

Yes, Summer is supposed to be our 'off' time with the MOS, but here are a few things that are coming up and/or didn't make the June Newsletter deadline. So, please take a quick browse:

1. Virtual Show Table: (ZOOM): We'll be hosting these again this summer on the 3rd Thursdays of July (21st) and August (18th); let's aim for a 7:30 start time. Please provide Fay Citerone (fay.citerone@gmail.com) with photos (taken in July for this first one) of your summer bloomers, ideally at least the day before each gathering. Be prepared to share some tidbit(s) about each contribution. This is purely social; no judging and no participation points. ZOOM connection information will be provided to all members, as we get closer.
2. Board of Trustees Meeting: COVID permitting, David and Margaret Smith will be hosting this on July 28 (4th Thursday of the month). We begin with a semi-potluck supper and then move to business. The budget for next year will be a major element of the agenda. All/any members are welcome to participate. Just please let the Smiths know (fpsakes1@aol.com) so they can plan the meal and seating logistics. I'd welcome a heads-up as well (jheinbokel@hotmail.com or 802.922.8686 (cell), but that's not as important.
3. Contributions via Valerie Lowe's AOS Connections: Two things came in that Valerie passed along since the deadline for the June Newsletter had passed. These are for information only; MOS is not advocating any actions here. They are:

a. **In Search of *Erycina echinata***

Good Afternoon,

I am contacting your society because desperate times have arrived in my search for a replacement orchid.

I have been around orchids my entire life, as my parents had a greenhouse before I was born. My brother and I were always involved in shows as children, setting up tables and running errands. I knew how to transport an orchid and keep it at show quality before I learned to drive. Our daily chores involved scraping clay pots, picking up leaf debris and picking slugs after bedtime. Even as I became an adult and moved off on my own adventures, I still attended local shows and would come home and help in the greenhouse.

My Mother, Jackie Parker, passed away in a car accident in 2019 and as anyone knows, that grieving process never really ends. Spending time with my Dad (Bill Parker) and making sure he was okay evolved into my personal reacquaintance with orchids, joining my local society, the AOS and building my collection.

We've spent countless hours discussing their plants, as my Dad remembers everything-who gave it to him, their story, all the trials and tribulations of learning the plant, memorable blooms, etc.

It was one of the above conversations that started this quest. His dear friend, Jim Quattlebaum (wife Kathryn) gave him a plant of *Erycina echinata* decades ago. Daddy mentioned that it was his most highly awarded orchid (HCC/AOS in 1986) and how it was one of many lost when the heaters went out in the greenhouse one winter. He chuckled during the telling, saying he didn't have any idea where Jim had even gotten the thing. He said he's been looking for it for years-he pulled up google to show me pictures of what it *wasn't* supposed to look like. He mentioned that he'd even talked with people he gave divisions to over the years, without success in finding the plant still living.

It's funny the things we fixate on sometimes, but I want to find this plant for my Dad. I have contacted numerous North American growers, but none have this species. I've spoken with Dr. Meyers (Columbian Orchid Imports) and he's willing to try and see if a Columbian collection has the plant (he's not hopeful). Mexican vendors and I have traded translations and when I've gotten a response, it's that they don't have it.

So now, I'm reaching out to individual societies to see if one of your members has *Erycina echinata* and would be willing to part with a division. I would be beyond appreciative if you could share this with your group and if anyone has a lead (of any type) of where I can locate it, I'm including all my contact information.

Sincerest Regards,

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b.

Paradise in Peril! Please enlist the help of your fellow orchid society members to help protect the Dracula Reserve from the damage caused by gold miners.

About the Dracula Reserve

The Dracula Reserve is a conservation area in northern Ecuador, near the border with Colombia, managed by the EcoMinga Foundation. A lush green landscape of forests and mountains currently covering over 2800 acres, it is a hotspot of diversity for the orchid genus

Dracula, for which the reserve was named. Since the establishment of the reserve in 2015, the Dracula Reserve is now known to contain an incredible diversity of flora and fauna, many of which are endemic to the valley in which the reserve is located. Early surveys of the Dracula Reserve identified over 160 different orchid species from 55 different genera, and this list continues to grow. Recent animal discoveries include new species of mice, shrew opossums, frogs, toads and lizards. Of great interest to the OCA, the reserve also contains new orchid species, including *Scaphosepalum zieglerae*, *Pleurothallis chicalensis*, *Trevora* sp., *Pseudolepanthes bihuae*, and *Lepanthes tulcanensis* as well as a number of new *Lepanthes* and *Pleurothallis* sp. that have yet to be described. Biological field research is being carried out here by several national and foreign institutions, and there are sure to be more exciting discoveries as they explore this incredible place. But today the very existence of this incredible area of biodiversity is under threat.

Why we need the help of Orchid Societies across the United States and Canada

Many local orchid societies have a conservation committee, or at least, a part of their mission statement that supports orchid conservation. We have a need that is truly deserving of a united effort by orchid societies and their members in the USA and Canada. Some orchid societies have already donated to us directly; however we would appreciate sharing our plea for funding with your membership.

The Orchid Conservation Alliance is a grass roots organization, founded in 2006. Its mission has been to conserve and protect orchid rich habitats (thus preserving not only the orchids, but the trees, environment, animals, other plants, fungi, insects etc.). Since our founding we have worked with local foundations in Brazil, Colombia and Ecuador to create multiple reserves that have permanently protected large tracts of primary, orchid rich environments. However, one of our most precious reserves, the Dracula Reserve in northern Ecuador, is now under considerable threat from gold mining.

Gold mining is one of the most destructive industries in the world. It displaces communities, contaminates drinking water, and destroys pristine environments permanently. Gold mining pollutes both the water and the land with mercury and cyanide, pollutants that are damaging to all flora and fauna, including the human inhabitants. The resulting erosion clogs streams and rivers, and can even taint marine ecosystems far downstream of the mine site. Most forms of gold mining involve moving massive amounts of soil and rock. Miners have already started mining on two privately-owned properties adjacent to the Dracula Reserve, and we desperately need your help to purchase one of these large lots (274 acres) from the landowner. The second parcel will be purchased by another foundation also currently raising funds. The owners want to sell to us, and not the mining companies, but we need to raise \$100,000 (US) to complete the transaction.

We are just over half way to our goal. Please help us get there! And time is of the essence as we must get our funding together to create a counter offer to the gold mining companies. You can donate online through the Orchid Conservation Alliance website, and any donation you can give, no matter how small, will be welcome! If you are a US resident, your donations are tax deductible.

For orchid societies, we would be most appreciative if you can put the notice of our plea in your monthly newsletter or an email blast to your members. We will gladly provide photos, content etc. Just let us know!

If you are interested in making a transformative donation, there are several new species of orchids available for a species naming donation (\$15,000/donation). For more information about newsletter content or transformative donations, please contact Mary Gerritsen. mary@orchidconservationalliance.org

You can also mail a check, payable to the Orchid Conservation Alliance, and send to Mary Gerritsen, Treasurer; 541 Parrott Drive; San Mateo, CA 94402