

# ILLINOIS ORCHID SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER

Volume 52 Number 1  January 2004

Jerry Garner, Editor

### NEXT MEETING – JANUARY 11<sup>th</sup> AT OAKTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Last month we published the 2004 Meeting Schedule, including speakers' names and topics, if we had them. We are republishing the schedule this month. Be sure to mark these dates on your calendar so you won't miss any of these exciting and informative meetings. We'll update the schedule in several months as Wendy begins to put together the 2005 programs.

#### 2004 Meeting and Speaker Schedule

**Keep this schedule handy for reference throughout the year. All meetings are at Oakton Community College, Des Plaines Campus, unless noted otherwise.**

**January 11** – Sam Tsui of Orchid Inn will speak on Parvi and Brachy breeding – a Paph rat's dream!

**February 8** – Bill Rogerson will share his secrets to growing meat eating *Cattleyas*.

**March 14** – *Zygopetalums* will be Leo Kusber's (Lion's Den Orchids) topic this month.

**April 3-4** - Spring Show time! Watch for details soon!!

**May 16** – Alan Koch of Gold Country Orchids will visit and share his thoughts on that ever popular topic, TBA.

**June 13** – Field Trip! Off to Madison, Wisconsin and Orchids by the Ackers and the Oberlich Botanical Gardens. More info as the date approaches.

**July 11** – Meeting at Triton College, Room TBA, speaker TBA. Hopefully, more details later.

**August 14 (Saturday)** – Annual picnic at Oak Hill Gardens, hosted by the Pigers. Hermann's topic TBA.

**September 12** – This is one for the Phrag wavers! Glen Decker of Piping Rock Orchids

will be our speaker. Glen has traveled to Peru to photograph *Phragmipedium kovachii*. Don't miss these fabulous slides!

**October 2 – 3** Fall Show!!!!!!!!!!!!

**November 14** – William Goldner of Woodstream Orchids will join us to discuss – you guessed it – TBA!

**December 12** - Back to Hausermann's and the annual holiday party.

As you can see, Wendy has planned exciting and educational programs for 2004. We'll still have the monthly judging, the workshops, the newcomers meetings, the sales, and all those wonderful treats. So plan on being at the meetings and supporting your IOS.

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#### Deadline for January Newsletter

JANUARY 18<sup>th</sup>

Send all news, notices, announcements, and photos to Jerry Garner, [garnerjl@comcast.net](mailto:garnerjl@comcast.net)



2005 Membership Dues



Go to the IOS website [www.iosoc.com](http://www.iosoc.com) to renew your 2005 membership dues or use the form in this newsletter. Don't put it off until later! Do it now!

**2003-2004 IOS Officers – Terms of office are from July 1 until June 30**

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

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

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

**IOS Board Meetings**

The IOS Board meets on the first Tuesday of odd months at 7:30 p.m. at the home of an officer or board member. Any IOS member may attend, but please notify the meeting host or Joe Dixler if you are planning to attend. Upcoming meetings are:

March 2, 2004 at the home of Steve Lipson  
May 4, 2004 at the home of Sue Golan  
Members' addresses are in the Membership Directory

**DUES ARE DUE – NEW PROCEDURE FOR RENEWAL**

**Allen Morr, Membership Chairman**

It's that time again - my how the time flies - to renew your membership for the coming year 2004. This year, what with our world, and IOS, moving more and more into an electronic era, we are changing our renewal procedure to save both time and money (printing and postage). Whereas we used to enclose renewal envelopes in January and February newsletters, which were mailed to the entire membership, for 2004 we are doing the following:

**For members who receive their newsletter electronically, a renewal form is downloadable off our web site [www.iosoc.com/](http://www.iosoc.com/). Go to HOME, click on ANNOUNCEMENTS, then RENEWAL FORM. If you cannot print the form, just write the requested information on a sheet of paper and mail along with your check.**

**For members who receive their newsletter by mail, use the tear-out form therein and mail along with your check.**

A membership cards for 2004 will be mailed to you upon receipt of your check. The cutoff date for renewal will be March 31<sup>st</sup>, so please do not procrastinate. Dues for the year are, as before, \$25.00 per household. Members who joined



**Phrag. sp. – Fox Valley Orchids**



**Bring your plants in for judging. Don't be shy – it's fun and educational!**



IOS between September 1 and December 31 are paid in full for 2004. (For these newer members, if you are not sure when you joined, please contact Allen Morr, 847-501-2532 or [amorr@ozonology.com](mailto:amorr@ozonology.com), and I will check our records). My thanks to all for working with me on our revised renewal process. I look forward to seeing you in the coming year.

## **WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

**Allen Morr, Membership Chairman**

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

Beth Engle ~ Romeoville  
Scott & Gloria Tobey ~ Oak Park  
Robert and Arla Ronayne ~ Darien  
Jeanne McInerney ~ Island Lake  
Suzanne Williams ~ Brookfield  
Terrie Lloyd ~ Tinley Park

## **NOTES TO MEMBERS**

- Be sure to wear your member badge to all IOS meetings. We have a lot of new members, and the badges help people feel more at ease and welcome.
- We continue to have problems with members' address, phone, and e-mail information. Take a second **NOW** or when you are renewing your membership to make sure all of your information is correct and up-to-date.
- Periodically check out the IOS website at [www.iosoc.com](http://www.iosoc.com) for news, old newsletters, and great photos!
- Consider using **IOS gift memberships** for your orchid loving friends. They'll be guaranteed 12 months of professional information and camaraderie. Applications are available on the IOS website, at local growers, and from Allen Morr.

## **AOS Chicago Judging**

Judging in January will take place at the Chicago Botanic Garden beginning at 1:00 p.m. Plants should be in place no later than one hour before judging begins.



Courtesy of Francisco Miranda (Miranda Orchids)



**NEXT MEETING JANUARY 11<sup>th</sup> at OCC**  
**New Member's Meeting @ 11:30 a.m.**

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## **Promote Orchids At Navy Pier Flower Show**

**Sue Golan, IOS Board**

*Reprinted from December 2003 Newsletter*

We have been invited by the prestigious Garden Clubs of America to show our orchids at their extravaganza at Navy Pier March 13 - 21st. It's a wonderful opportunity for us to promote orchids and a chance to show off the ones that just had to bloom a month before our own show in April.

We are limited to three orchids per person and they will be shown and judged as plants standing alone, not in a display. Some of you have a few wonderful plants at every meeting and I'm hoping to collect these and bring them to Navy Pier where I will register them. At Navy Pier the whole world will see them and we can promote our club and our show at the same time.

I need to know if you might have a plant or plants by the beginning of February so I can register them for you. We can always change the registration later. Who knows in February what you'll have in March? We can make a guess - there's no commitment. Call me at 847-234-6311.

## **Volunteers Needed for Outreach**

**Claire Papiewski, Outreach Chairman**

The IOS has been invited to set up an information table at the following growers' open houses:

### **❖ Geimer's Greenhouse**

Sat. February 7<sup>th</sup> 9am – 5pm

Sun. February 8<sup>th</sup> 11am – 4pm

### **❖ Hausermann's Greenhouses**

February 26<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> 8am – 5pm

IOS presence at these shows previously has resulted in great p.r. and many new members.

Please contact Claire at 847/622-8664 to volunteer your help, even if you can only work an hour or two. Sign up sheets will be available at the January meeting.

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**IOS WEBSITE  
BEST ON THE WEB  
[www.iosoc.com](http://www.iosoc.com)**

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## **January President's Message**

**Joe Dixler, President**

It's hard to believe we are starting our second year at OCC. It seems like only yesterday that we were looking at slides of the facilities and making the difficult decision to leave the Chicago Botanic Garden. This first year had so many new choices to make—like how to arrange the rooms for meetings and shows, how to raise funds to pay our rent for these facilities, and how to get the word out to the public that we were now in a new location. With the aid of a very helpful staff at OCC, this year has been even more successful than we had anticipated. Our very busy Board of Directors has been flexible and innovative making this a smooth transition. When I called on them, they were there to help. And these efforts have even shown a profitable first year—more than we could have anticipated. Our membership has been responding with enthusiasm as well. We have had better attendance this year than ever before, more plants have been brought to our judging table than we have seen for several years, many of

you participated and helped at our shows, and contributed delicious goodies to our monthly hospitality table. I am pleased to see that our society is moving forward with added support from our growing membership. Thank you for your help and participation.

We have some exciting plans for the coming year. Check out Wendy's speakers list for this year—I am really looking forward to it. Allen will continue to arrange newcomers meetings in a classroom behind our large meeting room at 11:30am at OCC. Don't be shy about calling our mentors. They are waiting to help you with your orchid problems. Please call Claire Papiewski to volunteer your help at the IOS table during Hausermann's Open House on Feb. 26-29. We need your assistance to pass out our bookmarks advertising the Spring Show (April 3-4) and to sign up new members. Many of you will be there anyway, so please give us an hour or two while you are there. We need a big turnout at the Spring Show to get the attendance back to the levels we had at the CBG and keep our vendors happy. If you have any contacts with newspaper or magazine editors, please tell Susan Crawford, our publicity chairman, at [ssusancrawford@att.net](mailto:ssusancrawford@att.net) or 773-348-4386. Our Spring Show will be adding a new feature—orchid corsages for sale, thanks to our own Remie Tesch.

In response to your requests, we will have an orchid trip to Madison, Wisconsin on June 13th. Our first stop will be Orchids By the Ackers, an excellent nursery in the suburb of Middleton. I visited them last summer and found a large variety of beautiful orchids including new *Besseae* crosses. Lunch will be at J.T. Whitney's Pub & Brewery, where you can taste their World Championship beer as well as brats, burgers and more. Read about them at [www.jtwhitneys.com](http://www.jtwhitneys.com). After lunch we will visit the Olbrich Botanic Gardens in Madison. While you will enjoy the lovely setting for orchids in their conservatory, their large orchid greenhouse they are opening especially for us, will really impress you. And their magnificent Thai Pavilion, one of only three of its kind found outside of Thailand, and the only one to be located in the continental United States, is breathtaking. You won't want to miss this excursion. Sign up will begin in March. Let me know your ideas for the society. That is the only way we can respond to your needs and make improvements. It sounds like another great year for the IOS, and we hope you will all participate in these events.

## New Members Meeting

Allen Morr, Membership Chairman

The very popular new members meetings will continue this month before the January 11<sup>th</sup> meeting. Bring your plants, your questions, and your ideas to the 11:30 a.m. meeting. This is designed primarily for new members but any IOS member may attend.



*Masd. coccinia* - photo by Joseph Dougherty

## MidAmerican No Longer Available In Paper Form

Rosalie Dixler, Communications Coordinator

Effective immediately, the popular orchid publication, *The MidAmerican*, will no longer be available in printed form. However, anyone interested will be able to download the monthly publication from either the IOS website ([www.iosoc.com](http://www.iosoc.com)) or the MAOC website ([www.midamericanorchids.org](http://www.midamericanorchids.org)). If you don't have access to a computer or the web, a few paper copies will be available at the IOS monthly meetings.

## January Meeting Notes

Wendy Wesley, Program Chairman

On next meeting will be on January 11<sup>th</sup> at OCC. The new members meeting will begin at 11:30 a.m. and the workshop will start promptly at 12:30 p.m. Rosalie Dixler will be presenting the workshop, sharing her experiences visiting orchids in their native habitats and the best way to get the most out of these trips. She will also be showing us some slides from an orchid excursion she and Joe took recently.

Our featured speaker will be Sam Tsui. Sam is a long time member of the Illinois Orchid Society and owner of the Orchid Inn. Sam's primary focus is on growing *Paphiopedilums* and *Phragmipediums*, something he does very well. Many awards have been given to his plants. Two of Sam's favorite types of *Paphiopedilum* groups to grow are *Parvisepalum* and *Brachypetalum* and their hybrids. He will be telling to us about upcoming growing trends in *Brachypetalum* and *Parvisepalum* breeding. Sam's talks are always extremely informative and enjoyable. You don't want to miss this one!!!! If you would like to pre-order orchid plants you can check out Sam's web sight through the Orchid Mall or at [www.orchidsinnusa.com](http://www.orchidsinnusa.com).

## Holiday Party A Success

I want to thank everyone for bringing in such wonderful dishes. Some people were kind enough to give me recipes to share with the rest of the society. I will try to get these recipes out to you in future newsletters. If you would still like to share a recipe, please bring copies to the next meeting. **(See below for recipe submitted by Rich Unger.)**

To add to the fun at the party, Dana Harrison, Hausermann's Sales Manager gave a wonderful presentation on good old and new hybrids that Hausermann's is offering. Here are a few crosses he mentioned in his talk:

**Old but good hybrids:** *Lc.* Trick or Treat, *Phal.* Dimitrios Sinnis, *Phal.* Patricia Benjamin, and *Ascda.* Princess Mikasa  
New hybrids with great potential: *Pot.* Melinda Rose Funk 'Christy', *Pot.* Burana Beauty 'Burana', and *Dtps.* Eric Smith 'Nanas Boy'.

If you couldn't make the 2003 party, be sure you have next year's party on your 2004 schedule. It's a great time to socialize, eat good food, learn something new about orchids, and then there are all those orchids in the Hausermann's greenhouses!

## ***Porcini Mushroom Pasta***

*4 oz. dried Porcini mushrooms*  
*½ - 1 cup freshly grated Romano cheese*  
*1 lb spaghetti noodles*  
*5-10 cloves of garlic, slivered*  
*truffle oil*  
(Recipe continued on next page)

(Continued from previous page)

\* Pour boiling water over the Porcini mushrooms, cover and let steep for 1 hour. Drain.

\* Boil pasta to desired tenderness, drain.

\* Toss in thin slivers of raw garlic, along with the Porcini and Romano cheese. Dribble truffle oil over and serve.

Prep time: 5 minutes  
Serves: 4

ENJOY! Rich Unger

### Away Show News

Diana Nielsen, Away Show Chairman

Below is the January – March 2004 away show schedule. I will definitely be going to the January and February shows, but the March shows present some difficulties. The three March shows are all scheduled very close to each other and they each require significant driving from the Chicagoland area. If anyone could help with these (and the January/February shows) please call me (630/894-9486). With some assistance from other members, we should be able to exhibit our members' plants at all five away shows, plus it's a great way to learn a lot about judging orchids.

### 2004 Away Show Schedule

**Madison, WI     Orchid Grower's Guild**  
**January 31 – February 1**

**St. Charles, IL     Batavia Orchid Society**  
**February 21 – 22**

**Green Bay WI     NE Wisconsin Orchid Society**  
**March 6 – 7**

**Davenport, IA     Illowa Orchid Society**  
**March 20 – 21**

**Fort Wayne, IN     Three Rivers Orchid Society**  
**March 27 - 28**

Contact Diana if you will have plants for these away shows and arrangements can be made for you to drop off or for Diana to pick up your plants. Be sure to read Diana's article on preparing plants for away shows in the October 2003 newsletter before sending off your plants.



Photo courtesy of Jewell Orchids

### Response to "Embarrassed Reader"

In December a member wrote in with questions about the sudden leaf drop and death of a *Brassavola nodosa*. Diana Nielsen responded:

What time of the day was the plant misted and/or watered? If it was in the late afternoon or evening, it could be that moisture may have stayed too long at the base of the leaves and rotted them. (Yes, I have personal experience with this!) If you still have any of the leaves that fell off, take a very close look at the base of the leaf to see if there is any rot. The rest of the leaf may appear to be fine.

If there is rot but you watered in the morning, it could be that as the days got shorter & cooler their was still too much moisture for the winter temperature and sun conditions. Is it possible that condensation on the window at night could have dripped onto the plant or made it too humid?

Hope this helps!

Diana Nielsen

### IOS Exhibit at Des Plaines Library

Claire Papiewski, Outreach Chairman

Rosalie Dixler and Claire Papiewski will have an orchid exhibit in place at the Des Plaines Library by the third week in January. The exhibit, which will feature a variety of information about orchids, orchid growing and orchid societies, will remain in the Library until the end of February. The exhibit will be in a highly visible display case in the hallway from the parking lot into the library. The Des Plaines Library website ([www.dppl.org](http://www.dppl.org)) has a link to the IOS website and the Library has been very supportive of the IOS.

The des Plaines Library is located at 1501 Ellinwood Avenue, Des Plaines, and you can call the library at 847/827-5551 for additional information.

Let's give a big "thank you" to Rosalie and Claire for their efforts promoting the IOS and be sure to stop by the Library to see the exhibit.

## Member Questions for January

(Submitted by Pat Del Vecchio)

1. How does one find out the registered name of a cross when one knows the parents of a seedling? For example: *Paphiopedilum* (Stoneii X Ang Thong 'Panda') or *Doritaenopsis* (Luchia Quest X Luchia Roscherz). Is there a data base I could access on-line where I could do a search for this information?
2. A few of the "seedlings" I have are now mature plants, so they are "old" crosses. Does every cross that is made and is sold have to be registered? Are there some crosses that are sold but never registered and thus remain nameless forever?

Please submit your responses to Jerry Garner at [garnerjl@comcast.net](mailto:garnerjl@comcast.net) and the information will be printed in the next newsletter.



Photo courtesy of Francisco Miranda  
Miranda Orchids Website

## Editor's Notes

Jerry Garner, Newsletter Editor

Reflecting back on the newsletter in 2003, I can safely say we have come a long way. Thanks to the foundation set by Barb Bennett, we now have a fairly sophisticated, informative, and good-looking newsletter. I can't thank Barb enough for her foresight and determination. We've moved into the cyber age with our e-newsletter, saving the Society money for other projects, and hopefully giving you, the membership, an accessible and timely source of information. Initially there were snags in the e-mail delivery but we have gotten those challenges down to a reasonable number and

we haven't given up on getting to a flawless delivery system.

I have some plans for 2004 – changes and additions - I hope you will find valuable. I know I told you we would have our IOS logo in the masthead of the newsletter this month, but my ignorance of most things technical prevented that from happening. By February I will have consulted with IOS computer gurus and that logo will be there. Plus, I am now asking all Board members and officers and committee chairmen to submit something to the newsletter each month. Hopefully this will keep you more informed about the workings of your Society and get even more orchid information to you. Of course, other members are always welcome to submit news or articles of interest.

Gradually I've been getting more feedback and suggestions from the membership. Please keep it up! Let me know what you like, what you don't like, and certainly let me know if you don't receive your newsletter. Rosalie Dixler, Allen Morr and I spend a lot of time trying to keep members informed, so let us know when your address, phone number, or e-mail changes. Remember that your **2004 membership fee** is due now. Drop that in the mail to Allen right away. For the e-wizards, copy the form from the IOS website. For the snail-mailers, a separate sheet is included in this newsletter.

Here's to an exciting and profitable 2004 for the IOS and all its members!

## E-Mail Update

Each month some e-mailed newsletters are coming back to me. Some are the same each month, particularly those with full mailboxes. Some, however, come back for no apparent reason at all! It seems useless to publish names in the newsletter you don't get anyway. Also, some members are still having problems opening or printing the newsletter. Because this isn't a universal problem, the newsletter probably isn't the source of the problem. If you or someone you know is having a consistent problem receiving the e-newsletter, please notify me by e-mail ([garnerjl@comcast.net](mailto:garnerjl@comcast.net)) or by phone (847/864-8417). I'll see if we can correct the problem but if we can't, I'll switch you to the snail mail list. We'll get it straight yet, and you won't have to miss a single issue of your newsletter.

## January/February Orchid Checklist

- **Cattleya** Watering and fertilizing will be at a minimum, as will potting. Be on the lookout for senescing sheaths on your winter-into-spring bloomers. Careful removal of the dying sheaths will still allow buds to develop without the danger of condensation-induced rot. Low light will lead to weak spikes, so, and as noted above, staking is critical. If you have a chance to get out to nurseries, there may still be a chance to acquire good plants in sheath for spring bloom. Getting them now not only ensures that you'll have them, but allows them to acclimate to your conditions and bloom at their best.
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- **Cymbidium** We are well into the flowering season now. Outdoor growers should be cautious of freezing temperatures. Damage starts to occur below 30 F. Be diligent about tying the inflorescences for best arrangement of the flowers. Also watch closely for slugs and snails. If weather is quite wet, protect the plants from the rain and this will help to reduce the risk of botrytis spotting.
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- **Lycaste** The most glorious of all orchids, *Lycaste*, will be moving toward their flowering season. Make sure the palm-like leaves do not interfere with the emerging inflorescences. Tying them loosely together often is helpful. Some growers cut the leaves off at the pseudobulb, but this removes part of the attractiveness of this elegant orchid. Resist picking up the plant to inspect those beautiful buds and then setting it down in all different directions as the flower buds will be forced to re-orient themselves to the light source each time and will not open as nicely as they should. Keep plants a little drier during the shorter days.

• **Odontoglossums** *Odontoglossums* and their intergeneric hybrids offer a great splash of color now. Though once thought of as being difficult to grow and requiring cool temperatures due to the emphasis on *Odontoglossum* breeding, the new intergeneric hybrids made using *Oncidium* and *Brassia*, for example, are just the opposite. These plants are quite content in more intermediate conditions. New growths generally emerge in the spring, later forming beautiful plump pseudobulbs. Look for the flower spikes to emerge from the inner sheath of the pseudobulb. If your plant's pseudobulbs are shriveled, then the plants have been kept too dry or too wet. Inspect the roots to determine which condition prevailed. If the lead pseudobulb is large, plump and green (and back bulbs are shriveled) but no flower spike is evident, the plants may have been kept too dry.

**Paphiopedilum** The standard *Paphiopedilum insigne*-derived hybrids, which are called "bull dogs" and "toads," are at their peak. Unlike most other orchids, they can even be potted while in bud. There really is no wrong time to pot a *Paphiopedilum*, and no other orchid responds so favorably to fresh mix and a cleanup. Keep an eye on watering until roots begin to grow.

**Phalaenopsis** Now is the peak of spike development, with the first plants in full flower. Staking and plant preparation is a must for those all-important spring shows. Correct staking now will give a better display and also make it much easier to transport to your society meetings and shows. Care with watering is vital to avoid mechanical damage to the flowers, as well as rot-related problems. Keep spent blooms cleaned up to avoid botrytis inoculation. Do not repot this month. Now you'll be seeing lots of *Phalaenopsis* at orchid shows and sales.

**Zygopetalum** For the most part, the flowering season will have ended for this group, providing the grower a chance to do some repotting. The plants will then have a



chance to become well established before the hotter months of summer arrive. Most growers use bark mixes, but some exceptional results have been seen lately using rock-wool blends. You may want to try this mix, but do not change your whole collection over to this new media until you are sure it is right for you. First, experiment with a few plants to see how they respond.

Prepared by Ned Nash and James Rose, AOS Website



### **Orchid Pollinators**

Adapted from the North of England Orchid Society website ([www.Orchid.org.uk/](http://www.Orchid.org.uk/))

Around 120 million years ago, when the dinosaurs ruled the land, much of the world was covered by primordial forest, and plant life was rapidly becoming diverse. Flowering plants were evolving and one of the first of these was the orchid.

As the world underwent many changes species of both plant and animal life died out or were replaced, but the orchid family expanded, populating every corner of the world except Antarctica. Living on trees, rocks, in the ground or under it, in tropical rainforest or lush grassland, high mountains or bogs, they thrived. Nothing seems capable of upsetting their evolutionary process. Indeed it is generally accepted that in the world today, there are around 35,000 different species of orchids in existence; many myths abound concerning them, the most common of which is that they are parasitic plants. This is not so; orchids grow on trees - true, but they do not feed from them. They use the host merely as an anchor.

The above facts must make orchids one of the most successful and adaptable family of plants, which probably explains their long family history. What they lack in internal resources, they will try to obtain elsewhere. Some orchids prefer a more acidic condition and will encourage ants to live on them, even in some instances creating suitable chambers for their guests to live in. In addition to warding off their enemies, the ants increase the acidity around the plant through their own use of formic acid as a defense system.

When it comes to reproduction orchids are extremely versatile, but individually selective. They have adapted themselves to use a variety of pollinators, with or without their consent. Where many insects are concerned, the plant attracts them either by color, smell or mimicry, or in some instances even a little stealth.

The color and smell factors are obvious, but mimicry? The flowers of many orchids are designed to look like either an aggressor of the pollinator or its sexual partner. In the case of the bee orchids for instance, male bees are attracted to the plants because the flower looks like a receptive female, and during a frustrating attempt at mating with the flower, the male bee will become the unwitting carrier of pollen, which it will duly deposit on its next amorous flight of fancy.

Some orchids adopt the lure technique and have long stems, the tips bearing their flowers. These can dance effectively in the breeze and look amazingly like butterflies (*Oncidium papillio*).

Now we come to stealth. The slipper orchid lures the insect with a promise of a drink from its pouch, or attracts it by scent or sight to the edge of the pouch which is very slippery and polished. Before it knows it the hapless pollinator finds itself stuck at the bottom, and is either too wet to fly, or the shape of the pouch precludes it, and there is only one way out which the insect will eventually find. As it escapes the insect will have to crawl through a small doorway which is so tight that the pollinator is pressed firmly against the pollinia as it escapes, only to repeat the exercise once more at another flower, this time depositing the pollinia as it collects a fresh one. Some orchids rely on crawling insects to pollinate them, and will produce long petals which trail downwards until they touch the ground or another object, thus creating a pathway to their flowers.

Orchids really specialize in their choice of a pollinator. This ensures the continued purity of the species because the pollinator can only successfully gain sustenance from its chosen specie host. Take for example the orchid *Angreacum sesquipidales* which produces beautiful waxy white star like flowers. The flowers exude a heavy perfume at night and the back of the flower has a long spur, sometimes up to 12 inches or so in length. At the bottom of this spur is a tiny source of nectar. Darwin reasoned that as the orchid was white, and only fragrant at night then the pollinator must be a moth, and that to be able to feed from the orchid the moth must have a tongue at least 18 inches long. Unfortunately it was not until after Darwin's death that the *Predicta*

Moth was discovered, and the great man never had the pleasure of seeing his theory proven.

Of course, orchids do not rely on insects alone. Humming birds, small mammals, even bats, and, not least of importance, the wind, all contribute to their reproductive successes.

Orchids were on this planet long before humans arrived, and despite our efforts to cut back forests, pollute the air and generally interfere with the ecology of the world as only we can, it is probable orchids will be here long after we have gone. If the theory of some is that the insects which will inherit the earth, then it is likely that the insects will unwittingly help to prolong the orchid's success as a survivor. Perhaps it is the orchids who will really inherit the earth.

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Please send suggestions for future articles or regular columns to Jerry Garner, Newsletter Editor, [garnerjl@comcast.net](mailto:garnerjl@comcast.net)

## In This Issue!

2004 Schedule	1
2004 Dues	2
New Members	3
Navy Pier Show	3
Outreach Volunteers Needed	4
President's Message	4
Meeting Notes	5
Away Shows	6
Des Plaines Library Exhibit	6
Member's Questions	7
January/February Checklist	8
Orchid Pollinators	9



Photo courtesy of Missouri Botanic Garden

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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Postmaster: Dated Material

NEW MEMBERS MEETING – 11:30 a.m.  
January 11<sup>th</sup>, before the workshop

January Meeting @Oakton C.C.  
January 11<sup>th</sup>: Speaker –Sam Tsui of Orchid Inn

TIME TO PAY 2004 MEMBESHIP FEE  
DETAILS INSIDE