

# THE RHODODENDRON NEWSLETTER

July 2010

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



## PROGRAMME

**General Meetings are held at the Municipal Horticultural Centre, Jolimont Rd, Vermont. Mel 62 G4 unless otherwise stated.**

### JULY 2010

**FRIDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> 8.00PM GENERAL MEETING.** Tim Orpin, who bought the well renowned Kenloch Reception venue in Olinda a few years ago, will talk about 'Companion Planting'. Tim and his wife have made huge changes to the house and garden. Both are botanists and plant collectors who are widely travelled. Delegates to the Rhododendron Conference in October will have the good fortune to visit Kenloch and the garden.

### AUGUST 2010

**FRIDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> 8.00PM GENERAL MEETING.** Speaker to be decided.

**TUESDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> PARKS VICTORIA INVITE SOCIETY MEMBERS TO MORNING TEA AT THE NRG TO CELEBRATE THE OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT ON 24<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 1960 BY THE PREMIER OF VICTORIA, HENRY BOLTE, THAT THE AUSTRALIAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY HAD BEEN GRANTED LAND FOR A RHODODENDRON GARDEN.** See notice in newsletter.

### SEPTEMBER 2010

**FRIDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> 8.00PM GENERAL MEETING.**

### OCTOBER 2010

**NO GENERAL MEETING. GOLDEN JUBILEE CONFERENCE 17<sup>TH</sup>-20<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER**

**SATURDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> AND SUNDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> GOLDEN JUBILEE RHODODENDRON SHOW AT THE NATIONAL RHODODENDRON GARDENS**

**SUNDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> 3.00PM MEMBERS AFTERNOON TEA AT NRG**

### NOVEMBER 2010

**FRIDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> AGM AND GENERAL MEETING**

## PRESIDENTS REPORT

The date of our conference is getting closer and we are starting to get registrations. When we started planning this conference we debated what the theme should be. Since this is also the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of both the ARS (Victorian branch) and the National Rhododendron Gardens (NRG) at Olinda, one thought was to make it a historical review. The history of a society is often pretty dry stuff but the history of the development of a botanical garden can be considerably more interesting. Since the ARS history is so tightly linked to that of the NRG we thought it might be appropriate to focus on the gardens, with the society history added more or less in passing. Several ways of presenting this information were debated. At one stage we thought about having a significant fraction of the talks on this theme but we were worried that might be a bit parochial for an international conference. We also thought it would be nice for attendees to have something to take away with them so maybe a book would be better, but then who would know enough about the history, have good enough writing skills and the time to prepare such a manuscript? Also we wondered how many people would be prepared to read such a book. Many people when reading historical books skim through, mainly looking at the illustrations and reading the captions. So the book should have lots of illustrations? Well maybe the book should be mainly illustrations, a pictorial history of the gardens and the society. Most people like looking at historical pictures as the historical photographic panels we have prepared for use at shows have proven.

Fortunately we have put some effort of late into collecting historical photographs of the gardens into our archives. So, a picture book? That would be very expensive to reproduce. What about reproducing it electronically and present the information on a disk? Even better, what about producing a historical DVD of the gardens and the society based on the historical images we have in our archives? Lots of people would be willing to look at a picture rich historical movie say up to one hour in length.

This seemed like a good idea but how to do it? Some investigation found that there are now software packages that can string images together, along with background music and a voice over commentary, and format it as a DVD capable of being played in any DVD player. The programs allow one to pan and zoom over the images so as to give the illusion of a movie even though all the original pictorial material is still images. We did some experiments and the results were encouraging and so the project started.

That was several months ago; and a lot of work and countless revisions have passed “under the bridge” in the intervening time but the outcome is a 50 minute DVD which indeed gives a pictorial history of the gardens as well as an overview of the gardens today. Along the way we have incorporated some ARS history within the context of the development of the gardens. We have shown this to some people outside the society and the general reaction is that it appears professional and is interesting to watch. We have purchased distribution rights to the background music (\$200). Duplication costs are very reasonable (about \$4 per DVD) and we will be giving a copy to each conference attendee. We will also be playing the DVD as the theme of one of our Friday evening meetings in the near future. Parks has indicated they may be interested in selling copies of the DVD in the garden shop (assuming this survives) and if so the work could also become a source of revenue in the future.

On a separate topic, the committee has been concerned for some time over the state of the NRG and the lack of maintenance staff. We would like to see these gardens officially recognised as a cool climate botanical garden; the equivalent of Mt Tomah in NSW, and discussions with Parks Victoria has made it clear they have a similar desire. Indeed they are quietly trying to achieve the same outcome. Knowing this common purpose we have started to do some lobbying in this direction through newspapers and directly to politicians at both state and federal level. The response to these initiatives has been positive but it is very difficult to maintain momentum. We need something to give this concept some impact.

We suddenly realised that maybe we could use the historical DVD to generate this impact. The full DVD would probably be too long but the last part, which is a tour of the gardens as they are today, is only 19 minutes long and highlights, very clearly, just how spectacular these gardens are. So we created a second DVD of just the last 19 minutes and changed the voice over commentary at the end so as to reflect our request that it be recognised publically as a botanical garden. We have now had 50 copies of this second DVD made under the title “The Australian Rhododendron Society presents a tour of the National Rhododendron Gardens”. Copies have already gone out to sitting state politicians and we will be distributing it further in the next few weeks.

Reading back over this, I realise that history must be catching. None the less, I hope the chronology of what has been going on is of some interest to readers.

On more mundane topics, the weather up here in the Dandenongs continues to be wet. We had 109 mm in May and a further 66.5 mm in the first 11 days of June for a yearly total to date 516.5mm. This is above average so maybe the drought is finally ending. Pity our dams don't seem to want to acknowledge it (by rising) at least as yet. The weather has now turned very cold although it was warm up to the end of May. The result of this late warm autumn weather seems to have been to bring on early flowering for several plants. There are asiatic rhododendrons and azaleas in the NRG in flower now.

Our May meeting featured a talk by Andrew Rouse on Vireyas and one of his bench displays showed the biggest Vireya flower I have ever seen *konori* “*White Giant*” – absolutely huge not to mention incredibly beautiful. Andrew has written about it in this issues' Vireya Species Column on page 4. There was not the slightest doubt which bloom would win the bloom of the night at that meeting.

Looking back on the history shows very clearly just how much this society has achieved. The ARS has developed a spectacular botanical garden which is one of the largest on the east coast of Australia and that is something we should be very proud indeed to be associated with. There is much we can still do to further develop this garden and bring it to the awareness of more people both local and more distant. It is an ongoing goal for this society and one I hope you are willing to be part of. Don't forget the Vireya potting up, and distribution day on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June at “Beechmont”. Please also consider coming to our conference in October.

**Mike Hammer**

## THE SPECIES COLUMN.

*R dendrocharis* -Subsection Moupinensia. [photo page 8]

This species has an unusual history, and was first described in Bulletin Society Botanica in 1886. Harold Davidian gave a detailed description in “The Rhododendron Species” (1982) but noted that the species was “not in cultivation”. Peter Cox showed some slides at the 2000 Rhododendron Conference as a recently introduced species and seeds were distributed shortly afterwards. One of our seedlings flowered for the first time last year and is now established in the rockery, over 120 years after its original discovery. Everything comes to those who wait!

### **Name:**

The name *dendrocharis* means tree-loving, due to its epiphytic nature.

### **Distribution:**

This species comes from a limited area in West Sichuan, China, at 1800-3200 metres. It is generally epiphytic on trees, cliffs, and rocks.

### **Characteristics:**

This is a compact shrub of less than 0.7 metres. The foliage is small with leaves 1.3-2.5 cm.long, smooth on top and densely scaly below.The flowers are comparatively large at 3.5-5.5cm. across, pink to white and usually heavily spotted red. This species is closely related to *moupinense* but is much more compact and has smaller leaves. The white-flowering form, *petrocharis* is at present regarded as synonymous or, possibly, a sub-species.

### **Hybrids.**

This species has potential for hybridising to produce attractive dwarf hybrids, and a number of crosses have been made in England and the U.S.A.

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

We recently planted one of this species at the bottom of the main rockery. ..(see photo page ).We propose to take cuttings later this year.

**Alan Kepert.**

## VIREYA SPECIES COLUMN

*R konori* “White Giant” [photo page 8]

*R konori* belongs to Section Phaeovireya (Argent 2006). This Section has about 40 species of which approximately half are in cultivation in Australia. Species in this Section can be recognized by the dendroid scales (particularly evident on the new growth) that are easily rubbed off and have a slightly ‘grainy-furry’ feeling (consensus of a poll – sample size of four – taken in the Rouse family). Other well known species in this Section are *R superbum*, *R hellwigii* and *R beyerinckianum*. With the exception of two species, this Section is confined to New Guinea.

### **Name**

*R konori* “White Giant” is a selected form of *R konori* registered by Lyn Craven in 1992 (see *The Rhododendron*, Spring 1992, Volume 32). The name is most apt – the flowers of this

selected form are huge – a corolla length of up to 20cm. Other introductions of *R konori*, notably those from far northwest West Papua (Vogelkop Peninsula), and colloquially referred to as the ‘West Irian’ form, have a much shorter corolla, about 10cm. It is this ‘West Irian’ form of *R konori*, an earlier introduction, which has been widely used in hybridisation in Australia.

### **Distribution**

*R konori* is one of the most widely distributed vireya species in New Guinea, extending from the Vogelkop Peninsula in West Papua, throughout the main range, and extending to some of the smaller Islands to the east of New Guinea. It grows epiphytically and terrestrially, at 750 to 2500m (Argent 2006).

### **Description**

*R konori* “White Giant” differs from West Papua form of *R konori* in a number of ways. The plant tends to have fewer branches, it has a more upright habit, bigger leaves and much bigger flowers (see photographs).

*R konori* ‘White Giant’ has flowered for me a couple times, and each flowering is eagerly anticipated. The truss has 3-6 trumpet shaped flowers, up to 20 cm in length, the cylindrical corolla tube becoming slightly funnel shaped, and abruptly opening at the lobes. Lobes white with pink flecks on the inner edge, outer corolla tube have a slightly yellowish tinge at the base, but otherwise predominantly white. The flowers are strongly perfumed, particularly at night. To date, my plants have flowered May to August; however I haven’t had enough flowerings to know whether this is a dedicated flowering season. To date, a plant will only have 1-2 trusses flowering at a time.

### **Cultivation**

*R konori* “White Giant” prefers warm, humid, growing conditions and does grow best in a glasshouse. It will grow outside where it can be protected from hot conditions (I’m thinking Melbourne summers). I grow it in a light mix (1 part peat moss : 3 parts crushed polystyrene), or in a tree fern log. It does not appear to form a vigorous root system. It is easy to propagate from cuttings.

The only ‘cross’ I have is an intra-species one - *R konori* ‘White Giant’ crossed with *R konori* ‘West Irian’ form. This plant is arguably better than *R konori* ‘White Giant’ in that the flowers are equally impressive combined with a more vigorous plant.

### **Verdict**

A very impressive species in flower – lots of ‘wow’ factor, with the added benefit of a strong perfume. Worth growing and worth trying outside, though most suited to a glasshouse.

**Andrew Rouse**

## **WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE GARDEN**

**Glenn Maskell**

**Team Leader, Parks Victoria**

It has been a very busy few months in the National Rhododendron Gardens. Bill Taylor’s donation of plants has allowed us to renew some beds and expand collections. We replanted ‘Bill’s Bed’, the triangle garden near the Camellia gate, with his Azaleas. They had survived a summer with little water and look a little worse for wear but they will recover well and are already showing green shoots and growth.

We have also taken the opportunity to renew the west side of the top tier of the Kurume bowl which was looking a bit rag tag with leggy odds and ends put in over time. The Tuesday group of ARS volunteers has been instrumental in helping sort and plant these beds. As I

write the Vireyas that Bill had in his collection are being planted in a bed below the Moorland. There has been a great co-operative approach between Parks Victoria and the ARS in respect of these plantings. I think this reflects Bill's determination and will to continue to work in this garden over many years and I hope he is pleased that his work and continued support are appreciated by the ARS and Parks Victoria.

I have also been busy with the front entrance. I have been negotiating with contractors and engineers to install a new bus drop off area and to give the gardens a better sense of arrival. The bus drop off area will allow buses to drop people safely at the gardens instead of the old system that dropped them on the road with the dangers of passing traffic on a bend in the road. The new entrance path has been widened and I hope the drop off zone will be finished in the next few weeks ready for replanting.

I have also been working through the design and quote process to replace the irrigation main around the garden. It is not an easy task to minimise damage to an established garden; to avoid destroying plantings and infrastructure. We hope to start installing in the next few weeks. The outcome will be a constant pressure system with new pipes and pumps from the lake. I hope to be able to add potable water near the Camellia garden and the Japanese Tea house for visitors to be able to refresh themselves. The old system has done well but it can leak over 100,000 litres a week with medium usage and requires at least a day a week to maintain it during the irrigation season.

The last of the interpretation signs went in last week and visitor feedback has been great, it is good to finish a project that has been going for about three years. The signage has added a lot of value to a visit to the gardens as people go away with knowledge about the history and plantings in the gardens.

The other change will be free entry to the gardens from July the first. We are working through the repercussions of this and awaiting many decisions about the future of services within the garden. Free entry is not without risk from government and Parks Victoria policy or from the public usage of the gardens.

Hopefully by the time spring comes all these projects will be finished and the garden doesn't look the worse for wear as this is a lot of change in a short time.

I have been working at the gardens now for four years and I would like finish the way I started this article thanking the ARS for their support. The generosity and work of many volunteers like Bill Taylor over the years has left an asset of which all Victorians can and should be proud.

### **MAY GENERAL MEETING**

Michael Hammer showed the members the draft DVD of the History of the National Rhododendron Gardens on which he has been working very hard. This will be available at the conference in October. Lasting for about one hour it follows the development of the garden using slides with music and audio background. I am sure all members will want to acquire one when it is released.

Andrew Rouse was the speaker at the May meeting. He spoke about species he has grown from seed collected from overseas and locally and the work he has done in hybridising vireyas.

The species Andrew selects to use for hybridizing are chosen for their form, colour, abundant flowers, strength and disease resistance. *Vireya pauciflorum* is used because it has good foliage. *V. acrophilum* is a good yellow with a bushy habit. Some species are not suitable because they do not readily set seed eg *aquabile*, others are too weak and susceptible to disease eg *suaveolens*. Nine-tenths of his hybrids are destroyed when they do not conform to his ideals. Many vireyas are wrongly named as species but are actually hybrids and these are also unsuitable for hybridizing unless their parentage can be established eg many *phaeochitums* in cultivation are hybrids.

Andrew grows many vireyas in tree fern logs, particularly those which are epiphytes in the wild eg *calignus*. Terrestrial vireyas are happy in pots or in the ground.

*Dianthosmum* flowered for Andrew for the first time this year and has the strongest perfume of any vireyas he has grown.

Most of his hybrids are growing outside in the garden or pots sheltered from the hot sun and wind by deciduous trees and evergreen shrubs. 'Simbu Sunset' is one hybrid which Andrew uses frequently. Two hybrids that work well in further hybridising are (*mac x rubineiflorum*) and (*rubineiflorum x pauciflorum*). Andrew has crossed them with various others. One of Andrew's favourites is *rubineiflorum x anagalliflorum* which is one of his father's hybrids. He has registered several hybrids recently. One is R "Pixie Star" (*mac x rubineiflorum*) x (*rubineiflorum x anagalliflorum*) which is growing in a hanging basket. R "Etty", another hybrid, is tough and floriferous, with orange flowers and is growing in full sun in his garden. 'Highland Bonsai' is a *womersleyi* cross with red flowers and is also in a hanging basket. There will be a distribution of these at the next vireya meeting in June.

It was an excellent presentation and inspired many questions during and at its completion.

**MAY BENCH RESULTS:** There were very few entries other than vireyas. Azaleas are just starting to flower and there was only one asiatic entry.

In the vireya exhibits: Class 1, the small vireyas, Simon Begg was first with *yongii*, Andrew Rouse was second with *robinsonii* and Simon third with the inevitable *tuba*!

Class 2, the small hybrids, Simon first with 'Vladimir Bukovsky', and second with *lochiae x pseudonitens*.

Class 3, large species, Andrew Rouse had a magnificent *konori* 'White Giant' and Simon was second with another *konori*.

Class 4, large hybrids, Andrew had a 'Gardenia Odyssey' x 'Simbu Sunset', Simon 'Nuigini Firebird' and Inge Hammer a 'Pink Delight'.

Class 5, a vireya plant in a container, Simon first with 'Clare Crouch' and Michael Hare second with 'Barbara Crouch' just to keep it in the family!

Class 6, evergreen azalea species, Simon had *linearfolium*.

Class 7, evergreen azalea hybrid, Simon first with 'Hino-di-giri' and Inge needed a name for her second placing.

Class 9, deciduous azalea hybrid, no first place, Simon second with a 'name wanted'.

Class 12, asiatic small rhododendron, a second place only to Simon with a *yak* hybrid.

**MNB**



*R dendrocharis*  
Photo Alan Kepert



*R konori* 'White Giant'  
Photo Andrew Rouse



"Beechmont" June 2010



"Beechmont" June 2010



*R tuba*, "Beechmont", May 2010



Vireya Group at "Beechmont"  
20 June 2010





The Butterfly House at Melbourne



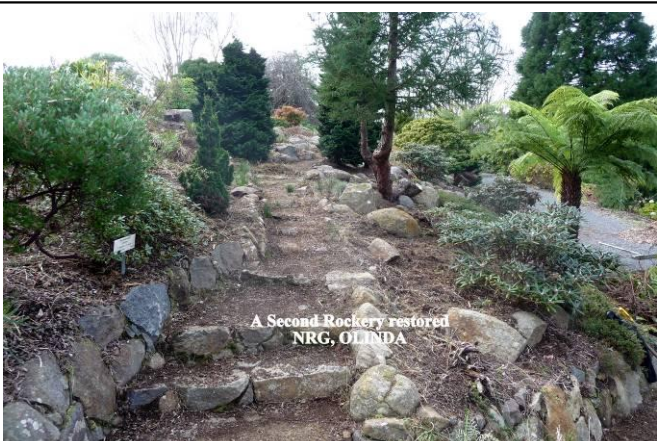
'Mali' baby elephant at Melbourne Zoo.



Bill Taylor's Patch NRG  
June 2010



Sue Crome's second Rockery Project, NRG  
June 2010



Sue Crome's second Rockery Project, NRG  
June 2010



Sue Crome's second Rockery Project, NRG  
June 2010

## AUGUST 24<sup>TH</sup> 1960

‘The Premier of Victoria, Mr. Henry Bolte, M.L.A., announced the granting of a site of 100 acres of forest land to the Australian Rhododendron Society for the purpose of developing a National Rhododendron Garden. Mr. Bolte said: “The establishment of the garden at Olinda is a good example of how the Government and a private organisation can work together to develop the natural attractions of an area for the benefit of all concerned.” (*Excerpt from ARS Journal Nov 1961 article by C.E.Sayers*)

**In order to celebrate this event Parks Victoria staff have invited ARS members to join them for morning tea on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> August 2010 at 10.00am in the Vireya Cafe.**

All members are welcome and are requested to accept the invitation by phone or email to Maureen Irvin or Glenn Maskell at the NRG by 20<sup>th</sup> August to assist with catering.

Maureen – [mirvin@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:mirvin@parks.vic.gov.au) or Ph: 9757 7308

Glenn – [gmaskell@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:gmaskell@parks.vic.gov.au) or Ph: 9757 7303

## VIREYA GROUP

Winter, at Olinda, has come. It came suddenly, after lunch, when I had nearly finished mowing the lawns. I did finish, got drenched and raced inside to a change of clothing and a warm fire. By the calendar winter came some days ago, but, until now, it felt, and looked, like autumn. Crisp mornings, sunshine and autumn colours. To me the nicest time of year in Olinda. This morning on Radio 774 Caroline Blackman was describing winter flowering plants; she mentioned daphne, early camellias and winter sweet (*Chimonanthus praecox*). Sadly she missed Vireyas, in common with nearly every other gardening presenter. Yet *R tuba*, *R konori*, *R laetum* and *R phaeochitum* as well as many hybrids provide a wonderful winter display. Marcia and I look out at breakfast at *R tuba* in the lawn and wonder why more gardens don't grow it. [Photo page 8] Caroline might also have mentioned cyclamens and fuchsias, even R “Christmas Cheer”, which has commenced flowering.

Why is it that Vireyas are never mentioned? Come to that why has the National Rhododendron Garden such a low profile that few Melbourne citizens even know of its existence? Mike Hammer has produced wonderful DVDs of NRG; a short version designed for politicians and decision makers to try to get more government and public interest and a long one to show the history of NRG for the Golden Anniversary Conference in October.

Our constitution, Cl.2, on the very first page, under “Statement of Purposes” states:

*“A. To promote interest in the genus Rhododendron by conducting meetings, shows and field days and by collecting and disseminating information about the growth and propagation of Rhododendrons*

*D. to establish good relationships with other branches of the Australian Rhododendron Society and local bodies with horticultural interests”*

The Constitution does not expressly say “to disseminate Rhododendrons” but I have always understood that to be implicit. Perhaps, in the past, when there were many specialist

Rhododendron Nurseries whose owners were the backbone of the Society, the nurseries expected to disseminate the plants. Indeed, if stories of the early shows are to be believed, some Rhododendron Nurserymen mounted guard on their stands at shows to prevent rivals taking cuttings of rare specimens or even the plants. These days we wish there were more than one or two Rhododendron Nurserymen! Indeed, by default, it is getting to the stage where the Society and members are the only sources of all but the commonest plants.

This year the Vireya Group has focussed on disseminating species and hybrids to members and to other Societies. This is for a very good reason beyond what the Constitution might say. A Darwinian reason: - survival. In the past Vireya species present in Australia have been lost. We might find out at the October Conference an authoritative version why this happened. But perhaps not. All I hear are hushed, unattributed, whispers that this person, or that, caused the loss. I won't repeat hearsay. Suffice it to say that one key reason was that the species were held in far too few hands.

Much effort, commencing with Bill Taylor's and Murray McAllister's New Zealand visit in 2003, has gone into recollecting missing species, and adding new ones.

In May *Newsletter*, page 12, I listed species that I supplied to Mt Tamborine Botanic Garden. ARSV's contribution, unfortunately, missed the transport due to a misunderstanding.

Andrew Rouse and I have just supplied Vireya species to Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden and to our ex President Lesley Eaton, who has recently moved to Mount Nelson, near Hobart. Unfortunately there was no contribution from ARSV's NRG collection.

The species Andrew and I supplied to Emu Valley were:

<i>adinophyllum</i>	<i>album</i>	<i>alticola</i>
<i>blackii</i>	<i>commonae</i>	<i>crassifolium</i>
<i>edanoi ssp.pneumonanthum</i>	<i>gardenia</i>	<i>javanicum ssp brookianum</i>
<i>javanicum ssp javanicum</i>	<i>kawakamii</i>	<i>konori var. konori [ex JR]</i>
<i>leptanthum var. warianum</i>	<i>leptobrachion aff</i>	<i>lineare</i>
<i>lochiae</i>	<i>loranthiflorum 'Sri Chinmoy'</i>	
<i>luraluense</i>	<i>majus</i>	<i>malayanum</i>
<i>phaeochitum</i>	<i>polyanthemum</i>	<i>radians</i>
<i>rarum</i>	<i>retivenium</i>	<i>rugosum</i>
<i>superbum</i>	<i>wentianum</i>	<i>aequabile</i>
<i>apoanum</i>	<i>brassii</i>	<i>curviflorum</i>
<i>fallacinum</i>	<i>javanicum var teysmannii</i>	
<i>kochii</i>	<i>konori [cream]</i>	<i>nervulosum</i>
<i>x planecostatum</i>	<i>praetervisum</i>	<i>rarilepidotum [yellow]</i>
<i>rhodoleucum</i>	<i>rushforthii</i>	<i>stevensianum</i>
<i>verticillatum</i>	<i>villosum</i>	<i>viriosum v. 'Thornton Peak'</i>
<i>viriosum v. 'Mt Finnigan'</i>	<i>womersleyi</i>	<i>williamsii</i>
<i>cruttwellii</i>	<i>agathodaemonis</i>	<i>culminicola</i>
<i>orbiculatum</i>		

In addition we met Lesley's very modest wish list and can add to that when Lesley is ready.

The Vireya Group plans to add to Emu Valley's collection as plants become available. It would supply plants to any other Branch or member or, indeed, any other garden group wishing to start or augment a collection and be prepared to label the plants correctly. Never again should species be 'lost'.

The Vireya Group met on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> June, again at 'Beechmont'. [Photo page 9]. This time the task was to sort out my hybrids, pot them up and take cuttings where appropriate and to distribute as many as possible. Andrew distributed small plants of his recently registered hybrids: R "Pixie Star", R "Highland Bonsai", R "Little Duchess" and R "Gypsy Bell". We had 15 attendees. I did not count the hybrids I distributed but my guess is about 300. Most of the hybrids Murray and Bill brought back from New Zealand were included. Michael Hare took a substantial number to Royal Melbourne Botanic Garden volunteers. He also contributed some, R "Mrs Elizabeth Miller". All part of spreading the genus around.

There is no doubt that few of the plants are obtainable anywhere else, especially as it was made clear at the General Meeting last Friday evening that the ARSV vireyas held at NRG are all needed for planting at NRG. Actually members helping members is good for those who participated. Such shared activities help keep the Society alive. I have a special vote of thanks for Inge Hammer who acted as master of ceremonies and made me consider each tray of plants to ensure that I kept one or two of everything.

**SWB**

## **VOLUNTEER GROUP**

The main effort of the Volunteer Group over the past weeks has been the development and planting out of a new bed of hybrid vireyas in the moorland area. In this task they have been assisted by Parks Victoria staff who not only cleared the area and prepared the ground but also did some of the planting. The bed is made up of a central circular area containing perfumed vireyas, regardless of their colour; radiating from this area are sections which have been planted with vireyas of particular colours: pink, red, white, orange, and yellow. [see photo page 9]

Most of the plants have come from Bill Taylor's nursery while others came from the ARS nursery stocks.

Since most of these plants have name tags they will enable visitors to the Gardens to appreciate the diversity of vireyas, and if they wish, choose plants which will suit their own garden.

A small group of the Volunteers continues to work at regenerating the rockeries, removing weeds, planting appropriate rhododendrons and other suitable plants. These are looking fantastic and well worth a visit. [see photos page 9]

The Volunteer Group meets every Tuesday. Lots of information and knowledge is shared over morning tea and lunch and various jobs around the NRG are undertaken. Members who would like to go along for an hour or a day are very welcome. Just turn up or ring John Quinn on 5968 1027 for more information.

**Michael Hare**

## **THE FUTURE OF NEWSLETTER**

I have been editing *Newsletter* for 6 years. I have enjoyed the challenge. While I know that my efforts have not pleased some, particularly on some controversial occasions or issues, I have no regrets. In words that are not original "I'd do it all again". It is enough for me that I have done my best. In regard to many other things in my life I do wish I could have my time again. But not this. Whatever one wishes no one can have the time again. There is only the future.

Every organisation needs renewal. Our Society needs new blood on committee and, after 6 years it needs a new *Newsletter* editor. It does not need a new President, yet. Mike has provided the slim glimmer of hope that our moribund Society might avoid summary extinction as early as 2011. Make no mistake General Meeting attendances are falling; few events attract attendance sufficient to justify holding them- the Vireya distributions being a notable exception - and committee initiatives now fall to President Mike and one or two others. Mike's National Rhododendron Garden DVD should persuade authorities that NRG should be maintained, and treasured, as a cool climate Botanic Garden not an expendable football of an outer suburban park of minor significance of which the populace has never heard. That should attract younger, new, Tuesday volunteers like the ones Royal Melbourne Botanic Gardens has. Marcia Begg has made a gallant effort in organising the 2010 Golden Anniversary Conference. If it succeeds it will be due to her efforts and that, too, gives hope that new, or old, Society members will come forward in 2011 to renew Committee ranks.

New expertise in Asiatics and Azaleas may emerge to help Laurie Begg, John Quinn and Alan Kepert. New Vireya expertise to communicate with Andrew Rouse is desperately needed. For older members with significant rhododendron collections, such as John Quinn, Lyn Craven, Murray McAllister and me, the sands of time are rapidly running out. We all share significant, though different, health problems as well as age. All species, and hybrids also, should be held in more than one or two hands regardless of age.

From 1 July 2010 entry to NRG will be free. No longer will Society membership have a value in providing free entry. Emu Valley Rhododendron Society, which has about the same number of members as ARSV, is reviewing its position. It, alone among ARS Branches, owns its own rhododendron garden and it has been advised its first priority should be to develop that garden. The ARS journal, *The Rhododendron*, depends for funding on National Council levies and thus on members paying annual subscriptions. These developments put in question just how many members will be paying.

I seek someone to take over *Newsletter* editorship in 2011. If my successor comes forward I am happy to help for a year, at least.

**SWB**

## **JOTTINGS**

**RHODODENDRON AND AZALEA SHOWS 2010.** This year there will be a different show programme held in spring for several reasons, including lack of man/woman power and display plants to decorate the hall, but mainly because the Golden Jubilee Conference will be the focal point this year. There will be one combined competitive show held the

weekend before the conference on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> October. A display of cut flowers will be maintained until after Cup weekend. All members and friends are invited to the Members Day for afternoon tea and to view the show on Sunday afternoon 17<sup>th</sup> October from 3.00pm.

**BOOKS FOR SALE:** Valerie Marshall, our librarian, has done a review of books in the Library and found that the following are surplus to the Society's needs. Members who are interested in purchasing any of the following books can contact Mick Hare (secretary) Ph: 9844 2232. The price shown does not include postage which will be added at cost.

TITLE	QUANTITY	PRICE
"The Pocket Guide to Rhododendrons", RHS	2 copies.	\$150
"Rhododendrons of subgenus vireya", Dr George Argent	3 copies	\$105
"The Rhododendron Handbook", 1998 Ed, RHS	1 copy	\$50
"The Larger Rhododendron Species", Peter A Cox	1 copy	\$30
"Vireya Rhododendron", Christopher Fairweather	1 copy	\$20
"Magnolias – A Gardener's Guide", Jim Gardiner	1copy	\$30

**ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA.** The RHSV is organizing a bus tour to Floriade in Canberra from 16<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> September. Places of interest are included in the cost and accommodation is at a high quality hotel.

For information contact Sue Grady Ph: 1300 139 715 or Email: [sue@tradetravel.com](mailto:sue@tradetravel.com).

**BULB GROWERS.** The RHSV has arranged a public meeting where Cameron McMaster, a South African Bulb Grower of international renown, will show a presentation on South African bulbs. Date: 14<sup>th</sup> September in Melbourne Botanical Gardens precinct.

Information and bookings contact the RHSV secretary on 5367 6363 or [secretary@rhsv.org.au](mailto:secretary@rhsv.org.au).

### **THE BEAUTY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE UNDONE**

We'll begin with a box, and the plural is boxes,  
But the plural of ox becomes oxen, not oxes.  
One fowl is a goose, but two are called geese,  
Yet the plural of moose should never be meese.  
You may find a lone mouse or a nest full of mice,  
Yet the plural of house is houses, not hice.  
If the plural of man is always called men,  
Then shouldn't the plural of pan be called pen?  
If I speak of my foot and show you my feet,  
And I give you a boot, would a pair be called beet?  
If one is a tooth and a whole set are teeth,  
Why shouldn't the plural of booth be called beeth?  
Then one may be that, and three would be those,  
Yet hat in the plural would never be hose,  
And the plural of cat is cats, not cose.  
We speak of a brother and also of brethren,  
But though we say mother, we never say methren.

Then the masculine pronouns are he, his and him,

But imagine the feminine: she, shis and shim!

Let's face it - English is a crazy language.

There is no egg in eggplant nor ham in hamburger; neither apple nor pine in pineapple.

English muffins weren't invented in England ..We take English for granted, but if we explore its paradoxes, we find that quicksand can work slowly, boxing rings are square, and a guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig.

And why is it that writers write but fingers don't fing, grocers don't groce and hammers don't ham? Doesn't it seem crazy that you can make amends but not one amend? If you have a bunch of odds and ends and get rid of all but one of them, what do you call it?

If teachers taught, why didn't preachers praught? If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat?

You have to marvel at the unique lunacy of a language in which your house can burn up as it burns down, in which you fill in a form by filling it out, and in which an alarm goes off by going on.

And, in closing, if Father is Pop, how come Mother's not Mop?

**MNB**

### **PROGRAMME 2010**

**JULY - FRIDAY 16<sup>TH</sup>** 8.00PM GENERAL MEETING. Tim Orpin, who bought the well renowned Kenloch Reception venue in Olinda a few years ago, will talk about '**Companion Planting**'. Tim and his wife have made huge changes to the house and garden. Both are botanists and plant collectors who are widely travelled. Delegates to the Rhododendron Conference in October will have the good fortune to visit Kenloch garden.

**AUGUST - FRIDAY 20<sup>TH</sup>** 8.00PM GENERAL MEETING. Speaker to be decided.

**TUESDAY 24<sup>TH</sup>** **PARKS VICTORIA INVITE SOCIETY MEMBERS TO MORNING TEA AT THE NRG** See notice in newsletter.

**SEPTEMBER - FRIDAY 17<sup>TH</sup>** 8.00PM GENERAL MEETING.

**OCTOBER - NO GENERAL MEETING.**

**GOLDEN JUBILEE CONFERENCE 17<sup>TH</sup>-20<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER**

**OCTOBER - SATURDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> AND SUNDAY 17<sup>TH</sup>** – **GOLDEN JUBILEE RHODODENDRON SHOW AT THE NATIONAL RHODODENDRON GARDENS.** Schedule will be enclosed with the September newsletter. Hall open for entries on Saturday from 8.30am. to 11.45am.

**OCTOBER - SUNDAY 17<sup>TH</sup>** - **3.00PM MEMBERS AFTERNOON TEA.** Members, friends and delegates to the conference are invited to join the committee for afternoon tea and to view the show.

**NOVEMBER - FRIDAY 19<sup>TH</sup>** 8.00PM – AGM AND MEETING

**DECEMBER - SUNDAY 5<sup>TH</sup>** 12.00PM – CHRISTMAS LUNCH.

## CONTENTS

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Page 1</b>
<b>President's Report</b>	<b>Pages 2-3</b>
<b>The Species Column</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>Vireya Species Column</b>	<b>Pages 4-5</b>
<b>What is Happening in the Garden</b>	<b>Pages 5-6</b>
<b>May General Meeting</b>	<b>Pages 6-7</b>
<b>Photographs</b>	<b>Pages 8-9</b>
<b>Vireya Group</b>	<b>Pages 10-12</b>
<b>Volunteer Group</b>	<b>Page 12</b>
<b>The Future of <i>Newsletter</i></b>	<b>Page 13</b>
<b>Jottings</b>	<b>Pages 13-15</b>
<b>General Meeting Program 2010</b>	<b>Page 15</b>
<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page 16</b>

## ARSV COMMITTEE 2009

There continue to be vacancies on the committee and members who would be interested to be more involved would be made very welcome. The committee meets at Nunawading at 5.00pm before the Monthly General Meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday.

PRESIDENT: Michael Hammer Ph: 9755 2176

VICE PRESIDENT No 1: Vacant

VICE PRESIDENT No 2: Vacant

TREASURER: Neil Webster, Ph: 9859 3622

SECRETARY: Michael Hare, 9844 2232

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

Inge Hammer, Ph: 9755 2176

Valerie Marshall, Ph: 9803 4434

Cynthia Sladen, Ph: 9561 8874

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>