

*Vancouver Orchid Society since 1946*

**Volume 3 , Issue 4**

**January 2013**

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

# *O rchidflora*



## ***Executive/Board of Directors***

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Membership Committee: Patrick Milligen

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COC/AOS Rep: Chris Ostenstad

Web Master: Gideon Singer

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**Please send your contributions to:**

[costenstad@shaw.ca](mailto:costenstad@shaw.ca)

[www.vancouverorchidsociety.ca](http://www.vancouverorchidsociety.ca)

**January 14, 2013 Culture class** 6:30 pm- 8:30 pm  
Cedar room, VanDusen Gardens. Repotting session. Bring in your orchids & potting materials for repotting. This will be a hands on session. All other orchids questions are also welcome.

## **Upcoming Meeting : January 21, 2013**

January Speakers will be a panel of members addressing the question of light & growing. Come out and enjoy this topic, by VOS very own members;

Patrick Milligen, Don Harquail, Carla Bischoff and  
Eugene Banziger

**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**

## *Announcements*

### Time to Renew your membership for 2013!

At the January meeting, we will be asking members to renew. If you don't plan on attending the January meeting, we would appreciate if you could download the membership renewal form from the website and send in your \$30 annual by mail. Many thanks to those who have already done so.

### Orchid Shows Coming up !

**Victoria Orchid Show**, Preview night March 1,; March 2&3 open to public

**Vancouver Orchid Show**, Preview night March 22; March 23 &24 open to public

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

February's Speaker will be Jenifer Penny, a conservation officer who will discuss our indigenous orchids ! <http://www.geog.ubc.ca/biodiversity/eflora/>

### *Message from The President*

Dear Fellow Orchid Lovers,

As I compose this, I am 35,000 feet in the air, on my way back from Montreal to Vancouver. At my feet is a new orchid, purchased when I visited the Jardin Botanique de Montreal. When you have the orchid bug, some objects become irresistible, like orchids that grow well for you.

So for every orchid lover out there, may the coming year provide you with orchids that make strong shoots, new roots, and lots of flowers.

And ...if you are still looking to find what grows well for you, come and join us in culture class where all orchid questions are encouraged. The January 14th (2013!) class in the Cedar Room will be about repotting (bring what you would like repotted, plus your medium and pot). This will be a hands on class, but of course, all manner of questions are answered (to the best of our abilities).

Our Christmas social was a great success. Many members expressed how much they enjoyed themselves, and how they would like every monthly meeting to be like this. Conviviality, good food, and interesting orchids make for a successful evening. A big Thank you to all those who donated generously to the auction. And thanks are due to Don Harquail who helped make the show table interesting with responses from the members who contributed their plants. I want to express also my gratitude to all those wonderful elves who helped to set up and/ or take down for the Christmas social. Without you, it would not have had the festive look that was part of the charm of the event.

It is no secret that I am still looking for a volunteer to help design our display at our upcoming Annual show on March 23-24. Generally the person in charge has a vision of how they can arrange all those disparate orchids to make a harmonious picture. You will of course get help from other members....

Again, it would like to say that the coffee and tea will not be ready at our meetings unless I can find someone to replace Terri, who will be absent from the society for some time. No experience necessary! A great way to meet all the VOS members...On a very happy note, the website redevelopment is proceeding apace. Many thanks to all those working behind the scenes on this project!!!

Again, Happy New Year, and may 2013 be filled with lovely flowers ...

# *Photos from the Christmas Party*



As always, great food,  
lovely company and don't forget the  
dessert !

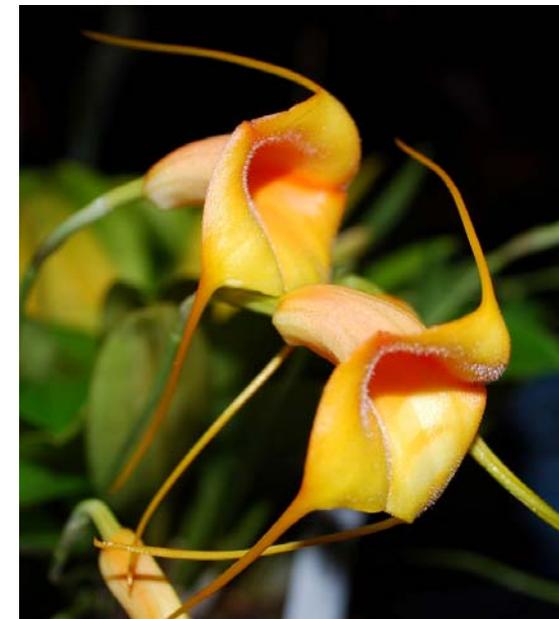
On the Left  
Don Harquail's "Recipe to Riches"..  
**Triple Nut toffee**



Left :Margaret presenting Radina with her **Floral Judging Certificate**

Below: The Evenings Show table





Thank you to everyone who brought in plants for the Christmas show table, these are just a few flowers I was able to photograph. ~ *Chris*

## Enigmatic Oncidiums -

AOS articles

The *Oncidium luteopurpureum*<sup>1</sup> Complex — Text and photos by Stig Dalstrom

*Oncidium luteopurpureum* was described by Professor Lindley on page 16 in his *Orchidaceae Lindenianae* (1846). It was a plant discovered by Linden a couple of years earlier in the forests of Quindio at an elevation of 8,860 feet (2,700 m) in the Central Cordillera in Colombia. Since Lindley only saw a dried specimen, he interpreted the colors of the flowers as being yellow and purple, hence the name. However, in a living state the flowers of this variable species are almost exclusively yellowish with brownish spots and markings. Approximately 20 years later, this species became better known through the introduction of living plants by various collectors. Plants were collected both in the Central and the Eastern Cordillera where this species still is fairly common. As in many other cases, the growers discovered a number of "different" plants that had been gathered together with *Onc. luteopurpureum* and that subsequently were described as separate species. But as the taxonomical knowledge increased with the flow of freshly collected plants, growers and taxonomists realized that many of these "species" merely represented the natural variation of a widely distributed and variable taxon. There were also several suspected natural hybrids discovered this way.

These discussions can be studied in several contemporary publications, such as *Reichenbach's Xenia Orchidaceae* (1868, 1874), *The Gardeners Chronicle* (1882) and Veitch's *A Manual of Orchidaceous Plants* (1887-94). It is clearly stated that reasonable "borders" between the many forms of this species are impossible to maintain, and that they should be regarded as subspecies varieties or "garden forms" only. Some are more distinct than others.



This smaller plant of *Onc. luteopurpureum*, which is found near Medellin, Colombia, is known in cultivation as "*Oncidium sceptrum*"



*Oncidium luteopurpureum* from Fusagasugain the Eastern Cordillera.

This information is important and useful today, considering the enormous number of plants that must have been available in the nurseries at the time. If the growers and botanists then could see how these plants graded into each other, there is no reason to doubt their words today.

Despite that Reichenbach and others who worked with these plants apparently agreed on lumping them into *Onc. luteopurpureum*, this decision is not entirely supported today. Bockemühl (1989) insists that one of these forms, *Oncidium sceptrum* Rchb.f. and Warsz., is a distinct species, not even closely related to the "superspecies" *Onc. luteopurpureum*.

Bockemühl claims that this "species" lacks close relatives due to the "short" column. All other characteristics pointing toward *Onc. luteopurpureum* are ignored.

But let us go back to the type description of *Onc. sceptrum* in Bonplandia (1854). Here, Reichenbach declares that the flowers are slightly larger than *Onc. luteopurpureum*. Furthermore, there is no designated collector or collection number in the description, only the country of origin (Colombia = New Grenada). Bockemühl believes that the type specimen (which Reichenbach used for his description), is in the Herbarium at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, labeled "*O. sceptrum*" R. 37. Warsz. The problem is that these flowers do not show any particular differences from the flowers of the type of *Onc. luteopurpureum*.

However, not until 1868 did the form that we today call "*Oncidium sceptrum*" become known through live plants. Wallis, who frequently collected near Medellin, managed to send plants to Linden's orchid establishment in Belgium. This information is submitted by Veitch, who writes in his *Manual of Orchidaceous Plants*, 2, p. 46: "*Oncidium luteopurpureum* var. *sceptrum*, Flowers smaller with broader segments and a more regular contour."

In other words, we do not know for sure which specimen Reichenbach used as a type for *Onc. sceptrum*. If it is the Warszewicz specimen labeled "R.37.," the collection site remains a mystery. Finally it does not look like the smaller-and-rounder form, known today as that "species" but rather as a "normal" form of *Onc. luteopurpureum*.

In 1989, I had the privilege to see some plants of the so-called "*Oncidium sceptrum*" in the wild. It is still fairly common in the vicinity of Medellin, where it grows in wetter areas as an epiphyte or terrestrially along the road cuts.

Despite that very little forest remains in the area, I was fortunate to find enough plants in bloom to get an idea of its natural variation. In some cases, the plants were smaller, with small round flowers and sometimes they were bigger, carrying larger and more stellate (starlike) flowers that looked like the supposed type of *Onc. sceptrum* as well as *Onc. luteopurpureum*. It was also interesting to see how the shape and size of the flowers change in cultivation, depending on the health of the plant. My conclusion is that this is nothing but a geographical form of *Onc. luteopurpureum* or at most a subspecies.

Dealing with oncidiums, it is risky using a single morphological feature such as the length of the column, as taxonomically significant. These notoriously changeable plants are not to be trusted. For instance, the length of the column can vary in many species despite that other features are the same. In *Oncidium kegeljani* E. Morren (the *Onc. epidendroides* complex), there are two groups of plants that differ only in the length of the column. Whether this difference indicates the existence of separate forms or subspecies, or merely the fact that I have measured large and small flowers of the same taxon, remains to be investigated. It is like classifying people shorter than 6 feet as one species and those who are taller as another species (intermediate forms are "natural hybrids"). We could do it, but it would hardly reflect a natural classification in my mind.



*Oncidium luteopurpureum* as published in *Lindenia*; Vol. I, plate LVIII

Reichenbach, together with Linden, also described *Oncidium schlimii*, in the same year and in the same publication as *Onc. sceptrum* (1854). The plants had been collected by Schlim (nr. 405) near Ocana in the Eastern Cordillera during his trip in 1846-52. Reichenbach later considered this "species" as a "variety" of *Oncidium luteopurpureum*. A second specimen of *Onc. schlimii* can be found in the Herbarium at Kew (Schlim 1024). It is mounted on the same sheet as a specimen labeled "*Oncidium schlimii*, Warszewicz, New Grenada."

Bockemühl treats *Onc. schlimii* as a synonym of "*Oncidium sceptrum*," probably due to the smaller flowers which are similar in size. But again, when we study the type specimen a little bit closer we get another picture.

But there is another dubious species that needs to be mentioned first. *Oncidium tripudians* Rchb.f. and Warsz. was also described in *Bonplandia* (1854). It was based on a plant collected by Warszewicz during his journey to South America around 1850. He also sent live plants to Linden's nursery, where they flowered a few years later. Somehow the type of *Onc. tripudians*, which is in the Reichenbach herbarium in Vienna, was believed to have come from Peru. Since nothing similar has been reported from Peru, only from northeastern Colombia, I assume that the labels were "mixed" somewhere along the way (especially since we know that Warszewicz was in Colombia when he collected the "*schlimii*" specimen and the supposed type of *Onc. sceptrum* var. *sceptrum*, at Kew).

So how did this mess get started? Permitting myself some speculation, it appears that Warszewicz and Schlim collected the same species, probably in the same area at about the same time. Since it is a common practice among collectors to spread botanical discoveries to several herbaria, Warszewicz and Schlim sent their inflorescences both to Kew and to Reichenbach (and possibly to other herbaria as well). Reichenbach described the Schlim specimen from Ocafia as *Onc. schlimii*, and the Warszewicz specimen, which lacked information about its origin but was believed to have come from Peru, as *Onc. tripudians*. At Kew they were both determined as *Onc. schlimii* and ended up on the same sheet.

Why Peru then? Well, Warszewicz actually visited Ecuador and Peru during his journey, where many of his *Oncidium* discoveries were made. Possibly it was assumed that *Oncidium tripudians* was collected there as well.

This latter name has been used for this species until today and should therefore be used, while *Oncidium schlimii* becomes the synonym.

*Oncidium tripudians* has since only been collected sparsely in the northeastern part of Colombia at elevations around 6,560 to 9,840 feet (2,000 to 3,000 m). It apparently occurs on both sides of the Eastern Cordillera. Morphologically it has a very peculiar shape and appears like something in between the *Onc. epidendroides*, *Onc. cristatum* and the *Onc. cruentum* complexes, with characteristics such as the rectangular but fringed column wings and the large and radiating colored keels on the lip.

Bockemühl compares it with *Oncidium spectatissimum* Lindl. (the *Onc. epidendroides* complex), while I would rather place it in the *cristatum* complex, to which *Oncidium luteopurpureum* also must be affiliated. However, since I have very little personal experience with *Oncidium* plants from this part of Colombia, I admit that I am speculating here. The fact that *Onc. tripudians* always has been regarded as "rare and variable" (a suspicious combination) leaves space for surprises.

Maybe it simply is the northernmost form of the *Onc. cristatum* complex, which otherwise seems to be absent there, or perhaps an independent natural link that ties the different species complexes together.

## Watering Know-how

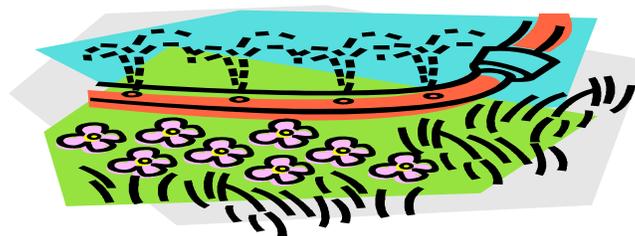
## Article from AOS



More orchids are killed by incorrect watering than by any other reason. There are two separate components to proper watering; when and how. The vast majority of orchids grown by hobby growers are naturally found on trees above the ground where the light is more plentiful. These plants (epiphytes) are adapted to having their roots exposed to light and air so in addition to water, orchid roots need air

### When do I water?

Orchids should be watered just as they begin to dry out. This rule applies to all orchids with slight variations depending on whether your plant has the ability to store water or not. Orchids such as cattleyas and oncidiums should be allowed to dry completely between waterings while orchids such as phalaenopsis and paphiopedilums that have no water storage organs should be watered before dryness occurs.



There's is no magic formula for how often to water. This is because your growing area is different from anyone else's. Temperature, humidity, air movement, potting mix (type and age), and light levels all play a role. There are several ways to determine when a potted orchid is almost dry: 1) the surface of the potting mix will appear dry when the potting mix is moss; 2) dry pots will feel lighter when lifted. After a few waterings, you will be able to tell by the weight of the pot whether or not it is time to water again. If in doubt, wait a day. 3) clay pots feel dry; 4) a pencil or wooden skewer inserted into the potting mix will come out almost dry. If in doubt, a finger inserted into the potting mix is perhaps the best tool to determine the moisture content of the potting mix; it causes no harm to the plant. A bark mix dries out faster than a moss potting mix.

It is best to water your plant in the morning to give the moisture on the leaves time to dry during the day. If any water remains in the crown (where the leaves join in the center) use a paper towel to blot the water to avoid crown rot.

You should water more frequently when the temperatures are warm and decrease watering when temperatures are cool. Keep in mind that temperatures close to the window on a windowsill will be colder or hotter than your general house temperature. Avoid having the plant in the direct line of the heat or air conditioning ducts.

### How do I water?

When orchids are watered, they should be watered copiously. Place your plant into the sink and let the water run freely from the drainage holes for about a minute. Do not use salt-softened or distilled water. Allow the plant to drain completely. This is an opportunity to examine how the potting mix behaves. If you cannot pour water rapidly through the pot, the potting mix is too dense and you run the risk of starving the roots for air. If you see finely divided material that looks like coffee grounds in the water coming from the drainage holes, your potting mix is breaking down and it's time to repot into fresh mix.

Finally a couple of notes about mounted plants and plants grown in baskets without additional potting mix. Avoid dunking the plants in buckets of water. This practice very easily spreads diseases. Two short waterings a few minutes apart are much more effective than one long watering. Once water runs off the plant, the roots will have absorbed essentially all they can at that time and excess water simply runs off to the ground. Water your plants and then a few minutes later water them again, always beginning with the first plant you watered. This allows time for the roots of the last plant watered to finish absorbing water before you wet them again. Roots that are completely saturated will be a solid color while those that are not will appear mottled.

The COC on Facebook October 04, 2012

The Canadian Orchid Congress and Montreal/Toronto Judging Centers have launched a new Facebook site under the name "ORCHID JOURNAL".



This initiative was developed to enhance and compliment local society efforts in maintaining information sites and is intended to be used as an orchid community bulletin board. Your orchid society and its members can now post directly to this site - pictures, meeting notices, recognition of special volunteers' contributions, show publicity, etc.

If your Society maintains a Facebook site, please 'like' us at [Orchid Journal](#) and your site will get the latest in updates from the COC and your orchid community.

Please contact me if you have any questions and/or suggestions!

Marlene Young, Facebook Administrator, ORCHID JOURNAL  
Email: [marlyoung@hotmail.com](mailto:marlyoung@hotmail.com)

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### *Messages from Members*

For Sale: Metal Halide light for sale. Inquire with Chris either by email [costenstad@shaw.ca](mailto:costenstad@shaw.ca) or call 604-937-3810

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

A HAPPY  
NEW YEAR

To Everyone !

# Vancouver Orchid Society

PO Box 42025, Marpole PRO  
Vancouver, BC, V6P 6S6

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM

Annual membership fee is **\$30.00 per household** (one or two adults); **\$20 for Students** – from January to December  
(**\$15.00 from July through December**)

NEW MEMBER

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Membership Number: \_\_\_\_\_

(Primary Member) Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

(Co-member) Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Province/State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal/Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

### Payment Method

Cash

Cheque

please make cheque payable to: **The Vancouver Orchid Society**

### Permission to publish the following in Membership Directory?

E-mail

Phone #

Neighborhood: \_\_\_\_\_

*The membership directory will be provided to current members for society business only as per the Personal Information Privacy Act.*

### Newsletter

*Our monthly newsletters in full colour will be e-mailed monthly and are also available through our website at [www.vancouverorchidsociety.ca](http://www.vancouverorchidsociety.ca).  
Newsletters will only be postal mailed upon request.*

### Volunteering

We are a volunteer organization. All members are encouraged and expected to volunteer at least once a year. Please indicate the areas which you will be able to assist:

Plant Sales

Raffle

Membership

Library

Kitchen

Show Planning

Show Setup

Show Security

Show Admissions

Show Displays

*How much time can you volunteer (approximate)?*

2 hours a year

2 hours a month

2 hours a week

anytime, just ask me!

### Please tell us a little bit about what kind of orchids you grow and how you grow them.

*What types of orchids do you grow (or want to grow)?*

Cattleya Alliance

Oncidium Alliance

Phalaenopsis Alliance

Vanda Alliance

Dendrobiums

Paphiopedilums

Phragmipedium

Cyripedium

Cymbidiums

Miltoniopsis

Temperate (outdoor) orchids

Others

*Where do you grow them?*

Windowsill

Under Lights

Greenhouse

Indoor (climate control)

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

*How many orchids do you have?*

under 20

20-50

51-100

101-200

over 200

What kind of programs or speakers are you interested in seeing?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAW AMENDMENT

### **Motion to Amend Bylaw Number 3b**

This item was missed at the Annual General Meeting (AGM)-July 27, 2012.

The motion was brought forward at the Christmas Event on Wednesday November 28, 2012. In excess of 50 people attended the meeting. The majority established the quorum.

### **Current Bylaw Number 3b**

“Board of Directors Meetings - (“Board Meeting”) shall be held at such time and place as recommended by the Board and approved by the membership, provided that at least one Board Meeting is held in each calendar month. The Society shall not be required to hold a Board Meeting during the months of July and August.”

### **Proposed amendment:**

### **New Bylaw Number 3b**

“Board of Director’s Meetings – (“Board Meeting”) shall be held at such time and place as recommended by the Board, and the number of meetings shall be at the discretion of the Board members but no fewer than five (5) meetings shall be held in a fiscal year.”

The proposed amendment was introduced by the President, Margaret Prat who led the discussion noting that the amendment reflects current practice.

### **Motion to amend Bylaw Number 3b as proposed:**

**Moved:** Margaret Prat. **Seconded:** Wayne Riggs.

### **Discussion.**

**(Show of hands vote.)**

**Carried.**