

news

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From the President

What an interesting beginning to the upcoming year for me and the rest of the COC executive.

As everyone knows, the planned COC AGM was to be held in conjunction with the Ottawa Orchid Show however due to circumstances beyond anyone's control, the Ottawa society was unable to host the meeting. Plan B went into play when the Toronto Orchid club agreed to host the AGM along with SOOS Orchidfest in August. As the date of the meeting got closer, it was obvious that a quorum was not going 'to happen'. Margaret Blewett, Past President, efficiently organized and mailed out an information package to ALL member orchid societies with the idea that all societies would have the opportunity to vote on the following four items:

1. Approval of minutes from the previous meeting.
2. Acceptance of the treasurer's report
3. Motion to appoint the auditors
4. Acceptance of the nominating report.

All items were approved by a majority of the 35 member orchid societies that are part of the COC family. Thank you to the societies that sent in their vote. Remember that a society is only as strong as the members and this demonstrates good interest and gives the COC executive a reason to respond to the members.

So here we are!!!

I want to hear from all of you. We will attempt to reach all member societies by email within the next month but you can reach me directly at faithep@shaw.ca We will be setting a course to become a 'members' organization and we need your input. All ideas and suggestions are welcome. We will keep you posted so make sure your current executive names are given to the COC webmaster, Jerry Bolce at jerry@uwaterloo.ca yearly and/or as soon as changes are made.

Save your pennies and join us in Winnipeg for the Manitoba Orchid Society 'Orchid Fascination' show and sale on March 23 – 25, 2007 as they host the COC AGM. See you there.

Many thanks to the retiring COC executive. We know you are never far away for help and guidance. To the new and remaining executive members, thanks for your time and effort. Remember 'many hands make light work'.

Faithe Prodanuk, COC President

The Notice Board

COC Membership and Insurance

As a reminder to everyone, the due date for your 2007 COC Membership and Insurance is January 31, 2007. The COC Membership fee is \$1.00 for each member of your society and the COC Insurance fee is \$1.00 for each member of your society. The COC Membership and Insurance year is January 1 to December 31, the same as a calendar year. Both the membership and the insurance are due by January 31, 2007. Please fill out the forms for the COC Membership and COC Insurance that are enclosed in this newsletter and submit with your payment to Janette Richardson - COC Treasurer.

Lynne Cassidy manages the policy with the insurance company and she should be contacted if you wish to join in, continue the coverage, or if you wish to leave the plan. She must know before negotiations begin in early December. Please contact her via email as soon as possible. She will be away from November 14 until December 4.

As a benefit of membership in the COC insurance coverage is available to all affiliated societies in good standing. The coverage is as follows:

Commercial Generals Liability, each occurrence:
\$2,000,000 with \$500.00 deductible
Tenants Legal Liability - any one premises: \$250,000 Incl.
Medical Expense - any one person: \$1,000 Incl.
Aggregate Limit - Products/Completed Operations Hazard:
\$2,000,000 Incl.
Bodily Injury/Property Damage & Legal Expenses:
\$500.00 Deductible
Errors & Omissions Liability (Directors & Officers/
Wrongful Acts): \$1,000,000 - \$500.00 Deductible
Non Owned Automobile: \$2,000,000 Incl.
The figures in this policy are the 'Limits of amounts'.

Lynne Cassidy - COC Insurance Liaison
Phone 604-536-8185, Email: lynne.cassidy@telus.net

In 2006 18 of 29 member societies joined the plan. The larger societies especially saw the need for protection from liabilities related to their meetings and shows.

From the Past President

Dear COC Members:

It is with great pleasure that I introduce you to your new executive and in particular your new President, Faithe Prodanuk. Faithe has been a member of the Saskatchewan Orchid Society in Saskatoon for over ten years ago, serving as Vice President for four years and President for three years. I know that the COC will grow and flourish as Faithe and the new executive bring you new ideas and new programs. Please support them and communicate with them often. It is with communication that things happen.

I thank the executive that have served with me over the past 2 years through thick and thin. Each and everyone has made their own special contribution and have always been helpful with ideas and support of the COC and myself. Team efforts are wonderful...and they are a great team. To those continuing on with Faithe, I know that she has a great group to work with. For Jean Hollebhone as First Vice President and Terry Zdan, Second Vice President, welcome aboard...more new ideas. Great!

Thank you Societies for responding to the mail out and getting your votes in following your meetings. I know it takes time as we all meet at different times...but you have been great. To hear from each society individually with your votes and your comments has been a record. Keep it up with Faithe.

It has been an honour, and pleasure to have served as your President.

Congratulations to the New Team lead by Faithe.
Margart E. Blewett, Past President

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.

You were asking about Vanilla?

Yes, the genus *Vanilla* belongs in the family of *Orchidaceae*. The word is derived from the Latin language and means something like 'sheath' referring to the seed pod, the Vanilla bean.

The alkaloid substance Vanilla is used mostly as a flavouring agent; of course the natural Vanilla is more expensive and tastes nicer, but in a blind test, most persons preferred the result when artificial "vanillin" was used. This was also used in a product called "New Coke", except that was not popular with consumers. Actually, the Coca Cola Company is one of the largest users of Vanilla.

The plant which is responsible for this flavouring agent is one of about 110 different species of the genus *Vanilla*. These plants grow in many tropical and subtropical areas of the world and are somewhat related to the saprophytic genus *Malleola*. Hawkes lists the following nine species in his Encyclopaedia:

- V. africana* from tropical West Africa
- V. aphylla* from Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia
- V. barbellata* (*V. articulata*) from South Florida and the West Indies

- V. dilloniana* from South Florida and Cuba
- V. humblotii* from the Comoro Islands
- V. phaeantha* from South Florida, the West Indies
- V. phalaenopsis* from the Seychelles
- V. planifolia* (*V. fragrans*, *Myobroma fragrans*) from

South Florida, Mexico, the West Indies, Central America; it is the plant grown commercially

V. pompona (*V. grandiflora*, *V. guianensis*) from Mexico, Central America, Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, sometimes used for flavouring.

In general, the large, cream-coloured, scented flowers are short-lived but the clusters can be in bloom for several weeks. The plants are vines, rooted in the ground but use their aerial rootlets to climb into trees. These vines have to be at least ten 3 meters long before they are mature enough to start flowering, which can be manipulated to some extent by allowing the apical part to hang downward from their support.

Vanilla planifolia, the source of our favourite ice cream flavour, is growing in large commercial plantations in Turkey, the Comoro Islands, India, China, French Polynesia, Northern Australia and Hawaii.

While in their native habitat, these flowers are pollinated by a particular kind of bee, which insures cross pollination to

continue with healthy offspring, in the plantations there are no such bees and the flowers must be pollinated by hand. In 1841, a young slave boy invented the method of using a needle to remove the rostellum and pinching the flower together to place the pollinia on the stigma and this ensuring self pollination. In a large plantation, this work can go on all year, day after day. The ensuing seedpods grow to about 15 – 20 cm long and are harvested before they are completely ripe. They are then fermented and cured before shipping off to the merchants. The actual seed inside the bean looks like black, sticky flour and produces that wonderful taste.

It is said that the best tasting in Bourbon Vanilla comes from the islands in the Indian Ocean (Réunion, Madagascar). The original Mexican Vanilla, used by the indigenous population in pre-Columbian times is called Totonac Vanilla. The Conquistadores brought this, along with many other treasures to Europe in the 16th century. What the tourist markets in Mexico may sell to the unsuspecting shopper is Coumarin, an extract from the Tonka Bean which is rather toxic, when used in large quantities.

To grow a Vanilla orchid, you must keep it warm, around 25 – 30C, never colder than 15C, humid with medium light, regular water and fertilizer; you must provide a stout support – I have seen these vines growing over 50 feet long in older greenhouses, twining everywhere and smelling - like vanilla! One orchid grower on the big island of Hawaii keeps them in his shade house in Kealakekua. He has each plant in a five gallon tub, standing on a slatted bench, where the roots can grow down into tubs with fertilizer water. The vines are wound around and around like a wreath and the buds, flowers and finger-like seedpods hang out everywhere. Of course, that is in Kona where the sun shines almost every day! These orchids are usually propagated by cuttings. So far, nobody has seriously tried to hybridize the Vanilla orchids.

To use Vanilla, you can either buy the liquid version – please buy real Vanilla flavour! Or you can go one step beyond and buy Vanilla beans. You can slice them open lengthwise, scrape out the black seed and use it in a special custard or whatever. The pods, empty of seed, can be boiled to impart their flavour to the boiling liquid. You can also place put the empty pods, cut into 5 cm pieces, inside a glass jar and fill that up with berry sugar, creating you very own vanilla sugar. Enjoy!

- I. Schmidt-Ostrander

The Myth of Orchis

European orchids have spawned numerous fables, many of them inspired by the two linked and rounded tubers typical of the genera *Orchis* and *Ophrys*. Ancient Greece was the first recorded culture to account for this curious characteristic in myth.

The legend of *Orchis* tells of a passionate youth, the son of a nymph, from whom he received beauty, and of a satyr, who added the gift of a robust libido.

During a celebratory feast for Bacchus, *Orchis* committed the sacrilege of attempting to rape a priestess. In submitting to unbridled lust, *Orchis* had reverted to an animal state alien and repugnant to Greek custom and culture. Because, perhaps, of his privileged birth, he had foolishly imagined himself immune to the Fates, who would swoop to punish any hubris. Punishment being tailored to the crime, his came naturally enough from the animal world into which he had sunk---*Orchis* was torn limb from limb by wild beasts. Destiny was thus fulfilled, justice done, and the natural and social order re-established. Myth now had nothing to lose by conceding a little generosity. At the intervention of the gods, the youth's body metamorphosed into a modest and slender plant---the antithesis of the frenzied remains that had generated it. With poetic justice, however, the organs of *Orchis*'s undoing were transformed into the plant's nether regions, its tubers. These were fashioned to resemble the very parts of his anatomy that had brought *Orchis* to grief. The hapless youth's name came to signify not only the plant into which he had mutated, but also the testes. As a botanical name, *Orchis* still applies to the genus of tuberous, terrestrial herbs of which, in myth at least, *Orchis* was the progenitor. It is also the root of the word orchid and of *Orchidaceae*, the family to which all these remarkable plants belong.



Orchis in flower, from Dodoens, *Florum*

The Legend of Venus

Cypripedium calceolus is an exquisite orchid, long known in Europe by the name Venus's slipper. One day Venus, the Roman goddess of love and beauty, was out hunting with Adonis when they were overtaken by a tremendous thunderstorm. Venus and her beloved took shelter. Naturally enough, they also took full advantage of their enforced intimacy, and this led to Venus's mislaying her slipper. When the storm had passed, the slipper was spotted by a mortal who immediately went to pick it up. Before he could touch it, Venus's slipper was transformed into a flower whose central petal, the labellum or lip, was not only shaped like a slipper but retained the color of the gold from which the goddess's priceless shoes had been made.

Sometimes ancient myth surfaces in modern science. Searching for a scientific name for the Venus's slipper orchid, the Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus recalled the tale of Venus and her mislaid shoe. The name *Cypripedium* is derived from Cyprus, Venus's sacred island, and pedilon, meaning slipper. The epithet of the first-named species, *calceolus*, is the diminutive of the Latin *calceus* and means "little shoe." Echoing this idea more than a century later, Ernst Hugo Heinrich Pfitzer placed the Southeast Asian slipper orchids in *Paphiopedilum*, a name combining Paphos, an island with a temple devoted to Aphrodite, with pedilon.



Cypripedium calceolus, from Dodoens, *Florum*

Articles from *The Orchid in Lore and Legend* by Luigi Berliocchi



Winner of the COC award for the best amateur display at the COOS show - won by Wendy Hoffman. Her *Cattleya bowringiana* won the Best Cattleya award.

Orchid Specialist Group

Have a look at the Orchid Specialist Group website
<http://www.orchidconservation.org/OSG/>

The North American Region has selected four flagship taxa. Scroll through the link to Publications and Articles where you will find factsheets now available for each taxon, in French and in English.

A Flagship Species is a species selected to represent a plant, animal or ecosystem at risk. A flagship species should -

1. have attributes to attract public interest;
2. represent a range of habitats and ecosystems in the Region;

3. represent the range of threats to orchid survival such as development for agriculture, habitation or industry, forestry practices, and drainage of wetlands.

The species selected are:

Cypripedium reginae - Representing northeastern wetlands of both the USA and Canada.

Dendrophylax lindenii - Representing the south eastern wetlands in Florida, USA. Range extends into the offshore islands of the Bahamas and Cuba.

Epipactis gigantea - Representing the mountainous regions from southern British Columbia and adjacent regions of the USA into Mexico.

Platanthera praeclara - Representing the North American Prairie region, especially the Tall Grass Prairie.

Conference

June 5-10 2007: The Fourth INTERNATIONAL ORCHID WORKSHOP concomitant with the Eighth INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE "ORCHID CONSERVATION and CULTIVATION" in Tver', Russia. Conference details Registration Form are found on the COC website under "conservation".

COC 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

Orchid Pests and Diseases prepared by Marilyn Light

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

COMING EVENTS

2006

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

Feb 10-11: The Southern Ontario Orchid Society at the Toronto Botanical Garden, Edwards Gardens. <http://www.soos.ca/>

Feb 23-25: Orchid Society of Alberta in the Grant MacEwan College, Millwoods Campus, 7319 - 29 Ave. Edmonton, Alberta.
<http://www.orchidsalberta.com/>

March 10-11: Orchid Society of the Royal Botanical Gardens, 680 Plains Rd., Burlington "<http://www.osrbg.ca/>"
Show chair is Ben Boers, email bboers@cogeco.ca

March 17 - 18: London Orchid Society at the Western Fair Special Events Building, London, Ontario <http://los.lon.imag.net/>

March 19-24: Orchid International Orchid Conservation Congress San José, Costa Rica <http://www.jardinbotanicolankester.org/ing/index.html>

March 24-25: Les Orchidophiles de Montreal Orchidexpo 2007
College de Maisonneuve, 2700 Bourbonniere St., Montreal
<http://orchidophiles.qc.ca/>

March 23-25: The Manitoba Orchid Society is hosting the COC Annual Meeting in conjunction with the "Orchid Fascination" Annual Show and Sale. <http://www.manitobaorchidsociety.ca/default.htm>

March 31 - April 1: The Orchid Society of Nova Scotia at the Nova Scotia Museum of Science, Halifax.
<http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Recreation/OrchidSNS/>

March 31 - April 1: The Regina Orchid Society at the Core Ritchie Community Centre, 445 14th Avenue, Regina.
Contact: reginaorchidsociety@yahoo.ca or c.eisbrenner@yahoo.ca

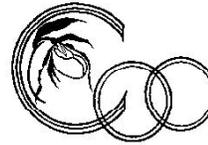
April 14-15: Les Orchidophiles de Quebec
<http://cf.geocities.com/orchidophilesqc/>

April 28-29: The Ottawa Orchid Society Nepean Sportsplex, 1701 Woodroffe Avenue, Nepean, Ontario.
<http://www.ottawaorchidsociety.com>

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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