org.nz
is worth a look!

TARANAKI REGIONAL COUNCIL

www.trc.govt.nz

Office hours	Mon-Fri 8am - 5pm	Environmental hotline	0800 736 222
Postal address	Private Bag 713, Stratford 4352	Regional gardens	regional.gardens@trc.govt.nz
Location	47 Cloten Road, Stratford 4332	Greg Rine	Phone: (06) 765 7127 Mobile: 027 240 2470
Phone	0800 736 222 (06) 765 7127	Andrew Brooker	Phone: (06) 765 7127 Mobile 0210 264 4060
Email	info@trc.govt.nz		