

orchid talk



July 2010



Articles for Orchid Talk due on or before 9th August 2010

President	Secretary	Treasurer	Editor	Show Organiser
Di Smith	Ernie Stewart	Pam Milliner	Di Smith	David Newell
54 962 861	3408 7420	5495 5520	54 962 861	54 962 861

All correspondence to
The Secretary
P.O. Box 49 Bribie Island Q 4507
Email: ernieste@bigpond.net.au

Editorial Address
Di Smith 635 Beachmere Road BEACHMERE 4510

Patron
Carryn Sullivan
Member for Pumicestone

This newsletter is intended to provide general information & cultural notes only. Pumicestone District Orchid & Foliage Society Inc. will not be responsible for any loss of property or injury to any person acting on information in the news letter

July 2010

◆ Cultural Meeting

Ningi Community Hall
Bribe Island Road, Ningi.
Meetings are held on the **4th Monday**
of each month starting at 7.30 pm.
Next Meeting: 26th July 2010

■ Committee Meetings

All members are always welcome
at committee meetings.
Meetings are held on the **1st Monday**
Of the month at **7.30 pm** at
635 Beachmere Rd Beachmere
Next Meeting: 9th August 2010
PLEASE NOTE THIS IS 2ND
MONDAY JUST FOR THIS MONTH

FROM YOUR COMMITTEE

- ❖ Please note this is the last bulletin any unfinancial members will receive. Our financial year starts in April and we advertised the fees were due before April, so you have had plenty of time to pay. Our next meeting is the cut off date. Please pay then or send a cheque to the clubs P.O. Box 49 Bribe Island. Family \$20.00 single \$15.00.
- ❖ Please help the committee in getting some guest speakers. Please give us some suggestions and we will follow up. There must be a topic you would like to know more about.
- ❖ Please consider even small positions within the club just to make it a bit easier on the few.



● From your President:-

Hello Everyone,

This month is the AGM. It was moved from June to July because of a couple of technical problems with the audit. If it is not sorted out by the July meeting we may have to put it back another month. I will contact you all if this is the case. Congratulations to all who received prizes at Cabooture show and many thanks to Allan for setting up and pulling down. Last Sunday was our Bunnings BBQ it was our last for the year. Once again we did very well. Thanks to all who attended.

As we had no June meeting this bulletin is very short. Darryl kindly sent me notes on his last talk at our workshop. It is on Cymbidiums. If you want to know how to grow a good cymbid - read it.

Di.

July is our AGM. All positions become vacant on that night. Anyone wishing to stand for any positions please fill out the nomination form that was sent or emailed to you . Nominations can be taken off the floor if no form has been filled out previously.

July meeting This will now be our AGM unless otherwise advised. Please note we will be handing out Yearly Point Score prizes at this meeting.

July Workshop will be on 18th July

It is at 635 Beachmere Road Beachmere at 1-30pm please bring a plate and a chair. As yet we do not have a topic but David will be giving the talk.

■ **Glasshouse Country Orchid Show**

This show is a fair time away but please put it in your diary. Set up 24th September Show dates 25th & 26th. It is held in Community Hall Beerwah.

Maroochydore Show Community Hall Millward Rd, Maroochydore August 7th & 8th.

A.N.O.S – Kabi Group is holding an Australian Native Orchid Show on 21 – 22 August at The Lion's Hall, Lawnton Showgrounds 757 Gympie Road Lawnton. Saturday 9am – 5pm and Sunday 8-30am – 2pm.

North Brisbane O/S Show Auditorium Botanical Gardens Mt. Cootha August 28th & 29th

CYMBIDIUMS

INTRODUCTION

Cymbidiums are a semi terrestrial orchid

From Asia – Australia up to Japan and across main land Asia through southern China and into North East India

They can be small plants or plants with leaves of up to 1m long or more (large plants)

Most are from 1000M elevation plus (this is important later)

They were the first cultivated orchid having been grown in China over 2500 yrs ago

Cymbidiums first appeared in Europe in 1753 with *Cym aloifolium*

Pumicestone District Orchid & Foliage Society Inc.

The Genus has about 44 species

Second most commonly grown orchid in the world – to Phalanopsis only recently became No 2.

TYPES

Generally cymbidiums are divided into 3 types based on flower size (for judging in Australia this is now 4 types)

- Standard – this is full size exhibition cymbidiums with flowers of over 9cm
- Miniature – these are plants with a flower size of less than 5.5cm generally bred with Cym pulimum, devonianum and others
- Intermediate – this 5.5cm to 9cm – generally about 7cm flowers being miniature types bred with standard types

The flower spike arrangement of cymbidiums can also be upright, pendulous and semi pendulous depending on the breeding.

WHY GROW THEM

Cymbidiums are a commercial orchid and being grown for the cut flower and pot plant trade they are a very easy plant to grow

They have long lasting flowers lasting 10 weeks or more

Cymbidiums come in a huge range of colours, flower sizes (from 1cm to 15cm) and spike habit

The flowering season now is from say march to October

New breeding is now producing multiple flower spikes per bulb with a 17cm pot being able to produce 10+ flower spikes making a very impressive display.

HOW I GROW THEM

I find cymbidiums are very easy to grow they however (if growing the wrong type) be a little more difficult to flower in Queensland

Bush house

My bush house is built from pipe all covered in 40% shadecloth

Benches are about 45cm from the ground and are pipe and weldmesh

I have experimented with sitting the plants on a 10cm depth gravel floor to save on bench costs – the plants seem to grow just as well either way.

Light

Cymbidiums need bright light levels at about the level of cattleyas or brighter so 40 – 50% shade

Poor / low light levels is a frequent reason for failure to flower plants

Many people believe that short periods of the plant being placed in full sun will greatly enhance flowering – I've never done it myself

Temperature

Cymbidiums can take a very wide range of temperatures from low negatives to mid 40c range

My range is from about 0C to say 36c

If you look at where they grow they grow in a vast range of conditions and temperature is not really an issue for the successful growth of the plant.

HOWEVER to flower the plants well in Queensland you need a temperature differential (day to night) when the new growth is maturing to ensure flowering.

Remember I said earlier that most species grow at 1000m+ elevation and at that height night time temperatures drop thus causing the flowering

Pumicestone District Orchid & Foliage Society Inc.

In Southern States due to their latitude the night time temperatures even in summer drop 8 to 10c thus resulting in spike initiation. – This can be a problem in Queensland as in summer our night temperatures only drop about 5c.

Watering

Cymbidiums do need / like a lot of water

It is ideal that during the growing season they are never allowed to dry out as this may slow growing

This is especially true for young plants they need to be kept moist, - as with most young orchids

Mature plants are very robust with a large amount of water stored in roots and bulbs so they can dry out with no ill effects

I water about 3 times a week in the growing season – in the late afternoons to assist with cooling the plants for flowering

In Brisbane I would suggest misting the foliage in the evening in summer as often as possible to aide in cooling the plants

In winter they can be kept more on the dry side – I water about once a week

AirFlow

As with all orchids airflow is critical

It will aide in cooling the plants to assist in flowering

It will assist in drying the foliage faster following rain or watering which will assist in disease prevention (fungal and bacterial)

Plant spacing is very important here – the ideal is for the plants NOT to be touching each other thus not being too crowded will allow for better air flow it also means more light getting to each plant which will also aid in growing and flowering

My plants are spaced at least 30cm from each other in all directions – since increasing my spacing's my flowering percentage has increased

Fertilising

Cymbidiums are gross feeders and will happily take as much fertiliser as you are willing to give them I do the following

- In spring I apply a 9 mth osomocote at the rate of 1 teaspoon per litre of mix (for Brisbane I would use a general / balanced osomocote and a tropical blend)
- Over summer (say dec to end of feb) I also apply a high potash (flower boosting) fertiliser to the plants to assist in flowering
- Some people suggest a top coat of granular potash around Christmas.
- Additionally I will use liquid fertiliser either watered into the pots or as a foliar feed about once a month.

Potting

Pots:

You use standard not squat pots for the potting of cymbidiums – a larger volume of potting mix will assist in keeping the plant moist

Some people are currently experimenting with growing plants in saucers full of water to keep the plants moist or even using plant buckets (i.e. a pot with no holes in the base) with the holes drilled about 2cm from the bottom to keep the plants moist.

Potting Mix:

Over the last 25yrs of growing cymbidiums I have used a wide range of mixes

- Commercial bagged cymbidium mix
- Medium grade bark
- Composted bark
- Peat & Perlite

Pumicestone District Orchid & Foliage Society Inc.

- Various specially made mixes using various components

All of these mixes have worked well in the growing and flowering the plants. Cymbidiums are very robust and I have found all mixes work with them. At present my mix is

- 4 parts med coco husk
- 1 part med bark
- 1 part jumbo perlite

This is the same mix I am now using for all my orchids – I change the size of the components but the composition remains the same for everything from paphs to oncidiums to dens to cymbidiums. This is to minimise costs and potting mix holdings.

Repotting and Dividing

For plants that have not flowered I will generally try to repot / divide these plants in say July so they are settled in the new mix for the growing season

For those that are flowering I normally will repot or divide as soon as they have finished flowering

It is important to get them done before the summer heat so they are well established prior to then

When dividing plants please always ensure a minimum of 3 green bulbs per division- no smaller as they will not flower the following season

Backbulbs

The green backbulbs can be struck to give you a new plant

The best way I have found is to put the backbulb (cut most of the roots off) in a plastic bag (sandwich bag) , tie the top (seal the bag) and then put the whole lot in a drawer / dark place for about 10 weeks.

By about that time the bulb will have struck and be developing roots and can then be potted up – wait until the growth is about 5cm long and or the roots about 1cm long.

You now have a free plant and it should flower in about 3 yrs

Pests & Diseases

This is to my mind the one problem with cymbids they do seem to be bits of pest magnets, however the treatment is just the same as all other orchids. In general a regular spray program will control all pest and most diseases and minimise any problems

Pests:

Red Spider or more correctly 2 spotted mite - shows up as silvering under the leaves – best to use a systemic insecticide or miticide. Some growers now are going the chemical free route and use predatory mites from companies like Bugs for Bugs.

Scale – doesn't seem to be a problem for me but the use of white oil will control

Snails and Slugs- can cause damage to new growths and roots however do most damage to flower spikes – best controlled with snail and slug bates

Disease:

Many problems here can be prevented by good housekeeping, picking up leaves, removing dead leaves and back bulbs from the plants as well as removing any sick or diseased foliage.

Good spacing is important in ensuring air flow and helping in disease control – ideal is with the plants not to be touching each other

Fungi and Bacteria problems are usually caused by overly wet leaves for long periods of time (a big problem for me). Most fungi & bacteria like high humidity, wet leaves and poor airflow to flourish.

- A regular fungicide spray program together with good bush house management and correct plant spacing will greatly ease any problems in this area

Further should you be getting a lot of black/ brown spots on your leaves due to the above conditions increasing the copper trace element in your fertiliser program will also help.

Pumicestone District Orchid & Foliage Society Inc.

Many commercial nurseries use a UV steriliser to treat all water for watering and spraying in their bush houses to control these problems as well.

Virus:

No ability to treat / cure virus – best to destroy plant as soon as possible

OTHER STUFF

Flowering

The following should be done to get your cymbids to flower in Queensland

- Grow the plants in bright light levels
- Water the plants as often as possible – plants and foliage in the evenings during Dec and Jan
- To flower they need the night temps to drop 8 – 10c night to day in summer (when the new growth is growing / maturing)
- Use a flower boosting / potash fert over this summer period
- Ensure no western sun on your plants from about 2pm onwards during summer as in a black pot this will heat up the roots not cool them down

Breeding

As most of you know I grow orchids for the pot plant trade- so accordingly I need to flower the thing to make money. So after years of experience I have found the following

- Standard Cymbids are unreliable flowerers in Qld unless you are prepared to do the above
- If you have neither the time nor inclination to play the above games then only buy plants with at least 25% Cym pumilium or devonianum in their breeding. I have found that these plants will grow and flower well in Queensland grown just as any other orchid. These plants will always be miniatures or intermediates types

Buying

I normally would never say this, but in Queensland I would not worry about growing seedling cymbidiums. There now is a large range of well proven clones available that will grow and flower well in Queensland without the need to consider the differences and difficulties of seedlings.

Some I would consider are the following

OLD CLASSICS

Oriental Legend	Evening Star	Dolly	Celtic Imp
Tom Thumb	Mimi	Summer Clouds	Pendragon
Dag	Nip	Starbright	Jill
Gawler	Ruby Eyes	Sarah Jean	Sunshine Falls
Pee Wee	Touchstone	Plush Canyon	Bulbarrow
Embers	Amesbury	Winter Fire	Agnes Norton

These are proven performers

MORE MODERN HYBRIDS

Mini Beacon	Mini Mint	Maluka	Pure Sarah
Gentle Touch	Freeling	One Tree Hill	Scott's Sunrise

Conclusion

So Cymbids can be successfully grown and flowered in Queensland – you just need to select the plants that are either proven in our climate or bred to perform here.

Pumicestone District Orchid & Foliage Society Inc.

In terms of Bang for your Bucks a cymbidium is hard to beat – a very robust plant that has long spikes of many large long lasting flowers – that is why they are such a popular orchid.

Bulletin Advertising

If you would like to advertise in the bulletin, The following annual rates apply:

Full Page \$60.00 Half Page \$45.00 Quarter Page \$35.00 Business Card \$25.00



Name _____

Address _____

State _____ Post Code _____

Place
Stamp
here



Orchid Talk

Pumicestone District Orchid Growers Workshop

Our workshop is every third Sunday of the month except December. Next meeting is on **18th July** Please see page 3 of this bulletin for details. Please bring a chair, some afternoon tea money for a raffle and problem plants. Contact Di on 54 962 861 or email sizzlin@bigpond.com for enquiries or information.

