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

(Established in 1947)
A.B.N. 92 531 295 125

21st April 2025 Volume 66 No. 4
Annual Membership : **$15 single, $18 family**

Patrons - Pauline and Trevor Onslow

Next Meeting : **Mon 21st April 2025**

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

COVID and even common old influenza remain a problem**. Please, if you are feeling unwell - do not attend.**

YOU MUST SIGN IN on the ATTENDANCE SHEETS at the **front hall on arrival**. **–** Insurance requires it. **Please do it.**

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

Culture Class – Jim Brydie will do the culture class this month and will talk about **preparing sphagnum moss before use**. As Jim will also do the Guest Speaker job this month and is talking about growing Phalaenopsis, the two subjects are closely related and if you are interested you should watch both.

The society sales table will also be open as usual with pots sticks and fertiliser etc and hopefully also some spare divisions of members plants. Please respect the ***"Sales Table Open / Sales Table Closed" signs*** and give our sales table managers time to set up and get themselves ready before you start grabbing stock and offering money**.**

The Supper Break – Supper is not self-serve. Volunteers are assigned to serve the food for hygenic reasons. The supper volunteers are also needed to get the supper paraphenalia, out of the cupboards and set up for supper. This includes setting up and filling a water heating urn. The supper helpers do **not** have to supply anything. Basic supplies are all purchased and organised in advance. **April volunteers – Liz, Ethan & Celeste Pyne + Robin Stewart**

Supper Food – Please Remember – while the society provides the basic supplies, ***we ask all members to bring in a contribution of cake, slice, or biscuits, etc for the supper table edibles. Just bring a small plate to add to the spread.*** There were some delightful cakes these last few months so thank you to those who provided them.

And Remember – Please bring your own mug or cup with you. *We have a few foam cups but they are the last.*

After the tea break, our **Guest Speaker** this month will be **Jim Brydie.** As mentioned above, **the subject** is **growing Phalaenopsis.** Jim recently decided to switch from Sphagnum moss to a bark mix and experimented for over a year but is now switching back and he will explain why, and how to pot using sphag.

Best of the Evening Novice – Catt Lucky Sagami grown by **Robin Stewart**

I think Cattleyas are just about the definition of beauty. I know there are other magnificent flowers of all kinds that aren't even orchids but for size, shape, and a huge range of colours and colour combinations, big Catts like this have to be up at the top.

I didn't take any measurements on the night but Lucky Sagami flowers have to be around 15 cm across and perhaps even a touch taller. It is a mix of 6 of the big labiate Catt. species and probably takes after its parent Stephen Oliver Fouraker as most of those also seem to be big white flowers with purple at the end to the lip.

Congratulations Robin. The second picture we took shows more of the plant and it had lovely clean leaves and nice healthy new pseudobulb and leaf developing fast. The two big flowers were also clean and healthy so you are growing it well. Onward and upward – keep it progressing and you will have even more flowers next year.

Society News (if anyone has a news item, please phone Jim on 9476 3383, or email at jimbrydie@aussiebroadband.com.au)
Jim's view – There was good attendance again last month and a few more visitors. I hope everyone enjoyed the night. The mood in the hall certainly seemed happy and easy. Dennys will chair the April meeting.

Steve Dunstan's sales table in the hall was a busy place. Not your everyday commonplace sales plants, these were divisions and latest hybrid seedling crosses and the members appreciated the chance to pick them over. It was very kind of Steve to go to the special over and above effort he made to give us a 'pick' among some unusual stock – it was appreciated. And thank you Steve also for the down to earth explanation of the great characteristics the Latourea section can bring great new intersectional Dendrobium hybrids we are starting to see at shows and fairs. I must admit that until your talk I had developed a slight bias against some of the Latoureas because of their 'face down' tendency but I didn't know enough to see the other side of the picture. When crossed with other groups like the Australian Dendrobes you showed how the Latoureas help make very attractive, colourful, and compact specimens quite quickly. We may be on the verge of a new wave of popularity.

We gained a few more volunteers for our supper table roster last month which was very encouraging. Thank you to all who have put your names down and thank you to Liz and Ethan Pyne and Anthony Mobbs who volunteered in March.

We have enough volunteers to keep the suppers going for the next few months but we still need helpers for further down the year. I understand that many of us can't commit too far ahead so I am hoping that it might be a situation where we just add to the roster as we go along. Lets see how it plays out but if you come to meetings, please try as hard as you can to find one night where you can pitch in and help with the supper set up, serve, and put away. Its not too onerous and you will be among friends.

We ran into a little supply problem with fertiliser this month. We ordered the wrong fertiliser and had very little Peter's Excel left to sell. However, I offered to sell the society an older 15kg bag I had stored at home if it could be checked. I mention this only because it was accepted and is now the source of the fertilizer for our sales table. I have no doubts it is as good as any fresher supply, but I wanted to inform members that is what you will be buying.

Coming events in the next few months of 2025
8-10th May – (shop hrs) - WSOS Autumn show, Ashfield Mall, 260 Liverpool Rd Ashfield
15-17th May – (shop hrs) - Bankstown OS show, Lidcombe Shopping Centre, Lvl 1, 92 Parramatta Rd, Lidcombe
23-25th May - 9 - 4 fri/sat, 9 -2 sun, Orchids Out West, Philip Charley Pavillion, Hawkesbury Showground
12-14th June – (shop hrs) - NSOS show, St Ives Village Shopping Centre
28-28th June – 9-4 Sat, 9-3 Sun, - Mingara Annual Fair, Mingara Recreation Club, Mingara Drive, Tumbi Umbi
10-12 July – Thur-Sat (shop hrs) - Eastwood OS, Eastwood shopping centre, Rowe St, Eastwood
31 July- 2 Aug – Cumberland OS show, Grove Square Shopping Centre, Baulkham Hills
8-10th August – (9-4 fri, 9-3 Sat) National Orchid Extravaganza, Arena Sports Club, 140 Rookwood Rd, Yagoona
15-17th August – (9-4 Fri,Sat, 9-3 Sun) St Ives Orchid Fair – St Ives Showground, Mona Vale Rd, St Ives

More Society News

1. Social Dinner – Our organisers Herb, Lina, and Jessie did a great job searching, negotiating and arranging a lovely dinner with great food at the Silk Restaurant St Ives. And we had 26 members sign up for the get together – but for reasons that can never be disclosed for national security reasons (or that's what Jim said anyway) Jim and Cynthia forgot to come and had to receive a reminder call from Dennys. How embarrassing. And worse still, after a busy day they had already dined at home before the call. Oh dear, will our senior members ever live down the shame.

Well at least they did manage to show up an hour late and joined in for a very nice cup of green tea as everyone was finishing their sumptuous repast. And Cynthia and I offer our personal thanks to Jessie for packing us a take away container of a collection of the tastiest dishes, so that we could try them for dinner the next night. Thank you very much Jessie.

Our youngest members also came along and from what I saw enjoyed every minute. It was good to see you Ethan, Celeste, and also Adrian.

Dennys gave a perfect little address on behalf of the members to thank our organisers (while I was thinking up excuses). I guess these things happen but after writing about the dinner arrangements in the bulletin, over and over for 3 months, I could never imagine it would be me. The roasting and laughs were well deserved but all in good humour. When is the next one? I'll set an alarm.

2. Leaving items at the hall? – It doesn't happen every month but you may be surprised to hear it happens on a monotonously regular basis. And last month there were once again several plants left behind. ***Check- before you go home – and take your plants and any other stuff with you.***

3. Annual membership fees – Those who haven't paid for some reason are not receiving this bulletin and can no longer bench at meetings. I know this means they also wont read this notice but if they find it another way, please pay

Fees can be paid at meetings or online to **Westpac Bank, BSB No 032 188, account name - Ku-Ring-Gai Orchid Society Inc. and account number 103568**. If you use this method, **please** use **your full name as the payment description** (or if your financial institution does not allow you to enter a name, use your **phone number**.

Best of the evening Species – Habenaria carnea grown by *Jim Brydie*

I fear I am one of the very few suburban writers that will ever write about the genus Habenaria. And all because I happen to like the pretty ones. How embarrassing.

Anyway, although I have written about the gems like Habenaria rhocheila and medusae and a few others from time to time but I don't recall ever giving you an overview of the genus so I will do that now.

Habenaria is one of those few genera that is found in all continents (except antarctica). There are about 900 species although some specialists believe that these should probably be regarded as at least 3 separate but closely related species. Which leads me to wonder about how its species are categorised into groups or 'Sections' and I wasn't able to find a readily understandable explanation. There are certainly quite a number of defined Sections based on morphological features but I could not find a list of definitions that could be used as a key to simply separate one from another so I have decided to not mention any.

For Habenaria afficionados, we can't help making these orchids all sound delightful but the reality is that about 80 - 90% of the species are either ugly or completely unremarkable. You wouldn't bother with them unless for scientific research. **BUT** those that are attractive are very attractive. – Such as my little plant of Habenaria carnea above.

The pictures above weren't taken on the night of the meeting. Jane did take some excellent photos that night but the artificial light in the hall kills the pink that your eyes see in the flowers so I have used pictures I took with my iphone that same afternoon. Hence the background of a very attractive Calathea sanderiana indoor plant as a background in the first picture.

The RHS at Kew Gardens tells us that the native range of Habenaria carnea is peninsular Thailand to peninsular Malaysia in wet tropical conditions. A mature plant can reach 30 – 60 cm tall and carry 15 flowers so mine is still just on its way up. Hopefully it will be even better next year. The other attractive feature of carnea is its lovely silver speckled dark green leaves.

Individuals vary in flower colour. The pink can be almost white to almost pale salmon but I suspect that the pale pink like mine is the most common and most sought after. The habitat is described as partially shaded, in limestone soils, in evergreen forested areas at lower elevations. The picture at the right shows a plant from Thailand at 600 M elevation and to my eyes that habitat looks considerably more shaded.

This and other attractive species from similar areas, like Habenaria rhodocheila, are all tuberoid terrestrials that spend half the year underground as just a dormant tuber. The trick in growing them is their management during this dormant period. In my opinion, while the orchid is dormant it should receive NO WATER AT ALL. I used to leave it in its pot and try to keep an eye on it until Spring when I might expect to see a new shoot emerging but the problem was finding a place to put a pot of what seems to be a dead plant somewhere where you can see it and watch regularly for signs of new life. It is not an attractive item while it is dormant, it is a nuisance. Sometimes I wouldn't notice a new growth until rather late. Sometimes I put it aside and lost it altogether. Sometimes I would get impatient and think "it should have been shooting by now" and give it a little water to prompt it (and in doing so, perhaps killed it?). Enough to say I didn't find the 'leave in the pot system' useful to me.

Instead, I wait until a month after the top dies off, tip the pot out and remove any tubers I find. Once the plant grows to maturity it will usually multiply the number of tubers year on year so watch for extras. I place the removed tubers into a plastic zip lock back with a small amount of moistened sphagnum in the bottom and hang the bag near my computer desk where I can see it every day. If it gets too dry during dormancy I can add a VERY SMALL amount of water but other than that I don't touch it, and I just wait to see those little shoots starting, usually late Spring. I repot every year into fresh commercial potting mix which comes with its own supply of fertiliser, and during the growing season all I do is keep up the water, making sure not to overdo it.

And that's it.

If you ever want to try one, baby deflasked plants can be frequently purchased from specialist species orchid nurseries. Buy a pretty one, species or hybrid, and to start with, just buy one and test your skills.

Best of the Evening Hybrid – Den Enobi Purple 'Splash' grown by ***Trevor and Pauline Onslow***

A little mea culpa on my previous write-ups of this lovely orchid. I have been calling it Enobi 'Purple Splash' but the real cross name is called "Enobi Purple", and the cultivar name is 'Splash'.

Trevor and Garrie both grow this beauty and it's a photo finish as to which does it best but how ever they do it they both have their formulas tuned to perfection. It is a beautiful hybrid and has won so many Best of the Evenings there is hardly anything that has been left unsaid. I think there are about 30 canes growing in this little pot full (5 or 6 inches), and what a head of flowers, and all those buds still to come as well. The insert at the right is a close up from the same plant taken a couple of years back, just so you can see the flower colour in more detail.

The cross Den Enobi Purple is 78% the Australian Den bigibbum, 10% is a close sister Den phalaenopsis, and the other 12% is a mix of much smaller percentages of 8 other species (mostly the 'antelope' section with the twisty petals), some of which have contributed to slightly miniaturising the plant and flowers. But that is rather oversimplifying things as there are about 8 generations of breeding along half a dozen different lines to get this far.

Congratulations Trevor and Pauline. It is a magnificent orchid and you grow it to perfection. It isn't one for the beginners but when grower gets to that point they are ready to take on 'hard-canes', you should be the teachers.

Latourea Dendrobium Cultural Info (based on data from Steve Dunstan)
Some samples of the species from Dendrobium section Latourea that Steve mentioned.

Den convolutum

Den biloculare

Den tapiniense

Den atroviolaceum

Den spectabile

Some the advantages that come from Latourea dendrobe genes in hybrids are the wonderful lip colours, the spotting, the good flower heads, and the wonderful compact growth habits of most that enables the generation of big specimen type plants in small pots.

Next follows the general cultural requirement charts Steve showed us. The charts advise on the kind of natural environment the species comes from, including the elevation at which it occurs. The latter should help determine the cold hardiness of different species and the habitat it prefers in your growing areas. I don't recall Steve's hot/cold demarcation level, but for Sydney I usually advise that orchids from 1500 M and above would have little trouble being grown in a shadehouse in Sydney

Den. Sect. Latouria	Origin	Elevation (M)	Rainfall	Temperature	Light
Dend. rigidifolium	PNG	2300 - 3800	High Mist	Cold Cool Int	Shaded
Dend. terrestre	PNG	1800 - 2600	High Mist	Cool	Dappled
Dend. atroviolaceum	PNG	300 - 1500	Intermediate	Cool Inter Hot	Dappled
Dend. cruttwellii	E PNG	1500 - 2450	High	Cool Inter Hot	Dappled
Dend. engae	PNG	2000-2700	High	Cool Inter Hot	Dappled
Dend. aberrans	PNG	300 - 2000	Intermediate	Cool-Inter	Dappled
Dend. amphigenyum	PNG	1600 - 2300	High Mist	Cool-Inter	Dappled
Dend. finisterrae	PNG	1300 - 2100	Intermediate	Cool-Inter	
Dend. rhodostictum	PNG Solomon	800 - 1200	Intermediate	Cool-Inter	Dappled
Dend. simplex	PNG Irian Jaya	2400 - 3100	Intermediate	Cool-Inter	Dappled
Dend. tapiniense	PNG	1500 - 2000	Intermediate	Cool-Inter	Dap - Bri
Dend. kauldorumii	PNG	1800 - 2200	Intermediate	Cool-Warm	Bright In

Den. Sect. Latouria	Origin	Elevation (M)	Rainfall	Temperature	Light
Dend. bifalce	FNQ PNG #1	0 - 800	Low	Hot	Bright In
Dend. alexandrae	PNG	900 - 1500	Intermediate	Inter-Hot	Dappled
Dend. convolutum	PNG	750 - 1500	Intermediate	Inter-Hot	Dappled
Dend. euryanthum	PNG	800 - 1500	High	Inter-Hot	Dappled

To help interpret the above requirements, for Central Coast growers Steve suggests : -

- **For Cool to Warm growers – a Shade cloth covered Bush House**
- **Intermediate to Warm – Bush House or Cold Glasshouse in winter**
- **Warm to Hot – Hot Glasshouse in Winter if needed**

Note – Humidity and Airflow are extremely important. Hang the pots to achieve. Use fans if necessary

- **Waterwell pots provide year round humidity. If you use them, place clay balls or styrene chunks in the well** (the same as Cary Polis told us recently)
- **plus Air Holes in the side of pots (use a soldering iron)**
- **Tree Fern Mounts can also be used**

Growing medium - for his Latourea types, Steve recommends :
From Cool to Warm growers, Sphagnum Moss may be used,
Or alternately, the mix below

- **40% Medium Pine Bark,**
- **20% Medium Clay Balls,**
- **15% Large Charcoal**
- **20% Polystyrene Balls**
- **5% Jumbo Perlite**

General Culture

- **Provide High Humidity**
- **Watering**

– Summer water almost daily
– Winter Fortnightly if in protected house, same in Bush House if no rain. If a wet winter don't water (as much)

**** NOTE - They grow all year**

- **Fertilize – They love a feed – every water if possible**
  – Use whatever fertiliser you normally use
- **Protect new growths from filling up with water**
  – use the **Plastic Cup trick** (upper picture at right)
- **AND** be sure to **CAREFULLY REMOVE leaf SHEATHS on all New Growths.** (The red arrows at the right point to developing new pseudobulbs encased in soft green leafy structures called sheaths. On 'Latoureas' these sheathes are very prominent and need to be split and removed to prevent a build-up of water behind the sheath, leading to rot. While stripping, take great care while the developing stems are still very soft as they can easily snap and break.

Some other delightful benchings from February – “Catts, Catts, Catts”

Catt Elusive Dream

RLC Adelaide Queen

RLC Chief Journey

RLC California Girl x Redland City

RLC Village Chief North ‘Green Genius’

Rth Nell Hammer

And some other beauties from across the hall

Ett. Volcano Trick ‘Orange Delight’
Colourful mix of presently 3 genera – Cattleya, Guarianthe, and Epidendrum.5cm flowers

Den Firewings – a cross between 3 Latourea Dendrobiums and our Aussie Den bigibbum

Paph Charlesworthii – a cute mini species from Myanmar. Shady grower on rocks at 1200-1600m

Prosthechea cochleate – the aliens are landing
Easy to grow, delightful flowers ‘en-masse’

unknown but looks a lot like Howeara Lava Burst
Nice one Ethan

Dendrochilum Magnum
(officially a hybrid of unknown x unknown)

What do you know about Apical Dominance? By Jim Brydie (with lots from Wikipedia)

At out latest meeting, Jessie Koh showed me a Vandaceous plant of hers that had begun to produce a number of new shoots at the base of the plant and several at points along the side of the main stem. The plant had lovely flowers and was in rather good condition overall and Jessie was a little surprised at all the new growths.

I suspected that the likely cause was a sudden loss of apical dominance from a damaged main shoot but because it was and excellent example of that effect and was flowering and growing well apart from the previous accidental tip growth damage, I asked Jessie if she would allow me to use her plant as a topic for this month's bulletin.

I will talk more about the specifics of Jessie's lovely orchid a bit further on but before I do that I want to properly explain Apical Dominance itself. I will do a follow up article next month, explaining plant systems in a little more detail but apical dominance is all to do with the way plants grow and the effects of their hormones in that process.

So, just what is Apical Dominance?

Wikipedia does a nice job of a general explanation in the following :

> In Botany, **apical dominance** is the phenomenon whereby the main, central stem of the plant is dominant over (i.e., grows more strongly than) other side stems. On a branch the main stem of the branch is further dominant over its own side twigs.
>
> Plant physiology describes apical dominance as the control exerted by the terminal bud (and shoot apex) over outgrowth of lateral buds.

Many conifers show particularly strong apical dominance, strongest of all being in the family Auraucaria, showing a single erect central trunk with strongly differentiated horizontal branching. Cuttings of Araucariaceae species taken from a side branch will not develop erect growth.

Overview - Apical dominance occurs when the shoot apex inhibits the growth of lateral buds so that the plant may grow vertically. It is important for the plant to devote energy to growing upward so that it can get more light to undergo photosynthesis. If the plant utilizes available energy for growing upward, it may be able to outcompete other individuals in the vicinity. Plants that were capable of outcompeting neighbouring plants likely had higher fitness and success. Apical dominance is therefore most likely adaptive.

Typically, the end of a shoot contains an apical bud, which is the location where shoot growth occurs. The apical bud produces a plant hormone – Auxin (IAA) (ie indole acetic acid) that inhibits growth of the lateral buds further down on the stem towards the axillary bud. Auxin is predominantly produced in the growing shoot apex and is transported throughout the plant via the phloem and diffuses into lateral buds which prevents elongation".

(JB – Phloem is the part of the plant that moves the sap, including sugars and other plant manufactured products (like hormones), throughout the plant

When the apical bud is removed, the lowered IAA (Indole Acetic Acid) concentration allows the lateral buds to grow and produce new shoots.

A bit about AUXINS *(Wikipedia)* - It should be noted that Indole Acetic Acid is not the only Auxin produced in plants. And, different plants react to the same hormone differently. For example, the picture below is of a weeping larch tree which exhibits almost no apical dominance from the hormones in its apical shoots. So you can not look at every plant and expect to see the same effects from its various hormones.

← Weeping larch (a conifer with the name Larix decidua var pendula)

Auxins are a class of plant hormones (or plant-growth regulators) with some morphogen-like characteristics. Auxins play a cardinal role in coordination of many growth and behavioral processes in plant life cycles and are essential for plant body development.

Auxins were the first of the major plant hormones to be discovered. They derive their name from the Greek word (*auxein* – 'to grow/increase'). Auxin is present in all parts of a plant, although in very different concentrations. The concentration in each position is crucial developmental information, so it is subject to tight regulation (by the plant) through both metabolism and transport. The result is the auxin creates "patterns" of auxin concentration (max and min) in the plant body, which in turn guide further development of respective cells, and ultimately, of the plant as a whole.

The (dynamic and environment responsive) pattern of auxin distribution within the plant is a key factor for plant growth, its reaction to its environment, and specifically for development of plant organs (such as leaves or flowers). It is achieved through very complex and well-coordinated active transport of auxin molecules from cell to cell throughout the plant body. Thus, a plant can (as a whole) react to external conditions and adjust to them, without

requiring a nervous system. Auxins typically act in concert with, or in opposition to, other plant hormones. For example, the ratio of auxin to cytokinin in certain plant tissues determines initiation of root versus shoot buds.

So what actually happens when the apical bud is removed?

The lowered IAA concentration allows the lateral buds to grow and produce new shoots. One would guess that the plan is for the various new shoots to compete and for one, probably the strongest or best placed, to become the new lead growth.

Plant physiologists have identified four different stages the plant goes through after the apex is removed (Stages I-IV). The four stages are referred to as :

1. lateral bud formation. cytokinin is promoted, causing the lateral bud to form since cytokinin plays a role in cell division;
2. "imposition of inhibition" ie apical dominance. Auxin is promoted, resulting in apical dominance ("imposition of inhibition")
3. initiation of lateral bud outgrowth following decapitation. (cytokinin released resulting in outward growth of the lateral bud);
4. elongation and development of the lateral bud into a branch. (auxin is decreased and gibberellic acid is promoted which results in cell division, enabling the bud or branch to continue outward growth).

On the right is Jessie's lovely orange flowered Vanda. The main stem was about 90 cm tall and the leaf span about 50-60 cm.

The label in Jessie's pot appeared to be incorrect but as several other growers also grow this particular hybrid, Garrie Bromley was able to tell me that some years back he did find the correct name and the cross is now called Vandachostylis Jean's Delight. The genus name Vandachostylis indicates that its gene pool is a mix of Vanda and Rhynchostylis.

Jean's Delight's parentage is Van. Shigenori Yamanaka x Vanda Yip Sum Wah. The lovely colour comes from the little miniature Vandas (miniatum and curvifolium) that used to be called Ascocentrums. But the genes also include 6 of the larger Vandas plus the blue or pink Rhynchostylis coelestis that was discussed last month. A curious mix. Big plant, smaller flowers, nice flower shape.

But now lets talk about why I thought apical dominance was at play.

This second picture on the left points out some key features.

(a) The yellow arrow points to the base of the flower spike that is carrying the lovely orange flowers.

(b) The blue arrow points to the damaged tip of the original main stem. It is the loss of this growing point that triggered the growth of side shoots.

(c) The flower spike is not coming from the original central stem but instead it is coming from the growth designated by the red arrows, which is a side branch off the old main stem.

The third picture *(right)* shows a cluster of at least 4 new shoots at the base on one side and there is at least one more on the other side of the main stem. Talk about a desperate attempt to keep living. This orchid must really like the care it is getting at Jessie's place. And those base shoots are in addition to the new flowering shoot up near the top.

I have never seen such a direct result of a loss of the apical bud in an orchid.

We must also bear in mind that there are two distinct growth styles in orchids. Monopdial like the Vandas, where the

main stem extends upward year after year. And Sympodial like the Cattleyas and others where the plant grows from a rhizome and makes a new pseudobulb (usually each year).

Apical dominance doesn't strictly work by gravity but gravity is an influence and apical dominance is more obvious in vertical growth plants such as a Vanda or a pine tree. However, the same principles apply to orchids with Sympodial growth. The lead growth on a sympodial rhizome certainly suppresses potential side branch growths off the rhizome and if you remove the lead growth, side growth will initiate, provided the buds along the rhizome are still viable. With the kinds of pests that routinely attack orchids these days, side bud viability can't always be taken for granted.

But getting back to Vandas, these orchids have an inherent problem in that excessive 'tallness' becomes a practical problem for growers over time. In addition, Vandas are also susceptible to a fungal disease known colloquially as "Thai Disease' (correct name Guignardia), a fungus which is a common cause of premature leaf drop on the lower leaves leading to the plant looking something like a tall bare stemmed palm tree. The picture at the left illustrates typical Guignardia fungal damage on leaves.

The usual remedy for an over tall Vanda is what is called "Top Cutting". I wont go into the detail of describing that process here but there is an excellent article by an Australian author 'friendii' on the St Augustine orchid society website at the following link – https://staugorchidsociety.org/PDF/RockhamptonOS-Topping-Vandas.pdf

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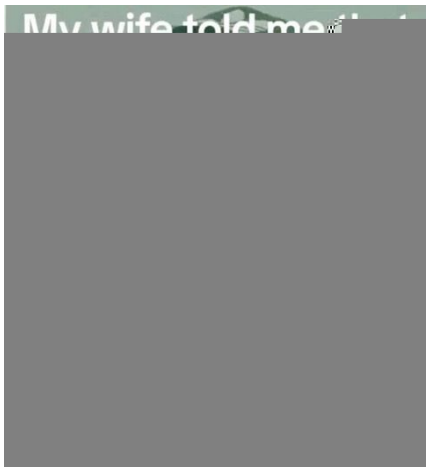
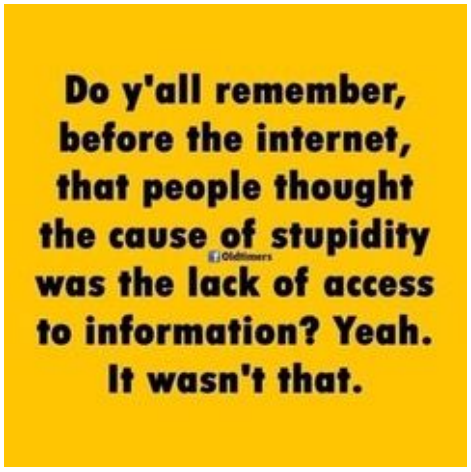
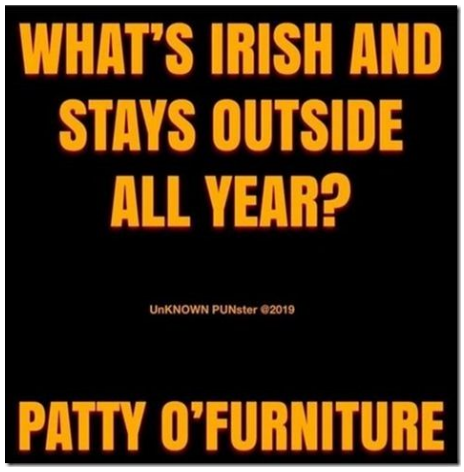
Humour to End the Day







A driver is pulled over by a policeman.

The policeman approaches the driver's door. - 'Is there a problem, officer?' - 'You were speeding, sir. Can I see your licence please?' - The driver responds, 'I would give it to you but I don't have one. I lost it four times for drink driving.' The policeman is shocked. 'I see. Can I see your vehicle registration documents please?'

'I'm sorry, I can't do that.' - 'Why not?' – 'I stole this car.' - The officer says, 'Stole it?' – 'Yes, and I killed the owner.'

At this point the officer is getting irate. 'You did what?' - 'She's in the boot if you want to see.'

The policeman looks at the man and slowly backs away to his car and calls for urgent assistance. Within minutes, five police cars, including an armed response team, show up, surrounding the car. The armed response team leader slowly approaches the car, clasping his pistol. - Sir, step out of your vehicle please!'

The man steps out of his vehicle. 'Is there a problem officer?' he asks in puzzlement.

'You told my colleague that you stole this car and murdered the owner.' - 'Murdered the owner?' – 'Open the boot of your car please.' The man opens the boot, revealing only an empty space. Definitely no body.

'Is this your car sir?' the ART leader asks. - "Why, yes,' the man replies and hands over the registration document. The officer, understandably, is quite stunned. 'My colleague claims that you do not have a driving licence.'

The man digs in his pocket revealing a wallet and hands it to the officer. The officer opens the wallet and examines the licence. He looks quite puzzled. 'Thank you sir. My colleague reported that you didn't have a licence, stole this car, and murdered the owner. My apologies.'

The man replies, 'What? I am being persecuted - and he probably told you I was speeding, too!'