

*The New Zealand*  
Internet  
*Orchid Review*

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Publication Details and Charges .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Editorial.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>This month's cover .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Red Face Department .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Bouquets Department.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Stenoglottis - terrestrials from Sth Africa.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Orchid clubs, Darwin (and me) .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>The hybridising and growing of some Miltoniopsis. ...</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>New Plymouth Summer Show .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Angraecoid Corner.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>My Orchid of the Month .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Pleurothallid postings .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Disa damage.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Wider Worlds – Non-tuberous Begonias .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>18th Australian Orchid Council Conference &amp; Show</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Sapphire Coast Australian Native Orchid Show .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Society Notices .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Classified Advertisements .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Advertising Section .....</b>	<b>25</b>

### Publication Details and Charges

It is intended to publish the *New Zealand Internet Orchid Review* on a quarterly basis, with publication in March, June, September and December.

The email subscription rate is **zero**. The print subscription rate (including postage) has yet to be determined, as the decision as to whether to provide printed copies depends upon demand. We would like to eventually publish a printed version, but there would need to be sufficient demand to make it practical. To date that demand has not been sufficient for us to follow it up.

### Deadlines for copy

All written copy for articles must be emailed to the Editors no later than one week before publication date. A reminder will be emailed to all regular contributors two weeks before each deadline. Society notices and classified advertising must be emailed to the Editors no later than one week before publication date. If you are running late, please email the editors ([ncmiller@orcon.net.nz](mailto:ncmiller@orcon.net.nz)). We expect the next issue to go out on 13 June 2008.

Classified advertising (non-commercial growers only) and Society notices will be published free of charge. A reminder notice will go to all subscribers and Society contacts shortly before each publication deadline.

### **Advertising**

If you are interested in advertising in this publication, please email the editors for an information sheet. Our advertising rates are extremely reasonable, being set at \$10 for a page, part pages on a pro-rata basis. Graphics and photos incur no extra charge, provided that you supply them.

### **Classified advertisements, Society notices**

These are published free of charge, maximum of 30 words for a classified ad please.

### **Letters**

Feel free to write letters to the editor. As long as they are not anonymous, obscene, time-wasting or libellous we will publish them!

### **Questions and answer section**

If you have any questions relating to any aspect of the growing of orchids or companion plants, we will solicit replies from our panel of experts. Any responses received will be emailed to the questioner, and the question and answers will be published in the next issue. This way you can receive a prompt response to your question but other readers can subsequently benefit as well.

### **Spread the word**

If you have any friends who grow orchids or 'companion plants', let them know of this publication. All they have to do to subscribe is to send an email. If they haven't joined the computer age and/or would be interested in subscribing to a print version, ask them to contact the editors by mail or telephone or else send an email on their behalf. So far only a handful of requests for a printed version have been received.

### **Please write for us**

All submissions are welcome – long or short. If you're not too fluent with the written word, we are happy to edit your copy. Without writers there will be no magazine.

### **We welcome feedback**

We would like to hear your reactions to this new magazine. Comments and suggestions on content, appearance, format etc. will all be taken aboard. At this stage we have held the format to that of a simple word processing document, and have eschewed columns and other elaborate devices. Is the file size too large for those on dial-up internet access? What do you think? All feedback will receive a reply!

### **That address again**

[ncmiller@orcon.net.nz](mailto:ncmiller@orcon.net.nz)

## Editorial

### A rose by any other name smells just as sweet?

Welcome to the third issue of our email orchid magazine, *The New Zealand Internet Orchid Review*. At the time of 'going to print' we have 216 email subscribers, the majority from New Zealand, but with 16 identifiably from Australia, 2 from Brazil, one each from France and the Netherlands, plus a number with addresses ending in .com, some of which are from overseas.

Referring now to Will Shakespeare's words, quoted above, like many orchid growers, your editors have an interest in other plants, not just in orchids. Recently we came across a case where the (correct) Latin or scientific name of a shrub for sale had been much shortened to an incorrect (but still latin-ish) name. The manager of the garden centre concerned (one of a large chain of such centres) justified this on the basis that "we can't sell plants with long names".

Excuse me? For many decades great nursery firms such as Duncan and Davies (New Plymouth) sent out elaborate catalogues filled with latin names and seemed to have no difficulty in selling their wares to a, theoretically, less-educated generation. Many older gardeners still have a copy of this catalogue on their bookshelf. If today, such plants will not sell, it is because modern-day gardeners have been 'dumbed down' by the gardening media and the horticultural trade. These days, some nurseries have no compunction in inventing new names for old plants, and in attaching totally inadequate labels to plants. As an example, a few years ago an attractive house plant labelled as 'Velvetia' swept through garden centres. There is no such genus as Velvetia, and the plant was a species of *Impatiens* (balsam). Such tricks do the gardening hobby no favours at all, in the long term.

This may be seen in the way that once-familiar plant suppliers are vanishing from the local scene, due to declining demand. Papa Aroha Orchids, Geyserland Orchids, Cave's Tree Nursery, Liddle Wonder (perennials) are just a few – there is a long list. To quote from Peter Cave's final catalogue, recently released:

"I would just like to thank everyone, customers, friends and staff, who have made it possible to run this business for thirty-one years. It has been fun, hugely rewarding, and it is sad to have to move with the changing times. Plant people are great, and I know the **non-gardening generations now dominant** will be missing a specially bonded community."

We urge orchid enthusiasts to support their local suppliers, and to encourage new entrants to the hobby to learn and value the special nomenclature that only orchids and rhododendrons seem to share. For decades it has helped keep order among the 60,000 or so orchid species and hundreds of thousands of orchid hybrids. Orchid nurseries, other than those supplying garden centres, 'big box' stores and supermarkets, are generally very good at labelling their plants properly. Long may it continue. Don't let suppliers or retailers dumb us down! That is a sure road to the extinction of amateur orchid growing in particular and specialist gardening in general. And next time you see a particularly blatant example of bad labelling at a garden centre or red shed, why not complain to the management. If enough of us do it, they'll eventually get the message.

Nick and Elizabeth Miller.

## **.This month's cover**

The cover photograph is of *Masdevallia caesia* 'Golden Cascade' CCC/OCNZ, AM/OCNZ, grown and photographed by George Fuller of New Plymouth. An article on the culture of this plant is to be found later in this issue.

## **Red Face Department**

The fern described in Barbara Parris' article on the fern *Adiantum caudatum* was carefully headlined by the editors as *Asplenium caudatum*! *Asplenium* (the spleenworts) is, of course, an entirely different fern genus to the maidenhairs, *Adiantum*, which is what Barbara was writing about. Blame this editorial lapse on the pre-Christmas rush for publication!

Also David Hutchins advises us that the '*Sarcochilus hillii*' he wrote about in the last issue is also known as *Peristeranthus hillii*. This appears to be the preferred name, **at present**.

## **Bouquets Department**

The plant of *Sarcochilus (Peristeranthus) hillii* shown in our last issue won Reserve Champion at the Sarcochilus show at Taradale, late last year. Congratulations to grower David Hutchins, of Gisborne.

## Stenoglottis - terrestrials from Sth Africa

Ron Maunder (ronmaunder@paradise.net.nz)

The genus *Stenoglottis* (Ldl) is found throughout eastern South Africa from the Eastern Cape northwards to Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. The name of the genus comes from the Greek *stenos* (narrow) and *glotta* (tongue) and refers to the lobes of the lip.

There are 6 or 7 species ranging from one 5cm high with about 5 flowers to the more commonly grown *S. fimbriata*, *S. longifolia* and *S. woodii* which have 50 or more flowers on 30cm high (or more) flower stems. These three are the ones most commonly seen in NZ collections and used in hybridising. Another recently discovered *Stenoglottis* species is being investigated in South Africa at present.

The *Stenoglottis* species grow naturally as terrestrials amongst forest vegetation, on cliff faces, mossy boulders and in rock crevices and very occasionally as epiphytes on mossy trees. They grow in a thin layer of humus which dries between rain showers in the growing season and thus need a good humidity while actively growing. At the end of the flowering the leaves die back and the plant should be dried off somewhat till new growth is seen 6-8 weeks later when moisture can be gradually restored.



Foliage of *S. Neptune* (Photo R. Maunder)

The species and hybrids seen in NZ mostly have a rosette of 10 or so soft leaves which are very easily damaged. *S. fimbriata* and some of its hybrids have leaves covered with most attractive brown spotting. Flowers are predominantly pink with *S. fimbriata* having a few spots on the lip and *S. longifolia* more heavily spotted flowers but clean green leaves. *S. woodii* has white flowers with a few faint spots and has broader clean leaves. All three species have strange, thick, finger-like

roots or tuberoids plus some normal roots.

Repotting should be left for at least two years if possible to build up nice specimen plants. The best time to repot is at the dormant stage. Carefully remove the thick tuberoid root mass in one piece and gently tease out the old mix and dry tuberoid "shells". A good terrestrial mixture of peat, fine bark, coarse sand or pumice, cocofibre, granular styrene foam, oasis or rockwool is normally used. Place a layer of stones in the bottom of the pot to make it quite shallow and sit the mass of roots back on some mix and cover them. Make sure to keep the emerging leaves above or on the surface of the mix. If dividing, the plant easily falls into clumps and care should be taken not to remove the tuberoids without signs of a growing tip on them. Shallow pots and pans are ideal for growing *Stenoglottis*. *Stenoglottis* are also being grown successfully overseas in hydroculture during their growth period.

I have found few insect problems, with mealy bug the most common and *Orthene* with a surfactant handles them. Hobby growers can use the meths on an artist's brush

method to kill any they see. Plants will lose leaves and rot if kept too wet or planted too deep in the mix. As they don't like high light I grow them in a shadehouse so have no problems with frost. South African experts say while dormant in winter *Stenoglottis* like a range of 6°C to 22°C and in summer as high as 34°C in active growth. Humidity should range from 50-80% during the summer.

The species are all designed to be cross pollinated by insects in the wild because of their flower construction, with the notable exception of *S. fimbriata* which self pollinates and ends up covered with pods.



*S. Neptune x woodii* (Photo R. Maunder)

A few hybrids have been registered mainly by the South African Duckitt's nursery and others of their countrymen: Venus (*fimbriata* x *longifolia*), Neptune (Venus x *fimbriata*), Jupiter (Venus x Neptune), Saturn (Jupiter x Venus), Elle Truter (*woodii* x *macgloughlinii*), Longwood (*woodii* x *longifolia*) and Bill Fogerty (*woodii* x *fimbriata*). Some hybrids like Neptune with its densely spotted leaves are seen here and likely more will follow.

With the flowering season spread from summer (*S. woodii*) for near on 6 months well into autumn (*S. longifolia*), this pretty and easily grown genus is sure to become more popular in NZ. It's a great pity there are no other colours which can be introduced and no other closely related genera, though the European *Orchis* has been suggested as having similarities. Maybe, just maybe, I might fluke a crossing with a *Disa*! Think of the resulting colours! If that fails then maybe some genetic engineering is called for!



Another clone of *S. Neptune x woodii* (Photo R. Maunder)

## **Orchid clubs, Darwin (and me)**

By **ROG** (*Rod, Orchid, Gun*)

Orchid clubs as we know have been dwindling in recent years but I don't think we have that on our own. Modern society enjoys instant gratification with bigger and better highs being demanded by a wealthier and more sedentary population.

Today you can go to a supermarket or nursery and buy a flowering orchid, which will be nicely presented and last for ages making it an ideal gift or pot plant to have in the house. Many people can't be bothered to repot, grow on and re-flower it a year later if they don't have much interest in doing that bit extra or getting their hands dirty. Having been involved with many different ideas in an attempt to entice more people to join our club it seems the ones that work best are personal introductions or for the occasional person getting 'hooked' on the hobby after receiving an orchid which flowers.

The environment in which you grow up has a direct bearing on how your hobbies, interests and ideas are shaped for the future. NZ is a sport mad country where news, advertising and other forms of media are dominated by sport of one kind or another. We have probably grown out of the rugby, racing and beer culture to a degree but it can't be denied that having a lot of time to pursue leisure activities certainly has a big bearing on the NZ psyche. Just look around at the number of cars, boats and holiday homes out there.

You may be wondering what all this has to do with Darwin and me?

I was bought up in a typical NZ fashion subjected to football, TAB radiobroadcasts and the 6 o'clock swill from an early age. Having an English grandfather gave me more of an interest in soccer than rugby but other sports were also very prominent in my formative years. Where we lived had bush at the back so this was another playground. Clearing this with huge bonfires smoking out the neighbourhood was the best part of gardening in those early years. My father did grow beans and tomatoes, we had a lemon tree and passion fruit vine but pot plants were a non-event then. Trees were for cutting down or firewood and many jobs were in the forestry industry. When we moved to Rotorua hunting, fishing and boating became the norm and these have remained with me to this day. (Along with a chainsaw, axe and log fire).

If you had asked me to join an orchid club when I was a teenager, young man, or getting towards middle age, I would have laughed at you. My mate's and my motto was 'if it stayed still long enough we shot it or cut it down. If it had pants on and was moving you tackled it, if wearing a skirt you chased it'. We have to be realistic then when we try to encourage others to take up this hobby. Unless the person has been introduced to the pleasure of growing plants at an early age, then it is unlikely a young man or woman will find this a rewarding or interesting hobby unless there are some obvious benefits.

On the other hand Darwin had a keen interest in bugs, plants and animals from an early age and studied these religiously at every opportunity. But he did like shooting them and eating them too! One of his early sports was shooting. He caught fish, birds and other species not only to study but taste as well. He must have liked travel and boating as he spent 5 years doing this before coming to his earth shaking conclusions.

He was obviously a ladies man going by the published material at the recent exhibition and with 10 children didn't spend all his time studying!

So why do we take up an interest or hobby at such an opposite end to the spectrum of our previous experiences. I suppose in my case it was change. Many people are content to stay where they are but some hopefully develop over the years as they mature. Darwin was brought up in a Christian dominated society with very fixed ideas about creation but challenged the establishment with radical new science and succeeded. Whether this was a gradual change in his development is difficult to know. Change is what makes the world and our society a better place. If we are open to change then there are many new and rewarding experiences out there for us to learn and enjoy rather than the momentary (and mindless) pleasures such as jumping off bridges with rubber bands attached to our feet. Just as we as individuals change then our clubs need to change to keep up with the times and have something to offer the modern day person.

Orchid growing is hard work, it requires patience, getting down and dirty, and depending on how much you want to put into it, research, science of breeding, development of new hybrids, study of species, appreciation of different flower forms, even field trips to exotic places for the more energetic or adventurous. It can also be a shopping bonanza, a collector's dream or competitive for those who want.

We need to appeal to the public with all these features to encourage them to become active members. Sitting at boring meetings talking business or technicalities will only hold a new member's attention so long. We need to make our societies enjoyable and a friendly environment for socializing with like-minded people, as this can be very rewarding. Club funds should be spent to benefit ALL society members so that everyone can see they are getting something for their fees and other financial support they give. Older more experienced members need to be more proactive, the days of the mystique of orchids have gone. It is a hobby that needs to be shared rather than concealed.

It is also a 'green' hobby. Orchids are one of the largest plant families on earth, so conserving, or buying and growing more could possibly help reduce global warming! I am certainly enjoying my association with orchid clubs, finding a whole new world opening up in friendships, knowledge, travel and a satisfying hobby. Stamp collecting may be fun but with orchids there is constant change, new species, new hybrids, new horizons and always new challenges.

## **The hybridising and growing of some *Miltoniopsis*.**

Ewen Perrot (perrtuita@xtra.co.nz)

The genus *Miltonia* flourishes in the warmer low-lands of Bolivia, Columbia, Equador and adjacent areas, while its more flamboyant cousins inhabit the higher altitudes where cooler constant air is the norm. Taxonomists struggled with separating and naming of the more spidery blooms of the *Miltonias* from the higher altitude beauties, finally attaching *opsis* to Milton and therefore arriving at *Miltoniopsis*.



*Miltoniopsis* Whale Bay (Photo E. Perrot)

These Orchids are what are generally termed warm growers. Yes, to a point they should have winter temperatures no lower than 12 degrees, but conversely, should not at any time during a year have temperatures higher than 30° for any length of time. A summer temp. of 25-27°C is ideal if at all possible.

If one is liable to over-water, then a higher heat is reasonable, but if the winter level is too low, then steady on the watering, they detest cold wet

roots. Think of it, grow good roots then you have good orchids.



*Miltoniopsis* The Universe (Photo E. Perrot)

*Miltoniopsis* are fussy about their food up-take, .04 on a CF meter every 3-4 weeks, or quarter strength of any popular manufactured popular brand. There is a need to watch out for any build-up of salts. A light sprinkle of Dolomite is beneficial about two months after the autumn potting. I always repot or pot-on in the autumn in preparation for the main growth period.

I grow the *Miltionopsis* in Sphagnum moss, which is generally satisfactory, although fertiliser-salt build-up is a

hazard, if one is not awake.

Good pine-bark is ok as long as the plant is not over-potted. If through carelessness or over-exuberance one has come to the situation of a dying plant, caused in most cases by too much cold or too much water, then take the bull by the horns!! Get the plant out of the pot, cut off the roots,(they're dead anyway) dip the victim in a Captan solution or a good sterilant, then repot into a clean pot of correct size, do not fertilise until new roots have appeared. **They will.**

Pest damage on *Miltoniopsis* is usually rather minimal, but one should be aware to watch for spider-mites and thrips.

These orchids are a delight to hybridise, a pod takes 7-9 months to mature, then approx- 6-7 months in a laboratory, finally starting flowering 10--12 months after deflasking. One then starts to wonder what to do with the runts - for me they are worth keeping.

In conclusion, use fans for air-movement, second-hand ones go and go, the moving air reminds them of home. If one has no Orchid-house, keep them in a room near an open window, after-all room temperatures are what we try to achieve with a orchid-

house, These beauties are sometimes called pansy-orchids, but while more demanding, leave pansies far behind.

Of the photos, the white with black tears is a cross between Milt. Demi-de-Pass x Milt. Harold Ripley, currently in the registration process as *Miltoniopsis* The Universe. The deep red with eyes is Milt. Pams Bay x Grouville, registered as *Miltoniopsis* Whale Bay.

Try to stick to the foregoing and you will find they are not hard to grow.

## **New Plymouth Summer Show**

G.Poffley (Howick, gpoffley@clear.net.nz)

Although I am not a member of this club and a first time visitor to this show, it has to be one of the highlights on the orchid calendar for the year. The show has been held in early January for many years and I've heard a lot of good reports about it from others who have regularly attended. At one time NZOS ran a bus trip from Auckland but with high fuel costs this was stopped and generally these are becoming a thing of the past for many societies.



*Disa* display at New Plymouth. (Photo G. Poffley)

The show was set up on the Friday evening and I was surprised just how well supported it was because at this time orchid flowers are not that prolific (or so I thought). Many people from out of town brought flowering plants to bench and along with local society members resulted in a great display. One of the interesting things about this show is the number of varieties that are not normally seen during the year at

other shows. There were some most unusual species on display, including many I've never seen before, and a few magnificent specimens. Taranaki is the Disa growing capital of NZ and two commercial Disa growers brought a large number of plants for display transforming the stage area into a sea of magnificent colours (*photo above*). Other Disa orchids were used in flower arrangements and smaller displays. Some plants were displayed by Pukekura Gardens, which has a wonderful selection of orchids.



*Huntleya meleagris* at New Plymouth. (Photo G.Poffley)

I was nearly tempted to buy a few Disas at the car boot sale held on the Saturday morning but will keep that pleasure until I have refined my growing skills a little better. And yes, the famous (or should I say infamous) car boot sale. I swore I would be very selective and keep my wallet in my pocket, only buying what was really necessary as, like most growers I have far too many to look after already. Unfortunately overcome by the selection of

unusual plants at reasonable prices and a trip to the bank, the car was jammed full of more treasures. Not to be outdone, my wife purchased succulents and hoyas at the boot sale, and at the SPCA market earlier that morning in the city, an unusual hydrangea and alstromeria for our already cluttered garden.

The evening entertainment was a catered dinner where 119 attended. All out of town exhibitors received a nice certificate of appreciation and an enjoyable social evening completed just on dark when the next organized event was due to start.



Guided tour, Pukekura Park (Photo G. Poffley)

This was the guided walk around Pukekura Park Festival of Lights hosted by local identity and orchid grower George Fuller (ex. Parks Curator). A large group assembled at one of the more remote entrances to the Park where George donned his back pack with loud speakers and a flashing red light balloon to guide us. We were then led on a tour around the beautifully lit park, which was fairly crowded with many visitors enjoying the

free entertainment. George's commentary described the history of the park and many of the significant trees.

Another farmer's market is held in the city on Sunday morning and here we bought organic cheese, milk and a large pot of manuka honey. As luck would have it we were also in time to see the arrival of the 2 kayakers at the beach along with 8000 others, after their 2 month long trip from Australia.

There are many workshops held for various orchid specialist growers over the weekend so there is plenty going on to suit all tastes. If you don't have time or aren't interested in these then there are plenty of other things to see and do in New Plymouth. The new Puke Ariki visitors centre is well worth a visit. There is a lovely coastal walkway accessible near the city. This year we were able to watch a large number of stone masons from around the world crafting sculptures here. Mt Egmont is nearby offering bush walks and on the slopes the large Pukeiti Rhododendron park is world-renowned.

So next year if you want to do something a little different keep this weekend free and enjoy the hospitality of New Plymouth.

## Angraecoid Corner

Margaret Dunseath (marg.dunseath@orcon.net.nz)

### *Aerangis appendiculata*

This enchanting orchid is native to Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe and according to Fred Hillerman, is quite rare. We are lucky, here in New Zealand, that Ron Maunder has been very busy pollinating his plants, (grown from seed supplied by David Menzies, originating at Kew Gardens), as it does appear to be difficult to obtain overseas.



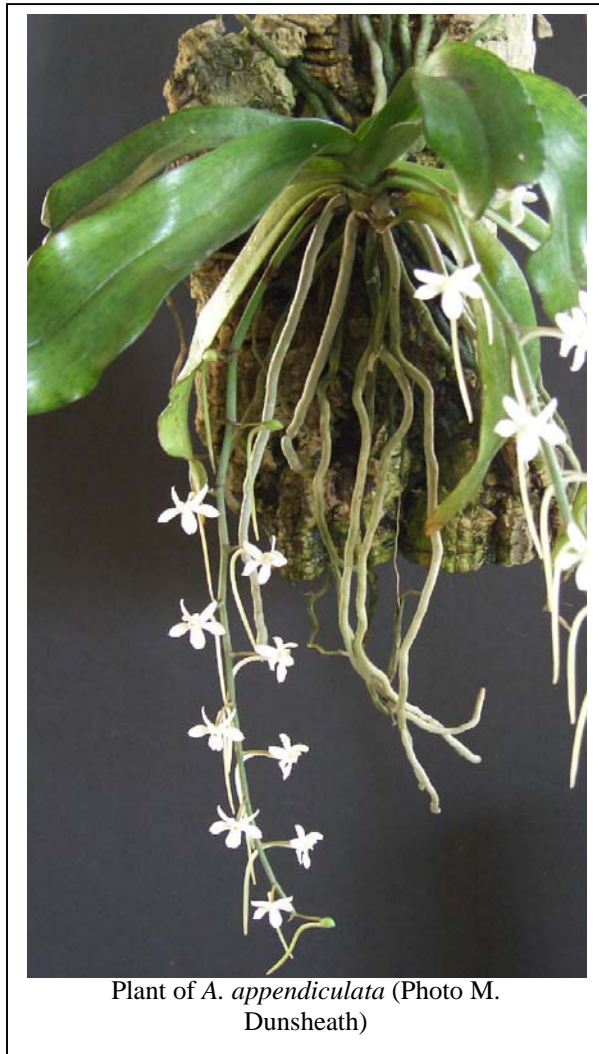
*Aerangis appendiculata* (Photo M. Dunseath)

Preferred growth can be epiphytic or lithophytic, with light levels ranging from heavy shade for the plants attached to trees, to bright light for the higher altitude ones which tend to be lithophytic. My plants are grown in Intermediate, shady conditions, Ron Maunder and Wilma Fitzgibbons grow theirs in higher light and with cooler overnight temperatures, Rons' sometimes approaching 0° C. This does not appear to damage the plant as long as it is kept dry when the temperature drops this low, and daytime temperatures need to be up in the 20-22°C range to offset the cold nights. Plants grown this cool tend to be much more compact and foliage is thicker and harder.

Like most *Aerangis*, this plant grows more easily ( for me anyway) when it is mounted, as the root system needs a

wet/dry cycle and needs to be dry by nightfall. Plants are initially attached to the mount upside down, which enables any water to drain from the crown of the plant.

Eventually the plant will reorientate itself to grow upwards, leaving a gap for air circulation between the plant and the mount which can forestall stagnant conditions which could cause rot. I use rainwater for misting and watering all of this genus ( and Angraecum) as some of them are quite fussy about water quality, and Hamilton has hard water. During the summer weak fertiliser is added every second day, and different fertilisers are used regularly to ensure a good supply of trace elements.



I prefer cork bark as a mount as it dries quickly and roots can be inspected for problems very easily and early action taken if any problems do appear. *Aerangis appendiculata* roots are quite succulent and profuse. Roots will attach to a mount very quickly, and rapidly grow on into the air. Spanish moss draped loosely around the aerial root system helps keep the humidity levels high, particularly over summer when temperatures are warm. In winter, if not sure whether to mist or not, a quick spray around the Spanish moss supplies humidity without over drenching the root system.

Flowering season for this orchid tends to be summer, in particular January, and multiple spikes over a period of time are common on my plants. Plants in flower need to be kept in cooler conditions if possible, as the flowers do not last much longer than a week if they are too warm. The scent tends to appear in the evening when the flowers have

been open about three days, and I believe this is the best time for pollination. These orchids are moth-pollinated, and the initial release of scent is very strong, as with all scented angraecoids, to entice the appropriate moth to visit, consume some nectar from the spur, and hopefully leave pollen from another plant that has been recently visited.

One word of caution, I did have problems with moth caterpillars last year, one of which chewed the centre out of one of my precious *Aerangis distincta* plants. I have had to wait until very recently to see if the plant was going to continue growing or if the growing centre had been chomped by an expert. The plant put out a new leaf last month, so I am very relieved. My growing area is now moth-proofed.



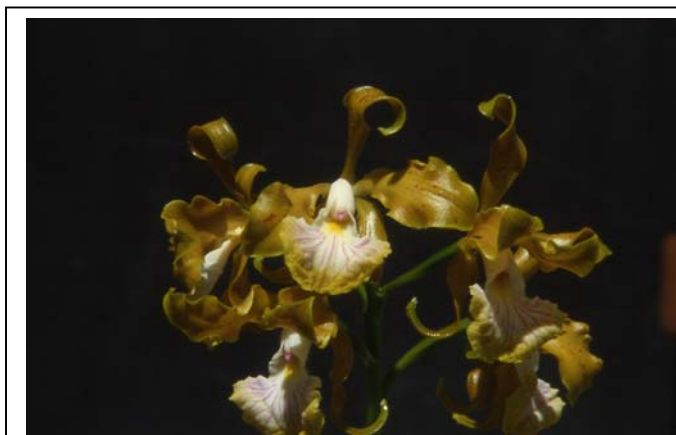
Another plant of *A. appendiculata*, this one grown by Ron Maunder (photo R Maunder)

## My Orchid of the Month

*Cattleya velutina* Rchb. f. 1870

Franz Zumbuhl (franzanda@xtra.co.nz)

This orchid occurs in the coastal mountains of the Brazilian states of Espirito Santo, Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo. There the winters are cool and the summers warm, and there is no real dry season. These conditions let us treat *C. velutina* as a subject for intermediate culture. The history is interesting in that J. Barbosa Rodrigues wrote



*Cattleya velutina* (Photo F. Zumbuhl)

about this species in 1790, but the text was not published until 1881. He named it *Cattleya fragrans* for obvious reasons, as a flowering plant's spicy scent wafts through the whole house.

*C. velutina* is a slender grower, with pencil-thin reedlike pseudobulbs about 30cm tall, topped by two 13 x 2.5 cm leathery leaves. The 6cm inflorescence produces

2-4 distinct flowers. If you look for a perfectly rounded bloom, forget about it! It has all the attributes one does not want for hybridising, as all the segments are curled, reflexed, crisped. But it is that harlequin-like/clownish appearance that I like about it. Sepals and petals are a mustard colour, spotted red/purple. The velvety lip has a 35 x 25mm heart-shaped midlobe, white with violet veins. Its pale green/yellow edges

are crisped and there are golden yellow keels emerging from under the violet tipped column. In nature there is a fair bit of colour variation from orange/yellow to mustard to copper tones. Early on there was an erroneous theory, that *C. velutina* was a natural hybrid between *C. bicolor* x *C. guttata*.

A very unusual Cattleya which does not make big demands on scarce available bench space. It is a very reliable flowerer for me, having done its "thing" every year between the 3rd week in Feb. and 2nd week of March since 1989! Beat that!

## **Pleurothallid postings**

*This occasional series of articles originally appeared in the newsletters of The New Zealand Masdevallia and Disa Group, and is reproduced courtesy of Trevor Gillbanks.*

### **Accommodating the monster. Or coming to terms with *Masdevallia caesia*.**

George Fuller (*George doesn't do email yet but we have hopes –Ed*)

In many fields of human endeavour it is safe to suggest that there will always be at least one exception to the rule. This maxim is equally applicable to the growth habits of orchid species and most appropriately to *Masdevallia caesia*. To my knowledge every other *Masdevallia* is conventional in that the leaves are produced in erect configuration. *Masd. caesia* is positively contrary and that description can have a range of applications because the slender based leaves up to 50cm long are exceptionally flexuous and however one chooses to accommodate the plant they are going to hang vertically.

It is many years since I first encountered this species and I have been enchanted by it to this day despite the anguish it has caused. Being foolhardy enough to hybridise with it is almost comparable to self-flagellation, necessitating a whole new concept in plant containment.

Confident that I could train this miscreant to dance to my tune I potted my first plant in conventional manner. Immediately I had a new novelty – an orchid with a horizontal whorl of leaves simulating a helicopter rotor! When it flowered the simulation became exaggerated. Now I had a foliar helicopter rotor tangling with a somewhat drab-coloured flower. In other words, a mess.

The plant had not finished with me. New leaves simply refused to be heliotropic in the manner that my botany books suggested leaves should be. In defiance they were hell-bent on geotropism (now, there's a very appropriate analogy). As a consequence, I not only had to hang up the pot but also to tip it to some extent on its side.

In view of the natural habit of the plant of producing pendulous leaves and flowers this was a big advance but it was also a step backwards in plant care because it was a nightmare to ensure adequate watering.

A hanging slatted basket partially tipped on its side seemed to be the answer and indeed in many ways it was because the plant, a species regarded in overseas literature as very difficult to cultivate began to flourish and celebrated having

subjugated me by producing a cascade of dull golden flowers attractively presented amid a vertical backdrop of glaucous leaves. This just had to be *Masdevallia caesia* 'Golden Cascade'. It had really proven itself very convincingly.



*Masdevallia caesia* 'Golden Cascade' CCC/OCNZ, AM/OCNZ (Photo George Fuller)

All very well, but for such an attractive specimen the containment seemed somewhat 'Mickey Mouse' (with due respect) and I decided to abandon all preconceived ideas and set about constructing a 21cm (8 ½-in), bottomless octagonal slatted basket beneath which by some means I would suspend the beast. This represented ultimate acquiescence to its demands. To secure the awkward critter I kebabbed it by driving several copper wires through in criss-cross fashion then secured them in a concealed manner to form a 'bottom' from which the plant hung.

This was in April 1994 and with 360° in which to spread, the plant became positively rampant. Seven years later I have just counted the leaves and there are 130, the longest 45 cm (17 ¾ -in).

By September 2000 it had obviously forgiven me for my ignorance and arrogance in trying to initially teach it to dance to my tune and rewarded my compliance with its true needs by producing a handsome radial display of 48 flowers. Timing was perfect because this flowering coincided with New Zealand's 4<sup>th</sup> International Orchid Expo held in Hamilton.

The plant gained:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Pleurothallid specimen over 100mm leaf length.
- Best Pleurothallid specimen in show. (Taupo Orchid Society Trophy)
- Certificate of Cultural Commendation (CCC/OCNZ)
- Award of Merit (AM/OCNZ)

The PMI is 153/30x30(13:16) \*

A few cultural notes may be of interest.

The plant is potted in 8-12mm (1/4 –1/2 –in) bark of *Pinus radiata* and has not been repotted in 7 years. It is housed with other Masdevallias in a 12 x 8 ft. glasshouse in which temperatures drop to 5° C (40° F) for short periods and is watered and liquid fed the same as the other plants. Maximum outdoor temperatures average 22°C (72°F) minimums 13.5°C (56°F) with a mean average of 18°C (64°F). Shading and ventilation hold indoor maximum temperatures to within approximately 3-5°C (6-9°F) of that outdoors. Maximum outdoor winter temperature average 5.7°C (42°F) with a mean average of 9.5°C (49°F). Air movement is fairly robust and light factor on the high side. To compensate, watering must be thorough, especially in view of the massive evaporation surfaces of the slat basket. This may be a very relevant cultural feature – I simply cannot over-water the plant.

In venturing into a hybridising programme with this fascinating species I made a rod for my own back because growth habits in primaries are positively pendulous as recorded in previous newsletter. Transport of such plants introduces yet another set of problems but in retrospect, I have no real regret over having been seduced by this singularly captivating species.

(\*PMI = Pleurothallid Measurement Index – *Eds.*)

## Disa damage

John Frew, Kawakawa (frew@xtra.co.nz)

Here are photos of Disa flowers showing damage done to the flowers by waxeyes. These birds had caused considerable destruction to this flowering commercial crop in the Whangarei area.



I was given my first disas in 1989 and then lost them through my lack of knowledge of disa growing. I bought the next lot at the International Show in 1990 but it wasn't until one day meeting at the Whangarei Orchid Day Group and Jack McKinley was speaking to our group about disas. Within 5 minutes of his talk I realised what I should be doing to grow and flower my plants. Since then I have used only rain water with very good results.



With my disas I occasionally missed repotting and I have learned my lesson by repotting each year.

The one problem I do have is the green algae on top of the sphagnum moss and the small plants coming through are damping off. Does any one have any ideas on this one?

The bird is a New Zealand native\* known as Silvereye, White-eye, Waxeye,

Bright Bird and tauhou.

\* The silvereye (*Zosterops lateralis*) is regarded as having a natural range from Western Australia east to Fiji. Until the 1860s there were frequent reports of small flocks of them, in NZ, always seen in winter. They probably began breeding here during the 1850s and started to spread north (information from *Beautiful Birds of New Zealand* by Rod Morrison and Alison Balance). They are now very common in town and country. They feed on nectar, insects, fruit and many other foods. In our garden they often damage flowers in their search for nectar, with abutilons, vireyas, and other bell-shaped or trumpet-shaped flowers being ripped open. This is the first report we have seen of orchids being damaged though. *Editors.*

## Wider Worlds – Non-tuberous Begonias

Nick Miller (ncmiller@orcon.net.nz)

To many gardeners, begonias mean the brilliantly coloured large-flowered tuberous types, which flower in summer and autumn. However, there are other types, with smaller (but still attractive) flowers, and handsome foliage. These usually non-tuberous types are classified into a variety of divisions, such as cane-stem, rex, rhizomatous etc., but I will not go into these technicalities today. It is amazing how much these wonderful plants have been neglected, in recent years. Our ancestors knew better.

Some begonias have stringent requirements of warmth and humidity (particularly those from South East Asia) but there are many which grow well under surprisingly cool conditions and a number are fine garden plants, while others do well in greenhouse or shadehouse, making excellent companion plants for orchids, bromeliads etc.

We live at 300 metres elevation, about 40 km from the coast and our climate, although virtually frost-free, is quite cool in winter (b... cold actually!). When we



*Begonia scharffii* in garden (Photo N. Miller)

moved here in 1982, a large plant of *Begonia scharffii* was in flower by our carport. I do not recall it being without flowers for a single day ever since. What a performer! Many of the cane-stem, foliage or shrubby type begonias do surprisingly well here, despite our altitude. The main problem is acquiring plants in the first place, and finding a name for them once you have got hold of them. The pot plant producers are very careless with labelling. Here are a few whose names we are

reasonably sure of. *Begonia angularis* has excellent foliage and does well in sun or shade, scrambling through shrubs or trees to a height of three metres or more, and is in flower for most of the year. In full sun, it stays nearer the ground. *B. metallica*



*B. angularis* in trees (Photo N. Miller)

also has handsome foliage and does well, forming a shrub to about 1.5



*B. metallica* in garden (Photo N. Miller)

metres. *B. luxurians* with palm-like finely divided foliage grows slowly and is not as lush as I have seen it in Tauranga, but is still worth a place. In a glasshouse it is excellent. *B. fuchsoides*, *B. cubensis*, *B. echinosepala* and *B. erythrophylla* (beef-steak begonia – a hybrid) also do well outdoors, with more being tried. Rex begonias often survive two or three winters before fading away, but seem to have barely got going before summer is at an end, however some seem better than others. One or two rex types look quite promising as garden or shadehouse plants, and most are happy in a cool glasshouse, preferably with a little ‘comfort’.



*B. bowerae* hybrid growing in fish tray, under greenhouse bench (Photo N. Miller)

In the greenhouse or shadehouse, even more are suited. Try growing them in a polystyrene fish bin, filled with a well-drained potting mix. These are excellent placed under the benches, where they look good and help keep the humidity up.

We have been acquiring more begonias, as chance permits, and will try more of them outside, as many of them are marvellous garden or greenhouse/shadehouse plants. Some even have perfume, and the foliage is

often very handsome. We are attaching names to them, when possible. If only there was a nursery specialising in these non-tuberous types, and selling them with (correct) names! Maybe there will be, in a year or two (hint). You can often find unusual begonias at plant stalls, boot sales etc., but not so often in garden centres. Just treat any labels attached to them with great caution. Good books on them are also in short supply, but that is another tale.



*B. diadema* (Photo N. Miller)



*B. 'Lime Swirl' ?* (Photo N. Miller)

## **18<sup>th</sup> Australian Orchid Council Conference & Show 8<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> Sept 2009**

The next Australian Orchid Council Conference to be held in Australia will be between 8<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> September 2009. This event will be held at Werribee Victoria, just 20 minutes by a freeway to the west of Melbourne.

The conference will be hosted by The Maribyrnong Orchid Society a Society based in the Western suburbs of Melbourne. This Society is also getting the support of 5 other local Victorian Orchid Societies to help them put on this event during what will be our springtime.

The City of Wyndham, which takes in Werribee, Point Cook, Hoppers Crossing and Little River, is the gateway to the picturesque Great Ocean Road on the south coast. Some of the local features of the City of Wyndham area are:

- ❖ The biggest market garden growing area in the state
- ❖ Victoria's Open Range Zoo is just 10 minutes to the south of Werribee, on a 200 hectare property featuring a 50 minutes guided Wildlife Safari
- ❖ The historic Werribee Park Mansion, built by the Chirnside family in the 1870s. The Mansion sits in ten hectares of an exquisite formal garden
- ❖ Victorian State Rose Garden boasting over 5000 roses occupying garden beds in the shape of a Tudor rose.
- ❖ Sofitel Mansion & Spa, a 5 star hotel – the ultimate place to stay
- ❖ Shadowfax Vineyard featuring locally produced wines
- ❖ A golf course designed by Greg Norman at Sanctuary Lakes – just 15 minutes drive from Werribee
- ❖ Werribee is just 40 minutes from the International Melbourne Airport and 15 minutes from Avalon Airport serviced by the discount carrier Jet Star.
- ❖ One of the tours we are offering is to the Anglesea area just an hour west searching for native Orchids, including BBQ lunches in the bush.
- ❖ Australian Air Force Museum at Point Cook

The venues are all booked and the deposits paid, the schedule will be sent out soon and the 'Early Bird Registration' forms will be out in September. If you want to go on our list for all conference information email the Secretary [ef.wilde@bigpond.com](mailto:ef.wilde@bigpond.com)  
The local accommodation gives you quite a range in prices, from a Caravan Park on the beach to a 5 star hotel. Ask for a copy to be sent to you.

All Orchid growers, local, Interstate and overseas will be made most welcome. Information as it comes to hand will be put on our club web-site [www.mosorchid.org](http://www.mosorchid.org)  
Don't forget the Cymbidium Society of Australia is also holding their Australian Conference at Ararat which is a good two hour drive from Werribee, at the same time. Why not visit both events?

Frances Wilde ([ef.wilde@bigpond.com](mailto:ef.wilde@bigpond.com))

## Sapphire Coast Australian Native Orchid Show

The Sapphire Coast Orchid Club presented its annual Australian Native Orchid Show at Twyford Hall, Merimbula on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> November. Visitors were treated to a beautiful display of the infrequently seen *Sarcochilus* orchids. These little Australian gems are becoming more and more popular as selective breeding increases their flower size and colour range. Many well grown specimens were on display, covered in flowers of pure white, white with red centres, all shades of pink, red and even yellow. The native orchids were well supported by a range of exotics, including cymbidiums, softcane dendrobiums and cattleyas.

Another feature of this years show was a display of 'Bonsai' by expert David Hof of Merimbula.

Local grower Shirley Bedingfield from Merimbula grows her *Sarcochilus* orchids to perfection, and the judges rewarded her efforts with a raft of prizes. Shirley 'scooped the pool' and came away with 4 championships. Her beautifully grown *Sarcochilus* Heidi x Jewel 'Dungog', carrying perfectly shaped, crystalline white flowers with red centres, was awarded Grand Champion of the show, as well as Champion Sarcanthinae Hybrid. Her well presented *Sarcochilus* Fitzhart 'Red' gained Champion Sarcanthinae Specimen, and her lovely white *Sarcochilus hartmannii* 'My Joy' was awarded Champion Sarcanthinae Species. Shirley also came away with the overall point score.

Champion Any Other Orchid was awarded to Tura grower Joy Richardson, for her impressive softcane *Dendrobium* Malones 'Victory'. Champion Novice was won by Tathra growers Graham and Adrienne Dempster for their colourful *Potinara* Love Call 'Lai'.

Further information may be obtained by contacting the Publicity Officer  
Ulli Cliff

**Sapphire Coast Orchid Club Inc**

**Publicity Officer** 365 Coopers Gully Rd, Bega, ph 6492 0510

Email: ulli.cliff@bigpond.com

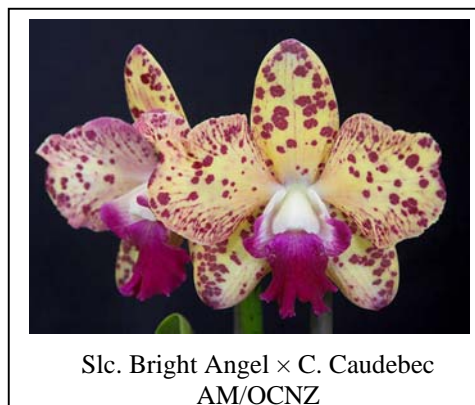
## Society Notices

**The Masdevallia and Disa Group** are now issuing a newsletter again.. To join them, contact the Secretary/Treasurer, Ruth Coles (candrcoles@hotmail.com)

### **Auckland Orchid Club Ribbon Show**

30 March 2008, open to the public 1-4pm  
Hobsonville Hall  
Hobsonville Road

This is a fun show judged by club members.  
Here is one of the entries from last year's show.



Here are some more show dates, lifted from Joy Wray's latest newsletter to her orchid friends (Thanks Joy)

**5-6 April 2008** -A South Island Seminar is to be held in Christchurch. Anyone wishing to attend please email: Adrienne Rushworth, [forbaxter@paradise.net.nz](mailto:forbaxter@paradise.net.nz)  
Leigh Leaity is talking on Chinese Cymbidiums.

**5th April** - Manawatu Orchid Society Autumn Show, Feilding.

**12-13th April** - Bay of Plenty Orchid Society, Memorial Hall, Te Puke.

**4th May** - New Zealand Orchid Society, AHC Rooms, 99 Great North Road, Western Springs, Auckland.

**10-11th May** - Capital City Orchid Society Show, Botanic Gardens, Wellington.

**31st May-1st June** - OCNZ AGM and National Judging Seminar, being held along with a show at Forum North, Whangarei. Make early reservations to get the best priced deals!

## **Classified Advertisements**

Wanted to buy

Cymbidium Pistachio Mint

Cymbidium Tiger

Cymbidium Memoria Andy Warhol

Cymbidium Fairy Rouge

Cymbidium Sweet Devon

Cymbidium Volcano

Cymbidium Bulbarrow any varieties.

Please email details to [leaitym@xtra.co.nz](mailto:leaitym@xtra.co.nz)

Many thanks

Mike & Leigh Leaity



# *New Zealand Orchid Society*

*This year the NZOS is celebrating  
60 years.*

*As part of the celebrations  
The following events have been  
planned.*

*Our Winter Show*

*18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> July*

*Featuring*

*A Display of Orchids from Taiwan.*

*Our Spring Show and Seminar*

*19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> September.*

*Featuring:*

*Fred Clarke from America*

*Phil Spence from Australia*

*Interested in attending ?*

*Email your details to:*

*[Leaitym@xtra.co.nz](mailto:Leaitym@xtra.co.nz)*

*To receive regular updates*

## *Shade houses by Peter's Glen*



### **Model L140 in a NZ garden**

Several different sizes of shade houses are available as well as all our other products. They can be viewed on our web site.

Agents: Roger & Isabel Clotworthy, 223 Range Road Papamoa. Phone 075750600, mobile 0274760626, or 0272712777.

We sell a range of pots, plant clips, short & long hangers, tube trays, 6, 12 & 15 hole trays.

For sale: orchid plants, and many different bromeliads

See our web site for more information  
[WWW.petersglenshadehouses.com](http://WWW.petersglenshadehouses.com)

Try growing some terrestrial orchids beginning with **S** from South Africa and South America!

**Satyrium odorum**

interesting scented terrestrial from South Africa, with lots of small greenish yellow flowers. Cool grower -  
- 3 dormant tubers for **\$10**

**Stenoglottis Neptune**

unflowered seedling with flower spike coming. Bright pink spotted flowers and unusual brown marked leaves. Dies back for a time after flowering. Cool grower. **\$10** per pot

**Stenoglottis Neptune x woodii (Registration pending as *S. Durham*)**

in flower now. Lots of small pale pink flowers with a few faint dark spots in their forked lips. Cool grower - **\$10** per pot

One of each of the above offers including parcel post \$30

\*\*\*\*\*

**Sobralia Yellow Kiss**

still a few plants left. Lovely large butter yellow blooms. We're about to divide them and clean the roots for an export order! Large flowered or FS plants with ten canes or more, shipped in pot - **\$45** each

Freight on these monsters - email us for a quote

**Paradise Orchids**

[paradiseorchids@paradise.net.nz](mailto:paradiseorchids@paradise.net.nz)



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**Our range of orchids has grown to be  
one of the most expansive in New Zealand and  
is constantly changing throughout the seasons.**

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**There are many more – ask us and we may have it!**

### **!! NEWS FLASH !!**

We currently have a number of flasks that are surplus to requirements.

The following Cymbidiums are ready for deflasking now;

Tracey Reddaway x (Green Glass x Foxfire Angel)	*	Itchycoo Park x Ruby Eyes
Valley Zenith x (Green Glass x Foxfire Angel)	*	Pinstripe 'Bayswater'
(Claude Pepper x Green Glass) x Julie Hawkes	*	Coraki Gold 'Kimberley'
(Claude Pepper x Green Glass) x Valley Splash	*	Pure Sarah 'Starburst'

Mention this ad and get them for \$40 each. Pictures can be found on our website.