



# Newsletter

## February 2025



## Spring Show - March 22<sup>nd</sup> 2025

Just a reminder to everyone that our Spring Show will be taking place on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2025.

Please do come along and encourage your family and friends to join us. It will make a lovely morning or afternoon out as we will have our orchid show, two excellent traders joining us with plenty of orchids for sale, a tombola, a book stall and refreshments complete with a seating area.

Entry forms for the Orchid Show will be attached to the March newsletter.

*There are lots of ways that you can help with the show:*

- **Volunteering on the day**
- **Bringing along a food item for refreshments;**
- **Donating a prize for the tombola or books/sundries for the book stall**

Sign up sheets went round at the February meeting for help with the following volunteer slots:

- **Door**
- **Tombola**
- **Book stall**
- **Refreshments**



We still have plenty of slots left that need filling so the sign up sheets will be there again at the March meeting.

If you can't attend the March meeting and would like to volunteer then please email Grace at [gew30@outlook.com](mailto:gew30@outlook.com) setting out what you would like to help with. Volunteer slots are one hour each.

You can choose to help in multiple different areas if you would like, e.g. one hour on the door and then one hour on the book stall. We also have a sign up sheet for food contributions (sandwiches, cakes etc).

Our refreshments have proved extremely popular over the last couple of years and so we hope to maintain this high level once again. Books/sundries should ideally be orchid or plant focused although other donations are also welcome.

Please bring any donations for the tombola and/or book/sundries stall to the March meeting if you can.

## First aid kit reminder

This is a reminder that we have a fully stocked new first aid kit and accident book. This will be present at every meeting. If you require use of the first aid kit please speak to Shirley or ask in the kitchen where it will be stored every meeting.

## Next meeting

Our next meeting will be held on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2025 when we will be joined by our speaker Dr Roy Bailey-Wood who will be presenting a talk called The Evolution of Orchids.

## Diamond anniversary of the Solihull & District Orchid Society

This year marks the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Solihull & District Orchid Society. This is certainly a milestone worth celebrating and the committee are working hard exploring various suggestions of something we might do to mark this special occasion.

Club members will be updated regarding how we will be celebrating our milestone later this year once the Show has concluded.

**You can follow Solihull & District Orchid Society on**



If you have any pictures or information you would like to put on our website please email: [lina\\_sala@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:lina_sala@yahoo.co.uk) or copy and pictures for newsletter: [ballm1@mac.com](mailto:ballm1@mac.com)  
Society email address: [www.solihullorchidsociety.co.uk](http://www.solihullorchidsociety.co.uk)



# New Year orchid table



**Steve Wade: species, Coelogyne multiflora 33 points**



**Steve Wade: Cattleya Hybrid 30 points**



**Monica Johnson: Oncidium cheirporum 30 points**



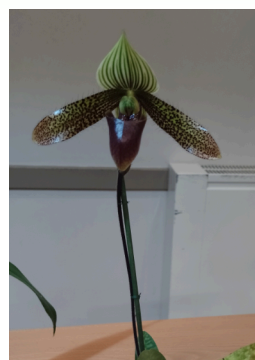
**Malcolm Moodie: Paphiopedilum fairrieianum 32 points**



**Coelogyne Intermedia Display only**



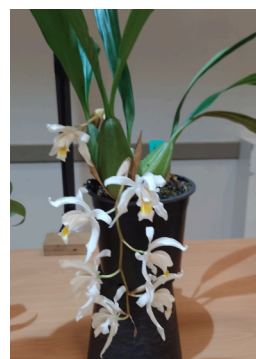
**Pat Bussy: Coelogyne Intermedia 29 points**



**Malcolm Moodie: Paphiopedilum Jonny Shaw 31 points**



**Pat Bussy: Eria taro 31 points**



**Steve Wade: Coelogyne Unchained Melody 30 points**



**Malcolm Moodie: Paphiopedilum tranlienanum 34 points**



**Pat Bussy: Coelogyne 33 points**

# Orchid Growing on the Isle of Portland

Annie and Simon Pugh-Jones

Simon noted that it's probably been over 15 years since his last visit to Solihull, making this return a particularly enjoyable opportunity to reconnect with old friends. In the intervening years Simon and Annie have established Isle of Portland Orchids. Not only do the couple run their nursery, but they also live among their plants, with orchids occupying almost every corner of their home.

The move to Dorset brought Simon back to where his orchid life started during his teenage years while working at Keith Andrews Orchids. Today, Simon and Annie's collection has expanded to include around 500 species, with a strong focus on miniature orchids—a preference largely inspired by Annie's enthusiasm for these unique plants. One of the key benefits of growing miniatures is the ability to accommodate a vast number of plants within a limited space.

## The Nursery Setup

The nursery consists primarily of two glasshouses:

- The Cloud Forest Glasshouse
- The Himalayan Glasshouse

In addition, there is a laboratory with two lamina flow cabinets where seedlings are propagated (from their own-produced seeds) or via vegetative division. Within their home the couple maintain grow-light-based glass cabinets for nurturing young plants and deflasked seedlings. Various rooms are utilised to create growing environments suited to different species, with windowsills and Velux lighting providing valuable natural illumination.

The nursery's proximity to the sea offers the advantage of a nearly frost-free climate, aiding in temperature regulation within the glasshouses. Additionally, the south-facing slope of the property enhances natural light levels, creating an ideal setting for orchid cultivation.

## Approach to Orchid Cultivation

Simon and Annie's growing techniques are heavily influenced by observations of orchids in the wild, allowing them to replicate optimal conditions in their nursery.

### Cloud Forest Orchids

- Costa Rica (1,400m) – A cool, very wet environment with daily rainfall. Trees in this region are densely covered in epiphytes, including several Masdevallia and Pleurothallis species. The volcanic soil encourages tall tree growth, reducing light exposure at lower canopy levels.
- Brazil – Though experiencing a dry season, this region maintains high levels of dew. Orchids here grow on smaller trees rooted in granite, with significant moss growth providing insights into their natural conditions.
- Rwanda – Featuring a climate similar to some of the South American cloud forests, maintaining consistent wet conditions year-round.

### Asian Orchids

- Himalayan Region – Long dry seasons lasting several months. Many orchids here develop pseudobulbs to store water, with Coelogyne flowering during the dry season to minimise damage from heavy rains. Cymbidium species thrive in varied microclimates, adapted to moisture, light, and temperature fluctuations. Some even withstand overnight temperatures close to 0°C.
- Sarawak, Malaysia – A near-equatorial location with minimal temperature variation (24°C–30°C) year-round.
- Lowland Himalayas (Assam) – Home to some Phalaenopsis orchids, which favour warm, humid conditions that are replicated in the nursery.

## Replicating Natural Conditions in the Nursery

Temperature, light, and moisture are carefully managed, with temperature differences between the floor and roof of the glasshouses easily reaching 10°C. Layered shelving is used to create different microclimates, ensuring each plant receives optimal conditions. Shelving also allows for better humidity and light control for young or recently divided plants.

Orchids are grown both mounted and potted, with daily misting—more frequent in summer. Traditional advice suggests watering only in the morning, but Simon and Annie's observations challenge this. In the wild, orchids often experience high evening humidity from nighttime dew, especially during dry seasons, prompting an adjusted watering schedule.

## Glasshouse Conditions & Environmental Control

- The Cloud Forest Glasshouse maintains a minimum temperature of 12°C, with variations across different shelving levels.
- The Himalayan Glasshouse maintains a minimum temperature of 7°C.
- No artificial fans are installed; instead, the natural airflow resulting from the glasshouses' structure and positioning provides sufficient air movement.

## Watering & Nutrient Management

Water quality is monitored using a simple EC (electrical conductivity) meter to prevent excessive salt buildup, which can harm orchid roots. Summer watering is maintained at 500µS. During stormy conditions, rainwater harvesting is paused to prevent seawater contamination, which can raise EC levels significantly above the usual 90–100µS.

### Managing Light & Shade

Each glasshouse is surrounded by a wooden frame, allowing for seasonal shading adjustments:

- A single layer of shading is applied in spring.
- A second layer is added in summer to regulate heat and light exposure.

## Conclusion

By carefully studying orchids in their natural habitats, the nursery continues to refine its approach to cultivation. From managing temperature gradients to mimicking seasonal moisture levels, each aspect of the growing process is meticulously considered. Despite their years of experience, the team remains passionate about learning and sharing their knowledge with fellow orchid enthusiasts.

Plants from the nursery are available for purchase via Etsy, and the website [Isle of Portland Orchids](http://Isle of Portland Orchids) is updated frequently with a featured 'Orchid of the Week'. Many of the orchids sold contain pages with detailed information on their cultivation. The site is well worth a visit.

**Hinckley & District  
Orchid Society  
Spring Show**

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2025  
10-00 till 4-00pm

Millennium Hall  
Britannia Rd  
Burbage  
Leics  
LE10 2HF

Visiting Societies and Trade  
Admission £3-50  
Children Free  
Refreshments  
Large Car Park at Rear of Building



