

Orchid Society of Santa

Barbara

An Affiliate of the
American Orchid Society

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, August 18, 2010

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

Meeting: 7:30 PM

Peter Lin
will speak about
Dendrobiums

The genus *Dendrobium* is a large and varied one, ranging from cool to warm growing species and from miniatures to huge specimens. Come hear Peter Lin speak about members of the genus. Peter is an avid orchid hobbyist, hybridizer and AOS judge from Southern California, where he grows about a thousand plants in three greenhouses. Due to space considerations, he specializes in miniatures and has received numerous AOS awards for his plants. This is orchid growing from a hobby perspective, so be sure to attend! Peter will be providing the plant table from his very interesting collection, so be sure to bring your money for the raffle table!

LOOKING AHEAD ...

OSSB FALL SHOW! "ORCHIDS RUN AMOK"

Setup: Friday, November 27, 12 NOON to 5 PM
Show: Saturday, November 28, 10 AM to 5 PM
Sunday, November 29, 10 AM to 3:30 PM



Above: A striking Australian dendrobium hybrid, *Dendrobium Awesome* 'Mauve Mist', displayed at the 2010 Santa Barbara International Orchid Show by Down Under Native Orchids. Photo by Heidi Kirkpatrick.

OSSB SUMMER POTLUCK!

Saturday, August 14, 2010, 12 NOON

Santa Barbara Orchid Estate

Come join OSSB and the Santa Barbara Cymbidium Society for our summer orchid social, an afternoon of good food, good orchids, and good company.

There are just a few picnic tables, so plan to sit on the ground or bring folding tables and chairs. Don't forget to bring your own drinks, plates and utensils.

Society potlucks are always fun, and ours are special as we have a number of good cooks. Don't cook? Fruit and veggie platters, cold cuts and bread, or cheese and crackers are tasty alternatives. Bring enough to share with six to eight others. Here is what to bring, according to last name:

A-I: salad or side dish

J-Q: dessert

R-Z: main course

Donate a plant to the silent auction and specify whether the proceeds go to OSSB or SBCS. And be sure to bid at the auction! It's a fund raiser for the society!

OSSB Officers for 2010:

President - Frank Methmann

Treasurer - PJ Sanderson

Membership & mailing - Robin Hamlin

Directors: Khosrow Sadeghian, Angela Watt, Randall Umland

Visit the OSSB Web Site!

Vice President - Todd Wenderski

Secretary - Heidi Kirkpatrick

Show Chair - Tom Ball

www.orchidsb.net

Summary of the July 2010 Meeting

❁ Program Report

Our own Paul Gripp introduced our special July speaker, world renown taxonomist Dr. Rudolf Jenny from Switzerland. Dr. Jenny is a prized international speaker and is the driving force behind Biblioorchidea, the online orchid literature catalog of the Swiss Orchid Foundation. Paul displayed just a few of Dr. Jenny's publication credits, including his monograph on the genus *Gongora*, Proceedings from the World Orchid Conference in Vancouver, and articles in such diverse publications as those from the *Orchid Digest*, the *Italian Orchid Society*, and the *Australian Orchid Society*. Dr. Jenny's latest work is a monograph on the genus *Stanhopea*, which was featured at the SBOE Orchid Fair.

Dr. Jenny began by noting that taxonomists are often classified as "splitters" or "lumpers," in other words those who tend to divide genera into ever more species and those who combine species. He claimed that he began as a splitter and is now a lumper, remarking that, "If you know only two plants of a species, you are a splitter. Once you know fifty, you are a lumper." Interestingly, he noted that Reichenbach was a splitter.

The *Stanhopea* tribe consists of twenty-four genera, one of which is lost to cultivation. In understanding its history, it is useful to remember that the first orchids known in Europe were natives; but botany in the early Middle Ages was part of medicine and tropical orchids had yet to make an appearance. European awareness of tropical orchids came before modern revisions in botany and botanical nomenclature. Stanhopeas feature in the early history.

In 1569, the Spanish King punished a Dr. Hernandez by sending him to Mexico to write a natural history. The twelve volumes that resulted went into the Royal Spanish Library. Parts were published in 1628 but the rest was destroyed in a fire. Among the orchids recorded in the surviving sections was one later named *Stanhopea hernandezii*. The name was chosen in 1912 by Schlechter, though the plant was unknown in cultivation. The genus itself was originally described by Hooker in 1829 in Curtis's Botanical Magazine.

Today, there are 60 species in *Stanhopea*. Unfortunately, due to the variation of many of the species, there are 650 names associated with the genus, for an average of 13 synonyms per species! This is ably shown by examining a few representatives of the genus.

All stanhopeas are pollinated by male bees that pay attention only to the particular fragrance of the flower. Evolutionarily speaking, a dark flower has an equal chance of getting pollinated as a light flower, provided both have the proper fragrance. As a result, floral colors and patterns can vary widely, since none is favored by the pollinator.

The fragrance itself arises from inside the hypochile. The bee collects the fragrance in a pocket on its leg for use in making pheromones to attract females. However, bee usually get drunk while collecting this fragrance and fall down onto the lip. The way out is most conveniently through a narrow space between the column and the lip, but the bee must be the right size. Too big and it doesn't fit; too small and it will not connect with the pollen. As a result all stanhopeas have their own specific pollinators that must not only respond to the species fragrance but also be the correct size.

Additionally, the fragrance of the flower may change from the first to the second to the third day, attracting different pollinators. Most Stanhopea species are only fragrant when their bee is active.

Stanhopea insignis from Brazil shows lots of variation in color and pattern of the flowers, which means lots of synonyms.

Stanhopea ecornuta is named for its lack of horns. Its lip is almost more like a paph lip and it is considered a "primitive" member of the genus.

Stanhopea annulata from Ecuador and *Stanhopea alicula* from Panama are very similar and probably are remnants of an old species that has since split into two populations. It is useful to note here that some populations of stanhopeas are local while others are very widespread.

Stanhopea candida is very widespread in the Amazon basin at elevations of 600 to 1200 meters. There is no variability in color of form

Stanhopea connata is one of the most fragrant of the genus. Since bees will fly 10 to 20 kilometers to find a flower, it makes sense that strong fragrance is a useful characteristic for a species. Flowers are yellow.

Stanhopea napoensis was collected only once, from which arose three plants. One was pressed for herbarium use. One went to the orchidist George Kennedy but was lost when he died. One surfaced very recently in Australia. The species has not been found again in the wild.

Stanhopea saccatum is easy to cultivate and flower.

Stanhopea posadae was in cultivation for some 20 years before Dr. Jenny saw and named it.

Stanhopea maculosa is the most northerly of the Mexican species, found in Sonora in regions where it sometimes experiences frost on the leaves.

Dr. Jenny also discussed representatives of the related genera, including *Gongora*, which is popular in cultivation. He began with *Gongora quinquinervis*, which illustrates the problem later taxonomists often have with historical documents and herbaria material. The genus was described in 1771 and the collected type specimen has a seed pod but no flower. The original drawing from 1794 has what Dr. Jenny called a “lousy” drawing of the lip. Diaries from the era helped, isolating the species as the only one from this region, bearing brown flowers. Dr. Jenny asserted that artists often are not good observers in a taxonomic sense.

Gongora galeata exhibits some of the floral variation common in *Stanhopea*. This species bears clear yellow flowers, or brown flowers, or all combinations in between.

Gongora truncata has five synonyms that represent its various color forms, including pure white flowers, flowers with red spots, flowers with no spots, and dark brown flowers.

Gongora seideliana has had only one type specimen collected. The area has since been deforested.

Gongora grossa is a confusing species. It comes with horns, but also without horns. Morphology is a better characteristic for identifying species than color in the floral form, But again, Dr. Jenny noted that fragrance is the only fixed characteristic that separates species, since fragrance is fixed by the species DNA.

Gongora herrenlusana was misplaced in the genus since the 1800s, when it was thought to be a variant of *Gongora maculata*. Instead, it is its own species.

Gongora boracayanensis has the honor of being on the front of Dr. Jenny’s *Gongora* monograph.

Dr. Jenny’s complaints against botanical artists came to the fore again with *Acineta superba*. The type drawing is incorrect in that the spike is upright rather than pendent. Worse yet, the type drawing is *stanhopea* with flowers not fully open. Similarly, *Acineta densa* and *Acineta superba* type drawings do not show taxonomically important parts. Many members of the genus are the same on the outside, which makes it vitally important for a taxonomist to see the flower. To this end, he suggested that when sending a photo of a plant to a taxonomist for identification, it is useful to put the flower in alcohol.

Some species have been outsiders in their genera and often shifted around. *Houlletia vittata*, originally identified by Lindley, is one example. After several name changes, it is now *Braemia vittata*. Plants are 1.2 meters with coconut-sized pseudobulbs and unimpressive flowers.

Some members of the *Stanhopea* tribe can be described as taxonomic nightmares. *Cirrhaea* is endemic to Brazil and extremely variable in color. Worse yet, some plants produce two kinds of flowers on the same spike. The flowers are not male or female, as with *Catasetum*, but are instead all fully viable. *Cirrhaea dependens* is easy to grow and colorful; it grows well with *Gongora galeata*. *Cirrhaea saccata* has green flowers on a pendulous spike; it is probably a valid species.

Dr. Jenny covered many more fascinating relatives of *Stanhopea*, but space prevents inclusion of them all.

Let's Show Our Plants at Lompoc!

OSSB will have a display in the Lompoc Orchid Expo, Saturday, September 25, 2010, from 10 AM to 4PM at Lompoc Public Library. Their theme is "Orchids 101." If you are interested in helping install the display or providing plants for the society display, contact our president, Frank Methmann, at fmorchids@hotmail.com for more information.

Sad Farewell

I am sad to report (but happy for them) that the Wenderskis are moving to the East Coast. Todd has finished graduate school here in Santa Barbara and is following the post-doctoral trail. Todd and Wendy will be sorely missed. **This also means we need a new Vice President and a new Hospitality Chair!!**

Show Table Results

First place went to a lovely, long petalled *Paphiopedilum* Prince Edward of York brought in by Richard Brown. Our president, Frank Methmann, earned second place and third place with *Rhyncholaelia (Brassavola) digbyana* and *Cleisocentrum merillianum*. His brassavola was notable for its pinkish tinge on a normally ice green flower, while the *Cleisocentrum* is one of the few, true blue orchids. Thanks to these winners for bringing in their plants and to Dan Brown and Mary Sadeghian for their contributions to our August Show table!

SBOE Orchid Fair Awards

A number of AOS awards were given out at the special AOS judging at the Orchid Fair. SBOE brought two awarded plants to share at the meeting: *Encyclia alata* HCC/AOS and *Acianthera leptotifolia*, which earned a CCM of 86 points for being incredibly floriferous but fitting into something less than half the size of a shoe box.

At the Japanese style *Neofinetia falcata* judging, our August speaker, Peter Lin, netted first place, Don Brown earned second, and Josh Davis fourth. Apologies if I have misremembered these results!