

**Sheffield & District  
Orchid Society  
Newsletter  
May 2013**



**May Plant of the Month  
*Dendrobium delacourii***

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## Editorial

It's a bumper edition this month with the show from Chatsworth included for good measure. Enjoy!

## Business

The annual show at Chatsworth was the main item of business, and as this has now passed is not worth documenting.

A trip 'down south' is still in the plans to replace the July meeting with a price of £109 for the weekend. Depending on whether there will be sufficient numbers (minimum 20) the trip will be confirmed at the June meeting, otherwise

something else will be arranged. Since the meeting all members on email were contacted as time was of great importance.

## The Table Show

John Garner gave this month's commentary on what could only be described as a very thin showing. It was hoped that members were holding their best plants in reserve for Chatsworth.

*Pterostylis curta* was the first plant, and one that is unexpected at this time of the year. It was also a bit shorter and a tad more sturdy. The plant should usually be in flower around February, and if nothing else this proves that different growers with differing conditions can produce the unexpected. We have seen several *Renantheras* over the past few years, almost all of them a reddish colour. *Ren. citrana* is quite different being a yellow colour, and should have a lemony scent - which wasn't evident today. This was a first time flowering plant with several branches of many starry shaped flowers, and a little bit more compact than the red ones.

Pleione Shantung 'Silver Wedding' was a bit misleading as it was the result of a mix up with the bulbs over autumn prior to re-potting. 2 flowers were pink, and 1 was the correct plant which was a delight and well named. *Cattleya Kagaribi Dawn 'Redstar'* was a superb plant with 4 flowering spikes each of 2-3 burnt orange flowers with a deeper coloured lip. The flowers had a strong *Laelia* influence to them.

*Dendrobium delacourii* is a small plant by nature, and dozens of flowering spikes had the plant not much bigger than a 6" ball. A mass of flowers made it look larger, and it was in perfect condition, and clearly the plant of the month. Sometimes flowers are hard to describe, and this is one of those that is easier to say simply look at the front cover... *Den. aphyllum* was a small plant just starting to develop, and will get quite large in due course. The 2 short canes had several pale pink flowers on them.

The next plant involves some mystery and intrigue from an illegal importation of South American Plants that were confiscated - who was that person, and are they still languishing in prison... Anyway, often the authorities neglect the plants, but on this occasion they were 'saved', and eventually some of them ended up in the greenhouses at Chatsworth as unlabelled plants. One of them has now flowered, and had been brought today for identification. It was rapidly established as a *Bifrenaria*, with *harrisoniae* as the species. The colour was slightly different from the norm, and upon checking the *Orchidwiz* database it was a good match for var. *citrina*. The plant did have a slight citrus scent, so we are quite happy to confirm the identity.

Galeandra *lacustris* had a hanging cluster of 7 pale flowers. It had already been out for 3 weeks, so was doing well, albeit almost at the end of its current display. Phal. Brother Golden Horizon had 2 short spikes of nicely veined orangey pink flowers. It is the first time it has flowered for a few years, and the grower would have preferred a single tall spike for better effect. Phal. *parishii* is a small flowered species of mainly white with a pink lip that needs to be seen in close up to be fully appreciated. The plant had recently been moved onto tree fern and was still to become fully established. The final plant was Chew Ging Hoe (*borneensis* x Penang Jewel) which had large leaves and 2 short spikes of lemon coloured medium sized flowers. Thank you John

## May Plant of the Month

### ***Dendrobium delacourii***

I inherited this plant from the collection of the late Alan Booth after he died, very prematurely, in 1993. Alan was an enthusiastic and knowledgeable grower and exhibitor, and a keen supporter of the Society for many years. *Den delacourii* is an unusual Dendrobium, not often offered for sale in this country and this particular plant doesn't quite fit the description of the species given in Baker and Baker's monograph on the genus. It is an intermediate-growing species, widespread in south-east Asia, and very closely related to *Den venustum*. It is quite distinct from it though – *D delacourii* flowers in May on short (c.5cm) compact pseudobulbs, with fewer, larger flowers whereas *Den venustum* flowers in September on longer (c.15cm) thinner, pseudobulbs. *Den ciliatum* is probably a synonym of *D venustum* differing only, it seems, in the length of the cilia on the lip of the flower.

This plant is deciduous: the leaves fall in late autumn and then it is kept almost dry until the new growths appear in spring. Careful watering is started now but when growth is well-established it is watered every day. I feed only once or twice with Orchid Grow before the flower spikes show in mid-April, when I change to Orchid Bloom, then back to Orchid Grow, tailing-off in autumn when the leaves start to go yellow.

It is kept hanging up on a piece of cork bark, in good light near the greenhouse door (not on the back of the door – to save anyone asking). The drop in temperature from a minimum of 70F in the daytime to a minimum of 60F at night that my thermostat provides, is apparently important in inducing flowering. **Ted Croot**

# April Plant of the Month

## *Eulophia guineensis*

I was given this plant in May 1999 by John Davison, then Chairman of the South East Orchid Society but sadly no longer with us, and it has flowered regularly every year since then. The species is apparently widespread in tropical Africa south to Angola, growing as a terrestrial plant in suitable areas. It is deciduous and needs a dry rest in winter followed by careful watering when growth resumes in spring. There are other species of *Eulophia* which grow in boggy conditions but this is not one of them; there are even other species which are saprophytic, having poorly developed leaves and relying on associated fungi for their nutrition.

This *Eulophia* is not uncommon in cultivation and is tolerant of a certain amount of maltreatment. It seems to do better with what we might call “benign neglect” than over-fussy care. Potted in a mix of equal parts of peat, loam and coarse sand (I add a proportion of medium bark as well), it can be watered and fed through the summer until it loses its leaves in the autumn. The only care necessary is to avoid prolonged water-logging so be sure it needs it before you water it. I keep mine quite dry through the winter and only resume in the spring when the new growth is an inch or two long, not when it first appears. Any water lodging within the new growth is inevitably fatal. The flower spikes appear at this stage too, the first flowers opening at the beginning of April usually.

One thing I have found with it is that the flowers themselves are very susceptible to fungal attack if the atmosphere in the greenhouse is at all humid (which is what a lot of other orchids most enjoy), the lips of the flowers become discoloured and the flower falls within days of opening. A spray with a good fungicide will prevent this and the flowers will last at least a couple of months.

It seems to be resistant to pest attacks - I have not had to spray it or pick snails off it during the thirteen years I've been growing it, and when it flowers, it's quite spectacular. It's no particular trouble, its leaves don't become inordinately large so provided you've got the space available for the height of the flower stems, it's a plant I would recommend to anyone to have a go with. **Ted Croot**

# From Flask to Flower

## Andrew Bannister

Andrew runs Orchid Alchemy and produces/sells lots of young plants, so is well placed to talk on this subject.

He started by saying that there are around 500,000 Orchid species and hybrids from all the continents apart from Antarctica, and therefore there should be something available for everyone to grow. There are 3 stages of Orchidology that we have all fallen into;

1. Acquire one or more plants
2. Discover that they will grow and thrive
3. Buy more, and become hooked.

Buying young plants is the cheapest way to extend a collection, and it brings the thrill of a first flower - which could be different. It should also be vigorous and grow quickly. He has 3 golden rules for successful growing

1. Visit growing areas frequently to check conditions - temperature & light etc.
2. Collect rainwater - essential to add nutrients for feeding, unlike tap water.
3. Never stop learning. Every year, and season is different, and predicting patterns is impossible.

The life cycle of the orchid is different to most other flowering plants, and varies enormously from one species to another. Orchid pollination is a story in itself with a variety of pollinators, but once pollinated can take from a few weeks to 18 months to ripen and be ready to sow. There can be up to 3 million seeds per pod, and if you assume that the wild population is stable, then survival rates per seed are about 3 million to 1 (In the Lab it is quite easy to get many to grow). Seeds are generally wind distributed, and are shaped to assist distribution. In cultivation they are distributed more by AirMail!

The seeds themselves are very small at between 0.03 - 0.08mm in size, and are under developed embryos. They contain no endosperm and therefore they require nutrients to germinate. This is achieved by attaching themselves to a fungus where they are termed parasitic for their initial development. In cultivation generally they are grown in vitro in a sterile environment. The technique to achieve this was developed in the 1930s with an agar mix containing small amounts of soluble fertiliser, vitamins and some proteins for energy. Variations on the theme have included banana, pineapple and coconut.

Once sown, the seeds can take years to germinate. They need the right temperature and a mixture of light and darkness, although they are unable to photosynthesise for a long time until they develop a green leaf. The energy is created from the sugars in the agar extract. The sterile environment in the flask is the best place for a seedling to develop, and including re-plating it should be left to get as big as it can, which may well include the first 'bulb' or so. De-flasking

should take place in the season when the roots start to grow. Wash the agar off and separate the plants if possible. If not it doesn't matter. Pot up with fine bark. The plants will still be very tender for at least 2 weeks, so they should be hardened off slowly with 50% shade and 70-78% humidity. They should get a watering with a continuous weak feed until becoming established. Young plants don't want a rest period as they have no established reserves, so push them along until they are of a sufficient size (a mature growth) to withstand a rest - this may take a couple of years. During this time they can be relocated to suitable light levels, but continuous checks should be made on colour to ensure they are growing correctly. Light or dark colours will indicate too little or too much feed, and this should be corrected. Although not requiring a mature plant environment the seedlings still require a night time temperature drop of 5C.

In their native habitats orchids thrive in nutrient poor areas. This is due to their efficient take up of nutrients. As they are unable to prevent this absorption they will die if given too high a nutrient level. This is vital knowledge when watering and feeding. Added salts etc in tap water means that adding fertiliser can reach too high a tolerance. Where possible, collect rainwater or use distilled water (RO) to allow a sufficient level of feed to be used. If in a drought and there is no rainwater available then tap water can be used, but no fertiliser added, and flush frequently to prevent a build up of salts. Remember that 'cold water kills', so ensure that the water is at greenhouse temperature prior to use.

Young plants should be in a fine compost. Many composts (or potting media) are available, and you should use whatever suits you and your environment, but don't forget that composts change over time - from bag to bag, and year to year, as well as decomposing over time. Adults need re-potting every 12-18 months, and seedlings more frequently (into larger pots). Young plants often have juvenile foliage, so may not look like you expect, but you should allow room for 2 years growth to allow for e.g. Phalaenopsis leaves to smother the surface area and prevent watering. It also prevents drying out. Experience will help in this regard between suitable pots and over potting.

Generally mature plants need 60-80% humidity, the same as most other plants, and this is temperature dependant. Higher temperatures need higher humidity, and this in turn needs a higher rate of air movement. This can be key to watering. Plants should only be watered when necessary, and this includes assessing water loss (evaporation and uptake) and compost age to those above. Don't forget that the environment is our responsibility as we control it. Getting it wrong can be fatal. Don't be put off though!

The length of time that a plant will take to flower from de-flasking can vary enormously. The fastest is *Cynorchis* at around 6 months, *Barkeria* at 12 months, and *Dendrobiums* from 18 months. These are obviously more rewarding than others which can take over 10 years. A reasonable average is around the 3 year mark. There is a great advantage to growing plants from flask or buying as a

seedling, and this is that they should be strong and vigorous, free from virus and have multiple growing nodes to bulk up. They will have varied genes which are required to help the species survive. Plants sourced from divisions may become the opposite of this. It is also possible to get more rare and unusual species from flasks which may be the only way to import plants without breaking CITES. Never stop learning is the final point, and can't be over emphasised. Remember every year is different, and the plants need to react to this, and so do you. As the environment changes, so should you! "You need to talk to your plants, but you also need to listen to them" is a good way of emphasising the point. A hearty round of applause followed.

## Chatsworth 2013

Our annual show took place on Sunday 19th May. The sun decided to shine for us, and a fair number of visitors to Chatsworth dropped in (had the show been the previous very wet day it would have been a different story!). The show this year was officially opened by the Duke who arrived unannounced on foot and appeared very much in touch with mere mortals as ourselves. Once inside he chatted to various traders and members and quite enjoyed himself.

Our own display was a relatively modest affair, being slightly out of season for a few of the growers. There was a lack of specimen sized plants which makes things look a bit thin. Brian won a Highly Commended (HC below) card, but we had the 'Best in Show' with Ted's Den. *delacourii* which still looked excellent. The trophy was presented to Ted by his Grace the Duke.

CANWOS were up on the stage and made quite a decent display on the day with several awards. Ren. *imschootiana* was an excellent deep orange, fully open with a 4 branched spike. Phrag. Tara was a strong red, and these were complemented by a variety of unusual plants.

NEEOS had a large display including several specimen sized plants. Cyp. Hank Small with 7 flowers being a perfect example - as was *Anathallis regalis*. A wide range of species and hybrids of many colours made a good display.

EMOS had their usual floor display with wood columns holding lots of plants. A good number of these were *Masdevallia* species and hybrids that were almost perfect. Whilst most of the 'smaller' plants were well displayed the larger plants stay on the floor where they can be overlooked or not displayed to their best effect - the down facing Paph. Shin Ye William being a case in point.

The Lincolnshire Orchid Group had a display made up entirely of UK hardy terrestrials which were a joy to see, as well as being a strong recommendation to the public to try these orchids. The range of genera included just about everything that you might expect to see at this time of the year, and some even a bit earlier. They probably deserved more HCs than they were awarded.



The final Society display was from Harrogate, and they had a fine range of plants large and small. Max. *sanderiana* was an unusual colour combination, and Den. Gatton Sunray was a very strong plant. Paphs *hangianum* and St. Swithin were both of the highest quality.

In the trade Chantelle had the biggest exhibit with lots of Cattleyas - large and small with a variety of colours. Although she had several Phals, the public were buying the colourful catts, and it would seem that trade is moving slightly away from lots of Phals - interestingly there were fewer Phals on Society displays than in previous years (Harrogate didn't have any at all). Orchid Alchemy had a wide selection of seedlings for sale, and Ray Creek had more of the 'Old School' mixture of Phals and Oncidiiums of varied colours. Roy Barrow had his selection of South American species, mainly of the cooler growing types. Dave Parkinson had his foyer display of hardy orchids. Between them the trade had a wide range of plants, with little overlap. Consequently most of them went home happy with what they had sold.

Overall it was a good show with a huge array of plants on show and a large variety on sale. A good time seemed to be had by all. Many thanks are due to those who participated - either providing plants or food, and manning the doors or slogging away in the hot kitchen.

## **2013 Annual Show Results –**

<b>Phalaenopsis species:</b>	<i>Phal lueddemanniana</i>	A Deakin	EMOS
HC	<i>Phal lueddemanniana</i>	M Armstrong	EMOS
HC	<i>Phal amboensis</i>	J Barker	NEEOS
<b>Phalaenopsis hybrids:</b>	Phal Sogo Yukidon	D Burton	EMOS
HC	Phal Sogo Yukidon	B Coulson	NEEOS
<b>Cymbidium:</b>	<i>Cym Tiger Tales</i>	S Pask	EMOS
HC	<i>Cym lowianum</i>	B Marsh	HOS
HC	<i>Cym Maureen Carter 'Oriental Star'</i>	S Pask	EMOS
<b>Any Other species:</b>	<i>Coel. ochracea</i>	H Hobbs	HOS
HC	<i>Coel. ochracea</i>	E Eyre	EMOS
HC	<i>Pholidota chinensis</i>	M Armstrong	EMOS
<b>Any Other hybrid:</b>	Bulb Carsul	T White	HOS
<b>Lycaste and Allied:</b>	<i>Max sanderiana</i>	T White	HOS
<b>Oncidiinae species:</b>	<i>Milt spectabilis v. lineata</i>	J Barker	NEEOS
HC	<i>Onc. sphacelatum</i>	B Marsh	HOS
<b>Oncidiinae hybrids:</b>	Tol. Peach	J Barker	NEEOS
<b>Vandaceous species:</b>	<i>Ren. imschootiana</i>	D Morten	CANWOS

HC	<i>Ren. Citrana</i>	B Woodward	SDOS
HC	<i>Sedira japonica</i>	Chris Tyrie	NEEOS
<b>Vandaceous hybrids:</b>	<i>Vasco Thai Sky</i>	J Barker	NEEOS
<b>Laeliinae species:</b>	<i>Psh vitellina</i>	R Dennis	HOS
HC	<i>L purpurata</i>	M Armstrong	EMOS
HC	<i>leptotes bicolor</i>	I Wright	CANWOS
<b>Laeliinae hybrids:</b>	Iwanagera Apple Blossom	J Barker	NEEOS
<b>Masdevallia species</b>	<i>Masd veichiana</i>	E Eyre	EMOS
HC	<i>Masd calocalix</i> ‘Eva May’	E Eyre	EMOS
HC	<i>Masd coccinea</i> var. Xanthina’	J Barker	NEEOS
<b>Masdevallia Hybrids</b>	Masd Pichincha ‘Tan Jewel’	E Eyre	EMOS
HC	Masd Patricia Hill	K Kent	EMOS
HC	Masd Barry Firby	E Eyre	EMOS
<b>Pleurothallidinae:</b>	<i>Anathallis regalis</i> ‘Staveley’	J Barker	NEEOS
HC	<i>Dryadella edwallii</i>	C Tyree	HEEOS
<b>Terrestrials:</b>	<i>Cyp Hank Small</i>	J Barker	NEEOS
HC	<i>Calanthe tricarinata</i>	S Clements	LOG
HC	<i>Cyp Sunny</i>	S Clements	LOG
<b>Miniatures:</b>	<i>Dryadella edwallii</i>	C Tyree	NEEOS
HC	<i>Dryadella edwallii</i>	J Barker	HEEOS
<b>Paphiopedilum species:</b>	<i>Paph hangianum</i>	I Dorman	HOS
HC	<i>Paph delenatii</i>	D Morton	CANWOS
HC	<i>Paph fowliei</i>	I Wright	CANWOS
<b>Paphiopedilum hybrids:</b>	Paph St. Swithin ‘Purbeck’	I Dorman	HOS
HC	Paph Shin Yi William	G Dobbs	EMOS
<b>Phragmipedium species:</b>	<i>Phrag longfolium</i>	G Dobbs	CANWOS
HC	<i>Phrag pearcii</i>	B Marsh	HOS
HC	<i>Phrag caudatum</i>	G Dobbs	EMOS
<b>Phragmipedium hybrids:</b>	Phrag Tara	D Morton	CANWOS
<b>Dendrobiinae species:</b>	<i>Den delacourii</i>	T Croot	SDOS
HC	<i>Den amethystoglossum</i>	H Hobbs	HOS
HC	<i>Den fleckeri</i>	J Barker	NEEOS
<b>Dendrobiinae hybrids:</b>	Den Gatton Sunray	B Marsh	HOS
<b>Best Amateur Plant -<i>Den delacourii</i></b>		<b>T Croot</b>	<b>SDOS</b>

# Dates for your diary...

## Monthly meetings at Ranmoor – 10am

- June 9th** Steve Clements - Hardy Orchids  
Steve is a member of the Lincolnshire Orchid Group, and mounted most of their display at Chatsworth recently - a wide range of genera and well grown!
- July** TBA
- Aug 11th** Mike Armstrong - Cattleyas and Photography

## Other shows

- June 14-16th Malvern International Orchid Show, Worcestershire  
<http://www.malvern-ios.org>
- June 16th NEOS annual show at Tatton Park, Knutsford, Cheshire



Masd. *pichincha* 'Tan jewel'

Society website - [www.sheffieldorchids.org](http://www.sheffieldorchids.org)



Above:- *Maxillaria sandariana*

Below: - Ted Croot receives the Best in Show salver from the Duke.

