

MAROONDAH ORCHID SOCIETY INCORPORATED

MONTHLY NEWS LETTER

Lycastes are orchids of the
New World Tropics and Subtropics



Lycaste Club Emblem

Volume : 48 - Issue : 9

Next Meeting: Friday – 17 October 2025

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

ITEM OF THE EVENING:

Terry Poulton – Cultivation of Cymbidiums

Topical Chat: AGM

Time: 8.00PM

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

Our Spring Show was once again a great success. Members and the general public were treated to wonderful orchid displays and the many bargains that were available in the Sales area. It was a bit strange having the Sales and Show areas in separate rooms at Parkmore Primary School but it worked well. And of course, congratulations to all our winners!

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all those members who provided plants for the club display – it looked fantastic. And thank you also the members and family who assisted in the pack up on Sunday afternoon. We were out by 3:45 – a great effort!

At our last meeting, David Cannon gave a great presentation on cultivating *Sarcochilus* from seedling. It was quite amazing to see some of David's plants which have flowered within a relatively short period after coming out of the flask.

As I mentioned in the last Newsletter, our AGM will be held at the October meeting and I encourage members to come along.

Finally, the Australian Orchid Foundation AGM will be held on October 18th at City of Whitehorse Horticultural Centre, 82 Jolimont Road, Forest Hill Vic at 2:00 pm. Guest Speaker will be Dr Heidi Zimmer and her topic is Orchid taxonomy in practice. Members are welcome to attend or, if you would like to watch through Google Meet, please email AOF@AUSTRALIANORCHIDFOUNDATION.ORG.AU for the link.

Michael Chivell

REMINDER: Membership Renewal NOW DUE

Fees were due 1st July 2025 Fees: Adult (single) \$20.00, Family \$25.00, Junior (16 years and under) \$5.00

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!

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: 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

Dear Members,

We have a missing sash from our Spring Show. The missing Royal Blue sash is for Champion Australian Native Dendrobium of the Show. If you have it by mistake please bring it to next October meeting.

David Cannon

MOS 2025 Spring Show







Congratulations to the 2025 Maroondah Orchid Society Spring Show Major Winners

PART 1 - MAJOR PRIZES	WINNERS
PRE- EMINENT ORCHID OF THE SHOW All sections & all classes	* Coelogyne Unchained Melody * Hanh Truong
GRAND CHAMPION ORCHID OF THE SHOW All sections & all classes	* Dendrobium speciosum x spec.Ted * Hanh Truong
RESERVE GRAND CHAMPION ORCHID OF THE SHOW All sections & all classes	* Masd.Midas Touch * Hanh Truong
CHAMPION CYMBIDIUM OF THE SHOW Hybrid/Specie All sections & all classes	* Cym.Barita Trinket * Terry Poulton
CHAMPION AUSTRALIAN NATIVE and or Terete Style Dendrobium Orchid OF THE SHOW (Species or Hybrid) Excluding Sarcochilus All sections & Classes	* Denrobium speciosum x spec.Ted * HanhTruong
CHAMPION AUSTRALIAN NATIVE Sarcochilus Orchid Hybrid/Specie All sections & Classes	* Plectochilus Kilgra * Leanne Le
Champion Coelogyne Hybrid/Species	* Coel.tenellum * Cheryl Luth
Champion Masdevallia Hybrid/Species	* Masd.Midas Touch * Hanh Truong
Champion Laelilnae Hybrid	* Lc.Wrigley x (Chocolate Drop x L.gouldiana) * James Hartney
Champion Oncidiinae Hybrid	* Bras.Pagon Lovesong * Sylvia Kappl
Champion Any Other Hybrid Orchid	* Pleione Tongario * Sylvia Kappl
Champion Specimen Overall	* Den.speciosum x spec.Ted * Hanh Truong

Champion Species Orchid Overall Excluding Australian Natives All sections	* Cattleya.walkeriana 'Deborah' * Jim Foster-Johnson
Champion Seedling of Show All sections & all classes	* Dendrobium Cosmic Opal 'Nebula' x Budgeriee 'Magic Sun' * Svitlana Pantelejenko
Champion Orchid by an INTERMEDIATE GROWER Intermediate section growers only	* Dendrobium Gracillimum * Jenny & Michael Chivell
Champion Orchid by a NOVICE GROWER Novice section growers only	* Maxillaria porphorestele * Edith Yu-Chan
CYMBIDIUM ORCHID SOCIETY OF VICTORIA AWARD. The award is for an outstanding Cymbidium exhibit Which does not win a major prize. All sections & all classes	* * Merrilyn & Graeme Moffat

PART 2 - DISPLAYS

CLASS	TROPHY
Champion Large Display without Theme – All sections (Over 2.5mtr Frontage)	Jim Foster- Johnson
Champion Medium Theme Display – All Sections (1mtr to 2.5mtr frontage)	Merilyn & Graeme Moffat
Champion Small Display Without Theme – All Sections (Up to 1mtr frontage)	Kelly-Anne Keily
Show Marshall's Ribbon. To be awarded by the show Marshall for an outstanding Exhibit not otherwise recognised or catered for in the schedule	• Ricky Kasman

Mini Stands: Open. To be awarded for best decorative arrangement of an area of 500 mm square with a maximum of 5 plants	• Claudia Ng		
Mini Stands: Intermediate /Novice. To be awarded for best decorative arrangement of an area of 500 mm square with a maximum of 5 plants	* Wyn Han		
Encouragement Award; Intermediate/Novice Sections;	* Thuy Pham		
Champion Floral Art Exhibit LAUREL HARRIS MEMORIAL AWARD. All sections Open, Intermediate & Novice	Christian Gunawan		

BENCH COMPETITION - September – 2025

POPULAR VOTE			
Open	L.C. Wrigley	c	J. Harnetty
Novice	Den. Donovan Opulescent	c	R. Soloweij

Points tally – 2025

Open	Points
J Foster-Johnson	86
S. Kappl	107

C Luth	55
A. Baker	21
C. Gunawan	36
J. Harnetty	37
B. Clemson	4
D. Wiese	50
G. & M. Moffat	46
L. Orland	39
D. Cannon	5
K. Balogh	6
K. Keily	13
Intermediate	
Tu Le	15
G. Chivell	28
R. & H. Coleman	19
Novice	
W. Han	8
T. Pham	4
R. Kasman	8
S. Liu	21
Pauline and Yuen Lock	7
R. Solowiej	4

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.

CULTURAL NOTES : HOW TO GROW AUSTRALIAN NATIVE DENDROBIUMS

There are over 1400 species of dendrobiums and related dockrillias to be found growing in nature throughout Asia and Australia. More than 60 species are native to Australia, most growing in coastal New South Wales and Queensland, although two species occur in Victoria and one in Tasmania. Many Australian native dendrobium species and their hybrids are suitable for growing in Victoria under shade house conditions or in a garden situation where they are sheltered from frost and direct sunlight. Over a thousand hybrids are now available, with flowers of nearly all colours, shapes and sizes.

POTTING. While a few species grow best when mounted on hardwood mounts or on tree fern slabs, the majority of Australian dendrobium species and hybrids grow well when potted in a 4:1-mix of pine bark (5-10 mm) and river gravel (5 mm). Black plastic squat pots with plenty of drainage holes are ideal. It is important not to use too large a pot – one that will comfortably accommodate the roots and allow enough space for two year's growth is large enough. Dendrobiums are best repotted after they have flowered, just as their new growths are appearing between October and early December. If their roots are in good condition, simply transfer the plant to a larger pot and fill in with new mix. If some of the roots show signs of decay, remove them and all old potting mix and repot in fresh mix.

LIGHT AND AIR. All dendrobiums grow and flower better if grown where they receive diffuse light (approximately 50% sunlight) for most of the year, full light during winter. They grow best if their pots can be suspended near the roof of the shade house so that receive good light and plenty of air movement. In summer native dendrobiums require frequent watering, especially during hot weather. However, they should not be kept continually wet and grow best if the mix is allowed to dry briefly before being watered again. In winter, much less water is needed, once a week being enough for flowering-sized plants grown under cover.

FERTILISING. Australian native dendrobiums may be fertilised in two different ways or by a combination of both. One option is to apply granules of a slow-release fertiliser, such as Osmocote-Plus®, to the top of the mix in October (shake the pot so that the fertiliser enters the mix). The other is to apply a weak solution of a liquid fertiliser at fortnightly intervals between October and April. Use at only half of the manufacturer's recommended concentration. Potassium-rich fertilisers, such as Campbell's A®, generally result in better flowering.

These cultural notes are kindly provided by the North-East Melbourne Orchid Society.

ORCHID SHOWS 2025

Show	Date/Time	Venue
Colac	Sat 11 Oct 9-4, Sun 12 Oct 10-4	Colac Show Grounds Cnr. Bruce St & Princess Hwy
Cobden	Sat 18 Oct 10-4, Sun 19 Oct 10-4	Civic Hall, Victoria Street
Ringwood/Yarra Valley Orchid Society	Sat 18 Oct 9- 4, Sun 19 Oct 9-3	Public Hall, 590 Warburton Highway, Seville
Ballarat	Fri 17 Oct 12-5, Sat 18 10 – 4 Sun 20 10-3	Cooinda Community Centre 10 Learthmonth Rd Wendouree
MPOS	Fri. 17 Oct- 19 Oct, Bunnings Hours	Bunnings Mornington 1100 Nepean Highway Mornington
Bayside	Sat 25 Oct 9 - 5 Sun 26Oct 9 - 4	Cranbourne Public Hall, 166-168 South Gippsland Hwy
Ringwood / Yarra Valley Orchid Society	Sat 1 Nov 9-4, Sun 2 Nov 9-3	Keystone Hall, Keystone Hall Civic Square, Croydon
Sale Sarc Show	Sat 8 Nov 9-4, Sun 9 Nov 10-3.30	Sale Showgrounds - McLaughlin Pavilion Corner Princess Highway and Maffra-Sale Road, Sale

LAST THOUGHTS

- What kind of shoes do frogs wear? Open-toad sandals.
- I just built an ATM that only gives out coins. I don't know why no one's thought of it before: it just makes cents!
- What did one slice of bread say to the other before the race? You're toast!
- Watch what you say around the egg whites. They can't take a yolk.
- I'm so good at fixing things, my motto is, "If it is broke, I'll still fix it."

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.

DISCLAIMER

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