

# Orchid Society of Santa Barbara



**Meeting: Wednesday, January 12, 2000**

**MacKenzie Adult  
Building at  
MacKenzie Park  
3111 State Street (at Las  
Positas) *Culture Corner*  
*begins at 7:00 pm***

*Meeting begins at 7:30 pm*

## **PROGRAM**

**Susan Fordyce** of Fordyce Orchids will speak about  
**Those Sexy Orchids**

Please join Susan Fordyce for a fun romp discussing pollination and pollinators of a wide variety of orchids.

## **Culture Corner**

Matt Swift will talk to us about repotting and dividing cattleyas.

## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

### **Five Cities Orchid Society Meeting**

2000 7:30 pm at the Arroyo Grande Woman's Community Center, 211 Vernon St.

Thursday, January 13,

### **Santa Barbara Chapter Cymbidium Society Meeting**

2000 7:30 pm at Stewart Orchids. Cymbidium Society of America judging is at 7 pm.

Wednesday, January 19,

**San Francisco Orchid Society Pacific Orchid Exposition**  
27, 2000 Festival Pavilion, Fort Mason Center, San Francisco.

February 25-

**55<sup>th</sup> Annual Santa Barbara International Orchid Show**  
2, 2000 Earl Warren Showgrounds, Highway 101 and Las Positas Road.

March 31, April 1-

### **Congratulations!**

Our own Don Brown has received one of the most prestigious orchid awards given out by the American Orchid Society. He was awarded the Butterworth Prize for the most outstanding example of orchid culture in 1998. Most of us probably remember the winning orchid, the immense *Dendrobium speciosum* var. *Hilli* 'Don Brown' CCM/AOS. This plant earned a 99 (out of 100) point Certificate of Cultural Merit for Don Brown at the 1998 Santa Barbara International Orchid Show, plus the Best Plant in Show for its new owner, Paul Gripp.

Among other awards recently earned by OSSB members is Bill Robson's Certificate of Botanical Recognition for his *Mormodes andreetae* 'Pinkie'. Note that this was reported under another species name in last month's newsletter; Dr. Eric Christenson has since correctly identified the plant.

Congratulations also to our new president, Sandy Svoboda, who won her first AOS flower quality award for a pescatorea-cochleanthes cross.

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### **The Alphabet Soup of Orchid Judging (or what those funny acronyms on your orchid label mean)**

Most of us begin our orchid growing careers because we are enchanted by chance encounters with orchid flowers. I certainly neither knew of nor cared about those ugly (I thought) labels stuck in the pots of my new plants. I'll admit it: I threw my first few labels out.

Gradually, I became aware that those labels meant more than just a place for nurseries to advertise themselves. Orchid labels tell the name of the plant, which is important if one wants to learn specific cultural information. But beyond that, orchid labels sometimes carry a bewildering array of letters that can be meaningless to the uninitiated. These letters, however, can reveal the judging history of a particular plant.

Why should the hobbyist care about what may seem to be an arcane judging system? In my collection, any plant that blooms for me is viewed favorably. Still, it only took me a few orchid shows to realize that some orchids had more, bigger, better-shaped or better-colored flowers than their siblings. It is only natural for orchid growers to mark these "better" plants with some sort of special label or award. For the hobbyist, learning something about judging acronyms can be the first step to selective shopping at a nursery or show.

The oldest awarding authority in the world is the **Royal Horticultural Society** in the United Kingdom. The RHS began its illustrious awarding career in 1858 with the creation of a **First Class Certificate** intended to commend flowers of premium quality. In 1888, the RHS introduced the Second Class Certificate, since renamed the **Award of Merit**, to be given to flowers of slightly lower quality that were still worthy of recognition. Awarded plants were painted to record their images, with the result that the RHS possesses over 7000 award paintings.

Orchids that received an award from the RHS were proudly labelled FCC/RHS or AM/RHS. As other

awarding societies came into existence, they used the RHS system as a starting point in developing their own awards. Today, the abbreviations of these awards follow the RHS scheme of award/awarding authority.

The **American Orchid Society** or AOS maintains an elaborate judging system comprised of orchid shows and monthly meetings at regional judging centers. Trained, accredited judges recognize flowers that are above the ordinary based on specific criteria delineated by the AOS. These results are published in the ***Awards Quarterly***

The most common AOS award for flower quality is the **Highly Commended Certificate**, which appears on the plant label as **HCC/AOS**. Orchids earning this award were scored with 75 to 79 points on a 100 point scale. Orchids that earned 80 to 89 point receive an **Award of Merit** or AM. The highest award for flower quality is the **First Class Certificate** (FCC), associated with point scores of 90 or better. Judges are generally quite sparing with the FCC and only a handful are presented in any given year.

The American Orchid Society judges can also present six other awards. New breeding crosses can be recognized for worthy new trends with an **Award of Distinction (AD)** or for improved quality with an **Award of Quality (AQ)**. Well grown and flowered orchids that contribute to horticulture, for example by potential aesthetic appeal, may earn a **Certificate of Horticultural Merit** or **CHM**. A **Judges' Commendation (JC)** can be presented to a plant that does not fit other categories. For example, a particularly important orchid parent that never received a flower quality award might receive a JC even though current standards for flower quality have surpassed it.

Bill Robson's recently awarded species and divisions of it (not seedlings of it) may now be labelled *Mormodes andreetae* 'Pinkie' CBR/AOS. The **CBR (Certificate of Botanical Recognition)** notes rare and unusual species with educational interest.

The **Certificate of Cultural Merit (CCM)** is given to the grower of a particularly well-flowered plant, such as Don Brown for his gargantuan dendrobium. Often, growers will note the point score of the award after the CCM/AOS; two separate point scores mean that the plant earned a second, higher CMM on a subsequent, better flowering.

Each year, the AOS Trustees award special prizes to the "best of the best" from the previous year, including:

**Butterworth Prize** - most outstanding CCM **Masatoshi Miyamoto Cattleya Alliance Award** - best species or hybrid *Cattleya* Alliance member

**Merritt W. Huntington Award** - most outstanding FCC

**Nax Botanical Trophy** - best species

**W. W. Wilson Award** - best species or hybrid *Cypripedium* Alliance

Other local "prestige" prize winners include Stewart Orchids, Fordyce Orchids, and S. Robert Weltz Jr.

In addition to the AOS and RHS, other orchid organizations around the world present awards to orchids of special merit. Commonly seen **Cymbidium Society of America** awards on cymbidiums and paphiopedilums include S/CSA and B/CSA for Silver and Bronze awards, respectively. The **Australian Orchid Council (AOC)** presents awards labelled FCC, AD and HCC. The **Australasian Native Orchid Society (ANOS)** judges species that are native to Australia and nearby regions of Asia and the South Pacific.

Large orchid shows often present their own awards, which carry substantial prestige. The abbreviation WOC, for example, indicates the **World Orchid Conference**.

While plants with the most coveted awards are beyond the financial reach of most hobbyists, a little knowledge of judging labels can help one select a better quality orchid. We may not all be trained as judges, but we can be assured that an AM/AOS indicates a pleasing flower.

### **Announcements**

- **Time to Pay Annual Dues!**

Now that we are into the year 2000, it is time to pay your orchid society dues if you intend to continue receiving the newsletter and participating in society activities. Dues are \$20 and may be paid to Carole Cowan at the January meeting. Alternatively, you may mail a \$20 check to Carole Cowan, OSSB Treasurer, 209 Cedar Lane, Santa Barbara, CA 93108. Make your check payable to OSSB.

- **Special Lecture!**

Five Cities Orchid Society welcomes visitors to its Thursday, January 13, 2000 meeting. The speaker will be **Dr. Leonid Averyanov**, Orchidologist at S1 Petersburg Kamerov Botanic Institute, Russian Academy of Sciences. Dr. Averyanov has been studying the flora of Viet Nam for two decades and has discovered a number of wonderful new species. His articles have been published in *Orchids* and in *The Orchid Digest*. He has received funding grants from the American Orchid Society, the National Geographic Society, and the San Diego Orchid Society.

The meeting is at 7:30 pm at the Arroyo Grande Woman's Community Center on 211 Vernon Street, Arroyo Grande. (Take the Grand Avenue exit from Highway 101.) If you would like to carpool or have further questions, call Jeff Thompson (563-4376) or Heidi Kirkpatrick (563-2894).

- **Roster Revisions**

Enclosed with this newsletter, members will find the latest roster revisions and additions. If your address or telephone number changes, please notify Carole Cowan.