



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

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## Next Meeting : Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2017

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

The **Culture Class** this month (7.15pm) will be **Cary Polis** who will talk about Vandaceous orchids, the how, the where, the which medium, and the why about all of the above. Wow, perhaps we should have reserved this one for a main meeting topic. Cary is a hugely experienced grower and a great speaker. I think this is an opportunity you shouldn't miss. Get in early for a front row seat.

The **Main meeting commences at 8pm**. Our guest speaker this month is Garrie Bromley presenting a talk that one of our old members, Dave Butler, put together on **Modern Trends in Breeding Sarcochilus orchids**. David is one of the top Sarcochilus breeders in Australia and has been at the forefront of many of the breakthroughs such as breeding reds and yellows. This is a very interesting talk. Dave doesn't like to travel at night any more but Garrie is a great professional presenter and does this one well. Don't miss it.

Our **supper volunteers** for February are **Mary Mathews** and **Janet Snodgrass**. We can only thank you.

## Best of Evening Species – Epidendrum paniculatum? - grown by Chris Nidagal



The word panicle means "a much branched compound inflorescence, often of pyramidal shape", so paniculatum means that this Epidendrum has a panicle shaped inflorescence. As you might imagine, so do many others and it may turn out to be just one of a group of 6 or more closely related species – all with similar flowers, and similar panicles.

The species most recently determined to be *E. paniculatum* is found in wet tropical forests in Peru at elevations between 1700 and 2800 metres. However, the pictures in Jay Pfahl's Internet Orchid Species Photo Encyclopedia show slightly different looking flowers to this one of Chris's. Jay tells us that taxonomist Eric Hagsater has undertaken a great revision of this species complex and he has separated out 6 species throughout the larger *E. paniculatum* subgroup range. The picture at the right is what he says Hagsater uses to illustrate his species concept. Its flowers are a little more elongate and have a bit of colour in the lip.



So what is the green and white one you may ask? Well I can't tell you. I still call it paniculatum. The Baker's species description in Orchidwiz says the species is found in Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, and Brazil, at elevations varying between 250m and 2550m. It would seem likely that this is describing a complex of species. What I can tell you is that I have a green and white paniculatum like Chris's and I can tell you I found it on a fallen branch along a riverbank in northern Peru. There were many of these species growing on trees along a wide flat riverbed with practically no water in it, although, I suspect that the river probably carried a lot of water at other times of the year. The trees were low and arching out over the riverbed but the Epidendrums would have been high enough to stay safe during flood periods. These plants only grow to about 50cm high so they don't sound like Hagsater's description.

Whatever it is Chris, we both like it. A really lovely species. Congratulations on your Best of the Evening.

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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. Bark Order** – We have a new Bark Order running. You know the deal, we buy one bulk pallet of 40 bags, delivered to Sydney from South Australia. We order a mixture of the grades you ask for (coarse, medium, fine, Cymbidium etc). We only place the order when ‘member orders’ reach the full 40 bag total.

If you need bags of fresh bark to pot up your orchids, please contact Ann Byron (9449 6860) to place your requests. We can’t define the price exactly just yet but it should be around \$27 for bark and about \$21 for Cymbid mix.

Don’t delay your requests, the 40 bag total fills quickly and once the 40 limit is reached, that’s it.

**2. New Members** – **John Chang** has just joined our society, and **Kitt Reyes** has expanded her membership to include her husband **Antonio Reyes**. Welcome aboard gentlemen, I hope you enjoy our club.

**3. Chinese Dinner** – All right people. We have talked long enough. There is a society dinner on at the Eastern City Chinese Restaurant, Pennant Hills, on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> April and the Society is subsidising the meal \$10 a head. We haven’t finalised the arrangement yet so I can’t tell you the exact cost but we are planning a banquet dinner. The cost is expected to be \$30 to \$35 per person so with your society \$10 subsidy your cost should be less than \$25. That does not cover drinks however, you will have to pay for those separately.

If you would like to come, please see Angie at the next meeting to book a place, or email at [anglyle@hotmail.com](mailto:anglyle@hotmail.com)

**4. Ken Russell speaking at Berowra** – on thurs 16 March very popular speaker Ken is coming down from Dungog to tell us about the culture of Cym canaliculatum. Berowra meet at the community centre, The Gully Rd, Berowra.

**5. Membership Fees** – annual fees are due members, 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.

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 (see attached). 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.**

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**Diary Dates 2017**

- \* Sun 19 March – MWOS public orchid auction, Cromer Community Centre, 150 Fisher Rd Nth, Cromer. Starts 9am
- \* Fri 24 to Sun 26 Mar - Royale Orchids Open days. 70 Brieses Rd, Peats Ridge
- \* Fri 31 Mar – Sat 1 Apr - Castle Hill Orchid Fair - Castle Hill Showground
- \* 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 the Evening Hybrid – Dendrobium Masako Taki - grown by (G & L Bromley)**



Another one of those beautiful hardcane Dendrobiums that Garrie grows so well. Where does he get them all?

Masako Taki is a cross registered by the Chao Phraya Orchid Nursery in Thailand in 1999. The parents are Den Halawa Beauty and Den Lois Anderson. Have any of you heard of either of those? That’s the trouble with these hybrid hardcanes in our geographic area. Garrie and few others here in Sydney might keep up with their hybrid lines, but these aren’t a popular orchid in our town. They are spectacular in flower but you need a heated glasshouse to grow them and they just aren’t for everyone. They are a product of the tropics where are popular as a backyard plant that produces a big showy display and where the flowers are relatively long lasting.

Blue is a hugely popular colour in orchids and Masako Taki is another step along the line breeders have been following to improve the colour intensity and flower shape in blue hardcanes. It is a paler blue than its parent Hawaii Nui, but perhaps slightly more full in shape. I can’t find a picture of the other parent Lois Anderson but have pictures of its parents Halawi Beauty and the species *D. phalaenopsis*, and the blue breeding certainly doesn’t come from there.



**Masako Taki**



**Hawaii Nui**



**Halawa Beauty**

Masako Taki has a fantastic spike and is a beautiful orchid. It just isn’t for everyone in Sydney town. Congratulations on yet another “Best of the Evening” Garrie and Lesley. Thank you for sharing them with us, we enjoy seeing them.

## **Best of the Evening Novice – Phalaenopsis unknown (Lina Huang)**

Yet another quality Phally of unknown origin. You don't need me to go over the reasons we see so many of these. Lets just enjoy the lovely, quality house-plant that they make.

Phallys are a lovely orchid. They were once regarded as specialist plants, only for the best, most experienced growers with a heated glasshouse, but now we understand them better. They are easily grown as a house plant provided you are careful with their medium and your watering. The warmth of your house or flat is sufficient to protect them from the cold in winter.

Cynthia and I have tried a variety of potting mediums but we find that sphagnum moss with the addition of a bit of crumbled styrene foam works best for us. It is a bit wet after watering but soon dries to a better level of moisture and holds it for a nice period of time. By watering with a pair of spray bottles (one with plain water, another with dilute fertiliser) you can keep the orchid moist and fed at just the right levels. All you need then is a table/shelf near a nice bright window on which to sit them, and you will easily keep a supermarket Phally going for months.

When the flowers finally reach the end of their life, and they must of course, you have a decision to make. As Garrie Bromley told us last meeting, you can cut back the top of the spike to just above one of the nodes and let it produce a secondary shoot. However, I find these second chance flower shoots disappointing. They generally produce fewer, smaller flowers and the side growth delays the restart of vegetative growth. I prefer to cut the spike off completely, right down near the base, and (provided the season allows) put the plant back in the greenhouse where I grow it until it produces a new flower spike. As soon as I notice a Phally with a spike starting, I take it back up to the house and Cynthia grows it into flower and on, until we cut the spike off again.

I find that the plants are renewed by a spell in the greenhouse. You can grow them permanently in the house if you wish but the greenhouse is admittedly a better growing environment. Not a mandatory requirement, but neither to be ignored if it is available. My only problem with growing in the greenhouse is that if I leave the plant and the spike to develop in there, some damn bug or snail always manages to chew off the spike before the flowers open. Phally spikes must be very tasty.

Congratulations on your Best of the Evening Lina. Well done.

## **Important Human Facts**

1. Men have 2 core motivations - hunger and hanky panky, and they can't tell them apart. If you see a gleam in his eyes, make him a sandwich.
2. Give a person a fish and you feed them for a day. Teach a person to use the Internet and they won't bother you for weeks, months, maybe years.
3. Health nuts are going to feel really stupid someday, lying in the hospital, dying of nothing.
4. In the 60's, people took LSD to make the world weird. Now the world is weird, people take Prozac to make it seem normal.
5. Life is like a jar of jalapeno peppers. What you do today may be a burning issue tomorrow
6. Life is sexually transmitted, and good health is merely the slowest possible rate at which one can die

## **Deaf Wife Problem**

Bert feared that his wife Peg wasn't hearing as well as she used to and he thought she might need a hearing aid. Not quite sure how to approach her, he called the family Doctor to discuss the problem. The Doctor told him that there was a simple, informal test the husband could perform to give the Doctor a better idea about her hearing loss. 'Here is what you do,' said the Doctor, 'stand about 40 feet away from her, and in a normal conversational speaking tone see if she hears you. If not, go to 30 feet, then 20 feet, and so on until you get a response.'

That evening, the wife is in the kitchen cooking dinner. He says to himself, 'I'm about 40 feet away, let's see what happens.' Then in a normal tone he asks, 'Honey, what's for dinner?' No response. So the husband moves closer to the kitchen, about 30 feet from his wife and repeats, 'Peg, what's for dinner?' Still no response. Next he moves into the dining room where he is about 20 feet from his Wife and asks, 'Honey, what's for dinner?' Again he gets no response. So, he walks up to the kitchen door, about 10 feet away. 'Honey, what's for dinner?' Again there is no response.

So he walks right up behind her and calls loudly: 'Peg, what's for dinner?' And finally, he hears a reply - 'For goodness sake, Bert, for the FIFTH time, CHICKEN!'



## ***Sarcochilus ceciliae* - How I grow them and what little I know about them. by Alex Wild**

(My first thanks for the following article go to Anthony Lowe, the editor of the Newcastle ANOS bulletin because that is where I saw it, but it was originally published in the Geelong ANOS bulletin. I have reproduced it here with the kind permission of the originators Alex Wild, and Neil Anderton the Geelong President and Editor.)

Alex opened his talk by commenting that he has been growing *Sarcochilus ceciliae* for nigh on 30 years, and during that time he had killed too many of them. That surely, Alex claimed, made him an expert - at killing them!

Given these credentials, he felt that he was in a good position to pass on what he had learnt by trial and error (with the emphasis on error) to help others to NOT kill their *Sarc ceciliae*



Some of the *Sarcochilus ceciliae* that survived to this day (despite his past misguided efforts)

Alex went on to show us some of his *S. ceciliae* collection, and showed some of the colour variations you can expect. They typically have pale to mid-pink flowers, but there are alba forms and some that are dark pink.



Colour is typically pink, but darker and alba forms are also found

Alex views *S. ceciliae* as a complex of three species:

- *Sarcochilus ceciliae* – most of us know this one.
- *Sarcochilus eriochilus* – most obviously distinguished by its smaller flowers and thinner leaves.
- *Sarcochilus roseus* – Alex doesn't know what these are, despite the fact that several of his plants were labelled as *S. roseus* when he bought them.
- *Sarcochilus ceciliae* flowers are around 12mm in diameter, whereas *Sarcochilus Eriochilus* flowers are around 6mm in diameter

For Alex, the differences are only academic, he grows them all the same.

Alex doesn't have a dedicated shadehouse for his *S. ceciliae* - he grows most of his *S. ceciliae* in pots on a shelf bolted to the west wall of his house in Altona. There they are sheltered from most rainfall by the eaves and protected from excessive sun by 50% shade cloth overhead. Some of the larger plants hang from the eaves on the north side of the house in a shade cloth covered front courtyard.



*S. ceciliae* (L); *S. Eriochilus* (R)

**Containers :** Alex grows *S. ceciliae* mostly in terracotta pots, bowls and saucers, but sometimes uses plastic pots. He prefers the look of shallow bowls, but they are not as readily available as pots and saucers. When using saucers, he drills drainage holes in the bottom.

**Substrates :** Alex has used several different substrates over the years, including – bark, charcoal, perlite, coarse sand, scoria and pebbles, and has used them in various combinations.

Most work OK in the short term, but in the medium to long term, he found that most irritate and, in the worst case, kill the *S. ceciliae* plants. Scoria works for him in the longer term and he likes the look of the red form. However, he has found the red scoria hard to find and has only been able to find the grey and grey-red scoria in his area. He has also used pebbles and they seem to work well and look OK.

## Watering and Fertilising

His *S. ceciliae* are mostly protected from rain but may get some wind driven rain.

In summer he waters once a week and as it cools he waters progressively less so that in winter he is watering once every 3 to 4 weeks.

He feeds them about 3 to 4 times during the warmer part of the year with soluble fertiliser such as Thrive, Aquasol etc., by spraying the plants with a solution at recommended strength with a hand sprayer.

## Pests and Diseases

*S. ceciliae* are very prone to scale attack. Alex suspects that scale are dispersed by the wind. To combat scale and other sucking insects he sprays with Rogor.

Occasionally a snail gets up the wall to the galvanised steel mesh. To stop the snails he scatters snail bait on the ground below the shelves.

Whenever Alex detects root rot, he removes the dead root and repots the plant. Mostly he finds that at the previous re-potting he had left some bark attached to the roots.

## Sourcing Plants

Seedlings are usually available from commercial growers such as Wayne Turville, Ray Clement, Steve Stebbings and no doubt some others.

Specimen sized plants only ever come on the market when someone's collection is being sold off. Alex bought one large plant at Howard Tozer's orchid auction.

Divisions are also rarely on sale because a well growing plant is not easy to divide. He has several divisions of one plant, only because the parent plant was in such bad condition that it fell apart. Such divisions take some time to re-establish.

Alex has experimented with using Keiki Grow (Ex Flora Laboratories) to produce keikis. He applies some to the developing flower spike, and mostly it works - sometimes it doesn't, but the plant just continues to flower!



Keiki formed after using Keiki Grow (L). When keikis don't form, the flower spike just keeps on flowering (R)

## Some of the different flowers



Alba (L); white but not alba (C); *S. ceciliae* Red Eye Willie x (Zenna x Kingston) (R)



*S. ceciliae*#334 Lucky Red (L);

small pink (C);

large pink (R)

Alex rates his current ability to grow *S. ceciliae* as 6 or 7 out of 10. What more should Alex be doing? Alex feels that to improve his culture he would need to:

- Grow them in a heated glasshouse to simulate mild & dry (not cold & wet) winters and warm & humid (not hot & dry) summers.
- Much more regular liquid feeding during warm part of year.
- When re-potting, remove every bit of bark substrate not just most of it.
- Establish better control over chewing and sucking pests.

In conclusion, Alex offered a challenge:

“What about you guys?”

I don’t want you all to grow your *Sarcochilus ceciliae* as well as this! No way!

I want you all to grow your *Sarcochilus ceciliae* much better!

My achievement to date is your starting point!”

Many of those present might argue about Alex’s low assessment of his ability to grow *Sarcochilus ceciliae*, but none would argue that Alex’s talk wasn’t entertaining and enlightening! Thanks Alex for your great presentation.

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### **An Introductory Lesson To Understanding The NZ Language**

What you hear VS What it really means

BETTING : ie as in “Betting gloves” – which are worn by batsmen during cricket matches

BRIST : a part of the human anatomy between the “nick” and the “billy”

BUGGER : As in “mine is bugger than yours”

DIMMER KRETZ : Those who believe in democracy

ERROR BUCK : a language spoken in countries like “Surria”, “E-Jupp” and “Libernon”.

EKKA DYMOCKS : an expression describing University staff

GUESS : a flammable vapour used in stoves

SENDLES : Thongs, open shoes

COLOUR : a person who is a murderer

CUSS : Kiss

DUCK HID : a term of abuse directed mainly at males

PHAR LAP : NZ’s famous horse that was actually christened “PHILLIP”

ERROR ROUTE : As in “Arnott’s mulk error route buskets”

FITTER CHENEY : A type of long flat pasta not to be confused with “rigger tony”

**Culture Clash** – Hoping to make savings on salaries, a big corporation starting up in the south sea islands hired several cannibals. "You are all part of our team now," said the HR rep during the orientation briefing. "You get all the usual benefits and you can go to the cafeteria for something to eat, but please don't eat any of the other employees."

The cannibals promised they would not. Four weeks later their boss remarked, "You're all working very hard, and I'm very satisfied with your performance. However, one of our secretaries has disappeared. Do any of you know what happened to her?" The cannibals all shook their heads NO.

After the boss had left, the leader of the cannibals said to the others, "All right, which one of you idiots ate the secretary?" A hand at the back rose hesitantly, to which the leader of the cannibals continued, "You fool!!! For four weeks we've been eating managers and no one noticed anything, but noooooooooo, you had to go and eat someone who actually works and would be missed!!!"