

Wallsend Nurseries

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Vireya Rhododendrons

This type of Rhododendron has been grown for more than 100 years. Their relative ease of growing and almost continual flowering in moderately warm areas such as Sydney ,Newcastle, North Shore & Wolongong make them “musts” for every garden lover.

These rewarding plants originated in South East Asia, the Phillipines and Australia. The many original species have been hybridised extensively to produce the spectacular specimen plants available today.

They are suitable for growing as garden, shade house or patio plants and may even be taken indoors for home decoration for a short time whilst in bloom.

The plants vary widely in height and shape. Some varieties are almost prostrate whilst others are tall growers up to about 4m tall (12') at times.

Flower colour also varies considerably particularly as new varieties are continuously being added to an already extensive range. Expect colours like pink, white, lavender and all the shades in between plus a lot of unusual colours like yellow and orange not usually found in other members of the Rhododendron family. Some of the varieties also have an unusual sweet perfume which ,again, is unusual.

Three basic requirements should be observed.

1. They like a reasonably moist soil but it **MUST** be well drained.
2. Good light . If possible shield them from the afternoon sun as this can lead to burnt foliage but otherwise the plants are quite sun tolerant.
3. Protection from temperature extremes. If growing them in any kind of container do ensure that you provide the plant with an open , friable potting mix & good drainage. The pH should be slightly acidic.

Pruning. This is necessary to help produce a bushier plant as they tend to grow rather “leggy” if not shaped while young. Tip pruning as the plant grows right from an early stage will help produce a more attractive plant & more flower buds.

If growing in the garden add peat moss or leaf mould to the soil before planting. A good slow release fertilizer such as Osmocote® or Nutricote® are a good idea to add as well. Don't overfeed as the plants may become spindly & sappy. A light dressing of blood and bone or a watering of half strength Aquasol® is usually sufficient for happy plants.

Pests and diseases are not usually a problem with Vireyas but during hot ,humid weather it's a good idea to spray with Bayleton® occasionally to control powdery mildew. The same spray can be used at flowering times to protect the flowers & buds from Petal Blight which these plants share with Azaleas as a common pblem.

Insect pests are also few with thrips & red spider mites being the most common. Use Folimat® for the thrips & Kelthane® as a control for the red spider. Caterpillars can easily be treated by spraying with Baythroid®. Scales can be treated by spraying with white oil or Malascale®.