

Central Vancouver Island Orchid Society Newsletter

March 2014



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Meetings are held September through June on a Saturday at the Harewood Activity Centre, 195 Fourth Street, Nanaimo, in the hall on the second floor, doors open at 11:30, with the business meeting starting at 12:00 noon.

Masdevallia rosea in Ecuadore 6 inches above the water in a sphagnum bog on a high level area with a cold light fog keeping it fresh for us.

Mike Miller, the photographer

Coming Meeting Dates: March 15, April 26, May 24, June 21, Sept. 20,
Oct. 18, Nov. 22, Dec. 6.

Program for March 15th

Advanced Phalaenopsis Culture With Pat van Adrichem

Coming Events:

Vancouver Orchid Society Show and Sale, VanDusen Gardens Floral Hall, March 22-23rd 2014
CVIOS Show and Sale, Naniamo North Mall, April 11th – 13th 2014

Editorial:

Well the first show is now over and Victoria’s new site worked very well. Laurie will have a full report at the meeting.

I have made a decision that will change things after 20 years and 200 Newsletters. I will be retiring after the June meeting and the society will need to find a new editor. I am more than willing to share knowledge and materials with who-ever steps forward but I think I have put in enough time on this job. Anyone who is interested in the job can contact me and I will explain all the aspects of the job I have been doing so they understand just what they would be getting into.

Cheers Mike

CVIOS General Meeting Minutes

February 22, 2014

Shelley called the meeting to order at 12:05 pm with 20 members present

Minutes - Sandra moved approval of the minutes of January 18, Don seconded the motion and motion carried.

Correspondence - The first issue of Orchid Digest for the new year was the only correspondence. The photos in this issue are spectacular.

Finances - In Joann’s absence, Shelley indicated that our finances were in order and looking good so far this year.

Shows - Victoria: Angie (south of Nanaimo), Laurie & Maureen (Nanaimo & area) and Donna (Parksville & Qualicum) will be taking plants for our display early Friday morning, March 7th. This means plants will have to be delivered to them or arrangements made for pick up by Thursday. The Victoria show is on March 8 & 9 at ‘Our Lady of Fatima Hall’. Check the Victoria Orchid Society for more details.

Vancouver: Mike is doing the Vancouver show and indicated for those who live outside Nanaimo, it may be easiest for you to bring your plants to our March meeting on the 15th as it is just one week prior to the show. The show will be held March 22 & 23. More details to come at our March meeting.

Our Show: Angie had posters and sign up sheets for members to volunteer and help let people know about our show. It will be at Nanaimo North Town Center with judging taking place on Friday April 11 and will continue over Saturday & Sunday March 12 & 13. Set up which includes setting up tables for displays, sales and information will begin at 12:30 on Thursday. Angie indicated that volunteer help would be appreciated, especially for draping tables. Plant registration and set up of displays will follow. Shelley will be doing 2 orchid potting sessions during the show.

President’s report: Shelley indicated that the talk she did at ‘Dinter’s Nursery’ went very well with 31 people attending.

Newsletter: Mike indicated that this is the newsletter cut off month for those who have not renewed their membership.

Refreshments: Thank you Shelley, Brad and Dora for bringing goodies this month. In March the following people will be bringing refreshments: Clementine, Donna, Sue, Laurie and Margaret. Following Alexey's tour of our show table plants, we broke for goodies and a return to our bag draw fundraiser. After Mike's informative presentation on wire and other supports that can be used to help make our plants look their best for shows, we adjourned early on this snowy almost spring day.

Growing Cymbidium Pot Plants in Japan

By Takehiko Mukoyama Mukoyama Orchid Company, Ltd. Japan

Reproduced from a lecture and color slide presentation given at the 17th Annual Cymbidium Congress on March 28, 1992.

The number of potted Cymbidium plants produced in Japan between the fall of 1991 and the spring of 1992 has been estimated to be approximately 4,400,000. Four million of these plants will be on the market by the end of this year (1992). Of these four million plants, 10% will be available for the market in September and October, 30% in November, and 60% in December. Why is the supply concentrated so heavily toward the month of December? I would like to provide you with an explanation.

In Japan, there is a custom of gift giving called "Oseibo" at the end of the calendar year. Furthermore, at the beginning of January is the New Year's holiday. Around this time, people give flowers as gifts when they are visiting friends and relatives. The most common orchids given as gifts include Cymbidiums, Dendrobiums, Cattleyas, Phalaenopsis, and Oncidiums. Some of the popular annual plants that are given as gifts include Cyclamen, Poinsettias, and Azaleas.

In addition to the practice of giving flowers as gifts, there is also the Japanese custom of decorating one's own home with flowers on New Year's Day. Therefore, there is a high demand for potted plants, including Cymbidiums, between November and the beginning of January. However, due to certain adverse climatic conditions in Japan, it is quite difficult to grow Cymbidiums in the summer so that they will be ready for the market in the winter. Thus, it's somewhat rare to see a large quantity of Cymbidiums at this time of peak demand for these plants. Despite the difficulties involved in timing this flower for the market, there is a special technique that is used for raising high quality Cymbidiums for the peak season. What are the techniques which enable us to meet this demand?

The following are the basic points that professional Cymbidium orchid growers in Japan must take into consideration:

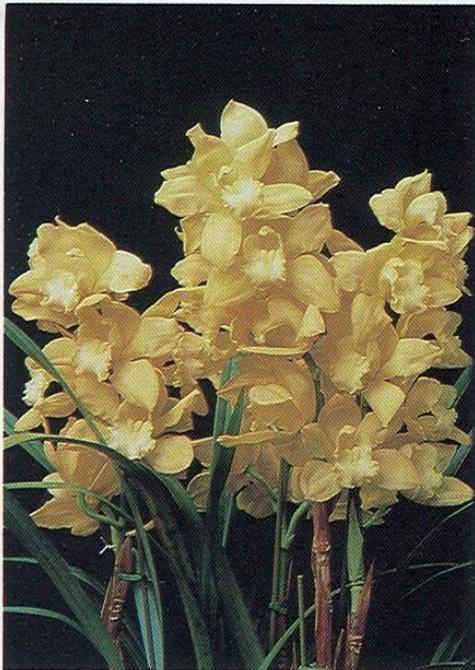
1. The time of shipment;
2. The color, shape, and final size (standard, intermediate, miniature, etc.) of the flowers;
3. The required growing period (3 years, 2 ½ years, or 2 years);
4. And the proper time to acquire the meristem plants, after deciding on the types and the growing periods.

In Japan, the usual *Cymbidium* growing period is 2 1/2 years. If we acquire meristem plants between March and May, we will be able to supply pot plants to the market at the end of the calendar year, the peak season, approximately two years and six months to two years and ten months later.

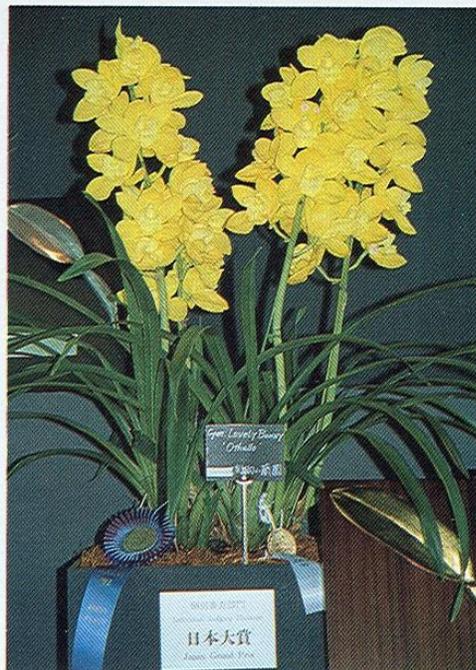
The example I have chosen is *Cymbidium* Lovely Bunny 'Juliet' (Sleeping Beauty x Yamba), which comes from the same cross as *Cymbidium* Lovely Bunny 'Othello,' the Grand Prize Winner at the Japan Grand Prix International Orchid Festival '92,' which was held at the Tokyo Dome in March of 1992. Characteristics regarding the basic points mentioned above are as follows:

1. The time of shipment is from mid-November through December;
2. The variety is *Cymbidium* Lovely Bunny 'Juliet,' a standard, yellow concolor *Cymbidium*;
3. The growing period is two years and eight months;
4. And the time of meristem plant acquisition is between March and May.

We purchase the young meristem plants from the nursery between March and May. These will be repotted into 3.5" pots after a neutralization period of one to three weeks. Six to eight months later, around November, they will be repotted into 5" pots.



***Cymbidium* Lovely Bunny 'Juliet'**
(Sleeping Beauty x Yamba)



***Cymbidium* Lovely Bunny 'Othello'**
(Sleeping Beauty x Yamba)

The meristem plants are not yet fully matured at this time and, thus, they will continue to grow. At this time also, the development of new growths has begun, but these will be pruned or pinched. The two new growths which develop in March will be kept as secondary bulbs. These bulbs, developed in March, will be fully matured approximately eight months later, in November. The following May, twelve to fourteen months after initially potting the young plants individually into 3.5" pots, they are once again repotted into flowering-size pots. These plants will have two new growths which are about 15 cm (6 in.) long. The new growths will ultimately become bulbs. If the secondary bulbs are started

too soon, occasionally they will form flower buds. For this reason, secondary bulbs should be kept small. You might think May is too soon for the repotting into flowering-size pots, which is the final stage. However, it is significant that the roots should be filled throughout the pot in order to develop quality flowers. It is important to repot the plants into flowering-size pots sixteen to eighteen months before the desired month of blooming. Each of the two child growths (secondary bulbs) which were present on the plant repotted into the flowering-size pot, forms a grandchild leaf bud between October and December. Each of these new growths is kept on the secondary bulb and will become a flowering bulb. Each of the flowering bulbs will form three or four stems a year later. These new growths, which will be flowering bulbs, will be 30-40 cm (12-18 in.) long by April of the following year.

The winter to spring period, after the initial twenty months following the initial meristem plant acquisition, is a critical period of cultivation. Up to this point, the cultivation has been rather general, but by February of the second year, the temperature inside the greenhouse should be controlled between 10-12°C (50-54°F) at a minimum and 22-23°C (71-74°F) at a maximum. These limits are raised slightly from the beginning of March to 15-16°C (59-61°F) and 25-26°C (77-79°F) respectively.

The controlling of the maximum temperature at 26°C (79°F) or below becomes rather difficult after May, because the outside temperature has risen considerably. By this time, grandchild leaf buds, which will eventually become the flowering bulbs, grow to about 40 cm (16 in.) in length or more.

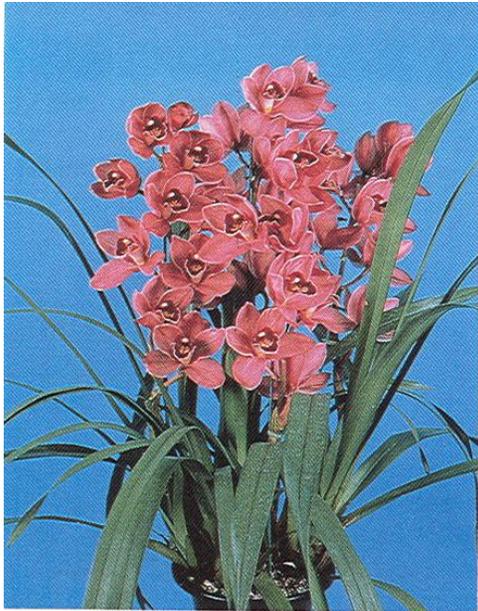
Japan usually experiences a rainy season from mid-June through mid-July each year, after which the hottest time of the summer arrives. During this time, the lowest outside temperature is usually between 22-23°C (71-74°F) in the morning, and 30°C (86°F) and above in the daytime, through the end of August. By the end of June, the grandchild leaf bulbs (the flowering bulbs) have started to develop flower buds. It is a well-known fact that flower buds of *Cymbidiums* have an extremely low resistance to high temperatures. The flower buds will die, or "blast," if the lowest temperature in the morning is continuously 22-23°C (71-74°F) or above. The same thing will happen if the temperature at night is high and the maximum temperature during the day continues to be 30°C (86°F) or above. In order to avoid this occurrence, we move the plants with flower buds to a cooler location, a process called "Yama-age." It is sometimes called the "mountain technique" in other parts of the world. This process begins from the first part of July. By the end of September and the beginning of October, when the flower spikes have reached a 30 cm (16 in.) length, the plants are brought back down from the mountain location and again placed in the greenhouse.

This three month period in the mountain location provides a proper environment for the flower spikes, since a temperature of 15-16°C (59-61°F) is optimal for their growth. In Japan, when using this mountain technique, an altitude of 800-1000 m (2,640-3,300 ft.) is most frequently used. *Cymbidium* growers in the southern half of the main island of Japan, with Tokyo at the border, frequently use the mountain technique. However, in the cooler areas, such as the northern half of the main island, the production of high quality *Cymbidium* potted plants is possible without the use of this mountain technique.

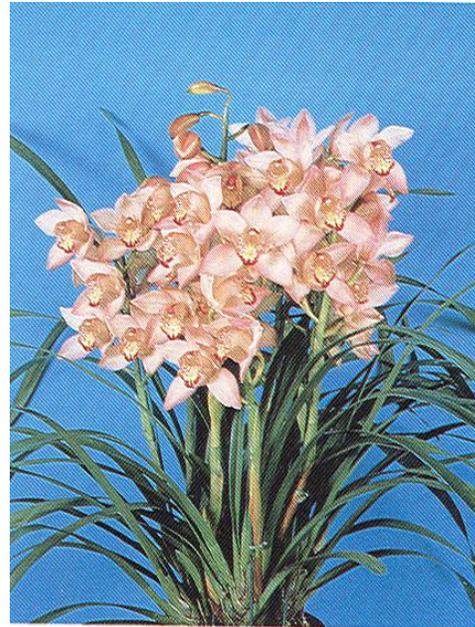
The *Cymbidium* plants returned from the mountain at the beginning of October will then be placed in a shading house. Determining the proper amount of shade to be used depends entirely on the color of the *Cymbidium* flower. For example, light pink flowers require 30% shading, whites and concolor yellows require 50%, concolor greens require 70%, and solid greens require 80% shading.

By the end of October, the outside temperature drops to around 8°C (46-47°F) and heating must be used. At this point, the controlling of the temperature inside the greenhouse begins. Growers usually start preparing for the shipment of flowers and plants by mid-November, depending on the stage of development of the flower spikes. The earliest flowering varieties begin blooming by the end of October. Since the spikes at this point vary between a length of 30-50 cm (16-20 in.), if we want to

make the shipment with two or three flowers open by December 10th, we must be able to control the temperature during this period. At times, it is necessary to raise the temperature up to 18°C (64-65°F) for late-flowering varieties, but the degree of sensitivity to heat varies, depending on the variety.



Cymbidium Miake 'Pieta'
A colorful example of a cymbidium
pot plant for the Japanese market



Cymbidium Lovely Rose 'Lambada'
A blush pink standard cymbidium for
the Japanese pot plant market

Once preparation in the greenhouse is completed for the winter in November, the actual potted plant shipments begin. The primary work done during this time is the placing of supporting stakes for the flower spikes. Pots with three spikes should be shipped when one of the spikes still has unopened buds.

I have been speaking about the basic growing system in Japan, but now I would like to move on to some special techniques. The pruning, or pinching of the growth which occurs as the first stage of the flowering bulb, is one of the major factors in determining the blooming time of the plant. Furthermore, whether or not the secondary bulb matures as planned is determined by when its new growth begins development. Because of this, earlier growths must be pruned. It is ideal that secondary bulbs start developing in March, which is not always the case. Thus, we pinch twice to adjust the time of the third growth development. Likewise, there are certain varieties which do not have new growth development. If we know of this particular characteristic, (1) we can delay the repotting period. At the time of repotting the plants from 3.5" to 5" pots, the roots shouldn't take up the entire pot. If the roots take up the whole space, the bulbs tend to mature more easily and new growths tend to develop. Or (2), we can start reducing the amount of water and fertilizer about a month before the time of new growth development.

In the final potting stage, the new growth of flowering bulbs, which start to develop in August, should be pinched. Ideally the final new growth, which will be saved for further development, should start in November. It requires twelve to fourteen months for the meristem plant to mature, secondary bulbs require eight to nine months, and flowering bulbs ten to twelve months.

The most frequently used fertilizer in Japan is organic fertilizer. Major organic fertilizers include rapeseed cake, ground bone, and fish meal, which are often used by themselves or combined. Organic fertilizers are usually applied in powder form directly to the surface of the compost. More and more growers are now using several organic and chemical fertilizers combined, which are prefermented for two to three weeks. Prefermentation allows ammonia to be released, thus there are no negative effects on the plants. As for chemical fertilizers, IB Compound (Magamp, etc.) and water soluble nutrients, such as Peters, are being used to some degree by Japanese growers.

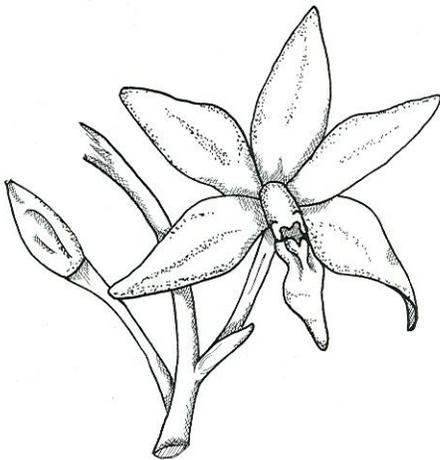
Orchid Advocate, Vol. 14 #1 January-February 1993

CYMBIDIUM COMPANIONS #10

EPIDENDRUM VITELLINUM by Paul Gripp

Drawing by: Roxanne Gripp

One of the most attractive and colorful of the species that grow and flower well under Cymbidium-type conditions would have to be *Epidendrum vitellinum*. This native of Mexico and Guatemala is a bonafide cool grower, often being found as high as 8,000 feet elevation growing in the mist forest regions.



The attractive foliage of *Epidendrum vitellinum* is about 6-9" long, and the flowers are produced from the current season's growths. Branching spikes, some 12-20" tall, produce bright cinnabar-red flowers that are about 1 1/2" across, and both summer and autumn flowering forms are known. The variety *majus* has flowers with broader segments than the typical form, and is a bright cinnabar-orange with a yellow lip.

Epidendrum vitellinum adapts well to either pot culture or when grown on mounts. It should be kept cool and provided with a lot of humidity and air, movement, and it does not require a marked resting period.

This species has been used to some degree in hybridizing and has proved compatible with several genera, including; *Cattleyas* (x *C. granulosa* = Epc. Lemon Twist), *Laelias* (x *cinnabarina* = Epl. Starfire and x *L. albida* = Epl. Ivory Imp), *Brassovola*, *Sophronitis*, and others.

If you are looking for something to brighten up your collection at a time of the year when there are few, if any, Cymbidiums in bloom, it would be hard to find a more worthwhile Cymbidium companion than *Epidendrum vitellinum*.

Orchid Advocate, Vol.2, No. 4, July-August 1976

GROWING THE NEW "TEMPERATURE TOLERANT" CYMBIDIUMS

Part Two

By Milton O. Carpenter

PREFACE

Cymbidiums are tops among all orchids for commercial flower sales throughout the world. Why is this? Mainly because the plants are highly productive in terms of yield, they are easy to grow, and they produce rather large, attractive flowers with excellent lasting qualities (both on and/or off the plant). In addition, the colors and combinations of colors seen in our modern Cymbidium hybrids are the equal of those seen anywhere in the orchid world.

So why aren't Cymbidiums cultivated by all orchid growers? Well, first of all, orchid growers differ greatly in their "tastes" and, because orchids are the largest plant family in the world, they have plenty of selection from which to choose. The main reason, however, for lack of universal cultivation, is the fact that almost all modern Cymbidium hybrids are derived from just seven of the large flowered species found principally in the hills of Nepal and Sikkim, where they enjoy bright sunlight and cool nights. Successful cultivation then requires that we emulate these climatic conditions---which is easily done in California, Australia, New Zealand, and England and Holland (the latter two with greenhouses to protect from freezing in their winters). Areas of the world without these naturally cool nights, then, are usually unsuccessful in Cymbidium cultivation.

About 25 years ago, we saw a great interest in "miniature" Cymbidiums, those made by combining the species *pumilum* with various of the "standard" (large flowered, cool growing) Cymbidiums. While these plants were more floriferous and somewhat easier to bloom than "standard" Cymbidiums, they were not reliable blooming plants for areas such as South Florida, where we do not have naturally cool nights. Thus, our decision, made 25 years ago, was to embark on a hybridizing program designed to create (with nature's help) "temperature tolerant" Cymbidiums. We define these as Cymbidiums, which will perform well in a temperature range of 95°F to 45°F and generally without the need of a wide temperature variation between day and night to initiate spikes.

From among 200 select breeding plants of "standard" Cymbidiums, we found just four that would perform reasonably well in our semi-tropical climate and we have used these principally in combination with the following: (1) *Cymbidium sanderae* 'Sanderae' (also known as *Cymbidium parishii* 'Sanderae') from Burma. This produces a beautiful white flower with a red labellum, an erect inflorescence, 10 to 12 flowers of 7.5 cm natural spread, it blooms reliably once every winter, and it is quite temperature tolerant; (2) *Cymbidium ensifolium* and its allied species from Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Assam, and southern China. These are small plants and flowers with a delightful fragrance (which is generally imparted to their progeny) and excellent heat tolerance. Some of these species like to bloom in the middle of our summers when temperatures in our greenhouses reach 105°F in the daytime and 80°F at night. Hybrids involving these species and "standard" Cymbidiums usually bloom both in the summer and in the winter for us; and (3) *Cymbidium chloranthum*, from Malaysia and Java (also reported from the Philippines). This is a very warm growing Cymbidium producing up to 40, one-inch luminous green flowers on semi-erect spikes. We have only been successful in making one hybrid with this species so far (*Cymbidium* Nancy Carpenter---*chloranthum* x Korintji).

To the best of our knowledge, we are the only commercial orchid firm in the world to specifically develop a breeding program to produce "temperature tolerant" Cymbidiums, but we do want to acknowledge the substantial help of one of the world's most knowledgeable Cymbidium hybridizers, Mr. Andy Easton of New Zealand.

CULTURE OF THE "TEMPERATURE TOLERANT" CYMBIDIUMS

First, remember that all cultural factors are inter-related (for example, a significant decrease in light intensity will call for a corresponding decrease in water and fertilizer), and secondly, we know that climatic conditions vary from place to place. Thus the individual grower should make those adjustments which allow him to obtain the best results under his conditions.

LIGHT

Light is probably the most important factor in the flowering of Cymbidiums. A good rule is to give as much light as possible, short of injuring the leaves. Proper intensity is indicated when the leaves are a grassy yellow-green color. Too much shade is the most frequent cause of non-blooming Cymbidiums. If you have a foot candle meter, it should register 4,000 to 6,000 or more during the growing season. When the bloom spikes begin to form, it is a good practice to leave the plant in the same orientation to the sun, for we have found that moving a plant and changing this orientation at that time will occasionally cause the young spikes to blast. Later, as the buds begin to emerge from the spike sheath, rather heavy shade may be applied (which will generally result in clearer colors and longer lasting flowers). Too high light intensities at this time could cause sepal deformation and/or bud drop. As soon as plants have finished blooming, return them to the higher light intensity.

TEMPERATURE

"Temperature tolerant" hybrids are relatively tolerant of heat and also enjoy cool night temperatures (but do not require them). While most "standard" Cymbidiums require a 20-25°F differential between daytime and night time temperatures during late summer and early fall to induce plants to start spikes, this is not required by most "temperature tolerant" Cymbidiums.

WATER (Quantity)

During their most active growth period, March through September in the Northern hemisphere, Cymbidiums require much more water. In fact, with good drainage (a necessity at all times) the compost should be kept moist, even wet, when compared to Cattleya culture. During the winter months, Cymbidiums should be thoroughly drenched and then allowed to become almost dry before watering again. Never allow the potting medium to become "bone" dry however! It is also a good practice to thoroughly leach the potting medium periodically to remove any excessive accumulation of salts. On bright summer days Cymbidiums will respond heartily to a misting of the leaves, which reduces leaf temperature through increased evaporation and humidity.

WATER (Quality)

A factor often overlooked and of prime importance is water quality. City water and/or well water will, many times, be found to contain an unusually high total soluble salt content. Ideally, the soluble salt level should be 25-50 ppm (parts per million) but not more than 100 ppm. Rain water is almost always the best source for good water, generally having a low soluble salts concentration and proper pH. One of the main causes of leaf tip die-back is too high a concentration of soluble salts in the water (the other main cause being simply a lack of water). In South Florida, most Cymbidiums are grown out-of-doors all year and benefit from the natural rains, especially during our wet summer months when almost daily showers are experienced (this fortunately coincides with our period of highest light intensities).

FERTILIZER

During the growing season, use a high nitrogen (e.g., 30-10-10) water soluble fertilizer at the rate of one teaspoon to a gallon, every two weeks. Additional feeding at this time may be accomplished by use of sterilized cow manure or hoof and horn (for nitrogen, principally), single super phosphate (phosphorus), and sulfate of potash (potassium). Dolomite lime or oyster shell is also occasionally used to adjust the pH of the soil and to add calcium and magnesium. The desired materials are mixed and applied to the surface of the potting medium at the rate of approximately one tablespoon per six-inch pot. Applications are made three times during the growing season at intervals no closer than two months apart. An easier alternative to the use of the dry foods is to apply the pelletized, slow release fertilizers which, when placed on the surface of the potting medium, release minute amounts of fertilizer at each watering. Many growers have found that the application of epsom salts (magnesium sulfate) to their Cymbidiums in early summer is helpful. The rate of application used is one tablespoon per six-inch pot.

From August through December, use a low nitrogen (e.g., 10-20-30) water soluble fertilizer at the same concentration and frequency mentioned above. Always feed on bright, sunny days, as plants cannot utilize the food in cold, overcast conditions.

AIR

Good air movement is a necessity at all times and the plants should be potted somewhat high in the pot to allow good air movement around the base of the bulbs. Depending on the individual growing situation, it may be desirable to hang the plants from an overhead frame in order to provide the best air circulation.

POTTING MEDIUM

A medium which is slightly acidic (pH 5-6) and of high organic content is best, but there are almost as many different Cymbidium mixes as there are growers. Generally speaking, whatever is being used with success in your area on "standard" Cymbidiums, will work well with our plants. Remember that the drainage must be good, however, for while these plants require copious amounts of water during their growing season, they will not tolerate water standing around the roots. Our current mix is Metro Mix 300 (a basically peat and perlite mix sold by W. R. Grace & Co.) to which is added some dolomite lime, sterilized cow manure, and super phosphate. A bark and medium perlite mix (3:1 proportion) with dolomite lime, single superphosphate, and some 3-8-0 fertilizer is also used successfully around the world. In the past year we have been experimenting with "rock wool," an inert material made from molten, spun rock. . We are using the 70% water retentive and 30% water repellent mix and have had excellent results so far. The obvious advantage to using this material is that it will not break down as will organic materials, and thus can be left on the plant root system for a long time, if particular attention is paid to "flushing" routinely for accumulated salts.

CONTAINERS

Experience leads us to believe that plastic pots are best for these Cymbidiums, as they have better moisture retention, the roots do not stick as much as with clay pots, there is practically no salt accumulation, and they are lighter in weight.

PESTS AND DISEASES

Fortunately Cymbidiums are more resistant to pests and diseases than are most orchids. Snails and slugs must be controlled, especially during the blooming season. Metaldehyde in powder, liquid, or pellets is effective. Spider mites are probably the major pest. Its small size makes it difficult to detect and spray must generally be applied to the underside of the leaves (where it locates) for proper control. Keltbane, Cygon, Pentac, or Dimite may be used. Orchid scale can be controlled with Malathion or Cygon.

Fungus diseases are seldom a problem. When they do occur, use Benlate, Banrot, or Subdue. A good preventative spray is Captan, Tersan, or Kocide applied three to six times yearly. Cymbidiums, along with most other orchids, are subject to all virus diseases. Their spread can be controlled by proper precautionary measures such as destroying or segregating infected plants, sterilizing all cutting tools (a propane torch is good), and keeping insect populations at a minimum.

REPOTTING

The best time to repot is after the plant has just finished blooming. Repotting is necessary when (1) the plant has reached the edge of the pot and there is no room for development of new growths, or (2) the potting medium is decomposed. If you are not sure of the health of the roots or the condition of the potting medium, take the plant out of the pot to examine it closely. If the plant and medium are in good condition, with only a few leafless bulbs, you may want to shift the entire plant to a larger pot, keeping the root ball intact. Division of the plant may be desirable if there are several leafless back bulbs present. Keep each division to a minimum of three green bulbs, removing the back bulbs, which you can repot individually to start new divisions. When repotting, allow enough room between the plant and the edge of the pot for two or three years growth. After repotting, place the plant in a shady, humid location and mist the foliage often, while curtailing the watering of the compost. This will encourage new root action, after which the plant is returned to normal light, food, and watering practices.