



# *Orchids*

*in New Zealand*

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# Australian Orchid Review

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# Orchids

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NEW ZEALAND ORCHID SOCIETY

VOL. 17 No. 1

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# WHERE TO FROM HERE

**A**S SOME READERS WILL KNOW I have been involved with various orchid publishing for over 10 years. One of the more interesting developments from this has been the correspondence it has created. In more recent years I have received an increasing volume of mail from individuals seeking a wide range of varying orchid growing advice. While it can take up quite a lot of time, I attempt to answer all the questions as best I can, often referring the questioner to the local orchid society where appropriate. Whether those involved contact the society involved is something I do not know. This does, however, raise the question—"Why do they seek advice in this way?"

- Are they, or have they been, members of an orchid society who have found they are not getting the advice or service they seek from that source?
- Do they in fact know that orchid societies exist throughout the country? (Interestingly, even in cities like Auckland and Wellington with their many orchid societies, correspondence is still received from growers in those cities.)
- Are the orchid societies not meeting the needs of some orchid growers who are looking for alternative sources of information?
- Should orchid societies be doing more to promote themselves in the local communities, broadcasting the many services they offer and further encourage the growing of orchids.?
- Should orchid societies be working more closely with specialist orchid growing nurseries in developing, promoting and assisting those who are, and those who may be interested, in growing orchids?

Your national body—CONZED—or what is generally known as the Orchid Council of New Zealand—has been around for many years. As we are all aware, the direct members of the Orchid Council of New Zealand are the orchid societies. The individual orchid growers are represented on the national body by their orchid societies, but is this structure meeting the needs of ALL the possible and actual growers in this country.

Over the last year or so it appears individual society membership in many areas has declined, for a multitude of reasons. While it can be assumed that some of those

members resigning will have given up the hobby of growing orchids, many will continue growing their plants to a greater or lesser extent. Many will, I hope, continue some connection with the Orchid Council through a continuing subscription to this magazine, but is this enough.

We are in a period of change—at work and at play. Perhaps it is time that we consider the future of our national body, and whether it is fulfilling the

## editorial

Orchids in New Zealand  
Editor:  
P. C. Tomlinson  
14 Putnam Street  
Northland  
Wellington 5, N.Z.



needs of all orchid growers in this country. An important aspect of that is the question of membership of Council. Should we allow another class of membership in addition to the societies—affiliate, individual or whatever, for example, to ensure that the interests of the non-society growers are still represented—or even encouraged. Such people could pay something in addition to the magazine subscription for access to the judging system, or to support the many other activities of Council. Whether we like it or not Council needs money to run its various activities (including this magazine) and perhaps this is a way that funds can be augmented, and perhaps even services expanded, while at the same time providing benefits directly to a wider range of growers. Perhaps there is a wide number of growers, who, for many reasons do not wish, or cannot, join the established societies. Council has always been somewhat remote from individual orchid growers, and perhaps a changed membership structure would provide the opportunity for everyone to be brought closer together, for the benefit of all.

Change must always be well thought out. Just because we have not considered these matters in the past does not mean that we should not consider

them now. The only way we can develop is to have considered and constructive dialogue of all the issues facing the 'addiction' of orchid growing. Have you thought about such issues, and discussed them with fellow growers, both within and outside the local society membership.

In reviewing the future it is worth noting the work of the Council over recent years. Council has been successful in bringing together many orchid growers from around the country. Like any such body it has its wrinkles, but it has many successes. The establishment of this magazine is one. The establishment, running and promotion of the judging system is another. It has represented orchid growers at a national level to the authorities, presenting views on such items as orchid importing and quarantine regulations. In association with the New Zealand Orchid Society it hosted the recent successful 13th World Orchid Conference; in a way similar to the two earlier international orchid conferences held in this country—Auckland in 1980 and Wellington in 1985, also co-hosted with local affiliated orchid societies. A speakers fund has allowed the sponsorship of visitors from overseas and their movement around the country, providing high quality programmes of

widespread interest which would not otherwise be possible. Anything that strengthens the Council can only be of benefit to all growers—both those in and outside established orchid societies.

For readers both in and outside established orchid societies, what do you think? Your views can be expressed in this magazine. That is one reason it is here! ◀

---

## Paph Antics

Thank you to all those growers who replied to the invitation to form a paphiopedilum group printed in the last magazine.

A meeting is planned to be held at Sherlock Orchids at 11 am, Saturday 23rd February. Bring a packed lunch, tea or coffee will be provided. Come and meet Lyn Sherlock and Peter Stephens and meet other paph enthusiasts.

**Lyn Sherlock  
Atkins Road,  
RD, OTAKI**



### Culture:

# Odontoglossum Art



**H**ERE SURELY WE HAVE A GENUS that, if not created specially for the convenience and delight of the amateur orchid grower, will gladden the heart of every lover of floral beauties. The graceful arching sprays of flowers, often 90 cm to a metre long and coming from diminutive plants in 75-100 mm pots or thereabouts, never fail to compel the admiration of all comers. With rows of evenly spaced out delicate blooms which range from a chaste white, to pink, to a dark purple or maroon, or with intermingling colours bordering on the bizarre.

Such are the beauty and unsurpassable qualities of the odontoglossums. It is more deplorable that odontoglossums have become the cinderella of most collections, having been tainted with the notion that they are difficult to flower. Given a reasonable chance, odontoglossums will flower with clockwork regularity—in fact, the only drawback under good cultivation is that they try to flower too often. In most cases where success with odontoglossums has eluded the grower, they have been treated as something like semi-aquatics under coolhouse conditions. In the attempt to keep the temperature down to “coolhouse” level in warm weather, the atmosphere in the odontoglossum house has too often been overcharged with moisture, which is, one of the worst things that can happen to the plants. It utterly refute the notion



**Art Kramer**  
*from Hawke's Bay*  
*presents his views on*  
*the art of growing*  
*odontoglossums.*  
*This will be Part I*  
*of a continuing series.*

that odontoglossums are “coolhouse” orchids, at least as far as our hybrids are concerned.

In their natural habitat odontoglossums grow at high altitudes, often at

elevations of 3000 metres. Transplanted into totally different climatic conditions, every effort had to be made to create conditions akin to those prevailing in their natural state, i.e. on high mountain ranges.

## HOUSING

Where a house can be devoted exclusively to the cultivation of odontoglossums, near ideal conditions can be created for these plants by providing a free circulation of air and ample shading. Ideal walls are without side lights. If side lights are present it is a simple matter to block these up with a lining of marine ply or hardi sheet. It is not only a matter of shutting out too much light, but primarily one of insulating the house against outside atmospheric conditions, and for this reason I advocate lining of the roof with polythene as well,

unless the roof is already double-glazed. Coupled with ample shading on the roof, the owner will thus be able to exercise a certain amount of control over the inside atmospheric conditions. If such a house received shading, by overhanging branches of a deciduous tree, the owner will get things pretty well his own way without much effort, or facing south is another alternative.

## SHADING

“Permanent” shading by painting over the roof glass if applied thick enough, will provide the necessary shade, but does little to keep the temperature within bounds

during hot spells. Lath blinds or shade cloth erected 100 mm above the glass roof is ideal. Remember, the best provisions will come to nought without adequate shading. Reduce the amount of shading gradually from March onwards.

## TEMPERATURE

A minimum night temperature of 12°C with a few degrees less during very cold spells, and a day temperature of 18°C or over, will keep the plants growing. A few degrees variation will not hurt the plants, but will slow down their rate of growth.

The warm summer weather will often drive the

day temperature up. No harm will come to the plants, provided sufficient ventilation is given to avoid a close stuffy atmosphere.

Aim at a night temperature in summer of 18°C, and if the outside temperature is not likely to drop to that level, close the ventilators in the evening and damp the floor down, including the path.

## VENTILATION AND ATMOSPHERIC MOISTURE

Whilst odontoglossums, like all other orchids in their natural habitat, receive fresh air all the

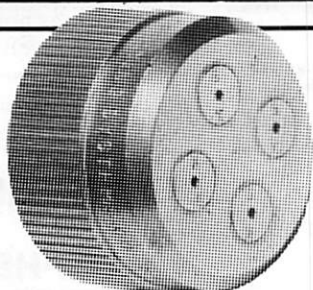


*Odontioda* Belinda Dixon-Ward

Grower: B. & H. Moody — Kapiti Coast Orchid Society



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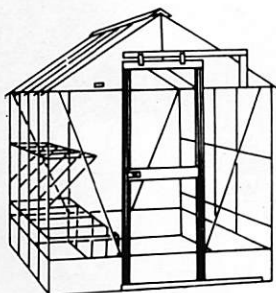
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time, the supply of atmospheric moisture at high altitudes is restricted **mainly to the hours of darkness**. Growing them under glass practically at sea level, these conditions have to be artificially created. In our Hawkes Bay climate, dry hot days will not necessarily be followed by damp nights, and damp nights are often too cold to take advantage of. That is why ventilation and atmospheric moisture are so closely bound up together as to be inseparable from a cultural standpoint.

Open the ventilators an inch or two in the morning as soon as the required temperature has been reached in the house. This is necessary to replace the moisture charged atmosphere with fresh air. Keep at least a crack open all day, except in very cold weather; more if the weather is mild or warm. Close the vents again in the evenings before the sun has set, when the weather is hot and dry or when artificial heat has to be used. Damp down the floor under the stages, as well as the path.

When the nights are damp and cool there is no need to close the ventilators and damping down should be omitted, as sufficient atmospheric moisture will find its way into the house through the ventilators. Under the conditions thus created the absorption of

moisture, followed by transpiration by the leaves, will take a natural course, to which your odontoglossums cannot fail to respond.

## **WATERING OF ODONTOGLOSSUMS**

This subject is of particular importance where *Odontoglossums* are concerned. One **untimely**

application of water can, under certain circumstances, undo all the good done to a particular plant for months past. During warm, bright spells of weather, when the compost dries out fairly quickly, this is not likely to happen. It is during spells of prolonged cold weather that the damage arises, especially where newly potted plants are concerned. Such plants, by virtue of the increased bulk of compost, which has not been penetrated by



*Odontoglossum* Parade

Grower: Geyserland Orchids — 13 W.O.C.

new roots as yet, remain wet for a very long time. Should they receive water, by accident or design, before the compost has dried out, the new roots are likely to die and the compost to turn sour, with the result that the new growth will not develop satisfactorily. Nothing of this sort is likely to happen if the compost is allowed to dry out before watering. Lift each plant at fairly regular intervals, then examine those that are light to the feel more closely and only water them if you are satisfied that there is no moisture left in the compost. Place the larger plants together in one group; the smaller in another; the seedlings in a third; and keep the newly potted plants separate to facilitate inspection. The large plants and the newly potted ones will require a weekly inspection at the most, and only a few may be found in need of watering. The smaller plants and seedlings should be inspected twice a week, but only watered where necessary.

If watering is completed by immersion **not submersion** and only up to one third of the pot's depth is placed in water whenever the compost has dried out, no mistakes are likely to occur.

*Odontoglossum* species enjoy a period of rest after flowering, which coincides

with the dry season in their country of origin. The length of their resting time varies from species to species. Here I highly recommend the Wellington Orchid Society Cultural Handbook for Odonts, a must for odont growers. During such periods of inactivity only scant supplies of water at longer than usual intervals should be administered to keep the compost fresh and prevent excessive shrivelling of the bulbs. The moment new growths appear normal watering should be resumed. The modern hybrid being a result of crossing a number of parents of different origin, and therefore different habits, has no discernible period of rest. Watering should, therefore, be carried on as usual after flowering. For some weeks after it has been relieved of its flower spike a hybrid *odontoglossum* will require less frequent applications of water than it did when in full growth, as indicated by the compost remaining moist for longer periods.

Shrivelling of the bulbs is not necessarily an indication that more frequent water is needed—the reverse may be the case. Allow such plants to dry out in the usual way, then start watering them in the usual manner. If the leading bulb does not plump up soon after this treatment, knock the plant out of the pot and

examine the roots and compost. Repot in fresh compost if necessary. After years of growing I came to the conclusion that it is no use trying to translate the methods used by orchid nurseries in large glasshouses into a house 3.6m x 2.4m or smaller. The former has the advantage of being twice as high into the bargain and the atmospheric conditions are fairly static. There are no violent fluctuations in the temperature and no chilly blasts directly onto the plants, such as you get every time you open the door or ventilator. Furthermore appearances are never more deceptive than when you behold a dripping staging of plants combined with wet floors. Yes, I have fallen for it myself and every time I got home from a nursery, started throwing about buckets of water. What I did not notice was the dryness of compost in the pots.



*Odcdm* Crowborough  
Grower: J. Askin  
Wellington Orchid Society

Odontoglossums are sensitive plants and are easily influenced by changes in atmospheric conditions and treatment. I never water with a hose or watering can. Always use a misting or fogging jet; also have a fan going day and night.

## REPOTTING

Owing to one's natural reluctance to disturb a plant in a thriving condition, it is often left in the same pot and compost until it shows signs of exhaustion or deterioration. When it is eventually dealt with it may take years of patient nursing to restore it to its former health and vigour. Far better to repot a plant at regular intervals, involving a minimum of disturbance.

The plants that appear to have come to a standstill, not to be confused with those that have undergone their natural period of rest, are often left to "sulk" for months on end in the same pot and compost. Provided other conditions are somewhere near the mark, the fault must be looked for inside the pot. The compost may be unsuitable, the potting too hard, the compost may have "balled up" into a solid mass, preventing aeration, or turned sour. The hardly noticeable beginnings of a combination of these troubles may have killed the old roots and inhibited



*Odontoglossum cervantesii*

the formation of new ones. Sometimes the cause of the trouble is not discernible at all, but the plant may romp away when potted up in a fresh lot of compost. In any case, nothing is gained by leaving a plant to "sulk".

Overpotting is another likely source of troubles, and a frequent one at that. If a plant is repotted annually, then overpotting is not likely to occur. It is written the amateur tries to fix the plants up for the next two or three years that overpotting takes place. Before the elapse of this period the compost will have spent itself and either have gone solid or sour; in either case preventing aeration of the roots. Odontoglossums have fine tender roots with little penetrating power, the

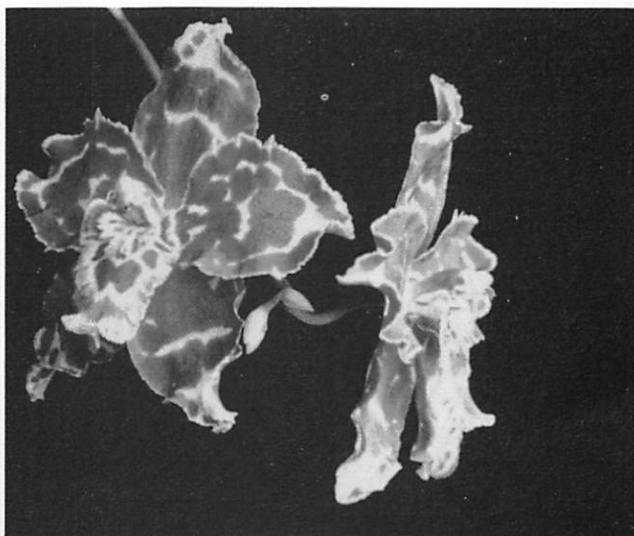
only exceptions are found in one or two species.

To cram the compost hard into the pot will prevent aeration so essential to these roots and impede the capillary function of the compost itself, no matter how well balanced this may be. Fairly loose potting is required and obtained by working the compost gently between the roots. This will ensure a better distribution of the roots and uniform wetting of the compost when watering.

When repotting, remove all back bulbs in excess of three behind the lead, together with the roots and compost adhering to them. Carefully tease out any firmed up chunks of compost from the main stock of the plant and

replace with new compost. Do not disturb the compost directly under the last made up bulb, where most of the new roots are concentrated.

For compost I use standard bark with some cut up dry oak leaves, remembering the Colombian species grow amongst oak trees. I do get some looks from the neighbours when I place layers of oak leaves in the carport and cut them up with the motor mower, but odonts like them.



*Odontioda* (Ingera x Royen)

## DISEASES

Fungus only thrives in damp close conditions. We should not, therefore, have far to look for the cause of the trouble. It manifests itself in many different ways, damping off being most frequently encountered. Here drips, or careless watering, combined with insufficient heat or lack of fresh air, are the most likely causes. With odonts the centre leaf or leaves present an oily appearance. Fungus can also account for the wet mould and oily patches on the leaves, sometimes referred to as wetspot disease, which is more prevalent after cold spells.

## FEEDING

Orchids have a very slow rate of growth, approximately one eighth of the growth rate of a

requirements are on a very humble scale and odonts are delicate feeders. Supplying Nitrogen in the period of a growth of leaf and bulb can be beneficial, but when the bulb is fully grown it should cease. A modest addition of Phosphate and Pottassium to the water all the year round is helpful, but not more than one quarter of the strength appropriate for cymbidiums.

I have come across a number of cases where odonts have been grown into strong plants with large, fat pseudobulbs, which persistently refused to flower. I think it might help others with similar problems to counteract such disconcerting habits of their plants. My own case is just the opposite, in as

tomato or chrysanthemum plant. Their nutrition much as many of my plants persistently showed spikes before the bulbs had even started to make up, or soon after. With this handicap, the bulbs cannot be expected to grow to, or near, their maximum size and neither do the resultant flower spikes. If the spikes are allowed to develop under these conditions, weakened plants will result, which may require a couple of years or more before they can regain flowering status again. Needless to say I recommend removal of the spikes in this instance.

According to general practice, plants approaching flowering size are given more light, in order to ripen the growths





*Odontoglossum wyattianum*

Grower: Geyserland Orchids — 13 W.O.C.

and encourage the formation of flower spikes. It was not, however, until reversing this process we managed to induce flowering of my plants at their correct stage of development. This entailed admitting more light to the plants at an earlier stage, thus favouring plant growth at the expense of flower development. Having thus succeeded in retarding the production of flower spikes, by increasing the light volume, it can be safely assumed that shy flowering plants can be induced to initiate flower development and by decreasing the volume of light through shading.

Suffice it to say for the present that a three quarters made up bulb not showing any intention of flowering, has never subsequently failed to do so, when subject to a period of comparative darkness. Once the flower spike has emerged from the sheath or bract, it does not seem to matter whether the plant itself is given short day or long day conditions. The spike growing upwards, helps itself to the extra light needed for its further development. There is no doubt in my mind that darkness favours the development of the hypothetical flowering hormones, whereas light

encourages the growth hormones. When the two are well balanced, growth and the production of flowers will go hand in hand, but where one set of conditions preponderates corrective measures may have to be taken to bring about the desired results. Here as elsewhere, observation of the plants is the safest guide.

**In conclusion, I now utterly refute the notion that Odonts are difficult to grow, once you have mastered their elementary requirements.**

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## REPOTTING

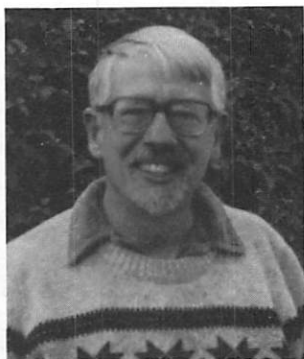
ONCE THE BUSTLE AND GLAMOUR of the 13th World Orchid Conference was over, it was back to more mundane things like repotting, which might have been neglected in the pursuit of bigger and better flowers.

A couple of "new" types of potting mix were discovered at the Conference, and are being cautiously investigated. It pays not to believe everything you are told, and just try a few not so precious plants in a new mix rather than rush into repotting every plant and then discover it doesn't suit your conditions.

### MIXES

The first of these new mixes is shredded and sterilised Sphagnum moss. There is nothing new about Sphagnum moss, you say, and you are right, but because it is shredded you don't have the hassle of long strands getting tangled up with the roots, or pulling a loose strand and finding you have unpotted the plant. It is also compressed into small pellets which expand enormously when soaked in warm water, so it is easy to store and also easy to use. I have potted up some deflasked seedlings in it and so far it all looks good. Yes, I did buy some flasks at the Conference.

The other new mix is Rockwool, which is made by heating a type of rock and then spinning filaments from it. Tremendous claims are made for it, but I haven't been able to find



*Bob McCulloch is back, busily repotting with pots, plants, pens, punga and more. Hear how an expert tackles this on-going job.*

any N.Z. source for it yet, so experiments will have to wait.

The more common mix is bark. It is freely available in various grades to suit the size and type of orchid you are growing. I prefer to

grow all seedlings in a fine grade of bark, they grow better for me like that than in the larger grades. They live on a hot bed in winter, and I have found that with the larger grades they dry out too quickly and need watering at awkward times. Also even orchids which have large and coarse roots when fully grown, seem to prefer a fine mix when they are younger.

### ORGANISATION

My method of repotting is to dry out the plants for a week or two while I get the rest of the bits and pieces together. Bark is one of these, and I have several 9 litre pails which are filled about  $\frac{3}{4}$  full of dry bark (all except one pail), and then filled with water until the bark starts to rise. Stop watering then or else the bark will continue to rise and then overflow. The

next day I empty one of the pails into the empty pail. This puts the bark which was at the top, and is still relatively dry, at the bottom of the pail, and it will then get wet. I do this to all of the pails, and always finish up with an empty pail. The bark will have absorbed some water, and a quick run around with a hose will top up all the pails. You can do this several times if you have the time and can be bothered, but I have found that once is quite adequate, and you can do the whole thing in 24 hours if you start in the evening and turn the bark over in the morning.

The night before the bark is to be used, I empty out the pails into a large container with holes in the bottom, hose it over to remove any sludge and it is ready to be used next morning. Some people add things like lime and fertilisers during the soaking process, the lime would certainly reduce the acidity of the bark which may be a good thing if you knew that the bark was too acidic from previous experience of roots refusing to grow into it.

Another thing is pots—I prefer plastic on account of cheapness and availability. Actually I have never grown in anything but plastic so can't really compare. My general impressions are that the roots are cooler and the

pots dry out quicker using clay pots, and clay pots are also heavier. Re-use of plastic pots is possible, by cleaning out all the old roots and other rubbish, soaking them overnight in bleach (1 part bleach to 10 of water), then rinsing thoroughly in fresh water. Wear gloves when working with bleach, as it does funny things to your skin otherwise. I usually save up a big pile of pots, then wait till one of the family is short of cash, and get them to clean them for a few cents a pot. This teaches them the dignity of labour, and that money doesn't grow on trees, and is terribly character building.

One of the greatest difficulties I have found with repotting is continuity of supply, both for bark and pots. It seems that my decision to standardise on a particular make of either is a signal for the manufacturer to go out of business, or stop making that particular item. The only way out of this is to buy a lot at one time, and then you have the problem of storage (and also of paying for it!). I have a large garage which is full of pots and mix, and barely enough room to squeeze a car in.

Other things you will need are labels, a marking pen, sulphur to act as a

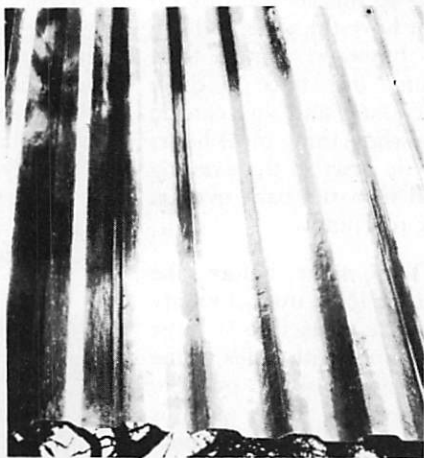


*Barkeria skinneri*

Tauranga Orchid Society — 13 W.O.C.

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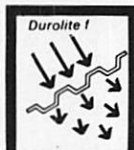
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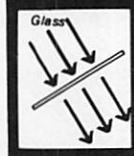
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fungicide, gloves if your hands are soft, possibly a saw, and certainly a knife, and some means of sterilising them. I use one of those throwaway lighters and meths, dip the knife into the meths, and then set fire to it, being careful that the flaming meths doesn't drip onto your hand. You should also have a bucket of water in case the meths bottle catches fire, and to wash your hands in.

Having got the plants, mix, labels, marking pen and pots all together, the next step is to find a suitable place to do the repotting. You will have lots of old mix, dirty pots, and bits of roots, leaves, back bulbs, crocking material etc, and you will need a bin of some sort to hold all this, unless you like running out to the rubbish bin with every pot. Not too big a bin, or you won't be able to get it out when it is full. I use a 9 litre bucket, and empty it into an used mix sack when it is full. When the sack is full it gets taken to the tip to get rid of all the nasties which could be in it. I have a bench about a metre wide which has the new mix in it's large container, pots, labels, a marking pen (a lead pencil is better, the writing lasts for years longer than a marking pen and it writes on a wet label, the one disadvantage is that it can't be read from so far away), and still has room for me to wrestle a

largish cymbidium out of its pot. The bucket sits under the bench, and the only time I have to move is to get more plants or empty the bucket. Before removing the plant from it's pot, have a good look at it to see if it can stay in one piece, or is better split into two or more smaller pieces. Tidy all the damaged leaves up, and remove the dried up bits of leaves from backbulbs by splitting them down the middle and pulling to the side. This avoids damaging the node where new growth will come from, and it is easier to do it now while the plant is still stable.

Remember to sterilise your tools after each plant to prevent the spread of virus and really you should wash your hands as well. Avoid smoking in the glasshouse—orchid growers shouldn't smoke anyway. I read an article in an old orchid magazine which claimed that if 5% of tobacco plants have virus, and if the machinery used to shred the leaves is never treated to kill virus, then eventually it will become completely contaminated and every bit of tobacco that passes through the shredder will finish up with some virus on it. So the chances of a smoker having virused plants is greatly increased, especially if he smokes while handling plants.

## METHOD

First remove the label and put it in a good safe place while you deal with the plant. Remove the plant by squeezing the pot all round to loosen the roots grip on the pot then hold a handfull of backbulbs in one hand and the pot in the other, and pull. If this doesn't work then turn the pot upside down and bang the pot on the edge of the bench. If that doesn't work then cut the pot off.

Once the plant is out of the pot, examine the root system to see how your culture has been, then remove any backbulbs and put them with the label. Then remove any dead roots and any mix from the live roots, and split the plant into as many pieces as you have decided. Dust the damaged roots and bulbs with sulphur to prevent fungus, and remove any roots from the backbulbs while you are getting your breath back. The backbulbs can be dried off for a few days then potted up with the appropriate label in a small pot and put under the bench, where they could put out a new growth in time. Once the new growth has leaves and roots, it can be removed from the bulb with a twisting action, and potted up ready for the sales table or to swap with other growers. The back-



bulb can be potted up again and again until it has shrivelled away, though each growth will be smaller than the previous one.

Prepare the pots for the divisions by filling the bottom of the container with drainage material, large lumps of something that won't break down, and will keep the drainage holes open. I use polystyrene foam because it is readily available to me, but coarse bark, broken clay pots, etc can be used just as well. Cover this with a layer of bark, then fit the division in the pot giving the growing bulb room to develop. I hold the division against the edge of the pot with one hand and fill the mix in round the roots with the other hand, stopping to bang the pot against the bench every now and again to settle the mix. The mix should come to about two centimetres below the pot rim, and the bulbs should be buried about a third of the way. A good soaking afterwards settles the mix even further and prevents the plant from dehydrating until the roots start working again. It's not that the plant takes any moisture from the mix, but if the mix is dry then it will take moisture from the plant, also as the water evaporates it provides higher humidity around the plant, which reduces the amount of water the plant transpires. Now find the label again, write

details of when it was repotted, and put it back in the correct pot.

The repotted plant can now be put in a warm, humid and shady spot until it gets over the trauma and starts growing again, when it can be put with the rest of the plants and treated normally. I usually mark the junction of leaves on the growing bulb with a marker pen, then when the mark starts to look ragged, I know the leaves are growing. It saves having to remember what the plant looked like when you have a lot of repotted plants, some of them growing and others still having a rest. During this time, don't water the plants, it doesn't matter if the mix gets a bit dry as long as the humidity is kept up. I prefer to water

and feed the normal plants and then put the newly growing plants out with them, this gives them another few days to get used to the idea of growing and they seem to benefit from it.

## MOUNTING

There are some plants which don't like growing in pots, they prefer to spread their roots far and wide looking for moisture and nourishment. Their roots are able to withstand periods of dryness, and in fact will rot if they are kept moist like cymbidiums. These plants will grow very well on cork bark or punga. The bark is used as is, but punga should be weathered until weeds grow on it. A suggestion recently was to



*Oncidium Beatrice Emery* on punga mount

soak the punga in water with lime added, about a handful to a 9 litre bucket. No matter which way you use, the roots should grow into the punga. If they die on contact, or turn away from it, either weather it some more, or use something else. When some types of punga are growing, all the "scales" face down to shed water, when attaching the plant turn the punga upside down so that the water is retained. Tie the plant on with something that won't cut into the roots, I usually scrape a hollow for the roots and put a wad of Sphagnum over them before tying the plant with several strands of fishing line. The Sphagnum is just to keep the roots moister until they are established, and if you do this at the beginning of summer then by the time the cooler weather comes, the roots will have grown into the punga, the Sphagnum will have fallen off, and you can remove the fishing line. Another wood which is very good for things like equitant oncidiums is feijoa. They grow well on this, but it is a fairly soft wood and soon rots away. Still I suppose you just tie the plant to a bigger bit and start again.

The frequency of potting depends on how fast the plant grows, how old it is, how often you water, and how much time you have

available. If the plant is young, it will benefit from yearly repotting, once it reaches flowering size then every two or three years, or when the pot is full or the mix has become a sodden mass. I like to keep some mix ready to use so that if a plant is looking seedy then I can knock it out of it's pot and examine the roots—nine times out of ten a poor root system is the cause of a plant growing poorly. If the roots are OK then it doesn't harm the plant, and if they aren't then you have to repot it anyway. The correct time to repot a plant is when new growth has just started at whatever time of year, but sick plants can be repotted at any time—it is better to repot a sick plant in the middle of winter than to leave it sitting in wet mix which will rot all it's roots off. The next best time to repot is when growth has been completed, normally in the autumn. If you do it carefully then damage to the plant is minimal, as long as it has enough time to re-establish itself before winter. It's also a good time to repot seedlings, they seem to grow better if repotted every six months. So if you did neglect your repotting last year, get out there right now, and go to it! ◀

---

## Some Common Cymbidium Problems Answered.

**Q** How long should the flower spike be left on the plant?

**A** Cut spike about three weeks after flowers have fully opened. Placed in water the blooms should last for a further four or five weeks. Any flowers that have developed on small seedlings should be cut off as soon as possible. This will allow the plant to grow strong growth capable of flowering well next year.

**Q** Why do my Cymbid leaves have black marks on them?

**A** Marks often due to sunburn, but can be fertiliser spray. Virus can cause marking on the leaves, but it usually starts as pale marks. This is another problem, one I won't elaborate upon as it is very hard to identify, but if you suspect a problem isolate the plant from others.

*Reprinted from Nelson Orchid Society Newsletter, July 1990.* ◀

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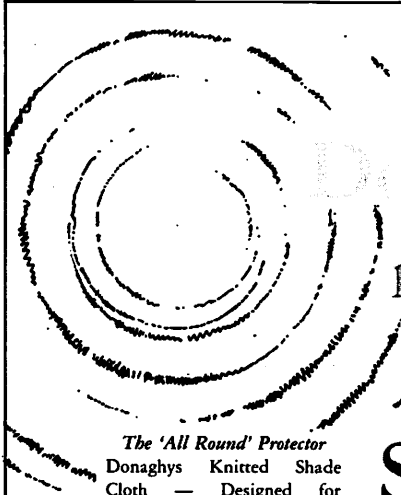


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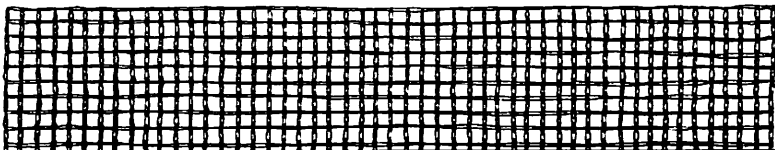
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DT 2453

# CHELSEA ORCHIDS

**T**HE WEST-BOUND PLATFORM at Victoria station, and something is up. What's with all these over forties? On the train, off again at Sloane Square, can't spot any Sloane Rangers among the swarm of well-heeled grey heads. Shuffle to the elevator, jostle at the top, tickets are fumbled at the electronic gates—"hurry along please" the staff tell those coming off the elevators with nowhere to go.

Out of the station, the mass emerges into bright sunlight with no collective sense of direction. Which way to turn? Eventually I join the body of the snake heading off to the 1990 Chelsea Flower Show. Soon the stationary queue stretches back a block and more. We spend hot minutes standing on the road waiting to reach the next pavement.

No tube-practicised edging through the queue here. "Oh, isn't she cheeky", as one pedestrian skips across the road in defiance of the human traffic wardens.

Inside the Hospital grounds at last we are assailed by Forces Benevolent Fund money-tins jangled every few metres, the enthusiasm of uniformed collectors equalling my enthusiasm to escape them. Instead, I contribute another £2 to The Royal Horticultural Society coffers by way of the catalogue, on top of my £7.00 half-day member's ticket.

In the hour meandering towards the British Orchid Council display, I'm pulled and tugged towards 'books, prints, tools and sundries'

**Melanie McDonald**  
*from Southland has  
been visiting the  
Chelsea Flower Show.  
People, displays,  
pleiones, lycastes  
and more.*

the length of Eastern Avenue. The add-ons to this hobby of ours can be as attractive as the orchids themselves. Williams' 7th Edition (*The Orchid Grower's Manual, 1894*) which would take care of one's homeward baggage allowance on its own, is £35 at one stand and £110 at another. Just to see these bygone books available is a treat. And if £115 is too pricey for a *dowiana*-type watercolour, take a watercolour of two apples—complete with bugs mind you—for only £55. Treasures to grace walls and shelves and bookcases, however exquisite, are just for the gazing at, for those with shallow pockets.

I'm similarly attracted to the range of greenhouse technology on sale.

The outside landscaped theme gardens are a crush of

people. I scramble through to the front rows of about four of them, back out through 7-10 rows of bodies, shoulder myself along to the next exhibit and on tip toes decide whether to plough in again. So this is Chelsea, and as a members' day it's not officially crowded.

Cynicism is swept aside in the marquee Wow! the Tokyo orchid show revisited! Navigation via catalogue across the ups and downs aisles, I finally located my allotted slot, to do sentry-duty on the British Orchid Council display, coordinated by the Thames Valley Orchid Society. One of six orchid stands, we had about 300 mixed genera from the North of England, Norfolk, the West Country and our own Thames Valley Society. A lot of smart *Dactylorhiza foliosa* species, loosely grouped by genera around the trusted tree and pond theme.

I spent the next hour or so in a familiar pattern, initiating conversations, fielding questions and trying to switch time-of-year replies by six months. I'd been wryly told to answer, "My cym-



bid won't flower" with, "putting it outside from November to February will fix it." Well that reply comes pat enough anyway. Even under the famed Chelsea marquee it doesn't take much expertise to be mantled with supposed authority by one's audience.

However, I did make the mistake of chattering to two apparently harmless old ladies, only to have them both erupt into loquacious examples of the great english eccentric. I was lectured on carnations and the full history of the RHS! My dismay was offset by the likes of a person, who wondered if it was alright for his phalaenopsis spikes to be branching again, and an en-

thralled woman who hadn't seen phallies since she carried them in her bridal bouquet.

The Orchid Society of Great Britain, with the only other society display, presented a tight exhibition based on quality and variety. Orchids were grouped by colour rather than the thematic presentations in the entertaining style of WOC displays. A gold medal awarded to the OSGB exhibit clearly lifted bystander interest. Each exhibit type is judged by a type panel on a points system similar to the orchid award-judging process. Dr Henry Oakeley's display and McBeans also earned gold medal status. Thirty southern growers

contributed to what was considered one of the OSGB's top Chelsea displays. Given the crowds, no photography could do justice to it or the BOC exhibit.

A cancellation led to an invitation to Henry Oakeley to introduce his lycaste and anguloa display to Chelsea, after polishing it at several regional orchid events. He says visitors are astonished by the variety within the two genera, and the bigeneric angulocastes. The display has a full backdrop of colour enlargements of some of his 400 plants not in flower at a particular show. Where are you, John Anderson of Ngaio? His posters give an educational element to exhibits more often seen at



Ian Butterfield at his Chelsea Show *pleione* display

Photo: Melanie McDonald

society meetings than shows, but photos, diagrams of hybridisation trees and live comment certainly draw the passing crowds to stop.

He used photos of *Lycaste* Auburn to show the range of colour and variety within a single cross, and photos of the *Fimbriate* group of lycaste species and hybrids to demonstrate its spectrum of colours; from emerald greens through cream, gold and orange to scarlet. I was impressed by this method of introduction to two genera with which I don't have much contact.

Pleiones rarely rate much space in a New Zealand show, but then we don't have Ian Butterfield and his surprising collection. A Chelsea display just full of pleiones is quite a sight, demonstrating again the wealth of variation and colour across a single genera. He has flowered them out of season using adaptable cold cases. I'm sure the mini species pleiones would be winners if they were more widely available.

The larger United Kingdom commercial orchid world was represented by Ritterhausens, Burnham Nurseries, and McBeans. The crowd shuffled me to a stop by some yummy wilsonaras at the side of the Burnham stand, but wasn't so obliging in getting me around the corner to the front. As at Tokyo, I vowed to return but never made it.

More luck at the McBeans display, a real

Chelsea extravagance of flowers replete with a backlit image of rocks and grassy foliage. Their entrance-way show stopper was a tree of superb flowering specimens of *Phal.* Magdi Yacoub, a classic white with maroon lip on striking arching spikes. Small posters on the naming of the hybrid balanced, or abetted, other posters giving prices.

Oustanding among the range of McBeans orchids was a palette of humungous miltonias, too large for my tastes, and exquisite yellow odont. alliances numbered rather than named. Less flamboyant, and tucked away at ground level a *Paph.* Maudiae vinicolor, and I coveted yet again.

Soon 8pm, my five hours up. It had been a rare experience to see orchids on show having escaped all the hard work behind the scenes. The quality and range of the plants presented was quite outstanding, their presentation an introductory step towards the finesse we may expect to see at New Zealand's World Orchid Conference.



During his recent visit to this country to attend the 13th WOC, Norman Heywood of Orchid Sundries Limited of the United Kingdom mentioned an occasional publication, the "National Pleione

Report incorporating Hardy Orchids." Generously he recently forwarded copies of the 1989 and 1990 issues; I believe there may have been one or two issues prior to this.

Those really interested in pleiones will have the Kew monograph by Phillip Cribb, C.Z. Tang and Ian Butterfield. For those wanting more practical assistance, breeding, flasking and growing information, thoughts on pleione showing, to mention just some of the articles, will find a mine of information in these modest little publications. While U.K. produced, the experience is not just from that country, contributors are from Australia and New Zealand (Ivan D. Rankin from Ashburton, and UK resident New Zealander David Menzies from Taranaki, currently working at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Glasgow.)

I found the articles quite fascinating and informative, even that on growing cypripediums as bog orchids. I do not know the price or availability of these booklets; details are presumably available from Orchid Sundries Limited (Norman Heywood) in the United Kingdom. If you are a pleione enthusiast, I am sure you will find these publications of interest and assistance, and worth the effort of tracking down.

P. C. Tomlinson

# CONFERENCE COMMENTS



**WHAT SOME orchid society members had to say about the 13th World Orchid Conference recently held in Auckland.**

“Well those lucky members of our Society that managed to get to the WOC in Auckland will now be back home, display plants will be settled back into position and they will now be watching over their new acquisitions from the commercial section. General impressions were that it was a most successful show. One member felt that every cent was well spent, another commented that the effort of getting there was well worthwhile and that it compared favourably with other overseas shows.

By any standard it was a BIG show. It was advertised that there were 60,000 orchid plants on display covering 2 acres. As a visitor I found the number of plants overwhelming and with the large crowds of the public attending, at times viewing was very difficult if not impossible to see everything one wanted to. It was hard to keep either flowing with the crowd or dodging people and still concentrate on looking at orchids. There were masses of *Cymbidiums*, lots of big specimen plants of *D. speciosum*, *Coelogyne cristata* etc but one of our

members felt that some of the lesser known species were not well represented and that variety wise our own show could be as varied. At least two members remarked that the South Island efforts were very pleasing especially in that the plants and props had to be transported such a long distance and that the quality of the plants that we grow in the South Island is also good. Then there was the sad story of the Oamaru Society's plants being involved in an accident on the way up, but they were still able to fill their display with salvaged plants and some borrowed ones.

Among the many *Cymbidiums* on display there were some massive specimen plants with over 20 spikes which drew considerable attention from the public. *Cymbidium* growers from our Society were most impressed with some of the new hybrids that they saw.

Then there was the commercial section where I later found that I was not the only one to blow all my pocket money. If all plants from the flasks that were bought by Society members grow well there should be plenty of plants around in a year or two. Most stands



*Epidendrium pseudopidendrum*

Grower: Papa Aroha Orchids — 13 W.O.C.

selling plants were from N.Z. nurseries, they all had a good variety of plants and it was fairly obvious that they had been preparing and saving for the show for some time. Most were at reasonable prices. Overseas buyers appeared to be buying up big, both Cymbids and other genera. One American paid \$3000 for a duvet cover which had been on display and having a hand painted orchid design.



*Masdevallia schroderiana* 'clem'

Grower: Pukekura Park, New Plymouth — 13 W.O.C.

Lectures were very popular and in some cases unless you were there early it was possible to miss out. The only criticism being that some lectures overlapped."

#### Canterbury Orchid Society

"Well what can one say —fabulous, magnificent, exciting and truly lovely, referring of course to the World Orchid Conference 1990. Thank goodness say I and many others, that it is all over. Definitely well worth every New Zealander's effort. The 'behind the scenes' work was unbelievable and those I met in my small sphere of activity, in my opinion, deserve gold medals. Feedback from various overseas visitors all agreed that New Zealand's WOC was the best they had ever been to, so 'aint that a feather in our caps?"

Howick Orchid Society

Well, what a magnificent display of orchids from New Zealand and overseas at the 13th World Orchid Conference Show. The effort put in by societies from all over New Zealand showed the enormous interest from our orchid society members, because without their support the Show would not have been the success it turned out to be, that is from the floral display, hopefully the financial viability of the Conference will come later.

As far as our local Society was concerned we should be more than pleased with the results. Our main display "Baskets Away" caused much interest and praise from both New Zealanders and overseas visitors with very favourable comments."

Poverty Bay East Coast  
Orchid Society

"What an experience! There are many words that one could use to describe the personal fulfillment that 'the Manawatu team' all gained by being one of the privileged New Zealanders to take part in this tremendous event. Working in a team of dedicated enthusiastic folk was an experience in itself. Being amongst 2000 dedicated, enthusiastic folk from all parts of the world and feeling 'at home' was an even finer experience. Being amongst thousands of plants and blooms from all over the world was surely the ultimate, and we were able to look and gaze and look again and look and listen to world renowned folk who know their orchids and look and check again if we wanted to cos they were all there.

We were proud to be part of the Manawatu, our

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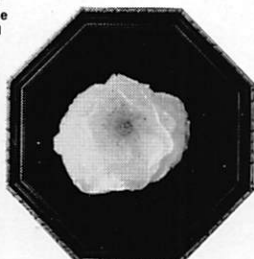
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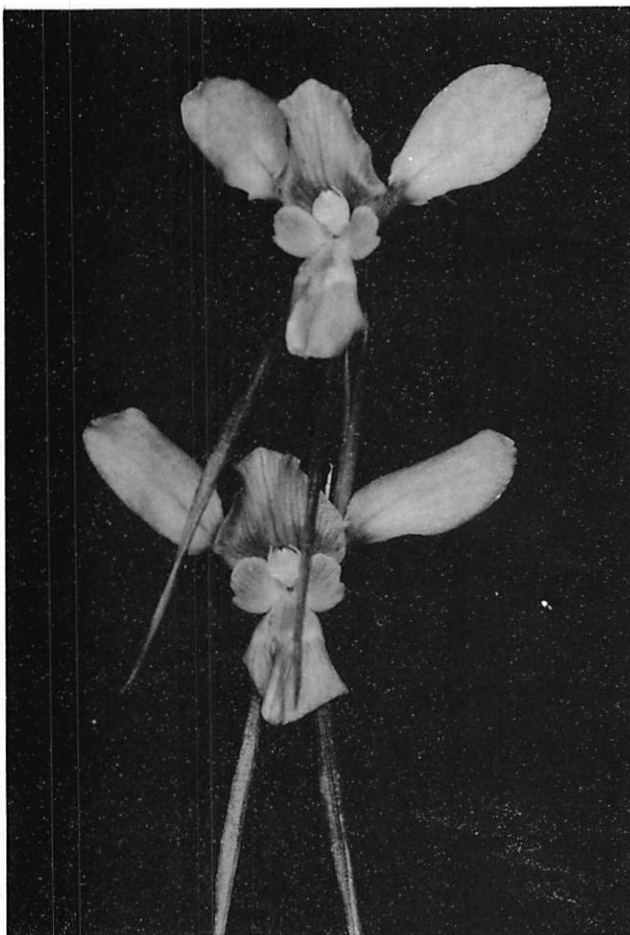


stand created a lot of interest. People loved our mixture of genera. Somebody was always clicking their camera at the colour contrasts. People would stop to listen to the Tui's song and comment upon the greenness of the moss that lined our river bank. Our river kept the moss nice and moist and as green as it was when our lads and lassies collected it from Apiti, the morning before we left. Only we knew of the puddle that was being created underneath our stand from seepage! Just one of the many crisis's."

**Manawatu  
Orchid Society**

"Obviously the 1990 World Orchid Conference. For an amazing number of Wairarapa people—many not club members—one, two, or several days at the 13th WOC in Auckland was a must, to the envy of many more I have since spoken to who saw the TV clips but couldn't be there.

I was amazed at how many I recognised over the 5 days. Met friends from other parts I hadn't seen for years and would never have suspected orchids held any interest for. Even Don and Joy Pickering were glad they managed to tear up by car for a day then back to P.N. in time next day to meet the train to bus our tour members home.



*Diuris punctata*

Grower: K. Luff — 13 W.O.C.

It's now very obvious to me the fascination orchids have for folks from all walks of life even if they all haven't succumbed to owning them. And believe me (and many thousands of others) they were well worth seeing. The normally blasé carpark attendants were most impressed (and overworked) by the public response—not only to the

massive display, but to the marvellous range of plants for sale. I would guess converts to our fascinating hobby would number some hundreds as a result.

"Overpowering, mind-boggling, just too much to take in at once"—Not my words, but a fair sample of comments I heard from N.Zers, Aussies, and



Americans. The sight of Japanese crocodiling to their hotel transport each day laden with boxes and plastic bags—cymbid. spikes or huge phal. leaves etc. poking out—spoke for itself. I would love to have owned the 1 hour photo stall. Didn't they do well!! Never seen so many cameras and videos outside the electronic shops in Singapore. Just hope too many were not disappointed with their efforts. Regretfully, despite their intentions, the organisers were unable to provide the right lighting for ideal photography due to the limitations of the building's electrical system. One glitch, but not the worst that could have happened. Sure there were others. But as a number who have been to other WOC's commented, none have been perfect. It was a mammoth undertaking and a credit to everyone responsible.

**Its happened!!** after all these years—Wickie Jackson brought her first orchid at Auckland.

**A WOC Train Traveller—**What a grand four days we had. All we had to do was be at the bus depot on time and everything else was organised for us in Auckland.

We had a very pleasant train trip—morning and afternoon teas, lunch, and drinks—and transfer to our hotel by shuttle bus. The

hotel was very nice. Beautiful meals, and clean, comfortable rooms.

**Owen Henson**

**WOC 1990 as I saw it—**Although we all came home exhausted both mentally and physically, I am sure we all felt it worthwhile.

Staying in a motel with up to 10 others is not impossible if commonsense prevails, and each is considerate of the others—even when 5 am “cuppas” are made. Might I add these same men were still making them again at 10 o'clock nights. The stamina of some committee members is unbelievable! Poor old me—first to bed and last one up.

The show itself was wonderful. Several visits were called for as you felt it to be too much to take in properly all at the same time. I met lovely people and made a lot of new friends. The group of 10 who went by train enjoyed themselves and didn't have to join the “miles” long gate queues as I had been able to pre-purchase their tickets.

**Badge Corner—**This amazed me!! People thought nothing of spending \$100 at a time. Most also had spares to swap. I worked at least 3 to 4 hours each day on this stand and enjoyed every minute. What takes 3 days to erect and only 3 hours to take down? Our

excellent Wairarapa display. Congratulations to Trevor, Taffy, John R., and any others involved in the design and making.

**Dawn Irvine.**

(Glad it was cameras we had and not tape recorders at the motel—would have been some interesting nocturnal nasal noises preserved for posterity.)”

**Wairarapa  
Orchid Circle** ◀

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## SOCIETY MEETING PLACES

From the list published in the ‘Conference’ **Orchids in New Zealand**, we would note the following changes:

*Canterbury Orchid Society*  
Venue:  
Horticultural Centre,  
Hagley Park.

*Wellington Orchid Society*  
Venue:  
Avalon Hall, Mabey Road,  
Lower Hutt.

*All societies are requested to ensure changes of meeting dates/venues are advised to CONZED.* ◀

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**Q Why do buds drop before they have opened?**

**A** Some plants don't like high temperatures in the autumn or winter. This is sometimes hard to control. The same symptoms can also be caused by the atmosphere being too dry. ◀

## DEADLINES—ORCHIDS IN N.Z.

### April Issue:

Editorial 1 Feb. Advertising 21 Feb.

### October Issue:

Editorial 1 Aug. Advertising 21 Aug.

### June Issue:

Editorial 1 Apr. Advertising 21 Apr.

### December Issue:

Editorial 1 Oct. Advertising 21 Oct.

### August Issue:

Editorial 1 June. Advertising 21 June.

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- ★ Dendrobium Allyn Star—similar to Hilda Poxon \$29.50

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# Diary Dates 1991

## April

Saturday 20th 12 noon to 5 pm.

Sunday 21st 10 am to 4 pm

SOCIETY: Bay of Plenty Orchid Society

VENUE: Te Puke High School Hall

ADDRESS: Tui Street, Te Puke

CONTACT: P.O. Box 478, Te Puke

## May

Saturday 4th. Sunday 5th

SOCIETY: Capital City Orchid Society

VENUE: Evans Bay Intermediate School

ADDRESS: Kemp Street, Kilbirnie,

Wellington

## June

Friday 7th running on to Monday 10th

SOCIETY: Tropical Queensland  
Orchid Council

VENUE: Shire Hall

ADDRESS: Ingham, Queensland, Australia

CONTACT: P.O. Box 109, Ingham 4850 Q.  
Australia

Saturday 8th. Sunday 9th

SOCIETY: North Shore Orchid Society

VENUE: Recreation Hall

ADDRESS: Bute Road, Browns Bay,  
Auckland

## July

Saturday 6th 10 am to 5 pm

Sunday 7th 10 am to 4 pm

SOCIETY: Wellington Orchid Society

VENUE: St. Orans College Hall

ADDRESS: High Street, Lower Hutt

CONTACT: Convenor, Doug Nelson,  
Phone (04) 783-901

## August/September

Friday 30th. Saturday 31st. Sunday 1st September

Sunday 1st September

SOCIETY: North Shore Orchid Society

VENUE: A.T.I.

ADDRESS: Akoranga Drive, Takapuna,  
Auckland

## September

Saturday 7th 10 am to 5 pm

Sunday 8th 10 am to 4 pm

SOCIETY: Kapiti Orchid Society

VENUE: Southwards Museum Complex

ADDRESS: Paraparaumu

Friday 13th. Saturday 14th

SOCIETY: Hibiscus Coast Orchid Society

## Please Note:

- 1) If this service is to be worthwhile, all Societies must forward **FULL** details of their show, detailing all the information scheduled above. (e.g. Wellington O.S. listing).
- 2) All show material must be forwarded by publication deadlines for inclusion in the next magazine.

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# JUDGING APPOINTMENTS

The following appointments were confirmed by the Committee on Awards at a meeting held at Nga Tawa School, Marton on Friday 11th May, 1990.

## TO ACCREDITED JUDGE

Gordon Grimson	Gisborne
Rex Eddy	Hawkes Bay
Ted Thomas	Hawkes Bay
Neville Morris	Taranaki
Andrew Elms	Manawatu/ Wanganui
Lynda Thompson	Manuwatu/ Wanganui
Mike Wilton	Manawatu/ Wanganui
Jeff Anderson	Wellington
Paul Cable	Wellington
Doug Patchett	Wellington
Gary Coburn	Marlborough/ Nelson
Roseanne Fisher	Marlborough/ Nelson
Gillian Lyster	Marlborough/ Nelson
Julie Marshall	Marlborough/ Nelson
Allan Wells	Christchurch

## AS REGISTERED OBSERVER

### SINCE JUNE 1989

Allister King	Marlborough/ Nelson
Muriel Morey	Marlborough/ Nelson

### FROM MAY 1990

Joanne Coburn	Marlborough/ Nelson
Eric Doidge	Dunedin
Hazel Doidge	Dunedin
Ila Fry	Marlborough/ Nelson
Harry Simpson	Marlborough/ Nelson
Joseph Simpson	Marlborough/ Nelson

In congratulating all appointees, the Committee on Awards stresses the ongoing requirements in respect of attendances and study by all personnel within the judging fraternity. ◀

## ORCHID NURSERIES —SOUTH ISLAND

The article on North Island nurseries in the October, *Orchids in N.Z.* was good and will be useful when we get to the North Island next, as there were some that I didn't know. However, I hope that you extend the article to include the South Island growers.

Rod & Julie Marshall  
(*Phalaenopsis*) NELSON

Lauredale Orchids  
(*Cattleyas*, *Dendrobiums*,  
*Oncidiums*) BLENHEIM

R. & T. Boys  
(*Cymbidiums*) BLENHEIM

Cee R Tee Orchids  
(*Cymbidiums*)  
CHRISTCHURCH

Tony Connelly  
(*Cymbidiums*)  
CHRISTCHURCH

Gordon City Orchids  
(*Cymbidiums* and others)  
CHRISTCHURCH

Adrian Irving  
(*Mixed Genera*)  
INVERCARGILL

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A few years ago I bought a plant of *Dendrobium bellatulum*. It still survives but doesn't thrive. I believe they are not easy to grow and I have not been able to find anyone who knows what kind of conditions they require. I wonder if one of your members has grown them successfully and can tell me how to grow them, I would be grateful.

Yours

M. Miernicki

A small contribution in the way of a question which arose recently in conversation with Adrian Irving from Invercargill. *Dendrobium kingianum* var. *alba* and the difficulty in flowering. We do of course flower well the different *kingianum* hybrids and the purple species—even the Bardo Rose which can be difficult—but the *alba* seems to need something extra. Could someone give us the answer please.

John Lloyd

◀ Please forward replies to the Editor.

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*Dendrobium Thyrsiflorum*

**Crower: E. B. and H. C. Topp  
Gisborne**