

Volume 3 , Issue 6

March 2013

Educating, growing &
embracing the joy of
orchids for
68 Years



O rchidflora

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Prize Draws: Margaret Elvidge

Kitchen: Stella Li & Terry Sing

BCCoGC Rep: Bill & Carla Bischoff

Library: Barbara Cable

COC/AOS Rep: Chris Ostenstad

Web Master: Gideon Singer

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Newsletter: Chris Ostenstad

Please send your contributions to:
costenstad@shaw.ca

Monday March 11 Culture Class, Monday March 11th, 6:30-8:30 pm, Cedar room, VanDusen Gardens. Repotting!!!

Bring your orchid and media. Ray Sword will demo repotting a Disa!.

Upcoming Meeting : March 27, 2013

Speaker: Speaker Sam Tsui, from Orchid Inn, on Paph culture of the Parvisepalum and Brachypetalum section. Sam Tsui is a long time grower and hybridizer of Slipper orchids

Orchid Shows Coming up !

Vancouver Orchid Society Show and Sale, Preview night March 22, buy your tickets from Stella Li <li.stella@gmail.com>. Open to the public Saturday March 23 (9 am to 5 pm) and Sunday March 24 (10 am to 4 pm). More information (and cut off dates for pre-orders) at www.vancouverorchidsociety.ca.

Central Vancouver Island Orchid Show, April 13 & 14 open to public

Monthly General Meetings: 4th Wednesday of each month
(except July, August & December) at Van Dusen Floral Hall

Doors Open 6:30pm, Meeting starts at 7:30pm

Message from the President

Dear fellow orchid lovers,

Just back from the Victoria Orchid Society show, where I set up the Vancouver Orchid Society display. The VicOS show was well attended, and our display was well appreciated by the those who attended. Don Bednarczyk got best in Cattleya Class for his Potinara Hisako Akatsuka 'Volcano Queen' HCC/AOS, and Roak Citroen got best in Oncidium Class for Odont Lea (a Wally Thomas hybrid). Also Don Bednarczyk got Best Orchid grown under artificial light only for his Blc Angel Heart 'Hihimanu' AM/AOS.

Overall, we got 8 First ribbons, 4 Second ribbons, and two Third ribbons. So out of 32 plants on our display table, 14 of them got ribbons. You can see the display table on our Vancouver Orchid Society Facebook page.

Yes, I finally joined the Facebook family, because I wanted to look at our Facebook page. It is not hard to join, although registration cannot occur without giving your birthdate, always a tricky question once you get older. But otherwise, there was not much private information divulged on my part...

While socializing around our display table at the Victoria Show, I made a point of showing orchid lovers the semi-hydroponic method of growing orchids, as well as the many fragrant orchids we had on our table. There was the Brassavola Little Stars, of course, but this orchid only smells at night. Don's 3 Cattleya hybrids were fragrant, but it was the Prosthechea radiatum (formerly Encyclia) that really smelled sweet.

I extolled the virtues of Miltonias as being easy orchids that are frequently highly fragrant. It always comes as a surprise to me that many orchid show attendees do not know that fragrance is present in many, many orchids (if my memory serves me right about 25%). Not all scents are equally attractive, but many orchids are worth growing for their scent. I digress

Our next big event is our own show. Please remember that if you want preview tickets (\$25) for the Friday night 'gala', you need to contact Stella Li before March 15th (see the minutes of our last meeting for her email address) - she needs to know her numbers so that she can give that to the caterers.

Also, although our volunteer sheets are now more full, no one has signed up for admissions on the Saturday afternoon from 3-5 pm. Not a hard job, and usually lots of fun to see who is coming to our show; it was my first volunteer job when I joined in 2002. And remember, we need your blooming orchids for our Society display! Bring them in Friday March 22 by 10 am, or arrange for drop off by emailing <margaretprat@shaw.ca> If you want to pre-order for the upcoming show, the deadlines are listed on our website.

While the show committee is working hard at the show, your executive is working hard at other projects.

The website is on the verge of being launched, and it will be very rewarding to see this project come to fruition. Although many people have helped, the bulk of the work has been done by Jennifer Fabre, Teang Tang, and Peter Hopkins.

Many thanks to them, and to Gideon Singer who has maintained the website so far (a labour of love). We hold high hopes that the website will present a fresh new face to the digital public and attract new members.

Our May guest speaker is Sam Tsui, who is a long time orchid hybridizer of Slipper orchids. Sam will talk about Paphiopedilum orchids in the Section Parvisepalum (e.g. malipoense, armeniacum, delenatii, emersonii, hangianum, micranthum) and Brachypetalum (bellatulum, concolor,, godefroye, niveum). It promises to be a very interesting talk, and Sam has communicated that he will talk about the culture of these Paphs.

And we are fast approaching the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in June when we will have to vote on next year's Executive and Board members.

Hazel Stewart, Don Harquail, and Margaret Elvidge have agreed to be on the nomination committee. You can nominate someone, or self nominate. You need to give your name to anyone on the nomination committee.

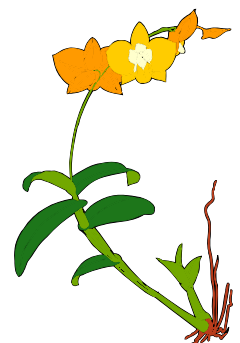
And remember, culture class is the 2nd Monday of the month, which is March 11th!!! Repotting class, with Ray Sword demonstrating the repotting of a Disa.

We will help you repot any orchid you bring, as long as you have the media, and a suitable pot. All orchid questions are welcome. Come give your suggestions for future culture class topics. Participant feedback is that you always learn something - everyone shares their tips. I certainly have learned a great deal

Remember to encourage family, friends and colleagues to come to our show

Orchidly yours, Margaret.

P.S. I am still looking for a volunteer for the Nanaimo show (CVIOS) set up day is Thursday April 11th.



Victoria Show Best in Class Winners



Best Cattleya, Pot Hisako Akatsuka
Grower: Don Bednarczyk



Best Other in Oncidium Group
Odont. Lea Grower: Roak Citroen

Photographs by Judith E. Higham

If you would like a picture of your plant,
please email Judy,
she will gladly email you the file
Higham@shaw.ca



Best Grown under artificial light
BIC Angel Heart 'Mihimanu' AM/AOS
Grower: Don Bednarczyk



Flower Quality, Plant Culture, Brassovola Litte Star
Grower: Margaret Prat



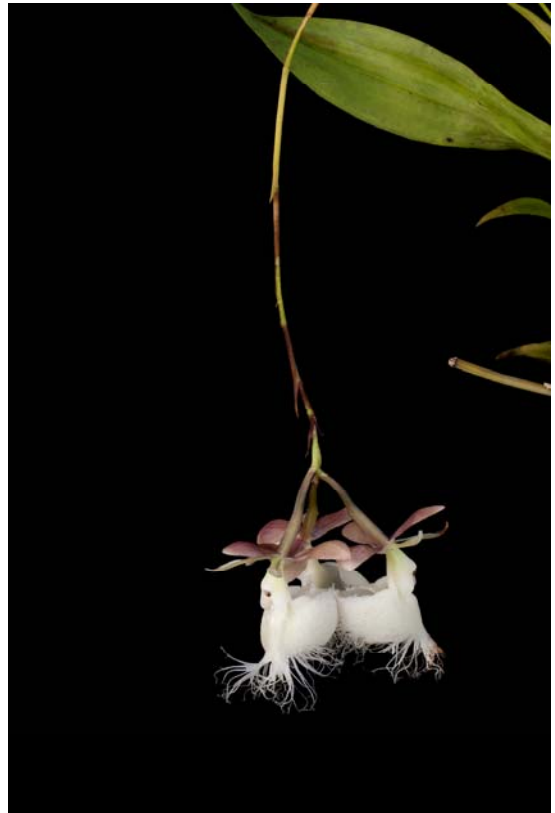
Unusual Species, Plant Culture, *Dendrochilum tenellum*

Grower: Carla Bischoff



Flower Quality, *Cymbidium Tracy Sunkist*

Grower: Collin Wilson



Flower Quality, *Epi ciliore*

Grower: Hazel Stewart



Flower Quality, Paph Angel Hair x Paph Saint Swithin

Grower: Margaret Prat



Flower Quality, Plant Culture, Paph Olympian Yard

Grower: Roak Citreon



Flower Quality, Dendrobium Nora Tokunaga x atrovioleaceum

Grower: Melanie Gallacher



Flower Culture, *Dendrobium kingianum*

Grower: Margaret Prat



Flower Quality, LC Secret Love

Grower: Melanie Gallacher



Flower Quality, Paph Newton x

Arutura Sen

Grower: Margaret Prat

Unusual Species, *Soph willigiana*

Grower: Carla Bischoff



Listen to your orchids - part 2

By Don Bednarczyk

LIGHT

"Full sun" in Vancouver is not the same as "full sun" in Florida. Most of us probably realize that the light requirements you see in most books about orchids are applicable to hot, sunny places, not Vancouver. "Full sun" here, from early until 11 AM and from 2 PM until dark, is probably still less than "semi-shade" in Florida or Southern California. So I find you have to really "up" most books' recommendations. **But here is the caution**, watch out for heat. Especially at noon hour, leaves in the sun get hot and burn if there is not a lot of air movement. I find that a set of blinds set so they cast fine lines of shadow on the plants works wonders. And you need air movement, especially when the plants are in direct sunshine. Most Cattleyas, which most books call semi-shade plants, grow fine in a Vancouver south facing window with blinds breaking the noon hour sun.

Also be careful if you move plants from place to place as I do. Orchids are like people, they can adapt to a lot of sun if they have their exposure increased gradually. If you are going to move an orchid from under lights to a greenhouse or a south window give them adequate time to adapt. Many people like to take blooming orchids and put them into their living area when they are in bloom. Be careful you do not burn them when you put them back when they finished blooming. Apply a little extra shading for a week or two. And watering your orchid before you move it to sunnier positions also helps the plant adapt without incident. Orchids need as much light as possible to give you maximal blooms. You want to avoid burning the leaves or the leaves turning a sickly, pale yellow-green. If you are seeing a purple pigment developing in the leaves, the orchids are probably getting just a bit too much light also. The purple will fade as you ease up on the light or the plant adapts to the higher light. But realize the purple color is telling you that you are on the edge of your orchid's tolerance to light.

Everyone has been told, if your orchids are not flowering, you probably need more light. And a Vancouver winter is dark, very dark. Even in a greenhouse, orchids just about stop growing. So we get thinking about supplemental lighting. And then there are those of us who want to use that unused space in the basement or the spare bedroom to grow our beauties. So we want more light. But what kind of light do you want?

Light is a weird beastie. It is made up of photons. So what are photons you ask? Photon is a word which physicists made up to describe the fact that light has properties of both an electromagnetic wave and a particle at the same time. It is made up of little packets of energy that travel through space at 300,000,000 meters per second and then give that energy to an object when the light is absorbed. The wave properties of light, such as its wavelength, are very useful to describe how the light behaves in transit and just what objects will absorb the light when it hits them.

When you pass white light through a translucent object such as a prism you can separate out all the colors of the rainbow. This is because different wavelengths of light move through the prism at different speeds. Raindrops in fact act like prisms so if you are standing in the right place you can see a rainbow. We perceive the different wavelengths of light as different colors such as red, green, and blue. When light hits an opaque object, one it cannot pass through, one of two things can happen. The light can be absorbed or the light can be reflected. Which phenomenon happens depends on which molecules the object contains and how they interact with specific colors of light.

Now before you go tilt on all the scientific language, I just explained why plants are green. Sunlight contains all the colors. Plants absorb the red and blue wavelengths and reflect the green ones. So plants look green. But they get their energy to grow from the red and blue light. If you try to grow a plant under green light it will die. The old purple grow lights were a mixture of red and blue light so the plants could absorb enough energy and they would grow. But the bulbs were short on green light, so the plants looked weird.

In Vancouver some people use lights to grow orchids in a totally dark place like a basement. Others use lights to supplement window light through the dark winter months. If you are in the basement, you really have to use full spectra lights. If you are supplementing window light you can get away with an incomplete light source because you are getting some sunlight, but you will do better with a full spectra source. Here is the problem. Plants get the energy to grow from both the red and blue light. And they really need both colors to do well. But without a little extra of the blue light, they do not get the signal to flower. And we all want flowers. So if you want flowers, you have to pay the extra for full spectra bulbs. Of course I have simplified it a bit. There are "in between" colors and "colors" we cannot see like infra-red and ultra-violet. But good bulbs are made to emit all the colors (wavelengths) that plants need to grow and flower. Buy specialty bulbs.

How much light do you need? Should you buy fluorescent lights, or metal halide lights, or sodium vapor lights, or one of the new super high output lights like the Sunthrower or the Tek-light, or the new LED arrays? It depends on three things: what do you want to grow, how much do you want to spend, and is there a convenient source? Fluorescent lights work for lower light requiring plants such as Paphiopediliums, Phalaenopsis, Masdevallias, and Pleurothalids. A 400 W metal halide light will allow you to grow Cattleyas, Laelias, and Encyclias in a 6 X 6 foot growing area and lower light lovers over 8 X 8 feet. They are a bit more expensive, but put out a lot more light. Sodium vapor lights supply the wavelengths of light necessary for growing, but not the ones necessary for bloom initiation, and are therefore more suitable for growing non-culinary herbs. If you want to grow Vandas and other high light requiring orchids, you may need a 1000 W metal halide light. If electricity costs \$0.0615/kW.h it means that a 400 W light which is on for 13 hours a day would cost about \$9.60/month. And the heat generated by the lights is usually sufficient to heat the growing area. In fact a 1000 W light often needs ventilation to avoid overheating the room.

Here are some important points to consider. Remember that the intensity of light decreases as the inverse square of the distance from the bulb. That simply means that double the distance and you get 1/4 the light. If you triple the distance you get 1/9 the light. Go to 4 times the distance and you only get 1/16 the light. A little movement makes a big difference. For fluorescent lights, that means you usually have the plants within 1 to 3 inches of the bulbs. For a 400 W metal halide light, start out about 2 or 3 feet from the bulbs for higher light requiring orchids and adjust the distance according to your plants response. I actually grow the highest light requiring Laelias about 1 foot from a 400 W bulb and some Paphs about 4 feet away.

Keep the air moving. Fans are essential. Use a light meter if you want to measure light. Don't trust your eyes to judge how much light is hitting your plants. Your eyes adjust to the light. Full sunlight is about 10,000 foot-candles (fc). Paphiopediliums grow well at 700-1000 fc. Cattleyas grow at 2000-3000 fc. Or just listen to your plants. Most growers start off in a panic using a light meter but end up putting it in a drawer and just looking at how their orchids are doing. Even the first orchid hunters observed that the orchids with lush, dark green leaves that grew in the shade did not produce as many flowers as the light green leaved orchids that grew in more light. Change your bulbs regularly. Just because the light bulb lights up does not mean that is putting out the same amount of light as when it was new. Ask your supplier how many hours the bulb is rated for use. You will be surprised how much brighter a new bulb is.

How long should you run the lights each day? Orchids in the wild are subjected to a yearly cycle of temperatures and light. Even plants at the equator see this due to dry and wet seasons. You can safely reduce the hours to 12 or 13 hours in the winter without disturbing the orchids that require long dark nights to induce blooming. You can easily go to 14 or 15 hours of light in the summer. There are reports of people using 18 hours of light. But do not leave the lights on all the time. Many orchids need time in the dark to complete their photosynthesis. For instance, Paphiopediliums kept under constant light completely stop growing. Constant light also completely confuses orchids that use the hours of daylight to tell them when to bloom.

Next month we will look at how water fits into the picture as well as fertilizers and supplements. And then we will try to pull all the pieces together.

Recently added to the Vancouver Orchid Society Library!!!

Growing Hardy Orchids, by John Tullock

This book received the American Horticultural Society Book award for a very good reason. If you were ever thinking of growing hardy orchids in your backyard (or on your deck!), this handy volume covers the basics for setting up your yard (or pots) for hardy orchids. It also gives more specific instructions for genera from *Anacamptis* to *Spiranthes*, nicely arranged in alphabetical order. Lots of tips and illustrations on *Cypripediums* (Lady Slipper orchids), *Bletillas*, *Calanthes*, etc. Gorgeous pictures, readable text, good organization, I certainly recommend this book if you are contemplating growing hardy orchid. Obviously, it is a more specialized book

Ortho's All About Orchids Edited by Elvin MacDonald

This beginner book has been around for a long time, for a very good reason. It is perfect when you are just getting started in the hobby. It covers the basics on light, temperature, humidity and air circulation very well, and generally give lots of good tips about how to grow orchids. In the Orchid Gallery, it classifies orchids as beginner, intermediate or advanced. I highly recommend this book for those new to orchid growing.

Understanding Orchids, by William Cullina

The subtitle of this book is "An Uncomplicated Guide to Growing the World's Most Exotic Plants". Although I consider myself a fairly experienced orchid grower (10 years), I learned a great deal from this tome. It covers the basics on orchid culture, like how to choose an orchid, but it also goes into a lot more detail than other books about greenhouses. It is the best book I have seen on the topic of repotting and media.

Lots of pictures, well written, great tips, I recommend this book for beginners and intermediate level growers.

These book reviews were written by Margaret Prat

Library News - by Barbara Cable

THINGS I LEARNED IN THE LIBRARY

Orchids Bulletin March 2012 – How to mount your orchid on wood.

Orchids Bulletin June 2012 – How to build a handy, dandy shelving unit out of PVC

Orchids Bulliten Dec. 2013 – Turning your orchids into beautiful photographs

Orchid Digest – Jan, Feb, Mar, 2013 – Liars & Cheats: The Story of Orchid Deception



All About Orchids by Charles Marden Fitch (1981) I LOVE THIS BOOK!

For a rank amateur such as myself this book was a revelation! Everything I needed was here and in a very readable format. Want to know the difference between growing on your windowsill, greenhouse or out of doors? Is something bugging your babies? Need info on orchids from Acineta to Zygopetalum (including pronunciation)? Wow! I know that there have been many more plants & other advances since this book was published but it's still a great all purpose primer.

NEW BOOK Four Seasons of Orchids – Allikas & Nash

This nifty book not only tells you when to expect your orchids to bloom but gives you basic growing requirements, tools & equipment needed and individual potting instructions on a wide variety of orchids. Good for beginners and those with short memories. Beautifully illustrated.

NEW BOOK Orchids for Every Home – W & B Rittershausen (2004)

This Reader's Digest book performs much as expected. Beautifully illustrated with concise information and helpful hints for those new to the hobby.

All VOS members please take advantage of your library, there are a lot of great books in our collection.

Volunteers Needed !!!



**Volunteers still needed for our
Annual Show Mar 23—24.**

Announcements & Upcoming Events

Monday March 11 Culture Class, Van Dusen Garden, Cedar Room 6:30 to 8:30 pm—repotting session— Ray Sword will demonstrate the repotting of a Disa, but we will report all sorts of orchids— hands on session, bring your plant and repotting media.

Open House Are you interested in visiting Poul Hansen's greenhouse (Victoria) and /or Fraser Thimble farm on Saltspring Island May 4 or 5th ? We are trying to see if we can organize carpooling. Please email margaretprat@shaw.ca if you are interested .

Central Vancouver Island Orchid Society AOS show and plant sale, April 12-14, 2013;
Nanaimo North Town Centre, 4750 Rutherford Road, Nanaimo, B.C.Culture class: March 27th:

The nomination committee for Board position for 2013-2014 are: Don Harquail, Hazel Stewart, Margaret Elvidge

Upcoming for April

April will be Dr. John Beatty from UBC philosophy on Darwin and orchids. A great deal of the *Origin of the Species* revolves around *Angraecum sesquipedale*, from Madagascar.

For Sale

If any member would like to post items for sale, please contact Chris before the 5th of each month, excluding July & August
costenstad@shaw.ca



To our New Members !

Janis & James O'Byrne

Elena & Mico Jansson

Linda McArthur

WELCOME

**Agenda:
Monthly Meeting: Wednesday February 27, 2013
Van Dusen Floral Hall**

Meeting was called to order: **7:30 PM**

Approval of the Minutes from the last Meeting
Moved Roak Citroen, **Seconded** Barbara Cable. **Adopted.**

Treasurer's Report **Erik Nilsen**

GIC \$17,129.24
Petty Cash \$ 177.72
Chequing \$ 4,726.51

Membership Report **Margaret Prat**

In 1999, the society had 291 members. Current membership is between 120-130 members. 3 new members attended tonight's meeting. Helena and Miko were introduced. Membership renewal is underway. Everyone is reminded to renew his or her membership for 2013. Designated corporate members are being welcomed into the society. They will soon be represented on our new website.

President's Report: **Margaret Prat**

• ***VOS Show 2013***

We need someone to assist Faye to set-up our show table. Volunteers, please contact Margaret Prat (margaretprat@shaw.ca) or Don Harquail (dnd5224@gmail.com).

Preview Night: we need someone with a "serving it right" license. If you can assist, please contact Margaret or Stella Li (li.stella@gmail.com), directly.

Preview night tickets are priced at \$25 pp. This year, we aim to recover our costs. Last year we weren't able to fully recover our costs. Catering costs have increased. Remember, after the reception, the vendors will open their sales tables. Deadline for preview night tickets: March 15. To order tickets, please contact Stella Li, directly.

Volunteers for the show

Volunteers make the show a success! We need a number of volunteers to help with various tasks that include: set-up/take-down; admission table; etc. Time is running short. To volunteer, please contact

Margaret Prat or Don Harquail.

Ribbon Judging

This is a wonderful learning opportunity for all members (seasoned or new) to work on teams to judge our show.

It's fun. It's not difficult. You'll learn about some of the more exotic orchids out there and how they are grown. To volunteer please contact Don Harquail (dnd5224@gmail.com).

Award/Trophy Sponsors

We need members to sponsor awards/trophies. If interested, please contact Margaret Prat or Erik Nilsen (enilsen@shaw.ca).

Show Advertising

We are aiming to attract 900+ attendees, this year. To do that we need to get out our show message: email your friends; visit the VOS Facebook page; FB our show dates; take posters/coupons for display at your local recreation or community centre.

Please, note that the site of the show is the Floral Hall and not the Van Dusen show building.

Jennifer Fabre is coordinating our advertising effort. If you know of a local newspapers, magazines, stores, garden clubs or newsletters that would attract patrons to our show, please contact Jennifer (jfabre@dundeewealth.com) with such information by March 08.

- ***Central Vancouver Island Orchid Society Show dates Apr 12-14***

We need someone to transport our orchids and to set-up and tear-down the VOS show table. Volunteers, please contact Margaret Prat or Don Harquail (dnd5224@gmail.com).

- ***Trip to Victoria-May 04-05***

We are planning a trip to Victoria/Saltspring Island. In Victoria we plan to visit Mr. Poul Hansen who has graciously offered to provide a tour of his greenhouse. On Saltspring Island, we plan to visit Fraser Thimble Farms that will be presenting

Orchidmania in conjunction with their event “Growing Native Plants”.

One member has signed up for the trip.

A sign-up sheet will be available at our upcoming March & April meetings or contact Margaret Prat, directly.

- ***Garden Works***

Thank you to all of the volunteers who participated at the 3 Garden Works locations. Feedback has been very positive.

- **Culture Class**

Just a reminder that culture classes are presented on the 2nd Monday of each month from 6:30 to 8:30 PM at the back of the Floral Hall.

On February 11th, 12 members attended the presentation on phragmipedium.

On March 11th, there will be a presentation on the repotting of orchids with Ray Sword focusing on the repotting of Disa orchids.

Bring one of your own orchids for repotting (also bring along a pot; medium; and newspapers for table cover).

- **Raffle**

Thank you to Hazel and Barbara for conducting the raffle tonight.

Meeting Adjourned:

8:00 PM

Tonight’s Guest Speaker:

Ms. Jenifer Penny, Program Botanist, BC Conservation
Data Centre, Ministry of Environment

Next month’s speaker: Sam Tsui, Orchid Inn
Topic: TBA

