

# On-line Orchid Group

## December 2011 Newsletter

Hi everyone and Seasons Greetings.

### Show dates

No shows coming up for some months. The first one I'm aware of is the Open Day at the Species Orchid Society in March. Details will be in the next newsletter..

### This month's orchid **Cattleya purpurata (formerly Laelia purpurata)**



C. purpurata



var striata



var carnea

This is the national flower of Brazil. It comes in a large number of varieties including the three above. Some of mine are currently in flower, some are finished, and a couple still to come. They grow in an igloo heated to 10 degree minimum during winter but a couple of friends grow them in glass houses but without added heat. They can be obtained from orchid nurseries and occasionally orchid shows. (The Species Society Open Day may be one place to obtain one at a reasonable price. \$20-\$40 flowering size)

Note With species orchids you can have flowers of one type or another all year round.

### **General Culture for the next few months.**

The important thing over the next few months is to make sure your orchids don't get too much light and do get sufficient water. Direct sunlight must be avoided otherwise the leaves will get sunburned. The ideal is under 50-70% shade cloth but under the shade of trees or pergola is OK. Water needs to be applied regularly. As a rough guide most people recommend every 2 weeks during the middle of winter through to every 2 days in the middle of summer. This needs to be adjusted when we have a number of hot days in a row. Personally, I water in the evening after a particularly hot day so the plants can take up the moisture during the night and I do this each day when we have hot days in a row. If watering is done in the morning of a hot day you can be left with water sitting down in the leaf axils during the heat of the day. This can heat up and 'cook' the new growth.

**Cymbidium** – Most of my repotting is complete. The later flowering types and those I haven't done yet will be done over the next month or so but I do have a cool shady area where they can be put while they get over the repotting. If you don't have such an area, it may be better to wait now and repot in autumn once the warmer weather has finished. I am fertilising with weak fertiliser every watering and I'm watering my cymys at night as most growers believe that they need a temperature drop at night during summer to help them to initiate flowering.

**Cattleya** – These are growing well and putting out lots of new roots. Here again. I am repotting these as necessary as I like to repot when new roots are active. Most of the flowering has finished but a number of species cats are putting up sheaths and spikes for early next year. Here again, fertilizing must be kept up while the plants are actively growing.

**Softcane Dendrobiums** - (Indian noble varieties) – These have been repotted where necessary and are now getting growths away for next season. Mine are growing in 75-100mm pots in reasonably coarse coconut fibre chunks. I also sit each pot in a plastic saucer which I keep full of water right through until April next year. Fertilizer for these needs to be low Nitrogen, high Potassium to help them to grow a nice plump bulb in order for them to flower well next spring.

**Aussie Dendrobiums** – I commented in my last newsletter that “It appears to be not a good year for speciosums.” Very few of them flowered but most of mine have put on some very good growth. Keep them moist if they are not actively growing but keep the fertilizer and water going if they are actively growing. If they have filled the pot they can be 'potted on' now. (Not teasing out the roots just moving the whole thing into a bigger pot and filling in around the edge with new mix.) This allows the plant to continue growing without disruption and eventually builds to a good sized plant. If the existing roots are not in good condition then they should be repotted properly.

**Sarochilus** – These little Australian natives have generally finished flowering but unlike a lot of orchids, after flowering is not the time to repot. Most growers keep the moisture and shade up to them over summer and then do the repotting in March-April.

**Pleione** – See Max's notes on my website below.

**Lastly** – If you're growing an orchid that I haven't covered above and you would like some help with it, please don't hesitate to email me or try the forum. Another alternative I have found useful is to do a Google search with the type of orchid plus the word 'culture'. For example 'cattleya culture'. This will usually bring up a number of useful pages of information.

### **OSCOV's culture notes.**

Over the last few years OSCOV has been releasing a full set of articles from the 'Orchids in Victoria' series as each edition has sold out. These are excellent articles and include culture notes by Victorian experts on a range of commonly grown orchids as well as the more unusual ones. Simply go to any of the OSCOV pages mentioned below and click on 'Articles' in the menu.

### **Websites of interest**

**Has anyone found an interesting or useful website that could be useful to members of the online group. If so, let me know and I'll include it in the next newsletter.**

### **Links:**

**Orchid Species Society of Victoria** [www.oscov.asn.au/ossv](http://www.oscov.asn.au/ossv)

**Orchid repotting guide** and

**Cymbidium staking guide** <http://aussieorchid.webring.com> Note no 'www'

**OSCOV member clubs across Victoria** [www.oscov.asn.au/members.html](http://www.oscov.asn.au/members.html)

**ORCHID LINKS IN GENERAL** [www.oscov.asn.au/links.html](http://www.oscov.asn.au/links.html)

**The OSCOV forum** [www.oscov.asn.au/oscovforums/](http://www.oscov.asn.au/oscovforums/)

**Please forward this newsletter** if there is anyone you feel may have a use for the information. If they would like to join the group and receive the newsletter they should email [aussieorchid@yahoo.com](mailto:aussieorchid@yahoo.com) and provide first name and preferred email address.

Location (suburb, state or country) and any further information is optional.  
Please make the subject of the message 'Internet Orchid Group'

**Next Newsletter** February TTFN Barry at aussieorchid

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