



# Pukeiti NEWSLETTER

Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust Inc.

[www.pukeiti.org.nz](http://www.pukeiti.org.nz)



Entrance to the Rainforest Centre nearing completion

## Progress— the end in sight or the beginning of the end?

After an indifferent summer and autumn in which 20 of the days at Pukeiti were wet - and many of the fine days miserable - and even though the downpours experienced by many throughout the country skirted Pukeiti, the building progress has been hampered; but the end of the present construction phase is in sight.

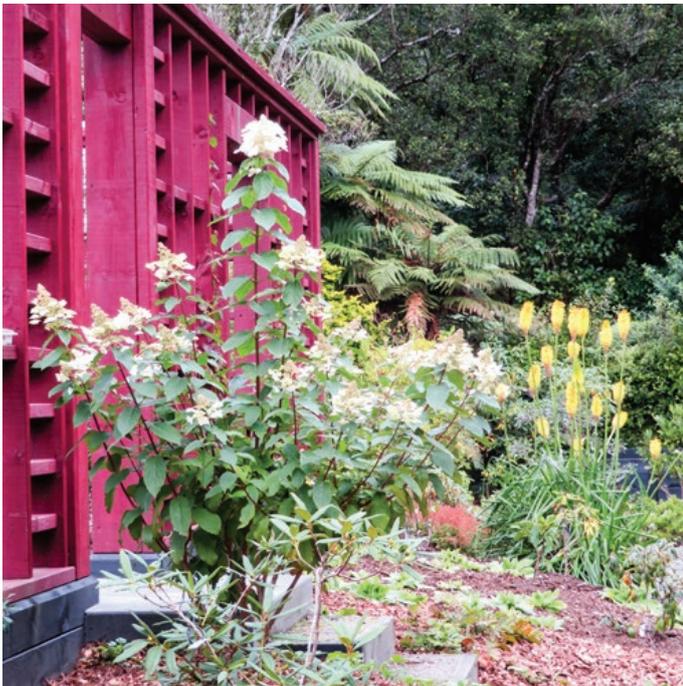
The Rainforest Centre (formerly the Gatehouse) is on its way to completion. The broad sweeping entrance, to be enhanced by the Maori carvings shifted from the shelter below the Founders' Garden (also being redeveloped), leads into the new larger café space which extends beneath a covered canopy, the triangular steel girders of which stand tall

and dominate the building. They have the same outline as the roof of the Vireya House (formerly the Covered Walk) and like it, the roof will be glazed. Easy access will be provided from the Cafeteria to the upper level of the Vireya House and its basement will provide public toilets and a conference room to be called the Rata Room.

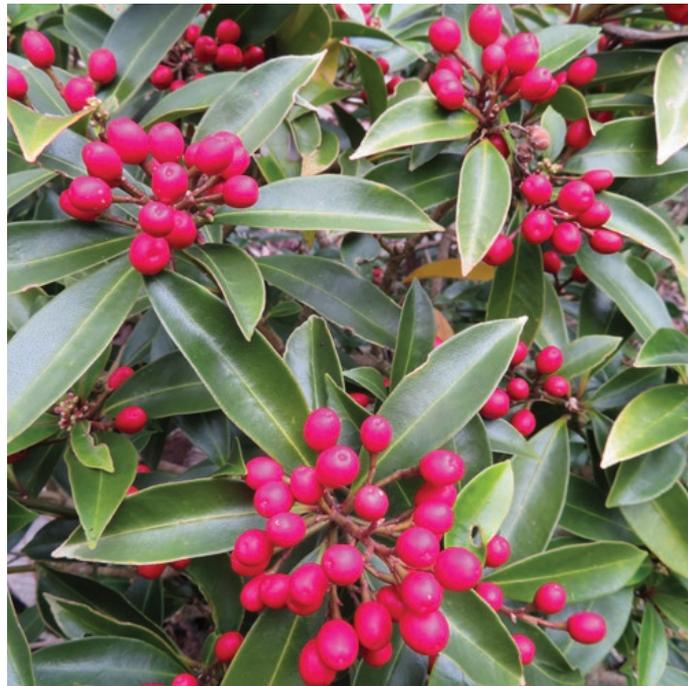
Planting in the Vireya House continues and it is beginning to look comfortably furnished with a range of plants, the most important of which are of course the vireyas. The various leaf shapes on these plants are intriguing. Many were moved from the original house to the nursery and then brought back, while others - new plants propagated from the old - ensure the retention of the full collection. It will

take some time before these small plants reach the stature of the old parents and for the new house to have a mature feel. There are other aspects such as the pond and the water garden still to be completed but a visit now to see the progress is worthwhile.

These are not the only projects on which staff time has been focussed. The Misty Knoll has settled and is already a firm favourite with its volcano-like craters, one lined with red and pink azaleas, the other topped with white scented rhododendrons, and will continue to attract visitors. Thanks are due to the Lysart- Watt Trust for supporting this project. The sand-formed pathways have been extended, sensitively curved following contours



The Keiller Garden takes shape. *Kniphofia* 'Joy's Gold', *Hydrangea paniculata* 'Tardiva'



*Skimmia japonica*

of the land, from the Hybrid Block through the Stead Block to the Keiller Garden. Even at the beginning of May the promise of this as a semi-formal garden that could be copied at home, quite different from the planting style of the rest of Pukeiti, is beginning to be fulfilled. Plants of *Kniphofia* 'Joy's Gold', *Hydrangea paniculata* 'Tardiva' and *Helium* 'Walstrand' add colour and the climbing hydrangeas and Virginia Creeper beginning to climb the framework of the 'house' add interest in the last days of autumn. It is a good place to sit and rest.

Along the main walks information panels have been strategically placed to signpost the adventures of plant explorers, particularly George Forrest, who collected many of the rhododendrons and introduced them into our gardens. One features the words of Graham Smith, Curator 1969-2008.

The treehouses have all been named and incorporate interpretative material

contributing to the education programme which is now a very important part of the TRC's plans. Some also support giant metal forest insects. Watching children explore the property, seeking each treehouse, and moving from one to the next has been a joy.

Away from the construction zone the staff have worked assiduously to ensure that the rest of the gardens along the main walks are in top condition - full marks to them.

These are not the end of the developments; others are just beginning. The basement of the old Lodge looks forlorn, but initial planning for its replacement is all but complete. Construction is included in this years' TRC Annual Plan. If approved, construction should begin later this year. The Pukeiti Board has approved a contribution of \$200,000 for the furnishing and fit-out of the Lodge which the Trust will continue to lease. Next year we will be in – the excitement builds!

The Rainforest Centre will be open for business this spring in time for the Garden Festival.

Lynn Bublitz

## A digitised collection.

Work of the staff has not been restricted to gardening and stepping around contractors. Lara Coxhead has worked diligently on digitising the total collection, not only the rhododendrons, using the Iris Programme, which replaced the BG Base Programme, and posting the information on our web-site [www.pukeiti.org.com](http://www.pukeiti.org.com). This information can also be accessed

through the TRC site. At this site click on **Gardens**, then under 'Pukeiti' click on **Plant Hunters' Station** and when the next page appears click on **Go to Pukeiti Plant Hunters' Station** and then in the box that appears, name the plant or group that you wish to search. It will give you a description of the plant, where it can be found at Pukeiti, and the year of accession.

This is one of the first public gardens, anywhere, to make its plant collection details available through the web for all to access.



Teresa Parry

## New staff member welcomed.

Teresa Parry comes to Pukeiti from the Hamilton Gardens. A trained horticulturist, she has a good knowledge of and abounding interest in plants and their display, along with practical garden experience.

Her main role at Pukeiti will be to look after not only the Vireya House but the gardens in Zone 1, i.e. the Lodge, Lawn, Founders' Gardens and the Rainforest Centre environs.

# From the Members' Committee,

## THE 2016 END OF YEAR BBQ

Rain stopped the day – it poured and the event was postponed until early in the New Year.

The day in February was one of those seemingly rare fine days this summer. On a mild windless evening, members, reminded of the postponed event, gathered on the lawn at Tupare bringing a great selection of dishes - in line with the pot-luck Pukeiti tradition - to supplement the patties, sausages and steak barbecued to perfection by volunteers. The tables, suitably decorated, were set out on the lawn, which was fringed by maples, iconic plants at Tupare, and over-looked by the tall Liriodendron and Copper Beech planted when the garden was first developed by Sir Russell and Lady Matthews. Foundation members of Pukeiti, Tupare was their home for over 50 years and the gardens were for many years opened to the public each Labour Weekend, the proceeds being donated to Pukeiti. Sir Russell was a driving force during the establishment and early development of the Trust, travelling New Zealand to recruit members, and providing and encouraging financial support over many following years.

The BBQ was held at Tupare as facilities were unavailable at Pukeiti. It was a very successful occasion.

Our new secretary, Anne Howard, was introduced to members. Diane Jordan whom she replaced has served in the role with distinction, giving the Trust clear direction, being always willing to address issues, help members, maintain records and over-see financial matters. She is a great servant and friend of Pukeiti and has been for many years its face. Diane has not cut all links with the Trust and remains as minute secretary of the Members' Committee.

## AUTUMN MEETING

With the construction work at Pukeiti making a meeting there unrealistic, a decision was made to hold the meeting in the Visitors' Centre at Hollard Gardens, this to be preceded by a stop at Pukeiti on the way where Graham Smith took a walk through areas of major change and the plans for the Lodge were outlined. Years ago buses ferried members to the AGM and the reintroduction of this service provided a stress-free and highly sociable means of transport. It was a very successful occasion overall, and it has been great to see these events well supported and to welcome new members of the Trust. It augurs well for the future when the facilities at Pukeiti, particularly the Lodge, are completed.

## COMING EVENTS

### MID-WINTER LUNCH Saturday June 24, 12 noon

This year this event will be Christmas themed.

As there is no suitable venue at Pukeiti this year (the Café at the Rainforest Centre should be open for the AGM in October) the Members' Committee, after sighting a number of alternatives have arranged for a mid-winter Christmas Dinner to be held at the Orangery Conservatory at the Quality Hotel at a cost of \$25 a head. Some wine will be provided and a good programme arranged, highlighting the conservation ideal which has always been part of Pukeiti's objectives. Basil Chamberlain, Chief Executive TRC will address the gathering.

### PLANT PROPAGATION DAY

Wednesday 26 July, 9.30am, Pukeiti

Members, under the supervision of staff, will make cuttings and divide perennials, many of which will end up on future plant lists. It will be a good learning experience and a most useful exercise

and replaces the working bee scheduled for this date. The dates of the other working bees are listed on the last page of the Newsletter. Working bees are tailored to the abilities of the volunteers and do not necessarily involve heavy physical work.

## SPRING MEMBERS' DAY AND AGM

Saturday 7 October at Pukeiti

The details of this event will be outlined in the next newsletter- but do not forget to mark your calendars. The Rainforest Centre will be open and hopefully the Lodge rebuild will have begun, so there will be plenty to see.

## NEW ZEALAND RHODODENDRON CONFERENCE

Feilding, Friday 27– Monday 30 October 2017

Details on the NZRA website. Both Graham Smith and Andrew Brooker will be speaking.

## POWERCO GARDEN FESTIVAL

Friday 27 October to Sunday 5 November

Volunteers will be needed to help at Pukeiti. Details will be advised later.

## NOTES

- Check the Pukeiti website- it is worth the effort. [www.pukeiti.org.nz](http://www.pukeiti.org.nz)
- Thanks to all those who supported the Plant Sale.
- Subscription accounts will be sent out early July along with nomination papers for the Board.
- Board Elections: This year Doug Thomson and Marion Mackay retire by rotation. Both are eligible for reappointment for the next three year term. If there are more than two nominations elections will be held at the AGM.

Progress – leaves on newly planted vireyas in the Vireya House



*R. phaeochitum*



*R. rugosum*



*R. himatodes*

Please mark these dates on your calendar

# Members' Activities

# 2017

## WORKING BEES

- WEDNESDAY MAY 24
- WEDNESDAY JULY 26
- SATURDAY AUGUST 26
- WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 27
- WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 22
- SATURDAY DECEMBER 09



## PROPAGATION WORKSHOP

WEDNESDAY JULY 26 – 9:30AM

Meet in Propagation area. Propagating perennial plants.

### MEMBERS' COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Tuesday September 05 – 9:30 venue to be confirmed.  
 Tuesday November 14 – 9:30 venue to be confirmed.

### BOARD MEETINGS

Friday June 23 – 6:00pm at Govett Quilliam Offices  
 Friday October 06 – 6:00pm at Govett Quilliam Offices



The proposed new Lodge.

## SATURDAY JUNE 24

# Mid-Winter Christmas Lunch

Orangery Conservatory,  
 Quality Hotel 12 noon  
 Please book with Heather on  
 (06) 7572460 or Diane (06) 7522800  
 by Wednesday, June 21.  
 \$25 per head



## ACTIVITIES

### SPRING MEMBERS' DAY & AGM

SATURDAY OCTOBER 07

*Details later in the year*

### MONDAY 04 – WEDNESDAY 27 SEPTEMBER

PUKEITI MEMBERS' TOUR  
 TO XINJIANG, CHINA.

### SUNDAY OCTOBER 15

A selection of members' gardens which are not normally part of the festival will be open for members to visit.

### FRIDAY 27 – MONDAY 30 OCTOBER

Rhododendron Conference, Manawatu (based in Feilding).

### FRIDAY OCTOBER 27 – SUNDAY NOVEMBER 05

2017 Taranaki Rhododendron Festival – volunteers needed for manning the Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust Kiosk.

## END OF YEAR BBQ SATURDAY DECEMBER 9

Please book with Secretary Anne Howard - Phone 021 0831 5444



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@waide.govt.nz



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 or Phone (06) 752 4141 Mobile 0210 264 4060
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