

news

Volume 22.1 - January 2010

Native Orchids on 2010 Canadian Stamps

According to information provided in *Details*, Vol. XIX N° 1 published by Canada Post, orchid lovers will have yet another series of definitive stamps featuring orchids to grace their mail beginning on January 11, 2010. This is the fifth issue featuring orchids and will include the striped coralroot, *Corallorhiza striata*, for the Permanent value, the giant helleborine, *Epipactis gigantea*, for letters to the US, the grass pink, *Calopogon tuberosus*, for international destinations, and the rose pogonia, *Pogonia ophioglossoides*, as a stamp for oversized letters.

The striped coralroot is an orchid without chlorophyll. Flowers are variable in size, shape and colour with the ones featured on the stamp being red striped, cupped flowers. Flowers can be almost entirely yellow through red and maroon. Plants can be long-lived but emergence is often irregular. Look for flowering plants in June within shady, damp or dry coniferous woods across Canada where the orchid shares fungal associates with nearby pines and spruce. Forestry practices and loss of habitat threaten this orchid in some parts of its range.

The giant helleborine is strictly western in distribution, ranging from southern BC through the US into Baja California, Mexico. This hoverfly-pollinated orchid prefers wet places near hot springs, beside lakes and rivers, wet seeps or ditches. Despite it being a fairly tall, robust plant which spreads by rhizomes to form dense mats, it is vulnerable to disturbance and to drought. The flowers are

variously coloured with orange and green shades predominating. Individual blooms emerge at the base of large leafy bracts in June/July.

The grass pink is a charming midsummer bloomer most often seen in bogs and fens from Newfoundland through to Manitoba where it can form large populations. Stems of pink to magenta and occasionally white flowers are a joy to behold. Flowers present a tuft of yellow hairs on the lip which lures naive bees by resembling pollen. The strategy can very successful with almost all blooms pollinated. Plants can be short-lived if mice find the tasty tubers.

The rose pogonia is a widespread orchid ranging from Newfoundland to Florida where it forms ramifying mats either in wet sphagnum bogs in the north or in seasonally inundated soils further south. Flowering is from May in the south to July in the northern part of the range. You may need a canoe to get close to these plants, especially the ones that choose to live in floating mats of vegetation.

Look for these charming stamps when they arrive at your post office and use them proudly.

Marilyn HS Light

[See orchid photos inside]

Notice Board

COC Insurance

We have discovered that the Insurance company needs to know the number of attendees at each society's annual show as it affects the insurance rate. No doubt you have been contacted to get this new information for this year and the item will appear on the form for subsequent years.

Orquídea

The Peruvian Orchid Club produces a very nice newsletter, in English, with lots of pictures. The August 2009 issue was devoted to Phragmipediums; the September issue looks at Peruvian Cattleyas. Have a look and, better yet, subscribe. Visit the website at <http://www.peruorchids.org/>

International

Aug 27-29/2010: Sixth Australasian Native Orchid Conference and Show. More information on the ANOS Website: www.anos.org.au

Nov 14-23/2011: 20th WOC Singapore 2011 "Where New and Old World Orchids Meet". Start planning now. "<http://www.20woc.com.sg/site/>"

Your Orchid Show

I might not have your show information at all or it may be not quite correct. Please check the COC website to see if your show information is accurate.- Jerry



COC Slideshows

The programs below have been added through generous donation. They are in Powerpoint and require a computer and digital projector. For details look on the COC website.

Phalaenopsis culture by R.F. Lucas. This program describes Robert's phalaenopsis culture under lights. It covers all of the essentials in text and pictures. It goes into light intensity, watering, growing media, fertilizing, and temperature. In addition there are sections on deflasking seedlings, hybridizing, and seed sowing.

The 19th World Orchid Conference in Miami by R.F. Lucas. There are 65 Powerpoint format pictures of the major exhibits and trophy winners, and an accompanying text. An excellent program to relive the 2008 WOC for those who were there and a teaser for those who were not to start thinking about Singapore in 2011. In any case this presentation provides an excellent overview of what a major orchid exhibition can offer, including wonderful paphs, phalaenopsis, cattleyas, vandas etc.

Dendrobium speciosum, its varieties and influence on its hybrids by Gail Schwartz. This program explores the different varieties of this Australian Dendrobium including growth habits and cultural differences. It was first presented to the Toronto Judging Centre.

The Stanhopeas by Inge and Peter Poot. A survey of Stanhopea species including culture requirements and origins. The program deals with species identification and presents some hybrids as well as some intergeneric hybrids. Includes a section on cultivation.

Orchids of the Ottawa Region by Henry Steger. A survey of species native to the Ottawa region with habitat as well as closeup photography. An excellent introduction to many of our native orchids.

Hardy Orchids, a slide program, has been converted to Powerpoint. One disk contains an 85 slide of orchids hardy in Canada plus a Word document narrative describing the pictures and the cultural conditions required for the plants.

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.

From the President

As I write, it is January 1 of a new year and new decade. Let us hope it is more peaceful and productive. For orchid societies and their members, it is a decade of new opportunities and enthusiasms. It is a great time to draw and interest new members in the wonderful variety of orchids and their culture. What better place to start than local supermarkets which have made orchids available to everyone! It is exciting to contemplate what may happen in this decade ...possible discoveries of new species and new hybrids, advances in the preservation of lands and conservation of native orchid species and hopefully reduction in the loss of orchid habitat, new technologies and learning opportunities, vendor changes, opportunities for travel to new places where orchids grow, etc.

The response to our request for membership and insurance payments by December 1 was fantastic and I want to thank you all most sincerely for cooperating. This means Lynne Cassidy the insurance chair now has a realistic membership account for the insurance agent and the appropriate fee assigned without guesswork. As of January 1, there is really only one society that is outstanding which I think is a remarkable achievement. Thank you all for your co-operation and speed in meeting our new deadlines. We realize it is an awkward time of year.

In the November newsletter, we indicated that the educational travel grant program would be ready to go December 31. The criteria and application form for accessing the travel grant are ready for publication on the web site. For this year only, the amount available will be \$2000 (the combined 2009 and 2010 funds) which means that 10 societies can be supported. As per policy requirements, the COC is required to give a two month notice before closing the application period, and we have therefore set the deadline for receiving applications at March 15, and for distribution of funds by April 15. The Orchid Society of Alberta has requested that societies arranging special speakers/tours share this information with societies in their regions so they can perhaps take advantage of these situations.

As indicated in the November newsletter, your executive's attention in early 2010 will now focus on four projects: expanding the culture sheets, managing the slide programs, adding to the native orchid conservation section on the web site, and preparing and circulating proposed housekeeping amendments to update the bylaws. Also, as the time for the Singapore World Orchid Conference approaches (November 14-23, 2011), Marilyn Light and I will meet with Environment Canada and the CFIA to be able to report back to

societies the CITES and orchid import requirements so they are clear for hobbyists planning on attending the conference and bringing back orchid purchases.

Gail Schwarz, the education chair, has already made a good start on the expanded culture sheet project and has been working with a team of volunteers to get these developed and ready for posting and use. Thank you Gail and thanks to your volunteers.

Over the next few months, Peter Poot will re-look at the issue of upgrading older slide programs. At the annual general meeting the executive was told societies found the slide programs useful and that some of the older programs should be updated and converted to digital format upon agreement of the author(s) of these programs. In 2007, five new slide programs were developed and these have been publicized in earlier newsletters. These powerpoint presentations are: *Phalaenopsis culture* by R.F. Lucas; *The 19th World Orchid Conference in Miami* by R.F. Lucas; *Dendrobium speciosum, Its varieties and influence on its hybrids* by Gail Schwartz; *The Stanhopeas* by Inge and Peter Poot ; and *Orchids of the Ottawa Region* by Henry Steger. In addition the *Hardy Orchids* program was converted to a powerpoint program.

However, your executive has been disappointed by the lack of uptake by societies for the new slide programs despite the AGM discussion. As Peter mentioned in his annual report, only two slide programs were borrowed in 2009. As much time and effort goes into the production of these programs for general use, please consider ordering them for your societies (the only cost is for postage). These new programs provide useful information for most societies. They can also be held for a "rainy day" program such as when an unexpected heavy snow storm prevents a speaker from making a scheduled visit. We will be going slowly on the production of revised older programs as we wait to see the uptake on the new programs. If the rate of lending does not improve, then there is little incentive to continue updates, especially for the authors who spend much time and effort in their production. If there are reasons why societies are not borrowing these programs, please let Peter know. We are all too busy to spend time on developing resources that are not needed.

In the next newsletter I will talk about the COC certificate and solicit nominations for a proposed June deadline.

With best wishes for a prosperous and happy 2010,
Jean Hollebhone and the COC Executive.

Orchid Hobbyist Hazards – and how to minimize them

Everyday life brings with it hazards but hobbies like orchid growing bring some particular risks which we can minimize if adequately informed. Our hobby involves cultivating living plants that require potting media, watering, fertilizing, lighting and ventilation, heating and cooling, pest control, and handling. We may joke about orchid addiction as a risk, and it can be real in terms of balancing the household budget. Joking aside, there are other very real hazards that could affect hobbyists and their homes. Hazards may be electrical/mechanical, chemical, or biological, all of which can be minimized or avoided if some basic safety measures are in place. Be aware and be safe!

Electrical hazards present real risks to hobbyists but these can be minimized by following the basic rules of electrical installation. Ground fault interrupter protection of all electrical devices and outlets is an absolute necessity when using devices to light, heat, cool, water or ventilate orchids. Even with ground fault installation, it makes sense to wear rubber-soled shoes when watering or spraying plants. It likewise makes sense to consult an electrician to be certain that local codes are respected when designing a grow room, lighting setup, or a greenhouse. Professional inspection may be required locally.

Mechanical hazards can be minimized by appreciating some basic laws of physics. Top heavy pots can come crashing down unless adequately balanced. Before an expensive pot is broken, that long awaited spike is damaged at home or at a show, stabilize such plants. Place a heavy rock or piece of brick in the pot base or place the tippy pot in a heavier container. When blooming is over, repot the plant.

Load capacity – Even well constructed shelving has a maximum load capacity. Exceed that load and the shelving may bend or break and plants risk being damage. The same goes for snow on a roof. Ensure that the slope of a greenhouse roof is sufficient to permit snow to naturally flow off. If necessary, remove snow before the limit is exceeded.

Humidity – Water sprayed onto plants indoors ultimately evaporates to become part of the overall humidity of the indoor environment. We can see this humidity as condensation on window glass especially in winter when the glass is cold. As the relative humidity of the interior rises, and especially if ventilation is poor as it can be in some homes and apartments, there is a potential for mould to develop. Prolonged high humidity exposure to the home can be especially damaging where we do not see the problem, in the

walls. Mould build-up in living areas can lead to various health problems.

Any collection of more than a few plants indoors should have adequate ventilation to remove excess humidity from the growing area via an outdoor vent. In winter, this may mean the removal of heat also so there must be careful adjustment of spraying/watering frequency to ensure that the orchids benefit also.

Slipping/falling – Walking on slippery wet surfaces is an accident waiting to happen. Algae thrive on moist illuminated surfaces and especially when fertilizer promotes their growth. Keep walking surfaces clean and free of algae which can make a smooth surface especially slick when wet. Wash the floor regularly using a quaternary ammonium algacide commonly used for pool use. Wear shoes with anti-slip soles.

Chemicals and Media – Relatively few toxic pesticides are now available for home use but even so-called safe pesticides can present hazards. It makes good sense to wear a mask, goggles and gloves when using any product and to apply outdoors if at all possible. A simple mask will reduce exposure to fine particles whether it is from dusty potting medium or from permitted pesticides including diatomaceous earth. A mask can offer some protection from finely divided droplets of horticultural oils now popular to control orchid pests while goggles will protect the eyes from irritating splashes. Masks are cheap enough for single use while rubber gloves can be washed for reuse.

Biological and Health Hazards – A very few orchids are known to induce contact dermatitis including some hairy ones like *Dendrobium senile* and the Showy Lady's slipper (*Cypripedium reginae*). If you grow such plants or visit them in nature, be certain to minimize skin exposure by wearing gloves. Wash hands thoroughly after exposure.

Lycaste species and hybrids have sharp spines at the top of pseudobulbs. These become a hazard during handling or repotting after the leaves have dropped. Handle such orchids with care to avoid puncture wounds.

Moulds and bacteria – Hobbyists are exposed to microorganisms when repotting especially when using moss or media that have been wetted and left damp for several days. The risk is low but any microorganism can gain entry to the body through cuts, abrasions, or by breathing contaminated air. Most of these organisms are opportunists and

only become a medical problem when a person is heavily and continuously exposed or is somehow more susceptible to infection. It is therefore wise to minimize exposure whenever possible.

Sphagnum moss is a known potential source of the fungus disease, sporotrichosis. The causative fungus is naturally associated with the moss but only becomes a problem for hobbyists who handle moss without taking appropriate precautions. Protect hands by covering cuts/abrasions. Always wear gloves. Wear gloves and a mask when handling dry potting media and during repotting. Wash hands and face afterwards. Seek medical attention for any hand injuries that appear infected.

Working in humid poorly ventilated conditions can lead to problems such as allergies, asthma, and possible lung infections. Wear a mask. Improve ventilation.

For additional information and suggestions about the topics raised in this article, some useful references are provided.

Humidity

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/enviro/air-eng.php>
<http://www.blueflame.org/datasheets/humidity.html>

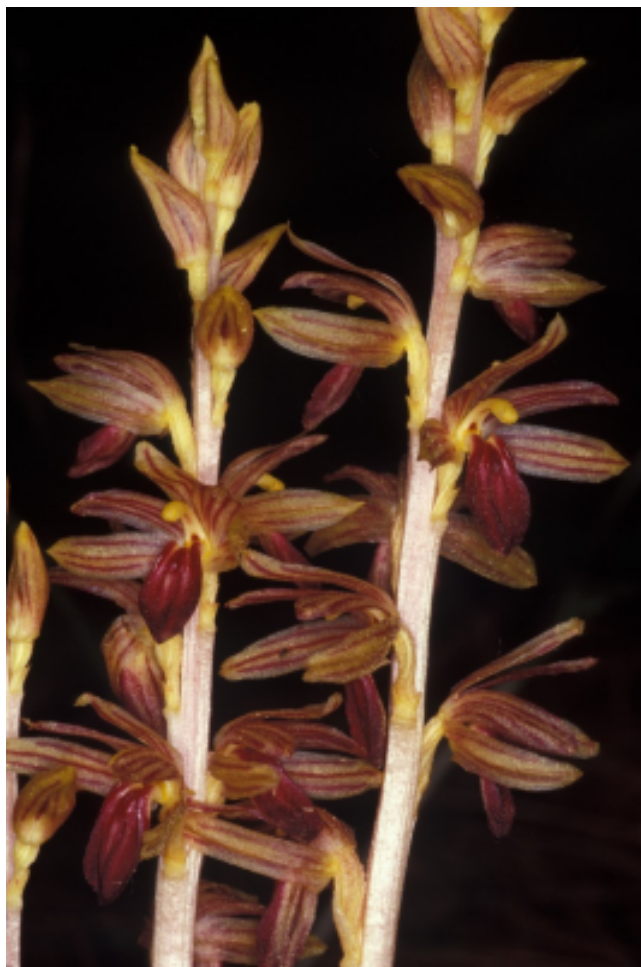
Temperature-controlled cabinets

<http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Recreation/Orchidcongress/news/cocv056.html#temp>
<http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Recreation/orchidcongress/news/cocv064.html#cab>

Sporotrichosis

<http://www.dhpe.org/infect/sporotric.html>

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Corallorhiza striata - The pictured striped coralroot is one that was tracked for some 30 years in the National Capital Region. Photo by Michael MacConaill



Calopogon tuberosus - A summer-flowering favourite is the very showy grass pink. Photo by Michael MacConaill



Pogonia ophioglossoides - The rose pogonia attracts pollinators with a tuft of yellow hairs resembling a pollen reward. Photo by Michael MacConaill.



Epipactis gigantea - The giant helleborine has been chosen as one of four Flagship species by the North American Region Orchid Specialist Group. Photo by Marilyn Light

Some links to conservation sites

Digital Flora of Newfoundland and Labrador - Orchidaceae
http://www.digitalnaturalhistory.com/flora_orchidaceae_index.htm

Native orchids that bloom in Nova Scotia in July by Steve Saunders -
<http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Recreation/OrchidSNS/bloom.html>

Orchids of Nova Scotia - <http://hanstoom.com/Archive/Photos/Orchids/index.html>

New Brunswick Natural Resources - Orchids - <http://www.gnb.ca/0078/WildlifeStatus/orchids-e.asp>

Native Orchids of Manitoba - <http://www.nativeorchid.org/mborchids.htm>

Orchids at Redberry lake, Saskatchewan - <http://www.members.shaw.ca/mjfinley/orchids.html>

Wild Orchid Country - Alberta - <http://www.albertaviews.ab.ca/issues/2003/marapr03/marapr03garden.pdf>

E-Flora BC (Orchids of British Columbia) - <http://www.geog.ubc.ca/biodiversity/eflora/orchidsbc.html>

APPLICATION FOR THE 2010 COC TRAVEL SUBSIDY

1. Applications are invited from COC societies for the 2010 COC travel subsidy. The deadline for receipt of applications for 2010 is 18:00 hours March 15, 2010.
2. Funds can be used any time within the 2010 calendar year.
3. Any society in good standing can apply for the educational subsidy in one of several ways:
 - to match society funds 50/50 to bring in a speaker of choice.
 - to join with other societies to bring a speaker who will go to several societies, thus increasing value for funds outlaid; the matching 50/50 formula would still apply to each society's contribution and a maximum of three societies can apply for tour support (to allow the money be distributed nationally in an equitable fashion).
 - to pay bus or other travel costs for society members for travel as a group to another centre for a speaker at a show, or other educational orchid event. Funds would be matched 50/50 as above.
4. Preference in 2010 will be given to applications from geographically isolated societies (those farther than 200 km from a major urban orchid society), and to small societies, defined as those societies having less than 75 members. Additional priority will be given to those societies cooperating to bring in a joint speaker, as in (3).
5. Eligible expenses will be limited to travel costs of the speaker or group transport vehicle, but will not cover accommodation or meals. Societies are required to identify the matching amount required up to \$200 and present some form of estimate to back up their application, e.g. a computer printout of the anticipated airfare.
5. Applications should be sent to the Education Chair, Gail Schwarz by mail or e-mail on the application form attached.
6. The Education chair and other members of the Board will review the applications to determine that selection criteria are met. Allocation of funds will be made on priority and time-of-receipt basis, e.g. the COC will not determine the worthiness of the application, but only if it meets the selection criteria.
7. The decision on applications received will be announced within 30 days of the application deadline, e.g. April 30, 2010 and sent first by e-mail to all participants and subsequently published in the COC newsletter. Funds will be distributed from the treasurer to receiving societies following the decision.
8. Societies receiving the subsidy are required to submit a receipt for costs, along with a short write up (and photograph) which can be published in the COC newsletter. Failure to comply would carry a penalty of ineligibility to access future funds for a period of two years. Each society is responsible for making its own travel arrangements.
9. The COC will make a report on the program to the 2010 AGM. It will make adjustments to the program as and when required by the travel policy directive.

[This document and the application form were emailed to the societies and all the material can be found on the COC website.]

COMING EVENTS

2010

Feb 13-14: The Southern Ontario Orchid Society 30th Annual Orchid Show at the Toronto Botanical Garden, Edwards Gardens.
"http://www.soos.ca/"

Feb 19-21: Orchid Society of Alberta "Orchid Fair", Annual Show and Sale, at Grant MacEwan College South Campus, 7319-29 Avenue, Edmonton. "http://www.orchidsalberta.com/"

Feb 27-Feb 28: Orchid Society of the Royal Botanical Gardens, 680 Plains Rd., Burlington, ON. Show chair is Chris Foden, email fodens@sympatico.ca "http://www.osrbg.ca/"

March 21-22: London Orchid Society Orchid Show, at the North London Optimist Community Centre, 1345 Cheapside Street at Highbury, London, Ontario "http://los.lon.imag.net/"

March 26-28: 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 27-28: Les Orchidophiles de Montreal Orchidexpo 2010, College de Maisonneuve, 2700 Bourbonniere St., Montreal, Quebec. For information: Andre Poliquin TEL/FAX: (450)653-9590 e-mail: mor-pol@sympatico.ca "http://orchidophiles.qc.ca/"

April 10-11: The Regina Orchid Society show will be held in beautiful Wascana Park, at Wascana Place, 2900 Wascana Drive, Regina, Saskatchewan. Contact Charles Eisbrenner at c.eisbrenner@yahoo.ca.

April 10-11: The Annual Toronto Artistic Orchid Association Show, Chinese Cultural Centre, 5183 Sheppard Ave., East (Markham Road) Phone: 416-292-9293 Email: Louisa Fung lousiafung@rogers.com
"http://www.taoa.ca/"

April 24-25: The Ottawa Orchid Society show at the Nepean Sportsplex, 1701 Woodroffe Avenue, Nepean, Ontario. Contact Dave Cooper (613-256-2853; orchidae@allstream.net) or Dave Thomson (613-523-7332; davic@magma.ca) "http://www.ottawaorchidsociety.com"

May 8-9: 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 "http://www.vancouverorchidsociety.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.**