

news

Volume 16.1 - January 2004

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December has arrived – with frost, cold winds, some snow and much rain here at the coast. This kind of weather is not the best for our orchids! They are huddled together, indoors, under lights – if they are lucky. It is a challenging time for the orchids and their growers. But wait, the Cattleya Season is upon us and just watch those big, fragrant Cattleyas start to open up now! Then all the worries are forgotten and we can contemplate our beauties with pure admiration. I must admit, as much as I enjoy the other orchids, even some of those with pouches (~), the big Catts are – for me – the essence of orchids.

Of course, we will also be able to look at all those catalogues that tempt us with their lovely pictures. On the Internet, there is a plethora of orchids for sale. Just remember, after you order something that is supposed to bring forth those stupendous blooms, you have to work! at making them do just that.

Orchids will teach us patience. One thing I have learned: you cannot hurry orchids. I have also found out that during the darker winter months, with our short days, you don't need to use much fertilizer; the plants will need very little - most of them are half asleep and when we sleep, we don't eat, either.

On a different note: It gives me great pleasure to welcome a new orchid society in our group: The Peace Country Orchid Society, which is about 30 members strong and meets in Fort St. John, B.C. have been in operation for a few years and this fall, they have joined the COC. We hope that they will enjoy this association.

There is some other COC business afoot. Your societies will have, by now, all received the copies of our 'Constitution and By Laws'. We, the COC Executive, want you to read through it and then, at the May 2/2004 Annual General COC Meeting, ratify this work. Industry Canada has approved the wording - standard version for non-profit organizations and if anybody feels that things need to be changed, this must be done at a later date. First these documents need to be ratified as they have been accepted by our government.

So, please, send me a letter with your approval or send a delegate to Vancouver this coming spring, with the ratifying letter to hand in.

As this message will be published after the Holidays, I want to let you know that I hope that you had great happiness during our Festive Season and wish you all the Best for the New Year – Bonne Année!

Ingrid Schmidt-Ostrander

The Notice Board

Note From the Treasurer: COC Dues for 2004

Just as a reminder to everyone, the COC membership renewals are due. The membership fee is \$1.00 for each member of your society. The COC membership year is January 1 to December 31 - the same as a calendar year. Your COC dues are due by January 31, 2004.

Cheques are made payable to: Canadian Orchid Congress and mailed to: Janette Richardson
38 Straub Crescent
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4T 6S6

The Second International Orchid Conservation Congress (IOCC)

The Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, Sarasota, Florida USA
May 17-22, 2004

TOPIC: Orchid Conservation Measures - The Conservation Balance

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Dr. Stuart Pimm
The Doris Duke Professor of Conservation Ecology at Duke University

The International Advisory Board has determined that the focus of the Congress should be on the future of orchid-related conservation measures, theoretical and applied, scientific and practical. Planned topics for IOCC 2004 include government/private partnerships for recovery projects; state and federal legislation; research trends; practical methodologies; integrated approaches; problem solving; conservation education; and progress reviews of global efforts toward orchid conservation. The program will also offer workshops, fieldtrips, and presentations for both laypersons and scientists.

For more information, visit
<http://www.selby.org/iocc/index.htm>

Slide Programs

Information on ordering the programs is available on the COC website.

Canadian Culture Sheets

The COC, in the person of Ross Otto, has produced a set of twelve orchid culture sheets. The sheets are available on the COC website as html files for viewing and PDF files for printing.

New publication

Orchid Conservation. Natural History Publications (Borneo) 2003. (Eds Kingsley Dixon, Shelagh Kell, Russell Barrett & Phillip Cribb) 417 pp.

Watch <http://www.nhpborneo.com> for details.

Books for Sale

Estate of Mr. A. Wilson, Victoria, B.C.

Sander's List of Orchid Hybrids:

Vol. 1961 – 70	US \$ 40.
Vol. 1971 – 75	20.
Vol. 1976 – 80	20.
Vol. 1981 – 85	40.
Vol. 1986 – 90	90.

Total: US \$ 210.00 Buy them together for Can. \$ 200.00

Also six books of Awards Quarterly, (vol. 23: 1,2,3,4 = complete and vol. 24 only 3 and 4) at market value US\$6.00 apiece, total of US\$36.00. Pay only Can\$ 30.00.

Shipping cost will be added to your bill, of course.

Please, reply to I. Ostrander, 250-652-0753 or ifl@telus.net.

COC Annual Meeting

The Vancouver Orchid Society will be hosting this year's COC annual meeting **April 29-May 2** in conjunction with its annual show. The Show will be held at the Richmond Curling Club on Hollybridge Way, Richmond BC. Contact the Show Chairperson, Jennifer Smith, at jsmith@LMLS.com for more information about displays, sales and tickets. "<http://www.vancouverorchidsociety.ca/>"

Miltonias

To begin, we must first establish: What is a *Miltonia*?

The first orchid plants that were called *Miltonia* were specimen of the (warm growing) Brazilian *Miltonia spectabilis*. This species and its cousins can be recognized by their yellow-green foliage, two leaves on top of each pseudobulb and up to 6 cm spaces between the growths. We are not going to discuss these in this article.

Some time later, the plant hunters found orchids quite similar to the first *Miltonias*. These come from higher elevations and farther North, like Colombia. Their leaves are more delicate looking than the above mentioned and light greyish-green with only one leaf on top of each pseudobulb; their growths are tightly clustered together. These orchids were called *Miltoniopsis*, because they looked quite similar to the *Miltonias*.

There are six species of *Miltoniopsis* orchids:

- 1- *Milt. roezlii* from Panama, Ecuador and Colombia
300 - 1200m elevation, together with Paphinia and similar plants.
- 2- *Milt. santanei* from Venezuela, Peru and Ecuador
350 to 1000m elevation, can be found with *C. rex* and *Coryanthes*.
- 3- *Milt. phalaenopsis* from Columbia
1300 - 1600m elevation, always in shady and humid situations.
- 4- *Milt. bismarckii* from Peru,
1000m elevation, in mountain forests.
- 5- *Milt. vexillaria* from Colombia and Ecuador
1000 - 2000m elevation, very humid situations, bright but no direct sun
- 6- *Milt. warszewiczii* from Costa Rica and West Panama
1500 - 2700m elevation in fairly cool mountain forests.

As you can see, the first two species will do better in warmer temperatures, as will #3, I have been told; this also applies to some of their offspring. If you notice that your species *Miltoniopsis* is not doing so well, try to give it higher temperatures, but do not let it go dry. However, in this article, we shall not concern ourselves too much with the species. They are the main parents of our hybrids, although way back, other compatible orchids were crossed with them, so we will just call these hybrids "Miltonias", or Pansy orchids. They have flower colours ranging from white through yellow and pink to dark red with patterns of stripes, spots and other colour contrasts. There can be up to six flowers per spike, each flower usually lasting about four weeks. A large plant with many spikes can be in bloom for 3 months. Their peak flowering season is May to June with a smaller spurt in October.

The *Miltonia* hybrids we usually try to grow are not

too particular about the exact day- or night time temperatures. They will tolerate high daytime summer temperatures of 27C (with good air movement) and can go down in cold winter nights to 10C (when their foliage is dry!). Always keep in mind that young seedlings cannot cope with extremes of anything.

These plants enjoy bright light – remember that they come from the tropics. They do not enjoy hot, direct sun. If you see a soft pink flush on the leaves, that is good; red or straw-coloured leaves show overdoses of light. Once you see the flower spikes, it is a good idea to give your plant a little less light. The spikes will grow better and the flowers will last longer under very light shade.

All *Miltonias* must be kept constantly and evenly damp. It works well to have extra drainage in the pots or baskets (colander!) so you can keep pouring on the water. If *Miltonia* leaves show wrinkles, this is caused either by insufficient water given to the plant or too much water stagnating around the roots, rotting them and then – no water will go to the plant, either. Please, remember that here on the West coast, we have water with very low salt counts. We have tried to grow *Miltonias* in the prairies and only when we began using the Reverse Osmosis water, did we have success with these plants. They do not need much calcium and prefer pure rainwater.

Miltonias do not have a rest period, growing all year. Still, our dark, short winter days will slow them down. That is when we can reduce the watering and the fertilizing. During the summer months, our *Miltonias* get fertilizer at almost every watering, something like one teaspoon per gallon of 20-20-20. Every orchid grower has her/his favourite fertilizer; use whatever you feel is right. Watch the results. Your mature plants should make abundant growths, strong, wide leaves and push two new pseudobulbs from every old one. Of course, the dainty hybrids with *Milt. phalaenopsis* will always have slender leaves; *Milt. vexillaria* will influence its hybrids with big, upright and heavy growth. We sometimes use calcium nitrate, Epsom salts and at times apply fertilizers with trace minerals added. Seedling plants will need much less fertilizer than mature plants that are expected to bloom.

The *Miltonias* have one special requirement besides needing constant moisture: they have to be re-potted at least every twelve months. It is better to get this job done before warm spring weather arrives. One thing to remember: do not overpot *Miltonias*! Keep in mind that they will need that pot only one year. Be thrifty! As with fertilizer, each grower also will have some special potting mix formula. One very successful grower in Portland uses:

To one gallon fine fir bark: 3c peat moss, 3c perlite,

3c granular cork, 3c charcoal, 2c oyster shell, a pinch of Dolomite lime stone and for mature plants adds a pinch of steamed bone meal.

Another very successful grower uses our native BC rock moss with drainage at the bottom of the pot. Please remember that orchids in moss need to have this renewed at least every six months.

Our own mix consist of 2 parts fine bark, 1 part perlite, ½ part charcoal and ½ part shredded New Zealand Sphagnum moss.

Insects and diseases come to all orchids; Miltonias can be found by all the regular pests – just use the regular controls. Aphids like to suck the young buds and flowers dry, but they can easily be washed off with plain water. The Miltonias' need for constant moisture and humidity can result in fungus spots on their soft leaves. Just make sure that you don't put them to bed wet – have fans blowing

over them after you have misted the foliage, before the temperatures go down overnight.

Miltonias have been bred with many other members of the *Oncidium* family. It is interesting to read the combination of different genera in Sanders' List of Orchid Hybrids. It takes about 9 – 12 months for a seed pod to mature. Then it will take about three months for the seed to germinate in the first flask. After that, it usually takes at least two years in different replated flasks before the baby plants can go into community pots. After 6 to 12 months, they can be potted up separately and then it will still be two to three years before you can expect to see the first flowers. So, altogether, it will be at least five years from pollination to the first blooming- that is if you are lucky!

Therefore, I wish you luck and happiness growing Miltonias! Oh, another Miltonia delight: in daylight, most Pansy Orchids have a wonderful scent.

I. Schmidt-Ostrander

The Lycaste Slide Program

As some of you may be aware, I have been promising to get together a program about *Lycastes* for the COC library. Of course, I had planned to include the *Anguloas*, because these two are so closely related.

As the saying goes "All good things take time." It was not only that I did not find the time to do this quickly. There were also new developments in the taxonomy of these plants and it looked to me as if soon, all things would fall into place.

Well – yes they did. But also, no – they did not. Because while I thought that I had taken all the right photos, it turned out that my camera's battery was too low (needed replacing) and this resulted in a lot of unusable slides. Of course, one can still take new photos, but some things (in the life of my *Lycastes* and their sisters) happen only once a year.

I feel that this may have been all to the best, because, in the meantime, Dr. Oakeley and associates have done a lot of work in this group of plants and have found the need to create a new genus: "The *Ida*". Those of you, who subscribe to the Orchid Digest publication, will have read the new data. For those of you who have not yet seen this text, I shall write a brief synopsis here:

In about 1794, the Spanish explorers Ruiz & Pavon had recognized that there really are three distinct genera contained within the two genera *Anguloa* and *Lycaste*. This was never followed through although some taxonomists recognized certain distinctions. Lindley created the genus *Lycaste* in 1843 after Ruiz & Pavon had already in 1794

created the genus *Anguloa*. Recently, in 2000, Ryan and Oakeley have established this new genus *Ida*. They base this on several structural, cladistic and chromosome differences:

Initially, the *Idas* had been grouped as the section Fimbriatae of the genus *Lycaste*. *Ida* flowers are always droopy and cupped versus the wide open flowers of the *Lycastes* that look straight forward. Their lateral sepals are narrow at the base and 'bowlegged' versus the wide basal attachments and straighter shape of *Lycaste* sepals. These lateral sepals in *Ida* form a mentum in which lies the conduplicate lip that holds the abundant nectar, whereas the *Lycastes* hold their sparse nectar in the simple mentum shaped by the lip itself. Almost all *Lycastes* have a very simple viscidium (the part that holds the pollinia) and the *Idas'* viscidia are shaped more elaborately. The mid-lobes of the *Idas'* lips are more or less fimbriate, whereas *Lycastes'* lips have slightly wavy-edged mid-lobe that in most cases has some fuzz on top. *Lycastes'* chromosome count is 40, whereas *Idas* although variable, have larger counts. Most *Lycastes* grow much farther North than the *Idas* and the *Anguloas*.

Now, taking into account all the vagaries of photography and developing the slides, it looks to me that this program should be ready for our COC members' viewing pleasure in the spring of 2004. I hope that you will enjoy learning a little more about my favourite 'Lycaste' flowers, the icy-green, night-scented *Idas*.

Ingrid Schmidt-Ostrander

Native Orchid Conference - June 2003

In mid-June, over 100 native orchid enthusiasts gathered at McMaster University in Hamilton for their annual conference and then proceeded to the Bruce Peninsula for associated field trips. Conferences of this nature have been held in North America for a number of years however this was the first to be hosted entirely in Canada. David McAdoo and Mark Rose of North Carolina organized this conference in the same efficient manner in which they had organized the 2002 conference in Greensboro, North Carolina.

On June 14, 2003, the Conference Chair, David McAdoo opened the plenary sessions by welcoming attendees from England, Germany and across North America. Dr. Paul Catling, Past President of the Canadian Botanical Association and co-author of *Orchids of Ontario*, was the first of a number of speakers. He described the Bruce peninsula and the 43 orchids found there, providing us with a preview of what to expect on our field trips.

The well known and respected native orchid researcher, Dr. Charles Sheviak discussed his experiences - "the good, the bad and the ugly" - in the preparation of *A Users Guide to the Flora of North America*. Dr. Sheviak is the Senior Scientist and Curator of Botany at the New York State Museum

Several authors of regional native orchid field guides were an integral part of the program and their presentations were accompanied by an outstanding selection of slides. Fred Case, author of "Orchids of the Western Great Lakes Region" and respected orchid scholar, stimulated us with a thought provoking presentation on the adaptations, plant distribution and conservation issues of our native orchids. Ron Coleman of Tucson, Arizona, author of "The Wild Orchids of Arizona and New Mexico" and "The Wild Orchids of California" provided us with an excellent slide presentation and discussion on the "Wild Orchids of California". A unique slide presentation, "A Potpourri of Pulchritude", was offered by Carl Slaughter, a retired obstetrician and the author of "Wild Orchids of Arkansas".

Prior to the conference members of the group had been invited to share their expertise with us. Topics discussed during these sessions included "Introduced Populations of *Dactylorhiza* in North America and Orchids of Newfoundland", "Pollination of the Western Prairie Fringed Orchid in the Tall Grass Prairie of Southeast Manitoba" and "Management and Conservation Issues of the Zurich Bog and Bergen Swamp in the state of New York".

Several accomplished photographers were in attend-

ance and entertained us with slide presentations including "The Orchids of New Hampshire, Maine & Vermont", and "In Praise of Native Orchids". In an evening session when they combined their expertise to lead a "Workshop of Orchid Photography".

The plenary sessions concluded on Sunday June 15, 2003, with a business meeting. At this time a new native orchid organization "Native Orchid Conference Inc.," was formed. The mandate is to arrange yearly conferences in different parts of North America as a forum to discuss relevant issues relating to our native orchids. The constitution for this fledgling organization was approved and the slate of elected officers include: President - David McAdoo; Vice-President - Lorne Heshka; Secretary - Hal Horwitz; Treasurer - Mark Rose.

The Bruce Peninsula with its unique landscape and spectacular display of wildflowers was the setting for three days of organized field trips following the conference. The participants were divided into subgroups and a number of interesting areas on the Bruce Peninsula and Flowerpot Island were explored. A total of 22 species of orchids were observed with 14 of these in bloom.

Seeing a migrant species, the European common twayblade (*Listera ovata*), in flower and finding the uncommon Hooker's orchid (*Platanthera hookeri*) in bloom within meters of a major highway were just a couple of the high points. The masses of large yellow lady's-slippers (*Cypripedium parviflorum* var. *pubescens*) impressed even the most seasoned orchidist.

This conference provided an opportunity to learn more about our native orchids and to observe and photograph them in their natural environment. A highlight of the conference was renewing the acquaintance of old friends and making many new friends. All who attended agreed that this event was most successful. With anticipation we are looking forward to the next conference.

More information is available on future native orchid conferences by joining the Yahoo group of the Native Orchid Conference at:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/nativeorchidconference/>

Or you can join Native Orchid Conference Inc., which entitles you to a quarterly newsletter. For a one year membership, send US\$35 along with your name and address to:

Native Orchid Conference, Inc.,
6201 Summit Ave.,
Brown Summit, NC 27214 - 9744

by Lorne Heshka

COMING EVENTS

2004

Feb 13-15: The Southern Ontario Orchid Society Valentine Show, Toronto Botanical Garden (Civic Garden Centre), Lawrence and Leslie Streets. "<http://www.soos.ca/>"

Feb 20-22: Orchid Society of Alberta in the Grant MacEwan College, Millwoods Campus, 7319 - 29 Ave. Edmonton, Alberta. This is an OAS judged show. Show chair: Terry Letendre, email: tletendre@shaw.ca

<http://www.telusplanet.net/public/macklam/pages/aborchsoc.html>

March 6-7: Victoria Orchid Society Spring Orchid Show. It will be in the Students' Union Building, University of Victoria, Finnerty Road. Contact: "Ingrid Ostrander" email: ifl@telus.net 250-652-6133 "<http://victoriaorchidsociety.ca/>"

March 13-14: London Orchid Society Orchid Show, NOTE: The Ukranian Club, Gore Road, London, Ontario
For show information: "<http://los.lon.imag.net/losshows.htm>"

March 20-21: Orchid Society of the Royal Botanical Gardens 680 Plains Rd., Burlington "<http://www.osrbg.ca/>"
Show chair is Ben Boers, email bboers@cogeco.ca

April 2-4: The Manitoba Orchid Society For more information, please email: president@manitobaorchidsociety.ca
"<http://www.manitobaorchidsociety.ca/default.htm>"

April 3-4: The Regina Orchid Society annual show and sale at the Core Ritchie Community Centre, 445 14th Avenue, Regina. Contact Charles Eisbrenner, email: c.eisbrenner@ca.ibm.com, phone: (306)545-2185

April 3-4: The Orchid Society of Nova Scotia at the Nova Scotia Museum of Science, Halifax. Contact: Jean Ikeson 866-798-0514 toll free; email: greenhouses@win.eastlink.ca
<http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Recreation/OrchidSNS/>

April 9-11: The Annual Toronto Artistic Orchid Association Show, Chinese Cultural Centre, 5183 Sheppard Ave., East (Markham Road) "<http://www.cccgt.org/>"

April 16-18: Central Vancouver Island Orchid Society
Location: Country Club Center, Nanaimo, BC. Contact: Sue Christison, email: CVIOS@shaw.ca
"<http://members.shaw.ca/CV IOS/CV IOS/>"

April 17-18: Les Orchidophiles de Montreal Show, College de Maisonneuve, 2700 Bourbonniere St., Montreal, Quebec. For information: André Poliquin Tel/FAX: (450)653-9590
"<http://orchidophiles.qc.ca/>" e-mail: mor-pol@sympatico.ca

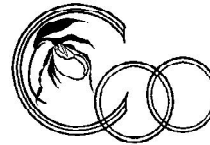
April 24-25: The Ottawa Orchid Society, Nepean Sportsplex, 1701 Woodroffe Avenue, Nepean, Ontario.
"<http://www.ottawaorchidsociety.com>"

April 29-May 2: The Vancouver Orchid Society will be hosting this year's COC annual meeting in conjunction with its annual show.

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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