ORCHID COUNCIL OF NEW ZEALAND NEWSLETTER
October 2026
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Website: orchidcouncil.org.nz Find us on Facebook

President's Message: Keith Smart

After an incredible four months away on a once-in-a-lifetime trip around the world, I am officially back on the job! I want to start by extending a huge thank you to Glenys and Allan for stepping up and filling in for me whenever needed during my absence.

It's great to be back. Since my return, I've already been able to attend three shows. While the number of plants on display seems to be slightly down this year, the societies have been very happy with the quality and turnout they've received. There was a lot of concern following the "killer cold snap" in July. Many societies and growers were worried about what would actually survive or come to life in time for the shows. However, as is so often the case, nature proved resilient, and there has been a great display of plants despite the weather. The frost certainly did more damage as you head north. There are a lot of sad-looking plants out there—and it's not just the orchids. Bananas and other tropical plants that people are now trying to grow took a significant hit.

Coming up in early December (4th, 5th, and 6th Dec) is the Iwitahi weekend. Several groups have expressed interest in a day visit, so we are now inviting people to come along on Sunday, 6th December (morning or early afternoon), to visit the reserve and see what Iwitahi is all about. We will supply a cuppa but need to know numbers, so please contact Toby on tobymarris@hotmail.com for details regarding the location, access, and the number of visitors planning to attend. Early December is truly the best time to see the greatest number of orchids in flower. Of course, this is highly dependent on the weather! The Thelymitra (sun orchids) only open on warm, sunny days, and their display of blue and pink flowers is what makes the reserve so spectacular.

Beyond that, I am planning a visit to the South Island for a judging seminar in Nelson over labour weekend. Nelson is always a wonderful place to visit in the springtime; the gardens and parks are full of spring colour, and the hospitality of the local people is always second to none.

Successful EPA Submission – Glenys MacRae

The Orchid Council of NZ, in partnership with the RNZIH (Royal NZ Institute of Horticulture), have been successful in the S26 Determination by the Environmental Protection Authority. Following our application (APP204974) late last year, 23 exotic orchid species, as listed on page 14 in Orchids 2026, have now been determined as 'not new' for the purposes of the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996. The decision committee acknowledged that the applicant presented "meticulous and compelling evidence" including a "broad suite of corroborating information sources, including documentation of the species' natural habitats and known global and local distributions, historical records of identification within New Zealand, detailed sale catalogues from domestic suppliers, phytosanitary export documentation, and expert witness statements." This means that the named orchid species can be traded in New Zealand without fear of prosecution and their import and export is facilitated (provided that phytosanitary requirements are met). Special thanks to Dr Marion Mackay for all her hard work leading the application, Murray Dawson for proofreading and checking the botanical nomenclature, and Glenys MacRae (OCNZ) for assembling the extensive evidence base. MPI Plant Imports has confirmed that those species will be added to the Plant Biosecurity Index and will notify OCNZ when that has been done.

South Island Judging Seminar, Labour Weekend, Nelson

Attached to the email with this newsletter is information about the October 24 and 25 South Island judging seminar being held in Stoke, near Nelson. Register by October 10th for $70, after that $80. Non registrants are welcome to attend the talks, $5 each.

Yearbook Articles

Editor Sandra Simpson would appreciate hearing ideas for articles on anything to do with orchids and their culture. Please email Sandra if you would like to write something. The submission deadline is earlier this time; articles need to be with Sandra by November 30.

Help Locate the missing Cym. Laura Fergusson 'Ruby' – Ray Finch CEO LFT

The Laura Fergusson Trust is currently undertaking a historical orchid research project in the hope that they can locate an original or find the parent. They are investigating the origins of the registered orchid hybrid **Cymbidium Laura Fergusson**, which was registered in 1981 by Featherhill Exotic Plants, run by Andy Easton. The registered parentage of the hybrid is recorded as: **Cymbidium Ivy Fung × Cymbidium Remus**

The Trust's research has confirmed that **Cymbidium Remus** was originally registered by **Bruno Schroder** in 1939 from the cross, **Cymbidium Regulus × Cymbidium Joyful**.

The Laura Fergusson orchid has an important place in the organisation's history. Contemporary records indicate that approximately one hundred seedlings of the Laura Fergusson grex were distributed internationally, including around twenty plants sent to New Zealand. Unfortunately, the whereabouts of those plants are now unknown.

As part of their efforts to document and potentially restore this aspect of their heritage, Ray would be very grateful for any assistance the New Zealand orchid community may be able to provide.
Specifically, they are seeking information on:

1. Whether any growers, collectors, societies, or nurseries in New Zealand currently hold, or have historically held, living specimens or divisions of **Cymbidium Remus**.
2. Any known sources, collections, or archives containing classic cymbidium breeding stock derived from **Bruno Schroder** lines.
3. Whether any records exist of **Cymbidium Laura Fergusson**, **Cymbidium Laura Fergusson 'Ruby'**, or related breeding material having been exhibited, sold, awarded, or propagated within New Zealand.
4. Recommendations regarding specialist cymbidium breeders or long-standing collectors who may be able to assist in locating surviving parent plants.

The Trust appreciate that many historic cymbidium collections have changed hands over the years, and would be grateful for any leads, however small, that might assist them in tracing these important plants.

The Laura Fergusson Trust has served disabled New Zealanders for many decades, and the orchid named for Lady Laura Fergusson remains an important symbol within their history and identity. They would be delighted to share any findings from their research with the wider orchid community.

If you are able to help please contact Glenys on macraeg@gmail.com who will pass information onto Ray.