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Next Meeting : * * * **June Meeting CANCELLED** (The Corona 19 situation is constantly under review as to when we might resume. You will be advised immediately there is a change.)

Topics from our Virtual Benching

Congratulations members, you all did it again. Fantastic contributions to our virtual benching and wonderful orchids to keep us all enticed to try and conquer next. I will explore a few other orchids in later parts of the bulletin but one that really took my eye was Jenny's Zygo. More specifically, Neopabstpetalum Adelaide Jester x Z. Artur Elle 'Essendon'. Can you believe that awful genus name? It comprises Neogarderia x Pabstia x Zygopetalum.

There are a hand full of these black and purple looking Zygo's and they always catch my eye. Even the straight Zygopetalum Artur Elle. It's just a pity that I don't seem to be able to grow them very well.



Like most members, my first Zygopetalum was Z. mackayi and I have no trouble at all growing that one. It's one of those orchids officially rated as "tough as bags" or "you can't kill it with a stick". And even after neglect and even zero attention, it is still growing here and there throughout my collection. One outside, amongst my few neglected Cymbidiums, and a couple of others in the worst spots possible in the shadehouse. Every year they each put up vertical spikes, much like a Cymbidium and produce 6 or so brown and green spotty flowers with a beautiful purple striped lip on a white background. Of course the one outside had to fight off Dendrobium beetles, snails, and other bugs that spoil the flowers, but on those growing under cover I get those lovely perfumed flowers to admire.

It was logical that when Zygopetalums began to be hybridised within the genus, and with a few related genera, that I would be interested in growing some of the new ones. I especially like the ones that feature lovely emerald green colours and as I said earlier, the black/purple ones. There is even a hybrid with the genus Aganisia that has amazingly blue flowers. Better than any other blue flowered orchid I have ever seen.

Zygonisia Cynosure 'Blue Birds'

The trouble was, I failed at growing every one I tried. Oh well, you can't win them all I guess.

These delightful orchids aren't impossible to grow. I know several of our members bench them every year and have no trouble growing them, so the problem is clearly in my methodology. I just need some help from one of you experts to see what I am doing wrong. So, how about it to all of you who have the right formula. I would appreciate some help folks. I would be happy to put all your advice together in the bulletin too if you would let me, but if you prefer to stay anonymous, howabout at least teaching me how to do it. My email is on page 2.



In the meantime here are some delightful example for those like me that might get some delight from them.



Hamelwellsara June



Z. James Strauss



Zna Adelaide Meadows



Zygotabstia Kiwi

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

President Dennys' Desk – Some distancing constraints are still in place and so, we are still in a holding pattern until it is safe to come together. As such, the June meeting is cancelled. Our committee is still keeping in touch to make sure there are no surprises that will adversely affect our society. If you need a connection or someone to have a chat with, please do not hesitate to contact me day or night on 0438877689.

Plant Growing Competition – The competition is still in place. I have re-potted our plants and they are growing well. If you are still keen on being involved let us know and we will arrange for Trevor to allocate one to you.

Virtual benching – A small number of our members do not have email access and so rely on the mail for their bulletin. I included a copy of the first virtual-benching-edition with the last mail out. I received phone calls from some excited members who were so thankful of the effort that our benching members had gone to as well as their appreciation for Jenny's dedication. The last effort was even better and so enjoyable to behold, just wonderful. I thank all of you who contributed as well as Jenny for her production skills and Chris for the initial idea as well as Jim who is always there.

Brassia connections – Following on from the great article on Brassia by Jim in the May bulletin, some of you may remember that Jenny and I collected some large concrete tubs containing spectacularly spiking, *Brassia verrucosa* from a lady living in St. Ives last September. The intention is that the plants will be made available to members in some form other than in the existing tubs which are very heavy. Jenny used the contents of one last November to facilitate a culture class which was well received. I have used the contents of another to prepare 5 specimen plants pots which hopefully will grow into healthy plants. Depending upon the success of this exercise, the plants will become raffle prizes or will be simply auctioned with all proceeds going to our society.

Other Society News

1. Vale Nancy Mauger – I was sad to hear from her friend Ann Byron that an old Ku-ring-gai member Nancy Mauger passed away on 20 June. She was 94 years old and had been living in an apartment at North Sydney. Her husband Len had passed away some years earlier.

Len and Nancy used to be neighbours of the Byrons at St Ives, and Nancy was a member of our committee for many years. She and Ann were key members of our show display set up team for a long time and were deeply involved in the planning and execution of all our displays. Nancy was a great innovator and apart from her ideas and suggestions, she would make many of the little props and dressings for the display themes. Len wasn't an orchid grower, but for every show Nancy would have him stashing their vehicle to the rafters with plants and props and they would be off to the venue ready for set up at the earliest time allowed. Ann tells me of the time our society was doing one of the displays when the venue was that huge tent especially erected in the Botanical Gardens. They had been told they needed to get there early and that the access gate would be open at 6am so Len was there right on time, only to find the gates locked shut and no one in sight but one of the garden workers who didn't know a damn thing about orchids or displays. They had to sit in their car at the gate for ages until eventually someone came along to help them. Len, who was a very senior businessman, was not impressed.

Nancy was also a great cook and used to make hundreds of sausage rolls for all our Christmas parties. I don't know how we survived in those days because the society was much smaller and we hardly had any money in the bank.

The Maugers were also wonderful hosts and held a number of dinner parties at their home for society members. I remember being a little overawed at attending one that may have even been my first attendance at a society social event, but if it wasn't for movers and shakers like Nancy and Len, we would never have grown.

Farewell Nancy, you are remembered.

2. Another Fabulous Virtual Benching for May – Congratulations members, you have all outdone yourselves again. At least 20 members contributed this month and provided so much lovely material our virtual benching was 12 jam packed pages. And not just pictures either. I don't know about the rest of you but I especially look forward to those little peeks inside different members shade houses or display areas, and tidbits of information that help us understand how we might grow our orchids better. And all those lovely orchids, unlimited potential subjects for writing up in the bulletin now that I don't have 'Best of the Evening's to guide my subject matter. The problem now is what to choose.

I hesitate to write up those breathtaking big showy Cattleyas. I don't seriously grow them myself because my conditions and my practices don't suit them so well (or that is what I tell everyone anyway) and regardless of that, I don't keep up with breeding trends either. What we really need is someone who really knows "Catt" culture and the latest trends to write something for us. Someone like Gloria and Allan Cushway, or Garrie and Lesley Bromley, or Trevor and Pauline Onslow, or others with that specific interest. I am always open to suggestions people?

However, despite all that, a lovely Cattleya flower does sometimes catch my eye and really appeal to me and I can't help myself find out what it is and whether I might be able to cope with it. One that caught me like that this month was Cattleya Love Knot as we got pictures from both Jessie Koh and the Onslows. Now there is a nice orchid I will go looking for when we get back to orchid shows and fairs. So, I will at least tell you what I learned about that one.

There can't be a single member left by now that doesn't know that my special love is species orchids. It just amazes

me that such a broad and diverse range of plants in nature can all be orchids. Perhaps they have even all evolved way back from a single common parent. Orchids have changed and evolved to take advantage of nearly every habitat niche you can imagine on this planet, and learned to survive in such varied situations that they have changed to become barely recognizable as being related to one another. The why and how of species orchids has become my primary enchantment, and this month our Virtual Benching has some great species stories.

In last month's Brassia hybrids article I mentioned that Miltonia spectabilis variety Moreliana has been recognized as a separate species and is now just Miltonia moreliana. Trevor Onslow sent us a beautiful picture of a nice one this month. Check it out. The modern selected morelianas sold today have a much shorter rhizome between the pseudobulbs and are more compact plants than the wilder types that prevailed when I first bought one. Next, John McAuley sent us pictures of a really rare species this month. Few growers have ever seen it because I think it was only discovered around 2016. Can you believe that new species are still being found in the wilds even today? I will tell you what I have found out on this new one of John's.

There are many more on my interest list but I wonder if I will have space to discuss them. I think I will just start and see where it all leads. You will have to read the rest of the bulletin to find out what I have managed to squeeze in. Congratulations once again members. It is nearly as good as coming to a monthly meeting to see all these lovelies. Keep up the good work, we are all getting great pleasure and knowledge from them. And thank you again to Jenny for weaving it all into an amazingly readable document. Very well done.

Stop Press – *Since I wrote the above I have learned that Bill's unbelievable specimen of Laelianthe Bowie-Albida 'Kennedys', that was featured in the May Virtual Benching, has been awarded an AM/ACE by the judges at the Orchid Society of NSW. AM/ACE stands for Award of Merit, Award of Cultural Excellence. Well deserved Bill. Your cultural skills leave us mouth-open amazed every time we see your big specimens.*

Is there anyone out there who knows my name ? by a friend staying with Bob Ellis

For many years I was happily living with a kind foster family. They were good folks in the sense that they provided me with a pleasant environment to live in (ample light, fresh air, food and water) which enabled me to grow strong and healthy. Unfortunately in April 2014 my foster family had to move into a nursing home and I was forced to find a new place to reside.

Luck was on my side as I was able to find another foster home. The Ellis family were happy to take me in, warts and all, and I continued to grow bigger and bigger. One day they asked what my name was, and did I know who my parents were. The lack of this knowledge has frustrated me for many years and I became green with envy (nice green bulbs and leaves) living with others who knew who they were, their family tree and who their parents were. So I put my thinking cap on to work out why my fellow fostered friends knew their name and history (their birth certificate etc.), but not me.

It was then that I realised that they were all producing flowers every year and I had never produced one. Daunted by the thought of producing this thing called a flower, I thought, if they can, maybe I can and then I would not be faceless and go through life as an unknown. With a bit of research and a degree of hope, in the Autumn of 2020, I decided to put things in motion and set about producing a flower.



My whole body felt strange, but good, as this long stem with a pointed knob on the end started to grow and to extend out of me. It got longer and longer, 60 cm in length, and the single pointed knob changed and became five and all of them became swollen. This whole experience was most tiring so I thought that I had best rest for a while. Some weeks later those swollen knobs started to develop splits and strange coloured things were forcing their way out. Frightened but excited at the same time I thought to myself could this be a flower like my fellow fostered friends grow?



Alas, disappointment set in, my flowers showed no resemblance to theirs. But then I thought, hey I may be different in shape, size, and colour but I

still have a flower, and I'm on the way to knowing my name and who my parents may have been.

If anyone out there knows my name and can help me with the rest of my family tree, I would be most happy to hear from you. I know my foster parents, the Ellis's, would like to know who they have given a home to.

Editor JB : Many thanks Bob, for giving your friend the bravery to ask for help. I am sure he will receive it.

Stop Press #2 - *I am told that Bob's friend has now been informed that his name is Laelia superbiens and that his parents came from the Central Americas. Superbiens is a giant. Although usually somewhat smaller, it can have pseudobulbs up to 45 cm tall, an inflorescence up to 2m tall, and a head of 20 gorgeous, 12-15 cm wide flowers.*



Tools - Gutter Mesh, Bonsai Wire, Pliers, Scissors, Tray Pot. - The tray pot is about 25 cm wide x 4.5 cm deep. It was purchased from Tinonee Orchids some years ago. Bonsai wire is aluminium and I find it to be gentle for orchids - the mesh from Bunnings



S. hartmannii BS x self 'Daisy' - top of the plant has been damaged and you will note that side keikis are developing on the main stem. The plant is showing signs of desiccation



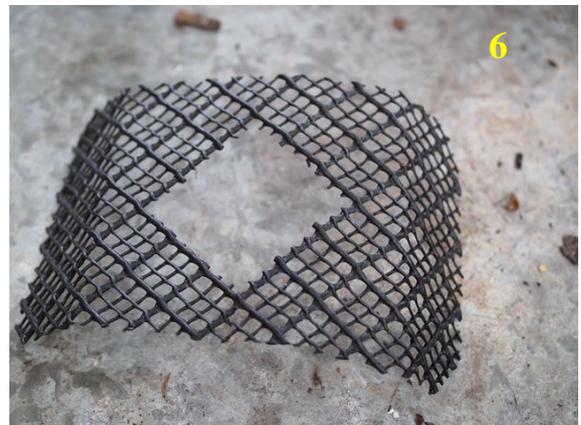
Poor root system - note the 'white' keiki developing (developed under the media with no light)



Keikis, or more correctly new growths developing



Cleaned up and new growth removed. This Sarcochilus is a nice one so well worth doing



Mesh cut to encapsulate the Sarcochilus



Sarcochilus held in place by aluminium bonsai wire



Tied into place



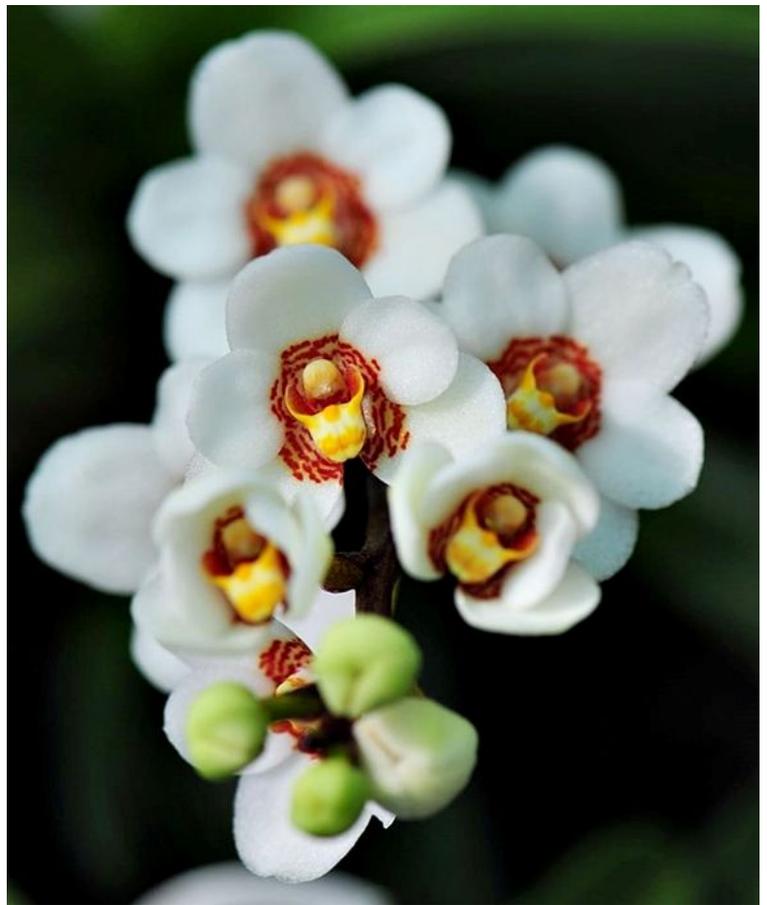
9
The mesh is solidly held – this method also allows easy repotting into fresh material in 3 or 4 years time. Simply turn the pot over and hose the bark out, then replenish with fresh mix.



10
New growths potted up separately. Keiki is held in place with flower sticks and tie wire



11
Finished - a bit of fertiliser and then aminogro, auxinone and eco-hydrate.



An example – *Sarco. George Colthup '2000' x hartmannii* 'Baby BS Wow'

An example – *Sarcocilus hartmannii* (BS x self) flowering, in this case it is 'Calli'



grows, but I never thought to use plastic mesh (gutter guard?) to lock the plant in position, or to use the mesh to raise the height of the orchid and allow slightly deeper media in the tray. Thank you so much George, for a great idea and for producing this amazing step by step 'how to' in pictures. And thank you for allowing us to republish it to our members.

Families - I just read a book on marriage that says always treat your wife like you did on your first date. So, after dinner tonight, I am dropping her off at her parent's house.

- If a man says he will fix something, HE WILL fix it. There is no need to keep reminding him every six months

Cattleya Love Knot (Catt walkeriana x sincorana)

(by Jim Brydie)



What a lovely yet simple Cattleya, and a only a hybrid between two species as well. Who would have thought it could be so good.

Back when it was registered in 1984 it was called a Laeliocattleya as the parent Cattleya sincorana was regarded as a Laelia back then. Nowadays the only accepted true Laelias are the species from Mexico and Central America (such as *L. anceps*), and a few species more recently shifted into Laelia from their previous

genus schomburkia. All the 'prettier' previous Laelias from Brazil, like *Laelia purpurata*, were shifted into the genus Cattleya along with the beautiful little red gems that used to be *Sophranitis*.

Anyway, enough of the background. Cattleya Love Knot was registered in 1984 and the two parents are unusual enough to tell you a bit more about in detail. The first parent, *Cattleya walkeriana*, has a delightfully formed flower displayed just above the leaves, on a short stemmed compact plant. The flowers are large for the plant at about 10-12 cm across. The species has a rather unique characteristic in that flowers are produced from a shoot at the base of a pseudobulb rather than from the top. The inflorescence looks for all the world like a developing new pseudobulb but the flowers mature and open from its top before the 'abortive pseudobulb' properly matures. When the flowers are finished, that shoot stops, and comes to nothing. The lip on *walkeriana* is also very characteristic in that the lip does not enclose the column. Instead, the inner side lobes flare out to form a decorative cup around the column base. I may not be describing that perfectly, but the picture above shows you what I mean.



Walkeriana grows from sea level right up to 2,000 meters. It occurs either as an epiphyte on large trees with rough bark or as a lithophyte on limestone plateaus, mossy rocks, river banks or cliffs. In some situations it grows in full sun and is subject to very high temperatures. While this might suggest it should be tough and easy to grow, it can be a cranky species to grow and flower and prefers either being grown on a mount or in airy well drained Vanda baskets and needs very good light to flower well.

The other parent, *C. sincorana* is also a compact grower. The following is from a description I did in a bulletin a couple of years ago. --

In nature its growth habit looks rather like the rupicolous Laelias that grow on the ground on rocks or among rocks, or even perhaps like a giant *Sophranitis*. It has stubby, tough, tightly compact pseudobulbs and a single, stiff, fleshy, boat shape leaf (6 to 11cm) on each pseudobulb. It has fantastic 8 - 10 cm rose purple flowers on a short inflorescence. The lip is also rose purple on the outside, with yellow inside and darker rose purple on the flared trumpet parts.



(From the Bakers info in OrchidWiz) - It grows in Bahia state in Brazil, (*JB: a few hundred km north of Rio De Janiero*). It is found in dry, desert like, sandstone tablelands which form part of the "Serra do Sincorá" mountains from which the species gets its name. Plants seem to grow exposed to almost full sun on *Vellozia* bushes (*JB: which look a bit like a giant Dracaena*), or on rocky ledges, at 1200-1500m elevation. Rainfall is low for long periods each year but moisture is still available from the dew, fog, and mist that develops almost nightly on the windward side of the plateau. In addition, the fibrous stems of the host *Vellozia* bushes collect and hold water droplets very efficiently, thereby providing moisture to resident orchids for several hours after the fog or mist has dissipated.

You can see the advantages that both species pass on to a hybrid. A semi dwarf compact form, large well shaped Cattleya flowers, and good colour. So why did it take until 1984 for the cross between them to be registered?

And how is this for a nice little specimen example of Catt. Love Knot. We saw from the virtual benching pictures, that Trevor, and Jessie are off to a good start. I am sure they will have theirs' up like this in no time.

You can also see from this Orchidwiz picture that not all Love Knots are the same colour. This one has a dark rose tip to the lip, some have even more colour, and there are also coerulea forms in blues and blue and white. All look pretty good to me. I wonder



when some enterprising orchidologist will remake the cross yet again. We had best keep an eye out, but in the meantime we might snaffle a piece at a society sales table or a members auction night. Who knows.

Dendrochilum migueldavidii

John McAuley's submission in the May Virtual Benching was the first I had ever seen or heard of this delightful orchid. However, seeing a brand new species doesn't surprise me all that much anymore as it seems to happen quite regularly. Especially from the Philippines, where Sydney's local Philippine orchid specialist Jim Cootes, is still actively studying their native orchids and regularly travels back and forth on exploration and recording trips.

The earliest official mention I could find of this one was in an article in a 2016 edition of the German Orchideen Journal which was announcing the discovery of a bunch of new species including this one. The official botanical description of any new species reads as a rather dry description so I won't repeat all that here but those who would like to see all the detail, I found it at : http://www.orchideen-journal.de/pdf/artikel4_2016.pdf



John's photo

image ex PhytoImages.siu.edu

From the published detail, I would it up sum as : *Dendrochilum migueldavidii* - a small upright grower with short stubby pseudobulbs (4cm tall x 1.8cm wide). It is found in shady, mossy forests at 1,300 metres elevation. It has tall, long stemmed leaves (leaf stems 8cm, leaves 29cm tall x 4cm wide). Like many *Dendrochilums*, the inflorescence starts out upright then turns sharply pendent, 35cm long, and carries up to 40 small (7 or 8 mm), peach coloured flowers with a citrus like fragrance. As you can see from these pictures, the flowers are tightly packed and the petals curve backward away from the lip. As I rather like these smaller orchids, I think that sounds rather attractive.

This new species is somewhat similar to a previously known species (*Dchlm. hampelii*) but differs in significant details of the flower such as the nerves in the lip, the shape of the lip, details of the column, and the fact that one has resupinate flowers, the other not (ie the lip is oriented uppermost or oriented downward).

Nature Photographer - A photographer was assigned to take photographs of a national park, so he decided to take them from the sky to get the best angle. He requested permission to rent a plane and the arrangements were made. He was told to report to a nearby airport where a plane would be waiting for him. He arrived at the airport and saw a plane warming up near the gate. He jumped in with his camera bag and shouted: "Let's go!" The pilot swung the little plane into the wind and, within minutes, they were soaring through the air. "Fly over the park and make two or three low passes so I can take some pictures," the photographer said.

"Why?" asked the pilot.

"Because I am a photographer," he responded. "And photographers take photographs."

The pilot was silent for a moment before finally he stammered : "You mean you're not the flight instructor?"

More Virtual Benching Highlights

In the earlier section I discussed Catt. Love Knot, an orchid that delighted me by its no nonsense simplicity, and this other orchid of Trevor and Pauline's speaks to me in similar terms.

I could immediately recognise that it had to be related to one of the old favourites, one that I still grow, - LC. Love Puppy.

Love Puppy dates back to 1970 but is still sought by anyone who sees it, even today. It



is a cross between *Laelia anceps* and *Cattleya Dubiosa* (*C. trianae* x *harrisoniae*). Being by *L. anceps* it has a slightly taller flower spike than many *Cattleyas* but the two smaller spiked *Cattleyas* in the parentage have brought it down so that Love Puppy's multiple flowers are only 15 to 20 cm above its leaves. AND, the *anceps* parent has made this a fantastically tough, easy flowering, reliable orchid.

The Onslow's Love Fantasy uses Love Puppy as one parent while the other is a more complex hybrid called Hawaiian Fantasy. It seems from the two pictures above that Love Puppy is dominant. It looks to me like a slightly improved Love Puppy. An orchid I would welcome in my shade house anytime.



Stenoglottis longifolia

The orchid that appealed to me most in this lovely cluster picture in Christine Rether's shade house is the pink **Stenoglottis longifolia**.

Quite wrongly, I always think of this orchid as Japanese because the very first time I saw it, it was planted as a border plant along an orchid walkway in a nursery glasshouse on the coast near Kyoto in Japan. I was enchanted by it and until I got back to Australia and looked it up, I thought it must be one of those Japanese mountain terrestrials I had read a little about before my trip.

Imagine my surprise when I learned that it was from eastern and southern Africa. It was not only available here, it was not rare at all, and could be easily grown in a shade house.



flower close up

S. longifolia is one of 4 species in the genus. All are semideciduous, soft leaved terrestrials or semi epiphytes with fleshy tuberous roots and an upright spike with multiple small flowers along it. *S. longifolia* is the largest and perhaps the toughest. Its leaves are about 15 cm, plain green, and its spike is 30 - 40 cm tall. The flowers are only about 12 mm. It grows in humus or mosses among mossy rocks at elevations of about 300-1300 m. It flowers in summer and autumn, with the old spike and leaves dying down in winter. In mild areas it might retain a few leaves but the plant is essentially dormant in winter. In late spring you start to see action again as new leaves sprout from the top of the tuberous root cluster (which can be divided to propagate the plant), followed a few months later by multiple flower spikes. The flowers open from the bottom of the spike up so there is a continuous display for ages. A great orchid, tough and very pretty.



LC. Bowie-Albida 'Kennedys'

Laelianthe Bowie-Albida 'Kennedys' – AM/ACE Bill's new award winner. Now if that doesn't take your breath away you may need help. How in the devil did he get that many bulbs in a pot that small and end up with that many flowers? I give up.

Bill gave us the full background in Jenny's virtual benching publication so I won't repeat it, but essentially this was imported as a species but was later confirmed to be a natural hybrid between *Laelia anceps* and *Laelia albida*. Wow.



Schoenorchis juncifolia

Now who doesn't love little blue flowers. *Schoenorchis* is a genus of cute little Asian orchids in the *Vanda* alliance. That is, they are monopodial. They grow longer, from a single stem rather than having pseudobulbs.

Schoenorchis juncifolia

has terete leaves (the name *juncifolia* means 'reed like leaves') and is found in Indonesia and Borneo at elevations between 800 – 1800 m. The vandaceous stem and its leaves grow pendently from tree trunks and branches. They can eventually get up to nearly a metre in length but I have never seen one longer than 30cm. Overall, this is a very elegant little orchid even without the flowers, but the flowers are beautiful as well. Small at 12 mm, but there are up to a dozen in each head. I grow this species successfully in my shade house but it is only 'almost a cold' grower and needs some protection in winter. It is available from time to time from specialist species sellers. Well worth looking for.

Bulbophyllum thiuurum

Maybe it is my wild imagination but the first time I saw this picture I thought of bananas dangling from a banana tree. The one on the right is about ripe by now, I am sure you could peel it. But no, it is an orchid. Not one with which I am personally familiar but the *Orchid Species Photo Encyclopedia* tells me : "it is found in a National Park in peninsular Malaysia in lowland swamp forests on trees. It is most likely extinct in the wild. It blooms in the later winter and early spring." Hmm. Doesn't sound very widespread, unless it just hasn't been found elsewhere just yet. Lowland Swamps sounds to me like it would need warm, very humid conditions so perhaps I will just admire John McAuley's plant for now.

