



# Western Suburbs ORCHID SOCIETY

wsorchidsociety.com

Established 1937

## May 2021 Bulletin

Volume: 54 Number: 5

*Plant of the Night for April*



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*RLC Village Chief North 'Green Genius'*

## Editorial

### Contents:

- Editorial: page 2
- Arthur's Notes: page 4
- Novice Nook: page 5

### Next Meeting:

May 17<sup>th</sup> from 7pm  
Craig Scott-Harden

### Websites:

[www.wsorchidsociety.com](http://www.wsorchidsociety.com)  
[www.flickr.com/photos/wsos/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/wsos/)  
[www.orchids.org](http://www.orchids.org)

### Email:

enquiries@wsorchidsociety.com

### Facebook:

Search for the group "Western Suburbs Orchid Society" and join

### Submissions:

At meetings or via email to the Editor before the first Monday of the month

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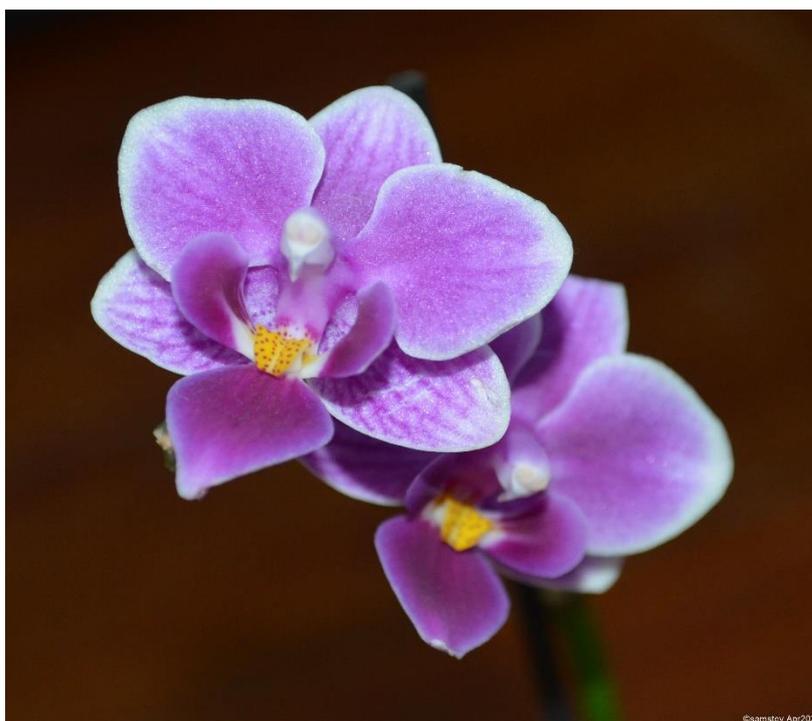
Last month we had our own Jonathan Clark telling us all about multifloral Paphs. There were lots of fabulous photos which showed just how diverse Paphs can be in size and shape, even for a subset of a genus. It was particularly interesting to see which attributes were passed on to the next generation depending on whether a plant was used as pollen parent or pod parent. A great talk Jonathan, thank you very much! We hope to persuade you to another talk next year.

Coming up this month we have a talk from another very experienced grower, Craig Scott-Harden. Craig has been kind enough to come to us for the occasional visit for many years and his talks are always well worth attending. This is another must-see event!

Our visit to Irene Chalmers' orchid collection was a great day out. Yes, it was a long drive, but well worth it to see her collection. It was a real eye opener and she has such an enormous backyard! I took heaps of photos and even a short video, but I've not had time to get everything together for this bulletin. (I had a good chunk of computer trouble this month, which didn't help.) Thanks to everyone who came along and thanks to Peter Meyer for bringing all the yummy pastries. I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did.

COVID restrictions have changed again and at time of writing it's mandatory to wear masks indoors. As I don't know what will be in force when our meeting is on, please come prepared to wear a mask, just in case. We still need a list of attendees to comply with the law, so please make sure to sign the attendance book.

Cheers, Sam.



Phalaenopsis unknown

## Minutes of WSOS monthly meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2021

### General Business:

- Sam handed out the photo for Plant of the Night for March, which was Cattleya Caudabec Candy by Phil Festa.
- Anyone wanting a new badge, please speak to Sam or Peter Meyer.
- Our visit to Irene Chalmers' place will be on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> May. Please advise your interest to Sam or Peter Meyer.
- Rosie will be resigning as Secretary this October unless someone volunteers beforehand. Please advise Sam or Peter Meyer if you're interested in the role.
- John Costa advised that Colin Fraser has recently passed away.

**TONIGHT'S SUPPER:** Thank you Peter McBryde

**RAFFLE PRIZES:** Gary Hodder, May Hui, Jonathan Clark, Michael Luu, John Costa, Wai Kwan Chan, Arthur Smyrnios, Peter McBryde, Arthur Midgeley

**BIRTHDAY RAFFLE:** Iris Leong

**SUPPER RAFFLE:** Tong Wun

**PLANT OF THE NIGHT:** RLC Village Chief North 'Green Genius' exhibited by Phil Festa

**MEETING CLOSED:** 9:15pm

### Upcoming Events:

- Bankstown OS has a show on 20-23<sup>rd</sup> May at Chester Square Shopping Centre, 1 Leicester St, Chester Hill.
- Paph OS has a Paph auction on 19<sup>th</sup> May from 7:30pm at Ermington Community Centre, 6 River Rd, Ermington.
- Cumberland OS has Seong Tay presenting a series of talks entitled "A Beginner's Guide to Growing Orchids" at their meetings, from 7:30pm each 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month at North Rocks Senior Citizens Hall, cnr North Rocks Rd and Farnell Ave, Carlingford.
- WSOS Winter Show 19-22<sup>nd</sup> August.
- WSOS Spring Show 21-24<sup>th</sup> October.



Epicattleya Volcano Trick 'Orange Fire'

**Counts:**

Number of plants benched = 42

Number of exhibitors = 12

Total views WSOS of the Flickr photo pages = 839,000

Number of photos on the Flickr photo pages = 2700

**Orchid Benching:**

Twelve members exhibited 42 plants at the April meeting. The quality of the benched plants was very high and the Plant of the Night was a beautiful cluster Cattleya RLC. Village Chief North 'Green Genius' exhibited by Philip Festa.

**Orchid Genera Names:**

You might notice that there are some changes to the genera names in the results compared to the information you wrote on a benching card. This is because of the many changes that the Royal Horticultural Society made to orchid genera names.

Some Examples:

- Genera name Doritaenopsis is no longer used because the RHS made the genera name Doritis obsolete and changed it to Phalaenopsis.
- Genera name Howeara is replaced by Rydbergara for the Oncidiinae hybrid Mary Eliza.
- Bct, Ett, and Ctt are abbreviated genera names for some hybrid orchids in the Laeliinae sub tribe (Cattleyas).
- Bct. is short for Brassocatanthe.
- Ett. is short for Epicatanthe.
- Cct. is short for Cattlianthe.
- Rlc. is short for Rhyncholaeliocattleya. Just imagine writing the full name of the plant of the night as: Rhyncholaeliocattleya Village Chief North 'Green Genius'.
- Ryg. is short for Rydbergara .

It's much easier to fit names on your plant tag or a show entry form if you use the genera abbreviation. The full list of RHS orchid genera abbreviations is easily found by doing a google search for "RHS orchid genera abbreviations" and then clicking on "2017 orchid genera abbreviations – RHS".



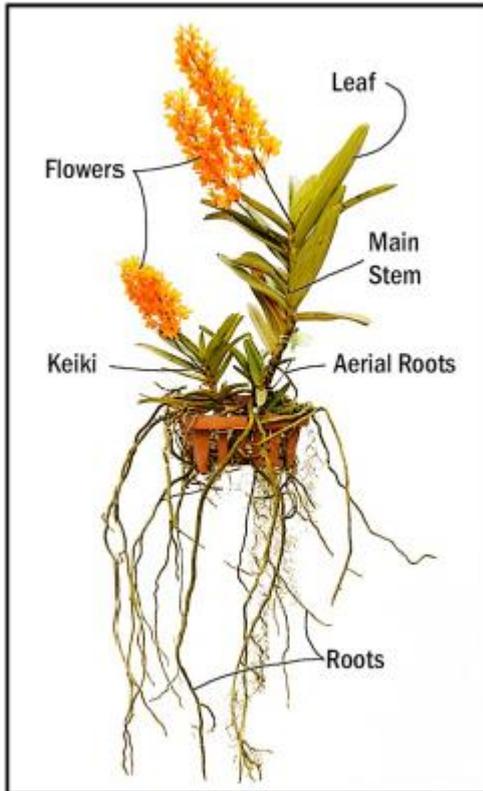
Zelemnia Alyshia Kay

**ORCHID PLANT PARTS AND WHY THEY MATTER**

With Sue Bottom

(Reproduced with permission from the author)

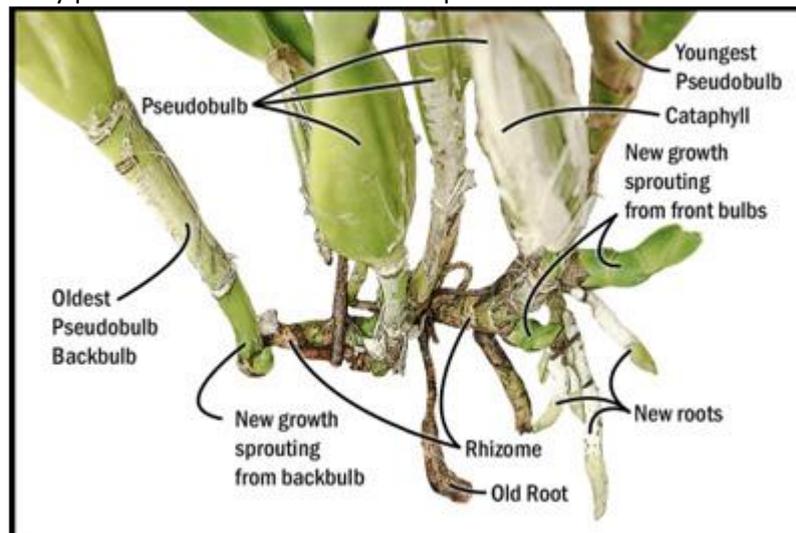
It doesn't really matter if you can remember all the names of orchid plant parts, but it is to your benefit to understand how these parts function. We'll talk about all the basic orchid parts to help focus your attention on things to look for when you are looking at your plants. Orchid growth habits fall into two basic groups, the monopodial orchids that grow vertically and the sympodial orchids that grow laterally.



**Monopodial** orchids like phalaenopsis and vandas grow upward from a single stem. Orchids with this growth habit grow upward from season to season from a single vegetative shoot. Leaves, roots and flower spikes sprout from nodes along the stem. Normally the plant will lose its leaves from the bottom up and continue to grow new leaves from the terminal or apical tip while making new roots along the stem. Monopodial orchids do not have fleshy pseudobulbs for storage of food and water like the sympodial orchids, so they require more frequent watering and feeding. Vandas often produce a **keiki** (KAY-kee), a Hawaiian term for baby that is used to describe a plantlet that sprouts from a mature plant. Keikis are a great way to share your plants with friends.

**Sympodial** orchids like cattleyas, dendrobiums and oncidiums branch outward horizontally rather than grow vertically like monopodial orchids. Sympodial orchids grow laterally and produce a new shoot along a rhizome that develops into a stem with roots and leaves and eventually produces flowers. This growth process is repeated in a continuous cycle. Sympodial orchids have pseudobulbs that grow along a rhizome (RYE-zohm), a root-bearing stem, the apex of which progressively sends up leafy shoots. When repotting, the rhizome should be at or just above the potting media. There is a greater

potential for rot if the rhizome is buried in the potting mix. A **pseudobulb** (SOO-doh-bulb) is the thickened portion of a stem used when discussing cattleyas, oncidiums and many other sympodial orchids. A cane, used when discussing dendrobiums, is similar to a pseudobulb but is much more stalk-like in appearance. The pseudobulbs and canes are like the humps on camels, storing food and water to sustain the plant during droughty conditions. They perform a vital function to the plant even when leafless. **Front bulbs** are the pseudobulbs on the younger



part of the plant. The front bulbs are the actively growing part of your plant and it is from these new growths that new flowers will emerge. The **backbulbs** are the pseudobulbs on the older part of the plant. The backbulbs are often without leaves but as long as they are still green, they continue to provide nourishment to the plant. Backbulbs can be used to propagate new plants from the original plant when new growths are encouraged to sprout from blind or dormant **eyes**, the incipient buds of vegetative growth. There are at least two eyes on each pseudobulb so that if one eye or lead becomes damaged, a new

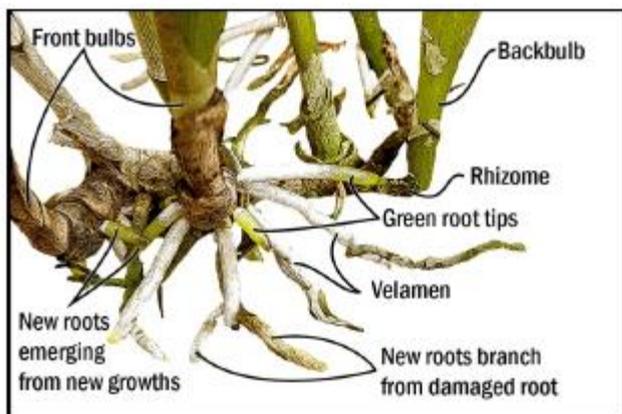
pseudobulb can emerge from the other eye. The **cataphyll** (KAT-a-fill) is an underdeveloped leaf that forms around the base of the pseudobulb and matures to form a papery sheath along the length of the pseudobulb. When the pseudobulb is growing, the cataphyll provides some structural support and protects the tender new growth from mechanical and insect damage. Cataphylls can sometimes form pockets where water can accumulate and bacterial action can cause the bulb to rot so the pockets should be slit or the cataphyll pulled down so water will drain freely. Once the growth is mature and hardened, the dried cataphylls can be removed before they become hiding places for scale and other sucking insects.



**Orchid Leaves** vary from the thin-leaved oncidiums and catasetums, the fleshy phalaenopsis, to the hard dendrobium and cattleya leaves that have waxy coverings that help minimize water loss. Cattleyas with a single leaf are call **unfoliates** and cattleyas with two (and occasionally three) leaves are called **bifoliate**. Unlike the unifoliate, bifoliate cattleyas should be repotted only when they are growing new roots. **Stomata** (sto-MAH-tah) are pores on the lower surface of the leaf epidermis through which the plant breathes. The stomata are mostly closed during the day to prevent water loss by transpiration and open at night when temperatures are lower and humidity is higher. This means that orchids are not good candidates for foliar feeding. If specialty foliar sprays such as those containing minor or trace elements designed to be absorbed through the leaves are to be used, they are best applied to the undersides of the leaves in the predawn hours.

**Orchid roots** consist of an inside wiry filament and thick sponge like covering called **velamen** that helps prevent water loss and aids in

absorption of water and mineral nutrients. Actively growing orchid roots have green (and sometimes reddish) tips; the longer the green tips, the faster the roots are growing. The white velamen layer follows a few days behind the root's growth tip. The emergence of fresh roots tells you your plant is going into the growth mode, if it needs to be repotted, the time is now (or maybe you should have done it last week when the new growth was swelling up before the green tips emerged).

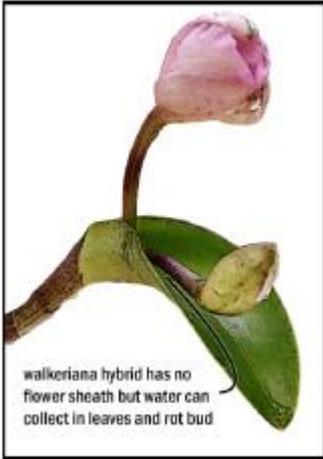
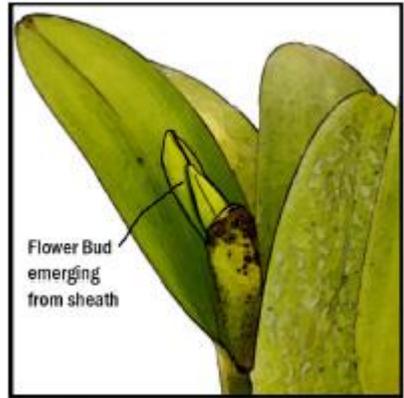


On cattleyas, flower buds emerge from a **sheath**, a modified leaf that encloses an emerging inflorescence. Some cattleyas bloom soon after the growth matures and the sheath is formed (said to bloom on green sheaths) and others rest for several months before blooming (said to bloom on dried sheaths). Sheaths should be watched carefully. If the colour changes to yellow or brown, the sheath should be carefully opened and pulled down so water can drain freely. Otherwise condensation inside the sheath from day/night temperature changes can cause the flower buds to rot in the sheath. Some cattleyas, like those with walkeriana in their background, don't bloom from sheaths. If you allow water to accumulate in the cataphyll extending above the leaf base, it can rot the emerging bud. **The inflorescence** (in-floor-ESS-ents) is the flowering part of the plant. Typical parts of the inflorescence include the peduncle, pedicel and flower itself. On a cattleyas, the inflorescence consists of a **peduncle** (pe-DUNK-ul), the stalk of an inflorescence that arises from the bulb, and the **pedicel** (PED-i-sel), the stalk of an individual flower that branches from the peduncle. Some orchids like a *Rl. digbyana* have a long and twisted pedicel so the flower is normally not well displayed unless it has been staked to



provide structural support. Phalaenopsis bloom from a **raceme** (ray-SEEM), a type of inflorescence with short-stalked flowers borne on an elongated stem that bears the pedicels and flowers. Racemes can be upright, arched or even pendent. Those of phalaenopsis are most often upright or arched and should be staked during development to make sure the flowers are presented to their best advantage.

**Orchid flowers** have three outer and three inner flower parts. The outermost flower parts are the three **sepals**; the dorsal sepal at the top of the flower and the two lateral sepals at the bottom of the flower. The innermost flower parts are the petals, consisting of the two petals on either



side of the flower and the **lip** or **labellum** usually at the base of the flower. The lip is a modified petal and is often the most striking part of the flower. It is very different from the other two petals and plays an important role in pollination, often serving as a landing platform for insects. The **column** is a fleshy structure that is in the middle of the flower and consists of fused reproductive parts, the male **anther** that bears the pollinia or pollen pellets and the female receptive organ, the **stigma**, a shiny depression filled with a sticky fluid. You don't need to know much more about this X-rated material unless you feel compelled to carry a toothpick around with you while you are admiring your orchid flowers. At that point, you'll have to give yourself over to a higher power as your orchid addiction has escalated!

