

MANLY WARRINGAH ORCHID SOCIETY INC.

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**NEXT MEMBER'S
MEETING**
Thursday
CANCELLED Cromer
Community Centre,
Fisher Road North,
Cromer.

**NEXT COMMITTEE
MEETING**
Thursday
CANCELLED



www.orchidsociety.com.au

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hello everyone , I hope you and your families are all well. These have been difficult times for us all, too quiet for some and too busy for others. It looks like things are beginning to open up again but I think it is important, as much as we might want to, that we don't rush back to normality too quickly. As most of you will be aware, the committee has decided not to go ahead with the winter show at Glenrose, despite the centre saying we could if we wished. This was decided due to the belief that we would not be able to distance properly and due to the handling of cash and plants. It is unfortunate, but still necessary to be careful. With the opening of venues to 50 people from the 1st of June, hopefully our monthly meetings will resume in the near future, but we will be taking direction from council on this as they will still have restrictions on the hall regarding distancing and hygiene that may prove prohibitive.

It was with great sadness that I heard of the passing of Gary Williams, he was an incredibly generous man with his time and knowledge and he will be sorely missed by the societies of which he was a member. On behalf of the society, I wish to extend my condolences to Harleen and their family.

On a happier note, it has been a pleasure to see so many of you sending us photos of your plants, particularly the novices. It looks like we've been missing a great season of flowering, and hopefully all that time at home means that later in the year and next year we will see spectacular results from all of your hard work.

As the situation evolves, we will keep you up to date, and until I see you all again I hope you are all well, and that we can return to meetings and shows as quickly as is safe to do so.

Dylan

The latest update on the Cromer Hall is that the Council is waiting for State Government directive to reopen probably with restrictions.

Our annual membership fees are due in July and the Committee have decided to waive the fees for 2020-21. However those members who have their Bulletin posted will still have to pay for postage which is currently \$10 per year. Bank details are BSB 062 155 Account No. 00906498 and please leave your name for reference.

Our AGM is scheduled for 24th September and if we still can't use the hall at that time we will hold an electronic ballot. Members are invited to nominate for committee and new blood is always welcome.

DIARY DATES 2020

June 25 Member's Meeting CANCELLED
June 28-29 Mingara Orchid Fair CANCELLED
July 23 Member's Meeting ??
August 7-9 ORCHIDS BY THE SEA. ??
August 14-16 St. Ives Orchid Fair ??
August 27 Member's Meeting
September 10,11,12 Spring Show Glenrose
September 24 AGM & Member's Meeting
October 9-11 Southern Orchid Spectacular
October 22 Member's Meeting
November 15 AUCTION
November 26 Member's Meeting
December 6 Christmas Party
December 17 Member's Meeting

GROWING ORCHIDS WITH COCO PEAT– Ian Nelson.

After living in Cromer for 27 years and growing my orchids there we made the move to the Central Coast at Tumbi Umbi. I built a big shade house and had five growing areas depending on what group. Cym, soft cane dens and a lot natives were under 30% shade cloth and had an area of 80% and the rest was white polycarbonate roof for phallies, hard canes and vandas. We had tank water for the house and a dam for outside watering which I pumped into a 5000gal tank. For the orchid area I had a 1000 litre chemical tank which was pumped through the sprinkler system with added fertiliser. My cymbidium collection grew to 2500 plants mainly seedlings from Greg Bryant or Kevin Black. I also grew Phalaenopsis seedlings from Greg Bryant. I was having big problems with bacterial fungi and strong fungicides were not giving me results. At this time Jim Brydie did an article in the Kuringai newsletter on using Alginox as a fungicide for orchids. I used about 2ml to the litre and it solved my bacterial problems. Around this time I was having problems with a batch of faulty bark and so were other growers so I looked into using coconut fibre as a medium. A commercial cymbidium grower was using coco peat as a medium and having great success. My neighbour got his supplies from a supplier in Queensland as this was salt free. I bought a 1200 block pallet, which worked out about \$8 per block. I stacked the blocks in the garage ready to use and only had to soak a block in a tub of fresh water and it was ready to use. I have never had any problems with this product. To pot up I clean all old compost off the plant roots and hold plant level with the top of the pot, then I fill around with coco peat for about 40-50mm from the top of pot and then put in 30mm of dynamic lifter right around the outside of the roots then top up with coco peat. My plants would be in this mix for two years. Also found slippers, hard and soft can dendrobiums did extremely well as did sarcs and oncidiums.

It pays to water cymbidiums late at night in November and December to drop the temperature to help initiate flowering spikes.

When we moved house again we were on town water and I had to build a new shade house and a polycarbonate house for my laeliniae which are growing well and also reduce my orchid collection. I now use slow release fertiliser. I have been unable to buy coco peat from my old supplier but Ray Clements does sell a good product.

Below is the article written by Jim, v.4, May 2009.

Alginox – Jim Brydie

During a 'plant doctor' session at a meeting recently, the subject of fungal and/or bacterial rots came up. The suggestion was that after cutting off all the rotted parts, the plant should be soaked in a sterilizing solution of Alginox. One of our 'doctors', Geoff Fulcher, said that he even sterilizes his bark with Alginox before he uses it as a potting medium.

Alginox is a cheap, very effective liquid product sold for the control of algae and bacteria in Swimming Pools. It has the same active ingredient as a once popular, but much more expensive, orchid or plant disease control product called Physan. Alginox is well worth keeping in your potting shed.

We have published the following article on the use of Alginox for orchid growers previously but we have had a number of new members join us since then so here is another copy. Why not tear out the page and keep it handy?

ALGINOX as a Disinfectant

These rates for use were supposedly put together by a nurseryman on the North Coast of NSW about 20 years ago. I and a few other growers of my acquaintance have used the product successfully and I personally believe that the recommended rates are quite safe for all orchids. **However! As with the use of any chemical, you should proceed with caution. Use gloves, don't drink it or get it in your eyes, keep it away from children, etc etc etc. You also never know if some plants may be more sensitive than others or if effects under some circumstances may differ. Usage is at your own risk. Please read all directions on the Alginox container before you use it and test it on samples in your own conditions before making any decision to use it more widely.**

The last time I checked, Alginox was still available in my local Woolworth's supermarket, in the pool chlorine section. It comes in a 2 litre container for about \$12.

ALGINOX – SUGGESTED RATES AND APPLICATIONS

| USAGE | RATE | APPLICATION |
|--|--|---|
| Dividing Plants | 15 mls to 4 litres of water (ie 3.75mls per litre) | Remove old compost, soak plant for 5 minutes before dividing with sterilized cutters. Trim the division and its roots, soak again for 5 minutes before repotting. |
| Seedlings from flask. Protect from damp off. | 7 mls to 4 litres of water (ie 1.75mls per litre) | Soak plants including agar, in Alginox solution for 5 mins. Remove agar, soak compost in Alginox solution. Afterwards, spray once per month or anytime disease is evident. |
| Adult plants | 50 mls to 20 litres of water (ie 2.5 mls per litre) | Spray once a month or anytime disease is evident. Soak compost when disease is evident. |
| Maintenance dosage. (Dendrobium cut flower growers spray) | 20 mls to 20 litres of water (ie 1ml per litre) | For specific problems such as rots or Botrytis, use the recommended dosage until under control. Then resume this maintenance dosage & spray once a month. |
| Disinfecting secateurs. kill fungus, bacteria, virus, algae on contact. | 5 mls to 1 litre of water | Wipe plant sap from the cutting edge first. Submerge cutting tool in Alginox solution before using again. |
| Rots such as black rot, brown rot, Erwinia etc | 15 mls to 4 litres of water (3.75ml per litre) | Remove compost, soak entire plant 10 minutes or more. Trim all rot from plant using sterilized cutter. Soak plant wounds 10 minutes or more. Repot using compost soaked with Alginox solution. |
| Brown rots in Vandaceous orchids | 25 mls per 10 litres of water (ie 2.5ml per litre) | Spray weekly during rainy periods. Ensure the solution gets in and around the leaf bases. Do not omit spraying because it is raining. |
| Disinfecting walkways and under benches | 15 mls to 4 litres of water (ie 3.75ml per litre) | Spray heavily under benches and on walkways. |



Laelia
Finckeniana
'Kennedys'
AM/AOS- B.
Dobson



Paph. insigne – E. Henwood



Display of cattleyas from Gloria



Softcane dendrobium grown by Ray



Grown by Gloria and Allan



Orchid & friend – E. Henwood

Please don't forget send me photos of your plants to put up on our Facebook page. Many thanks to the regulars for their photos. Tinka.

DO YOU HAVE A PROBLEM WITH ANTS AND OTHER INSECTS?

Recently I have received 2 articles on dealing with ants etc. the first part has come from Susie Butler and the second part, I cannot remember where I found it but it sounds good safe and simple and I know some orchid growers who use it.

1. From Susie who just had to share this.

I am excited about this one: our yard is quite alive with ants, so keeping them out of the orchid house has been the bane of my life. I've tried spraying the interior and exterior all around, sprinkling ant dust but no luck. I now use Borax 1 to 2 tbsp, 1/2 Cup sugar and 1.5 Ltr warm water. You can soak cotton balls in the mixture and put them out near the mess of ants. The sugar attracts the ants and they'll take the Borax with it back to their home. I put cotton wool in bottle caps (courtesy of Tony's beer) and filled the caps often. Placed at intervals on the benches, it has taken quite a few weeks but I now don't see the ants. Hopefully the scale will be under control somewhat.

2. Via the internet, Horticultural Molasses

Cheap, easy and does it all, not your kitchen molasses! Horticultural molasses does things for your plants like nothing else can and it is cheap, just mix up and start spraying everywhere. You simply can't overdo it, but you get to the point of diminishing returns. Molasses can kill insects and does not make your plants sticky it also causes a massive micro bloom in the soil.

Sweeter plant. Sugars are how plants store energy for rainy days and winter hibernation, so why is this important as a gardener? Aside from giving your plants a power boost, you are stopping bugs. Yes it stops bugs. Insects are very simple creatures; they can only feed within a narrow window of sugar content. When the sugar content of plants is raised, insects can't feed on them. They take one bite and move on.

The second way molasses controls insects is by being directly ingested by the insect. What most people don't know is that only Bees and Sugar Ants can process simple sugars. Insects have no way of expelling the gas that builds up from fermenting sugar and the vegetation in their gut (draw your own mental picture please) plus, they have exoskeletons and can't get bloated, their delicate internal organs are crushed from the inside out.

All a bug needs to do is walk through, or try to feed on a molasses covered plant. As they are constantly cleaning themselves the insects will try to lick the molasses off their feet and swallow it, or if they take a bite of a plant they will swallow it.

Microbial Bloom. As microbes go through their life circle, they add organic matter and micro nutrients to the soil, improving the soil and making nutrients more available to your plants.

Regularly applying molasses to your soil and plants greatly improves the quality of the soil over time.

Mixture 3 tbsp molasses,
 1 tbsp liquid organic fertilizer (seaweed, fish emulsion etc)
 into 4 litres of water spray with abandon every week or two.

It also works like a charm on lace bugs on azaleas and lantana for the garden enthusiast

This is the information that I saved about molasses. I have just removed the bit about fire ants as we don't have them in Sydney, but it really sounds good for any garden that needs a boost as well as your orchids and it is safe for bees.

We have started to use molasses at 1ml per litre of water in with the fertilizer weekly, but know of some orchid growers who use up to 5ml per litre only using it 3 to 4 times per year.

We have purchased it from Better Produce which is behind the flower market, 287 Mona Vale Rd, Terrey Hills.

(reprinted from NSOS bulletin, thanks to Lesley).

