

'Cymbidium Chatter'

Edition 3a April 2020



Photograph: Dr Pantcho Thomas

Welcome to this edition of 'Cymbidium Chatter', I hope it finds you all well and managing our new lifestyle!

Last week we heard from Joshua White, our youngest member. Joshua is very enthusiastic and thoroughly researches many aspects of Cymbidium growing and hybridising. I hope you

enjoyed his article. He has an avid appreciation for all types of Cymbidium flowers but has a special interest in Primary Hybrids and species. Thank you and well done Joshua!

I have been getting some terrific support from growers in the US and I have many wonderful photographs to share with you in this edition and also in coming weeks. The quality of flowers appears to be so much better than when I was in Santa Barbara in 2017.

Stay safe and well, and we can all look forward to catching up some time in the future!

Profiling Cym Gentle Touch 'Bon Bon'

Registered by N Lenkic 1996

Originator S Lenkic

Is there enough interest in green intermediate Cymbidiums for someone to try and take the next step forward? In 2010 one of our own members, Andy Tran, registered Templestowe Opal, one of only two offspring recorded for Cym Gentle Touch. Andy was also the person who hybridised Templestowe Opal. The only other offspring registration (2007) is Cym Bemm River, with well known Cymbidium grower Phil Grech being the originator and registrant.

Why are there only two offspring of Cym Gentle Touch? Surely a flower that has dominated its color class, is worth breeding with. Maybe it's because the plant grows too big to easily handle or is it, that it is a reluctant breeder. Both could be relevant. I find it hard to understand why Gentle Touch is such a large grower. At one stage, many years ago, I had both parents of Gentle Touch in my collection. Neither Borough Green or Amesbury were overly large plants. I am assuming that the cultivars used were BG 'Conference' and A 'Frank Slattery'. I also had Borough Green 'Opal' and Amesbury 'Green Angel' but neither of these were large growers. In fact Borough Green 'Opal', although a better color than its more famous sibling, was quite difficult to grow and even harder to get to flower, so I doubt that it would have been used.

A look at the family tree for Gentle Touch doesn't immediately provide an answer as to why it grows so large, perhaps those with a greater knowledge of the plants in its background can pick out the most likely culprits. What both Andy Tran and Phil Grech have achieved in the progeny of Gentle Touch is a reduction in plant size. In the case of Templestowe Opal (featured below), there is also a smaller flower size. The flowers are closer to miniature in size. The reduction in overall size maybe due to the genes passed on by the Ovation parent or maybe it has reverted back to its great grandparent, floribundum. Cym Ovation, I used to have several cultivars in my own collection, they were all smallish growers although the flowers were small standard in size. All the Bemm River cultivars I have seen, have been green intermediate or small standard sized flowers, it also has Ovation in its background.

Okay the first step has been taken. From my own personal likes I think Templestowe Opal is a good result however from a judge's perspective the flowers tend to be too crowded on the spike and the heavy substance of the dorsal sepal prevents the flower from opening fully. It is a beautiful green with a wonderful contrasting lip. Maybe it holds the key for producing the next green intermediate that will dominate our show benches. The Lenkic brothers must be delighted that Gentle Touch, 24 years on, still manages to take out the green class on a regular basis!



Templestowe Opal 'Tiny'
(Gentle Touch x Ovation)
Originator: A Tran
Registered: A Tran 2010



Organic Fertilisers - Be careful!

We are regularly reminded by our better growers to be careful using organic fertilisers. About nine months ago I started using Powerfeed on all my orchids, many different genera. It was applied weekly (too often I think) at about 500 parts per million. While the top of the plants looked great it was only when I came to pot-on or repot that I realised I had a problem. The root system wasn't great and the mix had broken down to the extent that many of the plants were basically growing in mud. So instead of potting-on I was forced into repotting all the plants. They have all gone into a 50/50 mix of coarse perlite and 15mm bark nuggets.

The Powerfeed (I have a large supply thanks to a generous lady at Yarra Valley OS) is now restricted to use on the general garden and the plants look fantastic. I apply it at same rate but only once per month. The orchids now receive Peters Excel Calmag Finisher once per week.

Cymbidium Yai 'Monica'

In the first of the April editions of Cymbidium Chatter I had an article about Cym Yai 'Monica'. In that article I wrote about the importance of buying either a piece of the original plant or at least one of the original clones of it. Cym Yai 'Monica', has it would appear been cloned many times, but not always from the original plant. We are often reminded that clones of clones rarely result in an exact replication of the original, variations can and will occur. The photographs below, sent to me by growers in the US, clearly show that variations will show up.

In that article, I posted three photographs and asked, "Which would you choose?" Clearly the flower that caught my attention, was the photo taken by Andy Easton. This flower was on a piece of the original plant. I have included that photo again, together with a few other Cym Yai 'Monica', including the awarded flower. You make up your own mind but I know which one I'd take home! Look at single flowers, don't be influenced by the overall display.

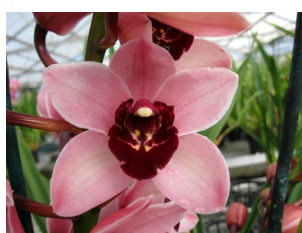


Photo: A Easton

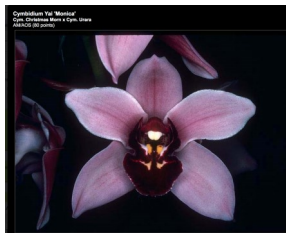


Photo: R Parsons



Photo: B Harris



Photo: P Alonzo



Award photo AOS

TeePee is getting ready!

TeePee (aka.Terry Poulton for our overseas and interstate growers) sent me some photographs just to prove that he is getting ready for a bumper flowering season. I'm not sure many growers would have included a step ladder in their shots, but we all know that Terry believes, "Big is better!"



Hopefully you are all getting ready to stake and train the spikes as they elongate. Yoyos are a great way of training the spikes but you can also use hat elastic, a peg and paper clip as a cheaper alternative. If using the latter be careful not to over tension the elastic as you can stretch the spike too much, resulting in flowers being spaced too far apart.

Getting Ready - there is no truth in the rumour that this is how Terry has spent every Saturday afternoon for the past month! Waiting!!



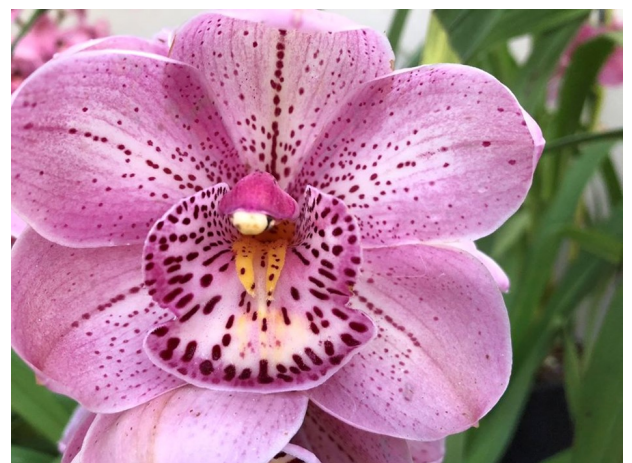
Pierre Pujol is a well known grower and hybridiser of show bench style Cymbidiums, in the USA. Pierre has given me permission to use his photographs, I have also included his comments about each of the flowers. Thank you Pierre and congratulations on the making of a wonderful cross!

Right: Cym. Mini-me 'En Colère' (Vogel's Magic x Kirby Lesh), another excellent seedling from this cross, with 2 arching spikes of 19 flowers/ spike on a compact plant. Hybridizer: Pierre Pujol. I was inspired to make this cross in 2013 after noticing a picture of a seedling of a cross with Vogel's Magic in an issue of the "Australian Cymbidium Scene" magazine produced by Geoffrey Bailey. Thank you, Geoff!



Left: Cym. Mini-me 'Woodside' (Vogel's Magic x Kirby Lesh). The best of the cross, for shape and presentation on the spike, with three columns naturally aligned. Small plant size and pendant spikes. The spotting this year is more noticeable as the plant was bloomed in a shadier area, which seems to aggregate the red pigments in a 'blotched' pattern versus a more sprayed-out overlay. The white base color is then more exposed which creates a stronger contrast. It was given an AM/AOS this year. Enjoy!

Right: Cym. Mini-me 'Fatty' (Vogel's Magic x Kirby Lesh). Hybridized by Pierre Pujol. A bit cuppy, a bit bunched on the spike, but very pretty with its very full round shape.



Left: Cym. Mini-me 'Mignone' (Vogel's Magic x Kirby Lesh). First bloom seedling, with 3 arching spikes, average 16 flowers per spike. It looks like a mini Kirby Lesh 'Cinnabar' with a *devonianum*-influenced lip and plant size. Enjoy