

VIREYA VINE

October 1982

Up here in Western Washington, four of us in Tacoma, Port Orchard, Puyallup and Kent, have been growing and talking Vireyas for several years. We see each other often and exchange Vireya plants and cuttings, but we wondered how we could learn more. One of us is a good correspondent with other Vireya collectors and the others are good visitors. At a recent meeting (of the RSF Education Committee of which we are all members, as we are all ARS members) we decided to join together in an informal band. I agreed to head it for awhile, if the other three would help. And so E. White Smith, Fran Rutherford, Steve Whitcher and I have formed a joint effort to help each other collect and raise Vireya Rhododendrons as winter houseplants and summer pot plants. (None of us around Puget Sound are yet brave enough to plant them outside for the winter).

At the 2nd Western Regional Rhododendron Conference, at Sea-Tac on October 1, 2 and 3, I spoke to (and they enthusiastically joined) the following Vireya collectors: Esther Berry, Jim Gerdeman, Don Hall, Emma and Tom Bowhan, Paul Molinari, E. Parker Smith, Everett Farwell, Jr., Frank Mossman, Peter Schick, Bill Cooley, Clive Justice and Art Whitehair.

I am also sending this note to the following people that I missed talking to or whose names were suggested by others: Harold Greer, Tom Tatum, Frank Cooper, John Swisher, Conrad Selfors, Frank Doleshy, Paul Kores, Dr. Van Royen, Dick Cavender, Bill Mearns and Peter Cox. The people I talked with all promised to contact or send me the names of others who might be interested.

OBJECT: To join together and assist each other in the challenge of collecting, growing, observing and flowering the various species and hybrids of Vireya Rhododendrons. We must get these plants widely spread so one person's loss would not mean all known plants are lost.

HOW: By sharing ideas, observations, cuttings and plants. Esther Berry does a superb job with the seeds of Vireya species and hybrids already.

COMMUNICATION: Direct letters, a newsnote letter, and gatherings anywhere--even during other meetings.

E. White Smith gave me permission to list the species he grows:

acuminatum
atropurpureum
aurigeranum
christi
christianae
commonae
cruttwellii
dielsianum
fallacinum
godenoughii
gracilentum
hellwigii
herzogii

javanicum
honori
laetum
leptanthum
lindaueanum
lochae
longiflorum
lowii
luraluense
macgregoriae
multicolor
multinervium

orbiculatum
phaeopeplum
pseudonitens
quadrasianum
rarum
retusum
rugosum
superbum
yelliottii
zoelleri
kawakamii
vaccinioides

Bob Badger's list of species and named hybrids:

atropurpureum
aurigeranum
brookeanum
christianae
christii
culminicolum
dianthosmum

goodnoughii
gracilentum
hellwigii
laetum
leptanthum
lochae
lowii

phaeochitum
rarum
retusum
rugosum
solitarium
yelliotii
zoelleri

Dr. Mangles
Dr. Sleummer
Ne Plus Ultra

Princess Alexandra
Valentine

VIREYA GOSSIP - at the 2nd WRC: Jim Gerdeman said someone had bloomed *R. superbum* - a fine pink color.

I believe it was Art Whitehair who said he has a bud on *R. solitarium*, or *R. goodnoughii*.

The Californians New Hybrid slides included the following named *Vireya* plants: Belisar, Lazarus, Pete's Cream (temporary name), Marshall Pierce Madison, Santa Lucia Narnia, Mount Pire, Calavar, Clair Parvel and Moonwood. Can you California "Viners" better describe these by color? Are they registered and have they been pictured in color in the *ARS Journal*? Any other named *Vireya* hybrids around?

Did I understand E. Parker Smith or Paul Molinari to say that they--or someone-- is successfully growing some of Paul Kores' Eastern New Guinea seed lots? Which species?

HOW HARDY ARE VIREYAS?

R. kawakamii

When Peter Cox was here in July he said that Edinburgh is having questions about *R. kawakamii*'s position. Have any one of you out there successfully hybridized, raised and flowered any seedlings of *R. kawakamii* crossed any other *Vireya*? Or for that matter, *R. saintpauli* or *R. vaccinoides* crossed any other *Vireya*?

FERTILIZER: Several of you from Oregon and California said you fertilize your *Vireya* species and Hybrids. With what? When? Monthly? Myself, Bob Badger: I used 6-10-8 Rhododendron Fertilizer made by Charles Lilly Company on potted *Vireyas* (species and hybrids) this summer in June. About $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon per 1 gallon container. I had molds form in a few days on the surface of the fertilizer applied to pots inside the fibreglass house--none on the potted *Vireyas* in the shade house--Good Results. I also feed all my *Vireyas* with Charles Lilly's 20-20-20 Plus Soluble once a month--Rate 1 tablespoon per gallon of water--on potted cuttings and larger plants. (Plus is: .02% Boron, .05% Copper (Chelated), .10% Iron (Chelated), .05% Manganese (Chelated) .0005% Molybdenum, .05% Zinc (Chelated). I got very good results and with the combination (on my soil mix) much breaking and growing of low-placed dormant eyes on the stems is occurring.

GROWING MIX, Bob Badger: I use a mix of $\frac{2}{3}$ unsifted ($\frac{1}{2}$ " minus) Oregon Pumice and $\frac{1}{3}$ of Ground Fir and/or Hemlock Bark-- $\frac{1}{2}$ " minus. I also grew and bloom a *R. laetum* x *R. javanicum*, orange (35 trusses and buds are now opening on a 2'x2' by 2' tall plant). This plant I repotted into a 5 gallon container 22 months ago. The fertilizers as above. The potting mix then was pure 100% Oregon Pumice-- $\frac{1}{2}$ " minus. The foliage is deep green and shiny.

Send me your observations of successes--or failures.

HOUSEPLANTS: As a retail nurseryman, I am very frustrated in having to sell Figs (Ficus), Dracenas, False Aralia (Dizygotheca), Palms and Boston Ferns as relatively "tough" houseplants. I would much rather sell rhododendrons i.e., Vireyas. All I had heard 3 to 4 years ago was problems with them and lanky size. So I went to the ARS Convention in 1981 in San Francisco to talk to Paul Kores. Armed with a list of all Vireya Species I could find and with the help of E. White Smith and Bill Mearns, we "lured" Paul into our room late one night at the Convention and "talked Vireyas". Paul graciously gave his comments freely and I list them here for all of you to share.

I asked his opinion--on the basis of having seen and collected in New Guinea--which of these species in my lists might make a good candidate for an indoor houseplant. He put one check mark for likely and two checkmarks for very likely.

PAUL KORES' LIST AND COMMENTS:

atropurpureum	✓	
christii	✓	
comptum	✓	
culminicolum	✓	
gracilentum	✓	basket
hellwigii		super
herzogii		possible
hyacinthosmum		a big pot plant
invasorium		= inconspicuum
konori	✓	Eddie Creek forms, best he saw
leptanthum	✓	
luraluense		from Bouganville
majus		Pangahga Creek forms better
phaeochitum	✓	
pleianthum		not container plant
rarium	✓	
rhodoleucum	✓✓	
rubellum	✓✓	good red
searleanum	✓✓	
solitarium	✓✓	
spondylophyllum	✓✓	
superbum	✓✓	
vandeursenii	✓✓	= vitus-idea
varianum		very similar to leptanthum
zoelleri	✓	

Paul added: New, or not in my list of species, that should be good container plants

capelleae (Kores)	Pseudovireya
rosiflorum (Stevens)	Solenovireya
ruhiniiflorum (Craven)	Euvireya
detznarianum (Skeumer)	Pseudovireya

Tom Tatum added:

pauciflorum	Malaya
Valentine	Hybrid

The plants listed above are my goal, now, to collect and grow, to see if they might make good houseplants. Send me your notes.

Well thats it for now. Lets see how far this "Vireya Vine" can reach out and share. Like the IPPS the rule is simple--no sharing!--no receiving!

Publishing dates: When I can. Information to: 405 N. Washington Ave., Kent, WA 98032.

Editor

Bob Barber