



news

Volume 21.1 - January 2009

Happy New Year from your COC Executive

We are pleased to welcome this month a new orchid society to the COC, the newly formed Prince Edward Island Orchid Club. With eight members, they are off to a great start led by President Marcelo Bosco and Treasurer Andrea Studzinski; they are also the newest member of the COC insurance plan! Their contact information can be found on the society page of the web site.

The results of the questionnaire sent out to all societies in October have been tabulated and are published in this newsletter. Your executive will be discussing them over the next month and responding to your suggestions. Our thanks to membership liaison chair, Valerie Tribes, for developing the questionnaire and analyzing the results.

Over the past few months your Executive has been working on a brochure and poster that explains clearly what the COC is about and the services it has to offer. We became aware that some members of orchid societies, often the newest members, may have no idea of what the COC is or does or how it can be relevant and helpful in furthering their interest and knowledge in orchids. A package of information material including the poster and brochure will be distributed to the COC representative of each COC member society by the end of February. Please use these materials at your March meeting or show to raise awareness of the work of the COC. It is hoped these materials will be kept and used annually by each Society to publicize the work of the COC and to inform members of services. I'd like to thank Jerry Bolce of COOS for the original poster concept, Brighthouse.ca for designing and printing the poster, and Derric and Elsie Gerdes of the North Okanagan Orchid Society for writing, designing and

editing the brochure and their unlimited patience in accommodating revisions.

Our Treasurer, Margaret Hewings, has the COC books up to date and has developed a draft budget for 2009 based on anticipated income and expenses. As a deficit is anticipated, any discretionary spending approved will need to be taken out of reserves. These are currently substantial but we cannot draw down reserves in the longer term. Over the next month, your Executive will be looking at the 2009 budget carefully and will be challenged to reduce and more closely manage expenses. The revised draft will be circulated and society presidents will be asked to review and approve the proposed budget in March for 2009. At the October AGM, a sustainable budget for 2010 will be presented for approval. This budget will be made after a review of all current expenses and proposed new programs.

Based on the decision made at the 2008 AGM, your executive has also been working on developing options for assisting smaller societies in enhancing their programming and learning activities. This will also be sent to member societies for comment shortly. Any funding for this program will need to be approved in the context of priorities for the overall 2010 COC budget.

The proposed expansion of the COC medal program and new slide shows are under development.

So, there is plenty of work ahead, keep tuned and enjoy your orchids and the upcoming spring shows.

Jean Hollebhone, COC president

Notice Board

Marilyn Light Receives Diamond Award Of Excellence

The Ottawa Orchid Society is very pleased to learn and share with you that one of our long serving members, and also a former president of the Canadian Orchid Congress, has been honored with a special award. Marilyn Light was awarded earlier this year the Orchid Digest Diamond Award of Excellence by the Orchid Digest Corporation for her many years of work and contribution to OrchidSafari.

OrchidSafari, as far as it is known, is the first virtual orchid society. Peak activity was during the 1995 through 2002 period but it still meets virtually for on-line chat twice weekly. Members are located in all parts of the US, in Canada, Brazil, and even Australia. Marilyn contributed a monthly chat discussion topic for about 10 years and now does so more sporadically.

A sample of discussions can be found at:
<http://www.orchidsafari.org/BOS/barbados.html>
Congratulations, Marilyn!



COC Annual Meeting

Fraser Valley Orchid Society has agreed to host the 2009 COC AGM in Langley, B.C. October 16-18, 2009. Reserve this time on your calendars. We look forward to the announcements of their Show in future newsletters.

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.

The Bruce Peninsula Orchid Festival

The Bruce Peninsula in Ontario is renowned for its diversity of wild growing, native orchids. An astonishing 44 orchid species occur on 'the Bruce', ranging from abundant Yellow Lady's Slippers to the endangered Eastern Prairie White-fringed Orchid. For a small area, the Bruce Peninsula has one of the greatest varieties of natural orchids in North America.

May 29, 30 2009

<http://www.orchidfest.ca/index-1.html>

Orchid Trip to the Bruce Peninsula

Margaret Hewings is again organizing her annual overnight tour to look at the orchids of the Bruce for June 6th and 7th - with a guide - departing from Burlington and Toronto. Contact her for details at mhewings@tpi.ca

COC Insurance Program

The insurance program for 2009 is now complete. There are 25 societies taking part. One new item has been made available to the societies - they can now insure their libraries and equipment. Four societies have taken advantage of this low cost insurance.

The premium as set at the beginning of the program has been kept to \$1.00 per member per year. This premium does not cover our cost to the Insurance Agent. The COC has been subsidizing this program and may in the future change the amount of the premium to the societies.

Orchid Red Listed

The Western Prairie Fringed Orchid, *Platanthera praeclara*, native to both Canada (Manitoba) and the continental United States, has been placed on the IUCN Red List as EN (Endangered). As far as I know, this is the first Red Listed orchid for Canada and the continental US. The Red List assessment details may be found at <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/132834>

Recovery Strategy for the Western Prairie Fringed-orchid (*Platanthera praeclara*) in Canada -
<http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection/En3-4-11-2006E.pdf>

The Black Jewel Orchid

The **black jewel orchid** (*Ludisia discolor*, also known as *Haemaria discolor*) is an orchid species native to Malaysia, Indonesia and Burma. Jewel Orchids are terrestrial orchids, which mean they grow in soil and soil-like medium and grow on the ground. In their natural environment, they can be found growing on the forest floor. They are known for their foliage, which are velvety; deep maroon leaves with red veins that run parallel to the center.

Blooming Time: December to February (Winter-Early Spring). Flowers are white with twisting yellow columns. Individual flowers are small but grow in clusters on upright stalks. Flowers will open any time from December to February and last a month or more.

Culture: *Ludisia discolor* tolerate intermediate to warm environments. They need high humidity and warm temperatures. Because of these temperature preferences, they can be grown in terrariums or pots. Low to medium light is ideal, and they tolerate extremely low light levels. Jewel orchids are terrestrial so grow them in equal parts of soil, and peat moss. You may want to add perlite to this mixture to assure drainage. Keep medium moist but ensure good ventilation in the area they are growing. Jewel orchids are uniquely different and are a perfect plant to simply enjoy their beautiful foliage.

Propagation: Ludisias can be propagated anytime of the year. Take cutting of growing shoots and make sure to cut it below the node, so roots can grow from it. Put it in a container full of water and let it soak for one to two weeks until roots starts to appear. Then, pot them directly in the potting medium.

From Wikipedia



Use Of Methanol To Enhance Plant Growth

There is a patent, listed on the web, that describes how adding methanol (methyl alcohol) to your water for watering your orchids can enhance the growth. Following is a quote from the patent:

In accordance with the present invention there is provided, a method of improving growth characteristics of orchid plants which comprises applying to the roots of such plants a solution containing alcohol, preferably methanol or glycine, and repeating the application at intervals until growth characteristics are improved. Preferably, the methanol is applied as an aqueous solution of from, about 0.01% to about 5% by volume methanol. Advantageously, the methanol may be applied along with fertilizer to the roots of the orchid plants.

The application of methanol to the orchid plant roots produces earlier flowering and more shoots and increases high temperature tolerance, root vigor, bright light tolerance and foliage glossiness or shininess.

The invention is also directed to orchid plants which have been subjected to the methanol application to roots. This produces a novel orchid plant having a more vigorous or greater root system than that of an orchid plant of equivalent size, age and variety to which there has been no application of methanol to the plant roots. Similarly, the invention is also directed to orchid plants having, respectively, earlier flowering, more shoot production, increased high-temperature tolerance, increased bright-light tolerance and increased foliage glossiness, as compared to plants of equal size, age and variety to which no methanol has been applied to the plant roots.

You can read the whole patent by going to <http://www.google.ca/patents/> and entering the patent number: 5642586. Note: this patent has expired.

For those adventurous types, give it a try on a few plants, with controls, and give us a report of the results.

Home-Made Remedies and Treatments

Problems with mites, scale, mealybugs? Not want to use harmful chemicals? Have a look for solutions at First Ray's website.

<http://www.firstrays.com/remedies.htm>

My recipe for mites, scale and mealybugs:

In a one liter spray bottle add:

5 to 15 ml of baby oil

A squirt of liquid dish soap

about 100 ml isopropyl alcohol

fill to 3/4 with water

Proportions are not critical

Shake well, and spray the plant, being sure to thoroughly wet all surfaces. Usually one application will suffice but keep an eye out for bugs and repeat as necessary.

I prefer using baby oil instead of cooking oil as the cooking oil will oxidize and become sticky. Also repeat applications will clog the plant stomata and suffocate the plant.

-Jerry Bolce



2008 Foothills Orchid Society Show

Canadian Orchid Congress Medal awarded to Orchid Species Preservation Society, Edmonton, Alberta

Q&A

Q: Someone has phoned me to ask about getting rid of mealybugs or scale (they are not sure) on orchids (probably Phalaenopsis, but they didn't know). Are orchids sensitive to insecticidal soap or rubbing alcohol? Can you recommend the best solution please.

A: You can use a q-tip or a small brush with rubbing alcohol or soap to brush them off the orchid. You can even spray the alcohol or soap solution or you can make a mix of alcohol, soap and vegetable oil for spraying. Keep an eye out for the bugs and repeat as necessary. See <http://www.canadianorchidcongress.ca/pests.html>

Q: I found your email address on a site called the Orchid House. I have searched the net over with not really any luck finding orchid seed. Do you have information as to who I might contact to purchase some? I do not have any seed trade which is what people seem to be doing. I want to try this for the first time, after finding a lab nearby who will offer their services if I am able to get seed. Any info that you pass along will be most helpful.

A: I have passed your email to a couple people that might have seed. [Anybody out there with seed in case this comes up again?]

Q: I am wondering if there is a way to propagate my beautiful Orchid, My daughter-in-law has some also and we would like to do some exchanges.

A: There many thousands of different kinds of orchids. I cannot give you detailed information without know which kind of orchid you have. In general some can be "split" like an iris and some grow differently and may or may not be propagated vegetatively. Orchids do not grow from seed like the garden plants you are familiar with - they require special aseptic media and laboratory conditions. (In the wild they produce several hundred thousand seeds in the hope one will produce a plant)

Q: I would like to buy a rare orchid for my father in Waterloo for Christmas. I am in Scotland.

A: I am not aware if there are any Canadian vendors that would ship a plant in the winter. I would suggest you buy him an orchid book. [supplied links]

[These are the questions that came in in the last couple months - Jerry]

COC Questionnaire

Below is a summary of a questionnaire that was circulated to the societies. It was an attempt to get some feedback on COC services. A member of your society executive might have filled out the questionnaire, however if you would like to make a further comment or suggestion, please email Jean Hollebhone at jhollebhone@sympatico.ca

Please note that the COC is a small group of orchid hobbyists who volunteer to help other societies grow. If you want something to happen, someone needs to volunteer - how about you?

Question 1: Service ratings

Insurance:

Of the societies responding all used the insurance except for one, and all rated it either Excellent or Good.

Slide Program:

Of the societies responding, 27% rated this from Fair to Poor, with the rest rating Excellent or Good.

Newsletter:

Overall a very good response to the newsletter, with one comment in particular asking for more relevant material with regard to Orchid care and maintenance.

Website:

Of those responding, all rated this Excellent or Good.

COC Medal:

Of those responding, all rated this Excellent or Good.

Culture Sheets:

Of those responding, all rated this Excellent or Good.

Guidelines:

Of those responding, pretty well a 50/50 split Good or Fair.

Speaker Tours:

A wide range from Excellent to Poor in this regard. Comments on the tours was evident in the answers to other questions.

Question 2: Are there any services and programs you feel should be improved and in what way?

Replies from the respondents are listed below:

1. Not at present
2. We see the COC primarily as a money collecting and empire building organization. COC needs to find out what its members want on a national basis not a Toronto/Montreal area basis.
3. The new COC liaison role is an excellent idea that needs to grow

4. Some of the slide programs are very poorly done and must be reviewed and updated to be of any value.
5. The slide shows need to be updated, and perhaps changed to a new technology.
6. The list of culture sheets available should be expanded to include other popular genera .
7. Slide shows should be digitalized for shipping. Culture sheets should be bilingual
8. Yes convert your slides to CD - we all use computer programs to present
9. Phal and paph, these are the most common orchids grown and the smaller societies would benefit from having these slide programs
10. Our Society feels it would be very beneficial if the COC were to greatly expand its current Touring Speaker program. In recent years, we have found it increasingly difficult to attract and organize high-quality visiting speakers, especially from outside Canada.
11. The OSA would support the COC becoming a "central booking office" for orchid speakers in Canada. We would like to see half a dozen top-notch speakers brought in every year for national, or at least regional, speaking tours. The cost of the tour would be divided evenly among the societies hosting the speaker.
12. We would support expansion of the slideshow library, and conversion of the various conventional slide presentations to Powerpoint format.

Question 3: Are there any new programs you would like to see the COC put in place, and why?

Replies from the respondents are listed below:

1. Not at present
2. An annual award, possibly/probably cash for the best article or slide show, as voted on by readers.
3. A registry for Canadians having orchid species and encourage production of seed between registered plants
4. Build on existing programs and services before diffusing energy on new ones
5. New slide or PowerPoint programs on occasion.
6. The COC could be involved in "publicizing" native orchids and orchid sites.
7. We would be pleased to see the COC playing a more active role in orchid conservation.
8. A lobbying and education campaign directed at CFIA and other officials in charge of enforcing CITES paperwork, etc. for orchid imports into Canada. The COC would do Canadian orchid growers a great service if a more streamlined process could eventually be achieved.

Question 4: Contact person for telephone conferencing?

Of the respondents who answered this question 100% said

the COC rep with a good 50% opting for both the COC rep and the President.

Question 5: COC Newsletter

Replies from the respondents are listed below:

1. We use some articles from the COC newsletter to inform our members via our ECOS newsletter
2. What we like to see in the newsletters is new advances, news of new things in the orchid world, what the COC is doing, changes to CITES, and possibly even new products.
3. Volunteering to contribute to this newsletter has been done in the past, with no response to this
4. Lorne Heshka has contributed in the past and is prepared to contribute in the future - if asked.
5. Most members feel it is a good one, and contains useful information.
6. Some articles are reported on and discussed at meetings. Most members have requested a copy, so it is forwarded to them by the COC rep.
7. I think it should be more of a reflection on Canadian orchidists, for example showcasing how a certain genera is grown in BC, prairies, Ontario/Quebec, the Maritimes and the Great North

Question 6: Website use and suggestions

Replies from the respondents are listed below:

1. Unknown whether members use the site.
2. Our members don't get on the COC web site. No one presently reports to the society on COC business.
3. The website is an excellent tool for those of us who use it. We don't see any need for change.
4. Few comments from members may indicate low usage.
5. Most members do not seem to use the COC website. Those that do say the information is good.
6. Those that use the site give a good rating, and find it useful.
7. Not many members use the website, opinions are mixed as to its value and content.
8. The structure is confusing and the look and feel very dated, though we all know that we work with the resources financial and human, that we have. And you really need to update the content.

Question 7: Funding for speakers

Several societies were not aware of the program, of those that were, most thought it a good idea, but not very well carried out. I have listed some of the suggestions and comments below.

1. If this was intended for small societies - it should be

clearly spelled out to societies

2. Perhaps a list of the eligible societies should be prepared!!
3. Are there any criteria to establish which societies should be eligible??
4. Perhaps larger societies should be encouraged to poll their members and ask if there are any members who would volunteer to go speak to nearby smaller societies.
5. We feel that meaningful subsidization of speakers by the COC is NOT financially feasible, and that the cost of visiting speakers should be covered entirely by the societies hosting them.
6. If the COC were to develop a much-expanded touring speaker program, smaller societies might be subsidized by the larger ones, on a cost sharing by size basis.

Question 8: COC awareness with Societies

A review of the responses would indicate a mixed reaction here, and a low awareness of the COC and its relevance to the member societies. I have listed some of the more interesting replies below:

1. There is no communication from the COC on anything the local Rep would report.
2. The last COC newsletter did not look like anything for other than COC Rep and/or executive.
3. Bombard the program chairs with the info, report on the activities that directly impact members in general and/or are of interest to them.
4. Create reasons for orchidists to come to your website.
5. COC rep should have some information displayed at each show to inform the members and keep up the level of awareness.
6. Overall, we feel that COC's profile is rather low among the membership at large. Greater involvement in touring speakers, conservation, etc. might heighten awareness and make the COC seem more relevant to members.

Question 9: How would you use the COC medal?

We did not get many responses to this question; some just did not provide any information at all. However, from those that did, most thoughts were to award the medal to a member who either was a major contributor to the society in some manner, or to a member who brought the best or most unusual plant to the show table at a meeting.

Orchids and their Pollinators

What do orchids do to induce, incite, seduce, trap, and attract their pollinators? The orchid flower like any other flower has only one mission to perform: it might emblazon itself, its perfume might please, or its colour might fascinate but its mission is to attract its pollinators and become pollinated.

Other flowers normally have stamen pollen bearers - stigmas — pollen receivers which lead to the ovaries. In the distant past, orchids probably behaved as other flowers do, but some strange pollination patterns followed and orchids acquired unusual shapes and developed an abnormally keen interest in their insect pollinators.

A cursory study of the *Cattleya* flower in relation to its form and behaviour will give a simplified picture of the wiles of an orchid flower. The most prominent part of the flower is its lip which is the largest and lowest petal. The other petals appear, one on the right and one on the left of the lip. Behind each petal three structures stand out as imitation petals - these are sepals.



The male and female parts of the orchid are combined into the column. The filaments of the original stamens grew together with the style and made a single structure. The stigma, or receiving portion of the style, is at the bottom of the column and it has a sticky surface which will hold on to any male cells which come into contact with it. The anthers are built into the front of the column. This posed a problem. The male anthers (pollinarium) and their pollen were too near to the stigmatic surface and the plant was subject to self-pollination, so the orchid developed the ROSTEL-

LUM which forms a barrier to self-pollination.

In most flowers there are several anthers and clouds of pollen cells which dust the flower openings and the intruding insects but in the orchid, the pollen grains are stuck together into masses called pollinia. Most orchids have two such masses of pollen and the whole of the pollinia gets stuck to the back or head of the pollinator bug. The insect then proceeds to the next *Cattleya* flower which in turn subjects the bug to extreme discomfort in its attempt to reach the nectar and thus unsuspectingly deposits its passenger pollinia on the sticky receiving stigma of the orchid. In this way the orchid is pollinated and the female cells become fertilized.

There is, however, no such thing as a simple orchid. The approaching bug sees the radiant colours of the lights of the landing strip — the lip — and the veins which direct and lure him to the source of the nectar. If there were clouds of pollen cells they could be distributed all over the pollinating bug, but the orchid must place the mass of pollinia on the right spot on the head or back of the bug to make sure that it will be deposited in the right place in the next flower he visits. There is little margin for error. Only bugs of the right size can fulfill the mission; small flies cannot depress the lip sufficiently to allow the pollinia to be deposited on the stigma below the rostellum. The right sized bug depresses the lip sufficiently and by squirming and pushing in its effort to reach the nectar it deposits the pollinia on the right side of the rostellum. When it has done this the bug retreats and in so doing he collects another passenger pollinia; and so the process is repeated.

Other kinds of orchids have specialized methods of trapping their pollinators in a sticky solution in which they twist and squirm, turn and struggle to free themselves and deposit the pollinia. Some bugs become so intoxicated by a drug which attracts them that they lose consciousness and collapse on the stigma and it collects the pollinia. When the flower has been pollinated, it releases ethylene gas which causes the flower to collapse and prevents further pollination. The beauty and perfume have served their purposes and the plant's energy is directed to producing a seed pod.

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COMING EVENTS

2009

Feb 14-15: The Southern Ontario Orchid Society.

The 30th Annual SOOS Orchid Show at the Toronto Botanical Garden, Edwards Gardens. "<http://www.soos.ca/>"

Feb 20-22: Orchid Society of Alberta Annual Show and Sale called ORCHID DREAMS at Grant MacEwan College South Campus, 7319-29 Avenue, Edmonton. "<http://www.orchidsalberta.com/>"

Feb 28-March 1: Orchid Society of the Royal Botanical Gardens 680 Plains Rd., Burlington Show chair is Chris Foden, email fodens@sympatico.ca "<http://www.osrbg.ca/>"

March 7-8: Victoria Orchid Society Spring Orchid Show will be held in the Student Union Building, University of Victoria. Contact Nancy Miklic (250)642-7626 nmiklic3@telus.net. "<http://victoriaorchidsociety.ca/>"

March 14-15: The Orchid Society of Nova Scotia at the Spring Garden Place at 5640 Spring Garden Rd, Halifax. Show Chair, Gail Schwarz. email rschwarz@hfx.eastlink.ca. "<http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Recreation/OrchidSNS/>"

March 21 - 22: London Orchid Society at the North London Optimist Community Centre, 1345 Cheapside Street at Highbury, London, Ontario For show information: "<http://los.lon.imag.net/shows.asp>"

March 27-29: The Manitoba Orchid Society Annual Show and Sale at the Assiniboine Park Conservatory. For more information, please email: secondvp@manitobaorchidsociety.ca "<http://manitobaorchidsociety.ca/index.php>"

March 28-29: Les Orchidophiles de Montreal Orchidexpo 2008 College de Maisonneuve, 2700 Bourbonniere St., Montreal, Quebec. For information: Andr e Poliquin TEL/FAX: (450)653-9590 e-mail: mor-pol@sympatico.ca "<http://orchidophiles.qc.ca/>"

April 4-5: The Regina Orchid Society Show and Sale will be held at will be held at Wascana Place, 2900 Wascana Drive, Regina, Saskatchewan. For more information, please contact c.eisbrenner@yahoo.ca.

April 11-12: 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.taoca.ca/>"

April 17-19: Central Vancouver Island Orchid Society, Country Club Center, Nanaimo, BC. Contact: Sue Christison, 250-246-2447 or email orchidlady@telus.net "<http://www.cvios.com/>"

April 18-19: Les Orchidophiles de Quebec at the Pavillon Evirotron, 2480 Blvd. Hochelaga, Sainte Foy. "<http://cf.geocities.com/orchidophilesqc/>"

April 25-26: The Ottawa Orchid Society show at the Nepean Sportsplex, 1701 Woodroffe Avenue, Nepean, Ontario. Contact Rick Sobkowicz, at ricksobkowicz@rogers.com "<http://www.ottawaorchidsociety.com>"

May 15-17: The Vancouver Orchid Society Annual Show will be held at the Richmond Winter Club, 5540 Hollybridge Way, Richmond BC. Contact: Wayne Riggs Email: riggskw@interchange.ubc.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.**