

From the President - January 2026

Well, I hope everyone had a great Christmas and everyone got great presents. Let's hope 2026 is a grand year for the Society and all its members. It's started off well here with 45mm of rain just to top up the tanks. We have a great list of guest speakers for the year (thanks to Roy for arranging them). Remember we have the AGM coming up in February and are always looking for new blood and fresh ideas for the Society to grow.

I will not be standing for President as my health is not the best. All the best for 2026 and hope all your Orchids grow the way you like them to.

Cheers Murray

At our Autumn show this year the judges awarded a plant of *Coel fimbriata* owned by Heather Guppy a Cultural Award. The award, a Certificate of Cultural Commendation is an award made by the Australian Orchid Council and below is a picture of Heather being presented with the award by Val Reid on behalf of the AOC. Well grown Heather. Congratulations.



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Meetings:
Fourth Friday of each month at
7.30pm, except September &
December.

Venue: St. Paul's Hall
Cnr. James and Phillip St
Toowoomba

Subscriptions:
Due: January Yearly
Family \$25.00
Single \$25.00

From the Editor

Welcome to the January 2026 edition of Tan Bark. The newsletter of the Toowoomba Orchid Society Inc. on the land of the Jarowair and Giabal nations.

Welcome to the new year 2026. Someone said if 2025 were to be likened to a drink it would probably be a Colonoscopy prep but that may be a bit harsh but let's look forward to a better 2026.

The summer solstice has passed which means the days are starting to shorten again all the way 'til June 21st but the day temperatures while severe before Christmas, have mellowed somewhat since with just the odd hot one now and then, but of course it is summer.

Christmas has been and gone as has the editor's month off but now as we confront 2026, we ponder what is ahead. Me, I've got a fair bit of orchid house building in front of me but of course there's often something to slow things down. A fence to be rebuilt and some earthworks and then some building but I'm sure that will happen when tradies return after their break. Maybe.

There have been some horrific events around the world in 2025, some of which are still happening, but our orchids can provide a calm amid horrendous hatred and greed.

Caring for humanity begins with the small, gentle acts that remind us of our shared fragility, and few things embody this more beautifully than tending to our orchids. In nurturing something delicate, we reconnect with the quiet rhythms of life that modern chaos often drowns out. The simple act of watering, potting or pausing to admire a bloom can be profoundly calming, grounding us in the present moment and softening the edges of our worries. As we care for these living things, we're reminded of our own need for patience, kindness, and renewal—qualities that, when extended to others, help cultivate a more compassionate world.

We have a whole year ahead of us, but we also have the annual general meeting to be held in February so if you feel you have something to offer the club, you'll find a nomination form attached to this publication. All positions will be declared vacant at the commencement of the meeting and hopefully filled by nominations of members who are eager to see the club moving forward in 2026.

Remember that nominations must be with the secretary 14 days prior to the AGM which means close of business on the 13th of February. Nominees must be financial members of the club and in order to be eligible to vote at an AGM a member must be financial, which according to our constitution is "*financial at the meeting prior to the AGM*" which would be the January 2026 meeting.

So, I'll say it for the first and last time; annual subscriptions were due on the 1st of January 2026 please.

I hope you all enjoyed the Christmas Party as much as I did. It was an excellent event with good food, good company and beautifully organised. Thanks to Jeanette and Jane. The trivia quiz was great fun testing our brains (ouch). Thanks Deb, for this item. So those of you who missed it you missed a great day. Thanks everyone who attended.

Until next time. Good growing. *John*

Whilst attending Orchid Society meeting, shows and other gatherings, photos may be taken for the purpose of marketing materials, social media and website. If you are not in favour of your photo in a group setting being on show, please make a Management Committee Member aware of your wishes.

DATE CLAIMERS & INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS

If you have orchids that you would like to sell, then bring them along to meetings. No commission is charged but sale is the responsibility of the member.

Happy Diners For further information see **Caroline Westall** or phone her on **0420218552**

5 th February 2026	Thai on High Street	11.30am
5 th March 2026	Oakey RSL - Oakey	11.30am
2 nd April 2026	Meringandan Hotel - Meringandan	11.30am

Bank Details Toowoomba Orchid Society Inc., Heritage Bank Acc. 5686989 BSB 638-070 or S21 for Heritage customers.

To assist our treasurer could you add your name and the reason for the deposit in the “remarks” space? I.e. Bus trip, Subs or for merchandise add the invoice number please.

Sick List We wish any members who are out of sorts, a speedy recovery.

Bunnings Sausage Sizzle The club participated in a sausage sizzle on the 16th of November at Bunnings West. A rainy, stormy day but we all had a good time and earned \$1730.78 for the club. Well done everyone.

TOS Guest Speaker

Our guest speaker for January will be Paul Smith of Ipswich. As you may be aware Paul grew and flowered a Softcane Dendrobium well enough to win Grand Champion at the Ipswich Spring Show and then 10 days later was transported to Woolgoolga where it won Grand Champion at the Australian Orchid Council Conference and Show against the best from around Australia. So, he does grow his orchids very well. I’m not sure what he will be speaking about but you can be sure it’ll be worth a listen.

Minutes of the General Meeting Held 28th of November 2025 at St Paul’s Hall Toowoomba.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, there isn’t a copy of the minutes available at the moment. Sorry.

Early last year the club provided plants for a growing competition. The plants were Softcane Dendrobiums, deflasked and grown out by Eddie (Thanks Eddie). Well, the November meeting was deemed to be the first “show and tell” and some members remembered to bring their plants in for appraisal. The result of judging by Vice President Roy was a win to Eddie closely followed by Trevor (not present but plant brought in by Debbie) It’s obvious that some members can grow softcanes well and some are not quite as astute. The two best plants had matured a nice sized bulb and were now producing half grown growths. Looking really good as a softcane should. Well done you two. Below are the members who remembered to bring in their plants and a photo of Eddie with his winning plant. Growing competitions are an ideal way to get more quality orchids into the hearts and hands of members and to let us all compare growing conditions as well as tips and tricks.



Ploidy in Orchids

Sometimes when browsing an orchid catalogue, you may notice a descriptor following an orchid name like “**4N**”. What does it mean and how can it influence the hybrid. This is called ploidy it’s a complex subject but stay with me while I attempt to explain it simply.

Ploidy is simply a way of describing how many sets of chromosomes an organism has in each of its cells. It’s a core concept in genetics, and in orchids it becomes especially important because it affects flower quality, fertility, and breeding outcomes.

Every plant cell contains chromosomes that carry genetic information.

Ploidy tells you how many complete sets of those chromosomes are present.

Common ploidy levels in orchids: -

- Diploid (2n) — two sets of chromosomes (the natural state for most species).
- Tetraploid (4n) — four sets of chromosomes (often created in breeding).
- Triploid (3n) — three sets (usually sterile but can have exceptional flowers).

Sometimes, during cell division, the chromosomes replicate but the cell fails to divide.

The result is a cell with double the normal chromosome number.

If this happens in a growing point (meristem), the entire plant can become tetraploid.

This occurs in nature, though it’s uncommon.

Induced tetraploidy (the most common method in horticulture)

Breeders often create tetraploids intentionally using chemicals that disrupt normal cell division.

The two classic agents: -

- Colchicine – a medication for gout derived from the seeds of the autumn crocus.
- Oryzalin (gentler and more targeted) – Originally used as a herbicide

These chemicals temporarily prevent the cell from forming a spindle during mitosis.

Chromosomes replicate, but the cell cannot split → resulting in 4n cells.

When applied to: -

- Seeds → some seedlings emerge tetraploid
- Meristems → treated growth points produce tetraploid tissue
- Protocorms in flask → efficient for mass breeding

This is how most modern tetraploid cattleyas, phalaenopsis, and cymbidiums are produced.

How to Spot a Tetraploid Orchid

Tetraploids (4n) often reveal themselves through subtle but consistent physical traits. None are 100% diagnostic without lab testing, but experienced growers can usually make a very good guess.

Typical visual and growth clues

1. Thicker, heavier substance

- Flowers feel firmer, almost “waxy” or “fleshy.”
- Petals and sepals are broader and hold shape better.

2. Richer, more saturated colour

- Tetraploids often show deeper purples, stronger yellows, and cleaner whites.
- Patterns (veining, spotting) tend to be bolder and more defined.

3. Shorter internodes and compact growth

- Plants look chunkier and more “sturdy.”
- Leaves are wider, darker, and thicker.

4. Slower growth

- Tetraploids divide and mature more slowly because each cell must copy twice the DNA.

5. Flower form

- Rounds out more easily.
- Lips are fuller.
- Petals overlap more readily.

If you ever compare a known diploid and tetraploid side-by-side, the difference becomes obvious — the tetraploid looks like the “premium” version.

How Ploidy Affects Breeding in Common Orchid Genera

Ploidy is one of the most important — and least understood — factors in orchid hybridising.

It determines fertility, compatibility, flower quality, and uniformity.

Here is a breakdown by major genera.

Cattleya Alliance

- Most modern show cattleyas are tetraploid.
- $4n \times 4n \rightarrow$ uniform, round, high-quality flowers with strong substance.
- $2n \times 2n \rightarrow$ more variation, often more vigorous.
- $2n \times 4n \rightarrow$ usually triploids ($3n$) \rightarrow often sterile but can produce exceptional flowers.

Breeders prefer $4n \times 4n$ for consistency and award potential.

Phalaenopsis

- Many commercial lines (especially whites and pinks) are tetraploid.
- $4n \times 4n \rightarrow$ thick, long-lasting flowers, excellent shelf life.
- $2n$ species are still used to introduce novel colours and patterns.

Triploids ($3n$) are common in supermarket phals — great flowers, but poor breeders.

Cymbidium

- Many standard cymbidiums are diploid, but tetraploids are increasingly used for show lines.
- $4n \times 4n \rightarrow$ larger, fuller flowers with improved substance.
- $2n \times 2n \rightarrow$ more vigorous plants, often more floriferous.

Tetraploid cymbidiums tend to bloom later and grow slower, but the flowers are superior.

Dendrobium (especially nobile and phalaenopsis types)

- Both $2n$ and $4n$ lines exist.
- Tetraploids give bigger, rounder flowers and stronger colour.
- Diploids give more canes and faster growth.

Breeders often mix ploidies to create triploids with exceptional flower quality, even if sterile.

Paphiopedilum

- Many species are naturally diploid, but tetraploids are highly prized.
- $4n$ Paphs have very thick leaves and heavy, glossy flowers.
- $4n \times 4n \rightarrow$ excellent form and substance.

Triploids are rare and usually sterile.

A couple of examples of $2n$ and $4n$ comparisons.



Guess which one is the tetraploid

Judging Results for November 2025

Category	Name of Plant	Owner
Novice Hybrid	Den. Little Green Apples	J Hopkins
Novice Species	Milt. flavescens	J Scott
Novice Seedling	No entry	
Judges Choice Novice	Milt. flavescens	J Scott
Encouragement - Novice	N/a	
Open Hybrid	C. Unknown	R Anderson
Open Species	Phal. stobartiana	E Otto
Open Seedling	Phal. hieroglyphica	E Otto
Judges Choice Open	Phal. stobartiana	E Otto
Master Hybrid	C. Catherine Clarkson	C & D Crees
Master Species	Phrag. caudatum	J & C Terry
Master Seedling	N/a	
Judges Choice Master	Phrag. caudatum	J & C Terry
Judges Choice Overall	Phrag. caudatum	J & C Terry
Popular Vote	C. purpurata v. carnea	D Tidswell



Milt. flavescens



Den. Little Green Apples



Phal. hieroglyphica



Phrag. caudatum



C. Unknown



Phal. stobartiana



C. Catherine Clarkson



C. purpurata v. carnea



MOMENTUM MENTAL HEALTH Our Charity for 2025

Merchandise Members Note (some prices have changed) For items call Peter on 44 921 9938
Peter now has an EFTPOS machine so payment at purchase is preferred please.

Bank Details : - Toowoomba Orchid Society, Heritage account 5696989, BSB 638-070 or S21 for Heritage customers.

Squat Pot 80mm (Each)	\$0.30	Orchiata Bark 35L (3 – 6mm)	\$38.00
Squat Pot 100mm (Each)	\$0.35	Perlite Super Coarse 100L	\$35.00
Squat Pot 125mm (Each)	\$0.45	Perlite Super Coarse 10L	\$4.00
Squat Pot 140mm (Each)	\$0.65	Std. Pot 100mm Tall (Each)	\$0.40
Squat Pot 175mm (Each)	\$0.90	Std. Pot 100mm (Each)	\$0.35
Squat Pot 200mm (Each)	\$1.45	Standard Pot 125mm (Each)	\$0.30
Orchid Pot 200mm (Each)	\$2.80	Standard Pot 140mm (Each)	\$0.35
Butterfly Clips Small (20 Pack)	\$3.00	Standard Pot 180mm (Each)	\$0.70
Butterfly Clips Med. (18 Pack)	\$3.00	Standard Pot 200mm (Each)	\$0.90
Butterfly Clips Large (8 Pack)	\$3.00	Saucer 140mm (Each)	\$0.60
Butterfly Clips Xtra Large (5 Pack)	\$3.00	Saucer 200mm (Each)	\$1.10
Labels 100mm (30 Pack)	\$3.00	Saucer 300mm (Each)	\$2.20
Labels 140mm (30 Pack)	\$3.00	Pot Hanger 360mm (Each)	\$0.50
Rutec Root Booster 1L	\$8.00	Pot Hanger 500mm (Each)	\$2.50
Rutec Growth Booster 1L	\$12.00	Bamboo Stakes 60cm (18 Pack)	\$3.00
Orchiata Bark 35L (18 – 25mm)	\$38.00	Bamboo Stakes 90cm (9 Pack)	\$3.00
Orchid Mix – All Sizes – (10L Pack)	\$12.00	Coco Peat -	\$10.00
Orchiata Bark 35L (12 – 18mm)	\$38.00	Orchid Charcoal 5mm – 10l bag	\$10.00
Orchiata Bark 35L (9 – 12mm) & (6-9mm)	\$38.00		

Next Meeting 23rd January 2026

It is the AGM

Subs are due NOW (second time)

Toowoomba Orchid Society Inc. Annual General Meeting 2026

I hereby nominate _____

For the position of _____

In the Toowoomba Orchid Society Inc.

Proposed by _____ Name _____ Signature

Seconded by _____ Name _____ Signature

Accepted by _____ Signature

This form, duly signed, must be in the hands of the Secretary 14 days prior to the AGM

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Toowoomba Orchid Society Inc. Annual General Meeting 2024

I hereby nominate _____

For the position of _____

In the Toowoomba Orchid Society Inc.

Proposed by _____ Name _____ Signature

Seconded by _____ Name _____ Signature

Accepted by _____ Signature

This form, duly signed, must be in the hands of the Secretary 14 days prior to the AGM

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