

VIREYA VINE

ISSUE # 8 NOVEMBER 1985

AN INTERNATIONAL GROUP OF "VIREYA BUFFS" - PUBLISHED BY THE EDUCATION
COMMITTEE OF THE RHODODENDRON SPECIES FOUNDATION

*What are you people doing out there? If we are to put out the Vireya Vine, we need
your letters and notes. Do one NOW. BWS ed*

From Jill Riehl, Washington State, USA
Dear Vireya Vine, April 22, 1985

When issue # 5 came, to my delight, I meant to send off my \$10.00 immediately, but another 30 days passed and issue # 6 arrived. How quickly a month passes. Finally I am mailing off my check.

It is fascinating to read the different experiences people have with vireyas. I have been growing them for some years and after a trip to Papua New Guinea I gave up this idea of growing them in rotted wood. Basically I am growing them in potting soil put out by a local nursery and they do well except that certain ones seem to be very prone to chlorosis.

For mildew which sometimes occurs the only effective measure I have found is Lilly Miller sulphur, a fungicide and insecticide. The answer I am looking for is how to assure dependable and full bloom. Perhaps some contributor will have an answer.

Jill Riehl
703 Bellevue Ave. East
Seattle Wa. 98102 USA

From Arthur Whitehair, California, State USA
Dear VV, May 25, 1985

Thank you for the 'complementary #6 issue'. My filing system, like my memory, is very fallible, so please accept my dues to keep this marvelous forum going.

The Species Foundation Symposium was wonderful and intelligent- scientific information presented by people from all over the world for all of us who attended to share. They spoke TO the audience, not down to us and the quality of the information was superb. Many thanks are due those who arranged this 3rd international symposium on Rhododendrons.

Since my climactic area is reasonably close to that of Vireyas and they seem to fit with my orchids and casual gardening approach, I feel we are a match, even if I am a relative novice to Rhododendrons. I now have some very nice plants of 5-7 years- hybrids and gifts from friends. It seems to me that each of us needs some non-special plants to learn on and these are my toys.

I've learned some of the truths of Vireya culture, at least in Alameda, Ca. They grow in full sun, needing protection only for those in flower so that the blooms last longer to enjoy.

When the plants are 3-5 years old they are reasonably tolerant to 26 degree of frost (F) for a couple of nights (I cover only when expecting heavy frost). They are growing in a very loose mixture of:

- 2 parts, composted shredded tree prunings
- 1 part, redwood bark (small 1/2" minus)
- 1 part, perlite
- 1 part, fine sandy loam

Fertilization is casual (I figure that as epiphytes they have to wait for bird doo, so my technique is about right). Maybe a light application (10-10-10) once or twice a year (if I remember).

Watering, when I get to it- since they're epiphytes, they seem to appreciate looking for water rather than being TOO wet.

Thanks to the Editor, my species collection has trebled and now contains some 25 species!
Thanks E. White

Arthur Whitehair
3256 Central Avenue
Alameda, Ca. 94501 USA

Editor note; I dragged Art over to my Home in north Tacoma after a day of sessions when he was here for "The International Rhododendron Species Symposium" April 29-30 1985. The best thing about Rhododendrons are the people you meet and Vireya people are real special. It was my great pleasure to help Art with his collection because after all I get my plants and cuttings from other people to. At the Western Regional Meeting of the American Rhododendron Society that was held at Seaside Oregon I took Dick Cavender some plants that he did not have and he gave me the cuttings of plants that I had not even heard of before. Dick also gave some plants to us for the Rhododendron Species Foundation collection. I think that it is most important that we all share plants so as not to lose a species from cultivation.

Also a few lines about how the Vireya Vine is doing. Just fine, but we do need your letters to print. We are not now sending the Vine to people who have not paid. We are not short of money but must follow good business practices of not giving too much away for free. If a person wants to have a copy of the Vireya Vine and has not paid that is fine, we are here to serve the Vireya world and they sure can have one but must also help with the cost. Some (many) people send in more than the \$10.00 US that we ask for and many thanks to them for the extra help. I type the Vireya Vine on my KayPro Computer at home and then print it on another KayPro that has a good printer at work. Then I send or give the printed copy to Fran Rutherford who takes it to the Species Foundation and runs it on their copy machine. (This takes Fran one long day to get all of the pages copied) The only thing that is paid for is the paper and the postage. I also do the mailing labels on my computer which Fran puts on along with stamps, stapling and envelopes for outside of the USA.

If you happen to have a KayPro computer I would be real happy to have your letter on disk that I would not need to retype it onto my disk. John Swisher in Florida is going to send his article that way. Saves me a lot of time. I do not think that this job of putting out the Vireya Vine could be done without a word processing computer. I sure could not do it.

About editing your letters; I do not do any editing to speak of. If you write a personal note in the letter I may or may not print it. I will some times change or add a word to make it sound better. Because this is a world wide publication I may try to make things clear for the reader if I can. Our goal from the start was to print what you send and we try to do this. We will even print a list of what you have for Sale if it has what we (the education committee) think is of educational value.

E. White Smith ed.

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From Norman Cruttwell                      Papua New Guinea  
Dear Vireya Vine,                      May 22, 1985

I am glad that the Vireya Vine has reappeared after its long absence. I have been meaning to write for a long time but am very busy running the Botanical Sanctuary and also acting in for the Church Rector who is on leave.

Readers may be interested in the progress of our Park and Sanctuary, though this has not been as rapid as we would have liked owing to a particularly prolonged and violent wet season, indeed even last years dry season was not particularly dry. This inhibited the flowering of many Rhododendrons. Now as we come out of the wet into another dry many have been or are beginning to flower. *R. phaeochitum* (pink) has been flowering, *R. rarum* is now in bloom with *R. scabridibracteatum* and *R. culminicolum* (all red). A few months ago the unidentified tree-like *R. spaff. maius*, absolutely covered itself with its tubular, scented, pink and white flowers. Two more mysterious natural hybrids have been found. One is probably *R. phaeochitum* X *scabridibracteatum* and the other, with narrow tubular flowers of a deep rose red is probably *R. multinervium* X *culminicolum*. These are guesses as these species among others are present close by. We also seem to have *R. beyerinckianum* (2 plants) though this is not quite typical. Among introduced species *R. hyacinthosum* from the Milne Bay Province has flowered for the first time in the Park. Its long waxy-like flowers are richly scented.

A number of buildings and facilities are being erected but bad weather has caused frustrating delays. The Park however continues to surprise us with more and more unexpected plants. The natural Rhododendron species and hybrids now amount to 22, all in an area of 200 acres.

Rev Norman E. G. Cruttwell, Curator  
Mt. Gahavisuka Botanic Garden  
P.O. Box 961 Goroka E.H.P.  
Papua New Guinea

Many thanks to Norman for his good letters. He of course is the only person we have living in Vireya Land. Oct. 20, 1985--- I just have received a letter from Ralph Sangster in Australia.---John Womersley has died of a sudden heart attack in the last part of September. A sad loss of knowledge on Vireyas and a good friend, RIP John

From Walter Mills Jr. New York State USA  
Dear VV, May 31, 1985

I got a nice note from Fran Rutherford with some suggestions for germinating seeds, and a packet of seed, but I pulled a complete blank. I got some no-damp-off sphagnum moss (which I see now that you don't like) and I've had the seeds planted for over two months, so I guess it's no go with them. Then I sent Esther Berry \$5 for more seeds and received the first from her, which have been planted about 3 weeks in the same medium-- no signs of life yet.

I've had a number of letters from growers offering mature plants, which I may succumb to if I continue to strike out on seeds-- but I am such a successful gardener with most everything else that this is a real challenge.

Then yesterday I had a real surprise. I received a nice note and a very generous envelope full of *R. javanicum* seeds from Allen and Shirley Anderson in Franklin Lakes NJ--fresh from a plant of theirs that had just produced the seed. I am trying three types of medium with these seeds; the sphagnum moss, some rich black soil from my back woods and rotted wood from a old tree stump. I have put these six pots (plastic) (two of each medium) on a shelf near the living room windows, but out of the sun. So we shall see and I'll let you know the results of my efforts.

Also do you as part of the Education function with the Rhododendron Species Foundation have a listing of all of the varieties of Malaysians with descriptions? If so, I'd like a copy and will remit whatever the cost is.

Walter S. Mills Jr.  
Box 52  
Chappaqua NY. 10514 USA

No Walter we do not have a listing of Vireya Rhododendrons with descriptions. The hand book from the RHS (last one) does list most Vireyas with a short description. It is one of the goals of the VV to get a complete list of the species in cultivation. If every one would send their list this would be much easier to assemble.

WE find it very heart warming to hear that people are writing to each other and sharing plants and seed.

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OK now here is a list of all of the vireya species that I know that are in cultivation. If you have more names to add to this list, please send them to us to be added to the list. This list is from plants that are growing in Australia, at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh and some of Washington State. We think that there must be some more names of living plants out in the Vireya World. Note; We also want to know about varieties.

VIREYA SPECIES PLANTS IN CULTIVATION

abietifolium	herzogii	polyanthemum
acuminatum	himantodes	praetervisum
aequabile	hooglandii	pseudonitens
alticolum	hyacinthosmum	purpureiflorum
anagalliflorum	inconspicuum	quadrasianum v quad
arfakianum	intranervatum	rarum
armitii	jasminiflorum	retivenium
atropurpureum	jasminiflorum v punctatum	retusum
aurigeranum	javanicum	rhodoleucum
bagobonum	keditii	robinsonii
beyerinckianum	konorii	rubellum
blackii	laetum	rubineiflorum
brookeanum	lanceolatum	rugosum
bryophilum	leptanthum	salicifolium
burtii	leucogigas	santapau
buxifolium	lindaueanum	saxifragoides
caliginis ?	lineare	sayeri
carrii	lochae	scabridibracteatum
carringtoniae	longiflorum	schoddei
christi	loranthiflorum	searleanum
christianae	lowii	sessilifolium
citrinum	luraluense	sheilae
commonae	luteosquamatum	snellae
comptum	macgregoriae	solitarium
crassifolium	majus	spondylophyllum
cruttwellii	malayanum	stapfianum
culminicolum	maxwellii	stenophyllum
culminicolum v angienae	micromalayanum	stevensianum
cuneifolium	multicolum	suaveolens
dianthosmum	multinervium	sumatranum
dielsianum	neuwenhuisii	superbum
durionifolium	nervulosum HYB?	tuba
ericoides	nummatum	vaccinioides
exuberans	orbiculatum	versteegii
fallacinum	pachycarpon	verticillatum

gardenia	pauciflorum	villosum
gaultheriifolium	perakense	vitis-idaea
goodenoughii	phaeochitum	williamsii
gracilentum	phaeopeplum	womersleyi
guilianettii	planicostatum	wrightianum
hellwigii	pleianthum	yelliotii
		yongii
		zoelleri

I am sure that some of you will have a comment or two on this list, such as; I have *R. retusum* var. *retusum*; are we sure that we really have *R. pseudonitens*? The plant at the Rhododendron Species Foundation was said to be a natural hybrid; or I have a plant labeled *R. orbiculatum* that looks like this or that, but not what the book says. Let us know and we will tell the Vireya World and we all will learn something new. E. White

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From George Argent RBG Edinburgh, UK  
Dear VV, September 4, 1985

Thank you for your letter of 26 August. (Note; your editor wrote to George and asked him what he was working on) I feel guilty at not having contributed to the 'Vireya Vine' before. It's very useful and very encouraging to know of others interest.

It is true that I have prepared the manuscript for a book on the (Vireya) Rhododendrons of Sabah with three co-authors, Anthea Phillipps, Tony Lamb and Sheila Collenette which will be published as a Sabah National Parks handbook with colour illustrations of almost all species in the near future. The aim has been to produce a book which can be used at three levels, as a pretty picture book, an introduction to the plants for a naturalist (particularly the local people of the area) and a reference book for specialist. It is not really a book primarily aimed to growers although we have added notes on cultivation (mainly Edinburgh orientated) where we have them.

I am still working on the taxonomy of Vireya Rhododendrons as part of a broader interest in tropical Ericaceae but have only seriously tackled those species from Borneo. Nevertheless I am hoping to organize a visit to Papua New Guinea next year (expedition is rather a grand term) with a view to collecting some more materials and broadening my taxonomic experience of the groups but any other book is a long way off.

I listed the species of Vireya that we had in cultivation for the 1982 Int. Rhodo. Conference and I enclose that list - modified to show losses and gains which more or less brings it up to date. (this list has been added to the Vireyas in cultivation list, ed)

I'm sorry I can't help you with any contacts for Vireyas in the Philippines. I am at present heavily involved in a lowland rain forest project which keeps me away from Vireyas more than I would like. Thank you very much for copies of the Vireya Vine. I shall try to keep you informed of developments in the future.

George Argent  
Royal Botanic Garden  
Edinburgh EH3 5LR  
Scotland UK

Thanks to George for the letter and the list of plants. Please let us know how we can get the book about the Sabah Rhododendrons when it is printed. Maybe the Species Foundation or some one like Harold Greer will stock this book so that we all can get it. Sounds good because there is just not much that the Vireya people can use at this time. Only a few people have the Sleumer

book. The newest RHS species book is a help for people but not enough info.

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From Robert 'Mitch' Mitchell Jr. Hawaii, USA
Dear VV, October 7, 1985

You may remember that my wife and I attended the International Symposium and some of the sessions of the ARS annual meeting on our way to England last April. We have just returned after having had a wonderful time cruising more of England's beautiful waterways on our Narrowboat "Kimalia". During the last three summers we have discovered more than 1500 miles of canals and rivers from York in the north to Godalming in the south. And of course we took advantage of every opportunity possible to visit many beautiful gardens. We got to Harlow Carr (Northern Horticultural Society) in time to see a beautiful Rhododendron display, but they were all gone when we reached Kew and Wisley in July.

Now I am reviewing my Symposium notes and find many mentions of how well *Vireya* should do in our garden. Here is a brief summary of our growing conditions: our home is in a rain forest filled with giant tree ferns, some of which are 25' high, and many ohia trees; the rainfall is about 170 inches a year, the temperature very rarely goes below 35F in the winter or above 90F in the warmer periods (we are at 4000' on the mountain of Mauna Loa and two miles from Kilauea Crater at the latitude 19.16N), and the soil is acid. We have a number of camellias and azaleas and are experimenting with rhododendron species and hybrids with plants from nurseries in Oregon and Illinois. We also have two *Vireya R. aurigeranum* from Lyon Arboretum in Honolulu.

My notes say that according to Dennis Harris the Maddenii series should do well here. Bill Jenkins thought I should order plants from *Vireya Specialties Nursery* in West Los Angeles. (do you have their address?). John Womersley spoke highly of *R. leptanthum*, *mcgregoriae*, *Taylorii*, *superbum* and *zoelleri*. Another person suggested crosses with *R. laetum*, *konorii* and *leucogigas* and these hybrids, Narnia, Calavar and Lazarus, sp? If you can help me obtain Cuttings or plants of any of these or any plants that you feel would do well here I would be most appreciative. I am really quite excited about trying to find *Vireya* that will like our growing conditions.

Robert Mitchell
P. O. Box 298
Valcano Hawaii 96785
USA

I am sure that Viners will help Mitch with his want list. Almost any *Vireya* should grow in his area. And he has tree fern to use for planting. Such a deal you have Mitch, you sound like you have a prime spot for *Vireyas*. *Vireya Specialties Nursery*' address is

2701 Malcolm Ave.
Los Angeles, Calif. 90064
USA

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From John Rouse,      Melbourne Australia  
Dear VV,      August 6, 1985

Thanks for your comments in VV7 on grafting *Vireyas*. You appear to have had much experience To assist with the experiment which I am presently conducting, I would very much appreciate the following information if it is contained in your records.

The grafts made which initially took, how long it was before incompatibility showed up, the form of this incompatibility and at the stage of failure, the size size of the plant and the development of the top growth and the roots. Did any of the unions actually fail?

Dr. John Rouse  
House 8 Stonehaven Court

Toorak, Victoria 3142  
Australia

No John, I do not have any records of my try with grafting Vireyas. I only did the grafting because Don Stanton encouraged me to do so and then sent me some cuttings at a time of the year that looked good for me to try grafting. Many Rhododendron people never try to do any grafting thinking that it is too hard to do. I had not done any until Arnold Teese (from Australia) was at my house one day long ago and I had some cuttings that would not root and needed to be grafted. Arnold did the grafts for me and they were all successful. These were Loderi type cuttings that would not root anyway. Then when Don Stanton sent some Vireya cuttings I had to try grafting. The grafts were put onto Maddenii Hybrid root stock that I didn't want. I left the grafts on for a long time (4 months ?) and then removed the signs and rooted them in my sweat box. I think that the grafts must have taken or they would not have lasted for that long. But then Don wrote that Vireya grafts might not last too long on Maddenii understock and not wanting to lose them I pulled them off. I wish I could tell you what the understock was, but I think that the signs were *R. laetum* and a Pink Seedling hybrid. I am sure that grafting of Vireya Rhododendrons works and is a useful way to go. You will probably be flooded with info from other Viners about this subject. Can you Viners give John some help with this. E. White

From Ruth Funder, Victoria, Australia  
Dear VV, May 28, 1985

I belong to the Aus. Rhodo. Society and am a foundation member of the Victorian Branch. I have graduated from collecting and growing the old larger type Rhodos to becoming exclusively a Vireya "nut". This is partly explained, because after retirement, I now have a much smaller garden and tend to grow most of my Vireyas in tree fern tubs - free standing or partly sunk into the ground. On the few days that we have temperatures above 100F I stand the tree fern tubs in a saucer of water.

Quite a few of the hardier plants thrive in our raised beds of sandy-loam with fir bark, compost etc well mixed in. These are *R. lochae*, *laetum*, (and their many crosses) *macgregoriae*, *javanicum*, *quadrasiaticum*, *gracilentum*, *inconspicuum*, *kawakamii*, *konori*, Triumphans, Princess Alexandra, Stanton's Glory, Coral Flare, Robert Withers and *R. jasminiflorum* and its crosses.

As I am over 3 score and 10, I am not interested in making my own crosses and sowing seed etc, but am quite happy to buy plants from the nurseryman, or accept seedlings from our Rhodo. Society, and just enjoy the fragrant and often unexpected burst of flowering throughout the year. Good luck with the future publications of the VV.

Mrs. Ruth Funder  
7 Mary Street  
Kew, Victoria 3101  
Australia

Sounds great Ruth and keep up the good work.

From Dick Cavender, Oregon, State USA  
Dear VV, May 31, 1985

Fellow Vireya Collectors

Small Rhododendrons are a lot like kittens, cute but soon growing up. Vireyas are the hobby that gets in the way of the business at my place, but still have to provide for some of their expense. We do not as a rule sell Rhodies by mail but will so in this case. I will ship anywhere

R. alticolum \$3.50, R. dielsianum \$4.00, R. kawakamii \$3 & \$8.00, R. laetum \$5.00, R. loranthiflorum \$8.00, R. phaeochitum \$4.00, R. phaeopeplum X R. leucogigas \$15.00, R. rarum \$5.00, R. rugosum \$4.00, R. solitarium \$5.00, R. stenophyllum \$4.50, R. koneri X R. zoeleri \$3.50, & R. Triumphans \$3.00 to \$5.00, R. Valentine \$5.00, R. dr. Sleumer \$3.50, and more. I would also be interested in any really outstanding hybrids in colors other than red, pure white or pure yellow. I would particularly like fragrant bicolors; doubles and hybrids of stenophyllum and internervatum.

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(Fran Rutherford)

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VIREYA VINE
RHODODENDRON SPECIES FOUNDATION
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