

# WARRINGAL ORCHID SOCIETY INC.



[www.warringalorchidsociety.com.au](http://www.warringalorchidsociety.com.au)

**PRESIDENT**  
Andrew Fernandez

**TREASURER**  
Alf Magnano  
0403006104

**EDITOR**  
Pam Kennedy  
0457710023

**SECRETARY**  
George Dimech  
0411372537

**MEMBERSHIP**  
Helen Robinson

**SHOW CO-ORDINATOR**  
Jerry Karbownik  
98173699

Jan-Feb  
2026

All correspondence to be addressed to: The Secretary, 77 Carrington Blvd, Thomastown, Vic. 3074

The next Committee meeting will be at 7.30pm on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2026  
Venue: 77 Carrington Blvd Thomastown.

The Warringal Orchid Society meets at the Watsonia Community Hall,  
35 Lambourn Road Watsonia

**The next Meeting will be on Wednesday 18 February 2026**

The hall will be open from 7.00pm. You are welcome to bench plants for judging and to come early to socialise with other members. A sales table operates with pots and other orchid accessories when available. Members are able to submit up to 6 orchid plants for sale (plants to be well established in their pots and in a clean condition). The society deducts a 10% commission on sales. Plants should be listed on a sales form available at sales table.

**Please be seated on time for meeting to commence at 8.00pm.**

**Speaker's corner:** We welcome back Murray Harding as our guest speaker this month. He will help us unpack all the wonders of beautiful *Dendrobium speciosum*. Always a font of knowledge, we are sure to learn lots about improving our specimens.



## CLUB NOTICES

### **Filled with energy and ideas for 2026? Join the committee!**

Our small but hard-working committee is much in need of some new growth, to play a small part in keeping Warringal the fantastic club that it is. Currently, the committee is shrinking, and that puts us at risk of losing the strong position we are in as a club. Please consider putting your hand up to join the committee. Please contact a committee member for further information. Our current committee includes Andrew Fernandez (President), George Dimech (Secretary), Alf Magnano (Treasurer), Helen Robinson (Membership), Bob Pyz (Pots and fertiliser) and Chris Dimech (Committee. And in support, Jerry Karbowlik as Show Manager, and Pam Kennedy as newsletter editor.

### **Important Dates for your Diary**

**WINTER SHOW – 1-2 August (Set up on 31 July)**

**SPRING SHOW – 3-4 October (Set up on 2 October)**

**Christmas dinner – 16 December (note this is a later date than previous years)**

### **New growers group –**

New members wishing to develop their orchid-growing skills are welcome to join the New Growers Group conducted by Jason Khoo. This group runs for approximately 30 minutes prior to the start of the monthly meeting.

### **Monthly meeting – Setting up**

Help is needed to set the hall up for our meeting. The hall is open from 6.00pm. Come early and get to know other members as you help set-up.

### **Monthly meeting - Supper**

All members are invited to bring a plate of supper to share at the end of our meeting. We all value this social time, so do not leave it to the same providers every month. Also, please help pack up chairs/tables etc prior to enjoying supper.

### **Bulletin Postage**

Due to increased cost of postage, members wishing for a paper copy of bulletin will incur an additional fee added to their membership. Email copy of bulletin is free of charge.

### **Warringal Orchid Society QR code**





# Celebrating Christmas 2024 and the 2025 New Year





And then there was that auction!!!!



Was this a bid?

Finally, celebrating our 2025 section winners – congratulations to all!



Open – Michael Coker



Intermediate – Pam Kennedy



Advanced Novice – Karen Trueman



Sorry, no picture!

Novice – Karen Lee





Summer photo  
competition entries



Lc. Tropical Pointer 'Cheetah'



Scaticaria strictifolia



Chiloscisto usneoides



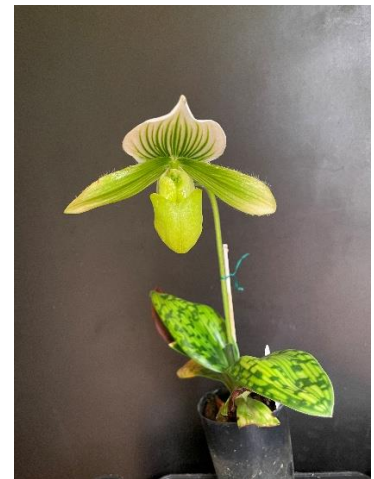
Masdevallia atuhualpa



Vanda Kultana Pink Tone x King  
Naresuan



Maxalaria cucullata



Paphiopedilum In Charm Silver  
Bell x Doya Green Prince



Leopard x Doya Beautiful



Aeranthes ramosa



Cymbidium suave



Dendrobium Kimiko



Vanda falcata



Phragmipedium Aidan

 **Orchid Species Society  
of Victoria (OSSV)** 

**SALE DAYS 2026**

- Orchid Display
- High Quality Vendors
- Indoor Sales Area
- Free Advice
- Free Parking



**DATES**  
**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2026**  
**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2026**

**Time: 9 am - 1 pm**  
**OSSV Members Free**

**General Public Entry \$5**  
 (Sign Up on the day and get free entry)

**Parkmore Primary School, 38-54 Jolimont Road  
 Forest Hills VIC 3131**

**Enquiries (Andre): 0408 594 859**

## This Month's article

### Famous monkey-face 'Dracula' orchids are vanishing in the wild

Published: October 14, 2025 3.12am AEDT in The Conversation <https://theconversation.com/famous-monkey-face-dracula-orchids-are-vanishing-in-the-wild-266859>



#### Authors

Diogo Verissimo - Research Fellow in Conservation Marketing, University of Oxford

Amy Hinsley - Senior Research Fellow, Oxford Martin Programme on the Wildlife Trade, University of Oxford

Luis Baquero - Researcher, Orchid Ecology, Universidad de las Américas (Ecuador)

They look like tiny monkeys peering out from the mist. Known to scientists as Dracula, the so-called “monkey-face orchids” have become online celebrities.

Millions of people have shared their photos, marvelling at flowers that seem to smile, frown or even grimace. But behind that viral charm lies a very different reality: most of these species are teetering on the edge of extinction.

A new global assessment has, for the first time, revealed the conservation status of all known Dracula orchids. The findings are dire. Out of 133 species assessed, nearly seven in ten are threatened with extinction.

Many exist only in tiny fragments of forest, some in just one or two known locations. A few are known only from plants growing in cultivation. Their wild populations may already be gone.

These orchids grow mainly in the Andean cloud forests of Colombia and Ecuador, some of the most biologically rich but also most endangered ecosystems on the planet. Their survival depends on cool, humid conditions at mid to high altitudes, where constant mist wraps the trees.

Unfortunately, those same slopes are being rapidly cleared for cattle pasture, crops like avocado, and expanding roads and mining projects, activities that are directly threatening several Dracula species (such as *Dracula terborchii*). As forests shrink and fragment, the orchids lose the microclimates (the specific temperature, light and humidity conditions) that they depend on for survival.

Another threat comes from people's fascination with these rare and charismatic plants. Orchids have been prized for their flowers for hundreds of years, with European trade starting in the 19th century, when “orchid fever” captivated wealthy collectors leading to huge increases in wild collection in tropical areas.

Today, that fascination continues, fuelled by the internet. Many enthusiasts and professional growers trade in cultivated plants responsibly, but others still seek wild orchids, and Dracula species are no exception. For a plant that may exist in populations of just a few dozen individuals, a single collecting trip can be disastrous.

#### *Turning popularity into protection*

In Ecuador's north-western Andes, a place named Reserva Drácula protects one of the world's richest concentrations of these orchids. The reserve is home to at least ten Dracula species, five of them found nowhere else on Earth.

But the threats are closing in. Deforestation for agriculture, illegal mining and even the presence of armed groups now endanger the reserve's staff and surrounding communities.

Local conservationists at Fundación EcoMinga, who manage the area, have described the situation as “urgent”. Their proposals include strengthening community-based monitoring, supporting sustainable farming and developing ecotourism to provide income from protecting, rather than clearing, the forest.

When you see these flowers up close, it’s easy to understand why they attract such fascination. Their name, *Dracula*, comes not from vampires but from the Latin for “little dragon”, a nod to their long, fang-like sepals, the petal-like structures that protect the developing orchid flower.

Their strange shapes astonished 19th-century botanists, who thought they might be a hoax. Later, as more species were discovered, people began to notice that many resembled tiny primates, hence the nickname “monkey-face orchids”. They’ve been called the pandas of the orchid world: charismatic, instantly recognisable, but also deeply endangered.

That charisma, however, hasn’t yet translated into protection. Until recently, only a handful of *Dracula* species had had their conservation status formally assessed, leaving most of the group’s fate a mystery.



*Dracula orchid* - CAPTION. Leela Mei/Shutterstock

The new assessment was led by a team of botanists from Colombia and Ecuador, with collaborators from several international organisations including the University of Oxford and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Species Survival Commission’s Orchid Specialist Group, finally closes that gap.

It draws on herbarium records (dried plant specimens collected by botanists), field data and local expertise to map where each species occurs and estimate how much forest remains. The results confirm what many orchid specialists had long suspected: *Dracula* species are in serious trouble.



Despite this grim outlook, there are reasons for hope. The Reserva Drácula and other protected areas are vital refuges, offering safe havens not only for orchids but for frogs, monkeys and countless other species.

Local organisations are working with communities to promote sustainable agriculture, develop ecotourism and reward conservation through payments for ecosystem services. These are modest efforts compared with the scale of the challenge, but they show that solutions exist, if the world pays attention.

*Dracula orchids are found in the cloud forests of Central America.*  
Ondrej Prosicky/Shutterstock

There’s also an opportunity here to turn popularity into protection. The same internet fame that fuels demand for these orchids could help fund their conservation. If viral posts about “smiling flowers” included information about where they come from and how threatened they are, they could help change norms about the need to avoid overcollection.

Just as the panda became a symbol for wildlife conservation, monkey-face orchids could become icons for plant conservation, a reminder that biodiversity isn’t only about animals. Whether future generations will still find these faces in the forest, and not just in digital feeds, depends on how we act now.

THE WARRINGAL ORCHID SOCIETY WOULD LIKE TO THANK THESE SPONSORS FOR THEIR DONATIONS

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