

Bulletin of the Orchid Society of Canberra, Inc.



GPO Box 612, Canberra, ACT, 2601, Australia
Volume 17, Number 4

July-August 2002

Regular monthly meetings

Monthly meetings of the Society are held on the first Tuesday of each month (except January) in Room 1, Griffin Centre, Bunda Street, Civic. Meetings commence at 8:00pm with the library and trading table open from 7:30pm.

Coming events

2 July OSC general meeting: Mark Fraser will speak on deciduous orchids. Sometimes when the leaves fall off, it's not a disaster, but what you do next could be! Hear about why some orchids are deciduous and how to care for them in their leafless state.

6 August OSC general meeting: We are hoping that Deane Johnson from Johnson's Orchids will be able to speak to us (we are in process of confirming the arrangement now). Johnson's Orchids is well known for its outstanding large phalaenopsis, but sells other kinds of orchids too. Should this plan go awry, Ben Wallace will bring forward his talk on the recent World Orchid Congress held in Malaysia.

28-30 June. The Orchid Fair at Royale Orchids, Brieses Road, Peats Ridge. We've organised car pools for those that have registered interest, but it is never too late! Call Robyn Noel by 8pm Friday if you'd like to come along

10-11 August. National Cymbidium Show. Douglas Mawson TAFE Institute, Port Adelaide.

16-18 August. Sapphire Coast Orchid Society Autumn Show. Twyford Hall, Merimbula.

16-18 August. St Ives Orchid Fair & Show. St Ives Showground, Mona Vale Rd, St Ives. Admission \$4. Vendors include Bighton Orchid Nursery, Dark Star Orchids, Dendi Orchids, Down Under Native Orchids, Easy Orchids, Robertson Orchids, Royale Orchids, Stockers Orchids, Tinonee Orchid Nursery. Give your name to Brian Leedham if you're interested in going and we'll organise car pools again.

16-18 August. The Melbourne Orchid Spectacular. Collectors Corner, Gardenworld. 810 Springvale Rd, Braeside.

****Members please note****

Our Spring show this year will take place over the October Long Weekend. Please take this into account when planning your movements over this period.

Minutes of general meetings

MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING 7 May 2002

Attendance: 45 Members 5 Apologies 4 Visitors

President Jane Wright opened the meeting at 8.03 p m, and welcomed all present.

Minutes of previous meetings of 5 March and 2 April were approved on the motion of Scott Fitzsimons, seconded by Peter Cudmore.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Presented by Brian Leedham

Newsletters: Sapphire Coast (April); Wagga Wagga (April); Gosford (April); OSNSW (April); Eurobodalla (May); ANOS Vic. (May).

Publications: Orchids Australia (April); Australian Orchid Review (April/May).

Catalogues: Dendi Orchids (April)

Correspondence: Bank Statement (2); COMSTAT (Statement); AOS (Subscription renewal); RHS (Subscription renewal); Terry Turner (cheque for \$197); Country Wide Cleaning Services (order for "Growing Orchids" - with cheque); Aranbeem Orchids (annual sale 18 May); ANOS Vic (refund for tuber order); ANOS NSW (re Conference 2004 - with three raffle books).

The Secretary's report was accepted on the motion of Pam Phillips, seconded by Sandra Corbett.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Presented by Robyn Noel. Current balance at bank was \$5139, which was approximately the end-of-year result.

The Treasurer's report was accepted on the motion of Pam Phillips, seconded by Sandra Corbett.

OTHER MATTERS

The President distributed a number of outstanding Popular Vote, and Spring Show Certificates, and some name badges.

Griffith Trip: Jane Wright also discussed the proposed trip to Griffith (1/2 June) and advised that those involved would visit the wineries on the Saturday afternoon, and Dennis Diehm's nursery on the Sunday morning. A barbecue would also be arranged on either Saturday evening or Sunday lunch.

MEETINGS PROGRAM

The June meeting will be the AGM, but Jane Wright will be our speaker.

SPEAKERS

Ben Wallace and Frank Fogliati both presented very interesting and informative talks on the culture of orchids on mounts. Ben spoke first on CAM plants (i.e. plants - including some orchids- which promote their growth through Crassulaccan Acid Metabolism). These plants are usually dry-climate epiphytes which have a habit of breathing at night rather than by day, because the atmosphere is cooler and more humid, and the air movement is reduced. Their stomates open at night and close by day in accordance with temperature and humidity conditions. Acidity builds up in their leaves overnight, and then is released during the day to promote photo-synthesis. It is therefore essential that such plants be provided with ample humidity overnight and good, but not over-strong, air movement. A problem in Canberra is that we also need to heat our glass houses in winter, which also tends to dry plants out. This can be overcome to some extent by watering in the evening, by using a humidifier, and/or by providing ample water storage on the floor of the house. Good air movement is also desirable to help prevent fungus and bacterial infections. But if the air movement is too strong it can tend to dry the plants out too quickly, although they should be dry by morning. Some compromise is therefore necessary. CAM orchids tend to be those with thick, rigid leaves, and non-CAM orchids generally have thinner more pliant leaves. As Ben pointed out, however, there can be exceptions to this general rule, and some genera at the margins can be either CAM or non-CAM. Ben demonstrated the wide

range of orchids which can be classified as CAM plants through a series of excellent slides.

Frank provided a composite talk on both CAM and non-CAM orchids, noting that some orchids need to be kept almost dry for up to 3 or 4 months during winter, particularly the deciduous ones. He noted also that excessive heat (above 30°C) can be stressful for many orchids, so orchid houses need shading and cooling over the Canberra summer. He recommended that air-circulation should not be excessive, and that air vents (top and bottom) combined with a small fan, should be sufficient.

Frank went on to discuss orchid culture on tree fern in particular, which he believes provides a more natural environment for orchids which grow as epiphytes in nature. The tree fern creates a micro-climate which releases retained moisture during warmer days, and yet provides sufficient air pockets for the plant's roots to prosper. Nevertheless tree fern has to be watered more often because it is a very dry environment. Frank prefers to use the tree fern as a slab (lying flat) over summer because this increases water retention.

Raffle: Winners were: Don Chesher, Norma Bush, Nita Wheeler, Bill Osmand, Bruce Mortlock (2), Gerlinde Lenz, Paul Guymer, Ann Howarth, Sandra Corbett, Marta Larko.

Door Prize: Won by Quin Yuen Chung

Judges Choice: *Dendrochilum wenzelii* owned by Don Chesher.

The Meeting closed at 10.34 p m.

MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING 4 June 2002

Attendance: 38 Members, 6 Apologies, 2 New Members, 1 Visitor

President Jane Wright opened the meeting at 8.20 p m, and welcomed all present.

Laurie Woods advised that Keith Alden sends his regards. He is looking good, but the treatment he is receiving knocks him around a little. Keith sends his regards to everyone for their good wishes.

Jane Wright reported that Lila Rose is facing her problems stoically, and that she really appreciated the orchids which were brought back from Griffith for her.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Presented by Brian Leedham

Newsletters: Sapphire Coast (May); Campbelltown (May); Albury/Wodonga (June); Gosford (May) OSNSW (May).

Publications: The Orchadian (April).

Correspondence: Bank Statement; 1 membership renewal; AOC membership form; OSNSW (re Ira Butler Trophy); Aust Orchid Foundation (research being undertaken & new publications); AOC (re slide library)

The Secretary's report was accepted on the motion of Col Palmer, seconded by Dean Carriage.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Presented by Robyn Noel. Current balance at bank was \$5780, which is indicative of membership renewals coming in. Robyn advised that the Society had provided two camellias to the Hospice as a memento to Les Lincoln.

The Treasurer's report was accepted on the motion of Mark Fraser, seconded by Peter Cudmore.

SALES TABLE

The President noted that the Tinonee seedlings were now available, and were going fast, and that a number of other plants were available on the sales table.

Library

Laurie Woods provided a brief summary of recent acquisitions.

SPEAKER

Jane Wright presented a number of slides taken at an orchid show she had recently attended in London Ontario. It was notable that the show was concentrated on table top and floor displays, and no orchids were benched within categories. This resulted in a more attractive display than a show which presented

the orchids in category order, although Jane felt that it made the work of judges more difficult.

Jane noted that there were large numbers of Paphiopedilums and Phragmipediums, and a number of Phalaenopsis in the displays, but the Champion of the show was an Australian native *Dendrobium* Kingrose, which, although very attractive, would not have gained such a high recognition in Australia.

OTHER MATTERS

Jane noted that the visit to Dendi Orchids at Griffith had been a great trip which had been enjoyed by all concerned. There had been a dinner on Saturday evening, which had been attended by Dennis and Dianne, and two of their three sons, and a barbecue at the Diehm's house on Sunday before the drive back to Canberra. And, of course, the highlight for orchid fanatics was the viewing of Dennis's orchid houses, and the purchase of his seedlings and flowering plants. Jane drew attention to a number of great photos which Gerlinde had taken, and which were available for viewing.

The Peats Ridge trip (29 June) would again be arranged through a car pool to be arranged by the Committee.

Laurie sought advice from new members about activities of interest to them. It was agreed that there should be another workshop in July, perhaps with advice about building glass houses.

Raffle: Won by Bob Wilson, Ann Howarth, Col Palmer, and Ray Palmer

Door Prize: Won by Sarah Turner.

Judges Choice: *Coelogyne barbata* grown by Don Chesher. The Meeting closed at 10.45 p m

Brian Leedham

Annual General Meeting

Although the minutes will be formally published in the bulletin directly preceding the next AGM, it is important to note that we honoured two of our members for their outstanding service to the Orchid Society of Canberra.

Laurie Woods was elected unanimously as a life member of the Society in recognition of his years of service in a myriad of roles, including President and Show Convenor.

Ben Wallace was presented with the OSNSW meritorious service award for his contributions to the Society, particularly for presenting such interesting talks on orchids from around the world.

From the President

I'd like to thank all of the committee from last year for all the work they put into making your society a success and all of the other members that pitched in and helped out whenever there was a job to do. We have just fewer than 100 members currently. When I add up all the people that helped on a regular basis at meetings alone, I come up with over 20 people. At our show every year, we get about a 75% participation rate in one aspect or another. That is what makes a society like ours function well, and what makes it rewarding to serve on committee. So thank you all: Laurie Woods (VP) for organizing our speakers, workshops and sponsors for the show; Robyn Noel (Treasurer) for keeping the society on the financial straight and narrow and for doing so much in organizing the show; Brian Leedham (Secretary) for managing all our correspondence; Tony Boyd (CM) for running the same

and Col Palmer for assisting him; David Rees (CM & editor) for producing an excellent bulletin, whose quality will be hard to beat; Yvonne Day (CM), Dean Carriage (CM) and Ben Wallace (CM) for input and ideas into planning society events; Gerlinde Lenz and Audrey Rough for womanning the door and raffle at meetings; Ray Palmer and Gunther Engelberger for providing the supper at meetings; Hans de Vries and Laurie Woods for the library; Mark Fraser and Sandra Corbett for opening up each meeting; Robert Rough and Bob Evans for organizing the popular vote; Sheila Cudmore and Judy Osborne for making the judges' choice; and everyone else that gladly pitched in and participated in society affairs.

From the Sales Table

John Ryan will be manning the sales table this year and will be pleased to hear from anyone with suggestions to make it more useful to members.

This month we have lovely plants for you from Tinonee Orchids. Enjoy, first in best dressed!

Sarcochilus Verolica (*falcatus* 'Ray' x *fitzgeraldii* 'Red Flash'). "Remake of an older, proven cross using quality parents. Huge flowers with splashes of colour – these will love cold weather and icy winds". 50 mm \$6.

Sarcochilus Melba 'Birdseed' x *Plectorrhiza tridentata* 'Chocolate'. "A huge filled-in Melba with the darkest chocolate-coloured tangleroot I have seen. Should be some very interesting novelties from these". 50 mm \$6.

Sarcochilus falcatus 'Ray' x *Sarc hartmannii* 'Yellow Snow'. "Both are high quality parents. Looking for Melbas with yellow centres". 50mm \$6.

Sarcochilus ceciliae 'Royal Flush' x *Sarcochilus Velvet* 'Harriott'. "Expect neat growing plants with well-presented colourful flowers". 50mm \$6.

Sarcochilus falcatus x *Plectorrhiza tridentata* 'Sid'. "Remake of *Plectochilus Kilgra* using improved parents. Compact growers for mesh pots or mounts, lots of flat green flowers." 50mm \$6.

Sarcochilus ceciliae 'Redeye Willie' x *Plectorrhiza tridentata* 'Pink'. "Little miniature novelties. This is *Plectochilus Rumrill*". 50mm \$6.

Sarcochilus dilatatus. "A gorgeous little twig-growing epiphyte; prefers humid conditions with good air movement. Not a beginner's orchid". Mounted \$11.

Rhynchostylis gigantea 'Kultana Orange'. "Imported mericlone of this impressive species. Sweet perfume and easy to grow, but these do like high humidity and protection from the cold." 50 mm \$7.

Angraecum sesquipedale. "The biggest and most impressive of the angraecums. These do well in cool cattleya conditions". 50 mm \$7.

Angraecum compactum. "Miniature growers with a short stem of 2 or 3 flowers in late spring and summer." 50mm \$7.

Angraecum dideri. "Small plants that bear flowers almost as large as the plant. Flowers pristine white with crystalline texture." 50mm \$7.

Jumellea arachnantha. "Compact fan-shaped growth. Flowers are produced individually on many upright wiry stems". 50mm \$7.

Viruses in Vanilla

Natural vanilla essence, one of the most common flavours used in the food industry, is extracted from the seed capsules of four species of the orchid genus *Vanilla*, and mainly from *V. planifolia* and *V. tahitiensis*. The main flavour component,

Vanillin, first made synthetically in Germany in the 1850s, comprises about 90% of natural vanilla essence, but it's the remaining 10%, containing up to a hundred other organic compounds that gives the natural product its subtle and unique flavour.

Vanilla vines are grown commercially in several subtropical countries such as Madagascar, Reunion Island, Fiji and Tonga, where the climate is suitable and labour is cheap. In its native home of Mexico, *Vanilla planifolia* is pollinated by a native bee, but elsewhere its flowers must be pollinated by hand. Because they only last one day, vanilla flowers must be pollinated on a daily basis, which makes vanilla production a highly labour-intensive business.

Vanilla vines are mostly grown on wire supports under shade cloth. Recently, stunted sterile vines have begun to appear in Reunion Island, a cause for considerable concern. Nearly all the vines in some plantations have been affected. Studies by scientists from New Zealand and reunion Island have now shown that these vines are affected by as many as six plant viruses, although only one, the cucumber mosaic virus, produces the symptoms shown by the commercial vanilla crop. Virus infections in plants are incurable and so the only remedy is to destroy all the affected plants. This represents a major economic loss because vanilla vines normally live for fifteen years and new seedlings take several years before they begin to flower.

Preventing the spread of virus from infected plants to others would also appear to be a formidable undertaking. Normally vanilla flowers are hand pollinated by twirling a stick in the base of the flower's 'trumpet'. One can hardly think of a better way of spreading sap (and any virus in it) from one plant to the next! Using a fresh stick for each flower would probably be too expensive but no doubt some inventive soul will eventually find an inexpensive solution to the problem.

This article was written by Brian Milligan, based on an article by Michael Field in the Melbourne Age (7 Feb 2002), and reproduced here, with thanks, from The NEMOS News, April 2002.

CROSSWORD No 5 SOLUTION by Dennis Drobe

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Vale Lila Rose

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Lila Rose on 14 June 2002. Lila had been very ill for some time, but she handled her illness with a dignity that inspired us all. Dean Carriage is arranging to name a cattleya hybrid in honor of Lila, and the Society will acquire a number of seedlings of the cross for members to buy.

New Members

We are pleased to welcome the following new members to the Society: Karen & Paul Guymmer, Simon Powley, William & Margaret Osmand, and Bob & Vicki Wilson. We hope that you will enjoy your association with us.

Report on the Griffith Trip

A dozen members of the society headed off to Griffith for the 1-2 June weekend. For many, it was their first trip to Griffith and all agreed that it was a destination worth visiting.

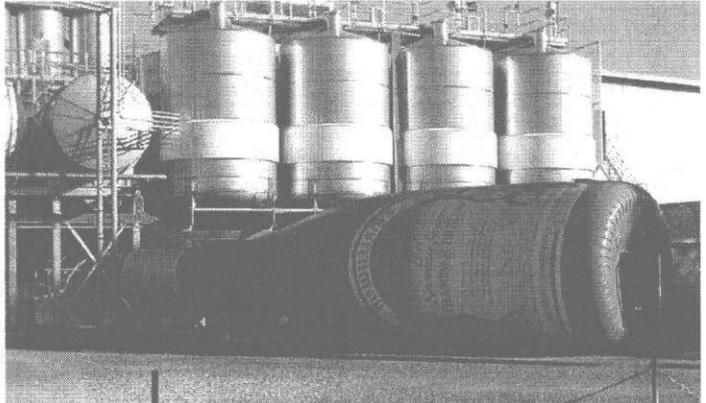
We met up with Dennis Diehm at Miranda Wines on Saturday afternoon and then sampled our way through four wineries before closing time. Then we all met at a very good Italian restaurant for dinner, where we were joined by Dianne, Christopher and Timothy Diehm.

The highlight was the visit to Dendi Orchids on Sunday morning. Dennis has a beautiful set up and there lots of plants in flower, particularly the mini-catts, for which Dennis has become well known. Following the big buy-up, we repaired to the house, where Dennis and Dianne treated us to a really great BBQ before we headed home.

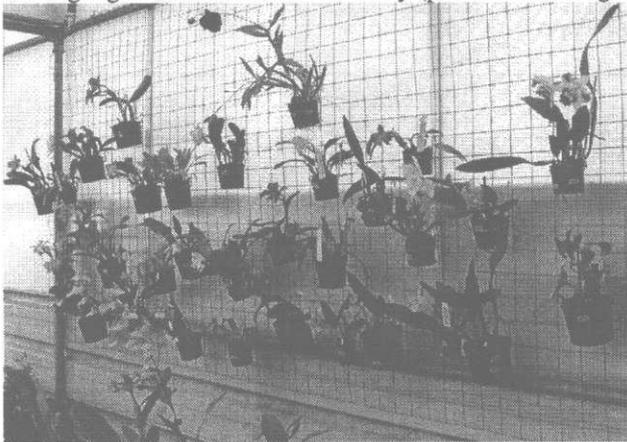
We all agreed that we should do this trip again, and thank Dennis and Dianne for their hospitality.



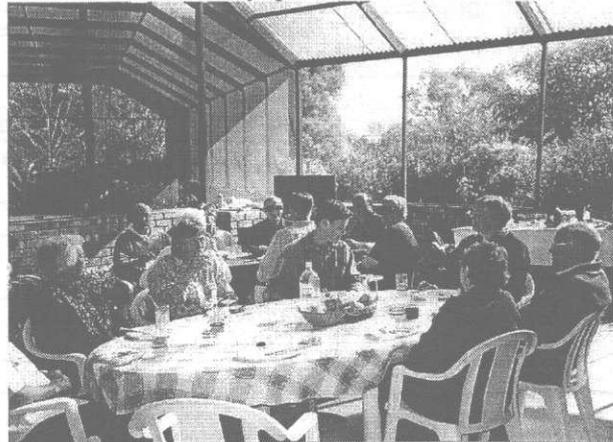
Having a good time at Piromit winery (photo: Jane Wright)



At McWilliams Winery (photo: Gerlinde Lenz)



The display of flowering plants for sale at the entrance to Dendi Orchids – quite a number of these made the trip back to Canberra! (photo: Gerlinde Lenz)



The BBQ at Sunday lunch (photo: Jane Wright)

