

MAROONDAH ORCHID SOCIETY INCORPORATED

MONTHLY NEWS LETTER

Lycastes are orchids of the
New World Tropics and Subtropics



Lycaste Club Emblem

Volume : 48 - Issue : 3

Next Meeting: Friday – 11 April 2025

**Venue: NEW Venue -
Parkmore Primary School
38 Jolimont Road, Forest Hill.**

ITEM OF THE EVENING:–

Time: 8.00PM

Topic: VOOTY Awards

Topical Chat: Potting different genera – Part 2

Our April meeting is the 47th anniversary of the formation of our Society. A birthday surprise will be given to paid members who attend.

Supper: Please bring a plate

**Special Effort: Tickets at door \$1.00 or 3 for \$2.00
Please consider bringing a prize or two for the special effort**

Sales Table: Leanne Le - Pots, stakes, labels and hangers.

President's Report

It's VOOTY Awards time!

Once again this year, Leo will take us through the finalists for the 2024 VOOTY awards. This is always a great evening where we get to see the most beautiful orchids and try to choose which were the winners.

Also at our April meeting topical chat, Jim will again discuss potting multiple genera. This is the final of the 2 part discussion.

At our March meeting, Stephen Early gave an excellent presentation on Cymbidium Hybrids, with particular emphasis on growing conditions. So, for those who attended the meeting, I'll be interested in hearing what critical take-outs you got from the presentation.

And don't forget that our next meeting will be a week earlier on Friday, the **11th of April**.

Until then ... Happy orchid cultivating.

Mick

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, The late Alan Cockram, 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:
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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

VALE Alan Cockram 1931-2025



We have said farewell to one of our Life Members, Alan Cockram, in March.

Alan joined Maroondah Orchid Society in 1992, together with his wife Nancy, and they became involved in many areas of our society and a regular exhibitor at the monthly meetings. Alan became one of our committee members, and this was the start of Alan's exceptional service to Maroondah Orchid Society. He was treasurer then was elected as President in 2015, and was Vice President in 2018.

Whilst being President and Vice President, Alan produced our monthly newsletter for over 5 years and was the Show Marshall for many of our Spring Shows. To facilitate all the work that Alan did for our Society, he made a spare room in his house as a Maroondah Orchid Society office. Alan was a part of a group of members who called themselves, 'The Naughty Nineties' who put on a combined display stand at our Spring Shows. Alan was always exceptionally welcoming to new members and made them feel most welcome.

Alan grew a variety of cold growing orchids, which saw him receive many prizes at monthly meetings and Spring Shows.

Due to health reasons Alan has not been able to attend meetings for some time.










Alan, you will be sadly missed by all that knew you.

Very special thanks for your friendship.

Our thoughts go to your family.

R.I.P

Interesting Plants From the March Meeting

		
<p>D. Weise's <i>Cleisocentron gukusingii</i></p>	<p>J. Foster-Johnson's SC Lana Corysll 'David'</p>	<p>S. Kappl's <i>Epidendrum porpax</i></p>
		
<p>K. Balogh's <i>Galeopetalum Ariene Armour</i> 'Conching'</p>	<p>T. Le's <i>Oncidium Catatante Kibuca Karma</i></p>	<p>D. Weise's <i>Paph. Magic Lantern</i></p>
		
<p>G. & M. Moffat's <i>Cymbidium Baby Cakes</i></p>	<p>J. Harnetty's <i>Miltonia Goodale Moir</i> 'Golden Wonder'</p>	<p>J. Foster-Johnson's <i>Masdevallia Midas Touch Yarra Valley</i>'</p>

BENCH COMPETITION - March – 2025

JUDGES VOTE	Cleisocentron gukusingii	c	D. Weise
POPULAR VOTE	Miltonia Goodale Moir ‘Golden Wonder’	c	J. Harnetty
BEST IN SECTION			
Open	Cleisocentron gukusingii	c	D. Weise
Intermediate	Oncidium Cantante Kilavea Karma	c	Tu Le
	Open Section		
Intermediate Cymbidium	Baby cakes	c	G & M Moffat
Masdevallia Hybrid	1st Midas Touch ‘Yarra Valley’	c	J. Foster- Johnson
	2nd Sun Dancer x Triangularis	c	J. Foster- Johnson
	3rd Bella Dona ‘Prima’	c	J. Foster- Johnson
Paphiopedilum	1st Magic Lantern	c	D. Weise
Paphiopedilum Species	1st henryanum	c	D. Weise
Oncidiinae Medium	1st (Nona x flexuosum) x Endrianum	c	J. Foster- Johnson
Miltonia	1st Gunabara	c	J. Harnetty
	2nd Goodale Moir ‘Golden Wonder’	c	J. Harnetty

	3rd Chocolate Drop x regnellii	c	C. Gunawan
Australian Native - Dendrobium Species	1st Den. rigidum	c	S. Kappl
Australian Native – Sarchochilus Species	1st herticalcar	c	S. Kappl
	2nd eriochilus	c	S. Kappl
Australian Native – Sarchochilus Hybrid	1st Zyzzzy	c	C. Clemson
Laeliinae Large	1st SLC Maris Beat	c	J. Foster-Johnson
	2nd George King x Dream Cloud	c	J. Harnetty
	3rd intermedia x Interglasse	c	J. Foster-Johnson
Laeliinae Intermediate	1st Lana Coryell ‘David’	c	J. Foster-Johnson
	2nd C. Marils Sun x S.C. Benufort	c	J. Harnetty
	3rd C. mahalo jack Castle Creek	c	C. Luth
Any Other Hybrid	1st Galeopetalum Ariene Armour	c	K. Balogh
	2nd Vanda Moonlight firefly	c	K. Balogh
	3rd Zygopetallum Artur Elle x Warrigal Wonder	c	J. Foster-Johnson
Species Any Genera – The America’s	1st porpax	c	S. Kappl
	2nd Oncidium flexiosum	c	C. Gunawan
	3rd Oncidium incurvum	c	C. Luth

Species Any Genera - Asia	1st Cleisocentron gukusingii	c	D. Weise
	2nd Dendrochillon magnum ‘Sunada’ x self	c	J. Foster- Johnson
	3rd Cymbidium dyanum	c	C. Luth
	Intermediate Section		
Oncidiinae Medium	Oncidium Catatante Kibuca Karma	c	Tu Le
	Miltonia Gunabara	c	G. Chivell
	Open Seedling Flowering for the First Time		
	1st Vandfa falcata ‘Barts Giant’ x Elegant	c	G. & M. Moffat

Points tally – 2025

Open	Points
J Foster-Johnson	25
S. Kappl	26
C Luth	9
A. Baker	6
C. Gunawan	10
J. Harnetty	14
B. Clemson	4
D. Wiese	12
G. & M. Moffat	7
K. Balogh	6
Intermediate	
Tu Le	4
G. Chivell	4
Novice	Points
W. Han	4

TWO COOL-GROWING LAELIAS

by Brian Milligan

The genus *Laelia*. There are about 75 species in the genus *Laelia*. Most epiphytic species of *Laelia* grow in Mexico while the rupicolous laelias (those that grow on rocks) grow in Brazil. The Mexican species, *Laelia anceps* and *Laelia gouldiana*, are arguably the easiest to grow under cool conditions, especially if you have a shadehouse with a fibreglass roof, so that the plants can be kept fairly dry in winter. *Laelia anceps* has been cultivated in Europe for over 150 years. Over twenty different varieties were then cultivated but only a few are common in Melbourne today.

Laelia anceps in Nature. In its native habitat *Laelia anceps* grows on tree trunks or branches on the edge of forests at altitudes of 1500-2000 m. The plants are often exposed to full sun and strong winds, with hot days and cold nights. Summer (the main growing season) is very wet and the plants receive heavy rain each evening and remain wet overnight. The next morning strong winds and sunshine quickly dry the plants before rain falls again in the evening. By contrast, the weather is cool and dry in winter and the plants receive little water until misty rain arrives in spring. New growths begin at this time with the new flower spike emerging from the centre of the new growth during summer. The flowers open as the new growth matures in late autumn.

Cultivation of *Laelia anceps*. Based on the above information, it would seem reasonable to:

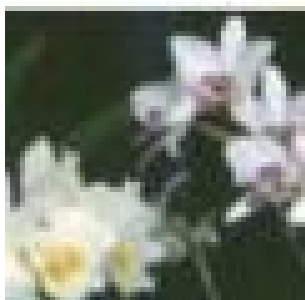
1. grow *L. anceps* on a mount (e.g. tree-fern slab or a rough, long-lasting branch of oak or Casuarina, in my experience, cork mounts do not suit *L. anceps*).
2. hang the plant where it receives good air movement and good light (30-50% shade in summer, less or none in winter).
3. water heavily in summer and early autumn, preferably in the evening, applying liquid fertiliser occasionally.
4. after the plant has flowered (usually in late autumn), water only occasionally until spring.
5. then mist the plant daily until new growth appears. At this stage begin the cycle again with heavy watering each evening.

Laelia anceps can also be grown in a pot, using coarse bark as the potting medium. Because each year's new growth is separated from the previous year's growth by about 50 mm on the ascending rhizome, the plant soon climbs out of its pot and the new roots hang over the edge. Although the plant grows happily like this, it soon becomes top-heavy and will then probably need to be broken up and repotted. The flowers are usually rose, pink, violet or white in colour, with a darker labellum carrying a central yellow spot. The tall stem usually carries two to six flowers. Chamberlain's variety has larger, more deeply coloured flowers than most.

Laelia gouldiana occurs in the same habitat as *L. anceps* and it can also be grown and flowered in an unheated shadehouse. It usually carries more flowers of deeper colour than *L. anceps* but they are slightly smaller (about 75 mm across). Some botanists once believed that *L. gouldiana* is not a true species but a natural hybrid between *L. anceps* and *L. autumnalis*.

All three grow together in the same mountainous regions of Mexico. However most authorities today regard *L. gouldiana* as a species and it should therefore be benched in the class Any Other Species or Species Any Genus.

Both *Laelia anceps* and *L. gouldiana* grow readily from leafless pseudo-bulbs in the same manner as cymbidiums do from their backbulbs. They 'strike' better if left in pairs. Many plants grown in Melbourne are probably divisions of older plants. Small divisions occasionally appear on the sales bench at meetings and shows. Small plants raised from seed can sometimes be found in orchid nurseries – these may produce flowers of higher quality, if they have been bred from selected parent plants.



LIME, CALCIUM and pH

by Stephen Early

When pH, lime and calcium are discussed at orchid meetings, there is often considerable confusion about the different terms and effects. Hopefully this article will explain the differences and remove some of the confusion. pH is a measure of the acidity of a liquid. It is a measure of the number of hydrogen ions in the solution. A neutral solution has a pH of 7, while an alkaline solution has a pH greater than 7 and an acidic solution has a pH less than 7. Each change of 1 in a pH number results in a change of 10 in the number of hydrogen ions in the liquid. Thus a change from pH 7 to pH 5 means that the number of hydrogen ions in the solution has increased 100-fold and the solution has become 100 times more acidic.

Lime. The term lime is often used for a number of products that are actually quite different. Lime comes from limestone rock, which is basically calcium carbonate (CaCO_3), its most common impurity being magnesium carbonate (MgCO_3). No purification is done so the exact composition depends on what hill the limestone is dug from. If the limestone is crushed and bagged it is then sold as Garden Lime. If it contains a significant amount of magnesium carbonate, then it is sold as Dolomite Lime. Calcium carbonate is a stable, relatively insoluble chemical until added to an acidic solution, when the calcium carbonate dissolves and carbon dioxide gas is released; the calcium carbonate only stops reacting with the solution when it has become neutral (pH 7). Hence adding Lime (or Dolomite Lime) to a potting mix will counteract any acidity and will continue to react to maintain neutrality (pH 7) until it is washed out or consumed (much less likely).

The first step in processing limestone is to crush it and heat it. This produces calcium oxide (CaO), a highly alkaline product sold as Lime. I would never use this product as it is dangerous to handle and quite likely to damage plants because of its high alkalinity. It may make the pH of a potting mix far too alkaline for safe use on orchids. A further step is to add

water to the Lime to produce Hydrated Lime or Slaked Lime. This is calcium hydroxide ($\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$), an alkaline solid that is slightly soluble in water. It is not as strongly alkaline as Lime and I know some growers use it. However, it can produce a pH much higher than 7 if added in too large an amount. Both Lime and Hydrated Lime will dissolve in water and over time react with carbon dioxide (a trace component of air) to produce calcium carbonate, particularly when in contact with water. If you wish to add lime I would choose Dolomite Lime, as it can cause little damage and will react only if the potting mix is acidic.

Lime or Dolomite Lime provides calcium only to acidic potting mixes – it provides no calcium if the mix is neutral or alkaline. Lime and Hydrated Lime may add more calcium but only by making the mix very alkaline, which would damage the plants. Calcium nitrate is another source of calcium that is often used. It's a highly desirable additive, as it provides nitrogen without simultaneously increasing the amount of potassium or sodium present.

However, most calcium salts are fairly insoluble so when adding calcium nitrate I would expect much of the calcium to end up as insoluble material not available to the plant.

Although I intend to add lime to my plants, I often forget, so I have looked for another method of simultaneously controlling pH and adding small amounts of calcium. I therefore add a small amount of shell grit (Canunda Shell) to my potting mix. This is a good source of calcium carbonate, which, being fairly coarse, will not wash through the pot when I water. In conclusion, to grow orchids well you need to keep your potting mix neutral (pH 7). This is readily and safely achieved by adding Dolomite Lime to the potting mix. Another method is to add shell grit (Canunda shell) or marble chips to the mix.

LAST THOUGHT

**Did you hear about the man who has a feature of water lilies?
He is not sure where the problem stems from.**

**What do you call a sale on a bouquet of daffodils?
A daffo-deal.**

**What is a baker's favorite type of flower?
Croissanthemum.**

**How did the flowering bush feel after winter?
A huge re-leaf.**

**What do you call [Dracula](#) with hayfever?
A pollen count.**

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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