

NZ ODONTOGLOSSUM ALLIANCE

NEWSLETTER

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From the Editor

Sorry Allan Locke, it seems that nobody out there has the spare plants or new varieties for sale you that are seeking. Certainly doesn't look good for the future does it! Try the Summer Display boot sale in New Plymouth. You should find a few plants there on offer! If anyone forgot to send in their free advert this time I will still accept it for the March newsletter!

A circular has arrived from the New Zealand Orchid Society inviting us to take a display area at their 50th anniversary show, to be held at the Ellerslie Convention Centre in Auckland from the 9th to the 13th of September next year. I haven't discussed this with Jane Frear as I know she has been poorly lately but I know she will be enthusiastic about us having a display. Auckland members who are interested should contact her and others can discuss it during the Odont Forum in New Plymouth in a few weeks time.

Once again the popular Summer Display will be on in New Plymouth . Starting Friday night of the 9th January and finishing about 4pm Sunday 11th. Bring your flowering plants along to the Central School and have a fun weekend. Our forum is at 8am Sunday but may move to 8am Saturday. Disa and Masdevallia forums are also planned.

Its that time to thank all contributors, thank Rae James for typing up articles and thank you all for supporting the newsletter with your subs. Seasons Greetings to all. Ron Maunder Editor

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BREEDER'S CORNER

Vale Dr. Don Wimber

Sadly, we recently learned of his passing and extend our condolences to his family and friends. Such an eminently famous plant cell scientist will be sorely missed. He is known to orchid growers from his work in establishing the number of chromosomes in specific clones (including those in our great interest the Odont alliance) so that superior parents or reliable seed producers could be found and used.

More Species Pollen: Our favourite doctor has sent us pollen of the following species :

Odm. praenitens, grande concolor and superbiens

Also seed from the primary hybrids:

Odm. (cristatellum x kegeljanii) and Andersonianum

He requests that the Andersonianum be used on a highly coloured *Odm.crispum* as it is itself a highly coloured cross of *Odm.(crispum x gloriosum*). All requests for this pollen should be sent to Ron during the holiday period.

Here I must make a correction of an item printed earlier wherein I stated that the Odm. cordatum seed sent to us was crossed onto a new variety of cordatum, in fact 'the variety' was new to us in that it was xanthic and Dr. referred to it as 'sulphureum' but of course it was not new in nature. It means that these seedlings will carry xanthic genes in percentage and if we can use the sulphureum pollen on the most likely gene carriers, there should be a small percentage of xanthic seedlings turn up and an even larger

percentage on the third crossing. That is looking at a time span of at least 6 years perhaps longer to reach the third crossing.

Future Uses of Xanthic & Albino: Ron and I had a discussion about this and it was decided to refer to the whites with only a gold mask as Albinos and the yellow background ones with gold patterns as Xanthics. That way all members will know what we are talking about!

I am pleased to report that the piece sent to me from Paul Cable of his *Odm. hallii* 'Verutu' HCC/OCNZ some 5 months ago, won the Roper Cup for best large species and at present is sporting a pod of the brilliant xanthic *Oda*.(Belle Houge Point x Eric Young). This is to test my theory 'Verutu' is so noticeably a yellow green in all its parts that it is just possible it may be an xanthic gene carrier. Like most species it refused its own pollen, also that sent by Ray Thomson of a particularly good Colombian type *hallii*. Alf Day has a good large flowered *hallii* in bloom and I will see if 'Verutu' pollen will take on his plant instead. We are quite short of *hallii* and it would be good if we can produce more seedlings to pass around.

Talking of seedlings I hope there was a response to Alan Locke's letter on the dearth of same. I certainly did my best by sending him some of mine and am willing to share with others who want to try them. Fact is.,unless we exchange among ourselves there doesn't seem to be a strong market for any type of orchid seedlings and that is a shame. We must all keep in mind the Waikato Orchid Society Expo 2000 coming up and this is just the right time to stock up on seedlings to present a whole new range of interesting clones and let our overseas visitors see that we are doing our best in this regard.

Past Glories. When I think of the amazing success of the first International put on by the North Shore Orchid Society at Ellerslie in 1980 and the clear profit of \$35.000 raised and lots of new members gained I am saddened by the lethargic attitudes now met with. One certainty I have is, if any society is going to pull off a 'big one' it will be the Waikato with Expo 2000. Meantime in 1998 there are the NZ Orchid Society celebrations to support and enhance; as NZ's oldest Orchid Society from which sprang most of the newer societies around the north, it is deserving of our best displays. Another 1988 event will be the Charity Spectacular held on the last Sunday in July at the Botanic Gardens, Manurewa. The Odont Alliance did very well with our display last time and expect to do even better with Alf Day's large collection. Alf was in England last year and we did not have first choice of what was available. There would not be anywhere, a more willing worker for Odonts than Alf Day; giving talks around in both islands when asked and putting on displays. Even the Perennial and Bulb Society regularly ask for a display of Alf's odonts to 'flesh' out their Shows in the Eden Gardens. He would be a worthy nomination for the John Easton Award.

This being the last issue for 1997 I hope members can look back and find some item of use to them from the Newsletters. If something extra is wanted a call to Ron would help direct our energies to the right topics.

Meantime, God Bless and a Happy Yuletide to one and all !

Jane Frear Manukau City

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Charles Vuylsteke, Snr and Jnr. Fine Fleur van de Belgische Sierteelt (1867 - 1937)

Here is the second translation from Flemish of a section of the book by Dirk Podevijn about Charles Vuylsteke Snr and Jnr : Fine Fleur van de Belgische Sierteelt (1867 - 1937)

Orchid Hybrids

From 1887 Charles Vuylsteke began successfully hybridising orchids. The first results appeared in 1891. On the 2nd May the chief editor of the Orchid Reveiw, Robert Allen Rolfe of Kew Gardens read an interesting article about Vuysteke's Odontoglossums in the Gardener's Chronicle. Rolfe asked Vuylsteke to send him a few flowers of different plants except Odontoglossum sulphureum which he already had.

In 1892 Vuylsteke bloomed a number of Cyprepedium hybrids - Cyprepedium zampa (Cyprepedium leeanum x hirsutissimum), C erato (sallieri x hirsutissimum) and C Jupiter (boxalli atratum x hirsutissimum), followed a year later by Cyprepedium Eurydice (leeanum superbum x hirsutissimum) C bosscherianum (barbatum superbum x spicerianum) C Eucharis (lawrencianum x chantini), C villosum ' Violaceum' (C villosum x C hirsutissimum), C 'Murillo' (C boxalli x C argus), C 'Zephyr' (C barbatum x C spicerianum).

Charles Vuylsteke also possessed a glasshouse filled with Odontoglossum pescatorei.

Charles de Bosschere from Lier (Belgium) and Public Relations Officer for Vuylsteke was insistent that a sytematic inventory be made of these man made hybrids.

On February 7th of that same year Charles Vuylsteke exhibited a few new plants at the Horticulture Show in Ghent - Amaryllis flammea, a hybrid; Odontoglossum mulus; Holfordianum leriopterum Rchb; Masdevallia ignea aurorea and Masdevallia ignea perfecta, both originating from Columbia, and Odontoglossum alexandrae pulchrum.

In February 1893 de Bosschere who had also worked as a correspondent of the Orchid Reveiw, suggested to Charles Vuylsteke that the Gardeners Chronicle and the Orchid Review run articles about the new Cypripedium hybrids.

He undertook to send a description of two other Cypripedium species to Dr Masters in London and requested that Vuylsteke send him notes about his new varieties of orchids as soon as possible.

Then De Bosschere sent a description to both English magazines.

At exhibitions run by the Royal Horticultural Society in London, Vuylsteke worked with F. Sander of St Albans.

In early March 1893 Vuylsteke sent a new Odontoglossum hybrid to Sander so that he could show it in London.

After the exhibition Sander gave part of the flower to a Mr O'Brien who wrote an article for the Gardeners Chronicle about it. Vuylsteke had asked for it to be given to Kew Gardens. However Sander advised against this because he felt that it would have gone unnoticed amongst the other botanical plants, while an article in the Gardeners Chronicle would have more impact in the horticultural world.

During the Horticultural Exhibition in April 1894 in Ghent, Amyrillis 'Madame Charles de Bosschere' belonging to Vuylsteke was awarded.

During the World Exhibition held in Antwerp in 1894, Charles Vuylsteke exhibited 160 varieties of orchids. He received first prize awarded by the Belgian Queen for this. Never

-the-less the Dutch media thought that Charles Vuylsteke's work was under valued. In the same year he flowered the new Cypripedium loochristianum, a cross between C hookerae and C harrisianum.

In spring 1895 the Gardeners Chronicle announced that Charles Vuylsteke was the first person in Belgium to breed Odontoglossum hybrids.

The Odontioda

Charles Vuylsteke's presence at the Temple Show on 31 May 1904 had a huge impact. He exhibited a raceme of flowers of Odontioda vuylstekeae, the result of a cross between Odontoglossum pescatorei (syn Odontoglossum nobile) with the orange spotted Cochlioda noeztliana - a cross which had seemed impossible for a long time. This new flower got a first grade certificate and a silver Lindley Medal.

The production of this striking cross, apart from any value it might have had either as a botanical or a decorative orchid, showed admirable skill on the part of Vuylsteke. He undoubtedly valued the Odontioda far above any other of the valuable orchids in his possession.

Never before had such a distinction been given to a cut flower by the Royal Horticltural Society. The British newspapers were also full of praise for the flower.

In the same year Charles Vuylsteke presented Odontoglossum percultum, a hybrid derived from Odontoglossum rolfeae crossed with Odontoglossum ardentissimum, Odontoglossum venustulum and Odontoglossum concinnum laetum.

At the Temple Show in 1905 Charles Vuylsteke exhibited Odontoglossum amabile "Ixion' and Odontoglossum lawrencianum ' Adonis' .

This first plant was mentioned in the British press as " the most famous orchid, probably the most famous plant at the Temple show".

Odontoglossum vuylstekeae was exhibited for the first time in the Hall at Westminster on the 7th November 1905. This plant received a first class certificate. The Gardener's Chronicle wrote that the flowers of this hybrid were the biggest, the best shaped with the best colouring of all the known hybrids. Again the British Press agreed unanimously. The Standard reported that Vuylsteke refused two offers each of 500 - the asking price was double!

A year later Vuylsteke succeeded in flowering another Odontioda with 32 flowers on one raceme.

Charles Vuylsteke's presence at the Temple Show in 1906 didn't go unnoticed by the American Magazine 'The Weekly Florist Reveiw".

They wrote " The temple Show is always 'the Show of the year'. All expert trade growers exhibit there and it may be of benefit to American growers to know the names of the top trade specialists in each particular line. Commencing with orchids, which form by far the greatest attraction, Sander & Son, St Albans; were showing the finest in all varieties, but Ch. Vuylsteke, Loochristi, Ghent, Belgium, showed probably the best Odontoglossums of various types."

In the spring of 1911 hybrid cultivation leapt ahead thanks to Charlesworth and Vuylsteke who bred Odontioda 'Sensation'.

to be continued

Heather & Alois Verstraeten Nelson

HOW I GROW ONE GOOD MILTONIA

Miltonia Clive Halls 'Jessica Mary'

Every 2 years or so I decide to try a new genus. I am enthused by reading, visiting shows and attending judging seminars. I was heading out to Ngai Tawa College Judges seminar in 1993 when we discovered orchids for sale at a garden centre near Bulls. A few North Island commercial growers had got together to sell plants to whoever was passing. I told Pat Elms I needed a Miltonia, any Miltonia, to practice on, a plant was found and bought. It had to be a seedling, of sturdy disposition, and a forgiving nature.

Milt. vexillaria 'Beenak' x Milt.James Iver Mattson 'Cherryvale' grew quite well and threw one inflorescence with four flowers that year. In 1994 two inflorescences with eight flowers. In 1995 there were three inflorescences with sixteen flowers. 2 of 6 and 1 of four. Good year that one! It was awarded a low AM/OCNZ and from there was named Orchid of the Year 1995. I asked Clive Halls if I could name it for him as he was the busy toothpick involved. It made two forward growths that year.

In 1996 there were two inflorescences with eight flowers, resting on its laurels? or no need to impress anyone any more? In 1997 there are 2 inflorescences with ? flowers. It seems that when it threw two forward growths its energies were directed that way rather than into flowers

My growing regime is as follows, I am not an expert, but this is how it works for me:-

House:-is built from twin wall polycarbonate, lined with agphane and lined again with 50% shadecloth on the whole of the roof and North and East walls.

Benches:- are open mesh at about 60cm height.

Potting Mix:-straight bark, small chunky bits that go through 10mm mesh, with no additives other than a lime soak to sweeten it a little.

Watering:- by automatic drip system

May - July		1	30min.	block morning,	
August - October		2 or 3	30min.	blocks	
November - December		3 or 4	30 min.	. blocks	
January - February 5		30 min. blocks		S	
March - May	2 or 3		30 min. blocks	S	

Each block allows 150mls through. I don't lose too many plants to rot, the cattleyas love it and also do well.

Food:-very weak, every second day and a different NPK plus trace elements each time, as long as the sun is shining and the interior temperature is about 20 degrees or more.

Light:-as bright as possible, so as to have light green leaves without burning.

Temperature:-16 degrees minimum all year, in Christchurch. This means thermostat controlled heating in winter. The Phalaenopsis suffer a bit, the cattleyas enjoy it, and everything else tolerates the conditions. In summer the vent opens automatically at 230-240C, the walls slide aside and during north-westerly conditions everything gets a cool shower at least once a day.

Air Movement:- as well as two fans at their lowest speed running 24 hours a day all year, there is an expelair fan (not automatic).

Humidity:- sits at 60% to 70% for 90% of the year. During nor-westers the humidity can drop to 20%, so I damp down frequently to try and raise it.

These conditions apply to my glasshouse in my city, yours will be different and you will have to adjust accordingly.

When thinking about this article I realised that I was lucky to have sought advice from the right people and ended up with a great plant. (Footnote: Clive Halls thinks that the Milt. vexillaria that he used may have been a tetraploid and so according to Sod's Law has since died.

Christchurch

TOURING ABOUT IN SOUTH AMERICA

(with occasional glimpses of orchids) IV: Brazil Amazon Idyll (part ii)

The next day, after detouring to feed pineapple slices to some monkeys resident in a clump of trees across from the lodge apparently forming an island but on closer inspection actually just growing straight up out of the water, we set off in the boat upstream for some distance, gliding along beautifully tranquil stretches of water which perfectly mirrored the images of the bush and vegetation overhead. We landed, and were taken for a leisurely walk in the forest. Although one of the crew from the boat was sensibly dressed in shorts, we had been instructed to wear trousers, and the high humidity, perfectly tolerable while moving in the open air on the water, became very oppressive and uncomfortable on land. The walk however was full of interest; and although the vegetation was totally different, and the temperature and humidity were very different too, yet it felt as if I could just as easily have been on a walk anywhere in the bush back here in New Zealand. Part of the fascination was that many of the plants growing here in the wild were things that people pay lots of money for, as potted treasures from a garden centre. One member of our party who was a professional nurseryman was absolutely in his element.

Max found the outer shell of a brazil nut fruit, an exceedingly hard shell about 20 centimetres (8 inches) diameter, each one of which contains 14 or 15 of the triangular cross sectioned segments that we recognize as brazil nuts. Something else which Max demonstrated to us was the jungle water pipe. He cut a section about 1_ metres long of a particular vine hanging down from a tree. The vine was about 10 centimetres (4 inches) diameter. Max severed the vine first at about shoulder height above the ground and then at a lower point. The cut section was about 1_ metres long, and when he shook it it sounded full of fluid, like a bottle. He sharpened one end of the section rather like a pencil, and when he held the section vertically a considerable quantity of perfectly potable water flowed from the point. We all enjoyed a somewhat novel drink. When I put my ear to the cut end of the remaining section of the vine I could hear the air being sucked in at the cut, as the remaining fluid was sucked at a tremendous rate to the top of the vine many metres high overhead in the jungle canopy.

We returned to base for lunch and then a siesta for those so *re*clined, or for several of us a couple of hours swimming, or at least immersed in the river right beside the platform extending out from the bar area. The water was most agreeable and we passed a very pleasant time, chatting to one or two of the other guests. No, we were not attacked by piranhas or any other nasties!

I discovered that the water around here is apparently slightly acidic, sufficiently so to discourage piranha and also discourage mosquitoes and the tropical fevers which mosquitoes can bring.

From a pamphlet we learn that the term "rain forest" describes forests that grow in constant humid conditions. They occur wherever the annual rainfall is above 2000 mm (80 inches) even if it is spread throughout the year, at rather high temperatures, above 20 degrees C. The main characteristic of the humid dense forest is the fact that plants congregate in groups organised in a distinctive manner within the ecosystem. Average total height in the Amazon forest ranges from 30 to 40 metres. The forest canopy is frequently discontinuous, giving space for forest vegetation types. There are several forest types: terra firme, varzea, iguapó, and catinga. We shall meet the terra firme and iguapó forest types.

Terra firme forest has tall trees, occupying slightly elevated flat or hilly plateaus (even this far inland, 60 to 200 metres above sea level) not subject to flooding. In general, there is no clear dominance of any particular tree species.

The iguapó forest is permanently flooded lowland forest, sometimes found in the middle of upland forests. All the trees here are adapted to a long period of submersion of their roots and lower trunks, at least six months and up to twelve months.

In the middle of the afternoon we again took to our boat, to some of the flooded forest areas nearby. It was quite magical to glide slowly through tranquil waters, the glassy surface giving a clear mirror reflection of the trees overhead.

Bare trunks, up to about half a metre in diameter but commonly less and often considerable less than that, emerged from the water bolt upright or at varying angles, and then higher up branched out in normal fashion. In general, the canopy here was probably about 10+ metres above our heads, forming the most delicate natural fan vaulting as if the interior of an enormous cathedral. As our eyes became accustomed to what to look for and where, we began to notice numbers of orchid plants, frustratingly far beyond our reach. Probably just as well! Only one problem, none of them were in flower. Everyone said "you should have been here two months ago!". It seems therefore that the main flowering season here is probably June-July. Most of the plants which we saw appeared to be of the cattleya family.

We emerged into more open areas, and pushed through floating grasslike mats into a large pond where there was much and varied bird life which kept the video camera-toting members of our party very considerably occupied for some time. Near the edge of this area we came up to one tree the crotch of which was thickly encrusted with quite large orchid plants. Most of the pseudobulbs each sported a long stem with seed capsules at the end. I guess these may have been laelia or encyclia. Elsewhere another tree, species not identified to us, was conspicuous with its covering of (its own) flowers of the most delicate pale lavender.

Max then had the boat driver speed us away to another part of the river system, a junction of two rivers, and here we stopped for a while and went fishing! That is to say, one or two of our party actually succeeded in catching a fish or two, red piranha, only 15 cm long, with the most vicious looking little mouths on them, about the size of a man's thumb nail, with narrow teeth grouped closely together, each tooth being barbed like a fish hook. There were plenty of nibbles at the end of my line, but all I succeeded in doing was feeding whatever was down there! While we were at this spot we were treated to the sight of several fresh water dolphins breaking the surface, but they did not seem to be friendly or playful or inquisitive as many of their salt water cousins are.

Next morning, all too soon, we had to return by the same means by which we came to this lovely place: fast boat, dusty road, and slow boat, back across the `meeting of the waters', to Manaus, where we arrived in the early afternoon, and were transferred to a *very* up-market hotel a little distance on the other side of the city, on the way towards the airport. As we checked in, I noticed that the listed price of the grandest suite was about USD \$3,500 per day. We were not offered accommodation in the grandest suite ... ! (Actually, I believe I much preferred the simpler style of the floating lodge we had just left.) However, the hotel was possessed of a very fine swimming pool and lido area beside it, which I made considerable use of. In this tropical humidity it was most pleasant to alternate between lying in the pool, and lying on a deck chair nearby, supping a deliciously cool beer or two. Oh, the hardship! Strangely enough, here, almost on the equator, the nicest beer was one called after the farthest distance away, `Antarctica'!

Later in the day came an exploration of the extensive grounds of the hotel, which boasted a mini-zoo, and something called an `orchidery'. Both were really rather pathetic. The `orchidery' (what a misnomer) consisted of a large flat expanse of some sort of shading material supported quite high on poles. Much of the space beneath, where there were some benches and other stands, was empty. There were some potted shrubs. Eventually, I found precisely *three* orchid plants in the orchidery. They were slabmounted, and hanging high up, under the roof. Only one of them bore a few flowers, which later I identified from my pocket `Golden Guide' as a Galeandra. The mini-zoo had quite a number of colourful birds, including various gaudy-hued parrots, comical toucans with their prodigiously over-sized beaks, some representatives of the alligator family, and sundry `big cat' types (according to the labels) but they were not to be seen, sensibly asleep in their quarters. But the walking paths around the ground were pleasant, and when that activity palled there was a shopping arcade for those inclined to go shopping.

In separate pools around the lido were some victoria regia lilies, their flowers opening pure white for just one night, and by morning collapsed and flushed strong deep pink. At the far end of the swimming pool were two artificial waterfalls, flat sheets of cascading water; and nearby were a number of troughs a metre or so deep, that at first seemed to be empty, but after a while you realised that those were not rocks or boulders at the bottom, they were turtles.

Max had returned with us to Manaus to take part in an international travel symposium and exhibition taking place at our hotel, and next morning he was able to arrange a mini-tour of the city for us. Highlights were the Mercado Municipal, and the Teatro Amazonas. The first of these, ('City Market') is located beside the river, a large sprawling building containing many stalls selling produce and articles of all kinds. Apart from fruit and veg (including the biggest bananas I have ever seen) there were all sorts of bottled condiments pickles and sauces, made from herbs, roots, and who knows what else besides; and a huge fresh-fish area. The variety of types of fish was amazing, all so far as I know of fresh-water origin. Nearby, many boats were pulled up against the river shore, and they were busy loading and unloading their cargoes. The passenger boats Max called `water buses'.

Some distance away stands the Teatro Amazonas, a most magnificent anachronism in the middle of equatorial Brazil. It's an opera house, built in Italian Renaissance style at the height of the rubber boom, in 1896, so this was its centenary year. It was renovated just a few years ago. Of its kind, it is quite a beautiful building. But I tried to visualise what a night at the opera here a century ago must have been like. Imagine all those Victorian-style gowns and white-tie-and-tails in that sweltering heat and humidity. Patrons' dress today might be different, but the ventilation remains just the same. The

acoustics however seemed tolerably good. A modern percussion ensemble was set up on the stage, so it's a reasonable guess that the theatre today is a venue for more than just opera. Upstairs above the entrance hall, and giving onto the colonnaded balcony, was a richly decorated, mirrored, parquet-floored reception salon, the size of a decent ballroom, ideal one would think for champagne suppers during the intervals.

And now, it was time to fly back to Rio (and by the way, the Brazilian airline, Varig, ranks high on my list for comfort and service) to rejoin our colleagues. From studying the newspaper during the flight: Even in this part of the world there were items about Chas & Di & Co; evidently Brazilians lap up their share of `news' about the British royals. And there was one article which I think was advocating chocolate as an aid to slimming (or did I miss something in the `translation'?).

Chris Hubbert Auckland

Illustrations

1 Guide Max firmly holding a 2 ft cayman which he had caught barehanded in a tributary of the Amazon. Photo Chris Hubbert.

2 Odontoglossum lacerum. Owned by John Campbell, Christchurch.

- 3 Odm. williamsianum. Two spikes with ten or more large flowers on each. This attractive species is rare in NZ. Most plants seen here with this name are Odm grande, a close relative which has fewer and much larger flowers. These two species and the other members of this group - Odm. schlieperianum and elegans, are from Central America and sometimes called Rossioglossums.
- 4 Odm. hallii x Odcdm. Tigersun. A first flowering seedling with much promise bred and photographed by Kevin and Lyn Sherlock, Manakau South.
- 5 Odm. cordatum var sulphureum. This is a photo of the rare xanthic form of the normally chocolate and yellow species from Central America discussed by Jane Frear.
- 6 Odm. grande var concolor. A very rare xanthic form of the species. This and the plant above are owned by Dr Guido. Any reader with pollen available from another plant of either of these two rare species is asked to contact us so seedlings can be raised to save these plants from extinction.



1 A baby cayman - Amazon River



2 Odm. lacerum - Ecuador



3 Odm. williamsianum



5 Odm. cordatum var sulphureum



4 Odm. hallii x Odcdm. Tigersun



6 Odm. grande var concolor