

Orchid Society of Santa Barbara

An Affiliate of the American Orchid Society



Next Meeting:

Wednesday, November 14, 2007

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

Meeting: 7:30 PM

Peter Lin
will speak about
Mini-Catts

What does a grower do when space is at a premium? Grow miniature cattleyas! Peter Lin started growing orchids some 25 years ago, took a hiatus, and now is back again as an American Orchid Society probationary judge and a mini-catt hybridizer. He has received numerous AOS awards on the orchids he grows in two small greenhouses and under fluorescent lights in his house. Incidentally, Peter notes that his day job is at the happiest place on Earth: Disneyland!

Peter will review miniature species and early mini-catt hybrids, then proceed to the relevant hybrids of today. His raffle table will contain some nice mini-catts as well as other great plants.

Calendar of Events

December 1-2, 2007

Casa de las Orquideas Open House

10 AM-4 PM, 170 S. Nardo Ave., Solana Beach. The Batchmans will also host the Rowland Collection, Islander Delights, and Andy's Orchids. Parking is limited so carpooling is recommended. Nearby Rudvalis Orchids and Sunset Valley Orchids are also having open houses. www.orquideas.com

December 8-9, 2007

Orchid Society of Santa Barbara Fall Show

Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 2599 Puesta del Sol Rd., show free with museum admission. Support your society by attending the show and telling your friends to attend! Support your society by volunteering at the show! See the back page for details.

Looking ahead...

January 23-27, 2008

19th World Orchid Conference

Sheraton Miami Mart Hotel, Exhibition Center, Miami, FL. Info: www.19woc.com

February 2-3, 2008

Sonoma County Orchid Society Show and Sale

Sat. 10 AM-5 PM, Sun. 10 AM-4 PM, Santa Rosa Veterans Building, 1351 Maple Ave., Santa Rosa. Admission \$7. www.sonomaorchids.com

February 29-March 2, 2008

63rd Annual Santa Barbara International Orchid Show

Note the early date of next year's show! SBIOS is held three weeks before Easter, and Easter comes early in 2008.

OSSB Officers for 2007:

President - Don Brown

Treasurer - Angela Watt

Vice President - Carole Thompson

Secretary - Heidi Kirkpatrick

Visit the OSSB Web Site!

www.orchidsb.net

Summary of the October 2007 Meeting

❁ President Don Brown welcomed visitors and reminded them to sign up in the guest book.

❁ 2007 was full of yummy refreshments. Thanks to all our members who signed up to bring refreshments in 2007! December will be our annual holiday potluck, but refreshments will begin again in 2008. Support your society! Sign up to bring us something good to eat at one of the 2008 meetings.

November 2007 Laura Dewey

Thanks to Bryce and Nancy Augustine for bringing in the October refreshments! And thanks to Kitty Lynn for extra cookies.

❁ The nominating committee (Sandy Svoboda, Frank Methmann, Art Denk) reported success in finding nominees for 2008. Frank Methmann outlined the slate of officers:

President	Randall Umland
Vice President	Carole Thompson
Treasurer	P.J. Sanderson
Secretary	Heidi Kirkpatrick

The membership will vote on these officers and any nominations from the floor at the November meeting.

❁ President Don Brown reminded everyone that with the Fall Show coming up, OSSB will need lots of volunteers. Sign up at the November meeting for the following: OSSB exhibit installation; hospitality; tear-down; OSSB sales booth!

❁ Sandy Svoboda ordered AOS calendars; if you are interested in a calendar and did not already order one from Sandy, she might have extras. A portion of the proceeds benefit conservation programs.

Program

Vice President Carole Thompson introduced our October speaker, Amy Jacobsen, who spoke on Rupicolous Laelias of Brazil. Amy began by discussing the sample plants she had brought to show the membership. Rupicolous laelias have a reputation as tricky growers, but Amy's plants were pristine.

Amy noted that success with rupicolous laelias eluded her until she began growing them in crushed granite in clay pots. Her plants ranged from the large (12 inch) *L. gloedeniana* to the miniature *L. lilliputiana*, at one inch high. *L. fournieri* was intermediate in size. All of Amy's sample plants had a polite growth habit with upright pseudobulbs that did not sprawl.

Laelias display two spike habits, one with a long spike ending in a cluster of flowers and the other with the flower slightly above the leaves. There are some forty-plus species distributed though Brazil. Rupicolous laelias are distinct from other laelia species in that they dwell on rocks. They are distributed primarily in the state of Minas Gerais, with some in Bahia and some in Rio de Janeiro. Plants are unifoliate (one leaf on top) with comparatively small flowers on a stalk that emerges from a sheath.

Amy informed the membership that taxonomists shifted rupicolous laelias to *Hoffmannseggella* and then again to *Sophronitis*. Brazilians in particular will not accept *Sophronitis* and doubtless this group of orchids will experience at least one more change of genus name. In the meantime, Amy spoke of rupicolous laelias,

which is how they are known to most folks.

Rupicolous laelias were first described in the 1800s with *L. cinnabarina* and then *L. flava*, now called *L. crispata*. Using *L. flava* as a sample, Amy informed the membership that this members of the subgenus *Parviflorae* has petals and sepals of the same size. Other laelias, such as *L. anceps*, have wider petals than sepals. Amy commented that the rather less than pristine flower shown in situ in the photograph reveals that there is no slug bait in nature!

Among other rupicolous laelias, *L. rupestris* was described in 1842 and *L. fournieri* in 1893. As with so many orchid identifications, there are questions about these species. Some think, for example, that *L. fournieri* is perhaps an alba *L. lucasiana*; Amy finds this unlikely. The 1960s brought *L. milleri*, which became important in cattleya alliance hybrids for its bright reddish orange color. *L. bradei* is a pale yellow, *L. shillanyi* is white, and the tiny *L. lilliputiana*, described in 1973, has a lavender flower large for the size of the plant.

L. alvaroana is a yellow flower with twisty segments described in 1999 by Francisco Miranda in honor of a Brazilian grower with some 100,000 plants. Amy and her husband Ken were fortunate enough to visit Alvaro's mountain growing houses (four of them, at 30 meters by 100 meters each), which are maintained by three full-time workers. The Jacobsens traveled to Brazil with long-time northern California grower Fred Shull, who has been going to Brazil every year for some 30 years. Amy noted that seeing the rupicolous laelias in nature is what inspired her to change her culture, leading to the improvement in the growth of her plants.

Rupicolous laelias are extremely important in cattleya hybridizing, as the numbers will attest. *L. flava* boasts over 2600 progeny in numerous generations, *L. milleri* 600, *L. briegei* 250, and *L. cinnabarina* a whopping 8600! Rupicolous laelias are favored in breeding because they very strongly pass on some of their characteristics, particularly small plant size, bright colors, flowers held above the foliage, and temperature tolerance. The less desirable shape is also passed on to progeny, but the effect is not as strong and is usually gone in the second generation of breeding.

Temperature tolerance is particularly notable. Rupicolous laelias come from some of the most challenging environments inhabited by orchids. During the summer, temperatures reach a sweltering 45 degrees Celsius, and the effect is intensified by the black rocks on which plants grow. Winter nights can bring hard freezes.

Among the numerous progeny with rupicolous laelias as parents or grandparents are the following striking flowers shown by Amy.

- *Sl.* Psyche—50% *L. cinnabarina*
- *Lc.* Rojo—50% *L. milleri*
- *Bl.* Richard Mueller—50% *L. milleri*
- *Lc.* Trick or Treat—37.5% *L. cinnabarina*, 25% *L. flava*
- *Lc.* Amazon Trick—68.75% *L. cinnabarina*, 12.5% *L. flava*
- *Lc.* Jungle Elf—50% *L. esalqueana*
- *Blc.* Love Sound—50% *L. briegei*

- *Lc. Tiny Treasure*—50% *L. longipes*
- *Lc. Fiery Glow*—50% *L. milleri*, 12.5% *L. cinnabarina*

Rupicolous laelias are compact, have brightly colored flowers, and present their flowers attractively. Why are the species not seen more often in cultivation? A few vendors sell species, such as Oak Hill, SBOE, Gold Country, Andy's Orchid, and Floralia. But this group of species has a somewhat deserved reputation for being difficult to grow. Species plants are not strong root growers. Root growth occurs with the formation of the new pseudobulb, and then is done for the year. By comparison, even the first generation hybrids are easy.

If one has difficulty growing a species, Amy's philosophy is that it is "time for a road trip!" She added that, "The gods of orchids give you brownie points for making the effort to see orchids in the wild."

So Amy and Ken accompanied Fred Shull to Minas Gerais in Brazil, a state known for its mining of amethysts, emeralds, topaz and tourmalines. Elevations are 2000 to 4000 feet and rupicolous laelias are found in areas without trees. By following the Estrada Real, the old gold mining trading route, visitors encounter the towns of Oura Branco and Ouro Preto, plus the Sanctuary Caraca. By a 30 minute drive on a dirt road (maintained for a cell phone tower), Amy reached a rocky mountain populated by low villosia shrubs. It was the end of winter, generally a dry time, and temperatures were a windy 40°F.

Here, scrunched into crevices of the dark rocks and boulders, was *L. liliputiana*. In some patches, the rocks supported lichen, which exists in a symbiotic relationship with beneficial fungus. It is in those lichen-populated areas that rupicolous laelias were to be found. Some plants were in full sun, with very red leaves. Some plants grew among the debris of bush leaves and grasses.

In this region between 2000 and 4000 feet, very few orchids grow on trees, and indeed there are few trees. In the nearby sanctuary, elevations rise above 4000 feet and there are some 350 species of orchids, most growing on trees. Also nearby is the world's largest open pit iron mine, and the iron is evident in the red-colored soil of the region.

When Amy visited, it was *L. flava* season, and blooming plants were visible on the side of the road. The roots of these also traveled along the surface of granite and sandstone rocks. Amy noted that plants were not strongly attached to the rocks, and it was possible to pick them up and set them back down without difficulty. The plants they saw showed a great variation in size and color. A particularly interesting specimen had 18 three inch flowers on a four foot spike emerging from a water bottle-sized pseudobulb. The flowers were yellow with a golden tone.

Outside of Cerro, they found *L. briegeri* and *L. rupestris* in quartz sand among jagged rocks with lichen on them. This was an area of winter fires and short grasses. There were no tall trees to give shade and temperatures reached 90°F only a few days after being at 40°F. In these harsh conditions, Amy found what she described as some award quality flowers. When asked about natural hybrids, Amy noted that *L. kleveri* might be one; flowers range from white to red to pink to yellow, and the variety of color

may suggest a hybrid origin. However, seed in the wild is dispersed only very locally.

Reviewing the habitat conditions, Amy found summers of 45 degrees Celsius with daily thunderstorms. Winters have no rain but bring heavy condensation. Translating for plants in cultivation, rupicolous laelias need particularly well drained media with absolutely no dampness. They like bright light and a dry winter rest and tolerate a wide temperature range. In practice, Amy waters once a week in winter and daily in summer, noting that the plants are "water hogs" in summer. Her plants grow unheated under 50% shade, but protected from our winter rains. Plants grow well in clay pots with crushed granite. Crushed granite can be obtained from building supply dealers, and growers should not use the smallest size. However, Amy added that one must have strong benches to support the weight as one's collection grows!

Breeders in Brazil, Amy noted, are doing exciting things with rupicolous laelias. Rupicolous laelias with *L. sincorana* make fabulous crosses. Rupicolous laelias with *sophonitis* result in bright, big, flat, round flowers in neon colors. Brazilians tend to use other species or primary hybrids to cross with rupicolous laelias, while US growers use complex hybrids for the other parent.

Lompoc Expo Results

OSSB members brought plants for AOS judging at the Coastal Valley Orchid Society Expo this year, and they did very well! CVOS and OSSB member Phil Reitz kindly reported on the awards received. Recall that HCC means "Highly Commended Certificate," which is scored at 75 to 79 points. AM means "Award of Merit" at 80 to 89 points, and FCC means "First Class Certificate" at 90 points and up.

HCC

Bryce Augustine—*Paph.* Monsoon Luna

Jeff Thompson—*Phrag.* Sorcerer's Apprentice 'Maired'

AM

Don Brown—*Slc.* Fire Lighter

Bill Robson—*Epi. capricornu* 'Pink Cloud'

Jeff Thompson—*Dracula tubeana* 'Dana'

FCC

Robert Weltz—*Paph.* Weltz Rothschild

Congratulations to members Bryce Augustine, Don Brown and Jeff Thompson and to past member Bill Robson. Particular congratulations to member Robert Weltz for receiving a prestigious FCC!

Want your plant featured on the cover of this newsletter? Email me a digital photo! Higher resolution is better and results in printable photos. Send your photo, along with the plant name and a brief description of how it is grown in your collection, to orchidtrain@cox.net. Announcements also can be sent to this address; be sure to nag me a week and a half before the next meeting.

Announcement

❁ The Fall Show is coming up on the 8th and 9th of December. OSSB is delighted to have James Merriman and PJ Sanderson return for publicity. If you have not volunteered for your society, give it a try!

There will be opportunities to volunteer for the following tasks: Pre-show publicity; Set-up (Friday afternoon) and Tear-down (Sunday after 3 PM); OSSB exhibit installation; Ribbon judging (Saturday morning); Hospitality; Sales. Remember that this show is a fund-raiser for the society, and we need volunteer help from the members to make it successful!

Consider installing a table-top display of your own or share one with a friend. OSSB will also need plants for the society exhibit. Don't forget to bring your *Laelia anceps* for judging.

There will also be member plant sales, with OSSB receiving 25% of the sales price. Blooming plants or plants with photos sell best. Make sure your plants are healthy, bug-free and disease-free.

You can also help with publicity by emailing or handing out flyers to your friends. Email versions of this newsletter will arrive with a pdf of a color show flyer. Quarter size flyers to hand out and full size flyers to post will be available at the November meeting.

Cover Photo

This month's cover photo features one of October speaker Amy Jacobsen's rupicolous laelias in a photograph courtesy of her husband, Ken Jacobsen. Note in particular the characteristic flower shape of the rupicolous laelias as represented by this example. The petals and sepals of these flowers are the same size, while in other laelias and cattleyas, the petals are wider than the sepals.

October Show Table Results

James Merriman's floriferous *C. portia coerulea* topped the voting on the October Show Table. This old-timer (the cross was first registered in 1897) is a primary hybrid of *C. bowringiana* and *C. labiata*. Second place went to Shirlie and Ed Carter's *Bc. Binosa* 'Wabash Valley' AM/AOS, a 1950 cross between *Brassavola nodosa* and *C. bicolor* that grows very well outdoors in Santa Barbara. Third place was a tie between Shirlie and Ed Carter's *Vanda rothschildiana*, also grown outdoors, and Bryce Augustine's *Phrag. Elizabeth Castle*, a cross between two primary hybrids, *Phrag. Hanne Popow* and *Phrag. Memoria Dick Clements*. Thank you to these exhibitors and also to Randall Umland, Don Brown, Carole Thompson, Jeff Thompson, and Frank Methmann for bringing plants for display on the October Show Table. Remember that there is one more month of voting. The results of show table voting for 2007 will be announced at the December meeting.