

NEWSLETTER
APRIL 2000



Edited by:
Susan Tucker
30 Pupuke Road
Takapuna
Auckland
New Zealand

From the Editor

Welcome to the new millennium and a new editor. Hi there, my name is Susan Tucker and I have taken over from Ron Maunder as the new Odontoglossum Alliance newsletter editor.

Firstly, a little about me. I am in my early to mid 30's and married to Ross Tucker whom most of you already know. I am a beginner when it comes to growing orchids. When I first met Ross about five years ago, I had just two cymbidiums to my name that hadn't re-flowered since I originally purchased them in flower. I can now grow orchids fractionally better - I can actually get them to flower for me now! My knowledge really only extends to being able to sell them to people who know less about orchids than I do. I do hope to be able to learn a lot about Odontoglossums and their allied genera by doing the editing of this newsletter.

I'll be bringing in some new and exciting ideas in the hope that it would be of more interest across the broad range of experience we have in the group. If you have other ideas, please let me know. Some ideas that I have are:-

- A question and answer section where you can submit a question you would like answered. This would be published inviting readers to answer. The answers would get printed in the next edition. If no answers are forthcoming from the readers I will endeavour to get them answered by an expert.
- A pride and joy section where you can submit a photograph of your plant together with a brief paragraph about it. The photos will hopefully be returned with your next newsletter.

- A book review column. This will review old and new books. The first review is included in this edition. If you have any books that you have read and would like to share your views, then please put pen to paper and write a small item for this column. As you can see, you don't need to make it too long, say 200 words.

I also hope to increase awareness of the group's existence by doing a recruitment drive through the many societies around the country. Maybe, if all goes well, I may even be able to extend the interest to overseas - we already have a few internationals subscribing to the newsletter.

Now, on to that nasty housekeeping subject, subscriptions. Good news, I will be keeping them at their current rate. I will, however, need them to be paid by the end of June as the coffers are empty and I won't be able to produce another edition without the subs. I hope to be able to increase the size of the newsletter as the membership increases and funds are raised and meanwhile keeping the subs down.

You have all received copies of the US Odontoglossum Alliance newsletters. If you would like to continue receiving them as well as the NZ edition please let me know on the enclosed subscription form.

And lastly, but not least, I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to Ron for all his years of hard work towards the Odontoglossum Alliance. His efforts have had a major impact in creating a bond and unity between growers in the Alliance.

'Til next time,
Susan Tucker.

From the Past Editor

It was gratifying to receive a belated offer at the Taranaki Summer Display in January from Susan Tucker of Tuckers Orchids, Auckland to take over editing and production of the NZOA Newsletter. I'm sure she will be the catalyst to getting it up and running again after its year in recess. Thank you Susan. I wish you all the best and appeal to former members to give you enthusiastic support with renewed subscriptions and lots of articles. Good luck.

Ron Maunder

The Story of *Odontoglossum Harryanum*

by Frederick Boyle

(continued from December 1998 issue)

Don Filipe was absent when he arrived - a fortunate chance, perhaps. Meantime Kerbach entertained the ladies, played with the children, and made himself agreeable. The haciendero found him seated at the piano, and applauded with the rest.

But his face changed when they got to business. Kerbach opened with flattering remarks upon the wealth of the country and its prospects. Don Filipe purred with satisfaction. Gradually he worked round to orchids. Don Filipe ceased to purr, and he hastily begged leave to visit the cacao plantation. As they rode through the sheltering woods Kerbach looked at him sharply. It was too late for flowers, but the growth of the

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The trouble must be faced, and after dinner Kerbach explained his object, as gently as he could. The planter flamed out at once, dropped his Castilian manners, and vowed he would shoot any man found gathering orchids on his estate. Kerbach withdrew. Next day he visited two other hacienaderos of the district. But Don Filipe had preceded him. Less rudely but with equal firmness the landowners forbade him to collect on their property.

A brief explanation is needed. In those parts of South America, where the value of orchids is known to every child, a regular system has been introduced long since. As a rule almost invariable, the woods belong to someone, however far from a settlement. With this personage the collector must negotiate a lease, as it is called, a formal document, stamped and registered, which gives him authority to cut down trees - for the peons will not climb. At the beginning, doubtless, they shrewdly perceived that to fell a stout trunk would pay them infinitely better - since they receive a daily wage - than to strip it, besides the annoyance from insects and the risk from snakes which they elude. At the present time this usage has become fixed.

(Boyle notes - Two or three years ago, however, the Government of New Granada made a law forbidding such destruction of trees - a measure which has happily reduce the output of orchids, since the natives are unwilling to climb for them.)

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explored the country at a distance and found nothing. It was necessary to come to terms with Don Filipe at any cost or abandon the enterprise. Meantime letters reached Amalfi describing the new *Odontoglossum*, with a picture showing the foliage. It was that he had found. The treasure hung within reach, and a pig-headed Indian forbade him to grasp it.

In such a difficulty one applies to the Cura. Kerbach paid this gentleman a visit. A tall, stout, good-natured ecclesiastic was he, willing to help a stranger, perhaps, even though unprovided with the dollars which Kerbach offered 'for the poor', if his mediation proved successful. The Cura made the attempt and failed signally. It was useless to try again. The good man begged ten dollars, or five, or one, upon the ground that he had done his best. But Kerbach in despair was not inclined for charity. The Cura sighed, hesitated, tossed off a glass of *agaurdiente* and proposed another way.

'This is a wicked country, sir,' he said. 'Ah! very wicked. And the wickedest people in it have a proverb which I shudder to repeat. But your case is hard. Well, sir, they say (heaven forgive them and me!), "If the saints won't hear you, take your prayer to the devil." Horrible, isn't it?'

'Horrible !' said Kerbach. 'But I don't know where to find the devil.'

'Yours is a pious country I have heard, though not Christian. In this wicked land even children could tell you where to seek him. Now, you will give me a trifle for my poor?' And held out his hand.

'But I am not acquainted with any children. Your reverence must really be more explicit.'

'Bother !' exclaimed his reverence, or some Spanish equivalent.

'Well, you will pay me the fifty dollars promised?'

'Twenty! When Don Filipe signs the lease.'

'And all incidental expenses? Then my sacristan will call on you tomorrow. Never talk to me again of your impious projects, sir.'

The sacristan was very business-like. He demanded a dollar to begin with for the Indian who would work the charm, and another dollar for himself to pay for the masses which would expiate his sin. Kerbach asked details, which were given quite frankly. The wizard was a respectable person-attended church, and so forth. The sacristan had talked matters over with him and neither doubted of success. Kerbach must write a letter to Don Filipe's wife begging her to intercede. The wizard having charmed that document before presenting it, she would be compelled to grant its request. If the planter should still refuse, a curse would be launched against him. And he could not dare resist that.

The man was so serious, he explained himself in such a matter-of-fact tone, that Kerbach, laughing, risked two dollars on the chance. With the letter in his pocket the sacristan departed. Two days later he returned. Don Filipe was willing to negotiate the lease. Kerbach was so delighted that he never thought of asking whether the lady's gentle influence or the terrors of the curse had persuaded him. Thus *Odontoglossum Harryanum* was found, to the eternal glory of Roezl".

(extracted from "The Woodlands Orchids" by Frederick Boyle 1901 - final of two parts.)

Selling Orchids is Hard Work!

Ron Maunder, Tauranga

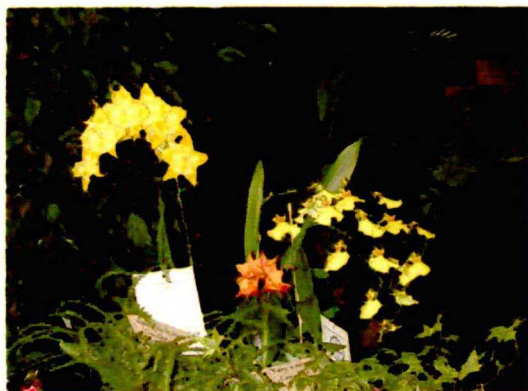
Just returned from selling orchids at a show in Germany. Susan has asked for a short piece so I'll try to keep it so. It certainly won't be a four or five episode epistle like in the past as I didn't visit nurseries this time round. I came back with lots of thoughts, new friends and even orders but have decided I'd rather live in our climate here. A few days in Sydney to thaw out on my way home and hearing about the orchid selling scene there didn't warm me enough to think of joining the Kiwi drift westward to the "Hard Country".

The germs of an idea for this trip go back a couple of years when I agreed to go talk in NSW at a show. Last minute I was told an article was needed. Wanted in 4 days so it could promote their show in one of their national magazines!. Not long after my return home from NSW the editor of a German orchid magazine wrote for permission to copy the article for his magazine. Editors sure get desperate Susan! You'll find out!

I turned him down saying that I could do much better if I rewrote the article in my leisure. I had thus committed myself. After about a year he finally got my article but he was soon back looking for another story about the bits I'd cut out! As bait he said he could get me invited to sell at a big show in Germany and put my article out the week beforehand in his magazine! When he told me the stall rate was only \$NZ350 and that there were usually 40,000 people going through the show I was definitely interested!

"Me no spreche the Deutsch", I told him but he kept emailing saying "English works" so I agreed to go and it turned out that 44,000 people went through the show there in 4 days!





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