The next Meeting of the

Cymbidium Orchid Club of South Australia Inc.
will be held on
Wednesday 28 May 2008
at the
Burnside Community Centre
401 Greenhill Road Tusmore SA

Meetings are held on the 4th Wednesday of each month February to November

Visitors Welcome

Program

7.00 pm	Auditorium opens, benching of plants & trading table
7.15 pm	Beginners Class. Note early start time (All Welcome)
7.45 pm	Viewing of Plants & Popular Vote
8.00 pm	Official Opening and Presidents Report
8.15 pm	Seedlings on the Show-bench
8.20 pm	Stud Plant Discussion—Glenn Heylen and Moss Bray
9.00 pm	Plant Raffle Draw
9.15 pm	Popular Vote and Judging Results
9.30 pm	Close of Meeting and Supper.

THE NEW

CYMBIDIUM NEWS

Published by the Cymbidium Orchid Club of South Australia Inc.
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JUDGE'S CHOICE—BEST OVERALL
Peter Pan x Radiant Harry
Grown by John Nicholls

Volume 9 Number 4, May 2008

The New Cymbidium News Vol 9 No 4—May 2008

The New Cymbidium News is published monthly – February to November inclusive and is the Official Newsletter of the **Cymbidium Orchid Club of South Australia Inc**

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Glenn Stearnes	(08) 8266 0471	(1 Year Term)

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SUPPER ROSTER 2008

Wednesday 28 May	Mary Heddle / Brian Heddle
Wednesday 25 June	Rosemary Bray / Pamela Leske
Wednesday 23 July	Coralie Hime / Jeanne Hall
Wednesday 27 August	Carmel Beasley / Wendy
Wednesday 24 September	Jeanne Hall / Raelene O'Donoghue
Wednesday 22 October	Raelene O'Donoghue / Glenn Stearnes
Wednesday 26 November	Geoff Spear

Many thanks to all the volunteers—See Andrew Nowakowski to volunteer for November meeting to give Geoff Spear a hand.

PROGRAM 2008

Wednesday 28 May	Stud Plant Discussion
Wednesday 25 June	Santa Barbara —Graham Morris
Wednesday 23 July	Stephen Early from Melbourne
Wednesday 27 August	Colin Gillespie
Wednesday 24 September	Good Bug—Bad Bug (to be confirmed)
Wednesday 22 October	Panel Discussion
Wednesday 26 November	Justin Priddy

SHOW DATES 2008

Winter Show ——— Munno Para Shopping Centre
13—19 July 2008 (set-up 12/7/08)

National Show ——— Noarlunga Leisure Centre
23—24 August 2008 (set-up and judging 22nd)

Spring Show ——— West Lakes Shopping Centre
31 August 2008—6 September 2008
(set-up 30/8/08)

NOTICE BOARD

NATIONAL SHOW PLANNING MEETING

Special planning meeting for the 2008 National Show to be held at Burnside in the main hall (where we hold club meetings) on Wednesday 11 June at 7.30pm.
All those members who attended the last planning meeting and other members who would like to assist are invited to attend.

Please help us make this Show the most successful National Show ever held

COFFEE MUGS AND PENS

Available soon.
Prices to be advised.

COCO FIBRE

The coco fibre is available from Graham Morris—Valley Orchids
There are 3 sizes available
$9.50 per 4½ kg block

WANTED

Don't forget our WANTED section.
Please contact: Peter Hall—pejeh@optusnet.com.au
Telephone: 08 8294 5562 or 0416 179 019

2008 NATIONAL CYMBIDIUM ORCHID SHOW

Can anyone intending to exhibit at the National Show please get your registration forms in as soon as possible.
Your show marshall can't design the layout until he knows how many exhibits there will be.
Can those attending the dinner, please also complete the form and return to Andrew Nowakowski.

ANYONE INTERESTED IN SPONSORING THE EVENT—PLEASE CONTACT RAY BRADY

PRESIDENT'S REPORT
May 2008

Your committee have been very busy setting up a yearly program we hope will hold great interest to all members. We are negotiating new speakers and new ideas.

Ben Knobben, Peter and Jeanne Hall, this year, will control the SAROC fair. They require the support of you, the members, to bring along your orchids and foliage plants thus enabling a balanced display. Please inform Ben and Peter of your intentions.

At our club meetings we need people to sweep up at the end of each meeting as there has been bark and other mess left lying about, with the result of a complaint from management.

The National Show is well under way and another meeting will be held on **June 11th at 7.30 pm** in the main hall. All people interested are invited to come along, especially those taking any part in the setting up. At the next meeting a board will be on display showing show numbers and also some of the allocated tasks. Should your name not be on any of these lists, please notify the committee to have one allocated to you. Even if you intend showing only one plant then your name must be on the list, as current show numbers do not apply during National Shows.

The next meeting is a stud plant discussion of a noted parent and for all budding breeders. It is your opportunity to learn about parent selection. Breeding requires some knowledge of the traits each plant offers to its progeny. Please ask questions as this creates interest for all to learn.

HOW MUCH WATER DO CYMS NEED?

This is a tale of two shadehouses. I have two groups of cyms, one smaller batch of some 30 flowering size plants at home in Adelaide that are watered the traditional way with mains water. That is twice a day in very hot weather with damping down under the benches in the afternoon on days hotter than 35'C. Water is allowed to run out the bottom of the pots to flush out excess salts. The shadehouse is nowadays surrounded by high fences and tall house walls cutting off all but the strongest winds. I have to use 2 layers of 50% green/black shadecloth in summer to stop leaves getting sunburnt. Leaf tip dieback is observed on most older cym leaves. The plants grow well and spike satisfactorily. Watering is cut back in cooler weather to once every 2-4 days if there is no rain. The same weak soluble fertiliser is poured over both groups of cyms once a week. All plants are up off the ground on benches.

Most of my 700 cyms are growing in a 50% green shadecloth house on a ridge-top in the Adelaide Hills at 550m elevation. No power is connected and mains water is not available. I depend on rainwater that runs off the plastic roofed flowering area on the southern end of the shadehouse. A 7.1KL (1500gall) tank fills each winter and is replenished by any summer rain. This has been enough water for 1000 orchid pots this past summer. I have a caravan pump and small battery system that delivers theoretically 7L/min through a hose. As the tank level goes down the water just dribbles out the end of the hose. Each pot gets about 4 seconds of water, enough to wet the compost but barely run out the drainage holes. Water is too precious to waste. As the water is salt free I don't have to flush out salts except for fertiliser. It takes about 40 minutes to hand water 1000 pots. The cyms get watered once every second or third day, even in summer. Watering is always just before lunchtime. I estimate that each pot (average size 6") receives about 100mL at each watering.

There is no spare water for damping down the floor and not enough pump pressure for misting leaves. Night temperatures are 5 degrees lower than in Adelaide and there is plenty of wind on the ridge. Gum trees on the western side give broken shade in the afternoon. The plants grow and flower successfully. The leaves went a bit yellow in

INFORMATION FROM YOUR REGISTRAR OF JUDGES

SCRIBES

WE ARE IN URGENT NEED OF SCRIBES FOR THE SHOWS THIS YEAR—ESPECIALLY THE NATIONAL

IF ANYONE CAN HELP OUT, PLEASE CONTACT BEN KNOBBEN.

Availability of Judges for the National Show

Will all judges notify Ben if they are available for the National Cymbidium Show—24 August 2008 at the:
Noarlunga Leisure Centre
David Witton Drive
Noarlunga Centre

SAROC Fair

Your committee has decided to mount a display again at this year's SAROC Fair. Anyone who has some cymbidiums, companion plants and/or is willing to help set up the display, please notify Ben.

The fair is being held on the June long weekend at:
Pulteney Grammar School
South Terrace
Adelaide

Your committee feels it is important to support SAROC and it is a good opportunity for members to catch up with friends from other clubs, share information and maybe pick up a few tips for your own displays.

Ben Knobben
Registrar of Judges

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Back to Ralf Farquhar—in another of his articles on marble chips. Cymbidium Orchid News Vol 1 No 3 August 1988. He recalled his school days and could remember basic chemistry.

Rain water as it descends through the atmosphere absorbs minute amounts of carbon dioxide gas from the air. This solution is a very weak carbonic acid H2 Co3. When we pass this water (carbonic acid) over the marble chips (calcium carbonate) the weak acid acts on the marble to form lime and carbon dioxide gas is released. The released carbon dioxide gas flows or bubbles over and through the film of lime water on the marble chips and in so doing combines with the lime water to again form calcium carbonate = marble. There is a constant situation within the marble compost, lime is always present and carbon dioxide is available at all times. Now lime is a chelating agent. Could it be then that the soluble fertilizer we apply over the leaves and into the pot of marble chips and roots of the cymbidium plant always remains at the strength at which it was prepared, it doesn't precipitate or remain and become toxic, because of the presence of lime water? Ralf has proven the fact that the marble never becomes laden with toxic salts, nor do the roots discolour or die. The residue after every application of fertilizer washes out through the weep holes of the pot. Ralf then went on to grow his cymbidiums with equal parts pine bark and marble chips and suggested that when the pine bark chips start to decompose it gives off valuable carbon dioxide, which hovers around the marble chips for a short time because it is heavier than air. These articles have now answered my questions as to why some growers use marble chips in their potting mixes.

Peter Hall
pejeh@optusnet.com.au

NEW MEMBERS

The Cymbidium Orchid Club of South Australia Inc
extend a warm welcome to:

Laurie and Sue Carter
Trevor Garard

the recent heat wave but greened up again after the rain in late March. There were no burnt leaves and leaf tip dieback was restricted to just a few susceptible clones. The leaves are shorter and stiffer than those on plants in Adelaide. My mix is bark and marble chips. Newly deflasked cyms die under these tough conditions but plants a year out of flask survive and grow OK. Growth of cyms is probably a bit less than optimum so it may take an extra year to flower seedlings and mericlones.

The two watering systems are very different. I think that the traditional methods of cym growing wastes water unnecessarily. The current severe water restrictions and high salt content mains water are likely to be with us for years. I am thinking of increasing my 4KL tank capacity in Adelaide and installing a pressure pump before next summer. I can then use tank water on the orchids and will not have to worry about water restrictions.

Les Nesbitt

CYMPLICITY MAY V08

May is make or break month where any spikes that will flower this spring will present themselves if they have not already; If not, you have to look at the plant and ask yourself why didn't you flower this year. The reasons are as widely varied as the cultivars of today. Recent division, lack of light, insufficient water and fertiliser, plant not yet big enough, stress of insect attack, a stinking hot hot summer, overcrowding, blah blah blah…. The question is you have to identify what the problem was with that particular plant, address it and put in an action plan. The results may still not be forthcoming next year either as the problem may be a multi pronged one but at least you have identified a shortfall in cultivation and are taking steps to rectify it. You will always have that real difficult plant or worse still the plant that never flowers. Many of these could be seedlings. I have some, specimen sized now and no flowers ever. Good foliage plants but! Then there are those notoriously hard cultivars. Examples being the red/purple sensations, Valley Zenith Concorde, Jubliation Geronimo. I know because I have all of them. I've beaten Valley Zenith, Geronimo is still too small and I am at wits end on a purple sensation and at $50

for the plant am not about to give in….yet.

Most flower spikes this month are at the development stage and look much like a new lead. These plants should all be marked with stakes and a training schedule in the process of instigation. Even at such an early stage many will be growing in the wrong direction or worse straight into another bulb or the side of the pot. Others will be at right angles to the pot which is no good for a straight standard, so even at this early stage we are beginning the gradual process of training the spikes to go where we want them to. The key word is gradual and in the middle of the day when the weather is at its warmest. We know how brittle spikes are at the best of times. Also be careful from now on when de husking older back bulbs as many a new spike has been broken during this process and if it is your only spike then a year is a long time to wait for the next one. Its even worse if it was a first year seedling.

That right angled standard has stake placed next to him and with the use of some elastic and a peg is gradually trained into an upright position, the crooked one is treated the same where it is steered clear of another spike so they don't cross. That spike that wants to commit suicide by running in to the side of the pot can be slightly elevated by placing some packing or a plant label under it and easing him over the side. If they are like this because the plant is too deep in the pot, pull the plant out, pack some new mix in the bottom and put him back. This stress will not harm the plant as there is very minimal disturbance to the plants roots. Quite often this will show up a shortfall in cultivation. The cause generally being that the mix has deteriorated into a sludgy mess, the bottom of the roots have rotted and the plant has slipped down. Mark this plant for re potting at the end of this years flowering.

If you have not done so already a precautionary spray for mites and scale is a good idea as the risk of damage to the flowers will increase once they break sheath.

Feeding and watering reduces now as things slow down but with cyms never really stops completely as is the case with many other genera. Feeing will still be high potash for those that liquid feed and nitrogen based for seedlings and smaller non flowering plants as we need to keep pushing them along. Also ensure the snail and slug baiting programme is in full swing as they too love new buds and after a longer

JUDGES CHOICE—SECOND DIVISION
sinense var Toshikans *(species)*
grown by: Peter and Jeanne Hall

Tall spike with 10 flowers growing in an 8" pot with bark, coir, marble chips. 4 bulbs and one new growth.

PLANT WRITE UP APRIL 2008

JUDGES CHOICE—ORCHID OF THE NIGHT / BEST IN OPEN DIVISION

Peter Pan x Radiant Harry

grown by: John Nicholls

Grown in a 10” pot, 15 spikes with an average of 12 flowers per spike. Classed as other colour with a red lip.

JUDGES CHOICE—FIRST DIVISION

Enzan Summer ‘Crystal’

grown by: Pauline Hockey

6 spikes of brilliant bright yellow, a pure colour; growing in a 7” pot with medium bark incorporating limestone gravel. 1 back bulb, 5 green bulbs, 3 leads.

than normal dry season are really hungry. Small leaf rolling caterpillars also find these new spikes tasty and they are very adept to chewing a small hole into the spike and taking out the flowers whilst you are blissfully unaware of their presence. A keen eye and regular inspections is important for those show plants.

Now is a good time to take stock of stakes, new labels etc as we should have a good idea of what number of plants we intend to show and what plants won’t make the grade but will still look nice in the shade house. Flowering houses should be prepared for the new seasons plants with arrangements made to vary the light requirements needed to bring out the best of colours. More of that later in the season.

Also keep an eye out for overcrowding as flowering sized plants appreciate more space, air movement etc than the non flowering counterparts.

May will also bring with it a substantial drop in temperatures, maybe some rain but always wind so we need to ensure plants are stable and this will become an important factor later as the spikes develop. There is one golden rule when growing orchids and that is disaster will ALWAYS strike your best plants.

As May ends and we enter June we see the sheaths extending and the first bunches of grapes poking through to give us our first look at bud counts. These spikes enter a rapid growth phase and with it the real effort is about to start.

Steve Howard

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IDIOTS GUIDE TO PRODUCING A GOOD POD!!!

(LEARNING FROM OTHER'S STUFF UPS)

This will not guarantee that the cross that your about to do will produce a "show winning seedling". It might however increase your chances of getting some viable seeds.

BASIC BIOLOGY

Transferring a pollen cap from one flower to the column of another flower ("pollination") is just the beginning of seed formation. If all goes well each of the thousands of pollen grains in the cap will grow a tube that carries the genetic material of the pollen down the column, through the flower stem to the ova (eggs) that are forming in the ovary. After the genes of pollen and egg fuse ("fertilisation") seeds develop and a seed pod is formed.

Another important point to remember, and be thankful for, is that we are freely able to break the laws of nature in the orchid world. A SPECIES is defined as a group of organisms that is only able to interbreed in nature within its own group. However we have been cross breeding different Species and even Genera in many cases.

Doris = species insigne x species tracyanum
Miss Muffet = devonianum x pumilum

Our modern hybrids usually involve multiple species in their parentage. This has allowed us greater opportunity to play with the genetics of the ORCHID FAMILY.

Orchid breeding has also been advanced by the natural or artificial increase (use of colchicine) in chromosome number. The basic state is DIPLOID while the converted state is TETRAPLOID a doubling of the genetic number.

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THINGS TO CONSIDER

An unnamed person brought us in a few pods each year for a few years and had very little luck. Only a few plants from some pods and nothing from others. It got to a point where I thought that we were suspected of

OPEN DIVISION

Intermediate Yellow First Prize	Michael Herbert x Willunga Eyecatcher	Ben Knobben
Intermediate Brown First Prize	Kasuda Shining 'Geyserland'	Les Nesbitt
Intermediate Novelty First Prize	William Kirsh 'Featherhill'	John Nicholls

FIRST DIVISION

Intermediate Cream First Prize	Michael Herbert x (Snow Eagle x Peter Pan)	Pauline Hockey
Intermediate Pink First Prize	Pendragon x Miniken	Silvester Ng
Intermediate Yellow First Prize	Pixie Dust 'Trinity'	Silvester Ng
Intermediate Brown First Prize	Devon Elf 'Vivien'	Silvester Ng
Intermediate Pure Colour First Prize	Enzan Summer 'Crystal'	Pauline Hockey
Intermediate Other Colour First Prize	Sundaani Autumn 'Sunrise'	Pauline Hockey
Intermediate Other Colour Second prize	Sundaani Autumn 'Sky Rockets'	Pauline Hockey

SECOND DIVISION

Intermediate Pink First Prize	erythrostyium x dayanum	Peter and Jeanne Hall

Monthly Competition Results For 23 April 2008

POPULAR VOTE

Best Species	dayanum	Pauline Hockey

JUDGES CHOICE

Best Overall	Peter Pan x Radiant Harry	John Nicholls
Best in Open Division	Peter Pan x Radiant Harry	John Nicholls
Best in First Division	Enzan Summer 'Crystal'	Pauline Hockey
Best in Second Division	sinese 'Toshikians	Peter and Jeanne Hall
Best Intermediate Seedling	Michael Herbert x (Snow Eagle x Peter Pan)	Pauline Hockey

not knowing what we were doing!! It turned out that he was breeding with some very nice flowers for their time but most of them were triploid (the result of a diploid / tetraploid cross). These plants have a genetic number that produces problems in pollen and egg formation and hence are very poor breeders. They can produce some seed but do not expect a lot of seedlings if you use a triploid. Luckily tetraploid plants (that breed more readily) are very common now and hence the choice of good breeding parent plants is a lot greater.

Hot Tip… Check the ploidy of you parents before you get too excited about the "grand champion" that you are about to breed.

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The interbreeding of different species of Cymbidiums seems to occur more readily in the types that produce larger flowers. As a result the producing of "standards" is easier than producing "miniatures". It seems that the smaller flowering species have less compatibility and so produce poorer results. A few "miniatures" however are good breeders as a study of the hybrid list will show.

Hot tip … When trying to breed "miniatures" or "intermediates" do not expect too much unless using proven parents

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A few years back when Pendragon was all the rage a friend of ours who was usually a bit tight with his breeding material was happy to give me pollen from his plant but I had no success with it at all. He however was producing Pendragon seedlings. One day in conversation he let slip than the pollen of Pendragon goes off very quickly and that it is better to use the plant as a pod parent (put the pollen of the other plant onto Pendragon rather than use its pollen)

*****

Lesson Learnt … If possible do your cross both ways
Pollen A onto plant B
Pollen B onto plant A
You may get two pods but that's better than none.
If your going to the trouble of getting out the matchstick/tooth pick/ whatever to do a cross it is advisable to record what you do, and not on a cigarette box as a well known hybridiser of a few years back used to do. He would transfer the information into his breeding book later, well most of the time. This could explain why that white miniature seedling that you bought a few years ago turned out to be a green standard. Luckily most serious hybridisers today are meticulous with their recording and you can be confident of what you buy. However it is not uncommon for a novice to ring up the lab to ask if we know what the other parent was for the pod that they had processed three years ago.

Quote novice "I know the pod parent but I'm not sure who gave me the pollen. It was a few years back"
Answer Lab "Sorry we only use numbers to identify pods."

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Lesson Learnt … Keep good records in a book that won't get misplaced. It can be a long process from "cross" to "flowering the seedling"

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A grower who will remain nameless struggled to produce good pods but when I saw his plants the reason was obvious. His plants were yellow, shrivelled, probably without roots and growing in straight sand. The poor things were struggling to stay alive, so it was understandable that they could not nourish a developing pod. A healthy plant, given the best growth conditions, will have the greatest chance of giving you a good result. Also from experience it seems that a hot spell during the early stages of pod growth can be particularly damaging. The weather is hard to change but you can keep your plant in a cooler spot to prevent heat stress.

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Lesson learnt … Nurture your pod plants. Fertilise and give them the best conditions possible. Some hybridisers double shade and mist their breeding plant to try to increase their odds of success. It was suggested to me that playing Motzart was good!! I'm not sure.

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Time is important. Include in your records the date on which the cross was done. A pod picked too early will produce poor results. A pod left too long may split and any seed lost.

Sorry to harp back to the record keeping but the following phone call is also not uncommon.

Quote "I've got a pod I've done and I was wondering if it is ready to sow. I think I did the cross before my wife's birthday or it could have been just after the last "showdown" or was it the Crows V Geelong game.
Answer Lab "Pity the Crows were cheated by the umpire again"

*****

Lesson Learnt … Record dates

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Although 6 months is the average time to produce a good healthy pod with lots of seed, it is possible to get a small amount of seed from fairly young pod.

An experienced hybridiser brought a pod in for sowing one day. He suggested that it was a bit young, just on 4 months old. The dog or the cat or the grand children had knocked it off accidentally. It did produce a few viable seedlings by the way.

Other tales of woe that have destroyed developing pods include caterpillars, rats, rabbits, donkeys, and best of all the wife who picks the spike that had just been pollinated because she needed something to brighten up the hall.

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Lesson Learnt …Keep your pod plants out of harms way.

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When studying the crosses that some catalogues advertised I used to wonder how it was that some crosses were possible. How was it that "Peter Pan" could be crossed with "pumilum" when they flower at totally different times of the year? An article in the Orchid Review has since shown me that pollen can be stored in the fridge. Since then I have stored pollen for over two years and still found it to be viable.

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Top Tip… Store pollen from season to season to improve you range of crosses

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Finally a customer had been bringing in odd pods for a few years and when we delivered a couple of flasks of a certain cross he was particularly pleased because he had previously done that particular cross for three years with out result.

*****

Lesson Learnt … If you are really keen on a cross try doing it more than once if you can.

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Top Tip… Have a go at doing some crosses. You don't have to be an expert to produce a show winner. You can't win the lottery if you don't have a ticket, and if you end up with horrible coloured ugly plants you will get a laugh from you efforts which is always a good thing.

Kevin McLean

MARBLE CHIPS AND CARBON DIOXIDE

In the past few newsletters I've discussed pH, EC, PPM, NPK, chelates and sequesters mainly for new or novice growers like myself.

This article is about carbon dioxide C^{02} and air. Almost 5 years ago, some of my first cymbidium orchid purchases were from Peter Chiles at Gawler. Peter used pine bark chips and marble gravel about 15-20mm and approximately 25% marble and 75% bark. He didn't have an explanation for the mix other than it helped to increase the weight of the pot so that they didn't blow over and that the orchids grew well in the mix. Peter's orchids did grow well and when it came time to repot them the root system was thick and white—really healthy roots.

I have read an article about marble chips in one of the original newsletters (Vol 1 No 2 July 1988). A bloke that lived at Nairne (Ralf Farquhar) wrote that he only had limited success growing cymbidiums from flask. He experimented with different mixes with the same results. He was a builder and at one stage had some leftover marble chips approximately 1 to 3mm in size. He used only these marble chips to grow from flask to community pots and when they were ready to be planted out into single plant pots, he found that the root systems were large, pearly white and easy to transplant because all he had to do was to gently shake the marble chips off. I know Glen Heylen uses approximately 3mm marble chips in his mix when planting from flasks to community pots.

In an issue of the Cymbidium Society of America Inc journal, there was an article about carbon dioxide by Mits Kubota who was a professor of chemistry at Harvey Mudd college from 1959 to 2000. In the article it stated that cymbidium orchids and indeed all plants need water, light and air to grow. He suggested that there had been numerous articles written about watering techniques and maximizing exposure to light but the role of air had not been discussed except for providing 'good air movement' in growing areas. The essential component of air needed for growth of orchids and other plant forms is carbon dioxide (C^{02}) which comprises only 0.03% (about 300 parts per million—PPM) compared to 78% nitrogen and 0.97% of trace gases in normal air. Plants combine water and carbon dioxide in the presence of light (photo synthesis) to form leaves and other solid plant material.

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