

# VIREYA VINE

ISSUE #75, MAY 2005

PUBLISHED BY THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE RHODODENDRON SPECIES FOUNDATION

R.S.F. PO BOX 3798, FEDERAL WAY, WA. 98063  
E. White Smith, Editor

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The next bunch are E-mail messages from the Internet.

On Apr 20, 2005, Bill Moyles in Oakland, California wrote:

I just learned today from a friend in San Francisco of the passing of Peter Sullivan. Peter, as you may know, was responsible for numerous outstanding Vireya hybrids and while at Strybing Arboretum was largely responsible for introducing Vireyas into cultivation on the West Coast.

Those days at Strybing in the late 60's and 70's were exciting times. His own collection at St John's Church in the Mission Street area carries on. And my own plants at the Lakeside park include many of Pete's, Cephas, Semper Fideles (his favorite), Lawrence, and Saint Agatha (and others) are there to see. My wife and I knew Pete for almost 40 years: we will miss him.

Bill,

Thank you for letting me know, even though the news is sad indeed. I never had the privilege of meeting him, but feel that I've known him for a long time. I have many of his hybrids in my collection and they will continue to remind me of this giant of the Vireya world. I only wish that it had been possible for me to tell him in person how much I admired him.

Mitch Mitchell Jr. , Hawaii

22 April 2005

As Mitch has done, I would have to add similar sentiments. Peter Sullivan was almost, one could say, a mentor to our chapter here. I know that some of the very first vireyas were sent to the conservatory back in Washington, D.C., and they were apparently the ones who sent some out to Strybing Arboretum where he began working with them in the 1960's. He befriended Carl Deul and Bill Moynier, founders of our chapter, it was in fact Peter Sullivan who introduced the two men to each other. Many of our plants, certainly the hybrids, came originally from plants he had given to Bill Moynier and encouraged Bill to experiment with them in our climate. I well remember the beautiful vireya garden which was planted there in Golden Gate Park near Strybing. The unfortunate freeze about 1990 ruined it. But his vireyas at his parish were protected enough to survive and even survived the construction which was undertaken at the parish later. Semper Fideles is in my garden. I will remember. George Klump, Southern California Chapter ARS

April 24, 2005

I first met Peter Sullivan during a Rhododendron Society Convention in San Francisco (don't remember the year but Hadley Osborne was in charge of the California Chapter ARS at that time). I was with my father-in-law from Tacoma. Pete gave a few people a peek at some of the Vireyas growing at Strybing Arboretum, and he even gave a few cuttings away. Elwood Budil (my father-in-law) probably got down on his knees and begged Pete for a small plant. Lucie and I visited Pete and his church garden in SF a couple of times and Pete really wanted us to take all the cuttings we wanted because he knew we would propagate them and pass them on. He also gave us some of his special plants. E. White Smith and Lucie Sorensen-Smith

Here are some of the Vireya hybrids that Peter Sullivan was involved with (note that many were named by other people). This list might not be right but is the best I can do.

R. 30<sup>th</sup> of June Sullivan

R. Aleksandr Isayevich from Strybing and possibly a leucogigas hybrid

R. Anastasia from Strybing? not registered

R. Aravir Sullivan/Moynier

R. Athanasius Sullivan/Moynier

R. Belisar Sullivan/Moynier

R. Bernadette Sullivan

R. Calavar Sullivan/Moynier/Lelliott

R. Cephas Sullivan

R. Clare Elsie Sullivan a leucogigas hybrid

R. Cristo Rey Sullivan

R. Cyril Sullivan a leucogigas hybrid

R. Edith Stein Sullivan/Strybing

R. Elizabeth Ann Seton Sullivan a good doer

R. Emmanuel Sullivan/Moynier

R. Felinda Sullivan/Moynier

R. Harry Wu Sullivan a leucogigas hybrid

R. Kurt Herbert Adler Sullivan/Lelliott

R. Lenore Frances Sullivan/Moynier

R. Leon Bloy Sullivan/Lelliott

R. Little Maria Sullivan

R. Marshall Pierce Madison Sullivan/Moynier (“When You Want to Give The Very Best”)

R. Mount Ophir Sullivan/Moynier/Bovees

R. Nancy Miller Adler Strybing

R. San Gabriel Sullivan/Moynier/Lelliott

R. Saint Agatha Sullivan

R. Saint Cecilia Sullivan

R. Saint Gertrude Sullivan

R. Saint Lucia Sullivan

R. San Miguel Sullivan

R. Saint Valentine Lelliott / Sullivan?

R. Semper Fidelis Pete was in the Marines during WWII

R. Tashbaan Sullivan/Moynier

R. Terebinthia Sullivan/Moynier/Lelliott

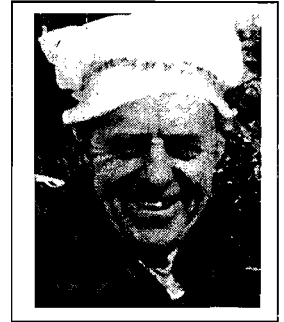
R. Vladimir Bukowsky Sullivan/Moynier/Lelliott

*And many more. Tom Lelliott was a early Vireya grower in Australia that Pete corresponded with. Rest in peace Pete, we will miss you. WoW that is really some list of Vireyas  
E. White Smith, Editor of the Vireya Vine*

*And yet another very early and important Vireya person, from New Zealand has left us.  
Taken from the newsletter of the Auckland Rhododendron Society.*

## OBITUARY - OSWALD (OS) BLUMHARDT

1995 - The weather was very inclement at the Gisborne National Camellia Show and Os improvised a hat from a plastic bag. He has his trademark impish grin and humorous comment.



Os Blumhardt died on Sunday, 25 July, 2004 at the age of 73. He is widely respected for the many plants which he introduced to New Zealand from his overseas trips and for his eclectic interest in a very wide range of plant genera: Camellias, Rhododendron especially Vireya, Lilies, Orchids, Michaelia, Magnolia and latterly Clivia, and the hybrids he produced. His passing leaves a gap in the NZ Horticultural scene that will be hard to fill.

Right from his earliest days at Pakaraka he showed an interest in plants. "As a child I was a terrible dreamer and my parents despaired of me ever doing anything useful. My education was a struggle as I was too easily distracted by other things." However, Os became an apprentice at Duncan and Davies in 1949 and hybridized Magnolias and lilies in his spare time. No named varieties resulted but he learned a lot from the lilies about breeding.

After leaving Duncan and Davies in 1954 he had his own nursery at Pakaraka, Bay of Islands but later moved to Whangarei. Several years of hybridizing using different genera were interspersed from the late 1970's by overseas trips following his various interests, extending his knowledge and bringing in new introductions.

Inspired by the Doak and Jury camellias he hybridized several which are still widely available. This led to the RNZIH presenting him with the Plant Raiser's Award in 1980, mainly for this work with camellias. In 1992 the NZ Philatelic Society selected *Sugar Dream* and *Night Rider* as the only two NZ raised camellias in a set of six stamps issued that pictured camellias. Other of his camellias are "Sleeping Beauty", "Red Crystal" and "Sugar Dream". He encouraged Jim Finlay in his creation of his scented varieties of camellia.

About this same time he was making magnolia crosses, most notable of which has been named "*Star Wars*" and now has world renown. He also produced michelia hybrids "Bubbles" and "Mixed-up Miss". The International Magnolia Society presented Os with its prestigious Todd Gresham Award in 2003.

His travels gathering new plant material took him on trips to Borneo, Thailand, Vietnam, Papua New Guinea, China and Japan. He would bring new material back to the nursery and begin experimenting with hybridising, propagating and distributing it.

Following the availability of a wider range of species vireya rhododendrons, Os hybridised with them. Among his notable vireya hybrids are "Rio Rita" ("Dr H. Sleumer x *R. leucogigas*), "Saxon Blush" ("Hot Tropic x *R. saxifragoides*) and "*Dawn Chorus*" ["*Tropic Glow* x (*R. lochia* x *R. macgregoriae*)]. He was well known in vireya circles for producing hybrids of the cold-tolerant species *R. saxifragoides*. One of his earlier hybrids is "Kisses" and its companion "Little Kisses" and a range of named but mostly unregistered vireyas of varying distribution.

His latest rhododendron-breeding programme aimed to breed trouble-free indumented elepidotes in bright, clear colours for the warm northern areas of NZ. Os was a keen advocate of hybridising with *R. simiarum* to obtain heat and disease tolerance. Right up until his death he continued to hybridise many different plants, with his recent interest turning to breeding deep red clivias.

Os contributed plants for the beautification of Whangarei and had become involved in conservation planting. He was generous of his time and knowledge and readily made plants available to other plants people.

He was a practising Christian who lived his beliefs. He died while at worship in his church. At his funeral one of the hymns was "O Dreamer" and this perhaps best sums up his contribution to the world, especially in so far as his dreams inspired his further interest in plants.

John Meyer  
President

From Erhard Moser  
Dear Vireya Vine,

April 2005  
Chemnitz, Germany

It is well-known that most Vireyas are occupants of tropical mountains and need much and constant light. The temperature too is nearly constant over the year in their nature locations. But if you grow Vireyas in the northern hemisphere during the winter season the cold climate and the low intensity of sunlight is much less convenient. What can you do to cultivate Vireyas under such conditions?

Today there is a lot of technical equipment available, additional lighting and heaters for example. But this is not even cheap and the energy costs are rising constantly in Germany. So how can you successfully cultivate Vireyas with low costs? With varying success I try to do this since 1975.

In general the most hybrids are relatively tolerant and do still grow and bloom if the conditions are less than optimal. However I am especially interested in the wild species. A lot of them – especially those which are from free alpine areas in the high mountains – obviously have a higher need of light. Under unfavorable conditions they neither show a typical growth nor do they bloom. Due to own experiences this happens for example with *Rh. buxifolium*, *Rh. ericoides*, *Rh. taxifolium* and other compact growing species with very small leaves. As a Vireya enthusiast you think about measurements to provide a well-balanced offer of light in cooperation with the other factors of growth.

My greenhouse is at the eastern side of the house and you can walk in from the cellar. The eastern position has advantages in the summer time. The morning sun does not heat the greenhouse too much. However there is a disadvantage in winter. The low position of the sun affords only a short sunny period of time in the morning. The glazing of the greenhouse has been made with double glass which results in a low loss of heat. Yet this too means that the snow from stronger snowfall is often on the greenhouse for days. In the summer seaweed gets between the panes. So in autumn the panes are cleaned at least inside and outside as far as they can be reached to make them more permeable to light. In winter young plants and especially the seedlings are put under the glass as close as possible or they get additional lighting. This guarantees a constant growth during the winter months too.

At sunny days from early May to the middle of September the greenhouse has to be shaded in the morning. Permanent shading is not good but without shading the plants get burnings on extremely sunny days. The plants are not sufficiently used to the sun, especially after the lack of light in winter. The shading has to be outside of the greenhouse. This reduces the heating of the panes and combined with that, a buildup of heat.



blooms around in our greenhouses. Selling some vireya rooted cuttings would be nice but the blooms are what we all live for aren't they? Who better to mentor and teach us than Lucie and White at Bovees? We do not strive to compete with them and laugh at the very idea we could even come close. However with their help (patience, lots of it) and blessings (we hope) we will have these wonderful plants for our enjoyment, oops to sell. In short, here we are joining the Vireya Vine to learn more about growing vireyas. Right now we have a few in bloom. What an exciting prospect for us and to have blooms year round, no wonder our seven cats never wander far. The cuttings we got from Bovees are doing well. We are excited about them blooming soon, we hope. If any of you are in the Portland area you should see Bovees to believe it is real.

Happy Vireya growing to all!  
Kathy and Vicki Phone 503-777-2048  
Van Veen Nursery  
PO Box 86424  
Portland Oregon 97286

*Comment from Lucie Sorensen-Smith; Honestly we do not solicit such a flattering paragraph! We feel very fortunate that people with such skills and enthusiasm are promoting Vireyas, and have already had a good response at their nursery from their very first listing. We also collaborate with Van Veen's on Vireya displays at 'Orchid and Vireya Rhododendron shows'. One thing nobody can buy is good friends.*

*O look at this. Have any of you Viners tried the Aspirin thing????? I have done it twice, but I wonder how a person knows if it did any good. And here is another thing. How many of you do foliar feeding of your plants. Does anyone use controlled release fertilizer? At Bovees we use only our "mostly organic" fertilizer that we mix up in a cement mixer. It is mostly canola and alfalfa meal, with iron chelate, some super phosphate, and a bit of potash and dolomite and other things. We also use a water soluble 20-20-20 a couple of times a year put on through a siphon system. What do you use?*

*Another thing we have found are some of the new higher efficiency fluorescent light units. The 4 foot ones use a 32 watt T8 light tube. The key to these new light units is the Electronic ballast. The light tubes are smaller around than the older ones. The 8 foot units are called "High Output" and the tubes are 110 Watt instead of 80 Watts. But they are much, much brighter. They are called T12. And then I was in a Home Depot the other day and found a person who did know something and he pointed at their ceiling lights and said they were T5 units. Boy are they bright and were probably up over 40 feet. I want some. And from a friend, Scott Ginther here in Portland, is a fact about "ant-seed-distribution". The technical name for it is "myrmecochory". It means "The condition of having seeds adapted for dispersal by ants". There are many plants that do this like cyclamens to get their seed planted. But not Rhododendrons. Darn. EWS*

See Chris Callard's wonderful Web site at [www.vireya.net](http://www.vireya.net)  
Get into this group and let's talk about Vireyas [www.groups.yahoo.com/group/vireya](http://www.groups.yahoo.com/group/vireya)

## 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)  
Catalogue is \$2.00 (Mail Order)

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

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

Mark Jury  
Tikorangi, RD 43 E-mail [jury@xtra.co.nz](mailto:jury@xtra.co.nz)  
Waitara, North Taranaki  
New Zealand

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

Neil & Kathryn Puddey Nursery  
PO Box 126, Woolgoolga, NSW  
Australia E-mail [puddey@bigpond.com](mailto:puddey@bigpond.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)

Christopher Fairweather  
The Garden Centre, High Street  
Beaulieu, Hampshire [www.vireya.co.uk](http://www.vireya.co.uk)  
England SO42 7YR E-mail [chrisfairweather@waitrose.com](mailto:chrisfairweather@waitrose.com)

Te Puna Cottage Gardens (John Kenyon)  
Te Puna Road, RD6 E-mail [TePuna.Cott.Gdns@xtra.co.nz](mailto:TePuna.Cott.Gdns@xtra.co.nz)  
Tauranga, New Zealand web site at [www.vireya.co.nz](http://www.vireya.co.nz)  
Mail Order NZ only Phone (07)552-5756

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

The Vireya Venue  
2 Clifford Street  
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  
[www.pacificislandnursery.com](http://www.pacificislandnursery.com)  
They also handle the Vireya seed exchange. World Wide.

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P. O. BOX 3798

FEDERAL WAY, WASHINGTON 98063 U. S. A.