

February
2022

The Orchid Grower

Orchid Growers' Guild of Madison

www.Orchidgrowersguild.org



Meeting Dates

Meetings on Zoom at 1 PM

- February 20
- March 20
- April 24
- May 15
- June Picnic TBA
- September 18
- October 16
- November 20
- December 18

Meetings start at 1:30 pm at Olbrich Gardens unless otherwise noted

Up-Coming Events

- February 12 & 13, Illinois Orchid Society Show, Glencoe IL
- May 7, Spring Orchid Sale
- Fall MAOC with Ohio Valley Orchid Fest, August 26-28, 2022, in Dayton

Officers and Committees

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Susan Reed (2022)
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Vice President:

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Treasurer:

Denise Baylis (2022)
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Board:

Lisa Linde (2023)
CrazyCatPlantLady@gmail.com

(Continued on page 2)

NEXT MEETING, February 20th David Sorokowski : "Don't Fear the Slippers"

David Sorokowski of Paph Paradise Orchids talk will be "Don't Fear the Slippers". This will be an introduction to growing Paphs successfully.

After receiving his degree in biochemistry from the University of Toronto, Dave opted to step outside his chosen field and operated a tropical fish import business for eight years. Upon returning to school, Dave received a degree in enology and viticulture from Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario. While attending Brock, Dave began acquiring orchids one 2" pot at a time and before he graduated, Dave had over 100 orchids. Winemaking and a pas-



Sandy Delamater's *Paphiopedilum (spicerianum x Stone Lovely)*

(Continued on page 2)

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hi Members!

We are sorry that we couldn't have our orchid show in Madison this year, but save those book marks for we will be giving you address labels to put on them for our show in 2023! We need to save what we can from our 2022 show to make 2023 a success!

I appreciate everyone for sending in photos of their orchids for the newsletter. At least we can share that way!

We will be sending plants to the Chicago show which is under strict COVID rules. These rules would have been impossible for us to enforce for our show.

We will have a virtual February meeting and very possibly a virtual March meeting. Chuck Acker has written up great orchid care sheets for our website <https://orchidgrowersguild.org> and he did a great Garden Talk epi-

(Continued on page 2)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

| | |
|----------------------------|------|
| Acker's Orchids: Part III | 5-7 |
| Garden Talk | 2 |
| Ghost Orchid Protection | 13 |
| Next Meeting | 1 |
| OQ Chair's Message | 3 |
| Orchid Escape | 2 |
| Paphiopedilum Project | 3 |
| President's Message | 1 |
| Re-Cap: January Miniatures | 4 |
| What's Blooming At Home | 8-12 |

Nancy Thomas (2022)
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Carrie Weisman (2023)
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Librarian:
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Liaisons:
AOS: Nancy Thomas
MAOC: Open

(Continued from page 1)

sode January 28 which you can listen to on line at <https://www.wpr.org/programs/garden-talk>

If you have any thoughts on topics or resources for future meetings please pass them along to anyone on the Board. We want to hear your thoughts on how to help our members enjoy, learn and share their knowledge and love of orchids.

We have coming up in May an orchid plant sale for the public, our member's auction of plants, election of board member, President and Treasurer.

We will hopefully have in person meetings and activities very soon!

Stay safe and well!

— Sue Reed

(Continued from page 1)

sion for orchids prompted Dave to seek a warmer climate in California about one year later. Dave has been growing paphiopedilums for about 15 years and seriously hybridizing for the past 10 years. He is an accredited AOS judge and his paphiopedilums have received over 100 awards to date from the AOS and CSA. Many of those awarded plants playing important roles in his breeding program. In 2018 Dave left winemaking in order to focus all of his time running Paph Paradise Orchids.

GARDEN TALK, Wisconsin Public Radio

Host Larry Meiller discussed 'Caring for Orchids' with Chuck Acker on Friday, January 28. If you missed it you can find it at <https://www.wpr.org/programs/archives/garden-talk>.

ORCHID ESCAPE, AT OLBRICH'S BOLZ CONSERVATORY

January 29 - February 28, 2022

10 a.m. - 4 p.m. daily

Escape to the tropics and take in bountiful, beautiful orchids displayed throughout the Bolz Conservatory!

Skip out on another dreary February day and into Olbrich's Bolz Conservatory, where a world of green rewards you with eye-popping color at every turn. 'Revel in the Rainbow' of Orchid Escape 2022, with over 700 orchids arcing overhead in a spectrum that borrows artistic license from plant pigments like anthocyanin. Seek out orchid flowers in the I SPY activity, marvel at decades-old specimens from Olbrich's permanent collection, or just wander under rainbow spans and cloudlike hanging baskets to reflect on the diversity found in the world's largest plant family, from *Ascocentrum* to *Zygopetalum*.

Orchids have played a central role at the gardens since the opening of the Bolz Conservatory in 1991, and the permanent collections have grown significantly over the past few decades. To reflect this, the Conservatory team set out to create new programming that would highlight the beauty and variety of this unique plant family. The show will incorporate both new orchids special ordered from vendors as well as specimens from the permanent collections.

ADMISSION

\$6 - General Admission

FREE - Ages 5 & under

FREE - Olbrich members (adult/child)

Paphiopedilum Project February

Happy New Year everyone!
I can report that two more members have been rewarded with a bloom on their project Paph plant.



Lynn West shared her photo with me

Both growers appear to have grown their plants under lights. I have observed improved growth/vigor when I moved my Paph from windowsill to lights.

Overall, it appears that this Paph hybrid is slow growing and takes it's good ole time to develop a full flower from when one first observes the emergence of a flower bud in the crevice of the central leaves to the time the flower is fully



Nancy Thomas also sent a picture of her blooming Paph.

opened. It is not unusual for this process to span three months. Patience has its rewards!

Please send photos of your Paph when it flowers.

Until next time, Happy growing!
— Gary Lensmeyer

Message from OQ Chair

We are so very sorry to have had to cancel Orchid Quest 2022. The board and I made the decision because the Covid numbers were just too alarming to expose the public and our members to so many visitors over a period of three days. My regrets include not seeing all of my lovely volunteers and thanking them personally for all they volunteered to do. We had nearly 25 members of Orchid Growers Guild that had already volunteered to run/help/organize or in some other capacity aid with Orchid Quest 2022. That is nearly two-thirds our membership! I am very proud to be part of this organization that when I asked for help, so many offered their hands. Thank you to all who had volunteered!!!

By cancelling Orchid Quest at the beginning of January, we only lost about \$300 (posters and bookmarks mostly). Of course we refunded the vendors but everyone said it was probably for the best and there were no complaints. We will work again for Orchid Quest 2023 (February 4-5 with set-up on February 3) but a lot of the preliminary work is done already. We will take advantage of that. I truly thank you from the bottom of my heart for your involvement and your commitment to Orchid Quest and Orchid Growers Guild.

— Terri Jozwiak

January Re-cap: Miniatures

Our January speaker, Dr. Kristin Uthus from New World Orchids, gave an interesting and enthusiastic presentation. We also had several members from the Milwaukee Orchid Society attending.

As a biologist, Kristin said that she would explain miniature orchids to us from that perspective. Natural variation occurs within birds, think hummingbird and the albatross which are both birds but are vastly different in size. Think dogs. All dogs interbreed but they range in size from teacup breeds of 2 kilos or less to English Mastiffs of over 100 kilograms. Unlike the bird example, each has been artificially bred by humans to express traits deemed desirable. The difference in size is in the number of cells they contain and the genetic makeup of the cells.

There is a wide range of ideas of what a miniature orchid is with many genera having small plant species as well as the medium to large growing species. So the care is similar no matter the size. Almost all genera have miniature species.

Kristin likes miniatures because as a grower you can keep more plants in a given space, particularly since many are suitable to be mounted or in baskets and hang vertically. She has found that humidity is more important for the smaller orchids than air movement. Miniatures can be grown in a homemade terrarium created from an old fish tank which can create its own small environment and thus limit the amount of attention needed. Another plus, many popular miniatures bloom several times a year, with long-lasting flowers and sweet scents.

Rather than discussing crosses selected for size, Kristen focused on miniature species. She described *Dendrobium kingianum*, a small to large sized, cool to warm growing orchid, originating from Queensland and New South Wales, Australia. It is found near the coast and in the mountains growing lithophytically on rocks and cliff faces and can form dense mats. The species has a wide degree of



Keith Nelson's *Leptodes bicolor* (Leptotes, from the Greek for delicateness) is from a group of small to miniature species all remaining under about 8" in height that can be grown mounted or potted.

variation due to its wide range in nature.

She named some of her other favorites and some of their unique characteristics that she appreciates such as the fuzzy leaves, veining and leaf variegation so that they can be appreciated just for their foliage.

Attractive large flowers can also be found in miniatures.

Cattleya luteola is one of the smallest species amongst the *Cattleya* orchids and needs regular, abundant watering and lots of light. Many miniatures can handle lower growing temperatures than some of the larger species of the same genera, *Sophronitis coccinea* is an example and produces a lovely red flower.

Dendrobium nobile's profuse, beautiful, delicately scented flowers produce a wonderful display for up to several months at a time. *Dendrobium bellatulum* is a mini-miniature sized, warm to cold growing epiphyte with fragrant, long-lasting flowers held close to the pseudobulb. The flowers are large in relation to the size of the whole plant.



Sandy Delamater's *Sophronitis (Catt.) cernua*

There was time for questions about individual's culture concerns at the end of the presentation which was recorded. It will not be on the web for general listening, but if requested this presentation can be replayed for members at a specific time.

Kristin does a mail order business year round, but the shipping does depend upon the weather. New World has sold plants at our previous Orchid Quest shows and was scheduled to sell at this year's show. <https://newworldorchids.com>

Acker's Orchids

Part III: New Directions

Text and Photographs by Chuck Acker

Having spent my entire life working alongside my parents Walter and Magdalene and later with my sister Nancy, I became to fully realize where my strong points were in the business. I could also see the roles that were not my forte, which was the business/management aspect of the company.

In early 2007 my sister and her husband decided it was time to pass the torch and offered the business to me. I politely declined since I am not a businessperson but rather a grower and fixer. The business was then sold to the Franz family from Manitowoc, WI. In October 2007 the transition was made and I moved out of my life-long residence. The Franz family moved into the caretaker residence and took over my on-site care-taking duties. I remained an active employee with the new owners, embracing the many changes to the business and surrounding property. Those changes included a large greenhouse addition for garden center plants, house plants, landscape service, supplies and potted plant production. The new owners also re-



These flasks are kept at around 70 degrees F with the exception of kovachii which are always on the bottom shelf where it is cooler, more like 62-64 degrees. The lights are on timers for 14 hours a day using T8 florescent bulbs of 5000 K. The flask [below] has been growing for approximately 8 months from replating out of the mother flask.



named the business to Orchids Garden Centre & Nursery to better reflect the direction they were taking the company.

In the years following the change of ownership, the orchid side of the business saw many challenges. We witnessed a decline in orchid plant sales and watched several long-standing orchid businesses in the area and around the country closing their doors or downsizing. The expense and time needed to raise orchids from flask in



Phragmipedium Acker's Sunstar (Don Wimber x *wallisii*)
2005

(Continued on page 6)



Phragmipedium Acker's Ballerina (Icho Tower x fischeri) 2012

(Continued from page 5)

North America (three to five years or more) proved to be cost prohibitive. The acquisition cost of blooming size plants for resale was also getting to the level that made it less profitable, and related products were also skyrocketing in price. Not to mention the cost of labor, insurance, maintenance etc. Competition from big box stores, grocery stores and many other chain retailers dramatically affected orchid plant sales of commercial growers all around the country.



Phragmipedium Acker's Sunbeam (Asuko Fischer x Waunakee Sunset) 2016

Even with a stepped-up advertising campaign and taking several other promotional avenues, sales still slowly declined. In early 2014, the Franz family decided to change the direction of their business and announced they would slowly start the discontinuation of orchid growing and related orchid products to better accommodate the new objective of their business. Thus, my expertise, knowledge and customer service for orchids were no longer needed. By the end of 2014, my lifetime of orchid growing was no longer required. As they say, "When one door closes, another opens."

Before my last day of employment, I had moved my personal collection of some 400 Paphiopedilum and Phragmipedium (that I had amassed



Phragmipedium Acker's Dragon (Twilight x humboldtii) 2012

over my 35 years of growing) to a friend's greenhouse in Deerfield. Having been breeding Phragmipediums while with my family's business since the early '80's and for the Franz's orchid business, I had made a name for myself around the world as a prominent Phragmipedium breeder. As that had become a side business for me during my employed years, I really wanted to keep that part of my life going.

(Continued on page 7)



The *besseae* collection



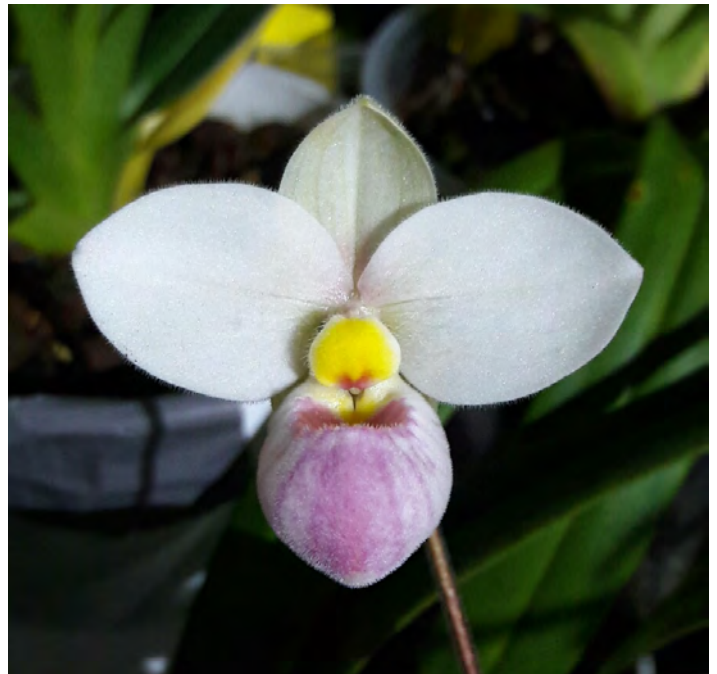
The *kovachii* collection

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My main interest was (and still is) producing new *Phragmipedium* hybrids for sale in flask and in community pots under my own name through my own website of www.flasksbychuckacker.com. My customer base is very diverse, from large commercial growers to an individual buying their first flask as a hobby or home grower. During the summer of 2018, I decided to sell off my entire *Paphiopedilum* collection to focus solely on my *Phragmipedium* breeding.

Having my collection at my friend's commercial greenhouse in Deerfield has allowed me to continue my passion for *Phragmipedium* breeding and my passion and love of the greenhouse itself. I still get to fulfill my affection for greenhouse doings such as maintenance and upkeep while also help my friend grow other plants at his greenhouse, such as his spring crop of annuals. Like they say: "You can take a guy out of the greenhouse, but you can't take the greenhouse out of a guy." In my semi-retirement days, some of my other interests are restoring old Farmall tractors with a very good friend of mine in Waukegan. As mentioned, mechanics have always been a second love of mine. Traveling, scuba diving, biking, hiking, tending to the plants in my yard and loving my Rottweiler are among the other things keeping me busy.

In closing this article, I want to say that I genuinely miss the orchid business and growing the incredibly diverse varieties of orchids that I had grown up within my family's business. I also



Phragmipedium Acker's Dawn (Hanne Popow x *schlimii* var *manzurii*) 2018

greatly miss the interactions with the very loyal customers, orchid friends and many society members. My passion for sharing the orchid knowledge I have gained over my life remains, and I look forward to continuing many more years with orchid-related activities. I hope you enjoyed this three-part article. I want to thank Denise Baylis and Terri Jozwiak for their suggestion of writing this and their assistance in putting it in the newsletter. Thank you!

Happy Growing,

— Chuck Acker

WHAT'S BLOOMING AT HOME...



“I love orchids but only grow the "easy" ones, they need to live with me, not in a special growing room. *Paph. sukhakulii*, *fairrieianum*, *liemianum* and their crosses are some of my favorites (I have branched out from my Phal obsession). Culture is divided between colored LED and T5's, they never go outside. Last fall into winter I made a conscious effort to fertilize. I have never had this many paphs flowering at once before. All the plants suffered while I was having the old sunroom torn off and a new one built in its place, hardly any flowered last year. The new high efficiency, wall mounted convection heater is better than the old baseboard heaters and the humidity stays around 35% (mostly because I try to keep water in the trays). As suggested, I did clean all the glass this fall as well.

Way too many variables to make a stab at a hypothesis. I hope it's not a mass 'death bloom'!?”

— Kathy Johnson

“The problem with dividing orchids is that you sacrifice your large bloomers. This year my divisions are recovering along with the new divisions I purchased. So I have several plants blooming but nothing spectacular, which is where a display comes in.” Jeff Baylis

Vanda lamellata 'Okinawa', *Cymbidium* unknown, *Brassocattleya* Mai-kai 'Mayumi', *Oncidium tampense*, *Paph* (Green Gold 'Iviro Oro' x Via Gema 'Limerick lass'), *Ionopsis utricarioides*, *Coelogyne flaccida*, *Epi.* (*Oersterdella*) *centropetalum* and *Oncidium cheirophorum*.



WHAT'S BLOOMING AT HOME...



Ken Cameron created this display of Neofinetia (fuukiran) at home for the holidays. This particular set of pots are by one of Japan's finest masters, Musashi Tenzan.



"I bought the two white *Phalaenopsis* Star April's Coming at our October orchid sale and these blooms are on new branches from the first spikes. Great hardy Phals and although they are the same cross the lips on the flowers are different. The *Phragmipedium* Peruflora's Spirit (*kovachii* x Eric Young) has been a reliable bloomer every year since I bought it in Milwaukee about 3 years ago. The *Paphiopedilum* (*leucochilium* x *thaiantum*) is also a reliable bloomer, this time with two blooms. The *Pleurothallis geographicalis* blooms best with high humidity. The *Guaricattonia Renate* was a plant I bought at our October auction!" Sue Reed.



Keith Nelson's *Angraecum sesquipedale*



Lori O'Neill's *Vanda Sansai Blue* 'Ackers Pride' FCC/APS (Crimson Glory x Coerulea) "Purchased at Orchid Greenhouse in May 2015. Always blooms twice a year. Lovely flowers."



Lori O'Neill's *Vuylstekeara* (*Miltonidium*) Aloha Passion 'HOF #1' (*Miltonidium* Memoria Mary Kavanaugh x *Oncidium* Alcatraz) "It was purchased at Orchid Quest in February 2006. I divided the plant when it got too large. Is a consistent bloomer. Lives outside in the summer."

... WHAT'S BLOOMING AT HOME: *CYMBIDIUMS*



Doug Dowling's *Cymbidium* Cherry Blossom 'Profusion' (*floribundum* x *erythrostylum*)



Jeff Metcalf's *Cymbidium* Point Conception 'Sunset Nativity' (*seidenfadenii* x Trigo Royale)



Gary Lensmeyer's *Cymbidium* White hybrid



Gary Lensmeyer's *Cymbidium* Yellow hybrid



Gary Lensmeyer's *Cymbidium* Red hybrid



Doug Dowling's *Cymbidium* Fairy Wand 'Ruby Wine' (*floribundum* x Princess Maria)

... WHAT'S BLOOMING AT HOME:

SPEAKING OF MINATURES, A SELECTION FROM SANDY DELAMATER



Bulbophyllum ankylochele, from New Guinea, second blooming, 56 flowers, mounted on a 5 1/4 x 3 1/4" slab.



Ornithocephalus inflexus, from Mexico, 5 x 1 1/4" stick, 2nd blooming.



Habenaria medusa, - ten years old, has bloomed every year.



Isochilus linearis, from Mexico, mounted on a 9"x 4" slab, second blooming.



Bulbophyllum laxiflorum, 3rd blooming.



Dendrobium lamyiaiae, - from Thailand, 4 x 1 1/4" stick, first blooming.

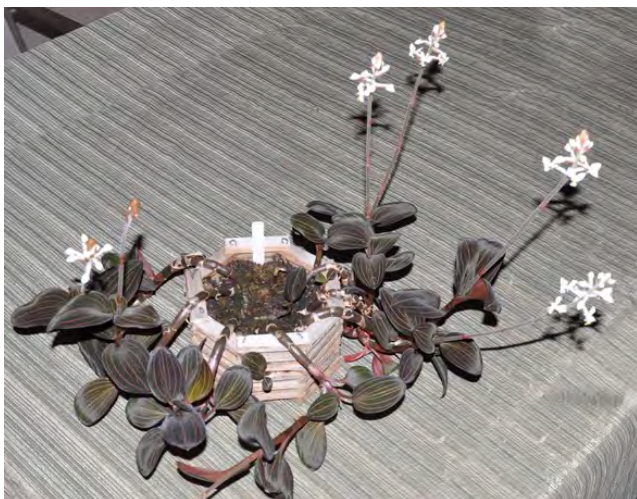


Masdevallia lilacina, from Peru, mounted on a 5"x 3" slab, 42 flowers, second blooming.



Mediocalcar decoratum, variegated, from New Guinea, first blooming, 4" basket w/moss.

... WHAT'S BLOOMING AT HOME:



Keith Nelson's Jewel Orchid, *Ludisia Discolor*



Jeff Metcalf's *Phalaenopsis* Lianher Red Diamond (Lianher Super Red x Charm Sun Big Red Robe)



Jeff Metcalf's *Potinara* (*Rlc*) Caroline Splendor (Waikiki Splendor x Oconee)



Jeff Metcalf's *Potinara* (Higher Multiple x Paradise Rose)



Jeff Metcalf's *Potinara* (*Rlc*) Smiley Cupid 'Wilson' (Elegant Dancer x Shinfong Honey)



Jeff Metcalf's *Rhyncholaeliocattleya* (was *Blc*) Focus Taiwan (*Rlc* Chunyeah x *Cattleya* Tainan City)

Press Release from the National Parks Conservation Association
Conservationists Aim to Protect Famed Ghost Orchids Under Endangered Species Act

Poaching, climate change, loss and modification of habitat and direct threats to the ecosystem — even in protected areas like Big Cypress National Preserve — could spell disaster for the species.

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla.— Conservation organizations submitted a petition to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) today requesting protection of the ghost orchid under the Endangered Species Act. The ghost orchid, one of the most famous and imperiled flowers in Florida, has declined by more than 90% globally.

The petition — submitted by The National Parks Conservation Association, The Institute for Regional Conservation, and The Center for Biological Diversity — also asks FWS to designate critical habitat essential to the survival and recovery of the orchid.

“The ghost orchid is the rare plant species that captures just as much attention as some charismatic megafauna in the state of Florida. This mysterious, beautiful plant captivates Floridians, reminding them of our state’s unique, wild heritage,” said Melissa Abdo, Ph.D., regional director at the National Parks Conservation Association.

“While the ghost orchid has always been rare, threats to its existence have become dire in recent years.” Abdo continued. Poaching, climate change, loss and modification of habitat and direct threats to the ecosystem — even in protected areas like Big Cypress National Preserve — could spell disaster for the species. That is why it is imperative that the ghost orchid be afforded protections under the Endangered Species Act.”

Abdo has longstanding experience with the ghost orchid, having helped discover new sub-

populations of the plant in Big Cypress National Preserve in the early 2000s.



“The ghost orchid is an icon of beauty and nature’s abundance,” said George Gann, executive director at The Institute for Regional Conservation. “Its long demise in southern Florida and Cuba, in part due to its immense popularity, is a bellwether of things to come. We can do nothing and watch another species go extinct in the wild, or we can act now to protect and restore this flagship orchid and its wild habitats. The Florida we envision includes a restored Greater Everglades ecosystem with all of its biological diversity, including the ghost orchid.”

The ghost orchid (*Dendrophylax lindenii*), made popular by Susan Orlean’s book The Orchid Thief and the movie Adaptation starring Meryl Streep and Nicholas Cage, is found only in Florida and Cuba.

There are only an estimated 1,500 ghost orchid plants left in Florida, and less than half are known to be reproductively mature. The Florida populations of ghost orchid have experienced a 30% to 50% decline. Chief threats to the flower include poaching, habitat degradation and the climate emergency.

“The ghost orchid is emblematic of wild, beautiful Florida, and this flower’s future depends on our ability to protect it from poaching and habitat loss,” said Jaclyn Lopez, Florida director at the Center for Biological Diversity. “The steady decline of ghost orchid populations coupled with the threats of the climate crisis puts this enigmatic plant at risk of extinction.”

REMINDER

OGG annual membership renewals were due December 31. The cost remains the same: \$10 for a student, \$20 for a single membership and \$25 for a household.