

# VIREYA VINE

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SPECIES FOUNDATION

R.S.F. PO BOX 3798, FEDERAL WAY, WA. 98063  
E. White Smith, Editor

*O, Boy - Yes we did Hawaii. I know that many of you Viners wanted to go there (Hawaii) at the end of January, and look, and talk about Vireyas, and sit in the sun, and get a sun burn, and we did it, and it worked out swell, in fact, better than swell. It worked out great. We were very encouraged by the interest in Vireya Rhododendrons shown by the people we met in Hawaii. To many of the people who were at the meeting, Vireyas were a new plant that they had not known about. There might even be a chance of their starting a Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society.*

*OK, let's start someplace other than at confusion. On January 29<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 in the morning, my wife, Lucie, and my daughter, Julie Feste, got out of bed in Portland, Oregon, dressed and headed to the airport for a 6:30AM flight on the United Airlines Shuttle to San Francisco. Sure, you say, so what, I've done that also, so what. Well, the Portland airport is under construction and you must go to a parking lot and take a bus to the terminal. That was OK because I planned on leaving my car in the long term lot at the airport anyway. Yes, it would have been nice to drop Lucie and Julie off at the terminal with the baggage but that is not allowed. The baggage and box of Vireya plants were checked through to the Kona, Hawaii airport and we are on the plane heading south. Into the landing pattern at San Francisco and the guy driving the plane pulls the wheels and flaps up and adds lots of power and we are no longer landing. FOG over the end of the runway. Fly around for a while and start to run out of fuel. OK, land at Oakland, California. Our pilot has the right touch and we even get a parking spot at the Oakland terminal. Wait an hour and some people get off and take the Bart (rapid rail system) into San Fran. Bang, off we go again. I just can't believe this. We are taking off and flying in a Boeing 737 across a body of water to another airport not more than 25 miles away. Anyway, we land at San Francisco and the United DC 10 is still sitting there waiting for us (the three of us?). Off we go for Hawaii. We land at Kona, which is located on the south west side of the big island. Now what is going on? There is no airport terminal. Just people sitting outside under large overhead covers. These people didn't look very happy. Hey, look, it wasn't our fault the plane was late getting in so that they couldn't go back to the mainland USA. I am not ready for this, no terminal, must be Hawaii. We had a box of Vireya plants with us and our friend, Glen Sahara, had notified the plant inspection people that we were coming and needed help. I opened the box and unwrapped a plant of *R. x planecostatum*. I then unwrapped a plant of *R. stenophyllum* with its very narrow leaves and that was enough for the plant inspection people. They closed the lid on our box and told us to go on through.*

*We get our rental car and headed out on a three hour drive to the Volcano National Park and the village of Volcano. We were headed for a US military rest area in the park where Mitch Mitchell had set up a get-together for that evening.*

*After driving past the area Lucie was observant enough to get me to turn the car around and we found the location only because I remembered that Mitch drove a Mazda van. Into the bar we go. Been a long day. Dark by now. Ya, this is the right place, there is our buddy Dick Cavender drinking beer. There is Mitch and Barbara Campbell also. There is George Argent from the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh, Scotland, also drinking beer. This has to be the place. I say to Lucie and Julie that I know these people and they like Vireyas and beer.*

*We stayed at a Bed & Breakfast in the village of Volcano. The owner had told me that he had a five acre botanic garden and that we would like it. He sure did and we loved it. Great big beds full of blooming Cymbidium orchids, and Anthuriums, plus many tropical plants we had only heard of. He also was growing Vireya Rhododendrons.*

*The next day we met at the "True Value Hardware Store" in Volcano. The store has a meeting room upstairs which they were very kind to let us have for the day. I started the meeting off by requiring everyone to introduce themselves and tell why they were here. Everyone really cooperated and told their life history. There were over 40 people attending so the introductions took over an hour but that was good. Glenn Sahara gave out free drawing tickets and sold them also. Greg Adams who owns Jungle Jewels Nursery in the Hilo area brought in a lot of Vireya rooted cuttings to give away and we sure thank him for his generosity. Mitch Mitchell and Bovees Nursery also brought plants. While we were calling numbers and giving plants away, I had Dick Cavender tell the crowd about how to root cuttings. I showed 80 slides about where Vireyas are grown around the world and showed about 20 species and 20 hybrid pictures also. The highlight for Lucie and me was the slide show put on by our good friend, George Argent, from the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, Scotland. George is the Vireya Rhododendron species expert for the world. Other than us Viners fiddling around and having fun thinking that we know a few things, he is really the expert. He had made a special trip to Hawaii just for this meeting. Thanks, George! That really meant a lot to us. Anyway, George showed slides for two hours. His were about Vireya collecting in Borneo and in the Philippine Islands, a very special showing for many of us interested in species and how they grow in the wild. Dick Cavender and Mitch Mitchell also showed slides. The day was finished off with a slide show presented by Peter Schick of Fort Bragg, California. Pete showed pictures from his trip to Papua New Guinea in 1987. Very interesting.*

*The next day most of us met at the Hawaiian Tropical Botanic Garden which is located just north of the City of Hilo. The Garden Director, Scott Lucas, was at our meeting the day before and was very gracious to open the garden and show us around. They have planted a few vireyas and plan to try growing them. Probably the larger leafed species and hybrids will do well there even though it is right at sea level. I should think that they will not be able to grow the high altitude or the dwarf plants successfully. It is just too warm at night. Probably the day time temperture will be OK but it is important to remember that Vireyas are Rhododendrons, and Rhododendrons need to cool off at night. They like a cool root system. In their native habitats Vireyas often get 40°F or lower at night and up to 80°F in the day. This very same temperature thing happens to hardy species in their native locations. But a few species and some hybrids will be able to handle the higher night time temps. Vireyas have been grown for years by Robert Hirano at the Lyon Arboretum in Honolulu, Hawaii.*

*On this day of garden tours we visited the gardens of Glenn Sahara, Charles Trommer, and Charles Martin and last but not least the garden of Helen Carlson, an extraordinary garden of Palms and Vireyas, grown in mostly black crushed lava. A few words about these gardens is in order.*

*Glenn's garden is kind of like an organized jungle with lots of neat plants, palm trees, dogs, cats and exotic birds. Charles Trommer's garden is north of Hilo and looks out over the Pacific Ocean. He has a wonderful valley with a waterfall and stream which he has cleaned out and planted up. Charles Martin's garden consists of many different plants as well as Vireyas. He gets great growth on trees and palms. One surprising thing that I learned there was that you can't plant other things very close to palm trees because the palm tree catches rain water with its leaves and sends it down the trunk for its own use. Rhodies growing close under palm trees don't do well. Mitch Mitchell has his home and garden at 4,100 feet altitude in the village of Volcano. He has done a lot of work landscaping and changing the lay of the land. Mitch has many Vireyas and they all look happy. He can even grow the species.*

From Richard Currie,  
Dear Vireya Vine

Auckland, New Zealand  
December 1996

I have been interested in Vireyas for some six year now and grow them on a north-facing 1/3 acre property here in Auckland. The property is part of a native bush valley and my section has many large tree ferns which provide excellent overhead shade for Vireyas. Vireyas are interplanted with my other plant interest, namely evergreen and deciduous azaleas, both of which I grow under a pine mulch in a much composted soil.

The natural soil here is clay based, so all of the Vireyas are in raised containers in a fine bark mix. There are now some +250 different hybrids and species scattered around the property. Much encouragement over the years has come from John Kenyon of Te Puna Cottage Gardens, and Jan & Brian Oldham here in Auckland.

We are fortunate that we never get a frost, with winter temperatures only dropping to a low of 5 degrees celsius. With the micro climate here in this valley the temperatures can often rise to almost 20°C in mid winter when the sun is out.

My Vireyas flower best in autumn and spring, although there is always around 25-30% of the plants in flower at any one time. I have been building up a collection from some of the rarer plants and am experimenting with growing seed which has taught me to be patient! I have just received my first batch of seed from Bill Moyles in California which will provide some new and interesting challenges. I also hope to try a few of my own crosses this autumn.

Richard J. Currie  
62 Goodall St. Phone 09-625-7098, Fax 7039  
Hillsborough, Auckland, 4 New Zealand

*Good letter, Richard. You didn't say anything about fertilizing. Do you use any? Also your comments about seed growing being slow. Yes, it sure is, but things can be speeded up a bit if a person takes a little bit of extra care. Seedlings need lots of light. Many times we have them in a protected area and they don't get much light. They also respond to feeding. Try using a plastic (small 1 gallon or so) sprayer with a very dilute fertilizer mix in it. Keep the sprayer near the seedlings and give them a shot every now and then. Many people forget that the medium we start seed in is very sterile and has no nutrients. Be sure to send some fresh seed back to Bill Moyles. His address is,*

*Bill Moyles  
Vireya Seed Exchange  
4243 Norton Ave.  
Oakland, CA 94602 USA*

*and he just loves to get E-Mail  
E Mail : [wmoyles@hooked.net](mailto:wmoyles@hooked.net)  
FAX : 510-531-9657  
Voice : 510-531-1375*

*For new Viners information; The Vireya Seed Exchange is run by Bill Moyles (and has been for many years) as part of the Seed Exchange of the American Rhododendron Society. For Americans there is a small charge for seed but there is no charge for other growers around the world. Bill always needs fresh seed. Remember, Vireya seed doesn't last very long so send it soon and don't let it stand around. You won't know what seed is available unless you let Bill know you want some. You must let him know. Wonderful as he is, he is not telepathic.*

*Most of the Rhododendron Societies around the world have a person designated to record and keep records about Rhododendron names. They are called Registrars. You fill out a form and send it to them with your plant description and the name you propose using. For the Royal Horticultural Society is Dr. Alan Leslie and for the American Rhododendron Society is Jay Murray who lives in New Jersey. Jay has been doing this job forever. I have been a member of the ARS for over 35 years and can remember only one other registrar. I first met Jay and Bob Murray in 1982 when we were at a national Convention and discovered that we each had new KayPro Computers and were trying to learn how to use them. It's hard to realize that I have had over 15 years of computer fun so far which has included many new computer friends and lots of spending of money. If you are interested; The Vireya Vine is produced on a 120 Megahertz Pentium computer with 16 meg of Ram. It is printed on a Hewlett Packard 4P LaserJet printer. The computer is running "Windows 95" and Microsoft Word for Windows 95 Version 7. The first Vireya Vine I produced was done on a KayPro II computer running at 2.5 Megahertz with 64 K of ram. This was a CPM computer and I used WordStar 3.3 as the software program. I had a dot matrix printer but it was awful so I would take the Vine on disk to work and spend hours printing it on a "letter quality printer." Great fun. And back to the subject. **Great job, Jay and Bob Murray, for all your years of service. Keep up the good work.***

From Bill Moynier  
Dear VV,

Los Angeles, California  
January 20, 1997

It has been a while, so here is an update from West Los Angeles. In response to the American Rhododendron Societies slide show librarian's request to Chapters to provide some new slide shows, our local chapter delegated me to generate one about "Vireyas in Southern California." Using mostly slides I already had on hand, I sent an 80 slide carousel and script on to the librarian last spring. It showed up in the Journal slide listing in the fall 1996 Journal issue. Its primary thrust is to try to encourage more people to give Vireyas a try. The first half of the show is dedicated to varieties presently listed in catalogs of stateside nurseries handling or specializing in Vireyas. Hopefully, access to such "pictures" will be more enticing than the proverbial "many words." The second half shows some of the newer plants we are growing along with some views of the Vireya beds the Southern California Chapter and the UCLA Botanic Garden (University of California at Los Angeles) established beginning in 1982. I included as many shots as possible of full plants to avoid the boredom of just truss shots. One interesting feedback from the first showing at a California Chapter meeting was: The plant I have identified as 'George Budgen' "is not George Budgen." The orange -yellow color is right but I am told that the flower shape of the true plant favors R. laetum more.

This was a bit of an embarrassment since during the 10 years Bette and I operated Vireya Specialties Nursery, and at many Chapter meetings over the years, we sent forth many of our version of this plant. If you have one of these plants it might be a good idea to add a "?" to the name tag. Another feedback by our member, Jim Jaeger, who presented the program subsequently to two local (not Rhododendron) horticultural societies, was that the listing of species parents for the various hybrids tended to bore the audiences, so he eliminated the longer listings as the shows progressed. This should probably be considered by script readers in future presentations of this program.

In the category of "good omens for the future here", chapter members Fred Renich and Dan Tyson (the Malibu-Camarillo area) and Ruben Sotello (down south in Vista, Calif.) are working diligently to perfect their Vireya propagation techniques with an eye towards possible commercial operations in the future. Since they are some of our youngest members, this bodes well for the continuing interest here and beyond, when some of us older souls are no longer around.

A word about petal blight: This has been one of the wettest falls in memory and each very welcome rain has produced a new plight of petal blight or whatever happened to the blooms - a very messy and discouraging sight. But this year I have had better luck at minimizing damage by spraying with Bayleton immediately after a rain, while the leaves are still wet, within several hours in most cases. In the past I usually waited till the plants had dried a bit and when I was fairly sure the rain was over, which was sometimes the following day, to compensate for the moisture still on the flowers. I have upped the Bayleton concentration from  $\frac{3}{4}$  tsp. per gallon of water to 1 tsp. per gallon. In many cases there has been essentially no detectable spotting of the trusses. Of course it kind of helps to be retired and still fairly mobile to mount this kind of quick response.

New seedlings continue to bloom for the first time. There have been two quite nice 8 inch trussed pure reds resulting from a cross of 'Marshall Pierce Madison' x javanicum. These are good and I will probably register them. An older seedling of 'Clipsie' x 'Ne Plus Ultra' has, with more recent blooms, evolved into a particularly beautiful plant which I plan to register. It is now a two foot tall by two and a half wide, nicely compact plant at about 12 years with excellent foliage. It had 5 inch pure deep watermelon trusses of 14 to 16 flowers, and they are fragrant. An extra plus are the mature buds; like dark maroon slender pinecones, about an inch long with bract ends peeling back as on pineapples. Only 'Athanasius' among my plants approaches this trait.

The slide show contains shots of some other newer hybrids which show good promise. It was a pleasure recently to bloom a couple of little jewels from "down under." A R. stevensianum hybrid x (macgregoriae x rubineiflorum) yielded a 2  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch truss of 5 flowers, pure salmon pink. The plant is now 5 inches tall and 8 inches wide and has 5, possible 9, new flower buds setting. Another is (Hot Tropic x saxifragoides) F2; 4 flowers in a flat 4 inch truss, rose red changing to cream half way down the corolla.

Enough for now. What is every one else doing with new hybrids?

Bill Moynier  
2701 Malcolm Ave.  
Los Angeles, CA 90068

From Clarke Keller

January 20, 1997

Dear VV,

Florida

Here is my contribution to help cover the cost of printing and mailing the Vireya Vine. I really look forward to reading the newsletter.

After plotting, planning and saving for 12 years, we have finally moved from New Jersey to Florida. Actually we have been commuting every few weeks of late while we settle into our new state while trying to close up shop and sell a house in New Jersey. It has been quite hectic, not to mention costly, but the end is near. I hope to start growing Vireyas this spring in Florida and would appreciate any tips on Vireya culture in a subtropical environment. We now live in Punta Gorda which is located on the south west Florida coast. I would enjoy hearing from Florida growers and welcome their input.

Clarke V. Keller

35380 Washington Loop Road

Punta Gorda, FL 33982

Phone 941-505-2300

*Great to know you are moved and are going to continue growing Vireyas. Clarke has been a Viner since 1989 so he has been with us a for a while. I am guessing that you took most of your plants to Florida with you. What do you have and what are your new growing conditions down there? The only advice I can give is to use very well-draining planting medium.*

*Just for your information. The Vireya Vine has 291 subscribers. 71 people from Washington State USA, 74 people from the rest of the USA, and 146 people from what we call "over seas." Australia -24, Austria -1, Belgium -1, British West Indies -1, Canada -4, United Kingdom including Wales and Scotland -14, India, Ireland, Japan, Papua New Guinea, Palau, South Africa -2, Spain -2, and New Zealand -18.*

## Rhododendron Species Foundation Plant Sale List as of December 1996

**Please Note: This is not an order form. If you are interested in any of these plants please contact the RSF.** This list is printed so that our readers will know what is available from the RSF. If you are interested in other species not listed you should make it known to the staff. To a degree at least, the people propagating Vireyas do not know what growers are interested in. Let them know. Or better yet, let all growers know what you want so that they can grow it or procure it for you.

Qty.	Accession Number	Species Name -	Price
	87/037	armitii	18.00
	78/101	christianae	9.00
	85/029	christianae	9.00
	78/103	gracilentum	18.00
	78/089	javanicum	20.00
	85/043	leptanthum	12.00
	87/042	leptanthum	14.00
	89/006	maius	20.00
	83/070	orbiculatum	15.00
	85/042	solitarium	13.00

Qty.	Accession Number and	Species Name	Price
	78/104	aurigeranum	11.50
	85/049	carringtoniae	8.00
	87/040	carringtoniae	8.00
	82/208	christianae	9.00
	85/019	dielsianum	9.00
	83/053	goodenoughii	9.50
	87/045	praetervisum	11.00
	89/004	herzogii	11.00
	89/008	herzogii	11.00
	78/102	jasminiflorum	9.50
	80/144	laetum	12.00
	79/029	lochiaie	14.00
	83/058	loranthiflorum	11.00
	78/099	loranthiflorum	11.00
	85/021	macgregoriae	10.00

The Rhododendron Species Foundation does ship plants outside of the USA. But it can be expensive. There will be a charge of about \$29US for a Phyto certificate plus air mail cost. Plants are bare rooted (washed clean). You will need to send your Government Permits along with orders and complete directions about how you want shipping done.

**The Vireya Vine is financed by its subscribers. The only things you pay for are printing and postage. Fran Rutherford and I do the work for the love of it or for some other unknown reason. We do not have an annual subscription fee. Your mailing label will have a year date on it which is the last time you contributed to the Vine. We welcome your contributions. You can use your credit card to make payments to the RSF for the Vine.**

New subscribers or recent contributors are:

Barbara Anderson	Hawaii	Jeff Knowles	Pennsylvania
Mary Beth Andre	North Carolina	Thinakorn Komkris	Thailand
George Argent	RBG Scotland	Heinz Kratz	Germany
Judith Berg	Hawaii	Leon Kubala	Texas
Dick Cavender	Oregon	Chip Lima	California
Richard Currie	New Zealand	Walter Loescher	California
Landsay Davis	New Zealand	Berry Lowitz	Hawaii
Jozef Delvaux	Belgium	Scott Lucas HTBG	Hawaii
David Dewenter	Hawaii	Charles Martin	Hawaii
Art Dome	Washington State	Mabelle McCormack	Oregon
Ian Donovan	Massachusetts	James McKechnie	California
Sharalin Downing	Washington State	Martin Montholer	Germany
Vance Edwards	Louisiana	Brian Morley	Missouri
Shona Fredrickson	New Zealand	Robert Nelson	Washington State
Iris Gaddis	California	Donald Paden	Illinois
Yolanda P. Gaitan	Columbia	Bernice Parish	California
Harry Hilkh	Ireland	Janice Peltier	Washington State
Robert Hirano	Hawaii	Nan Ray	California
Doug Irish Hosler	Pennsylvania	Eldean Rempel	Washington State
J. G. Inskip	Great Britain	Arthur Rohl	Pennsylvania
Elizabeth Evans Jeffries	Florida	George Ryan	Washington State
Bill Jenkins	California	Greg Santos	Hawaii
Barbara Johansen	Washington State	Peter Schick	California
Melba Johnson	Canada	John Spring	California
Janice Joseph	California	Paul Stanton	Washington State
Renee Kama	Hawaii	Richie Steffen RSF	Washington State
Clarke Keller	New Jersey	Mark Thompson	New Jersey
		MS Viraraghavan	India
		Mark Wright	Florida

## **VIREYA NURSERIES**

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

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

**Equatorial Plant Company**  
Lane, Barnard Castle  
Gray Co. Durham DL12 8PK  
UK Ph/Fax 01833 690519

**Jan Oldham**  
102 Meadowbank Rd.  
Meadowbank, Auckland 1005  
New Zealand

**Cape Cod Vireyas (Dick Chaikin)**  
405 Jones Rd.  
Falmouth MA 02540 USA  
(508)548-2233 leave a message (Mail Order)

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

**Rhododendron Species Foundation**  
PO Box 3798  
Federal Way, WA 98063 USA

**Mark Jury**  
Tikorangi, RD 43  
Waitara, North Taranaki  
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