

TOPIC: "CALADIUMS AND BEGONIAS"

GUEST SPEAKER : THEO BEENDERS

MALENY GARDEN CLUB MEETING : 30 JANUARY, 2018 UNDER THE OLD WITTA SCHOOL

- Parachute plant from South Africa and Madagascar is a succulent – flowers resemble parachutes – costs £29 plus freight to buy on-line
- New Crinkly Begonia is the holy grail of begonias – slow growing and costs \$25
- Related to Gloxinia and African Violet , Episcia has large tuber, orange/red small trumpet shaped flowers – will flower for months – from tropical Central and South America. Also among the 10 species is a cascading tropical white with purple spots
- Fittonia – nerve plant – has lush green leaves with accented veins of white to deep pink and likes shade
- Kaempferia – peacock ginger plant – deciduous in winter, shoots in spring with 10 to 15 flowers each day – likes shade – is used as a ground cover in small areas
- Ground Orchid – native to Cape York flowering October to April – thrives in ½ sun ½ shade and neglect. Available with purple, pink or white flowers – also hybrid apricot. Named native orchids are easy to grow
- Jewel Orchid – native to India – very dark green/burgundy leaves with lighter stripe – prized for its foliage rather than its little white flowers
- Native Hoya – pink flowers, dark leaves, fast growing. Also dark blood red Hawaiian King
- Shooting Star Hoya is a non-climber
- Theo uses 85% coconut coir, 15% jumbo Perlite, a little dolomite, blood and bone and Plantacote fertilizer as his potting mix. He uses ½ strength liquid fertilizer once a week – add 200ml Fish Emulsion or Seasol to 2L spray container of water and attach hose – amounts to 40L. Water the day before to moisten soil
- Flush coir peat 3 to 4 times to remove salt which affects sensitive plants
- Fernland 60/40 ratio for coir peat
- Plantacote Plus is more economical than Osmocote with the same properties
- Vanda Orchids need pots with several holes in sides. Flower spike will last 3mths on plant
- Theo's general Orchid mix is comprised of coarse bark, jumbo Perlite plus dolomite, blood and bone and Plantacote
- Dendrobiums and Cattleyas need medium bark plus the other ingredients
- Propagate Begonia from a small, mature leaf. Soak leaf for 2 minutes in ice-cream container with 1ml of rooting hormone mixed with 1L of water. Then place leaf into mix of coir peat, Perlite and dolomite in a container/box and spray with Mancozeb fungicide to make humid and protect before placing a pane of glass over top of box. If no glass use plastic and repeat spraying weekly
- Caladiums are prized for their coloured leaves in various colour combinations and are easy to grow using Theo's potting mix recipe

Theo advised that an Alpaca which doesn't spit needs a mate as is lonely since previous mate died. Available free to a good home.

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