



# The New Zealand Orchid Society Inc.

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## **NZOS NEWSLETTER**

**March 2024**

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### **This Month's Orchid:**



**Medicalcar (Med.) *decoratum***

This little species comes from Papua New Guinea. As the Latinized name '*decoratum*' suggests, it means decorative or charming. And when it is grown into a specimen plant, and in full flower, that is exactly what it is. It comes from the same general area as *Den. cuthbertsonii*, and so likes similar conditions to it - that is, to be kept moist, but not too wet, and this is why it generally does better on a slab, rather than in a pot.

The waxy flowers it produces are very small, so it looks best when it is allowed to grow into a large plant. Unfortunately, it is quite slow growing, so you can expect it to take a number of years to get into a good size plant, but if you do, then you will be rewarded by it being covered with a large number of flowers every year, that last for a long time.

Grow this plant in cool conditions, and to ensure the plant has a good number of flowers, in high light - but just not in direct sunlight.

## ✧ NEXT MEETING ✧

<b>WHEN?</b>	<b>Wednesday, 17 April 2024</b>
<b>WHERE?</b>	<b><u>Meeting location:</u> Mt Albert Senior Citizens Hall, 3B Wairere Ave, Mt Albert (Next to our old haunt, the Mt Albert War Memorial Hall)</b>
<b>TIME?</b>	<b>7.30pm</b>
<b>WHAT?</b>	<b>Rosy Fleischer – Orchid Viruses</b>

Viruses come in different forms, and some are even associated with a particular genus – for example the Odontoglossum Ringspot Virus – although given there are no longer any “Odontoglossums” as taxonomists have reclassified them, maybe it will need to be renamed a “Specific Type of Oncidium Ringspot Virus”?



Viruses in some cases have spread from other plants to orchids – for example tobacco mosaic virus, which has been around for a long time and is thought to have transferred accidentally from orchid growers who smoked, transferring the virus onto their orchids.

Virus is not always easy to detect, especially if they are in plants that are growing well, but it is important to try to identify any plants that are virused, as there is no cure, and the virus can be easily transferred from one plant to another in a number of different ways.

Find out how to identify the signs of virus, so if you suspect one of your plants does have it, you can isolate it from the others, and see if some of the other identifiers appear over time.

◆ **Members:** please feel free to bring in any plants you have, that you think might be virused. ◆

## ✧ NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

The club has had a relatively quiet month. However, over the next few months we will be busy with three shows scheduled. With that being said, we will be calling on you to help at these shows. We need help with setting up and taking down the stands, Roaming Club Ambassadors, manning the raffle and entry ticket table, catering, the club sales table, etc.

April heralds the start of cooler weather and shorter days, which means we need to be extra vigilant about our orchid care. We need to keep an eye on how often we water our plants. Extending the days between watering and applying water early in the day to allow enough time for foliage to dry before nightfall. Using a fan helps remove unwanted moisture from your orchids.

Moist conditions create a favourable environment for fungal & bacterial growth and can also be a precursor to rotting, particularly at leaf junctions and new growths.

Under certain circumstances, increasing calcium levels in orchids can improve their resistance to rot-type diseases. So, check that the fertiliser you are using contains calcium. Most store-bought liquid fertilisers do not contain calcium in their formulation. To mitigate this, some growers apply calcium nitrate once a month to boost calcium levels in their orchids.

Rosy Fleischer is presenting the talk for the next meeting, and his title is Virus Diseases of Orchids. Most orchid growers will, at some point, have one or two plants infected with viruses.

Until next month, happy growing.

All the best.  
Greg

## REPORT FROM THE MARCH MEETING

We had a good number of people in attendance this month to view a webinar by US specialist grower Nicholas Rust, on his experiences with both growing and hybridizing of Jewel Orchids.



His talk covered all the species, and gave information on how to grow the various types of orchids that make up this wide-ranging group of orchids with patterned leaves.

That extensive knowledge of these orchids, especially of the species, has allowed him to better understand how they grow, and as he has created a number of hybrids, he is aware of how those attributes continue on into the next generation.

To help add an extra dimension to the talk, one of our members, Rossy Fleischer, had brought along a number of his own jewel orchids, which he later talked about when we did the plant commentary.

This month too, we had a good number of orchids on display, which was a little surprising, as it is not the time of year when many orchids are in flower – however, in my case at least, I had several orchids in flower that should have been flowering much later, like the two *Sarcochilus*, which should flower in November, and *Den. nobile*, which is a spring flowerer. No doubt as a result of the warm weather we have had over summer, with a sudden drop in overnight temperatures for a period, which has confused the plants.



Rossy's collection of jewel orchids



An excellent and varied collection of plants were on display

Plants on display - compiled by Noel Townsley





**Greg & Lyn Barnes**

*Paph. charlesworthii*

*Paph. curtisii*

**Rossy Fleischer**

Milt. Moirmoir

Ctt. Memoria Ken Blackman

Bulb. Karen Lewis

Basket of jewel orchids

Angcm. *longicalcar*

**1st**

**2nd**

**Richard Legg**

Aerth. *ramosa*

Milt. Moirmoir (x 2)

**Noel Townsley**

Milt. Moirmoir

Iso. *linearis*

Milt. Connie Warne x *Onc. alexandrae* (Syn. *Onc. crispum*)

Sarco. Sunnyvale Sun Spot

Brat. Orange Sherbet

Sarco. Sunvale Peach x Fizzy Dove

Den. *nobile*

**3rd**

Milt. Goodale Moir

### **Yvonne Tapsell**

Epi. *radicans*

C. Isabelle Stone x S. y N. Río Salado

Onc. *flexuosa* (syn. *flexuosum*)

Stan. *inodora*

Z. unknown

Den. *chrysanthum*

Ohd. Cherry Fudge 'Carmela'

## ◆ TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP ◆

Yes, it is that time again!



◆ If you are simply renewing your membership, then there are no forms to fill in, you can simply renew by using one of the payment methods shown below.

If any of your details have changed, then please advise Noel Townsley or the secretary at: [secretarynzos@yahoo.co.nz](mailto:secretarynzos@yahoo.co.nz)

◆ It is also that time of the year when the various positions on the executive will soon be coming up for re-election. The society needs your help.

This is your chance to join the committee to help run the society.

Our AGM is coming up soon, so now is the time to:

- 1) get thinking about what you might like to see happen in the club over the next year
- 2) think how you might like to contribute to your club next year

To use well-worn phrases:

'Many hands make light work' & 'It's more fun in a group'.

We always love new ideas and new blood (so to speak) so if you would like to join do let us know.

If you'd like to find out what it might involve, we'd be happy to chat to you.

◆ Please send in any nominations you may have for the listed positions, either on the accompanying form, or by email to the secretary - if you are going to nominate someone - please do ask them first!



## SUBSCRIPTIONS

### **Membership Renewal**

**The subscription for the 2024 – 2025 year is due by April 30th 2024.**

**There are no forms to fill out unless your details have changed.**

**Please pay your \$30 by**

- cash at the meeting, or preferably by
- direct credit to Bank account number 06-0115-0179194-00

## Welcome To New Member

The NZOS would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest member:

Cindy To



## NEWS FROM THE INTERWEB – HOT OFF THE PRESS

# Scientists describe new orchid species related to famous Darwin's orchid

by Missouri Botanical Garden 14/3/2024



**Giant-spurred *Solenangis impraedita***

*Solenangis impraedita*, is a new orchid species described by Missouri Botanical Garden scientists and collaborators from Madagascar.

Missouri Botanical Garden scientists and collaborators discovered and described a new orchid species in Central Madagascar with a record-setting nectar spur and close ties to the famous "Darwin's orchid." This novelty species needs urgent conservation action, scientists say.

"Discovering a new orchid species is always an exciting event, but finding such amazing and charismatic species happens only once in a scientist's career. I really hope that this highly threatened species draws attention to the urgent crisis that is affecting Madagascar's biodiversity and helps support Garden's program there," said Tariq Stévant, Director of the Garden's Africa and Madagascar program.

The flora of Madagascar is known for flowers with elongated floral tubes pollinated by long-tongued hawkmoths. The most famous of these species, *Angraecum sesquipedale*, is known as Darwin's orchid, to pay tribute to Charles Darwin's theory that the flower was pollinated on a not-yet-discovered moth with a long proboscis. Scientists described the large hawkmoth, *Xanthopan praedicta*, 41 years after his prediction.

A newly published paper, "A new orchid species expands Darwin's predicted pollination guild in Madagascar," reveals an unexpected new case of parallel evolution with Darwin's orchid in the

newly described giant spurred *Solenangis impraedicta* whose nectar spur reaches a whopping 33 cm in length.

The study is published in the journal *Current Biology*.

"The contrast between the little 2-cm flowers and the hyper-long nectar tube is mind-blowing," said co-author João Farminhão of the Coimbra University Botanic Garden.

*Solenangis impraedicta* has the third longest spur ever recorded among flowering plants, and the longest nectar spur of any known plant relative to flower size. It is the only new orchid species with such an extreme adaptation to hawkmoth pollination described since 1965.

Patrice Antilahimena, a Garden field botanist, first collected the species during the baseline environmental impact study of a mine site in Central-Eastern Madagascar. Ten years later, Garden Botanist Brigitte Ramandimisoa and Simon Verlynde, Ph.D. student at the New York Botanical Garden, discovered a new location. The novelty belongs to the angraecoid orchids group that Stévant and an international team of experts have extensively studied. Stévant, an expert in African orchid taxonomy and conservation, first identified this species as an undescribed species of *Solenangis*.



**New orchid species, *Solenangis impraedicta*.** Credit: Marie Savignac

This sensational new member of "Darwin's pollination guild" is threatened by mining activities and potentially by poaching for the orchid trade.

"A precautionary approach is required when publishing such a spectacular new species. Wild populations must be protected and monitored and detailed information on their precise coordinates must be kept out of the public domain. So, don't ask us to reveal where we found it, somewhere in Madagascar," added Stévant.

The 15-year gap between this species' discovery and formal description allowed the team to implement conservation measures before the giant-spurred *Solenangis* achieves stardom. These include *ex situ* cultivation and seed banking as part of a collaboration between the Garden and the Ambatovy Conservation Department.

The pollination biology of *Solenangis impraedicta* was preliminarily studied using camera traps by Marie Savignac in 2019.

The observational period did not result in any conclusive pollination events, but the most likely pollinators are the large hawkmoths *Coelonia solani* and *Xanthopan praedicta*. The species name "*impraedicta*" (meaning unpredicted in Latin) is a nod to Darwin's prediction of the star orchid pollinator, which took 130 years to confirm in full. Hopefully, this time it won't take as long to identify the pollinator in the act.



**\* 2024/2025 FUTURE PROGRAMME AND UPCOMING EVENTS**

17 April 2024 – NZOS Meeting Night

11 May 2024 – NZOS **Autumn Show**– Western Springs Garden Community Hall

15 May 2024 – NZOS Meeting Night

19 June 2024 – NZOS Meeting Night

6 July 2024 – NZOS **Winter Show** – Western Springs Garden Community Hall

17 July 2024 – NZOS Meeting Night

21 August 2024 – NZOS Meeting Night

14 September 2024 – NZOS **Spring Show** - Western Springs Garden Community Hall

18 September 2024 – NZOS Meeting Night

16 October 2024 – NZOS Meeting Night

20 November 2024 – NZOS Meeting Night

19 February 2025 – NZOS Meeting Night

19 March 2025 – NZOS Meeting Night

16 April 2025 – NZOS Meeting Night

10 May 2025 – NZOS **Autumn Show** – Western Springs Garden Community Hall.

21 May 2025 – NZOS Meeting Night

18 June 2025 – NZOS Meeting Night

Time change. I  
had to go around and  
fix all my clocks.

