

NEWSLETTER

Jan. 2007

NEXT MEETING Sun 11th Feb. 2007 at 1.30 pm

Happy New Year

SPEAKER: Glenn Poffley will talk about the horticultural show in Chiangmai, Thailand and present some slides of orchids displayed there.

LAST MEETING: Our Xmas party was another well attended affair with over 50 members present and over 50 plants displayed. I'm sure everyone had enough lovely food to eat and there was even enough for everyone to take something home.

The meeting began with apologies as usual and especially the one from **John Scott** who is out of action with a smashed up foot. He and Annette were only 9 days into their intrepid journey when he fell down a cliff in Nepal causing himself some grievous bodily harm. Hopefully he will be up and back to his usual lively self soon.

Tris Wakelin gave the results of the Popular Vote and our Patron **Alf Day** handed the trophies to the deserving winners.

Results:

Winner of Open Trophy – **Pam Forde** tied with **Grahame Leafberg**.

Pam has been a strong supporter of the club especially this last year, winning many prizes or trophies at other society shows and always having many excellent plants for display.

Grahame has many 'hats to wear' and still manages to come to our society most days with a vanload of orchids to display. Grahame's rare and unusual flowers are always a talking point.

Winner of Novice Trophy – **Kathy Rimmer**.

Kathy a committee member, has also helped out with all our displays at other societies and brought some exotic plants for showing one of which won a coveted trophy at NZOS last year.

Points awarded:

Pam and Grahame 54, Glenn/Manee 47, Len Cobb 39, Michelle Tung and Lea Westlake 37 each.

Kathy 39, John Sheppard 24, Jackie Wee 17, Dieu Tran, Terry Thompson and Anton/Janet 16 each.

As you can see from the results voting for your choice at club days is important with some close scores.

It was then time for afternoon tea and what a spread that was.

Santa's arrival was right on time and everyone received a lovely Cymbidium seedling courtesy of the HOS, grown especially for Santa by **Mick Hughes**. Please note these need to be repotted and **do** take time to **rewrite** the label in pencil before the writing fades and you can't read it. As these are all seedlings there will be variations in even the same crosses although there was quite a selection of different plants handed out.

For those computer literate go on the net where hopefully you will find a picture of one or both of the parents. Also you can check out the breeding of your plants on RHS site. Plants with only one name are still seedlings but have been 'redone' by Mick in the hope of something different. Those with 2 names have yet to be named and if you have the inclination when it flowers you will be able to do this by registering it with RHS for a small fee. (Small in UK pounds!) This also applies to any other seedlings you have received such as those Phallies from Brian at Prize Giving.

RAFFLE: Thanks to **Brian Main** for the generous donation of a lovely Phalaenopsis New Cinderella for our Xmas raffle. It was a grand raffle with 12 prizes, thanks also to **Alf Day**, **Julie Duff**, **John Sheppard**, **Val Bayliss** and HOS for other prizes.

CULTURE: January is a month where everything should be growing madly but it's been a slow start to summer. The Cymbidiums will have enjoyed the cool nights through November/December and you should remember what Roy Neale told us about them needing a noticeable difference between day/night temperature to flower. Keep up an evening misting of these to cool them down during the hotter months. Another tip I learnt from Roy is that if they are benched too close to one another the bulbs retain the heat of the day and don't cool enough at night.

The strong winds we have experienced will have dried many outdoor plants out quickly.

Be careful of rotting on new growths of Cattleyas. Water in morning so they dry off during the day.

EDITOR'S COMMENT

The first 5 days in Thailand we spent in Bangkok which is HOT. It was over 30 deg every day and not much cooler at night. In the Nov. AOS magazine there is an article about an orchid park near Ayutthaya which is where we went for a day trip about 2 hours north of Bangkok. It is interesting to note that they can't flower Phals and Cattleyas there as the nights do not get cool enough. Most of the flowering orchids sold at the markets in BK come from the high country in other areas.

We made a point of visiting the big plant market held every Wed. and Thurs at the same location as the well-known weekend market (Chatuchuk). It is a quick and cheap trip now on the new subway, which has a station at the entry to the market. All types of plants are sold here mainly in pots and mostly in flower. You can even buy fully-grown trees in bags and the size of these has to be seen to be believed. Watching them being loaded onto utes is also quite entertaining as they seem to be able to manage this without damaging one branch. Unlike the average orchid grower transporting plants to shows!

The orchids are mainly Vandas, Cattleyas and Dendrobiums but many others are available. One vendor was selling only species orchids another specialised in Cynoches and Catasetums. One genera we don't see much of here and impressed me with the colour range was Spathoglottis. There has been a lot of hybridising of these terrestrial orchids in Thailand and they are very impressive. The Phalaenopsis were mainly whites and pinks, Paphs were also available but very few mini Cats. Others for sale included many of the warm Oncidiums and even Cymbidiums. I don't know how long they would last in that heat!

But the most impressive were the Vandas, Cattleyas and Dendrobiums. The colour range and combinations of colours were just enormous. They also seem to be going in for the antelope type Dens more now and this was evident in many places we visited.

Flasks of orchids were being sold for just \$8 and these are whiskey bottles containing approx. 70 plants. Prices of flowering plants varied but compared to here they were exceptionally cheap.

Frangipanis were also a sight to be seen with many new colours available for the local buyer.

The current exchange rate is 24 Thai Baht to the \$NZ which is great for shopping although they are not inundated with cheap Chinese imports, deciding to protect domestic industries instead with import taxes.

Mary had a little lamb, its fleece was slightly gray,
It didn't have a father, just some borrowed DNA.
It sort of had a mother, though the ovum was on loan,
It was not so much a lambkin, as a little lamby clone.
And soon it had a fellow clone, and soon it had some more,
They followed her to school one day, all cramming through the door.
It made the children laugh and sing, the teachers found it droll,
There were too many lamby clones, for Mary to control.
No other could control the sheep, since their programs didn't vary,
So the scientists resolved it all, by simply cloning Mary.
But now they feel quite sheepish, those scientists unwary,
One problem solved, but what to do, with Mary, Mary, Mary!

PLANTS ON DISPLAY (Dec. meeting)

These were not recorded, as there is no popular vote this month. It was another excellent display with a good selection of plants. Commentary was by Alf Day and Grahame Leafberg.

Have a look at our web site: <http://hos.inetgardens.com> and see some photos of the flowers and our Xmas party. Some of my shots were too rushed and didn't come out well. More will be added as the year progresses. Dennis has now updated links to the site, which should make it easier for others to find.

MASDEVALLIA & DRACULA

(From American Orchid Soc. notes,

abridged)

Masdevallia is a genus of some 350 species usually from cool misty mountains of tropical South America.

They need a cool damp environment to succeed.

Light levels for this group is usually thought of as fairly low but some successful growers believe that the best flowerings are produced under higher light levels. Plants can be grown, but not necessarily flowered under the same light levels as ferns. Most growers maintain the same levels as those used for Paphs and Phals. Higher light intensities are coped with if the growing area can be kept cool.

Temperatures should be cool to intermediate. Plants will grow but eventually expire if temperatures remain high for long periods of time. Cool evenings help reduce heat stress during the day. A night range between 10 to 13 deg C is ideal and day temperatures should be around 15 to 24 deg. Evaporative cooling or humidifiers are useful in maintaining these conditions.

Water is critical for these plants because they have minimal storage tissue. They must get adequate moisture all year round and the potting media kept relatively moist all the time. Roots should be allowed to just become dry before watering again. If drainage is adequate constantly moist roots are fine.

Humidity is important for these plants. The ideal range is 60 – 80%. In the home mist the plants (morning only) and set the plants on trays of gravel partially filled with water. In the greenhouse misting or wetting down the floors can increase humidity. Do not let water stand on leaves overnight.

Fertiliser should be applied regularly while plants are actively growing. Applications of 30-10-10 formulations twice a month are ideal for plants in a bark based medium. For other media use 20-20-20. As plants approach flowering use 10-30-20 bloom booster.

Potting is best done in the winter or early spring before the heat of the summer. Plants must be repotted frequently (every 1 –2 years) to keep the mix from decomposing. A fine grade potting mix is suitable with the bottom third of the pot crocked with foam or drainage material. When potting up, allow for new growth by placing the newest growth farthest away from the edge of the pot. A vitamin B1 compound is helpful in establishing newly potted plants. Keep humidity high and the media slightly dry until new roots form.

COMING EVENTS

PLEASE NOTE the following notice and plan to be free this day.

BAR-B-QUE: Our annual New Year BBQ is scheduled for the 17th **March** 2007 at Julie Duff's residence, Murphy's Rd, Flat Bush, Manukau City.

This is a Saturday afternoon and also St Patrick's Day so you can celebrate that at the same time!

The entrance to the property is opposite Murphy's Bush, (southern end) a **HOS** sign will be outside and there is plenty of off road parking in the paddock next to barn.

(If you wear green don't go into the bush, we may not be able to find you.)

HOS will provide all of the **meat** (sausages/steak), **BBQ's** and **drinks** (except wine/beer).

Please bring a small **salad** or **desert** as below.

Surnames starting with letters A – M (salad), letters N – Z (desert or sweet).

This is another chance to relax and enjoy the native bush surroundings and get to know others better.

You may also be able to discover Julie's secrets to her success with growing Cymbidiums.

This is the week following our club day and you will be reminded again at that time.

HOS Club days: 11th March, 15TH April, 13th May, 10th June, 8th July,
12th Aug, 9th Sept, 14th Oct, 11th Nov, 9th Dec.
Annual Show: Saturday 29th September, Set-up on Frid. 28th Sept.
Our AGM is at the April meeting.