



Orchid Society of Santa Barbara

Meeting: Wednesday, June 9, 2004

**Louise Lowry Davis Recreation Center
1232 De La Vina (at De La Vina and Victoria)**

Meeting begins at 7:30 pm

PROGRAM

David Banks from Australia
will speak about

Australian Dendrobium Species and Hybrids, plus Bulbophyllums

This month's special speaker is the editor of the *Australian Orchid Review* and author of over 200 orchid-related papers and of several books, including *Tropical Orchids of Southeast Asia* (1999) and Volume 1 of *Orchids of Australia* (2002, with John J. Riley). In addition to being an orchid judge with the Australian Orchid Council, David Banks is a member of the "Orchid Specialist Group" of the IUCN (The World Conservation Union) Species Survival Commission, headquartered at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, UK. He is also a Research Associate of the Center for Plant Biodiversity Research, in conjunction with the Australian National Botanic Gardens, Canberra. David Banks is recognized internationally as a speaker.

If you have not had an opportunity to hear David Banks, you are in for a treat. He is an entertaining and informative speaker. Even better, he will be supplying the raffle table and will have plants to sell, namely species (e.g., dendrobiums, stanhopeas, sarcochilus) and cymbidium hybrids. Since he cannot accept checks or credit cards, *you must bring CASH to buy plants from David Banks.*

David Banks will be speaking at several other area meetings, including:

Five Cities Orchid Society, Thursday, June 10 – Dendrobium species

Malibu Orchid Society, Tuesday, June 15 – Australian Dendrobium and Sarcochilus species, and their hybrids

Santa Barbara Cymbidium Society, Wednesday, June 16 – Cool Growing Orchids (Cyms, Paphs)

South Bay Orchid Society, Friday, June 18 – Orchids of New Guinea and the Pacific Islands

OSSB Officers for 2004: President – Phil Watt Vice President – Don Brown Secretary – Heidi Kirkpatrick

Summary of the April 2004 Meeting

► **President Phil Watt** welcomed visitors and guests, including members of the Ventura Orchid Society.

► Guest **Harold Koopowitz**, editor of the *Orchid Digest*, made the following three announcements:

- 1) This year's OD Summer Institute, June 26 & 27, will feature phalaenopsis with lectures, hands-on dissection and two lunches. \$150 for members and \$250 for non-members. Contact the Orchid Digest at www.orchiddigest.org or (562)431-1247.
- 2) The July 17th OD Seminar will be an afternoon of lectures on "New Ways of Growing Orchids for the 21st Century." Tickets are \$40 for the afternoon, or \$50 for the afternoon plus dinner, featuring the Director of Science at King's Park in Perth, Australia as distinguished speaker.
- 3) Dues are going up September 1! Renew your membership or join before then. Dues will increase from \$28 annually to \$32.

Program

Vice President Don Brown introduced our May speaker, Hendrik van der Hoven, who presented the membership with a "South African Road Show." His talk was accompanied by fine slides of orchids in their habitats. Most were terrestrials, but a few epiphytes were included.

South African orchids grow in three basic climatic regions, mostly in coastal areas. Some areas are much like our own, with winter rain. Others have summer rain and dry winters. The third type of region has rain throughout the year.

Most species found in cultivation are suitable for intermediate temperatures, while a few want hot and dry culture and those from higher elevations prefer cooler temperatures.

Van der Hoven grows most of his epiphytes mounted, to maintain and keep track of root health. Mounted plants also require less bench space, though they require more water.

Van der Hoven uses one of two mixes for many of his terrestrials. The first is a heavy loam with granulated styrofoam and sometimes perlite. He also likes to add leaf mold or humus. The second mix uses a sandy instead of heavy

loam. Some terrestrials he plants in bark in baskets, such as *Stenoglottis* species.

Terrestrials prefer to be overpotted than underpotted. Van der Hoven chooses pot depth based on the size of the tuber, and notes that repotting is important. Some tubers will grow downward too deeply in a pot over time.

Among the many delightful species van der Hoven discussed were the following:

Eulophia speciosa – tall spikes with yellow flowers; found in disturbed regions along roadsides.

Eulophia odontoglossa – often found amidst sourgrass along roadsides.

Mysticidium capense – showy epiphyte with spikes of white flowers; suitable for outdoor in Santa Barbara but must be mounted.

Disa maculata – gorgeous pale lavender to blue terrestrial.

Disa sagittalis – white flowers found on rocks with constant trickle of moisture.

Disa draconis – flowers after the leaves wither.

Disa ophrodea – several orange-red blooms per spike appearing only after a fire.

Eulophia petersii – six foot spike; grows in hot, dry areas like a succulent.

Satyrium pumilum – grows very close to the ground with dark red flowers; after being pollinated by ground insects, the spike elongates an inch.

Satyrium odorum (*S. bicornis*) – not pretty but easy to grow and with a fine clove fragrance.

Habenaria falicornis – spike of white flowers with spurs; not difficult to grow.

Disa racemosa – native of marsh areas and harder to grow; clear pink flowers in profusion after a fire.

Disa cardinalis – orange flowers; native of unpleasantly hot northern mountain slopes, but roots remain cool next to water.

Disa longicornu – found in rocky seeps; pale to deep blue flowers desirable in horticulture, but the species is not yet easy enough to cultivate.

Neobolisia tysonii – small but pretty brown flowers with white lip; well camouflaged in the wild.

Eulophia angolensis – tallest species of the genus, found in marshes or knee deep water; easy in cultivation if watered through the year. Cultivation trick: grow in pot the bottom half of which is gravel and water. Place holes halfway up the pot and mix above that.

Disa tenuifolia – small but lovely yellow flowers on plants growing in poor soil with succulents.

Disa hians – purple flowers growing in fertile soil in high rain areas.

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

- June 4-6, 2004 **Orchids of Los Osos Open House.** 9-4:30 Friday and Saturday. 10-3:30 Sunday. 1614 Sage Ave., Los Osos. (805)528-0181 or email: orchidland@aol.com
- June 5-6, 2004 **Conejo Orchid Society Show.** Thousand Oaks Library, 1401 E. Janss Rd., Thousand Oaks. Contact jgrodell@merlenorman.com or (805) 492-1569.
- June 12, 2004 **Orchid Society of Southern California Annual Orchid Auction.** Doors open 1 pm. Auction at 2 pm. Meeting Hall of First Christian Church, 221 S. Sixth Street, Burbank. www.orchidssc.org or vp2@orchidssc.org or (323)810-8280 for more information.
- June 16, 2004 **Santa Barbara Cymbidium Society Monthly Meeting.** 7:30 pm. Carpinteria Public Library, 5141 Carpinteria Ave., Carpinteria
- June 17, 2004 **San Gabriel Valley Orchid Hobbyists Annual Auction.** Doors open 6:30 pm. Los Angeles County Arboretum, 301 N. Baldwin, Arcadia. (626)330-8122 or 3w3r@adelphia.net
- June 26-27, 2004 **Orchid Digest Summer Institute.** This year's topic is *Phalaenopsis*. Learn about color inheritance, flower structure, etc., during lectures and hands-on laboratory work taught by experts including Dr. Harold Koopowitz. \$150 (\$250 non-members) covers two days and two lunches. For more information, go to www.orchiddigest.org or call (562)431-1247
- July 9-11, 2004 **Santa Barbara International Orchid Fair.** Earl Warren Showgrounds and Santa Barbara Orchid Estate. www.sborchid.com or 967-1284.
- July 17, 2004 **Orchid Digest Seminar** "New Ways of Growing Orchids for the 21st Century" 1 pm at Huntington Gardens Botanical Center, San Marino. Afternoon speakers: Alan Koch; Fred Clarke; Ramona Wilson; George Vazquez; Harold Koopowitz. \$40 for afternoon seminar. Distinguished Speaker: Kingsley Dixon, Ph.D., King's Park Botanic Gardens, Perth, Australia, speaking on "Underground Orchids and the Sex Life of Orchids Down Under." \$50 for afternoon seminar, dinner, and Distinguished speaker. More information: www.orchiddigest.org or (562)431-1247 or email Orchidsimonef@aol.com

The Magic Bullet

By Heidi Kirkpatrick

Have you ever been to an orchid auction, one with real auctioneers? There are, incidentally, two orchid auctions this month at points south of here. I have not attended an auction of either society. But I did attend auctions back East.

If you have attended an auction at all, you know that they can be seductive. An orchid auction for an orchidholic is even more of a temptation – all those wonderful-looking plants begging to be taken home! And some of them really are terrific buys, going for a fraction of their retail prices.

I can never leave an auction (or a fair, or a show) without bringing *something* home. And that, of course, is when the trouble starts, because then I have to *grow* the thing.

There is plenty of cultural advice available. Many nurseries have culture sheets for plants they

sell. The American Orchid Society web site (www.orchidweb.org) features cultural pages and both their magazine (*Orchids*) and that of the Orchid Digest contain cultural information.

I used to read this stuff avidly, back when I was just beginning with orchids and really believed there was a magic bullet of culture that would get my orchids looking like they do in the slides at last month's society meeting.

Well, there is no magic bullet, at least not for me. I decided *that* fairly soon after hearing one lecture about paphs being easy to repot and a subsequent one claiming they hate to be repotted. Both growers had much better looking plants than I do. So what's a poor, confused hobbyist to do?

I have since come up with what I think of as Heidi's rules of orchid growing ... really little more

than commonsense statements one hears frequently. They are:

- 1) There is no single magic bullet for growing orchids.
- 2) Everyone's growing conditions are a little different, so what works for someone else may not work for you.
- 3) If you are having trouble with your orchids, gather every scrap of cultural information you can find and try what seems to make the most sense for your growing conditions.
- 4) If what you are doing is successful for your orchids, do not succumb to the temptation to change your methods radically, no matter what

orchid experts say.

Remember these rules over the next few months as I tackle the subject of culture for those of us growing indoors, outdoors or in greenhouses in Santa Barbara. In subsequent essays, I'll do overviews of water, light, temperature, medium and pests.

My sources? I am not so impudent as to set myself as an orchid expert. Instead, I will survey what some of your fellow growers are doing to get healthy, flowering plants. For those of you comfortable with your cultural regime, you can find out what everyone else is doing!.

Announcements

- ▶ *Roster Corrections.* Your editor has already received several corrections to the 2004 roster, as follows:
 - Loretta Berlin does not have an email address.
 - Bella Chen's email address should read: bellactrls@yahoo.com
 - Paul Gripp's work telephone number is 967-1284
- ▶ *Upcoming OSSB Meetings/Events.*
 - July Meeting – the ever popular George Vazquez of Zuma Canyon Orchids.
 - August Meeting – Paul Chim, AOS judge and owner of May-on Orchids, on Asian orchids.
 - August BBQ
 - Fall Show – Museum of Natural History. November 13-14, 2004
- ▶ *Orchid Travel to Costa Rica* – Tom Ball is organizing a tour in November 2004. Talk to him at the meeting or check out the flyers on the back table.