

VIREYA VINE

ISSUE # 41, JANUARY 1995

PUBLISHED BY THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE RHODODENDRON SPECIES
FOUNDATION

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E. White Smith, Editor

In the August 15, 1994 issue of the 'AVIATION WEEK & SPACE TECHNOLOGY' magazine, there is an article about one of our Rhododendron friends. Mike Zimmerman, formerly Boeings Southeast Asia sales director has been promoted to President of Boeing China, Inc. Mike grew Rhodies in north Seattle for years and is still very interested in these plants. I visited with Mike in July at the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden, and he was excited about moving to China and getting a chance to see some of the native plants. China has been one of Boeings biggest customers for new jet aircraft.

Contributors to the Vine since issue # 40

David Binney	New Zealand	Leslie Riggall	South Africa
Oz Blumhardt	New Zealand	John Rouse	Australia
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Joan Menelay	Washington State	Hideo Suzuki	Japan
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Mitch Mitchell	Hawaii	Lynn Watts	Washington State
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Barry Paget	Australia	John Bodenham	England
Roland Perry	California	Rita Watson	New Zealand
R. P. Pohlmann	England		
Russell Redler	Louisiana		
Eldean Rempel	Washington State		

The date on your mailing label signifies the last time you contributed to the Vireya Vine. ALSO. You may pay membership to the Vine or the RSF with you credit card - Visa or Master Card. Be sure to sent the expiration date with your card number. Credit cards are a good way to pay for something outside of your own country because there is no extra charge and it is billed in your currency.

More interesting things: A clipping from a newspaper

"It is very important to keep your pruning tools clean and disinfected, especially if you are cutting out diseased or pest-infested wood or foliage. This recipe is based on one developed by the University of California at Riverside.

- ◆ 1 part sodium hypochlorite (Clorox, Purex, etc.)
- ◆ 5 parts water
- ◆ Immerse blades for 2 seconds and then immediately immerse them in,
- ◆ 1 part vinegar with 5 parts water plus 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- ◆ Then dry the tool
- ◆ This has proved to be more effective than using flame. Corrosion of the metal parts is stopped by the vinegar, and lubrication is provided by the cooking oil. Transmission of such diseases as Phytophthora, crown rot and fire blight is stopped."

This is probably a good idea. I have never done anything like this and have never had a problem. In a greenhouse it might not be too much trouble but outside, wow what a pain. Good idea anyway to remember.

One old time Vireya grower, Dr. Arne Jensen has passed away in Oregon. Arne was one of the early growers and created quite a few hybrids. At one time, his home was within throwing distance of the Pacific Ocean on the central Oregon coast.

From a newspaper clipping that was printed in the Portland Chapter ARS newsletter in 1990. "Keeping in low profile; the worlds smallest Rhododendron blooms at Pukeiti (New Zealand), according to the Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust director Graham Smith. The diminutive plant is known as R. rubineiflorum, and will only grow to about 3cm (little more than an inch), said Mr. Smith. "We think that this is the only plant in the country and certainly one of the few in the world that has been cultivated" Of particular interest is the large size of the flower in comparison to the rest of the plant".

"Mr. Smith said that he brought a cutting back from the highlands of Papua New Guinea in 1986 where the plant grew naturally on tree fern stems. Although Rhododendrons have been found in PNG for more than 100 years, this petite species has only been discovered in the last 20 years. Because there is more public demand for smaller Rhododendrons these days, Mr. Smith said the tiny plant would be ideal for hybridizing with other varieties".

"From pint-sized to out-sized, Pukeiti is not only the home of the smallest Rhododendron , but also the species reputed to have the largest individual flowers, R. leucogigas. The tiny R. rubiniflorum would have room to spare inside the giant flowers."

I saw the R. rubiniflorum blooming at Pukeiti in November 1994. Although this plant covered about a foot of soil area I would have missed seeing it except for the bright red flower, which was a single flower standing above the foliage which could have been up to 1 1/2 inches across. Really nice. Many of you Viners know that I went to Tasmania, Australia and to the North Island of New Zealand for a month from October 25th to November 25th. Don't think I was just down there seeing the sights. I was doing serious Rhodie work, looking for Vireyas. And I found them in a big way. Every where I looked there were Vireyas growing and blooming. They even grew along the roadsides and needed to be sprayed with Roundup to keep them under control. No, really.

From Joan Menelay

Blaine, Washington State

Dear VV,

October 28, 1994

I got a great deal of information from Lucie Sorensen's letter. Her three basic rules put the finger on my problem, overpotting. I got my Vireyas, konori, laetum, and christi in 1992. Konori flowered for the first time this month so I guess they are growing OK in their oversize pots. I used 1/2 medium pumice (which I bought at an Orchid nursery), 1/4 fine peat moss (I couldn't fine coarse peat) and 1/4th aged and screened fir bark. I was so leery of fertilizer that I did nothing at all until this spring. Then I used some Sunrise natural plant food tablets (6-9-1). All of the plants are healthy and so far I have had no insect or fungus trouble. This is likely due to my two 20 inch box fans which run on a low setting continually. I should say that I have my Vireyas in a 9 x 13 foot lean-to greenhouse with a SE exposure and a 50% shade cloth cover. I was so pleased when my konori flowered, I felt like rushing out to buy more Vireyas. Perhaps I'll write for the Bovees catalogue!!

Joan Meneley

8820 Osprey Road

Blaine, Wa 98230

Thanks Joan, but just blooming a konori is a great thing. I have at least four plants and have only ever bloomed one, once. Overpotting is not a real problem if you watch the watering. My greenhouse is the same size as yours and it also faces south, but I never have used any fans inside, except to send heat out. I just don't like the cold draft on me when I am in there. I also don't like the extra noise a fan causes, but have never had a problem. BUT a fan is a good horticulture practice and you are doing right to use one. Or, and here is a dumb question, does a fan also cause a cold draft for the plants?

Glen Sahara sends me photos of his Vireyas in Hawaii. He says they are all flourishing in his 200 inches of rain per year. His plants sure look good in his pictures.

From Russell Redler

Jefferson, Louisiana

Dear Vireya Vine,

October 14, 1994

The last time I wrote I told about the Rhododendrons that were growing in the New Orleans City Park Botanical Gardens. This past spring, I attended the April Horticultural Show and was looking forward to seeing the plants again. To my astonishment, there was not a single Rhododendron plant in that area, under the Live Oaks, by the Wisteria arbor. I looked up Mr. Cotton, in the plant sales area, where he was selling Rhododendrons again this year, and asked him about the missing plants. He told me that they were all stolen! "It was probably an inside job" -- someone who worked in the park. They would have needed a wheelbarrow to haul the plants to the six foot tall fence. Then they would have needed to toss the plants over the fence into an area where the park maintains a compost pile. Then they could have picked them up later with a truck. Mr. Cotton was very sad about this theft, because he had donated the plants, dug the holes and refilled them with the necessary loose pine bark mulch. The plants had been thriving. He said that he will not donate anymore. What a sad thing to report.

This spring I flowered a 2 1/2 foot tall Vireya; *R. laetum* x *konori*, to my delight, in a gallon size container. Nice.

Russell A. Redler

304 Jefferson Hights Ave.

Jefferson, LA 70121

Bad thing, this stealing of plants out of public gardens. When I worked for the Tacoma City Park Department years ago I dug a trench and buried a 2x4 board and then tied a wire around the root balls. If someone tried to steal the plants they at least wouldn't get a good live one.

From Hans Sauter

Seattle, Washington State

Dear VV,

July 20, 1994

During to 1980s I collected Vireyas from several sources, chiefly the Rhododendron Species Foundation and a few mail order nurseries. By 1990 I had 36 kinds of tender Rhododendron species, mostly Vireyas.

Knowing little about cultivation and remembering that Vireyas are epiphytic in the wild, I thought up a planting mix. It consisted of roughly equal parts of shredded sphagnum moss, perlite, and a fibrous pulp made by grinding old rounds of Western Red Cedar, that had been used in the garden as steps and had rotted thoroughly. The Vireyas seemed to love this mix, and mostly thrived; most of them even bloomed. Eventually I ran out of the rotted cedar and had to use some potting soil in the mix; this worked also.

I didn't have a substantial greenhouse and had found that Vireyas hated being in the house in the winter. I built a makeshift lean-to shed against the south side of our house, 8 x 4 x 4 feet, just a frame of 2x4s covered with double layers of 4 mil plastic. The back panel was black plastic and the shed had a hinged lid which could be opened up to 90 degrees, or closed tightly and secured in cold weather. Inside were two heating cables. In mid-October I would cram this contraption full of Vireyas and plug the heating cables in at night if it was likely to freeze. The heating cables did keep the inside above freezing, if sometimes just barely. For several years I had it made.

In the deep freeze of December 1990 the black plastic panel came loose and I did not notice it for several days. I was still working long hours at that time. The shed froze, despite the heating cables being on the whole time. Incredibly, about fifteen of the plants were still alive when I discovered this calamity, obviously badly damaged. Over the ensuing year about half of the plants dwindled and died. Seven plants recovered and are thriving to this day. Most of them bloomed this year, two are blooming right now, out in the open where they stay from April to October.

Seven plants left out of thirty-six is painful. The shed is long gone, and I now shelter the survivors either in a very small greenhouse or, sadly, in the house again. Sometime in the next few years I hope to be able to construct a small conservatory adjoining the house. My list might be of use to someone

Vireya etc. roll call, mid-1990

* - survivors in 1994

R. acuminatum	laetum
aurigeranum	lochiae *
christianae	loranthiflorum *
christianae x macgregoriae	maddenii
christii	macgregoriae
chrysodoron (maddenii)	mayabarae (? what ?)
ciliicalyx (maddenii) *	pachypodum (maddenii)
commonae	parryae (maddenii)
culminicolum	pauciflorum
dielsianum,	phaeopeplum *
goodenoughii	polyandrum (maddenii)
hyacinthosmum	rarum
inaequale (maddenii) * ~	retusum
jasminiflorum	rugosum
javanicum	suaveolens
kawakamii	superbum
konori	veitchianum (maddenii) *
	zoelleri

Hans J. Sauter M.D.
12544 9th Ave. NW
Seattle, WA 98177

You were lucky to have any of these plants survive the cold. Vireyas are not at all hardy to cold, although overhead protection and keeping them on the dry side helps them sometimes stand a bit of frost. But not much. In New Zealand I saw the damage done to Mark Jury's Vireyas when he had a hard frost. His problem was that one of the sprinklers didn't work, so some of his plants got too cold and had bad damage. Some of his new rooted cuttings were killed. A sprinkler is a good way to fight a quick freeze if it doesn't last too long.

Serious Vireya growers should get the small booklet from Jay Murray, called "Vireya Names". Jay is the Registrar of Rhododendron Plant names for the American Rhododendron Society. She has put together this booklet for Vireyas and it is a job well done (\$5.00US plus postage). In March of this year Bill Moynier from Los Angeles sent Jay some corrections/additions to the "Vireya Names" booklet. The changes have also been incorporated in the International Rhododendron Register.

- 1. 'R. Agnes' introduced by Peter Sullivan*
- 2. 'Calavar' named by Moynier not Sullivan*
- 3. 'Cyprian' named by Sullivan not Moynier*
- 4. 'Felinda' named by Moynier*
- 5. 'Marshall Pierce Madison' intro by Sullivan not Moynier*
- 6. 'Moonwood' named by Moynier*
- 7. 'Mount Pire' named by Moynier*
- 8. 'Narnia' named by Moynier*
- 9. 'San Gabriel' named by Sullivan*
- 10. 'Shasta' named by Moynier*

*Jay W. Murray
21 Squire Terrace
Colts Neck, NJ 07722-1021
Tel (908)946-8627*

West Coast United States people please note: *The Ninth Annual Spring Plant Sale of the Rhododendron Species Foundation will be held on Saturday, April 1, 1995. The location is; Weyerhaeuser Corporate Headquarters, West Entry Parking Lot, 9AM to 4PM. Also the garden is open free during the sale. For information call (206)838-4646*

VIREYA NURSERYS

*The Bovees Nursery (Lucie Sorensen)
1737 SW Coronado
Portland, OR 97219
(503)-244-9341 or 1-800-435-9250
Catalogue is \$2.00 (Mail Order)*

*CapeCod Vireyas (Dick Chaikin)
405 Jones Rd.
Fallmouth MA 02540
(508)548-2233 leave a message (Mail Order)*

*Red's Rhodies (Dick Cavender)
15920 SW Oberst Lane
Sherwood, OR 97140 (Mail Order)
(503)625-6331*

*Te Puna Cottage Gardens (John Kenyon)
Te Puna Road, RD6
Tauranga, New Zealand (07)552-5756*

One of the real advantages of being the editor of the Vine is that people send you things. Stan Eversole who lives in Palo Alto which is south of San Francisco California used a photo of *R. goodenoughii* on his Christmas card this year and sent one along to me. He also sent a good photo of *R. aequabile*. Both of these plants had been grown from seed by Stan. Very nice Stan. I also got a card from Norman Cruttwell in England. Viners who have been with us for a few years know about Norman. He was our (*Vireya* world) resident collector, expert, friend and correspondent from Papua New Guinea. Norman had to leave PNG because of his health and he was very sad to do so. But, he is doing better and is getting out and around at times. If you happen to be in England, I am sure that Norman would be thrilled to have a visit. If you have a real technical question about *Vireyas* you could try writing to him and he would probably help you out. He said in his card that he is still working on Botanical things. His address is:

Rev. Norman Cruttwell

Collage of St. Barnabas

Blackberry Lane, Lingfield, Surrey England RH76NJ

Here are some ideas about pests from Hugh Caldwell in Florida. I can't tell from his letter if he is laughing as he writes these things or not. He says that you can put white rabbits in the greenhouse and their body heat will help keep it warm. But you probably will need to move your *Vireyas* up out of the way, and it may take a number of rabbits. If you are bothered by grasshoppers you can use grasshopper soup to keep them from eating your plants. Take a cup of grasshoppers and grind them into a pulp. Add the pulp/soup to a gallon of water and use it over your plants. The grasshoppers won't eat the plants. Hugh says that some of their grasshoppers get to be 2 inches long. He also has lots of salamanders and frogs in his yard and that they do a good job of keeping the insects under control. He has a salamander with a red and blue tail that just lies around waiting for bugs to happen by. They have had a very wet summer and fall in Northern Florida where Hugh lives and he is changing his potting mixes in order to fight root rot. For the *Vireyas* he is using 50% fir bark and 50% lava rock (1/4 to 1/8 inch in size).

I don't know what Hugh has for "lava rock" but here in the Pacific Northwest we can buy crushed lava rock and it is red in color. It is fairly light weight and is quite porous. It is used for paths and top dressing here but would be good to add to a potting mix.

Jan Oldham in Auckland New Zealand used what she calls "potting bark" to plant her *Vireyas* in. I wondered what she was talking about and she showed me some of it. It was fine bark that had been partially composted and was nitrogen stabilized, what ever that means. Some of the hardest things about growing *Vireyas* and communicating with growers around the world are the terms we use. I am sure that people in NZ know what "Potting Bark" is but elsewhere we don't have a clue. Hugh's lava rock could be what we call pumice or it could be the same thing as our crushed lava. Every one has different trees in their area and call bark by different names. BUT, almost anything works, if it drains well. IF IT DRAINS WELL. *Vireyas* don't like wet feet.

Yes, Please enroll me as a member of the Rhododendron Species Foundation.
This form is from the Vireya Vine

☐ Student \$15 ☐ Active \$35 ☐ Family \$50 ☐ Supporting \$100

Members outside of North America check here for Air Mail and add \$10 ☐

☐ Enclosed is a check made payable to the RSF. US funds only

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Account Number _____ Exp Date _____

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☐ Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Ms.

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