

Orchid Society of Santa Barbara

An Affiliate of the American Orchid Society



Next Meeting:

Wednesday, February 20, 2008

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

Meeting: 7:30 PM

Dave Benzo
will speak about
***Cattleya aurantiaca* and Its Hybrids or
"It's in the Genes and
It'll Come out in the Wash."**

Come hear about the progeny of a great cattleya species from the past owner-hybridizer of Great Hawaiian Orchids Ltd., a 5000 square foot nursery with retail orchid store at the Maui Tropical Plantation. Dave Benzo is a senior judge with the AOS who nows lives in Morry Bay. He was official AOS photographer for the Maui Supplemental Judging Center, with photographs published in numerous orchid magazines and the Smithsonian Institution-AOS book called *The Ultimate Orchid*. We can look forward to a visual feast this month!

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

Calendar

February 29-March 2, 2008

**63rd Annual Santa Barbara International
Orchid Show "Orchid Fever"**

The show is only weeks away. This year, Frank Methmann and Randall Umland will oversee installation. OSSB will also have a sales booth, shared with Santa Barbara Orchid Estate. If you bring show or sales plants, be sure to clean them up so they look their best. Show admission: \$10. www.sborchidshow.com

March 1, 2008

Annual Cymbidium Congress

Check out www.cymbidium.org. It's not too late to register!

February 29-March 2, 2008

Pacific Orchid Exposition

Unfortunately, San Francisco's show conflicts with our Santa Barbara show this year. Fort Mason Center, SF. Admission \$14. www.orchidsanfrancisco.org

March 8 & 9, 2008

**Five Cities Orchid Society Show and Sale
"Orchid Carnival"**

Sat 9-5, Sun 10-5, South County Regional Center, 800 West Branch, Arroyo Grande, East of US 101, between Brisco Raod and Grand Avenue exits. Admission \$5. www.fc.os.org or info at 805-929-5749.

April 4-6, 2008

**62nd Annual San Diego County Orchid Society
Show "Orchid Opulence"**

Friday 4PM-9PM. Saturday 9AM-6PM. Sunday 9AM-4PM. Scottish Rite Temple, 1895 Camino Del Rio South, San Diego, Admission \$6. www.sdorchids.com or 619-405-0412.

Summary of the January 2008 Meeting

❁ Santa Barbara International Show manager Sandy Svoboda announced opportunities to volunteer or to work for the show. If you did not receive the email circulated several weeks back and are interested in more information, call your editor, Heidi Kirkpatrick, at 805-563-2894.

❁ Frank Methmann is in charge of this year's society display for the spring show. If you have questions or can help with installation, call Frank at 566-0839 or email him at fmorchids@hotmail.com.

❁ American Orchid Society rates are going up to reflect increased postage and printing costs. However, the AOS is holding a sale until March 31, with memberships at old prices. Two year sign ups or renewals will receive a coupon worth \$30 off on a retail purchase of \$100 or more from one of more at one of these 12 nurseries:

Carmela Orchids, Carter & Holmes Orchids, Gold Country Orchids, Hoosier Orchid Company, IGS, Krull-Smith, Norman's Orchids, OFE International, Piping Rock Orchids, Quest Orchids, R.F. Orchids, Inc., Soroa Orchids, Inc.

New Members:

Individual - \$49.95/year or two years for \$99.95
Joint - \$64.95/year or two years for \$129.95

Current Members:

Current members may extend their membership for two (2) years at the \$99.95 rate.

Program

Vice President Carole Thompson introduced our January speaker, Dr. Joe Arditti, and authority on orchid biology and science with some 30 books and articles to his credit. He spoke very entertainingly on the Ethnobotany of Orchids. "Ethnobotany" is a combination of two words and refers to how different cultures use plants.

Theophrastus, a Greek philosopher living around 300 B.C., is often thought of as the father of botany. He gave orchids their name on the basis of the shape of roots of local species, which resemble testicles, or *orchis* in Greek. Other cultures of the region saw this similarity, too, and decided the roots would be a good aphrodesiac. Dr. Arditti, who, before he retired, often used boiled orchids in his research, commented on orchids' aphrodesiacal properties this way: "If you can convince someone to eat that mess, you can confine

them of anything." Two roots fed to an unwilling husband supposedly made him more willing. A small root given to a woman was supposed to result in a girl child.

Himantoglossum hircinum is a European orchid with a powerful smell of goat. The Greeks thought it flowered where goat semen dropped, and was related to insatiable satyrs. In the modern world, a beautiful orchid flower is most likely to work as an aphrodesiac if given by a guy to a girl. But in Queensland, the aborigines will eat *Cym. madidum* as a contraceptive. Indeed, research with mice suggests that seeds and fruits of the plant in their feed will reduce litter size. To the accompaniment of much laughter from the membership, Arditti noted that this might mean a "dual function corsage." Taking the contraceptive concept to the extreme, a rejected zulu warrior might wave *Ansellia africana* at the woman who refused him to make her sterile.

Jumellia fragrans has been used as a cure for many ailments. In 19th century Europe, it was brewed into 'Faham tea.' The novelist George Sand is said to have fed Faham tea to the consumptive Chopin in an attempt to cure him.

Vanilla is the culinary orchid of today. When it was brought from Mexico, the natural pollinator did not accompany the plants. Fortunately for vanilla's commercial future, a Belgian professor figured out how to pollinate it by hand. Today, vanilla is grown in many locations, usually on a small tree that supports the vining growth of vanilla. The fruits (known by orchid hobbyists as seed pods) must be sweated and processed to extract the characteristic taste and aroma from the green capsule. In Panama, *Selenipedium chica* is used as a substitute for vanilla. In Brazil, *Leptotes bicolor* provides a vanilla-like flavor to ice cream.

Dr. Arditti showed a very attractive presentation of orchid as food. In Taiwan, he has seen *Doritaenopsis* flowers presented in jello. He noted that one should not attempt this at home unless one is absolutely sure of the food safety of one's flowers. Most commercial flowers are not sold for food purposes and therefore may be sprayed with pesticides and fungicides not considered safe for human consumption.

Salep is a concoction made from, generally, *Orchid militaris*. It is consumed as salep pudding, salep ice cream, or a salep drink. For the Day of the Dead in Mexico, parts of *Laelia autumnalis* may be candied and made into figures of cows, pigs, and horses, that are placed on the graves of loved ones.

A number of orchids may have been used as food or food flavorings in the past, but may have since lost favor,

including fragrant leaves of a dendrobium used to flavor rice. *Renanthera coccinea* formerly was pickled to make “atjar,” though today a request for “atjar” usually results in more common pickled items, like cucumbers. Supposedly, leaves of *Phal. amabilis* were at one point eaten in Indonesia.

Several jewel orchids reputedly are sold for food or medicine in Asia. *Anoectochilus reinwardtii* is considered a vegetable in several Asian countries. In Taiwan, *A. formosanus* is sold as a cure for chest and abdominal pain. Also in Taiwan, Dr. Arditti reported on a bottle of wine with flowers of *Cym. sinense* inside it.

Folk medicine has had numerous and inventive uses for orchids. *Gasrodia elata* has no chlorophyll but is instead parasitic on a fungus which is parasitic on a plant. Its dried, cooked, powdered tubers have been used to cleanse the bladder. They may also make an appearance in Po Chai Pills, for diarrhea. In British Columbia, Canada, the chewed bulbs of *Calypsa bulbosa* was used as a rub by native women hopeful of enlarging their breast size. *Acriopsis javanica* was used in Java for earaches and may actually have an antibiotic effect. In North America, *Cypripedium calceolus* was used as a sedative and for toothaches. *Cyp. pubescens* was used for spasms, although it is somewhat poisonous.

A number of cymbidiums have found their way into folk medicine. *Cym. aloifolium* was used as an emetic and purgative in India, China, and Sri Lanka. *Cym. canaliculatum* was used for food but also against dysentery. Another emetic was *findlaysonianum*, used in Malaysia. It was also used for sick elephants.

Den. cruenatum flowers 9 days after a rain and was used in Indonesia against cholera, pimples and other maladies. *Den. nobile* was supposed to reduce fever. A Chinese study on the latter found that it did work, but only mildly. Tumors supposedly could be treated with *Bletilla striata*.

In Indonesia, *Grammatophyllum scriptum* was concocted into a drink to expell worms. Interestingly, this plant was so named because supposedly it resembled Hebrew letters. Children who were slow to learn to talk in Guatemala were treated with *Macodes*, which was rubbed on their mouths. In Sri Lanka, *Rhynchosstylis retusa* was a remedy for sore eyes and a bane against demons. Diarrhea has been treated by an intimidating concoction of betel nuts, lime powder, nutmeg, ginger and *Calanthe*. In Indonesia, constipation was treated with *Liparis. rheedii*.

Moving away from medicine, leaves from *Phaius* and *Spathoglottis* are used to line net bags in New Guinea. The South American *Cyrtopodium* has been used to make the soles of shoes more durable. The hollow pseudobulbs of *Schomburgkia thomsoniana* are used as pipes for smoking in

Honduras. In nature, these pseudobulbs are occupied by ants that, in defending their home, effectively defend the orchid plant, too. *Cattleya percivalliana* was used in South America to cast a spell on women to make them happy.

Of course, orchids have been used in many parts of the world as subjects of art. In Singapore and Indonesia, orchid imagery is common, including gilt orchids, orchids on tapestries, orchids on money, orchids on stamps. *Vanda* Miss Joaquim is the national orchid of Singapore and as such appears frequently.

Dr. Arditti finished with a foray into the more obscure world of orchid art, with a Clark Sorensen design for a urinal shaped like a paphiopedilum.

Spring Show Announcements

🌸 Display

OSSB will once again install a display at the show, this year under the direction of Frank Methmann. This year's show is themed “Orchid Fever”. Show installation is Wednesday, February 27. Contact Frank if you can help with installation.

If you have plants for the society exhibit, they need to be at Earl Warren Showgrounds by 1 PM on Wednesday to be guaranteed a spot in the display. You may pick up your plant(s) on Sunday when the show closes. Plants should be healthy and free of disease or pests. It helps to remove dead leaves and stake the flowers before the show, as members installing the display won't have time to groom individual plants. Be sure to put your name on your pot (masking tape and marking pen work well) so your plant can find its way home.

If you have plants to be judged, you can fill out registration forms ahead of time (by February 26) online at the show's website, www.sborchidshow.com. Or you can fill them out on Wednesday. The judging classes are also available online if you want to review them.

🌸 Sales Booth

As of this writing, I have not received confirmation of the sales booth, but I assume it will be the same as last year, with OSSB receiving 25% of the sales price. Each plant should have an orange tag containing: the sales price, the seller's initials, and the number of the plant on the list the seller provides to PJ Sanderson, our treasurer. When your plant is sold, the orange tag is the society's record of the sale. Be sure to volunteer to help in sales Feb 29, Mar 1 or Mar 2. There will be sign-up sheets at the next meeting.

Orchid Society of Santa Barbara Membership Renewal

Annual Membership is \$30. Make checks payable to OSSB. Memberships can be renewed at the monthly meeting or by sending your check to: PJ Sanderson, 2211 Alameda Padre Serra, Santa Barbara, CA 93103

Please include the following information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Cover Photo

This photo is of Bryce Augustine's award winning *Phrag.* Elizabeth Castle 'Monsoon Scarlet'. It received a 79 point Highly Commended Certificate (HCC) from the American Orchid Society at our fall show in December. This lovely phrag is a cross of Mem. Dick Clements and Hanne Popow,, both of which have *Phrag. besseae* in the background providing a wonderful, intensely red color. The other two species in this hybrid are *Phrag. schlimii*, a small pink flower that evidently moderated the red color in this hybrid, and *Phrag. sargentianum*, which has tall spikes that were passed on in Elizabeth Castle. Only two generations from the species, and a very lovely flower is the result.

January Show Table Results

First place in the voting for the January show table went to Ed and Shirlie Carter's *Cym.* Splurge 'Noel's Fate'. Don Brown's *Dracula polyphemus* 'Angel' AM/AOS received the second place vote. Third place was a tie between Don Brown's *Cym. dayanum* and James Merriman's white *masdevallia*. Your editor couldn't find the tag in the mass of leaves. James called me after the meeting and I believe he said it was *Masd. towarensis*, but I can't find that note, either.

Thanks to everyone who brought plants to display, including Richard Brown, Frank Methmann, Linda Tripp and Jeff Thompson. Note that two of these are new members! The rest of us need to bring in our flowering plants, too!