

Orchid Society of Santa Barbara



Meeting: Wednesday, June 14, 2000

MacKenzie Adult Building

at MacKenzie Park

3111 State Street (at Las Positas)

Meeting begins at 7:30 pm

PROGRAM

Steve McNerney of Stewart Orchids will tell us about
Stewart Orchids: Past, Present and Future

Here is your chance to learn about the history and future of orchid growing and breeding at Stewart Orchids. Steve McNerney's big news is that this summer he and Mary Jo are moving the entire Stewart Orchids operation to historic Natchez, Mississippi! Yes, you read that correctly; Stewart Orchids and the McNerney's will be *leaving our area*. Steve and Mary Jo have been strong supporters of our society, including placing exhibits and selling plants at our Fall Show. We will miss them! By attending the June meeting, you can hear about Stewart Orchids and express your appreciation to Steve. Stewart Orchids will be providing the raffle table, so bring your raffle money! If there are plants you were eyeing at Stewarts, move quickly. You won't be able to buy from them in person for much longer.

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Santa Barbara Chapter Cymbidium Society Meeting Wednesday, June 21, 2000
Cymbidium Society of America judging at 7 pm, meeting at 7:30 pm, Stewart Orchids.

July Vendor Fair

July 15 and 16, 2000

Yes, it is time for another big purchasing opportunity. Our local nurseries will be having big sales and hosting many guest (including foreign) vendors. Cal-Orchid: 9-5 Saturday, 9-4 Sunday. Santa Barbara Orchid Estate: 9-5 Saturday, 10-4 Sunday.

See OSSB on the web at www.west.net/~orchidsb
Summary of the Meeting of May 10, 2000

Business Meeting

- ◆ **President Sandy Svoboda** welcomed our visitors and thanked librarian **Michael Ling** for his newsletter article giving an overview of library materials.
- ◆ One of our members was featured on a local television show about orchids. **Bill Robson** spoke for Gallup & Stribling Orchids; nice camera manner, Bill!
- ◆ **President Svoboda** reminded everyone that AOS judging occurs monthly at a meeting in Burbank. Judging starts at 7 pm on the second Monday of the month at First Christian Church, 221 S. 6th St. in Burbank. If you have a plant you would like judged but can't make it to the meeting, some of our local members usually attend, including Al and Sandy Svoboda, Paul Gripp, Jerry Rehfield and Bill Robson.
- ◆ Thanks to **Carol Rogers** for the May refreshments! Don't forget to sign up for future meetings with our refreshments coordinator, Laura Cogan. (Don't worry; she'll give you a reminder call if you volunteer.)

Program

Program Chair **Harriet Roberts** introduced our May speaker, **Werner Bajewski**, who with his wife Maria grows wonderful epidendrums in Carpenteria. His first encounter with orchids was in his native Europe where a number of terrestrial orchids grow in fields and meadows. When he moved to the US, he eventually became interested in epidendrums because they bloom all year and withstand temperatures to 28 degrees Fahrenheit.

Bajewski's presentation included a number of his beautiful reed-stem epidendrums and a comprehensive question and answer session on growing them. After many years of experimentation, he has found that the best looking plants and flowers are grown under 62% shade

cloth. Plants in full sun are shorter and have smaller flower heads.

His epis are grown in a mix of half bark, half potting soil, sometimes with lava rocks mixed in. Planting in the ground is possible, but the soil should be loosened with lava rock. He prefers Dynagrow fertilizer, but notes that epis are not too fussy if one uses a balanced fertilizer with lots of trace minerals. He applies fertilizer at a dilute rate (quarter to half strength) at every watering. Repotting is done every 3 years or so.

To keep the plant looking its best, Bajewski will cut off stalks with damaged leaves. If winter frosts are particularly harsh and damage the plants, he recommends immediately cutting the growths to 2-3 inches above the top of the pot; this prevents the rot from spreading down to the roots of the plant, which may survive to put out new growth.

Because reed-stem epi species are poorly identified, there is much confusion about the names of species and hybrids. Buying a plant in bloom or a keiki or division of a known plant insures that you will get what you want.

Aphid control can be accomplished with insecticidal soap, Neem Oil (frequent use may clog plant pores) or green lacewings. For a source of lacewing larvae, try Rincon-Vitova Insectaries, Inc., PO Box 1555, Ventura, CA 93002, 805-643-5407, Bugnet@west.net

Show Table

Paul Gripp and Jerry Rehfield pointed out some of the fine epis on our show table, and noted that epis tend to be clumped into species types, such as *Epi. radicans*, *Epi. ebegensis*, *Epi. segunda*. *Epi. Burtonii* and *Epi. Nebo* are among the few hybrids registered. Other outdoor growers on the show table included *Onc.* Killer Bees and the recently awarded *Odontonia* Yellow Parade 'Golden Wonder' HCC/AOS. Several

dendrobiums requiring dry winters were on show, including *D. thrysiflorum* and *D. farmeri*. Kudos to the owner of the outdoor growing C.

Growing Orchids Under Lights

by Heidi Kirkpatrick

Here in Santa Barbara we are blessed by an environment that allows us to grow orchids outdoors year round. However, not every orchid will thrive outside here. Orchid growers, often being rather perversely greedy, may start looking with longing at species or hybrids that need warmer winter temperatures.

The ideal answer is, of course, a greenhouse. But not every grower has the space, finances, or inclination to erect one. Don't despair! There is another alternative, one that I have used successfully for years. Grow in your house under lights!

There is an amazing and sometimes bewildering selection of equipment available for growing plants under lights. A comprehensive discussion is beyond the scope of this article, but I can, I hope, provide an overview and point interested growers in the right direction.

There are two basic types of lights for serious growing. The cheapest and perhaps easiest to deal with are fluorescent lights. Low light orchids will grow and bloom quite well under a bank of fluorescent lights. I have grown and bloomed phalaenopsis and paphiopedilums for years under a bank of four, four-foot fluorescent lights, with the lights suspended 8 to 12 inches above the leaves (more when I need to accommodate tall spikes).

Commercial light cart set-ups, usually with two or three banks of fluorescent lights, are available from a number of sources. For those of you who are a little handy, it is not difficult to rig one's own set-up. My spouse built my two-shelf unit using inexpensive fixtures from Home Depot.

The fluorescent bulbs one buys cheaply at hardware stores are often referred to as "cool" because the light has more blue than red. Special "warm" bulbs intended for plant growing, such as Gro-lux, are manufactured to give off a little more red light in an attempt to match more closely the color of light from the sun. Some growers feel that any advantage of these warm bulbs is not worth the added expense.

Whichever bulbs you choose, remember to change them annually; they may still function, but the quality of the light will degrade with time.

For orchids that have higher light requirements, the best choice is a high intensity discharge (HID) lamp. HID lamps come in

citrina, which is not always easy to bloom and grow. Thanks to everyone who brought plants to show!

several different varieties, including metal halide (produces a full spectrum effective indoors) and high pressure sodium (extra red output, often used as a supplement in greenhouses). HID lights are high wattage and produce more light than fluorescents, enabling growers to bloom orchids such as light-loving cattleyas. Optional motorized tracks allow a single lamp to light up to 6 by 12 feet of growing area.

The primary disadvantages of HID lights include their cost (a replacement 600 watt bulb may cost up to \$100) and the amount of heat they generate. To alleviate the latter problem, some growers with multiple lamps use a completely darkened room as their plant room and set a timer to turn the lights on at night.

Watering orchids in the home also may be a challenge. Commercial fluorescent light carts usually come with trays that can be used as a catch basin for water that drains through the pots. My home built light cart uses commercially available humidity trays that I siphon into a bucket when they get too full. Growers who build into a room or section of a room construct a variety of catch basins to protect the house floor, using such materials as pond liners and wash tubs. A friend of mine has galvanized hardware cloth resting on galvanized tin trays. Using a watering can is fine, but one of the commercially available indoor watering hoses (attaches to one's indoor faucets) is much more convenient.

Most indoor growers vary the length of "day" from 12 or 13 hours in the winter to 16 or even 18 hours in the summer. Automatic timers are almost a must; some of the newer digital ones are very sophisticated. A few of the really ambitious indoor growers I've known partially enclosed their growing areas with plastic and installed misting systems and air circulation fans.

However, one must always be careful to keep water and plastic away from the lighting, particularly the hot HID lamps. For most of us, a few fluorescents for our paphs and phals yield perfectly pleasing results.

Two sources:

Charley's Greenhouse Supply, 17979 State Route 536, Mount Vernon, WA 98273-3269, 1-800-322-4707, www.charleysgreenhouse.com
Indoor Gardening Supplies, PO Box 527AO, Dexter, MI 48130, 1-734-426-9080 9 am to 5 pm eastern time, www.indoorgardensupplies.com

Future Newsletters:

In this newsletter, I touched on the basics of growing in the home under lights. If you have questions, feel free to call me. There are several fine publications about growing under lights for those of you who want to know more. I've also received a number of questions about greenhouses and where to get greenhouse supplies. I intend to write an article for a future newsletter discussing recommendations of local greenhouse owners and where one can buy all the items one needs for a greenhouse. Later in the year, I plan to feature a series on the wild world of orchid pollination. If you have a topic about which you'd love to learn more, feel free to suggest it to me, although I don't make any promises about writing on it! -- your editor, Heidi Kirkpatrick

Member Profile

This month, Pat Siordia talked with two of our newer members, Brian and Laura Cogan. The Cogans have been organizing refreshments at our monthly meetings. Laura is a new member of the OSSB board this year and co-chair of publicity. Romantics (like me!) love hearing that the Cogans became interested in orchids as an activity they could share for a lifetime together.

Pat reports that the Cogans live in Goleta and began their orchid hobby by growing outdoors. Their outdoor collection features dendrobiums and many reed-stem epidendrums. Recently, they expanded their growing area with a new greenhouse. Occupants of the greenhouse include cattleyas, oncidiums, odontoglossums and other exotic warm-growing plants. Brian, a full-blooded Chumash Indian, works for Ericsson. Laura works, appropriately, in the plant care business.

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Heidi Kirkpatrick, Secretary
2687 Dorking Place
Santa Barbara, CA 93105