WELLINGTON

EPIFLORA

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EPIFLORA

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From the President

As I write this in the first week of May, the Wellington weather is still quite warm and sunny, and only a bit cooler at night.

The lack of rain over the last few months has been a bit of a problem to those who, like me, rely on the elements to assist with plant watering, and I've been rather remiss in doing my bit (There's always something else to do!) My pruning and repotting has also been slow, but will need to get going to get a good display later on.

The nights are now much longer and will soon become much cooler, so any watering will have to be earlier in the day and less frequently. We don't get many frosts here, but it is best to be prepared.

Our May meeting features Schlumbergers. Only a few of mine are in flower as yet, so I'm hoping that other members bring lots to create a great display.

Good growing,

Brian Read

The Programme for 2010

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

Those on duty are responsible for preparing the room, assisting with tea and tidying the room at the end of the meeting and bringing a plant or other item for the raffle. If for any reason you are unable to do your allocated duty . . . . . .

PLEASE ARRANGE FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO DO IT !

June 12th	Orchids - slides & a talk on native orchids By David McConachie ***On Duty:*** *Jim & Virginia Hayler.*
July 10th	Midwinter function. ***On Duty:*** *Kaye & Merv Keighley and Ruth Finlay.*
August 14th	Carnivorous Plants by Roy Griffith ***On Duty:*** *Jane & Roy Griffith, and Dianne O'Neill*
September 11th	To be advised ***On Duty:*** *Robyn Gibson, Vicky Gibson & Penny Luckens*
October 9th	Trip away to see Orchids & Fuchsias In the Otaki area.
November 13th	Talk by Rudolf Schulz ***On Duty:*** *Brian Read, Nola Roser & Marion Austin*
December 11th	AGM & talk by Jane Griffith on Epicacti ***On Duty:*** *Alice & Rex Hannam & Alison Beeston*

MARCH MEETING by Robyn Gibson

There were only nine members at our meeting but we all had a good time discussing the plants members brought in.

Vicky displayed Tradescantia fluminensis, otherwise known as Wandering Willie, and asked how to get rid of it. It is straying from next door. She was advised to spray with Roundup or similar and to keep spraying. Another method is to pull out the long runners, lay them on a firm surface such as a path and stamp on them to crush them. They may then be composted once they have totally wilted.

Robyn brought in a favourite dahlia, D. Taratahi Ruby, which was much admired for its brilliant flame red hue. The bloom was smaller than usual, because it was chosen after Wellington's bad storm and was hanging by a thread of stem. She also showed a pot of Setaria palmifolia which has beautiful pleated leaves. The plant in the pot didn't show its true size but a stalk was about 50 cm long. Grown in the ground it can reach 2 m high. Her third item was from the Rumex (dock) family, locally known as creeping dock. It is a very invasive weed with an enormous tuber. Advice given was to paint tendrils with woody weedkiller.

Alice brought in a Dietes bicolour flower and spoke about the numerous members of the iris family. She said that with planning (and plenty of money) one could have irises in bloom all through the year.

Joyce and George displayed a large pot of a New Zealand orchid, identified by Penny as Earina autumnalis, which had been rescued from a field. Penny said it would probably have fallen from a tree, as it is a perching orchid. The pot was a little overgrown with grass but members soon dealt to that. It was just starting to come into bud. We hope to see it again when it is in flower as these plants are highly scented.

Brian brought in three pots of mammillarias, one with tufts of hair, each containing a lethal looking hooked spine. Another had a coat of bristles. The third had radial white spines which lay flat on the surface of the cactus. It was in a 'face' pot and Brian had searched for the right cactus to provide the 'hair'. He had placed his nametag on the table in front of this pot and we all agreed it was a very good likeness.

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For the **April 2010 meeting** members were to bring plants to the meeting that they had a problem with.

The first we saw was an Aporophyllum that Alice brought in with lots of brown patches where the plant was apparently dying off.. she pruned it, dabbing the cut end with flowers of sulphur. Alice also showed how the secateurs should be sterilised with methylated spirits after each plant. Ruth had a similar plant that she had already pruned and brought photos to show the flowers it had produced.

Robyn had a Tillandsia that was overgrown with weeds and a fern in the pot .. she attacked it to leave just the Tillandsia and Penny potted the fern that was removed from the original pot. Robyn also had an Epiphyllum that she pruned and then Brian attacked four Epiphyllums that also needed pruning.

— 00 —

On **8th May, 2010** *Schlumbergeras* were the topic. Virginia brought some large flowering plants; Alice brought a lot of her collection; two other members brought plants for the competition table and Penny brought four cuttings of *schlumbergeras* for the interest table.

Also on the interest table were some of Phyllis lovely orchids and a *hoya polyneura* which she told us about.

Alice had studied the *Schlumbergera* books that we have in the library and gave us a talk on the subject.

She told us that the plants originate in the Bolivia, Rio de Janerio, Brazillian region of South America; that it is hummingbirds that fertilize the plants in nature. The plants tolerate 5-40 deg C and need 12 hours of darkness to encourage bud development. The time from budset to flowering is 7 to 8 weeks.

Spring is the best time to take vegetative cuttings; several different pottings mixes were recommended in the books but it is important that the mix is 5.5-6.5 pH. To achieve this leaf mould is good as is cow manure (dried) and tea leaves.

If you are growing white and yellow flowering plants these need to be kept above 18 deg C; if they are colder the colours will show more pink tones.

Alice also told us how to make inexpensive wire hangers for these plants.

— 00 —

The Growing of Bromeliads

by Rex Hardy. "Epi-Gram',
Epiphytic Cacti & Hoya Soc. of Australia Inc.

The genus "Bromelaceae" is the scientific or Latin name for Bromeliad which is the anglicized or Common name by which we generally know these plants. There are some 2,000 different species in this genus divided approximately into 44 genera or groups. The best known of these species, although not often recognised as a bromeliad, is the pine-apple. Other well known genera are Bilbergia, Aechmeas, Noeregelia, Cryptanthus and Tillandsias.

Where the Name Came From

The name for these plants was the idea of a French explorer, Fr. Charles Plumier, who named the genera bromelia after a Swedish botanist, Olf Bromelius. Later in 1754 a botanist called Linnaeus, 'referred to as the Father of Systematic Botany', established the genus and called it Brome-laceae.

Variety of Size and Shape

Bromeliads which grow - basically in clumping rosette formation, range in size from 1cm. to 10 metre giants. This giant of bromeliads is from the family Puya raimondii which after 150 years reaches a height of 11metres. Generally it is not the actual flowers that are the attraction of these plants but rather the infinite variety of scape, leaf and brilliant floral bracts as well as the berries (fruit) that provide the splash of colour that is so admired.

Within this group of plants there are many that make beautiful foliage plants, often with spotting, banding, striping, mottling. Others are just plain green species which turn a bronze or pink in bright light or when they are coming into flower. With few exceptions, each rosette blooms only once and from the centre. Once the plant has flowered, PU~S (small plants) usually from one to four, begin to grow from the stem of the plant.

Where They Came From

Bromeliads often nick-named "urn plants", come from tropical and temper-ate North, Central and South America where they grow in an amazing variety of habitats from deserts to rainforests, from mountain plateau to seashore. In their native habitat they grow alongside orchids, ferns, Cacti and succulents, as well as many other plants we grow today.

Their Early Discovery

The first bromeliad discovered was the pineapple which was discovered by Christopher Columbus in his second voyage to the new world in 1493. During this voyage the Spanish explorer discovered the pineapple being cultivated by the Indian Population on the Islands of Guadaloupe in the West Indies. Columbus brought the plant back to Spain and introduced it to the Spanish Court where it soon became very popular. From there it soon spread to other tropical parts of the world during the early 1500s.

By 1600 pineapples were being grown in India, China, Indonesia and Africa as well as the West Indies. As the conquest and occupation of the world spread, more varieties of bromeliads were brought to Europe where they first appeared in scientific collections and later spread to nurseries and private collections.

In the early 1800s the interest in bromeliads was mainly centred in France and Belgium. In 1875-76 a spe cial collecting expedition was sent out from Belgium to Colombia and Ecuador by a Professor Charles Morren. He sent two of his students named Andre and Nez as the leaders of this collecting expendition. Apparently they collected and described some 122 species of which 91 were new.

Where to Grow Bromeliads

The diversity of the bromeliad family makes it possible for most people to find suitable locations where these plants can be grown in their home surrounds. Some can be grown in shady areas of your garden. Others can be grown in pots on a verandah or patio as long as they do not receive the full sun, beating down on them. Others can be grown inside the home as long as they receive good light and good humidity.

If you are lacking a patio or outdoor area, you can turn to the garden because there are many bromeliads that will do well in the open garden. Care should be taken, however, where you plant what specie as there are only a few that will tolerate our hot sun. Most of those that are suitable do need to be planted where they will get some shade from trees and shrubs in the hottest part of the day.

There are some bromeliads that are ideal to be used to make a brom tree or log. Others like cryptanthus or vriesea are ideal to be used in the making of a small rock garden for inside the house. Tillandsias can be glued on all sorts of things to make fridge magnets. **(continued on p14)**

Hoya serpens

by Virginia Hayler

Originally found in the mountains of Sikkim, in western India. This cool area is bathed in mist and rainfall and swept by monsoon winds.

Hoya serpens is one of our cool growing plants that is great for the novice hoya grower. It needs very little care and flowers abundantly

The small, round leaves are deep green in colour and about 2cm in diameter. The style of growth is suitable for a hanging basket or planted in a tall pot or piece of punga log.

The umbels are usually about 5 cm in length, thicker than the main stems; with many flowers.

The flowers are white with a pale greenish tinge, fuzzy edges and a red centre. There is an alternate colour form where the flowers are pink instead of white.

The only problem I have encountered is a scale attack but this can be controlled by spraying with Conqueror Oil.

This plant is best treated as an epiphyte; minimum temperatures 15 deg. C and moisture is essential at all times. Don't expose to full sun but good light is required for flowers to be produced during mid-summer.

I have had two of these plants growing one on the patio outside and one in the lounge. The plant I have outside has produced three seedpods (as shown in one of the pics on page 10)

— 00 —

Hoya List

Some time ago members were asked to send a list of the plants they keep to Carol Rogerson so she could form a register of plants held by the Society.. Anyone who has not already done so could give me their lists and I will forward them to Carol. ...Editor.

Drymoanthus adversus

(With thanks to the Marlborough Orchid Society)

Flowering now in my cool house is a tiny native orchid, *Drymoanthus adversus.* The flowers definitely qualify as 'miniature' in any company. The whole plant is no more than 40mm across and the flowers barely 4mm.

Drymoanthus is a genus of four species closely related to the Australian Sarcochilus. Two species are found in New Zealand; *Drymoanthus adversus* is widespread in the North Island but is also found across the top of the south and Westland and Fiordland. The other New Zealand species, *flavus* is uncommon in Nelson and southern parts of the South Island.

Over fifty host trees are reported in the North Island. I have seen plants on the south side of Beech trees in the Marlborough Sounds and on Rata in NW Nelson but no doubt it can be found on many others. Being so unassuming it can be difficult to spot.

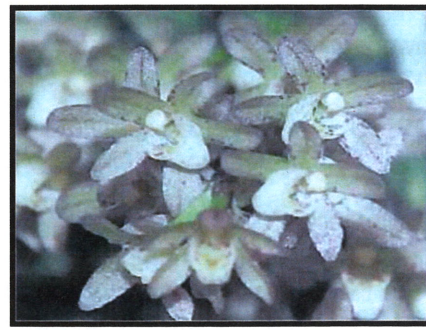
D adversus can be distinguished from *flavus* by the thickening in the labellum. This can be seen clearly in the photograph and sometimes joins to form a transverse ridge. Seed capsules are disproportionately large on this tiny plant and I usually cut mine off to avoid draining the plant.

It is possible to breed these species with the Sarcochilus genus. You might ask why but the answer as with a lot of crosses with small species is to inject some colour into what is commonly a white genus.

The hybrid with Sarcochilus is called, logically, 'Sarcomoanthus'. Orchidwiz has four hybrids recorded; Emarcy Gem (x *S. ceciliae*); Maungatapere; Rosey Posey; and Little Sparkle (x *S. falcatus*) by Lois Dougherty. Pictures I have seen of Emarcy Gem look a lot like 'ceciliae' so perhaps the Drymoanthus has not added much. The Little Sparkle though looks interesting.

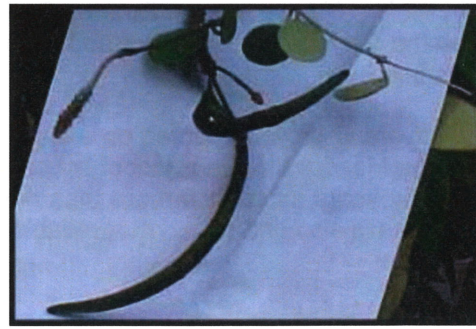
My '*adversus*' grows mounted on a small log in a moist shady spot next to some Masdevalia's in my cool house where it has flowered regularly for many years, often with more than one spike. It may be my smallest orchid but is also one of my most reliable! (pics p10)

NZ Native orchid:
Drymoanthus adversus



Hoya serpens

Both colour forms and seedpods



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Schlumbergera
'Madam Butterfly'

These plants were the subject of our May meeting.

Tmesipteris elongata

(with thanks to the N.Z. Hebe Society for this picture)

Tmesipteris ... by Dr. Penny Luckens

One of the more unusual epiphytic plants native to New Zealand, Australia and some Pacific Islands is the genus Tmesipteris. This genus, together with the related Psilotum genus (also found in NZ) belong to the family Psilotaceae. This family along with the families Lycopediaceae (lycopods or club mosses) and Equisetaceae (the horsetails) are primitive plants with a longer fossil history than that of the true ferns going back to Devonian and Silurian times. (350-380,000,000 years ago).

Tmesipteris (and Psilotum) lack true roots. Most Tmesipteris grow epiphytically on tree fern stems or on tree trunks but are sometimes found growing on the ground in humus. When I was at the university there was said to be only one species T.tannensis but in 1975 Chinnock decided that there were four New Zealand species, two of these are found also in New Caledonia and one or two in Australia. All four species look very similar with a generally unbranched stem up to 50cm or more in length, but more often 10-30cm long. The stem has a row of leaves arranged alternately on each side. The upper leaves are sterile and undivided, the fertile leaves are forked with a pair of fused sporangia (spore bearing bodies) on the upper surface.

Like true ferns there are two distinctly different generations to the life cycle. Fern spores usually produce a heart-shaped green gametophyte generation (prothallus) which bears male and female reproductive structures. Males gametes (sperms) swim across the wet surface and fertilise the egg cells. From the fertilised egg grows the sporophyte plant that is the fern plant that we know, which bears spores.

In Tmesipteris the gametophyte or prothallus grows as a brown mass of cells most of which are densely packed with mycorrhizal fungus, lacks chlorophyll and is either below ground or embedded in the treefern trunk. The prothallus body is cylindrical and covered with long yellow rhizoids. Sexual organs - antheridia producing sperms and archegonia containing the egg cell - can develop all over the prothallus. The prothallus can continue to grow after an egg has been fertilised and has developed into a rhizome which is the sporophyte generation. The rhizome remains below the surface of the tree fern stem or the humus layer on the ground. It develops shoots which emerge into the light and air and develop as green shoots, first with small scales and then with sterile and fertile leaves. One rhizome may be multibranched with one or more aerial shoots arising from the ends of its branches. The rhizome may have a total length much greater than that of the aerial shoots, and like the prothallus contains mycorrhizal fungi.

This is not a plant you can grow in your collection and should not ever be removed from the wild. However it is a plant you can look out for when you are next walking in the bush.

In contrast with many of today's modern scientific papers which can make somewhat indigestible reading for the non-scientist the two papers written by the Rev J.E. Holloway are long but make interesting reading.

Tmesipteris itself is an interesting plant, what is not apparent from a casual look is that it shows only part of its structure and only one of its two distinct generations above the stem on which it grows. It appears woody rather than fernlike - as do some lycopods - but does not belong with what we think of as woody (and flowering) plants. It lacks roots in both generations. The rhizome can grow and branch in any direction and the end of any branch may grow up into an aeial shoot. Both the prothallus and the rhizome have rhizoids instead of roots. It is through the rhizoids that the mycorrhizal fungus enters the prothallus and the embryo, and spreads to other cells within it. Until aerial shoots containing chlorophyll develop the prothallus and rhizome are dependent at least partly on the fungus for nutrients - perhaps mutually.

It would be interesting to know whether there is some recent research on the interdependence of the Tmespiteris and its mycorrhizal fungus and the way that the interaction enables uptake of nutrients from the humus or tree fern stem in which it grows.

In 1960 my American botany textbook relied heavily on Holloway's research, for information on Tmesipteris. How about today? Does the internet have reference to any current research?

Ref:

Brownsey, P.J. & J.C. Smith-Dodsworth
New Zealand Ferns and Allied Plants (David Bateman 1989)

Chinnock, R.J.
The New Zealand Species of Tmespiteris (Psilotaceae)
New Zealand Journal of Botany 13: 743-68

Moore, L.B. & J.B. Irwin.
The Oxford Book of New Zealand Plants (Oxford University Press 1978)

Parkinson, B Common Ferns and Fern Allies
Mobil New Zealand Nature Series (Reed 2000)

Holloway, J.E. The Prothallus and Young Plant of Tmesipteris
Transactions of the N.Z. Institute 1917 vol.50: 1-44

Holloway, J.E. Further Studies on the Prothallus, Embryo and Young Sporophyte of Tmesipteris
Transactions of the N.Z. Institute 1920 Vol. 53: 386-422

(See picture on p11.)

(Bromeliads ..... continued from page 7...)

For the serious collector of bromeliads a shadehouse with shadecloth of 70% density is ideal. In fact bromeliads make a very good companion plant and can be added to any collection of ferns, begonias, rainforest cacti, fuschsias, etc. There are, however, some that do require to be kept fairly dry in winter such as those belonging to the genus cryptanthus, and a shadehouse would not, therefore, be best for these. Rather than be a little more specific at this stage as to what bromeliads will grow where, I intend to cover this when I move on to some of the genera later in the article.

Potting Mix

It can be said that bromeliads, like so many other plants, will survive and grow in any soil. This is generally true, but if you want to have quality plants that look attractive and flower to their full potential then you need a quality soil mix. As most bromeliads grow in soil or will ~ adapt to it, the soil needs to contain nutrients, for the roots to feed on, to be free draining so that the roots are not wet continually and yet not so open that the mix will not support the plant.

Any potting mix that you use to grow other rainforest plants such as ferns, hoyas, rainforest cacti or fuchsias will do as long as you incorporate some well decayed animal manure and a little Nutricote or Osmocote. Please note: those bromeliads that are in the Tillandsia family are epiphytic and cannot be grown as terrestrial plants.

Watering and Humidity

Watering varies with the plant, the location, the light and the temperature. When the humidity is high and evaporation is slow, less watering is needed. bromeliads that have a rosette that forms a cup prefer to have their cups filled with water. Most bromeliads will tolerate heavy watering as long as the drainage is good. Bromeliads that originally grew in trees often can go without watering as long as the humidity is high enough for water to condense on them at night.

Fertilization

Bromeliads can live for years without fertilizer but a little is helpful to these plants, but any fertilizing, however, is best done in the summer. The best fertilizers for bromeliads are those that are organic such as Fish Emulsion or Garden Party. If you use chemical fertilizers, use about quarter the strength that is recommended on the container. Since the leaves can absorb fertilizer, spray them or pour the water over them as you water.

Pests and Diseases

Bromeliads are virtually disease free and able to withstand neglect. There are, however, a few pests that occasionally do worry these plants. Firstly, however, some words of warning - **avoid the use of White Oil on Bromeliads!** They "breathe" through their leaves and the application of this substance will result in their death as the oil will prevent their leaves from breathing. Some of the pests that can worry bromeliads are as follows:

Aphids - These small, soft-bodied, sap-sucking insects, approximately 3mm long, coloured brown, green, yellow or red are oval shaped with beaks. Although aphids are rarely found in numbers on bromeliads (except those of very soft tissue), their infestation causes stunted growth. They multiply rapidly, but if detected early are easy to control with a .. yet 'of water or by' spraying the plant with a Pyrethrum aerosol spray. Other sprays such as Malathion, Maldison or Rogor can be used.

Mealy Bugs - These are small oval, powdery looking insects (3mm long) forming cotton tufts or "colonies" which move slowly on leaves and roots and are located in inaccessible places to protect themselves against moisture. They live by sucking sap from leaves and roots, resulting in sickly looking bromeliads. To treat mealy bugs that attack the leaves, dab with a little methylated spirits on a 'cotton wool bud' or wrapped round a long matchstick. If badly infested use a Malathion or Rogor spray.

Scale Insect - These measure from 0.5 to 3mm. long and are mainly brown, black or yellowish, small oval, flat or helmet-shaped insects attached to foliage, the most common of shich is the soft brown scale. Early evidence of infestation is quite often stickiness and sooty mould, but with the exception of black fly speck scale, these can be easily controlled by dipping or spraying with a mixture of Clensel and Malathion at

recommended strengths, after which the dead scale can be wiped or brushed off. Other suggested insecticides are Bugmaster 80 (dust) or Maldison spray.

Snails and Slugs - These usually do not worry bromeliads unless they are the soft succulent types, but they do love to hide under the leaves or inside the pot and come out at night. Bromeliads can easily become the hosts for these pests, coming out at night, especially after rain, to feed on your other plants.

Propagation

Bromeliads can be propagated by two methods, firstly by sexual means (sowing seed) and by asexual or vegetative means. While propagation from sowing seed can be faairly successful as long as a few rules are observed, I am not going to write about this as it is not likely you will be wanting to propagate by this means. You are more likely to try propagating by vegetative means (removing the offsets or pups), so I will give you a few tips on doing this.

Each bromeliad rosette eventually dies after flowering, replaced by offsets at the base or on stolens. Once these offsets are from one third to half the size of the mother plant, they can then be cut off with a sharp knife as close to the stem of the mother plant as possible. If the offset has roots, that is good, but not totally necessary. Once you have removed the offset it is wise (but not essential) to dip it in hormone powder to seal the injury, but especially to stimulate root growth. These can then be planted individually into pots to grow on to maturity. Offsets or pups are best removed and planted in the spring and summer. If the offsets are not removed from the mother plant then the mother plant will continue to die and the offsets will take over forming a specimen clump to develop on the root stock. One advantage of removing the offsets from the mother plant is that the mother plant will not die as fast but will go into self preservation mode and produce one or two more offsets.

References:

Bromeliad Culture Notes. The Bromeliad Society of WA Inc.
Growing Bromeliads, The Bromeliad Society of Australia.
Bromeliads, Jack Kramer.

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Further reading.....

Our Society receives journals from a number of other societies with similar interests. These journals are all available from our library. In the last few months a number of interesting articles have been received. Here are some snippets that you might find interesting.
Of course you really should go and read the articles yourself !)

The March issue of **Epi-Gram** (published by the South Bay Epiphyllum Society, USA) stresses the importance of marking your plant labels with a pencil that will last they suggest No.2 (I have found a chinagraph pencil works well). They also publish some excerpts from an article first published in 1969 called "Epiphyllum Hybrids and their Hybridizers".

In the February issue of **Epi-News** (San Diego Epiphyllum Society) we see an old friend awarded Honorary Life Membership. Those of you who were in the society in our early days will remember Judy Johnson. It appears she has been just as busy since her return to the USA as she was when she lived in New Zealand. It appears that people in the USA have a lot more epiphyllum varieties to choose from; judging from the list of "What Bloomed in.. Jan/Feb" The only names I recognised were 'Padre', 'Christmas Elf', 'Fred Boutin', 'Fringe of Gold', 'Lollipop' and Wedding Bells. I dare say that Jane and Carol would know more of the names.

SFES Journal is the newsletter of the San Francisco Epiphyllum society and their December issue carries an article on our plant of the month Schlumbergera. They also show five colour pics of recent Epiphyllum crosses.

In Vol.64 No.2 **The Bulletin** (published by the Epiphyllum Society of America) features one of my favourites on the front 'Jennifer Ann' a delightful yellow epi. hybridized by George French in 1976 from 'Triumphant' x 'Yellow Delight'.

FRATERNA (the Official bulletin of the International Hoya Association) contained an article about a new hoya called 'paulshirleyi' originally named after Paul Shirley who was with the Botanical expedition to N.W. Sulawesi in 1994. Paul has a nursery, growing and selling hoyas and other exotic plants in the Netherlands.. see his website www.paulshirley.nl/gardens.html.

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How do I know when . . . .
it is Time to Plant

To determine when your garden soil is ready for seeds, grab a good handful of it. If you can form it into a ball, the soil is too wet. If it will crumble through your fingers and remind you of chocolate cake, it's ready for planting!

Quote of the Season! One 80-year-old farmer said it very simply: " I just wait until I see the weeds starting to grow in my garden. Then I know it's time to plant." . . . Found in the Nova Scotia Orchid Soc. Newsletter

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A TYPICAL DAY IN MY GARDEN

I went outside to hang out the wash and noticed a bug I had to squash.
Oh goodness, there is a nasty weed and those darn plants have gone to seed.
There is a garden stake I just must fix and that poor plant needs some potting mix.
That rose needs a deadhead too.
But first I will spray those shoots that are new.
Those pot plants need water too.
I'll just get the hose. Wait there is an aphid on my beautiful rose.
I'll just run down and thin the carrots out.
I notice there are lots of birds about.
Oh dear, I see the bird bath is dry. I'll fill that up when passing by.
Oh goodness me is that the time?
I had better start dinner for that husband of mine.
I'll go inside now my back is starting to hurt.
What's that the laundry basket and my husbands shirt.

I have forgotten to hang out the washing.

Unknown.

Now is the time .....

Colder nights have arrived for most of us. So we must be careful when we are watering and do it in the early morning before the sun gets too hot and early enough so that the plants will absorb the water.
Here are some suggestions for the southern part of the north island….

Now is the time ..... cont...

Aporophyllums—Water infrequently. If you have not already done so—and are feeling brave—a plant can be lightly pruned. You can even repot it if it needs it.

Ceropegias—no more water now (unless a plant looks really dehydrated). If that is the case give only a small amount of water on a fine morning. The stems of some varieties will have died right back now, these do not need water. Continue to check for pests and deal with any you find immediately.

Epicacti—It is still work time so you can prune and repot as necessary.

Hoyas—It is best not to water at all unless the plants look really dry (or you are providing some heat at night). Now is the time to have a rest from propagating and fertilising. Some days are still quite warm so mealy bugs will thrive—keep checking for them (and other pests) and deal with any you find.

Orchids—Provide protection for Cymbidiums from the worst of the wet weather and frosts—especially plants with flower stalks. You could move them into a porch or shadehouse or you could cover them at night with frostcloth. Reduce watering for plants with no flower stalks. Remember to stake the flower stalks and watch out for snails, slugs, mealy bugs, aphids, wetas and even mice! Most orchids just need less water.

Rhipsalis—Stop fertilising, allow the plants to mature.. And try not to move your plants...water very sparingly—otherwise leave well alone.

Schlumbergeras—enjoy flowers and only water when plants are dry.

Vireyas— Protect your plants from frost and direct sun, but most of all they require excellent drainage. At this time of year move them under cover, don't let them dry out but don't let them sit on wet saucers.

Back numbers of "Epiflora"

The first edition of Epiflora appeared in March 1992. We have limited stocks of back numbers for most issues from Volume 2 (March 1993)

Future Publication Dates ...

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