

The Vireya Venture.

THE VIREYA VENTURE No.9 OCTOBER 1992

The last issue of this newsletter for 1992 concludes a year when there seemed to be an increasing interest by the public in Vireyas and a wider spread of nurseries that were stocking them. It also saw another large number of Australian Vireyas being registered, bringing the total to date to 228, including a few named varieties of species but not this year's overseas registrations.

The Australian Rhododendron Society yearbook has a detailed account of R.lochiae by Dr.R.M.Withers with the history of its discovery, cultivation and hybridisation. This runs into some 22 pages , with illustrations. However we still need some more details to distinguish between the plants from different locations and Dr Geoff Atherton has contributed a few more facts on its occurence in this issue.

The annual general meeting of the Aust.Rhodo.Scty. was held at Wollongong on October 2nd and a very interesting suggestion from Ralph Sangster was discussed. This was to encourage and assist the establishment of a bank of Vireya species in a Botanic Garden in Australia. Possibly this would be better still if two or more gardens were involved, to obtain a spread of climates. Wollongong's Botanic Garden has a small collection to which it is adding, and so too, I believe, has Adelaide. We shall have to wait and see what develops but it is a project that we should all support.
The garden visits around Wollongong displayed more Vireyas and azaleas than other rhododendrons (these were seen at Berry) and there were some outstanding Vireya flowers displayed that promise some delights to come.

Finally, your subscription for the 1993 issues is now due and it would assist us to plan ahead if you would send this to us as soon as possible.

The Editor, P.O.Box 8, Keiraville N.S.W. 2500

J.Clyde Smith

VICTORIAN BRANCH VIREYA FIELD DAY 1992

Following the success of the first Vireya Field Day held at Nunawading on Saturday 20th April 1991, it was extended in 1992 to a two-day activity at the same venue on Saturday 21st and Sunday 22nd March this year.

The plant sales held in the large potting shed area were the most popular feature, with an extensive collection of vireyas, azaleas and other rhododendrons, in addition to non-rhododendrons. All these plants had been produced by members, and included many varieties not commercially available.

The flower and plant exhibits were of a high quality, attractively displayed in the Meeting Room in an informal manner planned and staged by Bill Taylor. The outstanding exhibit of the entire display was a trio of vireya entries by Brian Clancy. All were his own hybrids. One was a plant of 'Sunny' (*R. christianae* × *R. macgregoriae*) × *R. rubineiflorum*. This plant was awarded the prize for Best Vireya by the judges, Valerie and Lionel Marshall. Another was a hybrid of (*R. laetum* × *R. aurigeranum*) × *R. rubineiflorum*, and the third was described as a Test Garden, being a large slab of tree fern trunk,with 25 small, compact, vigorous cutting-grown plants of the latter hybrid in active growth uniformly spread over its surface.

The President's Award was given to Brian's trio of the above exhibits on account of the quality of the plants, the excellence of presentation and the innovation in hybridising. None of these plants was in flower, yet they were judged superior to all others on the basis of their small compact growth and dense shapely foliage.

Brian has hybridised with *R. rubineiflorum* in an attempt to produce compact dwarf vireyas with yellow flowers. Those which have flowered so far have had the ruddy colour of *R. rubineifolium*, but even without the flowers they are handsome compact plants worth growing for their foliage and habit. Other interesting Vireya entries were *R. orbiculatum* × (*R. laetum* × *R. aurigeranum*), *R. lochiae* × *R. leucogigas*, a seedling of *R. zoelleri* cv.'Island Sunset', (Max Warner's plant), *R. lochiae* × *R. solitarium*, the two forms of *R. christi*, and *R. stenophyllum* × *R. commonae*. The latter, which I think is a John Rouse hybrid, is becoming increasingly seen in Society displays, as the plants distributed a few years ago mature. It is hardy, relatively easy to grow (unlike *R. stenophyllum*) and sparingly produces rich red flowers over a long period; its foliage is long and thin, like *R. stenophyllum*.

Following its second successful year, this show appears likely to become a permanent feature of the Society program, but its gradual metamorphosis from the initial Field Day to a two-day show will require a more appropriate title. Its greatest attribute is that it provides an opportunity for members to display their autumn flowering plants and to meet other members in a congenial and comfortable setting.

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Our thanks to Mr Jack Wilson, P.O.Box 59,Forest Hill, Vic.3131, for this account of the 1992 Vireya Field Day, organised by the Victorian Branch of the Aust.Rhodo.Scty.

PETALLOID FLOWERS

Mrs.Sylvia Saperstein of Main Arm, Mullumbimby,2482, has an interesting offer to make to us, viz:-
"Last year I had several flowers on R.javanicum which had extra petals fused to the anthers. I selfed these flowers very meticulously, extracting the pollen from unopened flowers and putting it on stigmas which were covered before they were receptive to pollen. In fact I removed the petals from unopened flowers then bagged the stigmas in brown paper. I had an extremely good germination and now have seedlings a couple of inches high ready to prick out into tubes. If there are any enthusiasts who would like a few of these to bring to flowering I would be happy to pass them on. Please send a largish self addressed envelope to Sylvia Saperstein. Main Arm Mullumbimby N.S.W. 2482.

It might be quite interesting to compare notes on who manages to flower them first and whether the doubling is more pronounced. Some of the flowers on the same plant were extremely petalloid but had very little pollen. Also their stigmas were rather deformed and nothing came of that attempt.

I have several other crosses, maybe none very exciting, that I would like to share, such as 'Simbu Sunset' x 'Buttermilk' and 'Simbu Sunset' x R.javanicum.

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And a further interesting and useful comment:-
Having read about the problem of rust in Vireyas, I automatically assumed that the red spots I was looking at must be rust and spent a lot of time and money spraying them. When the red spots persisted on each new flush of growth it became obvious that I was using the wrong fungicide , or the problem was not a fungus. So I sent a specimen to the Dept. of Primary Industry who identified a magnesium deficiency. Suddenly the light dawned! The red leaves only showed up on plants that had been in the same mix for a year or so and after prolonged leaching the magnesium was depleted.

To test this deduction I treated two groups of 6" pots of R.javanicum which were particularly discoloured:- one group with one pinch of Epsom salts, the second with two pinches and a mixed group with none. The next flush of leaves on the first group were slightly red, the second not at all. The control group showed the original spotting. There seems to be no side effects from this treatment and it has the advantage of being inexpensive. Epsom salts can be bought in a supermarket and even more cheaply at a nursery supply shop.

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VIREYAS for WARMER AREAS

In the book 'Rhododendrons of Sabah'there is an interesting comment for those who live in warmer climates particularly, on R.longiflorum. This species occurs in Sarawak, Brunei, and Kalmanton, and also in the Karimara Archipelago, Sumatra and West Malaysia. It has been known for many years as one of the few species that the Veitch nursery had in the 1860's, but then it was named R.lobbii. It is a lowland species that is seldom found above 600m and it may occur even as low as to be epiphytic on mangroves. The comment therefore that it "probably has most future as a horticultural plant in tropical gardens" is readily understood.

This was put to the test by Professor R.E.Holttum, Director of Gardens, Singapore, in the late 1930's. He wrote two accounts of his experiments in the M.A.H.A. journal in 1939 and 1941, detailing his success in growing seedlings of it and in crossing it with R.jasminiflorum and also with a hybrid of R.jasminiflorum and R.Javanicum (?). Crosses also made with evergreen azaleas produced some viable seed but the plants were weak and none survived. However the Vireya seedlings that he produced ranged in size at the age of only 2¼ years from 2' high with many branches to the smallest that was under 1' high with few branches. It appears that they were beginning to flower at that age.

Two other species also recommended for further trials were R.javanicum var.Brookeanum and R.javanicum var.Teysmanii which has also been found growing epiphytically on mangroves. Unfortunately the war stopped any further work by Holttum.

It is interesting to note that his practice was to grow his plants in 'ordinary pots', presumably terracotta, half filled with coarse broken bricks and above this small pieces of brick and burnt earth. This proved unsatisfactory with insufficient aeration for the roots and was changed to coarse broken brick above which was a mixture of small broken clean new bricks and charcoal. Despite Singapore's normal high humidity they needed watering a little once a day, or twice a day in full sun when they had young growth. They were fed monthly with dilute ammonium sulphate or dilute urine.

Some Vireyas are found at elevations up to 4,000m but the majority grow in the 2,000m to 3,000m range and these are the species that have commonly been collected since most people were only interested in plants with good tolerance of cold weather. There are other Vireyas growing well below 2,000m that have potential for warm areas - or at least for use in hybridizing for this purpose. For example R.zoelleri grows from sea level to 1,500m or rarely to 2,000m. But was your plant collected at sea level or at 1,500m? Altitude is significant even in their home country - Canon Cruttwell once commented that there was no growth on some lowland plants after two years in the garden at Mt.Gahavisuka, where the altitude is about 2250m. Here they receive frequent showers, high ultra violet light intensity and although temperatures are pleasant during the day they are cold at night,although above freezing point.

There is another major factor to be taken into account and that is the vigour that comes from hybridizing so that R.lochae crossed with R.laetum from high altitudes seems just as heat tolerant as R.lochae x R.aurigeranum from much lower. However Wollongong is only on the verge of the semi-tropical areas and factors such as humidity, wind velocities, spread of rainfall, daylength, and night temperatures all play a part too. Nevertheless - the board walk through the mangroves at the Coffs Harbour Botanic Garden is of great interest now - but imagine it with a few epiphytic Vireyas growing there too!

The species that are available here which seem to have the potential to enjoy a warm climate are listed below, with their altitudinal spread shown in metres.

Aurigeranum	915 - 1740	
Baenitzianum	215 - 1200	
Christianae	600 - 1525	
Dianthosmum	800 - 1400,	possibly from 500
Intranervatum	600 - 1050	
Loranthiflorum	120 - 1000	On Bougainville 750 -1000
Luraluense	790 - 1830	
Longiflorum	0 - 600	
Jasminiflorum	1160 -1525	
" var punctatum	855 - 1830	
Javanicum	800 - 2000	In Sabah 300 - 1800
" var Brookeanum	0 - 1525	
Macgregoriae	500 - 3000	
Orbiculatum	800 - 1750	Brunei and N.Sarawak
"	1220 - 2135	Mt.Kinabalu
Zoelleri	0 - 1500	

As you may know there are quite a number of hybrids of the above species now available so keep them in mind for the warmer areas if you have a choice. Let us know what successes you have had too, so that other readers may be advised.

Editor

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Dr. Herman Sleumer's Book

Good news from Lyn Craven, 26 Saville Close, Melba, ACT. 2615 "Recent afficionadoes of the section may be interested in buying a copy of Sleumer's 'Flora Malesiana' treatment. It is available as a single issue of the relevant volume of the flora. This issue formed the basis of the item Sleumer,H. 1966."An account of Rhododendron in Malesia" which differs from the flora version only in the possession of a one and a half page introduction and an index. The reference to the item is:

Flora Malesiana series 1,volume 6,part 4,pp469-668.1966. First part of the Ericaceae treatment.Price: Dfl 70.00 (at 21 September 1992 this was about $62.50) plus postage and handling.
The bookseller's address is: D.A.Books, 648 Whitehorse Road, Mitcham, Vic. 3132. Attention: Thea Brazier.

I would be happy to photocopy the index from the offprint for any purchasers of the work.

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VIREYA REGISTRATIONS 1992

The following list of Vireyas are those submitted by the Australian Rhododendron Society Plant Registrar and approved by the Royal Horticultural Society during the year 1991 - 1992.

Aida's March R.laetum x R.zoelleri
Hybridized and raised by G.L.Snell, Maleny, Qeensland. Registered by Ross Macdonald, Montrose, Victoria. Truss of 10 - 12 flowers vivid yellow (15B) with lobes of strong reddish orange (40C).

Auburn Beauty R.laetum x R.christianae 'Sunset'
Hybridized and raised by G.L.Snell, registered by Ross Macdonald.Truss of 5 - 7 flowers brilliant yellow (12B), lobes vivid yellow (15B - 28A).

Breathless Unknown x R.herzogii
Raised by G.L.Snell, registered by Ross Macdonald. Truss of 15 - 20 flowers light yellow (10C) lobes light yellowish pink (27A).

Cakes and Ale (R.laetum x R.zoelleri,Golden Gate)x(R.zoelleri x R.leucogigas).Hybridized by P.Schick U.S.A. Raised by G.L.Snell, registered by Ross Macdonald. Truss of 4 - 8 flowers strong orange (25A/26B), lobes light orange yellow (23C).

Catherine the Great [(R.phaeopeplum x R.lochiae) x R.zoelleri] x R.leucogigas 'Hunstein's Secret'. Hybridized and raised by J.Rouse, Toorak, Victoria. Registered by Ross Macdonald. Truss of 8 flowers light greenish yellow (154D) lobes purplish pink (55B).

Channon Marie (R.laetum x R.macgregoriae) x R.zoelleri
Hybridized, raised and registered by B.Clancy, Bentleigh, Victoria. Truss of 8 - 11 flowers, light yellowish pink (38C) Star shaped throat vivid yellow (17C).

Chayya Pink Delight x R.intranervatum F2
Hybridized ,raised and registered by B.Clancy.Truss of 8 -14 flowers strong pink (52D/55D) shading to pale yellow.

Cinnamon Pink Parentage unknown
Raised and registered by G.L.Snell. Light orange yellow (16C/17D), lobes strong yellowish pink(37A).

Cybelle Barbour ([R.phaeopeplum x R.lochiae] x R.leucogigas) x R.jasminiflorum. Hybridized by J.Rouse, raised by G.L.Snell registered by D.Moodie, Montrose, Victoria. Truss of 16 flowers, pale yellowish pink (27D).

Diamond Jubilee R.konorii x R.zoelleri
Hybridized by G.L.Snell, raised and registered by R.Macdonald. Truss of 5 flowers, pale yellow (11C/11B), lobes deep pink (50B).

Doll Tsarsheet R.lochiae x (R.lochiae x R.konorii)
Hybridized by J.Rouse, raised and registered by R.Macdonald. Truss of 5 - 7 flowers, strong purplish red (58B)

Elation R.zoelleri(Mt.Hagen form) x R.leucogigas 'Hunstein's Secret'. Hybridized by J.Rouse, raised and registered by L.Craven, Melba, A.C.T. Truss of 4 - 6 flowers deep pink (52A/52C) lobes, tube light greenish yellow (8C) shading to pale yellow (11B/C).

Eureka Gold form of R.aurigeranum
Selected, raised and registered by G.L.Snell. Truss of 10 -17 flowers, vivid yellow (17C) with strong orange lobes (26B).

Faberge's Egg (R.intranervatum x Pink Delight) x R.javanicum
Raised by G.L.Snell, registered by R.Macdonald. Truss of 10 -14 flowers brilliant yellow (20A).

Finnegan's Rainbow R.laetum x R.zoelleri u
Hybridized and raised by G.L.Snell, registered by R.Macdonald. Truss of 5-7 flowers, vivid yellow (15A/17C), lobes vivid reddish orange (30B).

Gossamer White R.loranthiflorum x R.laetum
Hybridized, raised and registered by G.L.Snell. Truss of 5-6 flowers, yellowish white (158D)

Green with Envy "Gardenia' x (R.laetum x R.aurigeranum)
Hybridized by G.L.Snell, raised and registered by R.Macdonald. Truss of 10-15 flowers, light greenish yellow (4B),lobes light yellow (10C).

Hendre "Arthur's Choice' x R.wrightianum var. wrightianum
Hybridized, raised and registered by B.Clancy. Truss of 3-4 flowers strong red (45D).

High Country Wedding [(R.phaeopeplum x R.lochiae) x R.leucogigas] x R.laetum. Hybridized by J.Rouse, raised by G.L.Snell, registered by R.Macdonald. Truss of 7-9 flowers,light yellow(10C), lobes strong purplish pink (55B).

Highland Fair (R.phaeopeplum x R.lochiae) x R.zoelleri
Hybridized by J.Rouse, raised and registered by G.L.Snell. Truss of 5 flowers,light yellowish pink (36C/37C), lobes, outer strong red (50A) inner light yellowish pink (36C).

Hip-Hip-Hurrah (Dr.H.Sleumer x R.herzogii) x (R.laetum x R.aurigeranum) Hybridized and raised by J.Rouse, registered by R.Macdonald. Truss of 9-11 flowers, deep pink (52C).

Innuendo R.multinervium x 'Wattle Bird'
Hybridized by J.Rouse, raised and registered by R.Macdonald. Truss of 9-11 flowers, pale yellow (12D), lobes strong pink (49A)

Jolly Roger R.leucogigas 'Hunstein's Secret x (R.phaeopeplum x R.lochiae) Hybridized by J.Rouse, raised by G.L.Snell, registered by R.Macdonald. Truss of 7-10 flowers, strong yellowish pink(43D) lobe edge vivid red (45A).

Kaleidascope R.konorii x R.christianae F2
Hybridized and raised by G.L.Snell, registered by R.Macdonald. Truss of 6-9 flowers, pale yellow (11C), lobes pale yellow green.

Kiandra R.zoelleri'Island Sunset' x R.brookeanum
Hybridized raised and registered by B.Clancy. Truss of 7-14 flowers vivid reddish orange (30B).

Lucifer's Blush R.laetum x unknown
Raised by G.L.Snell, registered by R.Macdonald. Truss of 6-10 flowers moderate reddish orange.

Mistress Sue R.leucogigas 'Hunstein's Secret' x R.lochiae
Hybridized by J.Rouse, raised and registered by R.Macdonald. Truss of 5-9 flowers, deep purplish pink.

Platinum Blonde R.laetum x 'Sweet Wendy'
Hybridized by G.L.Snell, raised and registered by R.Macdonald. Truss of 6-9 flowers, vivid yellow (13A) lobes tinged red.

Poet Laureate (Dr.H.Sleumer x R.herzogii) x (R.laetum x R.aurigeranum) Hybridized by J,Rouse, raised and registered by R.Macdonald. Truss of 16-18 flowers, pale yellow (158B), lobes moderate pink (49B).

Ratafia Dr.H.Sleumer x R.konorii
Raised by G.L.Snell, registered by R.Macdonald. Truss of 3-6 flowers brilliant yellow green (154B) lobes strong pink (49A)

Rich Amber (R.laetum x R.zoelleri) x (R.zoelleri x R.leucogigas) Hybridized by G.L.Snell, raised and registered by R.Macdonald. Truss of 5-6 flowers, strong yellow (24A/25A) lobes vivid orange yellow.
Scotchburn White Vireya Hybrid - probably a natural hybrid. Selected raised and registered by G.L.Snell. Truss of 8-12 flowers pale yellow green (155A).
Sweet Amanda (Dr.H.Sleumer x R.herzogii) x (R.laetum x R. aurigeranum.) Raised and registered by G.L.Snell. Truss of 5-8 flowers pale yellow (11C), lobes moderate yellowish pink (39C).
Thief of Hearts R.lochiae x R.solitarium
Hybridized by G.L.Snell, raised and registered by R.Macdonald. Truss of 8-10 flowers, deep purplish pink (55A).
Tinkerbell's Flight R.loranthiflorum x R.laetum
Raised by G.L.Snell, registered by R.Macdonald. Truss of 7-11 flowers,pale yellow (11C),lobes light yellowish pink (36D/38C)
Tops of Kew [(R.phaeopeplum x R.lochiae) x R.leucogigas] x R.zoelleri Raised and registered by R.Macdonald. Truss of 11-15 flowers, pale yellow (158A) lobes white.
Tosca's Kiss R.leucogigas 'Hunstein's Secret' x [(R.phaeopeplum x R.lochiae) x R.zoelleri] Hybridized by J.Rouse raised and registered by R.Macdonald. Truss of 6 flowers moderate yellow (162B) lobes strong red (53C).
Tropic Splendour 'Simbu Sunset'x R.Zoelleri 'Island Sunset'
Hybridized by G.L.Snell raised and registered by R.Macdonald. Truss of 9-10 flowers, vivid orange yellow (21A/B), lobes strong reddish orange (32B).
Veronica Maureen (R.christianae x R.lochiae) x R.zoelleri Irian Jaya form. Hybridized, raised and registered by B.Clancy. Truss of 7 flowers yellowish white (155B)/ pale yellow green (4D), lobe edge vivid reddish orange (40A).
White Giant Form of R.konorii
Selected, raised and registered by L.Craven. Truss of 2-6 flowers pale yellowish pink (159C/D), lobes yellowish white (155D).
Zoe Elloise Dr.H.Sleumer x R.zoelleri, Michael Black form
Hybridized, raised and registered by B.Clancy. Truss of 6-13 flowers light greenish yellow (4B/5D), lobes moderate reddish orange (41C).

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It is interesting to see hybrids of R.intranervatum and R.solitarium appearing. These two species are relatively rare in cultivation, like R.commonae, which has also rarely been used as a parent. However that species from the higher altitudes of the Eastern Highlands of New Guinea is widespread there. It was seen in all its different colour forms from pale yellow to red in the very unusual location of Kain swamp near Laiagam, where it grows on low tussocks, when the A.R.S. group was there in 1983. While it is not common in cultivation the name has no reference to its occurence in any area as it comes from the Latin word 'cmmoneo', which means 'to remind'.

The R.H.S. Rhododendron Handbook of 1980 however explains the name as "dedicated to the author's wife". I wonder what prompted that reference ?

RHODODENDRON LOCHAE

Dr. Geoff Atherton of Lot 1, Mt Glorious Road, Mt Glorious, Queensland 4520 has been looking at R.lochae in the mountains and has sent in these observations :-

" Recently I had the opportunity to observe R.lochae in another two locations in North Queensland. We had the opportunity to spend a day on the Windsor Tablelands. This is a high plateau at the Northern end of the Atherton Tablelands. The elevation is about 1300 metres. The area was logged up to the time of world heritage nomination.

The R.lochae plants grow only at the higher elevations and are seen commonly in the granite boulders where they grow in the sandy leaf litter. They often scramble across these boulders and take root in the mossy leaf mulch on the sides of the boulders. We did not observe plants growing far from these granite boulders - their habit is mostly that of a scrambler, with fewer leaves than when grown in cultivation. Some of them were exposed by the logging roads and were tolerating the greater sunlight but were not bushing up. In the gullies however, we were surprised to see them growing as true epiphytes in tall rain forest trees, and they had no connection with the ground. Here they scrambled about the orchids, basket ferns and staghorn and elkhorn ferns.

The next week we climbed Thornton Peak which is 1400 metres high and is situated north of the Daintree River, near Cape Tribulation. This is another area of rare plants and again R. lochae began at about 1000 metres where the granite boulders protrude. They are often in the shade of the forest but on the top of Thornton Peak some were growing in patches of moss and rotted leaves on the exposed boulders. Here they would be subject to high winds and on some days, to full sun. However because of the altitude these areas are often clouded in and their leaves are constantly wet. We saw some very bushy plants growing to about 1.5m high, and some beautiful old specimens with gnarled woody trunks. Some of the 'oldest' specimens protruded from small cracks in the massive boulders and the woody roots could be followed for quite long distances till they reached patches of leaf litter. We did not observe truly epiphytic specimens on Thornton Peak but the forest was not as tall as on Windsor Tableland.

Our trip was in June, and, to our surprise a single flower was seen near the very top of the mountain on top of a massive granite boulder that was at least 15 metres high. The normal flowering period is in November to December.

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R.lochae is usually found growing terrestrially and the only reference to its epiphytic growth previously seen is in an article by Dr.R.M.Withers in the North Queensland Naturalist in August 1976. This was reprinted in 'The Rhododendron' in March 1979. Dr.Withers states that the epiphytic form of growth is peculiar to Mount Spurgeon and Mount Wilson. Here it grows on large trees of Eugenia venteratii - now Syzygium floribundum.

Editor.

DIE BACK - but WHY?

Alan B.Raper of Rhodo Glen, Georges Road, The Patch, Vic.3792 writes:
"For several years now, we have been noticing dieback in some varieties of Sasanqua Camellias and Vireya Rhododendrons, identical to the description in the Vireya Venture's boron deficiency article.

We have been blaming soil conditions, fertilizers, phytophthora, and any other name we could come across for this problem. Within the nursery we spray for insects and mites on a regular basis, so we were quite sure it was some other undetected factor. However in the last summer, this dieback of the buds and tips, moved up into Japonica Camellias to a point where we had to have it further investigated.

It turned out that the plants were being attacked by ERIOPHIDE MITE. These mites are building up on many plants, having first been identified on Citrus in the U.S.A. We have certainly had it here in Victoria, on Sasanqua Camellias, for many years.

The Miticides and Insecticides we have been using definitely do not restrict this mite at all and we sprayed different products at different times, so that an immunity has not occured. However the solution for Eriophide Mite is extremely simple as spraying sulphur is the entire requirement."

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THE PERFECT VIREYA MULCH

Also from Dr Atherton : "I have often wondered how to make the perfect mulch and I believe that I have now found the solution.

Firstly, you find a nice well drained block of land in a high rainfall area. Then over a few years you plant all sorts of interesting and rare trees and ferns. You include azaleas, camellias, bulbs and cycads. You water regularly and you buy truckloads of leaf litter and all varieties of other mulches to add to the soil where you place your plants. Add lots of blood and bone.

Then a bush turkey moves into your yard! He decides to build a mound and over the weeks he scrapes all the mulch, leaves, peat moss, broken azaleas and shattered camellias, ferns and bits of the trees into a large pit. Then he turns it all over and moves it about. All attempts to stop him are futile, but the mound is made of the perfect vireya mulch which I will make good use of when he settles down.
p.s. If you have everything except the turkey please don't hesitate to contact me through T.V.V."

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A Merry Christmas to all - enjoy your Christmas Dinner!