

R Zelleri . Island Sunset

THE VIREYA VENTURE No.17 OCTOBER 1994

The weather has certainly been the main topic of concern lately and our area has probably been typical of others. Fluctuating temperatures from almost too hot to too cold with overstrong and violently gusty winds, low humidity, no rain and bushfires coming closer are not exactly the joys of Spring that we look forward to after the usual cold of August.

Surprisingly our limited watering must have been enough because we had some very fine displays from Vireyas and also from azaleas and rhododendrons, particularly R.cilliicalyx and R.veitchianum. The other flowering shrubs did not lag behind but also showed their best. The lawns do not get watered and have just about disappeared in places - matching some of our usually green countryside.

The record flower for our garden was a fine pink from an old plant of Hunstein's Secret x R.zoelleri, it was 125mm across and 100mm long, The largest ever produced here.

Our thanks go to Bill Moyles for his very interesting offer from the American Rhododendron Society Seed Bank. His request for Vireya seed is one that we could all support. Unfortunately the International Reply Coupons (see later) have now gone up to $2.00 each.
However your subscription to the Vireya Venture is still the same as four years ago and this is due before the next issue in January 1995.
Your contributions are needed - tell us some of your news please.

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

From Bill Moyles, of Oakland, California :-

"I have enclosed a copy of the latest update of the Vireya Seed List - just finished it. I have been trying to keep the Vireya seed exchange going and it would'nt be possible without the Australian and New Zealand contributions.... Please feel free to circulate the list - I try to fill all orders even though the requesters often do not belong to the A.R.S.
I am convinced that available seed builds interest. They are not easy from seed, but there are a few things that can be done to make life easier. I do have some seedling guidelines. But, first the seed! We need contributors. I would hope that you could encourage your readership to do some pollination for us. And, I have found that storing seed in the freezer maintains viability over many years. I have germinated seed 4 and 5 years old. I don't list seed older than two years, but I keep it all squirreled away in the freezer! I personally am interested in species selection and F2's with odd parents. But any good controlled stuff is always welcome - and in quantity. We have run out of lochiae (various forms) seed - it is always requested.

I enjoyed Brian Clancy's Account of your recent show. I wish we could do that! .....Was happy to see 'Robert Bates' mentioned ..an Evans hybrid of great vigor. And 'Sunny' x rubineiflorum.

VIREYA SEED LIST 1994 REVISED AUGUST 1994

Seed harvested in both 1993 and 1994 are listed. Many items are in short supply so alternatives should be requested. All requests for seed should be sent to :-

Bill Moyles, Vireya Chairman, 4243 Norton Ave Oakland
California 94602 U.S.A.
Upon receipt of seed a contribution of $1.50 US per packet should be sent to:-
George Woodward, Chairman A.R.S. Seed Exchange
Box 531 - 55 Post Road
Westbury, New York 11590 U.S.A.
Send no money before seed is received. Up to 10 packets of Vireya seed is **FREE** to overseas members. Overseas members are requested to enclose either with their order or send after the order is received 2 International Reply Coupons to cover postage. A 'seed sower's guide'is available for an extra coupon.

CONTRIBUTORS:

ADM Keith Adams	N.Z.	EWS E White Smith	USA
Aus Aust.Rh Soc	AUS	SCH Peter Schick	USA
BLU Os Blumhardt	N.Z.	PUK G.Smith Pukeiti	N.Z.
CAV Dick Cavender	USA	SNL Graham Snell	AUS.
CLA Brian Clancy	AUS	STR Strybing Arb.	USA
EVR Stan Eversole	USA	TAT Tom Tatum	USA
LEW Harold Lewis	AUS	TUD Read Tuddenham	USA
MYN Bill Moynier	USA	WIL Jack Wilson	AUS
ROU John Rouse	AUS	WIS I.B.Wilson Dr.	U.K.
RUT Fran Rutherford	USA	MIT R.A.Mitchell	USA
CHA Dick Chaikin	USA	VIR M.S.Viraraghavan	IND

SEED LIST

1933

93-02 ROU hellwigii x konori, Irian Jaya form
93-03 ROU hellwigii x zoelleri
93-05 ROU hellwigii x (laetum x aurigeranum)
93-10 RUT phaeopeplum x St.Valentine (?)
93-12 SCH (zoelleri x leucogigas) x self
93-14 TAT (phaeopeplum x leucogigas) x self
93-35 AUS Bold Janus x self
93-40 TUD laetum (unverified) x self

1994

94-01 ROU konori I.J.x konori "White Giant', Craven
94-10 PUK luraluense o.p.
94-15 SNL sessilifolium x aurigeranum (yellow form)
94-16 SNL (orbiculatum x konori) x leucogigas (seed limited)
94-17 SNL leucogigas hyb.'large pink' x leucogigas
94-18 CHA Cape Cod Cranberry (konori x lochiae) x aurigeranum
94-20 LEW leptanthum x self
94-21 LEW rhodoleucum x self
94-22 LEW rhodoleucum x goodenoughii
94-23 LEW (laetum x aurigeranum) x rhodoleucum
94-24 LEW (laetum x aurigeranum) x goodenoughii
94-25 LEW Buttermilk (konori x aurigeranum) x rhodoleucum
94-26 LEW aurigeranum x Dr.H.Sleumer
94-40 WIS laetum o.p.
94-43 MIT Mt.Pire F2 (javanicum x laetum, Moynier #22)
94-45 ROU leucogigas 'Hunstein's Secret'x self (h.p.)
94-46 ROU leucogigas 'Hunstein's Secret'x self (o.p.)
94-47 ROU leucogigas 'Hunstein's Secret'x konori 'white Giant'
94-48 SNL [(leuco x (leuco x laetum) x phaeopeplum)] x leuco.
94-49 SNL (konori x konori) x leucogigas
94-50 VIR Dr H Sleumer x (aurigeranum x zoelleri) x javanicum
94-51 VIR Calavar (konori x zoelleri) x javanicum
94-52 VIR Narnia (aurigeranum x zoelleri) x Dr H Sleumer
94-54 PUK caliginis cream o.p.
94-55 PUK beyerinckianum o.p.
94-56 PUK womersleyi ex c/w Mt Giluwe, PNG o.p.
94-57 PUK hellwigii o.p.
94-58 PUK stevensianum ex nat hyb PNG,pink low spreading
94-59 PUK christii ex Smith 2383 Mt.Miap PNG o.p.
94-60 PUK christii ex Kores large form o.p.
94-61 PUK solitarium o.p.
94-62 PUK culminicolum v culminicolum ex Mt Gahavisuka, PNG
94-70 WIL [(phaeopeplum x zoelleri) x superbum] x (Arthurs Choice x carringtoniae) (ex Caddy)
94-71 WIL superbum 0.p. (Caddy) Wilson #1261
94-72 WIL beyerinckianum o.p. Wilsom #1263 Red/Orange
94-75 CAV Dr H Sleumer x (christianae x macgregoriae) F2

VIREYAS in FERN NESTS

In issue #8 (July '92) Lou Searle wrote briefly of his success in growing 'Pacific Shower' in a large elkhorn. He has now extended that practice and has written in to detail it:-

"The Elkhorn culture started in Crabbes Creek when I dumped 'Pacific Shower'into a medium sized Elkhorn fern with good nest leaves. I packed potting mix around it and it has never looked back! It was still there when I last looked for it, but it did not flower as it would have done in full sun - far too shady. Obviously the bigger the fern the better, because watering would then be minimal.

I have 'St. Valentine' here in a small staghorn; in summer it gets water most days. Both the plant and its host are doing well and growing together. I also have 'St.Valentine' at the side of a large elk. I could not get it into the host as 'St. Valentine' was too big. So I made a pouch of 75% shade cloth, attached it to the Elkhorn and Silky Oak and rammed it full of potting mix around the rather large plant. On the outside of the shade cloth I pegged a few small plates of Elkhorn. All are doing well. The larger 'St. Valentine'also flowers regularly.

A small plant of R.zoelleri I have in a large Elkhorn and it is really growing madly. There I hope to put more elkhorns under the original and down to the ground. I should think that eventually the roots will reach the earth if I keep the water up to it.

I have flowered R.brookeanum x R.lochae Thornton Peak in a large Elkhorn, but this host really took a beating in the January heatwave and is half dead. So here again I have pegged a few smaller plants to the dead half. I hope to get Elkhorns and Staghorns into as many trees as I can, and so more Vireyas. I have not used any fertiliser as yet.

L.Searle,Mortons Creek,N.S.W.

xxxxx

Elkhorns (platycerium bifurcatum) and Staghorns (platycerium Superbum) both occur in Queensland and N.S.W. and are cold hardy in cultivation as far south as Melbourne. Both are epiphytic and have very efficient nest leaves which are renewed annually, when the old leaves dry off and curl inwards to hold all the year's debris, pressing it against previous nest leaves. The roots eventually grow into this humus and are there protected from drying out.

Large plants tolerate strong sunlight but small plants dry out too quickly. They can be fed with old animal manure or blood and bone.

Elkhorns have one very convenient feature which distinguishes them from Staghorns - they have plantlets growing from buds on the outer lower margins of the nest leaves, while Staghorns are only propagated by sporelings which are raised separately.

xxxxx

VIREYA REGISTRATIONS

The following new registrations are taken from the American Rhododendron Society Journal Vol.48 No.3 Summer 1994. Colour numbers refer to the R.H.S. Colour Chart, while colour names are taken from 'A Contribution toward Standardization of Colour Names in Horticulture'.

AVALON 'Shasta' x R.aurigeranum
Hybridized, named and registered by William Moynier, Los Angeles, California. Slightly fragrant flowers are tubular funnel shaped with a straight tube and five wavy edged lobes; 2.75" across x 3" long; light yellow (18A) throughout with slight paling towards lobe edges; calyx lacking. Dome truss of 9-12 flowers is 7" wide x 4" high. Leaves are 4.5" x 2.25", elliptic, convex, broadly acute (apex), rounded (base); dull green with scaly indumentum; held 4 years; petiole 0.25", light green, scaly. Shrub is moderately floriferous with spreading habit, 1.8' high x 2.1' wide 12 years from seed; blooms September through April; plant and bud hardy to at least 32°F.

JOCK'S CAIRN Parentage uncertain,thought to be R.brookeanum x possibly R.javanicum; may be an old Veitch hybrid.
Obtained from US National Arboretum; raised and introduced Strybing Arboretum, San Francisco California; named by Peter Sullivan, San Francisco CA.; registered by William Moynier, Los Angeles CA.
Flowers are 2" across x 2.25" long with 5 smooth edged lobes, narrowly tubular funnel- shaped with tube narrowly cylindrical for lower 0.9"; strong red (41B) lobes with strong pink (52D) throat and a narrow star shaped band of darker colour between the two; calyx lacking. Dome truss of 10-14 flowers is 6" wide x 4" high. Leaves are 4.5" x 2", elliptic, concave,broadly acute (apex), cuneate (base); dull deep green with tan scaly indumentum below; held two years; petiole 0.4", light green, scaly. Shrub is upright and spreading with dense growth habit, very floriferous, 4.2' high x 5.2' wide 15 years from cutting; blooms August to December; plant and bud hardy to at least 32°F. (Synonym: R.brookeanum var.gracile, Strybing form.

PLEASANT COMPANION R.lochiae x [.R.konorii x Dr Herman Sleumer]
Hybridized, named and registered by William Moynier, Los Angeles CA. Very fragrant flowers are tubular funnel shaped with a straight tube and 5 smooth edged lobes; 2.75" across x 2.5" long; vivid red (52A) throughout; calyx lacking. Flat truss of 4-5 flowers is 6" wide x 2.75" high. Leaves are 2.5"x 1.75", broadly elliptic, concave, broadly acute (apex) rounded (base); dull green with scaly indumentum; held 2 years; petiole 0.6" pinkish cream, scaly. Shrub is spreading with dense growth habit; very floriferous; 2.4" high x 3.75" wide 18 years from seed; blooms all year but heaviest May to July; plant and bud hardy to at least 32°F.

SAN MIGUEL [R.aurigeranum x Dr Herman Sleumer] x R.leucogigas
Hybridized by Peter Sullivan, San Francisco, CA. named and registered by William Moynier Los Angeles, CA. Slightly fragrant flowers of heavy substance are tubular funnel-shaped with straight, narrow tube and 7 wavy edged lobes; 4" across x 4.5"

long;deep yellowish pink (41D) with creamy throat, aging to deep pink (51C); conspicuous bright green stigma; calyx lacking. Dome truss of 10-13 flowers is 10" wide x 5" high. Leaves are 6" x 2.25", elliptic, concave, acute (apex), cuneate (base); dull green with scaly indumentum; held 2 years; petiole 0.4", maroon, scaly. Shrub is upright with spreading habit; moderately floriferous; 4.25' high x 4.7' wide 20 years from seed; bloom period variable, December through August; plant and bud hardy to at least 32°F.

xxxxx

'Jock's Cairn' is now the registered name for the R.brookeanum gracile or R.longiflorum hybrid that was detailed in the last newsletter at some length, and should now clear up one confusing issue. However R.brookeanum is now listed in 'Rhododendrons of Sabah' as a subspecies of R.javanicum and it is noted that the subspecies R.gracile " is imperfectly understood and includes all the slender leaved forms of R.javanicum some of which may merely be impoverished forms of subspecies R.Brookeanum."The illustration of the yellow flowers of the Kinabalu form is not at all like 'Jock's Cairn'.
The question now is whether we have the true subspecies gracile in Australia?

xxxxx

Pretreatment of Cuttings

In conversation at the September meeting of the A.R.S. Illawarra Branch, two additions to the comments on this subject in the last issue were voiced. viz:-
(1) Hardwood cuttings or those delayed after being taken, appreciate a soaking for some hours with a few drops of 'Formula 20' in the water. That is, if you still have some - it seems to have gone off the market now. The main constituent was Vitamin B1, with very small amounts of Vitamins B2 and B6, Niacin, Indole Acetic Acid,and Naphthalene Acetic Acid.
(2) Dettol - about ½ teaspoon per litre - is a good cleanser and a safe one. Incidentally at times when leeches were a problem in the upper garden at the Rhododendron Park, a little Dettol on the ankles was a very effective deterrent.

xxxxx

Also there is a brief comment in the latest newsletter of the Friends of the Sydney Botanic Gardens on the practice , observed by a Mt. Annan Horticulturist on a recent visit to W.A.gardens, of soaking native plant cuttings in 'a solution of Hormone 20R at the recommended rate for a defined period of time'

xxxxx

Mt.Annan garden is grafting many plants from different soils and climates onto local forms of the same species for much greater ability to grow under their conditions with success.

Perhaps we could learn from this- some grafting of Vireyas has been done in Victoria but there have been no recent reports on this practice. Would this be of assistance in growing some of the more difficult species, from higher altitudes for example, or the very slow growing ones?

xxxxx

Correction

On checking the list of registered Vireya hybrids in issue #14, Jan.'94 while endeavouring to proceed with an update of all parent combinations and their progeny, I found too many errors to ignore, so please correct the following:-

Autumn Berry Wine	[(konori x laetum) x commonae] x laetum
Belisar	(laetum x zoelleri) x (macgregoriae x zoelleri)
Bellenden Coral	konori x lochae
Bright Lights	laetum x zoelleri
Chayya	Pink Delight x intranervatum
Cherry Pie	lochae hybrid x konori
Clare Crouch	laetum x Pink Seedling (possibly)
Clorinda	jasminiflorum x Minerva
Hugh Redgrove	lochae x unknown
Jolly Roger	[leucogigas x (phaeopeplum x lochae)] x zoelleri
Leonore Frances	(macgregoriae x aurigeranum) x Dr Herman Sleumer
Lovey	konori x [(phaeopeplum x lochae) x zoelleri]
Pink Feathers	Dr Herman Sleumer x zoelleri
Poet Laureate	(Dr Herman Sleumer x herzogii) x (laetum x aurigeranum)
Shantung Pink	[(phaeopeplum x lochae) x leucogigas] x laetum
Shantung Rose	[(phaeopeplum x lochae) x leucogigas] x laetum
Shasta	konori x (Pink Delight x jasminiflorum)
Tosca's Kiss	leucogigas x [(phaeopeplum x lochae) x zoelleri]

The following additions may also be made to bring this listing up to the date of issue #16:-

Auburn Beauty	laetum x christianae 'sunset'
Simbu Goldstrike	Simbu Sunset x Simbu Sunset

xxxxx

R.lochae var. Mt. Bartle Frere

Amongst the Vireyas in flower in September I nearly missed a very welcome sight - the first flowering of the Mt. Bartle Frere form of R.lochae. At the back of our house there is an area against the back wall that is paved and about 1.8m x 8.2m is enclosed in shade cloth to provide some wind protection to the Vireyas that grow there in pots. In winter the cloth covering the roof is taken down to let in more light - the wall faces S.W. Most of the plants here are tied to a pipe framework but a few cannot be fitted in and this lochae was one of them.

So, after it had been blown over and rolled around the floor at least three times it had been pushed behind several other large Vireyas for shelter,its buds had not been seen and its flowers opened without warning. So far there are 14 trusses of 7 flowers open with another half dozen at least still to come.

In addition to its distinctively veined leaves it has also displayed the other feature which distinguishes it from other forms of lochae, namely the zygomorphic flowers - that is they are symmetric in one plane only as the flower tube is curved while in other forms it is straight.

This is the best show of flowers that I have had from any plant of R.lochae, but its sister plant - the same size and age - does not have one bud showing. It is in a different area under probably less light so I have now placed it alongside its sister. But different lighting conditions with other plants of R.lochae have been no guide in this respect.

xxxxx

Some visitors to the local 'Florawarra' shows had difficulty in getting to the Rhododendron Park. This is easily reached from Sydney by leaving the Freeway halfway down Mt. Ousley to take the overhead bridge up New Mt. Pleasant road.

Unfortunately the approach from Wollongong is not so simple as it is not now possible to cross the Freeway to reach the bridge. So, from Wollongong take the Princes Highway to Fairy Meadow and go up the length of Cabbage Tree Lane. This leads into Alvan Parade, turn off at Elnathan St. and then go briefly up Brokers Road to Dobinson St. which leads to New Mt.Pleasant Road and the bridge over the Freeway.

xxxxx

If you have pots to wash and re-use, an old paint brush is a very effective tool to clean out the corners. A new one is alright too but an old one with shorter bristles is stiffer and a little more effective.

xxxxx

Dr.Atherton's letter in issue #15 referred in part to growing Vireyas under the shelter of tree ferns - Cyathea cooperi. The local tree fern here is Cyathea australis,the Rough Tree Fern; they grow well here in full sun and serve the same purpose. However I was not familiar with C.cooperi until a recent visit to Mt.Annan Botanical Garden, where there is a bank of fairly young plants near the Visitors centre.

They are certainly a rather more attractive fern than C.australis, confirmed by a much older plant in Sydney Botanical Garden. The trunk is much thinner (up to 15cm diam.) than the rough tree fern, it grows to 12m or more tall, and it is patterned throughout with large oval clean cut scars left by fallen fronds.

Listed as a 'very handsome fast growing species' its distribution is from Cooktown, Queensland, south through N.S.W. to the Illawarra district.
This certainly seems a better alternative to the soft tree fern Dicksonia antarctica, which is more at home in colder and wetter districts, even if much more readily available.

xxxxx

Also in regard to worms etc. in pots - refer back to Roy Skott's comment in issue # 11, March 1993, which was to add one teaspoonful of naphthalene to 5 litres of potting mix just before using it, taking care to avoid the irritation that naphthalene might cause.