

# Queensland Orchid Society Inc,

PO Box 1153  
Capalaba Qld 4157  
Australia

QOS official website [www.qos.org.au](http://www.qos.org.au)



## July Bulletin

July 2018 Volume 58 Number 6

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Next General Meeting at 8pm on 9th July 2018  
Venue: Red Hill Community Sports Centre  
22 Fulcher Road, Red Hill, QLD 4059

Next Committee Meeting at 10 am 18th July 2018  
At the Home of Kevin & Margaret Horsey  
At 110 Aspinall Street Leichardt

### Affiliated Societies, Judging Roster for July 2018

<b><u>Beaudesert O &amp; F S.</u></b>	3rd Wednesday @ 7.30pm	Michael Billiau. David Bushse. Kaye Bushse. John Roberts.
<b><u>Brisbane O.S.</u></b>	4th Monday @ 7.45pm	Lynda Rapkins. Reg Illingworth. Maree Illingworth.
<b><u>John Oxley O.S.</u></b>	2nd Wednesday @ 7.30pm	Don Nitschinsk. John Buckley. Reg Illingworth.
<b><u>Logan &amp; Dist. O.S.</u></b>	3rd Tuesday @ 7.45pm	Don. Nitschinsk. Lynda Rapkins. Michael Billiau.
<b><u>Ipswich O.S.</u></b>	1st Wednesday @ 7.30pm	John Buckley. Maree Illingworth. .

### Judges for Q.O.S. General Meeting on 9th July 2018

Les Vickers. John Rooks.

Judging Starts 7.45

### July Meeting Informat

Guest Speaker Robert Reitano

Subject. Dendrobium Spatulata Species

### Visiting Society in July

Aspley Orchid Society

Ipswich Orchid Society



*Proudly Supporting our Charity*



*The Lady Cilento Children's Hospital Foundation*

**The Queensland Orchid Society Inc. founded on Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> January 1934**

Members who contribute to this Bulletin endeavor to assure the reliability of its contents.

Any cultural advice provided is a guide only and may not suit individual growers.

It is the responsibility of the individual to validate such advice before applying suggested methods.

The Society welcomes potential members to come to the general meetings as our guests, and advises those wishing to join us, that subscription fees (in Australian Dollars) are

**\$20 for a single, \$25 for a family** from 1st January

**\$10 for a single, \$12.50 for a family** from 1st July

Other Orchid Societies interested in affiliating with us are advised that **Society Affiliation is \$30**  
Payable on the 1st January each year.

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2018 General Meeting of The Queensland Orchid Society Inc.

At Red Hill Community Sports Centre, 22 Fulcher Road Red Hill

MINUTES

Judging commenced at 7.45pm

Reminded members to get their raffle tickets from Greg & Peter price \$2.50 a strip the prizes are a variety of well grown orchid plants.

Please sign the attendance book.

The President Barry Kable declared the General Meeting open at 8:05pm. Welcome to Members, Visitors & Judges.

Present: As per Register 32

Apologies: Alf & Kaylene Filia, Pam Price, Myra Westphal

Visitors: A McKell

Nominated Judges for June: Les Vickers, John Rooks, Michael Billiau,

Associates: Helen Vickers, Gordon Grant, Ellen Stoysich, Ken Haase

Guest Societies for June: - Brisbane & Redlands Orchid Societies

New Members:

Financial Report: Treasurer Kevin Horsey to present Financial Report for May 2018.

Balance Brought Fwd. \$53,992.49

Income \$ 187.70

Expenditure \$ 2,398.53

Cash book Balance \$51,781.66

(Copy of reports was tabled)

Moved by Kevin Horsey and Seconded by Amanda O'Reilly

Correspondence: Your committee has attended to routine correspondence. (Newsletters show Schedules & other sundry notices are on sign in table)

General Business:

- Special Day today - John Elbert awarded Order of Australia in Queens Birthday Honours list and it is Keith McGinn's birthday.
- Guest Societies –
- John Rooks spoke on behalf of Redlands Orchid Society – Meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of month at Donald Simpson Community Centre Cleveland. They have a Saturday Morning Culture Group that meet on 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of month at members homes. One day Autumn & Spring Charity Shows are held each year supporting the Redland Hospital Auxiliary. Spring show will be on the 1<sup>st</sup> September, non-members can sell orchid if they bench.
- President Ken Haase spoke on behalf of Brisbane Orchid Society – Society started in 1963, membership is growing signed up 40 new members at last show. Annual show held in April each year. Their last show was their best ever. They hold around 3 bus trips each year. Meetings on 4<sup>th</sup> month except December at Progress Hall Logan Road Upper Mt Gravatt.
- Aranbeem Orchids Winter Sale Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2018. Large selection of Australian Cattleya breeding by Sam Scalia & Aranbeem will be available.

West Brisbane Orchid Society presentation by Chris Cobb on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> August at The Gap Church 1125 Waterworks Rd The Gap. \$2.00 towards cost for supper. RSVP 14<sup>th</sup> August.

Ekka 2018 – In the Old Museum Precinct. help will be need from members to supply plants & with the design of display then final setup on Wednesday 8th August. Help on display 10<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> 2 shifts a day, a ticket will be supplied for entry. Plant will be needed to be dropped off by Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> August on Northside to David James 726 Hamilton Road Chermside or Doug Wanks 14 Coman Street Rothwell & on the Southside at Barry & Ann Kable's 281 Redland Bat Road Capalaba. Potted Plants Competition – To be Benched on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> August from 9:00am to 12:00pm – \$15.00 to exhibit as many plants as you want, an exhibitor can only bench 3 plants per class.

- Ekka Official Site - [www.ekka.com.au](http://www.ekka.com.au) open Competitions Categories then Flower/Garden then Potted Plants for schedule
- Spring Show – 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> October International Shooting Complex Belmont – Promote at other societies that members belong to. It's not that far to come 1 klm off Gateway Arterial Road, plenty of parking no hill to climb, we need to get the word out about the move.
- 2019 is QOS's 85<sup>th</sup> year any ideas how to celebrate it

Any Other Business:

Tonight's Guest Speaker: John Roberts gave an informative talk on Native Orchids from North QLD down – Barry Thanked John for his presentation.

Raffle: 10 draws - Plants

Benching Results:

- 1<sup>st</sup> in Judges Choice Species Phalaenopsis amboinensis owned by K Haase.
- 1<sup>st</sup> in Judges Choice Hybrid Paphiopedilum Flame Arrow owned by L & H Vickers.
- 1<sup>st</sup> in Novice Rhyncholaeliocattleya Memoria Len Lawler owned by A O'Reilly.
- Special Interest Plant Bonatec speciose owned by G Yong Gee.
- Lucky Exhibitor K Haase .
- 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> for Guest Societies received a plant see plant results in Bulletin for names.

106 plants were exhibited by 20 members and guests

**The next General Meeting will be on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2018** at Red Hill Community Sports Centre, 22 Fulcher Road, Red Hill.

Thank you to all who helped tonight.

Meeting closed at 9:30pm

## QUEENSLAND ORCHID SOCIETY INC.

### News from the Committee meeting

The Spring Show 2018 is a 2 Day Show Setup on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> Show 13<sup>th</sup> And 14<sup>th</sup> October  
So Mark Your Calendar Venue Belmont Shooting Complex Old Cleveland Rd. Belmont

The cost to hire the security cameras affiliated Society's is \$ 40.00  
Non Affiliated Society's \$60.00

### Aranbeem Winter Sale

Aranbeem Orchids Winter Sale Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2018. Large selection of Australian Cattleya breeding by Sam Scalia & Aranbeem will be available.

# Special Interest Plant Of The Month

## June 2018

**PLANT NAME:** *Bonatea speciose Willd*

**OWNER'S NAME** Gary Yong Gee

**JUDGE'S COMMENT:** .



**Housing** 50% Shadecloth & Solaweave covered shade house plant is on weldmesh above a gravel floor 2mtr below roof and receives 70% shade

**Watering :** Rainwater Tank overhead watering system every 2 days in summer tapering down to about twice a week in the winter.

**Feeding Program :** Once a week with various fertilisers such as Horticultural solutions HSO 12, Duet, Thrive, Fertiliser is continued during Winter while plant is growing.

**Potting Medium :** Course sand with Potting mix ratio 1-2

**Other Cultural Comments :** Pot sits on a very shallow tray during warmer Months so that it never dries out After flowering plant does not die down and become dormant but water frequency is reduced and water tray is removed and tray is placed back when new growth commences.

## New Judging Course

- My name is Michael Billiau and I am the new Training Officer for the AOCQRSAJP (Australian Orchid Council Queensland Region Southern Area Judging Panel).
- The purpose of this email is to inform you that I want to start a new judging course in July and am looking for expressions of interest from your members that might be interested in learning how to judge orchids.
- At this stage the location for the course will be the Bayside Uniting Church at Tingalpa unless I can find something that is more appropriate so that people don't have excessive driving distances. I am looking at holding it on a Saturday morning between 9 and 12. Date will follow as soon as I have more information. There may be a small cost involved (\$3 to \$5) to pay for the room and other things like morning tea etc.
- Any interested person can email with their details and a short history of their orchid knowledge to the following: [m\\_b\\_billiau@bigpond.com](mailto:m_b_billiau@bigpond.com)

Regards

Michael Billiau



# Benching Results for June 2018



## JUDGES' CHOICE - HYBRID

- |   |                                   |               |
|---|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| 1 | <i>Paph. Flame Arrow 'T-Star'</i> | Vickers L & H |
|---|-----------------------------------|---------------|

## JUDGES' CHOICE - SPECIES

- |   |                          |          |
|---|--------------------------|----------|
| 1 | <i>Phal. Amboinensis</i> | Grant G. |
|---|--------------------------|----------|

## GUEST SOCIETY Brisbane O.S.

- |   |                                   |               |
|---|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| 1 | <i>Paph. Transvaal 'Celenthe'</i> | Vickers L & H |
| 2 | <i>Paph. Leeannum 'Toby'</i>      | Vickers L & H |

## GUEST SOCIETY Redlands O.S.

- |   |                       |               |
|---|-----------------------|---------------|
| 1 | <i>Onc. Unknown</i>   | Mc.Kell A & D |
| 2 | <i>Paph. Helvetia</i> | Rooks J & D.  |

## CATTLEYA EXHIBITION OVER 90mm

- |   |                                     |            |
|---|-------------------------------------|------------|
| 1 | <i>C. Redland Standard</i>          | Haase K    |
| 2 | <i>Rlc. Brunswick Blush 'Coral'</i> | Horsey K&M |
| 3 | <i>C. Dal's Choice 'Rudak'</i>      | Rutter J&H |

## CATTLEYA EXHIBITION Up TO 90mm

- |   |                               |              |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------|
| 1 | <i>C Dal's Choice</i>         | Haase K      |
| 2 | <i>Rlc. Black Mesa</i>        | McGinn K&A   |
| 3 | <i>C. Royal Beau 'Alex L'</i> | Rutter J & H |

## CATTLEYA NON-EXHIBITION

- |   |                                    |              |
|---|------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1 | <i>C. Lucky Charms 'Esmeralda'</i> | Rutter J & H |
| 2 | <i>Sgr. Yukosuka Story</i>         | Haase K.     |
| 3 | <i>C. Scarlet Imp 'Paradise'</i>   | McGinn K&A   |

## DENDROBIUM

- |   |   |            |
|---|---|------------|
| 1 | <i>Den Napporn Green Star 'Delilah'</i> | Grant G    |
| 2 | <i>Den. Andree Millar</i>               | McGinn K&A |
| 3 | <i>Den. Assie's Angelic x Lithocola</i> | Haase K    |

## PAPHIOPEDILUM EXHIBITION

- |   |  |            |
|---|--|------------|
| 1 | <i>Paph. Jim's World 'Faye'</i>          | Kidd I R   |
| 2 | <i>Paph. Yerba Buena x Thomas Gracia</i> | Tierney M  |
| 2 | <i>Paph. Hildegard</i>                   | McGinn K&A |

## PAPHIOPEDILUM OTHER

- |   |  |               |
|---|--|---------------|
| 1 | <i>Paph. Flame Arrow 'T-Star'</i>            | Vickers L & H |
| 2 | <i>Paph. Holdenii x Gavotte</i>              | Tierney M     |
| 3 | <i>Paph. Conco-bellatulum x White Knight</i> | Tierney M     |

## ONCIDIUM ALLIANCE

- |   |                                     |             |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1 | <i>Onc. Juino's Delight</i>         | McGinn K&A  |
| 2 | <i>Ohd. Cherry Fudge 'Carmela'.</i> | Kable B & A |
| 3 | <i>Onc. Juino's Delight</i>         | McGinn K&A  |

## VANDACEOUS

- |   |                                       |            |
|---|---------------------------------------|------------|
| 1 | <i>V. Candace's Sunshine</i>          | McGinn K&A |
| 2 | <i>V. Brighyon's Leopard'Canary'.</i> | McGinn K&A |
| 3 | <i>V. Pachara Delight</i>             | Grant G    |

## ANY OTHER GENERA

- |   |   |               |
|---|---|---------------|
| 1 | <i>Cycnoches Tawny Bar</i>                    | Kidd I R      |
| 2 | <i>Cloweseum Brown's Delight 'Rose'</i>       | Vickers L & H |
| 3 | <i>Fredclarkeara After Dark 'Black Pearl'</i> | Haase K       |

## SPECIES SYMPODIAL

- |   |                            |            |
|---|----------------------------|------------|
| 1 | <i>Paph. fairreanum</i>    | Haase K    |
| 2 | <i>Bulb echinophilum</i>   | Haase K    |
| 3 | <i>Cestichis latifolia</i> | Yong Gee G |

## SPECIES MONOPODAL

- |   |                                 |         |
|---|---------------------------------|---------|
| 1 | <i>Phal. amborinensis</i>       | Grant G |
| 2 | <i>Gastrochilus retrochilus</i> | Haase K |
| 3 | <i>Phal. Violacea 'Sharon'</i>  | Haase K |

## AUSTRALIAN NATIVE HYBRID

- |   |                                    |            |
|---|------------------------------------|------------|
| 1 | <i>Den. Fantasyland 'Princess'</i> | Haase K    |
| 2 | <i>Den. Fantasyland 'Sweetie'</i>  | McGinn K&A |
| 3 | <i>Sarco. Starstruck</i>           | Tiemey M   |

## NOVICE

- |   |   |                   |
|---|---|-------------------|
| 1 | <i>Rlc. Memoria Len Lawler *</i>          | O'Reilly A        |
| 2 | <i>Den Fantasyland 'Sweetie'</i>          | O'Reilly A        |
| 3 | <i>Rth Funch Orange Nugget x YoungMin</i> | Orange O'Reilly A |

Orchids with an '\* asterix' after the name indicates the plant has been registered.  
Please change your name tag.

## UPCOMING SHOWS

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Toowoomba O./S</b>             | 14th & 15th July St Pauls Hall, James & Phillips St Toowoomba          |
| <b>John Oxley Dist, O./S</b>      | 28th & 29th July Auditorium Botanic Gardens Mt. Coot-tha               |
| <b>Australian Native O/S.</b>     | 18th & 19 th August Strathpine Community Centre 199 Gympie Strathpine  |
| <b>Maroochydore O./S.</b>         | 10th & 11th August Millwell Rd. Community Hall Millwell                |
| <b>Logan &amp; District O./S.</b> | 25th & 26 th August Springwood Rd. State School Hall                   |
| <b>Nambour O.&amp; S.</b>         | 31st August & 1st September Uniting Church Hall Coronation Ave Nambour |
| <b>North Brisbane O./S.</b>       | 25th & 26 th August Auditorium Botanic Gardens Mt. Coot-tha            |
| <b>Tweed District O./S.</b>       | 31 August & 1st September Jessie Mc Milliam Wollumbin St. Murwillumbah |



# On the Bench

Photography by Reg Illingworth

## Judges Choice Hybrid



Plant :- *Paph. Flame Arrow* 'T-Star'  
Grower :- L&H Vickers

## Judges Choice Species



Plant :- *Phal. amboinensis*  
Grower :- G. Grant



**CATTLEYA OVER 90mm**  
Plant C. Redland Standard  
Grower :- K.. Haase



**ANY OTHER GENERA**  
Plant *Cynoches Tawny Bar*  
Grower :- I R Kidd



**Species SYMPODIAL**  
Plant *Paph. fairreanum*  
Grower :- K Haase



**Cattleya Exhibition up to 90mm**  
Plant :- C. Dal's Choice  
Grower:- Haase K



**Paphiopedilum Other**  
Plant:- *Paph. Flame Arrow* 'T-Star'  
Grower:- L & H Vickers



**DENDROBIUM**  
Plant:- Den Napporn Green Star  
'Delilah'  
Grower :- G Grant



**Ocidium ALLIANCE**  
Plant:- Onc. Juino's Delight  
Grower:- K & A Mc Ginn



**Cattleya NON Exhibition**  
Plant :- C. Lucky Charms  
'Esmeralda'  
Grower :- J & H Rutter



**Australian Native HYBRID**  
Plant :- Den Fantaryland 'Princess'  
Grower :- K Haase

# QUEENSLAND ORCHID SOCIETY

## OUR SPRING ORCHID SHOW

13th, 14th October 2018

**WILL BE HELD AT A NEW VENUE**

**The Belmont Shooting Complex  
1485 Old Cleveland Road, Belmont  
JUST FOLLOW THE SIGNS**



*A Stunning Presentation of Beautiful Orchids*

8.30am–3.30pm Sat, Sunday 8.30am–3pm

Leading Orchid Growers Available For  
Potting Demonstrations & Cultural Advice

**\*QUALITY SALE PLANTS \*FLORAL ART**

**\*REASONABLE PRICES**

**\*ORCHID ACCESSORIES & BOOKS FOR SALE**

Light Refreshment & Great Raffles

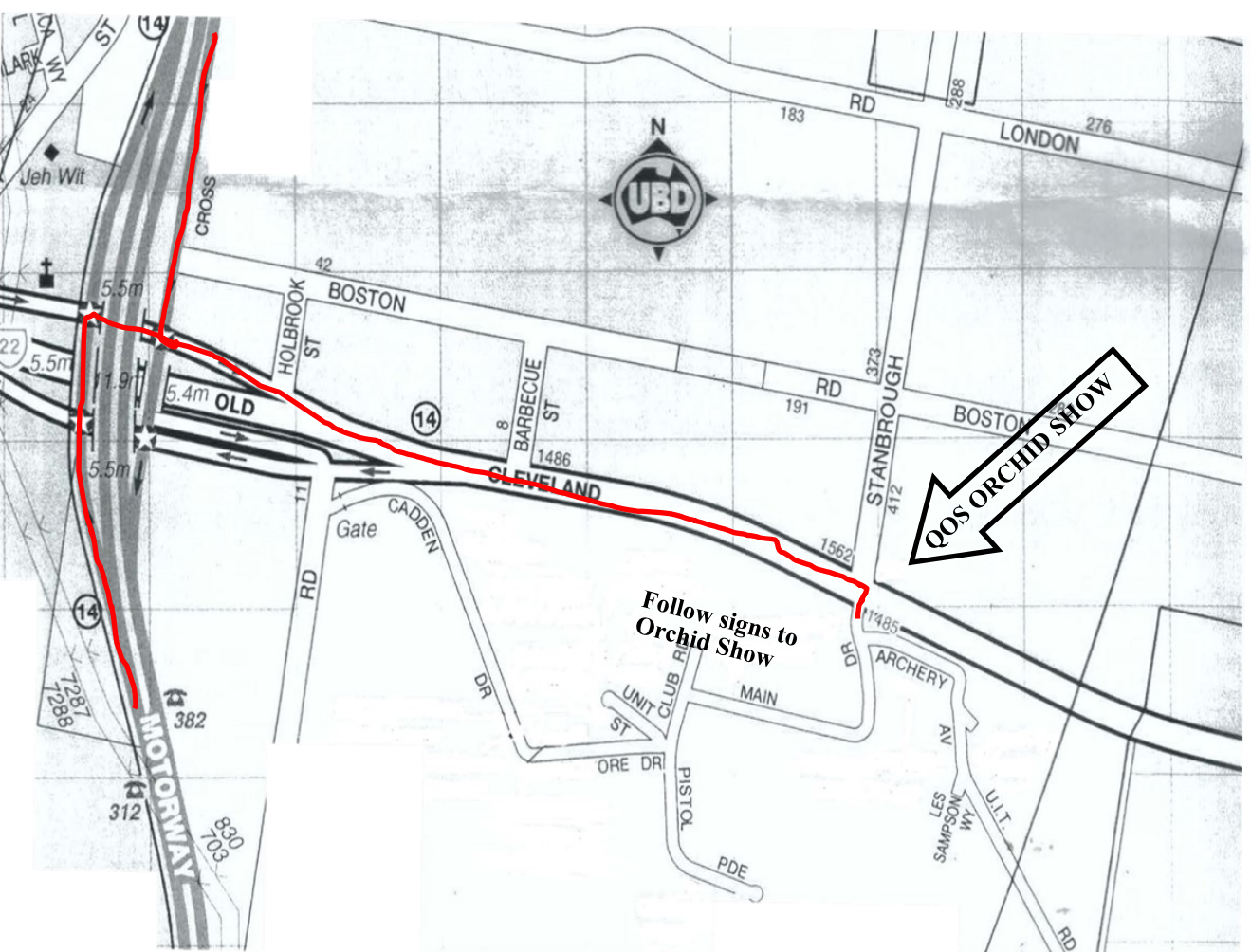
Admission \$4

**Proudly Supporting our Charity**

**The Lady Cliento Children's Hospital Foundation**

Enquiries – Ann Kable Ph 07 38245931

Email: [qos.secretary@bigpond.com](mailto:qos.secretary@bigpond.com)





*Chris Cobb*

## CHRIS COBB

### "The Native Orchids of Cape York Peninsula" West Brisbane Orchid Society - Wednesday, 22 August



Chris started growing Orchids back in 1978 and joined as a member of the North Moreton Orchid Group, where he did his Orchid Judging course.

He was also a member of the Aspley Orchid Society and a founding member of the KABI Native Orchid group in Brisbane.

In October 1993 he moved to Cairns. Chris started to explore the orchids of Cape York Peninsula with his first trip up the Cape in 1994.

Every time Chris went bush he would

take photos of orchids and their habitat.

In 2003 he went "high tech" and started using a digital camera to record his orchid discoveries.

In 2000 Chris travelled to California for five weeks and gave nine orchid lectures. He repeated this same trip again in 2007.

He has done many presentations on North Old native orchids - Adelaide twice; four trips to Melbourne; several to Sydney, Gosford and Newcastle; and, many more in Brisbane, Townsville, Ingham and Cairns. His highlight presentation was a special focus on *Cymbidium canaliculatum* at the 2011 Singapore World Orchid Conference.

In his own words:

"I try to use my talks as a teaching tool by showing orchids in their natural environment, how I grow them, and some tips on fertilizing, watering and fungicide".

Chris's presentation "The Native Orchids of Cape York Peninsula" at West Brisbane Orchid Society's meeting on Wednesday, 22 August at 7:30 PM will be outstanding. Don't miss it!

RSVP by 14 August to:

whossec@yahoo.com.au

\$2.00 contribution



## Welcome to the Website of Gary Backhouse

This website contains information on how to purchase EBooks in my 'Orchids of Australia' series. Currently two EBooks are available and a third is in production.



I have had a keen interest in natural history, especially wild orchids, for over 40 years and have travelled throughout Australia and to the major orchid areas of the world, photographing orchids flowering in the wild. I've managed to photograph over 1,200 species of Australia's est. 1,900 species of wild orchids, and over 5,000 orchid species worldwide, from northern Norway (inside the Arctic Circle!), to the mountains of New Guinea and Ecuador, to the Amazon basin in Brazil and to the southern tip of South America. While that sounds a lot of orchids, that still leaves some 20,000 species of wild orchids to be photographed! The EBooks are a way to get some of those images published. I'm also a keen wildlife watcher but fairly pedestrian wildlife photographer.

The Kabi Group is getting Gary Backhouse to do a presentation in August as our meeting is in the same week we are having him as Guest Speaker at our August Meeting, any Members from other Orchid Society's are Welcome to Attend for a \$2.00 donation to help cover the cost of this great Speaker.



# Ekka 2018

The Flower and Garden precinct has expanded each year since it moved up to the Old Museum. Last year for the first time in many years a Potted Plants Competition was staged. There were 26 classes of foliage and orchids with prize money for each class and \$100.00 for Champion Potted Plant of Show. More support is needed from the plant community to keep the competition running, please think about benching an orchid or foliage plant, the full schedule is on the Ekka website [www.ekka.com.au](http://www.ekka.com.au).

Orchid Societies of South East Queensland have been offered a display site again this year, your help will be needed to supply orchids for the display and 4 people a day will be needed on the display to speak with the public about orchid growing. More details will be available soon. See Barry or Ann Kable if you can help.

Ekka 2018 starts on 10<sup>th</sup> and runs for 10 days till the 19<sup>th</sup> August.



## ORDER OF AUSTRALIA

Mr John Gerard EBERT

### For Services to Community health

Services include

Ankylosing Spondylitis Group of Queensland

President, 1995-2007

Life Member, 2009.

Queensland Aids Council.

Foundation Committee Member, 1984-1988

Member, Ageing in diversity action group, 2014.

Community Correspondent Radio 612 ABC Brisbane, since 2011

Awards and recognition includes

Recipient, LGBTI Seniors Awards for contributions to active

Queensland AIDS Council 2014

# Plant nutrition

Ask ten people about plant nutrition and you'll probably get ten different answers.

This is a simple approach to a complicated subject.

## What are Nutrients?

I know you're probably not interested in a lot of scientific stuff, but a little knowledge here goes a long way toward successful growing.

There are 20 elements necessary for healthy plant growth. Air and water supply carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen. The other 17 mineral elements must be supplied by the growing media or fertilizer amendments.

In nature, plants get nutrients from organic debris that collects at the roots. This can be anything from decaying tree bark to bird droppings. Complex interactions involving live bacteria, enzymes, and microbes break down this organic matter so the plant can absorb it.

This process is almost impossible with potted plants because potting mixes are sterilized, killing the bacteria needed to transform the organic matter. So potted plants rely on the grower to provide the nutritional elements they need for growth.

## Plant Food or Plant Nutrients?

**Don't confuse "Nutrients" with "Plant Food". The real "food" plants use for growing is the light, water, and air. See box at right. Nutrients, on the other hand, are the minerals absorbed at the roots.**

**If you're not giving your plants the proper food they need to grow (light, water, air), your choice of nutrients won't matter.**

## Plant Food or Plant Nutrients?

Plants manufacture their own "food". **Using the power of the sun, they mix air, light, and water to make carbohydrates.**

These carbohydrates are the real "food" that stimulates new growth. **This process is called "photosynthesis".**

On the other hand, **"Plant Nutrition"** is the mineral elements collected by the roots that enhance photosynthesis. **These nutritional elements cannot compensate for lack real food plants use for growth (air, light, and water).**

So, before you give your plants that extra shot of energy with more nutrients, make sure they're getting **the "real food" they need for healthy new growth.**

- ☐ Adequate light
- ☐ Correct watering
- ☐ Good air circulation

## Know Your Fertilizer!

All fertilizers are not the same! (For this discussion, the words fertilizer and nutrients are interchangeable.) Nutritional elements are divided into two categories; macro-nutrients, and micro-nutrients. Plants need large amounts of some elements (the macro-nutrients) and only trace amounts of others (micro-nutrients). Take a close look and you'll find some of the major brands are not what they're cracked up to be when it comes to growing orchids.

## 3 Things to Look for When Buying Fertilizer for Orchids

### 1. N-P-K Ratio

All fertilizers contain three main elements; Nitrogen (N), Phosphorus (P), and Potash (K). This is called the NPK ratio. Fertilizer packages always have three numbers on the front panel that describes the NPK ratio. The first number is Nitrogen (N), the second is Phosphorus (P), and the third is Potash (K). The numbers describe what percentage of each element is in the fertilizer.

#### Read the label:

Look for 3 numbers on front panel e.g This fertilizer has an NPK of 10-15-10. 10% Nitrogen(N), 15% Phosphorus(P), and 10% Potassium(K).	Look for 3 numbers on front panel e.g This fertilizer has an NPK of 7-9-5. 7% Nitrogen(N), 9% Phosphorus(P), and 5% Potassium(K).
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Think of the NPK ratio as the recipe of the ingredients inside the package. Adjusting the balance of these main ingredients during the growing and blooming cycles encourages healthier plants and bigger blooms. More on this later.

### 2. Avoid Urea

Urea is an inexpensive form of nitrogen, the primary ingredient in all fertilizers (the first number on the package). Plant roots cannot use urea based nitrogen until it is broken down by enzymes or bacteria. That's great for outside plants, but sterilized potting mixes don't contain the enzymes needed to convert urea into something the plant can use. Unused urea turns to salt and actually becomes harmful to the plant's root system. This is especially true for orchids because orchid roots simply can't tolerate salt. **Avoid plant food that has "urea" on the label!** You might actually be harming your plants!

The best source of Nitrogen for all potted plants is Ammonia cal or Nitrate. You can find this on the back panel of the package. (For now, don't concern yourself with the percentage numbers.)