



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

(Established in 1947)

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15th May 2023 Volume 64 No. 5

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

. Patrons - Pauline and Trevor Onslow

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Next Meeting : Mon 15th May 2023

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

*Attendees must be at least double vaccinated. Please tick your name off the attendance list on arrival & enter 'DV' for double vaccinated if your status has not already been recorded. Face Masks recommended.

The hall is open from 6.30pm to set up the hall (please help), benching can begin from 7 pm but **PLEASE** no benching until all the class dividers and cards are in place. Give the set up team time to get everything organized.

Our Culture class for March will be **Geoff Le Marne** with a session entitled "***Introduction to Cymbidium culture***". We don't see as many of these spectacular and gorgeous orchids benched at meetings these days but every year at the big shows they reassert themselves as the queen of orchids. Geoff is one of NSW's best Cymbid grower. This will be a very valuable culture class for those who want to do it better.

Remember, please bring in a chair from the back of the main hall and take it back afterward. If you need help, just ask.

The usual **monthly raffle**, and the **library** will be operating, and the **sales table** will be open for sale of member's spare plants and for small quantities of pots and other growing supplies. PLEASE though, anyone expecting to purchase a larger volume of any one item should contact Dennys Angove in advance as previously explained.

The Supper Break – Our supper Volunteers for **May** are **Gloria Cushway & Ann Byron**. Thank you for volunteering girls. Your help is greatly appreciated. **Members please note** - the society supplies tea, coffee, milk, sugar etc, **but we ask all members to bring in a contribution of cake or biscuits etc for the supper table, AND please everyone, bring your own mug**. Also note that Supper is not self-serve, a member is assigned to serve to minimise handling. For those who forgot to bring their own mug, we have a few disposable cups but why not put a spare set of mugs in your car right now.

After the break, in place of a 'Guest Speaker' we will be holding one of our very 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 procedure can be found on page 2 and 3.

April Best of the Evenings? - Unfortunately, two of the orchids selected last month as 'BOE' were exactly the same as orchids featured the month before. That is, Stenoglottis longifolia benched by Loretta and Paul Au, and Den. Enobi Purple 'Splash' benched by G&L Bromley (the Onslows benched it in March). I am in no way wishing to downplay the worthiness of either of the April selections, but I don't feel I can write them up as a feature two months in a row, so instead I will feature a few other interesting orchids from the April benching.

For starters, how about these gorgeous Cattleya alliance hybrids :



Catt. unknown



LC. Angel Heart 'Sumi'



Rlc. Bruswick Gem 'Coral'



Rlc. George King 'Sthn. Cross'

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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 – Our April meeting was attended by 50 people and 155 magnificent orchids were benched. It was a stunning night for flowers with most folk wonderfully busy. The meeting seemed to go quickly even though our judges wrestled with the quality and numbers of plants. The culture class on fertilisers held by **Trevor** was well appreciated as was **Garrie**'s advanced culture class on controlling pests. Supper was most enjoyable, and I thank **Bronwyn** and **Sonja** for the great job they did making sure we were all safe and well fed. We also had 11 very nice plants for the raffle. I thank all our members for signing on and making the night a success as well as filling up all the blank spaces in our supper roster.

Gibberagong Board Walk – This wonderful walk located in the Ku-ring-gai National Park is open again and the road bridge down at Bobbin Head is also fully open again. They have a new sign at the head of the walk which features the endangered Bauer's midge orchid. This seems a challenge to me since I have never seen one. The first part of the walk is relatively easy and accessible by wheelchairs and walking frames. They also have new public toilets. However, the Bobbin Inn lease is still under negotiation, so this café is closed until the lease is finalised. Best to try during the week since it can be busy on weekends. Remember though, you need a pass, or you will have to pay.



Sales Table – Please remember that the sales table does not open until 7.00 pm since it takes some real time to get items sorted and helps Bill and Herb get the table organised. Please allow the plants to arrive at the table. If you are bringing plants in for sale, remember, the focus is on culture items so you may have to initially limit/manage your plant offerings accordingly and bring more in for sale from your vehicle as needed.

Culture session and badge reminders – Please remember to wear your badge and to carry a chair into the annex to attend the class and then take it back out again. If you are unable to carry a chair, please ask someone for help. Myself or others are always happy to do this for you.

Bulk purchase – If you need large numbers of items that we normally stock, please email your requirements to me so I can bring them in as a special order. I only have limited space in my vehicle so therefore, I am limited in the numbers of items I can bring to our meetings.

Weeding tip using Aerogard – At our last meeting **Garrie Bromley** mentioned using Aerogard to control weeds. In the two images presented here, a comparison is made between a clump of untreated *oxalis* weed and the same clump, 30 minutes later after having been lightly sprayed with Aerogard. It can be readily seen that the clump has been destroyed. That said, please be careful when using sprays to ensure your exposure is kept at a minimum by taking the necessary and recommended precautions for the substance you are using.



Wearing masks – The wearing of masks in indoor spaces is still recommended by NSW Health. If you are unsure about this, please visit, <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/stay-safe/guidance-on-wearing-face-masks>. 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. I will continue to wear a mask until I feel it is safe not to.

Other News Items

1. New Members – Welcome aboard to yet another new member in Lewis Matthews. I hope you enjoyed our last meeting Lewis. Orchids are such a diverse group they can be a bit mind boggling when first really take notice. Just come along and meet your fellow travelers and enjoy the ride. I hope that in time you will become infected with orchid madness like the rest of us.

2. Member's Auction

Procedures – Remember participants, you don't need to fill in a form to buy or sell. **For sellers**, **Lina** will be managing **the booking-in process (see below)**. She will set up an intro point somewhere in the entrance hallway or nearby and you need to see her **before** you put your plants on the auction display tables. **Buyers**, you just need to be bold and put your hand up to bid but if you buy, you must pay on the night before you go home. See below.

Specifics for sellers, (a). 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. (b) Take the cards back to Lina where she will assign lot numbers to go on the cards. (c) Now place your auction plants on the auction bench with the card in front. The cards then will remain with the plant throughout the auction until it gets to the auctioneer.

Reserve prices - You may set a *reserve price* on any lot. If you do, *in addition to it being written on the benching card we ask that you also clearly and visibly label the plant separately with the reserve price*. When the potential buyers are checking out the plants and deciding bids, it helps them be ready and decided before the sale.

In past years we have used yellow tags, and/or yellow price stickers to make the reserves obvious. It doesn't really matter what you use but make sure bidders and auctioneers know the minimum you are asking for the lot.

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.***

Plants must be Clean and Free of Disease - Lots are inspected when they are booked in. We reserves the right to reject plants believed to be suffering from pests or diseases, or not well established, or not in good condition.

The Money - The society takes a **15% commission** on all sales.

PAYMENT - 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.

3. Upcoming events

Thur 18 – Sun 21 May – Bankstown O.S. show, Chester Square Shopping Centre, Leicester St Chester Hill.

Fri 26 – Sun 28 May - Orchids Out West, Many club displays, many orchid vendors in the vendors hall. Note that OOW is being held at a new venue this year and is at Hawkesbury Showground, opposite the entry to the racetrack.

Thur 15 – Sat 17 June - North Shore O.S show, St Ives Shopping Village, Mona Vale Rd St Ives

Fri 16 – Sun 18 June – MWOS show, Belrose Supacentre, 4/6 Niangala Close Belrose

Sat 24th – Sun 25th June – Mingara Orchid Club Fair and Show at Tumbi Umbi in Mingara Sports club.

Hozon Brass Siphon Mixer & Dramm 170 Water Breaker Hose Nozzle

Following last month's culture class on watering and fertilizing, Jenny put together this summary of some of the items Trevor discussed. It should be very useful to help members find some of the key items discussed.

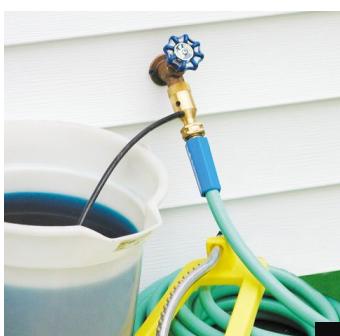
To achieve the appropriate concentration of fertilizer, use the Hozon mixer with a hose with a length of **15m** or less, in conjunction with a Dramm 170 Water Breaker Hose Nozzle. *The dilution rate will vary a bit based on your water pressure but this will get you in the right ball park.*

Dissolve ¼ cup Peter's Excel in warm water & make up to 9 liters in a bucket as your source.

The Hozon device can be purchased from Orchidaceous Supplies but you can google search for other suppliers such as <https://www.orchidaceoussupplies.com.au/Hozon> cost \$70 + delivery ~\$14.25. Additional information on the Hozon device from the manufacturer in USA <https://www.phytotronics.com/product/hozon-brass-siphon-mixer/>

To find suppliers for the water breaker hose nozzle, Google search for "Dramm 170 Water Breaker Hose Nozzle". Note, the 170 refers to the number of outlet holes in the face of the nozzle and there are different water breakers for different purposes. Trevor advises using the 170 if you are using the siphon fertilizer device. If you use the 400 hole model for instance, you may experience insufficient back pressure within the hose to properly operate the siphon. In addition, you can also specify either the 170PL for the plastic, or 170AL for aluminum. The plastic one is usually much cheaper. A couple of supply options are: <https://botanex.com.au>, <https://stonex.com.au/>, <https://duralirrigation.com.au>

The Dramm nozzle is also available from Garden City Plastics but you would need to wait for our next bulk order as they do not sell retail.



← Hozon connected to
hose with bucket of
fertilizer concentrate

Hozon device with
fittings →



Dramm 170 water
breaker

Comes in
plastic 170PL →
or
← aluminum 170AL



Best of the Evening Open – *Cattleya maxima* forms *coerulea* ‘Zoe’ grown by G & L Bromley



I think this is one of the most beautiful *Cattleya* species of all. It comes in a variety of colour forms. Mostly various shades of pink, but also in white and a few delicious shades of blue like this one of the Bromley's. But it is the lip and the flower shape that appeals to me. It doesn't fit the big filled in round shape that hybrids must attain to get an award but it just looks so attractive. Kind of soft, frilly, feminine, delicate.



Cattleya maxima is found in Ecuador, Peru, and Colombia. The Bakers information on Orchidwiz tells us that it was originally discovered in the hot, humid lowlands around Guayaquil in Ecuador but has since also been found at higher elevations on the western slopes of the Andes in northern Peru, Ecuador, and southern Colombia. Because conditions in the highland and lowland

habitats are so different, the cultural requirements for each population type may be quite different so if you grow *maxima* watch for signs of any stress from extremes of weather conditions.

The lowland plants would experience low rain, high temperatures and constant high humidity. Plants grow on long branches of old trees in dry areas. Something along the lines of those shown in upper the picture at the right.



In the highlands, most occur around 1000-2000 m elevation although some can be found up to 1800 m. But, don't forget these are essentially tropical latitudes so although they would experience much cooler conditions that doesn't mean freezing. It would mean a minimum more like 10 to 12°C at its lowest. I don't really know what the higher elevation habit looks like but I am guessing it is brighter and greener and wetter than the lowland habitat. Like the lower pic on the right.



The significance of the description saying they grow on large branches is that it indicates this orchid is a long lived plant. As opposed for example, to twig epiphytes



which grow on tiny outer branchlets and twigs (to get brighter access to light) which by nature don't live long themselves and therefore define the lifespan of the twig epiphyte when both fall to the ground. The picture at the left is a picture of a massive specimen of many, many years growth from the lowlands of Ecuador. It must have been sitting and flowering in that tree fork for a long time before it eventually expanded out to surround the trunk. I would cherish that one in my backyard, even if I might not be up to the task of doing it justice.

Like all species, the plants of *maxima* vary in size but a good size plant might have 30 cm pseudobulbs with a single 30 cm leaf sitting atop. In artificial culture they grow pretty much upright but as you can see in the ‘in situ’ pictures, natural plants grow in whatever direction fits the purpose. The Bakers tell us that the inflorescence is tall and upright and can carry 3–5 flowers on upland plants, 12–15 on lowland plants, although I can't help wondering if that difference is something to do with prevailing conditions as opposed to genetics. I also expect that the seedlings we see for sale today are most likely mixes between the two separate climate types so you should perhaps expect something between those numbers. With flowers being about 13 cm across, a head of even a dozen flowers is a rather awesome sight. Below are a few example of different cultivars showing quality examples of the range of variety available.



Crownfox



Crownfox Delicado



semi alba 'Estalita'



La Negra



un-named cultivar

Now who said you couldn't tell the sex of a flower. These are surely feminine. Nice one Garrie and Lesley.

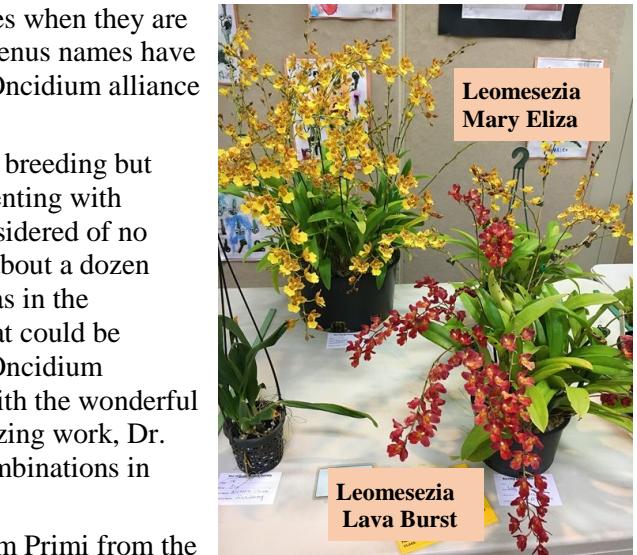
Leomesezia Mini Primi (1) and Lava Burst (2) – benched by *T&P Onslow (1)* and *G&L Bromley (2)*

I am always drawn to these delightful little Oncidiinae curiosities when they are benched, and although they have been written up before, their genus names have recently changed with some of the genetic restructuring of the Oncidium alliance since then so yet another explanation surely won't hurt.

It is hard to say exactly which was the first in this line of orchid breeding but back in the early 1970's several leading breeders were experimenting with miniature Oncidiinae genera that most growers would have considered of no interest. One genus they were using was *Leochilus*, a group of about a dozen twig epiphyte species found from Mexico to Argentina as well as in the Caribbean. The breeders were looking for miniature growers that could be combined with other small but more attractive *Oncidiums* and *Oncidium* relatives. W. W. Moir was looking for miniatures to combine with the wonderful little succulent looking *Tolumnias* with which he had done amazing work, Dr. Ruben Sauleda of Ruben In Orchids was looking for similar combinations in more colourful genera.

In 1970, Ruben In Orchids registered what was then *Rodricidium Primi* from the combination of *Rodriguezia lanceolata* and *Oncidium sarcodes*. I can't find a picture of *Primi* but there are pictures of the two parents below right.

The *rodriguezia* is small growing plant with dense clustersed spikes of a pink to red 12 mm flowers. The other parent, *Onc.* (now *Gomesa*) *sarcodes* is a full size yellow and brown flowered *Oncidium* type with a metre tall inflorescence with more than 40 big, 4cm wide flowers, so I am assuming *Primi* was somewhere between the two. Perhaps a *rodriguezia* looking plant with larger flowers than its mini parent but perhaps only 2 cm or so. Probably yellow and brown with lots of red tones throughout the flower.



In 1976, Stephen Howe, a grower in Florida, registered the cross of *Primi* with *Leochilus oncidiooides* (*left*) to make *Howeara Mini Primi* (*right*). Now for goodness sake, who would choose *Leochilus oncidiooides*, with it's 10 mm virtually colourless flowers, as the first step in this process to create colourful mini Oncidiinae?

Perhaps it was a hail Mary cross? (a cross between two orchids that happened to be in flower at the same time) But whatever it was, *Mini Primi* was a real cutie for those who could grow it. Trevor grows it beautifully, so did Frank Hofbauer, and so does Garrie and

probably many more. However, I know I am not the only one who has failed at *Mini Primi* and subsequent wonderful developments in the same line, like *Mary Eliza* and *Lava Burst* (the two pictured at the beginning of this explanation).



Lsz. Mary Eliza



Leomesezia Lava Burst



Z. onusta

Mary Eliza is the cross between *Mini Primi* and the gorgeous yellow *Oncidium onustum* that is now *Zelenkoa onusta*. And *Lava Burst* is the cross of *Mini Primi* back onto the red/pink *Rodriguezia lanceolata*. No doubt to increase the red dominance,

which it certainly did. The red strategy seems to have worked very well and nearly all *Lava Bursts* are red or pink of one kind or another although not all are as red as the one here at the centre.

I tip my hat to those who imagined these outcomes with their breeding and what is more, achieved them. And I also bow to the *Onslow*'s and the *Bromley*'s and others who constantly bring in these gorgeous orchids. I warn you both, you owe us a few written words on the principles of growing these mixes of twig epiphytes and traditional Oncidiinae. I want all your secrets, show us the way.

Learn During Repotting - by Sue Bottom (St Augustine O.S., Florida, USA)

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The annual repotting marathon is underway for us. It all starts when many of the slumbering orchids start to wake in the spring and start initiating new growth. New root growth is telling you to get your repotting supplies ready because this is the best time to repot your orchids. Repotting is a traumatic event as your orchid is yanked out of its home, but if it is growing new roots it will get acclimated to its new digs quickly.

Catasetums. Catasetums are the first group of orchids that start to rouse from their winter sleep, the catasetums first and the clowesias last, with all the intergenerics somewhere in between. As early as December, the catasetums are checked weekly looking for the newly emerging green growth to start peeking out at the base of the newest pseudobulbs. They are moved into a staging area for repotting, because there is still another week or two before roots will start growing from the tender new growths. Repot right when the new growth begins, and then keep them dry until the new growth is 5 inches or so tall. You can start watering when the leaves have unfurled and water won't be trapped in the new growth, with the potential to cause crown rot and the death of the new growth.



Uh oh, that catasetum must have some rot inside it that I missed when I potted it up. Those keikis are a sure sign of a survival mechanism.



The freshly potted catasetum was unpotted and there it is, that black rot at the base of the pseudobulb. Mom is a goner.



After cutting through the pseudobulb halfway up, you can see the rot is moving up the vascular tissue. The keikis were removed and potted up.



Plants are hung under the eaves after repotting so they won't be watered until the growths are 5 inches tall and the leaves unfurled.

The last two years I have been struggling with rots in the catasetums. Last year I tried to overcome my rot problems by cutting away the old growths and then drenching the plants with a systemic fungicide several times during the growing season. That apparently was not enough, because there was still a lot of rot discovered this year after the winter rest. I was even more brutal about cutting away all but the newest pseudobulbs and discarding any bulbs with any hint of rot. The catasetums that survived this process were potted up in clay pots with Styrofoam in the bottom third to half of the pot and then long fibered New Zealand sphagnum moss. I always interlayer timed release fertilizer with the moss, but this year I also interlayered a granular Heritage fungicide into the mix. This will be activated once watering begins later this spring and the plant will absorb the systemic fungicide into its tissues and hopefully overcome the problems with rot.

Cattleyas. The cattleyas start rooting about midway through catasetum repotting. I keep a staging bench empty during the repotting season, and inspect each of the benches looking for plants that require repotting this year. The unifoliates are much more tolerant of repotting than the bifoliates, so I am very careful to hold off on repotting

bifoliate until I see just the beginning of root growth. If a plant needs to be repotted, it is moved over to the staging bench. Once the staging bench is filled with overgrown cattleyas, the actual repotting begins.



In the evening, potting benches are inspected for plants requiring repotting, which are put on the staging bench for repotting the next day.



Older leaves yellow and give the plant an unhealthy appearance, often these are attached to pseudobulbs deep in the pot.



The roots grow into and around the Styrofoam, enjoying the airy reservoir. There is no rotting mass of decayed mix in the bottom of the pot.



After repotting, plants are replaced on the benches, with lots of space between pots. Plants look so much better after repotting.

The cattleyas have responded very well to using the shallow slotted pots, lots of chunky Styrofoam in the bottom third of the pot, and the coarse mix of bark, sponge rock, clay pebbles and charcoal. As plants are pulled from their pots, it is clear the roots have grown happily around the Styrofoam and there is no mass of rotted mix in the bottom of the pot. The bark is starting to soften in many of the pots after three years or so, but not enough to cause root damage. Some of the leaves on the oldest pseudobulbs have yellowed and browned giving the plant an unhealthy appearance. As these are unpotted, it is apparent that most of those unhealthy leaves are attached to pseudobulbs deep in the pot and the plant has grown new bulbs over the old, sometimes two layers higher. These older, yellow growths and any leaves with fine dotting indicative of fungal spores are cut away from the plant before situating the remaining growths in the pot. The only other changes being made are replacing Orchata with Fred Clarke's #5 kiwi bark in the large 8 inch pots. The granular Heritage product is also sprinkled on top of the pot, and then it is top dressed with good cypress mulch to protect emerging roots. It's amazing how much better the plants look after repotting.

It will probably be May before all the cattleyas in the original greenhouse have been given the once over. Many of the bifoliate have been moved over into the whitehouse on shorter benches. It is much easier to monitor for new root growth on these shorter, more narrow benches, and repotting, if necessary, will happen as soon as the new green root tips appear.

Phalaenopsis. The Phalaenopsis are the next major group that will be repotted. The summer bloomers should normally be repotted by February so as not to interrupt their bloom cycle, while the spring bloomers will be mostly repotted in June. None were repotted last year, the prior year they were potted in high quality New Zealand sphagnum

moss with varying amounts of Styrofoam depending on the pot size. All the phals were moved into the newly constructed whitehouse last August. After a brief period of letting the Halloween cool temperatures trigger the flowering process, the furnace was set so the minimum night time temperatures did not drop below 60F (15.5°C). It cost a fair chunk of change in propane, but the phals responded incredibly well to the warm temperatures with multiple spikes of gorgeous flowers.

You learn a lot about what you did right and what you did wrong during the repotting process. This is your opportunity to evaluate the health of the roots in the pot, telling you whether your potting materials are suitable given your watering habits. Keep your eyes and mind open while repotting, so you can tell what went right and what went wrong over the past growing season.

The oh-so-thoughtful husband

The other day I asked old Maud how she lost her husband and she told me a very sad story.

"It was tragic really. He needed a blood transfusion, but his blood type was not on record and the testing equipment had failed, so the doctors asked me if I knew what it was. They urgently needed to know in order to save my Norman's life."

But I've never known his blood type, so I just had to sit with him and say goodbye.

I'll never forget how supportive my Norman was. Even as he was fading away, he kept on whispering to me, "Be positive, be positive!". That was my Norman! Always thinking of others."

The Blue Suit, (more dead set humour)

A man who'd just died is delivered to a local mortuary wearing an expensive, expertly tailored black suit. The female blonde mortician asks the deceased's wife how she would like the body dressed. She points out that the man does look good in the black suit he is already wearing. The widow, however, says that she always thought her husband looked his best in blue and that she wants him in a blue suit. She gives the Blonde mortician a blank check and says, 'I don't care what it costs, but please have my husband in a blue suit for the viewing.'

The woman returns the next day for the wake. To her delight, she finds her husband dressed in a gorgeous blue suit with a subtle chalk stripe; the suit fits him perfectly... She says to the blonde mortician, 'Whatever this cost, I'm very satisfied... You did an excellent job and I'm very grateful. How much did you spend?'

To her astonishment, the blonde mortician presents gives her back the blank check she had provided. 'There's no charge,' she says.

'No, really, I must compensate you for the cost of that exquisite blue suit!' she says.

'Honestly, ma'am,' the blonde says, 'it cost nothing. You see, a deceased gentleman of about your husband's size was brought in shortly after you left yesterday, and he was wearing an attractive blue suit. I asked his wife if she minded him going to his grave wearing a black suit instead, and she said it made no difference as long as he looked nice.'

'So I just switched the heads.'

For those of you who can't work out social distancing, this is two meters apart.



When a bridge suddenly appears unexpectedly....



I was walking in the jungle the other day and saw a lizard on his hind legs telling jokes. I turned to a local tribal leader and said, "That lizard is really funny!" The leader replied, "That's not a lizard. He's a stand-up chameleon."

My friend said she wouldn't eat cow's tongue because it came out of a cow's mouth so I gave her an egg.