

# MAROONDAH ORCHID SOCIETY

INCORPORATED

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Volume : 47 - Issue : 8

Lycastes are orchids of the  
New World Tropics and Subtropics



Lycaste Club Emblem

**Next Meeting: Friday – 20 September 2024**  
Meeting begins at 8.00pm

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

### ITEM OF THE EVENING:

**Jeanne Dunn**

**Orchids in the bush**

**Topical Chat:** Final Preparations for Spring Show

**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

There are only a few weeks left until our world class Spring Orchid Show. I'm looking forward to seeing some magnificent displays in the hall. Sadly, this year's show will be the last at St Timothy's school hall, but we are in discussions with other venues for future meetings and our show.

By now you should be getting your show plants into great shape to ensure that they look fantastic. Don't forget to make sure that your plants are virus-free and your pots are clean.

It's also very important to remember that to show any plants, you must be a financial member of the Society by no later than the September General meeting.

And one final reminder – bring your money and a friend! We will have many plants for sale as well as bags of various size Orchid orchid bark which can be pre-ordered or purchased on the day.

Hope to see you there.

Michael Chivell

### **REMINDER: Membership Renewal NOW DUE**

The committee has decided that membership fees for financial year 2024 /2025 will remain at the same as last year.

Fees were due 1st July 2024. Fees: Adult (single) \$20.00, Family \$25.00, 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 (20 September 2024).**

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!

**REMINDER: If you have a MOS Perpetual Trophy please return to the club.**

**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, The late 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](mailto: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](http://www.oscov.asn.au/mos)

**MOS Facebook Address** [www.facebook.com/maroondahorchidsociety](https://www.facebook.com/maroondahorchidsociety)

## Maroondah Orchid Society Spring Show 2024

In preparation for our upcoming Spring Show, members are advised that for our Show to be successful your Committee need to have members assistance.

Please be advised that assistance will be needed for the following.

- Front Door Entry; Saturday & Sunday. Roster sheet will be available at September meeting.
- Selling of raffle tickets.
- Plant sales check out.

If you cannot commit to a time, just turn up and you will be allocated a job.

Setting up halls on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> September. 2.00pm – 4.00pm.

Cleaning up of halls after show finishes on Sunday afternoon after 3.00pm.

**If you intend to put up an individual display, please advise Show Marshall, David Cannon, 0418 394282**

For Floral Art and Mini Stands, please see details in Entry conditions for full details or advise Show Marshall, David Cannon, 0418 394282 no later than Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> September.

Forms for all requirements will be at our September meeting for filling in.

Thank you in advance for your help and to making our Spring Show very successful.

**The lower hall is not available for sales therefore sales will be in the main hall in a partitioned area separate from the show as per last year. Please let David know if you intend to bring plants for sale. Only members who are exhibiting at Spring Show are eligible to sell plants.**

**Please see Vendor conditions for details of Sale plant delivery timing.**

David

### **Orchiata Orchid Bark Orders**

The committee will be placing an order for – Orchiata Orchid Bark – size 9-12mm, 12-18mm and 18mm-25mm to be available for pick-up at the Spring Show. To assist in determining the quantity to be ordered please see the attached order form, complete it and email to David Cannon of your requirement by Thursday 12th September. The cost of the bark to members who pre-order is \$32.00 and will be sold at the show for \$35.00.

# OSCOV 2024 Show





## Congratulations to OSCOV 2024 Maroondah Orchid Society Show Winners

**Miniature Cymbidium Flower – Hybrid Predominately Brown**

**First – ‘Koala Bear’ - C. Luth**

**Paphiopedilum – Any Other Type Hybrid**

**Second – Rosey Dawn – J. Foster-Johnson**

**Miniature Exhibition Laeliinae Hybrid (less than 70mm)**

**Second – C. Chester ‘Bensam’ – C. Luth**

**Exhibition Type Oncidiinae Hybrid – Any Colour or Combination of Colours**

**First – Onc. Tiger Barb ‘Royal’ – D. & A. Weise**

**Any Other Oncidiinae – Miniature Flowered**

**Second – Twinkle ‘Yellow’ – J. Foster-Johnson**

**Masdevallia Hybrid – Predominately Pink**

**First – Machu Picchu ‘JV’ – J. Foster-Johnson**

**Masdevallia Hybrid – Predominately Spotted/Striped/Patterned**

**Second – Falcata x Myra – J.Foster-Johnson**

**Species Paphiopedilum - villosum**

**Second – villosum - D. & A. Weise**

**Species Pleurothallidinae (other than Masdevallia)**

**First - Restrepia brachypus ‘Goliath’ – L. Le**

**Species Coelogyne Small (formerly known as Dendrochilum)**

**First - Coelogyne glumacea - D. & A. Weise**

**Species The Americas (not Listed Above)**

**First - Maxillaria schunkeana - D. & A. Weise**

**Standard Cymbidium Flower – Specimen (min. 4 inflorescences)**

**Second – Cym. Hookerianum – L. Le**

**Miniature Cymbidium Flower – Specimen (min. 6 inflorescences)**

**Second – Cym. Sarah Jean ‘Jennifer’ – J. Foster-Johnson**

**Australian Native Specimen and/or terete style Dendrobium – Hybrid**

**Second – Den. Essie Banks – L. Le**

**Group of Three Different Genera – Species and/or Hybrid**

**Second – Max. chunkeana; Sten. glicensteinii; Paph. villosum - D. & A. Weise**

## Interesting Plants From the August Meeting

		
<p style="text-align: center;">K. Balogh's <i>Masdevallia</i> Curacao 'Justin'</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">D. Weise's <i>Coelogyne</i> <i>stenophyllum</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Tu Le's <i>Phalanopsis</i> Unknown</p>
		
<p style="text-align: center;">G. Chivell's <i>Chian</i> Tzy Dragon</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">T. Phan's <i>Dendrobium</i> Tetragonum Regal Red Lip x Tinonea Ref Lip</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">S. Kappl's <i>Paphiopedalum</i> Ruby Fire</p>
		
<p style="text-align: center;">D. Cannon's <i>Dendrobium</i> Shoreham</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">S. &amp; M. Early's <i>Coelogyne</i> <i>Colmanii</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">R. &amp; H. Coleman's <i>Cymbidium</i> Ngaire x <i>pumilum</i></p>



## BENCH COMPETITION - AUGUST – 2024

<b>JUDGES VOTE</b>	Masdevallia Curacao ‘Justin’	c	K. Balogh
<b>POPULAR VOTE</b>	Coelogyne stenophyllum	c	D. Weise
<b>BEST IN SECTION</b>			
<b>Open</b>	Masdevallia Curacao ‘Justin’	c	K. Balogh
<b>Intermediate</b>	Phalanopsis Unknown	c	Tu Le
<b>Novice</b>	Chian Tsy Dragon	c	G. Chivell
	<b>Open Section</b>		
<b>Masdevallia Hybrid</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Curacao	c	K. Balogh
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Alpha Sunrise	c	K. Balogh
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Rein Touch	c	K. Balogh
<b>Masdevallia Species</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> . macrura	c	S. Kappl
<b>Dendrobium</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Dockrilla Tamara ‘JD Spots’	c	S. Kappl
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Den. Catherine x J. D. ‘Dark’	c	A. Baker
<b>Australian Native - Other species</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Plectorrhiza beckleri	c	S. Kappl
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Bulbophyllum shepherdii	c	C. Gunawan
<b>Australian Native –</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Regal Hilda ‘Rockstar x Jesmond Sparkle	c	G. McCully

<b>Dendrobium Hybrid Combination</b>			
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Autumn Strawberry ‘Sunset Shades’ x Hilda Poxin	c	G. McCully
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Cobber ‘Yabba Yabba’	c	C. Ng
<b>Australian Native – Dendrobium Hybrid - Other</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Shoreham	c	D. Cannon
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Brimbank Sparkler	c	K. Balogh
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Dovidid	c	J. Foster-Johnson
<b>Paphiopedilum</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Brendarella ‘Frolic x Hoopia Harves’	c	C. Gunawan
<b>Paphiopedilum Species</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> villosum	c	D. Weise
	2 <sup>nd</sup> villosum	c	S. Kappl
<b>Paphiopedilum Primary or Novelty</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Ruby Fire	c	S. Kappl
<b>Any Other Hybrid</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Coelogyne Colmanii	c	S. & M. Early
<b>Species Any Genera – The America’s</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Maxillaria picta	c	K. Balogh
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Maxillaria schunkeana	c	D. Weise
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Restrepea sanguinea	c	K. Balogh
<b>Species Any Genera – Asia</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Coelogyne stenophyllum	c	D. Weise
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Coelogyne veronicae	c	D. Weise
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Coelogyne glunneem	c	D. Weise
	<b>Intermediate Section</b>		
<b>Minature Cymbidium</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Ngairé x pumilum	c	R. & H. Coleman
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Morialata Falls	c	R. & H. Coleman
<b>Phalaenopsis</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> unknown	c	Tu. Le

<b>Australian Native – Dendrobium Hybrid</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Den. Ellen	c	R. & H. Coleman
<b>Novice Section</b>			
<b>Intermediate Cymbidium</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Mini Dream ‘Pure Gold’	c	S. Liu
<b>Australian Native – Dendrobium Species</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> tetragonum Regal Red Lip x Tinonea Red Lip	c	T. Pham
<b>Australian Native – Dendrobium Hybrid</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Jonathan’s Glory ‘Olympic’	c	T. Pham
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Treasure magenta x Dark Cherry	c	G. Chivell
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Jonathan’s Glory Dark Joy	c	T. Pham
<b>Oncidiinae Small</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Chian -Tsy	c	G. Chivell

### Points tally – 2024

Open	Points
J Foster-Johnson	89
S. Kappl	84
C Luth	45
D. Cannon	8
G. Moffat	8
L. Orland	48
L. Le	16
C. Ng	5
C. Gunawan	41
K. Lam	7
A. Baker	6
D. Weise	17

K. Balogh	13
G. McCully	6
S. & M. Early	3
<b>Intermediate</b>	<b>Points</b>
Tu Le	23
J. Harnetty	43
J. Wong	11
R. & H. Coleman	17
S. Lim	1
<b>Novice</b>	<b>Points</b>
G. Chivell	24
T. Pham	14
R. Kasman	19
S. Liu	8

### ORCHID SHOWS 2024

Show	Date/Time	Venue
South Gippsland	Fri 13 September, 9.30 -4.30, Sat 14, 9.30-4	Wonthaggi Workmen's Club, 75 Graham Street, Wonthaggi
Cymbidium Orchid Society	Sat 14 Sept 9-4, Sun 15 Sept 9-4	Mt Waverley Community Centre. Miller Crescent, Mt Waverley
NEMOS	Sat 14 Sep, 9-4 Sun 15 Sep 10-4	Bulleen Heights Secondary School 221 Manningham Rd Lower Templestowe

Bairnsdale	Sat 14 Sept 9-4, Sun 15 Sept 10-3	Lucknow Memorial Hall, 105 Great Alpine Rd, Lucknow
Southern Suburbs	Sat. 21 Sept 10 – 4 Sun. 22 Sept 10 - 4	Snr City Hall, 964 Nepean Hwy. (Cnr. Exley Dr.)
Mid-Murray	Sat 21 Sept 10-4, Sun 22 Sept 10-3.	Kerang Memorial Hall, Nolan Street Kerang
West Gippsland	Sat 21 Sept 9-4, Sun 22 Sept 10-3	Anglican Church Hall, Cnr. Princes Way & Francis Ave, Drouin.
Geelong	Sat 21 Sept 9-4, Sun 22 Sept 10-3	Christ Church Hall, Cnr. Moorabool and McKillop Streets
Bayside	Sun 22 Sept Shopping Centre Hours	Cranbourne Park Shopping Centre Sth Gippsland Hwy Cranbourne
Stawell	Friday 27 Sept 10 -5 Sat. 28 Sept 10-4 Sun 29 Sept 10-3	Stawell Entertainment Centre, Town Hall 117 Main St. Stawell
Goulburn Valley	Sat 28 Sep, 9-4 Sun 29 Sep 10-3	Shepparton Harness Racing Track, Melbourne Rd, Kialla
Berwick	Sat 28 Sept 9-4, Sun 29 Sept 9-4	Senior Citizens' Hall, 112 High Street, Berwick
Maroondah	Sat 28 Sep, 9-4 Sun 29 Sep 9-3	St. Timothy's Catholic School, 21 Stevens Rd, Vermont
Warrnambool	Sat 5 Oct Sept 9-4, Sun 6 Oct 9 – 3	Our Lady Help of Christian Hall , 28 Selby Rd, Warrnambool
MPOS	Friday 4 Oct.	Cnr McMahons Rd and Gertrude St Frankston
MEOS	Sat 5 Oct, 9-4, Sun 6 Oct, 12-4	Burwood Heights Uniting Church, 347 Blackburn Rd, Burwood East
Ringwood	Sat 5 Oct 9-4, Sun 6 Oct 9-4	Keystone Hall 20 Civic Square Croydon 3136

Gippsland	Sat 5 Oct. Sun 6 Oct. Centre Hours	Mid-Valley Shopping Centre, Princess Highway
Bendigo	Fri 4 Oct 1-4, Sat 5 Oct. 10-3	Truscott Reserve 18 Murdock St California Gully
Colac	Sat 12 Oct 9-4, Sun 13 Oct 10-4	Colac Show Grounds Cnr. Bruce St & Princess Hwy
St Arnaud	Sat 12 Oct 9-4 Sun 13 Oct 9-4	Town Hall Napier St, St Arnaud
Cobden	Sat 19 Oct 10-4, Sun 20 Oct 10-4	Civic Hall, Victoria Street
Yarra Valley Orchid Society	Sat 19 Oct 9- 4, Sun 20 Oct 9-3	Public Hall, 590 Warburton Highway, Seville
Ballarat	Fri 18 Oct 12-5, Sat 19 10 – 3 Sun 20 10-3	Wendouree Neighbourhood Centre 1 Holly Grove Wendouree
MPOS	Fri. 25 Oct	Bunnings Mornington 1100 Nepean Highway Mornington
Bayside	Sat 26 Oct 9 - 5 Sun 27Oct 9 - 4	Cranbourne Public Hall, 166-168 South Gippsland Hwy
Ringwood / Yarra Valley Orchid Society	Sat 2 Nov 9-4, Sun 3 Nov 9-3pm	Keystone Hall, Keystone Hall Civic Square, Croydon
Bairnsdale Sarc Show	Sat 9 Nov 9-4, Sun 10 Nov 10-3	Paynesville Community Centre 55 The Esplanade Paynesville

## Phyllosticta Leaf Spot



Phyllosticta leaf-spot fungus (*Phyllosticta capitalensis*) spreads easily and causes unsightly blemishes on the leaves of orchids. It is most common in warmer climates, but can be found

throughout the world on a number of different types of orchids. This blight is also known as Guignardia; the names apply to two different sexual stages of the same fungus. Dendrobiums and plants in the Vanda alliance are most prone to this fungus.

### Symptoms

The first signs of a *Phyllosticta* infection in vandaceous orchids appear as elongated tiny purplish or black spots along the veins of the leaves. These lesions gradually grow in size, appear as long, blackish, diamond-shaped streaks, and eventually take on the characteristic eyespot appearance — the perimeter of the spot outlined in black, surrounding a tan or gray area of dead tissue, with a black fruiting body at the center. As the infection progresses, the spots can coalesce to cover the leaf. The leaf may eventually die and drop.

On dendrobiums, the fungus shows up as leaf spotting, starting as small, circular yellow spots that gradually turn black. As the fungus matures, the leaves yellow, exhibit a black weblike pattern, become more susceptible to brown rots, and may die and drop.

Symptoms of *Phyllosticta*'s presence take three to six weeks to appear as tiny spots on infected leaves, and several weeks longer to manifest as easily visible lesions. Higher light levels and dry conditions inhibit the growth and spread of the fungus, where in lower-light growing areas where as there is plenty of humidity, or during a series of rainy, overcast days, *Phyllosticta* has a greater opportunity to gain a foothold.

### Treatment

Remove and dispose of affected leaves from infected plants to keep the fungal spores from spreading into the growing environment. Some growers have reported covering the mature lesions with clear nail polish to prevent the dissemination of spores.

Repeated applications of fungicides such as Dithane M45, Captan, Ferbam, Mancozeb or thiophanate-methylbased treatments will help control infection levels and can prevent new infections in healthy plants, but it is difficult if not impossible to completely eradicate the fungus in an infected host plant. As always, when using any sort of chemical control on your orchids, strictly follow the manufacturer's instructions for dosage and safety.

### Prevention

Isolate new plants for a period of a month to two months if possible before introducing them to the rest of your collection. This should allow enough time for any pest or disease to present itself and be dealt with, rather than allowing them to spread to healthy plants. Segregate any infected plants from those that are healthy; this fungus is highly contagious and easily spread. Watering practices should allow for the plant to dry before nightfall, to keep the environment less hospitable to fungi and bacteria that thrive in moist, dark and cooler conditions. Keep the growing environment clean. Remove all dead plant material and allow for adequate air circulation between and around plants.

Thanks to The American Orchid Society

# GROWING SARCOCHILUS ORCHIDS IN THE MELBOURNE AREA

by Ted Elgood

**Introduction.** *Sarcochilus* species and hybrids provide an exquisite floral display, from the miniature flowers of *Sarcochilus hillii* to the very much larger flowers of hybrids such as *S. Melba* and *S. Judith*. The colour range, greatly extended in the last five years, now includes white, pastel pink to full red, yellow and orange, as well as flowers with beautifully patterned spots, splashes and bands. Shapes vary from the round, filled-in flowers of *S. hartmannii* to the round, open shape of *S. fitzgeraldii* flowers, the elongated flowers of *S. olivaceous* and *S. spathulatus*, and the starry or spider-shaped flowers of *Rhinerrhiza divitiflora* and its hybrids with *Sarcochilus*, adding to the beauty of this alliance. The primary purpose of this paper is to discuss the cultural conditions necessary to grow these orchids to their full glory.

**Climatic Conditions in the Melbourne Area.** The climatic conditions in the Melbourne area and particularly the Yarra Valley to the north of the city (where I live) can be summarised as follows :

January, February and March – hot days and warm nights; the days are long and bright, and the humidity generally low, particularly on days with strong northeasterly winds.

April and May – temperatures moderating, days becoming shorter, light intensity decreasing, humidity increasing.

June and July – cold days and night, occasional frosts, some mornings below freezing, humidity generally high, short days, dull light.

August and September – days warm, nights cool to cold, days longer, humidity generally high.

October, November and December – increasing day and night temperatures, increasing day length and light intensity; usually the wettest season.

**My Main Orchid Growing Area** is 15m long, 7m wide and 2.5-3m high. The long side faces east, while a work shed forms a large part of the western wall. The house is built using water pipe and fibre-glass for the walls and roof. This type of construction provides protection from rains and frost in winter and from the dry northeast winds in summer. No shade cloth is used between early May and early October, when maximum light is required. Doors in the north and south walls are kept open during the day to provide natural air movement. Fans, which run continuously, assist air circulation.

In the warmer months (October until May) sandstone shade cloth (70% shade factor) is used to moderate the light and heat entering the house. The southern wall is also removed then to improve airflow and to allow heat to escape. The floor of the house, which is covered with scoria, is kept wet to increase humidity and assist cooling. To maintain good airflow around the orchids, they are grown on wire mesh benches at a height of 0.9m above the floor.



**Optimising Conditions for Growing Sarcochilus.** Having established the basic housing for sarcochilus orchids, we can now look at some of the factors that influence their growth and flowering.

**Light.** Various sarcochilus species and hybrids have differing light requirements and this must be taken into account for successful culture. In my shade house there are four zones with significantly different light levels.

Zone 1 – Plants at bench height near the eastern wall, where they receive bright light, particularly during the morning. This zone is most suitable for *Sarcochilus ceciliae* and many of its hybrids.

Zone 2 – Plants at bench height in the middle of the shade house, well protected from the western sun in the afternoon. This zone provides dappled light and is suitable for *S. hartmannii* and many of its hybrids.

Zone 3 – Plants hung below benches facing north, well protected from strong sunlight throughout the day. This zone provides plants with high humidity and low light levels and is suitable for *S. falcatus*, *S. fitzgeraldii*, *S. olivaceous*, *S. serrulatus*, *S. spathulatus*, *S. weinthalii*, *Plectorrhiza tridentata*, *Rhinerrhiza divitiflora* and selected hybrids.

Zone 4 – Plants hung below benches facing south. Plants receive only indirect light. This zone provides high humidity and lowest light levels. *Sarcochilus hillii*, young sarcochilus seedlings and plants showing stress are grown here.

*S. dilatatus* and *S. hirticalcar* are grown in a heated glasshouse maintained at temperatures above 9°C and at light levels approximating those of Zone 1.

*Sarcochilus* species are placed in the various zones on the basis of conditions in their natural environment, although some trial and error has been necessary to determine optimal conditions of growth and flowering for some. As might be expected, hybrids are more tolerant of their growing conditions and may do equally well in two zones. In some cases, however, one parent may dominate and thus influence the choice of the most suitable zone. For example, hybrids bred from *Rhinerrhiza divitiflora* grow much better in the lower light levels of zone 3 than they do in zones 1 or 2. A certain amount of trial and error is needed to determine the best zone for some hybrids.

**Air Movement.** Good air movement is vital to the successful growth of all orchids and every opportunity should be taken to use the natural airflow within the shade house. Fresh air is needed to maintain photosynthesis at maximum levels and to keep the root systems healthy. Good air movement also reduces problems caused by scale infestations and fungal infections. The most desirable level of airflow should result in gentle movement of the leaves, rather than violent disturbance.

**Potting Mixes and Mounts.** Those sarcochilus species that grow naturally as epiphytes are best grown on slabs. Under my conditions I find that tree-fern blocks or lengths of cork oak limbs (80-100 mm in diameter) give best results. These substrates retain some moisture over the course of a day and are preferable to hardwood panels and cork bark, which tend to dry out too rapidly on hot days. Some hybrids with vigorous root development also benefit from slab culture. For example hybrids bred from *Plectorrhiza tridentata* and *Sarcochilus hillii* have such massive roots that they are difficult to contain in pots.

For the lithophytes, such as *Sarcochilus hartmannii*, *S. fitzgeraldii*, *S. ceciliae* and most of their hybrids, pot culture is the best option. The potting medium must be open, allowing air circulation around the roots and providing excellent drainage. The medium should retain some moisture and not break down too rapidly. Experiments using 100% treated pine bark, 100% stones or pebbles, and various mixtures of the two have been performed. All mixes provided satisfactory results, provided the watering conditions were adjusted to suit each type of medium. However, best results overall were obtained with 50:50 blends of bark and stone.

The following table indicates the optimal combination of pot size and potting mix:

Pot Size Composition of Mix

50mm tubes up to 100mm squat pots equal parts of treated pine bark and pebbles (5-10 mm)

125-200mm squat pots equal parts of bark (12-15 mm) and pebbles of similar size

250mm pots and above 40 parts of bark and 60 parts of pebbles (both 20 mm)

A range of stones and pebbles has been tried over a number of years. These included scoria, heat-expanded basalt, expanded clay nodules, Versa Rock® and (recently) Absorba-Ston®. Versa Rock®, expanded clay nodules and Absorba-Stone® are all low-density, porous materials that absorb moisture. They all tend to keep the mix moist and provide a suitable environment for healthy root growth.

The scoria tended to decompose, eventually forming a mud-like sludge in the bottom of the pot, and its use was therefore discontinued. Heat-expanded basalt is a low-density material consisting of spherical balls. It absorbs water, keeping the mix moist but not wet. The results were excellent but unfortunately it became unavailable.

Versa Rock® has been used for three years with excellent results; its only disadvantage is that lumps larger than 5-10 mm are unavailable. Trials using Versa Rock® as the sole medium for growing *Sarcochilus ceciliae* have given excellent results. Root development has been very good, with little or no root loss, a problem often encountered in mixes containing bark.

Expanded clay nodules (a product used in hydroponics) have been tested for a year; they provide excellent root development and top growth.

Absorba-Stone® has been introduced to the trial only recently. It is available in five grades, ranging from fine (suitable for seedlings) up to 25 mm lumps (suitable for large specimen plants). Initial results are promising but prolonged trials are needed to see if there are adverse effects from long-term use of any or all of these porous materials.

The main season of growth for *Sarcochilus* is autumn, although growth also continues through winter into spring. Growth perceptibly slows during summer. The best time to repot is in autumn and through the cooler months.

**Watering And Feeding.** Watering is a critical part of *sarcochilus* culture. As the plants do not have pseudobulbs to store water, it is necessary to water throughout the year. The aim should be to keep the plants moist at all times, but not wet. Under my conditions I water early in the morning three or four times each week in summer, once or twice a week in

autumn and spring and once a fortnight or even less frequently in winter. Keeping the humidity high during summer by misting under the benches is important to reduce plant stress.

Feeding orchids is always a good topic for lively discussion. I believe that regular feeding is important to grow and flower *Sarcochilus* orchids to their full potential. I use Peters Excel Hi K® at the rate of 300 ppm at each watering throughout the year. The pots are flushed with water every fifth watering to reduce the build-up of salts in the potting media. When I repot I sprinkle a small quantity of Zest® (treated chicken manure) just below the surface of the mix to encourage new growth.

**Summary.** *Sarcochilus* species and hybrids are fascinating orchids to grow. They produce masses of flowers in a range of shapes and colours. I hope that this article stimulates growers to investigate ways of optimising their growing conditions.



*Sarcochilus hartmannii* 'Anurat'  
CC/OSCOV



*Sarcochilus falcatus* 'Jacki'  
AM/OSCOV



*Sarcochilus* Burgundy On Ice  
'Rose' HCC/OSCOV



## LAST THOUGHTS

Why did the flower crash his bicycle? He lost control of the petals.

It's springtime already? You've got to be pollen my leg.

Why is the letter "A" like a flower? Because a B comes after it.

How do you kiss in spring? With tulips!

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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