

More Ideas on Societies- What is their future?

Although there was a good engaging discussion on what Societies are doing to try to encourage new members and to keep hold of them, time constraints meant that not all delegates could be heard.

Steve Pask representing EMOS had some ideas which are printed below for your consideration.

I personally think that the membership starts with a strong society committee, we have 14 members who are all actively engaged doing a variety of tasks, and during our committee meetings we have a separate topic on the agenda for 'membership drive'.

It is also important that we listen and take on board our member's thoughts and ideas and to show that we have addressed them in one way or another.

EMOS has a strong membership with 100+ members and each monthly meeting having approx. 70 members attend.

As a society and to let people know we are here, we have our own website, a society email, Facebook page and Twitter account with 1100 followers, each email and message received having a reply (if necessary) and not forgetting the BOC yearbook.

To help the society, we have, throughout the year, inclusive events which are driven by the membership - Christmas buffet, summer fete, raffles, member's plant auctions and society trips are also considered.

Most meetings involve a guest speaker and at times we look for someone from our own membership to do a talk, this has an advantage as the speaker knows the audience and is aware of what the members' needs are, what people grow and what problems they face.

When looking towards our own annual show we may put on a display at the local horticultural show prior to our show itself and publicity is done through local and area newspapers, village links, and radio (if possible), door to door leaflet drop which again is distributed by our membership.

At the annual, show, we have a manned table, promoting the society, encouraging the public with details of the society with membership offers and at the away shows we always take a variety of leaflets that refer to the history of the society, orchid conservation and details of our society.

We also offer to the membership a comprehensive monthly newsletter which has a variety of topics from society news, the orchid world, current and past, upcoming events etc. The publication is then emailed or posted to each member, our furthest member living in the Seychelles and 'yes', has been known to attend a meeting or two.

Listening to some of the issues that societies face today, our society is at present, one of the lucky ones, as you can see there is a lot of commitment not only from our committee but also from our members. This success has come from many years work and dedication from everyone.

I have seen over the time we have been involved in growing orchids, the decline of people having orchid greenhouses and move more towards windowsill growing. Like the trade, our society is always looking for new ways to encourage new and present members. We cannot sit back and think that everything is working well, we still need to adapt to suit today's growers and look at engaging the younger generation.