

CYMBIDIUM NEWS

Published by the Cymbidium Orchid Club of South Australia Inc.
<http://www.cymorchidssa.com.au> also see us on **Facebook**

Sorry. I usually use the winning flower from our last meeting on this page, but obviously that is not possible, so I thought it might be nice to reflect on what might have been seen at our May meeting if it took place.

This is the best overall flower at the May meeting 2019. Would it have been better this year? It is a really nice flower and is likely to be a very popular variety in future



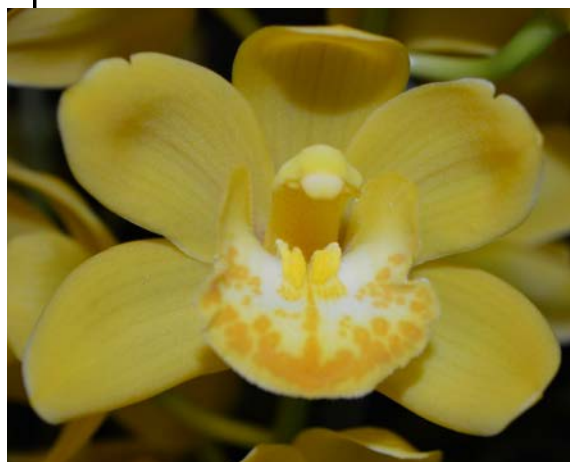
May 2019 Meeting

**Best Overall
Best in Open Division
1st Intermediate Yellow**



Pharaoh's Dream 'Dural'

Grown by Shane Moeller





In flower now, and would have been shown at the May meeting

**Celtic Imp 'Sharon'
Grown by Peter Hennesey**

Thank you Peter for sending this photograph



Cymbidium News Volume 22 No. 4 May 2020

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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Presidents Message May 2020



**President
Graham Fear**

Welcome to our May issue, Finally some light at the end of the tunnel for all of us with not only the club, but also the way we have been living over these past three months. Only one case in the last month and we are the first state to now be virus free. Let's hope this keeps up as it has been hard for all of us in one way or another, but everybody in SA has done a great job to get us where we are today.

There is no change with the Burnside Council as I am writing this, with all meetings still cancelled in the centre until at least June. There may be still a chance we could have a June meeting, but government regulations will need to change for this to happen. Hopefully July is a distinct possibility if things keep improving as they are. We will keep you informed once we know one way or another.

The same with the winter show. If the closed shops at Munno Para shopping centre start opening again as is currently happening around the state,

there is a good chance the show will still go ahead in one way or another. The Spring show is looking more and more like going ahead.

As I told you last month, we will be holding virtual monthly shows through the magazine over the next few months from June if there is no meeting. All of your flowering plant photos need to be sent to Graham Morris (gramorris@optusnet.com.au) and will be printed in each month's magazine. Normal plant prizes will apply and will be presented at our first meeting back. We will have a group of judges judging the photos and also a popular vote for flower of the month. Please supply your name, division, plants name and show number with your photos

The Seedling of The Year 2019 voting has been disappointing so far with only twenty members voting so far, so please vote as soon as you can so the winner can be announced in the June issue. All you have to do it pick your first and second choice and send it by email to cymor-chidssa@gmail.com or phone or text your vote through to me on 0421053951. Please include your name with the vote.

Some great rain over the past two months which I'm sure our plants are enjoying after months of tap water after our tanks had run out. From what I've heard there are plenty of spikes on everybody's plants, so hopefully everybody sends in their photos once they start opening.

I look forward to speaking to you all again in next months magazine and hopefully as the restrictions ease, catching up with you all in the near future.

Kind regards and stay safe and well.

Graham Fear
President

I think this information is great news for all our growers and deserves to be displayed prominently and possibly acted upon

The quality of our mains water seems to be extremely low in dissolved salts at the moment

I have measured the EC level over the last month or so, and it is showing ZERO parts per million

at my house in Morphet Vale

I suspect I am getting water from the Desalination plant

It has also tested at zero ppm at Melrose Park, and Woodville

This is great for growing plants which are sensitive to poor quality water (most devonianum hybrids)

It should also allow us to fertilize at a higher rate than previously when we often had readings of between

400 and 700 ppm

An EC (Electrical Conductivity) meter can be used to test your water quality.

See also pages 10 and 11

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Available on the net from about \$50 or from Hydroponic Stores

The following 2 articles were published in the Cymbidium Orchid Club of Western Australia May 2020 magazine. Thank you to Helen Stretch for making them available to us.

Species *Cymbidium ensifolium*

The cymbidium with sword shaped leaves. Blooms early summer to autumn. Grown in cool to warm conditions.

Early flowering cymbidium most likely have *ensifolium* in their background.

ORIGIN/HABITAT: This orchid is found in an island of distribution in Sri Lanka and southern India. Plants have not been reported in northeastern India, but they are found in a large area from eastern Burma (now Myanmar) and Thailand across Indochina into southern and eastern China, including Taiwan. Distribution extends northward to as far as the Ryukyu Islands, extreme southern Japan, and the northern half of Luzon Island in the Philippines. From Thailand, distribution extends southward and eastward through Malaya, Sumatra, Borneo, Java, Sulawesi, the Molucca Islands, and New Guinea. Through its range, plants generally are found as terrestrials in lightly shaded, broad-leaved forest, often in damp situations, at elevations of 1000-5900 ft. (300-1800 m). As the two subspecies appear to be found in specific regions, we will treat each of the subspecies as a separate species as far as selecting representative climate data, making cultural suggestions, and providing plant and flower descriptions. --

Source: Charles Baker. Orchid Wiz



Cym. ensifolium
'Qi Shan Yu Quan'



Cym. ensifolium
'Shi Chang Hong'



Cymbidium Insigne subspecies

Seidenfadenii (Red lip)

[insigne name = noble, splendid, grand]

Common name Splendid Cymbidium

I currently have this starting to flower. It was a plant I purchased from Keith Podger's collection. This is the first time I have flowered this cymbidium. It has a long spike with the 9 small flowers bunched at the top of the raceme. Similar to my other insigne with fine leaves and long raceme.

ORIGIN/HABITAT: Southern and central Vietnam. *Cymbidium insigne* is found throughout most of this mountainous region particularly the Lang Bian Mountains near Dalat.

Seidenfaden (1993) also reported collections from near Chapa in extreme northern Vietnam near the border with China. Plants also occur in the Loei region of northeast Thailand and on Hainan Island just off the coast of southern China and northern Vietnam. Plants grow in sandy soils of open woodlands at 2450-5600 ft. (750-1700 m). In Thailand, however, they are found at higher elevations usually about 4000-5000 ft. (1220-1520 m). --

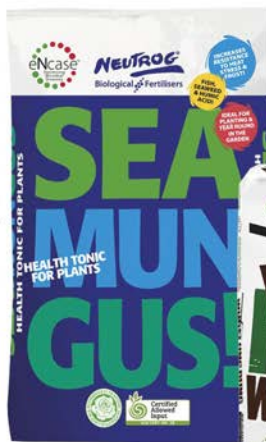
Source: Charles Baker, in *Orchid Wiz*
Cool growing cymbidium



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Further to our article recently on the use of seedling and cutting mix for deflasking of seedlings and clones, our President wanted to share the progress of the plant above.

It was potted out of a community pot as a single growth plant, into a 100mm pot containing **normal growing mix of bark and peralite**

In 3 months it bulbed up and has a 50mm new growth as shown above

Perhaps more experimentation with this product is worth considering

Above right is the new packaging of the Seed and Cutting mix.

It is available in 10 and 25 litre bags, but often in different parts of the stores.

Sometimes difficult to locate, so ask a staff member if you can't find it.



Above is a typical nutrient meter (commonly called an EC meter). They are readily available from Hydroponic Shops or on the net using Ebay or similar on line stores

The one above is used by removing a cap over the sensing electrodes, and inserting it into the liquid containing fertilizer. The lights on the side light up to indicate what strength the fertilizer mix being tested is at.

It is generally accepted that we should not apply nutrient at more than 1000 parts per million (ppm).

If the water (mains of tank) being used to add concentrated fertilizer to is at a high ppm level, less GOOD fertilizer can be added before the 1000 ppm level is reached.

An EC meter is a great tool to assist in a good fertilizing program

The article below is reproduced from The Orchid Societies Council of Victoria (OSCOV) web site.

What fertilizer should I use by Brian Milligan

New growers are quick to believe that success in cultivating orchids depends primarily on the type and amount of fertiliser used. Not so, in my opinion! In comparison with many plants, most orchids require little fertiliser and success in growing them depends more on providing them with optimal amounts of light, water, warmth and fresh air than with large amounts of fertiliser.

Fertilisers can be divided into several different types. Liquid fertilisers (which are usually solids!) are so called because they are dissolved in water before application. Their nutrients immediately become available to the plant via the roots, and in some cases also via the leaves. Slow release is the term generally used to describe fertiliser granules or droplets with polymeric coatings, which are essentially small plastic capsules of soluble fertiliser. These slow-release fertilisers should be incorporated in the potting mix. Their nutrients are slowly released during watering, especially in warm weather. Other fertilisers, such as Magamp®, Hoof-and-Horn® and Blood-and-Bone, also release their nutrients over a long period as they dissolve or are degraded by bacteria present in the potting mix.

Liquid Fertilisers contain major amounts of nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) in their chemical make-up. Smaller amounts of magnesium, calcium, sulphur and other elements needed for plant growth are also present. Magnesium is important because it is a constituent of chlorophyll, the pigment responsible for the green colour of plants. Chlorophyll catalyses photosynthesis, the primary step in the manufacture of cellulose, the structural material of plant tissue. Fertilisers containing a high proportion of nitrogen stimulate plants to produce leaf growth at the expense of flowers, whereas those containing relatively high proportions of phosphorus and especially potassium promote flowering. Thus fertilisers with different proportions of these elements (usually referred to as the NPK ratio) will have differing effects on plant growth and flowering. An alternative is to use a 'balanced' fertiliser in which the ratio of nutrients is such as to provide optimal orchid growth during the whole year. Super Brew®, sold by Atlantis Orchids, has a NPK ratio of 15:2:10, and is claimed to fulfil the above requirements. Other liquid fertilisers used successfully with orchids include Aquasol®, Thrive®, Wuxal® and Maxicrop®.

Orchid growers with large collections usually fertilise nearly every time they water by using a proportioning pump which adds a concentrated fertiliser solution to the water feeding the sprinkler system. A system sold for home use dilutes concentrated fertiliser solution approximately 20-fold with tap-water as it is applied by the garden hose. If applying fertiliser regularly in this way, the final concentration should be only 10% of the manufacturer's recommendation. However, when applying liquid fertilisers at weekly or fortnightly intervals, concentrations up to 50% of the manufacturer's recommendation can be used.

Slow Release Fertilisers are valued by the lazy grower and I use them extensively on my cymbidiums and zygopetalums! Osmocote®, Osmocote-Plus® and Nutricote® are three of the best known brands. I apply one or two tablespoons of Osmocote-Plus® to my 8-inch pots in October, together with smaller amounts of Magamp® and Hoof-and-Horn®. Often I add a little more in January. Slow-release fertilisers function by allowing their nutrients to diffuse slowly through their polymeric coating. Little fertiliser is released in cold weather, but the rate of release increases as the pot temperature reaches 20°C, coinciding with rapid plant growth. Some growers have excellent success using pelletised animal manures such as Dynamic Lifter®, which is essentially pelletised fowl manure. Some use it as a mulch on the top of the potting mix but others believe that it accelerates the breakdown of pine bark.

The above discussion applies primarily to fertilising cymbidiums and zygopetalums, which are regarded as 'heavy feeders'. I suggest caution when using slow-release fertilisers or animal manures on other orchids. It is safer to use liquid fertilisers at low concentrations and to apply them only to plants in active growth.

The article below is reproduced from The Orchid Societies Council of Victoria (OSCOV) web site.

pH and THE NUTRITION of ORCHID POT PLANTS by Bill Mather

The grey-white crystalline incrustation or efflorescence surrounding the drainage holes of a long established orchid pot-plant using bark substrate is generally assumed to result from over-feeding – either too strong or too frequent. The usual excellent advice is to flush pots regularly with water to wash out accumulated excess salts. The “burning” of root tips in such cases is evidence that ex-osmosis has occurred – that is, water has been extracted from the whole plant via the roots by a high concentration of salts in the base of the pot, particularly when the drainage has been poor. Such a mix is typically old and “broken down”. Certainly over-feeding old mix is a factor but even modest feeding levels will contribute to root loss in old mix.

In nature, epiphytic and lithophytic orchids grow on trees and rocks with their roots partially or fully exposed to the air. Roots that have died in broken-down mix have not drowned through lack of air necessarily, because the stomata in the under-surface of the foliage provide the vital pathway for respiration – the gaseous interchange of carbon dioxide from the air and oxygen as a product of photosynthesis. Remember that plant roots totally immersed in weak aqueous nutrients do not drown in hydroponic culture and that rock wool culture also involves immersion in aqueous nutrients without detriment to root tissue.

Living plants are made up of 75% by weight of water, 23% organic matter (complex carbon compounds) and 2% inorganic (non-carbon) chemical compounds. The latter represent the water-soluble mineral nutrients taken in by the root system. In pot-plant culture the substrate is almost devoid of these minerals, which must therefore be supplied by the grower.

There are 14 nutrient chemical elements (including trace elements). Four of these elements – phosphorus, calcium, magnesium and molybdenum – are insoluble in water below pH 5 (that is, more acidic than pH 5), whereas six elements (iron, magnesium, boron, copper, zinc and calcium) are insoluble above pH 8 (that is, more alkaline than pH 8). Thus the availability of nutrients to the plant varies at different pH levels and ceases beyond certain limits.

A solution at pH 7 is neutral (that is, neither acidic nor alkaline) and one at pH 6.5 is regarded as ideal for nutrition. The most important reason for the accumulation of excess nutrient salts is the development of acidity in the mix – bacterial and fungal action has lowered the pH of good freshly composted mix from pH 6.5 to pH 5 or less. Salts accumulate because they are not available in usable solution for absorption by root hairs. Worse follows by ex-osmosis – the plant dehydrates and the cells are destroyed when their cells rupture and collapse. Not only do extremes of pH affect the availability of plant nutrients but also they interfere with the delicate balance of microorganisms in the growing medium. For example, a very acidic medium can seriously interfere with mycorrhizae, beneficial fungi that make a plant's root system work more effectively.

When a potting mix has broken down, it is difficult to flush. Moreover, flushing does not change the pH; the mix remains acidic. Although it would then be logical to ‘sweeten’ the mix with a top-dressing of dolomite, this could provide a hit-or-miss quick-fix with the added risk of increasing the pH to such an extent that other nutrients become unavailable. Fresh repotting is always the best solution.

References

- 1 The Orchid Grower's Manual by Gordon C Morrison
- 2 Fertilizing by Wal Murphy

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**.The next Meeting of the
Cymbidium Orchid Club of South Australia Inc.**

Date

to

be

advised

when

Virus

Isolation

Restrictions

are lifted

Please refer to our President's Report
on page 4



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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

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

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. Contact Graham Morris if you need some now.

There will be some First Strike roedenticide bait available from the trading table when meetings commence, or collect from Graham Morris 0419 823 724
Packs of 10 baits \$5.00, Packs of 25 \$10.00
This new product is getting good reviews from growers interstate who have been using it for some time.

Recently another local member purchased some and put them out in his growing house, after seeing rats and mice damaging his plants. He had some left over and stored them in his shed, inside a sealed plastic bag. After returning from holidays he observed that all baits in his growing house had disappeared, and those in his shed had also been taken. Other types of baits, previously very effective, alongside, had not been touched. Be prepared. Rodents are out there right now, and hungry, and do eat orchid spikes, flowers and all parts of your plants

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Strike Back for Orchids
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Strike Back for Orchids Liquid
Ideal for all potted flowering and fruiting plants - not just orchids. **1L bottle \$10**



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ORGANIC FERTILISERS



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Seamungus Liquid
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Seamungus Green
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- These prices are strictly for members only and are not to be knowingly disclosed to the general public



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**In flower now and may have been shown at the
May meeting
Enzan Summer x Valley Freestyle
Grown by Graham Morris**





**Other members are interested in seeing what plants you have in flower now and in future
Please take photos of plants you have in flower in the months before meetings recommence
And send them to gramorris@optusnet.com.au
They will be judged (by our Judges) and prizes will be awarded**



In flower now and may have been shown at the May meeting.

**First flowering seedling
erythraeum 'Paradise' x *pumilum*
'Album'**

Grown by Graham Morris