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

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19th October 2026 Volume 67 No. 10
Annual Membership : **$17 single, $20 family**

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Next Meeting : Mon 19th October 2026

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

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 and class descriptors are in place. Give the set up team time to get things organized.

Our insurance requires that ALL **SIGN** the **ATTENDANCE SHEETS** at the **front door on arrival**. **Please do**

Meeting sales table will also be open, and this month we are back to normal operations with pots, sticks and fertiliser etc available as well as sales of members to sell spare orchids.

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**.**

Raffle - There will also be the usual generous monthly raffle, drawn after the guest speaker.

Culture Class – The culture class this month will be ***Christine Rethers*** and perhaps ***Lesley Bromley,*** answering novice growers questions about orchids they having trouble with. Novices may bring in a plant to get advice - but JUST ONE each please and even then, with the time available not all will be able to be discussed.

The Main meeting begins 8pm – with the formalities of the general meeting, presentation of reports and news, all while judging of the benched orchids takes place (*all over in about 30 mins – leading to the 'supper break')*.

The Supper Break generally starts around 8.30. This part of the meeting is where you get to socialise and admire all the benched orchids. Make The most of it - say hello tour fellow members, ask questions, and share you delight in the orchids and friends. **Supper volunteers this month are** – ***Brenda Walker plus 1***. If there is there a member who can help out on the night, could they please see a committee member at the meeting ?

The club supplies the tea/coffee/milk, sugar etc **but we ask members to bring their own cup or mug AND to bring in a contribution of edibles for the supper table*. Just a small plate. Contributions made be home-made or retail purchse – all are welcome.* NOTE - Supper is not self-serve.** Out volunteers serve the food for hygienic reasons.

Guest Speaker – We have a special guest speaker this month as **Zac Robertson from Eastwood society has agreed to talk to us about **growing orchids in small places**. I haven't seen this one before but I am reliably informed that Zac does a great job and the talk is fascinating. It sounds like a great talk to get along to see.

Rth. Trick or Treat 'Mini' Cluster x Rth. Shinfong Little Sun – *benched by Brenda Walker*



What a lovely orchid. And if you didn't know, 'Rth.' stands for Rhyncattleyanthe - a hybrid between Cattleya, Rhyncholaelia, and Guarianthe.

I love orange as a colour in Cattleya but it is not a common colour in nature. Orchids more often use red and orange as colours to attract bird pollinators instead of insects so much fewer species evolve that way, leaving mankind limited material to create those desired, bigger flowered, more round shaped orange flowers.

This pretty hybrid is a mixture of over 20 species and the flower shape is very good other than being a trifle 'cuppy' but I suspect the size is still only around 5 or 6 cm. The Trick or Treat parent has confirmed the dense multi-flowered head and the other side contributes the shape.

A beautiful orchid I would grab any day. Well done Brenda.

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Society News (if anyone has a news item, please email at jimbrydie@aussiebroadband.com.au)

Presidents Report – Our September meeting was once again very good although different to the usual meetings. Instead of our Culture Class at the beginning of the meeting and a guest speaker after supper, we held a members' auction which was very successful. This was a great opportunity for members to bring along some of their spare plants and for others to purchase them at very reasonable prices. This is a great way to share plants amongst member and for this I want to thank all of those who supplied plants, ran the auction and all the members who participated.

September and October are a very busy time of the year for the orchid community with shows like the ANOS Warringah show highlighting Australia natives, Orchid Central which was the last major show of the year in Sydney with displays and commercial vendors, and a number of other events such as the SPECIES show and auction last weekend. These events are the best way for members to see the wide variety of orchids that others are growing and to purchase plants for your own collection. I hope you have all taken advantage of these opportunities to share everyone's knowledge and enthusiasm and to expand your own collection.

Back to what is happening at our society, as you are aware our long-time editor, Jim, is retiring from publishing the monthly newsletter and we have great news that one of our other members, Stuart, has volunteered to take this role on. I want to thank both Jim for his fantastic contribution to the society over many years, and to Stuart for taking over the editor's role.

Also, a reminder that our next meeting will be the AGM. Whilst most of the existing committee are offering to continue on the committee, we are looking for others to join. If you want to learn and participate in the functioning of the society, this is a great opportunity to do so. Please consider joining the committee as we are always looking for members to participate and to provide a new perspective on what we are doing.

All the best with growing your orchids, Peter

Other Society News

1. AGM – A last reminder, our October 19th meeting will also be our Annual General meeting, where we must elect a new committee to run the society. In addition to pre-submitted nominations, nominations may be called at the meeting. Why not put your hand up and join the team - we would love to see new faces. A regular flow of members with fresh ideas in and out of the committee provides us with a sound experience base to grow our society into the future.

2. Membership Renewal - *The society's end of financial/membership year is 30Sep, as such, we will be opening membership renewals at our Oct meeting. If you are able, the preferred method is to pay via EFT using the details below.* ***If you prefer to pay cash, Lynn Dabbs has very kindly agreed to take payments*** *during our meetings in Jessie's absence.* ***$17 single, $20 family***

If you wish to renew you can pay by direct deposit to our Westpac account:

Account Name: ***Ku-Ring-Gai Orchid Society Inc.***
BSB: ***032 188***
Account Number: ***103568***

Please use your ***full name*** *as the payment description,* ***or*** *your* ***phone number*** *if your financial institution does not allow you to enter your name.*

If you wish, you can email kuringgaiorchidsociety@gmail.com to let us know your payment is on the way.
The use of cheques is being phased out by the government so we would prefer other methods of payment but for now, if the only option you have to is to pay by cheque please make the cheque payable to ***Ku-Ring-Gai Orchid Society Inc.*** *and post it to Jessie Koh,* ***PO Box 1501, Lane Cove 1595****.*

3. New Bulletin Editor – Stuart Ruthven has kindly agreed to take over editorship of the bulletin from next month. Thank you Stuart and best wishes. You have a great committee to work with and the bulletin palette is now yours.

I have been producing the KOS bulletin since 2003 so I have had a long run and I have changed the format many times over the years to better fit what I thought was useful and helpful at the time. Generating the bulletin can be something of a task but one where you gather so much information from so many people and sources you can't help being enriched by the process.

4. New Member – Warwick Fisher joined our club last meeting. Welcome aboard Warwick, I hope you enjoy our meetings and make lots of friends at the club. Would existing members please find Warwick and say hello.

Coming Events 2026

Sun 8 Nov – MWOS Spring Auction, Cromer Community Centre
Fri-Sun 5,6 Dec. - Summer Orchid Festival, Georges Hall Comm. Centre Hall, 188 Birdwood Rd Georges Hall
5-6 Dec – Summer Orchid Fair, Georges Hall Community Centre Hall, 188 Birdwood Rd, Georges Hall

Best of the Evening Novice : Phal. (no id) - grown by ***Robin Stewart***



Haven't the Phalaenopsis come such a long way in recent years. Supermarkets and chain hardware stores are full of them year round. They used to be regarded as the realm of only the specialist orchid grower with a heated greenhouse, but now buyers have come to understand they can be grown as a houseplant with just a little understanding. And additionally, they have also become accepted as a 'throw away after flowering' gift similar to a bunch of flowers.

For we orchid growers there are positives and negative to the new availability. On the positive side, breeders are developing many more different styles and appearances and there is much less protection of ownership rights for the new and the best. We see amazing new colours and patterns available everywhere and although prices have begun to rise lately, I feel sure that supply and demand will level that out as sellers seek to sell higher and higher volumes.

On the negative side, many breeders and sellers don't bother to register crosses and names. Orchid nurseries still do but supermarket stock is never named. And as e see with Robin's orchid, that means we list them as 'no id' or 'no name'.

Perhaps that is the way all hybrid sales will go in the longer term?

A lovely orchid Robin, and a deserved Best of the Evening.

Best of The Evening Species : Vanda christensoniana *grown by* ***Garrie and Lesley Bromley***



Now that is a specimen. This lovely orchid from Garrie and Lesley has been best of the evening previously but I have never seen it as big as this cluster.

Vanda christensoniana comes from Vietnam. The habitat description in Orchidwiz (quoted from Charles Baker's Culture sheet) says **:-** ***"This recently discovered orchid was found in southern Vietnam about 20 km northwest of Phan Rang. Plants were growing in a fairly narrow valley along a river between two nearby mountain ridges. This region, which is only 100-150 m above sea level, is dry, dusty, and overgrown with thin, bushy, semideciduous, monsoon forest.***

The temperature and humidity of the area are quite stable throughout the year at 26 – 32°C, and 75-80% humidity, but rain is concentrated dramatically in the autumn months which is when I would imagine the orchid would grow the most. The dry habitat described, and the low rainfall most of the year probably explains the narrow, fleshy, almost semi terete form of the leaves. The leaves are apparently green if grown in shady conditions but become intense burgundy red if the plant grows in full sun. The ability of a plant to produce deep red leaves in bright conditions or full sun is typical of plants that are frequently subjected to such bright conditions. The red pigments protect from burning.

The species comes in all shades from white to pink and blue. I love the blue colours but I must admit that pictures I have seen of many of the pink forms are also a delight to behold.





The lovely close ups at the left are from Garrie and Lesley's 2019 benching and show a beautiful orchid it is, but in reality the flowers are quite small at around 15-20 mm diameter.

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Congratulations on another BOE Garrie and Lesley. You so regularly show us delightful orchids. Thank you.

Humour - A guy walks into a bar and sits down. After a few seconds, he hears a high-pitched voice say, "I like your shirt!" The guy looks around, but there's no one else at the bar besides him and the bartender.

Again, he hears the voice say, "You have beautiful eyes!" The guy asks the bartender, "Is that you?" The bartender replies, "No, it's the peanuts. They're complimentary."

BOE Hybrid – Cattleya Snow Blind - grown by ***Garrie & Lesley Bromley***



Garrie and Lesley are specialists with these walkeriana dominant crosses. They grow them to perfection, but for less specialised growers they may need some adjustment to standard Cattleya culture.

Snow blind is a cross registered in 1986 and its parents are Angelwalker and walkeriana. The species make up is 22% Catt loddigesii and 78% Catt walkeriana so you can see its cultural requirements are very likely dominated by walkeriana.

Orchidwiz provides the following description regarding walkerianas natural habitats:

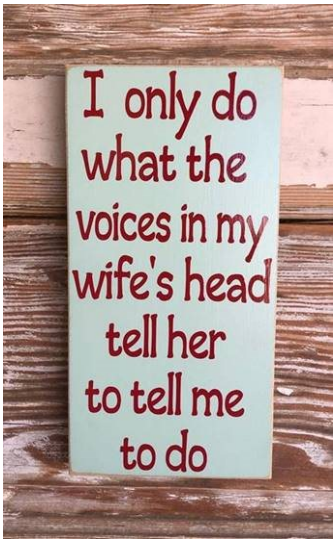
Brazil. - C. walkeriana is found over a large region of the interior south of the Amazon Basin, including the States of Minas Gerais, Goiás, and Mato Grosso. Brasilia is just west of the center of this area of distribution, Belo Horizonte is near the southeast edge, and Goiania is near the western edge. Within this overall area of distribution, plants are usually found at 2000-3000 ft. (610-910 m), growing in two distinct types of habitat. In one type, plants are found on very rough barked trees which grow in an alkaline environment on limestone bluffs, ridges, and mesas known locally as pedreiros. While the region is very dry much of the year, the limestone of the pedreiros is able to soak up and retain large amounts of water during the rainy season. This moisture is given up very slowly as the surrounding trees respire it into the air through their leaf surfaces, providing a relatively stable source of high microclimate humidity in an otherwise dry environment. The second type environment, known locally as chapada, is in regions where the limestone was not deposited on the underlying granite. The relatively flat granite plateau has been cut by eroding streams, leaving almost perpendicular cliffs as much as 1000 ft. (300 m) tall on either side. C. walkeriana is found in this habitat where streams plunge over the edge of the cliffs. They usually grow with their roots attached to bare granite rocks near the top of the cliffs along with lithophytic cacti, succulents, and epiphyllums. Some plants are found on rough-barked trees near the edge of the cliffs, but they are never very far from streams or areas with permanent water seepages. Moisture rising from the waterfalls condenses as soon as the temperature starts to drop in the evening and quickly covers plants and rocks in the vicinity with large amounts of water, even during the dry season.

From my own experience, I believe walkerian types grow best in slatted wooden baskets or aerated terracotta pots where the media can dry quite quickly between waterings. They also need bright light conditions to flower reliably.

The flower size isn't huge at 10-12 cm across but they flower on short stems low to the plant and good specimen with many flowers is quite spectacular. Snow Blind comes in white, pinks to almost lavender and there are rare blue flowered forms. Most are more or less unicoloured but some of the whites can have a coloured lip centre lobe which makes an attractive combination. This pure white one of the Bromley's is a beautiful orchid.

Congratulations on the BOE messrs Bromley. Another delightful star from your collection.

Accumulated Wisdom







Flowers benched at our September meeting



Cattleya Imperial Charm
Stuart Ruthven



Bc. Yellow Bird
L. Dabbs



Dend. thyrsiflorum
L. and P. Au



Paph (maudiae x Enchanted Oriental) x Hsinying Hero - L. and P. Au



Cattleya Orange Beauty
Helen Wong



Paph liemianum
Dora Law



Den. kingianum
H. Wong



Plectrochilus Kilgra
Lynn Dabbs



Den. Kingfisher Beauty
Lynn Dabbs



Den Yukidaruma 'King'
Helen Wong



Oncidesa Sweet Sugar
T. and P. Onslow



Rth. Shinfong Little Sun 'Orchis'
L&G Bromley

(A wonderful tale of the confidence building we all go through)

MY DENDROBIUM FARMERI STORY. *By Desmai Howarth, North Qld O.S.*

Bought from Sunnyview Orchids in September 2024 on our NQOS day trip, my first outing with our group. I'm a bit of an overthinker so I dithered a bit as it was so tiny and I wasn't confident I could grow a seedling and not kill it. Wayne Vievers and Tina Redmond watched me stare at it, trying to convince myself I could do it. Wayne finally walked past me and said go for it!! I don't really remember his exact words but it was something like "it's a great plant" & "you have to try or you'll never know" Maybe he was tired of watching my indecision but those few words gave me the push I needed!

Left to acclimatise on my patio for a week or so, I then decided to mount it to a board with sphagnum moss. I had a roll of stretchy clear plant tape that I used to secure it and then I hung it inside my little shade house on the patio and hoped it would do its thing.

I watered every day and fertilised weakly every week just the way all the online articles said. I hovered over it like a helicopter mom, watching for any nasties and watched it grow very slowly, a couple of leaves at a time. I nursed it through a tussle with moths that kept laying eggs on the underside of the leaves, resulting in a few lost leaves and still it never really thrived.

I decided to move it to the outside of the patio shade house to try a bit more sun. It grew a few more leaves but still, it never really got going.

Finally, thanks to a friend and his creative flare with a welder & some scrap weldmesh from work, my new larger shade house was built and I moved the rest of my little collection and the farmeri out into the garden in January 2026. Although it didn't grow much bigger, it greened up and looked generally more healthy, possibly due to what seemed like never ending rain, oppressive humidity and a few sunny days.





Perhaps I neglected my hovering for a while (more like got a bit lazy) and so I got a fantastic surprise when on 11 July I noticed a tiny, fully formed spike. I duly doubled my hovering and watched over the next two weeks as the spike got longer, the buds separated and then finally, burst into a fragrant little flower cluster. Yay for me! I actually grew a healthy orchid from seedling to flower.

Wayne, I hope you don't mind but I named it after you. I know I'm a bit strange and its perhaps a childhood hangup that sees me naming some of my plants. It's a little pink frilly number and not at all masculine but it's my way of remembering a moment when someone else's confidence rubbed off on me. Thanks for the push!

Oncidesa Sugar Sweet – This cute little gem benched by Trevor and Pauline last month attracted me because of it's almost nil dominance of the brown or orange tones present in many cultivars.



Sugar Sweet is a hybrid invloving a number of species but dominated by the original spanish dancer species Oncidium varicosum. However it does come from the line of a series of hybrids like Nonamyre, Sultamyre, and Varimyre that appeared to be looking to introduce the group of Brazillian species that we now know as Gomesa – such as forbesii, imperitoris-maximiliani (the old Onc crispum), and marshalliana. All these had more rounded overall shape with much larger petals and dorsal sepal, but also had much stronger brown toning in the flowers.

But at different times, other more unusual species were introduced to this line, such as Onc sphacelatum, and Onc flecxuosum. It is hard to imagine what the breeders were hoping for with additions like these.





Trevor's Sweet Sugar is not typical of its type. It's shape seems to be more like flexuosum and the brown is strongly minimised, but the effect is very pleasing and I certainly like it.

Here are some other Sweet Sugars for comparison. As you can see, these others have a much bigger Spanish Dancer skirt, and more browns and reds in the flower colour. I would guess that Trevors had an albino somewhere in its background, but I rather like the effect. What do you think?

What is "the Mallee" - Lots of Information you didn't ask for. by Jim Brydie

For the past 20 years or so I have been supplying decorative (?) natural wood pieces as an edging for orchid displays. Firstly to the NSW Species OS, and then later to both Ku-ring-gai OS and Species and even, once or twice, some to North Shore. But before I expand any further, I need to explain that I wasn't the original supplier of this curious display decoration stuff. Quite a few years back, when I was President at the Species Orchid Society, one of our long serving committee members at that club was Mrs. Jean Deane, who had also been a long term editor of the club's newsletter, began her retirement process and she and her husband were moving from their old Wahroonga family home to a more compact accommodation.

As a result, many of her accumulated orchid goods and accoutrements were being passed on to other members and I ended up with about 6 boxes of chunks of what she called 'mallee wood'. i.e: wood from the Mallee. I believe she collected the stuff on her many field trips with her husband while they were members of a lapidary club.

Each show year I am asked to bring 'the wood' again (as was Jean before me) but curiously, it gets asked for by a whole string of different names or descriptions. It seems to be called just about anything but its designated name, leading me to the conclusion that few know about 'the Mallee'. This article aims to set that straight.

So what the heck is mallee wood I hear you ask?

If you google "the mallee" the primary response will be that it refers to a geographic area. Wikipedia tells you that "**The Mallee"** is a sub-region of Loddon Mallee (a district) covering most of the north-westerly part of Victoria, bounded by the South Australian and New South Wales borders. Definitions of boundaries vary but all are based on the distribution of mallee eucalypts, which dominate the surviving native vegetation through most of the Mallee. It's biggest Victorian settlements are Mildura and Swan Hill (on the Murray river). The region is also known as the Victorian outback.



Just as an aside, the word "Loddon" comes from a Celtic expression for 'muddy river' and was originally used to describe the Loddon river in the UK. In Australia, the Loddon River was named by Thomas Mitchell in 1836. It is one of the longer rivers in Australia at around 400 km and rises on the western side of the Great Dividing Range in Victoria. Like all rivers it generates from smaller rivers and watersheds but is generally said to originate as the Loddon from around Newbury or Musk about 100 km NE of Melbourne and to then flow north, and later north west, to join the Little Murray around Swan Hill.

However, describing 'the mallee' as just being the Loddon Mallee is rather misleading, and it is also unfortunate that most of the Eucalypts near the sign in picture above designating "The Mallee" may not even be mallee Eucalypts.

Mallee trees are a group of species within genus Eucalyptus but are a particular type of Eucalyptus. They grow in areas characterised by low, inconsistent precipitation, high summer temperatures and infertile soils. Almost semi-desert. The mallee trees can grow to 6 to 8 metres tall but are often smaller and tend to have multiple trunks all arising from a heavy, dense woody basal structure known as a lignotuber. This lignotuber 'stump' part of the tree is not a true tuber but serves something of the same purpose. If the top of the tree is damaged by fire, storm, wind, or drought, new shoots eventually arise from the basal woody stump to regenerate the tree. The lignotuber grows very slowly, lives to a great age and becomes much bigger over time. It acts as something of a reservoir of water and nutrients.

Woodland described as 'the Mallee' is called so because it represents areas dominated by species of this different kind of Eucalyptus. There are between 300 to 400 different species in the group and they are found much more widely than just the Victorian Mallee. Mallee woodland is found in NSW, Victoria, SA, Western Australia, and perhaps even parts of western Queensland.



Mallee woodland in W.A.



Mallee woodland in NSW

The genus Eucalyptus in total is much broader. These are the trees that are commonly referred to in Australia as 'gum trees' as per John Williamson's famous song 'Give me a home among the gum trees ….'.

The genus Eucalyptus comprises some 850 species. Most Eucalyptus species are native to Australia but a few species occur in nearby countries and some are endemic there. In size they vary enormously in from very big, like the straight trunked forest giant Eucalyptus regnans, which can get up to 100 metres tall, to the 'mallees' at the other end of the

scale.

Mallee trees grow low and slow, so the wood in the lignotuber and root area is very dense and hard. When areas like the Victorian and South Australia mallee were originally cleared to become farming land, massive tractors dragged huge chains between them to clear the mallee trees and associated scrub. Lignotubers that weren't pulled out by the chains were dug out later to clear the land for wheat and sheep. Much was just burnt on the spot but it was also discovered that the dense hard mallee wood could be a valuable product as firewood which was still in great demand at the time. Huge quantities were shipped by train to Melbourne and other locations as a commercial product. The great density of mallee wood made it burn very slowly and generate a lot of heat. But in addition to its value as a fuel, more artistic souls also saw wonderful beauty in some of the shapes nature had created in growing some of these amazing pieces of wood.



a tourism mallee stump at Ouyen, Victoria



a broken up pile of mallee wood

Now I know all this has nothing to do with orchids despite the fact that there are many beautiful Australian native terrestrial orchids in the mallee, but we are all gardeners and naturalist in spirit and you may find it interesting to know that some of the most beautifully flowered of all Eucalyptus species are Mallees. Like those below.



Euc. preissoniana



Euc. kittsoniana



Euc. synandra



Euc. incerata



Euc. tetraptera



Euc. curtisii



Euc. pryiformis



Euc. landsdowneana

But a caution if this has enticed you to try to grow one in a wet coastal environment. These are dry country, poor soil growers and don't survive in wetter coastal areas unless you can find one in a specialist nursery where they have grafted the pretty upper part onto the base of a more coastal species.

You can find them, but they are much more expensive. Just don't bother trying to raise them from seed.

PS: if you would like to know a little more, there is a wonderful piece by Ian Fraser is a blog at :
https://ianfrasertalkingnaturally.blogspot.com/2024/10/the-magnificent-mallee-long-despised.html