



Sarcochilus australis

MARIBYRNONG ORCHID SOCIETY

(The FRIENDLY Society)

APRIL 2008 BULLETIN

www.mosorchid.org

Affiliated with the Australian Orchid Council
Incorporated in Victoria Reg No 1193Z

Disclaimer: The Maribyrnong Orchid Society Committee will not take any responsibility for actions taken on advice or views expressed in: this or any future Monthly Bulletin, or by Guest Speakers. It is always advisable to get a second opinion.

BULLETIN CONTRIBUTION DEADLINE – 3rd Thursday of the month

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Maribyrnong Orchid Society will be held at the Maribyrnong Community Centre, Randall Street, Maribyrnong on Tuesday the 8th April, 2008.

The Early 'new growers' group start at 7.15pm and is conducted by the informative Steve Stebbing. This group runs for approximately 30 minutes prior to the start of the monthly meeting. We also have 'Pots and Ferts' and plants sales tables operating at every meeting. Members may bring 10 orchids to be sold on the sales table each month. The Society deducts 15% commission on the sale of all plants. Please note that all plants must be labeled correctly and state whether they are hot/cold growing and expected floral colour, if not in flower. Plants are also to be listed on a sales form, available from members on the Sales table, to be filled out by the selling member.

Guest Speaker this month

The guest speaker this month will be Mr Andrew Francis and he will be talking about growing Cattleya orchids.

Supper Roster

For the April meeting we kindly have Peter and Hilda Caly on Supper Duties. All members are welcome to bring in a plate for supper to be enjoyed in the evening, after the Guest speaker has finished his presentation.

New Members

Our Orchid Society would like to welcome Danielle Hardingham, John and Julie Fletcher to our club. We hope to see you all regularly at our monthly meetings.

March 2008 Competition Results

As per judges sheets

OPEN SECTION

Dendrobium - Australian Native Species

1st Den bigibum J & M Lattimore

Paphiopedilum - Novelty

1st Stone Ground H D Breuer

Cattleya Novelty

1st LC Mini Purple 'Tamami' J Crawford
2nd SL Ellen Littman x C Walkerana J & M Lattimore

Oncidium Hybrid

1st Liz Full Moon J & M Lattimore
2nd Juihbao Gold J & M Lattimore

Dendrobium – Hybrid/Species

2nd Kasam With H D Breuer

Vanda

1st Ascda Su-Fun Beauty J & M Lattimore
2nd Vasco Crown Foo Magic J & M Lattimore

Masdevallia Hybrid

1st Bright Spot Lorodale M Pearce
2nd Copper Angel Highland N & J Walsh

Any Other Hybrid

1st Phrag Sorcerers Apprentice
x sargentianum M Pearce
2nd Otr Jane Fumiye Hawaii J & M Lattimore

Species Any Genera

1st Stanhopea moreii M Condon
2nd Brassia verracosa J Crawford

Best in Section

Ascda Su Fun Beauty J & M Lattimore

INTERMEDIATE SECTION

Cattleya – Novelty Type

1st Sc Cherry Bee E Walker

Species Any Genera

1st Rhyncostele biconiense E Walker
2nd Coelogyne prasima J & N Marshall

Best in Section

Sc Cherry Bee E Walker

ADVANCED NOVICE SECTION

Cymbidium - Medium

1st Sue Almeer 'Esmerelda' R Ryan

Cymbidium - Small

1st Mini Margaret B Whearem

Cattleya – Exhibition

1st LC Intercepts L Halil

Best in Section

Cym Sue Almeer 'Esmerelda' R Ryan

NON SECTIONAL

Seedling Flowering for 1st time

Sarc Velvet M Drobski
Den Graeme Banks M Drobski

Best Cultivated

C Claesana x L Sincorana A & S Webster

Judges Vote

Ascda Su Fun Beauty J & M Lattimore

Popular Vote

Phrag cardinale J Crawford

President Report 2008

Over the past year we have had four (4) successful shows and ten (10) meeting nights with a number of very good speakers, early segments and three (3) bus trips.

At meeting nights we have members that work hard in the sales area, pots and ferts, library, placing out plant classes and numbers, membership table, raffle tickets, removing tables, running the early segment and also the members who put their name down helping the Kitchen.

At our shows we have members that work hard as stewards, in the kitchen area, sales area, pots and ferts, door raffle, inside raffle, potting demonstration, advertising etc

Without these members putting in their own time and effort we would not have such a great club. I would like to thank each and every one of you for your great work.

We are fast into 2008 and of course the 18th AOC conference is in September next year, just less than 18 months away, so the committee has a lot of hard work in front of us.

Once again, thank you to all that helped through the year.

Anthony Scerri

ORCHID SHOW CALENDAR

Maribyrnong 2008 Orchid Shows

Autumn Show: 24th & 25th May
Winter Show: 12th and 13th July
Spring Show: 13th & 14th September
Sarcochilus Festival: 8th & 9th November

All Maribyrnong Orchid shows are conducted at our club rooms, which are located at Maribyrnong Community Centre in Randall Street.

Other 2008 Orchid Club Show Dates:-

1. Victorian International Orchid Fair
16th, 17th and 18th May
St Sava Hall, Greensborough
2. Orchid Spectacular 15th – 17th August
Collectors Corner, Springvale

Orchid Auction

The Victorian Regional Judging Panel are holding an Orchid Auction.

Date: Sunday 18th May.
Venue: Red Cross Centre
Gate 8
Waterdale Road Heidelberg
Viewing: From 9 a.m.
Auction starts 10 a.m.
BYO Lunch 12.30 p.m. to 1.15 p.m.
Tea and Coffee will be provided

Floral Art

At both the Autumn and Winter Shows, our Floral Art Judge Yvonne Feben will be giving Floral Art demonstrations in the small room just off the foyer. These will be held from about 10.30 on the Saturday morning at both shows. If you are interested in improving your Floral Art skills or even just wanting to see how someone else does it, make sure you come along.

Membership Fees

Membership fees are now due and Eric will be taking renewal fees from members from the next meeting. The fees remain unchanged:

Junior \$ 8.00 (under 16 yrs)
Single \$12.00
Family \$15.00

It will be greatly appreciated if members have the correct money on hand.

Social Trip

The bus trip organized for Sunday the 20th April has been fully booked. Those attending this bus trip please be advised that the bus will be departing at 9 a.m. from our Maribyrnong Club room. Those attending are requested to wear their name tags.

The second bus trip has been organized for Sunday 15th June 2008. The bus will be traveling to Castle Creek Orchids in Shepparton. The cost of this trip will be \$25. It will leave our Club rooms at 8 a.m. and returning at 5.00 p.m. Those interested in attending may book a seat at the next meeting as we had a few cancellations. The bus trips have been selling very fast so please register quickly.

Show News

It has been decided at both the Show committee and the general committee to give trial to the following new system to Orchid sellers for the Autumn and Winter shows this year.

Members selling plants will have to have the numbers of sales plants checked in and your sales sheet signed by another member before leaving them in the sales room.

If you do not comply with our request we will not be paying for any lost plants as we have been doing in the past.

We know some members bring in a few each day as they only have a small vehicle to transport their plants in, so please only write those on your sheet that are actually being brought in at the one time, others may be added to your sheet as they come in.

The committee wants to try this just for the first two shows when it is a bit quieter, and if this is found to be a hassle we will revert back to what we have done in the past. At the moment, Mick Condon and Hubert Nyssen have offered to help in checking in your plants.

Show News Continued:

After much deliberation at committee it was decided that due to most classes in the show schedule for the Intermediate and Novice/Advanced Novice sections not being filled, some of the classes will be deleted from the schedule. This will in no way hinder these growers from getting major awards. Please feel free to ask any of the committee members to explain this if you are worried.

The schedule along with sales tickets will be brought along to the May meeting, any members

who cannot get along to this meeting can phone for a copy to be sent by post.

Growing Competition

The owner of our growing competition plant No 43: please be aware you took the wrong plant home from the last meeting. In error you picked up No 47. Please bring it back to the April meeting and do a swap, in the meantime Jeff is giving yours TLC.

We would like to thank the following Major sponsors for their financial support for the 18th AOC Orchid Conference in 2009 being held in Werribee.

Australian Orchid Council, Orchids Australia, Retire Invest Werribee, Italian Sports Club Werribee, Wyndham City Council, Multicrop (Aust) Pty Ltd, Casetech Horticulture Ltd, J & B Scott, Australian Orchid Nursery
Their support is very much appreciated.

TWO COOL-GROWING LAELIAS by Brian Milligan

The genus *Laelia*. There are about 75 species in the genus *Laelia*. Most epiphytic species of *Laelia* grow in Mexico while the rupicolous laelias (those that grow on rocks) grow in Brazil. The Mexican species, *Laelia anceps* and *Laelia gouldiana*, are arguably the easiest to grow under cool conditions, especially if you have a shadehouse with a fibreglass roof, so that the plants can be kept fairly dry in winter. *Laelia anceps* has been cultivated in Europe for over 150 years. Over twenty different varieties were then cultivated but only a few are common in Melbourne today.

***Laelia anceps* in Nature.** In its native habitat *Laelia anceps* grows on tree trunks or branches on the edge of forests at altitudes of 1500-2000 m. The plants are often exposed to full sun and strong winds, with hot days and cold nights. Summer (the main growing season) is very wet and the plants receive heavy rain each evening and remain wet overnight. The next morning strong winds and sunshine quickly dry the plants before rain falls again in the evening. By contrast, the weather is cool and dry in winter and the plants receive little water until misty rain arrives in spring. New growths begin at this time with the new flower spike emerging from the centre of the new growth during summer. The flowers open as the new growth matures in late autumn.

Cultivation of *Laelia anceps*. Based on the above information, it would seem reasonable to:

1. grow *L. anceps* on a mount (e.g. tree-fern slab or a rough, long-lasting branch of oak or *Casuarina*, in my experience, cork mounts do not suit *L. anceps*).
2. hang the plant where it receives good air movement and good light (30-50% shade in summer, less or none in winter).
3. water heavily in summer and early autumn, preferably in the evening, applying liquid fertiliser occasionally.
4. after the plant has flowered (usually in late autumn), water only occasionally until spring.
5. then mist the plant daily until new growth appears. At this stage begin the cycle again with heavy watering each evening.

Laelia anceps can also be grown in a pot, using coarse bark as the potting medium. Because each year's new growth is separated from the previous year's growth by about 50 mm on the ascending rhizome, the plant soon climbs out of its pot and the new roots hang over the edge. Although the plant grows happily like this, it soon becomes top-heavy and will then probably need to be broken up and repotted. The flowers are usually rose, pink, violet or white in colour, with a darker labellum carrying a central yellow spot. The tall stem usually carries two to six flowers. Chamberlain's variety has larger, more deeply coloured flowers than most.

Laelia gouldiana occurs in the same habitat as *L. anceps* and it can also be grown and flowered in an unheated shadehouse. It usually carries more flowers of deeper colour than *L. anceps* but they are slightly smaller (about 75 mm across). Some botanists once believed that *L. gouldiana* is not a true species but a natural hybrid between *L. anceps* and *L. autumnalis*. All three grow together in the same mountainous regions of Mexico. However most authorities today regard *L. gouldiana* as a species and it should therefore be benched in the class *Any Other Species* or *Species Any Genus*.

Both *Laelia anceps* and *L. gouldiana* grow readily from leafless pseudo-bulbs in the same manner as cymbidiums do from their backbulbs. They 'strike' better if left in pairs. Many plants grown in Melbourne are probably divisions of older plants. Small divisions occasionally appear on the sales bench at meetings and shows. Small plants raised from seed can sometimes be found in orchid nurseries - these may produce flowers of higher quality, if they have been bred from selected parent plants.

HOW I GROW THUNIAS

by Brian
Milligan

The genus *Thunia* comprises five or six terrestrial species that are native to



Thunia veitchiana

the Himalayan regions and Burma. By far the most commonly grown species in Victoria is *Thunia marshalliana*, also known by the synonym *T. alba*, although some growers believe that the two are different. Other thunia species include *T. bensoniae*, *T. pulchra* and *T. venosa*.

Thunias are biennial plants that develop in spring from the previous season's growth, which withers and dies during the second season. The new cane develops rapidly during spring and early summer, carrying its leaves alternately along the stem in the same way as bamboo. In fact, 'bamboo orchid' is a common name for *T. marshalliana*. In nature the canes may grow as long and as thick as broom handles but fortunately they seldom reach this size when the plants are grown cold in Victoria. The terminal inflorescence, which usually begins to open around New Year's Day, can eventually carry up to a dozen large white flowers, each with a fringed lip marked with yellow and orange.

I also grow two other thunias, one a species, the other a hybrid. The species, *T. venosa*, was collected by a friend in Nepal many years ago before CITES regulations were introduced. It has white flowers with purplish striped lips and grows less vigorously than *T. marshalliana* under my cultural conditions. The hybrid, *T. Veitchiana*, was made almost 120 years ago by crossing *T. marshalliana* with *T. bensoniae*. The lip of its otherwise white flowers is mauve-purple with purplish veins.

Thunias may be grown under a variety of conditions. Some growers insist that they will flower only if grown in full sun, while others have no difficulty in flowering them under quite shady conditions. And while some growers assert that a heated glasshouse is necessary, others grow and flower them outdoors in Melbourne. Undoubtedly the conditions where they grow in nature are warmer than Melbourne

in winter but this is probably immaterial because the plants remain totally dormant during winter. When grown outdoors in Melbourne they commence growth only when the warmer days of October arrive, although they shoot several weeks earlier if the plants are housed in a heated glasshouse.

The conditions under which I grow my plants of *T. marshalliana* are those that David Banks (a Sydney resident and editor of the *Australian Orchid Review*) first advised me to use over five years ago. The previous season's leafless canes should be stored in a warm, dry spot over winter until new growth appears at their base in late September. They should then be planted in a terrestrial mix containing bark, peat moss, sand, tree fern, mountain soil and *Sphagnum* moss (the proportions seem to be relatively unimportant). Only the roots of the new growth should be buried in the mix (it's necessary to stake each cane to prevent it toppling). The mix is then topped with a handful of Dynamic Lifter® or similar pelletized animal or fowl manure. At this point the pot is stood in a container, such as large plastic ice-cream bowl, to which water is added to a depth of about 50 mm. Finally another handful of Dynamic Lifter® is added to the water, and the whole assembly is placed outdoors in a sheltered, sunny position. The water in the bowl is kept at the same level throughout the growing season (a hole drilled in the bowl's side about 50 mm from the bottom ensures that the level does not rise above the optimal level after topping up or in rainy weather).

The new growth develops at a prodigious rate, reaching a height of at least 600 mm within three months. The flower buds develop during December and open sequentially, the first appearing by the end of the month and others during January (the first to open has usually fallen by the time the later buds open). Usually I place the plants under cover when in flower to prevent discoloration and damage, which may result from strong sunshine, rain or hail, all of which may occur in Melbourne during January, occasionally on the same day. The above cultural notes should not be regarded as the only way to grow and flower *T. marshalliana* in Melbourne. Other growers have equal or greater success without standing their plants in water and using simple bark-based potting mixes in an enclosed, shaded glasshouse.