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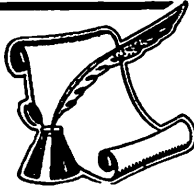
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



The Editor,

Dear Sir,

I should like to thank Des Leahy for his comments about the growing of *Cymbidium insigne* 'album.' Yes, it is quite apparent now that the seedlings are not "husky," but, rather the opposite. When I prepared my article in January, 1980, the plants were ready to be sent, in flask, to John Hannah, by Andrew Easton. In his letter to me (dated December 18th, 1979), Andrew stated "The seedlings are nearly ready to come out of the bottle and are very husky." They arrived in New Zealand at the end of January, 1980, and were expected to go on sale in June, 1980. However, it was nearly a year later before some could be distributed to growers. Naturally, after this long delay, some of my script needed to be altered. Unfortunately, the word "husky" slipped through without change. As Des Leahy has stated correctly, the plants need plenty of care as they are a delicate species to grow. I have a division from H. G. Alexander's clone of his pink variety of *Cymbidium insigne*, and even this, is not a strong grower; it needs plenty of "tender, loving care" to make it bloom.

Ros Bickerstaff
Napier

Dear Sir,

How often it is stressed that we should be careful when buying new orchid plants. I have been collecting for about five years and have many paphs, cattleyas, cymbidiums and other genera of which three quarters are large bucket or tub size plants. The cymbidiums have been purchased over five years, one here, two or three there and a dozen at a time on some occasions.

About December 1980, I noticed odd patterns on some mature cymbid leaves and kept my eye on this for a few weeks. During this time I read all I could lay my hands on regarding orchid diseases. Finally, in mid-January as I was going to buy some new plants from a well established orchid grower in Papakura, I decided to take along some of the affected leaves in a polythene bag and ask his advice.

The kind gent had a bit of a laugh at my ignorance and after he'd thoroughly examined the leaves, assured me there was nothing to panic about as he had often had

the same problem. He launched into the saga of the "something or other mite" as the culprit and how ants play a big part in carrying the mite about etc. I asked the grower if he thought a D.S.I.R. check would be wise. He laughed and said it was definitely this insect that caused that damage and I was panicking and being over dramatic. All I had to do was to spray with orthene every 6—8 months and worries on this one would be over.

But, they were far from over. I sprayed with orthene within a week and forgot the problem until mid-May when I noticed a lot of new young leaf shoots had very light and dark streaks in them, far worse than any I had found on the mature leaves. Being a member of the North Shore Orchid Society, I slipped some of the affected leaves into polythene bags and sought the advice of some knowledgeable members of the society. "Not sure," "Looks suspect," were the general comments and to take samples to the D.S.I.R. was the advice. Twenty-eight plants so far out of my collection are positive virus infected, about five or six small plants and the rest are large bucket size which have flowered many times. About \$500 worth have to be burned.

I know this virus was not in my collection before the 1980 flowering season and can only guess that one of the 'in flower' plants I bought at that time must have been the culprit and I have stupidly spread the virus when cutting flowers. In the months that followed my plants have merrily rubbed leaves in the breeze and I have tended and cared for them, tearing off the odd damaged leaf and so helping to spread the trouble further.

I am hopping mad at myself for not reading the signs and for not getting a D.S.I.R. check sooner. I am also mad that a so called full time professional grower can be selling the virus so smugly. I know now, my own mistake was in not flaming my cutting gear. It has been an expensive lesson.

J.E.W.

Auckland

The letter continues with advice to all growers, that when purchasing plants do not be tempted to buy bargain specials and no matter who the seller, check the plants very carefully for imperfections.

Ed

WANTED TO BUY

Bulbs or rhizomes of terrestrial (ground) orchids, excluding *Pleione*, *Bletilla*.

Mrs M. Pound,
60 Shakespeare Road, Wanganui

Orchid Hunting in New Zealand

Ros Bickerstaff, Napier

Last December I had the pleasure of being invited to spend a camping holiday over Christmas and New Year at a friend's farm on Great Barrier Island. It was a hectic rush in the two weeks available, to make all our travel arrangements, get our camping gear together, provisions to last us a couple of weeks and check my plants so they would be able to outlive my five weeks' absence from home, as I was going to return via New Plymouth.

We made our way to Auckland, after picking up our daughter at Thames, arriving just in time to buy fresh vegetables and fruit at the Bombay Hills. Next morning at an unearthly hour, we arose, breakfasted and were driven to the wharf with our terrific load of gear. Had to be on board at 6.30 am as we cast off at 7.00 am. On board we were fortunate to have the company of three members of our friends' family who were spending the Christmas holidays at home also. Luckily, had a calm crossing so arrived mid-morning fit and well.

We landed at the Tryphena Wharf, on the opposite side of the bay from Tryphena, and were met by our friends with a big truck to take our mountain of gear, their children and their pile of gear. All squeezed on.

It was not long before I saw the first orchid. A few kilometres from the wharf we passed through a patch of bush as we rounded a knoll on the unsealed road. There, on an overhanging branch was a massive *Dendrobium cunninghamii* in full flower. A really beautiful sight. It augured well for the holiday. Later, as we were crossing the series of ridges to get to the eastern coast, many more *D. cunninghamii* were seen, but none as large as the first. As we passed numerous patches of cut bracken fern close to the clay cuttings through which the road wound, the dried stems of what looked like *Thelymitra* could be

seen. However, on later examination, I discovered they were *Orthoceras strictum*. This *O. strictum* is one of the commonest terrestrial orchids I found growing on the southern half of the Barrier; it grew along the sides of the roads, on open ground and along the sides of the bush tracks always in sunny locations. Unfortunately, time did not permit me to wander over the northern half of the Island to see if it was as plentiful there.

My first bush walk was to some hot springs. We had to traverse an undulating track, often wading through muddy, swampy areas until we came to some shallow pools some seven or eight kilometres from the road. Naturally, we stretched out in the warm water of the pool but any effort to roll around or wash the mud off our legs stirred up the muddy bottom and leaf particles. On this walk I saw three orchid species: *Dendrobium cunninghamii*, *Orthoceras strictum* and *Drymoanthus adversus*. The *D. cunninghamii* was growing on large trees on the ridges well into the bush, high above the warm pools. The *O. strictum* was to be found almost all along the track wherever it was able to get the sun and had good drainage, often close to clumps of bracken fern in porous, pumicy sand. None was seen anywhere near the swampy sections of the track. As for the *D. adversus*, it was found growing only

on tall manuka well out of reach, five to eight metres up and usually on the eastern side of the trunk where they could get the early morning sun; the plants were often quite large with their velamen covered roots stretching for metres along the trunk, exposing it as an orchid epiphyte to those who look for such signs.

A few days later I went exploring up one of the smaller valleys close to our friend's home. A small creek trickled down from the bush-covered hillside; on either side were fern-clad banks overhung by light scrub and secondary growth. Here and there in slightly open patches, were the dry stalks of *Pterostyllis* species showing through the carpet of fallen leaves. I collected a few of their tuberous bulbs to grow at home so I could try to identify them. From the size of the stem and the shape of the dried seed pods they resembled *P. banksii* or *P. banksii* var. *patens*. Nothing else seemed to exist in the orchid line, so I started to wend my way homewards down the creek. A couple of hundred metres before coming out into the open fields I saw something that attracted my attention. A few tall dry stalks were standing sixty or more centimetres high out of the leafmould below the interwoven branches of a grove of about twenty karaka trees. From the dried seedheads, I suspected what they were. I carefully scratched away the leafmould and found what I had suspected — the club-shaped tuber of a *Gastrodia*. From its shape and that of the dried seedhead, it resembled *G. sesamoides*. (I brought back a specimen to try and identify it, and later, I showed it to Albert Blackmore who also thought it was *G. sesamoides*). I was surprised to find the starchy rhizome only fifteen to twenty centimetres below the surface; in other species of *Gastrodia* I have found, they have been fifty or more

centimetres down into alluvial soil. (N.B. It is impossible to grow *Gastrodia* sp. at home without its host fungi.)

Next day, we all decided to go to a beach a few miles north of our camp-site. We loaded up our friend's truck and set out. We knew we had to walk down a hill with our gear to get to the beach, but no one said it was about three kilometres down the track! However we took it slowly and managed to get there — with all our lunch baskets and barbeque gear, as well as our tins of fresh water as there was none at the picnic spot. On the way down, we passed hundreds of plants of *Orthoceras strictum*, some having over a dozen flowers on them, growing on the clay banks beside the track. Red-brown and yellowish green varieties, although the latter were not very prevalent.

What a delightful beach. It was well worth the long, heavy-burdened walk. A beautiful sandy beach and just a few kilometres out, set in a glassy blue sea, was a group of islands. They could not have been so sheltered, for waves were striking their rocky bases sending up tremendous showers of white spray. After a swim and lunch, my friend and I went exploring along the beach. There were traces of chipped obsidian to be seen high up on the sand dunes and at one end of the bay, below a tree clad slope, were traces of an old Maori encampment. Beyond was a grove of taraire trees and clinging to their smooth trunks were small clumps of *Drymoanthus adversus*, nearly always more than three metres from the ground, out of reach of predatory animals. On one trunk I counted twenty clumps. It is one of the most prolific areas I have seen for *D. adversus*, close to a steep cliff overlooking the beach — not 200 metres from the sea.

As I was leaving this grove, two trees with peculiar clumps growing in the forks attracted my attention. One was well out of reach up a high smooth trunk — too difficult to climb without help. The second trees fork was just too high to reach, but with the aid of a strong branch, which lay handy, I was able to procure a small part of the clump. It was a succulent with which I was unfamiliar. I put it in a plastic bag, which I usually carry, and took it back with me to try and identify. It was not until I was passing through New Plymouth about two weeks later that I had it identified by George Fuller as *Peperomia urvilleana*. In "Flora of New Zealand" Vol. 1, it stated that it grew in "coastal and lowland rocky places and light forest, often a low epiphyte," and it certainly answered the description. We halved the plant and now both George and I have some to grow; mine is looking very healthy.

Before I returned to the mainland, I was keen to get some photographs from a high promontory overlooking the sea. The locals called it "the Pa." As I scrambled up the steep rocky sides I found that it must have been used by the Maoris, as there were small terraces where traces of habitation could be seen. I managed to get some good coastal photos, but in addition found growing in the most unlikely places, some orchid plants. Most were *Thelymitras* which had dried stems and seed-heads. I collected a few tubers to grow and identify. They were growing in cracks of rocks facing the sea and would be subjected to salt spray. Near these I found a few stunted growths of *Microtis unifolia*. Another *Thelymitra* was found in thick dry areas of moss, so I have some specimens of these too, with some of their host moss. At the time of writing this, all the specimens I brought home are sending up new growths. Hopefully,

they will flower later in the year so that I can put a name to them.

While on the Island, the feature that impressed itself most on me, was that the vegetation and land form showed at some time past, the Coromandel and Great Barrier Island must have been connected. Everything was so similar.

Cymbidium Companions

by Ros Bickerstaff

MASDEVALLIA, Ruiz and Pavon.

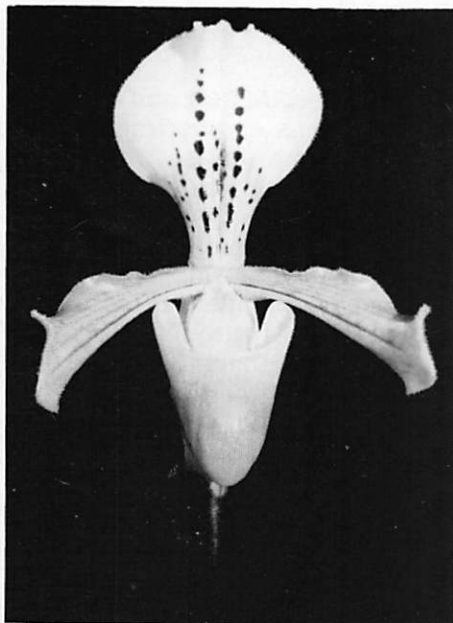
This genus comes from the high levels of the Andes, most being found in Colombia, although some are from Mexico, Brazil, and Bolivia. It derives its name from the Spanish botanist, Masdevall. This genus has caused taxonomists quite a lot of confusion. Today, the "hairy" species have been taken out of the genus, *Masdevallia*, and given a new genus, *Dracula* because of their eerie appearance. *Dracula* means "a little dragon."

This genus contains some interesting, yet beautiful, flowers. Many are really attractive and display themselves well. They are of easy culture and need little care other than putting out slug and snail bait, and keeping a supply of slater baits (traps) laid; the young growths must be "hors d'Oeuvres" or "pieces de resistance" for these pests. I grow my *Masdevallias* in a cool, shady, humid spot, in a compost of moss, fibre, bark, pumice and peat. This compost must be kept moist at all times — I do this with drip irrigation — and the plants soon become a mass of growths. Small 75mm plastic pots are ideal for the larger plants.

I grow *M.coccinea*,
M.schroederiana, *M.ignea*,
M.tovarensis, *M.nidifica*,
M.chimaera.

PUKEKURA CORNER

By George Fuller, N.D.H. [N.Z.],
Curator Pukekura Park, New Plymouth.



Paphiopedilum gratrixianum (Sander) Giullaumin

This is an attractive slipper in its own right and would have instant appeal to those who warm to paphiopedilum species, but for me it has very special sentimental significance also.

In a mixed collection of orchids with commitments to public display it is not always practical to specialise on one genus but inevitably contact is made with enthusiasts who do. One such person was the late Dennis Coe of Hawera who possessed a great

dedication for orchid species in general and paphiopedilums in particular. It was his determination to cultivate every species of slipper obtainable and had his life not been cut short there is little doubt that he would have achieved his objective.

Dennis was an ardent stickler for correct naming and was tireless in his researches into verification. As a result, he was able to name several rare species of other genera which had found their way into this collection unnamed and I quickly gained a great respect for his enthusiasm and his personality.

After Dennis's untimely death a mutual friend purchased his orchids and in a most generous tribute to his memory, donated a collection of species including the paphs to the Pukekura collection. There is a subtle irony in the fact that *P. gratrixianum* came to us thus, but incorrectly labelled as *P. villosum* var. *boxallii*!

The sentimental attachments do not end here. By a wonderful coincidence, at the same time that several New Zealand enthusiasts were gathering a representation of paphiopedilum species equal to the finest overseas, a school teacher named Digby Graham had set himself the task of painting with meticulous detail, every known species of the genus with a view to ultimately compiling a monograph. Removed as we are from the recognised centres of botanical authority and reference, I regarded this ideal as somewhat 'cranky' to be honest — but that was before I had met Digby.

My photographs of rarer species taken in England came to his notice and we were soon in contact.

I very quickly changed my first assessment, for here was a person with academic capability, artistic skill and a dedication which soon convinced me that his objective was obtainable. History was to prove otherwise, however, for Digby also died tragically young with his work uncompleted, but not before he had gained my greatest respect and nurtured a friendship of which I am very proud. It was he who verified the naming of this plant as *P. gratrixianum*.

Readers will now realise that this plant means more than just another in the collection and I hope that I will be forgiven for the sentimentalities but surely this aspect of caring for something because of its special origin serves to enrich our appreciation of life and is not uncommon amongst orchid growers.

The history of *P. gratrixianum* is rather obscure to me and the plant may well be rare — it was certainly masquerading under a false name which is how some varieties have turned up in unlikely places. I am intrigued also by the fact that Hawkes does not mention it — not even as a synonym and that up to 1946 only three hybrids from it had been recorded in a period when paph hybrids far outnumbered cymbidiums. If rarity was not the reason for lack of use in breeding, I am even more mystified, for the bloom has many highly desirable qualities.

In the references I have, mention is made of the similarity to both *P. insigne* and *P. exul* and Digby indicated that it was possible that it is a natural hybrid native to central Vietnam. Introduction was in 1904.

In 'Frederick Sander the Orchid King' there is a tantalising reference to the renowned collector Micholitz finding, in 1904 a paph.sp. in what is

now Vietnam but it is not named. He describes it as a very beautiful and distinct variety of *P. insigne* that was very scarce and then comes a note which would have to come from another era to ours for he apologetically records that he was able to collect only 5—6000 plants!

The habitat was in the spray of cascades and since the natives knew nothing of the plants he reaffirms his belief that the species is very rare. There seems little doubt that this is a record of the original collection of *P. gratrixianum*.

The blooms are about the size of *P. insigne* (approx 100mm) but more richly coloured in having clear green over the lower half of the dorsal sepal with the upper half white, very faintly traced with pink and with defined lines of blackish spots. The basic colour of pouch and petals is what I would describe very unscientifically as like that of honey but in the literature it is given as yellowish-green to yellow. The stem is particularly strong, erect and covered with black hairs.

Rather than suggesting similarities to *P. insigne* and *P. exul* the following are dissimilarities. Very fine hairs over all floral segments except labellum. Unlike the above, spots in ranks rather than in random and not on petals as in *P. exul*. The above have comparatively hairless stems. Leaves plain green but not as thick and rigid as *P. exul*, more erect however than *P. insigne* and suffused at the base with very distinctive black spots which make the plant easily identifiable out of bloom.

The plant is easier to cultivate in our experience than *P. exul*, flowers readily in April or May and the blooms are extremely durable — over two months in good condition, but unfortunately the rate of propagation does not equal *P. insigne*.

Perhaps literature to which I have not had access can clear up the

mysteries surrounding this very desirable slipper. Has an intentional hybrid been made between *P. insigne* and *P. exul* in the recent upsurge of interest in primary crosses of *paphiopedilum* and if so, how do the offspring compare with the champion in our stable?

I hope the answer is forthcoming and I must do a selfing to note any possible variation in seedlings but come what may, this plant will always hold a special interest for me because of the memories it arouses of two fine orchid enthusiasts.

MY TEN FAVOURITE NOVELTIES

by Lil Crouch, Waimauku

Mimi 'Lucifer' Lovely golden brown with a nice red V on the lip.

Starbright 'Capella' A beautiful deep pink and a fantastic spiker.

Jill 'Katalnica' (not *Katalinca* as most people say and write it). A good deep green with a very nicely marked lip and good spike habit.

Ivy Fung 'Radiance' The best maroon I know, edged with white — a great favourite with all who see it.

Orkney 'Pink Heather' Another lovely pink — Beautiful straight spikes of round filled in flowers.

Nonna 'Golden Glades' (*madidum* x *Alexanderi*). Very late yellow, perfumed and extends the flowering season. A very large grower with magnificent spikes.

Mary Pinchess 'Del Rey' A lovely colour — blooms almost any time on a mature plant.

Oriental legend 'Cinnamon' As near to orange as we can get — another favourite with everyone.

Lipper 'Bi-Colour' A large flowered two-tone, red and yellow very eye catching and unusual.

Agnes Norton 'Showoff' A beautiful bronze, well filled in flower with good substance.

What a mammoth task to choose ten of my favourite novelties (sometimes referred to as polymins) from our collection of 350 miniatures and novelties. I hate to tell you how long my list was to start with. However, I managed to whittle it down to a varied selection that should be a help to some of our readers, old and new. These are not only show plants but excellent for export too, with perhaps the exception of *Nonna 'Golden Glades'* which would no doubt be too late for either.

It is possible that my present choice will soon be superseded by newer ones as our seedlings come into bloom.

NEW ZEALAND NATIVE ORCHIDS CHANGES IN NOMENCLATURE

by Dorothy Cooper of Lower Hutt

A number of nomenclature changes in our native orchids result from revisions in recent publications and are summarised below:

Old name: *Caladenia carnea* R.Br.
New name: *Caladenia catenata* (Sm.) Druce.

Reference: 'The Orchardian' June 1980, p. 180

Old name: *C. c a r n e a*
R.Br.var.*minor* (Hook.f.) Hatch

New name: *C.catenata* (Sm.) Druce var.*minor* (Hook.f.) W.M. Curtis

Reference: 'Student's Flora of Tasmania' W.M. Curtis 1979, Pt.4A, Orchidaceae.

Old Name: *C. carnea* R.Br. var. *exigua* (Cheesem.) Rupp.

New Name: *C. catenata* var. *exigua* (Cheesem.) W.M. Curtis.

Reference: 'Student's Flora of Tasmania' W.M. Curtis 1979, Pt. 4A, Orchidaceae.

Old name: *Caleana minor* R.Br.

New name: *Paracaleana minor* (R.Br.) D. Blaxell

Reference: 'Student's Flora of Tasmania' W.M. Curtis 1979, Pt. 4A, Orchidaceae.

Old Name: *Pterostylis barbata* Lindl.

New name: *Pterostylis plumosa* Cady

Reference: 'The Orchadian' Dec. 1979, p.138; June 1980, p.182

Old name: *Spiranthes sinensis* (Pers.) Ames

New name: *Spiranthes sinensis* (Pers.) Ames ssp. *australis* (R.Br.) Kitamura.

Reference: 'The Orchadian' June 1980, p.186.

An Introduction to Viruses for Beginners

by Matthew Rainey of Napier

The first and most important statement is, that you should not worry about viruses, almost forget about them. The only time I would worry is when there is either a severe or mild colour break in flowers or when a plant starts to stand out from other plants. Fortunately I have not struck these disorders in my collection of plants. It is said that slight discolourations in leaves is virus and that the plants

should be put in quarantine or destroyed. This is debatable, as I have heard, seen, and actually grown plants out of this disorder with just tender loving care.

There are viruses that can knock a plant right back, such as Mosaic virus which destroys the flowers and foliage. If my plants caught this virus then I would get rid of the plant or plants. No chemical has been found that can eliminate virus in a plant, although there is a disinfectant for virus contaminated areas such as shelves, paths, glasshouses etc. — but not plants. The name of this substance is Trisodiumorthophosphate.

Commercial growers or people with large collections of orchids usually isolate or dispose of any plants under suspicion of virus. As for you, the hobbist, you may not be able to afford to do this, so just put any sickly looking orchids apart from the rest of your collection and give those plants T.L.C. — Tender loving care.

I would like to make mention of the fact that Matthew is only 14 years of age and comment that orchid growing is obviously not restricted to the 'olds'.

Matthew, as you can see from 'J.E.W.'s' letter to the Editor virus is a condition or disease that one should worry about very much and this applies to new, hobby or commercial growers. I know of people who have isolated their virused plants from the rest of the collection but sooner or later virus will show on others (not in every case of course). It only takes one small infestation of red spider or scale and the disease can spread very rapidly even though your sick plant is some distance away. You are certainly right in saying that some viruses show only for, say, a season and then all visual evidence is gone from the leaves, however if the leaves were analysed you would find that the virus is still in the plant, therefore can spread at some later date.

In closing, I would say, that if you have obvious signs or suspect an outbreak of virus cut a leaf off the plant and send it to your nearest M.A.F. Office requesting a scientific test for virus.

Ed.

Council Essay Award

Magazine subscribers are invited to enter the Council Essay Award which will commence with this issue of the journal and extend until the end of March 1982. The winner will be announced at the AGM of the Orchid Council of New Zealand in May 1982.

The aim of the competition shall be to stimulate the submission of original contributions to the Council's magazine. The subject matter shall therefore be confined to all fields pertaining to orchids. No form of advertising is admissible. Entries should be between 500 and 1500 words in length (one to three pages of our magazine). No limit is set on the number of entries which a competitor may submit. Photos are requested, they can take the form of colour negatives, positives or photos and black and white negatives or photos.

All entries will be judged by the Council's Essay Award Subcommittee. Members of the Council Executive, Editorial Committee, Competition Judges and their immediate families shall not be eligible to compete. Two prizes will be awarded, orchids to the value of \$100 and \$50.

The copyright of all entries shall be vested in the Council. The Editor reserves the right to publish the winning or any other entry, either in full or part, in any issue of the magazine editorially convenient i.e. not necessarily in the issue following adjudication.



CYMBIDIUM COMPANIONS (continued)

ONCIDIUM, Swartz

this is quite a large genus, having over 450 species in it. It is generally referred to as 'dancing ladies' because the flowers have usually wide frilly lips (the skirt), below tepals which resemble a head and arms; these dance in the slightest breeze. The genus name is derived from the Greek *ogkos* — a lump, tumour, or swelling — and refers to the swollen tubercles at the base of the lip. (*ogkos* is pronounced *ongkos*). Its home is in the tropical and subtropical parts of America. Many of this genus need warmth but many can be flowered in cool conditions. Most of my *Oncidiums* are grown cool on blocks of ponga fibre. They are placed in high open spots where they can get as much light as possible. They resent being over watered; I seldom water mine as the rain and dew seem to be sufficient for their needs. Those doing best outdoors are *O.incurvum*, *O.flexuosum*, *O.ornithorhynchum*, *O.cheiroporum* and a *sphacelatum*. Others that are enjoying growing outside are *O.marshallianum*, *O.cucullatum*, and *O.ansiferum*. The equitant *Oncidiums*, like numerous others, need more warmth and shelter, and are best grown in the shelter and heat of a glasshouse, especially during the winter months.

SOCIETY INFORMATION

TARANAKI ORCHID SOCIETY

Change of Officer:
New Secretary: Mrs R. Schellin, 47a
Endeavour Street, New Plymouth.

SOUTHERN COMFORT

by Tuawhenua Hoa

The article from the hitherto 'Silent South' in the previous issue of this magazine must have been of interest to all growers, both those who cope with similar (or worse) growing conditions, and also for those who enjoy the more salubrious (orchid wise) regions of New Zealand. It is hoped that this will inspire folk from other 'silent' regions to share their experiences, trials and successes through the columns of this journal.

The lure of the orchid seems to be such that those who succumb to the siren song will go to great lengths to provide suitable housing and climate for them, even unto sharing bathing arrangements and bedrooms with them. We note that one lecture given by Dr. Arditti at the recent Hamilton Seminar was entitled 'Sex and the single orchid.' There surely must be material in that thought for a veritable series of articles for this magazine.

I have visited orchid growers in some of the cooler areas of the South Island, though not as far south as Invercargill, and have always been impressed by the good standard of culture evident. Maybe it is because of the adverse climatical conditions to be contended with that ensures greater care in culture and in the provision of warm comfort for the plant. Many growers in the North do grow orchids that will just struggle along and flower without much aid in the way of artificial heat. These genera would grow and flower so much better if given the glasshouse temperatures that they really need. Growers in the south have to provide artificial heating even for the 'cool' genera, and so seem to be more inclined to provide suitable temperatures for ALL the genera they grow.

Culture notes for any area are never a complete waste of time for growers in places with differing climate conditions, as surely this is

just a matter of translation of temperatures, sunshine hours etc., as no matter where grown orchids still require the same basics of light, water, nutrients and air.

So please do not discourage the few growers who are willing and able to share their cultural knowledge in Newsletters and in this Magazine by dismissing their efforts as of small value.

The obtaining of Guest Speakers for Society Meetings is a headache for all programme organisers, even in the North Island, especially so for the more remote Societies, perhaps it is because the greater number of growers do not travel widely; they have to stay home to look after their orchids! there is no recognised 'N.I. circuit' or if there is, I wish someone would inform me of it, but there certainly is a 'cameradianship' that extends to all orchid enthusiasts, be they North, South, East or West. Any orchid traveller to the far South (provided he or she can make contact with an orchid grower, not always easy) will prove that the orchid cult does not have barriers, and any true orchid grower is only too willing to talk on the subject.

A few years back, Conzed Inc., the Orchid Council of New Zealand, set up a Programme sub-committee with the object of assembling slide programmes for loan to Societies, and compiling lists of people willing to give suitable talks. Although lists of possible speakers have been circulated to member Societies, we

do wonder what progress has been made with the proposed slide programmes? Conzed Inc. is currently circulating a slide programme of the 1980 R.H.S. awarded orchids through the regional Judging Panels; maybe this programme could also be available to member Societies.

Appeals have been made publicly for slides of orchid blooms for the Conzed Programme Committee from individuals and, that this Committee has funds available for the purpose of copying and/or the purchase of suitable slides. The lack of slides is evidence that this appeal has been unsuccessful and I would suggest a direct approach to some of the many growers who are also camera enthusiasts. This, if successful would bring not only the benefits of orchid slide programmes to all Societies including our Southern friends, but also stimulate interest in flower photography as another aspect of the orchid hobby.

It is surprising that our Southland friends have not been able to purchase orchid plants within New Zealand, or do the many reputable orchid nurseries (not all in the North) consider Invercargill as not part of this country? There is an air service to sunny, snowy Southland, so come on Orchid Nurserymen, send samples of your catalogues and lists to our furthest South Orchid Society!!

Please gentle reader, if heading South, do visit the Orchid Society of Southland, bearing with you a little something for that 'mixed' sales table. Such an assemblage as described must be quite delightful. A South Island holiday, visiting orchid Societies en route could be arranged to include the very interesting Orchid Seminar to be held in Blenheim on 17—18 October 1981.

Never fear 'Miruhiku Muse,' Southland is not forgotten, it is just that it is such a long way from the

main orchid growing districts, and we do rely on your able pen to bridge the distance and so join the 'cameraderie' of orchids and of those who nurture them.

For those who wish to send catalogues or lists the address is: Miss M. McDonald, 396 McQuarrie Street, Invercargill. (Secretary, Southland Orchid Society).

Over the past few months I have received enquiries as to the type and availability of slide programmes. Please direct future enquiries to the Secretary of the Orchid Council of N.Z., Mr D. Lawson, 36 Horopito Street, Waikanae.

Ed.

CYMBIDIUM COMPANIONS

(continued)

Promenaea, Lindley.

This genus was named by Lindley after the famous seer of Dodona, the priestess Promeneia, mentioned by the ancient historian, Herodotus. The species are found mainly in Brazil. These are delightful plants to grow. They are dwarf in habit and flower profusely with 5cm flowers which last about a month. I have had a flower of this size from a 5mm pseudobulb. Bulbs are usually about 2cm tall. Grow in a warm, but not too sunny a spot, where it is able to get shelter from draughts. It likes humid conditions, with a moist, but not soggy, compost that can retain moisture without allowing the roots to be waterlogged. I use a mixture of sphagnum, coarse fibre and small pieces of bark in nearly equal quantities. Keep the pots as small as possible, and rest the plants for a few weeks after flowering.

The only species that seem to be available are *P.xanthina* (syn.*P.citrina*), and *P.stapelioides*, with their hybrid cross, *P.Crawshayana*. These are all of easy culture.

SOME NATIVE ORCHIDS OF THE NORTHERN RIVERS, N.S.W.

by Percy H. Sheaffe

Australia is often referred to as "The lucky country," and we who live in this North-Eastern area of N.S.W. consider that we are blessed with the most favoured part of Australia.

On just what basis this opinion is measured, is open to speculation, but if climate is the criteria, then there is little doubt, or room for argument, that this coastal district is more than just plain lucky.

Historically, Australia has been an isolated island for a very long period, having little or no contact with other parts of the world, and this has resulted in the evolution of a flora and fauna population which is not only unique to Australia, but which in many cases is also indigenous.

In the field of fauna, the whole world is aware of our kangaroos, emus, koalas, platypus, lyre-birds etc., and no doubt most Australians are rather proud of their distinctive animal life, of which the most outstanding feature is the total absence of any savage beasts.

However, it is in the area of plant life that we are concerned today and in introducing the subject of orchids which are native to this area, perhaps we should take a brief look at the habitat, and particularly the tree species which are host to most of the epiphytic species which abound, or used to abound, in our forests.

Geographically, this is a sub-tropical zone, with an average temperature in the vicinity of 15°—21°C, and a rainfall of about 1500mm. There is a narrow coastal plain, merging into the foothills of the Great Dividing Range to the West. The country is clothed in basically two kinds of forest. These are the softwood rain forest areas of mostly red soil country and the hardwood open forest type which

are mainly on the ridges. In addition there is the coastal heath, which hosts a limited variety of terrestrial orchids.

When the pioneers first arrived in the area, they found large tracts of rain forest, which produced a range of softwood timbers, the most notable being red cedar, which is synonymous with the North Coast area.

The rain forest areas and hardwood forests provided two distinct kinds of habitat for both the plant and animal life which lived in them. A characteristic of the rain forest was its high rainfall, producing lush vegetation and heavy shade conditions thus promoting the tendency, nay necessity, for epiphytic plant life such as orchids, staghorns, etc. to inhabit the lofty tree tops, where the sparse upper branches provided just sufficient shade from the hot sun. On the other hand, much of the hardwood eucalypts inhabited drier ridges, thus providing more open conditions, conducive to epiphytic plants growing lower down on the tree trunks, and also provided a home for several terrestrial species. In combination with both these sets of conditions, are to be found many cliff faces and rocky out-crops, which is also the home of a variety of orchids. The third and remaining area is the coastal heath country, covered with low growing heath plants and stunted trees of the

bottlebrush and paperbark types. It is here that many of our terrestrials grow, including phaius, calanthes, and some of the little greenhoods. . (the Pterostylis family).

As a resident of the rain forest and hardwood areas, I became interested, principally, in orchids that made their home on trees or rock faces, with emphasis on the families Dendrobium and Sarcocochilus. Dendrobiums are probably the most representative and wide-spread genus, with D. Kingianum and D. Speciosum being most common, and I believe, of most interest to collectors and hobbyists, and even to commercial interests. Both of these species abound in areas further South, as well as in this North Coast region.

Den. Speciosum, var. Hillii, with long pseudo-bulbs and creamy yellow flowers, has been found on all areas of the North Coast NSW. It grows frequently on rock faces, and also on tall trees of many varieties, including and especially the Moreton Bay Fig, Ficus Macrophylla (Exotica P.1014). Large specimens are common, with many pseudo-bulbs, and carrying dozens of racemes of its creamy flowers. It is unfortunately one of the hosts of the Dendrobium Beetle, and a source of food for wallabies. D. Speciosum is easily grown in bush-houses and gardens, either in pots or in trees, the former requiring very large lumps of potting media.

D. Speciosum often grows in company with D. Gracilicaule, resulting in a natural hybrid, D. Gracillimum. This hybrid appears in a color range from clear white or cream of one parent, to yellow spotted with brown of the other. It is fairly rare, and can grow into a fine specimen, with canes 45cm long and many racemes.

D. Gracilicaule grows on forest trees, usually of the softwood type, and rather high up on the branches,

where its roots may grow out for several feet, wrapping themselves completely round the branch.

By comparison with these two, D. Kingianum rarely grows on trees, favouring rocky ledges, cliffs, and outcrops, where it flourishes in pockets of rich leaf-mould. Although it may be found in crevices and even on bare rocks, it slowly gathers a supply of decaying leaf matter to sustain itself, and is noticeably more lush and healthy when growing in deep compost which has built up on top of rocks. One unusual characteristic is D. Kingianum growing in association with the Sun Orchids, (Thelymitras), usually the two completely mixed together, particularly on rocky cliff tops, in places like Minyon Falls and similar.

D. Kingianum comes in a range of shades from the pure Alba form, through many shades of pink, often with a violet labellum, to a deep red. I have spoken to growers who have in their collection up to 75 different forms. There are also two distinctly different growth habits, one with long pseudo-bulbs up to 30 or 45mm and another with pseudo-bulbs only 5mm. The latter is more common farther South towards Taree, and often produces the darker blooms. The taller form may be found in almost any part of this coastal area, so long as the necessary cliff face or rocks are present. It is usually growing in rather large colonies. The Alba form is rare, and much sought after by collectors.

D. Kingianum has produced several hybrids, the most popular being D. Delicatum (D. Kingianum x D. Speciosum, which also has a colour range of white and several pinks. This was originally a natural hybrid, but has been later produced by several nurseries. In conjunction with D. Gracilicaule it produced D. Suffusum, and with D. Tetragonum produced D. Ellen.

In recent years Mr and Mrs Cannon, of Wayside Nursery, Port Macquarie, used *D. Kingianum* to produce a wide range of *Dendrobium* hybrids, and this orchid has always appeared to be a willing parent. One of the characteristics of these hybrids which I have noted is that they generally follow the *D. Kingianum* parent in growth habit whereas the main contribution of the other parent seems limited to variations in colour, and to a lesser extent, shape of blooms.

D. Falcorostrum is a very specialised orchid, growing exclusively on the Arctic Beech trees which may be found on a few very high elevated areas, such as the Dorrigo Plateau and Comboyne. Wherever the Arctic Beech grows there are large masses of *D. Falcorostrum*, which is a sight to behold when it blooms in the spring. Blooms are glossy white. We find *D. Falcorostrum* difficult to cultivate in our low altitude coastal area, where individual plants have a limited life. However, farther South in Sydney, the same species thrives in collections at sea level, obviously due to the cooler climate, and is considered by many growers to be this country's best native orchid.

Although I have described these few members of the *Dendrobium* family in some detail, there are many others to be found. These include *D. Aemulum*, *D. Tetragonum*, *D. Linguaeforme*, *D. Cucumerinum* and the several "pencil orchids." Some of these have unique and unusual forms of growth.

We now move on to what is considered one of the gems of the North Coast — *Sarcochilus*, with its varieties *Hartmanii*, *Fitzgeraldii*, *Weinthalii*, *Falcatus* and *Olivacious*. The latter is probably most widespread, but to me, the least attractive of the five.

Sar. Falcatus or "Orange Blossom," extends from the South, right along the entire coast, varying somewhat in form, often just in flower size. To the South, on the Comboyne Plateau, it may be seen growing on stunted trees along the roadside, but in my locality is more frequently confined to heavily wooded hillsides, where it may be found clinging to the trunks of small trees just a few metres from the ground. However I have observed that its altitude range is often quite limited, just favouring a relatively narrow band on the side of a hill. I once saw a spreading Red Cedar tree growing in open country, which had one mature flowering plant high in the branches, and literally thousands and thousands of baby *Falcatus* on every branch and trunk of the tree. I was never able to return and see how many survived.

The most breath-taking sight I have ever witnessed in the realm of native orchids must go to *Sar. Fitzgeraldii*, the Ravine Orchid, which is always found close to creeks or waterfalls. On a visit to the Mount Warning area on the Tweed River, a friend took me to see a colony of these plants growing on a rock face which jutted out over a small creek, with two faces forming a V, in area each being about the size of a small house or large room. This rock wall was completely covered with individual plants of *Sar. Fitzgeraldii*, all in full bloom, about two racemes per plant. Note that each plant was individual, no large clumps, and the entire rock was mottled with these pendulous spikes of flowers. A thorough search produced one plant with pure white blooms for my friend, and one with all pinky red blooms for me. Sad to say it did not survive. On a subsequent visit to the area, I found the forest had all been cleared and not a single orchid left. (What price progress).

To be continued.

SPRAYING EQUIPMENT

BY Brian Cosnett

I have few aversions but one is definitely spraying. It seems that growing things and spraying go hand in hand for if one wishes to achieve good results in the vegetable garden, the flower garden, the fruit trees or in the orchid houses there are always the insecticides, fungicides and fertilisers to be applied.

Over the years I have tried many types of spraying equipment with varying degrees of success. This article will outline some of these and give details of a spraying system which I made some years ago to suit my requirements and at a cost of less than \$50.00.

The Hand Syringe

I well recall this, the first sprayer purchased. It has now been relegated to my small glasshouse where it is used primarily to spray water around individual orchids or small groups of orchid plants. Years ago I used it with a 2 gallon bucket of spray mixture on the vegetables and fruit trees. It was a back-breaking job shifting the bucket and bending up and down every few seconds and when the nozzle became blocked with some foreign matter or coarse ingredients of the spray itself — the force I had to exert became such that the blood vessels stood out on my brow. This together with the fact that each year the fruit trees were growing taller and standing on insecure boxes and ladders didn't exactly win the approval of my family, result — Santa Claus produced a brand new push-pull continuous acting syringe.

The Double Acting (Push-Pull) Syringe

This I greeted with delight. No longer did I have to stand on boxes to reach the tree tops and in the garden my 2 gallon bucket was placed in the middle of a row, the pump hose placed in it and a couple of rapid push-pull actions and 'hey presto' we were spraying. It was a

great improvement and while the pump went well it was certainly much easier.

It was during this period that I was bitten by the orchid bug. Glasshouses began to spring up in rapid succession and the spraying requirements increased to indoors as well as outdoors. The inconveniences of spraying in confined spaces whilst moving my arms and the clogging of the nozzle resulted in increased exertion. The muscular pains in the chest and arms the next day made me realise I was not getting younger and also made me think I was a candidate for a heart attack. I started to look at other spraying equipment particularly for indoors and ended up buying a hand powder duster.

Hand Powder Duster

I have found this a very effective piece of equipment for the glasshouses and no doubt it is equally effective in the rose garden. In the winter months I find it excellent when I do not wish to wet the orchids. I use it particularly in the Cymbidium house for dusting the plants with a combined insecticide and fungicide all over and around the plants. This means the flowers and flower spikes are not wetted and the risk of damage

is minimised. Rose dust is filled into the hopper — the handle turned and a continuous stream of dust directed over the plants as I move backwards towards the door.

Caution — Extra care has to be exercised when using dust sprays such as this. I use old clothing — a gauze nose and mouth mask and a clear plastic visor which pulls down over the face thus protecting the eyes as well.

By moving backwards towards the door whilst spraying I beat the dust, as it were, towards the door and of course do not enter the house for some time until the dust settles.

Hand Spray (Atomiser)

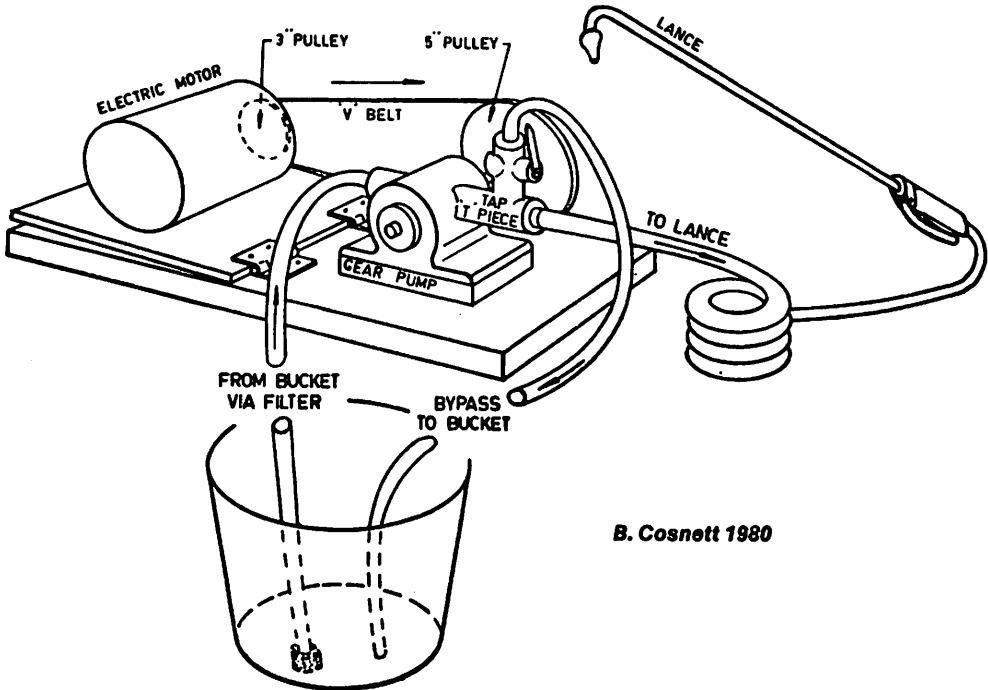
This I bought mainly for the hot house for use on humidity loving

Vandas and Phalaenopsis. There are several of these atomiser sprays available. The plastic squeeze trigger type, the hair spray pump type and the old metal fly spray type are example of these.

Motor Spray Unit

Up until now I had not found the sprayer to meet all requirements. I had no doubt the knapsack type unit would be very good for inside and outside spraying but the cost put me off.

The pump up container type with small lance was also considered but not preferred. A motorised unit with trailing flexible hose and a pistol grip lance which could be used indoors and outdoors formed the basic requirements for the unit made up some years ago and is shown in the following drawing.



Main Components

- a. The gear pump purchased locally is a ½ inch low pressure unit which produces a pressure of 30 to 40 P.S.I.
- b. The motor — In this case an old washing machine motor of ½ HP. A ¼ HP motor would be satisfactory or a petrol engine.
- c. 3 and 5 inch V pulleys.
- d. A Vee drive belt.
- e. An old tap — tee piece and ferrels.
- f. 1 metre hose lengths for pump input feed and re-circulation return.
- g. A 15 metre main output flexible type garden hose and spraying lance.
The LANCE is the hollow extension rod to which the nozzle is attached and includes a squeeze grip 'ON-OFF' control grip. I use a ½ metre lance in the glasshouses but can extend this up to 2 metres to reach high up fruit trees.

Description

The motor unit is mounted on a board hinged to the main base. This allows the weight of the motor to keep tension of the V belt drive and also allows the belt to be slipped off easily when the unit is not in use.

The belt drive is approx. a 2 to 1 reduction so that the pump is driven at 5 to 600 revs per minute.

The input hose feed to the pump has a filter on the end to stop foreign matter from being sucked into the pump.

The pump will suck up the spray about 2 to 3 feet and once pressure is built up there is no problem spraying high to the tops of trees if required.

Operation

1. Mix spray in container.
2. Place input hose with filter and

output recirculation hose into container.

3. Lift motor board and slip V belt onto pulleys so that the belt is tightened by weight of motor. Switch motor on.
4. Open up tap so that maximum recirculation will take place — that is pump will suck liquid from container and return it back into container at maximum pressure of 30 to 40 PSI. A distinctive noise and load on the motor will indicate the pump is primed and working. To check — lift recirculation hose out of liquid to see spray squirting back into the container.
5. Leave pump recirculating for some minutes. This will thoroughly mix the spray or fertiliser.
6. Turn recirculation tap off. The load on pump and motor will be obvious and full pressure will be available for spraying from the lance.
7. Spray pressure is adjustable by turning recirculation tap to say half off. Thus half the spray is available at the lance for low pressure spraying and the other half is recirculated.
8. Proceed to squeeze Lance pistol grip and adjust spray nozzle for a fine cone spray which may be directed under leaves of plants or around pots or wherever you wish.

Maintenance

The only maintenance requirements are:

- a. Grease the gear pump bearings regularly with a multipurpose or water grease.
- b. Thoroughly clean out spray system with water after spraying so that hose — lance and

nozzle are clear of spray as well as the pump and input and recirculation hoses.

By discreetly positioning the spray unit and with about 15 metres of flexible rubber hose I can set the system into operation and reach all three glasshouses without shifting the pump unit. I can also spray several fruit trees from this position.

Summary

With the complement of spraying equipment I now have as outlined.

- a. The hand syringe — used for watering or spraying individual or small groups of plants.
- b. the Push-Pull Syringe — now used for hormone sprays such as moss killers and weed killers — Not used for orchids.

- c. Hand Powder Duster — used in winter on Cymbids particularly.
- d. Hand Syringe (Atomiser) — used frequently in hot house on leaves of Vandas and Phalaenopses.
- e. Motorised Unit — general liquid spraying.

With these equipments spraying is not quite the drudgery it used to be.

Costs

The costs of a gear pump today is almost as much as the total unit cost 8 years ago — \$50.00. I estimate the whole unit could be made now by a handyman for about \$100.00 that is if you have an old motor and tap and a few bits and pieces.



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A variety of Cymbidium Mericlones and seedlings available at all times.

SOUTH ISLAND ORCHID SEMINAR

All members of Orchid Societies in New Zealand are invited to a Seminar which the Marlborough Orchid Society will be hosting in Blenheim on Saturday and Sunday, October 17 and 18 1981.

The purpose is to encourage a meeting of members of South Island Societies to meet one another and also members of North Island Societies who will be helping with the display and providing three of the six speakers.

The Seminar will be of special interest to the hobbyist orchid grower, but there should be plenty to interest the commercial grower. It will be held at the Auto Lodge Hotel, corner Alfred and Henry Street, Blenheim, with the display in the "Chart Room" and all seminar events in the "Marlborough Room."

The quality of our speakers should ensure a stimulating Seminar.

S P E A K E R S

CYMBIDIUM: Mr Norm Porter (Waikanae) and Mr Harry Simpson (Nelson).

OTHER GENERA: Mr Frank Askin (Wellington), Mr Dan Collin (Tauranga), Mr John Campbell (Christchurch) and Mr Ron Roy (Christchurch).

Registration is essential and will be \$12.00 if paid by October 1; late registrations will be \$20.00. This will entitle you to a numbered badge permitting admission to display and all seminar talks, the wine and cheese party, afternoon tea on Saturday and morning tea on Sunday.

An excellent smorgasbord lunch will be available on both Saturday and Sunday at \$6.95, providing there are sufficient members wanting this. To ensure this, please mark your intention to be present on the form below. Payment will be to the hotel management.

An a la carte dinner will be provided on the Saturday, but prior intention must be marked on the form below so that tables may be reserved. Again, payment will be to the management.

The Auto Lodge is a first-class hotel and a limited number of rooms have been reserved. Please write direct to the hotel. While there are numerous other hotels and motels, it will be very convenient and pleasant to stay at the Auto Lodge.

For bookings, write to the Public Relations Office, P.O. Box 199, Blenheim.

.....(CUT ALONG LINE).....

REGISTRATION FORM

PART TWO — To be sent to the SECRETARY, MARLBOROUGH ORCHID SOCIETY, 6 LYNLEY CRES., BLENHEIM, with payment of \$12.00 per person by October 1, 1981. (Late registration—\$20.00)

NAMES OF PEOPLE ATTENDING

.....

SOCIETY

NAMES TO BE PUT ON IDENTIFICATION BADGES:

.....

.....

I indicate	people wish Saturday Lunch	YES / NO
	Saturday Dinner	YES / NO
	Sunday Lunch	YES / NO

Signature:

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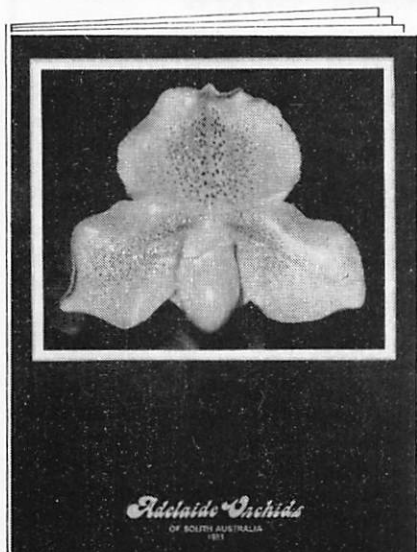
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Adelaide Orchids Full Colour Catalogue.



If you haven't received your free copy of the 1981 Adelaide Orchid catalogue, phone or write to Brigitta Orchids. As usual, the catalogue is lavishly illustrated with over 100 full colour photographs of standard and miniature Cymbidiums, Paphiopedilums and miscellaneous orchids, including many from the Odontoglossum alliance.



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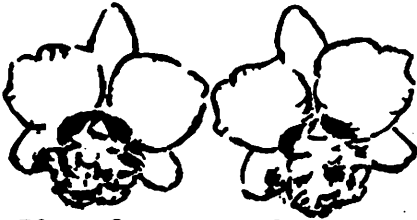
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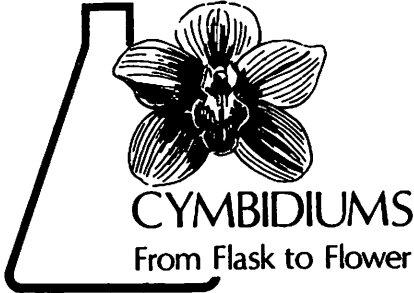
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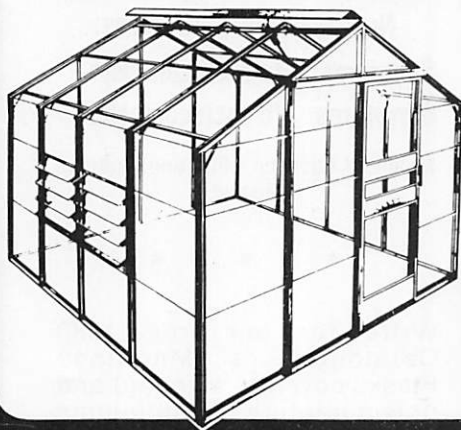
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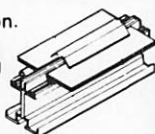
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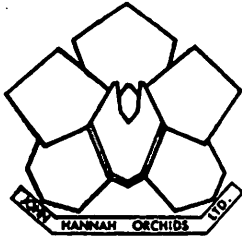
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