A NEW RHODODENDRON FROM NEW GUINEA

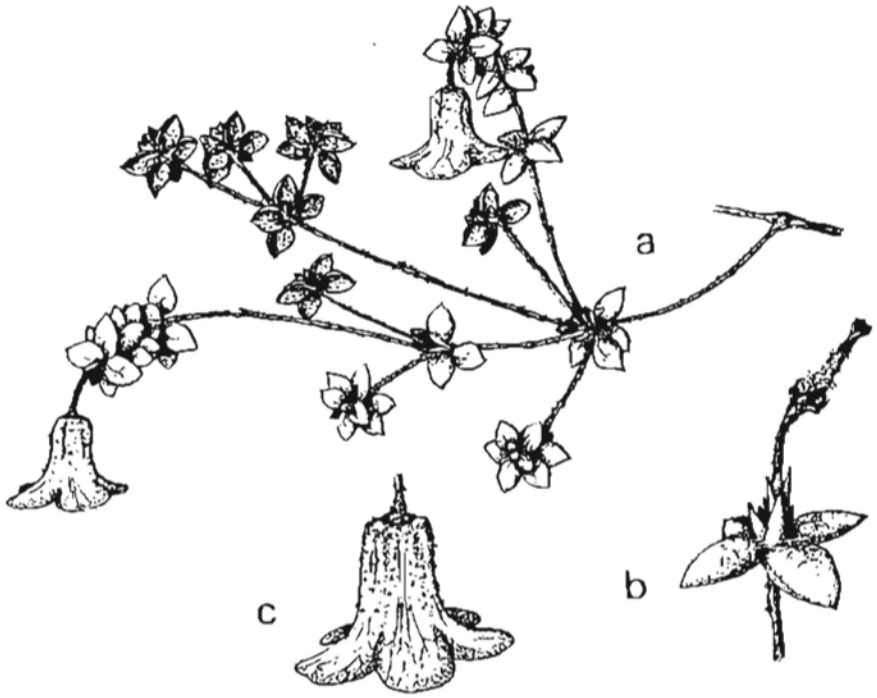

FIG. 1. a-c, *Rhododendron rubineiflorum:* a, habit × c.½; b, branchlet with very immature fruit × 1½; c, flower × 1. (from *Pullen* 227).

THE VIREYA VENTURE No.13 OCTOBER 1993

Further to the account of R.rubeiniflorum and its hybrids by Brian Clancy in the last issue, Dr.R.M.Withers has advised some more details of this species, which suggested that the above illustration of it would be appropriate. This has been taken from 'Notes from the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh' 1980, as has the description of it on the next page.

R.rubineiflorum is a small flowered plant and not common. So why bother? Anyone who has seen the mature plant growing for some 70cm up a log and covered in small but brilliant red flowers at the Kiap Orchid Lodge would appreciate - as we did in 1986 - that it has much potential. And so too has R.anagalliflorum. Unfortunately these high altitude plants are not so happy on the coast here so we must look to their hybrids for garden plants.

The latest registrations of Vireya hybrids are shown later and bring the total now to 248, the chances of seeing a complete collection in the one place have diminished again!

I regret to advise that subscriptions are now due before the next issue but at least the cost will be the same. Your early payment would be appreciated.

Your complaints,comments,and enquiries are most welcome, please send them to :
The Editor, P.O.Box 8, Keiraville, N.S.W. 2500.

Notes RBG Edinb. 38(1):141–144 (1980)

A NEW RHODODENDRON (ERICACEAE) FROM NEW GUINEA

L. A. CRAVEN*

ABSTRACT. A new species of *Rhododendron*, *R. rubineiflorum* Craven, is described and illustrated from New Guinea.

In 1974 the late Mr D. B. Stanton, of Wollongong, New South Wales, drew my attention to a *Rhododendron* being cultivated in the National Botanic Gardens, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory. The plants had been grown from cutting material collected in New Guinea in 1972 by Stanton and Mr L. K. Searle, then an officer in the Papua New Guinea administration.

When these plants flowered the species could not be identified with certainty using the *Flora Malesiana* account of the genus by Sleumer (1966-7). They keyed to *R. anagalliflorum* Wernh., but appeared to differ from that species in several details. Examination of specimens in CANB determined as *R. anagalliflorum* showed that they differed from the cultivated plant in the features tabulated below.

	Searle & Stanton plant	*CANB specimens*
Leaves	obovate to elliptic	ovate to elliptic
Corolla	12-18 mm long	17-25 mm long
	funnel-shaped	campanulate to broadly funnel-shaped campanulate
	lobes ± elliptic	lobes ± orbicular
	white, flushed purple from base	red to pink
Anthers	0·6 mm long	1·2-1·5 mm long
Style	0·2 mm diam.	0·5-0·75 mm diam.

Believing that Searle & Stanton's white-flowered plant might represent *R. linnaeoides* Schltr., which Sleumer (1960) had placed in synonymy under *R. anagalliflorum*, I requested the Australian Botanical Liaison Officer at Kew, then Dr A. Kanis, and again later his successor, Mr J. R. Maconochie, to examine isotype material in P of *R. linnaeoides* and the holotype in BM of *R. anagalliflorum*. Their examinations indicated that *R. linnaeoides*, *R. anagalliflorum* and the Searle & Stanton plant might represent a single species. To settle any doubts, I borrowed the relevant types from BM and P. Study of these proved that they, together with the cultivated plant, were conspecific. Thus the red-flowered plants in CANB which were determined as *R. anagalliflorum* represent a new species which is described below as *R. rubineiflorum*. The available type material of *R. anagalliflorum* (and also of *R. linnaeoides*) is not ideal, and, without good material of the species such as I have been able to obtain from live plants, it could be possible to confuse it with *R. rubineiflorum*. Presumably this is what Sleumer has done.

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R.rubineiflorum and R.anagalliflorum

I was interested to read Brian Clancy's letter regarding R.rubineiflorum in the July issue . Brian has since told me that he did not have access to all the published literature on R.rubineiflorum and R.anagalliflorum so I am writing the following information which I have extracted from the literature at my disposal:-
R.anagalliflorum is described by Dr.Sleumer in 'Flora Malesiana', page 568. The plants collected by Don Stanton and Lou Searle in 1971 were R.anagalliflorum and Lyn Craven makes this clear in his naming of R.rubineiflorum in 'Notes from the R.B.G. Edinburgh' 1980. These plants were quarantined at the Canberra Botanic Gardens and I collected two plants and brought them back to Melbourne after I visited Don Stanton in January 1975.

In 'The Rhododendron' of March 1972, Don describes his collection of a species new to him and I quote "Whilst having lunch in a very misty range, and admiring an orchid with its large sprays of orange, gold, and purple flowers, we spotted an unusual little rhododendron growing on the side of a small dead tree, which defied identification, very tight in growth, very small leaves and small white bell shaped flowers with a purple centre."

Returning to Lyn Craven's description of R.rubineiflorum, Lyn described this new species from herbarium specimens in CANB, specimens with red flowers, not white as in R.anagalliflorum and in his description he notes other differences. The holotype specimen in CANB was collected by Pullen in 1957 in the Western Highland District, upper Minj River Valley on the Minj-Nona Divide at about 3,400m, in Papua, New Guinea.

Before R.rubineiflorum was described by Lyn, Canon Cruttwell had observed it growing in the wild, and illustrated this little gem on the cover of his Christmas messages for several years. Then when a group from the Australian Rhododendron Society visited him in 1981, he presented to the Society a large plant of R.rubineiflorum which he had collected on Mt.Michael a few days before. This would appear to be the first time living material of R.rubineiflorum has been introduced into cultivation in Australia.

Both R.anagalliflorum and R.rubineiflorum are again well documented in 'The Rhododendron' Volume 31, 1991 in the article "A History of the Introduction of Vireya Species into Cultivation in Australia". In this article the introduction of both species into cultivation is described.

Brian is to be congratulated on making the two very difficult crosses, R.'Sunny' x R.rubineiflorum and (R.laetum x R.aurigeranum) x R.rubineiflorum and successfully flowering both crosses.

Dr.R.M.Withers, 23 Melissa Street
Donvale, Victoria 3111.

VIREYA REGISTRATIONS 1993

The following Vireyas were registered with the Royal Horticultural Society during the year 1992-1993. Our thanks to Mr.Frank Waghorn, Registrar Australian Rhododendron Society for this information.

Ada Verspeek R.konorii x R.zoelleri
Hybridizer unknown. Raised and registered by Ross Macdonald, Montrose, Victoria. Truss of 4-6 flowers light yellow 11B, with vivid red 52A lobes. Height 2m. First flowered 1991.
Benjamin Macdonald R.aurigeranum x R.konorii.
Hybridized by J.Rouse,Toorak,Victoria. Raised and registered by Ross Macdonald. Truss of 6-11 flowers, light greenish yellow 4C. Height 1.5m in 18 years. First flowered 1987.
Blonde Bombshell R.laetum x Sweet Wendy.
Hybridized by G.L.Snell,Maleny,Queensland. Truss 10-12 flowers brilliant yellow 7A inside corolla, lobes moderate yellowish pink 38B, vivid yellow 14B outside corolla.
Brunswick Green Dr H.Sleumer x R.leucogigas
Hybridizer unknown, raised and registered by Ross Macdonald. Truss of 6 flowers light purplish pink 55C, with strong purplish pink lobes 55B.Height 1.2m. First flowered 1991.
Choirs of Angels [(R.phaeopeplum x R.lochae) x R.leucogigas]
Hybridized by J.Rouse, raised and registered by D.Moodie, Montrose,Victoria. Truss with 33-100 flowers pale yellowish pink 36D, height 1.25 m. first flowered 1987.
Christopher John R.phaeopeplum x R.zoelleri 'Island Sunset'
Hybridized by J.Rouse, raised and registered by B.Clancy, Bentleigh, Victoria. Truss 4-6 flowered,deep pink 52B shading to pale orange yellow 16D inside and outside corolla. Height 0.7m. First flowered 1987.
Concerto for Brass R.lochiae x R.laetum
Hybridizer unknown, raised by G.L.Snell, registered by Ross Macdonald. Truss of 11-12 flowers, vivid orange 28B.Height 1.0m. first flowered 1988.
Crimson Scallywag R.commonae x R.inconspicuum.
Hybridizer unknown. Raised and registered by R.Macdonald. Truss has 5-9 flowers,vivid red, 45A. Height 1.0m First flowered 1992.
Crisp DeRoy R.laetum x (R.macgregoriae x R.zoelleri)
Hybridized by G.L.Snell,raised by R.Macdonald registered by D.Moodie. Truss of 9 flowers, vivid yellow 15A,lobes brilliant orange 25C fading. Height 2.0m First flowered 1988.
Gardenia Odyssey Parentage unknown
Registered by L.A.Craven, Melba, A.C.T. Truss of 8-26 flowers, light yellow 14D, lobes pale orange yellow 19D inside corolla, light yellow 12C near lobe,strong yellowish pink 31C outside corolla. Height 2.0m in 8 years. Perfumed.
Hotel on Mayfair [(R.phaeopeplum x R.lochiae) x R.leucogigas] x R.laetum.
Hybridized by J.Rouse, raised and registered by R.Macdonald. Truss of 4-9 flowers, moderate purplish pink 54D. Height 1.5m. First flowered 1988.
Jeremy Funder (R.konorii x R.rhodoleucum) x R.konorii
Hybridized by J.Rouse, raised and registered by Mrs R.Funder,Kew Victoria. Truss of 9 white flowers. Height 1.0m. First flowered 1992.

Marjiam 'Carillon Bells'x R.wrightianum var.wrightianum
Hybridized, raised and registered by B.Clancy. Truss of 3-4 flowers, strong red 53C. Height 0.3m in 5 years. First flowered in 1989.
Overflow R.christianae x R.lochiae F2.
Hybridized, raised and registered by B.Clancy. Truss of 6-7 flowers, moderate reddish orange 41C, blending to orange inside throat. Height 1.0m. First flowered in 1971.

The numbers refer to the R.H.S. colour chart and the names of the colours are those of the American Rhododendron Society's 'Universal Color Language'.

There is an alteration to the 1991 registration for 'Clare Crouch' which should read:-
Clare Crouch R.culminicolum var.Angiense x R.phaeochitum.

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RHODODENDRONS AT RISK - LIPIZAUGA BOTANICAL SANCTUARY

I feel I must acquaint all who care about Vireya Rhododendrons and all other beautiful or rare flora of the problems besetting the Lipizauga Botanical Sanctuary in Papua New Guinea.

I had to leave PNG early in 1991 due to a serious illness and was unable to return. I am now living in the United Kingdom. After many efforts to recruit a trained successor I was unable to do so as the Eastern Highlands Provincial Government was not prepared to pay for one and never answered the applicants' or my letters. Later an Australian volunteer was sent up to manage the place but he was not a botanist and soon left.

There were a number of PNG nationals working at the Mt.Gahavisuka Provincial Park, of which the Botanical Sanctuary is a part, including two rangers and several labourers and gardeners. One of the gardeners, Mr Gopsy Gozapao was very interested in the work and quite well educated and I had for several years been teaching him about the plants and their cultivation and sent him to the University of Technology for a year to study botany under the Professor of Forest Botany, Dr. Robert Johns, for a year. The Professor very kindly took him in as one of his students without charge, Gopsy staying with relatives in Lae. He did well and obtained a certificate. After that he returned to the LBS at Goroka and continued to work with me until I left.

The National Parks service sent him to the Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust in New Zealand last year, where he has completed a year of botanical and horticultural training under Graham Smith and obtai ned another certificate. He has recently returned to PNG and has been appointed Curator of the LBS. He will now be in charge of the Sanctuary, taking my place. He would be very grateful for any Rhododendron literature you would care to send him. His address is: Mr G.Gozapao, Curator, Lipizauga Botanical Sanctuary, P.O.Box 348, Goroka, EHP. Papua New Guinea.

The main problem now is finance. The Eastern Highlands Provincial Government was suspended last year for financial mismanagement

and was just about bankrupt. It was therefore suspended and the grant for the Park and LSB drastically reduced, as was their staff. Even Gopsy was retrenched, but has since been reinstated. I wrote to a number of people and organisations about the plight of the LBS, including the Adelaide Botanic Gardens, with whom we have a link. Brian Morley, the Curator, wrote to the Australian Government and AIDAB emphasising the international importance of the project (We are members of the Botanic Gardens Conservation International based at Kew). Of course our interest is not only in rhododendrons but in all plants, with a very large emphasis on orchids.

With regard to the Genus Rhododendron, we have 77 Taxa of which 21 are local (in situ) which includes many hybrids, most of them natural and several taxa which are at present unidentified. Among the finest are R.baenitzianum, R.Birat Red (unidentified) and Taxa 122 (pink tubular) and 121 (pink and white tubular,aff maius) and a large flowered bright scarlet form of R,scabridibracteum. I hope they are all flourishing.

I hope we shall get support from Australian societies and botanic gardens to ensure that the Lipizauga Botanical Sanctuary is able to continue as a conservational and botanical project. One of its great needs is of a propagating unit for rhododendrons, orchids and other PNG highland plants. This would not only replenish the flora but also provide a little extra finance. There was some money for this, but I was unable to start it before I left, and things have been disorganised since.

Canon Norman Cruttwell. 30 July 1993

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Canon Cruttwell is now living at the College of St.Barnabas, Blackberry Lane, Lingfield, Surrey RH7 6NJ England. We were fortunate to hear him at the International Rhododendron Conference in 1988 at Wollongong.

His covering letter, in part, will be of interest too:-
" I am enclosing a short article on the problems of the Lipizauga Sanctuary since I left in 1991. I would like Australian Rhododendron people to know about the situation. Rhododendrons are fairly robust plants and should survive.

I am surprised to hear so little about 'Birat Red' as I know seed and cuttings were taken on one of the latest visits. I know it has been raised in Australia by Graham Snell. It is a very beautiful plant and we have increased it in the L.B.S. Also Rhododendrons 121 and 122 are fine plants, the first growing to at least 15 feet and covered with flowers (pink tube, white lobes), and the second - only one plant so far-has bright pink flowers with an absolutely straight tube and abundantly floriferous. It is an endangered species and should be propagated - probably a hybrid. There is also a deep red 'hybrid' fine colour but tends to have split corollas."

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'Birat Red' is in flower in our backyard at the moment, it is a strong bush that has always seemed at home in this climate. However I do not know if it is available comercially.
Rhododendrons 121 and 122 have not been successful for me unfortunately. Editor.

VIREYA NAMES

Early this year a new publication entitled "Vireya Names" became available, being produced by Clover Springs Computer Services, New Jersey, U.S.A. It was superseded in July 1993 by a much more comprehensive and updated Second Edition entitled "Vireya Names - A Compendium of Species and Hybrid Vireya Rhododendrons".

It is a soft-covered book of 64 pages of A5 size, and contains entries on 560 Vireyas, including both species and hybrids, listed alphabetically. A precise coding system for the entries is explained in the introduction to indicate whether the entry is a species, a registered hybrid or selected species clone, or a plant which has been named without registration. A similar coding system is used to give details of flower colour, such as blotches, shading and stripes, with colours being specified acording to the R.H.S. colour coding system.

This approach has allowed a large amount of information to be presented very concisely. The format used for each entry gives the name, seed and pollen parents, hybridiser, introducer and registrant, colour data, reference source and supplementary notes where relevant. There is almost double the amount of text of the first edition.

The author, Robert Murray, makes no claim that this is a complete list of Vireya rhododendrons, for this is a rapidly expanding field, but he states with ample justification that "it is probably more complete than any other listing". In addition he presents a strong plea for rhododendron hybridisers to register their rhododendrons with the R.H.S. in England through one of the four approved registrars, whom he lists, including the Australian Registrar, Mr F. R. Waghorn, 60 Dunloe Avenue, Box Hill North, Victoria 3129.

The book concludes with an explanation of how it was compiled from the "Rhododendron and Azalea Names" database developed and maintained by Clover Springs Computer Services to provide computerised assistance for the American Rhododendron Society Registrar of Plant Names.

It is obligatory reading for all serious Vireya hybridisers and fanciers, and would be an invaluable aid for nurseries selling Vireyas. The purists will be pleased to find that the spelling revisions to some species names have been incorporated.

"Vireya Names" is available from Clover Springs Computer Services, 21 Squire Terrace, Colts Neck, New Jersey 07722, U.S.A. for US$5.00 plus US$3.00 for airmail postage.

Two databases which run on MSDOS and 640K of RAM are also available on 5¼" disks (360K or 1.44Mb) or 3½" diskettes (760K or 1.44Mb.) The Vireya database requires 2 Mb of hard disk space and costs US$90.00 plus shipping costs. The entire database for all rhododendrons requires 10 Mb of hard disk space and costs US$115.00 plus shipping costs. Updates (annually or as required) are US$45.00.

Jack Wilson

LAWRENCE

Another new registration from the American Rhododendron Society Journal, Vol.47, No.3 :-

Lawrence R.lochiae x R.pseudonitens
Hybridized, raised and registered by Peter Sullivan, San Francisco, California. Long tubular funnel shaped flowers with 5 wavy, retuse lobes are 1.75" across x 1.5" long overall, with the tube itself 0.4"-0.5" wide x 1" long; typical red colour of lochiae. Truss of 5-7 flowers is lax, 5.5" wide and 2" high. Red calyx is minute. Leaves are obovate, flat, broadly acute and mucronate (apex), cuneate (base); glabrous with dull sheen above, scales below, green tinted red, aging to green; held 4-6 years. Shrub is upright,vigorous,open growth habit; 8'high x 5'wide, 17 years from seed, very floriferous; blooms February to June; plant hardy to at least 25°F.

This vireya was illustrated in the A.R.S. Journal 4 years ago (Vol.43 No.2) and was quoted then as having good resistance to cold and flowering for a long period in the summer.

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SHOW TIME

If you are in Melbourne in October and/or November do not miss the Australian Rhododendron Society shows at Olinda. The Azalea Show will be held on Oct.9th and 10th, and the annual Rhododendron Show will be held on Oct 30th,31st, and Nov.1st. Both shows have sections for Vireyas.

By this time the Illawarra shows are over but in September there was a splendid display at the Rhododendron Park of Vireyas as well as Azaleas and Rhododendrons. Gardens generally through the district were looking at their best, thanks perhaps to a mild winter with less strong westerly winds than are normal The heavy rain (some 215mm total)on the 13th and 14th took some flowers off but made conditions good for the rest of the month.

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A merry Christmas to all.