

# SUTHERLAND SHIRE ORCHID SOCIETY

**BULLETIN: January 2021**

[www.ssos.org.au](http://www.ssos.org.au)

NOTE: The January Meeting has been cancelled

## ***SSOS Members: Bloomin'Awesome:***



Thunia marshalliana (Jan Robinson)



Angrhanthes Grandelena  
'Hihimanu' (Margaret Spring)

Miltoniopsis Red Tibe (Vic Petrovski)



Angraecum magdalene 'Keith'  
(Robert Nicol)

Bulb. tricolor (Wal Chapman)



Paph. Gemstone  
Randschild  
(Heath Myers)

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# SSOS Members, Bloomin'Awesome



Vanda sanderiana  
X coerulea (Gavin Curtis)



Coel. pandurata (Robert Nicol)

Paph philippinense  
(Jan Robinson)



Brassia arcuigera (Vic Petrovski)



Brassia cochleata (John Hely)

Cym. Daren Nancy Quach fantastic  
(Jim & Jan Riley)



Lyc. bradeorum (Jenny Sharpham)

Sobralia veitchii X  
sobralia xantholeuca (John Ng)



# SSOS Members, Bloomin'Awesome

Lyc. Rachel x deppei (Jenny Sharpham)



Beallara Diana Dunn (Vic Petrovski)



Onc Aka Baby Raspberry Chocolate (Margaret Spring)



Prom. Crawshayana (Melissa K.)



Paph. Grande 4n (Heath Myers)



Laelia tenebrosa (Robert Nicol)

# SSOS Members, Bloomin'Awesome

## Stunning Stanhopeas



*S. Unknown* (Jim Riley)



*S. hernandezii* (Jan Robinson)



*S. nigroviolacea* (John Hely)



*S. ruckeri* (Robert Nicol)



*S. nigroviolacea* (Jan Ware)



*S. nigroviolacea* (Jan Robinson)

# President's Message...



Happy New Year !! I hope you all had a safe and enjoyable Christmas and that Santa brought you a few more orchids to add to your collection.

Just when restrictions were starting to loosen.....now they've tightened back up again. But for how long? How long is a piece of string? Your Committee is still hoping to reconvene monthly meetings starting in February. 20 of you said you would be willing to attend under strict Covid rules, when you add the 9 Committee members you get a reasonable size group to start off with. The Committee will be doing a "dry run" in January and work out table and chair configurations, as well as a reduced benching schedule and other details. Stay tuned and we hope to see some of you next month!

In the meantime, it's peak orchid growing season. With warm temperatures and plenty of rain, new growths are shooting up everywhere and we need to be on the lookout for nasty critters wanting to nibble all that tasty new tissue. Stanhopea, promenaea, and a few cattleyas and species lycaste are in flower at my place and even two paphs, hooray!

Generally January is NOT the month to repot, as newly-disturbed plants don't like hot temperatures. But I'm doing a few anyway, especially with the forecast for rain the next 10 days (I'll keep my repotted plants out of the rain for a couple of weeks.)

Fingers crossed the temps don't soar after the wet.....and that the rain doesn't rot the new growths.....!!

Cheers and stay safe,

Handwritten signature 'Jan'

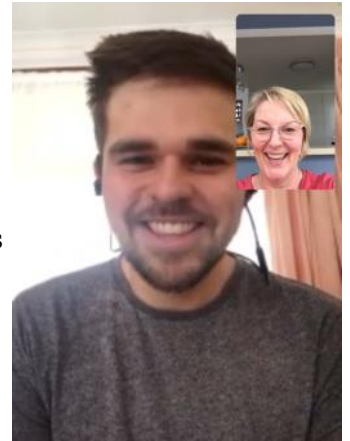


Litoria fallax, Eastern dwarf tree frog,  
Orchid Companion at John Hely's Pond



## **When did you start with orchids, what hooked you in?**

I started with orchids at around 13y.o. My Dad, Michael, had been growing orchids since before he had kids. When the family house was rebuilt his greenhouse was neglected. Only a few orchids survived. After a while, amongst the survivors, I noticed a soft cane had flowered and I thought it was nifty and interesting. Then a dendrobium flowered too and I got interested. I started to read Dad's orchid texts and found the diversity, colour and shape of orchids really interesting. Dad and I visited an orchid exhibition at Swaine's Nursery back then and I noticed there was an SSOS Junior Class ( Daniel Coulton was a Junior then too), this hooked me in. A few months later Dad and I went to an SSOS meeting. There were a lot of friendly greetings and a demonstration on re-potting a Stanhopea. I ended up going home with a Stan and I thought "That's alright", then the bug really hit!



Some of Dad's texts were on Australian Natives and I thought they were so unique and yet so diverse, plus they were in my local bushland! That got me more interested in Australian Natives, Sarcis and then mostly Terrestrials. I bought two Pterystylis at an SSOS sales bench. I then became interested in the more detailed tissue culture, germination, growing seedlings and the use of a Laminar Flow Cabinet ( my Dad's). This grew into a more general interest in Botany, to such an extent that in Year 10, I decided to make a career out of it and proceeded to a Bachelor of Plant Science at Sydney Uni.



As my collection expanded in my mid-teens, I joined a few other Societies as well. Revesby Workers Australian Native Orchid Soc had great native orchid growers and my knowledge of terrestrials especially, expanded. I also joined ANOS, Macarthur District and gained even more knowledge of Australian Natives. I was a founding member of Southside Species Orchid Club; we had great chats there on various species.

I met Robert Bisetto along the way, he was running the Orchid Tray company with Mike Hitchcock and George Birss. I would often help Robert at repotting time and my 'payment' was that I went home with a lot of back-bulbs. I owe Robert a lot for the knowledge I gained on orchid cultivation. Mick & George were great too. I went with them to orchid shows to sell their product. It was great learning the culture of orchid growers . It also helped me increase my collection and the desire to collect.

So I finished my B.Sc. and an Honours year on the evolution and genetics of plants. I had then planned to travel a bit but just before I took off, I applied for a job as Research Assistant at the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. Whilst in London, I had a 2am job interview and got the job! I've been in Melbourne for two years now and have committed to one more year before, hopefully, returning to Sydney to do a PhD.



## **What's Your Favourite Genus?**

Well there's been a few over the years but I'm in love with the Australian Spider Orchids, Caladenia. They are incredibly lovely orchids with beautiful shapes, colours and lovely inflorescences of multiple flowers; a stunning orchid group.





**What do you grow now?**

My personal collection in Melbourne is mostly terrestrials ( Pterystylis, Diuris, Caladenia, Thelymitria, Chiloglottis, etc). Most of my original collection is being looked after by Dad in Sydney! Thanks Dad!

**What’s your greatest orchid challenge?**

Back in Sydney, it was sarcs and root rot, trying to keep the humidity at bay. In Melbourne it’s a much drier climate, great for roses! The coolness here is a problem for some terrestrials.

My greatest challenge really has been getting watering right. Not only the frequency but also how much to water. You could grow all orchids in the same media but getting the watering right for each species is the important issue. The timing of watering is important, for example all year constant water compared to starting watering at a specific time of year. I have developed a fond appreciation for getting watering correct for different species.

**What’s on your orchid wish list?**

I get envious every year when I see the new season Barrita sarcs! I’d like some of those new pretty hybrids with their perfect shapes and lovely colours! Sarcs grow better in Melbourne!

**What’s the oldest orchid in your collection?**

My oldest orchid is in my Dad’s greenhouse in Sydney at the moment. When Robert Bisetto moved to Cairns, he gave me a large Vandopsis gigantea. He had had it for many years after being given it from someone else. I believe it’s about 50 years old. It’s a slow grower but monstrously huge in the wild.

**What are your future orchid plans or are you happy with your lot?**

Orchids are the centre of the universe! I’m very well entrenched in orchids now and could never leave them. Although I don’t want a huge collection here in Melbourne because I’ll only have to move them all back to Sydney!



# Laelia Puke-er-ata

By Jan Robinson

What to do with an orchid you've had over 10 years and it has only flowered once—and it's a BIG plant? One that you have moved to every conceivable location, searching for a spot it fancies. One that after getting advice on the Society's Face Book page, you hung up under your north facing veranda all winter so that it got FULL sun, "guaranteed to make it flower," – and then NOT A SINGLE SPIKE appeared yet again. Is this plant trying to do my head in??



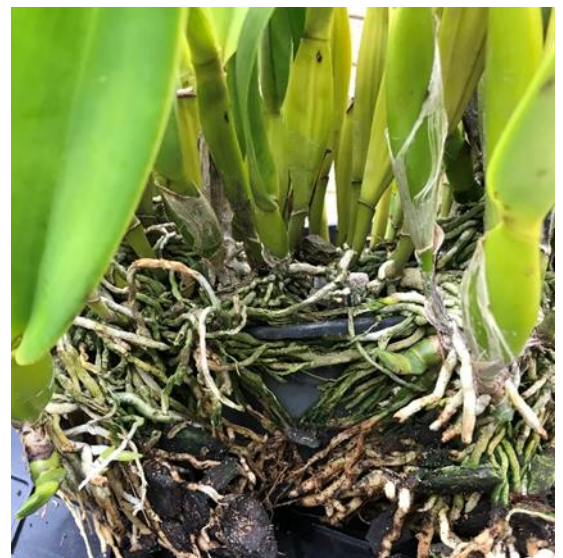
No Sales Bench in sight and I don't know how to sell orchids on Ebay or Buy/Swap/Sell or any of those other internet possibilities. Maybe use it as a footy and kick it into the neighbor's back yard? I'd probably break my toes. Chuck it in the green bin? Hubby would complain that it filled the whole bin up.



In a fit of pique (aka tres bits), I decide shock treatment is required for my 'Puke-er-ata'. Perhaps that will give it a fright and make it flower next year. (Or kill it!) First, sterilize my secateurs. Then take off the hangers without damaging any growths—no easy task, given the stupid thing has grown around the wire in several places. Now to get the plant out of the old pot. Easy, right? WRONG! Not when it has attached itself firmly to the rim of the pot and put roots half way down the sides. Grrrrrr..... Even after a good soaking, it still hung on. Eventually it

gave up and finally came out of the pot. Progress!

Now to cut the plant up. Easy, right? WRONG! A few years ago when I should have repotted it properly, I was lazy and just cut the bottom and some of the sides out of the old pot and stuck the remainder of the old pot and the plant in a new bigger pot. If you are ever tempted to do this—DON'T! You are only creating a rod for your own back later. It is an absolute nightmare to cut the plant off the old pot without damaging the new growths. (By now the air has turned blue above my head and I am wondering why I ever started this project in the first place!)



But slow and steady wins the race and eventually the old pot is pried away from the plant—and I can now see why Puke-er-ata hasn't flowered. Its roots are not good. In fact, they are shocking. Most are quite short and many are dead. Plus there is at least one slug, some ferns, plenty of moss, and goodness knows what else living in the very decomposed potting mix. Yuck.

(Cont. Next page)





Recently I heard a very good grower say he cuts off heaps of roots when he repots his catts. So for the first time ever, I cut almost ALL of the roots off my poor plant. Most are dead anyway, what difference should it make? Now for the amputation procedure and separation of the growths. Some pieces come off easily. Most not so easily. Miraculously only one new growth and one old cane gets broken off. All the cuts must be Steri pruned so they don't become infected; then I let them dry before potting the pieces.

While they are drying, I'm wondering what am I going to do with all these pieces now?? Multiple pots will take up way more room than one big pot I reckon.

And I was right! OMG, what to do with these now??? My Catt house is already overcrowded, no way can I fit all these in!! Huuummmmm.....well, it is the Christmas season, and better to give than to receive, right?

The next day was a Society committee meeting. Nine different growers. Nine different growing conditions. Nine different levels of expertise in growing cattleyas. Each person received a piece of my plant. I had seen John Costa's photos on Face Book of all his purpuratas in flower, he clearly knows how to grow and flower them—so he got the smallest piece to give him a worthwhile challenge. Gifford only grows cymbidiums and has zero experience with cattleyas, so he got the biggest piece (other than the large pot that I kept, of course!) The rest of the Committee got various-sized pieces. (Murray wasn't at the meeting, so I have put aside a piece for him, commensurate with his 40+ years of growing experience.....!) Hopefully next December our benches at the monthly meeting will be chockers with at least nine beautifully flowering *Laelia purpuratas*!



Dear **Ted's Orchids** are flourishing, with many SSOS members reporting strong new growths.



#18 *Slc Mahalo*  
*Jack x California*  
*Apricot*  
From Ian Ware

Thanks Guys!

#253 *Blc. Sunstate Colour Chart*  
*x Slc. Bright Angle*

From John Ng



## January Virtual Raffle Winners:

### **Paph Coos**

- David Hicks

### **Lagerara Roman Emperor**

- Di Phillips

### **Den (Blushart x Rutherford) x Tyabb**

- Gifford

### **Bulbo ambrosia**

- Lee Buivids

### **Miltoniopsis Andrea West 'Hof'**

- George Birss



Congrats!

## February Raffle Prize:

A flowering size

Oncidium Atunga Terrace



***You don't need to buy any raffle tickets to be in the draw! It's FREE !***

All you need to do is to send an email to Rhonda at [info@ssos.org.au](mailto:info@ssos.org.au) saying "please put my name in the raffle draw for February".

The deadline for participating entries is

**Sunday 24th January 2021**

All the names of participating members will go into a hat and the winner will be drawn on the 25/1. One entry per member. The plant will then be delivered to the lucky winner on a day and time agreed by that person and a Committee member. Don't miss out on a chance to win a fantastic flowering size orchid, send your email now!



Welcome to Wal Chapman's  
***Guess The Genera!***



*Take a guess then read the up-side-down answers*



Oncidium Sharry Baby 'Sweet Fragrance'

Dendrobium unknown, Dendrobium 50<sup>th</sup> state x Tangerine

Aerides multiflora, Brassia braciata

**Orchid photos** for the February Bulletin??

**Email** photos of orchids currently in bloom and their names to Melissa at [mjbk1@bigpond.com](mailto:mjbk1@bigpond.com)

**Want to write an article for the bulletin??**

Email to [mjbk1@bigpond.com](mailto:mjbk1@bigpond.com)

***Both before Sunday Jan 24th please !***



## AN ENCOUNTER WITH A HOVER FLY (at Jan's House)

While Jan was admiring her first-flowering *Paph philippinense*, she noticed what she thought were bees buzzing around her plant, which were subsequently identified by Rhonda as hover flies. When Jan asked on Face Book whether native insects pollinated non native plants, she received this response.



*"As you probably are aware that in the subfamily Cyripedioideae, most species of the tropical Asian Paphiopedilum and tropical American Phragmipedium are pollinated by hoverflies in which flowers of many species in both genera have aphid-like spots that attract gravid female hoverflies that normally lay their eggs in aphid colonies. A process known as Brood site mimicry.*

*Quite possible that our native Sphyridae also match the co-evolved species physical attributes, enabling it to act as a vector."*



As cool as it was to see the flies doing their best to pollinate Jan's plant, she was not impressed to find numerous eggs they left behind 🤢



## A GREAT FIND BY IAN WARE....



*"Lovely local native found about 1 km from our meeting hall*

*It's a Dipodium variagatum I think (but maybe D punctatum)*

*Growing next to the path down to the Woronora River.*

*Thankfully no one has picked them!*

*The stem emerges from an underground tuber/bulb and is about 30cm tall. The flowers last about 1 week.*

*At other times of the year, like most terrestrial orchids, you wouldn't know they were there at all."*



## RESUMPTION OF MONTHLY MEETINGS – EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Going forward, we hope to resume some form of monthly meetings early next year in a Covid-safe environment. For planning purposes, we are asking whether you would be prepared to attend a monthly meeting if the following restrictions applied:

- No suppers (or very limited);
- Reduced mingling;
- Social distancing observed at all times, including in areas around the orchids;
- Wearing of masks preferred;
- Limited benching of plants (possibly restricting # of plants each person can bring);
- Possibly pre-booking your spot at a meeting, given limited number of people are allowed in our hall;
- Wiping down your own chair as you leave the meeting (materials to be supplied).

We realize these factors are a bit of a moving target and rules can change overnight as we've seen recently in South Australia. We are also undecided about resuming our Sales Tables in the first few meetings, depending on meeting attendance.

**If you would be willing to come to a monthly meeting under the above circumstances, please either send in a “YES I WOULD ATTEND” email to Rhonda at [info@ssos.org.au](mailto:info@ssos.org.au), or phone our Secretary David Hicks on 0431 799 230 .**

Based on the number of positive responses we get, the Committee will put together some guidelines for our “new format” meetings. Stay tuned for further info!

### Keep in touch via our Facebook Group: “Sutherland Orchid Society”

Post your growing tips, recent mail order purchases, questions or just what's in flower at your place..... we'd all love to hear about it.!

If you are having any problems, please contact Jan Robinson [jadrob@bigpond.com](mailto:jadrob@bigpond.com) or Dan Coulton 0419 466986 for assistance.



**Disclaimer:** The growing guides are provided only as a starting basis to cultivation. Local conditions in your area may require modification to these suggestions. SSOS will not be responsible for the results of your cultivation practices. The opinions expressed in these articles are those of the author and not those of SSOS, SSOS in no way endorses or supports any claims or opinions of said authors.