

February
2007

The Orchid Grower



Madison Orchid Growers' Guild

NEXT MEETING FEBRUARY 18, SPEAKER TBA

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Orchid Quest is just around the corner. Being around such fantastic blooming orchids is an exhilarating experience. It is like going to the tropics for a day in the middle of winter. It is a grand way to beat "the winter blues." Much time and preparation has gone into the show. Thanks to all of you who have done the preliminary work. I look forward to working with you at Exhibition Hall at the Alliant Center the first weekend in February. Cross your fingers that the weather is kind to us that weekend.

Meeting Dates

- February 18 – Atrium
- March 25 – Atrium
- April 22 – Meeting Room
- May 20 – Atrium
- June Picnic – TBA

Up-coming Events

- Orchid Quest, February 3-4, 2007
- March 23-25, 2007 32nd Illowa Orchid Society Spring Show
- April 27-29, 2007, Illinois Orchid Society Spring Show in conjunction with Spring Mid-America Orchid Congress
- February 2 – March 2, 2008, 19th World Orchid Congress, Miami, FL

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Jill Hynum and I attended a meeting of the Madison Park Commission at Olbrich on January 10. There was a tremendous turnout and the room was packed with many people. It seems that in December 2006 Olbrich voted to change their rules for garden clubs using their facility. Some of the changes did not apply to OGG (such as paying Olbrich staff after 8 PM). However, regarding plant sales, they proposed that groups pay Olbrich 20% of gross sales of more than \$2000. Another change was charging for use of the kitchen to prepare food billed at \$25.00/hour.

I was able to tell them that last year OGG took in \$2615.05 from the Spring Sale but the orchids cost us \$1902. Thus our net profit was \$713.05. If we had paid 20% of \$2615.05 that would have been \$523, leaving us only \$190.

The end result of the meeting was that the Park Commission was sympathetic to the garden clubs because Olbrich did not talk to us before the changes were made. They did not come to a vote but instead tabled the discussion, giving back the proposal to the Olbrich Board to meet with the societies and iron things out.

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MAOC: Don Fago (2007)

Orchid Digest: Jill Hynum (2007)

Submit your photos to be included in the newsletter. Every month we want to include a gallery of photos to enjoy. Email your photos to Svetlana (grigkot@gmail.com) and Denise (jrbaylis@tds.net)

I encourage anyone in the OGG who is not a member of Olbrich Gardens to seriously considered joining. Not only does membership get you in free to many of the functions at Olbrich and 10% off in the Gift Shop, membership helps ensure that Olbrich Gardens will be around for many years to come because it will be financially solvent.

To be continued, Judy Stevenson

ORGANIZING YOUR BOOKS



Orchid lovers have been known to buy a book or two on the subject. I recently stumbled across a tool that can help you keep track of the books you have. It's called The Library Thing. It's an online cataloging tool available at www.librarything.com. The best part is for most books you only need to enter the ISBN or title and Library Thing will pull up records from the Library of Congress, Amazon.com and more. You select the record that matches your book and it gets entered into your library. You can associate tags with your records that can be anything you want – subject headings like “orchids” or physical locations like “living room bookshelf”.

You can enter 200 books for free or pay a fee of \$10 a year to enter an unlimited amount. You can mark your collection as public (if you want to talk to other people about books) or private. Of course if you want an absolute guarantee of privacy, an online tool probably isn't for you. To read more about Library Thing, see the Wall Street Journal article at <http://tinyurl.com/fk7s3>. Oh yeah, you can use it for other types of books too.

Speaking of orchid books, as some of you may know, AOS no longer directly sells books. They entered into a deal with Amazon.com and with OrchidsBooks.com. However, if you go to the AOS website www.orchidweb.org/aos, click on Amazon or OrchidsBooks, and make a purchase, AOS will get a portion of the proceeds.

Jill Hynum
AOS Rep

THE ACCIDENTAL ORCHIDIST

Perhaps some of you remember enjoying the photographs of Paphs by Rich Narf in a previous edition of the newsletter. I asked him to tell us how he came to have so many beautiful plants and to take such wonderful photographs of them.
Denise Baylis

I'm afraid that I am not the one to write about paphs since I have only been really serious about orchids for the past four years. I used to buy the "pretty one," take it home, and three months later it would commit suicide!

The story behind all my present plants: About four years ago my daughter, who also grows orchids, shamed me into a friendly contest to grow the best orchid, hence my serious present interest. While visiting her in Winston-Salem, NC about two years ago, she mentioned a grower that was going out of business so we went to check things out. There were mature species paphs by the hundreds at this place, and dirt cheap. I came home with 35 plants and have since wished that I had had the forethought to take more. Most of these plants were in need of repotting and had moderate to serious root rot. The plants were all repotted after the roots were cleaned up, in some cases there were very little root material left and the plants had to be wired into the pot.

Winter – The plants are kept in a basement room containing two 4 x 6 x 6.5 ft tall plastic "Green Houses" typically sold at Farm & Fleet or Menard's for a cost of \$40-\$60. Each green house has 16 40watt fluorescent tubes on the ceiling above it. Three of these lights are grow lights and the remainder are cool white. The light duration and timing is controlled by time clocks. Routine



watering is done with misters attached to tubing (1/2 gallon/min) suspended above the plants. I am presently running 12 misters per Green house. Time clocks control valves which disperse very diluted 20-20-20 in water three or four times per week. Excess water is captured in plastic storage container bottoms and adds humidity to the setup. The floor is covered with a heavy plastic sheet and is dammed around the outside by a 2 x 4" board under the plastic and lying against the outside of the 'house'.



Schoenorchis fragrans

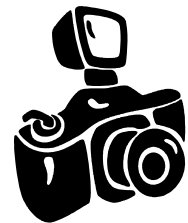
Summer - All the plants are moved outside to the west side of the house. They are under a canopy and are located under the drip line of the canopy. Some of the miniatures I water as needed, the others I only water if the rains don't come. I leave them out there until I can't stand the thought of them freezing, which is usually sooner than they need to come in. After a year of care they are doing quite well and I expect some good blooms in the future.

I have been photographing flowers, birds and insects for many years. I began while in high school with a three year stint as school photographer for the newspaper and annual. I had my first real flower experience in the alpine meadows of Rocky Mountain National Park and the Grand Tetons while still in high school. Too bad the old film dyes didn't last; I threw out most

of those photos years ago. I've gone completely digital now – it sure beats all those hours in the darkroom!

I have two cameras I use routinely. For quick shots and no heavy carrying I have a Nikon E995 Coolpix. (They also make the 4500 Coolpix which is the upgrade to the 995). This camera is unique in that it is articulated in the middle. This allows you to point the lens at the subject and turn the view screen to a position for easy viewing. For example, if you are on your knees taking a picture of a frog, you can rotate the screen in an up position for easy viewing. Both of these cameras should be easily found in large camera stores as used. The cost, just guessing, is around \$200 to \$300.

My flash is mounted off to the side and diffused or bounced off the ceiling. I do not use the built-in flash. My favorite and heavy hitter is a Nikon D70s digital outfitted with a 70-200 f2.8 macro focusing zoom lens made by Sigma. I use a right angle viewer attached to the view finder and a Sigma EF-500 flash either on the camera or held off the camera as deemed necessary. The flash is covered with a diffuser for soft lighting. The camera is usually operated in manual mode or aperture priority mode so I can control the focus distance (i.e. depth of field) and fuzz-out the background, the same principles that are employed on portrait photos. (Hint: cover your flash with a diffuser.) I process my photos as little as possible using Photoshop Elements, Ver. 5.



-- Rich Narf (Photographs by Rich Narf)

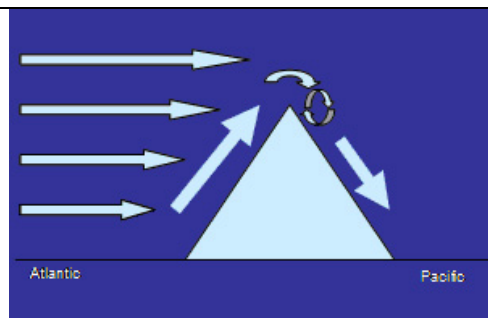


BOTANICAL TOURISM: THE GEOGRAPHY OF COSTA RICA AND BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Costa Rica is justly famous for its biological diversity, which includes more than 1400 species of orchids. While this pales in comparison to Colombia or Ecuador, it is a remarkable species count for a country whose surface area is small (51,000 sq. km., about the size of West Virginia) and whose dry land is only about 3 million years old. This orchid diversity is partly due to the wide range of biomes available in Costa Rica, which in turn reflect the mountainous nature of the country and its situation as a land bordered by two oceans. For instance, within Costa Rica, annual rainfall may vary from a low of 18 inches per year at one location to 25 feet per year in another location.

It is a combination of geography and geology that produces such habitat diversity in such a small area. A major geographic climatic influence is the equatorial current in the Atlantic, which flows from east to west, driving warm surface water from Africa across the Atlantic Ocean until it encounters the east coast of South America. In the northern hemisphere summer, the tapered coastline of South America shunts this massive flow of warm ocean water and its accompanying winds into the Caribbean Sea; the isthmus that is Costa Rica and Panama blocks this current and forces it northward, ultimately through the straits of Florida. (In the Northern Hemisphere winter, the Equatorial Current moves further south, resulting in a cooler Caribbean Sea and a distinct 'dry season' in Costa Rica and the rest of Central America.

The mountainous geography of Costa Rica itself is the result of its geological position at the collision boundary of the Cocos and Caribbean Plates. As the Caribbean Plate is being driven under the Cocos Plate, volcanism and uplifting forces produce a mountainous terrain.

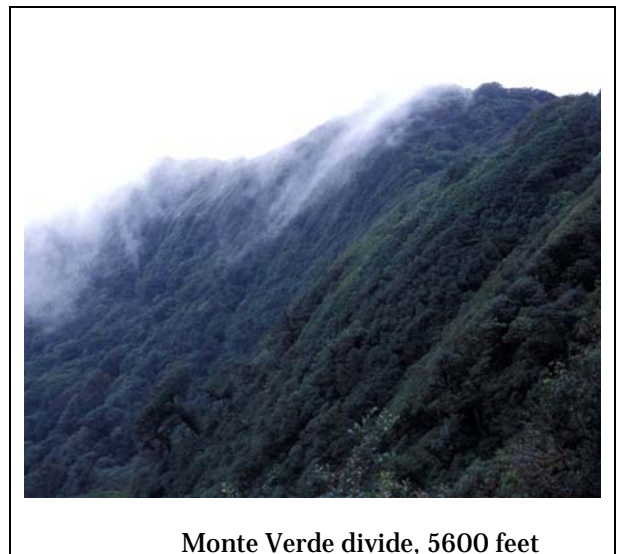


Warm, moist air is forced upward at the mountains into the cooler air mass at higher elevations. As the air rises it expands further cooling it, forming clouds and rain which falls most heavily on the eastern slope

Mountains run virtually the entire length of Costa Rica, reaching elevations of over 12,000 ft. At some locations the entire width of the country, from the Caribbean coast to the Pacific coast is less than 60 miles, yet within that distance there are mountains more than 10,000 ft. high. So Costa Rica is not just a barrier for ocean currents, but also a barrier for the warm, moist winds traveling with them. These tropical winds move inland from the east coast and as they strike the mountains, the warm moist air is forced upward into the cooler air mass at higher elevations. Also, as the air rises it expands, which further cools it. This in turn causes clouds to form and rain to fall on the eastern slope of mountains, and especially along the ridgeline of the continental divide. It is

along this very wet and windy ridgeline that we find the cloud forest habitat of Costa Rica, as typified by Monte Verde Cloud Forest Reserve. This is the biome of highest orchid diversity with close to 1000 species; yet most of these species are far from 'showy.' They are mostly miniatures, with no water storage tissues. They bloom year around, as there is little seasonality within a cloud forest; its climate is generated by elevation, not season. Tree branches in this biome are completely covered with epiphytes of all sorts, not just orchids.

The west side of Costa Rican mountains are by contrast very dry, especially in the dry season. The



Monte Verde divide, 5600 feet



Epidendrum parkinsonianum (above) and *A Mormodes atropurpureum*



tropical winds striking the mountains dump most of their moisture on the east side and along the crest, and as they descend on the west slope towards the Pacific they compress and dry out. By the time they reach the Pacific at Guanacaste the climate is so dry in the dry season that the trees drop their leaves to conserve water. At Palo Verde National Park in Guanacaste, the entire orchid species list is only four species. All have water storage tissues, and one is itself deciduous in the dry season (*Cyrtopodium paniculatum*). Yet the straight-line distance between Monte Verde and Palo Verde is only about 40 miles.

Thus, Costa Rica's position as a narrow and mountainous barrier separating the tropical waters of the earth's two largest oceans produces a climate almost as varied within its borders as is found in any country in northern South America, regardless of size. Biomes in Costa Rica range from lowland tropical rain forest, to the tundra-like Páramo habitat typical of the high Andes, to the desert-like seasonal deciduous dry forest of the northern Pacific coast. But, as is also true in South America, it is the tropical wet mountain rainforest and cloud forest habitats that hold most of the orchid species, where they thrive under conditions difficult to reproduce on a Wisconsin windowsill. By contrast, the four orchid species from dry Palo Verde will thrive on one. -- Jeff Baylis, (photographs by Jeff Baylis)

ERRATA

Two plants that received a second place ribbon were not included in the list of awards for the December meeting. They were both entered by Sandy Delamater and were *Gongora galeata* and Oedem. Tiger Crow 'Golden Girl.'



JANUARY RIBBON JUDGING

Four plants were submitted for judging at the January meeting.



Paph Doctor Toot, exhibited by Lorraine Snyder, received a first place ribbon (photo above). It is a primary hybrid between two species: *Paph Kolopangi* x *delanati*. This hybrid was made by Ray Rands and was registered in 1996. It brings the long flower spikes of the first parent down by breeding with the relatively shorter spike length of the second parent while retaining the pink colorations of the second species

Haraella retrocalla, exhibited by Richard Narf, received a first place ribbon (photo at

left). This is a slow growing miniature species taking several leaves to grow from 2-3 pairs of leaves to 8-10 pairs. Flowers, which open one at a time, are less than 1 inch across.



Coelogyne cristata, exhibited by Jeff Baylis, received a first place ribbon (left photo). This is a well bloomed young plant, grown on the windowsill of a home kept under 70 degrees.

A yellow Phalenopsis Dou Dii Pearl was also submitted by Lorraine Snyder and it received a second place ribbon.

-- Wayne King (photographs by Denise Baylis)

NEXT BOARD MEETING

The next Board meeting is scheduled for February 12 at 630 p.m. They will meet in the meeting room in the lower level of the Middleton Community Bank at 3207 W. Beltline Hwy, in Middleton. Check with Judy Stevenson for any last minute changes.

UP-COMING EVENTS

- Orchid Quest, February 3-4, 2007
- February 16-18, Batavia Orchid Show
- February 21, Friends of the Arboretum is sponsoring a talk on the "Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid." The talk requires prior registration, http://www.uwarboretum.org/events/register_1?id=387
- February 22-25, Open House and Sale at Hausermann's, "Springtime Enchantment"
- March 3-4, NorthEastern Wisconsin Orchid Society Show and Sale, Neenah
- March 23-25, 2007 32nd Illowa Orchid Society Spring Show
- April 27-29, 2007, Illinois Orchid Society Spring Show in conjunction with Spring Mid-America Orchid Congress, Glencoe IL
- February 2 – March 2, 2008, 19th World Orchid Congress will be held in Miami Beach FL

