



EUROBODALLA ORCHID CLUB INC

Newsletter

WEBSITE: <http://eurobodalla.org.au/3419.html>

MARCH 2014

At our last meeting....

Gordon Marion was our speaker in February and his topic was 'Orchid Growing Media'. With Jean Swindley's capable support as his technical advisor, Gordon gave a polished visual presentation and informative talk.

He discussed experiments with chopped casuarina bark (not so successful long term), his pine bark composting method which he still uses for large cymbidiums and his current passion for Growool/ Polystyrene/ Perlite mix (equal parts), an idea he embraced after hearing a talk by Scott Barrie of Barrita Orchids.

Gordon has been using this mix, with stones added to the top to prevent moss growth, for two years. He has flowered orchids more often and more easily in this mix, has resurrected some sad orchids and seen rapid root and leaf development in his plants. In the long term, Gordon believes this to be a more economical mix as it never gets replaced, just more added when potting on.

The medium isn't the whole story however, as Gordon uses a hydroponic fertiliser mix at 1/4 strength every week, but that's a story for another day. He would recommend the use of a complete fertiliser at 1/4 strength every week if using the Growool mix. Gordon would be happy for anyone interested in what he's doing to contact him.

He benched his beautiful *Vanda rothschildiana* at this meeting which has flowered four times in eighteen months.....now that's a pretty sound advertisement for what he's doing!

Thank you Gordon and Jean for sharing this information with us.

At this well-attended meeting, the Open Popular Vote went to Ray and Gayle Huddleston with their unusual *Psychopsis Kalihi*.

Helen Marshall took out the Novice Popular Vote with her large and beautiful unknown *Oncidium*.

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44712052

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44736963

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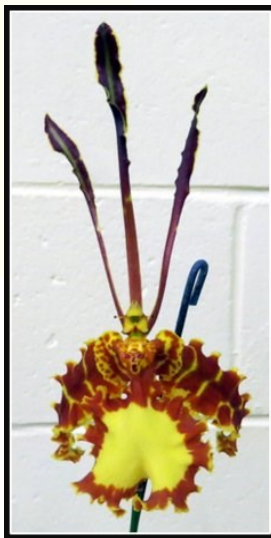
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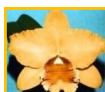


It is probably a good idea to start looking amongst your orchid collection to see if you can spare any plants for the April Auction.

Next month's newsletter will have more details of this event.



Annual fees are now due and payable to The Treasurer, Colin Pearson, at the next meeting or they can be posted to him at 10 Viewpoint Court, Tuross Head, 2537
\$13 for a single membership
\$16 for a family membership



We send our best wishes to any member who is ill or under-going treatment. We hope you are soon feeling much better.

NEXT MEETING

CWA HALL
QUEEN STREET
MORUYA
BENCHING: 7PM
MEETING: 7.30PM
SUPPER TO SHARE
12 MARCH
2014

The President's Sausage Sizzle.

This has now become an annual event and 27 members accepted Liz and Tony's hospitality and attended this first social gathering of the year. The weather was perfect, the barbecue was delicious and everyone attending had a very happy day. Liz and Tony's glasshouse was a new and admired addition to their garden.

Liz parted with some of her orchids and with Sylvia Hawkins capably filling the role of sales lady some members were able to add to their own collections.

Thank you to Liz and Tony for their generous hospitality and for opening their home and garden to club members.

(See photos on our website)

Tom Kelly's annual message
'March is the month to repot your Sarcs.'

Sphagnum Moss an orchid grower's friend.

Sphagnum Moss has long been recognised by orchid growers as being a useful and versatile product. It contains naturally occurring anti-biotic and is ideal for re-invigorating the roots of sickly or weak plants. It is an excellent medium in which to plant de-flasked seedlings. Its properties reduce the risk of fungal infection. (It has been used as a wound dressing on humans over the centuries.) Backbulbs and keikis respond well when placed in moss.

It can be used in combination with other products in a potting medium or on its own for some genera. eg. phalaenopsis, masdevallia. It is also effective as a top dressing to increase humidity around a plant.

It can hold up to 20 times its own weight of water and is able to retain its open structure, so fast draining can occur. When moss fibres come into contact with a root, they give the root access to all the water in the moss, not just what is directly around it.

Its open structure also allows good air circulation around roots, providing it is not packed too tightly. It is thought to hold fertiliser for longer than other media.

Moss is best used with rainwater. In the past organic fertilisers were recommended, but current thinking seems to indicate that weak chemical fertilisers may be kinder to it. Foliar

fertilising of orchids in sphag. is often recommended.

Fertilisers may cause some discolouration of the moss but this doesn't seem to affect the growth of the plant.



Sphagnum moss is easier to use when cut into short lengths or milled. It is not recommended to let it dry out completely as it is time consuming to re-wet it.

Annual re-potting is often advised if growing in sphagnum moss. Some even suggest more frequent re-potting which would be fine with a small collection, but costly and very time consuming with a larger collection.

Perhaps it is not surprising that this amazing natural product has been referred to as 'green gold' by horticulturalists.

.....This is a reprint of an article I wrote for the newsletter some years ago.

I love Sphagnum Moss. I have rescued many sickly plants from a variety of genera using sphag.(probably says something about my culture that I have so many sickly plants) and currently have a small laelia and a dendrobium which are thriving and producing new shoots since their transfer into sphag. Usually I will repot into my preferred medium for the species when roots have recovered. Some genera I grow totally in moss or moss and perlite.....pleuros and masdas and their relatives. I am having increasing success with phalaenopsis grown in straight moss and I do not repot them annually. Of course watering requirements are very different from a bark based mix and this needs to be taken into consideration. Sphagnum Moss is not inexpensive, but a bag for emergencies is well worth having in my opinion.

Sue Carroll



Ulladulla Orchid Nursery
200 Princes Highway, Ulladulla



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GROW COMP. PLANTS

There are now two plants in the Club's Grow Comp.

Laeliocattleya Intercepts 'Fluoro Flash' and

Cymbidium Dalmeny Splash 'Mystique'.

Last month Ray and Gayle Huddleston benched Sartylis Toowoomba Sparkle 'Coconut Ice' in flower. Well done Ray and Gayle.

The overall point score winner for this plant was Jean Swindley for her regular monthly showing of its progress.

Don't forget to bring the remaining two
Grow Comp. plants to the March meeting.

***By now cymbidium spikes are appearing,
so take care not to damage them when removing dead husks.***

For your diary.....

March 8 & 9. Workshop 2014 C.W.A. Hall in Moruya. For those who have paid their registration.

April 4 & 5. Castle Hill Orchid Fair Castle Hill Showground.

April 12 & 13. Collectors Plant Fair. Hawkesbury Racecourse.

May 16 - 18. Orchids Out West. Hawkesbury Racecourse.

Disclaimer: Eurobodalla Orchid Club Inc takes no responsibility for anything said by a member or a visiting speaker.