

# 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 3 August 2021



Anne O'Callaghan Award July 2021

*Angraecum leonis*

Peter

# NEWSLETTER

**NEXT MEETING Tuesday 10 August**

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# MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING

13 July 2021 7.00pm

**Present:** 25 members as per register.

**Apologies:** 6 as per register.

**Visitors:** Nil

**New members:** Nil

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

**Business Arising:** Nil

**Financial Report:** Treasurer's report was presented by Treasurer Adrian. The account balance is \$6,558.68 . Acceptance moved Ian, seconded Margaret. Carried.

**Business Arising:** Nil

**Correspondence:**

**Inwards:**

- AOC - AGM agenda and invoice annual membership fee \$100
- Orchids WA – agenda, minutes, reports.
- Associations On-Line newsletter
- Cancellation of Mirrabooka NGOF
- GCA- promotion for Townsville Convention, June bulletin and readings
- E-mail from Tony re auction of Chris Cabassi orchid collection Sunday 18 July
- City of Canning – booking requirements during COVID-19 lockdown (copied to committee)

**Outwards:**

- Committee – agendas, minutes.
- Orchids WA – agenda, minutes, reports.
- Associations On-Line newsletter
- South Eastern Orchid Society – booking 3m x 3m freestanding display for ISODW
- City of Canning - COVID-19 contact sheet

Acceptance of correspondence report moved Graham, seconded Lynn. Carried.

**Business Arising:** .

**General Business:**

- Mavis reported on the Orchids WA General Meeting held 27 June. The major business item on the agenda was the discussion about what kind of event is to be staged in place of the WOC in 2023 or 2024. Options include staging the 2023 or 2024 AOC, an alternative major national event, or an event designed to attract both national and international visitors. The event will be concurrent with a World Conservation Conference and tours to see WA terrestrial orchids and wildflowers. The previous funding from Business Events Perth was no longer available, and a new submission would need to be made, albeit for significantly less money. Similarly, it is likely that any Lotterywest funding would be less. The Orchids WA AGM is scheduled for 31 October and it is hoped to have feedback from members by that meeting. No decision was made on whether to contribute to the proposed Andrew Brown book, and a comprehensive Conservation Report was provided by Ron Fauntleroy who was commended for the work that he is doing to save rare and endangered WA terrestrial orchids.
- Mavis also confirmed that Dr Marion Davey, AOC President will be attending the ISODW as a presenter and will also speak at the dinner.
- Ken asked members whether there was

any interest in a bulk purchase of Orchidata bark. SOSWA can still buy at wholesale price from Garden City Plastics – price approx. \$21 plus GST. The Paphiopedilum Study Group are planning to order, and will invite NDOS and WJOS to participate.

- Peter advised that one flask each of *Dendrobium loddigesii* and *Dendrobium gratiosissimum* had been purchased from Windemere Orchids. He will grow them on as monthly plants.
- Ken advised members who wished to attend the ISODW dinner on Saturday 7 August at a cost of \$65 per head need to pay the Treasurer (cash or EFT) so that confirmation can be sent South Eastern Orchid Society by Friday 16 July.
- Adrian confirmed that he had completed construction of SOSWA display that would be used at both the ISODW and Perth Orchid Fair. Ken reminded members to provide him with the names of any orchids they might have in flower for both events in August as soon as possible. A roster for helpers at the Perth Orchid Fair will be at the July home visit and the August meeting – please be prepared to assist with this event.

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

Awarded to Peter for a well grown and displayed *Angraecum leonis*.

**Raffle:** no raffle

**Badge Prize:** Graham

#### **Life Members**

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

#### **Quiet Achievers**

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

- \* 29 Aug 2021 Graham & Marg, Hamersley.
- \* 26 Sep 2021 Lynne, Eden Hill

## MARKETPLACE - FOR SALE/WANTED

Karl Lee would like to purchase a plant of *Ceratocentron fessellii*. If you have a plant for sale, please contact Karl on 0432 956 885 or e-mail [karl.khlee@gmail.com](mailto:karl.khlee@gmail.com)

**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

**Committee:** Charly  
Graham Paul  
Chris Tony  
Maxine Mavis

## NOTES FROM YOUR COMMITTEE

- The well-supported Silent Auction held at the July meeting raised \$563.50. Sincere thanks to Charly and Chris for setting out the lots and collating the bids; Mavis and Adrian for recording the bids and collecting the money, the members that made bids for the lots and the members who donated orchids and other items for the auction.
- Thanks also to members who assisted with the auction of Chris' orchid collection. Special thanks to Ray Taylor who was auctioneer and was successful in getting bids for pretty much everything, and to the 47 registered bidders who with their spirited bidding justly rewarded Chris for his orchids.
- A large mounted *Brassavola nodosa* var *majus* in flower acquired from Chris will be offered in a special raffle at \$1 per ticket at the next home visit and general meeting

# MONTHLY PLANT

## *Cymbidium aloifolium*

**Country of origin:** Mainland and island S E Asia

**Description:** large sized epiphyte or lithophyte

**Difficulty:** easy species to grow and flower.

**Cost:** \$5.00

*Cymbidium aloifolium* (L.) Sw. 1799  
Section *Cymbidium* comes from China, Assam, Bangladesh, India, eastern Himalayas, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Andaman Islands, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Java and Sumatra where it grows in evergreen, semi-deciduous and deciduous dry lowland forests and savannah woodland at sea-level to 1,100m. These plants were purchased 18 months ago by Graham at a local auction and have been grown on. The majority flowered in February.

*Cymbidium aloifolium* is the type species for the genus, and is a large sized, hot to warm growing epiphyte or lithophyte on open mossy rocks. Small pseudobulbs are enveloped by leaf bases, with coriaceous, suberect, linear-ligulate, obscurely bilobed apically leaves. Flowering occurs on long, pendant many flowered racemes. This is a very easy and robust species to grow and needs no winter protection.



Photo source: [https://c2.staticflickr.com/6/5267/5785263445\\_a51166d033\\_z.jpg](https://c2.staticflickr.com/6/5267/5785263445_a51166d033_z.jpg)



Photo source: <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/36/b1/f4/36b1f42b7f4ef94845137c83f5a459bb.jpg>

## Growing orchids in your garden - some tips for beginners (cont. from July)

Even in Perth's hot, dry Mediterranean climate, it is possible to create rockery gardens which provide damp crevices and pockets of humus and leaf mould in which orchids will grow, although generally some additional shade is required during the summer months to stop our hot sun and clear skies from burning your plants. Further, as few orchids tolerate 'wet feet', the garden should be designed and arranged so that it does not become waterlogged in winter.

While as orchid growers we generally make do with whatever we have available to us, if you decide that you really want to grow orchids in a more natural setting such as a rockery, they will benefit from some pre-planning and construction methods designed to provide the most supportive environment. If there is no natural slope available, it would be well worth considering excavating or filling to create a slope. In this regard, it will be beneficial to locate your rock garden so that it gets the maximum winter sun and warmth. In non-optimal aspects, this can be facilitated by creating the garden close to a north facing wall that absorbs heat during the day and releases it at night, but offers protection from the harsh sun in mid-summer. Unless the rock garden is under cover, you will also need to give some thought to protection from frost if your location is susceptible – a temporary shade cloth, plastic or similar cover can help. It is also possible to incorporate pyrotechnic (electric heating) cable which could be used to boost soil temperature during the winter months – this is an efficient and reasonably economical method of heating and applies heat at the root zone where it is needed.

After ensuring that all weeds are removed from the subsoil, add a thick layer of coarse road base or broken bricks 20-30cm deep topped with 10cm of finer material such as coarse river sand, fine blue metal road base, washed fine gravel or any other finely crushed rock. This allows the water to drain away preventing waterlogging, but stops the finer soil and humus from being washed away. The soil layer itself should be a mix of compost or leaf humus, coarse sand and fine gravel which will provide encouragement and nutrition for your orchids once planted. The larger rocks are then placed on top of this bed, and the rockery allowed to settle for a few weeks before planting. Remember that the majority of lithophytic orchids grow on limestone, so if you are using granite or other stone, it may be necessary to occasionally add dolomite lime to maintain a pH that is acceptable to your orchids.

The normal rules apply when planting/attaching orchids to rocks or in a rockery:

1. The newly planted/attached orchid must be held firmly so that the new roots can attach to the media without being damaged by the plant moving about in the wind or by watering. This can be done by gluing (using a glue such as that used to attach Tillandsia plants to wood or clay mounts). For larger plants, masonry nails, strategically placed smaller rocks, ties made of old stocking etc. can be utilised.
2. Similarly, terrestrial species need to be held firmly in place by compacting the soil mix around their roots.



Photo: [www.bellevueterrasse.com](http://www.bellevueterrasse.com)

Companion planting is a critical part of the development of a rock garden. Clearly, it is not appropriate to include plants that require (or at least benefit from) intense sunlight during summer as this will damage your orchids. Similarly, unless you are able to incorporate different

zones, bog plants which prefer to grow in waterlogged conditions may be unsuitable. Including a small water feature can be an attractive part of your rock garden, although some thought should be given to including fish it as you may need to use fungicides and pesticides from time-to-time of your orchids. These products (other than some of the organics) are generally toxic to fish and amphibians.



Photo source: <http://www.orchidboard.com/community/outdoor-gardening/68128-orchids-garden.html>

Suitable companion plants include ferns (preferably not those that spread rapidly such as fishbone ferns and similar, or those that grow tall and take over), bromeliads, tillandsias, judiciously placed tree ferns and mosses. However, as your orchid garden is likely to be outside (or at least in a less controlled environment than a glasshouse), regular attention to ensure that pests such as slugs, snails, slaters and other insects likely to feast on new root and leaf growth are eliminated or kept at bay, and that ants likely to bring in scale are controlled.

Retaining walls are also a suitable habitat for many of the orchids that will grow well in rock gardens. While concrete is not a suitable host, other material such as granite, similar hard rock, sandstone and even limestone; although the latter is soft and can be rapidly invaded by algae, mosses and lichens which further break down the material. Once again, the ideal aspect in the southern hemisphere is north facing where it will get the maximum light and warmth in winter, with, for optimum results, summer overhead protection such as a temporary shade-sail. As can be seen from the photos of orchids in rock gardens, the plants are very adaptable and will attach to a suitable host in a short

time.

### Harry

*Dendrobium lichenastrum*  
*Masdevallia floribunda*

### Ken & Chris

*Laelia anceps* var. *chamberlainianum*  
*Macroclinium bicolor*  
*Paphiopedilum insigne*

### Peter

*Angraecum leonis*  
*Cattleya percivaliana*  
*Ceratocentron fessellii*  
*Laelia anceps* var. *chamberlainianum*  
*Paphiopedilum insigne*  
*Paphiopedilum liemianum*

### Tara

*Paphiopedilum fairrieianum*  
*Paphiopedilum insigne*

### Siva

*Calanthe vestita*  
*Epigénium cymbidiodes*

### Tony & Mavis

*Laelia anceps* *Disciplinata* x *SVO Flair*  
*Tolumnia variegata*

## MEMBER PLANTS DISPLAYED JULY 2021



*Cattleya percivaliana*  
Peter



*Laelia anceps* var. *chamberlainianum*  
Ken & Chris  
Peter





*Paphiopedilum fairrieianum*  
Tara



*Calanthe vestita*  
Siva

## MEMBER PLANTS DISPLAYED JULY 2021



*Masdevallia floribunda*  
Harry



*Ceratocentron fessellii*  
Peter

space of time. The roots will seek out crevices and faults in the rock searching for moisture. Accordingly, random stone walls rather than flat, regular blocks cemented together are preferred.

Ken Blackburn's excellent articles and photos at [http://theorchidfiles.com/?page\\_id=379](http://theorchidfiles.com/?page_id=379) show the development over time of an orchid garden atop and along a rock retaining wall. Ken also provides excellent advice about what to plant and when, although this needs to be adapted for our rather more severe summer temperatures in WA than in coastal Queensland. However, what his series of articles and pictures demonstrate that it is



possible to maintain an orchid collection on a smaller property without needing the space and income to erect and operate a glasshouse.

Source : <http://theorchidfiles.com/?p=3384>

The next photo shows the growth of orchids (including companion plants such as ferns) over several years. While growing orchids this way does prevent you taking them to shows and displays, they are growing in a more natural habitat and make a striking display for visitors to

your home. This photo clearly demonstrates the advantage of using irregular shaped stone as this creates crevices and locations into which orchids can be planted. In this photo, you can also see orchids that are growing on the bare rock face, similar to those that we have seen in northern Thailand

Source: <http://theorchidfiles.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/5-Lower-left-of-Centre.jpg>



I strongly recommend that those of you interested in venturing into growing orchids this way read Ken Blackburn's articles and look at the extensive range of photos of his orchid garden over several years. As noted earlier, living in hot, dry WA will mean that some adjustments will need to be made. These are likely to include the provision of shade during the hot, dry summer months. While ferns are the most natural companion plants, they too are likely to be damaged by hot, dry conditions and some thought should therefore be given to planting winter deciduous plants and shrubs, keeping in mind the space available, i.e. don't plant something that is going to grow into a huge tree if you only have a small space available. Humidity in summer can be provided by low pressure

misting off the mains water supply, or by drip system, although you might need approval if you do not have your own rainwater tank but wish to water more frequently than allowed under the sprinkler restrictions that apply in WA. Watering can be managed by directional sprinklers or capillary tubes/individual drippers that direct water to where it is needed.

In this general context, members who have attended home visits at Charly and Gerda's home will have seen a brilliant display of orchids and companion plants, in a small area where the plants are growing in a more natural setting. As the following photo clearly illustrates, they have creatively used dry branches attaching ferns, tillandsia and bromeliads, alocasias and orchids (at this time, generally in pots). These plants are growing well in a covered patio area that has a polycarbonate roof, and shade-cloth sides to allow free air movement.

Bromeliads make excellent companion plants for orchids as the water they hold helps boost local humidity.

Charly and Gerda are experimenting with orchids that will grow well and flower in their idyllic setting, and have found that those which will ordinarily grow in a shade-house are very well suited. The majority of their plants are still in pots although as they gain more experience, they are attaching plants to the dry wooden branches. However, to maximise the visual impact, they have generally hidden pots using Spanish moss as shown in the following photo.



Last, but by no means least, both exotic and native terrestrial orchids can be grown in the garden. Exotic species like *Bletilla striata* (commonly known as the Chinese ground orchid) and *Spathoglottis* species and hybrids are very happy growing in the garden, provided they are protected from the hot sun in summer, and are growing in reasonably coarse, well-drained, humus-rich soil. If you are able to provide more warmth in winter, some of the tropical species such as *Sobralia*, *Phaius*, and *Thunia* can be grown and flowered successfully. We grow both *Spathoglottis* and *Sobralia* in a garden in our covered patio and they are doing well and flower each year. Another Species Society member, Gordon had a large garden bed full of *Bletilla striata* that flowered profusely in spring each year.

Many orchid enthusiasts have grown reed-stem *Epidendrum* species and hybrids in their garden, often as a hedge. These plants are very vigorous and will quickly grow into large clumps. I suspect therefore that some of the terete and quarter terete *Vanda* species and hybrids would also do well planted in the garden as I have seen them in Asia and New Guinea in the full sun attached to wooden posts set in the ground with extensive air and soil-based roots. This massed planting can be very effective in a large garden. Using large containers or hollow logs is also an effective way to grow orchids in the garden. Subject to being able to provide some protection from the intense sun in summer and from frosts in winter, epiphytic genera including *Bifrenaria*, *Cymbidium*, *Cattleya*, Australian native *Dendrobium*, *Grammatophyllum*, *Laelia*, *Oncidium* and *Schomburgkia* should do well on suitable mounts in WA gardens.

If you are able to control watering during summer, many of the local terrestrial orchids are able to be grown in the garden. They are natural companion plants in native gardens, but with a few exceptions, do resent being wet in the otherwise dry summer period when they would normally be at rest. I know that several members of the Society have found that terrestrial orchid seed has blown onto their lawn areas and germinated. In these instances, the lawns are watered during summer and the plants appear to have adapted to this abnormal environment.

The last part of this article will cover growing orchids inside the house. While most orchids will tolerate short periods of time inside, it is not conducive to vigorous growth unless attention is paid to meeting their needs for air movement, humidity and light. However, some genera including *Phalaenopsis* are suitable for longer-term indoor cultivation. If you want to be successful in growing such plants inside, ensure that they are receiving filtered sun, good air movement and humidity (in the southern hemisphere, rooms with north facing windows are preferred). While this can sometimes be found in the bathroom, orchids do not appreciate hairspray and similar aerosols that are often used in the bathroom, and the humidity and warmth created for the short time the shower is being used ceases when the bathroom is not occupied. The air temperature drops and the humidity in the air condenses on the plant and its surrounds. We know that epiphytic orchids do not prosper if they are cold and wet; a situation that can occur

in the domestic bathroom. Similarly, cooking oils and other aromatics in the kitchen mean that it is not a suitable environment for long term cultivation. Conservatories and similar sunroom/patios however can be very suitable for a wide range of genera.

For those wishing to grow a more exotic range of orchids inside the house, the Wardian Case or some similar facility enables this to take place. A Wardian Case is a structure that enables plants to be housed in conditions that simulate their natural habitat. I am aware that people have used large aquaria for this purpose, although care must be taken to ensure constant air movement and address some of the less desirable features of these type of containers should you wish to use them for long-term cultivation. These containers require controlled lighting, water and humidity control, heating and cooling (especially if you wish to grow cloud forest species) and a constant supply of fresh air.

An interesting web site, <http://www.orchidkarma.com> provides a wealth of information about how to construct a vivarium to sustainably grow and flower tropical orchids indoors in Sweden. I really recommend you take the time to look at this website that has hundreds of photos, detailed analysis and recommendations based on experience of building and operating effective orchid growing environments inside the home. The following is just one of the many photos on this website. I initially came across this website several years ago when much of it was still being developed. It is now a comprehensive reference to everything that one could wish to know about how to construct and manage

vivariums, and how to maintain the health and vitality of a wide range of tropical and sub-tropical orchids grown indoors. Karma's website has many photos of her exquisite plants in flower just to tempt you.

Photo source: <http://www.orchidkarma.com/about/my-growing-spaces/>



Photo source: <http://orchidkarma.com/cool-vivarium-2-0/>



To finish this article, I will explore some of the challenges encountered in growing WA native terrestrial orchids in your garden. As noted earlier, because we generally want to water our gardens during the hot, dry summer months, including gardens planted with hardy local species and hybrids that once established, we are told need little if any water during summer. While in their natural habitat, WA terrestrial orchids will receive some moisture from rain that falls during the hot summer months (in some years we seem to get more frequent summer rain). This can be replicated by infrequent hand watering of about the amount that would fall in a heavy shower.

However, if you have the space, it is preferable to plant your terrestrials in an area that is not regularly watered. By way of example, at our previous home we grew them in an area away from the watered gardens in amongst *Anigozanthos* (Kangaroo Paws), *Grevillea*, *Protea* and other similar drought-tolerant plants. During the hot, dry summer months when there was no rainfall, the area was hand watered once every second week. We also had some trickle irrigation on a few susceptible plants and some of the terrestrial orchids received some moisture from this source. We regularly applied soil wetter in the area to ensure that the water sunk into the soil (high silica Bassendean sand).

I know that some other Species Society members have WA terrestrial orchids growing in their lawns, and I have plants of *Microtis unifolia* that have come up in hanging baskets in my shade house.

Another problem affecting terrestrial orchids in the garden is fertiliser and salt build up, although I have found that organic fertilisers such as blood and bone and fish emulsion do not appear to do any damage if applied in low concentration. In fact I know that some terrestrial orchid growers do make use of weak applications of these products to improve vigour and flower size.

For those with a small garden, the most effective means of growing WA terrestrial orchids is to keep them in plastic pot, and to store the pot once flowering has finished in a cool dry location. The pots can be replaced in the garden at the onset of winter once the plant has commenced growing in the next autumn/winter.

# 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 10 August**