



# Pukeiti NEWSLETTER

Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust Inc.

*Rhododendrons in a Rainforest*

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

## Another Chapter

### Greg Rine has retired.

He has led the changes at Pukeiti since its transfer to the Taranaki Regional Council, in 2010, when the partnership arrangement with the Trust was established. From this has evolved the Trust's role in providing advice, particularly on the conservation and enhancement of the rhododendron collection, in accordance with the original aims of the Trust Deed. These have been the guiding principles embodied in the agreement with the TRC. Guided by these, Greg's role was to manage and give leadership to several projects designed to enhance the visitors' experiences and education, maintain the gardens' appeal, and increase visitor numbers.

Much has been done in the past twelve years. Projects have included the metalling of the major pathways; enhanced wastewater systems; refurbishment of the Gatehouse which now includes a visitor information centre, Rainforest Café and conference rooms; the reconstruction of the covered vireya walks; the tree-top walkway to the water-wheel viewing platform and the Publitz Education Centre; the network of huts, all named for native insects which focus an education trail for children; special garden features such as the Keiller Garden, Misty Knoll, pond bridge and the installation of garden art – stone carvings and metal dragon flies, moas and Haast eagles; the well-used Piwakawaka Bush Hut and the beginning of a cycleway which will one day

reach the Oakura beach. For members, probably the most important, was the replacement of The Lodge. Built on the foundations of the old Lodge and public room it includes a members' lounge, boardroom and library, a small flat and the spacious Douglas Cook Room. The Trust has a lease over The Lodge which all or parts of can be hired. Outgoings are met by the TRC.

Concurrently the TRC has undertaken a pest control regime which has allowed for the reintroduction of kiwi.

Visitor numbers as a result of all the work have increased considerably – from 10,000 in 2012 to 86,000 last year.

While the projects have absorbed enormous energy, Pukeiti's reputation of international significance remains primarily due to the gardens in their unique rainforest setting, and of course the collection of rhododendrons.

The garden staff continue to do an amazing job. Greg's departure has coincided with a number of new staff appointments: Simon Barton is the new Head Gardener, and Chris Rodriguez and Ross Gradwell join our well established team of Scott Denham, Sharn Morgan, Andrew Brooker, and Lara Coxhead.

Andrew (part of whose salary is paid for by the Trust) is responsible for the ex-situ conservation programme at Pukeiti. Collecting and propagating cuttings and seeds of MPI approved plants, sourced throughout NZ and overseas, has been the first stage of the project. The second stage, while keeping the majority at Pukeiti, is the distribution of selected

*continues*



*Rhododendron protistum* 'Pukeiti': this group of flowers is on a layer taken from the original plant which unfortunately succumbed to phytophthora a few years ago. **Flowering at Pukeiti now** it marks the start of the blooming period of the big-leaf varieties, which are the highlight of the garden in August and September.



species to other gardens throughout the country. Plants have been sent to Kerikeri, the Quarry Gardens in Whangarei, Eden Gardens, Heritage Park, Dunedin Botanic Garden, and Gore, the climate of each site determining the species sent. One of Andrew's roles is to monitor the distributed collection to ensure the conservation of the various clones, particularly of rare plants, and thus the species.

Greg's replacement is Stuart Robertson, an experienced plantsman and park administrator. His previous employment was with the NPDC as Manager of Parks and Open Spaces. His focus with the TRC will be to maintain and enhance the high standards of Pukeiti, Hollard Gardens and Tupare so that they remain among the top group of New Zealand gardens. Stuart leads the next chapter, and the Trust looks forward to working with him.



Members and visitors gather on the walk led by Rene Duncan highlighting the medicinal uses of native plants



*R. rarilepidotum* : This mostly terrestrial vireya comes from Sumatra, Indonesia and was introduced to cultivation in 1975. A yellow form was later collected by David Binney. **Flowering now at Pukeiti**

## DISCOUNTS AT RAINFOREST EATERY

Graham, Yvette, Chad and Laura continue to offer a 10% discount on café purchases and the TRC continue to match this on anything purchased from the shop, on presentation of a valid membership card. The café is currently open 10am - 4pm, Friday to Sunday until September when it is open everyday

Phone: 06-752 4143 if you wish to check before arriving.

## From the Members' Committee

Nearly one month on from the shortest day, the days are starting to get noticeably longer but as the saying goes so too is the cold getting stronger. There's fresh snow on Taranaki Maunga this morning. I think everyone is suffering from a surfeit of rain and along with the colder temperatures one of the best things to do in the garden now is, I think, just to sit down somewhere warm and review the jobs to be done before the growth cycle starts again.

Here in coastal Taranaki, that will not be too far away. Some of my roses are starting to shoot away and as I was pruning the hydrangeas last week it was easy to choose viable buds to cut back to as many were becoming active already.

Up at Pukeiti, the hydrangeas we were pruning last Wednesday are still very much dormant but the camellias and vireyas are putting on a lovely display and many temperate rhododendrons are starting to have the odd truss opening on them. The mega stars, those large-leaf rhododendrons, are just starting to flower. Down where 'Pukeiti' used to stand so proudly and magnificently, a plant that has grown from a branch that

Keith Adams layered, is approaching full bloom. It was the first large-leaf rhododendron to flower in the garden this year. In 3 weeks, when we hold our soup and roll day, many more should also be looking lovely.

We have had two successful Sunday walks up at Pukeiti since the last newsletter. The first was led by Lynn Bublitz on the topic of epiphytes. In this walk Lynn showed us the plants he wrote about in the last newsletter and pointed out to us the features that enabled them to grow successfully perched in other forest plants. Ross, the gardener who is now responsible for the large-leafed area has since told us about several rimu plants he has found growing epiphytically in the bush. Rimu trees are not designed to be epiphytes but the birds aren't particularly careful about where they deposit the seeds they drop and some don't get through to the ground to grow from there. These accidental epiphytic rimu will eventually fall out of their host trees. Some may be lucky enough to land in a space where they can send their roots into the soil and continue to grow into large trees.

The second walk proved very popular with the public. About 80 people turned up to hear Rene Duncan talk about the medicinal uses of native plants. Rene started her programme in the Atrium where she talked about commonly used



medicinal plants that were not, or at least not commonly, found at Pukeiti. We then moved out into the bush where Rene showed us how to identify each plant and talked about some of the conditions they could be used to relieve.

The Lodge working bee held on June 08 was so well attended that not only was Lynn able to establish a team of library volunteers to help with running the library, but we were also able to get the cutlery polished and some of the leather furniture in The Lodge cleaned and conditioned. Thanks to all the members who turned up to help.

The Wednesday Volunteers provided most of the labour for the Perennial Propagation Day but with the preparation that the garden staff had done for us we had the job more or less completed by 11:30am.

For the remainder of the year, we have events organised for members each month.

For some events we will request an RSVP. This is to help with organisation. If you don't RSVP but on the day realise you would like to attend then please feel free to do so, we'd love to see you up at Pukeiti.

A reminder again, not that most of us need it, that Covid is still in the community. All events continue to be organised with the caveat that whether they go ahead or not will be confirmed closer to the event. A final decision on each event will be made about 10 days beforehand. If it is cancelled, members will be notified by phone or email. Those without email can either check with another member or ring Heather (06 757 2460). If you have left your contact details with the person receiving the RSVP responses, we will easily be able to contact you. If the event proceeds, it will be held in accordance with any current Covid restrictions and all event venues will be well ventilated, so please dress accordingly. Most health experts are still recommending that you use a mask when inside. If you are at all unwell, have cold, hay fever or Covid symptoms we ask you, please, not to attend.



*R. decorum* the seeds of which were collected on a Ron Gordon led trip to Kunming, China

## Pukeiti 35 Years Ago

Sir Russell Matthews, the Trust's Patron died, and was succeeded by Mr Tom White who at the time was a Board Member.

1987 was a busy year around the Gatehouse and covered walkway.

Bill and Pat Campbell became the first managers of the café and souvenir shop in July, 8 months after the Gatehouse had been officially opened.

Over 60 sponsors enabled the new Gatehouse to open with elegant rimu chairs with green leather seats and smart rimu tables. Further sponsors for the few remaining tables and outdoor furniture were sought in the August newsletter.

The terraces between the drive and the Founder's Lawn were marked out and built and the steps from the drive into the Gatehouse were installed.

The area for the covered walkway was cleared of native forest, levelled and the retaining walls were built.

Members of Rotary gave many volunteer hours building this and they also held fundraising events. Some of you may recall attending the Malvina Major concert in June organised by Rotary to raise money for the timber work in the covered walkway.

David and Pauline Brown resigned as staff to pursue kiwi fruit growing in the Bay of Plenty. Currently they are perhaps better known to members for their vireya nursery.

Kerry Daly was employed as a Labourer/Gardener and along with his wife and three small sons moved into the Cook Block House and Phillip Williams was appointed as Horticultural Officer.

Ron Gordon led a tour to China in April-May visiting Xian in Shaanxi province, Kunming, Dali, Cangshan Mountains, Yulong Mountain, and Lijiang in Yunnan province and Chengdu in Sichuan province.

# Upcoming Events

## SOUP AND ROLL LUNCH

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 21.**

It's now been two years since we held this event. In the meantime, the large-leaf rhododendrons, nestled into surrounding native forest, have just grown bigger and better. Ross has taken over from Craig as the gardener mainly responsible for this area and he continues to keep it looking good, the rhododendrons free from encroaching bush and able to shine, especially at this time of the year.

The day will start with a walk leaving from The Lodge at 11:00am. Graham Smith will be our guide on this walk.

After the walk a bowl of hot homemade soup and a roll will be served in The Douglas Cook Room.

We hope to have the Mobility Vehicle available for our less mobile members but it is currently in for a service and the garden staff at this stage cannot guarantee it will be back in time.

To help us with our organisation of the day, could you please RSVP by Friday 19 August to Annette Cameron: email: [ancameron@hotmail.co.nz](mailto:ancameron@hotmail.co.nz)

Phone: (06) 7537451  
Mobile: 027 635 4858

*When you RSVP could you please leave your name and contact details so you can be contacted should we need to cancel for Covid reasons.*

## MEMBERS' GARDEN VISITS

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 18**

This year we are visiting gardens to the west of New Plymouth.

We are in the process of confirming the last couple of gardens and will provide a detailed schedule for the day in the September monthly update.

We will be going to private properties which will have limited parking spaces so please consider car-pooling with other members.

## SPRING MEMBERS' DAY & AGM

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15**

**10:15am:** Meet at the Lodge

**10:30am:** A guided Garden walk to view new developments and what is in flower.

**12:00 noon:** Around this time the potluck lunch will be served in the Douglas Cook Room.

*Please bring finger food for a shared lunch.*

**1:15pm:** Annual General Meeting in the Rata Room

**2:30pm:** There will be a speaker to follow the AGM

*Further details of the day will be provided later in the year.*

**RSVP** by Thursday, October 06 to Heather (06) 757 2460 or email [cattrobson@gmail.com](mailto:cattrobson@gmail.com) leaving your name and contact details.

## TARANAKI GARDEN FESTIVAL

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28 – SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 06**

Volunteers will again be needed to assist Pukeiti staff with hosting duties and plant sales at The Lodge, and for membership promotion.

Diane Toole is again organising the roster and she will be contacting members asking for their help. Alternatively, you can offer your help by emailing [wanderweg@xtra.co.nz](mailto:wanderweg@xtra.co.nz) or phoning 027 414 4060.

The day starts at 10:00am and finishes mid-afternoon. The finish time is flexible and varies depending on the weather and the number of visitors.

Pukeiti Rhododendrons and where they Originated: Sunday, November 20

This is our last public walk of the year and will be a walk in the garden looking at where in the world some of our rhododendron came from. It will be followed by refreshments in The Lodge. As it is a public walk, promoted in the media and through the TRC social media pages, please bring along any friends and neighbours you think would enjoy the day.



*R. himantodes.* Native of Borneo where it usually grows at 1300 to 2000 m as an epiphyte, but also in deep peat soils of some summit ridges. **Flowering now at Pukeiti**

## CHRISTMAS BBQ SATURDAY 10 DECEMBER

The BBQ will be served at 12:00 noon at The Lodge (Final serving time is up to the cooks of the day.) The Pukeiti Trust will be providing BBQ meat and buns. Please bring a salad or small plate of finger food for dessert to share with others.

RSVP by Thursday, December 08

Heather (06) 757 2460 or email [cattrobson@gmail.com](mailto:cattrobson@gmail.com) leaving your name and contact details.

## Pukeiti Library

will be open each Wednesday  
1pm - 3pm beginning June 08  
for members to borrow books  
and access historic publications.

## Gift Membership Cards

Buy someone you love the gift of a year's membership to the Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust.

A great Christmas Present Idea

Contact the secretary at  
[pukeiti@pukeiti.com](mailto:pukeiti@pukeiti.com)





## Access to The Lodge Kitchen

Currently the lock between the kitchen and The Atrium is not working. Adele is trying to get it fixed but it is taking time. If you are going up to Pukeiti and wish to use the kitchen you will need to enter through the back door which requires a different access code. If you wish to use this entrance to The Lodge, please ring one of the committee members before you go up to Pukeiti so they can inform you of the current code.

As a trial, this year the café will, on some occasions over spring, be using The Douglas Cook Room. On days when the café is so busy it can't seat all patrons, they will open this area to serve tea and coffee. When this happens members will not have exclusive use of this room and the kitchen. To compensate members, the café has agreed that they will give members, on presentation of a current membership card, a free cup of tea or coffee. The committee would be interested in hearing about your experiences with this trial arrangement.

## Membership Renewal

Members should now have received an email from the Board Secretary about the current work of the Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust, the many benefits of being a member of the Trust and information as to how to renew their membership if they are annual members. Life Members and MIPs are also asked to consider giving a donation. The Trust continues to support the conservation of rhododendrons as Anne has described in her email. We provide specialist advice and equipment to the TRC to help them look after the Pukeiti Collections of Rhododendrons and we continue to provide facilities and services to members. When you renew your annual membership, you will receive a new 4-digit code for the internal doors of The Lodge. Anne will shortly be sending the new code out to Life Members and MIPs. From the end of August, you will need this new code to give you access to the locked rooms in The Lodge.

## Board Elections

This year, Lynn Bublitz and Diane Jordon are retiring from the Board by rotation, but are both eligible to stand again.

If you are interested in standing, please contact the Secretary, Anne Howard: email [pukeiti@pukeiti.com](mailto:pukeiti@pukeiti.com) for a nomination form. This requires the signature of two nominating members plus your signature of acceptance and residential address.

Forms need to be returned to the Secretary by September 9. If there are more than two candidates elections will be held at the AGM.

There could be alterations needed to the Constitution resulting from changes in the Trustees Act. These, along with the names of Board nominees will be emailed to members 28 days prior to the AGM.



*R. 'Pink Delight'*: This is an early flowering hybrid of *R. arboreum*. Eight rhododendrons, including azaleas and vireyas, have been given the name of 'Pink Delight'. The vireya 'Pink Delight' is in the vireya house.. **Flowering now at Pukeiti**



*R. macgregoriae*: Widespread in Papua New Guinea, it was introduced into New Zealand by Felix Jury. Other forms have been introduced since. The flowers are poisonous to livestock. People in the Western Highlands of New Guinea are recorded to have mixed them with sweet potato and used the mix to poison rats. **Flowering now at Pukeiti**



*Camellia 'Donation'*: One of many camellias in flower at Pukeiti – **a real highlight at this time of the year.**

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

# Members' Activities

# 2022

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 21**

## Soup and Roll Lunch

A walk round the large-leafed rhododendrons followed  
by a homely lunch in the Douglas Cook Room.

See details under Upcoming Events in this newsletter

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 18**

## Garden Visits

A selection of Taranaki gardens open for members to visit.

See entry under upcoming events in this newsletter.

Further information about the walk and speaker  
will be provided in the October Monthly update.

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15**

## Spring Members' Day & AGM

Details later in the year.

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28 - SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 06**

## 2022 Centuria Taranaki Garden Festival

Volunteers are needed for hosting in The  
Lodge and membership recruitment.

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20**

## Pukeiti Rhododendrons and where they Originated.

Our final public walk of the year will take you  
around the garden discussing from where in the  
world some of our rhododendrons originated.

Walk leaves from The Lodge at 10:00am followed  
by refreshments in the Douglas Cook Room.

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10**

## Christmas BBQ

RSVP Thursday, December 08

**FRIDAY 25 NOVEMBER -  
FRIDAY 02 DECEMBER**

## Pukeiti Tour to the Chatham Islands



**Pukeiti**

Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust Inc.

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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](http://www.pukeiti.org.nz)  
is worth a look!

We cordially invite you to join our travel  
journey through Southland

## Rhodenza SOUTHLAND 2022

'Pastures, Peaks and Pinot'

November 4-6th Gore  
November 6-7th Queenstown

Includes visits  
to the fantastic 'Maple  
Glen' beautiful 'Bannerman  
Park' and stunning 'Chantecler'.

There is the opportunity to arrive early  
and enjoy 'The Catlins' on the Southern  
Scenic route, Stewart Island or extend your  
stay and explore the many highlights of  
Queenstown and surrounding area.

The New Zealand Rhododendron Association Inc.  
Conference is being held in Gore (2 nights) and  
Queenstown (1 night). Details and registration forms  
are available on the NZRA website - [www.rhododendron.org.nz](http://www.rhododendron.org.nz). Click on 'conference' in the menu bar.  
Pukeiti Members are welcome to attend.

## Members' Committee meetings

Tuesday, November 15 - 9:30am - The Lodge

## Board meetings

The dates of the October and December  
meetings are to be confirmed.

TARANAKI REGIONAL COUNCIL

[www.trc.govt.nz](http://www.trc.govt.nz)

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