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ORCHID

newsletter

A newsletter for the members of the Maryland Orchid Society

January 2009



president's message

I'm not usually inclined to make New Year's resolutions. It's been well over a decade since I made any personal resolutions. Then again, there's something to be said for setting goals and articulating a vision of the future. (*If you aim for nothing, you're sure to hit it.*) So with a wink and a smile, here are my orchid resolutions for 2009.

1. Catch up on orchid magazines – I must have at least a 15-inch stack of periodicals that I haven't read and most of those are *Orchids* and *Orchid Digest* magazines. Just a couple of years ago, I was methodically and systematically reading old *Orchids* and *AOS Bulletin* issues from my small 1980s/1990s vintage collection. What happened to all that free time?
2. End monthly meetings on time – At nearly every monthly meeting I am gently reminded that not every member has the desire or stamina to endure a late night out. I, on the other hand, love the monthly meetings and would go until midnight if I could get away with it. This will be a tough one, but I'll do my best.
3. Get more exercise – I know what you're thinking, "How is this orchid related?" Here's how: As the only horizontal surface (other than the floor) in my spare bedroom, my treadmill tends to accumulate junk far more readily than miles. Most of this stuff is boxes and trays of dead orchids. It's a lot more

- convenient than carrying pots downstairs and out to the porch. I'm sure that fitness is but a simple clean-up away.
4. Get a new light stand – I'm out of room! Yeah, I know that doesn't elicit much sympathy from this crowd. But truly I'm at that point where the only way I can fit in a new orchid is if an old orchid dies. (Sadly, I'm getting good at that. See below.) In as much as a new light stand is still cheaper than a greenhouse, I'll make room in my living room for some higher light orchids. Those T5 fluorescent fixtures sure are expensive though.
5. Control orchid pests – The past few months have been extremely frustrating. I'm experiencing a perfect storm of Boisduval scale, brown scale, *Phalaenopsis* mite and mealybug. I'm committed to not using nasty poisonous chemicals, and so far I've won a few battles, but the war is not nearly over yet.
6. Push ideas – You may recall that I introduced the "Idea List" last October. It's still alive and well, and I'll keep you apprised of our accomplishments as the year progresses. Wish me luck. (I'll need it.) Best wishes for an orchid-enriched New Year!

Gary

Joseph J. Francis is January Speaker

Joe Francis serves on the finance committee of the National Capital Orchid Society and is treasurer of the Fairfax County Master Gardeners Association. He and his wife, Aggie, have carried a full load of volunteer work in the Washington, DC metro area that began in earnest shortly after their business career retirements.

Joe Francis is a hobbyist orchid grower whose avocation began some twenty plus years ago when his wife brought home a mature, in bloom *Cattleya skinneri* and suggested that there was room in the family greenhouse amongst the annuals and vegetable seedlings for orchids.

That journey led to an expansion from 180 square feet of greenhouse space to three structures totaling just over 2,400 square feet of growing space. Joe has perhaps 2,000 orchid plants under cultivation. He has a special interest in the standard *Cattleya*, but the *Oncidium* and other genera capture equal bench space. Joe has received a number of AOS recognition awards in both the flower and cultural categories.

Joe will speak about orchid virus infections and home hobbyist cultural practices that can minimize their spread within your collections. His presentation will include demonstrations using test kits that are available to the home orchid grower.

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December Show Table

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NCOS Paph Forum

MOS Spring Show Update



Phal. (Bamboo Baby X Taipei Gold)
- Janice Mazur



Paph. (Yerba Buena X Caddiona)
- Gregg Custis

Novice

1. *Phal.* (Bamboo Baby X Taipei Gold) - Janice Mazur
2. *Paph.* (Yerba Buena X Caddiona) - Gregg Custis
3. *Phal.* Hybrid - Suzanne Gaertner

Home Grown

1. *Onc.* Twinkle - Bill Scharf
2. *Paph.* Berenice - Phuong Tran & Rich Kaste
3. Tie *Lc. Mem. Dr. Peng 'Deep'* AM/AOS - Ernie Drohan
Mtssa. Seattle Sunrise X Milt. Cast Gold - Marilyn Lauffer



Onc. Twinkle - Bill Scharf

Greenhouse Under 200 Square Feet

1. *Dar.* Charm 'Pacific Blue' - Craig Taborsky
2. *Paph. spicerianum* - Lou Vadorsky
3. *Paph. (malipoense X armeniacum)* - Jos Venturina



Lc. Mem. Dr. Peng 'Deep' AM/AOS
- Ernie Drohan

Greenhouse Over 200 Square Feet

1. *Blc.* Chia Lin 'New City' AM/AOS - The Adamses
2. *Neolauchia pulchella* - David Smith
3. *Den.* Nora Tokunaga - Cy Swett



Mtssa. Seattle Sunrise X Milt. Cast Gold
- Marilyn Lauffer

Cattleya

1. *Blc.* Chian Tzy Emperor 'Golden Sun' - Les Kirkegaard
2. *L. anceps* 'Irwins' AM/AOS - The Adamses
3. *Blc.* Mary Hurland 'Hawaii' - Cy Swett



Dar. Charm 'Pacific Blue' - Craig Taborsky

Phalaenopsis

1. *Phal.* Mary Pollard - Mark Robbins
2. *Dtps.* (Taisuco Firebird X Minho Princess) - The Adamses



Blc. Mary Hurland 'Hawaii' - Cy Swett

Oncidium

1. *Bllra.* Marfitch 'Howard's Dream' AM/AOS - Craig Taborsky
2. *Odbrs.* Fangtastic Bob Henley 'HOF#4' - The Adamses
3. *Onc.* Twinkle - Mary Chiu

Paphiopedilum and Phragmipedium

1. *Paph.* Vera Pellachia 'TomCat' - Mark Robbins
2. Tie *Paph.* Sun and Surf - David Smith
Paph. venustum var. album - The Adamses
Phrag. Andean Fire - Lou Vadorsky
3. Tie *Paph. faireianum var. album* - Bill Scharf
Paph. (primulinum X Yosimite Moon) - Don Forester



Blc. Chia Lin 'New City' AM/AOS - The Adamses



Phal. Mary Pollard - Mark Robbins

Miscellaneous Hybrids

1. *Den.* Stephen Batchelor 'Venturina' CCM/AOS - Jos Venturina
2. *Burr.* Nelly Isler 'Swiss Beauty' - Phuong Tran & Rich Kaste
3. *Masd.* Vulcan - The Adamses



Paph. Sun and Surf - David Smith



Phrag. Andean Fire - Lou Vadorsky

Species

1. *Comp. macroplectron* - David Smith
2. *Pths. schweinfurthii* - The Adamses
3. *Max. variabilis var. aurea* - Bill Scharf

Miniature

1. *Epi. porpax var. alba* 'Harford' CHM/AOS - Bill Scharf
2. *Masd. decumana* - Craig Sherman
3. *Pths. alata* - David Smith



Zygo. (*mackayii* X Titantic) - Cy Swett

First Bloom Seedling

1. *Paph.* Jerry Fisher - Mark Robbins
2. *Blc.* Owen Holmes X C. Chocolate Drop - The Adamses



Photo by Beng Light

Blc. Ports of Paradise 'Emerald Isles' FCC/AOS - Nancy Duggan

Fragrance

1. *Blc.* Ports of Paradise 'Emerald Isles' FCC/AOS - Nancy Duggan
2. *Masd. nicaraguae* - Craig Sherman
3. *Zygo.* (*mackayii* X Titantic) - Cy Swett

The Judges Choice of the Evening, for the second month in a row, was *Den.* Stephen Batchelor 'Venturina' CCM/AOS, exhibited by Jos Venturina. The judges were Don Forester, Craig Taborsky and Lorie Lee-Young. There were 105 plants on the show table!

Photo by Beng Light

NCJC Outing Well Worth the Trip

On December 6, the MOS arranged for members to attend a special orchid judging education event at the National Capital Judging Center. The event, sponsored by the local AOS judges, provided an opportunity for members to interact with the judges. The small group of members

who attended the event found it extremely rewarding.

The event, set up in part by our own AOS judge Valerie Lowe, featured an informative seminar, questions and answers, and the chance to see up close what judges consider and evaluate when bestowing an award

to a plant or a grower. The critique for passage or failure proved most interesting, enlightening all of us in pursuit of the perfect orchid plant specimen.

Eric Wiles
Education and Activities Chair

Book Review: *Orchids of Mexico*

Review by Bill Ellis, Maryland Orchid Society Auction Chair

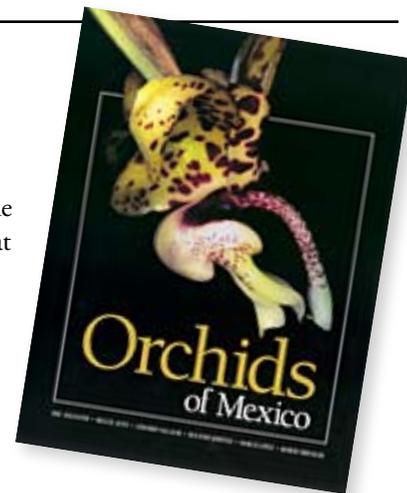
Orchids of Mexico, by Eric Hágsater, Miguel Soto, Gerardo Salazar, Rolando Jiménez, Marco López, and Robert Dressler; cloth-bound hardcover published in 2005 by Productos Farmacéuticos, S. A. de C. V., México City, México.

This is a book about the orchids of Mexico and the ecological regions where they are found. The photographs of Mexican orchids throughout the book, and of the habitats where they grow, are superb. Eight of the twelve chapters in the book are named for Mexico's ecological regions, where the climate and terrain produce characteristic plant communities, and specific orchid species can be expected. For example, the chapter Tropical Rain Forests describes the high rainfall during May through December, and year-round warm temperatures, as resembling the conditions in a warm greenhouse. A distribution map shows that the tropical rain forests are in the coastal plain along the Gulf of Mexico and in the southern and eastern parts of the Yucatan Peninsula. Seven of the ecological regions have maps to show their distribution.

The orchids in the tropical rain forests include terrestrials such as *Sarcoglottis sceptrodes*, with yellow flowers and silver and green variegated leaves, but the majority of orchids in that ecoregion are epiphytes. In the first few meters (6 – 10 ft) above the ground, growing on the bark of trees are found shade-tolerant orchids such as *Epidendrum macroclinum*. Higher up on the tree trunks, *Prosthechea cochleata* (formerly *Encyclia cochleata*, the Clamshell or Cockle Shell Orchid) is found, as well as *gongoras*, *stanhopeas*, and a number of *pleurothallids*. At the point where the trees form large branches, much dead vegetative material can accumulate to form humus and grow a moss layer, and large orchids can be supported, such as the beautiful *Sobralia decora*, an orchid with cattleya-like 7 to 10 cm (3 – 4 inch) lavender-pink flowers. (Note: *Sobralia decora* is mentioned on page 96, but the color photo is on page 155. A similar situation exists for many orchid photos, so the Index of Orchid Species should be consulted regularly.) This ecological niche, below the canopy, has the greatest variety and number of orchids, as well as many other epiphytes.

On the smaller branches within the forest canopy grow a variety of so-called “twig epiphytes,” including a number of micro-orchids such as those of the genera *Erycina* and *Ornithocephalus*. The difficult growing conditions for these orchids include strong breezes and rapid drying, little detritus to supply nutrients, and minimal surface area for support. The discussion of ecological niches in each ecoregion can be useful to understand the growing conditions, especially light and growing medium, required by the orchids for optimum growth.

The Tropical Rain Forest chapter also discusses in some detail the euglossine bees that pollinate about 600 to 700 different orchid species. These bees collect the floral fragrances from orchids and, during that activity, carry pollen between orchid blossoms.



Most chapters on ecoregions contain one or more “ombrothermic” diagrams, that show mean monthly temperatures and rainfalls together, as well as the periods with high or inadequate rainfall. The mean temperatures remain fairly constant in the tropical rain forest, between about 22 and 28 degrees Celsius. The rainfall has a brief dry period, during February and March, when the monthly rain is less than about 50 mm (2 inches), as well as the previously mentioned wet period during May through December, with monthly rainfall from 100 mm (4 inches) to about 450 mm (18 inches). These ombrothermic diagrams can be useful to orchid growers, because they show what the orchids in that ecoregion experience in nature, and may need for optimum growth.

In addition to the 8 ecoregion chapters, there are chapters on orchid structure and function, Mexican culture related to orchids, especially growth and use of vanilla, the Mexican landscape, and the desperate need for conservation. In the Mexican Landscape chapter, climate and geographic surface features (physiography) are described. Do not become confused — an excellent detailed map called the “Floristic Provinces of Mexico” is misnamed — it is a map of the physiographic provinces of Mexico. Physiographic provinces, such as “Southern Mexican Plateau and El Bajío” and “Transverse Volcanic Belt”, based on the physical structure of the terrain, coincide partially with floristic or biogeographic provinces because of the enormous effect contributed by elevation and soils to climate and growing environment for plants. In the rest of the book, the chapter titles and discussion provide appropriate names for the floristic regions — for example, Arid and Semiarid Zones (covering much of the Southern Mexican Plateau) and Tropical Dry Forests (covering part of the Transverse Volcanic Belt).

This book is really a masterpiece, having integrated the relevant subjects of physiography, climate, ecology, and habitat into a whole that spells out why the orchids are there, and shows those orchids in hundreds of beautiful color photos. You will find it fun to read, and very pleasing to the eye. You might call it a coffee table book with substance. It is available in the MOS library.

This column features the MOS' Judges' Choice plant for the previous month. In November and December, Jos Venturina's *Den*. Stephen Batchelor Venturina was awarded the honor. Following is Jos' description of how he grows his plant:



“ I purchased *Dendrobium* Stephen Batchelor from Nguyen Orchids at one of the MOS annual Show and Sale. It's at least 11 years old now because I was still living in an apartment when I bought the plant which, at that time had

five to six canes and a few flowers. It grew sporadically over the years, having survived two accidental “gassings,” a brief period of “water intoxication,” and five years of benign neglect – testaments to its hardiness! Blooming had also been intermittent albeit incremental when it did, up until this year when it suddenly took off after being re-potted this summer. And yes, it's true: I tried coaxing the buds to open by baking the plant in 90-degree temperature in the greenhouse in a vain attempt to loan it for the SOS Show this October, succeeding only in placing two *Masdevallias* in DNR (do not resuscitate) status.

Dendrobium Stephen Batchelor has been potted in different media over the past years, from bark and Styrofoam peanuts to coconut chips with Perlite, to the present formula of a few coco chips and a majority of rubber mulch. It has resided on the upper level of a two-tier shelving system in the greenhouse which is oriented north – a grievous error I know, but I was in a hurry to put up the greenhouse in 1998 (lest all my plants perish on the concrete slab) and didn't pay attention to the sun's movement over my backyard. Temperatures in the summer range from 80 to 100 degrees and 55 – 65 in the winter. Humidity stays at 60 – 70% most of the year, with a drop to about 50% during the cold months. It receives thorough filtered-watering daily during warm months, and every other day or every two days in the winter. This is in addition to the drip and misting systems in place in the greenhouse. I use Miracle-Gro 15-30-15 or fish emulsion to fertilize once a week during warm months, then a balanced fertilizer once a month in the winter. The only persistent pest has been slugs which do not seem to respond to Sluggo pellets any more. (Tried the beer, too – didn't work for me.) I've recently taken to wrapping inflorescences of any budding/spiking plant that can accommodate it in small coils of copper wire (talk about tedious work!!), and setting *Masdevallias* on copper-clad printed circuit boards – we shall see. My plant is in dire need of a new pot, and will get one when the last flowers fade which, because of its *alexandrae* and *johnsoniae* parentage, thankfully will not be for a few more weeks. ”

Date: 15 January
Event: Maryland Orchid Society Meeting
Location: First Christian Church, 5802 Roland Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21210
Time: Show table 7:30 PM; Meeting at 8:00 PM
Details: www.marylandorchids.org

Date: 22 January
Event: Maryland Orchid Society Board Meeting
Location: Buck home
Time: Light dinner 6:30 PM; Meeting at 7:30 PM
Details: www.marylandorchids.org

Date: 24 January - 26 April
Event: “Orchids Through Darwin's Eyes” Exhibit
Location: Smithsonian Institute
Details: http://newsdesk.si.edu/photos/nmnh_orchid_show_09.htm

Date: 7 February
Event: National Capital Judging Center Judging Session
Location: U.S. National Arboretum, 3501 New York Ave NE, Washington, DC 20002
Time: 12:30 PM
Details: www.nationalcapitaljc.org

Date: 14 February
Event: NCOS Paphiopedilum Forum
Location: U.S. National Arboretum, 24th and R Streets, NE, Washington, DC 20002
Time: 8 AM - 4:30 PM
Details: <http://www.ncos.us/ncos>

Date: 19 February
Event: Maryland Orchid Society Meeting
Location: First Christian Church, 5802 Roland Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21210
Time: Show table 7:30 PM; Meeting at 8:00 PM
Details: www.marylandorchids.org

Date: 7 March
Event: National Capital Judging Center Judging Session
Location: U.S. National Arboretum, 3501 New York Ave NE, Washington, DC 20002
Time: 12:30 PM
Details: www.nationalcapitaljc.org

Date: 13-15 March (staging set-up 10 March, exhibit set-up 11 March)
Event: MOS Show and Sale
Location: Maryland State Fair Grounds, Timonium, MD

Next MOS Board Meeting

The MOS will conduct its next quarterly Board of Trustees Meeting on 22 January at the home of Louis and Barbara Buck. Light fare will be available beginning at 6:30 PM. The meeting will start at 7:30 sharp. All Board meetings are open to the general membership. If you plan to attend, please RSVP to Lou, Barb, or Gary Smith to ensure that enough food and refreshments will be on hand. Directions from I-695 below:

- From I-695, LEFT at Exit 4 onto I-97 for 5.7 mi.
- RIGHT at Exit 12 onto New Cut Road for 3.9 mi.
- LEFT at Burns Crossing Road. The Buck's house is #168 on the right.

LADYSLIPPER ENTHUSIASTS...SAVE THIS DATE!

2009 NATIONAL CAPITAL ORCHID SOCIETY

PAPHIOPEDILUM FORUM

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2009

U. S. NATIONAL ARBORETUM

24TH AND R STREETS, NE, WASHINGTON DC

The 29th annual NCOS Paph Forum will feature internationally-renowned speakers, an unparalleled selection of Paphiopedilum and Phragmipedium plants for sale by leading vendors, a show table featuring hundreds of slippers in bloom, ribbons and trophies for outstanding show plants, door prizes, book signing opportunity, a silent auction to benefit the Slipper Orchid Alliance, and American Orchid Society judging.



2009 Paph Forum Speakers

Terry Root – Orchid Zone Limited, California
“Orchid Zone Slippers”

Alfredo Manrique – Centro de Jardineria Manrique, Lima, Perú
“Slipper Orchids of Peru including an Update on Phrag. kovachii”

John Salventi, PhD. – Parkside Orchid Nursery Inc., Pennsylvania
“The Developing Sophistication in ‘Pot Plant’ Paphiopedilums”

Bryan Ramsay – National Capital AOS Judging Center
“Overview of Recent Slipper Orchid Awards”

2009 Paph Forum Vendors

Plants: Alan Salzman Orchids, NY; Alfredo Manrique, Peru; Bloomfield Orchids, NY; Floradise Orchids, VA; Marriott Orchids, NC; Orchid Enterprise, VA; Orchidview Orchids, SC; Orchid Zone orchids by Cove Corporation; Parkside Orchid Nursery, PA; Woodstream Orchids, MD.

Supplies: Quarter Acre Orchids, VA

Orchid Design Gifts: Celebrate Orchids! VA

NCOS Member Plant Sales: Members pre-registered for the Forum may sell slipper orchids.



Book Signing Opportunity

Bring your copy of the recently published “Tropical Slipper Orchids” by Harold Koopowitz. Harold will be at the Forum and will sign your book.

Paph Forum Registration



Pre-registration is required. The entry fee of \$50.00 includes lunch and a door prize ticket. Participation is limited to the first 140 registrants! Sales begin at 8:00 am, the program begins at 9:45 am, and the event concludes at 4:30 pm.

Please visit the NCOS website over the next few weeks for further details regarding the 2009 Program and Schedule, Plant Exhibition Guidelines, and Meeting Registration Information. <http://www.ncos.us/ncos>

To see a list of last year’s prize-winning orchids and their exhibitors, visit <http://www.ncos.us/ncos>

mos holiday party

Photo by Beng Light



Paph. Jerry Fisher - Mark Robbins

Photo by Beng Light



Paph. Berenice - Phuong Tran & Rich Kaste



Photo by Beng Light

Quiet, Please

At last month's meeting it was requested by several members that we set aside a talking area so that members can feel free to converse without interrupting the speaker or Tom McBride while he reviews the show table. I would like to suggest that the church kitchen be designated for this purpose. Please move to the kitchen if you want to carry on a conversation during these times. Thanks for your cooperation.

Gary

Correction

In last month's newsletter the names we published for Jos Venturina's award-winning plants on the first page were incorrect. The correct names are *Scaphosepalum decorum* 'Venturina' and *Scaphosepalum gibberosum* 'Venturina'.

New Members

The MOS would like to announce Gregg Custis, David Grant and George and Julia Morris as new members. Please welcome them warmly at the next meeting.

ORCHID GREENHOUSE CLOSEOUT SALE!

The Susquehanna Orchid Society cordially invites you to a closeout sale of over 1,000 orchids from a private greenhouse collection on Saturday, January 10, 2009. The collection is heavy on Cattleyas but there are many other genera as well. All plants must go that day. Nothing is priced over \$20.00, most under \$10.00. Plants will be priced at \$2.00 per inch pot size. Build a quality collection at an unbelievable low price! Cash and check payable to the Susquehanna Orchid Society only. Please bring your own boxes.

Date: Saturday, 10 January 2009
Alternative snow date: Saturday, 17 January 2009.
Time: 11:00 am-4:00 pm.
Location: 825 Hess Farm Road, Dallastown, PA

Check our web site, <http://www.susquehanna-orchid.org/>, for snow date change in case of bad weather.

Directions:

From the North:

Take Rt 83 South to the Loganville Exit (Exit 10), Then take Rt 214 East for approx 2.0 miles

From the South:

Take Rt 83 North to the Loganville Exit (Exit 10), Then take Rt 214 East for approx 2.0 miles

From the East (Philadelphia area):

Take the PA Turnpike to Rt 222, and then to Rt 30. Rt 30 meets up with Rt 83, take that South to the Loganville exit, and then to Rt 214.

2009 Spring Show Update

We are no longer inching toward the Spring Show. In fact it feels more like "barreling" at this point. I promised a Show Theme by January's meeting, and here is the winner — "Orchids, Nature's Kaleidoscope". Put on your creative hats and start planning your winning exhibit.

The Show committee strives not only to improve the Show each year, but to keep the Society's best interest in mind at all times. In order to save paper, and the expense of printing and mailing the Exhibitor Packet to the membership, you will be receiving the packet via email, as a PDF attachment, before next Thursday's meeting. Please take time to familiarize yourself with the information included and come prepared to next Thursday's meeting with questions. The packet will also be posted on our website in the very near future.

If you cannot download a PDF or do not have access to a computer, there will be several hard copies available at the meeting. Should we run out, a copy can be mailed to you. We hope to do that only as a last resort for the reasons stated previously.

The Show has been so successful because of a membership that is very willing and eager to help. In fact, the Show would not be possible without you. Please sign up to help at next Thursday's meeting.

Bill Scharf,
MOS Vice President and Show Chairman

Maryland Orchid Society

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