



Aerangis fastuosa Ron Parsons



MAOC MINUTE

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MAOC is hosting a talk by Ron Parsons on "Madagascar, A Land of Many Contrasts" over Zoom on January 25, 2026, at 7:30 EST. This talk can be zoomed live and will be available for two weeks after online. Price for your society is \$30 and should be shared with all your members. Individuals can also purchase the talk for \$25. You can pay online at <https://mid-america-orchid-congress.square.site/>

Or mail checks to Jeanne Rhinehart, 6222 Le Roy Place, Cincinnati, OH 45230.

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The MAOC Communications Team



Ron Parsons has been growing orchids for 50 years and has been interested in the species for most of that time. He loves to photograph orchids and other flowers whenever possible. Ron has 121,000 digital images, most of which are of orchids, and still retains a slide library that exceeds 100,000 botanical images. He has given more than 500 talks on various botanical topics and has close to 7000 published photos. Ron has co-authored four books on botanical subjects, all with Mary E. Gerritsen. The first two, published by Timber Press, are *Masdevallias, Gems of the Orchid World* and *Calochortus, Mariposa Lilies and their Relatives*. Their third book, a two-volume set, *A Compendium of Miniature Orchid Species* was published by Redfern Natural History Productions in January 2014. In 2019 *The American Orchid Society Guide to Orchids and their Culture* was released and is on its third printing. The fifth book, a much-revised second edition of *A Compendium of Miniature Orchids Species* was released in October 2021. It is now a four-volume set with 3100 photos (1800 are new), including

those of more than 500 species not in the first edition.

"Madagascar, A Land of Many Contrasts"



The vast island nation of Madagascar is a land that should be visited sooner than later. It is home to approximately 1000 native orchid species, 90% of which are endemic, and are as unique as the fauna and other flora of this fourth largest island in the world. Unfortunately, much of the land is environmentally devastated, but the wild areas are home to some of the most incredible experiences a person can have. I may not have had great initial impressions upon arrival, nor for the first several days, but as the trip progressed, my feelings changed. I am filled with wonderful, indelible memories, and a longing to return (note: I did return for a

second trip, and I still want to return!). Above *Cynorkis lowiana*.

Holiday Orchids

Throughout history flowers and especially orchids have reflected meaning and hope with various cultures.



There are several orchids called Christmas Orchids around the world. Christmas Orchids refers to several orchids that bloom around the holidays.

Calanthe triplicata is a terrestrial orchid with showy flowers, also called Prayer Plant, native to Asia and islands from Asia to Africa.

At left, *Calanthe triplicata* 'Rona', exhibited by Harold and Rona Goldstein and photographed by James Osen.



Cattleya trianae is known as the Christmas Orchid and "May Flower" in Colombia, it's the national flower, blooming around Christmas with white, pink, or purple flowers.

At left, *Cattleya trianae* 'Angarita', exhibited by Peter Pirc and photographed by Kevin Dubiel.



Cattleya percivaliana is a smaller *Cattleya* species with a spicy scent, blooming in winter in the Andes in Venezuela.

At left, *Cattleya percivaliana* 'Dave Off', exhibited by Ben Oliveros and photographed by Glen Barfield.



Angraecum sesquipedale is also known as the "Star of Bethlehem Orchid," the "Christmas Star Orchid," and "Darwin's Orchid. It is endemic to Madagascar.

At left, *Angraecum sesquipedale* 'Star Shine' exhibited by Deborah Halliday and photographed by Arnold Gum.



Dendrobium cunninghamii is native to New Zealand and is known as the Christmas orchid or Winika.

Image is with permission from photographer, Michael Schwab from his Flickr account.



In looking for an orchid to use, there was only one orchid with New Year in its name, *Onc. Hilo Firecracker 'New Year'* from Akatsuka Orchid Gardens in Hawaii. The importance of orchids in the celebration of Chinese New Year or the Lunar New Year which is celebrated in many Asian countries appeared several times in the searches. It occurs in January or February and lasts for seven days.

In Chinese culture, orchids play a major part in the Chinese New Year. Flowers and fruits hold special significance and given as gifts at this time and have symbolic meanings. They have long been symbolic of 'many children' or fertility and abundance. In Chinese fen shui, orchids are thought to be one of the luckiest plants to use in

arrangement of the items in the living space. They are thought to bring peace, success, harmony to the home or business. Orchids are a popular gift to married couples symbolizing unity, driving away evil spirits and bringing fertility and abundance. They also signify refinement, luxury and innocence – a valuable and lucky gift! Prized in Japanese culture as a sign of wealth, prosperity and loyalty, they also can be found in temples, as offerings and in pictures painted into scrolls.