



Vireya of the Year
'Taylori'

VIVA VIREYA

HAWAII CHAPTER AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

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Hawaii'i Chapter Website: <http://www.hawaiiivireyaars.org/>

March President's Message

It's March already and I'm still using 2009.

It looks like our rains are back and hopefully the drought is over. My plants are looking happier -- it's amazing how some Vireyas take the drought much better than others. I have some that kept blooming like everything was just fine and others I needed to water just to keep them alive. I don't like to water. That's why we moved to the Hilo side of the island -- just for the rain. I don't want to sound like a complainer but I hope the rain doesn't try to make up for the drought all at once. In the last two weeks we have gotten 5.34 inches here.

I hope everyone went to the Zoo on the 13 for the Jean Curtis day. The club had a tent out by our Vireya species bed and our people talked to everyone that came by. Thanks to the club members that helped with the event and talked to the visitors. Also, much mahalo to the Friends of the Zoo for organizing the event and inviting us to participate.

April is our annual meeting and elections. The following positions are up for election: President, Vice President, and one board member position. If you are interested in one of these positions please let one of the board members know.

This month's program will be given by Rick Worley on the topic of pruning Vireya roots. This can be useful for plants you want to keep in decorative pots or for Bonsai and general good health of the plant.

There will be a now-unused club-owned HP DeskJet D2430 color printer for sale at the auction. It has been used very little and is in good condition.

Hope to see everyone at the meeting.

Ray Schimpf, Hawaii'i Chapter President

Upcoming National and International events

The Ultimate Rhododendron Conference -- April 9 - 11, 2010, Vancouver, Canada
URL: <http://www.rhodos.ca>

American Rhododendron Society Annual Convention -- May 14 - 17, 2010 in Long Island, NY
Phone: 631-689-9498 or email thefellers@verizon.net

German International Rhododendron Society Conference -- May 18 - 20 in Bremen, Germany
URL: <http://www.rhodo.org>

Australian Rhododendron Society Golden Jubilee Conference -- October 17 - 20, 2010 in Melbourne, Australia
URL: <http://www.vicrhodo.org.au>

ARS Western Regional Conference -- October 7 - 10, 2010 in Florence, Oregon

Editor's Note: We will place any pdf documents from these conferences on our own website as they become available. We have a little note on the great value of attending conference in the Editor's Notes.

Officers of the Hawaii Chapter ARS

President	Ray Schimpf	(808) 965-9412	raymondshimpf@msn.com
Co-Vice Presidents	Richard Rhodes & Ronnie Nickson	(808) 966-6801	RonnieRichard@att.net
Secretary	Jurahame Leyva	(808) 966-6693	jurahame@kurtistownorchids.com
Treasurer	Joyce Gay	(808) 966-5572	DavidandJoyce60@hotmail.com
Newsletter Editor	Jane Adams	(808) 345-0959	jane@whitecloudnursery.com

Directors: Spike Werner, Bettye Wakabayashi, Ron Phillips, Dick Kruppa

What's in a name? In the case of flowers, and in particular our Vireyas, the naming can be more interesting than you might think. Those of us who are registering new crosses are being asked by the registrar of RHS for more information about the names being submitted.

This subject got my attention recently when I received my copy of the Cato Institute newsletter. Its lead story was by Vladamir Bukowsky. The Vireya lovers who got interested about the time I did in the '90's will remember that is the name of one of Pete Sullivan's crosses. You may also remember that Pete named many of his wonderful crosses for political dissidents, and Vladamir Bukovsky was a major Russian political dissident, author and activist. "After spending a total of 12 years in Soviet prisons, labor camps and forced-treatment psychiatric hospitals, he authored and edited numerous books describing his experience." I thought he had died some time ago, but he is very much alive today and spoke at Cato institute last October. Here is an image of flower the Sullivan cross.



Mitch's Corner ***by Mitch Michell, Volcano, HI***

Editor's Notes ***by Jane Adams***

Greetings for the Merry Month of March!

As I put together the list of national and international rhododendron events that appears on Page 1 of this newsletter, it brought back memories of past conferences, both those I've attended on the mainland and those events we've hosted here on the Big Island.

Even if you've never attended one of the mainland or international events, our experience with putting on various Vireya seminars and two Western Regional Conferences have been eye-opening experiences. Not only was it greatly satisfying to watch island visitors experience our hospitality and aloha, but we went to great effort to provide them with opportunities not normally available to visitors. Private garden tours, our Fellowship Dinner in the park, Taiko drumming and keiki hula were definitely hits with our visitors.

Now put the shoe on the other foot, and think about what an opportunity it is for a rhododendron lover and gardener to be on the receiving end. You'll visit gardens rarely shown to the public, get privately escorted tours of botanical gardens, learn lots at

seminars, and have a chance to talk story with the folks who have come to visit us, not to mention the new friends you'll meet.

If you've a hankering for some international travel, what better than Bremen, Germany or Melbourne, Australia? Many of the Australian folks will be familiar faces as they've visited and presented here several times. Martin Monthofer in Germany was a presenter at the very first Vireya seminar we ever attended -- 2003.

If you are interested in seeing the East Coast rhodies in full bloom, there's no better venue than the gardens of Long Island. If you love the West Coast (or have never seen its wonders), the Western Regional is in Florence, Oregon on the central Oregon coastline. Remember that one of the hybridizers who did so much to breed some hardiness into vireyas, Jim Gerdemann, did so specifically to grow them on the Oregon Coast.

Of course, you also get the benefit of reduced hotel room rates. Oh, and did I mention the old and new friends you'll meet up with???

VOY = Vireya of the Year

It is time to think about the next Vireya of the Year. Take a look at your garden... Which of your vireya is your favorite? Then let me know. We'll make a list from which we will vote the next VOY. I'm shooting for the May meeting to finalize this so, get your favorites to me soon. Contact me at: sbertelmann@hawaii.rr.com or 808-966-9225. I'll be waiting to hear from you. Sherla

Past Vireya of the Year(s)

2002 Harry Wu - *zoelleri* *X leucogigas*.

Large, light orange-yellow, wavy flowers with a light pink-orange halo. Large leaves, thick stemmed, upright grower.



2003 Calavar - *konori X* *zoelleri*

Large dark pink, flowers that blends into white then yellow in the throat. Upright grower, fairly compact and has a carnation-scented fragrance.



2004 Jock's Cairn - *possibly brookeanum X* *javanicum*

Medium sized red flowers with a strong pink throat on a domed shaped truss. Good branching, fairly compact, upright, full shrub.



2005 - Avalon *'Shasta' X aurigeranum*

Large, wavy, all yellow flowers with a domed shaped truss. Lightly scented. Bushy, good branching, fairly compact grower.



2006 - Marshall Pierce Madison - (*'Triumphans' x* *javanicum*) *X leucogigas*

Large, strong pink, highly scented flowers on a large leaved, thick limbed, upright shrub.



2007 - Cape Cod Cranberry - *konori X* *viriosum*

Small 5-8 bell shaped, cranberry-red, strongly carnation-scented on a small leaved, bushy, compact growing shrub.

2008 - Great Scent-sation *konori X viriosum*

Large, deep purplish-pink flowers. Nicely scented. Upright, compact, open grower.



2009 - St. Cecilia - *konori var. phaeocephalum X* *leucogigas*

Very large, wavy, white flowers with purplish pink markings where petals meet. Large leaves, thick stemmed, open growing & nicely fragrant.



2010 - Taylari - *'Princess Alexandra' X* *brookeanum ssp. gracile*

Small, all pink flowers on a good branching, bushy, compact growing shrub. One of the oldest vireya still around circa late 1890's.



2011 - Your Favorite ??????

2012 - Your Favorite ??????

Editor's Note: This article appeared in the publication "Vireya Rhododendrons -- An Anthology of Articles from the Journal of the American Rhododendron Society, 1954 - 1998. The compendium was edited by E. White Smith and Lucie Sorensen-Smith of Bovees Nursery. E. White generously allowed us to reprint this in our Newsletter as the beginning of a series of articles about the history of the Hawai'i Chapter.

Vireya Aficionados Meet in Hawaii

by Clarice Clark, Puyallup, Washington

From the Journal of the American Rhododendron Society, Summer 1997, Vol. 51 No. 3

One memorable part of last year's ARS Annual Convention in Oban was an informal get-together of vireya rhododendron aficionados -- or vireya nuts, as some would call us. At this meeting, a member of the Rhododendron Species Foundation, "Mitch" Mitchell, showed a video of his garden in Hawaii where he grew Vireyas and explained how easy it was to grow and propagate them. He just sticks cuttings in the ground; no chemicals, no bottom heat, and they root. He can grow massive amounts of seedlings in discarded plastic Cool-Whip tubs, stapled in plastic bags that hang from his potting bench, shaded from the sun, and has blooming plants in as little as two years.

He stirred in us a mixture of awe and envy. Afterwards, he graciously invited anyone visiting the Big Island to come visit. E. White Smith, editor of our newsletter, the *Vireya Vine*, posted a notice that we take Mitch up on his offer and proceeded to organize a three day event. He had little difficulty convincing about 16 other "nuts" from the mainland, plus Dr. George Argent, reigning world expert on the tropical section of the genus, from the RBG in Edinburgh, Scotland, to attend a meeting on a tropical island in January.

The meeting was centered around the town of Volcano. The elevation of Volcano, about 4,000 feet (1,200 meters) is just outside Hawaii Volcanoes National Park and the famous Kilauea crater, which has been actively flowing since 1983, right up until the night we arrived. Attendees gathered for an informal evening meal at the cafeteria in the park, and then scattered to their nearby bed and breakfast accommodations. The next day, the 1st of February, found most participants exploring the park and experiencing closed trails and roads as the Park Service tried to predict the volcano's next move. I especially enjoyed the native *Vaccinium reticulatum* and *Styphelia tameiameia* encountered on a hike my husband and I took with E. White Smith, his daughter, Julie Feste, and his wife, Lucie Sorensen-Smith, proprietor of Bovees Nursery. We walked up a good appetite for our dinner at the home of Mitch and his wife, Sandy. We investigated their acre garden, filled with tree ferns, native trees, and of course, *Rhododendron*. As we sipped wine and renewed acquaintances from other meetings, we met new Vireya enthusiasts, from as far away as Massachusetts, and right next door. Mitch had also invited some of his Island neighbors, and Sandy ended up feeding about 30 people.

The periodic earthquakes did not seem to faze the locals, who carried on with life as usual, and some 40 people turned out for the meeting on Friday. White Smith chaired the meeting and, after introductions, instinctively moved to everyone's favorite part of any rhododendron meeting - FREE PLANTS! Lucky numbers were drawn for rooted cuttings donated by Mitch and by Greg Adams of Jungle Jewels Nursery, Hawaii: mostly hybrids and mostly grown in sterile media, suitable for transport back to the mainland. Several commercial growers were present, interested in these "new" market, and eager to learn how to propagate and grow potted plants for garden center sales. Expert growers and propagators, Dick Cavender of Red's Rhodies and Peter Schick of the Mendocino Botanical Garden, gave demonstrations and slide presentation. To get things moving after lunch, White made sure that everyone in the room got at least one plant, encouraged participants to buy lots of raffle tickets and kept the room hopping with frequent drawings. Almost \$200 was raised to offset costs of the meeting, and perhaps provide a "seed" treasure for what we hope will become a study club devoted to vireya rhododendrons.

The featured speaker was Dr. George Argent, who was a big hit with excellent slides of his trips into the wilds of "vireyaland." Some of his most recent research has been in the Philippines, collecting just ahead of rampant development. Dr. Argent teased us with a preview of some research into a puzzling group of non-Malasian species: *R. kawakamii*, *R. rushforthii*, *R. santapau* and perhaps *R. vaccinioides*. Anyone growing these species is urged to closely witness the flowering sequence. Do the florets unfurl from the outside in, or the inside out? And what, if anything, does this mean about any possible relationship between these species? I always learn so much from his presentations, a balanced mix of the scientific information, the spectacular scenery, and beautiful flowers.

The next day was perfect for local garden tours; the weather cooperated with clear skies the entire four days. Volcano usually gets at least 100 inches (2.5 meters) of rain a year, and the Hawaii Tropical Botanical Garden near Hilo, our first stop, looks forward to 160 inches of rain (over 4 meters) in 12 months! Scott Lucas, garden curator, gave us a private tour of the garden, pointing out the suitability of the site for orchids and vireya rhododendrons. Many of the other local gardens we visited tried growing the vireyas as epiphytes, or in raised mounds of highly amended soils. Mitch grinds up tree fern fronds and sheet mulches with newspaper. Other gardeners we visited make "soil" with compost and fine cinders from the lava fields. Glen Sahara, the local agriculture inspector, invited us to inspect his acre in Paradise Park near Hilo, and introduced us to his exotic birds and reptiles. All our big Island garden hosts were friendly and enthusiastic, and our thanks go out to Charles Trommer, Charles Martin and Helen Carlson. Perhaps they are among the 10 new subscribers to the *Vireya Vine* newsletter, and we invite them to visit the Rhododendron Species Foundation on their next trip to the mainland to see our vireya collection here in Federal Way.

Clarice Clark, a member of the Tacoma Chapter, has authored articles for the journal on her trips to Borneo and Yunnan, China

Editor's Note: And so it began -- the seeds of the Hawaii Chapter that have brought us all together to enjoy our good fellowship and beautiful plants. Next Month will bring an article about the next steps in the beginnings of our Chapter.

Treasurer's Report ***By Joyce Gay***

Thanks to several generous donations at the last meeting, a great plant sale (thanks to Vireya donated by Sherla and Jane), and \$35 from the Kimalia raffle we have the following totals:

Club Account:	\$5,938.98
Zoo:	\$4,758.43
Kimalia:	\$1,330.00

Mahalo to John Callahan and Enny VanDelden for their donations as well.

Announcements

The annual Big Island Wood Turners show is at the Wailoa Center from 8:30am- 4:30pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Wednesdays noon to 4:30pm. There are work shops on Saturdays 10:00am- 2:00 pm. The last day is March 25, 2010, and its ***Free***

There will be a Board meeting on March 21st at 11:00am before the regular meeting on the patio.

Please bring your plates and cutlery to save on the amount of rubbish going to the land fill.

The Mongolian Barbecue, which Sandy Mitchell is highly active in organizing, will be April 17th, starting at 5:00pm at the Cooper Center. Come out for good eats and support our chapter member's efforts.

Viva Vireya

We received this following invitations from Barbara Fahs to an event at her garden:

Aloha!

Come help us celebrate the 10th birthday of the founding of Hiiaka's Healing Herb Garden on March 20 from noon until 5 p.m. It's an open house type of event with free pupus, free garden tours and lots of natural beauty, Hawaiian native healing plants and nature loving people.

We'll also be holding a small plant sale, with keiki plants produced by the garden. Plants such as kukui nut trees, Macadamia nut trees, gotu kola, holy basil, plantago (lau kahi), Thai basil, epazote, sweet basil, parrot's beak heliconia, cardamom and more will be available for great prices.

I'll also have copies of my book for sale, so if you don't yet have a copy of *Super Simple Guide to Creating Hawaiian Gardens*, now's your chance to buy one at a discount over Internet and bookstore prices.

Drop by starting at noon and stay as long as you like!

15-1667 2nd St., between Paradise Dr. and Kaloli. Look for the Hiiaka's Garden sign by the street and please park on the street.

Hope to see you Saturday March 20. No need to RSVP. See below for map.

Barbara J. Fahs

March, 2010

Next Chapter Meeting:

When: March 21, 12:00pm for potluck, 1:00pm for the meeting.

Where: Kea'au Community Center

Business and Program: We'll continue talking about elections of officers, and our featured speaker will be Rick Worley speaking on root pruning.

Calendar of Coming Events:

Sunday, March 21: Regular chapter meeting at the Kea'au Community Center. Potluck at 12:00pm, meeting at 1:00pm.

Sunday, March 28: Regular 4th Sunday Zoo work party. 12:00pm - 3:00pm.

Sunday, April 18: Regular chapter meeting at the Kea'au Community Center. Potluck at 12:00pm, meeting at 1:00pm.

Viva Vireya!

Edited by Jane Adams
jane@whitecloudnursery.com
808-345-0959

**Hawaii Chapter – ARS
P.O. Box 1963
Kea'au, HI 96749**