

## Benching Your Plants

Preparing plants for the show bench begins the minute you bring home your new plant, not the week before the show. The following suggestions may serve as a help and a reminder.

Please refer to Bribie Island Orchid Society Inc. Model Rules, Constitution and Bylaws, November 2002.

“Show Rules and Conditions of Entry”.

You must own a plant at least 6 months. If owned for a shorter time then it may be benched with a tag saying ‘For display only’ or ‘Not for judging.’

### At home



- Stake, tie and train your plants as they grow.
  - Use a stake to train a Cattleya pseudobulb to grow upright and therefore the inflorescence will have a good upright start in life. (also canes on Dendrobiums and Vandaceous types.)
  - Staking must conform to QOS rules.
  - Stakes must not be too high. We don't want the judge to lose an eye.
  - Stakes should be unobtrusive and must not detract from the plant.
- Ties should be neat and blend in with the plant.
  - Have even light all round and above the plant to get even flowering. (not all growing towards one light source.)
  - When flowers are forming use wedges of styrene to space the flowers evenly.
  - Protect the flowers as they emerge from weather and water damage.
  - Do not allow pests or diseases to infest your orchids. (The judges and other plant owners don't like to see ants running along the show benches.)

### The day before

- The outside of the pot must be clean. (Either replace the pot or place the pot in a new and larger one.)
- The potting mix should be clean (no weeds.)
- If a flower breaks off, leave it on top of the pot.
- The plant and pot must be able to stand firmly on the show bench.
- Clean the leaves by washing with milk and water. Do not use leaf shine. (also applies to Anthuriums.)
- When handling and preparing your plants always have clean hands and sterilise all tools.
- Trim dead or damaged leaves by cutting them to the original shape of the leaf.

### On the day.

- Transport to show – a lot of care is needed not to damage the plant or flowers. (An upturned foam box is a handy carrier. Cut holes in the box to fit the pots.)
- A minimum of 50% of the buds on an inflorescence have to be open to be eligible for judging.
- If you are not sure where to place your plant ask an official.
- Place your plant on the show bench to show the flowers to the best advantage to the judges.
- Be very careful of other entrants' plants.
- Have labels and pot numbers where they can be clearly seen by the judges and the public.

- Have clean and neat printing on the label.
- Don't have flowers hidden by the foliage.
- Do not judge your own plant at home; let the judges do it at the show.

If you carry out all the above suggestions, then your plants will be in show bench condition.

References.

BIOS show schedule and conditions of entry.

Preparation of plants for show by Jim Mackinney.

How to prepare your plants for showing by Athol Bennett - Les Orchidaes, March 2004

Show bench rules by Joan Male and Lester Ratcliffe – Les Orchidaes, June 1995

Bloom displaying by Ken Balke from Orchids Australia.

By John Hopgood

These notes have been used at our New Grower's Meetings. They are from various sources and we thank the authors. All articles are supplied in good faith and the Bribie Island Orchid Society and its members will not be held responsible for any loss or damage.