



Orchid Society of Santa Barbara

Meeting: Wednesday, July 14, 2004

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

Meeting begins at 7:30 pm

PROGRAM

George Vazquez of Zuma Canyon Orchids
will speak about
Orchid Culture

If you would like to improve your growing conditions, our July meeting is the one for you. Our speaker will be the ever-popular George Vazquez. As owner of Zuma Canyon Orchids, Vazquez is an expert on phalaenopsis, in addition to being an AOS judge. Members who attended the spring show might have noticed the elegant Zuma Canyon phalaenopsis display. Vazquez will speak to us about orchid culture. Those who have heard him speak before know that he is eloquent on the subject. Note from your editor: I always pick up some good hints from Vazquez and go home in a frenzy to attempt better orchid culture. Vazquez will be providing the raffle table, so don't forget to bring your raffle money!

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

- July 9-11, 2004 **Santa Barbara International Orchid Fair.** Earl Warren Showgrounds, Fri-Sat 9-5, Sun 10-4. Free admission; parking \$5. Santa Barbara Orchid Estate, Fri-Sat 8-5, Sun 9-5. This is our big summer retail event. Vendors from all parts of the country and the world will sell at the showgrounds, and our local nurseries will have open houses.
- July 21, 2004 **Santa Barbara Cymbidium Society Monthly Meeting.** Carpinteria Public Library.

Check out our web site! www.west.net/~orchidsb

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

Summary of the May 2004 Meeting

► **President Phil Watt** welcomed visitors and guests.

► **President Watt** noted that the treasurer position has not been filled. We need a volunteer to perform our treasurer duties!

► A volunteer is needed to organize the annual BBQ!

Program

Vice President Don Brown introduced our June speaker, David Banks from Australia. Banks is a second generation orchidist who has been growing orchids much of his life. Now he is the editor of the magazine of the Australian Orchid Council (analogous to our American Orchid Society) and author of numerous orchid articles and books.

Banks spoke engagingly about a number of native Australian species, particularly those that grow in the vicinity of Sydney. Sydney is as far south of the equator as Los Angeles is north, which makes his growing conditions similar to ours. He noted, however, that they are now in their fourth year of drought, with low humidity that sparked last fire season's vicious Australian fires and the potential for running out of water in a couple years.

Among the orchids discussed by Banks are the following.

Dendrobium biggibum – N. Queensland monsoon area. Bulbs mature late summer and spikes appear in fall. Grow in small clay pots in bright light with *no winter water*. Growths are initiated by day increasing day length; if water is given too soon in spring, plants may rot.

Dendrobium kingianum – extensive breeding has resulted in various color forms, including solid color, bicolor (white with colored lip) or speckled.

Dendrobium fleckeri – high altitude in N. Queensland. 2-3 orange flowers. Pinched lip unfortunately transmitted to hybrids.

Dendrobium finneganense – very cool grower from 4000 to 4500 feet. Discovered 1990s. Makes lots of keikis.

Dendrobium aemulum – floriferous. 1 inch white flowers open all at once. Can bloom from the same bulb for up to 10 years.

Den. tetragonum – parent of showy starry hybrids. Dark flowers with purple lips appear sporadically several times a year. Best grown on slabs in deep shade, cool and moist.

Dendrobium cucumerinum – gherkin-like leaves. Grow on cork (not tree fern) in bright light outside here. Temps from -5°C to over 100°F in nature.

Prone to scale.

Dockrillia brevicauda – described 1993. 2 inch caramel colored flowers in mid summer.

Dockrillia fuliginosa – formerly *D. teretefolium* 'Black Pam'. rd too deeply in a pot over time.

Den. Hilda Poxon (speciosum x tetragonum) – variable. Some yellow with purple markings or with pink lips.

Den. Yondi 'Tina Goliath' FCC/AOC,OSNW – rich gold flowers larger than *D. speciosum*. Soon to be tissue cultured.

Den. Avril's Gold 'Luanne' – slow growing but worth the wait; others of this grex available.

Rhinerrhiza divitiflora – *Sarcochilus* relative with numerous 3 inch flowers lasting 3-4 days. Mount on tree fern or cork but do not cover roots with moss. Give copious water.

Sarcochilus ceceliae – grows brighter than other species, in cattleya light.

Sarcochilus falcatus – white flowers on woodland plant. Grow mounted on cork, roots not covered with moss, with high humidity. Good low in greenhouse.

Sarcochilus fitzgeraldii – grows in very deep shade. Flowers white with dark red center.

Bulbophyllum globulaforme – one of 3 smallest orchids in the world. 2 mm bulbs, 1.5 mm lip, 4-5 mm flower.

Bulbophyllum minutissimum – another super mini. Flowers 3 mm, flattened bulbs 3 mm. Easy mounted on cork. Grow with Aussie dendrobiums, but from high elevations so sensitive to heat.

Bulbophyllum elisae – rare. Several green 1 inch flowers per spike. Grow mounted on cork.

Bulbophyllum spathulatum – 1.5 inch deep reddish purple flowers. Cool and moist. Hard to grow.

Cymbidium canaliculatum – found epiphytically in full sun in nature, with temps of 100°F and freezing, dry in winter. Grow like a cattleya, hanging, in clay pot, watering once every 2 weeks in summer and once every 6 weeks in winter.

Coelogyne ovalis – easy grower outdoor here in baskets.

Sarconopsis Rita Anderson – a sarcochilus – phalaenopsis hybrid; low seed, hard to breed.

Sartylis Braveheart – *Rhynchostylis gigantea x Sarcochilus hartmanii*.

David Banks' commentary on pollination: He pollinates when the plants are most fragrant, on the theory that they are trying to attract a pollinator and are therefore most at their most fertile. Many Australian orchid species are pollinated in nature by native bee species.

Orchid Growing for Santa Barbarans

By Heidi Kirkpatrick

My father-in-law got me hooked on orchids. On a visit some years ago, he took us to Rod McClellan Orchids in San Francisco. I'd never seen anything like their sales room – this was before Home Depot had orchids – and I was worse than a kid in a candy store. Three plants took the plane with me back to Maryland, where I was living. There probably would have been more, but I was with the spouse, who was not instantaneously entranced.

And then I faced what every newly addicted orchidist faces: How the heck was I to grow these things? Like most novices, I thought that if I followed the magic recipe – and I was convinced there was only one recipe – my plants would thrive.

Many dead plants and one cross-country move with orchids later (shudder), I no longer consider myself a novice. Maybe an advanced beginner, instead. I still look for cultural advice, but I realize there is no one magic recipe to grow better.

Is it presumptuous of me to offer cultural advice to a membership many of whom grow much better plants than I do? Probably. In my defense, I am offering very little advice on my own. Instead, this month's editorial and subsequent installments are a compilation of years of copious note taking at lectures, casual conversations with fellow orchid growers, and a handful of direct interviews specifically for this article. (If I didn't interview you, do not be offended; I called at random and if I got an answering machine, you got removed from the interview list.)

So enough preamble, you are thinking. Hand out some cultural advice already!

My first advice is this: consider how orchid growing is going to fit into your life. If you are replacing those evenings playing computer games with evenings examining your burgeoning collection, your orchids will not be an issue. If you have a significant other, there may be protests about time or money spent on orchids. My spouse is pretty much a facilitator, but I think I hit his limit when I Fed-Exed several florist boxes full of orchids from Maryland to Santa Barbara, with the understanding that he was going to unpack and care for them all until I arrived. I have heard that the size of one's collection should not exceed the number of plants one's significant other is willing to water when one is away – true!

What if, horror of horrors, one's significant other is not merely a facilitator, but actually grows orchids, too? My spouse and I would probably throttle each other, but other members have solved inevitable conflicts amicably. Shirly Carter tells me that after many years together, she and Ed have

arrived at a solution that works for them. Shirly repots and Ed does the spraying and feeding.

Al and Sandy Svoboda have solved territorial disputes by having his and hers greenhouses. Sandy has described Al as her mentor. But she also says that when he visits her greenhouse, he can look but not touch.

So either your spouse is colluding with you on the orchid habit, or you have him/her suitably deceived as to the severity of your addiction. Now you have to decide where to grow those orchids.

In Santa Barbara, we are fortunate to have three possibilities for growing our orchids. Many plants will grow outside here, including cymbidiums, many laelias and cattleyas (e.g., *Laelia anceps*), and some oncidium alliance plants. This is one of the most inexpensive ways of growing orchids, and many if not most members take advantage of our favorable climate. Norm Wieder, who lives on the cooler, more humid Mesa, has a hillside of orchids under shadecloth. Don Brown, who lives in the hotter, drier foothills, has two shade houses. Bill Robson, who has a large and well-populated greenhouse, also has a very well-populated outdoor walkway.

Many orchids that will not survive our winters perform admirably inside houses, including phalaenopsis hybrids and minicatts. The battle in a house is to raise the humidity without letting the plant sit in water. Many growers, myself included, use humidity trays topped by grates. Water pours through the pot and puddles in the tray. The plant roots stay out of the water (and therefore don't rot), which gives a little localized humidity as it evaporates. Prior to the construction of my greenhouse, I grew paphs with relative success atop humidity trays in my house. These were on a two-shelf light cart, each shelf lit by four fluorescent lights. Jeff Thompson has used a similar fluorescent light setup in his house. These days, I have a few orchids next to a window where they receive bright but no direct light.

For those who can afford it, the most environmental control is afforded by a greenhouse. A number of members have greenhouses, both heated and unheated, ranging in size from a small place to keep the seedlings protected in the winter to a greenhouse practically the size of my house. Don Brown has my favorite piece of greenhouse advice: If you are growing specimens, consider building an oversized door so you can get the blooming plants out of the greenhouse to the show.

Next editorial: nuts and bolts, or how your orchid buddies water and fertilize.

Plea for Volunteers

Want to support your society? Now is the time to show your support with actions.

► **Treasurer** The Society has been without a treasurer for most of the year. *We desperately need a new treasurer!* If you are good with numbers, consider serving as the society treasurer. Please call Phil Watt (967-7565), Don Brown (687-3040) or Heidi Kirkpatrick (563-2894) if you would like to learn more about the duties of treasurer. You will earn the eternal gratitude of the board.

► **BBQ Organizer** It is already July and no one has stepped forward to organize the August BBQ. If you are interested in maintaining this tradition and putting your own stamp on the event, please call Phil Watt, Don Brown, or Heidi Kirkpatrick. The organizer's responsibilities would be to arrange for food, to gather any money, and to contact Heidi Kirkpatrick by August 1 with information for the newsletter. In the past, we have had food catered, but other possibilities would include sandwich platters or a potluck. Tentative dates are Saturday or Sunday August 14 or 15.

Announcements

► ***Roster Corrections and Additions.***

- T. J. Bloominger's home phone is 683-7771.
- Welcome to our new member! Add Beta-Raquel Rivera to your roster. PO Box 735, Santa Barbara, CA 93102, 965-8966

► ***Upcoming OSSB Meetings/Events.***

- August Meeting – Paul Chim, AOS judge and owner of May-on Orchids, on Asian orchids.
- Fall Show – Museum of Natural History. November 13-14, 2004

► ***OSSB Booth at Horticultural Society Sale – Sep 19.*** Don Brown has generously offered to run a society sales booth at the Hort Sale, with the help of his daughter Rosminah and Josh Davis. All profits are to benefit the OSSB special speakers fund. If you have plants (not necessarily orchids) to donate to the sale, bring them to MacKenzie Park that morning. If you would like to deliver plants ahead of time, Rosminah has offered to receive them while Don is out of town. Plants should be healthy and priced to sell.