



CULTURAL AWARD, March 2014
Brassavola nodosa var. majus
Chris

NEXT MEETING - TUESDAY 8 April

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NEWSLETTER



MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING

11 March 2014, 7.50pm

Present: 22

Apologies: Chris, Jim & Jeanine, Tony, Tony & Mavis, Charly & Gerda, Patricia, Paul & Andrea.

Visitors: Nil

New members: Nil

Minutes: Published minutes accepted (Ian, Ian)

Business Arising: Nil

Financial Report: Tabled by Sandra
Current balance of \$9,376.35
(Ken, Courtney)

Correspondence:

Inwards:

- GCA –photo info for 2015 calendar
- Various club newsletters
- AOF – Seed & protocorm info, essay competition, available publications etc.

Outwards:

- Nil

Business Arising: Nil

General Business:

- Members were reminded that only species and natural hybrid orchids were to be sold on the sales table at General Meetings. Hybrids, plants other than orchids and general goods etc. are acceptable for the Silent Auction
- Graham reminded members that the society has two awards that it can present at the AGM. These are Life Membership and The Quiet Achiever Award. Slips were made available for suggestions on recipients but it was stressed that these were not votes,

merely those thought worthy of consideration by the Committee. Ken gave a short explanation of the awards and what they represented to members.

- Ken explained the reasons for delaying the order from Ten Shin Gardens.
- Graham said that the positions of Secretary and Treasurer would be open at the AGM as both present incumbents would not be accepting re-nomination at the AGM in May. He asked that thought be given to nominating for these positions.
- Tom was thanked and complimented for his performance as auctioneer at Gordon's plant sale. Gordon thanked all workers and attendees at the sale and said he was surprised at the amount collected.
- Graham also thanked Gordon for his generous donation to the society, which was about 1/3 of the proceeds. Thank you Gordon.
- Tony is believed to be home from hospital after his surgery and recovering well. Best wishes from all members.
- Peter donated *Cattleya tigrina* to be auctioned on a 50/50 basis. Thanks Peter
- An auction of plants was conducted by Tom.
 1. *Cattleya tigrina* – Ian (\$27)
 2. *Bulbophyllum levyae* – Judith (\$35)
- Thank you Tom & congratulations to the successful bidders
- Thanks were given to Les & Val for the last home visit. The next one is on 30

March at Charly & Gerda Hartman's home's. Chair & plate as usual please.

Name Badge: Norm

Cultural Award: Chris for a well grown specimen of *Brassavola nodosa var majus*

Raffle: Mich, Graham & Ian.

NOTES FROM YOUR COMMITTEE

- As advised at the March meeting, the Secretary and Treasurer have advised the committee that they will not be seeking re-election. These are important, though not onerous roles on the committee and members are asked to consider standing for these positions. Should you have any questions about what is involved, please ask a committee member at the next general meeting.
- Thank you for making suggestions of recipients for Life Membership and the Quiet Achiever award. The Committee has considered your suggestions and will recommend members to receive these awards at the Annual General Meeting in May.

President: Graham
Vice President: Ken Jones
Secretary: Maxine Godbeer
2195 Hidden Valley Rd, Parkerville
6081
e-mail: macjon@ozonline.com.au

Treasurer: Sandra
Editor: Ken Jones
204 Park Street, Henley Brook
6055. Phone: 9296 1765
e-mail: kcjones@tpg.com.au

Committee:

Chris	Sharon
Charly	Paul
Adrian	Tony
Michele	Mavis

Life Members

Barry (dec'd)
Gordon
Joan (dec'd) & Ted (dec'd)
Neville
Noel & Eva
Barry

NOTICEBOARD

FORTH-COMING EVENTS

Home visits:

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

- * Apr - Margaret, Erskine
- * May - John, Bicton
- * Jun - Norm, Riverton

FOR SALE/WANTED

Imported plant news

In the absence of CITES certificates from Ten Shin Gardens, given the 40 working day time period to issue permits, I have advised Ten Shin Gardens that I will need to defer shipping until spring., rather than receiving plants in late autumn/early winter. Most members of the buying group have agreed to this action.

Ken & Chris Jones

MONTHLY PLANT

Guarianthe (Cattleya) aurantiaca

Country of origin: El Salvador, Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua

Description: Tough small to medium sized bifoliate Cattleya

Difficulty: Suitable for shadehouse culture

Cost: \$5.00

This month's plant is another from the 19th AOC and is from flasks from Sakdisri and Daughters nursery in Thailand. It has been grown on by Paul Somers.

Cattleya aurantiaca is a tough bifoliate species that is very easy to grow in our conditions (Ed we have them growing on trees in our garden). It occurs at low-moderate elevation (300 to 1,600m) as an epiphyte or lithophyte in tropical and lower mountain rain forest, often in exposed positions. For example, in Nicaragua, this species grow on trees in dry hilly pastures and in roadside forests. The species is also reported to be present on the Revillagigedo Islands, which are located about 700 km off the coast of the Mexican State of Colima.

Similar to many of the South American *Cattleya* and *Laelia* species, there is a wide range of colour forms and cultivars. These range from intense orange through concolor yellow to white, with darker spots



Source: http://farm5.staticflickr.com/4143/4800481471_3905da2fc4_o.jpg

and heavily marked labellums. The species has been widely used in hybridising for its strong orange colouration with more than 280 first generation hybrids and over 4,700 total progeny.

Given their natural habitat, this species is equally happy with pot or slab culture, provided good air movement is available all year round. For pot culture, any standard bark mix will be adequate, while slab culture could use any hardwood, cork or perhaps plastic mesh.

I have found this species to be quite resistant to common pests such as mealy bug and hard scale, but can be susceptible to cotton scale if the air movement is not adequate. In my experience, species *Cattleyas* need to have some protection from winter rain unless they are able to dry out quickly.

Graham & Margaret
Cattleya bowringiana
Dendrobium tangerinum
Gastrochis francoisii
Phalaenopsis pulcherrimma

Chris
Brassavola nodosa majus
Vanda lamellata

Maxine
Aerangis punctata
Epidendrum porpax
Haraella retrocalla
Phalaenopsis borneensis
Phalaenopsis fasciata

Ken & Chris
Christensonia vietnamica
Cymbidium dayanum
Dendrochilum magnum

Kingidium deliciosum
Miltonia clowesii
Schomburgkia ssp

Peter & Shirley
Aerangis articulata
Aerangis cryptodon
Aerangis ellisii
Aerangis mystacidii
Gongora galatea
Lophiaris lanceana
Miltonia x leucoglossa
Psychomorchis pusilla
Vanda tessellata

PLANTS DISPLAYED MARCH 2014



Gastrochis francoisii
Graham & Margaret

Aerangis punctata
Maxine





Vanda tessellata
Peter & Shirley

PLANTS DISPLAYED MARCH 2014

Cymbidium dayanum
Ken & Chris



Haraella retrocalla
Maxine



Photography by Mich

Leafless Orchids *Continued from March 2014*

While numbers in the wild have declined considerably, *Dendrophylax lindenii* can still be found in concealed swamps in Cuba, Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park, Big Cypress National Preserve and other guarded locations in South Florida, although it seems that it may now be extinct in Cuba due to habitat destruction.

Chris Little, who has generously allowed me to use photos and information from his web site says that it is rare to see a ghost orchid in bloom. He further notes that his research indicates that only approximately 2,000 individual plants remain in the swamps of South Florida, and of these, only 5-10% bloom each year. Of these blooming plants, only about 10% are pollinated by *Cocytius antaeus*, the giant sphinx moth. The prevailing theory is that the sphinx moth follows the odour of the ghost orchid where it then uses its long proboscis to access the nectar in the nectary at the lower extremity of the spur. The same moth must then find another blooming ghost orchid to pollinate.

Dendrophylax lindenii usually has only one flower open at a time, although in some instances, a plant may have more than one flower and may have more than one flower raceme. Chris Little says that on July 7, 2007 a previously unknown and outstandingly large ghost orchid was discovered in Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary in Naples, Florida. This plant, dubbed the "Super Ghost", was growing 14m above ground and had 11 blooms at its peak. It is currently the only wild ghost orchid whose location is not kept secret! The story of the

decrease in the number of plants in the wild includes interesting tales of snow in the Bahamas, the devastating logging of the mysterious Fakahatchee Strand, digging of the canal system throughout South Florida, and perhaps the most well-known reason, illegal removal by poachers.

Chris explains that life was tough for the Ghost Orchid on the 20th Century. Many elderly bushwalkers and orchid enthusiasts have told him that plants used to be much more numerous, but were never common. One of the reasons given was adverse weather conditions including a freeze in Florida in the 1970's. While this might seem to be part of a normal long term weather pattern, the construction of canals and draining of water from much of South Florida led to a substantial reduction in water levels throughout the orchid's habitat.

During the cold weather, the modifying effect of the standing water was lost and the vegetation was subject to frost, perhaps for the first time. He measured the temperature during a freeze in January of 2008 in Big Cypress Nation Preserve and at 1.5m above water level (the zone in which most *Dendrophylax lindenii* are found) in a water-filled swamp and found it to be about 2.5° C higher than temperatures outside the area. It seems that thousands of plants may have perished since as a consequence. Weather data for the Miami International Airport shows that most of the overnight freezes since the late 40's occurred the 1970's and 80's. The record 1977 freeze brought snow to both Miami and the Bahamas and it is

therefore quite reasonable to assume that it had a disastrous effect on the population of *Dendrophylax lindenii*.

For most of the 20th century, orchid collecting was a legal activity, but has since been banned. During that period, many orchids including *Cryptopodium punctatum* and *Oncidium luridum* were also over-collected and are now rarely found in South Florida. The Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve is considered to be the Ghost Orchid capital of the world. However, during the 1940's and 50's, the bald cypress timber that was so valuable due to its excellent structural qualities and resistance to rotting was heavily felled. An extensive system of train lines was constructed over the much of the Fakahatchee Strand's 85,000 acres, and the large cypress trees were cut by hand and then hauled out using trams (logging rail beds) and trains, devastating everything in their path. This unfettered logging left the Fakahatchee with very few primary forest cypress trees and dramatically changed the landscape.

Orchids that were not taken by collectors; killed by logs or building of trams were now exposed to higher levels of sunlight from canopy removal leading to massive plant death. While the trains and tracks are now gone, the trams remain and are now walking trails. Despite local ordinances to protect endangered plant species including *Dendrophylax lindenii*, they are still illegally removed and in most instances, doomed to death as the thieves often have no knowledge of, or access to the environment necessary for their survival.

Another issue impacting the viability of this

species is an apparent decline in the population of the Giant Sphinx Moth (*Cocytius antaeus*). It is rare and little is known about its environmental requirements and overall population dynamics. The diminishing presence of its critical pollinating insect is just another impediment to the orchid's long term survival, and is one of the side-effects of vegetation destruction.



Source: <http://www.ghostorchid.info/pictures2.htm> Campylocentrum:

The real challenge however is growing some of the species in this genus. Chris Little acknowledges the difficulty in cultivating *Dendrophylax lindenii* outside its natural habitat, and to be fair, this applies to pretty much all the genus. However, he emphasises the need to maintain high humidity and ensure that there is no build-up of salts left after evaporation. In the natural habitat, these plants grow in quite low light and in an environment that we might regard as stagnant with relatively little air movement, and at relatively high temperature. He says that while he has seen plants in flower that have survived in environments other than that described,

generally those grown in conditions that approximate those of their natural habitat are more vigorous. He grows *Dendrophylax* species hanging inside a container partially filled with water – they might do well in an aquarium. His plants are mounted on natural cork, but hardwood or treefern slab and plastic mesh should also be suitable. In this regard, *Chilochoista* grow well on terra cotta pots and in plastic baskets and these might also be suitable for *Dendrophylax*. He mists plants several times a week and is careful to use de-ionised (distilled water to ensure that any salt build up from daily watering is removed. Studies of both native and greenhouse grown plants show that the roots contain the usual mycorrhizal fungus, as well as some types of algae. The plants use these symbiotic agents as an additional supply of food. For this reason, leafless orchids are less tolerant of fungicide and algaecide treatments. However, if you need to apply fungicide or algaecide, make sure that you manage your fertiliser regime, and be prepared for some plant losses.

J Watts says that while mounting an orchid is a simple process, mounting leafless orchids is different. While almost any timber can be used, those with aromatic characteristics must be naturally or artificially weathered to remove the oils. Timber which does not have these aromatic oils, cork, small branches with bark attached, shingles or cut wood, tree fern slabs and upside down clay pots will all work, subject to your unique cultural conditions. He uses a cork wallboard product to mount his leafless orchids (this sounds similar to the cork tiles that Tony

uses so successfully to mount a wide variety of genera). Watts uses a small pad of sphagnum moss when attaching his plants although there is considerable debate about the efficacy of this approach as it can provide a haven for fungal pathogens and bacteria as it remains wet for much longer than an impervious substrate. He says that it is important for the mount to dry out in about 30 minutes. He also notes that cultivated plants over time become used to receiving nutrition from fertiliser and therefore less susceptible to fungicide application that can damage the mycorrhizal fungus and algae present in the roots. The most common disease problems are crown and root rot, and can quickly lead to plant death if not addressed, however, the best way of preventing this is careful management of cultural conditions such as ensuring good air movement..

When *Dendrophylax lindenii* is growing well, it will regularly send out new roots from the small inconspicuous stem in the centre of the plant. These roots may grow as much as 2cm a month. In common with all other orchids, it is normal for the plant to have some dead roots, however it is recommended that these be allowed to remain as their removal can damage active roots. The solitary (most often) flower arises from the centre of the plant over several months until the bud forms and opens. The flowers cannot be self-pollinated and must be cross-pollinated from another plant. The seed pod forms soon after fertilisation and takes 10-12 months to mature before turning brown and splitting to release the seed.

Continued next month

ABOUT US

Monthly Meetings

Monthly meetings held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month (exc January) at Wilson Community Hall, Braibrise St, Wilson 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 (1st 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 (1st 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

Next meeting Tuesday 8 April 2014

Peter & Shirley Masters

Phone: 08 93506087

Mob 0419831177

Shirley 0414948469

E-mail: 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, phone Peter or Shirley on the numbers shown, or e-mail peterskorner@iinet.net.au.