

VIREYA VINE
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RHODODENDRON SPECIES FOUNDATION

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E. WHITE SMITH, EDITOR

From Dr. Richard Chaikin Boston Massachusetts, USA
Dear VV, Oct, 1988

I think that it is quite important to continue to be exact with names of cultivars. In this regard I am writing to the Vireya Vine. After purchasing a few plants from Lynn Watts (in Seattle), I attempted to find out about the cultivar called CLIRIFLORMU. I asked Lynn about it and he told me that the name came with the plant when he got it from Australia. I then contacted several people around the country trying to find out about this plant. No one knew anything about it, nor was anyone successful in researching the problem.

Armed with the above lack of information, I headed for Australia with the VV group and the IRU meeting in Wollongong. I asked people down there as well and I even asked the famous Rev. Cruttwell and still no one could help me. But I did find some purchasers of this same cultivar.

During a break in the proceedings at the International Rhododendron Conference, and acting purely on a hunch, probably from up above, I asked Dr. Withers if he could help. When he asked why, I told him about Lynn Watts. He happily said that he had sent Lynn some plants. When I gave him my pen and then examined his writing I immediately knew the answer to my mystery. It seems that Bob had taken a course in prescription writing. The answer to the riddle is that R. CLIRIFLORUM is really LORANTHIFLORUM.

I am writing to the VV to inform any person who had such a plant to change the name on their label.

Dr. Richard Chaikin
7 Whitter Place
Boston, Ma. 02114 USA

From E. White Smith

Good, Dick, I have a plant of R. loranthiflorum with 17 trusses in bloom now in my greenhouse. Great plant that blooms young and is easy to grow. It might be a good choice for a cross, because of it has good habits.

Last June I read in the RHS Journal "The Garden" a letter to the editor from a lady in Malaysia. Most of us Vireya nuts keep our "eyes on the look out" for words in other publications like 'Malaysia, Borneo, PNG, Bali'. She said in her letter that she also grew a few Azaleas. OK, FINE. This is my kind of person and I wrote to her right away and asked if she knew about Vireya Rhododendrons or if she had seen any.

I also said that if she wanted, I would send her a list of species Rhododendrons that were native to her area. She did write back. Here is a excerpt from her letter to me. I don't think that she will mind.

From Mrs. Robyn Russell,
Dear Mr. Smith,

Kaula Lumpur, Malaysia
September, 1988

Yes I am interested in learning more about the "Vireyas" - I have seen a couple of Rhododendrons in the forest, mainly at higher altitudes than here (6000' c.f. 4500') which may be members of that group. I know little about them as yet, and like yourself have found no one here to help identify them. But of course I can still collect them. You might be interested in some habitat information, some photos for your newsletter, or eventually some seed.

From E. White Smith,

You bet, we would like some seed. We always like seed that has been "collected in the wild". Any other information is also welcome about plant habitat. This group of Rhododendrons are so new to cultivation that we need all of the information that we can get.

Mrs. Russell also says that they are about to be transferred to Far North Queensland, Australia for two years. She might have a chance to do some Vireya-hunting at years end. I am putting her on the Vireya Vine mailing list. She should be able to get some Vireyas when she moves to Queensland. Most Viner's know that Graham and Windy Snell have moved their operation to Queensland and are building a new nursery to grow Vireyas. Robyn will need to get in touch with the Snell's when she moves to Australia. Graham and Windy are not ready yet but I am sure when they are back into production again they will let all of us know.

SO, I and have made a list of the plants that are native to the Malay Peninsula. I include the list so that other people will also have this information.

I believe that most Rhododendron people are interested in plants from the wild. I also believe that we all must be careful about removing plant material from the wild areas. I really think that the key to the problem is to have people in the native country grow cuttings of species plants and send them out to growers and hobbyists. The person in the local area could make a little money with a scheme like this and we growers would get much better plant material. Is this a realistic idea or just my day dreaming???

I have also researched the Rhododendrons of the Philippine Islands. There are many species plants growing in both of these areas that are not now in cultivation or have not been reintroduced for many years.

We Viners (186 +) around the world know many people. Some times we learn that a person is going to a Vireya species area either on holiday or because of their job. We (The Vireya World) need contacts in native specie locations. I truly believe that there are people in these countries that do know about Vireyas and would like to know about the VV.

Keep your ears open, and your list of species plants ready.

Here is the list of the "Malay Peninsula" plants.
 I do not pretend that this list is complete or correct. It is the best that I can do with the information at hand.

Native species Rhododendrons of the Malay Peninsula.

Information taken from "An Account of Rhododendron in Malesia" by H. Sleumer, partly a reprint from "Flora Malesiana ser.I, vol. 6, part 4. And from "New Species and Noteworthy Records of Rhododendron in Malesia (Ericaceae)" by H. Sleumer, reprinted from Blumes 21 (1973) 357-376. These plants belong to a distinct section of the Genus Rhododendron called; Subgenus Rhododendron, Section Vireya; They are all scaly leaved plants. This group always will have a narrow wing or tail at both ends of the seed. No other Rhododendrons have seed like this.

Plant name Location	Sleumer # Other Information
Rhododendron spathulatum Malay Peninsula, Perak: Mt. Kerbau Siku, Ulu Telom.	#10 1525-2135 m ; Pahang: Mt.
Rhododendron perakense Malay Peninsula, (Cameron Highlands).	#13 1830 m.
Rhododendron seimundii Malay Peninsula (Pahang: Mt. Tahan),	#15 1675 m.
Rhododendron scortechinii Malay Peninsula (Main Range from Perak to Selangor).	#16 1465-2135 m.
Rhododendron malayanum Malay Peninsula, note that there are seven (7) varieties of this species but only var. malayanum grows on the Malay Peninsula.	#80
Rhododendron obscurum Malay Peninsula (Pahang: top of Mt. Benom, 2105 m). Might be a natural hybrid of R. malayanum and #s 13,16 or # 10.	#85
Rhododendron hybridogenum Malay Peninsula (Pahang: Cameron Highlands) Most certainly a hybrid of R. malayanum and # 136. It is exactly intermediate between these species.	#88
Rhododendron jasminiflorum Malay Peninsula #1 (Johore: Mt. Ophir); #2 is var. punctatum (Kedah: Kedah Peak, in Main Range from Perak/Pahang: Cameron Highlands, down to Selangor: Mt. Moyang, also in the Tiaping Hills and on Mt. Tahan) 855-1830 m. #5 is var. oblongifolium Malay Peninsula (P. Tioman, Pahang; Mt. Blumut, in Johore)	#136 vars. 1,2 5
Rhododendron pauciflorum Malay Peninsula #1 is var. pauciflorum (Main Range from MT. Kerbau to Mt. Batu Puteh; also on Mt. Tahan) 1370-2135 m. #2 is var. calocodon (main Range in Selangor: Mt. Mengkuang Lebak, Mt. Nuang) 1465-1770 m.	#168 2 vars.

Rhododendron robinsonii #217
Malay Peninsula (Main Range from Perak to Selangor, and in the Taiping Hills) 1035-1830 m.

Rhododendron javanicum #225 3 vars.
Malay Peninsula #3 is var. teysmannii

Rhododendron longiflorum #250 2 vars.
Malay Peninsula 1500 m.

The rest of these plants are not part of the Vireya group but closely related to the Asiatic Rhododendron plants.

Rhododendron wrayi #278 "Irrorata" group
Malay Peninsula (Main range from Mt. Kerbau on the Perak/Pahang/Selangor; on Mts. Tahan and Tapis in Pahang 1200-2165)

Rhododendron moulmmainense #287 "Stamineum" group
Malay Peninsula (Kedah Peak: Mt. Jerai) 855-1220 m.

Rhododendron klossii #288 like #287
Malay Peninsula (Main Range on the Perak-Pahang border, from the Cameron Highlands to the Frazer Hill region and in SW Pahang) 1600-1800 m.

My one month trip to Australia and New Zealand was a great success for me. I had a wonderful time and saw many fine Rhododendrons. I also met many fine Vireya people. I am going to take what I shall call "Editorial Privilege" and tell you about some of what we saw "Down Under".

I loved the two major Rhododendron gardens in the Southern hemisphere. The National Rhododendron Garden at Olinda in the Melbourne, Australia area has become a real sight. It is a large garden with mass color. They have also been able to attract many people who are not necessarily Rhododendron fanciers. This helps pay the bills. They are growing Vireyas in the ground at Olinda and in tree ferns. We will all need to watch what happens to these plants.

The other garden is Pukeiti, located on the side of Mt. Egmont at new Plymouth New Zealand. Pukeiti is just super. They had a lot of major wind storm damage but it will heal soon. They are also growers of Vireyas.

I had the privilege of visiting two growers that I must tell you about. The first one is Dr. John Rouse in Melbourne. What a collection he has. I think that John has the best and largest collection of Vireya Rhododendrons in the world. I was definitely impressed. Thanks for the look John, it was wonderful and I shall never forget your place. I can still picture your plant of R. javanicum, eight (8) foot tall, in full bloom, looking over the neighbors fence. We saw some of what John is doing with his grafting experiments. This is a very interesting garden. The other grower that blew my mind, was north of Auckland NZ. We went to Whangarei to see Oz Blumhardt. Oz had Vireya plants everywhere. He grows Vireyas commercially but is also an explorer and collector. If you get to New Zealand be sure to call OZ and go see him if you can.

One of the real thrills for me was to meet George Argent who is working on Ericaceae in the "Malesia" area for the RBG Edinburgh and has spent a lot of time in Borneo. George told me that he really likes the Vireya Vine and is happy that we are still doing it. Thanks to Bob and Marge Badger, and Fran Rutherford for getting the Vine started and for helping me keep it going. It is a lot of work but to know that you people out there really like and need it is a major compliment to me. One day when we were at John Rouse's garden, I was talking to Dr. Argent about the plant that we call *R. acuminatum*. There is much confusion about this and *R. rugosum* at this time. The plant that I got many years ago from Don Stanton with the name *R. acuminatum* is not what it is labeled. We now think that it is *R. rugosum*. George Argent has promised to write us a short item about the difference in the two plants.

From Bill Moynier Los Angles, California (lat. 34' N.)
Dear VV, June 21, 1988

Greeting from Southern California! Bette and I have enjoyed reading about the adventures in the Vireyas Vine and have decided that it is time for us to report in. We have been raising Vireyas here for 18 years now. Ever since Pete Sullivan, then head nurseryman at Stribing Arboretum presented us with a few cuttings to try. To our surprise they thrived here and over the years, Pete and others, notably Pete Schick and Maury Sumner generously supplied other cuttings, seedlings and small plants. Today the foundation planting for our home on a small residential lot in West L.A. is essentially 100% Vireyas. Some of these plants have been in the ground for 14 years. I had previously tried hundreds of older "broadleaf" types here with only mild success (I have isolated about 25 clones which do fairly well here). The Vireyas really seem to like it here, so much so that after getting so many inquiries as to where they could be purchased (the yearly Stribing sale was the only source that we knew of), Bette and I started our mail order business, Vireya Specialties Nursery, in 1980. We have room for only about 500 cuttings a year, so its very "small peanuts" indeed. But we enjoy it a lot, especially all of the new friends and acquaintances we have made over the years.

The blooming characteristics of the Vireyas here have continued to surprise and please us. I maintain a log book of blooming data and was somewhat surprised last year when I discovered that quite a few varieties had progressed to a stage where they were blooming essentially every month of the year. As you might expect these are older plants (10-18 years). Only did 'Narnia' exhibit this year around blooming characteristic as a relatively young plant. The plants showing this year around characteristic are as follows, where the number of months bloomed in the past 12 months are shown in parenthesis:

'Aravr' (12), 'Athanasius' (12), 'Clipsie' (11), 'Felinda' (11), 'Moonwood' (11), 'Narnia' (12), *gracilentum* X *lochae* (10), *javanicum* (11), *lochae* (12), *lochae* X (*konori* X Dr. Sleumer) (12), *lochae* X *pseudonitens* (10), *macgregoriae* (12), *macgregoriae* X *aurigeranum* (12), 'Red Prince' X *lochae* (11). Others as they mature, seem to be headed for essentially year around bloom include; 'Belisar', 'Cristo Rey', 'Mount Pire', 'Vladimir Bukovski', *laetum*, (*laetum* X *zoelleri*)F2, 'Pink Delight' X *jasminiflorum*.

On the other hand some of the older plants have settled into a pattern of heavier flushes over shorter bloom periods, typically 3-6 months. Some of these are; 'Cair Paravel', 'Calavar', 'Kert Adler', 'Ravalac', 'Tashbaan', 'Taylari', 'Thomas Becket', brookianum hybrid (the one we originally thought was Var. Gracile) and christinae X macgregoriae. The conclusion which I've drawn from all of this is that we won't really be able to define blooming characteristics very well until the plants start reaching maturity (10 to 15 years old). A correlate to this is that a new hybrid should not be dismissed too quickly just because it doesn't have large or well rounded trusses. A "nice" plant like 'Taylari' becomes a real beauty when it covers itself all at once with trusses as ours did last year for the first time! I am learning to look at new hybrids with an eye to what a mass display of trusses will look like rather than just evaluating the one or two trusses of a juvenile plant.

Still on the subject of blooming there is another characteristic which is an extra bonus: We don't really have a peak of bloom here. I have been tracking bloom time for 48 varieties over a two year period. If the plant showed color at any time during the month, I counted it as having bloomed that month. The results were that there were essentially an even number of varieties in bloom (18) from September through April, dropping down to a low of about eight during the June - July period. And this tendency has persisted since then, with the exception that older plants are filling in the low periods during June - July as time goes on. This characteristic allows us to enjoy these plants essentially year-around with the most color during the Fall-Winter-Spring periods.

Now for the bad news. Last fall for the first time, I had a serious outbreak of stem rot in the cutting beds. So much so that we will have only a fraction of the plants for sale this year compared to last year. The situation has been made even worse from a fallout of the drought we are presently in here. The water department has had to supplement our normally "good" Owen's River water with water from other sources and for the first time in our 18 years of growing Vireyas, we are seeing the effects on leaves and vigor of the young nursery plants. (The larger plants in the ground have shown no adverse effects yet) The new water has a much higher concentration of salts and a slightly higher PH. At present I am at a loss to know how to take corrective action. I have been studying some papers written by Carl Deul on our conditions here in Southern California and have a few ideas to pursue. Anyone out there have any ideas???? Also if any of you have gone through the excessive stem rot problem and then whipped it I would sure be open to suggestions. So far I have undertaken improved sanitary procedures which I hope will rectify the problem: fumigating the beds between batches of cuttings with Vapam and adding a dip of each culling in a broad spectrum fungicide before sticking them into the cutting beds.

Just a brief note on cultural problems here. The only disease/fungi which are noteworthy are spider mites, petal blight during the rainy season only, and on about 15-20% of the varieties, mildew in the late spring and summer. The mites are quite readily controlled with 3-4 sprayings of Malathion during the year. The petal, blight is a bit more difficult. Each rain seems to set it off anew whether I've sprayed recently or not. I have resigned myself to automatically firing up the sprayer as soon after each rain as possible. With this procedure, Bayleton keeps it pretty well at a minimum.

Fortunately, Bayleton also does the best job for me in knocking down the mildew to where it is more of a nuisance than a serious problem.

For those of you who might visit this area in the future, you may be interested to know that there is a bed in the UCLA Botanical Garden devoted solely to Vireyas. This bed, in it's present form was completed in 1984 by the Southern California Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society in cooperation with the UCLA garden. The bed contains about 80 plants, some of which are now 5 to 6 feet tall. The plants are now sufficiently mature to provide colorful displays just about any time of the year. A second bed, just across the path was planted a few weeks ago. The new bed is devoted solely to species plants. Also, earlier this spring, an initial planting of 16 Vireyas was made at the Huntington Gardens in San Marino. This is another project of the So. Cal. Chapter. The winters are cooler over there by the mountains and time will tell whether or not these plants, situated in a partially shaded bed, near the top of the hill, just south of the Library, will survive and thrive.

The letters to the Vireya Vine have all been very interesting to us and very helpful in some cases. We are looking forward to many more Vines in the future.

Bill Moynier
2707 Malcolm Ave.
Los Angeles, Ca. 90068

Great letter Bill, Thanks for sharing with us.

In VV #15 (Dec, 1987) I published a list of names and address for the Viner's who do not live in the United States. Because the Vireya Vine is a communication tool I am this time putting in some of the USA people. This is only part of the list. You will need to wait for VV #20 to get some more.

Art Whitehair	3256 Central Ave.	Alameda Ca. 94501
Yoder Brothers, Inc.	PO Box 68	Alva, Florida 33920
B.L. Frasier	1804 West 34th St.	Austin TX. 78703
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Amos	Box 11 Starveout Creek Rd.	Azalea Or. 97410
Mr. Marvin Larsen	45 Hazel Rd.	Berkeley Ca. 94705
Mr & Mrs. L. Nieuwenhuis	3435 Malito Dr.	Bonita Ca. 92002
Dr. Richard W. Chaikin	7 Whittier Place	Boston, Ma. 02114
Dr. Peter Stevens Arnold Arb	Harvard U. 22 Divinity Ave.	Cambridge MA. 02138
Mr. Walter Mills	Box 52	Chappaqua NY. 10514
Mr. Mathew A. Gordon	R.D. #1	Chester Springs PA.
Jay W. Murray ARS REGISTRAR	21 Squire Terrace	Colts Neck, NJ 07722
Mr. Clifford E. Desch	MATHEWS ROAD	CONWAY, MA. 01341
Mr. Hugh Caldwell	187 Brickyard Rd.	Doctors Inlet Fl. 32030
Barbara Campbell	527 Ashbury Ave.	El Cerrito, Ca. 94530
Doreen M. Spellman	7709 Errol Dr.	El Cerrito Ca. 94530
Dorothy Adams	4960 Mabals Dr.	Eugene, Or. 97405
Mr. Brian Pocock	1955 W. 28th	Eugene Or. 97405
Mr. & Mrs. Tom Bowham	27149 Huey Lane	Eugene Or. 97402
Mr. Harold Greer	1280 Good Pasture Island Rd.	Eugene Or. 97401
Mr. Fred Benich	P.O. Box 852	Somis, Ca. 93066-0852
Dr. Mack McCormick	2361 22nd St. W. Court	Florence Or. 97436
Mr. Peter Schick	17455 Ocean Drive	Fort Bragg Ca. 95437
Mr. Allen Anderson	220 Mulberry Way	Franklin Lakes NJ. 07417
Mr. Michael O'Hara	8375 Carson Rd.	Gladstone, Or. 97027
Theo C. Said	1150 West Winton Ave. #466	Hayward Ca. 94545

Mr. Robert Hirano c/o Lyon Arb	3860 Mona Rd.	Honolulu Hi.	96822
Mr. Russell A. Redler	304 Jefferson Hights	Jefferson, La.	70121
Jeanne K. Gustafson	28 Wood Hollow Road	Lawrenceville, NJ.	08648
J.H. Belyeu	6105 Riviera Manor Dr.	Jacksonville FL.	32216
Russell A. Redler	304 Jefferson Hights Ave.	Jefferson La.	70121
Adele & Joe Jones	17701 S.W. West View Rd.	Lake Oswego, Or.	97034
Mr. Ralph Williams	157 Yale Ave.	Lewisville Tx.	75067

Please notice that I sort this list by "city". We are always looking for new Vireya Viner's and welcome new names. Remember that we must charge for the Vine. Our fee is \$10 US but this charge is not for just a year (we have no set time). Some people have paid only once but many people pay each year and tell me that it is well worth it to them and that they like to help with the cost. Some Viner's are very good at writing to the Vine but others have never been heard from (are you "others" really out there?????).

I have finally decided to try a slow release fertilizer on my plants. A few years ago I took most of my hybrid plants to the Park Department Greenhouse for them to grow and to display in our Conservatory. The young man who watches after these plants has been very successful with them. He uses "Sierrablen" 18-7-10 + iron (9 gm per gal pot. he uses this on the top of the pot soil mix. So I got some and am trying it. Maybe it will help with the chlorosis problem. Nothing else has helped so far. I don't feel too bad about how my plants look though because I also saw a lot of yellowish plants in Australia and New Zealand. I hope you all have a happy Christmas and a prosperous 1989.

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