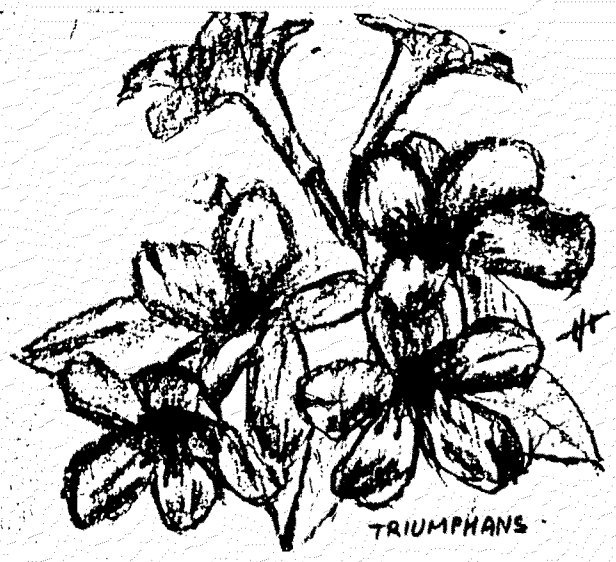


The Vireya Venture.

THE VIREYA VENTURE No.20 JULY 1995

Our summer rain eased off in April to a mere 10mm at Keiraville, but May was one of our really wet months with 340mm falling. June brought us back to normal with only 68mm and water restrictions on the use of fixed hoses are still in force. This is not surprising because coastal falls were not indicative of the majority of the state which is still drought declared.

Unfortunately our cold,gusty, and lazy (they go straight through) westerly wind have been with us for weeks although we do not usually have to suffer them until August.

A newsletter from the Victorian Branch of the A.R.S. contained a warning about using too much fine sand in potting mixes as this can keep the pot waterlogged. They had a very successful Vireya sale at Olinda, raising over $1200 in April.

The latest (Vol.49 No.2) journal of the American Rhododendron Society illustrated some fine Vireyas in an article by Keith Adams on the Pukeiti garden - "a near perfect environment for growing rhododendrons". There are no new Vireya registrations in the journal but they announce: 'International Vireya Group Meeting,11 May 1996 at Oban Scotland'. Details from Dr.Richard W.Chaikin, Cape Cod Vireyas, 405 Jones Road, Falmouth,MA 02540, U.S.A.

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

IN PRAISE OF VIREYAS

I have tied the curtains back - so that I can see my back garden and still enjoy the warmth of our ducted heating. Even in mid-winter the lovely patches of colour from the Vireyas, fill me with joy.

The flowers of R.lochiae x R.laetum with their lovely bright red - ink pink, contrast with the tall golden heads of R.laetum. In amongst the camellias I can see three huge heads of bicoloured 'Robert Bates' bursting forth, and nearby 'Bold Janus', showing off its stunning creamy orange flowers. In their tree fern tubs, 'Craig Faragher' is still showing off its tiny pink flowers, and 'Lady Di' and R.jasminiflorum are boasting several blooms on each plant.

The two bushes that are just covered with blooms at this time of the year are 'Simbu Sunset'- every branch aglow - and the old Veitch favourite 'Pink Delight'. As I look - the camellias, daphnes and primulas certainly add to the colour scheme - but the Vireyas are the highlights.

From Ruth Funder,Kew,Victoria.

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LAPOINYA RHODO GARDENS

Having reached the age where long-distance travel is becoming difficult and when my $8\frac{1}{2}$ acre garden is becoming hard work, perhaps I should be spending more time on my Vireya collection. Unfortunately, a great number of specimens have grown long and lanky due to the need to see flowers on my many seedlings grown on from seed sent to me by John Rouse, Bob Withers, Peter Schick and a few others whose names elude me at present.

As I have always been separated from Vireya competitions and from regular meetings of growers, I have had to follow my own methods plus regular reading of Vireya Vine etc. Here in N.W. Tasmania we have an almost perfect climate for Vireyas suject to keeping them under cover from May to August. I am not sure whether this is necessary either, as I have had a Vireya growing in a tree some 14 feet above the ground. It has received very little attention but continues to thrive since it was placed there some twelve years ago. It is a R.lochiae x R.christianae cross which is a reasonably hardy type. It flowers regularly though no seedlings have appeared nearby.

I am sorry that I have not released a whole range of seedlings into some of our trees. It requires a high stepladder, a large piece of treefern fibre held in place by a nylon cord and with a few elkhorns which take over the securing of the treefern material if the string should break. The Vireya is planted either within a cut in the fibre or squeezed behind the piece of treefern. ERlkhorns are not natural to this area but will continue to grow above the frost line. There are quite a few blackwoods growing along the edge of the garden which would be ideal for the growing of elkhorns and Vireyas.

At the Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden, Noel Sullivan has introduced a large quantity of Vireyas into the ground near the lake, shaded by blackwoods. They are grown in the heavy mulch of blackwood leaves where they exist more happily than I have seen Vireyas anywhere in the world. They flower well, are thick and lush green and will be a tremendous attraction in the years ahead. Reflected light reaches them from the lake below which is probably responsible for their frost free environment. I have always grown my Vireyas in an open mix of rotted wood with a small quantity of rotted leaves and crushed pine. Roots twine around the pot with ample airspace just as they would within a hollow log in an old tree. However they have always been grown with a minimum of fertiliser and restricted to a 125mm pot for the first few years. Most of my failures have occurred because of watering problems arising out of cramping too many pots within the glasshouses.

All types of Vireyas grow readily and easily in our climate. I have not noticed any appreciable difference whether they be species or hybrids, R.christianae or R.konorii, R.commonae or R.leucogigas. I did lose an imported form of R.hongkongense possibly from taking too many cuttings from too small a plant, just before winter conditions arrived.

When I think of the many people trying to grow Vireyas and other types of rhododendrons in hot, dry climates, with polluted water supplies (including chlorine), I can only thank our lucky stars that we are living in this wonderful cold rainforest climate.

From Bob Malone, R.S.D.106A, Lapoinya, Tasmania 7325.

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AZALEA LACE BUG

Until recently I had not been aware of the devastation that Azalea Lace Bug can cause in a planting of Vireyas. I have had only the odd plant affected, but a nursery that I visited had a heavy infestation and the foliage on many plants had gone white and was very sparse. It was quite a shock as I have always thought Vireyas to be fairly impervious to insect attack. I went through my own plants; quaranteed the few affected plants and sprayed them with malathion, with a follow up in 10 days. There has been no recurrence.

Because Lace Bug spend their whole life cycle on the underside of leaves, they are not readily seen until the damage is noticed on the upper surface as white dots. It seems to me that Vireyas are far more debilitated by this pest than Azaleas.

From Sylvia Saperstein, Main Arm, Mullumbimby, N.S.W. 2482.

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'HILLS and THE SEA', WOODBRIDGE, TASMANIA

We moved from the north of Tasmania in February 1994, where we had a small farm, bred a few cattle, Murray Greys and mixed dairy/beef, and Muscovey ducks; and grew and sold sweet peas, daffodils, and Bramley's Seedling cooking apples, in a small way. My husband had a full time job, which only left evenings in summer, and weekends, so the day to day running of the farm fell to me.

Our farm was on a very hot,dry,rocky hillside facing east, in Bridgeworth-Legana, near Launceston in Tasmania. The day and night temperatures would swing from very cold overnight to very hot during the day. We would often see rain falling all around but our hill was under blue sky and sunshine. In winter there would be a lot of frosts, followed by lovely warm to hot days. July to September and again in November we would have deluging rain and the paddocks, even on a fair slope would be inundated and swampy. After that the rainfall was very scant usually accompanying thunder storms in January, all evaporated the next day.

With this sort of climate and situation it was very difficult to start a garden, but we successfully set up 2-3 acres of a very pleasant rambling garden with trees and shrubberies, lots of rhododendrons, exotics such as camellias, spireas, irises, old fashioned roses, and native plants. We put in tons of composted stable and cattle feedlot manure, some drains to take the excess winter water, and a capilliary watering system with water pumped from a huge dam which never dried out, and reticulated to the hoses from a 1000 gallon tank at the top of the hill. Because of this climate, I had to keep my vireyas in pots in simulated conditions near the house where I could hose them down from time to time.

In winter they went into a small polyhouse which was heated overnight with two kerosene lamps, and further protected overnight with shade cloth over the top, which was rolled up in the morning to let in the winter sun. With mostly natural food such as cow manure tea, liquid seaweed fertilizer, and a little Osmocote or Aquasol in summer, I kept my vireyas healthy and flowering, but they did not grow much. I think I should have moved them into the next size of pot. I am loath to use insecticides or fungicides unless ther is a problem, and so far I have had none with the vireyas. I used to make up my own potting mixes with sand, peat moss and well composted manure and vegetable waste. I have more recently used coprapeat instead of natural peat as it rewets again if it dries, and is ecologically kinder to dwindling supplies of peat moss. It is less acid , with a ph of 6, but my plants seem happy enough in it.

When the four children had all left home to pursue their careers I took myself off to college to do some courses in fundamental horticulture, pruning, propagating, landscaping and so on. The horticulture courses fired my imagination beyond all expectations and I found myself immersed beyond contol, collecting plants, books and propagating like a mad thing.

My next door neighbour was just as enthusiastic and between us we eventually had a lot of unusual plants growing, and were always on the look out for something different.

When we bought our new home south of Hobart, on three acres (18 months before moving) in a milder climate, permanent creek, with the D'entrecasteaux Channel just across the road, more reliable rainfall, not so frosty, less temperature swing between night and day, and no rocks, I repotted up my special plants from the garden and took cuttings and so on, so that I wouldn't have to start buying from scratch trying to replace some of my less usual plants. (I wish I had taken more as the new owners let the cows and horses into the garden last summer).

I ended up with one thousand pots, set out in mini-climate situations to suit their various needs, and had to engage a special nursery truck to bring the pots down to our new home. The driver needed the pots in size order so everything got mixed up, and then offloaded by an army of helpers anywhere they could find some shade and shelter. Moving into an old house there had to be renovations done, a dam put in, the garden had 40 mixed eucalypts in a block and 20 down one fence, and a couple of stands of blackwood trees Acacia melanoxylon, plus one small bed of perennials and a few isolated exotic trees, acres of lawn to be mowed,and 1800 sq.feet of glasshouse in two buildings. The previous owners had always grown tomatoes for sale and our tenants had continued so we inherited a crop in the middle of production.

We hadn't sold our farm so every two weeks we lost three days, travelling back to cut lawns, water the garden and clean the house, for open days etc. This meant I never got down to reorganising my potted plants into like species and so they had to put up to being out of sorts with their situation. I lost a few plants, under the circumstances not many, but R.lochiae alba was one of the tragedies. However all is not lost as my neighbour had taken cuttings and has given me a tiny plant. In a year or so I should have this garden landscaped and all my plants settled into suitable situations, and hopefully have just the right spot for my vireyas.

I bought my first Rhododendron lochiae, because it was an Australian native plant and because I had started a collection of species rhododendrons. At that time I was unaware of the existence of vireyas, probably like most people, and remained so until during 1988 I bought a plant labelled as 'Malaysian Rhododendron, Tropical Sunset'. In the nursery was a customer, a Malaysian lady, also looking at the same rhodos, who said there was no such plant, the label must be wrong. So began my search for more information, which as we know, until fairly recently was pretty difficult to track down.

I telephoned our local nursery's supplier of 'Tropical Sunset' who read out some information from an American book he had there. This cleared up the incorrect spelling of Malaysian, introduced the word R.vireya, and told me of the areas where vireyas grow naturally, and some information abou growing them.

So armed with this information about a new species I set out looking for more, and found none until one day, by its unusual leaf, I recognised another vireya. This time it was R.lochiae alba. So I bought the only plant and took it home, expecting similar flowers to my red one (This must have been around the time of the interview on Garden Australia on television of Sandra and Graham Ross with Mr.J.Clyde Smith in 1989. I sent for the news sheet of the interview and susequently joined T.V.V.).

However, I am not sure even if the label on R.lochiae alba is correct. It has very leggy, but plentiful growth, smaller more elliptic leaves than my red one, the fragrant flowers growing in trusses of about seven or eight, are white, very thin, long tubes with flared short petals, similar to the picture of R.loranthiflorum on page 40 in J.Clyde Smith's book,'Vireya Rhododendrons'. I have seen a photograph of R.konorii, in the Good Gardening book,'Camellias,Azaleas and Rhododendrons', Murray Publishers Pty.Ltd. heading page 69 and decided mine was that and not R.lochiae, however on page 19 in Mr.Clyde Smith's book "Vireya Rhododendrons' is a photo of R.konorii which is not exactly like the other R.konorii in the other book. the petals at the end of the tubes being longer and less stiff, more wavy. Maybe some one can clear this up for me ? I do understand from reading Vireya Venture that R.lochiae is very variable, but to this degree ? I have scanned in vain lists for reference to R.vireya,'Tropical Sunset' and have not found the exact name so is it possible this is incorrect? The original label has long since disintegrated and I only have the reference in my own plant list, copied from the label at the time of purchase. It has yellow flowers with a hint of orange, similar to R.zoelleri 'Island Sunset'.

My other vireyas are R.javanicum and R.laetum and a second R.lochiae. I have stopped buying more until I have a settled position for these treasures. This is a very difficult discipline for me as I have found that here in Tasmania if you don't buy that unusual plant when you see it, the chance rarely comes again. That is our disadvantage to being isolated. Yes, it is possible to buy mail order from other states. Some nurseries seem to have no trouble and plants are despatched via Australia Post to me with no fuss while others say they have to arrange fumigation both sides of Bass Strait, (because of Argentine ants in Victoria) which doubles the price of the plants, and they cannot post them, only deliver by road to the nearest fumigation centre, from where I have to collect them. So buying in Tasmania makes sense. I am really looking forward to future trips around the nurseries so that I can add more vireyas to my collection.

From: Maggi Carver,'Hills and the Sea' Woodbridge,Tas.7162

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FERTILIZING VIRETAS

From Mrs.Sylvia Saperstein, Mullumbimby.

In a nursery fertilizing is more important than in the garden, as sales depend on lush bushy growth. Consequently nursery people are more aware of the pitfalls of over fertilizing. In exceptionally hot weather slow release fertilizers will releasae too fast. This causes a yellowing or lightening of leaves with light green veins. This is a sign of excess nitrogen and it looks quite similar to nitrogen deficiency. The two conditions can be distinguished by the dark venation of the former.

Too much fertilizer, or even the correct amount applied at the wrong time can adversely affect flower bud development. If applied when the flower buds are half formed, fertilizer can cause them to abort in favour of leaf growth, so apply it very sparingly if the plant looks starved. When buds are fully developed and are about to open a large application of fertilizer can affect the flower colour quite drastically. For example "Simbu Sunset' will be as yellow as 'Wattle Bird' with either very pale orange or none at all. Too much shade can affect some hybrids like 'Simbu Sunset' in the same way, but that is another story.

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The distributors of Osmocote, Sierra Chemicals, have issued some notes on the usage of Osmocote. The following extracts may be of interest:

The suggested 'medium' application rates e.g. for nursery stock are shown below. The 'low' rates for sensitive plants are about one third of these. One level standard teaspoon holds approx. five grams.

Osmocote Plus	3-4 months	150ml pot	5gr.	200ml pot	14gr.
"	8-9 "	"	7gr.	"	23gr.

The longevity of Osmocote is not affected by :- ph value, soil type, external salt concentration, microbiological activity, soil moisture levels, or quantity of irrigation water. The rate at which Osmocote Plus releases its nutrient content is determined by the temperature of the soil.

The longevities shown are based on practical experience:

Osmocote Plus 3-4 months at	16°C (60°F)	4-5 months.
	21°C (70°F)	3-4 "
	32°C (90°F)	1.5-2 "
Osmocote Plus 8-9 months at	16°C (60°F)	10-11 months.
	21°C (70°F)	8-9 "
	32°C (90°F)	4-5 "

If you pick up a granule to find out how long it is lasting, a thumb nail through it will quickly give an indication of how much unused fertilizer is still within the capsule.

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THE PROBLEMS OF THE REGISTRAR

Firstly, the ready availability of rhododendrons which have not been registered. I'm not touting for business, but there are two major problems with this practice:-

a/ The parentage of these plants is not recorded, and if they are used as parents themselves, this leaves a gap in the lineage of the new plant, or alternatively they may be overlooked as parents because of this lack of knowledge.

b/ The potential for confusion is also ever present. If the name is not registered, another plant could unwittingly be registered under that name, and from then on there is doubt as to which plant is being referred to when that name is used.

Many of us have these plants in our gardens. If the plants are not registered, at least someone should record details of their backgrounds, I am prepared to do this. So, if you have plants for which you are seeking information, let me know and we can ask members what they know about them.

Secondly there are some problems trying to get some sort of consistancy with descriptions of rhododendrons being registered. The R.H.S. Colour Chart means that colour descriptions have a uniform base, however, there needs to be clearly understood charts for such things as flower and leaf shapes. Unless you are a botanist, the meanings of many of the terms are not clear. This affects both the people registering their new plants and the people who try to match their new rhodo, which they have been told is correct, with the registered description. I have sought assistance from the herbarium and found some problems even with the material they sent me. I have requested definitive information about this matter from the R.H.S. Would members be interested when,and if, I receive it?

The vireya names I have submitted for approval (yet to be confirmed by the R.H.S. are:-

Citron Bells Seed parent 'Carillon Bells', pollen parent R.laetum x R.macgregoriae.Cross made by Stan Begg. Named by Bill Taylor.
Eleanor Kate Seed parent R.zoelleri pollen parent R.leucogigas 'Hunsteins Secret, named by Ruth Funder.
Johannes Seed parent'Christopher John'pollen parent R.lochiae x R.leucogigas 'Hunsteins Secret'. Crossed and raised by Brian Clancy.
Laura Kate Seed parent R.superbum pollen parent Dr Herman Sleumer. Crossed by Nancy Caddy. named by Brian Clancy.

In relation to the registering of rhododendrons, attached is a copy of the registration form which has to be completed by the Registrar and forwarded to the R.H.S. It gives an idea of the information required. The cost of registering is either $5 or $10 depending on whether the person wants to have the certificate filled out by a calligrapher(the higher charge) or just typed(the lower charge).Registrations should be sent to :- The Registrar, Graeme Eaton,
1386 Mount Dandenong Tourist Road,Mount Dandenong Vic.,3767

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APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION OF A RHODODENDRON NAME

is form, duly completed, should be sent to "The International Rhododendron Registrar, The Royal orticultural Society's Garden, Wisley, Woking, Surrey, U.K. GU23 6QB". Names already listed in the latest nternational Rhododendron Register or its Supplements may not be used again legitimately and are not acceptable for registration. Names proposed should also be acceptable under the rules and recommendations laid down in the latest edition of "The International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants". Details of these publications may be obtained from the above address.

There is no fee for registration of a new cultivar name. However, if a registration certificate is required please indicate this below and enclose £1 for each name that is submitted. Payment must be in sterling (or as a sterling cheque) and should accompany the form(s).

CERTIFICATE REQUIRED? Yes/No* (*delete as appropriate)

This new cultivar is a vireya rhododendron*/evergreen azalea*/deciduous azalea*/azaleodendron*/lepidote rhododendron*/elepidote rhododendron*?

COMPLETE EITHER SECTION A OR SECTION B, WHICHEVER IS APPLICABLE

SECTION A SELECTED CLONE OF A SPECIES

(a) Proposed name .....

(b) Name of species .....

(c) Name of subspecies, variety or form (if relevant) .....

..... Collector's number (if relevant) .....

SECTION B SELECTED CLONE OF A HYBRID

(a) Proposed name .....

(b) Seed parent (♀) .....

(c) Pollen parent (♂) .....

ALL APPLICANTS SHOULD COMPLETE SECTIONS C AND D

SECTION C

Selection*/Cross* made by ..... Address .....

..... Year .....

Grown to first flower by ..... Address .....

..... Year .....

Named by ..... Address .....

..... Year .....

Commercial introducer ..... Address .....

..... Year .....

Has the name been published with a description? Yes*/No*

If so, when where and by whom .....

.....

SECTION D Description (Where possible colour references should be given from the RHS Colour Chart (1966, 1986))

No. of fls per truss ..... Shape of truss .....

Fl shape ..... Corolla length .....mm

Corolla width ..... mm No. of lobes ..... Lobe margins (a) flat* (b) wavy* (c) frilly*

Flower colour: (a) buds .....

(b) inside corolla .....

.....

(c) outside corolla .....

.....

(d) colour and distribution of blotch/spots .....

.....

Calyx length ..... Calyx colour .....

Leaf shape ..... Length ..... mm Width ..... mm

Leaf margin (a) flat* (b) wavy* (c) upcurved* (d) decurved* Upper surface (a) matt* (b) glossy*

Leaf shape (a) at base ..... (b) at apex .....

Type of indumentum (a) hairs* (b) scales* (c) none*

Colour of leaf indumentum (a) when young .....

(b) when mature .....

Plant height .....m Width ..... m in ..... years

Flowering period ..... Hardiness .....

Further distinguishing characters (e.g. plant habit, stamen/style colours, scent) .....

.....

.....

Details of any awards or legal protection (patents, plant breeder's rights) .....

.....

Herbarium specimen sent Yes*/No* Colour print/slide sent Yes*/No*

Name and address of person or firm registering the name .....

.....

.....

THIS PART OF FORM FOR USE OF REGISTRAR

Date received ..... Certificate fee received Yes/No

Registration of this Rhododendron has been accepted as
has been postponed for reason stated

.....

Signature of Registrar ..... Date .....