



COFFS ORCHID NEWS AUGUST 2023

PUBLICATION OF THE COFFS HARBOUR ORCHID SOCIETY

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1. EDITORIAL:

I am in the process of going through my orchid collection and removing those plants that are not performing well. If they are good enough and in excess of what I need, then I will set them aside for placing on the sales table or perhaps donate them as a raffle plant at the next monthly meeting. If they have died, have root rot or some other health issue or are just not doing well then I will make the hard decision to bin them and send them to "Orchid Heaven".

I hear some of you say "You are being too harsh. Give them another chance to reach their potential". I guess this is why I am in my current predicament. I have simply run out of available orchid space.

Space is considered one of the prime resources in orchid growing. Crowding plants together results in a downgrading of their growing conditions. It can reduce light levels because one plant shades another and slow down air circulation, lead to increase in humidity around the plant leaf and encourage the development of fungal diseases. This often results in an increase in root rot, leaf diseases and flower infections such as Botrytis. If plants touch each other then it is easy for pathogens to be transferred from one plant to another. Crowding reduces a plants ability to grow, develop and flower normally.

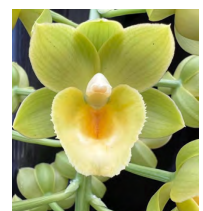
Facing many of these problems, I realised that it was now time to be ruthless and get rid of the non-performers. The end result would be more space and better growing conditions for the remaining plants. And if I was really ruthless, then I might even be able to purchase some new orchids to fill the empty spaces. Wouldn't that be awesome!

In the past I may have bought poorly by going for less expensive plants and thinking that my growing skills would make these plants winners on the show bench. How wrong was I! In general terms if a plant does not have good breeding credentials then it will not produce a superior flower no matter how good your growing skills may be. The bottom line here is that "you get what you pay for". You need to source and buy quality plants and they will always be more expensive. Then with the right cultural techniques you will be rewarded with success on the show bench. It is always a good idea to buy from reputable dealers who will guarantee they are selling you quality plants plus provide good growing advice. I am about a third of the way through reducing my collection and I can already see the benefits. Plants now have more room to spread and they appear to be more healthy and productive. Another bonus is I can see all of each plant which helps in assessing its day to day health.

I would suggest you might also consider adopting this reduction approach.

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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 MAZDA

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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.

OFFICEWORKS

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

2. CALENDAR, 2023

3 Aug 2023— Peter Gough-Paphs and Bill Bright—Phrags

19 Aug 2023— Dorrigo NP Visit

7 Sept 2023— Members Talks

9-10 Sept 2023—Spring Show

5 Oct—Plant Auction

Oct Visit to Rosella Orchids

2 Nov – AGM/ Age Care Talk

? Dec—Annual Presentation Meeting—Venue/Date to be determined

1st Feb, 2024—TBA

7th Mar, 2024—TBA

4th Apr, 2024—TBA

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

CHOS BANK DETAILS

BSB No: 533-000

ACCOUNT No: 32817199

ROSELLA ORCHIDS**Spring and Autumn 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. THE BENCHING FROM THE JULY MEETING: An amazing selection of plants were tabled at the July Meeting. Congratulations to everyone who benched plants.



Cat. Pretty Honami 'Burdekin'
owned by Phil Payne



Rhonda Smith's Paph. Yi Ying 'Morning Sun'



Bulb. Elizabeth Ann 'Buckleberry'
benched by Malcolm Ide



Dick Cooper's Den. Warringah No.1 'Manly' HCC/AOC



Fdk. Upgrade owned by Paige Sinclair



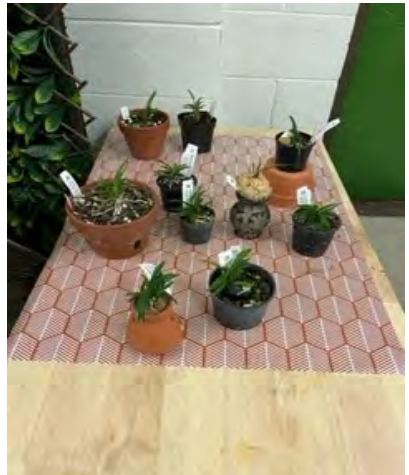
Galeopetalum Arlene Armour
owned by Bruce Hall



Cym. Dancer Delights benched by Malcolm Ide



Paph. Enzan Kitty grown by Paige Sinclair



The entries in the July Growing Competition

4. COMMITTEE MEETING REPORT:

Report from the Committee Meeting held on 25th July, 2023 at NCRB Gardens.

1. 2023 Spring Show organisation was outlined. List of tasks discussed and Duty Roster tabled. Scheduled was previously approved and has now been posted on the CHOS website.
2. Review of Life Membership Policy and Application Form.
3. Preliminary Meetings Duty Roster tabled and discussed. Frank Pappalardo to complete roster for implementation from September, 2023.
4. All the trial pencils and labels were distributed. Members are encouraged to trial these pencils for the next twelve months. A short survey will be conducted in June, 2024 to see how successful these pencils have been.
5. A new member has been approved—David Rudgley. Welcome David!
6. Frank Pappalardo gave details of the proposed visit to Dorrigo National Park on Saturday 19th August. Full details will be given at the 3rd August meeting.
7. Car Park Lighting—concern expressed about the safety of CHOS members when the lighting in the Botanic Gardens Car Park failed to operate at the June and the July meetings. The Council assures us it will be repaired in the near future.
8. Guest Speakers for September Meeting will be Helen Seiver and Paige Sinclair.
9. The Plant Auction is set down for the October Meeting.
10. Reminder to members that the Member Plant Sales will occur at the August Meeting.

**JUDGES FOR 3RD AUGUST
MONTHLY MEETING**
MARCIA LUSTED
SANDY HEALEY

Next Committee meeting will be on Tuesday 8th August, 2023 from 10.30am at NCRBG.

5. BITS AND PIECES:

- ◆ The CHOS will conduct their annual Plant Auction during the October monthly meeting (5th October). Members are asked to donate healthy, disease free plants that are of reasonable quality. Bruce Hall will conduct the popular event as the Auctioneer. There are always great bargains and quality orchids to be bought. It is always a fantastic fund raiser for the Society and members are again asked to support the auction by both donating plants and by plant purchases. An important change this year is that plants other than orchids can also be included in the auction.
- ◆ Want a change of scenery and be able to smell the mountain air? Join the Society on a day trip to Dorrigo National Park on 19th August, 2023. Walk out on the Sky Walk, take part in a short, healthy walk, look for native orchids and marvel at the wonderful animals and rainforest species growing in the Park. Shop in the Information Centre and enjoy lunch at the Rainforest Café. Travel will be by member carpool. More details will be available at the next monthly meeting. If you are interested then put your name on the list.
- ◆ Members will have another opportunity to buy and sell plants at the August monthly meeting. A table will be set up for these plant sales and each plant should be labelled with price and the owners name. No commission will be paid to the Society for these sales. Again, plants other than orchids can be sold. As these plant sales are between CHOS members (and not members of the Public) there is no need for any NSW Native Orchids to have Native Sales Tags attached.
- ◆ If you are growing any of Edward Pearce's Coelogyne plants then keep an eye out for any flowers that may be developing. Let the Committee know if you are able to flower one of Ed's plants.

6. ORCHID FAIRS AND CONFERENCES, 2023

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:

Nambucca Valley Orchid Society Spring Show—
31st August to 2nd September, 2023—Senior Citizens Hall. 11 Kent St, Nambucca Heads.

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

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



Woolgoolga District Orchid Society Inc.

EXCITING ANNOUNCEMENT FROM WOOLGOOLGA DISTRICT ORCHID SOCIETY INC.

Woolgoolga District Orchid Society Inc. is thrilled to announce approval has been granted to our Society to host the prestigious 2025 AOC International Conference and Show right here in Woolgoolga.

This magnificent event will be held at the new Wiigulga Sports Complex, Solitary Islands Way, Woolgoolga, on Wednesday, October 1 to Sunday, October 5, 2025.

THE AUSTRALIAN ORCHID COUNCIL



TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The Australian Orchid Council is delighted to announce that Woolgoolga Orchid Club is to host the next Australian Orchid Council Conference from 1st to the 5th October 2025

AOC Conferences are major events typically held every three years throughout the different member states and territories of the AOC.

The conference, which includes orchid competitions, displays, sales, as well as a comprehensive lecture programme attracts visitors from all over Australia as well as from overseas.

Woolgoolga has been selected on the basis of its thriving and enthusiastic orchid club, its wonderful coastal location and its modern, attractive facilities.

President AOC, 26th June 2023

Heaven Dew

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7. POPULAR VOTE AT THE JULY MEETING

**Popular Vote at
the July General
Meeting awarded
to Paige Sinclair
for this
magnificent
Fredclarkeara
Upgrade
Congratulations!**

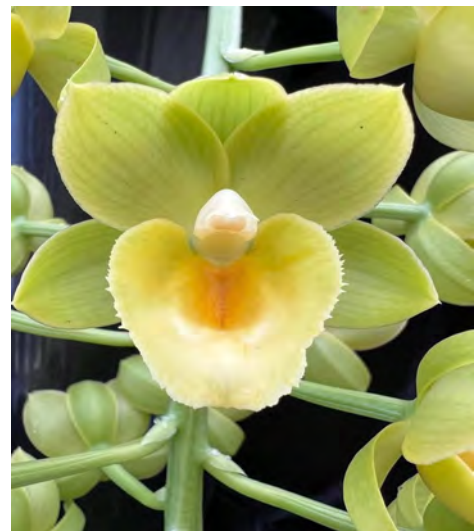


8. MONTHLY MEETING COMPETITION PROCEDURES:

Want to get the most out of the monthly orchid competition? Want to receive the points you are entitled to? Then check that you follow these procedures.

1. Plants **MUST** be benched by 7.15pm.
2. Judging commences at 7.20pm.
3. Each plant requires a label—these are available on the night or download from the CHOS website.
4. Clearly write your name on the back of the label. **NO NAME = NO POINTS.**
(We had one of these in July—the Show Marshals are good but not that good) .
5. Write the plant name in the space on the front of the label. If you don't know the name then put UNKNOWN or No ID. (Eg: Coelogyne NoID or Coelogyne Unknown) .
6. Place in the correct Class on the bench (or ask) and write the Class Number on the front of the label.
If you don't record the Class Number then you may not get any points (unless we can work it out).

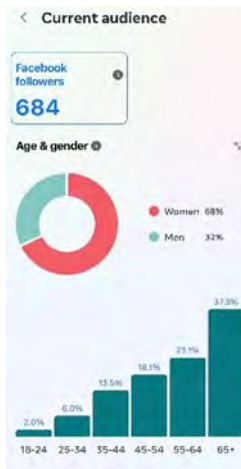
9. **AWARD: Fredclarkeara Upgrade** grown by Paige Sinclair. This plant has been given an Award Of Merit (AM). Congratulations, Paige. It is a great achievement.



10. Coffs Harbour Orchid Society Facebook

By Paige Sinclair

July 2023 – Currently, the Coffs Harbour Orchid Society has 684 likes. This is up by two people from June 2023. For our 'What's on Bloom' page we still have 178 members.



11. SPONSORS' SPOT: OFFICEWORKS

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.

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SUPPORT THEM AS THEY SUPPORT US



Why science teachers should not be given playground duty.



12. JOKE TIME :



St Ives Orchid Fair

'The Big One'



ST IVES SHOWGROUND, Mona Vale Road, St Ives

Friday 18th August 2023 9 am to 4 pm
Saturday 19th August 2023 9 am to 4 pm
Sunday 20th August 2023 9 am to 3 pm

ADMISSION \$8

Major Sponsors

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Orchid Care Services, Orchid Species Plus, Orchids of Distinction
Orchids on Newbold, Robertson Orchids, Rosella Orchids, Royale Orchids
The Orchid Mart / Serhan's Orchids, Tinonee Orchid Nursery
Woolf Orchidculture



In partnership with
Ku-ring-gai Council

For more Information: Show Marshal: Garrie Bromley Ph: 0425 336 049
<http://www.stivesorchidfair.com/>

13. CHOS SUPPLIES OF ORCHID BARK: The CHOS now has a large supply of Kiwi Bark and Charcoal. 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 sells 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).



14. AUGUST MONTHLY MEETING GUEST SPEAKERS: For the month of August we are delving into the amazing stock of orchid experts that we have in the Coffs Orchid Society. This month we will celebrate the Paphiopedilum Alliance and have two speakers who will address the Asian and the American members of this Orchid Alliance. Peter Gough will talk about Paphiopedilums and how he grows these Asian beauties. Bill Bright will take us through a photographic tour of the Phragmipedium group of orchids. Many members have trouble getting these to grow in their orchid houses while others think they are too exotic for them to handle. Come along and learn the secrets of how to master this wonderful orchid alliance. Hope to see you there!

15. Feature Article: Orchid Epiphytes are Different by Jim Brydie

[Printed with permission from the June Edition of KOS Bulletin]

In one way orchids are just another type of flowering plant among the Angiosperms. It is different, but so then are grasses, succulents, cacti, bromeliads, and various other evolved groups of flowering plants.

A few of the orchids distinctive features that directly relate to growing them as a hobby are :

They are mostly epiphytes (or perhaps lithophytes if you feel those things are separate)

They mostly use the CAM pathway for photosynthesis.

They have pollen in various numbers of waxy bundles rather than as separate dust like particles

Their seed is minute and dust like with almost no stored food to support germination.

Nearly all orchids have an association with one or more fungal species that becomes a partnership to support germination and sometimes forms a permanent orchid/fungus growth relationship.

While some of these may not affect the orchid hobby grower, an understanding of these unique characteristics is important if the grower wishes to advance their ability to grow and display orchids.

Evolution- Like a number of other different plants, including ferns, orchids developed the ability to grow as epiphytes. That is to grow on another plant or similar surface (like a rock) rather than growing only in soil.

The adaption to become epiphytic is usually aimed at gaining access to more light, higher in the forest canopy. After all, photosynthesis depends on light as the energy to the chemical process so with access to better light than on the forest floor a limitation on growth capability is removed or reduced. However, the downside of being an epiphyte is that up in the canopies of trees they don't have access to the water that soilborne plants can access and this has led to the roots, stems, and leaves of epiphytes becoming modified to cope with their drier environment.

Roots – Let us begin with an understanding of orchid roots and how those unique organs affect the way orchids grow.

The roots of epiphytes are physically different to those of non-epiphytes and have evolved to operate in air. As the root grows, the outer layer of cells dies to create an insulating sponge like surface that appears white when it is dry.

This layer of empty cells is called velamen and can be from 1 to 8 cells thick. It has two main purposes. First, when dry, the empty cells protect the living cells beneath from evaporation. Secondly, when water is available, the empty cells quickly fill with water like a reservoir, which is then transported by the living root cells to the rest of the orchid. The velamen is so absorbent that it will even take up moisture from clouds and mist. When wet, velamen appears to go green in patches, reflecting the chlorophyll in the living cells under the water filled outer cells. The few patches that stay white are specific air pathways that help the roots breathe when wet.

The epiphytic orchid lifestyle is one of alternate cycles of wet and dry. When it rains they get soaked, but when the rain (or mist) stops, the roots quickly dry off again, at least on the outside. Orchid roots need this airy environment where they can breathe. If they stay wet too long they can rot, and over watering kills more orchids than any other single failure in culture.

Fat roots, thin roots, roots hairs, and hairy roots – First off, all orchid roots have adaptations that enable them to stick to the surface of whatever host they happen to be growing on. The way they do it is that a developing root in contact with a host surface will produce specialised root hairs that enter tiny

crevices on the host material and exude a glutinous material that acts like a glue. Other than that, orchid roots rarely have root hairs apart from a few unusual exceptions I will mention shortly.

Orchid with Fat Roots - you must have already noticed that some orchids have fat coarse roots and some have thinner finer roots. Obviously, the velamen layer is thicker on fat roots but that isn't the only reason they vary in thickness.

As a general rule, fat roots have evolved to operate in drier, airier conditions than thin roots. They take up a lot of water when it is available and then they like to dry out again. They don't like to be constantly wet and if grown in a medium like pine bark they are often rather prone to rot off in the pot once the bark starts to break down and stays soggy. Plants with fat roots include Cattleya, Laelia, and most of the Vanda alliance. The Vanda alliance are mostly warm growing lowland plants from areas with very high humidity and frequent rain or its equivalent. Many Vandas grow large curtains of non-attached coarse root whose purpose seems to be purely to soak up precipitation or mist when it occurs. Cattleyas and others also produce specific 'air' roots but not to the same extent.

One orchid with coarse roots that is something of an exception is the Cymbidium. Despite its fat roots those roots have evolved in a much more constantly moist root environment rich in humus.

Orchids with Thin Roots - Examples are Masdevallia, Pleurothallis, and some Bulbophyllums but there are many others. As you might expect, fine thin roots are usually associated with more constantly moist environments. Perhaps with the roots constantly burrowing around in sphagnum moss or lichen or decaying organic debris.

These are (usually) smaller plants than the Cattleyas and Vandas and with the more constantly moist root environment, the velamen has no need to be so thick and are (generally) much thinner. There is less need for insulation and less capacity to take up a lot of water in one big gulp. Thin roots *need to be moist most of the time*, but again they don't want to be constantly saturated. There should still be a cycle between wet and 'dryish', but the medium shouldn't ever be allowed to dry out completely.

Hairy roots? - Technically, all orchid roots have hairs (as used to attach roots to a host), but really, you would never see those kinds of hairs without a microscope. The hairy roots I want to discuss here are the very obviously hairy roots of Paphiopedilum, Phragmipedium, and Lycaste. There may be others but I can't think of them.

Anyway, the hairs on the roots of Paphs, Phrags, and Lycaste are so prolific they look more like fur. I have no real idea why these genera started to grow hairy roots but it is assumed it is to do with increasing root area contact with the medium in which it grows. More efficient uptake of moisture and minerals? Just be aware these ones are different.

For we growers trying to cultivate orchids, we must have an understanding of orchid roots and the characteristics of the roots of the particular kind of orchid we are growing. It does affect culture of the orchid.

The CAM Photosynthesis Pathway – The Crassulacean Acid Metabolism pathway is named that way because it was first identified in the genus Crassula, a group of succulent plants.

Not all epiphytic orchids use CAM photosynthesis. The thinner leaved orchids like the Oncidiinae use the C3 pathway where the leaf pores (stomata) are open during the day so that carbon dioxide is being taken in and water vapour let out at the same time as photosynthesis is taking place. If too much water is being lost, the stomata can close to restrict the process and conserve water but this will shut down or reduce all processes.

Orchids with more succulent leaves, like the Cattleyas and many others, those which are subject to more desiccating conditions during dry periods, generally use the CAM process.

In this system, their stomata are open at night to take in carbon dioxide and let out water while temperatures are lower and humidity higher, but are shut during the day when it is hotter and dryer. The CAM pathway separates the intake and fixation of carbon at night, and its use in the photosynthesis process during the day. I don't intend to try and explain the chemical processes involved but what it means for growers is that should know that your succulent leaf orchids are breathing at night and not in the day.

The two types of orchids function quite differently.

Sex, Family, and Breeding – At some point in each growers development, they will begin to take an interest in either breeding orchids or at the very least raising orchid seedlings or manmade clones from a bottle.

The Orchid Families - If you want to try breeding two of your own orchids you will need a basic understanding of orchid families. The reason you need to know which orchids come from which families is not to avoid illegal incestual breeding, but more along the lines of avoiding trying to cross a dog with a cat. Orchids are one of the most diverse groups of Angiosperms and have evolved into a range of family groups that diverged so far back that, in general, they are no longer genetically compatible in breeding.

For example, the family to which Cattleya belongs is the subtribe Laeliinae and that subtribe contains about 40 different genera including Cattleya and Laelia. Most of the Laeliinae genera will interbreed but not all combinations.

A Cattleya will not breed with a Dendrobium because the latter genus comes from an unrelated subtribe. Growers don't necessarily need to study these things but neither should they ignore the subject saying "I don't need to know that". Knowledge of the structure of the orchid families and tribes is unavoidable even if you have to acquire it bit by bit over a longer period of time.

Orchid Physical Sex and Breeding – It's probably not worth expanding on all this here but perhaps we should do it as a culture class some time. The sexual structure of an orchid including its waxy bundles of pollen and its weirdly particular insect species pollination strategies are unique to orchids and make for fascinating stories.

In addition, the stuff about mycorrhizal partnerships to germinate seed is so amazing it deserves understanding and I would bet that 90% of top growers could tell you all about it off the top of their head. Put it on your learning schedule.

Just as an advance teaser, mycorrhiza is why you only get to buy orchid babies in sealed glass jars. It doesn't work for all orchid genera, but for many orchids man replaces the role of the fungus/seed relationship with a nutrient solution mixed with agar to support the seed until it is big enough to photosynthesize alone.

Sowing seed and deflasking are also skills you need to learn even if you don't take them up as a frequently applied part of your orchid growing. But again, these are topics for another day.

I went skydiving today for the first time. This guy strapped himself to me, we jumped out of the plane and as we plummeted, he said: So, how long have you been an Instructor?

16. DORRIGO NATIONAL PARK TRIP: Saturday 19th August, 2023.

8.00am—Depart from Coffs Botanic Gardens Car Park—Car Pool.

9.30am: Meet at Dorrigo Rainforest Centre—Shop, Art Gallery, Video.

10.15am: Sky Walk 10.30am: Morning Tea

11.00am: Lyrebird Walk—Rainforest track 12 noon: Lunch in Café

1.30pm: Short Walks. 3.00pm: Return to Coffs Harbour