MAROONDAH ORCHID SOCIETY
INCORPORATED

MONTHLY NEWS LETTER

Lycastes are orchids of the
New World Tropics and Subtropics

Lycaste Club Emblem

Volume : 47 - Issue : 2

Next Meeting: **Friday – 15 March 2024**

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

ITEM OF THE EVENING: VOOTY Awards led by Leo Orland

Time:	**8.00PM**
Topical Chat:	Autumn Jobs – Potting and Dividing.
Supper:	Please bring a plate
Special Effort:	Tickets at door $1.00 or 3 for $2.00
Sales Table:	Leanne Le

President's Report

I found out the hard way that attendance at February meetings is notoriously underwhelming. Whilst we had a great topic to discuss and an excellent guest speaker, the numbers at the meeting were quite low. I'm hoping that March will see a resurgence in interest and more members will attend.

David's review of last year's deflasked plants brought out the need to ensure that seedlings are kept damp, especially at this time of the year. There was quite a bit of discussion about best practice watering and feeding.

Jim Foster-Johnson's talk on growing and caring for Masdevallia orchids "Jim's way" was both interesting and informative. The segment included a demonstration of how Jim splits and repots his plants as well as discussion on his watering methods and how he looks after his plants during frosts.

We have a big year planned with some great guest speakers so I'm now looking forward to seeing more members at our upcoming March meeting and for the rest of the year.

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!

NEW MEMBER
I have great pleasure on behalf of the committee and members in welcoming Pauline Lock and Yuen Lock to our ranks. We hope you will have a long and fruitful association with the society.

ATTENDANCE BOOK - It is important 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.

SALES TABLE - Leanne Le

To sell – Members are welcome to bring orchids or orchid related goods to sell on the Sales Table. The club receives 15% commission on sales. Please fill out the appropriate sales document and make sure you put a price tag/sticker on the plant or goods.

Special Effort – Any contribution to the special effort is welcome**. Please ensure that plants that are donated have name tags on them even if the name is generic**.

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

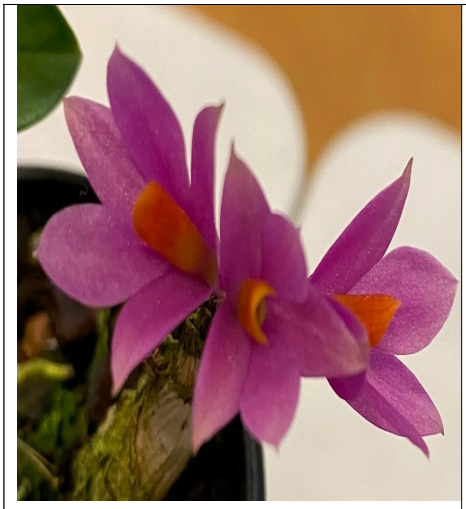
Life Members: The late Frank Date, Jim Foster-Johnson, David Cannon, Alan & Nancy Cockram, Dieter Weise, The late Barry Robinson, Susanne Redpath, Max Bomford, Cheryl Luth, G Moffat.

Current M.O.S. Inc. Committee:

President	Michael Chivell (M) 0402 568 217
Vice Presidents:	David Cannon (M) 0418 394 282
	Ron Coleman
Secretary:	Leo Orland (M) 0419 884 492:
	email leoorland@totalfundraising.com.au
Treasurer:	Ron Coleman (M) 0477 311 188
Committee:	Graeme Moffat (H) 9726 5793
	Leanne Le (M) 0416 818 290
	Genny Chivell (M) 0434 995 174
	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
MOS Facebook Address	www.facebook.com/maroondahorchidsociety

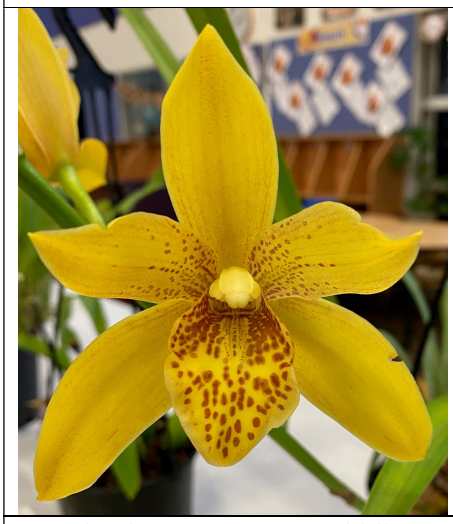
Interesting Plants From the February Meeting



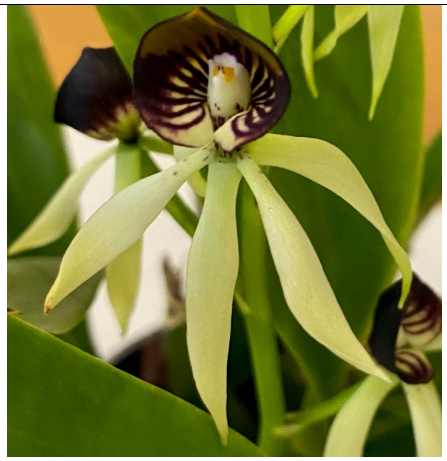
S. Kappl's Den. Hibiki

C. Luth's Cateleya
Mahalo Jack 'Castle Creek'

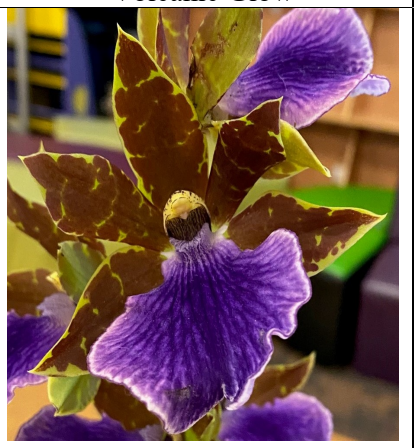
G & M Moffatt Odont.
Hallii x Bictoniense
'Volcanic Glow'



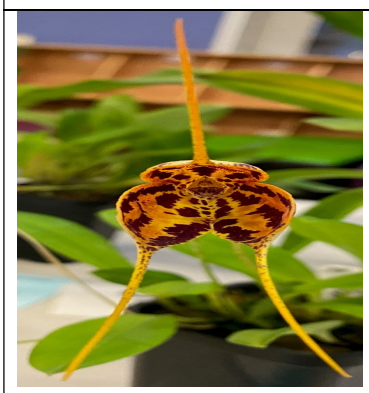
L. Orland's Grammatocymbidium
Ayodhaya



Tu Le's Prosthechea
cochleata

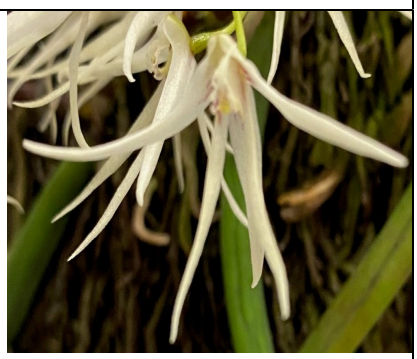


J. Foster-Johnson's Zygo
Artur Elle 'Essenden' x
Warrigal Wonder



J. Foster-Johnson's Masd.
Leopard Dancer 'Ghengis'

L. Orland's Oncid.
Golden Emperor



S. Kappl's Den.
Grimesii

BENCH COMPETITION - February – 2024

JUDGES VOTE	Dendrobium hibiki	c	S. Kappl
POPULAR VOTE	Dendrobium hibiki	c	S. Kappl
BEST IN SECTION			
Open	Dendrobium hibiki	c	S. Kappl
Intermediate	Prosthechea cochleata	c	Tu Le
	Open Section		
Masdevallia Hybrid	1st Hot Shot 'Tiger Tale'	c	J. Foster-Johnson
	2nd Lepard Dancer 'Gaengis'	c	J. Foster-Johnson
	3rd Supernova	c	J. Foster-Johnson
Masdevallia Species	1st infracta	c	S. Kappl
Australian Native – Dendrobium Species	1st Dendrobium speciosum	c	G. & M. Moffat
	2nd Dendrobium (Doc.) grimosii	c	S. Kappl
	3rd Dendrobium taylorii	c	S. Kappl
Australian Native – Sarcochilus Species	1st Sarc. Hirticalcar	c	S. Kappl
Oncidium Medium	1st. Onc. Golden Emperor	c	L. Orland
Oncidium Small	1st Hallii x Bictoniense 'Volcanic Glow'	c	G. & M. Moffat
	2nd Onc. Sharry Baby 'Sweet Fragrance'	c	L. Orland
Laeliinae Intermediate	1st Catt. Mahalo Jack 'Castle Creek'	c	C. Luth
	2nd Slc. Dals Magic	c	J. Foster-Johnson
Any Other Hybrid	1st Grammatocymbidium 'Ayodhaya' #1	c	L. Orland
	2nd Zygopetalum Artur Elle xWarringal Wonder	c	J. Foster-Johnson
Species Any Genera – The America's	1st Prosthechea radiata	C	C. Gunawan
	2nd Prosthechea cochleata	c	C. Luth
	3rd Maxillaria notilioglossa	c	C. Luth

Species Any Genera – Asia	1st Dendrobium hibiki	c	S. Kappl
	Intermediate Section		
Species Any Genera – The America's	1st. Prosthechea cochleata	c	Tu Le

Orchid Species Society of Victoria SALE DAY

The Orchid Species Society of Victoria is holding their first Sale Day for 2024 on Sunday March 10th from 11am until 3pm at St Timothy's Vermont. Please note the later start time due to the number of orchid buyers last year congesting the car-park of the church next door. Everything else remains the same. The sale will be in the huge school hall and again it is booked out by 23 orchid vendors. We even have one vendor selling pots, bark and fertilizer under the car-park outside because the hall is full.

PH and THE NUTRITION of ORCHID POT PLANTS

by Bill Mather

The grey-white crystalline incrustation or efflorescence surrounding the drainage holes of a long established orchid pot-plant using bark substrate is generally assumed to result from over-feeding – either too strong or too frequent. The usual excellent advice is to flush pots regularly with water to wash out accumulated excess salts. The "burning" of root tips in such cases is evidence that ex-osmosis has occurred – that is, water has been extracted from the whole plant via the roots by a high concentration of salts in the base of the pot, particularly when the drainage has been poor. Such a mix is typically old and "broken down". Certainly over-feeding old mix is a factor but even modest feeding levels will contribute to root loss in old mix.

In nature, epiphytic and lithophytic orchids grow on trees and rocks with their roots partially or fully exposed to the air. Roots that have died in broken-down mix have not drowned through lack of air necessarily, because the stomata in the under-surface of the foliage provide the vital pathway for respiration – the gaseous interchange of carbon dioxide from the air and oxygen as a product of photosynthesis. Remember that plant roots totally immersed in weak aqueous nutrients do not drown in hydroponic culture and that rock wool culture also involves immersion in aqueous nutrients without detriment to root tissue.

Living plants are made up of 75% by weight of water, 23% organic matter (complex carbon compounds) and 2% inorganic (non-carbon) chemical compounds. The latter represent the

water-soluble mineral nutrients taken in by the root system. In pot-plant culture the substrate is almost devoid of these minerals, which must therefore be supplied by the grower.

There are 14 nutrient chemical elements (including trace elements). Four of these elements – phosphorus, calcium, magnesium and molybdenum – are insoluble in water below pH 5 (that is, more acidic than pH 5), whereas six elements (iron, magnesium, boron, copper, zinc and calcium) are insoluble above pH 8 (that is, more alkaline than pH 8). Thus the availability of nutrients to the plant varies at different pH levels and ceases beyond certain limits.

A solution at pH 7 is neutral (that is, neither acidic nor alkaline) and one at pH 6.5 is regarded as ideal for nutrition. The most important reason for the accumulation of excess nutrient salts is the development of acidity in the mix – bacterial and fungal action has lowered the pH of good freshly composted mix from pH 6.5 to pH 5 or less. Salts accumulate because they are not available in usable solution for absorption by root hairs. Worse follows by ex-osmosis – the plant dehydrates and the cells are destroyed when their cells rupture and collapse. Not only do extremes of pH affect the availability of plant nutrients but also they interfere with the delicate balance of microorganisms in the growing medium. For example, a very acidic medium can seriously interfere with mycorrhizae, beneficial fungi that make a plant's root system work more effectively.

When a potting mix has broken down, it is difficult to flush. Moreover, flushing does not change the pH; the mix remains acidic. Although it would then be logical to 'sweeten' the mix with a top-dressing of dolomite, this could provide a hit-or-miss quick-fix with the added risk of increasing the pH to such an extent that other nutrients become unavailable. Fresh repotting is always the best solution.

References:
1. The Orchid Grower's Manual by Gordon C. Morrison.
2. Fertilising by Wal Murphy.

WHAT SIZE POT SHOULD I USE?

by Brian Milligan

It probably depends to some extent on the genus you plan to repot but in general one should use a pot large enough to accommodate one or two year's extra growth but no more. I fully agree with Alfred Smollet, who in 1927 wrote in The Orchid Review "I am a great believer in small pots. A common error with beginners is using pots unreasonably large. All beginners in Orchid growing are optimists, and the large pot is the outward and visible sign of this optimism". One of the main problems in using overly large pots is that the potting mix tends to remain wet for too long after watering, especially in winter.

The choice of pot size is largely a matter of common sense. When the orchid is knocked from its pot, cursory examination will show that, in most cases, the majority of its roots run around the circumference of the pot in preference to filling the pot completely. And if you examine their condition you will generally find that those growing around the perimeter are in a much healthier state than those in the centre of the mix. Dome® pots are designed with a dome in their bottom to eliminate the area most prone to root decay. An alternative is to place a small, inverted pot in the base of a larger one before repotting. Cymbidiums roots of a healthy plant generally fill the entire pot and remain in good condition for a couple of years. But thereafter, as the bark begins to decay, the roots in the centre of the pot are usually the first to deteriorate.

It's also important when repotting to ensure that the drainage holes in the pot are unblocked. Plastic pots made using old dies (moulds) sometimes have the drainage holes partly or fully blocked with plastic. It's important to open the drainage holes fully, using a lino knife or similar sharp implement. Sometimes I enlarge the holes at the same time to provide extra drainage. Some growers use an electric drill or hot soldering iron to make extra drainage holes in their cymbidium pots and swear that it results in faster growth.

Pots are produced in a variety of shapes and heights, some with far more drainage holes than others. Best of all, in my opinion, are Port Pots®, which have an extensive network of drainage holes in their bottom. In general, shallow pots seem to suit Australian native dendrobiums best. Net pots, designed to provide excellent drainage, certainly do that but they dry out quickly and therefore need to be watered twice as often as pots with fewer drainage holes. Oncidium seedlings do well for me in them but the roots tend to grow in and out through the mesh holes. This leads to problems at repotting time – either one cuts off the offending roots or one simply puts the whole pot into a larger one and tops up with new mix; each procedure has its disadvantages.

The above discussion refers to plastic pots, by far the most common in general use. But the older pots made of baked clay (terra cotta) are useful in certain cases. Because they are porous, water evaporates from their exterior, producing a cooling effect, which can be beneficial in hot weather. However, this is a disadvantage in winter, when it's better to keep the roots warm. Some growers prefer clay pots or saucers for temperamental orchids, such as Dendrobium cuthbertsonii and Sarcochilus ceciliae, which need a reliable supply of water but hate 'wet feet'. But in general I believe that black plastic pots are better, especially in winter when they help to warm the roots whenever the sun shines on them.

Unwanted Guest In My Orchid

When I was watering my Stanhopea orchid the plant moved. I took a closer look.

Then the head popped up. It was a ringtail possum who made its home in my orchid.

Leo Orland

LAST THOUGHTs

What did the leaf say to the other leaf? I'm falling for you.

Why did the scarecrow win a Nobel Prize? He was outstanding in his field.

Why's it so easy to trick a leaf in March? They fall for anything.

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.