

Whyban Zyban?

In last month's newsletter I mentioned the use of the dual-purpose fungicide, Zyban, to control Guignardia infection with particular reference to Vandas and their relatives. Bad news fellas!! At the June meeting, Barry English drew my attention to the fact that while the newsletter was going to print, Zyban had been withdrawn from sale. Zyban is a combination of a broad-spectrum contact fungicide, Mancozeb, and a broad-spectrum systemic fungicide, Thiophanate methyl. My enquires revealed that Zyban was withdrawn because of instability of the Mancozeb. Unfortunately, Thiophanate methyl is not available in Australia as a single ingredient fungicide. Since it takes about two years and a fair pile of dollars to obtain registration of a fungicide in Australia, it is unlikely that straight Thiophanate methyl will be on the market any time soon. Not to worry! Another dual-purpose fungicide containing Thiophanate methyl is still available. The trade name of that fungicide is Banrot. It is a combination of the contact fungicide, Etridiazole, and the broad-spectrum systemic, Thiophanate methyl. Etridiazole is very effective for controlling species of *Pythium* and *Phytophthora* which are water borne fungi that cause devastating damping-off, stem and root rots. Strictly, *Phytophthora* is not a fungus but a protist, but the effect is the same. I shall have more to say on these fungi in a later newsletter. Unfortunately, Etridiazole does not control as wide a range of fungi as does Mancozeb. However, straight Mancozeb is still available and can be used if necessary. Thiophanate methyl is very effective for the control of leaf- and flower-spotting diseases, including those caused by species of *Cercospora*, *Septoria* and *Botrytis*. *Cercospora* often infects plants of the Oncidium alliance, *Septoria* is common on both soft-and hard-cane Dendrobiums and *Botrytis* causes spotting of a wide range of flowers, particularly white flowers. However, infections with these fungi are not limited to these families of orchids. These fungi and their irritating mates infect a wide range of orchids and can be quite devastating in their effect. Thiophanate methyl also controls the root-rot fungi, *Rhizoctonia* and *Fusarium*. It is such an effective, broad-spectrum, systemic fungicide that it will surely be brought back onto the market. In the meantime, don't despair!! Banrot, in combination with mancozeb, will control almost every fungal disease that your orchids are ever likely to encounter. However, like all systemic fungicides, there are restrictions on its use. If you are going to use Banrot, make sure you read the label and adhere to all conditions stated on the label. My sincere apologies for the booboo.

Hopefully, till next month,

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