

**MIRIAM ANN ORCHIDS NEWSLETTER  
ALAN'S COLUMN APRIL-MAY 2011**

Autumn is here at last! Beautiful days and cool nights. Now is the time to start working again down in the bush house. Well what are we up to?

Lets start with our old favourite – cymbidiums.

**CYMBIDIUMS:** Spikes are now showing First of all place a few snail pellets around each pot. This is very good insurance. Secondly check for two spotted mites. If present spray with ECO-NEEM®. Don't forget to mix it with ECO – OIL® to get better coverage. ROGOR – 40® may also be used. This time of the year many growers give their plants a good spray with CLEAR WHITE OIL. It controls many pests including scale insects. Watch for little hairy grubs Spray with DIPEL®. This bio-control works very well if you spray at duck mixed with an oil. Look for black spot on the leaves. There are many fungicides available that can help control this problem. Example –MANCOZEB, CAPTAN®, THIRAM®, BRAVO® (in its many guises). Take precautions against bulb rots. Drench with FONGARID® or AGRIPHOS 600®. ALIETTE® also works very well. Fertilise with a low nitrogen fertiliser which has a low ammonia content MERRI FERT or PETERS BLOSSOM BOOSTER Apply weekly while spikes are developing.

Start to clean up your flowering house. Remove weeds etc. Before placing any plants on the benches, spray every where with a copper solution or with a HY-SAN® or HY-KLEEN. That means walls – roof-floor etc. Water every 5 to 7 days only if needed.

**NOBLE DENDROBIUMS:** By now you should be fertilising weekly with a high potassium fertiliser. PETERS BLOSSOM BOOSTER, CAMPBELLS "YELLOW" or MERRI FERT. Fertilise weekly until the apical end of the growth has finished growing. Then with hold all fertilising. Spray with MANCOZEB or CAPTAN® to help control Black Spot on leaves.

Watch for grubs and grasshoppers. Spray with ROGOR® if they are a pest! Keep pot just moist.

**CATTLEYAS:** Repot if necessary. Increase light. Fertilise this month with a good organic such as GROWTH BLOOD & BONE®. Do not over water Watch for scale insects. If present spray with MALDISON or maybe ROGOR. Mix a light oil with the above for a better kill.

**PHALAENOPSIS:** are still in full growth. Keep plants just moist. Fertilise weekly with a good organic such as fish, sea weed or light blood & bone. Watch for grubs on plants that are in flower If you are troubled by spotted flowers, spray with IPPON 500 AQUAFLO.

**AUSTRALIAN NATIVES:** The beetle is still around so keep a constant watch out for them. ECO-NEEM® has been used over the summer period with some success. Drench with ANTI-ROT® or FONGARID® to try and control bulb rots. Use CAPTAN or MANCOZEB to help control Black Spot or Rust that appears under the leaves. Fertilise weekly with MERRI FERT or CAMPBELLS "Yellow". Pot on if necessary.

**MISCELLANEOUS:** Most plants you can pot on or divide during early Autumn. Increase light levels. Still fertilise weekly. Alternate weekly with MERRI FERT or GROWTH BLOOD & BONE®. Check for aphids and scale. If present spray with CONFIDOR® or ECO-NEEM®. If you have been using MERRI- COTE now is the time to top-dress. A light top dress of ZEOLITES will help your plants growth. Move on this next month.

As I have run out of time, my secretary has told me she has to type this out urgently, so this is all for now.

If you are heading North this winter, don't forget to drop into Jenny's Orchid Garden. 10 Niel Court, Howard Springs N.T. ph 08 8983 1641. This is well worth a look. It is just South of Darwin just past Palmerston and don't forget to try the Devonshire teas!!

Plenty of DEBCO BARK now in stock and CYMBIDIUM MIX available. NEW seedlings will be available soon. THE ORCHID WORKSHOP DVD is now back in stock. Cost \$25 plus postage and packaging. My ALAN'S FERTILISER HANDBOOK is also now in stock with a new cover! ALAN'S PEST & DISEASE HANDBOOK is also still available with a new cover!

**NOTE:** As we will be in Queensland during May and June we will not be at ORCHIDS OUT WEST this year due to other commitments from mid May on.

The growers class will be held on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> May at 2pm. All welcome.

TILL NEXT TIME, GOOD GROWING

ALAN & MIRIAM MERRIMAN

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