

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



**July Plant of the Month
Phal. Chew Ging Hoe**

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Business

The committee having been looking at dates for Chatsworth for next year, and are looking to move back to the Spring Bank holiday Sunday (29th May) as the likely date.

Don't forget to send your pictures in for the photographic competition.

They should go to Ian Wilson at ian@boatsails.com

Harrogate OS have confirmed their annual show will be at Bramhope again on Sunday 28th February.

The Table Show

This month's commentary was given by Silvia Maunder who started as is customary on the left side. Two plants of *Trichopilia tortilis* were first up, and these are members of the *Oncidium* subtribe but look quite different. The flowers are quite short being produced at the base of the bulbs, and the lip is almost trumpet shaped white with pale brown petals

(see back cover). They are said to be scented, and are grown fairly warm where they are positioned high up in the roof. Brassia Arania Verde was a much larger plant with quite large spidery flowers that bear more than a passing resemblance to its more famous Rex parent; although it is actually 75% *gireoudiana* (the other 25% is *verrucosa*. An unknown Miltonia hybrid had quite a tall spike with several elegant yellow flowers with a strong lip of white and brown.

Renanthera *bella* is aptly named as it is a beauty. It is on a smallish plant, but had a long almost horizontal spike of very deep red starry flowers (see back cover). A much larger Vanda completely overshadowed it by sheer size, and this is a *coerulea* hybrid. The flowers were large and deep blue. Sadly many of the leaves had damage to the tip, and it could probably do with some warm sunny days to recover and grow some more.

Masdvelalia *barleana* was a joy to see as once upon a time it was widely grown, but nobody could get it to flower however they tried – maybe they all had part of the same clone! This plant was in flower – with about 4 modest pink flowers on quite a large plant. Quite a ‘miserable effort’ was the owner’s own summary, and who are we to argue. Masd. *coriacea* was another large plant with tall leaves and just the single flower (that I could see). The flower is quite interesting being off white with internal spots and stripes of purple best seen with a magnifying glass. Sarcochilus *roseus* is a small plant now in the possession of several members. It has been grown cool, and has produced a short spike of several deep rose coloured flowers. It isn’t quite as prolific as some of the larger species and won’t get as big and fleshy, but is worth growing for anyone short of space. Cattleychea Newberry Butterscotch was seen last month when it wasn’t quite fully open. It was now open, with the first flower looking to be starting to fade. It has done well with its reddy yellow flowers, and we look forward to seeing it again next year. Phal. Chew Ging Hoe was a large leaved hybrid with several spikes of small pale yellow flowers on short spikes. It has been in flower since February and shows no signs of slowing down yet. With 22 points it is this month’s ‘Plant of the Month’ – see front cover.

An unnamed Dendrobium had several clusters of flowers at the top of an almost leafless cane. The flowers were small and a greenish shade

of white. It has produced several keikis up the cane, so if grown well over the next year it should flower once again. A couple of unnamed Phals were next. The first was a deep purple with medium sized flowers. The plant itself was struggling with only a couple of leaves left, and advice was given to cut off the spike to try and save the plant. It needs to produce some more leaves to return to health. The second had a couple of spikes of mainly yellow flowers with a red edge that created an attractive hybrid.

Thunia Gattონensis is a strong grower and has 3 new canes this year, each with a cluster of trumpet shaped flowers at the apex. These were just starting to go over, but still showed their class. It is the wrong time of year for slippers, but quite a nice *godefroyae* was presented. It is still a bit cupped, but a good colour with a cream flower with burgundy spots, but with no spotting on the pouch. Phrag. *Andreettae* is quite a new species (2006), and this plant was a line bred seedling from EYOF. It is just about the smallest of the Phrags, being about 4" spread with a very small flower of pink colour. Several flowers seen previously are distorted, and this was one of the better ones, although still nowhere near perfect. The final plant was an *Epipactis gigantea*. This was a small group of plants (mainly from the top of the pot and some from the drainage holes) that was just coming into flower. It is UK hardy, and has been outside all winter. Consequently the growths haven't been forced and are a good size and colourful – being orange and brown. Often these plants are kept in unheated greenhouses where they grow rapidly in warm spring days when they get tall and spindly with more modest flowers. The longer the wait the better they are! Thank you Silvia.

July Plant of the Month

Phalaenopsis Chew Ging Hoe

This plant, which is *Phal borneensis* x *Phal Penang Jewel* (2003), came from Bukit Jambul Orchid, Penang, via Michael Ooi at the International Orchid Show, Peterborough, in June 2008. Kept at a temperature of about 16-18 deg. C (58-65 deg. F) it grew quite quickly from a small seedling into a flowering-sized plant. Not only that, but a very

generously flowering plant: once in flower, usually in mid-March, it will keep going for at least six months, each spike never carrying more than three open flowers at a time, but opening buds will replace those that drop off. It currently has five spikes so it usually carries 10 to 15 open flowers.

The only real problem with it is that its leaves are persistently yellowish especially the older ones which makes the plant look mal-nourished. The flowers are a similar yellow, fading almost to white as they age so the leaves nearly match them.

It doesn't receive any special treatment – it's watered every fourth or fifth day at this time of the year, reducing to every sixth or seventh in winter, depending on the outside weather. Sunshine raises the temperature and dries the plants out a bit faster regardless of the season. It's watered with ordinary tap water plus at most waterings, some of Akerne's Rain Mix. Using a conductivity meter, the concentration is kept at or below below 400 micro-seimens but if there's been a longer than usual interval between waterings, they get plain water.

It's not spectacular and its yellowish leaves can be a bit off-putting but it's a neat, reliable and cheerful little plant that would probably do quite well on a windowsill. **Ted Croot**

Phalaenopsis species for the home

Francis Quesada Pallares

This is the lecture that should have been delivered last year, but due to a mix up of memory sticks Francis was unable to deliver.

We all grow Phals, and for many of us these would have been our first plants from Garden Centres, DIY stores and/or supermarkets. Almost all of these are hybrids bred especially for the home, but fewer of us actually grow the species. This tends to be down to lower availability, less glamorous, and need a bit more specialist care. This last point isn't necessarily true as with a bit of diligence they can easily grow in the home. This was illustrated in Francis's last lecture where placement, heat & light were instrumental in filling up a 2 bed flat.

History

1753, Linnaeus described *Epidendrum amabilis*. At this point almost all tropical epiphytic orchids were classed as *Epidendrum*.

1825, Blume established the genus of *Phalaenopsis* and relocated several species into it.

1858, after great consideration Lindley described the first natural hybrid, which was \times *intermedia*.

1886, Rolfe carries out the first formal review of the genus for an article in the *Orchid Review*.

1980, Herman Sweet publishes 'The Genus *Phalaenopsis*' for the *Orchid Digest*.

2001, Christenson publishes '*Phalaenopsis*, a Monograph'. A full revision of the species, and is probably the best publication on the subject.

2012, *Renziana*, volume 2 covers the genus. This is more of an overall review of the species, and how to grow them. It isn't a revision, so nothing really new.

Despite the fact that Phals are one of the worlds most common and popular pot plant there isn't really as many publications about them as there are for some less common genres such as Paphs.

Distribution

They are all from SE Asia, from the east of India and the Himalayas, across to the southern part of China, and down to the Indonesian Islands, and just the northern tip of Queensland in Australia (a single species). They range from sea level up to 2200m, and this creates a varied temperature range with 3 species being warm growing, 1 cool growing (*wilsonii* up to 2200m) and the remainder being intermediate.

There are generally considered to be 60 species plus varieties and colour forms, although as usual it depends on which taxonomist you adhere to.

There are many ways to consider species if you wish to grow them at home (or even in a greenhouse). Francis feels it best to look at them in 5 groups. These are Classic, Interesting Foliage, Scented, Colourful or Patterned, and Miniatures.

Classics - These are the species that have led to all the initial hybrids – generally of a plain colour.

amabilis produces a metre long spike which is often branched. As the flowers are smallish there can be up to 100 blooms on a really good flowering. The flowers are generally white with some yellow in the centre. It hasn't been affected too much by line breeding so the commercially available plants are very similar to the wild ones. It is widespread across from Java to Sumatra, and the variety *rosenstromii* appears in Australia.

buyssoniana (formerly in *Doritis*) is actually a terrestrial that grows in high sun areas and has spiky leaves. It frequently forms a lot of basal clusters. It comes from Thailand, and has small deep pink flowers, although *alba* forms exist. It is a natural tetraploid, and was once a variety of the also common *pulcherrima*.

equestris is a small species, both in foliage and flower size (but a little bit too large for the miniature section). Well grown plants will produce hundreds of flowers over a period of many months. The species is mainly pink, but different colour forms range from orange to white. It is noted for producing keikis at the end of the flower spike. These will grow quickly and can flower on a small size, but it is better to remove these as small plants to avoid draining the mother plant. There are peloric floral forms that actually look decent. There are 4 accepted varieties - *alba*, *aurea*, *cyanochila*, and *rosea*.

sanderiana is one of the nicest of the species, although some authorities treat it as a natural hybrid. It is a medium sized plant with leaves that tend towards purple in colour depending on the degree of light. It produces an arching spike with 10cm flowers of a purplish colour. It is a summer season flowerer. It is common in cultivation, especially the *alba* form.

Foliage - all of these species are endemic to the Philippines.

lindenii has olive green leaves with some attractive silver spotting. It has a pendant arch holding medium sized flowers of white with pink lips. It is endemic to the Philippines where it grows at high elevation in a coolish climate. It grows better on a mount, hence why it isn't seen too much in cultivation.

philippinensis is a medium to large species with mottled & striped (more of a banding) leaves that are purple underneath. The flowers are large and heavy causing the spike to arch a lot at 1m long. The flowers are pure white with some red & yellow in the centre.

schilleriana is a well known species in cultivation and has foliage as for *philippinensis*. The leaf span can be huge at 45cm. It has a slender spike that arches with many medium sized pink flowers that are said to be fragrant although Francis has never detected it. The roots of this species are flat and warty, and if broken can reproduce vegetatively.

stuartiana has a 35cm leaf span of marbled leaves. The arching spike frequently branches and holds many 2" flowers that are generally white, but with a gold speckled triangle at the lower section of the flower. It is scented with a citrus flavour. There are 2 accepted varieties - *nobilis* & *punctatissima*.

Fragrance - though not always pleasant.

bellina is the queen of the species with 25cm plain green leaf span. The flower spike is quite short with small waxy flowers produced sequentially. These can be yellowish with red or purple mask (line breeding has led to almost red or purple flowers). It has a strong scent. It comes from Malaysia and Sarawak. Botanists have argued over the species for a long time and it was formerly a variety of *violacea*.

corningiana is an unusual species that always 'looks ill' with discoloured leaves. This may be down to DNA. Consequently it is rare in cultivation. It is medium sized with a 25cm leaf span. The short spike arches with 5-7 flowers at a time which are spiky shaped with a creamy base and red/brown barring. It has a hairy centre part to the lip, and comes from Borneo.

mannii is a large plant with a 40cm span. It has long narrow leaves with purple & brown spotting that have a tendency to break. The spice scented flowers are of a yellow base with heavy overlays of brown spots, blotches and stripes. It is widespread across indo-china from 500-1400m which leads to a large variation in floral forms including almost black or chocolate colours.

sumatrana has a debatable fragrance on a medium sized plant. It produces a long arching spike with usually only 2 flowers open at a time. These are a base yellow with red/brown bars of varying intensity. Consequently there are a lot of varieties and colour forms. It ranges from Burma across to the Philippines.

violacea is the king of the Phals, and is heavily scented, and almost indistinguishable from *bellina* - it is the scent that is the more obvious distinction. The short spikes hold usually 2 smallish white flowers at a

time that are overlaid with purple or rose. The petals tend to have a green tip to them. It is warm growing from Malaysia, and if it gets a sudden chill will drop the leaves overnight and die - beware! Notable varieties include *coerulea* and *indigo*.

Crazy Patterns

amboinensis has flowers of a yellow gold background with red brown barring - almost tiger stripes. The spike is weak, so starts flat and arches downwards with usually 2 irregular flowers at a time. It has a soapy type of scent. Found across Indonesia it is variable with var. *flavida* being mainly yellow with deeper bars and a yellow staminode.

bastianii has a 25cm green leaf span with a branched spike holding usually 7 flowers. These are green white with rich deep brown bars. The lip is quite hairy.

mariae is very similar to *bastianii*, but with slightly more cupped flowers on a drooping spike. There is a yellow form. Both are from the Philippines.

fasciata is a stunning species with flat spiky flower of 'rounded' petals that are slightly reflexed. The drooping spike holds rich yellow flowers with small red bars and the lip apex is pink. It is from the Philippines, and is closely related to *reichenbachiana* (now considered extinct in the wild). Just the scent is different.

hieroglyphica is interestingly named as it has whitish flowers with unusual shaped blotches, spots and barring that resemble the ancient Egyptian writings. It is a poor looking plant with long narrow leaves prone to damage and a floppy spike. There is an alba form that is attractive yellow and white.

lueddemanniana is one of the largest species with large drooping leaves. It is a sequential flowerer over a long period with heavy flowers causing the spike to arch. It produces 2 types of spikes with the short ones holding flowers, whilst the longer ones produce keikis that soon produce their own spikes creating large plants overall. The smallish flowers are white and heavily overlaid with purple - sometimes they can be a solid purple. This Philippines endemic has a large number of varieties and colour forms.

Miniatures - are those species that will grow in a maximum size of a 3½" pot.

appendiculata has a 5cm leaf span, so is quite tiny. It is hot growing, so is more difficult to cultivate. Francis grows it in moss inside a closed ice cream pot in a terrarium. The media is grit at the bottom totally immersed in water. This is topped with moss and the plant. The lid is opened now and then to refresh the air. The moss tends to stop the water becoming stagnant. Cultivation is further constricted by the species producing downward growing spikes holding 2cm white flowers with pink and purple bars. The name comes from the teeth on the lip. Alternate growing methods include baskets or mounted on cork. This Malayan endemic may be extinct in the wild (but being so small then who knows).

chibae (formerly a *Doritis*) is a bit larger at a 12cm leaf spread. It produces an erect spike with tiny 1cm yellow flowers suffused with chestnut that can be produced simultaneously. The flower spike can resemble an *Oncidium*. It is endemic to Vietnam between 400-600m, and has only been in cultivation for 20 years.

deliciosa has been around since 1854, and has been in a variety of genera since then - mainly *Kingidium*. It has a span of 15cm, and forms basal clusters. It is highly variable, mainly with 1cm white flowers with a pink mask. These tend to last for just a few days and are produced sequentially. It is widespread in the Philippines from sea level to 300m. Subspecies *hookeriana* has a yellow base and tends to produce more flowers.

finleyi is a species with a 10cm spread, and Francis calls it a marmite plant with flowers that you either love or hate. The spike grows downwards, so is best grown on a mount, and has flowers resembling the antelope type *Dendrobiums*. The flowers are basically white or cream with purple striping. The leaves are hooked at the tips. This Thai species was formerly known as *Kingidium minus*.

lobbii is a well known and commonly grown species found from the eastern Himalayas through to Vietnam. It has a 13cm spread and is often deciduous - so don't throw it away when they drop! It has a short spike with several 1-2cm flowers open at once which are white with an almost chestnut lip. There is an alba form which has a yellow lip (not a real alba), and a flava form which has yellow as well as chestnut on the lip.

parishii is very similar to *lobbii*, with the only real visible difference being a purple lip and spotted stigma. If you look carefully you will notice 4 'hairs' on the coloured lip. The range is identical. It also has 'alba' and 'flava' forms, together with *coerulea*.

Several questions were asked at the end, especially about growing *appendiculata* in a pot, as well as on pollinators which Francis thinks are a variety of insects, mainly beetles. This was prompted by a query that you almost never seem to see a fruit pot on any Phals in the UK, and why should that be. Hearty applause followed.

Dates for your diary...

Monthly meetings at Ranmoor – 10am

- Aug 9th** **Mike Armstrong** last spoke about taking photographs. This time he will discuss *Cattleyas* and allied genera. Now that most of the names have changed let's see how they all look.
- Sept 13th** **John Garner** will show the highlights of the EOC which took place earlier this year (Easter) at the RHS Halls in London.

shows/exhibits/conferences etc

- Sep 6th** BOGA & Darlington show, Josephine Butler College, Durham.
- Oct 11th** East Midlands OS – Radcliffe on Trent
*** SDOS Exhibiting ***

Society website - www.sheffieldorchids.org



Above - *Trichopilia tortilis*
Below - *Renanthera bella*

