Vireya Venture

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Neesa – Gardenia Hybrid

Our drought has broken typically with flood rain, dry creek beds flowed within one hour of it's arrival and roads were cut soon after. Little or no rain for six months and then 225mm overnight. Such climatic extremes really are normal, so the climatologists tell us for our part of the world. Vireya in our garden certainly proved their adaptability this year. Thank you to those offering encouragement to continue with the 'Vireya Venture' and the coloured photos I have been including. Please note Scarlet Butterfly(photo last issue) is a Graham Snell Hybrid not mine. It is that time of year when subscriptions are due. $10 Aust for four issues is covering costs. Please make cheques payable to The Vireya Venture and include any changes of address. Post to Neil Puddey P.O.Box 126 Woolgoolga 2456.

Editor

This is mail I have been meaning to write since I received the latest copy of Vireya Venture, to let you know how much your efforts at producing such an interesting small journal are appreciated. There must be quite a few keen growers of Vireyas in this area (Tweed Heads) as I do on occasions see some in the markets but it is only through Vireya Venture and Web Pages that my knowledge of these wonderful plants is increasing .Your photos are much appreciated and Scarlet Butterfly is a beauty. My very small collection of almost twenty plants is doing reasonably well considering the very hot and dry season that we have had. Those I have are all hybrids and from my reading are all 'good doers'. I am finding that they really are happier in a bright shade position here, perhaps it is because my courtyard conditions are warmer, although we are right on the coast with sea breezes. The few that I have in a position where they receive several hours of morning sun are not looking as happy as the others. I do have a general problem however of leaf drop particularly at the moment though it does occur throughout the year. All the plants are lightly fertilised and the drainage is very good but most of my plants loose lower leaves. Perhaps I am expecting too much and this is quite normal. None of my Vireyas are more than four or five years old but I do prune from time to time to avoid

legginess. My small purpose built bed looks lovely at present with Tropic Glow and Ivory Coast flowering and pink Delight and Kisses flowering in containers nearby. I have Bromeliads doing well around the Vireyas and they appear to be happy companions! All in all they give great pleasure don't they.

Again many thanks for the Vireya Venture and may it continue.

Jacque Cole

"THE NAME GAME

For those readers who propagate and sell Vireyas, a problem has now arisen regarding printed labels. Our present labels have been made obsolete, at least in most instances, in that the LOCHAE, or LOCHIAE we have been selling should now be correctly labelled R. *viriosum*, and R. *notiale,* for which, to the best of my knowledge, no label have yet been printed, should now bear the name R. *lochiae.*

This raises two points in my mind, the first being that R. *viriosum* will mean nothing to most people, and we cannot add Syn. R. *lochae* because that name is now being used for R. *notiale.* Presumably the labels could carry the heading 'formally R. *lochiae'.*

The second point in that the existing pictorial labels headed R. *lochiae* do not carry the correct illustration to be used for the former R. *notiale*, so technically, these labels should not be used at all in future, but maybe this is a moot point, particularly for those with a stock of labels in hand. Ultimately, when new labels are being printed, the correct heading for R. *lochiae* should presumably read R. *lochiae*, Syn. R. *notiale.*

Confusing to say the least. I must add that I sympathise with Lyn Craven who has been trying to sort out all this name calling business, and I do wonder whether this is the final end to the whole affair. Our native rhododendrons deserve to be correctly labelled, but I for one do not wish to go to the cost of having new labels printed. With me, sales of LOCHAE, sorry LOCHIAE, sorry, VIRIOSUM, are very few and far between, and only twice have I had a request for NOTIALE."

It has now stopped raining, Neil, but it is also nearing afternoon tea time, and it is not worth getting my hands dirty, so I'll keep going on another subject.

"EATING MY WORDS.

For some time now I have been sticking my neck out and suggesting that Vireyas do not need, on in fact are better off without, too much shade, especially with newly planted young plants. For several years I have been planting out vireyas from 140mm. (6") pots in full sun in Maleny with great success, planting in early Autumn to give the plants 8 or 9 months to establish before the stress of the summer heat hits them. The results have been sturdy, compact, bushy plants that flower early, and often.

I have added the proviso that Maleny is the best place in the world to grow vireyas, other that possibly Hawaii, and of course in their natural habitat, and that other parts of Australia may have to adapt their practices somewhat, to cater for their less than ideal conditions.

Certainly, once the plants are well established, they can benefit from light dappled shade in summer, largely to protect the flowers from being bleached by the mid day sun, and to this end I have been planting young shade trees at the same time as the vireyas, and pruning, or trunking these shade trees, to provide some shade after the third or fourth year.

This has worked very well for me, until this current summer season. The dry (drought) conditions, in spring and early summer, combined with higher than average temperatures, has resulted in a pretty sorry showing from my latest planting out, which is only now, late Feb., beginning to pick up following some good rains,and cooler, if somewhat humid, weather. I have experienced a number of plant losses of younger plants in the garden and also with potted plants in the shade area. The latter have mainly been older plants, probably with weak root systems, due to past neglect on my part in that they should have been repotted some time (years) ago.

So now I will have to revise my advice to prospective new vireya growers, but I still maintain that Maleny is the Vireya Heaven of Australia.

This all leads to another question, what are the most ideal shade plants for vireyas? The answer will obviously vary with locality, but it would be nice if we could get some suggestions from various readers, what they have planted under in their garden, what they would look for in an ideal shade tree, and name a few they would use if they were starting a new garden from scratch."

Well, Neil, I'll leave it at that, and maybe it will rain again, and I will be inspired to write on my ideas about shade trees.

Best Regards Graham Snell

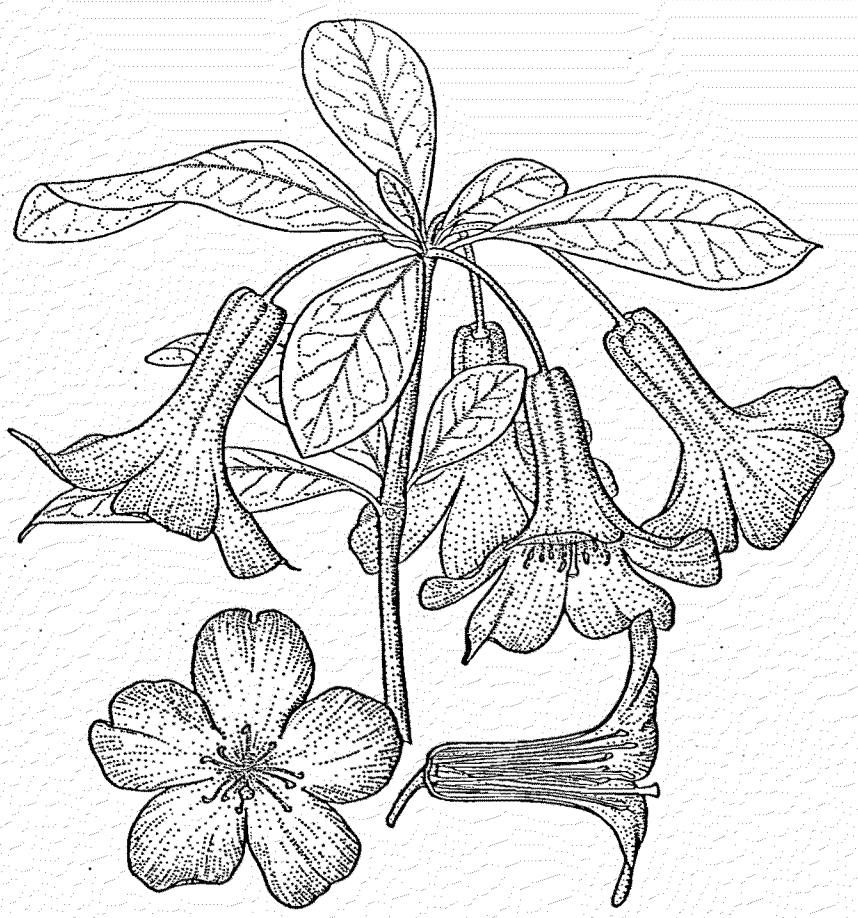

FIG. 1. *Rhododendron lochiae* F. Muell., ×0.8. Drawn from living material of the Mt Finnigan provenance by K. R. Thiele.

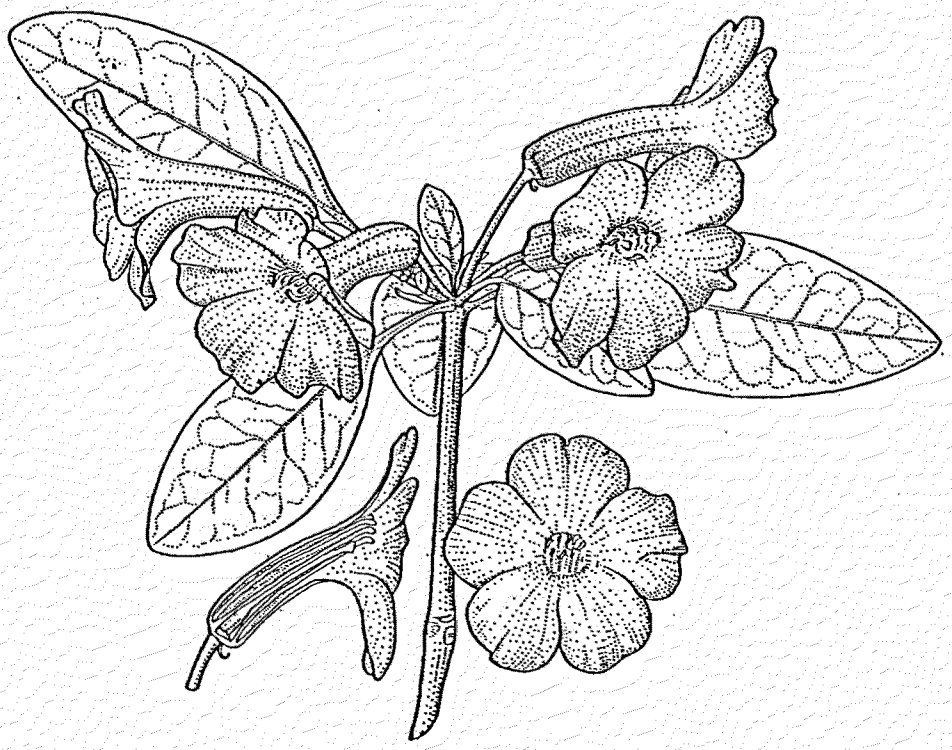

FIG. 3. *Rhododendron notiale* Craven, ×0.8. Drawn from living material of the type population (Mt Bartle Frere provenance) by K. R. Thiele.

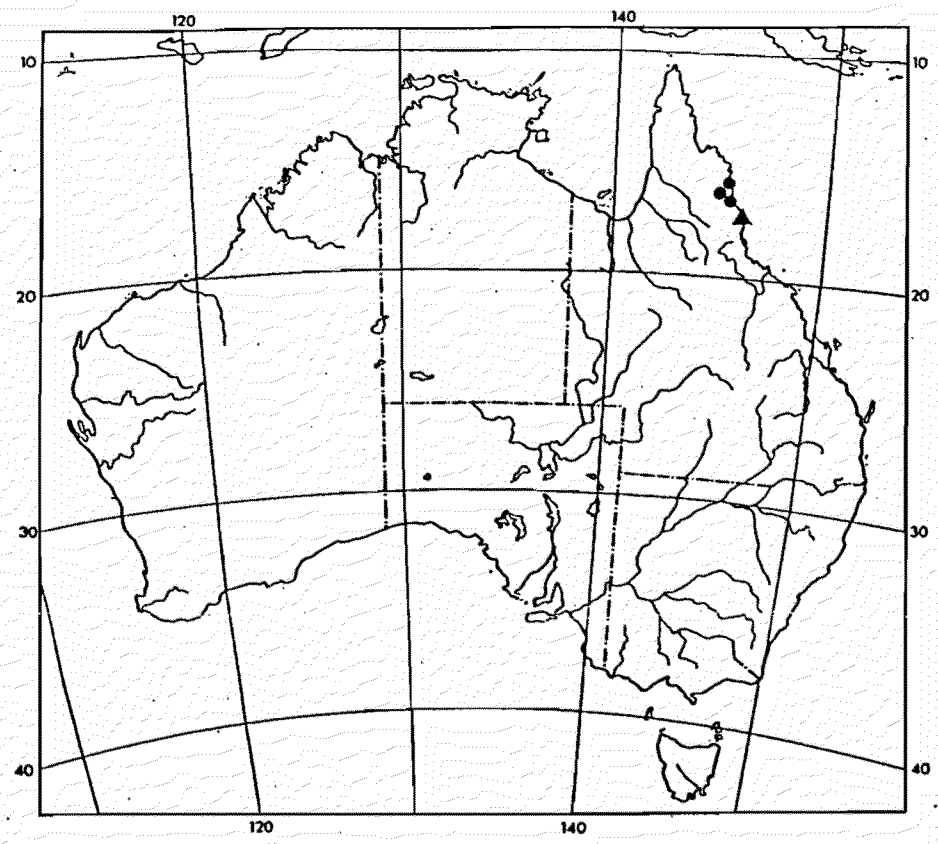

FIG. 2. Distribution of *Rhododendron lochiae* (●) and *R. notiale* (▲).

A new name for an Australian *Rhododendron* (*Ericaceae*)

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Introduction

Investigation of the taxonomy of *Rhododendron lochiae* F. Muell. resulted in the recognition of two species of *Rhododendron* in Australia, *R. lochiae* and *R. notiale* Craven (Craven & Withers, 1996). As the type of Mueller's species belonged to a plant that was scarcely known, in contrast to the other plant that was well known to botanists and horticulturists, conservation of the name *R. lochiae* F. Muell. with a new type was proposed in order to maintain the conventional application of the name (Craven, 1996). The species that Mueller's type represents was described as *R. notiale* Craven (Craven & Withers, 1996). This proposal was not approved by the Committee for Spermatophyta (Brummitt, 1998), the relevant nomenclatural committee set up under the ultimate auspices of the International Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS), and its decision was subsequently ratified by the other relevant fora. Following a query by the author, the secretary of the Committee, R.K. Brummitt, agreed to reopen the case within the Committee, but their second decision was similarly negative (Brummitt, 2000).

The first report (Brummitt, 1998) states that the 'name is not being changed for purely nomenclatural reasons; its application is being restricted for taxonomic reasons'. The present author considers the relevance and significance of this statement to be unclear.

Several species names have been successfully conserved in cases where misidentification has resulted in names being applied to taxa that do not include the nomenclatural types of those names (e.g. *Andropogon bicornis* (Prop. 1417), *Peucedanum nodosum* (Prop. 1426), *Spartium capense* (Prop. 1439), *Cuscuta capitata* (Prop. 1440), all in Brummitt, 2001). This type of conservation is not an unusual occurrence. From a perusal of recent volumes of *Taxon*, it appears that, when it comes to conservation of species names, the Committee makes somewhat arbitrary decisions. It seems, from my interpretation of their reports relating to the *Rhododendron lochiae* proposal, that the Committee believes that as far as the application and conservation of names is concerned there should be rigid separation between taxonomy and nomenclature *per se*. However, such an extreme view, even if achievable, is not in accordance with the wishes of many users of plant names, the majority of whom are not herbarium botanists. This view is also inconsistent with the Committee's recent decisions on other proposals that were made to conserve species names with a new type so as to preserve the nomenclatural *status quo*.

The decisions of the Committee are difficult to reconcile with the following

statements in the *International Code of Botanical Nomenclature (Tokyo Code)* (Greuter *et al.*, 1994):

'The Section urges the General Committee and through it all Permanent Committees to make full use of the options that the *Code* now provides in order to ensure nomenclatural clarity and stability.' (*Tokyo Code*: ix)

'... the XV International Botanical Congress urges plant taxonomists, while such work continues, to avoid displacing well established names for purely nomenclatural reasons, whether by change in their application or by resurrection of long-forgotten names...' (*Tokyo Code*: xiv)

In passing, it is worth noting that the subsequent edition of the *Code*, the *St Louis Code* (Greuter *et al.*, 2000), does not refute the sentiment underlying the above-cited passages.

The type method has clearly provided a successful way of unambiguously determining the application of names to plant taxa. However, automatic adherence to this method will not promote stability in nomenclature and will force the users of plant names to make unnecessary, and unwelcome, adjustments. Ideally, advances in taxonomic knowledge should have a minimal effect upon conventional nomenclature. Conservation of the name *R. lochiae* F. Muell. with a new type as proposed (Craven, 1996) would have permitted new taxonomic information to be integrated seamlessly with the present majority application of the name and would have avoided the lamentable confusion that is likely to ensue.

However, unfortunate as it may be, in accordance with the decisions made by the nomenclatural committee, *R. lochiae* sensu auctt. non F. Muell. is re-described below as the new species *R. viriosum*, and *R. notiale* Craven is synonymized with *R. lochiae* F. Muell.

Rhododendron lochiae F. Muell., Victorian Nat. 3: 157 (1887 as '*R. Lochae*'). *Azalea Lochae* (F. Muell.) Kuntze, Rev. Gen. Pl. 387 (1891). Type: Australia, Queensland, Mt Bellenden Ker, *Sayer* 135 [cited in the protologue as *Sayer & Davidson*, without number] (holo. MEL).
Syn.: *R. notiale* Craven, in Craven & Withers, Edinb. J. Bot. 53: 33, fig. 3 (1996). Type: Australia, Victoria, cultivated in garden at Montrose, Melbourne, 21 i 1993, *Craven & Elliot* 9105 (holo. CANB; iso. A, BRI, E, MEL). (Provenance: Mt Bartle Frere, Queensland, 1975, *leg. D.L. Jones* [unvouchered].)

Rhododendron viriosum Craven, **sp. nov.**
Species ad *R.* sect. *Vireyam* ser. *Javanicam* Sleum. pertinens, et affinis *R. lochiae* F. Muell. a qua corolla recta et limbo ad angulum 90°, tubo corollae intra pubescenti, filamentis pubescentibus, antheris dispersis circum faucem sed numerosioribus in dimidio inferiore et perrubra, et stylo basali 2/3 ad 3/4 stellatolepidoto differt.
Type: Australia, Australian Capital Territory, cultivated in the Australian National Botanic Gardens at Canberra, 22 ii 1994, *Craven* 9354 (holo. CANB; iso. A, B, BRI, E, L, MEL, QRS). (Provenance: Queensland: Mount Windsor Tableland, 27 v 1989, *Jones & Clements* 4420 (CANB).)

Terrestrial, lithophytic or epiphytic shrub to 3m (once recorded as scandent). *Branchlets* 2–4mm in diameter, terete to subterete, moderately to laxly stellate-lepidote, sometimes glabrescent; internodes 1–10(–19)cm long. *Leaves* in 2–6-merous pseudowhorls at the distal 1–3 nodes; lamina 2.5–11 × 1–7cm, elliptic to broadly elliptic to obovate, coriaceous (sometimes thinly so), moderately and persistently stellate-lepidote abaxially, glabrescent adaxially (scales minute, sessile, marginal zone irregularly lobed or dented or subentire to entire, centre ± flat to prominulous); apex acuminate (often bluntly so) to obtuse, ultimate apex entire; base obtuse to attenuate; margin revolute (sometimes slightly so); midrib prominent abaxially, impressed adaxially; primary veins 4–7 on each side of the midrib, prominent to prominulous abaxially, impressed to prominulous adaxially; lower order venation obscure; petiole 0.5–2cm. *Umbels* 2–7-flowered. *Pedicel* 1.8–3.5cm, subpendulous in flower, erect to suberect in fruit, moderately stellate-lepidote (subdensely stellate-lepidote distally), usually pubescent. *Calyx* wanting, rarely to 5mm and 5-lobed. *Corolla* 3.5–5cm long, straight, funnel-shaped, with limb ± at 90° to tube, red to reddish pink, moderately stellate-lepidote and sparsely pubescent outside, pubescent on tube inside; tube 6–10mm wide proximally, widening to 12–20mm at the throat; lobes 12–20mm long, suberect to spreading, very broadly obovate to subcircular, emarginate. *Stamens* 10, alternately long and short, not or only slightly exserted, presenting the anthers around the throat (± in a circle, absent or rarely present in the upper part of the throat); filaments pubescent, the longer 23–30mm, the shorter 21–28mm; anthers 3mm long, very dark red, suboblong. *Disk* scarcely or slightly prominent, pubescent. *Ovary* 3–6mm long, subcylindric to subellipsoid, tapering to the style, densely stellate-lepidote and densely pubescent; style stellate-lepidote and pubescent in the proximal c.2/3 to 3/4, equalling or slightly exceeding the level of the anthers, lying in lower part of the corolla tube, at maturity 14–23mm long; stigma capitate. *Capsule* subcylindric to narrowly ellipsoid, 1.5–3cm long. *Seeds* narrow, 3–4mm long, tailed at each end.

Illustration. Craven & Withers, Edinb. J. Bot. 53: 32, fig. 2 (1996), as *R. lochiae*.

Distribution. *Rhododendron viriosum* occurs in four main regions: Mt Finnigan, Thornton Peak, Mount Windsor Tableland, and Main Coast Range. In the last two it has been collected from several locations in each but the degree of geographic discontinuity is not known. The distribution is given in fig. 2 in Craven & Withers (1996) under the name *R. lochiae*.

Habitat. Recorded as a lithophytic, epiphytic or terrestrial shrub in rainforest, in low *Borya* herbfield on boulder outcrop, in moss forest, in windswept mossy thickets amongst bare rock exposures, and in simple notophyll vineforest with *Agathis* emergents on granite soils. Altitude 910–1330m.

Additional specimens examined. QUEENSLAND. Mt Finnigan [all from summit region], 21 ix 1948, *Brass* 20340 (BRI), 25 viii 1972, *Webb & Tracey* 10844 (CANB), 25 xii 1991, *McDonald*

s.n. (BRI). Thornton Peak [apparently all from summit region], 14 iii 1932, *Brass* 2284 (BRI), 12 xi 1973, *Hartley* 14036 (CANB), 12 xi 1973, *Stocker* 1087 (QRS), 1 x 1979, *Teese & Loyn* s.n. (BRI), 24 ix 1984, *Clarkson* 5559 (BRI), 26 ix 1984, *Clarkson* 5613 (BRI, QRS), 16 ix 1991, *Christophel* 91/106 (QRS). State Forest Reserve 144, Bower Bird Logging Area, 3 ii 1988, *Hyland* 13513 (QRS). Pinnacle Rock Track, 4.5km W of Karnak, 22 vi 1992, *Forster, Sankowsky & Tucker* 10717 (BRI). Roots Creek, 5 ii 1933, *Carr* 11/340 (QRS), 5 i 1936, *Robbins* 1252 (QRS); Upper Roots Creek, 12km WSW of Mossman, 1 i 1989, *Baird* 1748 (BRI). Mt Spurgeon, ii 1923, *Merrotsy* s.n. (BRI), 12 viii 1971, *Stocker* 772 (QRS). Platypus Creek at head of Mossman River, ix 1972, *Tracey* 14896 (BRI); head of Mossman River, 11 i 1935, *McLean* s.n. (BRI). Mt Lewis road, 28km from Mt Molloy–Mossman road, 31 i 1981, *Jessup & Clarkson* 279 (BRI, CANB). State Forest Reserve 143, Riflemead, North Mary Logging Area, 2 ii 1977, *Dockrill* 1363 (QRS), 21 x 1991, *Gray* 5341 (QRS). Several collections made from cultivated materials have been seen; these are not listed here.

The type collection was made from asexually propagated plants derived from wild-collected material. The specific epithet is derived from the Latin, *viriosus*, robust, strong, in recognition of its qualities when used in hybridization programmes. Typically, the F_1 progeny have reddish to rose-pink corollas, its floral pigment genes apparently always being dominant, and demonstrate good vigour.

Key to the Australian species of Rhododendron

Corolla tube straight; filaments pubescent; anthers dark red, presented around the throat with most being in the lower half; style lying in lower part of corolla tube ——— **R. viriosum**

Corolla tube curved; filaments glabrous; anthers yellowish, presented in a cluster at the top of the throat; style in upper part of corolla tube ——— **R. lochiae**

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