



The Cymbidium Newsletter

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

November/December 2011

2012 Meeting Dates

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

- President: **Terry Poulton** T : 03 9704 0101
- Secretary: **Jenny Robertson** T: 03 5998 2535 or 03 5998 2226 ah
E: orchid54@bigpond.com.au 54 Worthing Road Devon Meadows VIC 3977
- Treasurer: **Henk Morren** T: 03 9763 7278
- Senior Vice-President: **Ken West** T: 0418 567 856
- Junior Vice-President: **Ern Kettle** T: 03 9555 5646
- Assistant Treasurer: **Kevin Brown** T: 03 9808 1224
- Assistant Secretary: **Julie Forrest** T : 03 5978 6045
- Editor: **Karen Gillespie** T : 03 5998 2402
- Website Manager: **Geoff Bailey** T: 03 5995 5524
- Membership co-ordinator: **Andy Leamon** T : 03 9796 7935
- Catering: T.B.A.
- Registrar: **Ern Kettle** T: 03 9555 5646
- Assistant Registrar: **Glenda Coutts** T: 03 9727 4849
- Promotions & Sales: **Peter Sunderland** T: 5998 2535, **Colin Gillespie** T: 03 5998 2402
John Forrest T : 03 5978 6045

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.

WISHING YOU ALL A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A SAFE AND PROSPEROUS 2012 FROM THE PRESIDENT AND ALL THE COMMITTEE.

*Christmas Break-up

It is hard to believe that we are nearly at the end of another year. Our Christmas Break-up function will be held on the 13th December 2011 on our usual second Tuesday of the month, we will have an earlier start of 7.00pm, the club will be supplying Chicken, a range of cold meats, bread rolls and ice cream for dessert, we ask member to kindly bring a salad to share, also please remember to bring your own beverages, cutlery, glasses and plates. Please join us for a good evening.

*Trading Table

We will have the new growing competition plants available at the meeting for those member who did not attend last month's meeting, 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 competition 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:**

This is the final month for this year's plants, Colin Gillespie will be selecting the best grown plants from this year plants and awarding prizes so please bring in your plants, there have been some really well grown plants been brought in during the year and should be a close finish in the competition. 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.

***Virus test kits**

Randall Robinson has ordered more virus test kits which should be available in the new year.

*** Results for the monthly Competition:**

October Results

Judges Vote and Best in Open: Valley Splash 'Awesome' - Andy Tran
Best Intermediate Section: Alexandra Beauty 'Annalise' – G & B Wright
Best in Novice Section: insigne – Kelly=Anne Keily
Best Novelty: Taboo 'Black Imp' – Geoff Bailey
Best Species: Pumilum – Ern Kettle
Encouragement Award: (Ken Gorey x Borough Green) 'Janis Lin – Kelly-Anne Keily
Best Seedling: Devon Parish x Last Tango – Terry Poulton

November Results

Judges Vote and Best In Open: Plush Canyon 'De?? Cascade' – Ken Stewart
Best in Intermediate Section: Valley Splash 'Touch of Pink' – James Thomson
Best Species: Devonianum – S & M Early
Encouragement Award: insigne – G & B Wright
Best Seedling: Ruby Brook – Ern Kettle

***Request from City of Monash regarding Smoking**

Our meeting Hall, 10 metres within the front and back entrances of the Hall are SMOKE FREE, kindly adhere to this requirement as this could jeopardise future leases of the Hall. Many thanks for your co-operation.

***Christmas Raffle**

This month's raffle each member will be given one free ticket for our Christmas Raffle, anyone wishing to donate something towards the raffle please put on the tables provided.

Look forward to you all joining us at the next meeting on the 13th December for our Christmas function.

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 pyrethrins, 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.