

# *Orchids*

*IN NEW ZEALAND*



Volume 14—No. 5  
September/October 1988

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for

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# Orchids

## IN NEW ZEALAND

incorporating 'The New Zealand Orchid Review'

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NEW ZEALAND ORCHID SOCIETY

**VOL. 14, No. 5 SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1988**

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## FRONT COVER

*Dendrobium trigonopus*. This compact growing species with waxy golden flowers hails from Burma and Thailand and requires intermediate temperatures.

Grower: L. & R. Orchids

Photographer: Val B ylliss

## BACK COVER

*Earina mucronata*

Photographer: Bob Goodger

# About that first stone . . .

So 'Orchids in New Zealand' has been arriving late. Commercial interests have been disadvantaged, notice of functions obsolete, christmas wishes a farce. Understandably subscribers have been outraged, because someone has failed to deliver. But wait a minute, just who has failed to deliver? Has the reader put his or her house in order before offering criticism?

Being the Editor of an ambitious publication which does not pay for contributions is, I should imagine, akin to taking out an investment in stressful and thankless living. The embarrassment of having to perpetually plead for articles must be very wearing and is in no way compensated for by whatever gratuities may be forthcoming. In the long term, it must be a responsibility demanding considerable dedication. The glamour is bound to wear off but the deadlines keep recurring.

When the journal began I offered, in order to ensure a balance of content, to regularly submit photographs of and contributions about orchid species. Approximately 60 submissions later, it will have been noticed that I am getting tired too. Mainly perhaps because the Editors are just too nice to keep on kicking me in the pants any more. Late distribution is very undesirable but how can I be critical of their efforts when my own have fallen short? How do you stand?

'Orchids in New Zealand' is a very commendable publication and together with much of our sporting prowess, out of proportion on an international basis relative to population. It is a journal we have good reason to be proud of and I am rather alarmed to learn that in this avid orchid fancying country it is now running the risk of collapsing through lack of subscribers. This prospect is very disturbing when seen in the context that the annual subscription equates to the value of about one orchid plant. Surely a sacrifice of that magnitude is justified when one considers what we stand to lose. Simply ponder on all the valuable information provided in Vol. 14 No. 3, particularly relating to preparations for the 1990 World Orchid Conference. Is

there any grower who aspires to exhibit in '990 who didn't gain valuable information from that issue on what they should be doing now? Wonderful stuff which will ensure greater standards when we exhibit to the world. To keep the journal going, more subscribers are needed and it would be appropriate for each of us to introduce at least one new one, perhaps by offering a subscription as a christmas present.

I now suggest repentance. To each reader who has complained about late arrival, equally as many words should be written on some constructive observations about orchids - successes, failures, queries, problems - anything that may interest or instruct others. And to those who sat on committees of censure or wrote in condemnation, no less than 100 lines at double spacing to be on the Editors desk no later than the first of next month.

Perhaps the editorial problems are not restricted to shortage of copy, but until we have cleared our own consciences on that score, we should be very hesitant to criticise.

Anyhow, I didn't indicate which Christmas I was extending good wishes for!

*George Fuller N.D.H. (NZ)  
25 Victoria Road  
New Plymouth*

*Thanks, George,  
The Editors.*

## QUESTIONNAIRE

The Editors and Conzed Executive thank all those who replied so promptly to our questionnaire. We hope to include more information next issue.

# CONZED NEWS

The Executive Committee has decided to adopt 1989 as 'Orchid Friendship Year.' The publicity associated with the campaign will centre around orchid growing as a social service and have emphasis on the social activities and friendship offered by joining an Orchid Society. It is also a challenge to present members to introduce one new member within the 1989 year. The object is to increase membership prior to the 1990 World Orchid Conference.

## ASSOCIATE OF HONOUR

The Executive Council has recommended that the Associate of Honour be granted to Darrell Bell for his 13 years contribution to the N.Z. Orchid Community with special recognition to his wife Jackie for their joint contribution.

The honour is the highest award of Council and can only be held by five living persons at any one time.

Other recipients have been Albert Blackmore, Tom French, and Graeme and Pam Boon.

## OVERSEAS SPEAKERS FUND

This Fund has supported visits by three speakers this year, and they have considerably enriched the programmes of societies throughout the country. It is pleasing to note that 18 societies have now donated or loaned money to the Overseas Speakers Fund, and with the visit of Bob Birkey, nearly all societies who have contributed will have had an overseas speaker this year, which is certainly a good start to the project.

Societies who have not yet contributed to the Fund should consider the benefits to their society from having overseas speakers to stimulate interest.

## NATIONAL RAFFLE

This project which will make funds available to the 1990 World Orchid Conference Committee will now be organised for the months of March/April/May 1989. As a result of a request from Mr Assid Corban at the A.G.M. it has been decided to pay 10% commission to societies for selling the tickets. This commission could be used to help societies with expenses in getting to the 1990 Conference.

The overseas travel prizes should appeal to the general public as well as society members.

## JUDGING

Forward planning to shape our New Zealand Orchid Judges into a well-prepared group ready for the 1990 Conference is proceeding.

The Judging Seminar in Auckland at the end of October will be an important step, apart from being enjoyable for all those attending.

A new awards committee of seven members is a part of the revised judging system.

The members are as follows:-

REGISTRAR (appointed by the Executive Committee from nominations received from qualified judges.)

THREE REPRESENTATIVES (voted for by Regional Chairmen from their own ranks.)

THREE CONZED EXECUTIVE appointments (appointed by the Executive Committee, comprised of people interested in judging but not necessarily executive members or qualified judges.)

## CONZED AWARD

A recent award ratified by the Executive Committee:

*Paphiopedilum micranthum* 'Pictonite'  
HCC/OCNZ- Owner: Mrs Judy Coburn

# Cogito's Diary

Bill Fransen

## *Disa uniflora*

Between December and March I flowered a dozen *Disa uniflora* from seed supplied by George Fuller. Sown on 2nd June 1985, about 100 plants made it to adulthood. I parted with quite a few, so had around 60 plants left at the beginning of this year. I experimented with sphagnum moss, fine bark, expanded polystyrene, shallow and deep pots, small pots and large, single plants and three in one pot, etc., when in April/May it became obvious that quick action was called for. New shoots were coming up all over the place, in some cases even through the drainage holes. The potting mix was being pushed up by the root action and new growths. The plants that flowered, as well as the ones that didn't started to die off. I'm sure that this has alarmed people in the past, but it is obviously the natural course of events. The new shoots provide next year's crop.

The roots of Disas are very brittle. When carefully removing the plants from their pots, I had quite a job to untangle the roots, super-tender young shoots, and tubers, while also trying to salvage some of the shoots that emerged through the drainage holes.

After having transplanted and potted-on Disas for the last two years I've come to a few conclusions:

- Small plants can go in big pots or small. When planted into small pots they must be potted on until they are in 12 to 15 cm pots for flowering.
- I like to put a layer of scoria in the bottom of the pots so that they don't topple so easily when the plants are tall and flowering.
- I use fine 6 to 7 mm bark with expanded polystyrene mixed in 50/50 in the bottom half of the pot.
- It is not necessary to mix in sphagnum moss if fine bark is used. Fine bark will stay nicely damp with timely watering. I prefer to use aquarius foam rather than sphagnum when using coarser bark.
- Dividing the various growths and shoots is a matter of good judgement. The tubers are vital food storage organs and they must obviously not be broken off. I plant everything that breaks off and still has some roots left on it. Some will perish, and some will grow. Any size

growth is still a better prospect than a seedling that is only a few mm tall.

- I now prefer to plant only one plant per pot. Some plants are very vigorous. They produce up to a dozen new shoots which come up all around them. It becomes almost impossible to keep track of clones in that kind of tangle.
- Disas like it cool. They'll tolerate temperatures down to 0°C, but do best between 10 and 20°C.
- They like "medium" light, something like that for *Odontoglossums*.
- They like moisture at all times. For older plants it is no longer as critical as for young ones.
- I give mine half or quarter strength fertilizer of whatever is going, especially when growth is vigorous after flowering in autumn.
- I avoid hitting them with any kind of spray when treating surrounding plants. *Disa* foliage damages easily.

The plants that did not flower last summer look as if they will do so in 6 months time. A few seem to have narrower foliage, but we will have to wait and see.

One of the clones that flowered had a very sturdy inflorescence with seven well-shaped flowers on it. This plant's base was at least 25 mm in diameter. It had a peculiar growth habit which

seemed to help it to grow a thicker base. Small shoots kept forming at the leaf bases and in the leaf axils. They did not grow taller than approx. 10 to 15mm and seemed to help the plant to increase its circumference and vigour. No subterranean side shoots were formed like on most of the other plants. I put a couple of seedpods on it and it remained green until well after they ripened. When the decline of the motherplant started, the little shoots at the base started to grow again. They now provide continuity for next season.

## **Odontoglossums**

I am the moderately happy owner of some 50 Odont seedlings and mericlones acquired during the last 2 years. They were faithfully kept cool and watered and once per month supplied with fertilizer. Somewhere along the line things were not 100% right. Quite a few plants grew pleated leaves and some struggled after their first flowering.

Lack of success always spurs me on to try harder. When repotting, I noticed that the sphagnum moss portion of the mix was sour and soggy. I am inclined to over-water and the combination had caused considerable root-loss. In the new potting mix moss was excluded and about 20% polystyrene added. The plants did a little better but still not as well as some later acquisitions that I planted in basket pots.

Another re-potting session was started about 6 months ago. I feel that I'm on the right track now. Polystyrene has been left out because I suspect that Odonts don't like it. The open structure of the basket pots precludes the need for polystyrene anyway. Straight bark only is now used. Some stones are placed in the bottom of the pot for stability. The moisture holding capacity of the mix is found to be ample with the use of 4 to 7 mm sieved bark.

There are many growers who customarily pack the top of their pots with sphagnum moss. This is obviously done to help retain moisture. Moss seems to have adverse effects in my

hands so instead I use 5 mm scoria. I recently hung all my Odonts about 2 metres high along the main path in the cool house. They all tend to tip slightly forward and the fine bark is inclined to shift or wash out with watering. The thin layer of scoria on top of the bark helps to hold it in place. The scoria also keeps young plants and their roots firmly in place and it stays put when water is poured onto it. Young shoots are seen more easily and look happier sitting in scoria rather than moss.

One way and the other the changes seem to have been for the better. The plants receive better light, which they approve of in winter. They also get more moving air and slightly higher day temperatures being higher up in the house. Come warmer weather I will have to re-adjust again.

## **Warm and Humid - Cool and Dry**

The creation of conditions that are warm and humid is "of the essence." I have no problems to keep my warm room warm. All that is required is to set the thermostat on the electric fan heater at the required temperature. The trouble is that electric heating makes for a drier atmosphere. The other problem is that most plants need a temperature differentiation between day and night. This means setting the thermostat 8 to 10 degrees lower at night and back up again in the morning. That's a bit laborious but not the total answer either. Ideally the relative humidity should be lower in cooler temperatures. The opposite happens in actual fact, because cold air cannot hold as much water as warm air. I try to get a bit closer to the ideal by watering the plants and the floor in the morning when I go in to adjust the thermostat back up. Watering and damping down are avoided at night so that there is not as much available free water around as the temperature goes down.

In the cool house the problem is more difficult to solve. June has been a relatively mild month this year. On sunny days the temperature easily reached

18°C and most nights did not drop below 10°C. The relative humidity has been extremely high. This has resulted in 100% humidity and a lot of condensation during the nightly temperature drop, the latter being the exact opposite to the ideal "Cool and Dry" motto. The Nobile (softcane) type Dendrobiums kept on growing more roots so they must have liked it. Up to a point most genera seemed to like the high humidity. However, there were humidity associated problems as well. Sooty mould affected quite a few plants. This mould has more nuisance value than being an actual pest because it is unsightly. Cymbidium buds and flowers became prone to fungal spotting (some more than others). As a preventative measure I also moved a few in-bud Catts to the warm room because condensation drips in flower sheaths tend to cause damping off. Many plants that basically require warmth but will tolerate cooler conditions are the first to suffer the more serious fungal attacks when it gets colder and wetter than the optimum. I sprayed the inside walls and roof and the plants with Physan (2x at one week's interval) and increased the daytime

ventilation. This has improved things a great deal.

### **Slaters and Ants**

Some time ago there was evidence of root tip damage by slaters. I've found that diazinon prills control that pest and have consequently developed the habit of squirting prills where-ever they are in evidence. Other creepy crawlies can't handle the stuff either. I've also found dead centipedes and ants will migrate and eventually succumb if hounded with the prill bottle. Although not a pest in themselves, ants will culture aphids and scale insects for the sake of the honeydew they secrete. That lifestyle makes the ant an undesirable visitor. When I discover the exact location of an ant colony I also put out ant-bait in bottle caps.

### **Balance**

Isn't Life with orchids a balance between hot and cold, wet and dry, growth and rest, ventilation and a host of other things, health and disease? Even of good fungi and bad? Pest damage and ethereal perfection?

*6 Wedgewood Place Hamilton*

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## **A FINE ORCHID FOR A COOL GREENHOUSE**

### **DISA GRANDIFLORA – Now known as *Disa Uniflora***

*We don't usually reprint articles from other journals, but this extract, sent in by Kevin and Lyn Sherlock, is not readily available these days, and in its rich nineteenth century style gives interesting habitat observations.*

*Editors*

From 'GARDENING ILLUSTRATED' 13 Jan 1883 (a British publication)

No other terrestrial Orchid can compare in colour with *Disa grandiflora* when well cultivated; indeed, it is to be regretted that it was ever called an Orchid, seeing that the word too often frightens even good cultivators from growing it as an ordinary decorative plant for the greenhouse or conservatory, for which purpose it is well adapted. Although really an Orchid, and also a very beautiful one, it is as

amenable to ordinary greenhouse cultivation as a herbaceous Calceolaria or a Pelargonium, and, when in bloom, more effective than either. *Disa grandiflora* - at home on Table Mountain, at the Cape of Good Hope - is thus spoken of by a traveller who has paid a visit to its habitat: "We crossed the Kloof, which is a spur of the mountain, the ocean below us, dotted with fishing boats, looking glorious in the early



daylight, and ascended by Kastell Berg, passing on our way a large number of *Amaryllis Belladonna*, just throwing up their flower-spikes. About 2¼ hours brought us to the plateau, in the rear of Table Mountain proper, and my aneroid barometer showed that we had attained an altitude of 2700 feet. We had not proceeded 300 feet before we perceived the bright red spikes of *Disa ferruginea*, and almost at the same moment that charming flower *Herschelia coelestis*, called here the Blue Disa, met our view. Less than a ¼ of a mile brought us amongst quantities of *Disa grandiflora*, and well may Harvey term it 'the pride of Table Mountain,' for it would be difficult to find a handsomer or showier flower, and when you see a dozen or fifteen of its brilliantly coloured blooms together, it is a sight not readily to be forgotten. The intensity of colour exceeds that of any wild flower I have ever seen - the Snow Plant of California, with its rich colour contrasting with the spotless snow, excepted. *Disa grandiflora* grows most plentifully on the sides of the narrow water-courses which intersect the plateau, the sides a rule, being nearly straight, although we saw numbers on the face of large rocks where water was trickling down. The soil it grows in is a black sandy peat, and it may also be said to grow in the water, the soil being so wet; and as this is the driest month here, it is clear that the roots are always in wet soil, and, I believe, they never rest, as examination showed that they were pushing forth new growth. *Disa ferruginea* and *Herschelia coelestis* both like damp spots, but not so wet as *D. grandiflora*; these two species do not appear to grow in masses as *D. grandiflora* does."

Culture and Position: - Experience, not too pleasant betimes, has taught me one or two facts worth the attention of beginners in *Disa* culture. In repotting never disturb the roots or break up the ball too minutely. I once did this, and ruined a couple of strong, healthy plants, with a dozen good growths on each. Another point is never to place a pan of

water below the pot in which this *Disa* grows. All it seems to require is a layer of fibrous peat, loam, and Sphagnum Moss about 3 inches in thickness above the crocks. Instead of fine white sand, employ nodules of sandstone and charcoal the size of Hazel Nuts. Some growers use horse manure and other manures in compost, but I am fully convinced that these are not all essential, although in the hands of a good cultivator they do no actual harm. An essential part of the cultural treatment is syringing at least twice daily during the growing season. A shelf near the glass seems to suit the plants best, even when grown in a shallow pit; this rule holds good, and an eastern exposure seems desirable, with abundance of diffused sunlight. No other Orchid I know seems so anxious to thrust its flower-spikes up towards the side whence the sunlight comes as does this *Disa*. Even at the Cape we are told this tendency is observable. An excellent cultivator of the *Disa grandiflora* remarks: "I repot my *Disas* in December, if needful, and place them in a cold house along with Heaths and other hardwooded plants, first giving them a good soaking of water to settle the compost; afterwards they are kept fairly moist till they show signs of growing freely, when they receive water every day (foliage and roots) through a fine-rosed watering-pot. At the end of May they are shifted to a cold frame, but still watered freely every day till flowers begin to open, when they are moved to the greenhouse, in company with Fuchsias, etc., and similar plants. Here they receive just water enough to keep the Sphagnum alive. The compost which I find to suit them best is equal parts good fibrous peat and Sphagnum Moss, with a little charcoal broken to about the sizes of Walnuts."

Kevin & Lyn Sherlock  
Atkins Road, Manakau  
R.D. Otaki



# 40th ANNIVERSARY WINTER SHOW 1988

Since 1965 the venue for the Society's Winter and Spring Shows has been the Mt. Albert War Memorial Hall, and this year proved no exception.

The Layout of entries, both in competitive and display stance, complimented each other admirably and provided an aesthetic and pleasing exhibition of many differing genera. Floral art enthusiasts were catered for with five classes and two trophy events. These were all well patronised with a considerable number of imaginative and attractive entries. Such was the interest in floral art this year, that a large display was mounted in the main exhibition hall with the other individual displays. Competitors in the Large Display class included Geyslerland Orchids, South Auckland Orchid Club, Montessa Orchids, Marble Gardens, and L. & R. Orchids, who were the eventual winners of this class and also received an American Orchid Society Show Display Certificate for a meritorious display. Much interest was aroused in this entry with the many and varied genera of orchids that make up this subject in which we are all interested.

2. HCC/NZOS - *Paph* Via Prokuli '#1', grown by B. Fraser. This also received a Bronze Medal from the Cymbidium Society of America, which held a judging session early on the Saturday morning.
3. HCC/NZOS - *Oda* Port Melbourne 'Delightful', grown by Mrs N. Chisnall.
4. AD/NZOS - *Degarmoara* (*Miltassia* Charles M. Fitch x *Odm coronarium*) 'OBE', grown by Geyslerland Orchids.
5. CC/NZOS - *Cym* Fairy Rough 'Lavender Falls', grown by Mr and Mrs J. R. Green.
6. CC/NZOS - *Masd. towarensis*, grown by Mrs V. Bayliss.
7. CC/NZOS - *Cattleya* Guatemalensis, grown by L. & R. Orchids.

The Show was officially opened this year by the Member of Parliament for Mt. Albert and Minister of Conservation, Helen Clark, at the Thursday night preview. Once again members and invited guests greatly enjoyed the geniality associated with the event, which has now become the focal point of the Society's social calendar. The display of padded pictures and the painting demonstration, with a backdrop of lovely orchid blooms, as well as the excellent wine and food, contributed in no small way to the success of the evening.

## NZOS AWARDS

Following the judging of the 21 trophy, 36 open and 13 novice classes, the NZOS judging panel, which also included a visitor from Australia, Clive Hall, conferred the following awards, which have yet to be ratified.

1. AM/NZOS and AD/NZOS - *Paph* Goultenianum x *fairieanum* 'Midnight', grown by Geyslerland Orchids.

## SHOW RESULTS

GRAND CHAMPION ORCHID OF THE SHOW  
Lion Trophy

Geyslerland Orchids  
- *Paph* Goultenianum 'Geyser Girl'  
AM/RHS x *fairieanum*

GRAND CHAMPION PAPHIOPEDILUM  
Society's Cup

Geyslerland Orchids  
- *Paph* Goultenianum 'Geyser Girl'  
AM/RHS x *fairieanum*

**RESERVE CHAMPION PAPHIOPEDILUM**

**GRAND CHAMPION MIN/NOV (INT)  
CYMBIDIUM - Corban Trophy**

**FOUNDERS PAPHIOPEDILUM TROPHY  
Most Outstanding Spotted Paphiopedilum**

**ENA & DES LANGDALE TROPHY  
Most Outstanding Cymbidium**

**CORBAN CUP  
Best Miniature Cymbidium**

**JAMES TROPHY  
Best Cattleya or Allied Genus**

**CLARK CUP  
Best Novelty Cymbidium**

**REG BUTLER TROPHY  
Best Novice Paphiopedilum**

**AGNEW TROPHY  
Best Novice Min/Nov Cymbidium**

**CARPENTER WINTER TROPHY  
Best Masdevallia or Allied Genus**

**DEL CHANDLER TROPHY  
Most Outstanding Odont/Oncidium Alliance**

**JOAN PARKER WINTER TROPHY  
Best miniature, excluding Cymbidiums**

**JEAN ALLEN TROPHY  
Most Outstanding Cymbidium - Novice**

**ARMSTRONG TROPHY  
Best First Flowering Cymbidium Std/Nov/Min**

**SHIRLEY SIDNAM TROPHY  
Best Multi-generic Orchid**

**BOYCE CUP  
Best Culture - One Flowering Paphiopedilum**

**POWELL CUP  
Best Specimen Paphiopedilum**

**MOUNTFORT CUP  
Three Cattleyas - different colours**

**B Fraser  
- *Paph* Via Prokuli '#1'  
Mrs Val Smith  
- *Cym* Orkney 'Pink Heather'**

**A. Day  
- *Paph* Mucho 'San Antoine' x Milmoore  
Bonnie Doon**

**Marble Gardens  
- *Cym* Coral Illusion 'Toya'**

**Mrs Val Smith  
- *Cym* Orkney 'Pink Heather'**

**R. A. & P. J. Hargraves  
- *Slc* Hazel Boyd 'Red Celeste'**

**Geyserland Orchids  
- *Cym* Dolly x Coraki 'Margaret'**

**S. J. Rubie  
- *Paph* *hirsutissimum***

**Mrs Val Smith  
- *Cym* Orkney 'Pink Heather'**

**Mrs Val Bayliss  
- *Masdevallia* *mejiana***

**Mrs N. Chisnall  
- *Oda* Port Melbourne 'Delightful'**

**L. & R. Orchids  
- *Sophranitella* *violacea***

**Mrs Val Smith  
- *Cym* Yowie Flame 'Heather'**

**Montessa Orchids  
- *Cym* Rampur x Fanfare**

**Geyserland Orchids  
- *Miltassia* Charles M. Fitch x *Odm*  
*coronarium***

**1. I. & J. McEwen  
- *Paph* Mahaska 'Granite' x Geraldine  
'Pajoro'**

**2. C. Collis  
- *Paph* Santa Margarita x Gordon  
Sawyer 'The Giant'**

**3. Corbans Orchids  
- *Paph* Honda Gold x Gordon Sawyer**

**1. A. Day  
- *Paph* Mucho 'San Antoine' x Milmoore  
Bonnie Doon**

**2. —**

**3. —**

**1. L. & R. Orchids  
- *Slc* Hazel Boyd 'March Lion'  
- *Slc* Tickety Boo  
- *Slc* California Delight x *Slc* Hazel  
Boyd 'Aunty Harriet'**

**2. D. & N. Bonham  
- *Lc* Muriel Turner 'Seagull' x *Lc* El  
Cerrito  
- *Slc* Madge Fordyce 'Red Orb'  
- *Slc* Seagulls Houston**

**3. —**

**LAIRD TROPHY**  
Best Orchid - any Genus - by Novice  
not exhibited before 1985

1. Miss Ida Falk  
- Cym Swan Lake
2. —
3. —

**POINTS TROPHY**  
Open

L. & R. Orchids

**POINTS TROPHY**  
Novice

Mrs Val Smith

**EEFIE POTTER TROPHY - Floral Art**  
"My Favourite Arrangement with Orchids"  
(Novice)

1. Mrs Pat Hargraves
2. Mrs Nancy Sievewright
3. Mrs Bev Long

**WIGHT TROPHY - Floral Art**  
Points Prize - Open Section

Mrs Iris Cooper

### Some of the Awarded Plants at the NZOS Winter Show



*Paph* Via Prokuli ' #1' HCC/NZOS  
Grower: B. Fraser      Photographer: Martin Bonham



*Oda* Port Melbourne 'Delightful' HCC/NZOS  
Grower: Mrs N. Chisnall      Photographer: Martin Bonham

## VALE

### R. E. BARNES (Ron)

Ron Barnes, a life member of the New Zealand Orchid Society and well known in Orchid circles in the northern part of New Zealand, passed away recently in Auckland.

Ron, with his very good sense of humour gave much time to encouraging and assisting new growers.

Ron had a long distinguished history of service to Orchid Growing through his membership of the New Zealand Orchid Society which included 3 years as a Vice-President, 14 years on the Executive of the New Zealand Orchid Society, 11 years on the Show Committee, 3 years as Assistant Registrar Awards and Prizes and was an Associate Judge on the New Zealand Orchid Society Judging Panel for 7 years.

His contribution to orchid growing is equally matched with his long years of community service with the Auckland City Council.

He will be sadly missed by his many friends and associates.

## **Growing in your Greenhouse**

*Glenn Anderson*

At first glance, the title of this article may seem a little inappropriate. In my past articles, I have taken one important aspect of orchid growing at the time of publication and used that as the basis of my article. But this time, I was stumped. One does very little in Sept/Oct except grow one's plants. So that's it, I thought. I will write about growing. But that very quickly gave me another problem. We all grow our plants, but do we grow them the right way? Is there a right way? And many of us may go through a life-time of growing and never come to grips with the technicalities of NPK's, pH's and foot candles.

Basically, good growing depends on getting an acceptable combination of five basic factors; air, temperature, fertilizer, water and light. These factors are all interdependant, the attention of one necessarily altering the rest. Understanding these interrelationships and how the various factors affect your plants will take you a long way down the road to good growing.

As spring advances, we experience higher temperatures and stronger, longer hours of sunlight. To keep step with this natural change you will need to increase the frequency of your waterings, damp down on warm days to increase the humidity, increase the ventilation to control the temperature, and shade to control both the amount of light and the temperature. The temperature in a small greenhouse can skyrocket very quickly when the sun gets up if it is not ventilated. A late lie-in may be heaven for you but hell for your plants if it means they sit in a closed up greenhouse till mid-day on a sunny spring morning. If you are an habitual sleeper-in, an automatic vent could make life easier for you and your orchids.

With the growing season well under way, watering becomes very important. I am often asked 'why won't my cymbidiums flower? I put it outside like Mary's next door but it never flowers.' For people like Mary's neighbour who grows 2-3 cymbidiums under the apple tree, they often fall into a very basic trap.

In the spring and summer their orchids are green with no sign of flowers and they get forgotten about. They have to rely on a shower of rain for water and probably get no fertilizer.

Then towards autumn Mary says 'I've got six spikes on my orchids! How are yours?' The neighbour goes and looks at her orchids and there are no spikes. So she reels out the hose and waters her orchids frequently and pours on strong fertilizers in the hope of forcing spikes, just when she should be letting up on both. When she should have been watering and fertilizing her orchids was in the spring and summer while the plant does most of its growing, building up its strength for the flowering season ahead. I usually tell such people to choose the place for their orchids carefully. They should receive morning or afternoon sun but be protected from mid-day sun (although I know many people who grow in full sun) but equally important, they should be close to a water supply. To look at your plants and think 'I must water you' does them no good if there is no water handy and you then walk away and forget them.

The other important factor for this type of growing is how much light your plants are receiving. If you keep your plants on the south side of the carport they may not be receiving enough light to promote good flowering. By about late October, after the initial spring growth, the leaves should not be a bush green but rather a paler yellow-green.





*Odontoglossum bictoniense* 'San Elijo' AM/AOS  
 Grower: Geyserland Orchids Photographer: N.C. Miller

I have recently been intrigued by some hybrids from *Odm bictoniense* that are appearing. *Odm bictoniense*, itself, I always feel is a rather nondescript 'take it or leave it' type of species. In fact, I used to have one myself and sold it for that very reason. Although to be fair, mine was a very ordinary clone, and some are far superior to others. But when you look at some of its hybrids, you can see what a dramatic impact it has had.

One such example is *Odontocidium* Bittersweet (*Odm bictoniense* x *Odcdm* Crowborough) made by the late Dr Martin Orenstein and registered by Featherhill in 1982. The *bictoniense* has

*Odontocidium* Bittersweet 'Justice Swift'  
 Grower: Geyserland Orchids Photographer: A.W. Easton



changed the lightly barred coppery-bronze tepals of the Crowborough to a very heavy mahogany barring. The creamy-white Crowborough lip has gone to a very dark lip, in either red or purple tonings. The Bittersweets are all very dramatic which is not a term that could be applied to either parent. Then the *Odcdm* Bittersweet was remade using a 4n Crowborough which further improved the shape, colour and substance.



*Odontocidium* Golden Trident  
 Grower: Geyserland Orchids Photographer: Alan Patterson-Kane

Another example is *Odontocidium* Golden Trident (*Odm bictoniense* x *Odcdm* Tiger Hambu'hren) registered by Gerrard in 1982. *Odcdm* Tiger



*Odontocidium* Tiger Hambu'hren 4N  
 Grower: Geyserland Orchids Photographer: Alan Patterson-Kane

*Hambūhren* makes a showy specimen plant with tall branching spikes of yellow flowers lightly marked with brown but they could be said to be a little lacking in substance. But cross it with *Odm bictoniense* and the results are dramatic. The flowers improve in shape, and take on a very heavy substance with a resultant added depth to the colour both of the yellow and the brown barring.

It is hard for me to understand how such a Ho Hum species can have such a dramatic effect on its progeny, or

indeed, why the hybrids from *Odm uro-skinneri* which looks to all intents like a 4n *Odm bictoniense* is not generally producing hybrids that come close to equaling those of its less showy cousin.

Perhaps one of you out there can explain it to me or has had similar results with breeding? I am sure we would all like to hear about it, perhaps through the medium of this magazine. Exchanging thoughts and ideas is what it is all about.

421 Pukehangi Road  
Rotorua

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## Your Questions

*We are offering a Question and Answer Section to readers. We have a small panel of experienced growers willing to offer answers if you send us the questions. In this issue Andy Easton of Geyserland Orchids offers answers to two questions which have arisen.*

1) *What is the most effective treatment for scale — it seems resistant to Orthene and other materials?*

### SCALE

Rogor emulsion is ideal for the control of scale, thrips, aphids and mealy bug. It is systemic and will control these insects over an 8-12 week period depending on the season. The warmer the weather the shorter the control period. For scale one preventative application a year is usually sufficient. Application procedures are important for success with Rogor.

- 1) pick a warm day
- 2) water plants thoroughly with water early in the day
- 3) re-water with Rogor mixture mixed at the rate of 25mls per 20 litres of water. Wear gloves and gumboots to avoid the splash

**Note:** a 5 litre can of Rogor costs about \$85.00 and if stored sealed in a cool place will last for years.

A. Easton  
Box 162  
Rotorua

2) *Texts on genetics always stress the fact that the F<sub>2</sub> generation of a cross (i.e. a cross between siblings or a selfing of a plant in the first generation of a cross) is the way to get the maximum variation of possible results of a cross. Most orchid breeders seem to produce a cross, then backcross to one or other parent (or some other entirely different species or hybrid), rather than producing an F<sub>2</sub> generation. Why is this?*

WHY NOT F<sub>2</sub>F<sub>3</sub> etc.

These are some classic examples of line bred orchids, generally species:

*Vanda sanderiana*  
*Odontoglossum crispum*  
*Phalaenopsis violacea*  
*Paphiopedilum rothschildianum*

In the case of *Odontoglossum crispum* there certainly has been a decline in vigour and the *Vanda sanderiana alba* F<sub>2</sub> and F<sub>3</sub>'s are chronically weak growers.

I am aware of two hybrid cymbidium populations that were taken to the F<sub>3</sub> generation. The first involved Sleeping Beauty pure colour lines and the lack of

vigour and lack of disease resistance became quite a barrier to their continued culture. The other involved work with the cross Cleo Sherman. The F<sub>2</sub> generation was superb and produced many high award winners, but in the middle range of the cross and the few seedlings resembling either parent, some observers noted that none of the F<sub>2</sub> clones reached the overall supremacy of one of their parents, *Cym.* Cleo Sherman "Mem. Robert Casamajor" GM/CSA, although the F<sub>2</sub>'s were remarkably consistent in their quality. The F<sub>3</sub> generation is just now flowering as mature plants and it is my opinion that they lack a significant degree of growth vigour although flowering and flower quality is consistently good.

One could also point to the view that all white Phalaenopsis are really *P. amabilis* at the F<sub>10</sub> level or beyond. Certainly they are vigorous and in substance, shape and size of flower, totally surpass the parent species. Maybe in orchids they are the rule-proving exceptions.

In our breeding at Geyserland we make frequent use of F<sub>2</sub> crosses to achieve hybridizing goals, particularly in the Cymbidiums and occasionally in the Cattleya alliance. Particularly in pure colour cymbidium crosses at the tetraploid level, F<sub>2</sub> crosses are an essential step to progress. But F<sub>3</sub> crosses and beyond seem to run quickly into growing weaknesses. We will however outcross two inbred lines sometime soon and report on the results for those who are interested.

Another point of interest would be comparing the F<sub>2</sub> generation of Rincon "Clarisse" AM/AOS and Rincon "Clarisse" 4n HCC/AOS. There was much greater variation in the diploid F<sub>2</sub> generation with several white seedlings appearing and a considerable range of flowering sizes. The tetraploid F<sub>2</sub> generation has varied little from its parent and no white forms have been observed.

A. Easton  
Box 162  
Rotorua

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# MASDEVALLIAS — The Species

## Part 2

Russell Hutton

Sorry we missed an issue but I think from here on the typewriter and I should be able to keep up a steady supply of material for the editors. My last bout on the typewriter acquainted me with R.S.I. - Repetitive Strain Injury. I found it very difficult to believe that tapping away at the keys of a typewriter could cause such excruciating pain in my left arm. It got so bad I was searching the cupboards in the small hours of the morning for forgotten packets of disprin or panadol to try and get some sleep.

Back to more interesting things - Masdevallias. The next group we are going to look at are those of the

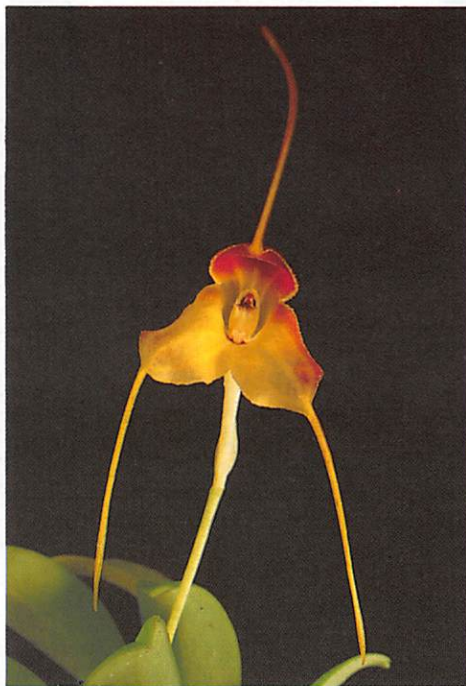
### Sub-Section Masdevallia

The 60 or so species included in this group range from Venezuela in the north to Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia. All have a rather well developed sepaline tube and the petals and lip are not exposed as in the sub-section Caudatae (previous article). There are, however, species with an affinity towards the Caudatae types such as *M. arminii* and others showing tendencies towards the Saltirices as with *M. agaster*.

The plants range in size from very small such as *M. patriciana* just a few centimetres tall to medium sized with leaves around 10 to 15 cm tall. The flowers of many of these species can be produced in great profusion and in a range of colours, some of which are strikingly vivid.

### Masdevallia arminii

Smallish plants with showy blooms reminiscent of the Caudatae group. A lovely free-blooming species from high altitudes of the eastern cordillera of Colombia where the habitat is cool and moist. Although this species is not common in the wild it thrives in a cool greenhouse or shadehouse. The flowers are large for the plant and can vary in colour from pale yellow with a light rose suffusion to quite strong rosy red. The rose suffusion I am sure is promoted with higher light. Messers Sander and Co. of England introduced this plant to orchid enthusiasts in 1882.



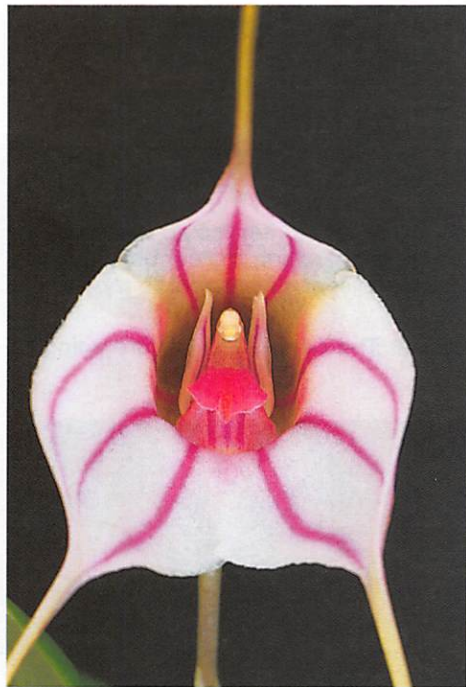
*Masdevallia arminii*

Grower: L. & R. Orchids

Photographer: V. Bayliss

### Masdevallia calocodon

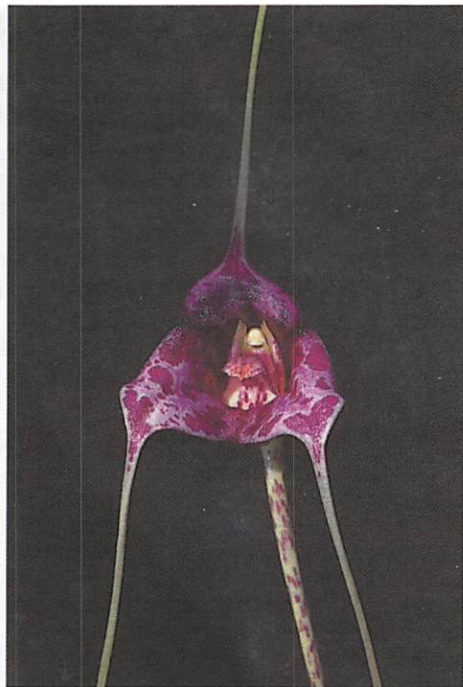
A plant of this species in full bloom is really striking with each flower perched atop its thin stem commanding your attention. The species comes from Bolivia and I think until recently has been confused with *M. paivaiana* also from Bolivia. I have found this plant grows well in cultivation but if too wet through



*Masdevallia calocodon*

Grower and Photographer:

V. Bayliss



*Masdevallia chaparensis* 'Pui'

Grower: A. Arms

Photographer: G. Fuller

the colder months will develop unsightly black spotting towards the tips of the leaves. When not actively growing let the potting mix run a little drier, those lovely blooms which appear from spring through summer look much better against a clean green background.

### **Masdevallia chaparensis**

Formerly known as *M. hajekii* and as such I saw a plant in bloom in the collection of the late Harold Ripley, a connoisseur of Masdevallias, in San Francisco. Not my idea of beautiful but bold and bizzare, yes. *M. chaparensis* takes its name from the valley of Chapare near Cochabamba in Bolivia where it is abundant in the damp cloud forest of this area. Carlyle Luer makes an interesting observation regarding this species remarking that despite its bold and distinctive blooms and abundance in an area near a city frequented by early botanists it remained unknown until the

early 1970's. The plants respond well to cool-intermediate treatment and are not shy of blooming.

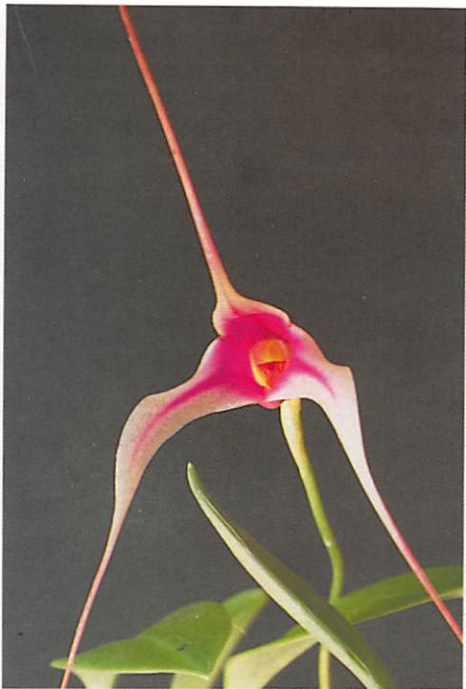
### **Masdevallia gilbertoi**

A very rare and distinctive species first introduced into cultivation by Sr. Gilberto Escobar in whose honour the plant is named. The species is native to Colombia and until quite recently only one plant had been found. With cool moist growing conditions and an abundance of moving air the plants increase quite quickly and the large graceful flowers are produced freely.

### **Masdevallia hieroglyphica**

An easily grown and rather floriferous plant which has been in cultivation since the late 1800's. In nature the plants are epiphytic in the cool cloud forests of the eastern cordillera of Columbia. The distinctive long-tailed flowers are held a little above the leaves and have a most





interesting appearance at the advanced bud stage. The hooded dorsal sepal is intricately patterned between the veins with hieroglyphics giving rise to Reichenbach's choice of specific name.

### **Masdevallia hymenantha**

The first bloom I saw on this plant sold me, exquisite. Seen in sunlight these beautifully formed flowers come alive with sparkle. The plants have a tidy growth habit with dark green leaves 8 cm to 12 cm long and the flower stems are long enough to come clear of the leaves. Colour of the flowers ranges from pale rose to dark rosy purple with darker tails and veins. This species is not common but has been known since the mid 1800's and appears to be confined to a small area of wet forested valleys in northern Peru.

#### *Masdevallia gilbertoi*

Grower: L. & R. Orchids

Photographer: V. Bayliss

#### *Masdevallia hieroglyphica*

Grower: L. & R. Orchids

Photographer: V. Bayliss





*Masdevallia hymenantha*

Grower: L. & R. Orchids

Photographer: V. Bayliss

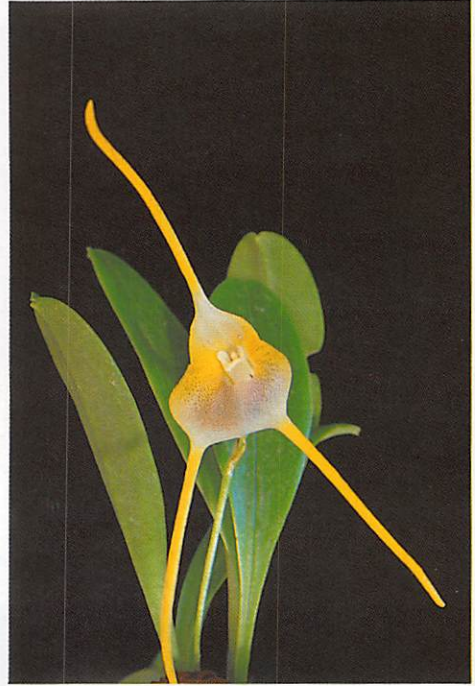
### Masdevallia mejiana

An epiphytic species from Colombia but found at lower altitudes than most others and as a consequence requires intermediate growing conditions to keep the plant in top condition. The broad rather fleshy leaves are bright green and have a distinctive gloss. A very attractive and graceful plant when bloomed well with the large attractive blooms of very fine form displayed on thin horizontal stems to 15 cm long. The flowers are waxy in appearance and very long-lived. To my mind the superb form of this species could have promise in hybridizing.

### Masdevallia odontocera

This smallish species grows in rather shaded areas low on moss covered trunks and branches of small trees and shrubs in areas of dense moist forests in northern Colombia, and although the habitat is not widespread plants are locally abundant. We find this species grows well in cool to intermediate situations with increased shade and the

colourfully striped, wide spread flowers are produced freely. Although the flowers do not appear above the leaves they make an attractive show on horizontally inclined stems around the base of the plant.



*Masdevallia mejiana*

Grower: L. & R. Orchids

Photographer: V. Bayliss

### Masdevallia verecunda

Coming from relatively low altitudes near the northern coast of Venezuela this species grows very well in cultivation if given intermediate growing conditions. A well grown plant will have a profusion of blooms which are somewhat nodding but have a certain charm of their own. The creamy white flowers are tinged green with the central vein of each sepal suffused reddish-purple and long wispy tails. The specific *verecunda* is derived from the latin 'verecundus' meaning bashful, an allusion to the nodding blooms.





*Masdevallia odontocera*

Grower: L. & R. Orchids

Photographer: V. Bayliss

*Masdevallia verecunda*

Grower and Photographer:

V. Bayliss



## Masdevallia uniflora

This cool growing species was the first of the genus to be discovered and named by Europeans. Two Spanish botanists Hippolito Ruiz and Jose Pavon found plants at around 3000 metres in open rocky situations in the Central Peruvian Andes in the early 1790's and it wasn't until around 1975 - 200 years later - that plants were again found and became available for cultivation. The leaves of this species are pale green and rather thin and soft. Try to avoid excessive summer heat and keep the air moist and moving. The plants do grow well with cool moist conditions and will reward you with a display of vivid pink blooms during autumn and winter.

The Quechua Indians know *M. uniflora* as rima-rima because it is supposed to possess properties which will cure speaking difficulties of children. The Quechua word 'rima' means speech. The treatment would appear to



*Masdevallia uniflora* 'Hot Pink'

A selected clone showing exceptional colour

Grower: L. & R. Orchids

Photographer: V. Bayliss

be painless and is still practised by the Indians today - the patient puts out their tongue and it is struck with a flower.

As there are so many species well worthy of mention in this group I will continue on with more next issue.

L. & R. Orchids  
P.O. Box 167  
Tuakau

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### BOOK REVIEW



## 'John Shaw's CLOSEUPS IN NATURE'

Published 1987 by AMPHOTO, an imprint of Watson-Guption Publications.

\$36.95

144 pages

189 colour plates

One of the more pleasing aspects of editing 'Orchids in New Zealand' has been the steady improvement in the overall quality of the photographs submitted to us for publication. We have endeavoured to encourage this trend by printing the occasional article on the subject of orchid photography.

There are a number of books on the subject of close-up and/or natural history photography available, even one devoted to the specialised topic of orchid photography. In general they are very good. The publication I am reviewing however, has made a particularly good impression.

The author, John Shaw, is a well known American photographer, specialising in nature and wildlife photography. He regularly has his work published in such prestigious journals as *Audubon* and *National Wildlife*. He also

has the happy knack of expressing himself clearly in print.

The book is divided into seven main sections. The first, **Getting Started** describes magnification, metering, how exposure works, and the 'care and feeding' of light meters.

**Equipment and Film** - discusses cameras (the book deals exclusively with 35 mm single lens reflex equipment), tripods and other accessories, and deals with the controversial subject of film choice (Kodachrome still seems to be the prime favourite.)

**In the Field** deals with depth of field, choice of lenses, background, natural lighting and good composition. It is followed by **Extension** which is largely concerned with the various methods of moving a lens further away from the film to gain increased magnification.

**Electronic Flash** deals with just that, and includes a number of very practical tips on the subject. I predict we will see a number of 'butterfly brackets' at orchid shows in the future.

**Supplementary Lenses and Teleconverters** describes a variety of clever ways of increasing magnification without compromising image quality, while **Special Considerations** includes a further selection of useful and imaginative ideas and practical hints. Although the author is obviously a Nikon enthusiast, other makes of cameras and equipment get fair and equitable treatment also.

The standard of the illustrations, and the quality of the colour printing had your editors green with envy.

The majority of the subjects are North American wildflowers (only a few orchids - a beautifully portrayed lady's slipper formed the accompaniment to the foreword) and insects, but such varied subjects as cobwebs, frogs and dewdrops took on new aspects when seen through John Shaw's lenses. Also shown in colour were a number of the set-ups used to make various photographs.

The technical production of this volume is superb, and the colour printing is breathtaking. Interestingly, the book is printed in Japan. Throughout, the emphasis is not only on technique and technology, but also on artistry. To quote the author — "A technocrat without emotion is clinical and soulless, while a poet without order is bound within personal imagery and cannot convey his or her feelings to others." This quote reflects the whole of this book.

No doubt a professional photographer would be able to find more criticisms of this book (I would have liked to see more orchids and more precise identification of the plants and animals portrayed) but I can only suggest that any orchid grower (or gardener, or naturalist) wishing to take photographs of his favourites should buy this book.

*N.C. Miller  
Te Akau Road  
R.D. 4, Rotorua*

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## Microwave Mishap

Mother dearest was in an adventurous mood having read various newsletters and discovered how to zap bark, sphagnum etc in the microwave, so she decided to 'do' some sphagnum (little did the poor defenceless sphagnum moss realise that it indeed was about to be done.)

Into the gaping cavern of the microwave went the moss in a plastic pot (take note of this!), and mother disappeared to do various unspeakables to the 'nasties' in the orchid house.

Later father entered the kitchen for the ritual 10 a.m. coffee, but instead found a towering inferno inside the microwave and the aroma of burnt plastic invading the house. An anguished cry erupted from father as he yelled at mother, who rushed in to discover a smallish blackish mess, rather like something the cat threw up.

**Moral of the story:** Don't put dry sphagnum moss into the microwave (unless of course you like the poisonous fumes of burnt plastic) - make sure it is damp.

*P.S.* One good thing eventuated from this escapade - the kitchen was cleaned (very overdue) and mother got to clean up the ash.

*Ruth Feist  
Te Puke*



# 17. SARAH ANN FEATON

(1848 — 1927)

Ian St. George

Mr and Mrs E. H. Featon's *The Art Album of New Zealand Flora* appeared in 1889, and was the first book of coloured artwork to be published in New Zealand. Volume I contains thirty-nine plates of seventy-one species, and the fortieth plate is a frontispiece, a smorgasbord of N.Z. foliage, flowers and fruits. More was planned, for they wrote in the preface:

"... it is contemplated to continue this work by the issue of two further volumes (the material for which is largely in hand) so that the colony may be put in possession of a faithful and artistic epitome of the flowering plants of New Zealand, serviceable alike for the student and artist, but the ultimatum of this enterprise rests on the measure of support afforded by our readers and the public."

Why was the work not continued? Una Platts writes, "One account has it that the material was destroyed by a flood in the Government Printer's basement." Bruce Sampson found the original paintings used for Volume I, and a further ninety-three paintings, mounted, numbered, and with printed legends, in the National Museum in Wellington a few years ago: clearly they were destined for the other two volumes, and there was no sign of water damage. He surmised that Sarah Featon was unable to persevere with plans for publication after her husband's death in 1909, or that the Government Printer was unwilling to undertake the work involved in making the plates (the firm of Bock and Cousins, who had done the lithographs for the first volume, was by then out of business).

Whatever the reason, the plates are there, unpublished, in the National Museum, and among them are some glowing paintings of New Zealand orchids — *Thelymitra longifolia*, *Orthoceras strictum*, *Earina mucronata*, *Earina autumnalis*, *Dendrobium cunninghamii*, *Acianthus sinclairii*, *Corybas macranthus*, *Caladenia minor*,

*Pterostylis banksii*. In the Alexander Turnbull Library's collection of Sarah Featon's work is a watercolour of *Pterostylis graminea*.

Edward Featon wrote the text: he arrived in N.Z. in 1860, married Sarah Ann Porter in 1870, and from 1875 they lived in Gisborne. Sarah Featon was educated by an uncle interested in art. The book was celebrated as a fellow to Buller's *Birds*, and formed part of New Zealand's gift to Queen Victoria for her diamond jubilee. The paintings are decorative rather than accurate, and are bright, almost incandescent. They have been called gaudy: Edward Featon's prose certainly is, but then that was the taste of the day. Try this —

"... who can deny that even the little Patch Plants, with their chaste inflorescence, clothing the rugged heights, and bordering on the region of perpetual snow, or the modest yellow petalled *Potentilla*, that carpets the lowland plains, are not equally worthy of regard and admiration, to all sisters, that bloom beneath the balmy influence of a more sunny clime."

"High in the alps of the Middle Island, amidst the clouds and snow, we find the chaste and velvety *Edelweiss*, the sweet-scented *Notholaspi*, and the little *Hectorella*. Upon a lower zone the beautiful *Celmisias* with their well-clad shaggy foliage and conspicuous aster-like flowers, adorn the plateaux — lower still the subalpine Beeches with the luxuriant flowering *Tawari*, and the handsome *Hoheria*, break the dark lines of the primeval forest, and lower again stately trees, handsome flowering shrubs, trembling ferns, springy mosses, and hoary lichens clothe the landscape, down to the plains





Plate: *Acianthus sinclairii*, *Corybas macranthus*,  
*Caladenia minor*, *Pterostylis banksii*. Watercolour by  
Sarah Ann Featon, ca 1890.  
Reproduced courtesy of the National Museum,  
Wellington.

below, where the luxuriant tropical Nikau Palm, and  
the quaint *Cordyline* strike their roots deep into the  
soil."

45 Cargill Street  
Dunedin

## COLOUR FUND

Assistance in funding our colour  
illustrations has been gratefully  
received from:

L. & R. Orchids, Tuakau  
Mrs J. Anderson, Otaki  
Mr Avon Rzoska, Panmure

## Phragmipediums

*This is a South American genus of Slippered Orchids and there are about eleven species. They are different from Paphiopedilums (the Asian Genus) in that the dorsal sepal is more or less like the petals and the edges of the lip are folded in.*



*Phragmipedium schlimii*  
Photography: David Menzies



*Phragmipedium longifolium*  
Photographer: David Menzies

## Phragmipedium Culture

*John Campbell*

The Christchurch area **was** the home of at least 2 very good collections of Phrags, as they are often termed, and earlier, the late Clem Stokell also grew a considerable number. Many from the Stokell collection ended up in my hands when I bought the complete "slipper orchid" collection. Ron Roy and the late Walter Syder were the other 2 competent growers mentioned above but it was Walter who aimed at having a complete Phrag. collection. Along with those purchased, I had added to my collection pieces from both Ron and Walter and **so**, (you might think) Phrags were fairly safely distributed in this area.

It's amazing how ignorant we orchid growers can be sometimes. I had read only one or two articles on the subject of Phrags and I distinctly remember plants being found in the wild on a wet seeping rockface. Now either I'd mis-read, mis-interpreted or plain missed the point about light and considered if it was wet and seeping, it had to be dark and shaded too. The fact that I'd driven to the West Coast dozens of times past wet mossy rock faces dripping with moss and bathed in blazing sunshine never registered. The other reference to Phrags which I recalled was plants

growing in a creek bed and periodically being submerged by flash floods. Creek bed = wet, wet = dark. Why for heavens sake? I guess more than half the creekbeds in the world are exposed to full sun. Ignorance! No other excuse.

Well, to cut a lengthening story short, I grew my Phrags on lower benches in considerable shade, using my usually successful Paph potting mix. For years these poor Phrags struggled along with seldom a flower but with some proliferation of plant material which was split, at potting time.

Lack of flowers soon engenders lack of interest and we all know what that leads to. Deaths began to occur so I quit the lot to an enthusiast who seemed to be doing better than I with Phrags.

Like the evergreen sucker, I imported a few from Brazil a year or so back. Some people just never learn. Down on the low benches again once out of quarantine, slow growth or no growth — well, I'm consistent, aren't I?

You're probably wondering where this article is leading, . . . probably you've re-checked the title and noted it does say "culture." What does this bloke have to offer?

Well I don't have anything to offer but the American Orchid Society Bulletin does. If you're an enthusiastic orchid grower you probably already subscribe to this valuable monthly. If you don't then you should check among your friends for the address and subscribe to some of the best orchid literature available in the world.

Now after an advertisement like that, I'm sure the American Orchid Society won't condemn my efforts at condensing a seven page masterpiece down to a few basic notes. If you're a Phrag enthusiast you'll want to read the whole article anyway.

The author, Gary Zetterstrom states that Phrags are easy to grow, are reliable bloomers and prolific growers. You wouldn't gather that from my earlier statements.

In spite of the many and varied habitats, they are all grown in a uniform potting mix in Cattleya conditions.

Two main factors are stressed, plenty of light and plenty of water. Only one species seems to object to this and that's *Phragmipedium besseae* which likes more shade. At something like \$200 per plant, probably not many New Zealanders' are having cultivation problems with *P. besseae*. To obtain maximum light on leaves, space between plants is important; leaves should be light green in colour.

Although some Phrags come from quite cool areas, all seem to grow well between 55° and 95°F. — Much the same range as my Cattleya house. Higher temps should be avoided if possible. Phrags like to be wet, not boggy, they still like air at the roots but underwatering causes more damage to Phrags than overwatering. The old orchid rule, "if in doubt, leave watering out" does not apply. If in doubt with Phrags, water! Every 2 to 4 days depending on weather. High humidity seems to be very beneficial, from 70% to 90%, although they will grow well at a lower humidity.

Water does not seem to harm plant leaves but wet flower spikes can rot off easily at an early stage so good air movement is necessary to dry excess water quickly.

The potting mix needs to be free draining or it will break down quickly under the moist conditions that Phrags prefer.

Words such as medium or medium fine grade don't mean much to us here and probably refer to commercial grades available in U.S.A. Free draining, could be taken too far also, so we will just have to experiment here to work out what's best. I will be trying ¼ to ¾ bark chips which I would call medium grade. Expanded shale is used in the U.S. mix. Perhaps scoria could substitute here. Four parts of medium-fine charcoal is added to 8 parts bark plus 2 parts fern fibre and 1 part scoria. This would be my choice, interpreting from the U.S. article.

I note that an inch to 1½ inches of marble chips, coarse limestone chips or gravel is used on the bottom of each *plastic* pot. I don't intend to re-write the whole article I'd far sooner offer enough to whet your appetite to read it yourself.

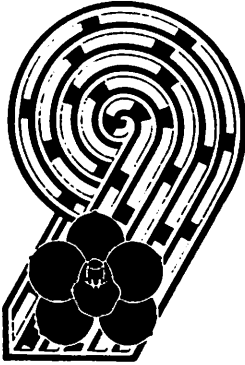
The basic facts are, plenty of light, plenty of water, plenty of drainage and plenty of air movement.

How I wish this article had appeared 10 years ago — I might still have a good Phrag collection.

21 Blakes Road  
Prebbleton, Canterbury

# 13th World Orchid Conference 1990

Auckland, New Zealand  
August 1988



## Highlights from Newsletter No. 10

### PROMOTIONAL ITEMS

Tea Towels, Tea Spoons, and Aerogrammes are selling well. The pre-ordering system has been helpful to Societies and many are now sending payment with order which will certainly assist with the stock taking and the following up required for this task.

### SHOW NEWS

The Show Committee clarifies that you may be booking a square or rectangular shaped area but your display can be any shape within that allocated area. They may also consider "Table Top" displays if sufficient interest is about.

Judging from response received from Societies so far, we should have almost a 100% display record by Societies. This is most encouraging and do not worry, we will fit everyone in somehow.

A handyman's sales place will be investigated so that on the spot purchases can be made for those last minute touches to your displays. Liaison persons will be assigned to each display to advise you and make sure you have everything you need. We aim to make things as easy as possible for you to set up your exhibition, then relax and enjoy the Conference.

Remember that plants can only be exhibited as part of a display at a World Orchid Conference Show. No individual benched classes are staged as may be common in many Annual Shows in New Zealand. Once in a display your prized orchid will be judged as an individual plant by one of the Judging Panels as a class winner or place getter, or medal winner.

### JUDGING

A draft judging schedule should be complete by the end of August, for circulation around key Judges. This should mean that a preliminary schedule could be published about October 31 this year.

### CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Conference Papers are now being actively sought and your offers and suggestions for speakers are invited. If you know or have heard a good speaker in New Zealand or overseas who can put together an interesting programme, let us know. Remember that although there will be space for commercial and scientific papers, the main thrust for our Conference will be for the hobbyist grower. Submissions for papers will be refereed by a panel for quality of speaker and paper, and balance of content in the conference. See also the May/June 1988 Orchids in New Zealand.

### NEW ZEALAND ORCHID HISTORY

A special part of the Conference will be a history of orchid growing in New Zealand. A publication of historical events and people involved or knowledgeable in these episodes is planned, and a special session will be devoted to the subject. Names such as; Jim Gardiner-Matamata, Charlie Scott-Nelson, Herbie Poole-Lower Hutt, Tom Grimson-Gisborne, Fred Parker-New Plymouth, Clem Stokell-Christchurch, Kath Black-Levin are emerging. Let us know if you know of any others who have played a part or have first hand knowledge of early orchid growing events in New Zealand.



## EARLY REGISTRATION

In response to suggestions made by many people, investigation will be made into a system of early registration. Details into costs have yet to be worked out, but it will be a means for you to stake an early claim for a place at the Conference, with some benefits for you.

## JUDGING SEMINAR

A Judging Seminar for the combined judges of the three panels in New Zealand (New Zealand Orchid Society, Orchid Council of New Zealand, and the Cymbidium Society of America) is being organised for October 29 and 30 of this year. This is another in a series planned to orientate local judges towards the special requirements at a World Orchid Conference show.

*R. W. Dix*

*Chairman — Publicity and  
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Send advertisements with  
payment, to the Editors.

## WANTED

To learn whereabouts of George Raymond Skinner Daniell, or Irene Margaret Daniell, or Margaret Anne Daniell, formerly of 19 Pautini Street, Wanganui, related to George Ure Skinner (1804-1866) of orchid fame. Please contact Robert M. Hamilton, 9211 Beckwith Road, Richmond, British Columbia, Canada, V6X 1V7: Tel: 604-278-2566

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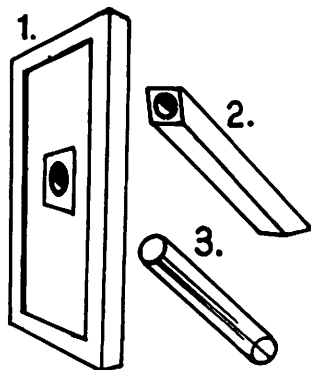
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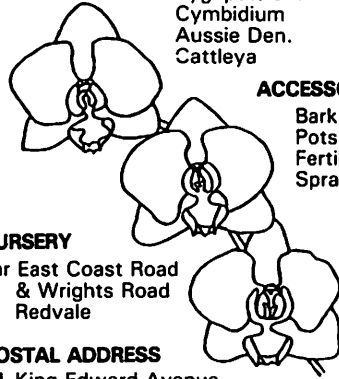
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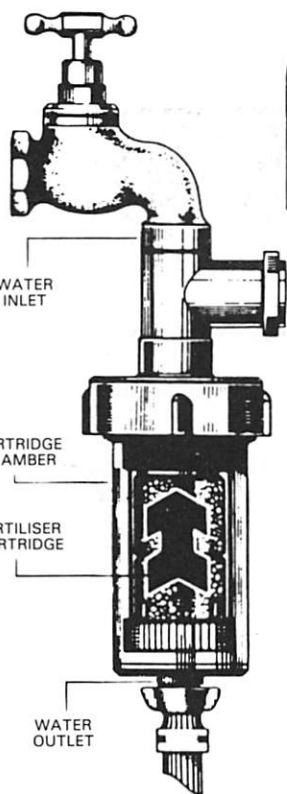
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*Earina mucronata* is an epiphyte which usually flowers in spring, but occasionally in summer to autumn. It has numerous dainty sprays of flowers at the tips of fine, drooping canes of narrow leaves. The leaves are longer and narrower than the autumn flowering species, *E. autumnalis*. The delicately scented flowers have creamy petals and sepals, with lip greenish-yellow to apricot.

*Photography: Bob Goodger*