



THE SOUTH COAST ORCHID CLUB OF SA INC.

# Gazette

July 2020

Patron: Coralie Hills FAOC  
President: Michael Willoughby

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY SOUTH COAST ORCHID CLUB**



**DEADLINES FOR NEXT GAZETTES**  
26 July and 23 August

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Published monthly by the South Coast Orchid Club of South Australia Inc.  
Affiliated with The Australian Orchid Council & the South Australian Regional Orchid Council

## YOUR COMMITTEE FOR 2020

<b>PRESIDENT:</b>	<b>Michael Willoughby</b>	<b>0479 162 527</b>
<b>SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT:</b>	<b>Malcolm Mangelsdorf</b>	
<b>VICE PRESIDENT:</b>	<b>Kevin Western</b>	
<b>SECRETARY:</b>	<b>Lucy Spear</b>	<b>0409 642 352</b>
<b>TREASURER:</b>	<b>Anne Steer</b>	
<b>COMMITTEE:</b>	<b>Donna Meeuwssen, Oui Ju, Christine Robertson, Jim Fogarasi, Craig Humfrey, Geoffrey Spear, Craig Dicker</b>	

### NON COMMITTEE POSITIONS:

<b>Registrar</b>	<b>Phil Steer</b>
<b>Editor</b>	<b>Christine Robertson</b>
<b>Web Master</b>	<b>Craig Dicker</b>
<b>Librarians</b>	<b>Vacant (Main Meeting) Diane Cawley (Southern Region)</b>
<b>Photographer</b>	<b>Neil Cooper</b>
<b>Convenor S. R. Group</b>	<b>Geoff Spear</b>
<b>Convenors Daytime Chapter</b>	<b>Barbara Almond, Patty Abell</b>
<b>Convenor Main Beginners Gr.</b>	<b>Craig Humfrey</b>



### **LIFE MEMBERS**

\* denotes Member who has passed away.

1978 Dulcie Grave *	1986 Harry Viney *	2009 Don Biebrick
1978 Leora Harvey	1986 John Nicholls	2009 Henk Van Leuveren *
1978 L. & H. Poole*	1989 Helen Edwards	2010 Dorothy Carassai
1978 Ellie Shaw*	2003 Norman Gitsham *	2011 John and Bev Gay
1979 Syd Monkhouse	2005 Merve Steele *	2012 Noel Oliver *
1979 Bernie Hanson*	2005 Shirley Steele *	2015 Lesley Fenton
1981 Lois Hanson*	Circa Tony and Toshy Deonno *	2015 Rod McRedmond
1981 John Leeder*	2007 Ron and Irene Parish	2018 Kevin Western
1985 Brenda Lynch	2007 Murray Baulderstone *	2020 Malcolm Mangelsdorf
1985 Bubs Gready *	2008 Geoff and Lucy Spear	This list is still being compiled.

### **SUBSCRIPTIONS:**

Subscriptions for 2020 are due now. There will be no increase in subscriptions for 2020. We do value your membership and seeing you at meetings each month.

#### **RATES – One membership covers all groups**

<b>Family Membership</b>	<b>\$38.00</b>
<b>Single Membership</b>	<b>\$30.00</b>
<b>Junior Membership</b>	<b>\$22.00</b>

#### **Rural and Interstate Membership**

<b>Family Membership</b>	<b>\$34.00</b>
<b>Single Membership</b>	<b>\$28.00</b>

**Account Details: BankSA Glenelg. BSB: 105-145**  
(Use your grower number for Reference)

**Account No.: 545457040**



## President's Message

### Happy 55<sup>th</sup> Birthday to The South Coast Orchid Club of South Australia.

It seems a long time since the Club was formed in July 1965 at Victor Harbor. Jack Earl took the effort to contact others who he knew were growing orchids. Syd and Shirley Monkhouse were present to help with the formation of the Club under Mr Robinson as President. The membership grew to 32 with displays held yearly that attracted considerable interest from the local people.

The Club moved in December 1969 to Morphett Vale with 33 members and President Graham Harvey, where the Club continued to thrive with the highlight of the years being the Spring Show. The Club has moved several times till it reach its present home at St Bernadette's Hall at St Marys, in July 2001. This move was facilitated by Merv Steele, Murray Baulderstone and Graham Shevlin.

The Daytime Chapter was established on 15 October 1987 with President Keith Northcote. The Southern Region Group was re-established at Victor Harbor in 2005. All groups continue to grow and thrive.

Amongst our Presidents there have been some outstanding names including: Les Poole, John Leeder, Harry Viney, Malcolm Mangelsdorf, Keith Northcote, Neil Wolfendale, Peter Flavel, Helen Edwards, Jane Higgs, Murray Baulderstone, Geoff Spear and our current President Michael Willoughby.

We are in full swing of the orchid flowering season and for this it would wonderful to see each other's plants, so send your photos to Christine our Editor to include in our Gazette to enable members to see them as there are no shows at the present time. Don't forget you can put your vote in for your favourite plant. The committee are endeavouring to meet as soon we are able. This has been difficult as restrictions have been in place and must be adhered to.

Missing you all, stay safe.

*Michael Willoughby*

Successful growing



## Happy Birthday .....

**PAULINE HOCKEY, MARK HOCKEY,  
BRIAN LYTTLE, CHARLES ORTLIPP,  
RICHARD COCKINGTON, SYD JAMES,  
ANDREW CRAIG, HELEN HUMPHRIES**



Is your name in the Birthday Book ??

## MEMBERS' PHOTOGRAPHS



**Cym. Yellow River**  
Grown By  
Vicky & Neil Cooper



**Oncidesa Sweet Sugar**  
Grown By  
Phil & Anne Steer



**Cym. Osborn**  
Grown By  
Vicky & Neil Cooper



**Miltonia Cogniauxiae**  
Grown By  
Phil & Anne Steer



**Prostheca cochleata**  
Grown by  
Phill & Anne Steer



**Phalaenopsis Unknown**  
Grown By  
Phil & Anne Steer

## MEMBERS PHOTOGRAPH COMPETITION

Members are asked to select their choice of orchid for the winner of the Members Photograph Competition. This is a popular vote. Choose the orchid you would like to take home.

**TO VOTE** you can contact the Editor on email:

[kloval@westnet.com.au](mailto:kloval@westnet.com.au)

Or you may phone Lucy on  
(08) 8381 4420 or 0409 842 352

Or you may phone the Editor on  
0438 363 940

# MEMBERS' PHOTOGRAPHS Cont...



***Cymbidium tracyanum***  
**'Tamborine'**  
Grown By Phil & Anne Steer



***Brsdm. Spiderman***  
**'Teflon 2'**  
Grown By  
Phil & Anne Steer



***Bulbophyllum Elizabeth Ann***  
**'Buckleberry'**  
Grown by  
Beth Stronach



***Miltonia moreliana***  
Grown By  
Michael Willoughby & Oui Ju



***Cyc. Margie Ryan***  
Grown By  
Michael Willoughby & Oui Ju



***Ctsm. Doctor Dennis Wollard***  
Grown By  
Lucy & Geoff Spear



***Epidendrum Boundii***  
Grown By  
Phil & Anne Steer



***Ctsm. Lovena 'Cassidy'***  
Grown by  
Michael Willoughby & Oui Ju



***Cym. erthrostylum***  
Grown By  
Michael Willoughby & Oui Ju

## My Orchid of the Month

### Blood Greenhood – *Pterostylis sanguinea*

Orchids are a fascinating group of plants. Most are epiphytic, that is they anchor themselves to trees by means of their roots. In South Australia all native orchids are Terrestrial, that means they grow in the ground.

Native Orchids are a very important part of our environmental system with some 250 species in South Australia. They are delicate and have a special role in our ecosystem. Orchids come in all shapes and sizes with some looking like spiders and even donkeys. When walking on roadsides or in National Parks we need to be careful not to step on some as they can be hard to see. Living close to the Sturt Gorge National park we are privileged to see these wonderful flowers. One large group of native Orchids found in South Australia is the genus *Pterostylis*. A few of the ones commonly seen in my area (Flagstaff Hill through Craighburn Farm to upper Coromandel Valley) of the Adelaide Hills are *Ptst. pedunculata*, *Ptst. viriosa*, *Ptst.nutans* & *Ptst. sanguinea*. The Sturt Gorge Conservation park is right on my doorstep.

#### **Blood Greenhood – *Pterostylis sanguinea***

A terrestrial orchid, found in Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia at elevations of sea level to 400 metres, occurring in woodland in shady areas and the soil is usually sandy. It tends to produce dense colonies and flowering is generally profuse. They grow in cool to cold conditions with night temperatures in the range of 10 to 19 °C. the flowering season is from April through September, the flowers grow to 30 cm with one to several green to maroon and white striped hooded flowers. Green leaves grow either flat on ground in a rosette with no flower stem, or no rosette but orange tips.



**PLANT SIZE AND TYPE:** A terrestrial plant with growths to 30 cm tall, including the inflorescence. At the end of summer, a rosette of leaves is produced.

**PSEUDOBULB/STEM:** The prominent stalk is encircled by a basal rosette of leaves, but sterile plants form only a rosette.

**LEAVES:** 10 cm long by 3 cm wide. Two to six egg-shaped or oblong dark green leaves with margins that may be smooth or crisped develop at the base of the stem.

**INFLORESCENCE:** To 30 cm long. The erect flower stem is produced from the centre of the basal rosette of leaves.

### What do we have here ?

Recently Anne was doing some gardening (project Soursob removal!) in a rather shady part of our front garden under a Bottlebrush (Callistemon) and in decaying mulch she came across a colony of some interesting flowers in an area of m<sup>2</sup> and immediately sent me a photo. I looked at the photo and thought Hmmm! What could this be. So I consulted my trusty identification chart of commonly found native orchids of the Adelaide Hills and I thought that we had a colony of Blood Greenhoods. We have since had these expertly identified.



### Can you identify the Flower?

**SO!** let's see who can correctly identify these flowers. On offer is an Australian Native seedling for a lucky reader who can correctly identify this flower. Send your answers to our Editor for the next gazette or contact me. Should there be more than one correct answer we will have a lucky dip to select the winner.

I hope you are all well and keeping safe. I am sure our orchids are getting lots of attention.

*Phil Steer*

Registrar



**Beryl and Richard Wilson**  
A view from their kitchen window

### VALE - MALCOLM GUY

The Committee and Members extend our deepest sympathy to the wife and family of Malcolm Guy on his recent passing.

Malcolm was a hard working member of our Committee back in the late ninety's. His Cymbidiums, Australian Natives and Terrestrials often won prizes. Malcolm will be sadly missed by all his mates in the Orchid World.

**R.I.P**

# AUSTRALIAN ORCHID FOUNDATION

Essay Competition 2019

Equal 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize Winner



## How do my orchids survive while I'm away from home?

By Jan Robinson

GO AWAY, PLEASE!!!

We are soooooo looking forward to the moment when She climbs into that 4WD truck with her hubby and disappears on another Gray Nomad adventure. Good riddance and don't come back until September, we say! She drives us absolutely mad during the winter months if She's at home, poking and prodding us to no end. Watering us inappropriately. Feeding us inappropriately. Sometimes even repotting us---in the middle of winter, can you imagine!! We've heard of another similar person called "That Woman," but we reckon our She is much worse.

For some reason, She stresses out over us getting enough water while She is away in the winter. Never mind that during the colder months, many of us would rather just hibernate in blessed solitude with lovely dry feet. It's bad enough to be cold, but to be cold AND wet is the pits! Heaps more of us die from being too wet during the winter than too dry. You would think She might have worked that out by now, She has been attempting to grow orchids for over 20 years and still hasn't a clue! For awhile She could count on her neighbour to water us while She was away during the winter. She would give him specific written instructions on what to do. Not to water when it's raining. (We are all under cover during winter, which in itself causes problems. But we'll get to that later.) Only water every 10 days or so. Make sure to water in the morning, not in the afternoon, so our leaves have time to dry out before the night cold. That was working quite well until the neighbour found golf. So now he is rarely home during the winter, either. What did She do to cope?

Get her hubby to install a watering system that runs on timers. Picture this: Once a week, at exactly 10:00 am, you are jolted out of a winter slumber by a blast of icy cold water, pelting you unmercifully from all directions at a great rate of knots. Rain or shine, 10 a.m., three minutes of the "water board" treatment. If a rainy or cloudy day or a day with no breeze, we are still saturated by water at nightfall and have to face hours of arctic-like drafts blowing around the bush houses, further lowering the wind chill factor and making us susceptible to those horrible fungal diseases that lurk around every corner, just waiting for such an opportunity.

Speaking of fungal diseases, She heard recently that the way to treat these problems is to paint the infected area with a thick paste of Mancozeb instead of spraying the whole plant. In her typical unthinking fashion, She mixed up a batch straight away and went to work--not with any of the finesse that an artist might show with a fine paintbrush, but more like a house painter using one of those roller brushes! She reckoned this would be a good way to prevent further fungal issues while She is away. So now some of us are dying, not of fungal infection, but of suffocation since we can't breathe through all that Mancozeb! You can imagine the amount of Mancozeb paste required to treat several thousand orchids that are about to be subjected to three long months of the weekly 10 a.m. "water board" treatment! If She would leave the watering system turned completely off for those three winter months, we would probably fare much better. It's much easier to recuperate from dehydration than from weeks of hypothermia. (And who wants to drink Mancozeb runoff for three months, yuck!)

When She is home, after watering She goes around dabbing moisture out of our leaf apexes with a paper towel to help avoid crown rot. When She is away, obviously She can't do that. One of her attempts to solve that dilemma is to cut up drink coasters and insert these bits between our leaves

where water pools, the idea being the water will wick up the coaster away from the plant tissue. The theory might be good but in practical application, She can be somewhat heavy-handed in her placement of these coaster pieces. Specifically in the top of a Paph where a bud is forming in the sheath and She doesn't see it as She crams a coaster piece into the top of the plant. After all, She doesn't want the cardboard to be dislodged by the watering system, so it needs to be inserted quite firmly. Or so She reckons -- but then later wonders why She is getting deformed Paph flowers!

One of the other bright ideas She had to protect us from the elements while She is away was to have a big piece of marine-quality plastic made to cover one of the bush houses. She unrolls it over the top during the winter so that we stay dry during the cold rains. A good idea in theory. However, due to the angle of the sun during the winter, She hangs most of us up in that bush house quite close to the top of the plastic to get as much sunlight as possible. Which creates several problems. First, when the watering system starts up, only about a fourth of us get any water because the nozzles are so close to the hanging plants. The plants that are close to a nozzle get drenched; the rest of us barely get a bit of mist. But I suppose that could be seen as a good thing, since it means that not all of us run the risk of still being wet over night when the watering system has started up on a rainy or overcast day. The second problem is that when She is away during late winter, the sun can be so hot under that plastic that some of us roast, especially the ones near the top. One year She put one of her few good Cymbidiums that was in spike under the plastic and left it there the whole month of August. Was it any wonder that when She returned, all the buds had either dropped off or were yellow and dried up? Once the temperature goes over 25 degrees C on a sunny day, it is like an oven underneath that plastic and we all cook. No matter how congenial the neighbour is, She can't ask him to unroll the plastic when it's cold and rainy and roll it back up when it's sunny, even She wouldn't be game to ask him to do that! Definitely an unsolved problem.

Then there is the poly carb house. As this is the shadiest part of the yard, mostly Paphs reside here. She was given a heater several years ago and it works quite well during the colder months—when She is away, that is. When She's home, every time She opens the door in the winter, a cold blast of wind whooshes in and the temperature drops immediately.

God forbid She notices any bug damage in here, because She does not rest until She has found and killed the poor grasshopper or cricket responsible, even if that means bursting in at all hours of the night with her torch and spray---and letting all the heat out. The watering system in here is also a problem. There is never enough sun during the winter to evaporate the water off our leaves before night time after one or two minutes of watering. Even with three small fans running, water frequently stays on us longer than 24 hours with the resulting crown rot, fungal infection, etc. On the flip side, if She turns the watering system completely off in here while She is doing her Gray Nomad thing, the fans dry us out pretty severely as most of us are in smallish pots. She has big tubs of water underneath the benches, but it is not enough to keep the humidity up with both a heater and fans running 24/7. So this is another unsolved problem.

The warmer months are not quite so bad when She goes away. We have more time and higher temperatures in which to dry off before nightfall. She rolls up the plastic over the bush house and drops the hanging plants lower, so there is better coverage from the watering system and we don't roast. She sets the timers to more frequent intervals and so far there have been no malfunctions with this equipment.

No matter when She goes away, some of us are bound to suffer—but come to think of it, many of us suffer when She is home as well! She definitely has NOT found the perfect solution to caring for us properly while She is away for any length of time, no matter what time of the year it may be. At one point She told her hubby in frustration that She could not possibly be away from us again any longer than two weeks at a time, but that statement did not go over very well and had to be retracted rather quickly. We are only plants after all and "shouldn't rule their lives," or so hubby declared rather crossly! So if you have any good ideas that She could use, please pass them along to her immediately!! Her orchids and her hubby would greatly appreciate it.

## **CYMBIDIUMS AND FROST**

### **by Julian Coker**

[Originally published in Orchids in Victoria by  
The Orchid Societies Council of Victoria Inc.]



Cymbidiums will generally tolerate extreme conditions with little apparent detrimental effect. However there are a few climatic extremes that cause serious damage, both immediately and in the long term. Frost is one of them. Exposure of cymbidiums to cold produces a range of effects. The first signs of damage are spotting of the flowers and 'burning' of the labellum, both along its sides and at its extremity. The sepals and petals are often affected with purple or brown spots, while lip burn generally results in brown, dead tissue (necrosis).

The pattern of frosts varies from district to district, with higher latitudes, higher altitudes and areas away from large bodies of water being most susceptible. Frosts occur on clear, still nights when the heat from the earth's surface can easily escape and in the Melbourne area are most likely to occur in June or July and again in September. It is rare but serious if there are more than two frosts in a row, as the second one is generally more severe than the first. This pattern can be markedly extended in areas subject to a continental climate, especially where other factors such as latitude or altitude are involved. It is important to know your area and the possibility of the occasional temperature extremes, as once the damage has occurred it cannot be reversed.

Frost damage is dependent on many factors, amongst them being:

Minimum temperature.

Duration of exposure to frosting or freezing.

The amount of moisture within, on and around the plant.

The specific clone.

#### **Minimum temperature**

As the external temperature falls, there is a linear cooling to 0°C whereupon frosting develops on the surface of the plant. As the temperature continues to fall, freezing of the plant tissues commences, generally at about minus 2-3°C and this is where serious damage begins. The reason why it requires this negative temperature is because sap (being water plus dissolved substances) has a lower freezing point than water itself. In addition, a considerable amount of heat is required to be lost by the plant to merely change from 0°C as water to 0°C as ice (latent heat of fusion) and this requires extreme cold of moderate duration. Frosting may damage or destroy flowers but its effects on other plant parts are generally reversible. Freezing invariably destroys the flowers and permanently marks the leaves; in extreme cases it may kill the plant.

#### **Duration of exposure to frosting or freezing**

Frosting for brief periods is less likely to cause lasting damage than for longer periods. Mild frosts usually develop just as the sun rises, last for an hour or so and then pass as the temperature continues to rise. This generally results in minimal or no damage. When the frost develops early in the night or when it is followed by a cloudy period (rather than the usual sunny day), prolonged exposure to cold will result. In this situation, as with extremely low temperature, damage can be severe.

### The amount of moisture within, on and around the plant

Plants that are relatively dry are generally believed to tolerate lower temperatures than more hydrated ones and certainly it is better to have dry plants than wet ones as the temperature falls. This may be explained by the fact that sap expands as it approaches freezing, and therefore a dry plant will have better tolerance to freezing than a fully hydrated one. Water on surfaces will rapidly freeze as the temperature falls below 0°C. Wet surroundings will to some extent act as a buffer to negative temperatures.

### The specific clone

Some clones are more susceptible to frost damage than others, as is readily apparent in larger collections where numbers of different clones are grown. This is obviously genetically determined and applies only over a small temperature range. Sepal spotting and lip burn are both clone- and grex-specific. For example, *Cymbidium* Mallana 'Lily May' is very susceptible to cold spotting, while its sibling, *C. Mallana* 'White Beauty', is resistant. White albino cymbidiums are especially susceptible to brown marks along the length of the labellum, while the progeny of *C. Cariga* 'Canary' and others have a tendency to 'burn' on the tip of the labellum.

### Frost Protection

Shade cloth does not offer any effective protection against frost but an enclosed plastic or glasshouse provides 2-3°C protection. At lower temperatures orchid houses will require added heat. You should study the heat source most appropriate to your situation and consider factors such as insulation, gas fumes and cost versus the minimum expected temperature in your district.

*Cymbidium* plants and their flowers are reasonably tolerant of temperature variations. However, one error and a whole year's effort can be lost. Be aware of the impact of frost, know your area and take suitable precautions to protect your plants in the event of the occasional heavy frost.

## UNUSUAL PLANT OF MONTH - *Zelenkoa onusta*

*Zelenkoa onusta* was one of the photos last month. It is one of the Oncidiinae Alliance. This species occurs in humid coastal lowlands of western Ecuador and NW Peru where there is scant rainfall. They are found on cactus and trees in dry forests from sea level to 1200m.

It is a small clump forming epiphyte 12cm tall with growths closely spaced along a creeping rhizome. Egg or pear shaped pseudobulbs are green with irregular brown-black markings, and are protected at the base with a leaf like sheath. Thick leathery sharply pointed leaf has a long groove down centre of upper surface and a corresponding keel on lower surface. Inflorescence 20-25 cm long from the base of the pseudobulb.

8-14 yellow flowers are carried on the upper half of the flower spike. The flowers have triangular sharply pointed yellow sepals, large almost round cadmium yellow petals with fine red spots on base, 3 lobed cadmium yellow lip, callus brown with red dots, green column and yellow anther.

The species has been widely used in hybridising with 69 first generation hybrids and 145 total offspring. It has been widely awarded in Germany, USA, Brazil, New Zealand. In Australia there have been 12 AM; 6 HCC, 3 ACC; and 2 ACM Awards.



**Orchids of July 2019**





## DAYTIME CHAPTER



Hi Everybody,

Patty and I would just like to update you on what we have been doing over the past few months. We hope that you have been keeping well, safe and warm and enjoying your orchids. These last few months have been a very interesting experience for all of us and if you are like us you have been able to catch up with a lot of odd jobs around the house. It is disappointing that we haven't been able to meet but we both believe it is better to be safe than sorry.

George and Patty are well and are keeping very busy, George has enjoyed going to the shade house and lovingly tending to his babies (*Sarcochilus*). He is happy that he can get out the house for awhile. Patty is very busy keeping George out of trouble.

Max has been able to spend more time in the garden and looking after the orchids. While in the shade house Max found a *Cymbidium* at the back with a bird's nest in the middle of it, much to his surprise. He has also found some orchids that we didn't know we had or more probably had forgotten we had bought them. At present we have a nice display of *Stenoglottis* and *Cattleyas*.

Other than that Patty and I are quite happy to keep being safe and warm and we hope that you and your orchids continue to keep fit and flowering so that we will have a lovely display when we eventually get together.

*Barb & Patty*

### CULTURAL NOTES by Bernie Hansen

**COMPOSTS**, or growing medias, are like music — they can be sweet, sour, coarse, fine and varied. The biggest contention of them all is that somebody is growing their plants in a 'wrong mix' — better than the experts are growing their plants in the 'right mix'.

My interpretation of the 'right' mix is the growing media, which grows your plants best in your conditions, whether you use an actual compost or an inert mixture of varying degrees, depends entirely upon your growing conditions, your observations and your techniques.

I have seen what we call terrestrials, semi-terrestrial and epiphytical orchids all growing in pure compost, made from freshly-sawn Radiata Pine and fowl manure and composted. These seedlings and adult plants were all healthy and growing well, contrary to all beliefs.

Another mix which is easy to mix and looks to be doing a good job is fine Fir bark, 2 parts to Isolite 1 part. This mix is handy for small plants (for Slipper Orchids). The addition of a handful of shellgrit per six inch pot is beneficial to most varieties. Where larger plants of *Cattleyas*, etc., are concerned use medium size Firbark instead of the fine grade. For *Cymbidiums* I like my mix of one bale of peat moss, one large cornsack or two wheatbags of rice husks and 10 lbs of Isolite. This mixture requires regular fertilizing but it will not break down and clog the pot; it is easy to water and very light in weight (worth considering when your wife helps). A must with the above mix is that it pays to fumigate with Methyl-Bromide to kill all weed seeds, but it can be mixed one day, used the next and what is left, stored away in drums.

Some growers use additives such as wood chips, oak leaves, etc. Their usefulness is to be debated but those who use them claim that the additives add bulk, helping to reduce the cost of the mix and that the oak leaves add texture to the blooms. Who can argue? It's easier to agree than to try and prove them wrong or right.

At various times growers table plants growing in pure charcoal. This is a very doubtful mix and one not really for beginners, though with right conditions and techniques good results are often seen.

My only advice to beginners is to try and copy a grower who is successful and when the basic knowledge of requirements is gained then write your own music.

From SCOWSA Gazette February 1971

## HOW TO GROW PHALAENOPSIS ORCHIDS INDOORS

### by Bill Mather

[Originally published in Orchids in Victoria by  
The Orchid Societies Council of Victoria Inc. ]

*Phalaenopsis* is a genus of approximately 60 species of tropical orchids, originating mostly in the hot and humid low lands of the Philippines, India, Indochina, Indonesia and northern Australia. Many of their hybrids produce long, arching sprays carrying ten or more white, pink, candy-striped or even yellow blooms. *Phalaenopsis* orchids are ideally grown within the temperature range of 18-28°C. However,



they can be grown and flowered successfully indoors on a window sill if the pots are stood on (not in) a tray of wet gravel in order to maintain a high level of humidity; a low overnight temperature of 12°C will not set them back, providing the room is warmer during daylight hours.

**Potting.** Plants grow well when potted in an open pine bark mix (10-18 mm), producing firm, thick, healthy, creamy-white roots with olive-green tips. Care should be taken when repotting because these active roots are very brittle and easily broken. Don't be concerned if the roots climb out of the pot. Repot at about three-year intervals, after removing dead and damaged roots and leaves.

**Light, Air Movement, Watering And Fertilising.** Exposure of the plants to half light (for example behind a muslin or lace curtain on a window sill), good air movement and daily watering will keep the plant actively growing and healthy. Water early in the day, so that the leaves dry by nightfall. Most fertilisers are beneficial, provided that they are used at low concentration is (say, one teaspoonful of Aquasol® per 10 L water) every week or two.

**Flowering.** Well grown plants flower twice each year, usually in autumn and spring. The flowers continue to grow in size after the buds first open. There are usually three or four blooms when the plant first flowers but in the second and subsequent seasons you can expect a tall, arching spike carrying seven to ten blooms, sometimes more. If your plant responds well to your conditions of culture, you may choose not to remove the old flower spike (it usually lasts for two months) but to cut it above a node, thereby initiating a secondary spike, which will flower about 90 days later.

**Pests And Diseases.** Check the underside of the leaves occasionally for mealy bugs and scale, which can be killed by brushing with methylated spirits. Sometimes the flowers are disfigured by brown spots, caused by air borne fungal spores (*Botrytis* sp.). It is a temporary, seasonal hazard induced when the flowers remain wet overnight in cool conditions. Water lodging at the conjunction of the leaves under these conditions may also lead to the development of brown rot in the crown of the plant. Use a paper tissue to remove water lodged in the crown before it can cause problems. Rots are best treated with a fungicide.

Photo: *Phalaenopsis* Zuma's Pixie by William Merritt.



Hello to all Members

Your District Council owns Carrickalinga House. So the Council's decision will decide when we can re-open our meetings . Plus we must consider most of our members are elderly. This needs to be taken into consideration. Graham and I are holding the fort, while Sue and Geoff have been on the sick list. Geoff is still waiting for results from a series of tests he had, Sue I believe is much improved.

Our plants are saying thankyou for all the extra attention they are receiving. We have had extremely good results.

Please send your photos to Christine, it is the only way now we have of sharing the beauty of our lovely orchids And your voting is important.

Roger Herraman is always being asked to be a Guest Speaker. I know you will be excited to have this write up from him.

Please stay safe and look after yourself in this extremely cold winter.

*Lucy Spear*

### ***Cymbidium canaliculatum*** **Roger Herraman**

Firstly, a little about myself :- I have been growing orchids in Adelaide for almost 50 years. Like most growers, I started with *Cymbidiums* and a few native *Dendrobiums* but it did not take long before I began to dabble with other genera as well. Over the years the *Cyms* have all but disappeared from my backyard apart from the canics. I still grow a number of native *Dendrobiums* and quite a few plants from the *Oncidium/Odontoglossum* alliance.

My favourite orchid over the years has been our own Australian native *Cymbidium canaliculatum*. I have been able to build up a reasonable collection of this species over the years to the point where, now, I have about 400 different cultivars.

To me, one of its most appealing attributes is its variability. I have seen individual plants in their natural habitat in adjacent trees (perhaps only 4 to 5 metres apart) yet have flowers that are quite different in colour and size.

Having made many trips to northern New South Wales and Queensland over the last 25+ years to see them growing in their own domain, I have developed a much better appreciation of their cultural requirements and to see just how hardy and resilient this species is. I have seen plants growing in the harshest environments you could imagine, yet they seem to thrive.

In its natural habitat, *Cym. canaliculatum* can be found from the upper Hunter Valley in New South Wales, then northward through the New England Tablelands in Northern NSW and continuing on into Queensland almost up to the northern tip of Cape Yorke Peninsula. In the central part of Queensland they may be found as far west as Blackall (550km inland from coast). It then extends westwards through the Gulf Country into Northern Territory and on into the Kimberley region of Western Australia. From this you can see that it is a very widely distributed species and this is probably one of the key reasons for its variability. Through New South Wales and Queensland it is almost always found on the drier western side of the Great Dividing Ranges although some exceptions I have observed are in the Hunter Valley and in the area around Cooktown in far north Queensland.

In northern Queensland it can be seen closer to the coast but in areas where there is a very distinct dry season. I have found that the northern forms of the species are generally larger and more vigorous in growth than those from the southern areas. The growing season commences around late October to early November here in Adelaide. The Northern Territory and Western Australian plants tend to be rather smaller growing and I find them much more difficult to grow in my conditions at home. Perhaps the difference in climate is just too great. Most plants take up to two years to mature their new growth. This doesn't seem to affect their flowering as they will flower on the semi mature growth in the first year and then again in the second year on the fully matured bulb. Often they will flower again the following year making them a very productive plant.

As a very general rule, the plants tend to become darker in colour as you travel northwards through their range. Of course, there are always exceptions but the southernmost cultivars seem to be usually lighter in colour with fine brown/green markings on the petals and sepals. In the northern tablelands region (Inverell-Tamworth area), plants are a darker green/brown. This colouration tends to be consistent as you travel northwards until about Charters Towers and Hughenden areas in north Queensland where the colour becomes a more distinct red/brown to brown with a fine cream margin around the segments. This colouring continues until the northern section of the Atherton Tablelands where the 'sparkesii' types are found in a relatively small area north and west of Mareeba. To me, the true 'sparkesii' varieties are a very dark red to black with no markings whatsoever on the petals and sepals. The labellum may vary from almost pure white to pink in colour with various amounts of spotting. Further north on Cape Yorke Peninsula the plants continue to be a dark red to brown colour but usually with a fine pale margin. These are known as the 'marginatum' types. The few plants from Northern Territory and Western Australia that I have managed to flower have been a smallish yellow/brown with a pale creamy coloured lip.

The pure coloured or 'alba' forms of *Cym. canaliculatum* are found occasionally throughout the whole geographic range of the species. I have seen them in the Boggabri area in NSW, near Toowoomba Qld and on lower Cape Yorke Peninsula. An interesting observation I have made regarding the alba plants is that I have only ever seen solitary plants. I have not found or seen any groups or colonies of them in my travels.



*Cym. canaliculatum* is very adaptable in culture and tolerant of a wide range of climates – much more so than other orchids which may be found in the same areas. I have seen *Cym. canaliculatum*, *Dendrobium bigibbum* and *Dendrobium trilamellatum* all growing happily on the same host tree in north Queensland, yet the *canaliculatum* is the only one that I am able to grow without heat in Adelaide. Most plants I have seen in the bush tend to be found around 6 to 8 metres above the ground around mid-tree height. Rarely are they seen higher than this and occasionally they may be found growing only a couple of metres from the ground. In north Queensland the 'sparkesii' varieties start flowering in early September and continue on through to mid October. The southern mottled forms begin to open in late September in their natural habitat and last for about a month.

*Cymbidium canaliculatum* is a very undemanding orchid to grow provided certain cultural conditions are given to the plants. First and foremost, I believe this species is killed more often by overwatering than any other cause. It requires very little water, compared to most other orchids, even during its growing season which is the summer-autumn period. My plants receive no more than one watering a week during this time. During heatwave conditions (40+°C) I may rarely give them a mid-week splash. From around Easter time each year I stop watering altogether and withhold it completely until late September when they receive an occasional drink if the weather is warm enough and up until the start of new growth when normal weekly watering resumes. It sounds like I am being very tough on the plants but I have found this annual watering routine suits my plants and my conditions. In summer I do damp down the floor area very occasionally during the week to improve humidity which rarely reaches 50% at this time of the year. *Cym. canaliculatum* does enjoy a slightly alkaline environment. Some growers like to give their plants a little lime during the growing season but I believe in Adelaide where our water is already alkaline, that this practice is not necessary.



Fertilizing is not a crucial factor in cultivation. I have used many different products over the years but nowadays Scotts cal-mag finisher is the only fertilizer I use. I do like to use a seaweed extract in early summer to help promote good root development and disease resistance. Fertilizers are applied at a very dilute rate with watering.

Potting mix is kept as simple as possible. Over the years I have experimented with many different ingredients but I have now settled on a mix of medium and large grade NZ pine bark (50/50), charcoal and river gravel. Into this mix I add a small quantity of shell grit. This has been my standard mix for some years now and seems to suit the plants very well. When striking back bulbs or potting smallish plants, I remove the large bark from the mix.

On the subject of striking back bulbs, I have found, like in many other orchid genera, that the more bulbs attached together the better the chances are of a strike. Single bulbs can be difficult, especially if they are many years old. An ideal number of attached bulbs would be about 3 or 4. Patience is often necessary as I have had bulbs take up to 4 to 5 years to strike and some, of course, never do.

Dividing and repotting is not done very often as they are a species which like to be left undisturbed for as long as possible. Due to the minimal watering of these plants, the potting mix tends to last much longer than with most other genera. I tend to pot on until the plant fills a 7" or 8" pot when it is usually time to divide. I don't like to let the plants grow much larger than this as they become very heavy, a little cumbersome and difficult to transport. Also, because I like to hang as many plants as possible, I find the 7" pot size to be about the maximum size to suspend without causing too many problems for the supporting beams. When a large plant needs to be divided, I remove almost all the roots from the divisions to allow for a fresh start in the new potting mix. Dividing and repotting is done immediately after flowering, usually in January. At this time the plants will very quickly produce a new root system with no setback to the plants at all.

As far as pests and diseases are concerned, *Cym. canaliculatum* doesn't cause many problems. I think their very thick leathery leaves must offer some degree of natural resistance against chewing insects. Occasional black spots will occur on leaves during a cold winter but this can be easily controlled with a broad spectrum fungicide like Mancozeb. Occasionally Mealy Bugs can be a problem on developing spikes. I just use a very small paint brush to remove them.

Housing of *Cym. canaliculatum* is best with an enclosed structure so that rain, particularly cold winter rain, can be avoided. My plants are kept in a polycarbonate house with no additional shading. The manufacturer claims a 55% light transmission which, to me, equates to a 45% shade covering. Most plants are hung well above head level with the leaves sometimes within a few centimetres of the roof. They do not suffer any leaf burn whatsoever which is further testament to just how much sunlight and heat these plants can take and indeed need, for optimum growth and flowering. Large plants and struck back bulbs are benched approximately 80 cm above the ground. The house itself has reached temperatures of 48°C on a number of occasions in hot spells during summer and usually goes down to around 5°C on cold winter nights. I use no artificial heating or cooling throughout the year but I occasionally run a ceiling fan in the house on very hot still days to improve the air movement around the plants.

Due to the growing conditions for *Cym. canaliculatum* being quite different from most other orchids, I don't attempt to grow many other genera in this area. The house itself is approximately 12 metres long by 3.5 metres wide and about 3 metres to the central ridge in height.

In Adelaide, the flowering season generally starts around late October in an average year and continues through to about Christmas. The earliest plants to flower are the southern mottled green/brown types with the northern 'sparkesii' clones opening a little later. Some 'sparkesii' clones will throw an odd spike during January and February but I generally remove them early because they are in the middle of their growing season at that time and trying to flower again may impede the new season's growth. I find if the weather stays hot they tend to grow faster. Their growing season is relatively short from December to around late April.

So, don't be afraid to have a go at growing this delightful species. You will be rewarded many times over provided you go very gently with the watering. A specimen plant in a 7" pot can have anything up to 10 to 15 gently arching spikes each carrying up to 40-50 flowers per spike.

Why would you want to grow anything else?

*Roger Herraman*



## Orchid Culture Notes for July

As cold and wet as July can be there is plenty happening in the orchid house. With Spring only a mere few weeks away our plants will soon be picking up the gradual lengthening of days and will soon initiate the beginnings of a new season. How short is a year of orchid growing?

Protection of your plants still remains a priority this month. With many plants in spike or in the process of initiating spikes we must ensure we keep up the protection from the elements, pests and diseases. It is definitely a time also to observe your collection, identify any problems occurring and act now, not later, when it is too late.

Both the middle of Summer and the middle of Winter are the times of the year where the stresses of our climate show up the most in our collections. This time of year it is the effects of being cold and wet that wreaks havoc. Root loss is common, yet the effects may not show up for some time and usually when it does in some cases can be too late. Fungal spots become evident, leaves yellow and drop off and watery patches creeping up the leaf are signs all is not well. Bulb rot is usually quite severe this time of year. Plants from climates where the Winters are dry will suffer the most. A plant will survive cold temperatures if kept on the drier side but the same cannot be said if they remain wet.

Many problems in the collection can be reduced or eliminated with good culture and a diary. We all know that pests and diseases generally attack weakened plants first. If these pests and diseases are prevalent take a good look at your collection and your environments, both in and around the orchid house. Common problems are poor culture and lack of protection, the wrong plants growing in the wrong spot, insufficient light, overcrowding, too much shade, poorly drained mediums, over wetness and dryness and so on. All of this weakens your plants and makes them more susceptible to pests and diseases. Don't be afraid to get someone in and look at your collection if you have some problems. Many a time a fresh set of eyes will soon point out something you can't see.

In the shade house July will see the peak flowering of the Oncidium complex and even now new growth can be seen forming at the bases of last year's made up bulb. After flowering most of these do need a rest where watering is reduced for a while and feeding stops. Don't dry out fully though. Many bulbs will shrivel after flowering and drop a leaf or two. Roots will also seal off. This is normal with some Oncidiums so don't panic. Inexperienced growers usually reach for the hose, thinking the plant is thirsty and end up wiping out the root system so the poor old orchids ends up putting all energies in re-establishing a root system. There are also plenty of Oncidium intergenerics around that are worth a go and some of these can be out in flower nearly any month of the year. They certainly give you an extension to your growing season, a bit like what the hot/ cold natives give to the normal native epiphyte flowering season. A few examples of some of the easier ones are the Colmanaras and Beallaras, Wilsonaras and the Burragearas. They are easy to flower and grow in our climate but do better with cover this time of year.

Zygopetalums are still flowering on and off. Keep these evenly moist and feed every fortnight at half strength. Whilst Winter slows them their metabolism does not stop completely. Just like a cymbidium, most Zygopetalums are always doing something whether its flowering, developing and maturing new growth or initiating new growth. As Zygopetalums flower off new growths the accent to feeding these would be something a bit more nitrogen to build up that new growth after the stresses of flowering. Try and spray with fungicide every 2 months or so if spotting on the leaves is severe. Try some of the newer breeding and intergenerics as they appear to be less likely to spot. For example the Zygonerias are producing nice clean compact plants. There is not much in the way of pests with Zygopetalums until Spring when the looper caterpillar parade kicks in. Keep slug /snail pellets in and around the Zygopetalum pots, especially those in spike. Big fat Zygopetalum spikes are high on the slugs menu tonight.



We start seeing more of the standard Paphiopedilums on the show bench from now on. These also need protection over winter, especially those in spike. Slugs will soon make a meal out of a spike. Even a slight chomp will severely hamper the flower development and most likely cause the spike to break under the weight of the flower. Keep water, snail pellets and fertiliser out of the axils as these will encourage rot and considering you usually only get one flower per growth it is a long wait till next year to see your plant flower. Keep moist, fertilise fortnightly at weak concentrations and don't forget to flush the plants pots occasionally with rainwater to wash out the salts. It is a pity we don't see as many of the standards as yesteryear as more growers lean towards the novelty and multi floral type. For those wanting to branch out into Paphiopedilums see if you can grab a piece of *Paphiopedilum insigne*. These are a great beginner's Paphiopedilum to start with.

Flowering of the Laeliniiae complex has thinned out and it is usually the species *L. anceps* and the very showy long stemmed variety chamberlains most often seen at this time of year. These are easy to grow and the flowers last a long time and don't the slugs love them. Keep them moist as well. In nature they are often wet and very cold at night and handle our winters well but the delicate flowers must be protected otherwise they spot badly. After flowering they send out another lot of new roots as well so the plant can replace its reserves ahead of the new growing season. I feed with a balanced feed of Miracle Grow and Powerfeed, and if not the Powerfeed then use some Seasol to aid the root development. They grow in plain medium bark and they do well as a hanging plant. I have tried coco peat as an additive and that will be the first and last time! The roots I have found with my culture do not like it with the roots aborting the moment they touch it. This is one of the most important aspects to growing and it is called observation. The coco peat has been washed thoroughly and I have mostly watered with rainwater and these plants were rarely fed after division last Spring so it is not salt that is causing the problem. Regardless if I leave them any longer I might as well bin them now. Autumn flowering plants are relatively dormant now but the Spring flowering ones are growing well with new roots and maturing growths. Needless to say these plants are grown in a warmer protected environment. For the newer growers it is best to stick with those Cattleyas and related genera that flower in the late Summer to early Winter. Their growth period is over our Spring and Summer and their dormant period is over Winter. As long as they are kept on the drier side with some cover they handle Winters well.

Now is the time Cymbidiums that flower in Spring will soon break sheath and this is the most important time for them. Not only do we need protection from slugs and snails and the rain that will mark our buds we also need to look at how we are going to train them. Whether we are aiming for a straight, decorative or pendulous habit now is the time we start to train them. If you have a new Cymbidium to your collection and you are not sure about the habit of that particular clone or species, ask around. Trying to stake a Cymbidium against its habit will only lead to heartache and a funny looking spike. Another area where the newer grower's fail to some extent is managing the colours. It is not that important yet as they break sheath but a bit later on as they lengthen the correct light or lack of will have a huge bearing on the flowers and the colour. We will have more on this later. Feeding your Cymbidiums now switches to something with a little more nitrogen in it as you should start seeing new growths initiating.

Native epiphytes also break sheath now and also need cover, a slug baiting programme and watch out for aphids as they home in on the new buds. If possible get them under cover even before they break sheath for best results. Terrestrial orchids will start flowering in greater numbers now. Keep these moist too but avoid over wetness as they are prone to damping off, especially in poorly drained mixes. For those growing the South African terrestrial species *Stenoglottis* cut off the flowering spikes now, even if they are in flower to force a short but beneficial rest. Remove rotting leaves and dry out slightly. Avoid disturbing these plants to ensure better flowering.

Weeds are usually a problem over Winter so make sure you remove them before they flower or get too established in the pot. Their fine roots will break down mixes more rapidly and reduce the all important drainage. Oxalis is a real pest in this regard, especially if left to grow a taproot that is very hard to pull out. That sees out July. In general like June, this is a protection month with more emphasis on protection than anything else as many more plants begin their flowering season. Next month is August and before months end the first warmish days that remind us that Spring is just around the corner.

*Steve Howard*

## **ORCHID CLUBS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA** **General Meeting Times**

**THE SOUTH COAST ORCHID CLUB OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA:** Meets on the first Wednesday of the month at St. Bernadette's Church Hall corner of Walsh Avenue and South Road, St. Mary's. Beginners Class starts at 7.15p.m., meeting at 8.00p.m.

**THE DAYTIME CHAPTER:** meets at the Lou Kesting Hall, off Broadway, South Brighton on the second Thursday of the month at 2.00p.m.

**THE SOUTHERN REGION:** meets at Carrickalinga House, 17-19 Torrens Street, Victor Harbor at 2.00p.m. on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month.

**THE ORCHID CLUB OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA:** meets at 8pm in The Enfield Community Centre, 540 Regency Road, Enfield on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month.

**Daytime Group:** meets from 2.00p.m. to 4.00p.m. in the Enfield Community Centre, 540 Regency Road, Enfield on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of the month.

**THE MURRAY BRIDGE AND DISTRICT ORCHID CLUB:** meets at 1.45pm in the Seventh Day Adventist Hall, corner Myall Avenue and Standen Street, Murray Bridge on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month.

**NORTHERN AND EASTERN DISTRICTS ORCHID SOCIETY:** meets in St. Philip's Church Hall, Galway Avenue, Broadview from 7.30p.m. on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month.

**THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN ORCHIDACEOUS SOCIETY:** Meets at the Adelaide West Uniting Church Hall, 312 Sir Donald Bradman Drive, Brooklyn Park from 7.30p.m. on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month.

**THE NATIVE ORCHID SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA:** meets at 7.30p.m. at St. Matthew's Church Hall, Bridge Street, Kensington on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month.

**THE CYMBIDIUM CLUB OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA:** Meets at 7.30p.m. at Burnside Community Centre, 401 Greenhill Road, Tasmore on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month.

### **Our Affiliated Clubs:**

**The Murray Bridge and Districts Orchid Club.**

**The Orchid Club of S.A. Inc.**



**AFFILIATED CLUBS**

Murray Bridge and District Orchid Club Inc.  
Orchid Club of South Australia

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E. & O. E.**