

THE RHODODENDRON NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2011

Published by the
Australian Rhododendron Society, Victorian Branch Inc. (A5896Z)
P.O. Box 500, Brentford Square, Victoria 3131
Email: secretary@vicrhodo.org.au
Telephone: 0418 340 240
Editor: Simon Begg Ph: (03) 9751 1610
email: simonwbegg@gmail.com
ARSV Website: www.vicrhodo.org.au
Picture site <http://picasaweb.google.com/ARSVic>



PROGRAMME

General Meetings are held at EITHER at the Municipal Horticultural Centre, Jolimont Rd, Vermont. Mel 62 G4 OR the National Rhododendron Garden, The Georgian Rd Olinda, unless otherwise stated.

OCTOBER 2011

SUNDAY 9TH – 2.00PM. NATIONAL RHODODENDRON GARDEN. Meet in the volunteer's lunch room to meet Neil Puddey, vireya specialist. (See information inside)

SATURDAY 29TH OCTOBER to TUESDAY 1ST NOVEMBER – CUP WEEKEND. RHODODENDRON SHOW at the National Rhododendron Garden. See schedule included. We need your help to fill the show benches and make the show a highlight for visitors to the garden so please bring along a few blooms from **your** garden.

NOVEMBER 2011

FRIDAY 18TH AGM and GENERAL MEETING at NUNAWADING 8.00PM. This is a vital meeting which may well determine the future of the ARSV.

We need your input. Do you care?

DECEMBER 2011

SUNDAY 11TH 12.00PM Christmas lunch at LES CHESSELLES French Restaurant at Mont de Lancey Museum and Homestead. \$15per person (subsidised by the ARSV).

BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL Phone or email Marcia Begg by 1st December or book and pay at the November Meeting. (Details inside) Ph: 9751 1610, Email: mnbegg@gmail.com

JANUARY 2011

SATURDAY & SUNDAY 21st & 22nd - LILIUM AND VIREYA SHOW AT FERNY CREEK HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY 100 Hilton Rd Ferny Creek. Included in the schedule are hydrangeas, roses and other species. Schedules are available from Mike and Inge Hammer Ph: 9755 2176 or FCHS.

THURSDAY 26TH AUSTRALIA DAY BBQ at NRG, 6.00PM. BYO everything. BBQ supplied. Those who would like to take a walk around the NRG meet near the lunchroom at 5.00pm. For more information ring the Hammers 9755 2176 or Beggs 9751 1610.

PRESIDENTS REPORT

After a very wet first half year, and a very cold winter, the last 2 months have proven to be rather on the warm and dry side although we are still well above average rainfall for the year to date. I note that we are moving back towards La Nina conditions which would normally imply increased rainfall but the southern Indian Ocean is supposedly warming which was a factor in the last 9 years of drought. Which will dominate over the coming summer? We will have to wait and see.

The \$200,000 the society helped to obtain for the gardens is being used to cover Dan's salary for the next 3 years, an excellent use of the money in my opinion.

For many years there has been talk of establishing a vireya house at the NRG but the problem has always been how much will it cost and where to put it. A recent suggestion is to convert the propagating glass house near the toilets at the far end of the top road into a Vireya house, relocate the quarantine glass house to the growing on area and use it as a propagating house. This is an excellent suggestion. The current glass house is underutilized and would make much more sense as a display house. It is also ideally positioned for such a purpose. I applaud the suggestion and hope it is acted on.

As you all know, the ARS annual meeting and election of office bearers is coming up in November. I have made it clear that for a variety of reasons I will not accept nomination for another year as President. Thus this is my last president's report. We currently have no treasurer, no vice president, a less than complete committee and in November, possibly no president. It is time for those who care about the society and wish to see it continue to step up and commit some time to the running of the society. By far the most active group within the society is the Tuesday group that work in the gardens. Indeed, of late this group has been growing slightly. Maybe the Tuesday group should consider taking over management of the society. There is no reason why committee meetings could not be held at the gardens on a Tuesday morning so there would be minimal inconvenience. The task can be scaled back to the point where it does not need to be particularly onerous or time consuming. This society has a proud history and has achieved a great deal. A major reason for its initial formation was the creation of the National Rhododendron Garden and this remains a very cogent reason for its continued existence. Please help it to do so.

Our show is coming up at the end of October and we will be occupying half the hall at the NRG. Please consider putting in some entries. The new lessee of the hall has indicated that after this year there will be a substantial charge for use of the hall for any future shows and the hall may not be available during our normal October – early November period. This raises a question as to whether future shows will be held at the gardens or at another venue. It will be up to the new committee to decide.

One of my major focuses over my time as president has been to promote the NRG and seek to have it declared Melbourne's cool climate Botanical Garden. I believe the promotion has helped the gardens and I note that this, plus of course free entry to the gardens, has boosted attendances from around 26,000 per year to close to 100,000 per year. The 50th anniversary conference also promoted the gardens internationally. I can only hope that eventually the

incredible value of these gardens will be recognized politically and they will be accorded the status they deserve. I will continue to promote them to the best of my ability.

I would also like to thank all those people who have helped me over my time as president. It is much appreciated.

Michael Hammer

RHODO CORNER

Alan Kepert has been in hospital for repairs and was not able to write his usual Species Column. Ian Wallace and Norm Brown from Ferny Creek Horticultural Society have very kindly agreed to allow Newsletter to reprint their article. Ed.

The Lapponicum Series of the Genus *Rhododendron*

This series (alternatively classified as the Subsection Lapponicum of the Section *Rhododendron*) contains the largest natural group of truly dwarf alpine rhodo species, rarely exceeding five feet in height. They have aromatic evergreen leaves with dense scales on both surfaces, making them *Lepidotes*.

The flowers are mostly in purple or pink shades with the odd yellow displayed in small terminal trusses or in some cases singly. The flowers themselves are generally funnel-shaped or tubular and not of a very thick texture, which can cause them to be easily damaged by windy wet weather. Most have short flower stalks with the calyx and the seed capsule also quite small.

Their normal distribution covers a large area of Western China down to Tibet and the Eastern Himalayas, and reaching high altitudes which generally makes them cold resistant, but all must have good drainage.

There are many worthwhile plants garden plants in the series, most of which will do well in the Dandenongs and the foothills, but are very difficult on the lower slopes. One definite plus is that they generally flower as young plants. If they become leggy or misshapen they can be pruned with electric shears after flowering without causing too much harm.

Many of these plants have been used in hybridizing, particularly with the Triflorum Series (Triflorum Subsection), eg. *R. augustinii*, to create a wide range of almost blue hybrids originally for the Northern Hemisphere.

To show the smaller members of the series at their best, and if room permits, it is better to plant them in groups of three or more to achieve the full effect of massed colour.

Some Lapponicum species that are still likely to be available.

- *R. chryseum*. Can be cream to yellow with 4-5 flowers in truss and height to 2 feet. Goes well with purple.
- *R. fastigiatum*. Light to dark purple, 4-5 flowers in truss, height to 3 feet, good glaucous foliage.
- *R. hippophaeoides*. Lavender blue flowers, compact truss, height to 5 feet, likes a moist area, early flowering. 'Haba Shan' is probably the best form.
- *R. impeditum*. Commonly grown, small purple flowers vary in colour, true dwarf.
- *R. lapponicum*. [photo page 10]The series type. Flowers purple, 3 to a truss, height to 3 feet. Difficult to grow.

- *R. intracatum*. Lavender to mauve flowers in compact truss, height to 3 feet, one of the best.
- *R. rupicola*. Commonly yellow, but best form plum crimson, outstanding, height to 2 feet, can be leggy. (If anyone has it Ian Wallace would like a cutting please!!)
- *R. russatum*. Flowers reddish to intense violet, 4-6 to a truss, height 2-6 feet, leaves can be up to 2.5 inches long.
- *R. scintillans*. Flowers purple rose to royal blue, 2-3 in a truss, height to 3 feet, tends to be straggly in shade.
- *R. websterianum*. Flowers can be purple, but mostly pale blue in Australia. Height 3 feet, keep moist.

Some hybrids which are likely to be available.

- ‘Blue Tit’, nice foliage, pale mauve, average flowers. (*R. impeditum* x *R. augustinii*)
- ‘Ilam Violet’, one of the best deep violet flowers, can grow tall in time. (*R. augustinii* x *R. impeditum*).
- ‘Intrifast’, good foliage, violet-blue flowers, low compact grower, (*R. intricatum* x *R. fastigiatum*)
- ‘Ocean Lake’, deep blue, early, low dense bush. (‘Blue Diamond’ x ‘Sapphire’)
- ‘Saint Breward’, larger truss, good violet blue with low spreading habit, will grow taller in time, so use shears. (*R. augustinii* x *R. impeditum*)
- ‘Saint Merryn’, another good dark violet blue with low spreading habit. (‘Saint Tudy’ x *R. impeditum*)
- ‘Chikor’, yellow flowers, small leaves which seem very dark for a rhodo. (*R. chryseum* x *R. ludlowii*)
- ‘Ramapo’, bright violet flowers, good grey young foliage, will take sun. (*R. fastigiatum* x *minus* Carolinianum Group)
- ‘Russautinii’, best forms of deep lavender, only buy this one when in flower, taller grower. (*R. russatum* x *R. augustunii*)

Personally, Ian thinks ‘Blue Diamond’ is superseded as it will not tolerate overhead shade. The above are just a few that may still be around.

VIREYA SPECIES COLUMN

R. acrophilum [photo page 12]

Classification

According to Dr George Argent 2006 *Rhododendrons of subgenus Vireya* RHS *R. acrophilum* is in Section VII Euvireya subsection iv Malesia. But recent published papers [see page] assert that subgenus *Vireya* should now be section *Schistanthe* and that the section comprises four subsections rather than the seven sections of Dr Argent’s classification. One of these four is Euvireya. Dr Argent’s subsection Malesia is a large one with 53 species very widely spread geographically extending from Vietnam to New Guinea with members in most places in between. *R. acrophilum* is among the Philippines species Dr Argent places in subsection

Malesia in common with *R taxifolium*, *R bagabonum*, *R rousei* and *R mendumiae*. All of these are known in Australia.

Name and origin

Greek- *acro*; summit, *philus*; loving; summit loving. So named because the original collection was described as made at the summit of Mt Mantalingahan with white flowers. Dr Argent thinks this is an error as the species has yellow and orange flowers and is found at a single location at about 1725m on Mt Mantalingahan as an epiphyte in dense montane rain forest.

Why choose to write about this species?

Dr Argent *op cit* 207 says that this species was introduced into cultivation in 1992 and flowered for the first time as small 15 cm plants in 1993. He continues:

“It has proved to be a really good horticultural plant, with its compact habit, bright green leaves and freely produced, usually bicoloured, orange and yellow flowers. It flowers irregularly at least twice, at different times of the year, new buds being encouraged by prompt deadheading. Winter flowers when the plants are in poor light can be pure yellow, the same plants in the summer producing bicoloured flowers with deep orange lobes: plants growing in climates with really strong light can be completely orange.”

Marcia and I saw this species in flower in Edinburgh at the end of August. One plant covered in flower was at the entrance to the Royal Botanic Garden, appropriately with a 3m Wollemi Pine in the background. We saw it again in full flower at *Botanica* The Rhododendron Park, Bremen, in the first week of September. We can say first hand it is definitely worth cultivating. I don't have one but Andrew Rouse does. Of course the fact that a species thrives in glasshouses in Northern Europe does not mean it will thrive in Melbourne or Olinda. But well worth a go.

Description

According to Dr Argent *op cit*. the species is a shrub to 1m. Plants in Edinburgh were close to that. With internodes 1.5-4cm the plant should not be straggly. **Leaves** 4-6 in tight to somewhat loose pseudowhorls covers a lot of possibilities. Blade 25-50 x 10-20mm elliptic or slightly obovate; apex broadly acute, obtuse to rounded; margin entire, flat, base broadly tapering; sub-densely scaly on both sides, glabrous and shiny above, more persistently scaly below. **Inflorescence** of 3-5 flowers in an open umbel, mostly horizontal but sometimes semi erect to half hanging, usually bi coloured with a yellow tube and orange lobes. Corolla 15-30 x 40-55 shortly tubular funnel shaped; tube 10-15 x 6-7 x 12-17 mm.

Simon Begg

A NEW STATUS AND A NEW NAME FOR VIREYAS?

Dr George Argent *Rhododendrons of subgenus Vireya* RHS 2006, 19 proposed Subgenus *Vireya* under the genus *Rhododendron*

“as an attempt at a practical way of dividing the group so that species can be identified and named. It is based on what can be recognised morphologically.” Dr Argent continues:

“Recent molecular work has not yet given a clear, unequivocal way of marrying morphology to morphological groups. This classification is based largely on that developed by Professor Sleumer (1949, 1960, 1966) but it incorporates the observations and treatment of Copeland (1929, 1943) and observations made particularly on the living collections in Edinburgh”.

Under the heading Subgenus *Vireya* Dr Argent, *op. cit.* 19 elaborated that he proposed subgenus status for *Vireya* for two reasons

“Firstly because it recognises the distinctness of the group (there are no intermediates or species that are doubtfully placed). Secondly it allows for more practical subdivisions given that the classification is very artificial”.

He referred to the, then, latest molecular work (Hall *et al.* 2006) casting doubt on the monophyly of *Vireya*. However, in a recently published paper **“Vireya Rhododendrons: their monophyly and classification (*Ericaceae*, *Rhododendron* section *Schistanthe*)”** **Blumea 56, 2011 153-158**, Lyn A Craven (Australian National Herbarium, Canberra, Australia), Frederic Danet (Herbier du Jardin Botanique de Lyon, Lyon, France), JeF Veldkamp (National Herbarium of the Netherlands, Leiden, The Netherlands), Loretta A Goetsch (Departments of Biology and Genome Sciences, University of Washington Seattle, WA, U.S.A.) and Benjamin D Hall (Departments of Biology and Genome Sciences, University of Washington, Seattle, WA, U.S.A.) assert that further investigation into the evolutionary relationships of the vireya group of *Rhododendron*, utilising nuclear DNA sequence data, has demonstrated that this group of species is monophyletic (meaning all members of the group have a common ancestor), and present a revised classification of them. The same five authors in another recent paper **“*Rhododendron* section *Schistanthe*, the Scientific Name for *Vireya* Rhododendrons (*Ericaceae*)”**, **Journal American Rhododendron Society 64, 190-192**, assert that the name *Rhododendron* section *Vireya* is not able to be used for the group of plants to which it is applied as there are five, previously and validly published, sectional names that have priority. They propose that one of these five, *R* sect. *Schistanthe* be taken up as the correct name for the section.

This proposed nomenclature change assumes that the group of plants in question, that everyone commonly known as Vireyas, have section rank, and not subgenus rank, as Dr Argent asserted.

However the further recent paper of Goetsch, Craven and Hall, 2011, **“Major Speciation accompanied the dispersal of *Vireya* Rhododendrons (*Ericaceae*, *Rhododendron* sect. *Schistanthe*) through the Malayan archipelago: Evidence from nuclear gene sequences”** **Taxon 60(4) August 2011: 1015-1028** says that an analysis based on the combined sequences of three nuclear genes supports a phylogeny [an evolutionary history of development] that *Rhododendron Schistanthe* (less *R santapau*) is monophyletic. In addition this paper identifies four well identified clades [all species in a clade have a common ancestor ie are monophyletic] within *Schistanthe* corresponding to subsections *Euvireya*, *Malayovireya*, *Pseudovireya* and *Discovireya* and it asserts clarification of the direction of dispersal of the subsection, namely it beginning in Asia. It also asserts close relationships

with other sections of the genus *Rhododendron*. It asserts section rank rather than subgenus rank.

I profess no relevant expertise to do more than report these developments, to note that we live in interesting, and exciting, times and to hope that both nomenclature and classification will, sometime soon, cease to be controversial. Quite by coincidence, Marcia and I visited George Argent in Edinburgh, Frederic Danet in Lyon and Hortus Botanicus, Leiden on our very recent, month long trip to Europe. More of our travels separately.

Simon Begg

**THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF AUSTRALIAN
RHODODENDRON SOCIETY VICTORIAN BRANCH INC. 2011
A VERY IMPORTANT MEETING**

Mike Hammer, in his last President's Report [page 2], states that he will not serve another term as President and that our Society currently has

- * no vice presidents
- * no treasurer
- * many committee vacancies.

By law an incorporated association, as our Society is, **MUST** have a public officer and a committee. It has these so long as Michael Hare occupies the positions of secretary/ public officer and so long as some committee remain.

But our Society must also abide by its own rules, or change them. Relevantly:

- * the committee shall meet at least 3 times in each year [rule 26(1)]- not too burdensome
- * any 6 members of committee constitute a quorum [rule 26(4)]. While Marcia and I were away this rule was only just observed
- * written notice of each committee meeting is required [rule 26(9)]. Newsletter suffices- but the Society should join the 21st century and provide for electronic service- a rule change required
- * rule 28 sets out our nonexistent treasurer's duties- Michael Hare and our bookkeeper address the substance of rule 28. Going forward, if a treasurer cannot be found, rule 28 should be rewritten to put the duties on Michael and regularise the bookkeeper
- * the Society must hold an Annual General Meeting each year
- * at the AGM 15 financial members personally present constitute a quorum [rule 10(5)]; that will be a very close call considering recent attendances. The Society

only just made it last year. Sensibly the number should be reduced by a rule change and proxies should be allowed

* at a general meeting other than an AGM the quorum for business [taking any decision] is 15 financial members personally present [rule 13(2)]. That makes it hard to take any decisions without careful attention to securing members' attendance. Number reduction and proxies seem a good idea.

* the rules and statement of purpose can only be altered in accordance with the Act [rule 32]. The Act, s 22, requires a special resolution. That means $\frac{3}{4}$ majority of members present [s 29(2)]; but it also means due notice of the resolution must be given. S 29(3) requires 21 days notice to all entitled members "in accordance with the rules". Rule 12(1) allows notice by Newsletter- very expensive to send a notice by separate mail.

* rule changes must be approved by the Registrar and do not take effect until they are.

WHAT I SUGGEST

1 it is already too late to draft rule changes for this upcoming AGM

2 the first task is to see if a President will nominate at or before the AGM. If so I think the Society lives on and there is time enough to tidy up in the New Year with a new committee. If not I think the Society folds and there are required wind up procedures and decisions, chief among them what to do with the money. Time enough for that, too, in the New Year.

WHAT I BELIEVE

I believe, from the enquiries and discussions I have had, that a President will step up and will receive support from every side. That happening most, if not all, of last year's Committee will continue. Until a replacement is found I will continue *Newsletter*.

I believe, also, that next year's committee will abandon Nunawading and concentrate activities, including committee, at NRG.

Simon Begg



Rh. lapponicum



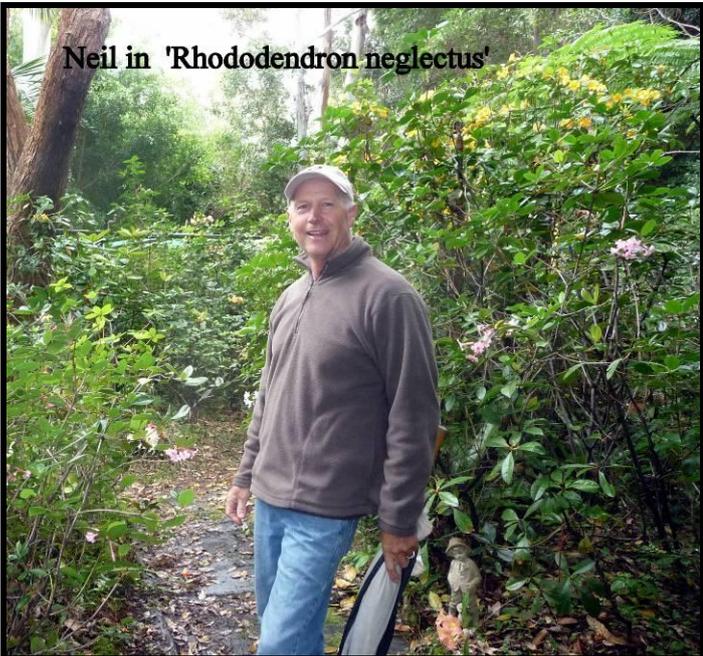
Rh. elegantulum



Rh. ciliicalyx

Magnolia tulipifera planted in 1715
at Hortus Botanica in Leiden.

Neil Puddey in his 'neglected' vireya
corner.





George Argent, Tony Conlon and Simon Begg in the vireya glasshouse at Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

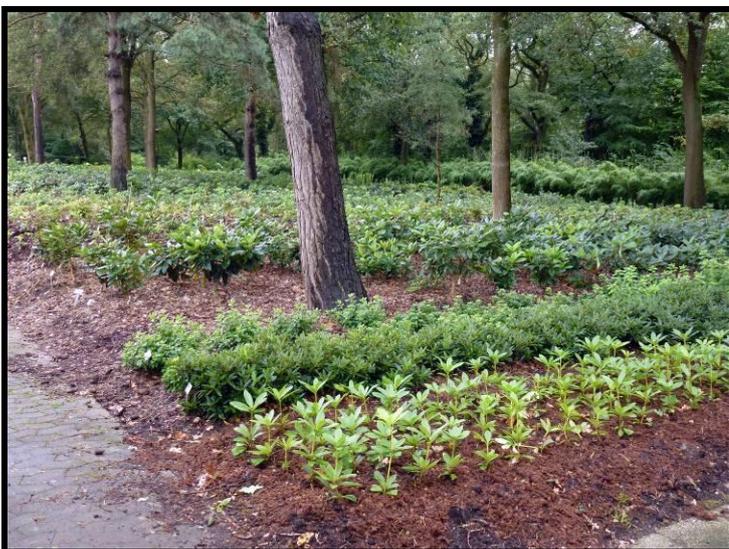
Rh. Rosendahlia at Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh



Rh. acrophilum sharing the prime position with the Australian Wollemi Pine in the new entrance at Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.



Frederic Danet, a director of the Jardin Botanique, Lyon, France and the majestic glasshouse.



Hartwig Schepker, Scientific Director *Botanika* the Rhododendron Park, Bremen, Germany in the summer Vireya shadehouse. All vireyas are moved into the glasshouses for winter.

Left – asiatics growing on outside.

AUSTRALIAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY
Victorian Branch Inc. (A5896Z)
NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2011

The Annual General Meeting of the Australian Rhododendron Society, Victorian Branch Inc. (A5896Z), will be held on Friday, November 18th 2011, at the Whitehorse Horticultural Centre, 84 Jolimont Road, Forest Hill (Melway Ref: 62 G4), commencing at 8.00pm.

The business of the meeting shall be:

- to confirm the Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting held on 19th November 2010;
- to receive from the Committee, reports upon the transactions of the Branch during the last Financial year;
- to elect Officers of the Branch, and the Ordinary Members of the Committee;
- to receive and consider the Statements of Income and Expenditure and Assets and Liabilities for the last Financial Year;
- to elect an Auditor;
- to conduct such other business of which notice is given in accordance with the Branch Rules.

All positions of Officers of the Branch shall fall vacant under Rule 22 (3) and are to be filled by election.

The Officers are: President, Vice-President (1), Vice-President (2), Secretary and Treasurer.

Three positions, numbers 4, 5 and 6, of Ordinary Committee Member fall vacant by rotation, each for a three year term in accordance with Rule 23 (3). In addition, position 1 is vacant for a term of 1 year and positions 7 & 9 are vacant for terms of 2 years. Retiring Officers and Ordinary Members of Committee are eligible to stand for re-election.

Please note that ONLY financial members of the Branch are allowed to vote at elections - ONE Vote per Membership.

Nominations of candidates for election shall be in writing, signed by two members of the Branch and accompanied by the written consent of the candidate, and shall be delivered to the Secretary of the Branch not less than seven (7) days before the Annual General Meeting. The Nominee, Proposer and Secunder must all be financial members of the Branch at the time of signing.

Nominations, which close at 5.00pm on Friday, November 11th 2011, should be sent to the Secretary, A.R.S. - Victorian Branch (Inc.), P.O. Box 500, Brentford Square, 3131.

A copy of the "Statement of Purposes", and the "Rules of the Australian Rhododendron Society - Victorian Branch Incorporated (A5896Z)" may be obtained on application to the Branch Secretary.

Example of suitable Nomination Form and Proxy Forms are included.

Michael Hare, Secretary

JOTTINGS

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: A grade one teacher thought she'd find out how well her pupils could relate to everyday life by handing each of them a paper on which she had written the beginning of some well-known proverbs, then asking them to complete them in their own words. Most of the students were from a rural or farming background, and the results showed her just how their observations influenced their understanding. Here's fourteen of the best – and remember, these kids were five to six years old.

1. Don't change horses.....until they stop running
2. Strike while the.....bug is close
3. It's always darkest before.....daylight saving
4. Never underestimate the power of.....termites
5. You can lead a horse to water but.....how?
6. No news is.....impossible
7. A miss is as good as a.....Mr
8. You can't teach an old dog.....new math
9. If you lie down with dogs you'll.....stink in the morning
10. Love all, trust.....me
11. Don't bite the hand that.....looks dirty
12. The pen is mightier than the.....pigs
13. An idle mind is.....the best way to relax
14. Better late than.....pregnant

AND ANOTHER: An elderly man was stopped by the police around 2 a.m. and was asked where he was going at that time of night.

The man replied, "I'm on my way to a lecture about alcohol abuse and the effects it has on the human body, as well as smoking and staying out late."

The officer then asked, "Really? Who's giving that lecture at this time of night?"

The man replied, "That would be my wife."

Marcia Begg

SEPTEMBER GENERAL MEETING

Ian Wallace led the group with a valuable discussion on the importance of rhododendron foliage for a year round display. His examples demonstrated the wide variety of shape, colour, size and density, many having indumentum which helps protect the plants from pests. Some of these were:

Rhododendron Species-

tsangpoense – small clean dark green foliage,

lindleyi – lanceolate leaf much smaller than *nuttallii*,

elegantulum [photo page 9]– best indumentum, though one of its hybrids, 'Teddy Bear' with thick orange indumentum, is better than the parent.

tsariense – tiny leaf with orange indumentum

eximium – cream indumentum

campanulatum ssp. *aeruginosum* - new growth has a glaucous bloom

yakushimanum – tomentosum and thick gold indumentum

hodgsinii – large leaves

orbiculare – lovely rounded leaves

Hybrids –

‘Sabrina Adler’ - nice leaf but suffers from powdery mildew

‘Kimberley’ – black buds are very attractive

‘Sappho’ – tall and lanky but hardy

‘Saffron Queen’ – peeling brown bark. Hardest yellow

Ian’s favourite rhododendron is *ciliicalyx* – [photo page 10] a garden worthy shrub, scented flowers, deep pink buds, will grow in the suburbs as it is relatively hardy. Needs care but worth it.

BENCH RESULTS

Class 1 – Vireya species less than 4cms. Simon Begg had all three places with *yongii*, *tuba* and *womersleyi*

Class 2 – Vireya hybrid less than 4 cms. Simon again with ‘Sweet Mac’ and ‘Penny Whistle’.

Class 3 – Vireya species more than 4 cms. Mike Hare won with *laetum* and Simon with two more *laetums*.

Class 4 - Vireya hybrid more than 4 cms. Mike Hare won with ‘Café au Lait’ and Simon with ‘Sunbird’ and ‘Bonza’.

Class 5 – One vireya plant in a container. Simon with ‘Orange Flambe’.

Class 11 – Rhododendron species less than 4cms. *Lepidotum* from Simon.

Class 12 – Rhododendron hybrid less than 4cms. ‘Rose Elf’ from Inge Hammer.

Class 14 – Rhododendron hybrid larger than 4cms. Simon with ‘Florence Man’ and ‘My Snow White’.

Class 15 – One rhododendron in a container. Inge had a *veitchianum* .

Marcia Begg

A FLYING VISIT TO IMPORTANT VIREYA PLACES

Marcia and I have travelled a lot this year. From the middle of August to the middle of September we visited our daughter based in Amsterdam and three grandsons there. But we made flying visits to Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh to see Dr George Argent and RBGE’s Vireya collection, Jardin Botanique, Lyon France to see Frederic Danet, Botanika, Rhododendron Park, Bremen to see Dr Hartwig Schepker and the Bremen Vireya collection and Hortus Botanica, Leiden to see the famous Botanic Garden there.

Dr George Argent, RBGE Vireya Collection, Edinburgh [photos page 11]

Having spent a very pleasant week near Windermere in the Lakes District with our grandchildren and family, Marcia and I motored north to Edinburgh. We made a wrong turning near Keswick railway station and took an extra hour to find an on ramp to the M6.

There were signs saying the M6 was closed between junctions 42 and 43. At Carlisle. We needed to exit at junction 44 just north of Carlisle. We thought we had yet to come to junction 41 where we planned to take to 'other' roads. Alas we missed this junction and came to a 2 hour halt! Of the kind for which motorways are famous. All because a lorry with soft drink bottles had clipped the median strip, rolled, and dumped its load on the opposite carriageway. Some early motorists at the scene had punctures in all 4 wheels. We eventually got off at junction 44 and pulled into the first cafe for lunch- in pouring rain. We read all about the hold up in the local paper, photos and all. We still managed to visit Hermitage Castle in the border region and make it to our accommodation. We had picked the Festival weekend so we were 30 k south of Edinburgh. On the following day George Argent and Tony Conlon met us at RBGE and spent the morning with us. We had a very pleasant lunch together. George, having retired, is in the process of selling his house and moving to Warwickshire. He will still visit RBGE, but not daily. Tony Conlon is now the keeper of the very significant *Vireya* collection. As always seeing the world's best collection is inspiring. Our two previous visits were in May. August is not peak flowering time but there were very many flowers to photograph. RBGE has about 170 *Vireya* species compared with just over 100 in Australia. So there are many we would like to acquire if opportunity offers. We saw *R apoanum* in flower. This species is elusive in Australia. Every time we grow one it proves to be an hybrid. Others that have yet to make it to my collection in Olinda, and possibly to Aus include *R rosendahlii*, *R longiflorum* [again Australian plants supposed to be this species proved not to be so- *R jasminiflorum* var. *heuseri* instead] *R stapfianum*, and *R durionifolium* var. *sabahense*. *R acrophilum* [photo page 11] so caught my eye that I have made it the subject of this issue's *Vireya* Species Column. *R mendumiae* was a first attempt to obtain a permit from AQIS to import its seed, rejected/deferred pending further information. Now it is permitted and a number of members have seedlings. No one, here, has flowered it. It was flowering at RBGE. Much nicer than I had been led to believe.

At lunch George gave me a copy of the Rhododendron Red list [rhododendrons endangered in their native habitat] of which he is a co-author. I promptly left it in the restaurant, but Tony kindly collected it and forwarded it on. There is to be a conference in Spring 2013 in Edinburgh and the organisers would welcome Australian participation.

Frederic Danet, Jardin Botanique, Lyon, France

Frederic Danet is a director of Jardin Botanique, Lyon, France. In his holidays, at his own expense, he collects *vireya* seed from West New Guinea. Frederic has been doing this for about 10 years. In that time he has made many collections and discovered a number of new species. Two of these *R kogo* and *R dutartrei* are 2007 discoveries and thus are not included in Argent *Rhododendrons of subgenus Vireya* 2006, RHS. See *Adonsonia series* 3, 2007, 29(1). Frederic has made seed available widely to key collectors around the world since Lyon does not have soil or water congenial to Rhododendrons and so does not have an extensive collection. Early seed from Frederic came via Lyn Craven. *R brassii* is one of these. Recently it flowered for the first time in Australia. Andrew Rouse has been growing Frederic's seed and sharing seedlings with members as they get big enough. I have a number of these.

Andrew's results are set out in *Newsletter* July 2011, 3. Frederic is a co-author with Lyn Craven of several of the papers discussed in this issue p5. Lyn describes Frederic as a very canny [I think he means perceptive] botanist. So Marcia and I travelled to Lyon and spent a morning, and lunch, with Frederic. [photos page 12]. We enjoyed our tour of Jardin Botanique and the massive glasshouses immensely. Lyon had a special collection of Pitcher plants including *Sarracenia* and *Nepenthes*. And orchids. Over lunch we got to understand botanic garden collection policy issues and their recent evolution much better. The bottom line is that it is not enough that a candidate for accession has full provenance. The requirements of the source country have to be addressed. Lyon is a large city with two airports. Being in Vichy France, I think, it has not suffered extensive war damage and has many historic buildings. It has an extensive metro system as well as light rail and busses. It is on the Rhone river which starts in lake Geneva and has its mouth near Marseilles. It was on the route of Cadel Evans' Tour de France in 2011 and is not far from the Alps that that tour immortalised. We tried to persuade Frederic that he should climb the North Queensland peaks and re-collect Australia's rhododendrons. Frederic, for his part said that visiting in West New Guinea is open for all ages; all that is needed is to fly to Bali then catch a Garuda plane to West New Guinea with a tourist visa and hire a car and a couple of guides. He suggested we were not too old for the task. I thought of the Australian aviator's tribulations when he landed in West New Guinea without a visa. The key, clearly, is knowing the locals. Our tour to Lyon was necessarily short but we would like more time there. The weather was delightful and eating at an open air cafe near our quaint hotel on the two evenings we were there is a memory to be treasured.

Dr Hartwig Schepker, Vireya Collection, Botanika, Rhododendron Park, Bremen

From Lyon Marcia and I flew back to Amsterdam and then, directly, to Bremen. At least that was the plan. The weather delayed our planes so that two one hour trips took all day. We arrived at Bremen at dinner time in bleak weather. Our Marriott, four stars at the same price as the three star in Lyon, was luxurious. The high Aussie dollar certainly encourages travel!

The next morning, with warm clothing and wet weather gear, we caught the light rail for the 20 minute journey to Rhododendron Park. The houses on either side were very upmarket and clearly pre war. But this was not the industrial part of Bremen. Bremen is a city State (or province) in common with Berlin and Hamburg. It is not a large city in population being Germany's 10th biggest. The State includes Bremerhaven 50 k away on the North Sea. Its industry includes Mercedes and Siemens. During the war it was submarines. They attracted bombers. In flocks. At the centre of Bremen miraculously the Cathedral, City Hall and Merchan's Guild escaped the bombs as did the Bahnhof next to the Marriott. Not much else did in the centre and industrial part.

We got to Rhododendron Park and *Botanika* at its centre just in time to go inside before the rain began. *Botanika* commenced construction in 2003. It must have cost heaps. We spent until near lunch time touring, first, the Vireya house and then the Asiatics. Most plants were 'in ground' rather than pots and were organised by place of origin. All beautifully labelled

and beautifully tended. How RBGE would like these resources! And, if it comes to that, NRG. We took lots of photos and progressed to the butterfly house. Then we went back to reception and asked for Martin with whom I had corresponded about the Bremen conference a year ago that Robert Hatcher attended. Martin was on leave but Hartwig Schepker kindly made time to talk to us. He took us to the propagation area that is not open to the public. Really state of the art equipment, and ample space and staff. The results showed in the production of new plants, Vireyas and Asiatics. The reason that big leaf and other common Asiatics were in the Glasshouse and not the Park outside was the winter temperatures. -18 degrees C can occur. But the Vireyas in pots spent the summer in a shade house before being taken inside for winter. Bremen has more than 100 Vireya species and must rival RSF, White Smith (Bovees) and Pukeite for the next best collection after Edinburgh. Hartwig is a leader of the German Rhododendron Society and very expert. Some propagation hints may well work well on species we have trouble growing. Bremen's official accession requirements must comply with provenance and requisite permits in place of origin. But it also has an unofficial collection. We were very grateful for Hartwig's time. After a very late lunch we braved the weather outside in the park. Mike and Inge Hammer were here for a day last year in peak spring season. The park was still lovely in early autumn with colour just starting. On Friday morning we took a city tour and, afterwards, visited the historic buildings in the centre of town. While we were in the Cathedral rain started in earnest and we were nearly soaked crossing the square under umbrellas for lunch. Then we took a train ride to Bremerhaven. Flat flat flat. And wet. We saw nothing in Bremerhaven pre war. We visited the climate house- a tour around the world on longitude 8 degrees starting in Bremerhaven and going south to Switzerland, Cameroon and Antarctica then north again via Samoa, Alaska and back to the beginning. Very realistic with real ice and heat. On Saturday back to Amsterdam.

Hortus Botanicus, Leiden, Netherlands

Marcia and I had visited this famous place in 2002 with Jane Edmonson. A short train ride from Amsterdam one stop past the airport. Another city on canals. Very historic and, once away from the station, very picturesque. Hortus Botanicus was where Linnaeus developed the nomenclature rules by which flora and fauna are named. While we were in Scotland we visited Dawyck where Linnaeus provided some of the historic trees. The University, which includes Hortus Botanicus, dates from 1516. The oldest tree we found in the garden was a *Liriodendron tulifera* planted in 1715. There were many trees several centuries old. We did not visit the Herbarium but I note that one of the papers referred to at page 6 of this issue is published in Blumea, the publication of the University, and one of its authors hails from the Herbarium. There is a walk along which each of the major plant families is represented and a board shows its family tree. Rhododendron is a small twig on a minor branch being Ericaceae! We have many photos to record our visit.

SUNDAY 9TH OCTOBER– 2.00PM.

NATIONAL RHODODENDRON GARDEN. Meet in the volunteer's lunch room to meet Neil Puddey, vireya specialist. Neil lives in Coff's Harbour on the coast north of Sydney where he has a vireya nursery. He has kindly agreed to come to Olinda to share his experiences and expertise with us. Neil supplies overseas markets in Singapore and China and sells locally on line. His beautiful garden is an excellent example of sub-tropical luxuriance with the focus on vireyas.

SUNDAY 11TH DECEMBER -12.00PM

CHRISTMAS LUNCH AT LES CHESELLES French Restaurant at Mont De Lancey Museum and Homestead. Les Chésselles is located at Mont De Lancey 71 Wellington Road, Wandin, Victoria. Melways 121 B2.



*Les Chésselles was nominated as a finalist for the European Restaurant (Rural) category!
Experience the French connection in the Yarra Valley.*

Hidden in the undulating hills of Wandin, Victoria, is one of the first homesteads, Mont De Lancey, settled by the Sebire family. Along with the Rougets

and Gaudions, the Sebires were one of the original French settlers in the Yarra Valley.

In the magnificent gardens of the property history abounds with an original Slab Kitchen, Machinery Shed and Blacksmiths Workshop. The gardens, St Mary's Chapel and gazebo or under the 100 year old Peppercorn tree near the newly established Rose Garden also provide a beautiful setting for Weddings.

Now a new French connection has arrived at Mont De Lancey in the form of a unique French style café... 'Les Chésselles'.

Not only will you enjoy French food but also French wines and cheeses, as well of course alongside the best wines of the Yarra Valley. As part of the experience, Gourmet produce are also available.

Lunch will consist of a 2 course meal with tea/coffee. Wine may be bought by the glass. Guests are free to wander around the garden and see the amazing collection of historical horticultural equipment but those who desire to visit the museum or homestead will need to pay the entrance fee of \$7.50.

\$15per person (subsidised by the ARSV). **BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL** Phone or email Marcia Begg by 1st December or book and pay at the November Meeting. (Details inside)
Ph: 9751 1610, Email:mnbegg@gmail.com

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ARSV COMMITTEE 2011

There are many vacancies on the committee. The vacancies, it seems, increase with every issue! New committee members with enthusiasm and new ideas are desperately needed.

PRESIDENT: Michael Hammer Ph: 9755 2176 and retiring at the AGM

VICE PRESIDENT No 1: Vacant

VICE PRESIDENT No 2: Vacant

TREASURER: Vacant

SECRETARY: Michael Hare, 9844 2232

Simon Begg (Editor) & Marcia Begg, Ph: 9751 1610

Inge Hammer, Ph: 9755 2176

Valerie Marshall, Ph: 9803 4434

Alan Walker, Ph: 9726 8836

Elizabeth Xipell, Ph: 9859 9934

SOCIETY PICASAWEB SITE

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

For the "Beechmont" Picasaweb site visit <http://picasaweb.google.com/simonwbegg>