ORCHIDS IN NEW ZEALAND



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Cover Photo: Cymbidium insigne var album. Photo by courtesy of Andrew Easton, USA.

A rare species can be yours!

Ros Bickerstaff, 12 Enfield Road, Napier.

To be the owner of the sole remaining variety of a rare species poses many problems. How would you cope saving a last surviving plant, so that it can still be enjoyed by future generations of orchid lovers? The problem becomes more acute when it is a clone famous for the progeny that bear its genes. This was what faced Andy Easton.

About four years ago, Andy had procured a division of Cymbidium insigne 'album' AM/RHS 17 from its owner Dr Melquist of Connecticut, USA. At that time, this was the sole surviving plant of this variety. Shortly afterwards, Dr Melquist's plant died leaving Andy Easton with the only remaining clone.

Well aware of the situation, he hopefully attempted to conserve his plant before it was lost to oblivion. He made a self-crossing and was successful in obtaining viable seed. He allowed them to ripen fully before sowing them. This was done deliberately, for his plant has a very weak virus which manifests itself only in the second and third year leaves, and then only in the axils. To prevent the seedlings having this virus, Andy produced them from dry seed. This inhibits the virus from being passed on. The seedlings produced are now husky plants.

They have been deflasked and some are ready for distribution to orchid lovers in an endeavour to conserve this variety of C.insigne, and allow these people to enjoy its beauty.

This plant is presumed to have originated in South Vietnam. The original C.insigne Rolfe was discovered by Georges Bronckart in 1901. He found it growing on the high plains (1500m) of Southern

Annam among sphagnum moss and tall grass.

In 1904, the famous St Albans' firm of Sander's introduced this species into England, where it immediately became a success. It was found to be a realiable breeder, and because of its long-lasting white to pink coloured and fine-shaped flowers, was used extensively by hybridizers. Among these was H.G. Alexander, grower to Lt.Col. Sir George Holford, of Westonbirt.

Quite a number of varieties were discovered in the shipments sent from Vietnam. One of these, a white with red dotted markings on the lip earned an FCC/RHS in 1907. It was this plant that was used by H.G. Alexander as one parent of the famous Cymbidium, C.Alexanderi 'Westonbirt' FCC/RHS (C.eburneo-lowianum x C.insigne FCC/RHS). This was the plant that responsible for the improvement in our modern hybrids: it was later discovered to be a chance tetraploid.

At first, C.insigne Rolfe was known horticulturally as C.Sanderi. Later, it was often known as C.insigne 'Sanderae', especially the clone which gained the FCC/RHS. Although not a strong growing plant, it has a tremendous spike — often from 4ft 6ins to 5ft (about

145cm) — carrying up to 20 beautiful blooms, making it a sight to behold. Andy Easton owns a plant of this rare species, too. However, this is not the best form of C.insigne. According to judges, it is considered that the best shaped variety is C.insigne 'Bieri (syn. 'Beeri') FCC/RHS 31.

Among the plants sent to England from the Vietnam area was a pure white variety which was given the varietal name of C.insigne 'album'. This clone has been found to possess alba genes. This was first C.lowianum discovered when 'concolor' crossed was C.insigne 'album'. This crossing produced the strain of C.Pauwelsii came C.Pauwelsii which "pure AM/RHS 'aureum' colour" clone.

C.insigne 'album' gained its first award in 1917, an AM/RHS, while owned by the orchid firm of Armstrong and Brown of Tunbridge, Wells, Kent. Sixty years later, on 18 March, 1977, when exhibited by Andy Easton at the Santa Barbara Show, it caused a sensation. It was considered to be of such a high standard by the judges of the Pacific South Region that it was awarded an AM/AOS 1977, with 82 points.

Andy's plant likes conditions a little on the warm side, making it bloom freely, as well as helping it to increase in size vegetatively.

By now you may be wondering why I have done so much research upon this species! Well, Andy Easton, who trades under his firm of Featherhill Exotic Plants, Santa Barbara, and who is also manager of Dos Pueblos Orchids, considers that New Zealand has an ideal climate for growing Cymbidium plants. Even though living in the

USA, he is still a New Zealander at heart and wants to offer these seedlings of C.insigne 'album' AM/RHS, AM/AOS to New Zealand orchid growers, so that they can conserve and enjoy this rare species.

There is an ulterior motive behind this offer. The net proceeds of the sales are to go to the "Orchids in New Zealand" Colour Fund to be used at the discretion of the Editor. Andy Easton has already sent the seedlings, in flask to J. Hannah of Papakura Orchids his distributing agent. Some are ready for sale, one per grower, so if you want a plant at a reasonable price see below. You will be helping the Council's Colour Fund by buying a seedling. Also, you will then own for yourself, this rare species, a variety of great historical importance — a Cymbidium classic!

Thank you, Andy Easton for this fine gesture to aid our Council funds.

Cymbidium Insigne 'Album'

Plants will be distributed to delegates who are attending the AGM of the Orchid Council of NZ held at North Shore, 23rd May, 1981. If you want any one of these desirable plants. notify delegate. Cost will vary between \$6 and \$10 depending on size. Number plants is limited so Club Secretaries are asked to write to the details Editor giving requirements. As no distribution will be undertaken. plants must be collected delegates.

THE GENUS ENCYCLIA

by Ron Whitten

The Encyclias with their small attractive flowers, were previously included in the large, widespread genus Epidendrum. they are separated from the reed-stemmed Epidendrums by having pseudobulbs which may vary from small and rounded to long and narrow. The pseudobulbs are topped by two or three leaves and the flower spike, with one or two exceptions, grows from the top of the bulb. The flowers range in size from less than 2cm to over 16cm, the smaller ones often being numerous on the spike.

The most commony grown Encyclia in New Zealand is probably E.ciliare which is found from Mexico to Brazil. Resembling a Cattleya with its tall, slender pseudobulbs it grows about 30cm high. The spidery flowers may reach 12cm or more across and are borne in clusters of three to seven. The yellowish-green sepals and petals are set off by the dainty white lip with its frilly side lobes and long narrow tongue.

Some other species which have made an appearance at monthly meetings are E.atropurpureum, E.citrina, E.cochleata, E.mariae, E.memorale, E.radiata and E.selligera.

E.cochleata and E.radiata are members of a small group of Encyclias with shell-shaped lips, the flowers opening 'upside down.'

E.cochleata is known as the Cockleshell Orchid from the shape of its lip. The species name means 'shell-like'. The slender yellowish-green sepals and petals hang down from the dark green and purple striped lip which is almost black on the back, somewhat reminiscent of a five-armed octopus. E.cochleata was the first epiphytic orchid to flower in England, in 1787.

E.mariae is a very attractive species with its clear green petals and sepals contrasting with its

large spreading lip marked with green lines in the throat.

E.citrina. called by Corticoatzontecoxochitl. Indians was long thought to be a Cattleya and is still considered as such for registrations. The grows in a pendant manner with small greyish pseudobulbs and greyish-green leaves. The scented flowers usually grow singly, hang down, and are only partially opened. The petals and sepals are bright vellow and have a waxy appearance and heavy substance. The lip is also bright yellow and margined with a white band.

Encyclias grow well in Auckland's moderate climate, many species not requiring any winter heat although they should be protected from frost. In general they require conditions a and cooler drier Cattleyas. They should be allowed to dry out between waterings or the roots will rot. During winter, when there is little if any growth, watering should be reduced to a level just sufficient prevent to pseudobulbs from shrivelling. Like all epiphytic orchids, Encyclias like coarse, free draining Repotting should be done as the new growths appear.

The pendant E.citrina is best grown on a piece of cork bark or ponga as it is particularly

susceptible to rotting of the roots through overwatering. This means of culture also enables the plant to be displayed to best effect to appreciate the pendant flowers. E. mariae may also be grown to effect in this manner.

If your Encyclia is not growing well find out about its native habitat and try to duplicate the conditions. All that may be needed is slightly cooler or warmer conditions, or less water.

MY 10 FAVOURITE CYMBIDIUMS

by Ron Maunder, Tauranga

A task to choose only ten! I've looked back over previous issues and agreed with most of those chosen. Perhaps its all been said? But no, not if I forget the showbench shape requirements and leave out my own favourite seedlings which aren't generally available. There are plenty of less famous Cymbidiums wouldn't win shows or awards, but by their bright and unusual colours or simple charm stop most growers in their tracks. I have selected a few from both categories which get pleasure in seeing flower.

- 1 KURANDA a mating of two Australian species, suave and madidum. Many long arching sprays of 20 or so 25mm bronze/yellow scented blooms with maroon barred lips. Flowers around Christmas and January.
- 2 ERYTHROSTYLUM 'Magnificum' FCC/RHS the parent of the early whites. A May flower-

ing pure crystalline white species with red column and lined lip. An unusual shape perhaps but plenty of spikes and compact miniature plant growth.

- 3 MAGNA CHARTA 'DELL PARK' AM/RHS a striking golden brown, depending how you flower it. Not a new orchid but one of three or four interestingly coloured clones from this cross. Not commonly seen.
- 4 HUNTER'S POINT 'SUNSET' an eye stopping orange with up to 18 flowers. Flower in high light and then shade to get full colour. Will become a very popular and sought after plant when more people see it in flower. Very productive with upright spikes.
- 5 ROSARITA 'RED RIVER' HCC/AOS a hard colour to describe, mauve/purple perhaps. A new colour for your collection. Small plants were around a few years ago and will become hard to get when it is seen in flower by more growers.
- 6 FASCELLA 'RUBY' a third generation devonianum seedling from a New Plymouth collection. Not miniature in plant growth. Around 15 black/maroon flowers with white lips and matching maroon spots. Vigorous grower with long spikes. The darkest flowers I've seen. Has been converted to 4n. Not a shapely flower, but has unusual colour. 7
- 7 FORT WILLIAM 'HAMSEY' AM/
 RHS flowered on a mature plant this is one of the best shaped greens I know. Ten flowers with magnificent Baltic marked lips. A real eye stopper. Midseason.
- 8 RIEVAULX 'COOKSBRIDGE'
 AM/RHS massive spikes often
 1 metre long with 14 and more

rose-pink flowers. Flowers too late to be seen at spring shows. typical vigorous Α Babylon hybrid.

9

10

ASTRONAUT 'RAJAH' FCC/ RHS a striking flower! Everyone wants it but there never seems to be any available. An unusual combination or orangy maroon and gold - depends how you shade it, with light maroon blushed lip.

MISS MUFFET I have several different devonianum crosses and can recommend them all. This one is crossed with pumilum and gives many pendulous stems of 10 and more 50 mm starry pink/maroon blooms with dark maroon lips. A beautiful hanging basket type miniature and much admired.

John Easton Award

The John Easton Premier Award for 1980, was awarded to Mr H.J. Poole, O.B.E., of the Lower Hutt Orchid Circle. The presentation was made at the annual Show of the Hawke's Bay Orchid Society, on September, 27th. There were ten nominations and Mr Poole's was judged the most worthy contribution for "the promotion and culture of orchids" over the years. He has always been available for passing on his knowledge and advice to those seeking help. He donated his collection of orchids to the Lower Hutt City Council, and this is housed in suitable accommodation in Tutukiwi House.

The \$50,000 required to build this glasshouse was raised by a local effort of the Lower Hutt Rotary Club. Tutukiwi House is well worth a visit.

ORCHID GROWING IN HAWKE'S BAY

by B.F.C.

Hawke's Bay with its highly fluctuating temperatures (from - 8 deg. C. up to 32 deg. C. is sometimes an enigma to amateur growers, mainly in being able to provide optimum conditions for various genera. This can be a very frustrating and expensive exercise at times, particularly with hot dry summer conditions (perfect for red spider, scale and chewing insects). Then winter's cold winds and frosts down to minus 8 deg. C. gives a 40 deg. temperature variation (also perfect for losing those warm growers).

Conditions close to the coast are more temperate, and greater range of genera can be grown quite successfully. However inland conditions are much harsher and

growers are more limited.

While a few of us are able to grow various types successfully, in the main, Cymbidiums, standard and miniatures predominate. temperature fluctation, usually at least 20 deg. at night in December, January and February suits the requirements of this particularly for spike initiation. Also our high light intensity accentuates colour, but increased shade is necessary to hold colour in greens, pastels and whites.

Paphiopedilums do well with 50 percent shade and a fan for air movement. AII need frequent mistings during hot summer conditions. Very few Odontoglossums, Miltonias, hybrid Dendrobiums or Vandas seem to be in evidence yet. Species are quite popular, both overseas and our New Zealand native varieties

grown more of late. A few growers growing Cattlevas Phalaenopsis very well, some high quality blooms showing up from time to time.

As in most districts orchid growing is rapidly spreading as more people become aware of their ease of cultivation.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Dear Mr Boon,

Once again it is a great pleasure to offer our thanks to the wonderful Orchid Growers and Society members who so warmly hosted our group on our visit to your country. The First Orchid Conference and Show were really an outstanding effort by the many Orchid Societies in New Zealand and they are to be congratulated for the excellent Show they staged so well.

it would be next to impossible to write a personal Thank You to the many people that made our tour through your country such a memorable event. When given the opportunity to host us the various Societies did so whole-heartedly and pointers through the pages of your magazine want to thank all that contributed to such a pleasurable stay in New Zealand. I personally will be looking forward to further renew the trips to growing friendships that have been nurtured in the 'hothouse climate' of orchid growing.

Sincerely, Ben Hardy. Tour Director, 1980 Kiwi Orchid Tour

BOOK REVIEW Breeding Variegata

by W.W. Goodale Moir & May Moir

Twenty-four chapters of interesting reading, particularly for those who have started a collection or are considering growing Variegata Oncidiums. The Authors have over thirty years experience in this field and through their writing have shared their considerable knowledge with readers.

Each chapter is a complete essay which makes for easy reference on any aspect covered in the book, this includes descriptions of species and natural hybrids, distribution of species, care, shape and size of flowers, the time of year to make crosses, breeding spotted flowers colour. Although and written specifically on Variegata Oncidiums many of the remarks on breeding can apply to other genera. One point that comes strongly through the text is the need to keep records, not only successes but also failures so that a full assessment can be made.

From a small beginning the Moirs have opened a new world of desirable and exciting hybrids with to further breeding avenues.

These small growing beauties will find a place in many collections and this book with eight pages of colour photos and a number of black and white prints is recommended to experienced and potential growers alike.

P.B.

Published for Harold L. Lyon Arboretum, by the University Press of Hawaii, Honolulu.

ODONTOGLOSSUM ALLIANCE

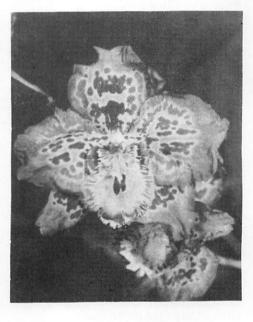
Albert H. Blackmore, Northcote

In this article I will not only give reasons for my love of Odontoglossums but I will go into some detail in respect of their growing habits, so that the reader can better understand the plant itself and the results of my experiments.

Seeing Odontoglossums in full flower, when Mrs Blackmore and I attended the third World Orchid Conference in 1960, introduced them to us. The Conference was held at the Royal Horticultural Society of Great Britain Headquarters in Vincent Square, London.

Usually at a World Orchid Conference a special Orchid Show is staged, drawing entries from world wide, but the 1960 Conference incorporated orchids with the famous Chelsea Flower Show. Conference entrants were indeed blessed by this co-operation, as they were privileged to see the Show before the general public were admitted and to our delight the orchid section gave the finest display that I have ever seen.

At the Chelsea Show the Display of Charlesworth's really captivated both of us as it contained members of the Odontoglossum Alliance which I had never seen before. I said to my wife that they were the orchid flowers of the future for me. The twenty years that have passed have not altered in any degree that resolve. I learned that the man behind their culture and breeding was a Mr Norris, who presented a paper at the Conference on them. We took a trip to the nursery of Charlesworth's at Haywards Heath where Mr Norris showed us around and I gave him an order for some young plants.



Although I had associated with orchid growers in New Zealand for some years I had never seen an Odontoglossum flower in the flesh before and on arriving home and telling our leading growers of my purchase I was told that I would do as they had done — kill them. I read Mr Norris's paper carefully, but found that English conditions were different from ours in New Zealand, especially here on the North Shore. I then searched for any other written word on the subject and found that although they were indigenous to Central America and the Northern

portion of South America, about 20 degrees north and 20 degrees south of the Equator, they were never found below 2000 to 3000 metres altitude. This meant that they did not know the difference between summer and winter and were cool growers.

The problem was, how would I at North Shore, Auckland, obtain a altitude with an temperature? The books that I read did not give the temperature required nor did they give any information regarding the day and night differences, if any, but they did say that Odontoglossums grew in bush clad mountains, so, with this sparse knowledge experimented with some degree of success and also with failures.

GROWING HABITS

As the leaves were soft to feel and wide. I concluded that the plants would want shade, but the degree of shading had to determined by trial. I found that if they were kept too shaded the new became flabby arowths appeared weak, but if the sun got at them in summer even for a short time the new growth, although firm, to be restricted. appeared therefore grew them in a position where they got some shade, this being more during summer ! than winter. I have also found that flower production was greater in the position where the plant grew best. I have tried with success growing them in the shade of Cymbidiums. I now grow them on their own as by so doing they can be controlled much better.

GROWING MEDIUM

I concluded that if they grew naturally under cover of bush they would probably want conditions similar to New Zealand orchids. 1 tried an open containing sphagnum moss and also one with coarse pine bark, both were satisfactory. I have had no success with a mixture containing pumice. Let me say that there could have been other factors that led to with failure pumice. probably watering, but I will deal with this later.

GROWING NATURE AND STRUCTURE OF PLANT

Odontoglossums are epiphytic: the roots are fairly fine and are inclined to keep close to surface. They love to enter any growing on top of compost and are often showing above the surface and suffer if allowed to dry out. New roots come with the new growths but old roots do not last many years and must be removed when repotting. plants, if healthy, will flower when quite small, but it is advisable to remove the flowers soon after opening as the new growth does not start until this is done. The next spike will appear on the side of the new growth as soon as it starts to bulb up. By the time the flower is out the bulb is completely formed. Usually one spike forms on each new growth, but when the plant is in very good condition a spike will develop on both sides. If the plant is well grown it is possible to gain a new growth from an old bulb by putting a cut through the plant, leaving two bulbs behind the cut and allowing at least two in front. I do not advocate this as the whole plant will be weakened, often with the lot being lost. Experience has told me to be satisfied with one healthy plant, so I have given up the idea. (To be continued)

ORCHIDS FROM THE FLASK — PART TWO —

By Mrs P.L. Greenfield

In the first part I explained how young orchids are removed from the flask and potted up into their community pots.

Depending on the orchids and the time of the year, I usually leave the plants in their community pots for several months. Some orchids will just sit in the pots for some considerable time before making any new growth. Others will virtually start making new growth from the word go. The initial setback can be caused by flasks being sent out too early. By this I mean where the orchids in the flask have not developed enough, i.e. reached stopper height, to withstand the rigours of life outside the flask. When the plants seem firm in the pot and have been established for several months, now is the time to pot them on. (If it is winter, wait until sprina).

There are two ways of doing this. The first one is where the plants are potted up in a plastic seed tray which will take up to twenty-five plants. The other way is to pot up the plants individually into small pots and place these into seed trays. They will usually take twenty plants done in this way.

My first batch of orchids from the flask were replanted directly into a seed tray after they had made excellent progress in their community pot. Some have formed their first leads after only eight months from the flask. At the same time as I planted twenty five plants to a plastic seed tray, I potted up what I thought was the best plant

individually. After several months, the plants in the trays had made more rapid growth than the plant in a pot. My husband proffered his explanation, "It's competition you know." Of course it was. After all, in the natural state of things, it is competition which selects the fittest and best plants to survive. So, whether planted up en masse in the seed tray or individually into pots placed in a seed tray, the trick is during the early stages at least, to keep the plants reasonably close together and the "competition" will stimulate them to grow quicker, thus competing with each other for light and space. Make sure however, that plants do have enough root and leaf room for adequate development otherwise the converse is true.

Plants grown in seed trays have done very well, the only difficulty being in that with having a virtually unrestricted root run, they have put out very long roots and this has made it difficult to pot them up. I now like to pot my orchids up individually, placing these in a seed handling after tray for easier from their removina them community pot as this makes for easier repotting later on.

From now on it is a matter of potting on when the plants need it, but this must be done on an individual basis as each plant grows at a different rate to its neighbour.

Some have quite extensive root systems and need moving on more frequently. Sometimes plants tend to "sit". I usually pot these on into fresh mix. They may not need moving up to a larger pot, but I find that re-potting does in most cases provide a new stimulus to make new growth. This is usually more prevalent in the slower growing varieties.

I like to keep young plants growing under optimum conditions until they reach the first bulb and growth stage, whereby they will be better able to withstand cooler arowing conditions. Of course this is not always hard and fast either as some varieties will make quite a large plant on the first bulb and lead whereas others will grow their first lead while still quite a small plant. Some discretion is thus necessary in this situation. If the plant has made a good sized bulb before throwing out its first lead, then it has more reserves to fall back on than the smaller plant.

Plants at this size should now under shadehouse thrive conditions. Of course they could be grown under these conditions at an earlier age but I like to build them up to the first bulb size as quickly as possible, then they are more able to sustain slightly adverse conditions better than if they are subjected to them at the earlier age. If your shadehouse is large enough, part of it could be better protected with the addition of plastic at the sides, thus offering more congenial growing conditions for your younger plants. I have taken it for granted that the roof is fully covered to exclude rain. From now on they can be grown on and treated the same as your mature orchids. Orchids from the

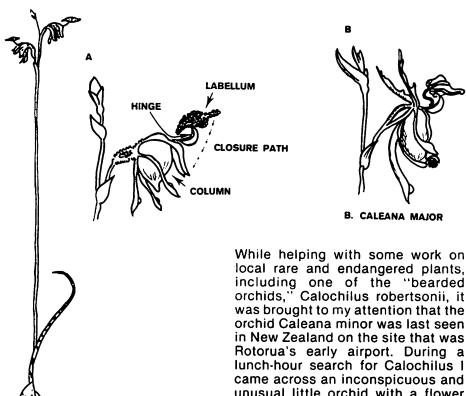
flask can usually be expected to flower from the third year on.

If your plants are grown outside, I found from personal have experience, that orchids which only produce one or two large bulbs per season, do not seem to flower as well as those plants which produce a larger number of bulbs. I think this is due to the plants which have fewer bulbs, have fewer leaves in relation to the flowers and if the weather is inclement and cold during the winter, this causes the plant to use up more of its reserves in withstanding the rigours of winter than its many bulbed partner, which because of its greater leaf area, can better withstand the cooler conditions and is able to sustain its flowers in better condition. The most obvious difference between these two types is in the size of the blooms, with those on the one or two bulbed plants being smaller normal. These plants particular, should be housed and under shade-house arown conditions which will afford more protection from the elements.

Caleana Minor

Chris Ecroyd, Forest Research Institute, Private Bag, Rotorua

Many orchids have been given common names such as "spider orchid," "bee orchid," "fly orchid," but few leave as little to the imagination as do members of the genus Caleana which are commonly known as "duck orchids." Two members of this genus, Caleana major and Caleana minor, are illustrated; they are known as "flying duck orchid" and "small duck orchid" respectively. In these orchids the labellum is shaped like a duck's head and at its base there



A. CALEANA MINOR

is a hinge-like structure which represents the duck's neck. The are represented predominantly by the downward pointing broad column. A small insect alighting on the hinged labellum overbalances the labellum which shuts the insect in the pouch formed by the column. After a struggle which it seems dislodges the pollen and self-fertilises the flower, the insect escapes.

This small genus consists of about four species, all Australian with only Caleana minor extending to New Zealand. It is the only New Zealand orchid with а trap mechanism to force small insects to carry out pollination.

local rare and endangered plants, including one of the "bearded orchids," Calochilus robertsonii, it was brought to my attention that the orchid Caleana minor was last seen in New Zealand on the site that was Rotorua's early airport. During a lunch-hour search for Calochilus I came across an inconspicuous and unusual little orchid with a flower that snapped shut when touched. It was only 15cm tall with a very slender red stem and small green flowers with a purple labellum and reddish tips to both sepals and petals. I recalled the name Caleana minor but did not really believe I would have had the good fortune to find the plant.

A thorough search of the immediate area revealed another two plants but these were mere broken stalks with no flowers remaining. A study of the literature and records confirmed my find as C. minor and revealed that this orchid had not been recorded in New Zealand since 1924. With only three plants known on a single site this little orchid must be one of the rarest plants in New Zealand. Fortunately it is not as rare in Australia.

drawings by Mrs J. Revell.

GROWING ORCHIDS INDOORS

by Shirley Goodwin, Rotorua

To many people, growing orchids indoors means moving their Cymbidiums into the living room when they are in bloom. Not many are aware that most types of orchids will grow and flower indoors quite happily if a little thought is applied to their needs.

A look at the natural conditions of the plants you are intending to grow is necessary to see if you are able to provide a reasonable substitute and orchids can be surprisingly tolerant to a different environment certain essential provided requirements are met. Because orchids have different light and sun needs, most windows in an average house or unit can be utilised. However, since all-round ventilation is necessary, plants should not be placed directly on a window-sill or on the floor. If a permanent growing area is desired, a 'bench' made of wooden slats set over a metal tray filled with gravel (for humidity) is ideal; otherwise, anything similar such as old oven shelves and baking dishes will work just as well and require no financial outlay. It is possible to have a good growing set-up without needing to purchase equipment. expensive abandoned glass fish-tank serve as a small 'Wardian Case' little ingenuity. Some with humidity-loving plants will thrive on kitchen window-sills bathrooms with diffused light. Most orchids will flower if they have four hours of direct sun a day, but others need shade or filtered sunlight. Any good reference book should be able to give you information of this kind. Vandaceous plants generally need more sunlight to bloom than most home-growers can provide.

Ventilation is important to all orchids, but it is preferable to open windows not directly next to your

plants, as they dislike drafts and sudden changes of temperature. If this is not possible, it may be better to buy a small inexpensive fan to provide air movement. Watering plants indoors is rather different from greenhouse or shade-house watering. Artificial heat means the need for more water. High humidity is not necessary provided the night temperatures are fairly Humidity can be raised in hot weather by misting around the plants, although a certain amount will be produced all the time if you are using a gravel pan. For misting, a plastic spray-on window cleaner bottle is quite adequate.

One big advantage of indoor growing is that plants are far less likely to be attacked by insect pests, and being in the home, any pests or diseases that do occur are more likely to be discovered in the early stages.

Growing indoors provides the opportunity of having warmer-growing plants that otherwise would not be practical as they could not survive outside or in a shadehouse. With a little judicious selection, it should be possible to have blooms all year round — on your own window-sills.



The Red Dendrobium of Vanuatu

by Ron Maunder

Further on we passed through an Australian settlers coconut plantation with signs "This is Emau Land" nailed on his trees. At the village I closely questioned when I asked permission to climb in the Bald Hills area. Seems geologists had climbed up and removed rock samples without permission. The island has deposits of manganese a few kilometres away.

The chief and I got on well when he found I knew volunteers he had worked with several years before and I was given his son's bed for the night in their concrete block house. It was indeed an honor to be invited to stay and to dine with them.

Next day I woke to a horrible scraping noise outside. I looked out and found the trussed coconut crabs in a erosene tin under my window! After breakfast collection of boys about 8-10 years old arrived and they were to escort me. I set off without the tennis boots because their shape had proved they were made for Asian feet! My jandals broke after the first hundred metres of climbing so I was barefooted once again! Out of the lower bush we crashed onto the tussock, led by boys who had no idea of any track. The ground consisted of jagged grey scoria-like rock amongst the grass clumps. I found this rock very painful to walk on so used the grass clumps, which slowed progress. Up ahead there were great yells and chatter back and forth in native dialect. When I reached them the boys were wrecking the styrene foam box of a meteorological balloon transmitter and tearing up the parachute. By the time they caught me up I was

admiring vast areas of purple spathoglottis, one kilometre further on. I collected several clumps from their dry sunbaked habitat and headed on towards the bushline Below, the sun shimmering on a calm sea and children in the village signalling us with mirrors. Out to sea were the many islands with the chain of volcanic cones leading N.W. towards the Solomon Islands and New Guinea. It was a perfect day and I can clearly remember that wonderful panorama as I write.

In the shelter of the bush the air became cooler and more pleasant. It was very open and soon I came across the masses of epiphytes so typical several hundred feet above sea level in the tropics. The Dendrobiums were different from others I'd seen on Epi Island, but there were Coelogynes and Phreatias and Bulbophyllum which looked the same.

The boys' enthusiasm once they learned what I wanted had to be curbed. I only wanted two of each not 200! I soon announced we should return to the village as I thought I might have to thumb a ride back to Vila and was a bit worried whether there would be much traffic with all the celebrations. The boys

knew a quick way down - I should have known better! We went down into a gully and then almost straight down. We clambered down the side of water falls and criss crossed the same creek many times. At one stage I inspected a huge fallen tree and collected new species of Sarcanthinae like orchids and one Earina which resembled our from the mucronata upper branches. When the creek levelled out we came across rock pools and the boys pointed excitedly into them. I asked them what it was and they shyly said in perfect English that it was "ura sir". I was fascinated at the name similarity when I saw a "Kura" shoot out from under a moved rock. The boys were afraid to catch them so I caught a dozen or two and they gingerly held them behind the claws as we set off again. On and on through thick bush, the occasional coconut palms, taro and banana palms. Obviously these had once been gardens and when the fertility waned had been left to go back to jungle. Finally we reached the road almost opposite the village and I was the centre of attention immediately with everyone capable of walking! No one had ever bothered bringing down these plants before and I tried to explain what I did with them. I showed them colour photos of the Cymbidium houses and explained how we shipped the flowers overseas. This created much interest, but I had to deter them from going into the export industry there and then! I was shown a few plants of a ceratobium or antelope-type Dendrobium - probably D.gibsonii, with pretty lemon flowers and purple lined lips. These were growing on trees along the

foreshore with terete-leaved strivlatum-type Dendrobiums, I had seen D.gibsonii for sale in Vila in the native open air market the day before. For \$20 I was able to hire the village 'taxi' and it soon filled up with "freedom riders." I was given the passenger seat to myself however! I did a bit of collecting on the way back along the road but felt holding up the passengers from seeing the Bastille Day festivities. As we drove into Vila we followed long distance runners and crowds lined the streets clapping and cheering. I felt like royalty and had to hide when I saw any of my NZ mates watching the procession!

The next day we left for New Caledonia aboard an Air Nauru plane. During the 12 hour stopover at Tontouta Airport we hired a bus to take us the 40 kms in to Noumea. The countryside was much drier and more barrenthan the New Hebrides. but the scenic views of Noumea were worth seeing. The huge throbbing nickel mine belching dirty brown smoke on the waterfront in Noumea contrasted with the quiet country-town image of Vila which has no heavy industry. In the evening we boarded the large Air NZ jet and headed for home. It had been a wonderful three weeks, but now it was back to work. Back to pay rates, overdraft, taxes and to conform to the pressures of civilisation-Ironically I envied their happy carefree life, and yet they wanted independence which would give them all those things I dreaded coming home to. Someday I know I will return to see my friends again in my Vanuatu island paradise and perhaps collect more orchids.

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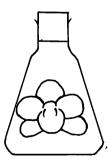
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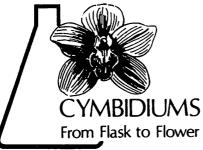
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