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Message from the Group Facilitator: Allan Watson

As we move into 2020 like a lot of us we think up a variety of New Year resolutions and most of them end up as a Tui's or yeah right. "I am not going to buy any more orchids" being one of the most popular.

But what an exciting year 2019 has been in particular for Miltoniopsis;

Miltoniopsis awareness has certainly been on the rise.

There has been an increased international interest in what the NZ Miltoniopsis Group is doing.

Overseas growers wanting to join the group (around 25% group make up)

The International Odontoglossum Alliance web site including our Newsletters on the web.

Been given opportunity to present Mps articles on a number of overseas and business Blogs sites

On the down side our first real attempt at a breeding program failed but those of us involved have learnt some valuable lessons which will be progressively shared. And we have started again with further attempts for 2020.

Having the opportunity to speak to a number of societies around the country has also be a humbling experience but it has allowed us to spread the Mps message further.

Going forward we simply ask for your ongoing support in providing view and comment for this newsletter without input this sort of medium tend to fade and then no one wins as experiences become lost to history.

On a personal note thanks to all that have supported Alan Locke and myself over the past year let us all continue to grow and enjoy what I describe as one of the most enjoyable hobbies of pastimes out there.

Allan W

Editor's Ramble.

Miltoniopsis come into the sorts of publication that generally deal with the success of the contributors and not the plight of those who are either not so successful or suffer out right failure. If you follow the Miltoniopsis and other orchid Facebook pages then you will see many postings about Miltoniopsis that are not performing or that have just up and died.

I want to try and identify the reasons of this lack of success and get these growers onto the road of recovery.

One of the main problems is the New Zealand climate which does not have the extremes of hot or cold experienced by other countries. This leads to complacency—near enough is good enough. In Winter, we allow our Cymbidiums to go down to freezing, while in Britain, because of the colder climate, they need to heat to a minimum of 10 or 12 c. to get them to perform.

Unfortunately, Miltoniopsis will not tolerate these sort of variations from their required conditions and equally, they are quick to show their disapproval by turning up their toes.

So, what do they need.

Minimum Winter Temperatures.

Ideally 15 c. or higher. 10 to 12 is about as low as it is safe to go. Below 10 and you can expect fatalities .

Maximum Summer Temperatures

Ideally not above 25 c. Prolonged periods above this will lead to damaged especially if it is coupled with low humidity .

Humidity

Ideally around 60%. Below 40% (Summer) or above 90% (Winter) will lead to problems.

Watering

These plants need to be damp always . They will not perform well if kept too wet or dry for any extended period, in fact too wet will kill them very quickly.

Fertilizer

Weakly, weekly. Higher nitrogen in time of growth, Lower nitrogen, blossom booster at flowering time. Flush with just water once a month to rid the mix of any surplus salts and fertilizer. Reduce fertilizer in the winter or stop it altogether if your minimum temperatures are below 12 c.

Repotting

Repot after flowering in the Autumn, or, if the plant is looking sick, immediately. Do not over pot especially if the plant is stressed. Go for a pot size that the plant just fits in. For a potting medium, you can use medium bark (no. 3) or fern fibre or sphagnum moss but remember that to keep damp bark will need more water than moss. Fern fibre comes in the middle.

If you meet all the conditions then, you too, should be able to grow top quality plants. If you can't then maybe try growing less challenging .

Good luck and good growing,

Alan

Where did our Miltoniopsis Hybrids come from? A question from a grower's perspective.

Being retired some will say that I have too much time on my hands but I find myself immersed in gaining an understanding of the genera I have become quite passionate about.

This understanding has in my view a priority interest in support of the Mps breeding program we are trying to establish.

As a key point of reference I have used information from Orchid Wiz, various Orchid books and the proceedings from the 1990 World Orchid conference held in New Zealand. The information that follows has been presented under the principle of best endeavor and I hope is of some value to our readers.

One of the earliest Miltoniopsis crosses Miltoniopsis Miss Louisa Fowler (Miltoniopsis vexillaria x Unknown) was registered in 1914 originated by Armstrong /Brown who, where involved with a some 12 Mps hybrids between 1914 and 1956 unfortunately there do not seem to be any photos of their crosses available.

Viewing the records contained in Orchid Wiz there appears to be four serious sources of Hybridizers associated with the breeding of Miltoniopsis.

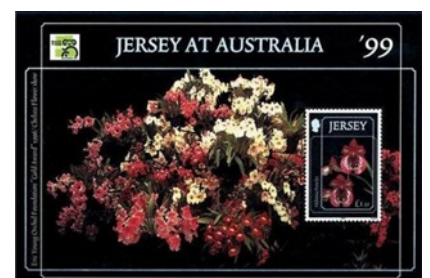
The First coming from **Howard Liebman**, with some 58 registered crosses between 1980 and 2001. Howard Liebman delivered a paper at the 1990 World Orchid conference in New Zealand where he made comment on Mps Hybridisation and the value of Yellow Mps in the Hybridization process. Bearing in mid all his comment was based around personal experience and his own network as at this point Orchid Wiz was not developed. The photo to the left is of: Miltoniopsis Andy Easton (Miltoniopsis Limelight x Miltoniopsis Hamburg) a cross which has received several awards in various countries.



This is Miltoniopsis Newton Falls . This is one of the popular ones that is readily available form New Zealand suppliers and is commonly seen at shows

These two cross are available in New Zealand from either Ninox Orchids or Pottering About.

The second is the **Eric Young Orchid Foundation** with some 200plus registered crosses between 1998 and 2019 unfortunately their crosses do not seem to be available in New Zealand and there are very few photos available. A number the the Eric Young Orchid Foundation crosses appear on stamps associated with the Jersey Isles.



The third appears to come from another American breeder based in Hawaii **I.N.Komoda** who has 100 plus Miltoniopsis registered . Some of the hybrids produced from this breeder have found there way to New Zealand. Here are photos of six of the most popular.



Miltoniopsis Benito Que



Miltoniopsis Drake Will



Miltoniopsis Hajime Ono



Miltoniopsis Maui Sunset



Miltoniopsis Rene Komoda



Miltoniopsis Robert Jackson

As with most hybrids if they are hybridized a number of times variations will happen in particular this can be seen with Miltoniopsis Benito Que, where there can be a strong pink influence as shown in this photo. In my view a better looking flower.



Another Miltoniopsis that produces a number of variations is Miltoniopsis Robert Jackson.

This photo shows Mps Robert Jackson 'Luna Shower', but as we know the most popular one in New Zealand seems to be Mps Robert Jackson 'Wild Thing'

Available from Tuckers Nursery or Pottering About

The fourth being **E. Carlson** who registered (left) Mps. Jean Carlson (right) Mps. Red Tide are two that are available in New Zealand



E. Carlson hybridization started registering Mps in 1981 up till 2014 although he has 50plus Mps registered it does not seem as though he was an influence in the Mps development (Stand to be corrected).

There are obvious a number of other hybridizers out there but not all have shown anywhere near the interest in Miltoniopsis as indicated above.

Closer to home in New Zealand we have not had a lot of Miltoniopsis breeding with the late Ewan Perrott successfully registering 5 crosses between 2005 and 2007 unfortunately there are no photos available of these crosses.

Obviously there are a lot more hybridizers out there and I have only touched the tip of the iceberg, but when you look at the crosses available in New Zealand the opportunity to access some of these crosses is extremely limited. Hence the forth coming focus on an Mps breeding program. Hope to be able to bring you more info in the future.

Allan Watson

You may wondering why this issue is a lot smaller than other issues—reason, a shortage of material

I hope to get the next issue out in early June but that will largely depend on you, the reader.

If you are reading this then it is reasonable to assume that you grow Miltoniopsis and if you do, then you have a story to tell so please put pen to paper and tell us about it and don't forget the photos—a picture is worth a thousand words

I need your input—your views, comments, questions, photos and ideas. In particular, photos of Miltoniopsis in shows or awarded, also how you grow your plants.

Only by sharing can this publication survive.

I need your feedback to know whether what I am producing is what you want and how you think it can be improved—as I am sure it can be. Please let me know what you think.

Please send your contributions to me at lochaven999@gmail.com by or before 1st of June.

Growers Corner

Miltoniopsis season growing under lights [Matthew Lenihan](#)



I supplement with lights in the Winter and Summer. The Miltoniopsis are kept in a bright afternoon sunny window during in summer the light come on for two hours at 7:30am then 30mins on and off till 11am. By the late afternoon they get sunlight through the window. I use some pretty bright LED full spectrum grow lights. In winter I get less afternoon sun so I turn on the lights in the afternoon too. The Miltoniopsis are only inside during the heat of summer and the depths of winter. They are on heat mats during winter. Spring and autumn they grow out on the balcony of my small apartment while the weather favours them. So not all year round under lights.

I see in one picture there appears to be fog suggesting that Matthew is using a fogging machine to increase humidity. Matthew lives in Toowoomba, Queensland Australia and shows the lengths that he has to go to grow these beautiful Orchids.

Editor



Miltoniopsis in New Zealand



[Mike Luong](#) Lives in [Sioux City, Iowa](#) USA

With a new hybrid between Miltoniopsis Breathless and Miltoniopsis Ernest Finney



**Miltoniopsis
Breathless**



**Miltoniopsis
Ernest Finney**



Miltoniopsis Breathless x Ernest Finney

Have you ever thought of hybridizing any of your Miltoniopsis?

Last year with great gusto four of us decided that there was a need to expand the range of Miltoniopsis available in New Zealand by hybridizing local plants as the import restrictions were in our view to excessive. There were some 69 crosses attempted with a strike rate into the pod stage of 62% which as I understand is quite high. A spread sheet program to monitor the pod maturity was established but due to some miss interpretation by the writer I entered the wrong expiry date (picked too soon) and the pods when processed were not fully developed and as such failed to germinate. As well as this issue due to some temp fluctuations we found a number of pods aborted before maturity.

So here we are it is now 2020 another attempt is underway the rest of this article is from my perspective and experience.

So far this growing season I have attempted 21 crosses with a 50% take 2months out from initial pollination. Those that have fallen by the way side have as a result of either stale pollen and or temps that got above 32°C in the hot house causing flowers to wilt and pods that were looking like starting to turn yellow and drop off.

Having communicated with a number of other Hybridizers around the world my concerns and thoughts were confirmed.

Learnings presented:

- Undertake the propagation process as soon as the flower is fully open as this is when the pollen is at its most potent stage. (I was waiting for at least three weeks until all flowers had opened)

- If plants are available undertake the propagation process as early in the season as you can.

- (Temperatures are normally cooler not many hot house temps above 25°C)

- Pod maturity time is around 250 days with possible plus 25 days required dependent on species in cross background. (Time clock on monitoring program based on hearsay had been set on 175 days)

- Verify the pollen before use. If the pollen appears as two black seeds it is no longer viable it should appear as two bright yellow specks.

- Best to take the pollen as soon as the flower opens and if required store in an envelope in the fridge.

- This way the pollen will remain fresh for up to two years where as if left on the plant it deteriorates rapidly.

Good luck and have fun.

Allan Watson