

FEBRUARY  
2026



#### Meeting Dates

- February 15th
- March 15th
- April 19th

All in-person and Zoom Meetings start at 1:00pm in the Learning Center at Olbrich Gardens unless otherwise noted

#### Up-Coming Events

- February 7-8, 2026, Orchid Quest, Monona Terrace
- March 14-15, Illinois Orchid Society Show
- March 21-22, Batavia Orchid Show
- June 11-15, Native Orchid Conference, Green Bay
- September 12-13, Wisconsin Orchid Society

#### Officers and Committees

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# The Orchid Grower

Orchid Growers Guild of Madison

[www.Orchidgrowersguild.org](http://www.Orchidgrowersguild.org)

## Next Meeting February 15th Special Lecture: "Why Orchids Need Fungi"

Dr. Larry Zettler has been on the faculty of Illinois College since 2007 where he has trained hundreds of undergraduates to propagate native orchids from seed. He says, "I am very concerned that not enough is being done to conserve the world's biological diversity in a warming world. Among plants, orchids are especially vulnerable to extinction. I attempt to



(Continued on page 2)

## President's Message

Time to put the sprinkles on the cupcake! There will be at least 15 orchid displays filling almost 4000 square feet of the Ballroom of Monona Terrace and 38 vendor tables in 7000 square feet of the main concourse of Monona Terrace. As I mentioned in last month's message, the heavy lifting for Orchid Quest is complete. Many people have contributed much time, energy, and skill. At our last meeting, Orchid Quest Show Chair Terri Jozwiak updated us on the progress of all the committees involved.

All the Award Sponsorship slots have been filled, more than seventy members have committed to volunteer on at least one of the days.

Twenty-five members have committed to helping out all three days. We have three sponsors so please consider further patronizing our sponsors throughout the year. Thank them when you shop at Klein's, Jungs or The Forward Group throughout the year.

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As we close in on the final days of preparation, do not hesitate to reach out to Ken Cameron, Sue Reed, Chuck Acker or Lynn West if you need help in registering your pest-free, blooming Holiday(?) orchid for our Guild exhibit. If you suddenly found more time (it could happen) to volunteer, reach out to Volunteer Coordinator Meg Graham as to where you can help.

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**Liaisons:**

**AOS:** Nancy Thomas  
**MAOC:** Lynn West

Next MEETING (Continued from page 1)

conserve rare orchids by studying their mycorrhizal fungi, and how these fungi can be used to propagate endangered species from seed (e.g., symbiotic germination). I enlist the help of students for this purpose, providing them with the tools necessary to conserve these plants long after I am gone."

His latest book, "Saving Orchids" is "a gorgeously illustrated ode to the beauty and significance of orchids—and to those fighting to save these unique plants across the globe. Until recently, a myriad of lifeforms enriched our lives. In some places, listening to a nighttime chorus of frogs in the neighborhood marsh was an archetypal touchstone of childhood. Children would search for tadpoles, just steps away from native Lady's Tresses orchids. Year by year, the chorus became quieter.

Today, only a few frogs and orchids remain. Is this the world we want our children to inherit? Do we want orchids to slip through our fingers and, eventually, to vanish? For biologists Philip Seaton and Lawrence W. Zettler, and the intrepid orchid defenders they introduce in this book, the answer is no. Seaton and Zettler have traveled the world over the past three decades, studying orchids—flagship species for plant conservation. Stunningly illustrated, this book is a culmination of stories about the people—young and old alike—dedicated to protecting these remarkable plants from extinction. In the 19th century, collectors removed, shipped, and sold vast numbers of orchids from the wild. Today, scientists strive to reverse this harm—to protect and rebuild remnants of orchids' original habitats against human disruption, including climate change. Seaton and Zettler reveal these plants' bizarre pollination partners, risky liaisons with fungi, and adaptation to human domestication to show that learning orchids' scientific secrets—and finding human helpers—is key to these plants' survival."

**MEETING SCHEDULE**

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC  
at Olbrich Botanical Garden

**Schedule is Approximate as Follows:**

- 12:00 pm Doors Open
- 12:30 Socializing During Plant Judging
- 1:00 Meeting Begins; Announcements
- 1:15 pm Show & Tell Table
- 2:00 Break
- 2:15 pm Guest Speaker & Book Signing
- 3:15 pm Door Prizes
- 3:30 pm Meeting Ends

(President's Message, Continued from page 1)

Many hands make light work.

As we look ahead to life after Orchid Quest, we will barely have time to catch our breath! Larry Zettler from Illinois College will be our guest speaker for our February 15th meeting. His topic will be "Why Orchids Need Fungi." This meeting is open to the public in the Evjue Commons and held in conjunction with Olbrich Gardens Orchid Escape in the Bolz Conservatory.

See you in a few days!

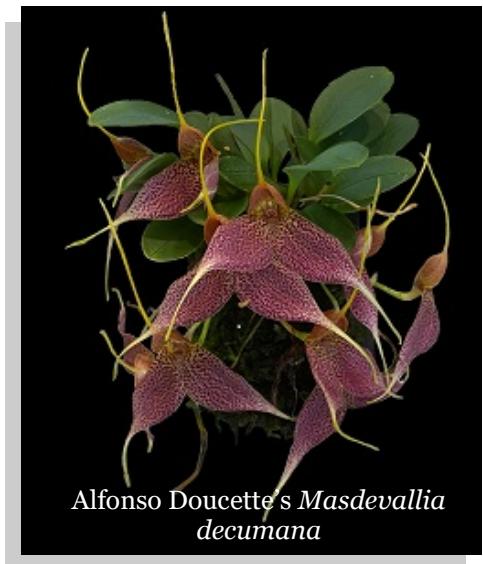
# January OGG Ribbon Judging

Nine intrepid members braved the freezing temperatures to bring their blooming orchid to our January meeting.

## First Place

Rachel Miller  
Sean Stake  
Rachel Miller  
Alfonso Doucette  
Steve Kastning

*Rhynchostylis gigantea* Pink x sib  
*Rhynchostylis gigantea* Spots  
*Oncidium cheiroporum*  
*Masdevallia decumana*  
*Phalaenopsis* NOID [novelty]

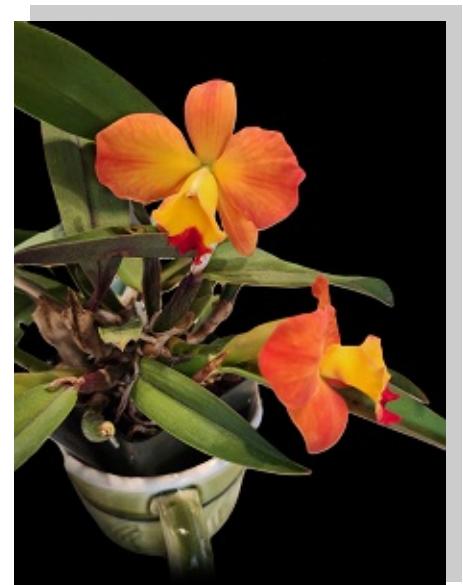


Alfonso Doucette's *Masdevallia decumana*

## Second Place

Lynn West  
  
Wanda Buckingham  
Gary Lensmeyer  
Ellen Karlson

*Cattleya* Mini Purple *coerulea* '4N' x  
*Cattleya mossiae* f. *coerulea* '4N'  
*Rhynchostylis gigantea* Pink x sib  
*Oncidium fuscum* pink  
*Sophrolaeliocattleya* Bella del Caribe (*Cattleya* Angel's Fantasy x *Cattleya* Beaufort)



Ellen Karlson's *Sophrolaeliocattleya* Bella del Caribe (*Cattleya* Angel's Fantasy x *Cattleya* Beaufort)



Rachel Miller's *Oncidium cheiroporum*



Gary Lensmeyer's *Oncidium fuscum* pink



Steve Kastning's novelty *Phalaenopsis* NOID



1. Sean Stake's  
*Rhynchostylis gigantea* Spots



2. Rachel Miller's *Rhynchostylis gigantea* Pink x sib



3. Wanda Buckingham's  
*Rhynchostylis gigantea* Pink x sib

It is unusual for three members to bring in essentially the same species on the same day for ribbon judging. All well-grown, as judge, Chuck made difficult decisions:

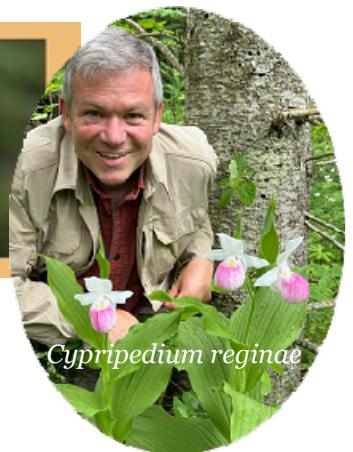
1. This plant has good sized flowers for the species, good clear markings and creativity in mounting.
2. This plant also has very good clear markings on a more clear to near white background and goodsized flowers for the species.
3. This plant has slightly smaller flowers for the species, its markings on the flowers on a creamy white background were not defined as clearly, and is also smaller in size.

From left counter-clockwise: Lynn West's *Cattleya* Mini Purple *coerulea* '4N' x *Cattleya mossiae f. coerulea* '4N'; Travis Wilson's *Phalaenopsis* NOID 'Gertrude'; Wanda Buckingham's *Phalaenopsis* NOID; and Travis Wilson's *Phalaenopsis* NOID 'Doris'.  
NOTE: Travis assigns names to his unknown crosses to maintain their individuality





## NATIVE ORCHID CONFERENCE



### National Native Orchid Conference in Door County this Year!

Raise your hand if you are staring to dream of warmer weather . . . me! You know, it's not too early to start planning your summer vacation. Many people around the world combine their passion for orchids with travel. How about spending a few relaxing and educational days in Door County, Wisconsin this June 11-15 in conjunction with the annual North American Native Orchid Conference Symposium? It's been almost 20 years since the meeting was last held in Wisconsin, so this is a unique opportunity that may not come again soon. Registration is now open and spots are limited to the first 100 who sign up!

A typical NOC symposium includes two days of lectures by well-known individuals from around the country who are highly respected in their fields. An overview of the history, indigenous culture, geology and natural history of the venue is included. All of us could benefit from learning more about our great state! In addition, orchid research topics, travelogues, conservation reports, taxonomic changes and other related subjects add to the interesting lecture line-up. This is not a scientific conference, but one pitched to the broader community of nature lovers and orchid enthusiasts.

There are typically two or three days of guided

field-trips to nearby natural sites that have been staked-out by local NOC volunteers (carpooling is encouraged). We usually see ten to twenty or more species of native Wisconsin orchids growing in the wild - a rare and special opportunity! The symposium is timed to coincide with peak bloom times so most of the plants are in flower. Photography opportunities abound and many lasting friendships begin at an annual NOC symposium. You will not be disappointed!

Your registration fee includes all-day admission to the Green Bay Botanical Garden on Thursday as well as the Thursday evening reception, plus breakfast and lunch on Friday and Sunday, all lectures and two days of guided field trips. You can do as much or as little as your prefer. You must make your own plans for accomodation. Registration this year will be \$229 for NOC members, \$249 for non-members, and \$99 for students.

**For more information visit**  
**<https://www.nativeorchidconference.org/symposium>**

— Ken Cameron



Purple Fringed Orchid  
(*Platanthera psycodes*)



Dragon's-mouth  
(*Arethusa bulbosa*)



Tuberous Grass Pink  
(*Calopogon tuberosus*)



*Calopogon tuberosus* var.  
*alba*

# ORCHID QUEST IS ALMOST HERE!

Orchid Quest is just days away, and excitement is building as we prepare for a weekend immersed in the beauty and diversity of orchids. The event is open to the public on Saturday, February 7, and Sunday, February 8, with Friday, February 6, reserved for set-up.

## Friday: Set-Up Day (February 6)

Set-up begins anytime after 9:00 a.m. at Monona Terrace (MT). Volunteers are welcome throughout the day, and help is always appreciated.

If you have a large load to unload—or would simply like assistance—please use the **parking garage entrance**:

- Enter the Monona Terrace driveway
- Take the **LEFT lane** and proceed to the garage door

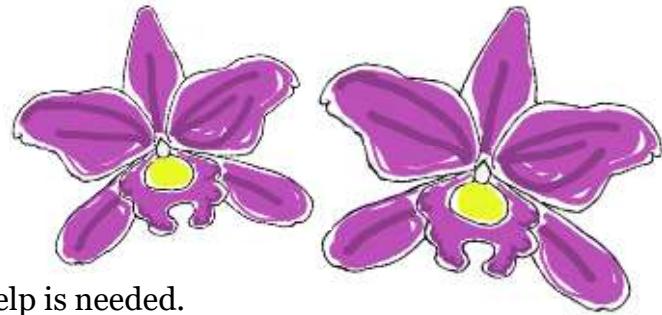
Unloading in the garage has several advantages: it's warm, volunteer helpers are available, and carts are readily accessible to transport items upstairs. Once you've unloaded, exit the garage the same way you entered, proceed through the parking kiosk to obtain your ticket, and park wherever you like.

If you only have a few items, you may prefer to unload at the main entrance. Simply go through the kiosk, pull up to the main door, and drop off your items inside before parking.

Friday is a particularly enjoyable day, as the space transforms from rows of plain tables into a vibrant orchid wonderland. Volunteers are encouraged to help set up in areas that interest them most.

**Important:** The deadline for plants entering the exhibit is **noon**, as exhibit installation—often featuring more than 100 plants—takes several hours. Be sure to stop by the membership table to receive your parking voucher, as Friday parking is covered by OGG.

Set-up typically concludes around **5:00 p.m.**, though staying later is perfectly fine if additional



help is needed.

## Saturday: Show Day & Judging (February 7)

On Saturday, Orchid Quest is open to the public from **10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

Those assisting as **clerks for the judges** should arrive between **6:30 and 6:45 a.m.** A light breakfast will be provided, followed by a brief training session on clerking procedures.

If you are not clerking, please plan to arrive **30–45 minutes before your scheduled shift** to allow time for parking and orienting yourself within Monona Terrace. Remember to wear your **nametag** and **purple apron**, if you have one. If you did not check in on Friday, stop by the membership table upon arrival. Parking on Saturday is \$5.

## Sunday: Final Day & Tear-Down (February 8)

On Sunday, Orchid Quest is open from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Volunteers should again arrive 30–45 minutes before their shift.

Be sure to make all purchases early, as the show closes promptly at 3:00 p.m. and attention quickly shifts to packing up. Any help with vendor or exhibit breakdown is deeply appreciated—many hands make quick work. Parking on Sunday is also \$5.

## A Weekend to Remember

Orchid Quest is a phenomenal weekend of orchid immersion. Take time to talk with vendors and fellow enthusiasts, ask questions, and share knowledge. You'll see extraordinary plants, learn from experts, and leave inspired by all that orchids have to offer.

We look forward to seeing you there! ☺

—Terri Jozwiak

# What's Blooming at Home...



Gary Lensmeyer's *Cycnodes Taiwan Gold 'Orange'* is fragrant



Jeff Baylis' *Phragmipedium 'Graeme Jones'* (Barbara LeAnn x *kovachii*). Purchased potted from Ecuagenera USA through their Florida site. First bloom for me, 4 blossoms on two spikes."



Keith Nelson with his *Oncidium sphacelatum*



Jeff Baylis' mini *Cattleya cernua*, is a Brazilian species. "It is a rare example of a Cattleya that is hummingbird pollinated. I bought this plant at the silent auction at our last OGG picnic. As it is mounted, I grow it under high light levels and under a mister. Blooms are long lasting."



Sue Reed, "My *Clowesia Rebecca Northen 'Grapefruit Pink'* x *Mormodes morenoi 'Red Stripes'* is blooming! It spent the summer outside with indirect shaded light and winters inside in my very cool sun-porch ( 70-60 F) with some added humidity about 50%."



Keith Nelson, "This *Vanda Sansai Blue 'Acker's Pride'* didn't bloom for two years after we moved. Last spring I said "OK bloom or die" so I set it in my rock garden all summer. It grew a whole new plant on top and now bloomed."



Jeff Baylis' *Coelogyne Jannine Banks* (often misspelled Janine) is a hybrid of Himalayan orchids (*Coelogyne mooreana* x *Coel. flaccida*). "I bought this plant many years ago at Orchids by the Ackers, and have divided it many times. I have kept two divisions, both of whom bloomed starting almost a month earlier than usual, as did two divisions of *Coel. flaccida*. I have had one or more of these plants in Orchid Quest for at least 6 years in a row. All have bloomed too soon this year. None will make it to the exhibit."



Keith Nelson's *Brassavola nodosa*. All three of Keith's orchids came from Chuck.

# Volunteer Opportunity: OGG Newsletter Editor

When I joined the Orchid Growers' Guild nearly 20 years ago, the guild was seeking a new Newsletter Editor. I knew very little about orchids at the time, but I had prior experience producing newsletters for other organizations—and even served as editor of my high school newspaper (a long time ago!). Wanting to become more involved, I volunteered.

Nearly two decades later, it's time for someone new to take on this role.

## What does the Newsletter Editor do?

In short: editors edit, and writers write. Your primary responsibility is to request and compile content from designated contributors—reminding them to submit articles, announcements, and photos. You may occasionally assemble information into a readable format, but you are not usually expected to generate original content. The role is about coordinating, organizing, and polishing what others provide, then assembling it into a clear, attractive newsletter.

You will also establish deadlines and follow up to ensure materials arrive on time. Once the newsletter is complete and exported as a PDF, it is distributed by a designated party—your work for the month is done.

## Skills and tools required

The tools are straightforward:

- Comfort with reading and writing English
- Familiarity with email communication
- Basic experience with word processing or publishing software
- Ability to save and export documents as PDFs

I began using Microsoft Word and later switched to Microsoft Publisher because I found it easy to use. Publisher is being discontinued

this fall, but it will remain available for purchase, and the Board is open to reasonable software accommodations.

## Why consider this role?

Serving as Newsletter Editor is an excellent way to become more involved in the guild. I attend Board meetings—now conveniently held via Zoom—which helps me stay informed about guild activities and makes it easier to know whom to contact for content. You gain insight into everything happening in OGG without taking on full Board responsibilities.

## Interested?

If you'd like to learn more, please contact me:

**Denise Baylis**

Email: [jrbaylis@tds.net](mailto:jrbaylis@tds.net)

Text: 608-698-4471

I'd be happy to talk with you about the role.

## 2026 Orchid Growers Guild Membership Renewal

**Individual: \$25 | Household (1+1): \$40 |  
Student: \$15**

It's time to pay your annual dues! OGG membership runs by calendar year, but if you joined after September 2025 you will continue to be in good standing through the end of 2026. If you are unsure of your status please contact our Secretary, Lynn West.



# HISTORY OF ORCHID GROWERS GUILD: The Origins and Evolution of Orchid Quest

Once the Orchid Growers' Guild (OGG) was officially established in late 1985, the next major milestone was launching an annual orchid show. Beginning in January 1988, the Guild's show was held for its first decade at West Towne Mall, with Herman Pigors serving as Chief Judge at that first American Orchid Society-judged event.

Those early shows were memorable for their challenges as much as their charm. Loading and unloading took place outdoors during mall hours, often in bitter January weather with little protection from the elements. The hospitality room was located in an empty storefront, where Guild members provided food for vendors, societies, and judges throughout the weekend. Additional food was prepared for setup and show days, while the Judges' Luncheon was hosted at a nearby restaurant. The Guild rented tables for displays and food and supplied the exhibit barrier ropes.

The West Towne Merchants Association conducted a survey on business activity during show weekends and concluded that the event was beneficial to the mall. As a result, they provided a \$500 annual subsidy to offset expenses. With free parking and no admission fees, the Guild's only revenue came from table rentals, but the financial risk was minimal.

Eventually, new mall ownership introduced kiosks in the main corridors, eliminating the space required for the show. By 1996, Kathy Johnson was Guild President, Carmen Golde Vice President, and Susan Reed Treasurer. Kathy's experience as a show chair at West Towne and Carmen's business background proved pivotal. Carmen made an extensive search for a new venue, meeting with facility managers and evaluating potential sites.

Always in search of "that one special orchid," Carmen proposed a new name for the show: **Orchid Quest**. The leadership team agreed it was the perfect identity for the Guild's next chapter.

Carmen ultimately selected the Alliant Energy

Center as the most suitable venue, balancing space, cost, and logistics. Despite concerns about parking fees, ticketing, and the risk of charging admission, the Guild committed to a three-year trial. While there was no cash subsidy, the contract included a revenue split, complimentary electricity, tables, side rooms, draping, and show piping.

The inaugural Alliant show was a resounding success, featuring large exhibits from regional florists—some with running water features. Although some exhibitors initially included non-orchid plants (not permitted in AOS-judged exhibits), the displays added visual impact. Carmen collaborated closely with Alliant contact Ted Ballweg on advertising and logistics. Newspaper ads included a \$1-off coupon, and collected coupons confirmed strong public engagement. A television ad further boosted visibility.

Carmen's organizational skills set the standard for future shows. She created detailed binders for each operational area—plant check, raffle, admissions, and more—complete with staffing plans and task lists. She secured permits, arranged banners on Madison overpasses, introduced an orchidarium as a top raffle prize, and implemented systems that remain in use today.

Despite growing attendance and financial success, some members continued to question the venue. After extensive review, the Guild reaffirmed that Alliant was the best option. Over time, the show was refined, and the Guild steadily improved its capacity to host a large, professional event.

When the revenue-sharing period ended, Alliant required the Guild to pay venue fees but retain all admission revenue. Seeking sponsorship, John King's contact at American Family Insurance led to a long-term sponsorship that ensured financial stability. The feared show-canceling blizzard never materialized, and Orchid Quest never operated at a loss. Later, Orchids by the Acker's (later Orchid Garden Centre & Nursery) became a sponsor, though that part-

*(Continued on page 10)*

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nership ended as the business shifted its focus away from orchids.

Rising facility and parking costs prompted renewed venue searches. Vendor surveys indicated strong satisfaction with Alliant, and no clearly superior alternative emerged. To maintain financial health, the Guild gradually increased table and admission fees.

A comprehensive venue search resumed in 2014, building on earlier evaluations from 2011. Sites considered included major hotels, Olbrich Gardens, sports and conference centers, and university facilities. Each was assessed for space, parking, cost, accessibility, unloading logistics, and catering requirements. Ultimately, the Marriott West Conference Center hosted Orchid Quest in 2015 and 2016, offering reasonable rent and free parking, but the event was displaced by a large sports conference.

Olbrich Gardens hosted Orchid Quest beginning in 2017, offering free facility use in exchange for no admission charge, which required downsizing the event. Parking limitations worsened af-

ter site expansion. When Olbrich launched its own month-long orchid exhibition, "Orchid Escape," visitor volume exceeded capacity, and Orchid Quest was again forced to relocate.

By this time, organizers had learned that every venue presents trade-offs: low rent may come with mandatory catering costs, free parking may require paid monitoring, and ideal central locations often carry premium fees. Monona Terrace, once dismissed as "too beautiful and too central to be affordable," ultimately proved to be a transformative home for Orchid Quest. The move in 2025 revitalized the show, restored exhibit diversity, and provided a stunning setting.

Today, Orchid Quest continues its tradition as one of the premier orchid shows in the Midwest. Without Carmen Golde's vision, persistence, organizational skill, and leadership, Orchid Quest as we know it would not exist.

*Contributing to this article were Kathy Johnson, Wayne King, Carmen Goldie, Susan Reed, Judy Stevenson, and Lorraine Snyder*

**You know that you are addicted to orchids when you forego a vacation because there is no one you trust to take care of your orchids.**



Ted Ceplina's *Cattleya* Harmil 'Orange Glow' x *Guarianthe aurantiaca* 'Mishima Spot'



Jason Berry's *Paph. spicerianum* 'Enticing' x *Paph. spicerianum* 'St Albany's'

# Orchid Oddities: The Scorpion Orchids (Genus Arachnis)

The scorpion orchids comprise 15 species located in southeast Asia from China to the Philippines and south to Indonesia. There are also a number of hybrids, which is what I have. I have *Arachnis Maggie Oei* which is a cross between *A. hookeriana* and *A. flos-aeris*.

*Arachnis* are monopodial orchids related *Vandas* and *Phalaenopsis* but have unique characteristics. They are a climbing plant and have been observed climbing over 30 feet tall. Because of this climbing nature they frequently put out roots between the leaves, this allows the orchid keeping to top the plant as it gets too tall. The bottom portion will produce a side shoot and keep growing while the top half can be potted up to start a new division. You can't do that with your *Phalaenopsis*! That climbing habit also makes it able to handle many different light conditions. When starting out the plant may be shaded in the tree canopy but as it climbs it finds more and more sunlight to take advantage of so it can handle nearly full sun to significant shade conditions.

Because they like to climb, you can place their pot in with a larger plant you may already have

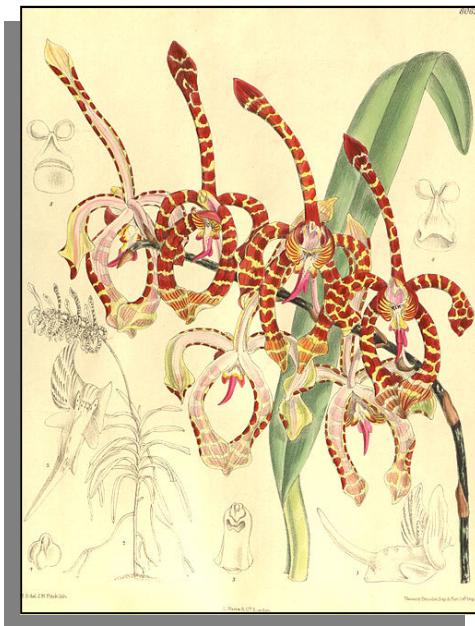
in your home like a fiddleleaf fig or a *Monstera*. I have mine next to a *Dracaena* that I hope it will climb as it grows.

*Arachnis* orchids like warmer conditions with temperatures ranging from 60-85° F and higher humidity like their natural habitats. They can grow quite rapidly and will respond to heavier fertilization than most orchids. Even though they like humid conditions they do prefer to dry out between waterings.

*Arachnis* can produce long inflorescences over four feet long with up to 25 flowers. They are fragrant and can last two months or more. The flowers resemble scorpions hence the common name of scorpion orchid.

The scorpion orchid is a relatively easy orchid to take care of and to propagate. It surprises me that they aren't more common. Imagine if we had an orchid display with dozens of 30 foot tall *Arachnis* orchids in bloom!

—Sean Stake



*Arachnis annamensis*



*Arachnis Maggie Oei* flower



*Arachnis Maggie Oei* variegated foliage