

Blue Mountains Rhododendron Society of New South Wales Inc.

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NEWSLETTER

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PO Box 238, Blackheath, 2785.

General Meeting Saturday 16 April 2011 at The Lodge 2:00 pm start

We welcome all members, especially those who have recently joined us

Guest Speaker

David King

David, a Gundungurra Man and Traditional Owner, son of Aunty Mary Gundungurra Elder, is our guest speaker at the April General Meeting, and will talk on Aboriginal Resources and how they are used.

David's philosophy may be summed up from part of his message as an introduction to the 5th National Wilderness Conference in 2006:-

"The beauty of my traditional landscape is breathtaking and nothing matches this in my opinion.

"We need to be first in ensuring that the lands which could so easily be destroyed are kept as dwelling places for the safety of this planet and its flora and fauna. We need to keep the paths of the planet open. We need to ensure we carry on and return first before others who will only view it as a path to development and destruction of the world as we know it.

"I support keeping the remaining large natural areas intact for the earth needs its wild places. The indigenous people and conservationists should work together in a spirit of co-operation and understanding. We need to map our country to see how it works before it becomes more of a barren wasteland."

This promises to be a very interesting and informative talk, on a topic that is probably unknown to many of us.

Advance Notice for June

The guest speaker at our general meeting on the 18th June will be Deb Milne, from Neutrog Fertilisers.

You are invited to come along to

Jazz in the Gardens

- When?** Sunday 17th April
12 noon to 4:00 pm
- Where?** Down in the Valley
- Who?** Jim Mills & his band
from the New Ivanhoe
- What?** Bring:
* Yourself
* A picnic lunch
* Your favourite tippie
* A rug (or chair)
* \$10 per person
- What else?** A raffle (of course)

From the President - (Rob's Ramblings)

The declaration of the Gardens as a National Treasure by the Traveller Australia Magazine published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age* in February this year is a tribute to the foresight of the Garden's founders of 41 years ago and grand recognition of the hard work the volunteers have put into our Gardens since then. This is something of which we can all be proud. Our challenge is to keep up the high standards we have set for ourselves over the past 41 years.

Jazz In The Gardens will be held this year on Sunday April 17th. Jim Mills and his band from the New Ivanhoe Hotel will be playing down by the lake from 1pm. Bring a picnic rug, lunch and a bottle of your favourite drop and enjoy an afternoon of great music and fun for all. A donation of \$10 covers expenses and any leftover goes to upkeep of your Gardens. There will be a raffle held during the afternoon, too.

The haunting sound of Jim's piano reverberating across the lake and throughout the valley is a joy to behold. I ask that all members consider coming down for this, as it is such a fun afternoon.

Our Guest Speaker for the next General Meeting on April 16th is David King of the Gundungurra clan, who will be talking on Aboriginal resources. This to me is a fascinating topic so I hope you can make it along to the meeting - please bring a plate.

At long last the road from the carpark at The Lodge down through the valley and exiting at Wentworth Street is to be tarred and sealed. This will enable small buses and those in cars who are less mobile to get a closer look at the gardens in the valley and on the slopes above it, as well as the Member's Native Walk. The drive will be available to those members and visitors with special needs.

Looking forward to seeing you all the next meeting and Jazz In The Gardens the following day.

Rob Emanuel - President

New Acquisitions

Our thanks to Barry Barnes in his managing to acquire a printer to be used with the PC in the Library for the production of maps and diagrams from the data being accumulated from the survey of the Gardens. The printer, a Brother A3 Colour Inkjet 'Multi Function Centre' can print, copy and, if required, fax documents.

Our thanks also to Neutrog Fertilisers, for their donation of a copy of their publication, the NSW edition of 'From the Ground Up', authored by Linda, Sandra and Graham Ross. This is a welcome addition to our Library.

New Botanic Gardens

A new Botanic Garden is being set up at East Bowral in the Southern Highlands. The Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens Inc is a not for profit voluntary association established in order to commence and see properly managed a botanic garden in the Southern Highlands. The Botanic Gardens employs no staff, it operates on voluntary and charitable donations and has a principal purpose of establishing and maintaining a Botanic Garden, primarily an arboretum with a mix of exotic, native, and endemic species within a benchmark of 70/80% exotic -30/20% native/endemic, to represent four distinct seasons in a cold climate environment where water resources are increasingly scarce.

(Does this take anyone back 40 years?)

The Society has contacted the committee of the Friends of the Gardens to offer the donation of a tree, suitable for the area, on behalf of the members of our Society.

New Member

We warmly welcome Melody Mandeno, from Lithgow, as a new member, and invite her to join in all the Society's activities.

Garden Report – March 2011

The rain keeps coming, with not a lot of sunshine. Flowering will be good this spring, but not as good as last year.

We have nearly finished marking parking bays in the car park and have also installed in the car park a large light that David Cook gave us.

With all the rain the weeds have grown with great vigour, and we have done a great deal of weed control, including blackberries, young holly, montbretia and ivy. We have also had to do quite a deal of work on the paths, fixing washaways and bridges as well as a lot of trimming to get the paths back to their correct width.

The dreaded dodder has also enjoyed the wet, and much control has been done on this. In addition a huge amount of Eucalyptus leaves that come down with every shower has needed to be raked and swept up.

Peter Belshaw, BMCC's technical fire officer, has helped us greatly in preparing a plan that, with weather and time permitting, will start later this year to do some hazard reduction work and also help with regeneration of woody seeded plants, such as banksias.

We have also approved an upgrade of the road into the valley and on to the gate at the end of Wentworth Street. This will enable us to get small buses (such as the Community Bus) into the valley area, thus allowing us to get the elderly and disabled into the valley to better enjoy the Gardens.

Please remember "Jazz In The Garden" – 12 noon to 4:00 pm on Sunday 17th April. Bring a picnic and a rug or chair. A great day is assured. Cost is \$10 per head.

Dick Harris – Garden Supervisor

Working Bee

The next working bee in the Gardens is to be held on Saturday 7th May, starting at 9:00 am. Lunch will be provided.

Dick has promised that we will definitely not be removing dodder!

All welcome

Hazard Reduction Plan

The first area proposed to be burnt is that area between the Ridgewell Road fence line and the fire trail on the Northern side of the Gardens.

Some comments by Peter Belshaw

As discussed during the meeting with some of the committee, the preferred location for the first hazard reduction burn within the Campbell Rhododendron Gardens is viewed as an achievable and low impact opportunity to begin a cyclical program of burning, with a view to both reducing the bushfire threat within the Gardens and stimulating ecological processes in these naturally vegetated areas.

For the information of the Society, an assessment, approval, planning and preparation process will now be initiated in relation to this activity. Given that this is a relatively straightforward burn proposal, I do not envisage this taking more than a few weeks. A summary of the steps from here:

- Council's environmental scientist will be requested to conduct an environmental review of the proposal
- Checks for cultural heritage values and artefacts will be undertaken
- An environmental approval for the proposed burn will be issued (a Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Certificate)
- Fire & Rescue NSW will be formally requested to prepare an operational plan and implement the burn
- Control lines will be prepared to contain the burn, such as minor works on the vehicle track and along the western fence line of the Gardens
- Wait for appropriate weather and fuel moisture conditions under which to conduct the burn

As noted yesterday, once all the planning and preparation works are completed it will be a matter of waiting for favourable weather to burn successfully. While such opportunities may present themselves later in autumn and through winter, it is possible this may not be undertaken before spring 2011, although the burn will be undertaken as soon as conditions permit. In relation to timing, I will liaise closely with the Society to ensure that the burn does not interfere with any major event and to minimise disruption to visitors.

Management Committee 2010 – 2011

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