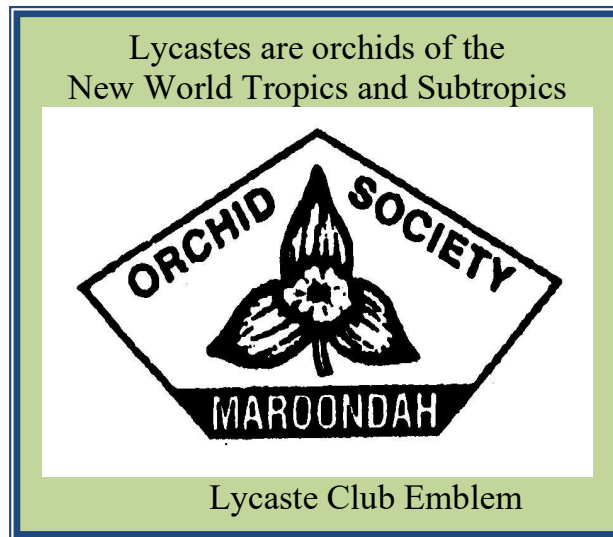


# MAROONDAH ORCHID SOCIETY INCORPORATED

## MONTHLY NEWS LETTER

Volume : 43 - Issue : 7



**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.

**Current M.O.S. Inc. Committee:**

**President** David Cannon (M) 0418 394 282  
**Vice Presidents:** Vacant  
Vacant  
**Secretary:** Leo Orland (M) 0419 884 492: email -  
[leorland@totalfundraising.com.au](mailto:leorland@totalfundraising.com.au)  
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Christian Gunawan

**Membership Secretary:** Edith Yu-Chan  
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**MOS Facebook Address** [www.facebook.com/maroondahorchidsociety](http://www.facebook.com/maroondahorchidsociety)

## President's Report

As we continue with these very difficult times, I trust you and your family are keeping safe and well.

Any member who is unwell, I trust you will be better as soon as you can.

Nobody would ever have known what we would be going through when we were first made aware of Covid19 earlier this year.

Seasons continue to roll on. We had a hot summer, then Autumn with first restrictions, winter and further restrictions and now heading to Spring.

Normally at this time of the year we are all busy preparing for our Spring Show. Please continue to be as busy as you can with your orchids, as they will still flower and give you a lot of enjoyment. As winter continues to roll along and daylight is slowly getting longer, keep your eye on your spike development as sudden cold/frosty nights can ruin your year's effort in getting flowering happening.

Also we would be looking towards our AGM in October. Unfortunately that does not appear to be possible in the current circumstances. As I have mentioned previously the term for President is only 3 years. We have had, for the first time in over 40 years, no Vice President's for this year. For your Society to continue to prosper, we really need to have Vice Presidents and a new President. Please consider if you would like to fill these positions or any other position on your committee and let me know.

Given the current circumstances and we do not know when we will be able to hold our AGM, we will be checking with relevant authority to see how we can extend the time. I am hopeful we might be able to have a meeting in December, but we will have to wait and see how the Covid situation is.

Best regards and take care,

David

Thank you to members who have contributed to 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 members please send it to me.

With much thanks

Leo Orland  
Editor

Message from Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria

Dear Gardens Supporter,

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria has again made the difficult decision to close Melbourne Gardens and Cranbourne Gardens to all visitors, from **11.59pm Wednesday 5th August**. Both Gardens will remain closed until further notice, opening as soon as it is safe and reasonable to do so.

While the physical gates will be closed to the public, in line with government guidelines we will have a very limited number of staff working on-site for the maintenance and protection of our landscapes and collections, and for critical scientific activity.

## Engage with the Gardens from home

I know the Gardens play an important role in the wellbeing of all visitors, not the least offering a safe place to connect with nature and enjoy time with friends and family. This has been particularly true for our local residents over the last few weeks.

During this unusual time, we will continue to develop new ways to engage with our beautiful and healing Gardens digitally. Through this I hope you can experience at least some of those benefits from afar.

To discover new ways to stay connected with the Gardens,

[https://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/virtualgarden?utm\\_campaign=virtual-garden&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_content=enews-closure](https://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/virtualgarden?utm_campaign=virtual-garden&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_content=enews-closure) for regular updates and to access activities.

We will keep you updated as more information becomes available and if you have any questions, please get in touch with us via [communications@rbg.vic.gov.au](mailto:communications@rbg.vic.gov.au).

We also encourage you to stay connected with our Gardens via [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

As always, we look forward to seeing you again soon, when we can together support thriving communities and a flourishing planet.

In the meantime, keep safe.

Professor Tim Entwisle  
Chief Executive and Director  
Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria






## **Can You Identify This Orchid?**

**The orchid below has been wrongly labelled the Pineapple Orchid. If you know what its real name is please email me your answer and I will publish the name in the next edition of the newsletter.**



**If you have a plant and you have lost its label please email a photo of the plant to me, especially if it's in flower and I will put it in the newsletter and maybe one of our members could identify it.**

Dieter Weise's Plants in Flower Now

 A photograph of three white Masdevallia towarensis flowers with long, thin, upright petals and sepals, set against a black background.	 A photograph of a Dendrochilum stenophyllum plant in a black pot, showing a dense cluster of long, thin, green leaves and several long, drooping racemes of small white flowers.	 A photograph of a single Paphiopedilum venustum flower, featuring a large, pinkish-red, veined lip and a green, ribbed column, set against a black background.
<p>Masdevallia tovarensis</p>	<p>Dendrochilum stenophyllum</p>	<p>Paphiopedilum venustum</p>
 A photograph of a Cattleya coccinea (Sophronites) plant in a black pot, showing several bright orange flowers with yellow centers and green leaves.	 A photograph of a Dendrochilum convallariaeforme plant in a black pot, showing a dense cluster of long, thin, green leaves and several long, drooping racemes of small orange flowers.	
<p>Cattleya coccinea (Sophronites)</p>	<p>Dendrochilum convallariaeforme</p>	

David Cannon's Plants in Flower Now



Dendrobium  
Jesmond Sparkler x Tweed



Dendrobium  
Crowea Sunset  
1<sup>st</sup> flowering



Dendrobium  
Hewitt Bride



Dendrobium  
Border Surprise



Dendrobium  
Star Sheen  
'Botanical Fireworks'

Leanne Le's Plants in Flower Now



*Odontoglossum pulcherrimum*



*Cymbidium Pioneer*  
'Boutique Shooting Star'



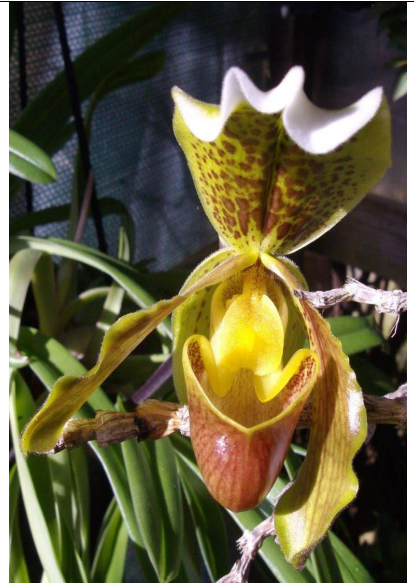
*Arpophyllum spicatum*



*Arpophyllum spicatum*



*Restrepia brachypus*



*Paphiopedilum insigne*

## **BOLTERS and RUNTS**

**by Brian Milligan**

Human nature being what it is, most of us believe that our orchids are not growing as well as they should. We might be pleased with the growth rate of a few but are less happy with all those that don't grow as well. However, if you stop to think about it, why should all our orchids grow at the same rate? Only in the case of a batch of mericlones, which are genetically identical, should all orchids respond equally to a particular cultural regime. When it comes to seedlings, even of the same grex, we can expect to find both 'bolters' and 'runts' among the progeny, much as we would like them all to be bolters that grow rapidly and flower early.

Growers of species orchids are often encouraged to replicate the conditions under which their orchids grow in nature if they wish to grow them to their best potential. In my opinion, this information should be regarded only as a guide, particularly with regard to the temperature range to be provided and the observation of a 'rest period' when the orchid should be watered less frequently (usually during winter).

We can, in fact, grow many species orchids in cultivation far better than they grow in nature, primarily because of the law of averages. As any student of the weather knows, there is nothing more variable than the weather, especially if one lives in Melbourne. In nature species orchids must survive dry spells when the weather should be wet, and also unexpected wet periods during the supposedly "dry" season. Yes, most orchids survive these unexpected seasonal variations, but obviously they don't grow as well as in more favourable seasons. It's therefore quite reasonable that they should grow better in our temperature-controlled glasshouses, provided that we water them regularly when they are in active growth and withhold water when they are at rest.

Scientific studies of species orchids in the wild have shown that their seedlings grow much more slowly than do artificially cultivated seedlings that are watered and fertilised regularly. In fact, some species orchids in nature may take several times as long as cultivated species to reach maturity, and it has been estimated that some specimen cattleya species found in nature may be a hundred years old or more! Reasons for the slow growth of wild species include not only unfavourable weather conditions but attack by various insect pests and grazing animals, and by lack of fertiliser, which is limited to that provided by passing bird life and water draining through dead vegetable matter trapped in tree forks.

Fertilisers make a big difference to an orchid's growth rate, provided that they are applied at an appropriate concentration and at the correct period during the orchid's growth cycle. Fertiliser composition is also important. Nitrogen-rich fertilisers will promote excellent leaf growth but may retard flowering and it's generally regarded that 'balanced' fertilisers (made of a blend of chemicals that provide the orchid with appropriate levels of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium) are best. "Weak and often" is good advice when it comes to fertilising orchids, as a grower may cause more harm than good by applying liquid fertilisers at concentrations that the plant cannot handle.

In conclusion, there are many factors that affect an orchid's growth rate, not least genetic diversity – some seedlings will grow better than others, regardless of the grower's cultural skills. Be prepared to cull some of the 'runts' from your collection each year (they take up just as much of your time as the 'bolters'), and put the space that they occupied to better use, for example, by purchasing some new hybrids or (even better) a line-bred species orchid!



# NATIVE TERRESTRIAL ORCHIDS – GIVE THEM A GO! by Frankie Fraser

A ‘terrestrial’ orchid literally means an orchid that grows in the ground. There are approximately 1200 native orchid species in Australia: more than half of these are terrestrials and most are uniquely Australian. Terrestrial orchids have tubers. In comparison to other plants, they have few roots because they live in association with fungi, called mycorrhizal fungi, which gather nutrients for the orchid. Some of these orchids are easy to grow, while some are difficult and others are impossible because of a special symbiotic relationship that they have with mycorrhizal fungi.

**Growth Cycle.** Almost all terrestrials are deciduous and have a growth cycle in which they spend 6-8 months growing in cool, moist conditions and 4-6 months resting as dormant underground tubers during the hot, dry summer. This is their unique way of surviving Australia’s harsh dry summer conditions. New tubers are produced in winter-spring and after flowering the plant dies down, the tubers becoming dormant until the next autumnal rains. Most terrestrial orchids flower in spring but there are some earlier flowering species such as the autumn flowering *Pterostylis* (greenhood orchids).

**Growing terrestrials from tubers.** I grow a few terrestrial orchids and love the sight of a potful of them in flower. The cultural comments below refer to my growing practices in my conditions – methods may vary from grower to grower. Tubers can be potted in December/January -I do mine in January when I am on holidays and have time to do it.

I use black plastic pots – squat pots are good because of their extra drainage holes. Before I put the potting mixture into the pot, I place a circle of shade-cloth in the bottom of the pot to cover the drainage holes. The cloth prevents the sandy potting mixture from leaking out and also deters larger slaters and earwigs from sneaking in!

I use the basic potting mixture recommended by ANOS which comprises two parts of coarse sand, one part of mountain soil, one part of buzzer chips (not treated pine, Western Red Cedar or chipboard), one part of leaf mould (partially rotted down leaves found under trees) and approximately one dessertspoonful of Blood and Bone per 9 litres of mix. Fill the pot about two-thirds full with the mix, and arrange the tubers with their growing ‘eye’ facing upwards. The tubers should be about 30 mm below the final level of the mix. Cover the tubers with more mix and firm it down. Top the mix with about 10 mm of chopped pine or Casuarina (sheoak) needles. The chopped needles form a mat and prevent erosion of the mix when watering. It also keeps the leaves above the mix so that they dry off quickly, thus lessening the chance of leaf rot. The juvenile plants find their way through this mat without difficulty. Note: When re-potting tubers the following year, use equal quantities of new mix and last year’s mix, so as to transfers necessary mycorrhizal fungi to the new mix.

Water the pots well and keep them shaded. Allow the pots to dry out between very light sprinklings until about the end of February (you don’t want the tubers to rot). Then place the pots in their growing position in the orchid house -I stand mine on paving bricks on the floor. *Diuris* like a brighter position than *Pterostylis*, and *Corybas* like more shade. Water them more regularly now, gently filling the pot to the rim and then allowing the water to soak in.

In autumn each tuber sends up a shoot to the surface and leaves grow quickly in late autumn. *Pterostylis* are the first to appear (March), then *Diuris* and finally *Corybas* (June). Terrestrial orchids don’t cope well with fertiliser (they can be burnt and even die), although *Pterostylis* and *Diuris* are tougher and can cope with a very weak solution (I use Aquasol®) when the leaves first appear.

After flowering, the plants begin to die down in or about November. I stop watering them, remove the pots from the orchid house and put them where they won’t get water (as in their natural growing conditions) –

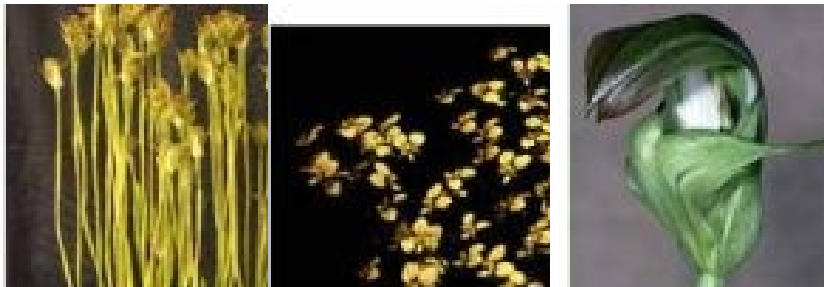
mine go under my decking because they are conveniently out of the way. I do give the pots a little sprinkle of water occasionally every week or two. Too much water will rot the tubers – so don't overdo it!

**Pests.** The worst pests are slugs and snails – they love to chomp on a stem or bud just when the plants are ready for the Spring Show! Snail pellets help (Baysol® works best for me). Scatter them around the pots, but preferably not in them. Remember that snail bait is poisonous to pets! Placing the pots on rough paving bricks also helps to deter snails and slugs. Slaters, and occasionally earwigs, find their way into the bottom of the pot if I don't put a piece of shade cloth inside the pot before adding the mix. Infrequently, near flowering time, tiny green caterpillars appear and wreak havoc with the stems. Pyrethrum spray 'fixes' them, but nothing can fix the damaged stems!

**Some Recommendations.** Beginners should choose species that are hardy and multiply well. I find colony-forming *Pterostylis* the easiest to grow, particularly *Pterostylis curta*, *P. pedunculata*, *P. nutans*, *P. concinna* and *P. baptistii*, which has large impressive flowers. Hybrids show vigour, and I grow *Pterostylis* Cutie 'Harold's Pride' which makes a nice show.

Terrestrial orchids are available as dormant tubers (Dec-Feb), bare rooted plants (May-August), flasks (all year) and as pots of plants (winter-spring). For starters you could try the following:

Do NOT remove terrestrial orchids from the wild.



### A FEW LAST THOUGHTS:

Two guys were out walking their dogs on a hot day, when they pass by a pub. The first guy says "Let's go in there for a pint." Second guy, says, "They won't let us in with our dogs." First guy: "Sure they will, just follow my lead."

He goes up to the pub, and sure enough the doorman says, "I can't let you in here with that dog." He replies, "Oh, I'm blind and this is my seeing-eye dog." The doorman says, "Ok then, come on in."

The second guy sees this and does the same thing. He goes up to the pub, and the doorman says, "You can't come in here with a dog." He replies, "I'm blind and this is my seeing-eye dog." The doorman responds, "You have a chihuahua for a seeing-eye dog?" The second guy stops for a second, and exclaims, "They gave me a chihuahua?"

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.

### DISCLAIMER

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