



# Orchid Society of Santa Barbara

*Meeting: Wednesday, August 9, 2006*

## **Louise Lowry Davis Recreation Center**

**1232 De La Vina (at De La Vina and Victoria)**

**Meeting begins at 7:30 pm**

### **PROGRAM**

Our own **Don Brown** will speak about  
**Visiting Orchid Shows and Nurseries in Australia and New Zealand**

If you like travelogues and would like to know more about the orchid community in the southern hemisphere, this is the talk for you. Our own Don Brown, president of our society and grower of spectacular orchids, will speak to us about his trip to Australia and New Zealand in 2005. Come see what shows and nurseries look like on the other side of the world, from the perspective of a fellow Santa Barbara grower. And be sure to bring money for the raffle table; Don Brown will be supplying the table with plants from his collection!

### **Calendar**

*August 13, 2006*      **Annual Orchid Society of Santa Barbara Summer Picnic**

For more information on this popular summer event, see the third page of this newsletter.

*September 16, 2006*      **Coastal Valley Orchid Society Orchid Expo**

Lompoc Public Library, 10 am - 4 pm. Observe AOS judging at 1 pm.

[www.coastalvalleyorchidsociety.com](http://www.coastalvalleyorchidsociety.com)

*September 23-24, 2006*      **South Bay Orchid Society 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Fall Show and Sale**

South Coast Botanic Gardens, 26300 Crenshaw Blvd. Palos Verdes Peninsula. Admission \$7, seniors \$6. [www.southbayorchidsociety.com](http://www.southbayorchidsociety.com)

*October 14-16, 2006*      **San Diego International Orchid Fair**

[www.qbgardens.org](http://www.qbgardens.org)

*October 21-23, 2006*      **Southland Orchid Show at the Huntington**

## Summary of the July 2006 Meeting

- **President Don Brown** thanked those who brought refreshments and welcomed our four guests, Joe Panzitta, Nga Vuong, Anh Vuong and John Terry.

### Program

Vice President Carole Thompson introduced our July speaker, Brian Gerhardt of Down Under Native Orchids (DUNO) in Australia. Gerhardt, with his wife Phena, was in Santa Barbara for the Orchid Fair, selling among other things the Australian dendrobiums for which DUNO is known. Gerhardt spoke to the membership about how to grow native Australian dendrobiums and about some of the recent and exciting breeding involving Australian dendrobiums.

The Gerhardts grow their orchids under 60% shade in shade houses. Plants, and in fact the whole Gerhardt property, subsists entirely on rainwater. DUNO does have one solid-roofed shade house to protect blooming plants from rain.

In the summer, Gerhardt waters every two to three days, or when the plants need it. He reminded everyone not to water hot plants on a hot day as this encourages black spots on the leaves as a result of phytotoxicity. Instead, it is best to water early or late in the day, and then water beneath the benches to raise humidity when temperatures are high at midday.

In the winter, Gerhardt recommends watering every seven to ten days or when the plant needs it. Australian dendrobiums should not be watered in the evening during the winter, and should not be watered if they are already wet from rainfall. For watering, Gerhardt emphasizes the following: "Winter *if* it needs it; summer *when* it needs it."

Gerhardt fertilizes his plants with a proprietary fertilizer with a ratio of 8-5-25. Orchids do not need high nitrogen and particularly do not like nitrogen in the form of urea. Gerhardt noted that most U.S. fertilizers seem to have high phosphorus, which is preferred by roses but *not* by orchids. However, orchids do flourish with high potassium, which gives good roots, good flower color and a high flower count. His recommendation is to feed every three weeks at half strength. For variation, seaweed or kelp food make good tonics. Superthrive is great, but expensive.

Dendrobiums do well in pots with lots of drain holes and a dome in the center to drive water from the center of the pot. In larger pots, invert a small pot in the center bottom of the big pot, leaving two to three inches around the edge for roots and potting mix. Gerhardt uses a proprietary mix of bark treated with potash and other secret ingredients. For smaller

plants, he uses 6 parts medium bark, 2 parts fine bark and 1 part 10 mm pebbles. For big plants in big pots, the mix is 6 parts coarse bark, 2 parts medium bark and 1 part 20 mm pebbles. Be sure not to overpot dendrobiums; give them no more than two or three year's growth room.

Gerhardt does not recommend the following for use in Australian dendrobium potting mixes. Charcoal, diatomaceous rock, and coconut all retain too many salts. Coconut also retains too much water. He acknowledges, however, that bark quality is decreasing and recommends removing the fine material from the bark with a kitchen colander. Additionally, DUNO plants are potted in dry mix. Wet mix sticks together rather than falling into air gaps around the roots when the pot is tapped during repotting.

If a dendrobium gets rot at the leaf axil, Gerhardt recommends cutting the bulb with a sterile utensil two fingers below the rot. Cover the cut with cinnamon, then water normally, but avoid wetting the rotted pseudobulbs. As an aside, Gerhardt suggested a similar method for rot in phals. After cutting away the rot with a sterile tool, however, a Q-tip is used to paint the wound with Listerine.

Finally, when mounting, use rough bark that does not exfoliate. Eucalyptus trees are toxic to orchids, but acacia, jacaranda, bottlebrush and lemon are fine. When mounting on cork, using the underside of the bark makes it easier for the plant to get established. To attach plants, Gerhardt uses strips of window screen and a hand stapler, two or three strips per plant, depending on the size of the plant.

The following are among the many delightful dendrobiums shown by Gerhardt. For a full list, contact your editor, Heidi Kirkpatrick.

- *Den.* Tie Dye - One of DUNO's "Tropicool" hybrids. "Tropicool" orchids have *Den. biggibum* in their backgrounds, tend to bloom twice a year, and are temperature tolerant.
- *Den.* Stunning - A wide variety of clones, from yellow with red markings (e.g., 'Differently') to reddish fuchsia (e.g., 'Simply').
- *Den.* Coot - The clone 'Fiona' produces 2.5 inch flowers in a pure, deep fuchsia.
- *Den.* Elegant Heart - 'Blue Tongue' has 4.5 inch flowers with blue lips.
- *Den.* Grace Robson - 'Watermelon' has a watermelon-colored overlay on pale yellow.
- *Den.* Kayla - A white flower with *Den. speciosum* influence and fragrance.
- *Den.* Yondi Tina 'Goliath' - the first Australian native dendrobium to earn an FCC/AOC. Pure yellow 3.5 flowers on a cool growing plant.
- *Den.* Ellen Glow - 3 inch ivory yellow red lip.

*Come to the Orchid Society of Santa Barbara's popular summer social event...*

## **OSSB Annual Picnic**

Sunday, August 13, 2005  
at the Santa Barbara Orchid Estate  
Dine at 3 pm  
Tour of the Orchid Estate at 4 pm

Held in Conjunction with the Santa Barbara Cymbidium Society  
Bring plants to donate for the Silent Auction  
Bring your own drinks, plates, utensils, and picnic blanket

Last year's summer picnic was successful as a potluck, so this year we will continue the potluck theme. If your last name begins with

A-I: bring a *main course*  
J-Q: bring a *salad or side dish*  
R-Z: bring a *dessert*

The Santa Barbara Orchid Estate has once again generously offered their picnic area, plus a tour of their facility after our meal. Bring a blanket to sit on, or folding tables and chairs if you prefer not to sit on the ground.

The silent auction will help us raise money for the society; thanks to Art Denk for volunteering to run the silent auction.. Donors may specify whether funds raised go to OSSB or to the Santa Barbara Cymbidium Society. You can support your society by donating a plant or by bidding on plants in the auction.

Come join everyone for a fun social afternoon!

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## **Orchids in the News**

I opened my July 22 issue of *Science News* and was more than a little surprised to find not one but two articles that made me think of orchids. Moreover, both pertained to one of my favorite orchid subjects: pollination.

Those of you who have read my newsletters for a few years probably know I am fascinated by all the weird and wonderful adaptations orchids have made to get themselves pollinated. And now there is a new one.

Researchers in China studied ten orchid populations for three flowering seasons. The orchid under study was *Holcoglossum amesianum*, a vanda relative with blush tinted white flowers resembling a cross between a mini-phal and an ascocentrum. Not once during their observations did the researchers see an insect visiting a flower. With some study, they realized that the pollen cap falls off as the flower

matures. The revealed pollinia twist around as they grow until they contact the stigma - the flower pollinates itself!

The second article did not mention orchids but instead insect populations. A study of hobbyists' insect-spotting records reveal a decline in bee pollinators in Europe. Scientists have worried for some time that increased pesticide use would begin to affect wild pollinators, like bees. The European study showed that the bee species that were hardest hit tended to be those with narrow plant preferences - and that the plants they pollinated also showed a decline in numbers. While the word "orchids" did not appear in the article, I was immediately reminded of all the orchid species out there which are pollinated by a particular species of insect. Food for thought!

### Announcements

- Thanks to Our Donors. OSSB would like to thank Alice Gripp and Michael Ling for their recent donations to the Special Speakers Fund. Thanks also to Alice Gripp for her support of our annual summer picnic!
- Goodbye to an OSSB Member. Your editor is sorry to note that OSSB member Joe Rubin has moved out of the area. Joe was a frequent volunteer at both the fall and spring shows; the society will miss him.
- OSSB Fall Show. For those of you who like to plan ahead, the annual OSSB Orchid Show and Sale will be at the Museum of Natural History on December 9 and 10, 2006.
- 19th World Orchid Conference. The next WOC will be January 23-27, 2008 in Miami, Florida. For more information: [www.19woc.com](http://www.19woc.com)
- Greenhouse for Sale. 9x16 Santa Barbara Greenhouse company redwood and polycarbonate with clear glass front. Comes with benches, swamp cooler, humidity system, shade cloth, hot water heating system using under-bench copper fin tubing, hot water heater and outdoor enclosure. Location; Thousand Oaks. Info: Mr. & Mrs. Ketcham at 805-499-8845.

### Show Table Results

Jeff Thompson won first place on the July show table with his very showy *Cyc. Jean E. Monier*. Show table commentators Bryce Augustine and Paul Gripp called it an "outstanding example of bloom." Bring it to AOS judging when the plant grows up, Jeff! Second place went to James Merriman's *Enc. adenocaula*, which Paul Gripp called a great Mexican species for outdoors in our area. Dick Swain's *Laelia purpurata* 'Venosa' earned third place. Paul Gripp noted that the label was in error and the plant was really a hybrid of *L. purpurata* and *L. tenebrosa* called *L. Picaba* - a "thrilling" plant according to Gripp. Thanks also to Don Brown and Eugne Hagerty for brings plants to show.

- Check out the society web site! [www.west.net/~orchidsb](http://www.west.net/~orchidsb)
- OSSB Officers for 2006:

President - Don Brown	Vice President - Carole Thompson
Treasurer - Angela Watt	Secretary - Heidi Kirkpatrick