



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

(Established in 1947)

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## *Patrons - Pauline and Trevor Onslow*

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**Next Meeting : Mon 21<sup>st</sup> November 2022**

**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 by the President. Minutes, general business etc, then once the judging is complete, Best of the Evenings are announced, and we will break for supper.

**The Supper Break** – This month supper will be returning to a more normal status. ***Please bring in something for the supper table*** but it will be served by someone, there will be no self-serve. ***A permanent requirement is to please bring your own mug.*** We have a few polystyrene cups left over but these are for visitors, we are no longer permitted to provide single use plastics at the hall.

**After the supper break** – Our guest speaker will be Jane D'Olier, who will give us a slide show of the recent 2022 Australian Orchid Council Conference and show in Queensland. Jane is a very knowledgeable orchid grower and a great photographer so this will be something you shouldn't miss.

## **Best of the Evening Species – *Epi. stamfordianum* - L & G Bromley**

A lovely species from Mexico, all the way down to Colombia and Venezuela. The flowers are usually greenish with purple splashes (left) but this rarer, unusual variety of Garrie's has a pink or purplish flush and is highly sought.

Stamfordianum is an epiphyte in open forests and even coffee plantations, mostly on the larger branches of tree crowns, up to elevations of about 900m. The lowish elevation warns that it might not be too happy in our Sydney environments without heat and this has proven to be the case.



Although it is an Epidendrum, it is one of the types with a distinct pseudobulb, and another unique feature is that it's inflorescence comes from the base of the old pseudobulb rather than from the top of a developing pseudobulb. Sort of a development from an aborted new pseudobulb, something like Cattleya walkeriana does. Still, we needn't get technical about it. The branched 60 cm inflorescence carries about 65 3 cm, very attractive flowers. A very desirable species that just needs a little recognition of its needs here in Sydney. And speaking of needs, one is that it undergoes a longish dryer spell around its winter season in its home habitats. By dryish however, I don't mean dry as needed by softcane Dendrobiums. They do get some rain in their dryer spell but they certainly draw back on growth during their rest and patiently wait for the increasing rains of spring to get them moving forward again. If you try to drive them with year round growth you will very likely kill them, especially if they are struggling here with our winter temperatures.



It's always a delight to see your lovely orchids each month Garrie and Lesley. Congratulations.

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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** – Thank you all for a successful AGM and an enjoyable meeting in October. I enjoyed the auction greatly. We have to limit the number of plants to enable us to finish on time. That said, many of the plants offered were of high quality and gave us all some enjoyment, especially when some of our members competed for the good one, they really wanted.

**Supper return** – Starting with our (next) November meeting, the committee has agreed that we re-start our supper operations. That said there will be in place some procedures to make sure we operate the supper in a safe manner. So, please comply with this process to keep the risk of contracting COVID as low as possible whilst still enjoying the supper. Members are invited to bring in a supper contribution and place their offerings directly in the kitchen. The supper table will be made up and servers will be in place to provide you with your choice. Tea and coffee will be available so please try and remember to bring in your own mugs/cups.

**Committee membership** – I thank Garrie Bromley for again acting as Chairperson in our transition to the new committee during the AGM. I also congratulate our new committee members for joining me in administering our society for 2023. You can refresh your memory about who is now on the committee by checking out the header of the bulletin. We now have 8 people on our committee but at least two more will make our task even more enjoyable than it already is. So, if you have some time and would like to join the committee just let us know and we will arrange your appointment.

**Orchids in WA** – Recently Janine and I returned from 19 days in the southwest of WA. It was not meant to be an orchid holiday but the casual search for orchids ended up adding value to our trip. Although a bit late for orchids, we found some lovely orchids, one of which is presented here. Your challenge is to name this orchid. Janine and I will be preparing a talk for our February meeting which will include some intriguing puzzles which kept me (and Chris) going for some time.



**New projector** – The committee has approved the purchase of a new projector and we will make the purchase as soon as it is convenient to do so.

**Christmas function** – Just a reminder that our Christmas function is on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday in December, that is the 12<sup>th</sup> of December, also now known as Green Monday in retail and eco circles. We will need to place some restrictions on attendance to manage the COVID transfer risk, especially with the “new wave” warnings now being announced. Details will follow in the next bulletin and in a separate announcement.

**Raffle News** – The committee has decided that our meeting raffle should be extended to 8 plants. The purchase of the extra plants is in hand and hopefully will be in place for our December meeting.

**Wearing masks** – 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>

#### 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.

If you are still concerned about the transmission of COVID or flu, then please feel free to continue to wear a mask at our meetings and use the hand disinfectant dispensers just to help keep the risk as low as we practically can do so. I will continue to wear a mask until I feel it is safe not to. Note that we will still be registering 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.

**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. Oops, mea culpa** - In last month's bulletin, in my front page discussion on Dendrobium Oliver-Jack, I made an error in the cultivar name. Despite the society minutes and all my notes calling the benched cultivar “Gerard”, which is its correct cultivar name, I insisted in calling it Gerald. I have no excuse. I have no idea why, these things just happen. My apologies to the breeders and all who own and grow this delightful Australian Native hybrid.

**2. New committee members** - At our AGM last month, two new members were elected to our committee. Thank you to Bill Saunderson and Di Flinders for joining the team. Welcome aboard, and I hope you enjoy every moment of your committee time as have many before you. And thanks once more to Garrie Bromley for managing the election.

**3. A Special Thanks to departing committee members James Clugston and Lee Payne.** We have greatly appreciated your work on our committee and thank you so much for contributing your services. We hope circumstances will allow you to work with the committee again sometime in the future.

**4. Reminders to Members re purchases** – First – in regard to stocks of the growing supplies we sell via the sales

table – eg. pots, stakes, fertilizer, etc., we only bring limited volumes to each meeting. **If you are coming with some specific requirement to buy off the sales table, or you require a relatively large number/volume** of some item, please email a request or notice to the society email address (see page 1) prior to the meeting.

**Please note** - there will be no Sales table at our Dec. meeting so if you need anything, this is your last chance this year. **Also – Our Sales Table will cease trading as soon as the supper break ends.** Don't wait 'til the last moment.

**Also note:** - all sales table vouchers expire on the 30<sup>th</sup> Sept following the date issued. Use 'em don't lose 'em.

##### 5. Removing Benched Plants – PLEASE – no removal of benched orchids until the end of supper.

**6. Outreach announcement:** on Wed 7<sup>th</sup> December – As part of the Huon Park Summer Fair (a retirement village) we are doing a small orchid display, orchid culture advice, and potting demos, and just a small member's plant sales area (15% commission). The address is Huon Park, Bobbin Head Road, North Turramurra. If you have a few plants to sell they need to be appropriate. Perhaps in flower, not too big or too small, yellow sales tag the same as at meetings, and not too many. Logistic arrangements will be discussed at the Nov. meeting and confirmed via email closer to the time.

**7. Growing Competition** – After an extended period of hearing 'the end is nigh', it finally came. That pandemic has a lot to answer for. Anyway, congratulations to Jessie Koh, winner of the Open section, and to Di Flinders winner of the novice section. A fine job by both and we have all learned a little along the way as we watched the progress of plants as they made their way to maturity.

#### Upcoming Events

**Mon 12 Dec – KOS meeting and Christmas party** – Please note the earlier date as has been our practice in recent years. The 12<sup>th</sup> is the second Monday rather than the third. We are trying to be responsible with covid risk management. Unfortunately, this means we may have to reduce overall numbers due to the restricted space in our small hall. Further information on attendees will be provided closer to the time.

#### Lighter Relief



The Emergency Phone

**The Dead Dog ?** - An old lady loved her dog so much that it followed her everywhere. One morning she got out of bed, went to the bathroom and suddenly realised that her dog wasn't by her feet. She finally found him in his bed "sleeping". She called his name, but he didn't get up.

She decided to take him to the vet to see if he could wake him up.

The vet didn't have good news. "Your dog is dead," the vet explained.

Not wanting to believe it, the old lady wasn't quite convinced and requested further tests – just to be sure. The vet went into another room and came back with a cat in a cage. He let it out, it walked around the dog, sniffed for a bit, then went back in the cage. The vet then once more confirmed that the dog was dead.

The old lady was sad, but finally convinced, and asked the vet how much she owed for the visit.

"\$400," he told her. "You're joking," she said in anger. "Why?"

"Well it was \$10 for me to tell you the dog was dead. Then it was \$390 for the cat scan you requested."

## Vale Graeme Scott-Harden

I was so very saddened to hear of the recent passing of our good mate Graeme. His health had been declining recently but no one actually thought we would ever really lose him.

I only knew Graeme for about 20 years, mostly through us both serving on the committee at the Species orchid society, but he was one of those men you just knew right from the time you first met. He was a gentleman, skillful with people, and positively influenced those around him without even trying.

When I first joined the Species committee, Graeme was one of a number of experienced and solid administrators already there, and also on the committees of a variety of Sydney's other orchid societies. And thank goodness they were there. I didn't nominate for the role but unexpectedly ended up president and was very thankful for the great support that Graeme and others provided. He was a rock of calm and common sense from our first meeting.

I soon came to particularly appreciate Graeme's considered approach to all things as well as a sense of what was important and what was not. He contributed to every discussion, volunteered whenever something needed to be done, and made the most of whatever was before him. He was a big help when the club constitution needed to be revised and put in the hard yards to get it done correctly.

In 2002 Craig and Graeme and my wife Cynthia and I were members of a small group that took a trip to South America to explore for orchids, visit Ecuagenera, and to see Machu Picchu and other historic sites. It was a fantastic trip. Graeme and Craig and our other companions were wonderful co-explorers and I will never forget the experience. Like any trip the odd occasion didn't go as planned but I don't think Graeme got uptight or stressed once. Whatever happened, happened. He just made the best of it and made sure he enjoyed every moment.

But apart from orchids, and his contributions to orchid clubs, it was always clear that Graeme's first love was his family. In particular, he especially appreciated the time he was getting to share with his son Craig in the latter part of his life, and their common enjoyment of orchids. They were members of a number of orchid clubs together. In addition, when Craig did guest speaker talks all over the place, including at our club Ku-Ring-Gai, Graeme was always there with him as his 'wingman'.

I often wondered how many times Graeme must have seen each of Craig's talks because once the lights were off and the talk began, I did once or twice see him snooze off in the middle. (no offence to your talks Craig).

The other of Graeme's great loves was an appreciation for fine food, fellowship, and an accompanying glass of wine. We once tried to get Species club members to socialise a little more, and organised a series of regular restaurant dinners, and Graeme was an enthusiastic supporter. Alas, the wide geography of club member addresses at Species didn't work out for us but Graeme certainly made the most of every dinner and I sure did too. Farewell Graeme, we are missing you already.

Jim Brydie



Graeme (left 'stressed out' in the Andes

## Speaking through an Oxygen Mask

A man is in the hospital on a trolley bed wearing an oxygen mask over his mouth after a big operation. He sees a nurse and motions for her to come over. When she arrives he mumbles: "mmpf -- nurse, --- are my test --- b-ack?".

The nurse could see that the man was worried and although she didn't quite hear his question she was sure his last word was 'black' and it seemed obvious what he was asking about so she quickly raised his hospital gown and manually examined the man's lower parts to make sure that there was nothing wrong. After checking out all his relevant parts by hand, she tells him it's all ok.

The man slowly pulls off his oxygen mask, smiles at her and, speaking very slowly and clearly, says: "Thank you for that, but please ... Are-my-test-results-back?"

**Deep Thinking** - I am not sure if it is ignorance or apathy that's destroying the world today. But, do you know what? The more I think about it, I don't know and I don't really care.

## Best of the Evening Open Hybrid – *Cattleya Lynn Spencer ‘Pearl’* grown by Gloria & Allan Cushway

## Best of the Evening Novice – *Cattleya Lynn Spencer ‘Cha’* grown by Anthony Mobbs

How amazing. This is the first time since I have been producing the bulletin, that one hybrid has won both Open and Novice sections on the same night. Admittedly, they weren't the same cultivar, but I can't do two write-ups independently can I? So I have decided to combine Open and Novice write-ups for the first time ever.



**Catt. Lynn Spencer ‘Cha’**



**Catt. Lynn Spencer ‘Pearl’**

*Cattleya Lynn Spencer* is a hybrid made by Mr Murray Spencer from California in the USA and was also registered by him in 1964. The parents were Catt. Bob Betts and Catt. White Blossom and it has been a very successful cross. It has been awarded 8 times and Pearl and Cha are two of the cultivars awarded, both with an AM, the second highest award given. I imagine it has been the feature in many bridal bouquets since it was made and is probably still featuring in weddings today.

The flowers are quite big, about 16 to 17 cm diameter, and while slightly wider than tall they are nicely round in outline. Just perfect for that big, white, flossy corsage. In fact perfect for all sorts of cut flower arrangements.

The breeding is pretty much on traditional lines aimed to produce big white flowers. It only involved 5 species – *Cattleya mossiae*, *gaskelliana*, *trianae*, *warneri*, and just a teeny bit of *intermedia*. Each of these comes in multiple colour forms so I presume this breeding line which was aimed at white flowers, was restricted to the *alba* or at least *semi-alba* varieties, and was focused on line breeding to improve shape, texture and presentation.

White *Cattleya* breeding has of course continued on. Lynn Spencer has been used as a direct parent in 42 named and registered hybrids but different breeders have all sorts of different aims. Professional orchid growers like to have the biggest, roundest, most filled flower that can possibly be made. Florists like more practical flowers. 15 cm is big but fits in a hand held corsage with other floral accoutrements. The pictures below are all post the year 2000 and I deliberately chose big, in your face, exotic flowers so not all modern hybrids are just like these. They sure are impressive but are they better than the 60 year old Lynn Spencer? I guess it's up to your personal preference.



**RLC Shinaphat Diamond**



**RLC Siam White**



**RLC Kesthin's Esther**

Gloria is the *Cattleya* aficionado in the Cushway household but she and Allan are equal orchid gurus he does some of the growing. I congratulate both on the wonderful orchids they continually share with us. We learn so much.

And, on the novice BOE side, Congratulations to you too Anthony. Your 'Cha' was beautifully grown and a worthy winner. Keep bringing them in, we love to see them.

## So what else was benched last month?



**Cymbidium suave** – Lee Payne. This is one of the three species of Cymbidium native to Australia. It is an unusual orchid in that it is an epiphyte but on the inside of Eucalyptus trees. It is found in a narrow east coast coastal band from about the base of Cape York all the way down to the NSW/Vic border.

It seems to take seed in the nubs left on the trunk where a substantial branch has broken off, or in the rotting centre of a stump where a tree has been sawn down for timber. Once the plant gets going it sends long roots down inside the trunk, feeding on the detritus left from decaying timber. It also sends down rhizomes (modified stems connecting pseudobulbs) looking for any new access holes to the outside. The cute little 20-25 mm flower occur on arching to pendent spikes. Lee's plant here has

fairly dark flowers against the average with most being a little more lime green. Some can be even a little yellow.

Lee's plant was growing in a horizontal section of Eucalyptus stem sawn off at both ends and sealed off with shade cloth nailed over the centre cavity to keep the material and the root system in place. It looked fantastic.

For those interested, Cym. suave is quite common in the bushland around Sydney but please don't try to cut out a piece. Nursery grown plants can be obtained from authorised nurseries.

**Cymbidium lowianum** – Lee Payne. Well while I am on the subject of species Cymbidiums, this one has always been a favourite with growers. It comes from the lower slopes of the Himalayas from northern Myanmar to Yunnan province in China. It is an epiphyte in damp, shaded, evergreen or mixed forest between about 1200 m elevation and 2400 m.

Sydney's climate suits it perfectly. This is really easy to grow and flower. You don't even need a shadehouse. Just grow it in the shade of a tree in the backyard but sit it on a table or bench or an upturned pot to keep it off the ground. It flowers in the spring on amazingly horizontal spikes that carry these great green 10 cm flowers with a big red V on the lip. It's a beauty.



**Dialaelia Mizoguchi 'Cloud Cover'** – G&L Bromley. This is a hybrid that comes from one of those side branches of the Cattleya family – the genus Diacrium. Dialaelia is a hybrid genus for a cross between a Diacrium and a Laelia. The most

popular Dialaelia is one of Mizoguchi's parents – Dia. Snowflake, and Garrie and Lesley own a lovely specimen of that one too. Snowflake has spikes of several lovely medium size white flowers held just above the foliage. (picture at the right).

Mizoguchi is the cross between Snowflake and Laelia anceps. The latter has tall spikes way



above the leaves and several rather larger flowers on each. As expected, both those are improved features we see in Mizoguchi. I can't find a decent whole plant picture of Mizoguchi Cloud Cover but the middle picture here shows the plant and flower form from another cultivar 'Princess Kiko'. I don't know if Cloud Cover is quite as tall, but you get the idea.

Unfortunately the genus Diacrium has now been incorporated into Cauliarthron. So it's now Caulaelia Mizoguchi.

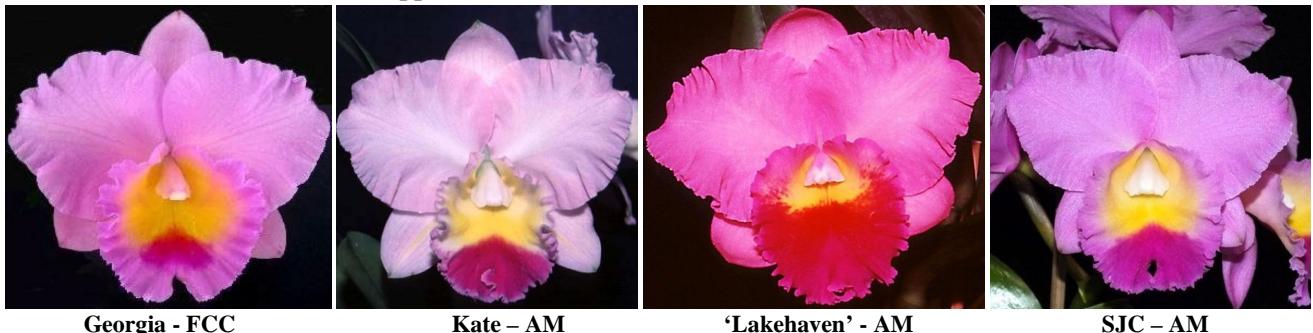
**SC. Dal's Choice** – Trev. and Pauline Onslow.

This is one for the more sophisticated aficionados. One for the growers seeking superior shape and delicate colour. There aren't any species in the wild that look as perfect as this one.

When I started to write this, I was surprised how well I thought Trevor's cultivar compared to other awarded Dal's Choice cultivars I found in Orchidwiz. But when you look a bit wider via google you see even wider variation in shape among Dal's



Choice. Most have a little more pointy petals, but ones with big round petals also exist so I decided that Trevor's is just a corker of a Dal's Choice. The pictures below are other awarded Dal's Choice cultivars for comparison. Beautiful Trevor and Pauline, a ripper.



Georgia - FCC

Kate - AM

'Lakehaven' - AM

SJC - AM

And a few other beauties with darker tones



Cym. Last Tango (Lina)

Zygomeria Adelaide Meadows (Jessie)

Phal Unimax Sweetie (Lesley)

Onc. Cholita Cuencana (Garrie)

**Cym. Last Tango** is a good example of the fantastic dark lip colours you get in Cym. devonianum hybrids. Devonianum (**pics below right**) is a species of Cymbid from NE India, Nepal and Bhutan, in the Himalayas, at around 1450 – 2200 m elevation. It grows in old decayed trees, on moss covered trees and on mossy rocks. The flowers are only small at about 3cm across and come on a sharply pendent spike. Flower colour can be dull green to brown to dirty red or even purple black but the lip is the outstanding feature and is nearly always a gorgeous dark purple. Its hybrids nearly all inherit the sharply pendent small flowers and the purple to near black lip. Hybrid flower colours and sizes vary according to the rest of the parentage but the pendent spike and dark lip seems to be maintained through at least several generations beyond the introduction of devonianum. Interesting isn't it. Try googling Cym. devonianum hybrids (images) and look at the variety you find.



I think you have more to look forward to with Last Tango Lina. I would love to see it as a big, multi growth plant.



**Zygomeria Adelaide Meadows** – Another with lip colours I just love although I seem to find them hard to grow for some reason. The common old species Zygopetalum mackayi grows like a weed but for me these more complex hybrids are tricky. Jessie grows them well and so did one of our past members Adele May so it is probably just me. Adelaide Meadows is also unusual in that some cultivars are green, some speckled, some purple, and the lips can be white, dark purple, pink or blue. Another worth a google to see the amazing range of colours. (and then ask Jessie how you grow them).

**Phal Unimax Sweetie** - (**pic. under header**) These mini and semi mini Phals are becoming the new wave of interest in Phalaenopsis. In the early crosses, some of the parent species were very warm growers and a tad more touchy to grow compared to their big white or pink Phal amabilis based cousins. But breeding is improving them all the time and as mankind adapts to living in apartments in less space, these 'mini' Phals will become more and more popular.

Unimax Sweetie was registered in 2007. So far only one cultivar (CL 296) has been awarded and it looks very similar to a faintly striped white cultivar of its mother - Phal. Little Gem Stripes. There are other coloured varieties of Little Gem Stripes (like the stripy pink one at the right), and at least 11 have already been awarded. With roughly 5 to 6 cm flowers, both Little Gem Stripes and Unimax Sweetie are slightly larger flowered than the real mini Phals but they are still cute 'littlies'. Perhaps we should call this size 'intermediates'

Two cultivars of Little Gem Stripes



One award for Unimax Sweetie 'CL 296' describes the awarded plant as having 4 x 70cm gracefully arching, branched spikes, carrying about 275 flowers and buds between them. That is nearly 70 flowers per spike and more than double the flowers per spike reported for its mother Little Gem Stripes. The awarded plant must have been some sight. Come on Lesley, I know you can beat that record.

**Oncidium Cholita Cuencana** – What gorgeous colour. Lesley tells me this is one they brought back from Ecuador. I think the name sort of means pretty native featured girl from Cuenca district. Cuenca is a city not far from Ecuagenera who made the cross.

As I have explained previously, all the red Oncidiinae come from one species. It used to be known as *Cochlioda noezeliana* but has now been folded into *Oncidium* to become *Oncidium noezelianum*. *Noezeliana* has a 30 - 45 cm inflorescence with 10 to 20 flowers, around 3 to 4 cm diameter.

With Garrie and Lesley's "Cholita", the infusion of other species has maintained the brilliant colour and the flower numbers, but improved the size to 7 cm and improved the shape. A very attractive hybrid that I hope we see more of in the future.



### And Finally, there were John Chang's Calanthes

*Before I start, I must admit that the lights in the hall played havoc with the colours in my attempts to take pictures on the night and I have had to make some photo editing adjustments to more correctly reflect the colours. Luckily, John had some daylight pics I could use for comparison so I think the pictures here are relatively accurate.*

John benched 3 lovely 'Japanese' Calanthes last meeting. One species, and two unnamed hybrids.



Cal. seiboldii (or C. striata?)



pink hybrid



orange/yellow hybrid

Calanthe is a simple yet complicated genus. I have had a personal interest in them since visiting Japan on business 30-40 years ago. Don't ask me exactly when, I would have to go find my old passport – I am not much at remembering dates – including birthdays, just ask Cynthia.

Anyway, when I put together a Powerpoint on Calanthes a few years back I kept the debate nice and simple and only mentioned the deciduous Calanthes (like *Calanthe vestita*) and the non-deciduous types like *Calanthe discolor*, and *seiboldii*, but the debate on the taxonomy of *Calanthe* and its close relative genera (*Phaius*, *Calanthe*, *Gastrorchis*, etc) is warming up. Modern DNA analysis techniques are disclosing that changes are needed. A number of genera in the group, and the specifications of some genera and species will need modification.

It has been found that *Phaius* contains species that don't belong together, and so does *Calanthe*.

As to *Calanthe*, no one was surprised to find that the deciduous *Calanthe* species do not belong in the same genus as the other *Calanthes*. The splitters therefore propose the deciduous types be split off into a new genus they say should be called *Preptanthe* (which was the section name for that type within *Calanthe*). However, there are also a couple of other sections within the non-deciduous *Calanthes* they say also need to be split off, in particular Sect. *Styloglossum* (about 36 species) to become a new genus *Styloglossum*.

In *Phaius* the splitters tell us that 3 old *Phaius* species – i.e. *P. flavus*, *P. columnaris*, and *P. takeoi* need to be removed from *Phaius* and placed in a new separate genus that is proposed to be called *Paraphaius*.

Of course all that is just one proposal for the changes to resolve the taxonomic issues uncovered.

In an alternate view, Mark Chase for one, proposes a lumping solution instead of splitting.

In the abstract to his proposal he explains : “*To address the polyphyly of Phaius and Calanthe in recent molecular studies, we recommend the merger of these genera along with Cephalantheropsis and Gastrorchis, which are embedded among the first two genera. Some authors have instead proposed to segregate new genera from both Phaius and Calanthe, but this results in generic concepts for which there are no reasonable morphological differences. It is in the interest of nomenclatural stability to combine these genera, so we here make the necessary combinations and provide new names to enable users to employ this broadened generic concept of Calanthe.*”

Now I can see the logic in Mark’s proposition but it seems to me that his proposal creates one hell of a big lump of a genus Calanthe. From my point of view, it creates such a large and nondescript genus as to be rather pointless. Calanthe would be a mix of present Calanthe, Phaius, Gastorchis and others and it would only delay further splits down the track. If the aim of the proposal was to help preserve nomenclatural terminology, especially in breeding records, then it creates as many problems as it avoids.

I don’t know. The new information isn’t in dispute and the problems it exposes will need to be addressed. It is going to be painful whichever way they go. I think I will wait a little longer to see which way the wind blows over a bit more time. There is no perfect solution to any of these genus redefinitions.

**Phew, well now that the scientific part of the discussion is out of the way**, let’s get on with a look at those lovely, lovely orchids of John’s.

While googling for a bit of history regarding Calanthe in Japan, I found this interesting introduction on the webpage: <https://archive.ph/oFFT> :-

“*Calanthe species are generally called EBINE (= shrimp root) since its pseudobulbs look like a shrimp. It seems that Calanthe species have been appreciated as gardening plants at least since the Edo Period (1603 – 1867). Calanthe discolor and Calanthe sieboldii were introduced with their growing tips in KADAN KOUMOKU (published in 1681), the first gardening book in Japan.*

*However, Calanthe have become especially popular during the last 30 years. Enthusiasts and breeders have created so many cultivars by crossing all the native species in Japan. Recently, many Calanthe hybrids with various flower colors have been created by using biotechnology. Plant type: evergreen, terrestrial. Calanthe species keep green leaves in winter. However the old leaves die after the new leaves sprout every year.*”

As in most of the worlds geographical areas, interest in orchids began with the collection of wild plants and especially any individuals that were ‘special’ or ‘different’. For example, flowers with different colours, larger or better shape. Also, plants that were bigger or smaller, or leaves that had some variance. Particularly variegations in leaf colour. Japan and China were the same as the rest of the world in this regard. And don’t forget, ‘Special’ orchids always include naturally occurring hybrids between wild species. In the early days these were thought to be just different species but I guess perceptive observation eventually brought aficionados to see that they have some features of one species, some of another and some blended and they only occur where both natural species occur.

Man-made orchid hybrids didn’t start in the west until the late 1800’s but in Japan it is thought there was rudimentary hybridization some time earlier. In Japan, Calanthe hybrids seem to have been limited to hybrids between Calanthes occurring naturally in Japan and that is limited to just a handful of species.

**(Japanese species pictures)** Calanthe discolor (pic 1 below), Calanthe sieboldii (top of article), Calanthe aristulifera (pic 2), Calanthe tricarinata (pic 3), Calanthe izu-insularis (pic 4), Calanthe reflexa (pic 5)



From about the 1980’s, modern orchid hybridization in Japan was beginning to be actively used to create some wonderful new single colours and also contrasting bicolour Calanthes, but curiously, the species used were still almost exclusively those same indigenous Japanese Calanthes. This reveals a contrast between traditional Japanese horticulture and western hybrid registration. In the west, hybrid registration began based on the private Sanders Hybrid Lists but this is now run by the Royal Horticultural Society from Kew in the UK. Early Japanese hybrids didn’t use name registration.

Apart from the language for hybrid names, there is also still some lack of agreement on species names. For example, in Phillip Cribb and Dudley Moore’s great 2013 book on the genus Calanthe they give Calanthe stricta as the correct

name for both *Calanthe seiboldii* and for *Calanthe discolor* and that position is also still adopted by Kew which is hardly surprising as the book was published by Kew, Mr Cribb works for the RHS, and Mr Moore is an honorary research assistant there. However, while they may be right, there is some disagreement as whether that 'lumping' of *discolor/seiboldii/striata* is correct. For the time being at least, I choose to keep them separate.

As I said, original Japanese interest in *Calanthes* began with the Japanese native species and their natural hybrids. Their ongoing hybridization has maintained that focus although they have now mixed and intermixed them in more and more complex ways. From all these hybrids there have evolved certain general 'types' and the Japanese have names for those 'types'. For example, hybrids based on just mixtures of *Calanthe seiboldii* and *Calanthe discolor* have certain common characteristics and are called "Takane" types. But don't forget we are talking here of all hybrids with just *seiboldii* and *discolor* genes (or at least reputedly so). If you backcross one 'Takane type' seedling to another, or cross that to another coloured cultivar of *discolor*, you still have only two species in the make-up. The outcomes will be quite different and may have different colours but will have a sameness to them and they are all Takane type.

Other "types" are: Kozu hybrids (mixes of *discolor* with *izu-insularis*)

Saruebine hybrids (mixes focusing on *Calanthe tricarinata*)

Satsuma hybrids (focusing on mixes of *discolor*, *seiboldii*, and *aristulifera*)

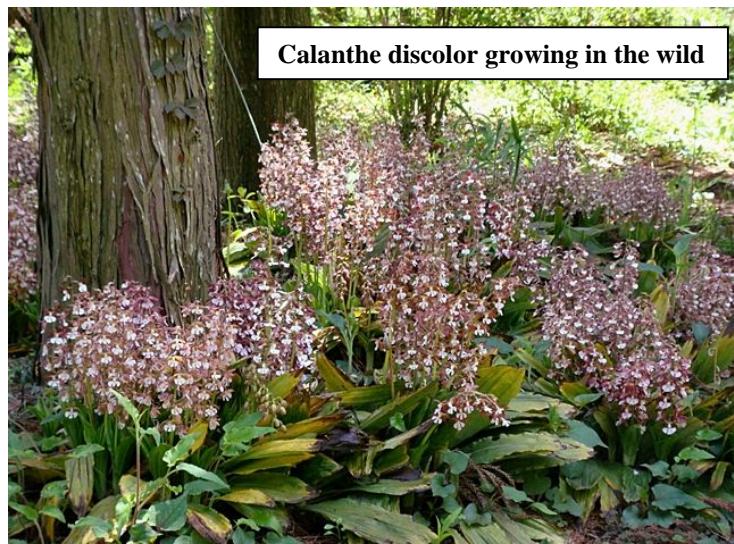
There is a very good explanation of the 'types' on a BotanyBoy video at [https://youtu.be/yLGYamPBy\\_8](https://youtu.be/yLGYamPBy_8) where he shows some of the wonderful orchids at a recent local orchid show in Japan and explains the background and language. He does a wonderful job of showcasing the possibilities of colours available and explaining the groups. (NB: if the link takes you to a "Your Browser is up to date" error page, just click the blue 'browse Youtube' box on that page)

So where to now? Out of curiosity, I wondered whether modern *Calanthe* hybrid registrations were widening the pool of parentage. I used Orchidwiz which provides access to all Kew orchid hybrid registrations. First I noticed that hybrid registrations were quite busy up until about world war 2 but the vast majority up until then were hybrids within the deciduous 'Section Preptanthe' *Calanthes*. From 1946 until the 1980's there was little hybrid registration at all and most of that was Preptanthe types.

From about 1990 we start to see evergreen *Calanthe* hybrids being registered but when I went to the trouble of checking what was going on, it was clear that the Japanese hybrid focus was still dominant. The main species occurring as a parent was *Calanthe discolor*, then *seiboldii*, *aristulifera*, *izu-insularis*, *tricarinata*, and *bicolor* (I assume this *bicolor* is really the naturally occurring hybrid *discolor* x *seiboldii*).

Other species also start to show up but just here and there. These include *masuca*, *sylvatica*, *alismaefolia*, *triplicata*, and to an even lesser extent, *lamellosa*, *okinawensis*, *calanthoides*, *argenteo-striata*.

It seems there is still a lot of hybrid potential to be exploited in *Calanthe*, especially when you see what the Japanese hybridists have already created from just 5 or 6 species. Are we on the verge of the next "Softcane *Dendrobium*" surge, in interest in a new orchid group?



### Dear Dad ...

A father passing by his son's bedroom was astonished to see that his bed was nicely made and everything was picked up. Then he saw an Envelope, propped up prominently on the pillow that was addressed to 'Dad.' With the worst premonition, he opened the envelope with trembling hands and read the letter.

*Dear Dad: It is with great regret and sorrow that I'm writing to you. I had to elope with my new girlfriend because I wanted to avoid a scene with mum and you.*

*I have been finding real passion with Stacy, and she is so nice. But I knew you would not approve of her because of all her piercing, tattoos, tight motorcycle clothes and the fact that she is much older than I am. But it's not only the passion...Dad, she's pregnant. Stacy said that we will be very happy.*

*She owns a trailer in the woods and has a stack of firewood for the whole winter. We share a dream of having many more children. Stacy has opened my eyes to the fact that marijuana doesn't really hurt anyone. We'll be growing it for ourselves and trading it with the other people that live nearby for cocaine and ecstasy. In the meantime, we will pray that science will find a cure for AIDS so Stacy can get better. She deserves it.*

*Don't worry Dad. I'm 15, and I know how to take care of myself. Someday I'm sure that we will be back to visit so that you can get to know your grandchildren. Love, - Your Son John*

PS. Dad, none of the above is true. I'm over at Tommy's house. I just wanted to remind you that there are worse things in life than the report card that's in my centre desk drawer.