



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

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

18th July 2022 Volume 63 No. 7
Annual Membership : **\$15 single, \$18 family**

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Next Meeting : Mon 18th July 2022

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

Same as last month – Attendees must be double vaccinated. *Your vacc. certificate will be checked (unless it was previously checked and registered at a meeting). Please cooperate with those managing this process.* Also, if you aren't feeling well on the night, please stay home. Think of your friends.

Face masks are no longer mandatory but are strongly recommended where 1.5 M spacing can't be maintained!!

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

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

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

The actual meeting commences at 8pm. We start with the meeting formalities run by the President while the judges review the benched orchids. Once judging is complete, and winners announced, we will break for supper.

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

The Speaker – After the break we will have a fascinating **talk by the President of the OSNSW, Mr. Graham Larkham, titled "Exploring plant pathogens and their impact upon orchids"**. Graham has been a major part of the administration of several of Sydney's orchid societies and is a very experienced speaker.

Best of the Evening Open - Hybrid-- Cymbidium Prized x Twilight in Gold grown by Geoff LeMarne



I wasn't there on the night but this sure looks like a startling colour. I imagine it must have been a real challenge for Jane our 'official' photographer to capture but she did a great job as usual.

I suspect this cross isn't registered just yet although I don't have the latest records. Prized was made by Guest Orchids in S.A. while Twilight in Gold comes from our old friends at Royale Orchids at Peats Ridge north of Sydney.

Prized's parents are 'Eight Carat' and 'Unforgettable'. I have no picture for the first but the name suggests gold, and only one picture for Unforgettable which is an albino gold. i.e. yellow with absolutely no red pigments. Twilight in Gold's parents ('Autumn Crisp' x 'Fire Water') are both deep golden yellow with strong red highlights in the lip. They are both are really well coloured but neither are particularly shapely. The one picture I found of Twilight in Gold is similar in colour but much better shaped.

So where does the red/brown colour come from? Well I am guessing that it comes from Cym. Claude Pepper which features strongly in the breeding on both parent sides of Royale's 'Twilight in Gold'. Claude Pepper is an old cross registered back in 1968 but it is a complex cross where some cultivars are pink, some almost red, some gold, some orange, and at least one is a green background overlaid with red that makes the flower look like striped brown.

I wonder if this glowing orange-gold-bronze look was what the breeder of Prized was looking for, or whether it was just a lucky coincidence? Who will ever know. Congratulations Geoff. It looks a real eye-catcher. I am sorry I wasn't there to see it.

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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 for July – Janine and I were unable to attend our June general and committee meetings due to COVID complications in our family. We had 34 people attend the general meeting which is wonderful given we had 12 apologies. Thank you, Jenny, for chairing the meeting and thanks are also extended to our great committee and active helpers for ensuring operations on the night worked. I also thank James for his presentation and at some time I would like to have a private viewing if possible.

I hope those that were unable to attend are managing whatever situations in which they have found themselves in a hopeful way.

June bulletin mail out – I apologise to those members who rely on the mail out for their bulletin. Life gets in the way sometimes and unfortunately that happened in our household with COVID complications and the difficulties that causes. I will try and get the missing bulletin to you soon.

Wearing of masks – Please remember that the pandemic **has not gone away**. There is a danger that complacency is emerging in our communities. People are still getting very ill, and deaths are still occurring. As I write this there have been 22 deaths in NSW in the last 24 hours. My age puts me in the high-risk group as I suspect are many of our members. Please try and wear your masks at our meeting and use the hand disinfectant dispensers just to help keep the risk as low as we practically can do so.

Rules are necessary to reduce the personal COVID risk of members to the lowest level possible.

Helpers still needed - St. Ives Orchid Show – please read the members **Information Pack** distributed with the bulletin. Our committee is busy planning for the restart of the show. We will be passing the volunteer request sheet again at the July meeting. Some members who have been unable to attend the meetings have indicated that they will still be able to volunteer to help at the show. On Thursday morning we will need folk to help setup the display, however, more physically able folk will be needed to help setup the vendors hall also on Thursday morning so the vendors can setup on Thursday afternoon. If you are unable to attend the July meeting, please let us know ASAP when you can specifically help, especially on Thursday morning. This request is extended to those who have already volunteered by phone or SMS. We need to let the St Ives Fair committee know the helper-offerings well ahead of the show so effort can be scheduled for a smooth operation.

Benching card records – Graeme Mohr has been collecting and recoding benching results for KOS since the beginning of time. Graeme is prepared to do so until the end of October but needs to hand over the role to someone else. He is prepared to help a new person do this. If you like recording data and manipulating spreadsheets, then this is the job for you. Please let Graeme or any of our committee know if you would like to have ago. It is not challenging if you would like to learn about spreadsheets.

Queen of Sheba – An ABC article on the sighting of this very rare orchid in WA can be found at the following link; <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-06-27/rare-queen-of-sheba-orchid-sighted-at-bremer-bay/101185000>

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

Member's welfare – personal challenges occur all the time, so please remember, if you need to speak to someone immediately then you are most welcome to contact me at any time, 24/7 on 043 88 77 689.

UPCOMING EVENTS: (please check sources for any changes)

1. 12-14 Aug -- National Orchid Extravaganza & Paphiopedilum Society of NSW, The Arena Sports Club, Rookwood Rd, Yagoona. Cymbidium, Paphiopedilums, and many others. Many vendors.

2. The St Ives Orchid Fair - 19-21 Aug

St Ives Showground,
Mona Vale Rd, St Ives

THE BIGGEST OF THEM ALL, BACK AT LAST

Members - We are one of the clubs that run this fair and we also put on one of the displays in the display hall.

This is your show – We need your Support and your Help

There are two main aspects to the support we want from you.

1. **Volunteer Rosters** - As one of the 4 partner societies that set up and run the Fair, we need your physical help to man the show while it is running. ALL workers at the show are the members of one the 4 partner societies.

Volunteer rosters will be circulated again at the July meeting and we need Ku-Ring-Gai members to volunteer for as many 3½ hour shifts during the show, and for the set up, that you can offer us.



St Ives Orchid Fair
'The Big One'

ST IVES SHOWGROUND
Mona Vale Road, St Ives

Friday 19 th August 2022	9 am to 4 pm
Saturday 20 th August 2022	9 am to 4 pm
Sunday 21 st August 2022	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/>

These shifts will cover all the tasks in running the show. For example - On Thursday (set up) we need people to help set up the vendors hall with its tables and cover all the tables with taped down plastic sheets. We also need members to help set up the display. During Fri/Sat/Sun when the show is open to the public, we need people to do security in both halls, help on the sales table, sell raffle tickets, sell entrance tickets, and also people to assist at the entrances to both halls to ensure visitors have tickets & be there to answer questions.

When you offer your volunteer time slot, the roster managers will allocate you to where they need you on the day, but, if for example, you have a problem standing up for extended periods, put a comment on the volunteer roster sheet when you offer your time slot and we will accommodate your needs.

*** *More detail is set out in the KOS MEMBER INFORMATION PACK sent out with this newsletter.*

2. The Ku-Ring-Gai OS Orchid display. – We not only run this fair, we are one of the societies that puts on a display of member's plants in the competitive display section. To do this we need your flowering orchids and small foliage plants we can use for fillers in between the orchid pots to give the appearance of a sea of plants and flowers.

The plants should be clean, in good condition, and free of pests and diseases. Orchid flowers in the displays are also entered into the show classes set out in the show schedule distributed with this newsletter. Because they are separately judged in their classes, we need members supplying plants to fill in a nomination form (also supplied with this bulletin) so that we know who owns each orchid and what its name is. Remember, you may be putting your orchids up to win some prize money for yourself. *Again, more detail is in the Members Info Pack.*

3. Sales Table - Finally, although this is not an obligation, the partner societies run a sales table for their members in the vendors hall. If any KOS members wish to sell plants, there are various detailed requirements you must follow and 15% commission applies. *All the details are in the KOS Members Info pack.*

BOE Open Species – *Cattleya percivaliana* grown by Lee Payne

I think this has to be one of the most desirable of all *Cattleya* species. Most are coloured the same as this one, that is a sort of lilac pink with deep crimson/purple and orange/gold in the lip. The shape varies a bit from one cultivar to the next but they are a reliable flowerer with large (12cm), pleasingly full flowers in heads of up to 4. The flowers also generally face the viewer perfectly without manipulative staking.

What more could you ask for.

Percivaliana comes from the north of South America, mostly Venezuela but also Colombia, at altitudes of 1300 to 2000 meters. It is mostly a lithophyte on cliffs or rocks, often in full sun, but also occurs as an epiphyte. Habitat locations are often near rivers or streams.

The plants are somewhat smaller than most of the other Labiate type *Cattleyas*. The pseudobulbs are generally about 15cm tall and have a single more or less upright 25cm leaf on top. The moderate size but still well shaped good size flowers has made it a popular choice for hybridisers over a long time. It is a direct parent in over 180 crosses and is in the parentage of over 7000 hybrids.

From our last meeting I have pictures of two different cultivars. The one above from Lee Payne, and this other (close right) from Loretta Au. As you can see they are slightly different in shape but quite similar.

The majority of *percivaliana* are this same colour pattern. The depth of the pink/lilac/lavender (whatever name you want to give it) also varies, with some pale lilac to almost white, and others in all depths of colour to quite a deep colour in the darkest. There are only very few other colour forms of *percivaliana* but they do exist. An article from the American Orchid Society tells me there is an albescent form which I believe means all white, and there is also what is known in orchids as a semi-alba form (far right) which means white petals and sepals but a full coloured lip. I have also seen pictures of a VERY pink form but I have never seen a pink one in real life and I am a bit suspicious given the variations that can be seen in photography of identical subjects. However, perhaps they do exist.

Lovely orchid Lee. Congratulations on another Best of the Evening.



BOE Novice for June – Onc. Tsiku Marguerite 'HOF' grown by Fred Gorginian



There is quite a story behind this style of Oncidium breeding. The hybrid that started it all, was made way back in 1958 by that famous pioneering orchid breeder – Mr. W. W. G. Moir.

That 'new' orchid was Onc. Twinkle and was the result of the inspired crossing between the pink flowered ornithorhynchum (now Onc. sotoanum) and the small yellow flowered Onc cheirophorum. This cross produced pretty much what should have been expected. A plant size midway between the two parents making a small but not miniature orchid, with flowers also half size and in a range of colours from white to yellow to pink. AND, lots of them too.

Now for the big surprise. Although it was made in 1958, no one seemed to notice it as a possible parent until over 40 years later. In fact, the first hybrid registered using Twinkle as a parent was this one of Fred's (*Tsiku Marguerite*) in 2000, which is the cross of Twinkle back onto Onc. sotoanum.

Let's look first at Twinkle.

Onc cheirophorum

O. sotoanum (ornithorhynchum)

Twinkle 'Fragrant Fantasy'

Onc. cheirophorum is the one that defines the semi mini form of Twinkle. This species comes from Nicaragua in Central America but also occurs all the way down from there to Colombia in Sth. America. It occurs in wet



tropical forests at only moderate elevations of 500 m to 1500 m (mostly around the middle of that range) so it usually proves to be a slightly warmer grower than many Oncidiums – perhaps minimum 10°C.

Twinkle's other parent (sotoanum) comes from the northern end of Central America and at slightly higher elevations. I have grown and flowered it well in my covered shadehouse 'cold' because it expects a dry dormant period through our winter and is fairly dormant, but in nature its temperature range never reaches extremes and its minimum would be about 10°C. It is also a smallish species but slightly larger than cheirophorum. It's pretty little pink flowers are only about 2cm across and occur on a semi-pendent, branched, very wiry inflorescence. It is easier to grow than cheirophorum and has passed on this characteristic to Twinkle, along with the genes for pink in the flowers. Luckily, one characteristic it doesn't seem to have passed on, is sotoanum's fairly pungent and unpopular perfume. It isn't all that bad, but you sure wouldn't go across the street to try and seek it out for the perfume.

As to cool tolerance, Twinkles is just a little more cool tolerant than cheirophorum but nowhere near as tolerant as sotoanum. It distinctly dislikes winter cold. It will maybe just tolerate around minimum 5°C but strongly prefers warmer. If you don't have a glasshouse it would be best to take it indoors.

So what about Tsiku Marguerite? Well I have never grown one so I hope Fred corrects me if I get this all wrong, but I would expect that a hybrid that is 75% sotoanum and only 25% cheirophorum will be much more strongly influenced but sotoanum's winter rest characteristic and would therefore grow colder.

When I checked out Tsiku Marguerite in Orchidwiz, the flowers were almost exactly what I would have expected. They seem to display just a little more like sotoanum. Most are horizontal to semi-pendent, although some, like Fred's are more upright. Individual flowers are much the same as sotoanum in shape and size. The colour range is less wide ranging than Twinkle. Quite a few white to nearly white, and a few rather pale yellows. It also comes in many shades of pink, from very pale to about full sotoanum colour. From the limited sample I have seen, Fred's seems to be one of the nicer yellows. To sum up, overall a colour range more restricted to the sotoanum end of the Twinkle range.

With some expected hybrid vigour I expect Tsiku Marguerite would be a good grower and a reliable flowerer. More or less like a better coloured form of sotoanum?

A nice one Fred, and one I hadn't seen before. Congratulations on yet another best of the Evening.

Music in the Cemetery -- A man is walking in a graveyard when he hears the Third Symphony being played backward. When it was over, the Second Symphony started playing, also backward, and then the First.

"What's going on?" he asks a cemetery worker. "It's Beethoven," says the worker. "He's decomposing"

Other orchids from the June meeting --- Paphs and more Paphs.



Paph fairrianum

Paph venustum

Paph venustum var. album

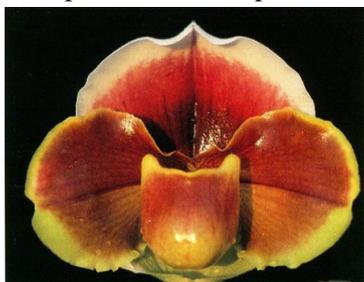
Paph wardii

I wasn't at the last meeting, but if I was taking pictures of Paphs I am sure these would have been my targets as these are high class specimens of species Paphs. And when I say high class, what I mean is these individuals are vastly superior to the average species of their type that might be found in the wild, if of course there are any left in the wild.

Man has intensively line bred most species orchids in the past 50 or more years, to the point where the seedlings we buy today strongly highlight the features we generally find the most attractive. In a species that would probably be strength of colour, contrasting colours, clean shape lines, accentuation of shape features that are unique to a particular species, etc. In the pictures above the shape and colour of the fairrianum is excellent, especially featuring the exaggerated curled up handlebar moustache shape of the petals. The venustum is very strongly coloured compared to most and the lip shape is accentuated. The venustum is an albino which is readily available today but would be very, very rare in the wild. The wardii is a little deficient in the size and shape of the dorsal sepal and the petals, but the colour is quite unusual in its highlight of the green tones and is quite desirable.

When I first began growing orchids about 50 years ago, the focus on Paphs was most definitely on the big round hybrids. Man's judging standards said that the best Paphs should be round in overall shape and filled in so that gaps between petals and sepals was either non-existent or minimal. The aim in flower texture was to be thick and long lasting and had lead to the exploitation of polyploid hybrids with multiple sets of the chromosomes of a standard Paph. Man had been breeding to create this perceived perfection for perhaps 70 to 100 years and had created some that were pretty damn close. However, when I first started, these had no interest for me at all. For that matter I wasn't interested in any Paphs at all. I didn't see the species much and the hybrids looked like big plastic dishes to me.

Compare these examples below to the species pictures above.



Paph Amanda 'Joyance'

Paph Amanda 'Nutmeg'

Peter Clifford Peter

Paph Greenshank 'Coro'

Your tastes change throughout the years of your orchid growing hobby and I do see the artistry and attraction of these type of hybrids today. I even have a big green albino type like this in my kitchen at present. It has been there for 6 weeks and is showing no sign of fizzling out just yet. It is impressive but a visitor the other day remarked "is it real? It looks like a plastic flower." And that for me is the issue. They don't look like a flower. They have little softness or finesse. They are big, bold, and plastic.

I don't know if any hybrid Paphs like these were benched last meeting but I have observed a gradual decline in the desire for these types in the past 20 years. Whether this is just an overall change in tastes or because hybridists changed direction toward the species and primary hybrid types I can't say but that change in breeding direction does seem to have happened. Life is curious isn't it?

Zelenkoa onusta (was Oncidium onustum) benched by Trevor Onslow
 What a delightful picture Jane got of this one. All standing upright and facing at you. This is a weird Oncidiinae species from desert areas and often grows on Cactus, which probably why I fail at it. Oh yes, I have flowered it a few times but my poor old Zelenkoas usually fade away never to be seen again.



Trevor on the other hand seems to have an inbuilt feel for what each orchid desires. He grows Zelenkoa beautifully, and just about every other Oncidiinae for that matter. I think its time for Trevor to do another guest speaker spot to teach the rest of us.

A couple of Garrie and Lesley's stunners

How about these two for shape and colour. Den Hot Lips on the left is one of those hardcane bigibbum types that were bred from an accidental mutation that produced a plant with a lip that looked like a petal. It was amazing to watch how hybridists stabilized that mutation over many generations to make it a feature they could produce at their will. Well almost anyway. It is quite an attractive ting isn't it?



The bluish one at the right is Vanda MARRISA's Little Doll 'Bonnie's Wish'. Now what a perfect shape and colour combination. If blue colour with a perfect round shape and a great contrasting lip was what they were seeking they sure got it right with this one. It is a mix of 7 Vanda species but more than 50% is just one, the big showy Vanda sanderiana and the next biggest contributor is 15.6% from the miniature flowered (previously Ascocentrum) curvifolium. The miniature flowered curvifolium makes the flowers of MARRISA's Little Doll more in the middle size range at about 6.5 cm across. Not small by any means but much smaller than the big sanderiana which can be up to 11 or 12 cm diameter although often a bit less.

The trouble with both these orchids for me is that they are strictly warm glasshouse types. Garrie and Lesley grow them beautifully but they provide what they need and both Garrie and Lesley are top grade growers of all orchids.

Mingara 2022 - sunshine, orchids, and orchid growers by Jim Brydie

With all the Covid 19 shut downs and event cancellations of the past few years, this year's visit was my first trip to Mingara or just about anywhere for a few years and I greatly enjoyed it. With the Sydney Swans playing at the SCG that same night, we had to leave a little earlier than I might have otherwise, but I would still have a few hours to check out all the wonderful orchids for sale on the vendors stalls, catch up with old friends, and check out the displays.

I have done the drive up the M1 many times before and it isn't a difficult trip but I must admit I was becoming excited as we pulled into the Mingara club carpark. It seemed so long since the last visit. We barely got out of the car before we saw many people already coming back to their cars with arm loads of flowering orchids and bags full of smaller plants. We were late. Would all the bargains already be gone?

But I needn't have worried. By the time we had made our way to the vendors hall, I was meeting old acquaintances and sharing the excitement of being back at the big orchid fairs. I must have stopped and said hello or talked to a dozen old friends in the first hour before I extracted myself to troll the stalls. I didn't plan to buy any orchids, I never do, but perhaps if I found something special, and if I really couldn't resist the temptation, maybe.



Boy was it busy and what a huge array of orchids. All sorts of species and hybrids were available. Many I found interesting and was tempted but I was strong and held myself in check. There were a few I had never seen before but still I resisted as I knew I shouldn't buy anymore. But then I found David and John Woolf's stall that had an exciting range of delightful little jewel orchids for sale at very good prices. Some small ones for just \$12 and some larger ones for just a little more. I succumbed. I just couldn't go home without buying something. I bought 4 different types and then blow me down if I didn't find more and different jewels at Bill Miles' OrchidSpeciesPlus stall. Bill had nice plants at 2 for \$30 so I bought two more different ones.

After wandering the sales stall for a couple of hours and talking to growers I hadn't seen for a while, Cynthia and I

were both looking for coffee and a bun, so we headed for the coffee stall just outside the vendors hall. Unfortunately, this is also where the orchid culture talks and other activities were also taking place, and boy, was space at a premium.

I don't know the geography of Mingara club that well, but if I have one suggestion to the show organisers, it would be that you need to improve your coffee/ fast food/ socialising area and your culture talks area. Events like this are not just about pumping people through. They are social events and word of mouth is important. There needs to be space for connection to happen.

I imagine the Mingara Sports club would prefer that visitors use its existing formal coffee shop and dining facilities upstairs, but frankly they were all rather overwhelmed by the number of visitors anyway and it wasn't a question of a contest, there just wasn't anywhere to for a coffee with friends.

Anyway, as we looked about for somewhere to sit if we did manage to buy a coffee, some friends from the Sutherland club invited us to join them and we all squeezed together sitting on chairs, a table and some plant pot edges. But orchid growers don't need much anyway. We did get the coffee and a muffin, chatted about Dendrobiums, making 'hardcanes' create kikis, and all sorts of other trivia that orchid growers find fascinating, and while we were entertaining ourselves, a lovely Mingara orchid club lady also welcomed us to the event and gave each party a little gift bag to take home. They are a wonderful orchid club Mingara. I must get up to a meeting again sometime when the weather warms up a bit. All in all a wonderfully pleasant day and always one of my favourite days out for the year.

All good things eventually end of course and soon enough we had to head off home, but even as we drove out of the carpark, I was already thinking about what I was going to do with those 6 new little Jewel orchids. I had failed at cultivating Jewel orchids previously but knew that I had failed because I just couldn't provide a realistic environment for them while trying to fit them somewhere into my glasshouse or shadehouse. These are warm growing, forest floor dwelling, high humidity, low light orchids. In general, growing areas designed for all my other orchids just didn't have the right niches for a jewel orchid's requirements.

What I had in mind now was a terrarium. Just last year while we were covid locked down, I had experimented successfully with a terrarium just to see if I could do it, and I thought that these jewel orchids would also respond well to that kind of culture.

For last year's experiment I bought some little foliage plants and a cheap 20cm diameter fish bowl for a terrarium. There were no orchids involved but I bought a fern, a baby coloured leaf Calathea, and a few foliage plants like small leaf Fittonias, and Hypoestes (freckle plants). I researched terrarium techniques and as a bottom base I crushed some orchid charcoal I already had on hand, and made my own terrarium potting mix to suit the container. I used premium grade potting mix, peat moss, and coarse sand.



Naturally, like all experiments, there were a few unplanned issues. The original layout I designed include a nice specimen of a rock to contrast the foliage but I found that it soon disappeared in the foliage so I removed it. Next was the Hypoestes. They were great at first, but even though I knew they would outgrow the container, my constant tip pruning and cutting back wasn't enough. There are still a couple in there but they aren't getting the light they need and with all my hard pruning they are dying out. The Calathea (rosepecta) grew really well in the environment too and looked very nice for 6 or 8 months with its contrasting foliage colours and texture, but it grew a little too well and well inside a year it outgrew the fishpond and had to be extracted. Such are the trials faced by an experimenter. But just the same I think it still looks rather nice. (see above)

Jewel Orchids - Earlier this year, James Indsto (editor for the NSW Species orchid society) wrote a very good article about his own experiment growing 'jewels' in a rectangular fishtank. He rigged it with LED artificial lighting and some underneath heating and it has been quite successful with his plants progressing nicely.

James' set up was more complex than I wanted to try though and my success with my own little terrarium made me think that my dining room table with a north facing window would provide sufficient lighting and as I am getting old and keep the house warmed with the air conditioner in winter, I thought that would be sufficient heat. With humidity loving plants though, the biggest problem is the horribly dry indoor atmosphere. However, the Fittonias I was growing were also subject to that problem and the terrarium seemed to be quite adequately compensating.



In my first terrarium I started out with a lid on the top opening to help maintain rainforest like conditions but I soon found that it just wasn't necessary and removed it. If the Fittonias could cope, and in fact were thriving, I thought the jewel orchids might cope as well. After all, they are low light, high humidity ground creepers.

From my first experiment however, one thing I did realise was that my first little globular fishtank wasn't big enough.

I checked out the local cheap stuff shop and found the next bigger bowl. The first was 20cm diameter, the new one (right) was only 25 cm but was also considerably taller. As you can see in this picture,

that is a much bigger overall growing space. * In case you were curious, the two little pots inside that large bowl are more Fittonias from Bunnings. (they were on special)

So what do my new little jewel babies look like? Well they are in 2 inch tubes, rather small and as yet undeveloped. Here is what the 6 of them look like and I am already thinking I should have just stuck to 3 or 4. It's the curse of all orchid growers. If they put 6 different ones in front of you then there is no way you are going to buy 4 is there? But I am sure you will be proud of me when I tell you that Bill's stall had even more species that tempted me. I was very strong and only bought 2 from Bill instead of 4. Even I couldn't buy 8.

The 6 I ended up with are (clockwise from the tall one at the back and the middle one last) : *Macodes sandieriana*, *Anoectochilus* sp. (perhaps *alba* white net), *Macodes petola*, *Anoect. roxburghii* (Hayata red), *Anoectochilus albolineatus*??, *Anoectochilus formosanum* Hayata.

I didn't realise until I got home that the lovely deep red one at the top left was labelled 'albolineatus' which seems a bit strange to me but may be right. If I figure out a different name later on I will let you know but I wanted a nice red one so I would have bought it anyway.

I know these babies are a bit small but all look vigorous and healthy so I am thinking that if they get into a suitable environment they should get off and running quick enough.

So what potting medium will I use? I am going to use the same charcoal layer as a base but may mix a few pebbles with it to stabilise it from slipping around in the glass. I originally thought I would try a combination of a coarse sand potting mix like the previous terrarium but go with a little more shallow layer. These orchids grow among rotting leaf litter and other forest floor debris which probably does include stones and sandy litter. However, when you buy these tubes they always come in loose sphagnum moss and all introductions I have read so far tell you to use ONLY sphag as the medium. I haven't done it yet but I am waning and as I have some sphag I will probably use that. For other orchids I like to pack sphag quite tight to stop it becoming over wet, but in a terrarium situation that isn't possible.

This is just the start of my experiment so you don't get all the answers yet, but I will keep you updated as I go along. I am going to put in all six orchids and several scattered divisions of *Fittonia* to aid the humidity and decorate the experiment but I know that if all thrive I will certainly have to weed out and transplant some of my initial plants as they develop. It's a bit like Bonsai really. An environment like this is never finally finished. There is always some regular primping and pruning and fiddling so you have to start out expecting it.

A bit more about Jewel Orchids We see a lot of pictures of small tubes of very highly coloured and patterned leaves called jewel orchids but what do they really look like and what are we aiming for when we try to grow these strange orchids. I thought that the first step would be to show you some of the staggering range of highly coloured leaf orchids that actually occur on nature. I suspect it is much more extensive than you really think.

The three main genera we see sold as jewel orchids are from Asia and are *Anoectochilus*, *Ludisia*, and *Macodes*. *Ludisia* is a little larger grower and more coarsely stemmed than the other two. However there are many, more genera that have also been available for years, like *Dossinia*, *Goodyera*, *Cystorchis*, *Melaxis*, *Nephalophyllum*, *Aspidogyne*, *Zeuxine* to name but a few. In addition there are many American terrestrial species with deeply patterned leaves, some with colour, that some might call jewel orchids and others may not.

In addition, within the first 3 genera mentioned, *Anoectochilus* has 42 species and there are 11 species in *Macodes*. There is only one species of *Ludisia* (*Ludisia*

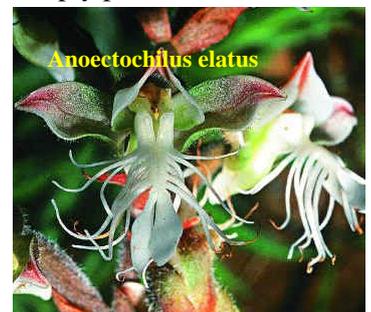


Macodes sandieriana



Ludisia discolor

discolor) but it varies so substantially in appearance, pattern, and colour that most would think there are more. In fact, the same can be said of the huge range of colour and shape variations among the species of the other two genera as well. It is no small task looking at a jewel orchid and trying to decide which genus or species it is.



Anoectochilus elatus

So what is it that separates genera and species? Well in nearly every case it is the flowers, no matter what the leaves look like.

Let's start with the genus *Anoectochilus*. The name itself comes from the Greek meaning open lip. The three pictures above show examples of the flowers of *Anoectochilus*, *Macodes*, and *Ludisia*. As you can see, once your jewel is in flower you should at least have no trouble figuring out its genus among these 3.

Anoectochilus all generally have that whisker edged lip in one shape or another but they do vary from one species to another. With patience and Dr Google I am sure you can get close to sorting one species from another, especially the more commonly grown ones, but you need flowers. Some of the orchids not so prominently discussed on google might offer a more difficult challenge but it's just about all there if you search.

But sorting species from genus etc just isn't the reason we grow plants. Nearly all orchid growers also have a house full of foliage plants and often don't care what they are called. Plants are grown to enjoy visually.

So what is the best way to visually enjoy a jewel orchid. These are not like the big Cattleya with 15 cm flowers that you bring in from the growing house when the flowers open. These are more like the variegated Dieffenbachia standing on the kitchen floor, or the Rhapsis palm in the lounge room. We are mostly looking for visual impact and accent. So what do we do with Jewel orchids?

Well each individual has their own idea. You can grow them each as a single specimen in one pot. The picture at the right is a very nice specimen of Macodes petola, but as I mentioned in part one I like the idea of a terrarium style visual feature. But what do I expect that to look like? Well what I had in mind was



something like the combination at the left. But the mix of sample of pots of different species in the middle below also offers some good ideas.



Alternately, if perhaps you have a more artistic leaning, you might like to try sort of combination of terrarium coupled to a miniature landscape of some kind like the far right. Buy some jewel orchids, a Fittonia or other foliage, add a rock or driftwood, or even a miniature statue? -- Let your spirit flow free.

Learning the Language -- An American arrives at Tennant Creek in the centre of Australia and wants to explore the Tanami desert. There's a camel hire business on the outskirts of town so he stops and chooses a camel for his journey. Having never ridden a camel before, he asks the manager how difficult it is. "Nothing to it," comes the answer, "you mount the animal, give it the command, 'Up', it gets up and you're ready to go".

"How do I make it move?" the Yank asks. The manager tells him he only needs to say "wow" quite firmly and the camel will immediately walk. If he says "wow" twice, the camel will trot and, three times, gallop.

Early in the trip, the camel and rider are doing well, managing a steady walk through the desert scrub. Time to see how they get on at a faster pace thought the American. "Wow, wow," the he commands and the camel responds, promptly assuming a quick trot. It's easy-going for them both, so he gives the order, "Wow, wow, wow". Now they are really getting somewhere. The camel gallops on through the sparse scrub, steady on its feet.

Suddenly, the Yank realises there's a huge gully ahead and they need to stop, pretty darn quick. He hasn't asked how to bring the camel to a halt and tries to think of a suitable command. They're almost at the gully and he has no answer to their plight so he says a quick prayer to himself and then, out loud, "Amen".

On hearing the word "Amen", the camel stops almost in its own length, and just as well because its front feet are right on the edge of a 50-metre drop. Shocked and shaken at how close he's come to injury or death, the Yank leans forward for a look into the gully. Seeing how deep it is, he says, "Wow...!"

Obituaries -- Husband Gordon dies so Susan went to the local paper to put something in the obituaries. After offering his condolences the gentleman at the counter asked her what she would like to say about Gordon.

"Just put 'Gordon died'," Susan replied.

Somewhat perplexed the man behind the counter asked "Is that it? Just 'Gordon died'? Surely, there must be something more. If it's money you're concerned about, the first 5 words are free." Susan ponders for a few minutes and finally said: "Okay then, put 'Gordon died. Cheap orchids available'."