THE SPECIES ORCHID SOCIETY OF WA (INC.)
http://members.iinet.net.au/~emntee/species Newsletter.htm

Vol 32 No 12
May 2021

NEWSLETTER

Anne O'Callaghan Award April 2021
Cattleya cernua
Harry

NEXT MEETING Tuesday 11 May

Contents

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING

13 April 2021 7.45pm

Present: 38 members as per register.

Apologies: 3 as per register.

Visitors: Mich

New members: Nil

Minutes: Acceptance of minutes from December meeting moved Arnold, seconded Richard. Carried

Business Arising: Nil

Financial Report: Treasurer's report was presented by Treasurer Adrian, who apologised for an error in the spreadsheet. The correct account balance is $8,573.91. Acceptance moved Ray, seconded Mavis. Carried

Correspondence:

Inwards:

- E-mails - South Eastern Orchid Society – ISODW 2021 invitation, Wanneroo/ Joondalup invitation to participate in Northern Orchid and Garden Fair
- E-mail – Orchids WA postponed meeting agenda and reports
- E-mail – minutes of Perth Orchid Fair planning meeting

Outwards:

- E-mail - City of Canning re COVID-19 contact register sheet March GM
- E-mail – Management Committee advice of flask delivery
- E-mail – SEOS confirming participation in 2021 ISODW

Acceptance of correspondence report moved Arnold, seconded Ian. Carried

General Business:

- The Society's AGM will be held on Tuesday 11 May. The Secretary gave verbal notice of the meeting to members, and advised that written notice could be collected at this meeting. Management committee nomination forms are also available from the Secretary.
- Peter reminded members that their renewal was due at the beginning of March. Members need to be financial to vote at the AGM.
- The Perth Orchid Fair committee met on 10 March. Seed funding of $300 is to be provided by the Species Society. Attendance of Eastern States vendors and presenters is being explored.
- Members are requested to identify species that they might have in flower for the Northern Orchid and Garden Fairs in July and October, and the ISODW and Perth Orchid Fair in August and to e-mail details to the secretary/Newsletter Editor so that name tags can be prepared. Assistance to set up and dismantle the display and to help conduct these events is required. Surplus plants can be sold at these events.
- Matters to be considered at the Orchids Western Australia general meeting at Mandurah on Sunday 18 April include members support for a proposed international orchid event to be staged in Perth in August 2023 in place of the WOC and promotional events in the lead-up, and the financial and resource

commitment necessary to support such an event, as well the Perth Orchid Fair and the ISODW.

- Flasks from Ching Hua Orchids, Taiwan have arrived. Assistance to deflask and grow the plants will be appreciated. We have 2 flasks each of *Brassavola cucullata* 'Ching Hua' x self , *Dendrobium cucumerinum, Guarianthe aurantiaca* 'Mishima Spot', *Guarianthe bowringiana* coerulea x self, *Jumellea confusa, Oerstedella wallisii, Oncidium stacyi* and *Trichocentrum splendidum* aureum. The plants are ready to be deflasked now – if you can assist, please advise Ken .
- Chris has advised that following a recent medical diagnosis, he will not be able to look after his orchids. He wishes to reduce his collection while the plants are still in good condition. The Society has agreed to purchase approximately 30 large species orchids that need to be divided and repotted for raffle prizes.
- The shipment of plants from Guy Cantor in Sydney has been received and inspected. All plants have been potted up and will be used as raffle plants in due course.
- Peter advised that a local grower has contacted him to advise that he can provide natural cork to be used for slab mounts. Peter will investigate and report at the next meeting.

Anne O'Callaghan Cultural Award:

Awarded to Harry for *Cattleya cernua* (previously *Sophronitis*).

Raffle: Mich, Lynne, Rod, Paul, Bruce

Badge Prize: Jane

President: Peter

Vice President: Adrian

Secretary: Ken Jones
210 Hermitage Drive, The Vines 6069. Phone: 9296 1765
e-mail: kcjones@tpg.com.au

Treasurer: Paul

Editor: Ken Jones

Committee:

Graham
Chris
Maxine
Charly
Tony
Mavis

Life Members

Graham & Margaret
Barry (dec'd)
Gordon (dec'd)
Maxine
Ken & Chris
Joan (dec'd) & Ted (dec'd)
Trevor (dec'd)
Neville (dec'd)
Noel & Eva
Tony & Mavis
Barry (dec'd)

Quiet Achievers

2013 Ian
2014 Chris
2015 Margaret
2016 Tom & Pat
2017 Charly & Gerda
2018 Paul
2020 Adrian & Dee

NOTICEBOARD

FORTH-COMING EVENTS

Home visits:
At 10 am on the Sunday after the fourth Thursday of each month. Please bring chairs and food to share.

* 30 May 2021 John, Bicton.
* 27 Jun 2021 Helen & Stuart, Kewdale
* 25 Jul 2021 Ken & Chris, The Vines

MARKETPLACE - FOR SALE/WANTED

Harry would like to purchase the following.
Brassavola cucculata
Dendrobium torresae
If you have spare plants/divisions for sale, please contact Harry on 0412 403 696 or by e-mail to harry.ashton@live.com.au

NOTES FROM YOUR COMMITTEE

- The May meeting will be our Annual General Meeting followed by the General Meeting.
- A minute's silence in Gordon Doherty's memory will be held at May general meeting (see vale on page 6).
- Delegates at the Orchids Western Australia Inc. general meeting on 18 April endorsed the proposal to stage a major international event in Perth in August 2023 following the decision of the WOC Trust to award the 2024 WOC to Taiwan. Delegates also confirmed the payment of $250 to Orchids WA members staging displays, and funding of $1,000 to attract speakers/vendors to the ISODW hosted by SEOS in early August.
- Peter has managed to locate a supply of natural cork, however it is still attached to trees that have been cut down. It is therefore difficult to remove as it is firmly attached to the cambium layer and needs to be cut away. Peter will discuss this at the next general meeting and arrange a time to for a group of members to go and remove it (must be during working hours).

MONTHLY PLANT

Dendrochilum latifolium var. macranthum

Country of origin: Philippines

Description: Medium sized, hot-cool growing epiphyte or occasional lithophyte

Difficulty: Relatively easy to grow and flower

Photo source: https://www.monaconatureencyclopedia.com/dendrochilum-latifolium-var-macranthum-2/?lang=en

Cost: $10.00

Dendrochilum latifolium var. *macranthum* (Schltr.) H.A.Pedersen 1997 is endemic to the Philippine islands of Luzon, Negros, Visayas and Leyete at elevations above 1,200m where it is a hot to cool growing epiphyte. This species is also known as *Dendrochilum macranthum* and was formerly *Dendrochilum grandiflorum*. It was given the *macranthum* epithet due to its large leaves.

The genus is generally resistant to most pests and pathogens, however can resent being broken up into small plants when repotted. However, if allowed to remain wet and cold in winter with insufficient air movement, opportunistic fungal and bacterial pathogens can occur resulting in unsightly brown patches on the leaves and if left untreated, the demise of the orchid.

This species is one of the simplest of the genus to grow and is perfectly happy growing in a shadehouse, providing winter protection from the cold and wet weather can be provided.

Flowering occurs on arched racemes in Autumn. This flowering plant was benched in March 2021.

Vale Gordon Doherty (1927-2021)

Gordon Doherty was a founding member of the Species Orchid Society of WA in 1988, and became its President in November 1990. He was also an active member of several general orchid societies and garden clubs. He was made a life member of SOSWA in May 2005. Gordon had a genuine love of horticulture and gardening, and an eclectic collection of plants including both epiphytic and terrestrial orchids, hippeastrums, show dahlias, fruit trees and seasonal vegetables. His back garden was completely occupied by a garage/shed, glasshouse, shadehouse, fruit trees and garden beds and a small patch of lawn. Gordon worked for City of Stirling as a Parks and Gardens supervisor before his retirement. Like many of his generation, Gordon was immensely practical and

was able to turn his hand to solve any problem.

Gordon's pragmatic approach to finding solutions is perhaps best demonstrated by his innovative approach to acquire more space to expand his orchid collection and create garden beds for show dahlias. While their next door neighbour had a large lot, she was not using a significant portion of the rear of her property. Gordon negotiated access to construct a large shadehouse and create garden beds for seasonal planting his dahlias. A gate in the diving fence enabled easy access, and as a quid pro quo, Gordon maintained the rear portion of her property for many years. Species Society home visits to Gordon and Robyn's home were always arranged to coincide with dahlia flowering so that members could see the beautiful blooms of which he was justifiably proud.

Over time, Gordon had to cope with illness including osteo-arthritis that progressively reduced his ability to maintain the level of physical activity that he had been accustomed to throughout his working life. Gordon coped with this in his inimitable style with good humour and an absence of complaint. One of his sons built a ramp so that Gordon was still able to get down into the back garden with his walker. Eventually, he and Robyn sold their home when his and Robyn's health issues and home and garden maintenance became unmanageable, and they moved into retirement living in Bunbury. I recall that at the time, Gordon told many of us that he moved to help his son Robert plant a vineyard, however his son Robert recently told me that Gordon did help him, although back in 2000, and sometimes gave unwanted advice in addition to the physical assistance.

Before they moved, at their request the Species Orchid Society arranged an auction to dispose of Gordon's orchid collection. Gordon wanted his plants to go to people who cared about orchids. Our auctioneer on the day, Tom Jackson with the help of many members successfully auctioned Gordon's collection, often obtaining prices well in excess of those expected. At the conclusion of the auction, Gordon, surprised by the amount of money generated insisted that the society take more than the usual 10% commission. Many of us personally benefited from Gordon's generous nature - he gave me some fishing rods, reels and tackle that he was no longer able to use.

The photo of Gordon taken by Tony aptly demonstrates Gordon's mischievous sense of humour, his memorable smile and most of all, his sunny disposition. After the love of his life Robyn developed dementia, they moved to Bunbury to be closer to family, and Gordon became her carer. Unfortunately, Robyn's dementia worsened rapidly and she passed away several years ago after having to move into an aged high care facility.

Subsequently, Gordon had to move into another aged care facility in Bunbury where some of our members enjoyed visiting him. Gordon died peacefully in his sleep on Tuesday 13 April. Our thoughts are with his family at this time.

Harry
Dendrobium bigibbum
Dendrobium schneiderae
Cattleya cernua

Ian
Zygopetalum mackayi

Charly & Gerda
Vanda lamellata

Ken & Chris
Epidendrum diffusum
Miltonia spectabilis var. *moreliana*
Miltonia x bluntii
Ornithophora radicans
Prosthechea brassavolae
Trichopilia fragrans

Karl
Dendrobium hekouense

Peter
Aerangis biloba
Bulbophyllum gerlandianum
Dendrobium affine
Dendrobium convolutum
Paphiopedilum liemianum
Zelenkoa onusta

Courtney
Miltonia x bluntii
Zygopetalum mackayi

John
Guarianthe bowringiana

Siva
Grammatophyllum multiflora citrinum
Thecostyle alata

Tony & Mavis
Epidendrum porpax
Phalaenopsis hieroglyphica

MEMBER PLANTS DISPLAYED April 2021

Aerangis biloba
Peter

Epidendrum porpax
Tony & Mavis

Vanda lamellata
Charly & Gerda

Bulbophyllum gerlandianum
Peter

MEMBER PLANTS DISPLAYED April 2021

Zygopetalum mackayi
Ian
Cortney

Dendrobium hekouense
Karl

Photography by Tony

Fresh air movement is essential for healthy plant growth

(reprinted from an article written for the Paphiopedilum Study Group)

A means of adding to air movement using natural convection is a heat or solar chimney. A solar chimney is simply a length of flue pipe, painted matt black that draws air from the highest point in the glasshouse roof. As the sun heats the flue, the hot air inside rises and is replaced by air from inside the glasshouse. If air entry to the glasshouse only occurs through low level vents, then this exhaust of air will result in fresh air being sucked in to the glasshouse. Within reason, the taller the heat chimney, the more air is heated and exhausted leading to more fresh air drawn into the glasshouse. Solar chimneys are good insurance for power failures that cause mains electric fans to cease operating.

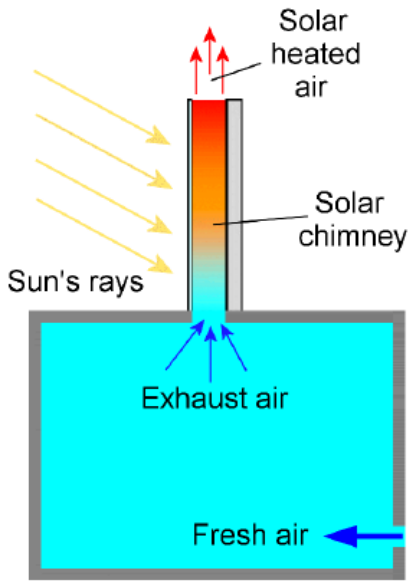

Diagram source: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Pavel_Charvat/publication/264882993/viewer/AS:134778674225152@1409145148752/background/1.png

How do we know whether we have sufficient air movement and humidity?

A simple test for air movement is to light a sandalwood mosquito stick and see where the air movement takes the smoke. We should see the smoke trail widely distributed with no dead areas where the air is stale and still. However, the best test is to observe our plants. Leaves (including mature leaves) should be uniformly green, with a full glossy surface rather than wrinkled or limp and desiccated. Roots should be uniformly coloured and active. The presence of insect pests such as cotton scale, hard scale and mealy bug are also indicators of poor culture, often as a result of inadequate air movement!

References: Horizontal Air Flow Bartok J Jnr

Are there benefits from using Molasses as part of your orchid culture?

Many of you will have heard Ray and other orchid society members mention the use of liquid molasses as part of a cultural program for orchids. As we all experience the damage done by caterpillars, and the active season for the black hairy caterpillars is approaching, I thought that the following information might be of interest to those who prefer to avoid using chemical means such as Dipel ® to control caterpillars

The following text is re-printed from Gardening Australia, Series 26, Episode 20 and was titled 'Costa's suggestion for sweetening up your vegie patch'.

Molasses is a by-product of the refining of sugar. Have a look at this stuff. It's so viscose. I remember eating it as a kid on pancakes and it's really sweet, but it's not just the sweetness - it's also packed with minerals which is great to get those minerals into your garden. And what better way to do it than to add it to your compost. All you have to do is mix molasses up into a watering can and slosh it on. Your compost will love it.

But not everyone loves molasses. There's quite a few different varieties of caterpillars that don't like it at all, so what I want to show you now is a simple recipe and it's a repellent for these caterpillars. All you have to do to start with is get a tablespoon of your molasses - slosh that into a bucket with a litre of lukewarm water. The final ingredient is some liquid soap. Put about a teaspoon of that and mix that up. Take a little sprayer bottle, pour it in and you're ready to go! Spray it all over your susceptible plants - on the tops and under the leaves as well. Spray it on your brassicas - like cauliflower, broccoli, kale, bok choy, tatsoi - and then reapply it after rain.

Molasses Caterpillar Deterrent

1 tablespoon molasses

1 litre lukewarm water

1 teaspoon liquid soap

NOTE: Even the most common foods and products can affect you and your plants. It is good practice with any homemade remedy to first spray a test patch on the target crop and wait 24 hours before checking the sprayed foliage for damage, before proceeding.

However, it appears that Molasses has other properties that can be beneficial in orchid cultural practice.

The WA Department of Primary Industry and Regional Development website at https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/mechanical-physical-and-cultural/natural-alternatives-synthetic-chemicals?page=0%2C2 makes a strong case for molasses as a preventative to repel insects and caterpillars that otherwise damage our orchids. However, they also caution that many natural remedies have not been scientifically tested or conclusively evaluated. While their popularity suggests they work, the degree of success is unknown, so it is best

to treat them as tools to reduce pests and diseases rather than to eradicate them completely. The following supports the benefits identified on the ABC Gardening Australia program.

Molasses spray for chewing insects

Caterpillars and other chewing insects apparently dislike the taste of leaves treated with this spray. Dissolve one tablespoon of molasses in one litre of warm water and add a teaspoon of liquid soap. Spray both upper and lower surfaces of the leaves.

Some gardeners claim that by doubling the amount of molasses and applying the solution to the soil, they have achieved some success against root knot nematodes.

The Manly-Warringa Orchid Society Bulletin, April 2016 at http:// www.orchidsociety.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/542-April-Bulletin-2016.pdf included an article reprinted from a presentation by Ken Russell in July 2013 on the use of non-chemical pest control for orchids . His molasses solution is made by mixing a teaspoon of molasses in 1 to 2 litres of water. Use the mixture to water the plant. Molasses is a rich source of potassium. He says" *you needn't worry about the molasses attracting bugs -the plants absorb the molasses instantly. Boom it's gone! The fruit trees just love it."*

"Molasses for Organic Pest Control.

One more benefit of molasses is its ability to be used in the control of some common pests encountered in gardening. The most commonly known use of molasses in NSW is for its ability to help control Fire Ants (Editor's note - fortunately we do not yet have this pest in WA). When Malcolm Beck was using molasses in the fertiliser spray for his fruit trees he noticed that the fire ants moved out from under the trees. We've also found a internet reference to the ability of molasses to control white cabbage moths in the UK. Mix a tablespoon of molasses in 1 litre of warm water and let it cool then spray every week or every two weeks as required for white cabbage moth. They hate it and I think it would be good soil conditioner as well if any drops on your soil. So molasses could be an effective deterrent in more ways than we think.

Why use molasses on Orchids? The reason nutrient manufacturers have "discovered" molasses is that it's a great source of carbohydrates to stimulate the growth of beneficial micro-organisms. 'Carbohydrate' is really a fancy name for sugar and molasses is the best sugar for horticultural use. Folks who have read some of our prior essays know that we are big fans of promoting and nourishing soil life and that we attribute a good portion of our growing success to the attention we pay to building a thriving 'micro-herd' to work in concert with plant roots to digest and assimilate nutrients. We really do buy into the odd organic adage – 'Feed the soil not the plant'.

Molasses is a good quick source of energy for the various forms of microbes and soil life in a compost pile of good living soil. As we said earlier, molasses is a carbon source that

feeds the beneficial microbes that create natural soil fertility. But, if giving a sugar boost was the only goal, there would be lots of alternatives. We could even go with the old Milly Blunt story of using Coke on plants as a child, after all Coke would be a great source of sugar to feed microbes and it also contains phosphoric acid to provide phosphorus for strengthening roots and encouraging blooming. In our eyes though, the primary thing that makes molasses the best sugar for agricultural use is its trace minerals. In addition to sugars, molasses contains significant amounts of potash, sulphur and a variety of micro-nutrients. Because molasses is derived from plants and because the manufacturing processes that create it are focused on removing the sugars, the majority of the mineral nutrients that were contained in the original sugar cane or sugar beet are still present in molasses. This is a critical factor because a balanced supply of mineral nutrients is essential for the "beneficial beasties" to survive and thrive. That's one of the secrets we've discovered to really successful organic gardening. The micronutrients found in organic amendments like molasses, kelp and alfalfa were all derived from other plant sources and are quickly and easily available to our soil and plants. This is especially important for the soil 'micro-herd' of critters that depend on tiny amounts of those trace minerals as catalysts to make the enzymes that create biochemical transformations. That last sentence was our fancy way of saying – it's actually the critters in "live soil" that break down organic fertilizers and "feed" our plants.

One final benefit molasses can provide to your garden and orchid media is its ability to work as a chelating agent. That's a scientific way of saying that molasses is one of those "magical" substances that can convert some chemical nutrients into a form that's easily available for critters and plants. Chelated minerals can be absorbed directly and remain available and stable in the soil. Rather than spend a lot of time and effort explaining the relationships between chelates and micro-nutrients, we are going to quote one of our favourite sources for explaining soil for scientific laymen. "Micronutrients occur, in cells as well as soil, as part of large, complex organic molecules in chelated form". The word chelate (pronounced "KEE-late") comes from the Greek word for "claw" which indicates how a single nutrient ion is held in the centre of the larger molecule. While the finely balanced interactions between micronutrients are complex and not fully understood, we do know that balance is crucial: any micronutrient, when present in excessive amounts, will become a poison, and certain poisonous elements, such as chlorine are also essential micronutrients. For this reason natural, organic sources of micronutrients are the best means of supplying them to the soil: they are present in balanced quantities and not liable to be over-supplied through error or ignorance. When used in naturally chelated form, excess micronutrients will be locked up and prevented from disrupting soil balance."

The North Shore Orchid Society June 2020 at https://northshoreorchidsocietyorg.files.wordpress.com/2020/05/202006-nsos-mb.pdf has the following to say about molasses.

“Cheap, easy and does it all, not your kitchen molasses! Horticultural molasses does things for your plants like nothing else can and it is cheap, just mix up and start spraying everywhere. You simply can’t overdo it, but you do get to the point of diminishing returns. Molasses can kill insects and does not make your plants sticky, and it also causes a massive micro bloom in the soil.

Sugar Sweet. Sugars are how plants store energy for rainy days and winter hibernation, so why is this important as a gardener? Aside from giving your plants a power boost, you are stopping bugs. Yes it stops bugs. Insects are very simple creatures; they can only feed within a narrow window of sugar content. When the sugar content of plants is raised, insects can’t feed on them. They take one bite and move on. The second way molasses controls insects is by being directly ingested by the insect.

What most people don’t know is that only bees and sugar ants can process simple sugars. Insects have no way of expelling the gas that builds up from fermenting sugar and the vegetation in their gut (draw your own mental picture please) plus, they have exoskeletons and can’t get bloated, their delicate internal organs are crushed from the inside out. All a bug needs to do is walk through, or try to feed on a molasses covered plant. As they are constantly cleaning themselves the insects will try to lick the molasses off their feet and swallow it, or if they take a bite of a plant they will swallow it.

Microbial Bloom. As microbes go through their life circle, they add organic matter and micro nutrients to the soil, improving the soil and making nutrients more available to your plants. Regularly applying molasses to your soil and plants greatly improves the quality of the soil over time. Mixture 3 tablespoons molasses and 1 tablespoon liquid organic fertilizer (seaweed, fish emulsion etc.) into 4 litres of water spray with abandon every week or two. It also works like a charm on lace bugs on azaleas and lantana for the garden enthusiast. This is the information that I saved about molasses. I have just removed the bit about fire ants as we don’t have them in Sydney, but it really sounds good for any garden that needs a boost as well as your orchids and it is safe for bees. We have started to use molasses at 1ml per litre of water in with the fertilizer weekly, but I know of some orchid growers who use up to 5ml per litre, although only using it 3 to 4 times per year.

ABOUT US

Monthly Meetings

Monthly meetings held on the second Tuesday of each month at Wilson Community Hall, Braibrise St, Wilson commencing 7.45 pm. Usually, the short formal meeting is followed by plant descriptions given by members. Supper follows to allow member's time to socialise and discuss orchids. All visitors are very welcome

Membership Fees

Family $30 pa. For first year only, new family members will need to purchase two name badges. Badges come in two versions - pin fastening $11.50 or magnet fastening $13.50 [*Please indicate preference*]

Single $20.00 pa. For first year only, new members will need to purchase a name badge. Badges come in two versions - pin fastening $11.50 or magnet fastening $13.50. [*Please indicate preference*]

New members who don't live in Perth will not require name badges, therefore membership cost will be at the renewal fee only

Monthly Home Visit

On the weekend following the fourth Thursday of each month (generally on the Sunday morning), a home visit is held at a member's home. This gives members an opportunity to enjoy the fellowship that our mutual interest provides, and to see how others go about growing their orchids.

Monthly Plant Display

Given that the prime objective of the Society is to promote the cultivation of species orchids, only species or natural hybrids are acceptable for display. Since we all may be uncertain about the identification of a plant from time to time, we encourage members to bring plants along about which they are unsure since someone may be able to identify them. There is no competition nor restriction on flower count, quality or length of ownership. We want members to be able to see species plants in flower. So even if your flowers are a bit past their best, bring them in as others may not have seen that species in flower.

Plant Sales

The Society provides an opportunity table for members to sell surplus plants and equipment, and for the Society to sell product from time to time.

Plant Purchases

The Society endeavours to obtain a different species seedling for sale at each meeting, usually costing between $6.00 and $15.00. The Society makes a small profit on these sales which is invested in benefits to members. As it is always difficult to get new or different species, should members have 20 or more plants of one species which they feel might be suitable as a monthly plant, please contact a Committee member.

Raffle

The Society conducts a raffle each meeting and at home visits as a means of generating funds. If you have spare species orchids that you wish to sell to the Society for raffles, please advise a committee member.

Management

In accordance with the Rules, the Annual General meeting is held in May each year at which time the office-bearers and committee are elected. The majority of Committee members serve two year terms.

If unclaimed, return to
The Editor
204 Park Street, Henley Brook WA 6055

Next meeting Tuesday 11 May