



news

Volume 20.2 - March 2008

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From the President

Hopefully spring and all its wonder is just around the corner in your area. Although many Orchid plants bloom throughout the year, spring does seem to perk up many plants as they soak up more sun rays with longer daylight hours. Hope you have many blooms to enjoy.

This is a reminder to all societies.

Ottawa is the host city for 'Orchids around the World' show and COC annual meeting at the end of April. The silent auction held in conjunction with the awards banquet is a major fund raising event for COC and the host society. It is customary that each society in Canada donate an item to this auction. You can bring it with you when you come to the show, pass it along with someone who is going, mail it to the Ottawa society, or send it to me and I will take it with me when I go. What can you donate? Orchid books, materials, pots, vases, pictures, plants, stationary and gift cards are some suggestions, but do not let your creativity limit you to this list.

This message should reach **ALL** society members and we, the COC executive, need **YOUR** feedback. This newsletter is the last one before the COC annual general meeting in Ottawa in April. The expanded agenda will be sent to your society representative and your society president for review and discussion. Please take some time to comment on issues under new business and send them to me at faithep@shaw.ca by April 18. That will give me time to collate all comments prior to the meeting.

Happy Blooming

Faithe Prodanuk, COC President



Paphiopedilum Enchantress

Notice Board

Speakers List

I am in the process of updating the Speakers List and would appreciate it if anyone who would like to be included, or if you know of someone who should be included, contact me. I will be contacting the people currently on the list shortly to see if there are any changes to their profile/list of talks etc. I would really appreciate it if people could get back to me by the end of April.

Thanks, Mark Elliott

WOC Award

Jerry Suffolk (CVIOS Nanaimo) entered an educational display at the WOC in Miami on growing Brassias and won first prize for Educational Exhibit. Pretty good? He has produced a CD on Brassias.

Ingrid's Essays

Over the years Ingrid Ostrander, past COC President and AOS judge, has written many essays that were published in her society newsletter or in the COC newsletter. These essays have been collected and placed on the COC website for all to enjoy. If you particularly like one, feel free to have it published in your society newsletter.

Passings

The Windsor Orchid Society has kindly sent a memorial donation to the COC for two deceased members.

Mary Kock, was an Honorary member of the Windsor Orchid Society for many years. Wife of Dick Kock, and co-owners of Huronview Nursery, Brights Grove, Ontario

Ken Bragg, was a member of the Windsor Orchid Society for many years. He was the husband of Eunice. Ken was very active with the Society on the Social Committee with his wife. They were co-owners of Windsor Uniforms. He was also very active in the community. He passed away on November 4/07 after a brief illness. He will be greatly missed by all, especially by his wife Eunice, the love of his life.

Material in this newsletter or on the COC website may be reprinted in society newsletters - just make sure you attribute the author and the COC.

COC Annual Meeting 2008 - 2009

The Ottawa Orchid Society has planned a great show April 25-27 with speakers and a banquet. Are you going? Attached is an invitation to participate in the special corsage competition.

The COC Annual Meeting is on Sunday, April 27 at 9:30AM. It is your chance to help the orchid community in Canada to thrive. If you can't volunteer, at least let your voice be heard. If you can't attend, at least send in your suggestions to the President.

Please see the Ottawa OS website for details.

PROPOSED SLATE OF OFFICERS

President: Jean Hollebhone

Ottawa, ON - Ottawa Orchid Society

First Vice President: Elsie Gerdes

Armstrong, B.C. – North Okanagan Orchid Society

Second Vice President: Peter Poot

Toronto, ON - Southern Ontario Orchid Society

Secretary: Carole Gert

Calgary, AB – Foothills Orchid Society

Treasurer: Margaret Hewings

Burlington, ON - OSRBG

NewsLetter/WebMaster: Jerry Bolce

Waterloo, ON - Central Ontario OS

Conservation: Marilyn Light

Ottawa, ON - Ottawa OS

Education: Mark Elliott

Surrey, B.C. – Vancouver Orchid Society

Insurance Co-Ordinator: Lynne Cassidy

Surrey, B.C. – Fraser Valley Orchid Society

Member Liason: Valerie Tribes

Vernon, B.C. – North Okanagan Orchid Society

(This is a new position to improve communication with member societies by personally contacting each member society twice a year.)

Past President: Faithe Prodanuk

Coldstream, B.C. – North Okanagan Orchid Society

ORCHIDS AND BEGINNERS

There is a problem in fitting the right orchids with the appropriate beginner. In a vast plant family with over 20,000 species and twice that number of cultivated hybrids, producing a proper match between plant and grower is the first step toward successful growing. This success usually implies flowering at least, as most of us are not sufficiently "esthetic" to be satisfied with only beautiful variegated leaves or graceful grassy foliage - without blooms. There are foliage orchids but most require warmth and high humidity and are not the easiest subjects for starters.

In a survey we made of home growers — on window sills or under lights - people said several times, "I grow orchid plants well, but I want flowers!", while others said they wanted only plants that could be recognized as orchids. Just be advised that success with any kind of orchid plant leads to another, and then another, so even as a beginner, start making plans for your greenhouse soon!



Phalaenopsis

There are a few caveats for the beginning grower besides trying to grow the most suitable plants. One is to realize that it takes one to three years for greenhouse grown plants to adapt to new home conditions. That's true for any plant moved around, but it can be critically important for the home grower with perhaps less than ideal conditions. (If you're growing good plants but without flowers, as the person quoted above, give them more light.) Another caveat is to start your orchid venture with several mature plants that will continue to bloom seasonally. Acquire seedlings as you go along and improve your know-how gradually; you'll still have the mature plants for flowers without waiting so long for seedling rewards. Finally, do have several plants at once, along with other house plants — they grow better "en masse", and your worry over a new growth or a broken root won't be concentrated on just one item. Spreading out your worry is very helpful, enhances the therapeutic aspects of

orchid growing and makes it all the more addictive and enjoyable.



Paphiopedilum

Orchids require the same environmental factors as other plants for proper growth, development and the flowering. Since most orchids grow rather slowly and deliberately, you can usually observe by their appearance whether or not the proper conditions are being provided. They are slow to grow and slow to die, and this gives you time to change conditions if they are not satisfactory. The environmental factors listed would be: light (both amount and length of day), humidity, temperature, watering, potting medium, air and finally fertilizers or nutrients. The last-named is usually much overemphasized and overdone, often to the detriment of the plants, when the other items are far more important. Of course it's the balance among these



Oncidium

that's critical, and the born "green-thumber" is the person who "thinks like a plant" and through past experience immediately recognizes that a plant needs new soil, or more light, or whatever. You don't have to talk to them, but daily observation of their performance — and reacting properly to what you see — will result in developing your

green thumb. Finally, don't be dismayed if a plant dies. We all have our un-successes; the plants we most like and find impossible to grow! Well then, either change the growing conditions or try to transfer your affections to other types of orchids. Remember too, that how you grow them today will have its influence next year. It's a long term continuum of good care that is required.

Cattleya pervealiana



Of all the environmental conditions, the balance among light, temperature and humidity is most important for good growing. Orchids require fairly high humidity as a rule — 50-70% or higher for some, and usually fairly bright light and temperatures from 60-75 degrees F. Many will grow and flower with those ecological parameters. It has been said that if you can grow ferns, rex begonias, or African violets, you can grow orchids. It's a good comparison, as these plants too are critical of this same balance of light, humidity and temperature. In home conditions, humidity is often a main problem so that humidifiers or frequent



Brassavola nodosa

misting or such other arrangements as wet gravel in trays are necessary. Also, for most orchids there is a critical temperature differential necessary between night and day — 10 to 20 degrees. This drop at night is a factor for general

good growth and imperative for flowering in many plants. Potting material and fertilizing need to balance. Tree fern, osmunda or composts have some nutritional content and will not need much supplemental fertilizer. Bark mixtures generally have no mineral content and require continual fertilizing, usually of diluted nutrients high in nitrogen, the nutrient that is most easily washed out and lost for the use of the plant. I, personally, belong to the school of fertilizing with extra dilute amounts — perhaps one quarter of whatever is called for — used fairly often, but always with some plain waterings between times to prevent any toxic build-up. If you forget or miss a few times, it won't make a big difference; the plants will still be O.K. and when they're dormant it can be skipped altogether.



Slc Jewel Box 'Dark Waters', AM-HCC/AOS

What are some of the tolerant orchids that will grow and flower with least difficulty? "Tolerant" to me, means plants that can take too much light, too little humidity, too high temperature, or too low, and still behave. Many are species, and either they may be grown directly, or their hybrids may be chosen, as they will usually have the same characteristics as the parents.

The lady slippers - either cool types with solid green leaves or the mottled-leaved intermediate sorts — are easy to grow and do not require high light. This makes them ideal subjects for cultivation under lights if that's your arrangement. *Phalaenopsis*, particularly *Phalaenopsis lueddemanniana* or its hybrids are also good subjects for under-light-growing, but they require intermediate to warm temperatures and higher humidity than many other orchids. They flower readily over long periods, and the flowering stalks can branch for secondary flowering that extends their season. They bloom readily from seedlings and may not be as expensive as other orchids.

In the Cattleya alliance, a few species or their hybrids are tolerant, but they tend to be medium or larger-sized plants. If you've the room and enough light, then try *Cattleya aurantiaca* or any of its many hybrids bright-coloured flowers in Spring and easy to grow. Taller plants are produced from fall-blooming *Cattleya bowringiana* and its hybrids such as *C. Portia*, but they are tried and true under tough conditions and almost always produce flowers. If you must have a purple cattleya, try *Cattleya percivaliana*, a medium-sized plant, flowering after Christmas and easy to grow into specimens.

All the terete-leaved *Brassavola* species are good candidates for beginners, particularly *B. nodosa*, the Lady-of-the-Night orchid with its aromatic perfume only in the dark. There are many hybrids of *B. nodosa* available with various cattleyas or laelias and they all behave well.



Miltonia

Another vast alliance of orchids includes the yellow/brown oncidiums, either alone or hybridized with their cousins, the odontoglossums, the miltonias or the brassias. These are often described as cool orchids, the odontos especially, but the hybrids tolerate intermediate temperatures well. They flower with branched sprays of bright-colored blooms. *Odontoglossum bictoniense* and its combinations are particularly good, and also look out for *Oncidium splendidum* or *Onc. tigrinum* and their progeny.

This will get you started, at least, but by no means a complete list. Some will suggest *Dendrobium kingianum* or *Dendrobium nobile* in their many forms, or Maxillarias perhaps, or Lycastes. If you must have a Sophronitis, try *Sophronitis cernua*, more tolerant than the other species and not as demanding of cool, humid conditions. And for a red orchid, Sic. Jewel Box 'Dark Waters' would be my prime choice. It has *C. aurantiaca* in the ancestry and grows readily.

Now, you're on your own! As your orchid green thumb develops its calluses, remember to read as much as you can about growing orchids. There's a wealth of good books and journals available, and often commercial catalogs will contain helpful information. As your knowledge increases, you'll soon be ready for that greenhouse. Good luck!

- Carl L. Withner

First published in The Canadian Orchid Journal, Spring 1982



ORCHIDOPHILIA

27th Annual Orchid Show

presented by the
Ottawa Orchid Society

In conjunction with the
Annual Meeting & Symposium of
the Canadian Orchid Congress

- ◆ Orchid Vendors
- ◆ Orchid Displays
- ◆ Art Gallery
- ◆ Invited Experts

April 26 & 27, 2008
Saturday ☞ noon - 5:00 pm
Sunday ☛ 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Nepean Sportsplex
1701 Woodroffe Ave.
Ottawa ON

GIVE YOUR ORCHIDS A SUMMER VACATION

What kind of orchids benefit from spending the summer outside?

Almost all cool and intermediate growers can be placed outside in the summer where we live on the Atlantic coast of Nova Scotia with good results. In Toronto, where we had a small collection of orchids, the results were even better because of the warm, humid summers. If you have doubts, see the article on Cymbidiums in the April issue of the AOS Bulletin. The author of that article puts his cymbidiums outside in Massachusetts for nearly six months of the year.

The cool growers that can go out include plain leaved paphs, cymbidiums, bletillas, pleiones, masdevallias, Columbian miltonias, odontoglossums and their hybrids such as odontiodas.

The intermediate growers that seem to do well outdoors in the summer include cattleyas, oncidiums, encyclias, epidendrums, Brazilian miltonias and laelias.

When should these orchids be put outside?

We put the cool growers out towards the end of June, depending on the weather; when the night temperature is steadily above 50 F., it seems to be safe. The intermediates go out a little later, when the night temperature is above 55 F. The temperature is more critical at the beginning of the summer when the plants are used to soft growing conditions indoors than at the end, when they are somewhat conditioned to outdoor life. All orchids except cymbidiums, pleiones and bletillas come back in before mid-September, the intermediates a week or two or even more before the cool growers. The cymbidiums stay out until frost threatens, and the pleiones and bletillas until they lose their leaves and night temperatures reach 30-32 F.

Where do you put your orchids when they are outside?

We put them in the shade of tall deciduous trees, in a sheltered spot in the back yard where they are protected from too much wind. The very shady growers (paphs, masdevallias, odonts, etc.) are in a position where they get direct unfiltered sunlight for only an hour in the very early morning. Cattleyas and similar plants get direct sun until perhaps 10:30 a.m. and dappled sunlight for the rest of the day. Cymbidiums can take even more sun. All our orchids stand on wire mesh covered racks for good air circulation and to keep down the insect population. In Toronto, we built a five-sided shelf of boards around the trunk of a

silver maple tree, about five feet above the ground. The cattleyas in particular did very well in this position and had virtually no insect problems.



Outdoor Orchid Bench.

Photo: Helleiner

What if I have to go away and leave the plants?

The obvious answer is to get someone to come in and water them. Another possibility is to place clay pots inside larger plastic pots of damp peat or sphagnum. It would probably be wise to move them into a more shaded, less exposed place, before you leave. One of the members of the Nova Scotia Orchid Society set up a very successful automatic watering and misting system which looked after his orchids for two months while he was away last summer. On his return all the plants were in excellent condition.

What about pests when you put orchids outside?

Slugs have been our worst problem, especially on bud spikes. The sweetness seems to attract them. The answer seems to be to bring a plant in as soon as you see buds on it. Keeping the plants off the ground is also a help. We have never had any luck with remedies like stale beer or grapefruit peel. We like to dip or spray our orchids with malathion or something similar before bringing them in the house, in order to get rid of any pests they may have picked up. We always feel that a complete dip (done by someone wearing throwaway plastic gloves) gets more bugs than a spray. In fact, although we have had our share of pest problems indoors, we don't think any of them can be attributed to pests brought in from a summer outside.

What problems do you expect with outdoor orchids?

Cold weather, with rain and fog: After a few days of this we take the intermediate orchids inside temporarily. After ten days or so we take in the paphs; in a really bad summer nearly everything will end up back in the house for a while. In most parts of Canada this is perhaps not a problem.

Hot dry weather: In this kind of weather orchids require a lot of extra watering and misting, but in this climate you can just about always count on cool nights and 100% night time humidity.

Bugs and slugs: Watch out for them, especially slugs and earwigs. If a plant develops a flower spike we take it inside; the sweetness seems to attract slugs which can gobble up a dozen buds in a night.

Theft: No real solution, but try tying the pots to their stand or rack with light wire. This helps in wind, too.

Hail: Our orchids were decimated (leaves literally cut off at the edge of the pot) one year by a hail storm. They all recovered eventually. Risk your life to get them in out of the hail.

After all that, why should I put my orchids outside at all?

They grow and flower better, in our experience, after a period outdoors. This is especially true of the cool growers that may not flower at all otherwise. Besides, you get all that very welcome extra space indoors for the summer.

by Mary Helleiner

First published in The Canadian Orchid Journal, Spring 1982

COC award winner from the 2008 show in Victoria, BC.

Mr. & Mrs. Pat VanAdrichem (Kingfisher Orchids) exhibited the winning display - "Best Interpretation of show Theme" which was: "A Treasure Chest of Orchids" The photographer is by Diana Rowles, Vic. OS Newsletter editor.



COMING EVENTS

2008

March 28-30: The Manitoba Orchid Society Annual Show and Sale.

Contact president@manitobaorchidsociety.ca

"<http://www.manitobaorchidsociety.ca/>"

March 29-30: Vancouver Orchid Festival VanDusen Botanical Gardens Floral Hall, Vancouver, BC "<http://www.orchidfest.com/>"

March 29-30: Les Orchidophiles de Montreal Orchidexpo 2007,

College de Maisonneuve, 2700 Bourbonniere St., Montreal,

Quebec. For information: Andre Poliquin 450-653-9590

e-mail: mor-pol@sympatico.ca "<http://orchidophiles.qc.ca/>"

April 12-13: Central Vancouver Island Orchid Society at the Country Club Center, Nanaimo, BC. Contact: Sue Christison,

250-246-2447 or email orchidlady@telus.net <http://www.cvios.com/>

April 12-13: The Regina Orchid Society Show and Sale will be held at a new location — Wascana Place, 2900 Wascana Drive, Regina, Saskatchewan. For more information, please contact c.eisbrenner@yahoo.ca.

April 19-20: The Annual Toronto Artistic Orchid Association Show, Chinese Cultural Centre, 5183 Sheppard Ave., East (Markham Road) Phone: 416-292-9293 Email: Louisa Fung louisafung@rogers.com "<http://www.taoa.ca/>"

April 26-27: The Ottawa Orchid Society show in conjunction with the **COC Annual Meeting and Symposium**, Nepean Sportsplex, 1701 Woodroffe Avenue, Nepean, Ontario. Contact David Cooper, Show Chairman, at orchidae@allstream.net.

"<http://www.ottawaorchidsociety.com>"

May 3-4: The Vancouver Orchid Society Annual Show will be held at the Richmond Winter Club, 5540 Hollybridge Way, Richmond BC.

Contact Mary Kapoor marka92220@yahoo.com

<http://www.vancouverorchidsociety.ca/>"

Sunday Aug 3: SOOS Summerfest at the Toronto Botanical Gardens. Glen Decker of PipingRock Orchids, PipingRock@aol.com Has CITES now and will be bringing plants. Erich Michel of Hoosier Orchids, eemichel7@msn.com Topic: 'The Orchid Species of Madagascar' (with some of Fred Hillerman's slides). He will be bringing plants. All Orchidists Welcome "<http://www.soos.ca/>">

Sept 27-28: The Central Ontario Orchid Society, Cambridge Hespeler Arena, 640 Ellis Road, Cambridge "<http://www.coos.ca/>"

Sept 26-29: Western Australian Orchid Spectacular and Conference "Living with Orchids"

"<http://members.iinet.net.au/~emntee/WAOS.html>"

Oct 4-5: The Foothills Orchid Society, Triwood Community Association Hall, 2244 Chicoutimi Drive NW, Calgary, AB

"<http://members.shaw.ca/foothillsorchidsociety/>"

October 25-26: Fraser Valley Orchid Society Show & Plant Sale, will be held at the Langley Civic Centre, 20699 - 42nd Ave., Langley, B.C.

"<http://www.orchidbc.ca/>"

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COC News

The purpose of COC news is to inform members of the meetings, policies of the COC, to profile members, and to provide technical information regarding happenings, trends and techniques in orchid cultivation across the country and around the world.

We welcome your suggestions and contributions. Deadline for each issue is one month before the issue dates previously announced.

Recipients of this newsletter are strongly urged to pass a copy on to other members of their society

**COC Web Site - <http://www.CanadianOrchidCongress.ca/>
This newsletter may be found there.
Please send in your show information: date, location, contact, etc.**