

MAROONDAH ORCHID SOCIETY

INCORPORATED

MONTHLY NEWS LETTER

Lycastes are orchids of the
New World Tropics and Subtropics



Lycaste Club Emblem

Volume : 45 - Issue : 5

Next Meeting: Friday – 17 June 2022

Meeting begins at 8.00pm

**Venue: St. Timothy's Catholic
Community School Hall
21 Stevens Road, Vermont.
(Melway, Map 62 Ref.G3)**

ITEM OF THE EVENING: **AUCTION AUCTION AUCTION**

In the past the auction has been a great fundraiser for our society and this year should be no exception. Members are asked to donate well established plants in top condition, related orchid accessories and any other items that are acceptable to auction at this fun event (the more the merrier). Turn up on the night with a few \$'s, you never know what you may take home.

Topical Chat: How are people preparing their plants for the show.

Supper: Please bring a plate

No Special Effort and No Sales Table:

Bench Competition

Bench Commentary – D. Weise

President's Report

The attendance at the May meeting (24) was down again but hopefully the numbers will swell for our in-house auction at the June meeting. Those present enjoyed Leo's VOOTY Awards presentation, with accompanying photos. Once again there were differing opinions, along with plenty of humour, on which plant in each category won the prize.

Our Club was well represented at the VOOTY Awards Dinner on Saturday 21 May at which the prizes were presented for the last three years. I had the privilege of presenting Dieter with the Society's prize for 2019. Another highlight was a prize to Dieter in 2021 with a Paphiopedilum named after his daughter Anja. She was at the dinner and accompanied her father to receive the prize. Sylvia also received a prize in the 2021 Awards.

I notice my Cymbidium spikes are now growing quickly and I need to keep a watchful eye on the need insert and tie to stakes.

For members who have not been in the best of health over recent months I wish you a speedy recovery and look forward to meeting with you at our Club Meetings soon. Our next Club Meeting will be held Friday 17 June 2022 at the same place and time.

Ron Coleman

Please note: If you have changed your contact details such as phone, email address or home address can you please contact Edith Yu-Chan (M) 0411 378 096 so we can update our records.

Thank you!

ATTENDANCE BOOK - It is important that people attending the monthly meetings or society outings sign the attendance book. This is required for insurance purposes; if you don't sign you may not be covered in case of an accident.

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

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

Current M.O.S. Inc. Committee:

President Ron Coleman (M) 0477 311 188

Vice Presidents: David Cannon (M) 0418 394 282

Vacant

Secretary: Leo Orland (M) 0419 884 492: email leoorland@totalfundraising.com.au

Treasurer: Graeme Moffat (H) 9726 5793

Committee Leanne Le (M) 0416 818 290

Daniel Tung

Jim Foster-Johnson (M) 0412 366 686

Edith Yu-Chan (M) 0411 378 096

Heather Coleman

Claudia Ng

Membership Secretary: Edith Yu-Chan

Newsletter: Leo Orland

Floral Art: Susanne Redpath (M) 0413 138 307

Website Manager Heather Coleman

MOS Website Address [www.oscov.asn.au /mos](http://www.oscov.asn.au/mos)

MOS Facebook Address www.facebook.com/maroonidahorchidsociety

REMINDER: Membership Renewal

The committee has decided that membership fees for financial year 2022/2023 will remain at the same level it has been for many years.

Fees are due 1st July 2022.

Adult (single) \$16.00, Family \$20.00, Junior (16 years and under) \$5.00

Please note – to enter or sell plants at the Spring Show a member must be a financial member no later than the Members' Meeting (16 September 2021).

You can pay in person to Edith Yu-Chan

Or you can pay via direct debit to the following bank account –
BSB: 063167 Account number: 10107735

Please remember to fill in the reference field with your name.

Thank you!

Interesting Plants from the May Meeting



D. Wiese's Paoh
gratrixianum



. C. Luth's Catt. Orpettii



J. Wong's Dend. Avril's Gold



D. Weise's Phrag. besseae



S. Kappl's Gastrochilus var obliquus



D. Cannon's Den. Louise's
Rainbow



J. Foster-Johnson's SLC
Mari's Beat



L. Orland's Cym.
Gladys Whitsell x devoniamum



A. Baker's Oncid.
Sweet Sugar 'Million Dollar'

BENCH COMPETITION - March – 2022

JUDGES VOTE	Paph. gratixianum	c	D. Wiese
POPULAR VOTE	Catt. Orpettii	c	C. Luth
BEST IN SECTION			
Open	Paph. gratixianum	c	D. Wiese
Novice	Den. Avril's Gold	c	J. Wong
	Open Section		
Australian Native Dendrobium Hybrid	1 st Den. Louise's Rainbow	c	D. Cannon
	2 nd Den. X Grimes	c	S. Kappl
	3 rd Den. Avril's Gold	c	J. Doney
Australian Native – Sarcophilus Hybrid	1 st . Sarc. Galaxy	C	S. Kappl
Laeliinae Large	1 st SLC. Mari's Beat	c	J. Foster-Johnson
Laeliinae Intermediate	1 st Catt. Orpettii 'Pink'	c	C. Luth
Laeliinae Miniature	1 st Catt. Chester 'Bensam'	c	C. Luth
	2 nd Catt. Seagulls Delight	c	J. Foster-Johnson
Laeliinae Cluster & Novelty	1 st Catt. Bowringiana x loddigessi	C	J. Foster-Johnson
Paphiopedilum Species	1 st Paph. gratixianum	c	D. Wiese
	2 nd Paph. spicerianum	c	D. Wiese
	3 rd Paph. fairianum	c	S. Kappl
Oncidiinae Medium	1 st Onc. Sweet Sugar 'Million Dollar'	c	A. Baker
	2 nd Onc. incurvum x crispum	c	J. Foster-Johnson
Oncidiinae Small	1 st Onc. Sydney	c	J. Foster-Johnson
	2 nd Onc. Sharry Baby	c	A. Baker
Any Other Hybrid	1 st Coelogyne 'Janine Banks'	c	D. Cannon
	2 nd Zygo. B. G. White	c	L. Orland
Species Any Genera – The America's	1 st Phrag. besseae	C	D. Weise
	2 nd Oncidium longipes	c	D. Weise
	3 rd Platanthera scerophylla	c	D. Weise

Species Any Genera – Asia	1 st Gastrochilus obliquus var. abilguus	c	S. Kappl
	2 nd Cym. elegans	c	J. Foster-Johnson
	3 rd Coleogne ovalis ‘Minor’	c	L. Orland
Standard Cymbidium	1 st tracyanum x elegans	c	L. Orland
Miniature Cymbidium	1 st Gladys Whitesoll x devonianum	c	L. Orland
Masdevallia Hybrid	1 st Leopard Danger ‘Ghengis’	c	J. Foster-Johnson
	2 nd Rein Touch	c	J. Foster-Johnson
	3 rd Copper Fire x Copper Wing	c	J. Foster-Johnson
Novice Section			
Masdevallia Hybrid	1 st veitchianna x falcata	c	J. & S. Tse
Dendrobium	1 st Avril’s Gold	c	J. Wong
Miltonia	1 st clowesii	c	C. Gunawan
Paphiopedilum	1 st venustum “Gewurztraminer” x album	c	R. & H. Coleman
Oncidiinae Large	1 st Miltassia	c	J. & S. Tse
Any Other Hybrid	1 st Zygo. Kiwi Choice	c	J. Wong
Seedling Flowering for the First Time			
	1 st Catt. brevipedunculata	c	S. Kappl
	2 nd Dockrillium Shoenina x Hot Coals	c	J. Foster-Johnson



Dieter Weise receiving his OSCOV Award for Best Cultured Orchid from Ron at the OSCOV Dinner

CYMBIDIUM SUAVE



Robert Brown described *Cymbidium suave* in 1810 based on his own collection from near Sydney (Port Jackson) in New South Wales. It has an unusual growth distinct from any other *Austrocymbidium*, instead of producing a new pseudobulb annually, the stem continues to grow and flower indeterminately for many years, eventually reaching a length of 50 centimetres or more.

Dockrill (1966,1969) cited *C. gomphocarpum*, described by Fitzgerald in 1883, as the only synonym of *C. suave*, no locality information was given, and until Rupp (1939) discovered an unpublished plate drawn by Fitzgerald, little information was available on this species. The description and plate published by Rupp (1939) are undoubtedly *C. suave*. Differing from the typical species in only minor details. Tierny (1957) claimed that *C. gomphocarpum* had been recollected at Harvey's Creek on the Atherton Tableland, but this has not been confirmed, so therefore *C. gomphocarpum* is treated as a synonym of *C. suave*.

DISTRIBUTION

C. suave has the most restricted distribution of all the Australian cymbidium species. It is found from southern New South Wales, (almost to the border of Victoria), northwards along the east coast to southern Cape York. It has the most southerly distribution of any *Cymbidium* species, almost equivalent to the most northerly latitudes at which the *Cymbidium* genus appears.

C. suave is found from sea level up to about 1200 metres, but does not occur on the drier western side of the dividing range. Preferring a drier habitat than *C. madidum*, *C. suave* only occasionally occurs in cleared areas in the forest, and although more cold tolerant than either *C. canaliculatum* or *C. madidum*, it will not tolerate the dry conditions in which *C. canaliculatum* thrives.

GROWTH HABIT

A medium sized perennial epiphyte beginning with pseudobulbs in young plants, and developing in older plants into an elongated stem up to about 50 centimetres long which is covered by the old leaf sheaths. Each shoot will grow and flower for many years before a new growth is produced from near the base, this extends a few centimetres each year.



Suited to damp open woodland, usually near the coast, *C.suave* is found in two types of habitat, both of which provide some moisture and protection for its roots. In damp open hardwood forests it grows in hollows in branches, and trunk of trees, particularly on Eucalyptus, forming a huge root system that penetrates deep into the damp rotting core of the tree, the roots sometimes extending 10m from the plant. It is also found on tree stumps and fence post made from Eucalyptus, if they have started to rot, as well as Bush Oak (*Casuarina torulosa*).

C.suave's other common habitat is on *Melaleuca* trees that grow along water courses or on swamp margins. The bark on these trees peels off like sheets of paper and the roots of the orchid penetrate between the layers, eventually forming an extensive network around the tree. When plants are removed from this habitat, so much root system is lost that the plant is most likely to die. Rupp (1937) also reported this species growing on tree fern trunks.

C.suave requires an open position where it receives strong sunlight. Flowering during August to October in Northern Australia and early Spring to Summer in the southern part of its range. My personal experience with flowering in Melbourne is early Spring but sometimes through to February.

In nature *C.suave* appears to grow on a varied range of hosts. It seems a different proposition when grown in private collections, as it seems to resent any root disturbance. Len Field in *Australian Native Orchids – Description and Culture Notes* – suggests a large pipe or hollow log as ideal for potting, a coarse cymbidium mix with some of the rotted heartwood centre of an Eucalypt is an ideal potting compost.

C.suave carries 6-11 thin straplike leaves, which eventually become deciduous as the stem grows. The arching to pendulous racemes, usually up to 35cms in length, are produced in the axils of the leaf bases just below the current leaves, often more than one per stem, and often persisting for several years. Rupp(1937) suggested that plants from a site in northern Queensland had shorter racemes averaging only 13 centimetres, whereas those from Southern New South Wales could reach 35 centimetres.

Flowers are to 2.5 centimetres, sweet scented, with light green, through yellow-green to olive-green, occasionally there may be reddish blotches on the petals and sepals. The shape

of the lip is variable. Brown (1810) described the lip as undivided, and Bailey (1902) described the lip as undivided to three lobed. Rupp (1937) extended this to include one from coastal New South Wales, which, although less common than others, he demonstrated a complete range of variation, from entire to strongly lobed lips.

C.suave seems to require considerable air movement and a lot of sunshine. Dendrobium beetle can cause considerable damage to the flowers, luckily we in Melbourne, so far, seem to have escaped the ravages of this pest, where as ants can be the cause of very heavy scale infestations.

Referring to Ken Russells article on Australian Cymbidiums, he states that 288 *C.suave* plants were studied in nature between the Hunter River, near Newcastle, New South Wales) and the Brisbane River (near Ipswich, Queensland) a range of 1000kms. Some plants were found near seal level (25m), others at elevations up to 700m. Hosts included blue gum, spotted gum, watergum, redgum., bottlebrush, blackbutt, stringybark, ironbark, tallowwood, native pine and native oak.

It seems obvious from the table below that *C.suave* prefers acidic conditions. The study covered 288 plants, 250 carrying seed capsules (in late September).

The best plants had a 25mm layer of good leaf mould, from decaying twigs, leaves and bark around their bases. Decayed material (heartwood) taken from the centre of the host stumps has pH of 3.5 – 4.0, and he recommended that this material be used to achieve a satisfactory pH range when cultivating *C.suave*.

No. of Plants	Host	pH near surface	pH in heartwood
195	Dead Stumps	4.5	4.0
65	Deadwood, Logs	4.5	4.0
15	Live Trees	4.5	4.0
8	On Rocks, Bark	5.0	4.0
5	Sickly Plants in Stumps	5.0	6.0

In cultivation at home, materials suitable for adjusting the pH of potting medium include, Phostrogen Acid Plant Food (a new product with a pH of 4.5); pineapple juice (pH 4.5) and coffee grounds (pH 4.5). These plants are intolerant of alkaline conditions so lime should never be administered

In my collection *C suave* is potted into plastic pots, using a combination of heartwood, smaller coconut chips and pine bark (nuggets), I would rather use heartwood, but living in Melbourne sometimes it can be hard find. For the acidic requirements I pour a 250 ml packet of pineapple juice into a one litre watering can, top up with water, and water in several times a year, taking care not to allow any run off to drain or drip on to any other plants. The plants are grown under 50% white shade cloth facing north in high light.

Leaney (1966) stated that *C. Suave* can send rhizomes considerable distances inside the rotting tree trunks in which it grows, these can appear further down the trunk and form a new

In my collection I am now careful to inspect the drainage holes of *c. suave* pots, as I have had the experience of not noticing a new growth emerging from the base of the pot, and immediately losing it, by dragging the pot across the bench.

If the points for floriferousness are included we now have over 60% of points allotted. Then if Rupps (1937) statement holds true "that a variety of *C.suave* exists in northern Queensland, that has very short racemes(to approx. 13cms),and then if one of these plants were benched, against a plant of comparable quality from the southern regions with a raceme of approximately three times the length, it would be greatly disadvantaged. I wonder whether, if provenance was provided for the short racemed plant, an argument could be mounted in defence of the northern plant, and also wonder how successful it would be. This whole exercise is aimed at emphasising the extreme care we must take in making our decisions, and any antipathy toward a plant, colour or shape can be some times blown out of proportion, with often unintended results.

Award # 80 *Cymbidium suave* “Jenny” ACC/ANOS 1998 (NSW
80.3 points)
W>G>#J> Lennon

There have been eight awards granted in the United States to *C.suave*
The American Orchid Society have granted four Quality awards and two Cultural awards.

The Cymbidium Society of America have granted two quality awards.

All of these awards were granted over an eleven year period 1993 to 2004.

One plant of *C.suave* was granted four awards over six years.

C.suave “Sweetie” a Bronze medal (77.12) 1998

an ACC /CSA (80.66) 1999

an ACC/CSA (93.00) 2004

a Silver medal (83.00) 2004

There are twenty three first generation hybrids listed, and of these , varieties of seven of these have been granted thirty three awards.

Probably the hybrids we see most of benched in our southern regions would be C.Sweet Devon (x *devonianum*),C. Kuranda,(x *C.madidum*),and C. Sunburst Finish (xC. Voodoo),we do see occasional plants of C.Bunyip (C. Carisona), and C.Koala (x C.Fiona)

All these mentioned have the ability to grow into eyecatching quality specimens. .

Of the twenty three listed first generation hybrids, the late Dr.Miles Seaton, who lived on the South Coast of New South Wales, is credited as being the originator of eleven of them.

SUMMING UP

When looking back over the articles written on the three Austrocymbidium species, I think that regardless of the hype over the so-called difficulties associated with growing of it , *C. canaliculatum* could become the next “popular thing” for southern collectors, and this is mainly due to its wonderful colour variations. This would probably be followed by *C .suave*, because of the popularity of its beautiful green colours, and of its growing outdoors in Melbourne.

Then we come to. *C. madidum*, the almost forgotten Australian.

Potential growers seem to be alienated by gossip about the size this can attain, and yet it can be the easiest of the Australians to grow in Melbourne, it happily grows in pine bark, it withstands our extremes of weather, takes the drier times better than *C.suave* ,the damper, colder, times better than *C. canaliculatum*, and this seems to make it an obvious choice, as an easy growing orchid, BUT, the legend of its size lives on.

Acknowledgements

The Genus Cymbidium – David Du Pay and Phillip Cribb

Australian Native Orchids – Len Field







Australian Cymbidiums – articles by K.W. Russell.

ORCHID SHOWS 2022

Show	Date/Time	Venue
Melbourne Eastern Orchid Society	Sat 11 June 9-4, Sun 12 12-4	Burwood Heights Uniting Church, 347 Blackburn Rd, Burwood East
Geelong	Sat 25 June 10-4, Sun 26 June 10-4	Christ Church Hall, Cnr. Moorabool and McKillop Streets
Country Challenge	Sat 2 July 12.00-4, Sun 3 July 9-3	Laidlaw Park 78 Patrick Street Stawell
Bayside	24 July Shopping Centre hours	Endeavour Hills Shopping Centre, Cnr Matthew Flinders Av & Heatherton Rd, Endeavour Hills
Gippsland	19 Aug -20 Aug	Mid-Valley Shopping Centre, Princes Highway
OSCOV	Fri 26 Aug -Sun 28 Aug 9am-4pm	'KCC Park', 655 Western Port Highway, Skye,
Sale & District	Sat 3 Sept 9-4, Sun 4 Sept 10-3	VRI Hall, Pettit Drive (Opposite the Sale Railway Station)
South Gippsland	Fri 09, 9.30 -4.30, Sat 10, 9.30-4	Wonthaggi Workmen's Club, 75 Graham Street, Wonthaggi
Cymbidium Orchid Society	Sat 10 Sept 9-4, Sun 11 Sept 9-4	Mt Waverley Community Centre. Miller Crescent, Mt Waverley
Bairnsdale	Sat 17 Sept 9-4, Sun 18 Sept 9-3	Dalsens Building, 11 Dalmahoy Street, Bairnsdale
Southern Suburbs	Sat 17 Sept 10-4, Sun 18 Sept 10-4	Snr. City. Hall, 964 Nepean Hwy. (Cnr. Exley Dr.)
Mid-Murray	Sat 17 Sept 10-4, Sun 18 Sept 10-3.30	Kerang Basketball Stadium Maxwell Street, Kerang
West Gippsland	Sat 17 Sept 9-4, Sun 18 Sept 9-4	Anglican Church Hall, Cnr. Princes Way & Francis Ave, Drouin.
NEMOS	Sat 17 Sep, 9-4 Sun 18 Sep 10-4	Bulleen Heights Secondary School 221 Manningham Rd Lower Templestow
Geelong	Sat 17 Sept 10-4, Sun 18 Sept 10-4	Christ Church Hall, Cnr. Moorabool and McKillop Streets
Stawell	Fri 23 Sep 10 – 5, Sat 24 Sep 10 – 4, Sun Sep 25 10 - 3	Stawell Entertainment Centre, Town Hall, 117 Main St, Stawell
Goulburn Valley	Sat 24 Sep, 9-4 Sun 25 Sep 10-3	Shepparton Harness Racing Track, Melbourne Rd, Kialla
Berwick	Sat 24 Sept 9-4, Sun 25 Sept 9-4	Senior Citizens' Hall, 112 High Street, Berwick
Maroondah	Sat 24 Sep, 9-5 Sun 25 Sep 9-4	St. Timothy's Catholic School, 21 Stevens Rd, Vermont
ANOS (Vic)	Sat 24 Sept 9-4, Sun 25 Sept 9-4	Mt Waverley Community Centre

Warrnambool	Sat 1 Oct 9 -4, Sun 2 Oct 9 - 3	Our Lady Help of Christian Hall , 28 Selby Rd, Warrnambool
Gippsland	30 Sept - 01 Oct Centre hours	Mid-Valley Shopping Centre, Princes Highway
MEOS	Sat 1 Oct, 9-4, Sun 2 Oct, 12-4	Burwood Heights Uniting Church, 347 Blackburn Rd, Burwood East
Ringwood	Sat 1 Oct 9.00-4, Sun 2 Oct 9.00-4	Keystone Hall 20 Civic Square Croydon 3136
Bendigo	Fri 7 Oct 1-4 Sat 8 Oct, 10-4 Sun 9 Oct 10-1	Eaglehawk Soccer Club, 5 Murdock St, California Gully
Colac	Sat 08 Oct 9-4, Sun 09 Oct 10-4	Colac Show Grounds Cnr. Bruce St & Princess Hwy
St Arnaud	Sat 08 Oct 9-5, Sun 09 Oct 10-4	Town Hall Napier St, St Arnaud
Cobden	Sat 15 Oct 9.30-4, Sun 16 Oct 10-3.30	Civic Hall, Victoria Street
Yarra Valley Orchid Society	Sat 15 Oct 9- 4, Sun 16 Oct 9-3	Public Hall, 590 Warburton Highway, Seville
Ballarat	Fri 21 Oct 12-5, Sat 22-Sun 23 10-3	Federation University, Cnr. Gillies and Gregory Streets
Bayside	Sat 22 Oct 9 - 5 Sun 23 Oct 9 - 4	Cranbourne Public Hall, 166-168 South Gippsland Hwy
Stawell/(Halls Gap)	Sat 29 Oct 9.30- 4 Sun 30 Oct 9.30 - 4	Centenary Hall, 115 Grampians Road, Halls Gap
Ringwood / Yarra Valley Orchid Society	Sat 29 Oct 9-4, Sun 30 Oct 9-4	Keystone Hall, Keystone Hall Civic Square, Croydon
CGOC Sarc Show	Sat 12 Nov 1-4, Sun 13 Nov 9-3	Dahlsens Building, 11 Dalmahoy Street, Bairnsdale

David Cannon's Plants Flowering Now

		
Coelogyne Jean Banks	Coelogyne mooreana 'Brockhurst'	Cymbidium Hugh Gordon 'Freckles' x Caniculatum 'Esk'
		
Cymbidium madidum 'Yellow'	SLC (LC Miss Wonderful x SLC (Tokyo Magic x Dream Cloud))	Sarcochilus Barbara Gregory (fitzgeraldii x Riverdene)

WHAT TO DO ON FROSTY NIGHTS by Brian Milligan

My best advice (for those of my age) is to put another blanket on the bed, pull on some bed socks, go to bed early and get up late! But dedicated growers who follow this advice still won't sleep well unless they've first made sure that their orchids are also cosy for the night.

July and August are probably the worst months for our orchids in terms of frost damage and it's therefore especially important to watch out for frost warnings at this time. Remember that the temperature in the suburbs of Melbourne is usually a degree or two lower than that forecast for central Melbourne. Cymbidiums can withstand temperatures down to freezing, perhaps even a degree or two below for short periods. But temperatures much below freezing can cause extensive damage to flower spikes. The unopened buds first turn brown and then black, before they eventually fall. Even spikes still in the sheath may be damaged. They may appear to be unaffected and still develop normally but when the flowers open they are often found to have pinched lips, sometimes with blackened margins. Australian native dendrobiums are also prone to frost damage, the leaves developing white areas and then falling from the plant. The large,

delicate leaves of lycastes are also susceptible and even the fleshy pseudobulbs may freeze and subsequently turn into a rotten mass.

Fortunately most of us who live in the inner eastern suburbs don't usually experience particularly harsh frosts. Our suburban blocks are small and as a result our orchids are fairly close to buildings, either our own or our neighbours, which act as heat banks and therefore tend to keep their surroundings slightly warmer than otherwise. Those in low-lying areas or with open parkland nearby will be more likely to be frost-affected and should take extra precautions.

So what should we do to protect our orchids from frost? For most of us, a shade-house with a fibre-glass roof will provide all the protection we need for 99% of the time. Only on two occasions in the last 15 years have I lost cymbidium spikes due to frost damage and on both those occasions the temperature had fallen to -5°C and remained in that vicinity for several hours. The only way to counter such extreme weather is to provide some form of heat and air movement, for example with an electric fan heater. Alternatively, move all your plants in spike into the house or garage for the night – this is probably the best option for those with a small collection. But do it before you go to bed because it will be too late if you wait until morning.

Such low temperatures are rare in Melbourne's suburbs but we experience mild frosts every year, for which we should be prepared. Several of my shade-houses have shade-cloth fronts mounted on roller blinds. These are normally rolled up during the winter months but on frosty nights I unroll them to provide extra protection. If you have a large tarpaulin, it's a good idea to pull it over the top of your shade-house, particularly if it doesn't have a fibre-glass roof. Draping sheets of newspaper over your cymbidium spikes is also a good idea – slightly warmer air is trapped beneath the paper. There is no wind on frosty nights, so there is no need to fasten the paper down – it won't blow away.

It's always colder at the perimeter than in the centre of your shade-house, so if possible move plants towards the centre. This is not possible in my overcrowded shade-houses and I occasionally notice frost burn on the leaves on my Australian dendrobiums located closest to the perimeter. Leaves touching the roof or walls and those close to the roof are also at risk.

Even those with heated glasshouses have to take care during frosty weather, because any leaves that touch the glass and especially the frame, if it's made of aluminium or iron, may be frost burnt. Also, I find that the orchids in my glasshouse need watering more frequently in very cold weather. The rate of evaporation of water from the pots depends on the temperature differential between the pot and the walls of the glasshouse and this, of course, is greatest in cold weather. It's obvious when you see all the condensed moisture on the glass on cold mornings and ask yourself where it has come from.

Some growers believe that they can counter the effects of frost by spraying their plants with water next morning until the ice has melted. The rationale is that if the ice is allowed to melt naturally under the influence of the sun's rays, additional heat is withdrawn from the plant's tissues (true), whereas the water sprayed on the plant provides the heat necessary to melt the ice. I'm sure that it's sound practice in the event of mild frosts. But at very low temperatures the sap within the plant has already frozen and the damage done, so I doubt if spraying with water helps under these circumstances.

For those members with a small collection, my best advice is to move your cymbidiums in spike indoors to a cool, unheated area. Don't bring them into your heated living room, because the sudden temperature change can sometimes cause bud drop. Of course, you must return them to their normal positions next morning (after the temperature has risen above freezing), making sure that the flower spikes face the original direction. If it seems like a lot of unnecessary work, just protect your best ones – at least you'll have a few plants for your winter and spring shows in the event of another super-frost!

LAST THOUGHT:

I'm afraid for the calendar. Its days are numbered.

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

NEWSLETTER



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

DISCLAIMER

Maroondah Orchid Society Incorporated, Executive and Committee will not take any responsibility for the results of any action taken on advice given or views expressed by any member or invited speaker at any meeting or show. Views and opinions in this Newsletter by authors of articles do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of Maroondah Orchid Society Incorporated or its Executive or Committee.