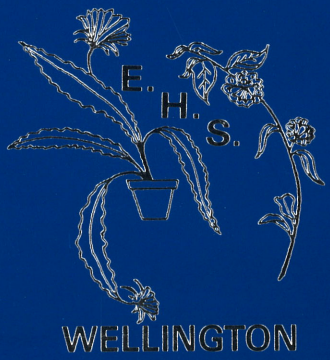

EPIFLORA

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Volume 5, number 1 **March 1996**

Table of Contents.

EPIFLORA is published quarterly by the Wellington Epiphyllum and Hoya Society.

Comments and contributions are most welcome. Please address correspondence to:

82 Kinghorne Street,
Strathmore Park,
WELLINGTON 3. NZ.

Closing dates for contributions:

Winter Edition - 20th May
Spring Edition - 19th August
Summer Edition - 18th November.

The President's Page

Dear Fellow Epiphyte Lovers

As this is the first Epiflora for 1996 I wish you all well and welcome those who are reading our quarterly magazine for the first time. Welcome also to Roy as our new Editor. I do hope that you will support him and send him copious articles and other items.

It is the Committee that is responsible for the smooth running of the Society and I would like to particularly thank those who served on it in 1995. This year we have some new members on the Committee and the names of all Committeee members and the tasks they are responsible for are printed separately in the magazine.

Only two months into 1996 we have already been involved in one show - at the Hutt Horticultural Society on 17/18 February. A big thank you to those who were involved in this. At its next meeting the Committee will consider whether we might take part in further shows or exhibitions this year.

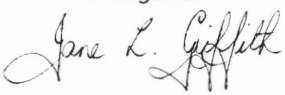
The programme planned for the year looks to be an exciting one and I do hope that many of you will be able to attend our monthly meetings. The Committee recognises the need to highlight increasing membership this year and so I do encourage you to invite friends to meetings and to introduce people to the splendour of our plants by giving plants as gifts for birthdays and other occasions. A subtle way of helping people to become enthusiasts maybe!

Our wonderful summer has ensured an excellent flowering season for both Epiphyllums and Hoyas. The Epiphyllum season being slightly later and longer than last year whilst the Hoya season is still in its prime. I do hope that you have been pleased with the flowering of your plants this year.

Just last week I read in the South Bay Epiphyllum Society newsletter about the new Schlumbergera book by John Horobin and A.J.S. McMillan - its great to see a new book on this subject and hopefully we will soon have a copy available in our library.

In the meantime happy pruning and preparation and I look forward to seeing many of you during the year.

Kind regards



Jane L Griffith

The Programme for 1996

Meetings are at Johnsonville Union Church (Dr. Taylor Terrace) and start at 2.00. Library books etc. are available at 1.30 pm.

March 9th.	Summer Care of Hoyas
April 13th.	Ted Sweetman, President of the Wellington Fuschia Society
May 11th.	Herman Kortink will talk about his trip to Arizona
June 8th.	"learning more about your plants" - sources of information and how to use them
July 13th.	Schlumbergeras - care and culture
August 10th.	Bugs and pests - a discussion on how to deal with them
September 14th.	Propagation techniques
October 12th.	Report from China
November 9th.	Visits to collections
December 14th.	AGM and Christmas function

The 1996 Committee

President -	Jane Griffith
Secretary -	Alison Beeston
Treasurer -	Nola Roser
Librarian -	Robyn Gibson
Editor -	Roy Griffith
Pot Sales -	Jenny Askwith
Raffles -	Morris Tarr
Teas -	Sue Rapira
	Andrew Flower

News about People:

Congratulations: - to Virginia Stead on her marriage this month.

Commiserations: - to Dianne O'Neill who is now nursing a broken ankle. Get well soon Dianne!

Good Wishes: - to Shirley Beissel who has had a bout of ill-health , we look forward to seeing you again soon Shirley.

News from China: - we have received a long letter from Penny Luckens who is flourishing. Ask to see it at the next meeting. She is keen to receive magazines for use in her English classes.

Auckland Epiphyllum and Hoya Convention - 1995

Sue Rapira *tells us her impressions of the first Auckland Convention she has attended.*

I was going to my first Epiphyllum convention so did not know what was ahead of me. I had never driven to Auckland by myself before - I found the Greenlane turn-off easily and then spent a good three hours looking for the motel - I found it just as the other Wellingtonians had arrrived.

The first night we all met at a church hall; I wasn't expected as I hadn't registered, Betty Gross told me I was naughty, but I gave her $50, she gave me a name tag and I was in. There was a sales table with a good variety of plants, a short meeting and a lovely supper. I was impressed by the friendly people - I liked all of them.

Saturday morning everybody met at the church hall and boarded the bus. We spent a day visiting places like the Auckland Domain nurseries where we wandered through the glass houses; one of which dates back to the late 1800's. We went to the Winter Gardens, which were a sight to see, all the summer flowers were in bloom. Of course I should mention that the weather was hot and fine all weekend. Lunch was organised by the Auckland members.

Saturday evening at the church hall the guest speaker talked about the Ellerslie Flower Show which was on just down the road

and then the photos were judged. We had a very nice meal then watched slides about Hoyas, (I slept through the whole show).

Sunday was my highlight. We had a bus tour of some very nice gardens. Every place we visited had special bits of interest to me like the huge Echium and lovely roses at Shirley Gunson's garden. When the bus stopped outside Ada Hill's garden all you could see was the house front and shaded greenery. The house looked as if it was built into the hillside. You couldn't believe the sight when you walked around the side of the house. The garden at the back was a hillside of colour, every type of flower and many, many roses; every single plant being named. I liked Betty and David Gross's garden because they grow the type of flowers I like. We had lunch there and then carried on to other gardens. We had a Barbeque tea at Kathleen and Eric Grainger's place.

I left next morning very early *(about 1.00 am ... ED)* so didn't wake anyone up. I lost my way a couple of times going home but soon found my way again.

To sum up:

* Well worth the trip.
* Met lovely people.
* Learned a lot about plants and a lot about ideas for gardens.
* Enjoyed some very good company.

Hoyas - Pests and Diseases.

Von Cross

Pests which attack hoyas in New Zealand are relatively few but can be devastating nevertheless. The worst by far is mealy bug which can infest the soil as well as foliage.

To combat soil infestation, incorporate a sprinkling of Diazanon prills (sold as "Soil Insect Killer" by Yates)in the potting mix or simply sprinkle a little on the bottom covering of mix when repotting - about one quarter of a teaspoon in a 10 to 12 cm pot. Gases given off percolate up through the mix. Should the roots already be infested, discard as much soil as possible, wash then dip for a few minutes only in a solution of "Target" (diluted according to the instructions on the bottle), allow to drain and then repot in clean mix and container.

Inspect foliage regularly for signs of mealy bug, also under the rim of the container, under ties and any crossed stems - these

are favourite hiding places. Often the first sign of infestation is a black sooty mould on leaves. This is not a disease - it is simply caused by the sticky excreta of mealy bugs and can easily be removed by wiping with a damp cloth or sponge.

My preferred spray for mealy bug is "Attack". Unfortunately it is not available in home garden lots at garden centres but has to be purchased from commercial horticultural merchants in a one litre tin which costs about $50. However as only 1 ml to 1 litre of water is used, it is a once-in-a-lifetime investment. I find it is safe to handle with normal spraying precautions and safe to use on hoyas at all times. A once a month application keeps plants free of mealy bugs and also aphids which are another pest on new growth and flower umbels. For just one or two plants I suggest "Target" as the next best.

A third pest which can cause havoc if not treated is Red Spider Mite. These are almost invisible to the naked eye and can be detected by silvering of the underside of leaves where the green outer layer has been rasped away. Sometimes a very fine web is visible. Species particularly prone to mite infestation are the softer foliage types such as "Multiflora". Regular spraying of the underside of leaves with plain water does much to discourage mites as they prefer dry conditions. A miticide may be necessary if the plant is badly infested.

To my knowledge, there are no diseases which attack Hoyas in New Zealand. A sick plant is almost always the result of poor management.

Epiphyllum Flowers

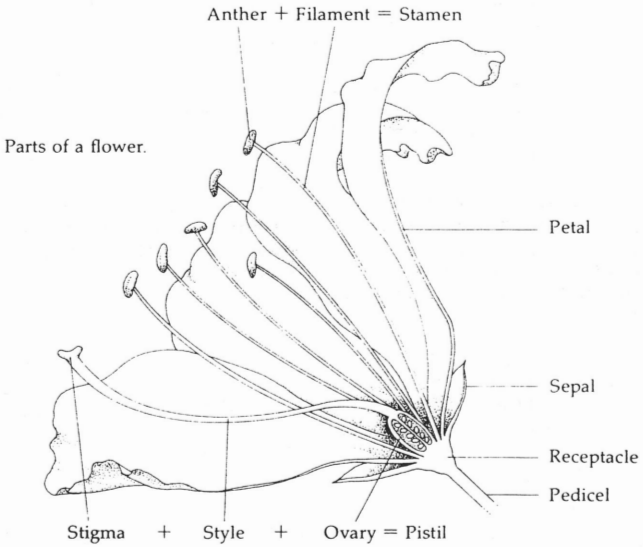
Jane L. Griffith

A request has been made for articles on Epiphyllum flowers and so this is the first of a series of articles in this years Epifloras dealing initially with the botany of flowers. In subsequent articles I will study the various coloured Epiphyllum flowers.

When most people are discussing Epiphyllum flowers they are talking about Epiphyllum hybrids - plants that have been hybridised to produce the vast array of flowers that are available today. The first known hybridisation took place in the early 19th Century when species plants were gathered from Central and South America and taken to Europe. It is not the intention of this article to discuss the history of Epiphyllum hybrids but to provide an elementary introduction to the botany of flowers

to assist in the understanding of how hybridisation takes place.

When describing Epiphyllum flowers the terminology used is the botanical taxonomy universally used to describe all flowers.



Referring to the diagram of parts of a flower the grower is first aware of the developing flower as the *sepals* start to open. The word sepal is derived from a Greek word for covering and the sepals act as a protection for the unopened bud. Frequently the sepal colour is no indication of the flower colour. For example the beautiful white ruffled Ben's Laura has golden-amber sepals offering a surprise for the collector the first time it flowers. As the flower opens the sepals curl backwards and sit below the petals.

The number and shape of petals an Epiphyllum flower has varies greatly with Ruby Snowflake being one of the most prolific. It

is quite common for Ruby Snowflake to have upwards of seventy narrow crinkled petals. Hybridisers are often interested in obtaining a particular petal shape as well as concentrating on colour.

Each Epiphyllum flower has both male and female reproductive parts. The male reproductive structures are called *stamens.* Each stamen consists of a stalk or *filament* which bears an *anther* at its tip. It is within the anther that the pollen develops. It may be observed that some Epiphyllum hybrids are abundant pollen producers whereas others produce minimal pollen - this may be attributed to the parentage of the plant.

The female part of the Epiphyllum flower is the *pistil* which is divided into three sections. At the top the *stigma* is the sticky surface which acts as receptor for the male pollen. An elongated *style* elevates the stigma into a favourable position for pollen collection. At the pistil's base is the *ovary* which in time becomes the fruit. In most Epiphyllum flowers the pistil is longer than the stamens and therefore the stigma with its spreading lobes can be easily used for hybridisation. There are a few hybrids where the pistil is always below the stamen in my experience so that plants such as Marmalade are hard to hybridise.

Epiphyllum growers recognise that the variation in shape and colour of flowers is limitless and it is this fact that has led to the huge number of Epiphyllum hybrids. This is also a continual challenge for those of us with the hybridisation bug!

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Capon, B. *Botany for Gardeners,* B.T.Batsford Ltd., London, 1992
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Merv's Meanderings in Taranaki.

Merv Keighley

About six kilometres from Stratford, on the road to Dawson Falls is a bright yellow house near the road. This is the home of Yvonne Brunton and her husband Andrew who own Craigmyle Epiphyllum Nursery.

After viewing a video produced by Yvonne which was shown at the

society's mid-winter dinner I decided that a visit was necessary. I arrived at 10.30 on the morning of Waitangi weekend to be welcomed by Yvonne. We proceeded to the Epiphyllum house and **Oh....!**

I have never seen so many epiphyllums in one place before. Yvonne has a purpose built shade-house. Andrew has been very supportive and has assisted in all aspects.

The house has a very solid frame which allows for baskets to be hung from wires stretched across from side to side. There are also wire frames up from benches, allowing plants to grow upwards. The roof is alternate corrugated iron and plastic which gives good light. There are also windows which can be opened for ventilation.

Yvonne has recently had a large shipment of cuttings from the USA released from quarantine and is eagerly waiting for flowers. Once plants have established themselves and flowered true to description Yvonne will have plants and cuttings for sale. Look for future advertisements from Craigmyle Epiphyllum Nursery.

A great two hours, thank you Yvonne and I wish you success in your venture.

(An article by Yvonne, outlining the importation process will appear in the next issue .... Ed.)

A New Aporophyllum and Other Things

Herman A. Kortink.

The crossing for this hybrid was made in December 1987 and the seed was sown on 25th March 1988. Heliocereus speciosus was used as the seed parent, the pollen bearer was an Aporocactus hybrid of unknown origin which was grown from seed at an earlier stage. The earlier hybrids all turned out to be very similar and almost identical with Aporocactus, some having a somewhat coarser spination, On balance I considered them all non-starters as the flowers were not impressive. Fortunately they carried abundant vibrant pollen when flowering and as Aporocactus genes are dominant in most crossings these plants were used to pollinate the Heliocereus speciosus flowers.

Quite a large number of seedlings resulted from this sowing and to my surprise I finished up with about 78 upright plants. These plants carry quite a fierce spination more akin to Heliocereus

speciosus. I have been battling ever since to keep this group growing and at best they have only made moderate growth. This group is also sensitive to overwatering and the numbers have been steadily reduced over the years from plainly rotting off or "just sulking". In the beginning of the growing year I threw out all the plants that did not show good healthy growth and now I have only about half of the original numbers left. This group carries no resemblance either to Aporocactus or to Heliocereus speciosus and up till now, some seven years after hybridisation this group has made no attempt to produce even a tiny bud for me. I was hoping that I would have flowers this year as some of the plants are large enough to have reached flowering size. I now have to hope for flowers next year, I am pushing the plants as hard as I can but their sensitivity limits my efforts somewhat as they simply keel over if kept wet too long.

The second largest group are simiar to typical Aporophyllums and have done very well. A number of them have outgrown the largest plastic hanging baskets and all are now housed in medium wire baskets. The stems have a nice bright green colour but the spination differs somewhat from plant to plant. The stems are mostly six angled and the areoles protrude somewhat giving the stems a distinct look quite different from other Aporophyllums in the collection. Their areoles carry from four to eight very fine short white spines but the spination is not identical in all plants as some have much stronger and almost pure golden spines which can be on some plants as sharp and firm as on Heliocereus speciosus. This group grows vigorously if kept fertilized and watered and will grow to a large size. Some stems will run ahead of the bunch and go straight up to the roof and only start to droop after reaching something like a metre in length.

Cross number 11/83 got me all excited in November 1993 by flowering for the first time. It started on one of the larger stems towards the tips in clusters of about four buds and in all ten buds developed. When the first one opened it appeared to be a good deep cinnamon. The colour patches I use unfortunately are not deep enough for most solid colours. As an ex-decorator my colour sense tells me it was close to cinnamon+++, but unfortunately this won't make it clear what the colour really is like. The colour is pure right through with no streaks, mottling or anything else. The petals are arranged in four neat rows and the length from the stem is about 80mm, across the opened flower measures about 70mm so it is rather medium to smallish in size and just about the size of flowers I like to see on Aporophyllums. The stems where the buds or flowers have been located turned a burgundy colour and this has up till now (January) not disappeared. This looks quite interesting.

The tops of some of the stems of the plants in this group have coloured nearly pure yellow on the parts exposed to strong light, these baskets would probably be about between 300mm and 400mm

away from the roof and as an experiment I moved two of them to a cooler, less exposed, location; it has not made the slightest difference. It appears that the yellowing is simply variegation as one often gets in hybrids and some species, it does not appear to be heat stress as other plants in this group are not affected by it and I have at least a dozen baskets with new Epiphyllums hanging in an even hotter zone. If their watering requirements are met these plants show no sign of distress so it appears even Epiphyllums will take quite hot growing conditions providing plenty of water is given, there is good ventilation and the plants are fertilised at regular intervals. As we readily observe at times plants can't grow in pots too small for their needs so regular potting up is absolutely necessary. If the plants get too large for the space available simply divide them or restart them from cuttings. Keep one for yourself and share the rest. The old plant is then discarded. If this is planned properly you don't even have to be without your favourite flowers for long as good cuttings can be taken well before the old plant is discarded. In this way your collection will consist of good healthy strong growing plants that will flower well in season and are not disease riddled. Nothing is more of a boring and dismal sight than a collection of plants in a poor state because of neglect.

Hybrids should always be carefully watched as mutations often occur. On 11/82 the plant started to grow about four very soft stems out of character and very much like an aporocactus complete with numerous short soft white spines. These stems have been removed and have been rooted up separately as they are clearly going to be something different. Unfortunately this is going to take another couple of years as the cuttings are nowhere as vigorous as the plant that sprouted them.

However, to complete my story about the new hybrid, in the meantime more of the second group have reached flowering stage. Four different plants have flowered so far, bringing no new surprises. The colour seems to be fixed. This group all seem to have that nice cinnamon colour the only slight variation on the theme is a small difference in size. So it seems that for these four plants (11/81 to 11/84) one name will suffice, however we cannot begin to give names as yet. I am awaiting my order of the proper horticultural colour patches to be able to describe their colour accurately. A number of the slower movers are catching up fast. These "should" flower next year and who knows I still might get some surprises. I am in no hurry (who is kidding) so why worry - stress is a killer.

Epiflora articles- volumes 1 to 4.

Article title, and author	*vol, No page*
EPIPHYLLUMS	
A Special Day, Dianne O'Neill	Vol 4, No 1, p12
Epiphyllum Species, (meeting report) J Griffith	Vol 1, No 2
Epiphyllums, (notes from workshop) J Griffith	Vol 2, No 4
Growing Epiphyllums from Seed, M Keighley	Vol 2, No 3
Impromptu Visit, Nola Roser	Vol 4, No 1, p13
Results of Experiment, J Griffith	Vol 2, No 1
Small is Beautiful, J Griffith	Vol 2, No 4
The Forgiving plants, (anon)	Vol 4, No 2, p5
HOYAS	
Do I Prune? - A Kind Cut, J Smith	Vol 1, No 4
How to get H. polyneura to bloom	Vol 1, no 1
Hoya Plants from Leaf Cuttings	Vol 1, no 1
Hoya sp. New Guinea White, M Tarr	Vol 3, No 3, p9
Hoyas, (notes from workshop) M Tarr	Vol 2, No 4
Hoyas by Jean Young, (meeting report) P Luckens	Vol 1, no 2
Hoyas, M Tarr	Vol 4, No 2, p16
Hoyas: To grow healthy plants and Hopefully get them to flower, M Tarr & J Smith	Vol 2, No 1
Seasonal care of Hoyas, M Keighley	Vol 2, No 1
Spring care of Hoyas, M Tarr	Vol 3, No 3, p8
SCHLUMBERGERAS	
Schlumbergera cuttings - A lesson learnt, Von Cross	Vol 3, No 2

Article title, and author	*vol, No page*
The Flower Development in Rhipsalidopsis, Britton & Rose, E Bachthler tr. H Kortink	Vol 2, No 4