

DECEMBER, 1991

ILLINOIS ORCHID SOCIETY

FOUNDED IN 1952

WHO: ILLINOIS ORCHID SOCIETY
WHAT: CHRISTMAS PARTY
WHEN: DECEMBER 15, 12 noon
WHERE: Orchids by Hausermann
2N 134 Addison Road
Villa Park, IL 60181
(708) 543-6855

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
Sue Golan 708/234-6311

We received such a nice compliment from our excellent November speaker, Dr. Ben Berliner, who was a guest in my home. I asked him, as a member of three orchid societies, how we rated, where we might need improvement, etc. He said he has spoken to 12 or more societies this year and that ours is the best organized and that the members he spoke to were extremely interesting.

I hope you enjoyed his talk and the fascinating workshop where Dr. Berliner fielded a wide variety of questions on orchid culture. He certainly knows his orchids!

We spend several thousand dollars each year providing speakers. Jay Mullen tries to vary the programs so that everyone's interests are covered.

This month, on the 15th, Hausermann's (or Hauserperson's, as John Stubbings likes to say) is our destination. This holiday meeting is the most fun and a chance to combine the things we like best, orchid shopping, talking, eating and washing it down with a little bubbly.

Bring your spouse or buddy or mom or neighbor, if you wish, but **BRING FOOD**. All that shopping makes us hungry and everyone is supposed to bring a main dish, salad or dessert, enough to feed about 8 people so that the last ones in line (often your poor officers) can have a good lunch too.

Maggie Kuntz is already at work on setting up the supplies for this feast.

The bonus is the free plant Hausermann's generously supplies to all members.

Since we have so many new members, we are going to try a new column in this bulletin for newcomers especially, dealing with culture and other practical things. We'll have various members contribute articles and, if there are special requests, we'll honor them so please let us know what you want to learn more about.

The most popular affair of the year is coming up on December 15. Our traditional Christmas Party will be held at Hausermann's where you will get a chance to shop for orchids with a glass of Cold Duck in your hand that will be served by Hausermann's. Bring lots of money or your credit card.

DIRECTIONS: Orchids by Hausermann is located 20 miles west of downtown Chicago in Villa Park. Exist westbound on North Ave. (Route 64) from the Tri-State Tollway (294) or Interstate 90. Take North Avenue four miles west and turn north on Addison Road. The greenhouses are just 2 blocks north of North Avenue on the west side--just off Addison Road.

BUFFET: Each member is asked to bring a hold or cold entree, salad or dessert (with serving utensils, please). Please bring enough to serve at least 6 people, or if you are inviting family or friends, make it more. A lot of dishes seem to be picked clean by the end of plant judging and the persons who do the most work all year long are the ones being left with a small selection.

The buffet will be served at 12 noon, followed by a short business meeting and a talk by Dana Harrison on the breeding of phalaenopsis at Hausermann's.

PLANTS FOR JUDGING: Plants for judging should be in place by 12:30. There will be **no plant sales by members**.

Gardening: Save the Wildflowers

By PATTI HAGAN

In the go-go '80s it never occurred to me, or the gardeners I dug, to question the origin of species of native plants we coveted. I pledged allegiance to The Three Laurels: Wild Native Flowering Plants catalog out of Appalachia. The prices were botanical bargain basement: Hardy Native Orchids, pink lady-slipper—six for \$3; trailing arbutus—six for \$3; trillium—six for \$1.50. Ordinary plant lust made me order greedily—in sextuplets. When the orchids and arbutus inevitably died, I didn't wonder if sudden death had to do with the trauma of being dug out of their ecosystems *propres* and plunked down in hostile environments like Brooklyn. These wildlings were so cheap—and I was so American—I just ordered more.

Then came the bonfire of our plant vanities. After the '87 Wall Street crash, the word ETHICS crept back into the American vocabulary: into biz school, law school, Wall Street and even gardening. The New England Wild Flower Society stated its intention "to make the ethical business of native plant propagation conservation *more profitable* than the destructive practice of wild-collection." Ethical Gardening arrived. Ethical gardeners did not dig wildflowers from the wild, nor knowingly buy wild-collected plants. They sought out nurseries that propagated the plants they sold. Gardeners of conscience were scrupulous to buy only from catalogs listing "nursery-grown" wildflowers.

By 1989, The Three Laurels had ceased "due to murder in our family & many other reasons, including . . . sickness, deaths and loss of areas of collection beyond our control," and I, in good conscience, ordered my American wildflowers from the giant Spring Hill Nurseries catalog. I was taken by its green-marketing pitch: "Protecting Nature's Heritage: Nursery-Grown Wildflowers." This neo-con gardener was won over by Spring Hill's earnest policy declaration: "Many wildflowers are becoming endangered species

itats or their environments are destroyed. To help maintain our nation's floral heritage, Spring Hill offers a special selection of wildflowers so you and future generations can continue to enjoy their charm and beauty. None of the wildflowers offered by Spring Hill have been collected from the wild. All have been specially cultivated in our nursery so they can readily adjust to garden planting."

Spring Hill's floral-heritage maintenance policy covered "#1 nursery-grown" pink lady-slippers (*Cypripedium acaule*) and yellow lady-slippers (*C. calceolus*). "You don't have to disturb natural plantings to bring the enchantment of rare Yellow Lady's Slipper to your shade garden. We'll provide fully guaranteed nursery-grown plants of this endangered Moccasin Flower." How reassuring.

But then, from the July 1989 meeting of the budding Eastern Native Plant Alliance, came the really bad news: "No nursery in the world is propagating *Cypripedium* . . . no commercial propagation of terrestrial orchids has as yet been possible. All plants of *Cypripedium acaule* offered for sale come from the wild, and [are] dying in customers' gardens." (Through the '80s, Wayside Gardens carried "native hardy" lady-slipper orchids, among its North American Wildflowers: "serving to bring you closer to your natural environment . . . chosen for their beauty, permanence and outstanding performance." It omitted claims of origin.)

Spring Hill touted "fully guaranteed top quality nursery-grown" *Trillium grandiflorum*. But the ENPA wasn't having any of it: "Trillium propagation is slow, generally inefficient, and consequently expensive [needing] between five and seven years to reach flowering size when grown from seed . . . commercial propagation on a large scale is not feasible . . . Therefore, any nursery selling large quantities of this plant for low prices must be obtaining these plants from the wild." (Wayside sells them still.)

The Natural Resources Defense Council's Plant Conservation Project came to

jack-in-the-pulpit, Dutchman's-breeches, crested iris, shooting star (all in the Spring Hill Wildflower Collection)—"almost always collected from the wild when . . . sold by mass merchandisers."

By so shilling its "nursery-grown" wildflowers, Spring Hill was being legally deceptive, perfectly unethical, and fully in accord with U.S. law. Spring Hill had simply availed itself of the Federal Trade Commission's Guides for the Nursery Industry (Federal Register 1979, Title 16, Chapter 1, Part 18), whereby "nursery-grown stock"

"Plants propagated and grown under cultivation, or plants transplanted from the wild and grown under cultivation for at least one full growing season."

The FTC definition allows wild-collected plants to be nursery-laundered via a brief layover in a nursery bed. Cowboy diggers in Third World economies such as Appalachia's dig on commission and sell their wild digs for pennies to wholesalers in, say, the Tennessee wildflower laundry town of McMinnville. The McMinnville cartel then brokers the wildflowers by the thousands, marked up a few pennies, to retail nurseries. Recent McMinnville order forms list pink lady-slippers in quantities of "199-UP" at 30 cents each; trillium, trout lily, jack-in-the-pulpit, shooting star "199-UP" at 25 cents each; Dutchman's breeches by the hundreds at 19 cents each, etc. (The Tennessee Dept. of Conservation knows of at least 600,000 wild-collected trilliums shipped out of state in 1989, plus an order for 20,000



Trillium grandiflorum

So that the nurseries' wild-collected cop-out makes perfect nonsense, FTC Guide 6 decrees: "It is an unfair trade practice to sell, offer for sale, or distribute industry products collected from the wild state without disclosing that they were collected from the wild state: *Provided, however*, That if collected plants are grown in the nursery row for at least one growing season before being marketed, such disclosure is not required."

In 1990, under fire from plant conservationists, Spring Hill dropped its U.S. government-sanctioned claims—but kept right on selling the pink lady-slippers, the trilliums, etc. They all became, simply, "#1 plants." This year the lady-slippers and the trilliums are gone, but not the rest of the suspects—the trout lilies, jack-in-the-pulpits, crested irises, shooting stars—plants about which the presumption of wild collection is strong—and about whose origins Spring Hill won't comment.

Just say nothing and gardeners will assume the best. Until the FTC gets around to deep-sixing its Alice in Wonderland guidelines on plants "collected from the wild state," EG aspirants should either take a vow of abstinence from wildflowers (as did Burpee in 1988), or subject suppliers to a rigorous inquisition. How does the nursery propagate the plants: seed, cutting, offset, tissue culture or act of God? They should also put their horticultural throw-weight behind the Oct. 15 Petition to the Federal Trade Commission Requesting Amendment of Labeling Guideline for the Nursery Industry, filed under the Natural Resources Defense Council leadership of Faith Campbell. (Among the signatories: Garden Club of America, California Native Plant Society, Mt. Cuba Center for the Study of Piedmont Flora, Environmental Defense Fund, Native Plant Society of Oregon, New England Wild Flower Society, Niche Gardens and Montrose nurseries, World Wildlife Fund's TRAFFIC (USA).) The petition says "current labeling guidelines encourage sellers to make deceptive claims about the origin of their products," and that Guide 6 "allows plants which originated in the wild to be disguised

Orchids and People

OF COURSE, orchids are a pleasure to grow! And once they have come into bloom, they are a real joy to behold. Delight in the loveliness of your flowers will be multiplied many times when their beauty is shared with others. You can share this beauty by joining an orchid society and by displaying your blooming orchid plants at the society's plant table or at orchid shows and exhibitions.

The reasons for joining an orchid society are numerous. Not only will you have a chance to share your achievements with others, but you will also share in the knowledge and achievements of others. The American Orchid Society has more than 400 local or regional societies throughout the world which are affiliated with the parent organization. Most of these societies have monthly meetings with a speaker or other type of program, a plant table where members show their flowering plants, and a social period where members enjoy the fellowship of other orchid enthusiasts. Many societies hold plant clinics where members learn to recognize their particular growing problems, or conduct workshops so that the novice orchid hobbyist may learn from more experienced members. Study groups, too, are often a part of local society activities; here you can delve deeper into certain genera, species, or hybrids, or pursue any of a thousand other topics which this grand hobby (a way of life for some!) presents.

The society's plant table each month is reason for joining in itself. The plants you will see range from fine hybrids to interesting species and well-grown specimen plants. Most societies use their plant tables as a major part of the program, having a knowledgeable member discuss the merits and faults of the plants on display. Some societies have a system of judging the plants on the plant table, with points or ribbons awarded. Some have their own medals for different categories.

Besides the plant or show table, larger orchid shows open to the public are staged by many societies on an annual basis. These shows serve to let the members share their orchid hobby with an admiring public, as well as to provide an opportunity for horticultural skill to be recognized with a ribbon or other prize such as an A.O.S. award.

The American Orchid Society, through its approximately 400 certified judges, grants numerous types of awards to deserving orchid species and hybrids and to exhibits under well-defined rules. These awards have been discussed briefly on page 7.

Most orchid shows are staged at definite times of the year and hence many outstanding plants cannot be displayed and judged because their blooming periods do not coincide with a show. To meet this situation, the American Orchid Society has established a number of Regional Judging Centers where orchids may be brought or sent for judging. The regional divisions are: Northeast (in New York), Mid-Atlantic (Philadelphia and Washington, D.C.), Southern (Atlanta), Florida North Central (Tampa), Florida-Caribbean (Miami), Mid-America (St. Louis), Great Lakes (Ann Arbor), Southwest (San Antonio), Great Plains (Oklahoma City), Pacific Northwest (Tacoma), Pacific Central (Oakland and San Francisco), Pacific South (Los Angeles and Long Beach), and Hawaii (Honolulu, Hilo, and Maui). Orchid growers within traveling distance often bring their plants or flowers to be judged, but orchid growers anywhere in the world may send their flowers by air. These judging sessions often include a discussion on orchid evaluation or a similarly educational program. Everyone is welcome.

Not all orchid plants are worthy of being judged, obviously, but all are worth displaying, even if in your own living room or greenhouse. Take your blooming plants to the office, schoolroom, or hospital room of an ill friend. A few days of such treatment will not harm the orchid plant, but will cheer and delight your friends.

Orchid plants are shown not only at orchid society meetings and shows. Numerous state and civic groups throughout the United States maintain displays of blooming orchids for public education and pleasure. The following are some well-known orchid collections open to the general public:

The Brooklyn Botanic Gardens, located in New York City at Brooklyn College, and containing a wide and varied collection.

Longwood Gardens, at Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, founded by the famous duPont family, a magnificent example of covered gardening with many orchids.

The Missouri Botanical Garden, St. Louis, where a "rain forest" of orchids and tropical plants may be seen in the famous Climatron.

The Los Angeles State and County Arboretum, at Arcadia, California, which houses a large collection of orchid species from around the world.

The Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, Sarasota, Florida, where epiphytes of many plant families are grown to perfection and presented in natural settings.

Through these several avenues — orchid societies, shows, and visits — you can derive a lifetime of fulfillment by meeting new people, making new friends, and entering the cordial fellowship of the world of orchids.



Photographer: Brian Ledoux

Landscaped entrance to the orchid exhibit at the Missouri Botanical Garden.

For membership information, pls. call or write:

American Orchid Society

6000 South Olive Avenue, West Palm Beach, FL 33405 (305) 585-8666

Continued from page 2

DATES TO REMEMBER

1991

December 15: Christmas Party at Hausermann's (Please note change in date)

December 28: AOS Judging at CBG, 7 p.m.

1992

January 19: Monthly IOS Meeting at CBG, 12:30 p.m.

January 20: Board Meeting 7:30 p.m. at Jean and Dave Jones' home in Highland, Indiana

January 25: AOS Judging at CBG, 7 p.m.

February 16: Monthly IOS Meeting at CBG, 12:30 p.m.

February 22: AOS Judging at CBG, 7 p.m.

March 13-15: Spring Show at CBG

March 28: AOS Judging at CBG, 7 p.m.

March 30: Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m.

April 19: Tour of Growing Facilities

April 25: AOS Judging at CBG, 7 p.m.

June 15: Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m.

September 27-29: Mid-America Show at CBG

as 'nursery grown,' thereby confusing or misleading the environmentally concerned consumer . . . 'nursery grown' means only that the plant has been 'established' in a nursery for as little as a few weeks."

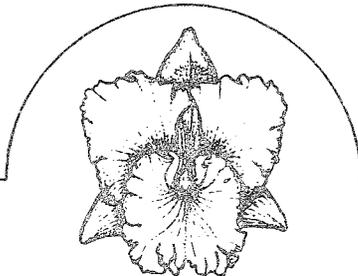
While lobbying the FTC for truth in plant labeling, one hopes impatient gardeners will not be led astray by well-meaning native-plant enthusiasts such as Jim Wilson, the "Southern Host" of PBS's "Victory Garden." In a recent Carolina Gardener magazine profile he confided that the "most satisfactory of all . . . ways to acquire [wild] plants [is] through the 'dig-it-yourself' approach. Just carry a shovel at all times plus a jug of water and a plastic bag, and be prepared to dig up a sample whenever you spot something interesting." Ethical gardeners *en garde!*

1992 DUES: Enclosed you will find your 1992 dues envelope. Those of you who joined after September 1 are members through the end of 1992 and need not send any money. According to the *Bylaws*, dues must be paid by the end of January. Lots of exciting things are being planned for next year, so we hope you will be with us to be an integral part of these plans.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER: The deadline for the December Newsletter is **December 22**. Please submit copy to the Editor.

December, 1991

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ILLINOIS ORCHID SOCIETY

FOUNDED IN 1952

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