

# **THE RHODODENDRON NEWSLETTER**

**JULY 2007**

Published by the  
Australian Rhododendron Society, Victorian Branch Inc. (A5896Z)  
P.O. Box 92, Olinda, Victoria 3788  
Editor: Simon Begg Ph: (03) 9751 1610 email: [simonwbegg@gmail.com](mailto:simonwbegg@gmail.com)



## **JULY**

FRIDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> 8.00PM – Nunawading - Speaker – Terry Nisbet  
– Irises (plants for sale)

## **AUGUST**

FRIDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> 8.00PM – Nunawading - Speaker – Ken &  
Leslie Gillanders from Tasmania

## **COLLECTORS DISPLAY & SALE DAY      NEW** **RELEASE OF VIREYAS**

SUNDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 10.00am-5.00pm  
OLINDA HALL

## **NOVEMBER**

SATURDAY 3<sup>RD</sup> & SUNDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> – OLINDA GARDEN  
AND ARTS' FESTIVAL

## THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN.

Dear Members,

Some interesting projects are in the pipeline for later this year. Our secretary Marcia Begg is well under way with planning a festival in conjunction with Parks Vic over the Cup weekend in November. Lots of interesting activities are on the way, including an art show, catering and other events. We will be stepping up marketing as this proved very effective for the Lady Bird event at Easter. Marcia needs your offers of help and any assistance will be appreciated.

The 'Members release and Display' of Vireyas at the Olinda Hall, on 9<sup>th</sup> September from 10am to 5pm is going ahead, and we are looking forward to seeing you on the day. New Vireya releases will be offered by Andrew Raper from Rhodo Glen Nurseries.

A draft collections policy has been prepared recently, and we propose to present it as a starter to adopting a formal collections policy for the Gardens. Many members may not be aware of the importance of the collection held at Olinda. There are few places in Australia where a wide range of rhododendrons can be grown to perfection. With climate change in mind, the altitude and environment of Olinda is becoming more important by the day.

A number of changes are occurring. Parks will take over the management of the retail plant sales area immediately. This has been brought about by the desire of Parks management to put the Dandenong Ranges Gardens on a commercial footing, and increase income from sales. The Society will continue to raise rhododendrons in the wholesale nursery, and sell to Parks Vic as a supplier.

We will be holding two monthly General Meetings at Olinda during the Spring season, Saturday September 15<sup>th</sup> and Saturday October 20<sup>th</sup> from 1:30pm. This will be an opportunity for members who cannot come out to the evening meetings, to come to Olinda, take a ride on the Garden explorer and meet fellow members.

Regards,

**Neil Webster.**

## CULTURAL NOTES FOR JULY

We are now into the coldest months and we've been getting a bit of rain. Up to date we've been struggling to keep water up to our pots and garden plants. Now we have to make sure that they aren't getting too much water. Plants will stand dryness much better than being over-wet. If you've used water crystals through the dry period, there is an increased risk of plants becoming water-logged. Of course, with the rain coming down, don't forget that you have plants in sheltered spots that might not be getting water. Plants are in their dormant period so keep fertilization to a minimum.

**TOM NOONAN, BILL TAYLOR, LAURIE BEGG**

## THE SPECIES COLUMN.

*calophytum* -Subsection Fortunea. [photo page 11]

Rhododendron *calophytum* is undoubtedly the most spectacular species in the Fortunea series. It grows to a small tree up to 9 metres tall (30 feet) so is not suitable for the small suburban garden, but does particularly well in the Dandenongs. The flower truss is spectacular, with up to 30 flowers in pale pink or white with a deep maroon throat. The foliage is also handsome with leaves up to 30 cm. long. This species in some ways resembles the Grandia Subsection, and may be a distant relative.

### **Name:**

The name *calophytum* means “beautiful plant”.

### **Distribution:**

N.W. Yunnan and S.E. Tibet (3700-4000 metres) among conifer and mixed forests.

### **Characteristics:**

This species is the largest of the Fortunea Series and is quite distinct with its large leaves and many-flowered truss. The species has been split into two subspecies:

Variety *calophytum*

Variety *openshawianum*. This is a less spectacular form, with smaller leaves and only 5-10 flowers per truss. It is rare in cultivation.

### **Selected Forms.**

The R.H.S. have made awards to two forms:

A.M. 1920. Flowers white flushed pink.

F.C.C. 1933. Flowers pale pink.

### **Hybrids:**

The R.H.S. lists 25 hybrids but only a few are available here.

Amalfi (Cornubia x *calophytum*) A.M. 1939. A beautiful flower in pink and white, but not listed in the N.R.G.

Avalanche (*calophytum* x Loderi) F.C.C. 1938. Described in “The Rothschild Rhododendrons” as “A shrub of superlative quality and moving beauty”, the flowers are snow-white with a small maroon blotch.

Avalanche Alpine Glow (*calophytum* x Loderi) A.M. 1938. Flowers pale glowing pink.

Babylon (*calophytum* x *praevernium*) Large satiny white flowers with a chocolate blotch, flowering early spring.

Calrose (*calophytum* x *griersonianum*) Flowers pink.

Calstocker (*calophytum* x Dr. Stocker) A.M. 1938. Large pale pink flowers with a deep red centre.

Donvale Lady (*discolour-houltonii* group) x *calophytum* This was a cross I did in 1968 but lost my seedlings. Fortunately Jack O’Shannassy raised some of the seeds and named one plant. The flowers are very attractive; pink and white with a deep maroon centre.

Most of these hybrids (except Amalfi) have been planted in the N.R.G. but at present we do not have the GPS location. We will organise a plant-hunting expedition in early Spring when they are in flower.

### **Where to See These Plants:**

There are some old plants of *calophytum* at the North end of the garden; one on the Mathias Road boundary and two near the centre of the Maddenia walk. Three smaller plants near the show hall are not yet of flowering size.

**Alan Kepert.**

## **VIREYA SPECIES COLUMN**

### **R praetervisum** [photo p 11 ]

Section VII Euvireya Section v Euvireya [according to the classification proposed by Dr George Argent *Rhododendrons of Subgenus Vireya* **RHS 2006 268-9**]; a shrub to 2m, Mostly epiphytic in montane forest.

### **Name**

From the Latin *praetervisus* meaning overlooked because, according to Argent, specimens of this species had accumulated in herbaria under *R longiflorum*.

### **Origin**

Malaysia (Borneo), Sabah, Mt Kinabalu, Mt Alab, along the Croker Range to near Tenom. 1100-1800m

### **Description**

[taken from Argent, *op cit*, but not in full] **Twigs** green, rounded, at first covered in small pale brown or transparent scales but quickly glabrescent [without these scales]. **Leaves** in distinct pseudowhorls of 4-6 large and a few small ones. Blade 50-72 x 18-32mm; ovate or elliptic; apex rounded or retuse; margin entire but broadly revolute; base tapering; dark green, quickly glabrescent and shiny above, sparsely scaly, paler and dull beneath. **Scales** lobed to stellate, brown. **Petiole** 1-6 x 3-4 mm, weakly grooved, finely scaly, minutely hairy on the upper side, often purplish red.

**Inflorescence** a 3-7 flowered umbel, the flowers hanging vertically downwards. **Corolla** 50-80 x 27-30 mm pink or pinkish violet, without scent; tube 40-60 x 7-8 x 10-12 mm, slightly curved and strongly fluted proximally.

Argent says it was first introduced into cultivation at Kew from material collected by Giles and Wooliams in 1963 and, initially, was grown as *R longiflorum*. It was recognised as a separate species by Professor Sleumer. In the wild it flowers best in March, as it does in Edinburgh. I have seen it in Edinburgh and I took the photo there in mid May 2006. The flowers are very striking indeed. Murray McAllister and Bill Taylor obtained cuttings from Graeme Smith at Pukieti in August 2003 sourced from Oz Blumhart's 1984 collection on Mt Kinabalu. It has proved easy to propagate from cuttings. Mine have yet to flower.

Those lucky enough to hear Andrew Rouse's presentation at the June General Meeting will recall that *R praetervisum* was one of the species Andrew thought had hybridising potential. It has been used in New Zealand.

**SWB**

## **GENERAL MEETINGS**

### **MAY 2007**

Neil Webster opened the meeting and introduced the guest speaker and his wife, Paul and Maureen Lucas. Paul's topic was 'A Fantasia of Gardens and Flowers of the World' with an emphasis on rhododendrons. A double bonus was the fact that Maureen Lucas was a registered judge. She happily agreed to be the judge for the night though apologising for her lack of expertise on the rhododendron species. Usually when invited to judge a specific species she studies up before the event!

While Maureen Lucas was judging the many excellent exhibits with Wally Lobbezoos' help as steward, the general business was followed by a cultural discussion by Len Sloggett on azaleas and a 'Pictorial Walk Around Len and Margaret's Garden'. This is a 5 minute session we hope to repeat with other member's gardens at future meetings.

Len showed us several very poor specimens of azaleas which had been affected by drought and/or shade. The water had not penetrated the soil and the plants were only just surviving. The soil had probably become hydrophobic.

Mike Hammer showed Len's garden photos while Len gave names and explained positions, soil, cultural requirements, etc. It is a lovely well established garden packed with lots of colour and diverse species. He and Margaret have made the most of every inch on their block, using layers of shrubs which hide the fences yet show off the plants to their best advantage.

Alan Walker displayed the latest library books purchased by Val Marshall our librarian. We have a wonderful collection of books at both NRG and Nunawading which can be borrowed by members. Alan also told us of the recent plantings in the new trial garden at the NRG.

There is a possibility that the Vireya Room (previously Café Vireya) may become a club room for other garden clubs to use as well as the ARSV. Glenn Maskell (Team Leader, Parks) is very keen on cleaning up the room and opening it up to the public as well. He is hoping to paint the hall and Vireya Room if Parks budget will allow. ARSV is getting quotes for curtains/blinds. We are having our September and October General Meetings there on Saturday afternoons this year.

After supper Paul Lucas presented his slide show. Paul and Maureen have travelled widely and have taken over 11,000 slides which are all catalogued. Famous European and UK gardens, Australian gardens and individual rhododendron photos with background music accompanied Paul's narrative.

At the conclusion of the slide show Maureen praised the quality of the blooms and announced the winning exhibits. Some of her tips for displaying blooms were – clean

containers, supporting materials (eg sphagnum moss) to be no higher than the neck of the container, fresh clean foliage with no apparent disease or wildlife, sufficient foliage or the judge may think it was removed because of disease, extra leaves can be put in if not obviously separate. A judge is not permitted to lift a container but the steward may do so. It was a very valuable session for competitors.

The meeting concluded with an auction conducted by Simon Begg. Two bags of liliams donated by Mike Hammer went for \$15 and \$13, the second being sold by Dutch Auction, ie backwards. A species vireya, *retivinium*, went for \$10. The meeting closed at 10.15pm.

## **Marcia Begg**

### **JUNE 2007**

As befitted winter the evening of the June meeting was cold and wet. Great for parched gardens and water storages but not quite ideal for venturing out at night.

Our guest speaker was Andrew Rouse whose topic was Hybridising for Small Vireyas. Andrew's preparation and presentation was outstanding well illustrated with pictures and diagrams in a Power Point presentation.

He started with hybridising parent statistics. Of the 350 Vireya species 150 [43%] are in cultivation. Of these a mere 7, *R aurigeranum*, *R javanicum*, *R konori*, *R laetum*, *R leucogigas*, *R viriosum* [*lochiae*] and *R zoelleri* dominate parentage to the extent of 72% of the 973 registered Vireya hybrids. His point was that, although each has a 'wow' factor in flower colour and size, none is compact and most are leggy [long inter node distances] and have sparse branching.

By contrast small compact species with an adult height of less than a metre, and preferably multibranching, are parents in less than 5% of registered hybrids. For example:

- 4 use *R anagalliflorum*
- 7 use *R wrightianum*
- 8 use *R rubineiflorum* and
- 25 use *R gracilentum*

Andrew believes that there is much untapped potential in small compact Vireya species. This is where he has focussed most of his hybridising effort. He believes that these Vireyas are among the most charming, form more attractive and shapely plants than the larger Vireyas and are suitable for pots hanging baskets and small gardens. He notes however that many small compact Vireyas have red flowers [higher altitude bird pollinated] and that, in hybridising, red is a dominant colour. Thus careful parent selection is necessary to obtain other hybrid colours.

Andrew stated his hybridising objectives as:

- Short internode length ie < 5 cm
- Naturally multi-branching OR will 2-3 lateral buds will shoot if the apical bud is removed

- Small leaves
- Hardy, including strong root stock and disease resistance
- Suitable for pots or hanging baskets outdoors
- Do not suffer from tip or stem die-back and basal re-shooting
- Single or twin flowers in truss

He gave examples:

- ***R rubineiflorum x R pauciflorum*** [two different seedlings of Andrew's cross] [a photo of one on page ]
- ***R rubineiflorum x R anagalliflorum*** [another of Andrew's crosses ]
- **R 'Pennywhistle'** [*R macgregoriae x R bagabonum* hybridised by John Rouse and named by Graham Snell] and
- **R 'Craig Farragher'** [*R gracilentum x R jasminiflorum* hybridised by Craig Farragher and registered by Graham Snell]

Some of the species Andrew has used are:

- Red
  - ***R rubineiflorum***
  - ***R pauciflorum***
  - ***R gracilentum***
  - ***R womersleyi***
  - ***R beyerinckianum***
  - ***R alticolum***
- Orange
  - ***R quadrasianum v rosmarinifolium***
  - ***R stenophyllum***
- Yellow
  - ***R sessilifolium***
  - ***R macgregoriae***
- White
  - ***R luraluense***
  - ***R loranthiflorum***
  - ***R suaveloens***
- Pink/Purple

- *R leptanthum*
- *R wrightianum* v *wrightianum*
- *R jasminiflorum* v *jasminiflorum*

Andrew showed pictures of the outcomes. As yet these pictures are of small young plants. The next stage will come, in the not too distant future, when these plants are pictured in full flower.

Andrew described his growing on regime. His hybrids are raised in the glasshouse for about a year with 2-4 weekly folia feeding [shades of Brian Clancy] and are potted on after about 6 months. Then they go to a shade house for another year on benches during which poorly performing plants are discarded. Andrew practices what he called 'tough love' to test the new seedlings vigour. Next follows another shade house for yet another year of growing on until they flower, with poorly performing plants discarded.

Andrew next turned to species with, in his view, hybridising potential.

***R suaveolens*** [photo page 10]

- from Mt Kinabalu, Borneo. Introduced into Australia in 1983
- Up to 25 pure white scented flowers in the truss
- Prefers warm, humid conditions
- Mid-sized plant, up to 1m (?)
- Could be used to produce small hybrids with pure white flowers

***R alborugosum*** [photo page 10]

- From Gunung Besang, Kalimantan, Borneo. Introduced into Australia in 2006
- 6-10 almost pure white flowers per truss
- Appears to be vigorous, branches freely
- Like *R suaveolens*, potential to introduce white into small hybrids?

***R praetervisum*** [photo page 11]

- From Mt Kinabalu, Borneo. Introduced into Australia in 2006
- 3-7 pink to violet flowers per truss
- Multi-branching shrub
- Has been used for hybridising in NZ
- Potential for introducing violet into the colour range

***R lamrialianum*** [photo page 10]

- From Trus Madi and Mt Kinabalu, Borneo. Introduced into Australia in 2006 from RBGE. Seedlings proving to be particularly capricious.
- 2-5 pendulous bi-coloured flowers per truss
- Compact shrub to 1 m
- Potential for bi-coloured compact hybrids

***R brassii*** [photo page 10]

- West New Guinea. Introduced into Australia in 2007.
- 3-6 flowers in truss. Flowers can be yellow, yellow-green with red flush
- As with *R lamrialianum*, potential for bi-coloured compact hybrids

Andrew concluded his talk with the hybridist's perennial question What if?

His example was taken from his father, John's, experience of hybridizing two hard to grow species and producing a tough hybrid that grows well in a pot and flowers every year and branches better than either parent. There is still room for long shots!

The example was an Asiatic hybrid. This is a hybrid between ***R amaniense*** x ***R championae***, hybridised by Andrew's father in ~1983. Both parents are in the sub-genus *Choniatrum*

**SWB**

**APHID AMNESTY, food for thought!**

*The following is taken from an article entitled 'aphid Amnesty' written by Val Bourne, in the March issue of 'The Garden' magazine.*

Val Bourne says that she has never sprayed aphids and yet has fewer problems with them than do friends who do spray them. She resists the urge to spray and instead watched carefully to see what would happen. She observed that the aphids were eaten by the larvae of the ladybirds and also by the larvae of hoverflies and lacewings. Adult tiny parasitic wasps, bugs, beetles, midges, mites and spiders also ate them. She concluded that aphids are essential food for these insects and that the gardeners should allow the predatory insects to keep aphids in check by encouraging a balance between the species. If, however, gardeners still want to get rid of them, spraying is not necessary, even soap spraying, as aphids are very fragile and can easily be killed by squeezing between the fingers. Yuk!! If you can manage to catch enough fresh aphids without squashing them, they can be sprinkled over a stir-fry for extra protein!!



*R amaniense* x *R championae*,



*R brassii*



*R lamrialianum*



*R alborugosum*



*R rubineiflorum* x *R pauciflorum*



*R suaveolens*



*R calophytum* ARSV archives circa 1992



*R praetervisum*  
Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh May 2006

## JOTTINGS

**BOOKS FOR SALE.** ‘Rhododendrons of Subgenus Vireya’ by George Argent. 382 pages. Hardbound copy \$130, post and packaging \$10 extra. To obtain a copy phone Val Marshall, 03 9803 4434, who has a few copies available.

This section of rhododendrons has been known for over 80 years but was not well known to the general grower.

Vireyas were first brought to the attention of the ARS by early Victorian members who were growers in the late 1950’s and early 1960’s even though it was known by then that Australia had two species of its own in Northern Australia.

Dr. Argent’s book develops and describes the various vireya species from the earliest to the latest known and from which many striking hybrids have been developed. The notes on cultivation and propagation are mainly developed from his experiences in the northern areas of the European climate, thus in glasshouses, whereas most of us grow them outdoors in the milder climates of Australia. The layout of the book is attractive with many coloured plates, though only one map to indicate locations of various species in the wild, so the reader may have to use an atlas.

This is a very informative publication and excellent reference book of great value to all vireya growers.

**LADYBIRD EXHIBITION.** Jane Davenport’s art exhibition of large banners fluttering in the breeze on the Cherry Lawn at the National Rhododendron Gardens in April was very well received by the public. The display in the hall by nurseries, the ARS and the Dandenong Ranges Tourism Information Centre attracted very favourable comment, especially the presentation by B and T Ferns from Silvan. They used the pergola to hang ferns and hanging baskets and surrounded the structure with ferns, bromeliads and vireyas. As a result they sold a significant number of plants over the period of the exhibition. We were so impressed with their display that we have invited them to repeat it during the Rhododendron Show.

When the visitor numbers, plant sales and gift shop sales were made available we were pleased to note that nearly three times as many visitors as normal for that time of the year went to the NRG. The nurseries were pleased with their sales and the gift shop sales were also three times greater than usual.

Parks staff was extremely happy with the result as were ARS members. The more people who can be attracted to the NRG the greater the possibility of encouraging new members to join.

**VOLUNTEER AWARD.** During National Volunteers Week in May this year Parks invited all their ‘Friends’ groups to send representatives to a function at the Sky High Restaurant at Mt Dandenong as a thank you for all the work they put into parks and gardens in the region. Two ‘Friends’/Volunteer ‘ groups were presented with 25 year long service awards consisting of a framed photo of most of the present members in the group (which can be seen in the Lunch Room at the NRG) and a Special Grant of \$5,000 for a project in their park. These were ‘Friends of Warrandyte’ and the ARS Volunteer

Group. All our present and past members of the Volunteer Group were invited to attend the afternoon tea and presentation. It was a pleasant afternoon only marred by the extremely dense fog pervading every nook and cranny in the hills! Many arrived late due to the poor visibility and no-one was looking forward to the drive home!



**APOLLO BAY TRIP.** A dozen members met at the Pisces Holiday Park for two or three nights in June. Though threatening to rain we spent the first morning exploring ARS members', Alistair and Julie Watts, plant collections at their home in Lavers Hill. Alistair is a well known plant collector and has been to many countries including New Caledonia, Chile and China on plant collecting trips. His collections cover ten acres and one walks from New Caledonia to Chile to New Zealand viewing plants previously unknown to

many of us. He is particularly interested in the coniferous plants of Gondwanan origin but he has many other species including a large collection of rhododendrons from the Northern Hemisphere though only a couple flowering at this time of year.

Much discussion followed during a welcome tea break.

A picnic lunch at Melba Gully State Park was followed by a visit to the Sequoia Forest near Beech Forest. Several acres of *Sequoia sempervirens* ( Californian Redwood) were planted in the 1930's as an experiment to see how well they would grow in the Otways. As with many conifers nothing grows beneath them and there is a thick layer of needles. Some trees would be over 50 m. tall. The next stop was a beautiful tree fern gully called Mait's Rest. Tall Mountain Ash (*Eucalyptus regnans*) and ancient Myrtle Beeches (*Nothofagus cunninghamii*) had escaped the loggers for some fortunate reason and been left for us to get a taste of the past.

Another ARS member's garden and nursery, Barham River Nursery, was on the list for the next morning. Tom McDougall and his wife have an extensive garden with an excellent collection of vireyas and asiatics flourishing on poor soil. Over the years they have improved the soil with mulch and prunings. A few years ago they were threatened with a bush fire when a burn off re-ignited during the night. Fortunately a neighbour spotted the blaze and alerted them at 1.00am! Several members took the opportunity to buy a few plants.

Most of the group headed for home after lunch while four of us took to the hills up Wild Dog Rd and eventually made the return trip with its fabulous views down Skenes Creek Rd.

It was an enjoyable break and Fred Coates has agreed to organise the next one.

**MNB**

## BENCH DISPLAYS

MAY 19<sup>TH</sup> 2007. One of our guests for the evening, Maureen Lucas, was the judge of our blooms. Maureen is an accredited judge and a horticultural writer of note. Her husband, Paul Lucas, was the speaker and Maureen was invited to do the judging when it was realised she was accredited. Normally she would study up on a species before judging but as this was a spur of the moment invitation that was not possible. Following the lines of genuine competition she was stricter than we normally experience for a monthly bench display. At the completion of the evening she gave some good tips for showing blooms to best effect.

Vireyas were in abundance with Simon Begg gaining the majority of points plus winning bloom of the night with *tuba*, his other wins were 'Penny Whistle', *konori* and 'Glen Sunrise'. Minor placegetters were Andrew Rouse, Elizabeth Xipell, Bill Taylor and Alan Walker. All classes other than potted plants had entries.

Azaleas were well represented in the evergreen hybrid class. Simon was first, Inge Hammer and Alan Walker took the other two places. The non-rhododendron section only had two exhibits. Alan showed *Daphne* 'Burkwoodii' and a very good terrarium of cyclamen. The cyclamen had been growing in the terrarium for many years.

All in all it was a good display from a few members.

JUNE 15<sup>TH</sup> 2007. There were only five contributors to the display and it was greatly enhanced with an excellent display of small species vireyas by Andrew Rouse.

The number of vireya blooms on show was good and all presenters gained points. Andrew had wins in both the small and large species, *longiflorum* and *loranthiflorum* (small species), *sessilifolium* and *brookianum* (large species). Andrew's *brookianum* was chosen as the exhibit for the night.

Simon Begg again placed with *tuba* and took more points with 'Red Tubular' and 'Glen Sunrise'. Mike Hammer and Len Sloggett each received place points. Alan Walker had two firsts, *jasminiflorum* x and 'Wattle Bird'.

The only entries in the azalea section were in the evergreen hybrid class. Winners were Len with 'Seagull', from Alan and Simon.

Only two classes of asiatics had blooms. Alan and Simon took the points with *plenum* and 'Winsome'.

The non-rhododendron winner was Len with a Coelogyne orchid 'Mooreana'.

**Len Sloggett**

**OLINDA GARDEN AND ARTS FESTIVAL**  
**CUP WEEKEND – SATURDAY NOVEMBER 3<sup>rd</sup> AND SUNDAY NOVEMBER**  
**4<sup>th</sup> 2007 – 10.00am-4.30pm.**

Plans are well under way. Invitations and application forms have been sent out. The hall will hold the Rhododendron Show as usual and a fern and orchid display and sale area. The previous 'Café Vireya' will hold an Art Show and sale presented by the Sherbrooke Art Society who are well known for the high quality of their art work. It is hoped that Anne O'Connor our well known member who is a botanical artist will demonstrate her talent.

The CFA will raise well needed funds with a BBQ and will also hold a display of their equipment.

Food vendors will sell cappuchinos, tea and snacks, New Zealand Ice Cream and more. The Healesville Sanctuary will display artefacts and information about native animals. Specialist nurseries will have plants for sale.

Wine tasting and sales by a local winery.

Live music by local artists.

Children's activities.

Entry includes a bus tour of the gardens. ARS members and a guest will have free entry and bus tour as usual. Children are free.

Members are asked to come along and invite friends and relatives to come and enjoy a pleasant day in the hills.

**MNB**

**THIS IS IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO SHARE WITH EVERYBODY**

**STROKE:**

Remember The 1st Three Letters. S.T.R

My friend sent this to me and encouraged me to post it and spread the word. I agree. Seriously. Please read.

**STROKE IDENTIFICATION:**

During a BBQ, a friend stumbled and took a little fall - she assured everyone that she was fine (they offered to call paramedics) and just tripped over a brick because of her new shoes. They got her cleaned up and got her a new plate of food - while she appeared a bit shaken up, Ingrid went about enjoying herself the rest of the evening.

Ingrid's husband called later telling everyone that his wife had been taken to the hospital - (at 6:00pm, Ingrid passed away.) She had suffered a stroke at the BBQ. Had they known how to identify the signs of a stroke, perhaps Ingrid would be with us today. Some don't die. They end up in a helpless, hopeless, condition instead.

It only takes a minute to read this.

A neurologist says that, if he can get to a stroke victim within 3 hours, he can totally reverse the effects of a stroke. He said the trick was getting a stroke recognized, diagnosed, and then getting the patient medically cared for within 3 hours, which is tough.

### **RECOGNIZING A STROKE**

Sometimes symptoms of a stroke are difficult to identify. Unfortunately, the lack of awareness spells disaster. The stroke victim may suffer severe brain damage when people nearby fail to recognize the symptoms of a stroke. Now doctors say a bystander can recognize a stroke by asking three simple questions:

S\* Ask the individual to SMILE.

T \* Ask the person to TALK, to SPEAK A SIMPLE SENTENCE (Coherently) (i.e. It is sunny out today)

R \* Ask him or her to RAISE BOTH ARMS.

NOTE: Another 'sign' of a stroke is this: Ask the person to 'stick' out their tongue. If the tongue is 'crooked', if it goes to one side or the other that is also an indication of a stroke.

If he or she has trouble with ANY ONE of these tasks, call 000 immediately !! and describe the symptoms to the dispatcher. A cardiologist says if everyone who gets this e-mail sends it to 10 people; you can bet that at least one life will be saved.

**ANON**

### **VIREYA GROUP**

A dozen members met at the NRG to find everything locked up! After a brief discussion we set off to Simon and Marcia's house and had an excellent meeting. In case the weather deteriorated we did the garden walk first. Even at this time of year there are quite a few vireyas in flower. Those who had not seen Simon's prizewinning *tuba* in flower in the garden previously were amazed how floriferous and large the shrubs are. Others of interest were 'Glenn's Sunrise', 'Robert Bates', 'Vladimir Bukowsky' in flower and 'Popcorn' in full bud, one of Karel van den Ven's grafted standards. Simon is concentrating on collecting species vireyas and has started a special garden bed for them. Many vireyas are growing in the garden on a south facing slope where frost does not settle. There are some large Mountain Ash which break the full force of the sun and, of course, they have the benefit of Olinda's fabulous free draining dark loam.

While enjoying a delicious afternoon tea we got down to business. All agreed that collecting species is the best way to go and our efforts will concentrate on those. Members will pool their resources to propagate a collection to keep and to supply other members. In other words to continue the excellent plan Murray McAllister started.

Members agreed that the best propagation facilities are at NRG. Simon uses that. He will go on doing it as fast as he can find material. Others likewise. Growing on, once the plants

leave the NRG propagation house, is to be decided. Members with good shade house facilities sound likely

Decisions will be made later about where a group collection will be kept.

It is clear that Murray's Vireya Bank release was too early in that most recipients lost most of their plants. Simon had better facilities than most and lost only a few VB plants so he has the best source materials. Also he has propagated from these. Others have some of what Simon lacks. Future releases need to be of well established plants, so will take time.

Simon has some 6" pots, some 3" pots and some 2" pots that will become available. By spring, when Simon sorts what he has alphabetically and records it properly, he will supply what he can. He hopes to concentrate on 6" pots with attached labels and provenance. In an ideal world the Group should view the material and verify identity of each **before** release so as not to exacerbate existing doubtful identities.

The group is 'entitled', also, to recourse to the very considerable stock Murray has built up from Murray's and Bill's NZ trip in 2003, Neil Puddey and other sources. However Murray and Bill have continued as 'custodians' of this resource and no one present was able say, exactly, what species were held nor when a future release of this resource is planned.

Simon went through the first half of Andrew Rouse's species inventory [Vireya Species in Australia] published in May 2007 *Newsletter* to see which we had and, of those, which we needed to propagate to supply to the group in the future. We concentrated more on what members had than on what they wanted, though we got a bit of that also. Marcia kept notes. These will be transcribed onto a spreadsheet and distributed for the next meeting. It was recognised that the May 2007 *Newsletter* listing was incomplete [missing, for example, some species Andrew has and contemplates using for hybridising- see pp 8-9].

Members discussed how doubtful identity plants would be verified. It was agreed that Andrew Rouse be approached to help.

Andrew Rouse, and Murray McAllister have been growing species sourced from Edinburgh from seed and, eventually, are a potential sources of supply of species that are lacking ; the supply chain from RBGE is still open, with possibilities, also, from Neil Puddey, Graeme Snell, Lyn Craven, and overseas from NZ, RSF and White Smith.

Mike Hammer said he could make a fogger and hot bed efficiently and cheaply. And supply plans for doing it.

It was agreed that the next meeting, on September 8<sup>th</sup> be at the NRG and possibly going to Mike Hammer's so he can show us his simple method of building a propagation hot bed and a fogger. We will finish the inventory then also.

**MNB**

## REFLECTIONS

The winter on the mountain can seem long and cold (especially when you are suffering from colds). But there are bright spots and wonders to contemplate. I was just observing the other day how beautiful the drops of water glinting in the sun where that hung off the Magnolia outside my office, the fog as it rolls through the giant Mountain Ash and the many textures of bark, the magnificent toadstools (I keep expecting to see the fairies fly out from under them) and seed pods found in the garden. The seasons in this garden are under appreciated by most but many of our visitor comment on the natural beauty of the gardens in the off season.

In the last month the friends of the gardens group have officially folded, they have left us a good sum of money to go towards interpretations. I hope to get quite a few of these signs out before the end of this financial year so expect me to be leaning on a few of you for some information about our history and collections. If you have a special interest in interpretation or have some great examples of it let me know. I am also interested in telling stories about the place.

The challenge with interpretations is to make it relevant and interesting to the majority of visitors, taking them on a journey that educates, entertains and leaves them feeling they have had a special experience.

As part of the recognition by Parks Victoria for the long service of the Rhododendron Society to the gardens a community grant has been offered. We have put in for a water tank and pump to catch storm water and to be used as a reservoir from the lake to give the nursery a constant alternate water supply. Converting the nursery from mains potable water to alternate water has helped the gardens save approximately 1 mega litre of water this year. This equates to reducing our potable water usage from 6000 litres per day down to below 600 litres. A lot of this savings has been achieved through infrastructure supplied by the ARS to convert to our lake supply. Water will continue to be an issue into the future and we all need to make sure that every drop counts.

In May I celebrated my first 12 months in the garden, I reflect on what I have learnt and thank those who have helped me settle in, and I look forward to the challenges we have ahead to make this garden the best it can be.

**Glenn Maskell**

## CALENDAR 2007

-

### AUGUST

FRIDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> 8.00PM – Nunawading - Speaker – Ken & Leslie Gillanders from Tasmania

### SEPTEMBER

SATURDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> 1.30PM – National Rhododendron Gardens – VIREYA GROUP – All Welcome

SUNDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> 10AM-5PM -- Olinda Hall - Collector's Display & Sale Day

SATURDAY 22<sup>ND</sup> - 2.00PM - National Rhododendron Gardens - Speaker – Andrew Raper – Reticulata Camellias

### OCTOBER

FRIDAY 5<sup>TH</sup>, SATURDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> & SUNDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> – ABC GARDEN SHOW AT CAULFIELD RACECOURSE.

SATURDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> & SUNDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> – AZALEA DISPLAY AT NRG

SATURDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> – 2.00PM - National Rhododendron Gardens - Speaker - to be advised

FRIDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> – HOBART CONFERENCE & NATIONAL COUNCIL AGM

### NOVEMBER

SATURDAY 3<sup>RD</sup> TO TUESDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> – RHODODENDRON SHOW

SATURDAY 3<sup>RD</sup> & SUNDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> - FESTIVAL

SATURDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> – 1,30PM – National Rhododendron Gardens – VIREYA GROUP – All Welcome

FRIDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> – 8.00PM - AGM - Nunawading Speaker – to be advised

### DECEMBER

CHRISTMAS LUNCH – To be advised.

## CONTENTS

Future Functions	Page 1
The President' Column	Page 2
Cultural Notes July 2007	Page 2
The Species Column	Pages 3-4
Vireya Species Column	Pages 4-5
General Meetings May and June 2007	Pages 5-9
Aphid Amnesty- food for thought	Page 9
Photographs	Pages 10-11
Jottings	Pages 12-13
Bench Displays	Page 14
Olinda Garden and Arts Festival	Page 15
Vireya Group	Pages 16-17
Reflections-Glenn Maskell	Page 18
Calendar 2007	Page 19
Contents	Page 20

### Australian Rhododendron Society Vic Branch Committee 2006-7

President – Neil Webster , Ph 9859 3622	Val Marshall – Ph: 9803 4434
Vice President No. 1 Mike Hammer– Ph: 9755 2176	
Vice President No. 2 Vacant	Bill Taylor -- Ph: 9754 8275
Treasurer – Neil Webster, Ph: 9859 3622	Tom Noonan – Ph: 9752 2211
Secretary – Marcia Begg, Ph: 9751 1610	John Quinn – Ph: 5968 1027
Simon Begg – 9751 1610 (Newsletter Editor)	Alan Walker- 9726 8836
Len Sloggett – Ph: 9808 6484	

There are 2 vacancies on the committee. Volunteers will be welcomed.

### SOCIETY PICASAWEB SITE

Visit <http://picasaweb.google.com/ARSVic> for the latest pictures.

Additions since the May 2007 Newsletter are :

- Pictures taken by Sue Jarvis at NRG May 2007
- ARSV trip to Apollo Bay June 2007
- Werribee Zoo June 2007
- Mildura June 2007- see a good 'People Mover'
- ARSV Vireya Group July 2007

For the latest on the "Beechmont" Picasaweb site visit

<http://picasaweb.google.com/simonwbegg>

**SWB**