

Volume 3 , Issue 2

October 2012

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



Orchidflora

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October 15, 2012 : Culture class 6:30 pm- 8:30 pm

Cedar room, VanDusen Gardens. Theme: Vandas and vandaceous orchids (that includes Neofinetias, Phalaenopsis, Ascocendas, etc.). Roak Citroen will show his new potting technique for Vandas, that requires less frequent watering (i.e. you can leave on vacation). Remember, questions on any orchid topic are welcome; bring in your problem plants if necessary.

Upcoming Meeting October 24, 2012

Fraser Valley Orchid Show: Preview night Oct 19 (tickets \$15 by contacting Dianne Gillis <djgillis@shaw.ca>),

October 20-21 at the George Preston Recreation Center, Langley. Visit www.fraservalleyorchidsociety.ca for more details. Your opportunity to see some wonderful orchids and expand your collection too.

Guest Speaker: Peter Lin, He will be speaking on Phalaenopsis
Mark your calendars

November 28, 2012 Christmas Social—more info to come later

Monthly General Meetings: 4th Wednesday of each month

Message from The President

Greetings to those who share the orchid bug!

Well, it is October, and the weather is cooling...reminding us that sun and warmth will soon be a thing of the past as we head into the fall. For all those who took their orchids outside, soon it will be time to think of bringing them back in! I have to confess that I will leave my *Dendrobium kingianum*s outside as long as possible.

We are in the midst of our Bloedel Orchid Show. I want to heartily thank all the volunteers who shared the roster to give some informal talks to the visitors at Bloedel. The latter were enthusiastic about the orchids, even more so once they had smelled *Oncidium Sharry Baby* 'Sweet Fragrance' (thank you Don!!!). And then there is the *Prosthechea radiata* that seduces visitors even more with its intriguing perfume (thank you Hazel!!). Many thanks to all those who loaned their orchids - with your help we managed a varied and interesting assortment of orchids

As I cruise the internet, I ponder the reasons to belong to an orchid society, when there is so much information available on the internet. And for those who have not tried the American Orchid Society website, you are in for a treat. The AOS has developed their website to address culture questions, and there are many useful videos. Check it out! Remember that the AOS is largely run by volunteers, with a tiny paid staff. The AOS is hard at work promoting orchids, and we as members can assist them by spreading the word.

Coming back to my original point, I think there are many good reasons to belong to a society, and to not pursue the hobby as a solitary activity. Coming to monthly meetings is the best venue for seeing orchids "in the flesh". You get to appreciate the whole plant, not just look at pictures of flowers. Photography can never capture the intoxicating fragrance of orchids. Colour, texture, and substance are better appreciated by seeing the "real thing". Culture tips can be shared. And there is the wonderful socialization with people who understand why orchids fascinate you!!!

So I hope to see some of you at the Fraser Valley Show, satisfying your thirst for more orchids beauties!!!

Happy growing!

Margaret Prat President, VOS

Library News

Over the summer (OK – at the August sale) our library underwent a change. It is now a leaner, but hopefully not meaner area. All the books that have not been read prior to this century have found new homes making the rest easier to find. Please have a look – there may be a treasure there that was previously overlooked. August & September issues of the Orchid Magazine are now available to take out. If you have any suggestions that would improve the library further I'd love to hear them. Book reviews of anything you have read recently would also be welcome.

INTRIGUING MASDEVALLIAS (1984) by Jo Kelleher

This book is a love letter to the species *Masdevallia*. The early pages are the introduction and management tips and the rest of the book waxes quite lyrical at times praising the *masdevallia* through words and pictures. This is a fascinating history of each plant including year, discoverer, original homes and growing conditions. Hybrids may spring from these plants but none are included in this book. There are, however, short sections on both *Draculas* and *Dryadellas* as they were included in the *Masdevallia* family until relatively recently. This is a lovely read but if you're looking for hard & fast facts this may not be the book for you.

ORCHIDS OF CUBA (2005)

by Juan A. Llamacho & Julio A. Larramendi

This new book is a new donation to our library. It is a beautiful, informative book outlining the diversity of the terrain and the orchids found in each area have their own chapter. There is excellent general information and a chapter on recently discovered orchids that have yet to be classified. Each orchid is beautifully photographed and labeled with both Latin and common names. All the text is in both English and Spanish. This is a great book for both browsing and closer study.

Submitted by Barbara Cable

Minutes from the Meeting: Wednesday, September 26, 2012

Meeting was called to order: 7:30 PM

President's Report: Margaret Prat

Special Announcement:

Long time VOS member Don Harquail is a finalist on the TV show "Recipe to Riches" airing on the Food Network. The show featuring Don will air on Wednesday, November 21st, at 8 PM.

New Members:

Janis O'Byrne & Nazie Lotfi.

Seventeen (17) new members have joined our society since January 2012. All members are encouraged to provide a current email address in order to ensure receipt of current activities of the society.

August Sale Report:

Revenue: \$721. Expenses: \$348. Net: \$373.

Attendance was down from 2011. This sale provides the society with an important promotional opportunity. Special thanks to Eric Nilsen, Margaret Elvridge, Barbara Cable and all of the volunteers who helped to make the sales event a success.

Fraser Valley Orchid Show

Where: George Preston Recreation Centre, 20699 42nd Ave, Langley, BC.

When:

Preview dinner: Friday October 19th followed by advance opening of the sales area. Cost of the dinner \$15.00 pp.

Judging: Friday October 19th.

Sale days: Saturday, October 20th -9 AM to 5 PM; Sunday, October 21st -10 AM to 4 PM.

Set-up for the show takes place on Thursday, October 18th after noon. We need a volunteer(s) to help with set-up and teardown (Oct 21st). If interested, please contact Margaret at email: margaretprat@shaw.ca

Plants for the show can be delivered to the home of Margaret Prat (3382 W29th Ave, Vancouver) between October 15th -17th. Plants for the show can also be brought to the culture class on October 15th.

For additional show information, preview dinner tickets and to download \$1 off general admission coupons visit the FVOS website (www.fraservalleyorchidsociety.ca).

Culture Class:

On Monday, September 10th, Roak presented on dendrobiums. Twelve (12) people attended.

The next class will take place on Monday, October 15th at 6:30 PM in the floral hall at Van Dusen Gardens. Roak will present on growing and caring for vandaceous orchids.

Remember to enter by the side doors near Oak Street.

Bloedel Conservatory:

The society will be contributing to the orchid show at the Bloedel, which runs for 11 days from Friday, September 28th until Monday, October 8th. This show provides exposure for our society and reaches an audience of like-minded gardeners who may be encouraged to join our society.

Our original call for volunteers didn't succeed in attracting many volunteers. Please contact Margaret (margareprat@shaw.ca) if you are available to help with this event.

Each day is comprised of two shifts: 11 AM to 1:00 PM; and, 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM. You attend our table; focus attention on our orchid display; pass out brochures advertising the society; and, answer any questions that may arise relating to the growing of orchids.

Note: Teardown of the display will take place on the morning of Tuesday, October 9th and those who have contributed orchids may pick them up in the morning at the Bloedel Conservatory or later at Margaret's home.

Executive Meetings and Recommendations from the Executive:

The new executive met for the first time on Tuesday, August 14th at a new downtown location-Jennifer Fabre's offices. This location is conveniently located on bus/LRT/Canada Line routes.

One area of discussion centered on how to make our monthly meetings more appealing to members. Recommendations to improve our meetings include changes to the start time and limiting the duration of the business portion of our meetings. It was recommended that our monthly society meetings start one-half (1/2) hour earlier resulting in a start time of 7:00 PM. It was also suggested that the business portion of our monthly meetings be set at a duration of one-half (1/2) hour.

So, for our next monthly society meeting on Wednesday, October 24th, the doors to the hall will open at 6:00 PM with show table set-up commencing at that time. The business portion of the meeting will commence at 7:00 PM and will be of one-half (1/2) hour duration.

Raffle:

Thank you to contributors to the raffle:

Marilyn Allen-1 plant; Barbara Cable-4 plants; Jeanette Chandler-3 plants; Wayne Riggs-2 plants; Gideon Singer-pots and candles; Hazel Stewart-1 plant.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:00 PM

Guest Speakers:

Tonight's guest speaker was Calvin Wong, Tropical Gardens Orchids who spoke on the topic of: "Semi-hydroponics culture".

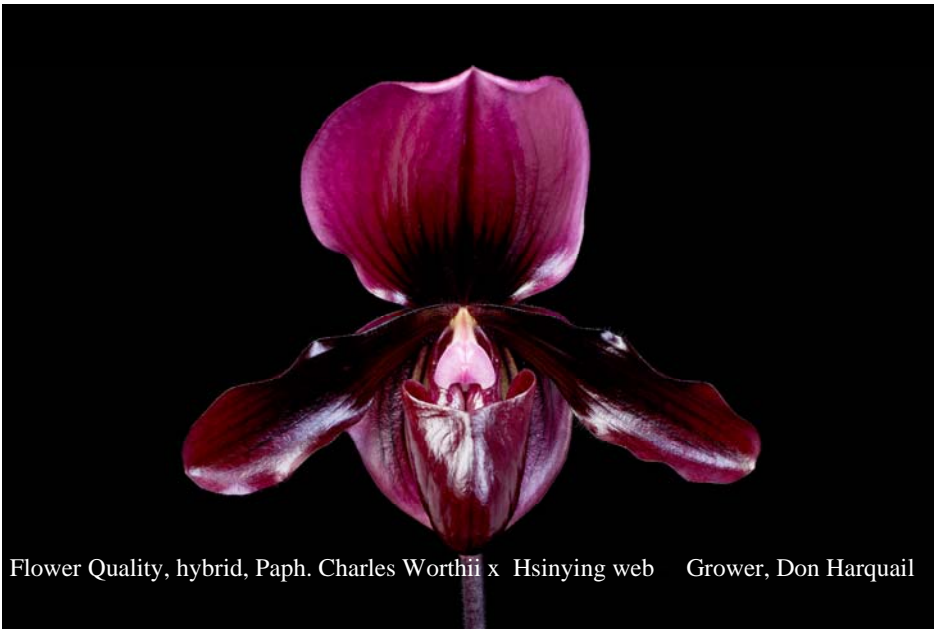
Next month's speaker is Paul Lin who will speak on Phalaenopsis.



Flower Quality, hybrid. Cym. Sunshine Falls "Butterball" Grower, Margaret Pratt



Plant Culture, Species *ceratostylis rubra*
Grower Carla Bischoff



Flower Quality, hybrid, Paph. Charles Worthii x Hsinying web Grower, Don Harquail



Plant Culture, Species, *Pleur sanderana* Grower Carla Bischoff



Upclose flower *baraosella bandroi*
Grower Carla Bischoff

*Every month show off
your Orchids at our
meeting!*

If you would like to
volunteer on the monthly
judging team, just ask !



Plant Culture & Display , Dendrobium magnum Grower, Melanie Gallacher



Plant Culture, baraosella bandroi
Grower Carla Bischoff



Unusual Species Phal tetrapsis
Grower Koichi Nakatani



Unusual Species Laelia fourneir
Grower Koichi Nakatani





Unusual Species *Stanhopea costaricensis*
Grower Pim Myer



Members Choice *Psychopsis papilio f. flava*
Grower Koichi Nakatani



Display *Dendrobium falconeri*
Grower Hoa Truong



**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

Phalaenopsis Are Easy To Grow

Hugo Freed

The following article first appeared in the *American Orchid Society BULLETIN* in May of 1976. It has been edited to reflect modern potting materials availability and nomenclature.



PHALAENOPSIS are certainly the most graceful and in addition are some of the most beautiful and spectacular of all orchids. The name, *Phalaenopsis*, is derived from the Greek and means "resembling a moth." It was so named because the white and pink species, growing on trees, bear many flowers on long, arched sprays and, at twilight, resemble flights of moths. Their natural range is mainly across the lowlands of one of the hottest and moistest parts of the world, stretching from Assam through Burma, the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia. The present day hybrids, when mature, generally bear from twelve to twenty (and quite often more) flowers, attractively spaced, and the spikes have a tendency to branch as they grow older and larger. *Phalaenopsis schilleriana* and *Phal. stuartiana* are two species that produce multitudes of flowers as do their hybrids on strong, mature plants. The small novelty types such as *Phal. sumatrana*, *Phal. bellina/violacea*, and *Phal. lueddemanniana*, etc., bear only a few flowers on much shorter stems. This is also generally true of their hybrids when crossed with each other.



Phal. schilleriana is arguably one of the most beautiful species in the genus.

The plants are monopodial (a single growing stem that gets generally taller over time) in nature and the inflorescence arises on alternate sides between the leaves. As plants grow larger they may produce two flower spikes about the same time and, depending on their genetic background, spikes may be branched on mature plants. When these are through flowering, they can be cut back about one inch above a plump node. A new spike should appear in about six to seven weeks. The first flower should open in approximately another six weeks (most whites and pinks will respire as well as many novelty types but not all). These are the average times recorded by me in a series of experiments wherein I cut back one hundred spikes three years in succession. Of course, not every spike will produce another, although most of them should.

Very often *Phalaenopsis* plants will form many roots. These will grow as long as the plant is pushed up high in the pot, leaving a good supply of aerial roots. A vegetative division can be made by cutting the stump of the plant below these aerial roots and potting the upper plant with these roots inside the compost in another pot. The stub which is left has sufficient roots and should not be disturbed or repotted. Water only enough to keep the plant alive. One or more plantlets should start to form within one or two months, sometimes a little sooner. Watering this bottom section too heavily can easily result in rotting. As soon as the new plantlets are well-rooted, they may be carefully detached and planted. Remember that they are part of the same clone and should bear the same name as the original plant.

I may have dwelt too much on the foregoing details. However, I feel that in order to care for these plants properly one should know something about them. *Phalaenopsis* plants are really very easy to grow if you follow just a few fundamental rules. Of course, due to the fact that light and climatic conditions vary in different areas, I shall deal mainly with the conditions that exist in my growing area which is Malibu, California.

Conditions here are ideal so that we do not have many of the problems that exist elsewhere. For instance, some of the growers in Bangkok, where it is hot and humid most of the time, try to grow phalaenopsis in pots. Even if grown in hanging pots, the pots themselves remain saturated with water and, too often, water remains in the crowns of the plants. Naturally, in this hot and humid climate, bacterial or fungus rot sets in and the plants meet rapid death. With roots exposed to the air (as in nature) and the plants tilted so that no water accumulates in the crown, losses can be held to a minimum.

Here are the details of the important requirement for the growing and care of *Phalaenopsis* plants as practiced by us in southern California.

Potting and Potting Media:

At our orchid range twenty-nine years ago, we potted phalaenopsis in osmunda fiber. At that time it was the most successful media in use in this country. However, osmunda fiber was quite expensive and the labor involved in potting was even more expensive (now - 2010, osmunda is practically impossible to find and other media are used almost exclusively). A few years later, when fir bark was introduced, we tried it and found it to be ideal. We have used it ever since. In most areas it costs less and the potting labor is considerably less. Over the years we have found that we could use ground-up bark in a size mixture from one-quarter inch to three-quarter inch for all size pots from three inch and up. For smaller pots I recommend seedling fir bark of one-eighth inch to one-quarter inch. The plants should be potted in pots one or two sizes larger than the plants because they grow quite rapidly, especially the roots.

The time to repot depends upon the size of the plant, the condition of the bark and the climatic conditions. If the roots have taken over the pot, it is a good idea to repot as soon as feasible. Potting should be avoided, if possible, over the winter time due to the shorter daylight hours and less light intensity resulting in less photosynthesis. Sometimes a plant needs attention at this time and I recommend the following two courses of action:

1. If you can push your thumb or fingers far into the bark, it indicates that the bark has broken down. A good idea is to push down until the bark is firm once again. Then add fresh bark to fill the pot to its previous level. It can be repotted in the spring with completely fresh bark.
2. If the bark is firm and there are aerial roots, you can repot the plant, pot and all, in a large enough pot so that there will be enough room for additional bark around the smaller pot. Some of the aerial roots, if long enough, can be brought down into the larger pot before adding the bark. Also a layer of bark on the bottom of the larger pot is necessary to bring the plant up to the proper

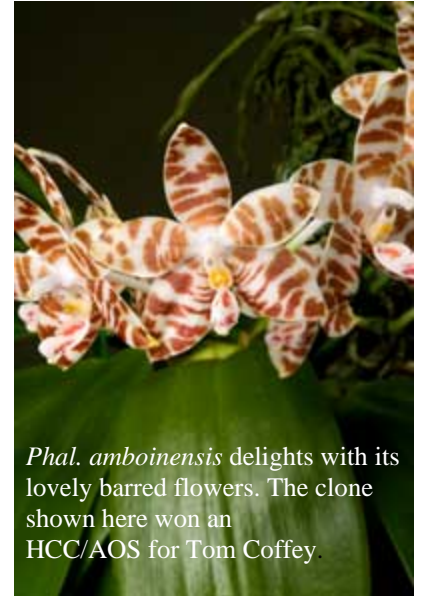
Phalaenopsis plants potted in fir bark grow better and flower sooner from flask in southern California, where ideal weather conditions usually prevail. Of course conditions vary in different parts of the country and other potting media such as osmunda fiber or shredded tree fern, etc., may prove satisfactory in these areas.

Light - Water - Feeding:

These three requirements go hand-in-hand. Although many growers recommend about 1000 foot-candles, I have found that our plants have achieved optimum growth at from 1250 to 1500 foot-candles. Of course with more light we get more photosynthesis. The plants not only can use more water and food; they require it. During cloudy or hazy spells, when our light intensity drops, cut down on water and fertilizer or the roots may rot or burn.

To me the success or failure of growing phalaenopsis is due more to the proper application of light or shade and water than anything else. At Malibu we generally water plants from 4" pots and larger about once a week, smaller pots about twice a week. As long as the drain holes remain open, any excess water will drain out at the bottom, making the fir bark virtually fool proof against excess watering. A good way to tell if a plant needs watering is to pick up a few pots of different sizes individually and feel the weight before watering and after watering. Since water is heavy you should notice a marked difference in weight between a nearly dry pot and a freshly watered one. Of course one must take into consideration a hot, dry wind which will dry out plants in a short time or a long, humid spell that prevents evaporation in the pots.

As to fertilizing, I have found fish emulsion to be ideal for the small collection, but several other water-soluble fertilizers are also available. Only a dilute solution should be used, preferably through a proportioner. All of these fertilizers have directions for their use printed on the container. Please follow directions. Doubling the strength will not double the rate of growth; it can damage or even kill the plant. In Malibu we fertilized our plants from March 1st through September 15th about once every week or two, depending on their condition. From September 15th to March 1st, we fertilized half as often. The longer days give not only longer light but better quality of light coming down through the spectrum, thus encouraging more photosynthesis. The opposite is true of the shorter days which provide poorer quality and intensity of light. In connection with light, some growers keep their Phalaenopsis houses much darker than I recommend, even as dark as 800 or 900 foot-candles. The plants have beautiful, dark green leaves, but they are soft and droopy and the flowers have much less substance.



Phal. amboinensis delights with its lovely barred flowers. The clone shown here won an HCC/AOS for Tom Coffey.

Air Movement and Humidity:

In nature, *Phalaenopsis* plants grow on trees about two-thirds of the way to the top, anchored to the bark of the tree by aerial roots. Around this height, the branches usually thin out sufficiently to allow good air movement and a fair amount of light. Due to the evaporation of surface water, the air is generally sufficiently humid for good growth. To approximate these conditions, I suggest around 70% humidity with gentle air movement provided by fans. A good air movement throughout the entire greenhouse should prevent *Botrytis* from ruining the flowers.

Temperature:

I have found that *phalaenopsis* grow best with minimum temperature around 63-65F at night and maximum day time temperatures of around 75-82F. In areas where night temperatures stay above 65F for any length of time, many plants may not initiate flower spikes during this period. Cooling the greenhouse to 60F or even to 55F at night for two to four weeks should prove quite fruitful in initiation of spikes. These plants can grow reasonably well at night temperatures as low as 55F. However, they will grow much more slowly and take longer for the flowers to open.

Pest Control:

These plants are more pest free than most genera, but I recommend a regular, controlled, preventative schedule to prevent damage from spider mites, thrips, scale, mealy bugs, aphids, ants, etc (Editor's note: While these sorts of prophylactic spraying routines were recommended long ago we now know that they rapidly foster the development of resistance. Pesticides are best applied at the first signs of trouble and two or three different pesticides with different active modes should be used in rotation to avoid the development of insect resistance). Far worse is the damage these insects can do by carrying virus from plant to plant.



Spacing:

Pots should be spaced on a bench to allow adequate ventilation. When seedlings are potted or repotted from smaller sizes, the seedlings are generally small enough so that the pots can be placed on the bench touching each other with enough space between plants to allow good air movement. However, when potted at the beginning of spring, the seedlings grow quite rapidly and very soon begin to grow over the edge of the pot and across the adjoining pots. If they are not then thinned out, the top growth will soon hide the pots from view. This happened quite often in our seedling houses because good help was extremely hard to find and we grew so many seedlings that we did not have enough bench space. Imagine seedlings repotted in 3" pots reaching an overall leaf spread of 6" to 8" and those in 4" pots reaching an overall leaf spread of 8" to 12" in about three or four months of good growing weather. This caused us three problems. First the plants did not receive adequate ventilation and occasionally we lost a few plants from rot. Second, the heavy covering of leaves would sometimes divert the water from some plants and they would dry up and die from lack of water. Third, and the most annoying, the roots would grow out over the edge of the pot or through the drain holes and continue to grow along the bench or into the adjoining pots. When I would reach over to pick up one pot, I usually found that I was pulling up several rows of pots along with the pot I wanted. I had to cut roots all around so that I could lift the one pot freely. Imagine the trouble in trying to fill a few orders involving even a few seedlings. For the hobbyist with limited bench space, I suggest spacing your seedlings far enough apart, three-inch pots with about three-inch spacing between pots, four-inch, with about four-inch spacing, and five-inch with about five-inch spacing. All *phalaenopsis* seedlings should flower in no larger than five-inch pots and many will flower in four-inch and even in three-inch pots.

Modern hybrids such as *Phal.* Brandy Parfait have won the hearts of a whole new generation of orchid lovers. This is 'Plantation' AM/AOS.

There is a saying that orchids "thrive on neglect." Nothing can be further from the truth. Most orchids can tolerate a certain amount of neglect, some more than others. But I know of no orchid that will not do better if properly cared for. (Editor's note: while orchids do not really thrive on complete neglect the intent of that axiom is that plants should not be babied to death and really applies to overwatering.)

Talking to Plants:

Do you know of anyone that claims that he or she talks to their plants and that they grow and flower better? Well, I do. I have had customers that not only talk to them but give them individual pet names. I have read articles about plants responding even to what a man was thinking about them. However, I still have to be convinced that any plant has a brain, auditory nerves, etc. I believe that those who talk to plants are successful for an entirely different reason. They add a secret ingredient to their care of the plants - love. I don't just mean a love for plants and flowers; I mean that kind of love that looks on each plant they own as a distinct living entity with its own individual "personality." They rejoice when it is growing well, they grieve when it is not. In loving plants in this way, they are bound to be much more observant of their "children" and thus will notice almost immediately any changes in the health of the plant and take appropriate action.

I have left the following to the last because it is fairly new and can be of extreme importance. This is the growing of *phalaenopsis* and other orchids mounted on slabs of cork bark and hung from rafters in the greenhouse or affixed to posts or beams or greenhouse walls. They are easy to water and fertilize by spraying the roots, although better success may be attained by also spraying the leaves. This eliminates repotting and all compost problems. Dr. George Kennedy, who lives only a few miles away, has been gradually converting his many thousands of plants to cork bark and he is almost through with this project. His plants grow better and bloom faster, including some difficult-to-flower ones. The January-February, 1976 issue of THE ORCHID DIGEST contains his article titled "Growing Orchids as Epiphytes." His success has been phenomenal. If a copy of this issue is not available to you, I suggest that you order one from THE ORCHID DIGEST.

I have retired from Arthur Freed Orchids and no longer have any connection with them. Where I have used the words "I" or "we," it alludes to the twenty-eight years I was in charge.

I wish to emphasize once again that there are no fixed and rigid rules for growing phalaenopsis. I have tried to give you a picture of the way we grew these plants in southern California. One must vary these conditions to suit any area where different conditions prevail. Phalaenopsis are really easy to grow. A few simple rules, a little common sense, a good observing eye and, most of all, patience, should be all the tools one needs. The results are well worth it. Remember that even the most complex *Phalaenopsis* hybrid is only, comparatively, a few steps away from the species, and species must be extremely hardy to survive in the jungle. I maintain that it takes a genius to kill a Phalaenopsis plant. Please don't be a genius! 29500 Heathercliff Road, #277, Malibu, California 90265.

Published on AOS.org

Messages from Members

Dependable Person to Water Plants: I am looking for a reliable and LONG TERM person to water my collection of orchids (mostly small to mid- sized plants) a few times a year. We usually travel for 2-4 weeks at a time, mainly in May, September and December. We live in the North shore, close to the Lion's Gate Bridge. I do not have a greenhouse so all watering is done in my bathtub with a sprayer! Please email me at jfabre@dundeewealth.com if you are interested and let me know what kind of remuneration you are looking for. Jennifer Fabre

Tune and Watch Don Harquail !

Recipe to Riches is a competition reality series that gives amateur Canadian cooks an opportunity to share their most delicious, home-grown recipes with the entire country and compete for a grand prize worth \$250,000.

Recipes are judged based on taste, presentation, originality, the story behind the recipe and its' suitability to become a mass produced grocery store product. Each category winning dish is made available in select Loblaw banner stores across the country days after the winning, giving Canadians an opportunity to try it for themselves, and vote for their ultimate favourite recipe.

At the conclusion of seven episodes, the category winners return for showdown' grand finale. Canadians will then have an opportunity to vote for the 'best of the best' and decide who wins the \$250,000 grand prize.

I made it in the top (3) of the Candies/Chocolates category. My episode will air November 21st. Look up my bio details at the web link below. It was so much fun.

<http://www.foodnetwork.ca/recipe-to-riches/season2/biolanding.html>

The first promo video of Recipe to Riches Season 2 just came out . You will find a link for it below. The first one is on Youtube, the second one is the same but on Facebook. It's now a commercial on the Foodnetwork. If you have Facebook you can follow me, just send me a friend request, I am now also on Twitter under DGH14.

The video is a lot of fun. Please share with anyone that you know.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vhwoW7gP06k&feature=youtu.be&hd=1>

<http://www.facebook.com/ricipetoriches>

Any members that would like to post a note in Orchiflora, please contact Chris Ostenstad costenstad@shaw.ca before the fifth of the month.
