



# Orchid Society of Santa Barbara

*Meeting: Wednesday, October 12, 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**

Four time SBIOS Grand Champion winner **Weegie Caughlan** will speak about  
**Growing Cymbidiums for Home Pleasure and for Show Awards:  
Its All About Form**

Weegie Caughlan describes herself as "a fiercely out-of-control, noncommercial Cymbidium hobbyist." However she describes herself, Caughlan gets results. She has won Best Cymbidium in Show ten consecutive years at the San Francisco Orchid Show and is four time Grand Champ and three time Reserve Champ at the Santa Barbara International Orchid Show. Her list of awards also includes American Orchid Society Awards, Cymbidium Society of America Awards, and show display awards. Caughlan is an AOS judge, a founder of the Gold Coast Society and the Golden Gate Cymbidium Society, and past president of several other societies. She grows about 2000 cymbidiums, from flasks and seedlings to a few tubs. She also grows a few Australian dendrobiums, paphs and phrags. If you want to learn more about how this amazing hobbyist grows such successful cymbidiums, this is the lecture for you.

**Announcements**

- Thanks to Ed and Shirlye Carter and to Elizabeth Ralston for the September refreshments. Thanks also to Mike Hersh for his donation to the refreshment fund.
- Thanks to Aranda Orchids ([www.aranda.com.br](http://www.aranda.com.br)) for their unsolicited donation of plants to our society at the July Orchid Fair.

## Summary of the September 2005 Meeting

- **President Phil Watt** welcomed guests Patrick Ortiz and, from Chaotic Exotics, John Sykorski.
- Member **Terri Mershon** is looking for repotting help and will share divisions with her helper. Call Terri if you can help (969-7350).
- The society's Special Speakers Fund will help pay for Weegie Caughlin, our October speaker.
- The OSSB Orchid Show will be December 10-11, 2005 at the Museum of Natural History. The society will need volunteers help with installation, clean-up, and sales, so get ready to sign up at upcoming meetings. Members are encouraged to put in their own displays, or to place plants in the society display. The society will once again have a sales area for member plants; get your orange sale tags and instructions from Treasurer Angela Watt. Thanks go to Janet Gripp, who volunteered to coordinate the judges' luncheon. Check your newsletters for further information about the show.

### Program

Vice President Down Brown introduced our September speaker, James Kotsybar, co-owner of Chaotic Exotics. He is an AOS judge and current Vice Chair of the Pacific South Judging Region. His entertaining and speculative talk was titled: "Early Evolution of Domesticated Orchids."

Kotsybar very kindly gave your editor a transcript of his talk. While it is too long to include in its entirety, I shall print excerpts and save some of the juicy examples for a future article on orchid pollination and other orchid oddities.

"Expert opinions vary considerably on orchid prehistory. Some say that the degree to which orchid genera hybridize with one another indicates that orchids are very recently evolved. They declare that orchids must be very young in evolutionary terms as evidenced by this lack of species differentiation. Others say that the ubiquitous presence of orchids worldwide is best explained if orchid ancestors came from Pangaea - the ancient, single continent from which today's landmasses split, 225 million years ago. Mysteriously, the fossil record can validate neither theory. There simply are no confirmed fossilized orchids .... Until recently, the prevailing theory was that orchids split off from the lilies which some resemble, but recent DNA analysis designates asparagus as orchids' closest ancestor.

"...orchids have evolved into epiphytes climbing to the treetops to find light and escape rot. In acclimating to life without soil, they have devised mechanisms to collect and store water and even resist its evaporation.

"We also know that orchids depend upon

pollinators in order to reproduce, and their primary pollinators are flying insects. Our scrutiny reveals that they have adopted various means to attract their winged liaisons, either with visual cues or with fragrances. ...

"Despite these clever tactics, studies have shown that successful orchid seedpod production occurs rarely in nature. However, orchids compensate for this scarcity by the copious amount of seeds per pod and a long, productive adult life.

"We also know that orchid seeds survive for only a short time unless they connect with mycorrhizal fungi, which provide them needed nourishment until they are able to photosynthesize their own food. In order to achieve this, orchids have reduced their seed size allowing them to be carried like dust in the wind and scattered prolifically until they find a fungal crib. ...

"Today, due to human intervention, orchids are experiencing an explosion of gene-mixing diversity. While pollination was rare in their former environment, in cultivation, plants can be made to produce pods yearly. ...

"Selection is no longer a random process of Nature; the orchid breeder has extensive data on the results to expect from most crosses. Choice is based on recorded experience or at very least a willful assessment of the likely outcome.

"... our new criterion for defining species is that the offspring develop a steady population that breeds true ... from one generation to the next. The fastest way to achieve this is by the repeated crossing of siblings .... The emergence of new species may happen faster than it is believed to have naturally occurred in the Galapagos or Australia or anywhere else on Earth.

"... In a few more thousand years, despite destruction of orchid natural habitat, the number of orchid species in the world could increase to a million or more. With our help, and as long as they retain their association with man, orchids could well become the botanical life form best suited to survival on Earth - at least in our homes and greenhouses."

"While it seems that we have taken control of the destiny of orchids, we have seen that their skill at adaptation has allowed them to ... completely manipulate their pollinators. Perhaps we should take a second look at our relationship with orchids. ... orchids do not generally require wasps to propagate their seedlings and have never insisted that they be groomed and repotted regularly by bees. We convince ourselves that orchid care is our idea. ... We might be well advised to consider, however, why it is that *Oncidium Sharry Baby* smells like chocolate. ..."

## The 2005 Orchid Digest Speakers Day, Part 2

### Nick Tannaci on Brachypetalums

By Heidi Kirkpatrick

I love paphs, so I really enjoyed Nick Tannaci's Speakers Day talk on paphs from section *Brachypetalum* and some of the interesting current breeding. Tannaci came across as an entertaining, genial man who joked, "I've only made two mistakes in my life, and they're timing and judgment."

Tannaci, who used to work for Terry Root at The Orchid Zone, now has his own nursery breeding Brachys. Paphs grow in low light levels between 900 and 1200 foot-candles. Root temperature is held in a range between 60°F and 85°F, with humidity at 65%.

Tannaci fertilizes every third week. He first waters to wet the roots, then fertilizes. He does not allow the roots to dry when they've been fertilized. For a mix, he combines seven parts fine fir that has been wet in hot water, one gallon of sand, a gallon of perlite and a gallon of charcoal. His water has a pH of 8, but what comes out of the pot, after going through the acidity of the bark, is at pH 6.8.

Rather than spray his collection, Tannaci culls sick plants. Since paphs are the least evolved of orchids, he fears that repeated fungicide usage will eventually kill the plant. The only infestations of mealy bugs he has had have been on hybrids with two foot flower spikes; his resident frogs couldn't reach to the top of the spike to get the mealybugs.

Brachy species convey particular traits to their progeny. *P. concolor* is great for color and vigor. *P. leucochillum* also is vigorous, with big, flat, shapely flowers. *P. niveum* has a smallish flower, but tends to breed big, with a nice tall stem. *P. bellatulum* has short stems and a large, cupped flower, but the cupping does not always transmit to progeny.

Crossing Brachys with members from the section *Parvisepalum* is very tempting. Parvis have tall stems and breed large flowers. However, substance can be thin. And Parvis are not very compatible with Brachys. Tannaci noted that Parvi pollen is reluctant to stick on Brachys, and some of the resultant crosses are themselves shy breeders. In addition, triploid and tetraploid plants (3N and 4N) tend not to breed well, said Tannaci.

Among the Brachys Tannaci discussed were:

- *P. Wellesleyanum* (*P. concolor* x *P. leucochillum*) 1875 - yellow fades in progeny
- *P. Greyi* (*P. leucochillum* x *P. niveum*) 1888 - alba version has great vigor as a parent.
- *P. Psyche* (*P. bellatulum* x *P. niveum*) - great parent. Best way to use *P. niveum* in breeding.
- *P. S. Gratrix* (*P. bellatulum* x *P. leucochillum*) 1898 - nice shape and nice red markings.

- *P. Virgo* (*P. leucochillum* x *P. Psyche*) 1921 - the finest pure Brachy cross.
- *P. Bella Lucia* (*P. bellatulum* x *P. Wellesleyanum*) 1988 - good breeder, especially of reds, though some find it a poor grower.
- *P. Muriel Constance* (*P. Greyi* x *P. bellatulum*) 1991 - pale yellow, no spots, good breeder.
- *P. James Bacon* (*P. concolor*-*bellatulum* x *P. leucochillum*) 1993 - breeds yellows that stay yellow; nice balance, shape, and stem.
- *P. Double Trix* (*P. Double Shot* x *P. S. Gratrix*) 2000 - nice tall stems. *P. Double Shot* is *P. Virgo* x *P. Psyche*.

• *P. Triple Trix* (*P. Double Trix* x *P. Psyche*) - 7-8" stems need no staking. Nice white with red dots. Only contains 3 species!

- *P. James Bacon* x *P. Greyi* - very wide dorsal.

And introducing Parvi hybrids:

- *P. Armeni-White* (*P. armeniacum* x *P. delenatii*) 1987 - charming white flowers on a good stem, but not good substance (delicate flowers) and a shy breeder.
- *P. Lynnleigh Koopowitz* (*P. delenatii* x *P. malipoense*) 1991 - great vigor with two foot flower stems, but a shy breeder.
- *P. Joyce Hasegawa* (*P. delenatii* x *P. emersonii*) 1991 - *P. emersonii* makes for big flowers but the species is hard to grow.
- *P. Mem. Larry Heuer* (*P. malipoense* x *P. emersonii*) 1991 - Six inch flowers! *P. malipoense* is a great breeder that accepts color.
- *P. Fanaticum* (*P. malipoense* x *P. micranthum*) - fertile and vigorous, pink to yellow to green flowers.

Combining Brachy and Parvi produces:

- *P. Ma Bell* (*P. malipoense* x *P. bellatulum*) 1992 - made by The Orchid Zone.
- *P. Wossner Perle* (*P. micranthum* x *P. niveum*) 1991 - big dorsal sepal.
- *P. Kabuki Moon* (*P. Virgo* x *P. emersonii*) - big dorsal with yellow pouch shaped like that of *P. emersonii*.
- *P. Wossner Bellarmi* (*P. bellatulum* x *P. armeniacum*) 1992 - concolor yellow and a lovely shape.
- *P. Raspberry Rhapsody* - a *P. Bella Lucia* hybrid with very deep red flowers (over which your editor drooled).
- *P. Green Smoke* (*P. malipoense* x *P. Greyi*) - very pale green flowers.
- *P. Muy Mal* (*P. malipoense* x *P. Double Trix*) 2004 - six inch flowers and a good breeder.

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

**October 12-16, 2005 Sonoma County Orchid Society Show and AOS Members Meeting.**

Also Slipper Orchid Alliance, Pleurothallid Alliance, International Phalaenopsis Alliance, Orchid Digest Corporation. Register for lectures or just attend the show and sale. [www.sonomaorchids.com](http://www.sonomaorchids.com) or 707-528-1671.

**October 14-16, 2005 San Diego International Orchid Fair.**

San Diego Fairgrounds, Del Mar, CA. Contact [www.qbgardens.org](http://www.qbgardens.org) or 760-436-3036 ext.206

**October 21-23, 2005 Southland Orchid Show at The Huntington.**

The Huntington Library and Botanical Gardens, 1151 Oxford Rd., San Marino, CA. Contact 909-626-8244 or [wardbrendar@hotmail.com](mailto:wardbrendar@hotmail.com)

**November 5-6, 2005 Santa Barbara Orchid Estate Fall Open House.**

\$7.50 specials, cymbidium season kickoff, silent auction, *Laelia anceps* parade.

**December 10-11, 2005 Orchid Society of Santa Barbara Orchid Show and Sale.**

At the Museum of Natural History. There will be volunteer, plant display, and plant selling opportunities!

● **September Show Table Winners.** First place went to Josh Davis for his *Neofinetia falcata*. Second place was a tie between Paul Gripp's *C. loddigesii* 'Blue Sky' and another Josh Davis plant, *Masd. veitchiana*. Jeff Thompson tied himself for third place with *Aerangis mystacidii* and *Bulbophyllum laxiflorum*. Thanks also to Laurel and Chris Clayton, Norm Wieder, and Don Brown for bringing in show plants.

● **September Show Table Report.** Among the outdoor growers on the plant table were *Enc. (tampense x steinbachianum)*, *Enc. alata* (fragrant in the daytime), *Cym.* Cinnamon, and a cane type *Epidendrum* from Ecuador. Indoor growers included *Masd. herradurae*, *Epi. porpax*, and *Aerangis mystacidii*. Paul Gripp noted that books put *Epi porpax* up to 3200 meters elevation, so it may manage outdoors here.

● Check out our web site! [www.west.net/~orchidsb](http://www.west.net/~orchidsb)

● OSSB Officers for 2005:      President - Phil Watt      Vice President - Don Brown  
   Treasurer - Angela Watt      Secretary - Heidi Kirkpatrick