



Pukeiti NEWSLETTER

Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust Inc.

Rhododendrons in a Rainforest

PLANT LIST AND ORDER FORM
VOLUNTEERING IN THE GARDEN & OTHER MEMBER ACTIVITIES
inside

www.pukeiti.org.nz

The Joy of Summer

Visitor numbers this summer have been enhanced by cruise ships docking in New Plymouth. Bus loads of passengers have enjoyed their short visit to Pukeiti. Many were entranced by the drive to the gardens through the forest which at times formed tunnels through which the busses passed. In places, *R. decorum*, now small trees planted along the roadside displayed in flashes of white the last of their flowers. This late flowering rhododendron was grown from seeds collected on the first expedition to Yunnan, China, led in 1990 by Ron Gordon, who established Pukeiti's relationship with the Kunming Botanical Institute. Several Pukeiti-led tours followed. In recent years, Covid stopped travels to China, but Gordon Bailey and Andrew

Brooker will visit the Botanical Institute in April to reestablish the connection. This will enable tours and collecting trips to again be organised. The latter is important for the *ex-situ* project.

There are few other rhododendrons in flower at this time of the year. It is the lushness and range of greens of the bush - the rainforest - and the patterns and textures of the leaves which are the attraction. In the covered walk through the Vireya Houses these are particularly appealing, enhanced especially by the arisaemas. As well there are always a few vireyas in flower which catch the eye and add a sparkle to the outstanding array of plants.

The green is brightened by colours of the summer flowering perennials in the Lodge borders and Keiller Garden. Around The Lodge are orange double-flowered Tiger Lilies, blue Russian sage *Perovskia*, and the outstanding red *Astrantia major* and *Monarda x*. In the

Keiller Garden, a must-see at this time of the year, patches of yellow light up the garden drawing the eye to various clones of Black-eyed Susan *Rudbeckia hirta*, particularly the green eyed 'Irish eyes'; *Coreopsis* varieties, and *Inula racemosa*. But yellow is not alone! The orange *Helenium* 'Moerheim Beauty', (the common name of which is sneezewort- but not a name to be sneezed at!) and a collection of red leafed dahlias are colourful examples among many other plants including a spectacular clone of *Hydrangea paniculata*. Hydrangeas are planted in patches along the major walks in Pukeiti and are an attraction in themselves.

Even though the rhododendrons are not in flower many have attractive new foliage. There is a lot to see. Pukeiti is certainly a joy to visit at this time of the year. It is still a 'Garden for all Seasons', a by-line of the earlier logo.

Lynn Bublitz



Rudbeckia hirta seedling in the Keiller Garden.



Astrantia major in The Lodge border.



Arisaema taiwanensis in the Vireya House.

From the Members' Committee

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2024.

The committee has had its first meeting of the year and unfortunately at this meeting we received the resignation of Diane Toole. Diane has been a valued member of the committee over the past few years, always happy to take on her share of the work and to do it cheerfully and well. She has also been a great source of ideas and she will be sadly missed. Diane is moving back to Nelson and we wish her and Lindsay all the best.

Along with losing Diane we have 3 other committee members who, because of family responsibilities, are very limited in the amount of time they can commit to this year. This has left a somewhat depleted committee which will struggle to carry out all the members events as listed on the 2024 calendar you received with last year's Journal.

Because this is a somewhat fluid situation we will give updates of any changes we need to make to the calendar in the Monthly Updates sent out by Anne Howard. Most events will still go ahead but they may be a bit more casual than they have been in the past. Pukeiti of course, still stays the same or more accurately, is getting better all the time so I'm sure we will see many of you at our functions during the year, enjoying this wonderful facility.

Upcoming events:

DRINKS AND NIBBLES IN THE GARDEN SUNDAY 18 FEBRUARY

*The Douglas Cook Room
or Terrace, The Lodge*

2:45: Transport will be available from the Mangorei Road gate. Please request this service before 10:30am Sun 18 Feb.

3:00pm: A guided walk back up to the Keiller Garden to see how the new system of perennial staking looks now that the plants are in flower.

4:00pm: Drinks and nibbles in the Douglas Cook Room and Terrace.

What to bring: The Board will provide cold water and some non-alcoholic punch. Please bring a plate of savoury



R. excellens

food for sharing and any other beverage you wish.

Revive The Memories Day.

Unfortunately, this has been cancelled for 2024. Circumstances mean that we cannot run this but our Mid-Winter Lunch this year will be in town, and any members who would have attended the Revive the Memories Day are very welcome to attend.

AUTUMN MEMBERS' DAY SATURDAY, MARCH 23

The Douglas Cook Room, The Lodge

10:00am: The Lodge will be open for members who want to drop off things before they go on the guided walk. People who ordered plants from the plant list will already have either picked up their plants or received them via courier but there will be some plants for sale at the end of the day. Bring some petty cash so you can take advantage of this offer.

10:30am: A guided walk will leave from The Lodge and the mobility scooter will be available for our less mobile members.

12:00 noon: Meet back at The Lodge for a Potluck Lunch.

After lunch we will be addressed by Bryan Vickery, a first term NPDC councillor, media journalist and popular emcee. Brian will talk about his experiences as a journalist.

Plants available for purchase, by cash sales or internet banking.

Please RSVP by Wednesday March 20 to Heather - phone: 021 206 5222 or email: cattrobson@gmail.com

WORKING BEES

At 9:00am on Wednesday mornings a small group of us meet at the Staff

Quarters before moving into the garden to work for 2, 3, 5 hours or however long we have and any time you can offer is welcomed. The work varies but generally involves weeding, deadheading and sometimes planting.

MEMBERS' PLANT SALES ORDERS CLOSE FRIDAY 08 MARCH

Please remember to get your orders in promptly to maximise your chances of getting the plants you want. If you are emailing a typed list of plants please remember to include all the following details: the plant number; name of plant; number you wish to purchase; your name; postal address; delivery address (if different to your postal address); email address and contact phone number.

Payment by internet banking

When you receive your plants an invoice will come with them. Please pay this on receipt. Our account number for payment is 15 3953 0497531 00 Please use your name as reference and put 'invoice number' in the particulars box.

PLANT COLLECTION FRIDAY MARCH 15:

Plants will be available for picking up from 12A Tamati Place, Merrilands, New Plymouth between the hours of 1:00pm and 6:00pm. If this does not suit you, alternative times can be arranged by ringing Heather on 021 206 5222 or emailing cattrobson@gmail.com If you cannot arrange to pick up your plants from 12A Tamati Place, they will need to be couriered to your address. We have used the same couriers for years. They have been reliable and careful of the plants and despite inflation causing the prices of virtually everything to increase, Aramex have not raised their prices this year.

Pukeiti 70 years ago

It was 1954 and the construction of the old Lodge was in full swing. The building site was levelled, the basement garage/tool shed was constructed in concrete and the road from the entrance was formed and metalled. Rimu logs, given by Mr Turchi, were milled to yield first class timber from which to construct the Lodge. Gifts of books meant there was already a nucleus of a library.

Plants were also being donated. Messrs Duncan and Davies gave a further 100 and Dr JS Yeats offered to share with Pukeiti some of his surplus plants from Kingdon-Ward's last expedition.

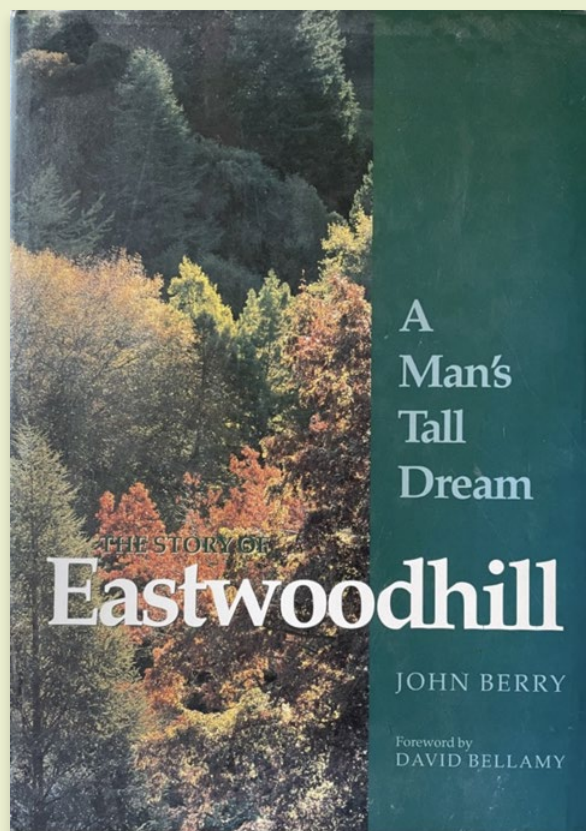
The Trust contributed 25 Pounds to the 1954 Kingdon-Ward plant hunting expedition, meaning it was entitled to some of any rhododendron seeds collected.

This turned out to be a very good investment with Pukeiti receiving seed of *R. protistum* (from which 'Pukeiti' grew), *R. elliottii*, *R. burmanicum*, *R. ciliicalyx*, among others. These plants were distributed throughout New Zealand and have all been used extensively in hybridisation.

Membership had grown to 300 and Mr Russell Matthews (later Sir Russell) was abroad, enrolling members in the USA and several other places.



Watercolour by Lois Connell



Book Review

A Man's Tall Dream: The Story of Eastwoodhill by John Berry.

Reviewer: Ian Croser

This book divides into two parts. The first part is the fascinating life of W (William) Douglas Cook and how he came to create the dendrologic masterpiece that is Eastwoodhill. His determination and dedication to his dream were paramount throughout his adult life. What I wasn't expecting was how interesting as a man he was, and how enjoyable it is to read about his adventures and interpersonal relationships. Another revelation was the crucial part played by his right-hand man, Bill Crooks who devoted 47 years of his life to his employer and Eastwoodhill.

We also learn how a man born in New Plymouth spent 14 years looking for the perfect place to create what we know as Pukeiti and how he gifted the land to our Trust in 1951.

The second part of the book details how HB Williams and numerous others overcame many obstacles to develop and maintain Eastwoodhill as NZ's national arboretum.

This book is available for members to borrow from the Pukeiti Members' Library in The Lodge.

Please mark these dates in your calendar. Some dates and details have been changed so check carefully*

Members' Activities

2024

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18

Drinks and nibbles in the garden

(out of the Douglas Cook Room), preceded by a guided walk around areas of seasonal interest in the garden.

SATURDAY, MARCH 23

Autumn Members' Day

10:00am – food drop off and plant sales

10:30 Garden Walk

12:00 Pot Luck Lunch in the Douglas Cook Room followed by a talk by Bryan Vickery

SUNDAY, MAY 19

The Bryophytes-Mosses and Liverworts

Lynn Bublitz will lead a walk looking at the mosses and other little treasures of Pukeiti. Walk in conjunction with TRC.

SATURDAY, JUNE 22

Mid-winter Lunch

More details later.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 17

Perennial propagation at Pukeiti

Prepare plants for later Members' Sales. Your help is welcome at Pukeiti from 9am.

SUNDAY, JULY 21

Epiphytes and other aerial plants

10:30am: Heather Robson will lead a walk looking at the epiphytes and other aerial plants residing at Pukeiti. Walk in conjunction with TRC.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 24

Guided Walk

2pm: A guided walk for members around the big-leaved rhododendrons followed by tea and coffee in The Lodge.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

Garden Visits

A selection of Taranaki gardens open for members to visit. *More details later.*

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19

Spring Members' Day & AGM

Details later in the year.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14

Christmas BBQ

Board meetings

Friday, March 22, 5pm

Friday, June 21, 5pm

Friday, October 18, 5pm

**TUESDAY 29 OCTOBER - FRIDAY
1 NOVEMBER 2024**

Rhodenza 2024

The New Zealand Rhododendron Association Inc. Conference is being held in Geraldine & Timaru. Pukeiti Members are welcome to attend.

Pukeiti Library

The catalogue of books can be accessed at the following site
www.librarycat.org/lib/Pukeiti



Pukeiti

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