

# ORCHIDS IN NEW ZEALAND



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# ORCHIDS OF NEW ZEALAND

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**Cover Photo:** This fine display of Paphiopedilum orchids was part of the winter show of the Wellington Orchid Society. Photo by courtesy of Mrs Janet Mendoza of Lower Hutt.

# Resumption of Orchid Imports

*Issued by Plant Health Diagnostic Station Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Levin  
7 December 1979*

## **Background**

- 1 Since the Ministry stopped issuing permits for the importation of orchids early last August additional information has been sought about tomato ringspot virus (TomRSV), a significant disease of horticultural crops in North America. Samples of recently imported cymbidium plants have also been tested.
- 2 These investigations have revealed no further relevant information and the only known record of this virus on cymbidium is in the cultivar Snowbird 'Jayhurst.' It therefore appears that TomRSV is uncommon in cymbidium, but this remains uncertain because only small sample of plants have been tested.
- 3 The risk of plants becoming infected with pests and diseases increases with age. Because cymbidium is now becoming a significant horticultural crop in New Zealand imports should be confined to relatively small numbers of healthy young plants that can be adequately inspected.
- 4 Plants raised by tissue culture may not be free from virus and it is therefore important that all mother plants be adequately tested before cultures are taken. Nevertheless, there is no evidence available to show that TomRSV is common in tissue-cultured orchids.

- 5 Because of the way cymbidiums are grown and because TomRSV is transmitted by nematodes living in the soil, tissue-cultured plants up to two years out of flasks are unlikely to become naturally infected with TomRSV. Pseudobulbs, however, are usually obtained from plants seven years old or more and are therefore of a less certain virus status.

## **Import Requirements**

### **Plants in sterile flasks**

- 6 Import conditions remain unchanged — an import permit or detention in post entry quarantine is not required. Provided the plants are free from pest, disease and contamination, and accompanied by a health certificate entry will normally be permitted without further restriction.

### **Cymbidium Plants/Pseudobulbs**

- 7 With immediate effect the Ministry will consider applications to import cymbidiums on the following basis:
  - a Plants to have been raised by tissue culture, not more than two years out of flasks and grown in a soil-less medium on raised benches. The health certificate is to be endorsed accordingly. Consideration will also be given to plants not more than three years out of flasks, subject to additional

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tests being carried out before export.

- b dormant pseudobulbs (without roots and foliage) may be imported provided 10% of the plants from which the bulbs were obtained have been virus-tested before export and found free from TomRSV and other known viruses. The accompanying health certificate is to be endorsed accordingly.
  - c consignments will normally be limited to 500 plants/pseudobulbs and importers will not normally be allowed more than this quantity in quarantine at any one time. Annual imports will be limited to 1,000 plants/pseudobulbs per importer per importing year (1 July to 30 June). These totals are inclusive of all orchid genera.
- 8 For the benefit of the hobbyist, permits may be issued for up to 10 plants/pseudobulbs per year without any endorsement to the health certificate, provided the plants are not larger than one growth and two bulbs. Those who require larger numbers may import:
- a young plants and pseudobulbs in accordance with the conditions of paragraphs 7a, b and c above, or
  - b up to 100 plants not larger than one growth and two bulbs, provided at least 10% of the plants of each cultivar/variety have been virus tested and samples of each cultivar/variety have been tested for parasitic nematodes prior to export. The health certificate is to be endorsed accordingly.

#### Other Genera

- 9 Consignments will normally be limited to 500 plants, with no more than 500 plants in quarantine at any one time and a maximum of 1,000 plants per importer per year. These totals are inclusive of any cymbidium imports.
- 10 It will be important for applicants to specify the genera of orchids required because some are hosts to rust diseases. Known rust host genera of which the Ministry is aware are: Batemanina, Bletia, Bletilla, Cattleya, Cycnoches, Cyrtopodium, Diacrium, Epidendrum, Huntleya, Ionopsis, Laelia, Lockhartia, Lycaste, Oncidium, Ondontoglossum, Ornithocephalis, Phaius, Polystachya, Rodriguezia, Schomburgkia, Spathige, Stanhopea and Trigonidium. Importations of these genera from Mexico, Central and South America will be limited to dormant pseudobulbs (without leaves) if possible. If this is not possible a limit of 10 susceptible plants per consignment will be imposed on genera that do not produce pseudobulbs. It will therefore be necessary for applicants to specify whether or not pseudobulbs are available.

#### Post Entry Quarantine Requirements

- 11 Imported plants (except those in sterile flasks) must be grown in quarantine on an approved site for a period after arrival. This can often be on the importer's property. If the plants are to be quarantined in:
- a a greenhouse, there should be no other plants in the greenhouse. Alternatively a section

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of the greenhouse may be sealed off permanently with its own separate outside entrance.

- b a structure other than a greenhouse, the imported plants should be not less than 50 metres from plants of the same genus and not less than 20 metres from any other plants (excluding lawn or pasture). Alternatively they may be grown in an "insect-proof" screenhouse not less than 5 metres from other plants of different genera.
- 12 Application forms and additional information may be obtained from the Ministry's local Field Officer.
- 13 When making application to import orchids it is important to:
- a specify the genera required and, in the case of cymbidium, the type of plant e.g. less than two years out of flask, dormant pseudobulbs.
  - b state whether dormant pseudobulbs are available for rust host genera (refer paragraph 10).
  - c specify the reason for importing e.g. personal hobby, eventual resale, cut flower production and whether it is intended to take tissue cultures.
  - d whether facilities are available to dip and spray imported plants should this be required.

#### **General**

- 14 Imports should be confined to plants that are as small/young as practicable and should not exceed one new growth and two

bulbs or the equivalent per plant. In the past, large imported plants have been found infested with insects, for which an insecticidal dip is often ineffective. When future consignments are found to be infested on arrival they may be fumigated with methyl bromide, reshipped or destroyed at the importer's risk and expense.

- 15 Because of the lack of information about TomRSV and rust diseases the Ministry may impose further restrictions without notice should significant new information become available. Alternatively the Ministry may vary some of the above conditions if, for example, additional tests are carried out before export.

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## **Dannevirke Society News**

We started our society 16 months ago as a small group with only 23 members at the first meeting. We now have 40 members and the society has not looked back.

We have over the past 12 months received so many inquiries from children that we now have a junior section. This has so far proved to be very popular and the ages of junior members range from 9—16 years.

The junior section lasts until the member finishes secondary school. The members attend all of the meetings regularly and show great interest.

In our first year we held a display of orchids in the picture theatre foyer in conjunction with the towns Market Day. This created a lot of interest as we had about 60 plants on display also a flowering miniature as a raffle which increased both our financial and membership position.

We will be holding another display this year but at this stage we do not know when. Last time it was in October and as some of us intend to be at the Conference we will not be able to fix a date at this time.

# CYMBIDIUM COMPANIONS (CONTINUED)

*Ros Bickerstaff, 12 Enfield Rd, Napier.*

## **DENDROBIUM, Swartz**

Most of the older varieties of epiphytes started their horticultural life, known as Dendrobiums, because this name means "living in a tree" (dendron — a tree; bios — life). It was not until years later that they were separated into other genera. Although many of the deciduous (nobile) dendrobiums can be grown with cymbidiums they need special treatment to induce them to flower. They grow from India through South East Asia to the East, and down into Australia, Polynesia and even to New Zealand (*D.cunninghamii*). Naturally, our own species grows easily when given a sunny, humid location with plenty of fresh air.

The 'nobile' or deciduous varieties which come mainly from the highlands of the Himalayas, Burma, and South East Asia are in the monsoon area. This means that they need a warm, moist spot for their summer growth and a change to a cool, dry position for the winter. I change their conditions on Anzac Day (25th April), and keep them dry and cooler by covering them and giving a little more shade. Wait until flower buds are well developed before recommencing watering; make sure that this is just enough to lightly damp the compost, for, if you water too heavily at this stage the flower buds form new plantlets instead. If this happens, wait until these plantlets have well developed roots (about 5cm) before removing them and potting them up. After flowering, give normal summer conditions again.

Many Australian dendrobies flower naturally in our New Zealand conditions. However, *D.speciosum* and *D.kingianum* give best results, for me, when I give them full sun and no water for about six weeks during February-March. They grow on rocks in full sun, so why should we change their growth habits from what they are used to in their homeland? *D.falcostrum*, and the hybrids, *D.Bardo Rose* and *D.Delicatum*, grow easily in our conditions.

I am growing nearly fifty species and varieties at the moment. Not all flower each year — it depends on the weather we get, especially in the summer months, as most need plenty of sun and warmth.

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## **WINTER SHOW DATES**

N.Z.O.S.

Mt Albert War Memorial Hall.  
July 10th, 11th, & 12th.

GOLDEN COAST O.S.

Paraparaumu Memorial Hall  
July 26th, 11 am to 5 pm  
July 27th, 10 am to 4 pm.

WAIKATO O.S. (Inc.)

Ferry Bank Lounge, Hamilton.  
July 26th, 8 pm to 11 pm.  
Show & Social evening.

WELLINGTON O.S.

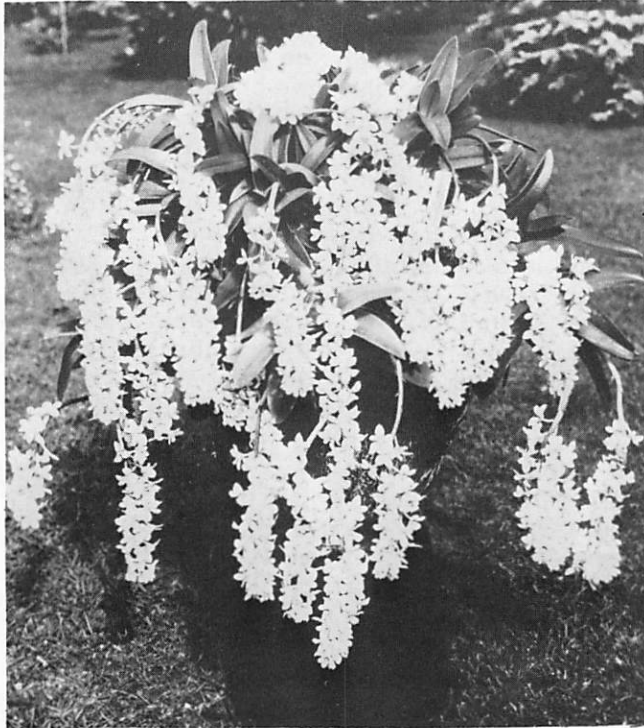
July —

For further particulars in respect of date and place, please write to Secretary, Mr L. Wyatt, 43 Hardy Street, Waterloo, Lower Hutt.

**Essay Competition extended, get your entries in now.**

# PUKEKURA CORNER

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



## **Sarcochilus hartmannii FvM**

I first saw this Australian orchid in the collection at Kew Gardens and well remember a struggling plant which had thrust up tiny blooms of purest white, sparkling crystalline in texture and centred with red. Weak as it was, it possessed a beauty I have not forgotten.

My next encounter was at Pukekura many years later in the early stages of forming the

collection. From several sources came robust multi-stemmed plants which I had the greatest difficulty in associating with that ailing treasure I had seen at Kew. I put the discrepancy down to climatic and cultural differences — a judgement which has since been proven suspect, for it now seems apparent that at an early stage in this country's orchid growing history, an abnormally robust and floriferous



form of *S.hartmannii* was introduced and has become very widespread.

Being a relative of the vandas, with thick roots that wander and cling, one would expect that *S.hartmannii* was a true climber in its native habitat and indeed it is sometimes found on trees but is more typically found on rocks or cliff-faces in full sun in the general coastal region of the Queenstown — New South Wales boundary. It is not common in the wild.

If we take a young, single-lead plant of the form most common here, it is best described as looking like a *paphiopedilum* but with much fleshier leaves. (I recall hearing of a plant being purchased as a slipper). The leaves approximate 15cm long, 4cm wide and have slightly asymmetric tips. It has a very strong tendency to branch at the base allowing for rapid increase or alternatively growth into a large specimen. Because of the great bulk of the leaves, the plant tends to hang, but can be encouraged to climb up a backing support such as treefern. It thrives in a container made of treefern, into which the roots penetrate but it is adaptable to other methods of culture.

As is well evidenced in Mrs White's plant illustrated, the purest white, crystalline, almost dazzling 3cm wide blooms are produced on 40cm pendulous spikes up to 20 on each. The three sepals dominate and at the base of all segments, both inside and out are crimson spots in variable amounts according to the particular clone. Flowering is in August, September and October.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*Thank you WHANGAREI ORCHID SOCIETY for your generous donation of \$100.00 to the magazine fund. This assistance is much appreciated as we work continually to improve the journal.*

## First New Zealand International Orchid Conference

Ellerslie Racecourse, Auckland  
October 15—19, 1980

Registration forms are now available from

*The Conference Secretary,  
P.O. Box 33-493,  
Takapuna,  
AUCKLAND, 9*

The registration fee is \$27.50 per person, payable by 30 June, 1980.

Late registrations up until 31 August, 1980 will be accepted at \$35.00 per person.

The registration fee entitles registrants to attendance at the opening cocktail party and show preview on Wednesday, October 15, and the Conference papers. A copy of the Conference Proceedings, admission to the Show, and badges are also provided.

Additional expenses will be such functions as the Closing Banquet and the Maori Hangi and prices are detailed on the registration form.

This is the first time that so many New Zealand Orchid growers will be assembled at one function — overseas registrations number several hundred.

**WE WELCOME YOU ALL**

## NOTE

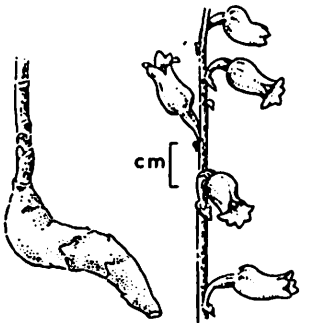
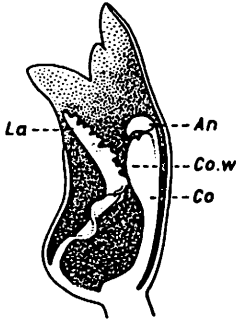
*All exhibitors who live over 80 kms from the display complex at Ellerslie may present cut Cymbidium spikes for show and award judging. Make your own arrangements for non flowering plants to use as a base.*

**Essay Competition, 2500—3000 words, any Orchid subject, enter now.**

# NEW ZEALAND INDIGENOUS ORCHIDS

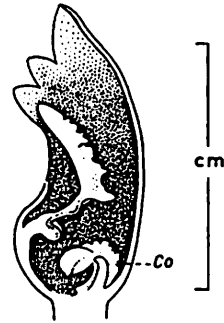
by Albert H. Blackmore  
(Continued from last issue)

**16 GASTRODIA** has three species, namely *sesamoides*, *cunninghamii* and *minor*. They are terrestrial.



*G. sesamoides*

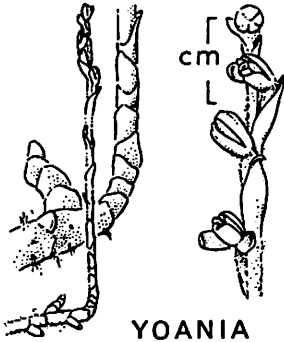
a *Sesamoides*, found mostly north of 42° latitude in open forest and scrub. Flowers droop to form bell like flower, coloured light brown with long calli much crested. Column almost as long as the labellum. Flowers December and January.



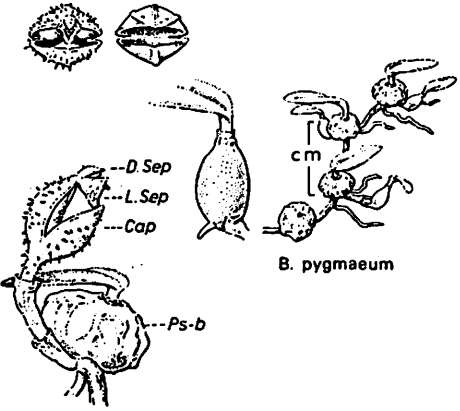
*G. cunninghamii*

- b *cunninghamii*, not uncommon in dark shaded places, but easily overlooked, from Bay of Islands throughout the both Islands. Flowers brownish or greenish, mottled with paler knobs, adjacent plants sometimes contrasting in colour. Unlike *sesamoides* it has very short column. Flowers December and January.
- c *minor*, this species is to be found in both Islands in shady scrub or deep woods. Most collections from about Lake Taupo and Wellington also from Dunedin, Lake Manapouri and Waituna Lagoon, Southland. Principally if not exclusively under *Leptospermum*. In shady manuka bush near Dunedin. Flowers along long erect stem. Each flower 10mm long, brownish in colour. Labellum narrow — oblong, long median calli rather simple. Column very short. Flowering period December and January.

**17 YOANIA** a terrestrial, has one species, namely *australis* found in North Island forest floor. Plant at flowering sometimes 20cm tall. It has rhizome 3 to 5mm diameter, much branched, bearing tufts of long, fine, colourless hairs. Stem erect and unbranched, pale rose colour. Flowers brownish with white tips.

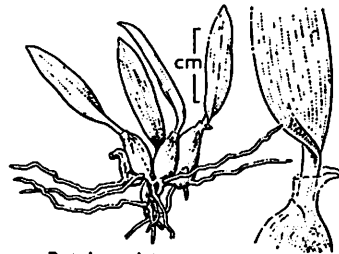
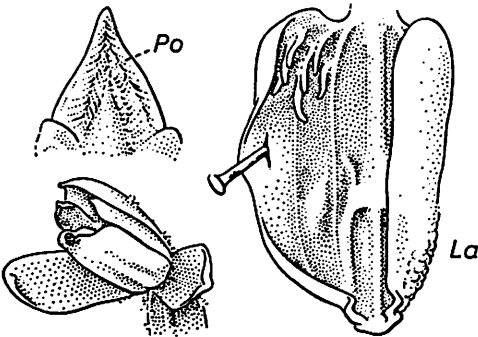


YOANIA



B. pygmaeum

a *pygmaeum*, found in both Islands. Plants forming a spreading mat up to 10cm or more in diameter. Rhizomes thread like, firmly fixed to substratum by many roots of similar size; pseudo-bulbs 3 to 5mm diameter becoming much wrinkled with age. Flowers, solitary come from the base of pseudo-bulbs, floral bract whitish and hairy. October flowers.



B. tuberculatum

**18 BULBOPHYLLUM** has two New Zealand species, namely *pygmaeum* and *tuberculatum*. They are epiphytic on forest trees.

b *tuberculatum*, found North Island. The plant wraps itself around trunks of trees, making a tight clump. Flowers one to several come, from the base of pseudo-bulb 4mm long. Whitish except labellum. Sepals are not hairy, labellum brightly vermilion red, with central yellow line. Flowers May.

Essay Competition extended, get your entries in now.

# Rediscovery of the Underground Orchid *Rhizanthella gardneri* R.S. Rogers.

by A.S. George. *Western Australian Herbarium*

On 26 May 1979 Lou John McGuinness, a farmer at Munglinup east of Ravensthorpe, turned over a dead tree root and unearthed a specimen of *Rhizanthella gardneri*. It was the sixth such chance finding of this intriguing underground orchid and the first since 1959. Mr McGuinness brought the specimen to the Western Australian Herbarium where its identity was confirmed on 28 May.

On 1 June I visited his property and with the assistance of five enthusiasts located 10 more plants. It was the first opportunity to study their growth habits in situ and excavate them. Plants were located by searching for slightly raised, cracked mounds such as are made by fungi before breaking the surface. In eight cases no part of the plant was visible above ground, but in the other two, where leaf litter had accumulated to a depth of 1—2 cm, a small hole about 1cm across had been formed by the involucre bracts pushing outwards. Although the flowers remained below ground level the tips of the bracts were slightly above it whether or not covered by a soil "lid". Further observations by Don Voigt and a subsequent visit on 1 August showed that all the plants eventually developed a hole during flowering. The orchids occurred in yellow-brown sandy clay. The vegetation was mallee-broombus with *Melaleuca uncinata* the most frequent shrub. As with previous finds the orchids grew close by the bases of the *Melaleuca*. Mallees included *Eucalyptus redunca*, *E. spathulata*, *E. flocktoniae* and *E. pileata*.

The orchids had a horizontal rhizome from three to 12 cm below the surface. New lateral rhizomes

were developing and it appears that this vegetative propagation gives rise to clones. Two groups each of four plants had apparently formed in this way, although they were no longer connected by living tissue.

The flowers were deep burgundy with white ovaries, while the bracts were translucent white and rather waxy texture. A sweet but faint scent similar to that of *Caladenia aphylla* was produced. No observations on pollination were recorded; perhaps the day was unsuitable, since a strong, cold north wind was blowing and the sky was almost overcast.

A further visit to examine the orchids was made on 1 August. By this time the plants had finished flowering. All had developed a hole in the soil surface but had not grown upwards at all. The perianths were withering the bracts had mostly dried and turned brown. In most cases the ovaries were intact and appeared to be developing further. One plant, however, had been stripped of its flowers while another had died and begun to disintegrate. Although now open to the air the plants were no easier to locate than when covered with soil, since they blended with the leaf litter. Some sand had also lodged in the heads. A further visit is to be made to collect mature seed.

Essay Competition, big prizes to be won, enter now.

# COOL HOUSE TOPICS PLEIONES

by Phil Mayhead, 360 Carrington Street,  
New Plymouth

The common name for this genus of beautiful and appealing species is the Crocus Orchid, indeed if one imagines Cattleya-like flowers on a Crocus one has a good mental picture of these plants.

They are also grown by alpine enthusiasts as well as orchid lovers in the UK where they were once known as the Window-sill Orchid. There are about 20 species, mainly Spring or Autumn flowering, and are found in South-East Asia, Formosa, China, and the Himalayas. The Coelogynes are their nearest relatives.

Some hybridising is being done within the genus and the following species have appeared in recent lists of New Orchid Hybrids of the RHS — *bulbocodioides*, *formosana*, *humilis*, *limprichtii*, *pogonioides*, and *yunnanensis*.

The main species grown in New Zealand at present is *P.formosana*, (synonym *pricei*), a glorious native of Formosa. They are high altitude plants found between 1,300 metres and 3,000 metres; and range in colour from palish pink to deep pink, with an alba form as well. Varietal names have been given to the more distinct forms, 'Oriental Splendour' being the best known overseas.

**Cultivation** — I plant the bare purplish-green bulbs close together in shallow pans using cymbid mix.

This is usually around 20 August and they flower in early October. This year will be quite important to get that flowering period correct for the 'Big Show.' The flower buds come up in the centre of the new growths, and seven flowers off one bulb remains my best. Watering and some feeding of weak strength fertilizer — Maxicrop, Atlas Fish, Nitrophoska, etc. is carried on well into late Autumn, and around May-June the foliage yellows, then goes brown and drops off. At this stage watering is stopped and the made up bulbs are dried off. This is around early July.

This is the important part! Most people who fail with this species do so because they slow down with the watering in January or thereabouts when the bulbs are only half made up, the plants dry out and naturally the leaves tend to yellow. This is taken as a sign of maturity so they dry them off altogether, the bulbs then shrivel away as they are nowhere near ripe. So, keep up the watering until Winter and let the plants tell you when they have had enough.

As the old bulb withers away while feeding the new growths small bulblets form on the top. These are planted the next Season, about half their depth, while the main bulbs are pushed in the compost much in the manner of Shallots.

Mealy bugs are their worst enemy.

These cultural notes are only for *P.formosana*, the Autumn flowering ones never go completely dormant evidently, but I understand the basic needs are perhaps similar for all species.

Essay Competition, 2500 — 3000 words, any Orchid subject, enter now.



### **CLEO'S MELODY 'BRONWYN'**

The cross was made by York Meredith of Willandra Orchid Company, Little Willandra Road, Dee Why, Sydney, NSW.

The owner and grower of 'Bronwyn,' Mr Norm Wood of Palmerston North, purchased a flask of seedlings (Arcadian Melody x Cleo Sherman) from Dos Pueblos, Australia in 1968.

A Big percentage of this flask have been top quality, predominately whites to soft yellow and one or two showing pink tones.

The cross was registered by R.J. Dean, NSW in 1974.

# MASDEVALLIA and DRACULA

by Ron Whitten

In the early days of orchid cultivation the Masdevallias were very popular and a number of hybrids were raised despite difficulties in handling the small pollinia and in inducing the scanty seed to germinate and grow. Interest in these showy, spectacular forms waned but the last ten years has seen a resurgence in their cultivation and hybridisation.

The most distinctive feature of these small, pseudobulbless plants is the unusual triangular shape of the flowers. The lip, petals and column are very much reduced and the sepals exaggerated in size, often with long tails. The red, orange and purplish colours of some species such as *veitchiana*, *coccinea* and *militaris* make these some of the most spectacular of orchids.

The genus DRACULA was only recently (1978) formed for over 70 species grouped around *Masdevallia chimaera*. Don't let sinister sounding names like *Dracula vampirina*, *Dracula chimaera* and *Dracula gorgona* put you off growing these orchids. Although not as brightly coloured as some Masdevallias the unusual colour patterns of many of the species make them quite spectacular in their own right.

*Dracula* and *Masdevallia* may be distinguished from each other quite readily on vegetative features. The leaves of *Dracula* are fairly thin with a sharp dorsal keel on the midrib, while those of *Masdevallia* are more fleshy. The small petals and lip of *Masdevallia* are similar in size but in *Dracula* the lip is larger than the petals and divided into two parts, the outer part expanded, often resembling a mushroom with fine radiating ribs.

Most Masdevallias and *Draculas* come from high altitudes in tropical America where daytime temperatures rarely exceed 25 degrees C and light frosts are not unknown. Mists and heavy rains keep the vegetation constantly moist. The air is in constant movement and remains humid at all times. These orchids lack pseudobulbs but their roots, growing through moss and lichens on the trees and rocks, are kept constantly moist. These environmental factors give us a guide as to how to grow these fascinating orchids. The prime requirement is for a moist, cool atmosphere. Light should be moderately bright, similar to that required for *Paphiopedilums* and less than that for *Cymbidiums*. Plenty of air movement is required to prevent the development of fungal diseases. The exact composition of the mix does not appear to be important so long as it is free draining but moist: soggy, stale mix will cause a rapid deterioration in the plant's health. Our plants are grown in Becks mix with the addition of a little chopped sphagnum moss. Do not allow the mix to dry out completely! Most *Draculas* have pendant spikes somewhat comparable to those of *Stanhopea* and should be grown in a

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Essay Competition extended, get your entries in now.

basket if the spikes are not to remain buried in the mix.

As the plants are in constant growth dilute fertilizer may be used throughout the year but less frequently in winter when growth is slow.

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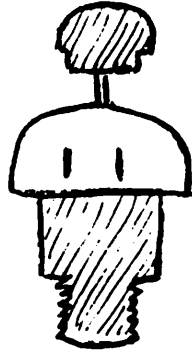
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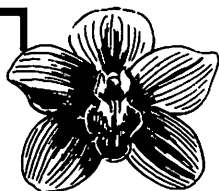
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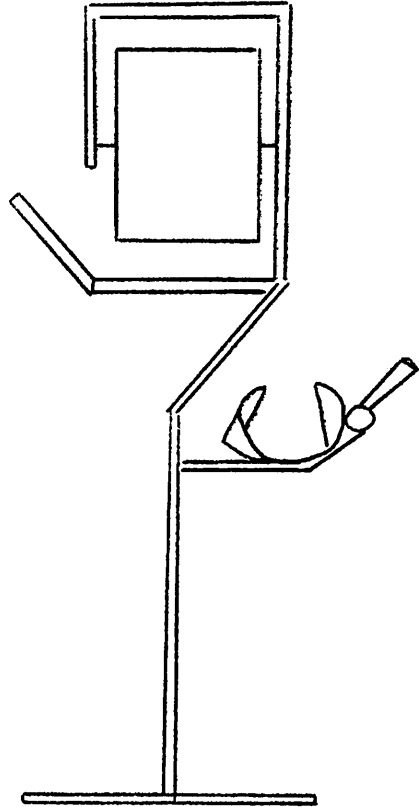
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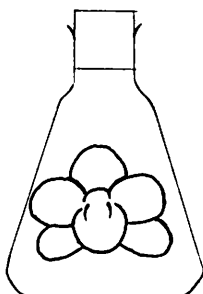
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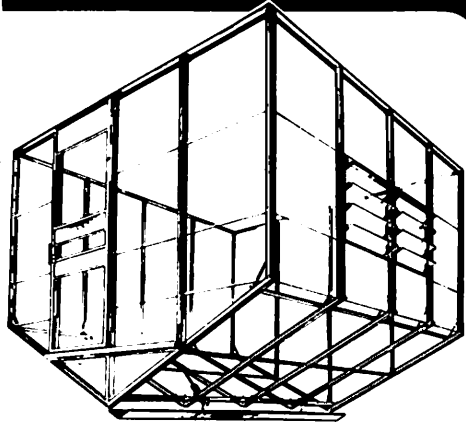
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