



# Australian Native Orchid Society - Macarthur Group



JUNE 2016

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**President:** Mr. W. Southwell (Ph. 46818589)

**Postal Address:-** 8A Boundary Road,

**Secretary:** Mr. J. English (Ph.86262934)

**PARRAMATTA. 2150**

**Treasurer:** Mrs. C. Asquith (Ph. 46259874)

**Next Meeting: THURSDAY , 16th JUNE, 2016**

**Life Member:** Mr. J. Riley, M. T. Cooke.

**Conservation Officer:** R. Hanman

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**Venue: BIRRAWA HALL**

**FITZPATRICK ROAD**

**Mt. ANNAN.**

**Doors open 7.15pm, benching closes 7.30pm, meeting starts 7.30pm**

Hi to All

A big Thank You to Don Roberts for his presentation at the last meeting.

Congratulations to Mary-Anne for plant of the night and popular choice, Well Done.

Winners of the Autumn Show were:

**Grand Champion – Peter Wise**

**Res. Grand Champion – Mary-Anne Warner**

Champion Other Orchid - Noel Bates

Champion Terrestrial Orchid - Nita Wheeler

Champion Specimen Orchid - M & W Southwell

Champion Exotic Orchid - C & T Asquith

Champion Bigibbum - Noel Bates

Congratulations to all the winners and all the exhibitors who entered plants.

27 growing competition plants were distributed at the last meeting, so expect to see a big showing at the table shows. Any member that did not get a plant, see me at the next meeting as I still have some plants available.

Ralph Martin has rejoined the club after an absence of some years, so a special welcome back.

Lloyd from Earth to Joy nursery will be at this meeting to give a presentation and will have orchids for sale.

Wally

**To all Members...please remember that our AGM will be held at our July Meeting...**

## **MINUTES OF Meeting 19<sup>th</sup> May, 2016**

Meeting opened at 7.50pm. We noted the attendance of former member, Ralph Martin.

**Apologies** Colin Long, Neil Robertson

Minutes from previous meeting as published in the newsletter

Moved Graeme Morrison Second Terry Cooke

**Correspondence** Newsletters from other Societies.

**Treasurers Report** Presented to meeting

Moved Carol Asquith seconded Ian Lawson

**General Business** Growing Competition plants handed out.

Next Month our Guest Speaker is Lloyd Edwards of Earth to Joy and he will be bringing plants for sale.

Wal handed out ribbons and prizemoney from the Rosemeadow show. (see list above)

Raffle. Phil Griffiths, Greg Steenbeeke, Marj. Yabsley, John English

Next Meeting: 16<sup>th</sup> June..

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**The following is for those who can't remember.....oh, and to set the record straight.....**

## **MINUTES OF Meeting 21stApril, 2016**

**Meeting Opened:** About 7.30pm, and President Wal welcomed the 23 attending members.

- 1. Apologies:** Neil Robertson, Chris Munson.
- 2. Minutes from Previous Meeting: as printed in newsletter**  
**Proposed by:** Phil Griffith **seconded by:** Peter Gibson
- 3. Business Arising from the Minutes:** nil
- 4. Treasurer's Report:** Moved Carol Asquith **Second:** Terry Cooke
- 5. Inward & Outwards Correspondence:** Newsletters sent and received

**Delegates Report:** Wal went on the Terrestrial Orchid study in the Shoalhaven area and will prepare a paper next week.

General Business:

John Sieman gave an informative talk on the Mt. Annan Seed Bank and efforts to curtail noxious plants Like the African Olive. (Editors note: photographs in local paper last week show some goats have been moved in to assist in this effort)

Rosemeadow Autumn Show in May

Spring Show will also be at Rosemeadow September 24<sup>th</sup>

Sarc Show will be at Oran Park Town Centre 22<sup>nd</sup> October

Ross will bring two new tables.

Wal spoke about new table covers for our shows...Greg advised he knew a good dressmaker.

There are two new classes for Den. Rhizobium.

Raffle drawn and meeting closed about 9.30pm.

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## **The Art of Maintaining Root Systems      By John Woolf (Toowoomba)**

Some orchids produce massive root systems easily such as Cymbidium and Zygopetalum, others such as Paphiopedilum and Miltoniopsis don't. Producing a good root system starts with the germination of the seedlings, or the beginning of the meristem process, in flask. You can produce good plants in flask without any root system simply by omitting the hormones and chemicals that initiate root development. This is normally done where the combination of growing and rooting hormones retard top growth as in the tissue culture of Eucalyptus species, then two separate growth media are used, one to promote top" growth and one to produce roots. After the plants have produced the required amount of roots, they are then deflasked and grown in a propagation area. This system can also be used for orchids as it is easier to work with them in flask at the early stages of development if they have little or no roots. They are then transferred to a medium containing the hormones needed for root development before being deflasked.

Plants coming out of flask without a good active root system are much harder to establish and losses could be high - hence the deflasking problems many growers suffer. Some growers say the roots produced in flask do not continue to grow once deflasked into a growing medium like bark or sphagnum, however, I do not find this to be true. Roots produced in flask do continue to grow if treated properly. As well, the plant then produces more roots as they harden off. Treating plantlets with hormones/chemicals such as "Best Grow" and "Nu Farm Growth Formula" when deflasking, assist in the retention of existing roots and the quick production of new roots. These chemicals **MUST NOT BE USED AT A STRONGER RATE OR MORE OFTEN THAN RECOMMENDED**. You will only succeed in producing stunted useless plants with huge root systems.

Care should also be taken when using these products on larger flowering plants as the side effects can cause loss of flowers, etc. (see Australian Orchid Review, December 1995, page 21). Remember to use your personal protection gear when using chemicals. Treat them all as potential hazards. Selection of the growing medium for the plant's life from seedling to adult and beyond is crucial. Without a good active root system to hold the plant firm in its pot and to gather food and water, your plants will not perform to their optimum.

## THE BASICS PURCHASING PLANTS

### Flasks:

Look for a good balance between top growth and roots. Don't look for plants that have reached the top of the flask as these could have run out of nutrients and may be harder to establish. Also, the moisture congregates on the inside of the lid and any leaves against the lid will be growing "under water" and normally die off after deflasking, leaving dead tissue for you to cut off risking infection through an open cut. Select plants about two thirds of the height of the flask.

### Small Plants:

Seedlings or mericlones - look for well-established, well-grown plants that are firm in their pots. This normally means a good root system. When you get the plant home, gently slide it out of the pot and check the growing medium and the roots for health and pests. Repot into your preferred potting medium or slide back into the original pot.

### Larger Plants:

Look for live root tips and a good open potting medium. As soon as the weather permits (your normal potting time), repot into your preferred potting medium. After potting, a treatment of either of the products mentioned earlier (ONLY ONCE) will ensure the minimum of stress to the plant(s).

## YOUR OWN COLLECTION

### Small Plants:

The same as above - don't be frightened to slide plants out of pots to check the medium and roots. If you can't get the plant back into the pot, simply pot into a larger pot it evidently needs. This can be done nearly all year. Regular potting of small plants, even every six months, is beneficial. The plants seem to respond and enjoy the fresh growing medium.

### Larger Plants:

Repot every two years. Every twelve months remove the top inch of medium and sprinkle a little Blood and Bone, then top off with new potting medium. Select your growing medium with care (see growing medium next paragraph) and if you suspect a problem is occurring, take the plant out of its pot and check. Some orchids such as Paphiopedilum, Miltoniopsis, Disa and all terrestrials should be potted every year.

## GROWING MEDIUM

This is where your own cultural practices dictate the type and size of the product you use to pot your orchid into. The amount and quality of water, the type of house, be it shadedoth, fibreglass roof with shade cloth side or totally enclosed glass/fibreglass, the amount of air movement and fertilizer are all factors that place demands on your potting medium. Other factors such as very cold frosts also dictate the type of potting medium. Don't put your plants into a mix that will hold a lot of moisture if you get severe frosts. That moisture will freeze killing the plants' root system.

After some 30 years of growing orchids and trialling many potting media and additives, I still return to good composted bark. There is nothing better for a mixed genera collection. In specialist situations and with good quality water, you can use other mediums successfully.

### Selection of the Potting Medium:

This, as stated previously, must be in conjunction with your own personal cultural practices. Choose a grade of bark that will meet the following criteria. You should do a set of trials using the same plants in the same type and size of pots in different grades of bark.

- (1) The bark will last for two years.
- (2) The roots are attracted into the bark.
- (3) The bark drains quickly.
- (4) The bark retains a coating of moisture.
- (5) There is ample air space between the pieces.
- (6) The pH of the bark *is* compatible with the type of orchid to be grown in it (fertilizer uptake is restricted if the pH is not correct).
- (7) The bark comes in the correct sizes for your usage - Fine, Medium, Coarse and Extra Coarse.
- (8) The bark is rough so it does not pack down over a period of time.

## **Preparation of The Bark:**

If the bark is already composted, as in Debco, a little Blood and Bone mixed into the moist bark and left for 3 to 4 days will suffice or you can use it straight from the bag. If the bark is fresh, it should be treated with a combination for fertilizers, moistened, mixed several times over a period of several weeks before use. It should have a good earthy fragrance, not a pine fragrance. **POTTING:** The bark should be moist, NOT WET, when you pot with it. After potting, a soaking with either "Best Grow" or "Nu Farm Growth Formula" will be beneficial in reducing the stress on the plant and ensuring the roots get away quickly to hold the plant firmly and begin to feed the plant. Selection of the pot is important. **DO NOT OVERPOT**, select a size that will give your plant two years growth. Remember, clay pots dry out faster than plastic pots, so take this into consideration when selecting a potting mix. You may have to use a finer mix so the plants don't dry out too quickly. If you are a heavy waterer, clay pots might be the right option.

## **Retention of a Good Active Root System:**

If you have followed a similar program to the one I have outlined, you shouldn't have any problems. If not, then why not try changing a few of your plants to see if you can improve them and make sure they are "doing their best" for you. If they grow and perform better, change the rest over. Remember, unless they have a good root system under them, they will not perform to their optimum.

## **HELPFUL HINTS**

Select a medium that will last two years.

- (1) Select the right grade to suit your culture and the plant.
- (2) Larger pieces can be used in the base of the pot to add to the drainage.
- (3) The only additive other than fertilizer, I suggest is styrene foam.
- (4) The bark must drain freely.
- (5) Ensure the bark is properly treated and not too fresh so the roots will be attracted to it.
- (6) An application of either of the two products mentioned is beneficial.
- (7) Use the correct type of fertilizers, totally chelated forms are recommended.
- (8) Remember, organic fertilizers are beneficial from time to time but constant use can break bark down quickly.
- (9) Flood the pots regularly with water to remove stale air from between the bark and replace with fresh air containing oxygen.
- (10) Check your root systems regularly at least twice per year.

Good Growing.

These notes have been used at our Cultural and New Grower's Meetings. They are from various sources and we thank the authors. All articles are supplied in good faith and the Bribie Island Orchid Society and its members will not be held responsible for any loss or damage. These notes are from Bribie Island Orchid Society Website.

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## **Benching Results APRIL Meeting 2016.**

Dendrobium Species	Den.biggibbum	M. Warner
	Den. Monophyllum	R. Morrison
Dendrobium Hybrid	Den. Topaz Dream	J. English
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Sarcanthinae Species	Sarc. Hirticalcar	R. Morrison
Sarcanthinae Hybrid	Sarc. Bessie	T. Cooke
	Sarc. Bessie x ( ? )	I. Lawson
Bulbophyllum	Bulb. Schilleraium	R. Morrison
Aust. Species Other	cestichis reflexa	T. Cooke
Aust. Rhizobium	D. Waverly x racomosur	G. Steenbeeke
Terrestrial Pterostylis	Dip. Robusta	T. Cooke
	Pt. ophioglossa	W. & M. Southwell
Terrestrial Evergreen	nil	
Dockrillia	nil	
Terrestrial Hybrid	Pt. nutans x baptistii	W. & M. Southwell
Terrestrial Other	Aci. fornicatusa	T. Cooke
	Cory. Hispidus	T. Cooke
Caladenia Species	nil	
Australasian Specie	Pte. Renviraule	R. Morrison
	Lip. Condylbulbon	A. & C. Asquith
Australasian Hybrid	nil	
Seedling		
Seedling First Flowering	nil	
Growing Competition 1.	1st A. & C. Asquith	
Growing Competition 2.	2nd R. Morrison	

**Plant of the night was Dendrobium bigibbum grown by Mary-Anne Warner.**

**Popular Vote D. Waverly x racomosur grown by Greg Steenbeeke.**

### **Congratulations**

**GOOD GROWING**

Note to all...I'm having some trouble in getting articles that members might be interested in.

If you happen across a good article or information, please get it to me and it will go into our bulletin.

Tony