



Rhododendron seed propagation and medium

By John O'Hara, President

This topic is on propagating the seeds on a *Rhododendron maddenii* x *R. cinnabarinum* and what medium to use, and how they might fair.

The presence of *R. maddenii* in the cross should make the plant somewhat more heat tolerant and probably give more vigour than *R. cinnabarinum* itself. The problem for us at the Dandenong Ranges Botanic Garden (DRBG) with *R. cinnabarinum* is that it is a very sickly plant, well known both here and overseas to suffer from rust and other fungal diseases. If grown well, and when in flower, it is a pretty plant that may well be worth a try.

In terms of growing from seed, it may well be worth bagging some seed capsules just to be sure. But, generally the seed capsules open partially first and leave enough seeds still in the capsule for there to be more than enough to grow all that you want without the need to bag.

The very fine dust like seed is best sown fresh by spreading on the surface of either wet peat, or better still, shredded sphagnum moss (I steal the kitchen blender and blitz the sphagnum). You can either mist the seed or soak the peat or sphagnum moss and let the receding water draw the seed into close contact with the medium. The seed does need light to germinate (hence the surface distribution of the seed) but not direct sunlight. Under a nursery bench or on a bright south facing window works well (we basically use an aquarium with the light on 24 hours a day). The seed is best placed in a terrarium or sealed plastic bag to germinate. Fresh seed may take as little as a few weeks to show signs of germination. Once germinated, the seedlings can be separated when large enough to handle and then slowly introduced into the outside world.

It is not a bad idea growing seedlings from a primary cross such as this one as it is more likely that you will get the greatest variation in plant and flower characteristics in this F2 cross. Sometimes when the F1 (primary) cross doesn't give you what you were after, going to the F2 might.

Event – FCHS Plant Collectors Expo – 5th and 6th of March 2022

The Ferny Creek Horticultural Society will be holding its annual Plant Collectors Expo on Saturday 5th and Sunday 6th of March from 10am to 4pm at 100 Hilton Road in Sassafra. They will have rare and unusual perennials, bulbs, trees, succulents and more by specialist growers, Australian made quality garden tools and equipment not available in hardware stores, machinery, wood turning, floral artists and book sales.

On Sunday, there will also be children's activities, a jumping castle and face painting. Set in 10 acres of beautiful gardens and with guided walks. Light refreshments and free parking available. Entry fee is \$5 (free for 14 years and under).

The ARSV will have a vast amount of vireyas and Asiatics for sale with quite a few members on hand to give advice and growing information. Booklets and membership forms will also be available. As an ARSV member, If you would like to assist on the day, give Alex Pottage a call on 03 5786 1595.

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Updates from members

By Richard Florey, Newsletter Editor

Australian Rhododendron Society (Victorian branch) ARSV has members across Australia and overseas and it would be good to receive news from you that we can put in the Newsletter from time to time. Such as, has anything of interest flowered? Any triumphs or disasters? Have you visited any interesting nurseries or gardens? A question for other members?

Please email your snippets and separate JPG photos to me at richarddflorey@gmail.com.

In this edition, we have received a member's garden article from Roy and Lorraine Bilbie.

Two new species of Vireya from Sulawesi, Indonesia

Article sourced by Francis Crome

Two new endemic Vireya species *R. ardi* and *R. tjiasmantoi* from Sulawesi, Indonesia are described in this article at Researchgate. The article has detailed morphological descriptions accompanied by a map of geographic distributions, plant illustrations, and discussions on habitat, ecology, and preliminary conservation status are presented. For further reading on this article, go to

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/357874806>



Left is *R. ardi* - A. Habit; B. Flowers; C. Corolla lobes with whitish marginal scales

Right is *R. tjiasmantoi* - A. Habit; B. Abaxial leaf; C. Flowers; D. Corolla lobes.

RHS RCM Group 'Plant Passions Series Online Talk' - Trek to Bhutan 2007

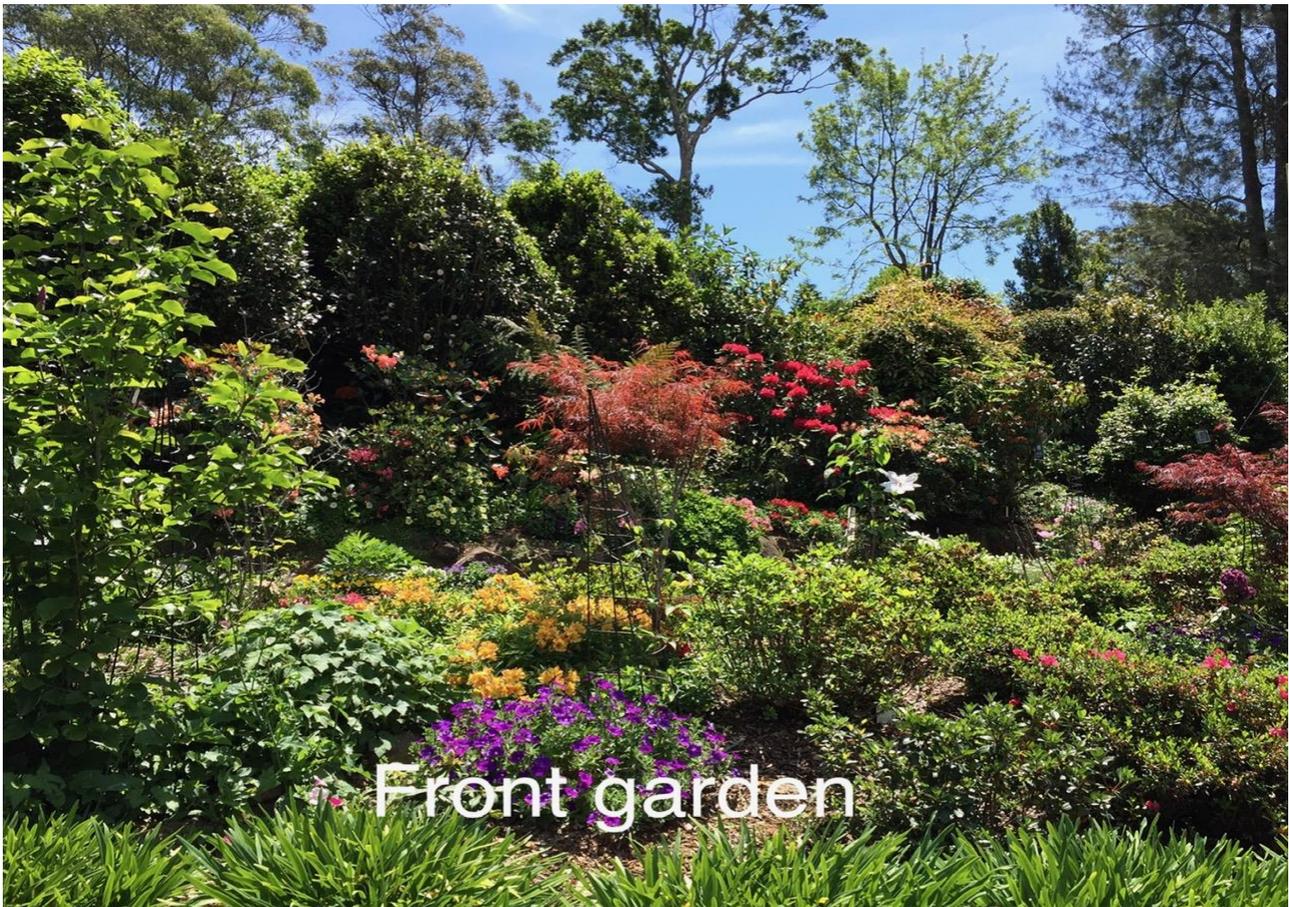
by Rosemary Legrand

Rosemary Legrand provides a real treat for all Azalea and Rhododendron lovers, ranging from the Himalayas in Bhutan to her childhood garden with her nurseryman father. Rosemary is a former nursery owner who keeps very occupied as a speaker, given illustrated talks for over 30 years to a wide international audience, and has numerous contributions to the book '1001 Gardens'. It is definitely worth listening to her trek about what is further afield. Go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c50wEZnoWRg>

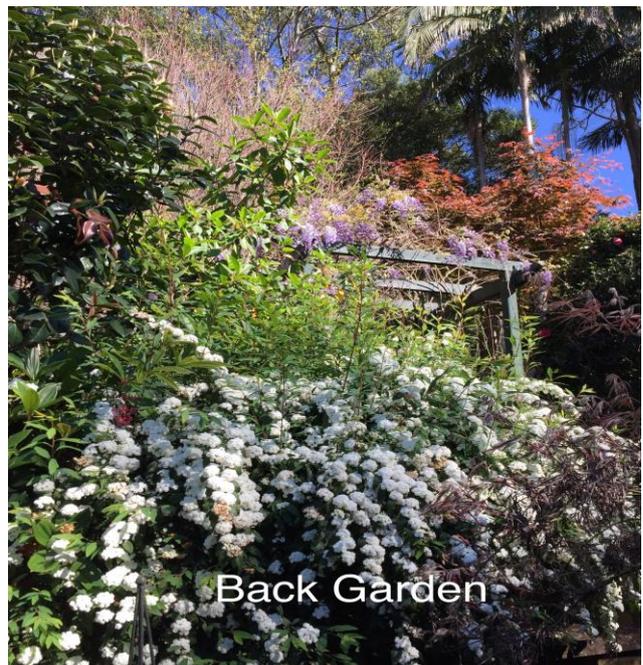
Member's Garden – 'The Haven' Tamborine Mountain, South East Queensland

By Roy and Lorraine Bilbie

We started our garden on Tamborine Mountain 14 years ago. Our climate here is often described as a place where tropical meets temperate. This gave us great opportunity to grow a wide range of shrubs, trees and perennials.



Our garden is a corner block approximately 1/3 of an acre with two very generous sized nature strips on the front and side. Over the years the front section suffered a lot of erosion so it has been remodelled with a rock wall and planted out as a garden. (Pictured) So it is quite an open garden on the two street fronts. It quite often invites interaction with passers-by which we enjoy.



We grow lots of Rhododendrons, Camellias and Magnolias plus Japanese Maples, Viburnums and Luculias.

