

CYMBIDIUM NEWS

Published by the Cymbidium Orchid Club of South Australia Inc.

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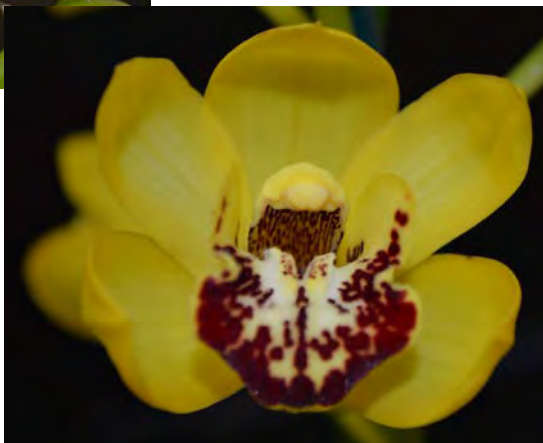


April Meeting

**Best Overall and
Best in Open Division**

Donovan "Dark Perfection"

**Grown by
Barry Bailey**





Shown at the April Meeting

**Shown as
Peter Pan x Sensation**

**(Now registered as
Peter's Sensation)**

Grown by Barry Bailey



Cymbidium News Volume 20 No. 3 April 2018

The New Cymbidium News is published monthly, February to November inclusive and is the Official Newsletter of the **Cymbidium Orchid Club of South Australia Inc**

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We are now on Facebook. Lots of up to date information and photos. Over 1000 views on many postings. Follow this link <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Cymbidium-Orchid-Club-of-South-Australia/149369758460045?hc>

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**Vice President
Barry Bailey
In charge while
Graham Fear on
holidays**

Unfortunately, Barry was preparing to go on a holiday cruise as this magazine was being prepared. He asked me to introduce our Guest Speaker for the May meeting.

David Brooks hails from Sydney, and is the Registrar of Judges of the Cymbidium Club of Australia, which for newcomers, is the Cymbidium Orchid Club, operating in Sydney.

David will challenge us with the question
“Cymbidiums, where to from now?”

His talk will discuss breeding up until now, particularly with emphasis on standard sized flowers, and the requirement for round shape, for a plant to be very successful. He will discuss some alternative breeding lines, also society's impact on cymbidium growing. Global warming and recent housing

development, should be considered in future. The requirement for compact growth in future, is worth considering.

David's talk promises to be hugely interesting, and thought provoking. Don't miss it.

Barry asked me to remind you of the dates of the shows.

Winter Show at Munno Para from Saturday 14th, until Saturday 21st August
Spring Show at West Lakes, from Saturday 25th August, until Saturday 1st September.
Start preparing your plants now.

Please note also. The roster for helpers at both shows requires many more time slots to be filled. If more help is not forthcoming, the very future of the trading tables is threatened. If you really want to sell plants on the trading tables, more help must be found. Additionally, the security of plants in displays and on the trading table, is at risk if we do not have a significant presence at ALL TMES. **WE NEED YOU.**

See you at the May meeting on Wednesday 24th May
David Brooks will be bringing some interesting plants for sale.

TRAINEE JUDGES WORKSHOPS

The second of the four workshops for 2018 was held last Monday, 7th May, with even a few more participants joining in to almost over-fill the room.

Trainees considered some of the issues around the presentation and acceptance of plants for judging, seedlings, the Club's current trophy system and the major judging approaches of "objective appreciation" and "pointing up".

Using selected TV images, Registrar Ben clarified the nature and importance of the inflorescence as a feature of judging.

Several practical judging sessions involved ranking plants for their shapes and inflorescences, as trainees were called upon to use their developing knowledge and skills around judging. Several kindly loaned plants in flower were appraised by the group, as well.

Further plants in flower would be most welcome for the next workshop on Monday, 18th June.

COLCHICINE CONVERSION by Julian Coker

Originally published in *Orchids in Victoria* by The Orchid Societies Council of Victoria Inc.

Please note that this article was published some years ago. Professor Don Wimber passed away in 1997.

Recently the orchid world lost one of its great gentlemen and gentle man in the passing of Don Wimber. Don was involved in many of the most notable scientific innovations related to orchids. He was the father of colchicine conversion of diploids to tetraploids in a number of genera, especially *Cymbidium*, *Phragmipedium* and *Odontoglossum*, which led to great advances in hybridising. Being such a modest man and not one who sought the headlines, his contribution to clonal propagation was understated. While Morel is generally credited with the development of clonal propagation, there are those who consider Don's contribution was of equal if not greater importance.

Much of Don Wimber's early work was carried out in USA and involved *Cymbidium*. Later this work was extended to chromosome counting and colchicine conversion, especially involving *Odontoglossum* and *Phragmipedium*, for the Eric Young Orchid Foundation. He spent a considerable amount of his later time in Sydney with his wife, who was working at Sydney University.

Wimber's earliest work with colchicine involved many different plants, but fortunately for us he did a considerable amount of work with diploid cymbidiums. This involved both large-flowered cymbidiums, leading in considerable part to the development of our quality cymbidiums of today, and especially small-flowered cymbidiums that in the diploid state were impossible or difficult to use as parents for further breeding. Most notable was the conversion of *Cymbidium* Peter Pan 'Greensleeves' from the diploid to the tetraploid state.

Colchicine, an alkaloid derived from the autumn crocus, has the ability to prevent the dividing cell wall from forming during cell division. During mitotic division the chromosomes are duplicated and drawn to opposite poles prior to the formation of the cell wall that will divide them. However, under the influence of colchicine this cell wall does not form and thus the chromosome number doubles. As these newly doubled cells continue to divide in the absence of colchicine, a plaque of cells forms; if the initial shoot develops from within this plaque then a plant with double the initial chromosome count results. Generally this represents a conversion from the diploid to the tetraploid state, but it can equally apply to triploids, converting them to hexaploids, or tetraploids to octaploids. These are generally of little use because of their undesirable growth habit.

In colchicine conversion, actively growing protocorms are exposed to a liquid or solid medium containing colchicine for a period of time, before being returned to a normal culture medium. It is a random exercise, with some protocorms having converted areas on their epithelium, and others none, while some are killed by the treatment. As the protocorms develop into plants, the trained eye can identify the converted clones by the nature of their growth and these can then be individually selected and grown on into mature plants. The ultimate test is chromosome counting, but stomatal guard cell size or visual observation will generally suffice to distinguish tetraploids from diploids.

Colchicine conversion is equally applicable to mericlones or seedlings. With our considerable bank of converted clones, together with chance tetraploids that sporadically occur, and their progeny, we now have an excellent base of vigorously growing, free-flowering, quality clones for future breeding. We owe Don Wimber a considerable debt of gratitude for his worthy contribution to improving the quality of flowers in converted clones, and in expanding the numbers of breeding parents, past, present and future.

Committee and Major Support Members 2018



Christine Robertson



Ben Knobben



Barry Bailey



Wayne Baylis



Max Kahlbaum



John Howard



Peter Aigner-Muehler



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From the Ground Up

From the Ground Up is a complete and comprehensive, state-based garden guide for gardeners. The books utilise the recommendations of many plant experts, coupled with the fantastic knowledge and experience from our authors - Sophie Thomson (SA edition), Jane Edmondson (VIC edition) and Linda, Sandra and Graham Ross (NSW edition). **\$35 each**



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Here is a little puzzle which I suspect will drive most of our readers to frustration, because it is very tricky to work out.

A man looks at a photograph and says

“Brothers and sisters, have I none, BUT, that man’s father, is my father’s son.”

Who is the person in the photograph?

8

I will run a short competition at the May meeting for anyone who thinks they have worked it out. A nice plant is the winner’s prize.

2N, 3N, 4N. What's it all about? A Brief Look at Polyploidy

by Paul Gripp

One of the main features of orchids as a hobby is the wide range of interest that makes it a challenging, intriguing, and ever-searching endeavour. The study of plant genetics in reference to orchids is one of these fascinating sidelines.

Now, orchid genetics can be a very involved, technical subject, but for those of us interested in merely a working knowledge to help us in our estimate of expectations, there are a few basic facts which we should understand in order to be intelligent cultivators of this particular plant family. Perhaps the most basic study that we, as orchid growers, should understand is that area dealing with chromosome numbers (or, levels of ploidy). Plants carry, in their anatomical make-up, a certain number of genetic carriers (chromosomes) which determine the characteristics of the plants and their future progeny.

An interesting fact about chromosomes is that, besides carrying the individual genes that determine specific characteristics, the degree of influence of an individual set of chromosomes is greatly modified by the number of sets (or level of ploidy) of the particular individual. Hence, the terms diploid (2n), triploid (3n), tetraploid (4n), pentaploid (5n), etc., refer to the number of sets or level of ploidy. Those in which the multiple is greater than the normal or diploid level are referred to collectively as polyploids. In trying to understand this, we should keep in mind that although plants of these various genetic groups do have certain specific characteristics, their main significance in breeding and heredity is their degree of influence in determining the characteristics of progeny. It is also true that the nature and significance of ploidy varies greatly among the various genera. In certain genera the rules of ploidy are fairly simple, with not too many exceptions. In other genera, however, the rules are very much complicated by uneven chromosome numbers and ability to breed among even very irregular chromosome patterns.

Generally speaking, the rules for the genus *Cymbidium* are fairly simple and well worked out, and they serve as a good example on which to learn. Breeding in cymbidiums turns out to be a blending process influenced by the various traits of both parents and weighed in quantity by their particular level of ploidy.

Diploids (2n): — Most typical, normal, naturally occurring wild types are of a diploid level of ploidy. The diploid level is the standard in nature, even though mutations and resultant abnormal strains commonly occur. Diploids are characterized by typically good, natural vigor. Diploids have many good features that are important in the most modern hybrids, and often it is their agreeable complimentary compatibility that makes a good match when used with other levels of polyploids, particularly the tetraploids.

Good *Cymbidium* diploids are certainly of great importance. Because of the fact that many of the most famous polyploids in cymbidiums have been brought about by much inbreeding, there are some poor growth characteristics that have carried along, and it is often the free-growing habit of the diploid that influences the progeny into being good, free performers. *Cymbidium* diploids are also characterized by often having more flowers per spike than many of the more popular tetraploids. Together with this, popularity in the tetraploid line has centered around the full-shaped white tetraploid. In order to get other colors, we must draw from the diploid color genes.

Tetraploids (4n) : — Tetraploids originally occurred by freak happenings, the plants' cellular structure changing in such a way as to possess twice the normal number of chromosomes in their make-up. Though tetraploids are often characterized by slower growth and heavier texture, the significance to the naked eye may or may not be apparent. It is also questionable to say that tetraploids are always necessarily associated with desirable features, such as good form and other characteristics we look for. Their main significance lies in their breeding influence. Because of their doubled chromosome number, they assert double the influence that a normal diploid would. Thus, the tetraploid has led to the finest advances in orchid breeding. This is because certain plants of good quality have been discovered to be tetraploids and they have been used in breeding to exert the advantage of their added breeding influence.

Triploids (3n): — Triploids normally are the resultant progeny from the mating of a tetraploid with a diploid. These comprise the great bulk of present-day cymbidiums. They are distinguished by uniform good growing characteristics and freeness of performance. Their visual traits, of course, vary from the extremes of one parent to the other and combinations of both, with their typical average lying about one-third from the tetraploid parent and two-thirds from the diploid. The ideal is to find those few plants from a particular cross which exhibit the good features of both parents, and in these exceptional cases we find our improvements. We usually find that triploid cymbidiums are sterile and will not produce seed. There are, however, some exceptions which give rise to other categories of polyploidy.

Pentaploids (5n): — A still higher realm of polyploidy is sometimes found in orchid plants and this is the pentaploid, a type having five sets of chromosomes in the vegetative cell. Pentaploids have proven to be fairly useful breeders, although because of the mechanics of chromosomes, uniform growth and quality usually are not obtained and some of the resultant seedlings may be more difficult to grow and bloom. Many of our most famous plants, however, have pentaploid parents in their backgrounds.

Aneuploids: — Hybridizers are continually trying to do the unusual: therefore, there is an emphasis on abnormal types which has led to the development of a goodly number of orchid plants with uneven chromosome numbers. These are termed aneuploids. Aneuploids are usually derived from uneven and rather unstable crossings, when parents of semi-incompatible chromosome numbers are used. The seedlings of such aneuploid crosses are usually most irregular and will vary greatly as individuals from their brothers in almost every aspect — from exact chromosome number to flower and growth patterns. This irregularity is brought about because their individual chromosome numbers are not exact multiples of the typical base number of the parent plants. Because some of these may be close to that of tetraploids, sometimes these aneuploids will act as breeders, but their performance can only be proven by giving them a try to see the results. There are many fine plants among the aneuploids, and although their implications in breeding are definitely hit and miss, it assuredly makes for interest and speculation.

With these various levels of ploidy available for hybridizing, there are a variety of possible combinations and it is possible to anticipate some generalities about the resulting progeny. It is with these thoughts in mind that hybridizers propose hopeful crossings and fantastic progress has been obtained. The results, although different from those obtained with polyploids, have shown characteristics that, while not necessarily comparable, have been equally spectacular. The uses of diploid crosses in cymbidiums at present

are (1) to gain more desirable forms of colored types, which are more intense in diploids than other classes; (2) to provide a new assortment of genes for use as potential breeding with tetraploids; (3) to create early bloomers and; (4) to make miniature cymbidiums.

Diploid X Tetraploid: — The breeding method which has proven most satisfactory, with the largest and most prominent mass producers of seedlings for uniform high-quality progeny, has been the mating of the tetraploid of good form with the free and prolific diploid. The result is the triploid strain. There seems to be no doubt that for uniform high quality of shape, habit, and pleasing color, this seems to be one of the most satisfactory of genetic combinations. Because of the fact that the tetraploid parent influences twice as much as the diploid parent, its characteristics of form and color are more nearly approached. As new tetraploids of different types are brought into use, we will be able to greatly broaden our spectrum of hopefulness.

Tetraploid X Tetraploid: — An even more recent trend in breeding is the tetraploid-with-tetraploid mating. These have produced outstanding blooms. In addition, the resulting progeny are tetraploids, so this type of breeding has given rise to entire strains of tetraploid plants. Because there were only a few tetraploids in the beginning, there was much tetraploid inbreeding, with consequent undesirable characteristics perpetuated in the progeny. Some of the more inbred tetraploid types, even though characterized by excellent flower quality, have poor growing and blooming habits and are difficult plants to handle. Care must be used in selecting and mating tetraploids to guard against such bad features.

Triploid, Pentaploid and Aneuploid Matings: — When triploids, pentaploids and aneuploids are used in mating with their like or the more normal diploid or tetraploid, a wide number of combinations can occur. Because these "offbeat" types produce gametes (pollen and egg) that are often incomplete or uneven, crosses with them are characterized by irregularity and unevenness, if they take at all. Because they are lacking certain genes, many plants do not perform normally. Over the years, however, certain plants in the aneuploid or uneven polyploid levels (triploids, pentaploids, etc.) have become known as good parents as a result of the success of their progeny. Sometimes outstanding plants are obtained from these matings, but usually the resulting aneuploid plants are irregular growers and often the seeds are few. For commercial establishments who grow large blocks of seedlings, this type of breeding is not practical. "Off-beat" breeding offers tremendous interest for the hobbyist, however. The hobbyist can't use many plants, and if he drops all his pods for the year, he has lost nothing. This opens up an infinite vista for attempts where the high percentage of failures will keep the hobby in line. The value to this type of breeding is that occasionally very fine varieties arise, and secondly, often the progeny that do arise are strange aneuploids themselves and sometimes breedable.

The subject of ploidy has many interesting facets, each of which can be magnified into a particular situation in a specific genus or group of plants. Cymbidiums have been used as a passing example because they are not only well worked out but simple in example. In some other genera things can be far more complicated. Although there are many variations and exceptions in the behavior of living things, most of these differences can be explained by subsequent modifications and rearrangements which do not change the underlying principles.

The ways of Mother Nature sometimes appear confused and complicated, but in reality they are orderly and pleasant, and these phenomena are brought forth most finely in our study of the orchids

Courtesy of the American Orchid Society.

NOTES ON ALBINISM by Prof. Dr. Guido J. Braem

Albinos are “en vogue”. This is true in respect to all orchid genera and especially for the slipper orchids, including the species that make up the genus *Paphiopedilum*. Whereas the general interest in the genus is not new, and was really established as early as the first half of the 19th century with the introduction of the first species into western Europe, notably Belgium and England, the special interest in albinistic forms (whether true albinos or not) is of a more recent nature.

Today, nearly all species can be obtained, either as products of artificial propagation or as wild-collected plants. The hunt for more “special” or more “rare” objects is on-going. And this is the point where the colour varieties and albinistic forms enter the scene.

Praised as especially valuable, and rated to be of “award quality” by members of the judging committees of the various orchid societies around the world, these colour varieties fetch much higher prices than do the “normal” specimens of the respective species. Although the true scientific value of these variants may well be a matter for further discussion, the commercial value is a fact that cannot be ignored. One should, however, keep in mind that only the first few plants really fetch the big money. In many cases these plants are propagated within a relatively short period of time, and seedlings (that sell for a much lower price) become quite abundant, usually within two to three years.

Since about 1970, quite a number of these colour variants have been discovered, but some have been known for a much longer time. The intensified search for new species, prompted by the augmented demand, did the rest. The overall result, as seen through the eyes of a botanist, is that a multitude of albinistic forms of *Paphiopedilum* species have become known and have been described.

It may be wise to delineate the necessary definitions here. Indeed, the terms “albino,” “albus” and/or “albinistic” are not always used with the proper meaning.

albino: by botanical definition, a plant that lacks the possibility to produce anthocyanin pigments. It should be noted that plants have 3 groups of pigments, being

- (a) anthocyanins, responsible for the red and brown shades,
- (b) carotenes, responsible for the yellow colours, and
- (c) chlorophylls, responsible for the “greens”.

Therefore, a plant correctly designated as an albino will not show any red or brown colour but can very well be green, yellow, white, or any combination thereof. As soon as any shade of red occurs anywhere in any part of the plant, the specimen is not an albino.

alba, album or albus (depending on the gender of the genus): a Latin word that simply means “white”. This term, as far as orchids are concerned, is used in connection with the colour of the flower. Only flowers that are pure white should be designated as alba/album. “Alba/album” plants are albinos, but we have already established that albinos are not necessarily “alba/album” (see above). A quick browse through their combined awards index for 1932-1997 revealed that the judges of the American Orchid Society have awarded plants as variety album or forma album for 13 *Paphiopedilum* species. Of those 13, only three (*P. bellatulum*, *P. concolor*, and *P. niveum*) can have pure white flowers.

albinistic: a term that is used in various ways. The correct usage is for the designation of an albino or “alba/album”. This term can, therefore, be used for a yellow/green/white plant or an all-white plant. Unfortunately, the term “albinistic” is often erroneously used to designate a plant that is faintly but normally coloured.

The rules of taxonomy also lack proper safety mechanisms against the misuse of the designation “alba/album/albus”. A designation of a species or an infraspecific taxon, as long as it is part of a

Continued on page 15

**.The next Meeting of the
Cymbidium Orchid Club of South Australia Inc.
will be held on**

**Wednesday 24th May 2018
at the**

Burnside Community Centre, 401 Greenhill Road, Tasmore, SA

**Meetings are held on the 4th Wednesday of each month,
February to November**

Program - May 2018 Meeting

- 7.00pm** Hall is open. Helpers required to assist setting up seating
Beginner's Group meet on the stage. New members are most welcome.
- 7.15** Beginner's Group meet on stage at front of hall
- 8.00pm** Meeting opens.
General business, General discussion and any questions
- 8.10pm** David Brooks, the Registrar of Judges of the Cymbidium Club of Australia (NSW) is our guest speaker. Refer to page 4 for details. David will be accompanied by his wife Judith, who is Secretary of the Cymbidium Club of Australia.
- 9.15pm** Judges discuss flowers displayed. No single flower competition
- 9.30pm** Meeting closes
Please remain for light supper and friendly discussions

The next meeting is on Wednesday 27th June 2018.

Supper Roster 2018

May	Glenn & Daphne Stearnes
June	Trevor & Margaret Jacob
July	Julie & Stacy Bagwell
August	Julie & Stacy Bagwell
September	Julie & Stacy Bagwell
October	Geoff & Lucy Spear
November	Geoff & Lucy Spear

NOTICE
IN FUTURE ONLY PREORDERED ITEMS
WILL BE BROUGHT TO MEETINGS

For enquires regarding Pots, Stakes, Foggers, Labels,
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PLANTS WANTED

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Tepko 'Freckles', elegans, Koala 'Cuddles
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Bags of TriSodium Phosphate are now available from the trading table (for sterilizing cutting tools etc). One Kilogram bag \$10, 500 grams \$5.00. Larger bags are available on request. Note, these prices are much cheaper than you can get privately.

The **Best Overall flower of the April** meeting was **Donovan "Dark Perfection"**, grown by Barry Bailey. It was also the best flower in Open Division.

It was growing in a 170mm (7 inch) pot, filled with 10 to 12mm bark.

It had three green bulbs and one backbulb

It had one nice, tall, straight up flower spike, with 8 open flowers, and six buds.

The flowers were a very strong yellow colour, with good substance. The labelum was maroon, with cream colouring in the throat.

The flowers were well presented, and well above the foliage.

Donovan was registered in 2004, and the parents are Kusuda Shining x Sleeping Ransom. Of interest is that the early breeding parents Golden Elf, and Peter Pan appear in the Kusuda Shining side of the family, and many good pure colour ancestors appear in the Sleeping Ransom side of the family. 14

Donovan has been used with good success as a breeder, with a number of matings already registered.

There will be no Single Flower Competition this month

Interstate Cymbidium Clubs

Cymbidium Club of Australia (NSW)

Secretary Mrs Judith Brooks Ph 02 9773 9197 email jahamilton.17@btinternet.com **Web-site** ccansw.com.au **Facebook** [cymbidiumclubofaustralia](https://www.facebook.com/cymbidiumclubofaustralia)

Meetings are on the second Thursday, March to November

Cymbidium Orchid Society of Victoria

Secretary Julie Forrest Ph 0417 339026

email efo28308@bigpond.net.au.

Website cosv.com.au Meetings Second Tuesday February to December

Cymbidium Orchid Club of Western Australia

Secretary Helen Stretch Ph 08 9362 4120 email hstretch2007@bigpond.com

Website cymbidiumorchidclubwa.com.au Meetings third Monday Feb. to Nov.

For details of other South Australian Orchid Clubs, refer to our Web Site cymorchidssa.com.au

Our “Cymbidium Orchid Club of South Australia” Facebook site is receiving well over 1000 views per posting, from growers all around the world.

Plants shown at our meetings are posted, and we try to add some interesting articles, which often cannot be published in this magazine. Try to look in on us and support the site (please).

Refer also to our Cymbidium Orchid Club of South Australia Website
cymorchidssa.com.au

Albinism Continued from page 12

validly and effectively published concept, is to be followed, no matter how erroneous or ludicrous the designation may be. Because of this, for example, *Paphiopedilum haynaldianum* forma (or variety) album is the valid designation of a plant with mainly green flowers.

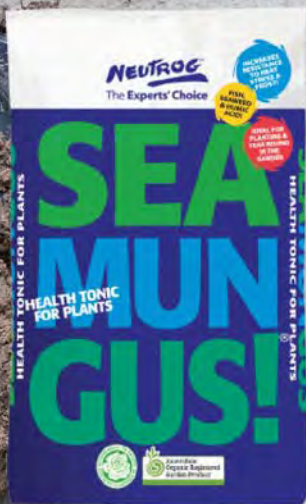
The taxonomic status of albino or albinistic forms is another source of disagreement and confusion. Most of these variants have been described at the level of a botanical variety. In the meantime, however, the great majority of those involved in orchid taxonomy consider colour variants - and albinos are simply colour variants - not to be worthy of the variety status. For that reason, the albinistic taxa are now generally reduced from varieties, abbreviation “var.”, to forms, and designated as forma, abbreviated as “fma.”

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Showbench winners from the May 2017 meeting



At left
Best Overall and Best in Open Division
Vanessa Amorosi “Stargate”

Below
Best in First Division
The Real Thing “105”



At left
Best in Second Division
Lucky Strike x Valley Fire

**Compare these with what will be shown at
our May 2018 meeting**



**Shown at the April meeting
Species Cymbidium dayanum Grown by Helmuth Gerber**