



# COFFS HARBOUR ORCHID SOCIETY

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[www.coffsorchidsociety.org.au](http://www.coffsorchidsociety.org.au)

## COFFS ORCHID NEWS – MARCH 2021

### GENERAL MEETING & ORCHID COMPETITION

1<sup>st</sup> THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH AT 7.00 for 7.30 PM, UNLESS OTHERWISE ANNOUNCED  
at NTH COAST REGIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS, HARDACRE ST, COFFS HARBOUR

**THE MARCH MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE DISPLAY ROOM, BOTANIC GARDENS**

<u>PRESIDENT:</u>	CAROLE DAVIS	026658 1354	
<u>VICE PRESIDENT</u>	BOB SOUTHWELL	0417 695834	
<u>SECRETARY:</u>	PAIGE SINCLAIR	0427 591901	<a href="mailto:paigesinclair@me.com">paigesinclair@me.com</a>
<u>TREASURER:</u>	BRUCE HALL	0447 742030	
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	NEIL McDONALD	0414 342978	
	JUDITH WHITING	0438 187028	
<u>NEWSLETTER EDITOR:</u>	BOB SOUTHWELL	0417 695834	<a href="mailto:bssouthwell@bigpond.com">bssouthwell@bigpond.com</a>

### SPONSORS

#### CFS TRAVEL

See Julie Larkey at CFS Travel, shop 27A in the plaza (opp Big W) Personalised service for all your travel needs. 6652 6555  
or [julie@cfstravel.com.au](mailto:julie@cfstravel.com.au)

#### LUDO'S OLD WARES

Buying and selling antiques, old wares and collectibles.  
Deceased estates. Ulmarra. 0402 044601

#### TINONEE ORCHIDS

Tinonee Orchids carries a wide variety of orchids and orchid growing supplies – coconut, pots, etc. They provide quick delivery of orders. 6553 1012 or [www.tinoneeorchids.com](http://www.tinoneeorchids.com)

#### COFFS COAST MOTORS

For Mazda and Honda vehicles, also second-hand vehicles, and ALL your servicing needs. Ring for an appointment 6652 3122, or visit 211 Pacific Highway, Coffs Harbour. You won't be disappointed.

#### COFFS HARBOUR PRODUCE

Coffs Harbour Produce is at 26 June Street in Coffs. They carry a good range of fertilisers, insecticides and fungicides for orchids, as well as general garden needs. 6652 2599.

**(More details in March Sponsors Spot)**

#### BRUCE HALL

Bruce provides the raffle items which are a major fundraiser at our shows.

#### SHEARWATER RESTAURANT

Brekkie and Modern Australian dishes in a light, upscale locale with outdoor tables and lovely views over Coffs Creek. 321 Harbour Drive. [www.shearwaterrestaurant.com.au](http://www.shearwaterrestaurant.com.au) or 6651 6053.



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**2021 MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE  
NOW DUE. PLEASE PAY BRUCE  
HALL AT THE NEXT MEETING OR  
POST OR DIRECT DEPOSIT**

## **1. CALENDAR, 2021**

- 4 Mar – Monthly Meeting. Member Presentations  
1 Apr - Monthly Meeting. Dick Cooper “Hardcanes”  
24-25 Apr – Autumn Show  
30 April – 2 May – Coffs Agriculture Show Display  
6 May – Monthly Meeting. Bruce Hall  
“Constructing a Greenhouse”  
3 June – Monthly Meeting. Ray Clement, Tinonee  
4 July – Final Open Day, Tinonee Orchids. Visit  
15 July – Monthly Meeting. Hans Schiable -  
“Dendrochilums”  
5 Aug – Monthly Meeting. Doug Binns –  
“Orchids and Broms of Mexico”  
2 Sept – Monthly Meeting. Guest Speaker TBC  
7 Oct – Monthly Meeting. Plant Auction  
16 Oct – 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Luncheon at Opal Cove  
4 Nov – AGM/Monthly Meeting. Elections.  
Dick Cooper “Birds”  
14 Nov - WDOS Workshop. TBC  
2 Dec – Christmas Awards & Presentation.



## **(2) MONTHLY MEETINGS - WE CAME BACK WITH FANFARE:**

Face-to-face monthly meetings resumed from Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> February with thirty members pre-registering and attending the meeting. The members sat 1.5 metres apart, followed Covid-19 rules, many brought an orchid each and enjoyed the first proper face-to-face meeting since March, 2020.

Three members spoke for around 20 minutes each and provided three well illustrated talks on technology in the orchid house, various potting methods and topping a Vanda. Thanks to Paige, Neville and Bruce for sharing their knowledge and expertise.

Two of our qualified judges, Dick Cooper and Bruce Hall, judged the Orchid of the Night and awarded a shared first place to Helen Seiver and Noeline Jackson. Congratulations on presenting two great orchids.

Our next monthly meeting will be held on Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> March in the Display Room at the Coffs Botanic Gardens, commencing at 7.30pm. **The good news is that restrictions on the numbers in the room has been eased. There is no longer any need to register before the meeting (with a maximum of around fifty persons).**

For the March meeting there will be presentations given by four Society members:

- (1) Bill Bright – Growing and repotting Pterostylis
- (2) Rhonda Smith – Growing Catasetinae
- (3) Peter Baker – Growing Tolumnia
- (4) Preparing your plants for the Show Bench – Bruce Hall

Once again at the March meeting we will NOT have the usual monthly flowering orchid competition as there is not enough space to erect tables within the room and still maintain social distancing. Instead, we request that each member bring ONE flowering orchid for 'Orchid of the Night' display. These will be placed on tables in the breezeway between the two security gates. These orchids will be judged by two qualified judges to determine the best orchid. Orchids should be benched by 7.15pm and judging will commence at 7.20pm. It is hoped to return to full orchid competition as soon as restrictions are eased.

**Members are also asked to bring their Mounted Dendrobium Growing Competition plant to the March meeting for FINAL judging. A table will be provided in the breezeway area and the plants will be judged on the night and prizes presented at the April meeting. Remember you gain one point by bringing your plant, the best on the night receives an extra two points and second best gains one extra point.**

We will start judging the Sarcochilus Growing competition plant from the April meeting. More details in the next newsletter.

Once again there are a number of Covid-19 rules that we all need to follow so we comply with Government Regulations. These Covid-19 rules are:

- Members to enter through the metal security gates. Do not use the side door. Maintain Social Distancing if there are other members present.
- Use the Hand Sanitiser supplied.
- Each member to sign in with name and contact phone number.
- If you have bought an orchid then place it on the tables provided in the breezeway area.
- Name tags will not be used and library books will not be available for borrowing.
- Seats will be positioned 1.5 metres apart. Family members may sit closer together but all others are to maintain the 1.5m distance. Members are asked not to stand around taking but to stay seated wherever possible.
- You will be able to purchase raffle tickets in the breezeway area.
- No supper will be available at this meeting. If you will require a drink or food then please supply your own.

- We ask that you wipe over your seat at the end of the meeting. Antiseptic wipes will be provided for this purpose.
- Masks are not compulsory but if you feel more comfortable wearing a mask then please do so.
- If you have any Covid-19 symptoms please do not attend the meeting.

**CHOS Membership Fees for 2021 are due from the start of February, 2021. They will continue to be \$10 per member and \$15 for family membership. The Treasurer will be happy to receive your membership payment at the 4<sup>th</sup> March meeting. It would be appreciated if you would place the exact money (\$10 or \$15) into an envelope, write your name on the envelope and hand to Bruce Hall when you arrive at the meeting. Bruce will give you a receipt at a future meeting. Envelopes will be available if you don't have one.**

**You can post a cheque or money order to CHOS, PO Box 801, Coffs Harbour and include your details. Alternatively, you can Direct Deposit the money into the Society's BCU bank account.**

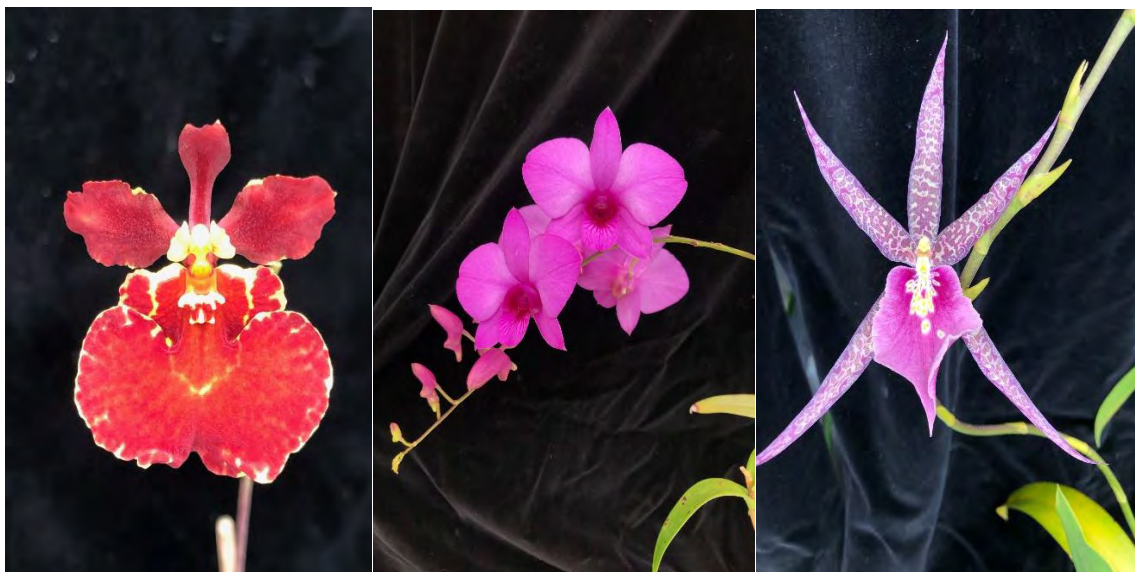
**Details are:**

**BSB – 533-000, Account Number: 32817199. Account name is Coffs Harbour Orchid Society. Inc. Please include your name and the word Membership in the Reference Section. **Please note that this is a NEW account number.****

**Membership fees must be paid by May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021.**

**EARLY ANNOUNCEMENT: CHOS TO CELEBRATE IT'S 50<sup>th</sup> YEAR ANNIVERSARY WITH A GUEST SPEAKER AND A LUNCHEON AT OPAL COVE ON SATURDAY, 16<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2021. PUT THE DATE IN YOUR CALENDAR AS A NOT TO MISS EVENT. MORE DETAILS IN FUTURE NEWSLETTERS.**





From the greenhouse of Paige Sinclair:

*Tolumnia* Esther Oka  
x *Tolu*. Stoptlight 'Guy'

*Dendrobium bigibbum*

*Miltassia* Charles M. Finch 'Izumi'

### **3. AGENDA FOR MARCH MEETING:**

- (1) Welcome / Covid-19 procedures
- (2) Apologies
- (3) Minutes of February, 2021, Meeting – as printed in newsletter
- (5) Correspondence
- (6) Finance Report
- (7) Membership Fees / new Member Presentations
- 8) Sponsors Spot – Coffs Harbour Produce
- (9) Orchid of the Night / Final judging of Mounted Growing Comp Plant
- (10) Raffle
- (11) General Business
- (12) Members Presentations: (i) Bill Bright (Pterostylis)  
(ii) Rhonda Smith (Catasetinae)  
(iii) Peter Baker (Tolumnia)  
(iv) Bruce Hall (Show Prep)
- (13) Please clean your seat with wipes provided

### **4. MINUTES OF FEBRUARY GENERAL MEETING AT NCR BOTANIC GARDENS – 4<sup>TH</sup> FEB, 2021:**

1. **Welcome:** Carole Davis opened the meeting at 7:31pm and welcomed everyone. She outlined the new normal, relating to COVID-19 restrictions and meeting requirements. 30 members attended. See attendance sheet.
2. **Apologies:** Barbara Pearce, Di Blay, Leonie Everitt, and Ann Deans
3. **One minute of silence** – was held for Rose Makay, Ken Green, and Clem Murray - all recently passed.
4. **Minutes of March 2020 meeting:** Moved by Helena Axelsson, seconded by Bob Southwell that the Minutes are a true and accurate record of the proceedings. Carried.

5. **Correspondence:** Paige Sinclair tabled the following documents for member's perusal; she moved that all the correspondence be accepted as presented. Seconded Gary Suter. Carried.

<input type="checkbox"/> Name	Date modified	Type	Size
201130 BCU Bank Statement	7/02/2021 4:28 PM	Adobe Acrobat Docu...	237 KB
201229 Rollover Maturity Advice BCU	7/02/2021 4:35 PM	Adobe Acrobat Docu...	259 KB
201231 BCU Bank Statment	7/02/2021 4:30 PM	Adobe Acrobat Docu...	304 KB
210107 Mid-North Coast Orchid Judges Pan...	7/02/2021 4:37 PM	Adobe Acrobat Docu...	232 KB
210117 2 Air FM Notice of AGM	7/02/2021 4:44 PM	Adobe Acrobat Docu...	424 KB
210119 - CHCC Booking Confirmation and C...	7/02/2021 5:00 PM	Microsoft Word 97 - ...	43 KB
210119 email Glenis Hunter - Covid 19 requ...	7/02/2021 4:59 PM	Outlook Item	76 KB
210121 Opal Cove Coffs Harbour Orchid Soc...	7/02/2021 4:56 PM	Adobe Acrobat Docu...	443 KB
210121Confirmation Agreement - Opal Cov...	7/02/2021 4:58 PM	Outlook Item	840 KB
210128 BCU Notice of Term Deposit	7/02/2021 4:38 PM	Adobe Acrobat Docu...	194 KB
210129 Woodburn - Evans Head & District r...	7/02/2021 4:33 PM	Adobe Acrobat Docu...	204 KB
210201 M Wheatly RE Fwd Coffs Harbour or...	7/02/2021 4:51 PM	Text Document	3 KB

6. **Finance:** Bruce addressed the members present summarising the Society's recent financial position. He reported that income from bark sales, the Bunnings BBQ amounted to \$2078.24 and the outgoing expenses largely made up by the Christmas function and food/drinks for the BBQ was \$1841.00 leaving net earnings of \$237.40 for the period. Moved Bruce Hall, seconded Bob Southwell. Carried.
7. **Membership Fees:** Bruce reminded members that membership fees were now due, and members could leave their money in an envelope with their names on the envelope and receipts would be forthcoming.
- 7.1.1. **New Members:** Carole Davis welcomed three new members and presented them with a welcome orchid. Frank Pappalardo, Kerrie Gosling, and Yuli Dwi
8. **Sponsors Spot: Coffs Coast Motors.** Carole Davis reiterated that if possible, members should consider using Coffs Coast Motors when choosing a new vehicle.
9. **Orchid of the Night:** Dick Cooper and Bruce Hall judged the plants on the table and awarded Helen Seiver and Noelene Jackson as joint winners.
10. **Raffle:** 1. Frank Pappalardo 2. Yuli Dwi 3. Diane Evans
11. **General Business:**
- 11.1.1. Congratulations to Malcolm Ide for his recent First Class Certificate (FCC) and Award of Cultural Excellence (ACE) for his Dendrobium Calico Twist 'Mandy Lee' FCC/AOC.
- 11.1.2. Congratulations to Helena Axelsson for taking out second place for her essay written for the Australian Orchid Foundation about growing orchids in a small area.
- 11.1.3. Carole Davis thanked Bob Southwell publicly for writing interesting and informative Newsletters during the COVID-19 pandemic
12. **Members Presentations:**
- 12.1.1. Paige Sinclair gave the members a talk on using technology in your growing space. She showed the group a light meter, a battery operated misting fan, a temperature and humidity device that works in conjunction with your smart phones, which will send alerts to warn of variations in temperature, called SensorPush, and the app she uses to keep records of all her plants, watering schedules and other useful information called OrchidAlbum.



**Battery operated Misting Fan for your Greenhouse**

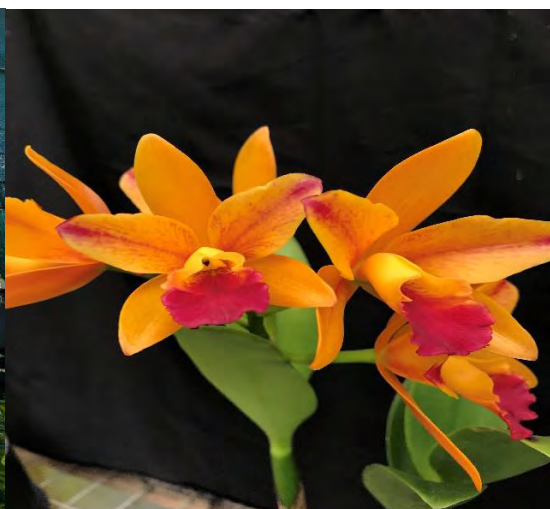
12.1.2. Neville Anderson gave the group a talk on Potting Mixes and Fertilizer for Monsoonal Orchids explaining the importance of pot size, repotting frequencies, watering and fertilizing schedules, noting that each orchid genus will have different requirements based on their natural growing conditions.

12.1.3. Bruce Hall gave us an interesting demonstration on Topping of a Vanda. Key points to remember are keep 4-5 roots above the cutline then seal both ends with SteriPrune. As you're potting, unruly roots can be cut to help them in the pot but keep two major roots in the pot and the others out of the pot. When watering be sure to include the aerial roots. Be sure to water the bottom part of the cut plant, with some luck and TLC it might grow a keiki.

Meeting closed 9:28pm



***Stanhopea inodora alba***



**Rhonda Smith – *Cattleya Netrasiri* 'Starbright'**

## **5. COMMITTEE MEETING REPORT:**

The February Committee meeting was held on 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2021.

Topics discussed included:

- To continue to hold monthly meetings based on a maximum of 30 in the room and follow Covid-19 regulations. Next Monthly Meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> March, 2021. (To contact Botanic Gardens to check if restrictions eased).
- Facebook raffle draw for January postings. Winner was Paige Sinclair.
- Decided to conclude the Mounted Dendrobium Growing Competition and request members to bring plants for final judging at the March meeting. Prizes will be awarded at the April meeting. The Sarco Growing Competition will recommence at the April meeting.
- CHOS 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Luncheon – set down for Sat. 16<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2021. Opal Cove booked. Special Committee Meeting to be held on 16<sup>th</sup> Feb at 3pm to work out organisation for the anniversary celebration.
- Green Orchid Information pamphlet being updated and reprinted.
- Carole to check with Sponsors in near future regarding 2021 sponsorship.
- Ann Deans has been appointed as the Catering Manager for CHOS.
- Autumn Show – 24-25<sup>th</sup> April, 2021. Venue booked. Schedule tabled and approved. List of duties tabled and agreed on. Set up of Show on Fri, 23<sup>rd</sup> April.
- Two new membership applications approved – Yuli and Diane Evans.
- New Membership Application Form tabled and adopted.

## **6. FACEBOOK REPORT:** (Paige Sinclair)

### **Coffs Harbour Orchid Society Facebook**

February 2021 – Currently, the society has 87 likes or followers on our Facebook page. This is up by 264% on the same time last year. The 'What's in Bloom' group saw a significant drop in the number of posts; hopefully, this is only due to the lack of blooms, not the lack of interest or perhaps not enough time. Finally, the Sarcochilus Growing competition only had four members post.

### **What's in Bloom Facebook Page**

January 2021 saw only 19 posts of Orchid blooms pictured, at the recent committee meeting, Paige Sinclair's name was drawn from the bag to receive a new plant. Sadly, the number of posts in this Facebook group was only about 30% its normal popularity. If you have something in bloom, share it so we all can enjoy.

### **Sarcochilus Growing Comp – Facebook**

Only four plants were posted to the page, Plants no. 5, 24, 26, and 40. Plant no. 26 is in the lead with 31 points, closely followed by plant number 5, then plant number 40. Reminder, there are plant prizes to be won for participating and being in the top three.



So get a portrait of your Sarcophilus posted on the page. Each month the competition runs for the first 7 days! Happy Growing. Congratulations to plant number 26 – well done.

Plant No#	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan-21	Feb-21	Total
5	2	2	2	3	2	4	2	4	2	2	2	27
7	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
23	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	0	0	0	17
24	2	2	4	2	2	2	2	0	2	2	2	22
25	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	8
26	4	4	2	3	2	2	2	2	4	4	2	31
27	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	14
30	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	2	0	0	7
37	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
38	0	2	2	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	8
39	0	0	0	3	4	2	2	0	2	0	0	13
40	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	24
	14	18	20	23	20	22	20	12	14	10	10	183

Reminder if you need help joining or posting on Facebook, Paige Sinclair is available to assist, contact her via telephone 0427 59 1901 and she will either help you over the phone or visit you in person. The next window to post your Sarcophilus plant is the first 7 days of each month. Just a reminder, there are prizes for this fun group, so get posting.

## 7. SPONSORS SPOT: COFFS HARBOUR PRODUCE

Coffs Harbour Produce are one of our long-standing sponsors, so please consider them when you next need some orchid growing products.

They stock a wide variety of rural products in their extensive store at 26 June Street, Coffs Harbour.

From an orchid growers perspective they carry a range of orchid potting mixes, perlite, charcoal, fertilizers and an extensive range of pest and disease chemicals (insecticides, miticides, fungicides, etc).

As well as providing fertilizers in bulk, you can also buy some fertilizers in smaller lots which may be more convenient to you when you are only using a small amount each time.

They also have a wide range of normal garden products at reasonable prices. Tell them you are a member of CHOS when you next visit. Their phone number is 02 66522599.

**They support us so please support them.**

**GROWING INFORMATION NEEDED: Do any members grow all or a large part of their collection in Terracotta clay pots? Another member has asked for advice on whether these are better than using plastic pots. The Editor believes they dry out more quickly than plastic pots and therefore you may have to water more often or adjust your potting mix so it retains water longer. Can you help with some advice based on your experience? Please let us know so we can share your knowledge with other members.**

## **8. BARK SALES:**

The Society stocks 40 litre bags of NZ Orchiata Bark selling at \$27 each. 35 litre bags selling at \$26 each. Four sizes. Contact Bob Southwell on 0417 695 834 or email [bssouthwell@bigpond.com](mailto:bssouthwell@bigpond.com). Remember if you desire quality plants then always use quality potting mix.

## **9. JOKE TIME:** (With permission from Ku-ring-gai OS Bulletin, Dec, 2020)

**The Secret Drunk** - A husband arrives home very late on St Patrick's Day, a little the worse the wear for alcohol.

He had trouble opening the door because the key hole kept moving. Eventually he got the door open and staggered in, but in attempting to climb the stairs he fell backwards landing on the 2 bottles of whisky he had in his hip pockets. The bottles shattered, and the broken glass caused a fair amount injury. He staggered to the bathroom to inspect the damage, took off his trousers, all torn & bloody, and grabbed a towel to staunch the flow of blood. Looking over his shoulder he could see in the mirror that he had numerous lacerations to both buttocks. So he searched and found a large box of Band Aids. Again using the mirror he carefully covered each cut with a Band Aid. Then off to bed.

In the morning his wife said **"You were drunk again last night!"** The husband replied "What makes you think that"

Wife : "Last night I heard you trying to open the door but turned over and went back to sleep. But this morning I found the door open with your key still in it and I thought 'he must have been drunk'. Then I found the carpet soaked in whisky and I thought 'he must have been drunk'. Then I found a trail of blood to the bathroom and I thought 'he must have been drunk'. Then I found the trousers all torn, bloodied and with glass in the pockets and I thought 'he must have been drunk'. Then the towel all soaked with blood and I thought 'he must have been drunk'.

But when I found the 156 band aids stuck to the mirror, I knew you had been drunk again.

**Drink Driving** - I'd like to share an experience with you all, about the dangers of drinking and driving. As you well know, some of us have been known to have had brushes with the authorities on our way home from the odd social session over the years.

A couple of nights ago, I was out for a few drinks with some friends and had a few too many beers and some rather nice vodka. Knowing full well I may have been slightly over the limit, I did something I've never done before - I took a bus home.

I arrived home safely and without incident, which was a real surprise, as I have never driven a bus before and am not sure where I got it from!

**THE CHOS 2021 AUTUMN SHOW IS SET DOWN FOR 24<sup>TH</sup> TO 25<sup>TH</sup> APRIL. YES, IT WILL OPERATE UNDER COVID-19 RULES WITH A LIMIT TO THE NUMBER OF VISITORS IN THE DISPLAY ROOM AT ANY ONE TIME, SOCIAL DISTANCING, ETC, BUT IT WILL BE HELD AFTER A 12 MONTH GAP. START AND PREPARE YOUR ORCHIDS NOW FOR THIS MAJOR EVENT.**



## **10. SELLING NATIVE ORCHIDS**

The Society holds a licence for selling NSW native orchids to the public. As a member of CHOS you are able to sell orchids at our Show Sales Table under the protection of that licence. There is a simple form you need to complete and you need to attach a Licence Tag to every NSW native orchid that you plan to sell. Bob Southwell has supplies of the forms and will issue you the licence tags. These tags have a sticky back and easily attach to the pot. Both NSW native species and Hybrids, where at least one of the parents is a NSW native orchid, must be tagged. NSW native orchid which are not tagged will not be offered for sale to the public. Start and prepare your NSW Natives for sale at this year's Autumn Show at the end of April.

## **11. NATIONAL ORCHARD WRITING ESSAY COMPETITION:**

In 2020 the Australian Orchid Foundation ran an essay writing competition for all Australian orchid growers. The essay topic was "Growing orchids in a small space or balcony".

Details of the competition was published in this newsletter and members were encouraged to take part. One of our members, Helena Axelsson, did take part and her contribution was so good that she gained second place. Second place in any national competition is indeed a great result and we congratulate Helena on her success. Helena has given us permission to publish her essay and we do so below.

### **GROWING ORCHIDS IN A SMALL AREA OR BALCONY      Helena Axelsson**

I have loved orchids since I was a small child. To be honest, I'm not sure I ever had a choice, as my father was an enthusiast. Some of my earliest memories are of orchid nurseries; walking in the cool of the greenhouses and staring in wonder at all the delicate beauty around me. I was left to explore, while my father would chat to the nurseryman for what seemed like hours; fascinated by these ephemeral blooms in all the colours of the rainbow. I especially loved phalaenopsis, and would constantly pester dad to buy one. I was always told no; they won't grow where we lived. Turns out he was wrong, but that is a story for another time.

Well, as you all know, once bitten by the orchid bug, it is only a matter of time before you are compelled to start to collect them. My first foray into orchid growing was as a newly-wed, in a newly purchased home in Lapland, Sweden. Living in the frozen north of Sweden, I was limited to what species were available. Also, what would grow without a pretty serious set-up, which channelled my attention towards my childhood dream flowers, phalaenopsis.

Now, Swedish houses are all equipped with deep shelves along every window; usually with a radiator underneath. This is a fairly easy environment to start experimenting with these beautiful flowers. However, once I had one orchid, my collection slowly expanded to cover every possible surface.

Sadly, I had to leave all this beauty behind, when I emigrated to Australia with my family. It wasn't long before I was back to my old ways.

Once again, my orchid collection started to grow. It began in a modest way but steadily continued to grow. As you, my fellow collectors and enthusiasts are aware, each orchid has its own beauty and subtle differences. You just need to have more. This became such a frequent occurrence, that my husband would roll his eyes every time he saw me walk in with another boxful (yes, boxful) of phalaenopsis. I soon covered all the available space on the tables and shelves, on the small balcony/veranda that was under 90% shade cloth. Every suitable inside space next to a window was covered. My husband and family would complain to me; they could no longer use the table or veranda outside. I needed to do something about my bloody plants! My hubby threatened removal, and or destruction of my babies. Truth be told, he looked and sounded pretty serious. I started to worry for their safety, so a solution needed to be found asap.

Now as we all know, as collectors and growers, space is our most precious commodity. If I want more orchids, which of course I did, I would have to come up with some creative solutions! When working with a limited floor area, the only sensible and feasible way is to go up. A vertical garden has long been acknowledged as the most efficient use of a small space. However, I had to work out how to translate it to best fit my situation.

The first step was looking into how these plants grow in nature. Phalaenopsis, which make up the bulk of my collection, are a pendant grower.



This means that the leaves like to hang downwards. This is not how we usually cultivate them in the home environment; with the exception of mounted specimens.

Now, I didn't really want to mount every one of my 80+ plants. I considered hanging the pots on a trellis-like frame. However, this still failed to allow for the pendant-growing nature. My solution was to design and build my own frame.

So, I got to sketching. This is what I came up with: a multi-level frame, with a wire cable and an angled piece of timber, to prevent them from swinging around too much. There are trays underneath to catch water overflow, and help keep humidity high. I found that once I hung my orchids up; it was so space efficient. I had room left over. My plants, and marriage, were saved.



That was only the tip of the iceberg. Not only did I get the right growing angle, I now also had better air circulation, more light per plant, better drainage, and consequently less disease. My Phalies loved it! They instantly all started sending out new leaves and roots in a frenzy of growth; which was unexpected, but was welcomed. As a bonus, a few plants that hadn't flowered last season even started growing out-of-season spikes. I was so amazed. I chastised myself for not doing this sooner.

The phalaenopsis are still happily hanging there. I have only had one plant knocked off (by my curious dog); and one newly potted plant fell out of its pot during a very windy storm. They live out there year-round, including over winter. Winter here, on the mid-North Coast of New South Wales, is fairly mild. However, the orchids still benefit from the thermal mass of the house, to help keep them warm on a chilly night. They seem very happy with this system, as 85 percent of them are currently throwing new spikes.

Of course, I have a few plants that don't tolerate the cold in any respect; and a few that are not fans of temperatures over 30 C. So for them, I have used my windows and set up a system of seasonal rotation. This means that my Miltoniopsis and Masdevallias get summer holidays indoors; and the tropical phalaenopsis species get a winter vacation to the milder climes of my living room.

My indoor set-up consists of shelving next to a large window that receives indirect light. I supplement the light with LED lamps (the type used for marine aquariums with multi-spectrum). On the shelves, I use trays or pots with damp gravel and sphagnum moss to keep humidity high; and I mist-spray as required.

So far this indoor/outdoor rotation system seems to work very well; but it is in its infancy. I'm not overly experienced with these plants, so time will tell. At least I haven't killed anything yet!

All in all, I currently have approximately 100 orchids in a floor space of 2.56 square metres, outdoors on the balcony; and a further 30 plants in 0.21 square meter area indoors in my lounge room. Even better, I still have room to add to my collection!





**12. THE DENSIFLORA OR CALLISTA DENDROBIUMS: by Jim Brydie.**

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**Let me Tell you a Story – “I have just bought a Den. thysiflorum, densiflorum, farmeri, Mousmee? Which is it?”** - There were some magnificent specimens of various members of this group in this month’s Virtual Benching. The official name for this group of closely related species is Dendrobium Section Callista. Some now call it Section Densiflora but I haven’t read the basis for that so I will stick to Callista. There are about 14 species in this showy group and unfortunately it is quite common for growers to get the names mixed up. That was demonstrated yet again this month with submissions to the virtual benching. They are all beautiful so it doesn’t matter that much which one you have, but because other growers may seek to buy one for themselves based on the pictures, I try to make sure they are labelled correctly.



The two most showy, and most commonly grown are *D. thysiflorum*, and *D. densiflorum*, so I will start with them. If it is just one or the other of these, they are easy to tell apart once in flower. *D. densiflorum* is all gold, *thysiflorum* is white with a gold lip. When not in flower they look much the same. Pseudobulb sizes can vary a little but they are 40 cm or so tall, more or less round in shape, but pretty much the same diameter the whole length and fairly strongly ridged. Hard to tell apart and I never try.

***D. chrysotoxum* var *suavissimum* ►**

***To help remember, “g” from gold flowers is closest in the alphabet to “d” in densiflorum.***



There is one other Callista species (*D. chrysotoxum*) with ‘similar’ gold flowers to *densiflorum*, but the plants look nothing alike. *D. chrysotoxum* has a shorter, stubbier pseudobulb with a distinctive club shape.

Narrow at the base, fat in the middle and then tapering again toward the top. There are several different flower colour combinations in *chrysotoxum*, from all gold, to gold with a reddish centre like this one which is known as ‘variety *suavissimum*’. Some have longer pseudobulbs than others.

Perhaps 20-25cm would be typical, but some are shorter like those in this picture. Regardless of all that, you can see you could never confuse densiflorum with chrysotoxum.

So, what is the next issue that gets mixed up? Well, we had a couple this month. Probably the third most popular species is *D. farmeri*. Its flowers are fairly similar to *thrysiflorum* but there are significant differences.

#### ***D. farmeri*** ▶



When not in flower, look at the plants. *D. farmeri* is shorter, and has 4 sided 'square cross section' pseudobulbs that taper similarly to *chrysotoxum*. That is, narrow at the bottom, then fatter, and tapering at the top although not as sharply as *chrysotoxum*. When they are in flower, *farmeri* can be either white or pink or any grade in between, but the lip is always gold in the centre with a white to pink strip on the lower edge. It has a 'bib'. - *D. thrysiflorum* NEVER has this arrangement.

*Farmeri* also has a less commonly seen close cousin called *D. palpebrae* which also has the square stems and the white tipped lip but I will not go into explaining the difference between the cousins.

There was one more beautiful and popular gold flowered *Dendrobium Callista* species benched in the VB this month and that is *Den lindleyi* (often labelled *D. aggregatum*), but it's plant form and habit are very different and could never be mixed up those previously mentioned. The pseudobulbs are only 5-10 cm tall, ridged, squat, and fat in the middle. *D. lindleyi* also has a smaller, cousin species, with which *lindleyi* is sometimes confused. This is *D. jenkinsii* which looks like a miniature *lindleyi*. But perhaps that is a subject for another day. I don't want to confuse you anymore than necessary in one go.



What I do need to mention is the *Callista* hybrids. The most famous one being *Den. Mousmee*. This is the manmade hybrid between *D. amabile* (syn *bronckartii*) and *D. thrysiflorum*, and it looks like a giant pink *thrysiflorum* with a huge inflorescence with many flowers. It used to be very rarely seen because the cross was first made in 1941 by the famous French nursery Vacherot and Lecoufle and was not made again until perhaps recently. Very few of that first cross are still alive today but with more sophisticated culture, those are being grown and divided and more and more can be purchased. The reason it wasn't ever re-made before now was because *D. amabile* was lost to cultivation for more than 50 years. It has now been re-found, seedlings have been produced, and plants can be purchased although quite expensive because they are rare. I don't know for sure but by now *Mousmee* must have been remade because it is much sought after.



Unfortunately, anything much sought after always demands a premium price, and as a result, many 'fake' *Mousmees* have been sold throughout the community. One particular supposed *Mousmee* cultivar, 'L. Bradford' (in honour of Lloyd Bradford), even received a cultural award in Sydney in 2003 and has been the subject of much debate. When a grower consulted Vacherot and Lecoufle, it was the nursery's opinion that 'Mousmee L. Bradford' was actually a sample of the cross between *thrysiflorum* and *farmeri*, and I am convinced they are right. However, this hasn't stopped it's trade as *Mousmee* despite that fact that 'Bradford' is very short even for a *thrysiflorum* let alone a *Mousmee*, and although it has a pinkish tinge, it is only very lightly coloured.

With some doubt being now cast on the cultivar with the name 'L. Bradford' many growers who paid big money for it as a *Mousmee*, have now dropped the 'L. Bradford' name and just sell it as *Mousmee*. It is being sold all over Sydney and probably many other places, and this is hugely confusing the marketplace for the real *Mousmee*.



Despite it being a magnificent orchid, you should all be very careful in buying Mousmee. There are many fakes out there and everyone who gets tricked makes the problem worse by propagating it.

Other hybrids - With the beauty of the Callista species, it is hardly surprising that there are many, many hybrids between them all. *D. thysiflorum* has been crossed with *amabile*, *densiflorum*, *farmeri*, *palpebrae*, *chrysotoxum*.

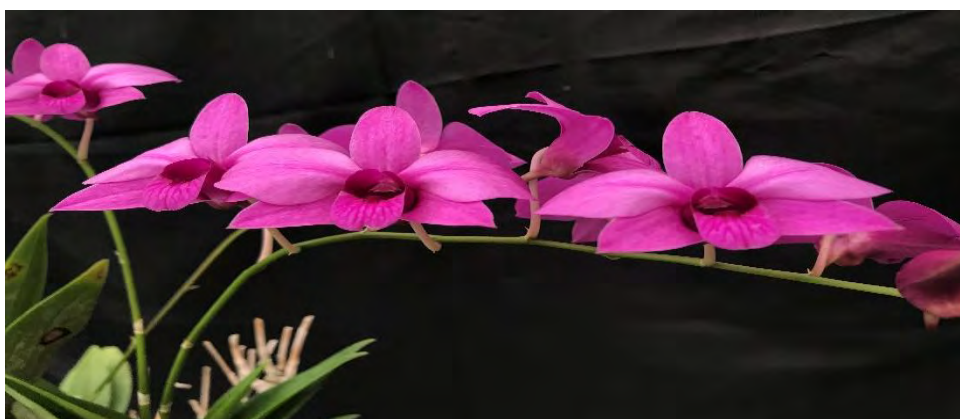
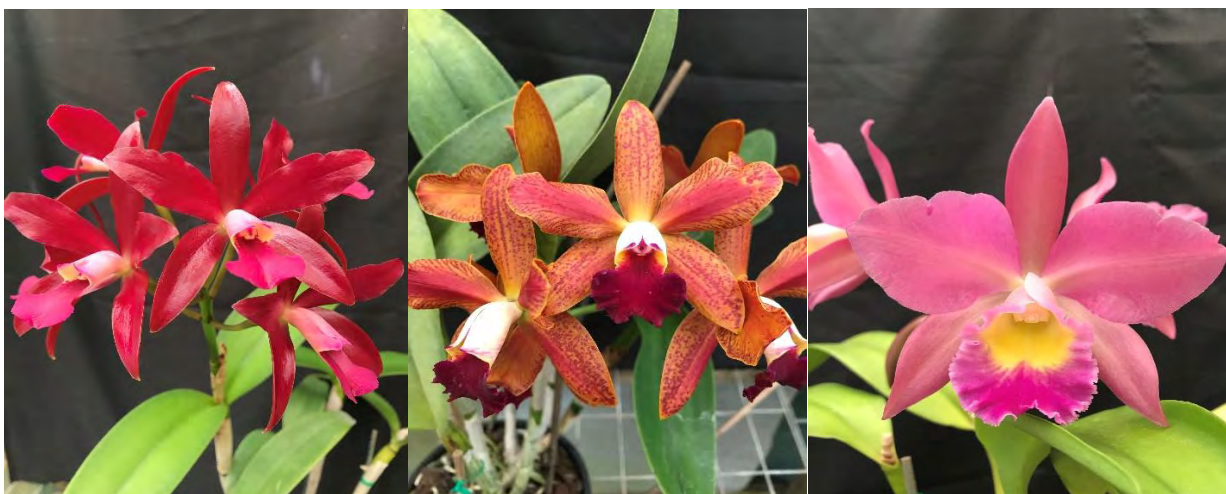
*Farmeri* has been crossed with *amabile*, *densiflorum*, *thysiflorum*, *Mousmee*, *Farmeri-thysiflorum*.

I won't list them all. But these are all long lived orchids and labels get lost. You can see that there must be many orchids out there among growers that are actually hybrids and they are very hard to distinguish from the species.

- If a species name is presented, I can tell you if it is plainly a wrong name, but I can't be totally sure whether it is a species or hybrid.
- When a hybrid name is presented I look at the characteristics and see if the features are consistent with the parents.
- If no name is presented, I can look for the characteristics of the species and **guess** at whether it might be a species or, if I think it is a hybrid, guess the likely parents. But none of any of the above is even close to an exact science.

Don't be ashamed or reticent if your orchid has a wrong name. Every grower's collection has them. If you are given correction advice from what you believe is a reliable source, fix the tag and move on. It happens all the time.

#### Orchids in flower from the greenhouse of Rhonda Smith:



Top Left: *Lc. Netrasiri Waxy*  
Centre: *Blc. Waiania Leopard*  
*'Ching Hua'* HCC/AOS  
*X Slc. Jungle Treasure 'Mojave'*  
HCC/AOS  
Top Right: *C. Chocolate Drop*  
*'Kodama'* x *Blc. Mt. Sulvan*  
*'David Littman'*  
Left: *Den. Enobi Purple' Splash'*