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VOL. 18 No. 2

APRIL 1992

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Scribes, Where Are You?

Any magazine is a mosaic of very many parts. All must come together if it is to be successful.

A very essential part of that overall mosaic is the contributors. Obviously, if no one contributes, there will be little if anything to read. When I first took over as Editor, I received good contributor support, much of which has been unsolicited. Unfortunately, over recent months this support seems to have dried up.

As will be readily apparent from recent issues, there is a shortage of original material. Articles are urgently required. Promises are nice, but hard copy is what is really wanted!

As previously stated, this magazine is owned by the orchid societies of New Zealand. If each society could encourage just one member in their society to contribute an article each year, then we would have more than adequate material. Surely this is not too much to ask from the orchid growers of this country.

Articles, both short and long, on any orchid related subject, are appropriate. They do not have to be literary masterpieces, just a clear expression of your thoughts on the selected subject is all that is required. There are many long established growers, and contributions on culture are of interest to us all. Perhaps you could encourage them to share their skills and experience. But culture is not just the only subject. Orchids are a diverse and very interesting group of plants, so the source of subject matter is almost unlimited.

I know all editors have difficulties obtaining suitable material, as a study of virtually any voluntary publication will attest usually at least once each year, but if this publication is not just to succeed, but to survive, then your assistance is urgently sought.

Remember, our resources are limited. Much of the publication is entirely dependent on voluntary assistance from a wide range of individuals. Some contribute large amounts of time, often late at night or during otherwise free time, and surely their contributions deserve some support from the wider orchid growing family by way of assistance in this way. ◀

Another . . .

The Orchid Journal
An International Review of Orchidology
ALEX D HAWKES
Editor

Feature of The Month

This month we feature Orchid Journal reprints on that most popular of genera — *Dendrobiums*.

There is a mine of information which should interest not only those who already grow these orchids, but attract new growers to this fascinating agreeable plant.

A final article covers New Zealand cultural parameters.

DENDROBIUM Swartz

Dendrobium as a genus dates from the year 1799, when it was established by Olaf Swartz. He based his name on two Greek words, namely, *Biow*, meaning to live, and *sewopov* a tree, or, literally, tree living. This epithet is admirably suited to the vast majority of the species, which are indeed epiphytic in their mode of existence.

Well over a thousand species of *Dendrobium* have been described to date, making it one of the largest of all genera of flowering plants, and probably the largest in the Orchidaceae (it is possibly not as immense as *Bulbophyllum* Thou.). It attains its most impressive development in the incredibly rich flora of New Guinea, where more than 590 species of this single genus have been detected. *Dendrobium* is exclusively Old World in its distribution, being known from Korea and Japan well into the Pacific Islands. Its alliance is closest with *Eria* Ldl. and *Bulbophyllum* Thou., and indeed some of the more unusual species in this group have, on occasion, been relegated to one or the other of the two noted genera.

Although *Dendrobium* was critically revised by Kranzlin, 1910, several hundred species have been added to it since then, and the genus now stands in a state of taxonomic confusion. A tremendous number of artificial hybrids

have been produced, and from a horticultural standpoint, it is certainly among the most important of all orchid aggregations.

Because of the tremendous size of this genus only those species most frequently encountered in contemporary cultivation may be mentioned at this time. The pronunciation of the generic epithet is characteristically given as (den-dro'be-um).

1. *Dendrobium aggregatum* (ag-re-ga'tum), native from Burma to Chinese Yunnan, is a dwarf epiphyte with pseudobulbs (pbs) to 75mm long, bearing a single paddle-shaped stiff If. almost as long. Fls. are in few-flowered, mostly arching racemes, 35mm across, the small ss. and ps. being butter-yellow, and the proportionately very large lip the same hue, with a large central orange blotch. Flowers in the spring and early summer.

2. *Dendrobium anosmum* (a-nos'-mum), native over a huge area from the

Philippines and the Malay Peninsula throughout much of Indonesia, is often erroneously called *Den. superbum*. Pbs. mostly pendulous, to 125 mm long in large phases, the Ivs. deciduous before the solitary or paired 125 mm highly-perfumed fls. appear. Ss. and ps. variable in colour from rosy-magenta to pure white. Lip tubular, darker than other segments, the throat very deep rose-purple. The white phases of this plant are generally called var. *Huttoni*. Flowers mostly in spring.

3. *Dendrobium atroviolaceum* (at-ro-vi-o-la'-se-um), from New Guinea, has spindle-shaped pbs. to 25mm tall, bearing a few leathery Ivs. at the top. Infl. an erect or arching 5-20 fld. raceme of 65 mm hanging fls. Ss. and psl. varying from greenish-yellow to greenish-white, with blackish-purple spots. Lip dark blackish-purple, marked with green and yellow. Flowers in the spring and early summer.

4. *Dendrobium bensoniae* (ben-so'-ne-e), from Siam and Burma, is a slender epiphyte, 1 metre tall, deciduous foliage, 60-75 mm fls. Ss and ps. generally white, the tubular lip yellow in the throat, where it is marked with orange-yellow and dark reddish-purple. Flowers in spring.



Top: *Den. Kim Heinze*

Bottom: *Den. atroviolaceum*
Grower: J. Anderson, Wellington Orchid Society.



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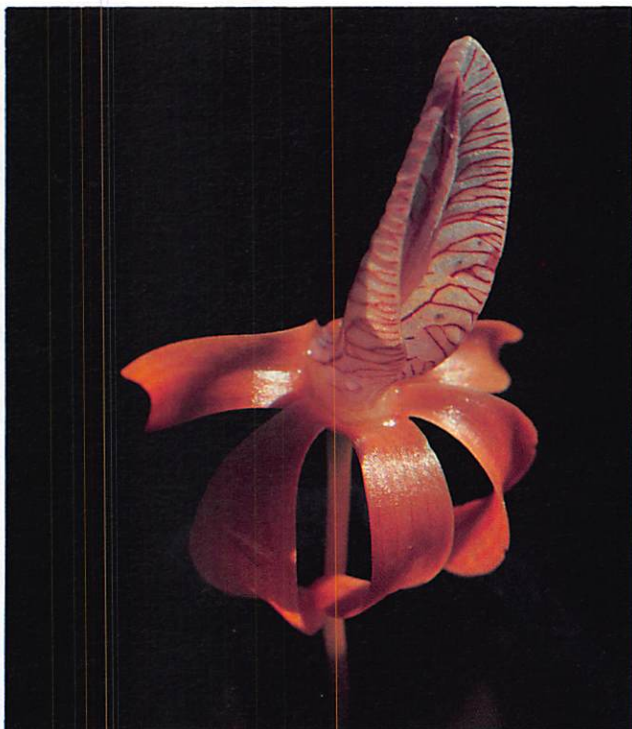
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5. *Dendrobium bigibbum* (bi-gib'-um), native in Australia and New Guinea, is an extremely variable plant with fleshy pbs. to 1 metre or more tall. Infl. a loose raceme with up to 10, 50mm fls., typically reddish-magenta, with a somewhat darker lip. Flowers in late winter and spring.

5a. *Dendrobium bigibbum* var. *phalaenopsis* (fa-le-nop'-is), found in Northern Australia, Timor, and New Guinea, is generally known as *Den. phalaenopsis*. It is a larger-growing plant, with a longer infl. and 75 mm fls., mostly similar in colour to those of the species. Flowers in winter and spring.

6. *Dendrobium brymerianum* (bri-mer-i-a'-num), native in Burma, has fleshy



Top: *Den. unicum*

Bottom: *Den. Lady Hamilton*



furrowed pbs. to 60 mm long, leathery lvs. and 3-5 fld. racemes of 65 mm golden-yellow fragrant fls. The large orange-yellow lip is particularly remarkable in its long, intricate branching fringe, which extends all around the edge. Flowers in spring.

7. *Dendrobium chrysanthum* (kri-san'-thum), from the upper reaches of the Himalayas, has fleshy stem-like pbs. to 1.6 metres tall, deciduous lvs., and paired 50 mm golden fls., the lip of which is marked with two blackish-brown blotches. Flowers mostly in the summer months.

8. *Dendrobium chrysotoxum* (kri-so-tox'-um), is found over a large part of the Himalayan region, often at high elevations, and into Burma. It has spindle-shaped fleshy pbs. of a rather yellowish colour, paired fleshy lvs., at the apex, and erect or arching racemes of up to 15, 50 mm fragrant fls. Ss. and ps. golden-yellow. Lip very large, fringed marginally, darker, and with a ring-shaped dark brown blotch in the centre. Flowers in winter and spring.

9. *Dendrobium crumenatum* (kru-men-a'-tum), the so-called "Pigeon Orchid", enjoys a tremendous distribution in Malaya and Indonesia. It is a most remarkable plant, generally growing on trees in exposed situations, in which the attractive



Den. brymerianum

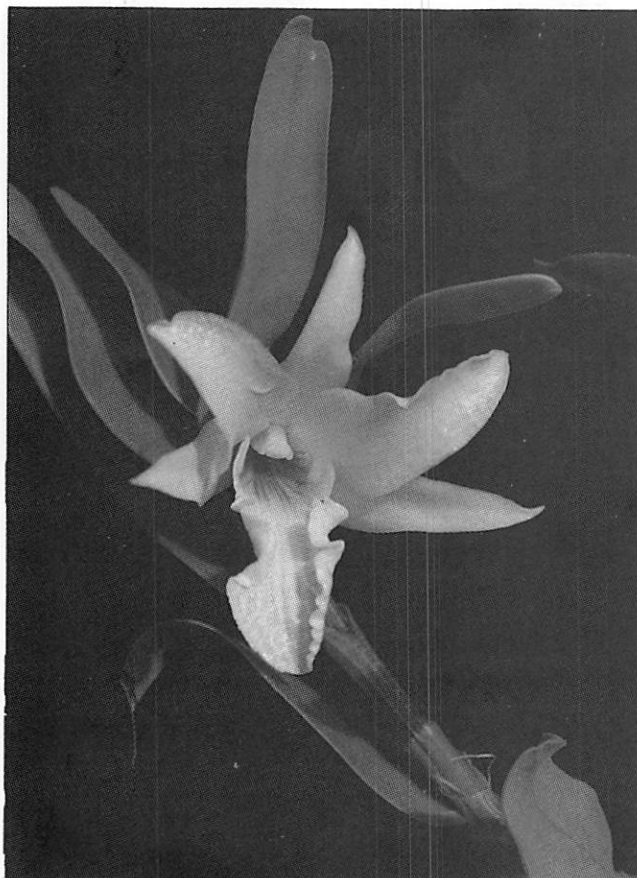
delicate white 50 mm fls. on all the specimens known to exist, no matter where they may be, open and close at the same time on the same day! The pbs. have a swollen basal portion, and very elongate, whip-like upper part, on which the leathery foliage is borne. The fls., are typically solitary on the upper and middle parts of the stems. Flowers throughout the year, often several times, the fls., lasting only a day or two at best.

10. *Dendrobium dearei* (der'-e-i), a native of the Philippines, has fleshy leafy pbs. to 750 mm tall. Fls., to 6 in number, 75 mm across, in apical racemes, pure white, the lip with a bright apple-green central area. The prominent spur (correctly

mentum) is also white, and adds greatly to the beauty of the blossoms. Flowers in spring and early summer.

11. *Dendrobium densiflorum* (den-si-flo'-um), is found in the Himalayan region all the way to Burma. Pbs. club-shaped, to 450 mm tall, leafy at the top. Infl. pendulous, very densely many-flowered, to 200 mm long and 125 mm diameter, mostly completely cylindrical. Fls. about 25 mm across, fragrant, golden-yellow to white, with a bright orange-yellow lip. Flowers in late spring and summer.

12. *Dendrobium draconis* (dra-ko'-nis), found throughout Burma, Siam and Indo-China, has fleshy pbs. to 450 mm, are covered with short black hairs. Fls. few, to 75 mm



Den. draconis

across, very fragrant of tangerines, pure white, the lip with a bright orange blotch in the middle. Flowers in early summer.

13. *Dendrobium farmeri* (far'-mer-i), from the Himalayas and Burma, is similar in habit and fls to *Den. densiflorum*, but has white ss. and ps., apically shaded with rose, and a golden lip tipped with pale rose. Flowers mostly in spring.

13a. *Dendrobium farmeri* var. *albiflorum* (al-bi-flo'-rum), also from the Himalayas and Burma, is generally known under the erroneous name of *Den. thrysiflorum*. It is generally similar to the species, but has more slender racemes, more elongate pbs. and slightly different floral structure. Flowers in the spring.

14. *Dendrobium fimbriatum* (fim-bre-a'-tum), found in the general Himalayan region, has slender flexible

pbs. to as much as 175 mm long, which often become partially pendulous through their weight. Infl. with up to 15 fls. about 65 mm wide. Fls. fragrant of musk, golden-yellow, the round fuzzy lip somewhat darker. Flowers in the spring.

14a *Dendrobium fimbriatum* var. *oculatum* (ok-u-la'tum) from the same region, is much the more frequently seen type in cultivation. It differs in having a large blackish-brown blotch in the center of the lip. Flowers in spring.

15. *Dendrobium formosum* (for-mo'-sum), from the Himalayas, has fleshy, furrowed pbs. to 150 mm tall, the sheaths of which are densely black-hairy. Fls. paired to 4, from the tops of the pbs., fragrant, to 85 mm across, snow-white, with an orange center on the lip. Flowers mostly in winter and spring. The horticultural var. *giganteum* (ji-gan'-teum), with somewhat larger fls., is the most commonly encountered type of this majestic plant.

16. *Dendrobium heterocarpum* (het-er-o-kar'-pum), from India, S. E. Asia, the Philippines and Indonesia, is usually known under the synonymous name *Den. aureum*. Pbs. cylindric, to 150 mm tall. Lvs. falling before flowers appear. Fls. in pairs, fragrant, 75 mm

across, cream-yellow to yellowish-white, the fuzzy lip with a bright reddish-brown blotch in the center. Flowers mostly in summer.

17. *Dendrobium moschatum* (mos-ka'-tum), native in the Indian Himalayas, has slender flexible stems to 175 mm long, which mostly become semi-pendulous as the plant increases in size. Infl. a lax 10-20 fld. raceme from the apex of the stem. Fls. musky-fragrant, to 65 mm across. Ss. and ps. butter-yellow, typically flushed with reddish. Lip slipper-shaped, fuzzy, mostly reddish-yellow, with two large very dark maroon blotches in the middle inside. Flowers in the summer months.

18. *Dendrobium nobile* (no'-bi-le), from the Himalayas and South China, is one of the commonest and most variable species of the genus encountered in cultivation. Pbs. stem-like, fleshy-cylindric, the nodes often more or less swollen, to 150 mm tall. Lvs. deciduous, often before flowering. Fls. mostly in pairs, to 75 mm in diameter, highly variable in colour, fragrant. Ss. and ps. typically rosy-purple, becoming much lighter basally. Lip basally tubular, white shaded with rosy-purple on margins and at apex, with a large velvety dark-purple blotch in the center. Flowers in

late spring and early summer. A tremendous number of horticultural variants, based principally on colour of the flowers, have been described, ranging from pure white to a very deep purple.

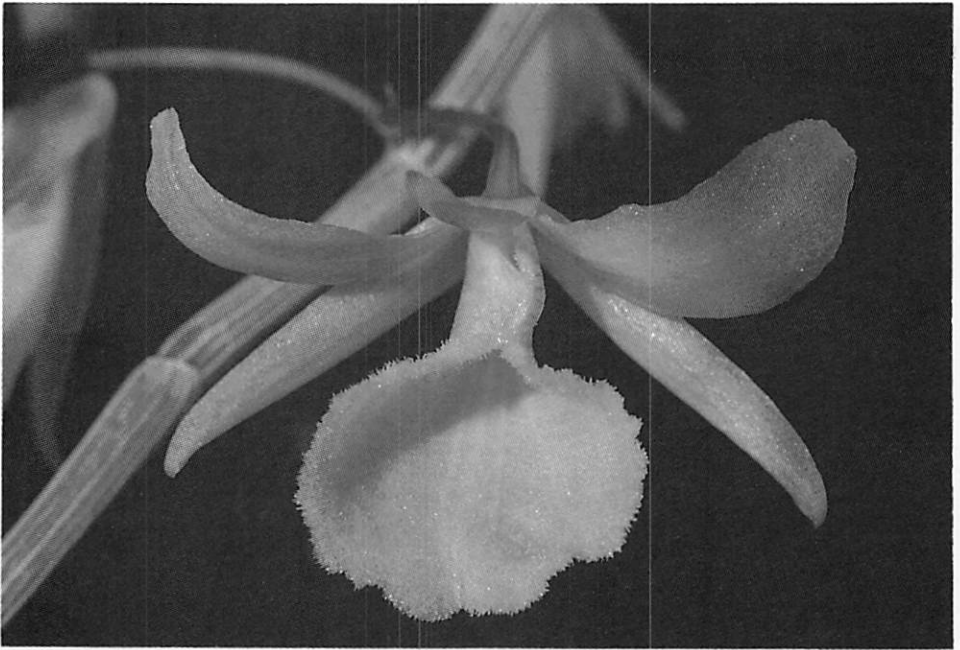
19. *Dendrobium pierardii* (pier-ar'-de-i), from the Himalayas to Burma, is a handsome pendulous plant with slender stem-like pbs. to 1.5 metre long, sometimes more in robust phases. Lvs. rather soft, mostly falling before the

fls. appear. Fls. paired or in 3's fragrant, to 40 mm across, delicate rosy-white, the rather tubular lip somewhat darker, the basal half pale yellow, often streaked with dull reddish. Flowers in the spring months.

20. *Dendrobium sanderae* (san'-der-e), from the Philippines, is similar in habit to *Den. dearei*, but has larger fls. (to more than 90 mm across) which are pure white, the lip with a prominent reddish blotch at its tubular base. Flowers in late fall and winter.



Den. nobile
Grower: Beth Mooney



Den. pierardii

21. *Dendrobium schuetzei* (shutz'-e-i), native in the Philippines, is also much like *Den. dearei*, in habit, but more robust and somewhat larger in all parts. Fls. to 75 mm across, snow-white, the lip greenish basally, with a few purplish streaks or stripes. Flowers in the fall.

22. *Dendrobium speciosum* (spe-si-o'-sum), from Australia, is a very robust species with stout spindle-shaped pbs. to 600 mm long, at the apex of which are a very few rigidly thick lvs. Infl. from near the apex of the pbs., to 450 mm long, bearing a very dense, many-fld., raceme. Fls., to 50 mm across, fragrant, cream-white to pale yellow, the lip whitish,

often marked basally with dull red. Flowers mostly in the spring months.

23. *Dendrobium striotes* (strati'-o-tez), from Java and Sumatra, has slender leafy pbs. to 1 metre tall. Infls. produced from the upper half of the pbs., mostly erect or ascending, to 1 metre long, few - to many-fld. Fls. often to 100 mm across. Ss. white. Ps. spirally twisted, erect, white flushed with greenish. Lip white, basally emerald-green, streaked with magenta. Flowers in the summer.

24. *Dendrobium superbiens* (su-per'-be-ens), from Northern Australia. Similar in habit to *Den. bigibbum*. Fls. to 50 mm

across, dark rosy-magenta, often whitish marginally. Lip tubular, often very dark rosy-magenta, with white keels. Flowers in late spring and summer.

25. *Dendrobium taurinum* (taw'-ri-num), from the Philippines, has robust spindle-shaped pbs. to 1.5 metre tall in large phases. Lvs. leathery, on upper half of pbs. Infl. erect, to 600 mm tall, with 20 or more 60 - 75 mm fls. Ss. yellowish-green. Ps. somewhat twisted, erect, longer than ss. reddish-brown or brownish flushed with rose. Lip rosy, lighter basally. Flowers in fall and winter.

26. *Dendrobium undulatum* (un-du-la'-tum), from North Australia and New

Guinea, is a massive species similar in habit to *Den. bigibbum*, but with robust mostly yellowish pbs. to 2.5 metre tall. Infl. to 1 metre long, mostly arching, many-fld. Fls, fragrant of honey, to 75 mm across, golden-brown to yellowish-tan, the ss. and ps. very wavy on the margins. Lip often somewhat darker, with whitish keels in the throat. Flowers in late spring.

27. *Dendrobium veratrifolium* (ver-at-ri-fo'-li-um), from

New Guinea, is another extremely robust plant, similar in habit to *Den. bigibbum*, though with pbs. to 2.5 - 3 metres in height. Infl. erect arching, to 1 metre long, many-fld. Fls. rather fragrant, 75 mm across, whitish flushed with lavender, the ps. often tipped with pale green. Lip light lavender, with a few yellowish keels. Flowers in late fall and winter.

28. *Dendrobium wardianum* (war-de-a'-num), from the Himalayas and Burma, is

similar in habit to *Den. nobile*, but typically somewhat more robust and larger in all parts. Fls. mostly paired, fragrant, to 100 mm across, white with a large rosy-purple blotch at the tip of each segment. Lip tubular at base, white with an apical blotch, the throat orange-yellow with a pair of very dark purple spots. Flowers in late spring and summer months.

DENDROMIUMS & HOW THEY GROW*

by Megan B. McVittie

In the early days when botanical explorers risked hardships and dangers to find new orchids for the great collections of Europe and England, they brought back several sensational discoveries from the Philippines. Among these were several *Dendrobiums*, which have since become known and loved all over the world. Today these old favourites are still in demand, valued for their ever fresh beauty as well as their use in hybridizing.

**Abstracted, from the PHILIPPINE ORCHID REVIEW, 1950. Although written primarily about the Philippine species of this genus, Mrs McVittie's remarks apply equally well to virtually all members of this fascinating group.*

The largest and most spectacular of the cool mountain types is *Dendrobium sanderae* which blooms as the spring advances into October. It is becoming rare now due to over collecting and must be sought high up and deep in the forests away from the trails. Because of the size and weight of the plant, it usually rests in the crotches of a big pine tree, conspicuous when in bloom in these pine forests which are barren of moss and hanging epiphytes. The mist and rain clouds are nearly always present at these heights and the air is cool even when the sun is brilliant. Two months later, as though it were an after-thought, blooms *Den.*

sanderae var. *parviflorum*. It is an exact replica of the other except in being two sizes smaller, and for many years, because of this uniform difference in size, and flowering season, was thought to be a new species. At this season, *Den. victoria-reginae*, its colours ranging from lilac to indigo blue, is found in the mossy forests at 5000 to 6000 feet. *Den. amethystoglossum* in its modest way is well known in other countries. The milky white flower clusters are speckled with the amethyst lips of each smaller blooms. All of these *Dendrobies* are found only in one small corner of the earth, in the Mt Province of north Luzon. They resent being brought



Den. sanderae



from chilly mountain tops to the plains of Manila, and they do not last very long. Growers who can arrange to keep them north until February can bring them down (to Manila) to enjoy the flowering, but afterwards the plants must be returned. Otherwise it is a cruel waste of orchids that are becoming rare. Another lovely *Dendrobium* (= *Sarcopodium*) which should be listed as semi-cool is *Den. lyonii*. It is found growing in primary forests at low and medium altitudes in Bataan and Laguna provinces. It has been known to flower in Manila for two seasons but after this the bulbs begin to shrivel and the plants seem to dwindle away. This species needs more shade than most and must have a fresh moist atmosphere like the forests where it is found. All these cool *Dendrobiums* have nevertheless done well in cultivation in Honolulu, which is generally about ten degrees less in temperature at sea level than Manila.

Den. schurtzei and *Den. dearei*, two famous *Dendrobies* unique to the Philippines can be grown successfully here. *Den. schuetzei* is perhaps the most troublesome because it comes from lush forests in Mindanao at about 1000-3000 ft elevation. Unless care is taken to keep the plants cool and moist, whatever the amount of sunlight, they begin to



Den. victoria - reginae

diminish and the flowers get smaller after a few seasons. This beautiful *Dendrobium* is hardly to be equalled in the species for its glistening white purity, with the possible exception of *Den. formosum* var. *giganteum*. *Den. dearei* is a charming friend that gives its blossoms two or three times a year, almost any time at all, with very little fuss, so that a bench massed with these plants is a continual surprise and pleasure. *Den. dearei* is receptive to pollen from all species of *Dendrobies*. This species, as well as *Den. schuetzei* and *Den. lyonii*, are reported not to need a rest period. *Den. taurinum*, which has been used for many fine hybrids, is found on plateau country at about 1000 ft elevation, growing in open woods and exposed to the hot dry winds of the

nearby plains. The species has never done well in Manila.

Two other indigenous *Dendrobiums* must be mentioned, *Den. anosmum*, although it is found in several old world countries, is generally considered Philippine because of the excitement it caused when it was first discovered near Manila in 1838. But *Den. heterocarpum* (*Den. aureum*), the "Primrose Orchid", was discovered in India five years before it was found here in 1842, and so it is not thought of as belonging to us. Perhaps today we have more of these two species growing wild in the Philippines than anywhere else. The plants of the latter, if gathered in the mountain province, do not thrive in Manila. There are two varieties —

one pendulous, the other stocky and upright. The flowers are a more golden yellow than those plants found in the low hills of Quexon or Tayabas; the low-land varieties are much larger, and closer in habit and flowering season to *Den. anosmum*.

The pendulous species like *Dendrobium anosmum* (*Den. superbum*) are best cultivated on living trees; otherwise they should be suspended in perforated clay pots or wooden or tree-fern baskets, which permit the stems to droop naturally. An excellent compost is made of small pieces of brick, charcoal, bone, plus well-dried coconut husk and lumps of sun-baked cowdung. *Den. anosmum* and *Den. heterocarpum* are great favourites, to be seen everywhere in the archipelago. Even more ubiquitous is *Den. crumenatum*, which has the intriguing habit of flowering all on the same day in any one community. It is found usually on coconut or other palms, and although it prefers a living tree, can be easily grown in pot or basket if coconut husk and fibre are used.

In the Philippines, perhaps because of the wealth of native *Dendrobiums*, we are inclined to be careless in

our methods of growing them. It is still too easy to get new plants if the old ones fail. A study of the cultural procedure which has been found necessary elsewhere in order to grow *Dendrobiums* successfully might be useful to the growers here. Sometimes it seems so simple to flower an orchid, and then again it becomes completely baffling; but there seems to be a pattern that one may follow for cultivating most *Dendrobes*. The cycle runs from flowering, on through the year to flowering time again. In those species which flower more than once a year, the changes and the treatment are still the same, but over a shorter cycle. This genus, more than most others, seems to need a rest period, especially the deciduous types. So the cycle is: flowering — short rest — growing period — real rest — flowering. *Dendrobium* is a sun-loving genus; but that does not mean that they are desert plants. Shading is the same as it is for *Cattleya*. In fact, horticulturists always classify the two genera together. They should be potted according to their habit, and since most of the commercial *Dendrobes* are “upright” in their growth, the following directions for potting refer to this type, whether the pseudobulbs are willowy like *Den. dearei* or whether they are fat and squat like *Den. lyonii*.

Potting

The best time to pot or repot is after the flowering, when the new growths are about 50 mm long or more and the new roots begin to show at the base of the young growth. This is usually in October, November or December. Do not disturb a plant unless the compost is sour. Dead roots should be removed and the rot, if present, cut out ruthlessly to the living tissue with a razor blade. Powdered flowers of sulphur is a good disinfectant to put on the wound. Fill the pot about half-way with drainage crocks. On top of the crocks then should come a cushion of compost. Place the plant roots on this and tuck the compost firmly into and around these roots, keeping the base of the plant on a level with the rim of the pot. The plants must be fastened and held by stakes set in the drainage crocks, or by coir or raffia tied around the pot, until the roots have grown enough into the compost to hold firmly themselves. A wobbly plant chafes the new root-ends and stops their growth. It is very important to pack the compost firmly! Because orchids in the tropics grow faster it has been thought best to use pots of a larger size or two than those used in temperate climates. This saves extra repotting and helps to better retain the

moisture. Newly potted plants should be sparingly watered until the roots take hold of the compost. Keep them in the shade for a while — and this is the only time when a *Dendrobium* really needs shade!

Compost used for repotting *Dendrobiums*

In England, where by general admission they have for many years grown the finest *Dendrobiums* to be seen anywhere, the composts have been made of equal parts, or three to one, of osmunda fibre and sphagnum moss, mixed together with plenty of sand and small pieces of crock — and no other feeding at all. But as Mr S.

Soysa pointed out, “they do have perfect control over atmospheric conditions within their glasshouses . . . It may seem that soft composts of moss and fibre provide some sort of assimilable plant food for the orchids which is lacking in mere brick and charcoal mixtures. But scientists have shown that it is not merely actual nutritive matter, but also a state of acidity that these substances provide. Orchids need a certain degree of acidity in the medium they root upon to maintain optimum health and flowering activity, and the close association of wild orchids with various ferns and mosses in the jungle is perhaps due to the fact that

the latter provide the requisite degree of acidity for the orchids.”

In Ceylon they have produced famous plants with their compost of charcoal, brick, bone and manuring. Added to these are chunks of matured coconut husk or else pieces of tree-fern. The use of sphagnum moss in low country is believed to encourage fungus rot and disease. In Hawaii, besides using osmunda, they are finding that as a substitute, and sometimes as a preference, shredded tree-fern may be used. They do not pot this tree-fern compost as firmly as the osmunda. Tree-fern blocks and baskets are also used so that orchids may hang



Den. heterocarpum

under trees at certain season. The roots are pressed firmly against the block and covered with fern-fibre and then held tightly by coir or wire until the new roots take hold. In Australia they have been experimenting successfully for many years with tree-fern fibre. In other tropical countries the approved compost has been made of charcoal, old bricks, and 40-50% of well-matured husk, with some bone added. Imported osmunda has been successfully used here, when available. Various species of fern roots supply us now with osmunda.

After the potting

Mr W. P. Bound, who was in charge of the most beautiful collection of *Dendrobiums* in the world, at Gatton Park, Surrey, the estate of Sir Jeremiah Colman, once wrote these directions: "After potting is the most critical time of the whole year, a time requiring much discretion in watering the plants. If the pseudobulbs are allowed to shrivel, a good portion of the roots' work is taken to restore the weakened bulbs, thus checking the young growths at the outset. After such a check, the growth will never attain such proportions as it would have if the pseudobulbs had been kept in a plump state. Sufficient water

should be given to prevent the bulbs from shrivelling, but no more until the roots have well-extended and entered the new material. As the season advances and the roots take a good hold of the compost, gradually increase the supply of water, still allowing the plants to become fairly dry before watering till December or slightly later; but during that month and the next, if they are growing well, never allow them to become quite dry. November and December is the repotting time. Do not disturb the plants unless the compost is in a sour state; otherwise give them only fresh surface material.

Active Growth

"Active Growth will now begin, and the plants should be kept well supplied with water. By February and March some of the *Dendrobiums* will have their growths nearly made up, though not fully developed. It is a great mistake to imagine that when the terminal leaf of the new growth is apparent that the resting season should commence. They still have much to do, and if they are given a decided check either by removing them to cooler quarters or by withholding water too much they cannot properly make up and solidify the new pseudobulbs. The principle we follow at this season is to water very

freely those that do not show the terminal leaf; those that do, we give enough to keep them developing. If water is withheld to a considerable extent, and much sunshine is admitted, the bulbs harden, but they do not swell to the same extent. As the season advances and the bulbs have become properly matured, the supply of water can be to advantage greatly reduced, and it will be found that the new bulb, properly built up, will go a long time during the winter months without water while the plants are having their proper rest."

CULTURAL NOTES

DENDROBIUMS

There are two main types — soft cane and hard cane.

SOFT CANE in the main are deciduous, shedding their leaves after one season's growth and remaining dormant throughout the dry season (in our season this rest period is winter). In spring wait until buds form and change to flowers before you start to water (they can be misted lightly up until then to stop the plant shrivelling). Some of these can be completely bare of leaves and covered with flowers if you work it right.

During the summer months the aim should be

to keep the compost continually moist, to ensure a continuous steady rate of growth. Old canes which may have shrivelled slightly during the resting period will quickly become plump again and the new roots will take up sufficient water for the plant's needs. Soft cane usually complete their annual growth by the autumn months, when the terminal leaf can be seen at the top of the completed cane. When this has been achieved, gradually reduce the watering and feeding to nil over a period of about 4 weeks. At this time of the year the plants should receive as much light as possible. To ensure flowering in the following spring it is important that the bulbs are sufficiently hardened and ripened by exposing the mature canes to full light. The soft cane varieties will react immediately to the shortening days and cooler temperatures by shedding their leaves which turn yellow before dropping off.

The temperatures soft canes require is a summer minimum night of 12°C (55°F) with a daytime rise to 25°C (80°F).

HARD CANE are warmer growing 18°C (65°F) at nights with a rise up to 30°C or more during the day. They will drop a few leaves off the old canes only, remaining evergreen all of the time. Hard canes are to be watered all the

year around and have no rest period like soft cane.

FEEDING any artificial feed in a liquid form, phosphate or nitrate based, mixed in a weaker solution than most other plants. Apply this either to the pot or foliar feed sprayed over the plant. (*Dendrobiums* do feed through the leaves.)

VENTILATION this is a very important aspect of orchid culture and this is particularly so with *dendrobiums* which flourish in a humid but buoyant atmosphere. Regular damping of the surroundings will create a high humidity and this should be maintained throughout the summer months. If the humidity falls significantly when ventilators are opened the remedy is not to allow the ventilators to remain closed, but rather to open them fully on hot sunny days and to spray extra water around the plants and underneath benches until the glasshouse is running with water. During the summer the vents can be left open day and night when the weather is right. During winter vents should be open on every occasion when this can be done without causing a dramatic drop in the inside temperature. It is important to open vents almost every day to allow sufficient fresh air to

prevent a stagnant atmosphere which is detrimental to all orchids.

REPOTTING:

Dendrobiums should always be done during the spring months at the start of the growing season. The ideal time is when the new growth can just be seen at the base of the leading cane and before the new roots appear. This can sometimes be difficult if the plant is flowering at the same time and in this case the repotting should be completed immediately the plant has flowered. *Dendrobiums* have fine roots and they like to be potted in as small a pot as possible. Over-potting can lead to overwatering, resulting in the loss of roots and in extreme cases, loss of the plant. Plastic pots are quite suitable, but an alternative method of culture is to grow them on blocks of wood. *Dendrobiums* are especially suited to this growing method of culture and they quickly establish themselves and produce an abundance of aerial roots. An excellent potting medium is fine bark and good chunky material with a small percentage of charcoal can also be incorporated to keep the compost sweet. In this basic mixture *dendrobiums* will grow and thrive. ◀

Reprinted from
Orchid Society of Southland
Newsletter October 1991

Tribute to a battler

It has come as a shock to the New Zealand orchid-growing community to hear of the death of Janet Mendoza. It is not that we were unaware of her health problems; for many years most of us knew of her battle with cancer and witnessed the effects of the various treatments that she underwent. She seldom volunteered information about it, very rarely complained, and always carried on as normal, turning up to help at shows, at meetings, and wherever else she was needed. Only a few close friends knew how seriously ill she was and what she was going through, the rest of us just expected Janet to be there at the next orchid event, because she always was. On December 5th, 1991, Janet finally lost her 7 year battle. She leaves behind, her husband Jerry, 5 children (all boys), and many friends.

Janet was, in many ways, a remarkable person and has led a remarkable life. She was born in Te Aroha, 1 of 6 children, and fostered by Hilda and Eric Addis (her aunt and uncle). Her primary schooling started in New Zealand and then continued in Australia (including Rockhampton) when the family transferred there. Janet trained as a nurse in Sydney but, in about 1951, applied for a job as an air hostess with Qantas. She was successful, and travelled all the Qantas routes, particularly those to South Africa. In 1956 she was on the Japan route which involved spending time in Manilla between flights. To fill in time she took up judo, eventually getting her Brown Belt. This pastime was to change her life because she fell in love with, and married, her instructor, Jerry, to whom she remained married for 30 years, until her death.

They lived in Manilla and their first three children were born there.

In 1960 they shifted to New Zealand, moving in to their present home in Waddington Drive in 1963. Janet was an active member of the Camelia Society, but orchids became her principal love. In the early 70's she visited Kathy Black of Black's Orchids, Levin, a meeting that was to blossom into a lifelong friendship. Janet undoubtedly learned much about orchids and orchid growing from Kath and regularly borrowed books and journals from her. In turn, she helped Kath at the nursery and at orchid shows. Kath and her orchid nursery became a "second home" for Janet, and the two women remained close friends.

Among the several talents that Janet possessed was a photographic memory. She continually

amazed us by her ability to recall details of plant parentage, a talent that became particularly useful when she became an orchid judge. She and Frank Askin were leading figures in introducing Wellington growers to judging. She was involved with several orchid societies, but principally with the Wellington Orchid Society of which she was a foundation member. She remained an active member of the Society serving on its committee for many years and, for 1 year, as its president. Janet was very involved in all that the Society did, particularly in the early days.

Another talent Janet possessed was with languages; she learned Japanese and joined Wellington Polytechnic as a tutor and instructor in English as a second language, working there

until shortly before her death. As her health deteriorated, Janet responded with characteristic determination; she went to Sydney to complete her qualification in nursing in order to better under-

stand her own problems and to help others with cancer. It was a disappointment to her that on her return she was unsuccessful in gaining registration as a nurse.

Janet was a battler, courageous to the end and entirely without self pity. She was an example to us all.

Roger Cooper

JOHN EASTON AWARD 1991

MAX GIBBS OF TAUPO

This prestigious Award administered by the Hawkes Bay Orchid Society is the only one of its kind in New Zealand and nominations are open to all members of societies' affiliated to the Orchid Council of N.Z. The Award is made annually for "the most outstanding contribution to the culture and promotion of orchids in New Zealand."

The Committee this year under the chairmanship of Mr W. Ross-Taylor were pleased to announce that **Mr Max Gibbs** of Taupo would be the recipient. Max is president of the Taupo Society and has tremendous support from the members and many societies, giving of his time and expertise to many orchid growers and native orchid lovers.

Max has been a native orchid enthusiast for 30 years. He is employed by the DSIR as an analytical chemist but has many other talents as well. He is a skilled photographer, a talented artist and illustrator and has the ability to write in a style that is easy reading. This writing ability is apparent in the many articles he has had published in New Zealand and Australia on native orchids.

He was the first person to recognise the extent and importance of the area at Iwitahi where he found almost 30 different native orchids. It was Max, through his ability to put into words, both written and spoken, and his

enthusiasm for the need to protect our native orchids that resulted in the first New Zealand native orchid reserve being declared by Timberlands in the Bay of Plenty.

Max spends much of his free time at Iwitahi or in other areas looking for and usually finding further habitats of his beloved native orchids. He has erected many wire netting cages to keep off browsing animals from the rare orchids.

Max works closely with Dr Brian Molloy in identifying some of the orchids from this area that do not readily fall into any printed description or illustration. He is the

leader and organiser of the annual open day at Iwitahi each December where hundreds of people have seen the native orchids and had their knowledge and enthusiasm increased.

Max is developing at his home a special collection of our native orchids to enable him to study them more closely and to display them to other enthusiasts. He is always willing to help and share his knowledge freely. He is quietly spoken yet when talking to a meeting holds the attention of his audience. He could be described as a 'gentle' man.

Mrs Christine Irwin
Secretary: The John Easton
Award Committee

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Grand Champion Cymbidium:-

Cym. Valley Zenith 'Greenpeace' — C. Scholes

Reserve Champion Cymbidium:-

Cym. Scarabeach 'Minka' #1 — C. Scholes

Champion Intermediate Cymbidium:-

Cym. Bonnies Pride 'Colleen' HCC/NZOS
M. Le Sueur

Patterson Cup. Best Plant or Spike excluding
Cymbidium:-

Wils. Shirley Monkhouse — B. & J. Vance

Domandic Cup. Best Plalaenopsis:-

Phal. French Connection 'Empress Gardens'
x Shige Haru Fugii 'Beach Haven' #2—D. Gee

Geoff Laird Memorial Trophy. Specimen Plant:-

Wils. Shirley Monkhouse — B. & J. Vance

Ross Cup. Best Dendrobium Species or Hybrid:-

Den. Bardo Rose — K. & G. Jackson

Dendrobium Trophy. NZOS Cup for Best
Dendrobium:-

Den. Yukidaruma 'The King' #1—F. Brljevic

Des Leahy Trophy. Best NZ Hybridised and
Raised First Flowering Seedling:-

Paph. Spring Silk x Deventeriana — D. K. Bell

Joan Parker Trophy. Miniature Species or Hybrid:-

Pleur. *shiedei* — V. Bayliss

Potter Cup. Best Cattleya Alliance:-

Slc. Minx #4 — I. D. James

Alison Cup. Best Lycaste Alliance:-

Lyc. Koolena x Promises — M. Wright

Blackmore Trophy. Best Oncidiinae Alliance:-

Wils. Shirley Monkhouse — B. & J. Vance

Taylor Trophy. Best Species:-

Phal. *schillerana* — D. K. Bell

Aldridge Trophy. Best Export Cymbidium:-

Cym. Clarisse Carlton 'Cooksbridge' x
Tethy's 'Black Magic' — C. & M. King

Molly Clark Trophy. Best Intermediate
Cymbidium:-

Cym. Flame Hawk 'Lipper' — J. D. Nicholls

Frank Brljevic Trophy. Miniature Cymbidium:-

Cym. Esk Claret 'Zorah' x *devonianum* #1 —
Sunrae Orchids

Ken Blackman Memorial Trophy. Best

Miniature Cymbidium:-

Cym. Esk Claret 'Zorah' x *devonianum* #1 —
Sunrae Orchids

Willetts Cup. Best Cymbidium Seedling:-

Cym. So Bold 'Southerly' — R. Dix

Hansen Cup. Novice Coloured Cymbidium:-

Cym. Pixie Moor 'Cedar Cove' x Cariga
'Tetracarnary' — H. R. C. & C. A. Spargo

Andrew Easton Seedling Prize #1 — Best
Classes 1, 2, 8 or 9:-

Cym. (Radiant Harry 'November' x Vogelsang
'Eastborne') — M. T. Hughes

Andrew Easton Seedling Prize #2 — Best

First Flowering, Any other Genus:-

Phal. Little Mary — B. & F. Johnson

Carpenter Trophy. Best Pleurothallid Alliance:-

Masd. Sunny Angel — V. Bayliss

Blackman Bowl. Best Novice Cymbidium:-

Cym. Appleby 'Caroline' — N. G. Townsley

Corban Trophy. Intermediate Cymbidium

Quality and Colour Clarity:-

Cym. Fuss 'Fantasy' #1 — R. & N. Armstrong

Pleione Trophy:-

Pln. *formosana* 'alba' — H. & G. Cooke

Ena Langdale Trophy. Polychrome Cymbidium:

Cym. Mouchette 'Magic Mushroom' —
R. Tucker

Tom Henry Trophy. Coloured non White
Cymbidium:-

Cym. (Acapulco Gold 'Coburg' x Swallow
'Golden Gate') — Mrs M. Young

Blake Trophy. Three coloured (non white)
Cymbidiums:-

Cym. Three Cymbidiums — F. L. Brljevic

Connelly Cup. Coloured Phalaenopsis (Novice):

Phal. *schilleriana* — T. & M. Ryan

Greenough Trophy. Best Floral Art Entry:-

Margaret Smith

Volkner Trophy. Floral Art Points Prize:-

Doris Ranfurly

Points Prize Open:-

Ross Tucker

Points Prize Novice:-

N. G. Townsley

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FEBRUARY ISSUE

Readers will note that the February issue was later than usual. Unfortunately, the preparation for the magazine falls during the Christmas and holiday period. Despite forward planning, under the present organisation structure, the February issue will always be late. Steps are taken to minimise the delays, and we apologise for its late arrival, but it is a difficult problem to solve without major changes.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 1992

| DATE | SOCIETY | VENUE, ADDRESS | TIME | CONTACT |
|------------|---------------------|---|--------------|---------|
| Apr 2/3 | CAPITAL CITY | Evans Bay Intermediate School, Kemp St, Kilbirnie | | |
| Aug 29/30 | KAPITI | War Memorial Centre, Pehi Kupa Street, Waikanae | 10-5 10-4 | |
| Sept 12/13 | OTAGO | | | |
| Sept 11-13 | STH AUCKLAND | Papakura Comm Centre, Gt Sth Rd, Papakura | | |
| Sept 26/27 | CANTERBURY | 5th Sth Island Orchid Seminar during show | | |
| Sept 26/27 | CANTERBURY | Horticultural Centre, Riccarton Avenue | | |

NOTE: Because of problems with the previous listings, the format has been changed to this tabular listing. All societies are invited to submit show details for publication in the format shown. Please ensure complete and accurate information is available as soon as details are finalised.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

I have read in many orchid publications "Never to fertilise a dry orchid". Could you clarify for me the following points:

1. Must an orchid be watered with clear water always, then liquid fertilizer applied later?
2. Or, should liquid fertilizer be sufficient without the previous application of clear water?

Would be most grateful for your advice.

Mrs R. Clark
Auckland

The question relates to what happens during (or perhaps more correctly) after the application of fertilizer.

A fertilizer contains mineral salts, in varying concentrations, salts that are required for a plant's continued growth. When applied to a plant in a pot, some of the water will evaporate, especially during hot conditions, leaving a dressing of the mineral salts on the media. If this happens over a prolonged period, the chemicals can build up to high concentrations, to a level that can eventually become toxic to the plant in question.

The reason for the recommendation for the pot to be flushed with clean water regularly is to remove these built up chemicals. As fresh water is applied, the dried salts will be dissolved, and if excess water is given, which freely flows from the pots drainage holes, these chemicals will be flushed away. Under conditions of high evaporation, the regular flushing of the pots with plenty of water (put the plants under a sprinkler for 30 minutes or so) will usually suffice to clear unwanted concentrations. This is then followed by the application of the fertilizer solution, at the strengths required.

If you use solid fertilizers, especially at high levels, the elements are released gradually. It is, however, important that the mix not be allowed to dry out significantly, otherwise the chemicals held in the water in the mix can reach high and even dangerous concentrations as the water is evaporated. This can equally arise with stronger liquid fertilizers under similar conditions. With all high fertilizing regimes, the plants must always be maintained at close to their maximum water holding capacity to minimise such risks. ◀

Correction

In the article headed "Species or Hybrid?" page 32 last issue, a number of errors existed, — in particular the use of the singular and plural 'genus' and 'genera'.

The corrections are: Paragraph three, fifth line should read "one genus (plural genera)".

Later the same paragraph "A hybrid made from two species of one genus (not 'genera') will retain the genus "(not genera)" name . . .

The use of the term "genera", in paragraph four is correct.

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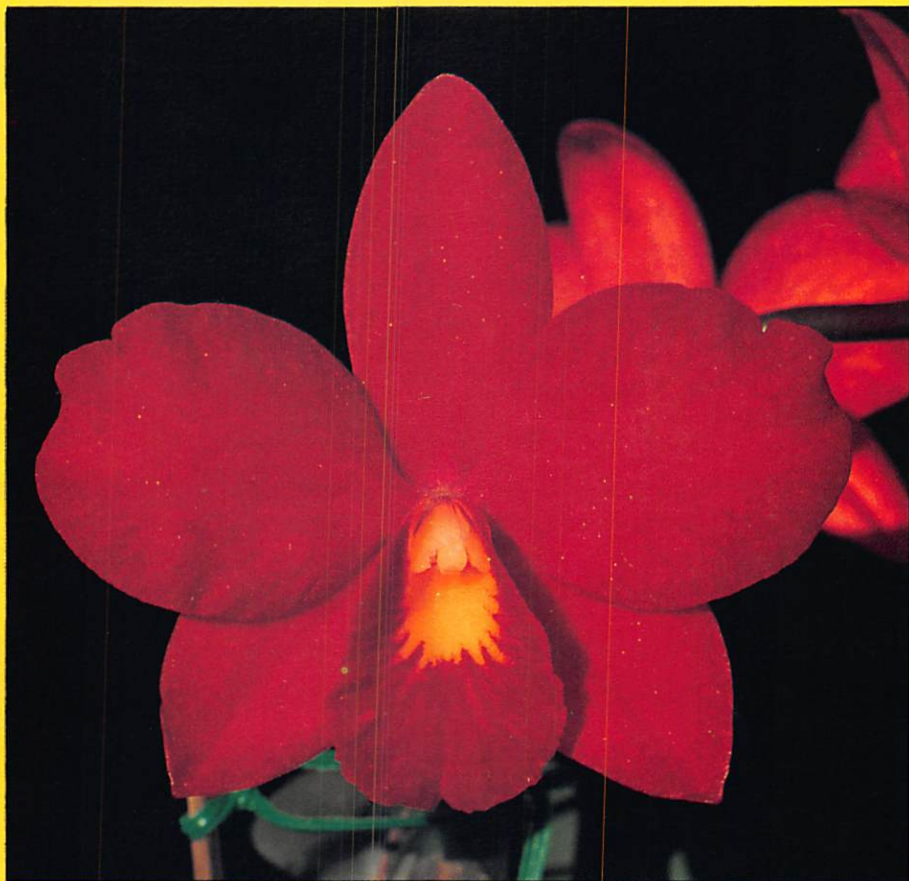
Simply attach the barcodes from each of the Yates Orchid Mix packs to the coupon below and Post to : " Yates Orchid food Offer " Yates Growing Media Div, Yates NZ Ltd, PO box 1109 Auckland 1

We of /I a member of/ the _____ Orchid society enclose ___Yates Orchid Mix 15L pack barcodes and /or ___Yates Orchid mix 35L pack barcodes as proof of purchase. Please send us / me **FREE** ___ pack(s) of **YATES INDOOR PLANT FEEDERS 340g.**

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*Orchid
of the Year
1991*



Slc. Minx 'Jexebel'

AM/NZOS, AM/OCNZ

CONZED ORCHID OF THE YEAR FOR 1991

Slc. Kaka x *Slc.* Orpetii made and registered
by I. D. James

Award Photo

CONZED 1991 AWARDS

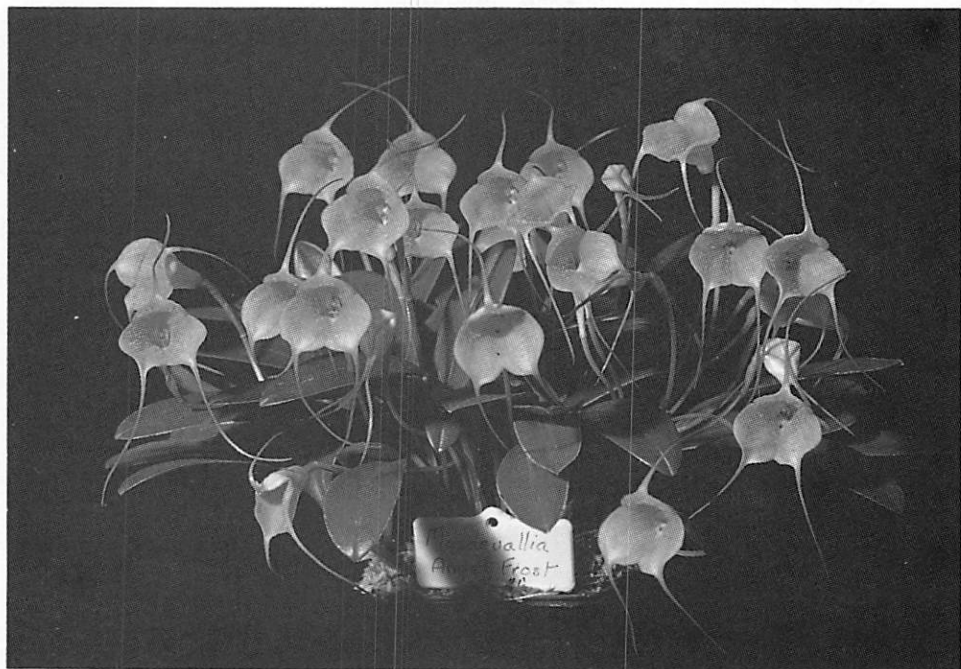
- AM *Paph.* Susan Booth 'Wendy Denise'
HCC *Oda.* Saint Clement 'Ellen'
HCC *Den.* Unregistered Grex 'Andrea Ruth'
(Circe x Shelley Maurine Thomas)
HCC *Wils.* Bardot 'Charles'
HCC *L. pumila* 'Helen V'
HCC *Masd.* Sunny Angel 'Dorothy'
HCC *Masd.* Harlequin 'Amelia'
HCC *Masd. veitchiana* 'Debra Maree'
HCC *Wils.* Nicola Jane 'Epsom'
HCC *Paph.* Shillianum 'J M Barry'
HCC *Onc. enderatum* 'Jim's Choice'
CCC *Bulb. medusae* 'Whiskers'
HCC *Masd. macrura* 'Jenni'
AM *Lyc.* Jackpot 'South Pacific'
AD *Lyc.* Jackpot 'South Pacific'
HCC *Wils.* Unregistered Gres 'Sophie'
(*Wils.* Kendrick Williams x *Oda.* Mainridge)
AM *Slc.* Mine Gold 'Margaret's Pride'
AM *Dtps.* Unregistered Gres 'Margaret's Joy'
(*Dtps.* Gorgeous Gold x *Phal.* Star of Florida)
AM *Alcra.* Unregistered Grex 'Tawhai'
(*Mlissa.* Chas. M. Fitch x *Onc. crispum*)
HCC *Cym.* Peter Dawson 'Ice Cool'
HCC *Cym.* One Tree Hill 'Waikanae Canary'
AD *Cym.* Starbright 'Capella'
AM *Paph.* Maudiae 'B. J.'
HCC *Masd. wurdackii* 'Natalie'
AM *Paph. micranthum* 'Glyndale'
HCC *Paph. appletonianum* 'Presentation'
CCC *Soph. coccinea*
HCC *Coel. mooreana* 'Taylor's Pride'
HCC *Cym.* Sensation 'Chianti'
HCC *Pln.* Shepherd's Warning 'Malacoota'
HCC *Paph. micranthum* 'Linda'
AM *Masd.* Falcata 'Cliffy's'
CCC *Masd.* Falcata 'Cliffy's'
HCC *Masd.* Copper Angel 'Bryce'
HCC *Sarco. hartmannii* 'White Magic'
HCC *Masd.* Falcata 'Max'
HCC *Masd. veitchiana* 'Glyndale'
HCC *Milt.* Dick Reichenbach
CCC *Den. nobile* var. *album*
- Peter & Wendy Stephens
E. Janette Ansley
Aileen Feist
- Alf Day
Betty & Joe Vance
M. & L. Dougherty
M. & L. Dougherty
Cliff & Ruth Coles
Dennis & Nancie Bonham
P. J. & W. D. Stephens
Michael Wilton
Mr L. Fitzgerald
Mr & Mrs T. Houghton
W. Ross-Taylor
W. Ross-Taylor
Alf Day
- M. & W. Lomas
M. & W. Lomas
- S. & J. Wray
- Ray Dix
R. B. & C. E. Corsbie
C. Verschoor
Beryl Elmers & Joe Smith
Robert Alfred McIndoe
John C. Schofield
Presentation Orchids
Aileen Feist
Mona & Les Taylor
Eunice Reardon
Kevin Luff
Kevin Luff
Cliff & Ruth Coles
Cliff & Ruth Coles
Cliff & Ruth Coles
Agnes & Harold Bayram
Ross Macdonald
John C. Schofield
Martin Bonham
Maurice Bycroft

| | | |
|-----|---|------------------|
| AM | <i>Paph.</i> Coramandel Gold 'Troy' | Jack R. Blackman |
| AM | <i>Masd.</i> Kimballiana 'L. & R's Super' | L. & R. Orchids |
| AM | <i>Masd.</i> Angel Frost 'L. & R. Gold' | L. & R. Orchids |
| HCC | <i>Masd.</i> Unregistered Grex 'Tuakau' (Angel Frost x <i>welischii</i>) | L. & R. Orchids |
| HCC | <i>Masd.</i> Falcon 'L. & R.' | L. & R. Orchids |
| AM | <i>Cym. suave</i> 'L. & R.' | L. & R. Orchids |
| CCC | <i>Cym. suave</i> 'L. & R.' | L. & R. Orchids |
| HCC | <i>Lyc.</i> Auburn 'Tudor' | Tudor Orchids |
| AM | <i>Slc.</i> Minx 'Jexebel' AM/NZOS | I. D. James |
| HCC | <i>Aer. odoratum</i> 'Summer Magic' syn. <i>virens</i> | June Swinbanks |
| HCC | <i>Disa</i> Veitchii 'Helen' | Helen & Rex Eddy |
| HCC | <i>Slc.</i> Unregistered Grex 'Peach Glow' (<i>Slc.</i> Jewel Box x <i>C. aelandiae</i>) | Ellen Manson |

Number of awards for the year 1991

FCC = 0 AM = 13 HCC = 31 CCC = 5 AD = 2 NAR = 0
 Total number = 51

Further details of Award plants are obtainable from local CONZED award panels, or from the Chairman of Awards, Dennis Bonham.



Masd. Angel Frost 'Val'
 Grower: Mrs V. Bayliss

CC/NZOS
 Award Photo

1991 NZOS AWARDS

| | | |
|-----|---|--------------------------|
| AM | <i>L. pumila</i> 'Helen V' | Betty & Joe Vance |
| HCC | <i>Wils.</i> Bardot 'Charles' | Alf Day |
| AD | <i>Wils.</i> Bardot 'Charles' | Alf Day |
| HCC | <i>Vuyl.</i> Unregistered Grex 'Muriel' (<i>Vuyl.</i> Cambria 'Plush' x <i>Oda.</i> Esteemed) | Lee Ducker |
| AD | <i>Vuyl.</i> Unregistered Grex 'Muriel' (<i>Vuyl.</i> Cambria 'Plush' x <i>Oda.</i> Esteemed) | Lee Ducker |
| HCC | <i>Paph.</i> Joanne's Wine '4-Star' | Papa Aroha Orchids |
| CC | <i>L. anceps</i> Louise | Carolyn Scholes |
| CC | <i>Masd.</i> Angel Frost 'Val' | Val Bayliss |
| HCC | <i>Cym.</i> Peter Dawson 'Bravado' | Ray Dix |
| AM | <i>Mclna.</i> Pagan Lovesong 'Ruby Charles' | Sunrae Orchids |
| CC | <i>Sarco hartmannii</i> 'Edna' | Merle Wildman |
| HCC | <i>Slc.</i> Momento 'Sunrise' | Marble Gardens |
| HCC | <i>Cym.</i> So Bold 'Southerly' | Ray Dix |
| HCC | <i>Phal.</i> Orchid World 'Kiwi Gold' | Carolyn Scholes |
| CC | <i>Masd.</i> Heathii 'Rose' | Rose & Neville Armstrong |
| CC | <i>Ptst. pedunculata</i> | A. Duthie |
| CC | <i>Den.</i> Jane Leaney 'Del' | Margaret Le Sueur |
| HCC | <i>Cym.</i> Scarabeach 'Minka' | Carolyn Scholes |
| HCC | <i>Cym.</i> Valley Zenith 'Green Peace' | Carolyn Scholes |
| HCC | <i>Wils.</i> Shirley Monkhouse 'Pearls 'n Lace' | Betty & Joe Vance |
| HCC | <i>Phal.</i> Little Mary 'Kahukura' | Barbara & Fanie Johnson |
| AM | <i>Slc.</i> Minx 'Jexebel' | I. D. James |
| HCC | <i>Slc.</i> Minx 'Grenadier II' | I. D. James |
| HCC | <i>Den. mohlianum</i> 'Erramunga' | Frank Brljevic |
| HCC | <i>Cym.</i> Unregistered Grex 'Sunrae' (Tom Thumb x <i>devonianum</i>) | Sunrae Orchids |
| CC | <i>Cym.</i> Unregistered Grex 'Sunrae' (Esk Claret x <i>devonianum</i>) | Sunrae Orchids |
| CC | <i>Cym.</i> Unregistered Grex 'Sunrae' (Dr Baker x <i>devonianum</i>) | Sunrae Orchids |
| HCC | <i>Cym.</i> Flame Hawk 'Lipper' | Sunrae Orchids |
| CC | <i>Cym.</i> Plush Canyon 'Sunrae' | Sunrae Orchids |
| HCC | <i>Den.</i> Unregistered Grex 'Spring Blossom' (King Falcon x Fiesta) | Sunrae Orchids |
| AD | <i>Alxra.</i> Hec Hazelwood 'Black Opal' | Sunrae Orchids |

Number of NZOS awards for the year 1991

FCC = 0 AM = 6 HCC = 16 CC = 9 AD = 3 NAR = 0

Total Number 31

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ORCHID GROWING: A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH

When in the course of human events an orchid plant dies, I do not accept complete responsibility.

When in the course of natural or unnatural causes an orchid plant dies I do not accept any blame. Shared blame and a sympathetic understanding prevent guilt and recrimination.

This no fault philosophy emerged because the orchid growers I first met exhibited either a live-and-let live attitude or a survival-of-the-fittest attitude. Later I learned that these positions reflected a cocer-up for their true emotions. A continued and closer observation of these people revealed five categories of mourners.

1. **Beginners** — cannot use the word “dead”. Their comment is “I lost the plant.”
2. **Learner growers** — eager to share their newfound knowledge; quote articles and books.
3. **Experienced growers** — listen to the problem; answer questions with questions; cite a friend’s experience with killing a plant.
4. **Mature growers** — console and instruct; might admit to a few deaths among their own plants.
5. **Emeritus growers** — assure you everyone has killed plants; may produce a list of losses; will show their terminally ill plants.

Whether a beginner or an emeritus grower, all orchidists confront the same perplexing problems in orchid culture. You can probably guess what they are:

WATERING

A novice asked an experienced grower why his plant didn’t sit upright in the pot. The experienced grower observed that the root system was missing and responded with the question, “How much do you water?” “Once every 10 days to two weeks,” the novice replied. “You must water more often,” advised the experienced grower.

Our own plants developed the missing roots syndrome before construction of the greenhouse was finished. We placed the collection on a rock-garden terrace which allowed filtered light all day. However, the mid-summer days held between 32°C and 38°C. My husband suggested sprinkling them an hour a day during the early afternoon. I would turn the sprinkler

on at about 1.00 p.m. every day and forget about it until 4.00 or 5.00 p.m. I never mentioned this negligence, hoping it would go unnoticed.

An observing eye noticed some drooping seedlings after a while, and a deep male voice asked how much water the plants had been getting. After a lecture about how over-watering destroy root systems, I changed my ways. Had his inspection been sooner, some of the plants would not have water-destruction.

LIGHT

Like water, too much or too little light produces the same result. In this situation, instead of losing the root system, no blooms appear.

While waiting for the construction of one of our greenhouses we had to house the collection under lights in the basement for about three months. We discovered how rebellious all that silent vegetation can become. We lost the

blooms for about a year. A few plants overdid their rebellion and expired.

TEMPERATURE

Much has been said and written about warm-growing and cool-growing orchids. At our house we tell all of them to adjust. Usually they do. We are oriented to pleasure from this hobby, so we have lower expectations from plants which must make big adjustments to their environment. We have been known to find new houses for plants which could not adapt; in the direct circumstances we have had an appropriate memorial service.

But sometimes certain temperatures can cause unanticipated devastation. When we lived in Nebraska we tried to raise cymbidiums. During the summer we put the plants around the patio in an effort to let them have maximum night-time cooling. Night-time temperature drops were infrequent and needed so we applied ice in the pots, hoping bloom spikes would develop. They rarely appeared. One early autumn morning I looked out the window and saw 53 black orchids — not the flowers, the leaves. During the night the temperature had plummeted to -9°C. I prefer to think of this disaster as a needed crop reduction.

ENEMIES

Treatment is available for problems developing as a result of bugs and fungus. Products from garden stores abound. However, some pre-problem considerations might serve up the right preventive medicine.

1. Keep a clean growing area.
2. Never bring a new plant into your growing area without a complete physical and cleanup.
3. Use care when exhibiting. Some exhibition areas can introduce new enemies.
4. If you suspect virus in a plant, isolate it. If the virus is confirmed, trash the plant.

Take the following wise words from a mature grower going on emeritus: Never allow an inspiring speaker or writer excite you into changing your growing habits if your plants look good and are

blooming. Follow the old adage. "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." We lost about 40 *Dendrobium* plants by changing potting media.

Do join the American Orchid Society for a subscription to the AOS Bulletin. Even if you don't have time to read the articles, the pictures will provide psychological reinforcement.

Do invest in some basic instructional books on culture, pest control, identification, etc.

Do join a local orchid society. Support groups provide enthusiasm and encouragement.

Do get acquainted with some of the mourners mentioned earlier.

Avoid dwelling on sad experiences; concentrate on successful techniques. Deny blame and guilt when a plant dies. I. do. ◀

Lois M. Holmes
Capital City Orchid
Society Newsletter
August 1991

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Something different



Xylobium variegatum (Syn. *Xylobium squalins*) is one of some 30 species of the genus.

Natives of the American tropics, this species comes from Costa Rica, Colombia, Venezuela and Brazil. The plant appears to grow well, and produces an interesting display.