Orchid Society of Santa Barbara

An Affiliate of the American Orchid Society

Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 9, 2007

Location: Louise Lowry Davis Recreation Center
1232 De La Vina (at Victoria)

Potting Demo: 7:00 PM

Meeting: 7:30 PM

Helmut Rohrl will speak about members of the *Oncidiinae*

Members of the oncidium alliance have undergone substantial taxonomic revision in the past few years—that means most of us have obsolete name tags in our collections. Come hear a widely recognized expert on this group of orchids. Helmut Rohrl first encountered terrestrial orchids as a child in the Bavarian mountains. He began growing orchids in the 1960s and began hybridizing in 1980, first experimenting with *Oncidiinae.* Today, Rohrl has worked with a number of genera, including laelias, bulbophyllums and zygopetalums. He is a certified AOS judge, on the editorial boards of the *Orchid Digest* and the *CSA Journal,* and on the publication committee for the AOS. Rohrl has also published seven manuals intended for serious hobbyists and judges.

Potting Demonstration: Jeff Thompson continues his series on potting orchids in various different media. This month: semi-hydroponic potting.

OSSB Officers for 2007:
President - Don Brown
Vice President - Carole Thompson
Treasurer - Angela Watt
Secretary - Heidi Kirkpatrick

Visit the OSSB Web Site!

www.orchidsb.net

Calendar of Events

May 5-6, 2007
Carmel Orchid Society MayFaire
American Tin Cannery, Pacific Grove, CA. Contact Ida Hale, 831-646-8724.

May 12, 2007
Ventura Orchid Society Sale
Dudley House, corner of Loma Vista Rd and Ashwood St, Ventura. 9-2. For info, contact Marc Goldman at 604-9017 or Jeri Bond at 647-3144.

May 12-13, 2007
Orchid Mania's 18th Annual Mother's Day Sale
Fort Mason, San Francisco. Free general admission, Sat 10-5, Sun 10-4. $20 for preview, Sat morning 9-10.

May 17, 2007
San Gabriel Valley Orchid Hobbyists Auction
Los Angela County Arboretum and Botanic Garden. 301 N. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia, CA. Info: 626-966-1197.

June 2-3, 2007
Express Orchid Exhibition
Holiday Inn Express, 1350 N. 4th, San Jose, CA. Contact: 408-467-1789 ext 601 or bdavidson@sjcexpress.com.

June 9, 2007
Orchid Society of Southern California Auction
First Christian Church, 221 South 6th St., Burbank, CA., www.orchidssc.org or 818-845-0492.

July 13-15, 2007
27th Annual Santa Barbara Orchid Estate International Orchid Fair
Earl Warren Showgrounds, Fri-Sat 9-5, Sun 10-4. Free admission; parking $5.

Summary of the March 2007 Meeting

Program

• The OSSB sales booth did well at this year's spring show. Thanks to all of those who made this possible, including the Santa Barbara Orchid Estate for splitting the booth with the society. Thanks to Angela and Phil Watt for overseeing the sales area and spending a great deal of time there. Thanks to PJ Sanderson, Santos Ojeda, Clara Brown, and all the members who helped at the booth. And thanks to everyone who brought in plants to sell.

• Beginning in June, newsletters will cost 41¢ each to mail since the US Postal Service is again raising its rates. Thanks to everyone who saves money for the society by receiving an email newsletter. If you would like your newsletter via email, please contact Heidi Kirkpatrick at orchidtrain@cox.net or via telephone at 563-2894.

Program

Chris Ehrler, president of the Five Cities Orchid Society, spoke in April to OSSB members about masdevallias, draculas and other pleurothallids that can be grown on the Central Coast. His discussion also included information on some of the recent revisions amongst these orchids.

Ehrler began by noting that 15-20% of all orchids are pleurothallids. These are South American orchids, predominantly from cloud forests, and include genera such as *Dracula, Lepanthes, Pleurothallis, Masdevallia, Porroglossom, Restrepia, Restrepiopsis, Stellis,* and *Tristella.* The genus *Masdevallia* alone contained some 420 species prior to its revision by taxonomists.

Many of these genera have members that do well for Ehrler, who grows in the Pismo Beach area. His growing area will be at 60-65°F and in the fog on days when San Luis Obsispo has temperatures in the 90s and 100s. He noted that growers should never change two growing conditions at the same time, such as using new mix as one moves plants into a greenhouse.

The following is a list of some of the species shown by Ehrler, beginning with members of the genus *Dracula.* Note that higher elevations suggest plants that live at cooler temperatures.

Dracula amaliae - A native of 1800 to 1900 meter elevations in Colombia. Flowers are white with brownish red markings.

Dracula bella - Another native of Colombia from 1800 meter to 2000 meter elevations.

Dracula bennedicti - Found at 2000 to 2300 m in Colombia.

Dracula chestertonii - Found at 1800 to 2200 m in Colombia.

Dracula chimaera - Found in Colombia from elevations of 1400 to 2450 meters. This species' wide distribution in suggests more tolerance in growing conditions. Flowers are hairy and measure 10-12" from tail to tail.

Dracula ligiae - Another Colombian native from elevations of 1500 to 2000 meters. Like most draculas, the flower will droop in the middle of the day if the humidity drops.

Dracula lotar - From lower elevations in Ecuador, beginning as low as 750 meters. Flowers are small, ¾-1″ in size.

Dracula polyphemius - A native of Ecuador from elevations of 1400 to 2200 meters. The largish flowers are maroon with white in the center.

Dracula portillae - From elevations around 2000 meters in Ecuador. Flowers are tan with a red overlay and white lip.

Dracula vampira - A native of Ecuador, found at elevations of 1800 to 2200 meters. The large flowers bear striations and appear very dark, almost black.

Draculas in general do well in less light than masdevallias, even less than 1000 foot-candles. A few will bloom better with a little more light. Dracula spikes grown down, so plants must be grown in mesh pots or baskets that allow the spikes to poke through.

The genus *Masdevallia,* with its large number of species, has been broken by Carl Luer into twenty genera. *Masdevallia* retains the bulk of the species, but other species were placed into new genera. For more information on the species in each of the following genera, contact Chris Ehrler (chrisehrler@sbcglobal.net) or Jeffrey Thompson (jeffrey93105@cox.net).

The "new" masdevallias are as follows:

Acinopetala	18	*Alaticaulia*	80
Buccella	6	*Byrsella*	32
Diodonopsis	3	*Luerella*	1
Luzama	15	*Masdevallia*	196
Megema	7	*Petalodon*	3
Pteroon	2	*Regalia*	5
Reichantha	15	*Rodrigoa*	8
Spectaculum	1	*Spilotantha*	25
Streptoura	1	*Triotosiphon*	3
Zahleria	3		

Since most species in this group are more widely recognized by their former genus name, Ehrler spoke about them as masdevallias, noting on occasion a new genus name. When growing masdevallias, Ehrler waters every 5 to 7 days for plants grown in New Zealand sphagnum moss, and more often for those in coconut. Rainwater and reverse osmosis water are prefered. For those using street water, Ehrler recommended flushing with copious amounts of water.

Masd. andreettaeana - White 2" flowers on plants found in Ecuador and Peru at elevations of 1600 to 2100 m.

Masd. ccaesia - Found in Colombia at elevations of 1600 to 2200 m. Flowers are yellow with a red lip and stinky.

Masd. chaparensis - A very cool grower from high elevation (2400-2800 m) in Bolivia. Flowers are white with a purple overlay and spots.

Masd. citrinella - a lemon yellow flower 1-1¼" in size

Mad. coccinea - From Colombia and Peru at elevations of 2400 to 2800 meters. This large flower is used as a cut flower in New Zealand. Ehrler showed the clone 'San Bar's Carmen Beauty'.

Masd. decumana - A species found in Peru and Ecuador at a wide range of elevations (1000-2500 m). Flowers have purple spots.

Masd. dynastes - Now in the genus *Buccella.* Plants bear many small white flowers with red spots. The species is native to Ecuador at elevations of 1400 to 2800 m.

Masd. excelsior - A native of Ecuador at elevations of 1500 to 2300 m. Flowers are red with green on the tails and measure 3-4" tail to tail. This species has been moved to the genus *Alaticaulia.*

Masd. gilbertoi - A lovely species with white flowers bearing a rose or fuchsia stripe down the center of the petals. It is native ot Colombia at elevations of 1400 to 2000 m.

Masd. hercules - A native of Peru and Ecuador found at elevations from 1300 to 2400 m. Flowers are very dark, with striations, plus yellow tips of the tails. Now one of the seven species in the genus *Megema.*

Masd. ignea - From high elevation in Colombia (2400-3100 m). Familiar in cultivation for his bright red-orange color and its stripes. Ehrler noted that while the stripes usually appear in 1st generation hybrids, they are less likely in the 2nd generation.

Masd. lehmannii - From elevations of 2000 to 2400 m in Ecuador. Flowers are small, but plentiful, appearing several to a spike. Leur has reclassified this as *Spilotantha lehmannii.*

Masd. limax - A native of Ecuador found at elevations of 1400 to 2400 m. The floral parts of these bright orange flowers are fused into a tube shape.

Masd. mendozae - Another tubular flower, this one in paler orange. The species is found at elevations of 1800 to 2300 m in Ecuador.

Masd. norops - Though this native of Ecuador is found growing in warmer and cooler cloud forests at elevations of 1500 to 2800 m, it has a reputation of being difficult in cultivation. Jeff Thompson noted that perhaps it prefers to dry between waterings. The flowers have interesting tails that cross.

Masd. pinocchio - From lower elevations (1300-1500 m) in Ecuador. Flowers are greenish yellow with a brownish-red overlay. Ehrler noted that the spikes should not be cut while they remain green, as they will rebloom. This species has been moved to the genus *Alaticaulia.*

Masd. polysticta - A multifloral type with white flowers bearing small purple spots. Found at elevations of 1600 to 3000 m in Ecuador. Moved by Luer to the genus *Spilotantha.*

Masd. saltatrix - A reddish, tubular flower with interior stripes. Native to Ecuador at elevations of 1800 to 2000 m.

Masd. strobelii - White flowers that are hairy in the orange throats. Plants are native of Ecuador and Peru at elevations of 1400 to 1800 m.

Masd. tovarensis - From Venezuela at elevations of 1600 to 2400 m. This species will rebloom from old spikes, so don't cut the spikes. Flowers are white. Now in the genus *Alaticaulia.*

Masd. yungasensis - Striking raspberry stripes over white. The species is native to Bolivia at elevations of 2150 to 3000 m.

Masd. veitchiana - One of the most familiar members of the genus. Found in nature in Peru at elevations of 2000-4000 m, including at Macchu Picchu, where it experiences cool air and direct sun.

Masdevallias have been used in hybridizing with often delightful results. Ehrler showed the membership a number of hybrids, including the following.

Masd. Angel Tang (*veitchiana x tonduzii*) - Flowers are yellow or white with purple hairs.

Masd. (coccinea x livingstoneana) - Hot pink 1" flowers.

Masd. Dragon Tongue (*ignea x macrura*) - Red with stripes. Flowers are not flat.

Masd. White Angel (Mary Stahl x *constricta*) - white flowers.

Masd. John Leathers (*chaparensis x calacodon*) - Intriguing white flowers with zig-zagging stripes of purple made of spots along the striations.

Masd. Fraseri (*coccinea x ignea*) - Like a pinker *Masd. ignea.* The cross was first made in 1882.

Masd. Kimballiana (*caudata x veitchiana*) - Bright yellow 1¾" flowers on a cross first made in 1893.

Masd. Maui Jewel (*tonduzii x glandulosa*) - Small (less than 1" yellow flowers with purple hairs.

Masd. Celestial Stripes (*yungasensis x pinocchio*) - Stripes over red with a yellow lip.

Masd. Redwing (*infracta x coccinea*) - Bright fuchsia flowers.

Ehrler showed a few other pleurothallids, including *Pl. amparoana,* the flowers of which he described as little white fuzzy toilet bowls. It is native to Panama and Costa Rica at elevations of 1200 to 1800 m. *Pl. ornata (schiedei)* from 2400 m in Mexico has a delightful dangling fringe around the flower segments. The cool growing *Trisetella hoeijeri* from 1800 m cloud forests in Ecuador has marvelous white flowers with purple stripes and outswept flower segments. (Your editor mournfully reports that of all the species she has attempted, this one died the very fastest from a lack of humidity.)

Stressors for pleurothallids are heat and low humidity. Ideally, plants prefer 75-80°F maximums and 50°F minimums, but Ehrler's area will drop to 40°F. Plants with good roots and moisture will survive to 90°F. A very few species are warm growers, and a few more are warmth tolerant. Humidity is best over 65%, with moving dry air being particularly bad. Good water is prefered. Plants should be repotted yearly. Those growing in sphagnum moss should use clay pots. Ehrler likes a mix of coconut husk, perlite and chopped moss. Plants should be secure in the pot, but moss should be not be packed in too tightly. Plants also should be underpotted.

Pleurothallids prefer light intensities from 600 to 1400 fc. Ehrler fertilizes at quarter strength every 3 to 4 weeks, using a fertilizer from George Hatfield formulated for RO water. Ehrler noted that phosphorus is unavailable at high pH. A better pH is between 5.8 and 6.4. His tip on the new masdevallia book with photos by Ron Parsons is to order it for $28+shipping from the Oregon Orchid Society.

Orchid Species Reference

Many of you have commented in the past on how I manage to write down all those confusing Latin plant names in the dark during a talk. Well, I cheat a little. Sometimes I ask the speaker during the break. Often, I go to Jay Pfahl's superb website, www.orchidspecies.com, which has, as of May 1, 2007, 6860 species listed, many with photos and brief habitat info. This free site is a true labor of love. He asks for a $10 subscription from regular users, but all the money goes to purchasing reference books from which he gets his information for the site. In my humble opinion, much of the internet consists of sites that suck up time and/or money without any redeeming feature. Jay Pfahl's site is one of the true gems, great for casual browsing, or for the editor desperate to spell something at midnight before bringing the newsletter to the printer.

Welcome Visitors, New Members

OSSB was pleased to welcome a number of visitors to the April meeting, including several from the Environmental Horticulture Department at Santa Barbara City College. OSSB also gained a new member in Len Jarrott, who called before the April meeting and is listed in the official roster.

OSSB Rosters

Traditionally, the annual OSSB roster is enclosed with the April newsletter. This year, your editor was slow. Some of you received the roster at the April meeting or via email. The rest of you should find the roster enclosed with this newsletter. If you did not receive a roster, please contact me, Heidi Kirkpatrick, at 563-2894 or orchidtrain@cox.net.

April Show Table Results

First place on the April show table went to James Merriman for his salmon-colored *Pot.* Magic Helen 'Mountain View'. Jeff Thompson's *Oberonia setigera* took second place. Third place was a three way tie between the following: Dick Swain's *Cym.* Anita Spencer 'Hidden Valley' B/CSA; Jeff Thompson's *Ansellia africana;* and Jeff Thompson's leafless species from the genus *Cleistochilus.* Thanks also to the other exhibitors who brought plants to the April Show Table, including new member Len Jarrott, Chris and Laurel Clayton, Don Brown, Phil Watt and Frank Methmann.

Orchid Photo

Thanks to Don Brown for his lovely photo of *Laelia anceps* 'Shapely' (a cross of 'Guerrero' and 'Helen') that has graced the cover of the newsletter.