



ILLINOIS ORCHID SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Volume 51 Number 9  September 2003

In This Issue!

September Meeting News	2
Newcomers/Mentor Program	3
Orchid Expo	4, 6, 12, 13
AOS News	4
September/October Checklist	6
Websites of Interest	7
Hints For Beginners	9
Orchid Quiz	10
How To Buy An Orchid	13

President's Message By Joe Dixler

I want to personally welcome the new members who have joined our society this year and tell you how happy I am that you are members. I would like to know what we could do to help you. Some societies have "Newcomers Club" with special meetings to answer your questions about growing. Others have name-tags with a sticker to identify you as new, so that long time members introduce themselves. What would you like to help you get the most out of the society? Please come up to me or any of the Board members and tell us your thoughts or e-mail me or Allen Morr, the membership chairman, with your ideas. In order to help you, you must help us. I am not good at reading minds, so I need your assistance.

I want to encourage everyone to participate in the society. We are always looking for people who want to become more involved. There are several positions that are open including: Outreach Chairman to handle member staffing for events like the Chicagoland Orchid Festival and Hausermann's Open House; and representatives to the *Paph*, *Odont*, *Pluerothallid*, and *Encyclia* Alliances. This year we elected two Board members relatively new to the IOS: Sandy Fuller and Allison Tribble. They both volunteered for various jobs, and showed an interest in the Society. I don't know which members would like to become more active. Therefore, if we see you volunteering, we get the idea! Please let me know by e-mail or at a meeting if you are interested in any of these positions.

It is only through your comments of what you would like, or want to change that we can make the society even better. If you have an idea of a place for a summer meeting, let Wendy know. If you know about a great speaker or have an idea for a workshop, Wendy is always interested. If you know of a radio station, news editor, or other idea for publicity for the fall show, Susan Crawford needs to hear it. Please tell Wendy you can volunteer to help with hospitality or plant moving at meetings. Lois needs volunteers to help at our upcoming Expo, October 10-12th. You will learn a great deal, have a genuine feeling of belonging, make new friends, have fun, and we will be grateful. This is your society, and we want to do what you want. Tell us your thoughts. Use an e-mail address shown in this newsletter, fax or phone me, or speak to a Board member. I am looking forward to an even better year with your help. We need your feedback.

Your Name _____

I would like to volunteer for:

I would like to see the following ideas incorporated into the IOS:

My address is 811 Stone Gate Drive, Highland Park, IL 60035; phone 847-432-7708, fax 847-432-144, or e-mail jmd@dixler.com (I will be out of town from Sept. 7-Oct. 3rd)

DEADLINE FOR OCTOBER NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 16, 2003

2002-2003 IOS Officers – Terms of office are from July 1 until June 30

President	Joe Dixler	847-432-7708	jmd@dixler.com
1 st Vice President (Meetings/speakers)	Wendy Holtzman	773-395-1771	wendyholtzman@netzero.net
2 nd Vice (Home show chair)	Lois Cinert	630-739-1068	geolocin@earthlink.net
3 rd Vice President (Away show chair)	Diana Nielsen	630-894-9486	dnielsen3@msn.com
Secretary (Recorder)	Jim Spatzak	847-498-4638	jamcam@avenew.com
Asst. Sec'y (Newsletter editor)	Jerry Garner	847-864-8417	garnerjl@comcast.net
Treasurer (Collects/disburses monies)	Steve Lipson	847-328-1837	steve@wifunds.com
Asst. Treas (Membership/ Dues)	Allen Morr	847-501-2532-	ozone03@ameritech.net
Immediate Past President	John Stubbings	847-480-1532	jstubbings@peoplepc.com

Board Members – Terms of office expire June 30 of the year shown.

Joel Edwards	2004	847-564-9537	
Allison Tribble	2004	773-728-4874	allisont@rcn.com
Ed Gamson	2005	847-432-7825	epgamson@welshkatz.com
Barry Lubin	2005	847-432-5698	BRLNo1@aol.com
Rich Unger	2006	773-685-2677	aroma_imp@hotmail.com
Anne Kotowski	2006	630-833-8042	phrag207@aol.com
Sandy Fuller	2007	847-234-6311	sjfuller62@comcast.net
Sue Golan	2007	847-234-6311	sgolan@aol.com

SEPTEMBER MEETING NEWS

By Wendy Wesley

Welcome back to Oakton!!!!

Our September meeting will be on the 14th – make sure that date is marked on your calendars.

We will be starting the workshop **promptly** at 12:30.

I am hoping that this will help us get through our meeting at a more reasonable hour. There has been some mention that our meetings have been running a little long, so please be considerate of your fellow orchid society members and let's try to get things started on time.

We have a really great meeting planned. Starting with our workshop on "New Trends in Orchid Medium."

Roberts Flower Supply will be giving the workshop as well as bringing supplies for sale. Check out their web site www.orchidmix.com/ or call them at 440-236-5571.

Our speaker for this month is Dr. Clark Riley. His talk will be on "The Down and Dirty of Terrestrial Orchids."

He will help demystify growing terrestrial orchids for the average grower.

I hope to see you at the meeting. If you are bringing plants for judging /show, please allow extra time for unloading and set up, and we will be able to begin the meeting on time!

Newcomers Workshop & Mentor Program

By Allen Morr

Workshop for Newcomers

Prior to this month's meeting, beginning at 11:30, we will have a newcomer's workshop conducted by one of our mentors (see following article). Anyone with questions about orchids and their culture is welcome to this one-on-one forum. If it is well received, we will have similar workshops prior to all regular meetings. We hope to see you there.

MENTOR PROGRAM

To help new members and beginner orchidists, our Society is launching a mentor program comprised of knowledgeable growers who have volunteered to answer questions about orchids and their culture. We hope you find this resource beneficial towards improving your success in this rewarding hobby, and that you will soon be showing off your "successes" with plants brought to our monthly meetings for judging and awards.

The following list provides e-mail and telephone contact information, locale, growing environment, and (where noted) specialty of the mentor. If possible, use e-mail, but be sure to include your telephone number and best time to call. The mentor will likely choose to contact you personally.

Joe Dixler: jmd@dixler.com; 847-432-7708; Highland Park; greenhouse; *Paphiopedilum*, *Phragmipedium*, and other genera

Sue Golan: sgolan@aol.com; 847-234-6311; Lake Forest; greenhouse

Sherry Maloney: smmaloney@earthlink.net; 847-498-0249; Northbrook; under lights (HID)

Barry Lubin: BRLNo1@aol.com; 847-432-6005; Highland Park; greenhouse with supplemental lighting; *Phragmipedium*

Barbara Bennett: ennett.mmc@comcast.net; 847-883-0069; Lincolnshire; under lights (HID); *Masdevallia*

Diana Nielsen: dnielsen3@msn.com; 630-894-9486; Roselle; under lights (fluorescent) and on windowsills

Lois Cinert: geolocin@earthlink.net; 630-739-1068; Bolingbrook; under lights (HID)

Joel Edwards: 847-564-9537; Northbrook; greenhouse; *Phalaenopsis*

Rich Unger: aroma-imp@hotmail.com; 773-685-2677; Chicago; greenhouse

Steve Lipson: steve@wifunds.com; 847-328-1837; Evanston; greenhouse

Martin Taylor: dmtatcenco@aol.com; 630-682-0464; Wheaton; under lights

Tom Heller: stochr@sls.lib.il.us; 708-456-6474; Norridge; greenhouse and under lights; *Bulbophyllum* and *Brassavola*

Paul Passine: platep@aol.com; 219-663-5255; CrownPoint IN; greenhouse; *Vanda* and *Ascocenda*

SEPTEMBER MEETING

September 14

OAKTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Newcomers Program begins at 11:30 and the meeting begins promptly at 12:15. Remember to be there early to set up plants for judging and member sales!!!!!!



Cattleya sp. (Photo courtesy of Aloha Orchids)

Summer Vacation Ends

By Lois Cinert

I know it seems like you just put your orchids outside. But, yes, it is almost time to start bringing them back into your winter growing area. Hopefully they have enjoyed the summer vacation. They should have started good new growths and root systems. The rain, with lightning, has been a good thing. A couple of times they may have gotten a little too wet, but that is something they can cope with, and recover from quickly. The only real problem with bringing plants back inside is insects. If you have been watchful, there should be no problem. There are several ways to keep the critters outside where they belong. The least harmful is to immerse your plants in water, up to the top of the pot. Wait for whatever is in there to swim out, and use whatever form of destruction you choose. Most bugs can't hold their breath for very long. This will get rid of ants, earwigs, sow bugs, and most other larger insects. Scale, whiteflies and mites will be harder to get out. A dousing with your favorite chemical insecticide ten days before you bring your plants in will help wipe out those populations. A second application five days before will take care of the newly hatched, and still give you time to wash out the chemicals from your pots before you get back to home growing. Before the cold weather, you have a chance to thoroughly clean and de-bug your growing area. Since most of my staging goes outside, my growing area is almost empty. This is the time to sweep, wash, disinfect, and re-plan your layout. Mine never quite gets back the same way. Make adjustments to accommodate new purchases and increased size of plants. Plan for accessibility and ease of handling your plants. Keep a slightly separated place for 'hospital' patients, quarantine for new plants, and those that might have insects. An empty growing area gives you an opportunity to make adjustments. I hope your plants did well in the very strange summer we have had. The few warm weeks left will top off their summer growth spurt, and hopefully give you an abundance of blossoms in the fall and winter.

(Check out the May IOS Newsletter for the first article Lois wrote on summering your orchids outdoors.)

Orchid Expo Not So Far Away!

By Lois Cinert, Home Show Chairperson

IT'S ALMOST HERE! October 10-12. The fall show always sneaks up on us quickly. After a long summer's rest, it's time to get back to monthly meetings and our fall show, Orchid Expo, an Autumn Odyssey. This is our tabletop show, and we want every member to participate. Bring your blooming orchid plants, set up your own display, or join with a friend or two. It's easy, and we will help if you've never done it before.

Bring your orchid photographs, collectables, crafts, stamp collections. We will have a place for them. A fern, and a piece of cloth will enhance your display. In this newsletter is a space application form. It is also available on our web page, www.iosoc.com, and you can use either to let us know what you will be bringing to the show.

We also need your help. This is OUR show, and we need you to volunteer to help make it a success. The more of us there are, the more fun it will be, and the less work for each person. If you only have an hour or two, that's ok. Come to enjoy the show, and stay a little while to help out. It will be great if you can devote more time, just let us know when you will be available. There are lots of different kinds of things to do, and a volunteer sheet listing the categories is also in the newsletter and on the web page. I will be waiting to hear from you all.

Our show will be welcoming the Ikebana Society and Triton College students, who will bring displays of cut flower arrangements, and demonstrate how to create them. It will be interesting to see orchids put to a beautiful, creative use. If your orchid room is becoming overcrowded, bring your extra plants to our sales table. This show features members' plants for sale. Our commercial member-growers will be bringing some plants, but this show will mostly have your plants for sale.

We are also asking donations for our Silent Auction. If you have a photograph, art object, book, or anything orchid related to add, we would appreciate your bringing it for sale. This will also be an opportunity for you to buy the rare and unusual at our Rare Plant Auction. Barry Lubin is out finding the best there is. We are expecting awarded divisions, rare species, and utterly gorgeous orchids to offer at this auction. It should be something special, and a truly rare opportunity to purchase something not readily available.

Please come to our show, as an exhibitor, volunteer, and just to enjoy the wonderful variety of experiences the orchid hobby offers.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

By Allen Morr, Membership Chairperson

Please extend a warm welcome to the following members who have recently joined the IOS:

Caldwell Buck ~ Woodstock
Dean & Maurie Stern ~ River Forest
Jeff Dundek ~ Palos Heights

I would encourage our "old" members to introduce themselves and personally welcome these newcomers to our Society. Remember to wear your name tag – it will make it a lot easier for new members to get to know everyone.

AOS CORNER

By Rosalie Dixler

Why Is AOS Judging Important to You?

You may have noticed the results of the Chicago Judging Center's activities in our newsletter articles labeled AOS Judging Results. Maybe you have wondered what that is all about. Every month, usually on the second Saturday, the day before our OCC meeting, the American Orchid Society judges meet at the Chicago Botanic Garden at 1p.m. to recognize orchid species and hybrids that are the best grown or bloomed compared to previous ones that have been awarded. Maybe you think you'll never get an award, it's all a big mystery practiced by a select few, or perhaps you don't even want to enter your plants for judging. So why should you care about judging?

The AOS judging system is the most highly regarded system in the world of orchids. These judges, all of whom serve without compensation, are the major force in determining the direction of orchid breeding in this country and many others, as well. When a hybrid is recognized by the judges with an award, some hybridizers will rush to make crosses with it, knowing that an awarded parent will often result in a superior hybrid, which will allow him to increase the price of the plants. At the same time, this superior hybrid will raise the standards in a particular genus. The same is true of species. When the judging system awards a new species, hybridizers begin to wonder, "What can that species add to the gene pool? Will it impart some quality that will improve known plants?" The 29 judging centers in the United States (Shreveport, Louisiana is the newest, opening November 2002), offer each of us the opportunity to learn about quality hybrids, species and cultivation. Our hobby can become expensive. Why give precious bench space to a poor plant, when the judging system allows us to choose from quality and participate in the latest trends in hybridizing?
(continued on page 6)

The IOS supports a large part of the budget for the Chicago Judging Center and our upcoming Rare Plant Auction at our fall Expo is being co-sponsored with them. Many of the Judges or Provisional Judges are also members of our society—Sue Golan, Jim Spatzek, Barbara Bennett, Bill Rogerson, John Stubbings, Hermann Pigors, Bill Porter, Bill Nelson, and Pete Peterson (who is the chairman). It takes a minimum of five years of study to become an accredited judge and much time, effort and money is involved. If you haven't visited the Chicago Judging Center, you should attend a judging session as it is very educational. Everyone is welcome to visit and observe the award process. You will see great plants, meet new friends, and learn a lot about what determines an awarded orchid. You can view the judging procedure and later ask them questions when they report on the plants that were not awarded. If you have a plant you think might be AOS quality, bring it. There are no costs involved in presenting a plant to be judged. And if you do win an award you receive fifty points for a CBR or the same number of points that the judges awarded for the other designations, which goes towards our monthly competition. This is quick way to raise your total and win our annual contest. Joe Dixler has earned many of his points this way.

(Adapted from an article in the June, 2003 "Houston Happenings" by Donna Craig)

Other News From AOS

AOS Judged Shows

At the American Orchid Society's 2003 Spring Members Meeting in Hilo, Hawaii, the Board of Trustees voted, effective July 1, 2003, to raise the show and trophy fees for societies planning to have an AOS judged show. The new fees are \$50.00 for the judging kit and \$50.00 for the AOS Show Trophy. The increase reflects ever-increasing expenses incurred by the Society for the administrative costs associated with these shows.

Conservation Tools on OrchidWeb®

Download these free documents at www.orchidweb.org for your use and for sharing at orchid society meetings:

AOS Conservation Committee Listing
AOS Conservation Policy
The Importance of Conservation
CITES: How It Applies to Orchids
Conservation Award: The Conservation Recognition Award
Conservation Award: The Philip Keenan Award
Brochure: Orchid Conservation
Brochure: Conservation Is Everyone's Responsibility
Emergency Care Contact Card

California Dreamin'

The AOS Fall Members Meeting will be held October 22 – 26, 2003. Hosted by the Sacramento Orchid Society, this not-to-be-missed event will feature a terrific orchid show, many notable speakers, a special appearance by *Orchid Fever* author Eric Hanson, and a diverse group of guest vendors. In addition, attendees will have the opportunity to tour San Francisco, Napa and Sonoma wine country, and the historical gold town, Nevada City. The meeting will be held at the Doubletree Hotel (Hilton), 2001 Point West Way, Sacramento, California (tel 916-929-8855).

For additional information, please contact Ida Carter, 7604 Darla Way, Sacramento, California 95828 (tel 916-689-1927), or visit the Sacramento Orchid Society's Web site at www.sacramentoorchids.org.

Meeting Schedule 2003-2004

Put these on your schedule NOW so you won't miss a single exciting meeting! Meetings begin at 12:30 in the Business Center at Oakton Community College.

2003

September 14 (OCC)
 October 10-12 – Orchid Expo (OCC)
 November 9 (OCC)
 December 14 -
 Annual Holiday Party (Hausermann's)

2004

January 11 (OCC)
 February 8 (OCC)
 March 14 (OCC)
 April 3,4 - Spring Show (OCC)
 May 16 (OCC)
 June 13 (TBA)
 July 11 (TBA)
 August 14 - Annual Picnic
 September 12 (OCC)
 October 2-3 - Fall Show (OCC)
 November 13 (OCC)
 December 12 -
 Annual Holiday Party (Hausermann's)

SEPTEMBER MEETING AT OCC SEPTEMBER 14 AT 12:30

CHECK OUT THE IOS WEBSITE FOR MORE NEWS AND INFORMATION ON ORCHIDS!

www.iosoc.com

CORRECTION: The August newsletter included incorrect information regarding IOS Board meeting dates. The IOS Board meets at 7:30 p.m. on the **first Tuesday of odd months** of the year at the home of a Board member. The next Board meeting will be November 4th at the home of Diana Nielsen, 57 Salt Creek Road, Roselle, IL. Any IOS member may attend board meetings, but please notify Joe Dixler ahead of time so he can inform the meeting host.

Orchid Expo Details

Display setup Friday, October 10, 2:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
Plant registration closes at 8:00 p.m.

Judging Saturday, October 11 7:00 a.m. - 10 a.m.
AOS judging will follow.

Open to the public October 11 10:00 a.m. - 5 :00 p.m.
October 12 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Teardown October 12 5PM to ???

Admission for non-members is \$5.00, with a \$2.00 coupon towards plant sales at the IOS members' table.

We will have a plant raffle, and cut Dendrobiums for sale.

Rare Plant Auction Saturday, October 11, 1:00 p.m.

Silent Auction Bidding during the show with winners announced Sunday, 4:00 p.m.

If anyone has orchid related items they would like to contribute to the Silent Auction, please contact Barry Lubin at BRLNo1@aol.com or 847/432-5698. Also, you can bring items to the September membership meeting.



(Miranda Orchids – Francisco Miranda, photographer)

Eleventh Annual Chicagoland Orchid Festival
September 12-14,2003
8:00 a.m. –5:00 p.m.
www.orchidfestival.com

September/October Checklist

- **Cattleya** Despite the shortening days and lowering angle of the sun, September can still be one of the hottest months. Water and fertilizer need to be in balance with heat and light. The alert grower will notice, however, that his or her plants are beginning to slow down a bit. Growths are maturing, and the sheaths are giving the promise of the next six-months' bloom.

Check plants for potting needs for the last time this season. Any in dire need should be potted, even some that may be on the cusp, as there is just enough of the growing season left to allow the plants to establish before the days start to get really short and cold.

This is the month for purples derived from *Cattleya labiata* breeding to flower. If you are short on flowers, look into this group. There is nothing that can quite match this type for beauty and fragrance. They are easy to grow, too.

Plants summered outdoors should begin to be prepared to be brought back into the winter growing area. Clean the plants up and be on the lookout for any pests they may have picked up during the summer. Treat as necessary.

- **Cycnoches** This little-known and under-appreciated genus, which can have male or female flowers, is at its best in the autumn. Two of the spectacular varieties are *Cycnoches loddigesii*, with its large brown flowers resembling a prehistoric bird, and *Cycnoches ventricosum*, the swan orchid. This last one has large, fragrant green flowers. The biggest problem, culturally, will be red spider mite infestations that require immediate attention. Plants are quite seasonal, requiring heavy watering in the growing season and then a drier dormant winter season.
- **Cymbidium** Through diligent modern breeding programs, the cymbidium season gets stretched longer and longer. Now we can expect to have flowers open as early as September and October. Stake inflorescences and move the plants to a shadier location to help the flowers develop successfully. Because the plants will have warmth tolerance "built in" genetically, keeping the plants as cool as possible will help prevent bud curl. For the midseason varieties, inflorescences should be initiated

by now. Feed plants on a regular schedule with a balanced fertilizer (20-20-20) and shade the plants lightly.

- **Dendrobium** This is a good season for hybrids of the *Dendrobium phalaenopsis* and *Dendrobium canaliculatum* types. Both are capable of putting on tremendous shows of long-lasting flowers. Fertilize with a low-nitrogen formula to promote the best flowers. *Dendrobium phalaenopsis* can get tall and top heavy, suggesting an attractive and heavy container would be appropriate for this type.
- **Lemboglossum bictoniense** Both *Lemboglossum* (syn. *Odontoglossum*) *bictoniense* and its hybrids bloom in this season. *Lemboglossum bictoniense* is a showy species from Mexico that has three different color forms: *sulphureum* (green with white lip), *album* (brown with white lip) and *roseum* (brown with a pink lip). It is a vigorous grower with tall inflorescences of many flowers, and imparts to its progeny (as seen in *Odcdm. Bittersweet* and *Odm. bicross*) ease of culture, warmth tolerance and eye-catching patterns. They make a prime candidate for odontoglossum beginners and advanced alike.
- **Paphiopedilum** Standard, green-leaved paphiopedilums begin to show their bloom sheaths this month. Late-season heat waves can blast these early sheaths, so be observant about proper cooling and air circulation. As with the rest of your plants that may have been summered outdoors, it is time to prepare for their move inside. Clean each plant and implement pest-control practices. Repotting, if necessary, is appropriate.
- **Phalaenopsis** The bulk of this season's growth is being ripened this month, with growers in cooler climates seeing the first emerging inflorescences. Some night heating may be necessary in the cooler areas. Begin to watch watering more carefully, and reduce feeding proportionately with reduced watering needs. An extra dose of phosphorus and potassium, such as a bloom-booster or high-acid-type fertilizer, is beneficial.
- **Rossioglossum grande** Once known as *Odontoglossum grande*, this is a spectacular orchid with six to eight flowers up to 8 inches across. Often known as the tiger orchid, it has bright golden yellow flowers heavily marked with chestnut brown barring. The plants are beautiful with a gray-green cast to the foliage, which is borne on succulent pseudobulbs. It prefers hot and wet

summers with cooler, even down to 40 F, dry winters. Grow under filtered light. Watch for snails and slugs that eat the flowers, pseudobulbs and leaves.

Prepared by Ned Nash and James Rose.
(From the AOS website www.orchidweb.org)

ORCHID TIP OF THE MONTH

Mounting Orchids

Tired of trying to get the moss to stay on the front of the plant when you are putting it on a slab. Cut a piece of plastic gutter guard and place it over the moss, fold it around the back of the slab and using small wire, just wire it in place. Plenty of air and the moss doesn't wash out. Plastic gutter guard comes on rolls from the hardware stores. When you have to remove it from the plant to redo the plastic can be put in the dishwasher and used over again.

(Courtesy of the AOS website.)



(Photo courtesy of Aloha Orchids)

Check Out These Websites

www.pleurothallids.com
www.ladyslipper.com
www.geocities.com/hossite/Stanhopea/
www.pleione.info
www.phal.org
www.phragweb.com
www.orchidguide.com
www.orchidculture.com

Do you have a favorite orchid related website? E-mail your finds to garnerjl@comcast.net with a brief description and I'll publish them in the newsletter for all our members to share.



(Phal. sp. Photo courtesy of Aloha Orchids)

E-Mail Addresses Still A Major Problem

Last month as many as 20 e-mails sent to members were returned for unknown reasons. The return message simply stated "undeliverable, addressee unknown, or refused." I have checked with several experts who have assured me that the size of the newsletter is not the problem. It seems the problem lies at the recipient's end. Please make sure the IOS has your correct e-mail address. Check the recently published membership directory and contact me (Jerry Garner), Allen Morr, and Rosalie Dixler with the correct address. Contact information for the three of us is on page 2 of this newsletter. We don't give out your address to anyone else and we promise not to spam you with unnecessary mail. We just want to make sure you don't miss any important news and announcements. We are striving to have everyone's contact information 100% correct. Thank you for cooperating.

Beautiful Deceivers

Pity the poor solitary bees that make their home on the sunny Mediterranean island of Majorca. Each spring, the males emerge from their underground lairs in eager search of a mate. Some find love with another buzzer, but others are made to look like fools -- by a flower. Majorca's beautiful bee orchid blossoms look and smell just like a ready-for-hugging honey, and they lure the excited males in for repeated bouts of frenzied, but fruitless, mating. The frustrated bees eventually give up, but not before the plants, especially designed to glue their pollen sacs onto the insects' legs, have tricked the bees into unknowingly carrying the pollen from one flower to another.

The bee orchid isn't the only orchid to drive insect admirers crazy. These unusual flowers have long captivated human admirers, too. Fittingly, in fact, our obsession with orchids is no more evident than at an annual international orchid show, where thousands of flower fanciers have gathered, eager to get a look at the latest and showiest flowers created by orchid

breeders. Indeed, while there are an estimated 30,000 kinds of wild orchids, many more hybrids have been added over the last few hundred years. Like the solitary bees, people seem powerless to resist the orchid's magic spell. "People get very passionate about orchids; they just seem to get hooked," says "New Yorker" magazine writer Susan Orlean, author of *The Orchid Thief*, a page-turning tale of the orchid's remarkable history, biology, and one man's obsession with the flowers. The flowers do have a colorful history. A century ago, adventurers often died during daring collecting journeys into jungles and swamps, in search of new and captivating species to sell to eager buyers. And it took gardeners centuries to unlock the secret of getting orchids to grow and flower in the greenhouse. The secret? Orchid seeds only germinate when exposed to a special fungus that growers can replicate with a gelatinous mixture of sugar and nutrients. Today, as a result of this and other discoveries, orchid culture is a billion-dollar global enterprise with millions of customers.

Buyers aren't beguiled only by the orchid's many shapes, sizes, and colors. Some are fascinated by the flower's sex life, which often features the drama of desire and deception. Over millions of years, orchids have evolved remarkable ways of attracting, and sometimes entrapping, birds and insects. The bucket orchid, *Coryanthes*, for instance, lures in male Euglossine bees with a perfumed oil the bees need to attract mates. It's hard for the bees to gain a foothold on the slippery substance, and they eventually fall into a pool of slimy fluid. There is only one way out - a tight-fitting channel the bee must squeeze through to escape. And when he does, the orchid secretly glues two plump pods of pollen onto the his back, which will be removed when he falls into another flower's pool of desire.

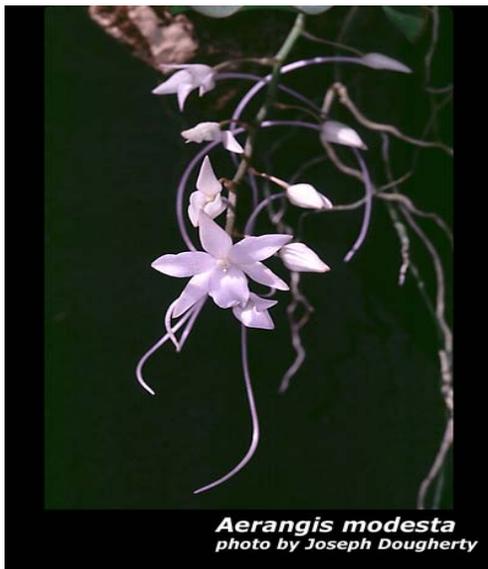
Other orchids have evolved similarly tortuous traps. Some attract flies by smelling like dead meat. Then, once the fly lands, it uses a kind of trap door to drop the fly into a pollen chamber with only one exit. To attract butterflies, some orchids use another trick - mimicking the color and shape of nearby flowers favored by the flutterers. Unlike those flowers, the fake butterfly orchids offer no nectar to the visiting insects and simply use them to spread their pollen from flower to flower. Other orchids appear to be an enemy to a pollinating insect - prompting an attack

and allowing the flower to get another free ride for its pollen. Such unusual pollination schemes have long entranced biologists. The great evolutionist Charles Darwin was so taken with the flowers that in 1877 he published a thick book entitled *The Various Contrivances By Which Orchids Are Fertilised By Insects*. In it, he noted that some orchids appear to rely on just one specific pollinator, a particular species of moth, for instance, for survival. Modern researchers call this specialized biological embrace of two species "co-evolution." But co-evolution has both benefits and risks. The benefit is that both partners can specialize and don't have to waste energy finding other ways to reproduce. The peril is becoming too reliant on a single partner. If one half of the co-evolved pair becomes extinct, the other is doomed as well.

Darwin's insights into co-evolution allowed him to foretell the discovery of a new species. In a famous example, he described an orchid from Madagascar that had a foot deep nectar well that kept the sweet liquid far out of reach of all known butterflies and moths. The existence of the flower led him to predict the existence of a specialized moth with a foot-long proboscis that, like a straw, could reach the deep reward. Indeed, after Darwin's death, researchers discovered just such an insect, and named it the Predicta Moth in honor of Darwin's educated guess.

The Predicta moth won't be the last orchid-related discovery. Even today, researchers and flower breeders are combing the world in search of both new understanding and new examples of what Darwin called "my beloved orchids."

(Adapted from an anonymous article on pbs.org/nature)



[Need a ride to a meeting? Send me your name, location, and contact information and I'll put your request in the next newsletter. \(garnerjl@comcast.net\)](#)



(*Cattleya maxima* - Rick's Tropica website)

Hints For the Beginner

- ✓ Provide the proper growing conditions before building up your collection.
- ✓ While you may want to collect them all, try to learn the care basics of just one or a few types of orchids, such as *Dendrobiums* or *Phalaenopsis* or plants that require the conditions you can easily provide.
- ✓ Learn about pests and proper and safe pest control. Even experienced growers have to deal with occasional attacks.
- ✓ Don't repot unless your orchid has outgrown its container or the mix had broken down. A plant that is growing well will flower best if left undisturbed.
- ✓ Always maintain sanitary growing conditions and keep your tools sterile. Keep your plants virus free by practicing good culture.
- ✓ Take the advice of experienced growers in your geographic area. Take into account variable climate and growing conditions instead of accepting every piece of advice you come across.
- ✓ Participate actively in your IOS meetings and other events. There is a wealth of information to be had while building up friendships with people who have the same "disease" as you.
- ✓ Bring in your plants for judging at the monthly meetings. It's a great way to learn how orchids are judged and improve your growing skills.

(Adapted from "Ten Dumb Things You Can Do To Your Orchids," by Ernest Hetherington in *Orchid Digest* July-Aug.-Sept., 2003.)

Orchid Quiz – How Do You Rate?

1. What is the orchid genus with the second largest number of species?
2. Orchids pollinated by butterflies are commonly what color?
3. What is a “ballpark” number of species in the orchid family?
4. What is the *Laelia* species with the largest flower?
5. What do we call orchids that are found growing on rocks?
6. What is the name of the fern fiber commonly used for potting orchids?
7. How many subfamilies make up the orchid family?
8. Name at least one orchid native to Illinois.
9. Are there any true black orchids?
10. What and when and where is Orchid Expo?

Answers in next month’s newsletter.

(Adapted from *Orchid Digest*, April-May-June, 2002)



(*Laelia dayana* f. *coerulea* X self – Francisco Miranda)

Thinking Of Exhibiting At Orchid Expo?

If you are considering exhibiting at Orchid Expo in October, now is a good time to review Rosalie Dixler’s article, “Adventures of An Orchid Exhibitor,” in the May 2003 AOS publication *Orchids*. Rosalie shares a lot of her personal experience and expertise in this article and the information can be helpful to novice and expert alike. If you don’t get *Orchids*, a few copies of Rosalie’s article will be available at the September meeting.

“Hot New *Phalaenopsis* Cultivars”

(Plants & Gardens News Volume 12, Number 4 | Winter 1997)

Mention orchids and what comes to mind? For me, the word conjures visions of plants festooning branches of trees in a steamy tropical forest where the silence is broken only by the sounds of waterfalls and the calls of

rainbow plumed birds. In reality, however, orchids grow in almost every imaginable habitat all over the world. There are more than 30,000 orchid species, making this family the largest of all the flowering plants. And it is their flowers, which come in myriad colors, sizes, and shapes -- often resembling butterflies, moths, or insects -- for which these elegant beauties are prized.

The first orchid specimens were culled from the wilds of Southeast Asia by early explorers who brought the plants home to Europe, where they were coveted by wealthy hobbyists. Massive wild collecting ended in the late 1920s as attention turned to creating new orchids through hybridization. The search continues in the wild for new species, but collecting is now strictly controlled and special permits are needed to import plants to this country.

Botanically, orchids are monocots, which means they bear a single seed leaf or “cotyledon” upon germination. Leaves have parallel veins, and flower parts generally come in threes -- three sepals and three petals. One petal, the labellum, has a unique formation that serves as a landing pad for pollinators. Although their appearances may suggest otherwise, most orchids are not fragrant. Some actually emit distasteful odors to lure their pollinators -- the smellier the better if the pollinator of choice is the fly. Flowers can last for months, days, or only hours.

Many orchids will grow and flower as house plants, but perhaps the best candidates are species of *Phalaenopsis* (pronounced “fail-en-OP-sis”), also known as moth orchids.

Phalaenopsis are native to Southeast Asia, extending from the Philippines to Formosa, India, New Guinea, and Queensland. In their native habitats, *Phalaenopsis* grow as epiphytes (air plants), mostly on tree branches. Epiphytes can also be found growing on rocks on the ground. There are also terrestrial orchids that grow in the soil. Sometimes mistaken for parasites, epiphytes, whether ground or tree dwellers, extend their life-sustaining roots out into the air to collect moisture and nutrients.

Trendsetters

Today, growing *Phalaenopsis* is within the reach of anyone who wants to try it -- the exotic is not out of bounds. And current breeding efforts have produced exciting new cultivars, including an increasing variety of beautiful, waxy, yellow blossoms, prized by collectors such as Charles Marden Fitch, who photographs award-winning plants for the American Orchid Society. Current hybridization and breeding efforts also continue to aim at creating stripes, spots, and plants that bloom out of the usual January to March *Phalaenopsis* season, according to Gene Hausermann of Orchids by Hausermann.

Other trends include breeding for fragrance and miniature form. Recent hybridization with related genera has also been producing interesting flower formations. Crosses with *Doritis*, for example, produce plants with smaller but more numerous flowers on each spike.

Phalaenopsis flowers are usually produced on single or on branched spikes. The number of flowers per plant varies from a few to as many as thirty. When in full bloom *Phalaenopsis* can be truly breathtaking to behold. Traditionally, the flowers have been white with reddish or rosy lips; hybridization is also making possible pinks, lavenders, and the aforementioned yellows. Most bloom in winter or early spring, setting spikes in the fall. Each plant will bloom at the same time year after year.

Planting and Care

The flowers can last for months, and while the plant is blooming the pot may be placed anywhere in your house or apartment to show at best advantage. When not blooming, plants require bright light, but not direct sunlight, which will burn the leaves, causing black spots. If you do not have enough natural light, *Phalaenopsis* adapt well to artificial light. Normal home temperatures are ideal.

When *Phalaenopsis* are in spike, close observation of the buds will reveal that the lip (the one petal that is different from the other two) is on the top when the buds are formed. Just prior to opening, the bud rotates on the stem so that the lip is on the bottom. Some species will also produce plantlets on the flowering spikes, complete with leaves and roots. These small offshoots can be pruned and planted, but keep in mind that transition from plantlet to flowering specimen is a long process requiring several years and lots of patience.

If you want to extend bloom time, plants can sometimes be coaxed into producing secondary flower spikes. When flowers are spent, feel along the spike for a node that has not produced flowers, but is slightly larger than the others. Cut the spike just above this node and wait for growth. The flowers on this secondary spike may not be of the quality of the original, but the results are still rewarding.

To approximate their natural growing conditions, most orchids are planted in pots in a medium composed of bark chips of varying size. There are many mixes -- experiment to find one that works well for you. *Phalaenopsis* need to be repotted every two to three years. Either plastic or clay pots will do the trick. I prefer clay to plastic because clay gives me a better feel for when plants need water. Most orchids require even moisture, but the excess water must drain away -- picture the plants growing on a tree branch and you will understand why. When repotting your orchid, wait until just after the plant has flowered. Fertilize with a dilute solution of orchid fertilizer once a week, especially when the plants are actively growing. Good air movement is essential.

If you are a beginner, purchase a mature plant from a reputable grower. After you have had some orchid experience, you can buy seedlings, remembering that it takes time and patience to nurture these young sprouts to the flowering stage. But as any orchid lover will tell you, it's worth the wait.



(Photo courtesy of Jewell Orchids)

Newsletter Articles/News Needed

By Jerry Garner

I've asked before and have had moderate response from some dedicated members. I need more news articles, articles of general interest, photos, and more for the newsletter. Send me anything you would like to see in your newsletter. Don't worry about spelling, grammar, even style. That's what an editor is for. So send me some of your ideas today.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Friday 2 -- 10

Name

Time

Phone No

Em

Unloading

Registration

Saturday 7-10

Clerking

Saturday 10-5

Admission taker

Auction

Repotting

Plant Sales

Membership - info

Raffle - Cut Flower

Traffic

Silent Auction

Sunday 9 - 5

Admission taker

Repotting

Plant Sales

Membership-info

Raffle -Cut Flower

Traffic

Silent Auction

Teardown 5p.m – 8p.m?

Fill in this form and e-mail or snail mail it to Lois Cinert, 595 Sharon Way, Bolingbrook, IL 60440
(geolocin@earthlink.net) or call Lois at 630-739-1068 and let her know when and how you will help.

“How to Buy An Orchid”

Many consumers, both retail and retailer, find themselves in a position today of having to make purchase-oriented decisions about an entirely new -- to them, at least -- class of plants: orchids. What should they be looking for? How can the purchase dollar be maximized? How can the best shelf-life -- of vital importance for both the retail and retailing consumer -- be obtained?

The Plant -- Should be in proportion to the container, have roots in the media, be clean and unblemished, turgid and medium green, free of visible pests.

The Flowers -- Should be lustrous and held well above the foliage on a strong, well-supported spike, be unblemished and free of fungal spotting, have some buds yet to open (never, ever accept a plant with flowers open to the tip of the spike, as it is impossible to judge flower life after all flowers have opened), and have a generally appealing aspect that fits with your decor.

The Vendor -- Is the overall aspect one of cleanliness and order? Do the production plants look good? Is the staff attentive and interested in your welfare? Can they answer the most elementary of your questions?

Selecting an orchid plant isn't really that different from any other flowering plant purchase, except for the satisfaction that comes with the proper decision. -- *Ned Nash, AOS Director of Education & Conservation.*

Genus of the Month

The genus *Dendrobium* was established by Olaf Swartz in 1799. The name *Dendrobium* comes from the two Greek words *dendron* (meaning tree) and *bios* (meaning life) and probably refers to their epiphytic habit.

This widespread genus occurs from India and Sri Lanka eastwards to Japan and Korea and south to Australia, New Zealand and Fiji.

Most *Dendrobiums* have an epiphytic growth habit, but some are also found growing on rocks and cliffs and terrestrial in grasslands.

An exact number of species is not agreed upon but estimates lie in the region of 1000 to 1400 species. Since there are so many species known to science, it is not surprising that there is a lot of variation in this genus. Not only the colour of flower but also the growth habit is variable. Some species are only 1 cm high while others may attain 3 meters or more in height.

Due to the widespread distribution and the various climatic niches in which they grow, *Dendrobiums* cannot be all grown alike. Certain species demand specific conditions while others are more forgiving

(Adapted from a www.orchidguide.com)

EXHIBIT SPACE FORM

Autumn Odyssey, An Orchid Expo

Fill in and return to Lois Cinert ASAP.

Full Table _____ Orchid Plants _____

Crafts _____ Cut Flowers _____

Collectables _____ Photos _____

Half Table _____ Orchid Plants _____

Crafts _____ Cut Flowers _____

Collectables _____ Photos _____

Orchid plants cannot be mixed in a display of cut flowers, crafts, collectables, or photographs. You may have one or several displays. Please fill out a new sheet for each display.

Name _____

Phone _____

Address _____

Email _____

Name on Display _____

Setup is Friday, October 10, from 2 PM to 10PM. Plant registration closes at 8:00 p.m. SHARP. Teardown is Sunday at 5 p.m. Displays must remain in place until teardown.



(*Encyclia bracteata* – Miranda Orchids)

Away Shows Begin Again

The first away show of the fall season will be the Wisconsin Orchid Society's show in Milwaukee September 20th. This is always a fun show and it's close by, so please plan on helping by submitting plants, assisting with set up, and/or assisting with take down. Set up will begin September 19th no later than 1:30 p.m. and take down will take place September 20th beginning at 5:00 p.m. If you've never participated in an away show, this is a great opportunity to "get your feet wet." Show novices and veterans should contact Diana Nielsen, Away Show Chairperson, now for detailed instructions, drop off locations, and other important information. E-mail Diana at dnielsen3@msn.com or call her at 630-894-9486.

A Reminder From the Editor: At its July meeting, the Board decided to begin e-mailing the newsletter to all members with e-mail addresses in an attempt to reduce printing and mailing costs. If, for some reason, you want to continue receiving the newsletter via snail mail rather than electronically, be sure to let me know. Our first attempt at e-mailing last month was reasonably successful, but some problems did occur. I have tried to eliminate those problems, but I am certain more will come up this month. Please be patient and let me know any problems you experience on your end. We'll quickly learn from our mistakes and get this e-newsletter perfect very soon. One of our biggest problems has been returned e-mail, as noted in another part of this newsletter. Please make sure we have your correct address, that your mailbox is checked (and cleaned out) periodically, and that your provider is allotting you enough space to receive a reasonably sized attachment. Remember, you need Adobe Acrobat Reader to download and open the attachment. This program is available free at the Adobe Acrobat website.

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

<p>Illinois Orchid Society Jerry Garner, Editor 623 Sheridan Road #1 Evanston. IL 60202</p>

Next Meeting September 14th
Oakton Community College

Orchid Expo October 12 – 14, 2003
At Oakton Community College
Details Inside Newsletter