



Sarcochilus australis

MARIBYRNONG ORCHID SOCIETY

(The FRIENDLY Society)

FEBRUARY 2010 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

Welcome to 2010

Welcome all members, new and old, to the 2010 Orchid year. We hope everyone had a wonderful and safe festive season and look forward to seeing you all at the Club meetings.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Maribyrnong Orchid Society will be held at the Maribyrnong Community Centre, Randall Street, Maribyrnong on Tuesday the 10th February, 2010. The hall opens at 7.00 pm and the Society meeting begins at 8.00 pm.

The Early 'New Growers' Group starts 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 up to 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 labelled 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.

Bulletin by Email

Did you know that future newsletters could be either emailed or mailed to you? If you would like your newsletter emailed, that will mean that you will receive your newsletter earlier. It also means that the club will save on postage costs. The environment will benefit if you also choose to read the newsletter online and not print it out. ☺

Should any of our members like to have their newsletter emailed, please drop a quick line to my email address: jenny.dark@darteks.com.au

Bulletin Contributions

The society greatly values the opinions of its members and the wealth of knowledge contained within the group. If you have an opinion about the bulletin or suggestions and contributions for the bulletin content please contact the new editor at jenny.dark@darteks.com.au or phone 9748 7345.

President's Report February 2010

After the club's big 2009, we start 2010 with our February meeting and I would like to wish you and your families all the best for 2010.

Our April meeting is the AGM, and I have to step down as president as I have completed my three years. It would be great to have some new members on the committee, as some of the old committee members have been on committee for a long time, and would like to have a rest. (Think about giving some of your time to your club and become a committee member in 2010).

The first show for the year will be our Autumn Show. This show will be on Saturday 22 and Sunday 23 May 2010, which is not too far away. As usual we require HELP over the weekend and on Friday night, so keep these dates clear.

I look forward to see you all back at the club with your orchids at our February meeting.

Anthony Scerri
President

Committee Nominations

At our April meeting we will be holding our A.G.M. We are hoping that some members may like to be part of the Maribyrnong Orchid Club Committee. The committee is always looking for members willing to put in new ideas.

Give it careful consideration as next month's newsletter will include Nomination forms for those interested in becoming part of this committee.

Membership Fees

Membership fees are now due and Eric will be taking renewal fees from members from the next meeting. 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 Society organises a number of social events during the year, including bus trips to popular locations.

The first bus trip will be on Sunday the 16th May 2010. The bus will be travelling to B & T Ferns and Orchids in Silvan, then on to Clive Hall's orchid nursery at Mt Beenak.

A Barbecue lunch will be provided, but it is recommended that you bring your own chairs. The bus will be leaving the centre in Randall Street at 9.00am and returning at 5.00pm.

The cost will be \$20 per person and deposits will be taken at the next meeting.

Guest Speaker this month

The guest speaker this month will be Dick Thompson who will be speaking on Growing Terrestrial Orchids and the Tuber Bank.

Library

I encourage you, especially newer members, to make use of our extensive library. Please feel free to browse the selection before each meeting. Library books and magazines may be borrowed for 1 month.

Mission Almost Impossible

Our mission, once again, should we choose to accept it, is to hold a sausage sizzle at Bunnings and make a profit.

Date: 9th January 2010

Venue: Bunnings at Highpoint

Agents to attend: Anthony Scerri, Judy and Kelly Marshall, Jeff McIntyre, Elizabeth Walker, Peter and Wilma Carlesso, Jeff and Doris Walker, Barry Harrison and Tim Scerri.

Orders: To cook and sell all sausages and onions until sold out.

Mission Report: Set up began at 7.50am. Once barbeque was organised, cooking began. Unfortunately weather was very hot and the people were not around. It was after 10.30am before people started to arrive. [Staff at Bunnings were commenting on the lack of customers.] Agents soldiered on regardless in the heat and stayed on until 4.00pm.

Suggestions: Look at trying to get a later date. Unfortunately nearly all other dates later in the year are taken. Will keep trying.

Summation: Mission was a success and made a profit. Thanks to everyone who helped.

Elizabeth Walker

Supper Roster

Thank you to all those who provided, and helped prepare, the supper at monthly meetings throughout last year.

The Supper Roster will be passed around at the February meeting so members can select a month to help with supper duties.

Meanwhile the Club needs two members to help with the supper duties for this meeting. If you can help it would be much appreciated. All members are welcome to bring in a plate for supper to be enjoyed at the end of the evening.

2010 Seedling Competition

Once again, Fran Wilde can take the credit for our orchids this year. Her wide experience and knowledge of sources has found us some Cattleyas which will grow cold, with your cymbidiums; they are well grown, some may flower during the year and reward competitors with something to look forward to toward the end of the competition in November.

Only 50 plants are available for \$8.00 each. This price is a bit higher than our usual target of \$5.00 but then their growth and potential to flower is worth the money. Such plants could not be purchased elsewhere for this price and any plants not taken up for the competition will sell for much more. Members can only receive one (1) plant per membership – i.e. one plant per single or family membership.

Plants will be issued by draw, so when you arrive at the meeting:

- 1. Draw a number from the box on the Competition table.**
 - 2. Make sure it is entered in the register**
 - 3. Collect your plant after the meeting.**
- Any latecomers can draw their seedling after the meeting – but with the lure of a flower towards the end of the year, it really will be first in first served.**

Good luck and happy flowering – and get ready to return your plants each meeting to guarantee you a place in the draw at the end of the year – plus an award for the first member to produce a flower. If you can't attend any particular monthly meeting, you can arrange for another member to return them for you.

Jeff Walker – Coordinator.

December 2009 Competition Results

As per judges sheets

OPEN SECTION

Sarcochilus – Species / Hybrid

- 1st Sarc Velvet 'Chocolate' G Downie
2nd Sarc ceciliae A Wild

Cattleya – Exhibition Type

- 1st Blc Malworth 'Orchidglade' J W Crawford

Dendrobium – Hybrid/Species

- 1st Den chrysotoxum J W Crawford

Species – Any Genera

- 1st Ansellia africana E & F Wilde

Best in Section

- Blc Malworth 'Orchidglade' J W Crawford**

INTERMEDIATE SECTION

Cymbidium - Small

- 1st Cym Cricket R Ryan

Sarcochilus – Species / Hybrid

- 1st Sarc Mini Rose K Weyers
2nd Sarc Mini Rose K Weyers

Best in Section

- Sarc Mini Rose K Weyers**

ADVANCED NOVICE SECTION

Paphiopedilum Novelty type

- 1st Paph Chouvetii 'Van Dyke' J & T Dark

Best in Section

- Paph Chouvetii 'Van Dyke' J & T Dark**

NON SECTIONAL

Seedling Flowering for 1st time

- 1st Phrag Autumn Fire J W Crawford

Best Cultivated

- Sarc ceciliae A Wild

Judges Vote

- Phrag Autumn Fire J W Crawford

Orchid Show Calendar

Maribyrnong 2010 Orchid Shows

- Autumn Show: 22nd & 23rd May
Winter Show: 10th & 11th July
Spring Show: 4th & 5th September
Sarcochilus Festival: 13th & 14th November

All Maribyrnong Orchid shows are conducted at our club rooms, which are located at Maribyrnong Community Centre in Randall Street, Maribyrnong. Check further bulletins for opening times.

How does the point system work for benching plants at our meetings and shows?

Every member of the society can earn points by benching plants at the monthly meetings and at shows. Points accumulate over the whole year (from February to December). The points are awarded to the membership eg: a Single membership, or a Family membership.

Each member who joins the society can bring along plants to be “benched” on meeting nights.

Plants are judged in classes (different orchid types) at each Level.

Members begin benching at the Novice Level (unless the member is a Junior) and may progress through to Advanced Novice, then to Intermediate and finally on to Open.

Members receive points for all plants benching:

1 point for benching on the night (total of 1)

Plus 2 points for each 2nd place in class

Plus 3 points for each 1st place in class

All first prize winners at Novice Level are progressed immediately to Advanced Novice Level.

At the end of the year, the winners of Advanced Novice and Intermediate Levels may be invited to move up to the next level for competition.

Points can also be earned at Shows – double the number for meeting nights:

2 points for entering plants in the show (total of 2)

Plus 4 points for each 2nd place in class

Plus 6 points for each 1st place in class

Next month we will talk about how to enter your plants into the correct class, and how to fill in the cards correctly.

Be Water Wise

by Colin Hamilton



Whether we like it or not, Australia is in dire straits with its water supplies. As a result of prolonged periods of drought, many water collection areas, including the underground aquifer, have not received sufficient run-off for replenishment. But we, as a nation, have kept using water with gay abandon. We are one of the highest users of water *per capita* of any nation. Now the rooster has come home to roost. We have to take action to conserve our dwindling resources.

I have given the matter some thought and asked some friends from around Australia for their ideas on how to save water in caring for their orchids, and looked at some of the websites advising tips to help mend our wicked ways.

- I guess the first and probably most obvious, yet most ignored, is the dripping tap. Leaking taps, pipes and dishwasher hoses is an easy way to reduce water wastage. One leaking tap can waste more than 2,000 litres a month. (*Source: Sydney Water Board*)
- Installing water efficient taps or tap aerators is a great, inexpensive way to cut your water usage without you even noticing.
- Mulch your garden beds to retain moisture and lessen evaporation.

Turning to more orchid-specific matters, here are some tips collected from across Australia:

- I found that using sphagnum moss as a potting mix or adjunct to a mix can help to increase the time required between watering orchids. Phalaenopsis especially love it. I found that they could be watered here at weekly intervals except in the heat of summer. On warm days I mist them in the morning. They do need repotting annually but their large thick roots make this easy as pie. I also found that small to medium size Vandas and Ascocendas do well with a layer of sphagnum moss in the bottom of the pot. Sphagnum is not recommended for orchids with fine roots as these are too easily damaged when repotting.

- For conserving water, one possible way is to use water-absorbing crystals in the orchid mixture - I think they're called Absorber Crystals. They hold the water and then release it slowly as the mixture dries.
- Use a wetting agent for all watering. This ensures that the water used 'sticks' in the pot and onto the plant and root system thus saving a lot of water and also allowing greater periods between watering.
- After the plants have been watered, plastic under the benches could collect the run-off and run it into drums. Filter it and reuse it.
- Obviously any rainwater that falls on the roofs of your house, orchid houses, or any other sheds needs to be collected and stored in tanks. Remember the old days when every house had a tank? If so, your age is showing! A friend installed a 4500 litre water tank at the beginning of 2003 purely for watering his orchids.
- Multiple small tanks of collected rainwater can be connected together to maintain even levels in each tank. Add a small pressure pump to service foggers, air conditioners and for watering by hand. These small tanks can be hidden behind the garage, garden shed, orchid house etc.
- I feel some growers will need to look at what orchids they purchase and their water requirements. Many growers have a tendency to water more frequently than is necessary. The time of day plants are watered is also a factor. Many orchids can do with less water than is currently applied, Australian native dendrobiums and their hybrids included. Hot/Cold hybrids with greater than 25% *Den bigibbum* influence do not need large amounts of water, as per the needs of the major parent. It may also be necessary to put pots in trays that contain water and leave the rest to capillary action.
- The ongoing water situation eventually will prove to be too much if we don't act now. I visualise some growers giving up because of the cost and unavailability of water. Reuse of water will need to be investigated but this is something difficult on a small grower-to-grower scale. Orchid growers, and particularly the professionals, will need to put their case to the relevant Governments to initiate an investigation into reuse of grey water and also reclaimed sewage water.
- Another friend has installed three rainwater tanks to collect the water from the roof. For Adelaide's poor water quality, he finds it important to have rainwater for Phals. etc. Also he has his misters on a timer to try to conserve water and to apply it only when necessary.
- I think that if you choose a potting medium with materials like moss, peat, vermiculite and perlite, these hold more water in the mix, and you don't have to water as often.
- No magic tricks for a friend in Sydney. What he has done over the last few seasons is simply reduce watering to harden his plants by watering less and less often, hand water using a watering can where necessary.



So there are a few views to get you thinking.

For more information on water saving ideas in the home and garden, I recommend you go to the Sydney Water Board's website <http://www.sydneywater.com.au/SavingWater/>
Colin Hamilton

Based on an article first published in Orchids Australia (October 2005)

Acknowledgements to both the Australian Orchid Council and the author, Colin Hamilton - who has sadly passed away since writing this article.

Editor's Note:

For those of us living in Melbourne, also see <http://www.citywestwater.com.au/target155> and <http://www.target155.vic.gov.au> and <http://www.ourwater.vic.gov.au> for a start on loads more local information on water saving.

Water use has been, and will continue to be, one of the foremost topics of conversation for all Australians, and for gardeners in particular. We need to be constantly looking at ways we can improve our water conservation and collection. Why don't you share with us ways that you save water in your house and garden, particularly on your orchids? Pass your hints on to the Editor.