

VIREYA VINE
ISSUE # 16 MARCH 1988
PUBLISHED BY THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE
RHODODENDRON SPECIES FOUNDATION

From Graham Snell
Dear VV,

Victoria, Australia
Dec. 15, 1987

(NOTE: This is not a copy of the letter that Graham wrote to me but I shall try to cover some of the things that he is asking. E. White, VV Editor)

Graham would like to know the state of, or the scale of commercial production and marketing of Vireya Rhododendrons in the U.S.A.

- A) What proportion of retail outlets, or how many handle them?
- B) The range of varieties?
- C) How many commercial propagators of Vireyas are there?
- D) What sort of volume of sales compared with the hardy

Rhododendrons?

E) What sort of advertising or promotion is being done? (Any copies available?)

F) Are Vireyas being included on plant list? (Again are copies available?)

G) What sort of advice is given by nurseries to their customers? (How to grow pamphlets etc.)

H) Any projections for the future scope and the type of Vireya likely to be marketed?

I) How many commercial Vireya growers are there in the U.S.A.?

Your Editor is going to leave the above questions open to the Vireya Vine readers to answer. One more question should be asked is; Who are the commercial growers? Large or small that will sell plants. Send in the information and I will print it in the VV. We of course are not in the business of running advertising copy but do feel that our readers need as much information as we can find about Vireya Rhododendrons and therefore shall print any information that we get from a commercial grower. (No cost of course) The Rhododendron Species Foundation has Vireyas on the list this year. Send for their Distribution List.

Graham Snell is MOVING. In April 1988 they are moving nursery, Vireya collection and all to Queensland. Their new address will be; 29 Bunya St.
Maleny, Queensland, 4552
Australia

This is about 100KM north of Brisbane, a little inland and about 1,500 ft. above sea level. He hopes that the new location will be ideal for Vireyas and that they intend to concentrate on growing them. Hence his interest in what is happening elsewhere.

Graham is looking forward to meeting Vireya friends from around the world at the Wollongong Meeting in October. He says that they will not be re-established by then but if anyone in the future wants to stop by the new place they would be most welcome.

Come on you Viners, how about some comments and commentary to Graham's questions.

Also a letter from Dick Cavender

Sherwood, Oregon
Dec. 28, 1987

Note from E. White,

Dick (Red) sent me his letter on Computer disk. Good for you Red and I was able to read it after I spent some time and did a few things with his disk. Red also sent his Vireya inventory on computer disk so that I was able to up date the list that was published in the last Vine. He was interested in some new (to the U.S.A.) species that showed up on that list and asked where they were growing. Well, when Dr. Chamberlain from RBG Edinburgh was here for the American Rhododendron Society Western Regional meeting last October he brought with him cutting of Vireyas that the Rhododendron Species Foundation did not have. Because they (the cuttings) all look good and should root and grow on I have included them on the list of plants in cultivation from this area.

One answer to Graham Snell's previous questions is Red's comments " I am still getting response from the HORTICULTURE article. I have been selling things as fast as I can root the cuttings. It is nice to see some interest in Vireyas from the general public."

Red's Rhodies & Alpine Gardens
15920 S.W. Oberst Lane
Sherwood, Oregon 97140
Tel # (503) 625-6331

Ed Note; The HORTICULTURE magazine ran an article about Vireyas and gave a few growers addresses. SUNSET magazine has also done short things about Vireyas. If you are ever in San Francisco and get to Golden Gate Park try to find the SUNSET magazine display area. There is a large bed of Vireya Rhododendrons growing near-by that is worth seeing. There are also Vireyas planted in other places that I have a hard time finding in the park. How about one of you SF Viners telling us about Golden Gate Park and their Vireyas?

Another Letter from a Viner who asks some questions but does not want the letter printed.

This person is having trouble with some of the Vireyas; Some of the plants have leaves that turn brown on the edges, some of the new leaves also do this. They have not been fertilized and have not been over watered. They have been kept in a cool room in the house. One plant sent out lovely new growth and then this drooped and the plants slowly died. A big plant of Dr. Sleumer also had the leaves turn dry and this symptom moved down the plant. The sick plants and the soil were sprayed with "Benomyl" which did not help. This person says that the plants are not watered until the soil is fairly dry.

How about some answers Viners:::

From Ruth Funder
Dear VV,

Victoria, Australia
Jan. 18, 1988

Just a comment about Mark Nixon's letter in the last VV, - re R. brookeanum var. gracile. Personally I have had two plants which both burnt easily and were not at all successful. I have found that the hybrid brookeanum X gracilentum X lochae, very much easier to deal with and very floriferous.

I have been really been bitten by the "Vireya Bug" and have squeezed into my small suburban retirement residence, a collection of 125 Vireya species and hybrids. I would like to list those that thrive well and are my favorites.

Firstly "Pink Delight" flowers all of the year around

"Sweet Mac"

"Bulolo Gold"

christi

laetum

"Coral Flare"

luraluense

orbiculatum

konori Hybrids

zoelleri hybrids

I must cut the list short because as each plant produces it's lovely flowers I am inclined to make it a "favorite". Good luck for the Vireya Vine. I read it always with pleasure.

Ruth Funder

7 Mary Street

Kew, Victoria 3101

Australia

Thanks Ruth for the nice letter. Yes you have a good point about R. brookeanum. It like any species Rhododendron can be had in a bad form. I have bloomed many seedling Vireya plants and then set them out side to freeze in the winter because they just were not good enough to take up the small amount of room that I have. I have had a lot of trouble with "sun burn" the last few years, and I don't know why because I have been growing Vireyas since 1972 in the same greenhouse. I must say again that a "real greenhouse" can make a major difference in how Vireyas grow. I just can not get over how well the hybrid plants are doing that I took out to the Park Department Greenhouses a few years ago. They sure do not look like plants that came from E. White because I just do not have that good of a greenhouse. These plants have large full size leaves that have a wonderful healthy look to them. The plants are very vigorous and bloom well for the Park Growers. O WELL.

Good list of favorite plants Ruth. E. White

From Bob Withers

Victoria, Australia

Dear VV,

January 3, 1988

Looking back through my copies of the Vireya Vine, all of which have provided most interesting and informative reading, I find that my last contribution was contained in issue # 4 of May-June 1983.

Time passes quickly and I must apologize for not having written again until 1988. Perhaps I may be excused for not having written in 1987 when I suffered a severe Myocardial Infarction followed by a Triple Coronary Artery Bypass operation. I am happy to tell you that I am well again, and a number of items have appeared in issues of the Vireya Vine that I would like to clarify or comment upon.

I will start with my good friend Norman Cruttwell's letter in the current issue (VV15). I agree with Norman that R. tuba discovered by Norman on Mt. Dayman is a possible natural hybrid between R. rhodoleucum and R. cruttwellii. There is no mystery about Hilda Crouch's plant illustrated in the ARS Journal (American Rhododendron Society - Vol. 41 #3). Her plant was given to her by me as a rooted cutting grown from a cutting collected by Norman and Ray Weeks on Mt. Dayman in 1974.

Norman mentions *R. christiana* var. *grandiflora*. I find that I also have a plant that is in flower at this very time, that is identical to Norman's description. My plant has been grown from seed supplied by Norman and labeled *R. christiana* from Kanasuru at an altitude of 2,500 feet, planted 9 January 1971. It would seem to be Norman's *R. christiana* var. *grandiflora* and I agree that it is a magnificent form. Possibly it is a tetraploid form of *R. christiana*. *R. 'Birat Red'* from Birat, M.B.P is growing well for me but has not yet flowered. I can only suggest that it is a *R. zoelleri* hybrid.

Norman's list of natural hybrids is very interesting. There are several others that I can add to the list. To my knowledge the first natural hybrid was *R. 'Dr. Hermann Sleumer'*, a hybrid between *R. phaeocephalum* and *R. zoelleri* which appeared in a batch of seedlings of *R. phaeocephalum* raised by Brian Clancy. The seed had been collected by Dr. Sleumer in West Irian on February 7th, 1962 at the Wardori river, Arfak mountains, Vogelhop peninsula. It was registered by Tom Lelliott and published in the R.H.S. Yearbook in 1972.

Another natural hybrid is *R. 'Sweet Mac'*, a cross between *R. inconspicuum* and *R. macgregoriae* from seed collected in the wild and raised by Lou Searle in New Guinea. It was named, introduced and registered by Graham Snell.

Another probable natural hybrid was grown from seed collected in the early 1970's by Don Stanton in New Guinea of *R. christi*. The seedlings were fairly typical of *R. christi* but when they flowered they were a uniform red colour, it's shape similar to flowers of *R. leptanthum*, and they are probably a natural hybrid between *R. christi* and *R. leptanthum*.

In Vireya Vine #15 our Editor raises the question of the identity of his plant labeled *R. hellwigii* which when it flowered appeared more like *R. dianthosmum*. I may be able to clarify this. Firstly, Dr. Sleumer as far as I know, collected *R. dianthosmum* in the Cyclops mountains in West Irian in 1962. Many years ago the Australian Rhododendron Society obtained scions labeled *R. dianthosmum* from Strybing Arboretum in America and Edinburgh in Scotland. Both grew well but the plants appeared to be different. Both still survive but have never flowered. It has been suggested that one might be *R. scabridibracteum*. (E. White note, It is possible that I got these plants from seed that Don Stanton sent over labeled *R. hellwigii* in about 1974, he wrote back about a year latter and said that for sure this seed was not *hellwigii* and that he did not know what it was.)

I do not think that our Editor's plant is in fact *R. dianthosmum*, but rather a good form of *R. konori*. If you are able to see a copy, I would draw the readers attention to my article in the "The Rhododendron", the Journal of the Australian Rhododendron Society of December 1974 entitled "The Quest for Rhododendron Hellwigii". The Society cosponsored an expedition to Kasonombe in New Guinea in search of *R. hellwigii*. Seed and cuttings of NGF 37954 were collected off rhododendrons having dark red flowers reputed to be *R. hellwigii*. I distributed seed from this collection all over the world to anyone I knew to be interested in Vireyas at that time. However of the many seedlings that have flowered none have red flowers. All have had beautiful creamy white flowers. In our opinion it is a very good form of *R. konori*.

R. hellwigii has since been recollected by Paul Kores and successfully introduced into America. Our material died in transit, but we have since imported scions of Paul's collection from America. They have not flowered yet. Paul Kores also collected seed labeled *R. superbum* which he sent to Australia and I think also to America. These seedlings have grown into very attractive plants, as yet unflowered, but they are quite different in appearance to plants of *R. superbum*, and they may in fact be *R. hellwigii*.

Our Editor mentions in issue #15 that the abbreviation ARS for both the Australian and the American Rhododendron Society is confusing. I agree with this, and during the Australian Society's expedition into Papua New Guinea in 1981 we decided to give our collection numbers the prefix ANRS to distinguish them from American collections. You may have seen ANRS prefixes used since.

Also in issue #15 is the list of species and the various countries in which they are grown. Regarding the species grown in Australia there are many corrections and some time I will produce an up to date list.

However at this stage I will comment on only a few names.

Firstly, *R. acuminatum* many years ago we imported a species labeled *R. acuminatum* from Kew Gardens in England. When I visited England and Kew Gardens in 1976 I found that they had corrected the identification of their plants of *R. acuminatum* to *R. rugosum* var. *rugosum*. So anyone in America to whom I sent scions labeled *R. acuminatum* prior to 1976 should change the name to *R. Rugosum* var. *rugosum*. *R. acuminatum* has since been introduced into cultivation as a result of the expeditions to Mt Kinabalu in Borneo by the New Zealand people from Pukeiti.

(OK Bob, Don Stanton sent me a cutting of what he labeled *R. acuminatum* in November of 1973. I still have the original plant grown from that cutting. It is very slow, grows only once a year, hardens the new wood very fast, has not bloomed, but is not hard to root. It looks very much like what we also have as *rugosum*. Should I change the name to *Rugosum* v. *rugosum* to. Changing the name of this plant will sure make the propagator at the Rhododendron Species Foundation happy because we (the RSF) strive to have the correct names on plants that we sell. We think that the right species names are very important and find the *Vireya* group difficult to say the least. E. White)

R. suaveolens is listed as being synonymous with *R. orbiculatum*. We have both growing but *R. suaveolens* has yet to flower. However both are growing at Edinburgh Botanic Gardens and they are quite distinct Species. The illustrations in Curtis' Botanic Magazine are quite distinct.

R. fallacinum . No queries or comments except to say that I have flowered it for the first time a couple of weeks ago and it is really magnificent.

Finally of the species listed I would like to straighten out the queries on *R. gardenia*. The question was asked in one of the *Vireya* Vines, why *R. gardenia* was so common in Australia, and almost non-existent in cultivation elsewhere. It is not common in cultivation in Australia and I doubt if it exist in cultivation anywhere. I would refer readers to my article "The First Flowering of a New Guinea Form of *R. konori*" in the *Rhododendron Journal* of the Australian Rhododendron Society in December 1974, and also to my letter in *Vireya* Vine #4 May-June 1983 page 14, item #3. The plant collected by Lyn Craven has now been registered as *R. 'Hunstein's Secret'*. This was originally thought by us to be *R. gardenia* and in 1974 I distributed seed under the name *r. gardenia* all over the world. John Rouse used the pollen extensively in his hybridizing program using the name *R. gardenia* affin. Dr. Sleumer originally said that it was typical *R. konori*. Lyn Craven, the late John Womersley and myself consider it to be a form of *R. leucogigas*, but John Rouse still has his doubts and now prefers the registered name of *R/'Hunstein's Secret'*. It may well be a hybrid between *R. konori* and *R. leucogigas*. John Rouse has shown that the pollen is in well formed tetrads. The flower suggests it is a form of *R. konori* but it's leaves suggest it is *R. leucogigas*. So please change the name on any of your plants labeled *R. gardenia* or *R. gardenia* affin. to *R. 'Hunstein's Secret'*.

More recently, material labeled *r. gardenia* has reached Australia from Boskoop. This eventually flowered and proved to be one of the finest *Vireyas* I have ever seen. The truss was enormous with numerous large creamy yellow florets. It reminded me of hybrids that I have seen between *R. konori* and *R. aurigeranum* only it was much better. John Rouse examined the pollen and mostly it was arranged in diads but there were a few triads. The pollen suggested that it was a F1 hybrid. If it is, hybridity should be displayed when the selfed offspring flower. In my opinion it will prove to be a hybrid and not *R. gardenia*.

Finally I have a couple of questions of my own and would be grateful if the readers could answer them.

Firstly regarding *r. konori* var. 'Pink Cherub'. We imported this from America some years ago. Eventually it flowered and is magnificent. However, surely it is a *R. konori* hybrid. Neither the leaves or the flowers look like *R. konori*. Has anyone any answers?

Secondly what is *R. 'Pink Creeper'*? We have imported *R. 'Pink Creeper'* cross from America which has proved to be interesting, but we can find no record in the literature of *R. 'Pink Creeper'* having been registered.

Enough Said.

Dr. R. M. Withers
10 Urquhart Street
Hawthorn, Victoria 3122
Australia

(Well the real *R. gardenia* please stand up.) (OK Bob is there even a species in the wild with the real name of *R. gardenia*???? E. White)

Our Resident *Vireya* Authority in the field sends his Quarterly report which follows. I also notice that Norman must now have a computer to use because his latest letter is printed on a "dot matrix" printer. It looks very good Norman and I must know what kind of equipment you are using and if there is much computer equipment in PNG?

From Norman Cruttwell

Papua New Guinea

Dear VV,

December 30, 1987

Christmas is over, and owing to a fall which cracked a bone in my leg, I am quite immobile, with quite a lot of time on my hands. Time to answer letters and write articles. Very welcome! However the leg is healing fast and I will soon be about again. One thing that I do regret is not being able to get up to the Park. *Rhododendron '121'* has been in flower and I missed it. Luckily I was OK when *R. baenitzianum* (I think) flowered for the first time, with a magnificent spray of 14 enormous soft flame coloured flowers on long peduncles, making a large head. I have never known *zoelleri* to have more than 4 or 5 flowers. The foliage is quite different too, more lanceolate, longer and darker green. Altogether a superb species.

(Note; I sent Norman a copy of the page from the American *Rhododendron* Society Journal, Vol. 41 #3, which showed a picture of *R. Herklotz* #5, *R. superbum* and *R. Tuba*. The first two accompanied an article by Dick Cavender and *R. tuba* was photographed by Leanie Borch with an article by Hilda Crouch from Australia, E. White) Thank you for your letter and photo copy of Mrs. Crouch's specimen of *R. tuba*. I think that it is a photo that she took several years ago, and I identified it as *R. tuba*, though the corolla lobes are a bit longer than typical. The leaves are typical *tuba* and not *R. rhodoleucum*, which has completely sessile orbicular leaves like *R. blackii*. On the same page there are two other photos, one of *R. superbum* and one unspecified (*Herklotz* #5, Ed). That looks to me exactly like *R. phaeochitum*. Were they also from Hilda's garden? (No they are from Dick Cavender's. Ed)

Please find enclosed a list of all of the Rhododendrons, cultivated and natural, which we have in the Lipizauga Botanical Sanctuary and Mt Gahavisuka Provincial Park.

Rev Canon N. Cruttwell
'Calanthe' P.O. Box 961
GOROKA, E. H. P

Papua New Guinea

PS (Post Scrip from Norman)

NOTE. ARS is an abbreviation for the Australian Rhododendron Society. They brought up some hybrids in 1983. Rooted cuttings from artificial hybrids raised in Australia. *R. hellwigii* is very doubtful. I had 5 rooted cuttings, but the severe 1987 drought has killed 4 and the last looks pretty sick. I made the mistake of planting them out. The identification of *R. baenitzianum* has not been independently confirmed. It is a magnificent plant, in my opinion it is even better than *R. zoelleri*, to which it is obviously closely related. Norman Cruttwell.

RHODODENDRON LIST 1987, Lipizauga Botanical Sanctuary

<i>R. atropurpureum</i>	Mt. Wilhelm, SP
<i>R. aurigeranum</i>	Wau, MP
<i>R. beyerinckianum</i>	Mt. Giluwe, EP
<i>R. blackii</i>	Laiagam, EP
<i>R. calignis</i>	Mt. Maip, EP
<i>R. carringtoniae</i>	Mt. Dayman, MBP
<i>R. christi</i>	Mt. Maip, EP
<i>R. christinae</i>	Daga, MPB
<i>R. commonae</i>	Kain Swamp, EP
<i>R. cruttwellii</i>	Mt. Dayman, MBP
<i>R. culminicolum</i> V <i>culmin-</i>	Local form (Small flowered) BHP
<i>R. "</i>	Alpine form (Large flowered) Mt Giluwe. EP
<i>R. dielsianum</i>	Local, BHP
<i>R. gracilentum</i>	Mt. Kaindi, MP
<i>R. herzogii</i>	Local, BHP
<i>R. hellwigii</i>	Saruwaged Mts. MP
<i>R. hyacinthosumum</i>	Mt. Dayman, MBP
<i>R. inconspicuum</i>	Local, BHP
<i>R. jasminiflorum</i>	Indonesia, etc. (via ARS)
<i>R. konori</i>	Daga, (White form) MBP
<i>R. "</i>	Mt. Kaindi (Pink form), MP
<i>R. laetum</i>	W. Irian, (via ARS)
<i>R. leptanthum</i>	Mt. Kaindi, MP
<i>R. leucogigas</i>	W. Irian, (via ARS)
<i>R. lindaueanum</i>	Mt. Kaindi, MP
<i>R. lochae</i>	Australia, (via ARS)
<i>R. loranthiflorum</i>	Bougainville, NSP
<i>R. luraluense</i>	Mt. Balbi, NSP
<i>R. macgregoriae</i>	Local, BHP
<i>R. maius</i>	Mt. Wilhelm, SP
<i>R. multinervium</i>	Local, BHP
<i>R. nummatum</i>	Local, BHP
<i>R. phaeochitum</i>	Local, BHP
<i>R. pleianthum</i>	Mt. Maip, EP
<i>R. rarum</i>	Local, BHP
<i>R. rhodoleucum</i>	Daga, (and via ARS)
<i>R. rubeiniflorum</i>	Mt. Giluwe, EP
<i>R. saxifragoides</i>	Mt. Giluwe, EP
<i>R. scabridibracteum</i>	Local, BHP
<i>R. solitarium</i>	Mt. Kaindi, MP
<i>R. stevensianum</i>	Mt. Michael, BHP
<i>R. truncicolum</i>	Mt. Suckling, OP
<i>R. tuba</i>	Mt. Dayman, MBP
<i>R. womersleyi</i>	Mt. Wilhelm, SP
<i>R. yelliotii</i>	Mt. Wilhelm, SP
<i>R. zoelleri</i>	Litipinaga, BHP

Unidentified Species

<i>R. sp. 'Birat Red'</i>	Birat, MBP
<i>R. sp. 'Daulo Pink'</i>	Daulo Pass, BHP
<i>R. sp. 'Mt. Kainda'</i>	Mt. Kaindi, MP
<i>R. sp. 'G 121' (aff maius)</i>	Mt. Gahavisuka, BHP (Herb. Cruttwell 1910)
<i>R. sp. 'G122'</i>	Mt. Gahavisuka, BHP (Herb. Cruttwell 1945)

Hybrids (Natural and artificial)

<i>R. aurigeranum</i> X <i>macgregoriae</i>	ARS
<i>R. christinae</i> X <i>aequabile</i>	ARS
<i>R. christinae</i> X <i>laetum</i>	ARS
<i>R. christinae</i> X <i>lochae</i>	ARS
<i>R. Christianae</i> X <i>lochae</i> X <i>macgregoriae</i>	ARS
<i>R. christinae</i> X <i>lochae</i> X <i>zoelleri</i>	ARS
<i>R. Culminicolum</i> X <i>dielsianum</i>	Nat. Local
<i>R. culminicolum</i> X <i>multinervium</i>	Nat. Local
<i>R. konori</i> X <i>christinae</i>	ARS
<i>R. konori</i> X <i>herzogii</i>	Nat. Mt. Kaindi
<i>R. konori</i> X <i>aurigeranum</i>	Nat. Kaisinik
<i>R. laetum</i> X <i>gracilentum</i>	ARS
<i>R. laetum</i> X <i>macgregoriae</i>	ARS
<i>R. lochae</i> X <i>macgregoriae</i>	ARS
<i>R. macgregoriae</i> X <i>dielsianum</i>	Nat. Local
<i>R. macgregoriae</i> X <i>rarum</i>	Nat. Local
<i>R. macgregoriae</i> X <i>zoelleri</i>	Nat. Litipinaga
<i>R. rarum</i> X <i>dielsianum</i>	Nat. Local
<i>R. scabridibracteum</i> X <i>phaeochitum</i>	Nat. Local
<i>R. stevensianum</i> X <i>macgregoriae</i>	Nat. Lufa
<i>R. zoelleri</i> X <i>dielsianum</i>	Nat. Litipinaga

Thanks , Norman for the fine list. What do the abbreviations after the locations mean. I think that I can figure out the EHP one which should mean Eastern Highlands Province. Right? It also must be noted that you say that you have almost lost your plants of hellwigii. We, and I do mean, all of us must pass these plants around to other growers. It would be a shame to lose one of the vireya species that we are now growing because only one or a few people are growing it.

This is the first Vireya Vine in a long time that I have had more than enough letters to fill the eight pages. I have a letter from Hugh Caldwell that will need to go into VV17. But Hugh does ask for cuttings from anyone who would share them with him. He might even buy them if you want.

Hugh Caldwell

187 Brickyard Road

Doctors Inlet, Florida, U.S.A., 32030

I had planned to put the mailing list into this Vine but that shall need to wait for another time. I would like to put Telephone numbers into the mailing list. Telephone numbers could make for much easier communicating and would be useful if a person was traveling around. Send your Telephone number in if you care to.

VIREYA SEED

We now have a new person handling and distributing Vireya Seed. Please send your seed to him and be sure to tell him that you want Vireya Seed. Vireya Seed is handled different from the other Rhododendron seed because it will not last near as long in storage.

Send Seed, Your name and address, list of your seed type preference, etc.

Bill Moyles

ARS Vireya Seed Exchange

4243 Norton Ave.

Oakland, CA. 94602 U.S.A.

E. White Smith (Vireya Vine Editor)

VIREYA VINE

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U. S. A.