

VIREYA VINE

ISSUE #71, JANUARY 2004

PUBLISHED BY THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE RHODODENDRON SPECIES
FOUNDATION

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

From Kathy Larson
Dear Vireya Vine,

Marshalltown, Iowa
October 2003

Twelve months ago I bought seven Vireyas. They are all still alive and all but two have bloomed (they are in bud now). So of course I called Lucie at Bovees in Portland and ordered eleven more plants.

We put up a lean-to greenhouse facing south last fall, opening out of our dining-room and filled it with the Orchids we had been growing under lights. The greenhouse is second-hand, the glass double-paned and it curves up to just under a second-story window. Last winter we used a fan to blow warm air from the house into the area and have an old baseboard heater over the door. That kept the greenhouse no colder than 50°F last winter. Outside we got down to -20°F on several nights. This is USDA (US Department of Agriculture) Zone 4. The greenhouse floor is brick laid on sand, so keeping humidity up is not a problem.

Our last frost is in Mid-May. The plants were set outside at the northeast corner of the house surrounded by bricks to hold them upright. This is the prairie and we get a lot of Northwest winds. The spot is sunny until noon. We had several weeks of 100°F and drought, but Iowa is always humid. During those hot weeks the dew point was 75°F, so the Vireyas were not stressed.

In late September the plants go back into the greenhouse. We have used the fertilizer supplied by Bovees and watered on a Cattleya Orchid schedule. My first plants were: 'Cyril', 'Harry Wu', 'Marshall Pierce Madison', 'Moonlight Serenade', 'Saint Cecilia', 'Sybil' and 'Vladimir Bukovsky' and I love them all.

Kathy Larson
312 West High Street
Marshalltown, IA 50158

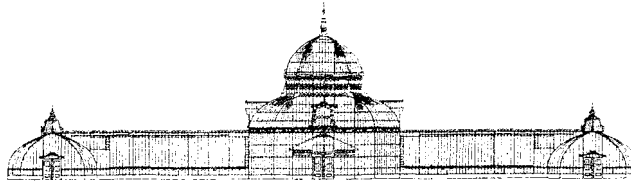
O Boy, I really love to hear about people who put a lean-to or sunporch onto their house. What a neat place to grow plants and to spend time. It is not only very close in but easy to heat and watch over.

I bet compared to a free standing greenhouse it is less expensive to keep warm. We find that almost everything likes morning sun and Vireyas will take it. Good light makes good blooming Vireyas. Just be careful of the late afternoon sun because it will burn on hot days. Good job Kathy.

If it does not look too bad it is also a good idea to cover a greenhouse completely with poly plastic in the winter. That stops all leaks of water and air. The best way would be to figure out a way to have a 2, 3, or 4 inch air gap between the plastic and the glass or what ever the greenhouse is covered with.

At Bovees we have a small plastic hoop house which is covered with a good grade of poly. We had tried everything to make clips to hold the poly firm onto the 3/4 inch PVC pipe but nothing worked until we found some clips in the "Charlie's Greenhouse" catalog. They work great (but they probably do not have them anymore). Take a look at Charlie's web site, they have a lot of neat things.

www.charliesgreenhouse.com EWS



From Nan Ray
Dear Vireya Vine,

Menlo Park, California
November 2003

The grand reopening of the Conservatory of Flowers in Golden Gate Park occurred Thursday, September 18, 2003. This is the beautiful glass house built in 1881 designed by Lord and Burnham. The Conservatory had diminished over the years as parts and wood wore out. Then it was damaged in the 1989 earthquake and the high winds of 1995 finished it off. Many thought it was beyond repair, but many thought it could be salvaged and restored. Much time and effort and money went into its rebuilding with careful adherence to the historical aspects. Most plants were moved out (those that could be saved after the windstorm), but the century-old philodendron, as tall as the building, could not be moved so it was carefully wrapped in plastic and left in place. It is thriving.

A few days before the big opening, a call was made to Don Mahoney, our volunteer boss at Strybing Arboretum to ask if we could supply Vireyas for the East wing known as the Highland Tropical room. Jim Queen and I selected the plants and we were then called upon to help design and plant this room.

Planting had to be held up until many bags of bark and peat moss were delivered to help the existing soil since these plants were going in the ground. We worked with other departments planting Bamboos, Tibouchinas, Melastomes, Ferns Bromeliads and epiphytic Orchids. We planted about 40 Vireyas, including goodenoughii, 'Cephas', 'Semper Fidelis' (a Pete Sullivan cross), and our big 'Hunstein's Secret' x konori. This beautiful plant had been in our greenhouse for a long time and it is great to see it in a natural setting.

This all took several days to finish but the room is wonderful to see. In spite of the attempt to be historically accurate, we can now put in modern touches. Thanks to computers, the climate is controlled as well as the mist system, keeping the room very cool. Everything is growing well in fact, we anticipate that things will grow so well that some of the plant material (hopefully not the Vireyas) will have to be removed. Jim and I have been assured by the Conservatory people that we are welcome to take cuttings anytime we wish and I personally am glad to see our plants have a new and permanent home for all to enjoy.

Nan Ray and Jim Queen
Strybing Arboretum
Golden Gate Park San Francisco, Ca.

Nan and Jim are volunteers at the greenhouse/propagating area at Strybing. They take care of the Vireya collection and have done so for many years. What would we do without volunteers? EWS

OK you asked for it. At least by not writing in to the Vireya Vine you have forced me to go and get some stuff that I think is GOOD. The next letters are from VV #4, June 1983, Bob Badger, Editor. In some cases you might need to read between the lines.

Please Note:: John Rouse passed away in March of 2002. John probably did more and documented more about Rhododendron science than any other person. The Vireya Vine would publish the things that people could understand while the tech bulletins did the much more technical items. I only met John a couple of times but he was a great supporter of the Vireya Vine and a good friend. I was at his Melbourne garden in about 1973 and reckon he at that time had the best collection of species in the world. John Rouse was also our largest financial contributor from the very start of the Vine. RIP John Rouse. EWS

I do not change the way words are spelled in other parts of the world. Notice in these stories that R. lochiaie was spelled lochae which has now been changed.

From John Rouse
Dear Vireya Vine,

Melbourne, Australia
April 3, 1983

Thanks for your comments on my contribution to "VV #2". With an editor's insight, you suggested that Section Vireya X Section Choniastrum might well be a possible cross. Attempts here with Section Vireya excluding Subsection PseudoVireya have, to date, produced no seed but the cross of R. retusum X R. ellipticum has resulted in some seed which was sown in January 1982. About 1% of this seed germinated, and resulted in some 10 seedlings whose hybridity was confirmed. The most vigorous of these seedlings is now nearly 5 inches tall and doing fairly well. They look evergreen, unlike Section Vireya X Section Pentanthera seedlings which don't quite look to be truly evergreen or deciduous, so I am uncertain how to treat them.

After writing to the VV in January regarding pollen storage, I thought I would try some of my own pollen. I emasculated R. lochae and applied R. javanicum, laetum, phaeocephalum and konori pollen which had been in storage for 2 to 3 years. By the size of the capsules, the pollen was viable except for that of R. konori, where the pistils abscised as was the case for all of the unpollinated pistils. When seed is obtained, I will check its germination and the resulting seedling vigor.

Compatibility experiments with Dr. Elizabeth Williams and Prof. Bruce Knox of the Plant Cell Biology Research Center at the University of Melbourne, resulted in the pollination of R. kawakamii var. flaviflorum X R. santapaui on December 7, 1982. Two capsules of seed ripened and were sown on March 5, 1983. The seed germinated in 21 - 23 days with a germination percentage of about 20%. The seedlings, now ventilated, appear normal and with vigor similar to seed of R. kawakamii var. flaviflorum selfed sown at the same time which germinated in 13 - 14 days. If these seedlings develop, will they be the first cross of R. kawakamii with any Rhododendron other than itself? The cross mentioned in VV #3, R. retusum X R. kawakamii var. flaviflorum and R. kawakamii var. flaviflorum X Kalmia latifolia, resulted in well formed seed, none of which contained embryos. It looks as if "Nosucheanum II" has not come about this time! Previous attempts at obtaining seed from the reciprocal cross of R. santapaui X kawakamii var. flaviflorum, with the seed parent on loan from Dr. R.M. Withers, have so far resulted in no seed or seed with no embryos, however the next try might be successful. Crosses within the Azalea Complex are hardly a topic for the VV, but you did introduce the subject in VV 3 so here goes;

- 1) Section Pentanthera X Section Tsutsutsi; I have one seedling of R. occidentale X R. indicum from seed sown in June 1981. So far it is evergreen and has one flower bud on it!
- 2) Section Choniastrum X Section Pentanthera; Seed of R. ellipticum X R. japonicum (Azalea) sown in June 1982 produced many partially chlorotic seedlings with great vigor. With age they are losing their chlorosis.
- 3) Section Pentanthera X Section Choniastrum; Seed of R. occidentale X R. ellipticum was sown in June of 1982. Two lots of seed was sown, one lot collected green (2 months early), and the other ripe. Both lots germinated well and healthy seedlings have resulted.

This pollination was made on January 21, 1983; R. herzogii LS4 X R. prunifolium, ARS 347/8-71. The seed parent was collected by Lou Searle, and the pollen parent came to us as seed in 1971 from the American Rhododendron Society, CW Georgia. Only about 10% of the seed contains embryos.

Dr. John L. Rouse
Toorak, Victoria 3142
Australia

Note; 'Nosucheanum' is a hardy rhododendron hybrid between Rhododendron williamsianum and Kalmia latifolia. The plants looks like 1/2 and 1/2 of each parent, the truss looks like rhododendron and the flowers look like big Kalmia flowers. It is very unusual for plants of different Genus to cross. If nature allowed this to happen we would really have a mess of confusion. EWS

From Bob Withers

Victoria, Australia

Dear Vireya Vine,

April 15, 1983

I have been growing Vireyas since 1961 and I think that in that time I have grown almost every Vireya species that has been introduced into cultivation. I also have grown some of the introduced species from Borneo, Sumatra, and Malaya. However, a time came when I could not cope with the quantity I was growing, and as a result I had to become selective. Nowadays I only grow those species of special interest, and a selection of hybrids, the majority of which have not flowered yet. The remainder of my collection has been passed over to my friend, Graham Snell, who has a Vireya Rhododendron Nursery and has far more space than I have. For years I have looked after imports and exports of plant material for the Australian Rhododendron Society, and to date I have sent 13 collections of Vireya cuttings to growers in America and to Botanical Institutions. In 3 visits to America I have visited with a number of your Vireya correspondents.

I have been asked to write an article for the RHS Rhododendron and Camellia Yearbook that will be published at the end of this year. The article will be about "Environment of Vireya Rhododendrons in Nature", in the hope that readers may try to copy growing conditions as found in the wild, and improve the cultivation in their own gardens. The article is based on my experiences in Papua New Guinea in 1981 with help from John Womersley and Canon Cruttwell.

There are a few points arising from the first three issues of the Vireya Vine that I would like to comment on.

1) After a lot of failures, Dr. John Rouse has finally succeeded in making a cross on his plant of *R. kawakamii* var. *flaviflorum* with pollen I supplied of *R. santapau*.

2) *R. lochae* X *R. christinae* results in a very floriferous hybrid but Brian Clancy has found that when it is selfed the F2 flowers are far superior to the parent, being more than twice as big. Two selected clones of the F2 are *R. 'Overflow'* and *'Arthur's Choice'*.

3) Peter Schick mentioned that I had informed him that *R. gardenia* is a geographical form of *R. leucogigas*. This is not quite correct. In 1966 Lyn Craven was collecting on Mount Hunstein in Papua New Guinea when he found a small seedling growing as an epiphyte on a fallen tree. He did not see the parent plant. I flowered this introduction for the first and only time in 1974. My plant is still alive but struggling. Dr. Rouse had a plant that grew much larger than mine, and flowered for the first time last year, and then promptly died. In 1974 I sent a leaf and floret to Dr. Sleumer and he said that it was typical of *R. konori*. The perfume of the enormous white flowers was typical of *Gardenia thumbergia* from South Africa and we thought it might be *R. gardenia*. However, Lyn Craven, John Womersley, and I now consider it to be the New Guinea form of *R. leucogigas*, although Dr. Rouse still has doubts and prefers to give it the name of *R. gardenia* aff., to distinguish it as a distinct clone. In 1974 I sent seed from my plant, and Dr. Rouse sent seed of hybrids that he had made using it as a pollen parent, to everyone we know around the world that was interested in Vireyas. Many of these seedlings should now have flowered. I do not think that the true *R. gardenia* has been introduced to cultivation. I think that any reference to *R. gardenia* in cultivation should be altered to read *R. leucogigas* (Mt. Hunstein form). This plant is by far the finest Vireya species that I have ever seen, and certainly the hardest to grow and propagate. It will be an ideal plant to grow in tissue culture when I have time to arrange it.

The best Vireya hybrid that I have flowered is a cross between *R. lochae* and the Mt. Hunstein form of *R. leucogigas*. The truss has numerous large florets with a beautiful reddish-pink colour. Once again it will be difficult to get propagating material from it quickly. This hybrid also illustrated another point, which is the value of *R. lochae* as a parent.

In the wild Vireyas are found growing as terrestrial shrubs or as epiphytes. Many species will grow in either situation, and it is true that while all species found growing as epiphytes have also been found growing as terrestrial plants, the reverse is not the case. A number of species that have been found growing as terrestrial plants have never been found as epiphytes. It would appear that Vireyas prefer to grow as terrestrial plants, but when growing in dense forests in competition with other trees and plants, they do grow as epiphytes in an attempt to obtain more light and better drainage.

One point that has not been mentioned in any of the letters to the Vine is the fact that some *Vireya* species may be found in the wild with both red and yellow variants. I realized this when I was in Papua New Guinea with the Australian Rhododendron Society Tour in 1981.

At Laiagam we were to see *R. commonae* plants with bright yellow flowers, and other forms that were bright red. A second species with red and yellow forms was collected by Paul Kores and it is close to *R. hooglandii*. *R. phaeochitum* is another species with plants having red or yellow flowers. There may be more?

Don Paden writes about the good yellow species from the Wau Ecology Institute (PNG). Yes it is *R. aurigeranum*. We saw a number of large plants growing happily in the garden of the Institute on our visit in 1981. The flowers were a beautiful buttercup yellow. A couple of days later we saw a *R. aurigeranum* growing at Zenag, that had bicolour flowers and looked like a small version of *R. zoelleri*.

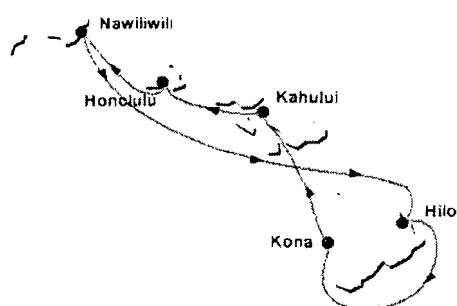
Dr. R.M. Withers
10 Urquhart St.
Hawthorn, Victoria 3122
Australia

Dr. Bob Withers is both a long time member of the Australian Rhododendron Society and the Australian Camellia Research Society. He has written many Vireya articles for the Rhododendron world.

Sail around the Hawaiian Islands with the ARS

The Hawaii Chapter of the ARS is pleased to present you with an exciting opportunity to extend your trip to the 2004 Western Regional Conference (Hilo, HI, Sep 22 -26, 2004). Join the "Pride of America", a new, American flagged and American staffed ship on a seven night cruise leaving Oahu for Kauai, Maui, and Kona and Hilo on the big island of Hawaii.

Cruise Itinerary



<u>Date</u>	<u>Port</u>	<u>Arrive</u>	<u>Depart</u>
Sun, Sep 26, 2004	Honolulu, Oahu		8:00 pm
Mon, Sep 27	Nawiliwili, Kauai	7:00 am	Overnight stay
Tues, Sep 28	Nawiliwili, Kauai		1:00 pm
Wed, Sep 29	Hilo, Hawaii	9:00 am	6:00 pm
Thu, Sep 30	Kona, Hawaii	7:00 am	5:00 pm
Fri, Oct 1	Kahului, Maui	8:00 am	Overnight stay
Sat, Oct 2	Kahului, Maui		6:00 pm
Sun, Oct 3	Honolulu, Oahu	7:00 am	

Relax while touring Hawaii without having to unpack and enjoy the freedom and flexibility of Freestyle Cruising offered by Norwegian Cruise Line! "Pride of America" is the first new ocean-going passenger ship in nearly 50 years to sail under the American flag. She will begin service in Hawaii in July 2004.

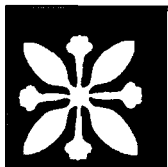
Cruise tour arrangements are being coordinated by Diane Weissman, a long-time ARS member and travel agent based near San Francisco, CA. Diane has offered to contribute to the ARS \$100 per passenger booked in this ARS group. Very competitive pricing (subject to availability) is offered:

Balcony cabins (Category BE) \$1,425 per person
Ocean view cabins (Category FF) \$1,125 per person

These prices include port charges and taxes, but do not include airfare, transfers to/from Honolulu airport, bar drinks, gratuities, garden tours or cancellation insurance (cost based on age at date of booking). Prices for other cabin categories are available upon request.

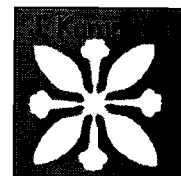
A \$500 deposit will hold your cabin and this early booking price. The deposit is refundable (less \$50 service fee) for cancellations received in writing before May 26, 2004. Full payment required by June 10, 2004. To make a reservation or to receive more information please e-mail diane@arsoffice.org or call 650-964-1003.

Note: Most passengers traveling to Hilo for the conference will fly via Honolulu. Convenient flights are available every two hours between Hilo and Honolulu. This will permit those attending Sunday morning conference sessions to reach Honolulu by 5 p.m. in time for the evening sailing. NCL offers a shuttle between the ship and Honolulu airport for \$20 each way, charged to the passenger's stateroom upon arrival. The shuttle operates from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Please note that your flight home should be scheduled after 12:30 p.m.



Western Regional Conference & Board Meeting Up-date

Dec. 18, 2003



Aloha,

Here is the latest information up-date on the Western Regional 2004 conference to be held in Hilo, Hawaii. We are still working on a final itinerary for the tours listed below. Any changes will be in the next update.

Please note both contacts listed in previous releases, Sherla's & Veryl Ann's, have new email addresses. Our good friend, Murphy's Law, seems to like to keep us on our toes and paid us an early visit.

Here are our new email addresses.

Sherla Bertelmann: vireya@pacificislandnurser.com

Veryl Ann Grace: veryl.grace@verizon.net

What: The Western Regional Conference & Board Meeting

Where: Hilo Hawaiian Hotel in Hilo, Hawaii

When: Sept. 23 – 26, 2004

Registration Fee: \$40. Late registration fee: \$55

Deadline for registration is August 1, 2004

Pending Tours:

1. Hamakua Coast - \$45 (includes lunch & garden entry fee of \$15)
All day tour. (gardens & commercial nursery tour)
2. Volcano National Park Day Tour - \$40 (includes lunch & volcano park admission fee) All day tour.
3. Volcano Lava Walk Night Tour - \$75 (includes boxed dinner, Lava Walk Guide, bottled water, flashlights & poncho) 3pm to 10:30 pm
(It is not recommended that pregnant women, children under 7 years of age, and persons with heart or respiratory problems, asthma, or other conditions not conducive to physical activity participate in the Volcano Lava Walk Tour. Participants will be required to sign a waiver of liability.)
4. Hilo - \$40 (includes lunch)
All day tour (gardens, zoo and vireya garden, & commercial)

The Board Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Sept. 23th. The banquet will be held on Saturday, Sept. 25. The dinner cost is not yet set. The conference is officially over on Sunday at 12 noon.

A post conference cruise is in the planning. Contact for more information is Diane. She can be contacted at diane@arsoffice.org

The program is still being worked on. E komo mai = Come on over!!!
Sherla D.M. Bertelmann Representing the Hawaii Chapter-ARS

Hilo Hawaiian Hotel 71 Banyan Drive, Hilo, Hawaii 96720

**A R S CONFERENCE
(AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY)**

September 21-26, 2004

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Please indicate number of people in room: _____ E-mail address _____

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****Requests for room must be received by August 1, 2004 or subject to rate and space availability.**

See Chris Callard's wonderful Web site at www.Vireya.net

Get into this group and let's talk about Vireyas www.groups.yahoo.com/group/Vireya

VIREYA NURSERIES

The Bovees Nursery (Lucie Sorensen-Smith)
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Neil & Kathryn Puddey Nursery
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Australia E-mail puddey@bigpond.com

Rhododendron Species Foundation
PO Box 3798 www.rhodiegarden.org
Federal Way, WA 98063 USA
(253)-838-4646 Mail Order E-mail rsf@rhodygarden.org

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Te Puna Cottage Gardens (John Kenyon)
Te Puna Road, RD6 E-mail TePuna.Cott.Gdns@xtra.co.nz
Tauranga, New Zealand web site at www.Vireya.co.nz
Mail Order NZ only Phone (07)552-5756

Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust
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New Plymouth E-mail pukeiti@pukeiti.org.nz
New Zealand web site at www.pukeiti.org.nz

The Vireya Venue
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Maleny, Queensland 4552
Australia

Pacific Island Nursery (Sherla Bertelmann & Richard Marques)
P. O. Box 1953 E-mail tropical@greensand.net
Keaau, HI 96749 (808)966-9225
www.pacificislandnursery.com
They also handle the Vireya seed exchange. WorldWide.

VIREYA VINE

RHODODENDRON SPECIES FOUNDATION

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U.S.A.