



Solihull & District Orchid Society



Spring Show

Can everybody that won Trophies at last years Spring Show please return them at the next meeting so that they can all be engraved prior to our 2018 Spring Show on Saturday, March 31st.

In addition, the rotas for supplying the refreshments and manning the various activities - raffle, tombola, door and refreshments will be circulated next month so, if you can, please consider volunteering as we always need all the help we can get.



Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Saturday, 3rd February when Malcolm Perry will be entertaining us with a talk titled " Extreme Methods of Culture".

Malcolm has visited us many times before and his talks are always interesting and in this case maybe inspiring. He is very knowledgeable having served on the RHS Orchid Committee and ran his own orchid nursery for many years.

This should be a fascinating afternoon - one not to be missed.

Thank you from Martin

I would like to thank fellow members for the card and messages of support during my recent illness. Thanks to all, Martin Mitchell

BOC Photographic Competition

Have a look, and have a go!

Please take time to go to www.british-orchid-council.info and vote.

If you go to the pull down menu "Photo Competition" then Current Gallery Slide Show and then Run Slide Show you will be able to see all of the photographs one after the other.

Select the ones you like the most and then if you want you can go back and have a detailed look at the pictures you have chosen but this time using "View Current Photo Gallery".

This will allow you to see the full picture one at a time.

You should then select your top 10 in order of preference and send them to Malcolm, laeliam@aol.com

He will count up all of our choices and then enter a consolidated vote on behalf our our society.

We have until end of February to get our votes, registered so please send your votes to Malcolm by Friday 23rd February so that a consolidation can be completed before the competition closes.



You can follow Solihull & District Orchid Society on Facebook and Twitter



**Chairman: Malcolm Moodie
01295 788159**

If you have any pictures or information you would like to put on our website please email: caroline.reid1@blueyonder.co.uk or copy and pictures for newsletter: ballm1@mac.com

Malcolm Moodie - *Potting and growing advice*

Today, the majority grow their orchids on a windowsill and whilst Phalaenopsis is by far the most common Malcolm encouraged us to be adventurous and try other genera. Even if you end up killing the orchid, you will learn a lot in the meantime.

When growing orchids, the first thing to consider is the plants temperature requirements. Whatever plant you decide to grow, it is important to find out the temperature it requires ensuring that your environment is suitable. When growing on a windowsill it is important, during cold spells, not to leave the orchids behind drawn curtains.

Light is another important factor to consider. Malcolm advised not to place orchid plants on a south facing windowsill as the plant could end up with leaf scorch. Always find a north, east or west facing window where possible. If south is the only aspect available then either install net curtains or place the orchid on a table away from the window.

In a greenhouse the best option is to install aluminium shading on the outside (ideally elevated by about 12 inches from the glass) which will eliminate scorching and greatly reduce heat gain.

Humidity is the 3rd most important factor to grow orchids successfully. Greenhouse and windowsill growers have considerably different challenges to overcome to accommodate the right humidity levels. In a greenhouse you can dampen the floor and install sprinklers but in the home this is more difficult. One can purchase a small humidifier or grow the plants in trays of damp gravel and use a hand mister regularly.

Water quality: Malcolm demonstrated with two jars of water which had completely different qualities. A water tester is a must for a more varied orchid collection because different orchid families require different levels of feed and as tap water varies so much from area to area it is advisable to use rain water wherever possible. Tap water will normally give a reading between 200 & 600 μ Siemens whilst rainwater is likely to read less than 50 μ Siemens but beware if rainwater is collected from a concrete surface as salts will leach into the water. Some orchids tolerate tap water better than the others. For example, Cymbidiums and Phalaenopsis will not suffer much, but Masdevallias and Disas are very susceptible to hard and high salts water which could result in these plants dying in a matter of weeks. If one sprays the leaves with hard water a white residue will be left on the leaves which is difficult to remove. Soft water should be also used for humidifiers as scale build up ruins the mechanism.

Fertiliser – If one is going to use tap water it is critical to know the μ S (microsiemens) to enable you to determine how much fertilizer to use so it is advisable to use rainwater, wherever possible. Malcolm advised using liquid fertilizer as it immediately disperses when mixed with water. Crystalline fertilisers have a habit of taking some time to fully dissolve although it is believed that Akerne's Rain Mix (only to be used with rainwater) dissolves very quickly. When faced with the wide range of fertilizers on offer in garden centres avoid all those that contain Urea and those that do not have the necessary micronutrients. Malcolm always uses DynaGro fertilisers available from Peter White.

Pests are very commonly encountered, particularly mealy bug, scale and red spider mite and all of these are difficult to completely eradicate. Malcolm finds Bug Clear Ultra the most effective, but advises changing the chemicals regularly as using the same ones for prolonged periods will likely create a degree of immunity to the active chemicals.

Finally, choosing the right potting compost is critical. Many of those sold in garden centres are not very good and as they are sold in colourful bags it is not possible to assess quality until the bag is opened. There are lots of different composts you can use but Malcolm advises to use bark as this is what is used by most commercial growers. He uses Orchiata for the majority of his plants.

When re-potting, it is important not to re-pot into a much bigger pot. The rule of thumb is to repot into the same size pot or one size larger. If a very large container is used there will be too much compost that will stay wet for too long resulting in rot and root death.

Re-potting is a very easy task especially after you have done a few.

In summary, this was an interesting afternoon with lots of tips on how to grow your plants successfully whether on a windowsill, conservatory or greenhouse.

Lina Smalinske

Have you any pics to share?

Janet James emailed this picture of *Bonatea speciosa* she had in flower over the Christmas period.



January Table points



Pterostylis curta - 29pts - Lina Smalinske



Epidendrum peperomia - 28pts - Anne Haines



Ludisia discolor - 30pts - Monica Johnson



Masdevallia Southern Sun - 29pts - Stan Taylor



Masdevallia Raymunda de los Andes - 28pts - Malcolm Moodie



Fredclarkia After Dark Black Pearl - 30pts - Lina Smalinske