

'Cymbidium Chatter'

Edition 16 - August 3 2020



A first flowering seedling for the 3 Amigos
Cym Lunar Advent x Cym Gwen Thomas



Welcome to the first edition of Cymbidium Chatter for the month of August. For those of us in Victoria there is still no good news regarding the COVID-19 virus. As we go into a more severe lockdown situation we all need to be thankful that our Cymbidiums are now at the start of their main flowering season. Hopefully their beautiful flowers will brighten our days!

Sadly we have also received word of the passing of two of our long time members, Ken West and John Kenter. It is quite some time since we have seen either man at our monthly meetings, as neither enjoyed the best of health in recent years.

Ken was a very active member of COSV, having served on the committee for many years, including time as president, show marshal and photographer. He was also involved in a number of other orchid societies and was a highly respected judge with both COSV and OSCOV. Those of us who knew Ken well, will have fond memories of a man who was one of nature's true gentleman and someone who worked tirelessly for our club. Our thoughts are with his family!

John was also an active COSV member and a valued judge with both COSV and OSCOV. John was also involved with a number of orchid societies and he enjoyed growing a mixed collection of orchid genera. Apart from orchids he also had a real love of fishing and I often shared fishing tales with him, talking about the ones that got away at Bemm River and Lake Tyers. Tight lines John! Our thoughts and condolences to his family!

On a brighter note I am pleased to share with you a photograph of a first flowering seedling of Khan Fury (left) flowered by the 3 Amigos. This is a John Gate (NSW) seedling that has huge potential! Congratulations to all involved!

Khan Fury



The Khan Fury grex was first created by Gordon Giles when he crossed (Khan Flame x Blazing Fury). Gordon registered the cross in 2005.

The flower (left) was one that John Gate (NSW) obtained from Gordon as an unnamed plant (later 'Nerolie') and used in several crosses. John is a very talented hybridiser who is creating some wonderful new exhibition style standard Cymbidium flowers. It was only a couple of years ago that Khan Fury 'Nerolie', named after John's wife, was awarded an Award of Merit at our own COSV show.

I have no doubt that John and the 3 Amigos would be delighted with this seedling of Khan Fury. As you can see from the photograph the plant is still quite immature, but it produced 14 flowers on a spike reaching close to 1.2m.

Is this flower awardable? On photographic evidence alone I would have to say yes! My immediate thought was that it was of AM quality.

When judging Cymbidiums a good starting point is to look for the best flower on the spike and to consider whether or not you would award it. The next step is to look at all the other flowers on the spike to determine whether they are of a similar standard. In this case I initially chose the flower on the right, third one up from the bottom of the spike. The second one up would have also been a good choice. The flowers are consistently good so I think it is worthy of a high award - based on flower shape and fullness, color, number of flowers, spike habit and the lip! It is a very well balanced flower and most likely will only get better as the plant matures. Naturally a lot will depend on the growing culture it receives but this plant is in very good hands - the 3 Amigos will do it well!

Two more flowers from the 3 Amigos



Dural Flame 'Dural' x Dural Dream 'Picture'



Coraki Glowing 'Bee Jay'

Potting Media - thank you to Steve Howard from South Australia for this excellent guide. Steve is an accomplished grower and has a large collection of mixed genera orchids.

Are you in a mix about what mix to use? We see all sorts of recommendations about what's the best to use but unless you look carefully at what you grow, where you grow and what conditions you have then these recommendations may not suit. This post is about some of the mediums I use. Sometimes I use just the one, others I may have a mix of two or more but when I do I'm not just guessing. There is a science behind it. I do experiment as well having two pots side by side, same sized plant, same culture but different mix to see what's working better. The most important advice I can give is if someone suggests use a particular medium different to what you have then try it on one or two plants you can afford to lose. Do not change a whole collection unless you are prepared to lose a whole collection if things turn bad. And give it some time. Change at the beginning of the growing season. Follow the pics to see what mediums are out there and why I use them. Suggest to those interested to save this.



Bark. The best all round go to medium that suits most. Available as either heat treated, which is best, or composted which is good too but lower shelf life. Bark stays in good condition for 3 to 4 years. Can get acidic after that and cause root damage that's often mistaken for over watering. Lime added twice a year counteracts acidity. Available in various grades from seedling to chunky. I use Orchiata from NZ. Snow mould and various fungi pop up in bark mixes. I use bark for all my phals. Nothing else. If you buy bark and don't use it all just dry it out and store it coz it lasts for ages. Keep it moist and it continues to age, compost and acidify often to the point it's useless by the time you use it...been there done that!



Marble chip. I use this a lot. Opens up mediums, adds weight and releases tiny amounts of calcium. Ideal when added with bark. Paphiopedilums love it as do cymbidiums, zygopetalum and Aust Natives, oncidiums etc etc.



Scoria. Inert pH neutral volcanic rock. Various sizes. Holds moisture and fertiliser and cools mediums in hot climates. Can be used solely or mixed. Recommended that in between fertilisation that these mixes are flushed with clean water to prevent salt build up.



Another volcanic rock...Pumice. inert and also pH neutral. This absorbs and holds moisture for moisture lovers. Its inert properties reduces root based fungal infections we find in more organic mediums. Various sizes



Clay balls. Dont work for me. Yet others do well. Semi hydro cultivation suits this medium.

From Bryan Nitz - COSV member

My Pywacket x tracyanum just in flower. This is my first flowering since buying it, but is a stronger spike than when I bought it. I know it is not a show stopper, but I like its fresh strong colour, being a little unusual. It also has a strong upright spike, held above the foliage. It shows strong tracy looks as it has two serves of tracyanum. I am also intrigued by the name. Where did it come from?

All that I can add Bryan is that the name Pywacket was registered by E Caughlan in 1996. The cross was made by Geyersland Orchids.

Perhaps Weegie can enlighten us all about the name Pywacket.

A search of OrchidWiz and the RHS site would suggest that this crossing has not been registered



From Lynne Phelan



Cym That's Outrageous (Ken Siew x Death Wish)

Thanks Geoff

I look forward to your newsletters and am particularly interested in the Virus series.

I don't have many cymbid hybrids as I am interested in species, particularly the small Chinese ones but I do have some primary hybrids and also the one attached which I bought for sentimental reasons at a workshop at which Kevin was going to be guest speaker but he didn't make it. I was pleased when it flowered that it retains many elements of the species: erythraeum, tracyanum, insigne and lowianum, I