



# VIREYA VINE

ISSUE #89, February 2010



PUBLISHED BY THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE RHODODENDRON SPECIES FOUNDATION  
R.S.F. PO BOX 3798, FEDERAL WAY, WA. 98063  
*E. White Smith, Editor*

From Nancy Waterhouse  
Dear Vireya Vine,

September 2009

Everyone growing vireyas seems to have different situations. In that spirit I offer what, over time, has proven to work best for me in my situation. I live in Vermont and have grown a handful of vireyas at one time for about 8 years. My small sunroom/greenhouse was built with that 'low E' glass which cuts down some of the ultraviolet--not ideal for getting lots of blooms in most cases. However, the vireyas seem to do well with it and I don't need to be worried about too much sun burning them.

I find for me the best planting medium is a product made by a company called Tindara (website of same name.) They make a premium orchid mix called Potting Up which has smallish coconut husk pieces and other ingredients for a quick draining medium. I also pot my vireyas in peat pots--the size that is 7" deep and 8" wide. I pot only 5" deep, so a high rim on the pot. These pots I hang with plastic rim-clip hangars. Because my dry vireyas are really light it is easy to know when they are ready for more water, hence overwatering is not a problem. In summer I put them outside....this summer was very rainy and I a few times I brought them back in just so they would not get too drenched...but in general they withstood the frequent rain just fine, thanks to the excellent medium. I highly recommend it and use it on my Phalenopsis orchids with great results there too. I particularly like that this medium does NOT break down quickly into a medium that no longer is quick draining.

One of my vireyas is actually 3 plants, Littlest Angel, together in a very large shallow hanging pot and this was a bit of an experiment, but they do fine together. Some of my plants have dropped lower leaves or getting looking scrawny and I have found they take well to fairly aggressive pruning to get them more branched. Because of my space and personal preference, I am trying for vireyas that are wide and full as opposed to lanky and tall.

A friend once told me that with Clivia flowers, when the blooms drop you can save those blooms and put them in a small shallow vase and they will stay fresh looking for several days, even a week, longer. I tried that with my vireya blooms that end up on the sunroom floor and it works well for these too. So if every bloom is precious at your site, gather those fallen beauties and put them in a little vase for more enjoyment. Mine delight me by my kitchen sink window.

Nancy Waterhouse

Putney, Vermont [<nancywat@sover.net>](mailto:nancywat@sover.net)

From Lyn Craven

Canberra, Australia

Dear VV,

October 2009

Reading the Brian Oldham's notes on vireyas in Auckland, New Zealand in the last VV made me very envious. A winter air temperature of positive 1 or 2°C would be a delight for me. Here in Canberra, Australia (inland, altitude about 600 m, latitude about 35 20S) we had an air temperature of about negative 5°C this year (and we have had it down to about negative 12 or 13°C from memory). My vireyas are in a greenhouse, with a single 3 Kw heater set to come on at about positive 2°C; the heater is to stir up the air as much as anything so as to minimize the chances of "cold spots". To seriously heat the structure, I think I would need about 4 of these heaters but as the objective is just to prevent frost injury I have only the one.

In the greenhouse, about 8 by 5 m, I used to have about 400 plants with about 110 species represented. My major interest is in species but I did have about 10 plants of different hybrids. Some of the plants were quite tall, and none was bushy due to the competition for light. The smaller species were easy to accommodate as they were in small pots tucked in between the larger ones, or on a bench dedicated to the "smalls". When plants got a little too large, I would work through, pruning judiciously to maintain the plant's shape but reduce its height. And I was continuously growing small plants to replace the big ones when they finally outgrew their allotted volume.

Due to ill-health, I have decided to significantly reduce my collection. This was a little sad for me as many of my plants I associate with particular people. For instance, I gave John Rouse the only plant of *R. leucogigas* 'Hunstein's Secret' that was in cultivation when I moved to Canberra but he subsequently took a cutting from that plant, which he rooted and gave to me; I guess I had had this plant for about 32 years or so. This was one of the plants that I disposed of, and my son and I drove it and a station wagon load of other vireyas to Melbourne a couple of years ago to give to others. Fittingly, the large 'Hunstein's Secret' and several other species rare in cultivation in Australia were given to Andrew Rouse, one of John's sons, who now has a collection equaling his father's in diversity.

My wife and I took another load of plants to Melbourne (a 600 km trip from Canberra) a month ago, and a trailer load was taken to the town dump by my neighbor as these plants had no particular merit and were not worth a trip to Melbourne. (I should explain that having greenhouses to indulge in one's plant hobby is a rare thing in Canberra. Power-boats, sitting in the driveway ready for their once-a-year wetting, are much more common).

Now, I can see the floor in the greenhouse, and this spring I will feed the plants up and pot on those that I am especially interested in to encourage some growth from lower down. Plants currently flowering (on 30 August in the S hemisphere) include *loranthiflorum* (this from material collected by me on Bougainville Island in 1964, my first vireya seen and collected), *wrightianum* (2 forms: bright red and black-red), *macgregoriae*, *williamsii*, *rarum*, *himantodes*, *pauciflorum*, *warianum*, *quadrasiannum*, *celebicum*, *leptanthum*, *jasminiflorum*.

Lyn Craven

E-mail at [lyn.craven@csiro.au](mailto:lyn.craven@csiro.au)

From Andrew Brooker

Pukeiti, New Zealand

Dear Vireya Vine,

August 2009

Vireya cultivation at Pukeiti has been ongoing since 1975 and the extent of our collection is now fully documented in our plant data base with 160 accessions. During this time there have been many changes for our collection as it continues to outgrow the area in which it is housed. When you think back to the humble beginnings where the cherished we had were locked away in a medium sized glasshouse, and compare that to the large open structures we now have – the collection sprawls through 400+ square meters of covered gardens, Pukeiti has come a long way.

Since taking on the Curators role in this great garden, I have been looking at the Vireya collection, and in particular the large species material we hold in storage. We were very fortunate to be given a large selection of Vireya species by Richard Curry in Auckland, NZ.

As part of our collection, it is very important that we not only grow and display as comprehensive a range of species as we possibly can. We continue to hold in reserve a quantity of all parts as a backup for ourselves and for others interested in Vireyas to purchase.

During the review of the collection, the Vireya hybrids have been looked at carefully. It has been decided that these will form the colorful background for the species collection, providing their great bursts of colour for the general visitor. Then when space is needed for new species material the hybrids will be pushed back farther. WE have found that our weather is mild enough for the hybrids to survive on the outer extremities of the covered areas.

Andrew Brooker

Curator, Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust Inc.

E-mail [andrew@pukeiti.org.nz](mailto:andrew@pukeiti.org.nz)

From Simon Begg

Dear Vireya Vine

October 2009

At one time you received many letters from Australia. 50 years ago Australia was, mostly, the very first stop a new Vireya species made after it was dug up, cut or its seed collected in its place of origin. This was often the case when the collector was not even from Australia. John Rouse, Don Stanton, Ralph Sangster, Tom Lelliott, Graham Snell, Clyde Smith, Bob Withers, Lyn Craven, Brian Clancy, Jack O'Shannassy and other Australian Rhododendron Society members whose names presently escape me, not only grew on and distributed the species but produced hybrids of lasting value. Lyn, Jack and Brian are the only ones of this group still alive with Lyn the only one both active and in communication with the Society.

New members have joined and gained expertise but not in the numbers of the past. The most notable new expert is Andrew Rouse, son of John.

I believe Andrew has, now, the most complete Vireya species collection in Australia.

Others include Barry Davidson, Murray McAllister, Bill Taylor, Neil Puddey, Lesley Eaton, and, in respect of hybrids, Kaye Hagan. There are certainly far fewer, if any, current primary species collectors from Australia. These days, and for many years past, most new species have gone elsewhere first before arriving in Australia. New Zealand, Scotland the USA and, latterly, France have provided the primary collectors. In very recent times Australian and New Zealand quarantine restrictions have inhibited both primary and secondary collection of species and all but abolished import of hybrids.

Victoria, the Australian State where I live, went through very dark days before I became an active Society member in the late 1990s. Many of the species that were once in Australia could not, with certainty, be located - certainly not at National Rhododendron Garden, Olinda that was once their Australian home. Murray McAllister with the help of Bill Taylor set out to reestablish and, if possible, grow, the Victorian Society and NRG collections. They obtained many species from Lyn Craven in Canberra and from Andrew Rouse. Murray and Bill went to New Zealand in 2003 and collected cuttings from many New Zealand collections. I think this was the last time Vireya cuttings, rather than vireya species seed, were imported into Australia. Subsequently, before the full force of new import restrictions came into effect, a number of species were imported as seed, some from New Zealand, much from Edinburgh and some from RHS, the Species Foundation and elsewhere. Australia's (and New Zealand's) import barriers now work on the basis that plant material sought to be imported must, specifically, be permitted on a "permitted" list - otherwise it is prohibited without a permit. Previously material was permitted unless specifically prohibited. Sudden Oak death (Phytophthora) changed everything. The initial Vireya permitted list contained only a handful of species. After representations by Bill Taylor this permitted list was expanded to include all species his research showed already to be in Australia. To get a permit for a new species (a species not on this expanded list) it was necessary to prove to Australian Quarantine Inspection Service [AQIS] satisfaction that the species was already in Australia or, far more difficult, to prove to Biosecurity Australia (a different Government body) that the species' weed potential scored below a certain figure on a weediness scale. If it scored above that it was either prohibited outright or prohibited "pending further, detailed, examination".

One trial species was selected and a permit sought for its importation. This evoked the "further detailed examination" response. An impasse, since no Society member had the resources, or knowledge to make a meaningful detailed weediness submission to get a positive response as a "detailed examination". But all knew that getting Vireya species to grow was a major achievement and, intuitively, that their weed potential was, really, zero.

My contribution to this embroglio was to treat the impasse just as I would an office problem in my ordinary work. First I listed all the known Vireya species not permitted. Straight out of Dr George Argent's book '*rhododendrons of subgenus vireya*'. I did the same for non Vireyas using Peter and Kenneth Cox '*The Encyclopedia of Rhododendron Species*'. Then I requisitioned members about the "Already in Australia" list for both Vireyas and non Vireyas and found a considerable number of species in both categories that should be, but were not, on the permitted list. I cross-referenced every species to an authoritative text. Sometimes more than one. I picked up typos in the permitted list.

Then I asked for Biosecurity help! I pointed out that one key element in “weediness” potential was comparison of the climate in the species’ place of origin with all Australia’s climates. This required a computer program (for which a very substantial license fee had to be paid) and, importantly, the skills to run it. I said, as was certainly true, that I lacked the requisite skills. I hinted at a lack of resources. Could Biosecurity do this for me? I produced emails showing relevant experts did not believe rhodendrons had weed potential save for certain hybrids of *R ponticum*. The Biosecurity response? All the “Already in Australia” species on my new list would, on a next reprint of the database [ICON] be added to the permitted list. Would I prioritize which species needing weediness assessment I wished dealt with first? I did. Initially I worked on common source, thinking that would make the climate program work better. I picked a specific part of Indonesian New Guinea, knowing George Argent was going there, and a list of Vireya species George hoped to collect. In short order; a winner. Then I picked the Edinburgh Vireya species not already in Australia thinking they were the most possible to get seed from. More wins, but by now the process slowed down from sheer volume. And, importantly, my having other commitments as well as Biosecurity having other important work. I am reminded to go back to the task before I and Biosecurity forget where we were.

However the task proves not to be impossible. It is persistence that is required. I hope it is translatable to New Zealand. There, I understand, *R ponticum* and the species that produce the weedy hybrids with it have been prohibited, notwithstanding, I assume, they are all in New Zealand. That has not happened in Australia. I look forward to discussions in New Zealand at their Auckland conference in November 2009.

As I walked around Marcia’s and my garden today, in beautiful sunshine, I thought of all the cottage plants Marcia has lawfully imported over the years from RHS. Many, placed in our soil and conditions, think paradise has come and spread as if to colonise the Earth. We do pull a lot of these out! I have yet to meet a Vireya that does more than provide a layered clone or two. None, yet, has germinated from seed without my seeking it.

The photo is *R christi*. A few flowers coming.

Simon Begg

From Clarice Clark

Dear Vireya Vine,

Puyallup, Washington State

October 2009

### **Internet Search Tips**

I had a plant of ‘Taylora’ bloom for me this month and while I recognized *R. jasminiflorum* in the flower shape, I wondered what else was in the parentage to produce this flower and how far “away” the jasminiflorum was. Second generation cross – or farther back? I knew it was an old hybrid, but how many species went into the production?

So I set about to research the cross. Naturally, I first went to the fabulous

<http://www.vireya.net/> website and found the registry entry in the hybrid gallery that credits Veitch & sons with a cross between ‘Princess Alexandra’ and *javanicum (brookeanum) ssp gracile*.

So, now I need to know what went into ‘Princess Alexandra’, so I search the gallery and find that ‘Princess Alexandra’ is a cross between *R. jasminiflorum* and ‘Princess Royal’. Next, a search for ‘Princess Royal’ – gasp! – turns out a dead end!

Having a crushing need to know, I turn to the internet and turn up a link to an article written by our editor 35 years ago: <http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JARS/v28n3/v28n3-smithjr.htm> with the answer to my search: ‘Princess Royal’ was the original inter-species cross: *R. javanicum* x *R. jasminiflorum*. So there are really only two species involved, which is why the resemblance to *R. jasminiflorum*. But it is such a pity that the fragrance seems to be lost – I don’t detect any.

I wanted to bring the links to the ARS Journal and its predecessor to the attention of the readers out there who may not be familiar with what is available when doing Vireya research. If you go to <http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/ej-search.html> to look for articles – be aware that neither the Journal of the American Rhododendron Society (JARS) or its predecessor – the Quarterly Bulletin of the ARS is listed on the drop down list of the searchable Ejournals – fear not – the Quarterly Bulletin of the ARS is there! But they refer to it as JARS – so if you go to: <http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JARS/> - You will get to the archives for the issues starting in 1950 up until fall of 1981 that are searchable and printable. If you visit the ARS site, <http://www.rhododendron.org/jars.htm> there is a link to the electronic archive of early issues as well as a search form for the contents of issues from 1991 to 2004: [http://www.rhododendron.org/JARS\\_search.htm](http://www.rhododendron.org/JARS_search.htm) This will bring you to an index, (which can be saved as a PDF), but not the actual articles. You will have to search down the printed publication. If you are searching for articles between 1981 and 1990, there is a printed index that was included in the fall 1991 issue of the Journal. It is available by ordering from the ARS - look inside the back cover of the Journal for the publication List and the address for ordering. (I was unable to find a link to publications on the ARS website)

The ARS office or the Rhododendron Species Foundation Library may be sources for back copies of the Journal. Happy searching!

Clarice Clark, online at the Yahoo Vireya group. Puyallup, Washington [jbroadus@seanet.com](mailto:jbroadus@seanet.com)

From Charles Trommer

Ninole (Big Island) Hawaii

Dear VV,

June 2008

I have many Vireyas planted in the ground at our home and was looking for a good method of labeling them. The labeling method I had been using, exterior paint on rocks, did not stand the test of time. The paint peeled off the rocks; probably because I could not thoroughly clean the porous lava rock, which impaired adhesion.



A second negative was that it became a chore to hand paint a large number of varieties names that I have planted.

I am now experimenting with Botanical Garden quality plastic labels which cost \$1.45 each with 2 lines of engraved names on the label. The supplier will engrave any info you want on the labels. Stakes to mount them on are also a problem. Looks like that has been solved by using scrap floor tile cut into 4 inch x 12 inch strips and using epoxy cement to hold the labels on. I have a test sample in the garden which I'm keeping an eye on for at least a year before switching over. Thanks to White for doing a great job with the Vireya Vine.

Charles Trommer

PO Box 118, Ninole, Hawaii 96773

*A lot of Vireya Vine people have sent me their e-mail address and will get the Vine that way from now on. Also I have sent it by e-mail to some people who I already had their address. And really, if you want a printed/mailed copy just say so, because that's alright also.*

*How much does the Vireya Vine cost you? "\$10US forever or if I don't hear from you for 10 or so years", I will remove your name from the mailing list. Some people send in a contribution every year or so and if you send a letter to the Vine you get money credit. See the year date on your mailing label, that is the last time you sent money or a letter. Because sending the Vine out by e-mail will save a lot of money in the long run, I plan on still collecting your name and address info in my data base, and then if we get what I think is too much money in the fund I will allocate some to operation of the new Rutherford Conservatory at the Species Foundation. That should sound like a good deal for all of us Vireya Nuts.*

**[SOOOOO I still need your letters and I still need a lot more e-mail address.](#)**

**[Send e-mail address to info@bovees.com](mailto:info@bovees.com)**

**[If you want to send a contribution to the Vireya Vine please send it to the RSF address on the top of page #1. Be sure to mark your contribution for the Vireya Vine.](#)**

*Late last summer my friend Fran Rutherford passed away. Fran had helped with the Vireya Vine newsletter for over 28 years getting it printed and doing the mailing. Fran left in his will a very large sum of money to the Vireya endowment fund at the RSF (the largest gift the RSF has ever gotten). The interest from the fund will be used to help operate the new Rutherford Conservatory which will be a tropical house, full of Vireyas. Fran also left his property and house to the same fund. WoW, that really helps. Thanks Fran, RIP*

## **VIREYA NURSERIES**

The Bovees Nursery (Lucie Sorensen-Smith)  
1737 SW Coronado (E. White Smith)  
Portland, OR 97219 USA  
(503)-244-9341 or 1-800-435-9250  
E-mail [info@bovees.com](mailto:info@bovees.com) [www.bovees.com](http://www.bovees.com)  
Catalog on the internet (Mail Order)

Glendoick Gardens (Kenneth & Peter Cox)  
Glendoick, Perth Mail Order  
Scotland, UK PH2 7N [www.glendoick.com](http://www.glendoick.com)  
Phone Nursery 073 886 205

D. & P.J. Brown  
Vernon Road  
Te Puna, Tauranga E-mail [brownz@atrix.co.nz](mailto:brownz@atrix.co.nz)  
New Zealand Phone (07)552-4966  
[www.homepages.ihug.co.nz/~brownnz](http://www.homepages.ihug.co.nz/~brownnz)

Hendrik Van Oost Azaleatuin 09/386.05.97  
Lulstraat 3, 9770 Kruishoutem., Belgium  
Will root Vireya cuttings on request  
[www.azaleatuin.be](http://www.azaleatuin.be) e-mail at [info@azaleatuin.be](mailto:info@azaleatuin.be)

Vireya Valley Nursery  
Woori-Yallock Road  
Cockatoo, Victoria 3781  
Australia

Neil & Kathryn Puddey Nursery  
PO Box 126, Woolgoolga, NSW Mail Order  
Australia E-mail [npuddey@bigpond.net.au](mailto:npuddey@bigpond.net.au)  
[www.vireyaworldwide.net.au](http://www.vireyaworldwide.net.au)

White Cloud Nursery, Pete & Jane Adams,  
PO Box 1387 Phone 808-345-3345  
Pahoa, HI 96778 Mail order  
[www.whitecloudnursery.com](http://www.whitecloudnursery.com)

Rhododendron Species Foundation  
PO Box 3798 [www.rhodiegarden.org](http://www.rhodiegarden.org)  
Federal Way, WA 98063 USA  
(253)-838-4646 Mail Order  
E-mail [rsf@rhodygarden.org](mailto:rsf@rhodygarden.org)

Vireyas NZ Tim & Yuan Edgecombe  
PO Box 48 Waipapa  
15 McCaughan Road, Kerikeri New Zealand web site at [www.vireya.co.nz](http://www.vireya.co.nz)  
Phone 09 407 5020  
Mail Order NZ only E-mail [info@vireyas.co.nz](mailto:info@vireyas.co.nz)  
They have bought and are growing John Kenyon's plants in Kerikeri  
where they have established a wholesale tree and shrub nursery.

Vanderbyl Vireyas Vireya specialist and supplier  
Box 250  
Mullumbimby NSW 2482 Phone 0266 845385  
Australia E-mail [antonvanderbyl@gmail.com](mailto:antonvanderbyl@gmail.com)

Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust  
Carrington Rd. RD4  
New Plymouth E-mail [gardens@pukeiti.org.nz](mailto:gardens@pukeiti.org.nz)  
New Zealand web site at [www.pukeiti.org.nz](http://www.pukeiti.org.nz)

The Vireya Venue  
2 Clifford Street [www.vireyavenue.com](http://www.vireyavenue.com)  
Maleny, Queensland 4552  
Australia Phone (07)5494-2179

Pacific Island Nursery (Sherla Bertelmann & Richard Marques)  
P. O. Box 1953 E-mail [pacislenursery@interpac.net](mailto:pacislenursery@interpac.net)  
Keaau, HI 96749 (808)966-9225 Mail Order  
[www.pacificislandnursery.com](http://www.pacificislandnursery.com) They also handle the Vireya seed exchange. WorldWide.

Multiflora Enterprises William Skimina  
PO Box 556 Phone 760-723-8886  
Bonsall, CA 92003 [www.multifloraplants.com](http://www.multifloraplants.com) Mail Order

**VIREYA VINE**  
**RHODODENDRON SPECIES FOUNDATION**  
**P. O. BOX 3798**  
**FEDERAL WAY, WA 98063**