

THE SOUTH COAST ORCHID CLUB GAZETTE

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MONTHLY MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the next Monthly Meeting will be held at the LUTHERAN CHURCH HALL Windsong Court CHRISTIE DOWNS on TUESDAY 14th JUNE at 8 p.m.

Our speaker for June Culteral meeting is Mr. Clive HALLS of Mt. BEENAK Orchid Nursery in Victoria. Mr. Halls was born in the U.K. in 1947 and commenced his apprenticeship with David Sanders Orchids in 1964. After 7 years, 18 months were spent in trying to develop a market for minature orchids growing in bottle gardens, but the project proved too costly in plant purchases. Then followed a short stay with "Stonehurst Orchid Estates" and Phalaenopsis Limited. To the continent and Holland with further education in orchids at Aalsmeer. Clive and Agi were married in Holland in 1972 then emigrated to Melbourne in 1973. Worked for McBeans Nursery for 7 years then commenced the business of Mt. Beenak Orchids. Appointed agents for Featherhill Exotic plants in 1980 and recntly for Everglades Orchids of Miami which will expand the range of Odont-Oncid alliance available to Australian growers.

Supper raffle tickets will in future meetings be sold at 20 cents each to reduce the number being distributed each night. We hope to reduce the work and time involved in preparing tickets for the draw.

Members will be interested to know that club membership has reached a total of 194 for 1983.

It has been the intention of the committee to assist our members through the club Gazette on the culture of a wide range of orchids, but not to perhaps include such genera difficult to obtain or grow within the scope of average club members.

The previous articles culled from much reading and research, we hope to continue as the membership grows both in numbers and experience.

The following article on *Oncidiums* is one of such. We trust that members, particularly those who are much more learned in the wisdom of orchids, will overlook anything other than glaring mistakes in this attempt to familiarise more people with a wider outreach on orchid lore.

The editor accepts full responsibility for such errors if found:

Unfortunately the genus *Oncidium* has been left out of many orchid books, books too that are quite explicit and detailed in their treatment of hundreds of different genera, for orchid lovers to see and appreciate the beautiful flowering plants benched at cultural meetings and show exhibits over the last few years must have sparked an interest to many. Native in the main to the countries of Brazil, Mexico, Guatemala, Columbia and Peru.

Firstly before we proceed it must be made clear that many of these *oncidiums* will grow cold with *cymbidiums* and they respond to perhaps a little weaker fertilization than the latter. Cultivation can be either in pots or mounted on blocks of fibre wood or tree fern. Most are of an upward growing habit, which lends them to Epiphytic culture, and means they may be mounted on a block or even a suitable 'host' tree. They are not parasitic, therefore must be trained and grown correctly.

Closely affiliated with the *Odontoglossum* family, they have been crossed with these as well as *Miltonias*, *Brassias* etc. Seedlings and species plants are available. Early crossings were made with *Oncidium Varicosum* from Brazil, and its use fortunately continued the appearance of the broad yellow labellum in its progeny.

Other species have since been widely used including *O. Flexuosum*, *Tigrinum*, *Crispum*, etc.

If pot grown, cultural conditions can be easily changed by moving the plant to a different location in an attempt to find the best growing conditions.

Oncidiums mounted or tied to a suitable tree must have greater care during the warmer months of the year, which do include hot dry periods often for weeks on end. Roots should not be allowed to dry out for more than short periods during these conditions.

The closing months of the year sees more vigorous growth with the cooler growing varieties while the autumn and winter months tend to be the testing period and watering and fertilisation can be reduced to almost nil.

With the increase in breeding with other genera flowering time can vary. Where once summer was the time orchids bloomed we find them on the show benches at almost any time of the year today.

Basically brown with yellow labellums and commonly named "The dancing lady orchid" orchids have increased in popularity as well as shape size and colour.

There are pink orchids rather harder to obtain and needing extra warmth for successful culture.

One successful method is to place a piece of tree fern 'host' in a pot and secure it firmly before tying the orchid plant previously prepared by enclosing the roots in sphagnum moss, with fishing line, until eventually the roots will cling to the rough surface of the fibre block or tree fern.

Trees which shed their bark are of no use for mounting epiphytic orchids and this must be remembered when selecting a tree for this purpose. The 'mount' should be 3" - 4" (or 7cm - 10cm) wide. Height should be limited to the ability of control in whatever position the grower sees best.

For potting, bark is being used successfully with perhaps a little gravel or scoria to counteract the upward tendency of growth, to overbalance the pot. Orchids should make a plentiful root system so one can gauge the plants performance on this aspect. As they absorb moisture from the air through their roots sufficient water should be allowed for this during their growth period. Should the visible roots appear 'dead' this is in fact not so as the appearance is deceptive.

The orchids as a general rule like plenty of light and filtered sunlight is ideal.

Like cymbidiums they need protection from frost and need to be taken out of the rain as the colour begins to show on the buds.

Don't try to grow them in dense shade, they will hang happily above the cymbidium plants because of their liking for airy conditions.

Try a few plants, you will be captivated by their charming, graceful and bright flowers.

SPRING SHOW

To prepare your thoughts revolving round the display which we are expecting many of our members, either singly or in unison with others, to mount for our exciting Spring Show at Colonnades shopping centre. October 3rd - 8th 1983. The committee has unanimously chosen the theme "Orchids in Melody". This should put many of our club on the right 'note' and enable the lucky ones to 'score'!!

CYMBIDIUM NOTES

JUNE: Most orchids would now be showing the spikes for 1983 although there are perhaps some stragglers still to throw up a late raceme or two. As it generally seems to be a pretty abundant season for flowering, most growers will be quite pleased.

It is seasonable to caution any who may be disappointed with non-spiking orchids, not to ignore such plants but try to discover the reason why. Is it the fault of the plant or the grower?

Some varieties throw spikes each year regardless of our culture, others refuse to flower if every help is lavished upon them.

There must come a time when orchidists really assess their collection on flowering habits, then on perhaps, standard, colour, number of buds per spike and growth habits.

Most of us would agree that it is far better for a hobbyist to be able to see plants in bloom each season than to have many plants flowering occasionally, no matter how good they may be.

One must make up his own mind as to what should go or which should remain, but taking into account that the same space on your bench is required either to flower an orchid or to have a nice green plant. Unfortunately, though much has been said between growers, about some highly rated varieties, one seems to have to go through the experience of purchasing and growing a plant for a number of years to catch the final disappointment of its performing, flowering habits.

How often has a plant been much admired on the show bench resulting in a surge of eager buyers wanting to own one like it? Sadly we fail to often look and notice if it is a large bulbed plant (usually an indication of its age), or how many years it has taken to get it into flower.

Some highly awarded plants are not always good plants for amateur growers to own because of the difficulty in flowering them.

What is necessary of course is to keep to the known, easily flowered orchids where space is limited. The exciting challenge to own and flower a new seedling must be limited to the expense, the facilities and labour available. The answer to those things can only be provided by the grower. To the successful people who have spikes showing on their plants, (some by now in flower), keep your culture at a maximum by care which will involve much time and patience. Have you discovered how simple it is to break a spike off in this cold weather? By picking up a pot roughly the leaves of a nearby plant can do this for you. Watch out for the direction the flower sheaf takes, they make a habit of becoming entangled in the shade cloth or netting of shade houses if not kept under scrutiny.

How quickly some spikes will grow into such a position, with simple attention they can be trained upright, or arching as the grower decides.

The final result of good training is the avoidance of twisted stems and wrongly angled flowers. Don't be ham-fisted, we all need "a lady's touch" on the spikes and buds during the critical weeks of spike training.

Now that you have your supply of stakes cleaned and ready, (see MAY, cultural notes) provide support for each raceme by inserting stake near the base of the stem. Try to avoid pushing stakes into the compost near the edge of the pot to avoid root damage. A well filled pot generally has orchid roots curled round the inside edge of the pot. Choose a position where the least damage will occur and try to keep the stake as upright as foliage and bulbs will allow.

Much can be learned by taking note of plants benched in shows and cultural meetings.

A well presented plant, even if only an average flower certainly can be much more attractive if correctly trained from the time spike becomes long enough to handle.

If a separate section for flowering has been provided, and this really is a necessity even if only a plastic cover over your existing shadehouse, make sure of retaining good air circulation. The easiest way to ruin and spot your blooms is high humidity and poor ventilation. Far better to flower your plants under an airy verandah, if shelter from strong wind and rain is provided, than to arrange them how be it so carefully, in a too warm, airless and overbright position.

Too much sun and the colour will bleach out quite quickly. Great care must be taken in watering plants once flowers are open, as careless use of the hose or watering can over the blooms will give unsightly spotting and brown marking within a few days.

One of the main reasons why cymbidium orchids are so popular is the wonderful way that the blooms last for upwards of two months in top class condition providing we maintain a high standard of care.

Mention must be made of retaining spikes on a plant for too long a period. My own experience and I repeat this is an opinion only, is to cut or break if possible, the flower spike after a maximum of six weeks and by providing fresh water every few days and slicing a little stem from the base of the spike will still enable much pleasure to be had from inside floral decoration.

Again don't place your floral arrangements in an over-warm position or the life of the blooms will be restricted. A nicely arranged vase of orchids placed before a large mirror accentuates the display by doubling the image and provides a beautiful sight.

I place a pinch of dusting sulphur on the residue of the cut raceme left on the orchid plant just as a precautionary measure to avoid infection of the plant.

If any "resting period" of cymbidium orchid can be so called it is the time that the plant is flowering, so many growers halt their fertilization programme for those two months.

This is a matter of personal choice, but do cut down to at least half your programme.
Next month we will attempt to include the tasks of breaking up and potting on etc. which should follow flowering.

Finally mention is made of both our forthcoming Winter and Spring Shows at Colonnades.

Winter: July 25th - 30th Spring :October 3rd - 8th.
Keep these in mind, publicise them and certainly be preparing your plants for inclusion in both, maybe for the first time in the club's composite exhibit.

TRADING TABLE

Members attention is drawn to the facilities offered by the S.C.O.C. at the monthly cultural meetings.

This service is designed to assist growers in purchasing orchids that other members have in surplus supply.

To enable this facility to build the club funds slightly, 25% of the selling price is retained by the club. The committee add at various times such plants that are voted worthy for resale, i.e. cattleyas, paphiopedilums and seedling cymbidiums to name a few.

We would point out that members are requested to provide a list complete with prices to the trading table convenors and suitably attach such prices to the plants offered.

It has also been necessary to ask that plants for sale be in good condition, and that all back bulbs be of advanced stage of growth and not just struck bulbs which could prove difficult to grow and culture.

Many good opportunities are offered to members in the plants provided at prices which are reasonable and others quite cheap.

NEW MEMBERS: We welcome as new members.

Ian & Angela O'Daniel, 35 Kindsay Ave., Edwardstown 5039

Mrs. Wendy NESS, P.O. Box 93, MT. Compass. 5210

Bob Kelly, 6 Jonwyn Close, Reynella 5161

John & Jylie Jacobsen 45 Lascelles Ave, Warradale 5046

John & Muriel Popper, 3 Amaroo Road, Sheidow Park 5158

The committee have made a tentative booking for the Christmas Club Dinner to be held on Saturday night November the 26th 1983 at the OLD CROWN HOTEL, REYNELLA. A book will be circularised at the June cultural meeting in which members may enter their names for a booking. Details will be announced by the Club President.

Those Blooms

Many of us are aware of the claims that a few drops of Formula 20 in the water will assist in maintaining blooms fresh. Another tip is to remove a fraction of the lower part of the stem every third day thus avoiding 'furring'. With the flush of the flowering season coming on the following advice offered by J.W. Blowers in the Orchid Review :-- 'The long lasting qualities of many orchids is their main attraction but one question I raise is, do we always reap the fullest benefit from it?

The time of cutting is, perhaps, the most important. If spikes are cut too soon, before the flowers are set, disappointment is bound to follow; after a few days the flowers will flop and nothing will restore them to their former glory. Most orchids develop slowly and time should be allowed for all the flowers on a spike to open and gain their full substance before cutting the spike. Each bloom will attain a certain substance (stiffness) which is a measure of its ability to last. When this has developed flower parts will feel more like stiff paper as opposed to being soft and rag-like. For most kinds it will require up to ten days for the last blossom on the spike to make it fit for cutting. This should be the test - the condition of the last flower and not the first to open. Now to the manner of cutting. Apart from using care, so that no part of a plant is damaged, this step may be accomplished without difficulty. Leave very little 'stub' or stem attached to the plant, not only for the sake of neatness, but to minimise the risk of wet-rot setting in. I think it is always worth the little trouble involved to dust the cut surfaces with sulphur powder, remembering the old adage, "prevention is easier than a cure."

To enjoy the longest pleasure of the flowers, the bases of the spikes should be cut again with the ends held under water. Without this treatment the spikes are airlocked, i.e. the stem cells are filled with water and unable to efficiently draw supplies for the flowers. Do not use scissors for cutting as these may squeeze and squash the cells at the spike ends."

To the above comments perhaps we can well say that a well 'cleaned up' plant prepared as for the show bench with the leaves nice and clean and placed in an attractive container always looks glamorous. The opportunity is thus presented to allow the stem to remain on the plant for an adequate time before removing.

Paphiopedilums

Care should be taken with watering at this time of the year, as new flower buds can be showing and too much water in the leaf axil can cause rot. It is quite a good idea to check after watering just to be sure that all water has drained away. If not, tip the plant over or place a piece of blotting paper against the wet patch till dry.

As buds appear use only dusts for any wogs, with defender pellets or similar for any slugs or snails that could be around. Buds which clear the leaf growth should be staked to give your bloom a little extra support and to give that better presentation which we look for when displaying at the show.

MONTHLY COMPETITION

MAY MEETING

OPEN DIVISION

Aust Native.	<i>Liparis reflexa parviflora</i>	K Northcote	3
Cattleyas	<i>Portia 'Monty'</i>	G Forrest	3
Dendrobiums	Lady Hamilton	G Forrest	3
	Halawa Beauty	W J Nicholls	2
	Impact	W J Nicholls	1
Miscellaneous	Epi. Lollipop	K Northcote	3
Novelty Paphiopedilum	<i>Haynaldianum x chamberlain</i>	W J Nicholls	3
Species Paphiopedilum	<i>spicerianum</i>	G Forrest	3
	<i>fairienum</i>	G Forrest	2
	<i>spicerianum</i>	W J Nicholls	1
Species	<i>Cym. simmonsissimum</i>	W J Nicholls	3
	<i>Doritis pulcherrima</i>	Tom Burian	2
	<i>Phreatia densiflora</i>	W J Nicholls	1
Division Flower of Month:-	<i>Paph. species spicerianum</i>	G Forrest	

FIRST DIVISION

Aus. Native	Hilda Poxon 'Heather'	L & R Moore	3
	Fishii	L & R Moore	2
Cymbidiums	Bethlehem 'Magi'	D & J Pollitt	3
Mini Cyms.	Showgirl x Peter Pan	J & D May	3
	Peter Pan 'Greensleeves'	D & J Pollitt	2
Cattleyas	Slc Naomi Kerns 'Fireball'	J Leeder	3
	<i>C. Portia 'Monty'</i>	B Lynch	2
	<i>Bc Languedoc 'Singapore Welcome'</i>	D & J Pollitt	1
Dendrobiums	<i>bigibum</i>	D & J Pollitt	3
Miscellaneous	<i>Asc. Tropicana</i>	D & J Pollitt	3
	<i>Lyc. Betty Sparrow x Koolena</i>	J Leeder	2
	<i>Epi. Nocturnum</i>	L & R Moore	1
Novelty Paph.	<i>niveum x chamberlainum</i>	D & J Pollitt	3
Species Paph.	<i>sukhakulii</i>	Ron Parish	3
Division Flower of Month:-	<i>Paph. sukhakulii</i>	Ron Parish	

SECOND DIVISION

Mini Cyms.	Spendour	V J Rogers	3
Cattleyas	<i>C. Mary Jane 'Newcastle'</i>	Mr & Mrs T Howard	2
	<i>C bowringiana x C Little angel</i>	C C Burfield	2
	<i>Bc Languedoc 'Singapore Welcome'</i>	N Packard	1
Paphiopedilum	Phips	Neale Washington	3
Species	<i>Epi. Bownelii</i>	Mrs Van Der Wilk	3
Division Flower of Month:-	<i>Cym. Mary Jane 'Newcastle'</i>	Mr & Mrs T Howard	
Presidents Flower of Month:-	<i>Paph. sukhakulii</i>	Ron Parish.	