

NZ Odontoglossum Alliance Growers Newsletter



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Vol 2 # 1, December 2022

From the group Facilitator.

Well, another year is just about over. Outside of orchid growing an interesting one to say the least.

Yet another Covid booster for us oldies and the war in Ukraine and I won't mention our own cost of living rise.

I don't know about yours but my orchids have been blooming great guns and look like it will be a blooming good season next year. Excuse the puns, but we all need to look to the future and how we can provide an input not only to this group of genera but this newsletter:

Some Highlights to Note:

☑ The first focus needs to be on this newsletter. The question being do you want it to continue. For it to continue we need input from more than just the few that are providing it to date. Even if its only a photo of what's out in your collection.

☑ After a struggle with the change to the banking system we have been able to establish a bank account with funds that we were recently made aware had been generated by the past Odont group. (No, it's not a lot of \$'s). This account is being administrated by the two Al's.

☑ The other focus for the odontoglossum alliance growers out there is the up-and-coming OCNZ National Orchid Show in Hamilton in September. By way of support on behalf of the Odontoglossum Alliance Growers NZ we have put up a \$100 prize for the best Odont Alliance plant at the show.

☑ Elsewhere we have a couple of our non-commercial growers with flasks at various stages in labs with some interesting crosses.

So, to all out there that read this newsletter have a great festive season. Please think about providing some input to this newsletter and stay well.

To those attending the Taranaki Orchid Summer show please lets know if you have any specific topic you would like to raise at the odontoglossum Alliance workshop. I look forward to catching up with those able to attend. Allan W.

Editor's Ramble

Well we have come to the end of another year, if you are wondering whether you have missed a few issues, the answer is no. The last issue was October 2021—the reason? - no contributions!. I need your input. You the reader presumably grow members of the Alliance and so you will have experiences to share, questions that need answering, plants that you are looking for or maybe, want to sell, and , of course, photos of your achievements so please share with the rest of the group



The photo's are of: *Cuitlauzina* [Cu.] *pendula* (syn. *Odontoglossum pendulum*)

This info is thanks to Orchid Wiz:

ORIGIN/HABITAT: Western Mexico. *C. pendula* grows on trees in oak or pine-oak forests in the Pacific coastal mountains bordering the Balsas Basin. Plants are also found near Morelia and Talpa in Michoacan and Jalisco, usually at 4600-7200 (1400-2200 m). They are also reported in the states of Sinaloa and Guerrero, with questioned reports from the states of Mexico, Oaxaca, and Chipas.



The top photo is of my plant and is unusually white. I got it in the late eighties from Ross Tucker who had imported it. I have tried to self it but it just won't. Last year I was able to get pollen off a pink one and this took, producing two pods which were sent off to the Lab, but I haven't heard if they were viable.

I am told that both I.D. James (Jim) and Russell Hutton tried both self and outcross it without

success. It maybe that they were using plants that were all divisions of one plant and so all their crossings were actually selfings

The second picture—the pink one—is Allan Watsons plant and is the form that we normally see.

To flower this species is something of an art. Do not water it at all during the Winter. Wait till the new growth appears and the spike emerges from it—this happen when the new growth is still very small—and then you can water it. If you start watering before the flower spike appears, even if the new growth is showing, it will not flower

An update on the Odonoglossum/Oncidium World by Ross Tucker

It's been a while since I have done an update on what's been happening at Tuckers in the Odonoglossum/Oncidium world. There has been a number of passing on of the pillars of NZ Odonoglossum growers over the past few years. This has led to larger hobby collections being broken up and sold around the country. But this is the evolution of orchid growing and in the growers themselves.

At present there is a boom time happening post-Covid lockdowns. Orchid shows are back in full swing and the public and orchid growers can't get enough to fill their addiction which has not been fed for the last 2-3 years. Record numbers have been queuing to enter orchid shows with some waiting over 1 1/2 hours before the show opens.

So they want everything immediately, clearing some sales booths in under an hour – if it's an orchid in flower and I want it. The Oncidiums fall victim very quickly and are snapped up by the handful and because of Auckland (and most of New Zealand's) temperate climates, the growers succeed with these orchids and clamour for more colours, shapes and sizes. We have had a very long wet winter but a very mild temperature range which is suiting their growing conditions.

I have been hybridising to produce a range of colours, shapes and sizes and with "Odonts" that grow easily and fast in our conditions. I am fortunate to have been around long enough to recognise some of the older parents that were used in NZ and luckily enough to have a few newer parents to mix them up, producing over 150 new hybrids in the last few years.

The breeding lines I like to follow are albanistic, pure colours of white and yellows with good shape and great multi-spiking potential, minimum of 2 presentable spikes to the bulb, first flowering.

A long term favourite of mine has been *Onc. tigrinum* hybrids, the only thing is, they often over produce and a spike of over 1-2 metres is very hard to display in an apartment comfortably. In reality, I like the colour patterns they represent but I must reduce their size by hybridizing with a shorter stemmed parent. I can't breed enough patterned Odont's, the more balanced, the better and the more contrast in colour, the better.

Some of our new hybrids have been listed on our website as well as on TradeMe. On either platform, they hardly last more than 24 hours before selling out. So, what new hybrids are we creating using the following parents in 2022...





Onc. Bryan's Beauty (A)



Onc. Bryan's Beauty (B)



Onc. Daydream



Onc. Elle Ronis



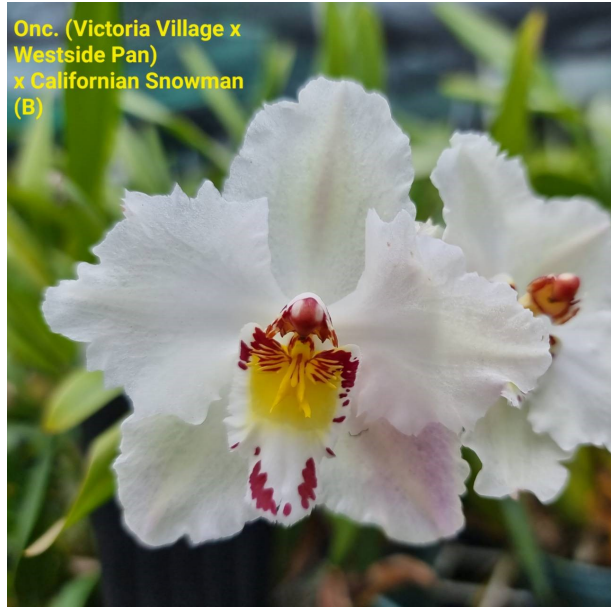
Onc. Victoria Village
x Onc. Eric Young



Onc. Golden Filigree
x Onc. Joyce Stewart



Onc. (Victoria Village x
Westside Pan)
x Californian Snowman
(A)



Onc. (Victoria Village x
Westside Pan)
x Californian Snowman
(B)



Onc. Heatonensis
x Helen Stead



Onc. Anna-Claire



Onc. Tiger Mac
'Mona' HCC/AOS



Onc. Promising Gold
'John
x Safety Beach



Onc. Tiger Sun



Ons. Eye Candy
'Penny Candy'



Onc. Heatonensis



Cyr. Edwardatum
x halteratum



Our larger Odonts are moving through the stages and many more are getting to blooming size so we hope to be able to offer more “Odonts” at orchid shows we attend as well as through our retail shop and our fresh new website.

As well as producing our own seedlings, we also have massive amounts coming in from overseas to tempt your taste buds for an interesting future.

A Snippet of History.

Odontoglossum Alliance. Have you ever wondered how it all started?

I heard a quote from her majesty the Queen during recent celebrations where she quoted Winston Churchill "The Further you look back into the Past the better you will see into the future" and I wondered how this applied to orchids.

We tend I suspect to mainly look at the now. In other word what's out in flower and what crosses might produce.

But I have started to think about when did it all start? Living in this current age of technical development we find the so called intelligent few applying the principles associated with DNA testing to orchid genus and so the re classification rename process begins. But that is now.

So, when did it begin? The International Odontoglossum Alliance web site has two vert or at least I found them so articles which attempt to provide some clarity and History one is a 204-page document Classifying Odontoglossums written by Leon Duval the other A PARTIAL HISTORY OF ODONTOGLOSSUMS IN GREAT BRITAIN by Brian Ritterhausen 13 pages.

It all seems to have started in the 1800 when two German horticulturalists decided to go on an adventure and collect plants in the wild in Northern Peru. Between 1800 and 1899 various expeditions brought over 1000,000,000. Plants back to Europe and this is when Leon Duval became involved.

The Odontoglossum Alliance appeared to be just floating alone in the background It was not till 1981 at the 10th World Orchid Conference in Durban South Africa and has continued to grow from there. Bruce Cobbledick, Robert Dugger, Dr. Howard Liebman and Dr. Wally Thomas were 4 of the original group. You can see their respective influence in some of the breeding to day. In particular the Liebman family. In support;

The Eric Young Foundation: First and foremost, to use their expertise to create and develop new modern orchid hybrids. They did not have any commercial restraints. They set up on the Island of Jersey after the 2nd World war and are still active today.

A part from the classification these plants were thought to be seasonal. This thought was based around the time of in wild harvest and if the plant was in flower. A lot of data to date still indicates that. Yet as time goes by, I am of the supportive opinion that Odontoglossums are a seasonal in other words when ready with strong pseudobulbs they will spike and subsequently flower.

Within the Odontoglossum Alliance there have been 120 separate genera identified to date and this is being broken down even further by the use of DNA techniques and complex hybridisation.

Most of us as hobby growers tend to focus on either crispum now alexandrae or brassia type flowers.

My personal view is that complex hybridisation without a foreseeable purpose is complicating breeding programs going forward. This makes me wonder where will it end.

I am sure our forefathers in the Orchid discovery world would have scratched their heads at some of the outcomes some attempting.

I try and follow the philosophy of Will any cross I make improve the species or either parent.

I can only suggest if you find yourself on a wet day with time to spare have a read of the two documents I have identified.

There content has given me a different focus. I have put a slide show together on this topic if anyone is interested.

A Snippet of History. Part 2

Odontoglossum Alliance: How complex can a Hybrid be?

The answer to the above question can be as complicated as long as the cross takes.

But is this approach really helping grow the Odontoglossum Alliance. Some times when such a complex Hybrid is being registered that it almost appears to be a toss of the coin as to what its genus name becomes. I am sure there is a more scientific approach applied to the process.

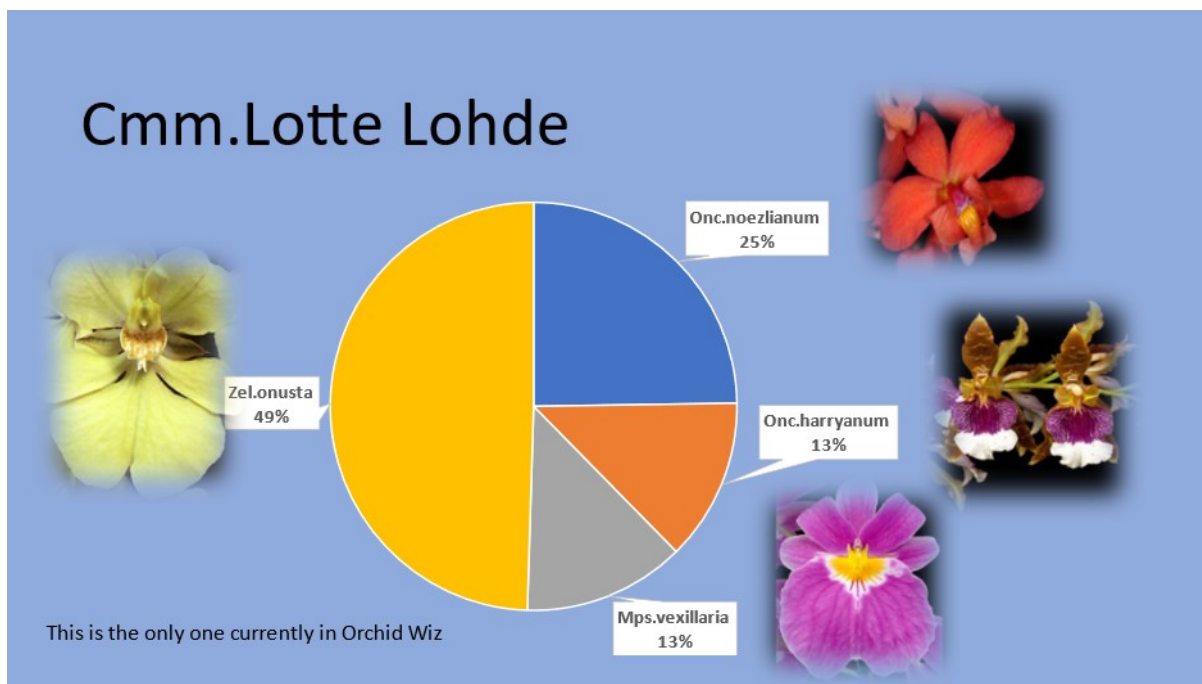
But what do complex hybrids really achieve? Do they take away the reflective identification of the cross parentage do the enhance the plants genus in anyway?

In part yes can be an answer to either question. Flower size can be increased and Temperature tolerances can be altered ie. Cool tolerant to heat tolerant variation.

If these are the outcomes and have positive commercial gain go for it. I can only suggest it takes years of crosses to achieve a result. I recall it took some 23 crosses of Mps Herralexandre to produce a flower in excess of 100mm in diameter.

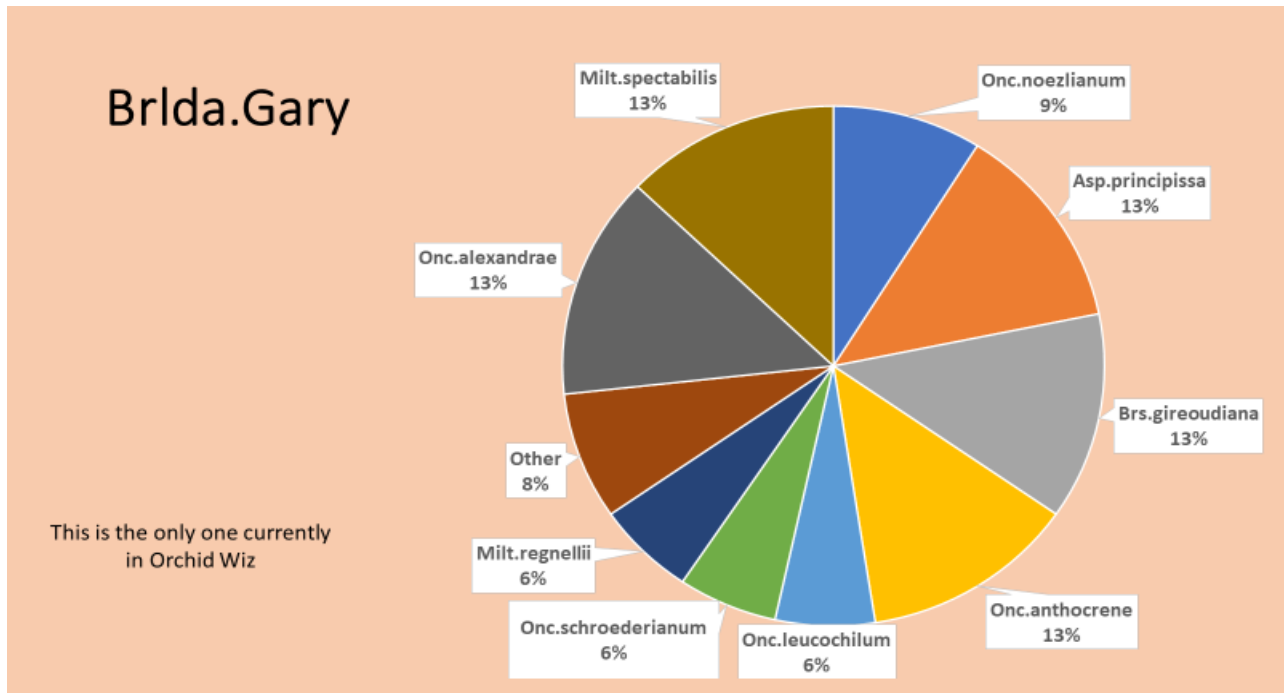
As hobby growers we do not all have access to programs like Orchid Wiz therefor a cross outcome is often based on the two flowers we are working with at the time.

I found two complex crosses in Orchid Wiz:



As yet there is no known flower of the above but one can only guess as to the end result.

The below cross is even more complex than the previous slide and it will either be a cracker or a fizzer. Too many parts show I have not added plant photos.



A recent face book post by a NZ Nursery showed a number of flowers that they had an intention to cross. Looking at the proposal and Orchid Wiz, I wonder what the outcomes might be. **(I stress I am not being critical of the nursery decision to attempt these crosses merely putting my observation as to what outcome may be expected)**

My View

Image 1: This may retain a *Onc alexandrae* shape, but I would cross my fingers as to the colour outcome in particular if the mottled patten comes through

Image 2: This cross would retain its shape. Yellow in a cross tends to influence the colour outcome in this instance it could well intensify . I suspect an award winning plant could come from this cross.

Image 3: This is what I would call a toss of the coin cross. Both these are strong plants which I suspect may fight for dominance without a winner. Not sure on the colour outcome

As indicated in my comment three of the above crosses could produce anything. This does not mean the outcome is a washout.

In summing up. Complex crosses provide us with a challenge. They may or may not provide a commercial or awardable end result. I suspect be it against my norm way of thinking unless we try, we will never know.

What is the most complex Hybridisation you have attempted please let's know either via face book or by an article that we can share with others.

Allan Watson

How Seasonal are our Odonts?

Like I suspect most Orchid growers I used to think orchids flowered on a seasonal basis. This thought was influenced by the various times our orchid societies held their respective shows.

Over the past two years I have taken particular note of when my Odonts have flowered and that relationship to show dates. Nothing matched.

I started thinking is the flowering being influenced by climate change? or, has my orchid culture improved? or is it just coincidence?

Not being a scientist, I started with the basics, that's looking at the various reference resources I had available. This helped to confuse the issue further. Some of the information indicated that the best flowering for a particular odont orchid should be between September to November. This time frame in line with the main Orchid Show season. Yet here I was with what I believed to be a reasonable (possible awardable) odont flowering in April. What was happening?

This earlier than expected flowering happened to a number of my odonts. Like I suspect a number of us out there I started to think that climate change (higher than normal night time temperatures) was the key influencer.



Onc. Hilda Plumtree



Onc. Stirling Tiger

I started to ask the question and a number of well-known and respected overseas growers helped shed some light. Here is a summary of their comment:

Not all odonts are seasonal in their growth habit in fact some are a seasonal. They do not necessary flower to or in a given season. To explain I was advised that they flower naturally whenever they mature a bulb day length (longer hours of light) has no influence over flower inhiation. The suggestion of higher night time temperatures may be a key influence maturing bulb growth more rapidly than would happen in normal environmental conditions. And perhaps the orchid culture provided joins all the dots together.

The two photos a just an example of my comments. Onc. Hilda Plumtree flowered about 3 months ahead of expectation and Onc. Stirling Tiger flowered within the expected time frame.

Growing orchids is a "Never stop learning process." We all learn from sharing.

Allan Watson

Register that Plant.

I suspect many of us have that Hybrid within our collections that we like to the stage we even may think it is worthy of being judged for an award. But we do not because it's not registered. As per the example below

I simply say register it.

But I don't know the grower or don't know how to are just a couple of excuses that can easily be overcome.



Oncidesa Golden Duchess
(Onc maculatum x Gom Goldrausch)

Don't know the Grower.

In a lot of cases, we may not know who was responsible for the original hybridisation that being the case the space requiring this info on the RHS form is filled in as UNKNOWN. If is a local grower there is an unwritten curtesy to ask them if they do not have an intention to register, can you and you fill their name in the originator space but you are the registrant and therefore can dictate the registered name. If not, a local (NZ) grower you may have to use a resource such as Orchid Wiz any contact with the identified grower is not mandatory you just identify them as the originator.

The rest is pretty straight forward.

Don't know how to.

The days of web-based forms make this process so easy. I would say however you can make it easy on yourself if you have access to Orchid Wiz get the required details from their data base.

Go to [https://plantregistration.rhs.org.uk/login\(popup:messages\)](https://plantregistration.rhs.org.uk/login(popup:messages)) This page requires you to set up and account once done it takes you to the info pages where you fill out the required details and post. Each registration has a cost for process (\$24.NZ Per plant at the moment).

I have found the process to be pretty flawless being completed within 5 working days. That means application submitted, Naming Details confirmed and Registration Certificate issued.

Go for it if you need any further advice feel free to contact me aj.watson@xtra.co.nz

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Well that's it for 2022, here's wishing you all a great Christmas and a prosperous New Year with less Covid disruption.

When will the new issue be out ? That depends on your input, without which there can be no output. I look forward to hearing from you all in the New Year.

Editor