

NEWSLETTER

July 2007

NEXT MEETING Sun 12th Aug. 2007 at 1.30 pm

Bring a new member!

SPEAKER: Barbara Johnson will be our guest speaker and will talk about growing Cattleyas. Barbara is a very experienced breeder of these and allied genera and has a large selection of them growing at her home in Whangarei. Plants will be available for sale.

LAST MEETING: A bumper turnout with over 60 members and visitors were present to hear Russell Hutton speak. Russell gave a very broad coverage of different types of orchids and how they grow and then moved onto importation and availability of orchids in NZ. A very interesting and informative talk with many questions answered by Russell on a wide variety of topics.

RAFFLE: 8 draws and some lovely plants donated, thanks to Mick Hughes (Bulbophyllum), Kathy Rimmer (2 large Oncidiums), John Sheppard, HOS plants plus others (didn't see who brought them in). This was possibly our best day with \$90 taken from the raffle.

SOME MORE funds (\$38) were added to the club's account with a quick auction of some orchid books donated by Life member Carolyn Scholes and Glenn.

OCNZ RAFFLE: Thanks to those that are helping sell these. Please bring any sold books (butts) plus money back next meeting. The money raised will go towards the big Orchid Expo to be held in Palmerston Nth 2010.

BOTANY MALL: A display table was set up here on the Saturday before our meeting to publicise our society in the hope of encouraging more people to join or come along and see what we do at our meetings. We talked to many potential 'customers' especially in the afternoon but surprisingly none turned up the next day. With an excellent position near a main entry, eye-catching orchids and large signs designed by Len we couldn't have done much more.

Thanks to Len, Glenn, Christina, Michelle, Manee, Anton, Julie and John Muddiman for helping out.

A man takes his Rotweiler to the vet. "My dog's cross-eyed, is there anything you can do for him?" "Well," says the vet, "let's have a look at him." So he picks the dog up and examines his eyes, then checks his teeth. Finally, he says, "I'm going to have to put him down." "What? Because he's cross-eyed?"

"No, because he's really heavy".

TEA ROSTER for Next Meeting: Shirley Odom, Sandra Moore.

Please phone Lea if unable to attend meeting. (575 5046)

President/Editor: Glenn Poffley Ph. 534 8689
Treasurer: Jackie Wee 250 4218

Secretary: Janet Wehman Ph. 537 1251
Vice Pres. Anton Wehman Ph. 537 1251

CULTURE

One thing many speakers have stressed over the years and a subject Russell talked about is that many orchids come from a climate that is totally opposite to ours. By this they mean orchids experience warm **wet** summers and cool **dry** winters.

Duplicating these conditions is possibly the one part of orchid culture where many of us fail. It means a virtual stop to watering over the winter. Orchids living naturally in what appears to be a dry area **do** get some moisture over winter and this is generally from mist or humidity so a light misting is all they need to keep them alive over this period.

Russell also noted that many orchids need a trigger to make them flower and if this is not provided in culture they will just get bigger and never produce flowers. This trigger may be in the form of extra water at the correct time or withholding water. Many orchids we grow come from areas where the day length never alters although just because this is near the equator they could still be cool growers.

Knowing what conditions your orchid experiences in nature is a big help in providing the correct culture at home. Hybrids are more tolerant of variable conditions than species.

Another problem is the type of mix they are potted in as this may retain moisture too long in the winter with the result being root rot.

The main problems though are (a) FAILURE to take note of what your plant is telling you and (b) FAILURE to actually do anything about it.

Many new growers will often tell you that their plant 'looks sick', but never do they pull it out of the pot and check the roots. 99% of the time the problem becomes obvious if you pull the plant out of the pot. Wet soggy roots fall away; dry desiccated roots look like paper, or when the plant is upside down you can see the insect infestation, which wasn't obvious when looking from the top. If they are not left in the same pot too long, checking the roots is an easy operation.

So my (and Russell's) cultural advice this month is to take note of what your plant is trying to tell you then do something about it especially with another cold winter upon us now.

PLANTS ON DISPLAY (July meeting)

OPEN

Glenn/Manee: *L. anceps* var. *alba*, *L. anceps* var. *Ashworthiana* (for display only)

Michelle Tung: *Den.* Kuniko.

Leonard Cobb: Paph unknown, Paph. Harvest Splendor 'Bobs', *L. anceps* 'Mem. Bob Norton' x *L. anceps* var. *Sanderiana*, *L. anceps*, *L. anceps* x *Lc.* Sandra Swearingen.

House of Orchids: *Den.* Sarah Jean 'Manly', *Den.* Hilda Poxon, *Den.* Anne's Rainbow 'Surprise'.

Anton/Janet Wehman: *L. anceps* var. *Williamsiana*, *L. anceps* var. *Ashworthiana*, *Blc.* Pamela Hetherington*, *Angraecum calceolus*.

Kathy Rimmer: *Miltoniopsis* Echo Bay 'Midnight Tears', *Howeara* Mini-Primi, *Epi. ciliare*.

Lea/Bryce Westlake: *Paph. insignis*, *Phal.* unknown, *Onc.* Sharry Baby 'Sweet Fragrance', *Onc. ornithorhyncum*.

Margaret Phair: *Zygo. mackayi* (or possibly *intermedium*)

Pam Forde: *Onc.* Sugar Babies, *Den.* Elegant Heart x Lynette Banks, *Den.* Hilda Poxon, *Den.* Colonial Surprise, *Den.* Starbright Corona, *Ptst.* Nodding Grace, *Phal.* unknown.

Betty Everson: *Cym.* unknown.

NOVICE

John Muddiman: *Laelia anceps*.

Christina Chi: No Name

Ken Tse & Chui Leung: *Laelia anceps*. (First time exhibitors)

OPEN: 1st = **Anton/Janet** (Blc.), **Margaret Phair** (Zygo), 2nd = **Len** (Paph.), **Michelle** (Den.), 3rd = **House of Orchids** (Sarah Jean), **Kathy** (Milt. & Howeara), **Pam** (Ptst).

NOVICE: 1st **John** (Laelia), 2nd **Ken & Chui** (Laelia).

*Name change or spelling error, please change label.

Russell Hutton and **Val** Bayliss gave a very detailed commentary, very much appreciated by the large audience. Russell also brought some flowers of various *Laelia anceps* and explained the differences.

EDITOR'S COMMENT

Wanganui O.S. 40th Anniversary Show. As you are aware **Howick OS** set up a display at this show held 23/24 June at the raceway complex. Even though it was a long distance to travel, it was an opportune time to publicise ourselves as we have just rejoined the OCNZ. This show is one of the larger in the lower North Island and this year was held in conjunction with the OCNZ AGM. We were the only society represented from the Auckland area apart from some commercial growers from here.

It was quite an effort packing everything into 2 station wagons, **Kathy Rimmer** took the small table, 2 large pieces of driftwood, 2 large blocks of polystyrene and a box of cloth. I managed to get 40 orchid plants into my car and only had just enough space for the other incidental gear (and Manee).

To ensure we were well prepared the display was erected in Len's downstairs room beforehand (minus the orchids) so we would know what we were doing when we got to Wanganui. All the plants were collected over 3 days and labels written out for each at home. Packing of the plants in boxes and then into the car was a major task as every spike had to be staked and fixed so that none moved or touched another on the long drive. This proved successful with everything arriving in good order. In fact the only damage sustained was at the show when a woman's handbag swiped one of my *Cattleyas*. It was knocked out of our display upside down onto the floor breaking 2 of the 3 flowers off. (She commented 'Sorry...a pretty one too.')

Kathy left on the Thursday deciding to spend an extra night on the way down, but we elected to leave early Friday morning to arrive about lunchtime and set up straight away as this was scheduled for Friday afternoon only and had to be completed by 5pm.

Everything went to plan except for the atrocious weather we encountered from about Te Kuiti. It poured for most of the journey and only eased as we reached Wanganui, surprisingly ahead of time. What didn't ease though was the howling polar gale, which persisted until the time we left.

Kathy and Roy had already unloaded their car by the time we reached the hall so we wasted no time in getting started. It took quite a while to get everything into place but we were well satisfied with the result.

Unfortunately we were not placed in the display competition but were up against some stiff opposition with 16 displays altogether from other societies or growers.

There were 12 commercial sales tables including the Wanganui society table with 3 from Auckland.

Kathy spent her pocket money with ease while I searched for something a little different.

The quality of the flowers at the show was very high with many not often seen in Auckland, in fact I would rate the variety of genera and species on show as exceptional.

Judging took place Sat. morning and certificates for 1st, 2nd and 3rd in each section placed on the plants. All plants were judged and the number of sections was limited to broad genera only with cash prizes for 1st place winners. There were 4 cash prizes for displays. Manawatu's winning entry was certainly striking and a lot different to the traditional styles. Ruby red cloth was topped by a silver coloured 'cake' and soaring above this a tall silver candle, a real eye catcher.

Howick OS plants received 4 certificates and many people commented on the variety, bright colours and presentation. We based our theme on the Wanganui River and used props to represent the scenery and culture of the area. (Thanks to Len and John Muddiman for these).

The show was well attended, especially on the Saturday in this very nice and bright venue. Kathy and I attended the AGM on the Sun. morning where we quickly came up to speed on all that was happening at short notice. After a leisurely afternoon at the show it was finally time to pack again.

It was a fun weekend with many friends and orchid growers to renew acquaintances with.

I would like to thank the following for their support by providing beautiful orchids for our display:

Alf Day (4 Odonts, 2 Paphs, 1 Zygo), **Len** Cobb (5 Paphs, 1 Lc, 1 Milt), **Dieu** Tran (2 Paphs, 2 Phals, 2 Odonts), **Glenn/Manee** (3 Cats, 2 Phals, 1 Oda, 1 Onc.), **Kathy** Rimmer (1 Zygo, 1 Masd, 1 Slc, 1 Howeara), **Grahame** Leafberg (1 Den, 1 Zygo, 1 Slc), **Pam** Forde (2 Onc), **Michelle** Tung (1 Slc).

A great selection of orchids, which were all carefully chosen to fit into the back of a station wagon.

A special thanks to Kathy Rimmer for the effort and help she gave and to her husband **Roy** (not an orchid person) who had to amuse himself most of the weekend in such miserable weather. Enduring the pain of an injured shoulder made worse by the cold, Manee also did her best to help. Certificates won: Grahame Leafberg: Den. Averil's Gold 'Tommy' 2nd Best Dendrobium and 3rd Best Specimen plant, Zygo. (Seagulls Landing x Artur Elle) x Brookside 3rd Best Other Hybrid. Len Cobb: *Miltonia spectabilis* 3rd Best *Odontoglossum* Alliance. Please go to our web site <http://hos.inetgardens.com> to view some pictures from this show.

DAVID BANKS' talk at AOC in Auckland last month was one of the best I've attended and I'm sure the 5 other members from HOS who attended would agree. The first half was on orchids and David's fluid and amusing commentary was highlighted with excellent photos, many of rare or unusual species. Two photos were 'firsts' having never been shown to an audience before. Three photos were dedicated to the world's smallest orchid including the Guinness Book of Records listing and David's own pick of about 16 perfect flowers in an area the size of his finger print. The second half was devoted to the other types of plants David grows to perfection in Sydney including succulents, bromeliads, bulbs, in fact almost anything from large rare trees to small carnivorous plants. His depth of knowledge and ability to convey this to the audience was superb. To conclude the evening we were shown some professional photos of the recent comet and a 'cook's tour' of his trip around NZ. I will certainly not miss any other talks he gives in NZ and count myself very fortunate to have been part of that most appreciative audience. Thanks to Auckland Orchid Club for arranging this and the members for providing a lovely supper.

OCNZ YEARBOOKS

Most of you will have been handed this very nice publication at the meeting on Sunday. Only those that have HOS as their 'home' society will receive one from HOS. If you have been a member of another affiliated society in the past then you will receive your copy from that society. Due to high cost of postage we will NOT be posting the remaining copies so please ensure you collect yours at a meeting of Howick OS or phone Glenn to arrange a pick up at a suitable time.

On the Green Party's telephone answering machine:
'If you want to buy marijuana then press the Hash key'.

RESEARCH

One of the more unusual plants I acquired at Wanganui was *Den. hookerianum*. It is not common and I later found it is listed on the Cites list as a prohibited export. There is very little information available about it and I am hoping it is correctly labeled. I finally have a decent photo of the flower courtesy of Russell Hutton. It is a cool grower from Assam and has (up to) 100mm yellow flowers with 2 purple blotches. Another was a species *Coelogyne stricta* (from Nepal, also on Cites) on the strength of a photograph the vendor showed me in a book the following day. It is at shows such as these you can sometimes find the unusual or rarer plants not in vogue these days. That's if you are interested in such oddities and I am, as these plants will never be allowed into this country again.

A plant that took my eye at the show was *Ansellia africana**. It was a beautifully grown plant with 2 huge inflorescences covered in bright yellow flowers with dark brown (almost black) markings. Commonly known as the Leopard Orchid it comes from Africa where it grows near the coast as an epiphyte. It is generally regarded as a warm grower but is variable as it ranges to elevations of 2000m. This is one of the larger orchids known and clumps of nearly a ton in weight can be found. The Zulu natives use the pseudo bulbs to make a tea.

The Best Wanganui Species winner was *Doritis pulcherrima* var. *coerulea**. This was a stunning blue and quite different to the usual pink to purple colour forms commonly available. *Doritis* is another warm grower from SE Asia and commonly used to hybridise with *Phalaenopsis* giving a *Doritaenopsis* (Dtps). Many of the multi flowered Phallies we grow are often Dtps.

Another intensely coloured flower on display, a very deep purple with a velvety lustre that positively glowed was *Ascocenda* Mem. Kay Killington 'Sandra'* (reg. Feb. 2007). And what a nightmare it was to photograph. When the light was on it, it reflected back at the observer and in shadow it went an even deeper hue. There was many a photographer spending a long time in front of this trying to get a satisfactory result.

* (See photos on web page)

WELCOME to NEW MEMBER – Tanida Poffley.

A normal 30 something NZ male, having split from his latest girlfriend, decided to take a vacation. He booked himself on a Caribbean cruise and proceeded to have the time of his life, that is, until the ship sank.

He found himself on an island with no other people, no supplies, nothing, only bananas and coconuts. After about four months, he is lying on the beach one day when the most gorgeous woman he has ever seen rows up to the shore. In disbelief, he asks, "Where did you come from? How did you get here?" She replies, "I rowed from the other side of the island. I landed here when my cruise ship sank."

"Amazing," he said. "You were really lucky to have a row boat wash up with you."

"Oh, this thing?" explains the woman. "I made the boat out of raw material I found on the island. The oars were whittled from gum tree branches, I wove the bottom from palm branches and the sides and stern came from a Eucalyptus tree."

"But, where did you get the tools?"

"Oh, that was no problem," replied the woman. "On the south side of the island, a very unusual stratum of alluvial rock is exposed. I found if I fired it to a certain temperature in my kiln, it melted into ductile iron. I used that for tools and used the tools to make the hardware."

The guy is stunned.

"Let's row over to my place," she says.

After a few minutes of rowing, she docks the boat at a small wharf. As the man looks to shore, he nearly falls off the boat. Before him is a stone walk leading to an exquisite bungalow painted in blue and white. While the woman ties up the rowboat with an expertly woven hemp rope, the man can only stare ahead, dumb struck. As they walk into the house, she says casually, "It's not much but I call it home. Sit down, please. Would you like a drink?"

"No! No thank you," he blurts out, still dazed. "I can't take another drop of coconut juice."

"It's not coconut juice," winks the woman. "I have a still. How would you like a Pina Colada?"

Trying to hide his continued amazement, the man accepts and they sit down on her couch to talk.

After they have exchanged their stories, the woman announces, "I'm going to slip into something more comfortable. Would you like to take a shower and shave? There is a razor in the bathroom cabinet."

No longer questioning anything, the man goes into the bathroom. There, in the cabinet, is a razor made from a piece of tortoise bone. Two shells honed to a hollow ground edge are fastened to its end inside a swivel mechanism.

"This woman is amazing," he muses. "What next?"

When he returns, she greets him wearing nothing but vines, strategically positioned and smelling faintly of gardenias. She beckons for him to sit down next to her.

"Tell me," she begins suggestively, slithering closer to him, "We've been out here for many months. You've been lonely. There's something I'm sure you really feel like doing right now, something you've been longing for?"

She stares into his eyes. He can't believe what he's hearing.

"You mean....." and he swallows excitedly as tears start to form in his eyes.....

"Don't tell me..... you've got Sky Sport?"

COMING EVENTS

South Auckland O.S. Annual Show. Benching 17 Aug. 2 – 7pm. Open to public 18 Aug. 9am – 4pm. Senior Citizens Hall, East St. Papakura. (benching only)

CSA 1 day show at ‘The Springs’ Gt North Rd (opp Zoo) 4th Aug, registration required (cost \$5). Phone Chris on 300 6933.

Auckland Orchid Club Spring Show 24th-26th Aug. at Kelston Community Centre*, top of Waikumete Hill, Gt Nth Rd. Set up Thurs 23rd Aug. (Display by HOS). * Note new venue

Seminar at NZOS (Mt Albert War Mem. Hall) Spring Show, Roy Tokunaga from H & R Orchids Hawaii.

NB The first 5 entries from a Google search for Howick Orchid Society comes up with: (1) Best Gardening website, (2) is our listing for the coming meeting by the Howick and Pakuranga Times, (3) and (4) give direct links to our website and (5) is a listing by e-plants, a club directory.