



# TOWNSVILLE ORCHID SOCIETY INC

## MAY 2012 BULLETIN

Full contact details are on our web site <http://townsvilleorchidsociety.org.au>

### TOS Inc. Directory of useful information:

**Postal Address:**

PO Box 836 D.C.  
AITKENVALE QLD 4814  
Ph: 07 47734208

**Hall Location:**

Joe Kirwan Park  
Charles Street  
KIRWAN QLD

**Patron:** Vacant  
**President:** Wal Nicholson  
**Secretary:** Jean Nicholson  
**Treasurer:** Charles Lee  
**VP Show:** Fred Marnock  
**VP Bulletin:** Donna Marnock

Ph. 07 47734208  
Ph. 07 47734208  
Email: [walandjean@bigpond.com](mailto:walandjean@bigpond.com)  
Ph. 07 4778 4815  
Mobile: 0438 328 009  
Mobile: 0417 007 819  
Email: [marnock1@bigpond.com](mailto:marnock1@bigpond.com)

- Meetings are held 8pm on the 4<sup>th</sup> Friday of each month except December .  
All meetings are held in the Townsville Orchid Society Inc Hall.

### TOS CALENDAR 2012

**April 2012** 1<sup>st</sup> June – Management Committee meeting - 7.30pm  
25<sup>th</sup> May – General Meeting - 8pm  
27<sup>th</sup> May - Novice/New Growers' Meeting - 1pm

### TOS - 2012 SHOW DATES

**WINTER:** 13 – 15 July - set up Thursday 12 July  
**SPRING:** 21 – 23 September - set up Thursday 20 September

### AUSTRALIAN ORCHID COUNCIL CONFERENCE & SHOW 11<sup>TH</sup> – 16<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2012 *Burswood Convention Centre – Perth – Western Australia*

Earlybird Registrations have closed but you can still register to attend. If you are unable to download the registration form, please contact the Secretary at the email address following: [aocconference@dodo.com.au](mailto:aocconference@dodo.com.au) with your postal details.

We now have credit card facilities for your ease of payment.

The details are now available on line at.....<http://www.waorchids.iinet.net.au/Registration.pdf>

**Note:** You must check all dates and times for accuracy before making any plans or bookings

### Annual Membership Fees

City Family	\$18.00	Pensioner Family	\$9.00
City Single	\$14.00	Pensioner Single/Junior	\$7.00

Details for paying membership fees. BSB:- 064823 Account Number:- 0009 0973  
Name of Account:- Townsville Orchid Society Inc. Commonwealth Bank, Aitkenvale  
**Fees are due 1<sup>st</sup> September each year**



### **Registrar's Choice – Best Hybrid**

V. Gordon Dillon '175' x Ascda. Duang Porn owned by Noel & Maureen Grant - 80 Points.



### **Registrar's Choice – Species:**

*Rhynchosstylis coelestis* owned by Noel & Maureen Grant - 78 Points

Photos by J Nicholson

### **JUDGES - May 2012**

OPEN/MASTERS -  
Rodney Daveson & Tom Hobden

NOVICE/SPECIES -  
Allan Hughes & Doug Benson

**TOWNSVILLE ORCHID SOCIETY INC.**  
**MINUTES - GENERAL MEETING HELD 27.04.2012**

**Meeting Opened:** 8.00pm by President W Nicholson who welcomed Guest Speaker Jason Peoples.

He explained why a new back door required replacing. Wayne Turville has supplied a poison to kill weeds – Kirwoods Curse, Oxalis & Military Fern – in orchid pots. Wal will trial before orders are taken. Also remarked on Dendrobium beetle and sugar cane.

Two Cattleyas and 1 yellow ground orchid missing from bus on trip to Ingham – please check your plants.

**Minutes:** of previous meeting Moved as a True Record by J Luecke. Seconded by G Christophers. Carried. **No Business Arising.**

Registrar's Choice Certificate given to W&J Nicholson.

**Correspondence: Inwards:** Campbell's Coaches A/c; North Qld Papers A/c; Nuleaf/Receipt; Southern Cross A/c/advertising/Credit Note; Netbank/Receipt/T Smith; DERM/Valuation Notice; Bunnings/Notification Bunnings Power Pass; HROAP Inc/Thank-you/ Sponsorship/TQOC Inc Conference; Litchfield O.S/thank-you/Bulletin; F&D Marnock/Apology/meeting; Jodie Silva/?date of meeting;

J Knowles, C Lee, T Lyster/web page/Ziphosting; Tony Watkinson/Newsletter AOC Conference WA; AOC/Order Form By-Laws, Details Update Form, Minutes Etc.; Coralie Hills/request photo; APOC 11 2013/Information; Aust. Charities/Not for Profit Taskforce/information; W Jones/re orchid; P Ritchie/advertising Den. Speciosum Spectacular/Kempsey,1-2.09.12; New Library book Aust. Orchid Research Vol. 6; Weight Watchers/closure/Anzac Day; Hall Hire/several emails.

**Held Over:** Bowen O&F Soc. Inc./Field Day 20.05.2012; Other society Bulletins; Aust. Orchid Review.

**Outwards:** J Knowles/several emails; Hall Hire/several emails; Coralie Hills/Orchids Aust. Article/M Korsman; Weight Watchers/enquire Anzac Day.

Moved by J Nicholson that Inwards Correspondence be received and Outwards Correspondence be Confirmed. Seconded by J White. Carried.

**Business Arising From Correspondence:** All A/c's to Treasurer; Bunning's Power Pass now in use; no members attending Bowen O.S. Field Day.

**Treasurer's Report:** given by C Lee who Moved that his Report be Received and Cheques passed for Payment. Seconded by M Bloom. Carried.

**Business Arising From Treasurer's Report:** Paid some members still owing from show – pay some on Sunday. Payments for sales tables not carried out as yet.

**Novice/New Growers Group:** Jason Peoples will speak again on Sunday. Bus trip a success – predominately foliage at Ingham.

**Building Report:** No word of Fund request for extra panels on roof. Quotes for air-conditioning about \$25,000. Only would be available for hall hiring during extremely hot periods – would charge extra.

**Web Site:** C Lee explained the confusion about our web page being taken off the internet. Only paid for registration of web address – we still haven't paid for the hosting of the web page - have to pay for another year and then look at other service providers. Have established it was a good idea to have a web page for a number of reasons so he recommends we have a small web page and extend it in time. It has cost about \$100 yearly and been paid by T Lyster. No counter on page. No one opposed to continuing page.

E Boon brought to our notice about incorrect photo on front page of Bulletin.

**Registrar's Choice: Hybrids:** V. Gordon Dillon '175' x Ascda. Duang Porn gained 80 Points for Noel & Maureen Grant.

**Species:** *Rhy. coelestis* gained 78 Points for Noel & Maureen Grant so Congratulations for winning both sections.

Jason Peoples from Neutrog Fertilisers presented a very interesting Power Point programme, explaining all the items on the market from the firm. He also distributed sample bags to all members present. Appreciation was shown by acclamation.

Following the tea break E Boon made a presentation to D Benson. W Nicholson presented Registrar's Choice and Show Winner Certificates to members present. E Boon then gave an interesting talk on tabled plants.

**Lucky door and Raffle:** tickets were drawn – congratulations to all.

**Meeting Closed:** 10.02 p.m.

## TABLED PLANTS – 27.04.2012

### VETERANS

#### Dendrobium

- |                          |               |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| 1) Den. Salaya Fancy Red | W&J Nicholson |
| 2) Den. Kimiyo Kondo     | W&J Nicholson |
| 3) Den. Boonling         | W&J Nicholson |

#### Dendrobium

- |   |               |
|---|---------------|
| 1) Den. <i>johannis</i> x Den. <i>lasianthera</i>           | W&J Nicholson |
| 2) Den. Sabin 'Blue' x Den. <i>bigibbum</i> 'Superbum' Blue | W&J Nicholson |
| 3) Den. Blue Foxtail  | W&J Nicholson |

#### Vandaceous

- |   |               |
|---|---------------|
| 1) Kgw. Yoon Weng – Low                         | W&J Nicholson |
| 2) V. Josephine Van Brero x V. <i>sanderana</i> | W&J Nicholson |

#### Vandaceous

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| 1) V. Gordon Dillon '175' x Ascda Duang Porn | N&M Grant |
| 2) V. Sunray x V. Gordon Dillon 'Blue'       | N&M Grant |

#### Ascocenda

- |                                      |           |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1) Ascda. Somsri Nugget 'Chao Praya' | G&S Kelly |
| 2) Ascda. Suksamran Sunlight         | G&S Kelly |
| 3) Ascda. Roslyn's Best 'Brighton'   | N&M Grant |

#### Vascostylis

- |                                |           |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| 1) Vasco. Jean's Delight       | G&S Kelly |
| 2) Vasco. Pine Rivers 'Wasana' | G&S Kelly |
| 3) Vasco. Pine Rivers 'Blue'   | G&S Kelly |

#### Cattleya

- |   |               |
|---|---------------|
| 1) Bc. Toshie Aoki 'Pizazz'             | W&J Nicholson |
| 2) C. Pamela Heatherington 'Coronation' | W&J Nicholson |

#### Cattleya

- |  |               |
|--|---------------|
| 1) Sc. Beaufort x Lc. Aussie Sunset            | G&S Kelly     |
| 2) Bc. Marigold Meadows 'Yellow Beauty'        | AM/AOS x      |
| Bc. Golden Shrine 'H&R'                        | W&J Nicholson |
| 3) C. Lulu 'Pink Blush' x Bc. Golden Llewellyn | W&J Nicholson |

#### Cattleya

- |                                      |               |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1) Thw. Southern Aurora              | G&S Kelly     |
| 2) Slc. Dal's Beau                   | G&S Kelly     |
| 3) C. Unknown x Bc. Kauai Starbright | W&J Nicholson |

#### Cattleya

- |                               |               |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| 1) Bc. Mackai 'Mayumi'        | W&J Nicholson |
| 2) B. <i>nodosa</i> x Unknown | W&J Nicholson |
| 3) B. <i>nodosa</i> x Unknown | W&J Nicholson |

#### Epicattleya

- |                                      |               |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1) Eplc. Volcano Trick 'Orange Fire' | G&S Kelly     |
| 2) Epicat. Rosita                    | W&J Nicholson |

#### Paphiopedilum

- |                    |               |
|--------------------|---------------|
| 1) Paph. Transvaal | W&J Nicholson |
| 2) Paph. Pinocchio | W&J Nicholson |
| 3) Paph. Shireen   | W&J Nicholson |

#### Phragmipedium

- |                        |               |
|------------------------|---------------|
| 1) Phrag. Green Hornet | W&J Nicholson |
| 2) Phrag. Green Hornet | W&J Nicholson |

### OPEN

#### Miscellaneous

- |  |               |
|--|---------------|
| 1) Paph. Vanguard                      | R Rasmussen   |
| 2) Phal. No Name                       | N Hardwick    |
| 3) Bc. Haadyai Delight Bangprom 'Gold' | R&J MacIntyre |

### SPECIES

#### Dendrobium – Australiana

- |  |               |
|--|---------------|
| 1) Den. <i>bigibbum</i> 'Tozer's Stripe' | W&J Nicholson |
|--|---------------|

#### Dendrobium

- |                                       |               |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1) Den. <i>gouldii</i> 'Red x Yellow' | W&J Nicholson |
| 2) Den. <i>gouldii</i>                | W&J Nicholson |

#### Miscellaneous

- |                               |               |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| 1) Rhy. <i>coelestis</i>      | N&M Grant     |
| 2) Coelogyne <i>trinervis</i> | M Bloom       |
| 3) C. <i>lueddemanniana</i>   | W&J Nicholson |

#### Bulbophyllum

- |                             |               |
|-----------------------------|---------------|
| 1) Bulb. <i>longissima</i>  | W&J Nicholson |
| 2) Bulb. <i>morphogorum</i> | W&J Nicholson |
| 3) Bulb. <i>lepidum</i>     |               |



## TOS Points Table

Points

27.04.2012

No.	Name	Veterans	Open	Novice	Species	Aggregate
84	Berzinski, Col & Mutch, Lyn		30			30
118	Bloom, Marie		3		3	6
68	Cairns, June & Stacey			17		17
85	Christophers, G & Siarni, A		5			5
213	Grant, Noel & Maureen	58			37	95
106	Hardwick, Noel		20			20
117	Keith, Mick	16			38	54
116	Kelly - Greg & Santina	50				50
65	Kennedy, Les & Ames, Fran	24				24
77	Marnock, Fred & Donna		11		8	19
167	MacIntyre, Ross & Joan		33		10	43
147	Nicholson, Wal & Jean	224			89	313
96	Phillips, Tina			4		4
128	Rasmussen, Robert		4			4
172	Sewell, Warren & Clara	158			21	179
62	White, Jean				2	2

### President's Comments:

Isn't it amazing how so many flowers have appeared on our orchids when there is no show in sight? We have two more monthly meetings before the Winter Show, so will be seeking volunteers on the work roster and for sales tables, at these meetings, hoping that the flowering will continue through our "winter weather." Our plants certainly look to be more healthy now that the temperatures have dropped.

Still no word about the grant application to increase our number of solar panels which may be due to the new State Government's changed attitude. With the existing panels reducing our electricity consumption by \$200, the committee feels that we should proceed A.S.A.P., particularly with subsidies to be reduced or abolished within months. Consequently it has been decided to wait two weeks for a decision, and if this doesn't come, then we will proceed, using our own funds. In consequence any ideas about air-conditioning would need to be deferred.

My desire to make an issue of our Society's sixty-fifth birthday doesn't seem to have become contagious, but I still think we should celebrate, possibly with a dinner in July – details of which have not yet been formulated - more on this later.

The talk by Jason from Neutrog was quite interesting, never thought they could make plain old chook manure serve so many purposes. Not too many years ago, before they started processing it I used to get it by the trailer load from the chook farms. Sweet Peas grow so tall just to get away from the smell – top-dressing the lawn with it used to kill the lawn grubs and also make the grass grow. I did put a little in the medium I potted Paphiopedilums with and lost half of them. I do know that used sparingly Vandas love it.

We need more guest speakers like that, so if you know anybody who could help please let's know. Keep 'em growing.

Wal Nicholson

### Novice/New Growers Report:

On the 29<sup>th</sup> April, 61 members and visitors were welcomed by Jeff Knowles who was the chairman for their afternoon meeting.

Our guest speaker for the afternoon meeting was Jason People who spoke about the Neutrog Fertiliser brands that his company have released to the market place and we thank him for his generous gifts of the sample bags of Go



Go juice and Strike Back products to try on our orchid plants.

A very interesting subject was raised by Jeff on the process of setting flower spikes or to initiate flower spikes on our phalaenopsis plants. With a short power point programme, Jeff emphasized to all us what was mostly needed to succeed with this achievement in relation to watering, inducting a fertiliser programme, increased light levels, temperature and humidity control that is required to activate the flower spikes on the phalaenopsis plants.

Unfortunately for all of us hobby growers, as we do not have much control over the temperature, humidity and light for this procedure to work and benefit our plants at the appropriated time here in North Queensland.

It was also interesting to note that in his research on this subject, how some of the renowned phalaenopsis growers around the world had varying ideas on this matter in relation to fertilisers, light, temperatures and humidity. Probably the Epsom Salt (Magnesium Sulfate) followed by a high Phosphorous Fertiliser programme may be best suited for our climate (this is only my opinion).

Jeff also gave us an insight to a Romeo and Juliet love story in relation to one of his *Bulbophyllum* orchid flowers and an inquisitive little wasp in his bush house recently.

Thank you for your valued information and entertaining programmes that you put together for the members that attended the meeting. We would like to thank Jean for her display of *Bulbophyllum* flowering plants and her competency on them, also Ray for his advice on his *B. thirium* plant.

What happened to all the flowers from our novice members in our Popular Vote Competition? Only 1 plant on the table thanks to Jan Allen and in the Open Section all 3 placing went to Bruno Figuera.

Thank you to all the other members in this section who brought along their plants. Our afternoon refreshments were again very delicious and our many thanks for your donations to the Multi Raffle Table and Ticket Sales. You all have to be congratulated for your generosity.

#### TOURS:

For those orchid buffs who also like to travel and see more orchids the 2013 Taiwan Luxury Orchid Tour ON SALE NOW!!!

For more information see the following website:  
[inquiry@atmtours.com.au](mailto:inquiry@atmtours.com.au)

### ARTICLE OF INTEREST FROM SINGAPORE

Australia's Prime Minister Julia Gillard poses with her partner Tim Mathieson (L) next to an orchid hybrid, **Dendrobium Julia Gillard**, named after her during a ceremony at the Singapore Botanical Gardens on April 23, 2012. The hybrid orchid is a cross between *Dendrobium Tay Swee Keng* and *Dendrobium Urmila Nandey*.

Ref: Reuters, Singapore.



This is only the second time the Singapore Orchid Gardens (part of the Singapore Botanical Gardens) has named an orchid after an Australian Prime Minister. In 1992, *Renantanda Keating* (*Vanda Siti Zain* x *Ren. Jessie Loke*) was named in honour of Paul Keating.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Growing Competitions, May 2012**

Although we do not yet have a 2012 growing competition up and running, members are still invited to bring in their plants from past competitions so that everyone can keep an eye on progress and results.

On display at the April meeting was the second known *Blc. Dal's Kew 'Drummer Boy'* x *Bc. Dal's Charm* to flower (see photo). This plant, owned by Alison Knowles, came from Burbank Orchids and was part of our recent *Cattleya* growing competition.

Also, it was interesting to find out that both Marie Bloom and Noel Grant have flower spikes on their *Dtps. Hsinying Sonata* x sib (a recent Sunday's growing competition). Hopefully we will see the flowers, as well as other member's flowers, at future meetings.

Jeff Knowles

## MEMBER'S CORNER

### BIRTHDAY WISHES

The TOS members wish the following birthday boys and girls a very happy birthday with many more to follow:



#### *Birthday Wishes to:*

Fred Marnock	2 May
Ann Roberts	2 May
Tom Woods	15 May
Wilma Dean	20 May

### In Noel's Bush House 4

*Cattleya aclandiae* (Lindley 1840)

For a long time, this has been one of my favourite orchids, although it had a bad habit of trying to die on me. I solved that problem by changing the way I grew it. Originally it was grown in a pot, but because it wanted to ramble, I had to frequently repot, which made the plant sulk, which led to a tendency for it to be susceptible to disease. Eventually, I lost patience (or got lucky) and pandered for its rambling habit, and, since 2002, it has been growing in a tray filled with large pieces of tree fern placed horizontally. It flowers several times a year and, happily, the flowers are fragrant.

*Cattleya aclandiae* is found in the north-eastern Brazilian state of Bahia, but because of excessive collection, it is now very rare. It was first flowered in England in the collection of Sir Thomas Acland (also called Ackland), a year after it was introduced by its discoverer, Lieutenant James. It was named after Lady Acland, who illustrated the plant for Lindley.



*Cattleya aclandiae*

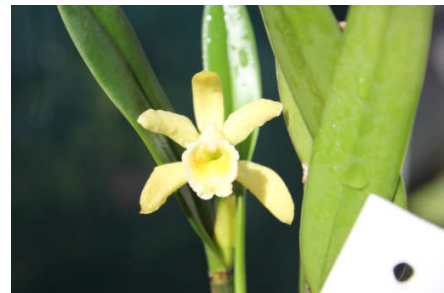
*Cattleya luteola* (Lindley 1853)

Another of my favourites, *Cattleya luteola* is the smallest of the *Cattleya* genus, with the flower usually less than 5cm across. You may have seen it hidden among other (larger) *Cattleya* species at the recent Townsville Orchid Society Autumn Show.

*Cattleya luteola* is named after its colour (luteo- means 'yellow'). It comes from the Amazon Basin and its range extends from Brazil into Peru, Ecuador, Columbia, Venezuela and Bolivia. My plant is the Brazilian form, which is smaller than Peruvian plants. Its habitats are subject to long hot periods followed by heavy seasonal rains, so it sounds perfectly suited to Townsville conditions, but I bought a flask of seedlings a few years ago and have only been able to keep 3 plants alive. It hates soggy conditions and has a distinct winter dormancy, so I have to be careful not to overwater.

Noel Grant, April 2012

Ref: "Orchids of Brazil" by Jim and Barbara McQueen  
"The Cattleyas and Their Relatives" Vol. 1 Carl Withner.



*Cattleya luteola*

### In Noel's Bush House 5

#### **Ionmesa Popcorn 'Haruri' - Singapore Botanical Gardens 2001**

This is an example of the difficulties experienced when an orchid is purchased with a suspect name and the problems you have to overcome to find the correct name.

I bought this orchid because I am interested in unusual hybrids (yes, I also love species)\*\*\*, and I had not previously seen a plant with this mixture of genera. It was labelled '**Iononcidium Haurai**'. When I got home, I immediately checked the popular orchid program "OrchidWiz" to verify the name, and also to check if there were any photographs. The result: no orchid of this name is known.

"Perhaps it is spelled incorrectly" I thought, and asked the program to show all Iononcidiums. The result: No genus with this name is known. A quick check of the list of genera showed that I should have looked for all Ionocidiums (notice that the second 'n' is now missing), which I quickly did. I found there were 18 Ionocidiums shown (abbreviated to Incdm - a hybrid between Ionopsis and Oncidium) but only one with a name even vaguely similar to "Haurai" – **Ionocidium Haruri**.

The information about this orchid was strangely sparse – Originator "Unknown", Parentage "Unknown x Unknown", USA 2005, but there was a photograph of an attractive small flower (obviously of the Oncidium family) with a large (for the size of the plant), very pale pink skirt



(the labellum), a yellow callus in the throat and pale purple petals marked heavily with dark purple spots. "I have found its name!" I thought. I checked "Sanders List of Orchid Hybrids" but was unable to find the plant (not unexpected considering the "Unknown" "Unknown" shown above).

I then decided to check the Internet, and "Googled" *Ionocidium Haruri*. I ploughed through several sites offering the plant for sale, until I came to [www.patentgenius.com/patent/PP16163.html](http://www.patentgenius.com/patent/PP16163.html), which described a Patent issued to a Mr Hideyuki Kanetsuna of Japan in 2005 for "A new and distinct *Ionocidium* orchid plant named 'Haruri' particularly characterized by a labellum that changes colour from yellow to purple during the flowering period. 'Haruri' resulted from a cross between *Ionopsis utricularioides* and *Oncidium flexuosum*". Aha! I now knew the parents!

The description also said "The new cultivar's flowers change colour with variations in temperature. 'Haruri' gains colour at night in low temperatures. The lower the temperature, the darker the purple colour becomes. If the temperature is greater than 15 degrees C., it becomes light purple". Armed with the new knowledge, I returned to OrchidWiz and searched for *Oncidium flexuosum*. Interesting! It is now called *Gomesa flexuosa*! (Damn those botanists and taxonomists fiddling with plant DNA and renaming plants). I found it had 54 first generation offspring, and the crossing with *Ionopsis utricularioides* is named **Ionmesa Popcorn** (made by the Singapore Botanical Gardens in 2001 as **Ionocidium Popcorn**).

Interestingly, one of the 3 photographs shown had a clonal name of, not 'Haruri', but 'Hauri' – very similar to the name originally on my plant – 'Haurai'. Another orchid grower who cannot copy a name correctly? This photograph showed flowers with different coloured labellums – those newly opened were yellow, while older flowers had labellums that were a pale pink/purple. Obviously it was 'Haruri'.

Back to the Internet, where a request to "Google Images" for *Ionocidium Popcorn* found a multitude of photographs of orchids (most with a clonal name of 'Haruri') showing plants with different colours on different labellums!

In my search for the correct name, I started with *Ionocidium Haurai*, progressed to *Ionocidium Haruri* then to *Ionocidium Popcorn* and *Ionmesa Popcorn*. I am now convinced that the correct name for my plant is **Ionmesa (syn. Ionocidium) Popcorn 'Haruri'** and I have relabelled it.

Noel Grant, April 2012

Ref: Computer program "OrchidWiz" 8.03 March 2012

Internet program "Google"

"Sanders List of Orchid Hybrids"

[www.patentgenius.com/patent/PP16163.html](http://www.patentgenius.com/patent/PP16163.html)

P.S. If anyone has a similar problem, or if you wish to check on the parentage of any orchid (or you just want to look at photos of pretty orchids), feel free to ask the Townsville Orchid Society Librarian, who will be happy to show you the wealth of information on OrchidWiz.

\*\*\* Those who know me will realise that this should say "I love species and I am also interested in unusual hybrids". That puts them in the correct order.



**Ionmesa Popcorn 'Haruri'**

\*\*\*\*\*

### ***HERBERT RIVER FIELD TRIP PHOTOS - 15 MAY 2012***



Repairs to Joan MacIntyre's sneaker when it fell apart



In the shade house at Ron & Gloria Hilders





Waiting to be allowed in at Allan Hughes place



Beautiful gardens at Hilder's Nursery



Sale tables under Allan Hughes home



In the shade house with Tom Hobden



Last stop was at Bruno Figuera's place



Sale tables under Eric Beltrame's home



**Welcome to Jeff who has now started to send the Bulletin some interesting articles**

**How to force your *Phalaenopsis* orchids to begin flowering.**

At the last novice / new growers' meeting I presented some research information comparing the various techniques that are often mentioned when discussion arises as to how to force your *Phallies* to send up flower spikes. For readers who missed the meeting, or who had trouble taking notes fast enough, here is an overview of the presentation.

1. Phases of the moon. No werewolf was able to confirm that the phase of the moon influenced the spiking at all, so as that TV program says – **Busted**.
2. Hormones and other chemicals. I have no information or experience in using chemicals, such as growth accelerants and growth retardants, so no conclusions can be drawn.
3. Water and humidity. I could only find one reference to this and it stated that you should reduce watering and reduce humidity to 50% (Gordon, American Orchid Society, 1989). I have found that in an orchid house constructed with shade cloth, it is well nigh impossible to alter the humidity at plant level when compared to the humidity on the outside. – **You Decide**
4. Light: Gordon (AOS, 1989) says to raise the light level from 1000 Foot candles to 1500FC, when measured at noon. You could try this if you have the means to measure and alter the light in your orchid house.
5. Temperature. Temperature, as a spiking initialiser, has been talked about for a long time. The argument seems to have begun with minimum, at night, temperatures being the initiator, to the difference between night and day temperatures being the determining factor, to the latest which says that low day temperatures are the controlling feature. "Phalaenopsis are induced to flower when exposed to temperatures lower than 79 F (26 °C), particularly during the day", stated Lopez (AOS, 2004). So if you can control your daytime temperature, then go for it.
6. Nitrogen. Even though Gordon says you should "Reduce or eliminate nitrogen fertilizer" later research by Wang concluded "The low N and high P fertilizers induced neither earlier spiking nor flowering." (Wang, 2000). **Busted**

7. Phosphorus. Gordon pushed increasing the level of phosphorus given to our plants, but all the latest research finds that playing with phosphorus (P) level in your fertilising program has no effect in forcing *Pallies* to send out spikes. (Wang 2000, Chang 2010) - **Busted**
8. Potassium. I could not find any data. – **Busted**
9. Magnesium. This is the perennial favourite with most "old wives tales". Gordon (1.3mL/L), Merriman, 2011 (6g/L weekly for the month of May) and Richardson, 2011 (20ml/L twice in April) all advocate its use, whereas Wang and Lopez found that its use did not induce *Phallies* to flower. – **Busted**

So where does this leave us? It seems that in our orchid houses we have no way of forcing our *Phallies* to begin producing those flower spikes on which our grand champion blooms will eventually open.

Regardless, I am fertilising with 5ml/L Epsom salts four times during April / May, using "Peters Blossom Booster" fertiliser at 120ppm nitrogen (down from 200ppm) and removing the extra layer of shade cloth that I had on the top of the orchid house over summer. I have not yet worked out how to control the phases of the moon - just in case!

Please remember that all this data refers to getting your *Phallies* to initiate the growth of their flower spikes. **It is not about how to produce long racemes with many big, perfect, colourful flowers - that is another story.**



*Jeff Knowles*