

news

Volume 14.3 - May 2002

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Hello Everbody!

This is a little scary for me - to address everyone in the whole of Canada.

To begin with, I must thank the Saskatchewan Orchid Society for hosting this year's meeting of the Canadian Orchid Congress. They are a rather small society but with a big heart. They provided true prairie hospitality throughout the days of the show.

Their banquet and auction were a delight to attend. I admired the perfect organization that made everything look so easy. I know that a Canadian Orchid Congress show is not an easy thing to assemble but the people in Saskatoon did it all with panache. Of course, there were many friendly helpers from near and far. The orchid show itself was extremely well attended from almost every club in Western Canada. Just think: there were over 600 entries in the judging classes.

The business meeting reflected this attendance, as well. You will read in the minutes how this meeting went. I only will say that it was decided to give every COC affiliated orchid society member a COC pin, so they know that we care.

Please, everyone - remember: we do care about our Canadian orchid growers and we will strive to be of service to you. Let us know what we can (try to) do for you.

Ingrid Schmidt-Ostrander, President

COC Medal

The COC makes available a show award medal that is free to all member societies in good standing. The medal is available annually to be awarded at the society show. It is up to each society to decide for which show category this medal is awarded, such as most artistic display, best specimen plant, etc.

The C.O.C. medal is mounted on a shield which can be hung.

Societies can order their medals from the following:

British Columbia:

Lynne Cassidy, 16077 16th Ave., Surrey, B.C. V4A 1S3.
Phone: 604-536-8195, email: lynne.cassidy@telus.net

Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba:

Ken Girard, 630 Third Ave., N.W. Calgary, AB. T2N 0J1
Phone: 403-289-9311, email: girard@ucalgary.ca

Ontario, Quebec, Maritimes:

Terry Kennedy, 15 Wilmac Court, Van Dorf, ON. L0H 1G0
Phone: 905-727-3319, email: ourtropics@ica.net



Sudden Oak Death

Since April 2001, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, has been warning persons about a plant disease called Sudden Oak Death (*Phytophthora* sp.) It comes from the Netherlands, Germany, California and Oregon, where this disease is capable of killing mature, healthy trees within a few weeks. The same species can infect a host of other plants, including Rhododendron and Vaccinium.

There are now a lot of regulations in place relating to importations of plants from the above mentioned places. As orchid growers and sometimes orchid importers - even of flasks! - we now need to apply for an import permit, if we want to get plants from these two states in the US (for all the other continental US, so far, we do not need this).

You can send your applications for import permits to

The Permit Office
Plant Protection Division
Food Production and Inspection Branch
59 Camelot Drive
Nepean, Ontario, K1A 0Y9

Fax: 613-228-6605

You can read a lot of other interesting information on their web-site:

<http://www.cfia-acia.agr.ca/english/plant/protect/d-94-14e.html>

Ingrid Ostrander

New COC Member Society

We welcome the Mount Cheam Orchid Society that joined recently.

15th Annual Canadian Orchid Congress Report *Orchids-Romance and Mystery*

COC-2002 was held at Prairieland Park, Saskatoon, SK on March 22-24, 2002 in conjunction with an annual horticultural extravaganza – Gardenscape. Attendance at the 3 day event was 20,615.

The Saskatchewan Orchid Society is pleased to report that COC-2002 was an overwhelming success. Vendors enjoyed a spacious sales area that proved to be conducive to active sales.

What started as a chaotic buzz of orchid plants and people on Thursday evening, transformed into a creative and ingenious display area that provided us with a breath-taking array of orchid plants arranged to convey Romance, Mystery, or both. There were seventeen separate displays. From a forest to a hotel room, our mind 'raced' with the romance and mystery of the orchid displays. Just under 600 plants were registered and many other plants were for display only. Seven AOS judges, with the help of many clerks, spent Friday morning examining every petal of every entry to decide on their choice of 'winners'.

One hundred and one delegates registered for the congress. Registered delegates and exhibitors were treated to a relaxing hospitality suite available throughout all three days, fabulous displays and interesting and informative lectures.

A hands-on potting workshop was offered to delegates (with registration) and interested orchid lovers. It was repeated at three different times giving participants an opportunity to get a plant and bark and pot it up under the direction of a seasoned orchid grower. Lectures, on the following topics, were very well attended: Native Orchids, Orchid Diagnostics, Flasking, Paphiopedilum, Odontoglossum, Basic Orchid Culture, Red Phalaenopsis, and Cattleya Species.

Saturday evening was the gala event including a silent auction, banquet and awards. The silent auction was a tremendous success as it raised over \$1400 for the Canadian Orchid Congress with over 100 items up for bid. The banquet, attended by 137 people, began with the pleasant sounds of a harpist. A special honorary lifetime membership was presented to Wilma Regehr, an avid local orchid grower for more than 25 years. Awards were presented to deserving winners showing spectacular plants and displays with a visual presentation of same as the awards were presented. A power point presentation is available of the proceedings.

On Sunday morning, March 24, Lynne Cassidy, COC President chaired the COC annual meeting.

It was an honor and a pleasure to host this congress in Saskatoon, and on behalf of all the members of the Saskatchewan Orchid Society we thank all the delegates and visitors from near and far in making it a memorable event for COC.

Best wishes to the 2003 congress planning committee in southern Ontario and we hope to see many people in Toronto next year.

Faith Prodanuk and Tracey Thue
COC-2002 Co-chairs

Saskatchewan Show & C.O.C. Meeting

The show was very well organized, with many very interesting and beautiful displays. The hospitality shown by the members of the Saskatchewan Society was very warm and generous. Food was provided for the whole weekend to delegates and vendors. Apparently the Regina society ladies provided 100 dozen cookies and squares! It was nice to see such co-operation. Many of the trophies were won by Lynn Kasper of the Foothills O.S., his plants were outstanding, well done!

This was the S.O.S. first AOS sanctioned show, it was well organized and smoothly run. There were 11 nominations and 1 award. The Co-Chairs Faith Prodanuk and Tracey Thue and their committees are to be congratulated on a well planned and well run show.

The meeting was very productive. The main items voted and passed by delegates as follows:

- 1) At future C.O.C. meetings the proceeds of the auction shall be shared equally between the host society and the C.O.C.
- 2) New pins will be ordered and each society will receive enough pins to present one to each of their members in good standing.
- 3) A poster has been designed briefly explaining the C.O.C. A poster will be sent to each society to be displayed at their shows.
- 4) More slide programs have been promised.

Lynne Cassidy - Past President

Canadian Orchid Congress Annual Meeting

24/03/02, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Items duly passed at the 2002 COC meeting:

Minutes:

Executive members present:

Lynne Cassidy, president
Janette Richardson, Treasurer
Terry Kennedy, Secretary
Ingrid Schmidt-Ostrander, Vice President

Absent and excused:

Marilyn Light, Conservation
J. Bolce, Newsletter Editor
Ross Otto, Education

Delegates:

Lorne Heshka, Manitoba OS
Mark Elliott, Vancouver OS
I Schmidt-Ostrander, Victoria and CVIOS
Joan Riemer, Regina OS
Jean Hollebhone, Ottawa OS
Faithe Prodanuk, Saskatchewan OS
Ken Girard, Foothills OS
Monica De Wit, OS of Alberta
Terry Kennedy, Southern Ontario OS

Observers present:

Marjorie Disher, Vancouver OS
Dianne & Ken Johnson, Victoria OS
Alice & Gerald Pitka, Sask. OS
Pamela Mann, Sask. OS
Florence Duesterbede, Regina OS
Phyllis Campbell, Regina OS

The President Lynne Cassidy called the meeting to order and thanked all those present for their attendance, everyone for their support during her time in office and in particular the Saskatchewan OS for hosting the 15th COC meeting.

Janette Richardson, the treasurer presented an audited statement, with the bottom line showing total assets of \$23,917.94.

The reports from the newsletter editor, education director and conservation had been submitted and were read by all attendees.

- Remove the defunct societies' names from the current roster
- Investigate limits of assets for non-profit organizations
- Make available information on importing orchids
- Present each COC member with a COC pin
- Send each COC member society a COC poster
- Discontinue the species list
- Divide evenly the auction proceeds between COC and hosting society
- Send each COC member society an AOS awards disk
- Establish a list of Canadian speakers
- Make more slide programs available
- Request each member society to send updates to Jerry Bolce
- Allow voting rights to representatives only

Marilyn Light had sent in the slate of officers to be elected and there not being any other candidates, the following persons were elected by acclamation:

President: Ingrid Schmidt-Ostrander, Victoria, BC
Vice President: Margaret Blewett, Halifax NS
Secretary: Terry Kennedy, Gormley, ON
Treasurer: Janette Richardson, Regina, SK

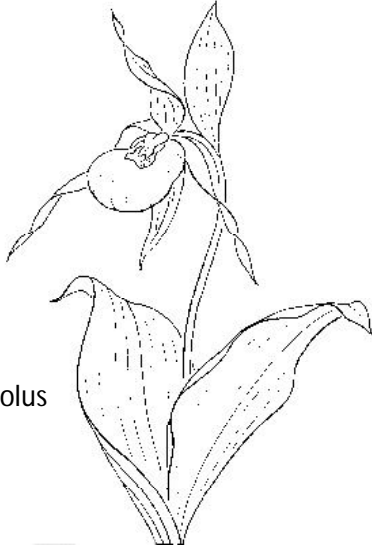
The meeting was then adjourned.

Slideshow

A slideshow of the ribbon winners and displays can be found on the COC website at
<http://www.canadianorchidcongress.ca/coc2002/>

OUR NATIVE ORCHIDS

All of us are ardent orchid lovers and growers. Are you aware that what we love and cherish are tropical epiphytes from both the northern and southern hemispheres. The topic of this article is the orchids of the northern temperate zones, which inhabit the woods, meadows, bogs and marshes of North America, especially Canada. Did you know that some of these orchids grow far beyond the Arctic Circle? Some of our native orchids may not be as showy and big as some of their tropical brothers and sisters but never the less they have a beauty all their own.



Cypripedium calceolus
var. *pubescens*

Finding an unexpected patch of *Calypso bulbosa* or even a few plants of the small yellow lady's slipper, *Cypripedium calceolus* var. *pubescens*, in our woods is pure joy. These native orchids, as compared to the tropical epiphytes, are all perennial herbs that die down over the winter and renew their growth every spring from a subterranean rhizome or tuberosids. They are terrestrial and are well adapted to our climate and weather. They have learned to retreat for the winter, to come up again when spring arrives. Not to do so would mean extinction. In fact our orchids need the cold of winter and the rest period it provides. Found growing in more southerly areas they had to retreat to mountain tops and exposed ridges, where the climate is more like ours.

We know now that the orchid family as such developed about 50 million years ago and their centre of origin was tropical South East Asia. From this centre they migrated to all the continents, which at that time apparently were much closer together, and as the Northern hemisphere had a very agreeable, humid climate, they also got estab-

lished on the North American continent. They dispersed through millions of years to widely different habitats, many of them becoming circumpolar, and so became isolated from their closest relatives and in this isolation developed into the hundreds of entities and species as we know them now.

Eventually the climate changed on the North American continent. Ice sheets advanced, retreated and advanced again and there is no doubt that hundreds of species were wiped out and disappeared forever. Survivors migrated south and some were fortunate enough to find shelter in refuges where the ice sheets did not encroach.

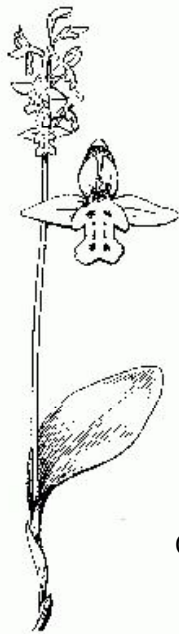
About 10 million years ago, after the last glacial period, the boreal species which had been driven south, again migrated north, possibly following their pollinators and strangely enough we find a far greater concentration of orchid species along the eastern borders of North America than in the West. Even stranger, we find today many terrestrial orchids growing in the eastern part of our continent have counterparts in China and Japan and nowhere else. Of course China and Japan were not glaciated and the original orchids survived there. That we have some of the same species in Eastern North America means, that some survived all geological and climactic upheavals, whereas in the West they succumbed. That is why we have such a wide distribution today.



Cypripedium reginae

It is generally suggested now that there are 200 species of native orchids in North America. More than half of these

can be found in Florida, where many of them are rather recent immigrants from Mexico and other tropical areas. The remaining less than 100 species are temperate or boreal terrestrials. Although our species are fewer in numbers they are often locally very abundant. I have seen meadows of *Habenarias* and large stands of the small yellow *Ladyslipper* even in Saskatchewan in a very wet year. They also do not seem to be quite so restricted to their range by specific pollinators as many of the epiphytes are. In fact they can be found over enormous distances. Nine of our species are circumpolar, that means they can be found in Siberia, Russia and Northern Europe and Asia, among them our beautiful *Calypso*, one of the Coral roots, small yellow *Ladyslipper*, our rattlesnake plantain, our twayblades and the little one-leafed *Habenaria obtusata*, of our deep northern woods. At least 13 species occur north of the arctic circle among them again *Calypso bulbosa*, *Cypripedium calceolus* var. *pubescens* and *C. passerinum* (the Sparrows egg or Franklin's lays-slipper), *Corallorhiza* (Coral root), *Orchis rotundifolia*, *Spiranthes* (Ladies tresses), and *Habenaria hyperborea*, *H. obtusata*.

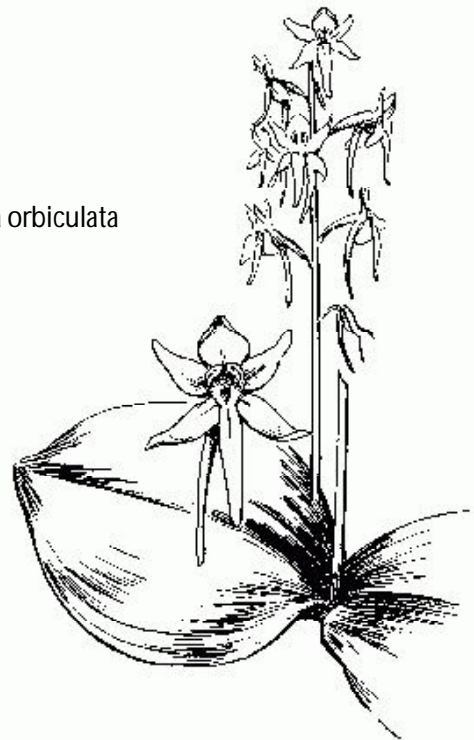


Orchis rotundifolia

Orchis rotundifolia is one of the only two species of the genus *Orchis* that can be found in North America. The other is *O. spectabilis*, a charmer of our eastern provinces. It is kind of a let down that in British Columbia we have only eleven native species of orchids. The ones we have are beautiful and they can be very plentiful and abundant locally. However, many species are disappearing and are endangered due to encroachment of their habitat. We are so busy draining swamps and wet lands, building new

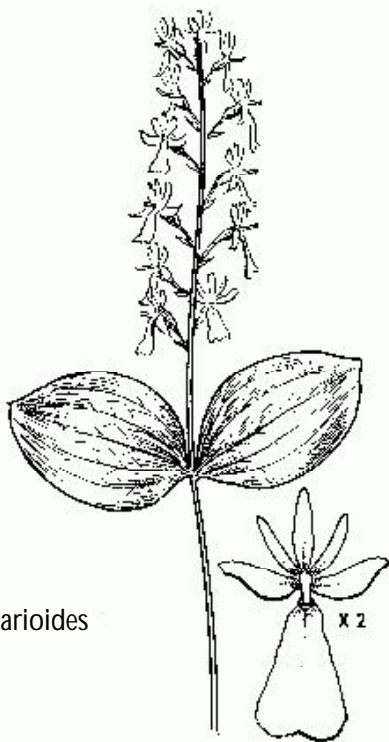
roads, new housing developments, a bulldozer can wipe out a whole population of *Calypsos* in an hour's work. They are still plentiful, but only in wilderness areas where fortunately the population is low, so few houses and roads are built. Ecologically minded people discourage picking of orchid flowers, for if you remove the leaf, you take away the food factory of the plant. If you pick the flower, no seed pod can form and there is no reproduction. However if an orchid lover digs up one or two plants here and there, when there are many present, this to my mind is no crime. We try to keep them alive in wild flower gardens and may even help to preserve them. A bulldozer or road machinery do far more harm than we do. As a society we too should join with other groups who are working to get legislation passed which will put orchids among protected plants.

Platanthera orbiculata



One would think that the best way to protect orchid species from extinction would be to collect the seeds and grow them at home, perhaps dig up a few endangered mature plants and establish them in our wild flower gardens. These things are not easy to accomplish. Have you ever seen an orchid seed? They are almost microscopic specks of dust. Only if you put this speck of dust under a microscope will you see that it consists of a seed coat and a little microscopic blob of about fifty cells which make up the orchid embryo. There is no food supply present. The seed could germinate and grow if we supply a culture

medium, which contains the minerals and sugars for germination and development of seedlings. In nature seeds fall to the ground and only germinate if invaded by a soil fungus, which by living in the seed cells, provides the seeds with food, so at first the orchid seed is parasitic on the fungus. Orchid seeds, containing no food supplies, are also very light and can be carried for miles by air drafts. Only a few of the thousands of seeds produced in one capsule will however be fortunate enough to fall on a substrate where the necessary fungus, belonging to the genus *Rhizoctonia*, is present. Perhaps it is fortunate that so few seeds can germinate and grow, otherwise the world would be swamped with orchid plants.



Listera convallarioides

Sometimes the young orchid seedling stays underground for several years before it sends up its first tiny stalk and leaf to begin photosynthesis on its own. Some orchids become independent of the fungus when they have reached this stage, many remain bound to the fungus symbiosis for all their life although they also produce some of their own food. Some are saprophytic - they live on decaying organic matter and cannot photosynthesize. They have no proper leaves and no green color. These are our ghost orchids, such as the *Cephalantheras* and the bird's nest orchid *Neotia nidus avus*. Mature orchids, which can produce their own food, share their products with the fungus, just as the fungus shared their minerals with them earlier. This is a real symbiosis, where both benefit but the balance

between orchid and fungus is always a very delicate one. At times the orchid seedling is destroyed by the fungus, sometimes, if the fungal hyphae penetrate too deeply into the cells of the orchid, the orchid will digest the fungus.

Growing terrestrial orchids from seed is not easy, nor is the growing of mature plants. Transplanting mature plants will not always succeed. These orchids which in their mature stages become independent of the fungus can be transplanted. The orchids needing the fungus cannot be transplanted. By digging up the plant the fungus is destroyed, and sooner or later the plant dies. All terrestrial orchids have very specific soil and food requirements. The soils have to be acid and often sterile because of the acidity. These conditions are not always easy to provide. According to some authorities, when grown in a greenhouse, they should be potted in living sphagnum moss and have a winter rest at 38 degrees F. They need dappled shade and lots of humidity and water when growing actively. So if you can provide the right conditions in greenhouse or garden you may succeed. It is always a challenge.

- Emmy Fisher, FVOS, VOS

Slide Programs

Cattleyas - by Ken Girard is now available. This is an excellent program.

Oncidiums - by Gordon Heaps is also now available. Slides have been added and the script has been re-done by Gordon. Thank you to Gordon Heaps for his donation of the Oncidium Slide Program. This very generous donation is appreciated.

Also available are

Fragrant Orchids produced by Marilyn Light
Terrestrial Orchids and Their Culture, compiled by Bill Bischoff

Programs on *Paphiopedilums* and *Phragmipediums* have been promised.

The slide programs may be ordered from:

Janette Richardson
 38 Straub Crescent,
 Regina, Sask., S4T 6S6

Phone: 306-543-0560
 Email: dale.richardson@sk.sympatico.ca

UPCOMINGEVENTS

2002

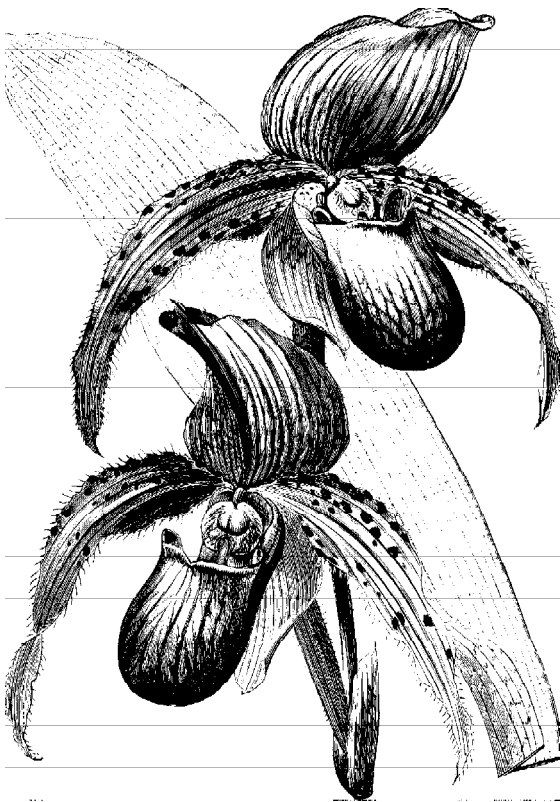
Sept 28-29: Central Ontario Orchid Society, the lower level of the University Centre Building at the University of Guelph, Guelph
"http://retirees.uwaterloo.ca/~jerry/orchids/coos.html"

Oct 26-27: Eastern Canada Orchid Society at the Days Inn Hotel in Downtown Montreal
"http://www3.sympatico.ca/barberic/ecos/"

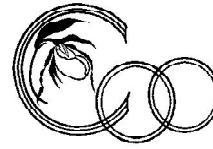
Nov 9-10: Niagara Region OS, Queen Elizabeth Centre, Facer St. (QEW and Niagara St), St Catherines

2003

April 3 - 5: The 2003 Mid America Orchid Congress and Show will be hosted by the Southern Ontario Orchid Society at The Inn on the Park at Eglinton Avenue East and Leslie Street.
"http://www.soos.ca/"



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



news

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Editor: Jerry Bolce

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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