

'Cymbidium Chatter'

Edition 5: May 2020



Cym. [(Green Spectacle x Conqueso) 'Scion' x Kimberley Valley 'Malibu')] Grower: W Caughlan

Welcome to edition 2 May 2020. A slight easing of restrictions has at least enabled us to catch up with family and friends, however it may still be sometime before we all feel comfortable about attending larger gatherings.

Your orchids should now be showing developing spikes although the unseasonal cold mornings will slow their development. I have been enjoying my first flowers of the season, on a relatively small plant of *Cym erythrostylum*. The plant produced two spikes, the first of which has been fully open for the past two weeks. I expect the flowers on the second spike to start opening this week.

Please remember to send me photos of any flowers so that I can share them with our other members. All members of COSV (those that have an email address) receive *Cymbidium Chatter* and I have an ever increasing supplementary list of growers, who receive it. This list is made up of interstate and overseas growers. Our overseas *Cymbidium* lovers have generously shared their photos and although it is still very early in our flowering season I think we should reciprocate whenever possible.

Looking for the next champion

We are reminded on a regular basis to grow *cymbidium* seedlings, in our quest to find the next champion and I think this is very sound advice. However many of us just don't have the space to grow large numbers of seedlings, and so we must be very selective in the plants that we grow.

How can we improve our chances of growing the *Cymbidium* that will beat all others? I used to grow a minimum of 10 plants of the one cross but my downsizing exercise has halved that number. So my next go-to-criteria is to look at hybridisers who have the 'runs-on-the-board' and it is very hard to go passed Greg Bryant, Bryants Orchids, when looking for a large flowered *Cymbidium* that has the potential to be the next champion! Sure there are other hybridisers, particularly in New South Wales, who are producing some great new flowers but I doubt that there is anyone who can match Greg's 'strike-rate!'

I was surprised when visiting Santa Barbara, USA, in 2017, by the number of times I was asked as to how many flasks of *Cymbidiums* I had brought with me, sadly I had none. Australian standard *Cymbidium* seedlings were in high demand and Greg's name was mentioned more than any other. So it comes as no surprise to see Weegie **Caughlan's** photo (top right) of a first flowering seedling from a Greg Bryant cross. Weegie flowered this seedling in the current flowering season in California and it has everything we look for in standard *Cymbidium* flowers. The shape is excellent, the labellum is in the right proportions to the rest of the flower and it is beautifully marked. Color - ice green or white? How often to do you see a really good pastel flower? This is a flower that I would make room for in my collection!

The following article appeared in **Cymbidium News**, the newsletter for the **Cymbidium Orchid Club of South Australia Inc.** Graham Fear, president, contacted me and asked if I would like to use the information and photographs in Cymbidium Chatter. Thanks for sharing the trial and its results with us Graham.

Just a note of caution: With any new trial it is always wise to start with a small number of plants. I can remember a trial I did with extra long forestry tubes for Cymbidium seedlings, they grew fantastic roots but when it came to potting-on I had great difficulty finding a pot that was deep enough to take the extensive root system. The solution: cut-off half the roots!

COMPOT - GROWING MIX TEST

At the February general meeting, our President, Graham Fear, told us about a trial he had conducted, on potting mixes, for plants straight out of flask.

Following are photographs and descriptions of that trial. Compots, single pots, trays etc are used when deflasking, and growers use a variety of mixes to put the young plants in.

Terry Poulton, from Victoria passed on to Graham Morris in 2017, that he had been using Scotts Osmocote, Professional Seed Raising and Cutting Mix, in compots and individual pots, when deflasking. Available in 10 litre (about \$7.00), and 25 litre bags (about \$13.20), from Bunnings stores. Note, some stores do not carry both sizes, and sometimes they are not displayed near one another.



Above: Ingredients for home made mix
Fine Coco Fibre
6 to 9mm Orchid Bark
Perlite Super Coarse



Right: Osmocote Seed Raising and Cutting Mix

Plants have been grown in conventional growing mediums after potting on from community pots or small trays. The seedling raising mix would probably be very expensive to use for mature plants.



Above: Community pots (compots) of Regal Flames 'Queen of Hearts' x Pepper Blaze 'Wraith'
In normal (home made) potting mix (left in photos) and In Osmocote Seed and Cutting mix (right
in photos)



This is how they looked in February 2020. The plants on the right were growing in the seedling
mix. Note the quality of the leaves, root growth, and the size of the bulbs.



Above: Put into 100mm pots on the 22nd February 2020. Size ranged from 35 to 40cm leaf length (14 to 16 inches).

Left: Very healthy roots and some plants already forming small bulbs.

Thanks once again to Graham Fear for sharing this information and photographs.

The conclusion is that the seed raising mix is certainly contributing to stronger growth in leaves, bulbs and roots, compared to my normal seedling mix. There is no right or wrong with any mix, but in this test, the seed raising mix has come out better, and it is also the case with all my other compots, that I have used the mix in.



(Left): Information on the bag of Seed Raising and Cutting Mix and (above): one of the seedlings 3 months on, note the bulb size and new shoot.