



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

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**Next Meeting :** \* \* \* **No August meeting** \* \* \*. (As already announced, we have had to cancel the July and August meetings. Let's all hope that the covid situation is brought under control sooner rather than later. Perhaps we will be able to have a September meeting. In the meantime, if you haven't yet been vaccinated please consider it. If you are worried about it talk to your doctor.)

## RLC. Burdekin Bells 'Rosco' benched by Lee Payne

What a big, flossy, exotic Catt. It just looks so luxurious. It gives me thoughts of wealth, affluence, and excess - strange how the mind ranges, isn't it? but this one could decorate my lounge room any day.

In our Virtual Benching, it got listed as Catt. Burdekin Heights due to a possum attack on the labels but after consultation with Lee, she confirmed it was really Burdekin Bells (one of Burdekin Heights parents).

As I didn't know anything about any Burkekins, I went to Orchidwiz which told me that B Bells is a Rhyncholaeliocattleya (RLC) hybrid rather than a straight Cattleya, but that seemed likely anyway judging by that huge frilly 'digbyana' lip, but now it's official. Both Burdekin Bells and Burdekin Heights were made and registered by Sam Scalia from Home Hill in Qld. Home Hill is just south of Townsville on the Burdekin River which no doubt gives its name to Burdekin Bells and Burdekin Heights. 'Rosco' is the highest awarded cultivar of B. Bells with an 'AM' of 81.3 points in 2017. The natural spread dimensions stated are 18.5cm wide x 17cm high. Very impressive.



The award picture at the right shows what exhibition 'Catts' look like when you set the flowers with artificial assistance like foam pads etc. It's not illegal, but in most cases it is the only way to make the flower flat and to sit in the exact plane you want for best presentation. I tried such things a few times to experiment, but because I have no real interest in awards I never progressed beyond experimentation.



Burdekin Bells is the hybrid between Cattleya Princess Bells and RLC Sylvia Fry. Sylvia is a huge pink flower and it's shape is passed on to Burdekin Bells. Princess Bells is white, pure Cattleya, and a pretty good shape itself although the lip is a bit more tubular closer to the flower. Surprisingly, both sides contain strong parentage from awarded whites with the famous Cattleya Bow Bells showing up in both sides of Princess Bells and also in Sylvia Fry. That is not to suggest that most Burdekin Bells are white though. There are many great pink cultivars as well as many white, and at least one 'half way', a sort of pale pink/lavender.

The subsequent Burdekin Heights cross continues the Princess Bells breeding lines by crossing back to a pink cousin in the huge pink Donna Kimura, which is also bred from Princess Bells.



There are many lovely cultivars in both these Burdekin crosses and I noticed only today that Garrie and Lesley Bromley had a picture of a lovely one in the North Shore OS newsletter. That one, Burdekin Heights 'Rosella', has very unusual multifaceted colour - sort of splashes and streaks and very attractive.

So Lee, yours might not be quite as flat and round as it might be, but it's luxuriousness was what caught my eye and I am sure you have been enjoying it as well. Thank you for sharing your pleasure with us.

**B. Heights 'Rosella'**

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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** – Well here we are back again in lockdown. It seems this time some folks have decided to break the rules and as a consequence the virus has been more difficult to contain. As I am writing this, I am about to leave to have my second vaccination. I hope all our members have been able to clarify their thoughts. Taking the advice of my GP helped me overcome concerns I had for my immediate future. Given the restrictions that are constantly under review and being put in place as well as the increased numbers of new infections, it is unlikely we will be returning to our meetings for some while.

**New orchid finds** – I decided to rebel and breakout, at least on the web, and looked for new orchid discoveries and I am pleased to say, there have been some. The first I found was of the discovery of a new species of orchid from the Guiana highlands in late 2020. It has been classified as being a member of the *Epidendrum* family and is an interesting story. You can read the story and see some images by using the google search statement “[new orchid find +mongabay](https://news.mongabay.com/2021/01/new-orchid-species-from-guiana-highlands-named-by-indigenous-group/)” or by typing in the following link. <https://news.mongabay.com/2021/01/new-orchid-species-from-guiana-highlands-named-by-indigenous-group/>.

The second find is closer to home and was discovered only very recently in the Gold Coast Hinterland during a hike. The new orchid belongs to the greenhood family and was found in the Lamington National Park. Again, the story with images is very interesting and can be accessed on the ABC website via <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-07-28/new-orchid-species-discovered-in-gold-coast-hinterland/100322870>

**Virtual benching Issue #14** – Jenny has again given us our monthly benching gift. I could not pick a favourite this issue since I was just so thankful to see the VB up and running again. It was wonderful and I thank all those who contributed to its content. I also appreciated Jenny’s heartfelt letter to Val Houley who recently passed away.

**Member's welfare** – If you are aware of any of our members having difficulties with the isolation caused by COVID restrictions then please let a committee member know. Alternatively, if any member needs to have a chat, then they are most welcome to contact me at any time, 24/7 on 043 88 77 689 – please keep safe.

**Future Events (with the present Covid restriction uncertainty, please check appropriate websites before going)**

**18, 19 Sept (Sat, Sun)** - Kariong Plant Lovers Fair, Kariong Mountains High School, 10 Festival Dr, Kariong NSW

**Sat 23 Oct** - The Species Orchid Society show and public auction day. Held at West Pennant Hills Community Church, 43 Eaton Rd, West Pennant Hills. auction starts 10.15am.



### In Memory of Val Houley

Val was a prized member of many societies, including our own, and served on many committees. She was an intelligent, thoughtful, and tolerant woman who could observe and listen but was also a great people person. With both individuals and organisations, she intervened and offered help wherever she thought her efforts would be useful.

Much has been written in tribute by half the orchid clubs in Sydney. I was especially moved by Jenny’s wonderful revelation in the “Virtual Bench” of how Val and she became friends.

Somehow it doesn’t seem appropriate to repeat any of that, so I will just tell you a story about how I met Val and her husband Bernie. At the time I think I was President of Kuringgai O.S. and

in those days orchid nurseryman Ken Russell used to organise an annual orchid show and sales tables at the showground at Dungog, which is about 50 minutes drive north of Newcastle. At the time, I used to promote weekend ‘Dungog’ trips among our members. We went to the show on Saturday, dinner at the bowling club that night, and someone to guide us up into Barrington Tops rainforests on Sunday to find orchids. The first time I met Val was one of those Sundays when she and Bernie were the only other members to show up on the Sunday. We first went up to Chichester dam at the base of the Barringtons and sat together for a picnic morning tea. We enjoyed the scenery as we got to know one another. It was a long time ago but I think Bernie was teaching at the time and Val was managing a couple of small properties they owned. They were really nice people and so open and easy to talk to. After morning tea we drove up into the mountains and checked out a couple of well known locations and I remember Val being really pleased to find a wild plant of *Sarcochilus olivaceous* in flower, growing on a big mossy rock in a shallow stream bed up near one of the ridges. We had a lovely time wandering about together, talking and finding orchids, but soon enough we had to pack it up and head back home.

After that we saw Val fairly regularly at meetings but although she was interested in the orchids, I always suspected that she was just as interested in the members. Bernie wasn’t in good health in those days and Val told me later that he had urged her to stay busy and get involved after he was gone. I guess that was just what she did.

I can’t say I was a close friend of Val’s but we always laughed and talked like old friends when we met. Somehow I just felt we knew one another and didn’t need to say more. I liked Val, respected her greatly, and I will miss her.

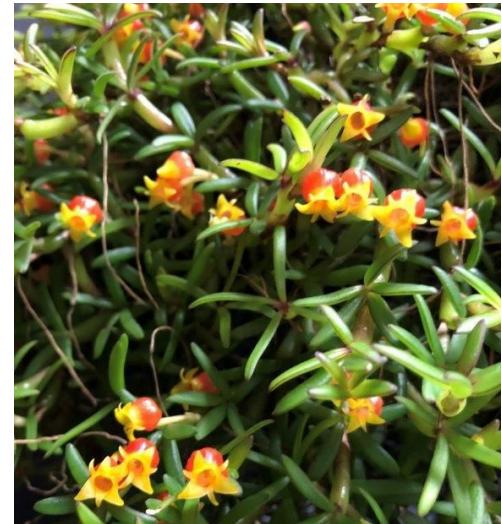
## My Favourite of the Month – *Mediocalcar decoratum* and friends

by Jim Brydie

In this month's Virtual Benching, you may not have even noticed the little picture of a *Mediocalcar* sent in by Christine Rethers. It was a picture of a nice little plant, but it was just a small picture among a bevy of other colourful and exotic orchids.

All the specialist Cattleya or Cymbidium growers are probably poo-pooing already, knowing that *Mediocalcar* are miniature orchids with rather small flowers, but anyone who already grows this little beauty will know what a real delight it is. Yes, the flowers are smallish, but so is the plant. Good size *Mediocalcar* flowers are about 1cm x 1cm, but perhaps an average plant might have flowers around 0.6 to 0.8 cm. This is a plant grown for mass display, not for the impressive single flower.

I have grown *Mediocalcar* for many years and currently have three species, but I was surprised to find that I have never previously written about the genus to encourage more growers to see what a little gems they are. Now must be the time.



There are 20 species in the genus *Mediocalcar*. They are small mat forming epiphytes from Sulawesi, Moluccas, Papua New Guinea, and east to Samoa. The genus is in the Eriinae family so the only relative genus you are ever likely to hear about is *Eria*. There are 370 *Eria* species and probably only a dozen of those are fairly widely grown so they aren't common. Many *Eria* look something like cane type *Dendrobiums* but others are quite different. The only other Eriinae genus you may come across is *Trichotosia* and I mention that because I grow *Trichotosia velutina* and have sold many divisions of it, so I know there are pieces about. It is a curious little pendant orchid with hairy grey/green leaves and attractive small white flowers, but to my eyes it is most attractive as a curiosity foliage plant.

However, our subject here is *Mediocalcar*. These are small plants with multiple fleshy leaves and a growth habit that branches in many directions. In many cases it tends to grow over itself and has many air roots. In some species the pseudobulbs are spread out, separated by a rather long rhizome, in others, like *decoratum*, the pseudobulbs are very close together. The flowers are uniquely urn shape, brightly coloured, and produce nectar. It is believed they are pollinated by nectar feeding birds.

They grow as epiphytes but are also found as lithophytes and also on the ground. They frequently grow in and amongst mosses in all habitats. All of the half dozen species I have seen come from PNG although some of those do also occur in other locations. In nature, they grow in mountain forests, generally at higher elevations (800 – 2600 m), which even in the tropics are quite cool overnight. The higher up, the colder. These elevations allow us to grow them without artificial heat in our Sydney shade houses but as Sydney often has wet winters, steps need to be taken to protect these little plants from excessive water with the cold. So what kind of natural habitat does that describe?



The pictures above will give you a fair idea. They do not represent the only habits or the 'required' habitats, but all the 'in nature' pictures I have found so far, do show humid, mossy, moist, relatively shady habitats.

By far the most commonly grown species is *M. decoratum* (right). It grows very compactly, and has delightful little orange and gold flowers. It is quite amenable to culture but grows best mounted or in a shallow terracotta saucer with drain holes drilled in it. It doesn't need a lot of medium to grow in and in fact will decline if you try to grow it in conditions that remain too wet for long at all. I generally grow it in a shallow bed of sphagnum moss in a saucer but that medium is becoming rather hard to come by lately and even if you can get it, it needs replacing in the saucer regularly. I am sure that many other mediums will also be suitable so long as you don't use too much. I also think that whatever you use, a good proportion of non-degradable materials like styrene foam, pebbles, or perlite would be helpful.



Other species you will see benched or available from time to time are *Mediocalcar bifolium*, *M. pygmaeum*, *M. versteegii* and *M. agathodaemonis*. I have seen all these, but as many orchids were collected in the wild and brought back through import license and quarantine, sometimes I suspect that the labelling of some is questionable. If you check photo images on the internet you can find almost identical flowers under different names and some very different orchids under the same names. Still, while divisions of the rarer types may not be cheap, whatever you end up with is bound to be a delightful, colourful gem so they are worth the investment. How about these for samples: -



*M. agathodaemonis*



*M. uniflorus*



*M. pygmaeum*



*M. versteegii*

Now finally, before you start thinking they all grow nice and compact like *decoratum*, I need to show you a couple with longer rhizomes. (the rhizome is the stem/root organ that grows between the pseudobulbs). Quite a few species are more commonly found with this growth habit compared to the more compact types. They are scramblers that cover ground in their habitat, making them ideal searchers looking for better territory. Perhaps more light, perhaps more moisture, who knows, but they are explorers and must be given space when you grow them. I grow mine mounted and choose a longer piece of cork. With a rhizome like these, you can see why, but put *Mediocalcar* on your list. **Another *M. agathodaemonis***



### **Pleurothallidinae – benched by many      by Jim Brydie**

If you are thinking that this is a genus name you haven't seen before, that is because it isn't a genus name but an orchid family name. This is the family of genera that includes many popularly grown genera including *Pleurothallis* (obviously), *Restrepia*, *Masdevallia*, *Octomeria*, *Dracula*, *Barbosella*, *Lepanthes*, *Lepanthes*, *Myoxanthus*, *Scaphosepalum*, and many, many more. This is a South American orchid group with once again, relatively smallish flowers. But there are some gorgeously cute, curious, and even colourful orchids in this family.

We had 8 different Pleurothallidinae from 3 genera in this months VB. Some lovely ones too as you can see below.



*Pleur semiscabra*



*Pleur phalangifera*



*Restrepia cuprea x guttulata*



*Pleur palliolata*

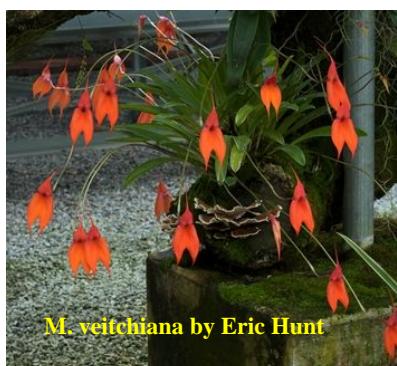


*Masd. Tarnie*

I can imagine that many might be thinking 'just another micro group of diddly little orchids only Jim Brydie could love', but no. This is one of the very largest of Orchid families with a constantly increasing number of genera, as some large genera are being examined more closely and broken up with new names. When I looked perhaps 15 years ago it was around 30 genera but I suspect it would have at least doubled by now. There are over 4000 species in the group and of those around 1000 are in genus *Pleurothallis* itself.

Plants can be truly miniature but some can grow to nearly a metre tall. The *Masdevallias* and *Draculas* probably have the largest flowers but although you might be able to correctly measure the flowers of some, like *Masdevallia veitchiana* as at least 20 cm tall, they are narrow, and they do have long tails on the segments. Still, with an orchid like this in your shadehouse, would you be arguing?

But what else? Well the thing that attracts me to the Pleurothallidinae is the amazing flower diversity. There are some truly ridiculously intricate flowers in this group. The shapes and dangly bits leave you wondering what on earth evolution was trying to achieve. Are there such different insects that require such amazingly different flower structures to attract just the right one. I am afraid I don't have the answer to that. Maybe some insects just like to browse, and to visit the most nonsensical? Who knows, but I must admit that I am certainly attracted to the most weird and wonderful, so maybe it is humans they are trying to pull in?



*M. veitchiana* by Eric Hunt

They know we will eventually destroy all their habitats and if we grow them they will at least have a life in our collections. Yes, that must be it.



**Scaphysepalm fimbriatum**   **Dracula simia**   **Masd. Pichincha**   **Pleur. teaguei**   **Pleur. amparoana**



**Pleur. gargantua**   **Pleur. truncata**   **Pleur. megalops**   **Pleur. strupifolia**   **Pleur. tarantula**



**Stelis eublepharis**   **Octomeria grandiflora**   **Octomeria crassiflora**   **Restrepia ephippium**



**Scaphysepalm swertifolium variety**   **Masd. erinacea**   **Masd. notosibirica**   **Dracula vampira**

Well how is that for a sample? Do you think you could find interest and pleasure in a whole collection of these curiosities? Some require a bit of understanding to grow, but nearly all can be accommodated if you try.

### Wry Humour



## The Cymbidium Death Wish Genre by Jim Brydie (a revision of a 2016 article)

You know I like “different” orchids, and boy, are these ones different. Death Wish is a stunner and virtually came from our own backyard as it was created by the late Kevin Hipkins of Royale Orchids up at Peats Ridge, just outside Sydney. The parents are Cym. Pywacket and Cym. Disney Girl, each of which contains 50% of that wonderful species Cym. tracyanum, and the tracyanum influence dominates.

Tracyanum has a striking flower with a nice upright spike and about 15 (12cm) flowers. The flowers have somewhat narrow segments but are boldly coloured with red stripes on a cream to green background. Another unique and pleasing characteristic is its unusual perfume which smells very similar to apricot fruit.

Like most species, the colours in tracyanum can vary a bit and I have seen many different individuals during the 40 odd years I have been growing orchids. The most popular always seem to be the ones with darker colours – usually having a more intense green background and darker red stripes, but there are many variations. The most common types seem to be the paler ones with a more yellowish cream background and paler red stripes. But, when I did a bit of research for this article, I must admit that I was quite surprised at just *how* different some of them can be.

I am only guessing, but based on what I have seen over the years, I think that some of the current very dark forms are the result of man made line breeding, and even artificial chromosome doubling, but that doesn't mean they all are. There are certainly records of very different forms going way back before man started playing his laboratory games.

In the small gallery below, I have borrowed a few pictures from the internet to show you some extent of today's variations within the species. When you see some of these newer types, it is easy to see where the inspirations for eye catchers like Death Wish came from, but I would never have imagined it in all the years I have grown tracyanum.

( 10 different clones of tracyanum )



However, getting back to Death Wish, let's look more closely at its parents Disney Girl and Pywacket. Both were developed by Andy Easton's Geyserland Orchids in NZ but were registered by growers in California.

Disney Girl's parents are tracyanum and 'Robin'. We can never know which clones were used, but in the case of Robin, only one clone (Freckles) ever seems to be mentioned. It has 4 of the 5 awards for Robin, and accounts for all of the dozens of pictures available anywhere. As you can see in the pictures above, Robin 'Freckles' was an unusual orchid in itself. There is no tracyanum in its genealogy but it has very strong speckling in all segments. Crossing it with tracyanum didn't improve the shape but seems to have intensified the spotting and emphasised the lines of spots. The two examples of Disney Girl above show that it is certainly an attractive orchid itself but now has tracyanum characteristics in the gene pool.

Pywacket is another tracyanum cross but with very dark colours. The parents are Tethys and tracyanum. Tethys was famous in its day for the dark colour of many clones, and it's very dark red. It was bred from earlier dark red Cymbids like Khyber Pass, and Volcano. Again, we don't know which clones the hybridist used, but the picture of 'Brenda Starr' below gives you a fair idea of what Tethys looked like. 'Brenda Starr' was maybe the darkest of the Tethys but



most had that fantastic full red lip you see in Brenda. Andy Easton was a very experienced Cymbidium breeder and I believe he would have readily imagined how crossing Tethys with tracyanum might intensify tracyanum's red colours before later crosses could be used to improve shape. Pywacket did exactly that.

Combining Pywacket and Disney Girl was a stroke of genius from Kevin Hipkins, He sure didn't do it to get a full round shape standard



Pywacket Heathrich Hills

Pywacket (sdorchids)

Tethys 'Brenda Starr'

Cymbidium. I think he deliberately looked for exactly what Death Wish gave us. It was registered in 2001, and was an instant sensation. Growers couldn't get enough of it. There have been 4 clones awarded so far. 'Tiger Jade' and 'Peats Ridge' have an HCC, 'Royale' and 'Speckled Spectre' have an AD. I can't find a picture of Tiger Jade but the pictures of the clones below show some of the range. However, I must warn you that in looking at pictures of these clones, there seems to be a huge colour and pattern variation within supposed pictures of the same clone. Whether this is due to growing in different conditions such as brighter light or more shade, or just the photography, I can't say. Just be aware that if you buy one, it may not flower for you exactly the same as these pictures.



'Dark Desire'

'Speckled Spectre'

'Saratoga'

'Peats Ridge'

'Royale'

I am not sure whether I should call it the "Death Wish genre" or perhaps the "Pywacket genre", as Pywacket actually came first, but it was Death Wish that sparked public demand. Since then, this genre has sparked a range of similarly 'different' orchids that many growers find irresistible.

In this month's Virtual Benching we had a Death Wish, a Cym Arachnid (=Death Wish x erythraeum), an unnamed hybrid of Death Wish x It Started With a Kiss, and a Death Wish looking hybrid with parent names I can't find. In addition there was a delicious looking hybrid of the same genre called Ken Siew. This one is erythraeum x tracyanum and looks like a small flowered dark tracyanum – another of Kevin Hipkins experiments.

I think we are going to see more of these dark 'tracy' shaped hybrids in the future as more breeders feed the demand for real eye catchers .



Cym. Ken Siew

### Oh to be Eight Again

A man was sitting on the edge of the bed, watching his wife, who was looking at herself in the mirror. Since her birthday was not far off he asked what she'd like to have for her birthday. 'I'd like to be eight again', she replied, still looking in the mirror .

On the morning of her Birthday, he arose early, made her a nice big bowl of Coco Pops, and then took her to Adventure World theme park. What a day! He put her on every ride in the park; the Death Slide, the Wall of Fear, the Screaming Roller Coaster, everything there was.

Five hours later they staggered out of the theme park. Her head was reeling and her stomach felt upside down. He then took her to a McDonald's where he ordered her a Happy Meal with extra fries and a chocolate shake.

Then it was off to a movie, popcorn, a soda pop, and her favorite candy, M&M's. What a fabulous adventure!

Finally she wobbled home with her husband and collapsed into bed exhausted. He leaned over his wife with a big smile and lovingly asked, 'Well Dear, what was it like being eight again?

Her eyes slowly opened and her expression suddenly changed. 'I have been wondering all day what the heck this was all about. -- I meant my dress size, you idiot.

*(it just goes to show, even when a man is listening, he is gonna get it wrong.)*

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Pharmacist to a customer: "Madam, please understand, to buy an anti-depression pill you need a proper prescription. Simply showing your marriage certificate and your husband's picture is not enough."

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My husband and I both have a cold. The only difference is I am cleaning the kitchen, he's dying.

## Orchid Pests. The Chewing Varieties!

by Wayne Turville of Australian Orchids

Wayne Turville's tips after 40 years growing under South East Australian Conditions (March 24, 2020)  
i.e. Mediterranean, dry temperate

There is nothing more annoying than growing an orchid from seed, waiting years and years to bloom it, and then some blasted cruncher eating the buds days before it opens. It happens to us all. Even after 40 years these beasties still get past my guard even though I look daily.



The thing with chewing crunching pests is that they are eating, so they are quite easy to poison and kill. The main issue is that each year less and less poisons are in the tool kit to use as more issues arise with their usage. Even my long term favourite Carbaryl is now difficult to find. Mind you we still sell it ! Might be a good idea to buy some and put it away as we may not be able to restock again. It is a simple stomach poison that is ingested. see - <https://www.australianorchids.com.au/products/3796227>

It was the main ingredient in Tomato dust that we used for ever in the past. It is good for Dendrobium beetle adults, grasshoppers, caterpillars, katydids, earwigs and all crunchers. It is of no use though for molluscs and mice.



It works by diluting in water and spraying to coat the leaves or blooms (whatever is being eaten). The liquid dries and a fine powdery residue remains to do the job.

The very first rain or watering washes it away so be wary when you spray.

I was inspired to write this blog because even hardened professionals still get hit.

This little bas\*%#d on the left took out 28 x \$8 seedlings before I finally found him. I just couldn't see him or his droppings, just the damage.

### Caterpillars, inchworms, loopers and cutworms.

These are all the juveniles of moths and butterflies of various species and genus.

### Grasshoppers, crickets, katydids.

These are quite intelligent insects that eat orchid blooms and new growths simply by crunching and digesting all the orchid tissue suited to their tastes. Tender young bulbs and blooms disappear overnight with no tell-tale droppings (as in caterpillars) or silver trail (as for molluscs).

Rural and outer suburban areas as well as larger grassy backyards are more suited for these insects. Black field crickets and locusts may swarm in rural areas. The obvious cure is to keep them out in the first place, using a complete shade cloth screening on all walls, roof and door. Should they opportunistically get in then a simple coating spray of carbaryl will knock them out. If you can find the insect a direct spray of Carbaryl or Confidor will suffice.

I remember once seeing a 15cm 6 inch grasshopper in an orchid collection in far Northern NSW, heavens know how much damage that would do!!

### Cockroaches

These seem to be a problem in more humid regions such as Sydney and North along the east coast. Once again these eat tender shoots and orchid blooms. Carbaryl again is very effective. Commercial cockroach traps may be tried.



## Dendrobium Beetles.

These occur from East Gippsland near the NSW Vic border all the way up the east coast to far Nth QLD. This attractive orange and black weevil like beetle (see picture of an adult at top of the article) are sometimes so common they swarm like flies around a dead carcass. Individual wild Dendrobium speciosums may have dozens all over it. They eat all the tissues except the roots. Leaves, canes blooms and even seed pods are all eaten until they look like lace. Fortunately these beetles only occur when epiphytic orchids grow naturally so they are currently not a problem in Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth or Tasmania.

Orchid purchases from NSW and QLD may contain eggs, larvae, and occasionally live adults so care must be taken to watch for them.

Dendrobium beetle larvae



Want more on this? This little guy has got a blog of his own to read at :

<https://www.australianorchids.com.au/blogs/blog/117584517-dendrobium-beetles-stethopachys-formosa>

In Pambula in the far south of NSW I have seen whole colonies of Den. speciosum nearly destroyed with all the blooms and seed pods eaten.

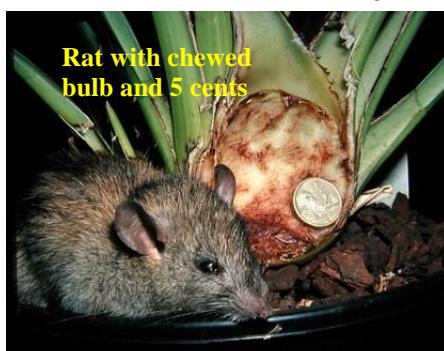
## Mice, Rats and Rabbits

Rodents when active and hungry, do awesome amounts of damage. I personally have lost \$2000 worth of young plants to one rat in one night. If I hadn't caught him in time he could have done over \$5000 damage.

It seems that at the first sign of chill (usually mid April to mid May) rats and mice move into structures and feed voraciously possible fattening up for Winter. Mice on the other hand nibble away, occasionally doing little damage. Poison soaked wheat here : <https://www.australianorchids.com.au/products/rait-bait-best-we-know-bromakil-soaked-grain-wheat-500-grams-screw-cap-jar>

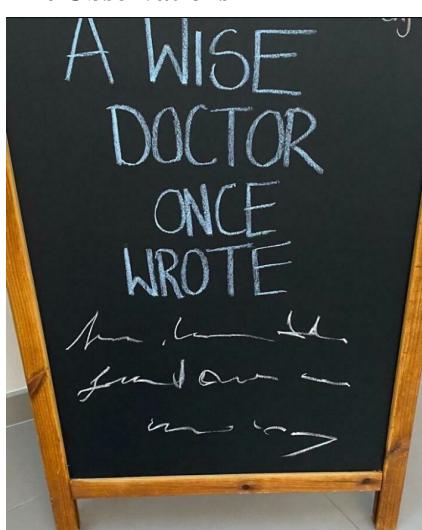
Rabbits are also a problem in rural and larger commercial areas or on acreage. Shadecloth screening and closed tight fitting doors should be enough to keep out rabbits. Rabbit damage is obvious as are its droppings.

When rats are active, it is important to place waxed bait secured by nails to planks of wood. Usually near doorways or any other points where the rats may enter. The baits are nailed down because the rat will hoard them in their nest if allowed. You know their taking the baits when you see the blue or green waxy deposits in the droppings.



Hopefully, the rat will ingest the baits before they find the orchids. I personally use rat traps once damage is seen as the baits take a few days to take effect.

## Life Observations



My wife sent me a text that said, "Your great"

So, naturally, I wrote back, "No, you're great"

She's been walking around all happy and smiling.

Should I tell her I was just correcting her grammar or leave it?

