



# news

**Volume 26.4– September 2014**



Lc Love Fantasy x Mari's Song

## President's Message

It is with great honour and privilege that I write to you as the new President of COC. As a long time orchid enthusiast, I am excited to be part of a dynamic team that not only supports orchid hobbyists and orchid societies across Canada, but also play a vital role in the education and conservation of orchids. At the AGM that took place this past August at the Kennedy's residence in Gormley, Ontario, a new slate of COC officers was elected. On behalf of the COC, I would like to thank Peter Poot, Past President, for all the work he did during his term over many years. Also a big thank you to the Kennedy's for hosting our AGM. I invite you to visit the [COC's Officers](#) page for further details and short bios of the executives and officers.

I would like to take this opportunity and share with you my vision during my term as President: Enhance Engagement and Leveraging Technology. The COC must deepen our relationship with our membership, via regular communication and the provision of relevant, value-added services. In order to remain effective and efficient, we must take full advantage of available technologies on how we conduct our businesses internally and the delivery of our services externally. I am open to your reactions, comments and ideas on this vision, and I invite you to write to me directly.

There is no doubt that much work is ahead of us, however the executive team wants to ensure the priorities we set are relevant to your needs as members. With that in mind, the team will conduct a short on-line Needs Assessment survey with our membership in the coming weeks. The purpose of this online survey are three fold:

- 1.) identify the real needs of our membership so that the COC remain nimble and relevant as a service organization;
- 2.) strengthen our relationship with member societies and the COC Representatives; and
- 3.) the outcome of the survey will provide the executive team with critical intelligence in establishing and prioritizing a concrete yet attainable work plan for the next year.

Stay tuned for more information on this online survey, in the meantime, I encourage you to start putting your thinking hats on!

As the fall show season is upon us, many societies are busy in their final planning stages for their annual shows. Declining show attendance and society memberships has been key challenges identified by many member societies the last couple years, and this trend is consistent with other horticultural clubs and societies internationally. In order to support member societies in this regard, we have included some excellent Marketing and Public Relations tips, lessons learned and best practices in this Newsletter. In addition, the Vancouver Orchid Society graciously agreed to share their 2014 Show Marketing Plan to COC member societies, if you or your show committee would like to obtain a copy of the VOS Marketing Plan, [here is the link](#). I also encourage members to share their experiences, tips and best practices on this topic so that we can broaden our collective knowledge base and help out each other.

The Executive team is also planning a workshop/seminar focused on Marketing in the very near future. Consisting of a panel of speakers ranging from professional marketing coordinator to show publicity personnel, this interactive workshop will dive deep into various marketing initiatives and tips for orchid societies. We are currently reviewing various platforms for electronic meetings that are conducive to interactive sessions with multiple participants. If you would like to help out in planning this initiative, please email Marlene Young.

As we reluctantly say good bye to summer, it is time to start preparing our orchids for the fall/winter seasons. Our orchids may start to slow down in growing, however as we all know, the work (or fun!) does not stop there. Having recently relocated my entire orchid collection from the east coast to the west coast, this is a season of continued learning and experiment, and that is just one of many reasons why orchid growing is so much fun. If you have best kept secrets, or tips on orchid growing you would like to share with others, please do so by emailing our Webmaster, Jerry Bolce. A <Growers' Tips Corner> would be a welcoming addition in our Newsletter!

Happy Growing.

Calvin Wong

[tropical.gardens@gmail.com](mailto:tropical.gardens@gmail.com)

## President

Being the child of an Ikebana Master, Calvin Wong has always been surrounded with flowers and plant materials since a very young age. Having killed his first orchid (a white *Phalaenopsis*) in lightning speed, Calvin did not accept defeat and started to research on how to successfully grow orchids, little did he know what he got himself into.

Calvin is an AOS accredited judge with the Pacific Northwest Judging Center and past Vice President of the Vancouver Orchid Society. Prior to relocating to Vancouver in 2011, Calvin was an active member of SOOS and the Toronto Judging Center of the AOS. Calvin travelled around North America for various speaking engagements, he also travels extensively around the world to participate in orchid shows as well as observing orchids in-situ. Calvin specializes in *Neofinetia falcata*, a charming Japanese species with a long history of cultivation.

Professionally, Calvin held various leadership positions with the Federal Government of Canada throughout his career, and has extensive experience in managing national bilingual teams virtually. Calvin currently held the position as Director in a Federal department under the Public Safety Portfolio and was recently awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal.

## First Vice President

Marlene Young has been growing orchids for over 20 years, is a member of the Ottawa & Eastern Canada Orchid Societies and served in many areas but specializing in show publicity. She developed and maintains the Facebook page for the COC and helped the AOS develop their own page. Along with the work currently being done through the Facebook site, with a focus on education, Marlene has recently worked with a French author (France) adapting his book on *Phalaenopsis* for the North American market.

Marlene was trained as an AOS Student Judge for almost 3 years (left for personal reasons), received several AOS awards for her *Lycastes* (her speciality) and was very involved in doing society show displays for many years. She continues to work behind the

scenes with show publicity personnel in several societies.

Semi-retired, she is co-owner and consults on software development for animal welfare, is a Director/Treasurer of a 127-unit Condominium Corp., previously a Project Manager for Pharmaceutical Marketing Research, a trained Landscape Designer and a certified floral designer. She also finds time to enjoy Bonsai with the Ottawa Bonsai Society.

## Second Vice President

Nathan Cable is a relatively new hobbyist, growing a variety of warm climate orchids in his spare bedroom under artificial light. Currently, he is experimenting with species *Phalaenopsis* and *Cattleyas*. He has served as the vice president and president of the Okanagan Orchid Society, and helps coordinate regular events with its talented and knowledgeable members. Outside of orchids, Nathan is a network engineer for a local school district, and has worked as a middle and high school teacher.

I've been 'seriously' growing orchids for the last 5 years, although I have one *Cattleya* hybrid that's about 10 years old. I grow in my house under artificial light. I'm looking at building a greenhouse or a solarium, but right now, indoors offers the best mix of cost and time commitment.

"I live in Kelowna, BC, which is a pretty arid climate as far as Canada is concerned. I've found it's been interesting keeping plants growing and healthy in a house! I'm a member of the Okanagan Orchid Society, which represents Kelowna. We're a small club, and we struggle with getting enough funds from auctions and our membership fees to bring in speakers. For the last two years we've presented displays at the Vancouver Orchid Show, and this year we're planning to display at the Fraser Valley show as well."

## Summary of Decisions at the August 2014 COC Annual General Meeting.

The meeting managed to once again marshal a quorum of member societies and directors. One society attended via Skype and several additional groups had supplied proxies. The minutes of the previous meeting were adopted as presented. The president's report was adopted as follows:

### August 2014 COC Toronto Annual General Meeting President's Report

First of all I want to thank the Southern Ontario Orchid Society and especially Doug and Terry Kennedy for graciously hosting this Annual General Meeting for us. This is my fourth and last President's report. Jean Hollebhone our past president and nominating committee has after some arduous canvassing come up with a complete slate of officers, including a new president and two new vice-presidents to represent both the east and the west. Her efforts have once again raised the question of compensation for travel to annual meetings for your officers. Past practice of expecting the officers to pay for all of their own travel to these meetings has become unrealistic in today's economic conditions. I suggest we make a beginning on this matter by at least having the Board work out detailed policy proposals for this within a bulk travel compensation package covering all of your board (6 persons) not to exceed \$1000 per year. This can then be circulated to the members for input before coming back to a general meeting. Alternatively we may have to go to all electronic meetings. This meeting was offered with electronic access and only one member and one observer have requested it.

Your corporation is in good financial condition. We have been able to operate within our means without raising dues. These dues have now been unchanged since our beginnings. Any additional needs have been covered by auctions and donations. There will be a silent auction for COC at Orchidfest tomorrow. I invite you to donate and or bid on items.

The reports of the various committees are before you for you to consider. Each report represents significant work on behalf of the Congress. I have continued to maintain and distribute the library of digital and slide programs, some on disc by mail and in one case via Dropbox. Most societies that use these probably now

have copies of all of the programs in their own files. We could use new programs.

The revised bylaws and articles of continuance are before you today in accordance with the directives of Industry Canada. In order for us to continue our incorporation these need to be passed by the Board of Directors and by a 2/3 majority by a members meeting. We need to submit those approvals to Industry Canada before October 17 this year.

I thank all of the COC member societies, the Board of Directors and the Committee chairs for their ongoing support during this difficult economic time. Our organization is about promoting the growing and conservation of orchids and assisting our member orchid organizations in their endeavours. We need to keep the channels of communication open across our country.

Thank you. Peter Poot.

**Financial:** The 2013 audited financial statements, the proposed 2015 budget, and the Auditor for 2014, Mr. Steve Mockler were all approved.

**Insurance:** There was considerable discussion on the difficulties experienced by Dianne Gillis and the Treasurer getting our members to submit their insurance and dues on time. A number of societies have been late submitting their renewals and the fees, creating considerable difficulties for our volunteer administrators. There was consensus that this needs to change. We will be sending the renewal notices out in September urging societies to deal with the matter. There also continue to be societies that do not send us their new slates of officers in a timely fashion. Please, our treasurer Andre Couture and our editor Jerry Bolce need these. Dianne Gillis agreed to continue administering the insurance program.

**Travel Grants:** In response to concerns the meeting amended the travel grant program conditions to make it clear that grants will be assigned on the following basis: First consideration will go to societies that are geographically isolated and that have fewer than 75 members, second consideration will go to societies that have fewer than 75 members and are not necessarily isolated. Geographically isolated means more than 200 km from a major urban orchid society. The policy was also amended to add: There is no limit to the number of times an eligible society may apply, however, if more than five societies apply then



preference will be given to eligible societies that have never applied before. Societies who have applied before will then be considered in the order in which the applications were received.

**COC web master.** Jerry Bolce initiated a discussion on the future of the newsletter and the website. The new executive will no doubt have further discussions on this perennial topic.

**2015 AGM.** This will be hosted by the Saskatoon Orchid Society, March 26-29, 2015. The question of a location and format for a 2016 AGM was left to the new executive.

**COC certificates of recognition.** Three certificates for outstanding service to the Canadian orchid community were approved. As none of the recipients were able to attend these will be presented by the local organisations that sponsored them. There will be COC recognition in a future Newsletter.

**Bylaws:** The bylaws and articles of continuance required by Industry Canada were considered and approved by a unanimous vote with the following amendments:

1. In section 5 clause 04 delete subclause 6 automatically dismissing a director who fails to attend three consecutive board meetings or whichever is the minimum number of board meetings in a calendar year. It was felt that there were sufficient other opportunities to deal with a non participating director.
2. Provide for a maximum 2 year term for President and a maximum 4 year term for all other officers subject to a proviso that terms may be extended in exceptional circumstances.

**Election of Officers:** The following slate was unanimously elected for the 2014- 2015 term of office:

President	Calvin Wong
1st Vice President	Marlene Young
2nd Vice President	Nathan Cable
Treasurer	Andre Couture
Secretary	Inge Poot.



## ROOTS: IT IS ALL ABOUT THE ROOTS!

Join us for a Webinar on September 27

Space is limited. Reserve your Webinar seat now at:  
<https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/796144778>



Please join John Salventi as he presents a topic near and dear to every orchid grower: how to take care of those precious roots! Roots are the lifeblood of our orchids. He will discuss all the methodologies for taking care of our orchid root systems. One of the founders and owners of Parkside Orchid Nursery in Pennsylvania, John began as a hobbyist in 1986 and entered the commercial orchid world. John is

now part of Salventi-Purviance Enterprises, LLC which provides orchid consultation, lectures and teaching, and sales of greenhouses.

Title: ROOTS: IT IS ALL ABOUT THE ROOTS!

Date: Saturday, September 27, 2014

Time: 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM EDT

After registering you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the Webinar.

System Requirements PC-based attendees Required:  
Windows® 8, 7, Vista, XP or 2003 Server

Mac®-based attendees Required: Mac OS® X 10.6 or newer

Mobile attendees Required: iPhone®, iPad®, Android™ phone or Android tablet

# Orchid Show Promotion

*Marlene Young*

Over the last few years, I have worked with at least five orchid societies in the East ranging from smaller ones to the larger. Each town/city comes with its own set of challenges. And some volunteers may be doing this for the first time.

I've listed the prime focus areas which usually resulted in an increase in attendance, in one case; the increase was the first time in several years.

## POSTERS

Size: Keep them reasonable 8 1/2 x 11". Smaller ones (4 per sheet) can be displayed in members' car windows.

Distribution: Hand several to your members. I have actually gone through the rows at meetings and hand them out. Usually to be posted at work. Don't display them too early.....4 weeks ahead is plenty

## COUPONS

If you're not doing them you're missing out.

Distribution: Drop large bunches off at garden centers, florists, etc about 4 weeks ahead of show. These are for 'bagged purchases'. Florists will include them with their sales. It's a 'win-win' as the florists appear to be giving their customers a free perk and we get free publicity.

Choosing which florist/garden center: A necessary step in larger cities, use your yellow pages and call only the garden centers/florists that have large display ads. This does two things, it lets you focus on the 'bigger guys' since they can afford large display ads and it gives you an opportunity to ask their permission ahead of time as well as how many coupons they would need. I prepared the list in postal code order.

Drop off kits: Prepare packages with a cover letter thanking them and you are non-profit and you are volunteers blah blah blah (you get the idea) and include a couple of posters for their window along with a bunch of coupons.

Now take your kits with florists' names, address and postal code and compare it to your membership list in postal code order. Put the kits out at the next meeting and ask the people that live in that postal code to hand

deliver. Almost all will say yes. Much better than sending by mail and the store owner gets to 'know your society'.

The biggest effort is the first year - keep your lists and redo the same thing the following year but you can skip the phone calls as your members should be able to follow through with the drop offs and details. We had some stores ask for more inserts too!!

Note: This eventually expanded our floral display section significantly when we added to our cover letter that if they wanted to submit a display in our show for judging it would be seen also by over 2,000 people (our show attendance) during the show (great free advertising for them)

## ROAD SIGNAGE

This one is not utilized enough!! Learn from our politicians and use cheap signage on major thoroughfares in your neighbourhood several days before the show. Check local bylaws and please specify that you are non-profit (ask for suggestions too), but the most successful farmers market in town only advertises this way.....signs along the side of a busy rush hour road in the high tech section of Ottawa. Big letters, few words are the key.....what it is, where and what time.....that's it folks!!

## PASSES/MEMBERSHIP GIVE AWAY

Every town has a garden type radio show or local morning show. Drop off free passes to be given away on air. Again, not too early, the week before is ideal. Add some free passes for the station employees too.

This is free radio advertising as your name is mentioned in the give away! This can be used for Cable companies, newspaper garden editors etc. Remember to tell your show volunteers at the door that all newspaper, tv people get in free. We picked up a local Chinese paper that gave us a deal on next year's advertising!

Give passes away generously!!!! Most are never used but it's the thought that counts. Code the back so you can see who redeemed them. Give them to people that do your trophies, ribbons, posters.....build relationships and they will even display posters at their locations.

## RETIREMENT LIVING ORGS/CONDOS

This should be done a couple of months before your show. Call/make appointments to meet with their recreation directors. Bring along coupons or group deals, posters etc to the meeting. Put a face on your org. Personal contact works and they love to set up bus trips for their small communities.

If you're in a larger city, use the same logic we did with selecting larger florists, go by the size of their display ads in the yellow pages.

This can be done by someone other than the publicity team. Ask (personally) a member with an outgoing personality to do this.....plenty of time for them to set it up....no pressures.

## PHOTOGRAPHY CLUBS

There are several ways to find photo clubs on the web - takes a little research but you will find emails in the 'contact us'. Send them a cover letter specifically inviting them to your 'photographers - tripods welcome' time slot. If you don't have one then start one at a time that is slow (like Sunday morning). Give them at least 6 weeks notice. I did clubs within 100 mile radius and they came in buses!!! This eventually led to a large portion of our attendance regulars too.

## GARDEN CLUBS

Again, go to your websites for a listing of garden clubs/horts/master gardeners listing. Email a cover letter, your coupons and poster, asking them to include it in their newsletters. They need six weeks notice ahead of show time to prepare their newsletters so count back. If your show is early, like in September, ask them to forward your poster, coupons to their membership at a special time. Don't forget to return the favour when they have their shows. This is no cost too!!

Keep this email listing for next year too.....then research only the ones that bounce back.

Horticultural classes in a nearby college??? School???? Drop in to talk to their teachers! We had several students volunteer with ribbon judging and assisting vendors by horticultural students from a local College.

## TV/RADIO/NEWSPAPERS

Try to target 'like-minded' shows that has a gardening type audience. Of course, any time slot is great but bear in mind that a very very small percentage would find our orchid shows that appealing (strange but true) if the show is a general interest type.

Cable companies are always looking for material - invite them to your meetings for special 'on the spot' interviews and a view of your show tables. Mention that orchids are the #1 potted plants in North America.....remember they're TV folks not orchid people.

Shows that view about a week before the orchid show have the most impact. Too early and it's yesterday's story.

Newspapers have special rates for non-profits; we only used the prime one in our city.....check to see if they are producing a gardening insert (months ahead). Ask them for 'premium real-estate' on the page!!! That means right hand side, prime location....and do barter for this.....they even stuck our show on a wrapper for free one year!!!!!! Again, think about free passes to your contacts. What about their online news options?? In the home section, flashing your show?!

Local tabloids.....ours was EMC. I submitted press release, on line, for several of these. Kijiji listing..... do this a week ahead of your show, it's free but if you spend a couple of bucks you can have your ad highlighted and kept at the top of the 'events listing' otherwise it moves down the listings as other new events are added.

## WEBSITE RESEARCH

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of website research that put us on the map in Ottawa Festivals, Tourist attractions, CTV calendar of events, Linking Boomers (on line listing), CTV morning shows - local.....also call for interview. Any senior magazines that are given away (need months advance work for these). These all got a press release as well as coupons and/or posters. All submitted on line.

## SHOW CONTENT/PARTNERSHIPS

Keep the show interesting! Would you go to the same car show every year with the same cars??

Partner or invite like-minded organizations. Bonsai, Garden Clubs, Ikebana, etc to have displays or even a booth! Double bonus, they do advertising to bring in crowds if they have a stake in it!

What about a simple re-potting session in a corner?

Learn from major success stories like Canada Blooms who have a stage with rotating shows to add an element of diversity. IT IS ABOUT MARKETING your show and entertaining too.

## LESSONS LEARNED

You need a 'team' for publicity and a schedule of events with assigned tasks. Newspaper, social media, Cable/TV, web, spokespeople etc and encourage them to expand their areas with new ideas, targets.

It's never too soon to start..... Our show was in April, I started the previous October with posters, developing team volunteers - we had the same wonderful group for several years. Each had our own areas of expertise/responsibility. A no rush schedule and good organization takes the pressure off.

What did you do right? Do a random survey, either at the door or on the floor, or a contest/raffle, asking them where they heard about your show. You need to know what you did that worked. Was it an ad, the photo clubs, senior residence - see how effective your work was and where it worked? You only need a random sample to get an idea or you're not spending your time effectively.

Our surveys have told us (and several locations I might add) that posters seem to have become the new graffiti?! Even if you get permission, too early and it becomes scenery lost in the blur and many posters/coupons are sent electronically to organizations for information distribution. Effectiveness is doubtful for the printed posters.

Recruit your volunteers personally!!!! Know your members and ask what would they like to do? Recognize their contributions before, during and after the show.

Do a critique....ask your show/publicity team for random comments, complaints, and praises within 48 hours of the show. Yes, while it's fresh....document and use it as your starting point for the next season. We tried to come up with a new twist/idea/target every year!!!

## Facebook (and why you need it all year not just at show time)

We have a Facebook page and our members don't join!

I post stuff and no one looks at it!

I don't believe in it or trust it!

Other societies don't even look at our page!

I don't see how it helps with getting our membership or attendance up?

### **We have a Facebook page and our members don't join!**

While it's great if you have your own members on board it is certainly not necessary to use Facebook to your advantage to build a presence in your neighbourhood.

First of all, give your members something to look at!!!! Post pictures of your members' own plants that are on the show table, a birthday, their picture for volunteering etc.

Now, tell them they don't have to join to see the pictures - show them they can look at it online on the web.....they just can't comment.....most just want to see stuff relevant to them

### **I post stuff and no one looks at it!**

To be blunt, it's not the time to try to create a niche for your own style. It should be about the society, its members, their plants, their contributions, live and in Technicolor! These you can't do on a website can you? Don't wait for them to submit stuff, just do it at the meetings.....so easy now with phones etc. Get your COC rep in on the action too!! If we start showcasing our members just maybe we would get more involved in volunteering. When was the last time you posted a picture of your show volunteers in the kitchen? Everyone enjoys a little recognition!

### **I don't believe in it or trust it!**

Well, it isn't about our own beliefs but what works today.....Facebook works, it is the best marketing tool you have, like it or not. I'm not asking you to join, I'm asking you to give your Facebook administrator more freedom and make them a key cog in the publicity team! They may not have all the answers so



give them contacts in your group for help when required if they hit a tough question.

It's time to look at what we're doing, times have changed and we need to change with it!

### **Other societies don't even look at our page!**

### **I don't see how it helps with getting our membership or attendance up?**

Both of these comments get the same answer and understanding the answer is the key to success.

Facebook is about creating a social network support system. It's about creating a support network, in your town or city, by working with like-minded organizations like other societies, florists, horticultural schools, garden centre, local senior organizations even the corner library. It's about building a relationship all year round within your town and neighbourhood.

The only time I see a flurry of activity is around show time.....really!!?? How about keeping in touch all year to pass along like-minded info? It's a little like sending your wealthy distant cousin a note just before Christmas and expecting an armful of gifts.

Note: There are also technical reasons why you are not reaching people if you don't maintain contact with them which we will not cover here!

What to do? Well, start by building relationships with other close by societies, sharing tips, photos, learn from each other, then try with other 'for profit' organizations by sending them a 'personal message' online to share your show information and include coupons. You can create a dialogue and presence too by just 'liking' some of their postings that relates to plants. What about the local library, garden club.....cyps in the garden thing works, post an article that gardeners would like. It was never truer; "if you don't use it you lose it" applies here. Use your imagination to build relationships!!! And you have a support network!!!! So when the time comes for your show, you have their support because they know you and you have shared!!! Remember the 'social network' part?

Now, go back to the items for publicity and start working the concept of building relationships with these types of organizations so when the time comes you will have their support. It takes practice but it can be done! With the new anti-spam laws just send the

photo clubs, etc., a personal message with the info and most will post the information on their timeline for you (so get to know them before you ask too).

We are stronger as a group then as a single entity! Use Facebook to do this....it will take time. I am also available to answer technical questions too!

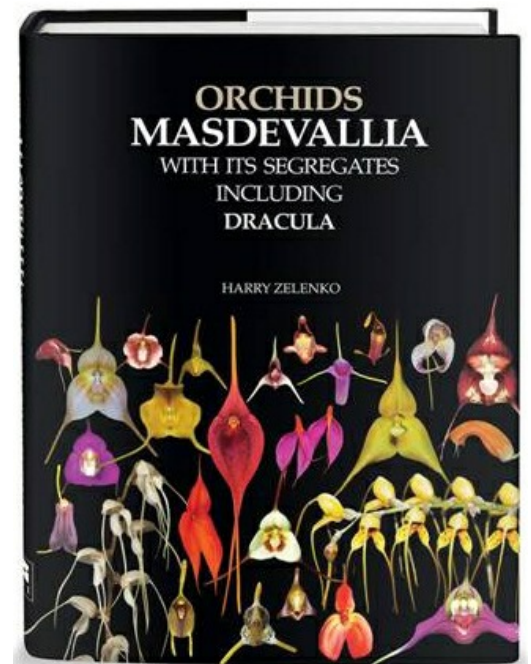
Good luck and the best part is that Facebook is FUN and FREE (for now)

[Visit the Orchid Journal.](#)

Marlene marlyoung@1000island.net

## **New Masdevallia Book**

Masdevallia with its Segregates including Dracula has been published by ZA I Publications, a publisher specializing in orchid books. The book includes Dracula, Porroglossum and Trisetella along with Masdevallia. The book is essentially a picture book which offers the most comprehensive photographic treatment to date with more than one thousand photographs taken by orchid experts including Ton Sijm. The Masdevallia taxonomy is based on Carl Luer's original Masdevallia genera and also includes his new genera for some of the groups as well as the latest molecular research by other authors. Also included is information on Masdevallia culture, a complete listing of species and an index plus articles by orchid experts including Gary Meyer, Ph.D., Alexander Hirtz, Alfonso Doucette, Rosemarie Zelenko, Herschel Littlegreen and the author, Harry Zelenko



## Dendrobiums, by Roy Tokunaga

(transcribed by Inge Poot)

On August 10, 2014 SOOS had the great pleasure to host Roy Tokunaga the cheerful owner of H&R Orchids (located on the main island of Hawaii), at our summerfest. He gave us two wonderfully informative talks one of which is transcribed here. H&R is located on Oahu Island on the opposite side of the island from Honolulu and Waikiki Beach.

The island looks like a swallow-tail butterfly with one wing tip lopped off. Honolulu and H&R are on the remaining "wing-tip" where the island is only 17 miles wide, but the scenic drive from Honolulu to H&R will still take 2-3 hours! The trade winds coming off the ocean drive the air up the central 1500 foot high mountains and thus cause cooling and rain. Right at the mountainside the rainfall is 400 inches per year, two miles further away the rain fall is 200 inches per year, and about two miles further towards the coast it is 100 inches per year until you get to the opposite coast and H&R where the rainfall is 40 inches per year, or twice that of Toronto.

"Dendrobium" very aptly means "tree life" and since dendrobiums are one of the many genera that perch mostly on trees this genus must have been one of the first where the taxonomists naming newly discovered plants realized that these plants grow mostly on tree branches.

This provided **culture tip** number one: **This genus must have good drainage.**

The most recent discovery about this enormous genus of about 1,200 species is that many species actually come from different origins and

as a result no amount of chromosome doubling can convince them to form viable seed. Taxonomists are still working on the best way to divide the genus to form a minimum number of naturally related genera with the known species. The old genus concept was based on the mentum or spur, (which does not give a nectar reward in all species) formed by the fusion of the bottom portions of the lip and the lateral sepals.



The problem is that it now seems several types of ancestral orchids had the very same mutation and were able to attract the same type of pollinators with it, since it made them assume a spur always provided a nectar reward.

The other floral parts of the dendrobium flower are attached to the mouth of the mentum and in this way

resemble bulbophyllums. Dendrobiums occur mainly in Borneo and New Guinea with just one species each in New Zealand and Tahiti. There are 40 sections to the genus with six species in Australia and New Guinea and Southeast Asia, stretching from Japan to the north, New Zealand to the south, Tahiti to the east and India to the west.

Now if too much of the rest of this write-up is above your head, Mr Tokunaga recommended the book "Dendrobium and its Relatives" which can be bought for about \$20 at amazon.com to help the novice with this genus.

H&R has such a mild climate that their orchids can be grown under shade cloth only. This means they need no expensive infra-structure and since they grow fast as well, they can be grown cheaply. Our speaker's mother grows her hybrid warm-growing dendrobiums and terete-leaved vandas against the side of the house in full sun and they only get fertilized twice a year when he visits her and they do beautifully! The shade cloth is necessary mainly to keep out bees that tend to get trapped in the flowers and thus make them unsuitable for sale!!!

### Culture Tip number two:

**Dendrobiums like their roots fully exposed to air.** Growing them mounted or in baskets is best. In pots the **medium should be porous** and never remain sopping wet for any length of time. Most can take full tropical sun.

### Section *Phalaenanth* of the genus

#### ***Dendrobium*:**

The type species of this section is *Dendrobium phalaenopsis*.



In the past, dendrobium hybrids used to be dominated by the phalaenopsis type species, because they make such lovely long arching sprays of flowers. *Dendrobium bigibbum* was used to reduce plant size. However, arching sprays are hard to fit into a packing box, so lately, the spatulata section species predominate in new hybrids, because to ship plants easily in boxes they should have shorter upright inflorescences. As a result the former lovely shingling of



flowers in long cascading inflorescences has been replaced by a spiral arrangement of flowers borne on many short upright inflorescences that no longer cause the pots to tip over!!

#### Section *Spatulata* of the genus *Dendrobium*:



Dendrobium stratiotes photo Orchidsplus

In Hawaii the warm growing spatulata type dendrobiums make great landscape plants, especially since their flowers last so long. Some will grow to six feet or more in height if fertilized heavily. So to keep them shorter they give them lots of light and not too much fertilizer. Most of the 50 or so species in this section require year-round warm growing conditions and bright light. They have narrow cork-screw –like twisted upright petals that make them look like gazelles. A good example is Dendrobium stratiotes, with lovely golden horns on white flowers, usually marked with red.

**Culture tip number three:** In rain or if one uses **rainwater** to irrigate, the pH of the medium tends to get progressively more acid. **Adding dolomitic lime to the planting medium and using MSU fertilizer will result in excellent growth and flowering.** At the Michigan State University experiments were performed and it was discovered that most fertilizers have too much ammonia / nitrogen in them and result in lush growth and few flowers. 5% of nitrogen (the first number in fertilizers) is sufficient. Also, the phosphorus content of most fertilizers is too high and just washes out and ends up in the rivers and lakes where it causes nasty algal blooms. 3% of phosphorus (the middle number of fertilizers) is sufficient. Potassium (or the Latin Kalium used in chemical formulae) should be the highest number to give lots of flowers. It is the last of the three numbers given for simple fertilizers. MSU fertilizer also supplies Calcium at 8% and Magnesium at 2%, all needed by plants and of course missing from rain water. (See June 2003 AOS "Orchids" magazine, "Without high Phosphorus" by Jan Szyren)

These results have been confirmed by researchers publishing in Orchids.

The Flowering of Orchids by Roberto Lopez and Erik Runkle, PhD. (Orchids, Mar. 2004). Flowering Phalaenopsis; Does Magnesium or Phosphorus Applied in the Autumn Promote Flowering? (Orchids, Aug. 2004.)

But as mentioned before: some of the dendrobiums get so very tall that fertilizing should really be done sparingly: Dendrobium Norman (7/8 *Den. stratiotes*) gets 13 feet high! *Dendrobium sutiknoi* a New Guinea species gets 8 feet tall or more and only flowers on the upper three to five nodes. So if you want to be able to enjoy or even see the flowers, don't fertilize too much! The flowers are certainly worth looking at with their gold, brown and apple green shadings and rolled up sepals.

#### Section *Dendrobium* of the genus *Dendrobium*:

The type for this section is *Dendrobium moniliforme*, a white flowered miniature from Japan.



Dendrobium moniliforme photo Orchidsplus

#### Section *Nobile* of the genus *Dendrobium*:

The type species of this section is *Dendrobium nobile*. Nobile type dendrobiums are known as Yamamoto Dendrobiums. They need 3-4 weeks of temperatures of 59F(15C) or less to initiate flower buds. They do not need drying out to do so. At temperatures down to 40F(4.4C) you get the best flowering. By not drying them you keep the leaves on and that allows them to make more food for more flowers. For the mass market the plants have to have masses of evenly distributed flowers.

Another useful species in this section is *Dendrobium unicum* from Thailand. It likes intermediate growing conditions and produces lovely orange fragrant flowers on 6-8 inch(15-20cm)bulbs.

**The Honohono Orchids** use the species *Den. superbum*, *Den. anosmum*, *Den. parishii* and *Den. primulinum* by themselves or to create lovely hybrids with long pendent



canes, covered with delicately coloured flowers in pink and white.

They are all deciduous like the species that were used to produce them, most flowers are fragrant, but short lived. Fragrant flowers get fertilized very quickly in nature and therefore do not need to last a long time. Plants need a cool period to initiate spikes. Drying in November, one to two months before flower initiation helps the leaves to drop. Cutting back on nitrogen fertilizer at that time helps with the leaf drop. Bulbs with leaves do not flower.



**Dendrobium nobile var. alba**

**Section *Pedilonum* of the genus *Dendrobium*:**



**Dendrobium bracteosum var. alba**

Species in this section have grape-like tufted inflorescences on leaf-less canes. An example is *Dendrobium secundum* with terminal sprays of orange flowers. *Dendrobium smilliae* an Australian species has single tight terminal clusters of pink and white tipped flowers. An almost black lip adds a nice contrast. *Den. bracteosum* has bunches of pointy tipped flowers scattered all over the leaf-less canes.

The deep pink or cream flowers have an orange lip and can last over six months. The flowers have nectar and are bird pollinated. Birds tend to be poor pollinators and bird pollinated flowers have evolved to compensate for this by lasting far longer than bee pollinated flowers. A dry winter is necessary for leaves to drop. Canes with leaves do not flower.

**Section *Dendrocoryne* of the genus *Dendrobium*:**

Most species in this section come from Australia. They have hard canes, are evergreen, have fragrant flowers, and need three weeks of 50 degrees Fahrenheit (10C) to initiate flowers.

The most famous species of this section is the variable, but usually enormous *Dendrobium speciosum*. The *gigantea* form has larger flowers. A well-grown plant is breath-taking. The long, dense inflorescences have cream to yellow to green cupped flowers. However, unless you have a few really strong sons and a big van, only visitors to your greenhouse will ever see it!!! Fred Clarke specializes in this species (as well as the plants he has talked to us about, such as the *Catasetinae*)



**Dendrobium kingianum** photo pp

As a contrast the quite small *Dendrobium kingianum* with white to deep pink fragrant flowers can fit into any growing space. The latter species needs cooler temperatures to flower.



### ***Rhizobium* section of the genus *Dendrobium*:**

Most of the species have terete leaves. They come from Australia and New Guinea. The flowers are usually non-resupinate, which means the lip is uppermost instead of on the bottom of the flower. They will flower several times per year – a great characteristic to bring to hybrids. *Dendrobium wassellii* is a cute example for this section from Australia with small, fat, ridged, upright leaves and upright inflorescences that are longer than the leaves and packed with spiky white flowers.



*Dendrobium wassellii* photo Orchids Plus

*Dendrobium rigidum* is another Australian miniature with smooth, fat upright leaves and when grown well will produce lots of inflorescences of pale peach flowers with a narrow yellow lip and deep red side-lobes. Yet another adorable miniature from Australia is *Dendrobium toressae* with tiny leaves the size of a quarter fingernail and pale olive green flowers of about the same size with orange lips are nestled singly amongst the mat of tiny leaves. This little cutesy likes more shade than the others in the section and can be grown almost like a *Phalaenopsis*, but maybe a bit cooler. Mounting it is the best strategy.

### **Section *Oxyglossum* of the genus *Dendrobium*:**

Plants have miniature growth habit, require intermediate to cool conditions, year round constant temperature and high humidity and have long lasting bird pollinated flowers. An example shown by our speaker was *Dendrobium subacaule* with narrow heavy upright leaves and large red tubular flowers with a yellow throat. *Dendrobium violaceum* has fairly long, narrow leaves that tend to droop and clusters of pale violet somewhat spiky flowers with red, black-shaded lips nestling amongst the bases of the leaves. *Dendrobium laevifolium* has lovely only slightly cupped, full, deep magenta flowers with yellow lips shaded

with red. This section also includes the famous *Dendrobium cuthbertsonii*. (The species Mario Ferrusi grows to perfection and that the rest of us kill).



*Dendrobium laevifolium* photo Orchids Plus

Line breeding there has produced a rainbow of colours from white, yellow, pink and red shades to combinations of all of them. Most of the flowers are large and full and have yellow to orange lips with a dark band near the apex or tip. It is a cool growing alpine species from New Guinea; one inch flowers last up to nine months. It needs constant cool conditions and high humidity, no dry period. Our speaker grows this species in sphagnum. If he does not keep them in a cooled area they wither away after 2-3 months. It occurs at 8000 to 9000 feet elevation where insects fly very poorly if at all. To attract birds as pollinators the colours tend to be brighter. All the species look somewhat alike because they are all trying to tell birds that they have nectar.

*Dendrobium tanii* from Papua New Guinea is the easiest species to grow from this section. It has curved out, light magenta flowers arranged in clusters near the base of the plant. The flowers last six months or more!

### ***Latouria* section of the genus *Dendrobium*:**

Plants in this section are characterized by leaves that are attached to the bulb without a sheath. They are bee pollinated, but last 5-6 months anyway!

The section contains about 50 species and most occur in New Guinea. They have long lasting flowers, in whites, creams, greens, and browns; they have evergreen leaves and are tolerant of the extremes. No dry rest period.

*Dendrobium rhodostictum* has the pseudobulbs lifted up by long thin stalks! Two to three relatively large white flowers with purple-tipped lips dangle like bells from their pedicels.

*Dendrobium atrovioleaceum* has cream to palest olive flowers with olive spotting on the reverse that can be seen on the front. The sepals are pointy, while the petals are wider and tend to twist. The lip frames the column and is deep red-brown. A miniature variety is even slightly fragrant. It needs

high humidity, must never dry out and flowers once per year, but flowers last 5-6 months.

in a row and the plant usually gets the “best dendrobium” award in several successive shows!



*Dendrobium atroviolaceum* photo pp



*Dendrobium musciferum* has densely flowered upright inflorescences with flowers that have hairy and warty pale green sepals, white rhombic petals and a golden lip with red lines on the proximal half.

*Dendrobium convolutum* has inflorescences of about six flat, pale green flowers with a wide, shiny, violin-shaped lip, that is overlaid almost to the edges with red-brown.

*Dendrobium aberrans* is a miniature species of this section that grows in intermediate conditions. A mature plant is quite well housed in a three-inch (7.5cm) pot! It has quarter-inch white flowers, produced in two to three flowered bunches from the top of the tiny plants. It is used to bring down the plant size of hybrids.

*Dendrobium spectabile* is a large-growing (up to about four feet or 1.5m), warmth requiring plant from New Guinea. It has terminal inflorescences of up to about 10 flowers of the most fantastic shape! The flowers are cream to gold with heavy red-brown veining and such heavy crimping on the flower part edges that the whole segment curls. The result is a flower that looks like a scary venomous insect!

*Dendrobium johnsoniae* is a medium sized plant with very white, about 10cm wide flowers, produced in threes to fours at the top of the plant. Crossing this species with *Dendrobium atroviolaceum* results in the famous Dendrobium Roy Tokunaga. The latter hybrid has nodding, very long lasting, white to cream flowers spotted with red-brown and purple side-lobes to the lip. We judges in the Toronto area see a big plant of this cross at several shows

The best white *Latouria* hybrid according to our speaker is the cross of Dendrobium Roy Tokunaga with Dendrobium Silver Wings, Dendrobium Royal Wings. The clone shown had arched terminal inflorescences of at about 10 flowers. The flowers were a bit cupped, fairly full, out-facing, and very white and the lips were beautifully veined with purple.

The best miniature *Latouria* hybrid according to our speaker is Dendrobium Aussie's Chip, a cross of *Dendrobium aberrans* and *atroviolaceum*. The plant shown was covered with terminal inflorescences of about six white flowers with a chartreuse overlay on the wide three-lobed lip. Lovely!

### Section *Formosae* (Syn. *Nigrohirsutae*) of the genus *Dendrobium* calls India and the Philippines home.

*Formosae* Dendrobiums need bright light and *Vanda* conditions. Fertilize heavily during the summer. In Hawaii they use one teaspoon of water soluble fertilizer per gallon (4 liters) of water per week and cut this down to ¼ teaspoon for the winter. The recommendation is to use the Michigan State University(MSU) RO water fertilizer.

*Dendrobium formosum* typifies the section and has very large, snow-white, full, in all but the best clones slightly floppy flowers that last a long time even though they have a thin tissue-paper- like texture. The lip has a large yellow and orange blotch spilling out of the throat. There are up to about four flowers per inflorescence.

*Dendrobium cruentum* must have good drainage. It is from Thailand and warm growing. It has ice green to darker green pointy-tipped flowers and the lip has well-defined red markings on the crest, edge and side-lobes.

*Dendrobium tobaense* has up to 10cm tall plants, but is difficult to grow since it comes from high elevations of 5000 feet or more, from the Lake Toba area. But its stunning flowers make it worthwhile to try to simulate its cool home. The flowers are light green, veined deep green; the lip is beige with a very white narrow tip (like a surrender flag!) and a bright red, wide crest in the lip throat. The anther cap is bright white.





**Dendrobium formosum** photo OrchidsPlus

Dendrobium Peng Seng (*cruentum* X *tobaense*) was illustrated with a clone that had two gracefully curved green flowers near the cane apex. The segments were veined with darker green and the lip was heavily overlaid with orange and red. Dendrobium Dawn Maree (*formosum* X *cruentum*) got the best of both parents in the clone used to illustrate the cross. The flowers were white, full, but not the least bit floppy and had a wide red and orange marked lip. The whole upper half of the cane was covered with flowers. It is sterile when 2n, so 4n clones are used for breeding. Dendrobium Green Lantern (Dawn Maree X *cruentum*) is much like Dawn Maree but has a hint of ice green in the flowers and most clones are more floriferous than Dawn Maree. The flowers last 4-6 months!

**Section Callista of the genus Dendrobium was the last section to be discussed in this talk.**

Plants in this section have hard canes and need three weeks of cooler temperatures to flower. It is not necessary to dry the plants in this group. *Dendrobium thyrsiflorum* has long ridged canes and produces grape-like hanging clusters of delicate white flowers with a yellow-orange, wide, rounded lip. The flowers last about a week.

*Dendrobium chrysotoxum* var. *suavissimum* flowers with about half a dozen waxy gold flowers that have a red blotch in the lip throat. *Dendrobium aggregatum* has small pseudobulbs pressed close to the mount and small leathery leaves. They will produce lovely sprays of 3cm yellow flowers, dominated by a rounded somewhat tubular lip whose throat is dark gold.



**Dendrobium thyrsiflorum** photo pp

**Summary:**

Old timers agree that good, abundant roots are most important for growth and flowering. pH of media should be 5-6.

Low salts in media. Leaching very important

Pediluncum and soft cane Dendrobiums need to drop their leaves before flower spikes can initiate. Dry cool winters help to drop the leaves.

Nobile and Dendrocoryne Dendrobiums require three weeks of cool night temperatures below 59F to initiate flowers.

The real flower booster is **calcium**. It is needed in large amounts during flowering. Calcium is highly immobile. It only moves in the xylem with the transpiration stream. If the humidity is too high or the stomatas are closed, calcium cannot move. Calcium must be absorbed by the roots and transported in the xylem at the time of flowering. It cannot be stored in the bulbs or roots for future use.

Roy Tokunaga starts applying a high calcium soluble fertilizer at 1 tsp per gallon, weekly, starting one month before spikes appears. He continues until the last bud opens. Nitrates do not interfere with the flowering. He waters as needed and he uses no ammonia based fertilizer until flowers are done.

The H&R formula; use only in Hawaii. Bright light year round.

Scotts Cal-Mag special in 25 pound bags.

15-5-15 with 5% calcium and 2% Magnesium

He also adds 20% calcium nitrate by weight.

At another time, he applies 20% by weight of magnesium sulfate.

They apply this as a constant feed through the irrigation system with about 6000 gallons of water.

In Hawaii, most hobbyists will use one tsp of soluble fertilizer per gallon of water and apply weekly. This is the maximum normally recommended for the summer. The rate drops to once a month in the winter.

Lower the rates for our climate here in Toronto and elsewhere in Canada.

### **Flower Boosters**

Flower production is like a rocket launch. All systems must be signalling "go". How does the plant direct all the raw materials to the spike? Sugar, amino acids, and various minerals. Roy scanned the literature to understand the flowering process. He is sharing some of the best articles below.

Orchids do not need extra Phosphorus or Magnesium. See Flowering Phalaenopsis, Orchids, Aug. 2004, pp.602-605, by Dr. Yin- Tung Wang. Without Phosphorus, Orchids, June 2003, pp 456-459 by Jan Szyren.

In the same article, Dr. John Biernbaum says "it's not the high doses of Phosphorus that boost the flowering, but the lack of nitrogen".

Roy has been able to confirm these results over the last 10 years.

### **Building Blocks for Hybrids:**

- o Den. formosum is the most important building block.
- o Den. cruentum, Formidible, Dawn Maree, and sanderae would be in the second 200 most successful hybrids.
- o Den. trigonopus, infundibulum, scabrilingue, schuetzei, bellatulum, and dearei would be in the third tier of 300 most successful hybrids.
- o Size comes from formosum, infundibulum, and schuetzei.
- o Substance comes from formosum, cruentum, and scabrilingue.
- o Yellow comes from trigonopus and lowii.
- o The red lip comes from cruentum, tobaense, and suzukii.

## **Address Change**

Orchid Society of Nova Scotia have been forced to register a new domain name for their website. It is now <http://nsorchidsociety.org> (.org instead of .com).

This is the third society to mislay a renewal notice for their domain name. Then you must either register a new name and change all your advertising or plead with your domain's new owner to sell it back to you. Neither a good proposition.

**Your society executive must keep a record of when these bills are due and if no notice has been seen, to chase it down.**

## **Orchid Website**

The St. Augustine Orchid Society has a great collection of notes on orchid culture on their website and you might browser their other pages for lots more.

<http://www.staugorchidsociety.org/culture.htm>

## **Conservation**

The IUCN/SSC Orchid Specialist Group is a global network of experts who volunteer their time and expertise to build a scientific and practical foundation for the conservation of orchids (Orchidaceae).

Orchidaceae are the largest family of flowering plants and they occur in a wide range of ecosystems and habitats. A charismatic group, many species are important in horticulture. Habitats of orchids are, however, threatened throughout the world, and the OSG is dedicated to their conservation and sustainable use.

The OSG newsletter is edited by Marilyn Light, our conservation person.

Have a look: [The Orchid Specialist Group](#)

## **New Vendor**

King Guey in Abbotsford BC specializes in Taiwan Phalaenopsis. <http://kingguey.ca/>





## Donation

Darrell Albert

On behalf of the Congress of Canadian Orchid Societies I wish to thank the Orchid Society of Alberta for their generous donation of the proceeds of the 2014 Alberta Orchid Show Banquet auction of \$840 to COC for furtherance of COC projects. COC is committed to supporting the growth and health of orchid organizations across Canada.

Thank you, Peter Poot, President.

## COC Auction at Orchidfest

Thank you all donors of auction items and bidders for your participation in our silent auction. The auction raised \$786 for COC programs. Thank you SOOS and the Kennedys for hosting the Annual General Meeting.

The Auction donors were: Ingrid Ostrander, Orchid Society of the RBG, Windsor Orchid Society, Joyce Medcalf, Rosanna Li, Joe O'Regan, H&R Nurseries, Synea Tan, Marion Curry, Agnes Hastick, Bernie Butts and Chuck Lefave, Central Ontario Orchid Society, Nila Ryabova, Veronica Cheblowsky, Tom Atkinson, Doug and Terry Kennedy, Mario and Conni Ferrusi, Inge and Peter Poot.



## COMING EVENTS

2014

**Sept 10-14:** The [21st World Orchid Conference](#) "Orchids: Gold in the Green Age" will take place in the vibrant city of Johannesburg, South Africa at the world class Sandton Convention Centre.

**Sept 27-28:** The [Central Ontario Orchid Society](#) Cambridge Hespeler Arena, 640 Ellis Road, Cambridge.

**Oct 18-19:** [Eastern Canada Orchid Society](#) at the CEGEP Andre-Larendeau, 1111 Lapierre, Lasalle QC H8N 2J4. Phone 514-684-3904

**Oct 18-19:** [Fraser Valley Orchid Society](#) Show & Plant Sale will be held at George Preston Arena, 20699 42 Ave. Langley B.C. Email [fvosbc@gmail.com](mailto:fvosbc@gmail.com) for more info.

**Oct 25-26:** "Falling for Orchids" - [The Windsor Orchid Society](#) will be holding its 2nd annual, AOS judged, Orchid Show and Sale at the Teutonia Club of Windsor, 55 Edinborough Rd., Windsor, Ontario. The Show will feature beautiful displays of orchids, artistic entries, educational exhibits and a great selection of vendors. Free presentations and demonstrations will be held on the Sunday of the event including a photographers workshop and exclusive photo session on Sunday morning. For more information refer to our website or contact Ed Cott at [laelia@aol.com](mailto:laelia@aol.com). "A splendid time is guaranteed for all."

**Nov 1-2:** The [Essex County Orchid Society](#) will be holding their 5th Orchid Show and Sale at Colasanti's Tropical Gardens, 1550 Road 3 E. Ruthven, ON. The Show will feature Artistic Designs Displays, Art component and vendors. Free talks and demonstrations on orchid related topics. For more information see the website or email Juliette St. Pierre at [canadel48@gmail.com](mailto:canadel48@gmail.com)

**Nov 8-9:** Orchids Under Glass, Fall Mid-American Orchid Congress will be hosted in the Grand Atrium of the lovely Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens in the heart of Columbus, Ohio. Contact Justin Pepperney at 1-614-804-1167 or email: [pepperney.3@gmail.com](mailto:pepperney.3@gmail.com)

Get your show dates, with details, to the COC editor.

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### COCnews

The purpose of COCnews 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 urged to pass a copy on to other members of their society.

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