

# Rockhampton Orchid Society Inc.

[www.rockhamptonorchidsociety.com.au](http://www.rockhamptonorchidsociety.com.au)

**P. O. Box 594 Red Hill Rockhampton, 4701**

***Founded 1955***



## **Newsletter March 2018**

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### ***Editor's notes***

Well I could use lots of clichés here such as, 'what goes around comes around', or 'I'm back'. However, when I looked through my files it was Feb. 2012 when I last compiled the Society's Newsletter. I would like to formally thank my predecessor Sandra Rowcliffe for her service for the last three years. Unlike the rest of society, for ROSI the new year starts now following the February AGM. We have plenty to look forward to including in the near future the tri- annual club visit which will be over by the time you read this and then the Autumn show in April. The schedule for the show is included in this Newsletter. Getting rapidly closer and only 18 months away now, is the society's hosting of STOC conference in September 2019.

The AGM of course comes with change and the election of the Society's (workers) executive, committee and ex-officio positions who are charged under the constitution to do their best for the Society and chart the course for the future. The biggest change has seen the retirement of our long serving Treasurer Bill Richardson who we thank for his dedication and services to the society for many years and more recently continuing while enduring ill-health –Thanks Bill! If you didn't make the AGM, you can find out who is doing what by consulting the table of office bearers.

I will endeavour to include as much cultural information on growing orchids, which is the primary purpose of the society as I can in the Newsletter. To start I have added an article I have recently written for the Orchid Australia magazine which will be published in the forthcoming Autumn magazine. It is about our Australian (Queensland) iconic Cooktown Orchid; I have also taken the opportunity to include in the article the first note about us hosting the STOC conference. It will be the first of many as the new committee takes up the challenge of making the conference a success. I also intend to include a 'culture table' for the genera we grow and a species of the month feature starting in next Newsletter. If anyone has a particular species they would like featured, please e-mail me your request.

On the social side of the society, it is with much sadness that our long-time Social Editor and Life Member Eleanor Dean (Ellie's Corner) is no longer able to continue in this role due to continuing ill-health. As a result, there is an opening for someone who would like to continue this role. Terry has told me he is able to pass on Ellie's notes on birthdays, etc., to the 'successful applicant'. Many members rightly place great importance on the social side of our society, so here is a chance for someone to keep the tradition going. Please e-mail me or call if you are interested in discussing making the position suit you. Likewise, on the social scene the New Growers format recently has come under a lot of discussion on its future,

and the new Coordinator for the group, **Marg Handley**, has requested that interested members attend her residence **16 Flinders Close, Lammermoor Yeppoon** on **Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> March at 2pm. to plan the year ahead.**

In closing, as you can see we do have a lot to look forward to in the forthcoming year, in arguably what is the best Orchid Society in Queensland.

Until next month, Jeff Glover

## Office Bearers

### Executive:

Patron: Vacant

President: Jeff Bloxsom

bloxsom123@optusnet.com.au 4928 6582

Vice President : Peter Jenkinson

[pe.oni@hotmail.com](mailto:pe.oni@hotmail.com) ph.0439515820

Secretary: Trish Craig ph. 49226621

[rockyorchidsociety@gmail.com](mailto:rockyorchidsociety@gmail.com)

Treasurer: Sandra Rowcliffe:

[svpsli@bigpond.net.au](mailto:svpsli@bigpond.net.au) Ph. 49364040

### Committee

Terry Dean 49282278 [terryellie@optusnet.com.au](mailto:terryellie@optusnet.com.au)

Jeff Glover [j-glover@bigpond.com](mailto:j-glover@bigpond.com) Ph. .49287701

Trevor Handley 49393196

Marg Handley 49393196

Bob Lakey [rlakey@dodo.com.au](mailto:rlakey@dodo.com.au) Ph.49288093

Nat Lakey 49288093

Tony March (contact details on application)

Bill Richardson [william.r@optusnet.com](mailto:william.r@optusnet.com) Ph. 49226621

Allan White Ph. 0419580086

### Ex Officio Positions

Society Registrar: Terry Dean

Newsletter Editor: Jeff Glover

Assist Newsletter Editor : Jenny Moore

Technical Advisors: John Frisch, Jeff Glover

Webmaster: Bob Lakey

Newgrowers/Workshops Co-coordinator Marg Handley

Providor Maxine Maunder

Promotion Officer Sandra Rowcliffe /Jeff Glover (STOC)

Door Monitors Lorraine and Brian Weaver

Librarian: Jack Martin

Raffle Plant Caretaker: Terry Dean

Property Officers: Barry and Faye English.

### Shows and Meetings

Show Marshall: Jeff Glover

Chief Steward: Moyna Richardson

Plant/Barcode collators Trish Craig & Barry English

Australian Orchid Council ROSI Based Judging Team

### Judges:

Jeff Glover

Terry Dean

Marty Gunder

Faye English

Bernard Hilse

### Associate Judges

Trish Craig

Doug Chippendale

Peter Jenkinson

Nat Lakey

Sandra Rowcliffe



### Growers Tip

Spider mites have been very active recently, attacking any orchids with large relatively thin leaves, such as, Catasetinae and Phaius (swamp orchids). They thrive in the high temps and dry conditions we have just endured. If you don't wish to use agricultural sprays, the best way to combat them is to keep your greenhouse in high humidity. This can be achieved by misting using garden hose fittings or investing in an electrical powered misting device. A simple hygrometer (measures humidity) can be purchased from hardware stores and placed in the greenhouse to monitor the humidity. However, if you wish to use chemical control and inevitably you will, considering the recent weather, make sure you use a miticide or miticide and insecticide combination. Spray a fortnight apart to **ensure you kill the hatchlings from the eggs you will miss in the first spray.**

Suitable products include, Stealth, Kelthane, and Yates Natrasoap (chemical free) 32.

**Rockhampton Orchid Society Inc.**

**Annual General Meeting Tuesday 27th February 2018**

**Attendance:** As per register

**Apologies:** As per register

**Minutes** of previous AGM meeting were approved as correct and accurate. No business arising from them.

Moved Allan White      Seconded Sandra Rowcliffe      **Carried**

**President's Report:** Circulated in the February 2018 newsletter. Jeff Bloxsom thanked all members for their support over the previous 12 months.

**Treasurer's Report:** Presented by Bill Richardson (as per report distributed at the meeting). Bill mentioned that our books have been audited and Bill has a letter to confirm that. Bill moved that his report be accepted.

Seconded Peter Rankin      **Carried**

**Election of Officials:** President Jeff Bloxsom thanked committee members for all the good work during the year as well as all members whose participation at meetings, shows and trips have kept the club strong. All positions were declared vacant.

Jeff handed the Chair over to Peter Jenkinson who read out the nomination for president. As there was only one nomination for president, Jeff Bloxsom was re-elected unopposed. Peter Jenkinson relinquished the Chair to Jeff Bloxsom who read out the remaining nominations.

**Vice President:** Peter Jenkinson

- Elected unopposed

**Secretary:** Trish Craig

- Elected unopposed

**Treasurer:** Sandra Rowcliffe

- Elected unopposed

**Committee:** 1. Jeff Glover

- Elected unopposed

2. Tony March

- Elected unopposed

3. Terry Dean

- Elected unopposed

4. Bob Lakey

- Elected unopposed

5. Bill Richardson

- Elected unopposed

6. Allan White

- Elected unopposed

7. Nat Lakey

- Elected unopposed

8. Trevor Handley

- Elected unopposed

9. Marg Handley

- Elected unopposed

**Librarian:** Jack Martin

- Elected unopposed

**Editor:** Jeff Glover

- Elected unopposed

**Assistant Editor:** Jenny Moore

- Elected unopposed

**Publicity Officers:** Jeff Glover & Sandra Rowcliffe

- Accepted

**Registrar:** Terry Dean

- Accepted

**Technical Advisors:** John Frisch

- Accepted

Jeff Glover

- Accepted

**Provedore:** Maxine Maunder

- Accepted

**Door Monitors/Hostess:** Bryan Weaver

- Accepted

Lorraine Weaver

- Accepted

**Property Officers:** Faye & Barry English

- Accepted

**Plant Caretaker:** Terry Dean

- Accepted

**Web Master:** Bob Lakey

- Accepted

There were no nominations for New Grower's Coordinator. After some discussion, Marg and Trevor Handley agreed to give it a go.

Meeting closed at 8.12pm

Jeff Bloxsom    President

Trish Craig    Secretary

## General Meeting Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2018

**Attendance:** As per register

**Apologies:** As per register

**New Members:** Robyn Bentley

**Visitors:** Nil

**Lucky Number:** 24 John Lowry

**Minutes** of previous monthly meeting were approved as correct and accurate.

Moved M Lyons                      Seconded P Rankin                      **Carried**

### **Correspondence:**

#### **IN – NEWSLETTERS**

Blackwater & District Orchid & Foliage Club Inc.

Boyne Tannum Orchid & Foliage Soc. (including show schedule and entry forms)

Caboolture Orchid Society Inc.

Childers & Isis District Orchid Society Inc.

Gladstone Orchid & Foliage Society Inc.

Gympie & District Orchid Society Inc.

Mackay & District Orchid Society Inc. (including notification of Field Day on 9/10 June 2018)

Mid Murray Orchid Club Inc.

Nambour Orchid Society Inc.

Nightcliff Orchid Society

Rockhampton Horticultural Society Inc.

The Sunshine Coast Orchid Society Caloundra Inc.

Townsville Orchid Soc. Inc.

#### **Emails re:**

STOCQ – AGM and general meeting details

OQI – Minutes of recent General Meeting

OQI - World Orchid Conference 23 in Taiwan 2020

AOC - 21<sup>st</sup> AOC Conference & Show February update

Qld Orchid Society Inc. – 2018 Calendar

#### **Mail:**

The Rock: Statements

Orchids Australia

Australian Orchid Review

Australia post: Account for PO Box rental

#### **OUT**

Certificates of Membership to Beryl Ledwy (10 years) and Mike & Phillis Henderson (30 years)

Motion that the inward correspondence be accepted and the outward correspondence endorsed:

Moved T Craig                      Seconded Z Kidman                      **Carried**

### **Treasurer's Report:**

Read and moved for acceptance by B Richardson                      Seconded M Lyons

**Carried**

### **General Business:**

The current meeting night annual competition rules were published in the February newsletter.

Please note the new sections. These rules should be published in the newsletter at the beginning of each year.

A large number of orchid books and magazines have been donated by Peter Shelton. The books will go into the library and the magazines (American Orchid Society Bulletin, Orchids Australia and Australian Orchid Review) will be available as 'give aways' at general meetings. Although some of the magazines are old there are still many good articles in of them.

**Show** – The standard display size will be a 1.8m blow mould table. These are able to be rented and returned at the end of the show. This removes the cost of having special tables made for the purpose and also means we do not need to find space for storage for the tables. There will be three prizes for standard displays: – 1<sup>st</sup> prize - \$150, 2<sup>nd</sup> prize - \$100 and 3<sup>rd</sup> prize - \$50. There will also be an incentive of a \$20 voucher to our shop for those putting a standard display. Corsages will receive the same prize money as floral art.

Designated sections for tabled plants will be provided on the show tables. Those entering tabled plants are requested to put their plants in the correct sections on the tables. In other words put your Dendrobiums in the Dendrobium section, Oncidiums in the Oncidiinae section, Cattleya in the Lailiinae section etc. These sections will be expanded or contracted on the Friday depending on demand for space.

**Triennial weekend:** The welcome morning tea will be at the Rockhampton Bowls Club  
Costs per head – Saturday lunch - \$15, Saturday dinner - \$30 and Sunday lunch - \$20  
Sunday lunch and farewell will be at North Rockhampton Bowls Club.

#### **Plant Commentary:**

Jeff Glover gave a comprehensive and informative commentary on the plants tabled. He included an explanation of the judging rules for the benefit of new growers.

**Exhibiter Raffle:** B & H Hilse

**General Raffle:** J Lowrey x2, T Craig, S Rowcliffe, J Martin, C. McCabe, J Bloxsom

**New Growers:** There will be a new growers meeting at the Handley's residence in Yeppoon on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

Meeting closed at 10.06pm.

Next committee meeting will be held at the Richardson's residence on 13<sup>th</sup> March commencing at 7.00pm.

Jeff Bloxsom  
President

Trish Craig  
Secretary

#### **Store Vouchers**

Barry and Faye have advised that not all the vouchers won at the Christmas party have been redeemed as yet, and would like to advise that they are only valid until the end of March (this month) so if you still have some; don't miss out!

#### **Monthly Meeting Judging**

Now that we have 4 resident Assoc. Judges and 5 Judges, rather than has been the practise of nominating judges each month; the committee has endorsed the change in that a judging team will be sourced from those members of the judging team in attendance on the night. In reality, this has already been happening while the Assoc. Judges were in training.

(Plants Tabled: Advanced 46; Novice 19)

### Judges Choice

V. Camano Beauty 'Pink'

J&N Glover

*Den. Sophie Bonnie 'Red Eye Special'*

J&amp;S Frisch

*Rhy. retusa*

P&amp;T Jenkinson

## Popular Vote – Advanced

Cattleya over 100mm

*Rlc. Alma Kee 'Tipmalee'*

T&M Handley

Cattleya up to 100mm *W/c. (Cook.)* Tropical Snowflake

M&S Rowcliffe

Vandaceous over 65mm

V. Somsri Sunset

T&amp;E Dean

Vandaceous up to 65mm

### V. Ken Kone 'Crownfox Sundancer'

T&amp;E Dean

## Dendrobium

*Den. Sophie Bonnie 'Red Eye Special'*

J&S Frisch

## Phalaenopsis

*Phal.* Chian Xen Piano

T&amp;M Handley

Species

*Rhy. retusa*

P&amp;T Jenkinson

## Miscellaneous

*Ctsm.* Orchidglade 'Davie Ranches'

W&amp;M Richardson

Novice.

Cattleya

C. Caudebec x *B/c*. Waianae Leopard

D&amp;S Eggleshaw

Dendrobium

Den. Airy Crimson (name not registered)

T.March

## Miscellaneous

*Ctsm.* Portagee Star x *Ctsm.* Louise Clark D&L Humble

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*Den. Sophie Bonnie 'Red Eye Special'*



V. Camano Beauty 'Pink'



*Rhy. retusa*

*ROSI Autumn 2018 Show Schedule:*



## **Autumn Show 2018**

**Rockhampton High School Assembly Hall  
Campbell Street, Rockhampton.**

**Set up displays 2pm – 8pm Friday**

**Judging from 7.30am Saturday  
Show open to the public:-**

**Saturday 14th April 9.00am – 4.00pm**

**Sunday 15th April 9.00am – 3.00pm**

**Admission –Adults \$3.00 Children free**

President –	Jeff Bloxsom	0407995122
Show Marshall	Jeff Glover	0409633469
Chief Steward –	Moyna Richardson	

### **Prizes**

Grand Champion:	\$200.00 plus Trophy, Rosette & Card
Reserve Champion:	\$100.00 plus Rosette & Card
Best Specimen:	\$50.00 plus Trophy, Rosette & Card
Best Exotic Species:	\$20.00 plus Trophy, Rosette & Card
Best Aust. Species:	\$20.00 plus Trophy, Rosette & Card
Best Orchid by Novice Grower:	\$30.00 plus Trophy, Rosette & Card
Runner up to Best Novice:	\$15.00 plus Ribbon & Card
Class Champions (Classes 1 to 6 & 8):	\$20.00 plus Rosette & Card
Runner up to C. C. & Best Species:	\$10.00 plus Ribbon & Card
Class Sections: (1.01 to 8.10)	<u>1<sup>st</sup></u> \$10.00 <u>2<sup>nd</sup></u> \$5.00 plus Ribbon & Card



**Table Display 1800mm x 750mm. (All entries for this display receive a \$20.00 voucher on the club store)**

- 1<sup>st</sup>. \$150.00 plus Rosette & Card
- 2<sup>nd</sup>. \$100.00 plus Ribbon & Card
- 3<sup>rd</sup>. \$50.00 plus Ribbon & Card

**Container Display:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> \$50.00 plus Rosette & Card
- 2<sup>nd</sup> \$30.00 plus ribbon & Card
- 3<sup>rd</sup> \$20.00 plus ribbon & Card

**Floral Art (Class 9)**

- Arrangement :- 1<sup>st</sup> \$20.00 : 2<sup>nd</sup> \$10.00 plus Ribbon & Card
- Corsage :- 1<sup>st</sup> \$20.00 : 2<sup>nd</sup> \$10.00 plus Ribbon & Card

### **Class 1.00 Laeliinae**

- 1.01 Standard shape, bloom size over 100mm, predominately White
- 1.02 Standard shape, bloom size over 100mm, Mauve/ Purple shades
- 1.03 Standard shape, bloom size over 100mm, any other colour
- 1.04 Standard shape, bloom size up to 100mm, predominately White
- 1.05 Standard shape, bloom size up to 100mm, Mauve/ Purple shades
- 1.06 Standard shape, bloom size up to 100mm, any other colour
- 1.07 Standard shape, miniature plant size, bloom size up to 75mm
- 1.08 Non standard, Cluster, not less than five (5) blooms per stem -  
(Excluding reed stem *Epidendrums*.- Crucifix Orchids)
- 1.09 Non standard, any other

### **Class 2.00 Vandeae (excluding Phalaenopsis)**

- 2.01 Vandeae, standard shape, bloom size over 65mm
- 2.02 Vandeae, standard shape, bloom size 30mm up to 65mm
- 2.03 Vandeae, standard shape, bloom size under 30mm
- 2.04 Vandeae, non-standard shape, bloom size over 65mm
- 2.05 Vandeae, non-standard shape, bloom size 30mm to 65mm
- 2.06 Vandeae, non-standard shape, bloom size under 30mm

### **Class 3.00 Dendrobium.**

- 3.01 Phalaenanthus type, predominately White
- 3.02 Phalaenanthus type, predominately Purple/Mauve
- 3.03 Phalaenanthus type, any other colour.
- 3.04 Phalaenanthus – peloric ( Pansy or Ekapol type)
- 3.05 Intermediate type
- 3.06 Spatulata type
- 3.07 Any Other type

### **Class 4.00 Oncidiinae**

- 4.01 Oncidiinae over 75mm
- 4.02 Oncidiinae 40mm to 75mm
- 4.03 Oncidiinae under 40mm

### **Class 5.00 Paphiopedilum / Phragmipedium**

- 5.01 Standard type
- 5.02 Maudiae type characteristics



- 5.03 Brachypetalum / Parvisepalum type characteristics
- 5.04 Multi-floral type
- 5.05 Any other type
- 5.06 Phragmipedium

#### Class 6.00 Other Genera

- 6.01 Phalaenopsis over 60mm
- 6.02 Phalaenopsis up to 60mm
- 6.03 Catasetinae
- 6.04 Epidendrum (reed stem type) (Crucifix Orchid)
- 6.05 Any other hybrid

#### Class 7.00 Species

- 7.01 Laeliinae (Cattleya, Laelia, Sophronitis, or Brassavola only) (or new genus names)
- 7.02 Vandeae (excluding Phalaenopsis )
- 7.03 Phalaenopsis
- 7.04 Dendrobium, Australian
- 7.05 Dendrobium, Exotic
- 7.06 Oncidiinae
- 7.07 Paphiopedilum/Phragmipedium
- 7.08 Catasetinae
- 7.09 Any other Australian species
- 7.10 Any other Exotic species

#### Class 8.00 Foliage / Fern

- 8.01 Anthurium (var. andreanum or schizeraenum)
- 8.02 Bromelaid
- 8.03 Tillandsia
- 8.04 Succulent or Cactus
- 8.05 Bonsai
- 8.06 Any other foliage - over 200mm dia. pot size
- 8.07 Any other foliage - up to 200mm dia. pot size
- 8.08 Adiantum (Maiden Hair Fern)
- 8.09 Huperzia (Tassel Fern)
- 8.10 Any other fern

#### Class 9.00 Floral Art

- 9.01 Arrangement - using predominately orchid blooms with embellishments
  - 9.02 Corsage – using predominately orchid blooms
- (Please note: No Class Champion Ribbon in Class 9.00)

**(8)** The Show Marshall in conjunction with senior judges shall have the right to refuse the exhibition of any plant which, in their opinion, appears diseased or pest infected.

**(9)** Both plant sales supervisors will have the authority to accept or reject any plant/s submitted for sale. Commission to the Society on plant sales is 20%

**(10) Prizes awarded for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> in each section.** Class Champions shall be selected from the winners of each section in that class. **Best Aust. Species and Best Exotic Species** shall be selected from the species class. The judge will also select from all other plants in their class the plant deemed to be runner up to the Class Champion, and best Aust. Species, and best Exotic Species. **Best Specimen Orchid** shall be selected from all plants exhibited. **Best Orchid by R.O.S. Novice Grower** plus the runner up shall be selected from plants identified on

plant label as “novice grower” or (‘red spot sticker’ available at set –up Friday) .

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**(11) Grand Champion** of the show shall be selected from the Class Champions plus both “Best Species” and “Best Specimen”.

**The Reserve Champion** of the show shall be selected from the remaining Class Champions, or Best Species, or Best Specimen, plus the plant previously chosen as runner up, in the section from which the Grand Champion was selected.

**(12)** The Rockhampton Orchid Society Inc. or its agents will accept no responsibility for theft, loss, destruction or damage to plants or property.

**(13) Container Displays.** The container may be a pot, saucer, basket, part of a hollow tree or other device to house and support the display. Overall dimensions shall fit within a 50cm. square area with no height restriction but must be free standing. A minimum of two (2) flowering orchid plants along with cut flowers shall be in the display plus embellishments using ferns and/or foliage plants and other props which may be used to highlight a theme. The only flowers allowed in display other than orchids are bromeliads and anthuriums or related types. Registered flowering orchid plants within the display are eligible for individual judging. These must have the registered plant name label displayed close to their bloom/s. Container display judging will be based on the overall aesthetic appearance and quality of all the plants included and will be completed before any individual judging. No one style of display is the ideal. All styles are of equal value when being judged.

## Plant Barcodes

Members are to use the Barcode-Collator allotted to them previously at last year’s Spring Show.

New Members can choose between (Trish Craig and Barry English) see ‘Office Bearers Table’ for contact details.

Plant lists for show entries are to be sent to either collator no later than the Wednesday (11<sup>th</sup> April) before the Show.

Your nominated collator will advise when your barcoded plant-labels are ready for collection.

## Show Displays

As discussed at the February Meeting starting at this Show there will be only one display size. The society will supply a standard 1.8 meter table.

A standard backing –stand will also be supplied, at 1meter wide as used previously on the Small Display. You can use this or a combination of your own backing materials.

**Next Monthly Meeting: Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> March. Starts 7.30 pm.**

**Notice to Members: Please assist if you can with cleaning the hall after the meeting**

## Musings on The Cooktown Orchid, *Dendrobium bigibbum*

By Jeff Glover

The Cooktown Orchid is so synonymous with Queensland as the state's floral emblem it is even an 'anti-fatigue trivia' question at various sites on the Bruce Highway that runs along the coast from Brisbane to Cairns. It is widely regarded as Australia's most attractive endemic orchid. For many people the very name 'Cooktown Orchid' invokes images of tropical rainforests running down to seas filled with coral, and beaches with waving palm trees. However, this is not so, it is instead mostly found in the very different biographical zone of the open forests of Cape York Peninsular, rather than growing in the renowned Wet Tropics to the south of Cooktown as is widely believed. (Lavarack and Gray, 1992).



Trivia sign on the Bruce Highway

This is directly a result of these climatic conditions. Having received abundant water from the monsoon in Summer; once in flower, and then hopefully pollinated, its seeds are later dispersed in the favourable wet and hot season and so the cycle continues again next Summer.

A check on Orchidwiz version 3X shows it has 279 primary hybrids and 3884 progenies. As a result, it goes without saying that one would be hard pressed to find a phalaenanth dendrobium that would not have *Dendrobium bigibbum* in its family tree. Interestingly, in the Geographical Distribution note on this USA derived database, Hawaii is also listed along with Australia (Queensland) and New Guinea as endemic regions. This reminds me of the spiel of a tour guide when I was once visiting Hawaii pontificating about the Hawaiian Macadamia Nut (Queensland Nut) which according to him, was also apparently endemic to Hawaii.

As a result, growing on the tip and the western dry side of the peninsular its hosts are the trees of the remnant patches of scrubs and monsoon forests, not tropical palms and other rainforest trees as some expect. It also occasionally can be found growing on rock faces that are shaded from the extremes of the afternoon sun. The distinct either, dry and hot, then wet and hot, seasons for this region has ramifications for collector cultivation; particularly for those wishing to grow it in the cooler, wetter in Winter southern states. It must have a dry rest period to be successfully grown in cool wet climates. When considering this climatic growth pattern an understanding can also be formed as to why it and its huge number of progeny flower in Autumn rather than in Spring as do the majority of other flowering orchids.

This orchid is highly variable in variety and form, there are also recognized sub-varieties and sub-species (ssp.) and historical synonyms still in use; a veritable taxonomists nightmare. Without delving too far in to this botanist's minefield, it is safe also to say that alba forms are far from uncommon and the very 'light blue' form 'coerulea' is also often seen in cultivation in Queensland. In addition, there is the question of *Dendrobium phalaenopsis* which was once regarded as a synonym for bigibbum; nomenclature that can still be found in use. However, it is now



*Den. bigibbum fma. alba* (owner T Dean)

formally regarded as a separate species. As well, by human intervention through line breeding, many plants have been derived in this manner and the resultant flowers look in my opinion like the equivalent of some outcomes of human cosmetic surgery. Just like the original surgery patient, 'Line Bred' forms are altered so much in shape that they look nothing like the original species and are more akin to multi-level hybrids. Similarly, bicolour, striped and flared supposed 'Cooktown Orchids' are now exhibited at shows, and in my experience are one sure way to get into a 'robust discussion' if doubt is cast upon their authenticity. I heard one wag say that the 'flared' version was endemic to Phuket and found growing wild in Thai restaurants! Lamentably, such is the popularity of this little 'Aussie Gem', every orchid breeder world-wide over the past 5 decades has wanted a piece of the action leading to much confusion as to just what now is the real McCoy.



*Dendrobium bigibbum* var *bigibbum* displaying a white tip. (Lavarack & Gray, 1992)

It is generally accepted that there are three distinct varieties that vary enough in structural form that warrant this distinction. *Dendrobium bigibbum* var. *superbum* is the more abundant and with the largest flowers and longest canes. While the northern form *Dendrobium bigibbum* var. *bigibbum* has smaller flowers and often displays a white spot on the labellum (Lavarack and Gray, 1992). The third recognized variety *Dendrobium bigibbum* var. *compactum*, or better known by the colloquial sobriquet of 'Dwarf Cooktown Orchid', is found growing in the coastal ranges south of Mossman, Far Nth Qld. In the past this was the most contested as to whether it was a distinct variety, or just the result of different growing conditions and other environmental factors. However, over the years it was found that it still maintains its dwarf habit in cultivation while others found further north and



in the western ranges of the Cape York Peninsular do not. Therefore, this cultural exhibition strongly lends to the argument that it is indeed structurally different and is likewise, genetically distinct to the extent to warrant this classification. (Lavarack and Gray, 1992). In addition, to 'muddy the waters further', as previously noted, alba forms occur in all varieties, so it is entirely feasible and proven to have a plant with the nomenclature of *Dendrobium bigibbum* var. *compactum* fma. *alba*, in other words a white Dwarf Cooktown Orchid.

Yet another feature of this endearing 'Aussie Wonder' is its propensity for not only breeding in artificial conditions, but its natural partnership with what could be regarded as the 'Aussie Battler' of orchids', *Dendrobium discolor*, also known as the 'Golden Orchid'. This species is found growing in many diverse locations such as, from mangrove swamps to open forests, ranging to the tip of Cape York to Central Queensland. It is very hardy, has long lasting flowers and produces many root – laden plantlets from its robust canes and can form huge clumps on trees and rock faces when these adhere to the hosts' surface. When found growing together they give us the beautiful botanical gift of the natural hybrid *Dendrobium X superbiens*, known colloquially as 'Curley Pink'. In its natural situation It is



**A modern phalaenanthus Den. hybrid derived from the Cooktown Orchid**

produced from insect cross pollination and wind borne seed dispersal. Like most hybrids it gains the best from both parents, in this case, the colour from *Dendrobium bigibbum* and the robustness, flower longevity, and 'twisted' flower structure from *Dendrobium discolor*.

Once established It can be quite prolific thanks to its plantlet producing propensity also inherited from *discolour* and is found growing in many gardens throughout Queensland on host trees such as Palms and Frangipani. The latter are perfect host as they tend to defoliate to some extent in Winter in central and southern Queensland locations, and then provide a full canopy in Summer that gives protection from



**Den. Curly Pink in the author's garden showing a seed pod and plantlet (kiki), far right.**

the harsh sun and heat. Many of the plantlets are given away, and on reflection this probably was my first knowledge of orchids as a child. We had a huge frangipani tree in our back yard which always seemed to have the pink flowers of the orchids mingled with the white and yellow of the frangipani. Looking back, it truly was a beautiful tropical image that lingers in my memory; one which was replicated for others many times by the gift of plantlets to neighbours and friends by my mother; who later told me our crop of Curley Pink was started from my Nanna, who not surprisingly also had a Frangipani in her yard covered in Curley Pink. Naturally, I have it in my garden, and yes, on Frangipani and Palms trees. It truly is the orchid- gift that keeps on giving.

As Australians and Queenslanders we certainly can be proud of our Cooktown Orchid's contribution to the Orchid World. It's beautiful colours, varietal range, shape, hardiness and fertility are a source of admiration world-wide. Especially, when coming from a continent not thought of as being a home to beautiful exotic endemic orchids. We may not have the abundant genera and species of Asia and the Americas, but in *Dendrobium biggibum* we do have one of the best. There would be many an overseas flower industry that would not be in existence if it was not for the presence of this little Aussie Breeder.

If you would like to see more of what Queensland has to offer in colours other than the Maroon of football fame, keep a place on your calendar for September 14-15, 2019 as the Rockhampton Orchid Society will be hosting the 10th. Sub-Tropical Orchid Council Conference and Show, in Rockhampton, Australia's first tropical City and The Beef and Barra Capital situated on the Tropic of Capricorn by the mighty Fitzroy River. Details and updates will be appearing in Orchid Australia from now on and also on the Rockhampton Orchid Society Inc. website [www.rockhamptonorchidsociety.com.au](http://www.rockhamptonorchidsociety.com.au) We hope you can join us; you may not be able to see a Cooktown orchid in the wild; but I know there are many gardens where a Curley Pink may be on offer.



The trivia answer sign.

Sources Cited: *Australian Tropical Orchids*. Bill Lavarack & Bruce Gray. 1992, Firth & Firth Books., Malanda, Qld. Australia.

Sources Consulted: *Growing Australian Orchids*. A.M. Brombery & B. Maloney. 1998, Kangaroo Press Pty. Ltd, East Roseville, Australia.

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### Your Orchid Diary 2018

<u>March</u>	30-31st Bribie OFS Show 30-2 <sup>nd</sup> April Gladstone OFS Easter Show
<u>April</u>	6-7 <sup>th</sup> Caloundra OFS autumn Show <b>14-15 ROSI Autumn Show</b>
<u>May</u>	21 <sup>st</sup> South Burnett Show Wondai 5-6 <sup>th</sup> Gympie District Show & Garden Expo 11-12 <sup>th</sup> Noosa District OFS Show Cooroy 11-12 <sup>th</sup> Bundaberg Orchid Society Show 26-27 <sup>th</sup> Boyne Tannum OFS Show
<u>June</u>	16 <sup>th</sup> STOC Meeting Maryborough
<u>July</u>	13-15 <sup>th</sup> Qld. Garden Expo Nambour 20-22 <sup>th</sup> Caboolture OFS Show
<u>August</u>	10-11 <sup>th</sup> Maroochydore Orchid Show 31-1 <sup>st</sup> Sept Nambour Orchid Show
<u>Sept</u>	14-15 Noosa Dist. Orchid Show TBA Caloundra Spring Show (closed) 21-22 <sup>nd</sup> Glasshouse OFS Show <b>29-30<sup>th</sup> ROSI Spring Show</b>
<u>Oct</u>	12-13 <sup>th</sup> Bribie Island OFS Show
<u>Nov</u>	2-3 <sup>rd</sup> Nambour Species Society Show STOC Meeting Caboolture

**Rockhampton Orchid Society Inc.**  
[www.rockhamptonorchidsociety.com.au](http://www.rockhamptonorchidsociety.com.au)

Meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of each month (excluding December) at St Stephens Presbyterian Church Hall, Burnett St. Nth Rockhampton; commencing at 7.30 pm. Plants must be tabled by 7.15pm.

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