

news

Volume 18.3 - May 2006

Contents

The Notice Board

Hybridizer Profiles

Bulbophyllum

Phrag kovachii

Your First Dendrobium

Getting Ready for Summer

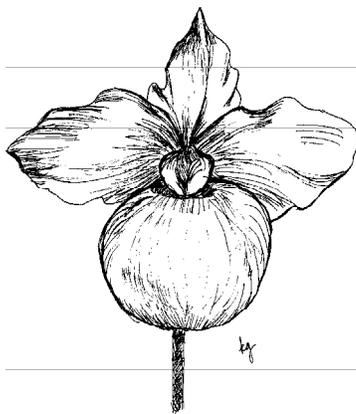
Coming Events

Dear Orchid Enthusiasts:

Is your Society covered by insurance through the COC? Do you want to continue your coverage for 2006 – 2007? Please let Lynne Cassidy know now. Your current coverage expires August 31, 2006. To bring the payment of insurance premiums and membership fees in the COC in line, so that they are paid together on a yearly basis, the next period, for which you pay will run from 1 September 2006 through to December 31, 2007. To maintain your coverage, or to become a part of the COC insurance program, contact Lynne at lynne.cassidy@telus.net. Don't miss out on this excellent bargain in insurance coverage for your society.

The outline of the plans for the COC Annual General Meeting to be held in Toronto August 5 and 6 are inside. If you have items you would like addressed, please advise me immediately so that they can be put on the agenda with time allotted for their discussion. Please plan to send a delegate to the COC meeting so that your society's voice can be expressed.

The format this year is a little different. We want to show that any society can host the Annual General Meeting without a lot of added expense to the society. Certainly, it would be ideal if over time, the COC would have the opportunity to visit your community, meet and enjoy your show with you and hold their meeting to plan the coming year's goals for the Organization.



This year, our meeting will be held Saturday August 5th at 1:30 p.m. at the Toronto Botanical Gardens, followed at 6 p.m. with a barbecue at the home of the COC secretary Terry and Doug Kennedy. Sunday, August 6th, those attending the meeting Saturday are invited to be a part of Summer Fest, an annual event of the Southern Ontario Orchid Society. A full program is inside for you to read. Come and spend the afternoon with Ivan Portille of Ecuagenera and Alan Koch of Gold Country Orchids.

Look forward to any items you would like on the agenda in August. See you in Toronto.

Margaret E. Blewett, President COC

The Notice Board

COC AGM and SOOS Summerfest

At the Toronto Botanical Gardens (Edwards Gardens)

Saturday August 5

The COC 19th Annual General Meeting takes place on Saturday afternoon. This is your chance to provide some input to the COC and hopefully get involved. We are hoping for a delegate from every affiliated society.

In the evening delegates are invited for a special BBQ at the home of Doug and Terry Kennedy, owners of Orchids in our Tropics.

Sunday August 6

Delegates are invited to participate in Summer Orchidfest organized by the Southern Ontario Orchid Society.

In the morning your chance to observe AOS judging - an opportunity to see the judging system at work. This is a great opportunity to show your very special plant to the judges. Bring it along.

For lunch join in the Orchidfest BBQ - hamburgers and hotdogs and lots of other goodies and drinks to go with it.

The afternoon will be filled with two special speakers. This years participants are Ivan Portille of Ecuagenera and Alan Koch of Gold Country Orchids. They will be bringing plants for sale. For details go to the COC website at <http://www.CanadianOrchidCongress.ca/coc2006/>

For further information contact: Tom Atkinson at asimina@sympatico.ca

Can't Make It?

If your society cannot send a representative to the meeting, please let us know of your concerns and suggestions as to how we can do better. Send it to:

Mrs. Margaret Blewett
Vansickle Rd., St. Catharines, Ont. L2S 4C2
email: mblewett37@cogeco.ca

Orchid Tour

Merv Lutes and Lynne Cassidy of the Fraser Valley OS have organized an orchid tour to Equador for March 8-29, 2007. For more information check <http://www.rostad.com> under "tour list" and "March 2007". You can contact Lynne at lynne.cassidy@telus.net or Merv at lutesara@yahoo.ca

Profiles of Two Well Known Canadian Orchid Hybridizers

During the Ottawa Orchid Show, April 29 – 30, 2006, I took the opportunity to interview two of Canada's most prolific and innovative hybridizers. Both Mario Ferrusi (Marsh Hollow Orchids) and Howard Ginsberg (Bedford Orchids) are accredited AOS judges. Both began growing orchids by happenstance: Mario on a dare from his wife Connie and Howard with an interesting plant purchased in a plant shop which he later learned to be an orchid. Both enjoy the surprise that a new bloom brings and share a concern of the loss of species despite current conservation initiatives and regulations. Here are their profiles. *(next page)*
Marilyn H. S. Light

Slide Programs

Cattleyas - by Ken Girard.

Oncidiums - by Gordon Heaps.

Fragrant Orchids by Marilyn Light.

Hardy Orchids and Their Culture by Bill Bischoff

Phragmipediums by Ingrid Ostrander

Lycastes by Ingrid Ostrander

More information on ordering the slide programs is available on the COC website.

MARIO FERRUSI

Hails from: Niagara region, Ontario

Profession: GM forging press operator

Family: Wife Connie, sons Rhys and Jared; daughter Ilia Lin

Orchid-related activities: AOS accredited judge, speaker, breeder, former show chairman for the Niagara Region Orchid Society, Past President of the Southern Ontario Orchid Society with on-going executive duties, proprietor of Marsh Hollow Orchids.

Most recent accomplishment: In 2004, one of his own hybrids, *Masdevallia* Kaleidoscope 'Ilia's Beauty' FCC/AOS 90 points (Cassiope x Copper Wing) was awarded on February 7, 2004.

Began growing orchids: It all began in 1980 with a Phalaenopsis purchased at a garden centre "on a dare by Connie".

Hybridization interests: Mario has interests in *Masdevallia*, *Lycaste* and *Odontoglossum* breeding and is now into the third generation with some lines. Some 360 seed lots have resulted from his hybridization attempts. His goal is to see in the next generation, orchids that are more floriferous, more vigorous, and easier to bloom. With *Lycaste*, he is trying to improve shape and segment breadth in *Lyc. skinneri*.

First hybrid: In the beginning, hybridization resulted because "both parents were in bloom". The result was his first cross registered as *Masd.* Ilia Lin. Now, everything is thought out beforehand.

What I enjoy most about seeing a new hybrid bloom for the first time? Mario recalls the surprise of what you get from a cross.

Favourite orchid in my collection: *Wilsonara* Hambühren Stern 'Ilia Lin' AM/AOS which was awarded in 1988. He has grown it for 20 years and it continues to delight every time it blooms.

Real Passion: All orchid activities, especially interactions with orchid people.

My views on conservation: Would love to see CITES simplified. "If it worked properly, it would be a great thing" – but plants are lost because of so-called conservation. "The more we lose, the poorer we are for it". We owe it to species to try to get seed and propagate them in flask.

Hobby: Gardening, especially for the fresh vegetables.

HOWARD GINSBERG

Hails from: Montréal, Québec

Profession: Civil lawyer

Family: Five nieces and a nephew

Orchid-related activities: Accredited AOS judge, proprietor of Bedford Orchids since 1994, speaker on phals and mini-cattleyas, writer

Most recent accomplishments: An Award of Quality for his remake of *Phal.* Rong Guan Amah (Timothy Christopher x *amabilis*), and his coming article on *Phal.* Golden Pecker to be published in the July/August/September issue of the Orchid Digest.

Began growing orchids: It all began with a Jewel Orchid, *Ludisia discolor*, purchased from an exotic plant shop. He learned that it was an orchid only after doing some reading. He joined the AOS, the Eastern Canada Orchid Society, etc., and began reading voraciously. The rest is history.

Hybridization interests: Howard is interested in obtaining bright vibrant colours but has realized that to increase flower size, you have to go back to white flowers. Species availability is now very limited which Howard regrets.

First hybrid: The first registered was *Phal.* Bedford Betwixt in 1996. Now some 150 hybrids later, Howard reflects "don't breed just because you can". Also, "find a good lab".

What I enjoy most about seeing a new hybrid bloom for the first time? The surprises are intriguing, especially when they arise from sib crosses. Genes get re-distributed and some offspring may look like their grandparent.

Favourite Orchid in my collection: Howard's favourite is *Phal.* Bedford Grumpy (Zumita Blush x Miniflash). The variety seen in this cross is amazing: Spots, stripes, blushes, large lips, all with exceptional floriferousness and vigour.

Real Passion: Hybrids and genetics. "Why does such and such an outcome happen?. He used to breed dogs – afghan hounds!

My views on conservation: There are useless, unenforceable regulations. Habitat is destroyed while plants protected from removal are destroyed also.

Hobby: Travel

Bulbophyllum (Thou.)

Type species: *B. nutans*

Habitat: The centre of distribution of this genus is said to be New Guinea with about 600 species. From there, the plants have evolved and spread throughout the world's equatorial zones: eastwards through the Pacific Islands and westwards through Asia, Africa into the Americas (only about 100 species here). They will not be found in the arctic zones because they need to live in tropical rainforests.

Not all grow in hot lowlands but some can be found at higher altitudes and if you have any *Bulbophyllums*, please try to find out from where they come.

History: During the 18th century, many newly discovered and interesting plants were sent to Europe, among them were a good number from the French islands off the East Africa coast (Mauritius, Réunion and Madagascar); therefore the French plant scientist Louis-Marie Aubert Du Petit-Thouars, born 1758, decided to go there with his brother, to explore the flora of these islands. He could not go traveling during the French Revolution, but managed in 1792 to find a ship that would take him to these islands in the Indian Ocean. In 1802 the brothers returned to France where Louis subsequently published several treatises and books (with drawings) about the plants he found there. Contained in some of his writings, were the first descriptions of "*Phyllorkis*", which Thouars later re-named "*Bulbophyllums*". This group of plants (at present about 2,000 species of *Bulbophyllinae*) is related to *Dendrobiums*, with *Epigeneiums* standing half way between these two large genera. Together with *Bulbophyllum per se*, there are a number of plants with other names belonging in this group. You can read all the currently accepted 20 names on p. 12 of Emly Siegerist's excellent book (from *Achrocaene* over *Cirrhopetalum*, *Sunipia*, *Trias* to *Vescisepalum*). Now there are even hybrids between several of these species. It is estimated that there are around 1200 *Bulbophyllums* alone throughout the equatorial regions. This vast number compares well with the New World group of the *Pleurothallidinae*. Attempts have been made by taxonomists to divide this huge number into smaller sections, (at the moment 78) and this work is still going on.

By the way – it is always safe to say '*Bulbophyllum*', even if the plant is a *Cirrhopetalum* or a *Megaclinium* or one of the other 20 species.

Description: In addition to having the regular characteristics of orchid flowers, one group of the *Bulbophyllums* have

a thickened base of the column with sometimes a vestigial column foot to which the lip is attached immovably. The other group – Schlechter calls them the "true" *Bulbophyllums*, have a definite column foot forming a mentum and the lip is attached loosely, so it wiggles. Most of the plants in this genus are epiphytic and have creeping rhizomes with pseudobulbs that carry one or two leaves, rarely three. The one - to many-flowered inflorescences always arise from the base of the pseudobulb in contrast to the *Dendrobiums* where the flowers always come from the sides or the top of the plants. *Bulbophyllum* flowers come in all shades and hues of the rainbow and can be between 18 cm across (*B. echinolabium* and *B. longissimum* for instance) to tiny creations that can only be admired through a magnifying glass, for instance *B. alagense* from the Philippines, which I call the 'rosary orchid' because its pseudo-bulbs look like the beads of a green rosary; its tiny orange eyelash flowers are 3 mm long and smell of cinnamon. *B. pygmaeum* from N.Z. and *B. minutissimum* are said to have the smallest flowers of all the orchids. The inflorescences of the *Megaclinium* group look like twisted tapeworms with little flowers coming from its sides, along the central vein. The *Cirrhopetalum* flowers grow mostly in umbels, which are characterized by coherent lateral sepals and palae on the dorsal, also on petals - feathery appendages waving in the slightest breeze. Most of the cultivated species have fleshy, even succulent leaves in different sizes, but there can be thin leaves, terete leaves etc. These species are in nature pollinated by a vast array of birds and insects; each species has its own pollinator. A few are infamous for attracting carrion flies, among them is the gigantic *B. beccari* from Borneo. It winds its rhizome (dia.20 cm) around the trunks of large trees, waving its charming white and rosy flowers for all to see and wafting the odour of rotting flesh far and wide. If and when any adventuresome orchidist, cultivating *B. spiesii* or *B. phalaenopsis* is successful in bringing them to bloom, the grower will only reluctantly enter the growing area because of the evil smells these flowers produce – just to be pollinated they say – for human noses: revolting!

Culture: Having already stated that these plants are epiphytes, we will realize that they need good drainage. They do not do well (for any length of time) in pots. I like to have them hanging on plaques of bark or cork or mounted on thin branches; the more robust plants like *B. dayanum* and *B. E.A.* 'Bucklebury' FCC/AOS need stout supports. They do well in open baskets and very shallow, saucer-like pots with additional holes in them. A fine to medium loose

mix works well. They grow throughout the year with only some species (from the Himalaya regions, Myanmar and Western China as well as some Pacific islands with higher elevations) needing a few weeks of drier rest after the new growths have matured. During active growth, all enjoy regular watering and weak fertilizer, high humidity, medium light and warm to hot temperature: winter minimum: 16 – 18 F. *Bulbophyllums* and their allies do not like to have their roots disturbed – leave them alone unless the mix (if there is any) becomes stale. Then you must rescue them quickly. I thought that just letting them dry will help but no – they die in soggy, old mixes. They also dislike any strong chemical applications.

IFL. Schmidt-Ostrander

Literature utilized:

Bulbophyllums and their Allies – Emly Siegerist, 2001

The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Orchids – Alex Pridgeon, 1992

The Manual of Cultivated Orchid Species – Bechtel, Cribb, Launert, 3rd Ed. 1992

Encyclopaedia of Cultivated Orchids – Alex D. Hawkes, 6th Ed. 1987

The Orchidaceae of German New Guinea – Rudolf Schlechter, 1914,

(English translation through the Australian Orchid Foundation, 1982)

The Orchid Digest magazines

Websites showing *Bulbophyllum* pictures:

Greg Allikas, Orchid Photos: www.orchidworks.com

Eric Hunt, www.orchidphotos.org

and other sites on the Internet



Phragmipedium kovachii

Phragmipedium kovachii was discovered in the late spring of 2002 in the Peruvian rainforest in the Andes mountains. A Mr Kovach purchased two plants from a roadside kiosk after recognising that they were something new and exciting. Thus began a tale, worthy of a book, of illegally imported plants, a race to have the plant named and their wholesale removal from the wild.

Today there are unlikely to be any found in the wild. Many illegally imported plants are hiding in collections around the world and finally legal, laboratory produced plants are available.

The flowers are huge - a 2" pouch, 4" vertical, and 8" horizontal; as easy to remember as a piece of lumber, 2x4x8. The color is intense. Plants will be the average *Phragmipedium* height everyone can handle. Plant size will increase each year to where it may have nine or more new growths emerging simultaneously. This can be controlled by subdivision, as long as each division has at least three growths.

For information on availability, contact Peter Croezen

orchids@golden.net or call 519-578-1617

Green Canyon Orchids

<http://home.golden.net/~orchids>



Taking Care of That First Dendrobium

Dendrobium Orchids are now available in many retail outlets. They are usually sold in bud or in bloom, year round, as there is no peak blooming season. Most Dendrobium Orchids sold in retail outlets have their origin in the south Pacific including Australia but what we see are hybrids derived from several species.

HOW DO I KNOW I HAVE A DENDROBIUM ORCHID?

Orchids are usually sold with a plastic label inserted in the pot. The label provides a name and some basic information on how to take care of the plant. Besides Dendrobium here may also be a name like 'Sonia' or 'Cutie' which refers to its hybrid name. This name may also be printed on the container.

Dendrobiums have leafy, cylindrical stems which range from 15 cm (6 in) to 60 cm (24 in) tall. Because Dendrobiums are deciduous (older stems drop their leaves), some stems may be leafless. The leaves are oval, pointed and are usually somewhat shiny. The flower spike arises from the top of the stem. It is erect and arching with a number of buds or open blooms arranged along it. The flowers may be white, pink, purple, red or yellow and are about 2.5 to 4 cm wide (1 to 2 inches). The petals may be flat or twisted like a corkscrew. Larger plants may be sold with several flower spikes. Dendrobium roots are usually not seen as they stay within the potting mix.

WHEN WILL IT BLOOM AGAIN?

Most orchids are sold in bloom. They will bloom again in their particular season according to their geographic and climatic heritage. Your orchid will generally re-bloom in the same season each year but because the flowers are long lasting, your orchid could flower for months. Old stems can produce additional flower stems but never from the same place as it bloomed previously. Your goal will be to help the plant produce strong new stems which will flower once they have matured.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE ONCE THE FLOWERS HAVE FADED?

Once Dendrobium flowers have faded, the flower stalk will yellow and die naturally. It should then be removed using sterilized scissors or a sterile blade. Cut the stalk near its base, taking care not to cut leaves in the process.

HOW MUCH LIGHT DOES A DENDROBIUM REQUIRE?

Dendrobiums thrive in bright light but direct unfiltered sunshine can burn the leaves. When selecting a spot for your plant, choose a curtained window or use wide spectrum fluorescent light to supplement available natural especially during winter.

WHAT TEMPERATURE IS APPROPRIATE?

Dendrobiums require warmth (20 to 25C day) but a bit cooler at night. Avoid exposure to cold or hot drafts.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD THE ORCHID BE WATERED?

Once a week or depending on how quickly the growing medium dries out. Water thoroughly with tap water, letting the water flow through the pot. Avoid using hard well water or overwatering this kind of orchid.

SHOULD FERTILIZER BE APPLIED? WHAT KIND AND HOW OFTEN?

Use very dilute liquid flowering houseplant or orchid fertilizer with regular watering once a week when a new stem is growing.

THE HOME IS DRY IN WINTER. HOW CAN HUMIDITY BE SAFELY MAINTAINED?

Pebble trays are not very effective. Spray leaves once daily with tap or deionized water.

WHEN SHOULD THE PLANT BE REPOTTED?

Dendrobium roots are very sensitive to poor growing conditions and to overwatering. What is most important is the quality of the potting mix. It should be open, airy, such that the roots can dry a bit between waterings. Before the mix becomes soggy and inhospitable to orchid roots, it must be replaced or about every 18 months to two years. Use a medium to coarse commercial potting mix designed for orchids. Use the minimum sized plastic pot to contain the roots. Never plant Dendrobiums in too big a pot.

-Marilyn H. S. Light

Orchids 101 – Getting Ready for Summer

Those of us raising orchids in temperate climates have to deal with winter with its shorter days and weaker sunlight. Now that summer is just around the corner, we want to ensure that our orchids are healthy going into this season and ready to take advantage of summer warmth and lengthening days.

I – For those hobbyists having plants indoors and intending to raise them outdoors during summer:

- 1 – Make sure that the orchids are as healthy as possible before taking them outdoors.
- 2 – Spring is a good time to divide and repot.
- 3 – Too much light can be as harmful as too little. Be certain to have adequate shade wherever you plan to situate the plants. Make use of high overhead shade provided by tall trees or employ shade cloth. Adjust light to maintain plant vigour.
- 4 – Keep pots off the ground to avoid slugs.
- 5 – Adjust watering and fertilizer schedules to accommodate increased light and higher humidity.
- 6 – Monitor temperature, humidity and air movement in all parts of the growing area. Watch for stagnant air pockets especially during cool wet weather.
- 7 – Examine your collection at least weekly for signs of disease and pests. This is especially important during extended cold rainy spells or during a heatwave. Have a 'hospital bench' to isolate sick plants.
- 8 – Orchids will benefit from the natural temperature difference between day and night but always protect sensitive orchids including *Catasetum* against sudden changes in temperature and humidity. Shelter cold-sensitive plants during chilly nights and heat-intolerant plants during hot weather.
- 9 – Day length affects many orchids, triggering them to bloom or rest. We have 16 hours of day in mid June after which time the nights get longer. Check that outdoor plants are not being accidentally illuminated by outdoor (street, security) lights or light spilling from a nearby window at night.
- 10 – Lay down a supply of rain water to use when watering restrictions are applied.

II For those hobbyists who maintain their orchids indoors year round either on a window sill, under lights or in a greenhouse:

- 1 – Give your orchids a 'spring check-up'. Divide, re-pot, cull as needed. Repeat upon return from summer vacation.
- 2 – Day length affects many orchids, triggering them to either bloom or rest. Check that windowsill or greenhouse plants are not being accidentally illuminated by outdoor or indoor lights at night.
- 3 – Adjust watering and fertilizer schedules to accommodate increased light.
- 4 – Monitor temperature, humidity and air movement in all parts of the growing area. Increase shade and employ evaporative cooling to deal with excessive summer heat.
- 5 – Protect orchids from thrips and other garden insects by screening greenhouse vents.

May, 2006 © Marilyn Light



Potinara Hwa Yuan Gold "Yung Kang#2" GM/16WOC

COMING EVENTS

2006

June 08-12: Native Orchid Conference Ashland, Oregon.
"http://groups.yahoo.com/group/nativeorchidconference/"

Aug 5-6: COC Annual meeting and SOOS Summer Orchidfest at the Toronto Botanical Gardens. The AGM is on Saturday with delegates invited to a BBQ at the Kennedy's. On Sunday enjoy the SOOS Orchid fest including AOS judging, a BBQ lunch followed by speakers from Ecuagenera and Gold Country Orchids. Plants sales occur throughout the afternoon. For details see:
http://www.CanadianOrchidCongress.ca/coc2006/

Sept 23-24: Central Ontario Orchid Society, Cambridge Hespeler Arena, 640 Ellis Road, Cambridge, ON
"http://www.coos.ca/"

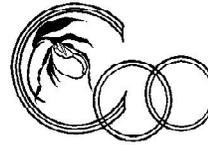
Sept 29-Oct 1: The Foothills Orchid Society, Calgary, Alberta annual show. at the Triwood Community Assn. hall. 2244 Chicoutimi Dr. NW, Calgary. "http://members.shaw.ca/foothillsorchidsociety/"
Contact Jan Gibson, e-mail: rebelq@sprint.ca

Nov 11-12: Niagara Region OS, CAW Hall 124 Bunting Rd, St. Catharines, Ont Contact: Tom Cunningham, Show Chairperson
Email: tessiercunningham@cogeco.ca Phone: 905-934-8289 Mail: 11 Winfield Court, St Catharines, L2M 7K6

2007

Use this space to list your society's 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

2001 - 6 Willow Street,
Waterloo ON, N2J 4S3
Phone: (519)885-1888
email: jerry@uwaterloo.ca

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

Officers of the Canadian Orchid Congress

President Margaret Blewett
905-687-9205
mblewett37@cogeco.ca

Vice-President Lorne Heshka
204-663-6850
lheshka@escape.ca

Vice-President Faithe Prodanuk
306-652-8656
faithep@sasktel.net

Treasurer Janette Richardson
306-543-0560
dale.richardson@sasktel.net

Secretary Terry Kennedy
905-727-3319
ourtropics@sympatico.ca

Education Mark Elliott
604-943-6979
melliott@mrl.ubc.ca

Conservation Marilyn Light
819-776-2655
mlight@igs.net

Past President Ingrid Ostrander
250-652-0753
ifl@telus.net