



WELLINGTON

EPIFLORA



EPIFLORA

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The President's Page

Dear Fellow Epiphyte Lovers

As I write this letter it is cold and cheerless outside and therefore I reflect back two weeks when we were in shorts and shirts enjoying the heat of North Queensland. It certainly was tempting to stay but all good things unfortunately seem to come to an end. In the luxuriant rainforest of this tropical paradise we thought we might have seen hoyas trailing and climbing but there were so many epiphytes that it was difficult to be certain. The Australian hoyas known to us are endemic of the area we visited and are also found further north.

As Winter gives its last nasty burst I'm sure we are all looking forward to Spring. Already buds are forming on epiphyllums and this year the schlumbergeras have flowered particularly well.

Our thoughts are now focused on our forthcoming Convention. I do hope that you are planning to join us in Wellington on the week-end of 14-16 November as there is an excellent programme planned. It will be good to see you as these gatherings are a wonderful time to catch up with old friends and to make new ones as we share our common interest.

I do hope that you have not lost too many of your favourite plants over Winter. Remember if you have do enquire from other members if they can provide a replacement cutting for you - this is so much part of what our Society is about.

I hope that the new growing season will be a good one for you and that you will take photographs of your plants for our Convention competition and to skite about at meetings.

Kind regards

Jane Griffith

The Programme for 1997

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

September 13th Propagation by means other than seed

October 11th. Ailing Plants - and how to help them - panel

November 8th. Rhipsalidopsis

November 14 - 16 Convention

December 13th. AGM and Christmas function

News About People:

Best wishes to David Gross, we hope the latest course of treatment has been helpful. We do hope to see both you and Betty in November.

It was good to hear recently from Virginia who is enjoying life in the far South. We look forward to catching up with her at the Convention.

Good wishes also to Pat O'Neill and to Dianne.

Items for your Diary..

Fri-Sat 3/4 Oct Kapiti Horticultural Society 60th Jubilee Flower Show at Paraparaumu Beach. Our society has been invited to put on a display - please tell Peter Beeston if you can assist in any way.

Fri-Sun 14/16 Nov Epiphyllum and Hoya Convention. Johnsonville Community Centre. Registrations are now coming in well. The convention will be open to the public on the morning of Sunday 16th

The Convention....

We hope that you are all coming - and looking forward to this year's convention - here are notes on a couple of aspects -

Photography Competition

In conjunction with the convention there will be a photography competition. The "rules" for this are:

- * entries may be submitted into any of six classes
 1. a single epiphyllum flower
 2. a single hoya flower
 3. a single flower of any epiphyte
 4. a group of epiphyllum flowers or plants
 5. a group of hoya flowers or plants
 6. a group of flowers or plants of any epiphyte
- * no more than two entries may be submitted in any class
- * entries are to be unmounted 3" x 5" prints
- * the class, exhibitor's name, and the name of the subject should be shown on the back of each entry
- * entries are to be submitted no later than 9.00pm on Friday 14th November

Plant Sales

Plants and other related materials will be available for sale at various times during the course of the weekend. Would anyone wishing to offer plants for sale contact the editor prior to 18th October so that price-label codes can be assigned and conditions of sale be sent.

Covered.....

Robyn Gibson writes about two books she has come across....

Two of my favourite gardening books feature cover photographs of plants falling under the umbrella of our society; yet the books are not specifically about epiphyllums or hoyas.

My attention was first drawn to "Adventures of a Gardener" by Peter Smithers, which was published in 1995 in conjunction with the Royal Horticultural Society. The cover has a really striking photograph of *E. oxypetalum* and the book includes coloured photographs of epiphyllum hybrids in one chapter devoted to cacti. The book details Sir Peter's lifetime involvement with plants of all types.

Recently I found another superb book "Evening Gardens" by Cathy Wilkinson Barash, published in 1993 and sub-titled "planning and

planting a landscape to dazzle the senses after sundown". Its cover picture is *Hylocereus undatus* and the book has numerous entries covering cereus, epiphyllums and selenicereus including half a dozen colour photographs.

While neither book is specialised enough to include in the society's library, I recommend that members search their local library for these books and enjoy a splendid "read" and gain an insight into the importance these authors place on the plants we enjoy.

Rhipsalis- The Easy to grow Species

We have read a number of books and articles by Frank Supplie so we are delighted to publish this article he has written for us. Frank lives in the Netherlands - hence his references to the Northern hemisphere. We look forward, with anticipation, to the sequel ...

Not all the species from the genus *Rhipsalis* are easy to grow. Some species are quite difficult in cultivation and can be grown only after having enough experience with these plants. Of course you can graft these plants, but truly - do you like grafted plants? In this article I would like to give some impressions on species which are easy to grow in cultivation. I will not talk about the difficult ones - they will be discussed in another article.

The genus *Rhipsalis* is in fact an old one. It was set up by Gaertner in 1788. Plants from the *Rhipsalis* genus have been in cultivation for over 200 years now, but we do not know all the "easy to grow" ones. A common (not botanical) name for these species is "mistletoe cactus" or a newer one is "green spaghetti". I would like to introduce some new and old varieties to you in this short article.

Rhipsalis baccifera group

Let us start with the old ones. The *Rhipsalis baccifera* group has several subspecies and therefore the type-species is now called *Rhipsalis baccifera subsp. baccifera*. This plant is the most widespread of all cactus species in nature. It grows in the Caribbean, Mexico, and the USA (Florida) and also in Central America and northern South America to Brazil. This "green spaghetti" has long branches which can be one metre or more in length. The tiny flowers are up to 3-4mm in diameter. The fruit is white coloured. Another easy-to-grow subspecies is *Rhipsalis baccifera subsp. rhodocarpa* (Web.) Supplie which differs from the type-plant with the colour of the fruit. Normally all subspecies have greenish or white fruits, this sub-species has red fruits and it looks even nicer than all the other species. Another sub-species is *Rhipsalis baccifera subsp. fordauphinensis* Supplie. This species

which was first described in 1996 has a bushy, somewhat erect growth. The flowers are small but a plant can flower for several months. After flowering this plant produces a lot of greenish-white fruits. It is very easy to grow and is now freely available in Europe.

Rhipsalis cereuscula Haw.

This old favourite grows in several South American countries. Its distribution is from Bolivia to Brazil. Often this plant is called *Rhipsalis penduliflora* but this is another different species. The flowers of both are campanulate and white coloured.

Rhipsalis floccosa SD ex Pfeiffer

This beautiful species with terete stems has small greenish-white flowers which are up to 13mm in diameter. The fruits are also white coloured.

Rhipsalis hoelleri Barthl. & Taylor

This newly described species is the only one with carmine red flowers. It has branches up to 150cm long. The stems are terete, 3 to 4 mm in diameter. The flowers are up to 10mm in diameter. The flower petals, style and stigma-lobes are carmine red. This species is closely related to *R. puniceodiscus*. It is named after Mr. Werner Holler, cultivator at the Botanical Institute in Bonn, Germany. The only difficulty with this plant is getting it! There are only a few plants in cultivation at this time. In my collection the plant is easy to grow and will be propagated as soon as possible.

Rhipsalis juengeri Barthl & Taylor

This species which was first described in 1995 is very easy to grow. It is a pendulous epiphytic species which can be 3 metres or more long. The stems are terete. The primary stems are up to 200cm long and 3mm in diameter. The secondary stem-segments are much shorter and are coloured light to dark green. The flowers are always solitary or (rarely) paired at the end of the stem segments. The campanulate flowers are 15 x 12 mm. This plant must be 3 metres or more to flower; but it is easy to grow and sometimes grows more than 1 metre in a year. I got a little plant in April this year with stems up to 15-20cm long. Now in May this plant is already 50 cm long. You need space to grow this species.

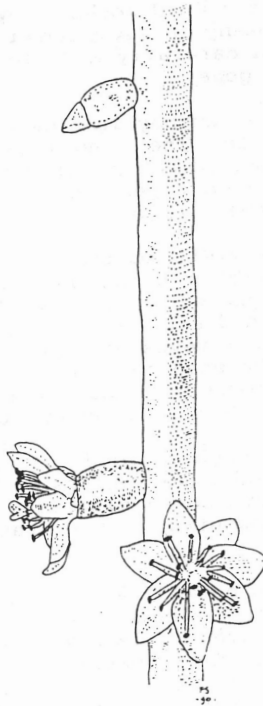
Rhipsalis lindbergiana K. Schu

This is an old favourite which was described in 1890 by Professor Karl Schumann. The plant can be found in Brazil where it grows epiphytically as do most other members of the genus *Rhipsalis*. It is also a "spaghetti" plant such as *R. baccifera* but the stems are mostly thicker

and the fruits are smaller.

Rhipsalis micrantha complex

The plants in this group are easy to cultivate but difficult to name. I use the names used by Prof. Barthlott in this article because they are well known under these names. The type-species *Rhipsalis micrantha f. micrantha* was first described in 1823. It is the most common form of the species with mostly flattened, scarcely fleshy stem segments. The small whitish flowers are followed by white berries. *Rhipsalis micrantha f. kirbergii* (Barthl.) Barthl. & Taylor was first described in 1974. This is a form that inhabits more arid habitats; it has long, pendulous, 4-6 angled stem segments. Its natural habitat is in Ecuador and Costa Rica. Finally there is *Rhipsalis micrantha f. rauhiorum* (Barthl.) Barthl & Taylor. This flattened form with crenate margins was named after Mr Werner Rauh; who was recognised as an expert on Euphorbias. Its growth in cultivation is consistent; it grows very well and has been commercially produced by some wholesale nurseries since 1977. All these plants are easy to grow although sometimes they are slow growing.



Rhipsalis floccosa
(drawing by F. Supplie)

Cultivation of *Rhipsalis* is usually easy. All the varieties I have mentioned will grow in almost any potting mix which is rich, porous, peaty and acidic. You can use a mix containing three parts of potting mix, 1 part of lava/perlite, 1 part red bark and one part anthurium or orchid mix. They grow very well in this mix. Experiment a little with the mix, I do not know the climate in New Zealand so this could influence the use of potting soil. *Rhipsalis* likes a shady place, as most of the epiphytic cacti do. In the Winter here in Europe my plants are at a temperature of 15 degrees C. I do not keep them completely dry in Winter, I give them a little water each week. Most of the *Rhipsalis* plants can be put outside here in Summer. I keep them in the greenhouse for the whole year. This is easier in some ways but do not let the temperature rise above 30 degrees C. and remember the plants need shady conditions.

Who's been eating my seed pods?

Can anyone offer advice to this Perplexed hybridiser?

The three bears who grizzled after Goldilocks had eaten their porridge have my complete and utter sympathy in a way never experienced before. That porridge had probably been carefully made to the exact liking of the family and suddenly it was gone!

So too had my pollination of epiphyllum hybrids been carefully undertaken last flowering season. The seed pods expanded and were ripening well on the leaves. Some pods had already been harvested and their contents carefully placed on paper ready for sowing. But alas over 30 seed pods remained on the plants gradually maturing.

One Saturday morning in June a visit to the shadehouse showed three labels on the floor - these labels being used for identifying the different hybrids. These were picked up and little thought given to what was happening although we did set a mousetrap. The next Saturday the pilgrimage to the shadehouse revealed over 20 labels scattered around the floor and benches. The seed pods had been cleanly taken off of the plants and the labels dropped. So much work destroyed in such a short time, hopes of new hybrids shattered for the year.

Careful study of the floor and benches found absolutely no indication of what or who had taken the pods. No tell-tale droppings, no teeth marks on plants, no signs of scratching although the cheese had been removed but not eaten in the mousetrap - the trap itself having not been activated.

Who had removed the seed pods so neatly? A rat seems a possibility as our ginger cat has discovered quite a number around the area but could a rat have scaled epiphyllum leaves to remove the succulent seeds? What of a possum? Probably it would be unable to enter the shadehouse and there were no tell-tale droppings. What about a weta? For the number of seed pods taken it would need to be an army of wetas and we

very rarely see evidence of wetas in the shadehouse.

Please help me to find an explanation so that this catastrophe can be avoided next year.

Schlumbergeras - a panel discussion

Phyllis Purdie reports on the panel discussion that formed the programme for the June meeting. The panel consisted of Betty Firth, Marion Austin, and Penny Luckens. Andrew Flower was there to chair the event and to see fair play.

Andrew began by saying he has only one schlumbergera and it grows outside - under a tree, and receives about five to six hours sunlight per day.

Penny spoke next and said that hers "grow themselves". They can stand low light (ie under weeds outside) but they don't like snails or wetas. She commented that they grow like epiphyllums - requiring a well drained medium and she grows her plants outside in a shade house, under trees or just sitting in the shade.

Marion told us that her plants grow mainly in hanging baskets which have "crystal rain" included in the mix. Most of them are in her shade house. She finds that if she uses bark, the plants dry out too quickly and so she plants hers mostly in plain soil with a spoonful of blood and bone. All of her plants have a soak in a bath of fertiliser twice a year.

Betty said that her plants really got a "rough life". They are kept in a cool greenhouse and get watered and fertilised when needed.

From this introduction, the plants seem to be relatively easy to grow and take care of. The following points came out during the rest of the discussion:

Potting Mix

Best grown in an organic mix, such as a peat mix, which is well drained and aerated. This helps control soil-borne diseases and pest problems. It was noted that some potting mixes encourage root mealy bug. Betty uses gravel and an ordinary potting mix.

Potting up

Penny suggested potting the plants a bit lower in the pot and then top-dressing them with humus or leaves. Betty noted that they are shallow rooted and did not need a large pot. She suggested putting three to four plants in a pot for a more effective display.

Watering

These plants are not as succulent as other types of cactus and therefore should be watered when the top of the soil is dry to the

touch. Provided that the container has good drainage the excess will run out - and the plant will not be overwatered.

Betty only waters her plants if they look dry; Marion waters hers once or maybe twice a day in Summer; and Penny said that they definitely need more watering after flowering when the plant goes into a growth spurt.

Fertilising

This should be done two to four times a year with a well-balanced fertiliser such as a 20-20-20 mixture. Leaching with plain water at regular intervals is also recommended to prevent the build-up of soluble salts. Penny uses Phostrogen.

Flowering and colour

Flowering is triggered when the day length shortens to about twelve hours. Night temperatures usually drop at the same time.

The plants are very sensitive to light levels and will not bloom if the daylight is extended. The use of artificial lights at night is, therefore, a problem when schlumbergeras are grown indoors.

Blooms that open when the temperature is 12 degrees C. (55 degrees F.) or less will show an additional lavender or pink coloration. If the plants only flower on one side - it could be that they are against a window and get colder or more light on one side than the other. To get "all-over" flowering it helps, therefore to rotate the plants from time to time.

Bud drop

The reason for this is a change in the temperature. If the plants are grown outdoors, take them indoors when the buds start to form, not when the plant is in full bloom. It was noted that rhipsalidopsis are more prone to drop their buds than schlumbergeras.

Pruning

This is recommended to improve the shape of the plant and is best done after it has finished blooming. To do this select the joint to be pruned and then pull and twist with your thumb and index finger.

Pests and Diseases - sprays

These plants are resistant to most pests and diseases. Betty found that once they started to rot (Bacterial disease) it was hard to stop this. The best solution seemed to be to take cuttings from higher up the plant.

For fungal diseases and root or stem rot the usual commercial products were best.

Slaters (wood lice) eat the roots and Penny suggests avoiding the use of gravel at the bottom of the pots - so the creatures have no place to live. Yvonne Brunton uses crushed oak leaves in the bottom of the pots and has had no problems. Plenty of air

circulating in a glass house also encourages healthy plants.

Yates Home Bug Dust is very effective in killing slaters, cockroaches, wetas etc. but you should wear a mask when applying it. Yvonne advised against spraying Maldison on epiphyllums or schlumbergeras as all new growth on her plants dropped off one week after spraying (*there may be some other factor here; we do not know of this happening to anyone else - ED*)..

Andrew uses Orthene, Penny and Marion do not spray. Another suggestion for mealy bug was to put the plant in a plastic bag with a moth ball.

Growing from seed

Seeds germinate in 20-30 days with plants reaching flowering stage at 18-36 months. None of the panel has grown plants from seed (Andrew has tried - but they have not flowered yet). Marion removes all fruits from her plants so that the nutrients go into forming the flowers and not the seed pods.

Excellent reading

"Zygocactus (Schlumbergera) - a comprehensive guide for the weekend gardener" by Mark E. Cobia. (This book is in the society library.)

Camellias- "God's gift to the Winter garden..."

Peggy Hazlewood came to our August meeting and shared her enthusiasm for these plants - Sue Rapira wrote the report.

Peggy told us that Camellias are named after George Joseph Kamel. They originate from China, Japan, Burma and Nepal and have been found growing at great heights and even in snow.

There are several varieties - including:

- Japonica - which has bright green leaves
- Reticulata - these are large trees with large flowers
- Sasanqua - these are early flowering, perfumed and can be used for hedges
- Pitardii

Most camellias have flowers in shades of white or pink; there is only one yellow flowered camellia (chrysantha) this variety requires very warm conditions to flower.

Colonel Tom Durrant was the first person allowed to bring cuttings into New Zealand from China. He is probably responsible for the great variety available here today.

Camellias grow "sports"¹ which are off-shoots of the original plant. Off-shoots are a natural growth, not caused by cross-pollination. If left to flower, the blooms can be quite different to those on the original plant. The cultivation and propagation of "sports" is the main means by which new varieties are developed.

Propagation of camellias can be by both cuttings and by seed.

Take cuttings in January from closed leaf tips and plant in loose potting mix. Peggy plants these in a home-made mini-greenhouse. Plant the cutting(s) in a 15cm (six inch) square pot; then cut the bottom off a two litre milk container and push the bottom edge down into the pot. Leave the screw top in the milk container. When it is time to water the cutting or give air to the plant - just take the top off. Camellia cuttings can take up to three years before they flower.

Camellia seeds are gathered in New Zealand on Anzac Day. The seed pods are very tough and one way to open them before sowing is to strike them with a hammer. Merv suggested soaking the seeds in very hot water - and then leaving for a few days to soften up. When the seeds are ready put them into damp moss in a container, cover with "Gladwrap" and place in a warm, dark spot. The roots will appear first, but wait for two or three shoots to appear before potting them up.

Camellias are hardy, they like a north facing sunny spot for flowering. Any general garden fertiliser can be used. Camellias do not tolerate lime, a new concrete drive can leach enough lime to affect plants quite badly. In Wellington there is a "petal blight" that affects camellias. This is an airborne fungus, there is no known cure. To check if your flowers are affected - look for a grey mould at the base of the flower stalk when the petals are removed. To minimise the spread of the fungus Peggy recommended that all dead or discarded flowers should be burnt.

Pink flowered Epiphyllums

Jane Griffith writes about another group of epiphyllum hybrids.

In the last of this series of articles about epiphyllum flowers the range of pink flowering epiphyllums will be discussed. It was surprising to note when turning to the Royal Horticultural Society colour charts that pink does not receive a separate classification but rather is shown in the red-purple colour range. But as the majority of readers do not have ready access to the RHS charts the decision was made to stick to my original thoughts and discuss pink flowering

¹ "sports" in epiphyllums were discussed in articles in the March 1997 issue of *Epiflora*



"Cadiz"

photo by R Griffith

epiphyllums. As in previous articles on this subject one is aware that we all perceive colours differently so that what you may regard as pink another may classify as light red or pale purple.

Through the decades of hybridising in America, Europe and Australasia millions of seeds have been planted with the growers having high hopes of producing something different in terms of colour, shape, or longevity of flowering. But the majority of seedlings when they first flower demonstrate little variation from plants already in existence. Therefore the ruthless grower will discard such seedlings and try again with further hybridisation. There are many pink flowering epiphyllums which have passed the test of being different and therefore worthy of keeping and possibly considering for your collection ranging from extra small basket types to extra large plants.

For those who enjoy growing the smaller flowering epiphyllums several of Wressey Cocke's hybrids can be recommended. 'Baby Showers' and 'Sugar Baby' are extra small hybrids of his whereas 'Bridal Shower', 'Pink Parasol', 'Baccaret' and 'Petite Pink' produce large quantities of small flowers. Another extra small flowering plant is 'Pink Snowflake' - flowers cascading down each leaf on this thin-leaved plant which grows well in a hanging basket.

One of my favourite pink flowering epiphyllums is 'Lady of Spain' - producing a medium sized rose pink flower with white throat this cross by Fort & O'Barr is a real beauty. The hybrid which Peter Sinclair named after his mother, Molly Sinclair also has a medium sized flower and is an asset to any collection, especially for those who prefer growing hanging plants. In the medium sized range one of the most profuse bloomers must be 'Zsa Zsa' which flowers two and sometimes three times of year in our shadehouse.

For those looking for upright plants several of those producing large pink flowers are worthy of consideration. One of the oldest of them is 'Padre' - a plant that seems to have dropped out of favour over the years. The parentage of Padre has been lost in the mist of time but its strong upright growth habit and firm flowers make it still an epiphyllum to consider. 'Cadiz' has rose pink flowers and good growth habit whereas 'Invitation' and 'Antarctica' are both spectacular for their ruffled petals.

If you are looking for epiphyllums which have colour variation 'Pink Jeroma' is attractive with silvery white petals with a coral pink edge. 'Pink Angel', a medium sized flower, is pale pink with rose pink throat and outer petals and the deep pink throat of 'Salmoneum' contrasts well with the paler pink petals.

In conclusion what of *Nopalxochia phyllanthoides*? In fact this is not an epiphyllum hybrid but in a genus in its own right. The beautiful pink flowers of this plant have been used by many hybridisers who are looking to produce more medium sized flowers. There is no doubt that this plant does produce a profusion of flowers but it is my experience that it is hard to keep the plant virus-free and looking good. Therefore after a while the marked leaves become so unsightly that there is little option but to throw the plant out.

The Road to Epi

Merv Keighley provides the third instalment of the history of his horticultural habits .. this week "leaving home"

Readers will remember that I described in the last instalment the imported cuttings grew into plants, the plants set buds and the buds opened into flowers! Wow - everyone had to come and admire them!

Everyone eventually leaves home and goes their own way. Even I did this. In 1968 I was promoted to a position in Wellington. Wellington - that is at the other end of the earth! What is to be done with my epiphyllums?

Joyce Carlton had someone who was interested in buying some from me. He was called Peter Sinclair. The Peter Sinclair.

Joyce brought him round to meet me and to see if there were any plants that he wanted. There were - remember I had imported plants. Peter made his selection - but I still had a lot of plants left. Good old Mum - will you look after these until I can take them with me please!

I remember coming home one weekend to Hamilton, getting out of the car and seeing all those spectacular flowers. There were dozens of them - Mum had done well! I just stood there with my mouth open, I couldn't believe how wonderful such a massed display was.



I took some cuttings to Wellington with me. They all grew, but there isn't a lot of room in a flat. A lot were lost but luckily the original plants were still in Hamilton.

Over the years labels were lost by me and by Mum. I eventually did the honourable thing and got married. We shifted to Invercargill - that really is at the end of the earth.

After four years and two boys we moved back to Wellington. I rejoined the Cactus and Succulent Society and started back into epiphyllums. I bought cuttings from various sources and took cuttings from what was left of my original collection.

What epiphyllums did I import? ... hopefully I will tell you next time!

... still to be continued...

Spring Care of Aporophyllums..

Herman Kortink (who has just returned to the NZ Winter from the warmth of California) reminds us of the work we should be doing now ...

As I write this (in the first half of August) only *Aporocactus flagelliformis* has buds forming; I am not surprised about this any more as different plants had buds last year and again it will be different next year. A *southern peach* was in full flower by the end of June and when I arrive back a month later it still has flowers and new buds on it. Before I left I gave the plant a litre of water as the soil was bone dry. This plant has been active for over three of the winter months but, because of the low temperatures we have been getting and the numerous night frosts, development has been slow.

All baskets and seedlings were dried off in April and have not received any water since. In mild winters I may open up the tap for just a minute just to make sure the roots stay alive. Any plants starting to show signs of growth early in the Spring (and some will) should be given some water because if the stems want to grow and are not supported by the roots, flower development will be affected. I am not very fussy about this as I have thousands of new hybrid seedlings, about fifty-five large baskets and one hundred and fifty smaller ones. I treat them as one big family. For convenience sake if the temperatures are getting milder towards the end of August I usually give all baskets a "minute" watering. As all my baskets are watered semi-automatically this simply means I will open the tap for one minute.

If the temperature is right and has been climbing up slowly (say 15-18 degrees C.) it should activate the roots and the plants usually will start growing again. From then on the watering frequency is increased and the tap may be opened twice a week for one minute.

If I detect definite growth on the tips and buds are forming I will increase the watering further - giving three minutes at least once per week in the beginning and then every four or five days as the season advances. As the baskets are hanging about two metres above the floor they tend to dry out more quickly than the rest. Feeding is also done at this time of year. I use Sierrablén (6-8 month) and carefully put a desert-spoon to each large basket; taking care not to heap it up against the stems as this fertiliser will burn the plant tissue. I try to spread it out near the microtubes that deliver the water as the pellets will dissolve quicker. All fertilisers of this type have starters in them that will dissolve immediately - but water is required for this.

I usually trim the plants in Autumn, but I do find some dried up bits at this time of year; these should be removed.

As we have had a reasonably dry but fairly cold winter, we may expect a good flowering season. The next month or so should tell us as most plants should have at least little coloured spots on their stems - which is a sure sign that bud formation has started. If your plant is a reluctant bloomer, move it around. If the stems are too red and have very little green on them the plant is probably getting too much sun. If the stems are lush and a very dark green you may be growing it in too shady a place - so bring it round to a brighter area. It could also be severely underpotted; these plants have a vigorous root system and you should pot them up when this is required.

Aporophyllums are very free flowering, and if you don't get dozens of blooms - even on a small flowering size plant - it pays to check on the conditions in which you are growing it.

Spring Care of Hoyas ...

Now that our plants have weathered the Winter months Von Cross writes about the things we should be doing now to prepare our hoyas for the Summer ...

As soon as hoyas commence making new growth, increased watering and fertilising can begin. Choose a fertiliser low in nitrogen and use it sparingly. Phostrogen, if you prefer liquid feeding, or Osmocote are both well suited to hoyas. Fertilising should have ceased well before the onset of Winter to allow new growth to harden.

Between about September/October and December is the best time to attend to any plants which need to be potted on. Hoyas generally do not require large containers. Even the most robust vines will perform very well in a 17cm or 20cm pot for years. Smaller growing species may never need a pot larger than 10cm to 12cm. It is often preferable to place the existing container inside a larger one, if the plant becomes top-heavy, rather than repot completely. A bark-based potting mix with

extra horticultural pumice added gives good results but, so long as they receive water and a little fertiliser from time to time, hoyas appear to be happy in any free draining medium. As an experiment, I have a *H. bella* which has grown and flowered quite well for several years in a 12cm clay pot filled with nothing other than pumice pebbles. A *H. carnosa* has perched for four years in a small jam jar containing never more than a couple of centimetres of water, to which a pinch of Phostrogen is occasionally added, and a rock to counterbalance it. No part of its stem is in water - only the tips of its roots.

Spring is the best time to make new cuttings. The best material for cuttings is growth matured the previous season. Older wood will root, but generally takes longer. Soft new wood will usually rot. Everyone has their own preference for size of cuttings. I find that just one pair of leaves with approximately 2 - 3cm of stem below (enough to anchor it in the rooting medium) is quite sufficient in most cases. *H. linearis* is an exception. With this species it is best to have at least two sets of nodes (preferably more) including one set at the base of the cutting. Remove the lower leaves. Reduce by about half each leaf on large leafed species. Rooting medium can be your usual potting mix or, as I prefer, coarse pumice sand. Cuttings usually root within about four weeks as the weather warms up; or even sooner if bottom heat is available.

Continue to be alert to the appearance of any "nasties". As well as mealy bugs, other pests which may trouble hoyas are: spider mites, aphids and occasionally scale. Indications that spider mites may be present are dull, lack lustre leaves together with silvery undersides. Very fine webs may be visible. Mites rasp away the green outer layer of the leaves, particularly on the undersides, hence the silvery appearance. To combat a bad infestation, a miticide is usually necessary. Pay particular attention to the underside of all foliage. Regular spraying of plants with plain water will help check mites - they prefer a warm dry home. Species particularly susceptible to mites are *H. multiflora*, *H. schneei*, *H. bella* and *H. lanceolata*. Yellowing of a few leaves on hoyas may be due to ageing of the leaf, exposure to excessive sunlight or cold.

Aphids attack new growth and can be controlled by any preferred insecticide. Where only a few plants are grown, an occasional spray with "Watkins House and Garden Bug Killer" aerosol provides quite good control of all these problems.

Work on Epiphyllums in Spring

Finally Jane Griffith writes about the work we should be doing with our epiphyllum plants ...

As the warmer weather comes we may be more inclined to work on our plants. For epiphyllums this involves:

1. Cleaning up plants that have suffered over Winter. Cut off unsightly decaying leaves, dusting the cut spot with sulphur to prevent further decay. Gently stir up the top layer of soil and replace if it is stagnant.
2. Begin to fertilise plants - this may be with an application of slow-release fertiliser or by using Phostrogen or a similar fertiliser which encourages the development of buds. Fertilising should continue through the flowering season.
3. It is not too late to prune and re-pot epiphyllums but at this time of year we are less severe in our pruning than during Autumn. Remove those older leaves that are unlikely to produce flowers (as buds are setting now these leaves are easily observable). Take care at this time of year not to damage the roots as you re-pot. Some Diazanon crystals in the bottom of the pot will help discourage root mealy bug and mixing slow-release fertiliser with your open potting mix will be advantageous for the plant.
4. As November approaches sit back and enjoy all your good work as your plants reward you with beautiful flowers. Be amazed at nature as you observe those neglected plants that you never got round to re-potting or titivating this year flower just as well as those you spent time on!

"Odd Cuttings and Seeds ...".

A recipe for punch

Sue Rapira - gives the recipe for the punch served at this year's midwinter gathering

Make a large pot (8 cups) of strong tea; leave to go cold.

Into a very large container (10 litres) put the cold tea, one jar of passionfruit pulp; one medium tin of crushed pineapple; one orange and one lemon sliced thinly. This is the base.

Then add one litre of cold water, three litres of lemonade and three litres of ginger ale. Stir.

You can add more lemonade or ginger ale to make up the volume to ten litres.

Species Epiphyllums

The latest issue of the ESA directory lists twelve epiphyllum species. The most recent addition to the list is *E. laui* which was described by Myron Kimnach in 1990. It is named after Alfred Lau. It is a vigorous sprawling species with large day-blooming

flowers, yellow on the outside, white within. It is the only epiphyllum species that is diurnal (except for *E. crenatum*) and is native to Chiapas, Mexico. In cultivation it is very cold-sensitive; otherwise it is easy to grow, liking lots of water and fertiliser.

Future Publication Dates ..

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:

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subscriptions are due on the 1st of January and are:

Members -	\$12.00
(overseas members	\$NZ16.00 or \$US12.00)
Additional Associate Members	-\$4.00



Workshops

To assist us in scheduling the workshops to enable everyone to attend those they would like to - please indicate your preferences by numbering the list of topics from 1 (most preferred) to 9. It will be possible for everyone to attend three workshops - and, if required, some workshops will be run more than once.

Workshop topic	Order of preference
Care and culture of Aporophyllums	
Care and culture of Epiphyllums	
Care and culture of Hoyas	
Care and culture of Schlumbergeras	
Ceropegias	
Flower arranging - using epiphytes	
Photography - (advanced)	
Photography - (basics)	
The Rhipsalis genus	
Video presentation of epiphyllums	

Photography Competition

In conjunction with the convention there will be a photography competition. The "rules" for the competition are:

- ◆ entries may be submitted into any of six classes
 1. a single Epiphyllum flower,
 2. a single Hoya flower,
 3. a single flower of any epiphyte,
 4. a group of Epiphyllum flowers or plants,
 5. a group of Hoya flowers or plants
 6. a group of flowers or plants of any epiphyte
- ◆ no more than two entries may be submitted in any class
- ◆ entries are to be unmounted 3" x 5" prints
- ◆ the class, the exhibitor's name and the name of the subject should be shown on the back of each entry
- ◆ entries are to be submitted no later than 9.00pm on Friday 14th November

Wellington Epiphyllum and Hoya Society

1997 Convention

Please forward this registration form, with payment, to:

Mrs D O'Neill
7 Blackbeech Street,
Upper Hutt

Names of people attending (cost of \$80 includes registration, transport to collections, all meals etc.)		Cost	
Names of people attending Saturday night dinner and/or Sunday night meal only		Dinner Saturday Nov 15 th \$22	Evg meal Sunday 16 th Nov. \$18
Total Amount Payable (Please make cheques payable to: The Wellington Epiphyllum and Hoya Society)			

Mailing Address

(please print)

Name	
Street	
Suburb	
Town	

Contact Phone Numbers	home	work
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Please tick in the box if you do not wish your name to be printed in the list of convention attendees

.....

Transport

Do you require transport from Wellington Airport or Railway Station

yes/no

Now please complete the section on Workshop topics overleaf

Registrations must be received by 1 November 1997