

The Rhododendron

Official Journal of the Australian Rhododendron Society

2004

Volume 44

Maddenia series

See key, page 64
story, page 33



Photographs by
Alan Kepert



The *Rhododendron*

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The *Rhododendron*, the journal of the Australian Rhododendron Society Inc., is published annually by the Society. Material for publication in *The Rhododendron* is welcomed and contributors are requested to note that the closing date for each issue is August 1.

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The Australian Rhododendron Society Inc.

Aims

The Society's objective is to encourage interest in and disseminate information and knowledge about the genus *Rhododendron* and to provide a medium by which all persons interested in the genus may communicate and co-operate with others of similar interest

Membership

Membership of the Society is open to all persons interested in the objectives of the Society upon payment of the annual membership subscription. For further information contact Branch Secretaries or the National Secretary.

Subscriptions

Annual subscriptions cover the period 1 July to 30 June, and vary up to \$25 depending on the Branch selected. (Branches set their own level, out of which an amount is paid to the national Society). The annual journal *The Rhododendron* is included as a benefit of membership.

Overseas members annual subscription is A\$25, which includes affiliation with a nominated Australian Branch and *The Rhododendron* sent by airmail in the last quarter of the calendar year. Contact the ARS National Secretary. Overseas subscriptions may be paid by bank draft or cheque payable in Australian dollars. The Victorian Branch can accept Visa or Mastercard payments.

Contact details

Details of local Branches, along with Office Bearers of the Australian Rhododendron Society, are listed on page 63.

Editorial

BARRY STAGOLL
EDITORIAL COMMITTEE CHAIR

I noted in the 2003 volume of *The Rhododendron* that member feedback is valued as a check on whether the Journal is properly reflecting members' interests. It was pleasing that feedback that we did receive was generally positive. However, the more responses we get, the better placed we'll be in trying to meet your preferences.

We hope you enjoy reading this year's volume. On behalf of all our readers I sincerely thank those who have provided contributions.

We need you, too

Or, more pertinently, we need your contributions to *The Rhododendron*, too.

Everyone's an "expert" at some things, and when they share their expertise this can bring greater enjoyment and success to others' gardening efforts. I know that I've gained great benefit over the years from generous encouragement and sharing of information (not to mention plants) by a large cast of friends and acquaintances made within gardening circles. And one of the ways I've enjoyed these benefits is by reading what they have contributed to publications like *The Rhododendron*.

You needn't be shy about getting into print. Whenever I see or hear somebody who I think has something relevant to contribute which would be interesting in print, I try to encourage them to get thinking on doing something about it. And I'm always happy to give them whatever help I can to work up their ideas or turn notes into a publication version, if that's what they want. I know that the members of the Editorial Committee based in Victoria (Lesley Eaton), Hobart (Ken Gillanders), Emu Valley (Maurie Kupsch), and Adelaide (Allan Kerr Grant) would do likewise, as would our Editor Richard Francis. We're not necessarily talking about blockbuster articles. Brief articles can be very good value.

We'll be more than pleased if you come forward with an idea for a contribution. And just as ready to follow up if, instead, you suggest the name of another person you think might have interesting material to contribute, or suggest a subject that you'd like to see covered.

One area that we've been exploring for some fresh material which might prove interesting for publication is the story of the production of azalea hybrids in Australia. Over the years, many emerged to find success in the market – not all of them by any means having been submitted for inclusion on the

Rhododendron Register. If anyone has an interest in helping to chronicle this subject, let us know. Eric Jordan in NSW has been working up some notes and would welcome any help which might be available from members with some information or an enthusiasm for these plants to contribute.

There's always room to consider additional offers of pictorial material, too (preferably with at least enough explanation to use for an effective caption, if not a longer note to be published about them). We can't promise to publish them all in our limited space, but in addition to illustrations accompanying articles, we always try to publish some good images simply highlighting the marvellous variety in plants of the rhododendron genus and events within the Society. ❁

Treasurer's Report & Financial Statements

Those who would like a copy of these should contact the National Treasurer, Mr Peter Wiadrowski, or Branch secretaries.

JOIN THE RHODODENDRON, CAMELLIA AND MAGNOLIA GROUP of the ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY London

The Group offers the following benefits of membership:

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President's Report

LESLEY EATON

The year has slipped by all too quickly and once again it's time to take stock of what has been achieved by the Society and its Branches over the last twelve months.

From what I've read in the branch newsletters I've received, it appears that a good calendar of interesting topics was arranged, but an alarming issue was noted that meeting attendances have not been as good as anticipated, and with some activities even being cancelled through lack of interest and support. Also, the lack of commitment and interest has also become apparent, with the inability to find a new National Council secretary despite numerous pleas. Are there now too many outside pressures, or is it just an aging society?

So it seems it's becoming increasingly difficult belonging to a specialist society. This is proving to be especially so with shrubs like rhododendrons which are perceived to be plants with excessive water needs. Although it's true that we should all conserve this precious resource we don't need the constant bullying and the guilty feeling continually being foisted upon us by the media. To remove this guilt feeling we are continually being told only to grow those plants designated as water misers, and for rhododendron lovers this is becoming increasingly hard to bear.

We've got quite a battle on our hands! Whilst I can't deny that rhododendrons certainly do perform better with plentiful watering in the early stages of their development, it is also true to say that once they are established they can and do flower quite satisfactorily with only weekly good soakings. It may not be the easiest genus to grow well in many parts of Australia, but isn't that the challenge? I'd like to see maps of the states displayed, and when any of us goes touring and finds a rhododendron in what he/she thinks is a quite unlikely location, having it pin pointed. I'm sure we would all find the results fascinating. Who, for instance, would expect to find a fine stand of older rhododendrons growing in a courtyard at Mulwala, a very hot spot near the Murray River? Who has seen the large hedge of *R. ponticum* types at the camping ground at Buchan in East Gippsland? I have, and the plants were looking very happy and healthy when I saw them some years ago. So keep your eyes open and do remember to report what you see. The results could be quite illuminating.

The various pests and diseases which have sneaked into Australia, by either fair means or foul, are also playing havoc, and are adding to the rhododendron's fall in popularity. The time has come then for a concerted effort to develop new cultivars which will be resistant to the azalea lace bug and the fungal diseases, especially petal blight. These diseases deter so many potential new growers.

Now could be the time to give a research grant for some enterprising person to pursue this subject. Not only would the money be well spent, but it could just lead to younger people taking more than just a passing interest in the genus. We just have to try everything to stop the rhododendron from disappearing from the nursery trade.

During the year we were saddened to hear of the passing of three of our members. Frank Boulter, a loyal and generous member of that famous institution, Boulter's Nursery, and Ken Cathie, an enthusiastic devotee of the genus with a particular passion for the species, both from Victoria, and Peter de Bomford, a long time member of Emu Valley. Our sincere condolences go to the families of these people.

On a much happier note congratulations must go to Ken Gillanders of Southern Tasmania, for receiving the Order of Australia Medal for his contribution and services to horticulture and to his lovely wife, Lesley, for her Life Membership award of our society.

So what next? The aims of the society have not changed over the years, but perhaps our desire to achieve these aims has lagged. It is time to go out and push the attractiveness and virtues to potential members. We are conducting shows, displays, and workshops and are promoting ourselves on the world-wide-web. But is this enough? We are still waiting for the public to come to us, and I believe it should be the other way around. We must get out to the public and flaunt our flowers. Just look at the newer vireya cultivars which are now available. Whilst the vireyas won't be 'the saviour', as where they grow is still only a limited area, they are exciting with their vibrant colourings and knockout fragrance. If you grow them, try taking a bunch into your local bank, or somewhere similar, just for a display. Leave a flyer. You never know what might happen. What I'm trying to say is, we are coming on desperate times, so we must try desperate measures to ensure the society continues to grow.

I'm feeling quite sad at the present as my term of president of the Australian Rhododendron Society comes to an end, and with it, nearly twenty years serving on the National Council in one role or another. With a move to country Victoria, and the change in the Rules of Association, I'll now sink into the depths of oblivion. But I can assure you that the genus rhododendron will remain my first passion and I'll be extolling its virtues wherever I can. The wonderful members I've met over the years and the close friendships I've made have certainly made this a wonderful time. My only regret is that I have failed miserably in what I believe to be the most important issue of all, the acceptance of the National Body as a unifying link between rhododendron lovers Australia wide. Remember we are not little islands just thinking of our local issues, we are part of the big picture. ❀

AUSTRALIAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY INC.

Annual Report for the year 2003–2004

GRAEME EATON

The 2003 Annual General Meeting of the Australian Rhododendron Society was held on Saturday 17th October at the Burnie Civic Centre, Burnie, Tasmania during the Society's annual National Convention which was hosted by the Emu Valley Branch.

A meeting of the Society's Committee (National Council) was held on the previous evening at the Emu Valley Rhododendron Gardens.

The president Lesley Eaton chaired both meetings, and her report, delivered to the AGM, was published in *The Rhododendron 2003*.

At the AGM, Allan Kerr Grant and Mary Grant were awarded life membership of the society. The citation read out at the meeting appears elsewhere in this volume.

Also at the AGM an amendment to the Rules of Association, to remove the position of Immediate Past President from National Council, was passed by the required majority.

The AGM was advised of the following National Council membership to serve from the close of the AGM.

Officers

President	Lesley Eaton
Vice President	Barry Davidson
Secretary	Graeme Eaton
Treasurer	Peter Wiadrowski
Registrar	Ken Gillanders
Public Officer	John Schutz

Branch Delegates to National Council

Southern Tasmania	Shane Atkins
	Kay Hagan
Emu Valley	Neil Jordan
	Ivan Johnston
Victoria	Neil Webster
	John Quinn
South Australia	Peter Wiadrowski
	John Schutz

The Society's Financial Statements for the year ended 30th June 2003 were received and adopted. Copies of this report were available from the Branch secretaries and National Council treasurer.

National Council also held a further meeting by teleconference in April 2004. At this meeting Simon Begg replaced John Quinn as delegate for Victoria.

The secretary restated his desire to resign, but agreed to continue until the end of July to allow further time to obtain a replacement.

Unfortunately, as indicated in last year's report, the New South Wales Branch was unable to continue and has ceased membership of National Council.

The financial situation for the 2003/2004 financial year improved slightly, showing a projected surplus for the first time in three years (projected \$1091). This was due to the increased levy charge to Branches, cuts in administrative costs, as well as a significant reduction in the cost of producing the Journal.

National Council will hold its next meeting at Olinda, Victoria during the October 2004 National Convention hosted by the Victorian Branch.

The Annual General Meeting of the Society for 2004 will be held during the dinner at the Knox Club, Wantirna on Saturday evening, October 16, during the Convention. (Members have received formal notice of meeting, and their personal invitation to the Convention, through their Branches.) ❀



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Life memberships

Citation for the Award of Life Member to Allan Kerr Grant AO, MBBS, DUNIV Adel. FRACP, FRCO, FRACPE, FACP (Hon) MD Flin. and Mary Grant M.Sc. Adel. Bot.

Allan has been a member of the SA Branch of the Australian Rhododendron Society since 1988. During his membership, Allan was either Vice President or President of the SA Branch from 1993 to 1996. He then became National Vice President of the Society from 1998 to 2000 and National President from then to 2002.

At Branch level, Allan has given numerous addresses to the monthly meetings covering topics such as “Small Rhododendrons” “Scented Rhododendrons” and “Deciduous Azaleas”. He has given illustrated talks on garden visits after trips to New Zealand (vireyas), Kew Gardens, Exbury, Wisley and Glendoick.

Allan has attended many national and international meetings of rhododendron enthusiasts in Germany and England, from which he has obtained outstanding knowledge of growing and propagating rhododendrons, including knowledge of cell propagation which he has obtained from his U.S. counterparts.

He has contributed to the National Journal including “Tolerant & Tough Vireyas” in the 2002 Journal and also instigated the National Journal Sub Committee of which he is still a member.

During his time as SA Branch President he introduced the style of husband and partner joint membership and commenced the monthly plant raffle which is of great enjoyment at all meetings. This goes hand in hand with Allan’s desire that meetings and social contact by members must, above all, be enjoyable.

Allan also had a valuable involvement with the American Rhododendron Society and arranged for Seed Exchange with the American Society. With the assistance of the Mt. Lofty Botanic Garden, this has produced outstanding results. Many new plants have been added to the Rhododendron Collection as a result of the partnership between the Mt Lofty Botanic Garden and the local branch, which Allan and Mary have pursued vigorously during the past 15 years.

Allan has achieved all this thanks to tremendous support from his wife Mary, who was also President of the SA Branch from 1990 to 1992 and has been on the Branch Committee for almost as long as Allan. They continue to attend Branch Executive Committee meetings where they make valuable contributions to the running of the State Branch. Allan has served as State delegate to the National Council for many years. Allan and Mary are held in high regard by all SA branch members for their knowledge, integrity and commitment to the Society.

Mary's apparently boundless encyclopedic botanical knowledge, her practical experience from many years of gardening, and her generosity with this knowledge and experience, makes her a very special and valued member of the SA Branch. Allan's welcome smile and earthy sense of humour always evident at BBQ's, garden visits and projects such as planting of vireyas at the Adelaide Zoo have endeared him to all. Allan, and another long term member and previous Branch President Bill Voigt, collaborated with Bruce Grivell in naming and recording the Whibley hybrids collection and arranged for the registration of 'Mr Rosenthal', 'Anna Booth' and 'Widge'.

It is with great pleasure therefore that we, as representatives of the South Australian Branch, recommend that the Society awards Life Membership to Allan Kerr Grant and Mary Grant.

P.V. Wiadrowski
Branch Delegate

J. Schutz
Branch Delegate

Citation for the Award of Life Member to Lesley Gillanders

The Southern Tasmanian Branch of the Australian Rhododendron Society proposes that Lesley Gillanders be accepted as Life Member of the Australian Rhododendron Society.

Lesley and Ken Gillanders were members of the Ferny Creek Horticultural Society, which spawned the Australian Rhododendron Society in Victoria. Lesley has been a continuous member of the ARS from its inception and was one of the founding members of the Southern Tasmanian Branch in 1978.

Ken and Lesley Gillanders are a team. They have travelled every road as a true partnership and this is clearly evident in this supporting material.

Throughout her long association, Lesley has contributed to the Society in many ways. She has been the ARS Southern Tasmanian Branch President in the past and is the current President of the Branch. Before taking on this position, Lesley was our librarian for many years, a position that was filled very ably. The records were always correct and all books returned. We had rhododendron displays for the public for some period in the past that were basically run by Lesley and Ken Gillanders. In 1990 we agreed to have a full rhododendron show at the Hobart Town Hall. Lesley has been the chief show steward for the entire life of the show and has kept meticulous records of the process throughout.

Woodbank Nursery, the Gillanders' nursery at Longley in Tasmania, operated from 1976 to 2002 and during this period offered many rare gems

to the rhododendron grower. This was no standard nursery, it made available much material which was not obtainable elsewhere. Lesley and Ken offered, for example, five forms of *Rhododendron campylogynum* and outstanding plants that can only be propagated by grafting included 'Janet', 'Leo', and many forms of the *Loderi* grex. Woodbank introduced 'Horizon Monarch' and 'Nancy Evans' into Australia and our gardens. Smaller rhododendrons, such as the Cox's bird series were there. These smaller and rarer plants were not sold by others as these plants lacked the commercial returns of standard rhododendrons. Woodbank was not just a nursery it had many thousands of plants and was the major source of rare and unusual material for temperate Australia.

Plant hunting was a Gillanders' passion. *R. rex* ssp *gratum*, along with many others, were first offered to us by them as a result of botanising when they brought back the seed. True companion plants from the native habitat were introduced too, and Lesley has a keen eye for interesting and different material. They also had Gondwanan groups of plants. In particular the genera *Eucryphia* and *Nothofagus* were of interest. Lesley is a true plantsperson with a very broad knowledge and she appreciates and understands the interrelationships between plant species, genera and families.

Lesley and Ken have shared their knowledge, skills and experiences with others. They have spoken at many conventions and venues including the 2000 conference of the Australian Rhododendron Society in Melbourne and the Alpine Garden Society in the United Kingdom. They have hosted visits from the American Rhododendron Society, the International Dendrology Society and Alpine Garden Society when they were in Tasmania. Lesley speaks in a segment at each of our meetings, such is our respect for her. She is part of a team that has shared their knowledge with us.

The garden at Woodbank is an inspiration to all. The knowledge and skills have been applied to produce a marvellous result much appreciated by those members of the ARS who have been fortunate enough to be there.

Lesley Gillanders has contributed to the Australian Rhododendron Society and the Southern Tasmanian Branch of the ARS in many ways including leadership, knowledge and skills, continuous service in necessary ongoing tasks, promoting rhododendrons and in promoting the Australian Rhododendron Society from its inception.

Barry Davidson
National Vice President & past President
Southern Tasmanian Branch

Tribute to Ken Cathie

(24/10/32–1/3/04)

Ken Cathie came into the rhododendron scene at a later age in life, and became perhaps the single most focused advocate of, and for the National Rhododendron Gardens. He was strong in his belief that these gardens were particularly important as a means of conserving the rhododendron genus, which is so threatened in many countries of origin.

Ken was unquestioningly passionate about species generally, and the big-leaf rhododendrons in particular. His rapidly acquired knowledge and enthusiasm, saw him surpass most other members expertise in those areas. As a result, Ken's familiarity with, and awareness of the Olinda collection was very comprehensive.

As a member of the Australian Rhododendron Society with more than 14 years experience, his specific skills saw him undertake the following roles:

- Editor of the Victorian Newsletter for the past five or six years. This drew praise from far and wide. Ken's background in the printing industry ensured that he was meticulous in preparation and presentation, and strove to provide stimulating and informative content.
- Preparation of a computerized species data bank, and the continued acquisition of new species. This was a time consuming task, but clearly will become part of the legacy he leaves us.
- Preparation of Australian hybrid data bank, with pictorials on CD-Rom was almost ready to publish. The Society will ensure that this proceeds to fruition.
- As Vice President of the Society, he was often the first to offer his assistance in preparation of Bench Displays, Judging, Retail Nursery, Show Management, Special Displays, Annual Society Awards. All were cheerfully done, again with meticulous care.



We all thank Ken for his friendship, his unqualified support of the Society, his innate suspicion of 'burrowcrats', but most of all, for the tangible legacies he has left at the National Gardens.

As Graham Smith from Pukeiti wrote, "Pukeiti has lost a good friend, Australia has lost a real man of rhododendrons, and Annette and family have lost a special husband and dad ... We will all miss him."

Bill Taylor
President, Victorian Branch

Murray McAlister
Vice-President

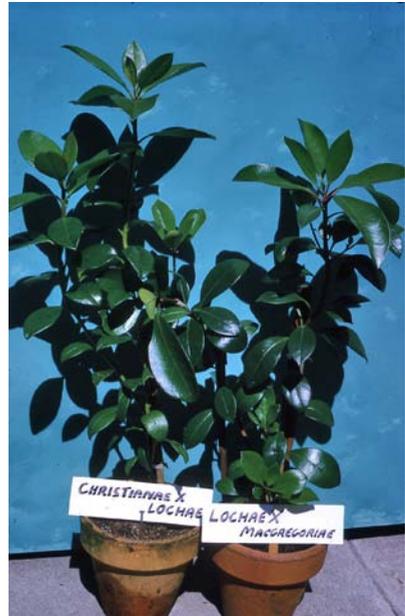
Foliar Feeding Works

BRIAN CLANCY

All rhododendrons and especially vireyas respond exceptionally well to foliar feeding. The leaf spraying of balanced soluble fertilizers with trace elements are especially effective in promoting growth and health of the plant. Radioactive tests show that micronutrients applied in this way can be in the sap stream within one hour after application.

There are three big brand name balanced water soluble fertilizers in granular form readily available on supermarket shelves and several more in liquid form at specialist garden centres. The first in Australia and one of the best soluble fertilizers with trace elements was marketed by Hortico Limited as Aquasol® in 1948. The original formulator, who lived at Ferntree Gully, Victoria, could have made a fortune but no patents were taken out in 1948; two years later a similar formulation was patented in the USA. My experience with Aquasol on hardy rhododendrons dates back to 1952 and continuously with vireyas since 1955. In other words, I have had 52 years continuous experience with foliar feeding of rhododendrons.

Aquasol's proven formula contains nine plant foods and eight minor trace elements which are essential for healthy plant growth and development. Trace elements, such as boron and manganese are required in extremely small or minute amounts for correct plant growth. Lack of a trace element leads to a deficiency disease that causes the plant to stagnate. Because Aquasol is applied in liquid form, nutrients are readily absorbed by both the roots and leaves of the plant producing rapid results. The most casual gardener can see a real improvement in the foliage of the plant the day following spraying. Photographs showing the glow of health following foliar feeding of two-year-old vireya hybrid seedlings, the floriferous flowering of *R. lochiae* in the glasshouse at Olinda and the mass of blooms on a small plant of *R. superbum* are illustrated on page iv of the colour plates in this issue.



Two-year-old vireyas show strong growth with foliar feeding.

Some examples illustrating the advantages of foliar feeding from my long experience are as follows:

In February 1962, I received seed of *R. laetum* from world authority Dr H. Sleumer, collected on his last trip by helicopter to the Arkfak Mountains, West Irian. It should be noted that vireyas are slow to grow from seed in the first year. That I was able to produce a plant in flower from seed of this species at the 1966 Annual Rhododendron Show at the National Rhododendron garden, Olinda was primarily due to regular spraying with Aquasol. This plant was awarded first prize in its class, best plant in the Show and the Award of Merit, the Society's highest award. This exhibit was reported in *The Rhododendron* and two national magazines as the greatest single attraction at the 1966 Rhododendron Show.

In regard to hardy rhododendrons, keen growers will appreciate that growers and exhibitors from the Hills area have a distinct advantage in growing and exhibiting hardy rhododendrons over those growers from near sea-level of metropolitan Melbourne. The hills areas are favoured with rich mountain soil, higher humidity, heavy dews and greater rainfall while the soil at near sea-level is generally sandy loam and experiences less rainfall, humidity and lighter dews. Having won some 23 Award of Merits at Annual Shows, Karel Van de Ven is the undisputed expert in growing and exhibiting rhododendron plants. However, at the 1968 Annual Show, the only occasion that I have exhibited a plant of a hardy rhododendron at the Annual Show, my plant of 'Susan', a *Rhododendron campanulatum* hybrid, was awarded first prize and Karel's plant second prize. The result achieved was due to regular application of foliar feeding despite the fact that my plant of 'Susan' was grown in sandy soil at sea level at Bentleigh.

When the vireyas in the glasshouse at Olinda had degenerated due to lack of skilled attention early in 1970, Arthur Headlam and myself were given approval to take over their maintenance. With weekly watering and fortnightly foliar feeding the vireyas responded immediately with a glow of health, flower buds and subsequently several flowerings throughout the year. After we had upgraded the collection with some 400 additional plants, including 20 ten-year-old plants of our native *Rhododendron lochiae*, vireya flowers were on display every week of the year. This display became popular with the general public and overseas visitors, especially Japanese and German tourists and, on two occasions Vice Regal parties, who came to see flowers of *R. lochiae* in bloom. There is no doubt that this continuous display of vireyas over the period of seven years was due to weekly watering and fortnightly foliar spraying with balanced fertilizers. Regrettably, all the vireyas in the glasshouse were vandalised and the cuttings thrown on a bonfire. My very last act in the glasshouse at Olinda was to demonstrate, at his request, to Dr David

Leach, author of *Rhododendrons of the World*, my method of planting vireyas in fern logs and their foliar feeding with full strength balanced fertilizers.

From 1966 until March 2000, I exhibited flowers of vireyas at practically every monthly meeting of the Victorian Branch of the Society held at Olinda, Camberwell and Nunawading. At meeting after meeting over some 35 years, I was asked the 'secret' of my success with vireyas and I always stated that it was due to foliar feeding. So much so, that other members frequently mentioned that my success was due to foliar feeding.

Of relevant interest to the subject of foliar feeding is the case of a member who was experiencing difficulty in making his vireyas grow properly. As a result, he decided to have the leaves analysed. Leaf analysis is similar to soil analysis and, these days, both cost about sixty dollars for each specimen analysed. In the case in question, the member had a good number of leaves analysed. The overall result was that the only deficiency was that of the trace element boron. The recommended solution, costing several hundred dollars, was that this deficiency in the vireyas would be corrected by spraying the leaves with a balanced fertilizer with trace elements, such as Aquasol.

At my local church in suburban Bentleigh palms are housed indoors throughout the year. When one Alexandra palm died I was asked to take over the maintenance. As a result, I have maintained the palms in 'show condition' for the past nineteen years with fortnightly watering and foliar spraying with Aquasol but with no other fertilizer added to the potting mix. Five times over the period of 19 years I have had to heavily prune the root zone systems of the palms but with foliar feeding no one could notice any difference to the continuous display.

Enthusiasts should note that vireyas are evergreen plants that are constantly losing water vapour through their leaves, night and day, throughout the year. If this water loss is not replenished the plants soon show their distress. If this dryness is prolonged the plants make no progress. Where vireyas are not regularly watered and fertilized their performance can only be rated as less than third rate.

The best results with foliar feeding are obtained when the liquid fertilizer is sprayed on the leaves, both above and below, in the last hour of daylight. David Leach in *Rhododendrons of the World* and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) have stated that the foliage absorbs the nutrients three to ten times more efficiently in periods of high humidity and particularly in the last hour of daylight.

Fifty years experience has demonstrated and proved that foliar feeding of rhododendrons and especially vireyas with balanced fertilizers with trace elements and regular watering are most effective in promoting growth and health of the plant and encouraging prolific blooming. ❀



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Rhododendrons in the Pontic Alps

KEN GILLANDERS

During a tour of north eastern Turkey in May and June this year, my wife Lesley and myself had the opportunity of seeing several species of rhododendrons in flower.

Four of the species occurring in Turkey belong to the ponticum series and the fifth to the azalea series sub series luteum.

Our trip started from Trabzon, a large town of the Black Sea, where we stayed for several days doing botanical excursions in the surrounding mountains. On a trip to Sumela Monastery, we saw our first *R. ponticum* growing in *Picea orientalis* forest, also in areas of deciduous forest consisting of *Fagus orientalis*, *Tilea platyphyllus*, *Carpinus orientalis*, *Acer cappadocium* and the very plentiful *Corylus maxima*.

All the north facing slopes of the Pontic Alps have a very high rainfall with rain bearing systems coming in from the Black Sea, ideal rhododendron country. We were surprised to see *R. ponticum* growing as scattered plants and not colonising large areas as they do in some parts of the United Kingdom. There was variation in the colour of the flowers. The majority having the typical lilac-mauve colour but some having an almost rose-pink colour to them, also the truss size varied. It can be found growing from sea level to 1,800 m.

R. ponticum was introduced into cultivation in 1763 from plants found growing in Gibraltar. It also occurs in Bulgaria, Portugal and Spain but its main population appears to be in northern Anatolia and the Caucasus.

Although despised by some gardeners now, seeing it growing in its native habitat, I feel most would say it is a beautiful plant.

The second rhododendron we found was *R. luteum*, belonging to the azalea series. At low altitudes it grew in similar areas as *R. ponticum*, often occurring together with it. At higher elevations above the tree line it formed large dense colonies excluding all other vegetation. Plants in these high areas were still in bud whereas those occurring lower down the mountains were in full flower. *R. luteum* has a delightful fragrance which is most notable on a warm sunny day. Variation was quite noticeable in the flower size and shape. As well as the colour of its yellow flowers. Also interesting, there was an occasional plant at high altitude in full flower growing among hundreds of other plants still in tight bud. There is an opportunity here to make selections of some of the plants, whose early flowering time varied by possibly up to four weeks. These could be useful in horticulture.

R. luteum was introduced in 1792 and has been used extensively in hybridizing. It is an excellent shrub with its beautiful golden yellow flowers,



KEN GILLANDERS

The fragrant yellow *Rhododendron luteum* in the Pontic Alps, Turkey.

magnificent scent and brilliant autumn colour to its foliage. Like some other rhododendrons and *Kalmia*, the honey produced from *R. luteum* can be quite toxic containing andromedotoxin. From Greek history comes the story of a Greek army led by Xenophon passing through the Pontic Alps to the Black Sea, soldiers raided some of the beehives and became quite ill after eating the honey. When the Romans controlled Pontus they would not accept honey from this area as tribute and instead only took beeswax. Its extensive range is from the Caucasus, Georgia, Turkey and Ukraine. It also occurs in small areas in Yugoslavia, Poland and Austria.

Passing over Sahara Pass on Cam Gecidi, *R. caucasicum* was very plentiful. It only grows at higher elevations, generally 2,000–3,000 m. At this altitude you are above the tree line and huge colonies are noticeable from a distance with its dark green foliage contrasting with the lighter greens of grass and herbs. Most of the plants we saw were 1 m or lower in height, depending on the altitude.

Most of these higher areas are covered in deep snow in the winter and it takes several weeks of fine weather after the thaw before the plants become active. Where the tops of some of the plants were exposed during the thaw, severe freezing had burnt the exposed area and these were completely brown. It is obviously a very hardy plant due to its very exposed aspect and the harsh weather it has to contend with at this altitude. Its trusses of pale cream flowers often had a faint flush of pink in the bud and on the corollas as they opened.



Often described as pale yellow some certainly did have a hint of yellow in them but very pale. The number of flowers per truss varied from 5 to 12 in the plants we saw. The leaves have a thin, fawn to brown, indumentum on the underside. Its habitat extends from north eastern Turkey, Georgia and other parts of the Caucasus. It was introduced into cultivation in 1803.

The two other species found growing in Turkey are *R. smirnowii* and *R. ungeronii*. Both occur in the mountainous areas around Artvin, where we were based for several days but unfortunately we never saw them, as both these species flower later in the season, which made them more difficult to find. Botanically this area of Turkey is very rich in a great variety of interesting plants. Orchids occur in great profusion. Species such as *Dactylorhiza*, *Orchis*, *Epipactis* and *Serapias*, being only a few of what we saw.

As you pass through the Pontic Alps to the southern side of the mountains, the climate becomes drier and different types of vegetation appear.

Cotinus coggygria was very colourful with its smoky heads of reddish inflorescences. Several species of *Cornus* including *C. mas* and *C. alba* occurred in this area and *Arbutus andrachne* with its outstanding shining cinnamon bark.

Many beautiful alpine plants grew in the high areas including *Corydalis*, *Gentiana*, *Fritillaria*, *Scilla*, *Cyclamen* and *Primula*. A Juno iris, *I. caucasica*, grew in one small rock-strewn area on Cam Gecidi. The pale yellow flowers contrasting with the blue of an occasional *Muscari* and *Bellevalia*.

A really outstanding prostrate growing *Daphne* was the sweetly fragrant *D. glomerata*. It makes mats up to 1 m in diameter with numerous heads of cream flowers which are pinkish in the bud. Described as one of the finest species in the genus. ❀

Kenneth Gillanders

Award of Australia 2004

BARRY DAVIDSON,
NATIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT

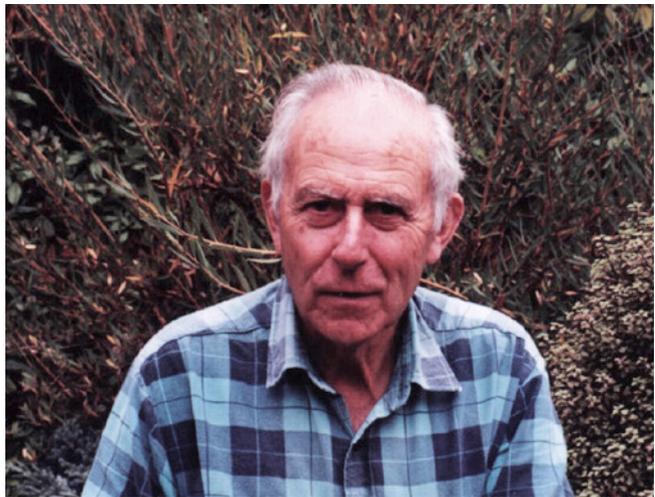
Ken Gillanders was honoured with receipt of the Award of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours List 2004. He gained the award for his services to horticulture and the summary of his achievements given here are an indication of the vast contribution that he has made.

The original Australian Rhododendron Society, now the Victorian Branch of the Society, was founded by a group from the Ferny Creek Horticultural Society in the Dandenong Ranges in Victoria. That group started the National Rhododendron Gardens at Olinda. This was a massive project on an area of approximately 120 acres (48 hectares). Ken was a key player in the voluntary group that established this project.

Ken worked at Chandlers Nursery in the Basin in Victoria for many years before leaving for Tasmania. He and wife came to Tasmania in 1975 and established Woodbank Nursery at Longley, south of Hobart. A bushfire in 1982 destroyed most of the plant and equipment and stock nursery material that had been accumulated over time. With determination the nursery was effectively re-established and the doors were opened again three months later.

Ken would want any recognition of his achievements to acknowledge the support of Lesley, their teamwork and their happy marriage of fifty one years.

In addition to the introduction of many new and interesting species



Ken Gillanders

and cultivars of fine plants, Ken has a keen interest in, and very detailed knowledge of, the plants of Gondwana and their interrelationships. The wealth of information that he has in the area and his knowledge of the plants and their use in horticulture would make an interesting book that would be a very worthwhile addition to the literature currently available.

He has continually trekked the mountains of South Eastern Australia and has a detailed understanding of the ecology. This is quite evident from the book, *Know Your Rock Garden Plants and Dwarf Bulbs*, which he co-wrote with G.M. Patterson and E.R. Rotherham and was published by A.H. and A.W. Reed in 1973. Publications of this type were rare thirty years ago. This is testament to the esteem that the horticultural fraternity has held for him for some time. The book was well received and may still be found in antiquarian booksellers for a price.

Ken's knowledge of Australian plants, their interrelationships with other Gondwanan relatives and his keen eye for a good horticultural plant are evident from the introductions that he has made to the industry. In particular are his interests in the genera *Eucryphia*, the leatherwoods, and *Nothofagus*, our southern beeches and myrtles. Both genera are found in Australia, New Zealand and South America. I feel that that he has made a really valuable contribution to Australian horticulture and some examples are given below:

Eucryphia lucida is the Tasmanian leatherwood and Ken has offered the following cultivars:

- 'Pink Cloud' – the first pink-flowered *Eucryphia* of any species offered worldwide and found in the wild while walking in Tasmania
- 'Ballerina' – a second pink introduction with large pink flowers, exceptional floral display and long flowering period
- 'Gilt Edge' – first variegated *Eucryphia* with a neat gold edge
- 'Spring Glow' – variegated with a white edge and pink young growth, making it an outstanding garden plant

Nothofagus fusca is a New Zealand species and Ken introduced the following forms:

- 'Rainbow' – a crimson/purple, yellow and green variegated form of exceptional garden value. This was selected from a group of plants that he grew from seed collected in New Zealand. The New Zealanders were so impressed that it was taken back
- 'Kiwi' – a smaller growing variety is very useful for the average garden. Again, this was taken back to New Zealand and released commercially

- *Nothofagus antarctica* ‘Chillan’ – has subtle yellow and green variegations that go well with the black/green bark and the leaves colour well in autumn. This is a selection from a Chilean species
- *Anopterus glandulsa* ‘Woodbank Pink’ – is the first pink selection and introduction of our white flowered native laurel
- *Lomatia tasmanica* – commonly called Deny King’s Holly after an exceptional Tasmanian who lived most of his life at Port Davey in our southwest. It was first successfully grafted and introduced to the nursery trade by Ken

These are really quite outstanding Gondwanan introductions to the Australian horticultural industry and give a clear indication of not only his ability to spot a fine plant, but also the many years of bushwalking and plant hunting that is required to find them. It should also be noted that these plants are to be found in botanic gardens in Ireland, the United Kingdom, France and Germany.

Planthunting overseas has produced many other exciting and different plants. He and Lesley have trekked in the Andes in South America three times from Ecuador, Bolivia, Chile and Argentina to Tierra del Fuego. He has made many trips to New Zealand, searching for native seed and introducing some of their cultivars. He has been to Africa twice; once to Lesotho and Natal and he has also climbed Mount Kilimanjaro looking for alpiners. The wilds of the Sino-Himalayan region have also been botanised. He has been to Yunnan Province twice and once to Hunan. He has travelled to Japan on collecting trips and he has also been to Iran, Kazakstan and Kyrgyzstan hunting for plants in wild places. Turkey, the home of many fine bulbous plants, has been visited a few times. Ken has certainly “roughed it” while planthunting. The fruits of his labours were offered to the public and it is quite clear why Woodbank Nursery has such a range of plant material.

Ken was awarded Life Membership of the Australian Rhododendron Society in 1992 and Lesley’s overdue recognition will be celebrated at the AGM of the Society in Melbourne this year.

Ken has published many papers in recognised publications:

- *Alpine Garden Society Journal*, United Kingdom
- *Scottish Rock Garden Society Journal*, Scotland
- *The Plantsman*, a journal of the Royal Horticultural Society, United Kingdom
- *The Garden*, a journal of the Royal Horticultural Society, United Kingdom
- *Pacific Horticulture Journal*, United States of America
- *Japan Alpine Garden Society Journal*, Japan
- He has also been a regular contributor to *The Rhododendron*

He is respected worldwide as an expert on alpine plants, Gondwanan plants, rhododendrons and woody plants.

Ken has been a member of the Alpine Garden Society since it was established in 1950. It now has over 20,000 members throughout the world and he has:

- introduced many plants to Australian gardens through this association
- spoken at the AGS Annual Convention in Nottingham, England 1981 – on the topic “Tasmanian Alpine Plants” and also on other occasions, including the 2002 conference.
- spoken at the Alpine Garden Society visit to Ferny Creek in Victoria. While in England in 1981 Ken was one of three speakers at the official opening of the Alpine House at Kew Gardens in London.

He has spoken at:

- The Japan Alpine Garden Society in 1984
- The International Plant Propagators Society – Dunedin Conference, New Zealand 1989.
- The International Dendrology Society – member of the United Kingdom and Australian sections – 1981 conference in Burnie, Victoria in 1999, an organiser of the 2003 conference in Tasmania in October.
- The Australian Rhododendron Society on many occasions including
 - International Conference to celebrate Australia’s bicentenary in Wollongong in 1988
 - Pacific Rim Conference in Burnie 1998
 - Annual Convention in Hobart 1996
 - International Rhododendron Conference in Melbourne 2000
 - Many other occasions at branch meetings etc.

Ken is in regular correspondence with leaders in horticultural fields such as Peter Cox, who is accepted as an international expert on rhododendrons. Peter was an organiser of the International Rhododendron Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland in 2002 at which Ken was asked to speak. Brian Mathew is a leader in the Alpine Garden Society and he and the Gillanders have been plant hunting in far flung outposts, such as their recent visit to Turkish alpine areas.

Many nurseries produce only commercial plants and offer many fine plants, but within a restricted range. This is certainly not true of Woodbank Nursery. It was the range of plants, of commercial value or otherwise that was offered at very reasonable prices, which set them apart. The catalogue contained around 1,600 different plants, all of which were available. This was no wishlist and there

were many thousands more selections to be purchased at the nursery, but not available in sufficient numbers to be placed in a catalogue.

What set the Woodbank list apart was the range of plants for sale. There were 12 members of the *Eucryphia* genus, 11 of *Nothofagus*, 118 of *Rhododendron* and twenty eight of *Clematis*, just to name a few in the 2002 catalogue and there were many more to be found at the nursery. Many rhododendrons were on offer that could not be purchased elsewhere. These were often imported from the United Kingdom, the United States of America or elsewhere and many had to be grafted or had particular propagation needs. Very few nurseries can be bothered with grafting, for example, based on the argument that there are many varieties that do not need such techniques. The connoisseur knows differently of course and in this way Woodbank Nursery was one of the few sources of many gems from many genera in the horticultural industry. Naturally, these plants were sold, but it can be argued that a large part of the Gillanders' catalogue demonstrated the true plantsman, as the plants were simply not commercial, but done as a service to customers and fellow collector enthusiasts.

The Gillanders introduced many exotics including:

- *Salvia corrugata* – the most commercial introduction and now propagated by other nurseries
- *Mahonia × media* 'Woodbank' – a selection
- many new alpine species and genera that appear in the catalogue
- imported rhododendrons, particularly smaller alpine cultivars from the United Kingdom and the United States of America of limited commercial value because they do not make a large plant in two years
- selected forms of other woody plants and perennials

Many botanic gardens around the world have sourced plants from the nursery in the knowledge that the material is correctly labelled and of good quality. Some northern hemisphere plants have been re-sourced from Woodbank Nursery. An example is *Magnolia campbellii* 'Charles Raffill', the true form of which was hard to find in the UK where the selection was originally made and it was taken back from Woodbank Nursery by a customer.

It is quite clear that Ken is an extremely reliable source of horticultural information, and he has made a continuing outstanding contribution to the community. In particular to our benefit has been his outstanding contributions to our Society, both past and continuing:

- Founding member
- Registrar of Australian hybrids

- Technical Officer since the Society was formed in 1960
- Regular contributor to ARS Journal, *The Rhododendron*
- Formation of The National Rhododendron Gardens
- Founding member of the Southern Tasmanian Branch – July 27, 1978
- Southern Tasmanian Branch President twice
- Committee member since 1978
- Show Chairman of the Hobart Floral Festival Rhododendron Show . Hours of work go into preparing for a show that runs for three days and he and Lesley are there for most of the time.
- Show Judge most years
- Recognised as the authority on rhododendrons at the meetings
- Always donates plants for the trade table supplying a strong financial backing for the group
- Hosting visits by international groups including:
 - Alpine Garden Society – United Kingdom, 2000 in Tasmania for one week
 - Japan Alpine Garden Society – one week guided tour
 - International Dendrology Society – United Kingdom
 - Canterbury Garden Society – New Zealand
 - New Zealand Botanical Society
 - USA Pacific Horticulture
 - Japan – at least three groups
- Speaking to local groups:
 - The list includes almost every garden group and specialist horticultural society in Tasmania
- Judging at various shows
- Advice and help to organisations including the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens

I have known Ken Gillanders for over twenty years and his and Lesley's generosity has made our garden a much richer place. Many others can tell similar stories and this leads to the final comment on Ken the person. Quiet achiever, knowledgeable, skilful and friendly are words that come to mind immediately. Ken was one of the outstanding temperate climate nurserymen and is recognised as one of the most knowledgeable plantsmen in Victoria and Tasmania. He has introduced a wealth of material at very reasonable cost, served the community and his achievements have been recognised by noted plantspersons and horticulturalists. ❀

Good things come in small packages

... a love affair with the smaller rhododendrons

LESLEY EATON

It is so easy to be bewitched by the sheer beauty, colour and form of the rhododendron and I was no exception in falling for this exceptionally diverse genus. And, have you noticed that once 'the bug' hits, no matter what genus, it soon becomes an obsession? For many years I eagerly waited for the new releases to be shown during the spring season and my collection of attractive, big and blousy rhododendrons which had caught my eye grew and grew.

This frantic purchasing came to an abrupt halt when at a local garden club meeting *R. ciliicalyx* was exhibited. The delicate blooms of what looked like pale pink crumpled crêpe paper, and smelling of all the best spices, just took my breath away. I had discovered the species! So off I went on a tangent, searching for more rhododendron species, both large and small. It just seemed a logical progression then to the collecting and growing of the smaller rhododendrons. I gave myself a height limit of about 1 metre and proceeded to search through all the local nurseries to find what they had on offer. I wasn't such a purist that I excluded the hybrids. Why should I? Many talented growers have produced superb plants over the years which have added greatly to the range of plants available.

The first purchases included the hybrid 'Cilpinense' and the species *R. pemakoense*. 'Cilpinense' is a semi-dwarf, compact plant with pale pink flowers, which is very free flowering and quite hardy. Unfortunately it is prone to attack from that wretched pest, the azalea lace bug, and is now used by us as a barometer for judging when to start the year's spraying regime. The species *R. pemakoense* also makes a floriferous, compact mound which is often stoloniferous. Pale pinkish mauve flowers completely cover the plant leaving little sign of foliage. Its hybrid, 'Rose Elf', also has these fine attributes. *R. hippophaeoides*, too, in its form 'Haba Shan', was among those early plantings. I must admit I was attracted to its lavender blue flowers with protruding reddish stamens and I just loved getting my tongue around the name.

I was so fortunate to begin my collecting at this time in the mid 70s, as rhododendrons were still a popular garden plant and the nurserymen of the time propagated a much larger range of 'the littlies' than are available now. You could go into any of the numerous nurseries in the Dandenongs and come home with many new plants, many of them tube stock from newly imported acquisitions. It was around this time that the first of Peter Cox's birds became

available on the Australian market. Seeing slides of 'Chikor', that dainty little pale yellow charmer, 'Ptarmigan', with little white flowers with lovely chocolate stamens, 'Curlew', whose large yellow flowers belied its dwarf stature and 'Phalarope' with pale mauve flowers which positively glow on grey days, really made my pulses race. And so it was that these small treasures soon found their way into my garden.

I became fanatical and my collection grew and grew. I curse myself now, for in my ignorance and haste in planting out some of the rarer species, I lost and have been unable to obtain again some most desirable plants. *R. pendulum*, *R. lapponicum* and *R. camtschaticum* were just three of the many which I lost through not researching their cultural needs more carefully.

But then fortune once more smiled on me for at this time I became friendly with a fellow grower of the smaller rhododendrons. Felice Blake had been importing, growing and propagating some of the best dwarf rhododendrons over many years. She became my mentor and because of her incredible knowledge, her keenness to impart that knowledge onto others, plus her generosity in sharing around the plants which she had propagated, led to the enlargement of my ever increasing collection. Many forms of that adorable species *R. campylogynum* with their thimble like flowers of plum purple to pink to creamy white were introduced to me by Felice Blake as was the perky pink-belled 'Canada'. *R. lepidostylum* with its aromatic blue leaves and lemon flowers, *R. trichostomum* with its pungent foliage and tiny daphne-like flowers and the American hybrids 'Cutie', 'Candi' and the beautiful deep blue English 'St Merryn' were all from obtained from Felice.

With the nurserymen keeping on introducing new overseas hybrids, this time of some of the best American rhododendrons, I discovered more little beauties to pounce upon. 'Shamrock' has proved to be an excellent little lime yellow semi-dwarf grower with quite a strong constitution. 'Ginny Gee', with its white flowers blushed with pink, copes with everything Mother Nature throws at it. 'Lori Eichelser' is another which has done well although its harsh pink flowers can make it difficult to place amongst other pink rhododendrons.

I discovered that the smaller rhododendrons grew very well in my last garden in the Dandenongs, in fact so well and so big that after some years they needed replacing with juvenile plants. This problem isn't arising at Swanpool with its less than perfect growing conditions. The plants stay much smaller and only produce short growth thus enabling them to stay in character. I've still been sourcing as much new material that comes on the market but this source is slowly drying up with the quarantine ban on rhododendrons from the Northern Hemisphere. Tracking down more species, too, has become more difficult and trying to obtain seed from overseas of some of the newly discovered or scarce

dwarf species is a constant challenge. *R. kongboense* is one I have been trying to search for for years. Peter Cox states it doesn't travel well as a plant – a fact borne out by the enthusiasts who have attempted the venture. *R. ludlowii* and *R. lowdesii* have also proved difficult and rather short lived in our harsher Australian climate. Many of the lepidote species also remain quite elusive. This, of course, just makes one all the more determined to extend the collection by tracking down material from far and wide.

This has led to thoughts of hybridising which at this time are still in its infancy with combinations of rhododendrons either still on the drawing board or small seedlings too small to flower and gauge their worth. I was fortunate enough to have that fine grower and hybridizer, the late Dr Noel Sullivan of Burnie in Tasmania, who when visiting helped me plot a course of possible crosses. His encouragement and guidance has led to my attempts at hybridising. He had been successful in producing a number of smaller hybrids but, alas, they are not commercially available as yet.

So enthusiastic was I about my collection of these delightful, small rhododendrons that my collection became registered with the Ornamental Plants Conservation Association of Australia. I had also become frustrated that so few rhododendron growers shared my passion and I felt that the gene pool of the dwarfs needed to be kept. It was here that I was given more encouragement from a fellow OPCA member who had also imported some rare and interesting dwarfs during the 70s. He gave me free reign during cutting season and the resultant small plants have also added to my collection. The small, bright rose 'Collingwood Ingram' form of *R. trichostomum* and the pretty clear pink *R. primuliflorum* were just two that were successfully propagated from this source of cuttings.

Now to some of my favourites – *R. keiskei* 'Yaku Fairy' would just have to top the list. It makes such a tiny, tight bun, has plentiful creamy lemon flowers and is a perfect subject for both the rock garden and for pot culture. Other yellows which are among my top dwarfs are the lepidotes 'Euan Cox' which makes a neat little plant with good sized yellow flowers, 'Shamrock' with its lime yellow flowers and 'R.W. Rye' which never fails to please me with its bright yellow flowers in early spring. Amongst the blues the deep coloured German hybrid, 'Azurwolke', stands out, 'St Merryn' is a chirpy small blue, perfectly at home in a pot, and in the species, the small navy flowers of *R. polycladum* (*R. scintillans*) is hard to beat, but its needs can be tricky to satisfy. There are so many desirable pink small growers, that choosing a favourite is a difficult task. However I wouldn't like to be without 'Fantastica', that *R. yakushimanum* hybrid from Hans Hachmann in Germany, 'Royal Pink' with its clear pink flowers held in a ball-shaped truss, 'Razorbill' with its unusual tubular flowers and

'Tiffany' whose flowers never fail to completely smother the bush. Nor could I leave out the Collingwood Ingram form *R. trichostomum* or the lovely little *R. primuliflorum*. For sentimental reasons I'd also have to include 'Cilpinense', one of my first smaller growing rhododendrons and 'Beatrice Eaton', a cross made by the late Frank Waghorn, between 'Kimbeth' and 'Kimberley', and named after my mother. The little white bells of 'Egret' and the pure white flowers or 'Eider' with its dark stamens never fail to please. I also have to add 'Schwanensee', another *R. yakushimanum* hybrid which is proving very hardy up here at Swanpool and is developing into a most handsome, healthy shrub. Of course in the mauves 'Phalarope' rates highly, and the young steely glaucous foliage of 'Ramapo' insures its place in the collection. The dark-red flowers of 'Carmen' just glow with the afternoon sun shining through them which endears it to those who grow it. The dark red blooms of 'Ruby Hart' also makes this rhododendron a favourite. 'Thor', too, makes the list with its scarlet-red flowers encased within huge calyxes.

So you see there is quite a range from which to choose some delightful smaller growers to add an extra dimension to your garden. Do remember that many good things do come in small packages, and a plea goes out for you, too, to join that small band of dedicated growers who have succumbed to the delights of these little treasures. ❀

Spring 2005 Adelaide

ARS NATIONAL CONVENTION

Weekend of 22–23 October 2005

Hosted by the South Australian Branch

Garden Visits, Tour of Mt. Lofty Botanic Garden, Wine Tasting.

Dinner on Sat. 22 October will incorporate the 2005 AGM.

Branch Newsletters will provide more details including contacts & booking arrangements nearer the time.

Or check the website www.ausrhodo.asn.au

We hope to see you there!

On the origin of Kurume azaleas

SATOSHI YAMAGUCHI

1. Historical background of Kurume azaleas

Evergreen azaleas are abundant in East Asia, especially in Japan. In the spring, we can see various beautiful azaleas around our country. Several azalea species have been domesticated and appear in our public and home gardens. But the exact origins of domesticated azaleas which today are important landscaping plants are uncertain. For example, the story of the origin and development of modern Kurume azaleas to their current degree of sophistication is obscure. Many scientists both in the horticultural and botanic fields have argued about their ancestor species.

The name “Kurume Azalea” appeared only relatively recently in our literature – after 1918. Before that time, these plants went under names such as “Kirishima”, “Kirishima tsutsuji” and “Ko-Kirishima”. The most common prior name used was “Kirishima”. That is the name of a home locality of wild azalea, Mt Kirishima, in Kagoshima prefecture in the southern part of Kyushu Island.

2. Biosystematic studies

Dr Sakata, of Kagoshima University, pioneered the chemical analysis of flower pigment in the evergreen azalea species found in Kyushu Island. He found a more intimate resemblance in the pigment constitution of Kurume azalea and the wild azalea population in the Mt Kirishima area than in that of Kurume azalea and *R. sataense*. His findings are summarized as follows:

R. kiusianum delphinidin (D) methylated (M)

*R. sataense** cyanidin (C) and D non-methylated

Kurume Azalea and Mt Kirishima Population C and D methylated and non-methylated

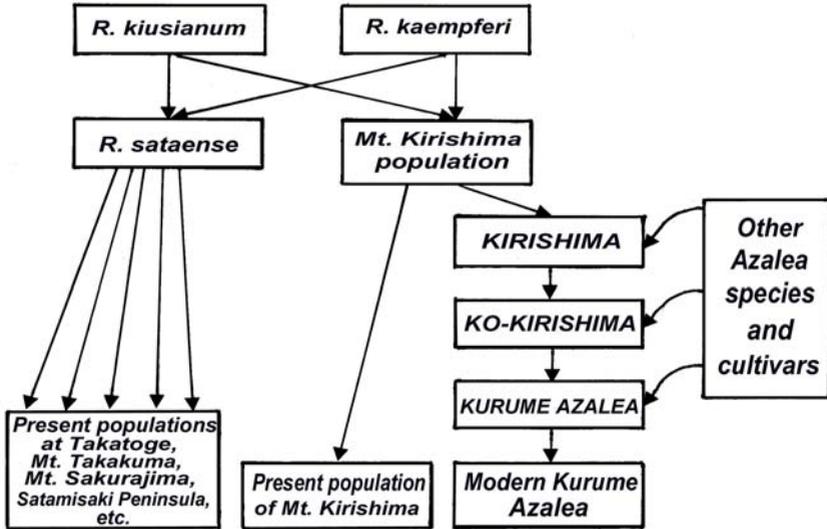
According to his results, *R. sataense* lacks the methylated flavonol which is present in the Kurume azalea and the wild population of Mt Kirishima.

However, my study on the stomata distribution of the leaf among evergreen azalea species and cultivars tells a different story. *R. kiusianum* has small stomata and high density on the leaf. *R. kaempferi* has large stomata and low density. The plants in the wild population of Mt Kirishima, Kurume azalea and even *R. sataense* show wide variation in the stomata size and density, intermediate between those of both these two species.

From these results, I conclude thus: The population of Mt Kirishima, *R. sataense* and Kurume azaleas belong to the same blood family, due to the interspecific hybridization between *R. kaempferi* and *R. kiusianum*. Also, the

differences in the presence of methylated flavonol, anthocyanidin types, flower colour, and leaf characters between the above-mentioned species and cultivars are due to natural selection occurring at each of their home habitats, influenced by different environments and pollinators. The accompanying schematic diagram is intended to place the relationships in perspective. ❀

SCHEMATIC REPRESENTATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE MODERN KURUME AZALEA AND ITS PUTATIVE ORIGINS.



Editor's note: The plant known formerly as *R. sataense* is now classified as *R. kiusianum* Makino var. *sataense*.

From 1976–1990 Professor Satoshi Yamaguchi was Researcher and Senior Researcher (Ornamental Tree Breeding) at the Laboratory of Breeding, National Research Institute of Vegetables and Ornamental Crops, Japan. He was then Head (Tea Breeding), Laboratory of Breeding, Department of Tea Agronomy, National Research Institute of Vegetables, Ornamental Plants and Tea (KANAYA) from 1990–1996. In 1996 he became Associate Professor (Horticultural Breeding) at the Laboratory of Vegetable and Flower Science, Department of Agrobioreources, College of Agriculture, Ehime University.

His published papers include Evolution of rheophytic life strategy of river side azalea; Origin and spread of horticultural plants in Asia (tea, chrysanthemum, aucuba, azalea, etc.); and Classification of garden camellias by pollen interaction.

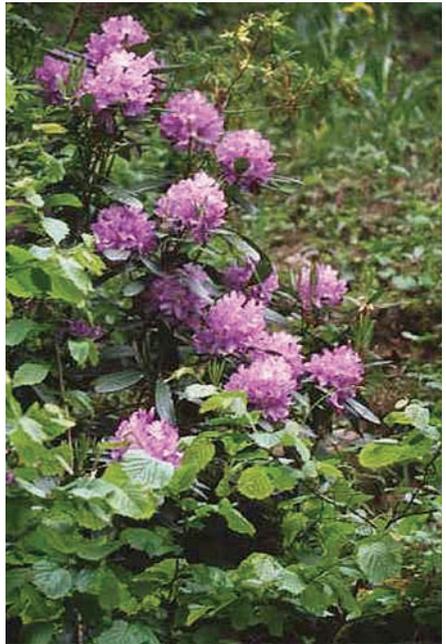
Rhododendrons in the Pontic Alps – see page 18



KEN GILANDERS

Rhododendron caucasicum

R. ponticum – close-up of a single truss and a shrub in its native habitat.



KEN GILANDERS



'Lori Eichelser'



'Heather Boulter'



'Augfast'



'Beatrice Eaton' and 'Curlew' (below)



'Euan Cox'



Left *R. campylogynum*

Good things come in small packages
see page 27

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GRAEME EATON



'Ruby Hart'



'Viscount Lindley'



R. keiskei 'Yaku Fairy'



R. lowndesii and R. megeratum (below)



R. luteiflorum



Right 'Tiffany'



A walk through the rhododendron forests of Nepal – see page 55



ALAN WATSON

Above Looking down on various coloured *Rhododendron arboreum* from the track on top of the ridge near Ghorapani.

Below *R. arboreum* in different pinks beside the track.



ALAN WATSON

The Maddenia Series

ALAN KEPERT

In the discussions at the Victorian Branch's Rhododendron Think Tank held in 2003, it was generally agreed that rhododendrons would be more popular if we had more varieties that were heat tolerant, lace-bug resistant, and easily grown in Melbourne and similar areas.

However, I would claim that there is a simple solution to this problem. We should grow as many of the Maddenia species and hybrids as possible, particularly those which are drought-resistant and early flowering.

Growing conditions

The main requirement for plants in the Maddenia Series is good drainage. You can either build up the beds using rocks or old railway sleepers and plenty of compost, or plant in pots. In nature these species generally grow in forests and are often epiphytic, growing in the forks of trees or on rocky slopes, so they have a liking for shade and good drainage.

In my own garden at East Ringwood, Melbourne, I have plenty of shade but most of the Maddenias flower quite freely, even under trees. My *cubitti* 'Ashcombe' flowers profusely every year under a 40-year-old *Cedrus atlantica* tree.

Water adequacy is becoming a problem for gardeners in Melbourne but Maddenia Series plants are probably the most drought-resistant rhododendrons in the genus. Make sure the plants have sufficient water in the spring for new growth and flower-bud formation, then only water in the summer and autumn if the plants look unhappy.

Classification of species

The Maddenia Series has been revised by Edinburgh and is likely to undergo further revision. There are a number of species which overlap in the wild, and there is a shortage of herbarium specimens. In the *Encyclopedia of Rhododendron Species*, Peter and Kenneth Cox report that the Ciliicalyx Aggregate could be reduced from 12 species to two or three. There are obviously a number of species which could be reduced to subspecies or varietal status. This would make it easier to classify our plants in the National Rhododendron Gardens, Olinda where we have many plants which don't quite conform to the old classification.

Recommended species

The species are subdivided into four sub-series or Alliances. We have about 30 species growing at Olinda and many of these are available to members. We could easily propagate more but so far there has been a limited demand, probably because they are only seen at shows and nurserymen don't propagate them.

Most of the following species are available through the Rhododendron Society:

Ciliicalyx/Johnstoneanum Alliance

burmanicum – One of the few yellow species, much used in hybridising. A fairly compact and bushy plant to 1.5 m high, easy to grow and propagate.

carneum – The name means flesh pink. The pink flowers are very attractive, but unfortunately my plant has almost white flowers.

ciliicalyx – Pink – This form was sold in Victoria by Boulter's Nursery many years ago. My plant growing in the ground is over 30 years old. The pink flowers appear in early spring and have a sweet, spicy perfume. This is a tough and hardy plant, easily grown and propagated, and should be more popular. It is the parent of 'Anne Teese'.

ciliicalyx – Streeton's Form – A strong growing plant with white flowers, very beautiful in full flower. This plant looks closer to *inequale* than *ciliicalyx*.

cubittii 'Ashcombe' – A first class plant, with white flowers marked with pink and yellow. This is now regarded as a form of *veitchianum*. This is a tough, hardy, and vigorous plant which will grow anywhere.

dendricola – This species has small leathery leaves and small flowers about 5 cm across. Very hardy.

formosum – This species has narrow, hairy leaves and small to medium sized flowers. The larger flowering forms are considered to be the best.

inaequale – A form of *formosum*, but has much larger flowers and leaves. The name means unequal stamens. (Most of the other *maddenii*s also have unequal stamens.) A strong growing plant with pink and white flowers, but not as good as *cubittii* 'Ashcombe'.

johnstoneanum – There are two forms, white and buff. The buff form is easily the best, having creamy yellow flowers with a golden orange colour in the centre. Easy to grow.

lyi – Named after Mr Ly, a Chinese collector. Small white flowers with a yellow centre.

pachypodum – This grew well for a few years but is now going backwards. Probably needs drier conditions.

scottianum – Now merged with *pachypodium*, but looks completely different. A good plant with white flowers, easy to grow.

taronense – The name is a synonym for *dendricola*. Highly rated in England. The plant we have so named has small leaves and flowers like ‘Fragrantissimum’. I don’t think this is *taronense* – however a beautiful plant and highly perfumed.

veitchianum – I grow three forms:

1. The small-leaved form grown by Boulter’s Nursery is one of the toughest plants for Melbourne conditions. My plant was grown in a pot for the first 20 years and then in the ground for the last 10 years. Only about 60 cm high and covered with white flowers in spring. No perfume.

(2) Pink Form – Came from the National Rhododendron Gardens. Quite attractive and should be propagated.

(3) Valders Form – An outstanding plant collected by Peter Valder in Thailand. Large white flowers 10 cm across in trusses of three to four. Sweetly perfumed, easily propagated.

Maddeni Subseries

I have what were previously three separate species now merged into *maddenii*:

1. Straight *maddenii*
2. *maddenii* ssp. *crassum*
3. *odoriferum*

All quite good but late flowering and not as easy to grow as the *Ciliicalyx* Subseries. Watch out for lace bug, petal blight, and dieback.

Dalhousiae Alliance

dalhousiae (and *dalhousiae* var. *rhabdotum*) – I have not had success at growing these, and I believe that they are too difficult to grow in the Melbourne suburbs.

nutallii – Grows quite well in a tub and is always spectacular in flower.

lindleyi – My plant died mysteriously last year. It seems to dislike our summer.

taggianum – An excellent plant with smaller flowers than *lindleyi* but much easier to grow.

liliiflorum – A rare plant overseas, but grows quite well here. Beautiful white trumpet-shaped flowers.

megacalyx – Only a small plant so far. Will need time to evaluate.

Lace bug resistance

A number of the maddenii's are resistant to lace bug. Completely resistant are: *cubbittii* 'Ashcombe'; *dendricola*; *formosum*; *taronense*; *scottianum*; *veitchianum* and *taggianum*. Moderately resistant are: *ciliicalyx* and *lyi*.

Potting mix

Plants of the Maddenia Series need a fast-draining potting mix which will allow some oxygen at the roots to prevent root-rot. The following mix generally gives good results:

- 2 parts premium free-draining potting mix (I use Pot Magic®)
- 1 part coarse gravel (less than 5 mm)
- 1 part perlite

Hybrids

A short list of recommended hybrids:

- 'Saffron Queen' – yellow
- 'Lemon Mist' – yellow
- 'Butterhorn' – yellow
- 'Seta' – pink and white.
- 'Racil' – pink, low growing
- 'Anne Teese' – pure pink
- 'Sabrina Adler' – white with reddish spots
- 'Tyermanii' – large white with yellow throat, a nutallii hybrid
- 'Fragrantissimum' – a leggy plant but worth growing for its perfume

Alan Kepert is a former Australian Rhododendron Registrar and former Secretary of the Victorian Branch. Currently he is a member of the Victorian Branch Committee and also contributes his expertise and labour to the National Rhododendron Gardens, Olinda as a very active member of the ARS Volunteer Group.

New ways to control azalea lace bugs

DENIS CRAWFORD

Azalea lace bugs are sap-sucking insects originating from Japan which attack azaleas and rhododendrons. The adult is about 3 mm long, with lacy clear wings marked with dark patterns. Nymphs are clear when young, growing darker until they are black with spines along the edges of their bodies – nymphs cannot fly. Eggs are difficult to detect as adults lay them partly inside leaf tissue.

All stages of azalea lace bugs are found on the under side of leaves, they are a common pest and can have several generations per year. Conventional wisdom says there are no parasites and predators of this pest and that the only way to control them is with a systemic insecticide. A random survey of specialist azalea and rhododendron nurseries in Victoria, NSW, Queensland and South Australia revealed that this is the approach most growers are taking.

Azalea lace bugs do have natural enemies such as the egg parasitoid *Anagrus takeyanus* and the predator *Stethoconus japonicus*, but they have not been recorded in Australia. Interestingly the predator has been present in the US since its accidental introduction in 1985. There is no research at present into the formal introduction of these beneficials into Australia.

Some growers surveyed thought that moist shady conditions encouraged lace bugs, while others thought that dry conditions were worse. Scientific research has shown that infestations in the shade were less severe than on plants grown in more exposed conditions. I discussed this confusion with Andy Ryland of the Beneficial Bug Co and he suggested that neither condition (too shady or too dry) is ideal, therefore plants are stressed and more susceptible to azalea lace bug attack.

Andy had some good news about alternative methods for treating azalea lace bugs particularly in a landscape situation. The Chinese Gardens at Darling Harbour has mass plantings of azaleas but also has pools featuring large fish, which disallows the use of conventional insecticides as they are toxic to fish. An IPM program based on monitoring and the use of horticultural oil sprays (at 1%) has successfully suppressed the numbers of azalea lace bugs. He said it is important to target nymphs with oils as adults can simply fly away, so regular monitoring for nymphs is vital. When nymphs are found, a weekly oil spray making sure the under side of the leaves receives a good covering, should reduce lace bug numbers significantly. Remember that the oil must cover and suffocate pests.

Professor Andrew Beattie of the University of Western Sydney, a leading expert on horticultural oils adds, “An actual infestation of azalea lace bug is more difficult to control with oil than if you start with low numbers of the pest, where a regular spray of about 1% oil should control them.” He also mentioned that azaleas are quite tolerant of oils and display low phytotoxicity. He also suggested that a very important factor in controlling lace bugs is varietal selection, as some varieties have a leaf wax composition which deters lace bugs. Specialist rhododendron breeders say that varieties with heavy indumentum (furrier undersides) are less susceptible. Alternatively some varieties are more susceptible. A grower I spoke with said, “I practice cultural control with these – if it ain’t rare I pull it out!”

Systemic insecticides are commonly used in commercial nurseries against azalea lace bugs, but what does that do to beneficials? There may be no recognised azalea lace bug parasites and predators in Australia but there are a range of beneficials which help control other pests of azaleas and your other plants. If you spray a broad-spectrum systemic against azalea lace bug you will kill these beneficial insects, possibly causing a flare-up of other pests. Confidor® is registered as a foliar spray as well as a soil drench. If used as a soil drench, beneficials will not come into direct contact with the chemical and most should survive – although the jury is out over what happens to predators when they eat a pest which has taken up the chemical while feeding. Read the label to ensure it is registered for that purpose in your state. If you must use chemicals, try to alternate them as there is already anecdotal evidence of chemical resistance in lace bugs.

New research into mycopathogens (extracts of fungi) at the University of Western Sydney has found some isolates of *Metarhizium anisopliae* and *Beauveria bassiana* are effective against azalea lace bugs on contact. They work best when applied with an oil to prevent the pathogen drying out. 90% mortality of lace bug was recorded after 7–10 days when applied in conditions of 20–30° C. The research suggests that mycopathogens suspended in oil and sprayed at regular intervals could effectively control azalea lace bugs in the urban landscape and nurseries. ❁

Denis Crawford formed his business, Graphic Science (on the web at www.graphicscience.com.au), to combine lifelong interests in photography and science. He holds an Honours Degree in Applied Science (Photography) from RMIT and had 10 years with the Victorian Department of Agriculture in entomological research.

Denis has an international reputation as a macro photography specialist and lectures on the subject. His skills have taken him to Antarctica to photograph marine fossils as part of an Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition in 1996, and to Brazil to run a workshop on insect photography at the XXI International Congress of Entomology 2000.

He has several publications to his name including *Insects and Diseases of Australian Potato Crops* (co-authored with Paul Horne and Rudolf de Boer) and *Backyard Insects* (co-authored with Paul Horne, and his colour plates of set butterfly specimens are a feature of the Whitley Medal winning CSIRO publication *Butterflies of Australia* (text by Michael Braby). He regularly contributes images and articles for *Australian Horticulture*, *Good Fruit & Vegetables*, *Organic Gardener* and *Gardens & Outdoor Living*.

Denis has been a keynote speaker at annual conferences for groups including the Australian Institute of Medical and Biological Illustrators (AIMBI), Australian Society for Horticultural Science (AuSHS), Victorian Entomological Society and Victorian Association of Photographic Societies (VAPS).

An oriental garden setting for your rhododendrons?

BARRY STAGOLL

Garden-styling features which originated in the Orient, in particular those associated with Japan, China, and Korea, have had considerable influence in Western gardening.

Although there are readily discerned differences between the traditional gardening styles of these countries, their 'core' garden concepts which come from common origins developed in China (and subsequently deepened by the influence of Zen Buddhism) are also readily identified, even by an alert observer who has not studied the history of their development.

If we take the main elements of a traditional Japanese garden to be water, rock and plants, these are also used together in a great many Western gardens. However, there are subtle ways in which these and other subsidiary elements are put together in an authentic Japanese garden style, for instance – such that an observer can quickly recognise the provenance of the garden's styling. It is unnecessary for this to be identified by the presence of Japanese architecture, or artifacts such as lanterns or water basins. Indeed, it has been said that the garden itself is an 'artifact' (a creation embodying imagination and cultural antecedents), which speaks for itself.

Why have Western garden builders adopted oriental garden features to incorporate in their own garden styling? Was it to demonstrate and reflect interest in the traditions of other cultures? Was it just a question of fashion? Did it seem that oriental garden precedents offered useful models for creating pleasing small garden spaces, for instance in modern city dwellings?

Well, I'm sure that all these influences were at work, and others of this sort. But surely a major impetus was the ambience – the 'feel' – of experiencing the surroundings of Japanese gardens or images of them.

The stroll garden

Of course, there is not merely one style of Japanese garden. In the West, probably the one most familiar, with its rock-fringed ponds; bridges and paths; lanterns; carefully manicured trees and flowering shrubs; perhaps also trellis or arbours for climbing plants such as the wisteria; (and often 'borrowed scenery' as a backdrop) is the 'stroll garden'. A peaceful, orderly, aesthetic landscape, with something of a 'fairy tale' quality. Natural – almost as if by suspending disbelief just long enough such a landscape could occur pretty much like this



BARRY STAGOLL

somewhere in a wild setting, with all those marvellous, select plants growing happily together. Yet we cannot fail to be aware of the careful efforts – and the traditional crafts and concepts – which have gone into its creation, and to admire the results in this context.

In my view it would be quite wrong to describe such a stroll garden, however closely it followed central design precepts many hundreds of years old, as a formal garden. It is more a product of something we might assess as ‘studied informality’ – the creators having a deliberate objective of producing an idealised natural landscape, much as we might describe the motivations of the 18th Century ‘English landscape’ school of landscape designers. It is also a general concept to which many plants-people (gardeners with a primary interest in plants) are attracted, to accommodate their plants in a ‘natural’, informal garden setting.

What contributes to its informality, despite its careful manicuring? Central to its achievement are the presence of asymmetry and the exercise of restraint. Symmetrical placement of identical or very similar components in any garden quickly establishes a degree of formality, especially if the particular components are prominent. So symmetry is usually left well behind at the entrance (where the gateposts at least, and maybe some other artifacts as well, will be positioned symmetrically). It is also seen in the shaping of ponds (never round or otherwise strictly geometrical); the placement of islands in them (never in the centre); the placement of rocks (large and smaller juxtaposed); placement of lanterns (some by the water’s edge, others elsewhere; and the placement of larger plants and trees.

The character of simplicity exhibited by such a traditional Japanese garden is a manifestation of the restraint shown in its creation. For instance ‘modest’ plants will tend to be favoured, which do not carry really bright blooms likely to dominate a portion of the landscape. However, it’s not just a matter of the selection of plants. The avoidance of too many competing visual elements in a single garden space is especially important. The use of natural materials as far as possible, over ‘industrial’ materials – at least insofar as they are visible – also contributes.

However, this is not to say that the scene need be boring. Variety is observed in the selection of plants for shape, size, texture and colour, and their preference for different blooming seasons; the selection of artifacts, bridge styles, and of any fences and buildings included; the shapes of rocks, the choice of colours for pebbles occupying different parts of the garden; and using different surfacing and texturing for paths in different parts of the garden.

We can understand how these design considerations would have drawn heavily on the traditions of the Chinese landscape gardeners, as many other streams of Chinese civilisation and culture were absorbed by Japan over many centuries past. History marks how the original concepts themselves evolved from the works of those designers and builders who – over two thousand years ago – created huge landscaped estates for Chinese rulers, intended to represent the more exciting aspects of the varied natural scenery of their kingdoms. If you visit a traditional, enclosed Chinese garden you will find that it feels different to a Japanese stroll garden, but think about the principles. Look, for instance at the way the vistas are laid out, and the placement of the rocks, and you will notice the care taken to avoid patently symmetrical results throughout, although there will quite often be symmetrical placements of some things, such as ornaments. Look beneath your feet, and you will see the path surfacing changing constantly.

In a Chinese garden one is likely to find more showy plants included – the Chinese came to gardening early, no doubt because of the measure of civilisation which emerged early in China, but we should bear in mind also that they lived in landscape which was home to an amazing variety of beautiful plant species, and no doubt importing them into gardens was a natural celebration of this.

Respect for all the natural elements of a landscape, and especially the living elements, is very much a part of the Japanese cultural tradition. This is said to be drawn partly from the ‘animist’ culture from which the Shinto religion developed. Shintoism survived the otherwise pervading influence of Zen Buddhism in Japanese culture, to continue alongside it up to modern times. Both converged in the aspect of spiritual belief which we might summarise broadly as ‘nature worship’. Again, there were similar outcomes from the merging of earlier spiritual belief and Zen Buddhism in China. A Chinese garden should

evoke living creatures in general rather than plants alone, including fish, visiting birds, and animals. If there are no animals actually ‘alive and breathing’, then a glimpse of a rock as it is touched by the light at a certain time of day, or a shadow, will be taken to represent the presence of, say, a rabbit or deer.

A somewhat specialised form of stroll garden – or in certain cases a garden within a more conventional stroll garden – is the ‘moss garden’. Examples are relatively rare, but this is a garden which features mosses covering the ground, attaching also to rocks, trees, and artifacts such as stone lanterns and bridge rails. It will also contain the obligatory ponds to include the element of water, which also picks up the all-pervading greens of the landscape. These gardens are very distinctive, and establishing one clearly would represent a considerable challenge unless the environment was inherently favourable to the cultivation of mosses, most of which tend to be very resentful of high light levels and, to a lesser extent, dry atmospheres.

Popular Western concepts of a ‘Japanese garden’ include the notion that it is small. Well, a great many, both inside and outside Japan, are. However, although they’re much less common, very large gardens fitting the stroll garden model exist, both in Japan and elsewhere. Not infrequently, they also incorporate examples of the other traditional types of Japanese garden, which are invariably modest in size. I’ll comment a little on these other types under the next heading. So the stroll garden is actually a concept which lends itself to some flexibility.

It’s not surprising that the traditional concepts of the stroll garden are those most usually incorporated in Western gardens which adopt a Japanese style. As I’ve said, it’s easy to see the affinity for people deeply interested in plants who prefer to site them in a ‘natural’ setting but still want at least a certain amount of order, and the access and facilities to enjoy them to the full.

Other types of Japanese garden

Three other main types are commonly encountered. Usually these are quite modest in size, and following the ethic of restraint they will always be quite simple, even seeming spartan in their scope.

The ‘tea garden’ is perhaps the type most quoted in conversation in the West, but authentic examples are also quite possibly actually experienced the least by Westerners and will be least understood. It is a very small, very simple – even rustic – garden of two parts: an outer and inner garden. Its purpose is wholly to allow the hosting of the ‘tea ceremony’, an occasion for revered enjoyment of tea served in an unchanging traditional way, and quiet discussion and contemplation of simple natural surroundings and traditional, usually simple, objects of Japanese fine art. Rendition of traditional music and poetry by the hosts may also be enjoyed.

Guests prepare themselves for the tea ceremony in the outer garden and await their host's invitation to enter the inner garden, where the actual ceremony occurs.

In Japan the tea garden is found in the grounds of temples, as well as in such places as real estate owned by corporations, public parks, hotel and restaurant grounds, and private houses with suitable space in their surroundings. They consist of simple carpentry; very natural and simple paths of stepping stones; moss and self-effacing plants of small stature; a water basin or 'tsukubai' for the guests to use to cleanse their mouths and faces before entry to the inner garden; bamboo fences and screens; and a little rustic pavilion-styled teahouse.

This style of garden has been included within larger Japanese style gardens from some of the earliest examples created in the West. Of course, where the resident population included persons of Japanese ancestry, they will have seen use for their intended purpose. In other locations, they were incorporated simply as a borrowed landscaping feature primarily for their aesthetic values, although they may have subsequently acquired occasional patronage for the tea ceremony. They are typically an extremely peaceful and picturesque garden feature, and this has encouraged their inclusion as a component of many gardens in the Japanese style established more recently in Western countries. Where limited garden space only is available, renditions of the tea garden have been used as the principal landscaping theme.

'Zen' gardens are quite different, being a unique embodiment in the form of a garden of principles important to Zen Buddhism. The components are, if anything, even simpler than those of the tea garden, to the point of being ascetic. They consist of a dry landscape formed of rock (representing islands), pebbles or sand (used to represent water), and moss (this ensuring that plants are represented). Typically the garden will be enclosed at least on some of its sides by a stone wall, and often it is viewed from the precincts of a temple, with the objective of the viewer reaching a heightened state of spiritual enlightenment through its contemplation. Such a garden is very carefully designed according to traditional Zen philosophy, with an absolute minimum of individual components.

The Zen garden is much less frequently represented in Western settings than all the other main Japanese garden styles.

The last type of Japanese garden on which I will offer a comment is the 'courtyard garden' style placed in internal courtyards of residences or other buildings. Such spaces have been utilised as gardens in many other parts of the world down through history. However, in many civilisations they were in effect a room open above to the elements, which was utilised as living or recreation space by the occupants. In Japan, they are typically small landscaped spaces intended for viewing rather than visiting as such. They have a sort of

equivalent in walled Chinese gardens, where some garden spaces will be set aside for viewing from windows rather than being available to the visitor for perambulation, as will be the case with most of the other garden spaces.

In Japan, the key components of such a garden will still be the rock, water, and plants as encountered in the other types. However, the space may be so small as to allow only a very minimal design, as the objective will be to avoid it appearing cluttered despite its limited size. Plants selected for small stature, including small grasses, or dwarfed plants including bonsai in pots, will typically be positioned in such spaces, around a tiny pond or water basin. In good examples the styling shares the quality of refinement demonstrated by the other styles of garden, and they can be a highly attractive feature. They allow occupants of small urban premises, for instance a restaurant or dwelling, daily contact with the marvels of nature going beyond the simple display of static flower arrangements, bonsai or potted plants. Even in multi-storey buildings, such gardens, or ‘facsimiles’ of such gardens, are sometimes incorporated.

Not surprisingly, this concept is very adaptable for use in small courtyard spaces in Western buildings, and has therefore been quite widely and successfully adopted in the West.

Thinking of building your own Japanese-influenced garden ?

Some writings on Japanese gardens have admonished that it is vital to follow a virtual textbook formula if attempting to create a Japanese-styled garden for yourself. I concede that if one wanted to replicate – or imitate closely – particular examples, this would be unavoidable. However, I see absolutely nothing wrong with adopting underlying concepts from another cultural tradition into one’s own garden creations, nor in introducing selected elements of such a tradition, so long as extreme sensitivity is observed to the achievement of a satisfactory context for these concepts and elements. For instance, however well-loved it may be, I would baulk at placing a garden ornament exhibiting Western tradition or values in the same vista as a Japanese lantern. Similarly, I would not favour placing an area of strictly formal Western-style garden where it will share attention with an area landscaped in the Japanese style. Otherwise, it is a matter of how fundamentally one can interpret the concepts of the ‘studied informality’ (as I’ve termed it) of the Japanese style. If you can become competent in this, I’m sure you needn’t follow slavishly any textbook design.

To take a simple example of how you might deviate from ‘traditional’ methods to achieve a legitimate and satisfying result, in locations where environmental conditions are not benign enough to grow traditional Japanese plants, you must substitute others. This should hold true even where the objective is to create a ‘Japanese garden’ as such, rather than merely to introduce selected

Japanese styling elements into a more cosmopolitan landscape. And, rather than feel guilty if it's not possible (or economic) to access suitable 'natural' materials for paths, artifacts, etc., choose the most natural in appearance of the alternatives. It's amazing how much more natural a concrete paving slab will look if its surface is eroded and 'aged' by scrubbing with sulphuric acid – even more so if it is broken into pieces!

It is important to make sure that you can attend to all the normal requirements for obtaining a good outcome for any garden project – meeting the cultivation requirements of your plants as well as possible, weed control, effective draining, placement for good access and viewing, etc. Do make sure that you install weed mat or another type of effective weed barrier under areas of pebbles, sand or gravel, to avoid a heavy weeding schedule.

I won't try to suggest here any construction techniques for ponds, bridges, fences, etc. You will find that a visit to a library or bookstore will turn up numbers of books containing plenty of practical advice on this aspect, including many which focus on the construction of oriental-style garden features.

Provided buildings or adjacent parts of the garden are not too overwhelming or inappropriate in their appearance, if necessary the eye can be assisted to focus on the central scene by installing some suitable fencing – with or without screening or climbing plants. You might even consider planting a row of ornamental bamboo, selected carefully for an acceptable growing habit, or, if not, with roots extremely well-contained. In the final analysis, if it's not possible to exclude from attention some surrounding features which are not ideal, then the designer should be entitled to rely on another concept borrowed from Japanese culture – the code of politeness would forbid any critical comment on this aspect, or even a sympathetic reaction which implied that the visitor had actually noticed!

What if a Chinese-influenced garden is more to your taste?

In some ways you can probably take a little more in the way of liberties with the inclusion of elements and features which may be encountered in Chinese gardens. Inherently, designers of 'authentic' Chinese gardens are somewhat less strictly bound by traditional rules than are those of 'authentic' Japanese gardens. The same is true for exponents of Bonsai ('Penjing' in China), where the tradition is more forgiving of a greater degree of spontaneity and originality than is typically tolerated by serious exponents in Japan. However, you should still be careful to avoid creating clutter and potential conflicts between individual garden features.

As with a Japanese-themed garden, you should plan to incorporate rock, water and plants. More flamboyantly-shaped rocks are more representative of Chinese styling, and it's okay to have them in greater abundance if you wish. As noted earlier, a greater range of flowering plants, including types which offer a

more showy blooming period, is quite in keeping with a Chinese theme. Such a garden is often planted so as to ensure that the passing of the seasons will be evident in every vista through the garden, by plants which flower and set seeds or fruits, take on a changed foliage colour, and/or lose their foliage, at differing times of year. If the garden as a whole is to be of some size, you might bear in mind that it is quite often contrived that a Chinese garden will be divided in some way so as to create a series of separate vistas, rather than just different angles on the same scenery elements.

To reinforce the Chinese theme, you might note that whilst Chinese gardens also use building materials such as bamboo and timber – for instance in the creation of arbours for climbing plants like the Wisteria – commonly they will also have masonry walls, for instance, to divide spaces. These can add a great deal of interest when incorporating features such as a ‘moon gate’ and other traditionally-styled viewing apertures.

A setting for favourite rhododendrons and azaleas

A garden design showing oriental influences is a perfect vehicle for adding interest to a display of smaller stature rhododendrons and azaleas. It doesn't have to be large, as discussed in the preceding sections of this article.

To take the example of a garden in Japanese style, typical inclusions in a small stroll garden or a courtyard garden in Japan will be the many types of Kurume Azaleas, Satsukis, and Gumpos. There are also plenty of smaller-growing Indica types (particularly if we include those of recent origin), as well as species such as *R. kiusianum* and *R. kaempferi* which are at home in relatively small spaces. Other flowering plants with a valid claim to inclusion, if you were to lean towards plants typical of those used traditionally in Japanese gardens, are smaller types of Pieris, Camellia, Daphne, Osmanthus, Aucuba and water Iris. In a larger space, plants such as *R. degronianum* ssp. *yakushmanum* and *R. makinoi* might appeal as choices, by reason of their wild origins, and ornamental cherry trees are a traditional inclusion, usually single-flowering types to observe the ethic of restraint. Clematis and wisteria are possible choices, along with the alternative of a well-selected bamboo if a non-flowering traditional plant is preferred, for screening plantings at the side of the garden. Wisteria is a large, vigorous plant, so unless you are prepared to be ruthless in keeping it under control – and skilled in pruning it so as to preserve its potential for flowering in the following season – it would probably be preferable to choose a suitable, less vigorous, clematis.

As to larger companion plants, selected smaller-growing *Acer palmatum* varieties are ideal. To complete the style, consider a smallish conifer or two. If you are ambitious enough to take on the task on containing the size of a

weeping spruce or larch, and to train it to suitably asymmetrical and gnarled shape, or do the same with a more open type of conifer such as a Japanese white pine or (easier) a dwarf juniper, then your garden will acquire an even more authentic character.

Water, in the form of a pond, and the rocks installed in the garden will be very useful in creating a good environment for the plantings. The pond will assist in maintaining humidity, and rocks provide cool root runs and conserve ground moisture during dry periods.

At the margins of your plantings, one or two different types of mondo grass, a small selection of moisture loving grasses or plants to surround the pond, and, if you can get it to establish, a discreet presence of small ground ferns or mosses will add some more authenticity and interest. Don't forget the aim of avoiding clutter – overdoing the number of plants of distinctive appearance is a trap to be avoided, particularly in a small space.

Whatever you decide on the mix of more optional features you might include, don't rely on the installation of a Japanese lantern or water basin, or other such feature, to compensate for such things as allowing your garden design to show an unacceptable degree of symmetry in its composition, becoming too cluttered, or being dominated by a feature such as a wall or fence where a little imagination might suggest an effective way to soften its presence. Remember, simplicity and refinement are key to achievement of the character we'd hope the garden will display, as a valuable setting for our plants and a satisfying scene for us and our visitors to enjoy.

At Mirrabooka, our own garden, many years after having adopted the intention to include a Japanese garden as a part of our overall plan, we completed its establishment only last year. It occupies only a fairly small space 15 m (about 50 ft) long and up to about 6 m deep (with the actual planting space averaging about 4 m deep). Sited in a space which is mostly enclosed, it is essentially of courtyard garden character, although it's well and truly in an outdoors setting. In such a narrow space, to arrange it so a stroll could be taken through the area would impose grave limitations on the planting space. So the viewing area is placed along the front. Small though it is, it accommodates over fifty flowering plants, mostly small azaleas, and a few small-scale trees.

We certainly didn't follow closely any particular model for our project. Rather, we took pleasure in accepting the challenge of utilising recognisably Japanese styling principles to achieve a result satisfying to us. We're happy that the garden reflects our own preferences for the mood we wished it to express, and that it provides an appropriate setting for enjoyment at close hand of some of our favourite plants, including many venerable types with a long history of cultivation in Japan. ❀

Sharing our knowledge

ALAN WALKER

About four years ago, a group of Victorian Branch members, led by our President Bill Taylor, started something which has just continued to grow.

Dee Dinkgreve, a Parks Victoria staff member in the office at the National Rhododendron Gardens, Olinda, asked our President whether the Society could do something to help improve the garden at the Olinda Post Office. This led to an offer to plant azaleas and rhododendrons there, if she could make arrangements for this.

Dee came to an arrangement with the leaseholder, who said that he would keep the plants watered. She also arranged for a teacher and twelve students from the Olinda Primary School to become involved with the planting.

The planting took place with the supervision and help of a group of our members. Up to this point the exercise went very well, although sadly the leaseholder did not keep up with the watering subsequently.

Later the same year, it was decided to donate a large quantity of rhododendrons to be planted in the Primary School's extensive garden. Arrangements agreed, a group of members set off, led by the President with his van chock full of plants. The whole school turned out – children and teachers. All worked out very well, with our group mostly just supervising and advising as the plants went into their places.

Children practicing propagation via cuttings.



This led on to another idea to further nourish the interest in rhododendrons amongst the school students. It was thought that it would be a nice gesture to give a rhododendron to each of the Year Six children at the end of the year, preparatory to their move on to secondary schools in the following year, to remind them of their time at Olinda and of the Gardens. Tom Noonan and I visited the school on the last assembly day of the year and made the presentation, which was well received.

After the presentation, the Principal, Jorg Kiene, asked if Society members might consider offering some instruction about growing rhododendrons to his students. This idea was discussed in a meeting at the school in early 2002, and it was decided that Year Three and Year Four students would visit the Gardens for about an hour once each month, to learn about propagation.

The children worked on how to raise azaleas and rhododendrons from cuttings, with good success, and at the end of the year took home their little plants.

The regular classes, and the presentation of plants to the students completing Year Six at the school, has continued each year since. We have found a really good means of promoting an affection for growing things, and for rhododendrons especially, among the young.

It would be great if all members were to try to find ways to pass on their knowledge to younger generations, helping our Society to grow even stronger in the future. ❁



Alan Walker is an enthusiastic member of the Victorian Branch, who has served on the Branch Committee. He is a long-serving and hardworking member of the Volunteer Group which assists in the National Rhododendron Gardens, Olinda. Alan was made a Life Member in 2000 for his services to rhododendrons and the Society. Alan is very proud of a collection of photographs of students at work and play in the Gardens and thank you letters from students. Many expressed thanks for their newly-acquired plants, and at least one conveyed special thanks to Alan for allowing its writer to “get his hands dirty”.

The vireya collection at the National Rhododendron Gardens

MURRAY McALISTER
VICE PRESIDENT, VICTORIAN BRANCH

In 1991, Dr R. Withers estimated that almost 120 vireya species were in cultivation in Australia at that time.¹ Today, perhaps 50% of those can be identified in the National Rhododendron Gardens (NRG) at Olinda.

Brief highlights

In the late 1950s, Brian Clancy acquired seed of seven species – *laetum*, *zoelleri*, *phaeopeplum*, *konori*, *macgregoriae* and *aurigeranum* from Dr H. Sleumer.

Canon Cruttwell and Lou Searle each made significant additions to that initial collection, which because of the sheer diversity of material added, highlighted the marvellous potential of vireyas.

Up to the year 1980, Lyn Craven, Dr Michael Black, Don Stanton, Peter Valder, Paul Kores, and Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew made further additions to the collection.

Why did the NRG collection decline?

1. There was prolonged debate as to whether vireyas were a legitimate addition to the rhododendron collection.
2. The variable flowering habit of vireyas caused some members to:-
 - a. consider that they distracted from the core business of the Society (Asiatic types).
 - b. observe the new commercial opportunities that such a plant offered them.
3. Over-zealous pruning of many plants (cuttings?) resulted in death of the specimen plant. Many of these were unreplaceable.
4. Vireyas were initially considered to be an indoors plant, with all the attendant limitations?
5. Subsequent outdoors plantings were often overshadowed, overgrown in a maturing garden. Poor location led to widespread neglect.

Unfortunately, collectors had become rivals – perhaps a little like the market for tulip bulbs in 1640.

It is worth observing that the initial seven species were quickly hybridised in every possible combination. By their very nature, however, these offspring tended to be long, leggy plants. Thus, any new species were eagerly received because of their potential. Possession gave the holder new possible horizons.

Consequences

1. The most significant vireya species collections in Australia are held in personal collections.
2. Much of the NRG collection is unnamed, or incorrectly named.
3. General reluctance to share plant material has eventually led to the loss from cultivation of some vireyas, and has certainly restricted the capacity of some of our hybridists to breed new plants.
4. Each of the above has had implications ultimately for the commercial development of vireyas in Australia.

With this background in mind, the Victorian Branch has commenced a program to renourish the NRG collection by sourcing plants throughout Australia and New Zealand.



Rhododendron superbum.

1. Australian sourcing

- a. The Rouse family kindly allowed us to collect cuttings from the late John Rouse's collection. Some 250 cuttings, including 60 species and some hybrids, have been propagated. These include *malayanum*, *fallacinum*, *crassifolium*, *yongii*, *multinervium* and *williamsii*. We have arranged for another collection later this year.
- b. Lyn Craven still holds an excellent species collection, and he has provided both cuttings and plants to us. In addition, seed from some of his latest trips will be invaluable. *R. malulidii*, *wentianun*, *solitarium*, *rhodopus*, 'Hunstein's Secret', *hyacinthosmum*, *sumatranum*, *ruttenii*, *planecostatum*, *alticolum*, *vaccinoides*, *burtii* and *pudorinum* are a few of those Lyn has given.
- c. Neil Puddey has agreed to grow on specific plants for the Society, with a few species included. We expect delivery late this year.
- d. Andrew Raper has donated many large specimens to the NRG, including *hellwigii*, *orbiculatum* and *superbum*.
- e. At the time of writing, we are also negotiating with Sam Bornstein for his collection of approximately 650 mature vireyas to be donated in part to the NRG. This would further complement our collection.
- f. Graeme Price has also donated a collection of 400 of his own hybrids to the gardens. These are young plants, and we are appreciative of Graeme's gesture.

2. New Zealand sourcing

We are absolutely delighted to discover that NZ growers were very willing to provide cuttings at no charge. We therefore imported over 1100 cuttings to Australia in September 2003. The primary thrust was vireya species, with some hybrids, and also some Asiatics.

- a. Richard Currie was our principal contact, and he, in turn, gave us details of other significant growers in the North Island. Richard is a leading hybridist, with many magnificent new creations. Some of note are 'Goldfinger', 'Rouge Noel', 'French Vanilla', 'Scarlett O'Hara' and 'Lord of the Rings'. 'Goldfinger' is flowering for us now, and we are certain you will enjoy it.
- b. Graham Smith at Pukeiti, was very gracious in providing a wealth of cuttings, and in the hospitality he extended to us. He has a pink *superbum* which is truly superb. *R. blackii*, *robinsonii*, 'Satan's Gift' were a few of those collected.
- c. Mark Jury supplied us with *williamsii* and *saxifragoides* and an excellent selection from their famed *maddeniae*.
- d. David Brown provided 'Shantung Pink', 'Yellow Bunny', 'Solar Flare', 'Red Mountain' and lots of good humour.
- e. John Kenyon sourced 'Ra', 'Aleksandr', 'Pavlova', 'Big Softy' and 'Madonna'.

- f. David Binny allowed us to choose from his comprehensive species collection, providing *bloembergenii*, *searleanum*, *yelliottii*, *sessilifolium* and countless others.
- g. Oz Blumhardt supplied 'Rotimoto Rose', 'Hot Tropic' and others.

What did we learn?

1. The New Zealand growers were very generous in supplying material. It is obvious that they each share with the others, particularly in the species area. Perhaps this is a good form of insurance?
2. New Zealand hybrids appear to be more advanced than in Australia, perhaps because of the wider gene pool from which they have drawn?
3. Hybrids are released to commercial growers to allow propagation in volume, and eventual wider distribution.
4. It appeared to us that seedlings or bare-rooted plants better survived the methyl bromide treatment required for entry into Australia than did some cuttings.
5. Many growers have donated plants to public parks and gardens, e.g. K. Adams, G. Smith, J. Kenyon. The results are visible at Eden Park and Pukeiti.

The future

1. There are other potential sources within Australia which require follow-up. It is demoralising to have to acquire cuttings in New Zealand of plants also grown by Australians who sometimes disclaim possession of such plants.
2. Multiplication of sourced material is our major priority. We would like to make this available to interested members and/or interstate Branches of the Society.
3. Develop a comprehensive collection within the National Rhododendron Garden by establishing procedures to propagate species regularly, and to aggregate the collection.
4. Establish a comprehensive seed harvesting program so that we can reciprocate the generosity of our New Zealand counterparts.
5. Develop a culture of sharing by learning from the past. If the New Zealanders can do it, so can we.

The cultivation of vireyas offers us all the promise of excitement, colour, scent and unpredictability. Let's all enjoy it in the spirit of cooperation. ❀

Reference

- ¹'A History of the Introduction of Vireya Rhododendron Species into Cultivation in Australia', Dr. R.M. Withers, *The Rhododendron*, Volume 31, Spring 1991

A walk through the rhododendron forests of Nepal

March 2004

PAT WATSON

Prayer flags fluttering in the breeze; prayer wheels clicking as they turn; snow on the peaks of the world's highest mountains; terraces of rice, wheat and vegetables climbing to the sky; rushing waterfalls; and hospitable, friendly Nepalese people are some happy memories of our trip to Nepal.

However, the most wonderful memories of all are of the thousands of flowering rhododendrons we trekked through for ten days, in the Annapurna Conservation Area in central Nepal.

We planned our trip after I read an article in the Fall 2003 (November) of the *American Rhododendron Society Journal*. There was an article by Elsie James on Nepal, with details of a trip planned for March 2004. After contact by email, my husband Alan and I joined the group.

This group consisted of 14 keen nature lovers, including rhodoholics, two botanists and the Director of a German Botanic Garden. They were mainly Canadians, with two Australians, two Americans, two Australians (us) and one German, together with Nepalese guide, naturalist and porters.

To start the trek we travelled about 200 km west from Kathmandu to the lakeside town of Pokhara, and then onto Phedi, where we started climbing up the roadless tracks into the Himalayas. Our trek was fairly strenuous, and very little was on level ground. We were either climbing up a mountain or down to a river to cross on a shaky bridge before climbing another mountain! There were no roads or vehicles at all – everything was carried by human walkers, including building materials. Each night was spent in a lodge/guest house.

For the first couple of days, and the last couple of days we were at a lower altitude, and the rhododendron trees that we passed through that were in flower were all *R. arboreum* with dark crimson flowers, many reaching 15 m in height. I can relate it to bush walking in Australia, and it was like walking through a forest of eucalyptus trees all covered with trusses of red flowers.

Many of the rhodos looked to be of a great age by the size of their trunks – some were 3 m in circumference – with epiphytes such as white flowering orchids (*Coelogyne* sp.) on their branches.

As we climbed higher to Tadapani and Ghorapani the *R. arboreum* were mainly in various shade of pink, with a few white. The bright scarlet of *R. barbatum* started to appear. Also bright against the sky were the huge white flowers of *Magnolia campbellii*.

It was amazing to see so many thousands of rhododendrons – the big trees each had thousands of trusses, and all the flowers were at their peak. A couple of weeks later they would be finishing, although there were buds on the *R. campanulatum* and *R. lepidotum*, and one that our botanists thought to be a cross between *R. arboreum* and *R. campanulatum*.

Carpeting the ground, mainly in the woodland areas, were flowering violets, gentian, primula and arisaema. In the damper gorges there were masses of deciduous daphnes, with flowers in soft pinks and lilacs. Many were about two metres high, and the perfume wafted on the breeze. There were also the yellow flowers of *Piptanthus* and *Reinwardia*. We saw leaves of *Peonia*, *Meconopsis*, *Anemone*, *Geum* and bulbs which would probably be in flower with the later rhododendrons in May.

As we often walked along ridge tops it was also amazing to look down on a tapestry of the upward facing rhodo trusses of pinks and reds, or to look over to other mountain sides covered with rhododendrons.

We trekked from 21 March to 30 March. If you plan to travel to this part of Nepal to see *R. arboreum*, this was perfect timing. Our group was aged from 45 to 75, so age is not a problem, but you need to have good legs, wind and heart to do the climbing. You also need patience and adaptability, as some of our accommodation and food was very basic, but adequate.

Before and after the trek we explored the ancient temples and pagodas of Kathmandu, and its World Heritage Sites where ancient buildings and holy sites are used daily by the locals, and magnificent antiques sit side by side with sellers of tee-shirts to tourists, and piles of garbage. We also visited the interesting Kathmandu Botanic Garden, and spent three days in Chitwan National Park, where we walked through the jungle, viewing birds and plants, and rode elephants.

Ken Cathie very kindly sent me, just before he died, a number of copies of the *The Rhododendron* which I distributed to the other trekkers.

Our trip was organised by Elsie James, a Canadian who lives both in Canada and Nepal. Elsie can be contacted at tibethet@moss.com.np or through the Himalayan Ecological Trekking website www.himalayanecological.com. ❀

Pat has been a Society member for many years, and also of the American Rhododendron Society from whom she has bought seed. A few years ago she received cuttings and seeds from members Jack O'Shannassy and Jack Wilson.

She has lived for 28 years at Galston in the North Western 'Hills' area of Sydney, on five acres, so there is plenty of room for planting, although with the current drought, and hot dry weather over the last few years, she has not been planting new areas.

Pat is also a member of the NSW Camellia Research Society, and edits their newsletter. Her garden has hedges of camellias and azaleas, and large shrub areas and borders of camellias – with rhododendrons mixed through them, and underplanted with undemanding perennials such as daisies, salvias and iris. There are many large gum trees, and around them are planted beds of natives for the birds. There are also about two acres planted with fruit trees and deciduous trees, underplanted with masses of early daffodils and jonquils. The district is not really suitable for rhodos, but various 'cast iron' ones such as 'Van Ness Sensation', 'Racil', 'Ivery's Scarlet' and 'Elegans' do well, as do various lavender, pink, and cerise ones, whose names have been forgotten. Vireyas do exceptionally well. The vireyas planted in sunny areas flower best, and recent plantings are mostly vireyas. There are also a number of seedlings that are flowering.

Zoo vireyas

Over the first half of 2004, Allan Kerr Grant (past President of the South Australian Branch and past national President) and two other SA Branch members, Chris Thomas and Bill Voigt, planted a group of vireyas in the gardens at the Adelaide Zoo, with the approval of its Director, Ed McAllister. These gardens are a feature of the Zoo, and contain numerous interesting plants originating in tropical regions.

The Society's National Council has been successful at encouraging a number of Australian botanic gardens to introduce vireya plantings over the last several years, as part of a continuing official project. It is pleasing to see other parallel efforts within the Society also succeeding in getting vireyas more widely used in locations visited by the public. We trust that the vireya plantings at Adelaide Zoo will prosper, and attract deserved attention. ❀



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New Registrations 2003-2004

KEN GILLANDERS

The following is a listing of registrations submitted by the Australian Rhododendron Society Plant registrar, and approved by the Royal Horticultural Society during the year 2003/2004.

Colour numbers refer to the R.H.S. Colour Chart. Accompanying colour names are taken from "A Contribution Towards Standardization of Color Names in Horticulture", R.D. Huse and K.L. Kelly, edited D.H. Voss (ARS 1984)

Parents of plants are reported in the conventional order – seed parent × pollen parent.

Abbreviations used H hybridized by
G grown to first flower
S selected by
N named by
I introduced by
R registered by

This year I have included broad colour definitions after RHS Colour Chart numbers for the flowers. This will enable members without access to the chart to have some idea of the colour of the flower.

'Belle De Marjon' Elepidote hybrid of 'Tortoiseshell Wonder' × white unnamed seedling. H(1990) G(2000) N(2003) R(2003) Don Dossier. Truss: flat, consisting of 11 funnel-shaped flowers. Corolla: 50 mm × 65 mm. Lobes: 5, wavy. Buds: 50A. Corolla inside and outside: 50B (pink) Leaves: oblanceolate 160 mm × 50 mm. Height: 1m × 0.5 m in 13 years. Flowering: November.

'Burnie Shines' Vireya hybrid of *superbum* × unknown. H(1993 Brian Clancy) G(1997) N & R(2003) Neil Jordan. Commercial introducer: Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden. Truss: flat, consisting of 8 tubular funnel-shaped flowers. Corolla: 85 mm × 80 mm. Lobes: 7, wavy. Buds: 185A, (mahogany) Corolla inside & outside" 62B (pink) 16B in tube (cream) Strong clove scent. Leaves: elliptic, 120 mm × 45 mm. Height: 1.5m × 1m in 8 years. Flowering throughout the year.

'Edwin George Swallow' Elepidote hybrid of 'Miss B L Jones' × 'Petras Debut' H(1996) G N R(2003) Don Dossier. Truss: conical, consisting of 20 funnel-shaped flowers. Corolla: 75 mm × 125 mm. Lobe: 5, wavy. Buds: 73A. Corolla inside & outside: 65A (pink) edged white, 10 mm ray on top lobe 185A (deep crimson) fragrant. Leaves: lanceolate 160 mm × 50 mm. Height: 1 m × 0.5 m in 7 years. Flowering: November.

'Emma Jayne' Elepidote hybrid of 'Aunty Ivy' × *aberconwayi*. H(1993) G(2003) N & R(2004) Don Dosser. Truss: ball, consisting of 13 campanulate flowers. Corolla: 50 mm × 65 mm. Lobes: 5, wavy. Buds: 73C turning to pure white. Corolla inside and outside: pure white. Leaves: ovate 100 mm × 50 mm margins upcurved. Height: 60 mm x60 mm in 10 years. Flowering: October/November

'Fairie Nielsen' Elepidote hybrid of 'Lockington Pride' × 'Loderi Titan' H(1990) G(2000) N & R(2004) Don Dosser. Truss: dome, consisting of 17 funnel-shaped flowers. Corolla: 50 mm × 90 mm. Lobes: 7, wavy. Buds: 61C. Corolla inside and outside: 75C(pale pink) turning to white with age, scented. Leaves: elliptic 220 mm × 55 mm, glossy with wavy margins. Height: 1.5m × 2 m in 13 years. Flowering: November.

'Fiery Eyes' Evergreen azalea hybrid of 'Ambrosius' × 'Firefly' H(1986) G(1990) N(1995) R(2004) Craig Carroll. Number of flowers per truss: 2. Corolla: width 80 mm. Buds: 45D. Corolla: double red. Leaves: elliptic.

'Lesley Crowden' Elepidote hybrid of 'Marcus of Lockington' × 'Australian Sunset' H(1996) G(2002) N & R(2004) Don Dosser. Truss: dome, consisting of 20 funnel-shaped flowers. Corolla: 50 mm × 100 mm Lobes: 6, wavy. Buds: 63C. Corolla inside: 18D(pale yellow) 63C(pink) on edge, with a ray 181C(terracotta). Corolla outside: 63C turning to 18D. Leaves: elliptic 150 mm × 40 mm. Height: 60cm × 60 cm in 7 years. Flowering: November/December.

'Mary Maughan' Elepidote hybrid of 'Petras Debut' × 'Miss B L Jones' H(1996) G N R(2003) Don Dosser. Truss: ball, consisting of 22 broadly funnel shaped flowers. Corolla: 50 mm × 100 mm. Lobes: 5, wavy. Buds: 59B. Corolla inside: 73A(pink) paler at centre. Corolla outside: 72C(mauve-pink) Leaves: lanceolate 150 mm × 45 mm. Height: 60 cm × 60 cm in 7 years. Flowering: November.

'Nell' Elepidote hybrid of 'Judith Ellen' × 'Cup Day' H(1990) G(200) N & R(2003) Don Dosser. Truss: ball consisting of 15 funnel-shaped flowers. Corolla: 50 mm × 75 mm . Lobes: 6, wavy. Buds: 61C. Corolla inside and outside: 57B(red) Leaves: lanceolate 70 mm × 38 mm, margins decurved. Height: 1.5 m × 1.5 m in 13 years. Flowering: November.

'Parasols in Pink' Evergreen azalea hybrid of 'Ambrosius' × 'Orchidflora Pink' H(1985) G(1989) N(1994) R(2004) Craig Carroll. Number of flowers per truss: 2. Corolla width: 90 mm. Buds: 57C. Corolla: deep pink. Leaves: elliptical. Flowering: April/October.

Unfortunately the following two registrations were omitted from the 2001–2002 journal. My apologies!

‘Patricia Wilson’ Elepidote hybrid of ‘Tortoiseshell Wonder’ × ‘Mrs Betty Robertson’ H(1990) G(1998) N & R(2002) Truss: loose ball consisting of 12 funnel-shaped flowers. Corolla: 45 mm × 9 mm. Lobes: 5, frilly. Buds: 64C. Corolla inside and outside: 63C(pink) Leaves: oblanceolate 140 mm × 50 mm. Height: 1.5 m × 1 m in 10 years. Flowering: November.

‘Dr Peter Hewitt’ Elepidote hybrid of ‘Unique’ × ‘Loderi Venus’. H(1995) G(2001) N & R(2002) Don Dosser. Truss: ball consisting of 14 funnel-shaped flowers. Lobes: 6, wavy. Buds: 1D. Corolla inside and outside: pure white. Leaves: oblanceolate 125 mm × 48 mm, upper surface glossy. Height: 75 cm × 60 cm in 6 years. Flowering: November. ❁

The Australian Rhododendron Society Plant Registrar should be contacted, in the first instance, by persons seeking to register. Mr Ken Gillanders, 2040 Huon Road, Longley, Tasmania 7150. Telephone (03) 6239 6455 or email gillwoo@optusnet.com.au.

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The Australian Rhododendron Society Inc.

President	Mrs Lesley Eaton
Vice-President	Mr Barry Davidson
Secretary	Vacant. Mail to RMB 1292 Swanpool Tatong Road, Victoria 3673 eaton@hard.net.au
Treasurer/Membership Secretary	Mr Peter Wiadrowski, 14 Orley Avenue, Stirling, South Australia 5152 pvw@internode.on.net
Plant Registrar	Mr Ken Gillanders, 2040 Huon Road, Longley, Tasmania 7150 gillwoo@optus.net.au
Editorial Committee Chair and Website Manager	Mr Barry Stagoll, 170 Knees Road, Park Orchards, Victoria 3114 mirra@austarmetro.com.au
Editor	Mr Richard Francis, 18 Sinclair Street, Colac, Victoria 3250 wildog@aapt.net.au
Webpage	www.ausrhodo.asn.au
Correspondence	National correspondence to The Secretary Branch correspondence to the Branch Secretaries.

Branch Information

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

President	Mrs Tania Thomas
Secretary	Mr Terry Darby, 35 Old Mount Barker Road, Crafers, South Australia 5152 darbys@tpg.com.au

TASMANIAN BRANCHES

Emu Valley Rhododendron Society

President	Mr Neil Jordan
Secretary	Mr David Cherry, PO Box 39, Burnie, Tasmania 7320

Southern Branch

President	Ms Ken Gillanders
Secretary	Mr Neville Horder, 150 Upper Hilton Road, Claremont, Tasmania 7001

VICTORIAN BRANCH

President	Mr W. (Bill) Taylor
Secretary	Mrs Carole Quinn, 24 Main Road, Gembrook, Victoria 3783 caroleq@bigpond.com.au

The *Maddenii* Series

Key to photographs illustrating Alan Kepert's story on page 33.

Inside front cover

- 1 *Rhododendron lindleyi*, Ludlow and Sheriff form
- 2 *R. formosum*
- 3 *R. lindleyi*
- 4 *R. ciliicalyx*, white form
- 5 *R. maddenii*, pink form
- 6 *R. pachypodum*

Inside back cover (opposite)

- 7 *R. pachypodum* var. *scottianum*
- 8 *R. liliiflorum*
- 9 *R. scopulorum*
- 10 *R. maddenii*, best form
- 11 *R. pachypodum* var. *scottianum*
- 14 *R. veitchianum*, Valder's form

All photographs by Alan Kepert.

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Maddenia series

See key, opposite
story, page 33



Photographs by
Alan Keper





**Vireya
rhododendrons**

1. *R.* 'Our Mary'
2. *R.* 'Brianna'
3. *R.* 'Channon Marie
Superbum'
4. *R.* *lochiae*

Photographs by Brian
Clancy



Our front cover
R. 'Cilpinense' and
R. *trichostomum*
'Collingwood Ingram', see
page 27
Photos by Lesley Eaton