

ILLINOIS ORCHID SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

JAMES F. SPATZEK, EDITOR

The May Meeting features Dr. Eric A. Cristenson and our annual Election of Officers!

May Program

I am very pleased to announce that the esteemed **Dr. Eric A. Cristenson** will speak at our next monthly meeting on Sunday, May 17th, at the Botanic Garden. A world renowned research taxonomist and prolific author,

CONTENTS

<i>May Program</i>	1
<i>American Orchid Society Judgings</i>	2
<i>Calendar of Up-coming Events</i> ..	2
<i>A Novice Idea</i>	3
<i>Hardy Bletillas</i>	4
<i>Board Meeting</i>	5
<i>Report of the Nominating Committee</i>	5

Dr. Cristenson is known for his articles that attempt to bridge the gap between taxonomy and horticulture. You may have read his in-depth book reviews in Orchids, the official publication of the AOS. Having done field work in the Guianas, he was the coordinator of the orchid treatment for the Flora of the Guianas, and authored the Vascular Flora of Central French Guiana. He is also assisting David Bennet of Lima, Peru, with a modern inventory of Peruvian orchids, which includes more than 60 new species from Peru. Dr. Cristenson is presently completing the monumental

task of writing and Encyclopedia on orchid species for the American Orchid Society. He is a Research Associate with the New York Botanical Garden but lives in Sarasota Florida.

The International Phalaenopsis Alliance(IPA) has funded a new monograph of Phalaenopsis which he is now completing. His talk will be on this genus with an overview explaining the relationships of the species groups and the variability within them, with special emphasis on those that were newly discovered. This lecture promises to be one of the highlights of the year.

Our meeting begins in the multipurpose room at 12:00 noon. We hope the April showers have brought you May flowers. Please have your display and sales plants arranged by 12:30pm. This is your last meeting to earn points toward your final tally for awards presented at the June meeting at Klehm Growers. The business meeting and lecture will follow in the Auditorium.

Nancy Schoo, who has been writing A Novice Idea for our newsletter and is secretary of the IOS, will present a workshop to encourage our members to participate in showing their plants. She will explain the IOS point count system and how it translates into the numbers you see in the monthly newsletter next to each participants name. We hope to encourage everyone to participate in bringing their plants to the meetings, shows, and AOS monthly judgments. Displaying your plants gives a real feeling of accomplishment, and the positive comments from others is the best reward. Beautiful flowers should be shared with others. We all began with that memorable first ribbon--you, too, can continue on to the incredible thrill of an AOS award.

For those of you who have not achieved a blue ribbon in

displaying your orchids, you can definitely earn accolades by bringing the results of your favorite recipe. Our social hour after the meeting is a great place to show off your baking skills. Compliments to the chefs as well as the growers are in order.

We need more people to take advantage of our skilled staff of orchid doctors. This is a great opportunity for you to get assistance even if you have no medical insurance coverage. Bring them in a plastic bag to avoid contamination with others.

Joe Dixler



American Orchid Society Judgings

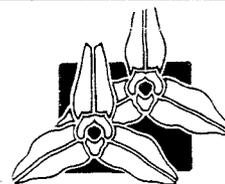
The judgments of the American Orchid Society Chicago Judging Center are held monthly in the Linneaus Room of the Chicago Botanic Garden, Glencoe, IL., on the 2nd Saturday of the month at 1:00PM (unless otherwise announced here and in the AOS Bulletin, Orchids.

May 9, 1998--1:00PM
 June 13, 1998--1:00PM
 July 11, 1998--1:30PM
 August 8, 1998--1:00PM
 September 12, 1998--1:00PM
 October 16, 1998--6:00PM
 November 14, 1998--1:00PM
 December 12, 1998--1:00PM
 January 9, 1999--1:30PM
 February 13, 1999--1:00PM

March 13, 1999--1:00PM
 April 9, 1999--6:00PM

Northeast Wisconsin Orchid
 Growers Show--Green Bay, WI

Thank you **Rob Halgren** for creating the Illinois Orchid Society exhibit at the Green Bay Show. Rob also stayed the weekend, clerked at the show, and brought the display back home. It's volunteers like Rob that help the Society to maintain a presence and share the work load.



Calendar of Up-coming Events

5/7-5/10/97

Southern Ontario
 Orchid Society Sh.
 & Spring Mid-
 America Orchid
 Congress & AOS
 Trustees Meeting
 Eastern Orchid
 Congress &
 Internat'l Odontoglossum Alliance
 Pleurothallid
 Alliance Meeting.

5/16-5/17/98

The 1998 International Orchid Festival, Homestead, FL.

6/25-6/28/98

5th Annual International Phalaenopsis Alliance

- 8/9/98 Symposium & Show, Miami, FL
Central Iowa
Speaker's Day
Des Moines, IA
11:00a.m.
- 9/8-9/15/98 6th Asia Pacific
Orchid Conference
Townsville,
Queensland, Aust.
- 9/26-9/27/98 Wisconsin Orchid
Society Show, The
Domes, Milwaukee
- 10/16-10/18/98 IOS Fall Mini
Show, Chicago
Botanic Garden
Glencoe, IL
- 10/24-10/25/98 Blackhawk Orchid
Society Show
Bloomgren Gard.
Rockford, IL
- 2/6/-2/7/99 Wisconsin Orchid
Grower's Guild
Show, Madison,
WI
- 4/9-4/11/99 Illinois Orchid
Society Annual
Spring Show
Glencoe, IL
- 4/23-5/2/99 World Orchid
Congress,
Convention Center,
Vancouver, BC,
Canada. E-mail:
[congress@venue
west.com](mailto:congress@venuewest.com).
(Judging, Tues.,
April 27, 1999)
- 9/25/9/26/99 Wisconsin Orchid
Society Show
Mitchell Park
Conservatory
Milwaukee, WI
- 10/8/-10/10/99 Illinois Orchid
Society Fall Mini
Show, Glencoe, IL
- 4/4/6-4/9/00 European Orchid
Congress,
Copenhagen, Den.
- 9/6-9/10/00 Orchids 2000
4th New Zealand
Expo
Hamilton, NZ
- 10/5-10/8/00 4th Australasian

- Native Orchid Soc.
Conference
Melbourne, Aust.
- 10/10-10/15/00 15th Australian
Orchid Conference
& Show
Burnie, Tasmania
- 2002 17th World Orchid
Conference
Shah Alam,
Selangor, Malaysia

IOS WEB SITE:

<http://www.geocities.com/RainForest/Vines/1272>

A Novice Idea

by Nancy Jean Schoo

Disclaimer: This article may be hazardous to your mental well-being. It may require excessive amounts of caffeine to understand.

The organization of the orchid family is complex and extensive, however, the botanical naming system makes it easier to know more about our plants. The orchid family, *Orchidaceae* (Or-ki-DAY-see-ee), is made up of a number of genera (plural for genus). These genera are placed into larger groups called tribes. For example, CATTLEYA is a tribe containing the two genera (genuses??) called *Laelia* and *Cattleya*. Notice that the *cattleya* tribe is in all caps while the genus is only capitalized. Remember this. It is instrumental in learning "pecking

order". The more caps the higher the level.

Each genus group is made up of any number of 'species'. A species name will always be in lower case. If you see an orchid labeled *Laelia purpurata*, you know immediately that it is a species orchid. A species orchid is a plant in its natural form, uncrossed with any other species or hybrid plant. A species carries its unique characteristics that separate it from all other orchids.

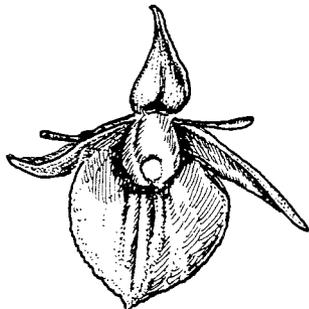
Once an orchid has been crossed with any other species, it becomes a hybrid (or if it happened in the jungle, naturally by insects) it becomes a natural hybrid. A hybrid plant is one that shares dominant characteristics from each of the parent plants. A species crossed with a different species makes a hybrid. A hybrid and a hybrid make a hybrid. Whoa, this is profound!

Now, let's go a little further. There are also 'intergeneric hybrids'. These plants are the result of crossing two genera together. *Sophranitis* crossed with a *Laelia* make a '*sophranitia*' which is abbreviated as Sl. on a plant label.

Stay with me...a species that has a minor characteristic variance that is naturally occurring is called a 'variety'. Example being a *Cattleya labiata* var. *Alba*. This *cattleya* is white in color.

Any two hybrid plants that are crossed together may have a 'cultivar' name. We see these names most often. A cultivar name is one that is named by the person that originally made the cross, or to someone he grants permission to. Cultivar names will have capitalized first letters and are contained within single quotation marks--Phal. Red Dream 'Quasar'.

Why would we even care about this? Knowing the generic makeup of a plant gives you clues to its physical characteristics and growing requirements. It also helps us when showing our plants and deciding the proper class in which it belongs. Besides all this, we are now one step closer to 'orchid geekdom'.



HELP!

A ride is needed to & from the IOS meetings for a long time member of the IOS who no longer can get to our meetings on her own. If you can help once or twice, or once in a while, call:

Freida Cogswell
2277 S. Westwood Lane
Palatine, IL
847-397-9255

Thanks!

It's easy to know those who can't count. They're the one's in front of the express line!



Hardy Bletillas

by Clark Riley

As in the case with epiphytic orchids, a relatively few hardy terrestrial genera hold disproportionate potential for horticultural usefulness. Along with *Cypripedium* and *Calopogon*, some of the greatest potential lies in the *Bletilla*. This small genus is represented in cultivation by only three species and their varieties, *Bletillas striata*, *formosana*, and *ochracea*. Of these three, *Ble.striata* and *Ble.ochracea* are vigorous and hardy, at least to USDA Zone 5. *Bletilla striata* is found in three varieties, the type variety of bright magenta purple, the white variety *alba*, and a variety with white variegations in the leaves. The purple and white varieties have long been available in the horticultural trade and can often be found for sale in retail garden centers. This "commoner" presentation may, in part, be responsible for the otherwise surprising lack of interest displayed by the orchid community. The species *ochracea* possesses bright mustard yellow flowers and has recently been introduced into cultivation from western China through the efforts of the National Arboretum and a network of dedicated fanciers. *Bletilla ochracea* has proven equally hardy to *Ble.striata* and hybridizes readily with it.

Bletilla striata and its varieties and *Bletilla ochracea* are very amenable to cultivation. Both do well in bright light in normal quality soil, planted three to four inches deep. In the author's garden in Baltimore, Maryland, USA, in USDA Zone 6.5, both species multiply rapidly growing in full sun. They are mulched with two to three inches of pine straw in the Winter to prevent early emergence in the Spring as the growing tips are susceptible to unsightly frost damage. Neither species is fertilized, nor has any fungicide or insecticide ever been used on either species. Under these conditions, the leaves of *Ble.ochracea*

are slightly thinner than *Ble.striata* and the plants are slightly smaller. Other than these minor differences, the plants are very similar in their presentation. *Bletilla ochracea* blooms about three weeks later than *Ble.striata*, though there is plenty of overlap in their two month blooming periods. The racemes of both species yield three to ten flowers and, in good years, many of the racemes will be branched. The hybrid between the two species is intermediate in all respects and is very attractive, combining the bright rose color of the *Ble.striata* with a graceful presentation and bright yellow disk in the lip from *Ble.ochracea*. A bundle of *Bletillas* is a lovely and long-lasting. One feature which portends a bright future for the genus is the ease with which *Bletilla* racemes can be pulled from the plant, eliminating the need for cutting utensils with their attendant risk of virus transmission.

Bletillas grow rapidly by division under good conditions. Most of the commercial *Bletilla striata* was surely obtained by propagation of a few clones. In addition, they grow with abandon from seed, utilizing any of the popular media or even on dampened *Sphagnum* moss, though the latter gives a much lower yield. Given good growing conditions, it is not uncommon to bloom seedlings two to three years from pollination. The prospect of rapid generation turnover and resulting selective breeding is very exciting. The author has second generation U.S. bred clones in the garden already under less than optimal seedling care. Other growers in the network are reporting light pink variants among seed-grown *Bletilla striata*. Attention can now focus on larger flower size and a more upward facing presentation. *Bletilla* is known to hybridize successfully with *Arundina graminifolia* (unregistered) and attempts are being made to cross it with the taxonomically related genus *Calanthe*, thus far with no reported success. The introduction of other species of *Bletilla* species would be

desirable.

Registered Hybrids:

- Bletilla striata x formosana*=
Yokohama(N.Suzuki,1956)
Bletilla formosana x ochracea=
Coritani(R.Evenden 1994)
Bletilla striata x ochracea=
Brigantes(R.G.& A.Evenden
1994)

Permission given for reprinting by Clark Riley. No changes may be made without the permission of the author, clark_riley@qmail.bs.jhu.edu, please.

Editor's Note: Clark Riley was a member of the Illinois Orchid Society in his day studying with Dr. John Law at the U. Of Chicago and was very active in the Society. Many of us have plants that he grew and sold at our meetings.



Board Meeting

The next meeting of the Illinois Orchid Society Board of Directors will be Monday, May 11 at 7:30PM. The meeting will be held at Jim Spatzek's, 2137 Center Avenue, Northbrook, IL. 847-498-4638. Call for directions if necessary. All Officers and Directors are expected to attend. All interested IOS members are welcome.



Report of the Nominating Committee

We are pleased to submit the following slate of candidates for election to the Illinois Orchid Society board. The terms of the officers are for one year, July 1, 1998 through June 30, 1999. The terms of the two board members are for four years, July 1, 1998 through June 30, 2002. We present this slate for your consideration; the election of officers and board members will take place at the May meeting of the Society.

President.....Ed Gamson
1st Vice President.....Joe Dixler
2nd Vice President.....Lois Cinert
Treasurer.....Linda Schubert
Asst. Treasurer.....Nancy Jean Schoo
Secretary.....Sue Golan
Asst.Secretary.....Jim Spatzek

Board Member.....Anne Kotowski
Board Member.....Sherry Maloney

We recognize the services rendered by those whose terms have expired and, as always, offer them only a vacation to recharge their batteries. We will be asking them to provide their talents and energy again in the future. Many thanks go to **Charles High, Carole Thompson, Sophia Harris, Chris Welch, and Heddi Schellbach**. Rest up! Less than four years until the next Mid America...

The Nominating Committee

Leo Schordje, Chairman
Linda Schubert
Tom Franczak



The President's Message

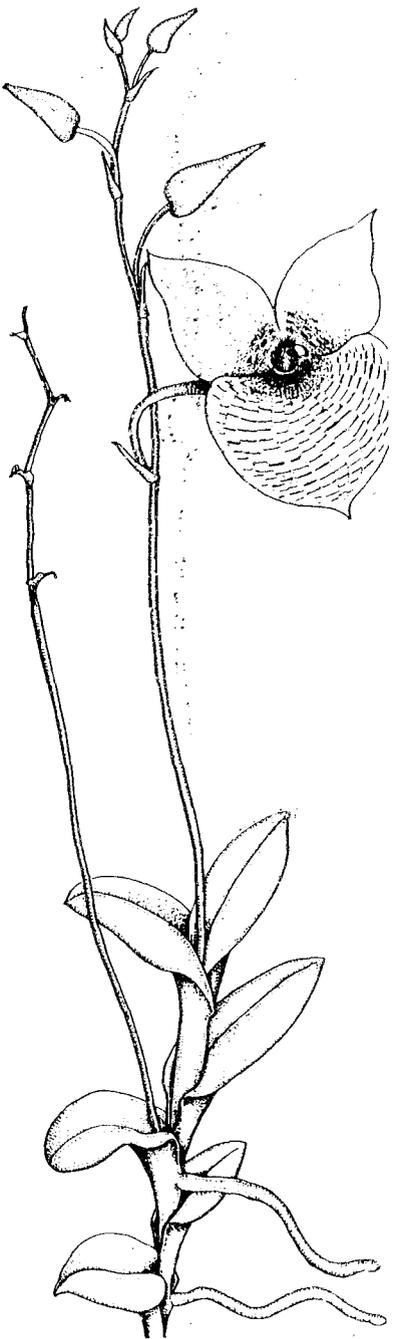
by
Ed Gamson

Thanks to **Cathy Bloome** for her workshop presentation at our April meeting during which she discussed moving our normally indoor-bound plants outside for the summer months and the invigoration such moves provide to the plants. Thanks also to **Nate Bremer of Wolf River Orchids**, of Reedsville, Wisconsin, for his slide presentation of *Phragmipediums*.

Cathy and Nate spoke to about seventy of our members in the downstairs Classroom 3 at the Garden. It was great to see so many of you at the meeting on a lovely Spring Sunday.

All of the data are not yet in, but preliminary data indicate that about 25 percent fewer people (about 6000 vs. about 8000) attended this year's Spring Show as compared to last year's Spring Show. The weather wasn't great this year, and we had competition from the NCAA basketball championship on the tube and an even larger flower show in Chicago at Navy Pier. Too bad for those 2000 people. They missed one beautiful orchid show on which our

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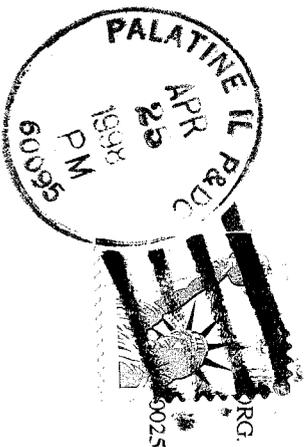
member did a great job.

I am hoping to be able to put together data on attendance and sales for the last several shows so we can chart the past, although I'm not sure of the value of such an endeavor. Whether such a chart will be predictive of the future will remain to be determined, particularly as we have not kept records of the weather and competing events for those previous show dates. Our next year's Spring Show is scheduled for mid-April, so we should avoid the NCAA basketball championship, the Navy Pier flower show, and maybe even bad weather.

To that different note from last month, the Nominating Committee has provided us with a slate of new officers and two new Board Members for next year. Look for that report elsewhere in this Newsletter. My thanks to the Committee for its work, and to those of you with whom I have had the pleasure to serve this year.

EJ Conson

**The Illinois Orchid Society, Inc.
James F. Spatzek, Editor
229 Greenfield Drive
Glenview, IL 60025-4816**



Joseph & Rosalie
Dixler 98-B
811 Stonegate Drive
Highland Park
IL
60035-5144

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