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SHOALHAVEN ORCHID SOCIETY



Cymbidium Shoalhaven 'Touch of Class'

May 2020

AFFILIATED WITH

the Australian Orchid Council and
the Orchid Society of N.S.W.

www.shoalhavenorchidsociety.com
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Shoalhaven Orchid Society Inc

news to share and I hope, once we can resume meetings, you will continue to contribute to your newsletter.

New Facebook Group

Thanks to Francoise Sikora who has been using her enforced isolation very productively our society now has a social media presence. Francoise and Suzanne Knight are the administrators. It's a great way to keep connected during these difficult times. Members are encouraged to join our Facebook group: **Shoalhaven Orchid Society Inc.** To join the group you can search 'Shoalhaven Orchid Society Inc' in the Facebook search bar and click on the link then click the 'Join Group' button. (Eds Note: If I can do it, anyone can! 😊) We would love to encourage everyone to post a picture of a flower or even just your growing area or ask any questions about any issues you may be having and we are sure that someone will be able to answer.

Virtual Benching Thank you to the members who sent photos for our virtual benching this month. (See pages 2,3 and 7.) As it is doubtful whether we will be able to meet in June please feel free to share your orchids with us if you have something in flower. Even if we do meet, often orchids choose to be contrary and flower between meetings so I'm always happy to find a spot for your beauties if space permits.

Other newsletter contributions are also welcome. We are lucky to have an interesting article from Alan Stephenson in this issue. Thanks ,Alan.

SOCIETY NEWS

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Due to the COVID 19 pandemic our May General Meeting has been cancelled. Your June newsletter will advise whether we are resuming meetings in June.

When meetings resume we will be meeting at our

NEW VENUE:

**Bomaderry Community Centre
17-19 Birriley Street,
Bomaderry.**

Until we can meet again look after yourself and enjoy your orchids



The editor notes ...

Hello members. A somewhat different newsletter this month but I'm sure you will enjoy the articles and photographs contributed by members. With no results or reports to publish we need your orchid

THE SHOALHAVEN ORCHID SOCIETY MEETS ON THE **THIRD MONDAY** OF THE MONTH at **7.00 PM** IN THE BOMADERRY COMMUNITY CENTRE, 17-19 BIRRILEY STREET, BOMADERRY.

The Shoalhaven Orchid Society disclaims any liability for losses which may be attributed to the use of any of the material mentioned in this newsletter.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hello Members,

I hope you are finding things to do while we are all staying at home.

If your orchids are looking fine, it is a good time to clean under benches, or possibly clean and bleach used pots in readiness for repotting in Spring.

Unfortunately I have to report that Tom Gablonski has had to step down from his Treasurer's role due to family health issues. Tom will stay on Committee. I have sent our Best Wishes to Tom and his wife, Colleen, on behalf of all members. Committee member, Di Slye, has volunteered to be the Treasurer for the rest of the year. Thank you, Di.

Our Secretary, Francoise Sikora, has been kept very busy lately creating a Facebook page for our Society. It is a 'private page' and therefore only viewed by our members. I can see that a number of you have joined and are contributing photos, messages and just staying connected. Thank you, Francoise.

Minor alterations to the 2020 Show Schedules have been approved by the Committee. Thank you Lynne Phelan and Don Hogan for your input. Let's hope we get to use the schedules this year!! Lynne has also devised a Virtual Orchid Sales Table for the month/s ahead. More info. in this Newsletter.

Our May General Meeting has also been cancelled. In the mean time we wait patiently for the Bomaderry Community Centre to re-open.

Stay safe, stay well and stay connected with us from home.

Warm regards,
Louise Gannon

IMPORTANT NOTICE

about your Bishop's discount card

A new discount card will be issued when you renew your membership. Please bring your old card to the meeting to exchange for the new card. Treasurer Diane has the new cards.

Current Life Members Shoalhaven Orchid Society

Mr Stuart Crowther - 1999
Mr Alan Stephenson - 1999
Mr Colin Marstin - 2007
Mr John Webb - 2009
Mrs Lynne Phelan - 2012
Mr Allan Taylor - 2014

MEMBERS' ORCHIDS IN FLOWER IN MAY



Encyclia cochleata 'Tinonee'
X *Encyclia cochleata* var *Alba*



Encyclia cochleata (outcross)

Lawrie Cowell has these two orchids in flower. Though they are both labelled *Encyclia cochleata* (now ***Prosthechea cochleata***) they are quite different. The left one is certainly *P. cochleata* but perhaps someone can identify the one on the right.



Don Hogan's lovely *Masdevallia Marguerita* 'Firewalker' (left). This orchid had two spikes when the fires were around but they died in the heat so it is nice that it is reflowering now. On the right is Don's *Thunia* which flowered on the shorter cane. He says, I grow my *Thunias* in a tray 2 inches deep; put gravel in the bottom of tray then fill with water & pile up "Super Growth" on top of the pot & when that is gone add another pile on top: they are gross feeders while growing. They are "swamp orchids", like *Phaius*, so put them in a shady spot on your orchid bench.





**MORE MEMBERS'
ORCHIDS IN
FLOWER IN MAY**

If you would like to join the virtual benching in June please send photo/s and the orchids name/s to Lynne by 24 May.

Brian Phelan

1. *Milt.* Earl Dunn
2. *Tricopilia marginata*
3. *Cattleya (Sophronitis) coccinea*
4. *Phalaenopsis amabilis*

Yvonne Young

5. *Stanhopea wardii*
6. *Den.* Angelline

Lynne Phelan

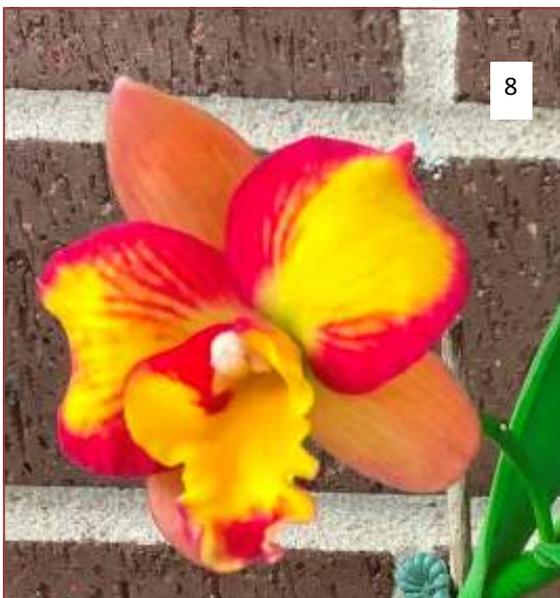
7. *Cattleya (Laelia) perrinii* var. *coerulea*

Val Starling

8. *Catt.* Fire Magic x *C.* Precious Jewel 'Ruby'

Sandra Ellis

9. *Cattleya (Laelia) schombergia*





WHEN TO REPOT

This cattleya is clearly due to be repotted. In fact, if I had been on the ball I should have done it when those new roots were just starting to break through the rhizome. Now I'll have to be ultra careful not to damage the very delicate growing tips when I put the plant into its new media.

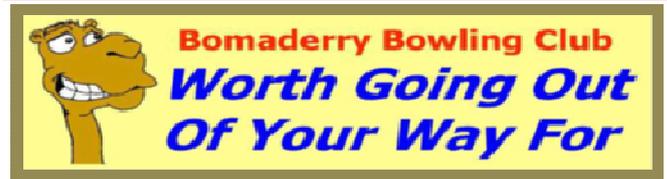
Repot ...

1. when the orchid has outgrown its container as this one has;
2. when the potting mix has broken down and doesn't have any air spaces left in it;
3. as soon as practical after you purchase a new orchid to ensure it is in the mix you prefer;
4. every 6 months or so for young, pre-flowering size plants as this keeps them moving;
5. IMMEDIATELY if the plants seems to be chronically sick!

Some general rules

- Orchids are best repotted when they are in active growth. Look for new leads or new roots.
- Keep a minimum of three pseudobulbs together (the back cuts may also be propagated).
- The goal is to minimize damage to the roots, especially the new, young ones, so stake the newly potted plant firmly so it doesn't wobble.
- Avoid using too larger pot.
- Avoid repotting in very cold weather or while the orchid is in its resting phase if it has one.

The Society
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DO YOU HAVE A PURPLE CHIN?

The title is of course incorrect as my chin is the same colour as the rest of my face but after speaking with several people over the years who know I am an aficionado of *Sarcochilus falcatus*, this is a question which I have been asked many times over the years.

The reference is of course to the variety of *Sarco. falcatus* which in a few rare instances actually displays the tip of the labellum (chin) in an unmistakable purple shade. I may have seen a photo or two with a purple chin in a rare article but it was some years ago and by accident, I managed to find a flower on a plant with this feature and more recently an entire plant with flowers of this type. I must confess to my poor vision as I have driven along this road several times when *Sarco. falcatus* was in flower but have failed to note this one particular plant and I have always considered myself to be more than adequate as sighting things of this nature when either driving or as a passenger.



The individual flower photo was taken four years ago but it was only 2019 I realised the rarity of this variation. I believed it existed much further north in NSW in the Barrington Tops as do a few other of our orchids but over the years I have come to learn there is often no hard line which is often used to say "it is limited to this altitude, latitude or habitat" and I am sure many orchid enthusiasts will have encountered a terrestrial, epiphyte or lithophyte which they would consider to be out of its normally expected region and that is the reason why we must keep on looking at every suspect rock or tree because one never knows what one will uncover and isn't that part of the reason we keep doing what we do.

Those who know my penchant for *Sarco. falcatus* have occasionally asked me if I have a purple chin but of course I do not have a plant of this type or a purple chin of my own, which could only be caused

by a severe bruise but as I do not involve myself in pubs or pub brawls, I prefer to limit myself to purple chin orchids.

This particular find was in a typical habitat tree in an almost rainforest setting at an altitude of 700m and a rainfall average of 1500mm per annum with the occasional drop of snow. The plant just happened to be over 300km from the Barrington Tops but the variant is unmistakable in shape and the measurement is 30mm across, although other plants in that tree and nearby came out at almost 40mm and with good shape as far as judging standards are concerned.



I have no knowledge of why this variant occurs or if it does so on an annual basis as I have mentioned, it has been five years since I first encountered such a plant and this visit was the first time I had returned since then. One reason is that my frequent orchid companion and the best orchid companion one could wish for died several

years ago and it was only my mention of the purple chin which prompted a friend to travel to this specific location to view this rarity, which as far as we were both aware is over 300km out of its known habitat range.

Fortunately, the tree is easily accessed and a photo was taken as well as one of me in the tree with the relevant orchid. To me this find was of great significance because as mentioned this is my favourite epiphyte and even though my immediate area is well supplied with *Sarco. falcatus* and I have photographed many populations and written about these experiences, some of which have been punctured with typical rainforest creatures such as leeches, ticks and the occasional carpet python or tiger snake. I have not experienced a purple chin here or anywhere within 300km, either south or north of this site, which will remain a very tight secret as I feel something this special must be allowed to continue as long as possible. I will also try to get to the site again next year out of natural curiosity to determine if other plants in the immediate area produce the purple chin as I am keen to watch whatever progress or spread is made by this particular variant.

Alan W. Stephenson

Louise's Shadehouse

I hope all our members and their families are staying safe in isolation during this Corona Virus crisis that we and everyone around the world are experiencing. Now that we all might have a little more time on our hands, I encourage you to write an item for our Newsletter. It can be about, for example - how you became interested in orchids, your favourite orchid/s, what you have in flower at the moment, your shadehouse, glasshouse or where ever you grow your orchids, whatever you like.

I would like to start the ball rolling with me, talking about my shadehouse and orchids.

My husband and I moved from Miranda in Sydney to Shoalhaven Heads in November, 2016 along with my 450 pots of orchids. We rented until we found a house that we liked and in September, 2017 we moved in to our home. We loved the house but the backyard was small so we demolished a 1/3 of our outside entertaining area and moved the clothes line in order to fit a shadehouse in. I then waited weeks for a local handyman to commit to erecting my shadehouse, but it all came to nothing. It was now December and the weather was warming up fast. My brother, Wal, came to my rescue and, although a printer by trade, he can turn his hand to most things. He offered to help me put it together – I became his labourer and together through scorching hot days working with galvanised pipe we did it and I am forever grateful to him. I must say, that he does not particularly share my passion for orchids and feels this orchid addiction of mine can be cured by a good dose of 'Roundup.'

My shadehouse is approx. 9 m. long by 6 m. wide, take out 2 ½ x 2 ½ metre square in one corner as we did not move our shed. I have 70% shadecloth covering most of the roof with 2 sheets of sun-tuff covering the remainder. My orchids receive sunshine for most of the day and in Summer I place another doubled layer of



the 70% shadecloth inside, loosely attaching it. My shadehouse is 2.40m high and I am glad that I made it that tall, as it enables me to hang a lot of my orchids. When hanging orchids, I try to find a place that they will not be hanging over the top of other orchids, so that when I am watering, or it rains, the plants underneath do not get a double dose. I also choose a spot where the hanging orchids will hopefully not shade other plants. My last resort for hanging plants is over the walkways, as anyone taller than myself, including my husband, Peter, always hit their heads on the hanging pots. (Peter's head seems to be a magnet for these pots.) My only regret after building my shadehouse is that I did not put a sloping roof on all of the top. When Winter hits with the cold and rain, it would be good to be able to put a cover over the top to stop my orchids from getting too wet. Without a slope the water would just pool on the covering at the weakest point.

I have included a photo of a tip I got from visiting George Birss's shadehouse years ago. It is of an upturned hanging wire basket hung from the mesh roof. From this basket you can hang a number of smaller orchids. I mainly use it for cymbidium seedlings as it gives them good air movement around their pots.



I have 9 mesh benches and 3 tiered mesh benches. Two of the benches and a tiered bench are under cover at one end of my shadehouse which are used mainly for flowering and repotting.

I am able to grow a number of different genera, cymbidiums, cattleyas, dendrobiums, coelogynes sarcochilus, stanhopeas, Aust. natives, a few bulbophyllums, and other miscellaneous orchids. I have nearly 3 benches of cymbidiums in their 3 sizes of standard, intermediate and miniature cymbidiums. At the moment I have 7 spikes on a cymbidium orchid I bought from member, Ron Findlater, 3 years ago, *Cym. Dave's Dream* x Tom Thumb. When I first saw it I thought how stunningly different it was with its tall spikes of burnt yellow flowers. Another favourite of mine is *Cym. Memoria Marvin Gaye 'Royale'* which is a pendulous miniature with dark yellow petals and a deep burgundy lip. It has won a few champion placings at shows but unfortunately for me, it seems to get rot very easily. I still have a few cymbidium orchids which were my father's from back in the 60s and 70s when his hobby was growing them for overseas export. Another of my father's orchids was a white cattleya that went without a name for a while until a Judge recognised it and now it goes by the regal name of *C. Lady Veitch*. My father use to say, "Never

sell any of this orchid, as it is a good florist orchid.” Well, when I got to 40 pots of it something had to give. I have given many plants of it away over the years but still keep a few in my collection. I think my father would have approved of that, as he was a generous man.

I like growing cattleyas and particularly enjoy seeing the large plants of *C. Little Susie* ‘Joy’ flower with beautiful sprays of purple flowers. This orchid is an old cross but to me the flowers just say – look – at - me! It has the species *C. bowringiana* in its parentage. I have a particular fondness for cluster cattleyas with their heads of beautiful flowers.



Probably the most stunning orchids I have are the South East Asian dendrobium species of *Den. densiflorum* with its egg yellow grape like flowers and *Den. thrysiflorum* with its yellow and white flowers and my absolute favourite *Den. Mousmee*, a beautiful hybrid of mauve and yellow flowers. These orchids flower around November but their flowers only last a week. I hang them on the south side of the shadehouse wall. In Summer they were hung about chest height, and as we have moved into Autumn, I have lifted them up higher so that they can enjoy the rays of Autumn light.

My specimen sized coelogynes - *C. flaccida*, *C. mooreana*, *C. ovalis*, *C. fimbriatum alba* and *C. Unchained Melody Alba* are all growing really well and seem to like being hung together in a protected corner, getting dappled light. Some plants just look better grown as a specimen with masses of flowers.

I have 3 stanhopea species, *S. nigroviolacea*, *S. wardii* and *S. graveolens*. The *S. graveolens* I bought from member Colin Marstin a few years back and it always rewards me with beautiful gold flowers. *S. nigroviolacea* with its burgundy and cream attractive flowers is always a reliable flowerer.



I think most of us have a few sarcochilus in our collections. These small Australian native orchids have been hybridised to achieve so many wonderful varied colours and are a very rewarding orchid to grow.

My soft cane dendrobiums have all grown a lovely lot of tall new growths over the Spring and Summer seasons. At the moment they are enjoying their last moments under the shade cloth before they are hung in the undercover area. They require very little water and no fertilizer during the colder months to avoid them growing keikis.

I do grow a few more different genera than I have mentioned but I can't name them all here. I know there are orchid growers with far better orchid collections than mine, but I am happy growing what I have, and enjoy looking at their flowers.

Louise Gannon
April, 2020

MORE MEMBERS' ORCHIDS IN FLOWER IN MAY



From Lynne's shadehouse

These are both *Dendrobium bigibbum* (aka The Cooktown Orchid) but the one on the left is a superior form. The petals and sepals overlap so it is quite 'round' in shape and the colour is quite intense. It is also considerably larger than the one on the right. Most advice says these need heat but I grow them in my unheated shadehouse. Provided they are kept dry in winter they flower beautifully every year.



Society Meetings 2020

18 May Cancelled

15 June TBA

Society Shows 2020

Winter Show 11-12 July

Spring Show 5-6 September

October Show 24 October

Missing orchids shows?

The American Orchid Society sent me a link to a virtual tour of the New York Botanical Gardens Orchid Show. It is 21 minutes and a bit 'over the top' but well worth a look if you are missing orchid displays. Parts of it reminded me of the display area at the Eric Young Orchids Foundation on Jersey. You can find it by searching for: [Virtual Tour of The Orchid Show: Jeff Leatham's Kaleidoscope » New York Botanical Garden.](#)

REPORT FROM COMMITTEE

Your committee is still working and the April meeting was conducted by email over a period of some days. The main items were:

1. Our Treasurer, Tom Gablonski, has resigned from the position for family health reasons but will stay on Committee.
2. Diane Slye has been appointed to the treasurer's position.
3. Bunnings have donated a \$500 gift card to the society to offset some of the loss of income from barbecues. Committee has not yet determined how this will be used for the society.
4. The April Auction was deemed a success with the addition of almost \$230 to Society income from orchid sales and commission.
5. Bond monies paid to the Bomaderry Community Centre for our future meetings will be held over until we are able to meet together again.
6. Committee passed a vote of thanks to President Louise for successfully finding the society an affordable, new venue for our meetings.
7. The Orchid Society of NSW has cancelled all judging allocations for shows until 30 June. As our Winter Show is 10-12 July we will have to see whether the BBC has reopened and shows can recommence by then.
8. Committee has updated all show schedules.
9. A Facebook page has been launched for the society: Shoalhaven Orchid Society Inc. It is a private page for SOS members only.
10. A new website is being built and will be managed by a society member when up and running.

Virtual Sales Table Members who have an orchid to sell* are invited to submit a photo and price along with contact details and to the editor. phelan.landb@gmail.com Please reduce the photo size to web/email size. Members interested in buying should contact the seller direct and make their own arrangements to exchange when Covid restrictions are lifted. The deadline for the June



newsletter is **24 May**. (Who remembers Empire Day? Also fondly remembered as 'Cracker Night'. Last held in 1958 so you'll probably need to have a Seniors' card to recall the fun and the mischief around the community bonfires!)

* It does not need to be in flower, just a strong, healthy plant.

FOR SALE



Laelia speciosa. Large plant but flowers going over now. \$20 Lynne Phelan 44478280.



Cattleya (Laelia) perrinii var. coerulea. This is a division of the plant on Page 3. It is fairly rare. The normal form has pink/lilac petals and sepals and a deep magenta lip. \$20 Lynne Phelan 44478280.

Looking for more sellers next month, please.