

ORCHID COUNCIL OF NEW ZEALAND NEWSLETTER

March 2026

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President's Message: Keith Smart

As I write this, the weather is still the main topic of conversation around here. The Valentine's weekend storms hit most of New Zealand in some form, dropping 300mm of rain here in the northern King Country. My property got off lightly, but many neighbours and friends sustained far greater damage, with flooding and slips. Now they're talking about cold weather and even snow in some places! As usual, I find myself wondering how I'm going to fit all my plants back into their winter-safe places. With so much rain and humidity this summer, everything has grown incredibly well.

My thoughts are very much with those affected by the summer storms. There has been widespread destruction in many parts of the country, especially along the eastern side, and recovery will take time. It's in times like these that we see the strength of our communities — neighbours helping neighbours, lending a hand, sharing resources, and supporting one another.

National Judges' Seminar 2026

To be held in Napier, June 12-14. Guest speakers, at this stage are John Mort and Jason Strong. Hawke's Bay Orchid Society emailed information and a link to registration to clubs on February 3. If you have not seen it, please ask your secretary. Registration closes May 14.

OCNZ Speaker Fund

OCNZ has created a new [guidelines document](#) for those wishing to make applications to its Speaker Fund, and this may be viewed on the website (click on the link). By opening the fund to applications from clubs and individuals we hope to respond in a more agile way to the call for speaker tours.

Downsizing Writ Large

OCNZ secretary Phil Thomsen has written a piece for the March issue of NZ Gardener about moving your garden to a smaller property, and as part of that spoke to Lee and Roy Neale.

Upcoming Shows

As we gather information for *Orchids 2026*, the list of show dates for this year and next is being updated. Three shows are being held in March. [See all the dates here](#).

Farewell to ...

Shirley Gray: A founding member of the Whangarei Orchid Society, formed in 1975, and the third President, serving on the committee and as Patron, for many years. Shirley was an OCNZ judge and a qualified florist who was always involved with setting up shows. Shirley who died in October 2025 is survived by four adult children, eight grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

Ron Maunder: A founding member of the Bay of Plenty Orchid Society (1970) and founding president of Tauranga Orchid Society (1981). He was on the OCNZ executive 1979-84 and served as vice-president 1984-87, was a long-time judge (more than 25 years) and held the John Easton Award in 1985. Ron, who traded as Paradise Orchids and was a well-known orchid hybridiser, died in Tauranga on February 24, aged 84. He is survived by his wife Jennifer, four adult children and eight grandchildren.

Orchids of the Year 2025

Our warm congratulations to the growers of these outstanding plants. You will be able to read more details about the orchids in the forthcoming *Orchids 2026*.

Orchid of the Year (George Fuller Trophy)

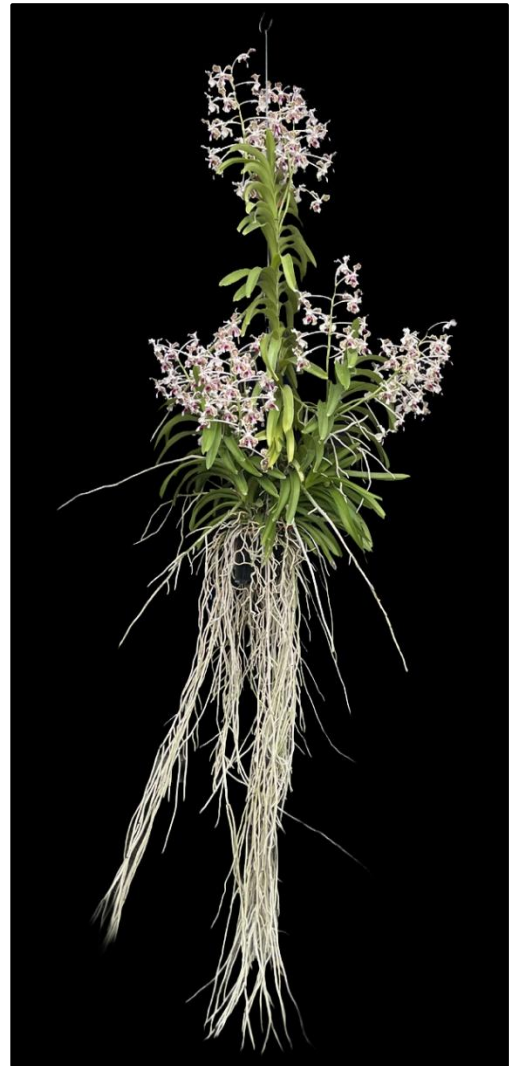


Above: 025-037 Fredclarkeara After Dark 'Darth Vader' FCC/OCNZ (90.70 points). Owner: Shawn Putt.

Species of the Year & Cultural Award

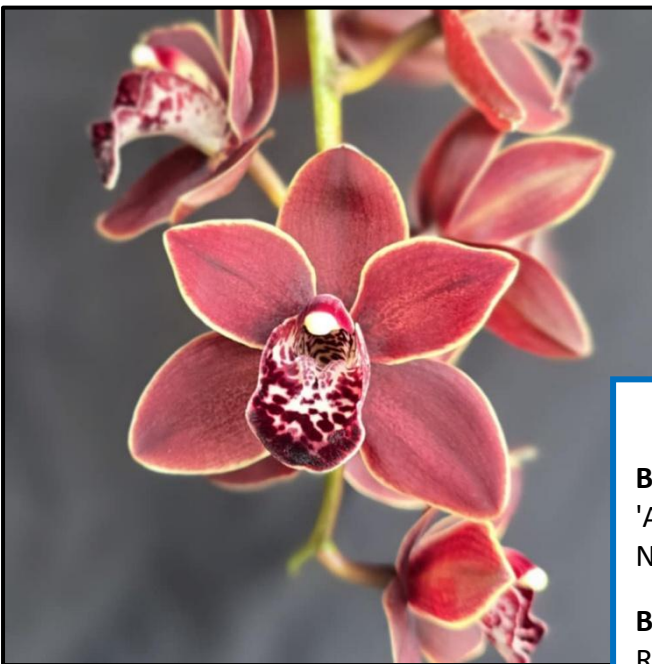
Below: 2025-060 *Vanda tricolor* 'Ruru' CCE/OCNZ (91.80 points).

Owners: Hubert Musiers & Tania Langen (Ninox Orchids).



Cymbidium of the Year

Below: 2025-056 *Cymbidium* Robert Duvall 'Winston' AM/OCNZ (83.50 points). Owner: Jane Napper.



Andy Easton Cymbidium Awards (\$250 each)

Best Standard: 2025-056 Cym. Hit The Spot 'Arthur' AM/OCNZ (82.63 points). Owner: Jane Napper.

Best Intermediate/Miniature: 2025-056 Cym. Robert Duvall 'Winston' AM/OCNZ (83.50 points). Owner: Jane Napper.