

CANTERBURY ORCHID SOCIETY

P.O.Box 7131, Sydenham, Christchurch 8240

Bulletin No.605 – April 2010

President: Marco Gonzalez Ph. 352 4046 or 021 951 625

Email – gonzalezm@asurequality.com

Secretary: Ross Bicknell Ph. 325 2779

Treasurer: David Rushworth Ph. 980 5483

Editor: Tony Connelly Ph. 384 8444

Email - aredc@xtra.co.nz

Next Meeting: Monday 12th April – 7pm.

Annual General Meeting

Plant display, orchid of the month by popular vote

Speaker: Lesley Newton

Subject: Japan Grand Prix Orchid Show



Pterostylis banksii

The March monthly meeting was attended by an average number of 21 members. The recently distributed survey forms, to be filled out and returned by the end of March, together with proxy forms for the upcoming A.G.M., caused some discussion.

A small number of survey forms were returned on the night, and the Committee hopes the majority will be returned to our Box 7131 Sydenham, in time to be used as an indication of member's future input at the A.G.M.

Our speaker for the evening was Murray Lister, who presented us with a well informed account of the recent field trip to the Arthur's Pass region, made by the N.Z. Native Orchid Group.

His comprehensive commentary and picture show complemented the written account contributed by Melanie Bridgen in the February Bulletin.

The highlight of the survey, was the discovery of *Pterostylis Irwinii* that had never been recorded so far south before.

Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the pictorial record of the native flowers and alpine scenery, and a well deserved vote of thanks was moved by Marco, and acclaimed by all.

Reminder

Please remember to fill in your Survey Forms and return them to Box 7131 Sydenham before the AGM, so that relevant information can be collated, and used as a guide to elect a new Committee for the 2010/11 year.

Plants on Display for March

A diverse bench of about twenty orchids in flower were displayed, and it was most difficult to seek out one to feature, as 'Orchid of the Month'.

Two plants of **Promeneia**; *xanthina* and *crawshayana* with yellow flowers displayed all around the pots, were shown by Ross Bicknell.

Aliceara Sweetheart Jonal 'Everglades' AM/AOS **Miltonias**, *spectabilis* & *clowesii* plus **Oncidiums**, *crispum* & *curtum* together with **Brassia verrucosa** combined to form a long arching spike, with five yellow/brown 10cm flowers.

My personal choice was Ellen Manson's lovely plant of **Anguloa clowesii**, with perfectly formed leaves & two stunning yellow tulip shaped flowers.

A group of eight colourful **Miltonias** combined to form a wonderful display by Adrienne Rushworth.

Rarely seen on display, were a **Neolehmannia** *porpax*, and two examples of **Ornithophora** *radicans*.

Two well presented **Phalaenopsis** and a **Cattleya** were also shown.

Voted '**Orchid of the month**', was an outstanding Vanda hybrid, grown by Murray Lister.

Ascocenda Duang x Vanda Pimporn



A.G.M. – Monday 12th April 7 pm; in the Watling Lounge downstairs in the Horticultural Centre.
It is very important you attend this meeting, as a 50% attendance is required to make a quorum, in order to elect a new Committee.

As all positions are up for election, please consider how you can contribute to the running of the Society. The position of Editor must be filled, as I have decided not to continue as Editor. I regret not being able to continue in this most interesting and challenging task after the 12th April, but I am willing to assist the new Editor make a smooth transition.

Last year, provision was made to store all the relevant information required to edit the Bulletin into a Memory Flash Stick. This belongs to the Society, and contains the Bulletin Template, Mailing Lists, Show Certificates and other useful information.

Even if you have only minimal computer skills, consider putting your name forward at the meeting to fill this vital position.

The Neem Tree:

by Tony Connelly

All parts of the Neem Tree (*Azadirachta indica*) are useful and contain compounds that have anti-feedant, antiseptic, antiviral, antipyretic, anti-inflammatory, anti-ulcer, and antifungal qualities.

For a number of years I have used neem products exclusively on my orchids. When I have spoken to other growers of its usefulness as a substitute for more lethal remedies, the overall response has been rather lukewarm, and often downright sceptical.

Recently, I was most heartened by this testimony from an experienced and well-respected orchid grower.

Neem v Mealy Bug, Scale, White Fly, and Botrytis

Recently I rebuilt my orchid house increasing the floor size and roof height. I have made new provision for good ventilation and lighting, double-skinned all the light areas, installed a temperature-humidity clock and a waterfall feature. After completion, in the month of December the temperatures ranged from 25deg to 35deg during the day and down to 10deg at night. Humidity was a little scarier, as it stayed somewhere between 70% and 80%.

Great I thought to myself, BUT, firstly I had an explosion of white fly, followed closely by mealy bug, especially on the *Laelia* and *Cattleya* plants, then to finish it off, my *Sarcochilus* were covered with brown scale on the undersides of the leaves, in a big way. I don't mind saying it took the wind out of my sails and I spent countless hours cleaning plants using strong solutions of Winter Oil, only to find I was losing the battle. If that was not bad enough, the white *Phalaenopsis* began flowering and they were covered with black spots of *Botrytis*; enough to lead a man to despair!

For some time I have used neem granules each time I have repotted plants, but never in its liquid form. I put myself in the group known as "sceptics", but with my back to the wall I had to do something, so here are my results.

I mixed Neem Oil at the rate of 15mls per litre of water adding a couple of drops of a sticking agent.

I used a 5 litre pressure sprayer, using protective gloves and a dust face mask; spraying early in the evening in temperatures around 20deg, always spraying during the evenings, after having watered in the morning.

After three applications, 11th-14th and the 17th of December, the White Fly and Mealy Bug were virtually gone.

After another two more applications on the 23rd and 29th of December, all the Scale disappeared. I have now extended the time between applications to three weeks apart, to make sure of control.

For *Botrytis*, after a discussion at Club night, it was recommended that I spray my *Phalaenopsis* at the bud stage. The great test was on two *Phalaenopsis amabilis* in early bud; one was sprayed twice, two weeks apart and the other not at all. Both plants have bloomed; the sprayed one has no blemish and the other is a complete disaster.

To sum it all up, I will leave it up to you to draw your own conclusions, but I am a convert to Neem, and my orchids are a testament to that.

Murray Lister,
Ashburton, 17/02/10.