

MAROONDAH ORCHID SOCIETY INCORPORATED

MONTHLY NEWS LETTER

Lycastes are orchids of the
New World Tropics and Subtropics



Lycaste Club Emblem

Volume : 47 - Issue : 1

Next Meeting: Friday – 16 February 2024

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

ITEM OF THE EVENING: Jim Foster-Johnson – Growing Masdevallia's Jim's Way

Time: 8.00PM

Topical Chat: Bring plants deflasked by David at our meeting and the plants you received at the Christmas dinner.

Supper: Please bring a plate

Special Effort: Tickets at door \$1.00 or 3 for \$2.00

Sales Table: Pots, stakes, labels and hangers – Leanne Le

President's Report

Happy New Year to all our members and your families.

2024 looks like being a great year for the Maroondah Orchid Society with a terrific line-up of guest speakers for our monthly meetings.

Our Christmas Dinner was well-attended and we had a sumptuous meal prepared by Hillards. Some beautiful plants were benched for the popular vote.

The Melbourne summer has certainly thrown up some curve-balls with El Nino petering out before it really began. It's been pretty wet with some quite humid days and I'd suspect this has had some impact on growing conditions for our orchids.

I'm looking forward to our February meeting where we'll have a look at some of the plants you received during David's deflasking demonstrations last year. So please bring your deflasked plants along and share with us how they've fared over summer.

Finally, congratulations to Christan Gunawan and Claudia Ng, both of whom have progressed to the Open Section, and to Tu Le who has progressed to the Intermediate Section.

Michael Chivell

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!

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	Michael Chivell (M) 0402 568 217
Vice Presidents:	David Cannon (M) 0418 394 282 Ron Coleman
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MOS Website Address	www.oscov.asn.au/mos
MOS Facebook Address	www.facebook.com/maroonidahorchidsociety

Photos from the Christmas Dinner







Plants on Display at the Christmas Dinner





Christmas Dendrobium Given To Members at Christmas

Den. Delicate Jayde

Den. Jayden 'Sheen' X Den. delicatum 'Natural White'



The images above are of Dendrobium Delicate Jayde hybrid seedling that was given out at Christmas meeting.

Details of parents are –

Den x delicatum White 'Natural'. Is a plant from Lansdowne Plateau, mid NSW coast area, that carries upright flower spike with lots of flowers. The RHS who are the worldwide register of orchid hybrids, do not accept the name Den.x delicatum and only recognise the plant name Den.specioekingianum, as this was registered as a hybrid in England in the 1892, with parents being Den.kingianum x speciosum, being the same parents as the natural Den.x delicatum.

Den.Jayden 'Sheen' is a hybrid registered by Wally Upton , Sydney in 1994. Parents are Den.Elegant Heart, which is (Den.Suzanne (bigibbum x tetragonum)) crossed with Den.speciosum.

The particular clone Den.Jayden 'Sheen' FCC/AOC, ACM/AOC has won 7 awards between 2004 and 2018, mostly by Henk van den Berg from NSW.

HOW I GROW MASDEVALLIAS

by Brendan Larkin

Why did I start growing masdevallias? As a junior grower, I was constrained by many factors, not least the size of my plants. Even though I was allowed to put my plants among my parents' collection and eventually be allocated my own space, I still had to be mindful of how much room I was using, especially in the heated igloo, which my parents were always complaining was too crowded. Masdevallias seemed to be the perfect solution as mature plants can fit comfortably in quite small pots. Their flowers come in such a wide range of colours, sizes and shapes that they seemed to me to be the perfect orchid. There are 300-400 different masdevallia species and many more in allied genera, so there are plenty to choose from. As a junior I found it a highly rewarding genus – there is almost always one or another in flower, and each month I could count on something different to exhibit on the show bench.

Habitat. Masdevallias are native to the central and South American continent. *Masdevallia floribunda* is the most northerly species, being found in the mountains of Mexico. Most grow in the equatorial regions of central and South America, usually in the mountains. They enjoy a temperate climate with little seasonal change.

Culture. Most masdevallias prefer an intermediate environment with a minimum temperature of 10-12°C. Our igloo has a warm end and a cooler end, and our plants are placed in it according to their preference. *Dracula* species and hybrids prefer warmer conditions, while other more robust masdevallia species prefer it cooler. Some masdevallias, such as the awarded *Masdevallia veitchiana* 'Sol', prefer to grow outdoors with the cymbidiums.

Heat is a killer for masdevallias, so provide extra protection on hot summer days by keeping them in as humid an environment as possible and by providing plenty of air movement. If you can afford the cost, buy an evaporative cooler for your growing area.

Potting. Most of my plants are grown in chopped Sphagnum moss mixed with small polystyrene chips, which stop the mix from becoming waterlogged. Some growers use other materials, such as Versa Rock and pine bark or Rockwool, Perlite and polystyrene chips. If you use bark in your mix, it's a good idea to add some Canunda shell or granite chips to minimise the development of acidity as the bark ages, especially if you fertilise heavily. Basket pots should be used for those plants that need to dry out more quickly than others, or those (such as draculas) that send their flower spikes down through the mix. Some plants are more conducive to mounting than potting. If you have a large plant that needs dividing, try growing the pieces in different ways (eg. in a hanging basket, on a mount, or in a pot) to find out which method suits best.

Watering. I water my plants once each week but at summer they are watered every day. Water and humidity go hand in hand, and the key to a happy masdevallia is humidity. Masdevallias do not have pseudo-bulbs and rely entirely on their leaves for nourishment and water uptake. A humid environment is essential, especially as keeping the roots too wet can cause them to rot.

Humidity. The higher in the greenhouse, the greater the humidity of the environment. Hot air rises, and the higher the temperature, the more moisture the air can absorb. There is a two-fold advantage in hanging your masdevallias high, as we have found that our plants now flower more prolifically, due to the combination of higher light and humidity levels. Plants with light green leaves will produce twice as many flowers as those with darker green leaves grown in heavier shade.

Air movement is a critical factor, as masdevallias require good air movement all year round. We use electric fans all year, and when the weather becomes warmer, even in spring, we use an evaporative cooler to keep the plants in their comfort zone.

Fertilising. Plants like to be fertilised but only at low concentrations. Peter's fertiliser, applied at one quarter of the manufacturer's recommendation, seems to be the correct strength for our masdevallias.

Pests and Diseases. Slugs and snails are our greatest problem. Snail bait works well (beware: it can also kill dogs and other pets) and so too does the heel of your boot! Caterpillars are currently a problem, as they chew the young flower spikes. I try to catch them in the act and remove them from the scene of the crime but you may prefer to use an insecticide.

Virus. There is only one known virus that infects masdevallias, namely, the yellow bean virus. If you suspect that your plant is infected, remove it from your collection and seek expert advice. If the infection is confirmed, destroy the plant as the infection could spread throughout your whole collection. Yes, it hurts to destroy cherished plants but it's better than eventually throwing out your whole collection.

Starting Out. Masdevallia veitchiana and its hybrids are the best plants to begin a masdevallia collection. They are robust plants that provide large flowers of good substance in orange or sunset tones. Don't be afraid to try masdevallias – they really are very rewarding orchids to add to your collection. Good Luck!

LAST THOUGHTs

Where do sheep go on vacation?

The Baa-hamas.

Why don't oysters share their pearls?

Because they're shellfish!

What do you call a Labrador at the beach in February?

A hot dog.

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.

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