

MARIBYRNONG ORCHID SOCIETY INC

GUIDELINES FOR THE CULTIVATION OF AUSTRALIAN NATIVE ORCHIDS

This leaflet deals with the cultivation of the cool growing epiphytic Australian Native Orchids. These grow on trees and rocks. Included in this section are the Dendrobiums - kingianum, falcorostrum, gracilicaule, speciosum, tetragonum, linguiforme, pugioniforme, teretifolium types and hybrids such as Dendrobium Bardo Rose, Hilda Poxon and Delicatum and the like.

There are two main ways which these plants can be grown. The first method is to attach them to a slab of well weathered tree fern, cork, casuarina, oak or other suitable support. The orchids are firmly tied to the support or host as it is commonly referred to with wire or strips of stocking. Some orchids suitable for this type of culture are Dendrobiums: falcorostrum, aemulum, tetragonum, pugioniforme and teretifolium, plus Sarcochilus falcatus.

The second method of growing these Australian Native Orchids is to grow them in a pot in an open, well draining mix. A good orchid bark can be purchased at our shows and pebbles and charcoal can be added if required.

The mix should stay just damp without being soggy. Orchids suitable for "pot" culture include Dendrobium kingianum, falcorostrum, gracilicaule, speciosum and sarcochilus.

Most of these orchids will do well in a shade house or bush house or some other sheltered position in the garden providing they get about 50% shade from strong winds and heavy frosts. They like to be kept moist but not wet and must be watered according to their pot or host, mix, climate, size and numerous other variable factors. For this reason each plant should be checked individually to decide if it needs watering. A very rough guide is to water every day during the summer and every week or so during the cold weather.

Fertilizing is not essential, but any of the liquid fertilizers can be given at 1/2 strength or less, the old rule, "little and often" is a good one to stick to.

These orchids aren't affected by many pests in the Melbourne area, the main ones probably being aphid, scale and mealy bug, along with slugs and snails. These pests can be quite easily controlled using the usual baits and insecticides, but, **USE EXTREME CARE, READ THE LABEL AND COMPLY WITH THE SAFETY DIRECTIONS.** If you have trouble deciding what to use, ask an experienced orchid grower.