

Staying connected during the COVID-19 pandemic

Starting the October issue with a selection of delightful orchids from the home of **Peter & Jane D'Olier**

Dendrobium eximium WOW what magnificent blooms! The common name for this beauty is The Extraordinary



Dendrobium & you can certainly see why. It is another of New Guinea's many gorgeous orchids. It is part of Dendrobium Section Latouria, which in New Guinea contains 53 species & 2 varieties. A medium sized, hot to warm growing epiphyte found on moss covered trees at elevations of ~400m in the Torricelli Range of northern Papua & to ~650m in Irian Jaya, western New Guinea. In its natural environment the rainfall is heavy year round with only slightly drier conditions for 1-2 months over winter so to grow it well probably requires protection from too much cold or getting too dry.

The pseudobulbs range from 20-40cm long & the leaves 15-20cm long. The inflorescence is about 15cm long with few to many large (4.5-7.6cm wide) flowers. With white petals and greenish-yellow or creamy-yellow sepals. One of the intriguing attributes is the dense hairs that cover the back of the sepals & extend down the ovary

(back 'stalk' of flower). The white, paddle shaped petals reach away from the lip like outstretched arms twisting gently. The tubular shaped lip is decorated with beautiful lines that can be mauve, purple, red-brown or vibrant fuchsia.

[OrchidWiz](#)

Although I don't have the conditions to suit the warm growing New Guinea orchids I absolutely love them & really appreciate seeing them on the bench & at shows. An extremely dramatic & very attractive orchid. As always, expertly grown & photographed by Peter & Jane – thanks so much for sharing this & all your beauties with us.



Dendrobium officinale x unicum ?



Max. variabilis var. unipunctata



Coelogyne lawrenceana

Dendrobium trantuanii – what glorious, glossy blooms! Found in northwestern Vietnam in rather dry, broad

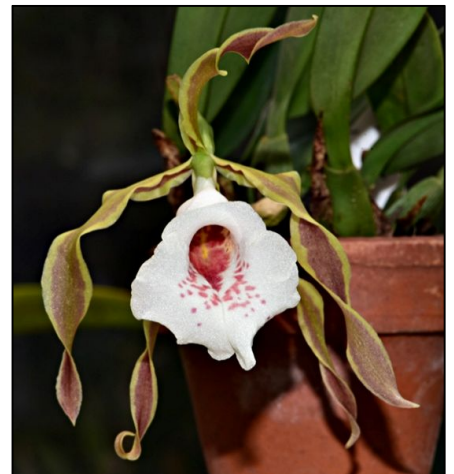


leafed evergreen forests at elevations of 800 to 1000m, growing as a miniature, warm growing epiphyte.

Flowers are 4 to 5cm with each inflorescence having between 1 to 3 blooms.

[OrchidWiz](#) [IOSPE](#)

Trichopilia tortilis ➔



Continuing the array of beauties from [Peter & Jane D'Olier](#) – what a vibrant selection of colourful Sarcs.



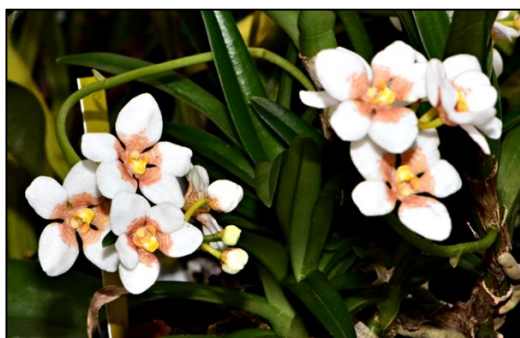
Sarco. Duno Nickys Twin 'Voo Doo'
x Kulnura Harrow 'Extreme'



Sarcochilus Kulnura Drive '4 Black'
x Kulnura Twist 'Mottle Big'



Sarcochilus Ella x Kulnura Spice



Sarcochilus Amber Snow



Sarcochilus Parma 'Lemon Drop'
x Kulnura Kaliedescope 'Chesell'



Sarcochilus Durras



Sarcochilus Ella 'Osre'
x Kulnura Space



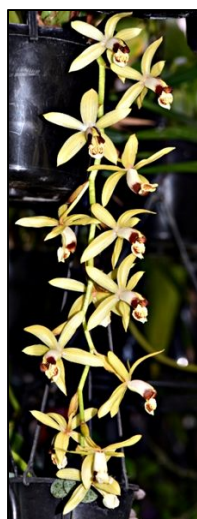
Sarcochilus Impact x
Kulnura Harrow 'Extreme'



Sarcochilus Maria 'Purple Magic' x
Kulnura Absolute 'Pink Ring'

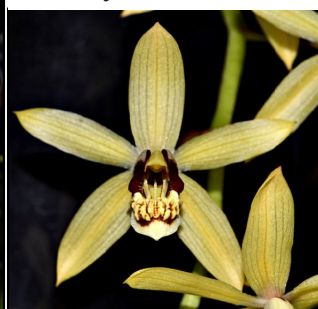


Phaius wallichii



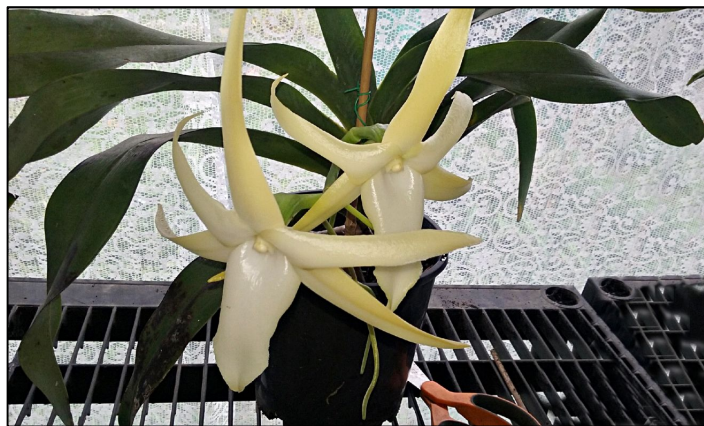
2 x *Coel. tomentosa* (syn. *Coel. massangeana*)

The pendant inflorescence can reach up to 40cm long producing 20-30 fragrant flowers. [IOSPE](#), [OrchidWiz](#)
The plant can bloom multiple times a year.



Dendrobium pierardii

Angraecum sesquipedale A very warm welcome to **Mary Ahonen** for her first contribution to the VB with this stunning



orchid. Purchased from Easy Orchids in 2010 after seeing a flowering specimen of theirs, I was told it needed warmth and I lived too far south to grow and flower it cold. It first flowered in 2017 and subsequently each year with only 1 flower per spike. This year it has two flowers and a bud on one spike and a second spike and bud forming on the opposite side. It grows cold but sheltered on a North facing verandah - **MA**



the opposite side. It grows cold but sheltered on a North facing verandah - **MA**

Jim Brydie did a write up on the big *Angraecums* in the May21 bulletin if you want more info on this group of orchids. A quick reminder of the key characteristics of *sesquipedale* from Baker's description in [OrchidWiz](#). Found in Madagascar in hot lowlands, on the trunks of trees, in light shade or diffused light usually at less than 100m. Always in areas with ample air movement & moderate to heavy rainfall most of the year with 2-3 slightly drier months late winter to early spring. Mature plants can reach 90-120cm. The inflorescence can be up to 30cm long.

A distinctive feature is that plants can produce their first bloom when only 15-20cm tall. Initially producing a single spike with one flower, as the plant matures the number of spikes &

flowers increases. Plants can have 1-4 flowers (rarely 6) per spike usually one at a time. The flowers are the largest of the angraecoid orchids & release a jasmine like fragrance at night. Blooms are substantial & waxy 17-22cm across, sometimes reaching a total length of 46cm they are resupinate (lip facing downwards) which is one of the distinguishing features between various species in this group.

Jim mentioned the connection of *Angraecum sesquipedale* to Charles Darwin's theory from 1862 that the pollinator must be a

moth with a really long proboscis. Darwin was ridiculed at the time but about four decades later a Hawk Moth was discovered with the precise characteristics described by Darwin & was named *Xanthopan morgani praedicta* in honour of Darwin's prediction. A beautifully grown specimen of this amazing orchid Mary – well done!

Scroll to 3:17min to see the action <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMVN1EWxFAU> Mother Nature in all her glory!

You know that question "If you could have a dinner party & choose your guests from anyone dead or alive – who would you invite?" Two on my list would have to be Charles Darwin & Sir David Attenborough.

One of Darwin's earlier theories of natural selection included observations of different species of finches he saw on the Galapagos Is. These with other theories eventually culminating in his book *The Origin of Species* in 1859.

On the Galapagos Islands it's like walking through a real life presentation of Darwin's theories. The landscapes, flora & fauna of the many islands within the archipelago can be quite different, all creating their own habitats. Darwin noted unique creatures were similar from island to island but perfectly adapted to their environments.

Most unfortunately, my trip to the Galapagos preceded my interest in orchids so I will give you a critter example. The wonderful marine iguanas are the only sea-going lizard in the world & are endemic to the Galapagos. Between the islands there are different types of various colours of iguanas that don't seem to mix - I loved them – but they belong in my classification of so ugly they're cute (see right). Darwin himself whilst acknowledging they were remarkable described them as "..... hideous-looking creature, of a dirty black colour, stupid and sluggish in its movements."

Like all creatures, mind-blowingly including birds, you can literally step over things in the Galapagos & they just stay there, totally unperturbed by your presence which is in itself, an awe inspiring honour. To preserve the environment, you are not allowed to deviate from the marked paths on the islands so if you are in an iguanas path when they decide to skittle off in your general direction you must just stand still. I reckon Darwin must have seen them in classic lizard "sunbaking" mode because although these are substantial creatures up to 1.5m in length, if the mood takes them, let me tell you, they are a hell of a lot more than sluggish!



PS I reckon whoever created gremlins had been to the Galapagos – that amount of similarity can't be a coincidence!

I was close to a trip to Madagascar a few years ago but never made it, maybe one day & now I would look for orchids.

There must be something in the air – a very warm welcome to **Sherry Chen** another first time contributor to the Virtual Benching. **Sherry** is one of our newest members who joined us mid covid. A few of you may have seen Sherry at one



Phal. Unknown

meeting before the lockdown hit us again but if not, we look forward to meeting you soon. 😊

Sherry labeled this lovely bloom to the right as “Regular ol’ *Phal.*” but she certainly has the knack for these as it is a very elegant, well grown plant.

As well as sharing some of her lovely orchids, Sherry sent in a photo (see right) of a tiny garden visitor on her *Ficus*. Sherry said the little dude sat still for her for quite a long time. I’m impressed, having tried to take photos of these myself - they move quite fast!

It is a type of Jumping spider from the *Salticidae* family which is the largest family of spiders with over 600 described genera & over 6000 described species. You can find over 250 of these species in Australia. Most are less than 10mm but they can range from 3-20mm. Jumping spiders have some of the best vision among arthropods and use it in courtship, hunting, and navigation. A lot of them are quite beautifully coloured. Their distinctive eye arrangement & jumping capacity make them easy to recognise. The way they move has quite a quirky aspect & they are interesting to watch - if you like that kind of thing! They are not poisonous so if you see one you can comfortably leave it in peace to share your space.



← *Den. Sakura ‘Hime’*

Sherry Chen

My very small plant surprised me with a bloom this year! No idea it would bloom on canes this small – SC



*Coel. flaccida – Sherry Chen
I made the mistake of putting this plant inside while it started blooming. My house did not smell nice - SC*



Jessie Koh

Brassia Winter Wonderland



Sarcochilus Unknown
Jessie Koh



Dendrobium Stardust ‘H&R’
Jenny Richardson



Jessie Koh

*Sarco. Parma ‘Lemon drop’ HCC/AOC
x Kulnura Kaleidescope ‘Chesell’*



*Den. (Orihime x Hercules) x
Roy's vereign ‘Kokamini’ - DL*



Restrepiella ophioccephala
DL *FS 2cm

← *This species grows in Mexico to Costa Rica to 1600m as an epiphyte, grow cold*
DL



*Den. nobile var.
cooksonianum - DL*

***FS = Flower size based on IOSPE**

Beautiful, vibrant blooms from the garden of **Chris Wilson** – with the last bloom from **Lee Payne**



← **Den. Yodogimi**
I find this a reliable plant to grow and flower
CW



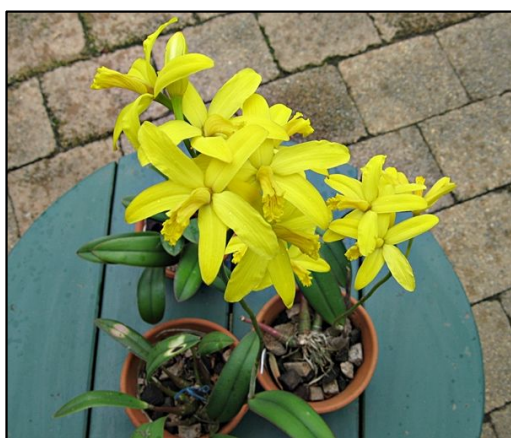
Den. Yodogimi x **Beauty Spring**. The flowering cane is staked to avoid the risk of it bending under the weight of flowers - CW



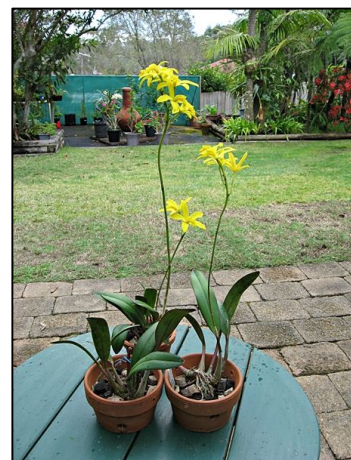
Cattleya Mini Purple

Flower is 8cm across

C. Mini Purple growing in a 10cm squat terracotta pot in a coarse mix. I grow it cold under shade cloth only ↑ – CW
Cattleya crispata (a.k.a. **Laelia flava**) x 2. I grow them in squat terracotta pots and the current flowering is the best yet.



The flowers are 6cm across and the tallest spike is 37cm tall. In nature they grow amongst grasses on rocks and hence the flowers face upwards to attract the pollinator flying overhead. I do much of what Peter and Jane D'Olier outlined in their article in the September bulletin. When repotting I try to be careful of their roots, using a coarse mix of gravel, bark and cork and avoiding overpotting whilst making sure the plant does not wobble. Over winter I do keep them inside at night to protect them from the cold, give them plenty of light during the day and water sparingly and when I do water, I do so when the day has warmed up and with time to dry before nightfall. - CW



sparingly and when I do water, I do so when the day has warmed up and with time to dry before nightfall. - CW

Dendrobium Ruppium ↓ It is a primary hybrid between **Den. jonesii** (previously known as **Den. ruppianum**) and **Den. speciosum**. Flower height is 55-60mm with a spread of about 35mm. It consistently flowers later than most of the other native Dendrobiums – CW



speciosum. Flower height is 55-60mm with a spread of about 35mm. It consistently flowers later than most of the other native Dendrobiums – CW



→ **Onc. leucochilum**
I struggle with this one and also keep it indoors at night over winter. Flowers are 32mm across and this time I had 40 flowers and buds. – CW



← **Cattleya Biatriz Dias**
Another sibling was depicted in last month's VB, I am still undecided if when they flower in the warmer weather their flower colours are deeper – CW

Cattleya (a.k.a. **Sophrrolaelia**) **Jinn** →
It is growing in a squat 125mm terracotta pot. The biggest flower is 60mm across - CW



Cattleya Trick or Treat

Lee Payne

Continuing on from last month's theme of garden delights, the **first three photos** show more beauties thriving under the



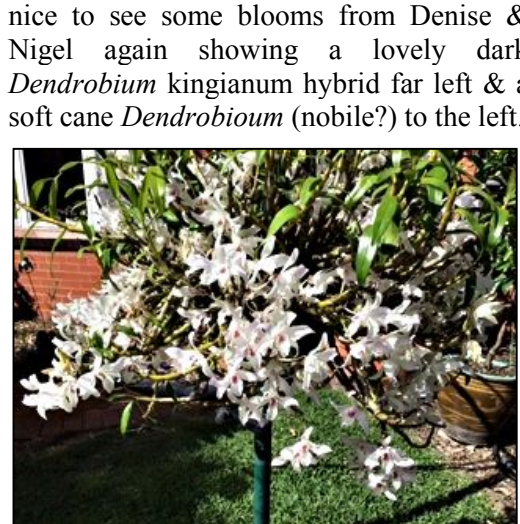
gentle, expert care of **John Chang**. This time primarily featuring very spectacular, mass displays of various types of speciosum & a few other native dendrobiums.

It must be simply divine sitting in the garden on a warm day having the beautiful fragrances waft around you.

Want to try your hand at creating your own orchid wonderland? Look out for more information in the November bulletin!



Staying in the garden with the **first two photos below**, pretty in pink from the home of **Denise & Nigel Hendy**. Very



nice to see some blooms from Denise & Nigel again showing a lovely dark *Dendrobium kingianum* hybrid far left & a soft cane *Dendrobium* (nobile?) to the left.



The three remaining white beauties are from the home of **Jessie Koh**. Above is a lovely specimen of *Dendrobium cassiope*. Jess says it's fragrant & flowers all year round.

The two photos to the left show a bumper plant of *Dendrobium Yukidaruma*.

Elegant beauties from the home of **Geoff & Jean Fulcher**

Phalaenopsis japonica (syn. *Sedirea japonica*). What a beautiful plant with its delicately coloured blooms arching away from the leaves & the aerial roots forming an artistic background for the blooms.



Found in Japan, the Ryukyu Islands, Korea & western Yunnan & Zhejiang provinces of China in open subtropical forests or cliffs along valleys at elevations of 600 to 1400m. The arching inflorescences can reach 18cm & produce 6 to 10, 3cm flowers that open successively & have a sweet lemon to ginger scent. Mature plants can produce a number of inflorescences simultaneously.

IOSPE

Phal. chibae →



← *Phalaenopsis philippinensis* Found in the Philippine Islands on northeastern Luzon in Nueva Vizcaya Province as well as the provinces of Quirino, Isabela & northern Aurora. It grows in the shade of tall trees usually near streams in rainforests at elevations of about 1200m.

Spikes start off erect at the base but become arching to pendent. As shown in **Geoff & Jean's** plant the spikes branch on mature plants. According to Baker's description in **OrchidWiz** inflorescences can produce 3-30 flowers with mature plants capable of producing over 100 blossoms which open simultaneously. With flowers 6-9cm across that are full & flat it produces a magnificent display.

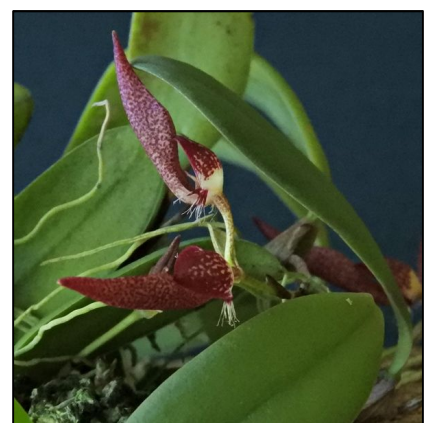
Bifrenaria harrissoniae var. *pubigera* (below) This variation can be found in Brazil near Rio De Janeiro. **Baker's** description indicates that plants grow on almost vertical, east facing rock cliffs at 200 to 800m. Plants grow exposed to strong winds & almost full sun with their roots buried in cracks in the rock face with a bit of detritus but not much vegetable matter. It sometimes grows as an epiphyte. The heavily fragrant, waxy flowers are 6-8cm & long lasting.



Oncidium ottonis



Bulbophyllum mirum



Beautifully grown orchids from the home of T & P

Cattleya amethystoglossa 'Pink Powder Puff' Found in Bahia, Minas Gerais & Pernambuco states of Brazil as a large sized, cool to warm growing epiphyte at elevations around 600m. Plants grow on rocky outcrops near the sea & on palms in the full sun with lots of warmth & humidity - around 80-85% year round. Rainfall is moderate to heavy most of the year with a slightly drier period late winter – early spring.

They are now almost extinct on the rocks in most areas due to habitat destruction from logging & agriculture & from commercial over collection. They can still be found in the topmost crowns of palm & hardwood trees.

Inflorescence carry 3-9 flowers of about 7-10cm that are long lasting & slightly fragrant.

[IOPSE](#) [OrchidWiz](#)

The spots on the sepals & petals combined with the brilliant fuschia/pink colour in the lip make it a real head turner. Just gorgeous!



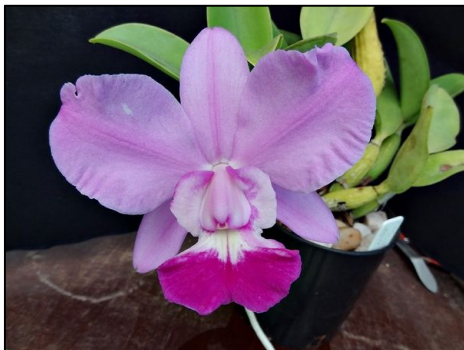
Cattleya intermedia var. *coerulea*



Dendrocium Kuranda Classic



Cattleya intermedia var. *orlata*



Cattleya walkeriana



Dendrobium Kuniko



Lc. Mini Purple x Sc. Lana Coryell

Ansellia africana *Ansellia* is considered to be a monotypic genus of orchid with only one species *africana*. It was named after John Ansell, an English assistant botanist who found the initial specimens in 1841. It is native to tropical & southern Africa growing along coasts & rivers in the canopy of trees, usually at elevations below 700m but sometimes may be found up to 2200m. It is a highly variable, giant sized (50-120cm) robust species varying in size & flower colour with a musky scent. The plant forms dense mats of erect roots creating what is referred to as a 'trash basket' collecting leaf litter to provide a source of nutrients.

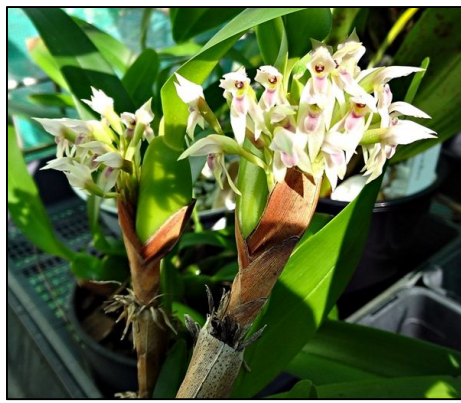
[Jay Pfahl](#) describes the following uses: "The Zulu in South Africa herbalists use the pseudobulb to make a tea that is used as an emetic. Also Zulu lore has it that a spurned lover can wear pseudobulbs of this species to prevent the ex-lover from having children. In northern Zimbabwe and Zambia this species leaves and stems are used to make a broth that is a supposed

cure for madness. The Pedi tribe of Zimbabwe use this species to make an infusion that curtails coughing in children. So more than just a striking flower a potentially versatile plant in many ways? [IOSPE](#) [OrchidWiz](#) [Wikipedia](#)





Laelia angereri - T & P



Maxillaria densa - T & P



Rth. Jungle Jumbalaya - T & P



Aerangis modesta - T & P



Maxillaria tonsbergii - T & P



Coel. cristata var. *alba* - T & P



Dendrobium lindleyi - T & P



Oncidium Mayfair - T & P

'Tis the season again for the gorgeous Callista-type Dendrobiums: *densiflorum*, *chrysotoxum*, *fameri*, *jenkinsii*, (*thysiflorum* – winter flowering) & hybrids. Producing such majestic & impressive displays when grown by the experts such as T&P and DL. Mother Nature proudly displaying the best she can offer – what could say spring has arrived better than these floral masterpieces. Thanks so much for sharing your beauties with us!



Den. Mousmee 'Lloyd Bradford' - DL



Dendrobium chrysotoxum - DL



Dendrobium densiflorum - DL

We might have to dub DL the 'Dendrobium Queen' – these specimen plants are magnificent – what a display!! Perhaps an advantage of virtual benching, not sure these would have been practical to transport.



Cattleya acclandiae
Lee Payne



Rhyncholaelia digbyana
Lee Payne



Cattleya trianae fma. coerulea
Peter & Jane D'Olier



Rlc. Sylvia Fry 'Dundas'
Lee Payne



←←
Dendrobium monophyllum
Lee Payne



← *Dockrilla schoenina* (syn. *Doc. beckleri*)
Lee Payne

Dockrilla striolata →
Lee Payne



*FS to 1.9cm



2 x *Cym. Kiwi Midnight Geyserland* - L Payne *Dcd. cobbianum* - J Richardson *Cym. Little Beauty* - Lee Payne

Bulbophyllum auratum - Peter & Jane D'Olier Like many *Bulbophyllums* this is an umbel type orchid. In botany, an umbel is an inflorescence that consists of a number of short flower stalks (pedicels) which spread from a common point – like the ribs of an umbrella.

If you fancy obtaining one of these for your collection & you like a specific colour, make sure you see it in flower because there is a

huge variation in colours – all beautiful but completely different.



Den. linguiforme - Peter & Jane D'Olier



Dendrobium Yodogimi x Beauty Spring - Jenny Richardson



Dendrobium In The Moment Jenny Richardson ex. Keith Ryan



Dendrobium Shinonome 7 Jenny Richardson



Dendrobium Oriental Paradise Jenny Richardson



Lc. Topaz Fancy 'Brilliant Bicolour' x Pot. Hawaiian Landmark 'Dazzler' - JR



Dendrobium Unknown Jenny Richardson



Slc. Minegold Jenny Richardson



Sarco. Fitzhart Red x Bessie Jenny Richardson



Maxillaria cucullata Jenny Richardson

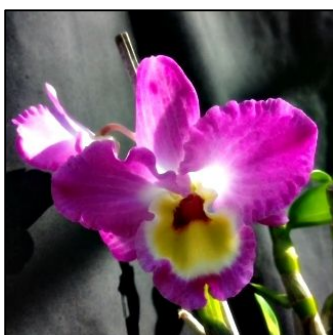


◀◀ *Calanthe izu-insularis* hybrid - John Chang



◀ *Dendrobium moniliforme* John Chang. Presented with beauty & elegance

Holcoglossum flavescens ➡ John Chang



◀ *Den. Utopia 'Messenger'* DL

Den. ➡ gracillimum J Richardson

➡➡ *Den. Mountain Mist* - DL

