



COFFS ORCHID NEWS JUNE 2023

PUBLICATION OF THE COFFS HARBOUR ORCHID SOCIETY

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1. EDITORIAL:

I sometimes think that many Aussies play a game called “knock the tall poppy”. In fact Australians probably have an international reputation for not always agreeing with the decisions made by authorities.

I see this behaviour in action at most orchid shows I attend, “The judges didn't get it right”. “What were the judges thinking?” “How could that orchid be the Grand Champion?” Many of these comments come from people who have some experience in orchid growing but no experience of orchid judging or little knowledge of how it works. On the other hand, I also witness the sheer joy on the faces of people when they see wonderful orchids for the first time and marvel at their beauty. These people realise they know little about orchids and accept that the judges are qualified and proficient at their job.

I commiserate with the judges. They work hard as a group and their final decisions are based on group consensus and are usually the result of many years of combined experience in judging and growing orchids.

Nobody can just decide they want to be an orchid judge and start in the job straight away. In Australia, all orchid judges undergo an 18 to 24 month intensive training course where they learn the basic standards for each orchid genera and the principles of judging. This course involves many hours of lectures and practical activities where the trainees are exposed to the wide variety of orchid plants. They are required to complete assignments during the course and undergo final theory and practical examinations with a pass mark of 75%.

This is followed by a three year period as an Associate Judge and they must judge at a minimum of six orchid shows each year. After this probationary period they may then be invited to join the local judging panel in order to gain full judging status. All judges are expected to keep up to date with developments and judge at a minimum number of shows each year.

Judging is not based on personal preferences such as “the only good colour is yellow” but is underpinned by a set of guidelines with reference to flower shape, flower colour and texture, flower size, growth habit and the number of flowers present. In other words, the judges follow a set of guidelines and not just make decisions based on personal preferences.

Yes, individual judges are human and they are not infallible but poor decisions are usually dealt with by the group and any errors averted.

Next time you visit an orchid show I hope you are also filled with awe at the beauty of the orchids, accept the judges’ decisions as final and enjoy the successfully grown orchids on display in the show room. If you don’t agree with the judges’ decisions then make an effort to talk to the Head Judge and discover why they made certain decisions. Happy Orchid Growing!

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SPONSORS**SHEARWATER RESTAURANT**

Brekkie and Modern Australian dishes in a bright, upscale location with outdoor tables and lovely views over Coffs Creek. 321 Harbour Drive, Coffs Harbour.
www.shearwaterrestaurant.com.au or Phone 6651 6053.

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. Phone 02 6652 2599.

COFFS COAST MOTORS

For new Mazda vehicles, also second-hand vehicles and ALL your servicing needs. Ring for an appointment 02 6652 3122 or visit 211 Pacific Highway, Coffs Harbour
You won't be disappointed .

DARK STAR ORCHIDS

Dark Star Orchids. 0416 195832 or (02) 65644088.

Hans and Sue run a small nursery west of Bowraville. They specialise in rare, unusual and hard to find species of many orchids particularly Bulbophyllums, Dendrochilums, Stanhopeas, Coelogyne and lots of other genera

www.darkstarorchids.com.au

email darkstarorchids@skymesh.com.au

BRUCE HALL

Bruce provides raffle prizes for Autumn and Spring Shows.

OFFICE WORKS

Officeworks carries an excellent range covering all stationery needs, computers/monitors/printers, and associated technology. They sell a wide range of smart phones and watches, plus furniture and workspace solutions. If you are looking for low prices on everyday essentials, it's all there at Home Base, Coffs Harbour. Phone 66 919100 or check out the full range at officeworks.com.au.

LUDO'S OLD WARES, ULMARRA

Deals with old wares and collectables — 0402 044 601

CALENDAR, 2023

- 1 June 2023— Dick Cooper—
"Using OrchidWiz"
- 24—25 June—Mingara Fair/Show
- 20 July 2023—Hans Schaible—
New Bulbophyllum
- 3 Aug 2023— Peter Gough and
Bill Bright
- 19 Aug 2023— Dorrigo NP Visit
- 7 Sept 2023— TBA
- 9-10 Sept 2023—Spring Show
- 5 Oct—Plant Auction
- 2 Nov – AGM/ Age Care Talk
- ? Dec—Annual Presentation
Meeting—Venue/Date to be
determined

Note: The Committee meets on Tuesday following the Monthly Meeting.

CHOS BANK DETAILS

BSB No: 533-000

ACCOUNT No: 32817199

ROSELLA ORCHIDS**Spring Show Sponsor**

Located in South Grafton and can supply a wide range of orchids but specialises in Cattleya and Vanda genera. They also stock a large range of hardware and accessories for orchid growers. Nursery is closed to the general public except by appointment.

www.rosellaorchids.com.au

3. WINNERS FROM THE NAMBUCCA VALLEY ORCHID SOCIETY SHOW



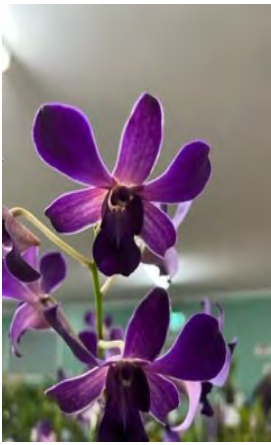
**Grand Champion Orchid— *Bulbophyllum ornatissimum*
 Congratulations to Rhonda Smith
 This orchid also won the Champion Species and Champion
 Show Specimen**



**Reserve Champion
 went to Terry Pul-
 len for his previ-
 ously awarded
Oncostele Wildcat
 'Dylan'**



**Champion Laeli-
 inae Bc. Donna
 Kimura 'Paradise
 Tami'.
 Owned by B and
 J Lennon**



**Champion
 Dendrobium
 Bubble Gum
 owned by
 Rhonda Smith**



**First Flowering
 Hybrid Seedling
 Oncidium Kulnu-
 ra Triumph 'No.
 7'. Owned by
 Rhonda Smith**



**Champion Exotic
 Hybrid
 Cloweaetum
 Elizabeth Anne
 Galagher owned
 by Paige Sinclair**

4. JOKES: DAD JOKES

- I once dated a guy who broke up with me because I only have 9 toes. Yes, he was lack toes intolerant.
- I've started telling everyone about the benefits of eating dried grapes. It's all about raisin awareness.
- I've started investing in stocks: beef, vegetable, chicken. One day I hope to be a bouillianaire.
- If you boil a funny bone, it becomes a laughing stock. Now that's humerus.
- I accidentally rubbed ketchup in my eyes. Now I have Heinzsight.
- Did you know muffins spelled backwards is what you do when you take them out of the oven?
- Scientifically, a raven has 17 primary wing feathers, the big ones at the end of the wing. They are called pinion feathers. A crow has 16. So, the difference between a raven and a crow is only a matter of a pinion.
- I was walking in the jungle and saw a lizard on his hind legs telling jokes. I turned to a local tribal leader and said, "That lizard is really funny!" The leader replied, "That's not a lizard. He's a stand-up chameleon.
- I tried to come up with a carpentry pun that woodwork. I thought I nailed it but nobody saw it.
- Singing in the shower is fine until you get soap in your mouth. Then it's a soap opera.
- The Black-Eyed Peas can sing us a song but the chick peas can only hummus one.
- Then there was the time Fruit of the Loom took Hanes to court... it was a brief case.
- How much does a chimney cost? Nothing, it's on the house.
- My friend said she wouldn't eat cow's tongue because it came out of a cow's mouth. I gave her an egg.
- Once upon a time there was a King who was only 12 inches tall. He was a terrible King but he made a great ruler.
- Ran out of toilet paper and now using lettuce leaves. Today was just the tip of the iceberg, and tomorrow romaines to be seen.
- My friend Jack says he can communicate with vegetables. That's right...Jack and the beans talk.
- I want to tell you about a girl who only eats plants. You probably have not heard of herbivore.
- I was struggling to understand how lightning works and then it struck me.
- Six cows were smoking joints and playing poker. That's right. The steaks were pretty high.
- I went to the paint store to get thinner. It didn't work.

oooOOOooo

I was visiting my daughter the other day when I asked her if she had today's newspaper I could borrow. She said "this is the 21st Century and we don't waste paper on newspapers. Here use my iPad". I can tell you this, that fly never knew what hit him".

5. COMMITTEE MEETING REPORT:

Report from the Committee Meeting held on 9th May, 2023 at NCRB Gardens.

1. Peter Gough was welcomed as a new member of the CHOS 2023 Committee.
Thank you, Peter.
2. Report and discussion of the successful Autumn Show. The Financial Report for the Show will be attached to the June Newsletter. Decided to charge \$2 per person as an entry fee to future Shows. Children Under 16 will be admitted free.
3. Members BBQ at Frank Pappalardo's residence on Saturday 13th May from 4 to 8pm.
4. Bunnings Fund Raising BBQ on Saturday 3rd June. Paige to request assistance with the work roster in the next few days.
5. Visit to Dorriggo National Park on 19th August. Full details during June and July.
6. Discussion on changing date for the 2024 Spring Show due to clash with AOC Conference in Perth. WA. Suggestion is to hold the CHOS Show a week earlier than normal—7th to 8th September, 2023. Further discussion required.
7. Policies to be reviewed at June Meeting—Role of the Committee Member; Committee Nomination Form; Plant Growing Competition.
8. Guest Speakers for CHOS August Meeting—Peter Gough and Bill Bright.
9. Peter Gough and Kerrie Gosling to take over future organisation of Plant Growing Competition.
10. Guest Speaker at June Meeting will be Dick Cooper on how to use OrchidWiz.
11. Next Committee meeting will be on Tuesday 6th June, 2023 from 10.30am at NCRBG.

**JUDGES FOR 1ST JUNE
MONTHLY MEETING**

BOB SOUTHWELL

PETER GOUGH



6. Results of the 2022 Plant Growing Competition using *Epidendrum* Princess Valley 'Blushing'.

First Place with 26 points went to Silesa King—Congratulations, Silesa.

Second Place with 14 points went to Peter Gough. Well done, Peter

First Plant to Flower went to Paige Sinclair—Good work, Paige.

7. ORCHID FAIRS AND CONFERENCES, 2023

Free Admission
Woolgoolga District Orchid Society Inc.

**2 Day
Orchid
Conference/Workshop**

Sat. November 18 & Sun. 19
Sat. 9.00am to 3.00pm Sun. 9.00am to 3.30pm

At the NEW
**WIIGULGA
SPORTS COMPLEX**
Solitary Islands Way, Woolgoolga

- 8 World-renowned Speakers
- Cultural Advice
- Potting Demonstrations
- Participants invited to bring 2 Flowering Orchids for Popular Vote Judging
- Coffee Shop onsite

Nurserymen's Orchids on Sale **Prizes to be Won!**
For more information contact - woolgoolgaorchidsociety@gmail.com

News from Woolgoolga District Orchid Society— This year their Spring Show will be held over two days on the first weekend in October and will be staged in the newly opened Wiigulga Sports Complex. As you can see from the flyer on the left, this year's Orchid Conference will be also held over two days with eight amazing speakers. Congratulations to WDOS on this initiative. All CHOS members should note these dates in their diary as these are events well worth attending. Hope to see you there.

OTHER DATES TO NOTE:

Mingara Orchid Show and Fair— Mingara Recreation Club, Tumbi Umbi. 24th to 25th June, 2023

Tweed Heads Show and Fair—4—5 November (TBC)

8. MEMBERS PLANT SALES AT MONTHLY MEETINGS—JUNE AND AUGUST IN 2023.

If you wish to sell plants to other CHOS members then you will have this opportunity at either the June or the August meetings. Plants should be healthy and disease free. They do not need to be in flower. A photograph will often help your sales efforts and if possible they should have a detailed label attached.

The Society will not collect any commission at these two monthly meetings. Remember, if you want a quick sale then price the plant accordingly. If you are selling natives to other members then they do not require a licence tag.

This year you can sell plants other than orchids.

9. PERTH INTERNATIONAL ORCHID CONFERENCE AND SHOW, 2024

Orchids Western Australia (OrchidsWA) and the Orchid Specialist Group of the IUCN invite you to attend the inaugural Perth International Orchid Conference & Show (Perth IOCS) incorporating two significant international orchid events, the 23rd Australian Orchid Council (AOC) Conference & Show and the 8th International Orchid Conservation Congress (IOCC) being staged in Perth, Western Australia from 11 to 16 September 2024.

The Perth IOCS will for the first time bring together an international speaker list of the world's leading orchid scientists along with growers, hybridisers, and hobbyists at a time when Western Australia's world renown wildflowers and astonishing terrestrial orchids will be blooming. Pre- and post-conference bus tours to the mid-west of Western Australia hosted by eminent orchidologist Professor Kingsley Dixon and orchid taxonomist and author/co-author of eight books on Western Australian orchids Andrew Brown will provide a highlight not to be missed. We invite you to register your interest for these tours early as there will be limited seats available.

Join the mailing list so you are kept up-to-date with the latest developments—www.perthiocs2024.com.au

10. POPULAR VOTE AT THE MAY MEETING



**Popular Vote at the May General Meeting was awarded to Malcolm Ide for his colourful Cluster Cattleya NoID
Congratulations Malcolm.**



Grand Champion grower Rhonda Smith being congratulated by NVOS President Grahame Beatton



Don and Helen Boorer receive their NVOS Life Membership badges from President Grahame Beatton



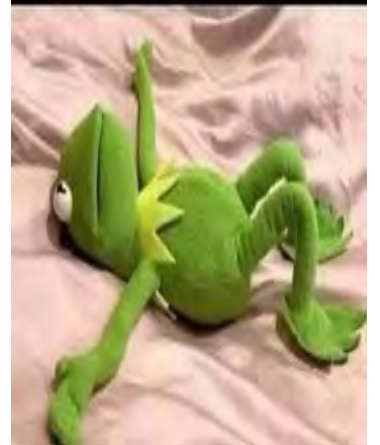
SOMETIMES ALL YOU CAN DO IS JUST HANG ON.

Life Lessons from a Pencil

- 1** Everything you do always leaves a mark.
- 2** You can always correct the mistakes you make.
- 3** It's what is inside of you that matters.
- 4** Sometimes, you may become dull and need a hand to be sharp again.
- 5** Allow others to help and guide you.

© TeacherLists

I need a day between every day to recover from the day before and prepare for the upcoming day.

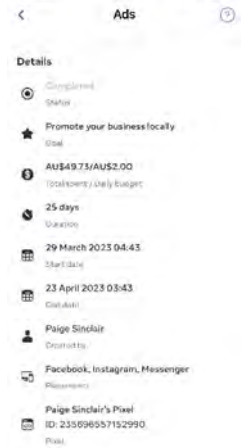
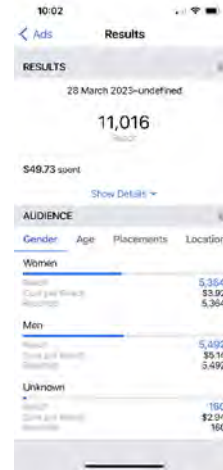
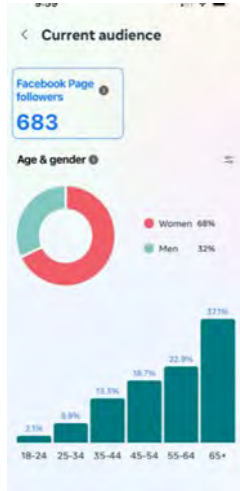


11. Coffs Harbour Orchid Society Facebook

By Paige Sinclair

May 2023 – Currently, the Coffs Harbour Orchid Society has 683 likes. This is up by only one person from April 2023. For our 'What's on Bloom' the number of likes remains the same as last month at 174.

Additionally, the other images are the results of the advertisement that was placed to attract people to visit our Autumn Show.



12. SPONSORS' SPOT: COFFS COAST MOTORS

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They also supply an extensive range of vehicle accessories, from fog lights and boot drawers to sports kits and alloy wheels.

Check out their website— www.coffscostmotors.com.au

You won't be disappointed .



SUPPORT THEM AS THEY SUPPORT US

anyone who says
their wedding was the
best day of their life
has clearly never had
2 candy bars fall down
at once from a
vending machine.

When I lost the fingers
on my right hand in a
freak accident, I asked
the doctor if I would
still be able to write
with it. He said,
"Probably, but I
wouldn't count on it 😂"

13. USING SLOW RELEASE FERTILIZER PLANTACOTE® Top K 6M 10 :9 :19 +2mg0+TE

A number of CHOS members have been using slow release fertilizer as their only means of providing nutrients to their orchids. Others have added it to their potting mix at repotting and then as a 6 to 8 months top dressing as an additional fertilizing method. There are a number of slow release formulations available but one that is increasing in popularity and has been reported as giving great results is Plantacote Top K. This is a fertilizer high in Potassium (K) which is essential for good plant growth and flowering. The NPK ratio of 10:9:19 and is produced in a number of slow release formats which includes 6 and 8 months release time mixes.

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION:

Plantacote Top K 6M is a controlled release fertilizer, coated with an outstanding tough and resilient polymer coating. Each granule contains all major and trace elements which are necessary for an optimal growth. Plantacote Top K is especially designed for crops with a high potassium demand. Due to the N:K ratio of nearly 1:2 in the Plantacote Top K formulation, excessive plant growth is avoided and thus the plant stability and compactness is promoted and the flowering performance improved.

The nutrients supply coincides with the physiological requirements of the plant over the entire growth cycle of 6 months. The release is based on a natural membrane process which is only controlled by soil temperature. Declared release times refer to an average soil temperature of 21 °C. Higher temperatures accelerate the nutrient release, lower temperatures slow it down. In comparison to slow release fertilizers the release time is unaffected by substrate type, pH, micro-organisms or level of irrigation.

THE ADVANTAGES OF PLANTACOTE® TOP K:

- Potassium pronounced formulation, especially suited for herbaceous perennials such as Orchids
- Homogenous product, each granule contains all essential nutrients (NPK+ trace elements)
- Regular and continuous release over the declared longevity (in this case over 6 months)
- Optimal plant growth
- High nutrient use efficiency
- Environmentally friendly due to reduction of volatilization and run-off
- Ultra-safe coating : no risk of cracks and breaks during handling and mixing
- Strict quality control to guarantee a consistent product in each bag
- Savings on labour and nutrient inputs

PRODUCT PROPERTIES:

Longevity; 5-6 months (21°C soil temperature)

Packaging: 25kg in a plastic bag

Appearance: beige-coloured granules

Bulk density (kg/l): approx. 1.0

Particle size: 2-4mm



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR USE:

For stock fertilization of substrates, Plantacote® Top K should be evenly mixed with the substrate before planting. In case of topdressing the granules should be evenly spread on container or bed surface. Additions to the substrate (e.g. lime) do not affect the product efficiency. The recommended rates of use refer to substrates containing no nutrients. If already fertilized substrates are to be used, the indicated rates of Plantacote® Top K should be reduced accordingly.

14. MORE NAMBUCCA BEAUTIES:



The Hard Cane table



Den. Lady Gem x Den.
bigibbum 'Stelth'



Blc. Keowee 'Vi Galaxy'



Paph. charlesworthii



Vanda Jose Coronado
X V. Madame Rattana

15. NEW SUPPLIES OF ORCHID BARK: As reported last month, the CHOS/WDOS has had to source a new supply of bark suitable for potting orchids. A large order of KIWI Orchid bark has now arrived

Kiwi Orchid Bark is a hard, clean, uniformly graded *Pinus radiata* bark suitable for growing orchids. Fred Clarke, Sunset Valley Orchids, California, rates it as the best orchid bark he has ever used. The Society will sell 50 litre bags for \$45 each.

Kiwi bark comes in four sizes— No.2: **3 to 8mm**; No.3: **8 to 20mm**; No.4: **20 to 25mm**; No. 5: **25 to 50mm**. (The 8 to 20mm size would be equal to mixing 9 to 12 and 12 to 18mm grades of Orchid bark and would be the ideal size for general potting purposes).

Supplies of 15mm charcoal (Orchid Char) are also available. These are in 19kg bags and sell at \$45 per bag.

Supplies are available from Paige Sinclair— Mobile: 0427 591 901

You can pick up the bark from 4 Jean Street, Coffs Harbour or make suitable arrangements with Paige regarding delivery. Payment can be via cash or Direct Deposit (Bank details Page 2).



16. GUEST SPEAKER ON 1ST JUNE AT CHOS MEETING will be Dick Cooper. Dick will talk on "Using OrchidWiz". OrchidWiz is a computer database which lists every registered orchid and gives photos, identification points, cultural details and award information. OrchidWiz is the ultimate in providing orchid information and is much more reliable than the internet. Dick will use a Power-Point presentation to illustrate his talk. The Society has a copy of OrchidWiz for member use.

17. Feature Article:

All About Vandas - Garrie Bromley and Jim Brydie

(Printed with permission from the KVO Bulletin, Feb, 2023)

First, just what are Vandas?

The genus *Vanda* is just one orchid genus in a family of closely related orchids that share what we call a 'monopodial' growth style. That is, they make a single stem which just grows taller and taller each year. The stem that makes new leaves from the growing point at its top, making the stem grow taller and taller each year.

The other growth style is Sympodial, which is the type that makes separate pseudobulbs joined by a special stem called a rhizome.

But of course nature is never as simple as the simple Monopodial pattern described above. Every plant has dormant bud zones on their stems that are designed to allow the individual to survive damage to the top growing point that may otherwise have been catastrophic. For example, when you cut the top section off a mature *Vanda* (including a number of aerial roots), you now pot up the top division as the new plant and hope that a stem bud will shoot and make a new plant out of the leafless bottom section. Frequently, it will.

But as well as being a possible method of propagation by division, many monopodial orchids naturally produce side growths from those side buds. These then become vertical growths in parallel to the original growth, making a cluster of vertical growths. That doesn't make them any less 'Monopodial'. It just means they grow in a cluster of monopodial growths.

Now as to which ones we call *Vanda* and which ones get some other genus name, well that is a question not easily answered. In fact taxonomists are today still studying DNA relationships to sort out which are really which.

I won't go any further in this little explanation but all monopodial orchids are in the giant orchid Family "Vandaeae" which covers about 160 genera and over 2000 species and there are many, many more Vandaeae hybrids. Our society's benching classes call this group "Vandaceous" so we have a class for Vandaceous species and another for the Vandaceous hybrids. In practical terms you can say if your orchid is monopodial, it is 'Vandaceous'.

Taxonomically, the hierarchy for Vandas is : Family Orchidaceae – Sub Family Epidendroideae – Sub Clade Dendrobioid – Tribe Vandaeae – Subtribe Aeridiinae - - Genus *Vanda* etc.

However, from there it gets sticky. Over the past 50 years all sorts of species have been moved in and out of *Vanda*. The latest research I read was from 2013 and it decided the answer was still a pineapple until more detailed DNA research was completed. So for now I am saying *Vanda* includes what were the genera - *Ascocenda*, *Euanthe*, *Neofinetia* and a handful of other relevant but lesser significant genera.

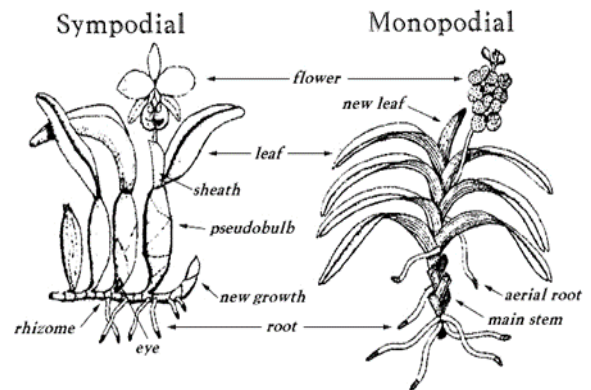
Types of Vandas - The orchids that were always known as "Vandas" come in basically three types:

"strap-leaved" – which have wide, more or less flat leaves.

"terete leaf" – which have round, pencil-shaped leaves. And,

"the semi-teretes" – which are hybrids between the other two types, and have an intermediate leaf shape. Their leaves are fleshy, heavy textured, but with an open "V" shape.

Sort of like a pencil shape slit down the long side and opened.



All the terete leaf (pencil leaf shape) Vandas have now been moved to their own separate genus called Papilionanthe. Although Papilionanthe and Vanda do make hybrids, They do not hybridise as easily as Vanda to Vanda because their genes do not quite match up function to function in the same way as Vanda to Vanda. Which seems to support the terete leaf types being shifted to a separate genus.

There are 11 Papilionanthe species and about 65 species of strap leaf Vanda although when you get down to examining the Vandas more closely you can see that the physical characteristic of wide flat leaves within Vanda is not completely consistent across the whole genus anyway. Many species, especially the smaller growing types like those that used to be call Ascocenda, have stiffer, more sharply V-shape leaves getting closer to what you might call semi-terete. So don't get too carried away separating Vandas on the basis of the shape of their leaves.



Papilionanthe teres

Growing styles and habitats

What is very different between Papilionanthe and Vanda is growth style & habitat. The pencil shaped leaves of the Papilionanthe are sort of cactus like and allow them to grow in full blazing sun. They are still tropical orchids that prefer regular rain and warmth all year round but the fact that they grow out in the open makes them a little bulletproof. They are terrestrials but kind of clustering. Some are almost swarming climbers. One American growers description says : *"The terete or semi terete vandas are the most bullet proof orchid I have. They have been exposed to over 100F and down to the high 20'sF. They have been buried under hurricane debris for months and found unscathed. Mine climb trees. ..."*

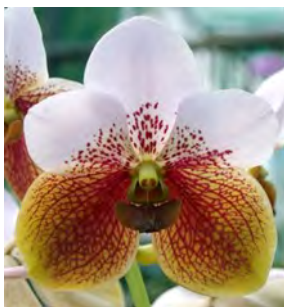
I don't know that writer but I like the bullet proof bit. I can't verify the temperature tolerance either but I have grown several Papilionanthe and they do tolerate at least near zero Centigrade. And, as full sun plants, they can also tolerate very high temperatures. It stands to reason that their hybrids (including the semi-teretes) are also tough as nails.



Papilionanthe Miss Joaquim

All of this discussion about really hardy and tolerant Vandas brings us back to the very reason for writing all this stuff in the first place.

Are there Vandas you can grow outside in Sydney? Before we can answer that we need to look at a few of the more lovely flowered 'strap leaf' Vandas that give us those huge brightly coloured Vandas that we all admire so much.



At one end of the scale is the Queen of all Vandas, Vanda sanderiana **(left)**. This amazing orchid comes from the Philippines Island of Mindanao and from elevations up to only 500m. The plants can be up to 1 metre tall x 60 – 80 cm wide. The two toned flowers are about 10 cm across and the 30 cm inflorescence can have from 4 to 10 flowers. Large plants with multiple inflorescences can be a very spectacular sight and this amazing species is present in the majority of the large flowered Vanda hybrids.

Apart from the amazing flowers, its habitat is the most important factor to note. Here is the description from IOSPE : ... *grows on trees at elevations of sea level to 500 meters close to the sea, often hanging over the water, and often fully exposed to the sun as well.*

In Orchidwiz, the Bakers Habitat tables tell us that day temperatures there average 29-31 °C, and night 20-21 °C, with hardly any variation through the year. Humidity is 80 – 85 % all year, with rainfall moderate to heavy all year.

This is a Vanda you do need a heated, humidified glasshouse to grow properly in Sydney.

However, we know that there are more than 60 other Vanda species and some of these come from higher elevations and some from habitats where there is much more variation in temperature and humidity. Happily for us, these 'others' include wonderful orchids like the stunning blue Vanda coerulea and a number of other gorgeous types used in Vanda hybridising.

Vanda coerulea (**right**) comes from the lower slopes of the Himalayas in NE India, Burma, Thailand, and SW China, up to about 1500 m, so the temperature extremes will be significantly greater. The Bakers describes its growing habits as : -“*.They usually grow high up in rough-barked trees that are not exceedingly leafy so that the plants are fully exposed to the sun, rain, and wind. The roots sprawl over the dry rough bark with no moss or lichen present. Therefore, they are able to dry very rapidly after becoming wet.*” It seems obvious that Vanda coerulea will pass on much more hardy habitat tolerance in its genes than those species from the traditional lowlands that are always wet and humid. Vanda tricolor also grows at elevations up to 1600 m.



Of the other species I see frequently listed in the genetics, most, like dearii, tessellata, and merrillii are all lowland wet humid types, but some, including the group of smaller growing and smaller flowered types that used to be called Ascocendas can be a little tougher. For example, Vanda (Ascocenda) miniata can be found up to 1000 m and often grows in dry deciduous forests. That would imply that they have evolved to tolerate a significantly wider range of temperature and humidity and changing seasonal conditions.

So, where does that leave us? I think it leaves us looking to experienced and very good growers like Garrie for guidance on which ones to try and how to treat them if you buy one.

If you really want to give a Vanda a try, but have no experience with them, then our suggestions are :

You should look for an attractive semiterete type (a Papilionanda) for your first try. They are still beautiful but much more hardy than strap leaf types. And more forgiving. One that is a bit old but beautiful is Pda. Mevr. Velthuis (**right**) which is the cross between Singapore's National flower - "Miss Joaquim" and Vanda sanderiana. Jim grows this in his cold (but roofed) shadehouse and it flowers regularly.



When you buy a Vanda for the first time, DO NOT BUY some tiny seedling, mericlone, or baby plant. Buy a mature flowering size plant for your first try. It will have more strength to tolerate your possibly less than perfect growing culture.

Concentrate on learning how to grow a Vanda. The best way to get a mature Vanda through a winter (that it never wanted to see) is to make it the biggest and strongest and healthiest you can get it before winter. Learn how much light is ideal. Even if you can't supply ideal conditions, you will know what to aim for. Hang them up high nearer to the roof. Give it a slatted basket or some airy container to grow in, open, coarse medium, and make sure it can dry quickly between waterings. THEN figure out how often to water and fertilise within that watering and drying cycle IN YOUR CONDITIONS.

Make sure you do fertilise it regularly, and not too concentrated. These orchids don't have big pseudobulbs as storage organs. Yes, they store minerals and water in their leaves, stem, and roots, but

that is a shorter term resource than in orchids with pseudobulbs. They want it supplied regularly and not too strong in any one dose.

If you have been growing a Vanda for a few years and it is growing well enough but hasn't flowered for you, you might try either more light, or move it to your more open shade house area where air movement is increased. If you do this however, do it in spring/summer and as we move into perhaps mid to late autumn, and we start getting those colder nights, keep an eye on the plant for any 1 cm+ black spots starting to appear on the leaves as these may be indicating leaf cell collapse due to cold damage. If so, move the orchid to warmer, more protected conditions.

18. BITS AND PIECES:

- A great members BBQ was held at Frank Pappalardo's house in the Lakes Estate. Thanks to Frank and Catherine for all their efforts and for their outstanding hospitality. A great night, Frank and Cathy. Well done!
- Bunnings Fund Raising BBQ is set down for Saturday, 3rd June. If you can't help with the BBQ then please come and buy a sausage or two to support the Society.
- The CHOS has eight outstanding sponsors who assist the Society through financial support. Please check out our list of sponsors (Page 2 of this newsletter) and support them whenever you can. Tell them you are a member of CHOS.
- Every member of CHOS has access to an Advisor on orchid matters. Each member should have a list of the various Advisors who have expertise in the various orchid genera. If you don't have a list then find it on the website—www.coffsortchidsociety.org. If you have an orchid problem and you would like some assistance then please contact an Advisor.
- Due to the Winter School Holidays, the July Monthly Meeting is set down for Thursday 20th July—Hans Schaible will present a new program on Bulbophyllums.
- Do you wish to buy or sell orchids—come early to the CHOS June Monthly meeting (1st June) where members will have orchids (plus other plants) for sale. No commission will be charged.
- You don't have to be on the Committee to help with the day to day organisation of the Society. There are many tasks and projects which non-committee persons could help with. If you wish to help in any way then please talk to one of the Committee Members.

