The Cymbidium Newsletter

Reg No A0023705W COSV Website: www.cosv.com.au

October/November 2011

2011
Meeting Dates

January –
February 8
March 8
April 12
May 10
June 14
July 12
August 9
September 13
October 11
November 8
December 13

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- Secretary: **Jenny Robertson** T: 03 5998 2535 or 03 5998 2226 ah
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- Membership co-ordinator: **Andy Leamon** T : 03 9796 7935
- Catering: T.B.A.
- Registrar: **Ern Kettle** T: 03 9555 5646
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Meetings: The 2nd Tuesday of each month (except January), Mt Waverley Community Centre, Youth Centre Hall, Miller Crescent, Mount Waverley (Melway 61/D12 and 70/D1). The hall is off Stephenson Road and is next to the Library.
Meetings start at 8.00pm. Basket Supper please.

*__AGM__

This month is our AGM, please attend as the formalities will only take a few minutes before we get into our social meeting. As this is the last full meeting for the year please make an effort to attend as the December meeting will be our Christmas break up details to follow in next months newsletter.

***Last month's meeting:**

Terry Poulton gave us a very interesting slide show on the National Cymbidium Show which was held in Adelaide at the end of August and was attended by quite a few of our members of which many won major prizes. Thanks Terry.

***Main Item for this months meeting**

This will be combined with the cultural talk with Colin Gillespie demonstrating how he pots up his orchids from flask, Jenny Robertson will be breaking up a large plant and we will also be showing how to pot on from a compot, as most of you are probably either re-potting or potting on at this time of the year, you might pick some interesting tips and knowledge, we would like to see you all at the meeting.

***Trading Table**

This months trading table will be the sale of the new seedlings and mericlones for next year's growing competition, the price will be the same as last year that is $15 for two plants (one mericlone and one seedling), the plants for the growing competiton are:

Mericlone – Flaming Vulcan ‘XTC” grown and supplied by David Wain, this is a dark red large standard cymbidium.

Seedling: Kirby Lesh ‘Pink Ice’ x (Cape Banks x Red Beauty) – hybridized and grown by Colin Gillespie, this cross should give light and dark pinks and is also a large standard, the Kirby Lesh ‘Pink Ice’ comes from Kimberley Orchids and the Cape Banks x Red Beauty comes from Royale Orchids in Sydney.

Please bring your spare dollars along to the meeting to support the club and compete in the growing competition. By releasing the plants in November instead of February has proved quite successful, this has been giving members the opportunity of three extra growing months for their plants.

***Growing Competition:**

Please remember to bring in your plants for the growing competition, members who have been supporting this competition we thank you, by all accounts you are all growing your plants very well, we would also like you to bring in any of the last 4 years growing competition plants they do not have to be in flower, below is a list to remind members of which plants we had for our growing competition.

2007	Mericlone – Lunakira Gleam	Seedling – Kellys Winter x Khan Flame
2008	Mericlone – Foxfire Veridian ‘Stargate’	Seedling – Paradisian Pride (Devon Parish x Ruby Eyes)
2009	Mericlone – Kimberley Splash ‘Calypso’	Seedling – Alvins Star ‘Southern Ocean x Paradise Star ‘White Cloud’
2010	Mericlone – Valley Olympic ‘Pink Perfection’	Seedling – Joans Era ‘No 1’ x Kingwin ‘South Park’

The plants in this year’s competition are:

Mericlone : Radiant Ruby ‘Aussie Gem” – dark red miniature

Seedling : Lunar Wall ‘Dural x Uluru ‘Orange Delight’ – standard cymbidium which should produce orange/yellow maybe with a bit of a splash petal.

***Plant Commentary:**

As we have been doing for the last few months, we will have an extended plant commentary on the plants brought in by our members, there should still be a number of flowering plants around as the weather this year has extended the flowering season, please do not judge your own plants bring them in for everyone to see.

***Virus test kits**

Randall Robinson is still selling virus tests kits, he is normally at the meeting so please speak to Randall if you are interested in buying any, Please member that it costs 3 times as much plus postage if you send your leaves to Tasmania to be tested, and this way you can get the results straight away.

*** Results for the monthly Competition:**

Apologies, the results for last month’s benching competietion are not available and will be published next month.

***Monthly Raffle**

If any member would like to donate anything to our monthly raffle they are more welcome to do so, the raffle tickets sold contribute to the running of your club.

***Advertising in the Newsletter**

Anyone wishing to place an advert in the newsletter please speak to the Secretary.

***Basket Supper**

Kindly bring a plate of eats to share after the meeting.

***Club Badges**

For any member who does not have a club badge these are available to order from Henk at a cost of $12 each.

***COSV Website**

All members who have access to a computer please make use of our website for all the up to date news, show dates, photographs etc, Thanks to Geoff Bailey who maintains our website, a job well done.

***Cultural Notes for this month**

This month we are including an article on scale and its control, I am sure many of you are been bothered by this pest, thanks to the OSCOV website for the article by Denis Oliver.

***Bark for SALE**

Andy Leamon has bark for sale @ $60 per metre, kindly contact Andy direct or see him at the next meeting.

Look forward to you all joining us at the next meeting on the 8th Novemberr 2011.

SCALE AND ITS CONTROL by Denis Oliver

The armoured scale insects are some of the most successful plant-eating arthropods. They occur almost everywhere that perennial vascular plants are found, with the exception of a few oceanic islands. They adapt readily when introduced to new environments and in particular they like the artificial conditions provided by hothouse culture.

The Life Cycle . This is a *general* description of the life cycle, as there are numerous differences in behaviour between different species of scale. Some mature female scale insects produce eggs, which hatch soon after laying, while others are live-bearers that lay crawlers. Female live-bearers continue to breed for 20-50 days, depending on the species, temperature and other conditions. Within a few hours male and female crawlers exit a flap in the rear of the female's shell and move off in search of new sites to colonise. They usually settle within a few centimetres of the parent but are theoretically capable of covering up to 150 metres. They are also dispersed by the hands and clothing of nursery workers and by other mechanical means. The crawlers settle on a new site within a day or two, withdraw their legs, insert feeding stylets into the host and begin feeding, growing and secreting their protective cover. Once their feeding stylets are in place, the crawlers do not move again.

They now undergo several stages of metamorphosis, which culminate in sexual maturity. Then, in the case of the male, a small gnat exits its shell and searches for a female scale with which to mate. The male gnat is unable to feed and is relatively short-lived. The female is mated through a flap in the rear of her shell; she then proceeds to produce another generation of crawlers. Un-mated females die after a short time. During the growing stages there are short periods of feeding (each approx. three days), followed by longer non-feeding stages (each approx. eight days). These non-feeding stages must be kept in mind when attempting to control scale with systemic insecticides. The scale's hard shell also reduces the effectiveness of many surface-acting contact sprays.

Control Methods and Materials . Scale tends to colonise most heavily on the underside of leaves and towards leaf axils. Any control measure needs to take this factor into consideration, as well as the existence of the protective shell and the dormant phases of the life cycle as described above. Surface-acting (contact) sprays, such as white oil, carbaryl and pyrethrans, need to be applied so as to cover the entire plant, especially under the leaves and into the leaf axils.

The traditional spray is white oil(also known as summer oil) in one of its many forms. It works by smothering the insect, both in its adult and crawler stages. Once dry, white oil remains effective for 5-14 days, depending on any additives present and the frequency and volume of subsequent watering. The advantages of white oil include effectiveness, low toxicity to both the user and the environment, and low cost. Its main disadvantage is phyto-toxicity, as white oil will damage flower buds and may also damage sensitive leaves. This phyto-toxicity is caused by two factors, namely, (a) UV radiation, which causes the breakdown of the oil to phyto-toxic components, and (b) rapid uptake of oil by the leaves, which may cause cell membranes to rupture.

Some products now on the market contain stabilisers to retard breakdown by UV-radiation and 'safeners', which retard uptake of oil by the plant. One such product is D-C-Pron Plus, which is sold as Pest Oil®. To my knowledge it has not been tried on orchids, so it should be applied with caution, especially to the flowers. Newer topical insecticides, such as piprenol and permethrin (a synthetic pyrethrin), are effective against scale. White oil is useful when mixed with these insecticides, as it enhances their spread and adhesion to the leaves. Systemic sprays are effective against scale only in its feeding stages. Depending on the severity of infestation, repeat spraying may be necessary. It is questionable whether amateur growers should take the risk of handling and applying these potentially dangerous chemicals, especially when safer alternatives are available.

Growers with small collections often physically wipe scale from their plants' leaves. TAKE CARE! The scale infestation is invariably worse nearer the base of the leaf. Naturally, one tends to press harder where the pest is thickest. The base of the leaf usually has a pronounced V-profile and the chances of splitting the leaf at this point are quite high. This will not only damage the plant but will also release sap onto the cleaning cloth and the hands of the operator. Unless care is taken, virus could be transmitted from an infected plant to others.

Growers often use an aqueous solution of either white oil or methylated spirit to wipe orchid leaves. The methylated spirit is said to help break down the waxy scale shell but I believe that a single wipe would be unlikely to kill scale in this way. Although wiping with white oil or methylated spirits removes scale, it does not kill any virus particles released if the leaves are damaged. If you are cleaning leaves, use a fresh piece of disposable hand towel for each plant, and wash your hands thoroughly. Don't dip your cleaning materials or hands in any solutions that could be contaminated with virus. As an added precaution you could use disposable gloves, which are now very cheap and readily available in a range of sizes and colours. Ants are often mentioned in the context of spreading scale. They are certainly attracted to the secretions of scale insects but to my knowledge they play no part in its dispersal.

It has been suggested that a good way to rid plants of scale is to dip the entire plant in a solution of a suitable insecticide at re-potting time. This procedure certainly ensures good coverage, avoids physical leaf damage and reduces the chance of spray drift. However, unless infestation is minor, a follow-up spray may be necessary.

Many of us are using predatory mites to control red spider, so widespread use of insecticidal sprays is undesirable. If your collection is not large, it may be possible to wipe scale from the distal, more accessible parts of the leaves and to use a small hand-pump sprayer to treat the axils and leaf bases only. White oil would be the measure of choice here because of its low toxicity to predatory mites. Several species of insects that feed on scale are sold commercially. Various species of ladybirds, in both their larval and adult stages, consume scale insects. I recently introduced several containers of red chilochorus (*Chilochorus circumdatus*) into one of my cymbidium houses. If this treatment successfully controls scale, it will be excellent to use in combination with predatory mites, which control red spider.

Does Scale Transmit Virus from Plant to Plant? The answer to this question is unknown but I think it unlikely. It's far more likely that growers trying to eliminate scale transmit virus! Once the crawlers select a site, they stay there for life. When the crawlers mature and produces more crawlers, the only way that these offspring could be contaminated is if the virus particles were transferred from the digestive system of the parent to its reproductive system and thus to its progeny. This may be possible but seems unlikely. Once the crawlers have emerged they do not feed until they have permanently settled at a new site, so they are unlikely to pick up virus particles in their travels. The only other mobile phase is the adult male scale but they do not feed and so are also unlikely to transmit virus.