



The Cymbidium Newsletter

Reg No A0023705W COSV Website: www.cosv.com.au

April/May 2012

2012 Meeting Dates

January –
February 14
March 13
April 10
May 8
June 12
July 10
August 14
September 11
October 9
November 13
December 11

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- Website Manager: **Geoff Bailey** T: 03 5995 5524 (new manager TBA)
- Membership co-ordinator: **Andy Leamon** T : 03 9796 7935
- Catering : We require volunteers for assistance in the kitchen, please.
- Registrar: **Ern Kettle** T: 03 9555 5646
- Assistant Registrar: **Glenda Coutts** T: 03 9727 4849
- Promotions & Sales:, **Peter Sunderland** T: 5998 2535, **Colin Gillespie** T: 03 5998 2402
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Meetings: The 2nd Tuesday of each month (except January), Mt Waverley Community Centre, Youth Centre Hall, Miller Crescent, Mount Waverley (Melway 61/D12 and 70/D1). The hall is off Stephenson Road and is next to the Library.

Meetings start at 8.00pm. Basket Supper please.

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*Last Month's Meeting

Thank you to David Francis of Duralite for speaking at last month's meeting, David brought along some of the products he sells and explained to the meeting their uses and advantages.

*Cultural Talk this Month

John McMillan will be giving us a cultural talk this month, as you are aware John lives in Traralgon so the conditions there for growing cymbidiums are slightly different to what we experience in Melbourne we look forward to his talk.

*Main Item for the evening

Dr. Randall Robinson will give a presentation on the 2012 Santa Barbara Orchid Show, Randall's talks and presentations are always warmly received and very interesting, please come along and join us for an interesting evening.

*Trading Table

Colin and Karen Gillespie will be having a trading table this month, there will be compots and seedlings of his own crosses for sale.

***Cultural Notes**

We are including an article on scale with the newsletter, we are continually fighting this pest, this article might bring you some answers, prevention is always the best cure, try and control ants as they are the main culprits in this battle. Our thanks to Denis Oliver for this article.

***Growing Competition for 2012**

This is our fourth month of this year's growing competition so please bring your plants in so we can all see how they are progressing. There have not been many plants brought in each month, please members bring your plants in, the plants for this year's competition are:

Mericlone – Flaming Vulcan 'XTC" grown and supplied by David Wain, this is a dark red large standard cymbidium.

Seedling: Kirby Lesh 'Pink Ice' x (Cape Banks x Red Beauty) – hybridized and grown by Colin Gillespie, this cross should give light and dark pinks and is also a large standard, the Kirby Lesh 'Pink Ice' comes from Kimberley Orchids and the Cape Banks x Red Beauty comes from Royale Orchids in Sydney.

***Results for the monthly competition.**

This time of the year there are not many cymbidiums in flower, thanks to the members who brought their plants in, the winners were as follows:

JUDGES VOTE AND BEST IN OPEN

Sarah Jean x devonianum - presented by Ern Kettle

Congratulations Ern.

***New Members**

We welcome the following new members to COSV and hope that they will join us for our informative and friendly meetings:

Nadir Tzelil from Windsor, Vic, and Stephen Sang from West Wodonga

***Condolences**

We are very sad to report the passing of Trevor Williams, our thoughts and condolences go to Judy and family at this very sad time.

***Request from City of Monash regarding Smoking**

Our meeting Hall : 10 metres within the front and back entrances of the Hall are SMOKE FREE, kindly adhere to this requirement as this could jeopardise future leases of the Hall. Many thanks for your co-operation.

***COSV Annual Seedling Competition – Sponsored by Malcolm Campbell of SAGE**

Firstly a big thank you to Malcolm Campbell for kindly sponsoring this new competition, this will be held on an annual basis as is for current seedlings in flower and will be a photographic competition, Ken West will photograph seedlings that are brought into our monthly meetings, if you are unable to attend a meeting you may submit your own photographs, we will require a photograph of a single flower and also the whole plant, final date for entry will be the end of November for more details kindly speak to a committee member.

***Events coming up for our monthly meeting**

Our annual auction will be held at our June meeting this year as we have Greg Bryant from Sydney as our guest speaker for our July meeting, please diarise both of these dates.

The Committee try their best to make the meetings interesting but input from the members is always welcome, if anyone has any thoughts about items of interest for the meeting please speak to a committee member at the meeting.

***COSV Annual Show**

Last year's show held in the Hungarian Club was a great success, we will be holding our show at the same venue this year, Our show will be on the 8th and 9th September 2012 with setup on Friday 7th. We will also be having a dinner on the Saturday evening at the Hungarian Club the cost will be \$35 per person, more details later in the year.

***OSCOV Show**

This will be held at the Springers Leisure Centre on 24th - 26th August 2012, with setup on Wednesday the 22nd and Judging on Thursday 23rd August, the OSCOV Orchids of the Year dinner will be held on the 25th August 2012, more details later.

***Stawell Orchid Society**

The Stawell Orchid Society is holding a seminar on the 2nd June 2012 in the Stawell Entertainment Centre, Main Street, Stawell, there will be 4 speakers and plants for sale, if you require any more information kindly contact Anne Gardiner on 5358 3742

***Victorian Country Orchid Clubs Challenge**

This great show is being held in Warrnambool this year on the 7th and 8th July 2012 at the Brauer College, Caramut Road, Warrnambool, and will be open to the public on Saturday the 7th July from 12pm to 5pm and Sunday the 8th July from 9am – 3pm, admission price is \$3 per entry, there will be plenty of plants for sale and light luncheon will be available, this is always a good show to visit if anyone is interested in more details kindly speak to Jenny our Secretary.

***Assistance in the Kitchen at our monthly Meeting**

The Committee is appealing to members who would like to be part of running the kitchen at our meetings to speak to a committee member, this can be on a permanent or roster basis. We thank you in advance.

We kindly request you to bring a plate of eats to share to the meeting on the 10th April 2012.

SCALE AND ITS CONTROL by Denis Oliver

The armoured scale insects are some of the most successful plant-eating arthropods. They occur almost everywhere that perennial vascular plants are found, with the exception of a few oceanic islands. They adapt readily when introduced to new environments and in particular they like the artificial conditions provided by hothouse culture.

The Life Cycle . This is a *general* description of the life cycle, as there are numerous differences in behaviour between different species of scale. Some mature female scale insects produce eggs, which hatch soon after laying, while others are live-bearers that lay crawlers. Female live-bearers continue to breed for 20-50 days, depending on the species, temperature and other conditions. Within a few hours male and female crawlers exit a flap in the rear of the female's shell and move off in search of new sites to colonise. They usually settle within a few centimetres of the parent but are theoretically capable of covering up to 150 metres. They are also dispersed by the hands and clothing of nursery workers and by other mechanical means. The crawlers settle on a new site within a day or two, withdraw their legs, insert feeding stylets into the host and begin feeding, growing and secreting their protective cover. Once their feeding stylets are in place, the crawlers do not move again.

They now undergo several stages of metamorphosis, which culminate in sexual maturity. Then, in the case of the male, a small gnat exits its shell and searches for a female scale with which to mate. The male gnat is unable to feed and is relatively short-lived. The female is mated through a flap in the rear of her shell; she then proceeds to produce another generation of crawlers. Un-mated females die after a short time. During the growing stages there are short periods of feeding (each approx. three days), followed by longer non-feeding stages (each approx. eight days). These non-feeding stages must be kept in mind when attempting to control scale with systemic insecticides. The scale's hard shell also reduces the effectiveness of many surface-acting contact sprays.

Control Methods and Materials . Scale tends to colonise most heavily on the underside of leaves and towards leaf axils. Any control measure needs to take this factor into consideration, as well as the existence of the protective shell and the dormant phases of the life cycle as described above. Surface-acting (contact) sprays, such as white oil, carbaryl and pyrethrins, need to be applied so as to cover the entire plant, especially under the leaves and into the leaf axils.

The traditional spray is white oil(also known as summer oil) in one of its many forms. It works by smothering the insect, both in its adult and crawler stages. Once dry, white oil remains effective for 5-14 days, depending on any additives present and the frequency and volume of subsequent watering. The advantages of white oil include effectiveness, low toxicity to both the user and the environment, and low cost. Its main disadvantage is phyto-toxicity, as white oil will damage flower buds and may also damage sensitive leaves. This phyto-toxicity is caused by two factors, namely, (a) UV radiation, which causes the breakdown of the oil to phyto-toxic components, and (b) rapid uptake of oil by the leaves, which may cause cell membranes to rupture.

Some products now on the market contain stabilisers to retard breakdown by UV-radiation and 'safeners', which retard uptake of oil by the plant. One such product is D-C-Pron Plus, which is sold as Pest Oil®. To my knowledge it has not been tried on orchids, so it should be applied with caution, especially to the flowers. Newer topical insecticides, such as piprenol and permethrin (a synthetic pyrethrin), are effective against scale. White oil is useful when mixed with these insecticides, as it enhances their spread and adhesion to the leaves. Systemic sprays are effective against scale only in its feeding stages. Depending on the severity of infestation, repeat spraying may be necessary. It is questionable whether amateur growers should take the risk of handling and applying these potentially dangerous chemicals, especially when safer alternatives are available.

Growers with small collections often physically wipe scale from their plants' leaves. TAKE CARE! The scale infestation is invariably worse nearer the base of the leaf. Naturally, one tends to press harder where the pest is thickest. The base of the leaf usually has a pronounced V-profile and the chances of splitting the leaf at this point are quite high. This will not only damage the plant but will also release sap onto the cleaning cloth and the hands of the operator. Unless care is taken, virus could be transmitted from an infected plant to others.

Growers often use an aqueous solution of either white oil or methylated spirit to wipe orchid leaves. The methylated spirit is said to help break down the waxy scale shell but I believe that a single wipe would be unlikely to kill scale in this way. Although wiping with white oil or methylated spirits removes scale, it does not kill any virus particles released if the leaves are damaged. If you are cleaning leaves, use a fresh piece of disposable hand towel for each plant, and wash your hands thoroughly. Don't dip your cleaning materials or hands in any solutions that could be contaminated with virus. As an added precaution you could use disposable gloves, which are now very cheap and readily available in a range of sizes and colours. Ants are often mentioned in the context of spreading scale. They are certainly attracted to the secretions of scale insects but to my knowledge they play no part in its dispersal.

It has been suggested that a good way to rid plants of scale is to dip the entire plant in a solution of a suitable insecticide at re-potting time. This procedure certainly ensures good coverage, avoids physical leaf damage and reduces the chance of spray drift. However, unless infestation is minor, a follow-up spray may be necessary.

Many of us are using predatory mites to control red spider, so widespread use of insecticidal sprays is undesirable. If your collection is not large, it may be possible to wipe scale from the distal, more accessible parts of the leaves and to use a small hand-pump sprayer to treat the axils and leaf bases only. White oil would be the measure of choice here because of its low toxicity to predatory mites. Several species of insects that feed on scale are sold commercially. Various species of ladybirds, in both their larval and adult stages, consume scale insects. I recently introduced several containers of red chilochorus (*Chilochorus circumdatus*) into one of my cymbidium houses. If this treatment successfully controls scale, it will be excellent to use in combination with predatory mites, which control red spider.

Does Scale Transmit Virus from Plant to Plant? The answer to this question is unknown but I think it unlikely. It's far more likely that growers trying to eliminate scale transmit virus! Once the crawlers select a site, they stay there for life. When the crawlers mature and produces more crawlers, the only way that these offspring could be contaminated is if the virus particles were transferred from the digestive system of the parent to its reproductive system and thus to its progeny. This may be possible but seems unlikely. Once the crawlers have emerged they do not feed until they have permanently settled at a new site, so they are unlikely to pick up virus particles in their travels. The only other mobile phase is the adult male scale but they do not feed and so are also unlikely to transmit virus.