



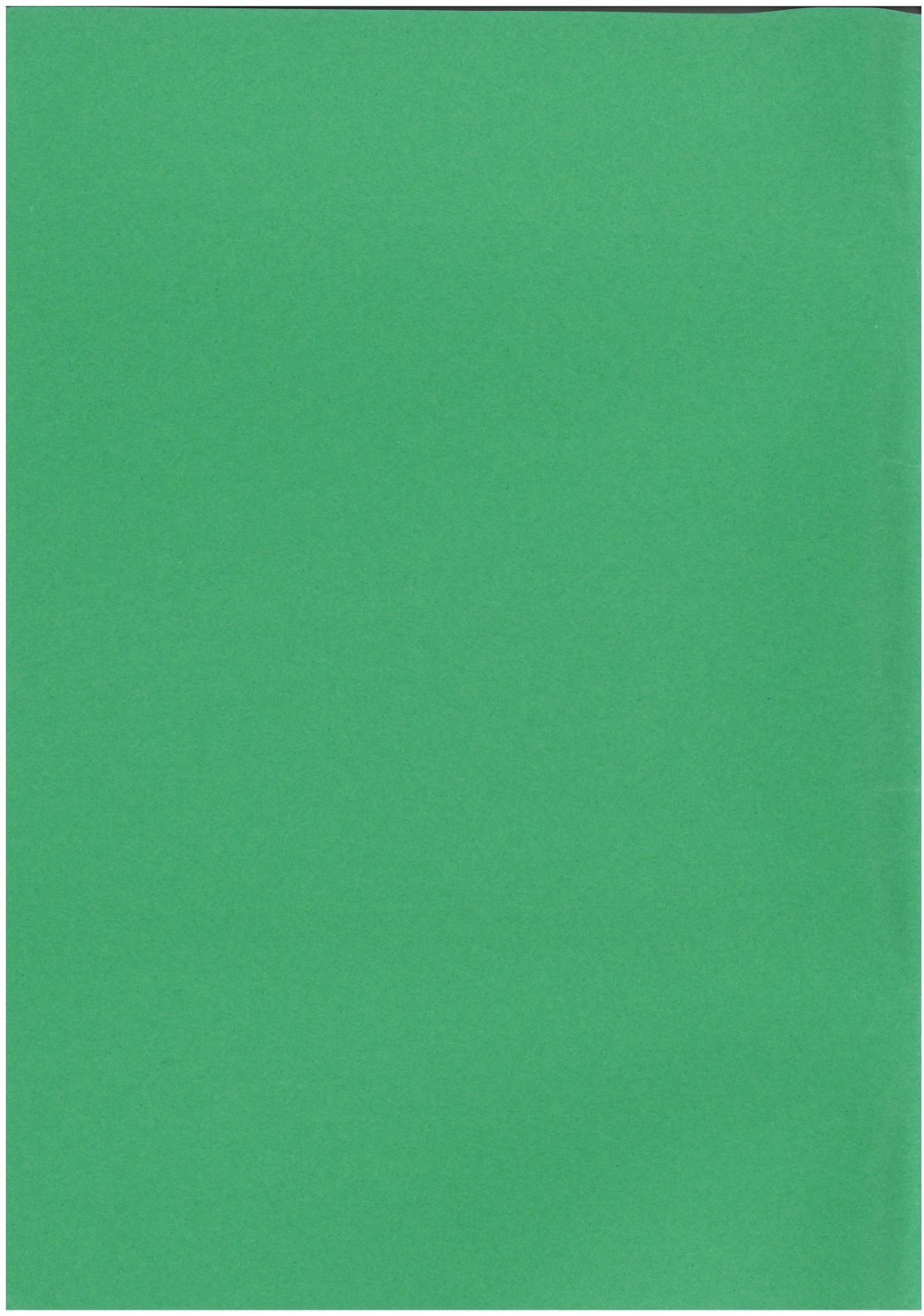
WELLINGTON

# EPIFLORA

Volume 9 No.2

May 2000







WELLINGTON

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## **From the President**

Dear Fellow Epiphyte Growers

We have reached that time of year when some of us leave for work as the sun rises and return home long after the sun sets. This means that our epiphytes only receive attention during the week-ends. This attention involves pruning and repotting epiphyllums, checking hoyas for any residual pests and tidying the plants up for winter - as well as admiring the schlumbergeras as they come into flower. For those of us who imported ceropegia seed from the International Asclepiad Society we watch expectantly for emerging seedlings.

I hope that you have prepared your epiphytes for winter and have reduced watering to a bare minimum. If you are tempted to take hoya cuttings let me advise patience as cuttings strike so much more successfully in spring.

Our June meeting is our mid-winter function - so I do hope that you will be joining us in the shared lunch, enjoying hearing our guest speaker plus taking part in the competition. You will find further details of the event further on in the magazine.

I hope the winter treats both you and your plants kindly....

Regards

Jane Griffith

29<sup>th</sup> May 2000



## The Programme for 2000

*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>June 10th</b>	<b>Mid-winter event</b> <i>(see below for more details)</i>
<b>July 8th</b>	<b>Schlumbergeras and how to care for them</b>
<b>August 12th</b>	<b>Discussion on soils and fertilisers</b>
<b>September 9<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Creating new epi hybrids</b>
<b>October 14th</b>	<i>to be confirmed</i>
<b>November 11th</b>	<b>Visits to Collections</b>
<b>December 9th</b>	<b>AGM</b> <b>Talk on "Other Epiphytes"</b>

## News About People:

We send sincere condolences to **Nola Roser** on the recent death of her son in Auckland.

It was good to see **Aynsley Taylor** at our last meeting. Aynsley has had a short sojourn in hospital for an operation on her shoulder.

A warm welcome to Alice and Rex Hannam (members of the Auckland Epiphyllum and Hoya Society and stalwarts of a number of conventions) - who have recently moved to Waikanae - and have now joined our society.

## Mid winter meeting:

We hope everyone will come to our mid-winter meeting. We have arranged a special speaker, a competition - and of course we have lunch.

You should have already received a card asking you to provide- cold meat, hot meat, salad, vegetables or dessert - you may have swapped your card with someone else. If you did not get a card - contact Mary Hardgrave.

Please also prepare your entry for the competition - it is to be an arrangement involving epiphytes - for a neighbour you really dislike!

Look forward to seeing you there.

*Help our Society to GROW...*

- Bring along a friend to the next meeting.
- Introduce a Neighbour to Hoyas or Epis, then bring them along to meet the group.
- Plant a seed in conversation, "pop in and join us on the second Saturday of each month."
- Distant members are always welcome
- Simply get your friends to fill-in the included membership form and join us.

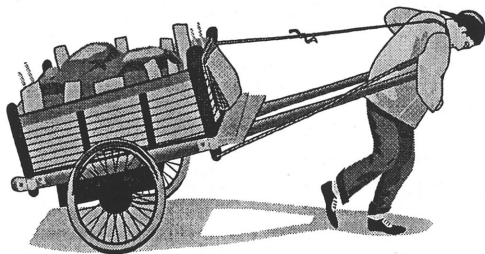
## A visit to Southern China...

*Donal Duthie recently travelled to China - we persuaded him to tell us about his trip at our April meeting. - Alison Beeston reports..*

At the April meeting Donal Duthie talked about his recent trip to Yunan, China and showed slides of the places and plants he saw. Although a member of the Society, Donal is seldom able to get to our meetings because of his work at California Garden Centre. For some time Keith Lowe from the Centre had been encouraging Donal to consider undertaking an overseas trip and when they heard about the trip being organised by Graham Smith from the Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust he was finally persuaded to join Keith and a number of others. One of the big advantages of this particular trip was that the guides came from the local Botanical Institute. They were responsible for travel and accommodation arrangements and had a wide botanical knowledge. The group realised how fortunate they had been when they encountered another group who had used commercial guides - and had had a most unsatisfactory trip.

Donal made it clear at the outset that he had only visited one small and remote area of China. Yunan province is in South West China. It takes three days by train to get there from Beijing, and six hours to fly there from Shanghai. Donal talked about his awareness, because of his work, of the enormous number of plants which originate in China. As a student he had learned about the botanical explorers who had been there before and found and written about the plants and he told of the excitement he felt at following in their footsteps.

Yunan is a mountainous land; only 7% of the land can be called flat. Rain is heavy in some areas - and misses others close by. As a result some mountains are covered in vegetation, while those close by are completely bare. The mountains are high so altitude sickness was also a real problem at times, slowing progress, causing headaches, making sleep difficult and affecting balance.



Rhododendrons were one of the principal plants they had gone to see



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and there were many species of these. It is not unusual to find mountains covered by one species of rhododendron, but there was a huge variety of other fascinating plants.

We were given an account of the various cities the group had visited; Kunming, Dali, Lijiang, Zhongdian and Dechin. Kunming has a population of three and a half million people. Dali reminded Donal of Queenstown with its background of lakes and mountains. Lijiang is a world heritage town with beautiful old buildings and waterways. In some areas ethnic Chinese are very much in the minority. Of the forty million people in Yunan half come from minority groups of which there are about thirty. Some areas are much more Tibetan than Chinese.

Among the slides which accompanied the talk were a number from a very large botanical exposition that the group had visited. There were also slides of a wide variety of plants in habitat. These included rhododendrons (of course) orchids, roses and irises.

### **Just two Photos...**

We reproduce here two of the slides Donal showed us during his talk. They show

*Mecenopsis horridula*. This smoky blue poppy is monocarpic, i.e. it dies after flowering. It is usually found growing among juniper bushes where it is protected from grazing yaks.



*Cypripedium tibeticum*. This plant was growing on the floor of an old lake bed near the mountains of Yulong Shan near Lijiang..



## **Epiphyllum Workshop.**

*Penny Luckens reports on the May meeting which took the form of a “Hands-on” workshop on the care and pruning of epiphyllums.*

Jane began the workshop by showing us the contents of her “toolbox”

- ◆ Secateurs - clean and oiled
- ◆ Alcohol (meths) - and a cloth for recleaning and disinfecting blades after working on a plant to stop the transfer of disease from plant to plant
- ◆ Flowers of Sulphur (and a brush) for dusting on cut surfaces to dry wounds and reduce fungal infections
- ◆ Diazanone - to kill root mealy bugs
- ◆ Osmocote - slow release fertiliser
- ◆ A scoop (that Isobel brought) made from the top part of a plastic milk bottle for scooping potting mix
- ◆ Tape - for tying plants to stakes or frames

If you are going to repot the plants you will also need clean pots, potting mix (free draining - of your choice) and stakes or wire frames.

Using a plant of “Lady of Spain” we were shown the stages involved. First inspect the plant identifying stems damaged by weather (sunburn), snails or rotting. Remove the damaged stems, cutting back to undamaged areoles, preferably towards the base of the plant, so new shoots will grow from low on the plant.

Remove old stems that have flowered. Areoles that have flowered will have a thick vein running to them from the middle and may still show a round scar where the flower was. Most epis flower on shoots produced the previous year and do not reflower on those shoots the following year.

When the pruning of a plant is finished disinfect the secateurs with meths and dust sulphur on cut surfaces. If the plant is not to be repotted then add some slow-release fertiliser.



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If the plant is rootbound and needs repotting inspect the rootball for mealy-bug (patches of whitish fluff on the roots and on the inside of the pot concealing colonies of root mealybugs). If repotting mealybug infested plants in the summer wash soil from the roots to get rid of as much of the infestation as possible, let the roots dry and repot into clean pots. Place a layer of coarse bark at the bottom of the pot followed by a layer of potting mix, a sprinkle of diazanon crystals or prills then a layer of potting mix. Epiphyllum roots should always be separated from direct contact with diazanon. If adding slow release fertiliser during repotting it can be added above the diazanon and below the epi roots. Fill up to near the top of the pot with mix. Add a stake or frame and tie the plant to support it if necessary. Replace the label.

Slow release fertiliser comes in several types which release nutrients over varying periods - 3 to 4 month, 9 month and 18 month are all available. If added to damp potting mix some time before use the nutrient may move into the potting mix, or even be leached out if the mix is stored where it can be rained on.

Pruning may include taking cuttings. These should be of mature stems - neither soft new growth nor old woody stems. Jane removes both the base of the stem and the tip before cutting into 150-200 mm lengths, labelling each length and dipping or dusting the cuts with flowers of sulphur. Jane writes on the cuttings from the top down, so the beginning of the name can be read even if the end is buried. Others prefer to label from the bottom so if the above-soil writing fades you may be able to dig up and read the buried part at repotting. When writing labels write on both the top and the bottom of the label so you have two chances of retaining the name. If your labels get a layer of algae on them (go green) then slugs or snails may graze across them and remove algae and writing. Some pens fade in sunlight or with alcohol. Punched plastic tape labels seem to last well, both staying legible and attached to the plastic label.

In response to a question about potting mix Roy said the mix used consisted of equal parts of bark, ordinary potting mix, sand and zoodoo<sup>1</sup>.

After the demonstration members were invited to come up and try their hand on a variety of epis brought in by several members. Cuttings were also available after the pruning session. Andrew had a plant of *Nopalxochia phyllanthoides* with brown spots. He remarked that in previous seasons it had been free of the brown spots, but

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<sup>1</sup>A compost made from the waste material from Wellington Zoo

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that this season he had discontinued applying fungicide. This observation tends to reinforce the view that this widespread discolouration on this species is a fungal infestation.

## **RHS A-Z Encyclopaedia of Garden Plants**

The "RHS A-Z Encyclopaedia of Garden Plants" lists *Nopalxochia* as a genus of four species of freely branching epiphytic perennial cacti, closely related to epiphyllum, from forests in Southern Mexico and Central America.

*N. ackermanii*, *N. macdougallii* (syn. *Lobeira macdougallii*) and *N. phyllanthoides* are three species listed. Varieties listed include: "Achievement", "Alba superba", "Calypso", "Celestine", "Chauncy", "Dreamland", "Gloria", "Helena", "Jennifer Ann", "King Midas", "Kismet", "M.A.Jeans", "Moonlight Sonata", "Queen Anne", "Soraya", "Tyke" and "Zoe". Of these "Gloria", "Jennifer Ann", "Kismet" and "Zoe" along with *N. phyllanthoides*, "Deutsche Kaiserin" and *N. ackermanii* are illustrated in colour.

This 1080 page, approximately A4 size volume was published in 1996. It was recently on sale in "PaperPlus" in Johnsonville. It lists over 15,000 plants with over 6,000 photographs and is the fourth in a series published by Dorling Kindersley ([www.dk.com](http://www.dk.com)) in association with the Royal Horticultural Society. This book is complimentary to the "RHS Encyclopaedia of Plants and Flowers" which lists some 8000 plants.

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## **Registering Epiphyllum Hybrids**

*A number of our members are now creating new hybrids, some are preparing to register them, so it seems appropriate to reprint the following article by **Raymond Eden** about the role of the Epiphyllum Society of America.<sup>2</sup>:*

One year ago, the ESA was appointed the International Registration Authority (IRA) for epicacti. Since then, several Bulletin articles have been published with information on those provisions of the *International Code of Nomenclature for*

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<sup>2</sup> Published in Vol 13 No 6 of "Epigram" the journal of the Epiphytic Cacti and Hoya Society of Australia.



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*Cultivated Plants (ICNCP, or The Code)* which affect the epi community. In honour of our first year as IRA we will recap what we have covered so far, then move on to some of the more important points.

The 1959 edition of *The Code* stipulated that to be established, a cultivar epithet (name) had to be in a modern language. Latin words were reserved for botanical epithets at the rank of species or higher. Words which might be mistaken for Latin, and cause confusion, were also prohibited. The exceptions were Latin words that are the classical name of an ancient Roman person or of a place. Latinized names already established were not to be changed, however.

The 1995 edition of *The Code* retains the modern language requirement, and adds several other restrictions as well. The words variety (or var.) and form may no longer be used in the cultivar epithet. The use of the abbreviation var. to denote variegated is prohibited. The word “Variegated” is to be written in full. The term variety is now reserved for use in the classification of species exclusively.

The following words (or their equivalents in any language) are no longer allowed in a cultivar epithet: - cross, hybrid, grex, group, mutant, seedling, selection, sport or strain.

The plural of these words is also rejected. Examples: the names “Norman Cross” and “New Cross” could not be established if they were proposed today, even though they may commemorate the name of a person or place. However “Maycross” could be established because cross is only part of the word.

The words improved and transformed (or their equivalents in any language) are disallowed. If a cultivar has been “improved” or “transformed” it must be given a different cultivar epithet.

Words which exaggerate a cultivar’s merits, or which may be rendered inaccurate with the introduction of new cultivars or through a change of circumstances, may not be used. For example, had they been proposed after January 1996, the apple *Malus domestica* “Earliest of All” or the bean, *Vicia faba* “Longest Possible” would have been rejected.. (You may realise *The Code* covers agriculture and forestry).

To be established, cultivar epithets may not consist solely of common descriptive

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(adjectival) words, unless one of the words may be considered a substantive, or unless the epithet is a recognised name of a colour. The word “double” (or its equivalent in other languages) may not be taken to be a substantive. Examples: the names “Large”, “Large White”, “Double Red” and “Variegated” may not be established. The epithets “Gold and Silver”, “Double Bronze”, “Orange Brilliant”, “Velvet Cream” are acceptable, because one or more of these words could be taken to be a substantive. The epithets “Majestic Red” and “Royal Blue” would be available since they are the well known names of specific colours.

To be established on or after January 1996, epithets may not be so similar to an existing epithet in the same denomination class that it might cause confusion (parahomonyms). This applies to written and oral similarities. Were it proposed the holly *Ilex* “Green Point” would not be established because it might be confused with the existing *Ilex crenata* “Greenpoint”. The epithet “Susannah” could not be accepted if there is an existing “Susanna” in the same denomination class. However “Suzanne” would not be a parahomonym because the difference in the pronunciation is distinct.

The 1959 Code restricted the number of words in an epithet to three. The 1995 Code puts no limit on the number of words a cultivar epithet may have so long as it has no more than ten syllables and/or thirty characters. Punctuation marks count as characters, but spaces between words are not counted. The only acceptable punctuation marks are the apostrophe (‘), the comma (,), a single exclamation mark (!), the hyphen (-) and the period or full stop (.).

As reported in the Bulletin (Vol 54, No 4, page 53) cultivar status is to be indicated by enclosing the cultivar epithet in single quotation marks. Single quotation marks are not counted as characters in the name. Cultivars of hybrid origin are no longer to be indicated by the use of a multiplication sign before the cultivar epithet. Likewise, the abbreviations “cv.” and “var.” are no longer permitted as alternatives to the use of single quotation marks. Where they occur, they are to be corrected.

Future articles will go into more detail with respect to choice and re-use of cultivar epithets. For now, the following quote assures readers that *The Code*'s authors have realistic expectations regarding implementation of the rules, “... it is recognised that many botanical gardens and other collections of plants are likely to continue (using conventions which are now prohibited) on their plant labels until such time as those labels are replaced...”.



**Epicactus Bella Vista AB955**  
Copyright Anwyl Bromeliads, 2000

photo by Andrew Flower

## Epicactus "Bella Vista"

*Andrew Flower writes:*

Before the days of Internet sites and computers, I used a 35mm camera for all my photos. But recently more and more of my work is with a digital camera because of the ease with which the photos can be stored on the computer, their instant availability, and the lack of processing costs. The downside of using a digital camera within the \$2000 or so price bracket is the relatively low quality compared to a film camera - at least for high quality prints. But these lower-priced digital cameras are fine for computer monitors, and thus ideal for displaying on the Internet.

Last week our Editor asked me for an "epi" photo for the bulletin. Horrors! I couldn't find a print from my Minolta 35mm anywhere. All I could do was point the blighter at our web site, and ask him to pick one from the huge range of about six<sup>3</sup> epiphytic cacti photos there at present!

So here it is - the Editor's choice. The plant was grown from a cutting bought from Craigmyle Epiphyllums in February 1998, and flowered for us earlier this year. Named "Bella Vista", it has proved to be a vigorous, basket-type plant; the flowers have an overlapping bell form, 12cm across, with lavender blue petals. Yvonne Brunton imported her original stock from the USA, where the hybrid was registered in 1981. The hybridiser was Wressey Cocke and the parentage was "Lennie Coria" x "Rhodamine"

The photo was taken in the studio with a Sony DSC-F505 digital still camera, using natural light from a window. The prints were produced on my Canon BJC-620 inkjet printer at 720dpi.

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<sup>3</sup> To inspect the rest of this vast range of superb photos - check out [www.anwyl.com](http://www.anwyl.com); there are a lot of rather odd plants there too. **Ed.**

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**Odd Cuttings and Seeds**

**No more two litre square pots?**

These used to be one of the stock (and popular) items available for sale. Recent attempts to get another consignment have proved totally unsuccessful. Sorry about that. The supplier has proved obdurate and unthinking. What we have left is all we'll get!

**International Asclepiad Society**

Brookside Nursery (UK) and the Cactus and Succulent Plant Mall have set up an on-line subscription service for the International Asclepiad Society. This will be particular useful for people living in countries where the IAS does not have an agent.<sup>4</sup>

This system can either be accessed from the IAS homepage on the Cactus Mall: <http://www.cactus-mall.com/ias> or from the Cactus Mall home page which gives access to all the on-line subscriptions available on the Cactus Mall (now nine publications/societies):

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

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<sup>4</sup>New Zealand does have a local agent - it is Jane Griffith.



## **Slugs snails slugs snails slugs....**

This is a perennial topic.... everyone has their favourite method and moan - well here is a new one... an NZ correspondent recently wrote...

“A new slug and snail bait has just come on to the New Zealand market. It is claimed that it is safe to use around children, cats, dogs, birds and other animals. It is also said to be kind to the environment, as it does not affect earthworms and beneficial insects. So at last there is a new and safe slug and snail bait.

It is being marketed here under the name Quash. It is a bran-based brown pellet, it doesn't need to be coloured blue/green to repel birds. It is applied in the same way as traditional baits. Unlike the other pellets it contains an active ingredient called Iron EDTA Complex. This stuff is used as a food additive to prevent rancidity, in medicine to treat anaemia and as a trace element in fertiliser, and although it can be relatively harmless to humans and animals, Iron EDTA Complex is deadly poison to slugs and snails. Tests in Australia have shown that Quash is more effective than the traditional baits, Methiocarb and Metaldehyde. In New Zealand about 5000 pets are poisoned every year after eating these traditional baits, many dying a painful death if they don't get to the vet in time. A 12 kg dog would have to eat 3kg of Quash to have a 50% chance of dying. This would be almost impossible. The pellets are unaffected by temperature and humidity, work very well in damp cool conditions that slugs and snails love. The plants also benefit, for not only are they protected from slug and snail damage they get to use the iron released from the disintegrating pellets. The pellets are said to give 2 to 3 weeks effective control.”

Another correspondent noted ..

“The US equivalent to this is Sluggo, which consists of semolina flour pellets with iron phosphate. The semolina attracts the slugs and the iron phosphate kills them. I can attest to its effectiveness. Here on the north coast of California, we have slugs the size of cows that voraciously graze on everything in sight. I didn't want to use a toxic bait.. About two weeks ago I applied Sluggo to the perimeter of my garden and not one nibble has been taken from my plants since. The slugs eat the bait, which makes them stop feeding, then they crawl away somewhere to die. It has rained heavily since

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and the pellets are still effective.”

But for those who really do not like any chemicals - here is one more idea from another correspondent ..

“I have discovered that slugs seem to love smoked fish. My wife and I were on a picnic some years ago, with some kind of smoked fish, and were besieged by slugs. You could see them coming from quite a way away, all heading straight for us. I have also found that smashed slug seems to attract slugs. Mash one, and it'll attract others.”

### **More medicine for bugs.....**

“To those of you who have difficulties in finding insecticides, it's widely known that gardeners use nicotine extract to fight common bugs in their plants. My cacti provider does so, especially so for delicate succulents that won't stand strong chemicals. If your shop does not have nicotine in stock, you can make it yourself putting tobacco leaves in a bowl of water for a few days, until the water turns a yellowish colour ( if there is no tobacco plant available, use cigarette ends or similar). The resulting water must be sprayed on the cacti. This mixture is not highly poisonous. Many millions of humans stand equivalent doses without difficulty ( although is not very tasteful !!!).”

And another correspondent noted..

“An old recipe for a nicotine solution is:

Soak 200 grams of tobacco and 50 grams of soap in 10 litres of water for three days. Then strain and spray. It's a remedy for fleas, aphids, caterpillars and louses.”

### **Using Epiphyllums as grafting stock...**

Finally a note from Mike in Kansas - A big flat epiphyllum stem has little veins running to each areole. If you hold it up to a light and look through it these veins are easy to see. Being careful to only cut on the surface, take a

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razor (tip) and cut a "T", right on top of a vein. You should be able to pull back the skin with tweezers and have a nice little pocket in which to place individual areoles. Being careful not to smash it, try to wiggle the scion to hopefully force out air bubbles. Now fold the sides of the pocket back up over the scion. When working with little pieces, it seems easier if the spines, if it has any, are clipped off with a nail clipper. I have several unknown species of epiphyllum and one definitely seems more suited for this than the others (its skin is thicker). The epiphyllum (like most grafting stocks) needs to have been freshly watered. If you keep it warm, moist and under 18 hours of light, the scions (the ones that take) erupt into growth. Regular spraying of the stem surface with dilute fertilizer seems to speed this even more. Occasionally my epi's put out non-leaf looking shoots. I have rooted these separately and grafted seedlings on to them before they have a chance to put on leafy growth.

### **Hoya web-sites...**

Time was when a search on the Web for the word "hoya" would produce a pile of references to American college baseball sites - and nothing else... Now here are some more addresses for sites that discuss **real** hoyas - the plants that is....

[International-hoya.org](http://International-hoya.org)

[home2.swipnet.se/~w-21721/hoya.htm](http://home2.swipnet.se/~w-21721/hoya.htm) (a Scandinavian site)

<http://hem3.passagen.se/clubhoya> (*again this is not an english-language site - but some translations are available*)

[rare-hoyas.com](http://rare-hoyas.com)

[bobsmoleys.com](http://bobsmoleys.com)

If any of you know of other useful sites - lets us know - we will be happy to publish them

### **E-mail discussion groups...**

As well as web-sites there are a large number of e-mail discussion groups. A

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list of the most popular (together with details of how to join them) can be found on the Cactus-Mall web-page. The web address is...

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

There are details of lists devoted to both Epiphyllums and to Hoyas here. Some of the most recently established ones discussion groups are not there yet as Tony Mace (the WebMaster for the Cactus-Mall) has a policy of not putting groups on the page until they are at least a little established..

## **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 All material in Epiflora may be reprinted by non-profit organisations provided that proper credit is given to WEHS, Epiflora and the author.*

*Please address correspondence to:*

*249 Te Moana Road,  
WAIKANAЕ.*

*Or: griffith@globe.co.nz*

*Closing dates for contributions:*

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Summer 2000 Edition - 11<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*

