



# Solihull & District Orchid Society

## AGM, Plant Auction and Display Table

On Saturday 7th September our meeting will consist of the Annual General Meeting, the Plant Auction and for the first time we will also have a Display Table.

The timings for the meeting will be different from usual meetings with the Hall open by 1.00 for your plants to be booked in for the Auction.

Please ensure this is completed by 1.45pm so that the AGM can start at 2.00 pm. All plants should be bug free with 10% of the sale price going to the Society.

This is a great chance to acquire plants grown by society members and so if you have any plants that are surplus to requirements please bring them along as other members will be eager to buy them.

It is always a fun afternoon and with the added attraction of a display table it shouldn't be missed. Look forward to seeing you all.

### August Trip to Burnham's Nursery

On Sunday 11th August we will be heading to Newton Abbot where we will be visiting Burnham's Nursery one of the oldest Orchid Nurseries in the UK. A unique family business with 20 Chelsea Gold Medals with a huge array of orchids on display and for sale.

Sara Rittershausen will welcome us and provide the background story to the nursery and then everybody, whether greenhouse or windowsill grower will have the opportunity to search out as many plants as they might want to bring home - there will be plenty of room on the coach!!

A complimentary buffet will be provided so all we need to do is enjoy ourselves. All the details regarding pick up location and time will be sent out to all those who have booked by Friday 26th July.

### Malvern International Orchid Show 2019

#### What a difference a year makes!!

We were warned to ensure we brought wet weather clothes and wellies and how right that was. During the run up to Malvern there had been substantial rainfall and it was clear from the car parks that things could turn rather muddy as the show progressed. So much so that on



Sunday morning the Exhibitors car park was closed. Inside the marquee conditions were variable with some stands located in areas where the ground was very boggy which got worse as thousands of footsteps from the huge number of visitors during the show? To cap it all most days saw downpours that bordered on the biblical. However, that did not deter a very large number of visitors who were amazed by the standard of the displays and the wondrous array of thousands of orchids for sale.



Our own display was the first under the leadership of Tjin with the shoji screen completed beforehand by Bill. The display was completed on Thursday with the support of Rob Butler, Ken & Monica and Bill & Clare. The Japanese theme showed a lot of ingenuity, including a Zen garden with bonsai and was named "Mr. Nakamura's room and garden" which was much admired by visitors and judges alike who awarded it a Silver Medal. Well done to Tjin and to everybody that helped over the 4 days and provided plants.

Of the plants on the display 7 received Awards of Merit: *Phragmipedium Grande* "La Tuilerie", *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* "Andrea", *Oncidium Caches es Demoiselles*, *Paphiopedilum lawrencianum*, *Masdevallia Ishbel Kirkwood*, *Masdevallia Fuzzy Navel* and *Masdevallia wageriana* all grown by Malcolm Moodie.



Overall, the show was a great success despite the weather with the next one planned for June 12th, 13th and 14th 2020 so mark it in your calendar as it is the show you cannot miss.



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



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If you have any pictures or information you would like to put on our website please email: [LaeliaM@aol.com](mailto:LaeliaM@aol.com) or copy and pictures for newsletter: [ballm1@mac.com](mailto:ballm1@mac.com)  
Society email address: [www.solihullorchidsociety.co.uk](http://www.solihullorchidsociety.co.uk)

# JULY SHOW TABLE

Pictures: Ken Johnson



*Vanda falcata* - 32pts - Stan Taylor



*Paph. tigrinum* "Cat's Miaow" AM/AOS - 29pts - Malcolm Moodie



*Panerorchis graminifolia* - 28pts - Maureen Jones



*Lycaste deppii* - 29pts - Janet James



## Ken takes the BOC Photo Competition - again

Whilst this was referenced in March's Newsletter it is well worth mentioning that Ken Johnson has done it again by having his photo of *Dendrochilum magnum* voted as the best photo for 2019.

His cheque was presented at a special committee meeting as he is unable to attend the AGM. Well done to Ken and another feather in the cap of the Solihull & District Orchid Society.



*Oncidium Hambutem Rose* - 27pts - Graham Jones



*Brassavola perrenii* - 28pts - Monica Johnson

# Growing Hardy Orchids - Colin Clay

Colin has been growing hardy orchids for a long time and has a vast knowledge about them. In his earlier career he used to take microscope pictures and so, when it comes to knowing what hardy orchid seeds look like and the amount of cells they contain he has a great understanding. Orchid plants can contain millions of seed in only one seedpod and may be less than 1mm in size with no more than 10 cells. In order for seed to germinate and grow it needs the help of fungi in the soil. If the right fungus happens to live where the orchid seed lands it enters and invades the seed. Afterwards the seed controls the fungus, which is providing the seed with moisture, vital nutrients and protecting it from nasty things getting into it. It's a very complex two way relationship. The research has shown that an orchid, on average, needs 6 - 7 different mycorrhizal fungi species in its lifetime.

There are two types of hardy orchids: the winter greens, and those that stay underground over the cold period and start growing in spring time.

## Cultivating hardy orchids

Hardy orchids do like moisture but also require good drainage, as a result raised beds and cold frames are good choices when growing them in the garden. Clay pots are also a more beneficial choice helping to establish better a root system, as they keep the roots cooler for longer.

The best time to start looking for hardy orchids in the woods is when the bluebells come out. In general, to be able to find hardy orchids you need to visit fields that have not been cultivated for a long time, because the mycorrhizal fungus takes some time to establish. Usually an orchid site has running water nearby with chalk and lime in the soil. However, Colin showed some examples in the Mediterranean, where hardy orchids were seen growing in extreme locations: such as high up on an

old wall or in the middle of farm tracks in cultivated fields. It only shows how these plants find their perfect conditions in the most unlikely places.

The best time to count and spot Bee Orchids is in December, as most of the time the areas where plants grow are council mown grasses. These plants never get to the flowering stage as the areas get cut down before their flowering season.

Colin advises growing hardy orchids in a 30 percent organic with the rest consisting of non organic growing materials such as perlite or grit. He mentioned seeing on one of his many trips Bee Orchids growing in a very shallow layer of soil, covering old lime quarries.

## Propagation of hardy orchids

If one would like to grow a bigger plant colony in their garden more quickly, a good idea is to take the newly grown tuber early in the season and pot it up separately, so that the mother plant has enough time to produce another one.

Pterostylis is best divided in the summer and not in spring or autumn.

Home conditions are good enough to carry out any kind of hardy orchid seed propagation with the only thing necessary for the seed to start growing, is to have is the right fungus to add to each glass jar along with the seed. However, Colin admits that after this laboratory/sterile stage the most complicated part is weaning the little baby plants to the outside environment. He says, as exciting it is to see the new plant forming out of the seed, the later stages get rather complicated and that he has now stopped doing this.

However, his talk and pictures showed that he successfully grows a large variety of hardy orchids in his garden and regularly goes out on photographic adventures to spot them in the wild.

Lina Smalinske