



*lochae x solitarium*

# The Vireya Venture.

THE VIREYA VENTURE

No. 2

JANUARY 1991

This issue of THE VIREYA VENTURE heralds the beginning of a New Year, 1991. I would like to wish all the Venturers a very happy, healthy and satisfying New Year, but most of all, as is uppermost in everyone's mind, wish for a year when human intelligence and reason can prevail to avoid the disaster of a war, which could involve and touch in some way or another, the whole of the human race.

Many thanks indeed to those Venturers who have contributed most interesting articles and letters to this issue. I am sure everyone will thoroughly enjoy the thought provoking and informative material in this issue. Thank you again.

Nevertheless, that does not mean that the rest of us should not be putting pen to paper with some of those ideas that you all have, and sharing them with other Venturers, so that this NEWS letter will be fulfilling its purpose in the most exhilarating way possible. For instance, we have been hearing from all States that the weather this Spring and Summer season seems to have been rather odd. How are YOUR Vireyas standing up to it? Has there been an increase in pests or fungus, or have they been thriving in adversity, hardy plants that they are? Have there been any new flowerings? (Come on Melbourne, start all our mouths watering!) There must have been lots going on in the Vireya world over the last few months. Tell us all about it! Anyway that's certainly enough from me, so on with the news, but please keep your letters, articles, comments, criticism and queries coming in to the Editor: Mrs. Wendy Snell, 7 Lawrence Place MS 16 Maleny, Queensland 4552.

## STOP PRESS NEWS

Our favourite Vireya *R. lochae* has been featured in 'Hort Notes' in Australian Horticulture, Dec. 1990 issue. Denise Whatley, a student at VCAH-Burnley, Victoria, has written an interesting description of the plant and how it is grown. Of particular interest is the small insert on 'Species Spelling' Phew! what a hornet's nest that has fallen headlong into! Comments, please! Especially in the light of Mr Brian Clancy's most interesting letter printed in this issue of T.V.V.

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Mrs Hari Withers of Donvale, Victoria, has forwarded a small article to T.V.V. which she found in TIME magazine, Sept. 17 1990 issue. It is a delightful account of Canon Norman Cruttwell's work in P.N.G. and, since his retirement eight years ago, his establishment of the park and botanical sanctuary at Mt. Gahavisuka, ten

kilometres north of Goroka. The Park is on 77 hectares and constantly visited by scientists from all over the world. He is aiming to build a small research centre with a laboratory, before he leaves P.N.G. in a year's time. The Park contains six species of bird of paradise, about 2000 species of orchid, 46 of them newly discovered, and 72 species of *Vireya* rhododendrons.

Canon Cruttwell has written widely and has been invited on frequent lecture tours in the U.S., Europe and Australia as an expert on orchids and *Vireyas*. P.N.G. recently published a series of four stamps which he designed, depicting four of these flowers. One was *R. cruttwelli*, another *R. christiana*, named after himself and his mother.

It is a most interesting account, we thank you Hari, for sending it to us.

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Two dates have been announced in the Victorian branch of the Australian Rhododendron Society's newsletter that would be of great interest to our enthusiastic Venturers, are as follows:-

Friday April 19th... 8pm at the Nunawading Horticultural Centre, Victoria-(general meeting of the branch) "History of the Introduction of *Vireyas* to Australia" by Dr Bob Withers, who has been actively involved in this field for over 30 years.

Saturday April 20th... following the above and in the same venue, between 2pm and 6pm, a *Vireya* Field Day, involving a display of Autumn flowering rhododendrons. It is expected that it will comprise mainly *Vireyas* and *Azaleas*, but all members of the genus may be shown.

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I would like to make a plea to all readers of T.V.V. and their friends to keep ears to the ground and eyes well open (in other words you have all suddenly been promoted to T.V.V. Reporters.) and please tell your rather isolated editor of any dates you pick up, which may be of interest to *Vireya* growers anywhere in Australia or overseas. Just a short note in the post with all the relevant details, please!

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Thank you very much Mr Brian Clancy, of Victoria, for a most timely exposé on *R. lochae*. Brian writes :

*R. lochia* - The correct nomenclature..

*R. lochae* was described originally by Baron Ferdinand von Mueller in the Victorian Naturalist, March 1887. As he had speculated 35 years earlier, this rhododendron was collected on the summit of Mt. Bellenden-Ker at an elevation of about 5000 ft. at the first ascent of Bellenden-Ker by Sayer and Davison.

Concluding the description, von Mueller wrote- "The dedication of the only Australian rhododendron to Lady Loch is in special recognition of the patronage given by her Ladyship to Victorian Horticulture and in particular to that very group of plant, the occurrence of which in the Australian vegetation is now only rendered known more than 80 years after the discovery of Mt. Bellenden-Ker."

The spelling of this species was corrected to *R. lochia* in The Rhododendron Handbook 1980 of the Royal Horticultural Society, London. This is the correct latin rendition of the plant named for the feminine gender. (The other corrections being *R. konorii* and *R. majus* - pronounced maius).

I am aware that *Vireya* growers in other countries look to Australians for the correct spelling of *R. lochia*. There is no doubt that this is the correct spelling but can we accept the referee's decision?

Brian Clancy, Bentleigh, Victoria.

I am sure the Venturers will be most interested in your views, Brian, and I am also sure we would be most delighted to share your unique knowledge about the beautiful *Vireya* hybrid 'Arthur's Choice'. Thank you in anticipation.

## BORNEO TOUR

RUTH FUNDER

We are very fortunate to have Mrs Ruth Funder's description of her trip to Borneo last September for our feature article. For those of us who were lucky enough to hear Dr George Argent's most erudite and enthusiastic lecture which he gave in Brisbane last October, Ruth's trip will only serve to whet the already growing appetite of those wanting to undertake such an adventure. Word is spreading that it would be wonderful if Dr Argent could lead a trip to the heart of this Vireya country in perhaps two year's time? Read on and start saving your pennies!

' On our recent tour through Sarawak and Sabah, there seem to me to have been six highlights which stood out from all the other interesting places and things we saw.....

The first pleasure was the trip to visit the Iban Longhouse on the Skrang River. After a five-hour bus ride from Kuching, on the most frightful road, we waded into the orange-brown waters of the Skrang River and sat six per native longboat - very aptly named, being thirty five feet long and only thirty inches wide. A native lad drove the boat with an outboard motor at the back and another lad steered with a pole at the front. We shot along this lovely wide, shallow river until we were halted by rocks or sandbars - then it was get out and push! The glorious jungle trees and palms, dripping with orchids and ferns overhung each bank and made a picture I will never forget.

The Iban people living in the Longhouses have now made very basic but adequate arrangements for visiting tourists. Our tour guide cum cook did wonderful things re meals - the fruit, rice, fish and chicken dishes he conjured up were banquet quality. We watched the Iban people perform their very slow cultural dances and were afterwards invited to join in. The women brought out into the open, common verandah of their Longhouse all their woven mats, carvings and other artefacts for us to buy. Quite accidentally one person left open the door of her family apartment (thirty families, comprising about 150 people live in each Longhouse). We were intrigued to see modern things inside - a TV set, easy chairs, foam mattresses, a sewing machine, wardrobes, cupboards etc. So, in spite of the dried heads of the old head hunting days hanging in their outside verandahs, inside their quarters they do have some modern comforts these days

The second highlight was the visit to the Bako National Park.

This also entailed a long bus trip from Kuching, followed by a very pleasant fast motor boat trip around the coast to the mangrove thickets at the Park. There were cabins for the tourists and lovely trees planted in the Park where the cheeky Macaque monkeys abounded. We climbed up on of the mountain trails with our backpacks full of water and food and eventually reached the flattened top - a wonderful sunny plateau covered with an Ericaceous type of vegetation. Jim Willis remarked that it reminded him of an Australian landscape - but joy of joys, there were pitcher plants just everywhere. Red, green and cream colours, large ones, small ones, climbing ones and ones looking like flat ground cover. We had two days to enjoy this interesting Park.

The next adventure was a visit from Kuching to Miri and on to see the Niah Caves. I can't really list this as one of the more enjoyable trips as it was quite a strange and weird experience. Although our cabins were made of the most beautifully polished timber, there was no water, no towels and the toilets were out of action. We had only two nights there and we survived. The track to the caves was through dense tall jungle trees, palms and ferns and we walked on a well-made wooden raised footpath. It took a good hour to get there with many flights of stairs up and down - but these were nothing compared with inside the caves where we had to navigate in the pitch black, using our torches to see if the next step went up or down. Within the caves were many natives, some collecting guano from the floors by torchlight and others climbing incredibly tall insecure-looking

bamboo poles to scrape the Swifts' nests off the roof of the cave. These men had a knife like scraper at the top of the pole with a torch tied underneath. The whole cave looked lit up by fireflies, more than a hundred feet up. What price 'Bird's Nest Soup' !

Standing out as a little one day gem was the trip to a small island, Pulau Sapi, just off the coast of Kota Kinabalu.

We explored the track up to the top of the tree clad island, seeing enormous Caryota palms, and then down to the shoreline where Jim Willis pointed out to us a large Cycad festooned with bunches of naked seeds. The rest of that wonderful day we swam, loafed on the beach and were treated to a barbecue feast, cooked by our able tour guides.

Then came a visit to Kinabalu National Park, - which for me was the real highlight of the tour, and I felt that anything after this would be an anti-climax. We had three full days here and were shown the Park's herbarium and the cultivated garden set out behind the administration buildings. We had several slide evenings and explored some of the country near the Park's headquarters. For our climb up Mt. Kinabalu we set off at 8am from our cabins at 5000 feet. The Powerhouse, where the bus dropped us off to start climbing was at 6000 feet and we climbed on a steep well-marked track of steps and stairs to 7500 feet. We lightened our backpacks by eating lunch and then down came the rain in buckets - so we decided to climb no further and splashed back to the Powerhouse.

Six of our group, including Jim Willis, were intrepid climbers and went on up to very near the top, slept in a hut there, to be awakened at 3am next morning to climb with ropes to the summit (13500 feet) to see the sun rise. I woke at 5.45 am and looked at the silhouette of the mountain and took pictures of the sunrise from the verandah of our cabin and thought of our friends way up on high. They took all day to descend and though a bit stiff and tired, soon recovered and were in fine form.

Botanically speaking, I had quite prepared myself for not seeing masses of Vireyas in flower, but I was lucky enough to see large thickets of R. stenophyllum plants with a few orange flowers and to recognise the foliage of R. rugosum and R. fallacinum, neither of which had flowers on those plants visible from the path. I managed to get photos of distant red flowers of several epiphytic Vireyas, probably R. fallacinum and R. crassifolium, and saw three different red flowers fallen on the track, which I thought could be R. fallacinum, R. crassifolium, and R. praetervisum (according to the pictures in George Argent's book). The high climbers saw and took pictures of R. lowii, R. ericoides and R. buxifolium. In the cultivated garden behind the restaurant most of the plants were labelled. The orchids, ferns and palms were well represented, but of the Vireyas I could find only seven examples and they were very sad straggly specimens. These were:

1. R. javanicum var. kinabaluense - with spent red flowers
2. R. retivenium - no flowers
3. R. crassifolium - with one truss
4. R. stenophyllum - with a few flowers
5. R. fallacinum - with no flowers
6. R. praetervisum - with no flowers
7. R. suavolens - with no flowers

Our tour leader, a fluent linguist, most kindly undertook to get the people in the bookshop to understand that I really did want a large number of 'Rhododendrons of Sabah' books to bring back for our Australian friends. He fixed the deal and I felt my mission was accomplished.

I was wrong in thinking that after Kinabalu anything would be an anticlimax, as

we thoroughly enjoyed the visit to the Orchid Research Centre at Temop. The Director, Tony Lamb, was one of the authors of the 'Rhododendrons of Sabah' book, and he kindly spent a very long time showing us his orchids, waterlilies, ginger plants, climbing vanilla bean and many other treasures in his garden. Then he took us across the road for a further eye-opening tour of the Agricultural Research Gardens. We saw and tasted fruits we had never heard of, and were truly amazed at the profusion and diversity of the specimens there, soon to be introduced to the commercial market.

All in all, it was a wonderful trip and our grateful thanks go to those Friends of the Botanical Gardens who organised it.

And many thanks, Ruth, for telling us of it.

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From Mr. and Mrs. Geoff Dryden, Wollongong, N.S.W.

' The New Zealand Rhododendron Association 45th Annual Conference, Oct. 23rd-26th. '

We enjoyed the Conference which was a good blend of garden tours and lectures. The meeting was held at Rotorua where the thermal activity made the venue all the more interesting.

The Conference opened with a flower show which demonstrated the diverse range of rhododendrons grown in the Rotorua area, from Loderis to Vireyas. The gardens varied from suburban gardens through to very large areas and ranged in age from new to well established. In all fourteen gardens were visited.

The smallest garden, owned by Mr. and Mrs. Childs, is an inspiration to all suburban gardeners. As well as rhododendrons and azaleas the garden featured camellias, species roses, acers and numerous perennials growing in harmony. Every corner of the property was filled with interesting plants, the overall effect was achieved by careful planning and what appeared to be a careful pruning programme.

One of the larger gardens owned by Mr. and Mrs. Miller is located in a rural setting. It has large plantings of rhododendrons with many secluded walks showing the enormous collection of rhododendrons to perfection. Like most other gardens, as well as rhododendrons, the garden featured bulbs, paeonies, roses, annuals and perennials, evergreen and deciduous trees. One of the highlights for us was magnolia 'Yellow Bird' in flower - a true yellow.

All the gardens visited were at the height of their Spring show and it was pleasant to share the gardens with fellow enthusiasts.

The general tone of the Conference was one of informality, however several interesting lectures were presented. Kenneth Cox gave two talks accompanied by slides, entitled "Rhododendrons for Smaller Gardens" and "Hybridizing Rhododendrons".

The last day was an International Rhododendron Union mini-conference, which consisted of four lectures. The first lecture was presented by Graham Smith, Director of Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust, who read Dr. Herman Sleumer's lecture accompanied by the original slides. Although originally presented in 1976 the lecture was fascinating and just as relevant today.

The second lecture on "Exploration for Vireya Rhododendrons and the Search for Relationships", given by Dr. George Argent, Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, was the most detailed presented. His slides of such places as Mt. Kinabalu demonstrated the excitement of fieldwork as a balance to studies in the laboratory.

The third paper, presented by Michael Cullinane/entitled " Vireya Rhododendrons in New Zealand , Past, Present and Future. He was a very enthusiastic lecturer who encouraged the planting of Vireya rhododendrons in New Zealand.

The fourth and final lecture was given by Mark Jury and entitled " The Maddenis, Good Garden Plants for the Warm Climate". He started his lecture with a series of slides on Vireya hybrids currently trialled or released by his family. It shows how popular this species is becoming in New Zealand. He then moved to Maddenis and their hybrids with excellent slides and information.

In conclusion the Conference timing was perfect with the gardens at their peak. Rotorua's notorious rain held off for the Conference, making it a total success.

Thank you both, indeed - I'm a little jealous, of course!

## THE NAMING OF VIREYA HYBRIDS

Dr Bob Withers

The first issue of The Vireya Venture was an excellent publication full of information for those enthusiasts interested in this group of Rhododendrons. The Editor is to be congratulated.

Following the publication of issue No.1, I was asked to write a short article clarifying a few principles governing the naming and subsequent registration of new Vireya hybrids. The correct naming of plants in cultivation is governed by the International Code of Nomenclature of Cultivated Plants which is published by the International Association for Plant Taxonomy, Utrecht, Netherlands. It is revised and updated from time to time.

A number of terms used in the code should initially be defined:

1. A clone is a genetically uniform assemblage of individuals derived originally from a single individual by asexual propagation, e.g. by cuttings or grafts. In other words it is the progeny produced from one seed.
2. Cultivar is a term meaning cultivated variety being a combination of both words. It is used in the same sense as the word variety. The concept of cultivar is essentially different from the concept of botanical variety, which is expressed as *varietas*, a category below that of species. The names of botanical varieties (*varietas*) are always in Latin form and governed by the Botanical Code of Nomenclature.
3. A species is a collection of individuals with similar characteristics found growing in the wild. Allowing for slight variation they breed true from seed.
4. A hybrid is a cross between two species.
5. A grex is the product of one seed capsule.

Cultivars are named in a number of ways:

1. A species is named according to the Botanical Code of Nomenclature and consists of the generic name e.g. *Rhododendron* followed by the species name e.g. *laetum*.
2. A cross between two species may be named according to a formula consisting of the botanical names of the parents connected by the multiplication sign (x) e.g. *R.laetum* x *R.phaeocephalum*. The seed parent or female parent is written firstly and the pollen parent or male parent is written secondly. Frequently the progeny from an initial interspecific hybrid cross or primary cross is similar, but shows considerable variation in the second generation.
3. From a primary cross or from a grex or from a cross between two hybrids, cultivars may be selected which are superior to the other cultivars or different. These may be given cultivar names and submitted to the registrar for registration. As an example, from the hybrid cross *R.laetum* x *R.phaeocephalum*, one clone and one only was selected and named *R.'Sweet Wendy'* and later registered by Graham Snell. No other clone from the cross *R.laetum* x *R.phaeocephalum* other than the clone registered as *R.'Sweet Wendy'* may legally be given the same name and distributed under the same name. However other hybrid clones bred from the same parents which are different and worthy of introduction into cultivation may be named and registered. I have recently seen a hybrid which is a cross between *R.'Sweet Wendy'* and *R.laetum* which may prove to be superior to *R.'Sweet Wendy'* and this is being further evaluated. A second example is another cross I made a number of years ago, *R.christianae* x *R.aequabile*. The best seedling was selected and named *R.'Robert Withers'* and registered by Graham Snell. The other seedlings were inferior, but have their use, as they have proved excellent understocks for grafting.

In conclusion, it cannot be stressed too strongly that a sister seedling to a named cultivar must not be given the same name and also that a seedling bred from a named cultivar must not be given the same name.

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We are very lucky indeed to have Dr. Bob Withers write such a comprehensive article on this rather complicated subject and, it is to be hoped, that this will clarify a great many grey areas for T.V.V. readers (as well as others). However, if it does give rise to further questions in your minds, please ask about them.

Many thanks indeed, Bob, for all your time and work in putting this article together for us.

TABLE 1 continued

NAME	PARENTAGE
Pindi Peach	laetum x phaeopeplum
Pindi Pearl	laetum x phaeopeplum
Pink Delight	unknown 19th Century hybrid
Pink Feathers	Dr Herman Sleumer x herzogii
Pink pazazz	konori x zoelleri
Pink Seedling	unknown 19th Century hybrid
Popcorn	macgregoriae x loranthiflorum
Princess Alexandra	Jasminiflorum x Princess Royal (jasminiflorum x javanicum)
Ravalac	zoelleri x konori
Red Prince	unknown 19th Century hybrid
Red Rooster	zoelleri x (lochae x javanicum)
Robert Bates	(zoelleri x lochae) x konori
Robert Withers	christianae x aequible
Rob's Favourite	lochae x macgregoriae
Rogue Red	saxafragoides x womersleyi(a natural hybrid)
Rosie Chimes	macgregoriae x gracilentum
Ruby Bells	(konori x laetum) x commonae
Saint Valentine	lochae x gracilentum
San Gabriel	(macgregoriae x aurigeranum) x Dr Herman Sleumer
Scarlet Beauty	laetum x Triumphans
Shantung Rose	(phaeopeplum x lochae) x (leucogigas x laetum)
Shasta	konori x (Pink Delight x jasminiflorum)
Simbu Sunset	laetum x zoelleri
Sir George Holford	javanicum x unknown
Souvenir de J.H.Mangles	[brookeanum x (jasminiflorum x javanicum)] x javanicum
Stanton's Glory	christianae x aurigeranum
Star Posy	jasminiflorum x unknown
Sunset Fantasy	(laetum x zoelleri) x (zoelleri x leucogigas)
Sunny	christianae x macgregoriae
Sweet Beatrice	rubineiflorum
Sweet Cherubim	loranthiflorum x christianae
Sweet Mac	inconspicuum x macgregoriae
Sweet Rosalea	konori x christianae
Sweet Seraphim	loranthiflorum x christianae
Taylori	brookeanum x Princess Alexandra
Tashbaan	(Sir George Holford x leucogigas) x aurigeranum
Terebinthia	Dr Herman Sleumer x Pink Delight
Thomas Becket	[(zoelleri x lochae) x zoelleri] x [aurigeranum x zoelleri]
Triumphans	Duchess of Edinburgh x javanicum
Tropic Fanfare	javanicum x lochae
Tropic Glow	laetum x zoelleri
Tropic Summer	aurigeranum x macgregoriae
Tropic Tango	Princess Alexandra x laetum
Vladimir Bukovsky	laetum x Souvenir de J.H.Mangles
Wattle Bird	laetum x aurigeranum
Wentworth	konori x lochae
Weston Glow	(javanicum x lochae) x laetum

TABLE 11

AURIGERANUM x	
christianae grandiflora	Stanton's Glory
Dr.Herman Sleumer	Nan Cutten
konori	Buttermilk
laetum	Gilded Sunrise
laetum	Wattle Bird
lochae	Liberty Bar
lochae	Penrose
macgregoriae	Flamenco Dancer
macgregoriae	Leonore Francis
macgregoriae	Bulolo Gold
macgregoriae	Tropic Summer
phaeopeplum	Angita Gita
Pink Seedling	Penrice
Sir George Holdford x leucogigas	Tashbaan
AURIGERANUM X LOCHAE x	
retusum	Clarion Firm
AURIGERANUM X ZOELLERI x	
(zoelleri x lochae) x zoelleri	Thomas Becket
AURIGERANUM X DR.HERMAN SLEUMER x	
konori	Lazarus
AEQUABILE x	
christianae	Robert Withers
BROOKEANUM. x	
Princess Alexandra	Taylori
CARILLON BELLS x	
gracilentum	Janelle Marie
CHRISTIANAE x	
aequabile	Robert Withers
aurigeranum	Stanton's Glory
dielsianum	Minnie Mouse
jasminiflorum	Pendance
konori	Sweet Rosalea
laetum	Clare Rouse
lochae (F2)	Arthur's Choice
loranthiflorum	Sweet Cherubim
loranthiflorum	Sweet Seraphim
macgregoriae	Sunny
CLORINDA x	
zoelleri	Cyprian
COMMONAE x	
(konori x laetum)	Ruby Bells
stenophyllum	Josephine Gordon
CROWN PRINCESS OF GERMANY x	
javanicum	Souvenir de J.H.Mangles