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R. S. F. PO Box 3798, Federal Way, WA 98063 E. White Smith, Editor

The following report from Jim Gerdemann was presented at the 1998 American Rhododendron Society, Western Regional meeting in Florence Oregon on October 4. Jim lives near the small town of Yachats, Orego:: Yachats is half way down the Oregon coast. It is blessed with a very mild climate where the high temps are seldom over 70F and the lows are rarety below freezing. One of Jim's problems in his research on cold hardiness in Vireyas had been the mild winters. During his talk I asked if the cold was just for a short time or if the ground or potted plants really do freeze. He stated that cold spells often last for three or four days and that, yes, the pots and ground does freeze.

Hardy Vireya Hybrids J.W. Gerdemann **November 29, 1997**

1. lochiae x pseudonitens. Sullivan 1975. Pete Sullivan named a selected seedling 'Lawrence' in 1993. Unnamed sister seedlings were released in the past. They appear similar and are equally hardy. Attractive, vigorous and free blooming. Hardy to at least +25.

2. lochiae x saxifragoides. Mossman prior to 1982. Two clones. Difficult, slow growing. Few flowers, not outstanding.

3. (zoelleri x lochiae) x commonae. Gerdemann 1985. Five plants remain out of 300 after selection for hardiness. Hardy to +25. None are outstanding. Flowers small red.

4. (lochiae x pseudonitens) x commonae. Gerdemann 1986. Twenty plants, one of hardiest named 'Tropic Alpine Brilliant'. Many good sister seedlings. Survived +20 with injury, uninjured by +25. Good vigor and free blooming.

5. wrightianum v. cyclopense x commonae. Gerdemann 1986. Fourteen plants, all very similar. Largest named Tropic Alpine Ruby. Survived ± 20 with severe injury, uninjured by ± 25 . Look like large vigorous free blooming wrightianum.

6. ((lochiae x pseudonitens) x commonae) x self. Gerdemann 1990. Two plants. Survives well in garden. Hardy to at least +25. Not outstanding but might be hardier than 'Tropic Alpine Brilliant'.

7. gracilentum x commonae. Gerdemann 1989. Five plants. Hardy to at least +25. Very attractive, compact and free flowering. Similar to gracilentum but larger and more vigorous. May be named Tropic Alpine Krummholtz.

8. 'Belisar' x hardy red *macgregoriae*. Gerdemann 1990. Two plants remain out of 47 after selection for hardiness. Hardy to +25. 1 flowered, flower rather small light orange and yellow. Not outstanding.

9. 'Belisar' x ((*lochiae x pseudonitens*) x *commonae*). Gerdemann 1990. Four plants remain out of 44 after selection for hardiness. Hardy to +25. One flowered, fair sized flower of bright orange red. This plant is very free flowering and has excellent foliage. It will probably be named and it might make an excellent parent. Second plant, flowers yellow and orange, similar to 'Belisar', but smaller.

10. (lochiae x pseudonitens) x hardy red macgregoriae. Gerdemann 1990. Two plants remain out of 27 after selection for hardiness. One fairly attractive. Neither have bloomed.

11. ('Hot Tropic' x saxifragoides) x saxifragoides. Blumhardt 1992. One plant very nice with good vigor. Has not bloomed.

12. ('Hot Tropic' x *saxifragoides*) x op. Blumhardt 1992. Eight plants. Two are compact and probably selfed. Six tall plants are obvious crosses. All except the two compact plants damaged by +26. None have bloomed.

13. ('Hot Tropic' x saxifragoides) x self. Blumhardt 1992. One plant, attractive but fairly open growing. Undamaged by +26. Has not bloomed.

14. ('Hot Tropic' x saxifragoides) x commonae. Blumhardt 1992. Eleven plants. Tall and open growing. Foliage not very attractive. Undamaged by +26. None have bloomed.

15. ((macgregoriae x laetum) x laetum) x saxifragoides. Blumhardt 1992. Twenty-nine plants. They vary from very compact to tall and open, all have attractive foliage. Many have bloomed. Attractive flowers of salmon pink. One plant with apparent bud sport has larger flowers that are yellow, with light pink margins on two branches. 3 or 4 flowers per truss. Untested for hardiness, but should be hardy to at least +25. An excellent cross.

16. (brookeanum Bako 3 x aurigeranum) x commonae. Gerdemann 1993. Twenty-four plants all with very attractive foliage. Hardiness untested but none were injured by +28. Should survive +25 without injury. The female parent is remarkable in that it has some hardiness. This form of *brookeanum* came from sea level in Borneo. Several bloomed in 1998.

17. commonae (Liagam form) x leptanthum. Gerdemann 1995. Ten two year old seedlings. The Liagam form of commonae is hardier than the Dolo Pass form used in all my other crosses. Untested for hardiness.

18. 'Belisar' x Cream commonae. Gerdemann 1997. Fourteen one year old seedlings.

19. Cream commonae x (gracilentum x commonae). Gerdemann 1997. Many seedlings.

20. Best plant from #9 x Cream commonae. Gerdemann 1997. Many seedlings. This cross might produce something different.

July 1998

Hybrid # 3. All plants planted into garden in area 14, on the south side of a bank where protection may be possible. There are 3 clones and a rooted cutting from one of them. All are large plants.

Hybrid # 16. Numbered in order of first bloom.

- 16.1. 7 flowers in truss 1.75" long, 1.5" broad. Tubular -funnel shape. Color 46. Truss 6".
- 16.2. 6 flowers in a truss. 2.25" long 1.25 wide. Color 46C. Interesting long flowers.
- 16.3. 3 flowers in a truss. 2.1/8" long 2 wide. Color 46D. Colorful new growth.

Hybrid #10

10.1 Attractive plant with reddish new growth, protected from freezing hence, hardiness unknown. Truss 6 flowers. 1.50" long 1.5/8 wide. Tubular-saucer shape. Color 43B or C. Petals recurved. Some what ruffled, attractive and different flowers.
10.2. 6 flowers in a truss. 1.25" long 1.25" wide, tubular-saucer shaped, petals not recurved. Color 44E.

Hardy Vireya Species

J. W. Gerdemann October 8, 1998

1. R. kawakamii. Has grown well in the garden for the past 17 years and is self-seeding. Attractive plant with small bright yellow flowers in midsummer. Survived 15 F without injury. Minor injury at 10 F. Few seed produced when crossed with other Vireyas. The few seedlings obtained died before reaching maturity

2. R saxifragoides. Slow growing and difficult. Not in my collection at present. Has produced some excellent hybrids for Oz Blumhardt. Hardiness untested but probably about 20 F.

3. R. commonae. (R. pseudonitens is now considered to be a form of R. commonae.) Easy to grow and a good parent. Hardy to about 20 F. I have 3 forms:

1. Species Foundation 79-035 Praft, Dolo Pass. Red flowers. Hardy to about 20 F. Killed at 10 F.

2. From Dick Cavender. Open pollinated seed from the garden at Laigan P.N.G. Plant differs in appearance from #1,

however flowers are similar. May be hardier than #1. Froze to the ground at 10 F, but quickly regrew from the base.

3. Cream *commonae* from E. White Smith. Produces a nice truss of light yellow flowers. Should be useful in producing hybrids in colors other than red. Hardiness untested.

From Don Meyer Dear Vireya Vine,

I thought it was time to write and tell you about Vireya growing in the far north. Actually we are no farther north than Portland, Oregon but the winter climate is only slightly more sunny and certainly more severe. I have been playing with Vireyas for several years trying all of the advice I get from the Vine. I have had only minor problems growing the plants, the usual things you do wrong when you are novice. Getting them to bloom however has met with only modest success until recently

I have about thirty plants, ten of which are old enough to be expected to bloom. In addition I have a number of two year olds which I have grown from seeds that I got from Bill Moyles.

I keep the plants outside from mid May to mid September. Last winter I tried a couple of new things in an attempt to improve blooming. I bought a HID sodium light, which I used to supplement natural green house lighting in the morning and evening during the winter. The greenhouse humidity is usually around 70%. In April with no buds in sight I decided to start misting the plants every day or two. In July and August nine of the ten mature plants started budding! All nine developed four or more buds. Blooming began in early September and looks like it will continue for several more months. *R. loranthiflorum* has about twenty buds of which ten have opened. 'Souvenir de J H Mangles' has six trusses open, which makes an impressive display. Considering the size of the plants there are more flowers than I thought possible.

I suspect this sudden burst of blooms from a diverse group of species and hybrids is related to the supplemental lighting. However, I lived in Seattle for four years and I don't think there is any more natural light in winter out there than there is here. At any rate I am now convinced that it is possible to grow Vireyas in Michigan and I will keep tweaking my technique.

Don Meyer 2740 Parkridge Ann Arbor, Mi. 48103

Sure Don, the light probably did make a difference. The other thing is ----- Vireya Rhododendrons bloom just like the hardy ones i.e. when they get big enough and old enough. As plants get larger and start to bloom you might notice that many Vireyas set flower buds after we have gone past the 12-hour day (twice a year). This 12-hour day thing might only apply to us folks up north with very short and long days. My wife Lucie Sorensen-Smith and I are working on a "Collected Works" book. Vireya articles copied from the Journal of The American Rhododendron Society. So far there are 91 articles and maybe 200+- pages. Lots a really great stuff. We will also have a few other items included like maps, list, tools, etc. At this time we only plan on doing about 200 copies and have no idea of the cost. We probably will have a couple of color pages. You may ask for a copy now but I probably will loose your request so wait if you can for an official notice.

From Brian Clancy Dear VV Victoria, Australia November 1998

Rhododendron rarilepidotum in cultivation has proven to be an outstanding and floriferous Vireya species with mature plants providing spectacular red flowered blooms over several months. It is easy to grow and flower and is a highly recommended species for all Vireya growers.

R. rarilepidotum is described by Sleumer (1960) as a terrestrial shrub on slopes 1800-2500M., with 8-12 flowered umbels (dark) red to crimson rarely orange. At the International Rhododendron Conference held at Wollongong in October, 1988, George Argent described the collection of *rarilepidotum* in Sumatra (Indonesia) in February 1988, in open hillside shrubbery close to the summit of an active volcano but away from the sulphurous vent.

In the 1998 Rhododendron Handbook it is described as a lovely and vigorous species in cultivation with 10-18 flowers per umbel, more or less horizontal with corollas bright orange to red often with a darker centre.

Fortunately, I have two seedling plants of *rarilepidotum*; one growing in a fern log and the other in a 14 inch plastic pot in a mix of 80% pine bark and 20% compost. The tags (GA3/1988) indicate that the seed was collected by George Argent in Sumatra in 1988. Both plants first flowered for me in 1997 and this year (1998) both plants have been outstanding in flower. Each plant has displayed, so far, 15 trusses with eight or more buds still to flower.

At the 3-4 October 1998 Show at Olinda, Australia, a 24-flowered truss of rarilepidotum won the best Vireya species whilst the Annual Rhododendron Show at the same location, 31 Oct 3 November, 1998, a 21-flowered truss of rarilepidotum awarded the trophy for the Best Vireya species.

I can only endorse what has already been stated, a lovely, vigorous and spectacular species.

Brian Clancy 31 Renown St. Bentleigh, Vict. 3204 Australia

From Marilyn Santos Dear Vireya Vine

Volcano, Hawaii October 1998

Mitch Mitchell and Glen Sahara of the Hawaii Chapter ARS got me started with Vireyas. I have always been pretty lucky with cuttings and both these guys have been very generous. Bovees in Portland sends fine plants when I feel I need to splurge and I've garnered quite a collection. My "short list" of favorites is now about 50 and growing. My husband, Greg and I have 3 acres in Volcano with a shade house for propagation of cuttings and a garden shed for growing seeds, complete with a heating mat and lights.

I'm getting a "Display" garden going now for my stock plants and plan to start selling to club members and friends by next year. I love my gardening and my goal is to make my hobby self supporting at the very least. I always pay close attention to which plants people go wild over so that I can be a source for those not able to grow their own cuttings.

Our climate is similar to a cool greenhouse -- 60 to 75 F this time of the year dropping to the 50s at night.

I've tried many different potting mixes with varying results. The factor of greatest importance seems to be as we all should know, <u>perfect drainage</u>, followed by good air circulation and proper fertilizing. Younger plants seem to benefit from avoiding direct sunlight until they harden up, this is especially true with my species collection.

If anyone knows of sources for quality cuttings of the more scarce varieties please let me know. I'd like to try 'Marshall Pierce Madison', 'Cair Parivel', 'Moonwood', 'Satans Gift', 'Rangitoto Rose', 'Silken Shimmer', 'Burgundy Surprise', 'Craig Faragher', 'Elegant Bouquet', and 'Gardenia Odyssey'. Species I'd like are *R. hellwigii, leucogigas, stenophyllum, sessilifolium* and *wrighianum*. I will see what the Rhododendron Species Foundation has to offer this year.

I really hope we can have another Vireya Meeting next year. I had a family emergency last time and really missed out. Aloha

Marilyn Santos PO Box 763 Volcano, Hawaii 98785-0763 (808)967-7770 Good job Marilyn, keep it up. She also sent in \$25 to support the Vine so a very special thanks. Boy is Volcano a great place to grow Vireyas. Never gets too hot and never gets a frost. Nice warm days and cool nights. The little town of Volcano is at about 4,000 feet up on the Big Island of Hawaii. It is only a short distance from the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. They have formed a Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society and are going great guns. Hardy Rhodes do not do well in Hawaii but Vireyas love the place.

Now here is a wee problem, and most of you may never care. At this time there are only three publications with technical information about Vireya Rhododendrons, Dr. H. Sleumer's "An Account of Rhododendron in Malesia", "Rhododendrons of Sabah" from the Sabah Parks, and "The Rhododendron Handbook 1998" from the Royal Horticultural Society. Only the Handbook is available now. The Sleumer book most often times does not give the scales a specific name or use the A, B, C, D indicators used in the drawings In the Sabah book they use the A, B, C, Ds for the scale types which is easy to follow along with. But notice that the A, B, C, Ds are different from Sleumer's. In the RHS handbook, scales are described using easy to understand words (Dr. George Argent wrote the discriptions). **Question? What do you think?** I asked Dr. Argent who does most of the work on Vireyas at Edinburgh, by E-mail and he said maybe I should put it to readers of the Vine.

From the Sleumer Book

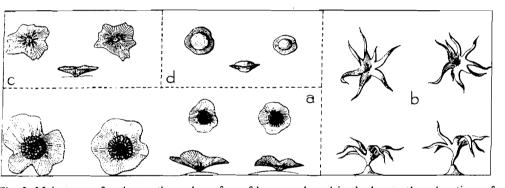


Fig. 2. Main types of scales on the undersurface of leaves and used in the key to the subsections of Rhododendron sect. Vireya, all \times 70. a. Scale variously lobed, with dark chestnut coloured centre and of two different sizes, exclusively found in subsect. Malayovireya (R. malayanum). b. Scale deeply stellatencised or -lacerate and stalked ("dendroid") to various degree (R. konori); on top of an epidermal ubercle exclusively found in subsect. Phaeovireya. c. Scale moderately substellately angled or dented and sessile (R. javanicum). d. Scale entire or almost so and sessile, exclusively found in subsect. Pseudo-ireya (R. quadrasianum var. cuneifolium). (a MEUER s.n., Mt Sago, Sumatra, b. KOSTERMANS 2248, c JUNGHUHN s.n., Java, d SINCLAIR 9084).

From Rhododendrons of Sabah

Types of Scales



Broad marginal flange with small centre Series Vireya



Stellate or dendroid Series Dendrolepidon



Narrow marginal flange with broad central cushion. Series *Pseudovireya*



Broad marginal flange and broad central cushion. Series *Malayanum*

From Graham Smith Dear Vireya Vine

Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust, New Zealand November 1998

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It is long past the excuse date for a note from Pukeiti. We are in the middle of our annual rhodo. festival at present in what has been one of the wettest springs on record. Would you believe that we recorded 1.5 metres of rain in October! Even by our standards that is a lot of rain and it shows in the visitor returns. We did manage to give Clint Smith and his group a reasonably damp visit but thats what rhodo growing is all about.

visitor returns. We did manage to give Clint Smith and his group a reasonably damp visit but thats what rhodo growing is all about.

At least the Vireyas are under cover and they are having a fantastic season for flower. At present 'Gardenia Odyssey' has a number of huge apricot pink trusses which wow the visitors but it is equally good to see them fascinated by the patch of *R. rubineiflorum* in full flower, not really believing that it can be a rhododendron. Thats what makes them so special and a great draw for a garden like Pukeiti. Of course we mix and match our collection with other odd and interesting plants to make a more comprehensive display all year round. *Arisaema, Pleione, Lilium, Corydalis, Calanthe, Agapetes, Tecomanthe*, and *Hosta* all make for good contrast and are not, for us, demanding of attention.

Our collection continues to grow and I find that with so many hybrids now available in New Zealand that it is becoming difficult to keep up with them all. It is necessary to be very selective with these introductions as our priority has to be with species and all efforts are made to add anything new in this line. Thanks to the likes of George Argent and David Binney some fascinating species are coming to light from places such as Sulawesi, Phillipines and Irian Jaya. Species such as *R. taxifolium, pubitubum, zoellingeri, alborugosum, inundatum* and *emarginatum* are now on display and add to the wonderful world of Vireyas. I was priviledged to see *R. emarginatum* in southern Yunnan earlier this year, growing as an epiphyte on tall trees (the plant had fallen to the ground) but the small, bright yellow flowers, like *R. kawakamii*, were all over the ground. You never know where these will turn up because at the time I was looking for *R. sinofalconeri*, a large leaf rhodo!

In the pipeline at Pukeiti is a new Conservatory for extension of the Vireya collection. This is to be a major building, effectively doubling the size of the area under cultivation. I am hoping that funding for this can be in place by the end of this year (1998) so that building can start during the summer months and it can be opened in the year of 2000. I am quite sure that we are going to be 2000 saturated and sick of the whole thing before the year is out. Never mind, if it acts as a stimulus for something special then go for it.

Readers may well ask why we grow our Vireyas under cover when in many parts of New Zealand they are garden plants, including New Plymouth just 20 minutes away near the coast. It is not so much the temperatures at our 1,200ft elevation but the high, evenly spread rainfall. We receive more than 3.5metres of rain a year, with no really dry period. Vireyas outside in those conditions tend to be very sporadic with their flowering and the wood does not ripen well. Providing a roof over their heads means that we control the rainfall and by keeping plants growing in the ground relatively dry in the cool wetter months ensures a good flower display. Remember that many of the species are epiphytic naturally and endure long periods of drought in the wild which stresses the plants and they flower in response. We aim to do this but in a more controlled way that ensures good healthy plants and masses of flower. I think we have the recipe fairly right now as they have never looked better.

Also by keeping the sides of the house open, a good breeze helps keep the nasties away and our mildew, rust and pest problems are not too onerous. Betrytis has reared its ugly head in the past year and the wet brown patches on the flowers did spoil some things. We have an extra vigilant clean up now, removing all spent flowers and anything showing signs of marking and this all ends up in the incinerator. It does seem to be working as, despite the incredibly wet conditions, we have less of it than this time last year.

I was hoping to get to Sulawesi next year but that has been put on the back burner for the time being. So instead I am organising another trip to Yunnan, China, this time in June to catch some of the wild flowers in the upland meadows plus late rhododendrons. If any of your readers are interested in joining us then get them to drop me a line at Pukeiti, R.D. 4, New Plymouth, Taranaki New Zealand. No vireyas but lots of other goodies and plenty of fun.

Best wishes to all vireyabolics out there. Come see us when you can but let me know beforehand.

Graham Smith.

E-mail pukeiti@pukeiti.org.nz

From Bill Moyles Dear V Vine, Notes from California: Oakland, California January 1999

The new year and the Lakeside Vireya Garden (City Park in downtown Oakland) has passed its first test! Not like 1990 but a test just the same. Down to the high 20Fs, but not for long. Temps came up during the day (not like 1990 when they stayed down). Jim Gerdemann reminded me of this; this is NOT Yachats, Oregon, where it goes down to the low 20s and stays down for a while. That's cold. Not sissy Northern California! There was foliage damage to some things (soft Ivs, konori types, new growth) but nothing lost. It will take time to assess the extent of damage, but it was instructive and there are a few things that can be done to protect further. I did use Cloud Cover on the second day.

Jim's "hardy" Vireyas showed not a sign of damage (in my backyard lath); nor did Pete Sullivan's 'Lawrence'. I think 'Lawrence' likes the cold. The foliage damage to other material especially *leucogigas/konori* hybrids was greater at my home but no major losses. I now have greenhouse space at Lakeside for storage and have a new "conservatory room" at home ... a glassed in enclosure on a 8 by 20 foot redwood deck out the back door. This room is turning into a gem ... all my seedlings and small things including closely watched *R ericoides, himantodes, rubineiflorum*, just to namedrop a few. *R maius* (RSF 89-006) has been in bloom (4 trusses) for a month, and is tragrant, 7 flwrs, 3 inch long white tubes, elegant. Have just put *jasminiflorum* var. *punctatum* onto it. This jas is my favorite and is just coming into bloom at Lakeside ... good foliage, no damage to it, and 15 tubes to the truss. Hope the pollen can make it down the long maius tube ... should do it the other way. Also in bloom are the various saxifragoides hybrids from seed of Oz Blumhardt in New Zealand, and I am waiting for the big egg too fully open on my *laetum x lowii*. I have pollen from the Michael Black *zoelleri* and it will go onto it.

Lucie and E White from Bovees generously donated several plants to the Lakeside garden. Their *laetum x zoelleri*, V81, 'Hansa Bay', (I believe Pete Schick in Fort Bragg, Calif. gets credit?) gets pride of place and is in bloom now. It showed no damage and blooms were unscathed. I intend to pair it with their V51, 'Mt Ophir', which is now opening buds. Two of their other plants will go to a beginning planting at Kaiser Center's roof garden across the lake.

Bill Moynier sent up rooted cuttings from LA of his latest creations for growing on and I am sure several of them will show up at Lakeside. He is already represented by 'Moonwood', 'Clipsie', and the fine yellow, 'Avalon'. Paul Molinari (Enjoy Rhododendrons) is finally propagating Vireyas in earnest for local nursery consumption in the bay area, but this will take a few years to meet a growing demand.

The 1998 Vireya Vine award for outstanding contribution must go to Chris Callard (London) for his Vireya Web page and his fantastic perseverance in putting together a complete list of named Vireya hybrids! On the down side, it is a bit disturbing to see the number of "named things" that have not been registered! And further on the down side, an award for (fill in the blank) ______must go to Berkeley Horticultural Nursery for leaving their Vireyas (including a 5 foot plant of R. 'George Budgen') unprotected and open to the sky and 24F during this last freeze. Needless to say, George is dead (and it looks like a few others too). This does little to encourage Vireya culture. So much for the professionals. It was sad to note that Fred Renick in Ventura County (LA of all places) suffered major freeze losses to his bid for future nursery business.

The seed exchange goes on and I have had a few (but just a few) new takers. There is some new seed and lots of older seed still available. One thing of note: I have completely redone my own seeding setup to assure that a temperature of at least 70F is maintained under lights. I am now convinced that is critical. I was getting poor germination with some very nice things (David Binney, Sulawesi collection) and I found that temps were getting into the low 60's. When I redid my system David's seed germinated like crazy. I was getting sloppy. Am now going back to the RSF Sulawesi seed that did not germinate just to see what happens.

In closing, I finally made it to Hawaii this fall and visited the Mitchell's. Had a fabulous time and saw how Vireyas can be grown in a benign climate. Seedlings growing on moss, as epiphytes, all in natural materials.

They are actually able to grow Vireyas in hanging baskets just like the books recommend, but we can't do that here because of the watering problem (well Peter Schick can in Fort Bragg, but ...) Wonderful place; great people and a very enthusiastic group. Found that Glenn Sahara (who I visited) used to work at Lakeside Park and he visited me last month! He has a plant (and I have cuttings) of a Dick Cavender cross of 'Calavar' x *goodenoughii*, an absolutely outstanding starburst effect. I came home and went into my seed bank and found *goodenoughii* x ('Dr. H. Sleumer' x *leucogigas*) unsown - a cross made by David Binney in 1995! I sowed it and it germinated with great vigor. The seedlings are almost an inch tall already. Older seed does germinate; especially hybrid seed. I am now going through my older stored-seed looking for those things that I perhaps overlooked.

Bill Moyles 4243 Norton Ave. Oakland, CA 94602

Bill Moyles -Vireya seed exchange 4243 Norton Ave., Oakland, CA 94602wmoyles@pacbell.net You must write to Bill to get seed. He has very good seed and really needs to give it away. (Free cutside the USA)

Are you selling or giving away Vireyas or even cuttings. Let us know and we will list you.

VIREYA VINE RHODODENDRON SPECIES FOUNDATION P.O.BOX 3798 FEDERAL WAY, WASHINGTON 98063 U.S.A.