



CULTURAL AWARD, April 2012

*Phalaenopsis hieroglyphica*

Peter & Shirley

NEXT MEETING - TUESDAY 8 MAY

AT WILSON COMMUNITY HALL

NEWSLETTER

Contents

2	General Meeting Minutes	6	Plants displayed April 2012
3	Notes from your Committee	8	The genus <i>Sophranitis</i>
4	Noticeboard	10	About us
5	Monthly plant		



MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING

10 April 2012, 7.45 pm

**Present:** 35

**Apologies:** Phil, Mavis, Noel, Eva

**Visitors:** Nil

**New members:** Nil

**Minutes:** Minutes as circulated accepted (Anne, Ian)

**Business Arising:** Nil

**Financial Report:** The Financial Report was tabled by Sandra. Current balance is \$3129.91. #2 A/c \$1812.00 (Ian, Ken)

**Correspondence:**

**Inwards:**

- City of Belmont – Notice of Forster Park car park closure until July
- City of Belmont – Credit Note for April, confirmation of cancellation of April, May & June bookings
- Merle Arrah – receipt for sponsorship
- City of Belmont – Seniors Club Development Day.
- B. Larson (Chairman AOC Conf. Committee) – Assistance to clubs staging displays at the AOC Conference
- Various club newsletters

**Outwards:**

- To City of Belmont – cancellation of April, May & June bookings for Forster Park Hall

**Business Arising:** Nil

**General Business:**

This was the first meeting at the Belmont Sport & Recreation Hall, where we were moved from the room we had thought to be

in to a larger one. Pro's & Cons were discussed.

1. The primary doubt raised was the reliability of the hall booking, whether we would get moved around to suit numbers etc.
2. Storage for books etc. Adrian said that a large wheeled trolley could be built to transport the books from storage area to hall? (room to store trolley?).
3. Kitchen distance from meeting room
4. The possibility that joining 6 members would be cheaper than paying the \$100 casual rental fee for two meetings.
5. Other halls will still be investigated by various members of the committee.

It was moved by Peter seconded by Ken that we join 6 members to the Belmont Sports & Recreation Club.

Motion was carried and Adrian obtained enrolment forms.

- The members present agreed to \$500 being allocated for the display at the AOC Conference.
- Ken will let the members know as soon as lists are available for pre-ordering plants to be brought to the Conference. It is hoped that plants can be obtained for use as monthly sales plants, using funds from No. 2 Account.
- While in the E.S recently, Mich visited Orchid Species Plus. She found the plants good but expensive. The owners have indicated they will be in Perth for the Conference and will sell off any surplus plants as they do not wish to cart them back home.

- Bruce was thanked for hosting the enjoyable Home Visit in March.
- A quantity of pieces of *Maxillaria porphyrostele* was donated by Peter. These will be potted up and used for club raffles etc.
- While there are no library facilities at present, Mich would still appreciate the return of any books by the AGM so she

can audit the library collection.

- The next Home Visit is at Maxine's, please bring a plate & chair.

**Cultural Award:** *Phalaenopsis hieroglyphica* grown by Peter & Shirley  
**Raffle:** Chris, Courtney, Ken, Jeanine  
**Name Badge:** Chris

## NOTES FROM YOUR COMMITTEE

- The next meeting is the Club's AGM. Please give some thought to joining the Committee - it isn't an onerous task, and your Society benefits from your ideas and suggestions.
- This meeting will be held at the Wilson Community Hall in Braidrise Street, Wilson (this is the hall that ANOS use for their meetings) to enable us to assess its suitability for our use.
- The June meeting will be a silent auction, so please prepare some plants now. We know that you will also be setting plants aside for sale at the AOC, but this is one of the society's main fundraisers. For new members, it is an excellent way to expand your species collection.
- While we realise that the library is not currently available, please bring back any books or periodicals that you have so that Mich can undertake the annual audit.
- AOC volunteer forms are now on the AOC website - please give some thought to how you might assist in making this event the most successful conference ever.
- If you haven't ordered your new badge yet, please see Mich.

**President:** Adrian  
**Vice President:** Graham  
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 Chris  
 Michele  
 Lee  
 Sharon  
 Trevor  
 Tony  
 Mavis  
**Life Members**  
 Gordon  
 Joan & Ted (dec'd)  
 Neville  
 Noel & Eva

## NOTICEBOARD

### FORTH-COMING EVENTS

#### Home visits:

At 10am on the Sunday after the fourth Thursday of each month. Please bring chairs and of food to share.

- \* May - John, Bicton
- \* June - Adrian & Deanne Jose, Safety Bay
- \* July - Gordon, Karrinyup

### FOR SALE/WANTED

Murray Baker is interested in buying some virus test kits from the following supplier: [https://orders.agdia.com/InventoryD.asp?loc=IN&collection=ISK%2013301&attribute\\_Size=25](https://orders.agdia.com/InventoryD.asp?loc=IN&collection=ISK%2013301&attribute_Size=25)

With freight costs they work out at about \$11.50 each for the minimum order, but he is hoping that cost will come down a bit for larger orders. If you are interested in sharing costs for some test kits, please contact Murray on 9310 2800.

**Imported plant news**

## MONTHLY PLANT

### *Dendrobium aemulum*

**Country of origin:** Northern New South Wales and Queensland

**Description:** Squat reddish/brown pseudobulbs, leathery apical leaves

**Difficulty:** Grows easily in shadehouse conditions in WA

**Cost:** \$12.00

*Dendrobium aemulum* R Brown 1810 (now *Tropilis aemula*), the Ironbark Feather or Brush Box orchid is found growing as an epiphyte on iron-barked *Eucalyptus* spp and Brush Box from South Eastern NSW to Northern Queensland. It was previously recorded in sections *Calypsochilus* and *Dendrocoryne*.

It grows in open forest at low altitude from the coast through the coastal ranges. *Dendrobium aemulum* is reported to be a very variable species, with some forms recognised on the basis of their host .

The white, feathery flowers (sometimes with pink flushing) appear in spring on short, though somewhat sparsely flowered racemes. The flowers themselves are relatively large, with narrow sepals and petals, and have a pleasant morning fragrance. Multiple flower racemes arising from upper nodes on each mature pseudobulb compensate



Source: <http://www.ourshopfront.com/kabi/images> (ANOS - Qld Kabi Group Inc.)

for the relatively small number of flowers per raceme, making make this a showy species when well grown.

To flourish, *Dendrobium aemulum* needs bright light, consistent humidity and above all, abundant air movement. In practice, this is best achieved by slab mounting on old dry hardwood, natural cork or similar media. They can also be attached to garden trees provided the climate is suitable.

I have found that this species seems resistant to many of the insect pest and fungus pathogens around, and have only had problems where there was not enough air movement. Even though the leaves are hard and leathery, cotton and hard scale will be moved in by the ants and severely set the plant back.

Thanks to Mich who has grown these plants on for several months.

### Gordon

*Cattleya bowringiana*  
*Epidendrum elongatum*

### Ken & Chris

*Epidendrum diffusum*  
*Pleurothallis saundersiana*

### Peter & Shirley

*Phalaenopsis hieroglyphica*  
*Phalaenopsis sanderiana*  
*Phalaenopsis tetraspis alba*  
*Vanda lamellata*

### Tony & Mavis

*Dendrobium bigibbum*  
*Miltonia spectabilis*  
*Miltonia X bluntii*

## PLANTS DISPLAY



*Miltonia spectabilis*  
Tony & Mavis

*Epidendrum diffusum*  
Ken & Chris





*Cattleya bowringiana*  
Gordon

# AYED APRIL 2012

*Phalaenopsis sanderiana*  
Peter & Shirley



Photography by Tony

## The genus *Sophronitis*

Lindley founded the taxon in 1828 when he described *Sophronitis cernua* Lindl., the type species for the genus (note: this is a somewhat modest species compared with *Sophronitis coccinea* which is found in the same general habitat). This genus of nine species is characterised by round or tapered pseudobulbs with single leaves; a short, stout column with small wings on each side of the stigmatic cavity; and eight pollinia. Most of the flowers in this genus are red shades with variants of yellow, salmon, orange, vermillion, coral rose and magenta tonings. There are few if any alba forms, and the yellow forms are quite rare and horticulturally very desirable. The Brazilian local name for *Sophronitis* is *vermelho* referring to its colour.

The genus name *Sophronitis* is derived from the Greek *sophron*, meaning chaste or modest, and, in this instance, small. However the bright colours of the flowers hardly fit that bill (although this is not the only example of a diminutive orchid with relatively large, brightly coloured flowers, for example, *Dendrobium cuthbertsonii*, and *Hymenorchis javieri* which are both diminutive species with brightly coloured flowers).

In common with many of the South American genera that were first described in the early 1800s, this genus has been extensively revised. The Brazilian *Laelias* had been moved into *Sophronitis* in 2000, and subsequently in January 2008,

the International Orchid Committee reduced *Sophronitis* to synonymy under *Cattleya*. (Note - the Royal Horticultural Society had already moved a hybrid of the rupicolous *Laelia* that had been renamed *Sophronitis esalqueana* into the genus *Cattleya*.)

In 2000, the first DNA study of the *Laeliinae* was reported in *Lindleyana*. A key result of that study was the finding the Brazilian *Laelias* did not belong with the Mexican *Laelias* (which included the type species *Laelia anceps*). The solution was to place the Brazilian *Laelias* into *Sophronitis*, although other authors proposed to split them into several segregate genera. While publication of *Genera Orchidacearum* Vol 4 in 2006 led to many name changes in artificial hybrid names in this alliance, the situation would have been significantly worse had this group of species been carved into a number of smaller genera.

Recent DNA studies with nine plastid regions plus the original ITS dataset have led to a better understanding of this group. While this expanded *Sophronitis* is always supported, it is also imbedded among species traditionally recognised as *Cattleya*. This meant that two options had to be considered, one the creation of new genera for the various subgroups of *Cattleya* or two to reduce all *Sophronitis* species with *Cattleya* and reflect this as subgenera or sections of a greatly expanded *Cattleya*. The latter solution

was preferred as it provided better nomenclatural stability for hybrids.

So once again, we hobbyist orchid growers have to get used to a new name for the genus. For the purpose of this article and simplicity, I will continue to refer to these species as *Sophronitis*.

Orchid growers have long been enthralled by the brightly coloured, attractively displayed flowers, on such diminutive plants. However, cultivation is not always easy and due to its diminutive nature, this genus appears particularly susceptible to sap-sucking pests. The genus is well known for temperamental flower production, and in common with some other small species, are known to flower themselves to death (perhaps a desperate survival mechanism). It is also reported that a good flush of flowers one year is followed by a much reduced flush the next year.

With the exception of *S. cernua* and *S. pterocarpa* (and the Brazilian *Laelias* more recently transferred to *Sophronitis*), flowers are borne singly. Some rarer clones of *S. coccinea* where the raceme carries two flowers exist, but are rare and in high demand by collectors. Members of the genus have been extensively used in hybridisation to impart red and orange colouring, compact growth and round flower shape.

This genus inhabits mountainous regions along, and inland from the Brazilian coast at elevations from sea level to more than 2200m. Given the colourful red flowers

and structure of the lip and column, it is thought that they are pollinated by humming birds (Dressler 1981), although I was unable to find any other reference to this association.

Given this habitat, it is not surprising that this genus requires year round humidity and good air movement. While the plants may partly dry out during the middle of the day, cloud cover and associated mists in the late afternoon restore the humidity. Therefore, successful culture is most often achieved by attempting to duplicate nature by limiting diurnal temperature variation, maintaining high humidity, and choosing the media carefully as they appear to resent being re-potted or re-mounted. Withner (1993) recommends osmunda, treefern pots (we could probably use slabs), moss covered bark or moss itself (perhaps sphagnum moss). It would be prudent to choose a cultivation method that will provide for 4-5 years before needing replacement. When needing to be transferred, it is critical to minimise root disturbance and resist the temptation to split the plant.

As the flowers of the species in this genus (excluding the Brazilian *Laelias*) are similar in form and colour, habitat, time of blooming and vegetative structure are the key factors in determining which *Sophronitis* species is being observed.

The first species is *S. acuensis* from the Organ mountains. Fowlie (1975) identified this species in September from plants collected at 2,100m growing epiphytically on small creek-side trees in ravines that

extended down the mountainside. The plants that were in full sun were flowering whereas those in heavy shade were not and did not appear nearly so vigorous. This habitat is higher and colder than the other species.

A mature plant is only 5cm high, and the flower is a vivid deep red in colour with the usual *Sophronitis* shape. Apparently, the colour becomes orange-red in cultivation in the US over time. There is also said to be a very desirable clone with a yellow labellum which is sometimes seen as *S. acuensis* var *xanthocheila*. Frequently, this species is confused with *S. cernua*.



Source: <http://www.orchidspecies.com/sophacuensis.htm>

*S. bicolor* Miranda 1991 is a recently discovered species, and according to Withner (1993), resolved some of the discrepancies within the genus, more particularly the significant number of varietal forms of *S. coccinea*, one of which was referred to var. *tetraploidea* or var. *gigantea*. While this does not mean that there are not tetraploid clones of *S. coccinea*, it does provide impetus for further testing to establish the truth or otherwise of the attribution of tetraploidy.

Miranda observed that this species is easily identified by its size. The elongated leaves are up to 15cm in length, similar to *Laelia pumila*. Another distinguishing feature is the loose-tipped bracts sheathing new pseudobulbs on developing growths and 5cm flower racemes which are significantly longer than the other species in the genus.

Miranda, who is the proprietor of Orquidario Boa Vista in Rio de Janeiro identified this species amongst other plants of *S. coccinea* growing in his nursery. It appears that it was collected from the Organ mountains at 1,000m altitude. The description notes that this species may naturally exhibit red pigmentation in the leaves that is not related to light exposure (cf *S. coccinea*). The sepals and petals can vary from red to orange as the following photo from <http://www.orchidboard.com/community/cattleya-alliance/58706-cattleya-dichroma-sophronitis-bicolor.html> shows.



For some great photos, look at [http://www.ne.jp/asahi/orchid/sophronitis/description\\_of\\_species.htm](http://www.ne.jp/asahi/orchid/sophronitis/description_of_species.htm) and <http://www.aos.org/Default.aspx?id=33>  
*To be continued*

## ABOUT US

### Monthly Meetings

Monthly meetings held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month (exc January at Forster Park Hall, cnr of Abernethy Road and Keane Street, Cloverdale commencing 7.45 pm. Usually, the short formal meeting is followed by plant descriptions given by members. Supper follows to allow members time to socialise and discuss orchids.

All visitors are very welcome

### Membership Fees

**Family** \$30 PA + 2 badges (1<sup>st</sup> year only) [Badges come in two versions. Pin fastening (\$11.50) or Magnet fastening (\$13.50) *Please indicate your preference.*]

**Single** \$20.00 PA + 1 badge (1<sup>st</sup> year only) [Pin fastening (\$11.50) or Magnet fastening (\$13.50)]

New members who don't live in Perth will not require name badges, therefore membership will be at the renewal fee only

### Monthly Home Visit

On the weekend following the fourth Thursday of each month (generally on the Sunday morning), a home visit is held at a member's home. This gives members an opportunity to enjoy the fellowship that our mutual interest provides, and to see how others go about growing their orchids.

### Monthly Plant Display

Given that the prime objective of the Society is to promote the cultivation of species orchids, only species or natural hybrids are acceptable for display. Since we all may be uncertain about the identification of a plant from time to time, we encourage members to bring plants along about which they are unsure since someone

may be able to identify them. There is no competition nor restriction on flower count, quality or length of ownership. We want members to be able to see species plants in flower. So even if your flowers are a bit past their best, bring them in as others may not have seen that species in flower.

### Plant Sales

The Society provides an opportunity table for members to sell surplus plants and equipment, and for the Society to sell product from time to time. A commission of 10% is charged on all sales.

### Plant Purchases

The Society endeavours to obtain a different species seedling for sale at each meeting, usually costing between \$6.00 and \$15.00. The Society makes a small profit on these sales which is invested in benefits to members. As it is always difficult to get new or different species, should members have 20 or more plants of one species which they feel might be suitable as a monthly plant, please contact a Committee member.

### Raffle

The Society conducts a raffle each meeting and at home visits as a means of raising funds.

### Plant Imports

The Society is able to use quarantine facilities provided by Ken & Chris to co-operatively import species orchids.

### Management

In accordance with the Constitution, the Annual General meeting is held in May each year at which time the office-bearers and committee are elected. The majority of Committee members serve two year terms.

If unclaimed, return to  
The Editor  
204 Park Street, Henley Brook WA 6055

## REMEMBER

**Next (May 8th) meeting at Wilson Community Hall,  
Braidrise Road Wilson**

Peter & Shirley Masters

Phone: 08 93506087

Mob 0419831177

Shirley 0414948469

E-mail: [peterskorner@iinet.net.au](mailto:peterskorner@iinet.net.au)

Peterskorner is now distributing a range of orchid products from Easy Orchids (Murray and Jean Shergold) and we are happy to take orders, and bring them to the Species Society monthly meeting **(please confirm your order the week prior to the meeting).**

Check out our catalogue at [www.peterskorner.com](http://www.peterskorner.com), phone Peter or Shirley on the numbers shown, or e-mail [peterskorner@iinet.net.au](mailto:peterskorner@iinet.net.au).