



Orchid Society of Santa Barbara

Meeting: Wednesday, July 13, 2005

MacKenzie Adult Building

at MacKenzie Park

3111 State Street (at Las Positas)

enter parking lot on Las Positas

Meeting begins at 7:30 pm

PROGRAM

Renowned species enthusiast **Howard Gunn** will speak about
Bulbophyllums

Most folks consider orchids pretty exotic. Here is a group of orchids that contains some really peculiar species. Come hear about Bulbophyllums from a grower who is a favorite speaker of the Orchid Species Society. Howard Gunn is a grower with a very large collection of species orchids; he also has a very large library with which to identify his orchids. He'll tell us about his favorite orchids, the Bulbophyllums, including hints on how to grow these weird and wonderful plants. Gunn will also be providing the plant table, so be sure to save some money for raffle tickets!

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

July 8-10, 2005

Santa Barbara Orchid Estate International Orchid Fair -- Grand Anniversary!

Friday and Saturday 9 am - 5 pm. Sunday 10 am - 4 pm. Free admission; parking \$5. Earl Warren Showgrounds, Santa Barbara. www.orchidfair.com Santa Barbara Orchid Estate and Cal-Orchid will have open houses during the fair.

July 12, 2005

Santa Barbara Cymbidium Society Monthly Meeting. This month's meeting is on a

special day to accommodate speaker Jason Fischer, of Orchids Limited, who will speak on Orchids of Japan. 7:30 pm, Carpinteria Public Library. 5141 Carpinteria Ave., Carpinteria.

August 14, 2004

Annual OSSB Picnic

At the Santa Barbara Orchid Estate. This year's event, held in conjunction with the Santa Barbara Cymbidium Society, will be a potluck, followed by a tour of the Orchid Estate. Bring plants to donate to the silent auction; you make pick how much money goes to OSSB and how much to SBCS. More details in the August newsletter.

Summary of the June 2005 Meeting

- **President Phil Watt** welcomed guests, including a visitor from Atlanta, Georgia.
- **Refreshments.** Now that Angela Watt is our treasurer, she can no longer bring drinks to every meeting. See the Announcements section for more on how you can make sure our meetings have drinks and snacks.
- **Fall Show Volunteers.** A society survives by its volunteers. OSSB needs volunteers for the fall show, including someone to help with publicity and a volunteer to organize a simple judges luncheon.

Culture Corner - Thanks to Jeff Thompson for his discussion on how light affects his plants. Jeff experiments with his plants and brought in several that showed results of low versus high light levels.

Program

OSSB guest James Rose of Cal-Orchid introduced our June speaker, Fred Clarke of Sunset Valley Orchids. Clarke is a grower/hybridizer whose plants have received prestigious awards from the American Orchid Society.

Clarke spoke on the three related genera *Cycnoches*, *Mormodes*, and *Catasetum*. He began with *Cycnoches*, which is correctly pronounced SIK-no-keez, though most growers, Clarke included, say sik-No-cheese. This easy-to-grow genus is characterized by swan shaped flowers, deciduous leaves, and separate male and female flowers.

Among the species in this genus are:

- *Cyc. cooperi* - 3 foot spike with 40 3"-4" flowers in reddish tones. There is also a green form.
- *Cyc. barthiarum* - newly discovered species with lip like a little hand. Male flowers green and white with reddish spots. Female flowers green without white.
- *Cyc. warscewiczii* - horizontal petals on green flower. Horticulturally preferred over *Cyc. chlorochilon*, which has upswept petals; the latter name is often incorrectly used.
- *Cyc. haagii* - 25 flowers per spike. Faint red overlay on green. Male flower has spots on white lip; female flower has no spots.
- *Cyc. Martha Clarke (herrenhusanum x barthiarum)* - golden yellow base with red spots and red overlay; white lip with "fingers." Named after Clarke's wife - always a good sign that the hybridizer likes a cross.
- *Cyc. William Clarke (herrenhusanum x cooperi)* - true gold color.

The genus *Mormodes* is characterized by interestingly twisted and contorted flowers. Unfortunately, these species can be challenging to grow, as they require 70° nights and 90° days for nine months of the year. Among the species Clarke

discussed were:

- *Morm. sinuata* - red stripes on a pinkish red ground.
- *Morm. igneum* - spotted flowers reminiscent of a swimming octopus.
- *Morm. maculata* - bright yellow flower with chestnut spots.
- *Morm. lawrenciana* - red spots.

By hybridizing them with their close relatives in genus *Cycnoches* and genus *Catasetum*, Clarke has managed to introduce some of the strong color, particularly red, found in *Mormodes* species. Crosses of *Mormodes* with *Cycnoches* are vigorous, flowering in two years from flask with flowers of *Cycnoches* shape and *Mormodes* color. Among the hybrids:

- *Cycd. Wine Delight 'JEM' FCC/AOS (Cyc. lehmannii x Morm. sinuata)* - deep wine color
- *Cycd. Chocolate and Cherries 'Sunset Valley Orchids' AM/AOS (Cyc. warscewiczii x Morm. sinuata)* - pink and glossy.
- *Cycd. Midnight Magic [Cyc. warscewiczii x Morm.(sinuata x buccinator)]* - flowers with broad petals and flat lips in deep rich reds.

Perhaps the most interesting genus is *Catasetum*. Female flowers are greenish and last 5-10 weeks. Male flowers last 1-3 weeks and have a trigger that, when touched, causes the pollen to eject forcibly, flying up to several feet. Species include:

- *Ctsm. pileatum* - huge lip with heavy substance in pale green, 15 flowers per spike.
- *Ctsm. expansum* - similar to *Ctsm. pileatum* but with red spots.
- *Ctsm. saccatum* - large plants bloom 2-4 times a year. 30 dark, starry flowers on a 2.5 foot spike.
- *Ctsm. denticulatum* - 6" plant with large flower that has denticulations or teeth around lip.
- *Ctsm. tenebrosum* - chartreuse lip on dark mahogany flower; easy to grow.

Among the hybrids Clarke discussed were:

- *Ctsm. Orchidglade (expansum x pileatum)* - spotting and a heart shaped lip.
- *Ctsm. Donna Wise (Orchidglade x tenebrosum)* - several color forms from dark to red to pale.
- *Fredclarkeara After Dark (Ctsm. Donna Wise x Cycd. Painted Desert)* - 25 flowers per spike in bloom 6-7 weeks. Some seedlings produced **black flowers!** Several have received FCCs from the AOS.

When the leaves on these orchids yellow, withhold water until new growth shows root tips. Water lightly only at base of plant until second flush of roots, then water heavily with increased fertilizer. Frequent watering when the spike appears and during flowering. Reduce water as leaves yellow in October. The plant should rest without any water for 1-2 months, during which time it can be repotted.

Announcements

- **Refreshments Update** - Thanks to Janet Gripp for last month's treats, and Angela Watt for the drinks and coffee. Now that Angela is serving as our treasurer, she can no longer bring drinks and the coffee pot to every meeting. No one has stepped forward to volunteer as Refreshment Chair. However, Joyce Wieder took the coffee pot and drinks supplies home last month to bring to the July meeting. Joyce proposes that 1) the person bringing refreshments also bring drinks or 2) two people volunteer for refreshments, with one bringing snacks and the other the society coffee pot and cups and drinks. If no one volunteers for a particular month, then the society will have no coffee and drinks that month. For July, we can thank Joyce for drinks and Al and Sandy Svoboda for snacks.
- **Orchids at the Public Library** - Art Denk has installed a display promoting orchids at the Main Library in Santa Barbara. The display, which is in a glass wall case in the entry lobby, shows a variety of orchid publications and posters, plus contact information for OSSB and the Santa Barbara Cymbidium Society. It can be viewed during the month of July.
- **Check out the CSA Journal** and you will find the Virtual Herbarium, by none other than our own Juliane Lewis.
- **Welcome New Members and Update Your Roster.** Returning member Pat Kenny, 3647 Santa Maria Lane, Santa Barbara, CA 93105, 563-7576. New member David K. Thurber, 1571 Sycamore Canyon Rd. Santa Barbara, CA 93108, 963-2436, thurberlaw@aol.com.

A Report on the 2004 Orchid Digest Speakers Day Or More Methods of Growing Orchids 2

Last month, I reported on diatomaceous rock, as discussed at the 2004 Orchid Digest Speakers Day. This month, I'll complete the series with a report on another alternative to fir bark: sphagnum moss, as recommended by Alan Koch of Gold Country Orchids and George Vasquez of Zuma Canyon Orchids.

Koch spoke about the advantages of using sphagnum to grow miniature cattleyas, a group of orchids for which Gold Country Orchids is well known. Koch uses New Zealand sphagnum for his orchids to mimic how they grow in the wild - on the side of a tree with roots amongst the moss growing on the tree.

When potting, Koch leaves an air space at the bottom and leaves the moss loose, so air and water can penetrate it. To repot, Koch leaves the old moss and adds new moss, placing the plant and moss into a clay pot. He does not put extra moss at the bottom of the clay pot.

It is important not to bury the rhizome of mini catts when repotting. This helps prevent rotting of the rhizome, and is a good rule when potting other rot-sensitive orchids.

After repotting, Koch drenches the plant and moss with 3% hydrogen peroxide, which stops fungus. He uses no other fungicide in his collection. Hydrogen peroxide is a good fungicide for other orchids, too, such as miltoniopsis. It can help avert crown rot in paphs and phals; at the first sign of trouble, drench three times with hydrogen peroxide.

Zuma Canyon Orchids is known for its phalaenopsis, and George Vasquez grows them in moss. He uses Chilean sphagnum moss. Its quality is not as high as that of New Zealand moss, but it is less expensive and still good enough for orchids.

Since changing to moss (and figuring out how to grow in moss), Vasquez finds that his phals grow great roots really fast. It is typical for young phals to need repotting at 4 months.

Vasquez uses non-biodegradable styrofoam to get aeration at the bottom of plastic pots. Plants are potted up frequently without the old moss being removed for the first year and a half. If the roots are rotted, he cleans out everything, then uses tree seal and puts a piece of styrofoam

beneath the crown. Styrofoam beneath the crown is also a good practice for mature plants.

When repotting, he tucks all the roots into the new pot and leaves an inch of space at the top of the pot; roots will grow here in a slightly sheltered area before hitting the pot wall.

Since converting to moss, Vazquez uses less water and fertilizer. Moss holds 8 times more water than bark, so less water runs through the pot. Phals in moss need watering only every 2 weeks or so.

Bark needs high nitrogen fertilizer, but moss does not. Vazquez uses his own Zuma

Canyon fertilizer, 18-15-9, intended for use with tap water. Since converting to moss, he has gone to a tenth of the strength he used with bark (e.g., from 1 tbs to 1/10 tbs).

George Vazquez also had my favorite quotation from the conference: "There is no wrong medium. There is the wrong way to grow in that medium." So am I making recommendations? Nope. If you figure out a medium, be it bark, moss, Diatomite, coconut, or something else, stick with it and ignore what the experts say. There is no better recommendation than a happy plant in your collection.

- Congratulations to June's overwhelming show table winner: Josh Davis's gorgeous *Masd. Veitchiana* impressed the membership and our two guest commentators, James Rose and Fred Clarke. Bryan Davis, James Merriman and Norm Wieder each received one vote. Jeff Thompson received one vote for each of two plants.
- *Monthly Show Table Review* - Bring in your flowering plant, sign the list, and you'll receive a point. Vote for your favorite show table orchid whether you brought one in or not. The orchid with the most votes gets first place and 5 points for its owner. Second place receives 3 points. Third place receives 2 points. At the end of the year, the person with the most points wins special recognition. Our show table judging program is in its infancy; please help us make it work by signing up your show table plants and by voting for your favorite show table plant.
- Check out our web site! www.west.net/~orchidsb
- OSSB Officers for 2005: President - Phil Watt Vice President - Don Brown
 Treasurer - Angela Watt Secretary - Heidi Kirkpatrick