



ESSEX ORCHID SOCIETY

SUMMER SPECIAL 2026

Summer Special 2026

*Celebrating our members,
our passion and our
beautiful orchids*

A Summer Welcome

We hope you're enjoying a wonderful summer and that your orchids are thriving during the growing season.

Whether you're tending a windowsill Phalaenopsis, nurturing a treasured Cattleya or simply enjoying the spectacular displays in your greenhouse, summer is one of the most rewarding times of the year for orchid enthusiasts.

In this special edition, we're celebrating the people and plants that make the Essex Orchid Society such a welcoming community. You'll meet our Chairman, Raymond Payne, discover how Aluminet performed during one of the hottest summers in recent years, enjoy highlights from our June Show and catch up on news from the wider orchid world.

As always, thank you for your continued support of the Society. We wish you a relaxing summer and look forward to welcoming everyone back in September for another season of inspiring talks, beautiful orchids and good company.

Happy growing!

The Essex Orchid Society Committee

CONTENTS

- 1 Meet Our Chairman – Raymond Payne 
- 2 Ray's Orchids & September Meeting 
- 3 Keeping Cool with Aluminet – A Member's Experience 
- 4 News from the British Orchid Council & June Meeting Highlights 
- 5 Genus Spotlight – Coelogyne 
- 6 Events Around the UK – Autumn/Winter 2026 & into 2027 
- 7 Diary Dates – The 2026/27 Programme & Society Information 

COMING THIS SEPTEMBER

A Victorian Obsession with Orchids

Discover the fascinating story of Orchidelirium – the Victorian obsession with orchids.

 Saturday 12 September 2026

 Doors open 1.30pm

 South Green Memorial Hall,
Southend Road, Billericay, CM11 2PR

INSIDE THIS ISSUE



MEET OUR CHAIRMAN

Raymond Payne shares his lifelong passion for orchids.



DOES ALUMINET REALLY WORK?

One grower's experience after an exceptionally warm summer.



JUNE SHOW HIGHLIGHTS

A celebration of the wonderful orchids exhibited by our members.



AROUND THE ORCHID WORLD

News from the British Orchid Council and beyond.



GENUS SPOTLIGHT

Focusing on the elegant and fragrant Coelogyne.



DIARY DATES & EVENTS

Your complete guide to the 2026/27 programme.

 Cover photograph: kindly provided by one of our members. 

GROWING TOGETHER



SHARING KNOWLEDGE



INSPIRING PASSION



www.essexorchidsociety.org.uk



[@essex.orchid.society](https://www.instagram.com/essex.orchid.society)



secretaryEOS@outlook.com



ESSEX ORCHID SOCIETY

MEET OUR CHAIRMAN

Raymond Payne

*A lifelong passion
for orchids*



Few people have been bitten by the orchid bug quite as dramatically as our Chairman. His relationship with plants began at ten — a keen young gardener who bought bulbs from Woolworths, planted them in garden soil and watched them resolutely fail. It would be another three and a half decades before orchids came back into his life.

A visit to the Eric Young Orchid Foundation at around 45 proved the turning point. He bought a seedling, nursed it for three years and lost it — his first honest lesson. Undeterred, he began picking up jewel orchids and Miltonias from B&Q and eventually found his way to the Society around 1996, encouraged by the late Peter Hall. "Joining the society was when I really discovered the world of orchids," he says.

Today that world fills a 6x6 greenhouse and a north-facing windowsill used as a quarantine room — a practice he considers essential. "When you get a new plant, put it in isolation for at least four weeks," he advises. A lesson learned the hard way: his most treasured plant, a *Prosthechea* given to him by the much-loved Audrey English, was also the one that introduced mealybugs to the greenhouse.

What keeps you passionate after all these years?

"Being able to get something new to flower."



His collection of around 85 orchids leans towards *Cattleya*, *Encyclia*, *Bulbophyllum* and *Neofinetia*, while his dream acquisitions — *Aerangis luteoalba* var. *rhodosticta* and *Dendrobium chionanthum* — both happen to belong to fellow member Diana, a fact he notes with good humour.

Asked about his greatest success, his answer says everything about the man: "Enthusing my six-year-old grandson, who can now name lots of orchids — and meeting so many wonderful people along the way."

QUICK FIRE

	Favourite orchid	<i>Neofinetia falcata</i>
	Most rewarding genus	<i>Bulbophyllum</i>
	Most challenging genus	<i>Masdevallia</i>
	Greenhouse drink	Tea
	Watering time	Morning
	Book recommendation	<i>A compendium of miniature orchid species</i> by Ron Parsons and Mary E. Gerritsen

*Some of Ray's orchids
flowering at the time of the interview*



SEPTEMBER MEETING — SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER 2026



Our Chairman, Raymond Payne, returns to the front of the room this September with what promises to be a fascinating presentation:

A Victorian Obsession with Orchids

The talk explores Orchidelirium — also known as orchidomania or orchid fever — the extraordinary period of flower madness that gripped Victorian society when collecting and discovering orchids became the fashionable pastime of the wealthy. It was an era of obsession, rivalry and adventure, and Raymond's presentation, drawing on material from BOC's Chris Barker, brings this captivating chapter of orchid history vividly to life.

*Not to be missed — we hope
to see you there!*





ESSEX ORCHID SOCIETY

Keeping Cool with Aluminet

A Member's Experience



Having experienced several increasingly hot summers, I decided to invest in aluminet shading as a way of reducing heat build-up in my greenhouse. The sun hits my greenhouse from around 10am until 6pm, and with temperatures this summer reaching extreme highs, I needed a solution that was effective without sacrificing too much light.

I fitted 50% aluminet shade strips throughout the greenhouse which I bought from Simply Control (www.simplycontrol.co.uk/), attaching them easily with strong Velcro tape — a simple system that means I can put them up in spring and take them down again in winter without any fuss. The results were immediately noticeable: on the hottest days, temperatures dropped by around 5–8°C, and the growing environment felt far more comfortable for the plants. Encouragingly, light levels remained good and flowering was not significantly affected.

PROS



- Significant reduction in peak temperatures — 5–8°C on the hottest days
- Easy to fit and remove with Velcro, making seasonal use straightforward
- Good light transmission despite 50% shade rating
- Plants and flowers clearly benefited from the more stable conditions
- Relatively low cost for the protection it provides

CONS



- Requires some initial time to measure, cut and fit properly
- On cooler summer days, the shading may reduce light more than necessary
- Velcro fastenings need to be checked periodically to ensure they hold firm
- Not a substitute for **ventilation** — best used alongside good airflow



On the hottest days, temperatures dropped by around 5–8°C, and the growing environment felt far more comfortable for the plants.



WOULD I RECOMMEND IT?

Absolutely. Aluminet has made a huge difference to my growing conditions and it has kept both my stress levels and my sanity intact through some very testing summers. If you are struggling with heat in your greenhouse, I would not hesitate to suggest giving it a try.





ESSEX ORCHID SOCIETY

News from British Orchid Council



A few items of note from recent British Orchid Council (BOC) discussions.



Visitor Leaflet for Orchid Shows

A visitor leaflet produced by the British Orchid Council (BOC) for use at shows has proved a real hit with orchid enthusiasts this season. Should Essex Orchid Society wish to hold a show of its own, 50 copies would be made available to us—a generous offer well worth bearing in mind as we consider the Society's future plans.

The BOC is also hopeful of attracting sufficient advertising to fund a larger, expanded version in time for the 2027 show season. If you'd like to take a look at this year's edition, a copy will be available to browse at the next meeting.



Society Questionnaire

The BOC plans to circulate a questionnaire to all member societies during August, with the aim of identifying examples of good practice and exploring how it can better support its members.

Responses are entirely voluntary, and there was healthy discussion about the challenges of comparing societies that vary greatly in size, membership and activities. We'll share the questionnaire with members when it arrives and welcome any thoughts you may have.



Orchid Conservation Register

The Orchid Conservation Register, an initiative launched by the Devon and Scottish Orchid Societies, continues to gather momentum. Four of the larger societies now have coordinators trained to use the Persephone database, helping to record and preserve important cultivated orchid collections.

We'll continue to share updates as the project develops and explore whether there may be opportunities for Essex members to become involved in the future.

Highlights from our June Meeting



ESSEX ORCHID SOCIETY

GENUS SPOTLIGHT:

Coelogyne



With around 200 species distributed from the Himalayan foothills through South-East Asia to the Pacific Islands, *Coelogyne* is one of the most rewarding genera for the temperate grower. Found predominantly as epiphytes at altitude — where cool temperatures, high humidity and distinct wet and dry seasons prevail — they reward those who respect their seasonal rhythm with some of the most elegant flowers in cultivation.

THE PLANTS

Most species produce well-defined pseudobulbs carrying one or two heavily pleated leaves. Inflorescences range from erect racemes to dramatically pendant spikes bearing up to thirty or more flowers. Colour is predominantly white, cream or soft green, with lips intricately marked in gold, ochre or brown — and many species are strongly fragrant.

CULTIVATION

Matching the plant to the correct temperature regime is the single most important factor in success.

Cool growers (*cristata*, *flaccida*, *nitida*, *mooreana*) require winter nights of 5–10°C with summer days not exceeding 25°C — ideal for the cool or unheated greenhouse. A pronounced winter rest with reduced watering and good ventilation is essential to initiate flower spikes; without it, growth will be vigorous but flowering unreliable.

Intermediate growers (*speciosa*, *tomentosa*, *lawrenceana*) tolerate nights of 12–15°C year-round and are more accessible to those without a dedicated cool house.

Watering and feeding: Water freely in active growth with a balanced high-nitrogen feed (30-10-10) fortnightly, switching to high potassium (10-10-30) in late summer to harden growth and encourage flowering. Reduce watering significantly as temperatures drop, allowing the medium to approach dryness between applications without dessicating the pseudobulbs.

Medium: Coarse bark with perlite and a small moss addition suits most species. Repot only when the rhizome is clearly overrunning the container, ideally in early spring as new roots emerge. Most species flower more freely when slightly pot-bound.

Light: 2,000–3,000 foot-candles of diffuse light. Avoid direct summer sun.



The orchid featured on our cover is *Coelogyne ochracea* var. *lemoniana*, photographed at the May Society show. The plant was sourced from Burnham Nurseries.



SPECIES WORTH SEEKING

Species	Type	Notes
<i>C. cristata</i>	Cool	Cascading white flowers, strongly fragrant, late winter
<i>C. flaccida</i>	Cool-Int	Pendant cream racemes; reliable and free-flowering
<i>C. nitida</i>	Cool	Compact; excellent for limited space
<i>C. massangeana</i>	Intermediate	Pendant spikes to 45cm; spectacular
<i>C. speciosa</i>	Int-Warm	Long season; accessible without a cool house

TROUBLESHOOTING

Failure to flower — almost always the result of an insufficient winter rest. Ensure a minimum six-week period of cool temperatures (5–10°C for cool growers), reduced watering and no feeding. Plants moved indoors for winter and kept too warm rarely perform well.

Pseudobulb shrivelling — some shrinkage during winter rest is normal. Excessive shrivelling indicates either too little water during the growing season or root loss. Check the root system at repotting; healthy roots should be white to silver with green tips.

Leaf spotting and blackening — typically caused by water sitting in the developing growth for extended periods, leading to bacterial or fungal rot. Improve air circulation and water early in the day so foliage dries before temperatures drop overnight.

Poor root establishment after repotting — avoid disturbing roots unnecessarily. Where possible, top-dress rather than repot, and when repotting is essential, do so only as new root tips are visibly emerging in spring.



ESSEX ORCHID SOCIETY

Events Around the UK for August and September 2026



*A selection of events from sister societies
that members may wish to attend*



August 2026

- 1–2 Aug** — **Harrogate Orchid Society Annual Show**, RHS Garden Harlow Carr, Harrogate. 10am–4pm. Orchid displays, sales, talks and demonstrations. Burnham Nurseries also selling on both days.
- 5 Aug** — **Burnham Nurseries Orchid Clinic**, Newton Abbot, Devon. 10am–3pm. Advice, repotting, plant sales.
- 8 Aug** — **North of England Orchid Society Show & Meeting**, Rixton with Glazebrook Village Hall, Warrington. 10am–3pm. 23 category show tables. Free entry.
- 8–9 Aug** — **Elite Orchids Open Day**, Vellthouse Farm, Elmore, Gloucester. 10am–4pm. Tour the glasshouses, meet grower Mark Turner, buy plants. Free but booking essential via Eventbrite. Limited to 25 per day.
- 8 Aug** — **Orchid Study Group Discussion: Orchid Gardeners' Question Time**, Aberglasney Gardens, Carmarthen, Wales. 1pm.
- 8 Aug** — **Wessex Orchid Society Summer Garden Party**. Venue TBC — check their website.
- 12 Aug** — **Darlington & District Orchid Society Meeting**, Sadberge Village Hall, Darlington. 2.30–4.30pm.
- 14 Aug** — **Lea Valley Orchid Society Meeting: Pests, Diseases and Other Orchid Sorrows**, Waterford Village Hall, Hertford. 7pm.
- 15–16 Aug** — **Burnham Nurseries & Orchid Paradise Open Weekend**, Newton Abbot, Devon. 10am–4pm.
- 15 Aug** — **OSGB Zoom Meeting: An Orchid Trip to Ecuador** — David Mathers. 2.15–4.30pm. Open to non-members.
- 16 Aug** — **Devon Orchid Society Meeting: Orchids in Art and Antiques** — Wayne Haywood, Burnham Nurseries, Devon. From 1.30pm.
- 21 Aug** — **Bournemouth Orchid Society Orchid Brains Trust & Plant Clinic**, Boscombe, Bournemouth. 7pm.
- 25 Aug** — **Cheltenham & District Orchid Society Meeting**, Down Hatherley Village Hall, Gloucester. 7.30pm.

Please check with the organisers nearer the time for any updates to dates, times or venues. Many societies welcome visitors — it's a great way to see new displays, meet fellow enthusiasts and perhaps find that special plant!



Websites of many societies list full details of upcoming events



Society newsletters often include flyers and booking information



Travel and enjoy — supporting our orchid community across the UK

September 2026

- 2 Sep** — **Burnham Nurseries Orchid Clinic**, Newton Abbot, Devon. 10am–3pm.
- 4 Sep** — **Cambridge Orchid Society Meeting: Auction of Members' Plants**, Harston Village Hall. 7.30pm.
- 5–6 Sep** — **Orchid Study Group Welsh Orchid Festival**, Aberglasney Gardens, Carmarthen. Sat 10am–5pm, Sun 10am–4pm. Rare species, hybrids, carnivorous plants, botanical paintings. Orchid growers on hand for advice.
- 5 Sep** — **Solihull & District Orchid Society Members' Plant Auction & AGM**, Dorridge, Solihull. Hall opens 1pm.
- 5 Sep** — **Hardy Orchid Society Leeds Autumn Meeting**. Details on their website.
- 6 Sep** — **Durham Orchid Show**, Josephine Butler College, Durham. 10am–4pm. Free entry and parking. Plants and sundries for sale. Craft show also on.
- 6 Sep** — **Sheffield Orchid Society Meeting: Orchids in Oz Part Two** — Terrestrial Orchids, St John's Church Hall, Sheffield. 10am–1pm.
- 12 Sep** — **North of England Orchid Society Show & Meeting**, Hoghton Village Hall, near Preston. 10am–3pm. Free entry.
- 12 Sep** — **OSGB Orchids for Everyone Day & Orchid Auction**, Cole Court, Twickenham, London. Opens 9.30am. Morning talk, afternoon auction from 2pm. Members and non-members welcome.
- 12 Sep** — **Wessex Orchid Society Meeting: Orchid Conservation** — Philip Seaton, Shawford Parish Hall, Winchester. Doors 2pm, start 2.30pm.
- 13 Sep** — **Scottish Orchid Society Meeting**, Glasgow Botanic Gardens. 2pm.
- 13 Sep** — **South West Orchid Society Meeting: Spicesotic Plants Hands-On Talk**, West Monkton Village Hall, Somerset. 2.30–5pm.
- 13 Sep** — **East Midlands Orchid Society Annual Show**, Bottesford VC Hall, Nottingham. 10am–4pm.
- 18 Sep** — **Lea Valley Orchid Society Meeting**, Waterford Village Hall, Hertford. 7pm.
- 18 Sep** — **Cheshire & North Wales Orchid Society Meeting**, St Mary's Church Hall, Chester. Doors 7pm, start 7.30pm.
- 19 Sep** — **Orchid Study Group AGM**, Aberglasney Gardens, Wales. 1pm.
- 19–20 Sep** — **Burnham Nurseries & Orchid Paradise Open Weekend**, Newton Abbot, Devon. 10am–3pm.
- 20 Sep** — **Devon Orchid Society Autumn Show**, Burnham Nurseries, Devon. 10am–3pm.
- 20 Sep** — **East Midlands Orchid Society AGM**, Bottesford Village Hall, Nottingham. 1.30–4pm.
- 22 Sep** — **Cheltenham & District Orchid Society Meeting: The Wonderful World of Cacti & Succulents** — Roger Ferryman, Down Hatherley Village Hall. 7.30pm.
- 26 Sep** — **Bournemouth Orchid Society Autumn Show**, Hamworthy Club, Canford Magna, Dorset. 12 noon–4.30pm. Plants for sale, potting demonstrations, free orchid clinic.
- 26 Sep** — **Bristol Rare Plants & Orchid Fair**, St Philip and St Jacob Church, Bristol. 10am–4pm. Rare and unusual houseplants, orchids, talks and demos.
- 27 Sep** — **Harrogate Orchid Society Meeting**, Poole Village Hall, Pool-in-Wharfedale. 10am–1pm.





ESSEX ORCHID SOCIETY

DIARY DATES



A reminder that the Essex Orchid Society does not hold monthly meetings during **July or August.**

We wish you all a wonderful, sunny summer holiday and hope your greenhouses and windowsills thrive!



PLEASE NOTE OUR OFFICIAL RETURN DATES for the upcoming autumn and winter. As always, meetings take place at **South Green Memorial Hall, Billericay, CM11 2PR**, from **2:00 PM to 4:00 PM** (Doors open 1:30 PM).



Coelogyne cristata var. alba —
kindly provided by one of our members.

AUTUMN 2026



12th Sept 2026

A Victorian Obsession with Orchids

Ray Payne



10th Oct 2026

Plants in Flower in the Nursery & Their Care

Zsuzsa Serer



14th Nov 2026

Orchid Pests and Diseases

Diana Petrokaite

NO DECEMBER MEETING



WINTER & SPRING 2026/27



9th Jan 2027

Native Orchids in the South East

Francis Quesada Pallares



13th Feb 2027

New Horizons in Hardy Orchids

Andrew Bannister



13th Mar 2027

Growing my Cattleyas

Michael Radley



10th Apr 2027

Orchids of Istria

Simon Tarrant



8th May 2027

AGM and Plant Sale



12th June 2027

Miniature Orchids Up Close:
Plants in Flower & Practical Care

Alex Koper

STAY CONNECTED



Website
www.essexorchidsociety.org.uk



Instagram
[@essex.orchid.society](https://www.instagram.com/essex.orchid.society)



Facebook
www.facebook.com/OrchidSocietyEssex/?locale=en_GB



Email
secretaryEOS@outlook.com

WE'D LOVE YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS!

This newsletter is for all members. If you have photos, growing tips, plant stories, show results, questions or ideas for future articles, please get in touch. Your contributions help make our newsletter interesting and inspire everyone.

We'd love to hear from you!

COMING IN THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE



How to Prepare for Your First Orchid Show
Practical tips for staging, grooming and transporting your plants.



Meet a Member
Getting to know the growers behind Essex Orchid Society.



Autumn Orchid Care Checklist
Simple jobs to prepare your orchids for the cooler months.

...and much more!

