



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

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**Next Meeting :** Monday, 17<sup>th</sup> July, 2017

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

The **Main meeting commences at 8pm** and there will be **no Culture Class or Guest Speaker** this month because we will be celebrating the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Society. **See page 2 for more details.**

Our **supper volunteers** for July are **Kitt Reyes** and **Lisa Harris**. We thank you for your help ladies.

**Best of Evening Open Hybrid – RLC Dream Trader ‘Colossus’** - grown by **Gloria and Alan Cushway**

Holy Moly Batman, now that is a big, flat, show winning orchid. About 20cm across I would say.

Dream Trader was created by Gregory Williams from Rockhampton in Qld. but was registered by Ross Maidment of Aranbeem Orchids in 1990. The cross is RLC Sylvia Fry x Cattleya Horace and it would hard to find two more famous names in Cattleya history than these.

The more modern of the two parents is RLC Sylvia Fry which was registered way back in 1966. At least a dozen clones have been awarded with everything from an HCC to an FCC. It looks similar to Dream Trader but was perhaps a touch more compact and rounded in shape. In its awards, it measured from 16 to 18cm diameter.



Horace was registered way back in 1938 and must have been a sensation in its day. It has 6 awards up to an AM, 5 of which belong to the one clone “Maxima”, which in one award measured 19cm across. It is a mix of 6 different Cattleya species, the last one added being Catt. trianae which represents 50% of its genes. Horace ‘Maxima’ was a huge, round, well balanced pink flower in the same colours as Dream Trader. It was a massive improvement in classic hybrid Cattleyas of the time. It is at the core of a massive range of hybrids. It is the direct parent in 261 (f1) hybrid crosses and is in the parentage of over 1695 crosses.

Dream Trader itself has been a direct parent in 38 crosses, which is a lot considering it is relatively recent, and I would guess it still has more to come for a while yet. And what a stunner it looked at our meeting. It was grown and presented beautifully by Gloria and Allan. What a difference there is between what this same orchid would look like when grown and presented by, for example ... me, and what real pro specialists can do, ... well chalk and cheese.

Later in this newsletter we have a very informative article on Garrie Bromleys talk at our last meeting, which give us all the basic tenets required to get Cattleyas growing properly, but I wonder if we can ever convince Gloria to talk to us one night on taking that extra step to grow orchids like these closer to their real potential. I am sure Gloria thinks it is easy and nothing to get excited about, but she really has the touch. Please think about it Gloria. We need you.

Congratulations on your Best of the Evening Allan and Gloria. I really love to see these orchids grown so well. They not only give us the thrill of seeing something of outstanding beauty, It gives us a standard to which we can aspire.

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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. Our annual Photographic Competition last meeting** – There were 13 entries in our photographic competition last month and they were all of wonderful quality. We have some real ‘artistes’ among us at Kuringai. Not just lovely orchids but very creative presentation as well. Well done to everyone who participated – a wonderful display.

The winner was Jenny Richardson with her picture of *Thelymitra ixioides* that she calls “Sun Kissed Freckles”, Second was Bob Ellis with his close up of the lip and column of a *Schombocattleya* - titled “April Showers”, and third was Jennie again with a picture of a beautiful little local terrestrial native orchid *Calochilus paludosus*. You can see why this genera are colloquially called “Beardies”. Jenny gave this picture the name “Dumbledore Reincarnated” - very creative don’t you think? The pictures are featured on page 6 of the bulletin.

**2. 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations** – the arrangements at our July meeting will be a display of society memorabilia in the foyer, the hall, and the back room. There will be some fascinating items on display. We hope that you will all find plenty to take you back to those years gone by and talk about the ways things were done and compare them to today.

There will be no guest speaker on the night, so once we break for supper, there will be an extended break to allow members to socialise and to enjoy the memorabilia. We need to ensure there is a good supply of food to “browse” and sample. The Society will be supplying some sandwiches, pavlovas, cheesecakes, and a number of other items, but as per our usual supper break, we are asking the members who attend to help us out by also providing a plate of something extra to add to the variety and volume. A few members have already volunteered specific items but if anyone has a good idea for something special, perhaps something savoury, that they would like to bring, we would love to see it. Why not use your imagination and impress us with your skills.

Just one request – to make sure we don’t all bring the same thing, could you please phone Pauline Onslow on 9477 3516 to outline what you would like to supply. Pauline is going to coordinate the overall supply to try and ensure we get a satisfactory variety. Lets all just come along and have a pleasant, easy going night and enjoy ourselves.

**3. Mingara is now over for another year** – The Royale and Mingara weekend is just over, and what a great weekend it was. Fantastic orchids to admire, lots of great stuff to poke through to find that rare species or that next Champion of the Show somewhere, and all those other mad orchid growers to chat to, swap yarns, to boast to, and to learn from. I bet you all came away with great memories and some new treasures to play with. **But --** now you can start planning - **for the biggest orchid fair in Sydney – The St Ives Orchid Fair.**

**4. St Ives Orchid Fair - We are one of the 4 clubs that run the fair, and we also put on one of the displays in the display hall. We need your support and your help with both tasks.**

(a) **The Volunteers Roster** – at the July meeting we will again pass around rosters asking for helpers to man the Fair. Please, every member should put their name down for at least one 3½ hour shift. If you do a shift, you get to wander the show free of charge for the rest of the day. We need people to do security in both halls, help on the sales table, and people to help at the front doors. The roster managers will allocate you to where they need you, but, if for example, you have a problem standing up for that long, let them know and we will accommodate your needs.

**Bear in mind, this is a three day event and we need your help all three days. Be realistic.**

(b) **Plants for our display** - I know that many of our members also belong to other societies. Many traditionally support another society and we understand that, **but can we ask you at least find a couple of plants for us as well?** **Set up day is Thursday and we need both flowers and foliage. They need to be there by 9am Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> Aug.**

For members who have trouble getting their plants to the show, we have some capacity to transport them for you but if you can get them there yourself it is very helpful. The set up team is being led by Cynthia Brydie. If you need help with transport, please phone Trevor on 9477 3516 to see what arrangements can be made.

(c) **When you are displaying orchids, we need you to fill in a “nomination form” (supplied with this bulletin).** It is a simple sheet to record your name, and the names of your orchids, to ensure that we know who owns which plants when they are judged. You never know, you may even win a prize, and **the form makes sure we know who to give the money to.** A copy of the Nom. form will also be sent to you with the August bulletin.

(d) **You also need to mark each orchid pot clearly with your name or initials** so that after the show it comes back to you. Sometimes the pull down process on Sunday is a mad-house. Labelled pots help us sort it out quickly.

(e) **Grooming your plants** - Show off your plants to their best. Please trim off dead or badly damaged leaves, and stake the flowers as they develop to ensure they stand up properly and face the viewer as best you can.

## **Diary Dates 2017**

\* Thurs 20 to Sat 22 July – NSOS show, Gordon shopping centre, Gordon, shopping hours.

\* 11-13 Aug (fri/sat/sun), National Orchid Extravaganza (Cymbidiums), The Centre - 1 Pellitt Lane, Dural (Entry off Pellitt Lane Dural. This is a great show with many interstate sales stalls. Put it on your calendar.

\* 18-20 (fri/sat/sun), August 2017 - St Ives Orchid Fair - St Ives Showground – **“the Biggest one of all”**

\* 8 Sept (fri) – Kuringai Orchid Society stall at Knox Grammar School Spring Festival

\* 22-25 Sept (Thursday to Saturday), the combined Berowra and Kuringai Orchid society’s show at Hornsby

**Best of the Evening Species – Laelia anceps ‘Caitlin’** grown by *Garrie and Lesley Bromley*



This is certainly a very, very nice form of *Laelia anceps*, but after writing it up the same species the past two months, I’m afraid it serves no purpose to repeat the message and I have not much more I can tell you.

‘Caitlin’ was awarded an AM (83.4 points) under the AOS (Australian Orchid Council) awards system, in 2006, so it is acknowledged as a high class flower. From my point of view however, it happens to be one of those with a long, whippy, 1metre plus, arching inflorescence, which detracts somewhat from its appeal. Garrie tells me that he acquired it when the P&R Orchid Nursery at Port which has since closed down. It was a lovely nursery that many of us used to love to visit. Its closing was a sad time.

Congratulations Garrie. A truly high class orchid and beautifully grown as usual.

**Best of the Evening Novice ??????**

Well how about that. For the first time in a very long time there was not a single Novice orchid benched. Hence there is no BOE Novice this month. So what happened Novices? I hope it doesn’t happen again too soon.

**Jim’s Choice – Isochilus** - As there was no Best of the Evening Novice this month, and there was a really cute little plant of one of my favourites - *Isochilus aurantiacus*, benched at our June meeting, I thought I would tell you about the genus *Isochilus*.

*Isochilus* is a genus of about 13 species found from the middle of Central America, to the top half of South America, and in the Caribbean. However, despite the genus containing 13 species, the only two I have ever seen in Australia are the purple/mauve *linearis* and the orange - *aurantiacus*.

*Isochilus* are from the Epidendreae tribe and many experts place the genus in the Laeliinae subtribe, which would make them related to *Cattleya* and *Laelia* etc, but over the years there have been debates about whether some of these oddball, fringe Laeliinae genera such as *Isochilus* and *Scaphyglottis*, which have a distinct column foot, really belong in Laeliinae. Some experts still separate them into another subtribe - Ponerinae. Now I know this sounds a bit overly technical, but the relevance to us ordinary growers is that it seems ridiculous to bench them with the *Laelias* and *Cattleyas*, and I think they should go in “Misc. American Species”.

*Isochilus* all look rather similar, with very thin stems covered with stem hugging persistent leaves on the upper two thirds. The effect is a pleasantly leafy, almost reed like plant. The flowers are quite small but appear in tight close set clusters along just the outer few centimetres of the stem. Plants may grow as either an epiphyte or lithophyte (rock surfaces), or even as a terrestrial. They have a creeping rhizome along whatever surface they are growing on/in and can become close set dense mats. They tend to grow in humid, shady, well watered conditions and in cultivation take well to a pot provided it is moist but well draining. Both come from moderate elevations (*linearis* 300-3900m but usually around 2000m – and *aurantiacus* 1500-2600m). They are both found in much of Central America, with the range of *linearis* extending down into South America as far as Argentina on the east coast, and Peru in the west.

I have grown both species quite happily in the shadehouse. I also tried *aurantiacus* in the warm glasshouse for a while and it grew well enough there as well. These are a pair of species well worth a place in your growing arena.



close up of *aurantiacus* - Ron Parsons



*Isochilus linearis* close up



*Isochilus linearis* in nature

## Notes from Garrie's talk on repotting a Cattleya - Garrie Bromley

There is no hard and fast rule as to how and when to repot orchids - the choice should depend on the condition of the orchid and your own situation. However as a general rule, one would repot if the orchid has out grown its pot, and/or when there are signs that the orchid is entering its active growing phase again (ie when there are signs of new roots appearing).

Prior to removing the plant from its pot, you need to do some pre-planning, namely having your growing medium ready and that any tools to be used must be sterilized. The growing medium will vary from grower to grower and I've tried and used all forms. Most growers use bark, medium to coarse grade, or a combination of both mixed with charcoal (4 parts bark to 1 part charcoal). When using bark it should be clean, fresh, and soaked in water prior to using. The medium I use is a Peat and Perlite mix of **6 parts of Perlite** (jumbo or coarse) to **1 part of Lithuanian peat moss**, to **2 parts of finely chopped or crumbled up styrene foam**, mixed well together. The mix should be slightly damp.

**All tools being used should be clean, sterilized and sharp.** The best and easiest way to sterilize your tools is to make up a saturated solution of a product called Tricleanium, available from most Hardware stores as a wall wash. Keep adding Tricleanium to warm water until the crystals stop dissolving. Then, stand your tools in it for at least 15 minutes. I use a 3 container process for cleaning my tools. The first is just water, to wash off excess plant and potting mix material from the cutters (which prolongs the life of the Tricleanium solution), the second is the saturated solution of Tricleanium to sterilize the tools, and the third is water again, to rinse the Tricleanium off to preserve the tools before cutting the orchid.

Removing the orchid from a pot can be hard at times. A good way is to soak it in water for about 30 minutes and then gently pry any roots off the outside and from the bottom of the pot and then squeeze around the pot to loosen any roots stuck to the inside. Once this is done you should be able to tap and or push the pot away from the plant. With the plant out of the pot, cut off the lower half of the root ball and divide the plant ready to repot into it's new pot (or pots) and fresh growing medium.

When dividing a plant you should have at least 3 growths on the division to be potted up. Some pseudobulbs may not even have leaves if the plant is in poor condition. Cut off and remove any dead parts from the plant, and with an old tooth brush, brushing in an upwards direction, brush off any old sheaths etc. Then tease out the roots on the division to be potted. The size of the pot to be used for the new division should be about a third larger than the plant root ball, and should have very good drainage, eg the 'Port Pots' available on our sales table.

Half fill the pot with the selected growing medium and then place the new division on top with its roots spread out over the medium (this will help the new division to be stable when repotted) and continue to add the medium until the pot is filled. As you add the medium, work it in around the roots and firmly push in. To give the plant stability until its new roots grow out into the growing medium, you should stake it using two ties per stake one top and one bottom. To kick start the new division, sprinkle a small amount of dolomite over the top of the pot and water it in.

*Note : When using the Perlite mix as a growing medium, it will be necessary to put a layer of small stones over the top to prevent it from being washed away when the pot is watered. (about pea sized pebbles).*

Now that you have completed the repotting, write out any new plant labels so that each pot has a label. You can do this with a fine water proof marker pen or a good quality HB grade pencil. One brand I recommend is the "Stabilo aquarellable 8008 black pencil". On each label write the full correct name of the plant on the front, and on the back - the date it was repotted and any other information that is relevant.

The success of your repotting is now out of your hands, as the forces of nature take over. The plant then goes back on the bench and receives the regular weekly, ¼ strength solution of liquid fertilizer, and then watch it really start to grow into a plant that will love you for ever.

### **Some useful hints :**

1. Any plant that you have identified or suspect to have a virus, should be disposed of in your household garbage bin.
2. To control insects including mealy bug, aphids, red spider mite and the Dendrobium beetle on your plants, you can use a normal household flying insect spray. I use "Mortein Fly and Mosquito Killer Odourless" in a red can.
3. For the various scale insects, I use a mix of white oil & pyrethrum. I prefer this to Canola based oils like Eco Oil.

*Aeroguard is quite effective to kill young and established weeds that start to appear in your pots. Especially that fleshy rooted, broad leafed pest with little white flowers that is impossible to pull out of the pot because its roots weave themselves in and around the orchid medium. The Aeroguard will kill the leafy part of the weed and although they may sprout again, if you spray again each time they reshoot, you will eventually succeed. Just one warning however, some orchids like Sarcophilus and Promenaea, and especially fresh soft growths, may be burnt by the Aerosol. Make sure you test it on one part of one plant first, and don't hold the Aerosol can too close to the plant when you spray.*

**Corybas pruinosus** —‘toothed helmet orchid’ by Anthony Lowe and Shirley Hilton

*Introduction by Jim Brydie : Tony Lowe, the editor of the ANOS Newcastle bulletin, produced this delightful article on Corybas pruinosus, for their June bulletin, and has agreed to let me reproduce it for you. It includes some very useful tips from the grower Shirley Hilton, for those who would like to try and grow it. And boy can she grow it.*

*Corybas pruinosus* is one species in a group of approximately 120, covering parts of Australia, New Zealand PNG and into S/E Asia. (additional note from JB: In Australia there are different numbers of species depending on which source you consult. David Jones wonderful book “Native Orchids of Australia” says there are 6 species endemic to Australia but he regards some of the species that most still call *Corybas*, as now being in the related genus *Corysanthes*, including the main subject of this article, *Corybas pruinosus*. He may well prove to be correct, but for the present, I must say that I still prefer to keep calling it a *Corybas*.)

*Corybas pruinosus* can be found along the eastern seaboard of NSW and the adjacent ranges, between Patterson (just north of Newcastle) and Moruya, with some large colonies found around the Nelson Bay area.

This fine specimen pot of *corybas pruinosus* was grown by Kevin and Shirley Hilton. When asked for a little on some of the practices she and Kevin employed, she said “to not complicate things, look at what nature does and keep it simple”. In their many walks observing this orchid Shirley noted that it was easy to see that the stronger looking plants grew where there was a better water supply, e.g. on the edges of roadside drains leading to the bush. Based on this knowledge, Shirley will often water a little more, even around periods of rain.

In caring for the species, because of the size and nature of the plant, Shirley feeds this very little, using something organic. Typically a cow manure or ‘Seasol’ drenching, and further on the organic theme, she sprinkles some crumbled up, very dry, Bracken fern leaves over the surface of the mix. In addition to acting as a mulch, Shirley thinks it may help encourage the kinds of soil fungi that many terrestrial orchids depend on as part of their growing cycle.

As to replicating the colony appearance, Shirley leaves her tubers in the pot for a longer period of time. The pot above could be around 7 years since it was last repotted. Repotting less, minimises disturbances and allows the plants to better populate the pot, but this may only be possible as a result of Shirley’s unusual approach to the medium in which she grows them. She doesn’t use a commercial potting mix based medium, she pots them in natural soils from as near to the area in which they were growing in nature as possible. She describes the soil as rather unproductive looking, and a bit crumbly in nature. To this she adds some of her own garden soil which has received regular cultivation over the years and the addition of cow manure etc. I imagine this garden soil would be quite humus rich and fertile, and to that mix she adds a little coarse sand. She uses well drained pots but places some fine mesh in the bottom to make sure the mix and plants don’t get out the drain holes, and before potting, puts a layer of small stones etc in the bottom. I can only guess, but I suspect that such a medium would gradually form its own mini ‘soil profile’ in the pot, to establish a naturally aerated habitat for the roots.

*JB Footnote: Corybas are cute little terrestrial species with underground tubers. In Australia there are one or two species from north Qld which may be difficult to grow but the species from NSW and south, are quite amenable to culture. Not as easy as Pterostylis perhaps, but grow-able if you are willing to set your mind to it. However, please do not take this to mean all Corybas can be cultivated. Some, including some of the most stunning looking species from PNG and Asia, are only found in tropical areas and grow only in the unique tropical environments in which they are found. For example, in thick mosses in tropical rainforests.*

*Some of the other species you can grow, and might like to try, are diemenicus, aconitiflorus, hispidus, and fimbriatus. All Corybas grow in moist, generally sheltered environments, so one of the problems encountered when benching a nice flowering pot full, is that the flowers tend to dry out badly under the lights at an orchid society meetings unless they are covered with some kind of glass dome or a terrarium. It is not difficult to do, but it can be awkward.*



diemenicus



aconitiflorus



hispidus



fimbriatus



fimbriatus, darker form

## The Photo Competition



1<sup>st</sup> *Thelymitra ixioides* 'Sun Kissed Freckles' (Jenny Richardson)



2<sup>nd</sup> *Schombocattleya* 'April Showers' (Bob Ellis)



3<sup>rd</sup> *Calochilus paludosus* 'Dumbledore Reincarnated'  
(Jenny Richardson)

### A little bit about the subjects

Perhaps I could start with Bob's *Schombocattleya* artwork, even though it was placed 2<sup>nd</sup>. The reason is that both of the others are related local Australian native terrestrials and I would like to comment on them together.

A *Schombocattleya* is a hybrid containing both *Schomburgkia* species and *Cattleya* species. *Schomburgkia* is a genus of *Cattleya* like orchids that generally come from warm, exposed locations, often in full sun on trees or rocks, often in low, dry forests along rivers. They generally have a long bare spike, similar to *Laelia anceps*, but with a ball like cluster of flowers at the end. In Bob's picture, at first I thought the name April Showers came from Bob's interpretation of the lovely markings in the lip, but the name is actually a registered hybrid so perhaps it is the plants name. But, whoever gave it the name must have been inspired by those amazing lines.

Jenny's two pictures wonderfully capture the hidden wonders of Australia's terrestrial orchids. The blue *Thelymitra* species, is from a genus known as the Sun Orchids because the flowers only open in response to the warmth of the sun and usually close again

at night. They are seasonal growers and have a short deciduous period each year where the above ground part of the plant dies away, and the under ground tuber waits for the season change that will enable them to repeat their annual cycle of growth (grow, flower, seed, then die back to a tuber again). They are found from Qld. to Tasmania and are common around the sparse Eucalypt heathland areas around Sydney. They seem to prefer locations with a moist, sandy, well drained soil and where the base of the plant will be protected by surrounding grasses and shrubs, but the flowers can reach the sun.

The other picture, the 'Beardie', is most likely *Calochilus paludosus*, which can be found from Qld to Tasmania and also across into Sth. Aust. They occur in similar habitats to the *Thelymitra*, but generally in slightly more shaded locations. The magnificent beard is a collection of hairs (calli, or non secreting glands) that are most likely involved in mimicry associated with pollination. Although many *Calochilus* are self pollinating, others are pollinated by male wasps tricked into thinking the flower is a female wasp. Unfortunately, these stunning flowers only last a few days.

Neither *Thelymitra* or *Calochilus* are real prospects for artificial cultivation so don't bother digging them up, but they make fantastic photo subjects don't you think?.