



Orchid Society of Santa Barbara

Meeting: Wednesday, March 8, 2006

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

George Hatfield of Hatfield Orchids will speak about
Tokyo Dome Show 2006

This month, come enjoy an armchair tour of this year's Tokyo Dome Show, the largest orchid show in the world. Your expert tour guide will be George Hatfield, past president of the Cymbidium Society of America, CSA and AOS judge, and owner of George Hatfield Orchids. As a judge and a regular exhibitor of stunning cymbidiums at the Santa Barbara International Orchid Show, Hatfield has an eye for fine orchids and fine displays. Be sure to bring your wallets, because Hatfield will supply the raffle table - delectable cymbidiums!

Calendar

- March 11-12, 2006* **Five Cities Orchid Society Show and Sale "Orchid Safari"**
800 W. Branch St., Arroyo Grande. Sat 9-5. Sun 10-5. Admission \$5. www.fcos.org
- March 17-19, 2006* **San Diego County Orchid Society Show.** Scottish Rite Temple, 1895 Camino
Del Rio South, San Diego. Info: (619) 426-9108 or keikiman@aol.com
- March 24-26, 2006* **61st Santa Barbara International Orchid Show "Orchids in Paradise"**
Earl Warren Showgrounds. Preview Thurs 6-9 call 682-7633x243 for tickets. Fri - Sun 9-5. General
admission \$10. Seniors (65+) and students \$8. Under 12 free. www.sborchidshow.com
- March 25, 2006* **Cymbidium Congress** (lectures, meals, admission to International Show)
University Club of Santa Barbara, 1332 Santa Barbara Street. CSA members \$115, Non-members \$140.
Info: Al and Sandy Svoboda 805-969-4536 asvoboda@earthlink.net
- March 31-April 2, 2006* **Santa Clara Valley Orchid Society Show.** Westgate Mall, 1600 Saratoga Ave,
Suite B2, San Jose, CA. Info: (301)641-2556 or twcolber@hotmail.com
- May 6-7, 2006* **Carmel Orchid Society, Inc. Mayfaire Orchid Show and Sale**
Crossroads, Highway 1 and Rio Road, Carmel, CA. Free admission. 20 vendors.

Summary of the February 2006 Meeting

- **President Don Brown** welcomed guests and visitors.
- **Spring Auction:** There will be no spring auction, as there are not enough society members available to organize and run it.
- **Special Speakers Fund:** Many thanks to those who have donated to the special speakers fun in the past. This fund allows the society to pay a extra beyond the regularly budgeted honorarium to obtain speakers of particular interest, such as those who travel some distance to visit us. Please consider a donation to the Special Speakers Fund if you have been enjoying our monthly speakers!
- **Display at Five Cities Show:** If you will have blooming orchids to lend for OSSB's display at the Five Cities Show (March 10-12, 2006), please contact Jeff Thompson (563-4376).
- **Fall Show:** The society's fall show will be at the Museum of Natural History on Dec 9-10, 2006.
- The society wished a happy birthday to **Dick Swain**.

Program

President Down Brown introduced our February speaker, Doug Conkin, who spoke to us about "Raising Cattleyas." Conkin is on the editorial board of the *Orchid Digest*, president of the Southland Orchid Show Committee, and a probationary American Orchid Society Judge. He also teaches a monthly course on orchids at the Huntington Library and Botanic Garden.

Conkin addressed cattleya culture not just for novice orchid growers, but because many people have forgotten how to grow fine cattleyas. While cattleyas were the queen of orchids during parts of the last century, the advent of mass market orchids has slowed their popularity. Mass marketers want a plant with first bloom in 2-3 years, but cattleyas are slow to mature and standard cattleyas will give their best performance once they reach the size to fill a 7 to 8 inch pot.

Learning how to grow cattleyas, asserted Conkin, will help hobbyists grow any epiphytic, sympodial orchids. (Sympodial = many growths, such as the multiple pseudobulbs on cattleyas or oncidiums ... or a gardener's iris. Monopodial = one growth on a central stem, such as a phal or vanda.)

Cattleyas are natives of Central and South America. They are found in mid-elevation montaine forests. Most species experience pronounced dry periods as part of a cyclical weather cycle.

Like all plants, cattleyas require 1) light, 2) water, 3) proper temperature, 4) proper humidity, and

5) air circulation. Fertilizer is icing on the cake and makes a difference only if the five basic needs are met. Repotting at the proper time in the growth cycle is essential for cattleyas.

- 1) *Light* - Conkin called this the single most important factor. Most cattleyas that fail to bloom in the house (as opposed to greenhouse or outdoors) do not get enough light. Cattleyas require 2000-3000 foot-candles for 5-8 hours a day to do well, which means a south or southeast window in the home. Leaves should not touch the glass, but the plant should be next to the window, perhaps with a sheer curtain to block no more than 40% of the light. Outside, cattleyas in trees need to be at the edge of the canopy; Conkin removes excess tree foliage twice a year. Cattleyas getting the proper light should have medium, grassy green leaves. Note that catts are day length responsive (change in day length triggers growth and bloom cycles).
 - 2) *Temperature* - Cattleyas appreciate the night drop in temperature they receive in the Western US. Ideal intermediate temperatures for most catts are 55-62F at night and 75-85F during the day. Catts will accept higher temperatures with good air movement and humidity. The genus does have a number of outdoor growers, such as *C. mossiae* or *C. trianae* and their hybrids. Conkin recommends moving catts outdoors in March through May so they have time to adjust before cool winter nights arrive.
 - 3) *Water* - Cattleyas need less water than phals or cymbidiums, but when they are watered, they should be watered thoroughly; Conkin recommended taking in-home catts to the sink or shower and running water through them for 30-40 seconds. A trick for learning how often to water is to put a pot full of mix next to the potted cattleya. A grower can empty the pot of mix to check how wet it is without disturbing the potted plant.
 - 4) *Humidity* - Cattleyas do well with a humidity of 50-75%. Because humidity naturally rises at night, Conkin advised leaving fans on day and night. He noted that heat from hot air blowers can dry out cattleya sepals.
 - 5) *Air Circulation* - Cattleyas, like most plants, prefer constant, gentle movement 24 hours a day. In the home, Conkin recommended a small, oscillating fan 3-4 feet away. In the greenhouse, Conkin suggested ceiling fans set to pull air up from the cool, moist floor.
- Potting is another factor important to cattleyas. Most catts prefer mounts, but pots are more practical for

the average grower. Catts need a chunky mix that allows lots of air to the roots. Conkin's mix prior to 1996 was made of equal parts medium bark, charcoal and perlite. In 1996, he replaced the bark with medium coconut chunks. Since coconut will hold a great deal of water, he changed to net pots. Now he uses equal parts coconut and medium diatomite.

Conkin stressed that orchids, especially cattleyas, only should be repotted when they are actively making roots. This cuts back on transplant shock. To avoid virus transmission, Conkin dispenses with potting sticks and uses only his fingers to firm mix between the roots. Since new little roots are very fragile and won't branch if damaged at less than 1½ inches, Conkin advised using a pot clip for newly repotted plants that wiggle a little.

Finally, Conkin stressed that fertilizer is not a panacea. Most growers, he feels, fertilize too much, which can burn the plant out in 5-7 years. However,

if the rest of one's culture is good, then fertilizer can make a difference. Conkin cited recent research that too much phosphorus (the "middle" number in fertilizer formulations) may be antagonistic to the calcium needed by orchids. He now uses Jack's Professional Orchid Food by J. R. Peters, which consists of 14-4-18 (nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium) plus 7-3 (calcium, magnesium). To obtain 125 ppm total nitrogen, he adds ¼ teaspoon per gallon on a weekly basis. With his tap water at a pH of 7.7, the buffered fertilizer solution drops to a pH of 6.8. Ideal pH for orchids is 6.0 in a range of 5.8-6.8.

February Show Table Winners

First went to James Merriman's *Lc. Velvet Night*. Dick Swain's *L. Maronii* won second. Third was a tie between Phil Watt's *Den. (Aussie Treat x speciosum)* and the *Gongora rufescens* of Bryan Davis. Thanks to everyone who brought plants: Jeff Thompson, Randall Umland, Don Brown, Laurel and Chris Clayton.

Spring Show Announcements

- **Society Sales Booth** - *Make money from your extra divisions and help the OSSB budget, too!* OSSB will once again share a booth with the Santa Barbara Orchid Estate. If you have plants to sell, you must make a numbered list of your plants and have an orange sales tag in each plant. On this orange sales tag should be: 1) the price of the plant; 2) the initials of the seller; and 3) the number of the plant from the seller's plant list. OSSB keeps 25% of the sales price. Consult our treasurer Angela Watt at 967-7565 or at the March meeting if you have plants to sell; expect to deliver your plants to Earl Warren Showgrounds prior to the show - details at the March meeting!
- **Volunteers Needed!** - OSSB will need volunteers for the following. *Exhibit Installation:* Call Jeff Thompson (563-4376) if you want to help with the hardware on Wednesday morning (March 22). After all the plants arrive at 1 pm, volunteers will make nametags for each plant and arrange plants in the display. *Sales Booth:* Sign up at the March meeting to help with sales on Friday, Saturday and Sunday during the show. Sales shifts will be 2 or 3 hours.
- **Plants for the Society Exhibit** - *Bring your plants to Earl Warren Showgrounds by 1 pm if you want them in the display!* If you cannot get your plants to the show, contact Jeff Thompson (563-4376) or Heidi Kirkpatrick (563-2894) to have them picked up Monday or Tuesday.
- **Cymbidium Society of America Congress** - Early registration for CSA members (by March 10) is \$115. Late registration and non-member registration are \$140. This full registration includes 6 lectures and 2 panel discussions on Saturday, March 25, plus the Friday night show party, Saturday continental breakfast, Saturday luncheon, SBIOS gala awards banquet, and unlimited entry to the show. Lectures: Jason Fisher on *Cym. goeringii* and on breeding trends in phrags, Nick Tannaci on brach paphiopedilums, Steven Frowine on fragrant orchids, Kevin Hipkins on cymbidiums in Australia, Bob Asbell on standard cymbidiums. For more information, contact Al and Sandra Svoboda at 959-5746 or asvoboda@earthlink.net
- **Opening Night Preview Party** - Thursday, March 23 at Earl Warren Showgrounds. Sponsored by Sansum Diabetic Research Institute of Santa Barbara. Admission \$50. CSA Congress participants \$35. For information: 682-7638 ext. 203.

But Will It Grow Outside?

After many years of taking notes at our monthly meetings, I have accumulated a list of plants Paul Gripp and others say will grow well outdoors. With the buying opportunities of the spring show around the corner, I thought I would include a few of these. There are, of course, the standards: cymbidiums and anything with *L. anceps* in its background. Other outdoor growers include: *L. Moroni*, *Angraecum sororium*, *Angraecum magdalenae*, *Brassia veracossa*, *Enc. cochleata*, *Lc. Intercepts* (toughest Mexican by toughest Brazilian species - a very hardy plant), Australian dendrobiums, *Rhyncholaelia glauca* (grow dry when cold), *Renanthera imshootiana*, *Neofinetia falcata* (grow dry in winter - water maybe every 2-3 weeks), *Enc. prismatocarpa*, *Paph. armeniacum* and *Paph. micranthum* (can take to freezing if no water at the roots), *Onc. flexuosum*, *Lc. Portia coerulea*, *Pterostylis* species (Australian native of wet winters and hot dry summers; dormant in summer), *Coelogyne massangiana*, *Dendrochillum glumaceum*, *Sophronitis coccinea*.

- Check out the society web site! www.west.net/~orchidsb
- OSSB Officers for 2006: President - Don Brown Vice President - Carole Thompson
 Treasurer - Angela Watt Secretary - Heidi Kirkpatrick

Pay Your OSSB Dues for 2006!

This is your last month to renew your OSSB membership. Next month, the rosters will come out, and if you have not renewed, your name will not be in the roster and you will not receive the April newsletter. You may pay our treasurer, Angela Watt, at the meeting, or send her a check for \$30, payable to OSSB. Do not send cash!

Angela Watt, OSSB Treasurer
513 Barling Terrace
Goleta, CA 93117

Please include the following information, even if you think your address is current in the OSSB database.

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Email Address:

Do you want your newsletter via email (saves money for the society)?