



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

(Established in 1947)

A.B.N. 92 531 295 125

17<sup>th</sup> July 2023 Volume 64 No. 7

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

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**Society mail to** - PO box 1501 Lane Cove, NSW, 1595

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**Committee** : Chris Wilson (Library and Reference Sources)

**Committee** : Bill Saunderson (Sales Table)

**Committee** : Di Flinders

**web site (active link)** : <http://kuringaiorchidsociety.org.au>

**Society email** : [kuringgaiorchidsociety@gmail.com](mailto:kuringgaiorchidsociety@gmail.com)

\*Some sections of this issue have been prepared via caretaker whilst our editor takes a well-earned break

**Next Meeting: Mon 17<sup>th</sup> July 2023**

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

We still ask that all meeting attendees are 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.

**THERE WILL BE NO CULTURE CLASS AT THE JULY MEETING.** Why not make the most of the time before our main meeting starts to chat to a grower whose orchids you have always admired and get some tips.

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 July are **Loretta and Paul Au**. Thank you for volunteering. 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 for the supper table, sweet or savory, whatever you like 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. Go out and put your club night coffee or tea cup in the car right now.

**Guest Speaker** - After the break we have **an excellent guest speaker**. Our very own **Gloria Cushway** will be running a Master Class on "Cattleya Culture". Gloria is the Cattleya Queen so don't miss this opportunity to learn from an expert and see if you can pick up some ideas on how to grow those magnificent plants we get to enjoy on the bench.

## St Ives Orchid Fair 'The Big One'



ST IVES SHOWGROUND, Mona Vale Road, St Ives

Friday 18<sup>th</sup> August 2023 9 am to 4 pm  
Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> August 2023 9 am to 4 pm  
Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> August 2023 9 am to 3 pm

ADMISSION \$8

Major Sponsors

Rosella Orchids - Garden City Plastics - Swagman Sprayers

ORCHID VENDORS

Alice's Orchids, Dark Star Orchids, Ezi-Gro Orchids, Fong Ping Orchids  
Hills District Orchids, Macquarie Native Orchids, Nicky's Slippers  
Orchid Care Services, Orchid Species Plus, Orchids of Distinction  
Orchids on Newbold, Robertson Orchids, Rosella Orchids, Royale Orchids  
The Orchid Mart / Serhan's Orchids, Tinonee Orchid Nursery  
Woolf Orchidculture

For more Information: Show Marshal: Garrie Bromley Ph: 0425 336 049  
<http://www.stivesorchidfair.com/>

In conjunction with 3 of our sister societies, this is our show. Please refer to the **KOS Member's information pack** that will be circulated with this bulletin, for full details about participating in and helping support your club with the fair.

- What is a show without a display - we need **plants, plants, plants**, all disease free, clean plants are very welcome no matter the size, novice or open - variety adds interest.
- Novices are particularly encouraged to enter plants – please don't assume your plants are not good enough – we would like them all!
- Nomination forms to Dennys by 6pm 15<sup>th</sup> Aug
- Display plants on site by **9am Thu 17<sup>th</sup> Aug**
- Sale plants on site no earlier than 8am Fri 18<sup>th</sup>
- If you are selling Aussie natives please get tags from Chris, sales sheets as provided via email.

Enjoy!!



Members, PLEASE be generous with your time when those rosters come around & volunteer for at least one KOS shift. Email [kuringgaiorchidsociety@gmail.com](mailto:kuringgaiorchidsociety@gmail.com) or phone Dennys on **043 88 77 689** to volunteer if you don't attend meetings.

The opinions and recommendations published in this bulletin are those of the authors of the various items. The Ku-Ring-Gai Orchid Society Inc disclaims responsibility for any losses or damages that may be attributed to the use or misuse of any material or any opinion published in this bulletin.

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**Society News** (if anyone has a news item, please phone Jim on 9476 3383, or email at [jimbrydie@aussiebroadband.com.au](mailto:jimbrydie@aussiebroadband.com.au) )

**President Dennys' Desk** - Our June meeting was attended by 47 people and 111 orchids were benched. **John's** talk on the *Tokyo Grand Prix International Orchid Flower Show* was very enjoyable and produced a lot of interaction. **Dora's** culture class on *Softcane Dendrobiums* was well received with lots of positive feedback. I thank **Penny and Pearl** for their assistance in preparing the supper table and I also thank **Cynthia** for selling raffle tickets in fine style. **Adrian Zderic** also donated a nice cymbidium to the raffle, where we had 13 plants on offer, thank you **Adrian**. My call for more help after the meeting was well heard and I thank all those members who helped put the tables and chairs away.

**A Benching Rule Reminder** - It is important for new members to be reminded that to be eligible for point scoring and judging, plants must be owned and grown by the exhibitor for at least 6 months. Growers are encouraged to bring any orchid in flower even if recently acquired. Those ineligible for judging should have "NOT FOR JUDGING" marked on the bench card; they will still receive a benching point subject to the exhibitor benching not more than 5 plants in that class.

**St. Ives Orchid Fair** – **Kevin** sent round the SIOF roster at our last meeting. The "show" is very important for KOS since it is the only major source of income we have. So, we will still need some more volunteers to help to get the show up and running and during the operation of the show. Remember, the former activity is about show operations. Setting up our KOS display is a separate activity. So, novices should try and get a nice flower ready for the show and if anyone can help set up the display then make yourself known to **Lina** or anyone on the committee. Check out the "information pack" sent with this bulletin for a better understanding of volunteer roles at the "show". It can be fun so please get involved.

**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 let alone the minds of **Bill** and **Herb**. Please let the plants 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. We are undertaking the purchase of some new plant clips and special pencils.

**Supper, Mug and Badge reminder** – Please remember to wear your badge and try and bring your own mug for coffee/tea. A contribution to supper is always welcome.

**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.

**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.

**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. New Members** – A very warm welcome to our newest member **Grace Zou**. We hope you find many new friends at our club. Members - please say Hi to Grace if you see her at a meeting and make her feel welcome.

### **2. Upcoming events**

**Thu 13- Sat 15 July** – Eastwood OS show – Eastwood shopping Plaza

**Sat 22 July** – ANOS Sydney Auction, Castle Hill Showground

**Fri 4 – Sun 6 Aug** - MWOS Orchids by the Sea, Belrose super centre, Level 1, 4-6 Niangala Close, Belrose

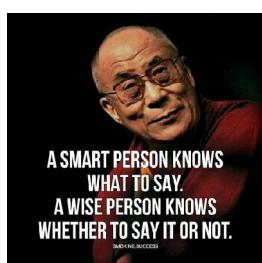
**Fri 11- Sun 13 Aug** - National Orchid Extravaganza and Paphiopedilum Society, Greyhound Club Arena, Yagoona

**Fri 18 – Sun 20 Aug - St Ives Orchid Fair, St Ives Showground. See pg. 1 & attached member's pack.**

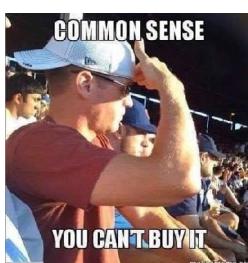
**Sat 9 – Sun 10 Sep** - ANOS Spring Show, Forestville Memorial Hall, Starkey St, Forestville

**Thu 14 – Sat 16 Sep** - NSOS Show, St Ives shopping village, Mona Vale Rd, St Ives

**Fri 13 – Sun 15 Oct** - Orchids Central (5 clubs), Club Condell Park, 178 Eldridge Rd, Bankstown



When you lie on your resume  
but still get the job



## Tough Little Babies - by Jim Brydie (an introduction to the following two articles)

The immediately following article "The Culture of Dendrobium speciosum Nature's Way" by David Butler came to me during discussions with David about raising orchid seedlings from flasks. Long ago David wrote about a process he uses to 'acclimatise' seedlings from the flask environment to our more usual types of orchid cultivation environments. He called the process hardening up and to illustrate how tough little seed orchids **have to be** in their natural environment he sent me his article with some amazing observations of Dendrobium speciosum babies growing in nature. It includes comparison of the kinds of circumstances the survivors seem to favour and it is a wonderful piece of observation and deduction.

It is an appropriate reminder that orchid seedlings have the innate ability to tolerate much harsher conditions than we seem to commonly think. An important point to remember when you are deflasking a new batch of orchids and are probably about to over baby them in those early stages.

Many different writers have described their own versions of a 'hardening' processes immediately after deflasking and like the different methods of growing adult orchids, there are as many variants as there are successful growers. Also, as common sense dictates, local habitat and climate has a big influence but there is no 'one' way of doing it right.

Despite this, my observation is that there are some strong common factors which would include: -

- Ex flask wash all the agar off thoroughly, but gently, in warm water
- Some do some don't use a preventative fungicide as a precaution to aid transition from their sterile world.
- Many use a spray of 'ENVY' over the leaves to reduce water loss rates immediately after deflasking.
- Medium -- the 'medium' to place the deflasked orchids into varies with the grower. It can be anything from just a piece of paper towel to versions of just about any mix used for adult orchids.

BUT many point out that if any introduction of fungal or bacterial infection occurs, it is likely to have come from that medium so many recommended that you sterilise the medium before you use it.

**And**, much less medium is used in potting than you would potting a normal orchid.

- Different forms of humidicrib are used as a halfway house to gradually 'harden' the babies from flask to outside world conditions. The humidicrib is usually placed in an indoor or protected environment with cool but not cold conditions, and shady but well lit.
- The hardening is usually done by keeping the crib sealed for the first week or so (be it a plastic container with cling wrap, or a purpose build humidity chamber), then to gradually open the seal after a week or so, and a little, more week by week, until they seem stable enough to remove it altogether.
- During the hardening process most recommend giving the babies a light spray over the leaves weekly to stop the plants dehydrating. Some use a spray of light liquid fertiliser in these early stages, some don't.

The key seems to be to make sure you DON'T OVERWATER. Nearly all your orchids are epiphytes and even if they aren't, they have evolved to take water when it is available and use it carefully. Almost NO ORCHID likes to be too wet for too long.

With the show season now underway and Spring just around the corner, I am guessing that many of you will be tempted by the various flask sellers at the many orchid fairs. So, to follow David's speciosum article we have an article on deflasking bottle babies by Jeff Knowles from Townsville. I think his donut shaped compot looks especially like a beaut idea that would help with managing just the right level of water retention in those early phases.



ASTRONOMER  
ELECTION RESULTS  
ELEVEN PLUS TWO  
THE EYES

When you rearrange the letters  
When you rearrange the letters  
When you rearrange the letters  
When you rearrange the letters

MOON STARER  
LIES - LET'S RECOUNT  
TWELVE PLUS ONE  
THEY SEE

## The Culture of *Dendrobium speciosum* Nature's Way

Life, for seedlings, is not always easy - David Butler

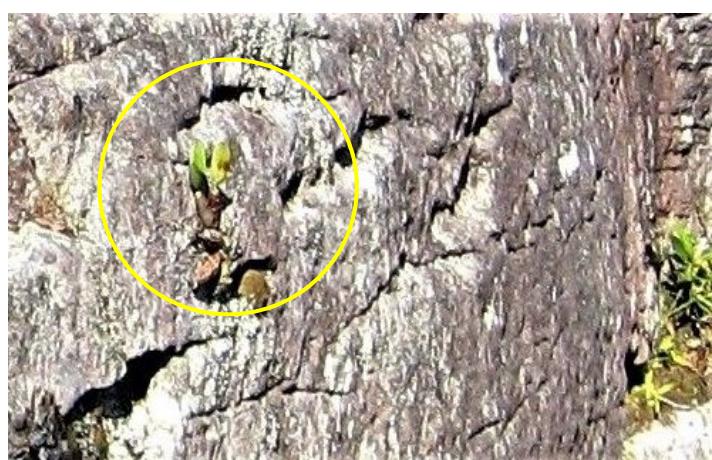
Photographed in Bouddi National Park on the Central Coast of NSW, these *Dendrobium speciosum* plants and seedlings show just how precarious life can be. For a seed to germinate and develop into a flowering plant then go on to breed and produce another generation can take many years and much good fortune.



Mature plants in the foreground grew from seed in ideal conditions with moisture, mulch, a humid up-draught and afternoon shade. How different to the young plants on bare rocks nearby (circled)



The mature plants in the background are surrounded by leaf mould and receive good afternoon shade unlike the foreground seedlings which grow much more exposed on the virtually bare rock.



The mature plant in flower has developed on a moist, east-facing mossy cliff face, so very much different to the conditions nearby where seedlings are doing their best on bare, exposed rock.



Two extremes. The seedling on the left has germinated in thick moss and is in danger of rotting, while young seedlings which grow nearby battle to survive on bare rock with moisture from overnight dew.

## Babies in Bottles OR How we deflask orchids *By Jeff Knowles*

*Republished with the permission of the author and the Townsville Orchid Society.*

Editor's Note : Don't forget that down here in Sydney we don't have the benefit of the wonderful Townsville weather. Wait for the warmer weather to do any deflasking and take precautions with the watering to ensure the surfaces dry by nightfall.



Babies in Bottles

For those members who had a quiet snooze while Alison and I demonstrated our deflasking technique at the August meeting, or for those who would like a hard copy, here it is.

### Deflasking.

The flask we deflasked at the meeting was one of three we purchased. They all are *Vanda sanderiana* var. *alba*, a name which is not recognised by the "World Checklist of Selected Plant Families" – but that is another



story for another time. The flasks were sourced from Thailand.

The procedure we use is:

1. Score the glass flask, wrap in newspaper and strike firmly near its end to break it open.
2. Slide out the orchids and place them in tap water in an ice cream container. With gentle hand stirring most agar can be removed and the plants separated from each other.
3. Prepare the compots and tubes. The compots we use are 200 x 100mm black plastic pots with a central upturned 125 x 75mm black plastic pot to form a "donut". Some pieces of polystyrene foam are used in the bottom so that the two pots are aligned at the top. Some damp sphagnum moss is placed in the "donut".
4. Plants are carefully removed from the water, their roots are wrapped in sphagnum moss and then planted in the donut or tube ensuring that their leaves are not buried in the sphagnum moss. The sphag is not heavily compressed. We place around 16 / 20 plants in each donut compot. Try not to handle the plants too much.



The emptied flask



A "donut" compot being prepared

5. Some rock + bark + charcoal + perlite all about 8 to 10mm in size is placed on the sphag to cover it, taking care not to cover the leaves of the plants.
6. Write out the name tags and insert them into the pots.
7. Gently water the plants to remove any rubbish that may have settled on the leaves and to moisten up the media.
8. After most of the water has evaporated from the leaves, 30 minutes to an hour, spray the leaves with *Envy* to help prevent water loss through the leaves. The media is not saturated with it.
9. Place the pots in a shady place for a few weeks and watch them settle in and begin to grow.

You may spray with your preferred fungicide. *Mancozeb* is a good preventive one. *Previcur* packs a bit more punch. You may also begin fertilising then as well with a weak (maybe  $\frac{1}{4}$  g / L) soluble growing fertiliser (*Peter's Winter Grow Special* is a good one). Increase the concentration of the fertiliser over time until it reaches your preferred strength. Keep them damp, but not dripping wet. You can decide whether to water or not by the old "stick the finger in the potting media" trick – not too dry, not dripping wet, just right.

Sometime in the not too distant future we should be able to take the plants out of their compots at a meeting.

Why don't you become adventurous and give it a go?

Well, that all folks.



Here is one we prepared a week earlier



Plants coming out of the "donut" compot.

### Best of the Evening Open Hybrid - *Rlc. Dream Trader* 'Colossus' grown by *Gloria and Allan Cushway*

Wow, these big showy flowers with their vibrant, contrasting colours, frilly edges & impressive size certainly make them a head turner.

*Rlc. Dream Trader* is a hybrid originated by G.J. Williams in 1990, it is a cross between *Rlc. Sylvia Fry* x *Cattleya Horace*. Measuring an impressive 19cm in diameter, it doesn't take a great deal of imagination



to envisage where the cultivar name of 'Colossus' came from.

Expertly presented & very well grown as always by Gloria and Allan.

**Paranoia has reached absurd stages...**

**I sneezed in front of my laptop and the anti-virus started a scan on its own**



**I'm so old, I can remember going through a whole day without taking a picture of anything.**

# WATERING ORCHIDS - by Ross Maidment

(This article is republished with the permission of the author - Ross Maidment of Aranbeem Orchids)

## Understand the Orchid

Most orchids that we grow are epiphytes. You have to get your head around the fact that they grow on things, not in things. Containers we use are for our convenience not the orchid which just wants something to anchor on and grow. Different orchids grow in a wide range of environments and have different growing cycles and climates. It is a common major mistake that orchids require a lot of water frequently. Many orchids have pseudobulbs and leaves that store water for growth.

Do some research on the conditions required for particular orchids. Some years ago a grower Ivan Barton used his mathematical and computing ability together with a number of other university colleagues to analyse various orchid growth requirements. They charted the water, temperature, seasons etc conditions for a considerable number of orchid species and came up with a database they called "Growing Orchids by Climate". These academics offered to give a detailed growing sheet on various orchids for the price of something like \$5. Unfortunately, they did not realize that most orchid growers would rather spend \$500 on orchids and boast about how many they killed, than \$5 and how many they grew well!

Their database was surprisingly effective and even hybrids depending on the parentage of species in their ancestry followed the same requirements. For example, I had been struggling growing Cattleya aclandiae and its hybrids in pots. From their data sheet, it showed it required drier conditions than most other Cattleya types that I was growing. Some simple research reveals it grows in rather dry seasonal forests near the coast on elevated plateaus. Elevations of 100-400 m near permanent bodies of water with sea breezes but with little rain. When I changed to growing Cattleya aclandiae in clay pots and on mounts, and placed it where they would get watered less frequently and dry out faster, but still had good humidity - they thrived!

## Understand Orchid Roots

Orchids have adapted a different root structure to other plants. The outer layer of the root is surrounded by a layer of tissue called velamen. This is sponge like, highly water absorbing cells that turn green and expand immediately after watering. This velamen is also a good indicator of the orchids water requirement. Learn to read the roots - dry velamen is white or silver and freshly watered velamen is green or mottled. Like a sponge, if the velamen is already saturated then it cannot absorb any more water. Orchid roots need to dry out between watering. If the velamen is constantly wet then it dies and then there are no roots to take up water.

## Factors Affecting Watering

**Type of Orchid** - Various orchids have different watering requirements. Do some research and get further information about these requirements. Some require higher and more frequent watering when in their rapid actively growing cycle. There are many that have very seasonal growth and have a distinct dormant season when they should not be watered at all. Many types of orchids have adapted to a short watering and require to dry out quickly after.

**Potting media/Mounts/Containers** - Different potting media vary in their water retention characteristics. Likewise various mounts can also retain water and dry out differently. There are a myriad of diverse potting containers on the market. Clay pots dry out faster than plastic ones. Larger pots retain more water than smaller pots. Containers with varying amounts of bottom and/ or side drainage behave differently. It is like Goldilocks and the Three Bears - Not too wet, not too dry, but just right.

It comes down to getting the water retention, drainage allowing drying out, and aeration, all balanced and appropriate to the type of orchid. There is no absolute media/mount/container required. You can achieve the orchids requirements using various options keeping in mind water retention, drainage and aeration. I am not an advocate of - "You need a Vanda pot to grow a Vanda, you need a Phalaenopsis pot to grow a Phalaenopsis". If you do not keep the factors discussed in mind you will still stuff up!

**Temperature** - Higher temperatures in the growing season will result in faster evaporation and water loss. More frequent and heavier watering may be required. Lower temperatures have less evaporation and longer drying times, so less frequent and lighter watering may be required.

**Humidity** - The higher the humidity in the growing area then the less need for watering. Orchids will dry out slower and the velamen in the roots is capable of absorbing some water.

**Air Flow** - Growing conditions vary greatly in different areas and also the type of growing construction. Air flow is essential to good orchid culture all year round. Air flow can be strong or gentle, hot or cool, humid or dry. Strong, hot, dry air flow will dry out orchids faster and more frequent watering will be required. The opposite for gentle, cool and humid air flow. This is something you can only evaluate in your particular growing area. Air flow may also vary with the seasons.

**Placement of Plants** - Most orchid growers end up with plants on multi levels over-hanging each other. Care should be taken that they are not directly over each other so that water from one runs directly into the lower ones.

Plants on higher levels will dry out faster than lower levels. Plants in more protected areas with less air movement will dry out slower. Those in more humid areas will also dry out slower. Consideration needs to be taken into such plant placements as it affects watering requirements greatly.

**How Often to Water** - This is the most common question asked by new growers. The hope is for a definitive answer that ensures successful growing. Unfortunately, due to the so many variables there is no definitive answer. Consider and evaluate all the points that we have discussed and how they relate to the types of orchids growing media and conditions that you have.

Most orchids are capable of going for long periods without water. The majority are killed by over watering not under watering. They will die slower and show signs like wrinkled pseudobulbs, leaves and roots if under watered. They will die faster by over watering as the roots will very quickly die off and media breaks down faster. Allow them to dry out between waterings. If not sure whether to water it is better to hold off

These are some of the ways I decide whether to water or not. Feel the weight of a freshly watered orchid to the same weight when the plant is totally dry. There is a considerable difference. Learning to assess this way is simple and easy. When totally dry - water, when not - do not water. If I am not sure whether or not to water, then leave it till the next day. Allow the ground in the growing area to be totally dried out before watering. If it is moist then there is sufficient humidity that the orchids will not require watering. Lastly, when the weeds in the pots start to wilt, then it is time to water the orchids.

**How much to Water** - Water so the plant and media are totally saturated and water flows totally through the pot and drainage. Fertilizer salts can build up in the media and this flushing helps remove them and prolong the life of the media. If, when watering you then notice that it is not draining freely, warns that the media has broken down and repotting is required.

**When to Water** - Watering early in the morning is the safest practice. It enables foliage and crowns of plants to be dry by nightfall. This is particularly important in cooler areas and when plants are not in active growth. It also allows for greater humidity during the day. Water on warmer fine days and not on wet overcast days.

**Is Misting Watering?** - Misting is not watering. Misting may be beneficial in periods of higher temperature as it can lead to evaporative cooling and increase humidity. Orchids will absorb some water from it, but it is not as beneficial as a thorough watering. Excessive misting can increase the risk of fungal and bacterial diseases.

**Controlling Watering** - The number 1 method is to restrain YOURSELF. Orchids DO NOT need continuous watering. If you are doing it just for something to do - READ A BOOK.

When we have prolonged periods of excessive rain as recently, it is always followed by a new wave of advice - "You need to cover your orchid collection so you can control watering". This may be fine if you have abundant water and conditions that if you do it will not create an extreme high temperature and low humidity environment. The usual consequence is an orchid collection that gets fried the following summer.

It is important to remember that free flowing and draining water is not a problem. Orchid roots can still breathe. When the water is pooled and still it becomes stagnant and fungal, bacterial and pest problems will flourish. Properly potted, drained and good air circulation will see orchids benefit from the free water and nutrients. Of course it will be of detriment to flowers which should be put under cover in these periods if required.

**Evaluating your Watering** - The most honest critic and advice you will get is from your orchids. Roots should be plentiful with healthy velamen and green growing tips. Pseudobulbs and leaves should be full and firm. New growths should be healthy and not too soft that they will fall over. Flower stems should be strong and not rot off. Orchid Growers and water are the most dangerous of combinations that orchids experience.

*With thanks to Ross on behalf of KOS members for such an informative article explaining the various aspects to consider before watering our orchids. Overwatering can be one of the most common mistakes & your great advice will help us reflect on the orchid's needs before succumbing to the urge to water – Jenny. Members please note that Aranbeem Orchids have a great selection of plants on their website at reasonable prices. [aranbeemorchids.com.au](http://aranbeemorchids.com.au)*



Who called  
you a bad  
dog?  
Point them  
out.  
I will end  
them!



## Best of the Evening Novice - *Masdevallia Marguerite* 'Fire Walker' grown by *Loretta & Paul Au*

What a pretty little thing this is with its rich hues of orange & red enhancing its eye catching shape. It is the largest plant, with the most flowers I have ever seen on a *Masdevallia*, it certainly makes a statement.



*Masdevallia Marguerite* is what is referred to as a primary hybrid being a cross between two species *Masd. Infracta* x *Masd. veitchiana*. The hybrid originates from 1982 by J & L Orch.

According to [ISOPE](#) there are over 600 species of *Masdevallia*. Depending on which reference you look at, they are described as miniature to large sized epiphytic, lithophytic or terrestrial plants. The genus is named after Jose Masdevall, who was a



physician & botanist from the court of Charles III of Spain.

Belonging to Subtribe *Pleurothallidinae*, *Masd.* are found in Mexico to the southern Andes. The highest concentration of species can be found from Venezuela to Peru through the Andes foothills and highlands mostly at higher elevations between 2,500 – 4000 m, in the cool, misty mountains. Some species grow at elevations as low as 1100 m however over the years, collectors have stripped many plants from these lower elevations.

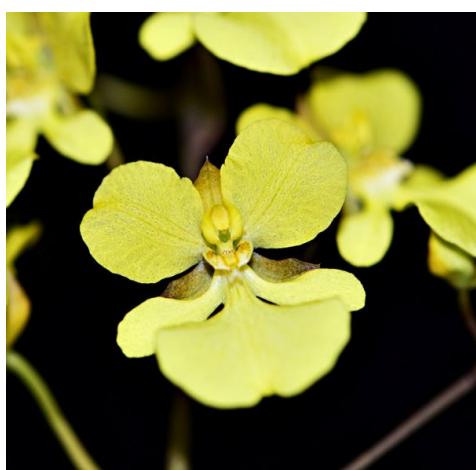
Most *Masdevallia* are cool to cold growers, they have no pseudobulbs and consequently little ability to store water and therefore appreciate a humidity level between 60-80%.

The plants have creeping rhizomes, the inflorescence usually produces a single flower but some species have multiple flowers. The flowers are characterized by sepals commonly with a tail, that are fused producing a splayed 3D triangular shape. [OrchidWiz](#), [Wikipeda](#), [IOSPE](#), [AOS](#)

Beautifully grown Loretta & Paul – as mentioned at the meeting, I don't think we will be seeing you in the Novice section next year.

## Best of the Evening Open Species - *Zelenkoa onusta* (previously *Oncidium onustum*) grown by *Trevor and Pauline Onslow*

What a delightful potful of these dainty, yellow pretties. The genus *Zelenkoa* was introduced in 2001 by MW Chase, NH Williams et al. and contains only one known species *Zelenkoa onusta*. Native to Panama, Colombia, Ecuador & Peru, these plants grow in humid coastal lowlands from regions with long, dry winters with little rainfall. Often found growing on cacti and trees in dry forests usually near sea level but plants have been found as high as 1200 meters.



*Zelenkoa onusta* is a miniature sized hot to cool growing

epiphyte, it has a small clump-forming habit with growths forming close together along a creeping rhizome. The 2cm flowers are primarily yellow with a few fine red spots in the centre. After blooming they require a definite rest period with reduced water and reduced or no fertilizer until new growth appears in spring. [IOSPE](#), [OrchidWiz](#), [AOS](#)

Trevor told us at a recent meeting he grows his *Zelenkoa* in their peat and perlite mix but puts them in clay pots which helps satisfy their very specific wet-dry cycle. This gorgeous plant from Trevor and Pauline is clearly happy under those conditions.