

## Cymbidium Orchids for beginners – In six easy lessons – Part 6

### 15 The Internet

The internet is a fabulous source of information. If you are not able to use it you are missing the opportunity to find almost any information you need to assist you to succeed. The internet is relatively simple to use, and is very forgiving of anyone, even if you make mistakes. Try to learn or get someone who is internet competent to assist you.

One could spend a lifetime on a computer and look at just a small percentage of the information available.

For example, I typed the word “**Cymbidium**”, into the search engine (Google) and got the following references

Cymbidium Orchids	272,000	results
Cymbidium Orchid care	54,400	results
Cymbidium Orchid Nurseries	27,300	results
Cymbidium Orchids for sale	228,000	results
Cymbidium orchid plants	78,600	results
Cymbidium Orchids care of	52,200	results
Cymbidium Orchids Australia	28,000	results
Cymbidium Orchid pictures	94,000	results
Cymbidium Orchids wholesale	19,100	results
Cymbidium Orchid colours	38,900	results

If I looked at all these references and absorbed just a small percentage of the information available, I think I could confidently claim to be an expert in Cymbidiums. Obviously, it is impossible to read more than a small percentage of this information.

With such a large amount of information available it is necessary to make the search for information more specific for it to be of any use.

For example, one could type

**Cymbidium Orchid Nurseries Australia** – 2600 results (down from 27,300)  
Or,  
**Cymbidium Orchid Nurseries South Australia** – 768 results

The **Cymbidium Orchid pictures** section, with 94,000 results, must contain some photos of interest to most serious orchid growers. Unfortunately, you will need to battle through lots of irrelevant references which will not interest you (eg paintings). Also when I did get into this section, it then told me that there were 240,000 results (previously shown as 94,000) – sorry I can’t explain the discrepancy.

**Many nurseries have a web site.** Some are very comprehensive, some are small and primitive. These can be a great source of good, relatively up to date information. A web site is just like a book, or catalogue, but published on the internet.

Our site [valleyorchids.com.au](http://valleyorchids.com.au) has the following sections:

<b>Home</b>	Information about how to contact us
<b>Current news</b>	What is happening at the nursery
<b>About us</b>	Some of our history
<b>Our plants</b>	Photo gallery of plants available – hundreds of photos

<b>Orders and pricing</b>	Listings of plants availability, sizes and price
<b>Growing instructions</b>	Suggestions to assist you to grow our treasures
<b>Links</b>	Connections to associated nurseries and clubs
<b>Contact us</b>	email details – how to contact us with an email

Many people report to us that they repeatedly spend many hours on our site.

There are many other cymbidium orchid nurseries with similar setups. Search for them and look at what they have to offer. Many update their sites regularly, sometimes with special offers only available over the internet. Be careful with overseas, or some interstate nurseries. Importing from overseas is quite difficult and can be expensive. Some Australian States have import restrictions and require permits for plants entering those States. Some nurseries are accredited to send plants over state borders. It is relatively expensive for the nurseries to set up. Don't try to smuggle plants into prohibited states. The authorities are well equipped to intercept illegal shipments, and severe penalties can apply. Smuggling also tarnishes our industry and makes it harder for the honest growers.

EBay and a couple of similar sites can be a great source of good and interesting plants. These are auctions over the internet. To secure a plant one needs to bid for it, then monitor the auction till it closes, in case someone else outbids you. You may raise the bid if necessary. It is very easy to register as a seller and offer plants for sale. Beware, there are many sellers who are inexperienced or have very ordinary or undersize plants for sale. There are many plants offered for sale on EBay, which are very in short supply elsewhere. Bargains and disappointments are many. The downside is you may unwittingly be dealing with someone you do not know or with an unproven sales record.

If there is a problem with the sale, it can be difficult to resolve.

In summary, the internet is huge and expanding. It can be a huge advantage to be able to access information from it. Seriously consider getting access to it. It is relatively easy, sometimes a bit frightening, but can be a great medium to see what is available and to purchase some very different plants, often not available commercially.

## 17 Ethics

The Webster Dictionary defines **ethics**, as “the study and philosophy of human conduct, with emphasis on the determination of right and wrong “.

In the growing of Orchids, **what is right and wrong?**

I personally like to succeed, but make sure I am not doing the **wrong** thing for the industry and others in the industry. I would like to think that I put more into it than I try to take out. I think that is **right**. It is important that the whole industry is successful. We are very fortunate in Australia that we have some of the best cymbidium orchids in the world. This has not come about by accident, but by hard work and perseverance over a long time by some fabulous hybridizers. Some of these hybridizers are rewarded, with sales of new varieties, world wide.

There are however, others who do have not done the hard yards, but want to cash in on the success of the serious, hard working good hybridizers. They generally put little into the orchid industry, but expect to take whatever they want, with no regard for others who have worked hard. They undermine the success of the genuine, successful hybridizers.

The pirating of tissue is regarded as acceptable in many circles and even encouraged. I could understand it many years ago, when new varieties commanded a crazy, premium price (new release flasks were often \$200 per flask of 25 plants, others older type flasks, \$25 or \$30) Plants produced by pirating of tissue soon bought the price down to sensible levels. Nowadays, grossly inflated prices

of new releases rarely occur, so why should these pirate laboratories justify grabbing tissue from other nurseries, proliferating it, and offering it for sale.

Nowadays, to protect their interests, hybridizers of many of the very best new varieties release their plants only to trusted growers, who are legally bound to not release them to other growers who may in turn pirate them. Another way the hybridizer protects their new varieties is to delay the release, grow large numbers to large size, and charge a premium price when eventually released. These practices mean that the general orchid growing fraternity are deprived of the best plants. Pirating of tissue is **wrong**. If authorities and clubs could prevent, or at least discourage this practice, cymbidium orchid development would accelerate and all would benefit.

Another very unethical practice, which is very **wrong**, is the practice of renaming a plant, so it appears that a hybridizer has a special exclusive plant with which to breed. Plants also have their name changed, so they can be re-cloned and offered for sale under a new name. Some will claim that their new, renamed plant, is different (mutated), from the original. It is usually just an intentional, dishonest act, intended to deceive, and should probably be challenged in court as misleading advertising. The use of DNA testing could be used to prove if a plant has been renamed.

I am regularly disappointed when I see someone doing the wrong thing. In the cymbidium orchid industry (clubs are a part of the industry), there is plenty of scope for improvement and by everyone working to do things right, we could be much better than we presently are. I am reminded of a conversation which I had with a work supervisor many years ago, when I was working as a Draftsman. I was approached to join the Institute of Draftsmen. When I asked, "What can the Institute do for me", the response by my supervisor was that I should consider "What I could do for the Institute". Just by joining, I would make the Institute better, and then the industry would be better for me. I joined and became positively active. In the cymbidium industry, if we all acted ethically (with many rights and no wrongs), the industry would be a lot better than it is now.

The clubs could do a lot and perhaps adopt a code of practice, and promote it seriously. We should also lobby the authorities to have plant variety protection made easy, affordable and to enforce it.

## 17 The Future

The growing of cymbidium orchids has improved greatly over just a few years. Just look at the species orchids and compare them with the good modern prize winner. It is amazing how much change has occurred in just 60 or 70 years. I am old enough to have seen the cymbidiums 40 or so years ago. Plants which were exciting in those days, now are fourth rate. We would not seriously grow most of them now. In those days they had a very short flowering season, poor colour range, short flower spikes and often not many flowers per spike, virtually no miniatures or danglers, and very poor production.

Even over the last 10 years we have seen huge changes. We are a long way from producing the perfect cymbidium. However, we will continue the improvement, probably at an even faster rate than in the past. The future is exciting, and the sky is the limit. The growing of many top-quality seedlings from inspired and knowledgeable hybridizers will keep the improvements coming. We should always remember that the cymbidium is fabulous and is probably the most prestigious and recognisable flower in existence. We should be promoting it more seriously than we are at the present.

One hugely exciting development which is forthcoming, is the heat tolerant strains of cymbidiums. If successful, it should open up cymbidium growing to many more areas and make the northern part of Australia suitable for cymbidiums. It could lead to the formation of more specialist cymbidium clubs – great for all cymbidium growers.

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