

# 'Cymbidium Chatter'

Edition 1: February 2020



Cymbidium erythrostylum f. album 'Blumen Insel x self'  
Photograph: Royale Orchids, Peats Ridge, NSW

The goal of this new booklet is to keep members of the Cymbidium Orchid Society of Victoria, better informed about the activities of the club, and to also keep track of what is happening in interstate and overseas clubs. Cymbidium orchids are among the most widely grown type of orchid in Australia, and they deserve to be written and spoken about!

There are four Cymbidium clubs in Australia (Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia) but I'm sure that you would find Cymbidium growers in all states and territories of Australia. The type of Cymbidiums they grow may vary, but one thing remains the same— "we have all been bitten by the orchid growing bug!"

Unfortunately there are no longer any magazines catering for orchid growers in Australia. The cost of producing full colored, glossy magazines is quite prohibitive. If 'Cymbidium Chatter' is well received and supported it may help to fill the void created, when Australian Cymbidium Scene and more recently the Australian Orchid Review, stopped being produced. Why did they stop being published? I can only speak on behalf of ACS—subscriber numbers and production costs were at odds with each other!

This time around there will be major differences. 'Cymbidium Chatter' will only ever be a small booklet, it will be a supplement to the monthly newsletter received by members of COSV. It will not be available in hard copy form, that is, unless a member chooses to print it themselves. The booklet will be received as an email during the week immediately following our monthly meetings. The good news is that the booklet will be FREE. The booklet will continue to be produced if there is a good level of support for it. Support by way of photographs, growing tips and cultural advice etc.—will all be welcome and required! Unlike ACS, which was always on schedule I will not be held to deadlines. If a holiday or family event gets in the way, you will have to wait!

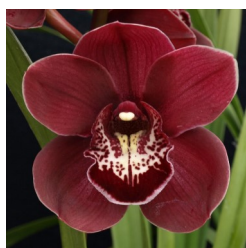
Geoff Bailey— Email: [grb17@bigpond.com](mailto:grb17@bigpond.com)

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Kimberley Splash 'Coral'

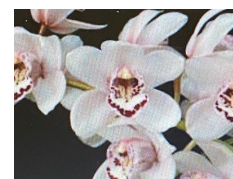


# Our new growing competition plants

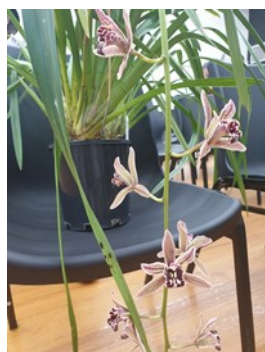


Cymbidium (Lady Angela x Flaming Vulcan) 'Nicole' - this is a clone of a richly colored standard Cymbidium. From Barrita Orchids in New South Wales.

Cymbidium (Aquitane x Hungarian Rhapsody) 'Ice on Fire' A clean, white Winter flowering intermediate. The flowers are produced on tall erect spikes. This plant is exclusive to Barrita Orchids. Photographs: Scott Barrie



## On the Show bench: February 2020



This section of Cymbidium Chatter will be a regular in each edition. For it to remain so, we will need members to bring in their flowering plants. Please remember that other members are keen to see what is in flower, having flowers early in the year is quite an achievement, so please don't leave them at home!



Hugh Gordon 'Freckles' - H Wagstaff

Little Beauty—S&M Early

During February each year, COSV gets a call/reminder from the person responsible for processing all the paper work for the OSCOV Orchids of the Year awards, asking where all the Cymbidium awards are! For as long as I can remember there has always been a frantic search and phone calls made to various growers, to submit photographs of Cymbidiums to be entered into the awards.. This really shouldn't occur, Cymbidiums feature in just about all shows and for at least the last decade, probably longer, they have been well and truly under represented, in Orchids of the Year. COSV should ensure that we always have a good supply of photos of plants awarded throughout the year and at shows. As registrar of judges for COSV I will be asking judges to consider as many plants as possible for awards, however, to award plants we must have a good number of plants benched at our monthly meetings. Not all plants will measure up for quality awards, but there are awards given for good culture ( Cultural Certificate) and for distinctive plants (Award of Distinction—AD). I will, throughout 2020 keep reminding you that we need to see more plants on a regular basis, hopefully the OSCOV hierarchy will also instruct the wider group of judges to consider more Cymbidiums for awards.

We need to make our monthly meetings more interesting and a good number of plants benched will go a long way to ensuring that. More importantly we need to support the people who so generously volunteer their time and efforts. For the past few years Marilyn Larkin ( a member at MPOS) has been doing a sterling job processing all the awards and preparing the Orchids of the Year presentation. Prior to her taking up the role Stephen and Meryl Early, likewise did a fantastic job! Thank you!

COSV is your club, working together I am sure we can make it that much better! Let us all make a supreme effort to make our judges work that much harder each month. They turn up at each meeting hoping to see the tables full of plants to be judged, 2019 was not a good year! Let's make 2020 the best yet!

# Growing Tips & Cultural Advice: — — A Beginner's Guide —

Cymbidium orchids are grown for their flamboyant and colourful flowers. The climate in most capital cities is suited to growing cymbidium orchids in a sheltered, shady area. This sets them apart from many of the more tender, tropical orchids such as slipper orchids (*Paphiopedilum*) and moth orchids (*Phalaenopsis*), which need warm or hot house conditions outside the tropics. Cymbidiums are now available in a wide range of spectacular colours and are classified into three sizes (by the width across the top two petals of the flower): standards 100mm up (4"), intermediate 55-90mm (2-3.5") and miniature up to 55mm (2")

## Plant details

**Common name:** Orchids

**Botanic name:** *Cymbidium* spp.

**Climate:** Cymbidium orchids will grow in most mainland capital cities and coastal districts. Cymbidiums are native to Asia and northern Australia.

## Good points:

Due to modern breeding, cymbidiums now come in a variety of colours from white and pink through to oranges, apricots, browns, reds, burgundy, yellows, creams and greens. They will grow in a pot in cymbidium potting mix in a shaded area in the garden or a shadehouse. They do not require a great deal of work. The most commonly grown cymbidium orchids bud in winter and flower from May through August and September to produce stunning long-lasting flowers. Some orchids are capable of producing up to four flower spikes from each bulb and have erect, fleshy leaves. Once in flower the plants can be brought indoors into a bright room where the blooms can be enjoyed for many weeks.

## Downsides:

Snails love to eat the flowers and hide under the rim of the pots and come out at night. Use snail bait or check plants and pots thoroughly for snails. Viruses such as mosaic and ring spot will show up as black or brown spots or streaks on the leaves. If you suspect a virus, destroy or isolate the plant.

## Uses:

Potted around the house indoors or outdoors to provide stunning colour and style to indoor spaces, as well as the garden. Orchids will not grow in garden soil but can be made to look as if they are growing in the garden by planting them in orchid potting mix on top of the garden soil. Apply the orchid mix to a depth of at least 30cm (12"). Cymbidiums are also used as cut flowers and in corsages.

## Care:

Grow in specialist cymbidium orchid potting mix with good drainage. The potting mix is made up of pine bark, peat, coarse sand and polystyrene. Mix in more fine pine bark for even better results. Do not grow these plants in soil in the ground. Maintain moist potting mix by watering once or twice a week, depending on the weather and fertilise with specialist orchid fertiliser, such as Nitrosol and Aquasol (available from most nurseries). Different formulations are available to encourage flowering and growth. Consult the container for recommended rates of application. Keep in a shaded spot such as under deciduous trees, on a well lit veranda or in a shadehouse but make sure that plants receive enough light to flower. Lush green leaves and few flowers indicate that your cymbidiums are too shaded. Divide after flowering when the plant fills the pot and replant segments into new pots with orchid potting mix.

**Growing outdoors:** Although cymbidium orchids are usually grown in pots they can be grown as garden plants if planted into a mound of orchid mix. Give plants grown outdoors shade from hot sun particularly in summer but expose to more light in autumn and winter to encourage bud formation.

**Getting started:** Cymbidium orchids and specially formulated potting mixes are available from nurseries throughout Australia or at many of the orchid shows. Prices for intermediate and miniature cymbidium orchids range from \$20-\$50. Other more exotic varieties are available from specialist orchid nurseries and are more expensive than the cymbidium orchids.



## ***Grower's Profile: Kimberley Orchids***

Kimberley Orchids has been at the forefront of all things Cymbidium for many decades now, and if Joyce and Jenny have anything to do with it, they will continue to be a major force for many years to come. I paid a quick visit to Kimberley Orchids just over a week ago, Joyce and Jenny have everything looking top notch. Young Cymbidium plants, all sitting in saucers, were housed in what was the Cattleya and Vanda house, and they all looked fantastic. With just over an acre of Cymbidium plants under rooftops, they will be able to cater to the cut flower, pot plant and hobby grower markets, for many years to come. This is great news, but the most exciting news is that there are still many seedlings yet to flower, some of them created by, Peter Sunderland, but many of them, the result of Jenny's own hybridising efforts.

When we think commercial growers, we immediately think of elaborate housing and equipment, but not so with Kimberley Orchids, there is nothing that the average grower couldn't replicate in their own backyard. The housing, although extensive, is simply constructed, the benching is also basic. The attention to detail is obvious, and it shows that a lot of thoughtful planning has gone into creating the largest Cymbidium nursery in Victoria. Growing techniques and culture, potting mediums, watering and fertilizing programs, are all very basic—but just so effective. There are no secret formulas, in fact Kimberley Orchids is the perfect example of what can be achieved, if you cater to the basic needs of plants, and maintain a clean and healthy environment!



Kimberley Splash  
'Mr Patrick'



Kimberley Flash 'Skyla'



Kimberley Valley 'Foxglove'

The Grower Profile page will feature photographs and brief notes about the 'set-ups' in members' backyards. I will need 10 people per year to volunteer to be part of this page. You don't have to be an experienced grower or have an elaborate 'set-up' to take part. We can all learn from each other, we all have growing challenges to face, it is how we adapt and get the very best out of the growing environment that we have created, that is important!