

# 'Cymbidium Chatter'

Edition 10 June 22 2020

**Welcome** to this edition of Cymbidium Chatter. The news this weekend with regards to COVID-19 is not encouraging and it is a shame that the government has had to revert to more stringent restrictions. It is incumbent on us all to follow the directives issued by the chief medical officer and to be mindful of our actions - the welfare of all Australians should be our primary concern and responsibility! With this in mind the committee has had to cancel its proposed meeting scheduled for Tuesday evening, We have, however, unanimously decided that this year's show will be cancelled. Hopefully we will be able to resume our monthly meetings sometime in the near future, until then, stay safe and well!

Please remember to send me any photographs of plants that are in flower, thank you!



Cym Jessie Blakiston x Kalahari Blaze Photo:3 Amigos



## 3 AMIGOS CYMBIDIUMS

The 3 Amigos are specialist growers of exhibition Cymbidiums based in South Australia. They have a Facebook page where they post photographs of new seedlings and also other plants grown by the trio. Pictured (left) are Chee, John, and Shane - the 3 Amigos.

I have had the pleasure of judging plants grown by them at the Royal Adelaide Show for the past two years. I was to be the guest judge again at this year's show but it was also cancelled.

All three men know how to grow and present their Cymbidiums. Their plants are always very healthy and they have an 'eye' for quality flowers.

## More from the 3 Amigos Photographs: 3 Amigos Text: G Bailey

The Adelaide/South Australian flowering season is always a few weeks ahead of the Victorian season. Featured below are some of the early season flowers from the 3 Amigos, all are first flowering seedlings!



First flowering seedling for 2020. Lunar Blaze 'Dural' x Kirby Lesh 'You Beaut'.

Seedlings - if you have the room, seedlings are certainly rewarding but as Geoff Le Marne, President of the Australian Cymbidium Orchid Society (NSW) pointed out in this post, this flower is not as good as either of its parents. I am sure you would find that the primary goal of any hybridiser is to produce a flower that is superior to both its parents.

So what are your chances of getting such a flower. I remember asking Peter Sunderland, Kimberley Orchids, this very question. Peter put the odds at 500:1. Not good odds but certainly worth the gamble. Very few growers have the room to grow 500 plants but where possible it is always worth growing multiple seedlings from the same cross. In most cases you will at least get a variety of flowers but there are crosses that produce flowers that all look the same.

Below three siblings from the cross of Uluru 'Orange Delight' x Hazel Faye 'Shocking'



Now for your next exercise in growing seedlings: **Culling!**

Looking at the three seedlings above, ask yourself "Which one do I keep?"

You may decide to keep all three. Remember that a flower may not be at its best until the second or third flowering, or until the plant has grown to maturity.

Things to consider:

1. Flower shape and color, texture (do the flowers glisten/natural sheen)
2. The labellum (lip)
3. Spike habit and flower arrangement
4. Flower substance
5. Growth habit
6. Do I have room for all three

I know which one of the seedlings I would keep!



Cymbidium Dural Dream 'Cheers' x Joan Bryant 'Harmony' Photograph: 3 Amigos

A mid-June flower which is very presentable. It would certainly hold its own on the show bench at monthly meetings, it would appeal as a cut flower, great presentation on the spike and not too many flowers, I think florists would love it! Remember florists shy away from spikes with too many flowers, they become too expensive to purchase (no more than 14 flowers is ideal).



Cym Jessie Blakiston x Kalahari Blaze Photo:3 Amigos

Left: this is a very shapely mid-June flowering intermediate, the type of flower that could easily win a Winter show. How often do you look at a photograph of a flower and try to determine its actual size. This is never an easy task and if you are really serious about growing Cymbidiums it is wise to become familiar with the parents used in any cross. In this case we have a miniature flower, Cym Jessie Blakiston, crossed with a standard flower, Cym Kalahari Blaze; so it is reasonable to suggest that a high percentage of the offspring will be intermediate-sized flowers. However, there are always exceptions and a complicating factor is that here in Australia we have small standard and large standard flowers. Variations in size will occur, depending on which parent dominates.

### Cymbidium flower size

Large flower type: over 100mm

Small flower standard type: 85mm - 100mm

Intermediate type: 60mm - 85mm

Miniature type: less than 60mm

NB: always try and include the size of the flower with photographs.

## The Rise and Fall of the Uglies!



Cymbidium Amy Winehouse  
(tracyanum x Death Wish)

For a short period of time, close to a decade, the Uglies as they have become known, enjoyed an easily explained time of popularity. This was clearly the case among hobbyists and general gardeners alike. I think they were so popular because we had enjoyed too much of a good thing with the development of flowers with real show bench attributes and potential.

There was a time when many growers became bored with the round exhibition-type flowers. This time has passed and hobbyists are once again choosing to seek out seedlings with the qualities and attributes to win shows. There will always be a small group of growers within orchid clubs who will still look for that something different, flowers closely aligned with and not all that far removed from the species. Primary hybrids have always been of interest to this group of growers and there will always be a place for species Cymbidiums. Clubs would be wise to encourage this group as the flowers although unlikely to ever win a major prize do add interest to any display and the general public love seeing them!

So where does this leave the 'Uglies'? People will continue to grow them. From a judging perspective they will always be placed in the Novelty Class but for how long do they remain novel? We see different variations of them, most the result of Kevin Hipkins, Kevin Butler and to a lesser extent Nado Lenkic's hybridising programs. We have the 'Uglies' but we also have the pelorics (I'm not sure they fit into the 'Uglies' category). A peloric Cymbidium flower won Grand Champion of the Show in Perth, in recent years, so there is certainly a place for them. Those who grow-to-show, will have to decide whether they like the 'Uglies' enough, to find a space for them in their collections.

The flower featured above Cym Amy Winehouse, a first flowering seedling from a cross made by Kevin Hipkins, Royale Orchids. It is not as 'ugly' as some, I will find a place for it in my collection, not so much for the flower's appearance but because of the wonderful fragrance it emits. It is among the sweetest fragrance I have smelled in an orchid. 'Variety is the spice of life' and 'beauty lies in the eye of the beholder', so perhaps there will always be a place for that flower that is so different that it polarises opinions about it!