

NEWSLETTER

Sept. 2008

NEXT MEETING Sun 12th Oct. 2008 at 1.30 pm

Prize Giving

SPEAKER: Next meeting is the HOS annual Prize Giving and as usual our speaker will be Patron Alf Day who always has something new and interesting to entertain us with. This meeting Alf will look at some of the history of Howick Orchid Soc. and some of the interesting people who were instrumental in its establishment and progress to its current strong position.

LAST MEETING: Leigh Leaity with some help from Mike gave a very interesting talk and slide show of orchids from around the world with many unusual flowers never seen in NZ. There were some spectacular plants and amazing nurseries giving us a taste of what the world of orchids has to offer.

RAFFLE: Thanks to those who donated all the orchids. Lee Stone went away with an orchid and big stag horn, 'Big spender' Betty bought bundles as always and won a *Zygopetalum mackeyi*, Manee got a nice *Cymbidium* and Anton a *Dendrobium*. Lots of nice orchids as usual.

OBITUARY – Margaret Phair

We were sad to learn that Margaret had passed away earlier in the month after battling a long illness. Margaret was with the HOS for a long time and had a lot to do with the running of the club in earlier days especially the raffle and bus trips.

Margaret was also very active in ANOS and had a keen interest in NZ natives often bringing in these mounted on slabs. She was well known in many orchid clubs around Auckland.

Margaret was the raffle organizer when I first joined the society and was never one to be in the background. She always exhibited unbounded enthusiasm, always sat in the front row at meetings, was very vocal, spoke her mind and never let anyone stray from the job on hand.

Margaret will be missed by all those that knew her and many societies will be worse off without her happy and enthusiastic presence.

PLANTS ON DISPLAY (Sept. meeting)

Due to time and space constraints the individual entries will not be published this month.

OPEN: 1st Michelle (Cym), 2nd Anton/Janet (Den.), 3rd Michelle (Cym).

NOVICE: **No Entries!**

NOVELTY: 1st Michelle (Den). Didn't she do WELL!

A **woman** has the last word in any argument.

Anything a **man** says after that is the beginning of a new argument.

CULTURE: At last some warmer weather and noticeable growth on the orchids. My Cyms have started new growths early this year and many other orchids seem to be reacting positively to a little warmth after a long winter. This is the time to repot, divide if necessary and start with a weak fertilizer. I've mentioned before to look at your plants and see what they are doing, they will tell you when it is time to water and fertilise. They can dry out quickly after a few warm breezy days once growth starts in earnest. Those in flower can lose condition rapidly at this time of the year. Plastic/glass houses can heat up very quickly so keep an eye on temperatures in these now. Don't forget the sun is rapidly getting higher so leaf burn is a danger on plants receiving more light. Be careful leaving water on the leaves of Phallies (and other fleshy leaf varieties), which may be exposed to the sun. I make this mistake every year ending up with unsightly blotches and burn marks. A worst-case scenario is you can burn these so badly it will kill the plant. A recent article (AOS magazine?) I read gives the relative light levels various genera can cope with. Cymbidiums and Dendrobiums will take the most.

WELCOME to NEW MEMBERS –

Heather Brockett (Pakuranga)

Narua Irvine (Eastern Beach)

Calvin & Sue Smith (Howick)

HOWICK ORCHID SOC. 1 DAY SHOW

Preliminary reports as this newsletter goes to print indicate a very successful show yet again. Although public through the doors was down on last year we are about the same on sales, well up on the raffle and show expenses are expected to be lower than last year. Next year we can improve our advertising as we know which forms are the most effective.

We are very pleased with the huge amount of help received by club members, especially Verna in the kitchen who excelled not only in the efficient running of this but also provided many home baked goodies. Many others also provided plenty of lovely food, which is a talking point among members from other clubs I can assure you.

On the Friday a large team worked hard to pick up, transport and then erect tables. We are grateful to Ken, Dieu and others for providing their vehicles. On Friday afternoon Len and Kathy mounted a spectacular display on the stage to commemorate our 25th anniversary. They went for colour and impact and there could not be any doubts about them not achieving this with a huge range of orchids colour coordinated and filling the entire area.

Our ladies in the sales area, Janet, Lee, Raewyn, Sandra and Pam plus John from Taumarunui were tireless during the day. Jim as usual was our stalwart at the reception desk along with Manee and Suwaree selling raffle tickets. Maurice was chief security officer and the team of Michelle, Steven and Jackie manned the prize card desk. We also had an excellent turn out of people to help the judges stewarding. Many others were at the hall all day helping in many ways, Paul, 2 Johns, Julie etc and if I haven't mentioned everyone please be assured we value your help and enjoy the social occasion.

SHOW RAFFLE RESULTS (DRAWN at SHOW)

1st Marlene Hughes (1 year subscription to **WEEKEND GARDENER** Magazine)

2nd Melanie Smith (Gigantic Cymbidium – donated by **JULIE DUFF**) Luckily the winner lived close by!

3rd Elizabeth (Phalaenopsis – donated by **BRIAN MAIN**)

4th Sheila Westley (Cymbidium – donated by **MICK HUGHES**)

Does pushing the elevator button more than once make it arrive faster?

EDITOR'S COMMENT

The seminar and visit to NZ by Fred Clarke (Sun Valley Orchids USA) was most successful. Held at Mt Albert in the Bridge club hall (adjacent to the show) he gave 3 talks including an outstanding slide presentation with each.

I learnt more about orchids and orchid culture in those 2 days possibly than in many years of my association with the hobby. A large number of flasks were available many of genera not usually found in NZ, plus the latest in mini Cattleya breeding. We are fortunate that NZOS has been proactive in organizing these visits and with the success of them we look forward to even more in the future. Eight HOS members (home soc) were in attendance. Others came from all over NZ including the south island.

A woman worries about the future until she gets a husband.

A man never worries about the future until he gets a wife.

NEW MEMBERS

Although it's nice to go to the beach and take advantage of the good weather hopefully coming, you should take some time to get your orchids in order now.

Some effort in the spring will save a lot of time later and give your plants a good start for the growing season. Broken down media (especially bark) is a big cause of root rot.

Orchids with a lot of back bulbs (leafless bulbs usually in the middle or to one side of the plant) need to be divided and cleaned up. The dead roots on these will sour the mix and usually the plant will be rotten in the middle harbouring disease and insects.

If you have bought flasks then deflasking can be done soon and the seedlings potted up. This gives them a chance to get established over the warmer months. Everyone has his/her own preferences but I prefer to pot into a mix of fine bark/pumice/pearlite. I crock the small pots well with polystyrene and put 2 to 4 seedlings per small pot depending on size.

Use pots with good drainage holes, this also allows some air movement. Many new to orchid growing use pots that are unsuitable for orchids. I spend a lot of time drilling extra holes in the bottom and sides of pots.

You certainly learn a lot about growing (or killing) orchids by growing seedlings.

Paddy and Mick are walking down a street in London. Paddy happens to look in one of the shop windows and sees a sign that catches his eye.

The sign said, "Suits £5.00 each, Shirts £2.00 each, Trousers £2.50 per pair".

Paddy says to his pal, "When we get back to Ireland, we could make a fortune.

Now when we go into the shop, you be quiet, okay? Just let me do all the talking cause if they hear our accent, they might not be nice to us. I'll speak in my best English accent."

"Roight y'are, Paddy, I'll keep me mouth shut, so I will." says Mick.

They go in and Paddy says, "I'll take 50 suits at £5.00 each, 100 shirts at £2.00 each, and 50 pairs of trousers at £2.50 each. I'll back up my truck and"

The owner of the shop interrupts, "You're from Ireland, aren't you?"

"Well...yes," says a surprised Paddy. "How der hell d' y' know dat?"

The owner says, "This is a Dry Cleaners."

COMING EVENTS

Check your OCNZ Year Book as there are still some good shows coming up.

HOS Club days for 2008:

9th Nov (Orchid plant and Book Auction, **Orchid donations require**) 14th Dec. (Xmas Social)

Meetings are held 1.30pm sharp in the Fencible Lounge every month except January.