

# Orchid Society of Santa Barbara

An Affiliate of the American Orchid Society

Next Meeting:

**Wednesday, March 18, 2009**

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

Meeting: 7:30 PM

## **Dr. Holger Perner**

Senior Advisor of the  
Huanglong Nature Reserve Administration  
in China  
will speak about  
**Chinese Dendrobiums**

We are fortunate to host Dr. Holger Perner, an internationally recognized expert on orchids in China, for our March meeting. Dr. Perner will speak to us about Chinese Dendrobiums, These beauties are not as familiar to many of us who currently grow Australian Dendrobiums. The Huanglong Nature Reserve in Sichuan, at which Dr. Perner is Senior Advisor, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Cover photo: Phil Rietz joins the ranks of dracula growers in our society. Here is a photo of his *Dracula chimaera*, the pot held sideways to show the flower, which emerges pointing downward.

## **Santa Barbara International Orchid Show Announcements**

**The Spring Show is almost here and OSSB needs your support!**

### **Δ Display**

OSSB will be installing a display at the show on Wednesday, March 18. Notice that this is the same day as our meeting. Our intrepid installers want to go to the meeting, too. **If your plant is going to be in the display, it needs to be at Earl Warren Showgrounds by 9 AM on Wednesday.** You can also make arrangements with Randall Umland, Jeff Thompson or Frank Methmann to deliver your plant early.

### **Δ Sales Booth**

OSSB will share a sales booth with SBOE at Earl Warren. If you want to sell plants, make a numbered list of all your plants and their prices. The plant number, plant price and your initials need to be written on an orange tag that goes into the plant; you can get tags from PJ Sanderson. OSSB is also desperate for members to help staff our sales booth. 25% of the sales price of member plants goes to support OSSB.

### **Δ Ribbon Judging**

Ribbon judging is a fun and educational way to explore the show. Arrive at Earl Warren at 9:30AM on Thursday, March 19. You don't need to be an expert, and you'll get lunch with the judges.

### **Δ Advance Tickets**

Show admission is \$12 this year, but you may purchase advance tickets for \$10 at the Wednesday OSSB meeting. Sales of these advance tickets support OSSB.

OSSB Officers for 2009:

President - Randall Umland  
Treasurer - PJ Sanderson

Vice President - Carol Rogers  
Secretary - Heidi Kirkpatrick

Visit the OSSB Web Site!

[www.orchidsb.net](http://www.orchidsb.net)

## Report of the February Meeting

### Announcements

- President Randall Umland welcomed visitors, including members of the Channel Islands Camera Club, who came to hear our photography-expert speaker.
- Treasurer PJ Sanderson reminded everyone to pay their annual dues for 2009. If you do not pay by March, you will be dropped from the mailing list and will not appear in the OSSB roster that comes out in April.
- OSSB will once again have a sales booth at the Santa Barbara International Orchid Show. We will need plants to sell and members to staff it. Please sign up at this month's meeting to help with the sales booth at the show. Be sure to groom your plants for show or for sale. Remember, plants should be bug and disease free! See more details about the show on the front page of the newsletter.

### Program

Vice President Carol Rogers introduced our February speaker, Greg Cooper, a full time instructor at Brooks Institute of Photography in Ventura. In a rather timely lecture for those of us who intend to photograph the upcoming spring show, Cooper spoke to the membership about how to make good orchid pictures.

Cooper graduated with a double major in photojournalism and anthropology, but he was introduced to orchid photography by his mother, who grew orchids and needed decent photos to help sell her plants. Currently, he also photographs orchids as fine art, which he sells.

The goal with his mother was to produce pleasing and accurate photos. Cooper began by informing everyone that one does not need an expensive digital SLR or an expensively equipped studio to make good orchid photos. While he brought his expensive digital SLR and its tripod for demonstration purposes, he also had a pocket digital camera that he said would make very nice orchid photos ... if one knows how.

When Cooper photographs his mother's orchids, he stacks footstools and crates from his mother to get the plant to a convenient height. He photographs in her backyard, in a sheltered spot away from wind. Photos are also best when taken in a spot facing north. Direct sunlight on flowers casts sometimes difficult shadows and makes it harder to reproduce an accurate color.

And color is everything in the digital realm. Cooper uses a grey card, an inexpensive, calibrated grey square of heavy paper available at camera stores. When photographing a plant, his first photo is of the nametag so he can archive the photo. Then he takes a photo of the plant with the grey card just in the edge of the frame. The grey card will help Photoshop calibrate the color and, since it is only on the edge of the frame, can be easily

cropped away from the final photo.

Cooper proceeded to list several easy tips for better photography.

Tip number one: Use the telephoto or zoom lens. Take the zoom as high as it will go and get as close to the plant as the camera will focus at that zoom. This will produce better results that getting in close to the plant and not using the zoom or telephoto lens.

Tip number two: use a tripod. Orchid photography, especially outside, as Cooper photographs his mother's orchids, can be very challenging without a tripod. For those with a point and shoot camera, a tripod need not be a large and expensive piece of equipment. Tabletop tripods are not very expensive and will sit atop any flat surface.

When using a tripod, it is best to use the self-timer on the camera to avoid camera shake when one pushes the button to take the picture. A flash would alleviate the need for a tripod, but using a flash will create shadows and bad color. Best is a tripod with a longer exposure. But when one photographs outside with long exposures, protection from wind is essential, as even the slightest breeze will make the flowers move. It is helpful if the spike is well staked to reduce movement of the flowers. And when the flower is finally still, he recommends taking several photos to take advantage of the lack of motion.

Tip number three is to have a clean background. Again, Cooper emphasized that this need not be an expensive piece of equipment. His background is a three to four yard piece of black felt he purchased at \$2 a yard. It doesn't show wrinkles or dog hair or make peculiar patterns in the photo. He likes to photograph at around f4. At higher f stops, the background may come into focus (revealing those dog hairs). At f2.8, there may not be enough depth of field to capture the flower. Cooper noted that it generally works better if the black felt is wider rather than taller.

Tip number four: Have the flower away from the background. This is a great tip for people, too. If the subject (flower, person) is right up against the background (black felt, wall, etc), then the background becomes part of the pictures, rather than melting away out of focus. (And again, those dog hairs may start showing up.)

Tip number five: have patience!

Cooper fielded a number of questions specifically about the upcoming show. It is best, he noted, if one can go through the show with a tripod, but there may be liability issues with the tripod legs sticking out. A good alternative is a monopod, which provides stability on one leg.

Because shows have many different types of lighting, he noted that the grey card is not useful. When he shoots manually, he might use a white balance and meter, but for most of us, he recommended to let our cameras decide automatically.

An awareness of backgrounds is very important at shows. Using the telephoto or zoom on the camera will blur many awkward backgrounds, but a photographer still needs to be aware of what is behind the prized orchid being photographed. For more control over the background, one can have a friend hold a black board behind the flower to make a temporary background. And again, it is better to step back and zoom rather than getting as close as one can to the flower.

Cooper picked a cymbidium from the raffle table to use as an example. He commented on how the top three flowers of the spike would photograph well because they did not have many leaves or any other flowers in the background. He stacked two crates to raise the flowers to a comfortable height for his tripod. These crates were a good three or four feet in front of his black felt background. Once he had the plant in the right spot, he let it settle a few minutes so the flowers would completely stop moving.

First, he took a photo of the plant tag to record the name. Then he chose one flower out of the top group of three; this would be his focus. The photograph will look good if one flower is in focus, whether or not the rest are also in focus. Then he held the grey card along what would be the edge of his picture, pressed the self-timer, and took the photo.

Looking at a specimen dendrobium on the show table, he commented that it would be tricky subject because the many spikes would interfere with each other visually in a photograph. In addition, the spikes were angled awkwardly to be captured by a camera. He recommended trying to find a single spike slightly apart from the rest; this would help capture the look of the individual flowers on the spike.

In response to questions on organizing photos, Cooper said this can be as simple as putting the photo files in folders on the computer. Each file name would have a keyword. He might use Ventura, beach, or dog, but for orchid folks keywords might be Cymbidium, Paphiopedilum, Cattleya, etc. One can then search the computer for a particular keyword. There are also commercial programs available to help with archiving photos. Cooper mentioned Lightroom, Iphoto, and PhotoMechanic.

In his final comments on equipment, he noted that when it comes to digital cameras, the more pixels, the better. Today, it is uncommon to see cameras with less than 8 megapixels. Eight to twelve is most common today. Even most point and shoot cameras have at least 8 megapixels, and they take very nice orchid pictures.

For those folks who have film equipment, he cautioned against using it with digital cameras without careful research first. In particular, he noted, along with several photographers in the audience, that an old, non-digital flash might fit in the shoe of the digital camera, but there probably will be voltage problems that may even be damaging to the camera. Considering the price

of a good digital camera, it is not worth the risk. He noted also that a ring flash (mounted to the lens, it casts no shadows on the subject) is beautiful for orchids, but ring flashes are very expensive.

Greg Cooper's artistic orchid photos can be seen at his website at [orchidphotographic.com](http://orchidphotographic.com).

## Calendar

### March 13-15, 2009

#### San Diego County Orchid Society Show "Around the World with Orchids"

Scottish Rite Center, 1895 Camino Del Rio South, San Diego  
[www.sdorchids.com](http://www.sdorchids.com)

### March 14-15, 2009

#### Central California Orchid Society Show

Sierra Vista Mall, 1050 Shaw Ave., Clovis, CA

### March 20-22, 2009

#### Santa Barbara International Orchid Show "Orchid Escape"

Earl Warren Showgrounds. [www.sborchidshow.org](http://www.sborchidshow.org). Show hours: 9 AM to 5 PM Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Concurrent open house at OSSB member nursery Santa Barbara Orchid Estate. Look for OSSB member nursery Orchids of Los Osos booth at the show. Open houses at other local nurseries, too: Cal-Orchid, Gallup & Stribling, Hatfield Orchids, Orchids Royale. Thanks also to SBOE for splitting a booth with OSSB.

### March 21, 2009

#### 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Cymbidium Congress

Held in conjunction with the Santa Barbara show. Lectures, banquet, auction, etc. Get a brochure at the meeting or go to [www.cymbidium.org](http://www.cymbidium.org)

### April 4-5, 2009

#### Five Cities Orchid Show and Sale "Orchid Stampede"

800 W. Branch Street, Arroyo Grande, CA

## Refreshments

	Food	Drink
March	Robin Hamlin	
June	Joyce Tolle	
August	Betty Watt	

There are plenty of spaces open on the sign-up sheet!

### **OSSB Membership Renewal—Renew or this is your last newsletter!**

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: \_\_\_\_\_

### **February 2009 Show Table Results**

First place in the February Show Table voting went to Jeff Thompson's striking *Masdevallia pinceps*. Larry Vierheilig's *Blc.* Dr. Joe Walker 'Ray Mishima' earned second place honors. Third place was a three way tie. Tod Wenderski tied himself with *Amesiella monticola* and *Dendrobium cuthbertsonii*. Jeff Thompson also earned a third place with another of his *masdevallias*, *Masd. (panguiensis x princeps)*. Thanks also to Randall Umland for bringing plants to round out our show table.

January show table plants were brought by Bill Robson, Don Brown, and Larry and Laurie Vierheilig.

For February, the AOS judges awarded a 77 point HCC to SBOE's *L. anceps* 'Pink Rose'. My apologies for not having the rest of the January and February results.

Our local AOS judging center is looking for a digital projector. Contact Bryce Augustine if you have information.