



THE SOUTH COAST ORCHID CLUB

Affiliated with the Orchid Club of South Australia Inc. and with The Australian Orchid Council

Patron: Sir Francis Matters

MONTHLY NEWS SHEET

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Our next Meeting at the Morphett Vale R.S.L. Hall, at 8 p.m. on 9th February. **Mr David Austin, Propagator at the Adelaide Botanical Gardens, will give a talk on 'General Plant Propagation'**. This will be followed by a brief lecture by Mr Graham Harvey on Cymbidium Backbulbs. If you care to have a progress report and advice on your backbulbs and/or plants, please feel free to bring them along. Have your name tags on them. A special table will be set up for this purpose.

If you have paid your subscription you will find your membership card with this News Sheet. Please clearly print your first name and your surname on it in the space provided.

The tabled plants at the January Meeting were judged by our Mr Wesley Harris as follows: **Open Section** – Best Cattleya: *Guttata leopoldii*, grown by Mr Bernie Hansen. Best Paphiopedilum: *Paphiopedilum sukhakulii*, grown by Mr Nicky Zurcher. Best of Miscellaneous Genera: *Stanhopea tigrina*, grown by Mr Graham Harvey. **Novice Section** – *Epidendrum obrienianum*, grown by Mr Peter Speers. **The Popular Votes for orchids** were given to *Paphiopedilum callosum*, and for **Indoor Plants** to *Alocasia cuprea*, both plants grown by Mr Wesley Harris.

Our Trading Table will again be in operation, and those of you who have duplicates of the rarer species, or easier to grow Miscellaneous Genera might care to consider placing some of them for sale to fellow members.

Just a little reminder – Mrs Ellie Shaw is always on standby with the **Club's Library** after the 'Official Closing' of the meeting – the library is to your benefit, and we can highly recommend making use of it.

The date and venue for the next **Spraymaking Session** for the ladies will be announced at the next meeting.

Our Club's Syllabus for 1971 will be published in the next News Sheet, as not all of our proposed speakers have notified acceptance of our invitations yet.

Hope to see you all at the next meeting, your Editor.

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.