MAROONDAH ORCHID SOCIETY INCORPORATED

MONTHLY NEWS LETTER



Volume : 48 - Issue : 2

Next Meeting: Friday – 21 March 2025

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

ITEM OF THE EVENING:-				
Time:		8.00PM		
Topic: Stephen Early – The effects of cymbidium species on modern hybrids.				
Topical	Chat:	Potting different genera – Part 1		
Suppe	er:	Please bring a plate		
Special	Effort:	Tickets at door \$1.00 or 3 for \$2.00		
Sales T	able:	Leanne Le - Pots, stakes, labels and hangers		

President's Report

It's amazing what a difference a year makes. Last year I made comment about the small number of members who attended our February meeting. This year I was delighted to see so many members on a balmy Friday evening at our new venue - Parkmore Primary School.

We had a couple of special guests at the meeting. Cliff Ireland, OSCOV President was on hand to present Hanh Truong with two awards, The Memoria Gunter Haar Award for Best Cultured Orchid of the Year and The Gerald McCraith Award for Best Other Species Orchid of the Year. I also presented Hanh with a cultural award for her Cymbidium Kuranda benched at our November meeting. Clive Hall also joined us and gave a great presentation on cultivating Masdevallia.

Thank you to those members who provided prizes for the Special Effort. And, just a reminder, if you are donating plants, could you please provide a name tag with either the plant's name or "Unknown".

Unfortunately, David Cannon, our Society Patron and current Vice President, has been unwell recently. We wish David a speedy recovery and hope to see him at our March meeting.

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, 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		
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		

Photos from the February Meeting



Cliff Ireland – OSCOV President



Hanh Truong receiving her OSCOV award





Sylvia Kappl receiving her OSCOV award Hanh receiving her MOS Cultural Certificate

Interesting Plants From the February Meeting



BENCH COMPETITION - February – 2025

JUDGES VOTE	Brassavola perrinii	c	C. Gunawan
POPULAR VOTE	Vanda Lou Sheary	c	S. Kappl
BEST IN SECTION			
Open	Brassavola perinii	С	C. Gunawan
Novice	Zygopetalum mackayi x Elfin Jade	с	W. Han
	Open Section		
Masdevallia Hybrid	1 st 'Ruby Roses'	С	J. Foster- Johnson
	2 nd Kinballiana x Midas Touch	c	J. Foster- Johnson
	3 rd Prince Charmine	C	J. Foster- Johnson
Australian Native - Dendrobium Species	1 st Den. taylorii	c	S. Kappl
Australian Native – Sarchochilus Species	1 st linticalca	c	A. Baker
	2 nd eriochilus	c	S. Kappl
	3 rd Plectorrhiza brevibbris	C	A. Baker
Australian Native – Sarchochilus Hybrid	1 st Bonanza	C	C. Clemson

Laeliinae Intermediate	1 st Mini Purple	c	S. Kappl
	2 nd Mahala Jack	c	C. Luth
Laelininae Cluster & Novelty	1 st Denis Jungle	C	J. Harnetty
Species Any Genera – The America's	1 st Brassevola perrinii	C	C. Gunawan
	2 nd Encyclia radiata	c	C. Gunawan
	3 rd Cat. alaorii	c	D. Weise
Species Any Genera – Other	1 st Angraecum	c	C. Luth
	Novice Section		
Any Other Hybrid	1 st Zygopetalum mackayi x Elfin Jade	c	W. Han

Points tally – 2025

Open	Points
J Foster-Johnson	7
S. Kappl	11
C Luth	6
A. Baker	6
C. Gunawan	6
J. Harnetty	4
B. Clemson	4
D. Wiese	2
Novice	Points
W. Han	4

CYMBIDIUM SPECIES -MONTH by MONTH by Stephen Early

I have often heard cymbidium hybridisers claim that they will soon have cymbidium hybrids that will flower all year round. But this is possible now with a collection of cymbidium species, so where is the big change? All the plants I describe in this article are ones that I grow and that are available in Victoria. Unless stated otherwise, they will grow and flower without heat in Melbourne.

In January and February not many orchids are in flower but several of the thick-leafed cymbidiums are usually in bloom. One is Cymbidium aloifolium, the type species for the genus (which means that it was the first cymbidium described). It is appropriate that it should be the first species to flower, together with Cymbidium finlaysonianum, C. bicolor, C. atropurpureum and C. rectum. All of these species require heat and we therefore grow them with our cattleyas. Their need for heat is not surprising because they grow in the lowlands of Asia, often in full sunshine. However, C. suavissimum, which can be grown without heat, also flowers at this time. It is closely related to C. floribundum but it has upright spikes and produces its flowers about three months later than C. floribundum. In March and April C. lancifolium comes into flower. Also known as C. aspidistrifolium, it forms a small plant with tapered leaves. Growing in leaf litter on the forest floor, each bulb develops on an ascending rhizome so that the plant is continually raised above the accumulation of leaf litter. Due to the altitude at which this plant grows in nature (up to 2300 m) it will grow cold in Melbourne.

In April and May a number of cymbidium species are in flower. One of my favourites is C. dayanum, which grows cold and is often still in bloom in July. It makes a good specimen in a 125 - 150 mm pot and produces a series of spikes over several months. Another species that flowers in April and May is C. erythraeum, its smaller plant size and flowers resembling those of C. iridioides.

The distinctive bell-shaped flowers of C. elegans, a strikingly different species, appear in May and June. C. erythrostylum also flowers at this time – it's an outstanding species with white flowers and makes a charming specimen plant. It is an important parent in the breeding of many early-flowering standard cymbidiums.

In July C. tracyanum begins to flower and continues to produce its twisted, reflexed and highly scented flowers in light and dark brown shades until August. Its flowers have about every fault the judges would penalise in a cymbidium hybrid. C. iridioides (often known as C. giganteum) also flowers at this time. It is sometimes confused with C. tracyanum, even though both the plant and its flowers are quite different.

Come August and September and one of the gems of the orchid world, C. hookerianum, often known by its synonym, C. grandiflorum, comes into flower. It has celery-green foliage and large green flowers. Unfortunately many plants labelled as C. hookerianum are early hybrids but once you have seen the real species then the impostors are easy to pick. C. insigne flowers in September. Its flowers vary from pink to white; you can easily recognise its influence in many early standard cymbidium hybrids.

In September and October we see the flowers of C. sanderae, often also called C. parishii, although this is now thought to be a different species. C. sanderae has large spikes of cream – white flowers with heavily marked lips.

From September through to November you can see C. lowianum in flower. This is a large plant with long, arching spikes carrying many flowers, which are usually green, although a yellow form has been found. I have purchased many plants and later discarded them because of questionable leaf markings. Finding disease-free plants can be difficult because most plants of this species have been in cultivation for many years.

In October we have C. floribundum in flower. Also known as C. pumilum, this miniature species has been used to breed most miniature and intermediate cymbidium hybrids. Because of its small plant and small flowers, it makes an excellent specimen plant. At this time of year C. devonianum also flowers. It is also used to produce miniature- and intermediate-sized hybrids. It has large strap-like leaves and produces small flowers on pendulous spikes. In my experience C. devonianum grows best with a little heat in winter. During November and December the Australian cymbidium species, C. suave, C. madidum and C. canaliculatum begin to flower. Only the first of these three species grows well in Melbourne without winter heat.

As you have seen, a collection of species cymbidiums will provide flowers all year round. With the exception of January and February you can do this with cool-growing plants. All of the species mentioned in this article have been collected in Melbourne by us over the last few years and are not uncommon. I have not mentioned those species that we have as yet to grow or flower successfully.

Watering

Orchids absorb the majority of their water just like any other plant does – through their roots. Though, orchids, like other epiphytes (orchids are epiphytes), have the ability to absorb a small percentage of water through their leaves and canes[1]. What that percentage is exactly varies from plant to plant, but the percentage is still small, about < 5%. Epiphytes have evolved structures and mechanisms to help them absorb water or save water during periods of drought.

Morphologically, some orchids, especially Dendrobium[2], have evolved trichomes (hairs) to help absorb ambient humidity when the humidity is extremely high[3], but it has not rained for a long time – typical of tropical savanna climates with humid dry seasons[4] or other climates with high humidity and low rainfall. The "black-haired Dendrobium" (Section Formosae) are perfect examples of this.

What is the relationship between water and humidity for plants?

Plants absorb water passively, which means that it's because of physics that water enters the plant. Plants absorb water through their roots, and the water vapors transpire (evaporate) from the shoots and leaves. This creates a straw of water through the plant – the cohesive/adhesive nature of water pulls itself up through the plant to fill the void left by transpiration. When the humidity is high, less water transpires, and the plant does not need to be watered as often, and the media that the plant is growing in will retain water for longer.

	Low Humidity	High Humidity
Dry Soil/Media	Plant will lose water. Plants must be most frequently watered. Stunting may occur.	Plant will withstand longer intervals between watering. This scenario is ideal for many orchids, especially during rest/winter.
Wet Soil/Media	Plant will withstand longer intervals between watering. This scenario is ideal for many orchids, especially during growth.	Plant will be saturated with water. Ease off on the water unless the plant is pseudobulb-less. Rot may occur.

The chart below describes the attributes of different water and humidity scenarios:

Will watering affect growth? What kinds of growth does watering affect?

Because plant cells are mostly water, the amount of water given will always affect growth. Water should always be thorough with respect to its two components – amount and frequency. The amount and frequency of water given can signal to the plant what season it is, as well as affect development and longevity of new shoots and flowers. During growth and cellular development, the amount of water present during the formation of plant cells will determine the cell size. Plant cells are more or less boxes that have a permanent (but flexible) shape that is formed when the cell develops. During ideal conditions, the cells form proper plump box shapes, and all the plant parts form correctly.

Underwatering Orchids

Too little water causes cells to become too small, and stretches of dryness that are too long followed by a sudden deluge of water can lead to some orchids developing "accordion growth", as seen in the figure below.



Figure 6 - Accordion pleating growth of thin-leaved orchids. Courtesy, Cloud's Orchids

Overwatering Orchids

Too much water is known as "overwatering", though it's really a misnomer. *Overwatering is really when the media that the orchid is growing in does not dry out fast enough*. This can be from too frequently watering, adding too much water, or from other conditions that affect transpiration and evaporation from the media like – not enough airflow, too high humidity, or not enough light. Remember, an environment is in cyclic flux, so it's not just about how much water you are adding, but also how much water is *leaving*!

Watering and Flowering

Orchids need the most water during flowering, even if they otherwise would not tolerate being so wet. Water availability is critical for floral longevity. Most orchids are programmed to bloom during peak ideal conditions for their pollinators, so naturally, most bloom times are in spring – (which as we know, really just means the beginning of favorable weather). Flowers are sensitive organs that are designed for reproduction, and over millions of years have evolved from leaves. That means that just like leaves, transpiration still occurs, and water is lost. This makes flowers a liability during dry spells.

Knowing that, if you have an orchid that is growing just fine, but not blooming, try watering more in the spring, or just before (and during) the season that it's supposed to flower. You may be surprised!

American Orchid Society

LAST THOUGHT

What's an elephant's favorite vegetable? Squash.

Who lives in the scary Hundred-Acre Wood? Winnie the Boo.

What happens to a horse refuses to pull a wagon through the pumpkin patch? It becomes a *neigh* ride.

Who won the skeleton beauty contest? No body.

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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