'Cymbidium Chatter'

Cym Coraki Glowing 'Kentlyn'
Photograph: Terry Poulton

Edition 27 October 19 2020

Welcome to this edition of Cymbidium Chatter! The COVID-19 news is certainly more encouraging and the easing of restrictions means that we can all look forward to some social interaction. Fortunately I have been in possession of a work permit that has allowed me to work at the bowls club for several hours each day. The greens are looking good and I am slowly getting on top of the algae/fungal blooms and stains on the synthetic surface.

When it comes to using any product to control specific problems associated with orchid growing, you should ensure that you follow the Safety Guidelines carefully. Most of the products have clear instructions and every care should be taken when using them. Unfortunately I lost my favourite uncle and aunt, many years ago now, to an extremely rare form of stomach cancer. My uncle had a large indoor plant nursery in Clayton and regularly used various sprays to control insect pests and other problems. Although it was never proven, the sprays used, were considered to be responsible. It was more than 30 years before anyone was allowed to build on the land that the nursery occupied. So please take every precaution!

We are almost at the end of our flowering season although I still have a large plant of Cym Sarah Jean 'Ice Cascade' that is opening ever so slowly and it is still producing new spikes. Interestingly the spikes are much more erect and the flower form is quite different to when it flowers at the normal time, about six weeks earlier. I did post a photograph on Facebook and many people commented that their Sarah Jeans are flowering late this year and that the flowers look quite different.

I have been busy re-potting many of the plants and I have come to the realisation that I have been overwatering my plants. For the first time in many, many years, I am now growing my plants under shade cloth, with no hard roof controlling the amount of water my plants receive. I have lost a number of plants to rot and others are not looking as healthy as they should. Our heavier than normal rainfall, we have already received our annual average rainfall, coupled together with me hand-watering and fertilising the plants on a weekly basis, has I believe been responsible for the decline. I have always stressed that OBSERVATION is the most important skill an orchid grower can develop. So apart from easing off the watering I am also adjusting my potting mix. I use a combination of bark, perlite and coir chip for all orchids, no matter what genera. I have decided to do away with the coir chip, as this material retains a lot of moisture and certainly breaks down far quicker than either bark or perlite. So hopefully the plants will start to look much healthier, a bit of warm weather will work wonders!

Another Greg Bryant hybrid, superbly flowered by Terry Poulton - Cym Coraki Glowing ‘Kentlyn’

Cym Willunga Royal ‘Orange Delight’ X Blazing Dream ‘Teepee’

This is a first flowering seedling grown by Terry Poulton. It is good to see some new intermediate sized flowers. This flower has taken on the attributes of both parents with relation to color and it appears to have the floriferousness of the *Cym* Blazing Dream parent. Both parents are pictured below.

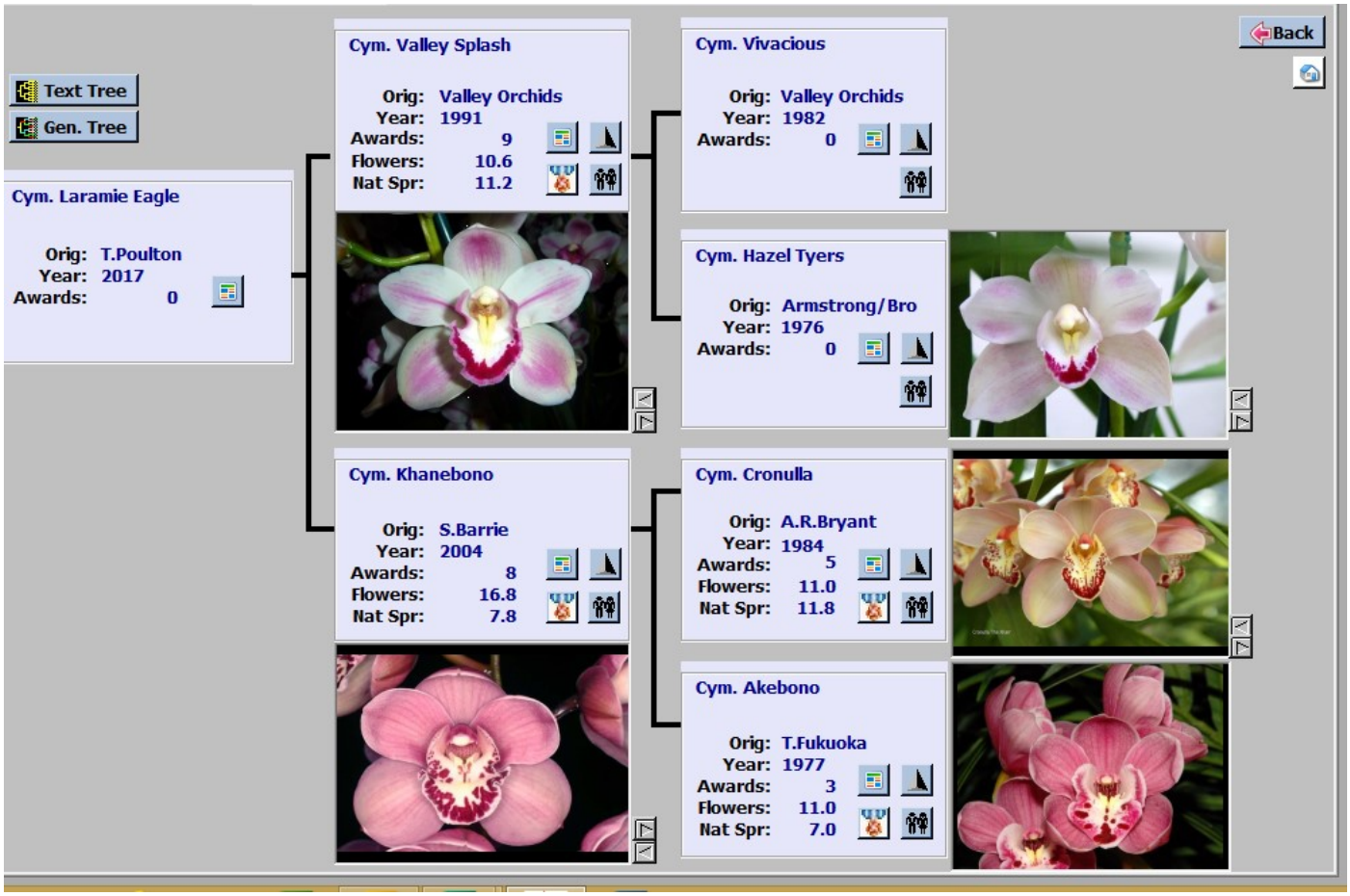
Cym Willunga Royal ‘Orange Delight’

Photograph: Harley Kingston

Cym Blazing Dream ‘TeePee’

Photograph: OSCOV

The making of *Cymbidium* Laramie Eagle



Cymbidium Laramie Eagle was created when George Serhan (OrchidWiz lists Terry Poulton as the originator) paired *Cym* Valley Splash 'Awesome' with *Cym* Khanebono 'Jacinta'. Terry Poulton registered the cross in 2017.

The name Laramie Eagle, was created recognising the name of the street in which Terry lives and 'Eagle' was selected, as an Eagle, in golfing terms, is one better than Par. This recognises George Serhan's involvement in the game of golf, he was in his younger years a very accomplished golfer and he is now just as accomplished as a hybridiser of show quality *Cymbidiums.*

I have featured *Cymbidium* Laramie Eagle on a previous occasion in Cymbidium Chatter but I thought it was worth a revisit as the grex is producing some fine flowers. Interestingly the ones we have seen so far have none of the strong blushing ('Jacinta' has feint blushing), that we associate with the parent Cym Valley Splash 'Awesome'. While writing this article I did check with Terry and he informed me that he had one flower with some blushing but it had been relegated to the cull department as it didn't measure up as far as flower form goes.

It is always difficult to get everything just right with a flower but *Cym* Laramie Eagle 'Pink Champagne' goes close, as does Laramie Eagle 'Jacinta', owned by George Serhan and named after his daughter. Terry owns 'Pink Champagne' and he also has another very attractive flower *Cym* Laramie Eagle 'Snow White'. On its two flowerings the flowers have been spaced too far apart and this is accentuated even further when the spike is held in an upright position. I really believe this flower would be shown to its best, if the spike was allowed to arch, something that rarely happens in Terry's collection, he just doesn't have the room!

Cym Laramie Eagle ‘Pink Champagne’

Photo: Joshua White

Cym Laramie Eagle ‘Pink Champagne’

Photo: Terry Poulton

Cym Laramie Eagle ‘Pink Champagne’

Photo: Joshua White

Cym Laramie Eagle ‘Jacinta’

Photo: George Serhan

I think that most growers would agree that these are two classy flowers. ‘Jacinta’ has everything going for it, excellent spike habit, shapely flowers and the arrangement on the spike is excellent. I can see 16 flowers on the spike there could even be more!

‘Pink Champagne’ was the OSCOV Cymbidium of the Year 2019. It has taken the color from the *Cym* Khanebono parent while ‘Jacinta’ is more closely aligned to the *Cym* Valley Splash parent. Both flowers are wonderful show bench *Cymbidiums.* Great hybridising George!

Top and left: Cym Laramie Eagle ‘Snow White’

Above: *Cym* Laramie Eagle ‘TeePee’

In the photo (left) you can see that the flowers are spaced unevenly and too far apart. This is a long spike, approximately 1.5m in height. I think Terry should allow the spike to arch next time it flowers. There is not much room in the igloo but he does have an excellent enclosed verandah, he may have to give a few geraniums a good heave-ho!

— My Experience with Anova Pots —

By Joshua White

Some growers may be familiar with the ANOVApot®, an Australian-designed water-saving pot that has had success within the nursery industry (read information is available on the official website at http://www.anovapot.com/). ANOVA pots are available from a number of distributors around the country.

A recently cleaned (washed and bleached) 175mm ANOVA pot.

I have never bought ANOVA pots new; my exposure to them has resulted from the purchase of a handful of established Cymbidiums in ANOVA pots. The vast majority of my collection uses a range of plastic pots (mostly produced by Garden City Plastics in Australia), which feature numerous drainage holes across the base (sometimes known as a capillary base). My choice of pot was primarily driven by the understanding that I needed to provide excellent drainage (additionally, I had the advantage of being able to salvage a large number of them when my workplace replanted the garden outside my building; they were otherwise going to simply bin what were near-new pots, so after a wash and a bleach, I had a reasonable supply).

Clockwise from top-left: GCP 200mm Euro Pot, GCP 140mm Capillary Base Pot,
a range of GCP pots ranging from 100mm to 140mm, and two different styles of GCP side-hole pots.

What prompted me to write this short article was an observation whilst I was repotting a number of my Cyms this Spring – **all but one of the plants in ANOVA pots had short root systems**. In each case, the root system stopped about an inch above the well or collar in the base of the pot and frequently lacked good growth around the side of the pot. This was consistent regardless of how long I had had the plant in the pot; the most recent was one that I'd had for just under 8 months, whilst the longest was about 4 years (this plant was quite overdue for repotting). In the latter case, I noted that whilst much of the bark had broken down, the finer particles had all collected in the base of the pot (something which could not occur in any of the capillary base pot styles), leaving over a centimetre of sludge.

As an aside, the media breakdown was almost certainly accelerated by the use of Powerfeed, which Geoff Bailey has previously commented upon in issues 3b and 11. I noted last year when doing pH tests that it was causing the media to break down far more quickly than I had anticipated; from then I significantly reduced its use until I began trialling an inorganic fertiliser.

The single exception I found was a plant growing in a perlite and vermiculite mix, rather than a bark-based mix, which had an extensive and healthy root system. This leads me to suspect that choice of media is critical for the grower intending to use ANOVA pots.

A Cymbidium growing in perlite and vermiculite in a 140mm ANOVA pot.

Does this mean that ANOVA pots are unsuitable for growing Cymbidiums? No – I know of growers who use them with success (most of them with warmer climates than I). However, this does suggest that the combination of a bark-based media and ANOVA pots does not work for my growing conditions and watering regime (I am located in Oakleigh, a suburb in the south east of Melbourne). I water as little as fortnightly during the cold and wet period of winter, or as frequently as three times a week in the height of summer.

One observation I made when checking the ANOVApot website was that none of the examples showing the performance of different plants (such as in their twin-pot irrigation system) are of orchids. I suspect that they were not designed with orchids in mind and that due to the semi-epiphytic nature of the Cymbidium genus, ANOVA pots are not the optimal solution.

Would I recommend ANOVA pots to a beginner? Probably not, especially if they were in Melbourne or somewhere with similar conditions. When I first started growing Cymbidiums, I found getting the moisture levels right to be the biggest challenge and had a number of plants either dry out or rot from inexperience (a similar fate befell quite a few Liliums, especially seedlings, when I started growing them too). I would expect that the use of an ANOVA pot would require more precise management of moisture levels, something which the beginner is not likely to be skilled at initially.

In closing, I want to reiterate that this is only my observation and that your experience may differ to mine, especially if you have different growing conditions to me. There is no "one size fits all" pot design or media and it may take some experimenting for a new grower to work out what works best for them. The key is to ensure that your combination of pot design, media and watering regime match your growing conditions and thus avoid your plants dehydrating or rotting.

Spring Flowering Cymbidium Species – Stephen Early

Spring is a time when many of the cymbidium species come into flower. This includes many of the species that make up our modern hybrids and hence it is not a surprise that many of our cymbidium hybrids flower at this time.

Cymbidium sanderae is one of the first to flower in spring. Its white flowers with the dark lip makes it a most desirable species. It grows fairly easily under shadecloth for us. It was known as *Cymbidium parishii* but the plant originally collected under this name is clearly different hence the name change.

Cymbidium crassifolium is a species not many would know under this name. It was known as *Cymbidium bicolor* subsp. *obtusum.* It differs from other forms of bicolor in terms of the spike length and with a shorter and more crowded spike and the shape of the flower. It has thick leaves like the others in this section and flowers a few months before the others. We grow it in a heated glasshouse at a minimum of 10C as it comes from relatively low altitudes.

Cymbidium wenshanense is a large flowered species from china which was named only in 1990. It is now available in Australia and has large white flowers with a very attractive large labellum. It generally carries between 3 and 7 flowers.

Cymbidium lowianum flowers generally in October and there are a number of forms. Unfortunately there are quite a few labelled as lowianum that are in fact hybrids. Tell tale signs that it is not a true lowianum are the lip is wide and not narrow, the shape of the flower and the inflorescence style and distance to the first flower. By far the best clone I have seen is the clone 'Compte de Hemptinne' and well worth getting. There is also a pure color form *Cymbidium lowianum* 'Concolor' and again unfortunately there are many of forms that are not true to name. The true form is nice and dark green with a striking yellow V on the labellum. We also have a variegated form in which not only are the leaves variegated but also the stems and flowers. Unfortunately some back bulbs from this plant have ended up not being variegated so would not buy a plant unless the leaves were clearly variegated. *Cymbidium lowianum* var. iansonii was originally known as *Cymbidium iansonii* but included as a lowianum due to the work of Du Puy and Cribb. It has a much fuller flower an orange markings on the labellum and less flowers than a normal lowianum.

Cymbidium tigrinum flowers late October early November. The width of the flower is almost as wide as its leaves are long. It will grow cold but you do need to keep the water off it in winter.

Cymbidium eburneum also flowers in October. There are a number of different forms. The classic form normally has only one flower with an occasional second flower. It will flower for many years on the same growth and remains a relatively small plant. There is one now seen with 2 to 3 flowers that makes up to a big plant quickly and I believe comes from China. There is also a form with red markings on the lip and I hope to see it in flower in a couple of years if the flask I purchased was true to name. There is also a yellow form – if it is an eburneum and the pink form which is now known as *Cymbidium wadae.* I wait for both of these to also grow larger and flower.

Cymbidium changningense is a Chinese species closely related to lowianum. However the flower is much larger and only a few flowers on a spike. Some have suggested it may be a natural hybrid between lowianum and mastersii but apart from the fact that the species flower many months apart the flower is much larger than both parents. It is an easy growing and flowering species and makes a speciemen sized plant quickly.

Cymbidium insigne is easily identified by tall upright inflorescences. Most of the pink forms have been breed from the clone ‘Mrs Carl Homes’ and seem to be infertile. This may be because they are tetraploids. *Cymbidium seidenfadenni* was separated out from other insignes and can be easily identified by the shape of the flower. Unfortunately, so much interbreeding has happened in this species that it many labelled as insigne may be hybrids.

Cymbidium floribundum flowers for us in October and is a true miniature. It will flower in a 75mm pot and by the time it gets to a 140mm pot is a true specimen. It is so important in many of our miniatures and although the standard form is brown its colour varies from red to green. An easy plant to grow and flower and well worth having it in any collection.

Cymbidium devonianum is the other common parent to be found in our miniature hybrids. It varies a bit but most are a grey brown colour but there is a form that is almost pure green. It again is an easy species to grow under shadecloth but will go backwards quickly if allowed to dry out. We grow it in a pot with a saucer to keep the water up. In nature in summer it gets on average 30mm of rain a day and in winter has a minimum temperature of 0C, so will tolerate frosts.