



THE SPECIES ORCHID SOCIETY OF WA INC.

<https://speciesorchidsocietywa.com>

Vol 37 No 8 February 2026

NEWSLETTER



Anne O'Callaghan Award December 2025
Dendrobium thysiflorum
Diane

NEXT MEETING Tuesday 10 February

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MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING

9 December 2025 7.41 pm

Present: 21 members as per register.

Apologies: 5 as per register.

Visitors: 2 as per register

New members: Nil

Special General Meeting: The draft minutes of the Special General Meeting were circulated to members with the newsletter.

Acceptance of the minutes moved John, seconded Bruce. Carried

Business Arising: Nil

Minutes: Summary of minutes of November meeting tabled for members. Acceptance of minutes moved Helen, seconded Graham. Carried

Business Arising: Nil

Financial Report: Adrian presented the financial report. The balance at bank on 30 November was \$6,225.99. and \$415.40 on the Debit Card. Acceptance of financial report moved Adrian, seconded Graham. Carried

Correspondence:

Inwards:

- Committee - draft GM agenda and draft GM minutes, Not For Profit self-review matters and timing
- Jordana – photos from GM.
- Garden Clubs Australia annual membership and insurance invoices and members details update form
- SpacetoCo – December venue booking
- Paul – newsletters and photos uploaded to One Drive for website.

Outwards:

- Committee - draft committee meeting agenda and minutes, draft GM agenda and minutes, draft 2026 program, appointment of Public Officer and Special General meeting to amend SOSWA rules and deferral of Not For Profit self-review due date to 5/1/2026
- Paul – newsletter and photos uploaded to One Drive for website.
- Members – newsletters to members

Correspondence report moved Graham, seconded Murray. Carried.

Business Arising: Nil

General Business:

Perth Orchid Fair

- Lee-Anne advised members that the Perth Orchid Fair committee met and reviewed the 2025 event, and concluded that despite moderately adverse weather, the event was successful. The venue has been booked for 11-13 September 2026, and enquiries made about availability of a lecture room for a speaker program.
- She also advise that Fred Clarke from USA and Max Rawlings (MnS Orchids) from Queensland are keen to attend in 2026 as presenters.
- Several Eastern States vendors including Paul Smith have expressed interest in participating. Bruce will follow up with Joseph Wu Orchids when he is Taiwan in early 2026.

Orchids WA

- Lee-Anne told members that the OWA Management Committee met on 25 November to discuss the Orchid Hub Project, adding the new Chairperson as a bank signatory, the 2026 AGM and general meetings and to initiate a business planning process for 2026 and beyond. She thanked Bruce and Diane for drafting this plan for consideration by members.

- A draft program of meeting dates will be circulated with the AGM minutes.
- Lee-Anne advised members that the next meeting in February 2026 will consider the purposes for which members can seek financial assistance and document the purposes for which assistance can be provided and the application and acquittal process. Priority would be given to events that were to the benefit of all members rather than individual clubs or societies.

Special General Meeting

- Ken was appointed as Public Officer for the Society, and the holder of the position of Secretary as the officer responsible for lodgement of documents with the Association and Charities Branch of Consumer Protection. He will lodge the NFP self assessment as soon as he has access to the ATO business operations website
- Ken advised that a Change in Particulars form had been submitted to the ATO, and amendment to the Society's registered rules submitted to Consumer Protection.

Home Visits

- The 2026 home visit program was published in the December newsletter.
- Thanks Mavis for compiling this program. It will be updated as other members offer to host a home visit.
- The next home visit is at the home of Adrian & Deanne on Sunday 22 March.

Other General Business:

There is no general meeting in January.

Plant give-away and festive supper:

All members received a free orchid, or other plant or item before enjoying supper and quality time catching up with one another.

Anne O'Callaghan Cultural Award: Members voted for Diane's *Dendrobium thyrsiflorum*

Name Badge: Chris Jones

Raffle: No raffle.

Meeting closed: 9.10 pm

FORTH-COMING EVENTS

Home visits: 22 March 2026, Adrian & Dee José, , 72 Waikiki Road, Safety Bay

MARKETPLACE - FOR SALE/WANTED

President: Lee-Anne

Vice President: Ryan

Treasurer: Adrian

Secretary: Ken Jones

210 Hermitage Drive, The Vines 6069.

Phone: 9296 1765

e-mail: kcjones@tpg.com.au

Editor: Ken

Committee:

Murray

Graham

Linda

Rod

Marion

Paul

Mavis

Life Members

Ian

Graham & Margaret

Chris Cabassi (dec'd)

Barry Gardner (dec'd)

Gordon Doherty (dec'd)

Maxine Godbeer (dec'd)

Ken & Chris

Adrian & Deanne

Joan (dec'd) & Ted (dec'd) Larson

Trevor Pratt (dec'd)

Neville Risbey (dec'd)

Paul & Andrea

Noel (dec'd) & Eva

Tony (dec'd) & Mavis

Barry Winter (dec'd)

Quiet Achievers

2013 Ian

2014 Chris Cabassi (dec'd)

2015 Margaret

2016 Tom & Pat

Quiet Achievers

2017 Charly & Gerda

2018 Paul

2020 Adrian & Deanne

2021 John

2024 Graham

MEMBER PLANTS DISPLAYED

December 2025

Murray & Arni

Encyclia atrorubens
Oncidium flexuosum
Sedirea japonica

Diane

Ascocentrum ampullaceum
Dendrobium thyrsoiflorum
Vanda tricolor var. *suavis*

Rod

Ansellia africana
Cattleya purpurata

Ken & Chris

Dendrobium amabile
Dendrobium chrysotoxum
Encyclia siedelii
Eria javanica
Phalaenopsis mariae var. *fasciata*
Phragmipedium sargentianum
Prosthechea cochleata

Adrian & Deanne

Ansellia africana

Cattleya purpurata russelliana
Dendrobium tangerinum
Encyclia bractescens
Encyclia seidelii
Epidendrum falcatum
Miltonia flavescens
Sedirea japonica
Trichoglottis loheriana
Vanda tricolor var. *suavis*

Bruce

Trichocentrum ascendens

Victor

Ansellia africana

Helen

Cattleya purpurata
Cattleya purpurata

Siva

Cattleya gaskelliana concolor
Cattleya sincorana



Cattleya gaskelliana
Siva



Trichocentrum ascendens
Bruce

MEMBER PLANTS DISPLAYED December 2025

Photography by Siva



Vanda tricolor var *suavis*
Diane
Adrian & Deanne



Cattleya sincorana
Siva



Encyclia atrorubens
Murray & Arni



Ascocentrum ampullaceum
Diane

2026 Home Visit Program

Sunday 22 March 2026, 10.00am	Adrian & Dee, Safety Bay
Saturday 18 April 2026, 10.00am	Ezi-Gro Orchids, Lansdale
Sunday 21 June 2026, 10.00am	Bruce & Kaye, Dianella
Sunday 26 July 2026, 10.00am	Ken & Chris, The Vines
Sunday 16 August 2026, 10.00am	Norm Riverton
Sunday 27 September 2026, 10.00am	terrestrial orchid visit, Wireless Hill
Sunday 25 October 2026, 10.00am	Graham & Margaret, Hamersly

NOTES FROM YOUR COMMITTEE

December General Meeting

Thank you to those members that generously donated species orchids and other plants for our Christmas gift to members. Members who received plants at the meeting were most appreciative of your generosity.

Vale Caterina Ottobriano

Our former member, Caterina lost a long battle with cancer last week. We extend sincere sympathy to her family who are also coping with the recent unexpected death of their father, Pas. Those of us who knew Caterina remember her as a vibrant and active member of the society.

Her funeral will be at 11.00am on Wednesday 28 January at St Thomas Moore Church, Bateman.

February Meeting

As advised, we do not meet in January as members are often away on holidays or otherwise committed to family and other events. For our February meeting, we have asked Ryan if he would do another presentation for members.

Annual Membership

Our financial year ends 28 February 2026 and your 2026-27 membership will be due. The current membership fee is \$20 for an individual member and \$30 for a family membership. You can pay the Treasurer at a meeting, or transfer payment by EFT to the Society's account at Bendigo Bank, BSB 633-000, account 122491988 including your surname.

Orchid Substrates and Cultural Implications

Following on from my previous article on orchid nutrition, it is appropriate to dive into the never-ending debate about orchid media. In their book *The Essentials of Orchid Growing*, Gordon Morrison and Mark Webb say that there are "few subjects which generate more discussion and argument amongst orchid growers than orchid media." However, whatever one's view, these disagreements do not mean that they are incorrect despite the fact that sometimes experienced orchid growers are dogmatic about what is the best and only media in which to grow orchids. In the orchid species world, this is further exaggerated, with some members having favoured medias trying to emulate their orchids natural habitat.

As I have often remarked to our orchid society friends, in all the wild orchid habitats that Chris and I have visited, we never saw one epiphytic orchid growing in a pot with the roots buried in media. We saw many growing on live and dead trees, on rocky outcrops, in soil covered in rotted plant leaves, compost and leaf mulch over limestone.

For this article, I will look at some of the most common medias and will include mounts that most closely replicate the natural environment of many of the epiphytic orchids that we grow live. However, at this early stage, it is important that the most suitable substrate and approach to culture for your orchid collection should be based upon your experience over time, and if needed, published and anecdotal research and investigation of approaches that appear to support healthy plant growth and flowering. You may recall that in the last article on *Orchid Culture Essentials*, I spent some time identifying the limited nutrition that wild species orchids enjoy in their natural environment, and suggested that for best cultural practice, we need to ensure that at the very least our orchids get what they get in the wild.

The term substrate applies to whatever the orchid is growing on or in. It may be the bark of a live tree, a piece of hardwood or cork, a pot full of bark, charcoal or stone or some other material. With few exceptions, orchids need a substrate that does not become water sodden and rapidly disintegrate over time, and that permits good penetration of air. For this reason, provided humidity can be maintained during our long hot, dry summer, mounts to which the roots can cling and when watered, the excess runs off leaving the orchid and its mount to dry are a preferred means of cultivating many of the species orchids that we grow as this most closely replicates the natural habitat. Orchids in bark or similar media need repotting more frequently as the media starts to break down and decompose as the result of the action of fungi and bacteria stimulated by the nitrogenous fertiliser we apply. While this substrate is rich in nutrient, it does not allow free air circulation and ensure rapid water drainage. However, this aged media does make good mulch for our gardens and provides nutrient for plants.

The requirement for free air flow is best explained by reference to the process of photosynthesis. CO₂ is used by all green plants to produce carbon molecule skeletons, while fungi and bacteria are not autotrophic (growing with sunlight and inorganic rather than organic substances). Fungi and bacteria need another carbon source usually from complex carbohydrates (e.g. starch, cellulose, sugar alcohol, free sugars, lipids (fatty acids or their derivatives) and other organic compounds that can be broken down by enzymes secreted by these micro-organisms. However, the authors remind readers that using high nitrogen fertiliser for orchids in predominantly bark substrate does not necessarily leave any available to the orchid as micro-organisms will actively target and consume any available nitrogen. Therefore, the use of hardwood or other mounts allows the orchids to grow in a more natural way, and they do not have to compete with fungi and bacteria as they do in bark or other medias. The obvious downside is that orchids grown in this way require more frequent watering and the maintenance of high humidity during our hot dry summer months.

Morrison and Webb report that they investigated the use of charcoal as substrate. They report that it is long lasting and therefore avoids frequent repotting and consequent root damage, its surface has a high number of cavities which contribute to water retention and the roots cling to the surface. There are also air spaces between charcoal pieces, and it can be watered heavily to flush out any excess nutrient. For this reason, most of us who can access good quality charcoal include it in our media, along with Perlite or expanded clay that also provide air cavities in the media. Some orchids like *Paphiopedilum* that normally grow in the humus layer on top of the soil are better in slightly alkaline media that can include limestone or marble chips, or the regular application of dolomite lime.

Lastly, they discuss the use of natural cork slab to which the plant is tightly affixed with roots in contact with cork. They do not recommend separation of the plant and mount with a pad of sphagnum moss underneath the orchid, although it can be placed over the roots to provide moisture reservoir. There are various materials that can be used to affix the orchid to the mount including fine plastic covered wire or chicken wire. This process also works equally well when attaching orchids to a live tree.

For terrestrial orchids, Morrison and Webb recommend a media that mimics their natural habitat. This can be a mix of peat moss, soil and coarse sand with some fine gravel or perlite to provide extra drainage. A mulch of leaf litter to conserve moisture, and the application of organic fertiliser such as blood and bone, Powerfeed or Fish Emulsion will assist these species. They caution however that some experimentation is needed as these species come from widely divergent habitats ranging from wet tropical to semi-arid.

ABOUT US

Monthly Meetings

Monthly meetings held on the second Tuesday of each month at Wilson Community Hall, Braibrise St, Wilson commencing 7.30 pm. Usually, the short formal meeting is followed by plant descriptions given by members. Supper follows to allow members 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.

Single \$20.00 pa. For first year only, new members will need to purchase a name badge.

Name Badges

Badges come in two versions - pin fastening \$14.00 or magnet fastening \$16.00 [*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 Tuesday of each month (generally on the Sunday morning), when we can find a host, 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.

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.

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 \$15.00 and \$20.00. 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.

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 9 December 2025