



In memory of

Kevin Wilson

28.05.26 – 20.08.20

When I joined Sutherland Shire Orchid Society in 1970 Kevin Wilson was already a keen and well-established member, having quickly moved out of novice classes in the early sixties. From the very first, he was a keen grower of natives, which was a passion he held and shared with others throughout his life.

Kevin was always very generous towards me and I still have plants that that he gave me all those years ago. He was even more giving with his time. I am not quite sure why he never tired of having an annoying teenager at his place badgering him with questions but he never did. I never understood why Neville Roper christened him Grouchy, but that was the name that stuck.

Another of Kevin's passions, driven by his son, was the St George Handicapped Children's Association. In the 70's our shows were held over a Saturday and Sunday at the GyMEA Community Hall and the proceeds were all donated to the Children's Association at his request.

Kevin was a leader in the development of native orchids, seeking out outstanding clones along with a small group of others. Kevin participated and led many trips to the bush with groups and society members – the collection of wild orchids wasn't the problem it is today. He wasn't there to strip the bush but to see how they grew and bring back pieces of choice orchids to improve the quality of their collections. They were pioneers in what had until then been a small sideline in the orchid world, just a few hybrids and ordinary forms of the species.

He was among the first to start breeding them, including the species, trying to develop enhanced forms of the species and attractive new hybrids. The work was slow at times but we all now enjoy the fruits of their labours. *Sarcochilus hartmannii* "Sylvanvale", "Red Cloud" and "Red Cap" and the hybrids Dove, Jeanne and Orange Glow stand to his account.

His work with natives enabled the fellow orchid lovers he inspired and mentored to bring as many of the show plants and delightful hybrids that we have today – can I simply mention Col Brandon, Dennis Wood and, of course, Neville Roper. He and Kevin were special friends. We owe, in part, the colourful sarcochilus hybrids to that relationship and the support he gave Neville.

In those distant days keener members put on large floor and table- top displays of a size only done by societies these days. They required a lot of work in setting them up not to mention a goodly number of well-grown plants. Kevin had a big collection of many genera and was able to put on large floor displays, often with Ron Turtle.

As a judge of the Orchid Society of New South Wales and later the Australian Orchid Council, Kevin was greatly respected and wielded great influence and, as always was tireless in the work he put in, especially training new judges. He always enjoyed seeing something new. Again, in the area of natives, particularly dendrobiums, we can see his influence especially in the way they present their flowers. If I heard him say, “we don’t judge noddies” once, I heard it a thousand times.

Kevin was for many, many years a tireless worker for the society when societies did much more than they do today. The big New South Wales Winter and Spring display shows involved a lot of work. Sutherland often put on two huge displays and, of course, Kevin was in the thick of it. He was rightly made a life member in recognition of his efforts.

More importantly, he was a loyal friend who was always willing to share his great love of orchids. We shall miss him, but whenever one of the plants he gave us flowers, we will remember him.

Tribute by: Murray Aldridge

A listing of the beautiful Sarcophilus registered by Kevin:



Sarco. hartmannii ‘Red Cloud’ AM/AOC
Registered K. Wilson 1997 NSW



Sarco. ‘Jeanne’
Registered K. Wilson 1995 NSW

plus

Sarco. Cherie’s Joy 2002
Sarco. Coral Ice 2002
Sarco. Cherie Snow 1995
Sarco. Orange Glow 2002

Sarco. Snowtime 2002
Sarco. hart. ‘Sylvanvale’ 1984 HCC/AOC
Sarco. Redstone 1997
Sarco. Greenhart 2002

*Orchid information sourced from the Australian Orchid Registered Hybrid List: February 2020
Courtesy - Australian Native Orchid Society Inc.*