

The Vireya Venture.

THE VIREYA VENTURE No.18 JANUARY 1995

Hot weather in December aggravated the drought here and one 40°day left a few burnt leaves on some shrubs, including a few Vireyas that were not fully acclimatised. So, our Christmas present in Wollongong was four cool and damp days - only 41mm of rain but a very welcome change. Then our first week this month gave us 126 mm of rain with some heavy showers, hopefully enough to get some moisture down to the subsoil which might ease the competition from the tree roots that have given trouble and forced the transfer to other places of a number of plants, not only Vireyas.

Miss Holmwood, our treasurer, fonnd the Burnie Meeting of much interest and has detailed her impressions later. Her reference to the smallest Vireya in the world, R.caespitosum had me looking for a meaning of the name in W.Stearn's 'A Gardener's Dictionary of Plant Names'. It comes from 'caespitosus' meaning 'growing in dense clumps', which explains Dr.Sleumer's choice of its name. It shoots from its branches in clasping a tree fern trunk!

The Victorian Branch of the Australian Rhododendron Society is holding its annual Vireya meeting and Show at the Nunawading Horticultural centre on March 17th,18th and 19th, and maybe I shall see you there, it is a good show with an interesting array of Vireyas for display and for sale.

The 'Hybrid Parentage' tables have been prepared as a matter of interest and in the hope that they may be a guide to those who are looking to produce something new and different from existing registered hybrids.

We need your comments, questions and suggestions, please send them - now- to:

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

J.Clyde Smith.

INTERNATIONAL RHODODENDRON CONFERENCE

Our thanks to Miss Hazel Holmwood for the following report:-

The 1994 Pacific Region International Rhododendron Conference was held at Burnie, Tasmania, from October 29th-31st. It was organised by the North West Tasmanian Branch of the Australian Rhododendron Society under the chairmanship of Neil Jordan of that Branch and proved to be a most informative and enjoyable few days. The presentations by the various speakers were, as I said above, informative but also challenging and made listening easy and for the most part, absorbing.

The main theme of the conference was the milder climate Rhododendron, or Vireya, and I was interested to see some vireyas growing quite happily out in the open as far south as Hobart and its environs. In fact the champion bloom at the recent Rhododendron show in Hobart was 'Sweet Wendy' exhibited by Phil Cooper from a northern suburb of Hobart and grown outside in a garden against the front of his house.

Since I have not yet received the official transcript of the proceedings, the following consists of selections taken from my own notes, jotted down during the talks.

The first speaker was **George Argent** from the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh who spoke of plant hunting in S.E.Asia. He explained that he has little time to grow plants as he is "still hunting them". He made the following points:-

- -- 300 species of vireyas have been identified.
- -- he showed slides of many high altitude and low altitude species, including R.caespitosum which creeps on trees and is named as the smallest vireya in the world.
- -- R.macgregoriae - he suspects that the red form is hybridised.
- -- R.gardenia Lyn Craven has recently written an article about this - the one commonly called 'Gardenia' has been named 'Gardenia Odyssey'.

Graham Snell followed and the points he made which were of particular interest to me are as follows:-

- -- vireyas should be described as "milder climate"rhododendrons rather than "tropical rhododendrons". They do not, as a whole, cope well with tropical weather. High humidity is O.K. but not when one tries to emulate it in a green house situation.
- -- with the move from his nursery in Victoria to one in Maleny, he found that the brighter light and the more even day length throughout the year have produced better plants with brighter and/or deeper coloured flowers.
- -- working within his shadehouses he found that too little moisture and/or too little aeration will kill plants.
- -- he experimented with ground heating only and found that 25° ground warmth was excellent and produced plants which had good growth, were bushier and which flowered earlier.
- -- he suggested protection from full hot sun but, on the other hand, heavy shade was not good.

-- he suggested using wetting agents such as Debco in pots and around larger plants.
-- he maintained that there were a number of new hybrids produced in Australia but are not registered, most people seeing little point in doing so.
-- finally he maintained that there should be a centralised collection of vireyas and that Queensland weather makes it an ideal place. However, few Queensland gardens have good plantings of vireyas.

Jaap van Dorsser was from the Forestry Commission in New Zealand, but, whilst based in Burnie for a year, had taken great interest in the Emu Valley Garden. He gave one of his very entertaining and informative talks and demonstrations on his speciality, care of the root system in planting.

He said that seedlings are often "stuffed" into a container instead of making sure that the roots are free to grow. A plant which he had brought from a nursery was used as a demonstration and it was plain to see that the roots, encouraged by a round container, had "balled" into what he called the "spghetti syndrome". Often plants in pots have been left too long without being freed and hence the roots have become "pigtailed", i.e. with twisted grain at the top. These plants, as well as those with the hard ball caused by the "spaghetti" syndrome, tend to fall or blow over after they have been planted in the ground.

Some answers he gave were:-

"do not use round containers or even those with rounded corners for any length of time for seedlings. Now containers have been developed with sharp corners and these encourage roots to grow down, particularly when the container has holes towards and in the bottom for roots to grow through. He, and a succeeding speaker, showed such pots which are now used in the Forestry and some commercial nurseries.

"when buying plants look for a good soft root ball (and I would'nt be surprised to see Jaap tap the plant out of the pot to make sure!), one which can be eased out without setting the plant back.

"holes for trees and larger plants should be dug square with roots spread and the centre resting on a mound - then anchor straight, firm in, but do not 'ram'.

John Rouse and **Elizabeth Williams** took us on a fascinating trip into the past to explain their theory and also the results of their research into 'The Sexual Compatability and Incompatability within Section Vireya of the genus Rhododendron'. Faced with this imposing title, I thought that this talk would be far beyond my understanding, but I became so enthralled that I forgot to take notes - particularly as the talks unfolded.

John pointed out that, apart from Section Vireya, the large lepidote subgenus Rhododendron has its centre of species diversity in the mountainous Himalaya-Tibet region. Section Vireya is a well defined group of - George Argent says that 300 species have been found whilst John proposed a reserved

"over 250 species", almost restricted to S.E.Asia with a few members occurring in the mountains of the Indo-China corridor which links S.E.Asia with the Himalayan region. There are strong breeding barriers between Vireyas and the rest of the subgenus but Vireyas hybridize freely so long as their flowers are are not too dissimilar in size. There has been, however, one successful cross between what he called the "temperate" and the "tropical" species, and that was between R.lochiae and R.virgatum, producing a plant which was called "Little Pioneer", but this has proved to be sterile.

The programme carried out by John and Elizabeth showed that two main groups of species could be recognised by their compatability or incompatability when grafted as scions onto a non Vireya stock of Himalayan origin. What also proved to be most interesting to the researchers was that these two graft-distinguishable groups are also geographically distinct, occurring to the west or east of Wallace's Line. This line passes between Borneo and the Celebes and continues to the east of Bali.

The reason for this became clearer as Elizabeth Williams showed us the earth's tectonic plate movement, the separation and the collision of continents.

So the presentation showed us the probable climatic and geological factors which led to the formation of species in the Himalayan region (between 20 and 8 million years ago!) and more recently (in the last few million years) of species in S.E.Asia. East of South America and West Africa are thought to be the origin of the first flowering plants - ericacias are thought to appear in Laurasia (northern mass of continents) about 70 million years ago while Rhododendrons originated 50 to 60 million years ago and spread over the Northern Hemisphere. There was still land at that time between Alaska and Laurasia.

Bob Malone maintained that disease in Rhododendrons can be treated by simply stripping all the leaves of the infected plant, except the new growth at the very top and that, since the disease was only in the leaves and contained in them, the leaves could be dropped at the base of the plant without harm to surrounding plants. He caused much controversial comment.

Amonst other speakers,**Peter Valder** spoke on Tropical Rhododendrons Other than Vireya whilst **Ken Gillanders** spoke on Rhododendron Companions from Gwondanaland (southern mass of continents).

All in all it was a very rewarding conference and it was a pleasure to see the Emu Valley Garden - with Vireyas growing under the canopy of trees and others on the trunks of tree ferns which were standing in one of the lakes.The garden is progressing according to the master plan and the volcanic soil is producing many excellent blooms - the American visitors were most surprised to see better blooms of some plants which they regarded as their own, e.g. 'Puget Sound'.

Hazel Holmwood, Figtree, N.S.W.2525.

VIREYA REGISTRATIONS

The following registrations of Vireyas were made by the Australian Rhododendron Society with the Royal Horticultural Society in the year ending June 30th, 1994.
As usual the numbers in brackets refer to the R.H.S. colour chart but the names of the colours are those of the American Rhododendron Society's 'Universal Colour Language'.

Donvale Pink R.lochiae x R.leucogigas 'Hunstein's Secret'
Hybridised by Dr.J.Rouse,Toorak Victoria. Raised and registered by J.O'Shannassy, Donvale, Victoria. Truss of 7-11 flowers, colour Red Purple Group 68C (moderate purplish pink). Thin white stripes outside corolla at junction of lobes. Height: 1.5m. First flowered 1992.
Happy Times (R.laetum x R.aurigeranum) x R.rubineiflorum
Hybridised, raised and registered by Brian Clancy, Bentleigh, Victoria. Truss of 3-4 flowers. Colour Red Group 42B (strong red). Height 0.3m. First flowered 1992.
Little One 'Sunny x R,rubineiflorum
Hybridised, raised and registered by Brian Clancy, Bentleigh, Victoria. Truss of 2-3 flowers. Colour Red Group 40D (strong yellowish pink). Height 0.25m. First flowerd 1992.

Also, from the American Rhodendron Society Journal No.4, Vol,48:
Rocky's Mom (['Felinda' x (R.aurigeranum x'Dr.Herman Sleumer')] x R.javanicum.
Hybridised (1985) raised and registered by William Moynier, Los Angeles, California. Flowers are five lobed with frilled margins, tubular-funnel shaped with a straight tube, 2.75" across x 3" long, vivid reddish orange (30A) throughout turning creamy-orange at base of tube outside; calyx lacking. Dome truss of 11-15 flowers is 6" wide x 3.5"high. Leaves elliptic, flat, broadly acute (apex), cuneate (base), 5" x 2.25", dull green with scaly indumentum below; petiole 0.4",light green,scaly. Shrub spreading, moderately floriferous, 1.75' high x 1.9' wide 8 years from seed; plant and bud hardy to at least 32°F.

Note: The Australian Plant Registrar is now Mr.Graham Eaton, of 'Kalbar', 1386 Mt.Dandenong Tourist Road, Mt.Dandenong, Victoria 3767, as Mr. Bob McLachlan of Buurnie was unable to continue in this position.

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HYBRID PARENTAGES

The tables that follow, overleaf, are intended to show the hybrids that have been produced from the various crosses of the species. The seed parent in each case is marked with an asterisk*.
Hybrids have been omitted where one or both of the parents is a multiple cross, e.g. 'Rocky's Mum, above, unless that cross has been specifically named. Otherwise there is no indication of the colour or form of the parent - as an example there are six named hybrids from the R.laetum x R.zoelleri cross all of which must be presumed different from the others, but if a parent is simply shown as that cross it is not so distinctly defined.

AEQUABILE	
x christianae*	Robert Withers
ANAGALLIFLORUM	
x Orania*	Silver Thimbles
APRICOT NECTAR*	
x zoelleri	Pacific Sundown
ARTHUR'S CHOICE*	
x wrightianum	Hendre
AURIGERANUM*	
x christianae	Rouseabout
konori	Benjamin Macdonald
laetum	Cape Cod Sunshine
leucogigas	Iced Primrose
macgregoriae	Flamenco Dancer
"	Tropic Summer
phaeopeplum	Angi Gita
Pink Seedling	Penrice
unknown	Oriental Orange
AURIGERANUM	
x christianae*	Stanton's Glory
laetum*	Wattle Bird
"	Gilded Sunrise
lochae*	Liberty Bar
"	Penrose
konori*	Buttermilk
"	Vanilla Cream
macgregoriae*	Bulolo Gold
Shasta*	Avalon
BAGOBONUM	
x macgregoriae*	Penny Whistle
BROOKEANUM*	
x Princess Alexandra	Taylori
BROOKEANUM gracile	
x lochae*	Christmas Present
zoelleri*	Kiandra
CARILLON BELLS*	
x gracilentum	Janelle Marie
wrightianae	Marjiam
CHRISTIANAE*	
x aequabile	Robert Withers
aurigeranum	Stanton's Glory
dielsianum	Minnie Mouse
jasminiflorum	La-de-da
"	Pendance
"	Petra
laetum	Clare Rouse
lochae f2	Arthur's Choice
"	Overflow
macgregoriae	Sunny
Sweet Wendy	Highland Peter Pan
Tropic Glow	Haloed Gold
CHRISTIANAE	
x aurigeranum*	Rouseabout
konori*	Dressed to Kill
"	Kaleidoscope
"	Sweet Rosalea
CRISTO REY*	
x javanicum	Peter Valder One
"	Peter Valder Two
DIELSIANUM	
x christianae	Minnie Mouse
DR HERMAN SLEUMER*	
x herzogii	Pink Feathers
konori	Ratafia
"	White Rum
laetum	Glen Borch
leucogigas	Brunswick Green
"	Cephas
"	John Henry
Pink Delight	Terebintha
zoelleri	Zoe Elloise
DR HERMAN SLEUMER	
x wrightianum*	Little Nell
DUCHESS OF EDINBURGH*	
x javanicum	Triumphans
GRACILENTUM*	
x jasminiflorum	Craig Faragher
laetum	Carillon Bells
GRACILENTUM	
x Carillon Bells*	Janelle Marie
lochae*	Alisa Nicole
"	Saint Valentine
macgregoriae*	Coral Chimes
"	Rosie Chimes
HERZOGII	
x unknown*	Breathless
Dr Herman Sleumer*	Pink Feathers
INCONSPICUUM*	
x macgregoriae	Sweet Mac.
INTRANERVATUM	
x Pink Delight*	Chayya
JASMINIFLORUM*	
x christianae	Pendance
Minerva	Clorinda
Princess Alexandra	Minerva
Princess Royal	Princess Alexandra
unknown	Star Posy
JASMINIFLORUM	
x christianae*	La-de-da
"	Petra
gracilentum*	Craig Faragher
laetum*	Christopher Borch
unknown*	First Light
JAVANICUM*	
x Duchess of Edinburgh	Ne Plus Ultra
konori	Pink Lightning
lochae	Tropic Fanfare
unknown	Sir George Holford
JAVANICUM	
x Duchess of Edinburgh*	Triumphans
konori*	Crimson Lightning
laetum*	Flaming Ball
"	Java Light
"	Mt.Pire
"	Niugini Firebird

KONORI*

x aurigeranum	Buttermilk
"	Vanilla Cream
christianae	Dressed to Kill
"	Kaleidoscope
"	Sweet Rosalea
javanicum	Crimson Lightning
laetum	Esprit de Joie
"	Lolly Willows
leucogigas	Duchess Satin
lochae	Bellenden Coral
"	Cape Cod Cranberry
"	Great Scentsation
"	Wentworth
lochae hybrid	Cherry Pie
orbiculatum	Elizabeth Crouch
zoelleri	Ada Verspeak
"	Calavar
"	Diamond Jubilee
"	Eastern Zanzibar
"	Pink Pazzaz

KONORI

x aurigeranum*	Benjamin Macdonald
Dr Herman Sleumer*	Ratafia
"	White Rum
javanicum*	Pink Lightning
lochae hybrid*	Cherry Pie
"	Hot Gossip
loranthiflorum*	Crinolette
rhodoleucum*	Barbara Crouch
zoelleri*	Ravalac

LAETUM*

x aurigeranum	Gilded Sunrise
"	Wattle Bird
christianae	Auburn Beauty
jasminiflorum	Christopher Borch
javanicum	Flaming Ball
"	Java Light
"	Mt Pire
"	Niugini Firebird
macgregoriae	Don Stanton
"	Tetramum
phaeopeplum	Pindi Peach
"	Pindi Pearl
"	Sweet Wendy
Pink Creeper	Pretty Cotton Candy
Pink Seedling	Clare Crouch (poss.)
Souvenir de J.H.Mangles	Vladimir Bukovsky
Sweet Wendy	Blonde Bombshell
"	Choc Orange
"	Platinum Blond
zoelleri	Bright Lights
"	Cameo Spice
"	Finnegans Rainbow
"	George Budgen
"	Simbu Sunset
"	Tropic Glow

LAETUM

x aurigeranum*	Cape Cod Sunshine
christianae*	Clare Rouse
Dr Herman Sleumer*	Glen Borch
gracilentum*	Carillon Bells
konori*	Esprit de Joie
"	Lolly Willows
leucogigas*	Bold Janus
lochae*	Concerto for Brass
"	Coral Flare
"	Donald Stanton
loranthiflorum*	Gossamer White
"	Tinkerbells Flight
Princess Alexandra*	Tropic Tango
sessilifolium*	Pacific Moonrise
Sweet Wendy*	Blond Venus

LOCHAE*

x aurigeranum	Liberty Bar
"	Penrose
brookeanum gracile	Christmas Present
culminicolum	Cape Cod Lobster
gracilentum	Alisa Nicole
"	Saint Valentine
jasminiflorum	Lochmin
laetum	Concerto for Brass
"	Coral Flare
"	Donald Stanton
leucogigas	Bobs Crowning Glory
"	Donvale Pink
macgregoriae	Celebration
"	Robs Favourite
"	Tetramum
pauciflorum	Littlest Angel
pseudonitens	Christmas Past
"	Lawrence
solitarium	Thief of Hearts
unknown	Hugh Redgrove

LOCHAE

x christianae*	Arthurs Choice
"	Overflow
javanicum*	Tropic Fanfare
konori*	Bellenden Coral
"	Cape Cod Cranberry
"	Great Scentsation
"	Wentworth
leucogigas	Mistress Sue
macgregoriae	Ferdinand von Mueller

LOCHAE hybrid*

x konori	Cherry Pie
"	Hot Gossip

LORANTHIFLORUM*

x christianae	Sweet Cherubim
"	Sweet Seraphim
konori	Crinolette
laetum	Gossamer White
"	Tinkerbells Flight

LORANTHIFLORUM

x macgregoriae*	Popcorn

LEPTANTHUM

x Taylori*	Tiffany Rose

LEUCOGIGAS*

x laetum	Bold Janus
lochae	Bobs Crowning Glory
"	Mistress Sue

LEUCOGIGAS

x aurigeranum*	Iced Primrose
Dr Herman Sleumer*	Brunswick Green
"	Cephas
Konori*	Duchess Satin
zoelleri*	Elation
"	Hosanna

MACGREGORIAE*

x aurigeranum	Bulolo Gold
bagobonum	Pennywhistle
commonae	Coral Chance
gracilentum	Coral Chimes
"	Rosie Chimes
lochae	Ferdinand von Mueller
loranthiflorum	Popcorn
stenophyllum	Wee Willy Winkie

MACGREGORIAE
x aurigeranum* Flamenco Dancer
" Tropic Summer
christianae* Sunny
inconspicuum* Sweet Mac
laetum* Don Stanton
lochae* Celebration
" Tetramum
rubineiflorum* Sweet Beatrice

MULTINERVIUM*
x Wattle Bird Innuendo

ORBICULATUM
x konori* Elizabeth Crouch

ORIANA*
x Anagalliflorum Silver Thimbles
Rosy Chimes Happy Wanderer

PAUCIFLORUM
x Tetramum* Merry Christmas

PHAEOPEPLUM*
x lochae Kurt Herbert Adler
zoelleri Christopher John
" Dr Herman Sleumer

PHAEOPEPLUM
x laetum* Pindi Peach
" Pindi Pearl
" Sweet Wendy

PINK CREEPER
x laetum* Pretty Cotton Candy

PINK DELIGHT*
x intranervatum Chayya
PINK DELIGHT
x Dr Herman Sleumer* Terebintha
lochae* Irian Jaya

PINK SEEDLING
x aurigeranum* Penrice
laetum* Clare Crouch (poss)

PRINCESS ALEXANDRA*
x laetum Tropic Tango
PRINCESS ALEXANDRA
x brookeanum* Taylori
jasminiflorum* Minerva

PRINCESS ROYAL
x jasminiflorum* Princess Alexandra

PSEUDONITENS
x lochae* Christmas Past

RHODOLEUCUM*
x konori Barbara Crouch

ROSY CHIMES
x Orania* Happy Wanderer

RUBINEIFLORUM*
x macgregoriae Sweet Beatrice
RUBINEIFLORUM
x Sunny* Little One

SAINT VALENTINE
x Saint Valentine* Charming Valentino

SAXAFRAGOIDES*
x womersleyi Rogue Red

SESSILIFOLIUM*
x laetum Pacific Moonrise

SIMBU SUNSET*
x Simbu Sunset Simbu Goldstrike
zoelleri Tropic Splendour

SOLITARIUM
x lochae* Thief of Hearts

SOUVENIR de J.H.MANGLES
x laetum Vladimir Bukovsky

STENOPHYLLUM*
x commonae Josephine Gordon
STENOPHYLLUM
x macgregoriae* Wee Willy Winkie

SWEET WENDY*
x javanicum Cherry Harmony
" Orange Harmony

SWEET WENDY
x christianae* Highland Peter Pan
laetum* Blonde Bombshell
" Choc Orange
" Platinum Blond

TAYLORI*
x leptanthum Tiffany Rose

TETRAMUM*
x pauciflorum Merry Christmas

TRIUMPHANS
x laetum* Scarlet Beauty

TROPIC GLOW*
x Tropic Glow Hot Tropic
TROPIC GLOW
x christianae* Haloed Gold
Tropic Glow* Hot Tropic

WOMERSLEYI
x saxafragoides* Rogue Red

WRIGHTIANUM*
x Dr Herman Sleumer Little Nell
WRIGHTIANUM
x Arthurs Choice* Hendre
Carillon Bells* Marjiam

ZOELLERI*
x brookeanum Kiandra
Clorinda Cyprian
konori Ravalac
leucogigas Elation
" Hosanna

ZOELLERI
x Apricot Nectar* Pacific Sundown
konori* Ada Verspeek
" Calavar
" Diamond Jubilee
" Eastern Zanzibar
" Pink Pazzaz
laetum* Bright Lights
" Cameo Spice
" Finnegans Rainbow
" George Budgen
" Simbu Sunset
" Tropic Glow
phaeopeplum* Christopher John
" Dr Herman Sleumer
Simbu Sunset* Tropic Splendour