

Orchid Society of Santa Barbara

An Affiliate of the American Orchid Society



Cover photo: Bill Robson's *Robiquetia cerina* 'Sycamore Creek' shown at the 2009 SBIOS. One of the unusual orchids mentioned by the April speaker.

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, May 20, 2009

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

Meeting: 7:30 PM

Dr. Daniel Geiger
will speak about
Growing Orchids in Terrariums

Daniel Geiger started growing orchids in a terrarium as a lark. He was told it was impossible, which just motivated him to succeed. Since then, he has written about his techniques for *Orchids*, the magazine of the American Orchid Society. In his non-orchid life, he is Research Curator of Electron Microscopy in the Department of Invertebrate Zoology at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History.

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

Refreshments

	Food	Drink
May	Angela Watt	
June	Joyce Tolle	
August	Betty Watt	

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

Calendar

May 8-10, 2009

Orchid Society of California Mother's Day Show and Sale
Lakeside Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Dr., Lake Merritt,
Oakland. www.orchidsocietyofcalifornia.com

June 13, 2009

Orchid Society of Southern California Annual Auction
First Christian Church meeting hall, 221 South Sixth Street,
Burbank. www.orchidssc.org/osscc_auction.aspx
Admission is free.

July 10-12, 2009

Santa Barbara Orchid Estate International Orchid Fair
Earl Warren Showground. Free admission, \$5 parking.
www.orchidfair.com

July 10, 2009

Santa Barbara Cymbidium Society Special Speaker
Come hear Orchid Fair guest author Lou Menezes at 7:30 pm
in Louise Lowry Davis Rec Center.

Report on the April 2009 Meeting

Announcements

- President Randall Umland welcomed visitors and invited them to sign the guest book.
- Thanks go to Frank Methmann who signed up to bring the April refreshments. Thanks also to Nancy Augustine for supplementing the bounty.

Program

Vice President Carol Rogers introduced our April speaker, Peter Lin, a mini cattleya hybridizer and probationary AOS judge. Peter provided the very popular raffle table, which was supplemented by donated plants from Carmela Orchids. Peter spoke to the membership about wild, weird and wonderful orchids. He described the talk as a portrait of the bizarrely and fascinatingly strange world of orchids.

Peter organized the wonderful photographs into groups as follows: wild color; peloric flowers; crazy lips; fringed flowers; hairy flowers; and animal or insect impersonators. He began his tour of wild colors with the shockingly blue (yes blue!) *Pescatorea coelestes*, which boasts a four inch flower. The related *Pescatorea lehmanii* comes in several colors, all also very strong. *Huntleya fasciata* is notable not just for the browns and yellows, but also the waxiness of the flowers.

Of course, many of us have seen the wild colors bred into some of the more commonly grown orchids, such as the highly patterned Harlequin phalaenopsis. Both dendrobiums and cattleyas have been bred with splashed forms, such as splash petal cattleyas.

From Japan comes another blue orchid (did you think there were none?). This one is *Ponerorchis graminifolia*. Flowers smaller than an inch come on spikes from bulbs. These have been line bred to heighten the color.

Black is another color not found in orchids ... usually! The one inch flowers of *Maxillaria schunkeana* are so darkly burgundy maroon that they appear almost black. Similarly deep burgundy (black!) is *Fredclarkara* After Dark, a hybrid of *catasetums* and their relatives.

For crazy lips, one can start with the genus *Dendrobium*. *D. spectabile* boasts very contorted flowers with long, twisted lips. This native of Papua New Guinea grows two to three feet tall and bears heads of flowers. *D. tobaense* is a smaller plant with a proportionately large flower of green, with a peculiar orange lip that almost seems to have an odd appendage. *D. unicum* flowers are almost all lip; the flowers are orange and the lip is striped and conveys to its hybrids. Plants are six to eight inches and grow best mounted. *D. hemimelanoglossa* has a half inch green flower with a virtually black tip on the end of the lip.

Dracula vampira could qualify as peculiar on several counts. The large flowers have black and white stripes and hang down from the plants. The lip is peculiarly bucket shaped and white.

Similarly odd is *Dracula chestertonii*, which Peter described as having a “baboon-bottom” lip. *Dracula cordobae* is hairy with a very white lip. Finally, the genus *Tricopelia* has pendulous flowers that are almost all lip!

For peloric flowers, Peter began with cymbidiums, as there are number of examples. He showed *Cym. Strathdon*, which has petals like the lip. *Cym. Ison's Wild Thing* has sepals with a bottom half mimicking the lip. Phals also exhibit peloric flowers. Or, in the case of *Phal. Krull's Butterfly* or *Den. Kuranda Classic*, the lip looks like another petal. At the Santa Barbara show, Peter saw a white phal with three perfect lips and no petals.

Interestingly, there is a clone of *Neofinetia falcata* called ‘Hosigurima’ with a lip like a petal. This means that there is no spur; normal flowers of the species have a notable spur.

Some flowers are fringed, and this can have an interesting look. *Dendrobium harveyanum* has a two inch yellow flower with a great fringe around the edges. The plant needs a dry rest. This means no water from Halloween to Valentine's Day! *Dendrobium brymerianum* and *Dendrobium fimbriatum* have a similar, fringed look and the same dry rest requirement.

Many orchid lovers are familiar with the fringed green flower of *Rhynocolaelia digbyana*. The species has been used frequently in breeding, where the fringe becomes ruffles in the hybrids. The species is night time fragrant and has silvery, glaucous leaves.

Pleurothallis schiedii (one of your editor's personal favorites) has dangling appendages around the edges of the sepals. The flower is spotted and the “dangles” are silvery white.

Epi iliense has green-white flowers that hang down and sport a fringed lip. *Habenaria medusae* has long fringes on the petals and sepals of the two inch flower. The plant is native to Thailand where it grows as a tuber that goes dormant part of the year.

From fringe it is a natural step to hairy flowers, such as *Haraella retrocalla*. Flowers are yellow with maroon blotches and a lip so hairy it looks like fur. *Pleurothallis cypripedioides* has not only hair but a peculiar shape, like a lidded bucket or pouch. Another hairy pleurothallis species is *Pleuro. flexuosa*, and it is very hairy indeed.

No talk on peculiar orchids would be complete without at least a few bulbophyllums, and Peter listed four that sported hair. *Bulbo. phalaenopsis* is an extremely large plant with three to four foot leaves, best grown in a basket. It blooms in a large head of hairy flowers. *Bulbo. barbigerum* has a flower reminiscent of a fishing lure with a hairy lip on one end. *Bulbo. dayanum* and *Bulbo. lindleyanum* both have hairy flowers, the latter with red stripes on white.

A number of draculas are hairy, such as *Dracula pubescens* and *Dracula chimera*. *Stellis eublepius* has light green, quarter inch flowers that are completely hairy. The hair on *Eria panna* appears as white down on the back of the orange-yellow flowers.

Masd. strobellii has hairlike glands in the throat of the orange-yellow and white flower; these will sparkle in the sun. *Masd. glandulosa* is similar, but with red.

Many interesting orchid flowers owe their peculiarities to the fact that they mimic an animal or insect. *Orphrys* species are pollinated by male insects that try to mate with the flower. *Psychopsis* species also have flowers resembling insects. Peter noted that one should never ever cut the spike, because they will rebloom year after year.

The peculiar *Syngmatostarix lutzii* was aptly described by Peter as “birds on a wire.” Flowers are yellow. Following the bird theme is the “Egret Orchid,” *Habenaria radiata*. Flowers are white and green; plants emerge from bulbs or corms. *Cycnoches* species are called “swan orchids,” for their graceful, though upside down flowers. And in the center of *Peristeria elata* one can see the shape of a dove, thus its common name as the “Dove Orchid.”

Birds and insects aren't the only shapes seen in orchid flowers. *Angraecum germinyanum*, a native of Africa, has a largish, greenish flower with long flower parts reminiscent of an octopus.

And then there are just the plain weird. Bulbophyllums, of course, have plenty of weird flowers. Peter showed the four inch flowers of *Bulbo. bifordiense*, which have translucent “windowpanes.” He described the maroon flowers of *Bulbo. arkakianum* as resembling two slugs.

Pleuro sarracenia has one inch maroon flowers that look like miniature pitcher plants. The taxonomist who named it noted this similarity, as the species name is used for true pitcher plants.

Stanhopeas have pendulous heads of large flowers that are very fragrant but last only two or three days. *Gongora rufescens* has pendulous spikes of brown and yellow flowers. *Dendrobium tetragonum* is sometimes called the “Spider Orchid” for its spidery flowers. *Epigeneum apleum* looks like it has horns and a black lip. *Robiquetia cerina* almost doesn't look like an orchid at all. It comes in purple or yellow with a head of flowers shaped like a pine cone.

And of course there are *Coryanthes* species, the “Bucket Orchids.” These peculiarly shaped flowers each have a gland that drips nectar into a bucket. Insects are attracted to the waxy flowers, slip into the bucket, and get drunk on the nectar.

Peter finished with several orchids he called “alien.” Two Australian genera fit the bill. *Pterostylis* species bloom in late winter with two inch flowers bearing “horns.” Plants then go dormant till late fall. *Corybas* species have two leaves and one flower resembling an alien spore. Often flowers, many of which are burgundy, have spiky edges.

Bulbo. tingobarim has a head of bright orange flowers with hinged lips. The long flowers look rather like tentacles. *Bulbo. gracillum* is a three inch tall plant that bears three to four inch whorls of spidery flowers. *Bulbo. plumata* has a four to five inch long pendent flower.

What could be more peculiar than a leafless orchid? There are several. *Microcoelia stolzii* has eighth inch white flowers on spikes that emerge from the crown of the roots. Like all leafless orchids, plants must be mounted rather than potted, as it is the roots that photosynthesize. *Microcoelia coralina* has tiny flowers with a coral spot in the center of the flower. *Dendrophylax lindenii* has three to four inch greenish-white flowers on a leafless orchid.

Finally, *Zootrophion alvarii* is peculiar for its flowers, which Peter likened to a yellow bird. The flowers have a little slit, and that is as open as they get.

Your editor apologizes for spelling errors in the orchid names. If I had time to check them all, I might go to the orchid species website at www.orchidspecies.com. This is always a time consuming prospect, however, because the site has so many wonderful photos that it is nearly impossible not to linger and browse.

Left: *Psychopsis* Mendenhall shown at the 2009 SBIOS. Note the buglike shape with long antennae.

Right: *Bulbophyllum platyrachis* from the OSSB display at the 2009 SBIOS.





A highly pattered
phalaenopsis hybrid
from the 2009 SBOS.
Photos this issue
by your editor,
Heidi Kirkpatrick.

AOS Awards in April

The AOS judges gave three awards in April. Chaotic Exotics brought in *Paph. liemianum* 'Chaos' that was awarded an HCC. Bill Robson earned a CHM (certificate of cultural merit) with his *Odontoglossum septum*. And SBOE received an AM for a *Dendrobium speciosum grandiflorum* with flowers twice the size of those recorded in other awards.

Show Table Results

I don't have results for the March meeting, but I do have a list of those who brought plants. Thanks to Bill Robson, Don Brown, Larry and Laurie Vierheilg, Todd Wenderski, Randall Umland, and Jeff Thompson for bringing something to share even though many flowers went to the spring show.

In April, Don Brown, James Merriman, Dick Swain, Larry Vierheilg and Jeff Thompson put plants out for the show table. First place in the voting went to James Merriman's *Masd. schroederiana*. Second

place was a tie between Larry and Laurie Vierheilg's *Dendrobium farmeri* and James Merriman's *Pot. Magic Helen* 'Mountain View'. Third place also was a tie, this one between two plants belong to Don Brown: *Cattleya intermedia amethystella* 'Aranbeem' AM/AOS and *Dendrobium linguiforme*.

As always, thanks to everyone who brought a plant to show. The show table is educational to everyone. Thanks also to Paul Gripp and Bryce Augustine for discussing the plants on the table.