

# Central Vancouver Island Orchid Society Newsletter

## October 2013



*Paphiopedilum* Wossner Vietnam Star 'Pacific' HCC/AOS 77pts noon.  
(*Paph. rothschildianum* x *Paph. vietnamense*) Exhibitor: Jonathan Littau  
Judith Higham, the photographer

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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

**Coming Meeting Dates:** Oct 19, Nov 23, Dec 7.

**Program for Oct.19<sup>th</sup>**

**"Fun with Orchids."  
With Shelley Rattink**

**Coming Events:**

Fraser Valley Show and Sale November 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> 2013

**Editorial:**

With the cool nights I hope you all have your plants safe indoors now except for the Standard Cymbidiums which can stay out until we have had a frost to set the flower spikes. This is also the time to refresh the Cypripediums outside and other hardy orchids now that they have died down should be transplanted, repotted, etc. I know I have a few to do this season and looking forward to seeing the offsets and maybe potting on some for sale.

Our first show is creeping up on us and I hope you have some plants you are training the spikes on that will be real show stoppers. We have three tables to make look wonderful so I will need 30 to 60 plants in flower to make it look great. It would nice to see some of members come over to see this show as usually one car makes it over. It is well worth crossing the water to see.

Don't forget to bring in your membership renewals. It is time!

Cheers Mike

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## CVIOS General Meeting September 21, 2013

Shelley called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm.

Dora moved that the minutes of our June 22 meeting be accepted as published. Bev seconded the motion and motion carried.

Correspondence: Three AOS magazines and the Orchid Digest arrived over the summer and will be placed in our Library.

Treasurer's Report: In Joann's absence, Bryan gave us an account of bank balances for the general, AOS and Harry's memorial account. He also gave us a summary of the draft budget that was approved by the executive at our summer meeting. The only changes that were made based on last year's expenditures, were a reduction of the show travel budget and an increase in the program budget. Bryan explained the rationale for these changes and members were in favor of these changes and the budget as presented.

Shelley reported on some of the other items that were discussed by the executive at the summer meeting including:

- Agreement to send Orchid Digest a donation to help cover the cost of producing their special issue on Phals.
- Shelley will be doing a repotting demonstration at Dinters in Duncan on October 12. Vivian will go to help promote our society and let people know about our meetings.
- Mike will be doing our display at the Fraser Valley show (Nov 1 -3). Plans for getting our orchids to the show will be discussed at our next meeting.
- Fundraising: We decided to forgo the March plant auction and try it again next year. We would like to have a combination of live and silent auction along with bag draws at our Christmas lunch and continue with a small plant auction at the summer picnic.

Vivian reminded everyone that memberships for 2013/14 are due and gave a fun overview of results from our 'membership moments' to date.

Bryan asked for suggestions of topics for programs this year.

Mary gave a brief summary of some of the new books in our library including one on Cymbidiums, one on orchid culture with lots of tips and hints for new growers and another two volumes on growing Asian Orchids that were donated to our group through Mike.

Mike indicated that a long time former member of our society (Mary Spearing) had recently passed away, and referred members to the memorial information about Don McDermid. Members shared some of their memories of Don.

Shelley thanked Mike, Donna and Bryan for taking care of Don's orchids and helping Marsha make them available to our members.

Sandra indicated that we do not need any more people to bring goodies in October, but November needs a top up. Thank you to Mary, Mike, Dora, Clementine and Elizabeth for bringing refreshment this month. Reminders to Brad, Julia, Connie, Shirley and Terri for October.

Nancy asked us if we wanted to have a group plant order from H&R as her import permit expires in October. Many members expressed interest. Nancy suggested they check the H&R website and let her know what they want to order.

Don indicated that he had installed 'Orchid Wiz 10.1' on the CVIOS computer for reference use at meetings.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:35, followed by our tour of all the beautiful orchids that members brought to share, refreshments, and one of the most comprehensive and informative presentations on growing paphs and phrags we have ever had by Glen Decker of Piping Rock Orchids.

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## **The End of a Collection**

I have now been asked to help disperse my fifth collection of orchids after a member has died and I would like to talk to members and anyone with plants who is nearing the time of passing through those Pearly Gates.

Make plans for dealing with your collection if something happens to you. It takes the stress off those who you leave behind. Ask one person to liquidate your collection. Make sure the person agrees to do the job and keep that person informed.

A sudden death is impossible to plan for, but you know your family and how and when many have made the last journey so you can prepare to a point. If you have more plants than you can maintain annually as in repotting and feeding and controlling the bugs then you need to shrink your collection to within your ability to support it.

Long sad slow endings are the most painful for everyone, but the collection should be seriously dismantled early so that the very few plants left can be looked after by the supporting family without stress and being overburdened by guilt. It is better to have your family see happy healthy plants than half dead and dying remnants of what was once a glorious array.

In the planning don't radically start experimenting with media if your plants are doing very well already. Don't start potting-on instead of repotting. I have seen so many pots when dumped with the old pot shape full of dead roots in the middle of a different media that was never fully entered by the

roots. Always repot by the book. Keep the pots as small as possible, unused media just rots in the pot. Make sure all old media is off the roots and wash them in warm clean water. Seeing a large classic Cattleya hybrid with no roots living is a sad picture. I have seen it many times in these undertakings. I think the most important lesson to be learned is that all orchid roots need air around them and the wet soggy media I have often found drowns the roots and the plants suffer. Make sure the media particle size leave lots of air spaces so oxygen is able to be taken in by the roots. Only roots that have grown under water like to be under water. The rest suffocate and die!

I think there are lessons here for us all even the under 50s. Keep your collection in bounds and maintain it as it should be. If you find it too much then give some plants away or sell off some. Those that remain will rejoice!

In potting it is best to keep all the plants of one kind in the same media and pots. If you are using clay pots especially large ones then drill more holes around near the base and don't set them on a solid shelf, the water cannot drain away and the roots rot. Also in clay pots the particle size of the media should increase to keep the airways open.

With media it may be that you are using non-organic material and this does not break down and keeps its integrity.

The big rule is "Don't have more plants than you can handle easily."

Mike Miller, October 2013

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## ORCHID CULTURE ON THE CULTURE OF MINIATURE ORCHIDS

Phil Jesup

*This article was originally published in Orchidata, Vol. XI, No.2, special issue 'Orchid Culture,' 1971, pp. 50-54. Mr. Jesup grew these orchids in the Northeast and though the article was published more than twenty years ago, it is still applicable. Nomenclature updated to current.*

I have been asked to write a piece on the culture of miniatures by the editor of *Orchidata*. That is nearly like writing an article on the culture of orchids, and herein (already!) lies the first lesson: the cultural requirements of a collection of miniatures are as diverse as the culture of a miscellaneous group of larger species. The presumably obvious clue is "minis" are simply orchids which happen to be of dwarf stature and are found in as many different types of habitats as "maxis." While defining them, I should further say that most genera have one or more dwarf to minuscule species and, of course, some are composed exclusively (or nearly so) of minis.

Then we get into the problem of what a mini is. To some, it's anything vegetatively smaller than a cattleya (these tend to be beginners in the hobby or those hooked almost exclusively on one or more of the commercial genera); to others, a plant at maturity six inches high or less (these people tend to have a problem categorizing a species with five-inch leaves and a three-foot bloom spike) and, finally, there are those who feel that anything not fitting comfortably into a one-inch pot at maturity wouldn't qualify. Perhaps subclassifications for purposes of clear communication would be "minuscules," "miniatures" and "dwarfs." However, for this article I will be broad-minded and consider any plant vegetatively six inches or less, regardless of whether it may have a thirty-five-foot bloom spike, a miniature.

**Now that we know what a miniature is,  
I will admit that there are a few general rules we can apply:**

1. A mini needs closer observation, for diseases, insects or pests can demolish a small plant very quickly by contrast with a cattleya or cymbidium. For example: four mealy bugs on a two-inch high *Oncidium haitiense* would severely weaken the plant, whereas the same four on *Encyclia fragrans* would have little effect. The amount of plant juices supplied is the same, of course, but from the minis it comprises a far greater percentage of the whole. In both cases the four mealy bugs will rather quickly become more than four.
2. Minis usually require water applied more often and, therefore, need more time spent on them. The clue here is that even those from dry, or seasonally dry regions will be in smaller pots, which will dry out fast, or on slabs or logs, which usually dry very rapidly.
3. The same principles of pot size apply to most minis as to larger orchids. Often I have seen a tiny orchid in the center of a four-inch pot "drowning" in rotting potting medium.
4. One shouldn't attempt to grow minis (or any other kind of orchid for that matter) unless one is willing to make the necessary adjustments in culture to accommodate them. This is a personal feeling. I have so often seen a fine collection of one or a few types of orchids, in which the grower was obviously particularly interested and which have a well-defined common cultural requirement, with a few other diverse species, often miniatures, stuck here and there, or even, say, a cattleya collection with a few paphiopedilums languishing in a corner-it undermines the whole effect and concept in my estimation.

With any varied collection of species, large or small, one must put in more time and be a keener observer than with a culturally uniform collection. Microclimates and, above all, proper potting and watering, I feel, are the secrets.

**The culture requirements of miniatures are as diverse as that of larger species.**

At this juncture, a few comments about frequently seen genera, subgenera or tribes with other specialized requirements:

1. Perhaps the group that comes most readily to most hobbyists' minds are the pleurothallids, consisting of *Pleurothallis* itself, *Masdevallia*, *Stelis*, *Restrepia*, *Lepanthes*, *Lepanthopsis*, *Platystele*, *Zootrophion*, *Porroglossum*, *Barbosella*, *Brachionidium*, *Restrepiella*, and so forth. The vast majority of the multitudinous species are dwarf to miniature and, with only a few exceptions, most will thrive best in a cool, moist environment. While pots should have excellent drainage, they should be kept moist at all times, this being even more important than with paphs or phalaenopsis (and incidentally most need similar conditions of shade). Most *Pleurothallis* species and most others will do nearly as well or, in some few cases, better in intermediate temperatures, but with the exception of relatively few low elevation species, masdevallias quite rigidly require cool to cold conditions.

I pot all pleurothallids in a mixture of New Zealand sphagnum and chopped tree fern for no better reason than in early potting stages plants with few roots tend to fall out of loose mixes or bark due to top-heaviness. I feel that a good living growth of sheet moss or other type of moss over the surface of the pot indicates the proper environmental conditions, tends to keep the pot surface from drying out, provides a good medium for surface roots, and looks attractive. If the atmosphere is moist and living moss scarce, a few clippings of moss tips sprinkled on the surface of the medium of a newly potted plant will soon become a verdant blanket.

My pleurothallid collection is, for the most part, somewhat underpotted, receives a pot watering every clear day, and is even watered in bad weather if it occurs for more than two or three days consecutively. Where possible, a misting system in operation over and on the plants on hot summer days would be good. I fertilize not at all in osmunda, and presumably dosage as for other plants in bark mixtures would be appropriate for those in bark.

With all of this H<sub>2</sub>O, fungus problems occasionally occur on specific plants. The best antidote is a soaking in a bucket of Cleary's 3336 wettable powder. You will find that in a large collection of pleurothallids, certain species are more subject to diseases than others, although they require just as much water to grow properly. It pays to keep your eye on these.

2. The magnificent orange-flowered *Neocogniauxia monophylla* and *N. hexaptera* require the same conditions as the pleurothallids, since they grow under similar cloud forest conditions and have no thickened stems for water storage.

3. The trichocentrums are all small, with leaves and growth habit resembling a miniature "burro-eared" oncidium. Logically, they require similar conditions, i.e. sun, perfect drainage, and not much water. Their very thick, fleshy leaves are their water-storage organs. The best idea is usually a piece of rough bark or limb or a mexi-fern slab, although in small, perfectly drained pots they usually do well.

4. The dwarf cirrhoptalums, bulbophyllums and megacliniums are a problem to contain in pots due to the wandering rhizomes of most species. A tree fern slab or "totem," or a log or piece of cork bark are good, but these should all have pads of osmunda or living moss to prevent too rapid drying. Warm and damp is the keynote here, because even with pseudobulbs they require frequent watering to really thrive. Some species require a degree of rest period with less water in order to flower; how long and when must be left to experimentation with individual species (isn't that part of the fun and challenge of orchid growing?). Cattleya light conditions on the darker end of the scale should be right, and if possible, temperatures should be warm for most species.

5. Promeneas are cool section plants, like to be kept quite constantly damp but with a good bit more light than the pleurothallids.

6. Sophronities-cool and damp, but with good drainage, is the key here. Light should be somewhat less than for cattleyas. These requirements are for all species except *S. cernua*, which needs intermediate temperatures, bright light, and does best on logs, cork or tree fern slabs.

This merely scratches the surface. After many years of growing them, I am still having dismal failures and spectacular successes for seemingly contradictory reasons. *Maxillaria sophronitis* I can tell you how to grow a bushel basket of it, but how to flower it...? One year a basket of flowers, the next five, few or none under seemingly identical conditions. And so on.

For the finale, I will list what I would pick, if asked today, as my dozen favorite minis (alphabetically) with the way I successfully grow them. (I) = intermediate temperature; (C) = cool. The list illustrates the wide range of genera in which minis can be found:

*Ascocentrum pumilum-bright*, average water (I).

*Dendrobium unicum-as* for *Dend. nobile-dry* and cool in winter, wet and warm in summer. *Dipteranthus planifolius-average* light, small pot, dampish (I).

*Dryadella liliputiana-small* pot, osmunda, fairly bright, dampish (C).

*Epidendrum angustifolium*-bright, small pot, dampish (I).  
*Homalopetalum pumilia*-small pot or log with live moss, cattleya light, dampish (I).  
*Lepanthes calodictyon*-small pot, osmunda and moss, wet, shade (C).  
*Lepanthopsis astrophora*-small pot, osmunda and moss, wet, shady (I).  
*Lepanthopsis serrulata*-as for *L. astrophora* except thrives both (C) and (I).  
*Macroclinium bicolor-mexi*-fern slab, frequent water but should dry fast, bright (I).  
*Oncidium arizajulianum*-bare rough branch, bright, daily watering but dries quickly (I).  
*Platystele lancilabris*-small pot, osmunda and moss, wet, shady (I).  
*Platystele ornata*-as for *P. lancilabris*.  
*Pleurothallis abjecta*-piece of bare wood, wet, shady (C).  
*Trisetella triaristella*-small pot, osmunda, shady, wet (C).

You may have noticed that the list sneaked up to fifteen. You are lucky it didn't reach one hundred.

Orchid Digest, Oct.-Nov.-Dec., 1994

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## *Habenaria rudocheila* \*

Dr. F. M. Dourado

To the musically inclined mention of the word *Habenaria* brings up in his mind visions of George Bizet's opera *Carmen*, where the dance "Habenara" is performed. On closer scrutiny however, the words are entirely different as in our orchid *Habenaria* there is an "i" spatchcocked in between the "r" and the "a".

The student of French prose will have read the classical novels of Honore de Balzac (1799 - 1850) in his *Human Comedy (Comedie Humaine)* series. In one of them, "The Quest of the Absolute" Balzac writes of a person imbued with the desire to find perfection on earth. In the same vein, turning from Balzac's stories to the science of Orchidology it is like the philosopher's dream of perfection for the orchidist to secure the most unusual, the most intriguing and the most spectacular orchid flower. High on this list I would put the *Habenarias*. At first glance the sight of the *Habenaria rudocheila* in bloom conjures up visions of new rare flora. The flowers are so unusual that a person who looks at them for the first time can be excused for imagining he is in a strange country with fantastic new flora.

Twenty years ago, my first acquaintance with the *Habenarias* was with *H. carnea*, which used to flourish in the limestone jungles of the langkawi Islands and a similar geological setting, the forests of Wan Tangga and Wan Kelian in Perlis. Now there are no plants in the area to be seen as their habitat has been ravished by collectors indiscriminately and the associated species *Goodyeara hispida* and the *Paph niveum* which grew hand in hand with the *H. carnea* have all vanished. Not so long ago I asked the Curator of the Botanical Gardens of Singapore for a couple of bulbs of *H. carnea* so I could flower them and write an article. His reply was "You have described the habitat of an orchid species so well in your articles so much so that orchid pirates have muscled in on their happy homes and now the *H. carnea* is a rarity. "Of course he did not give me any either for free or for exchange. Thus I cannot write of the *H. carnea* in comparison with *H. rudocheila*. With no pictures of *H. carnea* the account will be like Balzac's remark "To sleep on a beautiful bed with no pillow".

The flowers that gracefully adorn these pages were from 2 plants that survived from about 30 bulbs of 4 different colours - the yellow, the green, the pink and the red. As these plants hail from Chengmai in Thailand, where there is a dry spell of a few months they cannot grow well in our damp



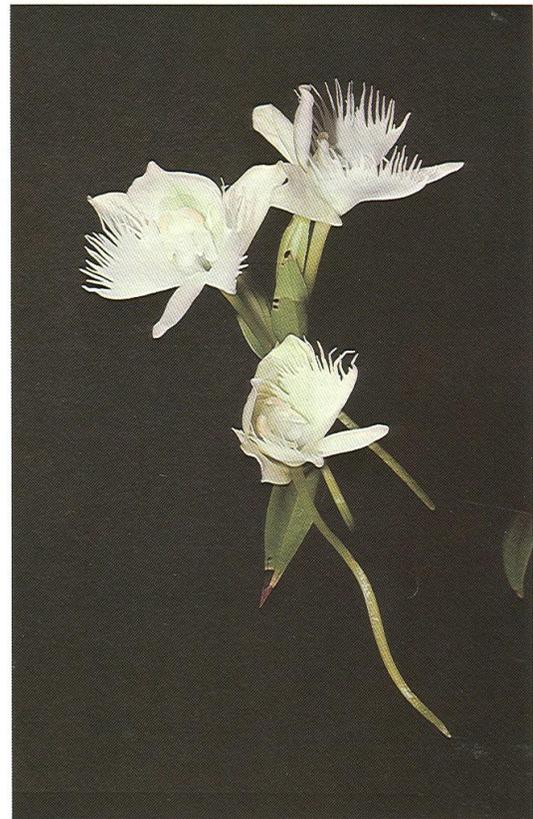
*Habenaria loerzingii* J. J. Sm. Many orchids have never been illustrated in color, such as this spectacularly flowered species, chanced upon in flower in east Java in company with James Comber. A typical terrestrial, growing from a tuber, it grew in the soil next to the habitat of *Paphiopedilum glaucophyllum*.

*Habenaria loerzingii* J. J. Sm. is described in *Bull. Jard. Bot. Buitenzorg* 3, ser. V, t.20, f.2, a-g for 1922. x1.

*Pecteilus suzannae* (L.) Rafin. "Pectein" is a Greek word meaning "to comb." The fimbriations of the species look as if they have been neatly arranged, as if by combing. x2/3. Hong Kong.



*Habenaria rhodocheila* Hance. This spectacular species from Thailand and western Malaysia has leaves which appear reminiscent of Jewel Orchids (*Macodes*, *Anoectochilus*, etc.). However, when it flowers it is spectacular with erect scapes of greenish flowers but iridescent red lips, creating a spectacular effect. x1. Specimen northeast Thailand.



perpetual rainy weather, I have always been stimulated by the challenge to grow the unusual. Thus one of the first garden plants I flowered was the *Strelitzia regina* - the Queen of the flowering

plants - I was told by the Botanical Gardens of Singapore then that the plant only survived in a Mediterranean type of climate. The proof of the pudding is in the eating and it is when the 2 attached blooms of *H. rhodocheila* were taken to the monthly meeting of the Perak Orchid Society Show 6 months ago that I convinced the skeptics that with persistence, patience and loving care, plants completely alien to our habitat can thrive and bloom. Incidentally the *H. rhodocheila* obtained first prize in its section at the show.

The geographical distribution of this species extends from the South of China through Indochina, Thailand & Burma to Penang, where the plants have yellow blooms. I have yet to see a plant from Penang or Peninsular Malaysia in the wild. The plants are found in partially shaded areas growing under large boulders near streams - exactly the same habitat I described for the most famous of all the Jewel Orchids the Green *Macodes petola* found in the jungles of Kampar. The flowering season is between Sept. to Nov. up to 10 to 15 flowers are borne of a 3" radius. After Nov. the leaves and stems gradually dry out after the plant had flowered but the underground tubers remain dormant during the ensuing months and must be kept dry to survive. In May the plant starts to sprout if the bulbs have not been ravaged by fungi or insects and within a few months burst into bloom. It is a low plant about 8 inches tall with green leaves 6 inches by 2 inches, the flowers are characterized as in the picture by the large four - lobed lips which measure about 1 1/4 inches to 1 1/2 inches long and slightly less than 1 inch in width. My view is that the most beautiful species in my collection that came from Thailand is the *H. rhodocheila*,

Of the other 14 types of *Habenarias* found in Peninsular the largest flowered species is *H. susannae* found in open grassy places in Kedah. Unlike the diminutive *rhodocheilas* or the larger *carnea*, *H. susannae* has 2 1/2" wide white flowers opening up in succession from plants which are about 2 - 3 feet in height. In Hong Kong *H. susannae* grows up the Peak as mountain plants. The tiny delicate *H. sumatrana* are often seen at the edge of rubber estates in Kadah near the rice fields. One can easily mistake the plants when not in bloom as blades of grass. With their tiny white blooms on close scrutiny the stamp of the *Habenaria* lip is there on the flower. From a distance the blooming plants resemble miniature St. Joseph's lilies - a very common garden plant in Malaysia. I do not know of any local crosses of the *Habenarias* but I feel sure that crosses between the *susannae* and *rhodocheila* would be spectacular. The common type is white but green, pink and yellow have been seen.

\* Synonyms: *Habenaria xanthocheila* Ridley and *H. pusilla* Rchb. f.

## References:

- 1) *Hendersons Malayan Wild Flowers*, 1949 Part I, Vol IV of 3 volumes
- 2) *Holtum, Flora of Malaysia - Vol I Orchids*
- 3) *Beautiful Thai Orchids* by Rapee Sagarik
- 4) *Ridley, Flora of Malaysia Vol I to Vol V*
- 5) *Burkill, Dictionary of Economic Products of the Malay Peninsular*
- 6) *Encyclopedia of Orchids* by Alex Hawkes
- 7) *Manual of Cultivated Orchid Species* by Bechtel, Cribb & Others

Orchid Digest, Oct.-Nov.-Dec., 1991

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# *Laelia perrinii* Batem

By Peter Taylor of Baulkham Hills



**Laelia perrinii** Photo by Peter Taylor

This beautiful species was introduced to orchid enthusiasts from the extensive collection of Mr. Harrison of Liverpool and was described by Lindley in the Botanical Register for 1838. It was named after Mr. Harrison's gardener, a Mr. Perrin, who tended the collection of South American species of his employer.

*Laelia perrinii* belongs to the *Cattleyodes* section of the genus. *Laelia* species in the section are robust plants resembling *Cattleya* - however, they have that

distinguishing feature that clearly marks the genus *Laelia*, 8 pollina rather than the 4 of *Cattleya*. Some other desirable species in the section of *Laelia* are *Laelia purpurata*, *Laelia lobata* and *Laelia tenebrosa*, all spectacular and of relatively easy culture. They should have a proud place in all species collections.

The flowers of *Laelia perrinii* have distinct features, which easily identify the species in its section. The petals are very flat and are a little wider towards the tips. This feature can be easily seen in the accompanying illustration. The lip is wonderful - while narrow in proportion to the other floral segments it is of beautiful colour. The front portion is an intense crimson-purple and this confronts strikingly with the white throat. The column of this species is also distinctive.

*Laelia perrinii* is a Brazilian species, rather widespread in the states of Rio de Janeiro and Espirito Santo. It favours for its habitat the trees on rocky slopes of the tropical rainforest and also on rock ledges. It requires good light, particularly in winter and excellent air circulation to grow and flower well (this is required all by *Laelia* species in general and particularly those of the *Cattleyodes* section).

There are a number of named varieties of *Laelia perrinii*. One of the first collected by the firm of Sanders in England was *Laelia perrinii* var. *alba*, a pure white variety, much desired and rarely available today. Delicate pale grey-blue with a darker band on the lip is seen on *Laelia perrinii* var. *coerulea* and *Laelia perrinii* var. *concolor* has a lovely pale pink colour.

I grow this species, *Laelia perrinii*, in my glasshouse with a winter minimum of 12°C. I have tried mounting plants on cork slabs and on tree fern with poor results. Best growth is obtained when plants are potted in an open, free-draining mix. Watering in winter needs to be watched carefully as plants do not respond to over watering in cool weather. Bright light, especially winter light induces, in my experience, better pigmentation in the flowers.

Unfortunately, the excellent clone pictured is not mine. It is a plant belonging to George Bazil of the SPECIES Society in Sydney. George also grows *Laelia purpurata* to perfection.

I wonder why Lindley chose the name 'Laelia' for this genus of Orchids? Perhaps because the name was often used by the Roman patrician family Laelius for girls born to the wealthy and influential members of that family. Certainly *Laelia perrinii* is a distinguished member of the Orchid family and has all the grace and beauty of an upper-class Roman noble woman.

From Orchids Australia, April 2004