

# Orchid Society of Santa Barbara



**Meeting: Wednesday, March 14, 2001**

**MacKenzie Adult Building**  
at MacKenzie Park  
**3111 State Street** (at Las Positas)  
*Meeting begins at 7:30 pm*

## **PROGRAM**

Cycad and exotic plant expert **Guy Wrinkle** will speak about  
**A Natural History of Amazonian Peru**

Come hear a travel log on an area rich in orchids and other exotic plants by Guy Wrinkle, who teaches biology and runs a nursery specializing in cycads and other exotics. Wrinkle has done field work in Africa, Mexico, South America and Europe and has a keen insight on natural history. Cal-Orchid will provide the plant table.

## **CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS**

**San Diego County Orchid Society Show**

March 15-18, 2001

***Santa Barbara International Orchid Show***

March 23-25, 2001

◆ **Discount Tickets** – At the March meeting, Carole Cowan will have discount tickets for admission to the show. These tickets are \$6 each, compared to the \$8 admission at the door

◆ **Society Exhibit** – Plants must arrive at the Earl Warren Showgrounds by Noon, Wednesday, March 21 if they are to be included in the exhibit. If you cannot deliver your plants at that time, arrange for pickup or to deliver plants earlier to Jeff Thompson (563-4376). Make sure your plants have your name on the pots. Volunteers can sign up at the March meeting to help install the exhibit.

◆ **Sale Plants** – The society gets 20% of the sale price of plants sold at the society's booth. Orange tags and pricing for each plant are needed if you want to get your money for the sale of your plant. You need to supply Carole Cowan with a numbered list of your plants that has the name of each plant and its price. The plant will have an orange tag (available from Carole) with your initials, the number of the

plant, and the price. This orange tag will be kept by the society when the plant is sold and is the record of how much the society owes you. Plants should arrive at the sales area after 3 pm, Thursday, March 22. Keep in mind that blooming plants sell better.

◆ **Volunteers** – Sign up at the March meeting to help with Hospitality or Sales. Hospitality workers answer questions at the society exhibit, direct visitors to the society sales area and encourage them to join the society. You don't have to be an orchid expert. Sales volunteers interact with customers and bag sold plants. Jerry Rehfield (684-3344) is looking for ribbon judges (this is fun to do). You don't need an education in formal judging; you simply need to know what you like. Ribbon judges get free admission to the show.

### Summary of the 2001 February Meeting

> **President Sandy Svoboda** welcomed new members and visitors, including visitor Myrna Smith.

> **Orchid Digest Paphiopedilum Compendium.** The Orchid Digest corporation has reprinted its popular issue containing Harold Koopowitz's list (and photos!) of the current Paph species. If you want to know the latest but don't want to pay \$100 for a comprehensive taxonomy volume, this is the issue for you. The reprint is only \$20, has excellent photographs of those yummy paph species, and includes additional articles on paph hybrids and culture. If you are interested, contact Heidi Kirkpatrick (563-2894).

> **Spring Show Announcements.** *Display* – Jeff Thompson, who will be installing the society's display, said plants should arrive at the showgrounds by noon on Wednesday, March 21 if they are to be included in the OSSB display. He would like volunteers in the morning and early afternoon to help label plants. *Ribbon Judging* – Jerry Rehfield asked for names and phone numbers of those interested in ribbon judging at 9 am Thursday. He noted that ribbon judges get free admission to the show. *Volunteers* – Treasurer Carole Cowan passed around sign-up sheets for hospitality, set-up and sales. These will be passed around again at the March meeting.

> **Cymbidium Congress.** President Svoboda reminded everyone about the annual CSA Cymbidium Congress, which will be held in conjunction with the Santa Barbara spring show. See the announcements section of this newsletter for more information.

> **Dues!** Secretary Heidi Kirkpatrick reminded everyone that members must pay the \$20 annual dues if they wish to continue receiving the monthly newsletter.

> **Gallup & Stribling** – Bill Robson announced that the G&S visitor's center is now open seven days a week.

### Program

President Sandy Svoboda introduced our February speaker, **Jerry Rehfield**, a long time member of our society. Rehfield is a certified AOS and CSA judge for over 40 years and is known in the orchid world for his hybridizing. Rehfield spoke to us about **Compact Cattleyas**. Compact catts are hybrids about 12 inches tall that tend to be easier to grow than the sometimes finicky miniature catts.

Rehfield began his discussion with a review of the term "tetraploid" (often written 4N). Tetraploids have twice as many chromosomes as normal and tend to be desirable to growers for their rounder flowers with heavier texture. Normal or "diploid" (2N) plants may be easier to grow, but tetraploids have better flowers. Crossing the two produces a triploid plant (3N), which is often sterile. Counting chromosomes is expensive, so most tetraploids are found by educated guesses based on the quality of the flowers.

Rehfield began his survey of compact catts with a few beautiful reds, such as *Slc. Anzac*, a prolific historical breeder, *Slc. Madge Fordyce*, which has proven to be a good red parent, and *Slc. Louella 'Ace of Hearts'* HCC/AOS, one of *Slc. Anzac's* progeny. Red in compacts is introduced by *Sophranitis coccinea*, which also reduces size.

Another species that helps reduce size is *Cattleya walkeriana*, a four inch plant with 2-3 inch, nicely shaped flowers. Using the coerulea form can produce very nice blues, such as *C. Sea Breeze (C. walkeriana x C. mossiae)*. *Lc. Mini Purple* is a very successful cross of *C. walkeriana* with

another small-growing species, *L. pumila*. *L. pumila* is a parent of the four inch *Slc*. Pink Doll and the eight to nine inch *Lc*. Gasko-pumila.

One of Rehfield's favorite species for compact breeding is *C. aelandiae*, a compact plant with spotted two inch flowers. This species is a parent of such hybrids as *Slc*. Precious Stones and *C*. Jungle Spots. Other useful compact species include *Brassavola*

*glauca*, *Encyclia mariae*, *C. luteola*, and *L. sincorana*.

Rehfield noted that the advantage of compact cattleyas is that they are easier to grow than minis, have smaller plants than standards, but produce relatively large flowers. Breeding of compact cattys is producing beautiful, shapely flowers to please everyone from casual hobbyists to serious growers.

## Sex, Lies and Kidnapping Or a Look at the Wild World of Orchid Pollination

By Heidi Kirkpatrick

### Part 2

Some of the earliest orchid-pollinator relationships to be studied were those of terrestrial orchids common in Europe. Darwin wrote about *Orchis pyramidalis*, a species whose name, like the word "orchid," derives from an ancient Greek word for testicle – referring to the twin tubers of the plant. He found that this species was pollinated by moths, which were often brutally treated by the flowers. Studies of the moths found that they came away from the exercise with pollinia attached to their probosces, sometimes as many as 11 pairs. Darwin noted that the unfortunate moth, "with its proboscis thus encumbered, could hardly have reached the extremity of the nectary, and would soon have been starved to death."

Many orchids are pollinated by male wasps or bees intent on a little hot sex. Orchid flowers in such genera as *Caladenia*, *Cryptostylis*, and *Spiculaea* exude scents and have lips that resemble particular species of female wasps or bees. Species of the genus *Orphys*, European terrestrial growers, have flowers with complex lips that are particularly insect-like.

Usually, the male wasps or bees emerge in the spring a short time prior to the females. In search of romance, they are fooled by looks and smell into thinking the orchid flowers are sexy female wasps or bees. The male lands on the lip, expecting to get lucky, and instead picks up orchid pollinia. In the case of the genus *Drakaea*,

which has a hinged lip, the male is bodily flung against the orchid sexual parts when he tries to fly off with what he thinks is a female wasp. The frustrated male leaves and, if the orchid is lucky, is duped by another bloom which receives the pollen. Those who study pollination refer to this orchid tactic as "pseudocopulation." The rest of us figure it is downright sneaky.

Most of us view ants in the greenhouse with disfavor. They are attracted by the sweet secretions of many orchid flowers and "farm" aphids that consume orchid sap. But in nature, some orchids seem purposefully to attract ants. These orchids actually are using the ants to protect the flowers.

Many vandas, for example, are pollinated by carpenter bees, which are strong enough to bore through the back of the flower in search of nectar. However, these plants make additional nectar at the base of the flowers. The ants attracted to this nectar discourage the carpenter bees from approaching the flower from the "wrong" direction – the direction in which the bee avoids the pollinia.

Numerous orchid flowers produce sticky sap or nectar at the backs of the flowers, usually attracting ants. Speculation with some South American orchids, such as lycastes, is that the ants discourage destructive insects such as caterpillars from reaching the flower. While this is a reassuring thought, I suspect few of us see

ants chasing away slugs in the greenhouse!

While most orchids pursue pollinators by attempting to be as attractive as possible, a few species choose another route. Some South American oncidiums, such as *Onc. hyphaematicum* and *Onc. planilabre* antagonize their potential pollinators. These flowers with their antenna-like sepals or petals resemble enemy insects to certain species of territorial male bees. The bees will ram the pseudo-insect in an effort to

drive away a competitor, thereby receiving the pollen or depositing it again.

Male bees figure prominently in some of the more exotic pollination schemes of South American orchids. Next month, I will report on the results of the Spring Show, but in the May issue of the newsletter, look for more wild tales of orchid pollination, including stories of drunken bees and an occasional kidnapping!

### Announcements

#### ➤ **Dues Reminder!**

If you do not pay your dues by the end of March, you will no longer receive the newsletter and your name will not be added to the member roster, which comes out in April. Dues are \$20. Pay Carole Cowan at the March meeting or mail your check, payable to OSSB, to Carole at 209 Cedar Lane, Santa Barbara, CA 93108.

#### > **Five Cities Orchid Show Report**

The society would like to thank Jeff Thompson, who installed our exhibit in the Five Cities Show, and Don Brown, who helped tear down and bring all the plants back. Thanks go to the following members for loaning plants to our exhibit: Alan Chovil, Carole Cowan, Stephanie Hannan, Frank Methmann, Bill Robson, Dick Swain and Jeff Thompson. Congratulations to our winners of the following awards: Best of Division, Cattleya Alliance to Bill Robson for *Sl. Beautiful Sunset*; blue ribbons to Bill Robson for *Epi. criniferum* and for *Den. teretefolium x Den. pugioniforme*; red ribbon to Dick Swain for *Cym. Dr. Baker 'Peg'*; white ribbons to Frank Methmann for *C. Esbetts* and to Bill Robson for *Paph. Lady Isabel x Paph. kolopakingii*.

#### > **CSA Congress**

The annual CSA Congress, held in conjunction with the spring show here in Santa Barbara, will be on March 24, at the Holiday Inn in Goleta. The morning programs will cover cymbidiums, while the afternoon will be on paphs and phrags. The evening banquet will feature cocktails and the annual auction. Those who attend will listen to internationally recognized speakers, have a chance to socialize with other orchid growers, and generally have a good time. Contact Al or Sandy Svoboda for more details.

See OSSB on the web at [www.west.net/~orchidsb](http://www.west.net/~orchidsb)

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