

WELLINGTON

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# EPIFLORA

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# **EPIFLORA**

**WELLINGTON**

**Volume 7 No. 4**

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## **From the President**

By the time you read this, the year will be almost over. The committee held its final meeting for the year on one of the wildest evenings for weather in a long time. We considered the final arrangements for the Exotic Plant Sale and the November visits to collections. In addition we discussed possibilities for next year's committee. It seems strange to realise that after our November crawl there will be no further visits to Kinghorne Street as the Griffith collection will soon have a new home in Waikanae. We wish Jane and Roy well in their new home. We also have similar wishes for Sue and Ray Rapira who are shifting north in November. We will miss the Rapiras at our meetings. Sue was an active member of the committee until her accident and it is good to see her fit and well again. At least Jane and Roy will be close enough to still be involved.

Jenny will be retiring as Secretary and Nola as Treasurer at the AGM so we will be looking for replacements. Whether we will also need a new President is still a question to be answered and will depend on what happens over the next couple of months. Over the years it has existed, the Society has been well served by many who have given much time and effort to keep things going and that is a situation we hope will continue.

The big question at the AGM will be whether or not we broaden the base of the plants we study. It's a question that has already been raised in *Epiflora*. It's a wider question than what our own particular preferences are - the real concern is "what will be best for the club?". Whatever the decision I would hope that the friendly spirit which has been a special feature of the Society will continue and that the new committee will be able to produce a programme for the coming year that will keep all our present members involved and happy - and, at the same time, encourage and help new members.

Best wishes to you all

Alison Beeston.

## **The Programme for 1998 and early 1999**

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

<b>December 12<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>AGM and Christmas function</b>
<b>January 9<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>“Bring and Brag” - bring a magnificent plant and tell everyone about it</b>
<b>February 13<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Visit selected Hutt Valley collections and BBQ.</b>
<b>March 13<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>“Hoyas” will be the focus of this meeting</b>
<b>April 10<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Visiting speaker from Plant Care Products Supplier.</b>

## **News About People:**

We extend our condolences and sincere good wishes to **Di Comber** and her family, following the death of her husband **Ken**.

**Sue and Rei Rapira** are heading north at last - we hope they will enjoy their new home, and look forward to keeping in touch with them.

**Jane and Roy** have just moved - to Waikanae. Thanks to the many people who in various ways helped move the plant collections - and apologies for the lateness of this issue (which was one of the consequences!)

## **One Item for your Diary ..**

**November 19<sup>th</sup> - Epiphyllum and Hoya - Convention -  
21<sup>st</sup> - 1999 Auckland.**

## **Hoya lacunosa**

*Morris Tarr* writes about one of his plants that always arouses a great deal of interest at shows and displays.

This lovely little plant comes from the warmer regions of Malaysia and Indonesia.

It is a plant that is ideally suited to a hanging basket. The leaves are small, deep green and are "lacunose" which means cupped or sunken between the veins, thus giving an uneven appearance to the leaf surface.

An appealing aspect of this plant is its beautiful soft scent. The blooms are a tiny ball of white with a yellow centre, very fuzzy and form in clusters of 15 to 20 flowers.

It is a very easy plant to grow and maintain. It is very well suited to indoor conditions - especially a lounge and has quite a long flowering season. Flowering begins in the spring and continues right through to autumn.

This is definitely a plant that every Hoya enthusiast should have.



**Hoya lacunosa- grown by Morris Tarr**

## **Rhipsalis revelations ....**

*September's talk by Andrew Flower is reported by Alison Beeston.*

Andrew began his talk with a demonstration of the value of the Internet as a tool for getting information about plants. He had copied a paper by Kenneth Friedman on Rhipsalis - which included colour illustrations. From there he moved on to a discussion of the theory of evolution. He pointed out that Rhipsalis are part of the Cactus family and one of the things we are always taught about Cactus is that they are native to the American continent. Yet, while it is true that the greatest concentration of the Rhipsalis are found in Brazil, they are also found all over Africa. While the theory has been that they got there by means of birds or sailors, Phil Maxwell in a recent talk at the New Zealand Cactus and Succulent Society annual conference, discounted this theory.

Phil pointed out that birds do not migrate from the tropics to the tropics - rather they go from north to south to avoid winter. Most long distance travelling birds are sea birds that neither roost in trees eating berries nor are so constipated as to go from America to Africa to deposit the seeds they have eaten. Nor are they likely to fly the Atlantic with squished fruit containing seeds on their feet or feathers. The suggestion that sailors collected Rhipsalis, because it is like mistletoe, and took it on their voyages seems equally unlikely. Phil's theory is that Rhipsalis is not a highly evolved plant form and that it dates back to before the splitting of Africa and America by plate tectonics - which would explain why it is found in both continents.

According to the Friedman notes habitats vary widely and include sub-tropical, humid, semi-deciduous forests; mountain areas and areas where summers and winters are warm and there is moderate rain. *R. baccifera* (which includes several species which sometimes appear under different names) is found in Madagascar as an epiphyte in dense humid forests from sea level up to 1700 metres; while *R. horrida* is limited to forests on the sandy shore on the east coast and *R. suareziiana* lives on rocks on the dry west coast.

Andrew had on display a number of plants, divided into groups by gross morphological characteristics (ie what they look like). His divisions were by stem characteristics ie pencil or round stems, flat stems, ribbed or angled stems. He pointed out that it is quite possible for the same plant, grown under different conditions, to have somewhat different characteristics. He also pointed out that only a very small percentage of any plant will grow to maturity.



There was some discussion of the conditions needed for successful growing. The consensus was that they need watering well in summer and drying out in winter. Fertiliser needs to be low in nitrogen. Andrew uses "Peter's Blossom Booster".

## **Flower arrangement - with (and without) epiphytes**

*Penny Luckens reports on the demonstration given by Marion Austin at the October meeting.*

In a short space of time we were treated to the creation of three contrasting arrangements along with innumerable hints on how to treat various flowers and leaves to ensure a longer life in floral arrangements.

As one who spent a lot of time doing floral art in the 1950's and Japanese flower arrangement (Ikebana) in the 1970's, I find the current styles and the technology used today most interesting.

The first arrangement was one using three shallow black plastic dishes ("casket trays"), three pin-holders, five dutch iris flowers, Cyperus (sedge) stems and Hosta leaves. The iris flowers were placed vertically on the pinholders, three on the left of centre (the tallest group), one in the central dish placed at right angles to the other two dishes and on top of them, and the shortest iris stem in the dish on the right. The sedge stems, without leaves, were bent into triangles and used to give depth to each iris group and to connect the three groups. The hosta leaves were used to give contrast and to cover the pinholders.

Marion explained that other materials could be substituted in this arrangement - Watsonias or montbretias for height instead of the iris with their leaves used instead of the sedge stems. Other large leaves such as peppermint geranium, ivy or angelica - or even stones or shells could be used to cover the pinholders. Soft leaves such as peppermint geranium or 'Sydonic' lavender can have their stem ends placed in boiling water briefly then plunged into cold water for 12 to 24 hours before being used in arrangements. Shiny leaves such as ornamental angelica (which is not edible) tend to draw your attention and dominate an arrangement.

The second arrangement was a vertical one in a classical vase using Antirrhinums, Arum lilies, Mignonette, grey-blue conifer sprays and large ivy leaves.

A block of Oasis was fixed to a plastic candle-holder with Oasis-fix and then to the mouth of the vase and then further anchored with wire netting over the oasis. When using green oasis leave a space beside the block so you can easily pour in water each day. Green oasis should be soaked before use, brown oasis is for dried arrangements.

The Antirrhinums were placed at the top of the arrangement in a group twice the height of the container. The Arum lilies formed a crescent in the centre and to the left of the antirrhinum stems, balanced on the right by some stems of blue cupressus. Very large ivy leaves at the base covered the oasis and the tip of the vase.

The third arrangement was done in an ornate picture frame, with a 'bird feeder' wired onto the 'picture mount'. A mixture of pink, blue and purple flowers were used - *Teucrium frutescens*, sweet peas, *Dendrobium kingianum* flowers (the purple flowers of these Australian orchids are pleasantly scented) and small flowered shrubs.

Some of the tips we were given included the following:

- ❑ When using Oasis put the foliage in first and then put the flowers through it; rather than try to put the foliage in last.
- ❑ Don't mix freshly-cut daffodils with other flowers as their sap will affect other flowers badly.
- ❑ Line terracotta pots with plastic and then fill with sphagnum moss or Oasis for arrangements
- ❑ Burn the ends of Iceland poppy and maidenhair fern stems before soaking them in cool water.
- ❑ Put palm fronds in 4 inches of boiling water and leave until the water is cold - before you use them.
- ❑ Put crossed sellotape across the top of a glass - so stems have something to lean against
- ❑ Violets and hydrangeas need to be fully immersed in water as they drink through their flowers
- ❑ Cut the tip out of red hot poker (kniphofia) stems to stop them growing towards the light

*and finally*

- when you buy containers - look at their shape not their colour. A spray can will soon change the colour to a better one.

Thank you Marion for an informative and entertaining afternoon. We will all be looking at gardens, containers and picture frames with new eyes.

## **An Australian safari**

*Kaye and Merv recently had a trip to Australia. Among many other things - they went looking for plants in Melbourne... Merv writes ....*

At the beginning of August, Kaye & I arrived in Melbourne, having driven 1500 km from Adelaide, and having been driven a further 3500 km previously from Adelaide to Alice Springs and back.

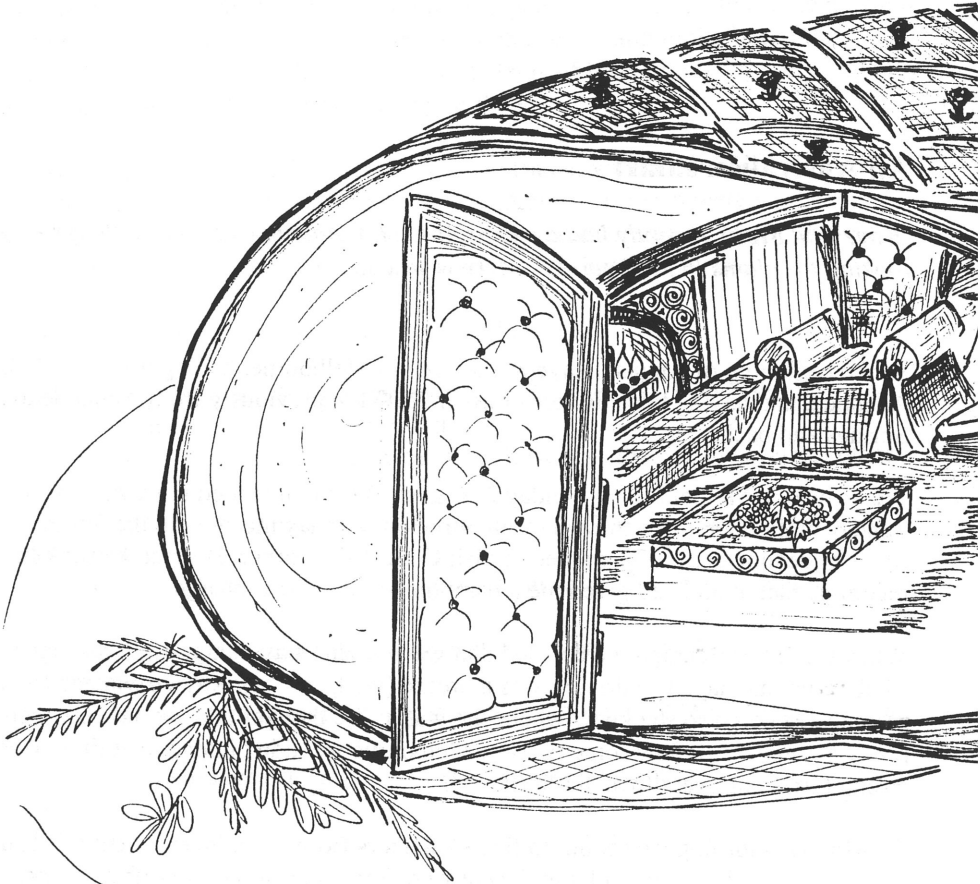
We arrived in Melbourne on Sunday 2 August. We had intended to stay in Bendigo on Sunday night, then drive through Melbourne on Monday morning to the South East side (the Dandedong area). We wanted to visit Collectors' Corner. Herman Kortink had recommended it and had given me a pamphlet on it some time ago.

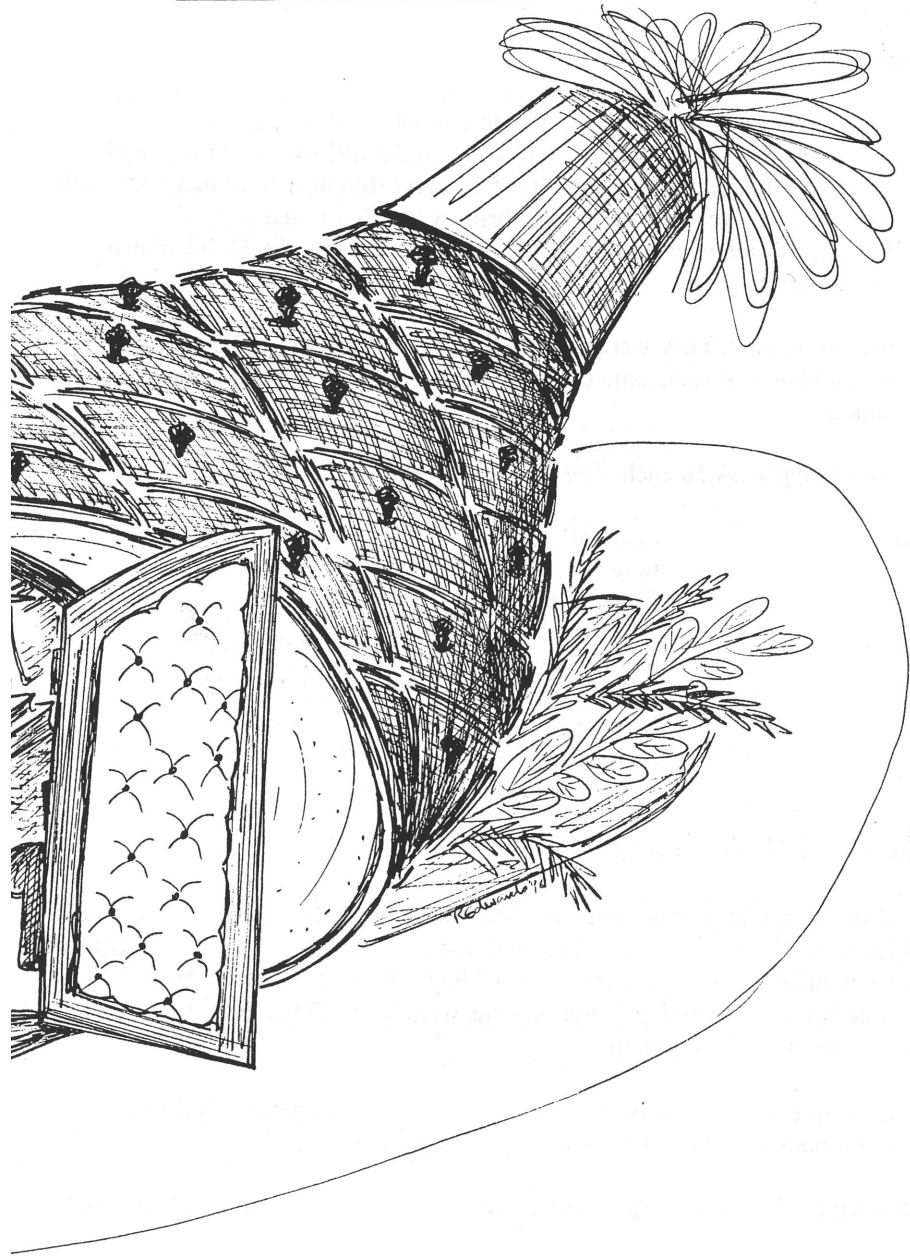
When we got to Bendigo we decided that we wouldn't stay, but go right through to Melbourne that day. The driving was a breeze (well, sort of). Kaye navigated (with the map upside down so she knew where she was!). We thought that we did very well. Didn't really get lost at all. Saw some parts of Melbourne we didn't intend to at times (took a wrong turn), but overall we did fairly well.

On Monday morning we set out to find Collectors Corner. Quite easy really if you have the right maps. The place is large! There were large numbers of all different species of orchids, many in flower. As in NZ, Cymbidiums abounded, but *Cattleya* and similar types were plentiful and in magnificent bloom. Many *Masdevallia* were on sale in bloom also.

## Season's Greetings

every year Dick Kohlschreiber of the South Bay Epiphyllum Society announces "...the club will furnish a honey-baked ham ...". After all these years there must be many happy residents in these homes - Robyn Edwards gives us a peek inside one of them ....





The prices made one drool.

Around the corner were cacti, in small pots, in medium pots, and in large pots. Further around from the cacti were the caudiciform plants. Magnificent!! Oh, how I wished I could bring some home. Large plants in large pots. Many different species that I had only read about - to see the real live thing was a real thrill. A couple I noted were *Callibanus hookeri* and *Dioscorea hemispherica*. In the next area were Ceropegia. Didn't notice anything that we haven't got here.

Epiphyllum plants were next. They were displayed in similar fashion to how we display them here. Colorful photos of each named hybrid - again I didn't notice any names that are not in New Zealand.

Hoya were in good supply. \$4.50 each. The list goes on and on but included -

Hoya carnosa	Fish Tail
Indian Rope	fungii
serpens	Cheng Mai
Silver Pink	pauciflora
obovata	Royal Hawaiian
Krinkle	santos x cumingiana
Shooting Star	shepherdii
Krimson Princess	Honey Dew
australis	Krimson Queen

All the names are as as noted on the labels.

Further around still was a large area set up as a forest with large dead trees and waterfalls all covered with bromeliads. (Not being interested in these I didn't note names!!!). Outside were the real cacti and succulents. Big ones! Real BIG ones. On still more were the bonsai. If any one was into bonsai, all requirements were here. Trays, pots, tools, mix and trees ready to be pruned and potted.

Inside again, there was a large variety of sea shells and rocks & minerals, all for sale. Many horticultural books were available - I bought one on Ceropegias.

When (not if) we go to Melbourne again Collectors Corner will again be on our 'must do' list.

## So you want to import plants.....

*As many of our New Zealand members will be aware - the ground rules for importing plant material are changing - and becoming ever stricter. In this article (first published in the New Zealand Cactus and Succulent Journal) **Ted Verrity** describes some of his experiences... ..*

- ❑ Ignore the advice from your family that you are mad.
- ❑ You need knowledge of organisations called Coventry City, Chelsea, Tottenham Hotspur and Borussia/Dortmund.
- ❑ July. When, thanks to the help of these organisations you are \$900 ahead on the TAB, you stop betting.
- ❑ Apply to MAF for a “Plant Import Health Permit”. Do not be surprised when the MAF officials are extremely pleasant and helpful. It is useful to supply them with details about the plants you are importing.
- ❑ You must expect some delays with the United States Agricultural Service, although the people at the Huntington Botanical Gardens are very helpful, they will not understand what “Phymatrotichopsis omnivora” is, nor will they dip the roots in fenamiphos at 10 ml a.i. per 10 litres water for 30 minutes.
- ❑ October. When the plants arrive at Auckland Airport and you can’t understand what the official is talking about because you don’t have your permit in front of you, do not get cross when you are told you don’t care about the plants. Just demonstrate it is not necessary to have a telephone to be heard between Wellington and Auckland Airport, sending your colleagues scurrying around trying to find out what is the matter with you.
- ❑ On your way home to check the permit do not be surprised to receive four phone calls on your cellphone from MAF officials enquiring about the plants. The sixth phone call, six hours after the first, will confirm that the plants have been sent to Lynfield after you have agreed to their treatment and paid the GST.

- You then send details and information to the staff at Lynfield, who you will find to be totally supportive and co-operative, and will grant you visiting rights to the plants, if you can arrange it, and keep you fully informed over the next three months when you ask for progress.
- Don't despair when you get a demand from the Customs Department for the GST you have already paid.
- When just before Christmas you receive a phone call from Lynfield asking whether you have established that *Phymatotrichopsis omnivora* is not present in California resist the temptation to say you thought MAF would know that, and explain that the plants were treated at Auckland Airport. An urgent e-mail to John Trager at the Huntington will get the answer you require about *Phymatotrichopsis omnivora*. Do not sound too disheartened when Lynfield advise that the plants will need to be kept in quarantine for at least another month.
- Very early in the new year write to Lynfield apologising for being so despondent earlier.
- Do not be surprised on your next enquiry that the plants are ready to be collected. Make a trip to Auckland, but be prepared to pick up a well packed parcel that weighs over 19 kilograms.
- Unpack the box and admire the plants that are flowering. Look forward to spring when you will see the rest flower (you hope!).

**Note:** The lesson is if you keep people informed of exactly what you are doing and why you will find that the greater majority of the time they will be extremely helpful and co-operative.

**Footnote:** November 1998 - EVERY plant is covered in buds, and several have flowered already.



## Odd Cuttings and Seeds

### More for those with Internet access

Here is the address of a very useful list of plant pests - it is available in English and French versions.

<http://granit.jouy.inra.fr/HYPPZ/pests.htm>

This database is well worth checking out. It is easy to use and includes a large number of plant pests with colour photos and information

Also there is a new list of second hand books from Whitestone Gardens on-line at:

<http://www.cactus-mall.com/whitestone/shbooks.html>

And for the first time Roy Mottram has put on line a list of new books and journals at:

<http://www.cactus-mall.com/whitestone/catbooks.html>

<http://www.cactus-mall.com/whitestone/journals.html>

### Withering "holiday Cacti"

*Dick Kohlschreiber wrote this note recently - referring to what we often know as "Christmas cacti"*

What do you do if your plant starts withering: if this occurs right after they bloom, I wouldn't worry about it too much. It's probably due to the stress of blooming. If the plant has not bloomed and it's withering, it does not necessarily indicate that the plant is too dry. So don't water it unless you check for sure that it needs water.



**Epiphyllums Bridal Shower (top left) and Gold Coin - grown by Jane Griffith**

Withering often indicates some type of root problem. On the withered plants I've had, 9 out of 10 of them are too wet. If you want to try to save a withered plant, cut back on the watering and put the plant in a cool shaded place. Make cuttings in case the plant doesn't survive. Other signs to watch for are roots forming at each joint. Sometimes if the foliage turns red, it's a sign that the plant is stressed.

If your buds drop off or segments fall off the plant, it may be due to low humidity or sudden changes in temperatures.

## **Two Epiphyllums - "Bridal Shower" and "Gold Coin"**

*Jane Griffith* writes about two small flowering epiphyllums

Over the years hybridisers have used **Bridal Shower** as a plant for many new hybrids. Its attractions lie in its small compact size and prolific flowering.

**Gold Coin** is one of the successful hybrids of **Bridal Shower** and **Little Shoe Lady**. This cross was made by Wressey Cocke and then grown and registered in 1979 by Ethel Hurst of Hurst Nursery. Thanks to these two American epiphyllum experts and enthusiasts for providing us with this delightful free flowering pale yellow flower with its interesting recurving bronze sepals.

## **Future Publication Dates..**

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

*Comments and contributions are most welcome.*

*The society aims to encourage discussion and debate; opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the society. It is the policy of the society to publish corrections of fact but not to comment on matters of opinion expressed in other publications.*

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*Closing dates for contributions:*

Autumn 1999 Edition - 13<sup>th</sup> February  
Winter 1999 Edition - 8<sup>th</sup> May  
Spring 1999 Edition - 14<sup>th</sup> August  
Summer 1999 Edition - 13<sup>th</sup> November

## **Subscriptions:**

**Subscriptions are due on 1st of January and are:**

**Members - \$12.00**  
**(overseas members \$NZ16.00 or \$US12.00)**

**Additional Associate Members - \$4.00**







