

**MIRIAM ANN ORCHIDS NEWSLETTER**  
**ALAN'S COLUMN SEPTEMBER 2008**

Yes! Its that time of the month again. Time shore flies when a newsletter has to be produced every month etc.

First of all - There will be NO class in SEPTEMBER. We will be up north visiting a few orchid societies and organizing a couple of workshops. So no class. October will be our visit day to Keith and Loma Oxley's. More news further on.

Over the last couple of months I have seen many wonderful flowers at our recent Spring Shows. Some of the new cymbidiums have been great. I notice two-spotted mites are on the move and black spot spoiling the appearance of some plants. Some virus symptoms, I think are the aftermath of the big frost last July! A bit of thrip damage that was probably caused in late autumn. But the shows are wonderful to look at!

The Fairs have been great, especially the big one – St Ives. Garry Bromley and his bank of merry men and women certainly go out of their way to make every one welcome. I certainly enjoyed the fruit cake! I think the attendance was way up this year, and the public certainly spent well.

The orchid growing fraternity is starting to grow again. New Societies starting up at MINGARRA and ROOTY HILL. We wish them well into the world of orchids. No details as yet as when they meet etc. I will let you know when this info comes to hand.

The big news is that my new fertiliser handbook is now finished. I had a few copies from the printer and they went like hot cakes - yes all gone. I will have the first delivery by the end of August. If you would like a copy, it will cost you \$\$22.00 plus postage.

Orchid growing is basically growing hydroponically. To know what is happening, what new in media, nutrients one should join the Australian Hydroponic and Greenhouse Association. The newsletters are worth the membership fee. Next year the Bi-annual Conference and Exhibition will be held here in Sydney. These are very interesting and informative. I will keep you informed regarding venue, dates etc. In the meantime how about joining ! For further information regarding membership write or ring SASKIA BLANCH P.O. BOX 538 NARRABEEN N.S.W. 2101 phone/fax (02) 9939 5993 mobile 0414 333 996.

### **FUNGAL AND BACTERIAL PROBLEMS**

Over the past few years I have mentioned the use of VIBREX®. This is chlorine dioxide plus and activator. A few of you have asked, regarding rates of use. I will write in detail in a future issue of our notes, but for the moment for cleaning out glass house with no plants you use 17ml/100litre of water plus their H-3 also at 17ml/100litres of water. For plants diseases one can use VIBREX® at 1.7ml/litre of water plus 1.7ml of the C-10 activator. Mixing is critical , but there are instructions on the can on how to mix etc. When I get sometime I will publish the full info on it for you. In fact I have put together a slide presentations on VIBREX® that I will show at one of our class days or maybe your orchid society. Let me know.

I mentioned earlier this year that I would put together a few technical articles on commercially available products that are not generally available for the hobby grower.

One of these products is DEPLOY 1000®. This is a non-ionic spreader that gives a quick wetting action and improves absorption and spray coverage. DEPLOY 1000® is neutrally charged and when a neutrally charged solution comes into contact with a negatively charged leaf surface, the solution will spread and penetrate the leaf surface. This product increases retention of spray droplets by reducing the surface tension enabling improved coverage of the leaf surface. This particularly useful when targeting weeds with heavy or waxy surfaced leaves that are hard to kill with contact herbicides. Cymbidium and Cattleya leaves are also hard to wet.

For further information, prices etc give me a ring.

Well what should we be doing now? The Cymbidium potting season has now started, the sooner you get started the plants will have a longer period of time to get established before the hot weather hits us.

While repotting a hand full of MERRI COTE around the top of the pot will give your plants a good start. A few drenches with a rooting hormone will also help. Don't overwater newly potted plants. Fertiliser not needed for a few weeks. Check for two-spotted mites under the leaves. If present, give plants a good spray under the leaves with AZAMAX®. Mix with ECO – OIL® at label rates. Watch for black spot – spray with ECO-CARB® , or MANCOZEB. Some growers like to drench plants with FONGARID® after repotting.

Cattleyas are still in a resting stage. Mine are just thinking about sending roots into action. Once growth is evident you can repot if necessary or pot on. As weather starts to warm up you will have to increase your watering. Start to fertilise with GROWTH BLOOD & BONE or MAJOR CARP.

Phalaenopsis have been great this year. Many new combinations of colours, strips, spots, blotches etc. There were some nice ones in DENDI ORCHIDS display at St Ives. Leave heat on in hot house. Keep humidity up to around 60%. Fertilise weekly with MERRI FERT or PETERS GENERAL PURPOSE.

Australian Natives and their Hybrids are now in full bloom. After flowering repot as quick as possible. Then fertilise with a good organic such as MAJOR CARP or GROWTH BLOOD & BONE. Watch for black spot. Spray with MANCOZEB. Keep an eye out for aphids. Spray with ECO OIL®. Don't forget the SUPERTHRIVE® to be put into your fertiliser! This will give your plants a quick start. Don't over water after repotting.

Paphiopedilum are now just finishing their winter flush. By the time you read these notes you should start repotting. There are many brews around that one could choose from. I still use DEBCO® medium (5-10) bark mixed with a little coarse perlite. The rates I use are around 5 parts bark to one part perlite. If the plant has poor root growth I usually repot into sphagnum moss and a little super coarse perlite. Remember if using moss, you must repot annually. Fertilise with liquid BLOOD & BONE. Alternate this with MERRI FERT with the required amount of SUPERTHRIVE®. Keep plants just moist. NOTE: FERTILISE EVERY TEN DAYS. Check for mealy bug and fungal spots.

### **FREE FREE**

I have some glass house glazing bars to be given to a kind orchid grower. If you want them, give me a ring.

This is all for now NO CLASS IN SEPTEMBER. Class will visit the Oxley's on the 11<sup>th</sup> October. Details in next newsletter.

We will be on our workshop and lecture tour up the North Coast of N.S.W. in September. Be back a few days and then have my knee operated on, then we will see where to go !!

Until then,

GOOD GROWING

ALAN & MIRIAM MERRIMAN

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