

'Cymbidium Chatter'

Edition 21 - September 7



Cym Mini Khan 'Carousel' x Alexandra's Flame
'Pink Impressions' Photograph: A Antoniou

Welcome to this edition of Cymbidium Chatter, while the news for Victorians is not great, an additional two weeks of Stage 4 lockdown, we are at least moving in the right direction with the number of new COVID-19 cases reported each day at better levels. As frustrating as the lockdown has been, I'm sure that if we all stay strong and stay the course, we will be able to return to some sense of normality prior to Christmas. 2020 will certainly be a year easily remembered, albeit for all the wrong reasons!

First up a correction from last week's CC. The grex Cym Street Tango was hybridised by Andy Easton, not Kevin Hipkins. Kevin bought a batch of Cym Street Tango seedlings from Andy and the wonderful Cym Street Tango 'Ooh Ah', came from this group. Kevin had 'Ooh Ah' cloned and it sold widely within Australia and also overseas.

Now mention of Cym Steet Tango 'Ooh Ah' and Cym Mem Amelia Earhart seedlings did elicit a number of responses from hobbyists here in Australia. I had several people contact me to say that while they liked the look of this style of Cymbidium, they would not grow them, as they are far too difficult to transport to monthly meetings and shows. I could relate to their viewpoint to some degree. I can vividly remember a plant of Cym Street Tango 'Ooh Ah' I had in my collection. I had managed to get two beautiful spikes of flowers on a fairly small plant and planned to take it along to a COSV monthly meeting. You can imagine my sense of disbelief and horror, when I saw that my wife had attempted to try and train the pendulous spikes into upright ones, breaking off several lips in the process. Needless to say, I sold the plant and it wasn't all that long before we were on amicable terms again!

Last week's CC was really the first edition that prompted growers to contact me. There were many people who were delighted to hear news of a 'new' (the launch of the website was new but Surf Coast Orchids has been operating for several years) Cymbidium orchid nursery here in Victoria. Others contacted me to say that they would much rather support Australian hybridisers and buy their seedlings, than to purchase seedlings produced by overseas hybridisers, many of whom they felt, did not have a good understanding of the style of flower that was successful at club meetings and shows here in Australia. Certainly there is a difference in the style of flower that is readily accepted in overseas countries, however many of our own hybridisers have realised the need to diversify and cater to the needs of all growers! Not everyone grows to show!

All contributions, articles and photographs, to grb17@bigpond.com

In last week's Cymbidium Chatter I promised that I would feature some of the Champions from the Cymbidium Club of South Australia's Spring Show. All the plants featured were grown by the 3 Amigos - Chee, John or Shane. While the three gents exhibit as individuals, they combine their plants to make a magnificent display. This is a great way of creating a display and the three gents also share their financial resources when buying flasks of seedlings etc. As mentioned in previous issues, they grow their plants superbly, no doubt sharing growing tips with each other and they purchase quality plants, sourcing some of the best Cymbidiums to be had in Australia. I hope you enjoy their photographs of their display but also the Champions for the various classes.



Champion Large Standard Cymbidium
Cym Coraki Glowing 'Kentlyn'
Grown by Chee Ng



Champion Small Standard
Cym Mesmerise 'Looby Loo'
Grown by Chee Ng



Champion Intermediate
Cym Gentle Touch 'Bon Bon'
Grown by Shane Moeller



Champion Large Standard Seedling
Cym Wyong Flame x Lauren Jackson
Grown by Shane Moeller

An 'Old Timer' salutes again!

I have spoken previously about the fact that Cym Gentle Touch 'Bon Bon' continues to win at shows around Australia. It was registered in 1996 by Nado Lenkic with his brother, Simon, being the originator.

Just because an orchid is old, in this case 24 years of age, doesn't mean it is incapable of winning on the show scene. The fact that Cym Gentle Touch 'Bon Bon' continues to out perform other green intermediates, suggests that this class of intermediate has either been ignored by hybridisers around the world, or that they have found the task of creating a reasonable challenger, just too difficult! I love green Cymbidiums and as old as it is, I do plan to once again grow a plant of Cym Gentle Touch 'Bon Bon'!



Champion Intermediate Seedling
Cym Joanstar x Khanebono
Grown by John Moon



Champion Miniature Seedling
Cym Mem. Amelia Earhart x Pacific Sparkle
Grown by John Moon

Do we need more brown Cymbidiums?

In last week's Cymbidium Chatter I raised this question and from the responses I have received the answer would appear to be no, although there were some growers who did as I did, liked the new shade of brown, achieved with the Cym Mem Amelia Earhart and Cym Pacific Sparkle seedlings. The indication from those who responded was that they were looking for bright, clean colors, particularly in pendulous style Cymbidiums. Australian growers have for many years been satisfied with the Cym Sarah Jean and Cym Mary Green grexes (plural of grex). Some of the Cym Sarah Jeans were bright but the Cym Mary Greens, although they presented their flowers beautifully, were very much on the dull side, when it came to color. Bright colors have certainly been achieved in standard sized flowers, so hopefully it won't be too much longer before we see a similar scenario with our pendulous Cymbidiums.



Champion Novelty
Cym Valley Champion Superstar
Grown by Chee Ng



The 3 Amigos stand at the COCSA Spring Show

Tips for building a good display:

- 1) Quality over quantity, more isn't always better!
- 2) Place the orchids you want the judges to look at, in a prominent **position**.
- 3) Never underestimate the value of a white flower, it lifts the colors around it!
- 4) Aim for a good balance, flowers of the same color either side of the central flower (as above)
- 5) Stand back and enjoy what you have created! Congratulations to the 3 Amigos!



Displaying pendulous Cymbidiums, never an easy task!

If you grow pendulous Cymbidiums for show purposes you need to think very carefully about how you display your plants for the best effect. In the photograph above you can see several Cym Mem Amelia Earhart seedlings, the stands used ensure that the plants display their flowers to their best advantage but could they be displayed better. It is difficult to determine from this photograph whether the plants are sitting at ground level (I think they probably are), this is certainly the easiest way of incorporating them into a display but it really doesn't do the flowers justice. They need to be displayed as close as possible to eye level to be seen at their best, this is never an easy undertaking and sometimes near impossible! A further improvement would be to insert the pot into a piece of black cloth/material which will cover the black frame and drape gracefully over it.

For many years Tony Saraceni built wonderful displays of pendulous Cymbidiums at the OSCOV Show. Tony is the grower for Paradisia Nurseries, with Collectors Corner being the retail outlet. He had at hand some wonderful pendulous Cymbidium plants to work with. Often the displays would only feature a relatively small number of plants but he would ensure that these large specimen plants, sometimes 20+ spikes were displayed at, or close to eye level. The judges certainly appreciated the plants being at this level and the flowers were given every opportunity to impress all onlookers. The plants weren't those with long pendulous spikes but those with shorter arching inflorescences and so they were that bit easier to work with. It would seem from the emails I have received over the past week that these are the type of plants hobbyists are looking for!



Still with the 3 Amigos, the importance of white Cymbidium flowers cannot be overstated. In the photograph above the white Cymbidium has the effect of lifting and highlighting all the other colors around it. Place another flower, it doesn't matter what color it is, in the place of the white and you create a much duller section of your display.

Congratulations once again to our three friends from South Australia. The 3 Amigos certainly know how to grow and show their flowers! My sincere thanks to them for allowing me to share their photographs with all the readers of Cymbidium Chatter!



A new seedling

Tony Antoniou, a COSV member, sent in this photograph of a new seedling he has flowered.

The cross is Mini Khan 'Carousel' x Alexandra's Flame 'Pink Impressions'- from Battack Orchids, NSW. The flower is an intermediate in size and shows potential.

Battack Orchids are to my understanding no longer in existence, having moved their plants to Fire-tail Orchids, NSW, many years ago.

Kevin Black, the proprietor of Battack Orchids, registered Cym Mini Knan in 1999, he was also the originator.

The other parent Cym Alexandra's Flame, was registered by Scott Barrie in 2004, with Gordon Giles being the originator.

Photograph: A Antoniou

Slow release fertilisers suitable for Cymbidiums

Many growers apply slow release fertilisers to the top of their pots at potting-on and repotting time. I have always used an eight to nine month slow release, believing that if I applied it in August, it would remain active during the plants main growing period. Other growers I know, apply a twelve month release, this should ensure that plants receive some level of food all year round. I should add that during the Winter months I do apply a weak level of liquid fertiliser each time I water my plants. Many growers will say that this practice is a waste of time and money, as the plants are inactive during the colder months of the year. The choice is yours! Photographs below show two of the more popular slow release fertilisers.



Wains Orchids

Normally at this time of year we would all be excited about the forthcoming COSV Show, next weekend to be precise, but 2020 is an exceptional year! Unfortunately we can't look forward to seeing David Wain's wonderful display of quality Cymbidiums. However, David has been busy and has managed to keep the sale of plants humming along through an online presence. This is despite his collection being ravaged by a severe hail storm earlier in the year. Featured below are some of David's flowers together with his comments about each



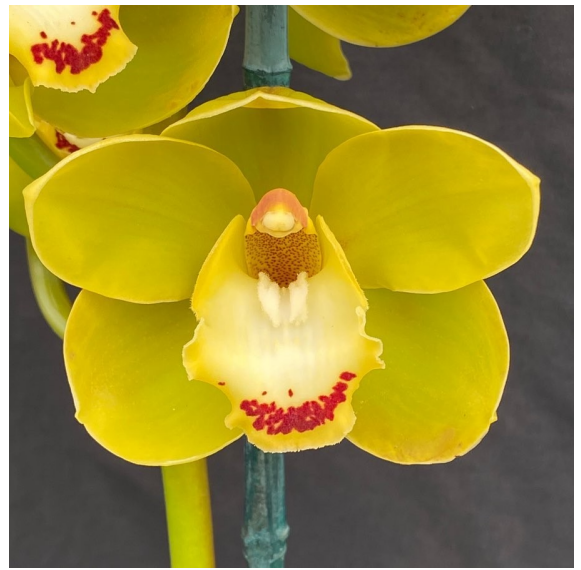
Despite being heavy-handedly divided last year, Templestowe Charm 'Julie' still flowers with great shape and colour. Looking forward to being able to show it properly next year.



A big thank you to everyone who has continued supporting us via our online store during this difficult time. It's a big shame that we've spent the majority of our show season being locked down but at least you can still get some of your orchid fix online! (Pictured: First flowered seedling)



(Kimberly Flame x Uluru) 'Andy' is an easy flowerer with a great dark orange tinge. It's a large standard with a broad lip perfect for showing or just as part of a quality collection!



Dulcet 'Green Dream' is a light green large standard with a delicate red banded lip. It would make a great addition to anyone's cymbidium collection.