



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

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**Next Meeting :** \* \* \* **No September meeting** \* \* \*. *Once again we have had to cancel the next meeting. We hope for better news next month but I am sure you all read the papers and watch TV. Vaccination rates are finally rising quickly, fingers crossed that infection rates simultaneously reduce.*

### **Cymbidium sinense** 'benched' by Peter and Jane D'Olier

At one time I had quite a fixation on the more northerly group of Asian Cymbidium species, mostly from the mountains of China, Japan, and Taiwan. I travelled to Japan twice as part of my job and arranged a stopover in Taiwan once to try and visit a nurseryman whose name I had been given. I was just beginning to get into orchids at the time and was surprised to find these and other orchids easily purchasable around the city, and once, even in plastic bags at the airport. I hadn't arranged any import or quarantine so I didn't buy any but I hadn't seen these types before and I was hooked.

Cym. sinense is one of the species I went looking for. It is fairly widespread in nature. In the west of the range it is found from NE India, through Myanmar, NE Thailand, and into western China. In the east, from Hong Kong and China, the mountains throughout Taiwan, and also in the Ryuku Islands. It is a terrestrial found at elevations between 300 - 1200 m, and is generally found in shade in broadleaf forests near streams or water.

It comes in a range of colour shades and I find the darker ones like Peter and Jane's very attractive. However, there are many beautiful paler shades too, and alba forms in green and occasionally yellow/green. There are also many variegated leaf forms that are highly prized. Examples are provided below.



Sinense seems to grow quite well in our Sydney collections although its native habitats are perhaps warmer in winter.

It has also been used to create some attractive hybrids in the miniature Cymbidium class as its upright flowering habit and



strong flowering are nice features to incorporate. The picture at the right is Cym. Asian Tower (registered in 2007) is a good example. (more on Asian Cymbidiums next month)

Nice one Peter and Jane. We just love your pictures each month.

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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** – Our lockdown continues but I think I can see some light at the end of the tunnel. However, the length of the tunnel is somewhat variable and will be dependent upon the success of the vaccination program that our communities and government jurisdictions are wrestling with. Janine and I have now had both our jabs and look forward to the time we can get out and about again. Our orchids are flowering, and our garden is looking nice and keeps us grounded, so to speak.

**Walking in my LGA** – The Hornsby Shire is a large local government area and consequently, Janine and I have been able to take advantage of its bushland attributes. We have done quite a few walks along some of our close by trails, but mostly on the weekend to avoid crowds. One of our finds was the Carrs' Bush track located in Fagan Park, Galston. It is a small section of remnant bushland that the council has developed into a lovely walk. We were lucky to find a *Pterostylis* and a brilliant white *Caladenia* species growing along the walk. The beauty of this find is that there is a rear car park close by to the walk, it is an easy walk and there is a nice BBQ area associated with the trail.



On another walk along the bush trail at the end of Quarry Road, Dural we found a field of *Thelymitra ixioides* (Sun orchids) growing and another purple form of *Caladenia*.

So, if you are walking any trails for exercise, keep your eyes open. Hopefully we can add some of these trails to Chris Wilson's library of trails. I expect that the Northern Beaches and Ku-ring-gai LGA's are likely to have some bush trails to



explore. I suggest take a stick to wake up the wriggling creatures.

**Virtual benching Issue #15** – Another wonderful virtual benching effort this month. Thank you to all those that sent in their photos. One of my all-time favourites is *D. Rutherford Starburst* and it was nice to see more than one benched but, this month I was taken with the Fulcher's pretty *Bulbophyllum spathulatum* and I admired the stark beauty of the D'Olier's *Cymbidium sinense*. Gowan Stewart's display of phallies was also pretty amazing. Thanks again Jenny and her supporters for another fine edition.

**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 and conscious of the need to wear a mask.

### Future Events

- 70 - 80% of the population double dosed. Limited responsible socialising with friends and family is allowed.
- more realise that vaccination is the way out. Rates rise further, more easing of rules.
- pubs and clubs open again (Sunday night dinner with the family at the club)
- Christmas shopping, even if it is with masks, QR codes, and distancing.
- Christmas with family and friends. Lots of laughing grandchildren gorging on chips, cherries, lollies, and running around under the sprinkler on the lawn.

(I am not game to dream beyond that)

**A Simple Misunderstanding** - Sitting on the side of the highway waiting to catch speeding drivers, a State Police Officer sees a car pattering along at 22 Mph. He thinks to himself, "This driver is just as dangerous as a speeder!" So he turns on his lights and pulls the driver over. Approaching the car, he notices that there are five old ladies inside - two in the front seat and three in the back – the 4 passengers were wide eyed and white as ghosts.

The driver, obviously confused, says to him, "Officer, I don't understand, I was doing exactly the speed limit! What seems to be the problem?" "Ma'am," the officer replies, "You weren't speeding, but you should know that driving much slower than the speed limit can also be a danger to other drivers."

"Slower than the speed limit? No sir, I was doing the speed limit exactly... twenty-two miles an hour!" the old woman says a bit proudly. The State Police officer, trying to contain a chuckle, explains to her that the '22' on the signs was the route number, not the speed limit.

A bit embarrassed, the woman grinned and thanked the officer for pointing out her error. "But before I let you go, Ma'am, I have to ask... Is everyone in this car ok? These other women seem awfully shaken and they haven't muttered a single peep this whole time," the officer asks. The driver replies:

"Oh, they'll be alright in a minute, officer. We just got off Route 119."



**Jim Brydie's Favourite of the Month – Sergioara Yokosuka Story - benched by Gowan Stewart**



I can't help it. I have always liked green and yellow orchids. Erin Kobayashi is one of my favourites, but although this one is a much smaller, simpler flower, I think the colours are just great. Oh, and if you are wondering what a Sergioara is, this lovely orchid is the one on page one of the last VB listed as Epicatt. Rene Marques x Rth. Free Spirit. (I looked it up)

The parent Rene Marques was one of the most successful attempts to breed the form of the stunning *Epidendrum pseudepidendrum*. Anyone who sees this *Epi.* species wants it but it is an ungainly plant and not so easy to cultivate. It is a metre tall reed stem type *Epidendrum* from lower elevations in Costa Rica and Panama. Very warm, very humid and very tall. **BUT**, the flowers are magnificent. 5 cm across, green sepals and petals, a startling orange lip and many clones have a red or red & purple outer half of the column (to which the lip is attached).



Most sadly for us growers, the orange in its lip is recessive in breeding with just about everything except some other *Epidendrum*s and a couple of *Brassavola* species. If only our hybridists could eventually breed those colours into a big flossy *Cattleya* form. How popular would that be?

Well we can always hope. But in the meantime, Sergioara Yokosuka Story is a nice short compact grower. It still has a bit of a reed stem look about its structure but it is only about 30cm or so tall. It was registered in 2014 and only one cultivar ('Canary') has been awarded so far. It measured 6.2 cm natural spread and 6 cm tall. There are many cultivars, most as yet unnamed, but they are all lovely and quite similar. In some the yellow of the lip almost has an orange tint but it is hard to tell whether it is a trick of the photography. Some have more of the purple tint at the end of the column, others don't. They are all very attractive and delicious and a well flowered specimen is really something.



The other parent of Yokosuka Story is Rhyncattleyanthe Free Spirit, a traditional *Cattleya* shape, medium size, gorgeous yellow. It is easy to see why the breeder chose a beauty such as this to explore the 'pseudepidendrum' breeding line. You can also see however, just how dominant the *Epidendrum* flower shape and stem shape are when crossed with pseudobulb type *Cattleya*s. Perhaps another fresh batch of breeders will persevere back and forth until we see a green and orange version of Free Spirit. Come on guys. If you can make one of those I'll buy one.

**Rth. Free Spirit**



**Gowan's other wonders** – thank you for sharing all your treasures with us Gowan. Everyone just drools over the lovely stuff you grow and share with us. I have never heard of *Dendrochilum hampelii*, or *Dendrobium lamgpongense*. I don't think you can ever stop being surprised when you grow orchids.

And wow, how about that Paph Wosner Black Wings, and it is a first flowering seedling as well. Gorgeous. The shape immediately reminds you of *Paph. rothschildianum* so I could guess that side of the parentage, but I had to research it to see what else was there.

The cross was registered in 2009 and has a curious background. The parentage is listed as *rothschildianum* x *anatum* under the name Wossner Black Wings but later, it was decided that the species *Paph. anatum* was the same as another species *Paph. adductum* and because there was already a hybrid *rothschildianum* x *adductum* registered in 1994 as *Paph. Johanna Burkhardt*, the name Wossner Black Wings was regarded as redundant.

Or at least it is for now, but perhaps the taxonomy gurus might later decide there is sufficient difference between *adductum* and *anatum* after all. and separate them again.

Right from the time *Paph. anatum* was first described, there was contention over the differences between *anatum* and *adductum*. The two were obviously very similar but side by side certainly seemed different as well. Whether this was to eventually be with *anatum* as a species, or as a variety of *adductum*, or just a different looking *adductum*, was still to be eventually determined but at least initially *anatum* was accepted as a species. As of now, the pendulum has swung the other way and it is regarded as just a different looking *adductum*.

Gowan's hybrid is still a baby just yet so I hope we get to see more pictures when it gets bigger in a few year's time. That looks like award material you have there Gowan.

It's such a delight to see the lovely treasures that you and other experienced growers like the Bromleys, Onslows, Cushways, Fulchers, D'Oliers and others send in to share. You are all really helping keep our spirits up.



**Johanna Burkhardt?**



**What a Phally Month** – Surprisingly, although there were heaps of lovely Phally pictures in this month’s VB, they were supplied by just 3 members. It seems to me that some of you growers out there aren’t trying hard enough. Surely everyone has a Phalaenopsis as an indoor plant these days. They are the 21<sup>st</sup> century version of an African violet.

I hope no one thinks pictures for the VB is a contest. You will all have orchid flowers popping up now that spring is upon us. Get those cameras or your iphones out and share your successes with us. Just make sure you get a nice clear solid focus. That’s the most important part for virtual benching. Your treasure might end up in a feature write up.

Anyway, this month it was Gowan again who showed some of the unusual directions Phally hybridists are looking. I am afraid that the big burgundy and white blotch types aren’t for me but I was fascinated by the focus on the contrasting red lips of the two species like yellow flowered types at the right here. Now doesn’t that look rather nice?



And then there were a whole series of early generation developments of petaloid lip mutation Phallies. You know, the types where the lip takes on less of the specialised lip form and function and looks a bit more like a big petal. Which is what the lip was before it began to mutate to a specialist organ to guide pollination. How about these for fascinating new types?



**Lioulin R Lip**

**Charming Crystal Waters**

**Tying Shin Rose Parade**

**Tying Shin Super Star**



**Chia-Shing Hot Kiss**



**Allura Dracary's**



**Allura Santa Claus**

I think I have just found a new interest. Thank you Gowan. Now where can I get a plant of that Chai-Shing Hot Kiss? And finally, while we are on the subject of Phalaenopsis, this month Geoff Fulcher has provided us with some deeper background to the lovely yellow Phal. Fuller’s Sunset that featured in the bulletin in July. (see next page)

**Very Punny**

An anthropologist was cataloguing South American folk remedies with the assistance of a tribal elder who indicated that the leaves of a particular fern were a sure cure for any case of constipation. When the anthropologist expressed his doubts, the elder looked him in the eye and said, "Let me tell you, with fronds like these, you don't need enemas."

King Ozymandias of Assyria was running low on cash after years of war with the Hittites. His last great possession was the Star of the Euphrates , the most valuable diamond in the ancient world. Desperate, he went to Croesus, the local pawnbroker, to ask for a loan. Croesus said, "I'll give you 100,000 dinars for it."

"But I paid a million dinars for it," the King protested. "Don't you know who I am? I am the king!" Croesus replied, "When you wish,..... to pawn a Star, ..... makes no difference who you are."

Evidence has been found that William Tell and his family were avid bowlers. But unfortunately, all the Swiss League records were destroyed in a fire, ...and so we'll never know for whom the Tells bowled.



**Phalaenopsis Fuller's Sunset** -- article by Geoff and Jean Fulcher



In the present Covid-19 environment it seems people have become more interested in tracing their ancestry. With Orchid growers of course this means researching the ancestry of our favourite hybrids. Recently Jim Brydie wrote a nice little piece on a Phalaenopsis Fuller's Sunset we benched back when we had real orchid society meetings. For those who missed it, the flowers are bright yellow (almost daffodil) with a good-sized solid red labellum. The flowers are long-lasting and don't fade; the plants will branch so it forms a good specimen plant; (this one had five racemes), and is not finicky when it comes to growing requirements. This spurred me to research the grex's ancestry to find out where the large solid red labellum, so uncommon in this style of Phalaenopsis, came from.

Phal. Fuller's Sunset, made & registered by Ching Ann Orchids, Taiwan in 2004, is Phal. Taisuco Date x Phal. Chian Xen Queen.

Phal. Taisuco Date has Phal. Brother Lawrence twice in its last four generations and is over several generations largely derived from species in the Phalaenopsis Subgenus Polychylus, several of which have yellow in their flowers and good heavy substance, but the characteristic small lip. The most prominent of these are Phal. venosa and Phal. amboinensis, both of which come in a variety of colour forms, mostly based on yellows, browns and reds.



----- Phal. venosa -----

||

----- Phal. amboinensis -----



Brother Lawrence was a wonderful cross registered in 1995, with almost all cultivars yellow, many with white in the centre. Over 25 have been awarded so far. The flowers are around 7 to 8 cm natural spread.

On the other hand, Phal. Chian Xen Queen is largely derived from species in the Sub-genus Phalaenopsis, which includes Phal. amabilis, sanderiana, schilleriana, stuartiana, aphrodite, philippinensis, and the like. (ie the rounder shaped, larger flowered types). On the way through the generations there are



several grexes with red lips, culminating in Phal. Chian Xen Queen, clearly the source of the red lip in Phal. Fuller's Sunset.

The discovery of Phal. Brother Lawrence in the Phal. Fuller's Sunset ancestry reminded me that several years ago (2005!) I did a hybrid of Phal. Brother Dendi 'Picasso' back-crossed to Phal. Brother Lawrence. I still have three of the progeny. None of the cross had a red lip of course. They do have good long lasting yellow colour, although not quite as solid as in Phal. Fuller's Sunset.



Two of them, (clones 1 & 2), have faint spots on the petals from Brother Lawrence (parent & Grandparent). Clone 3 also has some of the reddish tint in the petals and sepals from Phal. Brother Dendi 'Picasso'. All are vigorous growers and have the heavy substance in the flowers that is so desirable in Phallies. The plant of Clone 3 is over 70 cms across.



Phal. Brother Dendi 'Picasso' brings to mind the late Dennis Diem of Dendi Orchids (the old Dendi Orchids is no longer trading) whom we have to thank for making the Phal. Brother Dendi cross along with many others designed to broaden the range of Phalaenopsis styles available.

Geoff Fulcher

**Answering machine message:** "I am not available right now, but thank you for caring enough to call. I am making some changes in my life. Please leave a message after the beep. - If I do not return your call, you are one of the changes."

**Lockdown-** Question to all the ladies who used to wish that their husbands would spend more time with them at home instead of at the pub. 'How's it going these days ladies?'

**RUPICOLOUS LAELIAS** by Peter and Jane D'Olier

This article is about Rupicolous Laelias and some insights into their natural habitat and how we have adapted our growing conditions to suit. Not long ago this group of orchids were renamed Cattleyas, however, for the purpose of this article the name Laelia is retained.

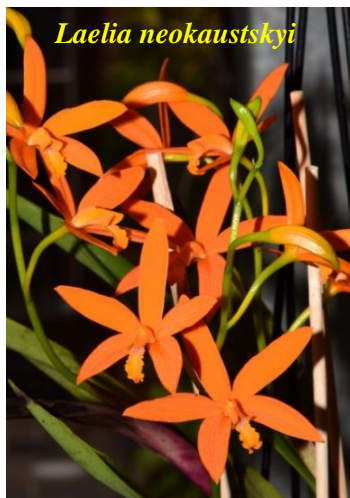
The word Rupicolous is derived from the Latin rupicola meaning living amongst rocks. This means most of this group of Laelias grow in rocky areas rather than in trees, but there are a few epiphytes such as *L. harpophylla*.

My wife and I like growing this group of orchids because they are:

- a) miniature orchids that do not take up much space
- b) They are mostly species that haven't been line bred so the plants are as found in nature
- c) Different to what most people grow
- d) Challenging but rewarding to grow

We concentrate on growing the species but do also have a few hybrids.

All rupicolous Laelias come from the mountain ranges close to Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. These mountains are about 500-1500m high and are very rocky with little tree coverage, just small shrubs and grasses.



There are about 35 species and more are still being found even today. Each species is found in very localised areas and habitats. This means species do not have large populations and many are prone to extinction in the wild as areas are mined and developed.

There are some epiphytic species such as *L. kautskyana*, *L. harpophylla*, and *L. neokaustskyi*. These grow on trees in the moist, shady forests of Espírito Santo at about 600m and typically are taller than other rupicolous Laelias, with long pencil thin pseudobulbs. We grow some of these in deeper pots and bark and some in small pots with peat & perlite. Typically, this group have yellow or orange flowers.



The other rupicolous Laelias typically grow amongst rocks in either full sun or amongst grasses and shrubs

which give some, but not much, shading.

Brazil is close to the equator so the sun is overhead, very bright and can be hot. Due to these harsh conditions the plant sizes range from miniature (eg *L. liliputana*) to small (eg *L. lucasiana*) to a bit larger (eg *L. caulescens*). These are all small compared to other Cattleyas and Laelias.

**Flowering** – those in full sun with little cover typically have short flower spikes. Those amongst grasses have longer and some very long flower spikes so flowers can get above the level of grass. Colours range from yellow, orange, reds, purple and some whites.

Now I will describe some of the conditions they grow in their natural habitat and what it means to grow them in Sydney.

**Temperature** – their natural habitat is in mountainous areas where the summer temperatures are between 16-35°C and winter between 11-23 °C. This is very similar to Sydney temperatures so we can successfully grow them cold, without heat in winter.

**Light** – Most grow in very exposed areas with little or no cover. Some grow in the open in almost full sun and typically these are small unifoliate (single leaf) plants with thick, vertical, lancet-like leaves to minimise exposure to sun. In the wild these are often desiccated and burnt looking. Others have a bit more protection growing amongst grasses and these can have different leaf structure still being small and thick, but more horizontal. We tend to grow most of our rupicolous Laelias in high light, say 60% shade. This may be darker than in nature but they still flower and growth is more robust.



**Pot size** – These Laelias mostly grow in cracks in the rock with very little soil. This means we grow them in very small pots and they do best when they fill the pot. We have also noticed that their roots tend to stay within the pot and



very rarely grow out of pots like epiphytic orchids. Small pots also means they dry out quicker and don't remain wet.

**Media** – in their natural habitat the roots are in cracks in rocks with very little soil around them. To us, even though there is little soil, I think the roots stay damp in the crevices. Some growers grow in bark, some in rocks or scoria and others in peat and perlite. For most species with our growing conditions, we get best results with a peat and perlite mix (6 parts jumbo perlite/2 parts styrene/1 part peat moss).

**Watering** – This is the hardest part with growing rupicolous Laelias. Where these Laelias grow there is high rainfall during summer and many of the areas are subject to flash flooding. During winter there is very little rain but heavy dew every morning. This means we should water more during summer and less during winter. There is a lot of different advice about winter watering but we have found if you keep them too dry during winter they dry out and go backwards and if you water them too much you risk roots rotting. Once these orchids go backwards, it is very hard to keep them alive. So there is a fine balance in winter between under and over watering. We have found it is best to keep them under cover in order to control rain and watering. We grow them under a polycarbonate roof and have a fogging system throughout the year and then control watering to keep them damp but not too wet. Contrary to usual advice about winter watering, we have lost more of these Laelias from under watering than over watering. We water all of our plants individually by hand so we can ensure proper watering and keep an eye on the condition of our plants.



**L. glodeniana**

**Repotting** – some say you should avoid repotting but we have found they often do well in the new mix when repotted, as long as you do not damage their roots in the process. For us, peat and perlite seems to suits this and we sprinkle blood and bone in the mix to encourage growth.

**Fertilizing** – like all of our collection, we fertilize regularly with good quality fertilizer once a week at quite high concentration (1.35gm per litre of Peters Excel) and flush the plants during the other waterings.

If growing well, then the bulbs of these Laelias get plumper and stronger.

**Pests and diseases** – the main problems we have are mealy bug and scale but if plants are healthy then these are lesser problems. We do not like using toxic pesticides so when we do have a problem, we clean plants by hand with a tooth brush and something to kill the bugs such as a diluted solution of hydrogen peroxide and distilled water. We also occasionally spray our collection with a neem oil solution to control pests.

**Dividing** – this is risky as it takes time for these orchids to recover and re-establish and divisions often don't survive. This is one of the reasons there are not many available for sale.

**Availability** – because these species are temperamental, and not big and flashy, very few people grow them and hence few nurseries raise them for sale. To make things worse, it is very difficult to import them from Brazil. We have found these laelias are very hard to get and prices can be high. But don't forget, when you can buy them, they may be small but they are mature plants which take a long time to get to their sizes.

I hope this gives you some insights in to the growing of rupicolous laelias and hope that you are encouraged to grow them as, whilst challenging, they are very rewarding orchids to grow.

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**More from the VB.** - Well who needs a Westfield multi society show to blow everyone's socks off. Gloria and Allan sure don't. Your home must look wonderful with an ever changing display of fantastic Cattleyas and all the other orchids you guys grow.



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And how about that dinner plate flower of Rlc. Sylvia Fry 'Supreme'? It can be 18 cm diameter. Created way back in 1966, it is still one of the most classic full round shaped Cattleyas ever produced. It is also tough and reliable and hugely popular. I'm not in the least surprised that Gloria still grows it. It's a beauty.



**Rlc Sylvia Fry 'Supreme'**

There was another unusual one they showed in the VB as well, and that was Rlc. Lisa Taylor Gallis 'Butterball' I haven't seen this one before, and the VB pic was a bit scratchy, but it does look one I would like to see in the flesh. Lisa Taylor Gallis is an unusual cross that has produced whites, pinks, yellows, creams, and orange to flesh tones with all sorts of contrasting lips. . It must be quite exciting to flower a seedling of the cross and not know what to expect.





**Bulb. spathulatum** - And then, every month there is that species you have also never seen before. This is a close up of the flower display on a little Bulbophyllum 'benched' by Geoff and Jean Fulcher. Jean was always the one with a thing for Bulbos but I don't know which of them found this weird little thing. Look at the circled section of the picture. Little birds heads with a beak and eyes peeking out from under the flower above.

I didn't know anything about this species so I looked it up. Bulb. spathulatum is found at low to moderate elevations in tropical valleys from NE India right across to south Vietnam. In reality, the flowers are quite small at about 12-15 mm longitudinally, and the flower colour in the Fulcher's plant is quite exceptionally attractive. However, when you see pictures of other specimens, I am afraid that the image I drew from the picture above turns out to be rather fanciful. The broadish orange and speckled part of the picture is actually the lip of each flower and the lip is more or less pocket shaped in the manner of a Paphiopedilum lip. Check out the two pictures below of different colour forms which lets you see the 'pocket' lip more clearly.

In the red form to the right here, you can see that the flowers seem to open by popping up the dorsal sepal to expose the hole that gives access to the sexual parts of the flower. Perhaps the birds head and beak peek out more as the flower opens further.

All three are really cute little Bulbo slippers aren't they? Especially Geoff and Jean's yellow and orange one, and also the red form which I think comes from the Canberra Orchid Society.



It just shows what a difference it makes when you see the flower from a different angle.

If you are thinking of going looking for one though, remember that Geoff told us in the VB that this is a warm growing species and you would need a warm glasshouse here in Sydney.

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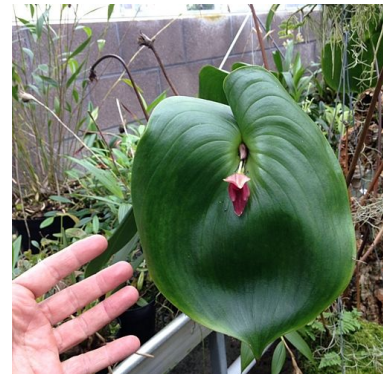
And finally, how could I leave without talking about a Pleurothallis. Did you know this is perhaps the largest genus in the orchid family with over 1000 species? The Pleurothallidinae group which includes Pleurothallis, Masdevallia, Dracula, Stelis, and many other often grown genera, contains over 4000 species.



And while we are talking about size, Pleurothallis marthae (as per the gorgeous pictures of the D'Olier's yellow Pleur. marthae var alba 'Royale' in this month's VB) is one of the big Pleurothallis. The more usual colour is a combination of pinks and cream but the alba form is also well known and highly prized.

Pleur. marthae comes from Colombia in the moist rainforests of the Andes. Charles Baker reports that it is found at 1800 - 2500 m elevation which is quite high and would suggest this is a cold grower, but I have found that it does better on the floor in my glasshouse. Perhaps in my case that is more a reflection of its need for shade and humidity.

This is no miniature orchid. The leaves are generally about 15 cm across and although those in the pictures at the left are quite round shape, they are generally more elongated and end in a pointed tip. The



flower size varies but it's natural width x length is roughly 1.8 cm wide x 3 cm tall.

One of the idiosyncrasies of Pleurothallis is that they don't have pseudobulbs. In their place they have a long thin stem called a "ramicaul" which arises from a rhizome the same as a pseudobulb would in most orchids. A rhizome is a specialised creeping plant part from which both stems and roots arise. For marthae, the ramicaul can be up to 90 cm tall. A nicely grown plant can take up a bit of space but is very attractive.





**Do it now! Australian Dendrobium hybrids and pulling down the sheath.**

**Also known as "Tulip Leaf". A really important tip!** by Wayne Turville of Australian Orchid Nursery

Yesterday I looked at my plant of Dendrobium Yondi Tina 'Goliath' FCC and saw the typical tulip leaf being extra fused this season. One cane has already been lost due to overhead watering and misting (that's \$'s lost curse it all!)

So, I thought it was time to reprint these notes in my blog.



Sometimes growing orchids can be intimidating and somewhat difficult. Here is a great tip used by all the best Australian Dendrobium growers. All hybrids that have Dendrobium Star of Gold 'Bathurst' in their background seem to suffer from this affliction.

The next generation to use Star of Gold 'Bathurst' had this genetic fault also. The famous Yondi Tina 'Goliath' FCC is the worst for perpetuating the fault.

'Tulip leaf' is when the protective young leaf sheath that surrounds the expanding new growth strangles the young leaves into a water holding cup like a tulip flower.

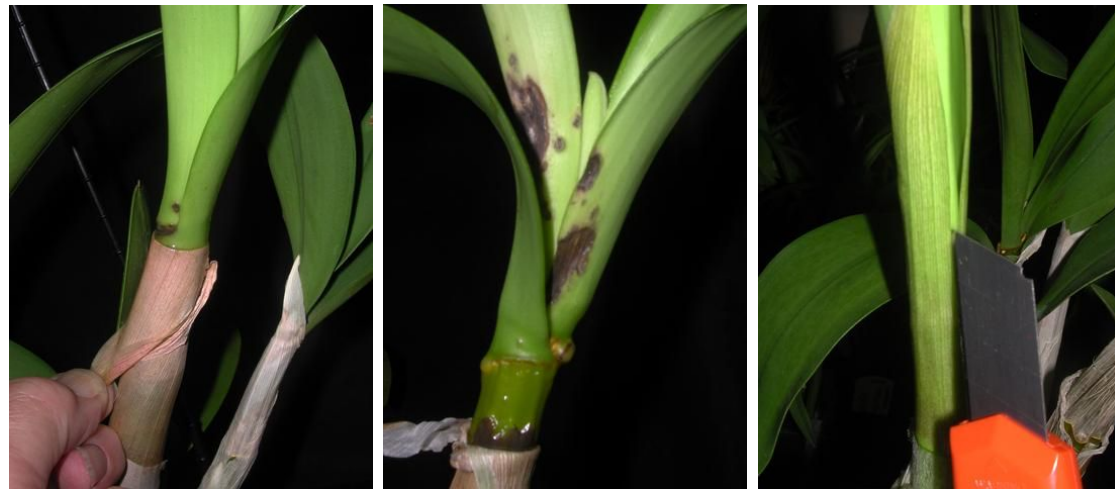
All the examples shown below are Dendrobium Brimbank Gold. It has wonderful gold bloom, but it is a complete must for sheath peeling. The problem then lies in the fact the sheath makes the developing growth hold water.



The young new growths tend to produce sugary liquids to attract ants (another blog in itself) and this mixes with trapped water to ferment and rot the new cane.

In a hobby collection its easily controlled, by peeling and sometimes minor surgery, but in a commercial situation it's just too much work. Better to try and breed it out.

So how to do it? Easy, just pinch the leaf fine sheath and peel it down to allow the water to escape. If you don't, bacteria and fungus may germinate and damage as shown below.



So now you know! But sometimes it's not that easy. The new sheath may not be so papery and may require a scalpel or box cutter to slice down the sheath. This may be necessary if up to three layers of sheath need to be removed. What a ruddy nuisance! Be careful, as if done



too early the growth may collapse. Also watch out for the growing flower nodes which look like lemon pips. This is where your blooms may come from.

The 'peel' procedure may also be needed on Dendrobium speciosum and nearly always on Dendrobium Avril's Gold, even though there is no Star of Gold in their background. Warm humid weather, and overhead watering, also make this rotting more common, as do high temperatures.

It may also be necessary to perform this on plants as young as 50mm tubes (picture 3 above). Pic 4 shows the botrytis attack from Tulip leaf where I just caught it before losing the growth. Now exposed to air, it should dry and heal.

(Reproduced with the authors permission. – Thank you for sharing your experience Wayne)

**Fairy Wishes** - A man and his wife, now in their 60's, were celebrating their 40th wedding anniversary. On their special day a good fairy came to them and said that because they had been so good that each one of them could have one wish. The wife wished for a trip around the world with her husband. Whoosh! Immediately she had airline/cruise tickets in her hands.

The man wished for a female companion 30 years younger... Whoosh...immediately he turned ninety!!!

(Gotta love fairies with a sense of humour!)