

'Cymbidium Chatter'

Edition 11 June 29 2020



Cym Valley Olympic 'Feathered Rose'
Photograph: 3 Amigos

Welcome to this edition of Cymbidium Chatter. We have certainly had some cold starts to the days but the brilliant sunshine from mid-morning soon makes up for the frosty start.

OSCOV has cancelled the Melbourne Orchid Spectacular and we (the judges) are getting regular updates regarding other shows that have been cancelled. Sadly, I guess, this is the new norm for the time being until such time as we have better control over the spread of this virus.

Stay safe and well and please remember to email me any photographs of plants that you have in flower. Fortunately, the 3 Amigos continue to post some great photographs on Facebook and they have given me permission to use them. Also, our friends in the US are still posting photographs of late flowering Cymbidiums.



A Feathered Fancy from the 3 Amigos

The grex Cym Valley Olympic has produced a number of feathered flowers. A high percentage of these feathered forms have been mutations of clones of Cym Valley Olympic 'Pink Perfection' or Cym Valley Olympic 'Rose'. In their own right 'Pink Perfection' and 'Rose' were beautiful flowers but even pieces of the original plants could not demand the prices that these feathered forms attract. The lovers of novelty type flowers will pay huge money to obtain such plants.

A word of warning - as attractive as these type of flowers are you must ensure that the feathered flower is the result of a mutation during the cloning process and not as result of the plant being infected with a virus. Buy from reputable growers or nurseries!

Left: Valley Olympic 'Feathered Rose'
Photograph: 3 Amigos

Cym Lunar Blaze 'Dural' x

Kirby Lesh 'You Beaut'
Photograph: 3 Amigos

The side-lobe is extended and sits behind the label-lum.

The side-lobe is extended and sits behind the label-lum.

This is an irregularity. Do all flowers have the same appearance?



What do you make of this flower??

We are always on the lookout for different flowers, one that would be worthy of getting an Award of Distinction. Would this plant qualify for such an award? Putting on my judge's hat I would have to say a doubtful no! If every flower on the plant was the same as this one, I seriously doubt that they would be, then maybe it would. The color of the flower is attractive and the overall shape quite good. When it comes to Awards of Distinction the flower doesn't have to be perfect.

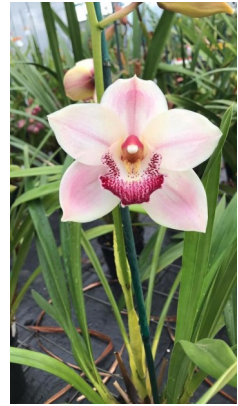
So what is unusual (distinct) about this flower? I'm sure even the newest of growers would recognise that the extended side lobes (arrowed above) appear to be attached to the back of the labellum and they actually present as 'extras' when compared to a normal Cymbidium flower. Personally I don't find these extras to be unattractive but the flower does have its faults! The labellum is slightly narrow and the flower's biggest fault is in the upper-most part of the lip, being different on either side of a central line. However, now that I have considered this more seriously, if, and it's a BIG IF, all the flowers were the same then I think it would need to be considered for an AD. The irregularities though would have to be consistent across all flowers.

Just for the exercise I will do my homework before the next edition of CC and find out if all flowers had the same consistent irregularities!

1 in 500

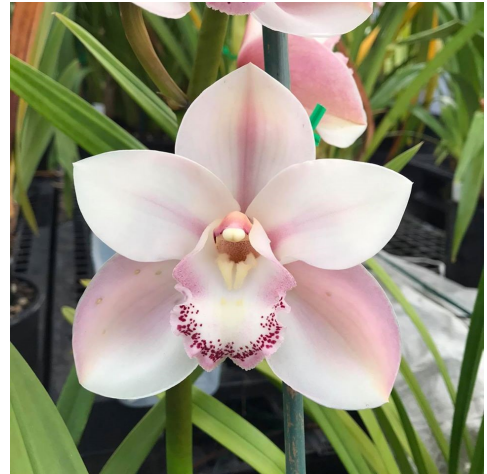
As mentioned in last week's CC the chances of getting a top quality seedling are not all that high and the odds blow out even further if you only have enough room to grow a small number of seedlings from the one cross. Our hybridisers throughout the world do a great job in producing quality Cymbidiums, some are more successful than others but even the most experienced don't always get it right. The 3 Amigos have flowered several siblings from a cross that on paper looked very promising, they are still waiting for that 1 (photographs next page).

Siblings - (Khan Flame x Thundergod)'Sequoia Dream' x Spring Flame 'Blushing'.



Knowing the quality of flowers they like to grow, I doubt very much whether any of these flowers will find a permanent home in the 3 Amigos' collections. Color-wise the flowers should be quite popular with florists.

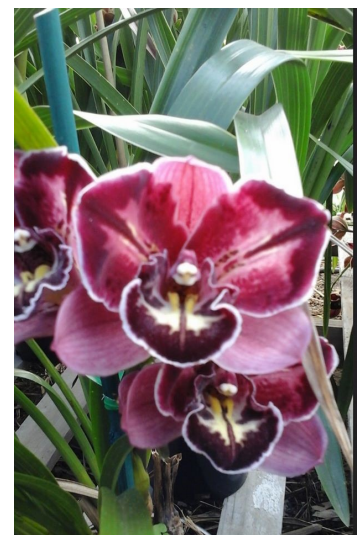
Even though two quality parents were used to make the cross very few of the positive attributes have been passed on to the offspring. This is the chance you take when growing seedlings. Do you continue to grow and flower any remaining plants from the same cross? Perhaps the next to flower will be that 1:500.



Interesting Petal Pelorics

Sam Willis, California, USA, put the following interesting post on the Gold Coast Cymbidium Growers Facebook page:

"Cym. Pepper's Fire underwent several mutations during the meristem process done by Loren Batchman. All are truly enchantingly small plants with charming mutations on the petals."



Fertilising your orchids

When it comes to fertilising your orchids a good starting point is to start with the experienced growers and find out what they do. However once you have taken that first step it is important to arrive at a method that works for you. This will take time but you will get there! There are so many things to take into consideration -what fertiliser do I use? Organic or chemical? When and how often do I apply it? What strength fertiliser do I use? Etc.

Over the years, I have tried just about every possible fertilising program with varying degrees of success. Until recently organic fertilisers were my first preference (if you use Organic fertilisers be prepared to pot-on or repot more frequently, as they will break down the mix more quickly) , anything from Strike Back for Orchids, pelletised chicken manure in all its forms, seaweed concoctions, cow poo tea etc. My most recent organic fertiliser, Powerfeed, gave me a fantastic looking plant above the pot but the root system in the pot was very different. It was serious enough for me to have to repot all my plants and it prompted me to switch to a chemical fertiliser, Peters Excel Finsher. I have been using that now for about five months and all seems okay. Time well tell! Fortunately I have the equipment to deliver the fertiliser in a controlled manner.

The fertilising units (2) I have allow me to deliver the fertiliser to the plants in exact dilution rates. Both units (pictured below) use Dosmatic Minidos Mid-Low Flow Proportioners to deliver the fertiliser while watering the orchids. All I have to do is measure out one and half cups of Peters Excel to 20 litres of water. I dial up 250:1 on the Minidos and it delivers fertiliser at the rate of 435 - 500 parts per million. I could be more exact with the fertiliser measurement but a guess at half- a-cup is good enough for me. My plants are fertilised once per week on a weekly basis. If heavy rainfall is experienced it may stretch out to once a fortnight during the cooler months. Most of my plants are grown under shade cloth.

Both units are mobile, I like to fertilise all the plants in the garden not only the orchids. The smaller unit, which only has a one litre container is also ideal for delivering pesticides and fungicides to the plants. If in doubt with the dilution rates, a quick call to Sage Horticultural puts me in the know.



With either unit you attach one side to your water supply, on the other side a length of hose for watering and for delivering the measured dose of fertiliser.