



From the President.....

From the President.....Tony Groube

Hopefully we'll be through lockdown, or at least have a 'freedom' date by the time this Newsletter is published. It's been a great time to catch up on chores, but a trying one at the same time.

I'm looking forward to coming out of the lockdown, with everyone vaccinated and maintaining the new "Covid norm" – probably masks, physical distancing etc. It'll be good to have some real, live contact.

We'll be up and running in next to no time. Stay safe – see you soon ~ Tony

**NEXT MEETING
AS SOON AS
COVID 19
ALLOWS**

From Editor Sue...

Last month we looked at how to grow Dockrillias on the South Coast of N.S.W.

This month we feature another beautiful Australian orchid.....

Dendrobium tetragonum and Graham Jackson, who grows them very well, has provided us with this interesting article.

Thank you Graham.

Growing Tetragonums on the NSW South Coast Graham Jackson

Tetragonums are a small to medium epiphytic Australian species. They grow from the Illawarra NSW to Cooktown QLD. Their canes have 4 angled sides widest in the middle which gives them a semi pendulous form.

I grow them high under 75% shade cloth where they receive good air movement. I keep them moist nearly drying between waterings. I fertilize at 1/2 strength every fortnight when I see new roots or canes forming August until the end of March.

I prefer to grow in hanging pots using a mix 50/50 small and medium bark. It helps me control the moisture the plant receives They also grow well mounted on Melaleuca with some bush moss to keep their fine roots moist. Flowers form from the end of the cane and nodes along the cane as it matures. I never cut off the small flower stems as sometimes next year's flowers form from them. They can flower several times a year. Want to expand your collection? I cut a mature cane from a plant and tie it with some bush moss along the sides to a tree fern mount. Lay down and keep moist. New plants form from the nodes along the cane. I remove the plants after a year when new roots are forming. They can be hard to reestablish but keep moist and feed them with some Seasol ½ strength every week until away. The old cane still produces new plants over a few years. Doesn't always work but worth a go.

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My favorite tetragonum subsp. cataractarum from Conner ranges central QLD

It is almost the end of flowering time for Cymbidiums with just a few late bloomers still to emerge. It seemed like a good opportunity to pose some questions to two of the Club's Members who have been successfully growing Cymbidiums for many years.....Liz Cleaver and Tony Groube.

Here are their responses:

Some vague responses to Sue's Questions of 2 September 2021

1 Stunted flower spikes on Cyms – probably, poor breeding. Might also be unbalanced fertiliser, starvation, thirst, poor growing conditions. (Can't think of this as a general occurrence.) Some crosses have shorter spikes than others – the breeding comes back into it.

2 Blackened leaf tips, cause – don't know, doesn't signify a great problem as far as we know, but may indicate roots are in trouble, may be over fertilised or too wet, or just poor air flow.

3 What to do with a pot full of back bulbs in centre of plant – NOTHING if plant is a Seedling and you want to show it, if and when it finally flowers (plant must be 'intact' or 'complete' to meet criteria.) The time to address back bulbs is on division of the plant, maintain at least one back bulb to the edge of the pot, per division.

4 Why do some plants have so many back bulbs – again it's probably in the breeding or poor culture.

5 How to increase number of flower spikes – don't know. Perhaps a high potassium fertiliser may do it, and do not over pot.

6 Frequency of fertilising/watering – no hard and fast rule. Some 'gun' growers say every ten days, but so much depends on the weather. Cool, damp spells, versus hot and windy dry spells, pot size etc. We supplement slow release fertiliser with every watering (Magamp or similar 'in line' fertiser.) The potting media plays a big part in watering requirements – some media is more moisture retentive than others.

7 Slow release fertiliser effectiveness – we believe so, but must be a 'controlled release' variety, which guarantees that it will not dump all its nutrients in one hit. We use a controlled release 8-9 month, High K variety, applied annually in Spring. (Ron Boyd when growing Cyms used 6 month controlled release – starting Spring, then overlapping with a second application to expire by start of following Winter – with success.)

8 Cause of yellowing leaves – old age, if all are pale it could be too much light. It could also come from an attack of sap-suckers! Often the first sign of 'boisduval' scale or Mealy Bug. Could indicate a root or bulb rot problem.

9 Back bulb propagation – clean husks from bulb, place upright in river sand to about a third to half of bulb depth, keep damp and don't forget to label.

10 Effective pest control – most effective are systemic insecticides, but these are frowned upon. Eco oil, Neem oil, Pyrethrum, Black Strap Molasses etc. are softer on the environment and personal health.

11 Snail control – a few strategically placed decoy stands of Agapanthus seem to do the trick for us. A few pellets of Defender do the trick if snail damage becomes a threat.

So much depends on light levels, spacing of plants, good air movement, right watering and fertilising regimes, and MOST IMPORTANTLY, VIGILANCE!!

Now the next thing to do is to hop on to the St Augustine Orchid Society site, to see if they provide similar advice/commentary to the above. And they provide it in SPADES! Thanks for seeking our advice Sue, but for 'the good oil' go to St Augustine if you have a search engine – you'll be amazed.

Liz and Tony, September 2021



This beautiful display of Dendrobiums belongs to Gayle and Ray Huddleston.

The star of the photo at the back, with 22 spikes, is *Dendrobium Jaydon* which is a cross between *Dendrobium Elegant Heart* x *Dendrobium speciosum*.

Often this cross shows more pink and purple from *Elegant Heart*, but this one has a creamy yellow colour which is probably a result of the particular *Speciosum* used in this cross.

It is magnificent!

Monthly Maintenance



- ◆ Make sure that the extra shade cloth you need for Summer is now in place.
- ◆ Keep the watering up now that the weather is warming. If you aren't sure if your watering regime is correct, the following description of orchid roots could help:
Plump white roots indicate a healthy orchid that's being watered correctly.
Shriveled grey roots indicate that the plant needs more water.
Shriveled spongy brown and black roots are a sign of rot, so ease off watering.
- ◆ Cymbidiums will soon benefit from being watered at night. They need an overnight drop in temperature to initiate their flower spikes.
- ◆ Repotting should still be ongoing. Don't forget to keep your tools sterilised. Pots can be re-used providing they have been soaked in a bleach solution to completely clean them.

Editor's Orchid Spotlight



Sometimes an orchid says 'Look at me' and that is certainly the case with this beautiful *Dendrobium* belonging to Jean Swindley.

It is *Dendrobium Eclipse* which is a cross between *Dendrobium Awesome* 'Big Best Deep Purple' and *Dendrobium speciosum* var. *curvicaule* 'Daylight Moon'.

A WARNING.....

Dendrobium beetles are on the move. Graham Jackson found 3 trying to get into his orchid houses in mid-September. A well sealed orchid house is the best way of protecting your plants from this very destructive insect. If you grow orchids outside or in an open house, constant inspection is necessary with a container handy to catch them as they drop. Spraying with Carbaryl will control them if you are happy to use this insecticide.

And this was posted on the Orchid Society of NSW FB site.

Panania....East Hills Orchid Society.

Dendrobium Beetle ☹

The last 2 summers Peter Wise has been watching our destructive beetle keeping an eye on what is happening. Peter Wise had plenty of beetle ☹ damage over the years. He noticed he had less problems in 2020-2021. This may be because he planted flowering Marigold plants to try and keep Fruit Fly off his veggies. Last summer he had a big pot of *Speciosum* and other *Dendrobiums* with new growths all outside with no damage at all, as well as 2 hanging baskets of *Crucifix* orchids.



Note, this is not guaranteed to be a cure for beetle damage but you may want to give it a go.

And finally a link to a very practical article by Ken Slump,
'The Art of Culling'
Some sound advice but could you follow it ?

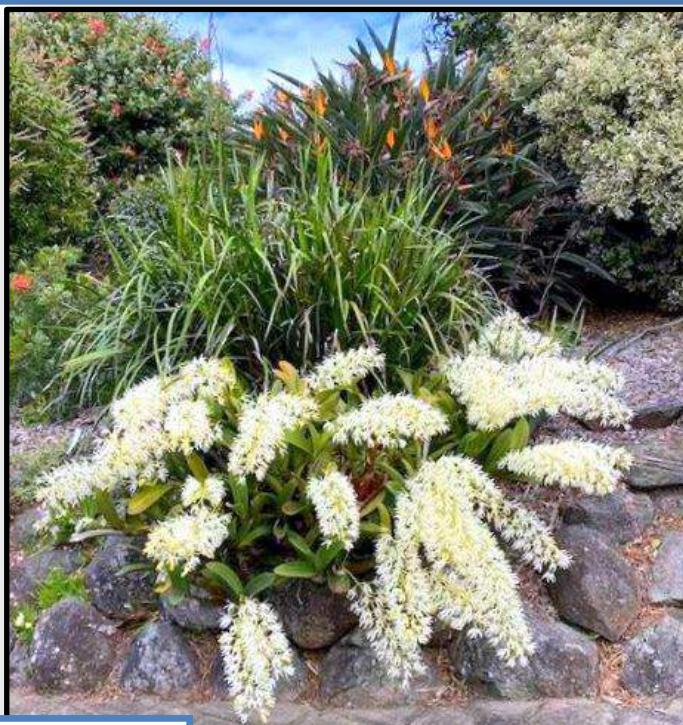
<https://www.orchids.org/articles/the-art-of-culling>



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Maria Kacarovski



Helen Marshall

FLOWERING NOW



Cristata

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D & D Hay