

Upcoming Events

2018:

28 - 29 Jul - Orchid Lovers' Fair, Walter Sisulu Botanic Gardens,

1 - 2 Sep – QOC Spring Show,

7 - 9 Sep - Plantae Orchid Club Spring Show

21 - 23 Sept – EPOS Spring Show,

28 - 30 Sept – COS Spring Show,

28 - 30 Sept – WOS Spring Show,

13 - 14 Oct – NOS Spring Show,



WITWATERSRAND ORCHID SOCIETY

P.O. Box 72007, Parkview 2122

Email: info@witsorchid.co.za

Website: www.witsorchid.co.za

Fun & Friendship Through Orchids

MAY 2018

Meeting: SUNDAY, 27TH MAY 2018

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING AT 14H00

TOPIC: **Cattleyas**
HOST: **Stuart Smith**
TIME: **13h00 – Tea and snacks**
14h00 – Meeting starts after SGM
VENUE: **The Floreum, Joburg Botanical Gardens, Oliphants Rd, Emmerentia**

TEA DUTY

The Lands & Dave Eastman

Please volunteer for Tea Duty (2 members per month). It is very social, and no skill is needed for this duty

RAFFLE

The *Laelia gouldiana* (donated by Bill Mincher) was won by **Marinus Kort**.

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM, held last month, was unable to fill the positions of President, Treasurer and Secretary due to a lack of nominations. **This is a very serious situation** as the Society cannot function with the three most important positions on the Committee being vacant.

It was decided at the AGM to call a Special General Meeting to discuss this, make suggestions and amend the Constitution, if necessary.

You will have already received the Notice of Meeting, which will be held at 14h00, immediately before the normal monthly meeting.

Please give this some serious thought and, if you are willing to help, please contact Marinus Kort.

THE PLANT TABLE – APRIL 2018

By Allan Abel

Reminder of the rules of the Plant Table

Every member is encouraged to bring and share their flowering orchids with other members.

However, for plants to be entered in the prize selection process, they must comply with the following rules

- All plants must have been grown by **the owners for at least 6 months**.
- Novice section is for those members who are **new to growing orchids**. A Novice will cease to be a Novice when they;
 - o win a Red Ribbon at a WOS Show or
 - o win the Plant Table Annual Prize.

This month, the plant table consisted of 33 orchids belonging to 9 members.

The only African/Mascarene orchid was a ***Stenoglottis longifolia*** belonging to Mandy & Marius Kort.

The Laeliinae alliance comprised 12 plants, indicating that the peak autumn flowering season was in progress.

Keith Palmer tabled the following plants; **C June Bug**, **C Isabel Stone**, **Laelia anceps** and **Ctt Moly Tyler**.

Mandy & Marius Kort showed (**C Hawaiian Jewel x C Circle of Life**), **C Aquifinn** and **Laelia anceps var lineata**. Dave Eastman brought along his **Lnt. Wrigleyi** and **Rlc Plinlimmon**, and Bill Mincher his **Rlc Pastoral**. Irene Mann exhibited a **Rlc Fort Watson 'Mendanhall' AM/AOS**, whilst Erhard had an **Epi floribundum**.

The Slipper Orchids were the next largest section with 11 plants on the Table. Erhard showed **Paph Leeanum** and **Paph insigne** and 2 other unknown hybrids, and Syd Land also had a **Paph insigne** and **Paph (Maudiae x Enzan x Enzan Jolly Roger)**. Dave tabled **Paph Harrisianum** and **PaphTarentaal** There were 3 Phragmipediums this month - **Phrag schlimii** owned by Dave, **Phrag Memoria Dick Clements** owned by Erhard and **Phrag Cape Sunset** owned by Allan Abel.

There were only 2 Oncidiinae plants this month. Mandy & Marinus showed an **Aliceara Winter Wonderland** and Keith brought his **Oncidium sotoanum**.

There were 6 Other Hybrids on display. Allan exhibited a **Vanda Loke** and **Miltoniopsis Messenger**. M & M Peters brought an unknown **Cymbidium hybrid** , Dave a **Zygopetalum Artur Elle** and Mandy & Marinus their **Vandachostylis Fuchs Dream (?)**

The 2 Other Species comprised Allan's **Dendrobium imbricatum** and Mandy & Marinus' **Cym erythraeum**.

The favourite orchids, as selected by the members, were

BEST HYBRID

BEST AFRICAN / MASCARENE



***Phrag Mem Dick Clements* owned
by Erhard Schmid**



***Stenoglottis longifolia* owned
owned by the Korts**

BEST NOVICE



***Cym* unknown hybrid owned
by the Peters**

BEST SPECIES



***Laelia anceps* var *lineata* owned
by the Korts**

Cynorkis christae -- A new species of orchid

A new species of orchid with enormous, highly scented flowers has been discovered in Madagascar. It was discovered by Austrian botanist Anton Sieder, who passed on his findings to the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, who confirmed the plant, named **Cynorkis christae**, as being new to science.

Another nine orchids have been discovered in the same area recently, including *Cynorkis aconitiflora* a delicate, violet flowered species with blooms similar to *Aconitum* and *Cynorkis elephantina*, notable for its speckled flowers and flower stems.



The new findings were researched by Johan Hermans, Honorary Research Associate at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Johan's friend Anton Sieder from the Vienna University Botanic Garden alerted him to the discovery of **Cynorkis christae** in Northern Madagascar in January 2016. Anton emailed Johan some pictures of the orchids and as soon as Johan saw the image of the orchid in flower, he knew it was something that hadn't been recorded to science before.

"It is quite a find," said Johan, who saw the orchid in the flesh in January this year after travelling to the mountains with a team from Kew and Paris. "One of the most noticeable traits of this new orchid is its sweet scent, which one of our team likened to smelling like champagne," he added.

Cynorkis christae also has enormous flowers, with a 5cm (2in) wide lip and a 16cm (6in) spur. Most of the flower is pure white, while the top petals have distinctive maroon markings.

While still in Madagascar, Sieder secured the permits needed to collect some plant material of **Cynorkis christae**. He sent it – preserved in alcohol – to Kew in a shoebox, and Johan saw this 'astonishing thing' for the first time, before making a botanical sketch of it. The lengthy process of confirming this plant and the nine other species as new began. The plant was named after Anton's wife Christa, hence **Cynorkis christae**.

"It has puzzled me quite a lot as to why this orchid hasn't been recorded before," says Johan. "It is probably due to it growing in quite a remote area," he adds. "It is quite an adventure to get there!"



A year after Anton's email Johan and his team set out to see the orchid and it took them four days to travel to the site, on the western side of the Tsaratanana Mountains, from the Madagascan capital Antananarivo. The trip was in Johan's words a 'gamble' because the plant only flowers for a month or so during the rainy season and flowering could easily have been missed.

Johan says there are a couple of hundred *Cynorkis christae* visible along the road where the orchid was discovered, growing on steep slopes and rock faces. "It has caused an immense amount of amusement to the people living in the area, with so many people taking such an interest in the plants," says Johan. "It is like a group of people suddenly studying the daisies growing in your front lawn."

Johan is hoping that a further trip to Madagascar later in the year will allow for collecting seed although it will be ripe in the wet season when the area may not be reachable. If it can be saved, seed of these orchids could be added to the Kew Millennium Seed Bank at Wakehurst Place in East Sussex, which aims to prevent the extinction of plants in the wild by storing seeds for the future.

Committee Members

Position held	Name	Email Address	Contact Details
Past President	Marinus Kort	mail@thekorts.co.za	082 447 5081 / 011 794 1041
Vice President	Deon Barnes	deon.barnes@angloamerican.com	083 469 6188 / 011 842 2151
Secretary	Vacant – contact President		
Treasurer	Vacant – contact President		
Meetings Organiser	Bill Mincher	billmincher@yahoo.com	082 871 3152
Newsletter Editor	Allan Abel	aabel@global.co.za	082 738 8360 / 011 477 7938
Extra Member	Chris Steckner	chriselke@icon.co.za	011 782 3959
Librarian	Mandy Kort	Amanda.kort@wits.ac.za	011 794 1041
Show Organizer	Vacant – contact President		