



# THE MONTHLY BULLETIN OF THE KU-RING-GAI ORCHID SOCIETY INC.

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**Next Meeting : Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2016**

**Venue :** The Lindfield Community Centre, corner of Bradfield Rd and Moore Avenue, West Lindfield.

The **meeting commences at 8pm**, and there is no culture class before the meeting. We often have members away on holidays in January so it is our tradition to forego a culture class and a visiting guest speaker, but we will still focus strongly on orchid growing. After the first formal part of the meeting, **Trevor Onslow, Christine Rethers, and Jim Brydie** will host a **presentation on Orchid Growing Houses, the pros and cons, and the practical aspects of growing orchids in them.**

Our **super volunteers** for January are **Frank and Annemarie Hofbauer**. Many thanks as usual for all your help.

**Best of Evening Novice – Ascocenda Su-Fun Beauty - grown by Angie Lyle**



What a beauty Angie. I have always admired Ascocendas but continually failed at growing them. I salute your wonderful success with this lovely orchid.

The genus Ascocenda is a contentious name these days. It is a hybrid genus name for crosses between the natural genera Vanda and Ascocentrum but taxonomists now propose that all the species we once considered belonged to Ascocentrum are really Vandas. If this is so, then Su-Fun Beauty is really just a Vanda, but for the time being at least, I think we should retain the old name. If nothing else, it tells us that, like all Ascocendas, its flowers will be of medium size (around 5cm) and the plant will be medium size as well.

Su-Fun Beauty was registered in 1984 by Danny Low in Malaysia. No originator is given. Its parents are Vanda Bangkokapi and Ascocenda Pralor. I can't find any pictures of Bangkokapi but both its parents are strongly V sanderiana types with more colour in the bottom half of the flower than the top. One parent is white with green in the bottom half, and the other parent has a pink top and strawberry bottom. I imagine that Bangkokapi would be some kind of two tone pink.

Su-Fun's other parent, Ascocenda Pralor, is where the smaller flowers come from. It is a cross between the famous, much awarded Ascocenda Meda Arnold, and the gorgeous small flowered species Ascocentrum miniatum. Would you believe that there are 68 different clones of Ascocenda Meda Arnold that have been awarded? That surely has to be close to some kind of record. Meda Arnold clones vary in colour from red, to pink, to blue, but I like the reds best. The species miniatum is usually orange but some are almost yellow and some have a coppery red tone. Its flowers are only 1cm to 1.5cm across but there are plenty of them. Su-Fun Beauty doesn't have miniatum's flower count the colour is clearly there.

**A. miniatum**



Ascocendas are lovely things but like nearly all the Vanda alliance, they are warm growers. They like roots dangling in the air, they like humid conditions and regular water, but do not like their roots confined in wet pots. Most successful growers employ baskets of one kind or another. I have tried all types and combinations but never found a solution that worked for me until recently I changed a few to sphagnum moss. Those poor long suffering plants still have a long way to go but sure look better than they ever have before. I have my fingers crossed.

Congratulations on the Best of Evening Angie. Some growers have got it for Ascocendas, and some (like me) haven't.

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**Society News** (if anyone has a news item, please phone Jim on 9476 3383, or email at [jimbrydie@bigpond.com](mailto:jimbrydie@bigpond.com) )

**1. President's award 2015** – At the party, President Kevin announced that his annual award this year was going to a long standing member who has always devoted her time and efforts to the benefit of the Society and its members. Whether it is in managing and running the sales table, or organising the design and presentation of the Society's displays at shows, or arranging the supper at Committee meetings, Pauline Onslow has always been ready to service our Society.

Congratulations Pauline. All of us really appreciate your work. A really well deserved award.

**2. Yet another wonderful Christmas party** – There were about 75 members and guests in attendance and as I looked about at various time during the night everyone seemed to be in good spirits and happy. It was a warm night but not too bad, there were masses of beautiful benched orchids to admire, good food, refreshments, and friends to discuss the pleasures and trials of the past year. What more could you ask for?

The committee did a great job planning the food in advance but on the night it just wouldn't happen the way it does without Pauline's terrific management and coordination. It is mostly finger food but there was a wonderful variety and I'm sure that everyone found something to suit their tastes. All of us give our special thank you to the many people who pitched in to supply items or to work on the night to help with running the event. A wonderful example of cooperative effort. Thank you all (and especially to Frank and Annemarie for the great punch).

What a shame that we have to wait another whole before we get to do it all again.

**3. The monster Christmas Raffle** – Thank you also to everyone who donated prizes for the monster raffle - it was a ripper again this year. There was good variety, quantity, and quality of prizes and lots of winners went home happy. We didn't all win of course but that's the way the cookie crumbles. If you didn't win a prize this time, maybe your number is fated for next year.

**4. Bulletin article competition** – As bulletin editor, I was super pleased with this years article competition. Graeme Mohr submitted 2 articles, Bob Ellis one, Dennys Angove one, and Phil Spence two. All were fantastic and I am glad I wasn't asked to pick a winner. However, the selection committee of Christine Rethers, Doreen Clark and Ron Howlett, eventually gave first place to Phil Spence's great piece on a visit to the Papua New Guinea highlands. They also decided that all three other competitors be designated equal second in recognition of the high overall quality. The club allocated a \$20 sales table voucher for first and \$10 sales table vouchers for each other competitor.

Congratulations guys. Great work.

I can also now announce that we are running the article competition again in 2016. It is open now and will run until October so that we can announce the winner or winners in November. Now girls, did you notice that all last years entrants were men? Where were you? I can surely expect some good stuff this year can't I?

**5. Growing Cattleyas?** – Many of the prize plants handed out in December were of the Cattleya alliance and Kevin pointed out that some Cattleya culture fundamentals might benefit some of our less experienced growers. Quite right of course. We all eventually learn, mostly from much trial and much error, but how much smarter is it to start with clues. Please see the attached growing notes.

**6. Membership Fees** – Well after all that praise up, I now have to tell you that its time to pay your annual fees again. \$12 single, \$15 family. But what great value. Please pay at the front table at the next meeting or mail in a cheque, and we would really appreciate it if you included a completed payment advice with the payment (see attached). It helps us to keep track and gives us a paper record.

## 2015 Pointscore Competition Results based on total points

Each year at this time we publish a table showing where members finished in the year's overall pointscore tally. This is of interest to many but can also be confusing because it has no direct relationship to the way we allocate the prizes handed out at the Christmas meeting. Prizes are based on a small \$ value being allocated for finishing **1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>r</sup>** **in any single benching class, based on accumulated points across the whole year.** We do not give out actual cash. We purchase plants for the winners, valued at about the nominal value of their total prizes across all classes.

Any anomaly between where a member finished in the overall point table, and the apparent prize they were allocated, is easily explained. We deliberately allocate prize values based on separate class places to favour members with smaller collections or collections focused on particular genera. This spreads prizemoney allocations across a wider range of growers. Placings in the overall pointscore definitely favour larger and wider collections.

Please note, the **1<sup>st</sup>'s, 2<sup>nd</sup>'s and 3<sup>rd</sup>'s** mentioned above are for placings in a benching class at the end of the year based on points accumulated **in that class** over the whole year. They are not for placings **in a single month.**

### 2015 Pointscore Open section results (top 21 places)

1 <sup>st</sup>	G&L Bromley	808	8 <sup>th</sup>	F&A Hofbauer	201	15 <sup>th</sup>	M Barrett	88
2 <sup>nd</sup>	J&C Brydie	564	9 <sup>th</sup>	B Spurrs	183	16 <sup>th</sup>	K&H Crocker	74
3 <sup>rd</sup>	A&G Cushway	537	10 <sup>th</sup>	D Law	142	17 <sup>th</sup>	I Tanner	64

4 <sup>th</sup>	C Nidagal	341	11 <sup>th</sup>	C Rethers	140	18 <sup>th</sup>	S&J Torrisi	53
5 <sup>th</sup>	T&P Onslow	315	12 <sup>th</sup>	T Peterson	139	19 <sup>th</sup>	G&J Fulcher	51
6 <sup>th</sup>	P&J D'Olier	282	13 <sup>th</sup>	H Choo	120	20 <sup>th</sup>	W Dhu	36
7 <sup>th</sup>	T Miller	221	14 <sup>th</sup>	G Mohr	94	21 <sup>st</sup>	N Gill	35

#### Novice section results (top 9 placings)

1 <sup>st</sup> Peter & Betty Ng	104	4 <sup>th</sup> Bruce Farrar	32	7 <sup>th</sup> Bob Taffel	24
2 <sup>nd</sup> Dennys & Janet Angove	80	5 <sup>th</sup> Angie Lyle	30	8 <sup>th</sup> Yvonne Szeto-Low	21
3 <sup>rd</sup> Janet Snodgrass	40	6 <sup>th</sup> Jean Hocking	24	9 <sup>th</sup> Mary Mathews	8

“**Benching Guidelines**” – If ever you lose your own copy, this comprehensive description of all benching classes and all the rules of our annual pointscore competition, are now posted on the Society website for your convenience.

#### Revised Novice Grower Standings for 2014

Our Society’s rules are that once a Novice grower wins a particular benching class in the annual pointscore, they are no longer eligible to bench in that particular Novice class. Eg, this year Janet Snodgrass won class 35 (Laeliinae Species and Hybrids), so from now on, Janet must now bench that kind of orchid (Laelia/Cattleya alliance) in the Open class, but may bench other orchids in other Novice classes.

Once a Novice Grower has won **three individual Novice annual pointscore classes** (either in one year, or over a period of years), they are no longer Novices, and are elevated fully to Open class. This year we congratulate Peter and Betty Ng for achieving this distinction. They won 3 Novice classes all in one year, so welcome to Open class Peter and Betty. You have been benching some beautiful orchids this year and I am sure you will compete as well as anyone in the Open.

**Please also note, that like most clubs, we have one other special rule concerning Novice status.** That is, if you are a member of other orchid clubs and you win your way out of Novice (or equivalent) standing in any one class, or overall, at any of those clubs, then you are likewise no longer Novice in those equivalent classes at Kuringai. We expect individual members to judge this for themselves and act accordingly but if you aren’t sure please raise the issue with a senior member at our club.

**Current Novice Standings :** The following table of Novice standings details the individual position of all members who are presently benching Novice at meetings. If you aren’t listed, and you are not sure of your Novice standing, contact me on 9476 3383 or at jimbydie@bigpond.com - Keep in mind that novice class is not mandatory and no member is bound only to the novice classes. You can choose to bench in Open at any time you choose.

**These standings apply retrospectively from the December 2015 meeting** (all class winners were independently notified before the Christmas meeting). **Please take careful note of these standings and bench accordingly.** A copy of the list will be at the hall every meeting, in the benching cards box.

#### **THESE ARE THE NOVICE CLASSES IN WHICH INDIVIDUAL NOVICES ARE NO LONGER ELIGIBLE TO BENCH**

<i>Dennys and Janet Angove</i>	class 39 - Miscellaneous Hybrids (won in 2015) (now Open in this class)
<i>Marj Camp</i>	class 39 – Miscellaneous Hybrids (now Open in this class) class 38 – Miscellaneous Species (now Open in this class)
<i>Doreen Clark</i>	class 39 – Miscellaneous Hybrids (now Open in this class)
<i>Bruce Farrar</i>	class 35 – Laeliinae Species and Hybrids (now Open in this class)
<i>John and Jean Hocking</i>	class 34 – Australian Native Species & Hybrids (now Open in this class)
<i>Val Houley</i>	class 38 – Miscellaneous Species (now Open in this class)
<i>Jessie Koh and Herb Schoch</i>	<b>Jessie &amp; Herb are now Open in all classes</b>
<i>Theresia Lee</i>	class 34 – Australian Native Species & Hybrids (now Open in this class) class 35 – Laeliinae Species and Hybrids (now Open in this class)
<i>Angie Lyle</i>	class 35 – Laeliinae Species and Hybrids (now Open in this class) class 37 – Oncidium species and hybrids (won in 2015) (now Open in this class)
<i>Kevin O’Connor</i>	class 34 – Australian Native Species & Hybrids (now Open in this class)
<i>Peter and Betty Ng</i>	class 34 – Australian Native Species & Hybrids (won in 2015) (now Open in this class) class 36 – Cymbidium (won in 2015) (now Open in this class) class 38 – Miscellaneous Species (won in 2015) (now Open in this class) <b>Peter and Betty are now Open in all classes</b>
<i>Christine Rethers</i>	class 38 – Miscellaneous Species (now Open in this class) class 39 – Miscellaneous Hybrids (now Open in this class)
<i>Jim &amp; Dinitra Smyrnios</i>	class 36 – Cymbidium (now Open in this class)
<i>Janet Snodgrass</i>	class 35 – Laeliinae species and hybrids (won in 2015) (now Open in this class)
<i>Lorraine Soei</i>	class 36 – Cymbidium (now Open in this class)
<i>Lily Tan</i>	class 35 – Laeliinae Species and Hybrids (now Open in this class)
<i>Ian Tanner</i>	class 35 – Laeliinae Species & Hybrids (now Open in this class) class 39 – Miscellaneous Hybrids (now Open in this class)
<i>Yvonne Szeto-Low</i>	class 39 – Miscellaneous Hybrids (now Open in this class)

**Best of the Evening Species – Aerides feildingii - grown by G & L Bromley**



What a beautiful orchid and no wonder it got Best of the Evening at the Christmas meeting the last two years in a row. However, to avoid getting repetitive, I thought I would widen the description and give you a bit more of an introduction to the genus Aerides.

As Garrie mentioned last month, many experts are now folding the genus Aerides into the wider and larger genus Vanda, but personally, I am not so sure. To some extent the issue is part of the old perennial argument between ‘Splitters’ and ‘Lumpers’. Do we end up with just a few gigantic genera with many ‘sections’ within each genus to help us distinguish between groups of more closely related species, or do we elevated the sections to be separate genera. Anyway, as most books still call this group Aerides, so will I.

Aerides is an Asian genus of about 28 species, related to the Vandas. One of the key distinguishing features of Aerides is the prominent, generally forward facing spur formed by a pouch like structure at the base of the lip. (*see picture*)

All the Aerides species are beautiful orchids and highly desirable. I have includes sample pictures of some of the more popular types below. However, unfortunately for most hobby growers, most Aerides come from relatively low elevations in nature and prefer warm conditions. My general guideline for judging whether a tropical species will grow cold/cool or not is whether it usually grows at elevations of 1500m or above. As you can see from the figures below that I have extracted from the internet, most Aerides grow below this. (sample Aerides natural elevation ranges : A crassifolia – 0-1300m, A falcata 0-700, A fieldingii - syn rosea 300-1700, A flabellata 300-1700, A houlettiana 0-700, A huttonii 0-800, A lawrencea 0-500, A maculosa to 1400, A multiflora 0-1100, A odorata 200-2000, A quinquevulnera 300-2000)

The 1500m threshold is not hard and fast of course, and some Aerides can be grown cold in milder areas, but in my experience they are better warm.



Garrie’s species – A fieldingii, is found on trees and rocks in the foothills of the Himalayas from NE India and Bhutan, all the way to China and Vietnam. They occur at moderate elevations, usually at the lower to middle end of the 300 to 1600m range. As a result, one might expect that it will need some protection from the worst of Sydney’s cold. Perhaps a cool grower if your min temp is above 5°C. These days the species name A. fieldingii seems to be accepted as a synonym for the name Aerides rosea. I guess time will eventually swing us over but for the moment either is ok and nurseries may label it either way.

In nature, the plant itself grows downwards, pendent, or at least ascending from a pendent habit. When cultivated, we generally stake it upright in a slatted basket or similar (often with little or no medium), but the pendent nature still shows. The 60-80cm inflorescence is also sharply pendent.



**A. flabellata**

**A. houlettiana**

**A. multiflora**

**A. odorata**

**A. quinquevulnera**

**A. huttonii**



In flower, fieldingii is simply a stunner. Each inflorescence has somewhere between 60 & 100 (3cm) pink/mauve, beautifully filled in flowers. The colour can be a bit variable. Some plants can be quite heavily spotted, and the colour can be Anything from pink on pink through to almost purple on white. Others are almost solid pink or just faintly spotted and there are also pure white albino clones. The long dense flower spike makes all of the variations real beauties.

Most sources say Aerides are easy to grow but perhaps that relates to growers with the right conditions. They say they need good light – some say full sun – and plenty of air around the roots. I have never been successful with them but that doesn’t mean others won’t find that they suit their culture. If you have a mind to try, then I suggest A. odorata might be a good place to start. It has always been a popular species and it does occur across a wider range of elevations.

Congratulations on the Best of Evening Garrie and Lesley. Its a beauty every Christmas.

## Best of the Evening Hybrid – *Vascostylis Crownfox Magic 'Gigi Magic'* (G&L Bromley)



This is the 4<sup>th</sup> BOE for this beauty in the 12 years since I became editor. Not that there is anything wrong with that, classy orchids are classy, its just that Best of the evening write ups become rather repetitive. Anyway, for that reason I offer a rather abbreviated version this time.

*Vascostylis* is a man made hybrid genus containing *Vanda*, *Ascocentrum*, and *Rhynchostylis*. As mentioned in an earlier item in this bulletin, taxonomists have recently proposed that all the species of the genus *Ascocentrum* be transferred across to *Vanda* but as I haven't yet read the papers explaining the rationale, I am still using the old names at least for the present.

In this particular cross there are 9 different species but the main components are 38% *Vanda sanderiana*, 25% *Rhynchostylis coelestis*, and 8% *Asco. curvifolium*. (the other 6 are all minor *Vanda* species). *Crownfox Magic* is a smallish plant by regular *Vanda* standards. It is about 30 to 40cm high, with about a dozen lovely 6cm flowers, white with a bright blue lip and also a hint of a blue tinge on the edges of the petals.

The cross was developed in 1998 by Robert Fuchs Orchids in the USA. The gorgeous blue and white colours come from *Rhynchostylis coelestis*, a species from Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam at relatively low elevations, in areas with a very dry winter. It has about 25 densely packed, 2cm flowers, on an upright 20cm inflorescence. The most sought after clones are white with blue tipped sepals and petals, and a blue lip. It also occurs in white and pink, but the blue and white is the most popular. Garrie and Lesley grow their *Vascostylis* warm, but I have heard that with care it might just about tolerate a cool glasshouse in Sydney. At least in milder areas anyway. It all depends on how cold it gets where you live.

Congratulations on another Best of the Evening Garrie and Lesley. I can't grow it, but at least I can admire yours.

## *Neofinetia falcata* – a fascinating miniature *Vanda* Jim Brydie

After all my Best of the Evening descriptions telling you that *Vandas* are not for the less experienced, I wandered into my shadehouse just after Christmas and noticed several plants of *Neofinetia* in full flower. An obvious exception I need to tell you more about. It tolerates cold and grows easily in a shade house environment in our Sydney climate.

*Neofinetia falcata* is a delightful miniature species from Japan, Korea, and perhaps mainland China. There are 3 species of *Neofinetia* but *falcata* is far and away the best known and most widely cultivated. The other two (*N. richardiana*, and *N. xichangensis*) and both found only in China and to be frank, I had never heard of either until I began to write this article.

*N. falcata* has a fascinating history. It has been cultivated and prized in Japan for over 400 years. Originally known as "Fu-ran", or the wind orchid, this eventually became Fukiran which means the orchid of the rich and famous. Only the rich and royalty could own Fukiran, and they searched far and wide for the best and rarest types. In the late 1800's, when western culture was finally allowed in to influence Japan, the interest of Japanese growers in orchids widened to take in the more colourful tropical orchids of the world but many never relinquished the tradition with their native orchids. In 1920 the Japanese Fukiran Society was formed to allow members to display their plants and share their interests. The society continues today and in 2012 an offshoot was also established in the USA.

*Neofinetia falcata* is occasionally found growing on rocks but it usually occurs on the smallish branches of deciduous trees. The trees being deciduous means that the plants receive strong light all through winter and early spring. The plants are reported to grow at an angle on the branches so that water can not accumulate in the crown or the leaf bases. Most mature plants are only about 7 or 8cm tall but their habit of making multiple side growths and forming relatively large clusters, makes them look larger. Some exceptional forms can be up to about 15cm tall.

In my growing area, the plants usually commence flowering in late December. Flowering size plants usually throw multiple 7cm inflorescences, each carrying from 3 to 7, pure white, 3cm flowers with a huge prominent nectar spurs. They are generous flowerers and make a beautiful display.

Like any species, there are many variations in the form of both plant and flowers. Plants or flowers can be larger or smaller, there are those with variegated leaves which are highly prized in Japan. Pink flowered variants are very rare in nature but in modern times, concentrated line breeding focused on the pink flowers has led to these being much more readily available. However, just a warning if you are deciding to rush out and buy a pink flowered seedling. I have bought two different supposed pink crosses and so far the best had just a slight tint of pink in the flower stems.



The only true pink flowered specimens I have seen are on the internet. Still, I am sure a few in each cross work out pink, maybe you will be the lucky purchaser.

**Light** - Neofinetias prefer medium bright light levels, about the same as for Cattleyas.

**Temperature** - Plants can tolerate a wide range of temperatures. In the winter, they will tolerate down to just 1 or 2°C but probably prefer a bit more. My own plants would be subjected to 1°C for short periods but I do have a polycarbonate roof over my shadehouse so they wouldn't be sopping wet and freezing at the same time. In its natural environment winters aren't totally dry but rainfall is much reduced.

In summer, plants are quite happy between say 20 and 38°C but remember, they grow naturally in deciduous trees so they would be under a decent leaf canopy in mid-summer when temperatures can go substantially higher. Very very few orchids blithely tolerate 40+°C without some help.

**Water & Fertilizer** - I pondered here whether I should discuss potting before watering because the two are linked hand in hand. The appropriate frequency of watering depends entirely on how you potted the plant and where you grow it. However, we must start somewhere. Just keep in mind that you can't read this part in isolation.

Neofinetias should dry out between watering – they are true epiphytes and don't tolerate wet roots well.

I water and fertilise all my orchids at the same time, which is decidedly NOT ideal for many. In summer this equates to every 2 or 3 days when it is hot and dry, perhaps every 4 or 5 days when milder. In the shadehouse in winter it might mean watering every 10 - 14 days. I fertilise with the water every second time if I can, but maybe its 2 out of 5.

For some orchids this is just enough. They start to wilt if they dry right out in hot dry weather. For others, my water schedule is far too much. To compensate, I grow many orchids hanging from wires above the benched orchids, closer to the light and the air circulating ceiling fans where the air is drier. In addition some are potted in basket pots or slatted baskets. Some even mounted. I also try to just wave the hose quickly past those that don't want it but the end result is I don't grow some types of orchids as well as I would like. Such is life.

**Potting** – When I visited Japan as a young man, long ago, my interest in orchids had just begun and I was fascinated to see the different way the Japanese potted Neofinetia. Their traditional way was to place them on what looked like a little mountain of sphagnum moss sat in a tiny terracotta pot. It seemed so impractical but looked rather quaint and nice. Still, I never took it up and when I acquired a Neofinetia, I potted it in terracotta pot in bark. Over time, I eventually discovered that they did better in baskets and recently, when repotting one that was still in a terracotta pot, I found that the only live roots were the ones growing over the sides in the air.

As a result, I thought perhaps I should show you more of the Japanese method. There is a great step by step video on the American Fukiran Society website at (<http://fukiransoa.weebly.com/repotting-f363kiran.html>) but as I can't plug in a video, I thought some extracts would best help illustrate the process. In this method, you start with a handful of sphagnum moss and wrap it downward over the top of a small softdrink bottle. This is the underlying base of the 'mountain'. Place your Neofinetia (after cleaning up dead roots etc) onto the top of the mound. Next wrap some more sphag around the outside of the Neofinetia and lift the plant and sphag off the bottle. Wrap a little more sphag around the plant over the roots and stick the base of the mountain into the pot. In this video he used a slotted plastic Vanda pot but this would then often then go inside a decorative ceramic pot or even just be potted direct into a small terracotta pot.



**It's in the rules** - A nice, calm and respectable lady went into a pharmacy, walked up to the pharmacist, looked straight into his eyes, and said, "I would like to buy some cyanide."

When the pharmacist asked why she needed it, she replied, "I need it to poison my husband."

The pharmacist's eyes got big and he backed away saying, "I can't give you cyanide to kill your husband, that's against the law! I'll lose my license! They'll throw both of us in jail!"

The woman reached into her purse and pulled out a picture of her husband in bed with the pharmacist's wife.

The pharmacist looked at the picture for a moment and said, "Well, why didn't you tell me you had a prescription."