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SOUTH AUSTRALIAN  
**ORCHID**  
**BULLETIN**  
JUNE 2020



Orchid of First Division June 2019

*Rlc. Dundas 'Lakeside Pearl'* grown by Wendy & Michael Lodge



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## **CHANGES TO CONTACTING COMMITTEE**

Members please note:

Along with changes to the web address as mentioned in last month's Bulletin, there has also been changes to contacting senior committee members. Email addresses to contact the President, Secretary, Treasurer and Editor are as follows:

President: [president@ocsa.org.au](mailto:president@ocsa.org.au)

Secretary: [secretary@ocsa.org.au](mailto:secretary@ocsa.org.au)

Treasurer: [treasurer@ocsa.org.au](mailto:treasurer@ocsa.org.au)

Editor: [editor@ocsa.org.au](mailto:editor@ocsa.org.au)

These new addresses now also appear in Management Committee Members list on page 3 of the Bulletin

It would be appreciated if you use the above email address in lieu of private email addresses for any Orchid Club of South Australia correspondence in future.

*Graham Hein, Treasurer*

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## **PRESIDENTS MESSAGE JUNE 2020**

2020 has been a year of many challenges and changes. time marches on, some things change, some things do not change, some things are still undecided and tomorrow some things will look different. But I hope that most OCSA members and families are well (I know a few are struggling) and for those who are facing challenges I pray that things will change for the better quickly.

OCSA too is facing similar issues, meetings, shows, etc. The OCSA Committee is continuing to keep in touch with one another and decisions are being proposed and then amended. Current issues under consideration are how to keep in touch with members and provide information and what will we be able to provide this year.

The OCSA Committee will be meeting in June (regulations permitting) to discuss potential options for the rest of 2020. Items already raised include orchid shows, member plant sales in OCSA Bulletin, providing members with up-to-date cultural information, club meetings, OCSA Orchid Forum and assisting members with orchid related problems. If you have an issue or an idea, please forward it by email to [president@ocsa.org.au](mailto:president@ocsa.org.au)

The "OCSA Orchid Forum" (Facebook page) has made a positive start with over 110 members already joined. It has been great to see members showing their orchids online and discussing current orchid issues and orchid related problems. It has only been operating for one month and local, intrastate, interstate and overseas orchid growers are beginning to show interest.

I have found my orchid spikes have been slightly later this year, probably due the extremely cold weather. My first Cymbidium spike opened a week ago (only about a month behind normal opening) and I am enjoying the flowers, the rest of my

Cymbidiums are still in the sheath, with many just beginning to emerge.

Remember:-

As the flower spikes are emerging so are the insects and pests which like to eat the flowers, be vigilant and check regularly (slugs, snails, thrips, lace bugs, caterpillars, earwigs, mice, rats and rabbits, etc).

Be careful when searching for or staking flower spikes, the cold weather makes the spikes brittle and easy to break. You don't want to wait another year to see that new seedling.

With Winter approaching orchid plants consume less fertiliser than usual.

And the addition of a seaweed product (e.g. Seamungus) will assist the orchid root growth during the cooler months and help protect plants.

Orchid shows are still possible this year and it sometimes follows that the cleanest flowers produce the most winners.

I look forward to seeing you at the earliest available option.

*Des Bettcher  
President*

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### **\*\*\* STOP PRESS\*\*\***

The Orchid Club of South Australia web site address has changed.

Please change your web address to:

<https://www.ocsa.org.au/>

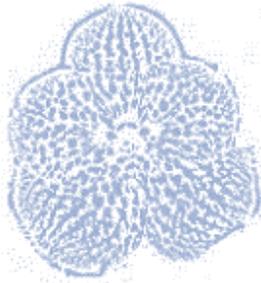
*Graham Hein*

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## **BEGINNER'S GROUP**

Will be postponed until further notice.

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## **A GREEN THUMB**

*The other day I offered my neighbour some orchid plants in flower, he said “thank you, but no, I am not a good gardener, when it comes to gardening, I have a **BLACK THUMB** and everything I plant, dies”, I said ‘but you have a large rock garden at the bottom of your yard, what about that’, he said “yes, but yesterday, two of the rocks died”.*

I hear so many people say, ”I love your garden, you must have a **GREEN THUMB**” or “my orchids won’t flower”, “I don’t have the right skills” or simply, “I just can’t grow them, they all die”.

So, what is a **GREEN THUMB**?

One theory from early 1900s was thought to refer to the algae which grew on the outside of earthenware plant pots and would stain your fingers.

Another theory is that King Edward I, liked green peas so much that he employed servants to shell them and the one who shelled the most peas, won a prize the “greenest thumb”.

**The most accepted meaning today is to grow plants well.**

What sort of thumb do you have when it comes to gardening?

Do you have a **GREEN THUMB**, a **BROWN THUMB**, or a **BLACK THUMB**?

Oh yes, I forgot to mention what I think a **BROWN THUMB** means, “a lack of gardening skills or the inability to grow plants well”.

Well, I will tell you a secret, it doesn’t matter, everyone can grow plants and not just well, but exceptionally well.

So where do I start you ask?

Before you decide to buy a plant, you need to examine your growing environment. What’s that, you ask? Every property has its’ own unique series of micro- climates.

### **1.) Light, Shade and Temperature Factors**

Location is Important.

Is it a sunny location, under a shady tree (yours or your neighbours), under a pergola or veranda or carport, on the South or North side of your house and outbuildings (the direction of the sun) or is it inside your house. Is the location too hot or too cold, too much light or not enough light?

## **2.) Weather Patterns**

Is the location too wet or too dry, is it too windy or does the area not provide enough airflow? How often does it rain? Are your plants water lovers or are they drought tolerant? What type of water are you going to use (rainwater, mains water, bore water, etc)?

## **3.) Soil and/or Potting Medium**

Do the plants you like, grow in acid or alkaline soil/compost, are the plants salt tolerant, is your soil/potting medium free draining or clay saturated?

Once I have examined my property, and if I research the plants I would like to purchase, can I grow anything? Technically if you can provide the natural environment in which a specific plant grows you can grow that plant well? But at what cost? Consider the following costs, heating, cooling, housing, labour, etc

So how do I decide which plants I grow and where can I grow them?

- 1) Can I provide the desired growing environment I need?
- 2) Consider growing plants which are native to your location
- 3) Consider growing plants which your neighbours grow
- 4) Consider plants which grow easily in your suburb or state, etc
- 5) Buy plants that require the least care you are willing to provide
- 6) Start with a sample of your plants, trial and error
- 7) Consider your practical requirements, eg shade cloth, tools, potting medium, fertiliser, time, etc
- 8) Research your plants natural growing environment
  - a. Check out the Internet
  - b. Ask friends and neighbours
  - c. Join a gardening club
  - d. Ask a recognised hobby or commercial grower

If you have read this far you may be either feel overwhelmed or confused but it won't take long, and your BROWN or BLACK THUMB will very naturally become a GREEN THUMB.

**THE SIMPLEST ANSWER IS DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK A QUESTION.**

**If others in your location can grow their plants exceptionally well,  
SO, CAN YOU.**

*By Des Bettcher*

## A Species Orchid *Brassavola nodosa*

*Brassavola nodosa* was first discovered by Linnaeus in 1753 and given its current name in 1813. It occurs naturally from Mexico to Columbia on the Pacific coast and islands,



virtually Central and South America. In Panama it was known as “Lady of the Night” because of its heavy perfume released between sundown and the middle of the night.

*Brassavola nodosa* occurs in the lowland tropics from sea level to 500m altitude and grows on moist or wet rain forest trees or on cacti in drier areas.

*Brassavola nodosa* is the most common in cultivation of all the *Brassavolas* and, though hardy, needs intermediate growing conditions for

optimum flowering. Under ideal conditions, plants will flower all year round but under Australian conditions they flower in Autumn. It needs 20-30% shade, 40-70% humidity, strong unimpeded airflow and temperatures of 13-16°C at night and 18-24°C during the day. Because of its preference for open-rooted growth, open pots, slat baskets and bark slabs are ideal for its shallow root system.

Fertiliser should be given every third watering. Half strength high nitrogen should be fed to plants in pots and slat baskets and half strength house plant solution to plants on slabs.

Propagation is by division, ensuring each division has at least three growths.

During the plants rest period after flowering, ensure that the bulbs don't shrivel. Flowers appear on old growths as well as on new growths.

The plant of *Brassavola nodosa* grows up to 45cms tall with leaves almost terete in shape and up to 20cms long. Pseudo bulbs are small and stem-like and the inflorescences terminal.

*Brassavola nodosa* flowers are among the largest in the *Brassavola* genus reaching 8cm in diameter. Colours range from pure white to pale green or light yellow. Sepals are cream and the labellum broad and white with a few purple spots in the throat. The flower is pleasantly fragrant in the evenings. Each raceme can have up to six blooms.

*Brassavola nodosa* has been used quite extensively in hybridisation both as pollen parent and pod parent. It has been hybridised with *Cattleya*, *Brassolaelia*, *Brassolaeliocattleya*, *Laeliocattleya* and *Sophrolaeliocattleya* etc. The following are examples of the hybrids registered recently.

Lc. Royal Emperor x *B. nodosa* = Blc. Texas Royalty  
*Ttma. canaliculata* x *B. nodosa* = Bmc. Dona Estela  
Blc. Golden Yen x *B. nodosa* = Blc. Texas Topaz  
*B. nodosa* x *B. flagellaris* = *B. Maria del Marion*  
*B. nodosa* x *Epl.* Sunset – *Bpl.* Mediterraneo

As can be seen *Brassavola nodosa* is important in its own right and for its contribution to the hybrids we enjoy today.

[The late] Rex Diwell  
(An extract from the March 1998 Bulletin)

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## **STERILISING YOUR EQUIPMENT**

At last month's meeting a crystal called trisodium phosphate was introduced to the members. It is a product which has been recommended for use to kill virus which may be present, particularly on your cutting tools and orchid stakes (unfortunately not your orchid plants).

It was suggested that 200grms of the crystals in about a litre of warm water will provide the saturated solution needed. In a saturated solution a few crystals should remain undissolved.

You can use this solution for several months, until it goes a purplish colour. It does not have the corrosive action of White King. Just leave your equipment in the solution for ten minutes, remove and rinse in water.

Packs of approx..500grms, for \$3:50 each will be available from the Treasurer's desk at the next meeting.

We encourage you to try this product and reduce the risk of transmitting virus in your orchid collection. *A little effort in prevention now may save a large cost later on.*

I will be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Richard Fishlock  
(An extract from the May 1998 Bulletin)

Note: Cost of trisodium phosphate is now \$5:00 and is available from the trading table, not the Treasurer's desk.

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**FERTILISER (part 1)**  
**WHAT NUTRIENTS DOES YOUR FERTILISER CONTAIN?**  
**Fertiliser elements (macro, micro & trace)**

**Major** - nutrients required by plants are Carbon, Hydrogen and Oxygen

**Macro** – nutrients are those elements consumed by orchids in large amounts ranging from 0.15% to 6.0% of the nutrients found in plant tissue.

**Micro** – nutrients are those elements consumed by orchids in smaller amounts ranging from 0.15 to 400 ppm which is less than 0.04).

**Trace** – nutrients are those elements consumed by orchids in very minute amounts.

**MAJOR NUTRIENTS**

**C – Carbon** forms the backbone of plants, including starches and cellulose, assists in photosynthesis and is a part of the carbohydrates that store energy in the plant and comprises 44% of the overall genetic makeup of your orchid.

**H - Hydrogen** is necessary for building sugars and building the plant. It is obtained almost entirely from water and comprises 44% of the overall genetic makeup of your orchid.

**O - Oxygen** by itself or in the molecules of **H<sub>2</sub>O** (water) or **CO<sub>2</sub>** Dioxide) are necessary for plant cellular respiration. Oxygen comprises 6% of the overall genetic makeup of your orchid.

**MACRO NUTRIENTS**

**N – Nitrogen** is used by plants to build vegetative growth.

**P – Phosphorous** assist flower production and is needed for the conversion of light energy to chemical energy.

**K – Potassium** builds orchid tissue and helps produce chlorophyll. It regulates the opening and closing of the stomata and regulates water loss from leaves.

**Ca – Calcium** helps increase longevity and stiffens flowers.

**Mg – Magnesium** produces chlorophyll and assists flowering.

**S – Sulphur** produces chloroplasts and amino acids.

**MICRO NUTRIENTS**

**B – Boron** helps cell wall formation, flower retention and pollen formation.

**Cl – Chlorine** aids stomata regulation of water loss.

**Cu – Copper** builds cell wall growth and helps prevent wilting.

**Fe – Iron** assists chlorophyll.

**Mn – Manganese** builds metabolism.

**Mo – Molybdenum** helps pollen formation and nitrogen fixation.

**Zn – Zinc** helps crop growth.

### **TRACE ELEMENTS**

**Co – Cobalt** assists metabolism and enzyme growth.

**Ni – Nickel** is an enzyme involved with nitrogen metabolism.

**Se – Selenium** has health benefits and assists with fighting bacteria.

**Si – Silicon** produces rigidity and elasticity.

**Na – Sodium** helps metabolism.

**And other trace elements.**

*By Des Bettcher*

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## **Australian Dendrobium Culture**

What is difficult about this you say? Everyone knows that you must grow them under shade cloth with your cymms. Perhaps you might go to the trouble of hanging them up high.

This method is still appropriate for well established mature plants but will limit your ability to grow new crosses as they become available. As the demand for these wonderful orchids has increased so has the size of plants provided by the nurseries decreased. Also, the introduction of hot/cold crosses has further complicated the issue.

Let's look at each of the issues.

If you do not have a heated house it is best to avoid the warm/hot growers. These include *bigibbum*, *canaliculatum*, *discolor*, *affine*, *atennatum*, *baileyi*, *cancoised*, *caronii*, *insigne* [and] *johannis*.

Of the others how do we go about growing them.

Mature hybrids: If purchasing a mature plant from another grower the job is easy. Have a look at his/her growing conditions and provide similar. Basically, moderate to bright indirect light is required. In Adelaide this translates to 50-70% shade cloth. Protection from the rain is not necessary but if you wish to show plants then providing cover once buds are visible will certainly help. The plants also prefer high humidity and good air movement is essential.

While most can grow in pots with a bark medium those with pendulous habit such as the "bridal veil" types prefer slab culture.

The Babies: I think this is where most growers come to grief. They see a plant advertised in a catalogue it sounds wonderful, so they purchase it. It comes in a 50mm tube and only 25mm high. Out it goes with the other Aust. Dens only to die a slow death.

Most small plants require more care and attention than the larger mature ones. They do not have pseudobulbs with a food source to carry them through stress periods.

What to do? We have found that we get nearly 100% success rate with both cold and hot/cold crosses by growing them for the first 12-14 months in a protected area. In our case under a pergola with a polycarbonate roof. They are potted up in a mix of fine bark, granulated polystyrene and perlite. This make for a medium that is free draining but retains moisture around the roots of the young plant.

When they are well established and producing strong new growths, they can be potted into 80mm pots with larger bark 10-15mm and shifted out with the older relatives once their roots start to penetrate the new medium.

Species: These should be treated as individuals as the natural habitat and climate conditions can vary considerably and to get the best out of our species, we should have a good understanding of their basic needs. Until I can get a volunteer to write a couple articles I would recommend "Native Orchids of Australia" by David L. Jones as a great source of information.

*Charlie Edwards*  
(An extract from the May 1999 Bulletin)

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## **Some Orchid Facts (Part 1)**

### **What Makes an Orchid an Orchid?**

Orchids differ from all other flowering plants in several ways, the main one is their reproductive apparatus. In flowers such as Daisies, Roses, Lilies etc. anthers, which carry the pollen and is the male part of the flower, is separate from the stigma which is the female part and receives the pollen. In orchids these parts are fused together in an organ called a column.

The pollen of the orchid is not dust like as in other flowers but is in 2-4 sticky, waxy globules called pollinia. These are situated at the top of the column and transferred mainly by insect to the stigmatic plate, thus effecting pollination.

Another significant difference is that orchid flowers are zygomorphic meaning that when they are split into two equal halves on one plane only, the parts are of identical appearance. Most other flowers can be split into two equal halves on any plane and still be identical.

## How many different Orchids are there?

The number of different orchids throughout the world has never been determined with any accuracy. Estimates range from a low of 20,000 to a high of 35,000 species. It would seem that a figure of approximately 25,000 valid species is a safe and reasonable estimate.

In addition to the 25,000 or so wild orchids, there exists about 60,000 hybrid forms, this number increases by over 1,000 each year. Thus, in the Orchidaceae we have by far the largest number of flowering plants known to science. At the lowest estimate something in excess of 80,000 at present time.

## Where do Orchids grow?

Orchids in the world can be found all over the world with the exception of the Polar regions. The greatest concentration being in the tropical and sub-tropical regions of South and Central America and in New Guinea.

Australia is not rich in native orchids having about 600 species many of which are unique and not found anywhere else in the world.

*[The late] Reg Shooter*  
*(An extract from the April 1998 Bulletin)*

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## ***Paphiopedilum villosum***

*Paphiopedilum villosum* is a very attractive plant with plain leathery bright green leaves up to 25-35cm long. They are pale and hairy at the base and have a notched tip. The under surface is paler green with purple spotting at the base.

The single glossy flower, up to 12cm in diameter, arises from a dark green, hairy stem which is up to 30cm tall. The flower opens in late Winter to early Spring.

The lower section of the dorsal sepal is deep purple and the remainder is green with a white hairy edge.

The unusual looking petals have broad ends which curve forward. They are mahogany-brown on the upper half and a lighter tawny shade on the lower half. These two areas are separated by a distinct brownish-purple mid vein.

The tawny brown pouch has a glossy, varnished appearance, with a lighter yellow margin around the rim.

*Paphiopedilum villosum* is an epiphytic orchid which grows in forests in North East India, Burma, and North West Thailand at elevations of 1200 – 1700 metres. The roots grow among decaying leaf mould, mosses and ferns in the forks and on the trunks of trees. It has been observed up to 30 metres above the ground and has also been found growing amongst roots and mosses on rocks. This orchid is considered to be a cool growing one. It enjoys high humidity, tolerates medium-low light conditions and will grow best in a temperature range of 12°C-33°C. To grow this orchid in cultivation, a cold glass house would be a suitable environment provided that copious water is given during Summer months and brisk air movement is provided. During the Winter, watering should be reduced. A bark mix with, perhaps, a little polystyrene foam added would be a suitable potting mix.

The first *Paphiopedilum* hybrid was produced in 1869 by a Mr. John Dominy from the famous Veitch nursery. He crossed *Paphiopedilum barbatum* as a pod parent with *Paphiopedilum villosum* as the pollen parent to make *Paphiopedilum Harrisianum* which inherited the strong colours of *Paphiopedilum barbatum* and the wonderful texture of *Paphiopedilum villosum*. It was named in honour of Dr. John Harris, a surgeon who had suggested to Mr. Dominy the idea of pollination.

*Paphiopedilum villosum* is in the background of many of our Standard *Paphiopedilums*. This beautiful plant deserves a place in any orchid collection.

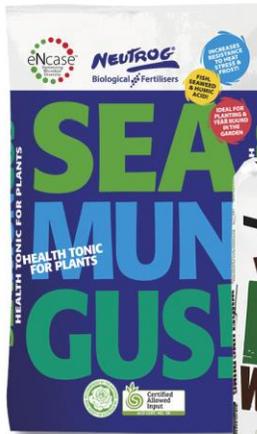
*Lesley Gunn*  
(An extract from the June 1998 Bulletin)



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Finding that suitable plant hanger and/or stand, can be difficult. If you are looking for that unique framework to hold and display your orchids, you need to call Joe Cassar 82509382 or 0452 193 903 for a wide range of strong wire hangers and stands. Various sizes and designs available.

### **KEVIN WESTERN ORCHIDS**

P. O. Box 276 Blackwood, South Australia

Phone/Fax +61-8-82704599 ([westernorchids.com.au](http://westernorchids.com.au))

40 years, experience, compounding complex sterile and non-sterile pharmaceuticals combined with 47 years in orchid tissue culture, orchid culture and orchid care.

#### **Products :-**

- 1) More than 8000 flasks comprised of Dendrobium, Dockrillia, Cymbidium, Cattleya alliance, Zygopetalum alliance, Bulbophyllum, Coelogyne, Sarcochilus alliance, Disa, Oncidium alliance, Vanda alliance, Paphiopedilum, Cymbidium (emphasis on heat tolerant forms) – as species, hybrids, clones and/or seedlings. For sale, flasks contain superior plants for superior survival potential at deflask.
- 2) Tissue culture Media designed to cover the range of needs to germinate, grow, multiply and clone the broadest range of orchids including terrestrials.
- 3) Hormone Keiki Paste
- 4) Tissue culture course. Two-day, practical and theoretical components fully explained, practiced and presented.
- 5) Tissue culture consultancy – to instruct and solve problems and production issues.
- 6) Potted and mounted plants of cool to cold growing species and hybrids from my flasks.

**Cymbidium Orchid Club of S.A.**

Secretary: Christine Robertson  
PO Box 454,  
Strathalbyn S.A. 5255  
Ph. (08) 8536 3948

**Gawler Districts Orchid Club**

Secretary: Murray Page  
Ph. (08) 8250 0689  
PO Box 32, Gawler, S.A. 5118

**Millicent Orchid Society**

Secretary: Robert Wood  
Ph. (08) 8723 2953  
c/o 37 Wehl Street North Mount Gambier  
S.A. 5290

**Mount Gambier Orchid Society**

Secretary: Robert Wood  
Ph. (08) 8723 2953  
c/o 37 Wehl Street North Mount Gambier  
S.A. 5290

**Murray Bridge & Districts Orchid Club**

Secretary: Wendy Schmerl  
Mobile. 0435 909 246  
PO Box 652, Murray Bridge, S.A. 5253

**Native Orchid Society of S.A.**

Secretary: Lindy McCallum  
PO Box 14 Kensington Park, S.A. 5068  
Email: [nossa.secretary@gmail.com](mailto:nossa.secretary@gmail.com)  
Website: [nossa.org.au](http://nossa.org.au)

**Northern & Eastern Districts Orchid Society**

Secretary: Bradley Holden  
Mobile: 0406 643 911  
Address: PO Box 448, Greenacres, SA

**Port Lincoln Orchid Club**

Secretary: Meg Coleman  
PO Box 1335 Port Lincoln S.A. 5606  
Ph. (08) 8682 1463

**Port Pirie & Districts Orchid Club**

Secretary: Margaret Fisher  
T.B.A – Changed recently  
Ph. (08) 8633 2893

**Riverland Orchid Society**

Secretary: Marianne Lynch  
Ph. (08) 8588 7384  
PO Box 746, Berri, S.A. 5343

**South Australian Orchidaceous Society**

Secretary: Pauline Simcock  
Ph. (08) 8390 2212  
PO Box 161, Brooklyn Park S.A. 5032

**South Coast Orchid Club of S.A.**

Secretary: Lucy Spear  
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**Sunraysia Orchid Club**

Secretary: Diane Cavanagh  
Ph. (03) 5025 7305  
PO Box 1818, Mildura Vic. 3502

**Whyalla Orchid Club**

Secretary: Brian Noble  
PO Box 3566, Whyalla, SA 5600

Program for 2020

NEXT NIGHT MEETING

**JUNE meeting cancelled**

Enfield Community Centre, 540 Regency Road, Enfield

NEXT DAY MEETING

**JUNE meeting cancelled**

Enfield Community Centre, 540 Regency Road, Enfield

DATES FOR 2020 SEASON

4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> July

Winter Show

To be confirmed



*A Member of the Australian Orchid Council Inc.*

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