VIREYA VINE

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E. White Smith, Editor

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We print this list because we think people are interested in who is getting the VV and growing the plants. We say Washington State so that you do not confuse it with the US capital.

New subscribers or recent contributors are:.

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John Spring	California
Charles Trommer	Hawaii
Roger Van Loom	Belgium
Mary Tye	California/VI
Don & Kathy White	California

Just in case you don't know. Our great Vireya friend Bill Moynier passed away in February of this year. Bill and his wife Betty had a mail order Vireya operation for many years. A great many of the species and hybrids we now grow are because of them. RIP Bill

Back in 1988 a group of us were in Australia for a Rhododendron conference. I had the great pleasure of visiting Lyn Craven who lives in Melba A.C.T (Australian Capital Territory, Canberra). Lyn has a nice greenhouse full of Vireyas and other things. He picked up a potted plant, looked at the bottom of it and made some kind of exclamation. I asked what was wrong and he said something about pill bugs.

OK, I knew what they were and asked if they did any damage, wherein he answered "yes, they eat my compost", meaning his potting mix.

Yes, they sure do and almost all of us have this happen. So let's learn a bit about these bugs.

Pill Bugs and Sow Bugs

They have many common names include pill bugs, sow bugs, potato bugs, rolypolys and woodlice. People often confuse pill bugs and sow bugs, but, to protect their soft undersides when disturbed or to keep their gills from drying out, pill bugs can roll into a ball with their legs tucked inside; sow bugs cannot do this.

Sow bugs have oval bodies when viewed from above. Their backs have a number of overlapping movable plates. Most are gray colored, and grow to about 9/16 inch (15 mm) long and 5/16 inch (8 mm) wide. The pill bug has a rounder back from side to side, and a deeper body from back to legs. Their color is usually grayish brown, and they reach less than 1 inch (2.5 cm) in length.

These bugs belong the Order Arthropoda (arthropod means segmented body and jointed appendages), Class Crustacea, Order Isopoda, and have a hard armored exoskeleton and jointed limbs. Both creatures work at night, and each has seven pairs of legs at maturity. They are scavengers, feeding on both dead and live plant and animal debris. Because they belong to the Class Crustacea, they are closely related to lobsters, crabs and shrimp. Even though these are dry-land crustaceans, pill bugs and sow bugs still require damp habitats due to the delicate gill-like breathing organs on their undersides, which need to be kept moist to work. They prefer to live in damp sheltered locations that have decaying vegetation, like under logs, boards, compost piles, and under pots, which is where we find them.

Pill bugs and sow bugs are generally herbivores, feeding on the fungi and bacteria that are around dead and rotting plants. The damage caused to the roots of Vireyas and other plants by these pests comes from their munching on the fungi and microorganisms that are on or near the root surfaces. In their feeding some root parts also get chewed up.

There are ways to get rid of these pest. Natural predators include frogs, toads, newts, lizards, spiders and small animals. These will help and at Bovees in Portland, Oregon we are always careful if we are spraying in the greenhouses. We usually know when and where frogs and other different predators are. You can spray with insecticides like Malathion, Diazinon (is it still available ?), or Sevin. Spraying will help but probably not cure the problem.

You can also use things like diatomaceous earth around the plants that the bug will try to crawl through or you can soak the affected plants in a tub of water overnight, completely immersing pot and potting medium. Raise pots above the ground or bench. Keep the potting medium fresh. Fiberglass window screening placed over drainage holes inside pots will help keep pill bugs out.

You should remove leaf litter and dead plant debris or old wood from inside and around the exterior of the greenhouse or outdoor growing area. I have heard that a half of a cantaloupe set upside down near plants might attract the bugs and give you an idea of how bad the problem is. A few of these little guys probably are not a problem. EWS

OK here we go again. I am confused now. For many years we have been growing a Vireya Rhododendron named *R. lochiae* (or *lochae*) which is native to far north eastern Australia. There have been many good hybrids made using this plant. And then along comes another Rhododendron from Australia and it gets named *R. notiale*. These two plants are much the same but there are a few things different about them. How do I know? I have seen *R. notiale* in Dr. Bob Withers garden in Australia but I do not think we have this species in the USA. I have crawled around on the ground at the Rhododendron Species Foundation looking at the plants labeled *R. lochiae* and have looked carefully at all of our plants and we don't have it.

The difference is that the one we knew as *R. lochiae* (and now called *R. viriosum*) has a straight corolla tube, the anthers are red and the anthers are presented around the throat with most being in the lower half. The style is laying in the lower part of the corolla. The other plant (now *R. lochiae*) has a curved corolla tube, anthers are yellow and are in a cluster at the top of the flower throat. The style is also in the upper part of the flower tube.

Confused? So are we. Lyn Craven, in Australia tried to **"conserve"** the name *R. lochiae* which would be used for all of the plants we had known by that name and gave the new species the name *R. notiale*. That is because the original collected and named type specimen was named *R. lochiae* and the plant we know and grow was also called *R. lochiae* but was not the same plant. So they tried to conserve the name *R. lochiae* for the one we know and give the new species the name *R. notiale*. That sounds logical doesn't it? But a group called 'Committee for Spermatophyta' has said **"no way". The proposal to conserve the name was not approved. SO WHO IS CONFUSED?**

It now seems that;

A) The plant we have known and grown as *R. lochiae*, the straight-corolla flowered plant, is now to be called *R. viriosum*. This is because the original type specimen of the name *R. lochiae* belongs with the plant with curved flowers and the name *R. lochiae* has to go there. There was no species name available for the plant with the straight flower and it now has been named and described by Lyn Craven in a recent scientific article, i.e. as R. viriosum.

B) The name *R. notiale* is a taxonomic synonym for R. lochiae and should not be used in the future. The name *R. lochiae* should be used from now on for the plant with curved flowers. This plant is not yet common in collections but cuttings have been sent to RBG Edinburgh and seed has been sent to the US.

And on, and on, and on. E. White Smith, Editor

The following is from a 1951 English publication. Thought you might like it. I think the old publication came from the collection of Hjalmar Larson of Tacoma, Washington. He was a well known Rhododendron grower and in his small greenhouse I saw my first Vireya, R. kawakamii in bloom, probably from the John Patrick collections in Taiwan (from 1968 to 1974).

June, 1951 GARDENING ILLUSTRATED

A RADIO BROADCAST - AND SOME LATIN NAMES

By J. D. U. WARD

Broadcast from - (a regional radio studio) for ten minutes on tree seeds. My script had been previously approved but before the microphone at rehearsal I was meek and as clay in the hands of the experienced producer. My script contained five Latin labels and one technical word of Greek derivation. The man was no bully. In the first round he knocked out only two Latin labels: " Chinese ghost tree" was preferred to *Davidia involucrata,* and "birdcherry" to *Prunus padus*. I tactfully refrained from telling him that I'd known the name Chinese ghost tree for only three months, and that a reference book had once been necessary when a friend spoke of birdcherry, for I was not sure whether this was a vulgarism for *Prunus avium,* the wild cherry or gean so common in the Chilterns, or whether, in spite of *avium,* bird cherry meant *Prunus padus,* the wild cherry of the northern counties, the tree whose drooping racemes make the blossom look like a cross between cherry and lilac.

Painless Extractions

In the next round the producer gently removed *Abies* and *Sequoia.* "I don't know what they look like, and the words won't convey anything to most people. . . . Can't you . . . ?" I could. "Silver firs and Wellingtonias and the giant redwoods from California." (Thank Heaven I had not to cut the words on stone.) In the third round he scowled at "epiphyte": Your lovely Greek *epiphuton* . . . No . . and then I saw him check at *Megastigmus spermotrophus*. I blushed and swallowed and explained (quite truthfully) that this had been included as a joke, because the fly which steritises the seed of Douglas fir is so small and the name is so large. He shook his head and said firmly, rather as though I were a naughty schoolboy who had taken too great a liberty in the classroom, "It's not the sort of joke that comes over the air. It's just a meaningless sound". I myself wanted to drop a poor piece of facetiousness: having written that birch seeds normally run over 750,000 to the pound, I had added, " If you're a disbeliever, try counting one evening. But that was not to be dropped, for it "showed I was human".

Latin or Double Dutch ?

Circumstances alter cases. The circumstances here were a "popular" talk by one who had broadcast fewer than half a dozen times. Earlier in the same year, writing for a professedly scientific paper, I had used the Latin names of trees and of certain insect pests quite freely. Since a recent article by another writer had described the common wild rabbit as *Oryaolagus cuniculus,* there seemed to be no reason for inhibitions. But the editor disliked my tree and insect labels: they were "unfamiliar" and "mere Greek" to his readers. I rejoined that if a man was writing about little known foreign trees and about insects recognisable by fewer than ten men in a million, he couldn't use popular names, for there weren't any. We finished by telling each other, in polite periphrases, to go to hell.

The dislike or horror of Latin labels is so wide spread that one suspects a kind of psychosis, a deep underlying reason for the revulsion. Can there be an atavistic throw-back to the 16th century, and is Latin connected with the Pope and fears of invasion and conquest? One body of objectors commonly descends to sneers, thus: "He's the kind of man who calls heather *Calluna* and bilberry *Vaccinium.* He speaks of *Abies* this and *Quercus* that. For him trees are Latin ciphers.

Now for me trees are always lovely things. I don't want to call them by fancy Latin names". Here one might suspect calculated impudence, if it were not that most of the offenders are usually too stupid to calculate anything. But there are exceptions; and a major puzzle remains - the puzzle of why knowledge and precision should be thought to indicate lack of genuine appreciation. No music lover would boast that he did not know what *allegro* meant. No one would suggest that because a man could distinguish a violin from a flute he was probably unappreciative of music and dry as dust. In all arts and sciences, and even in sports and games, those who care most usually acquire most knowledge and understanding. But, among trees or other plants, even a little knowledge is held (by the entirely ignorant) to be an unspeakable thing.

The strongest argument for Latin labels is that they have more precision than the vernacular. This precision argument should not be pressed too far, since there have been, and still are, many changes as a result of the taxonomists search for perfection. (Here, indeed, a little derisive criticism might not be out of place).

Latin labels have international currency. This particular utility of Latin labels is at once interesting and pathetic, for here is, apparently, the sole significant remnant of Latin as the world language of educated people. The survival of international Latin in the biological sciences rather than in the humanities (which specialise, in the conservation of the classical tradition) is in itself a noteworthy oddity.

Next, any student who uses good reference books acquires automatically the habit of thinking in Latin names, because Latin is the language (for names) of the authorities for all but the very commonest plants and animals.

Fourthly, Latin names will usually tell you far more than the vernacular, and a reference to the Latin will often correct some gross error enshrined in the English. For instance, 90 per cent of the trees called cedar are immediately revealed by the Latin names to be other than cedar; the mountain ash is shown to be no ash but a relation of the apples and pears ; the sycamore is seen to be maple and not what the name "sycamore" suggests; and the Japanese umbrella pine is found to be not a pine. Occasionally the Latin of tree names will yield some unexpected trifle of information; hornbeam is *Carpinus Betulus,* and here is the origin of the word carpenter. Such specific adjectives as *praecox* and *serotinus, sessiliflor* and *macrocarpa,* all give information.

Too Complex for Laymen

There are, of course, difficulties and to spare about Latin. Such a label as *Chamaecyparis nootkatensis* var. *argenteo-variegata,* though simple and straightforward compared with many, is forbidding to a young novice-and one may often sympathise with the garden boy who, was provoke by a polysyllabic monstrosity to say, "Golly-wot-a-narmana". There are such labels as *Perdi perdix perdix,* which is one classification of the common partridge, for the very childish to giggle at. Much botanical Latin is hideous, and some is an extraordinary mixture of tongues: the familiar *Pseudotsuga taxifolia* (Douglas fir) is a jumble of Greek, Japanese and Latin. Even simple spelling may be uncertain. One man writes a specific *Lawsoniana* thus, with a capital, because it formed from the proper name Lawson, while another says that only generics should have capital and that the specific should be *lawsoniana.* Pronunciation, and particularly the quantities and accentuation of vowels, is another problem, and the botanists have not shown much respect for the dictionaries of classical Latin. Nearly all botanists and foresters say Populus for poplar. A certain forest entomologist went to a famous prep school (with an unequalled record for winning Eton scholarships) to examine insect damage to some poplar trees. He spoke of Populus *candicans* and *Populus balsamitera.* The headmaster was thankful that no boy was in hearing.

Here is no assertion that Latin is always preferable to English. There are many times and places where the use of Latin for very well-known trees or other plants would sound precious and pretentious. But I do wish to declare, first, that some scientific knowledge and interest in trees does not preclude aesthetic appreciation; and, secondly, that anyone who cares enough for trees to read and inquire about them, and take his studies seriously, will very soon lose any prejudice against Latin labels.

Good stuff -- you think?
And since no one else will write anything for the Vine you all will just have to listen to me go on. Here are some good things we have learned over the years.

If you have a greenhouse try covering the whole outside with poly plastic in the winter. The plastic stops water leaks, and seals holes. If the greenhouse is glass it will keep slipped glass from letting in cold air and rain. Don't know what would happen if it snowed and you had to get out and pull the snow off. Anyway it works great for us and saves a lot of heat.

Holes or cracks or slipped glass you can or can't reach. The "spray can foam" stuff works great and after a couple of days you will be able to get it off your hands and also will be able to go back and trim the hardened foam with a sharp knife so that it looks better. If you have plastic lenses in your glasses, BE CAREFUL – this spray foam will eat into the lenses if it gets on them. Great stuff for fixing rotted wood you don't want to replace right away. When you are using this spray foam it comes roaring out the long tube and sometimes globs of it fall down. It is hard to get off of Vireya leaves. And shoes, and shirts, and hair, etc., and if you do very much you will have it all over yourself. This stuff is great but has a mind of its own.

OK that works but sometimes we want to kill things. The "things" I really didn't like were small weed type "things" called 'pearl wort' and 'liver wort'. Both of these small plant/things would grow just fine in the greenhouse, in pots, on steps, and paths, both inside and outside. 'Pearl wort' looks almost like a moss but is usually a brighter green. It has very small flowers and must make a lot of seed because it will come up everywhere. 'Liver wart' is a small plant that grows flat on the surface, has almost round scale like leaves and must somehow make seed because it also comes up everywhere once it get established. Liver wort will look like some ferns do in their first stage of life (ferns go through two major stages) so you might think that they are baby ferns. Both of these weeds are hard to get rid of. Weed killers like "Roundup" do not work. BUT, simple cheap vinegar does work. Just spray it on the plants straight as it comes out of the jug. It will also kill moss so be careful if you like moss. Vinegar, vinegar, vinegar, I just love it because we had liver wort growing on a outside path and even if I scraped it off with a shovel it soon came back. And yes, the vinegar might take a couple of trys to get the job done for sure.

If you have a greenhouse or like structure, you should look carefully to see how much light comes in from the North (south side of course if you are in the Southern hemisphere). You may be able to save heat by not having clear glass or plastic on that side. We now use sheets of ½ inch insulation foam on the north side of our glass greenhouse and hold it in place with the spray foam. We remove the sheets in the summer for ventilation. Easy and much cheaper than replacement glass. Sometimes I can get this sheet foam with one side silvered which is even better. Wait, wait, should the silver side go outside to reflect the cold or inside to reflect the light? EWS

Dear Vireya Vine San Francisco, California
From Christy Hartsell MAY 13 2003

I live in the San Francisco Bay Area and see about 2 or 3 weeks of frosty weather a year. I grow all my vireyas in pots and put them in an non heated garage during frosty weather. They get about half day sun. I have been growing vireyas for about 10 years using the following method. I do many things differently in growinq vireyas in pots. My Vireyas are on a drip system which also waters my annuals, Impatients and Begonias. During the summer, I usually go on extended vacations for 2 or 3 weeks. So by necessity, I have always over watered my vireyas. My methods seem to work since I grow lots of varieties and they all are happy. They are watered daily and each pot gets at least 1/4 gallon a day during the summer. I keep the plants much drier in the winter, when they are not growing.

The pots I like to use are the plastic, wide hanging selfwatering basket type with holes in the side for watering from the bottom, preferredly white or some light color. I find that the water reservoir increases humidity around the plant. The hole in the side guarantees good drainage. The light color and the water evaporating in the reservoir keeps the roots cool. Some of the pots are hanging and some I set on my deck depending on the type of vireya. I water all pots with a dripper from the top.

While everybody has their own favorite mix, I use a slightly different one due to the high amount of water I give my plants during the summer and fall. I use 50% cocoa mulch, 25% 1/2 inch lava rock (from Chip Lima), and 12.5% redwood bark, and 12.5% 1/2 inch coconut chips. The cocoa mulch breaks down fairly quickly. This mix sometimes gets a harmless mold. This is an ongoing process, and the mix percentages changes just about everytime I repot. If you use a green house or take the plants inside the smell of chocolate from the mix is very pleasant. I over pot my plants, even though the plants grow a little slower at the start. I believe this helps breakout at the base of the plant and I eventually will get a bushier plant. Overpotting saves me time, since I may leave the plant in the same pot for 3-5 years. I have noticed the plants seem to like growing next to other plants or close to the side of the container. So I sometimes will plant 2 or 3 or even 4 plants in one big pot. I have to move less pots in the winter this way. For fertilizer I use Osmocote (standard not acid) every 6 months and foliar feed (Sea Max currently) about once a month.

While this method may not work for everyone, my plants seem to do fine. About three years ago we had over 100F degrees for a week (108 one day). The vireyas looked fine, even though I got quite a bit of leaf burn on my Maddenis (Mi Amor and Patricia Marie).

While I do not live in an area with bad water, I would suggest trying this method in summers where water is bad. I suspect you will have less salt and fertilizer burns. The excess salts would be washed out with excess water everyday.

Sincerely, Christy Hartsell
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Some interesting Internet sites www.vireya.net **www.groups.yahoo.com/group/vireya**

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