

# MARYLAND ORCHID SOCIETY

# ORCHID

## newsletter



News and information for the members of the Maryland Orchid Society

June 2012

## president's message

### Blink of an Eye

It is very hard for me to believe that two years have passed by.

It has been my honor and pleasure to serve as President of the Maryland Orchid Society. What a vibrant, enthusiastic and welcoming group the MOS is. We have accomplished much, but as always there is still much to do and I look forward to my continued involvement. The society is healthy and self-sustaining. We continue to attract new members and we continue to have enormous participation from the membership. As a Society we have bettered our skills in cultivating orchids. This is made obvious by the always impressive show table each month. Our Auction and Annual Show continue to do well as our most prominent fundraising events. These events have served us well by introducing the Society to new members, which is always our goal; I'm very proud of that.

As I write my last message as president of the Society I want to whole-heartedly thank the MOS Executive Board and Committee Chairs whom I've had the honor of working with over the past two years. They have made my job easy and truly enjoyable. It's been a pleasure to work with such talented, amazing and hardworking people.

Thank you so much!

Happy Growing,

*Bill*

### Erich Michel Speaks at June Meeting

We're fortunate to have enticed Erich Michel back again for a return visit to MOS. His last stint was as an unexpected but much appreciated plant vendor at our annual show last March. His collection of sale plants made more than a few members drool. Erich's presentation topic will be on Tropical Terrestrial Orchids, which will include jewel orchids. It isn't every day that a grower with Erich's breadth of expertise and knowledge can be made accessible to our members. Don't miss this opportunity, our last before the summer break.

Erich Michel joined Hoosier Orchid Company as Laboratory Director in the spring of 1991, after studying Biochemistry and Microbiology at Indiana University. He has great interest in all aspects of the propagation of orchid species and handles laboratory programs and has responsibility for the implementation of research programs at Michel Orchid Nursery. His research has included tetrazolium red stain testing for living tissue using oxidation; the determination of seed-coat thickness and

consequential sterilization requirements; the germination of terrestrial orchid species from Europe, South Africa, Australia, and the United States; experimental hybridization using new subtribe combinations in the Catasetinae; media formulations in relation to growth rates; pollination mechanisms; phylogenic relationships; seed and pollen storage; and virus and its effect on plantlet growth. Erich and William Rhodehamel have published the most comprehensive and extensive listing ever compiled of green capsule harvest times. Erich was a speaker at three World Orchid Conferences—Rio, Vancouver, and Miami—on his specialty of conservation and micropropagation of orchid species.

Erich is an accredited American Orchid Society judge. In September of 2008, Erich formed his own Company, Michel Orchid Nursery, and purchased all the breeding stock in-vitro (sterile flask) from Hoosier Orchid Company. Michel Orchid Nursery now maintains one of the largest collections of artificially propagated Orchid species in the Country.

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# may 2012 show table

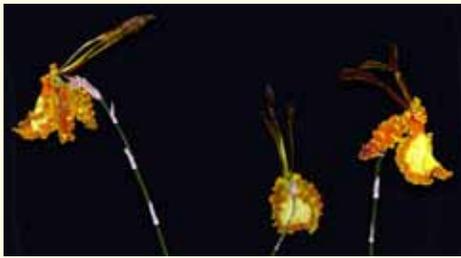
by Tom McBride

Special thanks to Sarah Hurdel for the beautiful photos below of last month's show table plants!



## Novice

1. Phal. Hybrid (above)- Amanda Gallegos



## Home Grown

1. Phal. Sogo Fairyland - Bill Soyke & Sandi Bertamini
2. Tie Mtps. Lennart Karl Gottling #12 - Bill Scharf  
Psy. Hybrid (above)- Marilyn Lauffer
3. Tie C. *skinneri* - Norma Lynch  
Macodes *petola* - Sarah Hurdel & Gary Smith



## Greenhouse

1. L. *sincorana* (above)- David Smith
2. Cym. San Francisco 'Dos Pueblos Special Green' - Craig Taborsky
3. Tie Lc. Culminent X Blc. Mem. Grant Eichler - Barbara Buck  
Paph. Song of Love - Lou Vadorsky

## Cattleya

1. L. *sincorana* - David Smith
2. Tie Epi. *embreei* - Clark Riley  
Ctt. Secret Love 'Hsinying' - Gary Smith & Sarah Hurdel
3. Slc. Jewel Box 'Scheherazade' AM/ AOS - Craig Taborsky

## Phalaenopsis

1. Phal. *lueddemanniana* (below)- The Adamses
2. Tie Phal. Blond Beauty - The Dagostins  
Dtps. Hsin Sesame - Bill Soyke & Sandi Bertamini  
Dtps. (Brother Success X Xen Mammon) - John Dunning
3. Tie Phal. *equestris f. alba* - Clark Riley  
Phal. *cornu-cervi* 'Red' - Gary Smith & Sarah Hurdel



## Oncidium

1. Brs. Rex 'Waimono Spottles' FCC/ AOS - John Dunning
2. Mtps. Breathless 'Brilliant' (below)- The Dagostins
3. Tie Odbrs. Fangtastic Bob Henly - Chip Hiebler  
Psy. Mendenhall 'Hildos' FCC/ AOS - Laura Sobelman



## Paphiopedilum and Phragmipedium

1. Paph. Bel Royal - John Dunning
2. Tie Paph. Mount Toro - The Adamses  
Paph. (Emerald X *philippinense*) - Gary Smith & Sarah Hurdel
3. Tie Phrag. Belle Hogue Point - Bill Soyke & Sandi Bertamini  
Paph. Eleanor Rozilla - Owen Humphrey

## Dendrobium

1. Den. Mingle's Sapphire - David Smith
2. Den. Bicentennial - John Dunning
3. Den. *bataense* - The Adamses

## Miscellaneous Hybrids

1. Masd. Marguerite - The Adamses
2. Neost. Lou Sneary 'Bluebird' - Owen Humphrey
3. V. Hybrid - Sue Spicer

## Species

1. Brs. *brachiata* - Michael Moran
2. Tie Rob. *mooreana* - The Adamses  
Thecopus *secunda* - Gary Smith & Sarah Hurdel
3. Tie Cert. *philippinense* - Bill Scharf  
Bulb. *makoyana* 'Harford' - David Smith

## Miniature

1. Pths. *species* - David Smith
2. Rest. Tiny Tot - Bill Scharf
3. Tie Rest. *dodsonii* - Michael Moran  
Den. *trantaunii* - John Dunning



## First Bloom Seedling

1. Paph. Temptation (above)- Clark Riley
2. L. *purpurata* var. *werkhauseri* - Bill Soyke & Sandi Bertamini
3. Tie L. *briegeri* - Michael Moran  
Paph. Bianca - John Dunning

## Fragrance

1. Max. *tenuifolia* - The Adamses
2. C. Interglossa X Lc. Tokyo Magic - Eric Wiles

The Judges Choice of the Evening was Brs. *brachiata*, exhibited by Michael Moran. (See page 5 for Michael's description of how he grows his plant.) The judges were Patti Kelt, Frank Dagostin and Ernie Drohan. There were an incredible 114 beautiful plants displayed on our show table this month!

# Ants in Your Plants, Perchance?

After spending several hours battling ants in my orchids, I thought it's time to rerun and update this article from the April 2008 issue of MOS News. I ended up submerging the infested plants in water for a few hours to get rid of the ants, then creating ant moats to make sure the ants were gone and no more could get to the plants.

A scourge of ants recently took up residence in my basement orchid growing habitat on a stormy winter night. This foreboding was not lost on me. They pulled up their little moving vans and set up house in a Sharry Baby and proceeded to claim the rest of the plants for their neighborhood. The perfect setting for any happy family—the room is bright, breezy, warm and moist with fungus gnat eggs and tiny plant lice to smorgasbord on. I tried traps, sprays and pleading pathetically with them to no avail.

For the ant traps to work I needed to cover every nano-inch of my growing area. When I saw them haul off a few of my smaller plants on their backs I knew I needed to get serious.

Some say ants in and of themselves aren't necessarily a big orchid problem. In fact, I read online in the [Biotropica](#) article *Dispersal of the Orchid Dendrobium insigne by the Ant Iridomyrmex cordatus in Papua New Guinea*<sup>1</sup> that a small group of specialized epiphytes in New Guinea depend on ants for dispersal. Dispersal of what I'm not sure because I understood only about three other words in the 4-page article. Any way, I decided to do some research and find out how other people keep ants away from their plants and hopefully *way* outside. The following are opinions, suggestions and recipes for ridding orchid collections of ants. (No endorsements disclaimer here...) I hope these are helpful in sending your ants to the great anthill in the sky. I say to the ants, "Bon appétit."

## David Smith

David Smith, one of our MOS education gurus says, "I have found that those cheap little ant baits in the low black plastic container are very effective in getting rid of ants. I do not try to spray any of the ants with insecticide, just find the main trail and place several of the baits along the trail and beside the affected plant. It takes several

days but eventually they are gone." David also recommends creating water moats around plants that are attracting ants. Ants typically can not swim and will drown. It will also prevent other ants from getting to the plant.

## Marilyn Lauffer, MOS Membership Chair

I had used the little black square traps on my outside tables, but with all the rain we had, the ants persisted.

Last year, I just did not mess with ant deterrents on the outside tables, but the day before I was bringing them back in the house in the fall, I used a great product called Terro liquid ant bait. It comes in a bottle at Home Depot and looks like clear, sticky syrup. I put a small piece of plastic (from a cut up margarine or Cool whip container) on the top of each plant and then put about 1/4-1/2 tsp. of the Terro bait on the plastic. Within about a half hour, the ants came out of the potting media onto the plastic to eat the bait. Supposedly, they carry the food back to their nest and kill themselves and lots of others. By the next morning, there were no signs of living ants. I left the plastic pieces and a few drops more bait on the top of the pots and brought them into the house. I had very little problems with ants over the winter season.

The Terro also comes in pre-filled traps which are great for putting on windowsills and the like, but for lots of pots, it's much more economical to use the bottle of liquid.

Within the last few weeks, I copied down a list of ant deterrents I saw on TV ( I think the source was DIY or HGTV, but I'm not sure). It listed coffee grounds, peppermint, citrus oil, cinnamon, and red pepper as all being ant deterrents. I may try some of those on the outside tables this summer. I think Borax is also good.

## Susan Jones

Susan Jones' article, "Home Remedies" in the January 2005 issue of *Orchids Magazine* suggests: When dealing with ants, remember they are attracted to the sugary honeydew excretion of other pest insects and commercially prepared sugar-based ant baits. A homemade syrup of boric acid powder, sugar and water placed throughout the growing area will draw ants. They will eat the poison and take it back to the queen. This should remove the ant colony within a few days. This option is not safe for use in an area accessible to children or pets.

Replacing the potting medium can eliminate pests' eggs and crawlers. Mollusks, ants, sow and pill bugs and even roaches hide in pots, and media that is breaking down not only attracts pests like sow and pill bugs, but is a danger to the overall health of the plant's root system as well.

## From "Dorothy" online on the Orchid Board

- White vinegar in a spray bottle
- cucumber peels
- Anti ant plants - peppermint, spearmint, oregano, bay leaf, garlic, pennyroyal or a combination of eucalyptus leaves (you can get at a flower shop) and whole cloves (supermarket spice section) or a sprinkle of cinnamon or black pepper or red pepper flakes or cayenne
- Mix orange or grapefruit juice, water and liquid soap together (equal parts) and spray the area.

(This one for the sadist in you):

- Make a syrup of 1/2 cup sugar, 1/4 cup water, 2 teaspoons borax. Cook until smooth and well blended. Let cool. Put in old jar lids where you see the ants coming in (near windows/doors). They bring it back to their nests ... it makes them very thirsty and when they drink water they explode ... same effect happens with cornmeal.

continued on next page

- Ants won't step on or over powdered charcoal, bone meal, talcum powder or chalk. Sprinkle these around your plants.

### Another from Orchid Board

Ants can be a problem, especially when moving your orchids back inside in the fall. Orange Guard, a citric acid product, is a good way to eliminate these pests. However, if they are down in the mix, you will need to drench the pot with an insecticide or re-pot the plant.

### From the Napa Valley Orchid Society web site

Ants are a threat to your orchids. Yes, it is a major annoyance when ants boil out of a pot in protest when you water 'their' orchid, but ants are more of a problem than a simple annoyance.

Ants bring with them both aphids and mealy bugs. Ants will actually carry them around and place them on your plants. You cannot get rid of mealy bugs and aphids without first getting rid of ants.

There are good products readily available for ants. The ants among the orchids are the sweet eating variety. Put out lots of ant stakes and traps. I put out a new batch twice a year.

### Posted by eileen on Garden web

Before I poured anything into the soil, I'd want to know that the plant will tolerate it. I had ants living in one of my orchids, and I just took it outside, dumped the pot, washed the heck out of the roots, and put the plant in a fresh pot. Then I came back with boiling water and scalded all the eggs, larvae, and pupae off the old pot. The pot cleaned up fine; I'll use it again someday. The ants are wandering around outside, where they are welcome to make a home. There is no remains of their scent trail on the plant — it's in a different pot, and there's no dirt in the old pot. No poisons used, and the plant is fine — blooming now.

### Posted by ifraser from Garden web

Water your plants with weak coffee (no milk or sugar!) and/or sprinkle the compost with some coffee grounds. I'm not sure why this works. It also works with decaff coffee so it isn't the caffeine. You can also put the grounds in any nests you find in the soil.

### From How to Grow Orchids web site: <http://www.how-to-grow-orchid.com/orchid-disease.htm>

There are a few merely bothersome pests whose appearance need occasion no alarm, although the grower may wish to be rid of them. Ants and fruit flies are the most common members of this category.

Many growers dislike ants. In the jungle ants have friendly relations with orchids—stinging ants often prevent human desecration of the plants—but in the greenhouse and home ants are unsightly and unnecessary.

They have never been proved guilty of damaging orchids, but as sometimes they live in cooperation with the mealy bug and may assist aphids, it is just as well to prevent their entrance into the greenhouse.

Ant-proofing outside the house is the safest and simplest method of dealing with them. Fruit flies are often found in the greenhouse.

When it comes to orchid disease, they feed on decomposing *Osmunda* and, although at times difficult to distinguish from the scale fly, they do no harm. Routine spray will dispose of them.

## education corner

June's education corner will feature growing *Phragmipediums*. Feel free to bring in a plant and ask questions.

## Maryland Orchid Society Board of Trustees Meeting July 26

The next quarterly meeting of the Board will be held at the home of Margaret and David Smith. Arrive as early as 6:30 PM to enjoy a light meal and refreshments. (Please consider bringing a side dish or refreshment.) Open to all members. Please RSVP to the Smiths or Bill Scharf.

## 2012 MOS Nominating Committee Recommendations

The MOS Nominating Committee would like to recommend the following slate of Officers to the Membership:

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>President:</b>      | <b>Eric Wiles</b>                         |
| <b>Vice President:</b> | <b>Sarah Spence</b>                       |
| <b>Controller:</b>     | <b>Mary Chiu</b>                          |
| <b>Treasurer:</b>      | <b>Chip Hiebler</b>                       |
| <b>Secretary:</b>      | <b>Sarah Hurdel</b>                       |
| <b>Director:</b>       | <b>Gregg Custis</b><br><b>Chris Zajac</b> |

Respectfully submitted,

**Valerie Lowe, Nominating Committee Chair**  
**Joan Roderick**  
**Chip Hiebler**

*This month I thought I would give a sampling of some of the information one can obtain from the AOS website. More in depth information is available to AOS members by logging into the webpage with your own name and password. Below, however, is an excerpt from the monthly checklist section – probably one of the more widely visited areas of the website.*

**Cattleya** - Cattleyas this month require careful attention to their watering and fertilizing needs owing to characteristically high temperatures. Evaporative cooling is a must in areas of the country where it is effective. Where it is not (the more humid regions), care needs to be paid to proper venting to keep temperatures within reason. Bottom vents in conjunction with top vents provide enough rising airflow to help keep plants cool. Increased air flow lessens humidity and dries plants out more quickly, necessitating more frequent damping down and watering, in areas where high humidity is not a problem. Higher light and heat indicate more fertilizer. The growths your plants are making now are the source of this autumn, winter and spring's blooms, so applying adequate fertilizer this month is the best way to



ensure future blooms. Higher temperatures and humidity may also lead to fungal or bacterial rot problems, so it is important to closely observe your plants for any early indication of problems. Pests are also at a high point this month for the same reason.

**Paphiopedilum** - Cooling and air circulation are especially critical in these two months to prevent stress and avoid disease problems. Watering needs to be closely monitored to ensure that plants do not dry out. Warmer-growing hybrids will be at the peak of their blooming, with attention needing to be paid to staking of spikes. Look for water lodging in growths, which can rot emerging spikes and lead to the loss of the entire growth.

**Cymbidium** - Summer can be the most rewarding season for cymbidiums. Growth should be coming strong now. The leaves of the new growths are best when they are broad and fairly stiff. The color should be a light green to nearly yellow. Early flowering varieties should be showing flower spikes, so move the plants into a cooler area with lower light. For mid-season varieties, lower the dosage of nitrogen to assist in spike initiation.

— Taken from the American Orchid Society Website – All About Orchids – Monthly Checklist – July and August

There are also a number of videos and articles that are available to the public and many more to the AOS Members.

Lynn Fuller, Chair  
AOS Affiliated Societies Committee

## Don't Miss the MOS Summer Party

The first MOS summer party will be July 21, 4 p.m. (rain date July 28) at Eric Wiles' house. The party is potluck so please bring food or drinks for you and at least two other people and don't forget your sunblock, lawn chairs and party hats. We are also having a White Elephant gift exchange. Bring a healthy and pest-free orchid-related item to play. More information at the June meeting and in e-mail updates. For more information contact Eric at [winvet88@yahoo.com](mailto:winvet88@yahoo.com).

## How I Grow *Brassia brachiata*

By Michael Moran

This species which is found from Guatemala to Panama is fairly easy to grow in that there are no special cultural requirements to remember.

In summer my plants outside in a "shade house" under 50 percent aluminet shade cloth. The *Brassia* hangs high so it receives the max amount of light. The plant is in a plastic pot and is watered and/or rained on every 3 days.



Photo by Sarah Hurdel

I have been using a 20-14-13 plant food, but any balanced plant food would be fine. This is applied generally once a week at 1/2 teaspoon per gallon for the duration of the summer. When temps drop in late Sept. so does the watering and feeding to about once a week to 10 days until the following spring.

# *in memoriam*

Howard Eskildson an accomplished home hobbyist orchid grower who specialized in the culture and care of plants found in the genus *Lycaste* and *Cattleya* for more than 25 years passed away on June 6th surrounded by his spouse Joan, of 29 years, and other members of his immediate family.

Howard held membership in and was active in the affairs of both the Maryland Orchid and the National Capital Orchid Societies for many years until a prolonged illness forced him into a more passive role. In spite of his disabilities he organized and founded the Brookside Orchid Club whose activities are centered at the Brookside Gardens in Silver Spring, Maryland. A memorial service is planned for the later part of June.

## More May Show Table Photos



# *maryland orchid society*

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The *MOS Newsletter*, published monthly by the Maryland Orchid Society September through June, shares the latest news of our orchid community. Please submit your comments to [sobelman1@verizon.net](mailto:sobelman1@verizon.net)

We invite articles, notices, etc. for inclusion in our newsletter. The deadline for inclusion is first Sunday of the month.

**Contributors: Sarah Hurdel, Valerie Lowe, Tom McBride, Michael Moran, Bill Scharf, Gary Smith, Laura Sobelman and Eric Wiles. If I missed anyone, I truly apologize.**

The MOS brings together people interested in orchids to promote and encourage orchid culture, preservation, education, propagation, hybridization, and all other orchid-related activities of interest to its members. Benefits of membership include a subscription to the Newsletter (e-mail and web), voting rights, borrowing privileges from the MOS Library, monthly guest speakers, local judging, valuable door prizes, and much, much, more!

If you are interested in orchid culture and would like to meet others with similar interests, we cordially invite you to join the ranks of Marylanders already enjoying the benefits of membership in the Maryland Orchid Society.

Visit us on the Web at [www.marylandorchids.org](http://www.marylandorchids.org)  
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