The Vireya Venture



THE VIREYA VENTURE No.29 OCTOBER 1997

Wollongong has had a rather warm and dry winter with less gusty westerly winds than usual and spring in September was colder, until we left for two weeks on October 5th to go to Tasmania. In our absence the weather reached two extremes - 79mm of heavy rain on October 7th and 35°C on October 11th!

On our return the garden had changed completely to a very lush spring display, with extraordinary growth all round (including the lawns) and a host of flowers. The Vireyas did not lag behind and we had the biggest truss ever on a R.leucogigas x R.aurigeranum hybrid - nine flowers about 100mm diam. on a truss some 220 mm wide. For contrast the smallest flower - barely 18mm in diam. - appeared for the first time on a very sickly plant labelled R.macgregoriae - yellow form. It was yellow and it had six petals and a very tightly bunched cluster of 14 stamens, so I would not care to guess at its parentage.

Some of my Vireyas date from the very early days and were unnamed seedlings. Although the parentage of the hybrids was known, labels can be misplaced and some of them were no doubt siblings of future registered hybrids.

The attached lists of Australian registered hybrids is included at the request of Graeme Eaton, it includes Azaleas, Rhododendrons and Vireyas. Your assistance in this survey would be much appreciated and could lead to some interesting conclusions.

Subscriptions for 1997/98 are now overdue and are unchanged at $10.00. This will be a reminder that yours has not yet been received if underlined. Please send them to P.O.Box 8, Keiraville, N.S.W. 2500.

J.Clyde Smith, Editor.

TASMANIA

Our visit to Tasmania was to attend the Annual General Meeting of the Australian Rhododendron Society in Hobart. The availability of births on 'The Spirit of Tasmania' and car space gave us a few spare days to see gardens in Burnie and Hobart that were not part of the A.G.M.

In Burnie we were able to again visit the long established garden of Bob Malone at Lapoinya. It is still a privilege to see this magnificent collection of rhododendrons, particularly the broad leaved hybrids growing on the incredibly steep banks of the creek.

Also we had several visits to the Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden of the N.W.Branch of the A.R.S. - We first saw this in 1981 when we witnessed the first planting of a rhododendron by the Society President, at that time Dr.Chris Laurie. Much planning then went on, the garden is situated in a steep gully in a virgin forest, the soil has been mulched for years withe fallen leaves and there are several springs to fill their dams. Much clearing had to be done but provision was also made for shelter belts.

This area gets occasional frosts and some damage was evident on a few petals, so their Vireya planting was made under the shelter of some tall Blackwoods. At a guess there were at least a hundred plants here, in the ground or nesting on the native soft tree ferns. Many of these were in flower and they do flower all the year around.

The rhododendrons are planted in two areas - the most central area with hybrids. and around this geographical groups of plants, e.g. natives of U.S.A., Japan, Burma etc. where companion planting of other species from those areas will complement the scene and provide shelter. Weeds have been a problem but weedkillers have been used and the garden looked very clean. Possums have been anuisance - as they seem to be elsewhere in Tasmania from the number of powerpoles etc. that have sheet metal guards around them - but an electric fence has reduced the damage from all pests.

The Garden now has a very new Visitors Centre - with refreshments - and is open each day for the main flowering season. However some extensive hybridizing has resuted in some plants that will flower in August and others that flower in February.

In Hobart we saw a number of private gardens with magnificent displays of rhododendrons, but their frost problems do limit the Vireyas. We were fortunate to see a very fine specimen of Wattle Bird in full flower in Barry Davidson's front garden.

One oddity was the number of bumble bees. Here one will occasionally pay us a brief visit, but they are so numerous around Hobart that they are not welcome, being blamed for most of the pollination of rhododendron flowers, which increases the need for deadheading.

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From Neil Puddey, 'Jagera' Woolgoolga, N.S.W.

"I have continued with yet more Vireya planting in preparation for our opening in September with the Australian Open Garden Scheme. I have found , as I guess most Vireya growers have, that they perform much better when planted out.

My planting technique has been simply to place the plants on the soil and build up around them with composted pine bark. This approach has been successful for our sub-tropical conditions so far, but time will tell. I chose to plant many of my stock plants into the garden not only for aesthetics but also because I was frustrated with the tip burn that many of my plants were showing.

This problem is not evident in the garden plants, suggesting that Vireyas are not totally happy in pots. I also believe that this is a symptom of root problems and that the plant is under stress as a result. Invariably in potted plants after a great show of flower, I would see leaf browning and upon root investigation would find problems. A pot bound Vireya has little buffering from water/nutrient floods and famines, combinations of which probably led to root damage and invasion by phytophera.

In the last issue you also mention the semi-double flowers of 'Rosie Posie'. This hybrid came from Graham and Wendy Snell's collection. Some blooms are standard but others are very petalloid. I see the same petaloid nature in 'Ivory Coast', 'Jean Baptiste' and 'Red Rooster'. My one attempt at a cross between two of these looked good for five weeks but then failed. The stamens are generally too disfigured to produce pollen and in 'Rosie Posie's case I think it is female sterile. I have noticed some petalloid tendency in other hybrids but these have been single flowers and not repeated. Other interesting flowers are those produced with 9 and even 12 petals but not as a result of mutated stamens.

Our planting at the Coff's Harbour Rgional Botanic Gardens was looking very nice until some rather desperate person helped themselves. A nice plant of R.notiale disappeared with these so maybe they knew what they were doing. Not to be defeated we have replanted, I am just hoping that I don't end up supplying half of Coff's Harbour.

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A letter from Rodney Wadham, Lenswood, S.A. is relevant to previous comments:- "I apologise for not writing before but have been waiting for some good news to relate from the Vireya scene over here, unfortunately in vain. The lack of interest at all levels is depressing as I believe that Vireyas can be grown well in Adelaide, mostly in pots and hanging baskets, provided some protection is given against climatic extremes, which, in the suburbs, occur in hot summers and, in the hills, cold winters. There is nowhere for the public to see good quality plants with a sufficient number in flower at any one time.

My own plants have survived another winter under tall gums with

Petal Blight

This winter an outbreak of Petal Blight here and elsewhere was the most severe that we have had, affecting not only Azaleas but also Vireyas and Rhododendrons. Normally this is not seen in winter when cold days prevent its development. Dr.Peter Valder has done considerable research on the subject of petal blight and this has been published in the March 1974 issue of 'The Rhododendron', journal of the A.R.S., Vol 13 No.1.

He quotes one comment from U.S.research which said:- "It has been shown in the United States that temperatures of about 18 -19°C (Weiss and Smith, 1941) are the most favourable for infection and the enlargement of the lesions. Thus it becomes troublesome in the spring as soon as the weather becomes warm enough."

The spores of the fungus which find their way onto the petals cannot germinate unless free moisture is present, and this can come from dew if it remains for long enough. So our warmer and more humid winter with less drying westerly winds gave us a winter instead of a spring infestation. Usually petal blight has been prevalent in the mid range of temperatures and not seen in winter nor in the heat of summer here.

Regular spraying with Benlate was used in early trials and found to be only partially effective although it did greatly reduce the formation of the over wintering of the sclerotia and the consequent reduction in the next year's attack. Bayleton was then found to be much more effective and still is, provided it is applied before the flower buds are open.'Mancozeb plus' is also effective as an occasional change from Bayleton in case local resistance to it should develop. It is important to remove all affected flowers from the bush and the ground before sclerotia can develop.

Much more detail may be found in Dr.Valder's article.

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In Retrospect

The rhododendron registrations that were summarised in the last issue roused my interest in the introduction and history of Vireya hybrids in Australia. Looking through the Royal Horticultural Society's yearly list of rhododendron registrations brought to light some interesting facts that will be tabled in the next issue. In addition there have been numerous articles on Vireyas in the A.R.S. journals, the first one ,very appropriately, was in Vol.1, No.1, Feb.1959 viz."Rhododendron Lochae" that was illustrated by a drawing of a truss by R.Cutten, which is reproduced on the first page of this issue. The article read:-

"Rhododendron lochae is the only member of the genus Rhododendron indigenous to Australia, and therefore it should be of special interest to Australian gardeners. It is a native of North Queensland where it is found growing both as an epiphyte*, in a restricted area around Bellenden Ker, near the beginning of the Great Dividing Range between Innisfail and Cairns. It is an attractive shrub with glossy dark green elliptical leaves and geranium red bell shaped flowers.

Although R.lochae is still little known to Australian gardeners it occupies an important place among Rhododendrons in Great Britain, where it recently received an Award of Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. It is pleasing also to note that the Ferny Creek Horticultural Society last year adopted it as the emblem of that Society.

Owing to its semi-epiphyte character R.lochae is very suitable for growing in a container, indeed it will actually thrive better in a well drained pot, tub or tin than it will planted in the ground, even with good shelter. A good potting compost is necessary. The writer finds a mixture of leafmould, peat moss and fern fibre very sarisfactory. As it comes from the tropical rain forests, protection from frost and strong sunlight is absolutely essential.
(* A plant that lives on, but does not derive nourishment from another plant.)

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The accompanying illustration makes it quite clear that this was not R.notiale.
In May 1961 Mr.V.J.Boulter wrote that R.Lochae did not do well in the cold at Mt. Dandenong but did well at Ringwood and concluded :-" I trust that this article will encourage some one in one of our really hot districts to try R.lochae."
In response Mr.L.C.Weber,Epping N.S.W. wrote:" Does Sydney come within this zone ?. Two very small rooted cuttings were obtained in 1956. One was potted in a loam-peat mixture, the other in a loam-sand-peat mixture. Both thrived, the former making better growth,but the latter flowered first. The buds opened in succession giving a prolonged flowering period from early March to the end of April.Both were grown under bush-house conditions with no specialtreatment.....
"It has the makings of being a good rhododendron for Sydney"

AUSTRALIAN REGISTERED HYBRIDS

In this newsletter there is a complete list of Australian registered hybrids. As registrar, what I am trying to find out is :-

1. How many of them are still alive.
2. Where they are so that a/ We can get a slide of each to complete the slide collection of Australian registered hybrids
   b/ We can ensure that there is more than one plant of each hybrid to try to ensure survival.
3. Get a greater understanding of the hardiness of each plant by finding how widely it is growing.

If each person who receives this list could circle (or use a highlighter) to mark each of the registered hybrids they are growing, complete the name , address and phone number section at the bottom, and return it to me, I will be able to collate the returns to obtain the information I am seeking. If you feel like adding a short note with further details of each plant (e.g. height, width, hardiness, your opinion of the plant, etc.) that will be appreciated and will add to our knowledge of each hybrid, but if that is too much work and is likely to deter you from returning your marked list, don't worry about those details, but forward on your completed list. Another idea that could help us assess the hardiness of each hybrid would be to place a cross beside hybrids which you have tried and which have died.

I accept that many people may believe that some of our earlier hybrids have been surpassed in quality by some of the newer hybrids, however it is important to preserve plants of all named hybrids 1. To use as comparisons when people are trying to identify plants in older gardens.

2. To preserve the gene pool. You never know when some hybridist will see qualities needed as a parent.

3. Some of the early hardy hybrids may grow in areas of Australia where previously rhododendrons have not been tried.

I may need to follow up this survey later with a list of hybrids about which I have received no information. I'll have to wait and see.

If you have any queries about this survey please feel free to contact me by mail 1386 Mount Dandenong Tourist Road, MOUNT DANDENONG, Victoria, 3767 or by phone (03) 9751 1105.

Graeme Eaton,
(Australian Rhododendron Registrar)

AUSTRALIAN REGISTERED HYBRIDS (To 25/ 6/ 97)

Deciduous Azaleas

Dellas Red
Elizabeth's Gold
Emerton
Gilda
Hilda May
Holly's Yellow
Joseph Byrne
Les's Penny
Lockington Avon
Mary Lou
Molly's Red
Olinda Bushfire
Olinda Candy
Olinda Cecile
Olinda Fire Red
Olinda Flame
Olinda Glow
Olinda Gold
Olinda Gypsy
Olinda May
Olinda Orange
Olinda Rose
Orange Supreme
Pink Ball
Turncoat
White Top
Yallaroo

Elepidotes

Abby Boulter
Alexander's Lockington
Alinta
Andrew Crouch
Angel
Angel's Touch
Anna Deen
Anna Michelle
Annalies Van De Ven
Annie Dosser
Antaeus
Anthea Borch
Apricot Delight
Apricot Gold
Apricot Ice
Apricot Sun
Arnold Teese
Aunty Ivy
Australian Cameo
Australian Gold
Australian Primrose
Australian Rainbow
Australian Sunrise
Australian Sunset
Avonsleigh
Beatrice Eaton
Beaut One
Beekman's Delight
Belinda Beekman
Belle of Lockington
Betty Boulter
Big Ben
Biggin's Centenary
Bloodline
Blue Crown
Bob Peace
Bold Lad
Boulter's Cream
Boulter's Rosalea
Bramerton Bronze
Bramerton Pastel
Bramerton Salmon
Bramerton Sunset
Bronze Wing
Brooke Rochelle
Callight
Caramel Coffee
Champagne Delight
Charles Begg
Church Lane
Clive Lissenden
Colehurst
Corinne Boulter
Cormid
Crazy Joe
Crimson Glow
Crinkles
Cup Day
Daisy Blanch
Dame Pattie Menzies
Debbie Thomson
Delamere Belle
Delicious
Desert Jewel
Desert Star
Desert Sun
Diane Beekman
Donvale
Donvale Beauty
Donvale Cheer
Donvale Gem
Donvale Glory
Donvale Lady
Donvale Pearl
Donvale Ruby
Donvale Ruffles
Dorothy Lonsdale
Dorothy Loveday
Dunloe
Early Days
Edith Boulter
Elenor's Joy
Elissa
Elizabeth Gillhoff
Elizabeth Lund
Empire Rose
Empire Silver
Empire White
Ereda Beekman
Essie Huxley
Ester Dudley
Faith Henty
Fire Prince
Fire Walk
Flashing Red
Floor Show
Forest Blaze
Forest Flame
Francesca Beekman
Frank Waghorn
Freckle Pink
Frou Frou
Furnival's Boy
Gay Song
Geoffrey William Crouch
Gift
Glen Beacon
Glen Bruce
Glen Cameron
Glen Crimson
Glen Glow
Glen Highlight
Glen Pagoda
Gooday
Grace Paterson
Green Shade
Hasgard
Hay Lee
Heather Barr
Heatherdale
Heidi Boesch
Hot Wonder
Ian Wallace
Inez May
Jack's White
Jane Walker
Jean Porte
Jeanette Clarke
Joan Bye
Joan Langdon
Joan Thompson
John Dosser
Judith Ellen
Judy Hassett
Just Dreamin
Kalimna
Karel's Red
Karenne Griffin
Karl
Kate Boulter
Laura Matthews
Laurel Clarke
Laurie's Choice
Lavender Filigree
Lek Rasmussen
Leonie Borch
Lighthouse
Lindy Ellen
Lockington Crown
Lockington Flame
Lockington Jane
Lockington Lockie
Lockington Pride
Lockington Sandy
Loraine Langdon
Loribelle
Lynn Boulter
Madge Bramley
Marcus of Lockington
Marg Sawers
Margaret Cutten
Margaret Mack
Margaret Sindorff
Maria Van Zelm
Maria's Choice
Mark Mansfield
Marnie
Mauve Bouquet
Mauve Satchel
Max Marshland
May Barr
Maybe
Melba
Merry Lass
Michael Beekman
Midnight
Min Langdon
Morio
Moulin Rouge
Mount Wilson
Mundai
Murraba
Nanie Garret
Natalie Murray
New Olympic Gold
Nirita
Noel's Glow
Noele Boulter
Noila
Noorook
Nunawading Pride
Olinda Early Surprise
Olinda Pride
Olinda Ruby
Olinda Sunset
Olympic Gold
Our Gem
Pamela Reynolds
Perri Cutten
Petra's Debut
Phillippa Howells
Phyle Donegan
Pirianda Blush
Pirianda Chestnut Flare
Pirianda Green Flare
Pirianda Lilac

Proud Cis
Purple Gown
Purple Opal
Red Crest
Red Embers
Red Gate
Red Rosella
Red Throat
Redman
Rhys
Ron Langdon
Ross Maud
Sady
Saki
Samantha Sawers
Satin Glow
Shirley Scott
Sir Phillip Bennett
Sir Robert Menzies
Snow Peak
Spring Fiesta
Stowport
Sub Zero
Success
Sue Cutten
Sue Lissenden
Susan Lonsdale
Tamie Fraser
Thrills
Tilly Aston
Tolemac
Toolangi Ruby
Tristan Esposito
Victor Boulter
Waghorn's Burgundy
Sensation
Warburton
Wendy Lonsdale
White Cameo
White Flare
William Avery
Winning Post
Winter Beauty
Yako
Yamina
Yellow Dream
Yellow Gold
You Beaut
Yvonne Davies

Evergreen Azaleas

Anne Chantal
Anniversary
Anthony Roland
Apricot Blush
Autumn Beauty
Beau Bonnie
Belinda Lee
Ben Brook
Berna Prise
Berna Startrek
Blackburn Pink Frill
Bobo
Cheryl Anne
Comanche
Crinkle Cut
Dee Jay
Diana Trask
Diane Robin
Emma Gray
Esme Lorraine
Floppy Boy
Fragrant Lorraine
Frosty Morn
Gay Divorcee
Georgina
Gwen
Happy Anniversary
Happy Birthday
Harmony Mott
Harry Van de Ven
Impact
Jack Frost
James Belton
Jan Byrne
Jenny Mac
Joan Elizabeth
Jordan's Flame
Julie Ann
King's Choice
Lavender Delight
Lightning Ridge
Lisa Broom
Lockington
Lockington Dancer
Lockington Dream
Lockington Pink
Orchid
Lockington Shannon
Lockington Star
Lorraine
Margaret Palmer
Marilyn Kay
Martha Gardner
Merle Finimore
Min's Choice
Mrs H Van De Ven
My Mother's Day
Nambucca Princess
Nellie Gatehouse
New Loring
Nicole Joy
Pacific Twilight
Paddy Nick
Paradise Candy
Paradise Cascade
Paradise Charity
Paradise Coconut Ice
Paradise Elfin
Paradise Fairy Bells
Paradise Harlequin
Paradise Honey
Paradise Honeymoon
Paradise Jennifer Ann
Paradise Little Flirt
Paradise Old Smokey
Paradise Pixie
Paradise Radiance
Paradise Romance
Paradise Rosa-Lea
Paradise Sensuous
Paradise Susie
Paradise Voodoo
Paradise Wee-Willy
Paul Byrne
Peach Crumble
Phyllis Marsh
Piewacket
Pride of Nambucca
Rainier Red
Ralph
Red Rosebud
Rose Marsh
Roy Hawking
Royal Show
Ruth Kirk
Saidee Kirk
Seora
Sharon Kathleen
Silver Gem
Silver Glow
Silver Light
Sorrento
Southern Sunset
Spider Light
Star Bright
Suzanne Jean
Von's Surprise
Windmill

Lepidote

Alf Bramley
Anne Teese
Arthur Howells
Candle Gleam
Denise
Donvale Pink Drift
Dunloe Tasha
Florence Mann
Greenthroat
Heather Boulter
Hilary Joan
Long Bow
Moon Blush
Olinda Bells
Pink Silk
Pirianda Harvey
Pirianda Pink
Southern Cloud
Viscount Linley
Wedding Gown
Winifred Merson

Vireya

Ada Verspeek
Aida's March
Alisa Nicole
Anatta Gold
Angi Gita
Arthur's Choice
Auburn Beauty
Australia 11
Autumn Berry Wine
Barbara Crouch
Benjamin MacDonald
Blond Venus
Blonde Bombshell
Bob's Crowning Glory
Bold Janus
Breathless
Bright Lights
Brunswick Green
Bulolo Gold
Buttermilk
Cakes and Ale
Carillon Bells
Catherine the Great
Celebration
Channon Marie
Charming Valentino
Chayya
Cheeky Mandarin
Cherry Harmony
Choc Orange
Choirs of Angels
Christmas Past
Christmas Present
Christopher Borch
Christopher John
Cinnamon Pink
Citron Bells
Clare Crouch
Clare Rouse
Clarion Firm
Concerto For Brass
Coral Flare
Craig Faragher
Crimson Lightning
Crimson Scallywag
Crinolette
Crisp Deroy
Cybelle Barbour
David Crouch
Diamond Jubilee
Doctor Herman
Sleumer
Doll Tearsheet
Donvale Pink
Dressed To Kill
Duchess Satin
Dulcie Lelliott
Eastern Zanzibar
Elation
Eleanor Kate
Elizabeth Crouch
Esprit-De-Joie
Eureka Gold

Faberges Egg
Ferdinand Von Mueller
Finnegan's Rainbow
Fireplum
Flaming Ball
Fuchsia Lady
Gardenia Odyssey
Gentle Jenny
Glen Borch
Gossamer White
Great Scent-sation
Green With Envy
Happy Times
Hari's Choice
Helen's Laughter
Hendre
High Country Wedding
Highland Arabesque
Highland Fair
Highland Peter Pan
Highland White Jade
Hilda Margaret Crouch
Hip-Hip-Hurrah
Hosanna
Hotel on Mayfair
Hunstein's Secret
Iced Primrose
Innuendo
Irian Jaya
Island Sunset
Janelle Marie
Jeremy Funder
Johannes

Jolly Roger
Josephine Gordon
Juan Diego
Kaleidascope
Kay Catchlove
Kiandra
La-De-Da
Lady Clare
Lana's Gold
Laura Kate
Lemon Minuet
Liberty Bar
Little Nell
Little One
Little Pinkie
Littlest Angel
Lochmin
Lolly Willows
Lovey
Lucifer's Blush
Marjiam
Melbourne Cup
Mistress Sue
Mrs Elizabeth Miller
Nan Cutten
Niugini Firebird
Orange Harmony
Orange Wax
Oriental Orange
Our Marcia
Overflow
Pacific Moonrise
Pacific Shower

Pacific Sundown
Patrizia Del Roma
Pendance
Pendragon
Pennywhistle
Penrice
Penrose
Personality
Pindi Peach
Pindi Pearl
Pink Feathers
Pink Lightning
Pink Pazazz
Pink Sally
Platinum Blond
Poet Laureate
Popcorn
Pretty Cotton Candy
Ratafia
Red Rooster
Rich Amber
Robert Withers
Rogue Red
Rouseabout
Ruby Bells
Saint Valentine
Scarlet Beauty
Scotchburn White
Shantung Pink
Shantung Rose
Stanton's Glory
Star Shower
Sunny

Sunset Fantasy
Sweet Amanda
Sweet Beatrice
Sweet Cherubim
Sweet Mac
Sweet Rosalea
Sweet Seraphim
Sweet Serenity
Sweet Wendy
Teddy's Best
Thief of Hearts
Tiffany Rose
Tinker-Bells Flight
Tom Lelliott
Tops of Kew
Torrid Affair
Tosca's Kiss
Tropic Fanfare
Tropic Splendour
Tropic Summer
Tropic Tango
Vanilla Cream
Veronica Maureen
Wattle Bird
Wee Willie Winkie
White Giant
White Rum
Wild Redhead
Yellow Fire
Zoe Eloise

Unknown

Anne Sullivan
Leonie Pink

Name .....

Address .....

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Telephone .....