



# THE MONTHLY BULLETIN OF THE KU-RING-GAI ORCHID SOCIETY INC.

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**Next Meeting :** \* \* \* **No March meeting this year but stay alert. Vaccination is underway** (Our committee will advise you immediately as soon as there is any change to our situation.)

## The February Virtual Benching

What another amazing exhibition of strange and wonderful orchids as well as the gorgeously beautiful ones we wish we were growing. Fabulous Cattleyas, the most beautiful *Myrmecophylla brysiana* I have ever seen, African orchids, Asian orchids including one from Japan, American orchids, Papua New Guinea orchids, Caribbean orchids, and an Australian orchid, and even a snake. But please, anyone thinking of featuring spiders next month, we have to draw the line somewhere (shudder).

## My Favourite this Month – RLC Mahina Yahiro and a Cloisonné vase 'benched' by Lee Payne



How would you like to have this lovely specimen decorating the corner of your loungeroom or kitchen? Five big flossy, dinner plate Cattleyas on one plant, facing all directions out from the corner it is decorating. And to set off the visual effect, a few little decorative items for the eye to explore. I give it 9 stars for growing and flowering the orchid beautifully and for effective display. That is my choice for this month.

RLC Mahina Yahiro is an older Cattleya these days. It was registered in 1986, but is still, pretty much the style that classic style Cattleyas are aimed at even today. Big, pink, round, and a nice yellow highlight in the centre. The parentage includes many famous names from the breeder's tortuous pathway seeking perfection. Names most of the experienced growers will remember and have admired. The direct parents are RLC Donna Kimura and RLC Meditation but before them there were Deesse, Princess Bells, Mount Anderson, Bob Betts, Bow Bells, and at the core, species like *Cattleya labiata*, *mossiae*, *gaskelliana*, and *Rhyncholaelia digbyana*. In all there are 8 *Cattleya* species involved as well as the *Rhyncholaelia*.

Since it was registered, Mahina Yahiro has been used to make 55 primary hybrids (ie where it is a direct parent) and is still

actively being used today. Amongst Mahini's following generation, some that look good to me are RLC Momilani Jewel, Alice Underwood, Redlands Madonna, and Redlands Pride. But of course we don't yet have pictures of some of the more recent crosses, so perhaps just looking for Mahina Yahiro as a parent might be the way to go.

A lovely orchid Lee. Very well grown and perfectly displayed.

PS: do you know what cloisonné means? I was just showing off by including the word in the title. Making out that I know all about it. The truth is that I only recently heard it all explained on TV, on Bargain Hunt. Cloisonné enameling involves the creation of raised compartments above the surface of the metal of the item (eg attaching wire to the surface of a bronze vase). These are then filled with vitreous enamel glaze (or paste) and vitrified in a kiln. There are of course other methods of decorative enameling. For example champlevé, which involves the creation of compartments below the surface (as opposed to above the surface with cloisonné). Typically, shallow troughs are carved out of the metal and then filled with vitreous enamel. (mostly onto bronze). And Guilloché is where the metal surface is mechanically engraved (engine turning) before application of the vitreous enamel.

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**Society News** (if anyone has a news item, please phone Jim on 9476 3383, or email at [jimbrydie@aussiebroadband.com.au](mailto:jimbrydie@aussiebroadband.com.au) )

**President Dennys' Desk** – So, with vaccinations rolling out and if the current restriction stays in place and/or improve then I am prepared to run a meeting at our current hall at West Lindfield in April. I have no expectation that members should attend if they are concerned about their own situation. The meeting will need to be run to meet the covid management requirements and in accordance with our covid plan which has already been prepared. I will confirm with more details later.

**Supplies** – Recently Chris Wilson and I went up to Garden City Plastics to pick up a large order for KOS that we had placed with them. I can advise that we now have new stocks of Osmocote and the Peters (XL) Cal Mag finisher still at the same price. If you need any, please contact Norm and Anne Byron. Their phone number and address are in the white pages. We also have some large clasp, 43 cm pot hangers in stock at 50 cents each. I am holding these at my place along with the pots. If you need supplies, please email me to reserve them. It will be some time before we put in a new order to GCP. I have never been there before and I have to say, it was very convenient and efficient.

**Virtual benching** - On the 19<sup>th</sup> February, Jenny issued VB #11. My naïve favourite was Pauline and Trevor's *Promenaea* Kiwi Small World. I was also intrigued by Jane and Peter's *Platystele misera* since I find it quite difficult to grow small flowers. Thank you all for submitting photos. I get the impression that the skill level across the whole member's production spectrum has improved greatly. It will be nice to review the efforts over the year and may make a nice talk topic for the future and or a major production piece to lock in the effort forever. Thank you for the effort Jenny.

**Member's welfare** – please remember, if you need to speak to someone immediately then you are most welcome to contact me at any time, 24/7 on 043 88 77 689.

**Future Events** (please note that all these can change in a flash under present circumstances)

**Sun 18<sup>th</sup> April** – the MWOS will host the next of their very popular bi-annual public orchid auctions. Catalogues are just being developed at present. More info available as it comes to hand.

**Wed 9<sup>th</sup> to Sat 12<sup>th</sup> June** – N. Shore Autumn show at St Ives Shopping Village . (set up wed 9<sup>th</sup>, pull down Sat 12<sup>th</sup>)

**Sat 26<sup>th</sup> – Sun 27<sup>th</sup> June** - Mingara Orchid Club 2021 Fair & Show, Mingara Recreation Club Tumbi Umbi

**Sat 7<sup>th</sup> – Sun 8<sup>th</sup> Aug** - Combined Cymbidium Club of Australia and Paphiopedilum Society of NSW Annual Show, Ermington Community Centre, 6 River Rd Ermington.

**Friday 13th August, Saturday 14th August and Sunday 15th August, St Ives Orchid Fair.** At this stage we are still planning for the St Ives Orchid Fair with the hope that it will go ahead on these dates. We will keep members up to date with the preparations and will keep our fingers crossed that we are able to have it.

**Protecting plants.** Following last month's article on using ENVY to help protect plants, one of our readers David Vaughan from Queensland offers this useful alternate information.

**Potassium silicate for orchids** - David Vaughan

A few years ago, an acquaintance of mine who grows orchids commercially introduced me to using potassium silicate ( $K_2SiO_3$ ) to provide additional resilience during stressful hot and cold extremes, but also as a very useful substance to support the hardening off of orchid seedlings from flask. I currently use potassium silicate prior to the really hot end of summer and for the transition into winter.

Potassium silicate is an inorganic compound that dissolves in water. Potassium is a macronutrient of plants; it is the K-component of the various fertilizers that we often use. Plants require potassium for various things such as the transport of water and carbohydrates within the tissues. It also provides additional strength to cell walls on its own, but this is greatly increased with the addition of the silica in potassium silicate. The silica component bolsters cell walls, providing additional strength and support against extremes in temperature but also against some plant pathogens which may find it more difficult to attack treated plant tissue. This bolstering of cell wall occurs rapidly (within a day or two) because the roots of the plants recognise the potassium and readily absorb potassium silicate, distributing it quickly to all sections of the plant. In deflasked seedlings, this benefit is obvious. The main problems with deflasked seedlings are that they are fragile, suddenly exposed to a multitude of potential microorganisms, some of which might be pathogenic, and they are exposed to less temperature and humidity stability. Mitigating these stressors improves overall seedling success.

Potassium silicate is highly alkaline. Therefore, when preparing a solution to give to orchids, it is imperative to accurately determine the pH of the solution and to adjust it down to the desired pH of about 6.5. Citric acid can be used to reduce the pH. Potassium silicate can usually be purchased as a liquid and is sold by various niche specialist (e.g. hydroponics) companies. It is also available to purchased online in Australia and is relatively expensive.

(Thank you David, a great tip and one I hadn't heard before - Jim).

**One liners** - I don't always go the extra mile, but sometimes in life you just have to. Like when you miss your exit.

- I just got myself one of these great new seniors' GPS's. It not only tells me how to get to my destination, it reminds me why I wanted to go there.



## Orchids from the Virtual Benching -- Jim Brydie

1. *Procatavola Golden Peacock* - benched by Lina – What a lovely little orchid, but what the heck is a Procatavola?

I know it isn't a species so it has to be one of those manmade multi generic hybrid genus names. It seems obvious that the 'vola' part must come from the genus *Brassavola* because it is the only natural genus I know of containing those letters together. That leaves us with 'Procata...'. Maybe the Cat is for *Cattleya*? That would mean that the 'a' after Cat also belongs with 'vola' which makes sense given it comes from *Brassavola* so that leaves us with 'Pro'. It has to be from a genus in the *Cattleya/Laelia* family (*Laeliinae*) so the only one I can think of would be the one we discussed last month. And that is *Prosthechea*, a recent split away from *Encyclia/Epidendrum*. But is there a *Prosthechea* that has orange flowers anything like these? Well, it just so happens that there is one. It is *Prosthechea vitellina* which used to be *Encyclia vitellina* and previously *Epidendrum vitellinum*. It was moved to *Prosthechea* by W.E. Higgins in 1998 but was also confirmed as a *Prosthechea* by Withner and Harding in "Debatable Epidendrums" in 2004.



We hardly ever see this gorgeous little species from Mexico, El Salvador, and Guatemala

benched but I am sure it is still cultivated in choice species collections. I have tried a few times but killed it each time and I couldn't bring myself to do it to another one, even if it was to be 'in the name of science'. *Vitellina* occurs naturally as an epiphyte in oak and pine forests at relatively high elevations (between 1400 m and 2600 m). If you look carefully, you can see dozens of little orange patches in the trees in this forest picture from orchidspecies.com. These habitats are pretty much all 'cloud forests' where the highly moist atmosphere from lower tropical elevations rises against the mountains and cools, condensing into mists, clouds and even rain. This is especially common in the late afternoon as the day temperatures are dropping anyway.



*Vitellina* is not a large plant. It has egg to cone shaped pseudobulbs between about 3 and 5cm tall, with a few 15 – 25 cm tall leaves at the top. Plants have a glaucous appearance (powdery grey) and as you can see from the forest picture above, its habitat seems reasonably shady. The inflorescence is about 30 to 45 cm tall but usually arches out or down from the plant, unlike the lovely staked specimen above from *Tropical Angkor Orchids*. The flowers are about 3 to 4 cm across and come in yellow to orange to deep scarlet. The inflorescence carries about 12 long lasting flowers.



The second species parent in Golden Peacock is *Cattleya milleri* which is one of the 'Catts' that used to be known as a rupicolous *Laelia* until it was decided that all of this group were really *Cattleyas* after all. *Cattleya milleri* comes from Brazil and like many of the other 'rupicolous' types, grows at elevations of 800-1400 m in rocky desert like areas inland from the coast.

The first plants found were on iron ore deposits in the state of Minas Gerais and their roots were growing in mosses, detritus, and plant debris in cracks and crevices in the rocks.

The flowers are usually a fantastic red, about 3 to 4 cm across and bunched at the top of a 30 cm inflorescence showing the flowers off well above the rather small stubby plant down among the rocks. It was always a rather rare plant but these days is likely extinct in the wild due to habitat destruction and over collecting. Luckily, although it isn't the easiest orchid to grow, it is

cultivated and becomes available from time to time as seedlings or mericlones. A highly desirable but tricky orchid.

So now we have two parents with similar flowers in size and in reds and oranges, although *P. vitellina* can occasionally be more yellow. The third species parent, *Brassavola nodosa*, is a great parent. It has larger flowers than the other two at about 8 or 9 cm but the flowers are always in green and white and it has very narrow petals and sepals. The flared white lip is the showy feature but that lip also sometimes shows some spotting in the inner part and it turns out that it carries a gene to impart lip spotting into its hybrids. Now look back up to the top picture and check out the lovely little red spots in the lip of Golden Peacock.

Golden Peacock plants look just like you would expect from the 3 parents. The plants are compact. Short pseudobulbs with thick, rather fleshy *nodosa* like leaves, but upright like *Prosthechea vitellina*. The flowers are about 7 or 8 cm across, taking their size from *nodosa* but their shape from the other two. The colours are in shades of orange from yellowish orange to a deeper orange like *vitellina*. Not all cultivars have the spotted lips but most do and one blog site says they grow to flowering





in just 3 years and can flower 3 times a year. Not bad value for a very showy little easy to purchase hybrid. And just think about all you just learned about orchids at the same time.

**2. *More Brassavola nodosa spots - several benchings*** – I have previously written about the spotted lip nodosa hybrids but that was back in 2016 so I am going to cheat a little on content this month and repeat that article here. There must be some new members in the club by now who didn't get to see the last explanation. But first, these 4 at the left are some recent Virtual Benching entries that also fit the pattern. I could hardly be described as an aficionado of the Cattleya alliance, but spotted *Brassavola nodosa* progeny have always made me curious. Just about all the nodosas that I have seen looked pure white and pale green to me, virtually albinos.



**BC Memoria Vida Lee**



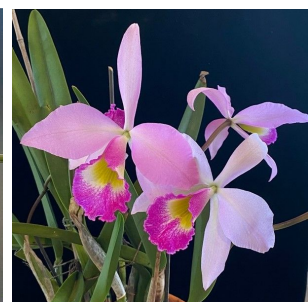
**unknown nodosa hybrid**

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Found from Mexico, all the way down to Colombia and



**BC Terri Drake?**



**unknown nodosa hybrid**

Venezuela, *nodosa* comes from lowland coastal habitats, generally below 500m, on either trees in lowland tropical forests and mangrove swamps, or on exposed rocks and cliffs near the shore. It is a lovely species whose flowers are dominated by the lip which starts as a narrow tube and flares to a wide, heart shaped white trumpet. The flowers are very fragrant at night and are pollinated by night flying moths.

Curiously however, *nodosa* is known to produce spots or striations in the lip of it's hybrids. I had never bothered to look into it deeply but I



always wondered just where these came from.

(samples of *nodosa* hybrids)



**BC Humdinger**



**BC Carol Lomer (from percivalliana)**



**BLC Lime Cooler**



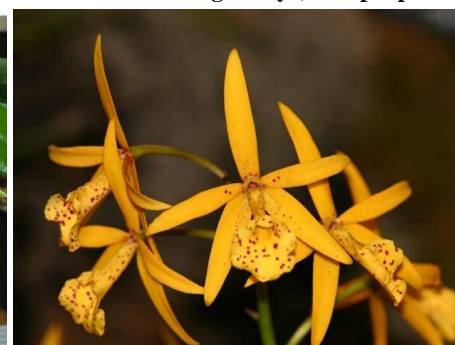
**LC Morning Glory (from purpurata)**



**BC Maikai (from bowringiana)**



**BC binosa (from C bicolor)**



**L Richard Mueller (from L milleri)**

Not every *nodosa* hybrid ends up with a spotted lip but it does seem a relatively dominant feature, along with the general shape of the lip. You can see what I am talking about from the pictures above. There are hundreds of examples, but in these samples I have chosen some from parents most growers might know. For example, in the first line, Humdinger is from Catt. Razzle Dazzle, and Lime Cooler is from BLC Helen Brown.

So, where do the spots come from? Well it turns out that *nodosa* itself sometimes has red spots inside the lip. I guess that even in clones where the spots are absent or not noticeable, the genetic coding for them is still there. The *nodosa* picture at the right shows a very obvious form of the spots that can show up in the species itself.



All these years growing orchids and I didn't realise (until 2016) that *nodosa* could be spotty. But before I came across this new information, I had already consulted our local orchid oracle Ken Siew (from OSNSW and Species). He has



an amazing knowledge of orchids (among many other things) and as usual his response was fascinating. I have repeated part of it here. – “Hi Jim, the spotting in nodosa hybrids is a well-known phenomenon. When bred with a plant with a coloured labellum, the spots will appear. This is because nodosa itself reputedly have labella with white and green spots, but operate almost like an alba. With albas the genes related to the placement of colour are still there even if the mechanism for colour production isn't. When matched with a plant which normally produces red pigments (anthocyanins), even if there is none in the labellum, the progeny usually produce colour in the labellum.

This problem is one I am trying to work around as one of my aims when breeding Cattleyas is to produce classical flowers which are pink with only yellow in the labellums. No red allowed. I don't have too many species with those specifications to start with. I have to rule out using albinistic parents because I never know what their normal lip colour patterns would be like if they weren't anthocyanin deficient.

The interesting thing about nodosa spots is that in breeding, the nodosa breaks up a solid coloured lip into spots. I wonder if this has anything to do with a recent evolution from a diurnal pollination to night moth pollination. Is this the way a marked labellum lost its colour? Did pre-Brassos lose colour 2 ways? Would a pre-Brassovola have had a coloured lip more suitable to some form of day pollination syndrome? Should we regard Brassovolas as being albinistic plants? Mostly they take whatever colour is put onto them.

The spotting on the lip is dominant and highly characteristic of nodosa hybrids even several generations later. So Jim, its spotting is not recessive at all! But the albinism might be!!!! The spotting was noted in an article in an issue of the AOS Bulletin a long time ago - sometime in the 80's, I think. Unfortunately, not much else was mentioned about the genetic mechanisms.” Ken. (Aren't orchids fascinating?)

### 3. *Aeranthès Hsinying Ramosa (and others)* - benched by Geoff and Jean

I rather like *Aeranthès*. Perhaps it is just because I happen to like green flowers but they do have an elegance about them, and although they might not look like it, they are related to other African/Madagascan genera like *Angaecum* and *Aerangis* so *Aeranthès* and it's cousin genera are all in the *Vanda* family. That means they are monopodial and therefore they grow longer and longer from a single stem rather than making a series of new pseudobulbs along a surface stem called a rhizome. The rhizome/pseudobulb type of growth is called sympodial. This doesn't mean that monopodial orchids only have one stem though. Most can and will produce side shoots from time to time that can cluster together as a group of growths but each of those stems is also monopodial and will get longer and longer as they grow.

However, *Aeranthès* are just a little different to the other (mostly white flowered) African and Madagascan orchid genera. For starters just about all the *Aeranthès* have green flowers. There is at least one that you might call yellow/green and a few white to greenish white, but the rest are all shades of green. The other thing that always seemed different to me is that all the species I have seen, which is only about 10 of the 40 odd species, have long, wiry, pendent inflorescences with spaced flowers that always seem to display perfectly to face the viewer. The wiry inflorescence is quite distinctive

Geoff and Jean's hybrid *Aeranthès* is (*grandiflora* x *ramosa*) backcrossed to *ramosa*. That makes it 75% *ramosa* and 25% *grandiflora*, but perhaps the significant improvement over the species is noted in Geoff's comments in the Virtual Benching “....*This plant has been continuously in flower through most of winter, all spring and is still going.*” Sounds impressive.

*Aeranthès* hybrids are still a new territory. There are only about 10 so far. It is hard to imagine what may come from it but it is easy to see that intergeneric hybrids could create something interesting. If you have a mind to perhaps try one, it is the species that are much easier to come by and among the most

commonly seen might be :



*Aeranthès filipes*



---- *Aeranthès grandiflora* ----



*Aeranthès ramosa*



If you find others available check the species details online to make sure they are physically desirable and can tolerate your growing conditions. A few species like *ramosa* are found at moderate elevations and may well grow without heat in many parts of Sydney but many others are lowland warm growers. It depends on the individual, but those I have grown were quite happy in my glasshouse and I only keep that at about 8 – 10°C minimum in winter.



#### 4. *Promenaea Kiwi Small World* – by Trevor and Pauline

Aren't these small growing *Promenaeas* absolute little gems. I had already picked this out for a write up myself when I noticed our President picked it as his favourite for the month. (great taste)

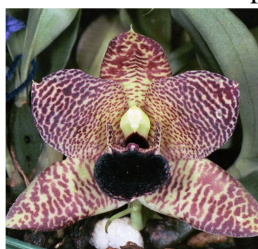
The genus *Promenaea* is a curious member of the *Zygopetalum* alliance although it doesn't look much like a *Zygopetalum*. The genus comprises about 15 species in total, all from Brazil, mostly from the central and southern areas relatively close to the coast and in generally temperate zones. Their natural habitats would be warmer than Sydney but although they don't like extremes of temperature (hot or cold), they seem to adapt pretty well to growing here with some protection. In freezing Winter temperatures their leaves may spot a little unless they are under cover, and in our scorching Summer temperatures leaf tips can burn if they aren't given enough shade. They won't drop dead from either extreme but it does set them back.



*Zygopetaliinae* is part of the *Maxillariae* tribe which makes them related to *Maxillaria*, *Lycaste*, *Bollea*, *Pescatorea*, *Zygopetalum*, *Neomoorea*, *Colax*, *Aganisia*, etc. The *Promenaeas* are close enough relatives to interbreed with nearly all the genera mentioned, and some amazing intergeneric hybrids have been made, although it must also be said that there have been quite a few duds as well.

At one of our meetings some years back, the famous Australian nurseryman John Woolf from Toowoomba told us that just 2 species, *Promenaeas stapelioides* and *xanthina*, stand out for their influence in breeding.

*Promenaea stapelioides* is a beautiful species named for its flowers resemblance to the flowers of a genus of African succulents called *Stapelia*. The picture below shows a comparison of *Promenaea stapelioides* to the species *Stapelia hirsuta*.



The other *Promenaea* species that John mentioned is *Promenaea xanthina*, which is named for the brilliant yellow of its flowers.

And would you believe, Trevor and Pauline's hybrid is a complex 4<sup>th</sup> generation mix of just those two species. It is genetically 62.5% *stapelioides*, and 37.5% *xanthina*.

Prom stapelioides

Stapelia hirsuta

Prom. xanthina

There are lots of other nice *Promenaea* hybrids about as well, and John Woolf and his son David know all about them. At the next plant fair perhaps their stall is a good place to start your search.

I was interested to see the way Trevor and Pauline have been growing *Kiwi Small World*. It seems to be in a shallow decorative glazed bowl and the media looks like Trevor's ubiquitous peat and perlite with decorative pebbles on top. It looks very attractive as a plant and the flowers perfectly match its display. Very Nice.

*Promenaeas* are quite small plants. The compressed roundish pseudobulbs are about 2 to 3 cm diameter and have 4 greyish green 5 cm leaves. Two leaves clasp the pseudobulb, two from the top. New growths are tightly clustered and over a few years a well grown *Promenaea* can nicely fill a squat 12 – 15 cm pot and cover it with twenty or more 4 to 5 cm flowers. But the secret is the 'well grown' qualifier. Not that easy if you don't have amenable conditions.

The species are mostly epiphytes but are occasionally found as lithophytes and they are all shade lovers. They are native to Brazil, mostly from the central and southern areas in relatively temperate zones. Their natural habitats would be warmer than Sydney but they don't like extremes of either hot or cold. In summer spells of extreme heat, the problem can be managed by moving them to greater shade, perhaps lower to the ground where humidity should be higher, and making sure there is adequate air movement. Winter cold is a bit trickier. In an article written by Neville Roper he explains – "... extreme cold may cause leaf dropping and spotting, especially if not kept under cover. I can grow them in Sydney both in a glasshouse, heated to a minimum of 10 degrees Celsius, or outside year-round under cover. The ones in the shadehouse grow best in summer while the ones in the glasshouse grow best in winter. Keeping the foliage dry on winter nights, as you would for most other genera, seems to be more important than temperature."

Personally, I have only had moderate success with *Promenaeas* despite admiring them greatly. My home location makes my shadehouse just a few degrees too cold in winter, despite it being covered, and the *Promenaeas* really don't seem to appreciate the closed up steamy environment of my heated glasshouse. But don't let that put you off. If you have a better growing environment they aren't at all hard to grow and they are a beautiful little orchid.

**Medium** - *Promenaeas* seem to be 'growable' in almost any medium provided that it drains well and retains some moisture. They like to be moderately moist all the time but not 'wet' which can be a problem when organic mediums based on bark and similar products may become problematic as they age. If you use these types you should perhaps repot more frequently and add ingredients like styrene foam and perlite to keep the mix open.



From Neville Roper again – “These orchids prefer to not be allowed to dry out for long periods so regular watering is the order of the day. I like to see the green bulbs begin to wrinkle a little before I apply more water. Like most other orchids too little water is far less harmful than too much.”

They seem to respond quite well to fertiliser while they are growing and especially while you are watering regularly and they grow quickly from seedlings. Just keep your eye on the plant and judge what it is doing and what it needs.

### **Dendrobium johnsoniae hybrids – Jim Brydie**



**Debonair**



**D. johnsoniae**



**D. kauldoroumii**

In our last Virtual Benching Geoff and Jean showed us a gorgeous specimen of Dendrobium Debonair which is the hybrid between Den. johnsoniae and Den. kauldoroumii. These are both rather unusual

Section Latourea species because they are essentially white flowers, although the first has delightful purple lines in the throat that vary in intensity from one cultivar to another, and the second is a mix of white and green. Most other Latoureas are much more highly coloured, especially in the lip.

For one reason or another, I have always been somewhat taken by Den. johnsoniae. To me, it somehow just doesn't look like the other Latourea Dendrobiums. It has a curious but delightfully elegant look.

The species comes from New Guinea, Bougainville Island, and the island of Guadalcanal in the Solomons to the east of New Guinea. They are epiphytes and usually grow in high light. In some cases even full sun for part of the day. They occur at moderately highish elevations around 500 – 1200 metres, but all of these habitat locations are full tropical zones so johnsoniae is clearly a warm grower.

There are some quite lovely hybrids from johnsoniae, including Geoff and Jean's Debonair. But my favourite is the one called Fire Wings. It is not a primary hybrid as it involves 4 species including Den. bigibbum, but the flowers show the distinctive johnsoniae shape. The colour varies from one seedling to another but they are nearly all a lovely mix of white and bigibbum pink/purple. A few years back, when Roy Tokunaga from H&R Orchids in Hawaii did a talk at our society, he very kindly brought along some little plastic packets of a variety of deflasked orchids to sell on our sales table. Each packet contained 4 or 5 plants and the stock included packets of Fire Wings, and boy were they popular. I still have a few growing but haven't flowered one yet. Perhaps I need to give them more light.

Anyway I have seen a few of our other members flower them and every one so far has been beautiful.

Here are a few other samples of johnsoniae primary hybrids. I can't wait to see the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> generations come along. Are these to be yet another new type of orchid to keep an eye out for?

**Den. Fire Wings**



**Den. Stephen Batchelor**



**Den. Jomag**



**Den. Cole Neifert**



**Den. Green Envy**

### **Horses for Courses**

A man was sitting quietly reading his paper when his wife walked up behind him and whacked him in the head with a Magazine. “Owh” he cried, “What was that for?”

“That was for the piece of paper in your pocket with the name Lara Lou written on it,” she said.

“That was nothing,” he replied, “two weeks ago when I went to the races, Laura Lou was the name of one of the horses I bet on. I bought you those flowers with the winnings that day.”

“Oh darling, I'm so sorry, I should have known there was a good explanation,” she apologised.

Three days later he was watching TV when his wife walked up and this time hit him in the head again, with a frying pan this time, knocking him out cold. When he came to, he asked, “what was that for?”

“That horse just phoned for you.”

**It's a Matter of Degrees** - The graduate with a Science degree asks, "Why does it work?" The graduate with an Engineering degree asks, "How does it work?" The graduate with a Commerce degree asks, "How much will it cost?" The graduate with an Arts degree asks, "Do you want fries with that?"

### **Cattleya Mini Purple** – two lovely orchids benched by Lee

Mini Purple has been a hugely successful and very popular hybrid since it was first made in 1965 despite it being a simple primary hybrid between *Cattleya pumila* and *Cattleya walkeriana*. Due to the variability of each parent in their colour forms and shape, the cross has been re-made more times than you can imagine, creating it in just as many colour forms and shape variations as the parents.

Mini Purple has improved and improved and been crossed with so many other compact *Cattleyas* that today it is hard to just see an orchid benched as 'Mini Purple' and say positively 'yes it is a Mini Purple'.



**Catt. Mini Purple No. 1**



**?Catt. Mini Purple 'Surprise'**

The early hybrids were much more after the style of *Cattleya pumila* (which was known at the time as *Laelia pumila*). It has quite a tubular lip, and are generally sort of star shape with very little overlapping of the petals and sepals. *Catt. walkeriana* usually improves the Mini Purple lip by opening the tube shape of the lip, and its much wider petals fill in the roundness of the flower in Mini Purple.

In some of the harder to develop colours like the blues, and white with a blue lip, the shape doesn't yet quite match the more common pinks and mauves, but they are certainly still improving. (samples )

**Catt. Pumila**



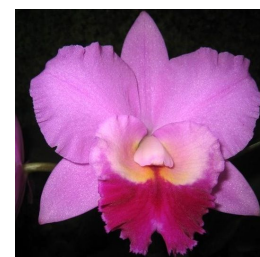
**Catt. walkeriana**



Now you might have noticed the '?' before the name of the second of Lee's lovely orchids. I searched everywhere for a clonal name of 'Surprise' among the Mini Purples but came up a blank. It could still exist but it is such a good shape and colour that I would have expected it to have been awarded if it was Mini Purple and it hasn't. In searching Orchidwiz however, I noticed that there is a hybrid of Mini Purple and Rosie's Surprise called Mini Surprise, and pictures of Mini Surprise are very similar to Lee's Mini Purple Surprise.

As a sheer guess on my part, I can't help thinking the label on Lee's plant might be a mistake and that it might really be *Cattleya* Mini Surprise.

**Catt Mini Surprise**



### **Bad news and good news –**

A man's wife goes missing while diving off the West Australian coast. He reports the event, searches fruitlessly and spends a terrible night wondering what could have happened to her. Next morning there's a knock at the door and he is confronted by a couple of policemen, the old Sergeant and a younger Constable.

The Sarge says, 'Mate, we have some news for you, unfortunately some really bad news, ...but, some good news, and maybe some more good news'.

'Well,' says the bloke, 'I guess I'd better have the bad news first?' - The Sarge says, 'I'm really sorry mate, but your wife is dead. Young Bill here found her lying at about five fathoms in a little cleft in the reef. He got a line around her and we pulled her up, but she was dead.'

The bloke is naturally pretty distressed to hear of this and has a bit of a turn, but after a few minutes he pulls himself together and asks what the good news is.

The Sarge says, 'Well when we got your wife up, there were quite a few really good sized crayfish and a swag of nice crabs attached to her, so we've brought you your share.' He hands the bloke a hessian bag with a couple of nice crays and four or five crabs in it.

'Geez thanks', he says, 'they're bloody beauties. I guess it's an ill wind and all that. So what's the possible good news?'

The Sarge says, 'well, if you fancy a quick trip, me and young Bill here get off duty at around 11 o'clock and we're gonna shoot out to the reef and pull her up again.'

(thanks George)