



Sutherland Shire Orchid Society

Upcoming Events:

- SSOS June Meeting 12th June
- Mingara Orchid Show 24-25th June
- SSOS Winter Show 29th June - 1st July
- SSOS July Meeting 10th July
- St Ives Orchid Fair 18-20th August

Articles This Month:

- You Grew It
- In My Greenhouse
- An Afternoon with Col Fraser
- Orchids vs Ferns



President: Frank Daniel
 Vice President: George Birss
 Editor: Richard Dimon
 dimon.richard@gmail.com

SUTHERLAND SHIRE ORCHID SOCIETY JUNE 2017



SSOS May Plant of the Night – *Bulbophyllum rothschildianum* grown by W. & J. Chapman

SSOS Winter Show: Orchids By The Shores

Woolooware Shores Retirement Village
 Thursday 29th June to Saturday 1st July
 Setup for members Wednesday 28th June 2pm-5pm

SSOS Bunnings BBQ

Saturday 10th June
 Bunnings Warehouse,
 Kirrawee



SSOS GENERAL MEETING

MINUTES - MAY 2017

The president extended a welcome to our members and guests.

The President also asked for someone to motion that the March minutes which were distributed through the Bulletin, either by mail or email, be accepted as accurate. Gary Hodder motioned that the minutes be accepted. Carried.

CORRESPONDENCE OUT

Two requests for sponsorship of our shows sent to Bunnings and Tradies responses to go to Rhonda Jackson street address, we should hear after she returns from holidays, plus email confirming selection of our show judges.

CORRESPONDENCE IN

OSNSW April 2017 *Orchid News*

May 2017 newsletter from Eurobodalla Orchid Club - Margaret Hay

May 2017 newsletter from Batemans Bay Orchid Society – Margaret Turner

April 2017 newsletter from North Shore Orchid Society – Garry Bromley

Judges confirmed for both the Winter & Spring Shows.

If you are interested in this information, please see Terry and he will email you the newsletters.

NEW MEMBERS

No new members, a request for information has been received.

UPCOMING SPEAKERS

TONIGHT: SSOS Auction

JUNE: Margaret Bradhurst will talk on native orchids in the southern Sydney. She will also have copies of her new book for sale.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

We are updating our bank signatories to reflect the incoming committee.

Use of vouchers at Sales bench - Only properly authorised SSOS vouchers be used on the Orchid sales table at monthly meetings. The Old Orchid Tray Co. (now Orchid Supplies by George & Mike) be used at the Orchid Supplies by George & Mike not at the sales bench.

The committee has agreed to look into purchasing a free-standing advertising banner to be used at our shows as well as at other promotional opportunities (BBQ at Bunnings etc).

Upcoming SSOS Winter Show:

Flyer - The show flyer will be titled *Orchids by the Shore* were distributed.

Advertising - We are allowed to put up banners around the Shire, as long as we provide the wording to the Council a week before we put up.

Plus the President spoke to the Taren Point Public School about putting a banner on their fence with an arrow pointing towards Woollooware Shores, the school also agreed to put up a message on their electronic billboard on the corner.

Promotions – We will be holding a promotional table on Saturday 24 June 2017 at Caringbah Shopping Centre (the one with Woolworths in from 9am - 3pm. Volunteers available to man the table.

Volunteers – required for security over the show as well as at the Promotions table. A number of members have put their name down to be volunteers particularly in the morning shifts, but we will need more volunteers to cover the afternoons.



The President on behalf of The Orchid Society of NSW has presented ST Ho with an Award of Merit for his *Dendrobium polyanthum (primulinum)* “Yeowie” awarded last October.

Seedling competition - first judging occurred at tonight’s meeting. Next judging will be our August meeting.

Results –Novice 1st Frank Daniel, 2nd Jim Riley, 3rd Peter Ng others entered were Cheryl Matheson, Robert Cawley, Robert Nicol, Margaret Spring & Terry Thompson.

Results – Open 1st Michael Dimon, 2nd Richard Dimon, 3rd Jan Robinson others entered were George Birss and Dianne Phillips. See them again in August 2017.

The judging committee decided that one of the benched plants deserved a cultural award, due to its growth and staking showed the plant at its optimum. The plant selected a fine example of *Bulbophyllum rothschildianum* by Wal Chapman.

Upcoming Orchid Shows Open days:

-Orchid Productions (Phil Spence) Open Day 20 May 2017, 8 Dashwood Close Wamberal NSW 2260 Ph 0408 994 696.

-Orchids Out West 26-28 May 2017 Hawkesbury Racecourse Clarendon

-Mingara 24-25 June 2017 Mingara Recreation Centre Tumby Umbi

-St Ives Orchid Fair 18 -20 August 2017 St Ives Showground St Ives

Auction Results: 13 members sold 50 plants, gross of \$1,128; 15% commission to Society = \$169 less \$105 in prize vouchers used = net cash profit to the Society \$64.

NAME BADGE DRAW – Members drawn not present

LUCKY PLANTS – Vic Petrovski, Pam Davies; and Pheng Sanaphay

PRESIDENT'S AWARD – *Restrepia muscifera* grown by George Birss

RAFFLE winners were; 1934 Elsie Burriss, 2201 Pat Dos Santos, 1850 Phil Green, 2238 Jim Riley, 1821 Sharon Lee and 2182 Sandra

Next meeting: 12 June 2017

YOU GREW IT!

Brassavola flagellaris

–exhibited by Lee Buivids



What a truly spectacular specimen. Grown on a cork slab. A creeping epiphyte or lithophyte (found growing on rocks or tree branches) comes from Eastern Brazil and prefers a little warmth and can be grown in a hot house. It has elongated terete (cylindrical or tube like) pseudobulbs that can be from 6 to 30 cm long. Each pseudobulb will have a single elongated “ whip like” leaf. The inflorescence arises from the crease at the base on the leaf. An inflorescence can have between 2 and 15 flowers that in the evenings and at night have a citrus fragrance.



The flowers display well with light green long narrow sepals and petals. The lip is white, broad and flat with a yellow / green central spot.

An easy to grow orchid, that requires year-round watering, humidity and fortnightly feeding. It likes bright light and can be grown in a shade house with some winter protection or in a warm glass house. Best grown mounted to allow it's roots sufficient aeration but it also displays the flowers better as they will hang out and away from the foliage.

Dendrobium wenzelii

—exhibited by S.T.Ho



Named after a Philippine collector and first described about 100 years ago. A beautiful species epiphyte orchid from the Philippines grows between 300 and 1000 metres in bright light and partial shade.

Dendrochilums or grass plants as they are commonly called due to the fact that they look like tufts of grass when not in flower. The clustered pseudobulbs have terete / fusiform leathery leaves (cylindrical or tube like, spindle shaped) up to 30cm long. Inflorescence are semi arching and will carry up to and sometimes more than 50 crowded flowers which is each only mm's in size and are true miniatures. Inflorescences only

appear on new growths and can vary in colour from bright red to dull red / rust, brown, orange and greenish yellow.

The plants when grown in the right conditions will nearly double in size each year and will quickly reach a specimen size plant. Best grown by division but may “sulk” if it's roots are disturbed too much. This plant grows well in a shade house and can take a variety of temperatures and prefer bright light to flower well. Although it likes constant watering it likes to dry out between watering and a slightly dryer winter.

There are many other Dendrochilums with different growth forms and colour and flower shapes. *Dendro. javierii* is similar in appearance but is a striking vibrant yellow. *Dendro. cobbianum* has a broader leaf with a long arching inflorescence that can be 40cm long of gold through to white flowers and is highly scented. *Dendo. tenellum* is the opposite with thin narrow leaves that really look like long grass and has a short inflorescence, 2 -4cm, at the end with many miniature flowers that a 1/10th mm in size.

Masdevallia floribunda

—exhibited by George Birss



A mini – miniature cool grower orchid from Belize, Mexico, Costa Rica and the Caribbean that is found in damp forests at around 400 to 1500 metres elevation.



These orchids have no real pseudobulbs but thin tubular sheaths with a single leaf. The bloom on a single inflorescence (often followed by a second flower) is tubular in shape and doesn't flatten out and is held just above the leaf.

Although most find *Masdevallia* orchids difficult to grow in Sydney especially near the coast where it is a bit warmer, if you can provide the right growing conditions *Massies* can be a great boost to a collection. I have found that they like cool conditions with high humidity and bright light. In saying that those 40 degree temperatures in January can be devastating and you may have to take special care and or move them to avoid the heat. They can be grown potted or mounted. In pots I have found spag moss best and double pot, two pots the same size inside each other, this helps with keeping the roots warm and humid.

Bulbophyllum rothschildianum

– exhibited by Wal Chapman



This species originates from India and is actually *Cirropetalum rothschildianum*. *Cirropetalum* is a genus of orchid related to *Bulbophyllums*. The flower is a semi-circle umbel like pattern. The dorsal is smaller and usually hairy, while the lateral sepals and petals are usually fused at the column foot and then abruptly twisted to form a convex blade.

A hot to cold growing epiphyte with ovoid (egg shaped) pseudobulbs with a single leaf. The umbellate inflorescence that appears from the base of the pseudobulb and has 4 to 6 fragrant, maybe not such a nice smelling, clubbed shaped, roundish, flat flowers, 5 to 10cm in length, which are greenish crimson colour with darker reddish spots. The inflorescence is upright and displays the flowers above the foliage. Grow this orchid in a shallow pot or basket with fast draining mix. The roots of this plant are thin and short and don't need a deep pot. This plant likes partial shade, ample water and fertilizer and good air movement. Grows easy in a shade house in the Shire and spreads readily to form a specimen and as it flowers on the new pseudobulb may need some manipulation of the new growth to keep the plant contained.

Bulbophyllum Elizabeth Ann

Buckelberry

Another from the *Cirropetalum* section but is a HYBRID.



Registered in 1969 by J. Chambers and is a cross between *Bulbophyllum longissimum* and *Bulbophyllum rothschildianum*. This is probably one of the most famous and sort after *Bulbo*. Hybrids due to it's pendant, showy flowers. Blooms of this orchid are pendulous. The inflorescence is "Cirropetalum type" and framed by 6 to 10 individual flowers.



Much like the shape of its parents the sepals and petals are fused. The bottom two sepals are much longer and can be up towards 30cm in length. The colouring is a light buttery colour marked with red stripes. The lip is small and has a bright pink / red colour. The lip is movable and appears to jiggle when the flower is moved or bumped. The smell is not as unpleasant as its above parent.

Again, best grown in a shallow pot or basket. The plant grows easily in a shade house, is easy to grow and even as a small plant the inflorescence is rewarding but as the plant matures to fill a 200mm pot the rewards are exceptional with 10 to 20 inflorescence.

IN MY GREENHOUSE



Wow Winter is here, or as I write this here tomorrow, and haven't we had a great Autumn. Until a day or two ago even the nights weren't too bad, but last night and tonight very chilly. Sure is a strange weather pattern.

I don't know about you guys but everywhere I look I find new shoots, new growths and things popping into bloom.

At present my *Laelia anceps* are in full flower with more opening every day. It's great to see these vibrant purple heads waving in the breezes high above the plants. My plants of *Dendrobium glomeratum* with its vivid pink / purple bunches of flowers and *Dendrobium lowesii* var. *bicolor* with bunches of red and yellow flowers on their metre-long canes. I have always struggled with Catts. But recently and presently I have had some luck. Firstly with C. California Girl with two

big heads of three flowers each and five or six more catts either open or in full bud, I am stoked.

Another genus I always had trouble with were *Paphiopedilums* or slipper orchids, well I have devoted a bit of time and effort and I believe I am at least on an upward curve. So far I have re potted the paphs. I have and thinking I had less than ten I now find that I am up around the 40 + mark and not only are they looking health some are flowering. I have *spicerianum* and *gretrixianum* either in bud or flower. The main things after re potting is actually regularly inspecting, the environment (where they are located in either the shade house or the hot house for those that require warmth in winter), light and watering and fertilising.

I recently moved some plants around in the shade house and having some bench space that received more light I moved some *Masdivallias* there and wow, guess what, more new growth and spikes on some that haven't seen spikes in a few years, great.

A acquired a number of different *Trichoglottis* a while ago, some unfortunately are "unknown", maybe I can identify when they flower. One that I do know the name of is *T. wenzellii* and it is in bud, numerous buds.

Last year my *Vandas* suffered through lack of heat as the hot house I have is overcrowded and no room could be found for largish plants. Well about 5 weeks ago Aldi had as one of their weekly specials a small plastic house. Tube frame, wire shelves and plastic outed skin. I purchased one and it sits outside my shade house. It now houses most of my *vandas*, and a number of plants of various genera, about 20 plants in all. I didn't want to put too much in just in case something nasty happened. It gets the afternoon sun and plenty of light. I have two trays of water under the lowest shelves. So far the day temperature has reached 35°C and the nights 14°C. Last night I forgot to close the flap till after 8pm, the night temp. got down to 6°C. And the little house went down to 10°C. Won't do that again. Usually when you open up in the morning the roof is dripping. I may need some shade cloth over the top to stop the night air in winter and stop the heat in



spring. May not use at all in summer, but it's doing the trick now. What I desperately need is a little fan (something like a desk fan) to assist with air movement, that way I don't have to open the flat in the day for air circulation, but fans are not in shops at present only heaters. Keep an eye out for mealy bug and scale and them little green grubs.

MONTHLY JUDGING RESULTS MAY 2017

PLANT OF NIGHT

Bulb. rothschildianum W. & J. Chapman

OPEN CLASS HYBRID

Rth. Dal's Girl 'Arcadia' S.Crosby/T .Costa

OPEN CLASS SPECIES

Bulb. rothschildianum W. & J. Chapman

INTERMEDIATE JUDGES CHOICE

Bulb. Elizabeth Ann 'Buckleberry' R. Nicol

NOVICE & JUNIOR JUDGES CHOICE

Cym. Enzan Shining 'Royale Flame' H. Chen

PRESIDENT'S CHOICE

Win
ner Rstp. muscifera G. Birss

CLASS # 1 AUSTRALIAN NATIVES

1st Den. tetragonum #2 S.Crosby/T .Costa

2nd Den. tetragonum S.Crosby/T .Costa

3rd Ob. titania I. & I. Chalmers

4th Ptst. acuminata S.Crosby/T .Costa

CLASS # 2 PAPHIOPEDILUMS SPECIES

1st Paph. helenae S. T. Ho

2nd Paph. henryanum S. T. Ho

CLASS # 3 LAELIINAE OVER 110MM (CLASSICAL SHAPE)

1st Blc. Greenwich W. McEvoy

2nd Blc. Chia Lin 'Shinsu' W. McEvoy

Blc. California Girl 'Orchid library' V. Petrovski

4th Blc. Tuftim Siam W. McEvoy

5th Blc. Mount Isa 'Jean' W. McEvoy

CLASS # 4 NOVELTY PAPHIOPEDILUMS

1st Paph. Rosy Dawn J. Robinson

CLASS # 5 LAELIINAE OVER 80MM UP TO & INCLUDING 110MM (CLASSICAL SHAPE)

1st Rth. Dal's Girl 'Arcadia' S.Crosby/T .Costa

2nd Lc. Mari's Magic 'Purple Flare' W. McEvoy

3rd Blc. Paradise Elegance T. Hyde

4th Blc. Rosella's Cherry Ripe W. McEvoy

CLASS # 6 PAPHIOPEDILUM

1st Paph. Huddle x In-Charm White S. T. Ho

CLASS # 7 LAELIINAE (NON CLASSICAL SHAPE)

1st C. Lavender Lulu 'Morrissey' S.Crosby/T .Costa

2nd Lc. Moonlight Madness W. McEvoy

3rd Lc. Mona Pink 'Hiromi' W. McEvoy

CLASS # 8 LAELIINAE UP TO & INCLUDING 80MM (CLASSICAL SHAPE)

1st C. Lavender Ice S.Crosby/T .Costa

2nd C. Burana Beauty 'Burana' J. Robinson

3rd Hknsa. Dal's Strike S.Crosby/T .Costa

4th Pot. Burana Angel 'Hsinying' G. Hodder

CLASS # 9 AUSTRALIAN NATIVE HYBRIDS

1st Den. Hilda Poxon S.Crosby/T .Costa

2nd Den. Memoria Lillian Warren S.Crosby/T .Costa

3rd Den. Australian Tiger Star .Costa

4th Den. Memoria Adrian Groffen C. Brandon

CLASS # 9A DENDROBIUM SPECIES -ASIAN

1st Den. glomeratum G. Birss I. & I. Chalmers

2nd Den. crenatifolium L. Buivids

3rd Den. tongii



4th Den. antennatum	I. & I. Chalmers	Bulb. Elizabeth Ann 'Buckleberry'	W. & J. Chapman
CLASS # 10 SPECIES ASIAN (Elsewhere not Included)		Bulb. Elizabeth Ann 'Buckleberry'	I. & I. Chalmers
1st Bulb. rothschildianum	W. & J. Chapman	4th Bulb. Rungsan	I. & I. Chalmers
2nd Bulb. grandiflorum	I. & I. Chalmers	CLASS # 17 DENDROBIUM HYBRIDS	
3rd Bulb. bractescens	I. & I. Chalmers	Den. Rhizobium Belmont Dream	
4th Bulb. rothschildianum	G. Birss	1st 'Nev'	C. Brandon V.
CLASS # 10B ONCIDINAE SPECIES		2nd Den. Jade Junior 'Sawadee'	Petrovski S.Crosby/T
1st Onc. sotoanum	I. & I. Chalmers	3rd Den. Miss Singapore	.Costa
2nd Zel. onusta	S.Crosby/T .Costa	4th Den. King Dragon	I. & I. Chalmers
CLASS # 11 PHALAENOPSIS OVER 75MM		CLASS # 18 VANDACEOUS	
1st Phal. 'unknown'	G. Birss	Ascd. Somsri Gold 'Fred's	
CLASS # 11A COELGYNINAE SPECIES		1st Champ'	M. Dimon
1st Ddc. wenzelii	S. T. Ho	V. Chao Praya Emerald X Kenny	
2nd Ddc. wenzelii	G. Birss	2nd Gold X Five Friendships	G. Curtis
3rd Coel. assamica	I. & I. Chalmers	CLASS # 19 MASDEVALLIA & DRACULA SPECIES	
4th Ddc. wenzelii 'Janette'	J. Robinson	1st Masd. floribunda	G. Birss
CLASS # 12 SEEDLING		CLASS # 21A PLEUROTHALLIDINAE HYBRIDS	
1st Den. Mingle's Sapphire	G. Birss	1st Rstp. Julia Howe	G. Birss I. & I.
CLASS # 13 ONCIDIUM HYBRIDS 60MM AND UNDER		2nd Rstp. Julia Howe	Chalmers
1st Tst. Maureen 'Pink Skirt'	S.Crosby/T .Costa	3rd Masd. Marguerite 'Orange Burst'	G. Birss
Oncsa. Sweet Sugar 'Million'		CLASS # 21B LAELIINAE SPECIES	
2nd Dollar'	P. Davies	1st Epi. paniculatum	S.Crosby/T .Costa
CLASS # 15 ONCIDIUM HYBRIDS OVER 60mm		2nd B. flagellaris	L. Buivids W. & J.
1st Bllra. Diana Dunn	V. Petrovski	3rd Arpo. spicatum	Chapman
2nd Colm. Wildcat 'Mt 4'	S.Crosby/T .Costa	CLASS # 22 MINIATURE CYMBIDIUMS UNDER 60mm	
3rd Burr. Nelly Isler 'Swiss Beauty'	G. Birss	1st Cym. Morialta 'Gingerbread'	V. Petrovski
4th Alcra. Everglades Sunshine	L. Buivids	CLASS # 23 SPECIES OTHER (NOT ELSEWHERE INCLUDED)	
CLASS # 16 MISCELLANEOUS HYBRIDS		1st Angcm. comorensense	S.Crosby/T .Costa
1st Bulb. Micah Maetani	I. & I. Chalmers	2nd Z. maculatum	P. Davies
		3rd Aergs. mystacidii	G. Birss



CLASS # 23A OTHER PLEUROTHALLIDINAE SPECIES

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|------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1st | Rstp. muscifera | G. Birss |
| | | I. & I. |
| 2nd | Rstp. iris | Chalmers |
| | | S.Crosby/T |
| 3rd | Rstp. sp 'H' | .Costa |
| | | S.Crosby/T |
| 4th | Rstp. brachypus | .Costa |
| | | W. & J. |
| 5th | Rstp. stricta | Chapman |

CLASS # 24A NATIVE SARCANTHINAE HYBRIDS

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|------------|--------------------------|------------|
| 1st | Sarco. Soft Touch 'Maro' | C. Brandon |
|------------|--------------------------|------------|

CLASS # 26 NOVICE - CYMBIDIUMS

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|--|--------------------------------------|---------|
| | Cym. Enzan Shining 'Royale
Flame' | H. Chen |
|--|--------------------------------------|---------|

CLASS # 28 NOVICE - LAELIINAE

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|------------|-----------------------------|---------|
| | Pot. Jim Nikou x Rlc. Izumi | |
| 1st | Charm | H. Chen |
| 2nd | Rth. Rosella's Maiden | ????? |
| 3rd | Ctt. Porcia 'Coerulea' | J. Chan |

CLASS # 29 NOVICE - MISCELLANEOUS

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|------------|----------------------------------|---------|
| | Z. Seagulls Landing x Z. Blackii | |
| 1st | 'Negus' | H. Chen |
| 2nd | Onc. Wildcat 'Petite Sirah' | H. Chen |
| 3rd | Onc. Sweet Sugar | H. Chen |
| 4th | Onc. Pacific Sunrise "hakalua" | H. Chen |

CLASS # 31 INTERMEDIATE - PAPHIOPEDILUMS

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|------------|----------------|------|
| 1st | Paph. Sunshade | P.Ng |
|------------|----------------|------|

CLASS #34 INTERMEDIATE - LAELIINAE

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|------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| | | P. |
| | | Sanaphay |
| 1st | Lc. Porcia 'Casurina' | |
| | Ctna.Dal's Capri Calypso x | |
| 2nd | C.Caudebec Carmela | P. Ng |
| 3rd | Lc. Porcia 'Coerulea' | P. Ng |
| 4th | C. Chocolate Drop ' Kodama' | P. Ng |

CLASS # 35 INTERMEDIATE - MISCELLANEOUS

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|------------|---------------------|----------|
| | Bulb. Elizabeth Ann | |
| 1st | 'Buckleberry' | R. Nicol |

CLASS # 36 INTERMEDIATE - SPECIES

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|------------|-----------------------|----------|
| 1st | Bulb. rothschildianum | R. Nicol |
|------------|-----------------------|----------|

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|------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| 2nd | Coel. tomentosa | P.
Sanaphay |
| 3rd | Ddc. wenzelii 'Janette' | R. Nicol |

AN AFTERNOON WITH COL FRASER

This week I delivered some orchid pots and supplies to Col Fraser. Col is a long-time member of Sutherland orchid Society. So the opportunity arose for me to sit and have a chat with Col about his orchid obsession and as with most growers it becomes an obsession.

Col has been growing orchids for fifty-seven years and still remembers his first two orchids that he acquired from Frank Slattery. He started with a back bulb of Cymbidium Balkis var. Patricia and a green bulb of Cymbidium Cariga var. Corrento and his love of cymbidiums still carries on today with the majority of his collection being cymbidiums. He does have quite a few, actually quite a lot of other genera from Oncidiums, Cattleyas, natives, Epidendrums and Coelogyne that he has acquired from friends and through various other means.

Col believes the most influential impacts on his orchid growing were the Hargrave Brothers from the old Saint George Orchid Society. His obsession even had him buying seedlings on his wedding day, a true orchid die hard, but he did arrive on time.

He recalls how he exported cut flowers, cymbidiums of course, with Alvin Bryant to the United States. Once Alvin had boxes ready for export, to the Queen of Siam, now Thailand.

Beautiful sprays of white Cymbidiums. Col arrived with his contribution, sprays of coloured Cymbidiums, and out went Alvin's white ones, replaced by Col's colours.

Col's growing achievements has spanned many years as his collection of forty to fifty show champions ribbons from Open Shows from Panania East Hills, Lidcombe Hospital Orchid Society, OSNSW, Bankstown Sutherland and Five Dock. He recalls in 1977 he won 5 Grand Champions and 2 Reserve



Champions. He thinks he has received his last champions ribbon as judges are not interested in cymbidiums now. He is not sure how cymbidiums can progress any further from the shape and form of today's orchids and misses the intricacies, colours and distinctive shapes of the old species cymbidiums that today's orchids were bred from.

Col uses a mix of 50% medium Co – Co chip and medium bark. He waters every second night for ten minutes through an overhead watering system and uses “Strike Back for Orchids” and “Seamungus” as his fertilizers. He re-pots every 2 -3 years. His best advice to a novice grower would be to spare the water.

As spikes appear he marks them with pieces of wire with white ends and later uses wooden stakes. As the spikes grow in length he connects yo–yo's to lengthen and straighten the spikes. As the spike buds up he move the plant to an undercover area to protect the flowers. He showed me one new spike, maybe 30cm in length that was as thick as some people's wrist. “This could be special” he said.

Col has no hot house or glass house just a large shade house where he grows large cymbidiums, he has a few miniatures and doesn't like pendulous ones as they take up too much space. His favourite orchid at the moment is Valley Splash Awesome.

This year Col has had to neglect his collection a bit and for the past three months hasn't been able to attend to his beauties. But in saying that, apart from a few weeds his plants are in wonderful shape and although Col says he won't have much to show, what he flowers will be terrific.

Footnote: Col has had a recent stint in Hospital and is still finding his feet at home. He is mobile and now looks forward to getting out and re potting and is well on the road to recovery.

FERNS VS ORCHIDS: WHY IT'S NOT

GOOD TO BE IN THE SAME POT

Over the ten years that I have been hooked on growing and admiring orchids, I have been lucky enough to have the chance to repot many thousands of plants for a whole variety of orchid growers. Many of these people (including myself) have “a few orchids that have been neglected and need repotting”. This statement generally follows with “especially the ones with the ferns growing in it”. This has been a common occurrence I have noticed with a lot of struggling orchids, particularly in growing areas with high humidity like glasshouses.

While repotting some large Cattleyas and specimen Dendrobium plants recently, I noticed a substantial amount of root rot within the center of the plants, causing me to divide and thoroughly clean the plants. However, all these plants had lovely big ferns growing in the pot. As much as I love ferns in the greenhouse (especially with keeping high humidity levels), I don't like them growing in the same pot with my orchids.



Cattleya in 3yr old bark mix covered with ferns



From my previous experience, large ferns growing with your orchids indicates that the orchid mix has expired and turned to mush. The high amounts of decaying mix in your pots provides ideal conditions for ferns to establish themselves. This can be commonly seen within large specimen orchids, where it is often difficult to clean old mix off the roots found in the middle of the plant.



Rootzone of Cattleya covered in fern roots, with the new roots restricted to the edge of the pot

This leads to rotting in the center of your large orchids, which ferns just love to thrive in. The fibrous fern roots can quickly establish, dominating the rootzone of what's left of your

orchid. The best thing to do in such a situation is to completely clean out all the fern roots and dead orchid roots, remove any other rotting organic material like old pseudobulbs, and possibly divide the plant if necessary.



What's left of the healthy Cattleya rootzone

So, next time you start seeing ferns growing with your orchids, it would be definitely wise to check if they need repotting in fresh mix.

Articles for the Bulletin

If you are interested in providing articles for our monthly bulletin, please email Richard Dimon at dimon.richard@gmail.com

The articles can be on anything you like related to orchids. Pictures to go with articles are also encouraged.

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. Pictures provided by Pamela Davies, Cheryl Matheson and Richard Dimon and may not be used without the expressed permission of the photographer.