



Rockhampton Orchid Society Inc.



**PO Box 5949
Red Hill Rockhampton 4701**

Founded 1955



www.rockhamptonorchidsociety.com.au



[Rockhampton Orchid Society Inc](https://www.facebook.com/RockhamptonOrchidSocietyInc)

Newsletter – June 2025



As we enter the winter months, a majority of us will become less motivated to move, just wanting to snuggle up and stay warm, getting out of bed is getting harder as the sun rises later. The shorter days mean watering my orchids in the dark before I go to work, fortunately, I have lights in most of my greenhouses.

For most orchid genera growth will slow down over the cooler months. Catesetums will drop their leaves and go dormant. Hard Cane Dendrobiums do not enjoy cold winter breezes and if they are exposed to the direct south westerly breezes they may drop their leaves. That is the reason some growers cover their southern & western walls of their greenhouses to cut off the winds. I normally do mine the first week of May. The product I use is a clear tarp that is available from Bunnings – POLYTUF Clear View Tarp 2.4m x 3.0 m. The tarp has eyelets to enable attaching to your greenhouse walls. I have rows of galvanised wires running down the two sides of my greenhouse and we use cable ties to attach the tarp to the wire. If you do wrap your greenhouse, be aware that bugs and vermin will flourish in the warmth and the reduced air movement eg: Mealey bugs, thrips, mites, cockroaches, rats, mice etc., so you have to be vigilant and treat when required.

Softcane (nobile) Dendrobiums love the cold weather, the colder the nights, the better the flowering in Spring. Phalaenopsis enjoy the cooler change. Cattleya orchid leaves may get a red colouration to them from the cold. For those of you who love winter enjoy, I am already wishing for the warm and longer days to return.⁴⁷

Sandra Rowcliffe - Editor.

**Next Monthly Meeting: Saturday 28th June 2025.
Doors Open 12.30pm and Meeting Starts at 1:30pm.**

Plants must be tabled by 1.20pm at the latest.

Notice to Members: Please assist if you can with cleaning the hall after the meeting.

Any original article contained in a Rockhampton Orchid Society Newsletter may be re-printed for educational or information purposes, if, the Author and Newsletter & Edition are referenced.

Rockhampton Orchid Society Inc.
General Meeting Saturday 24th May commencing at 1.26pm

Attendance: As per register

Apologies: As per register

New Members: NIL

Visitors: NIL

Popular Vote – Members completed the popular orchid vote.

Minutes of March 2025 monthly meeting as published in the April newsletter were approved as correct and accurate. There was no meeting in April due to the clash with our show dates.

Moved

Robyn Bentley

Seconded

Peter Rankin

Carried

CORRESPONDENCE FOR GENERAL MEETING OF R.O.S.I. ON SATURDAY 24th MAY 2025

IN –

- Newsletters – Albany Orchid Society Apr/May, Blackwater Garden Club Apr/May, Bundaberg Orchid Society Apr/May, Caboolture Orchid & Foliage Society Mar/Apr, Caloundra Orchid Society Apr/May, Childers & District Orchid Society Apr/May, Gladstone Orchid & Foliage Society, Gympie Orchid Society Apr/May, Hervey Bay Orchid Society Apr/May, Mackay and District Orchid Society Apr/May, Maryborough Orchid Society Apr/May, Nambour Orchid Society Apr/May, NQ Orchid Society, Port Curtis Orchid & Foliage Society Apr/May, PROPA
- Email from STOCQ re: cancellation of Bribie Island Show on 18th & 19th April due to upcoming election pre polling venue
- Email from STOCQ re: new show date of Sunshine Coast Orchid Society 17th & 18th April 2025
- Email from Michelle Landry re: RSVP for Show Dinner
- Email from STOCQ re: Show Dates
- Email from STOCQ confirming ROSI Autumn Show Dates
- Email from Australian Orchid Foundation
- Email from AOC re: 33rd AOC BOM Minutes
- Email from STOCQ re: Caboolture Show Information
- Email from STOCQ re: reminder of STOCQ Meeting in Bundaberg on June 14
- Email about Hervey Bay Spring Show – 26th, 27th & 28th September
- Statement from Rockhampton Regional Council
- Card from PROPA following our Autumn Show
- Receipt from Dianne Berrill
- Email of Resignation from Jeff Glover

OUT –

- Newsletters from other clubs to members
- Show Dinner Invitation sent to Michelle Landry
- Sponsorship Letter sent to Doblo's
- Response Letter to Jeff Glover Email

Sandra Rowcliffe moved that the Inwards correspondence acknowledged as received and outwards correspondence endorsed as sent.

Seconded

Moyna Richardson

Carried

Treasurer's Report – This was sent out separately to May Newsletter.

In the absence of Karen Jeff Bloxsom moved that the report be accepted

Seconded

Dennis Ratcliffe

Carried

Growers Group:

Robyn Murphy spoke about the first Growers Meeting for 2025 that will be held at Jeff Bloxsom's residence 12 Harden Street Kawana, from 1.00pm to 4.00pm. The focus will be on Vandas and the basics on orchids. Everyone was reminded to bring a plate for afternoon tea and possibly a raffle plant.

Business Arising from the last meeting: NIL

General Business:

- Shirley Kuhl thanked all the volunteers in the kitchen.
- Jeff mentioned that the show was a tremendous success
- Jeff informed that we have been able to book the Robert Schwarten Pavilion for both of our 2026 Shows. Autumn Show will be 21st & 22nd March and Spring Show will be 26th & 27th September.

- Dennis Ratcliffe mentioned that while he was on security duties that there was nothing but positive remarks by show attendees. The ladies on the door heard many similar comments. Visitors were happy with the return of the Devonshire Teas.
- The reporting talks were invaluable and well attended.
- Jeni Scott commented it was the best dinner ever!!!
- Christmas Function will be on Saturday 29th November at the Rockhampton Bowls Club and the same caterer has been booked. The room hire is \$400, and the drinks will be at their members prices.
- Jeff commented at our Committee Meeting we discussed the show wrap-up. He said that everything seemed to be exceptional. He asked if anyone had any ideas for our next shows. Tara Thorne suggested having more vendors. This was discussed but if there were more vendors this would possibly take away from our members plant sales, so we will continue with four. Kerry Green suggested that the stores area combines with the members plants area, this will have to be looked into. Margaret Warren suggested that we purchase another square terminal. Without Wi-Fi available the square terminals had to be tied to members phones; the terminal did not work in the current location of the stores stand.
- We had looked at a mid-year function, but this will not go ahead now as there were members with too many commitments.
- Moyna Richardson congratulated the committee and all the members who worked for the show.
- Jeff said that there was still no decision on what is happening with the club stores, this will have further discussion to find a way forward. There is some consideration about implementing an order system.
- Dennis Ratcliffe asked if Jeff Glover was resigning from the Club, but Jeff Bloxsom said no it was only from the positions of Registrar, Cultural Advisor and Show Marshall. He said that Tony/Bob/Peter were already filling the registers position.
- Sharyn Frisch stood up and says she needs to say something. She talked about the Popular Vote Trophy that disappeared in 2018 which was Awarded to John & Sharyn, and that they felt they never received it, but did pay for a replacement trophy. The original trophy turned up at the Trophy Engravers, the business had new owners who found the trophy up on a shelf when they were cleaning things up. Jeff said a plate of all the names of the winners from the original trophy had been put on the new trophy, and that with the discovery of the original trophy Jeff asked if anyone had any ideas what to do with it now. Paul Bennett moved a motion that the trophy be used as the Reserve Champion Trophy, this was seconded by Jeni Scott and all agreed. So the trophy will be a sponsored trophy from John & Sharyn Frisch, and all agreed. Sharyn said she was pleased about this. Jeff will organise the plates to be done for this.

Plant Commentary - Peter Jenkinson, he mentioned that it was a great variety of orchids tabled.

Talk following the meeting – Tony March delivered an informative talk on the preparation and care of orchids as we move into the winter months. He thanked Jeni Scott and Keith Marsden for the talks they presented during the show. These were strongly attended.

Lucky Number: #8 – Kathy Vella

Exhibitor's Raffle: #25 Judy Dore

General Raffle – Helena Maker, Sandra Rowcliffe, Marg Handley, Peter Jenkinson, Allan Cunningham, Lyn Hopes, Kay Ratcliffe, Jeff Bloxsom, Robyn Murphy, Kathy Zammit x 2, Daphne Jenkinson.

Additional Raffle of two (flask) seedlings potted into plugs at our Show were then drawn and won by Alan Mikkelsen and Marg Handley.

Next General Meeting – Saturday 28th June

Next Committee Meeting – will be following the June Meeting, no need to hold one in May.

Meeting closed at 3.45 pm

Jeff Bloxsom

President

Sandra Rowcliffe

Secretary



Annual Competition – May 2025 Results

Judges Choice

<i>Dendrobium</i> Genting Royal ‘Banana Split’	T March
<i>Ctsm. saccatum</i>	T March
<i>Fdk.</i> After Dark ‘Baker’s Cherry Madness’	J & P Bennett

Popular Vote

Advanced (Plants Tabled: 92)

Cattleya up to 100mm	<i>Bc.</i> Maikai Mayumi	T March
Cattleya over 100mm	<i>Rlc.</i> Chia Lin ‘New City’	J & P Bennett
Vandaceous up to 65mm	<i>Vanda</i> Janice Allison ‘Coconut Ice’	J Scott
Vandaceous 65mm & over	<i>Vanda</i> Kulwadee Fragrance #19	J Scott
Oncidium	<i>Ons.</i> Wildcat ‘Bloodshot’	J Scott
Dendrobium - Any Other Type - Intermediate	Tie - <i>Den.</i> Joe Tawiwattana Tie – Den. Hsinying Frosty Maree ‘Icicle’	J Scott T O’Connor
Dendrobium - Phalaenante	<i>Dendrobium</i> Mitzuao White	T & M Handley
Paphiopedilum	<i>Paph.</i> Dellaina x <i>Paph. concolor</i> x <i>Paph. Virgo</i>	B Jenkins & S Kuhl
Bulbophyllums	<i>Bulb.</i> Lilliana x <i>Bulb. rothschildiana</i>	R Wines
Phalaenopsis	<i>Phal.</i> Fuller’s Black Leopard	T March
Catasetinae	<i>Fdk.</i> After Dark ‘Baker’s Cherry Madness’	J & P Bennett
Species	<i>Ctsm. saccatum</i>	T March
Miscellaneous	<i>Ctsm. sinense</i> x <i>Cy.</i> Murasaki	T & M Handley

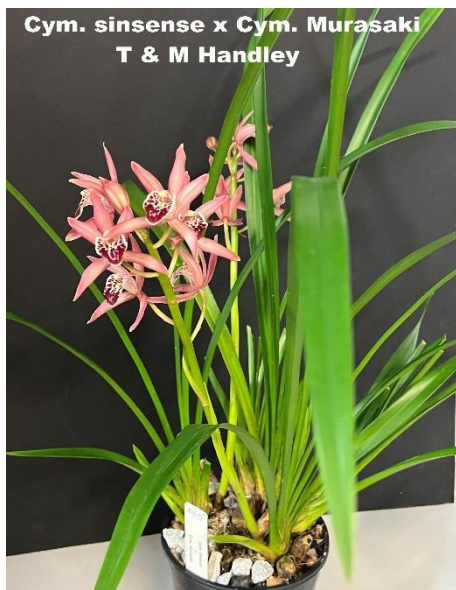
Novice (Plants Tabled: 16)

Cattleya up to 100mm	<i>Rth.</i> Musician ‘Topaz Quation’	D & K Ratcliffe
Cattleya over 100mmn	<i>C.</i> Dal’s Choice ‘Princess Jen’	L & G Schulz
Dendrobium	<i>Dendrobium</i> Airy Ice	R Bentley
Miscellaneous	<i>Phal.</i> KV Beauty	M Warren
Species	<i>Paph. spicerianum</i>	D & K Ratcliffe

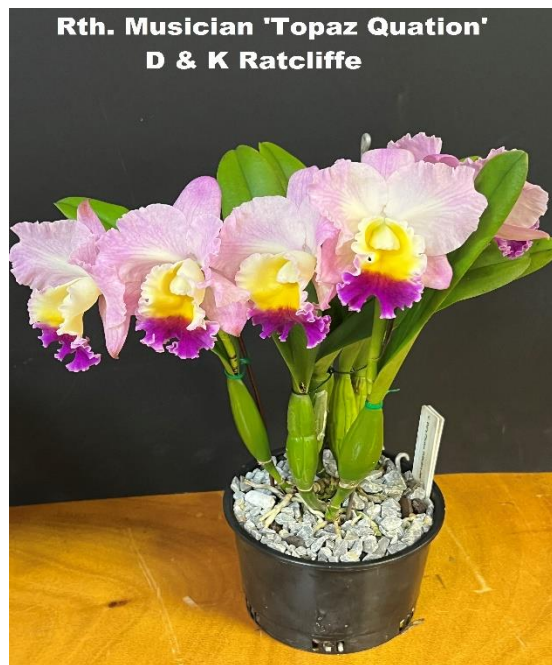
JUDGES CHOICE WINNERS – MAY GENERAL MEETING



POPULAR VOTE WINNERS MAY GENERAL MEETING







PRESENTATION OF STOCQ CERTIFICATES FOR AWARDED PLANTS



Growers Group Workshop

Saturday 31st May we held our first Grower's Group Gathering for 2025. It was held at Jeff & Mailyn Bloxsom's home and attended by approximately 25 members. The day was very ordinary looking, having rain over Thursday & Friday there were still a lot of grey clouds hanging around, but we were fortunate that the weather stayed fine all afternoon. This was the first workshop that Robyn Murphy co-ordinated and she did a great job.

Jeff did a presentation on basic orchid growing, covering areas of species over hybrids, how to write labels correctly and then went onto a Vanda Potting Demonstration. We thank Jeff for sharing his knowledge and both him and Marilyn for opening their home and greenhouses up for the group.

Jeff also did up an article on how he grows Vandaceous Orchids which I have included in this newsletter for those who did not attend the workshop.



HOW I GROW VANDACEOUS ORCHIDS by Jeff Bloxsom



Vandas are a *monopodial* orchid – this means they have a single stem and growing point at the tip or crown of the orchid. Damage or disease getting into the crown of the Vanda usually results in the death of the plant. Their growth is generally upright in habit, but sometimes requires staking to achieve this. The main stem can have lateral buds which can develop into plantlets (“keikis”). These small plants can be removed from the mother plant when they have attained sufficient size with their own root system.

Remove with a sterile blade and I usually treat the area on the mother plant with a fungicide paste to prevent infections getting in. As vandas continually grow, a mature plant can get very tall and unmanageable in the collection.

Another means of controlling this and propagating a new plant is by a means we call “topping the plant”. Some times a mature plant will develop roots along the stem of the plant. Wait until there are at least three to four roots and then you can cut the top of the plant off, of course

below these new roots. Treat both cuts with a fungicide paste and re-pot the new plant. The base of the plant left behind will not grow from the cut top but usually will send out new plants from the side.

The leaves on vandas are arranged in two rows or ranks along the main stem, and the inflorescences emerge from the leaf axils (the angle where a leaf is attached to the main stem.) Some vandas will flower from every new leaf axil or at least every second one, if you have strong healthy plants.

There are three broad types of leaf shapes among Vandaceous orchids – Strap-Leaf (V-shaped, leathery leaves), Terete (tapering, pencil shaped leaves that are circular in cross section), Semi-terete (Hybrid combination – somewhat pencil-shaped and tapered but not always completely round like the terete).

The strap-leaf type is the ones I mainly grown and require to be grown in a shade house or could be hung under a tree providing shade. Whereas terete vandas and the semi-terete hybrids are sun lovers. They can be grown in the full sun out in the open. The only thing is if you have dendrobium beetle problems, they do love the flowers on the vandas and this can be a problem.

STRAP LEAF VANDA



TERETE VANDA



SEMI-TERETE VANDA



Vandaceous plants will grow well in any porous medium if properly aerated. The mix I use which I have found suits my purposes is 2 parts hard bark – 1 part coarse charcoal – 1 part stone (scoria). I have found this mix to last a long time, something you require for vandas as they last many years in the same container and medium.

I use plastic baskets of various sizes for all my plants. Wood baskets look good but rot in time which can cause problems for your plants. Vandaceous orchids are epiphytes and need good air circulation. Air movement also reduces the incidence of leaf-spotting fungal and bacterial infections.

Plants should be suspended so that the aerial roots are free to hang down, otherwise the roots attach themselves to the bench or wall and are damaged when the plants need to be moved. Vandas are vigorous growers and will soon move into their neighbour's basket if too close. A trick I use on my mature plants is to lightly tie the hanging roots closely together to stop this problem.

Vandas are not like other orchids when it comes time to re-pot. They do not like to have their roots trimmed. The large aerial roots don't like to be disturbed. All the same, you won't kill your plants if you do trim the roots but will inhibit the plants growth for some time. Of course trim off any old dry dead roots and clean up plant as much as possible.



I then turn the plant upside down and shake out as much of the old mix as possible, especially any decayed bark. Instead of removing plants from their smaller, older baskets at re-potting time, I "pot up" plants from smaller to larger baskets by just placing the small pot inside the larger pot. This is the reason I use plastic baskets that don't break down.

I soak the roots and plant in water with a weak growth formula until they become pliable, and then work the roots through the slats in the larger basket, so that I place the smaller basket and plant intact into the larger basket. Never coil the roots around the old basket because vandaceous plants will feel better with an unrestricted root system. I then top up and cover the old basket with my potting medium. This method minimizes shock to the plant and permits continued, uninterrupted growth.

Late Spring to early Summer is the best season for re-potting vandaceous plants, but these orchids may be re-potted at almost any time of the year. But best time to re-pot is like all orchids when you can see new root growth. I water my vandas at least once a day in summer, sometimes twice on very hot days. As I water with overhead sprayers this helps in keeping the humidity in the green house. In any season avoid watering plants late in the afternoon. Vandaceous plants should be dry before nightfall. I also have now installed a misting system in the Vanda house which has proved very helpful in cooling down the Vanda house in the hot summer months, and increasing the humidity.

Vandaceous orchids are heavy feeders and should be fertilized at least once a week with a complete, balanced fertiliser. I alternate my fertilisers – organic (seaweed – blood & bone etc) with commercial fertilisers (I use Peter's all purpose). Once a month I will give my plants a concentrated vitamin and hormone solution to promote vigorous growth. If time permits I fertilise more than once a week but at a weaker solution. As I also use my over head sprayers to fertilise I try to give my plants a good flush out every month to remove excess salts and minerals.

The problem I have had with my earlier collection of Vandas is a fungal disease known as Phyllosticta Leaf Spot, This blight is also known as Guignardia (Thai disease). Although a lot of different orchid genera are prone to this disease, it is more prevalent in the vandaceous and dendrobium alliance. Although Phyllosticta does not kill an orchid, it may weaken the plant to the point where it easily falls prey to other pests or diseases. This blight can quickly be carried from diseased plants to healthy ones by splashing rainwater, sprinklers or watering. In addition the spores are discharged into air and can travel between plants on a breeze. If this disease gets into your collection it is very hard to eradicate.





You have to be ruthless in the control of this disease. I removed any plants that showed a lot of Guignardia because it is almost impossible to eliminate from an infected plant which then could spread to your healthy plants. I destroyed these plants. While the plants with only a little spotting on leaves, these leaves must be removed and treat the area with a fungus paste. Usually it affects the older lower leaves, so left untreated these leaves will die and fall off anyway. This is the reason why in a lot of vandaceous collections

you see these stems with only leaves at the top. I call this the "palm tree syndrome."

Unless you can promote root growth along the stem allowing you to eventually top the plant and re-pot, I feel these plants take up valuable space in my collection so I usually put these out in the garden.

The first signs of a Phyllosticta infection in vandaceous orchids appear as elongated tiny purplish or black spots along the veins of the leaves. These lesions gradually grow in size; appear as long, blackish, diamond shaped streaks. So after you have eliminated this blight from your collection I control any re-infections by a dose of a good fungicide every couple of months.



I use 'Triforine', this is a thiophanate-methylbased systemic fungicide. Also sold as a black spot rose spray. Of course when you purchase a Vanda make sure it has none of this spotting as you could easily introduce this disease into your collection.

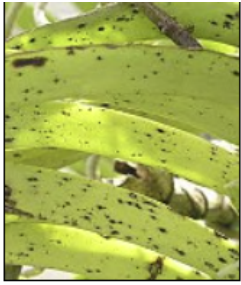
The objects of growing a good vanda is to have a strong healthy plants with its leaves all the way down the stem with no spotting. Ideal vandaceous culture need plenty of good room and hanging height for their robust root system, good light, plenty of water, and a regular fertiliser program, as they are hungry little buggers.

A few of Jeff's winning Vandas below



LEAF DISEASE IN VANDAS

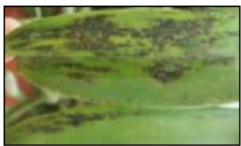
Source – <https://staugorchidsociety.org>



Guignardia Symptoms: The first signs of Guignardia infection are tiny, dark purple, elongated lesions on either leaf surface. These lesions run parallel to the veins and elongate into purple streaks or diamond-shaped areas. Spots often merge to form large irregular lesions that may affect a large part of the leaf. With age, the center of the lesion turns tan. Raised, black sporing bodies develop in the affected area feeling like sandpaper. Affects mostly ascocentrums and vandas and their hybrids. This blight is also known as Phyllosticta; the names apply to two different sexual stages of the same fungus.



Phyllosticta Symptoms: Spotting from Phyllosticta may start anywhere on the leaf or pseudobulb. The lesions are tiny, yellow and slightly sunken. As they enlarge, they become round to oval and more sunken, especially if the infection is on the leaves. With age, they turn tan to dark brown and develop a slightly raised, red to purple-black margin. Eventually, tiny black, raised spore structures develop in the center of the spots. Individual spots are about ¼ in across. Severely infected leaves may drop prematurely. This blight is also known as Guignardia; the names apply to two different sexual stages of the same fungus.



Treatment: Spray with a suitable fungicide containing copper or quaternary ammonium compounds, Daconil or Cleary's 3336, or some of the fancier fungicides like Heritage or Pageant, following label instructions.

Prevention: Good sanitation with good air movement. Reduce leaf wetness, water on the leaves may lead to infection. If the fungus is a continuing problem, monthly fungicide sprays may offer effective prevention.

Read More: [The Dreaded Thai Disease - Phyllosticta Guignardia](#) (Dr. Martin Motes),

FUSARIUM WILT IN ORCHIDS – HOW TO RECOGNISE & TREAT

Source – <https://everydayorchids.com>

Fusarium wilt in orchids is, unfortunately, a problem that you may encounter at one point or another. It is caused by the Fusarium pathogen, and this kind of infection can be hard to identify at first. You might notice that your orchid isn't looking as lively lately. Maybe the leaves are yellowing, the roots are rotting, or the orchid just looks like it's starting to die. What's happening? As you are investigating, ask yourself, could your orchid be infected by Fusarium?

Fusarium is a fungus that affects all plants, including orchids. Fusarium infections in orchids are also called "Fusarium wilt." Orchids affected by this microorganism may display various signs of distress, such as yellowing or wilted leaves and discoloured or rotting roots. Treatment options include pruning off affected areas and treating with a fungicide spray.

Fusarium infections in orchids are caused by the Fusarium oxysporum fungus. This fungus is highly contagious and moves easily from plant to plant. It is one of the main causes of fungal infections and can affect a variety of plants, not just orchids. Check out their website for more information of this disease.

MID YEAR ROSI GROWERS GROUP GATHERING

When – Saturday 12th July

Time – 1.00pm to 4.00pm

Where – Sandra & Michael Rowcliffe's Home

53 Constance Avenue Rockyview

What to Bring – Folding Chair – Coffee Cup – Plate for Afternoon Tea – raffle prize



Orchid of the Month

This month I am covering the genera Phalaenopsis Orchids, commonly known as the 'Moth Orchid'. These are by far the most gifted variety of orchids being sold in nurseries, hardware stores and supermarkets (sadly most times without a name). They are extremely easy to grow and very long flowering. Most plants will have developed flower spikes over the last couple of months and they will be in full bloom by Spring.

Source - <https://rhs.org.uk>

What are moth orchids?

These tropical orchids produce exotic displays of showy blooms that last for several months. The flowers come in a range of colours, most often white, pink or purple, but also shades of yellow, peach and burgundy. The petals may be veined, patterned or blotched with a combination of these colours. The tall, arching flower stems can be produced at any time of year and sprout from a clump of long, leathery, evergreen leaves.



These orchids have been widely bred to produce many free-flowering and easy-to-grow hybrids. They grow well as houseplants, enjoying the year-round warmth and filtered light in our homes.

They are grown in very loose, airy compost, mainly made of composted bark. Keeping the roots in good condition – not too wet or too dry – is the key to success with moth orchids.

Moth orchids are among the most widely sold flowering houseplants and are available from many outlets, including garden centres, supermarkets, DIY stores and florists. They are also available from many online houseplant retailers. .

Thanks to modern propagation techniques, moth orchids are now cheaper and more readily available than ever before, in an ever-expanding diversity of colours and patterns. They range in size from miniature plants just 15–20cm (6–8in) tall, to statuesque specimens of 50cm (20in) or more.

Most moth orchids are sold as unnamed hybrids – only specialist orchid growers offer named species and hybrids. Newer introductions and recent hybrids (even if unnamed) tend to be easier to grow and bloom more frequently.

In summer, keep them out of direct sun, as it can scorch the leaves. Moth orchids like consistently warm conditions all year round – 19–30°C during the day and 16–19°C at night.

Watering



Correct watering is vital to ensure moth orchids stay healthy. If kept too wet, the roots are likely to rot, but if kept too dry, the roots may shrivel and die.

- Water moth orchids weekly throughout the growing season but reduce watering slightly in winter.
- Never let the roots dry out completely and never let plants sit in water. Always let excess water drain away.
- Ideally use tepid water, preferably rainwater.
- When watering, take care not to splash the leaves or get water into the crown, although you can mist the plant lightly in summer to increase humidity.

Feeding

To encourage strong growth and flowering, feed lightly but regularly during the growing season using a specific orchid fertiliser. However, regular feeding every time you water can lead to a build-up of potentially harmful salts in the compost. To flush these out, water without feeding every fourth watering. Feed only sparingly, if at all, during the winter months. When using fertiliser, take care to follow the manufacturer's instructions, as overfeeding can be damaging rather than beneficial.



Encourage flowering

If the plant is large and healthy but hasn't flowered for a while, move it to a cooler spot, reducing the temperature by about 5°C for a month or so. It should then send up a new flower stem. To stimulate repeat-flowering, cut back the old stalk after all its blooms have fallen to just above the second node (joint) beneath the spent flowers. A new flowering side-shoot will often form.

Deadheading

If the faded blooms don't fall by themselves, pick them off to keep the plant looking its best. After all the flowers on a stem have fallen, cut it off just above a healthy node (joint) lower down the stem, to encourage a new flowering side-shoot to sprout from that node.

Re-potting

It is important to completely change the compost every couple of years (I try to do mine every twelve months), as the structure of bark-based orchid composts deteriorates. It becomes less airy and denser, holding onto water longer, which can cause the roots to rot.

Moth orchids can be re-potted at any time of year, as long as the roots are active and have green tips. Re-potting is only necessary once a plant has become too large for its container or has been in the same compost for two years:





- Choose a suitable container. If you use a transparent pot this allows you to see if the compost is still moist below the surface, so you know when to water. Damp compost is darker than dry compost. Some roots can also photosynthesise, so a clear container helps with this.

- Always use specially formulated bark-based orchid compost. Never use loam-based or multipurpose compost, as these will kill moth orchids.



Re-potting is straightforward:

- Remove the orchid from its container and pull out all the old bark compost from among its roots, untangling them gently if necessary.
- Snip off any unhealthy or dead roots – these may be brown, shrivelled, mushy or hollow.
- Shorten the remaining healthy roots back to about 12cm (5in). Healthy roots are plump, firm and silvery-white.
- If the roots now fit comfortably into the old container, then re-use it. Be careful not to **overpot** into too large a container – if there is lots of excess compost, it will stay wet for too long, causing the roots to rot.
- Hold the plant in the container at the level it was previously growing and fill in the spaces around the roots with fresh orchid compost. Gently firm it in as you go, especially around the edges. If done correctly, when you pick up the plant by its stem, the container and compost should come with it and not fall away. Loose compost will cause the plant to be unstable and may damage the new root tips, stopping them from growing.
- Don't bury any roots that are growing out into the air, as these may rot if covered with compost.
- If the plant is unstable or lopsided, you may need to add a small cane or two to provide support until the roots have established in the new container.
- Finally, give the plant a thorough watering, ensuring the whole root ball is moistened. Let the water drain straight out and don't leave the plant sitting in water.

Caring for older plants



Moth orchids are easy to look after and can continue growing – and flowering regularly – for many years with minimal maintenance. Just keep them warm, in good light, water regularly and re-pot every couple of years. Occasionally wipe the leaves with a damp cloth to remove any dust.

Moth orchids often form roots above the compost that look like they're trying to clamber out of their container. These are nothing to worry about and you shouldn't try to bury them. Moth orchids are epiphytes, which means they naturally grow on other plants, usually on tree branches. In the wild, these 'aerial' roots help them cling to their perch and absorb nutrients and moisture from their surroundings.

Pruning

After flowering, cut off the stalk just above the second node (joint) beneath the spent flowers. A new flowering side-shoot may then sprout from the node. If no new flower shoot develops and the whole stem dies, turning pale and dry, snip it off at the base. Cut off old leaves as they start to fade, to keep the plant looking its best.



Training

Moth orchids are usually sold with the flower stem clipped to a thin supporting stake, to hold it upright. Subsequently, when plants produce new flower stems, clip or tie these to the stake, so the stem doesn't droop under the weight of the large flowers or grow in a wayward direction.

Propagating

Occasionally, a small plantlet (keiki) will sprout from a node on the flower stem. Once this has formed several good roots you can detach it and pot it up in orchid compost. Water sparingly at first but mist the leaves daily.

You can encourage moth orchids to produce keiki by applying 'keiki paste' (a specialist hormone preparation) to the nodes on spent flower stems. This can be a little fiddly:

- Use a scalpel to make a vertical cut through the bract covering the node. Be very careful not to cut into the bud beneath.
- With tweezers, pull away the two halves of the bract and apply a little keiki paste to the exposed bud.
- After six to eight weeks, a little plantlet may form.



Keiki paste is available from specialist orchid suppliers. Ordinary hormone rooting compound will not work.

Problems

If given the correct growing conditions, moth orchids are healthy and long-lived houseplants. But you may sometimes encounter the following problems:

- **Lack of flowers** – move the plant to a slightly cooler location, with a temperature about 5°C lower, for a month or so. This should stimulate flowering.
- **Root deterioration or rot** – keep the compost slightly damp. If too wet, the roots are likely to rot, if too dry, they may shrivel and die. Healthy roots are vital to your plant's good health. Using a transparent container makes it easier to check on the roots. When re-potting, avoid using a much larger container (overpotting), as excess compost can hold onto moisture and encourage root rot.



Moth orchids are generally untroubled by pests and diseases. However, they may occasionally attract mealybugs, so check plants regularly, as the earlier you spot any pests, the easier it will be to get rid of them.

When grown in a greenhouse, or temporarily outdoors in summer, slugs and snails may cause damage.



2025 Dates

**** ALL DATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE ****

- June** 14th STOCQ Meeting - Bundaberg Orchid Society
21st June – Gympie & DOS Show
- July** 18th & 19th – Caboolture OS Winter Show
- August** 2nd & 3rd Port Curtis Orchid & Foliage Society Show
8th & 9th - Maroochydore OS Show Buderim
28th, 29th & 30th – Childers & Isis OS Spring Show
- September** 6th & 7th STOCQ Meeting - Nambour
2025 Orchidfest - Nambour
11th, 12th & 13th – Maryborough DOS Show
20th & 21st Rockhampton OS Spring Show
19th & 20th – Noosa DO & FS Show
26th & 27th – Glasshouse OS Show
- October** 1st to 5th – AOC Conference & Show Woolgoolga NSW
10th & 11th – Bribie OS Show

November

ROSI CHRISTMAS AWARDS EVENING AND DINNER AT THE
ROCKHAMPTON BOWLS CLUB VICTORIA PARADE ROCKHAMPTON.

2026 Dates

March 21st & 22nd ROSI Autumn Show

September 26th & 27th ROSI Spring Show



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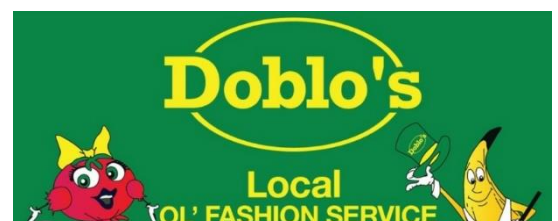
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Meetings are held on the fourth Saturday of each month (excluding December) at Fred Fox Band Hall, Cnr. Gladstone Road and William Street, Rockhampton. Meetings commence at 1:30pm, doors open at 1.00pm and plants must be tabled by 1:20pm.

Disclaimer:

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