

**Sheffield & District
Orchid Society
Newsletter
January 2015**



**January Plant of the Month
*Laelia gouldiana***

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Editorial

Happy New Year to you all and I hope that the recent spell of snow hasn't caused you any issues. I have plenty up here on the 'roof of the Pennines', and the 4x4 is proving invaluable.

The 2015 programme card is included with the newsletter, and a printed version will be available to collect at the next meeting for those members who get their newsletter by email.

The results of the member's survey from October/November last year are also attached for member's perusal.

Business

Our next display will be at Bramhope for the annual Harrogate Society show at the end of February. Plants will be required, and full arrangements will be made at our next meeting in February. Just a few weeks later will see our display at Bowburn, and once again plants will be required.

The Table Show

The first commentary of 2015 was given by Ted Croot, who started at the left with a large plant of *Vanda tricolor* var. *suavis* with a single spike of 9 flowers of mainly white with brown mottling and a purple lip (hence 3 colours). This warm growing species from Java is currently thriving under lights and flowering twice in the last 6 months. A couple of *Calanthes* were next up with Tokyo having a huge bulb and spike of many good sized flowers of mainly white with a reddish lip. There was some debate as to whether Tokyo was a clone of *vestita* or a hybrid. It is in fact a hybrid of Bryan x Veitchii. The next was a much smaller plant (from the Chatsworth collection) of pale cream with a red centre to the flower. It was thought to be Baron Schröder, and will get bigger in successive years. *Rossioglossum* Rawdon Jester was a large plant with a strong spike of 4 flowers and 1 bud. These are quite flamboyant flowers of yellow and brown, and many will say that this was the best hybrid produced by Mansell & Hatcher during their lengthy existence.

Rhynchovola David Sander is a plant we have seen several times, and has a crystalline white flower with the merest hint of pink. A member of the *Cattleya* group, it has interesting spear shaped leaves, and is kept on the dryer side. *Dinema polybulbon* was said to be a bit of a mystery, having been moved around the genres a bit. It is a miniature with a creeping rhizome that rapidly spreads into a mat. It is deemed to be a member of the *Cattleya* tribe (it has been known as both *Epidendrum* and *Encyclia*), and is a monotypic genus. The small bulbs produce miniature flowers of mainly brown with a white lip (see back cover). It is said to be seen often around Sydney planted in tree fern stumps where it flows down the sides creating an artistic effect. *Laelia gouldiana* was just about perfect with 3 good flowers on a strong spike. It has now been in flower for about a month, and was judged to be the Plant of the Month (see front cover). *Rlc. Marguerite Fournier* was large flowered type with mainly pale pink flowers that should turn a bit darker.

After having no Phals in December, several were on show this month. *City Girl* was a tall pink with medium sized flowers. Another was incorrectly labelled as *shilleriana*, and was a standard purple hybrid (the real *schilleriana* is pale pink with a very distinctive lip. *Memoria Liu Jin-Chyuan* is a small Phal bred from *lobbii* (x Timothy Christopher) with small flowers of white and an orange lip. It had 2 spikes, but sadly some leaf scorch. *Leopard Prince 'Sexy Pink'* was a well marked flower of a

white base with pin spots and blushing. It hasn't flowered for a while, and is now growing under lights where it is doing better, but will take some time to grow some better leaves. Penang Starbright was a *violacea* hybrid that was doing very well, and flowers sequentially for a long period of time.

The Paph season is still in full swing and *insigne* is a species from NE India to China – although this one had a label indicating it had come from Madeira. It was a good strong plant with an unusual corrugated pouch. *villosum* var. *boxalii* was a small form with a dark dorsal, and it had been grown in a frost free greenhouse to underline the toughness of some species. Nitens is a primary hybrid between these 2 species, and is just what you would expect – several small spots with brown glossy petals. Lyro Petite Fleur is another primary, this time being *primulinum* x *barbigerum*. Again, it is part way between the 2 with decent sized yellowish flowers with a hint of brown. The last was a large plant of Cottisford 'Mont Millais' AM/RHS that had recently been purchased from the McBean's sale, and had very large flowers of brown/purple with a white halo.

Coelogyne *rochussenii* was a decent sized plant with several pendant spikes of pale brown flowers that creates a good effect. Dendrochilum *glumaceum* was small, but specimen sized plant with masses of short spikes of miniature whitish flowers that would be best seen with a magnifying glass. Rhynchostylis *gigantea* had 2 strong spikes of masses of individual small flowers of a deep red/purple colour with white mottling (or is it the other way around?). A pot full of Pterostylis *curta* was in full bloom, and was probably a full month ahead of schedule due to the prevailing weather conditions. This green hooded Australian terrestrial normally flowers mid-late February, and can sometimes last until Bramhope – but not this year!

Cym. Lump O'Gold 'Glitter' AM/AOS had a long pendant spike of large pale yellow flowers with red ribs on the lip. Cym. Ivy Fung 'Radiance' had a spike of lots of deep pink flowers held quite tightly. Dendrobium Gilleston Stardust is a large Australian hybrid with 3 large bulbs and 3 spikes of masses of small pale yellow flowers. The hybrid concept was to take the large species *speciosum* and cross it with the smaller hybrid Star of Riverdene and create a compact plant with long sprays of flowers. The result in this example had been more of the opposite with a large plant and relatively short flower spikes! It was still quite an attractive plant though, and will re-flower on the older bulbs for up to 5 years. Thank you Ted.

January Plant of the Month

***Laelia gouldiana* (Gould's Laelia)**

This one has been growing on now for quite a few years. It originally came to me as a couple of back-bulbs from Louisa Haag.

A native of Mexico it is now reported to be extinct in the wild but is still cultivated in the state of Hidalgo, northeast of Mexico City, at 3950–6250 ft. (1200–1900 m) where it is grown most often in a region of deep ravines and are almost always on Mesquite trees in dry, brushy areas in the semiarid mountains. Or so says Orchidwiz.

I keep it high up in good light all year, with a little shading in the summer but with none at all during the winter.

Temperatures in that part of my “Orchid House” (Conservatory) regularly reach 28-30C and go down to 14C on winter nights.

Feeding is the same as all my Cattleyas, a standard (half strength) mix throughout the year, the amount of feed being regulated by the watering regime. Which is simply more water during growth, less during resting and in winter, allowing the plant to become nearly dry between waterings.

The growing medium is my standard mix of medium bark and chopped Copra (In Swedish, Kokocrap..) with a little charcoal thrown in for seasoning. The bark seems to stand up well with little sign of deterioration. This plant has not been re-potted now for two or three years and the bark appears to still be in good condition. **Charles Ford**

The Forum

Several plants had been brought for discussion by the panel which consisted of Silvia Maunder, Charles Ford and John Garner. First up was Paph. Vanda M Pearman. This is a hybrid between *bellatulum* and *delenatii*, and is a relatively slow grower. It is grown under fluorescent grow lights and has developed a number of spots of the top sides of the leaves. There doesn't appear to be anything sinister about them, more a case of simple cell collapse rather than a spreading bacterial type of rot. This type of hybrid needs to be grown warm or hot and can sulk if kept cooler. A bit of extra calcium wouldn't do any harm through an application of either crushed oyster shell or dolomite lime.

Next was an interesting Christmas gift of a Phalaenopsis. This was clearly a presentation pack for the occasion. A glass jar with a loose wire ‘handle’ was stuffed with Spanish moss and a single small flowering plant in the middle. The Phal itself had 2 spikes of small white flowers. The problem is that it isn’t possible to properly water the plant in a container without drainage. The solution was simply to remove the plant from the container and place into something more convenient. The Spanish moss itself is quite a valuable and useful asset to be used elsewhere.

Cattleya Orange Delight is one of the climbing rhizome types that has risen to about an inch above the compost. The plant has also developed leads in opposite directions (of course). The best course of action would be to cut the rhizome to about 4 bulbs, then leave for a short period prior to repotting. This would give the cut time to heal, whilst forcing the new roots to become more established as well as hopefully initiating a new growth lead on the old growth. Dividing a plant is something that should be done with caution as it weakens the plant. Sometimes a plant may simply fall apart, but if a cut is necessary then it should be carried out using sterile equipment (knife), followed by a dusting of either flowers of sulphur or cinnamon. Opinion is divided on whether to keep a plant dry after division and potting, or to use damp compost – all to assist in healing the wound.

An unnamed Phal had minor damage around the edges of several leaves. The damage was clean, and looked fairly evident of it being food for a pest. It clearly isn’t a slug, but almost certainly a beetle, and probably a vine weevil. These will hide in the compost during the day, and feed overnight on several plants. Meanwhile any larvae will be gnawing away at the roots and compost underground. Treatment is quite simple with spraying and drenching with something like Provado Vine Weevil Killer (other brands are available). A couple of doses a fortnight apart should do the trick, and using it as part of an ongoing spraying regime should help prevent any re-infestation.

Coelogyne lawrenceana had several flower spikes that were in various stages of development, however as they reached their full extent they started to rot. The plant itself is healthy, and doesn’t appear stressed. One spike was still in full health, and will it survive to flower? There is no apparent cause for this, and it is next to other closely related plants which are also healthy. The problem would appear to be environmental despite this. The species is endemic to the Langbian region of southern Vietnam (ref Orchidwiz), so is a warmer growing plant than the majority of

Coelogynes. It is possibly too warm, and relocation to a cooler area may help (it may be too late for this flowering season).

The final plant was Rlc. Marguerite Fournier which had leaf damage. The main damage was to a leaf estimated at 5 years old. As it is still green then it is important to leave it alone as it will still photosynthesize. The damage is a few mottled spots, and slightly pitted. Damage will occur over a period of years, and once damaged won't recover. It is likely that this has resulted from a build up of salts – probably from prolonged use of tap water. Cattleyas are a genus that react more to salts, and emphasize that water quality is quite an important factor. It is also worth noting that Cattleyas as well as other genres will store water in their 'bulbs' or swollen canes. If this is contaminated then when these reserves are required for new growths then these are passed into the newer leaves, continuing to leave damage – even when clean water has subsequently been used. The plant will eventually grow out of this issue, although it may take several years of new growth to develop whilst the old growths die back. A general discussion followed on water quality, feeding and composts, with a general feeling that the newer bark compost is difficult to water once dry. A good soaking prior to using will help.

Dates for your diary...

Monthly meetings at Ranmoor – 10am

- Feb 8th** Illustrious members of the committee will discuss how they started and grow their plants
- Mar 8th** David Menzies is a regular speaker at SDOS, and today he will discuss his new greenhouse.

shows/exhibits/conferences etc

- Feb 22nd** Harrogate OS Annual show, Bramhope
** SDOS exhibiting **

Society website - www.sheffieldorchids.org



Above - The intriguing *Dinema polybulbon* growth habit

Below - The colourful and floriferous *Dendrobium Gilleston Stardust*

