

MAROONDAH ORCHID SOCIETY

INCORPORATED

MONTHLY NEWS LETTER

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Lycastes are orchids of the
New World Tropics and Subtropics



Lycaste Club Emblem

Meetings cancelled until further notice.

M.O.S. Inc. Patron: David Cannon

Life Members: The late Frank Date, Jim Foster-Johnson, David Cannon, Alan & Nancy Cockram, Dieter Weise, Barry Robinson, Susanne Redpath, Max Bomford, Cheryl Luth, G Moffat.

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President's Report

Dear Member,

I trust you are all well and safe as we go through this very difficult time. Easter Celebration Time this year certainly was not what we were used to with our family and loved ones.

As difficult as it is being confined mostly to home it does give us extra time to spend with our orchids as they still continue to grow and they need our TLC.

Autumn is certainly with us. Good rain, some cooler nights and mostly sunny warm days. Be careful with you watering so that plants dry out before night time as growths are still maturing and early flower spikes are showing. Summer new growths have continued well into autumn. Time to start, watch and prepare your plants for the possibility of our Spring Show later in the year as September will come around very quickly. We are all hoping that the restrictions will be different by end September.

For any member who is not feeling well, I trust you will be better soon.

Really interesting to see what orchids you have flowering at this time.

Happy growing, and take care.

Cheers,

David.

Thank you to members who have contributed to both article and pictures which are included in this newsletter. And remember please feel free to send me any images of your orchids in flower. Please include a close-up of the flower and make sure you include the name of the orchid. Also if you have an article you would like to share with member's please send it to me.

With much thanks

Leo Orland – leoorland@totalfundraising.com.au
Editor

Wildlife in Kinglake

Normally in Kinglake our life revolves around seeing king parrots, kookaburras, currajongs and the occasional friendly wombat that comes in at night to dig holes. At night there are an abundance of rabbits.

During February we moved a large pot plant off the back veranda to near our table under the pergola. When we got it down we got attacked by a swarm of angry wasps. We managed to get into our back room with about 14 of the wasps. The only way to stop the attack was to swat them. Glenda and I got multiple stings. Two nights later the nest got a powder dusting which eliminated the nest.

We then had another period of king parrots, kookaburras, currajongs and the occasional friendly wombat.

It didn't last.

Mid March I was in the orchid house and I spotted something on a pot that shouldn't have been there. I got closer and discovered it was a tiger snake. I stepped back and quickly decided I wasn't going to tackle it. I went into the house and rang Ken the local snake catcher. He said that he would be there shortly but I should go back and keep an eye on it.

I went back and the snake had gone. I carefully hunted around but with no luck. Ken arrived and he also had a look with me but with no luck. I followed him down the igloo looking on the floor and benches. Ken said to also look up because they are good climbers. Bother. I wished I had more eyes.

Ken gave up saying there were too many hiding places and he could spend hours there with no luck. I asked what I should do. He said when I go down there carry a compression bandage for the bite and a mobile phone for the ambulance. Bother. I was hoping for better advice.

Ken left and I went inside for a drink (tea). I then got a compression bandage and my phone and went to the orchid house again. As I slowly walked down the house I saw the snake on the bench moving in the same direction as me. I moved back and rang Ken. He was in Doncaster bagging a possum and would be over an hour before he could get here and I should watch the snake. After an hour and a half and shuffling from one foot to the other Ken arrived. Fortunately the snake had settled on a dendrobium pot at the front of the bench. Ken had one of those extension arms with the pinchers at the end and grabbed the snake (plus the dendrobium) and bagged it – he retrieved the dendrobium. Back at his van I asked what he does with the snake now. He said he keeps it for while for any client that hasn't paid their bill then releases it into the bush. Ha ha. I quickly gave him my credit card from which he deducted \$165.

We are now back to king parrots, kookaburras, currajongs and the occasional friendly wombat, and practicing social distancing on our property.

Peter Hince

Members' Plants in Flower Now

		
<p>Claudia Ng's <i>Laelia Interceps</i></p>	<p>Kong and Fun's <i>Cymbidium</i> <i>Devon Elf</i></p>	<p>Kong and Fun's <i>Cattleya Potinara Burana Beauty</i></p>
		
<p>Kong and Fun's <i>Drac. Bella 'Mt Rainer' x cordobae</i></p>	<p>Kong and Fun's <i>Masdevallia Machu Pichu</i></p>	<p>Rosalie Naylor <i>Cat. Mini-Purple</i></p>
		
<p>Graeme and Merilyn Moffat's <i>Stanhopia wardii</i></p>	<p>David Cannon's <i>Porterara Blue Boy 'Jill'</i></p>	<p>David Cannon's <i>Cym. Canned Magic</i></p>

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO STAKING CYMBIDIUM SPIKES

by Brian Milligan

April is examination time, when the results of your cultural program over the previous nine months become apparent. If you have lush, green leaves but few flower spikes, then perhaps you have been feeding your cymbidiums too heavily with high-nitrogen fertilisers. A more balanced fertiliser formulation, coupled with plenty of light, should give yellow-green foliage and more flower spikes. Both flower spikes and new growths emerge from the base of the pseudo-bulbs. The new growths are usually more sharply pointed than the flower spikes. The latter are often softer but I am not in favour of the 'squeeze' test to differentiate them, because of the possibility of damaging the concealed buds.

The flower spikes of pendulous cymbidiums sometimes head straight for the rim of the pot. If they are allowed to reach it, they may abort or burrow back into the potting mix. Even if they manage to find their way up and over the rim, their stems may have unsightly twists or kinks. This possibility can be avoided by placing a plant label or other flexible piece of plastic under the developing spike, so that it is gradually forced to climb up and over the rim.

When I first discover a cymbidium in spike I turn the pot so that the spike(s) face the direction of maximum light (usually north). Eventually most of the flowers should then face the same direction. Of course, if your cymbidiums have spikes all round, then you don't need any advice from me, as you're a much better cymbidium grower than I am! Having decided which way the pot should face, then stick with that decision and don't turn the pot again, especially if the buds have emerged from the sheath. Cymbidium spikes respond very rapidly to changes in the direction of light, and will twist or kink to face the light source within a day or two unless very firmly staked and tied.

There are several schools of thought on when cymbidium spikes should be tied. Some growers insert their stakes as soon as the spikes appear, and apply the ties as soon as the buds begin to emerge from the sheath. Others stake and tie on show day! I favour somewhere between the two extremes. It's important to differentiate between those cymbidiums with upright spikes and those with arching or pendulous spikes. The latter look ridiculous if staked upright. Aluminium stakes are better for arching spikes, as they can be bent to follow the natural curve of the spike. It's a good idea to label those plants with pendulous or arching spikes, so that you remember to give them special treatment each year. Green cane stakes are the most unobtrusive, so much so that it's easy to poke your eye out while searching for new spikes! A handy hint is to cover the top with a piece of plastic foam. But please remove it, and trim back the stake so that it is a little shorter than the flower spike, before staging your plant on the show bench.

Some growers train their cymbidium spikes upright using hat elastic. A slipknot is tied at one end of a 20 cm length of hat elastic, and pulled tight just below the penultimate bud (second from the top). The other end is slipped beneath the metal spring of a wooden clothes peg. The peg is then slid up the stake so that the elastic becomes reasonably taut. As the spike elongates, the peg will need to be slid further up the stake to maintain the tension. This procedure helps to keep the spike straight, and may also improve the spacing of the flowers. Be careful! If the elastic is tightened too much, the topmost buds can become very widely spaced from the lower ones as they fly over the neighbour's fence!! The Nie-Co-Rol® is a spring-loaded device that achieves the same result as hat elastic without the need for periodic adjustment. The device is tied to the roof of the orchid house, and the hook pulled down from the spring-loaded reel and fastened below the penultimate bud.

ONE LAST THOUGHT:

What do you give the man who has everything?

An intensive course of antibiotics.

If Undeliverable Return to:
The Hon. Secretary,
Maroondah Orchid Society Incorporated
P.O.Box 5076, Ringwood. Vic. 3134

NEWSLETTER



Smart Water Shop offers up to a 10% discount on our range of products excluding specials and installations.

Glenwood Orchids offer "Valued Customer" discounts on presentation of your current membership card.

Collectors Corner/Garden World - You can get 10% off some items within the store by showing either your membership badge or membership card.

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