

news

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WHAT'S NEW

The C.O.C. Show and Meeting hosted by the London Orchid Society was a Success in every respect. The show hall was laid out in a spiral, effectively showing the many lovely displays to best advantage. The organization of the C.O.C. meeting and speakers was excellent. The auction brought in a very good sum for the C.O.C., largely due to the auctioneers, Marilyn Light and Dick Kock. Congratulations to the show committee and the members of the London Orchid Society for an excellent show.

Slide Programs - Hopefully we will be adding programs on Cattleyas, two on Oncidiums and one on Paphiopedilums. We will keep all the member societies advised, as these programs become available. If there are any photographers out there who have a collection of slides that may be of interest to the societies please do let us know.

In this issue there is an article on the Orchid Specialist Group. Many societies were very concerned as to the aims of this group and whether any donations would be put to good use. Mike Miller, Editor of the Central Vancouver Island Orchid Society investigated this group. I am sure after reading his findings everyone will agree that donations sent to the OSG will be put to good use.

Speakers Tour - I have passed our list of Societies on to Francisco Miranda. Hopefully he will be able to give the cost as well as a plant list very soon. If the cost is within reason, we will certainly go ahead with the tour. If the cost should be such that the societies are unable to meet the cost, we of course will have to cancel the tour and perhaps make an all-societies plant order. I will keep you informed of progress.

C.O.C. Show 2001 - The Victoria Orchid Society is the host for this show. It will be held March 3rd and 4th 2001. It will be held at the Student Union Building at the University of Victoria. I look forward to seeing many of the Canadian Societies represented at this show.

Lynne Cassidy.

Letter from the President

As the new president of the C.O.C., I would like to introduce myself. I have been growing orchids since 1980. Since I have a large mixed collection it has become a passion, as I am sure many of you will understand. I belong to both, the Fraser Valley Orchid Society and the Vancouver Orchid Society, and have held several positions on the executive of the F.V.O.S. I was honoured to be a member of the W.O.C. organizing committee, which was a great team effort which resulted in a highly successful show.

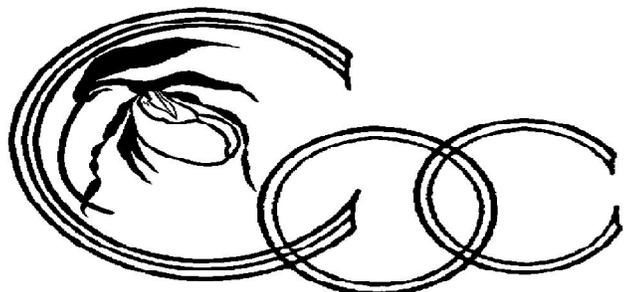
A team effort, can make the C.O.C. a stronger organization and of greater service to the Canadian Societies.

Some of the aims of the C.O.C.:

- Slide programs which can be loaned to the societies. Several should be completed by year end.
- Instead of a Canada wide speakers tour, (which is a organizing nightmare) a Canada wide plant order could be arranged through the C.O.C.
- A speakers tour by region could also be tried again. The tour in Western Canada last year was quite successful.
- Society representatives submit society news and show results for inclusion in the newsletter.
- Society representatives bring the society concerns and ideas to the attention of the executive.
- Continued conservation efforts and close watch on the Cites developments is still in the very capable hands of Marilyn Light, Past President.
- More articles submitted by members for the newsletter.

I look forward to working with the societies and meeting as many of the society member as I can.

Lynne Cassidy,
President



Further to the OSG and the WOC letter from Wally Thomas

After the WOC in Vancouver each of the societies and orchid clubs that had donated money towards the trophy fund had their money returned with interest. With the cheques came a suggestion that each group may wish to donate some or all of the money to the Orchid Specialist Group (OSG) of the Species Survival Commission (SSC), which in turn is a subset of IUCN - The World Conservation Union.

As I knew nothing about any of these groups or what they did, I contacted Wally Thomas and asked for some supporting information to back the idea of a donation. I was put in contact with Shelagh Kell, the new Secretariat, and have all the information I could want now. The OSG had approached the WOC for financial support and was given a sizable amount to help them with their work. This is why Wally Thomas then suggested that the groups that supported the WOC may wish in turn to support the OSG.

My one question to Shelagh Kell was why no information about this very important and very international group had made it into the Newsletter Circuit so that we editors who are always short of good articles could spread the word. Shelagh explained that the OSG Secretariat was only recently established, and initial tasks have included reconstituting OSG membership, producing the first two issues of *Orchid Conservation News*, the OSG newsletter, convening a plenary meeting at the 16th WOC, producing the OSG Strategic Plan, and establishing regional groups and other committees. However she did say that this year one of the goals was to spread the word and raise further funding to support the work of the OSG.

What follows is my impression of what this group is trying to do and where they are going. Anyone who wants to copy the information and spread the word please feel free.

Most of the Orchid Societies and Clubs of the world have conservation as one of the goals in their constitution and rarely get to do very much about this very important activity. One way of contributing to orchid conservation would be to give an annual contribution to the OSG, however small, to help reduce the plight of orchids in the wild around the world.

The Orchid Specialist Group

The Orchid Specialist Group is linked to IUCN- The World Conservation Union through one of its six commissions, the Species Survival Commission (SSC). The SSC consists of 120 Specialist Groups, the Orchid Specialist Group being one of them.

I think the mission statement of the OSG tells a great deal about the group. The mission of the OSG is "*To assist in international efforts to conserve biological diversity, by providing support and encouragement for the development and execution of programmes to study, document, save, restore and manage wisely species and their habitats.*" This group began in 1984 with Eric Hagsater as Chair, Vinciane Dumont as Vice Chair and Joyce Stewart as Secretary. The present Chair is Phillip Cribb of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and Shelagh Kell is the Secretariat. The 120 volunteer members from 44 countries forming this group come from a wide range of areas of expertise as listed in the literature. "These include orchid taxonomists, ecologists, population biologists, data managers, commercial and non-commercial growers, *in vitro* propagation experts, seed bank managers, reintroduction and restoration specialists, nature reserve managers, specialists in conservation education and training, and international wildlife legislation experts. Around 80 organizations and societies with conservation interests are represented, including botanic gardens, herbaria, universities, nurseries, government departments and orchid societies." This membership is not closed and they are actively looking for more talented members especially in the orchid rich tropical regions.

The goals of the OSG, as stated in the *OSG Draft Strategic Plan* are:

Development of effective strategies for gathering, documenting and disseminating information on orchid diversity and conservation.

Provision of advice, expertise and access to appropriate contacts to enhance the efforts of individuals or organisations working on orchid conservation.

Determination and review of the status and needs of orchids and their habitats, and provision of such information on a regular basis to the IUCN Species Survival Programme.

Encouragement, promotion and implementation of specific recommended actions for the wise management

and survival of orchids and their habitat.

Encouragement and promotion of programmes that aim to educate orchid growers, conservation managers and general public in methods of orchid conservation and its importance.

If this group can even start on these kinds of works, they will be successful in slowing down the extermination of species and their habitats. Their justification as to why orchids are an important indicator group I thought well conceived. It states that:

"The Orchidaceae is one of the largest and most diverse families of flowering plants, with estimates of its size ranging up to 30,000 species. However, it has recently been estimated that 6% of the world's orchid flora could be threatened, with 1779 orchid taxa listed in the 1997 IUCN Red List of Threatened Plants. For many years orchids have been the focus of great public attention due to their sheer beauty and diversity. Orchids are therefore an important flagship group, and by focusing on the conservation of these remarkable plants, it is possible that other species can be conserved through the protection and management of orchid-rich habitats."

When we think of the diversity of habitat that would need to be protected, there is indeed a huge number of associated plants and communities of plants that would benefit from protecting an orchid in their midst.

To help break down this enormous task the OSG has divided its membership into nine regional groups: North America, Meso America, South America, Afro-Madagascar, Europe, Indian Subcontinent, Tropical Asia, East Asia, and Australasia. We sit here in the North America Region with Marilyn Light in as our first Chair.

A major concern through this and many other conservation movements is funding or the lack of it. At present the OSG is trying to maintain the office of its first Secretariat. The first year (1998/1999) the AOS, IUCN and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew covered the operating costs for one year with seed funding. A request for funding to the 16th WOC in Vancouver put \$5,000 into the budget and RBG Kew is committed to cover the costs of office space and operation for the 1999/2000 year (about \$ 10,000 US.), but about \$20,000 is still required to keep the OSG functioning and working

towards its goals. In 2000 one objective is to look at affiliating through some form of membership the hundreds of Orchid Societies throughout the world and to get a financial commitment of support to maintain the important work of the OSG and the Secretariat.

All Orchid Societies around the world should be waiting and planning what type of support they can be to the OSG and what expertise support they might require from the OSG for any of their own projects. Considering many constitutions of Orchid Societies contain some goal regarding conservation of orchids, but many may not have found an avenue to work through to a project, the OSG may give them a wonderful opportunity to support their own goals. When budgets are prepared in future some stipend to be delivered to this working support world body will also further the goals of orchid conservation for the individual societies.

I think one thing that has struck me reading through the OSG literature is their realistic outlook. For instance, there are some species that will become extinct in the wild no matter what we try to do so then *ex situ* cultivation is the only logical way to save the species. Casual orchid growers and those immersed in the passion, which orchids can become cannot control every development and change in the world of orchids that threaten their survival. But we can work to save "some" habitats, encourage "some" eco-tourism, support "some" local modern propagation and any other avenue open to give our wondrous orchids the best future obtainable. The world, its habitats, plants and creatures, including man, are all dynamic and changing, creating an ever more diverse world. Extinctions are part of this natural process. However, we the MANipulators have created a rate of change and extinctions more dramatic than ever before in the history of the earth. Therefore, we as a dominant species do have a responsibility to try to save species headed for trouble or possible extinction because of our activities. As an individual, a club or a society be open to the OSG and the needs of the group assembled to support the plants that bind us as one.

Mike Miller, editor

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Judging Statistics

The following are the judging statistics for the Pacific Northwest judging region.

Foothills O.S. - Number of plants in show - 458; Plants entered - 442; Plants nominated - 20; Plants awarded - 9.

Fraser Valley O.S. - Number of plants in show - 569; Plants entered - 569; Plants nominated - 30; Plants awarded - 9.

Orchid Society of Alberta - Number of plants in show - 600; Plants entered - 502; Plants nominated - 13; Plants awarded - 6.

Slide Program

A slide program titled 'Fragrant Orchids', produced by Marilyn Light is now available. To borrow this program the following steps apply:

1. The program must be ordered one (1) month before your meeting.
2. A cheque for \$25.00 as a deposit, this cheque will be returned to your society, when the program has been returned.
3. A cheque for \$10.00 to cover the cost of mailing and insurance.
4. When returning the program please insure for \$150.00.
5. The program can be ordered from:
Janette Richardson
38 Straub Crescent
Regina, Sask.
S4T 6S6

Phone: 306-543-0560

There will be more slide programs available in the near future. We will advise the societies through the newsletter as these become available.

COC Newsletter on the Web

Please mention in your society newsletter that the COC Newsletters are available on the web at:

<http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Recreation/OrchidSNS/cocnews.html>

UPCOMING EVENTS

2000

Sept 30 - Oct 1: Central Ontario Orchid Society, the lower level of the University Centre Building at the University of Guelph, Guelph. Jointly with the Guelph Bonsai Society.
<http://retirees.uwaterloo.ca/~jerry/orchids/coos.html>

October 21 - 22: Eastern Canada Orchid Society, Days Inn Metro-Centre Ville, 1005, rue Guy, Montreal
<http://www3.sympatico.ca/barberic/ecos/en/show2000.html>

Nov 4 - 5: Niagara Region OS, Queen Elizabeth Centre, Facer St. (QEW and Niagara St), St Catherines

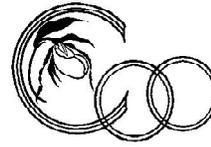
2001

March 1 - 4: Victoria Orchid Society Orchid Show and COC Annual Convention in the Student's Union Building of the University of Victoria. Contact: Ingrid Ostrander email: ifl@telus.net 250-652-6133
<http://www.members.home.net/bearman1/>

COC Web Site:

<http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Recreation/OrchidSNS/coc.html>

Please send in your show information - date, location, contact, etc.



news

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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

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