



The New Zealand Orchid Society Inc.

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February 2017

MARCH MEETING:

WHEN? Wednesday 15 March 2017

WHERE? Mt Albert War Memorial Hall, New North Road, Mt Albert

TIME? Meeting commencing at 7.30pm

WHAT? Review of NZOS Awards for 2016 presented by Dennis Chuah

A look back at the plants that were awarded, and an announcement and presentation to the winner of the **Geoff Laird Orchid of the Year for 2016.**

Who will the winner be?

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Notes from the President

Ni hao from Taiwan.

Our first meeting of the year was at Noel Townsley's house, a last minute change from the usual venue, due to Madeleine sustaining an injury to her knee just prior to surgery on it. I hope that has gone well for her.

A pleasant afternoon BBQ was held at Noel's, with some new faces along for the first time, which was great to see.

I am writing this after having spent the day at the Taiwan International Orchid Show.

Wow! What a wonderful time we've been having. There are some wonderful new varieties of Phalaenopsis available. The plants on display are amazing, so too are the displays. We have taken lots of photos to share with you when we return.

And this coming meeting we reveal the winner of the Orchid of the Year. Who will the first ever recipient be? Come along and find out.

Ross Tucker

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Toowoomba or bust

Many of you may recall John Woolf from Australia at the 2016 Orchid + Flower Show. He was selling flasks of his own hybrids, many of them small flasks aimed at the hobbyist who doesn't want too many plants to deal with.

Whilst visiting my son and granddaughter in Brisbane at Christmas, I decided I would attempt to visit John in Toowoomba and see what and how he was growing his plants. Toowoomba is located at an elevation of about 700 meters, atop "The Great Dividing Range" (what in NZ we would call hills), 121 km outside of Brisbane.

The reason I said "attempt" the trip, is that I borrowed my son's old Holden Commodore for the journey, that only a couple of days before had refused to start and had to be jump started so my son could get to work. It started this time, and with the air conditioning broken (and bearing in mind it had been 40 degrees a week earlier), I opened the windows for the trip. Sounds easy, but the electric window switches, while working, have a broken mount, so if you are not careful they fall through a hole and have to be rescued and pulled back up so they can be used – alright if you are stopped, but a test of multitasking if you are travelling along the motorway at 100km/hr in traffic.

Toowoomba is up in the hills, and I had been forewarned by my son that there are special emergency stopping bays located on the highway as you come back down. These are actually a ramp that runs off to the side, with a pile of dirt at the end that you can plough into, in the event that the brakes failed, and you thought stopping a good idea. It would seem then, that the brakes were a bit dodgy as well.

Once I got to the motorway, the wind noise was quite considerable, even if the stereo had been working, there would have been no point in trying to listen to it anyway. I just hoped the clouds I could see in the distance weren't going to turn into another downpour, as this would involve closing the windows, which would mean the interior would likely get very stuffy indeed. I also had no instruction regarding the wipers, whether that meant there was no need, because they didn't work, I wasn't sure. I was just hoping not to have to put them to the test, saving any disappointment.

As it was, the trip up to Toowoomba went without incident, and I arrived to find John, his wife, and his son, plus two German Shepherd dogs, there to greet me. He showed me around his laboratory, and the considerable collection of flasks, which he sends all around Australia, before we headed off to view the eight large orchid houses.



John's flask area. Note this photo is only of one half of the whole area.

The growing houses are, all but one, covered with shade-cloth only, allowing the rain through, keeping most of the bugs out, and of course plenty of air movement. Being at a higher elevation, it is a little cooler here than in Brisbane, and unlike our NZ weather, most of their rainfall is over the summer growing period – just the sort of conditions that most orchids like.



John, having trouble with an old injury, currently tours his estate in a four wheeled chariot, accompanied by his four legged companions.



Part of one of the houses. Note the wire benches on which the plants sit for easy drainage.



The warm house – note the fogger going in the background to maintain the high humidity these plants require.

John told me about a problem he had had with his weedicide - used to kill the weeds that come up in the pots, as there are too many plants to try to weed by hand. His usual one is no longer available, so he tried a different one. This left him with most of the plants having brown spots on the leaves, making them unsaleable until the new foliage has replaced the old. Another problem that he has, which we don't face thankfully – snakes!

Every year he finds about 5 or 6 deadly brown snakes curled up in the houses which he has to remove. These he hands back to his next door neighbours.

Being summer there weren't a lot of plants in flower, but in a collection this size, there were still quite a few to see, all the same.



Aspasia lunata



Enc. Butch Luce



Sarco. hirticalcar



Brat. Kauai's Choice



Odnina (now Mtdm). Tropical Heat Wave

Amongst his plants in flower was Tropical Heat Wave. John tells me he has been using this a lot for breeding, and is hoping for some exciting new flowers to come from this. Certainly the flower was a stunning colour, and a good size and shape.

From John's premises, we made a detour to have a look at his son's orchid collection, which was at his home only a few kilometers away. This was more like that of a hobby grower in size, although that of a keen hobby grower. He had quite a few plants on slabs hanging up, and I noticed that none seem to be wired on. The reason being, he tells me, he glues the plants to the slab using a small amount of a water based glue (Liquid Nails or No More Nails type products). Being water based, it doesn't damage the plants, and, once the glue dries, it will not wash off. And needing only a few drops, one tube should last a lifetime.

This seems a simple solution to getting the plants into position, and without the need to spend a lot of time wrapping fishing line or wire around the slab. I will be trying this method in the future.

From Toowoomba, it was back to Brisbane, a journey, unfortunately, downhill. With the assurance of the stopping bays, I put the car in a low gear, and set off for the return trip. This trip proved uneventful, and with the clouds disappearing, the likelihood of rain with it. A few days later, after I had returned to NZ, my son told me that the battery had died, and he had to get a new one. I guess the trip to Toowoomba was its last valiant effort.

Noel

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**2016/17 FUTURE PROGRAMME & UPCOMING EVENTS:**

- 15 March 2017** – Meeting night
- 19 April 2017** – Meeting night
- 13 May 2017** – NZOS Autumn Show
- 14-16 July 2017** – NZOS Winter Show
- 15-17 September 2017** – NZOS Spring Show

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Judges meeting for 2017

For those of you who are judges, these are your confirmed meeting dates for 2017:

- 22 April 2017
 - 17 June 2017
 - 12 August 2017 All meetings commence at 9am
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