



President : Murray Aldridge
Secretary: Louise Gannon 02 95249072
Treasurer: George Birss 02 95203946

Correspondence to : The Secretary, 36 Raglan Rd. Miranda . 2228

MONTHLY BULLETIN

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Meetings held at the Uniting Church Hall, cnr. Flora and Merton St., Sutherland on the Second Monday of the Month. All Visitors Welcomed. Visit our Website on www.ssos.org.au

Editor : Kevin Wilson Email : pkwilson@telpacific.com.au

FEBRUARY 2007

Minutes from the Januray 07 Meeting.

The President opened the meeting, welcoming members and visitors, asking for a motion that the minutes as circulated were a true record of the meeting. Motion moved by D. Coulton.

Murray went on to welcome all members back for the New Year. He then reminded members that the Beginners classes will be starting up again at the February meeting, 7:30 p.m. in the Crying Room. Whilst we loosely call this a Beginners Class, all members are welcome to sit in. Further to this, See Ting Ho will be starting an Orchid Discussion Group, if enough people are interested. Please see him for details.

Murray introduced our new Treasurer, Mr. George Birss to the meeting and reminded all that **Fees are now due.**

Dennis Wood will be once again showing the slides for the voting of the Seedling of the year competition.

CORRESPONDENCE

Bulletins from Various Societies.
Orchids Australia..

LUCKY PLANTS

T.Thorburn,(Crosby & Costa,) T. Balgos.

PLANT RAFFLE

Mark Drury, (Crosby & Costa), Barry Gilroy, George Birss.

DATES TO REMEMBER

12th.February---SSOS Monthly Meeting. Monthly Point Score.

12th. March --- SSOS Monthly Meeting and AGM.

Before closing the meeting, Murray announced the results of the seedling competition, after the members had viewed the slides and the results were :- **Judges Choice** – October—Owner: Kevin Wilson –Sarc. Riverdene x (Cherie x Rona).

Members Choice -- - July ---- Owner Trevor Thorburn – Bright (Tol. Irene Gleeson x Tol. Raph Yagi)

Congratulations to all.

Murray thanked Dennis for the organising and showing of the slides, and thanked Madge's daughter Karen, for stepping in to sell the raffle tickets. Meeting closed 9:50 p.m.

Editor's Corner

Two of our older members have had a spell in hospital, and thankfully now taking things easy at home. To Bob Maxwell, and Col. Campbell , we hope things will now go well.

It was with regret that we report the passing of Mr. Lou. Sasso. A.O. aged 101. Lou was a OSNSW

Judge and Past President , always ready to give of his wealth of knowledge and expertise. A sad loss to the orchid world. We express our sympathies to his wife Malveena.

With the new years point score under way, I was asked to out line the point score. In all classes there are points awarded for an overall yearly score.

1st. in class - 5 pts.

2nd. in class - 3 “

3rd. in class – 2 “

4th. in class --1 “

If there is ten or more plants in the class, then a fifth place can be allocated (1 pt.)

The monthly meeting also supports four sections, open, intermediate, novice and junior. This takes in 41 classes. If you have a problem in deciding where your plant should be placed, please see the marshal, or a committee member for advice. Please remember, if you place your plant in the wrong section, it may not be judged.

Wish List.

Sandra Crosby & Tony Costa are hoping to procure plants of *Chysis tricostata*, and *Chysis aurea*. They have plants of *Cymb. Cricket* and *Cymb. Tennis* and are curious as to whether there is a *Cymb. Golf* also out there? Can anybody help ? If you have a wish list please let us know.

JUDGES ROSTER FOR FEBRUARY

FEBRUARY	TEAM 1	TEAM 2	TEAM 3
LEAD JUDGE	N ROPER	G HART	I CHALMER
JUDGE	W CHAPMAN	D BROOKS	K WILSON
JUDGE	I WARE	S T HO	J HART
ASSOC.		J MOSS	
WRITER	M HITCHCOCK	J ROBINSON	E BEEHAG

What Pot?

Many Orchid Societies conduct growing competitions in which seedlings of approximately the same size are given to the members to grow on. Periodically the plants are taken to a meeting where the growth rates are compared.

Something that is very noticeable is the range of pot sizes/styles that the plants are potted in. It is generally the newer growers who place small plants in relatively large pots.

The dangers of over potting are- the potting mix remains too wet for too long, breaks down prematurely, becomes more acidic and root damage will most likely occur.

Some people attempt to counter the over potting argument by asking "In nature, in what size pot do orchids grow?"

Orchids have evolved over millions of years, developing root systems to suit the environment in which they live. We attempt to grow our plants in an artificial environment by confining the root system. This is a totally different situation to the natural one where they can range over the growing area in search of nutrients and water. Roots of epiphytic orchids remain wetter for a longer period in pots than in nature and this fact must be taken into account when selecting a pot.

We grow our orchids in pots for our convenience, especially the epiphytic orchids, as pots enable us to more or less contain the root system of the plant. This allows us to move our plants with a minimum of effort and without disruption to the plant. We can take our plants to shows, meetings or bring them into the house to enjoy the flowers.

Some factors which influence the choice of pot are:

The type of potting medium you intend to use has a great influence on the size of pot. Bark based potting mixes generally last approximately two years before requiring replacing so a pot size that allows for two years' growth should be selected.

- Spaghnum moss requires replacing on an annual basis so there is very little purpose in using a pot that allows for two years' growth as the plant can be moved to the next size pot annually.
- The same criteria are used when assessing other types of potting mediums; the expected life of the mix determines the amount of room left in the pot.

The genus of orchid will determine the style of pot.

Briefly, *Cymbidium* orchids have a vigorous and extensive root system so they require a standard type pot, which is deeper than the diameter, which will allow for two years' growth. *Cattleya* orchids require their root system to dry out fairly quickly so a squat type pot, the height being less than the diameter, combined with a bark mix will allow for two years' growth. The roots of *Vandaeous* orchids are almost impossible to contain in a pot so they are placed in baskets with a minimum of potting mix.

- Environmental factors- light, temperature, ventilation etc- will influence the type and size of the potting medium, not the pot size.

The selection of the correct pot is just another factor to be considered in our balanced approach to growing orchids.

Bruce Wood

MEASURING LIGHT LEVELS – John McAuley

Orchids, like all plants need light to photosynthesise. Orchids grow in various habitats all over the world with differing light intensities. Whenever we read about the culture of our plants we see reference to light intensity, usually in the form of foot-candles. Okay, so what is a foot-candle? Without going into anything too technical, after all we are only orchid growers. Full sun without too much pollution in the air can be measured somewhere around 10,000 foot candles, whereas a cloudy overcast day can be as low as 1000 foot-candles. Naturally these figures are variable depending on the time of year and latitude and serve as a very rough guide only, and as such I use them for illustration purposes only.

So what about us pedantic orchid enthusiasts? How do we find out what light our plants are, and whether we are giving them too much or too little? Firstly, we must make certain assumptions. For instance, the good cultural notes give the average midday light for a particular orchid in its naturally habitat.

Some culture notes give "low", "medium" or "high" light requirements without reference to actual levels. In these cases, "low light" orchids generally need 1000 - 1500 foot-candles, "medium" 1500 - 3000 footcandles, and "high" 3000 - 4500 foot-candles.

Remember that maximum is a sunny midday.

We can measure the actual light intensity available for our plants at any particular time by using a relatively simple manual camera with a built in light meter. If you haven't got one, used manual 35mm cameras are as cheap as chips thanks to the digital revolution.

Set the ASA or film speed on the camera to 25 ASA, and set the shutter speed to 1/60th of second. Focus on a piece of white paper where your orchid's leaves would be. Make sure you haven't cast a shadow on the paper. Now adjust the f-stop to align the needle or indicator for a correct exposure. Note the f stop reading and check the following table for a reading in foot-candles.

f2	:	100 foot candles	f2.8	=	200 foot-candles
f4	:	375 foot-candles	f5.6	=	750 foot-candles
f8	:	1500 foot-candles	f11	=	2800 foot-candles
f16	:	5000 foot-candles			

dishes or when having a shower. This can yield up to 10 Although not 100% accurate it may be a good guide for most purposes. John McAuley

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The Drought and Orchid Growing.

Australia is in the grip of the worst drought in living memory and with a prediction of a 70% chance of an El Nino effect forming this summer the prospects look fairly dismal.

As of the first of October 2006 the Central Coast of NSW has in place level 4 water restrictions; water from the town supply can not be used outside the home. With our main dam at 13% capacity and an estimate that it will take at least 10 years of above average rainfall to fill the dam, we face at the very least many years of further water restrictions in addition to the 5 years already experienced.

What can we do to enable us to continue to enjoy our hobby; as the vast majority of orchid growers are hobbyist?

We have to reduce the rate of evaporation, increase the interval between watering as well as sourcing an external supply of water. Increase the level of shading on your orchid house. The absolute worst thing that can happen is that you supply too much shade to your orchids and they do not flower but you will be pleasantly surprised to find that your orchids adjust to this lower level of light and still flower. For growers who have an enclosed house adjust your fans so as to supply the minimum ventilation to suit the situation as vigorous air movement is very drying. For the bush house grower the increased shading will automatically reduce the ventilation.

Remember that if you adjust one aspect of you culture you will have to balance the rest of your culture to this adjusted level. Some potting mediums are more water retentive than others. Spaghnum moss and peat and perlite mixes will increase the interval between watering, as can reducing the size of the bark mix used. We would like to think that we have our watering programme suitable for the genera grown but the reality is that we still over water. We could toughen up our plants by increasing the interval between watering and accept as part of normal culture slight shrivelling of the back bulbs. The use of an anti-transpirant at monthly intervals during the summer period will greatly assist our plants cope with the heat.

Water restrictions are imposed by the relevant authorities to ensure the supply of water to the homes within the community. They are not put in place just to impose hardship on the orchid world.

Please do not do anything silly as water restrictions are legally enforceable.

We have to source our water supply from an external source. Rain water tanks are one method but we still require sufficient rain. My tank was empty for 3 months last summer. Bore water is another source but I think there will be increased regulation of this water source.

One very simple source is to collect the initial cold water from the hot water system when washing the litres a day, which would otherwise go down the drain. This will go a long way as you will soon see.

We have to change the way we water our orchids. I have always watered by hand as I could not justify watering the floor, paths, benches and walls when all I wanted to do was water my orchids.

I used to water using a wand coupled to the town supply and used approximately 250-300 litres per watering. I now use a pressure sprayer and use between 25-30 litres, that is a saving of 90% for the same result.

What's that? You don't have the time. If you cannot grow your orchids to the required standard within the constraints imposed, you have too many orchids.

What about salt build up? If you water more times than you fertilise and you fertilise at a reduced rate you cannot have a salt build up.

I carry grey water from the bathroom and laundry and spread it upon the floor and paths of the orchid house to maintain humidity levels.

Consider the genus of orchid grown. Do you have sufficient water to grow orchids that require watering each day during the warmer months for example, Vandaceous type and orchids grown on slabs? Is it an appropriate time to cull those plants that do not grow well, grow poorly or that was given to you by Aunty? Give consideration to your spraying programme, are you spraying to treat a problem, prevent a problem or just because?



SEEDLINGS OUR INVESTMENT

IN THE FUTURE

What is a seedling? So often people are confused with the difference between a seedling and a mericlone.

A seedling is a plant resulting from the growth of a single orchid seed, formed by the union of a male pollen grain with a female ovum. It is a uniquely new plant that has inherited various features from both its parents. Even when an orchid is crossed with itself (selfing), or where two plants of the same species are crossed with each other, variation is obvious in the seedlings that result.

A mericlone on the other hand is a plant that results from the multiplication of tissue from the meristematic area of a single plant. All resulting plants have an exactly identical makeup and barring mutation, will all be identical.

A six to nine month period from pollination to harvesting of the seed, followed by a nine to twelve month period in tissue culture to produce a viable plant for the outside environment, followed by three to five years to produce a flowering plant, gives a five to seven year generation time, so growing seedlings, where there is no guarantee of a desirable result is generally for the commercial grower or the genuine devotee. It is however almost invariably through seedlings that advances appear in cymbidiums appear.

Advances may take the form of show champion, a new shape or colour or some other outstanding feature. The chances of achieving this is small, perhaps one in one hundred or one thousand, but with the constant improvement in genetic material available in parents and the increasing knowledge possessed by hybridisers, the chances are improved and the satisfaction is great when the exceptional seedling appears.

Many avenues are now available in cymbidium breeding lines and rewards are available in all of them. For many the show-bench orchid is most appealing and probably the majority of seedlings are produced with this end in view. In addition, seedlings with potential to provide new shapes and colours and colour combinations are becoming more available as well as those with extended flowering times, perfumes, warmth tolerance, super-productivity and other desirable features.

All good collections contain a number of seedlings and it is best to add to these regularly. With small collections a few may be purchased each year from the various catalogues available. Bear in mind that accompanying descriptions describe expectations and that hybridisers are great optimists. With larger collections, more seedlings or a few community

pots comprising a number of seedlings from the same grex may be grown.

You are never too old or too young to start growing seedlings and once a collection has become established over a period of time, there is the constant excitement of seeing what uniquely new flowers appear each year. Be part of the excitement and part of the future of the cymbidium. You may be the lucky one!

THE PLEUROTHALLID ORCHIDS

by Walter T Upton

If you have limited space or wish to grow small plants that border on the weird and wonderful then the 30 odd genera in the group commonly referred to as Pleurothallids are for you. They were relatively poorly known until the twenty or so years when species orchids in general became more available.

They come from the tropics and subtropics of the Americas and the West Indies, comprising some of the world's smallest orchid plants as well as flowers of all shapes, kinds and sizes. They are beautiful, sometimes grotesquely so, are most interesting and possess a definite charm. Some are small variations of primitive monsters as well as insects, and some are quite whimsical and odd in appearance with their mimicry of faces - for example the *Dracula* species. There are a few very large species like *Pleurothallis gigas*, a plant up to 90cm long with multi-flowered racemes of greenishwhite flowers.

The habitats vary from wet, moist, montane and cloud forests to scrub and dry forests, road embankments, cliffs, moss covered rocks and amongst leafy humus and mosses on the shaded forest floor. Many of the smaller plants are found growing on small branches and twigs. Generally they are in filtered sunlight, and are often enshrouded with daily fogs and heavy dews. In general the temperature requirements are from cool to intermediate, a minimum winter temperature of 8 to 13°C and, if possible, a maximum summer temperature of 25°C. They are quite tolerant of higher temperatures for short periods and frequent misting on hot days is beneficial.

The species from the lowland areas generally require warmer temperatures and the species from the high altitudes cooler temperatures. *Masdevallia amabilis* from the high altitudes in Peru is a pretty species; the perianth tube is orange-yellow longitudinally veined with red, the free portion often

a deep rose. It is strictly a cool growing species. Approximately 20% of the Pleurothallids are found below 1000m, the great majority, about 75%, between 1000m and 3000m, and a small percentage about 3000m. This indicates that the majority prefer moist, shady and cool to intermediate conditions with an atmosphere of high humidity and cooler nights. A constant air movement is beneficial.

The plants should not be allowed to dry out for long periods and the growing medium should never become sour or stagnant. They require constant moisture, therefore perfect drainage to suit the moist but never overly wet conditions at the roots. They do not need a rest period but benefit from a slightly drier time in a very cold weather. The best conditions for most is semi-shade, filtered sunlight, protected from very bright or direct sunlight and regular fertilising with a weak, ½ strength, standard fertiliser or a weak manure solution.

Small pots or tree fern, or similar, slabs suit the small to medium sized types but never over-pot. On slabs more frequent watering is necessary unless the humidity is constantly very high. A mix of sphagnum moss, or sphagnum, shredded tree fern fibre and peat moss is suitable; some growers use a mix of well-washed fine pine bark, charcoal and small stones with added peat.

The most popular genera would appear to be *Masdevallia*, *Pleurothallis*, *Restrepia*, *Restrepiella*, *Dracula*, *Dryadella*, *Scaphosepalum*, *Condylage*, *Lepanthes* and *Porroglossum*. The popular *Masdevallia* genus grows best in the cool glasshouse with ample humidity and constant air movement.

Pleurothallis is one of the largest genera in the Orchidaceae and most are of easy culture requiring constant damp but never wet conditions. The genus *Dracula* grows in moist forests where the humidity is always high. The inflorescences emerge downwards through the mossy humus to produce flowers successively. It is therefore necessary to plant them in wooden baskets, or similar. Scent producing glands, osmophores, are noticeable in the genera *Restrepia* and *Scaphosepalum* the smells from these glands attract the pollinators.

Ten species that should be readily available are *Masdevallia tovarensis*, *M. triangularis*, *Porroglossum teagueri*, *P. echidna*, *Condylago rodrigo*, *Dryadella edwallii*, *Scaphosepalum lima*, *Restrepia antennifera*, *Restrepiella ophiocephala* and *Pleurothallis sarracenia*.

MONTHLY JUDGING RESULTS

For : Jan-07

OPEN JUDGES CHOICE

/inner Gongora cassidea sp. M. Aldridge

INTERMEDIATE JUDGES CHOICE

/inner Prom. Norman Gaunt `Tiger Alert` G.Birss

NOVICE & JUNIOR JUDGES CHOICE

/inner Stanhopea nigro-violacea J.Robinxson

CLASS # 2 SPECIES PAPHIOPEDILUM

- 1st Paph. niveum S.Crosby,T.Costa
 2nd Paph. moquettianum W&J. Chapman
 3rd Paph. lowii S.T.Ho
 4th Paph. primulinum G.Hart

CLASS # 3 CATTLEYA OVER 110mm

- 1st Lc.Prophecy x Lc. Mini Purple `Lea` S.Crosby,T.Costa
 2nd C. Hawaiian Wedding Song `Virgin` S.Crosby, T.Costa

CLASS # 4 NOVELTY PAPHIOPEDILUM

- 1st P.moquettianum x phillipinense K. Wilson
 2nd P. phillipinense x kolopakingii G.Hart
 3rd P. Vedanta`Carpentaria`x Rothschildianum S.Crosby,T.Costa
 4th P. Coos T.Balgos
 5th P. leudochilum x bellatulum S.T.Ho

CLASS # 5 CATTLEYA OVER 80 TO 110mm

- 1st Lc. Mini Purple `Sato` J.Hart
 2nd Blc. Erin Kobayashi x C. walkeriana E.Beehag
 3rd C.walkeriana v. alba xBlc. Toshi Aoki `Pokai` S.Crosby,T.Costa
 4th Lc. Marie's Song x Slc. Dal's Buddy S.Crosby,T.Costa

CLASS # 6 PAPHIOPEDILUM

- 1st P.Awain Dahill Bing x Credle `Camira` S.Crosby,T.Costa

CLASS # 8 CATTLEYA UP TO 80mm

- 1st Ctna Brandi`Oc`x Lana Coryell `Rita` S.Crosby,T.Costa
 2nd Slc. Angel Eyes " "
 3rd Slc.Dal's Halo E.Beehag
 4th Slc. Dal's Eyes E.Beehag

CLASS # 10 SPECIES ASIAN

- 1st Den. crepidiforum G.Hart
 2nd Coel. tomentosa J. Moss
 3rd Phal. mannii S,Crosby, T.Costa
 4th Phal. panthanina W&J.Chapman

CLASS # 11 PHALAEOPSIS

- 1st P. Olympic Disc. `Mickey` S.Crosby,T.Costa
 2nd P.Unknown S.Crosby,T.Costa
 3rd P.Unknown S.Crosby,T.Costa
 4th P. Enzam `Blade` S.Crosby,T.Costa

CLASS # 12 SEEDLING

- 1st St. Swithin x Michael Koopowitz G.Hart
 2nd Paph. Lady Isobel x phillipinense G.Hart
 3rd Lynleigh Koopowitz S.Crosby,T.Costa

CLASS # 13 ONCIDIUM

- 1st O. Sharry Baby `Sweet Fragrance` K.Wilson
 2nd O. Sharry Baby `Sweet Fragrance` A&E. Moulang

CLASS # 14 NOVELTY PHALAEOPSIS UNDER 75mm

- 1st Phal. Taipei Gold T&J. Hyde
 2nd Phal. Brother Dendi `Picasso` T&J. Hyde
 3rd Phal. Dov-di Rose x Chung Her John S.Crosby, T.Costa
 4th Phal violacea v. alba x Tasy's Ever Green S.Crosby, T.Costa

CLASS # 15 ONCIDIUM INTERGENERIC ALLIANCE

- 1st Colm. Wildcat `Mt4` S.Crosby, T.Costa
 2nd Colm. Wildcat `Bobcat` S.T.Ho
 3rd Wils. Ulladulla E.Beehag
 4th Odcdm. DonBivin E.Beehag

CLASS # 16 MISCELLANEOUS

- 1st Enc. Bees Knees x ? J&M. Moss
 2nd Milt. Delores Hoyt x Saffron Surprise S.T.Ho

CLASS # 17 DENDROBIUM HYBRIDS

- 1st Den. Betty Ho xJiad Gold M.Errington
 2nd Den. gongaleau `Royale`x victoria-regina S.Crosby, T.Costa
 3rd Den convolutum x Sand Cay M.Errington

CLASS # 18 VANDACEOUS NOT VANDA

- 1st Ascda. Su Fun Beauty `Orange Bella` J. Hart
 2nd Ascda. Pink Pine Rivers T&J. Hyde

CLASS # 19 MASDEVALLIA & DRACULA SPECIES

- 1st Drac. riplejana G.Hart
 2nd Masd. menatoi G.Hart

CLASS # 21A PLEUROTHALLIDINAE HYBRIDS

- 1st Masd. Persian Robe G.Hart
 2nd Masd. Owen Neils W&J. Chapman
 3rd Drac. gigas x Drac. vampira G.Hart
 4th Masd. veitchiana x maculata W&J. Chapman

CLASS # 21B LAELINAE SPECIES

- 1st Enc. cochleata G.Hart
 2nd Enc.diota G.Hart
 3rd Broughtonia sanguinea Merrington
 4th Enc. cochleata G.Hart

CLASS # 23 SPECIES OTHER THAN ASIAN OR PAPHIOPEDILUM

- 1st Gongora cassidea sp. M. Aldridge
 2nd Lycaste aromatica D.Wood
 3rd Phrag. caudatum G.Hart
 4th Angraceum magdalenae S.Crosby, T.Costa
 5th Prom stapilioides D.Wood

CLASS # 23A OTHER PLEUROTHALLIDINAE SPECIES

- 1st Pleuro. vidata G.Hart
 2nd Pleuro. johnsonii G.Hart

CLASS # 29 NOVICE - MISCELLANEOUS

- 1st Phal. Unknown J. Robinson
 2nd Phal. Unknown J. Robinson

CLASS # 30 NOVICE -SPECIES

- 1st Stanhopea nigro-violacea J.Robinxson

CLASS # 35 INTERMEDIATE - MISCELLANEOUS

- 1st Prom. Norman Gaunt `Tiger Alert` G.Birss
 2nd Phal; Unknown G.Birss

CLASS # 41 JUNIORS

- 1st Calanthe triplicata D.Coulton
 2nd Epid. exasperatum D.Coulton