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web site : <http://kuringaiorchidsociety.org.au>

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Next Meeting : Monday, 17th April, 2017

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

The **Culture Class** this month (7.15pm) will be Plant Doctor session with **Trevor Onslow and Jim Brydie** as the plant doctors. No appointments necessary. If you have a sick orchid or one on which you would just like a bit of advice, bring it in and get the 'doctors' to check it out for you. Depending on the numbers brought in, they will try to give advice on every plant brought in. These are often popular sessions so get in early if want to sit up front.

The **Main meeting commences at 8pm.** Our guest speaker this month is **James Indsto** and his topic is "**Classic Cattleyas**". James gave this talk recently at the Species Orchid Society and it was very well received. He tells us all about the main species involved in creating those amazingly big show Cattleyas we all love. This is a subject we don't see explored nearly often enough and it is something to really look forward to.

Our **supper volunteers** for April are **Evelyn Tse and Ann Byron.** We all thank you.

Best of Evening Novice – *Miltonia clowesii* - grown by *Lina Huang*



This orchid was benched under some other name but the judges agreed it was definitely *clowesii* and I concur. However, *clowesii* can be a rather variable species and as *clowesii* go, this isn't an example of one of the better ones. I have included a row of small pictures of other examples of the species to illustrate the point. It just goes to show, when a buy a plant with a species name on it, it might not look exactly like the ones displayed in books.

Miltonia clowesii is one of 8 *Miltonia* species known as the Brazilian Miltonias. It comes from the mountains inland from Rio de Janeiro and north to the coastal Organ mountains, and is generally found at elevations around 800 meters. However, as the habitat is a fair way south of the equator, it is regarded by Sydney growers as a hardy, cool grower. The inflorescence can be up to 60cm, and carries 7 to 10 successively opening flowers (several open at a time), but the spike is often shorter and the flowers fewer. The flowers are about 5 to 7cm across and as I said, flower quality varies substantially.

This is a species that likes relatively bright light all year round but that doesn't mean full sun. 50% shade cloth is good so long as your shade house isn't also affected too much by shade from any

nearby trees or buildings. If it is, then seek out a brighter spot under trees, or on a verandah or something like that. *Clowesii* also likes regular water all year round, and regular light fertiliser.

As you can see from the pictures on the right, flowers can be quite



variable. They can be skinny or have broad segments, the colour can be pale or dark, the spots well defined or not so.

Regardless, they are always pretty when you get a good plant flowering well. Congratulations on your BOE Lina.

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

1. Bark Order – The latest bark order has now been filled and the order placed on the supplier. Those who have ordered bark will be contacted shortly to advise pick up and payment arrangements.

2. Committee member resignation – With great regret the committee has accepted the resignation of Rod Heydon from your management committee. Rod served us wonderfully since he joined the committee in 2015 and we were very grateful for his assistance but, for personal reasons, he asked if we would mind if he stood down. As he has always done, Rod still intends to help on meeting nights where possible, and we are all thankful for his efforts.

3. Chinese Dinner – **The venue is the Eastern City Chinese Restaurant, at 7 Hillcrest Road Pennant Hills** and the date is **Friday 28th April**. We will **meet at the restaurant at 6.30pm for dinner at 7pm**. This banquet dinner will be a great opportunity for members to get to know one another just a little better outside the structure of our monthly general meetings. So far we have 25 people booked in but would be happy to get that number up to 30 or more so how about checking your schedule and making a space so you can come and join us. Members partners are most welcome to join us and the Society is subsidising the cost \$10 a head.

If you google the address you will see that there are two big public car parks right at the restaurant. One more or less across the street, and the other behind the restaurant, not to mention street parking. Parking will not be a problem but if you would prefer to travel by public transport, Hillcrest Rd is right near Pennant Hills railway station.

I can't tell you the exact banquet menu but who cares, you always love the mystery of all those wonderful Chinese food dishes don't you? The committee are selecting the dishes to be included and we are conscious that a surprising number of attendees don't eat seafood, so I can at least tell you that seafood dishes (if any) will be minimalised. The banquet includes a small entree, a selection of mains dishes with fried rice or boiled rice, and a dessert.

Softdrinks, wines and some other alcoholic drinks are available for personal purchase at the restaurant but you may also BYO your own wine if you wish. As is the custom everywhere, the restaurant charges \$2.50 per head for byo to cover corkage and glasses etc and we have included an allowance for this in our calculations. We will be charging a single flat rate amount to each attendee. We anticipate the charge after subsidy, will be \$25 per head but we will have to confirm that a little later. We should be able to tell you exactly at the April meeting.

If you would like to come, please see Angie at the next meeting to book, or email Angie at anglyle@hotmail.com

4. Membership Fees – annual fees are due. If you haven't paid, please see Angie at the next meeting or perhaps pay by direct bank transfer. The amounts due are \$12 for a single membership, \$15 for a family – a bargain.

If you are paying in person at the meeting, or mailing in a cheque, please note that we ask you to **include a completed 'payment advice form'** with the payment. It helps us to keep track and gives us a paper record

If you wish to pay by electronic banking, the Societies banking details are :

Westpac Bank, St Ives branch, BSB No 032 188, account number 103568. Please make sure that you include the words **"Membership fees"** as the payment description – and **include your name as the remitter.**

5. Our annual photographic (or digital picture) Competition – June Meeting 2017 (19/6/17)

Get your cameras ready! This competition will be our feature of the night at our June meeting. The purpose of the competition is to offer an additional avenue of orchid appreciation to members and to perhaps act as a lead-in to the Art Section of the St Ives Orchid Fair. All members are encouraged to participate.

Rules of the Competition:

1. participants must be members of the society and are to advise Graeme Mohr (telephone 94498127 or preferably email mohr48@optusnet.com.au) before the June meeting that they wish to enter and the number of entries.
2. pictures must be an original photograph or picture taken by the member (limit of 3 entries per membership). Exhibits to be handed to Graeme by 7.10pm on the showing night, Monday 19/06/17.
3. entries will be located in the culture class room. The competition replaces culture class on the night of 19/06/17.
4. Each exhibits must feature an orchid as the main subject, and be presented suitable for displaying. Exhibits are not to have been awarded a prize previously at the Ku-Ring-Gai Orchid Society or the St Ives Orchid Fair.
5. Maximum size of exhibit: A4 size (300 x 210mm). Name of exhibitor to be placed on the back of the exhibit. Exhibits will be allocated a unique number on hanging, the number will then be placed on the exhibit.

Whenever possible, the Society rules will mirror the St Ives Orchid Fair Art Section rules.

JUDGING: There will be no judging by invited judges. The winners will be based on a popular vote system by members present. Each member of the club may vote, and the photograph that attracts the most votes wins the prize. Members to convey their choice to Graeme before the end of the tea break. Results will be announced on the night, immediately after the main invited speaker presentation.

First prize \$15 sales table voucher. Second prize \$10 sales table voucher. Third prize \$5 sales table voucher.

5. Our 70th Anniversary – This year marks our Society's 70th anniversary. We have decide to celebrate the occasion at our July meeting. Do any members have any interesting memorabilia (photos, trophies, display artifacts, records, old bulletins etc) that we might be able to include in a celebratory display on the night? If you do, would you please contact any member of the committee and talk to us about it?

Diary Dates 2017

- * Sat, Sun April 8,9 - Collector's Plant Fair Hawkesbury Race Club, Clarendon, opposite RAAF base
- * Fri – Sun, 26,27,28 May - Orchids Out West - Hawkesbury Racecourse, Clarendon (opposite RAAF Base)
- * Thur - Sat, 15 - 17 June 2017 - Cumberland Orchid Circle Display, Carlingford Court, Carlingford
- * Fri – Sun, 23,24,25 June – Open Days Royale Orchids, Brieses Road, Peats Ridge
- * Sat, Sun 24,25 June - Mingara Orchid Fair/Show, Mingara Club, Mingara Drive, Tumbi Umbi.

Best of Evening Hybrid – Dendrobium Enobi Purple (splash) - grown by (Trevor and Pauline Onslow)

What an amazing looking orchid. When these ‘splashes’ first showed up in hybrids the developer must have thought he had just struck gold.

However, despite mankind’s constant fascination with the new and different, I have to wonder if the current surge in desire for ‘splash’ Dendrobiums, and even Phallys, like the one featured last month, will be short lived. I can still remember 30 odd years ago, the amazement of orchid growers when we first saw those pansy like Dendrobiums like Den. D’Bush Pansy (pictured left). We all thought that the breeders were going to be rich, but it just didn’t eventuate. I am not sure why, perhaps the petaloid lip proved hard to pass on in breeding, who knows.



D. Enobi Purple is a hybrid registered in 1996 by Dr Kohji Karasawa in Japan. Not all were splash petal types but it seems likely that the breeder knew that the cross carried the mutation potential and was deliberately aiming for it. There are a handful of different ‘splash’ Enobi Purples, but there are far more ‘non-splash’ types from the same cross. Trevor tells me that he bought a compot of seedlings of the cross at the AOC Conference show that was held at Port Macquarie racecourse back in I think 2006. Unbeknown to Trevor, Garrie and Leslie Bromley bought one too. Some years later Leslie mentioned to Trevor casually that they had bought this supposed ‘splash’ compot and had flowered a number of them and they were disappointed that none were splashed. Trevor told them he had bought one too and had exactly the same outcome. They made a pact that if either flowered a ‘splash’ from the remaining plants they would share it with the other but as fate would have it, no splashes flowered. Later, a determined Garrie found a supplier that had a compot and guaranteed there would be lots of ‘splashes’ among them. Garrie kindly gave one of the compot to Trevor, which did turn out to be a splash form, and that is now the beautiful specimen he benched at our last meeting. Garrie and Leslie have also flowered splash forms, but they havn’t thrived quite as well as Trevor’s. Still, Garrie is one of the best hardcane Dendrobium growers in Sydney (along with Trevor of course) and I am sure he will have them up and flowering as gorgeous specimens in no time.

The parents of Enobi Purple are Den. Enobi Komachi x Den. Laguna Princess. Unfortunately, I can’t find a picture of either so I can’t provide any insight into where the splash patterns come from. The breeding of both parents is predominantly Den bigibbum. Enobi Komachi is 62.5% bigibbum and another 20% its close cousin D. Phalaenopsis. Laguna Princess is 94% bigibbum. Each parent has a little % of a variety of PNG species, mostly species from section spathulata like Dens taurinum, stratioides, canaliculatum and the like. It is very hard to predict what impact these would have on the hybrid progeny but many are rather large plants with tall canes and lots of flowers so perhaps it is floriferousness. None have splash petal varieties as far as I know so the splashes more than likely come from a mutation in a variety of bigibbum. To show the variations, here are some pictures of different Enobi Purples.



Enobi Purple - splash



Enobi Purple - splash



Enobi Purple - splash



note pattern variation flower to flower



Enobi Purple – no splash

two pictures of same plant? (Enobi Purple – splash JC/AOC)

Anyway, like all orchid subjects, its just so fascinating isnt it? Congratulations on yet another deserved BOE Trevor.



Award picture by Garrie Bromley for the OSNSW award

Picture by owner Bill Dobson

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Now here is something you don't see every day. In all my 40 plus years of growing orchids, I have never seen this species benched. I was aware of its existence, and I knew it had been used in hybridising within *Sarcochilus*, in particular the breeding of yellows, however, it was rarely, if ever, available for purchase, and I assumed that meant it was rather difficult to keep alive in cultivation. Then, along comes Bill and benches this 'thing'. "Wow", we all said. Just look at the cells glistening in that close up, and it looked even better when you were looking at it in the flesh.

As it turns out, the judges knew this was coming to our meeting because they had been advised in advance that it was to be judged for an award. It had already been judged at a recent Australian Native Orchid Society (ANOS) meeting and been awarded an FCC. No one could recall an FCC having ever been granted by ANOS previously. However, the OSNSW judges duly did their review at our meeting and it also received an FCC from the Orchid Society of NSW.

But, despite its rarity and thus novelty value, I am sure that you all know that an FCC award isn't based on novelty or how well the plant is growing. The award is a measure of the quality, shape, colour, and floriferousness of this clone against others of the species. To illustrate how good a clone Bill has here, I have included a couple of pictures from the internet of other examples of *Sarcochilus dilatatus* for comparison. 'Lily' is a quite superior form.



The book Australian Indigenous Orchids by A. W. Dockrill tells us that the distribution of this species is from the Richmond River in north-eastern NSW (empties to the ocean at Ballina) to about the Burnett River in central-eastern Queensland (about level with Maryborough or Frasers Island). He says "this species is typically an epiphyte of the "dry scrub" areas of the lowlands, and low on the ranges, a fair distance from the coast. In some areas however, it occurs in the more or less typical rainforest. David Jones book Native Orchids of Australia gives much the same information but adds that while fewer are found in the moister rainforests those found there are often on trees along streams. He also tells us that it can be difficult to maintain in cultivation. Plants require warm, humid conditions with plenty of air movement. They resent disturbance and should be attached to a slab of weathered hardwood.

Bill Dobson described the habitat in which he found his *dilatatus* as : in Queensland, ... in vine thickets which get heaps of rain in the summer months but are a lot drier in the winter months when the temperature can drop down to single figures at night. But do you know what a vine thicket is? Well I don't, but I imagine that it is a dryish gully with light overhead canopy of relatively small trees tangled with native vines. I went to the internet to seek an appropriate picture to demonstrate the concept, but instead found a delightful *dilatatus* story on Gerry Walsh's website. Gerry is famously known as the "Rock Lily Man" as he is one of Australia's specialists on the subject of *Dendrobium speciosum* amongst other things. With Gerry's permission I have reproduced his article here. I am sure you will be as enchanted as I was. He paints such a revealing story. *Gerry's website is <http://www.therocklilyman.com>*

"Sarcochilus dilatatus is something of a mystery species to most native orchid growers. Everyone knows what it looks like and they can tell you how it influences the hybrids in which it is a parent. But not a whole lot of growers have seen S. dilatatus in the wild and even less have much idea about the conditions it likes to hang out in. Most will also support the notion that S. dilatatus is difficult to grow in captivity. There isn't a whole lot of specimens to be found around the bush houses in the village of Sydney, or in any other village really. These hazy ideas, held by

the majority of growers, are quite natural and it is easy to understand just how the vagueness that surrounds *S. dilatatus* has evolved.

The first plants of *S. dilatatus* that I ever saw were seedlings which were distributed from flasks at a meeting of ANOS Sydney Group some time in 1983. I obtained four of these and promptly killed them before ever seeing any flowers. The next plants I experienced were shown to me in September 1987 by the late Ralph Crane, from Brisbane, and were growing in the Brisbane Forest State Park. I'll never forget the elation of that first glimpse of these wild growing plants. And I quickly understood just how I'd murdered those precious seedlings back in '83.

As is often the case, seeing those first wild plants of *S. dilatatus* gave me all the understanding I needed to successfully grow this small *Sarcanthinae* species. Little did I realise that *S. dilatatus* would prefer to grow on the thin twigs of shrubs in a small, dry, *Lantana*-choked gully, much more than on the thick moss-encrusted slab of hardwood where I had sentenced those seedlings to a slow death. There can be no disputing the value of studying the habitats of the various native orchid species we come across. Far too many growers go all dribbly at the mouth at the sight of a nice orchid growing in a tree, but fail to observe where the tree itself is growing.

I tend to think of *S. dilatatus* as a sort of northern form of *S. australis*. They both grow in almost identical situations with regards to position on the host, air movement, moisture and light. They even have a floral shape vaguely similar i.e. long and narrow with club like ends to the segments. It is quite possible that these two species have a common ancestry.

S. dilatatus is very uncommon in NSW. I have never seen a plant growing in situ in the wilds of my own state. It certainly exists sparingly in dry scrubs away from the coast and to the west of about Grafton. I have no real knowledge of it occurring elsewhere in NSW.

North of the border, *S. dilatatus* begins to appear with regularity. As mentioned above, the preferred habitat appears to be dry, scrubby rainforest and creek beds, noticeably at low to moderate altitudes and at some distance from the coast. By far the greatest number of plants I know of occur in plantation hoop pines in the Sunshine Coast and Noosa Hinterland. It frequently colonises the lower limbs of the older plantings . . . as do a host of other native orchids.

I first observed this feature of plantation hoop pines back in November 1989. On a subsequent visit to these areas in January 1993, I set out to check out as much of this man made habitat as I could in one day. I finished the day having logged in 600 kms and with the view that *S. dilatatus* is benefiting greatly from the activities of the forest industry in southern Queensland. I could never forget the sight of a dozen or so of the hugest specimen plants of this species that I have ever come across, sitting smugly about four metres above my head. Several of these were hanging off dead limbs.

One in particular supported seventeen leaves and over fifty old racemes. As well, there were eleven new racemes nearly ready to burst into bloom. The plant was on its last legs when collected and unfortunately it never recovered. I kept the dead trophy for years to show all the sceptics just how huge *S. dilatatus* can get.

I was shocked when visiting the same locale in January 1995, and found about twenty hectares of ploughed up clay and not a stick of shade for hundreds of metres around. It resembled a bombing range. I agree with the need for a forest industry based on plantations but I don't know how to deal with the idea of letting thousands of orchids perish in the rubble piles after the inevitable harvesting takes place. It makes sense that any plants growing in such forest coups should be rescued before they are killed . . . regardless of how rare or how common a species they are.

A discussion on *S. dilatatus* could not be concluded without mentioning the form that occurs up near Gladstone (Qld) and at points further inland and up into the Calliope Range. This form of the species first came to my attention when I journeyed up there in September 1992. We found this little Sarc that had just finished flowering by a matter of days. For the life of us we could not decide what species it was. What would be flowering in the middle of winter?

The southern Queensland form of *S. dilatatus* blooms from November through to January i.e. summer. So although these new plants looked like *S. dilatatus*, we discounted the idea because of this six month discrepancy in the flowering time. After all, it is only four hours car drive to the north of the type range.

Of course, it is now well known that this ponderous species is indeed *S. dilatatus*, but with a very different habit and appearance. The flowers are much dumpier or stout, being only about one cm high compared to southern flowers which can reach 2.5 cms deep. The colour is the other outstanding feature of these Gladstone plants. The club-like ends of the segments are strongly cerise/ochre brown in nearly all the specimens I've seen in flower, while the southern colour varies from yellow through to coffee brown and as dark as treacle brown. A large specimen in full bloom is absolutely stunning.

S. dilatatus can get up to a dozen buds on each raceme. But this doesn't mean that there will be a dozen open flowers at any given time. It is the habit of *S. dilatatus* to open progressively, but certainly not regularly. While two flowers may be open today, these might wilt away after a few days. It could be up to ten days or so before the

next one or two buds open. This irregularity means that a specimen plant can have flowers on board for a long period of time. If the weather is not too hot or changeable, each flower can last up to two weeks.

For its size *S. dilatatus* usually has an above average number of racemes. A plant with only 3 leaves often has two or three racemes. All this irregularity means that hybrids made with *S. dilatatus* usually have the same unpredictable flowering habit and blooms can open up over an extended period compared to other *Sarcanthinae* hybrids.

If you want to grow *S. dilatatus* successfully you must consider where it grows in nature and transfer that knowledge across to the bush house. The big choice you must make is what host to tie your plants on to. My favourite host at the moment is two cm thick branches, about forty cms long, of that very common *Leptospermum* species (the common name for *Leptospermum* is 'tea tree') that has to be nearly the most common tree on the dry ridge tops of the Hawkesbury Sandstone regions. As you can probably gather, I don't remember what species it is. But it's the one with the wide and thin flaky bark that peels away in masses when pulled even slightly. This bark is usually a grey colour with just a hint of purple. Do you know the one I mean?

The roots get under this bark and it is very hard to overwater them. This saves many a plant of *S. dilatatus* and the other quick-die species such as *S. australis*. In fact I've got several specimens of *S. australis* still growing happily on this *Leptospermum* host after more than five years. I attribute this success solely to the dryness that the roots find under the copious layers of this ti-tree bark. You virtually can't wet them unless you set out to do so. Of course it helps to hang them up in some corner where you don't water them anyway. *S. dilatatus* is one of those species best hung up and forgotten.

Speaking of roots, those of *S. dilatatus* are perhaps the most active of all the *Sarcochilus* species. They are constantly growing - I doubt there is a time in the year when they don't have long green tips probing their way along through the fissures and layers of bark. I've seen wild plants of fairly small size with just a few roots but a couple of them can be pushing a metre in length without any doubt.

Wild plants often carry a great number of seed pods. More than once I've observed plants with 6 or 8 pods from last season still not split despite this year's blooms just opening. To me these pods are just as interesting as the flowers themselves. They represent vigour and fertility that is often absent from some other species of native orchids. For the novice grower, specimen plants of *S. dilatatus* are just not available. Hopefully it will be available more frequently in flasks in the future. It sure deserves to be."

Now a brief note to all members : please don't all rush out to try and buy a *Sarc dilatatus*. You must know by now that Bill could grow leaves on a broom handle and there are only a few orchid growers who can do that.

Bill, you have a beautiful orchid there and thank you for sharing it with us at our meeting. It was a pleasure to see it.

The Serious Business of Health and Weight Loss

- * Tofu is a great diet food, but many find that the best way to prepare it is throw it in the trash and grill some meat.
- * Cardio workouts are a great way to keep fit and manage your weight. Do you know that this morning I did a week's worth of cardio after walking into a spider web in the garden.
- * I don't mean to brag, but this week I finished my 14-day diet in 3 hours and 20 minutes.
- * A recent study has found that women who carry a little extra weight live longer (than the men who mention it).

Lemons

The woman applying for a job in a lemon orchard in Queensland, seemed to be far too qualified for the job; given her arts and education degrees from a Melbourne University and her previous job as a social worker and a teacher at the local TAFE college. The foreman frowned and said, "*I have to ask you this:* "Have you had any actual experience in picking lemons?"

"Well, as a matter of fact, I have!" she said, "I've been divorced three times, owned a Ford station wagon, a Leyland P76, supported Collingwood the last 4 years, voted for Julia Gillard and bought shares in Dick Smith P/L."

The Ventriloquist

A young ventriloquist is touring Sweden and, one night, he's doing a show in a small fishing town. With his dummy on his knee, he starts going through his customary dumb-blonde jokes.

Suddenly, a blonde woman in the fourth row stands on her chair and starts shouting, "I've heard enough of your stupid blonde jokes. What makes you think you can stereotype Swedish blonde women that way? What does the color of a woman's hair have to do with her worth as a human being? It's men like you who keep women like me from being respected at work and in the community, and from reaching our full potential as people. It's people like you that make others think that all blondes are dumb! You and your kind continue to perpetuate discrimination against not only Blondes, but women in general . . . and pathetically, all in the name of humor!

When the embarrassed ventriloquist begins to apologize, the blonde shouts . . . "You stay out of this! I'm talking to that little hypocrite on your lap!"