

THE NZ ODONTOGLOSSUM ALLIANCE



NEWSLETTER

Volume 5 Number 2
June 1994

FROM THE EDITOR:

In recent days weather has been a feature of the news in the north at least. Auckland desperately short of water and with hosing bans. Spectacular thunder and lightning storms with flooding and whole areas of electricity cut by falling trees and so on. We lost trees and roofing and down the road phones and faxes were "cooked" by power lines falling on telephone wires. Pumps and other appliances were affected by low phase power. Kiwi fruit packhouses stopped by powercuts and wet fruit. It's times like this when you find out how good your insurance really is! Actually winter really hasn't struck in my part of the woods and the intermediate house has rarely needed heating at night to keep it at 10°C. I guess down in the south it is snow and frost as usual?

In this issue we hear from Eileen Griffiths from N.S.W. who nearly lost her collection in the bushfires during summer. I'm sure her unorthodox potting mix will get the experimenters going.

We can now offer four crosses of Odont Alliance mini flasks, now they are at the protocorm stage. Order now pay later. Perhaps 12 months away! Any surplus from these will go towards the colour page, future overseas speakers and keeping subs down.

Note that Ray Thomson is coming over in July — not June. Please support his meetings with car loads of Odont and Masdevallia enthusiasts. He is really enthusiastic about saving the Ecuadorean species and has magnificent slides of the habitat and plants. Read his June articles in "Orchids Australia" and "Australian Orchid Review" if you don't believe me! Our grateful thanks to those members and clubs who are hosting his visit and paying airfares etc. There will be flasks for raffle and for sale at most venues. I will make sure he shares them out! We are underwriting his main fare but hope your contributions will reduce the cost.

Alan Locke is not getting much feedback on how the "species project" plants survived. Is no news "good news" or "bad news"? Thanks to Val Warren for *Odm.harryanum* seed and photos from Paul Cable, Jane Frear and Nick Miller in the past. Cathy Hine reports her *Odm.coronarium* is in spike so if any overseas members or readers can supply pollen please send it urgently. Of course the plant should be checked visually for leaf streaks, patterns or necrotic marks which could indicate virus infection! We hope to have something about this striking plant with its hard to flower reputation and climbing growth plus a photo — in an upcoming issue.

Another Australian visitor may be over soon and has agreed to give 2 or 3 talks. We will get someone in your area to set up a meeting if you are lucky enough to have him in your area.

We have one spare Odontoglossum Reference Book available for \$55. This gives all hybrids with Odontoglossum blood from the 1800's to 1990 — plus AOS awards.

Please send in articles, photos, suggestions for articles or ask for a questionnaire to help us make your answers into a story for us — from you!

Ron Maunder (Editor)
P.O.Box 2107
Tauranga
Ph.(07)5525570

Species Bonds.

Members who hold species bonds did not receive "interest" plants last year. We apologise for this oversight and advise that these will be distributed at either the Auckland or Palmerston North meeting next month. Others will be posted out later. Funds are available should any species bond holder wish to withdraw.

Odm. Maharanee Again!

Whatever I write here is still speculation based on the known characteristics of *Odm. Maharanee* but I will list them in the hope they jog the memories of other orchid growers who may be able to add light on the vexed question — is the bright red colour in *Odm. Maharanee* flowers permissible in an *Odontoglossum* or not?

Meantime, I have written to the RHS Registrar asking for the description of flowers etc., given by Sanders when *Maharanee* was registered as a cross in 1925. Also requested was a description of any *Maharanee* clone that may have been painted an R.H.S. official artist.

To start with, does anyone know the parentage of *Brugensis*? listed in the 1929 imports (see last issue) as unregistered. If we are considering switched labels, *Oda. Brugensis* is one possibility as are *Oda. Lady Patricia Ramsay* and *Oda. Beryl*. My *Odm. Maharanee* 'Charlotte' is small to medium in both leaves and pseudobulbs, green tinged yellow in colour. The plant has a curious habit of self dividing on a regular basis. Alan Lewington tells me that his *Oda. Arlington* '?' does the same thing and has given me a plant to check out as it grows. Curiously the leaves and bulbs are greenish yellow and bear a marked resemblance to *O. Maharanee*, so I await its flowering with interest. Especially as *Oda. Arlington* 'Jane' in my possession for 5 years is nothing like Alan's clone, being dark green leaved and the elongated bulbs entirely different and it has never self divided.

Whatever *Maharanee*'s parents turn out to be, there has to be yellow blood in there somewhere. Too many of the *Oda. Trixmahnee* seedlings show yellow, tan, ginger and even one all over dark brown and these colours certainly did not come from the *Oda. Trixon* parent, bred for red for generations back! I am keen to resolve this issue for a very good reason. There are at least 42 pods, in flask, or on *Oda. Trixmahnee* seedlings, up and down this country right now!

Jane Frear
Auckland

NZ ODONTOGLOSSUM ALLIANCE FLASKS

The following crosses are presently available as protocorms and will be made up to hobby flasks by the lab — 10 plants per flask \$25, which includes postage if needed. Flasks will take at least 12 months. Send orders only to Alan Locke, R.D.7, Te Awamutu (no payment). First in ensures flasks, where numbers available are insufficient. No limit.

94/1 — *Alexanderara* Hec Hazelwood x *Oda. Saint Clement* 'Lacy' AM/OCNZ
— this is expected to give vigorous *Alexanderaras* with bright
— markings.

94/2 — *Oda. Hallaga* x *Oda. Helen* and *Irene*
— expect patterns and purples. These are Dugger seedling
— parents.

94/3 — *Odm. harryanum* x self
— at last the real McCoy! see Vol.4 No.1 for photo — 15 fls!

94/4 — *Odm. Megaglossum* x *Odm. Moselle* 'Moxham'
bright yellows with brown markings.

BUSHFIRES AND HORSES — IN AUSTRALIA

The following is extracted from two letters received from an Australian member living on the south coast of NSW.

Thank you for those kind thoughts about the horrendous bush fires earlier in the year. Ulladulla was fortunate to miss out but of course fires were raging either side of us in forest areas — in a couple of instances right down to the sea. Houses and property were lost of course but no human lives in our southern area. The very sad part about it all was that a lot of these fires round here were deliberately started. How could people do such a thing!

My orchids weren't affected by the fires but those very hot gale-force westerly winds were another matter. With temperatures in the high 30's everyday it was bad enough but those winds made life difficult for me as well as the plants. The leaves were hot to touch during the day and it did occur to me that I might lose the collection of Odonts and Miltoniopsis. I watered early every morning and again late at night until everything was saturated. I hosed over the roof of the shadehouse every couple of hours during the day.

All plants survived although the leaves have since turned yellow and tatty and I've had to cut them off. I do believe that the medium of horse manure that was used to pot the plants did help to keep them alive by keeping the roots wet all day. A bark mix I'm sure would have dried them out a lot more.

Now to my adventures of growing in horse manure. Yes it was started by the Scottsdale Orchid Society in Tasmania. I believe it has been used there as a mix for cymbidiums for about 15 years. I was interested in articles in the "Orchids Australia" magazine June 1990 and December 1992. They have slides available of how to grow in horse manure in a glasshouse. I wrote to a Rex Johnson — Scottsdale Orchid Soc, Hollybank Apiary, Underwood, Tasmania(Australia)7268 for the use of the slides. All my orchids are grown in a shadehouse and they do well in the horse manure mix. I have about 600 Australian native, Cattleyas, Paphs., Cymbids and Odonts all growing very well after 2 years of growing this way. Shiny green bulbs, no wrinkles and lots of new leads.

The manure I use is picked up from horse paddocks or stables and is available over the street for \$2 a bag. It is a balanced food (NPK 6:3:3) and is mixed 50/50 with straw. I try to use it wet and because it is all fibre it never gets sloppy. It does break down fairly quickly but the roots get down to the bottom of the pot quickly and repotting is really easy — just put it in as it comes with small lumps not big ones. For small pots I break it up a lot finer. No more fertilizer is required as every time you water the plant gets some food. What could be more natural?

The orchids will need repotting or potting on every year — sometimes twice a year for small pots. I like to pack the manure in quite firmly and place the plants on a small mound above the rim of the pot. Keep the roots firmly in the manure but the bulbs on top. Then I put about 2" of sphagnum moss over the top to keep the roots cool and damp. If the moss keeps green on top the environment is good. The Scottsdale O.S. use urine too but I haven't gone into that!

The roots of the plant must be kept wet. The easiest way to do this is with a drip or trickle irrigation system — I use the hose. Overhead watering during winter can cause fungal infection if the foliage stays wet for too long. Therefore during winter the plants need overhead protection. From 15th May to early August I give no overhead watering to keep the humidity down but water the pots everyday the sun is shining brightly. About October the plants can be moved out into a more open position. During summer watering until the water pours out of the bottom is necessary. They love overhead watering during summer.

I use squat pots of all sizes, not clay. I don't put anything in the bottom but styrene chunks could be useful and I'm thinking about trying styrobeads with the manure and straw mix.

It's a pity you can't come over and see how well the plants are doing. Perhaps some of the members will give this method a try and get as much fun out of it as I do!

Eileen Griffith
Ulladulla, NSW

Ray Thomson's visit-July 12th to 20th

Ray Thomson's visit has been delayed until July because the June date clashed with the OCNZ AGM in Palmerston North. Unfortunately it now clashes with those going on the Darwin conference trip, but because Ray returns to Ecuador next month we have no other options.

Ray will be giving two lectures while in N.Z. and most meetings will try to combine these - providing time and his voice permits.

The first talk will be of a more general nature - on Ecuador, its climate, orchids and their habitat and the Odontoglossum Alliance in particular. The second will be on Masdevallias. Don't miss these excellent talks and slides! Please encourage your friends to make up a carload and come along. We hope these meetings are well supported as other speakers are being considered for the future. Ray's itinerary is as follows:-

Wednesday 13th July - Auckland Contact Joe Vance (09)6258759
Venue - Fickling Centre, Three Kings. 730pm sharp!

Thursday 14th July - Tauranga Contact Ron Maunder (07)5525570
Venue - Wesley Hall, 13th Avenue, Tauranga. 730pm

Saturday 16th July - Palmerston North Contact Tom Stonely
(06)3236563
Venue - Salvation Army Church Hall
cnr Princess & Church Streets. 10am-4pm
Please bring finger food for a shared lunch
Door charge - no raffle

Monday 18th July - Wellington - Capital City Orchid Society
normal monthly meeting and venue.

Tuesday 19th July - Nelson - Gillian Lyster (03)5476743
normal monthly meeting and venue.

Wednesday 20th July - Christchurch - Ellen Manson (03)3894586
special meeting and venue. Enquire.

Those travelling from outlying areas should check with the contact beforehand - in case of change or cancellation.

The 14th WOC and more - Part 5

We awoke to the sound of busy activity on board the Beauport. It was daybreak and making my way up on deck I found we had berthed in Guernsey. We had a leisurely breakfast while the ship sailed for another hour or so on to Jersey, which we reached just after 8am. It was fascinating to see the industrious cableless tractor units disappearing into the ship like ants and bringing out the trailer units of various mainland transport companies and others loaded with sea-containers.

We made our way ashore and across carparks to another wharf where a phonecall to the Eric Young Foundation established that grower Martin Ahring was off sick and we would need to find our own way to the nursery. It was my turn to drive so I went off and hired a rental for the day. Time was running short for us. I was due at a barbeque in Belgium that night, while L&R were flying out of Frankfurt in Germany at 11am the day after next! We had come from the other side of the world so we had to visit this orchid "mecca" while we were so close - even if we missed out on some of the other places of interest in Europe.

I set off driving on "our" side of the road - as one would normally do in UK, Oz, Japan or back home. Surprising, considering the strong French influence on the island. We had a tourist map with main routes marked but nowhere could we find the EYF marked. Nor was it advertised in our Whats on in Jersey This Week brochure. The rental operator had told me it was "up near the zoo", so with Russell navigating we made our way from the wharf, around the bay and up one way streets to the road which led to Trinity. The road was narrow and windy and often lined with stone fences. Narrow single lane roads led off every so often and either had no names or Rue de something! We couldn't find the EYF anywhere! At the only petrol station we came across half an hour later, we found that only road name signs were allowed in Jersey and no tourist advertising signs. With the staff's help we eventually found the "lane" turning off through a break in a stone fence down the side of a stone building and leading to the EYF nursery.

The EYF was out in the country and consisted of several modern glasshouses, nicely laid out grounds and carpark, an entrance and shop. After paying an entry fee we went on into the display area. It was full with a busload of tourists. Partway round we came across Alan Moon being congratulated on his 14th WOC awards and ribbons and he waved us through into the growing area. The public display area was not as large as I had imagined. It consisted of a long and somewhat narrow house with a pathway down each side of a long central display. Above

concrete water tanks were high, branching "trees" made from steel skeletons and covered with rounds of virgin cork bark. Growing all over the trees were clumps of flowering orchids in groups of genera - pendulous flowering cymbids, Miltoniopsis etc all interspersed with staghorns and ferns. Various types of plants "planted" in the ground around the display forced the pathway to meander about. Two good sized greenhouse growing areas ran off to one side and contained many other orchids in flower. This area was tastefully divided off from the public display by chains or group displays of flowering cattleyas, odonts, phrags and deciduous calanthes. We walked about in the growing area while Alan showed some other growers about. Phil Altmann of Victoria and Odont fame was there behind the scenes also - see photo.

Alan was due for leg surgery - long delayed because of the WOC, and had to take frequent rests. Soon he gave us a tour of the plants pointing out famous breeders and awarded clones. He was very proud of the new tetraploid Odonts, Miltoniopsis and Phrags the EYF had identified with Donald Wimber's help. There were certainly some beauties!

Alan believes these will take those genera to greater heights in breeding. For myself, I fell in love with a magnificent golden yellow patterned xanthic Odont - Oda La Hougue Bie (see photo). I believe it was superior to their award-winning reserve champion white odont at the WOC. Perhaps it hadn't been out in time! It had large size, terrific substance and intensity of colour and good shape and suffered just a little from bunching. To me it made the white alba Odonts look insipid! I didn't bother asking if he had any divisions for sale!

We had a quick look at the potting area and his new rockwool mix, and before we left I presented him with one of our metal badges for his absent badge collecting grower, Martin Ahring. Truly the EYF is a must for all serious orchid growers to visit but one which could be more widely advertised locally!

We spent the next couple of hours visiting the German Underground Hospital with its huge underground bunkers and dreadful relics, photos and videos of life under German occupation. Well worth a visit. There was not enough time to visit any more of the tourist attractions such as Gerald Durrell's Zoo, the Jersey Butterfly Centre, the Lavender Farm or the two castles. We found a restaurant and had a late lunch and then drove around to Bouley and Rozel Bays. The map showed so many modern Odont and Cymbid names such as Petit Port, St Clement, Mont Felard, St Aubin, Gorey and St Ouen - to name some. I'm sure we could have stayed another day or two and found plenty to see. Down at the wharf again we unloaded our gear and boarded a Condor trimaran for the

fast trip to St Malo in nearby France. This massive futuristic craft is similar to that recently proposed for the North/South Island ferry service - I believe. In quick time we were in France, through Customs and into St Malo by taxi. Alas, we had missed the Paris train by a few minutes so shared a third floor room in a local pub that night. Under a very weak lightbulb we repacked our gear, for next day we would be off early to Paris where we would go our separate ways.

Ron Maunder.

SPRAYING MADE EASY

I N February of this year Ron Maunder stayed with us in Nelson. He was here for a judging seminar and a society meeting. On viewing my orchid houses I complained about aphids and that I was forever spraying, but they kept returning. In winter I have a good collection as when the birch leaves drop, they all come into the warm to breed.

Ron asked had I heard of Flora-Gas, available from N.Z.I.G. which he uses, coming in a small hand held bottle. Off to N.Z.I.G. I go and was given a pile of photocopied pamphlets to read. You cannot get the small bottles in the South Island, so they said, only in 15kg bottles so I suggested that they get one up from Christchurch to try. We would see what it would kill.

I have two tunnel houses, approx 50 cubic metres each, covered with Agphane and lined inside with bubble plastic. There are fans going all the time and heaters for winter. One house is kept a lot warmer, we try to maintain 15°C. minimum. The other house at 3°C. minimum. We thought as a starting point, I would need to spray for 15 seconds half way down the house and another 15 seconds at the door. Into the house I went, with facemask on, gloves, glasses etc. With the vents and door shut I sprayed being careful not to spray directly on the flowers. Repeated same in the second house.

The next day all vents and doors were opened up and after a short time I went inside. Not one spider or aphid, the odd cockroach upside down, no ants and in the pond under the Vandas, lots of little white things which turned out to be slaters, belly up.

Approx 4 weeks later, I noticed a few aphids arriving back so we sprayed again. This time trying the same principle, but two lots of 10 seconds per house. Now we are seeing whether we can get the mealy bug, there is not much of that. But it seems that they require a heavy hit in close proximity. So we are going to do a couple of sprays 7 days apart. Yesterday we did both houses, this time 2 at 12 seconds.

I have kept records of all the spraying, with the temperatures inside and out etc. and the houses have been kept shut for at least 12 hours after spraying. It has been worth the effort. Thanks to Ron for putting me onto the gas. Why don't you try it?

Gillian Lyster
Nelson

Branching Spikes - a hint.

Two or three buds on a single branched crispum-type hybrid can spoil the spike's beauty for show or award judging. Remove that offending branch with a sharp razorblade as soon as you see it. Also remove those early bracts which surround the branches as they leave the main stem. They often keep the branches too close to the stem and result in bunched-up sprays. If necessary use styrene wedges or weighted strings to further spread the branches. Do it before the tissue hardens.

This month, June 1910, we travel north to Ardarroch, Garelochhead, Scotland, the stately home of R. Brooman-White, Esq. It is situated in the Loch Long valley flanked by rugged hills where the atmosphere is humid all the year round with winters usually mild and equable. A situation most suitable for the cultivation of orchids which have been collected on the cool slopes of South American mountains.

The 23 houses are built into the base of a hill from which water is constantly trickling, there is actually a spring in one of the houses. Sphagnum moss grows abundantly in the locality. 13 of the houses are needed to accommodate the orchids which have been cultivated here for many years and now form one of the most renowned collections in the history of orchid culture. 10 of these houses, with an earth floor and no second moisture holding stage, house the odontoglossums, which stand on open lath staging. During winter, if necessary, a light corrugated iron 'break heat' is placed between this and the heating pipes.

There are at least 60 named varieties of *Odontoglossum crispum* here, and a very large number of fine hybrids which are now rapidly coming to the fore. A three-quarter span house contains over 1,000 fine strong plants of *Odont. crispum* which have been grown out of doors from June to September as an experiment, which their fine condition proves to have been successful. Seedlings, of which there are several thousands, are in another house, growing in a mixture of Osmunda, Sphagnum moss, peat and sand. Some of the earliest raised are almost of flowering size.

Duplicates and backbulbs are grown in another span-roofed house together with recently acquired plants which have not yet flowered, while yet another house contains a large number of *Odont. crispum* which, although above average type, are not up to the standard of being named.

The plants are looked over frequently, and marked according to the standard of their flowers; the poor ones are relegated to an odd corner to be disposed of, those showing promise are carefully noted when they flower the following year. Those of exceptional merit are placed in a separate house, which now contains over 500 of these 'special' specimens, each with some distinctive feature. Almost one-third of these are either in spike or in flower. Truly a most impressive spectacle.

Here we must mention *Odm. crispum* 'Mercedes', its bulbs are a blackish mahogany colour, and when in flower has purple pigment at the back of its well blotched sepals. The variety 'Duke of Montrose' is almost perfect in both shape and elegance of marking, while 'Duchess of Montrose' is also of the finest shape, a beautiful rosy tint without any marking. 'Colossus' boasts of enormous clear white flowers on a plant of marvellous growth. 'Mont Blanc' is very similar, hence its name. *Crispum* var. *hololeucum* is also of the purest white; even the yellow on the labellum is almost eliminated. Of the 'blotched' varieties a few names will convey the high grade of this particular section; 'Cooksonianum', 'Mariae', 'Luciani', 'Lindeni', 'Starlight' and 'Leonard Perfect'. *Crispum* var. *purpurescens*, which originated in the Burford collection, and *crispum* 'Whites variety' must not be missed. Of all the excellent forms of *crispum*, not one has been so much admired as 'Diana'. Petals are 2 inches in width, with a deep crisped edging giving the flower a lovely appearance. The seedling house contains many *Cochlioda* crosses, as well as the scarce natural hybrids *wilckeanum* and *loochristiense*, and hybrids from *Odont. hallii* and *polyxanthum*.

Cypripediums (paphiopedilums) will always hold their own as a winter flowering orchid, so here a very large house is devoted to them. All the largest and best varieties of *insigne* are here, as many as 100 blooms of the beautiful var. *sanderæ* can be seen at one time. Many fine hybrids are also growing well, amongst them *Beeckmanii*, *Niobe 'Oakwood'*, *Clinkaberranum*, *Arthurianum* and an interesting plant from *Memoria Moensii* x *spiceranum*.

Another *Cypripedium* which is always admired is *Euryades 'Burford Variety'*. This is part of the original plant which was awarded an FCC/RHS when shown by Sir Trevor Lawrence in 1899. Interest in this section is likely to continue because there are many thousands of seedlings on the side stages which have yet to flower, amongst them a batch of *callosum* var. *sanderæ* raised here from seed. Now that a suitable place has been found for them, *bellatulum* and *niveum* are remarkable for the vigour of growth they display growing in a compost of loam, moss, broken crocks and a little sand.

The *Cymbidium* collection is rapidly increasing with plants of *tracyanum* and *lowianum* var. *concolor* crossed with *Eburneo-Lowianum* and a hybrid between *cyperfolium* and *tracyanum* which was raised in Mr. Measures collection at Camberwell, and has just flowered for the first time. It is intermediate in habit, with small *tracyanum*-like flowers but with darker markings. There is also a plant of *Lowgrinum* which gained an AM/RHS in 1903. Suspended from the roof of this house is a row of large *Odontoglossum citrosum* plants.

The *Cattleya* house features some strong plants of recently imported *C. schroderæ* and *C. mossiae*. These are breaking away well. These are still being kept very dry because here they are very liable to damping off if over watered. There are interesting seedlings including a batch derived from *Sophranitis*. An interesting hybrid is *C. citrina* crossed with *C. mossiae*. In another section are many specimen *Cattleya* plants, all growing in pots of 6 inches or more in diameter. A number of recently imported *C. leopoldii* are growing in nothing else but coarse silver sand. All these are flowering on the first bulb made in this country. Large specimens of *Coelogyne cristata* and *laelias* also do well in this house.

In the last house we visit there is a large batch of *Odontoglossum oerstedii* recently imported from Costa Rica. These plants are of dwarf habit, with flowers mainly white but with some yellow markings. They are slightly scented. They need more warmth than the standard odonts. There are also several hundred plants of *Odontoglossum pescatorei*, these are growing well but it has not yet been possible to prevent spotting on the leaves. The variety *thompsonianum* receives special attention here, and is responsible for many hundred seedlings.

This remarkable collection is in the care of Mr. J. Smith, a very experienced orchid grower who acquired his first knowledge at Messrs. Veitch's Nursery. Mr. Brooman-White's love of orchids prompted him to send Albert Millican to search for more fine varieties to enlarge his already superb collection. This collector has published a book describing his travels and findings which he has dedicated to his employer.

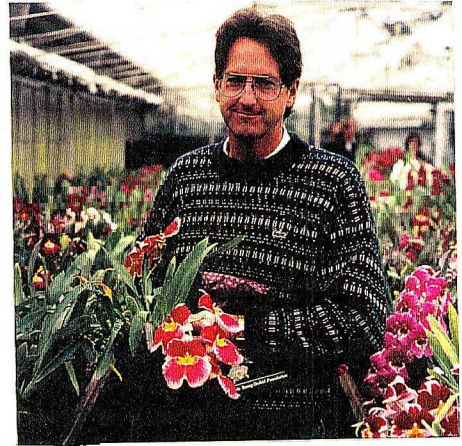
Conway, 36 Springfield Grove,
Clifton, Bristol

This article was reprinted in the English Orchid Review, May 1982

ERIC YOUNG FOUNDATION – JERSEY Is.



St Helier Jersey



Phil Altmann



Oda. La Hougue Bie



Growing Area



***Public Display
Miltoniopsis Trees***



Tetraploid Odont. Display