



WELLINGTON

EPIFLORA

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Wellington Epiphyllum & Hoya Society

Vol 4

No 1



EPIFLORA

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Editorial

Another year - another four volumes of Epiflora to produce! A fortnight ago we were regretting that we had agreed to carry on as Editors for another year - the only things we had for this issue were the 1994 Annual Report and the brief note from Morris on plant labels and we were wondering how on earth we were going to fill it up. A reminder at the last meeting and a little gentle persuasion at the last Committee meeting and before we knew where we were there was enough without the article I had planned but still haven't written. Special thanks to the two who insisted they couldn't possibly write anything but tried anyway. It was good to have the reports of the pre-Christmas visit to Dianne's which was a special day for all of us fortunate enough to attend.

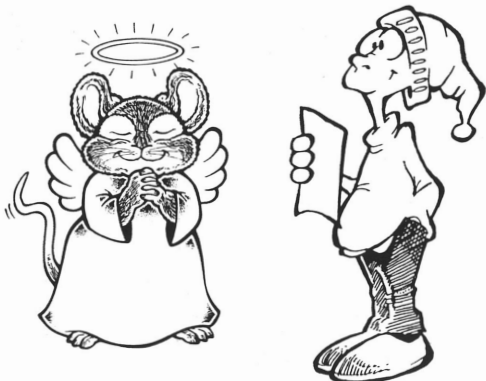
We are enjoying comparing notes on growth in our "his" and "hers" glasshouses. We still haven't fathomed why "her" Ceropegia flower earlier, though not necessarily better than "his". Our best guess is that "her" glasshouse retains the heat longer after the sun disappears. Otherwise heat is similar. Of course it could have something to do with different soil mixes and treatment. Probably we'll never know the answer as with so many other questions.

Speaking of questions the Problem page, after promising beginnings, has lapsed and, despite promises, there are still some questions asked earlier which were never answered. Ah, well, it was a good try. Any suggestions for future articles would be appreciated - and any members prepared to write. And don't forget at the end of this year we'll be looking for new editors.

Alison & Peter Beeston

Coming programmes

11 March	Hoyas at their best	Morris Tarr
8th April	Workshop of Epiphyllums	Jane Griffith
13th May	Aporophyllums	Hermann Kortink
10th June	Schlumbergeras	



The President used to write...

Dear Epiphyte Lovers....

I wonder why he used to say that?

After all, we are called “The Wellington Epiphyllum and Hoya Society”. So doesn’t this mean we are interested in epiphyllums and hoyas, and some allied genera such as cereopegias—many of whom would rather keep themselves firmly anchored to *terra firma*? Oh! well, I suppose he must have meant that we do our loving sitting in trees... interesting, though. You might care to think about it.

I’m going to write...

Dear Members...

Welcome to another year, another set of challenges, a new committee, and as the more observant of you will have noticed, a new (temporary) President. And, I hope, your moneys-worth of enjoyment from your membership in the Society. But if you are feeling grumpy and dissatisfied, how about helping your committee help you to feel better about things? You could let them know what activities you would like to have at our meetings. Do you want a competition table? Should we expand the “interest table” to a “sick and interesting table,” then if we are not happy with the way our plants are growing we could bring them in and the experts could enlighten us. What monthly topics do you like best, and are there any new ones you would like to see introduced? Let us know—last time when the committee was drawing up the year’s program for 1995 we struggled to fill the timetable for every month.

I would again like to express my thanks to Roy and Jane Griffith, Myra and Morris Tarr who are temporarily absent from executive positions under our 3-year maximum tenure rule. And to Merv who is reduced to counting the money. Despite not sitting on the “official bench,” they continue to give us invaluable advice whenever asked. And, of course, thanks to the new committee, full of enthusiasm...

Andrew Flower.
President.



It gives me great pleasure to present my first (and last) Annual Report as President. I am standing down this coming year.

Again this year we have had a great programme of monthly meetings. Our speakers and facilitators have demonstrated their wide knowledge and we all as members have made their task much easier simply by our participation - just by asking "why" or "how".

As a Society we participated in one show, the Lower Hutt Horticultural Society's Summer Show. This was in February when there are not many epiphyllums in flower but hoyas and ceropegias are - so giving an opportunity to display this side of our Society. An appealing display was staged. Many thanks to Peter Beeston for his artistic direction. This was again evident at the display mounted at the California Garden Centre in November. Both displays resulted in new members. A further display and sale of plants was staged in the glass house at the Lady Norwood Rose Gardens. Many bus loads of visitors - from near and far - passed through and much interest was shown. A further participation in a show is planned for the Hutt in February 1995.

A sale of "rare and unusual" plants was held at the Education Centre in the Botanical Gardens in October. A good number of people passed through the centre and considerable interest was shown. Hopefully, once the public obtain plants and the plants flower, more information will be wanted - resulting in more members.

Membership is growing slowly. The main reason behind participation in shows etc is to obtain new members. We still could do with a further 10 to 15 to be a viable unit. We will get them!

Epiflora, our magazine, has joined the elite ranks by running colour pictures, (about one), but more are planned. We initially intend to whet the appetite by not having too many. Something to look forward to. Our editors, Alison and Peter Beeston, continue to seek and innovate. Thank you Beestons!

I would encourage all members to have a go at writing. It doesn't matter if you think you can't write well. The editors will put it into shape. Give them the opportunity to be "editors". Even a one or two line idea will help fill up a blank space on a page.

I would like to encourage members to "have a go" at propagation, whether it be from cuttings for hybridizing. Whilst not meaning to cut anyone out of things, it concerns me that only one or two members are doing this. Should for any reason, such as disease or other tragedy if the grower's collection, we as a Society will struggle to enlarge and improve ourselves. It is very difficult and costly for us to import new plants so by hybridizing we can produce new plants that could have the rest of the world running to our door. Some of us are working on this right now.

In conclusion I must thank the Committee for all the support during the past year. We have had a happy Committee who have worked hard and well. Especially I thank Jane and Roy Griffith. They were the brains behind the founding of the Society. I especially know and appreciate the untiring enthusiasm they both have shown. They both feel that they need a "breather" to get their breath back and so are retiring from the Committee this year. I know that the enthusiasm is still there so I trust that they will return as committee members. I have produced a new epiphyllum hybrid and will register it with the Epiphyllum Society of America. In appreciation for Jane's hard work and encouragement to me especially it gives me great pleasure to name the plant "Reverend Jane".

Thank you all for your friendship in our Society. Keep Growing.

Merv Keighley



Ceropegia Hybrid

Obtained from Dave Dawson (Auckland) at 1991
Epiphyllum and Hoya Convention in Auckland.

This plant has been grown in full sun in a well-
drained soil-mix.



GROWING CEROPEGIAS

At the February meeting of our Society we talked about the growing of Ceropegias. The large number of Ceropegia plants in flower that were brought in for display was an indication of the success that some of our members were having with this group of plants.

Ceropegias are members of the Asclepiad family (commonly known as the milkweed family) and therefore are fellow members of the family with stapeliads, cynanchums, brachystelma and others.

The range of plants that were on display at our meeting proved that the Ceropegia tribe covers a wide range of life forms - some being stem-like succulents, others fleshy leaved plants whilst a further group are spindly fine leaved plants with little resemblance to succulents.

It is not surprising that there is such a great variety in forms of Ceropegias when one considers the great geographical area in which they are found. The majority of Ceropegia plants are found in the African continent especially in southern Africa but they are also found in the Canary Islands, parts of the Middle East (Yemen, Saudi Arabia), parts of India, China, Java, New Guinea and northern Australia.

With this knowledge of geographical distribution it is important to recognise that one cannot generalise about the growth of these plants in their natural habitat. Some natural habitats are areas of woodland where the small trees and shrubs provide some degree of shade for the plants whereas others are areas of semi-desert where there is little shade. As a rough rule of thumb the more leaf cover the Ceropegia plant has the more shady are the natural habitat conditions - a factor that should be borne in mind when selecting where to grow your plants. The stem or stick-like Ceropegias such as *Ceropegia dichotoma* and *hians* in contrast for the majority of the year have no

leaves and grow in an unsheltered natural habitat especially in the Canary Islands.

The *Ceropegia* genus are particularly interesting for their distinctive flowers but before speaking of the plants that were on display mention should be made of the variety of root forms.

Ranging from thick and fibrous roots, thin and fibrous roots to those, such as *Ceropegia barklyi* which has a central caudex.

It is the root form and the shape of the corolla that have been used to distinguish the different species.

On display at the meeting where flowers of *Ceropegia africans*, *ampliata*, *cimiciodora*, *nilotica*, *radicans*, *stapeliiformis* and *woodii*.

All growers agreed that a free draining potting mix was essential for these plants although it was not surprising to note that each one of us had our own particular and distinctive mix! All were in agreement that the plants should be kept relatively dry in winter but watering should commence in mid October, increasing gradually as the temperatures warmed up until in the height of summer plants would need watering approximately three times a week.

There was some debate as to where *Ceropegias* should be grown in ones glasshouse or shadehouse - one school of thought recommending some shade whilst others (including myself) having greater success in full sun during the summer. There was agreement that the thin stemmed plants like *barklyi* and *woodii* preferred a shady environment in which they would flower throughout the year.

Propagation of *Ceropegias* may be undertaken in three ways:

- i. stem cuttings. This appears to be the most successful way of propagating existing plants, especially if tip cuttings are taken and placed in propagating sand two or three days after the cutting has been made.
- ii. layering. Although to date members have not

utilised this method to any great extent it is particularly useful where a plant is showing signs of stress and the aim is to re-root a stem section. Careful but not too frequent mist spraying of the layered section- will assist in root formation.

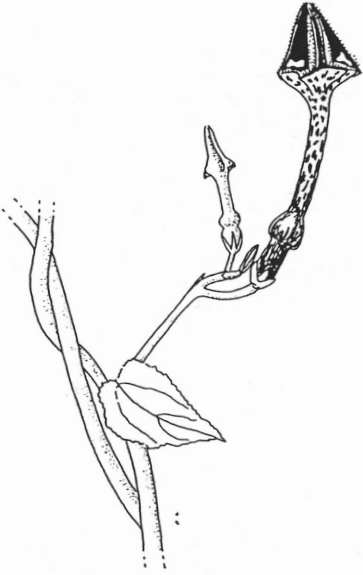
- iii. growing from seed. Ceropegias are very difficult to pollinate in the artificial environment of the glasshouse and therefore propagation from seed is reliant on obtaining fresh seed from the natural environment. I have had some s u c c e s s propagating seed from the International Asclepiad Society seed bank and would recommend this Society to all who are serious growers of these wonderful plants. I was particularly thrilled to bring Ceropegia nilotica to the meeting as this was seed from the Seed Bank sown in April 1993 and which flowered for the first time just before the meeting.

Although there is not a great deal written about Ceropegias the International Asclepiad Society journal provides articles on these plants and Allen Dyer's book *Ceropegia, Brachystelma and Riocreuxia* is an excellent reference for plants coming from Southern Africa.

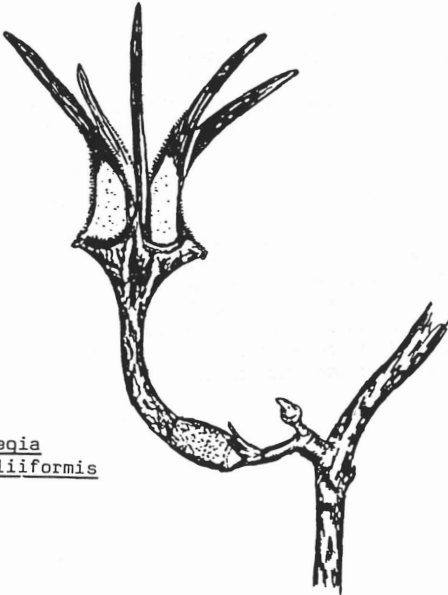
There is no doubt that Ceropegia flowers are fascinating - weird, other-worldly, bizarre or whatever other adjective you might use to describe them you can be certain that these plants will always be a talking point to both growers and observers.

Jane Griffith

C.nilotica



Ceropegia hayqarthii



Ceropegia
stapeliiformis

SNIPPETS

At the December meeting the derivation and pronunciation of the genus *Echeverria* was raised. The genus is named after Atanasio Echeverria (or Athanasio Echeverriay Godoy), a Mexican botanical draughtsman or artist employed on the "Flora Mexicana" published in 1858. Pronunciation is given as e-kee-ve-ree-a but Spanish is *Echeverria*. A genus of about 100-150 species in the mountains of Central and South America, particularly Mexico, where the climates are cool and comparatively moist.

P. Luckens

Echeverria & "Flora Mexicana"

Alison Beeston

Echeverrias are, of course, outside the range of the Epi and Hoya Society but Peter was unable to find a suitable Hoya or Epi to bring to the December "Bring and brag" session so decided to cheat and bring one along and it was because of the interest shown and some discussion that arose on how the name of the genus should be pronounced that Penny sent in her comment above. It sent me back to some research I did a few years ago on the history of succulent plants and the people who, over the centuries, have contributed in one way or another, to our knowledge of them. Where would we be in any of our plant societies without the botanists, gardeners, collectors and authors?

What made me check my notes was that I had always understood that Atanasio *Echeverria* was Spanish not Mexican. I may of course be wrong but he was certainly a major figure in the Spanish expedition sent to Mexico in 1788 by Charles III of Spain under the leadership of one, Martin Sesse. It was as a result of that expedition that "Flora Mexicana" eventually appeared but the story is a fascinating one.

Just before the expedition was due to leave Charles III died and his successor was not in the least interested in sponsoring botanical expeditions. They still went but with the death of the king went any hope of steady funding. They often had to struggle, not just for money to continue but for their personal survival because of disease and dysentery as well as hunger. No one back in Spain seemed in the least interested in them but they kept going assuring themselves that things would be different when they returned. The rapid spread of botanical gardens in Europe would, they thought, ensure that their plan for a monumental work on the flora of Mexico with *Echeverria*'s drawings would soon eventuate and bring them all fame and fortune to make up for present hardship.

When they did return after four long hard years it didn't turn out like that. Charles IV ignored them completely and Sesse along with Mocino, another member of the group returned to the former's small estates while Echeverria was employed by a Spanish artist. The material for "Flora Mexicana" went with Sesse and on his death, with the material still unpublished Mocino took it with him to his new job at the Museum of Natural History in Madrid. During his time there he finally met someone who seemed to appreciate what the expedition had achieved. That someone was Augustin Pyramus de Candolle (1778 -1841). Swiss by birth, wealthy and brilliant he was Professor of Botany from 1806 -1816 at Montpellier University. When the French army under Napoleon overran Spain Mocino left his post in Madrid, taking his precious "Flora Mexicana" material on an oxcart to seek refuge with de Candolle at Montpellier . The two then moved to Geneva until 1820 when Mocino returned to his job in Madrid leaving the plants and drawings with de Candolle to be collected later. When he finally wrote to ask for their return de Candolle was happy enough to do so but concerned for its safety and anxious to himself study it further. For these reasons he went to the considerable expense of hiring 10 draughtsmen for 10 days to make precise tracings of the Echeverria drawings on finest tissue paper using needle-sharp hard lead pencils. What happened to the originals once Mocino got them back is not known. The herbarium specimens, the plants and the original drawings all disappeared. It was de Candolle's tracings of the Echeverria drawings that provided the base for "Flora Mexicana" when it finally did appear, too late to be of much use to those who had given so many years to working on it. In 1827 de Candolle gave the name Echeveria to the genus now so popular with succulent collectors to honour the creator of the drawings. It is possible that, as Penny states, Echeveria or Echeverria was Mexican and joined the expedition once it got to Mexico but my source, which as far as I can recall was an article in an early National Cactus and Succulent Journal, said that he was part of the original expedition and returned with it.

Sunday, Dec 18th dawned bright and clear. It was going to be a lovely December day, a busy time for everyone with Christmas only a week away.

What made it so special was that most of my Epiphyllums were blooming. Being so far up the valley and having our own micro climate the Epis tend to open a lot later than the Wellington ones. Consequently there's usually no one around to admire mine when they do flower. In fact I have been known in years past to go down the driveway and "snaffle" any of my neighbours who happen to be going by to "come and see my lovely blooms please!!" I am quite sure they see me as very eccentric.

This year, knowing they were very close to blooming, I offered an invitation to members of the Epiphyllum and Hoya Society to pay us a visit if they had a few spare minutes on the Sunday after the December meeting.

Well. even now, thinking back, I am surprised at how many people turned up. Some stopped at the river and had a picnic and then came on. Others who had come from a greater distance (Levin etc.) partook of a cold luncheon outside under the sun umbrellas.

The sun shone, the Epis bloomed right on time and I was in my element, talking and showing off the flower and plants that I love and have taken such care over.

Thank you everyone for making my day so special and I do hope you all enjoyed it as much as I did.



Impromptu Visit

Nola Roser

At our last meeting for 1994 Dianne & Pat O'Neill offered an open invitation to all members to call the following week to view their Epis which were then at their best. This was the first time since they had finished their great new garden project - a new pergola - a shadehouse too. They felt they would like to share their pride and joys with us (if anyone could spare the time).

What a lovely Christmas bonus for all that called - not only many beautiful flowers to see but a delicious lunch was awaiting us too. It was hard to choose which to enjoy first so we nibbled, looked, sipped, ooh'd and aah'd and soaked up the sun too - Delicious day. Dianne had hoped that one special Epi would open for us as the bud was so full but unfortunately it didn't oblige. We were also taken indoors to "cool off" and to see several flowering Hoyas. Dianne and Pat also have a glasshouse with a delightful small and select group of cacti- beautifully kept we must say -not like a lot of us who have too many plants to really tend properly. (Not to be overlooked was the rest of their pretty garden -even if Pat doesn't like roses). It was a perfect day, perfect viewing, great company, with the best of hospitality.

Best wishes for your 1995 season. For the impromptu invitation and sharing too many thanks Dianne & Pat from us all.

P.S. Ah! Those delicious, not to be forgotten mince pies!!



Taranaki Visit

Virginia R Stead

Marjorie Hunt and I were lucky enough to be included in a visit to the Taranaki area that had been arranged for members of the Auckland Epiphyllum & Hoya club.

Yvonne Brunton had organised a motel for us in Stratford where the Auckland group would be staying.

We left Levin early (7.15 a.m.) on a beautiful Friday morning and met Yvonne and her husband at the Stratford motel at about 11a.m. Betty & David Gross, Judith & John Bowman, Margaret Maruska, Shirley Gunson & Kathleen Granger had arrived from Auckland and Alic & Rex Hanna from Putaruru and Betty Brunton (Yvonne's sister in law from Stratford) also joined the group.

We then all went to the Pukekura gardens in New Plymouth where we had lunch in the Kiosk beside the lake.

In the afternoon we visited the garden of Les Taylor, a retired teacher. This garden is open to the public, Following this we called in on Phill Mayhead and his wife and saw just how much one can do with a garden on an average sized section. Phill is a friend from days-gone-by when I was more involved in the fishkeeping hobby. He had a few fish tanks in the garden shed, a para pool behind this where he had bred some goldfish and a beautifully landscaped pond full of small goldfish. It was really great to catch up on him.

Following this we called in and saw Alma Rydon and her lovely garden and enjoyed the afternoon tea she had prepared.

None of these gardens had Epiphyllums although we did see the odd Hoya. Nevertheless they were very beautiful gardens and well worth visiting.

We all went to dinner at the R.S.A. in the evening and that was also very enjoyable. Some of the members then visited a friend of one of the Auckland members but Marjorie and I were quite tired and so went back to our motel to rest in anticipation of a busy Saturday.

We were really lucky with the weather and Saturday was another one out of the box. I was very pleased that I had taken my sunhat. We started the morning with a visit to Greenhills Gardens and also walked round their neighbour's garden that had been established in a gully behind their house. This was a well packed garden with even a pond at the

bottom of the gully. Greenhills has been on the Palmers Garden Show on TV.

From there we went to Maureen Ostler's garden with several large ponds complete with ducks. It was lovely to walk round the lakes under the shade of the trees.

We had lunch at the home of Hazel & Jim Jane. These retired farmers are members of the local group and had a shed in their yard about the size of two double garages filled with Epiphyllum, Zygos and other cacti.

On Saturday our numbers increased when Judy Johnson & Trisha & Murray Birchlan from Feilding joined us.

In the afternoon we visited the home/farm of Betty Brunton where the men were busy haymaking. We even had a calf come and visit us at the door of the lounge. Betty is very keen on Zygos and half of her garage is partitioned off for her collection. We were then treated to a great afternoon tea.

This was followed by a trip up the mountain; well part of the way; we went to Dawson Falls where there is a tourist building with static displays of what is on the mountain and where it is found etc. Then a guide (a young lady working in the university holidays) took most of the group on a walk to view the falls. Those of us who felt old and frail rested in the tourist building.

The convoy then went to the home of Yvonne & Andrew Brunton where there was another very large shed full of Epiphyllums, a lot of which were still flowering. She had plants for sale and members took advantage and added to their collections. After everyone had filled their cars with plants we had a buffet tea and saw a video of some beautiful Epis.

In the evening some of the members went back to the Pukekura gardens where there was a lighting display among the trees with fluorescent pebbles on the path. This had been going on since Christmas and was due to finish in February.

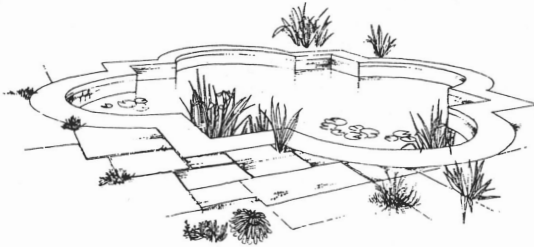
Sunday morning we met again and visited the garden of Val & Bob Sangster. This is a rural property and a very lovely garden. There is a photo of it on the front of the Gardens of Taranaki book. We then had morning tea at PJ's diner on the main road at Normanby just north of Hawera. This shop belongs to Ngaire Hunt who is also a member of the local group and she very kindly provided the morning tea for the group.

We were then treated to a look at the Cactus garden of Mr. J. Beale of Normanby followed by a quick tiki tour to the local dairy factory where all the dairy products are

processed now. This is a very large factory and evidently very high-tech.

We went back to PJ's diner and photos were taken of all the group and then we had lunch at the shop.

Marjorie and I then left the group and made our way home via Wanganui and two plant shops and two fruit shops. We were fairly tired after the trip but it was well worth the effort. I'm looking forward to the the next one? November in Auckland for AGM?



Plant labels

Morris Tarr

I think that everyone has, at one time or another, gone out to their glasshouse or shade house to check on a plant to verify its name and found to their dismay that they cannot read the label, the writing has completely faded out.

How frustrating, and at times disastrous, this can be. Just about every plant lover must have at some time tried many different makes of marking pen, and then finally settled on one particular brand, myself included.

To this end I decided to do a test. I have written on one plastic label with four different brands of pen and one pencil currently available in New Zealand and placed it on a prominently sun lit shelf in my glasshouse. It has been there since May 1994 and already one marker has completely faded out, so at a later date I will be able to come up with a definite answer.

