



Australian Native Orchid Society - Macarthur Group

MAY 2013

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President Mr. W. Southwell (Ph. 46818589)

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Secretary: Mr. J. English (Ph.96079809)

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

Next Meeting: THURSDAY , 20th June, 2013

Life Member: Mr. J. Riley

Conservation Officer: R. Hanman

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Venue: BIRRAWA HALL

FITZPATRICK ROAD,

Doors open 7.15pm, benching closes 7.45pm, meeting starts 8pm.

Mt. ANNAN.

President's Message.

Hi to all.

A big thankyou to Greg for his presentation and talk on orchid nomenclature, a very dry subject, but Greg is a good enough speaker to make it interesting to our members.

Congratulations to Terry for plant of the night at the May meeting. A really well grown pot of Pte. ophioglossa.

This month will be our bingo night..

7th July is the Open Day at Tinonee, Ray Clement has always been a strong supporter of our club. Attend this event if you can.

Reports are that this will be a very good year for Speciosums.

Wally.

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The club now has Metarex Snail Bait – ring Margaret if you need some!

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MEETING HELD 16 May, 2013

1. Meeting Opened: 8pm, and the President Wal welcomed members.
2. Apologies: Chris Munson, Greg Knight, Alan Kneipp, Peter Gibson, Don Roberts
3. Minutes from Previous Meeting:
Proposed by: Terry Cooke seconded by: Ian Lawson
4. Business Arising from the Minutes: Nil
5. Treasurer's Report: Presented by Tony
Proposed by: Carol Asquith Seconded by: Ian Lawson
6. Inward Correspondence: Various Newsletters, Invitation and Schedules for Kempsey Spectacular.
7. Outward Correspondence: Newsletters
8. Delegate Report: nil

Many owners however are struggling to keep their orchids alive by not providing the correct growing conditions. One major factor that contributes to their demise in the home is over or under watering. How much and the technique for watering is largely dependent on the species and its origin.

For an Orchid Humidity is Crucial

In general orchids hail from more tropical areas around the globe where they are subject to enormous quantities of rain and extremely high levels of humidity. Setting humidity in the home to something approach that of a rainforest (80% or higher) would be extremely uncomfortable, so it's necessary to develop a strategy that provides high humidity to your orchid without raising the level throughout the home. A couple of techniques can be employed. One is to sit your orchid pot on top of tray or saucer, fill the saucer with pebbles and water the pebbles - making sure that no water is actually touches the orchid pot. Another simple technique is to group a number of orchids, and/or other plants requiring high humidity, together. This will work to retain and hold more moisture in the air surrounding the plants.

How Frequently should you Water Orchids?

Over watering orchids is significantly more prevalent than under watering orchids causing the owner to 'kill with kindness'. There is a common misconception that if potting media looks dry, particularly tree bark, then the plant requires watering. Bark can often appear dry but retains plenty of moisture. As a guideline, it is best to water your orchid sparingly once or twice a fortnight and make sure that any bark has dried out completely before re-watering. In their natural habitat, many orchids grow on the trunks and branches or trees where it is common for roots to completely dry out before water becomes available again. This has led to a natural hardiness when it comes to water which belies the orchid's beauty. Spraying a fine mist of water containing fertilizer is a good approach to watering your orchids with suitable fertilizers being found at most good garden centers. Creating a schedule that fits in with other routine's around the house is a great way to guarantee that you water your orchids at the right time, allowing you to enjoy them for years to come.

Other Growing Factors

The home is a great environment to grow thriving orchids providing that a number of factors are correct. In this article we've discussed the importance of making sure that orchids are watered correctly and touched on applying and using the correct type of fertilizer. Of equal importance is the need to ensure that orchids receive the correct amount of light (sunlight or artificial), the right potting media and the right time to repot your orchids. Combining all of these factors will ensure that you have the best possible success growing orchids

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EXTEND YOUR ORCHID'S FLOWERING PERIOD BY MONTHS

Again, from Five dock Orchid Society's website, from November 2010.

After your orchid has finished flowering and you cut back the stem, here's an excellent trick for preventing infection:

Using the hot wax from a candle, you can actually "seal" the freshly cut tip of your orchid's stem, which is an excellent way to prevent infection!

Here's what to do:

Once you've cut back your stem using your sterilized tools, simply light a candle and allow it to accumulate a little melted wax around the wick. Blow out the candle. And before the wax has a chance to harden again, touch the wet wax to the exposed tip of your freshly cut stem.

Voila! In less than 2 minutes, you've created a home - made protective coating for the exposed tip of your orchid's stem. And this little trick will help keep your orchid disease free for months!

REASONS WHY YOUR ORCHID WON'T REFLOWER

Young or Recently Divided Orchid. If your orchid is not yet mature, or has been recently propagated (e.g. from cuttings, bulbs, etc.), there might not be anything wrong at all with your plant.

You've just got to be a bit patient, and be willing to wait for your plant to reach blooming maturity.

Orchid propagation is more of an advanced topic, so I'll leave the details for our book if you're interested in learning more.

BUT, there are a few **CRITICAL** things you should know right now:

If you're attempting to grow orchids directly from seeds, you might want to rethink that decision, and here's why: Did you know it can take anywhere from 1 to 12 years for an orchid to go from seed germination to flowering? Yes, you read that right... Up to 12 years! And did you know that most orchids take around 4 years to flower after germination?

I don't know about you, but I don't have that kind of patience! :-)

Because of this, today orchid seeds are germinated in laboratories where conditions can be controlled.

The tiny orchid seeds have almost no food storage available, and therefore rely on special types of fungus for germination. So my recommendation? Leave seeds the pros, and stick to mature plants!

PESTS & DISEASES

If your orchid is plagued with any sort of pest or disease, then you have what we call a "stressed" plant on your hands. And just like when you or your family gets sick, your orchid is using **EVERY LAST OUNCE** of energy to fight off those foreign bugs!... (It simply has **NO** energy left to produce flowers...)

So to get your orchid to flower again, the first thing you need to do is nurse your plant back to health :-)

The topic of pests & disease naturally deserves more space than I can give it in this issue of your newsletter. (And we'll be talking about some effective ways to deal with a few common pests in a later newsletter.) But in the meantime, here are a few signs to watch out for: -Yellow spots, holes, or "nibble marks" on the leaves or flowers - Dark, soft, and rotting bulb/roots.. Do you see any of these signs on your orchid?

Because if you've been having trouble getting your orchid to flower again, and you **SUSPECT** there might be something plaguing your plant... ..then **THAT'S** where you should focus your attention.

Orchid pests come in many shapes and sizes. And some of the more common problems include Aphids, Thrips, Mealy Bugs, & Spider Mites - just to name a few.

OVERWATERING IN COLD TEMPERATURES

This is a reason on my list that usually gets a few people scratching their heads...But it's also something that can catch you by surprise if you're not careful. Here's what I'm talking about: If you're like me, you like to keep things as simple as possible, and get into a regular watering schedule with your orchids..

Cymbidiums every Saturday morning... Phals every four days, or what have you.

But one thing that's tough to remember is that as temperatures drop, the rate that water evaporates from your plants **ALSO** slows down.

So what that means, is this:

You need to **SCALE BACK** your watering during those cooler months a bit. Otherwise you run the risk of **OVERWATERING** your orchid -- And overwatering can lead to all sorts of problems, including an orchid that simply will **NOT** be able to produce flowers for you (no matter how nicely you say 'please'...)

YELLOW LEAVES AND ORCHIDS – WHAT DOES IT MEAN

It's Ryan "The Orchid Guy" Here again..July 2010 From Five Dock Orchid Society Website

In the last few bulletins, we talked about one of the most common questions people have when things aren't going quite right with their orchids: "What's going on when all the flowers suddenly fall off, and what should you do about it?"

Today, we're going to touch on another very common orchid problem and one that you might be facing right now if your orchid is sick...And that is: "What's causing your orchid's leaves to turn yellow? And what should you do about it?"

In today's bulletin, hopefully I can shed a little light on what's going on with your plant when the leaves are yellow, and leave you with a few pointers on what you can do about it :-)

First, it's important to know that as part of the natural, healthy growth cycle of your orchid, the oldest leaves on your plant will yellow and eventually drop off. This is perfectly normal.

HOWEVER... if you're finding that young leaves are also yellowing, then you may actually have a problem on your hands. Younger leaves may become yellow if they're not exposed to enough light, or are lacking fertilizer, make sure you're giving your orchid enough light...and the right type of fertilizer. Orchids that are exposed to too MUCH light may also have yellow-light green leaves...HOWEVER, when orchid leaves are getting too MUCH light, the yellow-green color will usually be accompanied by round or oval brown-colored sunburn spots. (The presence or absence of these brown-colored spots is usually the best way to distinguish whether the problem is too little or too much light.)

Now, if you find that your leaves are yellow... AND at the same time also droopy, soft, plucked, and pleated... this is usually a sign of under watering. Finally, if the leaves of your plant are mostly green, but have small, yellow "spots", then this is usually a sign of insect damage.

If you suspect that your problem is insect-related, it's important to act fast, because if left untreated, certain insects can decimate your orchid (and spread to the rest of your collection) in as little as just a few days.

So... to sum things up:

The fact that your leaves may be yellow will only tell you part of the story. Understanding the context - what is it that's accompanying the yellow leaves - is essential to know whether your plant is simply experiencing part of its natural growth cycle... Or whether you have a problem that needs addressing right away.

Don't worry, as you gain more experience, you'll find yourself developing a "sixth sense" for just this sort of thing :-) Until next time...More tips to come!

Hope you all enjoy articles..GOOD GROWING