



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

(Established in 1947)

A.B.N. 92 531 295 125

17th October 2022

Volume 63 No. 10

Annual Membership : **\$15 single, \$18 family**

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Next Meeting : Mon 17th October 2022 (our AGM meeting)

Venue : The West Lindfield Community Hall, corner of Bradfield Rd and Moore Avenue, West Lindfield.

Attendees must be at least double vaccinated and Vacc. certificates will be checked. Face masks are not mandatory but are strongly recommended.

The hall is open from 6.30pm. Please try and get there early to help set up tables and chairs. A small number of members already help but more will make the job much easier and quicker. Don't just leave it all to 'someone else'.

No benching until all the class dividers are in place. Give the set up team time to get everything organized, and when benching, if you aren't sure where your orchid goes, ask a more experienced member for help.

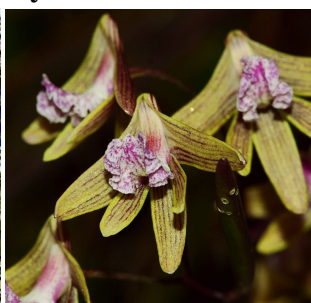
No Culture Classes at present due to Covid, but the **sales table** is operating for sale of members plants and for small quantities of pots and other supplies. There will be the usual **monthly raffle**, and the **library** will be operating.

The actual meeting commences at 8pm. We start with the meeting formalities including the AGM. Once the AGM is complete and judges selection of the Best of the Evenings is announced, we will break for supper.

The Supper Break – Coffee, tea, milk and hot water will be provided at the meeting. But **remember**, you will still need to bring your own **sugar/mugs/cups and stirrers**. The club will supply some wrapped biscuits but members may also **bring their own nibbles**. **No food sharing please (Covid rules)**.

After the supper break – Instead of a guest speaker, this month we will hold one of **our popular member's orchid auctions**. Each single membership is invited to bring 2 'lots' for auction, family memberships may bring 3. A 'lot' may be a bundle of more than one plant. More details on the process on page 2 and 3.

Best of the Evening Open Hybrid – Den. Oliver Jack 'Gerald' grown by Lesley & Garrie Bromley



This certainly is a curious one. There are two different orchids registered with almost the same name. One as Oliver Jack (Jiggi x striolatum) and Oliver-Jack with a hyphen (Australian Freckles x striolatum) but it seems growers and judges may have mixed them up because there are award records for a cultivar "Gerald" under both names. The award photo for Henk Van den Berg's plant in 2015 looks a match for Garrie's orchid so I am guessing this one is Oliver Jack 'without the hyphen', registered in 2004 by Down Under Native Orchids. The Oliver 'with the hyphen' was only registered in 2020 by Mr. C. Farrell. I can't imagine why the registrars would allow such double naming.

The two are very similar in breeding. The difference is that the 2004 Oliver (no hyphen) is 25% Den. teretifolium and the other is, instead, 25% Den. fuliginosum. These are both terete leaf Dendrobiums (syn Dockrillias) but teretifolium is a purely pendent grower with long, trailing growths and spidery white or cream/yellow flowers. Den. fuliginosum comes from PNG, is a shorter more compact plant and has a startlingly dark purplish red flower. I imagine that the latter has been used hoping to get darker more colourful flowers from the hybrid, but why the double up names?



teretifolium

fuliginosum

Another lovely orchid Garrie and Lesley. It's a delight to see your lovely orchids 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)

President Dennys' Desk – Again, another busy meeting in September with 41 people and heaps of beautiful flowers. We had over 20 members benching which was fantastic along with some lovely flowers benched by our novice members. It was also so good to hear Garrie Bromley's story of the NSW effort at the Australian Orchid Council Conference and Show, held recently in Queensland. I congratulate all those people involved in that effort as well as Geoff Le Marne, who keeps on keeping on winning.

Setup and Pulldown – At our last meeting we were a bit light on with regard to helpers. Nathan, Graeme and Stuart did a great job but a couple more people would make life easier for all. So, if you can hang back for about 20 minutes or so, please do so. Your help will be appreciated.

The St. Ives Orchid Show – At our September meeting, Garrie also gave a report on the SIOS which was the second best in 21 years of running the show. Garrie indicated that there were a lot of challenges, including rent increases, having to rent tables, poor flowering in member's collections and a COVID requirement to cope with. He and the SIOS committee were very happy with the result. 3325 people came through the door and an international judge indicated that the displays were first class. Garrie called up the SIOS treasurer, Kevin Crocker who was complimentary regarding the great effort put in by KOS members. Kevin presented me with a nice cheque as the KOS share of the surplus generated at the SIOS. If you really enjoyed your experience at the show, then that is another reason for having a good think about nominating for our committee.

SIOS Volunteers' Fruit Cake – Thank you Lesley, I forgot to say that the fruit cake was superb.

AGM – Our AGM will be held at this next meeting. I will be nominating again for President and some of our existing committee members have also decided to re-nominate, which is wonderful. Our society works because our committee works well. If you are thinking of nominating for the executive or committee, please have a chat with existing or past committee folk. We will still need some more folk to get involved so please have a think about nominating. Alternatively, you can be nominated from the floor. It is great fun and delivers great social rewards for all committee members as well as social and culture rewards for all our members. We work well in a team relationship.

Member's Plant Auction – As usual, we will be having our auction after the AGM so prepare your plants, bring some cash, and have some fun. Rules for the auction are elsewhere in this bulletin.

When to wear a face mask

It is strongly recommended to wear a face mask in indoor public spaces and when you can't physically distance from others.

Wearing masks – I will not be relenting on this issue until I feel it is logically the time to do so. That said, we will be trying to re-start culture classes next year. COVID Safe rules have changed but wearing masks in indoor spaces is still recommended. If you are unsure about this, please visit : <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/stay-safe/guidance-on-wearing-face-masks>

Please try and wear your masks at our meeting and use the hand disinfectant dispensers just to help keep the risk as low as we practically can do so. We will still be recording attendances.

Voucher expiry dates – Remember, that the expiration date for \$5 vouchers issued from and including October 2022 is now the end of September 2023.

Coffee and Tea – We will still be offering coffee and tea and biscuits at the October meeting. If possible, please bring your own mugs/cups and stirrers. Bring your own supper if you need to but no sharing, please. We will need one or two volunteers to be on hand to dispense the milk during the break.

Member's welfare – personal challenges occur all the time, so 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.

Other News Items

1. October AGM – As mentioned above, this meeting we will hold our Annual General Meeting (AGM), involving the election of a committee to manage the society for the next year. We would love to see some new faces to join in the fun. The current committee are a great group and I can personally assure you that being on the committee doesn't unduly impose on other aspects of your life. It expands your knowledge and your social connections. Why not think about nominating and offering your help?

2. Member's Auction

Procedures – As per our last auction, you don't need to fill in a form. **Lina** will be managing *the booking-in process, issuing auction benching cards, and assigning auction 'lot numbers'*. She will be located at a table inside the hall where the sales table used to be.

If you are selling, 1. Go to Lina and get a benching card for each sales lot. Take the cards away and fill in the plant name, your name, and reserve price (if any). Much the same as for benching an orchid. 2. Take the cards back to Lina

where she will assign lot numbers to go on the cards. 3. Now place your auction plants on the auction bench with the card in front of each lot. These cards then will remain with the plant throughout the auction until it gets to the auctioneer.

Setting a price - If you want to set a **reserve price, in addition to it being written on the benching card** it would help the potential buyers when they are checking out which plants to buy, and help the auctioneers, if you **ALSO clearly and visibly label the plant with the reserve price. In past years we have used yellow tags, and/or yellow stickers.** It doesn't really matter what you use but make sure bidders and auctioneers know what you are asking for it.

Presentation – In real estate the mantra is location, location, location **but in selling plants it is appearance, appearance, and information.** Clean your plant up and show it at its best. If it looks messy and poor, you will get half what it might be worth. And if you know your plant, **put a picture on it. Show the buyer what it is.**

Clean and Free of Disease - The society will inspect plants when they are booked in and reserves the right to reject plants that it believes are suffering from pests or diseases, are not well established or otherwise not in good condition.

The Money - The society takes a 10% commission on all sales.

Buyers must pay with cash before they go home. Please bring your own supply of cash in appropriate size notes. Don't expect the society to have change for large notes if you spend \$10.

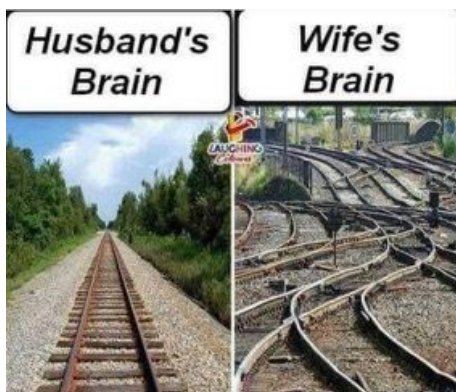
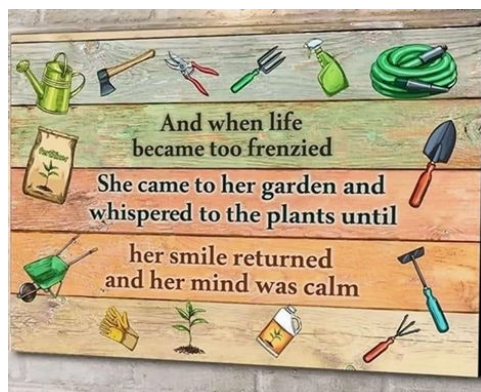
Sellers are paid the following month due to the workload on those running the paperwork during the auction.

Upcoming Events (apart from Xmas)

Sat 22 Oct, Species OS show and auction day, W. Pennant Hills Community Church, 41-43 Eaton Rd W. Pennant Hills. The auction starts at 10.15am and lots are available for inspection at least 30 minutes prior. For a catalog see Jim's email top of page 2.

Sun 13 Nov. MWOS Public Auction, Cromer Community Centre, 150 Fisher Road, Cromer NSW 2099. Plant inspections from 9am, Auction from 9.30am

Entertainment



The Harley - While riding my Harley, I swerved to avoid hitting a deer, lost control and landed in a ditch, severely banging my head. Dazed and confused I crawled out of the ditch to the edge of the road when a shiny new convertible pulled up with a very beautiful woman who asked, "Are you okay?"

As I looked up, I noticed she was wearing a low cut blouse with cleavage to die for... "I'm okay I think," I replied as I pulled myself up to the side of the car to get a closer look. She said, Get in and I'll take you home so I can clean and bandage that nasty scrape on your head.

"That's nice of you," I answered, "but I don't think my wife will like me doing that!"

"Oh, come now, I'm a nurse," she insisted. "I need to see if you have any more scrapes and then treat them properly."

Well, she was really pretty and very persuasive. Being sort of shaken and weak, I agreed, but repeated, "I'm sure my wife won't like this." We arrived at her place which was just a few miles away and, after a couple of cold drinks and the bandaging, I thanked her and said, "I feel a lot better, but I know my wife is going to be really upset so I'd better go now."

"Don't be silly!" she said with a smile, while unbuttoning her blouse. "Stay for a while. She won't know anything. By the way, where is she?" "Still in the ditch with my Harley, I guess."

The Big Dog. - A man takes his Rottweiler to the vet.

"My dog is cross-eyed", he says, "is there anything you can do for him?"

"Well," said the vet, "let's have a look at him". So he picks the dog up and examines his eyes, then he checks his teeth. Finally, he says, "I'm going to have to put him down."

"What?" cries the owner, "just because he's cross-eyed?" - "No," says the vet, "because he's really heavy"

Best of the Evening Open Species – *Cattleya coccinea* grown by Trevor and Pauline Onslow



Last month Trevor gave us one of his all too few presentations as a guest speaker (I wish we could talk him into doing it more often). This time he told us all about a magnificent gem of an orchid now called *Cattleya coccinea* but which for most of its existence was known as *Sophranitis coccinea*. And of course one of the beautiful samples he benched won best species of the evening. Just look at the flowers on that picture at the left.

Those flowers are about 6 to 7 cm wide by a little less tall and if you look carefully at the pseudobulbs below them, they are smaller than the flowers. Amazing.

The old genus *Sophranitis* comprised about 9 species, all small plants with relatively large flowers, except for *Sophranitis cernua* which has a short multiflowered inflorescence with up to seven much smaller flowers (each 15 to 20 mm wide). *Soph. coccinea* is the magnificent queen of the genus.

EVERY orchid grower desires *Sophranitis*. Everyone gives them a try at some point in their hobby. But, as Trevor told us, although they aren't by any means impossible, these little things also aren't the easiest orchids to grow.

During his talk, Trevor mentioned a great *coccinea* grower from past years in our society. That grower - Loma Oxley is still one of our members but past her orchid growing days. However, when Loma was a grower she grew *Sophranitis coccinea* beautifully and just about everything else just as well. When I joined our society in the 1970's, her regular benching of a perfect specimen plant of *coccinea* made me try to be a *Sophranitis* grower many times.

Like most growers, I had some successes and did get a flower or two, but I never got anywhere near Loma's skill level, nor could I ever give them what they really wanted. Time after time they would eventually decline in my care and fade away until gone for good.

Trevor outlined some of what he does to care for them and he has great success. I didn't take notes while he was talking so I will try to get Trevor to get something into writing for us but I do recall from his talk that he explained the need to replicate some of the natural cultural conditions they experience where they grow in nature.

I haven't yet had a chance to ask Trevor for his article, but I did recall that some years back I wrote an article on the genus explaining some of the foundations that underly their natural distribution. It obviously wasn't based upon my personal successes, but it did contain information from a South American expert. The following is a resurrection of that 2013 article with a few updates. I hope it will give new triers some sound background as a starter.

More *Sophranitis*, and what the heck is a *Vellozia* bush – Jim Brydie (from 2013)

(NB: I am continuing the use of the genus name *Sophranitis* for convenience only. The accepted genus name is now *Cattleya*)

There are perhaps 10 *Sophranitis* species according to some sources but only 7 according to Jack Fowlie (1987), and I accept his view. If I might sum them up ***very simplistically, and in horticultural terms***, they might be described as:

S. coccinea – Large, bright red flowers 4 to 7 cm across. Usually 1 per bulb & modern ones have a nice round shape.

S. brevipedunculata – Flowers similar to *coccinea* (4 to 7 cm), but 1 to 3 per bulb & with much shorter flower stems.

S. wittingiana – Like a pink version of *coccinea*, 4 to 6 cm across, in singles.

S. acuensis – Much smaller in plant and flower than *coccinea*. Flowers about 2.5 cm diameter, bright red.

S. mantiqueræ – Again smaller but similar to *coccinea*, bigger than *acuensis*. Flrs between 2.5 & 5 cm, bright red.

S. cernua – Flowers significantly different by being small (2 cm?), orange or red, and in bunches of up to 7.

S. pterocarpa – Same as *cernua* but with fleshy wings on the ovary at the back of the flower.

As the purpose of this re-copied article is to focus more specifically on the habitats of *coccinea* and its close sister *brevipedunculata*, I have removed parts of the original article concerning the other species and leave you to research those yourself.

But, if you love *coccinea*, I think you also need to know all about *S. brevipedunculata* (*means short flower stem*). First to know they are different and the difference is more than the length of their flower stem.

Their natural habitats are quite different and this makes them different to grow. In the map at the right you can see that *S. coccinea* occurs pretty much in a long band of low mountains parallel to the coast. They are found at altitudes from about 800-1800 m, on the slopes facing the sea. The mountains block most of the moisture coming in off the ocean so this is a high humidity area where there are long hours of fog and mist every day, and this suits *coccinea* perfectly.

On the other hand, *Sophranitis brevipedunculata* has a much more restricted distribution and the habitat is different. It



is found in the low, dry, mountainous interior of the state of Minas Gerais. This area (shown in pink below) is inland from the coastal mountains and more northerly than most of the coccinea habitat.



Brevipedunculata is mostly found growing on *Vellozia* bushes (*more on Vellozia later*), but sometimes directly on rocks. Instead of tropical rain forest, the plants grow in open, much drier areas, and are subject to a lot of light and constant wind. Perhaps the very short flower stalks are a genetic adaptation to the constant winds in the area. The general elevation at which *brevipedunculata* is found (about 1000-1300 m) is a little bit lower than average for *coccinea* (800-1800 m), but more importantly, day temperatures tend to be quite high and night temperatures drop considerably. There is a distinct dry season that can be as long as several months, and during that time the plants rely almost exclusively on nightly dew. The variation in temperature from day to night, and throughout the year, makes this a very adaptable

species, tolerant of wider environmental conditions than *coccinea*, including adaption to more intense light than *coccinea*. If you want to try and grow your first *Sophronitis*, perhaps this is the one.

There are other differences between the two however. Plant form can be quite different but it can also be similar. Most of the *Sophronitis* have short, stiff, fleshy leaves, and stumpy little egg shaped pseudobulbs that tend to grow close together in two ranked, soldier like rows. A bit like those you can see in the left picture below, which is of *S. brevipedunculata*.

Coccinea however, has a much wider range than *brevipedunculata* and broader physical characteristics. Some of its varieties still have the short squat bulbs, but the best forms often have much more cylindrical pseudobulbs that can be up to 7.5 cm tall, as in the second picture here.

I chose the two pictures at the right to illustrate the pseudobulbs, so the flowers here are not average for either species. Most of the wild clones of both species would look more like the slightly starry form of the right hand picture, and although large flower forms are found, don't be disappointed if the one you buy turns out to be more like a 4-5 cm size flower. Unless of course, it is a mericlone of one of the line bred and colchicine treated larger flowered forms of *coccineas*.



Many skilful growers do well with *S. coccinea* in pots, but they are rather unforgiving if you don't manage them perfectly. You might not grow them as luxuriantly on a mount, but many find it a better long term proposition, at least until you develop a successful process for pot culture. *Sophronitis* don't make a massive root system so you need to protect every one they do make. Natural cork is a good mount, or *Vellozia* if you can get it, but if you decide to remount, be as gentle as possible, and use just a little pad of sphagnum.

By now, you must be wondering just "what the heck is a *Vellozia* bush". In the wild, in the areas that the big *Vellozias* grow, it is the preferred host for *S. brevipedunculata* and about 20 other orchids.

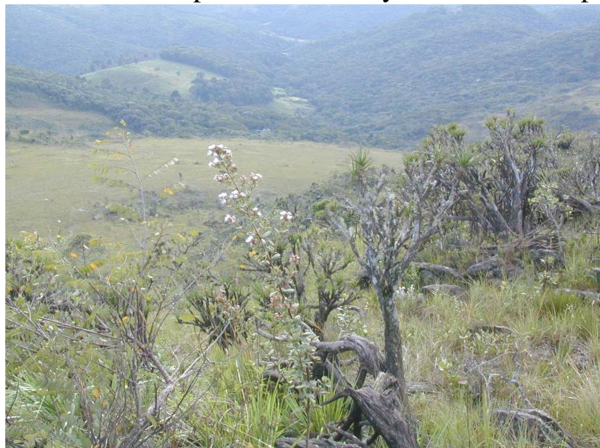
Vellozia is a genus of about 100 grassy leaved herbs & shrubs. They range from just a few cms to one giant of 6 metres. The larger ones somewhat resemble a *Pandanus* or an overgrown, branching *Dracaena*, but the stems of *Vellozia* can be covered in persistent leaf sheaths or even entire old dead leaves. (I haven't seen a live *Vellozia*, but this sounds something like our Australian *Xanthorea*, or grassboy species).



Vellozia stems, which can reach up to 50cm diameter, can also be covered in adventitious roots. The *Vellozia* pictures on this page are all of the biggest species, *Vellozia gigantea*, and give some idea of the structures and the dryish inland areas in which they grow.

On one orchid website, I found this charming little

narrative about an exploration trip: - “We saw many species of Vellozia on the trip. Virtually every stop was home to one or more species. Generally these are short plants, branched mainly from the base, with rather thickened stems



and often with attractive grassy leaves, and showy (blue or white) flowers. I include Vellozia auriculata here because it is one of the few giants of the family. To 3m tall, it resembles an arborescent (ie treelike) Yucca, with thickened stems and a flared trunk. I have no idea if it is truly succulent, but it sure plays the part well. Vellozia gigantea is an even larger species (to 6m) that grows in the same general region of Minas Gerais.”

I believe that both of the above Vellozia species are wonderful orchid hosts. I still have a small plant of Sophronitella violacea, mounted on a piece of Vellozia, just as it was when I bought it off York Meredith that way over 30 years ago, and the host is as good today as it was back then.

Unfortunately, harvesting Vellozia and the orchids on it, has decimated populations in the wild, so it is probably just as well that governments have banned Vellozia being cut anymore.

References - Miranda Orchids, USA, <http://mirandaorchids.com/> (Francisco Miranda). The species distribution maps above are copyright to Mr. Miranda and may not be reproduced without his permission.

Best of the evening Novice: Den. Pacific Pride grown by Fred Gorginian



Pacific Pride is the cross between Den. alexandrae and Den. forbesii but it is the former that gives it its strangely twisted shape. The species is renowned for its weirdness.

Forbesii is also just a little strange, but you could probably apply that term to just about all Section Latourea Dendrobiums.

Alexandrae comes from Northeastern Papua New Guinea, in the Morobe District. The type specimen was found in the Waria Valley near Gobi at 900–1100 m elevation. It grew in cool, shady conditions on moss-covered trees in the mist forest. These areas get year round rainfall and fairly even temperatures. There is just a slightly dryer period from June to August. Not exactly what you would call a ‘cool’ growing orchid but it does tolerate moderately cooler temperatures in Sydney with some care.

It is spectacularly twisted and shaped orchid and, I suspect, is

mostly grown for its ‘wow what’s that’ appeal. Check out the following examples.



There is a sort of Halloween look about them isn’t there? The petals look as though they have a spiral twist but it is pretty much an illusion. It’s just the wavy edges in the petals that give that appearance.

Den. forbesii comes from Eastern PNG in mountain rainforests. These habitats are moist, mossy, open valleys in the highlands, usually between about 900-1500 m elevation but occasionally higher. The white petals have an unusual spade shape with a folded narrow base and flared round ends. As I said, both a trifle curious.



I suspect Pacific Pride gets a little more cool tolerance from forbesii but it takes more after alexandrae in appearance.

Congratulations on another BOE Fred. I am sure there will be many more to come.

A delightful orchid from our September Meeting – *Cym. goeringii* 'Daisetsurei'

(by Jim Brydie)

In October last year I wrote an article on Cymbidium species focussed mainly on some of the small flowered Asian types from Section Jensoa. One of those lovely, but not often seen mini's is Cymbidium goeringii, and low and behold, last month John Chang benches this amazing variegated leaf specimen. So now I have actually seen one in the flesh.

But is this a typical goeringii? Well hardly. First off, it is a variegated leaf form, which are the most prized of all by the Japanese and Chinese, and most interestingly, it has a variegated flower.

Personally, if it wasn't for the variegated leaves I would be very tempted to think that perhaps this orchid was infected by some virus because I haven't seen colour break flowers like this on other than virused plants but then, when you look at the leaves, the variegation isn't patchy at all, just evenly variegated in the same way all variegated leaf plants show. So, I guess the flowers are just an unusual characteristic.



Nature is a great force in creating variations within any species. Some are just accidental jumps due to errors in chromosome copying in reproduction, others are just part of the natural variation within all DNA. It is all part of the great cycle of life that enables living things to adapt.

However, in the case of orchids, man has accentuated the process. We seize upon every quirky individualism in a plant as a treasure. Either something to be admired for its difference, or maybe just a thing we can own that few others possess. Accidents that popup and would usually die out are grasped by humans and kept alive. We also sometimes go further with controlled breeding to accentuate some feature or to combine one unique character with another.

With goeringii and a others prized by the royalty and wealthy of ages past man has been doing this for about 2000 years. Goeringii is famously known as the scholars orchid due to its association with the famous philosopher Confucius who was believed to be the first to write about the orchid in about the 6th century AD. Written history back that far is rather thin on the ground so I call that history.

There are hundreds of different forms of goeringii given specific names to identify them. Different variegations in the leaves, different flower colours, different orientation of the flower petals, and so on. Who needs a collection of 'orchids', when you can just have a collection of different Cym. goeringii's or some other species such as Neofinetia falcata. And every way you look at it, each is just as valid a way of enjoying the variability of nature as any other.

Cym. goeringii Distribution and Habitats – (a repeat of last years stuff but it will save you going back to find it) This is a terrestrial species. It is found in a reasonably wide range of locations. In Orchidwiz, the Baker's cultural information gives us : "*ORIGIN/HABITAT - Japan on the islands of Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu. It is also found in Korea, the Bonin and Ryukyu Islands, and is widespread in China and Taiwan. It is reported to occur, but is rare, in northwest India near the western border of Nepal. It grows at elevations of 500-3000 m, with the higher elevations occurring in the warmer, more southerly locations. In Japan it is usually found near the sea, growing as a terrestrial in open forests on lightly shaded cliffs or slopes. In northern Japan it grows in coniferous forests, while on the southern islands it occurs in the warm, temperate vegetation zone in broadleaved, evergreen forests, often among grasses and bamboos. In Taiwan, it occurs at 900-1500 m in the central mountain region, usually on dry slopes that face east or southeast.*"

The island of Hokkaido is the northernmost of the 4 main Japanese islands and most is snow territory in winter. Hokkaido is the very northern end of goeringii's range at around 42 degrees N latitude and even there it only grows at the southern end of the island and quite near the coast.

So what sort of habitat does goeringii come from? - I have never seen it growing in nature so I depend on the learned writings of others. And in this case I refer to the "BotanyBoy" website. (always a source of reliable and quality information (ref. - <https://botanyboy.org/cymbidium-goeringii-a-cold-hardy-terrestrial-orchid-from-east-asia/>).

The text below is extracted from the article referred above but is not the full text and is rearranged a little for readability. If you are interested I recommend you read the full article and watch the incorporated video of finding the orchid growing in the wild. ---- BotanyBoy tells us :

"... *Cymbidium goeringii* is an evergreen orchid with below ground pseudobulbs and long (12-40 cm), grass-like leaves. It often grows in rocky woods in a very thin layer of humus – almost to the point you could call them lithophytic. --- The pseudobulbs are round and flattened somewhat, growing at tight intervals along the thick rhizome. The roots are many, thick, fleshy and white, and up to a half meter long. In early autumn flower shoots

form at the base of that season's growth. They are thickest at the middle and come to a point; 3-4 cm long and about 1 cm wide. This shoot remains in stasis until late March or early April (or Sept – Oct in the southern hemisphere) when it begins to grow into a thick flower stalk to a height of 12-25 cm. It is graced with a single flower (rarely two), and covered by a number of alternating white to green sheaths. The flowers are 4-5 cm across and are intensely scented with a sweet smell. Supposedly, Chinese plants are more fragrant than Japanese ones, though in my experience they all are strongly scented.



It is often seen on extreme slopes in rocky woods, but I've also seen it growing happily in bamboo groves, conifer plantations, steep road embankments, and on the tops of tall sand dunes in pine forest overlooking the sea. In this last habitat the plant reaches its largest size. I know of one specimen that has 20 or more lead growths and perhaps 100 growths in total. I think they like this environment due to the perfect drainage that 50 meters of sand can provide! One interesting aspect of this plant is that its above ground mass is equal to the below ground mass. In other words this species has a huge root system. Although many people list these as "pseudobulb epiphytes", I've never seen them growing in trees, or for that matter, even on rocks. The roots and pseudobulbs are always underground or at the very least in thick humus, thus I would call it a true terrestrial orchid.

Here are some screen shots from the video clip in the writer (Tom Velardi's) article showing the species habitat.

Wild ground orchid of Japan, *Cymbidium goeringii*



The Japanese name is *shunran*, simply meaning "spring orchid". Indeed, it does bloom in spring, anywhere from early April through May (Oct to Nov in Australia). *C. kanran* in the same vein is named *kanran*, meaning "cold orchid" because it most commonly flowers in November-January during cold weather. Sometimes Japanese plant names can be ridiculously straightforward, and sometimes maddeningly obscure.

Happily, *C. goeringii* is a fairly easy species to grow if you have warm summers. It is funny to me that some people consider it and its cousin *C. kanran* to be cool to cold growers. They are the farthest thing possible from that. They do need a cool off in winter to go into an appropriate dormancy, but both thrive in hot summer temperatures. When I think I'm about to die from the August heat, I take a look at my *shunran* collection and it is at its peak performance, growing like mad. I've been told that people have trouble growing this one in climates where summer temperatures are cool. No doubt that here in southern Japan they get only hot temperatures from July to early September (above 30 C daily). So there goes the "cool to cold growing" myth!" (end of Botanyboy quotation)



Choosing a medium? - In the BotanyBoy habitat video, he looks at the 'soil' under the surface layer of humus (picture at the right) and describes it as a kind of 'volcanic loam' that has a scree component'. In other words a coarse, rocky but rich soil but on a steeply sloping hillside. He doesn't speak at this point as to whether the orchid's roots penetrate the soil to any material extent but his earlier descriptions imply the roots are more on the surface among the humus layer. I am imagining just partly in the rocky soil taking advantage of that half way zone between humus and soil.

On another website "Orchidweb.com" representing a specialist nursery in the USA, they describe the traditional way of growing *goeringii* – "The traditional way to grow *goeringii* is



using a fired earth product, also used in bonsai mixes, called 'Akadama' and 'Kanuma'. These are red and yellow fired earth granules. Typically, they are blended together, and segregated by granule size. Then they are planted in tall plastic Cymbidium pots, filling the pot from bottom to top in 1/3 increments of coarse, medium and small size clay mix. We do like using this mix when possible.”

Considering its natural environment, that sounds like a very sound process to me.

Variations in *goeringii*'s. – As mentioned earlier there are hundreds of named varieties. John Chang's splendid variety is named 'Daisetsurei' which probably refers to it having originated in the Daisetsu Mountains in Hokkaido. Other varieties are named for their foliage or flowers.

To show you the huge range available with *goeringii*, take a look at these samples (where possible I have indicated the website from which the image was borrowed). And first, as John's orchid is a variegated variety, here are just a few different variegated cultivars.



'Nikkouden' (Orchidweb) 'Sumonzan' (Flickriver) 'Teikan' (Shikoku Gardens) Tain Cao (Flickriver) Silvery Moon (Amazon)
And now for some flower colour varieties. These pictures all come from the Ranyuen nursery in Japan



So, do you still think they all look much alike and not very interesting?