

**THE SPECIES ORCHID SOCIETY OF WA (INC.)**

[http://members.iinet.net.au/~emntee/species Newsletter.htm](http://members.iinet.net.au/~emntee/species%20Newsletter.htm)



**Vol 33 No 2 July 2021**



Anne O'Callaghan Award June 2021  
*Zelenkoa onusta*  
Harry

**NEXT MEETING Tuesday 13 July**

**NEWSLETTER**

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# MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING

8 June 2021 7.10 pm

**Present:** 27 members as per register.

**Apologies:** 6 as per register.

**Visitors:** 1 as per register.

**New members:** Nil

**Minutes:** Acceptance of minutes from May meeting moved Richard, seconded Tony. Carried.

**Business Arising:** Nil

**Financial Report:** Treasurer's report was presented by Treasurer Adrian. The account balance is \$7,557.92. Acceptance moved Arnold, seconded John. Carried.

**Business Arising:** Secretary advised that payment had been made to Ezi-Gro for the flasks from Taiwan, and would be reported in the July financial report.

**Correspondence:**

**Inwards:**

- Adrian - display materials and construction of display props.
- E-mail – Orchids WA draft meeting minutes
- E-mail – J Varigos permission to reprint article from newsletter
- E-mails – Bunbury Orchid Society charity auction
- E-mail – AOC report.

**Outwards:**

- E-mail - City of Canning re COVID-19 contact register sheet May GM, insurance C of C
- E-mail – Committee draft GM minutes, Committee and GM agenda,
- E-mail – Draft Orchids WA agenda,

AOC reports

- Associations on-line – 2020/21 Society information statement

Acceptance of correspondence report moved Mavis, seconded Charly. Carried.

**Business Arising:** Nil

**General Business:**

- Norm successfully auctioned nine of Chris' species orchids for a total of \$305. Thanks to Norm, and to members that took part in the spirited bidding for these highly desirable species.
- Ken reminded members that we have committed to staging a display at the Northern Orchid and Garden Fair on 3-4 July. Set up will be on Saturday 3 July at 12.00 noon. Member's assistance to set up and dismantle the display and conduct the event will be appreciated. Mavis Watkinson reminded members that wish to sell plants that they should be prepared to help run the event by working on the sales table, kitchen or on the door.
- Members able to supply flowering plants for this display please e-mail details to the secretary/newsletter editor. Ken advised that to date, he had only received plant details from Adrian José.
- John and Norm were thanked for the raffie plants donated at the last home visit
- The following agenda items for the Orchids WA General Meeting in late June have been circulated.
  - Perth Orchid Fair – Update & Future directions
  - Intersociety Display & Workshop –

update

- Revised Budget for 2021/2022
- Orchids of the Southwest Book by A Brown Proposal for funding.

Graham asked how much money was needed to fund the publication. This is not known until the delegates consider the submission.

- Delegate Mavis asked members whether there are any other matters that they want included in the agenda – no matters were raised.
- Peter thanked Jane, Adrian, Arnold, Charly and Graham who helped him collect cork on Friday 28 May. It was a successful venture and they collected two trailer loads of cork bark.
- Ken reminded members about the preparation of plants for the silent auction on Tuesday 13 July. While species orchids are preferred, it is understood that many members will not have surplus species orchids and hybrids are welcome, as are any items for orchid culture.
- Peter initiated discussion about the frequency of home visits. Attendance has declined over the past few months, and Mavis has found it more difficult to find hosts for the monthly visits. Members generally indicated they strongly supported the current arrangements for monthly home visits and were reluctant to move to bi-monthly or less frequent home visits. Mavis advised that she would be approaching members seeking hosts for 2022 in October this year.

#### **Anne O'Callaghan Cultural Award:**

Awarded to Harry for a well grown and flowered *Zelenkoa onusta*.

**Raffle:** Adrian, Graham, John, Caterina, Richard

**Badge Prize:** Calvin

#### **Life Members**

Graham & Margaret  
Chris  
Barry (dec'd)  
Gordon (dec'd)  
Maxine  
Ken & Chris  
Adrian & Deanne.  
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 & Deanne  
2021 John

# 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.

- \* 25 Jul 2021 Ken & Chris, The Vines
- \* 29 Aug 2021 Graham & Marg, Hamersley

## MARKETPLACE - FOR SALE/WANTED

**President:** Peter  
**Vice President:** Adrian  
**Secretary:** Ken Jones  
210 Hermitage Drive, The Vines  
6069. Phone: 9296 1765  
e-mail: [kcjones@tpg.com.au](mailto:kcjones@tpg.com.au)  
**Treasurer:** Adrian  
**Editor:** Ken

<b>Committee:</b>	Charly
Graham	Paul
Chris	Tony
Maxine	Mavis

## NOTES FROM YOUR COMMITTEE

- Our annual silent auction will be held at the July general meeting. This event is our annual fundraiser and depends on member donations of plants (orchids or other garden plants), orchid growing materials, books etc. Please **do not water** plants on the day of the meeting as the water draining from the pot makes it impossible to read the bids. Also, please ensure that any plants donated are free of disease as you would wish for any plants that you purchase.
- Adrian and Paul have now completed construction of our display props that will be used at the Northern Orchid and Garden Fair, Mirrabooka on 3-4 July. If you might have plants for any displays, please provide details to Ken so that he can print out plant name tags.

## Inter Society Orchid Display and Workshop 2021

The 2021 Inter Society Orchid Display and Workshop hosted by South Eastern Orchid Society of WA Inc. will take place at the Kelmscott Hall, River Road, Kelmscott on the weekend 7-8 August 2021, with set up on Friday 6 August from 11.00am. The Species Society has committed to staging a display of species orchids using the new display props constructed by Adrian José. The theme for the event is Weekend at the Movies and we are creating a display to embody this theme.

The ISODW dinner will be held at the same venue on Saturday evening at 6.30pm.

Cost is \$65 per head for a catered buffet that includes:

- Pumpkin soup (gf)
- Roast sirloin beef with red wine jus and Yorkshire pudding
- Grilled WA barramundi with cracked black pepper and lemon (gf)
- Baked Mediterranean penne pasta (v)
- Thai chicken yellow curry with jasmine rice
- Cooked North West king prawns with cocktail sauce (gf)
- Roast panache of root vegetables (gf)
- Crispy thyme and rosemary potatoes (gf)
- Cauliflower and broccoli cheese (gf)
- Caesar Salad
- Greek Salad
- Individual mini pavlovas with mixed berry coulis (gf)
- Apple crumble and custard

The ISODW dinner is a great opportunity to catch up with and make new orchid friends. For catering, South Eastern Orchid Society have asked participating societies to provide details of their members wishing to attend the dinner along with payment to the by the 16 July. If you wish to attend the dinner, please pay the Treasurer at the next meeting, or transfer payment to the Species Society account at the Bendigo Bank, BSB 633-000, Account number 122491988 prior to the meeting. Please include your surname in the transfer.

## Growing orchids in your garden - some tips for beginners

When preparing material for visitors to the 19th AOC orchid show held in Perth, I planned a presentation on growing orchids in your garden. While this article was published in our newsletter in 2013, many years have passed and we now have many members who have since joined the Species Society. Therefore, I felt that it was now time to reprint this information.

Many orchid growers do not have the luxury of space or resources to erect a glasshouse and/or shade house. At the time, I believed that this shouldn't be a barrier to enabling them to grow a few orchids. At the same time, experienced orchid growers are often keen to push out the boundaries of their hobby and growing orchids in a garden can be a rewarding experience. With the popularity of flowering orchids and their ready availability

in hardware and department stores, florists, general nurseries etc., many more people were purchasing (and continue to buy) orchids instead of cut flowers or other pot plants, and give them as gifts. While it is reasonable to assume that many of these orchids only ever get to flower once (i.e., they die), there are some simple ways of growing these plants for those who do not want to go to the expense of a purpose-built shade house or hothouse.

For example, hybrid *Phalaenopsis* orchids can quite be grown quite successfully inside the house, perhaps in a bathroom or similar room where there is enough light and humidity/warmth. However, it should be said at the outset that most inexperienced growers will overwater their orchid plants, believing that as they come from tropical climates, they need to be wet all the time. As a more experienced orchid grower, and having observed many species orchids in the wild, I now know that this is not so.

Epiphytic orchids (the majority of those we grow), whether from the hot tropical rainforests or from cooler, temperate montane forests need to dry out between watering. If you take a close look at epiphytic orchid roots in their natural setting, i.e. exposed to the air, you will see a white coating on the roots called velamen, and when the plant is actively growing, a green (or occasionally brown/red) root tip. What the velamen coating does apart from protecting the orchid's critical food supply system and anchoring it to its host, is act a food reservoir by absorbing and storing nutrient from the water washing down the tree when it rains. Next time you are repotting an orchid, look at the roots that have been covered by the media - they may be white or brown, but are substantially modified for life in an environment where they are not exposed to air and light.

The host provides many things to an epiphytic orchid in its natural habitat - a suitable place to live that provides the required amount of light . In the tropics, many of the host trees loose some of their canopy during the less light intense, cooler and drier season, thereby increasing the light available to the orchid. Further, the host tree modifies the immediate local climate by humidifying the air in its canopy, attracting pollinators and birds and animals thus attending to the plants reproductive destiny and assisting with its nutrition. Observing epiphytic orchids in their natural habitat, it soon becomes obvious that not all trees are desirable hosts. Those that are literally covered in orchids will also be festooned by a wide range of ferns, mosses and lichens, and tend to be rough-barked primary forest species such as Asian dipterocarps (egg Luan and Meranti) and tropical hardwoods and softwoods (Mahogany, Teak and Cypress). These are the trees that we learned to look for while hiking through the forest. While some epiphytic orchids have adapted to introduced species such as oil palms, the majority continue to inhabit the primary forest species and disappear once these trees are cleared, although this disappearance can also be due to pollinator loss.

Understanding of these requirements of epiphytic orchids is fundamental to the successful cultivation of epiphytic orchids in your garden. Clearly, the same constraints do not necessarily apply to growing terrestrials (orchids that grow in soil) and this will be covered as will growing epiphytes in pots or lithophytes on rocks and walls in future

parts of this article.

So, assuming that we want to try growing a few epiphytic orchids on trees in our garden, what do we need to do?

Firstly, we need to find a suitable host tree, to provide an acceptable environment for our orchid. Epiphytic orchids need a rough, permanent barked tree - if the tree sheds its bark like most Eucalypts, it is not suitable. I have found that native trees including *Grevillea*, *Allocasuarina* (Sheoak), *Casuarina* (River Oak), *Melaleuca* (Paperbarks and Myrtle Trees), *Callistemon* (Bottlebrush), *Callitris* (Cypress) and *Acacia* (Wattle) are suitable. There are also many exotic tree species that are suitable including *Plumeria* (Frangipani), *Jacaranda*, *Poinciana* and *Crescentia* (Calabash) as well as Australian tropical trees including Red Cedar, Hoop Pine, Lilli Pilli, and though not strictly a tree, *Cyatheales* (Tree Fern).

In choosing a suitable host for your epiphytic orchids, you need to look for the following attributes:

- i. rough, permanent bark (that does not contain large amounts of volatile phenolics, for example *Ficus* [rubber tree]) as this type of surface retains more water than does a smooth bark;
- ii. an open crown of leaves that provides the required level of shade to the orchids (approximately 50-70% shade in Perth), and that permits the free circulation of air;
- iii. a suitable aspect where the orchids are protected from the hot midday sun, but directly exposed to early morning and late afternoon sun (north-facing is the preferred aspect). If the situation is too sheltered, intermittent or failure to flower may be the outcome (usually indicated by excessive leaf production and dark green leaves); and
- iv. reliable access to water either from reticulation or hand watering.

Once you have identified a suitable host tree, you need to think about what epiphytic orchids to attach. I recommend that you experiment with orchids known to be robust and vigorous in less than optimal conditions. Generally they will be hybrids that are vigorous growers, for example reed-stem *Epidendrum*, *Cattleya*, Australian native *Dendrobium*



and *Oncidium*, and that have some degree of drought-tolerance. Because I am passionate about species, I started out with *Dendrobium speciosum* and *Dendrobium kingianum*. Both these Australian epiphytic species are virtually indestructible and are tolerant of less than perfect growing conditions. I use the irregular-shaped pieces left over after breaking up and repotting. The plants in the photos were attached to a *Grevillea* in 2007 and have grown

**Harry**

*Brassavola cordata*  
*Leptotes unicolor*  
*Zelenkoa onusta*

**Graham & Margaret**

*Pterostylis hamiltonii*

**Maxine**

*Dendrochilum cobbianum*  
*Dendrochilum saccolabium*  
*Paphiopedilum spicerianum*  
*Sophranitella violacea*

**Ken & Chris**

*Cattleya maxima*  
*Coelogyne candoensis*  
*Dendrochilum saccolabium*  
*Paphiopedilum fairrieianum*  
*Pleurothallis quadrifida*

*Vanda sanderiana*  
*Zootrophion atropurpureum*

**Adrian & Dee**

*Laelia anceps* var. *chamberlainianum*  
*Lockhartia oerstedii*  
*Paphiopedilum spicerianum*

**Victor**

*Angraecum magdalenae*  
*Phalaenopsis lindenii*

**Norm**

*Paphiopedilum fairrieianum*

**Richard**

*Bulbophyllum lepidum*

**Tony & Mavis**

*Phalaenopsis equestris*  
*Zelenkoa onusta*

**MEMBER PLANTS DISPLAYED JUNE 2021**



*Brassavola cordata*  
Harry



*Leptotes unicolor*  
Harry





*Zootrophion atropurpureum*  
Ken & Chris

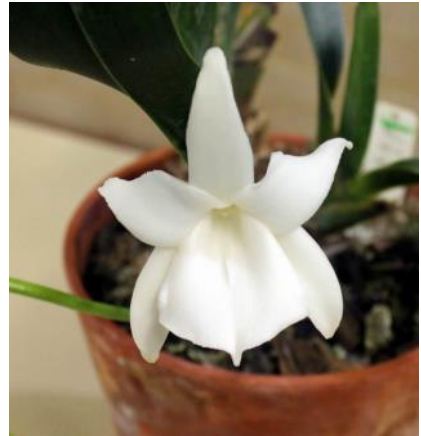


*Paphiopedilum fairrieianum*  
Ken & Chris  
Norm

## MEMBER PLANTS DISPLAYED JUNE 2021



*Bulbophyllum lepidum*  
Richard & Jane



*Angraecum magdalenae*  
Victor



well and flowered regularly since. More recently, I attached an *Oncidium maculatum* to the same tree which has also flourished.

I attached these orchids to the host tree in early spring (although autumn is also suitable once the extreme heat of summer has passed) by using the ubiquitous telephone wire or soft cloth plant ties around mature pseudobulbs. It needs to prevent the plant moving in the wind as should this occur,



*Dendrobium x delicatum* in flower 2021

the active green tips will seal over. I do not use material such as sphagnum moss between the orchid and the tree, although may, if the weather is likely to be hot and dry, use loose paperbark or similar material to cover the root mass which can help retain some moisture. This helps protect new roots from the effect of sun and hot, dry wind, while allowing air movement and moisture penetration. The wire or binding material can

the roots will not attach to the host anchoring the orchid, and



be removed once the roots have a firm hold on the host. For your first venture, choose orchids that are inexpensive and surplus. Don't choose sickly plants as the orchids that you attach to trees will have to survive in a much more hostile environment than those living in your shade house. Over the years I have attached several orchid genera to trees at our previous home, often as a result of dividing and repotting plants and being left with an 'odd shaped' division that would not fit in a pot.. These have included *Biffrenaria harrisoniae*, *Oncidium sphacelatum* and hybrids, *Laelia anceps*, *Cattleya aurantiaca* and *Cattleya* hybrids.

*Laelia anceps* primary hybrid in flower 2021

Choosing your host tree is a critical part of this exercise, and as noted earlier, its location is also important. Shade and protection from hot, dry summer winds and protection from cold, wet weather and frosts in winter are equally critical. Further, in winter, it is important to make the most of whatever sunlight is available, and to this end, it is desirable that the tree canopy is less dense over the winter period but still provides enough cover to protect your plants from frosts. In the southern hemisphere, a northerly aspect is optimum as the sun

tends to shift to the north in winter. Because the amount of light diminishes during winter, it is important to position your orchids so that they receive the benefit of winter sunlight (note that as the sun moves to be more overhead in mid-summer, the canopy should provide more shade).

When choosing a tree, ensure that it is rough-barked, does not shed its bark, and if you intend the orchid to become self-sufficient, in a place that receives regular watering. In the beginning, it is worth positioning your orchids where they get more than enough shade as this can be corrected later by pruning the tree.

*Oncidium maculatum* primary hybrid in flower 2021





You might also consider attaching companion plants such as *Tillandsia ssp* or *Bromeliad ssp* or other exotic ornamentals close to your orchid as they will help maintain humidity during the drier months. Orchids can be attached in several ways. The simplest are the use of telephone wire, plant tie string, old stocking or plant grafting tape. The latter three will breakdown over time and the wire can easily be removed once the orchid has firmly attached to the host tree. Another option with large plants is to nail them on, although I do not recommend this method that as it can allow unwanted pathogens to infect the plant and host tree. I suspect that a glue such as that used to attach *Tillandsia* to small bits of pottery could also be used. I do not use sphagnum moss pads under or over the plant roots as I find that it can hold too much moisture, and becomes moisture repellent when it dries out. I have also found that if you're attaching orchids during the hot summer months, an anti-transpirant spray is helpful as it reduces leaf desiccation.

Encouraging healthy growth presents some challenges compared with glasshouse/ shade house culture where conditions can be carefully controlled. I fertilise regularly to ensure that these plants get the best start possible, remembering however that orchids are gross feeders and the maxim, "little and often" is the rule. It is also important to maintain a pest patrol as new shoots are very attractive to snails and slugs, and sap-suckers such as scale and mealy bug (that is, considerably more attractive than the host plant). I also use a slow release fertiliser/tonic (egg Strikeback, Sea Mungus, Osmocote for Orchids etc.) that can be contained in a small net pot on a spike. Although I have not seen these for sale in Australia, they can be purchased in Thailand and I feel sure that someone will be selling them here. This ensures that every time it rains or your orchid is watered, it receives a small dose of fertiliser.



*Dendrobium speciosum* in flower 2021

The frequency of watering one's orchids is a topic that always stimulates debate. There is no 'one right way'; it all depends on your situation and conditions. However, as a general rule of thumb, when orchids are first attached to a tree or other mount in your garden, it is prudent to water them at least every day until new roots start to attach themselves to the tree. Once vigorous new root growth is evident, the watering frequency can be reduced, remembering however that during very hot/dry weather conditions, your orchids will need to be watered at least once every day, and perhaps in the evening on those days where high night time temperatures and/or easterly winds combine to desiccate everything. After the first year, the roots should have made their way to a part of the tree trunk or branch that is less exposed and your plants will no longer need the daily attention. When watering, it is important to remember the wet/dry cycle that is part of the natural environment for the majority of epiphytic orchids. This cycle is based upon the orchid plant being drenched, allowed to dry out before being drenched again. If the roots are still white after watering, you have not applied enough water - the velamen coating on the roots should turn greenish-brown after watering indicating that they have absorbed some of the water that can then be made available to the plant.

Other epiphytic options include the use of dead, rather than living trees, hollow logs, wooden posts, tree stumps and similar mounts. The problem with these mounts however is that they are more susceptible to termite attack, along with a host of other insects and fungus pathogens that act to break down the wood, in time requiring the orchid(s) to be re-attached. The consequent root damage that occurs while doing so will adversely affect the orchid and can lead to its demise. However, if you have a suitable location in your garden and can access a well-weathered hardwood mount, placing a large *Dendrobium speciosum* or *Cymbidium maddidum* on an old stump, or a large piece of tree trunk can make a spectacular display when the plant is in flower. Hollow logs or stumps can be an excellent place to grow epiphytic orchids as the hollowed out section can be filled with compost or humus into which the roots will quickly grow providing a readily available source of nutrient.

There are many other orchids that while principally epiphytic, are readily adaptable to lithophytic or terrestrial growth. These include species in the genera *Angraecum*, *Bulbophyllum*, *Cattleya*, *Coelogyne*, *Dendrobium*, *Encyclia*, *Epidendrum*, *Laelia*, *Pleione*, *Schomburgkia*, *Thunia*, and *Vanda*. Although their light and temperature requirements can vary widely (some will need 70-80% shade while others will be quite tolerant of 50% shade).

If planting in a rockery, it is also important to research whether the particular species prefers its roots exposed to the air and light like *Vanda*, or like *Pleione*, prefer their roots to be covered by moss, lichens or ferns. Other genera such as *Arundina*, *Bletilla*, *Calanthe*, the rupicolous *Laelia*, *Lycaste*, *Neobenthamia*, *Paphiopedilum*, *Phaius*, *Sobralia*, *Spathoglottis* and *Stenoglottis* are true terrestrials or occasional lithophytes and will flourish in the right environment.



Sobralia hybrid flowering in indoor garden 2021.

*Bletilla striata* in flower in outdoor garden 2020

Growing orchids lithophytically can be very rewarding, and as many of the commonly grown epiphytes are equally adaptable to being grown as lithophytes, many options are possible. As most of us in the Perth metro area live in an environment that is primarily sandy, the options are more limited than in settings where there is exposed rock. However, retaining walls constructed from moss rock or limestone can provide a more than suitable location for an orchid, proving sufficient protection is available. The common name for *Dendrobium speciosum* is the Sydney Rock Orchid and it will readily attach to a suitable rock substrate. Similarly, the common name for *Dendrobium kingianum* is the Pink Rock Lilly. Both these species are relatively tolerant of high light, although the leaves will be damaged by the overexposure that can occur in Western Australia's hot, dry summer. However, in my experience, this does not prevent them flowering.



*To be continued.*

# 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  
210 Hermitage Drive, The Vines WA 6069

**Next meeting Tuesday 13 July**