

# *Orchids*

*IN NEW ZEALAND*



Volume 15—No. 3  
May/June 1989

1889-1989 — 100 Years of Cymbidium Hybridising

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW!!  
NEW ZEALAND ORCHID SOCIETY**

will hold its Annual Winter Show on  
**7th, 8th and 9th July 1989**  
at the Mt. Albert War Memorial Hall  
New North Road, St. Lukes, Auckland 3.

**Staging of Plants:** From 2.00 pm to 7.30 pm  
(Incl. Trading Table plants) Wednesday, 5th July.  
**Judging:** 9.30 am, Thursday, 6th July.  
**Show Preview:** 7.30 pm, Thursday, 6th July.  
**Open to Public:** 10.00 am - 8 pm, Friday, 7th July.  
10.00 am - 5.00 pm, Saturday and  
Sunday, 8th and 9th July.

**A N D — The 41st Annual Display of Orchids — Spring Show  
22nd, 23rd and 24th September 1989 — Same Venue**

**Staging of Plants:** From 2.00 pm to 7.30 pm  
(Incl. Trading Table plants) Wednesday, 20th September.  
**Judging:** 9.30 am Thursday, 21st September  
**Open to Public:** 10.00am - 8.00pm, Friday, 22nd Sept.  
10.00am - 5.00pm, Saturday and Sunday,  
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# Orchids

## IN NEW ZEALAND

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NEW ZEALAND ORCHID SOCIETY

**VOL. 15 No. 3**

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## FRONT COVER

*Rhyncostylis gigantea*

This handsome species of the vandaceous alliance comes from S.E. Asia. It is very popular in Thailand, where particularly fine strains have been developed.

Growers: Sue & Kevin Smith

Photographer: John Addison

## BACK COVER

*Lyperanthus antarcticus*

Photographer: Bob Goodger

In the Greenhouse . . .

*Bob McCulloch from the Wellington region has agreed to write this column for us for a while sharing his orchid growing experience with us.*

## Orchid Ramblings

*Bob McCulloch*

Most experienced orchid growers would agree that the best way to grow orchids is to give them the right conditions and then treat them with ignore. Most of the less experienced growers would probably agree, if only they could figure out what the right conditions are, and why they keep changing.

It's reasonable to assume that the majority of new orchid growers already have a good background knowledge of botany and horticulture, and probably graduated to orchids because of the beauty of the flowers, the challenge of growing something exotic, or just plain boredom with roses and daffodils.

In any case, it's important to realise that orchids have exactly the same requirements as any other plants, and the only mysterious bits are that some of those needs are exaggerated out of all proportion to our normal perception of what is required to grow a plant.

All plant roots need access to air now and again, but orchids have gone paranoiac about it, and demand to be dried out between waterings. This makes it difficult for those terrestrial or semi-terrestrial orchids, but they seem to have evolved hairy roots to keep things airy, or else that take good care to grow in fairly light soil.

The rest of the orchid family, who grow on trees or rocks, have developed the ability to soak up any passing moisture in a flash, and have become not plants which require air at their roots now and again, but plants which like a bit of water at their roots occasionally.

Probably as a result of this, orchids are fussy about the humidity of the air, being happiest with a higher humidity than exists in the average flower garden. The high humidity slows down the rate of water loss from the plant leaves, and also helps to keep the leaves cool.

Another difference with orchids is that with few exceptions they cannot tolerate full sun. Those which can, have small cylindrical leaves designed to avoid the sun as much as possible, and in general the larger and thinner the leaves of an orchid plant are, the more shade it requires.

But probably the most difficult difference to come to terms with is that most orchids have a definite resting period sometime in the year. This can vary from a few days to several months, usually after flowering, when the orchid pulls its roots up under its leaves and goes to sleep for a while. Watering or feeding at this time will lead to roots rotting away, as they are inactive and the mix remains soggy instead of drying out. This doesn't mean that the orchid will die, but it certainly slows it down when it starts growing again.

So the basic cultural needs of orchids in captivity are something to grow in which will hold them upright and allow air to the roots, moving moist air at the right temperature, plenty of water when they are growing, and not much when they aren't, enough light at the right intensity, and some fertilizer to make them into big strong plants which will have lots of flowers.

Try to visit the glasshouse of someone who has visited the region where the orchids you want to grow originate from, as these people invariably have superior conditions and grow their orchids much better than the rest of us. Make a note to visit those regions when you win Lotto.

# More 1989 Show Dates

## WINTER SHOWS

### *NORTH SHORE ORCHID SOCIETY*

10th & 11th June  
North Shore Training College Hall  
Akoranga Drive, Takapuna.

## SPRING SHOWS

### *GOLD COAST ORCHID SOCIETY*

26th & 27th August  
(Not dates previously announced)  
Southwards Car Museum

### *NORTH SHORE ORCHID SOCIETY*

1st, 2nd & 3rd September  
North Shore Training College Hall  
Akoranga Drive, Takapuna.

### *OTAGO ORCHID CLUB*

9th, 10th September, 1pm - 5pm  
St Peters Hall, Hillside Road, Dunedin

### *MANAWATU ORCHID SOCIETY*

9th & 10th September  
Conference Centre, Palmerston North.

### *THAMES VALLEY ORCHID SOCIETY*

15th & 16th September  
War Memorial Hall, Mary Street, Thames.

### *LEVIN ORCHID SOCIETY*

23rd & 24th September.

### *TAUPO ORCHID SOCIETY*

23rd & 24th September  
Memorial Hall, Taupo.

### *TARANAKI ORCHID SOCIETY*

29th & 30th September, 1st October  
St Josephs Hall  
Devon Street West, New Plymouth.

### *CANTERBURY ORCHID SOCIETY*

note change of date:  
30th September, 1st October

### *WANGANUI ORCHID SOCIETY*

7th & 8th October.

Remember that orchids are very adaptable plants, and will grow and flower under less than perfect conditions, but only to the point where the least favourable condition limits growth. It also means that you should choose the types of orchids you grow with regard to the conditions you can supply. If you can't supply heat, and there are regular frosts in your area, then any attempt to grow orchids which require warmth is doomed to failure.

Another thing to bear in mind is that conditions in your section are not the same as in the section next door. The very structure which allows your neighbour to grow beautiful orchids, may very well cast a shadow on your glasshouse at the wrong time of day, and prevent the same type of orchid from flowering! The shape and position of buildings also creates microclimates which can be used to advantage, or avoided, as the case may be.

To avoid disappointments, which are costly and may even put you off orchid growing, decide which types of orchids you should be able to grow, and stick rigidly to those types until you have a bit of experience under your belt. When you go to a show, and you know you are going to buy a plant, make it a large flowering size one, preferably in spike. Flowers are the name of the game, and if you have a plant that has already flowered, then your chances of flowering it next year are much better than if you buy several seedlings of flowering size. In the early years of orchid growing, the accent should be on a small number of plants well grown, rather than a larger number of small plants struggling under conditions which may not be quite right.

There will be plenty of opportunities to grow younger and smaller plants when you have your growing conditions sorted out. After all, you are going to grow orchids for the rest of your life, aren't you?

18 Davis Crescent  
Upper Hutt

# Pondering On Greenhouse Design

*Bill Mulder*

In our quest to grow orchids ever bigger, ever better and ever more beautiful a great deal can be read about various ways to achieve this. We have everybody's versions of potting mixes, types of pots, watering habits, food and so on. But . . . not much can be found on the IDEAL glass or shade house.

I am now faced with the Dilemma of what to build: A ready off-the-shelf aluminium 8 x 10 plus the inevitable additions, or a plastic roof over table type benches with bug-proof open walls, or something else . . . but what?

I started doodling and tried all sorts of ideas. This article offers my version of a proposed glass/shade house and I sincerely hope that I will create either a storm of protest, slander and invective on why I should create such an idiotic plan? A dialogue and exchange of ideas, helpful hints and creative criticism, BEFORE I actually build it.

First there is the percentage of achieved display area compared with total floor area occupied by the orchid house. For relatively small houses the percentage is unfortunately small, but we do need to have a walkway through the house and ideally we need to inspect our plants from at least two sides.

With middle-age spread and no longer such agile limbs and backs, a certain amount of bum-room is needed, otherwise we knock plants off their perches as we pass along. In an 8 x 10 house the achieved display area or benchtop area could be less than 60% — in other words we pay 40% of the purchase price for nothing at all!

In some houses I have also noticed disadvantages such as disastrous peak temperatures, poor ventilation, low humidity, poor light and its control.

In Auckland at a latitude of 37° south the sun's altitude is an "average" of 53° at midday — in Summer rising to 76° and in Winter a low 30°.

If we take the floor of an orchid house and face it due north and incline it so

that our "average" sun strikes it square on, and we place plants on shelves built like steps on this inclined floor we have achieved absolute maximum light. Further light control can be obtained by total or partial shading with permanent or removable slats, curtains, whitewash — you name it!

Our next obvious problem (in Auckland) goes together with light-heat! This can be controlled in two ways — by convection and evaporation.

Natural convection occurs when heated air rises and is replaced by cooler air — The greater the temperature difference between these two volumes of air, the better the draught. Our heated air will rise and escape through two weather proof slots in the top of the house and should draw cooler air, the coolest air available from anywhere in my garden, from under the orchid house, through the part of the floor not used to stand on and left open for this purpose.

The whole front of this house would be left open and bug proof.

In the side of this house, one 1200 x 2400 bug proof opening can always partially and/or semi-permanently be reinserted depending on season and temperatures and ventilation actually obtained. Plants in high temperatures thrive better with high humidity, and for this purpose our inclined floor will have its horizontal support outside the house and the vertical support, for floor as well as shelves/steps, on the inside. Glued to the inclined floor, between the verticals would be strips of foam from top to bottom, kept wet by trickle. Plants needing extra warmth and humidity (would grow) on the top shelf and plants

needing it cooler near the bottom. I imagine that the table/benchttop would be typical of local conditions; in my particular area this fortunately means no frosts either.

For plant inspection the steps/shelves can be used by leaving strategic areas of steps clear of plants to stand on. These plants are all below bum-level so they will not be knocked off their perches. The walkway round the table can be narrower than usual as there is nothing to knock over behind you. (*What about tall flower spikes — Editor?*).

This proposed house has an approximate horizontal floor area of 28.8 sq meters, and an estimated 6½ M<sup>2</sup> of walkway and step inspection areas, which gives a much improved percentage of achieved display area of almost 80%.

For those who aim for the maximum of 100% of floor area to be used I suggest a gantry supporting the grower, hovering over his plants . . . what an idea . . . Hang on a minute . . . I'm back doodling!

11 Brett Avenue  
Takapuna

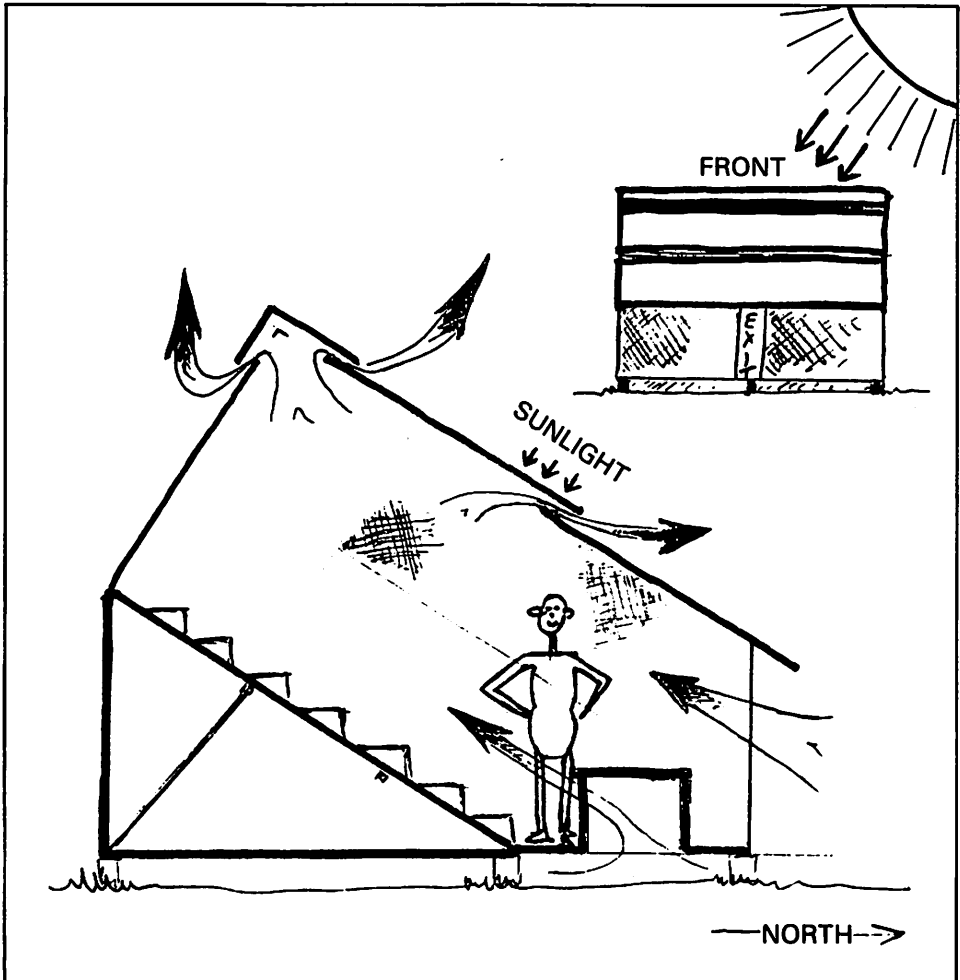


Diagram of proposed Greenhouse

# Cogito's Diary

*Bill Franssen*

## OBSERVATION

How easy it is to enter one's greenhouse and walk around as if in a dream. We enjoy the uniqueness of our plants, the general atmosphere, the light, the smell, the humidity, the warmth or coolness according to the time of year. The combination of these things must have gone a long way in making us plant lovers, probably from early childhood. "Youth's a stuff will not endure", but the love of plants certainly will.

When I consciously set out to see what else needs doing around the greenhouse, I invariably find that whole groups of plants should be repotted or some other task should be caught up with urgently. I don't worry too much about whether or not the time of year is right when things are overdue. Once I realised that certain plants are slowing down I give them the full treatment. Tip them out of their pots. Clean up the foliage. Cut out the dead roots. Put them in a fresh mix. Place them in an optimum environment. More often than not you will have done the right thing. The provision of optimum conditions is usually the biggest challenge.

I try to exercise the mind more fully. Perhaps I learn more from writing about these things than the people that read it! I obtain more and more books. I borrow from the public library and from our Society. Somehow, sooner or later. I ferret out what a given plant requires. "The book" is not always right. Popular opinion is not always right. Sometimes the answer is found by deduction. At other times it is sheer luck that sets us on the right course. Keep looking for what else needs doing!

## THE WARM ROOM

Through summer the warm room is really not a necessary facility. I kept some plants in there because it was convenient. The shade loving ones like the Paphs and Phallies and some recently de-flasked plants are more easily managed in there. One louvre window and the opposite inside (into the garage) door were kept open day and

night for continuous ventilation. During the day the outside door on the East side of the room was opened wide as well but closed during the night. That amount of ventilation made the use of the electric fan for inside circulation unnecessary.

Towards the end of February the nights got so cool that the inside door was closed for the season and the electric fan plugged in again. In early March I started to move some of the warm growers, mainly Vanda alliance plants, back into the warm room. Most warm growers will be back in there by early April.

While the temperatures reach between 25 and 30°C during the day I'll damp down the floor at least twice daily. Growth is still very good, especially noticeable in aerial roots. The aerial roots on plants of all kinds love warm and humid conditions. Some time soon the electric fan heater will be re-activated and will come on for short periods during chilly nights.

The love of plants will help a lot when it comes to providing the right kind of care. The love of plants makes us wonder more keenly what might be the reason for various occurrences. People who love plants don't rest until they somehow find the right set of conditions needed for them to thrive. Such people are the "naturals", the ones of whom we say that they have green fingers.

Not every plant lover is blessed with that kind of gift. If however the love is there, the ability can be acquired. One of the most important factors is that we



develop our powers of observation. It won't do to stand in awe of the beauty of a particular plant and not notice that the one next to it is doing poorly. One not far away obviously needs repotting and has been trying to tell you this for the last six months. A small species cattleya may not have moved much since you bought it two years ago, and the new shoots on another are damping off. A plant hanging from the ceiling has not been watered for weeks.

Such things happen in almost every greenhouse. The only way to improve matters is to grab oneself by the scruff of the neck to be stood in front of such suffering until realisation dawns that "something" needs to be done, preferably quickly. We must train ourselves to look around and notice things. If for some reason a plant fell out of favour, you'd better chuck it out. Either that, or pick it up and wonder why on earth it won't do what you expected of it. Perhaps it should be potted in a coarser mix or placed in a basket and hung from the ceiling. Perhaps it should receive far less light for some time.

In my own case, the harder I find it to grow a certain plant well, the more determined I become to get it going. When your efforts, trials and tribulations bear success that gives more satisfaction than flowering an easy subject. Mind you, I don't discount "easy" plants, they are invaluable. There are too many hard to grow plants around to not appreciate vigour, hardiness, flori-ferousness, cold tolerance, and faithful performance. The surprising outcome of tenacity is that once you have succeeded in getting a troublesome individual "going" it seems to become progressively easier to grow such plants well.

## THE COOL HOUSE

Leaving the West side twinwall sheets in place this summer has proved to be the correct procedure. Temperatures in the cool house have reached 32°C only a few times. There has been no apparent

distress to the cool growers such as Disas and Odonts. Having the shadecloth sitting some 150mm above the roof twinwall sheets has no doubt helped to keep the heat out. Heavy damping down of the floor was done on most days. In extreme hot weather the temperature at head height was only 2°C higher than at floor level. On most days however there was a differential of 6 to 7°C between those measuring points. I keep the cool growers as close as possible to the floor for that reason. The Odonts have done well. I removed some small flower spikes and such plants seem to develop bigger pseudobulbs and foliage because of it.

The bulk of the highest temperatures has ranged between 27 and 30°C on the warm days of summer. Maintaining adequate shade and a high relative humidity helps keep the leaf temperatures down and the plants cope well. I know of a greenhouse in which temperatures rose to 40°C on more than one occasion and where the plants seemed none the worse for the experience. Heavy damping down helped in that case too. Growth of my plants this summer has been very good.

From early March I've closed the door in the South end wall during the night. Temperature drops at night have been quite severe on a few occasions lately. The warm growing plants need shielding when these temperature drops occur.

## THE CYMBIDIUMS

Except for quite a number of young plants most of my cymbids spent the summer in the back of the garden under shadecloth. They sit on a framework about 600mm above ground level. Having repotted or split up practically all my plants, I'm very happy with the number of flower spikes that are showing. A fresh mix and plenty of fresh air does cymbidiums a lot of good. I prefer the growth habit of some plants above that of some others and believe that the length and habit of the foliage is of equal importance to flower shape and

colour. I have one or two plants that some people will make scathing remarks about but which produce plenty of spikes with, to me, attractive flowers of good lasting quality, year after year. I find it hard to quit such plants, but would not dare to bring them to a show.

Another intermediate cymbidium flowers faithfully in February each year. Having an ensifolium parent, the lasting quality of the flowers isn't all that good, but they get the popular vote every time. I split the plant up last year in July and every bulb of the three divisions produced a side shoot. Such plant habits should be recognised.

I generally feed once a week but two times in dry weather. When it rains these plants get a free wash and flush through of the plant bags. That is valuable. Normally I feed again two or three days after rain, especially in very warm weather. The plants which have their spikes elongating are transferred to the cool house and given a suitable place. The rest will stay where they are until the night minimum temperature falls to 7 or 8°C regularly, or when the weather gets so wet that the roots stay too cold. That's likely to be some time in April. Even when back in the cool house the plants should keep on growing well until May-June.

## SLATTED WOOD BASKETS

Over the last year or two I've taken more to the use of slatted wood baskets. This was as a result of some plants doing badly in plastic or clay pots. I must again admit to watering too often for the well-being of many plants that are enclosed in pots. Below follows a list of the plants that now reside in wooden baskets. Hopefully brief commentary and in a few cases updates on plants mentioned before are included:-

*Aerides*, *A. crassifolia*, *A. falcata*, *A. houlettiana*, and *A. odorata*. All of them are doing well where before all the roots that were in the pots rotted. They like moving air and about 30% shade in summer. Small plants of about 75 to

100mm are in baskets of 125mm square (inside measurement). They should be all right in there for a couple of years.

*Angraecum sesquipedale*. Obtained as a 150mm plant, it sulked and lost roots while in an ordinary pot. Now living in a wooden basket and really liking it. I moisten the bark regularly and it dries out quickly which seems to suit it. This is one of the few African species in my collection. It produces beautiful flowers but my specimen has to reach that stage yet. This is the flower of which Charles Darwin predicted that only a moth with a one foot long proboscis could do the pollination. Such a moth was later found. Incredible deduction!

*Brassolaeliocattleya*. This is an intergeneric group of hybrids in which *Brassavola*, *Laelia*, and *Cattleya* have been used. A while back I had a small plant which had lost all of its roots. The foliage still looked O.K. so I decided to try it in a wooden basket. Blc-s need plenty of air around the roots, and quite a few tend to damp off if kept too moist. This particular one never looked back and is now growing a healthy root system and new shoots. They like it warm.

*Catasetum piliatum*. After flowering this beauty about two years ago it went into a decline. This was probably as a result of my standard failing: too much water too often. The plant is now beginning to pull through after nearly a year in a small wooden basket. It is showing the beginnings of a healthy pseudobulb and nice snow white roots spreading through the bark medium. I must remember to give this one a rest when the new pseudobulb matures.

*Cattleya*. After experiencing how my poorly performing *C. walkerana* took off when transferred to a wooden basket I also planted *C. nobilior*, *C. shilleriana*, *C. schofieldiana*, and *C. skinneri* in baskets. They have all done extremely well. The amount of root development has been amazing, but that has been the case with nearly every plant that has been

transferred to a basket. Success was also had with *C. acklandiae* which I mounted on a quartered coconut husk. It hangs by some lacing wire in the warm room. After aborting a flower bud and losing all of its roots while in an enclosed pot last spring it sent out many new roots, grew a new pseudobulb, and flowered from that for well over one month during last January and February. Its clean fragrance filled the whole of the warm room, particularly during the warmest part of the day.

**Cirrhopetalum medusae.** This plant is doing much better since its transfer to a slatted basket and higher shade. It likes warmth and high humidity. A new pseudobulb and plenty of fairly fine new roots have developed. I am yet to see it flower.

**Coelogyne cristata.** A cool grower which I acquired as a small bunch of little marble-like pseudobulbs. It sulked in a plastic pot for nearly two years. It is thought to resent transplanting, but I gave that story the lie because the plant took off with a vengeance after being placed in a basket last November. I feel that this one may turn out to be my pride and joy. Not bad after wondering if it was ever going to do much. They do need a rest of several months after the new pseudobulbs have matured.

All this planting in baskets works very well for certain species and even with some hybrids. I've come to the stage where it is necessary to curb the basket cult, especially of the warm growers. There is only limited "hanging" space in my warm room. Some of the roots extend to 300mm below and to the side of the baskets. These have to be hung. The others can be placed on an upturned flower pot or directly on to the wire framed bench. There is no doubt that plants in baskets look good in any greenhouse.

I will continue with this subject in the next issue.

6 Wedgewood Place  
Hamilton



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We are very grateful to a further list of people who have been generous enough to contribute to our Colour Fund.

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# The Cymbidium Genie.

*John Campbell*

As this is the year of the Cymbidium, I wracked my brains for a Cymbidium story, and then noticed my little Cymbidium Genie sitting on a shelf in the hothouse. I hope the following tale is of interest to readers.

My story actually starts way back in the olden days, 1952 to be precise. I'd left school and was working in my dad's shop at Albury, one of the coldest little townships in South Canterbury. I'd always had a keen interest in plants and had built myself a little hothouse from an old house window. I had purchased a few assorted pot plants which were seen by a chap who worked in the local garage. Orchids are the thing he said. If you want to make BIG MONEY, get into orchids. People still say that don't they; when will they ever learn. I didn't even know what an orchid was.

Some time later I was in Timaru and saw a book on orchid culture by Sanders and probably spent a weeks wages to purchase it.

I found it very interesting, and certainly thought I'd like to give it a go. Somehow, I got the address of Henry Rudolph in Wellington and wrote for a price list of orchids.

You can imagine the horror a 16 year old experienced when the price list arrived some weeks later.

I was earning five pounds a week, paying two pounds ten shillings a week board and had two pounds ten shillings left to squander. (That's \$5 to you young-uns.)

The cheapest plant listed was a *Coelogyne* at fourteen pounds, so my orchid growing never got off the ground.

Over the next 20 years, I quite frequently read portions of that orchid book and indeed did spend a couple of years working at the Timaru Botanic Gardens where I had a brush with a few little understood orchids.

The section in the book which fascinated me most was the culture of orchid seed in sterile flasks.

When I moved to the Christchurch area in 1964, I was, unbeknown to me, in the midst of some very keen orchid growers though they were spread fairly thin on the ground.

It was not till about 1969 or '70 that I attended a small orchid show put on by

the Canterbury Orchid Bergonia and Fern Society and I joined up as a member.

What a reception I got when I started making enquiries about growing orchids from seed. Here's a new boy who hasn't even got a dozen orchids and he's talking about growing from seed. The word 'NERK' wasn't in use then, but I think it was something like that with which they would have tagged me.

Well, I wasn't going to be put off that easily and persisted in my quest for information. The grapevine whispered the name of a god who had access to the heavenly information which I so foolishly sought. I eventually tracked down Ernie Bradley of Nelson who had grown orchids from seed long enough to have his own seedlings flowering. He was in very poor health at this stage and had actually stopped seed culture but still had all the gear. He showed me his glass bell-jar setup and gave me enough encouragement to keep up my momentum. He even offered to sell me the whole works, but unfortunately the price tag was miles above my ability to pay.

By another great stroke of luck, I discovered that I lived within two miles of the Stokell homestead, near Prebbleton. Mr Clement Stokell was the grandfather of orchid growing in the Christchurch area and orchids had been grown at the property from as far back as the First World War.

With the help of a chemist friend, Mr Stokell had attempted flask culture, obtained a strike of seed but lost it to

mould infection eventually. He was a great help to me and gave me plenty of encouragement and stacks of books to read.

Lincoln College, the centre of Agricultural and Horticultural learning in the South Island is only about four miles from Prebbleton and I was able to discuss sterile culture with people from there and also use their library. I was also fortunate that my brother-in-law was at the National Library School at the time, and would track down and photocopy articles of interest noted in the Horticultural Abstracts.

I built myself an enclosed box with a glass top and arm holes in front and was all set to 'give it a go'.

Mr Stokell had a large hothouse and orchid collection including many big species *Cymbidium* plants which spent at least half the year outside under the trees. His plants of *Cymbidium grandiflorum* (now *Cym. hookerae*) had been 'got at' by bumblebees and carried stems of great seed capsules.

One of the photocopied articles I had was about embryo culture, the planting of immature seed from un-opened seed capsules, and noted that a higher rate of success was obtainable.

My little 'sterile work station' was sprayed out with a 10% bleach solution, hands washed in bleach solution and everything else to be used in the process. The green seed capsule was dipped in meths and flamed to sterilise the outside and opened inside the cabinet with a sterile knife.

There's no explaining the thrill I experienced a couple of weeks later when little green specks began to appear on the agar. Even now after hundreds of flasks, a strike of seed still makes the pulse quicken. It's the start of a whole new generation of orchids and you've no idea where it will lead to.

Anyway, the *Cymbidium* seed grew and set me off on a course from which there seems to be no turning back.

What about the Genie you ask? Well, it's still in the bottle.

*Cymbidium hookerae* was so common down here that it was pointless spending time growing them on.

They're still in that original flask. Planted sometime in 1971, probably late in the year, they have now been sealed in for at least 17 years and there's still one plant alive in there. Will I someday polish up that grubby flask and release the Genie? I doubt it, it's now become a time capsule, some sort of a memorial. Perhaps they'll mount it on my headstone, perhaps even poke my ashes in there with it; I'd like that.

21 Blakes Road  
Prebbleton  
Canterbury



## HOW BIG?

How do you convince people that the WOC in 1990 is going to be really big?

Talking to various visitors to our nursery, it is apparent that there are conflicting views and in an endeavour to convey something of the magnitude anticipated, Kevin has likened the Conference to being the 'olympics' of the orchid world. Oh my — the imagination boggles. Can you visualize muscle-bound masdevallias, marathon miltonias, canoeing cattleyas, sprinting stapelias. What about high-diving disas, cycling cymbidiums, boxing brassias or swimming stanhopeas?

But just as it takes time for an athlete to prepare for a big event, so too must time and care be given to our plants. Preparation can never be started too soon. So I hope, dear reader, you are already into plant training and realising that this is really going to be the biggest orchid show ever seen in New Zealand, but remember, please — NO STEROIDS!

K. & L. Sherlock  
Atkins Road, Manakau  
R.D. Otaki.

# VALE

## ALEX ARMS

There will no doubt be many readers for whom the name Alex Arms does not arouse a hint of recognition but for those for whom it does, there will be a feeling of great sadness to learn that he passed away at the age of 74 years in early February.

Before becoming involved with orchids, Alex had dedicated himself to a wide range of activities, several associated with community support and to each he gave untiring input, from which he gained great respect. These qualities he brought with him into the fellowship of orchids and whether we knew him or not there is little doubt that in some way or other we are all a little better off for the enthusiasm he brought, the generosity he bestowed and the inspiration he engendered.

Alex's great love for orchids found its main focus in the sphere of cymbidium species and from a very early stage he determined to cultivate the most representative collection that he could obtain. He was faithful to this ideal throughout and succeeded in assembling what would almost certainly be the most comprehensive collection in this country and no doubt well beyond our shores. It comprised approximately 90 clones plus a range of primary hybrids, many of which were assumed to be lost to cultivation. This collection and his unbounded enthusiasm formed the nucleus of a unique display on the history of cymbidium breeding which aroused considerable interest at the 1985 Orchid Conference held in Wellington.

Whatever he grew was grown well. A visit to Taranaki was not complete without calling upon him to admire not just the cymbidiums which he both grew and flowered well but the mixed genera also with masdevallia and disa being particularly outstanding. He just loved plants and this extended to his large garden embracing flowers, fruit and vegetables.

But this man had qualities beyond his great cultivating skills. He was gentle

and kind and it was easy to feel at ease in his company. The newcomer could be assured of his devoted attention, the specialist a stimulating discussion. He extended his desire to help others by speaking on his favourite subjects and those who attended these very practical occasions, spiced with a great measure of humour, are not likely to forget them.



*Cymbidium aloifolium*, *C. aloifolium* 'album'

Grower: A. Arms

Photographer: G. Fuller

The distinctive striped lip distinguishes this from several other very similar species. It occurs from India, through Burma, across S.E. Asia to the Philippines. The 'album' variety is very rare.

Alex was very proud of his 'album' plant, having recently imported it from Santa Barbara. The first flowers opened a few days before he died, and were a great thrill to him.

One of Alex's great desires was to keep before everyone a recognition of the importance of the species — the progenitors of the outcome of man's hybridising skills. His emphasis was on the genus cymbidium and it is therefore perhaps appropriate, but no less sad, that his crusade should end in 1989, exactly 100 years after the registration of the first cymbidium hybrid and in an era in which there is in fact a revival of interest in species.

Throughout all his endeavours Alex had unflinching support from his wife Grace and we owe her a debt of gratitude. To her and family we extend sympathies. Tributes have been so numerous that individual acknowledgement of all may not be possible, for which she apologizes. We each in our individual way mourn the passing of one who in every sense, earned the title "Mr Cymbidium".

*George Fuller, Curator, Pukekura Park  
New Plymouth*

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## IWITAHİ GRANT

— An update on the report in our last issue.

*Max Gibbs*

The Taupo Native Orchid group of the Taupo Orchid Society has been awarded a grant of \$1000 from the Ministry of the Environment to assist with the cost of a native orchid survey, recovery and public awareness programme centered on the Central Volcanic Plateau pine forests between Iwitahi and Broadlands. The grant was one of eleven that were awarded in the Central North Island area. A total of \$44,000 was allocated nationally this year.

The Environmental Grants Scheme was introduced by the Government in 1978 to support the environmental movement through limited financial support of specific projects. Projects which qualify for financial assistance, either wholly or in part, may include research studies (other than University), surveys, displays or educational resource materials. Approved projects are to be completed by 30th June of the year granted with reports submitted to the Ministry of the Environment by that date.

The Taupo Native Orchid group plan to use the grant to extend the survey of the native orchids growing under the exotic pine in the Kaingaroa State Forest. The objectives are . . .

1. To establish the habitat requirements and distribution of native orchids throughout the Kaingaroa State Forest.
2. To identify habitats of importance which could be preserved.
3. To recover selected colonies of native orchids from the path of

logging operations and transplant these into reserve areas, other pine plantations or the Taupo Botanical Gardens.

4. To conduct a public awareness programme of native orchids through displays and publications in the newspapers and other journals.

The Central Volcanic Plateau has a wide variety of native orchids and the super abundance of these tiny beautiful plants combined with the easy access to their habitats could be used by the tourist industry in much the same way that Southern Heritage Tours take advantage of the spring flowering season in the South Island.

The grant from the Ministry of the Environment will help conserve native orchids in New Zealand and will allow display material to be prepared for use locally and in the 1990 World Orchid Conference in Auckland.

*15 Rahui Street  
Taupo*

# Re-discovery of *Thelymitra matthewsii* in New Zealand, 1988.

Doug McCrae

Back in 1920, Thomas Cheeseman described *Thelymitra matthewsii*, naming the species after R. H. Matthews and adding the footnote — "A charming little plant, worthily dedicated to its discoverer, who has added more to our knowledge of the New Zealand orchids than any other observer of late years . . ."

Richard Matthews and his son H. B. (Blen.) recorded this orchid from near the coast, west of Kaitaia. Only a few specimens were ever found, growing on consolidated sand dunes under tall teatree.

This Australasian species occurs in Victoria where it is also rare.

During 1988 I have undertaken an orchid survey of the Te Pahi Farm Park for the Department of Conservation. The Park lies at the very northern-most part of New Zealand, between Cape Reinga and North Cape. On one of my regular visits to the area I stumbled upon a single specimen of this diminutive *Thelymitra*. As flowering occurs in September/October I was too late and could manage only photographs of the leaf and spent inflorescence.

Apart from the flowers there are other distinctive features which aid

identification of *T. matthewsii*. These include: number of flowers (one or occasionally two); small size (100-150 mm at flowering); two broad, sheathing stem bracts; leaf sheathing at base, covered with fine hairs, becoming much expanded then suddenly narrowing into a fine blade which is usually spirally twisted so as to coil around the stem.

No other New Zealand representative of the genus *Thelymitra* exhibits these characteristics.

Presumed extinct in New Zealand, this orchid had not been seen here for more than 75 years. It is worth noting that the original locality for *T. matthewsii* is almost 100 kms from that identified recently.

112 Haverstock Road  
Sandringham, Auckland

## RECENT N.Z.O.S. AWARDS

<i>Paph.</i> ( <i>Goultenianum</i> x <i>fairrieianum</i> ) 'Midnight'	AM,AD	Geyserland Orchids
<i>Paph.</i> Via Prokuli 'Papa Aroha'	HCC	Papa Aroha Orchids
<i>Degarmoara</i> ( <i>Mtssa.</i> Charles M. Fitch x <i>Odm. coronarium</i> 'O.B.E.')	AD	Geyserland Orchids
<i>Laelia</i> ( <i>longipes</i> x <i>pumila</i> ) 'Little Beaut'	HCC	R. & N. Armstrong
<i>Phal.</i> (Ravel x Chamade) 'Papa Aroha'	AM	Papa Aroha Orchids
<i>Cym.</i> Touchstone 'Mahogany'	CC	Sunrae Orchids
<i>Cym.</i> Tiger Orb 'Irene'	AD	M. D. Leahy
<i>Dracula gorgona</i> 'Rajah'	AM	Mrs V. Bayliss
<i>Masdevallia</i> Stella 'Merina'	HCC	L. & R. Orchids



## RECENT CONZED AWARDS

The following awards were approved recently  
by the Committee of Awards.

23/88	<i>Phal.</i> Crystal Chanda Lear 'Bellbird'	HCC/OCNZ	D. K. Bell
24/88	<i>Oda.</i> Arlington 'Lil Red Engine'	HCC/OCNZ	L. & R. Orchids
25/88	<i>Odm. rossii</i> 'L. & R.'	HCC/OCNZ	L. & R. Orchids
26/88	<i>Paph.</i> (Lyxel x <i>sukhakulii</i> ) 'Coromandel No. 1'	AM/OCNZ	Papa Aroha Orchids
27/88	<i>Phal.</i> (Ramel x Chamade) 'Coromandel'	HCC/OCNZ	Papa Aroha Orchids
28/88	<i>Den. cunninghamii</i> 'Alba'	AD/OCNZ	G. & M. Lundon
29/88	<i>Cym.</i> Hallmark 'Citron'	HCC/OCNZ	I. D. James
30/88	<i>Trichopilia suavis</i> 'Tokoroa'	CCC/OCNZ	G. & P. Anderson
31/88	<i>Odcdm.</i> Tiger Mac 'Geyserland'	AM/OCNZ	Geyserland Orchids
32/88	<i>Blc.</i> Pokai Tangerine 'Orange Delight'	HCC/OCNZ AD/OCNZ	Geyserland Orchids
33/88	<i>Cym.</i> (Tom Thumb 4N x Claudona 'Rajah' 4N) Geyserland	HCC/OCNZ	Geyserland Orchids
34/88	<i>Lyc.</i> John Ezzy 'Flamingo'	HCC/OCNZ	M. J. Liddell
35/88	<i>Oda.</i> Beryl Payne 'Tracey'	HCC/OCNZ	N. & G. Chisnall
36/88	<i>Paph. purpuratum</i> 'Janet'	HCC/OCNZ	R. Woodhouse
37/88	<i>Onc.</i> (macranthum x falcipetalum) 'Wanganui'	HCC/OCNZ	Geyserland Orchids
38/88	<i>Paph. micranthum</i> 'Pictonite'	HCC/OCNZ	Judy Coburn
39/88	<i>Cym.</i> Ivy Fung 'Radiance'	CCC/OCNZ	D. K. Lilly
40/88	<i>Phrag. caudatum</i> var. <i>macrochilum</i> 'Giganteum'	HCC/OCNZ	Papa Aroha Orchids
41/88	<i>Cym.</i> Scarabeach 'Minka'	HCC/OCNZ	Carolyn Scholes

### Society Secretary Updates:

#### Poverty Bay - East Coast Orchid Society

Mrs Helen Topp  
315 Clifford Street  
Gisborne  
Telephone: 74-327

#### Wanganui Orchid Society Inc.

Mrs S. Tasker  
P.O. Box 7080  
St. Johns' P.O.  
Wanganui  
Telephone: 42-833 only

#### Nelson Orchid Society

Mrs G. Lyster  
62 Point Road  
Monaco, Nelson  
Telephone: 76-743

### A. C. O. S. D. C.

No, its not a newly discovered strain of orchid virus, nor is it an International terrorist group.

On the contrary, the A. C. O. S. D. C. is the Auckland Combined Orchid Societies Display Committee, recently established with representatives of Auckland, Howick, North Shore, and South Auckland. The New Zealand Orchid Societies, who have formed a united body to plan and construct a mass display at the 13th World Orchid Conference at the Epsom Showgrounds in Auckland in September 1990.

## 21. Matilda Smith

(1854-1926)

## John Nugent Fitch

(1843-1927)

Ian St. George

Although T. F. Cheeseman originally intended that his *Manual* should be accompanied by illustrations, it was not until 1914 that the *Illustrations of the New Zealand Flora* appeared as a two-volume separate work. Cheeseman wrote in the Preface,<sup>1</sup>

"... there was no intention of producing a series of drawings selected mainly on account of the beauty and attractiveness of the plants portrayed. I assumed that the true object of the work was to issue plates of an educational character, so selected as to present an accurate and comprehensive idea of the main features of the flora, and so designed and executed as to be of real use in the study and identification of the plants of the Dominion."

For years this was the best guide to the New Zealand flora, and it is now an expensive collectors' piece. Cheeseman chose as artist Matilda Smith. She was born in India, came to England as a baby, and eventually contributed 2300 plates to Curtis's *Botanical Magazine*, and many to other publications. She was the recipient of many awards, and her work was so admired that two plants were named for her. Nevertheless Wilfrid Blunt has only faint praise for her:<sup>2</sup>

"... she was noted for her skill in re-animating dried, flattened specimens, often of an imperfect character'. Miss Smith remained to the end a rather fumbling draughtsman, more remembered for her 'great pains' and 'untiring efforts' than for her skill, but best of all esteemed for the charm of her personality. She was on occasion her own lithographer; but she owed much to John Fitch, who made some attractive lithographs from her rather hesitant sketches."

Not so. Bruce Sampson found her original pencil drawings for Cheeseman's *Illustrations* in the Auckland Museum, and they are skilful

and accurate scientific drawings - little different from the lithographs. Fitch had added few extra touches.



Plate: *Caladenia carnea*, lithograph by J. N. Fitch from a drawing by Matilda Smith, from Curtis's *Botanical Magazine*, 1898. Hooker's key reads "Fig. A, white-flowered var.; A 1, lip; A2, column; A 3, pollinia: — All enlarged; B, pink-flowered var. (From *Flora Tasmaniae*, t.124); B 1, roots, of nat. size; B 2, lip, enlarged.

John Nugent Fitch was the nephew of W. H. Fitch, Kew's greatest botanical illustrator, and was second only to his uncle in industry — 2500 of his lithographs appeared in Curtis's *Botanical Magazine*, and he illustrated many other works until his career was brought to a halt by a paralysis of his hands. Between them the Fitches had been sole lithographers for the *Magazine* for seventy-one years.

Fifteen New Zealand orchids are illustrated in Cheeseman's *Illustrations*,

often two to a page. All are monochrome lithographs. The only New Zealand orchid illustrated in colour by Smith and Fitch appeared with a paper by J. D. Hooker in Curtis's *Botanical Magazine*.<sup>3</sup> It is *Caladena carnea*, the white flowered variety grown at Kew from an Australian specimen, and the illustration of the pink form taken from Hooker's *Flora Tasmaniae*.

45 Cargill Street  
Dunedin



## CYMBIDIUMS

### Dear Editors

I read our magazine mostly with pleasure. Articles are almost always interesting and photographs good. However, those readers outside New Zealand, and I know we have some, would never know that we are a cymbidium growing country of some ability, both hobbyist and commercial.

I started writing this letter before I received the January/February issue of 'Orchids in New Zealand', all fired up to castigate the Editors and anyone else connected with the magazine. Lo and behold, in this historic issue, not only do we have a key article on cymbidiums including photographs, but two others with reference to cymbidiums. Topping this, there is a cover photograph of a cymbidium.

Therefore from a letter of reprehension emerges one of congratulations. Well done George Fuller

for breaking the drought. Perhaps you will consider a series on further hybridising of this genus through to advances enjoyed from the present day cymbidiums. We may even inspire New Zealand growers to cultivate and show these orchids again to a standard to match the Australians. It will be our shame if the cymbidium genus is not well presented by New Zealand exhibitors at the 1990 World Orchid Conference.

So you cymbidium growers, send articles about cymbidiums to 'Orchids in New Zealand' for publication, and photographs to interest those on the outer fringe. Generate interest for the mainstream orchid, not apologise for growing it. Join the Cymbidium Society of America — New Zealand Branch, by sending to me for details. You will then subscribe to that other excellent magazine, 'The Orchid Advocate'.

With all this done, we might even get our Judges to look again at cymbidiums. It was noted that no quality award for any cymbidium was among recent awards listed in the same issue as all the above heady stuff, although a species did get a cultural certificate.

Yours sincerely,

Ray Dix  
381 Redoubt Road  
Manukau City

# NATIONAL SHOWS

*Dear Editors,*

The idea of National Shows has been bandied around by the Waikato Orchid Society because that Society hears of the comradeship and fun that I have at National Rose Shows once a year, and the idea of having a similar weekend of looking talking and assessing orchids is at this stage just a dream.

The decisions on where the next three years of Conventions will be held is made by the National Council with the local Societies making an application to Council.

Yes, I have just been to the Christchurch Rose Convention. In 1989 it's off to Napier and the following year it's up to Auckland and then off to Wellington.

The advantage of being the host Society is the added revenue one collects from the higher attendance. The membership increase is largely up to the Society. If they put the work into it they can expect 20-30 new members, higher I would think for Orchid Societies.

The easiest way to give you a break down of what we have come to expect at a Convention is to run through the programme.

- Friday evening is Rollcall of Societies (not individual members). Wine and finger foods are served for a small fee.
- Saturday morning is time to exhibit ones' flowers. Judging commences at 11 am and the show opens to the public at 1 pm. Those that do not wish to display plants could catch a tour bus and be taken on a sight-seeing tour around the town or city.
- On Saturday afternoon there is another bus tour, (imagine visiting orchid houses) or maybe the Society arranges a guest speaker.
- Our judging exam is either on Saturday afternoon or Sunday morning, whichever fits in with their timetable.

- On Saturday evening is a "Happy Hour" where the trophies are presented and this is followed by a Banquet Dinner, usually costing approximately \$20.00
- Sunday and Monday (one need not include Monday but there's usually a good percentage stay until the end) are bus tours fitting, in a church service Sunday and closing on Monday evening with a B-B-Q farewell function.

One need not host a competitive show. Wouldn't it be great if we could educate the public into what an orchid flower can look like and that cymbidiums aren't the only orchids grown by New Zealanders.

Our Rose Conventions are always attracting overseas visitors. What a sharing of knowledge that would create.

Our commercial growers have stands at the Conventions. They find them tiring but financially profitable.

To me it seems a shame that we have to wait 5 years before we all get together to share orchids in New Zealand. Life is too short to waste these valuable years waiting.

Just look around and assess all the knowledgeable growers we have in our Country. How often do we get to hear them?

Yes, Waikato will be hosting a trial run for the Judges at their Spring Show in October.

In 1990 we will be renewing friendships from the 1985 Convention in Auckland at the World Orchid Conference.

Just think - with a little bit of forethought we could be looking at a 1991 Convention and the comradeship would continue to the benefit of THE ORCHID.

*Margaret Liddell  
Morrinsville*

# The Journeys of an Orchid Nut

## or the Australian Bicentennial Conferences

*Ian and Iris Roberts*

Away back about the middle of 1987 at a club meeting we picked up a brochure giving notice of a Bi-centennial Orchid Conference to be held in Caloundra in September 1988 and at the following meeting, one about a further Conference in Sydney. They made interesting reading and as we weren't too long back from a builders conference at Conrad's at Surfers Paradise, we idly commented that we wouldn't mind going to them both and then put the idea out of our minds. Shortly after this we heard, again at a club meeting, that Syd Wray was thinking about organising a group of Orchid enthusiasts to go to both conferences and the idea came to life again. A number of our Club members were quite keen on the idea so we wrote away for information and were able to be included in the tour.

Eventually early September 1988 arrived and it was time to get started, not without a little apprehension. We now knew that there would be five of us Otago-ites, two from Christchurch that were ex-Otago and well known to us and the rest of the party with the exception of Syd were names on a list, those people from a warmer climate who grew orchids as easily as we grew chickweed, or so we had been told, and about whom we knew nothing.

We flew to Auckland and at nine the next morning we were at the International Airport, anxiously looking for a face we could recognise or a party that looked like the one we were to join. Finally we recognised our group and after dropping our cases beside the growing pile, we joined the crowd surrounding Joy and Syd, who brought order out of chaos, got us onto the plane where we could introduce ourselves to those sitting near us and start to put faces to the names on the list. In no time at all we were in Brisbane, through Customs, baggage collected and on the bus that was to take us to Caloundra and the motels that would be home for the next week.

Our tour group was spread around four motels and ours, at King's Beach, was the furthest from the town and the Conference Centre, which was a good twenty minutes walk away. Being split up like this meant that we formed smaller groups which then tended to stay together right through the trip.

We took the chance to explore the town of Caloundra, so that the next day we were able to go straight to the Conference Centre and register. This was our first look at the Conference venue and we were not disappointed. The entrance foyer held a massed display of Epidendrums in autumn colours, which was quite breathtaking, and this was supported by a floral art display of the same genus while along another wall there was a bank of Paphiopedilums about four metres long and over a metre in height, both species and hybrids, and this was only the way in.

Dorris and her group of helpers who were handling the registrations were to help us in many ways during the Conference, always with a smile and a friendly word. The people in Green and Gold gave this Conference a friendliness and a cheerfulness that will be very difficult to improve on. Having registered, we were then free till the Thursday evening, a day and a half away, to be tourists and see something of the Sunshine Coast, and those that had booked tours headed off to enjoy them.

Thursday evening and the Official Opening finally arrived and we were allowed into the hall. I wish that I had words to adequately describe the experience of entering that hall. The first impression was not visual, it was the perfume of all those orchids in a confined space. The next impression

was of the colour — there wasn't a shade or combination of colours that wasn't there in the hall — and then the overall beauty of the display became apparent, along with an appreciation of the work and planning that had gone into the staging and presentation. While we wandered in awe around the hall we were offered a seemingly endless array of appetizing snacks and glasses of wine or cordial. The Official Opening speeches were made, we were entertained by songs from children from one of the local schools, but for me anyway, this was all incidental to the beauty of the Orchids. Each Club or Society display, and there were forty or more, was different from its neighbours and all had to be studied to see what outstanding orchids were hidden in the massed display. By this time I had progressed to the top of the hall and here, wonder or wonders, was another hall almost as large which held the commercial display, and the orchids in this hall were in no way inferior to the main display. At 10 pm we were invited to go off home so that we could be back by 8 am the following morning for the official photographic session, before the lectures which commenced at 9 am.

We were at the hall by eight and got busy with the camera to try and capture some of the colour and to photograph those orchids I thought were the outstanding ones of the many on display. The hour was insufficient time for this task and in fact three days later I was still trying to complete the job and still finding more orchids worth photographing. As the Judges had looked at 13,000 or more orchids and then there were the commercial displays as well, even finding the outstanding ones made the search for the needle in the haystack seem simple.

At 9 am we were off to the lecture theatre and proceedings were opened by Members of the New Zealand Orchid Council outlining what was planned for the World Conference in Auckland in 1990 and extending an invitation to everyone to be there and asking for

support from Australia at least to the level that New Zealand had supported Caloundra (there were five organised tour parties from New Zealand and other individual travellers as well). While on this subject I would like to suggest that New Zealand Clubs and Societies arrange groups of members to travel to Auckland as mini tours — it's great to travel as a group and have someone with whom to discuss what you have seen during the day, and it's a great way to get to really know the members of the club you belong to.

Back to the Conference. Here the organising suffered its only hiccup and Bob Gordon of the U.S.A. stepped into the gap and gave a talk on *Phalaenopsis* which was highly entertaining and allowed the organisers to get the programme back on the rails.

We didn't attend all of the lectures but the ones that we did go to, we found really worth while; the first was by Len Lawler and was on the Native Orchids of Tropical Queensland and there was no doubting that Len was an expert on his subject. In his talk he covered a vast amount of the North of Queensland and many of the Australian Natives that had very specialised cultural requirements and as a result were found in small areas which meet those requirements. This listener got lost a lot of the time, the result of being a novice amongst experts.

The next speaker was George Vasquez from the U.S.A. who spoke on the breeding of yellow *Phalaenopsis* and supported his talk with slides showing the parents used in a cross, followed by slides of the progeny, to illustrate the success or otherwise of the crossing.

George was followed by our tour leader, Syd Wray, who spoke on *Oncidiums*, a subject he knows well and he certainly made this listener keen to try and see if we could grow them with success down in Otago. It's now on the list of projects to be started when time allows.

This was about enough knowledge for us to try and assimilate in one sitting, so we took a break and spent the afternoon just looking at the display in the Conference Centre again and again and again.

In the evening we went to Bob Gordon's workshop on Phalaenopsis growing, where he expanded his discussion of the morning and again entertained as well as informed. At 9 pm we were sent off to our motels where we discussed amongst ourselves all we had seen and done during the day.

Next morning we were at the Centre early to have another look around before the crowds arrived, and crowds there were to be. 56 tour buses arrived during the day to see the exhibition and all that we saw arrive were full. The commercial people had smiles from ear to ear, as every one who came seemed to buy at least one plant and most more than one. About this time it became apparent that there was a competition among the members of the tour party to see who could buy the most flasks to take home, I'll announce the winners later in this article. We went into the lecture theatre to hear Norito Hasegawa on Paphiopedilum breeding. He supported his talk with 160 magnificent slides to make his lecture visually exciting as well as informative. The afternoon was spent at the local racecourse, all arranged as part of the tour — a pleasant afternoon in the open air, and as we about broke even we came away very satisfied with ourselves. This was the evening of the Gala Night and all dressed up, we climbed into the buses and off we went to "The Big Pineapple". Everyone who had registered for the Conference that wanted to go was there and the downstairs was set aside for the Gala dinner which was a lovely meal, but didn't quite live up to its extravagant description in the Conference literature. After the meal we were treated to a train ride round the plantation, quite an experience in the dark. Very tired we climbed back on the buses taking us back to our motels, a much quieter party than on the way out.

At 9.30 am next morning we were back on the buses to be taken up to the Blackall Range overlooking the Glasshouse Mountains for a Bar-b-que meal. After a scenic bus trip we reached the picnic area and were sent off on a bush walk, probably in the hope that some or all of us would get lost. It was very pleasant walking through the bush and we heard some unusual bird calls, with the whip bird being the most unusual and also the most realistic. By the time we returned the organisers had the cooking well underway and we all lined up as though we hadn't eaten for days, the open air and a little exercise ensuring we did justice to the well cooked steaks. For the first time we were able to enjoy the local fresh fruit, and enjoy it we did - pineapples, grapes, melons, ginger and macadamia nuts all have a much better taste when tree ripened and fresh and they disappeared with marvellous rapidity. At last even the heartiest appetite satisfied, we climbed back on the bus for a sightseeing trip back to Caloundra. The late afternoon was spent back at the show taking a few more photos and still finding a few plants we hadn't noticed previously.

Next day we were up very early for a trip to two of the local growers who lived between Caloundra and Gympie. The first was a commercial grower, G. and B. Robinson who as well as growing orchids also grew African Violets and the ladies in the party spent much time admiring these. The glass houses were very good with the plants well presented, but for most of us, the sight of soft cane dendrobiums growing on every tree around the property was the outstanding feature. Not only growing, but showing by the number of flowers and the extensive root systems that they liked these conditions. It didn't seem to matter what the host tree was, all had a mass of feeding roots strongly adhering to them. We went on to Gympie to Allan Pearce, the Conference Chairman's home, and what a home it was, surrounded by a beautifully landscaped section and extensive gardens. Roses were obviously another interest and

each rose was watered by micro tube, all 140 of them, although they didn't look at home in the warm climate and certainly weren't as vigorous, nor were the colours as good as those grown in our cooler climate. Allan's glasshouses had to be seen to be believed — 'state of the art', fully air conditioned with the big houses having four very large units installed and the smaller houses one each, automatically watered and fertilized with the humidity constantly monitored and electronically controlled. Allan grew all his orchids, with the exception of a few cymbidiums, in chip sized river gravel and all the plants looked healthy and well grown. How satisfactory this growing medium would be without the control the watering and fertilizing system gave, I wouldn't know, and lifting some of the bigger pots, full of this mix, was fairly difficult. After a good look round we travelled back to have a last look at the show as this was the last day.

Following this was The Mystery Night and we were picked up from our motels and taken on a circuitous route via MacDonalds, (which according to the bus driver was to be the venue,) round side roads and in here and out there until at last we arrived at a Square Dance Club. Here a spit roasted meal had been organised for us, and after we had been given a straw hat which we had to wear all night (this gave everybody a sort of western look and certainly made some of the party hard to recognise) we were very well fed, and watered liberally. Then the band started, giving us the exercise we needed to get off those extra kilo's which we had put on on the trip and we danced — old time, modern, square, we danced them all — until in no time at all it was midnight and time to go home. Before leaving the Kiwi contingent danced the national dance, "The Bird Dance", and challenged the Aussie's to perform their dance, "The Kangaroo Hop". Whether they were bemused by the sight of all those Kiwi's leaping around I don't know but they had trouble in finding more than a handful of performers and had to be

helped out by the Kiwi's joining them. On this hilarious note we left and the bus took us by a much more direct route to our motels.

Looking back over our impressions, the Civic Centre was the ideal setting for the Caloundra Conference with enough room to display everything to the best advantage and with all the services that were necessary to insure the smooth running of the show. The organising committee were marvellous and everything was done to make the registrants welcome guests. The show itself as a spectacle was exciting and the orchids on display were of the highest quality, the lectures were both informative and entertaining, and Caloundra will be a hard act to follow. The highlights of the show for me were a Cattelya named Chocolate Drop (the texture of the flower and the gloss on the petal and sepals was unbelievable), seeing the satisfaction of the Whangarei folk when their display won an award, and also seven individual awards, and the friendliness of the orchid growers and orchid lovers that we met at this Conference.

The next stop in our travels was at Redcliffe, a suburb to the north of Brisbane, where we were to be billeted with members of the Redcliffe Orchid Society for the next two days, an inspired piece of organising by Syd and Joy. These two days were to prove to be, for us, the highlight of the trip. We arrived late afternoon, and our host took us to meet his wife and have a quick look at his orchid collection, before the light failed. Our host Ed Thorogood was the Editor of the Native Orchid Society newsletter and with his wife Mary was to give us a marvellous two days. His hobby collection was housed in two shade houses which in area equalled about one and a half times the area of our home, (Aussies don't do things by halves) and contained something in excess of 5,000 orchids, mainly soft cane Dendrobiums, with a good number of Oncidiums and of course his first love, the natives. Darkness drove us inside,



where we had an outstanding fish meal, cooked by Mary, and then settled down to talk until after midnight. Ed brought out some of the Native Orchid Bulletins which he had produced and we talked about the articles in them and about family and orchids, till finally tiredness caught up with us and we went to bed. Next morning, Ed took us off to have a look around Redcliffe and to see some of the other collections in the area. The day was cold, the coldest of our trip (in fact our host went home at lunch time and put on his long-johns), but if the day was cold the hospitality wasn't. Redcliffe must have the highest percentage of characters per head of population of any place we've been and we met them all. We quickly learnt that hobby collections have a different meaning here from in New Zealand and most we saw were between 2,00 and 5,000-6,000 plants and covered all the genera, although cymbidiums were not well represented. Native orchids were obviously the main interest of a lot of the folk we met and having seen them in flower and read the articles in the bulletin, we could understand why. That evening our tour party were the guests at a Bar-b-que meal at the home of one of the Club members. The Redcliffe Society had decided to hold this instead of their monthly meeting, and it was a night to remember with good food, good company and raffles of flasks for the flask collectors who now talked about twenties, not ones and twos. Much later we went home to talk again into the small hours.

In the morning we bid our hosts reluctant farewell and headed down the road to a day at Expo. One day was not enough time to see anything like all of Expo, but by the end of the day our feet told us we had been there too long. Two days at Surfers Paradise followed, then a day to Port MacQuarrie, where the accommodation at the Port Pacific was in the luxury class, and then a further day to Sydney, where the second Conference was being held.

Most of the group, like us, had elected to go to this Conference just as paying

public, and so on the first morning in Sydney, Joy rounded up the party that were going to the Show and like Brown's cows, we wended our way through Hyde Park and the Domain to the Exhibition site. The Sydney Exhibition Organisers had chosen to have the Show in marquees and the weather did not treat them well. On the day before, when the Show was being set up, it had rained heavily and the Show site was still very damp when we got there. A marguee has certain disadvantages, the white walls make photographing very difficult and the ropes to protect the displays, were set so far out, that close-ups were almost impossible without incurring the wrath of the Show Stewards. For all that it was a good display with some genera on show that we hadn't seen further north. The Lycaste's were outstanding, as were the native orchid displays and I will always remember a pot with a pink, a yellow and a blue Thelymitra all growing and flowering together, some saucers of Pterostylis that were outstanding and another pot with three different Phragmipediums which were the first I had seen and which intrigued me. As well as the display, there was an area set aside for the commercial people and our flask collectors had a right royal time. Having been around and around until we thought we had seen it all we left to go shopping. Later in the afternoon another thunder storm hit Sydney and we were glad we had seen the display on its first morning open.

Next day those that were interested, went on a bus trip to see some of the orchid collections, both commercial and hobby, in Sydney. Some very good collections were seen, including Wally Upton's but the outstanding visit was to Sid Batchelors' collection of Native orchids. This was my idea of an orchid growers heaven. The shade house was landscaped inside so that everything wasn't on the same level and the front wall was rounded like a bay window so that it looked that little bit different from the other shade houses we had seen. The plants were very well grown with

not a weed to be seen and the display plants were outstanding examples, many of them in flower. It was a collection to remember and again the camera got a lot of use.

This ended the orchid part of the trip, leaving us a little free time in Sydney, apart from an evening organised by the tour members to show our appreciation to Syd and Joy for all they had done for us.

Coming home to New Zealand most of us worried about excess baggage but, the gods were looking after us and half our luggage was loaded and swallowed up by the luggage conveyor before the man at the counter realised that there was no add tape in the scales! After a good flight we arrived back in Auckland where the Ministry of Agriculture officers were to be inundated with flasks. Happily all got through without too much trouble, and everyone said their last goodbyes and promised to write and keep in touch.

Result of the "collect the flask" competition was a tie for first between Rae Hastings of Whangarei and Grace Wootten of Christchurch.

What were my impressions of the trip overall? We enjoyed every minute, and we would do it again. Of the orchids in Australia — I'm envious of their spectacular natives and would like to try some here in New Zealand, and I was most impressed by the *Oncidiums* I saw, so they too are on the buying list, when I get the time to tidy up the plants I have now and do justice to them. My wife liked the *Phalaenopsis* she saw over there and they too are on the list for the future.

Roll round 1990 so that we can meet the friends we made on this trip.

Ian & Iris Roberts  
46 Howarth Road  
Fairfield, Dunedin



## New Zealand Successes at Australia's Orchid Expo, 1988

### CYMBIDIUMS (several classes)

<i>Cym.</i> Bob Waabel	J. & S. Wray, Whangarei O.S.	3rd
<i>Cym.</i> Lillian Stewart 'Imperial Velvet'	M. Dove, Whangarei O.S.	3rd
<i>Cym.</i> Levis Duke 'Bella Vista'	B. & J. Gover, Whangarei O.S.	2nd
<i>Cym.</i> Winter Wonder x Hamsey	J. & S. Wray, Whangarei O.S.	3rd
<i>Cym. munronianum</i>	T. Dillon, Whangarei O.S.	1st
<i>Cym.</i> Narella 'Jennifer Gail'	M. & B. Johnson, North Shore O.S.	2nd
<i>Cym.</i> Mini Sarah 'Jillian'	D. Chandler, North Shore O.S.	1st
<i>Cym.</i> Touchstone 'Jarvis'	B. Johnson, North Shore O.S.	2nd
<i>Cym.</i> Fuss 'Fantasy'	B. Johnson, North Shore O.S.	3rd

### ONCIDIUM & ONCIDIUM ALLIANCE

<i>Odcdm.</i> Tiger Butter	F. Brett, Whangarei O.S.	2nd
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### PAPHIOPEDILUMS

<i>Paph.</i> Charhill x Winston Churchill	G. Honare, Whangarei O.S.	1st
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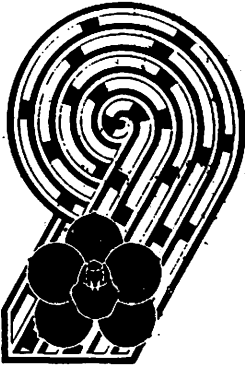
### DISPLAYS

Whangarei Orchid Society, New Zealand	1st
North Shore Orchid Society, New Zealand	2nd

*Congratulations, all.*

# 13th World Orchid Conference 1990

Auckland, New Zealand  
February 1989



## Highlights from Newsletter No. 12

### PRELIMINARY REGISTRATION

It is now time for you to express interest in the Conference by completing a Reply Form and returning it so that we can list you as a potential registrant. All Societies will be sent a stock of these forms. No obligation is made by filling in these forms, although of course we like to think you will make the commitment. Once we have you computer listed we will send the full Registration Booklet later this year.

### PROMOTIONAL ITEMS

With the start of Society meetings for another year we have planned some new items for you. The 1989 tea spoons to add to the set and a range of new design cattleya tea towels will both be available shortly. As before we propose to send samples to all Societies for you to place orders. Good selling. This is a good fund raising means for the Conference and a tangible way everyone can be directly involved, even at this early stage.

### FINANCIAL

We are hopeful of good news on major sponsorship by end of March. As you can imagine, lack of this is causing some strain but the professional group engaged to secure sponsorship appear optimistic of success. In the meantime your consideration to loans and pledges and even donations, will be most helpful.

### 1990 COMMISSION

The 13th World Orchid Conference is now approved as a Recognised Project of this Commission. As you will know, 1990 is the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi and 150th anniversary of both Auckland and Wellington. The 1990 Commission has been established by Government to co-ordinate and promote activities for the 1990 year which will involve all in the

community in a way that gives full expression to what it means to be a New Zealander.

We are pleased to be recognised as a project to highlight this key year in the history of New Zealand, and are convinced that orchid growing as a leisure pursuit is a fulfilling and expanding pastime for many. The celebration of 1990 is not only about looking back at the past but also planning for a better future and lifestyle.

### SPREADING WORD

Publicity is another word for "spreading word." This surprising statement is meant to emphasise the importance of our network of Liaison Officers. These key people are in the front line making contact with the orchid growing public. However, these dedicated souls cannot always pass the necessary word without help from Presidents, Secretaries, Executive of Societies and Clubs. So please give them this assistance and make sure everyone in your Society knows how they can participate and enjoy the 13th World Orchid Conference.

Our Liaison Officer in Houston, Texas is certainly stamping around in that area. We have had a flood of responses giving emphasis that people in Texas do things in a big way. Good going, Texas.

## ACCOMMODATION

We heard a surprising statement made at the New Plymouth weekend, that all possible accommodation in Auckland is already booked up, and that for those who have not already secured bookings it is too late. What utter bilge. Where possible, our convention managers are booking up accommodation for the Conference, ready for you when you register. In some cases hotels and motels do not like to commit themselves so far ahead.

Let us assure you that there will be sufficient accommodation in Auckland for all. Within easy walking or close motoring distance to the Showgrounds alone, 35 motels were counted. A few could have been missed too. Multiply these up from a larger radius and you need have no fears. For those New Zealand residents preferring motel accommodation, we are ready for you.

## THE WOC TRAIN

There has been talk of a special train starting at Invercargill and picking up South Island registrants along the way. What a splendid way to travel and also transport those important orchids. We are not exactly sure if a co-ordinator for this has arisen yet, but in the meantime if you or your Society is interested, get in contact with Judy Coburn, 93 Milton Terrace, Picton. Telephone (057) 36-789. Numbers of travellers will be important for viability.

*R. W. Dix  
Chairman - Publicity and  
Public Relations Committee*

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for copy to the Editors:  
Vol. 15, No. 5 : 15th July

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for advertisements to  
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Vol 15, No. 4 : 16th June  
Vol 15, No. 5 : 11th August

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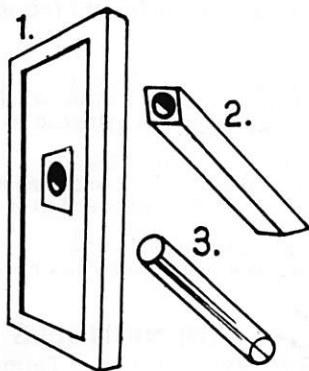
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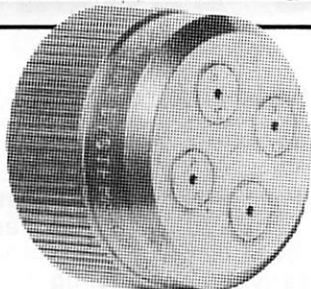
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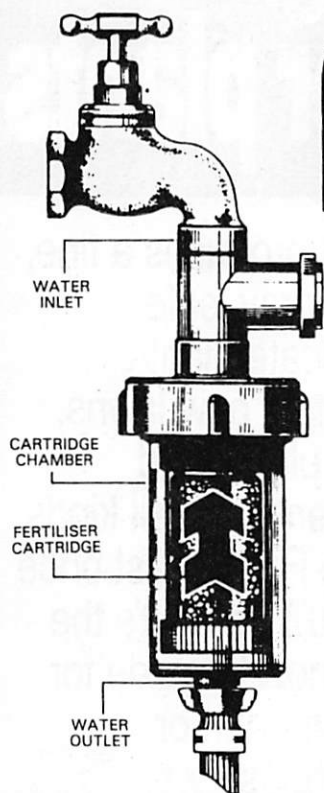


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# CHAMPION fert·mat<sup>®</sup>

## FERTILISER DISPENSER

The ideal addition to your orchid collection.

**The advantages of using Fert-O-Mat.** Easy to fit, simple to use, fertilise as you water, even distribution of fertiliser, use with any watering system, quick, convenient with excellent results. Unit comes complete with fertiliser plugs in initial purchase price.

**Orchid experts agree orchids do best with regular soluble fertiliser feeds of fairly low strength.**

Two analysis of fertiliser available—  
"Quick Green" corresponds to the U.S. recommendation for orchids of 30-10-10 or N.Z. 30-5-8.

"General Purpose" corresponds closely to the U.S. 10-10-10 for orchids in spike (generally known as the blossom booster).

Fert-O-Mat provides the three main elements N.P.K. in the proportions recommended by both U.S. and N.Z. Orchid experts for orchids (American Orchid Society Bulletin, N.Z. Orchid Review, Department Scientific & Industrial Research, Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries). Both formula of fertiliser contain essential trace elements.

For best results use Fert-O-Mat with every watering. Quick Green is recommended for spring/summer growth, General Purpose blossom time.

Fert-O-Mat is also highly recommended for use in flower and vegetable gardening. Use Fert-O-Mat and judge the results for yourself.

## AUSTRALASIAN IMPORTS LTD.

P.O. Box 53-034  
Auckland Airport

Phone 275-4963

# Norm Porter Orchids

## \* CYMBIDIUMS

Flowering size plants available from Nursery or sent anywhere in New Zealand by Newmans Bus—Depot to Door Service ...\$16-\$30 each

Seedling and Mericlone Flasks—Wide selection including Mini and Standards to suit the hobbyist and commercial grower.

## CYMBIDIUMS IN SPIKE

### Charley's Angel 'Raspberry Lime' B/CSA, HCC/AOS (Ann Miller x Showgirl)

Intermediate, clear Lime Green offset by a solid Raspberry Red lip, free flowering, up to 3 spikes per bulb. September.

Large plant 2 Lt. pot. In spike \$23.00

### Running Bear 'Candy Striper' (Kalinka x Chief Joseph)

A distinctive intermediate, Creamy Pink with a dark Lilac-Purple stripe on each petal. August. Large plant 2 Lt. pot. In spike \$23.00

### San Francisco 'St. Nadine' HCC/AOS/ODC.,

### BA/CSA,AM/AOS/ODC,SA/CSA (Balkis x Blue Smoke)

An old favourite with a string of awards, large clear Ice Green, broad White lip with Pink freckles, very good doer.

Large plant 5 Lt. pot. In spike \$25.00

### Summercloud 'Moonstone' (Eagle x floribundum pumilum)

A clear August moon White miniature, tall upright spikes, Cream lip with Lemon spots, very vigorous, Ideal weddings.

Large 2 Lt. pot. In spike \$23.00

### York 'Sahara' (Shina Black x Alexanderi)

Very free flowering, late Oct-Nov. Apricot Yellow with pretty lip markings, very popular cut flower, Large 2 Lt. pot. In spike \$23.00

Each as priced, Freight extra;

or Any 3 plants for \$66, freight paid to your door;

or the 5 plants for \$110, freight paid.

1989 Free Catalogue now available.

All prices include GST

Send to—

## NORM PORTER

"CYMBIDIUM ORCHID SPECIALIST"

Nursery—23 Parata Street, Waikanae  
(Parata Street is opposite Woolworths)

Phone (058) 36-977

Hours—Tuesday-Saturday 9.00 a.m.-5.00 p.m.

During the flowering season, May-November, the Nursery is Open  
Sundays and Public Holidays



## PORTRAITS OF NEW ZEALAND ORCHID SPECIES



*Lyperanthus antarcticus*

The higher altitudes of the Tararua Ranges and sub alpine parts of the South Island and other southern islands, in damp, peaty areas, are the best places to look for this elegant orchid, although it also occurs at lower altitudes in the southern areas. This is the only New Zealand species of this genus.

*Photography: Bob Goodger*