

THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN ORCHID BULLETIN

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE ORCHID SOCIETY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA
FOUNDED 1946. A MEMBER OF THE AUSTRALIAN ORCHID COUNCIL.

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NOVEMBER 2022

The next meeting of the Orchid Society of Western Australia (Inc.) will be held at the Manning Senior Citizens Activity Centre, Manning, on **Friday 25 November, 2022.**

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THIS MONTH'S MEETING

TESTING WATER QUALITY — LYNN BROOKS
Q&A — PREPARING ORCHIDS FOR SUMMER
REPOTTING A CATTLEYA — LINA PACCA

MEETING DATES

OSWA Committee: 7:30 pm Friday 2nd
General Meeting: 7:30 pm Friday 16th
(THIRD Friday!!!)

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General News

Birthdays

November: 2nd Aishya Ghose; 18th Trevor Burnett

December: 6th Val Seaman; 22nd Howard Tan; 23rd Cheryl Compagnone; 27th Maxine Godbeer

Best wishes to anyone else celebrating Birthdays or Anniversaries. To any member on the sick list we wish you a speedy recovery, and may you soon be well.

New Members

Welcome to Lydia Brazzale (Roleystone), Laura Herd (Kallaroo), Siew Tan (Atwell), John Cain (Riverton), and Bev Ruello (Floreat). We hope you have many rewarding years ahead with our Society.

This month's Meeting Item: Testing Water Quality, by Lynn Brooks

Water quality is one of the most important factors for orchid growing. This month, Lynn will bring to our meeting some equipment for testing the pH and salt content of water. If you would like your water tested for free, please bring samples in clean containers (such as Vegemite jars) that have an opening at least 5 cm in diameter. Samples can be 50-100 mL in volume but need to be at least 2 cm deep on the container, to cover the working parts of the measuring instruments. Samples that will be interesting to test include:

- tap water
- rain water
- bore water
- water that has dribbled out of an orchid pot after watering
- your standard liquid fertiliser solution (e.g., Strike Back Liquid made up as per the label)
- distilled or deionised water
- water from a reverse osmosis (RO) unit -- input water (which will probably be tap water)
 - output water ("RO water")
 - wastewater from the reverse osmosis unit

Please label your sample with your **name**, **suburb**, and **sample type**. Perhaps we will be able to construct a map to compare tap and bore water quality in different areas. Also, feel free to bring along any gadgets that you have for measuring water quality, to add to the discussion.

Club Plants for sale at the November GM

We recently purchased a club plant from The Hanging Garden orchid nursery in Victoria. The plant is a line-bred *Dendrobium kingianum* ('Pale Pale Mauve' x 'Waikivory Pink') so the flowers should be well-shaped, pastel pink, and of course fragrant. The plants will be available for purchase by members at the November GM, at a very reasonable price, so bring your money with you!

Thank you!

October and November have been busy! Thank you to all who helped out at the Potting Workshop, the Perth Garden and Outdoor Living Festival, and the Late Flowering Orchid Display. These events were all very successful ventures for OSWA again this year.



Dendrobium kingianum
'Pale Pale Mauve'
x 'Waikivory Pink'

Membership Subscriptions were due on 1 November!

\$26 double, \$21 single. Even though inflation is picking up and our expenses are increasing, the cost of membership has remained unchanged again this year — excellent value! For your convenience OSWA accepts payment by direct deposit (preferred method), cheque, or cash (paid at a general meeting). Direct deposit can be made via electronic banking or at any Westpac branch using the account information below. *If possible, please use direct deposit or cheque, to lessen stress and chaos at the general meetings.*

For direct deposit into OSWA's account:

Account name - Orchid Society of Western Australia Inc.
Bank - Westpac Bank, Booragoon, WA
BSB - 036069 Account Number - 457265
Reference - please use your name or phone number, to help us identify your payment.

For payment by cheque:

Make cheques payable to The Orchid Society of WA Inc. and bring them to a general meeting or post them to OSWA, 58 Gladstone Rd, Leeming 6149.

Orchid Doctor Sessions at General Meetings

Do you have a favourite orchid that is looking a bit sad? Not thriving? Not flowering? Has some strange malady that you can't identify? Bring your orchid along to a general meeting for discussion. Chances are, another member will have a solution to your orchid's woes.

December General Meeting - 16th December: Christmas party and Secret Santa

As part of our traditional December meeting, there will be a Secret Santa again this year. Please bring a plate of finger food to share for the party. For the Secret Santa, please bring a small wrapped gift to the value of about \$10. Everyone who brings a gift will receive a ticket to choose a gift from the pile during the meeting. Also, please note that to avoid being too close to the Christmas rush period, our December meeting will be a week earlier than usual, on **Friday 16 December**.

January General Meeting - Visit to the home of Ray and Peta Taylor - 27 January 2023

Ray and Peta Taylor have kindly offered to host us for our traditional home visit in January, which takes the place of our meeting at the Manning centre. A barbecue will be supplied. Members are requested to bring a salad or sweets to share, and its BYO drinks, and BYO chair if you wish to sit. Also, please bring a plant to donate for the raffle. More info, and a roster so we can coordinate the salads and sweets, will be available at the November and December general meetings, and in upcoming bulletins.

Intersociety Orchid Display and Workshop (ISODW): 5-6 August 2023

OSWA is running the ISODW for 2023. Trevor and Barbara and their team are already planning for this event but there is still a lot to do. How can you help? Here are two things that you can do right now:

(1) Suggest ideas for the Theme for the Displays. At every ISODW, there is a Theme for the Displays. In the Display competition, points are awarded for how well the display fits the Theme. Themes that inspire creativity and beautiful displays work best. Some suggestions so far: "Song titles"; "Orchids around town"; "Orchids outback"; and "Orchids at dinner". November may be your last chance to suggest a theme, so if you have an idea, email it to Harry asap, or bring it up at the November GM.

(2) Grow some plants for auction. At the ISODW in Busselton this year, there was a plant auction held during the ISODW dinner. Plants donated by members of the Busselton club were auctioned, and the auction raised a lot of money for the Busselton club. If we are to do something similar, we will need a bunch of interesting, quality, preferably uncommon orchids. If you have some divisions that you can donate, please nurture them over the summer and autumn so that they will be at their best for the auction in August 2023. The plants won't need to be in flower at the time of auction, but they will need to be in excellent condition (no pests, no black fungus spots on the leaves, not pot-bound, etc).

GENERAL ORCHID CULTURE NOTES FOR BIRAK (APPROX. DECEMBER/JANUARY)

The Orchid Society of Western Australia acknowledges that our meetings are held on the traditional lands of the Noongar people. Unlike the European calendar, the Noongar people describe the climate of Western Australia's South West as having six seasons, guided by what is happening and changing around us, rather than specific 'dates' on a calendar. This approach to describing Perth's climate is helpful for guiding our orchid related jobs for the year. Birak is the season of the young, and features rising temperatures and decreased rainfall. Easterly winds in the morning can be hot and dry, but the Fremantle Doctor is strongest this time of year, which provides some welcome relief for our orchids in the afternoon.

- ✓ Repotting should be complete by this time of year. Unless emergency circumstances require it, any repotting should be delayed until March. Try not to disturb the root system if performing any 'emergency surgery'. Plants in older mix that probably should have been repotted sooner will benefit from application of dolomite lime to help balance the pH and prevent the decomposing media from becoming too acidic
- ✓ With increasing temperatures, extra shade cloth may need to be applied. Be guided by the colour of your orchids leaves—plants in ideal light will have light green leaves. Leaves that turn yellow or red are receiving too much light, and plants with dark green leaves are producing more chlorophyll to compensate for insufficient light. Ensure any holes/gaps in shade cloth are addressed or plants are likely to burn.
- ✓ Most orchids will have new growths well under way by now, so keeping up the fertilizer regime is important. The 'weakly, weekly' approach is a good guide for liquid fertilizer, where 'weakly' usually means quarter to half strength. Slow release pellets can also be used, but some pellets release their contents in a temperature dependent manner and can 'dump' large amounts of fertilizer on hot days. For this reason, it's best not to just apply them to the surface of the mix where they receive sun—tap the pot so they settle into the mix a little, and avoid placing them where they have the potential to burn a new flush of new root tips.
- ✓ Remember that fertilizer application needs to go hand in hand with increased watering, especially for newly repotted orchids that have a fresh, free draining mix that doesn't hold as much moisture as older mix. Remember to water orchids heavily- water should run through the bottom of the pot to flush out any excess salts. Try to grow plants like bromeliads and groundcovers under the orchids—these will absorb any excess fertilizer runoff, help create a frog friendly environment (insect patrol) and improve humidity in the growing space.
- ✓ If you have a variety of pot sizes, you will need to ensure that the smaller pots do not dry out too quickly. A simple solution is to double pot, so the final size pots are all the same. By this I mean placing the smaller pots into a larger pot which is filled with compost which encircles the smaller pot—this keeps the smaller pot (and the root system of the plant) cool, and slows the rate at which it dries out.
- ✓ With warmer weather, check your plants and the surrounding area for mealy bugs, ants and other bugs that may decide to move into the cooler conditions of a shade or glass house where greater moisture content is available. It is much easier to get rid of the pest when there are only a few, rather than letting them multiply, which makes the task removing them harder. Snails and slugs are less active at this time of year.

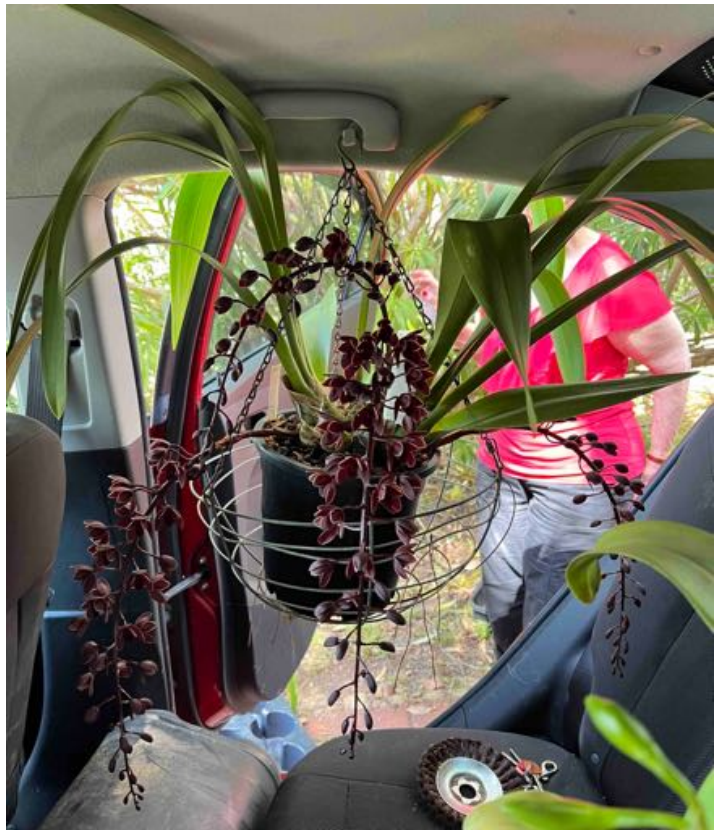
CYMBIDIUM CULTURAL NOTES FOR BIRAK (APPROX. DECEMBER/JANUARY)

The new seasons leads are well underway now and during the next couple of months the growth will be rapid. Regular fertilizing will help push these growths along, remembering that cymbidiums are heavier feeders than most other orchids. Liquid fertilizing once a week or once a fortnight with a product such as Strike Back for Orchids is ideal. If you are not sure how much fertilizer you should apply, then always err on the lighter side. It's far better to give the plants two applications of half strength fertilizer than one dose that is too strong. Slow release pellets, such as Strile Back for Orchids pellets, can be applied when there is not enough time for regular liquid fertilizing. Increased fertilizing goes hand in hand with increased watering, and cymbidiums should not be allowed to dry out under any circumstances. Plants

in free draining bark mix should be watered every day, and during heat waves, twice a day. Cymbidium flower spike development is triggered by nocturnal drops in temperature (a drop of at least 13 °C is ideal), so many excellent cymbidium growers water or mist their plants in the evening through summer to help drop the temperature.

This is a time of year when there are not a lot of cymbidiums in flower in Perth. Those that are in flower tend to have small pendulous flowers, including our Australian native cymbidiums and their hybrids. Pendulous cymbidiums are difficult to transport, but see the photo for a tip from Lynn—there is no excuse to not bring these beauties to a meeting!

Summer is also the time when Red Spider Mite and Two Spotted Mite will pose a threat. These mites love hot, dry conditions, especially if there is little or no air movement. Controlling mites is important because these pests can spread pathogens through an orchid collection. The actual mites are very small and hard to see without a good magnifying glass or microscope. Watch for evidence of mites on the underside of the leaves of your cymbidiums. It will look like a very fine spider's web all over the underside of the leaf, but it won't come off if you rub it. If possible, ensure the undersides of the leaves get thoroughly wet when you water your plants. It may be necessary to increase the space between pots



to allow this to happen. There are lots of miticide sprays available. Most are 'kill on contact' sprays that need to be applied once to kill the adult mites, then again 10 days or so later to kill any newly hatched mites. It is imperative to read and follow the instructions on the pack, and follow all the safety precautions, otherwise it won't just be the mites that are feeling crook.

CATTLEYA CULTURAL NOTES FOR BIRAK (APPROX. DECEMBER/JANUARY)

Some hot weather has finally arrived. With the onset of hot dry conditions, examination of your plants will show the development of new growths, which will elongate quickly. A fertilizer programme will be beneficial to push these growths along. Quarter or half strength Strike Back for Orchids liquid applied weekly is a good all-round fertiliser to meet these requirements, or the Strike Back for Orchids pellets applied 4 to 6 weekly if you don't have the time to liquid feed. The aim should be to produce big fat bulbs without inducing the appearance of further weak new growths. Cattleya orchids become stressed and stop growing in heatwave conditions (consecutive days above 35 °C), so in these conditions it is best to withhold fertilizer. Adding shade cloth layers and misting the floor of the shade house to drop temperature and increase humidity are good strategies to help plants cope in these hot, dry conditions. New growths should be watched and trained into an erect position before they mature off, so that when flowers appear, they are well displayed.

PAPHIOPEDILUM CULTURAL NOTES FOR BIRAK (APPROX. DECEMBER/JANUARY)

The Paphiopedilum growing season will now be fully in progress. The plants should be producing new roots that will support the new growths, which should be developing strongly. Remember that paphiopedilums like lower light than other orchids, and enjoy humid conditions with good airflow. Additional shade cloth and misting the floor of the shadehouse in hot conditions can help keep plants happy in the heat.

Paphiopedilums are often in smaller pots than other orchids, and these can dry out very quickly. Paphs do not have bulbs to store moisture, and cannot afford to dry completely in hot conditions. Let's look

after our plants over our Christmas break by:

- checking to ensure good air movement
- misting to assist with maintaining humidity, especially in the glasshouse
- weekly fertilizing with a dilute liquid fertilizer, such as Strike back for Orchids liquid
- checking to ensure plants are not overcrowded
- checking for pests and treating if necessary
- keeping the area clean of dying leaves or other detritus
- checking all plants to see if there are any signs of stress
- increasing watering to prevent paphs from drying out
- watering in the early morning before the sun is too high
- watching and controlling your shading.

Minutes of the General Meeting of The Orchid Society of WA (Inc.) held in the Manning Senior Citizens Activity Centre, Manning, on Friday 28th October 2022

Welcome: 7:40 pm

Apologies and attendance: as per register

Presentation: Fertigation. Shaun Hoffmann demonstrated the Ez-Flo fertigation system and did a Q&A session. The ease of the product installs and the fact that it saved time and provided consistent flow of fertiliser to the plants appealed to many. Being able to access someone in WA was also a bonus. He has given OSWA members 10% off if they bought before end of December. Thank you Shaun!

Correspondence: Correspondence was noted. There was no contentious business arising.

Moved Valerie C, seconded Keng L that the correspondence and business arising be accepted. Carried.

Financial report: Presented by Sheelagh H. Moved Sheelagh, seconded Jacqui B that the financial report be accepted. Carried.

General Business:

Nantha presented two orchids for scrutiny.

One was a *Cymbidium* which looked green and thriving, but its leaf tips were black. Courtney suggested that there was something in the water that the orchid didn't like. He and Ray also pointed out that the leaves were long and strappy and very dark, indicating the plant needed more light...a lot more light. They suggested repotting the plant in fresh bark and placing it in a different location. Ray also said to get it done asap as the flower buds should be forming soon and the plant might possibly flower if it was in a better location. (On a side note, Helen told noted that the plant was originally one of hers and offered to help report! Thank you Helen!)

The second orchid was a *Miltonidium* Bartley Schwartz which looked terrible. The leaves looked burnt and there were several back bulbs. Looking at the mix, Courtney suggested that the plant had been in the pot too long and desperately needed re-potting. Rauly also pointed out that the base of the pot had calcification, suggesting the mix needed changing as there was too much salt in the mix. Courtney went through how to repot, including dipping the plant after cleaning the roots in a very weak bleach solution. He suggested soaking the plant in the solution for several minutes, which would kill any mealy bugs and other pests. He also said to use a fungicide to clean up any cuts before repotting. Finally, Courtney gave a general guide re bark size. Orchids with fine roots like *Cattleya*, should be potted with larger bark and those with larger roots like *Cymbidium* should be potted in smaller bark. (Editor's comment: This advice about root thickness vs bark size seems counter-intuitive and requires further discussion!)

Raffle and Door Prizes: Arnold, Neelia, Dawn, Laura, Tara, Lynn, Courtney, Enid, Bill

Open popular vote: Courtney Rogasch with *Angraecum (sesquipedale x superbum)*.

Novice popular vote: Marian M with *Cattleya* unknown. Mariam fertilizes with a soluble fertilizer in rainwater. This is an orchid that came from Bunnings.

More from Ez-Flo

Unfortunately we could not get the TV talking to the laptop at the October meeting, so our guest speaker Shaun Hoffmann was not able to show us his video presentation on the Ez-Flo fertigation system. Shaun has made the video available online at <https://app.vidstep.io/watch/yxhIx5FkeMxH9gbYTael>. Further information is available at www.ezflo.com.au. Shaun has also offered 10% discount for purchases by OSWA members:

This is your 10% off voucher code for The Orchid Society.

Valid until 1st Dec.

Discount code, 10% off Sitewide = **ORCHID10**

MONTHLY PLANT COMPETITION (OCTOBER 2022)

OPEN

1A	(1)	1	Courtney Rogasch	<i>Cattleya walkeriana forma tipo</i>
		2	Ray Taylor	<i>Encyclia alata var. majus</i>
1E	(1)	1	Courtney Rogasch	<i>Slc Trick or Treat 'Orange Magic' AM/AOS x self</i>
2A	(1)	1	Harry Ashton	<i>Cymbidium canaliculatum</i>
3C	(2)	1	Ray Taylor	<i>Paphiopedilum Green Grixes x Hsinying Foam</i>
		2	Ray Taylor	<i>Paphiopedilum Yi-Ying 'Morning Sun'</i>
3D	(2)	1	Howard Tan	<i>Paphiopedilum Yang Ji 'Diamond'</i>
		2	Howard Tan	<i>Paphiopedilum Lady Isabel Xantium</i>
4A	(1)	1	Tara Peeters	<i>Dendrobium linawianum</i>
4D	(1)	1	Ray Taylor	<i>Dendrobium Gloucester Charm 'Keith'</i>
5D	(1)	1	Malcolm Davis	<i>Phalaenopsis unknown</i>
5E	(1)	1	Tara Peeters	<i>Phalaenopsis unknown</i>
7A	(2)	1	Maxine Godbeer	<i>Angraecum viqueii</i>
		2	Ray Taylor	<i>Vanda merillii</i>
8B	(3)	1	Helen Stretch	<i>Sarcochilus Rosella 'Spotty' x Sarcochilus Kulnura Absolute 'Dot'</i>
		2	Helen Stretch	<i>Sarcochilus Fitzhart H9 x Sarcochilus Fitzhart 769 'Red Flush'</i>
		3	Helen Stretch	<i>Sarcochilus Judith Snowy x mole x Jennifer Joy 'Poached EGG'</i>
10B	(1)	1	Tara Peeters	<i>Serapias olbia</i>
11A	(1)	1	Ray Taylor	<i>Phragmipedium 'Nicholle Tower'</i>

NOVICE

15A	(1)	1	Alan Rowe	<i>Epidendrum nocturna</i>
15E	(2)	1	Alan Rowe	<i>Cattleya unknown</i>
		2	Marion MacFetridge	<i>Cattleya unknown</i>
15F	(1)	1	Alan Rowe	<i>Epicattleya Rene Marques x Ruth Free Spirit</i>
18E	(1)	1	Enid Chelva	<i>Dendrobium unknown (nobile kind softcane)</i>
19B	(1)	1	Nelia Farquharson	<i>Phalaenopsis unknown</i>
19C	(1)	1	Nelia Farquharson	<i>Phalaenopsis unknown</i>
23B	(1)	1	Alan Rowe	<i>Dendrobium Ella Victoria Leaney x Dendrobium speciosum var. grandiflorum 'Mt Larcom Gold'</i>
24B	(1)	1	Keng Leow	<i>Bifrenaria harrisonae</i>



Novice popular vote

Phalaenopsis unknown
grown by Nelia Farquharson



Open popular vote

Encyclia alata var. majus
grown by Ray Taylor



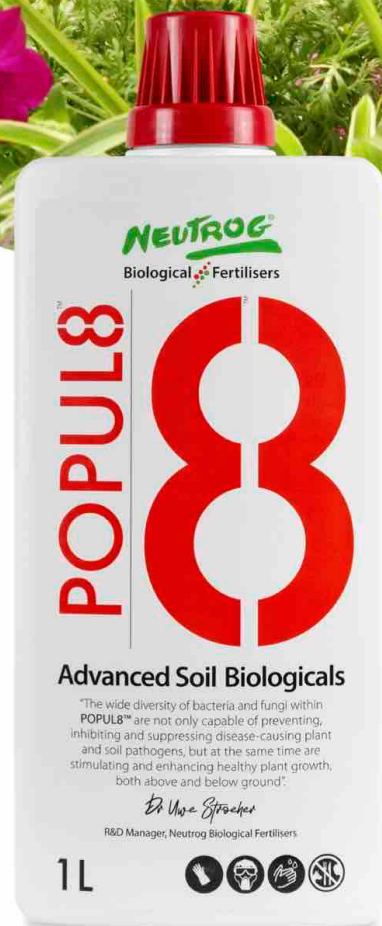
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