

# MARYLAND ORCHID SOCIETY

# ORCHID

## newsletter

News and information for the members of the Maryland Orchid Society

November 2012



## president's message

Well, how many of you feel hurried lately? Isn't it amazing that when the days get shorter, time seems to fly and we feel so hurried? Let's see ... my schedule has recently included an MOS general meeting, an MOS Board meeting, an MOS auction committee meeting and our annual auction. Add to that a holiday, my birthday, my son's birthday, my job, my farm and my other job, an election and a natural disaster for good measure—all in the span of three weeks!!! (Okay maybe four, but you get my drift.) Now we still have yet another holiday, shopping, family visits and all that other stuff! Where does the time go! Isn't life fun, ughh!!! Stop the ride I want to get off for awhile!!

That's where orchids come in. They make you take a moment to enjoy their splendor. They demand patience and peace to thrive. And they give you, after lots of hard work, silent satisfaction in their delicate beauty, that mellows the chaotic feeling left behind by a rushed life. It's times like these that we all need to be reminded to stop, look at, smell (provided it's not a *bulbophyllum*) and ponder the more simple pleasures that life can deliver by caring for these interesting plants.

Eric

## November MOS: Sarah Hurdel's Famous, "What's Eating Your Orchids?"

Back by popular demand, Sarah brings us her famous talk, "What's Eating Your Orchids?" first featured at MOS's April workshop. This time, Sarah offers several new useful tips and more photographs to make diagnosing pest problems easier and explains what to do when slugs are salivating on your Sophronitis and aphids are eating your Angraecums.

Sarah is currently serving as MOS Secretary and is also a member of the Catoctin and National Capital Orchid Societies. Her enthusiasm for orchids (and her orchid collection) has grown exponentially since attending her first MOS meeting five years ago. There she was introduced to *Catasetum*, *Cynoches* and *Mormodes* during a presentation by Fred Clarke, and thus began her orchid obsession. After regularly helping to set up the MOS exhibit at away shows, she also began volunteering at the Spring Show, the MOS Auction and the Spring Workshop, all of which provided many opportunities to learn more about orchids...and to acquire more plants! She now cares for a collection of over 300 plants, containing a wide variety species and primary hybrids, all

grown indoors under fluorescent lights in winter, with most spending the summer outdoors.



Her presentation will cover topics related to orchid pests that will be of interest to any orchid grower — such as pest life cycles and identification, types of pesticides, and prevention. Sarah will also address issues of concern to those that grow orchids in their homes, and share methods that she has used successfully.

## education corner

November's Education Corner will feature Bill Ellis speaking about and answering questions related to Dendrobiums. Feel free to bring in Dens. if you have questions about them.

**INSIDE** 2 October Show Table  
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# october 2012 show table winners by Tom McBride

Special thanks to Sarah Hurdel for the beautiful photos below of last month's show table plants!



## Novice

1. Phal. Hybrid (left) - Amanda Gallegos
2. Hwra. Lava Burst 'Puinani' AM/AOS - The Hallameyers



## Home Grown

1. Enc. *cochleata* - John Dunning
2. Tie Paph. Ho Chi Minh - Owen Humphrey  
Hab. *rhodochila* 'Nuanna' FCC/AOS (above)- Chris Zajac
3. Tie Slc. Fuchsia Doll - Deborah Dade  
Cirr. Elizabeth Ann 'Buckelberry' FCC/AOS - The Soykes

## Greenhouse

1. Masd. Aquarius - Jos Venturina
2. Stenoglottis *longifolia* - David Smith
3. Lc. Chocolate Drop X B. *nodosa* - Barbara Buck



## Cattleya

1. Cattleya Hybrid (above)- Craig Taborsky
2. Tie Blc. Hawaiian Stars 'Hsinying' - John Dunning  
Sc. Calypso 'Crestwood' HCC/AOS - David Smith
3. C. Caudebec 'Carmela' HCC/AOS - Robert Johnston



## Phalaenopsis

1. Phal. Coral Star (above) - John Dunning
2. Phal. Sheena Beauty 'Ran Ran' - Judi von Mehlem
3. Phal. Memphis Music 'Mem. Olivia' AM/AOS - The Lundys



## Oncidium

1. Milt. Earl Dunn 'Dark Lip' - Robert Johnston
2. Tie Burr. Nelly Isler 'Swiss Beauty' (above)- Janice Mazur  
Onc. *taochicum* - David Smith
3. Tie Alcra. Hilo Ablaze 'Hilo Gold' HCC/AOS - John Dunning  
Onc. (Nonamyre X *onustum*) - Chris Zajac  
Psy. (Mendenhall X *papilio*) - Mary Chiu

## Paphiopedilum and Phragmipedium

1. Paph. *barbigerum* f. *album* - Clark Riley
2. Paph. Pinocchio - The Dagostins
3. Paph. (*tonsun* X *henryanum*) - John Dunning

## Dendrobium

1. Den. Mingle's Sapphire - David Smith
2. Den. Enobi Purple 'Purple' - John Dunning
3. Den. Darlin Imp 'Sentinel's Pink Showers' - The Dagostins



## Miscellaneous Hybrids

1. V. Robert's Delight (left) - Jos Venturina
2. Cyd. Wine Delight 'JEM' FCC/AOS - John Dunning

3. Bulb. (*dearei* X *echinolabium*) - Sue Spicer

## Species

1. Gram. *scriptum* var. *citrinum* - John Dunning
2. *Cerastostylis rubra* - David Smith
3. *Cerastostylis rubra* - Bill Scharf

## Miniature

1. *Neolehmannia porpax* - David Smith
2. Den. *rigidum* - Sue Spicer
3. Masd. *herradurae* - Bill Scharf



## First Bloom Seedling

1. Paph. Wossner Vietnam Love (above)- Janice Mazur
2. Paph. (Hsinying Magic Voodoo X *charlesworthii*) - John Dunning

## Fragrance

1. C. *labiata* var. *suave* - Craig Taborsky
2. Lc. Cariad's Mini-Quinee - The Lundys

The Judges Choice of the Evening was Masd. Aquarius, exhibited by Jos Venturina. See December's newsletter for Jos' description of how he grows this beautiful orchid. The judges were Judi von Mehlem, Ernie Drohan and Ann Lundy. There were an incredible 84 beautiful plants displayed on our show table this month.

# september judges' choice

## Growing Gram. Scriptum Orchids By John Dunning

In Nature, Gram. scriptum plants grow at low altitudes under hot steamy conditions in the coastal forests of the larger tropical Pacific islands, including the Philippines, the Moluccas, the Solomon Islands, Fiji and New Guinea. With much heavy watering, rich in phosphate fertilizer, in the early spring, its leaves grow up from the base of old pseudobulbs to about 1 to 2 feet high.

Around the 1st of May, I put the plants outside under a 50% shade canopy to shield them from sun directly overhead (like with Vandas). G. scriptum likes full morning and afternoon sun but leaves can burn from long exposure to bright unshielded hot sun directly overhead. With the first hot humid days of June, spikes begin to form at the base of



Photo by Sarah Hurdel

pseudobulbs which best grow together in clumps inside 4 to 8 inch pots. They LOVE the hot steamy Baltimore summer weather (95 to 105 degrees) such as what we had this past summer! In early July spikes grow up quickly to be about 20 to

40 inches long containing up to 100 buds each, which begin to flower in early August. The two-inch across non-fragrant flowers typically stay in bloom for 1 to 2 months. I soak my G. scriptum pots for about 15 minutes in water 2 or 3 times a week from early spring thru early fall and about once a week in the winter. I soak in full strength high phosphate fertilizer from about the first of March thru July and switch to about 25% strength high nitrogen fertilizer for the rest of the year. Without help from rainstorms, I flush with pure water once every two weeks. Leaves typically last less than two years, leaving bare pseudobulbs in clumps, which may be separated, and those with roots reotted to 4 inch pots.

## How I Grow My Vanda Robert's Delight (Parents: Vanda Kasem's Delight x Vanda Madame Rattana)

By Jos Venturina

*Jos' beautiful Vanda won first place in this past month's Miscellaneous Hybrids class. Following is an excerpt of how Jos grows his Vanda.*

Vanda Robert's Delight, a meristem, is recognized for its eye-catching, huge, rounded flowers, and deep maroon coloration. It possesses leathery, drought-resistant leaves. I purchased my plant from an orchid nursery in Florida; it was in bloom at that time. I've had this plant for more than 5 years.

This plant is growing in a plastic basket, with its bare roots requiring daily watering and weekly feeding during the active growing season. This plant needs very high light levels to bloom. It spends the

summer outside the greenhouse, under aluminum cloth to get 50% sunlight. When the ambient temperature reaches around 80 degrees (maximum), I expose the plant to direct sunlight. This plant puts out one to two flower spikes every year (two this year) between late summer and early fall.

Before the winter weather sets in, I move this plant back to the greenhouse, reduce watering and stop the fertilizer.



Photo by Sarah Hurdel



# MOS Steals the NCOS Show!!

Thanks to the gracious loan of plants from Steve and Rachael Adams, Frank Dagostin, John Dunning, Suzanne Gaertner, J. Hildebrandt, Sarah Hurdel, Marilyn Lauffer, Valerie Lowe, Ann Lundy, Norma Lynch, Janice Mazur, Michael Moran, Jamie Riegel, Clark Riley, Mark Robbins, David Smith, Gary Smith, Bill Soyke, Tammi Staub, Eric Wiles, Barry Woolf, Chris Zajac and The Little Greenhouse, the Maryland Orchid Society was awarded the Orchid Digest Award for Best Amateur Exhibit in Show and the American Orchid Society Trophy for Best Exhibit in Show. Many thanks to Sarah Hurdel, David Smith, Margaret Smith, Gary Smith, Tammi Staub and Eric Wiles for helping me to install the exhibit and to Sarah Hurdel, Owen Humphrey and Gary Smith for helping me take the exhibit down.....Valerie Lowe

Ribbon	Owner
<b>First Place Ribbons</b>	
<i>Angraecum distichum</i>	D. Smith
Btcm. Little Dragon 'Carmela', HCC/AOS	D. Smith
<i>Angraecum distichum</i>	D. Smith
Blc Dennis Kone 'Ruby Red'	J. Dunning
Paph. W.A. Sutton 'Patty', AM/AOS	M. Robbins
Epi. <i>difforme</i>	The Little Greenhouse
Den. <i>laevifolium</i>	The Little Greenhouse
Coch. <i>amazonica</i> 'Loch Raven', HCC/AOS	The Little Greenhouse
C. Spotted Gem 'Snow Leopard'	J. Hildebrand
C. <i>maxima</i>	S. & R. Adams
<b>Second Place Ribbons</b>	
Epi. <i>diffusum</i>	D. Smith
Milt. <i>spectabilis v mooreliana</i> 'Anne Warne', AM/AOS	D. Smith
Oecl. <i>roseo-varigata</i>	D. Smith
C. Mini-Purple 'Tamiami'	E. Wiles
Gram. <i>scriptum v. citrinum</i> #2	J. Dunning
Colm. Massai Red	J. Gaertner
L. <i>lucasiana</i>	S. & R. Adams
Paph. Wossner Koloniv	S. & R. Adams
Den. Stephen Batchelor	S. & R. Adams
Aer. <i>lawrenceana</i>	S. & R. Adams
Hab. <i>medusae</i>	V. Lowe
Phrag. Belle Hougue Point	W. Soyke
Phrag. Giganteum	W. Soyke
Alcr. Hilo Ablaze 'Hilo Gold', HCC/AOS	W. Soyke
Phrag. Demetria	B. Woolf
<b>Third Place Ribbons</b>	
Phrag. Noirmont 'Clemencia'	C. Zajac
Onc. Jiubao Gold 'Tianan'	A. Lundy
Hasgw. Red Stella 'Hawaii', AM/AOS	D. Smith

Ribbon	Owner
<b>Third Place Ribbons continued</b>	
Alcr. Pacific Treasures 'Everything Nice'	D. Smith
Pleur. <i>denticulata</i>	D. Smith
Liparis <i>condylobulbon</i>	D. Smith
Eria <i>densa</i>	E. Wiles
L. <i>lucasiana</i> x C. <i>loddigesii</i>	E. Wiles
Hwra. Lava Burst 'Puananii', AM/AOS	F. Dagostin
Paph. Hilo Green Mountain	The Little Greenhouse
Paph (Hilo Magic Shift x Hilo Ruby)	S. Hurdel
Paph. Wildcat 'Bobcat'	S. Hurdel
Paph. <i>primulum v. purpurescens</i>	V. Lowe
Bulb. Wilbur Chang	W. Soyke
<b>Honorable Mention</b>	
Phal. Ever-Spring Light	J. Dunning
Phal. hybrid	S. Hurdel
<b>Best Miniature Plant in Show</b>	
<i>Angraecum distichum</i> (right)	D. Smith
<b>Best Amateur-grown Miniature Plant</b>	
<i>Angraecum distichum</i>	D. Smith
<b>Best Amateur-grown Vandaceous Alliance</b>	
<i>Angraecum distichum</i>	D. Smith
<b>Best Amateur-grown Species Plant</b>	
<i>Angraecum distichum</i>	D. Smith
<b>Best Society Exhibit</b>	
	The Maryland Orchid Society
<b>Best Exhibit in Show</b>	
	The Maryland Orchid Society
Sarah Hurdel installed a small exhibit at the NCOS Show and garnered The Slotter Award (Best Amateur Exhibit – Less Than 25 Square-Foot), a \$25 endowed award!	



# The Maryland Orchid Society Wins at SOS Again!!!!

Thanks to the untiring efforts of Sarah Hurdel, Jamie Riegel, Bill Scharf, Gary Smith, Sue Spicer, Bob Travers, and Eric Wiles with the generous donation of plants by Steve and Rachel Adams, Frank Dagostin, John Dunning, Suzanne Gaertner, Jenny Hildebrand, Owen Humphrey, Sarah Hurdel, Marilyn Lauffer, Valerie Lowe, Ann Lundy, Norma Lynch, Janice Mazur, Michael Moran, Jamie Riegel, Bill Scharf, David Smith, Gary Smith, Bill Soyke, Sue Spicer, Tami Staub, Eric Wiles, Chris Zajac, and The Little Greenhouse, the Maryland Orchid Society Away Shows Committee installed another award winning exhibit at the Susquehanna Orchid Society Show. The 50 sq. ft. exhibit was voted the Best Society Exhibit in the Show and also received the Orchid Digest Award for the Best Amateur Exhibit in the Show and the American Orchid Society (AOS) Show Trophy for the Best Exhibit in the Show. (See page 6 for a photo of the display.) Although several plants were pulled from the exhibit for consideration for AOS flower and cultural awards, none of these were granted at this time. However, other ribbons and awards were granted as follows:

Plant	Place	Owner
Dendrobium Stephen Batchelor	1 <sup>st</sup>	S. and R. Adams
Neof. Lou Sneary	3 <sup>rd</sup>	"
Paph. Doll's Kobold	2 <sup>nd</sup>	"
V. Robert's Delight 'Torblue'	1 <sup>st</sup>	"
Bpl. Golden Peacock 'Orange Beauty'	1 <sup>st</sup>	J. Dunning
Phal. Ever-Spring Light	1 <sup>st</sup>	"
Paph. Heron's Faire	3 <sup>rd</sup>	"
Paph. <i>tonsum</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	O. Humphrey
L. <i>dayana v. coerulea</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	S. Hurdel
Ludisia <i>discolor v. alba</i>	1 <sup>st</sup>	"
Ludisia <i>discolor</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	"
Paph. <i>venustum</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	"
Paph. Monsoon Temptation	1 <sup>st</sup>	"
Paph. <i>hirsutissimum</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	G. Smith
Paph. Curtis Lutchman	1 <sup>st</sup>	G. Smith
Phal. Nobby's Amy	2 <sup>nd</sup>	G. Smith
Phal. hybrid	3 <sup>rd</sup>	S. Hurdel
Phrag. <i>schlimii</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	S. Hurdel
Ludisia <i>discolor</i> 'Ambrosia', CHM, AOS	3 <sup>rd</sup>	V. Lowe
Paph. <i>chamberlainianum v. latifolium</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	"
Bulb. <i>medusae</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	A. Lundy
Paph. <i>barbiggerum</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> BEST	"
Pyp. Mendenhall 'Monarch', AM/AOS	1 <sup>st</sup>	"
C. Bob Betts 'White Lightning'	2 <sup>nd</sup>	N. Lynch
Onc. Sunlight 'Hilo Honey'	3 <sup>rd</sup>	J. Mazur
Paph. Memoria D. Anne Lowe	2 <sup>nd</sup>	"
Paph. Henrietta Fujiwara	1 <sup>st</sup> BEST	M. Moran
Phal. <i>cornu-cervi</i> 'Linda', HCC/AOS	2 <sup>nd</sup>	"
Phal. hybrid	2 <sup>nd</sup>	J. Riegel
Dendrobium <i>oligophyllum</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	W. Scharf
Masd. <i>herradurae v. xanthina</i>	1 <sup>st</sup>	"
Slc (Ken's Dream x Tokyo Magic)	3 <sup>rd</sup>	"
Liparis <i>condylobulbon</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	D. Smith
Bulb. Wilbur Chang	1 <sup>st</sup>	W. Soyke
Holcoglossum <i>wangii</i>	1 <sup>st</sup>	S. Spicer
Phrag. <i>pearcei</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	"
Alcra Hilo Ablaze 'Hilo Gold', AM/AOS	3 <sup>rd</sup>	E. Wiles
Ceratostylis <i>rubra</i>	1 <sup>st</sup>	"
Epi. hybrid	2 <sup>nd</sup>	"
Pleuro. <i>allenii</i>	1 <sup>st</sup>	"
Epi. <i>cochleata</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	C. Zajac
C. Portia 'Cannizaro', FCC/AOS	1 <sup>st</sup>	The Little Greenhouse
Chondrorhynca (Molier x <i>albicans</i> )	1 <sup>st</sup>	"
Dendrobium <i>laevifolium</i> #1	1 <sup>st</sup> BEST	"
Dendrobium <i>laevifolium</i> #2	3 <sup>rd</sup>	"
Dendrobium Mingle's Sapphire	2 <sup>nd</sup>	"
Dockrilla <i>rigida</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	"
Paph. Hilo Green Mountain	1 <sup>st</sup>	"

The exhibit was dismantled and all packed up within an hour with the help of Sarah Hurdel, Bill Scharf and Sue Spicer.

Submitted by Valerie Lowe, Away Shows Chair



**Another award-winning exhibit at the Susquehanna Orchid Society Show**  
 The 50 sq. ft. exhibit was voted the Best Society Exhibit in the Show and also received the Orchid Digest Award for the Best Amateur Exhibit in the Show and the American Orchid Society (AOS) Show Trophy for the Best Exhibit in the Show. (Photo by Valerie Lowe)



Photo by Sarah Hurdel

## *local aos news*

**November 3: National Capital Judging Center:**

Sarah Hurdel's plant of *Holcoglossum wangii* 'Sweetheart' received a 79 point Highly Commended Certificate (HCC).

## *aos corner*

Lynn Fuller, Chair, AOS Affiliated Societies Committee

### **The 2013 AOS conservation calendars are available.**

Photographs are of orchids in their natural habitat. This large 11x22", full-color calendar contains 14 months so you can keep dates into 2014. Enjoy the beauty of orchids in the wild as you support conservation, with \$2 of each calendar purchase going to fund AOS conservation projects. Wholesale pricing for groups are packed and available in boxes of 12). They make great holiday gifts for your orchid loving friends and family!

### **Gordon W. Dillon - Richard C.**

**Peterson Memorial Essay Contest.** The deadline for submissions to his annual contest is November 30, 2012. The theme for the 2012 essay is: The Orchids I Want But Can't Really Find (Real or Imagined). More information on essay submissions and rules may be found on the AOS website. A bit of history on the award (from the AOS website): The contest was established in 1985 by the AOS Northeast Judging Center to honor the memory of two former editors of the AOS Bulletin (now Orchids). Gordon Dillon served as

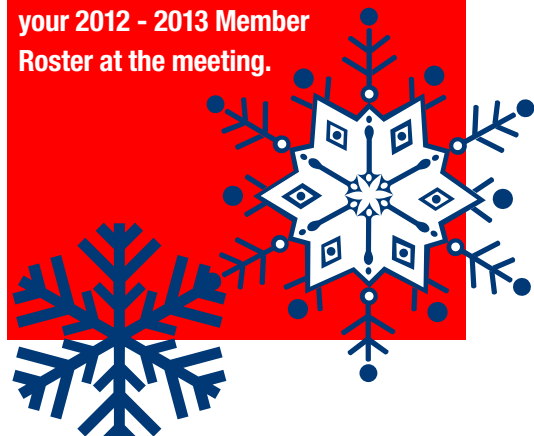
editor from 1943 through 1968 and again from 1970 through 1973. Richard Peterson's name first appeared on the masthead of the AOS Bulletin in April 1971 as associate editor. In 1973, he was named editor and, upon Dillon's retirement in 1977, he became the executive director, retaining his position of editor through 1984.

The Chair of the Publications Committee recently updated the society newsletter resources page on the AOS website. Included in this resource are ideas for society newsletter contents as well as a template for creating a newsletter, professional photographs to use and clip art. Newsletters are a great way to keep the lines of communication open among your society members. If your society doesn't have one yet, check out the page under the Affiliated Societies tab for this resource. Most societies post their newsletters on their website and they are available to read by anyone from their website.

Next month I will give a report of the Members Meeting this month in Portland, Oregon.

## **Prepare to Partay**

**Mark your calendars, save the date!**  
**The MOS holiday party is just around the corner. Always a wild time, the party on December 20 will be kicked up a notch as Eric Wiles will again wear his mistletoe hat. Consider bringing a covered dish (of food) or some other food-related consumable to the party. If you'd like to contribute to the holiday party, contact Barbara Buck at 410-551-9374 or [barbarabuck@comcast.net](mailto:barbarabuck@comcast.net). Also, don't forget to pick up your 2012 - 2013 Member Roster at the meeting.**





# To Grow an Orchid, it Takes a Village, ... and Some Fungus

An orchid bloom, so delicate and elegant, arises out of a complex symbiotic relationship with, of all things, fungi. It's a classic case of beauty and the beast, or gorgeous meets gross. But the fundamental relationship between the much-admired botanical family known as the Orchidaceae, which make up more than ten percent of the world's plants, and the little-understood fungi that live in the soils of a forest floor, is one of the more complex mysteries being studied by Smithsonian orchid ecologists. And as more and more orchid species disappear from North American forests, botanist Dennis Whigham of the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center in Edgewater, Maryland, says it's another example of the canary in the coal mine, a warning that must be heeded. "When orchids are present," Whigham says, "that means the ecosystem is in good shape."

Recently, to help foster a better understand of the optimal conditions it takes for native wild orchids to survive, if not thrive, Whigham and his colleagues announced the formation of the North American Orchid Conservation Center, a public-private partnership that includes several regional botanical gardens as well as the U.S. Botanic Gardens. The plan is to establish a national seed bank for the 250 known species of North American orchids and to identify the genetic diversity of the fungi that are central to the life-cycle of each species and figure out how to propagate them. "There were just a few people working on conserving native orchids," says Whigham, "but now we've created a national network."

<http://blogs.smithsonianmag.com/aroundthemall/2012/10/to-grow-an-orchid-it-takes-a-village-and-some-fungus/>



At the Smithsonian's greenhouses, orchid expert Tom Mirenda tells tales about a few of the beauties growing there, including from left to right: Aliceara Pacific Nova—"A weird and twisted hybrid made from a combination of several orchid genera." Brassidium Fangtastic Bob Henley—"Looks like it might bite you. But it is perfectly safe...unless you are a wasp. Brassias lure wasps to their blooms by mimicking the type of spider they parasitize. But this one is just faking ...and quite disappointing to the wasp who has to keep looking for a 'real spider.'" Oncidiopsis Stefan Isler—"Orchid hybrids like this combine the best features of their parents. This one combines a very small red flowered plant with a larger and more floriferous yellow flowered orchid. Such is the hybridizer's art." (Photos by Beth Py-Lieberman)



Of Rhyncholaeliocattleya Raye Holmes 'Newberry,' or just Cattleya Raye Holmes, Mirenda says: "This luscious beauty invites pollinators to visit her with the clear directional signals of the nectar guides in her lip."



Above left: Assorted Dendrobium hybrids: Mirenda says that fall is the best time of year to see these large hybrid dendrobiums in full bloom. The Psychopsis Butterfly at right, he says are "a real orchid mystery; these fantastic orchids resemble butterflies, undoubtedly to lure a pollinator, but in 200 years of cultivation, no one has ever observed its insect partner in action."

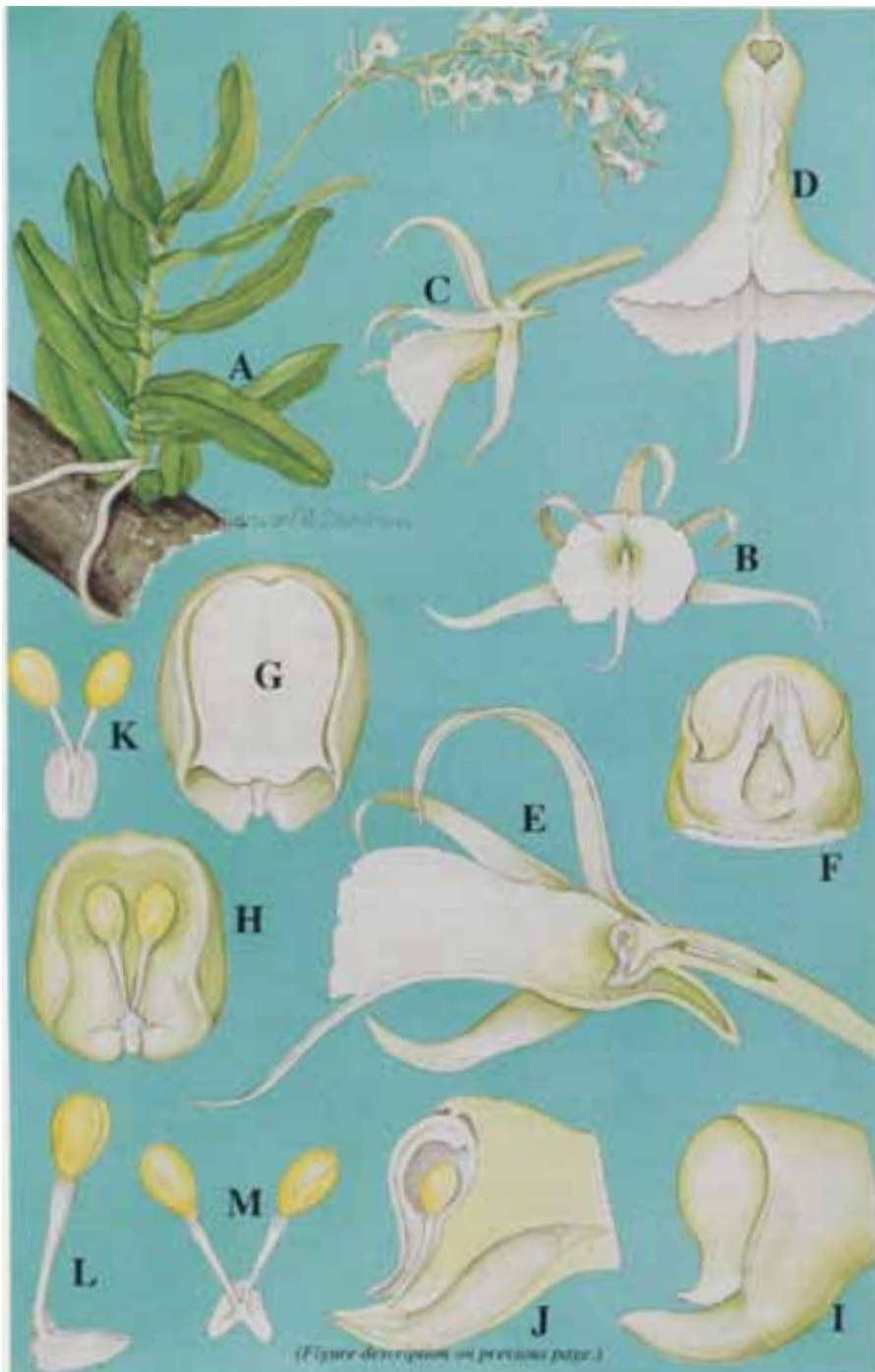


Mirenda (above left) holds a Phalaenopsis flower, to describe what makes an orchid, an orchid. Orchid flowers, he says, "do some pretty awful manipulations to the animals that pollinate them... here one animal is getting even!" Finally, Mirenda mimics the hard exoskeleton of pollinating bee with his fingernail.

# Where's Daddy? Life With An Orchidist

By Karen and David Hamilton, American Orchid Society *Bulletin*, May 1991

Submitted by Norma Lynch, MOS librarian



**T**he kids are screaming, the dog's barking, the spaghetti's boiling over and the phone's ringing off the hook. Where's Daddy? Out in the greenhouse, of course. Out where he can feign total oblivion to all the cares of the world. Out where he can lose himself in communion with his plants. And...out where he hopes I won't find him.

I suppose I should have seen it coming. Back when we were in college the man had 30 or 40 African violets and several other larger plants crammed into his dorm room. He even slept with a grow light in his face. It's a good thing he didn't have a roommate. Most of those plants have since gone by the wayside. Not that he didn't try to keep them. The day after graduation his poor parents packed up the car with the stereo, clothes and, most importantly, the plants. His mother had to ride 500 miles with a Norfolk Island pine between her feet. A move to New York combined with a maternal brown thumb reduced the initial collection to a single individual still eking out an existence in the wilds of Oklahoma.

A series of moves around the country followed soon after we were married. When we finally settled in one spot for a while it seemed as though his plant-mania had subsided. Little did I know that lurking deep within, like some sneaky virus ready to erupt, was the OBSESSION. That fateful day began with a trip home from Washington, D.C. I had somehow allowed myself to be talked into a detour to an African violet-grower's greenhouse in southern New Jersey. The gleam in his eye was unmistakable from the second we walked through the door. As though in the grip of a supernatural force, my complacent husband selected plant after plant until the trunk was overflowing with upwards of 50. When we arrived home, there was far too little window space to accommodate the new acquisitions. I could have told him that - but he was beyond human intervention. His devious little mind soon came up with a bright idea. Why not a light set-up in the bathroom? There was, after all, extra room and the plants would benefit from a little extra humidity. Several manufactured stands were searched out and, fortunately, I thought, proved well out of our price range. He cleverly then found out the address of the local distributor for the stainless steel shelving found in small groceries, bought lights from Sears and gravel trays from the local garden center and soon had plants happily growing in my bathroom. Thus began my descent into Plant Hell.

*continued on next page*



I want you to know that I have nothing against plants themselves. I enjoy gardening as much as the next person. I just have this strange notion that plants should not live better than I do. And certainly shouldn't receive more attention than the kids. My friends tell me I'm lucky not to be a football widow. But football, at least, has a season. Have you found an off-season for orchids? First there's the repotting with bark covering the floor and the two-year old who wanted to help out. Then there's the constant search for pests and diseases. And especially watering, which can only be done on a day when there's not a cloud in the sky and early in the morning so that the dears have a chance to dry off before nightfall. Wait a minute! If their little leaves need to be dry why, pray tell, do they need an automatic humidifying system? I wish as much consideration was given to me! I might even be able to take a shower early in the morning with someone to answer the phone and corral the baby. But I'm not lucky enough to be a plant!

I have yet to tell the tale of the invasion of the first orchids. My dearly beloved's career took him to Hawaii a few years ago. Rest assured I didn't pass up the chance to go along. When, after a week of meetings he still hadn't seen an orchid outside of the hotel dining room, I agreed to allow a little shopping with the proviso that it not interfere with our planned trip to Volcanoes National Park. Of course, the road between the airport and the park is lined with orchid growers that advertise in those tourist magazines. The first stop was a real tourist trap catering mostly to the tour-bus crowd. I managed to pull him out of there before the Visa card made an appearance. The next place seemed much more reputable and had a much larger selection. One look and that familiar gleam appeared, whereupon he proceeded to take one of those and one of those and one of those. That continued for a minute or two until I got a look at the prices. Good Lord! At 20 to 30 bucks a pop I decided right then and there that two was the limit. We did actually buy one extra as a present for my mother. He has since acquired a piece of that one, too.

These purchases were duly boxed and stamped with the requisite government stickers, and we returned to Honolulu. (Yes, I did get to see the volcanoes.) I left the next day to stop in California to rescue my mother from our two-year-old. My budding orchidist was to fly home the next day with plants in tow. Unbeknownst to me he had discerned from a colleague that one of the large grocery stores in Honolulu had a huge garden center full of orchids. Take a guess what I found when I walked in the front door: not two but 20 orchids he had somehow managed to bring back as a carry-on luggage. (I think I'm

going to have to have a talk with United Airlines!) He convinced me that the prices were considerably lower than at one of the official growers. And, I have to admit that the ones in bloom were quite beautiful.

My descent into the next circle of Plant Hell is actually my own fault. A couple of years after our entry into the realms of orchid growing we decided to have a second child. As fate would have it the only room suitable for flowering cattleyas just happened to belong to the new arrival. Because she was a non-mobile entity this was acceptable. I could, however, foresee a time when we would come upstairs to investigate an unusually quiet baby and find bark and shredded plant parts ground into the carpet. So, instead of laying down the law and demanding that the plants find new quarters either in our house or on the trash heap, I made the passing suggestion that we acquire a small greenhouse. By the time I thought the better of it catalogs by the dozens had begun to arrive. Once again I thought I was saved when the prices were well beyond our budget. Fate was not on my side!

One of the local orchid society members just happened to have a small glasshouse for sale for \$300. My husband leaped at the chance and was soon over at his friend's house dismantling glass and aluminum. Then the "little extra expenses" started to roll in. He needed a truck to move the larger frame pieces and to haul bags of cement from the home center for the foundation. Then there was a ventilating fan with matching motor-operated louvers, a sealed unit thermostat for the NEW heater and a few thermometers thrown in for good measure. And, of course, let's not forget the components for that automatic humidifying system. By the time he was done the tab was well over \$1,000 even before the first heating bill sat heavily in the mailbox. When I put my foot down about the bills, he did make an attempt to insulate with bubble packing material and turned down the thermostat. Of course, the complaint was duly registered that the Phalaenopsis plants were rotting, but we already had given the electric company too much business in the wintertime.

There are a few other things I'd like to warn you about. Check the thermostats occasionally. I'm always finding the setting where the plants are most comfortable and where the bank account is begging for mercy. No matter how many times I make adjustments, somehow they always sneak back to the original temperatures. Watch out for seemingly innocent birthday or Christmas gift requests. Those two little plants that are on the top of the wish list may turn out to be \$500 apiece. Beware also when he comes and tells you he needs some very simple and

inexpensive gadget for the greenhouse. He may have neglected to mention the 10 other (much more costly) pieces that go with it to make it work. Any project concerning the orchids will have budget overruns that make the stealth bomber pale by comparison.

A few months ago in the *AOS Bulletin* a heinous little article appeared which spelled out steps for sneaking plants by your suspicious spouse. (Yes, I do thumb through the *Bulletin* if only to keep up with what these cash-eating plants are going to throw at me next.) It used terms like Grand Inquisitor and enemy for those of us who are unwitting and unwilling victims of this hobby. By way of equal time, I would like to offer some ammunition to my compatriots.

\*Keep an eye on plants that are developing buds. If you can't think of any, and a flowering plant just happens to appear in the house, bells should go off.

\*Listen for the opening of the greenhouse door or for footsteps in the growing area the night of a local society meeting. This can sometimes indicate an attempt to hide a plant.

\*Keep a rough idea in your head of how large the collection is. That way you'll be able to tell if a new shipment arrives from Brazil.

\*Keep a close eye on your checkbook and MasterCard balances. Then again, orchid growers may start using dummy names to cover up those thousands of dollars in charges.

\*Don't ever let your orchid ogler attend an auction. Have you ever seen orchidists at one of those things? That number goes up and down like the choir in a church service. (Why is it that the auctioneer always declares the plant sold when my husband's number is the only one up?)

\*Watch out for orchid shows, too, especially on the first day. You've seen pictures of sharks in a feeding frenzy? They have nothing up on this bunch in a sales area. In fact, it's a good idea to confiscate the charge cards and checkbook before giving out the keys to the car.

\*Make it clear that you expect a bauble or two if you are pressed into service watering plants during the primary caretaker's six-week business trip. A carat or three is sufficient.

My husband recently found yet a new ploy for making new acquisitions. He thought he had gotten around all of my objections when he happened to visit a well-known botanical garden and found to his delight that it was giving away some of its surplus orchid plants. Orchid plants for free! How could I object? And how could he resist that one and that one and that one...? But then came the

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bill for sending one hundred (yes, 100!) orchids via Next Day Air up to New Jersey. Of course, I blew my top and pointed out that none of his plants has ever turned out to be absolutely free. And besides, I still have to water them when he's gone.

Now that I've vented my frustration perhaps you orchidists out there can understand better those of us over on this side of the battle lines. After all, have you ever seen anything less attractive than a windowsill full of out-of-bloom orchids? Granted, when they do finally deign to honor us with a bloom they are quite spectacular. But, of course, that bloom usually gets carted off to some plant show or other and comes back looking like the dog stepped on it. Or the plant stays in bloom so long that you're ready to buy new furniture to match that particular shade of paphiopedilum puce. There really is no way of fighting this obsession short of moving out. So, I've found some rationale for living with it. He will have a full-time hobby to occupy his time when he retires to keep him out of my hair. And at least I know where he is at night, I'm just waiting for the day when I can install a permanently activated intercom in the greenhouse, so when the cry goes up "Where's Daddy?" he'll have no excuse for staying out with Peggy Huffman or Hazel Boyd or Madge Fordyce or...

# Maryland Orchid Society Board of Trustees Meeting January 24

The next quarterly meeting of the Board will be held at the home of Sarah Spence on January 24, 2013. Arrive as early as 6:30 PM to enjoy a light meal and refreshments. (Please consider bringing a side dish or refreshment.) Open to all members. Please RSVP to Sarah.

Other important dates:

MOS Annual Holiday Party — December 20, 2012

MOS Annual Show and Sale— March 8-10, 2013

SEPOS Show—April 12-14, 2013

## New Members

The MOS would like to welcome the following new members:

John B. Carter and Judith Picciotto

# maryland orchid society

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The *MOS Newsletter*, published monthly by the Maryland Orchid Society September through June, shares the latest news of our orchid community. Please submit your comments to [sobelman1@verizon.net](mailto:sobelman1@verizon.net)

We invite articles, notices, etc. for inclusion in our newsletter. The deadline for inclusion is first Sunday of the month.

The MOS brings together people interested in orchids to promote and encourage orchid culture, preservation, education, propagation, hybridization, and all other orchid-related activities of interest to its members. Benefits of membership include a subscription to the Newsletter (e-mail and web), voting rights, borrowing privileges from the MOS Library, monthly guest speakers, local judging, valuable door prizes, and much, much, more!

If you are interested in orchid culture and would like to meet others with similar interests, we cordially invite you to join the ranks of Marylanders already enjoying the benefits of membership in the Maryland Orchid Society.

Visit us on the Web at [www.marylandorchids.org](http://www.marylandorchids.org)  
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