



# NEWSLETTER of the HOWICK ORCHID SOCIETY Inc.

**Jan. 2015**

**NEXT meeting Sun 8<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2014**

**WELCOME back** to another year of orchid growing, where we will try to keep you entertained with interesting speakers, lots of raffle prizes, great displays of flowers, informative plant commentaries and as usual a bit of fun with some questions and giveaways from time to time.

**NEXT MEETING:** As mentioned in the last newsletter we would like to see as many new members as possible at our first meeting of the year where Anton Wehman and Leonard Cobb (2 long serving members and experienced growers) will discuss and demonstrate potting and growing techniques. Many of you should benefit from this talk.



*NZ native Thelymitra pictured at Iwitahi*

**LAST MEETING:** Our Christmas day went very well with an abundance of beautiful food provided by members who attended. We started with a few giveaways by asking some tricky questions followed soon after with a very informative plant commentary by Alf Day. Alf's knowledge never ceases to amaze us all. Santa announced his arrival with some jingling bells and then gave all members present a small gift of sphagnum and a bundle of plant stakes. John Muddiman announced the winners of the Popular vote competition, this is over the whole year and includes all plants displayed by members. (See results later in this letter)

## **EDITOR'S COMMENT**

It was a busy spring and summer for me with a lot of repotting to complete, constant watering and fertilizing and keeping the bugs at bay. I'm sure many of you have been doing the same necessary chores. I am keeping my fingers crossed that I have finally beaten the infestation of Cymbidium bulb rot after using a strong residual antifungal spray all around our property including the shade house walls, floors and under the benches earlier in the year. I spoke to one of the overseas speakers who suggested this method of combating this insidious disease which has devastated my collection. Apparently the spores can live for a long time and re-infect plants randomly, which was the problem I was experiencing.

Manee and I attended the Iwitahi weekend near Taupo and had a very entertaining and interesting time finding native orchids in the wild. You really can't beat the thrill of coming across a relatively rare flowering plant in its natural habitat and there will be a more in depth article on this in the next OCNZ year book.

This year we would like to see you concentrating on consolidating your collection and ensuring your plants get good care and attention in the hope that they will be flowering for the big show in Auckland 2016. We want as many as possible to choose from for our display as it is no good just depending on a few growers. A wide range of genera is needed to produce a good display so the more growers we have the better we can balance the colours and arrange them to suit the theme and other props.



*The food table (L) Santa giving Alf a hug (above)*

## CULTURE

This is the most important time of the year for your orchids as they will be putting on new growth and fattening up bulbs ready for flowering, so it is imperative you do not leave your plants to their own devices by going off on holiday without someone to look after them.

Many of you who displayed at our show will have received a good quality fertilizer so make sure you use it now. It is not much use in winter as the plants will mostly be dormant.

Be careful to keep your orchids shaded from direct and intense sun over summer as they could suffer from leaf burn, especially if wet.

On the other hand they must receive good light to be able to grow and flower well.

Late last year I bought a bag of garden bark nuggets as I use the larger pieces for crocking orchid pots especially for plants that like a fairly open mix. Normally I wouldn't buy this type of product but it was a damaged bag and on special! Pictured below is the reason why you should buy good quality **clean** bark that is specially produced for orchid growers. I have no doubts that most grades of garden bark sold to the general public would be similar in content and unless sieved carefully and cleaned would do more harm than good.

In an effort to reduce attack by the moth grub I am reducing the amount of bark in my mixes and supplementing with large coarse pumice. This also has the advantage of less breaking down of organic material which clogs up pots.

*At the top is fine bark (about size 2 and less)  
To the left is the soft layer found under the bark  
To the right are wood pieces  
These will all decompose very quickly  
NB. Coarse bark nuggets not shown*





William and Man's amazing *Den. thyrsiflorum* (above)  
*Chysis laevis* (Dennis Chuah) (R)



## RESULTS of POPULAR VOTE

OPEN:	1 <sup>st</sup> equal	Grahame Leafberg	
		Francis Henrich & Rod MacKay	50 points
NOVICE:	2 <sup>nd</sup>	William & Man Lo	34 points
	1 <sup>st</sup>	Diane Gurr	54 points
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Barry & Penelope Gasson	49 points
NOVELTY	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Heather Hunkin	37 points
	1 <sup>st</sup>	Kathy Rimmer	64 points
	2 <sup>nd</sup> equal	Warren & Elaine Mullins	
		Michelle Tung	20 points

PLANTS ON DISPLAY not recorded for December meeting

Alf was very impressed with such a great display this month especially the superbly grown specimen plants.

You are **encouraged** to bring any plants you think may need to be looked at if they are not growing too well. Sometimes we will take a look at the way they are potted to see what is hidden below the surface. This does not apply to large cymbidiums!

I'm often **puzzled** as to why so many orchid shows are held in earlier months when we get such wonderful displays at our meetings later in the year when all the shows are over.

**STILL WONDERING** what the 2 unlabelled photos at Kirstenbosch in last month's newsletter were? The green flower was the African orchid *Bonatea speciosa* and the unusual shrub was the *Gardenia thunbergia* and although it has a white flower it is not like the ones we generally grow here which are from Asia.

My grandpa started **walking** five miles a day when he was 60.  
 Now he's 97 years old and we have no idea where he is.

We all get **heavier** as we get older because there's a lot more information in our heads.  
 That's my story and I'm sticking to it.



*Sarcochilus ceciliae* right (slab grown) and above a hybrid of *ceciliae* x *Melba*  
*Sarco ceciliae* is an Australian vandaceous orchid species and flowers later than other *sarcochilus*.  
 Below only 2 of the photos are *ceciliae* hybrids.

### **HOS Club meeting Dates for 2015**

Meetings start at 1.30pm at the Fencible Lounge, Uxbridge Rd. Howick. (Next to library)

**PLEASE NOTE** these dates in your diary or calendar.

8 <sup>th</sup> Feb;	8 <sup>th</sup> Mar;	12 <sup>th</sup> Apr;	10 <sup>th</sup> May;	14 <sup>th</sup> June;	12 <sup>th</sup> July;	9 <sup>th</sup> Aug;
13 <sup>th</sup> Sep;	11 <sup>th</sup> Oct;	16 <sup>th</sup> Oct. (Set Up);	17 <sup>th</sup> Oct. (SHOW);	8 <sup>th</sup> Nov;	13 <sup>th</sup> Dec.	

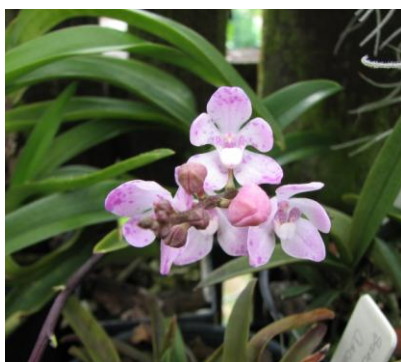
NOTE the show date has been amended (again) to be the Saturday after our club day in October. Our meetings start promptly and we run to a fairly tight schedule because of hall booking times. Please help set up and put away the tables and chairs if you are able.

**ANYONE** is welcome to bring a small donation for afternoon tea.

We do not charge members for entry or tea at our meetings but to help cover costs non members and visitors are charged a fee of \$2.

**Raffle** prizes are usually a combination of HOS bought goods or donated orchid plants. If you wish to donate to the raffle please restrict this to orchid plants or products pertaining to orchid growing only.

At the last committee meeting it was decided to hold an orchid plant **auktion** at the AGM meeting in April. **Donations** of plants are required to make this a success so please put aside any plants that you no longer require. This is a good opportunity for new members to increase their collection.



*Sarco Kathy*



*Sarco Yvette*



*Sarco Arcadia*