

SUTHERLAND SHIRE ORCHID SOCIETY

BULLETIN: July 2020

www.ssos.org.au

NOTE: The July meeting is also cancelled. See President's message for details.

SSOS Members, Bloomin'Awesome:



Paph. Oliver Ho, Heath



Medicatum decoratum, Wal



Bc. Moris Glory 'H & R',
'H Vic'



Coel Linda Buckley, Jan

L. albida 'Violet Snowflake' X
L. Gouldiana 'Westernport', Robert



Rlc. Village Chief North
'Green Genius', Pam



Laelia Anceps
Vietchiana x Wil-
liamsiana, Gary Hodder



Rlc. Village Chief North
'Green Genius', Pam

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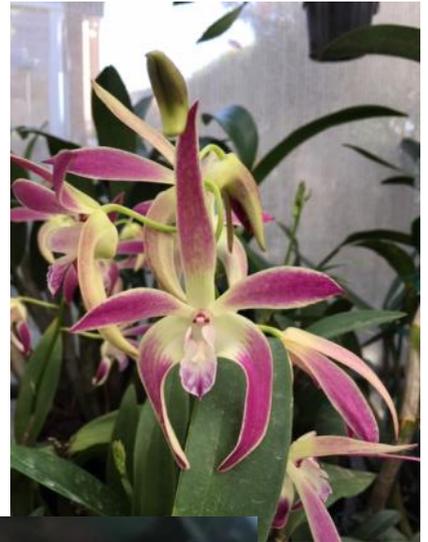
mjbk1@bigpond.com

SSOS Members, Bloomin'Awesome

C. Monte Elegance 'Richard' X C. Caudebec 'Carmela',
Christoff Mans



Den. Grace Robson, Graeme

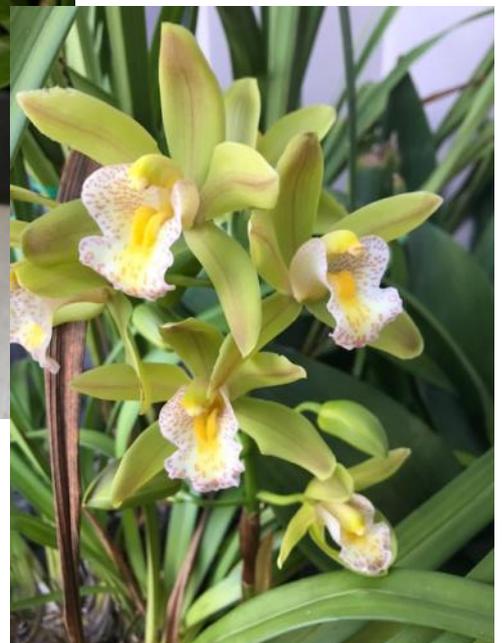


Paph Unknown, Mark

Onc. Twinkle 'CT White Strong', Robert



Dock. fuliginosa x hepatica,
Rhonda



Cymb. Lime Green, Sonia



C. Chocolate Drop 'Kodama', John Hely

SSOS Members, Bloomin'Awesome

Rlc. Chunyeah 'Good Life', Vic



Blc. Burdekin Storm 'Midnight' x C. Mem.
Jerome Schultz 'Bette' Christoff



Z. Unknown, Mark



L. anceps
Veitchiana x Dawsonii, Gary Hodder



Paph. Siann, Heath



Zelenkoa onusta,
Pam



BLC Berdekin Storm Midnight,
Sonia



President's Message...

Greetings Fellow Members—

I hope you are all well and enjoying your orchids. With restrictions easing, everyone is wondering when we can resume our Society's meetings. Both the church where we meet and the NSW government have rules for public gatherings. Here is currently what would be required if we were to have a monthly meeting:



- All tables and chairs must be cleaned with sanitiser before the meeting—as well as after. (Volunteers to do this?)
- Hand sanitiser must be used by all attendees entering the church hall.
- Social distancing ('SD') must be maintained at all times, 4m² between each member. The church has advised that the auditorium can accommodate 58 people allowing for SD, which means 58 chairs spaced out at 4m². This does not include room for our benching tables. If we use the tables, the number of chairs must be drastically reduced—and all attendees must be seated, no standing around in groups, during the meeting.
- SD must be maintained while we put our orchids on the bench as well as when we remove them. Are we all going to wait patiently for our turn in the queue with 4m² between each person when we arrive? Likewise, are we all going to wait patiently at the end of the meeting to get our plants off the tables, observing SD?
- No shared suppers are currently allowed by the church. We could BYO snack and a thermos---but no loitering in the foyer or near the kitchen. So we would have to sit in our chairs 4m² apart while we ate.
- SD must be maintained around the sales tables. Are they kidding??!! We haven't seen a sales table for months, who is going to wait patiently in a queue 4m² apart to have a look at the plants offered for sale??!!
- SD must be maintained by the judges while they are looking at our plants. What are they going to do, shout out to each other which plant deserves 1st, 2nd and 3rd in each class? Can you imagine the noise level??!!
- Everyone must sign the church's book so that if there is a Covid19 attack, we can all be traced. Many of us "forget" to sign our Society's attendance register. We would have to lift our game on this requirement.
- On our way out, the handles of any brooms or other cleaning equipment we used must be sanitized as well as all door handles and knobs touched by any of us. (Volunteers to do this?)
- Social distancing requirements must be monitored and **enforced** during our meetings. Who wants to be the Bad Guy and tell other members off when they break the 4m² rule? (Volunteers to do this?)



The Committee has agreed unanimously that before we resume our monthly meetings, the requirements will have to be much less stringent than these current ones. Safety of our members is our #1 concern. Until the social distancing limits are reduced, I'm sorry to say we won't be having monthly meetings.

In the meantime, keep well and continue with those orchid experiments. Heath and Jenny have an excess of African violet pots from a previous hobby, they are trialing various orchid genera in them and had their *Catasetum fredclarkeara* hanging in their lounge room flowering its head off in one of these pots.

(Cont. next page)

Melissa's father in law was an excellent orchid grower in his day and used fingernail polish to stop the spread of fungal disease on his plants; I am trying this on a few of mine. It certainly brightens up the sea of green!

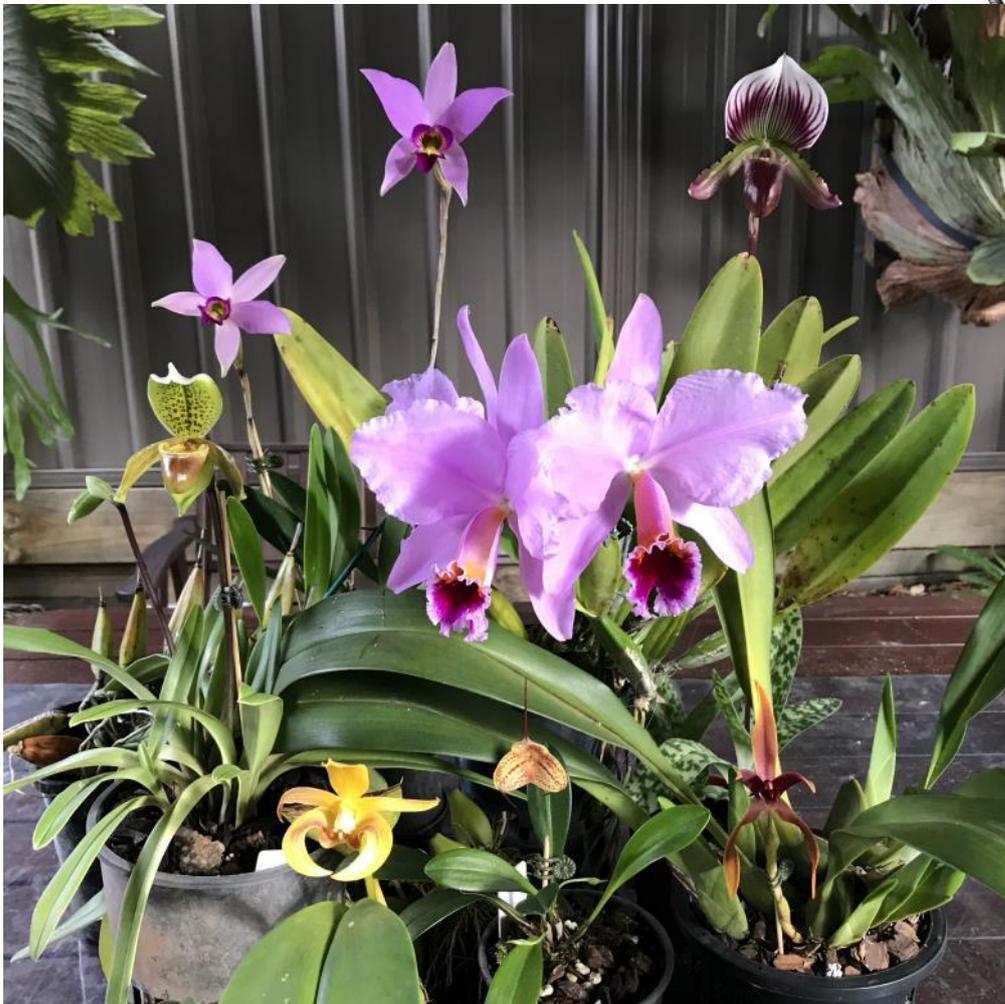
If you have any questions about any of these requirements, give me a ring. I would welcome your comments and would love to have a chat.

Cheers until next month,

Jan



Welcome to Wal Chapman's
Guess The Genera!
 (Take a guess then read the up-side-down answers)



ANSWERS (Left to Right)
 Paph insignne, Laelia anceps, Bulbo Willmar 'Galaxy Star',
 Masd Hani X triangulatis, Laelia percvahiana 'Summit',
 Path Maudiae Colouratum, Maxi nigrescence.



SSOS JULY Virtual Raffle

During the Covid (No Meetings) months, the Society will be “raffling” off the plants we got recently from John Allen. This month's raffle prize is the last of our awarded plants--but don't worry, we've still got other great flowering-size plants in stock!

Bifrenaria inodora 'Olive' AM/AOC is a species plant and is as tough as an old boot. It grows cold in direct sun during the winter but would appreciate a bit of sun protection in the summer. Whether you are a Novice, Intermediate, or Open Grower, this is the raffle plant for you!!



**Congratulations to the June Winner:
Sonia !**



You don't need to buy any raffle tickets to be in the draw! It's FREE !

All you need to do is to send an email to Rhonda at info@ssos.org.au saying “please put my name in the raffle draw for July”.

The deadline for participating entries is **26th July 2020**

All the names of participating members will go into a hat and the winner will be drawn on the 26th July. One entry per member. The plant will then be delivered to the lucky winner on a day and time agreed by that person and a Committee member. Don't miss out on a chance to win a fantastic flowering size orchid, send your email now!

Keep in touch via our Facebook Group:

“Sutherland Orchid Society”

Post your growing tips, recent mail order purchases, questions or just what's in flower at your place..... we'd all love to hear about it.!

If you are having any problems, please contact Jan Robinson jadrob@bigpond.com or Dan Coulton 0419 466986 for assistance.



My Top 5 Terrestrial Orchids Worth Trying by Daniel Coulton

Cymbidiums, Cattleyas, Phalaenopsis and Dendrobiums are the go-to genera when we think of orchids and all are almost exclusively epiphytic (growing on trees) or lithophytic (growing on rocks). However, despite their lack of popularity there are a huge number of orchid species which like the majority of the plant kingdom decided to stay on the ground and are termed terrestrial. These orchids are hugely underrepresented in collections which really is a shame as many are both beautiful and unique.

I thought I'd introduce you to a few of my favorites covering a number of different groups, genera growth cycles and geographic origin to give you a flavour for the variety that is out there.



Thunia marshalliana

This plant is relatively common in, mixed collections and even amongst gardeners generally. This plant forms stems or elongated pseudobulbs up to two feet long which bear white and yellow cattleya like flowers at the top during December. The plant is deciduous over winter which is often the best time to repot into a moisture retentive well training mix. Once new growth starts at the base you should begin watering and fertilizing heavily and the plant can take full sun if grown in a saucer to keep the water up. In fact, often if you grow it in a shadier position it will refuse to flower. Other Thunia species are harder to track down but also worth tracking down.

Bletilla striata

Also known as the Chinese Ground Orchid these plants are often available as bulbs during winter from a number of sellers. They are a winter deciduous plant that is one of the few orchids that does well in a garden setting. The purple flowers are born in mid spring and make an attractive display when grown on mass. Several colour forms are available including an attractive albanistic form and even one with variegated foliage. While not an orchid that captures the hearts of many orchid growers it is definitely one worth adding to a shady corner of your garden.



Pterostylis curta

An aussie native that is summer deciduous and grows from an underground tuber in Autumn and flowers in late winter. This plant is the most vigorous in the genus though *nutans* and *baptisii* are other species worth growing. I have grown mine in prepared succulent mix though there are countless other mixes suggested if you do your own research. These plants unlike others on this list are summer dormant and require minimal watering during summer or they will rot.

Stenoglottis fimbriata

In my view the easiest and best growing of this genus though all are worth growing including some of the hybrids. This winter deciduous plant flowers in mid-Autumn on strong stems of small pink and white flowers. It multiplies well and a specimen is an impressive sight. It should be kept on the dry side while dormant with watering increased once you see growth commence.



Calanthe triplicata

An evergreen aussie native with the common names of Christmas Orchid and Swamp Orchid which gives you a few tips to its flowering and growing. Its indigenous to rainforest areas near watercourses and enjoys a moist mix throughout the year. In the warmer months I keep mine with a saucer once new growth starts. Its white flowers during December with flowers developing and opening progressively over several weeks. It can grow to be a large plant and enjoys shade. This really is one of my favorite orchids and other than being a little prone to attack by snails and mealy bugs.

A CHAT WITH JAN ROBINSON By Melissa Karayannis

When did you first start with orchids? What hooked you in?

In May 1996, on our way home to Engadine, my husband David and I noticed a sign "Orchids For Sale". We stopped to investigate. It turned out to be The Orchid Place in Engadine (with Barbra's Mother) before it moved to Heathcote. David and I were greeted by greenery that extended for at least the size of two house lots; all orchids but none in flower. At the time you could buy 5



cymbidiums for \$40 and that's what we did. We took them home without asking any questions and promptly planted them in the garden...in the soil! A couple of months later I noticed an unusual growth coming from one of the plants, which to my utter delight turned out to be a flower spike. I used to sit outside and gaze at that spike; I was hooked and in love!

Five years later, I counted 71 cymbie spikes in my collection. My cymbies were now in pots! By then I had expanded my collection and had a few laelias, zygopetalums, paphs, etc. A family member passed away and I then inherited even more genera!



As my collection grew, David built me a bush house. I struggled along on my own for 10 years and then decided to join SSOS. My life, as I'd previously known it, then changed forever! Ho's novice classes, at the time, revolutionized my approach to growing orchids, especially on fertilising and insect control.

Twenty-four years later, I still have that first flowering cymbie; it's actually flowering now.



What's your favourite genus?

Well in 2020 it's cattleyas because its been such an awesome catt year. Next year maybe dendrobiums, who knows!

What are your favourite few plants?

I love my Paph Liberty Taiwan 'Rose Lilah' which got an AM and Best in the SOS show in 2016, also my Paph Wyruna Vietnam Magic.



*Another favourite is my 'Big Ben'. It's actually *Miltonia spectabilis* var *moreliana* 'Big Ben'. I bought it off the internet as a seedling in 2007. Five years later it was awarded an AM and an Award of Cultural Commendation; two years after that it got upgraded to an FCC.*

What do you grow now?

Catts, lycaste, dendrobs, stanhopea, sarcs, masdevalia, paphs, soft canes, etc.

What's your greatest orchid challenge?

Flowering bloody paphs from flask! Getting sarcs and massies through a Sydney summer without devastation; flowering lycastes.



(Cont. Next Page)

Which genera have you tried and failed with?

Zygos, phrags, aerangis, cymbies (everything went backwards with cymbies after I expanded to other genera).

What’s on your orchid wish list?

To expand my neofinetia/vanda collection. There are lots of colourful hybrids now that are small and compact and grow well in Sydney.

What’s the oldest orchid in your collection?

I have some plants that are very special to me because they were gifts from senior growers years ago. For example, a Paph. insigne var ‘Harefield Hall’ from Kevin Wilson, a Catt bicolor var brasiliensis from Madge Errington, a Thunia marshaliana (“Christmas Orchid”) from John Hart and many sarcs from Neville Roper.

What are your future orchid plans or are you happy with your lot?

Well, I was resolved to stop buying orchids so that I could get my collection under control, until another SSOS member (shhhhh) got me onto the internet and FaceBook buying of orchids during the Covid Lockdown. Somehow Covid has now expanded my collection!



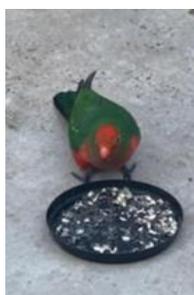
Jan’s growing areas include:

A main bush house for stanhopeas, coelogyne, sarcs, Australian dendrobiums, masdevalias and some paphs.

A north-facing lean-to bush house off the side of her home for catts, lycaste and some dendrobiums.



A heated glasshouse which houses mainly paphs. A pergola area that provides cover for softcanes, SE Asian dendrobiums and any flowering plants.



The Wonderful and Intriguing World of Pleurothallids

Murray Aldridge SC

PLEUROTHALLIDS have a wide ranging and intriguing beauty - from masdevallias which number among the most brightly coloured of orchids of all to the truly amazing and scary draculas, the jewelled intricacies of *Lepanthes*, the Zen-like beauty of *Stelis* and the endless imagination of *Pleurothallis*.

What Are They?

Pleurothallids (members of the Pleurothallidinae) are a distinct group of orchids and probably the largest group of orchids in the world. About 10% of the world's orchid species are pleurothallids. Add a distinct growth habit which is mimicked by very few orchids (although some brassavolas do look similar to some of the terete leaved *Pleurothallis* and *Octomeria* species) and you have a large and unique group of orchids to explore.

The distinctive growth habit consists of just a thin stem where in most orchids you would find a pseudobulb. This thin stem joins the rhizome and leaf and may be very short, as in many *Masdevallia* species, or several feet long as in many *Pleurothallis* species. This thin stem is called a ramicaul. "Pleurothallis", in fact, means rib-like branches.

As is typical in the Pleurothallidinae there is enormous variation about the basic plant structure and the distinctive structure of some Pleurothallidinae defines the genus to which they belong - for example the upside-down hoop petticoat bracts of *Lepanthes*, brassavola impersonations of *Myozanthis* (coupled with brightly coloured purple or red prickly hairs over the new growths) and *Octomeria* and the ridged plicate leaves of draculas.

Masdevallias and draculas are large flowered plants that have distinctively fused sepals with very small, if not entirely unnoticeable, petals and lip - the complete opposite of many other orchids. This gives them often a distinct triangular or tubular shape. *Restrepias* and many pleurothallis have fused lateral sepals. *Restrepias* have very thin



Lepanthes ♂

petals and a dorsal sepal with an unusual club-shaped end (thought to be an osmophore - a scent producing organ). The petals, even if small are very distinct and often "three-dimensional". Instead of just being flat, as if cut out of a piece of paper, they often have spectacular horns and growths. These include the three-horned petal tips of draculas, the clubs of *Restrepia* and *Myozanthis*, the crazy modernistic sculptures of *Lepanthes* and the plastic-like ridge of *Stelis*.

One of the great charms of the Pleurothallidinae is its endless floral variation.

Where do They Come From?

Pleurothallis are wide ranging orchids. In the north they start in southern Florida and are found throughout the Caribbean and Central America and are widespread through northern and mid-southern America. They grow from sea level to well over 4,000 metres altitude. We think of them as cool cloud-forest plants and most of them are, but there aren't too many cloud-forests let alone in the swamps of Florida. Although many of them do not enjoy bright light some do. *Pleurothallis teres* grows on the same bare granite ledges in full sun as

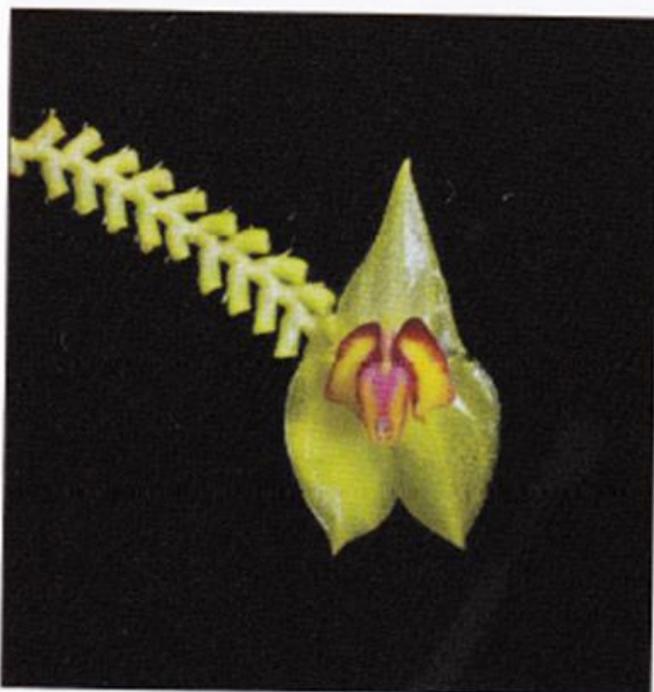


Lepanthes 3

the Brazilian rupicolous *Laelia crispata* and *L. rupestris*.

Their geographical range means that pleurothallis are tropical plants. Tropical doesn't mean hot as roughly the average temperatures fall by about one degree Celsius per hundred metres of altitude. There is therefore a wide range of culture conditions in which these plants grow.

The common theme wherever these wonderful orchids grow is the humidity. Wherever they grow the humidity is high to extremely high. Eighty to ninety percent is often cited as an average range and many, such as *Lepanthes*, prefer an



Lepanthes 5



Lepanthes calodictyon

almost saturated atmosphere. Indeed the flowers of some, particularly the large draculas, will wilt if taken out of their cool, humid environment only to plump up again when returned to the humidity. This is why, particularly overseas, draculas and other pleurothallids are shown in a wardian case to keep the humidity up.



Masdevallia amabilis



Pleurothallis marthae plant

flowered these plants are simply a delight. Finally freshness of flowers is very important –Pleurothallidinae flowers will often deteriorate quickly particularly if taken out of their preferred environment. This means that care should be taken when judging them - they need to be kept as cool and as humid as possible and placed away from heaters and strong hot lights.

Culture

For most a wet, damp and shady environment needs to be provided - the cooler your temperatures the more light can be given.

In warmer areas (such as New South Wales) care should be taken to select those species that come from warmer areas.

Good quality sphagnum moss is an ideal potting mix - alone or with perlite (or polystyrene chips if you insist on polluting the environment). Bark based mixes, again with perlite work well also.

Water quality should be high (low salt content). Plants in sphagnum need very weak, balanced fertilizer - inorganic fertilizers seem to preserve the quality of the moss. Bark based mixes will require more fertilizing and one with an emphasis on nitrogen. Remember, however, these orchids come from high rainfall areas and do not tolerate strong fertilizers or have any need for heavy feeding.

Good air movement prevents most fungal problems and is what the plants enjoy anyway. Snails and grasshoppers can easily be kept in control by regular night time vigilance. The worst



Pleurothallis marthae

pest of these orchids is aphids - which are not only capable of destroying new growths but are the vector of the virus that affects them - bean yellow virus. Fortunately they are easily controlled by pyrethrum or soap sprays. You don't need anything stronger, and will keep yourself and your family alive and healthy and able to enjoy these wonderful orchids.

Murray Aldridge SC
New South Wales

Photos supplied by M. Aldridge SC



Porroglossum sp

This article was originally published in *Orchids Australia* in 2007. Thankyou Murray Aldridge for your kind permission to reproduce it here, unfortunately minus the first page of pictures due to space restrictions (sorry!)



S.O.S. ANNOUNCEMENT!!!

For the first time since the show began, our Society won't have to do ANY work for SOS!!

After the best show in its 15 year history last year, the Orchid Society of NSW stepped in to try to take control in such a way that we stepped out and resigned as an organising partner.

If the show happens this year and we are invited to participate, we may consider doing a display and putting plants on the community sales table. (Our Society will not have its own sales tables.) But we won't have to put up signage before the show and take it down afterwards, set up the auditorium, man the plant crèche, provide security, or clean up the auditorium after the show is over. HOORAY!! We can just enjoy ourselves and buy more plants.

We will keep you posted on the status of the show.



Wal's *Dendrochilum javierii*

Gary Hodder's
Odontioda E 'Samurai'



Heath's *Paph. fairrieianum*

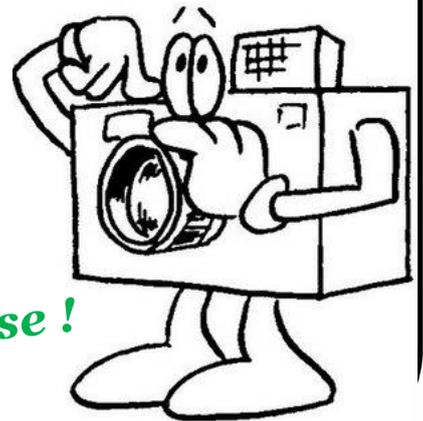
Orchid photos for the August Bulletin??

Email photos of orchids currently in bloom and their names to Melissa (Editor) at mjbk1@bigpond.com

Want to write an article for the bulletin??

Email to mjbk1@bigpond.com

Both before June 28th please !



22nd Australian Orchid Council Conference & Show

1 - 5 September 2021



For The Love of Orchids

South East Queensland: at the Logan Metro Sports & Events Centre, about 30 minutes by road south of the Brisbane CBD and airport. See Website for full details: orchidsaustralia.com.au/index.php/events-shows.

St Ives Orchid Fair 2020

With regret, but in the best interests of our members, exhibitors, vendors and guests that due to Covid-19 and Local and State Government regulations The St Ives Orchid Fair Committee has decided to cancel the 2020 St Ives Orchid Fair.

The Committee is scheduled to meet in November to proceed with recommencement of this event on August 13, 14, 15th 2021.

Disclaimer: The growing guides are provided only as a starting basis to cultivation. Local conditions in your area may require modification to these suggestions. SSOS will not be responsible for the results of your cultivation practices. The opinions expressed in these articles are those of the author and not those of SSOS, SSOS in no way endorses or supports any claims or opinions of said authors.