

**THE GREATER LAS VEGAS ORCHID SOCIETY
THE ORCHID COLUMN
SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 10, 2023 1 PM
“HOW ORCHIDS GOT THEIR NAMES”
CAROL SIEGEL**



Complete with my walker after my recent hip surgery, I will do a powerpoint presentation on how orchids got their names.

Sometimes it seems that orchid names were selected to be impossible to spell, difficult to pronounce, and challenging to remember, nonsense words invented by sadists to make us look like idiots. Not so! Orchid names actually are full of meaning and tell interesting stories about the flowers they describe.

Join me for a fascinating talk on orchid names that will have you looking at them in a whole new way. The good news is that although there are thousands and thousands of orchid names, you will usually only meet 100 or so of them and can be an expert in no time.

Orchid names tell us a lot about the plants they describe. For example, *Angraecum sesquipedale*, commonly called “the star of Bethlehem,” blooming at Christmas, has the name “Angraecum” from the Malaysian word for orchid. “Sesquipedale” means “a foot and a half” because the nectary of the orchid hangs down almost a

foot and a half. Darwin posited that there must be a moth with a very long tongue to get the nectar at the bottom of the nectar. Forty years later, the moth was found, *Xanthopan morgani praedicta*, because Darwin predicted it.



COMING ATTRACTIONS

Sept 10, 2023 Carol Siegel “How Orchids Got Their Names”

October 8 Peter Lin “Dendrobium and Their Culture”

November 12 Bridget Uzar Carter and Holmes

“Troubleshooting Your Orchids”

She will provide orchids to sell

December 10, 2023 Holiday party Art Chadwick “Cattleya” In

person talk WITH ORCHIDS TO SELL

January 14 White Elephant Sale Orchid Limited Zoom Nursery

Tour

Feb 11, 2024 Diana Smith “Mounted Orchids”

March 10, 2024 Bridget Uzar “Introduction to Tropical

Ladyslippers”

April 14 Carol Siegel “How to Build An Orchid Collection”

July 14, 2024 Alan Koch

SEPTEMBER 10 FOOD



Many thanks to the kind people who volunteered to provide food for September. Thanks to Cheryl Sago for chairing the feast. So nice. Thank you to Cathy Loftfield, Maria Demeo, Vira Ross, Kate Schlatter, and Delina Santos. If you haven't told Cheryl what you are bringing, be sure to do that. We are most

grateful to you all for your time, trouble, and expense.

In October, we will have a potluck, an International Food Fair with everyone bringing something.

In September, our terrific piano player will delight us, and I have ordered orchids for sale. Thanks to Jackie Bravermann, who despite her own surgery, volunteered to uncrate and bring them in. Thanks, too, to Cathy Loftfield for kindly and expertly running the meeting and organizing things in my absence. Thanks, too, to Harriet Yasuhara for taking charge of the welcome desk in Kathy Weber's absence. I am most grateful.

One of the best sources of orchids is Waldor Orchids (www.waldor.com) which sells on ebay, too. The orchids they sell on Ebay are usually in bud or spike and are beautiful. They have several wonderful articles on their website. They had a cute article on their website which I thought you would enjoy.

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT ORCHIDS WALDOR ORCHIDS

Orchids Have the Smallest Seeds: Orchids have some of the smallest seeds in the plant kingdom. These tiny seeds lack endosperm (the food supply found in most seeds), and they rely on fungi to germinate and provide nutrients for growth.

Deceptive Mimicry: Certain orchids have evolved to mimic the appearance and scent of insects. This helps attract specific pollinators that mistake the flower for a potential mate, leading to successful pollination.

Vanilla Comes from an Orchid: The vanilla flavor comes from the beans of the Vanilla orchid (*Vanilla planifolia*). The process of hand-pollinating the vanilla flowers is intricate and contributes to the high cost of natural vanilla.

Dancing Lady Orchids: The *Oncidium* orchid genus includes species often referred to as "Dancing Lady Orchids" due to the resemblance of their frilly lip to a woman's dancing skirt.

Sexual Deception for Pollination: Some orchids employ sexual deception to attract pollinators. For instance, the Australian Hammer Orchid (*Drakaea*) emits pheromones that mimic a female wasp, tricking male wasps into pollinating the flower.

Long-Lasting Blooms: While many flowers last for a few days, some orchid blooms can persist for several weeks or even months, making them an extraordinary sight in gardens and homes.

World's Smallest Orchid: The world's smallest orchid, *Platystele jungermannioides*, is only a few millimeters in size. It was discovered in 2009 in Ecuador.

Air Roots: Many orchids have air roots that help them absorb moisture and nutrients from the air. These roots often grow above the ground or dangle from trees.

Orchids and Ants: Some orchids have a symbiotic relationship with ants. The ants protect the orchid from herbivores, and in return, the orchid provides shelter and nectar for the ants.

Orchid Inflorescence: What appears to be a single orchid flower is actually a complex structure called an inflorescence. It's composed of multiple flowers arranged in a unique pattern.

Orchids in Space: Orchids have been sent to space for scientific research. NASA studied the effects of microgravity on orchid seed germination and growth.

Ghost Orchids: The Ghost Orchid (*Dendrophylax lindenii*) is a rare orchid native to Florida and Cuba. It has no leaves and is often seen growing on tree trunks, appearing almost ghostly in its appearance.

These strange and remarkable facts highlight the incredible diversity and adaptations of orchid plants in the natural world.

