



Newsletter



November 2022

Christmas show

At our December meeting we will, once again, be holding our Christmas Show (the schedule and entry form is attached to the Newsletter).

And, whilst that is always a highlight we also get to enjoy the Christmas Buffet so please, everybody, bring along your cakes, savouries and nibbles so that we can all share the food and enjoy each others company.

In addition, we will be drawing the raffle for the Christmas Hamper - you can still bring things along to donate as Janet will add items right up to the time we make the draw making it a wonderful prize and start to our festivities.

Don't forget that if you make a

donation you will receive a ticket and further tickets will be available to purchase which will increase your chances. As they say "You have to be in it to win it".

The normal Raffle will also take place so this looks like a wonderful afternoon.

The room will be open to accept your plant entries from 1.00 until 1.45 when judging will commence.

If you can please email your entries to LaeliaM@aol.com or phone them through (01295 788159) during the week before it will be greatly appreciated.

Failing that please bring along your entries on the day.

The more the merrier.

Subs due

We will have your new Membership Cards with the Diary of Events for 2023 at the December meeting.

Please see our Treasurer George Mayes who will be pleased to issue you with your new card. Membership this year is £15 Single and £20 Couple.

Anybody not able to attend the meeting can send a cheque to George Mayes - 3, Jackdaw Lane, Droitwich, Worcs. WR9 7HE



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



If you have any pictures or information you would like to put on our website please email: lina_sala@yahoo.co.uk or copy and pictures for newsletter: ballm1@mac.com
Society email address: www.solihullorchidsociety.co.uk

Orchid Improvement Course

In July 2022, we made a trip down the M5 to attend the orchid improvers' course at Burnham Nurseries in Newton Abbot. At the height of the summer heatwave, it was very hot in the greenhouses, especially for Grace at 7 months' pregnant!



The course was led by Sara Rittershausen at Burnhams. We started the day with a lecture on keeping common varieties of orchids at home and then had a guided tour of the nursery. A



highlight included the beautiful fish pond



which is filled with colourful koi carp and planted up with orchids either side as well as suspended from the ceiling in pots creating a real rainforest feel.

A tasty cream tea lunch was provided by the on-site cafe at Burnham; Cafe Vanilla.

In the afternoon, we completed a practical session learning how to repot orchids in both pots and as mounted specimens on bark. Finally, we finished the day with a spot of shopping, leaving with our wallets considerably lighter and a car full of orchids!



Grace & George Mayes

Tropical orchids without heat

With all the energy price increases many more orchid growers are trying to save on their bills.

Therefore, Andrew's talk could not have been more timely.

Andrew presented a large list of different orchid genera that can be grown at a much lower temperature than most growers thought practical.

He also talked about optimising the insulation and improving the thermal density of the greenhouse by keeping water butts and/or cement blocks under the staging and installing an independent and accurate thermostat which will be a lot more precise than that installed in a heater.

He also suggested looking at your collection with a fresh pair of eyes and to discard plants that aren't doing well in your current set up. You can also bring some orchids indoors to grow on the windowsill as you are already heating your home.

Andrew suggested that researching the species you wish to grow may highlight that many plants do come from higher altitudes where temperatures sometimes drop very low, meaning that you may be able to grow that species at a lower temperature than you currently think.

Andrew also mentioned that for every 100m increase in altitude the general rule is a 1 degree temperature drop. For example,

Andrew grows *Vanda coerulea* which is generally considered a tropical grower, but that it grows at altitudes up to 1500m and therefore he has dropped his temperature as low as 8C.

Additionally, the *Dendrobium* genus has many cold growing species especially those from the Himalayas.

Also *Laelia anceps* and *Coelogyne cristata* grow in areas where frosts are not uncommon. There are also hardy terrestrials from South Africa,

Asia and even native UK orchids to consider when choosing your cold growing orchids.

Andrew was also quick to point out, that nobody should look at this as just simply turning down the

thermostat. It is a gradual process and most importantly, temperature drops during the season when plants are putting on new young leaves or growths, isn't a clever idea. There's a huge difference between "cold tolerant" and "cool growing" orchids.

Andrew concluded that he is interested in developing hybrids that are cold tolerant and to achieve this they must be grown from seed in countries such as the UK.

Andrew's talk made all of us think about the possibilities of adapting our own growing methods to lower the cost but increase the range of what we could grow successfully.



Liina Smalinske