



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

(Established in 1947)

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16th January 2023

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

Patrons - Pauline and Trevor Onslow

President : Dennys Angove 043 88 77 689
Secretary : Jenny Richardson (Culture Classes)
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Editor (Hon. volunteer) Jim Brydie
Society mail to - PO box 1501 Lane Cove, NSW, 1595

Committee Jessie Koh (Membership Secretary / Social Events)
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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 : kuringaiorchidsociety@gmail.com

Next Meeting : Mon 16th January 2023

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

Attendees must be at least double vaccinated and Vacc. certificates will be checked. Face Masks recommended.

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 dividers are in place. Give the set up team time to get everything organized.

The Supper Break – The society will supply tea and coffee but we ask members to bring *in a contribution for the supper table*. There will be no self-serve. Someone will be assigned to serve to minimise handling. Please **bring your own mug**. We have a few poly cups left over but single use plastics are no longer permitted in the hall.

January is our first month back. There will still be no culture class, but the **sales table** is operating for sale of members plants and for small quantities of pots etc. There will be the usual **monthly raffle**, and the **library** will be operating.

There will be **no guest speaker, but instead, we will hold one of our famous “Plant Doctor” nights**. After the formalities of the general meeting, and the tea break, we will rearrange the seating to accommodate a Plant Doctor panel at each end of the hall. The doctors will be Trev. Onslow, Peter and Jane D’Olier, Garrie Bromley, and others.

If you have an orchid you are worried about. Perhaps one that just isn’t growing or is going backwards, and you are not sure what to do next, bring it along to this meeting for the experts to assess and provide practical advice. See if the experts can diagnose your plant’s problem and give you some practical suggestions for changes to your culture and/or some immediate action that needs to be taken. There are no limits on the number of plants you may bring in but if there are large numbers, the doctors reserve the right to prioritise which ‘patients’ they see on the night

Best of the Evening Hybrid (Dec 2022) – Den. Super Model ‘Fancy’ - grown by Betty Ng



Super Model is another of the Yamamoto nursery’s releases and was registered in 2006. It includes 25% of the miniature species D. moniliforme which is used with more standard size softcanes to produce shorter, more squat hybrids with reasonable size flowers. No cultivars have been awarded as yet but ‘Fancy’ and ‘Platinum’ are both quite popular and often seen.

Betty has grown this one very well. The growing season is short and fast. In the wild, this coincides with the Asian monsoon season with warm conditions and lots of rain. In Sydney it is about November through April. The secret is to get the maximum size canes you can in that short period and you have to definitely think ahead. Softcanes

flower off the two year old canes so you have to put maximum growth into a plant for at least two years to get a flowering like this one of Betty’s. Patience is required, and then in the plants rest period (June – Sept) you must avoid the temptation to keep watering and fertilizing in the hope you might fatten them up even more. If you do, the result can often be a damaged root system and a plant going backwards.

In the rest period just water lightly occasionally to stop the plant shriveling, and wait for October when you hope to see flower buds forming on the two year old canes. Even then hold off the water and fertilizer. As the flower buds mature and then open you will also see the plant beginning to produce new cane shoots at the base of last year’s canes. The flowers only last two or three weeks in prime condition and by the time they are ending, the new shoots may be anything up to 10 – 15 cm tall. This is the time to start growing again, gently at first but within a month, full on. You need to get those new canes tall and fat by the end of the following April.

A beautiful specimen Betty, well done and congratulations.

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

President Dennys' Desk – The New Year starts, and I hope and wish all members and their families have a better year this year. Life seems to be moving towards as it was prior to COVID but I suspect some norms will be lost. Stephen Hawking once said, "Intelligence is the ability to adapt to change". I have it over my desk to re-align my thoughts when they drift in a silly direction. I am pretty sure our orchid community and hopeful that the larger community will also adapt positively.

Huon Park Report – Our outreach activity at the retirement village went off smoothly except I was expecting some more orchids to be available on our member's sales bench. Pauline and Trevor brought some lovely flowering orchids and they all sold. We had three tables supplied by the village and were located on their beautiful verandah, under shelter with a great outlook and plenty of fresh air. We had a small display table which looked wonderful thanks to the great flowers that Lina, Pauline, and Trevor supplied along with Chris Griffin who lives in the village. It was a nice venue with a market to browse inside, morning tea was available, and the people were friendly and interested. Trevor conducted a potting demonstration that was well attended with lots of follow up questions. Trevor also gave away the orchids he repotted which were received with surprise and great delight. We managed to help people throughout the period we were there by answering their questions on orchid culture. It was not an arduous activity; it was pleasant and the principal objective of sharing the enjoyment of orchids with others was well met. We all agreed we would do it again next year, which is likely to be on the 29th November.



Christmas Party – I was so relieved that the sit-down Christmas Party experiment worked and was so enjoyable. I have had so many people say that they had a good time, which is what it was all about. I will recommend to our committee that we have a similar setup next year. The other, most important thing to note of course is that the Bromley's won a raffle prize. The raffle was outstanding with lots of great gifts and two tables full of Christmas colour. Thank you all those who brought in a raffle prize and special thanks to Ann Byron who again wrestled with the crowds to come along with yet another wonderful KOS hamper. The food was tasty and included some vegetarian options. We had some left over and were able to supply some members with some food parcels to take home. Our party team was wonderful and worked hard to make it go so well. I thank Janine, Di and Heather for their hard work preparing the food service and for our committee who all stepped up so well (except Herb who wanted to but had to be told to sit down). I also thank everyone else who turned up early to help. Special thanks also to Jane for the photos. The special moment for me was when Jean Fulcher arrived to be with us, thank you Jean.



Membership Renewal – Members are reminded that it is now time to renew your membership. You can do this online or find Jessie Koh at our next meeting who will gladly assist you to do so.

Wearing masks – Although COVID Safe rules have changed, the wearing of masks in indoor spaces is still recommended. If you are unsure about this, please visit, <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/stay-safe/guidance-on-wearing-face-masks>. 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.

Oxley Achievement Award – Over the last 2 years the committee has been working towards the presentation of an award to perpetually recognise the outstanding service that Loma and Keith Oxley gave to our society over many years. The purpose of the award is to recognise the exceptional service that a non-committee member gives to our society on a yearly basis. This year, 2022, is the first year of the award and I am happy to announce that Jim Brydie was the recipient of the award which was presented by Ann Byron to Trevor Onslow on behalf of Jim who was unable to attend our Christmas party due to ill health. Jim has given all of us such delight in his continued editorship of our bulletin as well as the preparation of articles of great value, especially to our novice members.



Congratulations Jim and thank you for your very special service to our society.

JB: How embarrassing to not be there to receive this. I am greatly honoured to be given this award named to remember all the amazing service Keith and Loma gave to our society. When I first joined the committee I was flabbergasted at all they did, and I learned so much about orchids and people from them. Thank you Keith and Loma and all the other wonderful committee members from those early days who helped me, and thank you to KOS.

2. A Wonderful Christmas Party. – As I wasn't able to be there I can't comment in person of course but I did get to play with a whole swathe of pictures Jane D'Olier took on the night and one thing I noticed was all the happy faces of people enjoying the night, and the other was the presence of a number of new members also enjoying the night. It was good to see you Pearl, Adrian, and others. I am sorry I wasn't there to say hello on the night, it just wasn't to be.

We finally got a practical chance to run a Christmas Party again and it was a beauty. Under the Covid limitations we had to change our format somewhat and this year went for a sit down dinner and it worked very well. A huge congratulations to Denny's and his committee for all the hard work in setting it all up.

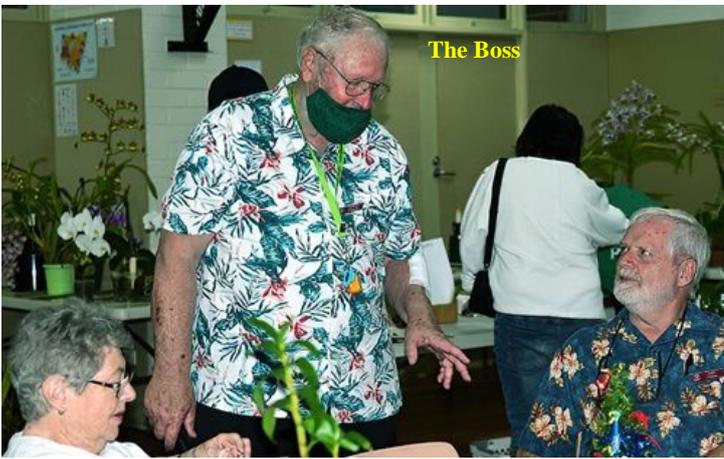
I hear the sit down style was very popular so all you need to do is fit in more tables next year because Cynthia and I will be coming, and I would expect a few more too.



The girl's night out table



Welcome Adrian, sorry I missed you



The Boss



Beauty between the beasts



Bob and Barbara. Bob must have just told one of his jokes





Lovely smiles



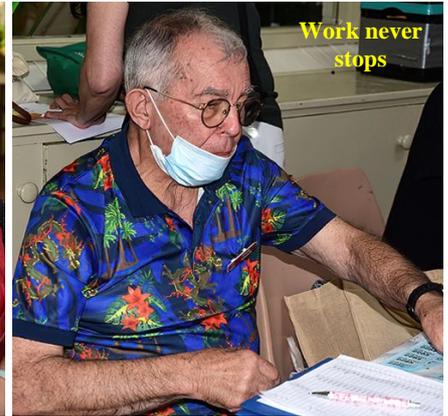
Happy new members



Nice to see long time members the Lams



Merry Christmas



Work never stops

Membership - fees are \$15 single, \$18 family. You can pay by bank transfer 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 your phone number if your financial institution does not allow you to enter a name. If you wish, you can email kuringgaiorchidsociety@gmail.com to confirm your payment.

Benching Competition Results – At our Christmas meeting, the point-score competition winners are announced and prizes handed out. We do not publish the complete results of the point-score, or the results in specific classes (i.e. the placings upon which prizes are based). There are 40 benching classes in total and the total results of over one hundred members benching in 40 classes is rather unwieldy to say the least. However, the results are not secret and if any member is interested in obtaining a copy, please send a request to kuringgaiorchidsociety@gmail.com, (the KOS email address) and we will send it to you.

What we do publish each year in our January bulletin (see below), is a summary table of the overall total points (across all classes) for about the top 20 or so point scorers in the Open division, and perhaps 5 to 10 in the Novice section. Placings in these tables are not the basis upon which prizemoney is earned or number of classes won. We publish this table just because many members like to see where they stand competitively amongst all others.

Please, please, don't take this competition too seriously and don't get over-competitive. Let's just enjoy seeing lots of lovely orchids every month. Bring your plants in to show us your skill and to share your pride in your orchids. It's a chance to share your pleasure, your knowledge and discoveries, to see how others are doing and to ask questions.

Pointscore Results Open (combined years 2020-2022)

1 st	Bromley, G & L	583	9 th	Ng, Peter & Betty	150	16 th	Wilson, Chris	
2 nd	D'Olier, Peter & Jane	335	10 th	Chang, John	149		Scores below 50	
3 rd	Koh, Jessie	279	11 th	Tanner, Ian	144	17 th	Barrett, Margaret	
4 th	Cushway, A & G	246		Scores 100 – 50		18 th	Harris, Lisa	
5 th	Onslow, T & P	203	12 th	Law, Dora		19 th	LeMarne, Geoff	
6 th	Payne, Lee	184	13 th	Fulcher, G & J		20 th	Richardson, Jenny	
7 th	Huang, Lina	175	14 th	Miller, Trevor		21 st	Angove, Dennys & Janine	
8 th	Rethers, Christine	154	15 th	Mohr, Graeme		22 nd	Floyd, Dave	

**** I will publish the novice results and the updated Novice standings next month.**

Do you know how our Benchng System classes work?

It has been some time since I last tried to explain all this and we have had quite a number of new members join us, so I have decided it is time for a new explanation. Old hard heads may now clock off and jump a page or two.

When you first join an orchid society, the split up of all the special categories or 'classes' in which benching occurs seems beyond understanding. So why do orchid clubs divide orchids up into so many separate little sections? Well the

answer is very simple. If we only had once big class, the big flossy ones would always win. And, as our club gets around 100+ plants benched every month, we split them up into sort of “like for like” sections so that the big Cattleya flowers are competing against other Cattleyas and so on.

Sounds quite simple doesn't it, but orchids are very variable beasts. There are over 30,000 naturally occurring species of orchid and they range from very tiny to rather huge.

As we don't have infinite space for an infinite number of ever smaller division of classes, common sense must apply and we end up with between 30 and 40 classes. It varies over time and we do modify it occasionally, and every club has variations of the way it draws its own lines between classes.

So how do we choose where to draw the separating lines?

1. Our objectives are to separate the types that are popular (we get many benched) and which stand out as easily identifiable. For example, ***a few popular types with their own benching class are : Phalaenopsis, Cymbidiums, Dendrobium, Cattleya family, Oncidium family, and Paphiopedilum*** (nicknamed the slipper orchids because the lip is shaped like the toe section of a shoe).

You will notice I used the word family a couple of times above because some groups (like the Cattleya family) have a number of very closely related genera that easily interbreed and their hybrids are often mixtures of anything from 2 to 5 or more different genera. The taxonomic family that includes Cattleya is called orchid family Laeliinae, named for the genus Laelia, another member of the family. Hence our Cattleya family benching classes are called Laeliinae classes purely because that is the correct taxonomic expression.

The same thing applies to the Oncidium family and as well as Oncidium there are probably a dozen other genera that are frequently used with Oncidium to create hybrids. The name for this group is Oncidiinae.

2. The ***next*** obvious place to draw separating lines is ***within Families like Laeliinae and Oncidiinae and Phalaenopsis, and even the very popular Sydney backyard orchid – Cymbidium. And those lines are based on flower sizes. Ie Large, Intermediate, and Miniature.*** In each case the Class name card will incorporate a basic definition of the actual size limit used or the different genera that are included in the Family. When you know what to look for it doesn't take long to get the hang of it and in the learning period you can ask an experienced member for help.
3. The ***next divider is to separate 'species' orchids*** (the ones that are found naturally in the wild) ***from 'hybrids'*** resulting from man-made breeding. Although hybrids can occasionally occur naturally in the wild, they rarely survive and thrive as a new type in their own right. We regard hybrids as artificial creations of man purely for his own entertainment.

Getting back to Species as a category, we get too many species benched each month to put them all in one class, so we separate them into two classes. (a) - species from the Americas, and (b) those from Asia and the rest of the world. Did you know that the species orchids we see in the world today, evolved completely independently in the Americas? They came from common ancestors to the Asian/African species and exhibit many of the same physical characteristics, but they evolved those characteristics completely separately in each place. For example, the slipper orchid genus Paphiopedilum is found only in Asia but there is a similar but quite different slipper orchid called Phragmipedium that evolved in the Americas. The two never cross paths and have nothing to do with one another but each has that slipper like lip.

To cope with this geographic class separation, you don't need a degree in taxonomy, the main genera involved in each is listed on its Class name card.

4. And most important of all, we separate the benching competition between Novice growers (those just learning the ropes), and Open class growers where all can compete. Next month I will explain more about all the special rules applying to Novices. There are clearly set out rules to manage the process of progression from a Novice just starting out, to those growers eventually becoming open class with the rest of us.

All clubs have their own rules but one thing we do ask is that when you join KOS, if you bench in Open class at another club that you also bench in Open at KOS, just to give the real new starters a fair go.

That gives you all the concepts for why we split orchids up and some of the basis for doing so. There is no point in me going on to discuss every class. When every member joins our club they are given a copy of a document called “The Benching Guidelines” which lists every class by name and explains the definitions that divide it from others. That document is also available on our website. It is deliberate that overlaps are designed into the system so that a particular orchid may qualify to allow its benching under more than one class category. This allows some flexibility for those that's don't seem to fit properly in one or the other. In those cases, use your personal discretion.

In the Jan 2019 bulletin there is a more comprehensive, wordy explanation of the classes in an article I wrote which will be useful if you have filed copies of our old bulletins, but if not, you could ask Jenny for a copy via the society email on page 1. However, you could alternately just bring your orchids along and try to wing it. Read the class card definitions, look at similar orchids benched, and ask for help if needed. You will be pick it all up quickly enough.

Vale Geoff Fulcher - (31 May 1941 ~ 5 Dec 2022)

Last month we lost yet another old friend, a member of many orchid clubs in our area, and a regular contributor at all. Geoff was an unassuming man. Never one to push himself into the limelight but ever ready to assist if he saw a need.

He and his wife Jean both grew up in Queensland and only moved to Sydney in about 1969 when his work with Mineral Securities Mining brought him here. He had many interests, such as AFL football, fishing, sailing, and of course orchids, but arriving in a new city meant a need to find your way afresh. When they first arrived in Sydney they stayed with a relative here on the north side, who lightly suggested they join an orchid society, to keep Geoff 'out of the pubs'.

Goodness knows how he picked Manly Warringah society but they got lucky. He was elected to their committee in 1971 and was President from 1978 to 1981. Luckily for us, he eventually also found and joined Ku-Ring-Gai, and North Shore, and NSWOS. He and was a judge, a guest speaker, and active contributor at all.

I suspect the sailing and fishing hardly got much of a chance to sneak his time after that, even though Jean tells me the fishing gear is still all stashed safely ready for use. He did sail occasionally though and once did the Sydney to Lord Howe Island sail so he must have been quite an accomplished sailor. You won't get me out on the open waves like that with no land in sight.

He and Jean were also members of the Sydney Swans AFL club, adopting them as their home side after they settled here. Cynthia and I occasionally met them out at Sydney home games because Cynthia is also an avid supporter, with me along (a glued on Balmain Tigers Man) as secondary supporter.

Geoff tried his hand at many things in his lifetime. He did some geology training, worked for a sapphire mining company for a while, owned a Macadamia farm. He was good at everything he tried and worked as a company secretary for many companies in his time with them so he must have been a clear thinker and good organiser. Jean tells me has many files of spreadsheets he created on different scenarios for the Macadamia farm so he was forward thinking and detailed in planning. When they moved from Pymble to Hornsby Heights later in life he took great delight in planning and buying his Rolls Royce glasshouse with watering and fertiliser systems incorporated, to replace the plastic tunnel house he used as a hot house at Pymble. When I visited them after he got it all set up, he took great pride in explaining the complex watering system he designed and got installed. He loved every minute of getting his orchids all set up in there and caring for them.

Geoff hadn't been well in recent years and although his mind was as sharp as ever, his body was beginning to fail. Such is the way life works. Farewell Geoff. We miss you already.

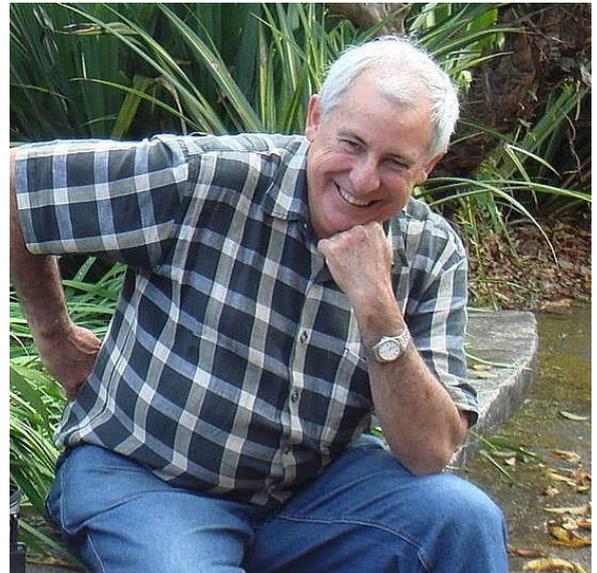
Best of the Evening Novice – Phal unknown - grown by Loretta and Paul Au

Isn't it amazing the way Phalaenopsis colours and patterns have evolved in recent times. As little as 30 years ago, 99% of Phallies were either white or pink. And now look at what we see, even in the local supermarket.

This one of Loretta and Paul's is a lovely pattern of sharp contrasts. Nice sharp purple (?) colour veins and full red wings on the lip. Very attractive.

The lack of a registered name is also a sign of the times. The hobby orchid grower is only a minute part of the marketplace these days, although clubs like ours still perform a vital function via education and passing on knowledge of the culture of exotics like orchids of all kinds. The trouble for the likes of us though is that the breeders and mass producers have moved to a larger market and that is the indoor plant market or gift market and for that, those receiving don't give two hoots for a registered name unless it is something special they might boast about like Rockefeller's Prizewinner or something.

But even we orchid growers buy them, name or no name, because all the latest developments like the biggest and best yellows, new colours and new patterns, all come through the mass production plant market. So if you like it, buy it and enjoy it. Your's is a nice one Loretta and Paul, and well grown too. Congratulations on a Best of Evening.



Best of the Evening Species – Oncidium crispum grown by *Trevor and Pauline Onslow*

When the genus *Oncidium* was split up perhaps 20 years ago, this species and its close family members from Brazil were placed in the genus *Gomesa* instead of *Oncidium*, but alas there was a complication. There was already a species called *Gomesa crispum* so they couldn't call this lovely thing *Gomesa crispum*. Hence, we now call it *Gomesa imperatoris-maximiliani*. How is that for a mouthful of a name. Shows great imagination doesn't it? Or not?

I have told you all this before so my apologies in advance, but *Onc. crispum* and its other 9 or so close relatives used to be known as *Oncidium* section *Crispa* and have become the core of one of the most popular 'Oncidium' hybrid groups. The *Crispa* group species generally have more equally balanced petals and sepals in the flower and are popularly bred with the huge lipped 'Spanish Dancer' *Oncidium* species *Onc. varicosum*, or one of its many other hybrids. The combinations of *varicosum* and the *Crispa* group species creates big flowered hybrids, still with the massive skirt of the *varicosum* lip but also with larger upper flower parts as well.



gardneri

crispum

marshallianum

forbesii

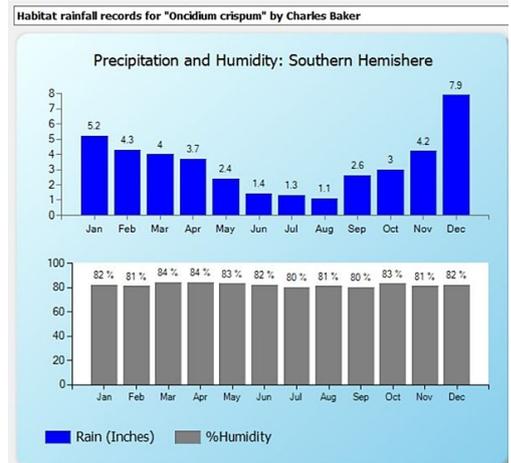
varicosum

O. Sundown cross

The problem with growing these spectacular 'Oncidiums' however, is that they can be rather touchy to grow. Looking happy and thriving one day and sad and sorry the next. Similar to some of the monsoon area orchids from Asia, the secret with these yellow and brown beauties is that they have evolved to operate in a distinct seasonal pattern. Even knowing what I am supposed to do, I am afraid I have had as many failures as successes with these beautiful orchids, but I will at least tell you what I understand of their needs.

In *Orchidwiz*, they publish the invaluable data of Charles Baker providing climate tables prevalent in the natural habitat of most orchids. In the case of *Oncidium crispum* (or *Gomesa imperatoris-maximiliani*), I think it gives an invaluable insight into what these orchids expect.

The table at the right is displayed in the equivalent southern hemisphere monthly names for our convenience. As you can see, there are several aspects to note. First, humidity is above 80% all year round. A little different to our summer Sydney climate which can go as low as 30- 40%.



Second, there is a distinct lower rainfall period during winter, coinciding with this species non-growth resting period. But perhaps more important is to note that even in the higher rainfall months they only get from 4 to 8 inches per month and in the Spring (Sept, Oct) rainfall is still minimal.

Of course rainfall measures are not the full story for water available to the orchids because they also experience many heavy mists and dews that their roots can absorb, but the overall rainfall pattern tells me that these aren't orchids expecting drenching rain to support a short sharp growth rate. Their roots have evolved to suck up whatever comes their way, but they almost certainly also expect to experience dry periods in between. I believe this means their roots would find it very difficult surviving for long in a wet pot in our growing environments and that is also exactly what I have experienced with them. We tend to water regularly because we grow mixed collections and try to find a balance that suits all. For most of us that fine line between enough for all but not too much some, is exactly too much for *Oncidiums*.

I grew one species similar to *crispum* (*Onc/Gomesa enderianum*) for many years and I only managed that by hanging it very high in my shadehouse, near one of the roof fans. Up there it got very bright light and warm air during the day so that even when I watered, it managed to dry quite quickly. Alas, I think that plant it is finally dead from leaving the shadehouse on auto watering for long periods where it got too much water too often, and by not taking action to fix scale infestations.

Enough of my negativity though. Trevor grows these orchids very impressively and can even do a great talk on them if we twist his arm far enough. Are you hearing this Dennis? (sorry for the dob in Trevor)

Other Orchids Benched at the party.



Galeopetalum Arlene Armour 'Conching' (by L & P Au)

I have always admired orchids with green and dark brown black like this. And with the purple to violet stripes in the lip, what more impact could you want.

Arlene Armour is a curious case. In Orchidwiz it is listed as registered as *Zygopetalum Artur Elle* x unknown but despite the Artur Elle side being 100% *Zygopetalum*, Arlene Armour is registered as a *Galeopetalum* which is a cross between a *Zygopetalum* and a *Galeottia*, implying that the unknown parent was either a *Galleotia* or a *Galeopetalum*.

In the web based source 'OrchidRoots' the unknown parent is listed as *Galeopetalum Giant* which is *Zygo Artur Elle* x *Galleotia grandiflora*. This would make Arlene Armour the backcross of Giant to Artur Elle.

From the pictures of Giant that I have seen (see below) I am inclined to believe that Giant is very likely the 'unknown' parent.

So what is a *Galeotia*? The Internet Orchid Species Photo Encyclopedia (IOSPE) gives this genus outline : "There are 12 species found in this genus and 6 of those are found in Colombia. As a whole they are hot to cool, humid growing plants that need basket culture to accommodate the rapid growth of the pseudobulbs and leaves. The inflorescence arises from the axils of the newly developing shoot. They have plicate (*pleated*) leaves, a fan-shaped callus (*a raised fleshy ridge on the lip*), a three-lobed lip, a fimbriate margin to the lip and four hard pollina."

This genus is closely related to *Zygopetalum* and the species involved in Giant is *Galleotia grandiflora* which has quite large (9 cm) flowers. It comes from Mexico down to Colombia, growing on trees in open lowland rainforests between 100 - 1100 m elevation. It has large leafy leaves and a 20 cm inflorescence from near the base of the pseudobulb with several large flowers. Of course the Artur Elle side is very important as well and for those who fancy Zyygo's, Artur Elle is genuinely the Rolls Royce. There are many named and awarded cultivars but if I had to generalise I would say a typical Artur Elle has very dark sepals and petals and a blue lip with lines, however some cultivars have a more red to lavender/pink lip which is also very attractive.



Gal. grandiflora Galeopetalum Giant Gptm. Giant 'Rhein Clown' Gptm. Giant 'Windswept' Zygo Artur Elle 'Dark Matters'

So what sort of conditions do these intriguing *Zygopetaum* alliance orchids need? Well I wish I knew. I can grow the hardiest of all – *Zygopetalum mackayii*, which survives among your *Cymbidiums*, but I have tried half a dozen times to grow the fancier intergenerics like *Galeopetalums*, and the beautiful blue flowered *Zygonisia Cynosure*, but I have failed every time. I know it is just me and my methods because many of our members grow them quite successfully and reportedly easily, but it leaves me unable to offer any personal experience insights.

What I can say though is that Artur Elle is a mix of 4 different *Zygopetalums* and has at least 20% of each. They are *Z. mackayii*, *Z. intermedium*, *Z. crinitum*, and *Z. maxillare*. Interestingly, I have only seen one of these growing in the wild and I think it was either *intermedium* or *crinitum*. Both of these are sort of like smaller, less robust versions of *mackayii* and whichever it was I saw, it was growing in an open grassy shrubby field in northern Peru. It was surrounded by 30 cm grass, medium size daisies, little woody shrubby plants and the like. The leaves were in bright conditions but shaded somewhat by the low plants around, and the bulbs would have been shaded. The ground was a mix of soil and decaying vegetable matter like sticks, and leaves and the like. The flowers were poking above all the chaff and were in full sun. However, although I don't know the elevation where that was, it would have been in the lower levels of the Andes mountains. In that location it would never get overly hot nor cold, so it's hard to equate that to Sydney growing.

The 4th Zygo species in Artur Elle is a very different beast. I saw this one growing in the Atlantic rainforests north of Rio de Janeiro. We saw it in its almost universally preferred growing situation. It starts as a seedling epiphyte on a treefern trunk, near



the ground. However, as *Z. maxillare* has a climbing rhizome with spaced pseudobulbs, once the plant gets growing it winds its way upward around the treefern trunk and eventually ends up growing round and round in the crown of the treefern. The other important thing to note is that these habitats are on the forest floor in wet forests. Very shady, very humid. A rather different habitat to the other 3 *Zygopetalum* species, but *maxillare* is still used in a lot of *Zygopetalum* breeding because its flowers are quite delightful, and the long windy rhizome thing seems to abate when it matures and gets enough light.

So, with the combination of those 4 species, I suspect Artur Elle isn't one that wants full sun or deep shade, but it would prefer high humidity and no extremes of temperature in either direction. And as to the *Galeopetalum* side, I suspect much the same applies. High humidity if you can keep it up, no frosts and no stinker hot dry days, unless you can provide protection or temporary conditions.

So there, that's my insight, probably completely wrong, but you have to have a plan before you start don't you?

Doritanopsis Liu's Berry 'Trinity' - G&A Cushway

Aren't these new miniature Phally hybrids delightful? We are now beginning to see many more of them at meetings. This one belongs to Gloria Cushway or at least I think it does. Gloria is the *Cattleya affionado* in the Cushway household and as I haven't seen Allan with Phallies, I am guessing it is Gloria's. Allan will tell if I am wrong.

Last November I mentioned Lesley's Unimax Sweetie, and a month later Gloria shows us this one. Perhaps its time to look at some of the miniature flowered Phally species to examine the potential just around the corner.

Let's have a look at the species behind Liu's Berry to see what we can find. First, can you see that sharply triangular 'spade' lip on Liu's Berry? That is rather different and not many species have it so we should be able to see where that comes from.

Liu's Berry is an uncomplicated cross but surprisingly only registered in 2006. One parent, Eduardo Quisumbing, is a primary hybrid between *Phal amabilis* (the big white with lots of flowers) and *Doritis pulcherrima* (now *Phal. pulcherrima*). *Phal amabilis* is used to confer shape and size and number of flowers and it or its similar close cousins are part of the gene pool of 99% of all Phal hybrids. The other species, *Phal pulcherrima* (which used to be known as *Doritis*) is a very unusual orchid that grows as a lithophyte on flat (horizontal), moss and debris scattered rock faces, as shown in the picture at the right. It is unusual in that it is a dryish grower with almost vertical growth in both the plant and the inflorescence. The in situ plant shown here doesn't have a lot of flowers but better cultivars can have more than a dozen 20-25 mm flowers. Although quite a bit different looking to most other Phallys, it is in fact now accepted as a *Phalaenopsis* itself.

Pink in *Phalaenopsis* was initially created by using other pink species (usually pale pink) such as *schilleriana* and *sanderiana* but the history of pink *Phalaenopsis* breeding, and in fact all Phal hybrids is rather curious, and commercial development of Phallys only really began in the middle of last century. The history is fascinating and I offer here a brief summary from one of Mary Noble's books.

Back in the 1940's a breakthrough in the quality of white Phals was the creation of the hybrid *Phal. Doris* at Duke Farms in the USA. *Doris* was the result of a lot of crossing with a number of species that some consider just variations of *Phal amabilis* so although you can trace its history back through many previously registered hybrid names, one line of thought says that most of this was all just selective line breeding of superior forms of *amabilis*. But whatever view you take, the history is now so complicated it could never be untangled. One of the aims in creating *Doris* was to produce pure white flowers with no pink tinges anywhere as many previous whites showed at least a pink blush on the back of the petals. *Doris* produced pure whites.

However, the breakthrough in the generation of durable and quality pink *Phalaenopsis* also came from *Doris*. A selfing of the famous *Doris* produced some pure whites and some that reverted back to the *amabilis* characteristic to show pink tones on the back of the petals. Selfing of the most pink of those and then back crossing and inbreeding of those pinkish types, eventually produced flowers where the pink genes were dominant and made solid pink flowers front and back. These pink *Doris*'s are still just *Doris* taxonomically and breeding registers don't differentiate colour characteristics. So when you see *Doris* listed you can't tell which is which. Further breeding has led to the introduction of *Phal pulcherrima* to these lines and has produced many fine pinks to the extent that *pulcherrima* is now also a major influence in pink Phally breeding today. Quite a story eh?

Getting back to Liu's Berry's parents, I can't find a picture of *Phal. Eduardo Quisumbing* but a description I read said



it had white flowers with a vertical inflorescence and no branching. It seems it took flower shape from amabilis and spike habit from pulcherrima with other genes lurking in the background.

The second Liu's Berry parent is the more interesting one. It is the almost tiny species *Phal parishii*. I grew this one for a few years but lost it through neglect. All the flowering plants I ever saw had a leaf span of 5 or 6 cm and flowered on very short spikes with 2 or 3 cute little 15 mm flowers, white with a purplish spade shape lip tip.

Everyone who sees *parishii* in the flesh wants to grow it, which is why decently advanced plants are rather expensive. It is also a bit picky on its culture. It doesn't seem to want to grow in a pot so it needs to be mounted on a piece of cork or equivalent, and it does need a heated glasshouse. Charles Baker's description of its origins and habits tells us that it comes from "Northeast India, Myanmar (Burma), and Thailand. Plants are most often found on moss-covered tree branches overhanging streams, where hot, moist conditions prevail during the growing season. In Myanmar (Burma), this orchid is found near Moulmein. In Thailand, plants are found in the northern and western mountains with collections reported near Ban Me Lamung at 500 m and near Kanburi."



From the size of the plants I grew and others I have seen benched, I always thought this cute little orchid was just that, a cute **LITTLE** orchid. I have never seen one with more than 5 flowers and they usually have less. My biggest plant had leaves about 7cm long and I thought that was big. But now that I have looked a little deeper, I see that that may have been a reflection of the growing skills of myself and friends at that time. I now see that *Phal parishii* can have leaves up to 15 cm long and 5 cm wide and can have up to 15 flowers on a 15 cm long inflorescence. Not bad material as breeding stock if you can retain the 'cute' and toughen it up a bit.

So far, Lui's Berry has only been used as a parent once in a registered cross, and surprisingly it was crossed with the giant Papilionanthe Miss Joaquim. Goodness knows what the breeder had in mind with that, but I can't find any pictures of the progeny so we must wait further to see whether it is tried with something else. However, *Phal parishii* itself has been used as a parent about 20 other times since Lui's Berry, and many of those quite recently, so perhaps there are some more "little" rippers just around the corner. We should keep our eye out at all the orchid fairs that have Phalaenopsis stalls and check the nursery lists.

Christmas is over for another year, so perhaps some reflections



Aliens

An alien vessel landed quietly on St Peter's square in Rome, a hatch opened and two little grey men with dazzling smiles appeared. They were promptly granted an audience with the Pope. After a brief discussion about the weather, the Pope said, "I know this question may sound odd to you, but I was wondering if you and your kind knew about Jesus Christ?"

"Jesus Christ?!" exclaimed the slightly taller of two aliens. "Of course we do! He visits our planet every two years or so. Awesome fellow!"

A hush descended on the audience chamber, and everyone watched the Pope, whose face had turned a rather odd purple. "Every two years?" he shouted. "We're still waiting for his second coming!"

"Maybe he didn't like your chocolate?" suggested the alien.

"Chocolate?" replied the Pope. "What in heaven's name does chocolate have to do with it?"

"Well," said the alien. "When he first came to our planet, we gave him chocolate. What did you do for him when he first came to yours?"