

# 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 8 MARCH 8 P M

## PROGRAMME

Don May will show his film 'More About Orchids'. Some members have seen this film before but since it was originally shown Don has re-edited the film and new aspects have been introduced.

Monthly Plant competition, Trading Table. Members please bring along a plate for the supper table

## IT'S DOWN TOOLS AND DOWN TO GARDEN WEEK

Yes you have heard it on TV - Channel 7 - also on Radio - 5AD - and you are aware of the International Orchid Show in the Motor Pavilion.

This is going to be worth the visit to Garden Week in itself.

Yes 'South Coast' is participating. Will all members who have a plant in flower on Sunday 13 March please take it to one of the following depots:-

Mrs Brenda Lynch 23 Holder Road Hove

Mr Terry Howard 21 Peregrine Crescent, Christie Downs

Mr John Leeder 54 Austral Terrace Malvern.

'South Coast' will be staging an exhibit of its own in the Walter Duncan Hall. When the Show is over plants will be taken back to the depots for return to the owners. YOUR SUPPORT IS EARNESTLY REQUESTED.

Show opens Wednesday 16 March - 10 am - 10 p m Wednesday, Thursday Friday and Saturday. Sunday 11 a m - 6 p m. Monday 10 a m - 6 p .m.

If unable to take your plant to a depot please contact John Leeder for assistance. Telephone 271-7070

CYMBIDIUM NEWS

As keen growers of cymbidium orchids realise we are now in the stage of spike initiation and knowledge of the correct procedures to adopt are most important if the crop of flowers are to be both numerous and worthwhile. Naturally enough the first essential is healthy and vigorously growing plants. These summer months are the growing months and it is so essential to have strong well established leads or growths to expect flowering spikes. Looking over the geographical pattern we find that they originally came from the area extending from India through the Islands south and culminating in Northern Australia.

Climatic conditions maintain generally warm days and cool nights during the summer months and this is the perfection we must strike for even though most of us are cultivating hybrid cymbidiums bred in our Australian conditions and somewhat more adaptable our climate extremes.

We read so much these days on various fertilisers and the results that each different application and programme brings, but it is useless to expect every plant in our collection to bloom each year and in fact year after year unless we learn to know their particular needs.

Each grower must find the particular compost that suits their watering habits. Neither a waterlogged nor dried out one will perform it's flowering functions correctly. Experience in our own growing conditions and this includes, (1) Housing, (2) Air Circulation, (3) Space, (4) Cleanliness (5) Watering, (6) Fertilising, (7) Handling. Many folks are limited as to our first point, Housing.

The perfect position for a house in S.A. is of course on the sunniest spot in the garden. To be in the sun for as long as it shines each day is perfection, IF the sunlight is filtered correctly. Early days of orchid growing here saw a big majority of collections under heavy shade, then came the change to 50% shade cloth. With the advent in the last few years of very hot summers quite a fair percentage of our people have increased this shading to 70% and noted a big change in the prevention of foliage burn that was becoming so prevalent in high summer temperatures. It has seemed to make no difference with the added shade cover during Autumn as the spikes still continue to appear with equal regularity with the intensified shading.

Darker conditions are more suitable for winter months to hold the colour of the blooms, but most growers have some sort of waterproof to shelter them from the elements.

Top of choices for housing is the pipe or metal framework covered with 70% shade cloth. The rather new woven cloth seems very much to be a good investment if suitably attached to the frame.

Benches need to be raised to a convenient working position and well constructed. A row of freshly watered orchid plants become quite heavy! Some growers opt for no benches and keep their plants on the ground level with some form of plastic covered with either gravel, woody material, shavings or sawdust etc. This no doubt increases humidity but also increases back pains and it is not surprising to find many

orchid folk suffering with bad backs. To make ones hobby both enjoyable and easy on yourself is a sound scheme.

Point Two, Air Circulation: Again a much talked about subject, but we need only to remember that in their wild state most cymbidiums have very 'Airy' conditions. Unless wind is strong enough to blow your pots of orchids over and off the benches wind does not do too much harm to your plants. Shade cloth breaks the direct wind force and the foliage can take fresh air as a duck takes to water. Too many of us have insufficient air circulating through our houses, sometimes due to the positioning of the house, at others, too many plants in a given area. I have found that generally the person who has a collection of well spaced cymbidium plants the healthier and stronger the plants are as compared to an overstocked and almost airless situation. Do your orchids flower regularly for you? Do they look vigorous and have strong erect foliage? I believe air circulation has a lot to do with the answer to these important questions. Be wise, don't compromise and crowd those extra plants into a too small area. The end result in growth and blooming is well worth the care taken with this very important subject.

Point (3) Space. Have you seen some orchid plants heaped together in a semi-dark or too bright area, often with the mistaken thought that being all together helps humidity or plants enjoy like companions? Perhaps this is true to a certain degree but as previously expressed in point (2) crowding inhibits growth though it may provide more humidity. Space not only around our plants, but if benches are used, below and above is very important. Roofing should ideally be at least 7 feet (approx. 2 metres) above the ground, higher still if possible. In my own situation it was remarkable how much better growth and sturdiness was achieved by increasing the height of the shadehouse roof. Humidity can be achieved by the use of damp retention materials on the shadehouse floor or benches.. in effect by not allowing these to become dry during the summer months. Space above is just as important as space around.

Point (4) Cleanliness: In the shade and flowering house, if you have both, be a good housewife. Don't leave half empty pots (where you may have lost an attempted backbulk propagation), dead foliage, blooms, weeds and rubbish around on benches or floors. Spiders, insects, slugs and snails plus a host of other pests look for these hiding places to breed and then send forth their progeny to consume or deface our plants at will. Cockroaches and black beetles also slaters are very active in the dark and can do quite a bit of damage if left to multiply as they do, rapidly.

A well ventilated house prevents a lot of these problems just as a dry atmosphere invites others in. Maintain your own peak of cultivation at a high level all the time, tidy up the plants and surrounds and make it a necessity to keep them clean. Over use of insecticides etc. is an extremely bad habit.

Prevention has always been better than curing. Weeds and rubbish around the house will attract pests, while a clean area will certainly lessen the growth of hateful and harmful pests. Summer problems are with red spider or red legged mite, and quite often these are not noticed until the foliage of the orchid begin to show silver or white markings. As the underside of the leaves is the home of these mites, that is where the spraying must be done to be effective. (there has been some discussion of late about the use of white oil in pressure packs, as to whether the base compound used in these preparations is not harmful to orchids) so perhaps we could play safe and mix our own white oil and water for prevention and cure of red spider.

Point (5) Watering: A contentious one according to many, but it shouldn't be if one understands that the cymbidium orchid does not like 'wet feet' nor extended periods of dryness. A damp compost is essential always. One should know the difference between damp and wet and sodden if we attempt to grow plants in pots. Damp is good, wet is bad but sodden is death to orchids. Experience of your own conditions and habits is the all important factor. If you are able to check your plants daily or are limited to times suited to your life style, one must know the conditions your plants are in daily. The hit and miss method of a heavy watering once a week, with out taking in the day to day conditions in your growing house just does not bring out the best in cultural results, nor does the little light daily sprinkle. Knowing the water retention of your particular compost in all weathers is the first consideration. The rate of drying out is another, either by heat, wind or exposure. The amount of water given must be viewed with seriousness. In larger collections it is difficult to retain all pots to the same compost at all times, as simply, a new plant to ones bench can change that unless repotting is done immediately.

Some plants are prone to have roots that grow quicker than others and will need more water, while others do not naturally increase at the same rate therefore will not use as much water, and remain damper for a greater length of time. This is where constant attention reaps its reward. In most cases the weight of the pot will give an indication if it is wet or dry. If a heavy based compost is used this would not apply. No set rules can ever be set as to the number of times to water in a week or even day during summer, but the aim with cymbidiums is to keep them nicely damp at all times. Experience has shown over the many years that it is most important during spike initiation time, summer, to attempt to cool your plants and pots down at night time, each days end. this is what happens in natural conditions and for successful spikes initiation it must be accomplished with our plants.

Point (6) Fertilising: We can help our plants or hinder them. No fertiliser in a 'hungry' compost of bark, scoria, gravel or charcoal and the orchids will not produce healthy, vigorous growth.

Over fertilising will cause limp foliage, stunted growth and even streaking of the foliage and leaf die back. How to reach the premium? Again, know your plants, watch them and keep a programme on the weaker side rather than heavy. A little often, say once a week is more beneficial than heavy fertilising once a month. You will learn by the plant growth and general erect appearance if you are treating them well. Keep to that programme, don't go on increasing your applications and measure. No way will we make our orchids grow like 'Jack's Beanstalk'. Patience and practise, skill and experience are our watchwords with each and every pot we grow.

Finally and like each of the previous points it is brief of necessity.

Point (7) Handling: Be careful in this as even without spikes orchids can be abused. If the foliage is touching the floor or flat of the bench, do not place the nearest pots on these leaves as they become bruised and eventually die causing, firstly unsightly appearance and eventual die back. This bruising while in its wet state can well be a point of attack for fungi or even mosaic disease if the sap is flowing or exposed. Do not tear leaves from the bulbs if they become straggly and damaged. Cut them back to the bulb with a sterilised tool. Picking up a pot of orchids should be similar to picking up a baby.

I've seen growers pick up a pot by its leaves to examine it or show it off. You wouldn't pick a baby up by its hair, unless you were very strange or cruel. Both are living things and we must treat them as such.

We generally take much more care of our orchids when flower spikes are in evidence but it is important to regard them with similar respect as we build them up for their next showing of blooms.

If we grow orchids we have to treat them correctly the whole year through, not just while they have spikes.

Not for repetition, but perhaps for increased production may I repeat our 7 points: (1) Housing: (2) Circulation: (3) Space: (4) Cleanliness: (5) Watering: (6) Fertilising: (7) Handling, as being the more important necessities for optimum cymbidium flowering.

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ODONTOGLOSSUM GRANDE. NOW RENAMED <sup>R</sup>ELLOSSIOMGLOSSUM GRANDE

Commonly known as the 'Clown Orchid' because of the small portion in the centre of the flower.

This formation can be found, with variation, in several other odontoglossum species. How unsuited is the name clown orchid for one of the most spectacular and magnificent odontoglossums.

At various times this particular plant has been also referred to as the 'Tiger Orchid'.

Surely few orchids can give the grower such a thrill when flowering for the first time. Excitement mounts as the elongated buds slowly unfold their petals, the large blooms growing and setting like some fantastic butterfly.

The overall result is created by rich hues of glossy chestnut and yellow. The flowers are four to five inches across, the petals marked with almost solid bars of chestnut which breaks up near the yellow tips. The sepals are similarly marked and the shell shaped lip is creamy white with a few broken bands of reddish brown. Both sepals and petals shine like polished wood. The spike can carry up to five blooms which appear in late Autumn when the bulb is completed and the plant is commencing its rest.

A complete and decided rest in the cool house is required by *Flossiumglossum Grande*. It should be placed in a position of bright light and left completely dry. The hard, dark green bulbs should not shrivel and the plant should rest for at least three months. The new growth when it appears, is flat and speckled with brown. This is a natural marking and is retained on the underside of the mature foliage.

A large and extremely well flowered specimen plant was benched during 1982 by one of our experienced club members and it was indeed a beautiful sight.

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MONTHLY COMPETITIONFEBRUARY MEETINGOPEN DIVISION

Dendrobiums	Spellbound	W J Nicholls	3
Miscellaneous	Onc. Kaulanii	G Forrest	3
Phalaenopsis	Penang x Mariae Dobkin	K Northcote	3
	Sandy x Amboinensis	W J Nicholls	2
Species	Vanda merrillii	W J Nicholls	3
	Phal. equestris rosea	W J Nicholls	2
	Phal. luedemmania	W J Nicholls	1
Division Flower of Month	Den. Spellbound	W J Nicholls	

1ST DIVISION

Aus. Native	Saccolarcopsis amii	L & R Moore	3
Aus. Native Terr,	malaxis latifolia	P T Barnes	3
Cattleya	Lc Whitinae x C bowringiana	P Barnes	3
	Slc. Anzac c Canberra	P T Barnes	2
Miscellaneous	Onc. Montanum x crispum	P T Barnes	
Paph. Hybrid	Harrisianum Balls var.	R Parish	3
Paph. Nov.	Haynaldianutt x chamberlainum	P T Barnes	3
	primulinum flavum x hennisianum	J Leeder	2
Paph Species.	primulinum purpurascens	R Parish	3
	parishii	R Parish	2
Species	Calanthe reflexa	P T Barnes	3
Division Flower of Month	Species Paph. primulinum	R Parish	

2ND DIVISION

Mini Cym	PeterPan Greensleeves	C C Burfield	3
Cattleyas	Summer Stars x forbessi	S & I Nicholls	3
	Summer Stars x forbessi	Brenda Brereton	2
	C Suavior x C guttata	C C Burfield	1
Paph. Nov	glaucophyl um x belatulum	C C Burfield	3
Paphiopedilum	Rosette Goliath	Neale Washington	3
Species	Encyclia radiata	Neale Washington	3
	Epi. boundi	Mary Vaughan	2
Division Flower of Month	Paph. Nov. glaucophyl um x belatulum		
	C C Burfield		
<u>Presidents Flower of Month</u>	as above.		

NEW MEMBERS:-

We welcome the following new members:-

Mr M F (Bill) Buxton, 44 Masters Avenue MARION 5043

Mr M G (Murray) Weston 37 Payton Avenue DERNACOURT 5075

Mr N R (Neale) Washington 43 Hamilton Avenue WARRADALE 5046

M/s B E (Trix) Anderson 60 Flaxmill Road MORPHETT VALE 5162

M/s Van Der (Rosemary) Wilk, 15 Bedlington Court NOARLUNGA DOWNS 5168

## **Summer & Holiday Care of Cattleyas & Phalaenopsis**

*Ian Milne — Wellington Orchid Society  
Journal*

The first consideration is of course water. I still say do not water Cattleyas every day, but do give your plants time to dry out. This will of course happen more rapidly than in the cooler weather, but still does not call for constant wetness. Your plants can get root rot just as easily in the summer as in the winter if you keep them constantly wet. When you get that mad urge to water despite the fact that you did it yesterday, mist your glasshouse with a fine spray of water from end to end over leaves and everything. This will satisfy the urge and will do your plants good, not harm, as constant watering will do. This method helps to cool the leaves and allows the plants to absorb what moisture they require through those leaves and at the same time allows the roots to get their heads above water and to breathe. Try and keep glasshouse floors wet, again several times a day if possible. Gravel chips on the floor are a big help in the retention of moisture.

Sawdust is not bad, but gravel is much cleaner and does not stick to your shoes when you come inside — therefore no domestic problems as a bonus!

Shading for Phalaenopsis should be increased to prevent burning as those big leaves are very susceptible to burning. Don't shade completely or you will get very soft and floppy growth; just enough shade to save from burning.

Cattleyas like the sun and will enjoy a lot. When you see the leaves hard and soft green to yellowish colour you have the right conditions to induce flowering. Even a bit of burning, though unsightly, does not do any real harm. Cattleyas require strong light to flower but, as usual, temper your efforts with a bit of commonsense.

Going on holidays and no one to care for your plants is a different story. Increase your shading, leave your fans turned on, and open all ventilators. The temperatures at this time of the year should not drop low enough to do any damage with everything open etc. But they certainly could rise high enough to cause discomfort in your glasshouse. Soak all pots by putting them in a bath or tub to allow mix to absorb as much moisture as possible. Thoroughly soak floor and all inside the glasshouse, place as many pots as possible on the floor where they will be cooler and get maximum humidity.

For those people without glasshouses I suggest you use any trays, roasting dishes or similar. Fill with water and place on the floor of your room. Cover the trays with some sort of grill; strips of wood will do, and sit your pots on top. This method can be applied to any house plants quite successfully.

I hope these ideas will be of help and will close with best wishes and good growing for the coming year.