



# Tuckers Orchid Nursery

*Presents...*

## Orchids for Everyone



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### FROM ROSS THE BOSS

#### Welcome back –

The orchid season in NZ is slowly starting to get into swing with heaps of flowers appearing on the Cymbidiums, Paphs and Phalaenopsis, and anything else which has mature enough bulbs. Our sheds are starting to burst with all these flowering plants ready for the show season. If you haven't had a chance to notice yet, go out and have a look at your plants. They seem to have grown well over our long, hot summer.

This month's topic is again Phalaenopsis, but with a twist. We have larger, nearer flowering sized plants of some of our newer colours, that we have been saving. I believe there are 4-5 new oranges, different shades to almost dark red-orange. Lots of spots, white with pink spots, pink with white flares, yellows and other combinations as well. These plants, you won't have to wait very long to have them in flower as they are all "C" sized.

Another thing which is happening at this time of the year is preparation of your plants for displays or shows. Move your plants inside, or out of the worst of the weather and you should be staking them, i.e. putting a stick in near the spike and loosely tying with either a twisty tie or clips, near the middle of the spike. This also allows more room, so plants can be spaced closer together, utilizing your covered space more efficiently. It's time to put out your slug bait, and if necessary, mice bait, as both these pests think your spikes are there just for their free feed. Clean up those old husks on your plants, as they harbour bugs and beasts, and do a clean-up spray (no oil based sprays on the flowers) if necessary. Check the air movement in your greenhouse – a small fan continuously running stops spots (botrytis) on your flowers and leaves in damp conditions.

Like everything else, anticipation looking towards the opening of a new seedling and a favourite is always worth the wait. Plants that have potential, I always keep to the front so as to give them that extra bit of care.

Some of the new Phalaenopsis parents and mericlones



Phal Queen Beer 'Red Flash'



Phal Taida Fortune



Phal equestris



Phal amabilis

Further to Roy Tokunaga's visit, more comments were made, not about culture but about the changing of the USA's orchid nurseries.

Many of the older established nurseries in Hawaii and mainland USA are just closing down, unable to compete, or their land is being gobbled up for housing developments. On Roy's island alone three nurseries closed this year, and a couple more are thinking about it. This is fine, if all the orchids you want to grow are the same as everybody else's from the local supermarket, no choice, no variety just like weetbix in a packet. "I don't think so!"

Most orchid growers I know are collectors. They like variety and choice, but this choice comes at a price. Our nursery tries to offer a very wide range of orchids, probably too many, and to keep this going we need to sell plants. Here's where you come in. You are converts to the orchid world, but to how many of your friends and family do you give a gift of an orchid plant (a spare plant or plants) to start them off as an orchid grower. It makes space in your greenhouse for a few more additions as well. We try to sell to garden centres, and other outlets, but when I ring up offering plants to the sales person, they say they haven't been asked for orchids, so they won't stock them until asked. So please every time you visit a garden centre, ask where are the all the orchids and orchid products, Tuckers Orchid fertilizer etc., and do it as often as you can otherwise orchid nurseries in NZ will go the same way as in the USA. Land gobbled up for more houses for Auckland. So that your choice will be limited to mass market plants with no names, no choice and no variety.

### **SPECIALS THIS MONTH:**

6 pack of Phallies size C	\$85
10 pack of Phallies size C	\$150 (incl 1 small Moth Orchid Tucker)
Moth Orchid Tucker 175g	\$10
500g	\$18
6 pack Orange orchids mixed genera size B	\$50
Dolomag 300g 'The right grade'	\$8
Calcium and Magnesium for orchids – larger quantities on application	
Slug Out also available on request.	
All prices incl GST	

**These specials are now available for ordering through our website. Look for them in the Online Orchid Club category. Please let us know if you do not see this category option.**

Included are free cultural notes and a special free gift (Delivery charges apply). To place an order you can email us at [orchids@clear.net.nz](mailto:orchids@clear.net.nz) or visit our website [www.tuckersorchidnursery.co.nz](http://www.tuckersorchidnursery.co.nz) to view our range. We are happy to send these orchids anywhere in NZ only.



### **WEBSITE WATSUP:**

In the December newsletter I touched on how we were working towards putting the newsletter specials on our website. This has now been accomplished and some of our members have managed to work their way through some glitches and ordered our specials. For those that may have tried and gave up, here's what you need to do;

1. The specials are only available to view by Online Orchid Club members. Create an account on our website.
2. Email us once the account has been created and we will change the status over from Retail to Online Orchid Club. We will email you back once this has been completed.
3. Clear your browsing history.
  - 3.1 For Internet Explorer, open the browser window, click on the Tools menu and then select Internet Options. On the first screen, the General Tab, you will see Browsing History. Delete your browsing history.

3.2 For Mozilla Firefox, open the browser window, click on the Tools menu and select Options. On the Privacy tab click on Clear your recent history. Ensure that you then select 'Everything' at the next screen.

3.3 For Google Chrome, click on the button at the top right of the screen showing three horizontal bars. Select Tools and then Clear browsing data. Ensure that you then select 'the beginning of time' at the next screen.

4 Log in to our website using your email address and password. You should now see the additional Online Orchid Club plant category on the left hand side.

If you are still experiencing problems, please email me and I will endeavour to sort them out for you. Meanwhile, we will keep last month's specials up for another month to allow for those that wanted them but were having problems getting them.

**Note 1:** If you are wishing to order specific varieties to be included in one of the multipacks, either type the details into the Comments box at Step 5 of the checkout process or email us straight away. Otherwise we will assume that you wish us to make a selection for you.

**Note 2:** For the first time since we created this website we have loaded in some new varieties of orchids not previously available. As promised, these will be made available to our Online Orchid Club members first before being made generally available. You will find them in the Online Orchid Club category and they will go to general release once the next newsletter issue is released. Remember, the early bird catches the worm (we pick the best plants first to fill orders).

Susan Tucker



### CATS COMMENT:

**Grooming plants for the shows.** Firstly, select plants early that you think will make the grade. Often these will have flowered before and if the spike looks like it will be half decent get them under cover early, so that the weather or beasties do not get the chance to damage them. This is not foolproof however, as I used to have a nice plant of Odm Summit which regularly tried to flower, but often as not I would go out to the green house to find the spike bending at right angles, having been bitten through mid stem sometime in the night. Try as I might I couldn't find out what had caused the damage as there was no slime trail or evidence to be found. I think it must have been a flying bug of some type. After your plant has been brought in for special care, stake the stem carefully. Straighten them gradually, day by day, and do not try to do too much at once, or you will have a broken spike and much heartache. Also do not try to do this too early in the day, as the spikes will be brittle in the morning. As the day warms, up the sap rises in the stem, and it become more pliable. Clean the pots and slip the plant into a bigger pot, if it looks as if it may be top heavy, or tip when the flowers open. The plant won't mind this, if you do not disturb the root ball too much. Clean your leaves to allow the maximum photosynthesis opportunity for the plant. Give it good light and top dress with a little slow release fertilizer to give the plant a boost. Don't forget the dolomite too. Water the plant regularly to get that spike growing to its maximum ability. When you move the plant decide if you want the flowers to present all in one direction, or all around the stem. If you want the flowers to look in one direction, ensure the light falls on the side of the plant that you wish the flowers to display. If you want all around flowers, you need to make sure the plant gets even light from all angles, as in a glasshouse. Once the flowers start to open do not change the orientation of the plant, because if you change it, the flowers will twist and spoil all your careful preparation. Before the show clean the leaves again and wipe them over with a little milk and water (about quarter strength). This gives the leaves a nice gloss but does not look as artificial as an oil mix. Transport your plants carefully, adding extra stakes and support for the flowers if needed. Do not watch your flowers while driving, as the vibration of the car can make them jiggle and move quite considerably which can do your head in if you let it! Also it is not recommended to take your eyes off the road while driving! Enjoy the show, help out if you can and support your local orchid society by being a member and showing off your plants. They need your support and all plants large and small are welcome in their displays as long as the plants are clean and tidy. Excellent friendships can be cultivated over a cuppa too!

## FEATURE OF THE MONTH – PHALAEENOPSIS

The genus “Phalaenopsis” was named by C.L. Blume in 1825. In Greek, the name means “looks like a moth,” giving rise to the plant’s common name, “moth orchid.” The orchid’s large, curved petals do indeed look like a moth with its wings spread. More than 50 species of Phalaenopsis have been identified; Phalaenopsis amabilis being one of the most popular and America’s favourite orchid.

The genus is comprised of 50-60 mostly epiphytic (grows on trees) and lithophytic (grows on rocks) species, spread throughout most of Asia east of India and the Pacific, to the Philippines and south to Australia. It is monopodial (means it grows upwards from a central stem) with large succulent, drooping leaves with short stems, growing off the stem from among the leaves is a flower spike, which can have a few, to a hundred flowers with a distinct 3-lobed, clawed lip. They grow in dense, wet forest regions where there is a marked contrast in day and night temperature, usually from 17-22° C at night, up to 35°C by day. They are, by far, our most popular plant here in the nursery, and this year we will flower about 10,000 plants in all colours. They readily breed with other genera in the vandaceous family.



### CULTURE OF PHALAEENOPSIS:

Most Phalaenopsis are small to medium plants, but some can be somewhat large if older, or a particular variety. The thick spongy roots like to be misted in the summer heat. A good way to tell if the plant is getting enough or too much light is to judge by leaf colour. The leaves should be similar to the colour of grass. Phalaenopsis plants can bloom at any time of the year, and can bloom 1-12 months. When the plant has finished flowering, it can either be cut at the base of the flower spike, or below the last flower down the stem, in hopes the plant will re-bloom. Only do this if the plant leaves and roots look strong enough to help the plant bloom again.

Phalaenopsis are relatively easy to grow.

**Light** – Moderate lighting is required, never full sun as it will scorch the leaves. In the house, an east facing location behind net curtains is preferable. Shading from 10am till 5pm will be needed in summer.

**Temperature** – Phalaenopsis are very fast to grow and flower provided you give them enough heat. For the hobby grower this means over 10-15° C up to 30° C.

**Watering** – Water regularly, without letting them completely dry out between applications.

Phalaenopsis do not have a rest period. Do not let water sit in the leaf axils, as rot may set in and kill the plant. Dry carefully with the point of a tissue before nightfall, if this happens.

**Feeding** – Feed with Moth Orchid Tucker weekly, all year round. Flush the plants with plain water monthly to remove excess salts from the mix.

**Repotting** is best in spring or summer. Use a medium to large grade of bark with a tiny bit of peat added to stop the bark drying too quickly.

**Humidity** is necessary particularly for the growth of young plants. Adult plants are more tolerant of the drier conditions often found when growing in the house. Plants can be placed on a bed of wet stones to increase humidity, although they must not actually sit in the water.

### PEARLS OF WISDOM FROM THE LATE JOHN McCOLM: aka our production manager

Phalaenopsis are very fast to grow and flower provided you give them enough heat. For the hobby grower this means over 10-15°C up to 30°C. Water and feed regularly at least once a week. One of the few problems associated with Phalaenopsis is, how to make them flower almost continually.

Tip 1: To initiate spiking (flowering) drop the average day and night temperature by 5-8°C maintaining the minimum temperatures. So move them into the cooler garage or back bedroom for

up to 6 weeks – light levels can be quite low but still feed them Tuckers Moth Orchid Tucker every 10 days (reduced because of the cooler temperatures). This fertilizer has been specially formulated to give very high potassium content. Re-spiking can happen as quickly as 2 weeks. Then move them back into the warm room again. Using different fertilizers can also make the plants grow more leaves than flowers, so always use the special Moth Orchid fertilizer for best results.

Tip 2: When the flowers on a spike are finished, don't cut the stem off. Just cut back to 1cm above where the first flower was. This can initiate a 2nd, 3rd or 4th branch of flowers from the nodes on the original spike. Keep feeding the plants weekly, as long periods of flowering uses a lot of energy, and to keep the plants growing more leaves and getting bigger, they need lots of food.

Tip 3: The most common insect pest is the woolly aphid – to kill these the best spray is Attack – but don't forget that the bugs also infest your bark mix so dunk the pot into the insecticide too, which also kills the source of re-infestation. If you can't find Attack, Confidor will also do the trick. In general, the hybrids are easier to grow than the species, but all Phalaenopsis like to be warm and humid.



### SPOTLIGHT ON SPECIES: *Phal venosa* & *amboinensis*

*Phal amboinensis* – A warm growing epiphyte from Ambon Island, Indonesia, and Sulawesi Island, Papua New Guinea. It grows in shady humid forests with year round rainfall. The flowers usually appear on long arching spikes in late winter or early spring.

*Phal venosa* – These are found on Sulawesi Island (Celebes) in Indonesia. Warm growing with erect spikes of 3-5 flowers that appear in summer and autumn, they prefer year round watering and feeding.

Both of these species appear significantly in the breeding of our little orange beauties that we are releasing this month.

#### Photos of parents;

We have a number of seedlings using these parents available this month. See our online orchid section of our website for a listing.



Phal amboinensis  
(Not available)



Phal venosa  
(not available)



Phal Tying Shin Forever Love  
Seedling parent



Phal Brother Sara Gold  
Seedling parent



Phal Taipei Gold  
Parent of Tying Shin Spring



Phal Tying Shin Golden Rose  
Seedling parent



Phal Sogo Lawrence  
Seedling parent



Phal Nobby's Pacific Sunset  
Seedling parent

## WHERE WE ARE OUT AND ABOUT THIS MONTH:

All quiet for the next few weeks. Time to concentrate on growing the plants well.

Next Month we will be focusing on: Chinese Cymbidiums species and hybrids



Cym goeringii

*Please note, the photos of plants shown in our newsletter are a mixture of breeding plants, plants we have seen in our travels and plants we have for sale. Not all of the plants that are displayed in our newsletter are available as plants for sale. Please check our website for details of what plants we have for sale. We do, however, welcome requests for plants that are not listed on our website as we may be able to supply them or something very similar.*