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Cym. Firewheel 'Ruby' 4n HCC/AOS  
Paph. Assiniboinne 'Bold Emperor' HCC/AOS  
Cym. Claudona 'Rajah' 4n HCC/AOS  
Paph. Verde Oro 'Pacific' S/CSA  
Maclellanara Pagan Lovesong 'Carol Ann' AM/RHS  
Cym. Vangie 'Harlequin' 4n JC/AOS  
Cym. Bulbarrow 'Featherhill' HCC/AOS  
Cym. Miniatures Delight 'Mitzi' B/CSA  
Cym. Devonwood 'Featherhill' HCC/AOS, David McLean Award of Distinction.  
Cym. Showgirl 'Coburg' Cultural Award/CSA  
Maclellanara Pagan Lovesong 'Cerne Giant' AM/AOS  
Vuylstekeara Heather Moore 'Abundance' HCC/AOS  
Odontioda Minel 'Burnham' HCC/AOS  
Vuylstekeara Monastia 'Rubra' AM/AOS  
Cym. Burgundian 'Chateau' Cultural Award/AOS  
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Odontobrassia Inca 'Featherhill' HCC/AOS  
Cym. Sylvia Miller 'Coburg' B/CSA  
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# ORCHIDS OF NEW ZEALAND

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## Contents

**Page**

- 30 Fourth Annual Report by Tom French.  
32 Santa Barbara Show by A. O. Dare.  
33 Vandas by Keith Goodwin.  
35 Cultural Notes by Bruce Douglas.  
36 Chiloglottis by Jim Forrest.  
37 Home Made Rotator by J. G. (Jim) McIlwraith.  
38 Atmospheric Stimulant by Jim French.  
40 Thoughts on Cymbidiums by Gordon Maney.  
42 Orchid Trends in the U.K. by Wilma Rittershausen.

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**COVER PHOTO:** Cymbidium Spice Islands 'Fantasy', photo by courtesy of Tom French of a clone in his private collection. Spice Islands 'Fantasy' (Claudona x Balkis) was raised by Stewarts and registered in 1960.

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# FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT

by Tom French, President.

Membership of the Council showed a pleasing increase during the year with the formation of three new Societies and the affiliation of two established Societies. We are very happy to welcome to Membership the Marlborough Orchid Society, South Taranaki Society, Wellington Orchid Society, Canterbury Orchid, Begonia and Fern Society, Wairarapa Orchid Society and the Wanganui Orchid Club (re-joined).

This increase in membership does give Council greater strength in dealing with matters that effect our orchid growers and in carrying out our objects as set out in the constitution.

The newer Societies report rapid increases in membership and all Societies show some increase, demonstrating the growing popularity of the orchid cult in New Zealand.

The magazine 'Orchids in New Zealand' continues to provide orchid information of a high standard. The articles from our contributors are read with interest, especially by our overseas subscribers, but more articles, by more contributors are required to maintain the standard already achieved. We do sincerely thank those Societies who so generously donated funds to provide for the colour illustrations on the front cover of the magazine.

During the year groups of trainee Judges met regularly and carried out practise Judgings. A further series of Judging Seminars were conducted by the Registrar General Mr A. H. Blackmore and sufficient Trainee judges of proved proficiency were elevated to the status of Judges to enable four

Regional Judging Panels to be organised, and these are now in operation. Training of Judges is still proceeding, so that in time, a full coverage of the country with Regional Judging Panels will be achieved.

Four Awards have been recommended by Regional Judging Panels and these were recently ratified by your Executive.

The Judging Standards and Rules have now been printed in a handy booklet form and these are available at reasonable cost to those other than Judges.

The Conducting of Conferences is one of the Constitutional objects of Council and following discussions at the Annual Meeting of the Australian Orchid Council, to which your President was invited, the year 1980 was selected for the Orchid Council of New Zealand's first International Conference, as there is no other major Conference in that year.

This Conference is only made possible by the kind offer of the North Shore Orchid Society to act as host Society. They are already well forward with plans that promise for a stimulating programme of both orchid and social events. A well balanced panel of speakers on orchid matters from overseas and New Zealand is being appointed and we are sure that the information they give, will be of value to our New Zealand enthusiasts.

I would like to thank personally, all those fine orchid folk who have worked so well for the aims of Council and have given the support that has enabled Council to make such progress in such a short time. The planning and publication of a

lecture tours of the U.S.A. are highly successful ventures. At home, Wilma spends much time writing articles and books on orchids, drawing from a lifetime of experience, as well as lecturing to orchid societies in Britain.

Not all orchids however, are grown in greenhouses. With the advancement in recent years of centrally heated houses, many people like to have their plants growing around them in their living rooms. Modern dwellings have large, light windows which make excellent places in which to grow a few orchid plants. Indoor growing cases are also increasing in popularity. These can be placed anywhere in the living room and filled with a number of orchids of one's choice. These growing cases can be purchased ready made, to one's own particular requirements. They are completely self contained, having their own artificial lighting and fresh air supply. They are easy to control and keep humid, and the plants grow and flourish well in the microclimate.

The advantages of having orchids in the home is that one is close to them for most of the time, and therefore quick to notice when a plant is in need of water or some other requirement. Also, houses do not get overheated during the day as can a greenhouse which is not frequently attended. Neither are the plants likely to suffer from cold at night, either through accident or the prohibitive cost of heating the greenhouse, which is necessary for at least six months of the year.

To meet the increased interest in these plants over the last two decades, organised societies run by amateur growers have sprung up all over Britain and in the U.K. to further the knowledge of orchids and encourage beginners to this pastime. These societies hold

regular meetings to which members can bring their best plants for competition. They invite the best professional and amateur growers to lecture to the members on different aspects of orchid growing, as well as answering the numerous questions which are asked of them. They also have inter-Society visits and competitions, and often hold joint shows thereby achieving one large and impressive exhibition instead of several smaller, less interesting ones. These shows are heartily supported by members of the trade who take the opportunity of selling their plants, and meeting their customers. The many orchid societies in Britain have amalgamated to form the British Orchid Council. This body of enthusiastic members organise an orchid congress every eighteen months, which is held in a separate part of the country, with a different orchid society as host for the occasion. These congresses now form a regular feature in the orchid calendar, attracting speakers and visitors from all over the world. Each one alternates between the spring and autumn months, enabling a completely different range of orchids to be seen at two consecutive congresses. The standard is understandably high and an excellent exhibition is staged by many of the societies and trade nurseries. These congresses usually cover a complete weekend and include outings to local places of interest as well as a cocktail party and congress dinner to ensure a good social atmosphere prevails over the more serious and informative lectures and demonstrations. The next B.O.C. Congress is to be held in Winchester on 20th and 21st January 1979.

The leading professional orchid growers in Britain are formed into the British Orchid Growers Association who hold an annual exhibition each March in London.



# ORCHID TRENDS IN THE U.K.

by Wilma Rittershausen, Burnham Nurseries, England.

Orchid growing has become one of the fastest expanding hobbies in the U.K. In countries with moderate temperatures, greenhouses have always been a very popular extension to the garden enabling the grower to become acquainted with some of the world's more exotic plants. It is not long before anyone who owns a small amateur greenhouse feels they would like to grow a few orchids. Within a very short time, like a cuckoo in the nest, other plants are pushed out of the greenhouse to be replaced with an ever increasing orchid collection.

One of the most important annual events in orchids is the Burnham Symposium held each autumn in London. Amateur growers from all over Britain and Europe attend this very popular occasion to hear a series of lectures and demonstrations expertly delivered by the Burnham team. In the event of an even larger audience, the venue may soon have to be changed to a larger exhibition hall to accommodate the ever increasing number attending this now famous function.

Burnham Nurseries Ltd are one of the leading professional orchid nurseries in Britain. This firm was started in 1950 by Mr P. R. C. Rittershausen who turned his extensive private collection into a commercial venture, and is now run by his son and daughter, Brian and Wilma. From these early beginnings the collection has grown and developed into a first class nursery which caters for the amateur grower the world over. The nursery is situated in Newton Abbot, Devonshire, which is in the heart of the tourist area. Many visitors are welcomed to the nursery to be pleasantly surprised at the wealth and variety of plants which are on display and for sale. Organised visits by orchid societies from all over Europe are a regular occurrence and all delight in browsing around the greenhouses to find the plants of their choice.

Burnham Nurseries are successful in growing the type of orchids

which are most popular with the amateurs. A walk around their greenhouses show a wide range of inexpensively priced plants mostly cool growing species which can be grown in greenhouses or living rooms. These plants are attractively displayed on benches accompanied by picture boards of each variety to enable the newcomer to select from the different types. Many of the species which are still plentiful are imported while others are grown and propagated at the nursery which enables them to offer a very wide range of species. In addition, many fine hybrids are raised from selected parents, and here Burnham come into their own with their distinct varieties in many genera. The finest of these hybrids are chosen for culture by meristem and they boast a comprehensive list of meristemmed plants available in all sizes. The special interest has been in multi generic hybrids from the Odontoglossum alliance. In these hybrids they lead the field, having the largest selection to offer in Europe.

In the past, great interest was shown in the more flamboyant of the hot growing orchids. In recent years, with the higher cost of heating etc., the cooler growing, low energy orchids are in vogue. At Burnham this demand is being adequately met in various ways. Brian is well known for his appearances as a judge and lecturer at World and European conferences. His

National Orchid Magazine, the training of Orchid Judges and the setting up of Regional Panels, liaison with various government departments on matters effecting orchids, the gaining of recognition overseas as an established and progressive orchid body; all matters that presented many problems but ones that have been overcome by the support of so many people.

I feel confident that the Orchid Council of New Zealand is now firmly set on the pathway to the full achievement of its Aims and Objects. That Council will play an even greater part in the development of the study and cultivation of orchids in New Zealand, through the principal of mutual co-operation.

**ADVANCE NOTICE:** Taranaki Orchid Society will be holding a display and seminar early June 1978 in conjunction with tours of Pukekura Park and private glasshouses.

## CYMBIDIUM SEEDLING FLASKS

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FCC/RHS, FANFARE 'ST. FRANCIS' 4n MIR-Diploids:

ARGYLL 'COOKSBRIDGE' AM/RHS, CLAUDONA 'RAJAH' AM/RHS, TAMATEA 'TAHI,' CORAKI 'MARGARET' B/CSA HCC/AOS.

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# MY TALKING ORCHID

by Mrs M. Peters of Ha

Recently while sitting on a bench stop reading a copy of "Orchids New Zealand" March/April 1977, made a great discovery.

Yes! Russell Martin, I have met a talking orchid. In fact, I have one at home, sitting quietly chatting to itself on my front porch. I bought it quite innocent of its tremendous rarity, at last year's local show and since then have had many interesting conversations with it.

For those interested in the unusual and unique, my Cleo Sherman will astound and when it talks itself into flowering, it will also be very beautiful. I admired it tremendously when I bought it but not being an expert on orchids, I was unaware that everyone else was not on speaking terms with their Cymbidiums, Cattleyas and so on.

At present it is complaining of the cold, that it hasn't been fed properly, needs repotting and that it is generally neglected. It will probably start soon on the fact, that it is the only orchid around without its very own shadehouse. In fact, although I am fond of it and realise what a great treasure I have, I think perhaps someone else would like the pleasure of its company. It would appreciate a good home and I would not ask an unrealistic figure although I know its great value. It's not everyone who has a talking orchid. So, if Russell Martin cares to contact me I will be delighted to talk turkey.

In the event of being able to dispose of the attractive specimen, I am certainly going to this year's show to acquire another variety. It seems to be an interesting and profitable hobby.



# The Third Annual Congress of the Cymbidium Society of America and the Santa Barbara Show

by A. O. Dare, Greytown.

The third congress held at Santa Barbara on Saturday 8th April drew approximately 180 registrants from all over the United States, New Zealand, England, South Africa and Australia and everyone must have been pleased to have attended. The Santa Barbara Show was held at the same time and it too must have pleased everyone. Ernest Hetherington was a tremendously good chairman and there were some outstanding sessions.

Frank Fordyce spoke on "The future of Cymbidiums and Paphiopedilums in National and International Markets" and he made it clear that the commercial grower could not afford to sell his prize clones to competitors or to the hobbyist. Keith Andrews of Dorset England dealt with devonianums from the Khasia hills and showed a number of slides of devonianum crosses in delightful browns with full red lips. Syd Monkhouse of Australia suffered the indignity of a power failure when dealing with primary hybrids in Paphiopedilums but we eventually saw his excellent slides. If some of those who attended previously had no idea of how to prepare mericlone cultures or the difference between 4n and 2n plants, they would certainly have learnt something from Dr Donald Wimber who took us step by step through the excising of the meristem and showed us slides taken through a microscope of chromosomes, cells, stomata etc. with most lucid explanations.

The Show, held over three days at the Earl Warren Showgrounds, attracted large numbers. The pre-show wine and cheese at \$4.50 a head in aid of the Arthritis Foundation must have attracted about 500 guests and to give some idea of the size of the hall, these people plus four or five wine tables easily fitted in amongst the orchids. A rather interesting feature of the

Show was that most of the exhibits and plants for sale came from commercial growers where as here in New Zealand it is the hobbyist who provides most of the flowers and plants. There were some excellent and beautifully landscaped exhibits.

The Grand Champion went to Highland Mist 'White Fog'—a cut stalk—while the Reserve Champion was the beautiful pale pink Via Real 'Alexander.' Plants of Via Real 'Alexander' were on sale at three nurseries for \$150, \$175 and \$200 yet I had two commercial growers tell me that they would not want to own one. Those plants I saw had only six or seven flowers on a single stalk. Other outstanding Cymbidiums were Via Repose x Loch Lomond 'Gold Dust' a gold slightly shaded pink with a wide delicate pink lip; Fuss 'Fantasy' a bright red with a solid burgundy lip; Firewheel 'Ruby' 4n a deep rose well shaped flower; Cleo Sherman 'Candy Cane' a large white flushed pink; Peepers, a polychrome miniature (almost chocolate) with a wide solid red lip; Sensation 'Imperial' a real blood red with a beautiful red lip; Peepers Jeepers a proper brown miniature with a heavily spotted lip; Levis Duke 'Bella Vista' a well shaped lemon-yellow; Clarissa x Remus a dark brown with a green edge to the petals and sepals; Henry Dickenson a round deep pink; Atahaupe x Vieux Rose a clear pink with a solid red lip.

The Hybrid List published in the same issue recorded numerous unmemorable names, but amongst them were Cymbidiums — Eliot Rogers, Jean Celeste, and Xmas Beauty, Cypripedium! Harbur and many multigenics from G. Moir, including Kirchara, Milpasia and Renantanda.

Hybrid of the Month is Cymbidium Water Rail. C. Pixie x C. Alexanderi 'Westonbirt' F.C.C.), first recorded by Sir William Cooke in 1942, and remade by McBeans Ltd. To quote: "One amateur grower without skilled labour has cultured a C. Water Rail with three spikes, 29 flowers." How have our cultural standards changed!

Mention is also made (remember this is B.M.) of pollens of Rosanna 'Pinkie' and Babylon 'Castle Hill' costing from £10 to £20

L.C. Olga 'Chelsea' was awarded and A.M. R.H.S. in 1958, and this clone still brings hundreds of dollars in the U.S.A. It has never been mericloned.

## Watch those labels

Abbreviations used for generic orchid names in our lists of plants on display, are those recommended by the international Committee on Nomenclature. These abbreviations are very useful as they do save a lot of space, especially on plant labels, but **CARE** is required when using them, as too easily, when transcribing labels Oda. gets written as Odm. etc., causing confusion that probably extends years into the future, and annoyance to those growers who may one day own a piece of your plant.

For the convenience of members we append breviations for some of the more commonly grown genera.

Note: \* = natural genus.

\*Aergs. = Aerangis

- \*Aerth. = Aeranthes
  - \*Aer. = Aerides
  - Aerctm. = Aeridocentrum (Aerides x Ascocentrum)
  - Aerps. = Aeridopsis (Aerides x Phalaenopsis)
  - Aerdv. = Aeridovanda (Aerides x Vanda)
  - Alcra. = Aliceara (Brassia x Miltonia x Oncidium)
  - \*Angcm. = Angraecum
  - \*Ang. = Anguloa
  - Angcst. = Angulocaste (Anguloa x Lycaste)
  - \*Aslla = Ansellia
  - Arnps. = Arachnopsis (Arachnis x Phalaenopsis)
  - Aranda = Aranda (Arachnis x Vanda)
  - Ascda. = Ascocenda (Ascocentrum x Vanda)
  - \*Asctm = Ascocentrum
  - Ascps. = Asconopsis (Ascocentrum x Phalaenopsis)
  - Ascns. = Ascorachnis (Arachnis x Ascocentrum)
  - Asvts. = Ascovandoritis (Ascocentrum x Doritis x Vanda)
  - \*Asp. = Aspasia
  - Aspsm. = Aspasium (Aspasia x Oncidium)
  - Aspgm. = Aspoglossum (Aspasia x Odontoglossum)
  - Bllra. = Beallara (Brassia x Cochlioda x Miltonia x Odontoglossum)
  - Bdra. = Beardara (Ascocentrum x Doritis x Phalaenopsis)
  - \*B. = Brassavola
  - \*Brs. = Brassia
  - Brsdm. = Brassidium (Brassia x Oncidium)
  - Bc = Brassocattleya (Brassavola x Cattleya)
  - Bdia = Brassodiactrium (Brassavola x Diactrium)
  - Bepi. = Brassoepidendrum (Brassavola x Epidendrum)
  - Bl. = Brassolaelia (Brassavola x Laelia)
  - Blc. = Brassolaeliocattleya (Brassavola x Laelia x Cattleya)
- (To be continued as space permits)



# Thoughts on Cymbidiums

Sordon Maney, Palmerston North

Every grower of Cymbidiums, large or small, casts his thoughts back to last flowering season, thinking of the mistakes made and wondering if she or he had sprayed enough or fed enough. What are we going to do to improve our growing and produce more flower spikes this year. Let us hope that all the seedlings you acquired four or five years ago turn out to be champions.

Last year I wrote an article on over-potting, in fact stressing the importance of picking the right size for your plants. If hobbyists did indeed take this advice, I am sure they will be surprised at the number of flower spikes a plant in a 20cm pot has produced. At the time of writing, this first week in May, many plants that were divided and of necessity put into smaller pots because of lack of roots, should be showing flower spikes and thoroughly root-bound. Now, that is the time to pot on to the next size, say from 12cm to 15 cm to 20cm, definitely no more. This will do much to improve the quality of the flowers and add to the strength of the spikes.

Feeding at this time is also important, use a good nitrogen based fertiliser plus the addition of a fungicide such as Captan. Now that we are watering less because of the cold weather it is important to water thoroughly when we do. Remember, when in doubt, do not water, another two or three days won't matter. It pays to spot water at this time of the year as some of your plants seem to stay damp a lot longer than others. An important thing to remember is that a glasshouse can dry out very quickly

and for this reason damping down of walks and benches is a must. This artificially created dampness does help to keep the red spiker population down. It is also a wise precaution to include a miticide such as Kelthane in your spraying programme, say twice a month. Slug bait is also No. 1 on your list each week.

Early flowering varieties of Cymbidiums need special attention during June and July; feeding of these plants is vital if you want flowers the following season.

## Where are they now?

by Janet Mendoza of Lower Hutt.

In January 1959, The Orchid Review reported on the best cymbidiums of 1958, that is, the 13 awarded during that year by the R.H.S.

Here they are, in order of award:

1. Memoria Cyril Strauss A.M.
2. Burgundian 'Castle Hill' A.M.
3. Islander 'Exbury' F.C.C.
4. Fascination 'Amethyst' A.M.
5. Burgundian 'Chateau' A.M.
6. La Belle 'Annabelle' A.M.
7. Vieux Rose 'Roxanne' A.M.
8. Lillian Stewart 'Erythrite' A.M.
9. Alexanderi 'Purity' A.M.
10. La Belle 'Dell Park' F.C.C.
11. Fascination 'Rajah' A.M.
12. Nile 'Emerald' A.M.
13. Robin Redbreast 'Celle' A.M.

Of these, Burgundian 'Chateau' and La Belle 'Annabelle' are still around in force in New Zealand, but, remembering that this was still several years B.M. (before mericlones) it is quite possible that some of these clones may have perished. It is also interesting that even in 1958 the loss or disappearance of Joyful, the parent of Fascination and Remus, is mentioned with regret, as it is in the ancestry of Burgundian and Robin Redbreast, i.e. five of the 13 awarded clones.

I also saw some outstanding flowers at nurseries in California. Tap-estry 'Zita,' Forty Niner 'Alice Anderson,' and Jean Slattery 'Cecil Park' at Joe Rudvalis — Fanfare 'St Francis' 4n, Vieux Rose 'Josephine,' Sussex Dawn 'Winter Green' alba, Hoosai x Volcano a large green of not great shape but striped all over in red, Solana Beach 4n at Santa Barbara Orchid Estate — Madrid 'Forest King,' Patarak 'Yellow Sunset,' Jungfrau 'Dos Pueblos' by the thousand at Gallup and Stribling — Kyber Pass 'Rowes Red,' Cleo Sherman 'Blushing Bride' at Rowes — Tethys 'Little Fireball,' Sabre Dance 'Black Prince' and two very long pendulous stalks of small flowers on madidum x Esmaralda and a madidum x Mitzy 'Mabel' at Stewarts.

## VANDAS

by Keith Goodwin, P.O. Box 2039, Rotorua.

These well known monopodial orchids are entirely of Asiatic origin and have been extensively hybridised for commercial production in recent years. As a result the original species are less commonly encountered than the contemporary hybrids.

The genus is represented by over 70 species of typically strap leaved or in a few cases, terete leaved plants with numerous aerial roots produced from the upper regions of the stem. Plants of the strap leaved type vary in size from 25cm high (*V. pumila*) to 1 metre in height as in *V. coerulea*. The leaves have a very leathery texture and grow in a fan formation. Most species are strong growers. Flowers are variable in size and colour, usually flat with a short spur on the lip. They generally last well. Terete leaved (pencil-like) plants tend to require brighter light conditions to produce many flowers.

*Vanda pumila* is of the strap leaved type with a spike of up to three 5cm fleshy and fragrant flowers arising from the leaf axils. Sepals and petals are cream spotted with brown and the lip is white to yellowish streaked longitudinally with red.

*Vanda cristata* is another strap leaved plant having yellow-green flowers with a large curious tongue-like dark red and white lip.

*Vanda stangeana* has up to eight basically green flowers tessalated with red and are about 5cm across. I find this species very attractive.

Of the terete leaved plants we have *Vanda teres* which grows into a large tangled mass, a metre or so tall in its natural habitat. Flowers are 8-10cm across, pale rose in colour with a showy rose-purple and yellow lip and are produced during the summer months.

Several other species are also grown in the same glasshouse including the superb *Vanda coerulea*.

The genus thrives in conditions of high light intensity, humidity and good ventilation. The importance of ventilation is one aspect of orchid culture which is often underrated in a bid to maintain temperature and humidity. One way to achieve air circulation in winter is to install an electric fan operated via a timing device and thermostat then the glasshouse may be sealed to the elements. Vandas are amenable to pot culture and ours are grown in plastic containers with pine bark on a wooden slatted bench. Temperature requirements vary from coolish to warm depending on the species but most will survive extremes coupled with suitable moisture conditions. The plants do not require a rest period but their growth rate will slow in the winter months.

# PUKEKURA CORNER

by George Fuller, N.D.H. (N.Z.), Curator Pukekura Park, New Plymouth.



**Dendrobium discolor Ldl.**

The genus Dendrobium is widely distributed throughout the East Asian area and into the Pacific as far south as New Zealand.

This species, also known as *D. undulatum* is one of the largest of the group, one authority indicating that it will grow up to five metres tall! I feel that it is regrettable that the name *D. undulatum* is no longer applicable since it so aptly describes the form of the individual flowers.

Distribution ranges from Northern Australia to New Guinea. Needless to say it is a heat lover and this is a significant requirement in cultivation. The plant should be maintained in constant growth without the rest period required for some members of the genus. Plants in cultivation generally reach up to about two metres in height but will

bloom when smaller. Ample light will enhance bloom production.

Each bloom is about 5-7cm across and a general description of colouring would be 'tan' but this is a very variable characteristic and ranges from almost brown to yellow in different specimens. The spikes are usually produced from the upper parts of recently matured pseudobulbs but sometimes an old leafless cane will come to light with a second or even third spike.

The flowering season is said to be April to December but so far our plant has bloomed only in January and February with a spike now well formed in May, so it appears that one may expect flowering over a very extended period. In addition the blooms are long lasting and very decorative.

# 1980 CONFERENCE

With just two years to go to our 1980 Conference our initial overseas publicity is already attracting enquiries and Air New Zealand, our Conference carriers, are following up these approaches at key points on their routes.

The response from New Zealand Societies has been very enthusiastic, and offers of trophies for the Show gratefully received. The allocation of these trophies to particular classes will be decided when the Show schedule is finally endorsed, and the donating Societies informed straight away.

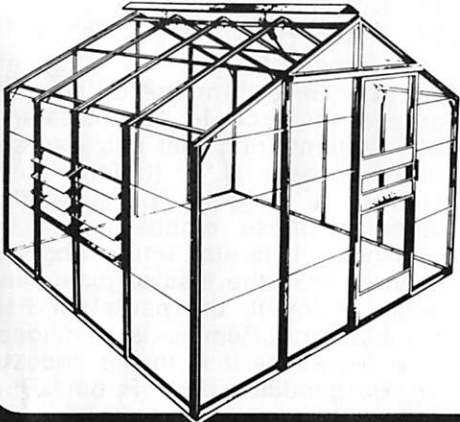
The selection of ten speakers for the Conference was a difficult one calling for an equal balance of five from overseas and five from New Zealanders. We are looking for


accomplished speakers from divergent areas, who would be able to both entertain and inform us on a variety of genera, such genera to be reasonably familiar to New Zealanders. We hope that all invited will be able to come, but as we go to press we have two definite acceptances: Syd Monkhouse from Adelaide will deal with miniature Cymbidiums, and David Stead of Mansell and Hatcher will present a paper on the *Odontoglossum* alliance.

1979 will be our busiest time for finalising accommodation and tour arrangements, and work in these areas is already under way. There will be further information fed to all Societies regarding the International Show in particular when copies of the Show schedule are available.

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# Feeding Orchids by Atmospheric Stimulant

by Jim Dench, 428 Botanical Road,  
Palmerston North.

The subject of manure for orchids is an old chestnut and articles have appeared written as early as 1885, (English Orchid Review 1972 refers). Today the facts are established, Nitrogen is the main nutrient to sustain the majority of plant life, with Ammonium Salts being a proven artificial source of supply of Nitrogen. In his article "Orchids for Amateurs" BTL remarks that every gallon of rainwater contains about half a grain (34 milligrams) of Ammonium Salts, while orchids supplied with rainwater will survive and flourish, the question is, is 34 milligrams of Ammonium Salts per gallon sufficient for their full and better development? I believe not. In a hot house environment other sources of Nitrogen supply should be available.

Therefore, like every orchid grower with an unnatural environment being used, I look for other and better sources of supply of Nitrogen and my method is as follows:

The potting mix must be sweet and open, the mixture being of wood chip, perlite, tree bark and charcoal, which has a capacity to absorb ammonia vapour (Nitrogen). BTL remarks that young roots will readily cling to charcoal, and I have seen this. My experiments in a small glasshouse 4m x 3m show great success in vapour (atmospheric) feeding by using small pieces of Carbonate of Ammonia, almost the size of a walnut, which I suspend from the apex of the glasshouse. The Carbonate of Ammonia evaporates slowly giving

off nitrogen which is absorbed by the charcoal in the potting mix and also by the leaves of the plants. Yearly, I would use only about 500 grams of Carbonate of Ammonia, from which there is no perceptible odour and while I have proved my system to be simple and cheap, the success I obtain is a vigorous growth with fine blooms.

I also believe shading the glasshouse is important and protect all my plants from ultra violet light (direct sunlight).

Ammonium Carbonate is available from your chemist as Ammonium Bicarbonate and should be stored in an airtight container in a generally stable temperature of not more than 30°C.

I would be pleased to receive reports and information from other growers who have experimented in a similar fashion.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Mr Boon,

The Executive of the Taranaki Orchid Society were very distressed to see in the latest publication of your magazine that the show dates for the Taranaki Orchid Society were incorrectly advertised as being that of the North Taranaki Society.

We would be most obliged if you would put a correction in your next publication pointing out that it is the Taranaki Society.

Thanking you in anticipation and wishing your magazine continued success.

D. Whittaker (Mrs)  
Secretary  
Taranaki Orchid Society.

The name of your Society has always been shown as 'Taranaki' but to prevent any confusion at show times, particularly for outside visitors, it was decided to call you 'North Taranaki' (for the Show Calendar) as distinct from the South Taranaki Society which is situated at Hawera, some 72 kilometres south of New Plymouth.

—Editor.

## CULTURAL NOTES

by Bruce Douglas of Kawerau

Believe it or not August is the first month of Spring; did I feel you shiver? Up north the first spring flowering trees will almost certainly have passed. Roots of most plants will be starting to develop and leaf and flower buds will start swelling. Down south all this activity, which is hard to see, will of course be later — in some parts a month later.

Orchids will not be much different either and this should mean something to you. A waxing sun has a great deal of stimulus on plants and on the bonus side, doesn't it make you feel good too.

Have you prepared your orchid mix yet? Time passes fast so do not get caught. If you have only one or two plants very little mix will be required and you may prefer to purchase. If you have more plants you could perhaps need up to several tonnes of mix so it is not a five minute job especially if you are a working person.

Make sure you have a mix suitable for the type of orchid to be potted. Don't get a bee in your bonnet and change all the genera into a totally different mix that requires a new approach. Rather, shift some of the plants over to the new mix and leave all the others as a control batch. Should the new mix prove better, then change the rest of the plants over the next year. Over the years I have seen and heard of several good collections taking a heavy check (after every pot was changed) because the new mix was not even as good as the old one. Do you see how important it is to have the correct ingredients in your mix.

Wash and/or sterilise all pots, unless they are new of course. There seems to be no point in risking the

transfer of virus or fungi spores to the next plant. They are capable of finding enough trouble of their own without you adding to their problems. Knives and scissors used for cutting should be checked and perhaps sharpened. A good clean cut heals much faster than a ragged one which in some cases may never heal.

Watch any spikes developing; train them up on stakes or string unless they are a pendulous type. Slugs seem to be able to anticipate a tasty morsel for weeks then CHOMP and you have lost out to them. Keep your slug bait going. A dirty glass or shade house will make them winners every time.

Watering will be increasing with root activity, plants will need to be checked frequently. All orchids grown in a glasshouse will need extra ventilation as this period progresses. Spotting of flowers is usually caused by too much humidity, this goes back to air circulation which should have a drying effect. Too high a day temperature even for an hour or two may damage some of your finest blooms.

Watch out for aphids, they have a fantastically quick rate of reproduction and suck cell sap in order to feed. With Cymbidiums they would first be seen near the top of the flower spike just as the buds start to spread out from a tight bunch. Not only does the plant become somewhat debilitated from their sap sucking but they can be one of the causes of virus infection, so watch that spraying programme.

Show times are coming up for many Societies and a few suggestions at this stage may be of help should you enter plants for display or exhibition.



1. ... be clean and tidy. ... go with a little white oil ... water. Use damp soft rag or sponge.
- 3 Stake spikes as soon as you can and train in an upright position. Do not let top of stake show above flowers.
- 4 Flowers should be trained to look at the judge or public.
- 5 Start training buds early with cotton wool or the like. A slight twist of the bud stalk each day should help to bring it round eventually to the desired position.
- 6 Finally, after carrying out the above, make sure the plant still looks natural and attractive.

Now to finish, may I tell you about the worst orchid pest we have in New Zealand. It can effect culture and does effect flowers. This pest is a variety of *Homo sapiens* that must handle everything in sight, backs into flowers breaking them, pulls out labels for the obscure purpose of reading them, but must with all sincerity put them back in another pot. Unfortunately by law you are not allowed to spray this pest and so it persists from time to time around all collections.

## CHILOGLOTTIS

by JIM FOREST, Te Puke

Chiloglottis comes from *cheilos*, a lip, and *glossa*, a tongue, referring to the shape of the labellum. In Australia they are known as "Bird Orchids." If you look into the open flower of *Chiloglottis* it is not too difficult to imagine young birds begging for food.

It is a small genus of seven species found in Australia and two of these extend to New Zealand.

*Chiloglottis* are a fascinating group of orchids that grow in colonies, usually in sheltered places.

Only one species is common in this country, the second, *C. formicifera* having been reported only once from near Kaitaia. *Chiloglottis cornuta* grows in loose colonies in a wide variety of habitats. It is common in the Kaimais in damp places, in clearings in the bush so long as it's not in full sun. Lately I've found it growing in the exotic pine forests in half rotted pine litter.

Two ovate-lanceolate leaves which lie flat on the ground are a sure identification. These vary in colour from light green to dark almost black green. Some colonies have beautifully veined leaves not unlike "Jewel Orchids." These come true to type for me so it's not induced by where they grow. Similar variations are found in *Corybas trilobus*.

The underground system consists of small tubers and long fleshy white roots. New tubers form on the tips of these roots.

Like most colony forming orchids *Chiloglottis* has few flowers in proportion to its numbers. In pots I've found this habit to continue. There is only one pale green flower which emerges at the same time as the leaves, and is relatively short lived. After pollination the stalk elongates to make for easier seed dispersal.

I grow my *Chiloglottis* in wide pots in a well drained mixture of sand, peat moss and leaf mold. Plant the tubers about two centimetres deep, place in a shady well protected position and don't allow to dry out fully, not even during dormancy.

Main problem is aphids although leaf rot sets in quickly in unsatisfactory potting material or in draughty positions.

*Chiloglottis cornuta* is found throughout the country and some of the largest colonies I've found have been in swamps in Southland.

## A Home Made Rotator

by J. G. (Jim) McIlwraith, Tauranga

Some readers may be interested to know the details of a Rotator (or tumbler) which I am using to proliferate protocorms, but I hasten to add that the design is not mine but is based on an article in the American Orchid Society Bulletin by Rex P. Tompson of South Australia.

I subsequently wrote to Mr Tompson and he gave me further advice in the light of his experience since the original article was written and this proved most helpful.

From the point of view of cost it was desirable to make the rotator myself and as most of my tools are woodworking rather than metal working, and I have easy access to timber products, the obvious thing was to use wood wherever possible.

Rex Tompson used a 2.2 watt washing machine timing motor and I obtained this locally from an electrical appliance serviceman for \$7. It has a speed of two revolutions per minute so it was necessary to countershaft this in order to get down to one revolution every two minutes.

The motor I selected was fairly easy to attach to a 6mm mild steel shaft and I used the same size rod for the countershaft and had it threaded on one end to hold the rotating discs.

The frame is made of 100x25mm dressed pine and consists of two uprights 300mm high and the top and bottom which gives a distance of 150mm between the uprights and these carry two brass bushes each for the drive and countershafts.

The motor is direct coupled to the drive shaft and the countershaft is 90mm above it. A friend of mine

who has a wood lathe turned up two pulleys out of 10mm plywood and these are fixed to their respective shafts with epoxy resin and the distance between the two shafts and the size of the two pulleys is such that a standard Singer Sewing Machine belt does the job admirably.

The two discs to hold the 75mm test tubes are made from 3mm plywood and are 150mm in diameter and 100mm apart. The four ties which connect the two discs are 6mm dowelling.

Before assembling the two discs I carefully bored 20 holes of 75mm diameter and five of 6mm, four for the dowelling and one for the countershaft, then used Quick Set epoxy resin to secure the dowelling ties to the discs.

Having assembled the rotator frame I fixed it to the countershaft with a nut on either side of the disc on the threaded end of the shaft.

The tumbler operates 24 hours per day and seven days a week, and about once per week I squirt light machine oil into the bushes and this is the only attention it receives.

There seems to be quite diverse opinions on the optimum rotation speed, but Rex Tompson says he is now using 12 revolutions per hour as he is of the opinion that the slower the speed the better, as it appears to do less damage to the tissue. However, from my own limited experience I think that any slow revving operation will be sufficient to make the sections proliferate providing the other factors such as media, light and warmth are within the required limits.