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Next Meeting : Monday, 18th July, 2016

Venue : The Lindfield Community Centre, corner of Bradfield Rd and Moore Avenue, West Lindfield.

There will be no **Culture Class** this month, to allow time and space to set up the photographic competition, and to allow members to review the entries.

The main **meeting commences at 8pm**. After the tea break, our competition judges will announce the winner and review some of the entries to give us an insight into the things that were good or that perhaps could have been better. Our modern cameras give us amazing abilities to take high quality photos these days, even on just point and shoot. Those auto settings are very sophisticated. However, I suspect that we will all benefit greatly from a few tips on the artistic side, framing the shot, and things like selecting the direction and angle of the light etc.

I know we aren't a photography club, but we all use cameras and this is a good chance to pick up a few tips.

Our **supper volunteers** for July are **John and Jean Hocking**. Thanks for helping yet again.

Best of Evening Species – *Vanda tessellata* - grown by Garrie and Lesley Bromley

This unusual coloured treasure is found in warm, humid, tropical forests in Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and Myanmar. The Orchid Species Photo Encyclopedia says it is found up to 1500m but other sources say 1500 feet (or 450m). I suspect the latter is right.

It is quite a beautiful thing close up. The name tessellata refers to the lattice like pattern in the sepals and petals. In the best clones it is quite exquisite. This is a medium size plant that should get to about 60cm or more in height with a leaf span of 40cm. The shortish inflorescence is about 20cm with 10 to 15 very pretty 5cm tessellated flowers. The tessellations are usually a pale ochre brown but some are more blue/grey and other colour forms also exist. In some cases the sepals and petals are so strongly coloured that the tessellations are essentially invisible and the segments appear either a pale brown or a bluish grey. There is also an albino form.

I have never tried to grow *V. tessellata* because it is another that is more suited to a constantly warm, moist environment, but Garrie and Lesley seem to have their culture formula for Vandas down pat. They regularly bring in beautifully flowered Vandaceous orchids, and presented so well, that I have been tempted into trying again and again, only to fail every time. There are some I grow moderately well, but only the slightly hardier, more forgiving types. Ah well, you can't win 'em all.



very dark form



pale brown form



var alba



tessellata "Fuchs Indigo" AM



"Robert" AM

Congratulations yet again Garrie and Lesley.

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Society News (if anyone has a news item, please phone Jim on 9476 3383, or email at jimbrydie@bigpond.com)

1. Old Bark bags? – to help us supply the ½ bags of bark for the raffle, Anne is looking for some clean, empty bark bags. Can anyone help? Please phone Anne on 9449 6860.

2. Suppers – the suppers at our meetings are supplied by you – the members. We don't ask you to bring a huge plate of sweets. To foster a nice variable selection it is best if many members each bring a small plate. Please contribute.

3. Photo competition – Photograph Competition at the July Meeting.

Don't forget, entries must be notified in advance. We have now decided it is to be a minimum of one week before the meeting. Entries should be sent by email as Graeme will be away for a short time before the meeting and may not respond immediately. The contact is mohr48@optusnet.com.au

Rules (a) Entries must be an original photograph, taken by the member (limit of 2 photographs per membership).

(b) Exhibits to be handed to Graeme by 7.15pm on the night of our July meeting (Mon 18th July)

(c) All exhibits must feature an orchid as the main subject, and be presented suitable for displaying. Exhibits are not to have been awarded a prize previously at the Ku-Ring-Gai Orchid Society or the St Ives Orchid Fair.

(d) Maximum size of exhibit is A4 size (about 30cm x 21cm).

(e) Name of the exhibitor is to be placed on the back of the exhibit. Exhibits will be allocated a unique number on hanging, the allocated number will be placed on the exhibit.

JUDGING: judges will be appointed by the committee, judges decisions are final. No debate will be entered into. Results will be announced on the night. There will be two prizes. **A Judges verdict**, and **a Members choice**. A \$15 sales table voucher will be given to each. Members to convey their choice to Graeme before the end of the tea break.

4. St Ives Fair – As you know, we are one of the 4 clubs that run the fair, and we also put on one of the displays in the display hall. We need your support and your help with both tasks.

(a) **The Volunteers Roster** - Last meeting we passed around rosters asking for helpers to man the event. There was some response – thank you for that, but we need more. Maybe you weren't at the last meeting, maybe you were reluctant to commit so far ahead, but please, every member should put their name down for at least one 3½ hour shift. If you do a shift, you get to wander the show free of charge for the rest of the day. We need people to do security in both halls, people to help on the sales table, and people to help at the front doors. The roster managers will allocate you to where they need you, but, if for example, you have a problem standing up for that long, let them know.

When the lists come around next meeting **Put your name down**.

And finally, there is usually a strong preference for volunteers to put themselves down for a roster on the first day. Everyone wants to come early while the flowers are at their best and the vendors stalls are fully stocked, **but PLEASE members, this is a three day event and we need your help all three days**. Be realistic.

(b) **Plants for our display** - We know that many of our members also belong to other societies. Many traditionally support the 'other' society in displays, **but can we ask even those to find a couple of plants for us as well?**

Offering your plants for our display is entirely voluntary of course, but the number of members currently contributing plants to our displays is alarmingly small compared to the number of members who bench every month at meetings.

Set up day is Thursday and we need both flowers and foliage. They need to be there by 9am Thursday 18th Aug.

For members who have trouble getting their plants to the show, we have some capacity to transport them for you but if you can get them there yourself it is very helpful. The set up team is being led by Pauline Onslow. If you need help with transport, please phone Trevor or Pauline on 9477 3516 to see what arrangements can be made.

(c) **If you are displaying orchids, we also need you to fill in a "nomination form" (supplied with this bulletin)**. It is a simple sheet to record your name, and the names of your orchids, to ensure that we know who owns which plants when they are judged. You never know, you may even win a prize, and **the form makes sure we know who to give the money to**. A copy of the Nom. form will be sent to you with this bulletin.

(d) **You also need to mark each pot clearly with your name or initials** so that it comes back to you. Sometimes the pull down process on Sunday is a mad-house. Labelled pots help us sort which plants belong to who in a hurry.

(e) **Grooming your plants** - Finally, to show off your plants to their best, please trim off dead or badly damaged leaves, and stake the flowers as they develop to ensure they stand up properly and face the viewer as best you can.

5. Knox Grammar School Garden Festival – Friday 9 Sept. – We are holding a stall at this event. If any member would like to help on the day with personal presence or plants, please contact Kevin Crocker on 9484 7072

Orchid dates

12-14 Aug (fri/sat/sun), National Orchid Extravaganza (Cymbidiums), The Centre - 1 Pellitt Lane, Dural (Entry off Pellitt Lane Dural. This is a great show with many interstate sales stalls. Put it on your calendar.

19-21 (fri/sat/sun), August 2016 - St Ives Orchid Fair - St Ives Showground – **"the Biggest one of all"**

9 Sept (fri) – Kuringai Orchid Society stall at Knox Grammar school Garden Festival

22-25 Sept (Thursday to Saturday), the combined Berowra and Kuringai Orchid society's show at Hornsby Westfield

Best of the Evening Novice – Cym. Death Wish ‘Royale’ growers Janine and Dennys Angove



I have always liked the “different” orchids, and boy, is this one different. It is a stunner and came from virtually our own backyard. It was created by Kevin Hipkins of Royale Orchids up at Peats Ridge, just outside Sydney.

Death Wish is a really interesting cross. The parents are Cym. Pywacket and Cym, Disney Girl, each of which contains 50% of that wonderful species Cym tracyanum, and the tracyanum influence dominates.

Tracyanum has a striking flower with a nice upright spike and about 15 (12cm) flowers. The flowers have somewhat narrow segments but are boldly coloured with red stripes on a cream to green background. Another unique and pleasing character is its unusual perfume which smells very similar to apricot fruit.

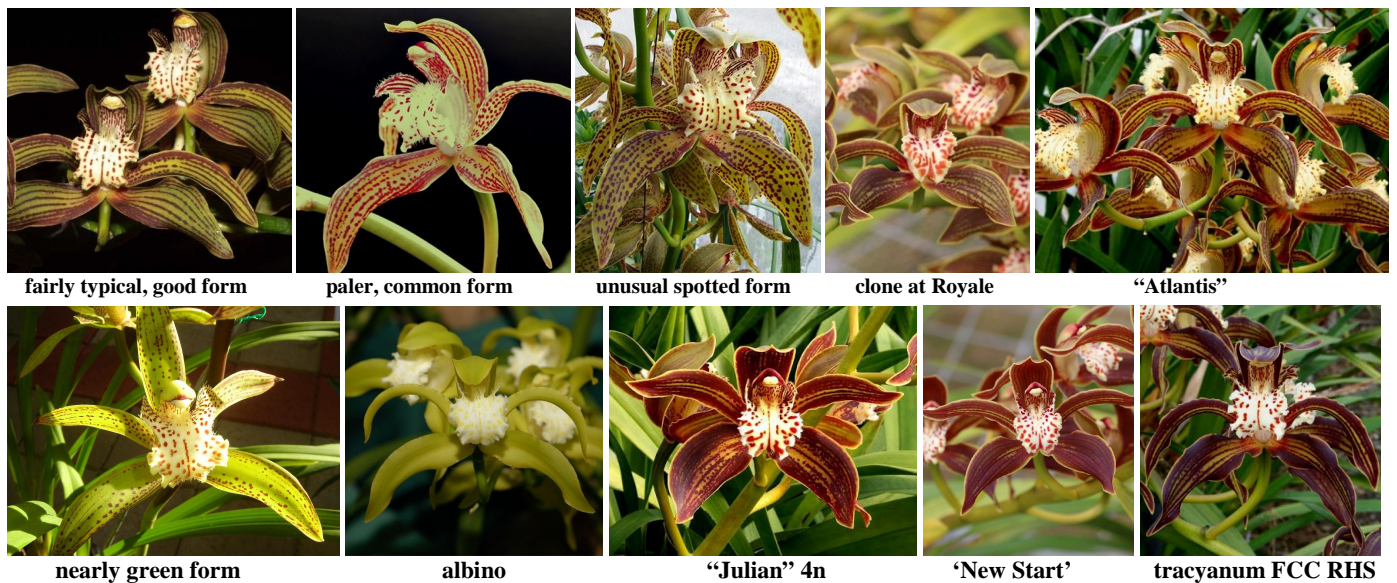
You will often see this species name spelled “traceyanum” with an “e” which is not correct. The species was named in honor of its owner Mr. HA Tracy. It was first described as a species in the Gardeners' Chronicle of 20 December 1890 and the name was published as Cymbidium tracyanum. Unfortunately, the following year, in Williams' Orchid Grower's Manual, the description of the species appears again but with the owners name given as AH Tracey and the plant name given as Cymbidium traceyanum. Williams work was later copied by Veitch in his Manual of orchidaceous Plants (1893), and as these two publications were regarded as the bible by orchidists, the error was subsequently proliferated. (reference <http://www.orchids.it/il-genere-cymbidium/>)

Like most species, the colours in tracyanum can vary a bit and I have seen many different individuals during the 40 years I have been growing orchids. The most popular always seem to be the ones with darker colours – usually having a more intense green background and darker red stripes, but there are many variations. The most common types seem to be the paler ones with a more yellowish cream background and paler red stripes. But, when I did a bit of research for this article, I must admit that I was quite surprised at just *how* different some of them can be.

I am only guessing, but based on what I have seen over the years, I think that some of the current very dark forms are the result of man made line breeding, and even artificial chromosome doubling, but that doesn't mean they all are. There are certainly records of very different forms going way back before man started playing his laboratory games.

In the small gallery below, I have borrowed a few pictures from the internet to show you some extent of today's variations within the species. When you see some of these newer types, it is easy to see where the inspirations for eye catchers like Death Wish came from, but I would never have imagined it in all the years I have grown tracyanum.

(10 different clones of tracyanums)



However, getting back to Death Wish, lets look more closely at its parents Disney Girl and Pywacket. Both were developed by Andy Easton's Geyslerland Orchids in NZ but were registered in California. Disney Girl by Mrs Patrice Gomes in 1992, and Pywacket by Eleanor Caughlan of California in 1996.

Disney Girl's parents are tracyanum and “Robin”. We can never know which clones were used, but as you can see from the pictures at the right, Robin was an unusual cross in itself with an almost petaloid appearance and strong speckling in all segments. The introduction of tracyanum didn't improve the shape but seems to have intensified the spotting, and Disney Girl is certainly an attractive orchid in its own right.



Robin 'Freckles' Disney Girl

Pywacket is another “different” orchid. Its parents are Tethys and tracyanum. Tethys was famous in its day for the dark colour of many clones, and its very dark lips. It was bred from earlier dark reds Cymbids like Khyber Pass, and Volcano. Again, we don’t know which clones the hybridist used, but the samples at the right give you a fair idea of what was involved. “Brenda Starr” was maybe the darkest of the Tethys but most had that fantastic full red lip you see in Brenda Starr. I would imagine that crossing Tethys with tracyanum might have been expected to intensify the red colours before further crosses were used to improve shape, but I am only guessing. Perhaps Mr Easton had already imagined the wonderful dark, spotty, but open flowers Pywacket delivered.



Pywacket Heathrich Hills Pywacket (sdorchids) Tethys ‘Brenda Starr’

Combining Pywacket and Disney Girl was a stroke of genius we can thank Kevin Hipkins for, and he certainly didn’t do it to get a full round shape standard Cymbidium. Since Death Wish was registered in 2001, it has been a sensation and growers could hardly get enough of it. There have been 4 clones given awards. “Tiger Jade” and “Peats Ridge” have an HCC, “Royale” and “Speckled Spectre” have an AD. I can’t find a picture of Tiger Jade but here are 5 clones to show some of the range. However, I must warn you that in looking at pictures of the clones, there has been a huge colour and pattern variation within supposed pictures of the same clone. Whether this is due to growing in different conditions such as brighter light or more shade, or just the photography, I can’t say. Just be aware that if you buy one, it may not flower for you exactly the same as these pictures.



“Dark Desire”

“Speckled Spectre”

“Saratoga”

“Peats Ridge”

“Royale”

I am not sure whether I should call it the “Death Wish genre” or perhaps the “Pywacket genre”, (which came first, the chicken or the egg), but this genre has sparked a range of similarly ‘different’ orchids that I am sure many growers find irresistible. I had intended to go on and discuss more of the kind but I have just about used up my colour picture space allowance this month in this one piece so perhaps I will reserve that for next time.

Congratulations on another Best of the Evening Dennis. It was flowered beautifully and don’t be too put off by Garrie’s advice on stake tying, it wasn’t being put up for an award and they all need support for transport.

note: Williams Orchid Growers Manual Edition 7 can be read online at biodiversitylibrary – just google the book name

Best of the Evening Hybrid – Vascostylis Tristar Gold AM/AOC - grown by Garrie and Lesley Bromley



You have to admit that these modern Vandas are eye-catching.

Tristar Gold was developed, and registered in 2004, by Taiwan Tristar Orchids. Its parents are Ascocenda Fuch’s Sunset and Vascostylis Shigenori Yamanaka. It is a complex mix of 9 species going back at least 9 generations but interestingly, 3 species provide 75% of the genes. Flower size comes mainly from its 25% Vanda sanderiana but the other two key contributors are perhaps surprising. They are 25% Rhynchostylis coelestis which has pendent foxtail racemes of small, gorgeous, blue and white flowers, and the other is Ascocentrum miniatum, a sort of mini Vanda with upright spikes of small yellow or orange flowers.

Most of these Vandaceous hybrids are warm growers that demand good light and high humidity. They are the essence of a wet growing epiphyte in that they prefer to grow with their roots in the air and be rained on regularly. In areas like Sydney, our winters are too cold and our humidity too low. They can be grown of course, but they generally need a protected, enclosed growing house, air movement, and regular water and fertiliser. When you visit growers in Queensland, you see these orchids grown the way they prefer. In Cairns for example, they grow them just hanging under shade cloth in a basket with either a very open mix like scoria, or no mix at all. In the greater warmth & humidity, they grow like rockets with absolute curtains of roots around the plant. They put our southern plants to shame.

It takes experienced growers like Garrie and Lesley to show us how delicious Vandas can be when they are grown and flowered well. Congratulations Garrie and Lesley – a beautiful orchid.

Lockhartia, an interesting Oncidium Relative

Very few orchids are grown as foliage plants but have you ever seen more interesting foliage than this? - and it has flowers too.

The genus *Lockhartia* is a close relative of *Oncidium*. There are about 28 species, all found in the tropics from Mexico down through Central America and also the top of South America. As a genus, they occur in a variety of habitats from the hot lowlands to the cooler high elevations, but mostly in wet areas. We only see a few species here in Australia, and the ones most common in collections here are *L. oerstedii* and *L. imbricata* which are both cooler growing types.

However, I have grave suspicions about the names we see on the labels of *Lockhartia* species these days. The trouble with *Lockhartia* is that the plants all look pretty much the same.

There are a few species that have particularly distinctive foliage, but mostly, the foliage is not a diagnostic factor in determining one species from another and to illustrate the point, I have personally seen quite different looking foliage on several plants of one species. The differences were enough to make me think I had separate species, until they all flowered, and proved to be the same. Some species are bigger than others, but there is also a big variation in size between individuals of each species so that can't be used.

So what is it that separates one species from another? Well perhaps we need to start with the definition of a species. There are many slight variations on this but essentially, it is : - a population of similar individuals in nature that interbreed, but are reproductively isolated from other populations. The isolation referred to is usually based on geographical isolation, but with orchids especially, it may be that compatible species that occur in the same area, are separated by flowering in different seasons or because some idiosyncrasy of the flower (shape, colour, or form) means that they are pollinated by different insects and thus can never interbreed.

Interestingly, most plants other than orchids, produce huge volumes of pollen on huge numbers of flowers all at the same time as a strategy to try and make sure that at least some pollen gets to a fertile ovary. Orchids on the other hand, have evolved a different strategy. They produce their pollen in massed waxy clusters, and have narrowed their relationship with the pollinating insect, usually to a single species, to try and ensure that their pollen gets transferred all in one go and only to another flower of the same species. Clever little devils aren't they. But, this parallel evolution linking them with a particular species of insect is a dangerous one as well. If the insect gets wiped out, the orchid species might die out too.

Hybrids between different species do occasionally occur in nature but these are quite rare. They usually do not breed on further but in some cases the hybrid may even eventually be absorbed back into the base population of one species or the other, depending on its characteristics.

Which brings us back to what differentiates *Lockhartia* species. I was unable to find a comprehensive identification key for the *Lockhartia* species but I did find one that used a combination of two sets of differentiators. One set depended on where the subject plant came from (geographic separation), which isn't much use if you are dealing with a plant in a collection here in Australia, and the other set was the differences in the form of the flowers, such as lip shape, lip colour, or the presence or characteristics of oil bearing nodules on lip callus. Differences in flower form (or the oils it produces) are obviously related to which species of insect it attracts. Beyond that I leave the details to your imagination but the pictures below give you some appreciation the variations in flower form.



Lockhartia lunifera



L. oerstedii

L. lunifera

L. verrucosa

L. imbricata

L. micrantha

These are just 5 representatives to show you some of the more easily recognizable differences, but be warned, there are also differences between flowers within any given species as well. So, for example, don't expect every 'oerstedii' to look exactly like this one.

The problem with *Lockhartias* is that from a slight distance many species can be easily mistaken for one another. Nearly all the flowers are yellow flowers with red markings, are about 1.5 - 2cm tall, and are produced from the nodes between the leaves in small clusters toward the end of the stems. There are a couple of species with distinctive white flowers, the flowers of a few species are significantly smaller, a few slightly larger, but very few species have

such a distinctive appearance that they are easily recognised.

Some species have round tipped leaves, some have pointy tipped leaves, some leaves are longer, some shorter, but while this might be useful to help distinguish some species, they aren't characteristics to be used for identification on their own. In other words, you can't avoid using the flower to decide which species you are growing.

The conclusion is that if you acquire a Lockhartia, I suggest you accept the name on it when you get it unless some trusted guru suggests otherwise. These are very attractive orchids both in flower and when not in flower. There is something quite elegant about the erect to arching, sculptured stems, clothed in their tightly clasped overlapping leaves. The flowers are a bonus and if you grow them well, they will give you a really lovely display of colour.



L. lunifera 'Lucia Morimoto'



L. grandibracteata



L. bennettii

Hybrids: There are two crosses of Lockhartia species but I have only seen a picture of one – Lockhartia Gold Speck, which is *oerstedii* x *acuta*, but while it is nice, it is hardly a leap forward. The other cross involves *bennettii* which might have been interesting to see, but again, it no doubt looks and performs like a Lockhartia. The genus has also been crossed with other Oncidiinae genera with interesting results, but I would have to say they are novelties and nothing more. Perhaps the best is the cross between *L. bennettii* and what was *Odontoglossum* (now *Oncidium*) *cirrhosum*. Called Lockcidium, or Lockoglossum Norris William, these pictures show how the plant is wonderfully intermediate in form and flower.



Lkcdm Norris William

Odont cirrhosum

(pictures from cattlaelia.forumactif.org)

Again however, more a curiosity than a wonder.

Culture: Some of the more exotic types are warm growers that would need a glasshouse in our Sydney climate, so if you have mind to try a Lockhartia, it would be best to start with one of the cooler growers such as *L. oerstedii* or its synonym *L. verrucosa*. *L. oerstedii* seems to grow cold for me but my research tells me that while it does occur up to 1800m in Colombia, it is more frequently found much lower so perhaps some clones are cooler growing than others. Reports on *L. lunifera* are similar, although it is another one I had always regarded as a cool grower.

They can be mounted but are also easily grown in pots with care. I find that they prefer terracotta but I guess that depends to some extent on the media you use and your watering patterns. I have successfully used peat and perlite, sphagnum moss with styrene foam, and also bark mixes. The root system is rather fine (thin) and not very large. They are epiphytic in nature and despite them usually coming from naturally wet areas, the nature of the stems and leaves is distinctly reminiscent of a plant that can survive dryer periods. They might like regular water but I don't think they like any mix that stays wet too long, so take care to repot before your mix goes off.

Until a few years ago, I grew a specimen of *L. oerstedii* to quite a large size in a 100mm terracotta pot in my shadehouse. It was in a peat and perlite mix, and thrived for the first 4 or 5 years. However I eventually I found it producing more and more dead stems as it began to decline. The peat and perlite mix doesn't decay but its structure does slowly decline over time and different orchids tolerate this better than others. I obviously exceeded this ones tolerance. However, after pulling it apart and resetting it, it has subsequently begun to move forward again. I guess the answer is to repot before it declines, however long that is for you.

Strategic Decisions - Two guys, one young, one old, are pushing their carts around the supermarket when they collide. The old guy says : "Sorry about that. I'm looking for my wife, and I guess I wasn't paying proper attention" The young guy says, "That's OK, it's an amazing coincidence really. I'm looking for my wife, too... I can't find her and I'm getting a little desperate."

The old guy says, "Well, maybe we can help each other, what does she look like?"

The young guy says, "Well, she is 27 years old, long legs, is wearing white short shorts, she is tall, has red hair, blue eyes, is buxom...but doesn't wear a bra. What does your wife look like?"

The old guy says, "It doesn't matter, --- let's look for yours."