

# VIREYA VINE

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PUBLISHED BY THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE RHODODENDRON SPECIES  
FOUNDATION

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

Computer CD Rom Disk - Chris Callard in England has produced a CD-Rom for your computer. It is Windows 95/98 compatible and expands upon all of the topics covered on his INTERNET Web Site. Priced at \$20.00US plus postage and packing.

CD disk includes, History of Vireya culture; Distribution of Vireya in the wild; Cultivation advice; Vireya displays and nursery sources worldwide; Full species classification list - alphabetical and by subsections; Comprehensive list of over 700 named Vireya hybrids; Hybrid parentage list; and photographs of over 250 varieties of Vireya species and hybrids.

See his Web Site to order with a credit card.

**[www.website.lineone.net/~cjcallard](http://www.website.lineone.net/~cjcallard)**

For non-credit card orders, send a check for £15.00 drawn on a UK bank to Chris Callard, 26 Colwood Gardens, London, SW192DT, England

Chris has also located a few copies of the book "Rhododendrons of Sabah", published by Sabah Parks in Northern Borneo. This wonderful book is now out of print. It will probably be priced at about \$30US. If you do not have one write to Chris or send E-mail to [chris@vireya.co.uk](mailto:chris@vireya.co.uk)

From Sherla Bertemann

Keaau, Big Island (Hawaii), Hawaii

Dear Vireya Vine,

May 25, 2000

Even though by now you must be sick and tired of hearing about the Hawaii Vireya Seminar held on the Big Island of Hawaii this past March, 2000, I thought I better add more to the subject. Here we are two months down the line and still I find myself thinking of the affair. I believe when things are meant to happen, especially good things, little miracles occur to bring them about. This is how I saw the seminar.

As treasurer for our Rhododendron Chapter I felt privileged to have made contact with so many wonderful vireya lovers. Communicating with many by E-mail I felt I knew them, so that when I heard their names at the registration desk it was like putting a face to a long time friend. Since then, some have gone on to be just that ... friends. This is just one of the miracles ... New friends.

Anyone who has tried to put together any kind of get-together knows there are always the behind the scene concerns. One of ours was the size of the room we had reserved in the hotel. It held up to 60 people. We felt confident until the time got closer and the reservation numbers were still rising, approaching 80. The day before the seminar we were given a new room that would hold 80+ people. A "miracle".

For the garden tours we had reserved two vans for a total of about 30 people. At the last minute we were able to get a school bus and one van allowing for the transportation of about 55+ people to go on tour. Another "miracle".

After the garden tours a fellowship dinner was held. What a feeling to see so many people in attendance and inter-acting like family. One member brought in for our plant auction, about 5 full grown vireya plants (dug out of his garden). Seeing these giants standing against the back wall I couldn't help but laugh. It was wonderful especially seeing the expressions on others as they walked in and saw the plants. To me, it was a "miracle" to have someone in the club making such a generous donation. It also taught us that vireyas are strong and adaptable, being able to be ripped out of the ground and transplanted with little drawback. (We made \$400+ on the auction)

At the time of the seminar we were in "drought" conditions in Hawaii. Here on the Big Island many of us rely on rain water to fill our catchment tanks for the water we use in our household as well as in the garden. More than three weeks without any rain means conserving, hauling, and/or buying water. At the fellowship dinner it began to rain. A large cheer went up from the local residents. Another "miracle"? Here in Hawaii we have a saying about rain. "Rain is often seen as a blessing". What a perfect way to end the seminar with blessings from heaven!

I feel much better having shared my view of the seminar. Now on to other things. Our Hawaii Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society has doubled in membership this past year. This means we have people at all different stages of learning about vireyas. We are trying to practice good record keeping especially when it comes to the names and crosses. This is very important especially since cuttings come to the meeting and go home with someone else. If a plant is mislabeled at any point this error is compounded as more and more people get the cuttings.

Much Aloha and Mahalo,

Lastly, I am now selling vireya from our certified nursery here on the Big Island. For more information contact

Sherla Bertelmann, Treasurer, Hawaii Chapter, ARS

Pacific Island Nursery

P.O. Box 1963

Keaau, HI 96749... (808)966-9225

Or by E-mail: [tropical@greensand.net](mailto:tropical@greensand.net) or [www.pacificislandnursery.com](http://www.pacificislandnursery.com)

We are located just off the Keaau Hwy, four miles from the Keaau intersection. We are open to visitors Wed through Sat. 9 AM to 5 PM. (Recommend you call first. Shipments by USPS priority mail unless otherwise specified. Shipping days are Mon to Wed. payments by check or money order at this time (looking into credit card sales).

Here are the varieties I have ready to go:

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1. <i>R. dielsianum</i>                 | 2. <i>macgregoriae</i> x <i>aurigeranum</i> | 3. 'Harry Wu'                           |
| 4. Cream <i>jasminiflorum</i> hybrid    | 5. 'Mt. Pire'                               | 6. 'Nancy Miller Adler'                 |
| 7. 'Red Prince'                         | 8. 'Sunny's Brother'                        | 9. <i>herzogii</i> x <i>aurigeranum</i> |
| 10. <i>lochiae</i> x <i>christianae</i> | 11. 'Vladimir Bukowsky'                     |   |

*Here is a bit about how we are supposed to write species and hybrid names.*

1) *Species plant names should be in small letters and in italics for instance R. lochiae not R. Lochiae even if the species is named after a person or a place.*

2) *Hybrids are not done in italics and should have the hybrid name surrounded with single quotes like R. 'Nancy Miller Adler'. The single quotes say to you that the name is a hybrid name.*  
3) *The first time you use the Genus name, ie. Rhododendron, you spell it out. From then on you only use R. Sometimes we do not use the R. in writing but we really should in order to keep things clear and meaningful.*

*And a new first for the Vine. First printed e-mail message. Note that Graham is sending the e-mail to the "vireya@egroups.com" which anyone can join, and pass and receive mail about Vireyas.*

From: Graham Price <g.price@ned.dem.csiro.au>  
To: <vireya@egroups.com>  
Sent: Thursday, June 15, 2000 12:53 AM  
Subject: Re: [vireya] re:carringtoniae

Hi All.

My name is Graham Price and I am a vireya collector/hybridiser living in Melbourne Australia.

I'm replying to an email from Chris Callard and to E White Smith in which the general discussion was about photos of R. carringtoniae. Chris suggested that – “maybe we could have a kind of Virtual Vireya Show each month in the internet?” I think the idea was for people to submit photographs of their vireyas for posting on a suitable website for all to see. I'm not sure about the Show aspect, though I certainly would be interested in seeing what is posted.

The point I am interested in relates to a collection of vireya hybrids I am producing and how to compare them with what is already available. I am a member of the local branch of the Australian Rhododendron Society but unfortunately I cannot get to many monthly meetings so have limited points of contact.

I collect species and hybrids (about 50 commercially available hybrids & 20-30 species) and from crossings I made a decade ago, I now have about 150 of my own hybrids now at flowering stage. I also have about 600 smaller hybrid seedlings, 1-2 years old. As the larger plants flower I have to decide what to keep and what to throw away (I don't have enough room to keep them all). I have already selected four seedlings that I think are special and I will register them, eventually. It's the intermediate ones that I get equivocal about. What I would like is some way of showing each flower to a range of knowledgeable people and getting advice as to whether it is any good or not, ie. similar to but inferior to R. xxx so throw it away.

The idea of posting photos of vireya plants and flowers on a website is one possible way to get feedback as to the merits of my hybrids. I generally photograph the flowers so I can get them scanned and posted to Chris, or whoever. What do people think of this idea?

Dr Graham Price, Director, Australian Geodynamics CRC  
School of Earth Sciences, La Trobe University  
Bundoora, Victoria, 3083, Australia

Phone: 03 9479 5641 Fax: 03 9479 1272 International Ph: 61 3 9479 5641 Fax: 61 3 9479 1272 Email: g.price@ned.dem.csiro.au Internet: www.agcrc.csiro.au/people/PriceGraham/

Vireya Group Main Page: [www.egroups.com/group/vireya](http://www.egroups.com/group/vireya)

*And a day later from Graham*

Further to the issue in my message. I have recently been looking at the photos I have taken of my hybrids as they flower - using them to compare and decide what to reject. Photos are a good reminder but are not totally satisfactory as a means of comparison between individuals. For example, it is hard to see from the photos which plant is the best - and I place a lot of emphasis on plant quality. The more compact plants that present the flowers well are rated higher than straggly tall plants. I systematically tip-prune from an early age and keep them in full sun all year (minimum shade cloth only) so my plants are generally bushier than most others, but there is still a range of sizes and degrees of compactness. Also, it is hard to really tell the size of the flowers because apparent size changes with the distance to the camera even though I try and use a scale in each photo. And of course, lighting conditions vary greatly and this changes the apparent colour of the flowers. Colours and flower shape also change between the seasons, being more open in summer and maybe a little darker in winter.

Still, photos are the best means I can think of at present (as an aid to memory) and I am using them to decide which plants to get rid of. Because of the space pressure from the advancing small seedlings (about 600 of them) I am expecting to cull my larger hybrids from about 125 to around 10-15. Still that's not a bad outcome. Graham Price

From Fran Jackson  
Dear Vireya Vine,

Volcano, Hawaii  
July 2000

Here on the Big Island of Hawaii there is a question about the poisonous effects of Vireya Rhododendrons on our local birds. Several things I have read suggest that the nectar and some leaves can be poisonous. Hawaii has the largest number of endangered bird species in the world. I would not want to inadvertently introduce yet another threat to our already endangered birds.

My info on poisons comes from Clyde Smith's book which mentions honey poisoning; and from Betsy Gagne who commented during her recent talk to our group that one of her fellow Bishop Museum field workers in New Guinea had been asked to identify some leaves, which when used for a tea had been fatal to a native. They proved to be Vireya, but I don't think she said which. Hawaii's endangered birds include those called "honey creepers" because they sip nectar; for them, Vireya poison could be dangerous. Frankly, it would be nice to know anything and everything about Vireyas and their poisons, not just as they may affect birds.

Can the VV readers direct me to additional info about the poisonous effects of Vireyas? If not already available, perhaps a call to growers world wide is in order. We especially would like to know if the poison is limited to only a few Vireya species or is it across all species? Is the strength of the effect in any way related to the soil or other medium that the plants grow in? How about the effects, if any, of the other variables such as growing environment (temp, sunlight, daily watering, or the fertilizer used, etc.). What species of birds?

If nobody has done it yet, this question might make a good research project for a graduate student in botany, horticulture, environmental, or avian studies.

On another subject. We have found that it's not keeping the soil damp but keeping the leaves damp that counts with our Vireyas. As a newcomer to this field I recommend as a starter plant R. 'Twilight Pink'.

Branches readily - our two year old plant in a one gallon pot is +- 24 inches tall with over 3 dozen branch ends available for blooms. It blooms the year around - especially if trimmed and new growth is forced the year around. The cuttings strike in 3 months even if the cutting is from a truss that bloomed. Trusses of 7-9 flowers, pink and similar to 'First Light', no scent though. I have taken older cuttings, to shape the plant, which have then both bloomed and sent out new shoots at the same time, presumably while also rooting. Cuttings of blooming and finished-blooming trusses also do well, as do older stock with even two or three whorls of leaves. All in all, a very responsive hybrid. Do you, by any chance, know the parents? (I don't even know if this is a registered hybrid). It's a tidy house plant or hedge plant in our full sun or dappled light.

Fran Jackson  
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Volcano, HI 96785-0804  
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*Wow. What a good question. I would think that Vireyas being poison is not a problem. Yes some leaves of some Rhododendrons are toxic to animals. And some nectar is toxic from some species. It could be that honey from Rhododendrons as a whole might be a bit toxic, but it does get mixed in with lots of other nectar, so there is probably not much there. In the Himalayan Mountains and probably also in China, Rhododendron flowers are eaten by people. I have tasted a local wine made from R. arboreum in the Indian state of Sikkim (not very good wine). In New Guinea there are birds called "honey eaters" that do feed on Vireya flowers. In fact what the birds are probably really after are the insects in the flowers. We have asked this question of people who have studied in NG and they say when the bird is cut open, it is full of insects. These same birds are at least in some cases a major pollinator of Vireyas. There have been at least one report of Vireya nectar causing a bad skin rash, but I have had lots of it on me and even lick it off at times and have had no problem. Vireya leaves are eaten by lots of insects in cultivation and in the wild. At least in cultivation the really scaly ones are not bothered very much. I have seen Rhododendrons in New Zealand that have been eaten so much by sheep and cattle that the grower had to fence them off to protect the plants. Finally, I think that birds and animals are pretty smart about what they eat. BUT who knows and it sure would make a good research project. Other ideas??? E. White*

From Graham Smith  
Dear Vireya Vine,

Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust, New Zealand  
2 May 2000

I was interested in the reference to the "underground shoots" of *R. rubineiflorum* mentioned in the VV59 issue. At Pukeiti we have two patches of the plant, both from the original cuttings that I brought back from PNG found growing on a tree fern log. I used this as the guide to establishing the plants which were set beside tree ferns and grew into them.

The most interesting growth came from the second planting of several small plants into a raised bed backed by a short wall of tree fern logs. The plants did their usual spreading out from the middle and formed one attractive patch of fine foliage, only 10cm tall and flowering on and off through the year. Several years after planting *R. rubineiflorum* foliage appeared 20cm (8 inches) up the tree fern wall with no sign of the stem climbing up. This is obviously "inside" the fern log. Since then the aerial plant has become quite large and now flowers delightfully on the vertical face much as it did in the wild.

I wonder whether this epiphytic tendency can be extended to establishing on moss covered tree stems or boulders? Dehydration would probably be the key factor but I am thinking of giving it a try in our moist climate, both out in the open and under the shelter of our new Conservatory.

Talking of Conservatorys, congratulations to the Species Foundation on the proposed new building for their garden. I am sure this will enhance the public image and understanding of these fantastic plants and result in more plantings in suitable climates. Yesterday I drove past a local private hospital in New Plymouth, near the sea, and was struck by a bold splash of orange against the entrance wall. Stopping to investigate it turned out to be a vireya hybrid and it was putting on as good a display of tropical looking flowers that you could ever wish to see. All this in our winter. What a lift for people using the hospital which as we all know can be quite traumatic..  
VIVA VIREYA!

Next year, 2001, will be very special in the history of Pukeiti as we celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee. The 20-25<sup>th</sup> of October promises to be an exciting time in New Plymouth, New Zealand as the New Zealand Rhododendron Association joins with Pukeiti to spend five days immersed in rhododendron culture. Pukeiti will have its new Conservatory open so come and join us if you can. Details available from Graham Smith, Pukeiti, RD 4, New Plymouth, New Zealand or email [pukeiti@pukeiti.org.nz](mailto:pukeiti@pukeiti.org.nz) Web site is [www.pukeiti.org.nz](http://www.pukeiti.org.nz)

The new Conservatory is coming on well but has taken three times as long to build as estimated so it will not be open this spring. We will not be into it until mid August I feel. I think next year, around March, may see it open to the public so perhaps we will leave the official opening till the October 2001 50th Jubilee celebration and have George Argent open it. We will see what happens. Incredible winter here with no rain for three weeks and everything looking very dry. Frosty nights and day temperatures up to summer strength. The plants do not know what to make of it and so far are reluctant to open outside. Big leafs just showing but later than usual and not so many of them this year.

Graham Smith  
Director, Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust

New Vireyas registered with the "International Rhododendron Register", courtesy of Dr. A. C. Leslie of the Royal Horticultural Society. I am only listing the plant name, the cross, and the person who hybridized (H) or registered it (REG). (s) = seed parent.

'Alexa', (gardenia x aurigeranum) (s) x aurigeranum, H & REG: Bill Moynier (US)  
 'Anacapa', 'Marshall Pierce Madison' (s) x javanicum, H & REG: Bill Moynier (US)  
 'Arne Jensen', loranthiflorum (s) x 'Taylorii', H: A. Jensen, REG: Lucie Sorensen-Smith, Bovees (US)  
 'Big Softie', 'Dr. Herman Sleumer' (s) x leucogigas, H & REG: Os Blumhardt (NZ)  
 'Bridesmaid Bouquet', 'Arthur's Choice' (s) x carringtoniae, H: Brian Clancy, REG: Geraldine Roelink, Vireya Valley Nursery (Aust)  
 'Brunei Bay', stenophyllum (s) x leptanthum, H: A. Jensen, REG: Lucie Sorensen-Smith, Bovees (US)  
 'Capistrano Dawn', 'Nancy Miller Adler' (s) x (konori var. phaeocephalum x leucogigas), H & REG: Bill Moynier  
 'Doris Mossman', (zoelleri x macgregoriae) (s) x stenophyllum, H: Frank Mossman, REG: Lucie Sorensen-Smith, Bovees (US)  
 'Flamingo Bay', (((aurigeranum x Dr. H. Sleumer) x leucogigas) selfed) x clone of same cross, H: A. Jensen, REG: Bovees Nursery (US)  
 'Hansa Bay', laetum (s) x zoelleri 'Golden gate', H: unknown, REG: Lucie Sorensen-Smith, Bovees (US)  
 'Harold's Delight', 'Pink Delight' (s) x intranervatum, H: John Rouse, REG: Geraldine Roelink, Vireya Valley Nursery (Aust)  
 'Harry Wu', zoelleri (s) x leucogigas, H: Pete Sullivan, REG: Lucie Sorensen-Smith, Bovees (US)  
 'Humbolata bay', 'Sir George Holford' (s) x leucogigas, Grown by Stribing pre 1976, REG: Lucie Sorensen-Smith, Bovees (US)  
 'Jeanhee', 'Felinda' (s) x javanicum, H & REG: Bill Moynier (US)  
 'Jenna Soojean', (aurigeranum x brookianum) (s) x 'Taylorii', H & REG: Bill Moynier (US)  
 'Lake Amaru', konori x laetum, H: unknown, REG: Lucie Sorensen-Smith, Bovees (US)  
 'Lake Habbema', gardenia (s) x ((konori var. phaeocephalum x lochia) x zoelleri, H: Peter Schick, REG: Bovees (US)  
 'Lake Toba', (konori x laetum (s) x aequabile, REG: Lucie Sorensen-Smith, Bovees (US)  
 'Lake Wissel', 'Dr. H. Sleumer' (s) x herzogii, H: unknown, REG: Lucie Sorensen-Smith, Bovees (US)  
 'Maneau Ra', konori (s) x christinae, H: unknown, REG: Lucie Sorensen-Smith, Bovees (US)  
 'Marudu Bay', (zoelleri x macgregoriae) x suaveolens., H: Frank Mossman, REG: Lucie Sorensen-Smith, Bovees (US)  
 'Mary-Lynn Cullinane', (herzogii x laetum) (s) x aurigeranum, H & REG: Michael Cullinane (NZ)  
 'May Kathleen Henderson', 'Cameo Spice' (s) x hellwigii, H & REG: Michael Cullinane (NZ)  
 'Mount Kaindi', (aurigeranum x 'Dr. H. Sleumer') x ('Triumphans' x javanicum), H: unknown, REG: Lucie Sorensen-Smith (US)  
 'My Gay David', 'Dr. H. Sleumer' (s) x superbum, H: Brian Clancy, REG: Geraldine Roelink, Vireya Valley Nursery (Aust)  
 'Our Waltzing Matilda', 'Arthur's Choice' (s) x 'Gardenia Odyssey', H: Brian Clancy, REG: Geraldine Roelink, Vireya Valley (Aust)  
 'Red Mountain', red form of commoniae (s) x lochia, H & REG: Os Bleumhardt (NZ)  
 'Saint Cecilia', konori var. phaeocephalum (s) x leucogigas, H: Pete Sullivan, REG: Lucie Sorensen-Smith, Bovees (US)  
 'Sarah Meejean', 'Clipsie' (s) x 'Ne Plus Ultra', H & REG: Bill Moynier (US)  
 'Sirunki Lake', natural hybrid, probably macgregoriae x dielsianum (pre 1985 USDA 382-B), REG: Lucie Sorensen-Smith, Bovees (US)

Some interesting Internet sites    [www.website.lineone.net/~cjcallard](http://www.website.lineone.net/~cjcallard)  
[www.mipagina.euskaltel.es.almand/vireya](http://www.mipagina.euskaltel.es.almand/vireya),    [www.tropicalgardner.com](http://www.tropicalgardner.com)

# VIREYA NURSERIES

The Bovees Nursery (Lucie Sorensen-Smith)  
1737 SW Coronado (E. White Smith)  
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Beaulieu, Hampshire [www.website.lineone/fairweather.com](http://www.website.lineone/fairweather.com)  
England SO42 7YR E-mail [plantdoc@martex.co.uk](mailto:plantdoc@martex.co.uk)

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Keaau, HI 96749 (808)966-9225 [www.pacificislandnursery.com](http://www.pacificislandnursery.com)

Vireya seed exchange. WorldWide. Bill Moyles 4243 Norton Ave., Oakland, CA 94602 e-mail [wmoyles@pacbell.net](mailto:wmoyles@pacbell.net)

Rhododendron Species Foundation  
PO Box 3798 [www.halcyon.com/rsf](http://www.halcyon.com/rsf)  
Federal Way, WA 98063 USA  
(253)838-4646 Mail Order e-mail [rsf@halcyon.com](mailto:rsf@halcyon.com)

Glendoick Gardens (Kenneth & Peter Cox)  
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web Site [www.glendoick.com](http://www.glendoick.com)

Te Puna Cottage Gardens (John Kenyon)  
Te Puna Road, RD6 E-mail [TePuna.Cott.Gdns@xtra.co.nz](mailto:TePuna.Cott.Gdns@xtra.co.nz)  
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