

# NEWSLETTER

May. 2008

**NEXT MEETING Sun 8<sup>th</sup> June. 2008 at 1.30 pm**

*Competition!*

**SPEAKER:** Next meeting Glenn will talk about and show a selection of slides from the Tokyo Dome Grand Prix Orchid show visited in Feb. 2008.

**LAST MEETING:** Unfortunately I couldn't attend as I was speaking at another society, but from what I hear Roy Neale was up to his usual excellent standard with his talk on looking after seedlings. Even though it was Mother's Day there was still an excellent attendance including visitors and new members who joined at the meeting. Thank you Anton for looking after the meeting so well in my absence.

**RAFFLE:** Thanks to those who donated all the orchids, (Tris, G. Leafberg, Mabel Teal).

**TEA ROSTER** for Next Meeting: Christina, Norma Clarke, Barbara Dennis and Julie Duff. Please phone **Christina** (575 7517) or **Lea** (575 5046) if unable to attend meeting.

**Remember** the Tolumnia plants we fooled you into buying for a competition plant last year? Well, its time to bring those that have survived back to this meeting (June) so we can see what you have achieved. (If anything)

Prizes for the 2 that are most well grown. (Mine won't be in the running as it ran out long ago!)

**WELCOME to NEW MEMBER – Jenny Richards (Howick).**

**AUCTION (Nov.)** Thanks to **Mabel** Teal we already have 3 large nobile Dendrobiums donated for this event. Also recently donated was the remainder of (deceased) **Stan** Harris' collection of orchids by his wife Ethel. The plants are mostly unnamed slab mounted or bare rooted Cattleyas and will be sold 'as is'.

**Gordon** Pickering (ex. Pres. HOS) has donated his collection of orchid books to the society and those not added to the library will be auctioned.

We are very grateful for these donations, which are a big help in keeping our fees to a minimum.

**A NOTE** about our meeting dates.

We sometimes changed our dates if they clashed with a public holiday or some other day of note such as Mothers Day. To avoid confusion we now **don't**, as we advertise our meetings as every 2<sup>nd</sup> Sun of the month. The only day we don't have a meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday is for the Prize Giving in October, as 2 weeks is required from the show date to arrange engraving of trophies.

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**CULTURE:** I suppose the operative word is COLD as those sudden changes can bring a marked drop in temperature with very little warning. Most plants will cope with the odd cool night but a sustained period of low temperatures as we had in 2006 will cause damage. I recently visited the Urewera National Park and was amazed at the amount of damage caused to the forest that year by heavy snow falls. There are still many large trees down and numerous broken tops and branches covering the ground.

Endeavour to keep the Cattleyas on the dry side from now on and put them in a position with good light. Phallies can last a week without water at room temperature, keep in a bright room but out of direct sun.

Cyms should be developing inflorescences now so need to be kept a little sheltered and drier too. Masdevallias and Odonts should be relishing this time of the year. Keep watering these as they come from very moist or misty mountain areas.

Dendrobiums should now have water withheld for longer periods to encourage them to flower. They also need a lot of light over the winter. This includes most types.

Sarcochilus should be putting on rapid growth from now on. They prefer cooler windy positions with some shade. They generally grow on rocky outcrops in cooler areas of Australia.

Those who are using sphagnum as a potting media should be very careful with watering now as this takes a long time to dry out (approx 3 times longer than bark in my experience).

I have had yet another outbreak of scale on the Cats and mealy bug on the Phals. This summer has been insect heaven and you can now imagine what it must be like coping with these in warmer climates. Remember warm days and cool nights is good for fungal diseases.

Systemic sprays are sometimes the only effective remedy.

## **PLANTS ON DISPLAY ( May meeting)**

### **OPEN**

Wolf Grausch: *Slc.* Mem. Frank Gronwell, *Sc.* Lana Coryell x *Pot.* California Coronation\*, *Phal.* Ching Ruey x sib.

Grahame Leafberg: *Den glomeratum*, *C.* Mrs J. W. Whiteley, *Onc.* Golden Sun x Sunstruck, *Milt.* \* *cognianum* (or nat. hybrid, no *Onc.* Listed), *Soph. brevipedunculatum*.

Ron Reeves: *L. gouldiana*, *L. anceps*, *C. percivaliana*\* var. *alba*, *Cal. vestita*, *Paph. purpuratum*, *Paph. insigne* var. *sanderae*\*.

Anton & Janet: *Stenoglottis. longifolia*, *Slc.* Bob Kanzer\*, *Bealarra* ?.

Pam Forde: *Onc.* Sugar Babies, *Soph. cernua*.

Ken & Chui Tse: *Cym.* unknown, *Barkeria cyclotella* (Display only).

John Muddiman: *Phal* Sogo 'Red Ruby', *Phal. fasciata*, *C.* Hazel Boyd, *C. Duchesnei*, *Max. picta*.

William & Man Lo: *Phal. venosa*, *Mtdm.* \* *Bluntiosum*, *Drac. cordobae* 'Xias', *Paph. tonsum*, *Paph. gratixianum*?\*, *Paph.* Island Way, *Paph.* Silver Fleuret x (*MysticJewel*\* x *Goultenianum*\*), *Paph.* ? Ball (must have something else), *Paph.* King Arthur.

Bert & Evelyn Ong: *Slc.* Mem. Ken Martin, *Slc.* Susie's Valentine 'Te Puke'.

Val Bayliss: *Onc. onustum*.

### **NOVICE**

John Sheppard: *Masd. triangularis* 'Cutee'.

Note: \* Label changes required. (Either incorrect spelling or a new name of a registered hybrid)

OPEN: 1<sup>st</sup> Bert & Evelyn (Mem. Ken Martin), 2<sup>nd</sup> John Muddiman (*Phal.* ), 3<sup>rd</sup> Bert & Evelyn (Susie's Valentine).

NOVICE: 1<sup>st</sup> ? label missing, 2<sup>nd</sup> John (*Masd*).

Commentary by Roy and Lea Neale. Its always good to hear from someone different.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2008

2007/08 has been another exceptional year for our society with an increase in membership, excellent meeting attendances, raffles and auctions making our financial status very good. We are able to continue this year with no increases in fees even though everything else around us is continuing to rise in price. As long as we get member's support we will continue the same as we have been doing for the last number of years. One of the biggest increases in costs we faced was capitation to the OCNZ, which we joined last year. This cost is largely offset by a substantial saving in public liability insurance, which we get through the OCNZ at a heavily subsidized rate. The other advantages of being back with the OCNZ are many, such as better access to overseas speakers, which unfortunately we were unable to capitalize on this year, an excellent magazine and the ability to have a say in the wider orchid community. We also get access to other shows outside Auckland where we can capitalize on publicity for our society. There are many experts in different fields also able to help when and if we require it.

Your committee has worked hard to get you good plants for our events and staged a very successful show last year. Anton worked extremely hard to make this a great success and with some help this year will continue (although under duress) to be our show marshal.

There were not any bus trips last year as big increases in fuel costs have now made these expensive and very dependant on fully booking a bus. Past experiences have shown that support is often marginal resulting in the club having to subsidize the costs. Any shortfalls in this climate would be substantial.

Our regular social events, such as prize giving, Xmas function and BBQ have all been very well attended and we would stress these are important to members for getting to know others and being able to share ideas. Since these are regarded in this light the club is happy to continue with financial support for these and those members that attend them.

We had an excellent range of speakers last year and hope to continue the trend this coming year.

We pay reasonably good fees to speakers based on distance traveled to come to Howick and consider this is important to keep up the standard. With the acquisition of a new digital projector at Xmas this gives us a greater range of people to choose from offering a wider range of subject matter.

With so many benefits available for attendees on club days such as plant sales, auctions, afternoon tea etc the committee decided to increase the door fee for visitors late last year.

As mentioned our society is run for the member's benefit not the public at large although we do encourage them to come and see what we offer by allowing them 3 times as visitors.

The newsletter continues with Glenn as Editor and with the help of Dennis Chuah AOC we now have a website on which you and a world audience can view a selection of photos from our club days and shows. This is in keeping with modern communication technology and a lot cheaper than publishing them in print. Again we encourage you to make use of this facility, as this is the way modern technology is heading.

In closing I would like to thank the hard working committee for all their help throughout the year, Anton as Vice Pres. and Show Marshal, Janet as Sec, Jackie our Treasurer, Lea with Bryce's help organizing the kitchen and help at other soc. displays, Julie for hosting the BBQ and help on displays, Manee for the raffle, Paul, John, Christina for help on various other tasks including show displays and last but not least Len whose continuing contribution has been indispensable. All the above also undertook vital jobs for the show for which we are very thankful. I would also like to mention non comm. members Michelle who looks after the library, Jim Bensemann our auctioneer and doorman at the show, Tris the popular vote scrutineer and any others who have contributed to making this a happy and successful society.

**A husband** and his **wife** were sound asleep when suddenly the phone rang. The husband picked up the phone and said, "Hello? How the heck do I know? What do I look like, a weatherman?" He then slammed the phone down and settled into bed. "Who was that?" asked his wife. "I don't know. It was some guy who wanted to know if the coast was clear."

## **EDITOR'S COMMENT**

In previous years our display plants had the name of the exhibitor on the reverse of the label. I still think this is desirable so that voters are not prejudiced in their choice of the Popular Vote. Some other societies still use this method, which is fairer to the exhibitors. We will be endeavouring to reintroduce this as soon as possible.

Choosing sprays can be difficult when there are so many on the market and everyone has their own preferences. My suggestion is to try them carefully. Some may be suitable on one genus but not another. For instance I nearly killed all the *Sarcochilus* with a copper spray but others don't mind it at all. Contrary to what one speaker told us I found oils badly affected my Phallies, some worse than others. Another well-known grower's wife tried it as a leaf polish with disastrous results. Severe infestations of insects require drastic measures and although I don't particularly like using it, Orthene is the answer here. Although this has now been withdrawn from the market along with a lot of other sprays. It is systemic so is absorbed into the plant tissue and is effective a lot longer than others. The same goes for an effective fungicide, Saprol, which is also systemic and also has been withdrawn. They may still be available in other combination sprays such as Shield, BUT be warned both are very toxic so use protective clothing, gloves, face mask and don't spray on windy days. READ the small print on the LABEL to see what the chemicals are. Also be careful with a commonly used aerosol insecticide 'Confidor' (also in powder form) as this is also very toxic.

For bulb rot in cymbidiums you will need a specialist spray (not available in garden centres), which only comes in big quantities and is very expensive.

Potting compost is probably the most controversial subject. We all know about the great sphagnum versus bark debate and now we have coconut fibre thrown in for good measure. I have read many different views on these, for instance one of NZ's foremost orchid growers Andy Easton (now in USA) suggests to only use sphagnum for seedlings, while in a *Phalaenopsis* magazine a top American grower uses it for all his Phallies. The important thing to note about these mixes is how you use them and most people do not do enough research into this. For example the USA Phally grower goes into a lot of detail on how much packing of the sphagnum is required and watering frequency amongst other suggestions. You must also repot more frequently as sphagnum breaks down quickly and coco-fibre even more quickly. Coco-fibre comes in many different forms so again must be handled in different ways. My experience on visiting our members who are having problems with sphagnum or coconut fibre is to find plants growing in a waterlogged sodden mass more suitable to bog plants than orchids.

Having puzzled over lack of growth using many different fertilizers, burnt leaves with sprays, extracted plants out of rotting composts of coco-fibre and drowned a few in sphagnum I now err on the side of caution. I stick to a free draining mix incorporating mainly bark, some charcoal and pumice, which is much safer. It is also easier to water everything at the same time rather than trying to remember some plants in a different media requiring different treatment. Inert materials, such as polystyrene provide air space, do not break down and will not absorb moisture. Charcoal also doesn't break down and can take up excess salts out of the mix.

It can be a frustrating hobby. Unless you are prepared to do some research into something different to what you are accustomed to then my advice is to stick to the tried and true.

It was AUTUMN, and the Indians on the remote reservation asked their new Chief if the winter was going to be **cold or mild**. Since he was a new Indian Chief in a modern society, he had never been taught the old secrets, and when he looked at the sky, he couldn't tell what the weather was going to be. Nevertheless, to be on the safe side, he replied to his tribe that the winter was indeed going to be **cold** and that the members of the village should collect wood to be prepared. But also being a practical leader, after several days he got an idea. He went to the phone booth, called the National Weather Service and asked,

"Is the coming winter going to be **cold**?"

"It looks like this winter is going to be quite **cold indeed**," the meteorologist at the weather service responded.

So the Chief went back to his people and told them to collect even more wood in order to be prepared. A week later he called the National Weather Service again.

"Is it going to be a **very cold** winter?"

"Yes," the man at National Weather Service again replied, "it's going to be a **very cold** winter."

The Chief again went back to his people and ordered them to collect every scrap of wood they could find. Two weeks later he called the National Weather Service again.

"Are you absolutely sure that the winter is going to be **very cold**?"

"Absolutely," the man replied. "It's going to be one of the **coldest** winters ever."

"How can you be so sure?" the Chief asked.

The weatherman replied, "The Indians are collecting wood like crazy!"

## NEW MEMBERS

Firstly a reminder on nomenclature. *Italics* are used for the **Genus** and this is usually abbreviated. If the plant is a **species** it is also given in *italics*. If a hybrid then normal print is used. A cultivar name is given with inverted commas. If a botanically recognized varietal species then it is followed by var. and the name in italics.

You should check your orchid names on the RHS web site to make sure the spelling and name is correct and that it is a registered name. [http://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/registration\\_orchids.asp](http://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/registration_orchids.asp) Click on grex name and enter the name of your plant in the appropriate box. You can use part names to find a hybrid if unsure of the spelling.

To find if a cross has been registered click on parentage and then fill in the appropriate boxes. Try it out and see how you go. It is reasonably user friendly but spelling sensitive.

There are other programmes around which can be purchased some giving a lot more information and even photographs.

Try not to lose labels on your orchids as they are important for when it comes to displaying them.

## COMING EVENTS

This year being our **Silver Anniversary** we will have a little extra for your enjoyment at Prize Giving.

**HOS** Club days for 2008: 13<sup>th</sup> July – Orchid photography (Dennis Chuah), 10<sup>th</sup> Aug (vacant), 14<sup>th</sup> Sept (Leigh & Mike Leaty), Show Set up 26<sup>th</sup> Sept, Show 27<sup>th</sup> Sept, 12<sup>th</sup> Oct, (Prize Giving – Alf Day) 9<sup>th</sup> Nov (Auction) 14<sup>th</sup> Dec. (Xmas social)

Meetings are held in the Fencible Lounge every month except January.

AND just to make you think.....

**Why** do we press harder on a remote control when we know the batteries are flat?

**Why** do banks charge a fee on 'insufficient funds' when they know there is not enough?

**Whose** idea was it to put an 'S' in the word 'lisp'?