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MONTHLY BULLETIN

VOLUME 43 NO 9

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

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SEPTEMBER 2007

Minutes from the August 07 meeting.

The President declared the meeting open, extending a welcome to Mr. Brian Larkin, the President of the O.S. of N.S.W. our speaker for the evening, and other visitors present. The minutes of the last meeting, as presented in the Bulletin were passed on a motion by M. Errington, as a true and accurate record.

Murray thanked Dennis Wood for his presentation on Native orchids in the Beginners Class. The new location at the front of the hall accommodated the eager audience.

Murray then reminded us that our Show was approaching, and people were needed in the help of setting up the Show on the 5th. of Sept. at 1 p.m. Show plants will be accepted and booked in from 4 p.m. Our Show Sect. Diane Hannah has the entry sheets and plant cards at to-nights meeting and at Swanes Nursery when setting up. The roster is available if you can help to work at the show, even one hour can help in the security and sales over the four days .You can phone Diane on 9521 6209. Don't forget your spare plants for the sales table, the 15% commission applies. If you are putting on a table- top display, please notify the show marshal Neville Roper, 95962517 who is filling in for Paul Wheeler, at least 24 hrs. before the set-up.

Not to be forgotten is our display at the Sharkies Spectacular. We need assistance with the display,

ferns, foliage plants, milk crates, orchids of course and ideas. Murray went on to give a plant description of some of the more unusual plants on show.

Supper was then taken.

Brian Larkin then gave us his talk on the link with the South East Asian Orchids and Australian, with a visual display of the Singapore Show and the float displays. President Murray thanked him for his visit and talk.

Lucky Plants. J. Robinson, N. Roper, G. Hart.

Plant Raffle. L. Gannon, R. Ettrick. R. Coulton.

Judges Choice. T. Costa, G. Birss, D. Wood

New Member. Welcome back to ex-member Bruce Smith.

Judges for Sept. Meeting.

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

Dates to remember.

5th. Sept SSOS. Set-up for Spring Show, Swanes Nursery.

6th. -9th. Sept SSOS Spring Show.

10th.Sept SSOS Monthly meeting, Beginners class
7:30 p.m. N. Roper. Talk on pollination, flasking
seed and deflasking, replating, and baby plants.

15th. Sept. Marton Public School Fete. 107 Kingswood Road
Engadine.

12th. to 14th. Oct. Sharkies, Southern Orchids
Spectacular.

Editors Corner.

See Ting Ho had a quick trip to hospital and I'm
pleased to report that all went well and he is home
and chaffing at the bit to get back in action.

Sadly we regret to inform you of the passing of
Joe Weston. Joe was a new member. We pass on
our sympathies to his wife Jan and his family.

If you require a name badge, please see Louise.
Cost is \$6.60.

Treasurer George advised us that we had 163 plants
benched at the meeting. Well done.

CATTLEYA - Cultural Tips

The Cattleya family can be broadly summarized as
plants from the Genera Brassavola, Laelia, Cattleya,
Sophronitis and combinations of these. They are
mostly epiphytic in nature (with the exception of
some rock growing Laelia).

LIGHT REQUIREMENTS - All plants broadly
referred to as Cattleyas need relatively high levels of
light to grow and flower well. In frost free areas,
70% shade through the hot Summer months and 50%
through the Winter seems to produce good results.
Cooler climates may find that 50% all year is
adequate. Conversely, in extreme heat extra shading
will minimize heat stress and sunburn.

POTTING MEDIA - Being generally Epiphytic
("Tree Growing") in nature, Cattleyas. For most
plants, a medium grade of treated orchid bark is
sufficient. Some growers find the addition of 8-iomm
size charcoal is beneficial, along with polystyrene
balls or coarse perlite. Some growers also use
sphagnum moss, however this is not best for the

average home grower, with watering and feeding
accuracy more critical. Always use treated bark.

WATERING - All Cattleyas have pseudobulbs
capable of storing moisture during dry periods, so
allow plants to just dry slightly between watering. As
a VERY BROAD guide, once a week in Winter and
twice a week in Summer would be adequate. During
very hot dry Summer periods 3-4 times a week may
be needed and conversely a wet cold Winter may
mean no watering for 1-2 weeks. A solid roof cover
during the Winter to give rain and Frost protection
will generally give best results. Give the plants a
good soaking right through the potting media and
over the foliage as well. In very hot Summer weather
we tend to water late in the afternoons while in
Winter mid morning is best.

FERTILISING - The use of a liquid fertilizer
designed for orchids once a week is beneficial during
the growing months. Keen growers use a "growth"
style fertilizer (Higher Nitrogen, lower Potassium) at
the beginning of the growing period (Sept/Oct) and
then change to a blossom booster style (Lower
Nitrogen, higher Potassium) Jan/Feb to optimize
growth and flowering throughout the year. We avoid
slow release style Fertilizers.

MINIATURE CATTLEYA -In general, mini cats
have the genus Sophronitis evident somewhere in
their breeding background, which explains their
improved tolerance to lower temperatures than the
larger exhibition or Blc types, and their more
compact growth habit. Culturally the above cultural
tips still apply but we find they enjoy more moisture
and dislike very high temperatures.

Robertson Orchids

MONTHLY JUDGING RESULTS

For : Aug-07

OPEN JUDGES CHOICE**Winner** Odcn. Tiger Butter 'Alpha' D. Wood**INTERMEDIATE JUDGES CHOICE****Winner** Paph. tonsun var. curtissifolium G. Birss**NOVICE & JUNIOR JUDGES CHOICE****Winner** Cym. Tracey Doll x Baltic Harvest Trevor Costa**CLASS # 1 AUSTRALIAN NATIVES**

1st Ptst. baptistii N. Roper
 2nd Den. tetragonum var. maseyanum P. Wheeler
 3rd Ptst. concinna J. Hart
 4th Ptst. concinna J. Hart
 5th Den. tetragonum var. giganteum J&M Moss

CLASS # 2 SPECIES PAPHIOPEDILUM

1st Paph. wardii G. Hart
 2nd Paph. venustum var album G. Hart
 3rd Paph. insigne R. Moar
 4th Paph. tonsum N. Roper

CLASS # 3 CATTLEYA OVER 110mm

1st Blc. Bonanza Queen J. Hart
 2nd Blc. Dundas J. Hart
 3rd Blc. Crispin Rosales x Pamela Hetherington T. Thorburn
 4th Blc. Wendy Tanaka T. Hyde

CLASS # 4 NOVELTY PAPHIOPEDILUM

1st Paph. Illuka Queen G. Hart
 2nd Paph. Greyii x micranthum G. Hart
 3rd Paph. Papa Rohl Costa/Crosby
 4th Paph. sukhakulii x Ventura K. Wilson

CLASS # 5 CATTLEYA OVER 80 TO 110mm

1st Slc. Lana Coryell x Horrace J. Hart
 2nd C. Karbola Beauty T. Hyde
 3rd Blc. Silvia Fry Costa/Crosby
 4th C. Unknown R. Etterick

CLASS # 6 PAPHIOPEDILUM

1st Paph. Small World x New Edition G. Hart
 2nd Paph. Honey Gorse 'Downlands' K. Wilson
 3rd Paph. Small World x (Colonist x Flight Path) K. Wilson
 4th Paph. Small World x Downland Pride G. Hart

CLASS # 7 CATTLEYA INTERGENERICS (Up to 70mm)

1st Cookara Tropical Snowflake Costa/Crosby
 2nd Pot. Free Spirit J. Hart
 3rd Hknsa. Solo Doll Costa/Crosby

CLASS # 8 CATTLEYA UP TO 80mm

1st Slc. Psyche x (Mem Mary Ellen x Beaufort) Costa/Crosby

CLASS # 9 AUSTRALIAN NATIVE HYBRID

1st D. Melissa Nicole Dickey D. Wood
 2nd D. Eureka x (Carrawah x Sunglow) P. Wheeler
 3rd D. Pambula P. Wheeler
 4th D. Aussie Victory 'Sunspot' P. Wheeler
 5th Ptst. Tallwood N. Roper

CLASS # 10 SPECIES ASIAN

1st Coel. assamiza G. Hart
 2nd Dendrochillum stenophyllum G. Hart
 3rd Dendrochillum wenzellii R. Moar
 4th Coel. speciosa K. Wilson

CLASS # 11 PHALAENOPSIS

1st Phal. Taira 'New Life' T&J Hyde
 2nd Dtps. Leopard Prince x Phal. Danseuse Costa/Crosby
 3rd Phal. Ida Fukumara T. Thorburn

CLASS # 12 SEEDLING

1st Paph. New Edition x Paph. Malvena Sasso G.Hart
 2nd Dendro. Pintoray x Riversun P. Wheeler
 3rd Paph. Formosa Lady G. Hart
 4th Rest. Pelyx x elegans N. Roper
 5th Sarco. Tigress x hartmannii N. Roper

CLASS # 13 ONCIDIUM

1st Onc. Twinkle 'Red Fragrant' Costa/Crosby

CLASS # 15 ONCIDIUM INTERGENERIC ALLIANCE

1st Odcn. Tiger Butter 'Alpha' D. Wood
 2nd Colmanara Wildcat 'Bobcat' Costa/Crosby

CLASS # 16 MISCELLANEOUS

1st Coelogne Linda Buckley K. Wilson
 2nd Coelogne William Forget G. Hart
 3rd Phrag. Hanne Popow K. Wilson
 4th Lycaste Barbara Sander 'Tanyas Candy' R&J Ettrick

CLASS # 17 DENDROBIUM HYBRIDS

1st Dend. Mikes Fantasy K. Wilson
 2nd Dend. Carron Deb x tangerinum T. Thorburn

CLASS # 18 VANDACEOUS NOT VANDA

1st Ascda Princess Mikasa 'Pink' Costa/Crosby

CLASS # 19 MASDEVALLIA & DRACULA SPECIES

1st Masd. angulata R. Moar

CLASS # 20 INTERMEDIATE CYMBIDIUM 60 TO 90mm

1st Cym. Gentle Touch 'Bon Bon' Costa/Crosby
 2nd Cym. Mini Dream 'Pure Gold' x Pearly Queen E&A Marks
 3rd Cym. Flaming Pepper 'Dural' Costa/Crosby

CLASS # 21A PLEUROTHALLIDINAE HYBRIDS

1st Rest. Pelyx x elegans D. Wood
 2nd Masd. Marguerite J. Hart
 3rd Rest. Pelyx x elegans D. Wood
 4th Rest. malesteria x striata N. Roper

CLASS # 21B LAELINAE SPECIES

1st Soph. coccinea D. Wood
 2nd Soph. coccinea D. Wood

CLASS # 22 MINITURE CYMBIDIUM UNDER 60mm

1st Cym. Sarah Jean 'Ice Cascade' E&A Marks
 2nd Cym. *pumilum* x Jessie Blakiston E&A Marks

CLASS # 23 SPECIES OTHER THAN ASIAN OR PAPHIOPEDILUM

1st Max *schunkeana* G. Hart
 2nd Odm hallii D. Wood
 3rd Max variabilis G. Hart
 4th Max variabilis G. Hart

CLASS # 23A OTHER PLEUROTHALLIDINAE SPECIES

1st Rest. guttulata N. Roper
 2nd Restrepoides ophesepla G. Hart
 3rd Rest. antenniferia N. Roper
 4th Rest. guttulata D. Wood
 5th Pleuro. lamnthophylla G. Hart

CLASS # 24 STANDARD CYMBIDIUM

1st Cym. Khan Flame Costa/Crosby
 2nd Cym. unknown T. Thorburn

CLASS # 24A NATIVE SARCANTHINAE HYBRID

1st Sarco. Yvonne N. Roper
 2nd Sarco. Burgundy on Ice N. Roper
 3rd Sarco. Tigress x hartmannii N. Roper
 4th Sarco. Riversong J&M Moss

CLASS # 25 NOVICE - PAPHIOPEDILUM

1st Paph. Honey Gorse 'Downlands' J. Robinson

CLASS # 26 NOVICE - CYMBIDIUM

1st Cym. Tracey Doll x Baltic Harvest	Trevor Costa
2nd Cym. Red Carmine x Blazing Fury	Trevor Costa
3rd Cym. Red Khan x Blazing Fury	O. Howard
4th Cym. A.W. x Lung 'Japan Green Tower'	J. Robinson

CLASS # 27 - NOVICE - NATIVE & NATIVE HYBRID

1st Den. Gillian Leaney x Kuringai	B. Gilroy
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CLASS # 28 NOVICE - CATTLEYA

1st Blc. George King x Royal Sceptre	B. Gilroy
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CLASS # 29 NOVICE - MISCELLANEOUS

1st Phrag. Persens	Trevor Costa
2nd Ascda Ken Kane	Trevor Costa

CLASS # 30 NOVICE - SPECIES

1st Paph villosum	S. Vavayis
2nd Pter. coccina	G. Dodd
3rd Rest. cuprea	Trevor Costa

CLASS # 31 INTERMEDIATE - PAPHIOPEDILUM

1st Paph. Honey Gorse 'Downlands'	S. Vavayis
2nd Paph. Honey Gorse 'Downlands'	S. Vavayis
3rd Paph. Honey Gorse 'Downlands'	S. Vavayis
4th Paph. unknown	G. Birss

CLASS # 32 INTERMEDIATE - CYMBIDIUM

1st Cym. Gentle Touch 'Bon Bon'	L. Gannon
2nd Cym. Sarah Jean	D&M Hannah
3rd Cym. Wakakusa	L. Gannon
4th Cym. Joans Carisma	D&M Hannah

CLASS # 33 INTERMEDIATE - NATIVE SPECIES & NATIVE HYBRID

1st Den. Rutherford Sunspot x Rutherford Bride	D&M Hannah
2nd Den. Angellene	G. Birss

CLASS # 34 INTERMEDIATE - CATTLEYA

1st Slc. Fran's Doll	G. Birss
2nd C. Unknown	G. Birss
3rd Bl. Yellow Bird	G. Birss

CLASS # 36 INTERMEDIATE - SPECIES

1st Paph tonsum	G. Birss
2nd Coelogyne mooreana	S. Vavayis
3rd Pter. curta	G. Birss
4th Dendrochillum tennellum	G. Birss

CLASS # 41 JUNIORS

1st Zygo Blue Blood	D. Coulton
2nd Dend. Ellen	D. Coulton
3rd Dendrochillum tenellum	D. Coulton
4th Epi. radicans	D. Coulton

ORCHID SIGHTINGS IN THE WILD

By Jan Robinson

My husband David and I recently decided to escape the Sydney cold and head to Queensland for a few weeks. Surreptitiously, I asked Kevin Wilson if he knew of any good orchid nurseries between here and Noosa, and he obligingly gave me a list. I then baked a big batch of David's favourite biscuits to take along, in case he needed to be bribed to stop at any of the spots Kevin had suggested.

We drove in to Noosa on a Saturday afternoon (without any nursery stops), took one look at the almost-grid locked traffic and asked each other what in the heck were we doing there? We are not usually the resort types but having

already paid a non-refundable deposit for a unit, we knew we had to make the best of a dodgy situation. Happy Hour down on the beach watching the sunset made us feel a bit better that evening, and the next morning we headed to Noosa National Park for some bushwalking, determined to enjoy our holiday.

Walking along the cliff track was as bad as the main drag of Noosa—there were people everywhere! The only difference was a few koalas in the trees. We were now getting a bit exasperated with the situation, but miraculously another Happy Hour on the beach calmed us down.

Resolved to get away from people the next day, we went back to the national park but headed for the little-used Noosa Hill track. We had barely hit the track when off to the side we saw a big clump of what looked suspiciously like orchids growing in the sun and sand, which of course required closer examination. Having admired Sandra Crosby and Tony Costa's magnificent *Cymbidium suave* at last year's Sharkies Show, we knew we weren't looking at a suave, but the leaves, big pseudobulbs and old seed pod convinced us it had to be a native cymbid. We also ruled out *canaliculatum*, as we had recently acquired a piece of Ho's Australian Midnight and I remembered him telling me *canaliculatum* is an Aus' native and it is the *canaliculatum* in that cross that has the big fleshy leaves, and the plant in front of us did not have leaves like that. (See, Ho, I DO pay attention some of the time to what you tell me!) We decided to continue on with our walk, but to stop at the National Park's office on the way back and ask them what kind of cymbidium we had seen.

As we approached the top of the hill, we began to see more and more clumps of the same cymbidium—growing in forks of living trees, in dead tree stumps, on fallen logs, and more in the sandy soil. There were cymbidiums everywhere! None of them were in flower but many had seed pods still attached to last year's racemes, with almost ping-pong ball-sized pods. The most we counted on one raceme was 11 pods. David commented that we should pick one and take it back to Neville for flask germination, but we resisted that law-breaking impulse. It was quite an amazing sight to see so many native cymbids in one area and all of a sudden Noosa didn't seem too bad.

The next day we went to the National Parks office and asked the young man behind the desk what type of cymbidium orchid grows in his park. He gave us a blank look and said he wasn't aware of any orchids at all growing in Noosa National Park, but then got out a book of the park's flora and fauna and turned to the index. After a false start in the S's (was it my accent or had he never heard of cymbidiums before?), he turned to the right page where there was a picture and blurb about the plant we had been seeing, *Cymbidium madidum*. As there are only three cymbidiums native to Australia, we were feeling quite pleased with ourselves for finding one of them.

The next day we decided to take another look at Cymbidium Hill, but to walk the track the opposite way from yesterday in case we had missed something. Sure enough, we found several *Cymbidium suaves* as well as a tiny terrestrial orchid in flower that we think was a caladenia of some sort, according to our somewhat lame flower book. There were five or six of them in flower, four pure white ones (albas, right, HO?) and several others with pink and mauves. This time we did not bother stopping at the National Parks office.

Now that we knew native orchids could be found in the area, our trip took on a new purpose! We began driving around the outlying areas, binoculars always at the ready in case either of us spotted anything even remotely orchid-like. About 50 kms southwest of Noosa in the Conondale Range, we came upon a camping area with some walking tracks and decided to do the 5 km walk to the fire tower. The first kilometre and a half were somewhat boring, but then we began to see orchids. And more orchids. And even more orchids. Little clusters of small dendrobiums growing in bits of moss stuck onto the trunks of towering turpentine trees—and not just a few, maybe as many as 50 or 60 or even more clusters per tree. One huge gum tree had *Dendrobium speciosa* all along one very long branch, unfortunately it was so high up we could only see it clearly with the binoculars. David spotted another type of dendrobium with heaps of big, tall canes growing in a large clump in the fork of a tree. We searched under the tree just in case any canes had fallen off that might need to be rescued, but without success. We also found several different varieties of dockrillia, one of which I'm pretty sure was *Dockrillia linguiformis* and a huge mass of the more pencil-looking one. A few more *suaves* and *madidums*, but by now we had seen so

many native cymbidiums, they were a bit “ho hum” to us!

There was only one other group of bushwalkers on the trail that day, and we are certain they didn't see any orchids. We are also quite sure that the majority of the visitors to Noosa National Park never take any notice of the orchids growing there, not to mention the park rangers. (Although when all those *madidums* are in flower, surely **SOMEBODY** must see them?!) It was a real buzz for us to find so many native orchids in the wild, even if we couldn't identify most of them. If there are that many orchids just along the tracks, imagine how many are in the bush!

Having spent most of our holiday looking for native orchids, I didn't have the heart to ask David to stop at any nurseries on the way back home. I did ask him, quite innocently I thought while we were laying on the beach one non-orchid hunting day, where Deception Bay is in Queensland (home of Aranbeem Orchids, per Kevin's list). David replied “Cape York” and I let it go at that. As we were bypassing Brisbane several days later, I saw a sign for the Deception Bay exit and said, “Hey, I thought you said Deception Bay is in Cape York?” His only response was, “Pass me another one of those biscuits.”

Facts Or Fiction

We read or are told to do this or to not do something else when growing our orchids. I wonder how much is fact and how much of the advice has evolved over the years.

1. An Organic Fertiliser is Better Than an Inorganic fertiliser:

Orchids can only access the elements in a fertiliser when they are dissolved in water and are conveyed, via the root system, into the plant.

Inorganic fertilisers are generally dissolved in water before being applied to the plant, thus the elements are readily available to the plant.

Organic fertilisers come in two forms, liquid and solid. Liquid fertilisers are dissolved in water and the elements are as readily available as the inorganic elements. In the solid forms of organic fertiliser the elements only become available once it has been broken down by the action of microbes and bacteria and only then can they be dissolved in water and accessible to the plant.

Inorganic fertiliser packaging displays an N:P:K ratio as well as the quantity of any other elements

contained within the fertiliser, thus we can easily calculate the desired strength of the fertiliser to be applied.

On checking a range of liquid fertilisers, only some displayed the elements available in the fertiliser. Caution should be exercised when using a fertiliser when you do not know what is contained within that fertiliser.

The elements available to the plant, from a solid fertiliser, are governed by the rate of bacterial action and it is very difficult to calculate if we are supplying the elements at an optimum rate.

It should be remembered that the element nitrogen is the same element whether it is supplied in an organic or inorganic form. The same applies to all the other elements.

2. Water Your Plants before Fertilising:

The roots of epiphytic orchids are covered with a thick layer of a dead material called velum, which acts as a sponge absorbing any water and nutrient which comes into contact. In their natural habitat, the roots pass this mixture into the plant and then become dry waiting for the next rain event.

Generally we contain the roots of our epiphytic orchids in a pot which retains water/fertiliser for a longer period and we never really allow the roots to become completely dry. The potting mixture is generally just damp before we water.

If we water today with the view of fertilising tomorrow the roots and the potting mixture would still retain a large amount of water thus making it very difficult for the roots to absorb any fertiliser tomorrow.

If we fertilise at a weak rate when the potting mix is just damp the plant will gain maximum benefit from fertilising. If we fertilise shortly after watering all we really doing is diluting the fertiliser with the water that is available in the pot.

I have not seen any scientific evidence that supports the claim that fertiliser can burn the root system of a plant.

Bruce Wood

DEFLASKING - THE PERILS & PITFALLS AFTER THE HONEYMOON

After some effort you have a nice bunch of healthy seedlings and you think that this deflasking caper is easy - WRONG! Your problems are not over. I wish I had a dollar for every time I have had a look at healthy seedlings only to notice signs of problems.

What can go wrong at this stage? If you have composted the seedlings into sphagnum they can grow like weeds for several months then start to go backwards, almost invariably I find the roots have rotted. This doesn't happen to everything e.g. Philippines *Dendrobiums* such as victoria-reginae love a moist pot of sphagnum. If I am going to use sphagnum I just lay the roots on top of it rather than planting them in it.

Similarly some seedlings put in fine bark can go well then fail when the roots rot. No different from growing adult plants but everything happens quickly with seedlings. I have used perlite/peat moss or coconut with reasonable results but as always some plants don't like that either.

In an effort to stop root rot I put a lot of seedlings onto mini slabs made out of half wine corks. Cut the cork in two, place seedling on the cork, staple a thin piece of fly wire on the back of the cork, wrap it over the roots, staple the other end into the cork and job done. Last year many seedlings responded well to this but this year I changed the watering system and they didn't. The problems with this system are;

- Finding corks in this era of screw top bottles
- Humidity needs to be high but this then puts your other non-slabbed seedlings at risk
- Eventually you will need to move the seedlings on to either bigger slabs or pots - I had some *Laelia purpurata* seedlings that did really well on slabs, rather than try to remove them from the cork I just put the whole lot in 50mm pots. Seems to be working so far.

Fungus loves damp seedlings and particularly clumps of seedlings. You need air movement but not too much so that they dry out.

Bugs and beasties! A snail can wipe a compot in no time flat and even if they don't eat everything you often find that the rest of seedling dies. Must be something in their mucous. Mites can be a major problem and white scale is a nightmare.

After all these trials and tribulations you have some healthy seedlings growing well, what next?

Firstly congratulate yourself; you have done far better than Mother Nature where survival rates are very low. Grow the seedlings as you would any other plant in your collection but be prepared to repot them more frequently than adult plants. I find myself moving them on at least annually. The finer materials used in seedling media goes off very quickly in small pots.

Guy Cantor. June 2007