



## DOWN UNDER NATIVE ORCHIDS

Specialists in Australian Native Orchid Species & Hybrids

The Home of TROPICCOOL™ Hybrids

PO Box 3630 WAMBERAL NSW 2260

PH: your code + 61 2 4385-4552 or FAX: 61 2 4385-8330

Email: [brian\\_duno@bigpond.com](mailto:brian_duno@bigpond.com) WEBSITE :- [www.duno.com.au](http://www.duno.com.au)

### DEAR CUSTOMER

We have several types of plants on offer and would like to tell you a little about them. Our culture notes are offered as a guide only, it works for us, so please be careful to try our ideas on an unimportant plant first to see if it suits your conditions!

#### Tropicool™ Hybrids and Papua New Guinea Hybrids /Species

These plants have a tropical species in their background, in most cases Den. *bigibbum*, a plant which is used behind many of the worlds cut flower orchids. It lasts longer than most Dendrobium species and produces such flamboyant flowers. As *bigibbum* flowers in autumn, and most other commonly used species in our hybrids flower in spring. Our Tropicool's™ usually flower any time between May and September, with our peak at the end of July, early August (both periods are for Southern Hemisphere timings), just add, OR SUBTRACT, your choice, six months for Northern Hemisphere timings. As a result, this type of hybrid has filled in the off season with wonderful flowers, and will tolerate as much cold as most other native Dendrobiums. The trick is to keep them DRIER in cold weather. The colder the DRIER! In cold weather, when the bulbs start to wrinkle give them a good drink in the morning, avoiding the coldest days. If the bulbs are not wrinkling, they are not thirsty! Pot up into 80mm pots when big enough. **DO NOT over pot!** Air movement is important, we hang our best (large plants, not seedlings). Allowing your plants to have that lovely morning warming sun is probably the single most important tip you can get. Whilst with the P.N.G. varieties, these are mostly alpine Latouria varietal crosses or species, and you can treat them as you would a D. *bigibbum*, drier through winter, not totally dry though, remember their habitat is in the alpine regions of P.N.G., humidity high. If you follow these guidelines you should grow them as well as your other natives.

#### Other Dendrobiums and Sarcophilus Hybrids/Species

As with the Tropicool's above, these should not be over watered. If you watch the bulbs you will see they generally wrinkle before the Tropicool's so can tolerate more water, but don't over do it. Be guided by the plant bulbs! *Sarcophilus* on the other hand don't have pseudo bulbs, so they have to be treated a little differently, in that in summer you can't afford to let them dry out as they don't have any water reserves, other than in their leaves. Water when they need it. Light doesn't have to be as bright as for Dendrobiums to grow them successfully, feed and treat them the same as ordinary Dendrobiums, except for the watering. In winter cut back as you do with Tropicools™ for watering.

**General; - Avoid high Nitrogen fertiliser like the plague - it leads to soft, fungi prone growth and few flowers.** We use a high potassium orchid food with an N: P: K of 8:5:25, if you aren't able to obtain a low nitrogenous fertilizer, then a fertilizer with a low percentage content of UREA, at a rate of one gram per litre fortnightly (two weeks) all year round. To explain, if you locate a fertilizer with an N (nitrogen) rating of 15, and the percentage of urea was 8% in the overall mix of things, that would be OK, but if it was 15% Urea, NO, NO, look for another. To get optimum results when using Pine bark mixes, it is a good idea to give your plants a drink of limewater in early autumn and again in early spring. We use micro-fine lime (F70 Superfine Limestone) at a rate of one gram per litre. The bark mix we use for seedlings, is 6 parts fine, two medium and 1 part 10mm-river pebbles. Dendrobiums and Sarcophilus up to 140mm pots, 6 parts medium, two parts fine and one part 10mm river pebbles, speciosum up to 140 - 180mm pots 6 parts medium, two parts coarse and one part 10mm river pebbles. For larger speciosum our bark mix is 6 parts coarse, two parts medium and one of 10mm river pebbles. Before potting (using dry mix) sieve the mix to remove all 'fines', put the fines on the garden or into your cymbidium mix, if you grow them. When deflasking we add a capful of Envy (Stress-guard) or a product that will prevent the transpiration of water from the leaf and roots structure, to the water. Soak the seedlings in the solution for 15-20 minutes, shake all the agar off the roots then lay them on some damp newspaper. The logic behind using dry bark mix is that it is much easier to work with, for starters. You can get those odd shaped pieces of bark and pebbles to combine around the existing roots to give it a firm hold on things in their new environment, with just the lightest of tapping on the rim of the 50mm pot. DO NOT press down heavily on the area where the roots are, as this will fracture them, placing the roots and naturally the plant into unnecessary stress. It is a lot easier when you are going from 50mm tubes to the larger pot sizes, where you are basically just potting on. You will note we have included river pebbles in our potting mixes, we have trailed this and find it does work for us. After potting we sprinkle a mix of sel-grit & canunda shell (50/50) over each pot; this is for lime and calcium supplement. Then totally drench the plant to get rid of any missed 'fines', & thoroughly soak the bark to encourage the roots to grow into a nice new moist environment. This process could take up to 15 minutes, depending on the quantity of plants. Do not let the bark dry out in the early stages of the plants' potting into its new mix. We do not recommend using charcoal in your Native mix, holds 'salts' & will eventually turn your mix sour, rot the roots, & sends your plant/s to the big bush house in the sky, not what we are looking for, we want flowers & lots of them. We hope that this is of some help, and look forward to hearing from you, should we be able to assist further.

Best wishes and Happy Growing,

Phena & Brian.

