September

The Orchid Grower

Orchid Growers Guild of Madison

orchidgrowersguild.org

NEXT MEETING SEPTEMBER 20

Who will be the first to coax their 2026 Challenge Plant into bloom?
Photo—Ken Cameron

Welcome back to the Orchid Growers Guild monthly meetings!

We kick off the new season with a preview of the year ahead, a new format for Show and Tell, and a focus on this year's Challenge Plant, ***Brassidium* Kenneth Bivin 'Santa Barbara' AM/AOS** (*Oncidium cariniferum x Brassia arcuigera*). See more Challenge Plant details from Chuck Acker on page 4.

Meeting Dates

- September 20th
- October 18th

Meetings start at 1:00 pm at Olbrich Gardens unless otherwise noted

Up-Coming Events

- September 12-13, Wisconsin Orchid Society Show, Mitchell Park Domes, Milwaukee WI
- October 24-25, Eastern Iowa Orchid Society Show, Cedar Rapids IA
- February 6-7, Orchid Quest in conjunction with Mid-American Orchid Congress, Monona Terrace, Madison WI
- March 13-14, Batavia Orchid Society Show, Wheaton IL
- April 3-4, Northeastern Wisconsin Orchid Society Show, Menasha WI
- April 17-18 Illinois Orchid Society Show in conjunction with Annual American Orchid Society Meeting, Chicago Botanic Garden, Glencoe IL

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(Continued on page 2)

President's Message September 2026

I hope everyone is rested from all their summer activities! What a great Summer picnic we had at Token Creek County Park! It was so nice to be able to sit and visit and get to know people better. The day was perfect- until the rain rushed us out. Hopefully our orchids will get another month to benefit from outside weather and cooler fall temperatures that often initiate spikes! My personal collection took a hit from a summer storm that destroyed the natural shade provided by a huge locust, so some of my orchids are recovering from sunburn. Too bad there isn't an SPF for orchids!

As we start the new OGG meeting season, I'd like to mention a few things that will be the same and some that will be different. All of our meetings are currently scheduled to be held in the Commons on the 3rd Sunday of the month with the EXCEPTION of the February meeting which will be on the 4th Sunday, February 28th. Chuck will be bringing our next Challenge plant to our September meeting. (See his article elsewhere in this

(Continued on page 2)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

	Page
Away Show Apprentice Opportunity	3
Challenge Plants 2025 & 2026	4
Continue Learning About Orchids	13
Desert Oasis Surprise	11
June Picnic Show & Tell	7-8
Native Orchid Congress 2026	9-10
Ohio Valley Orchid Fest & MAOC	6
Orchid Quest 2027 Update	5
President's Message	1-2
Ribbon Judging News	3
Upcoming Events	12

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(Continued from page 1)

newsletter). Members Ted Ceplina, Roy Yaroch and Steven Liu are currently enrolled in the AOS judging program so Ken and Chuck will be calling on them to share some of what they are learning during the Show and Tell part of our meetings. We have the calendar of speakers already set with live in-person (hopefully!) speakers in October, November, February and May. We will once again have our annual Santa Chuck Holiday Celebration at Rex's Innkeeper.

SEPTEMBER 20 MEETING SCHEDULE
Time is Approximate as Follows:

- 12:00 pm Doors Open for Setup
- 12:30 Socializing During Plant Judging
- 1:00 Meeting Begins; Announcements & Welcome
- 1:45 pm Show & Tell Table
- 2:15 Break
- 2:35 pm Chuck's 2026-2027 Challenge Plant Information
- 3:15 pm Closing Thoughts & Door Prizes
- 3:30 pm Meeting Ends

We are still looking for people to help experienced members set up away shows. This is a great opportunity to learn the subtleties of setting up a display at an AOS judged orchid show. Denise and Lorraine are heading up the WOS show in Milwaukee on September 13-14 and Ken is heading up the Iowa show on the weekend of October 24-25. Now would be the time to start getting your plants ready for the show by checking for bugs, proper nomenclature and staking for the best presentation of blooms.

OGG is as diverse a group as any healthy ecosystem. There are many niches that have yet to be filled. Have you thought about your role in our ecosystem?

— Meg Graham

Show and Tell . . .

Phragmipedium Karame (*besseae* x Jersey) from Patricia Jones.

Steven Liu's hybrid, *Cattleya* A-Ma Bilian, newly registered in memory of his grandmother (C. Caudabec 'Linwood' AM/AOS x C. Benin 'Pink Leopard').

First Away Show Coming Up Soon! Apprentice Opportunity

You've had all summer to enjoy your blooming orchids. Now the time is approaching to share them with others! The first orchid show of the season is just over a week away —the Wisconsin Orchid Society's annual show at The Domes in Milwaukee on September 12-13. An email request for orchids will be out shortly.

In the meantime prepare your blooms now! Stake up those flower spikes and position your buds so they will open to their best advantage. A little preparation now can make a big difference when it's time for the show.

Denise and Lorraine will be transporting supplies and plants to the show on Friday, September 11. If you'd like to see what's involved in participating in an orchid show, consider tagging along. The Milwaukee show is an easy drive from Madison and is a great opportunity to get your "feet wet" and see how a show comes together.

Technology has streamlined many of the tasks. Plant and show registration are now handled by others, so you can concentrate on getting your plants there and creating an attractive display. And, of course, you'll get an early peek at all the wonderful plants the vendors have brought for sale!

Come along, lend a hand, learn the ropes—and enjoy the show!

Contact Denise Baylis denise.baylis221@gmail.com or Lorraine Snyder Lorraine.Snyder127@gmail.com if you would like to check out what is involved.

Ribbon Judging - Show and Tell News

When I mentioned at the summer picnic that we would be looking a little closer at the plants on the Show & Tell table, I realized some members got a little concerned. We are not aiming to intimidate anyone, but rather to continue our endeavor of teaching better nomenclature and how to stake your inflorescences.

We will be looking a little closer for proper nomenclature on your plant labels as well as on your judging slips; for example, the first letter in the genus should be capitalized, the first letter in the species should be lowercase, and quotations should be used for award and clonal names, along with the award designation if applicable. If we find errors, we will discuss how to correct them.

Here is an example of how this AOS awarded *Phragmipedium* species would be labelled - Phragmipedium longifolium 'Chuck's Choice' AM/AOS. And here is an example of an AOS awarded hybrid - Brassidium Kenneth Bivins 'Santa Barbara' AM/AOS.

We will also be looking a little closer at how your inflorescence was staked for the best flower presentation, as well as giving tips on how and when to start the staking process.

This will be good practice for us all and will really help when it comes to entering your plants into show exhibits. With the assistance of our new AOS apprentices Ted Ceplina, Roy Yaroch and Steven Liu, we have an amazing opportunity for us to learn more about the orchid judging process and how to better prepare our plants. This will be fun, informative and entertaining!

—Chuck Acker

2025 Chuck's Challenge Plant - Psychopsis Mendenhall "Hildos"

Kathy Johnson's Group A plant in bloom.

For those of you who were not at the summer picnic, I had made an announcement that our president Meredyth Graham was the first member to bloom one of the *Psychopsis* Mendenhall 'Hildos' FCC/AOS challenge plants from 2025. If you recall, there were two groups of these, plant **"A"** and plant **"B"** as they came from two different growers in Hawaii. Meredyth's plant was from the "B" plant group.

I had also mentioned at the picnic Meredyth decided to take herself out of the winner's circle for this challenge to allow for another member to be in the running for the "First to Bloom" prize. She was mostly in this challenge to prove to herself that she could grow and flower this genus after having a struggle with one in the past.

UPDATE! As of Wednesday July 29th at 5:02 PM, I received an emailed image from Kathy Johnson documenting her *Psychopsis* Mendenhall 'Hildos' FCC/AOS from group **"A"** in flower! CONGRATULATIONS KATHY! She will receive her prize for this challenge at the October meeting.

Because of the two groups of plants in this challenge there will be two prizes given out, one for "First to Bloom" from plant group **"A"** (Kathy Johnson) and one for "First to Bloom" from plant **"B"**. Be sure to submit a picture to me via my new email at chuckacker1@gmail.com if you flower a plant from group **"B"**! Prizes will be given out at the October meeting.

—Chuck Acker

UPDATE FOR THE NEXT ORCHID PLANT CHALLENGE!

Brassidium Kenneth Bivin 'Santa Barbara' AM/AOC

I have secured yet another AOS awarded plant for the next challenge! These plants will be distributed **AT THE SEPTEMBER 20 MEETING.** If you are interested in growing a plant of *Brassidium* Kenneth Bivin 'Santa Barbara' AM/AOS (one of the spider orchids) please bring your $10 to the September meeting. If you are unable to attend the September meeting, let me know via my new email at chuckacker1@gmail.com and I will set a plant aside for you to pick up at another time. Judging criteria for this challenge plant will be discussed in further detail at the September meeting. See you all there!

— Chuck Acker

Brassidium Kenneth Bivin 'Santa Barbara' AM/AOC at the grower. Photo—Orchid.farm

Orchid Quest 2027 Update

Orchid Quest 2027
Set-up: Friday, Feb. 5, 2027
Show dates: Saturday & Sunday, Feb. 6–7, 2027

As you may have heard, we are inviting the Mid-American Orchid Congress (MAOC) to pair up with Orchid Quest this coming year. What does that mean? It means we'll have many more expert orchid growers, including more orchid judges, attending Orchid Quest. Since we're now experts at running our show at Monona Terrace, we have no worries about showing off our beautiful show and location. We've even added a few extra events to Orchid Quest that should give even more "WOW" power to our show. You'll be finding out more about these events in the coming months. One of the specials is the Friday Show Preview and Night Market. I just attended this new addition to a show at the Ohio Valley Orchid Fest this past weekend, and let me tell you — what a blast it is to shop with other orchid enthusiasts, racing from vendor to vendor to grab a new *Mexipedium* here and a new Phrag variety there, all before being among the first to see the exhibits in their full glory.

Something to take advantage of now: We've reserved special rates at nearby hotels, with a limited number of rooms available — book now!
HILTON MADISON MONONA TERRACE
Book online: https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/orchid-quest-february-2027/
Or by phone: 800-445-8667
($129 / $139 with group code "94I")
EMBASSY SUITES MADISON DOWNTOWN
Book online: https://group.embassysuites.com/arxcmw
Or by phone: 608-740-6870
($119 with group code CESOQ7)

Terri Jozwiak
Orchid Quest Chair

At MAOC/Ohio Valley Orchid Fest, Meg Graham and Terri Jozwiak gave a quick promo for MAOC pairing with Orchid Quest at Monona Terrace in February 2027, and featured an Orchid Quest auction basket.

Ohio Valley Orchid Fest and MAOC

What a fun experience! I made the drive down with Ted Ceplina, and if you've ever spent hours in a car with someone who shares your passions, you know how the miles just melt away. Between orchids, Orchid Quest, hobbies, jobs, neighbors, and everything in between, the conversation never lagged — the long drive felt like nothing.

Friday's highlight was a talk by Frank Cevera of Monster Island Orchids, and it completely changed how I think about growing *Phragmipediums*. Turns out not all Phrags want the same conditions. Species like *schlimii*, *besseae* and *longifolium* thrive along fast-moving streams — constantly moist and shaded, but with plenty of airflow rushing past them. Others, like *caudatum* and *humboldtii* prefer the opposite: full sun and a well-drained loam mix. I came home and immediately reorganized my Phrag bench to give each plant the environment it actually wants.

Ted Ceplina and Chuck Acker looking over some orchids at MAOC - photo Meg Graham

I also got to spend time with fellow MAOC attendees — judges and seasoned growers from as far away as New York and Canada. Their depth of knowledge was humbling, but what struck me most was how generous they were with it. Everyone was eager to teach, and since I was eager to learn, I fit right in.

One of the highlights was trying my hand at "bench judging," a format used at smaller shows where plants are grouped and judged by variety rather than by exhibitor. I entered a *Bulbophyllum biflorum*, *Bulbo abbreviatum* and *Phrag* Sedenii 'Blush', all beautifully staged against black cloth backdrops by the Ohio Valley volunteers. My plants brought home two 3rd-place ribbons and one 2nd — and while several entries were pulled for AOS judging that weekend, only two ultimately received an award, a good reminder of just how high the bar even at a smaller show.

—Terri Jozwiak

Show and Tell . . .

"I purchased a healthy *Vanda falcata* and brought it home with high hopes. It took up residence under a mister, where I was certain it would thrive. Instead, despite all my good intentions, it slowly began to fade away.

As a last-ditch rescue attempt, I hung the plant inside a glass jar with a small amount of water in the bottom to create a humid microclimate. To my amazement, it responded. Before long, it was growing well and eventually rewarded me with blooms.

Now, the flowers are nothing like the spectacular displays on the plants grown by Ken Cameron or Jeff Metcalfe, but I couldn't be happier. This is the **first orchid I have ever managed to rebloom**. I usually leave that sort of success to Jeff, but this time even he threw up his hands—and somehow I ended up with the flowers!"

— Denise Baylis

June Picnic Show and Tell

Continuing past practice for the Annual Picnic, everyone who brings a plant is a winner!

Gary Lensmeyer	*Brassia* Hybrid
Lori Getter	*Brassocattleya* Hamlyns Magic 'Leilani' (*Catt*. Jalapa x *B. nodosa*)
Trinity Mikkelsen	*C.* Orchidglade 'SVO' x *C.* Candy Sparks 'High Color'
Nancy Thomas	*Dendrobium macrophyllum*
Sue Reed	*Dendrochilum cobbianum*
Benji Miranda	*Encyclia cordigera*
Sue Reed	*Miltoniopsis* Rene Komoda 'Pacific Clouds' (Edwidge Sabourin x *roezlii*)
Lori Getter	*Paphiopedilum* NOID
Lorraine Snyder	*Paphiopedilum parishii* x Sib
unknown	*Paphiopedilum rothschildiaum* x Paph (Bel Royal x *sanderianum*)
Meredyth Graham	*Paphiopedilum* Saint Swithin (*philippinense* x *rothschildiaum*)
Mary Kraft-Lee	*Phalaenopsis* NOID
Mary Kraft-Lee	*Phalaenopsis* NOID Seed Pod Pollinated 4/12/26
Sue Reed	*Phragmipedium* Chuck Acker (Eric Young x *wallisii*)
Dan Schmidt	*Phragmipedium kaieteurum* 'War Eagle' x self
Meredyth Graham	*Phragmipedium* Paul Eugene Conroy (*wallisii* x *longifolium*)
Benji Miranda	*Psychopsis* 'Mendenhall'
Meredyth Graham	*Psychopsis* Memoria Bill Carter x Self
Meredyth Graham	*Psychopsis* Mendenhall 'Hildos' FCC/AOS
Jeff Metcalf	*Vanda falcata*

Photographs by Amy Holt

Clockwise from top-left: Benji Miranda's *Psychopsis* 'Mendenhall' and *Encyclia cordigera*; and Nancy Thomas' *Dendrobium macrophyllum*

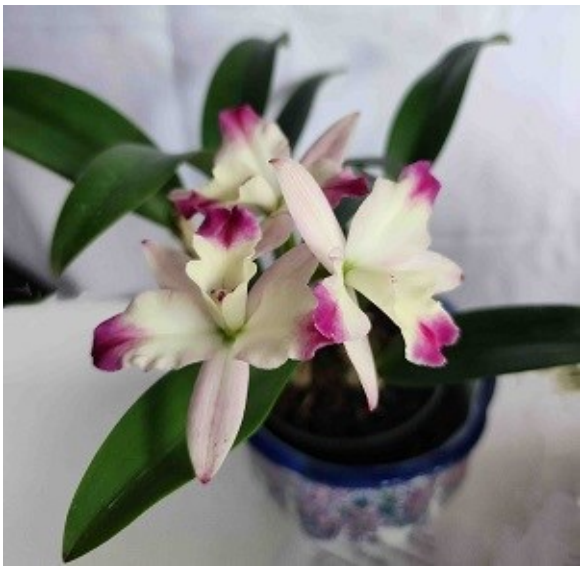
June Picnic Show and Tell

Dan Schmidt's *Phragmipedium kaieteurum* 'War Eagle' x Self

Sue Reed's *Dendrochilum cobbianum*

Jeff Metcalf's *Vanda falcata*

Gary Lensmeyer's *Brassia* Hybrid



Trinity Mikkelsen's *C.* Orchidglade 'SVO' x *C.* Candy Sparks 'High Color'

Native Orchid Congress, Green Bay

Probably ten years ago, OGG sponsored a field trip to The Ridges Sanctuary in Door County. Ever since that experience, I have considered Door County one of my favorite destinations for orchid hunting in early spring. Nevertheless, wherever I travel, I always keep my eyes peeled for an unexpected orchid growing in an unlikely place.

Since that first field trip, I have returned to Door County several times in the spring with friends. In addition to revisiting The Ridges, we have explored a number of other sites and have consistently been rewarded with orchid sightings. In some years, so many *Cypripedium parviflorum*—commonly known as the yellow lady's slipper or moccasin flower—have grown in the roadside ditch adjacent to The Ridges that highway crews seemed to mow them without concern.

When I learned that the Native Orchid Conference was being held in Green Bay this year and that field trips were being offered, I jumped at the chance to attend. Also representing OGG were Lorraine Snyder and Ken Cameron, who along with Scott Weber was one of the conference speakers, and fellow OGG member Brandon Corder.

The presentations covered a wide range of topics, including orchid conservation, the geology and biogeography of Wisconsin—particularly the Door County Peninsula—orchid reintroduction, habitat preservation, and methods for documenting orchid populations. Field trips were offered to sites managed by The Nature Conservancy, the Door County Land Trust, The Ridges, and other protected areas.

Ken, Lorraine, and I decided to team up and visit several recommended sites together. We were told that we would likely encounter certain orchids, but we would have to locate them on our own. Our search took us through conifer swamps, bogs, damp mixed forests, utility rights-of-way, and open fields. Along the way, we got our feet wet, tripped over deadfalls, and, on one day, hiked a total of ten miles. On a more leisurely excursion, we found *Corallorhiza striata* (striped coralroot) and yellow lady's slippers blooming near the rocky shoreline of Lake Michigan. In the end, we succeeded in finding at least one orchid species at every site we visited.

Ken Cameron, Lorraine Snyder and Denise Baylis at Toft Point State Natural Area

We were especially thrilled to discover a patch of *Corallorhiza trifida*, commonly known as green coralroot or early coralroot. This delicate, leafless orchid is considered uncommon throughout much of its range. Yellow lady's slippers were present at multiple locations—past their peak on the Green Bay side of the peninsula but still blooming strongly along the Lake Michigan shore. One colony of *Cypripedium arietinum* (ram's-head lady's slipper) had already finished flowering, while striped coralroot could be found at several sites.

At Toft Point there was helpful signage pointing to *Corallorhiza trifida*

We also located a patch of *Cypripedium acaule* (pink lady's slipper) in a state park. On his drive home, Ken found *Cypripedium reginae* (showy lady's slipper), Wisconsin's state flower, at several locations near Porterfield across the bay. In addition to orchids, as a bonus we saw wildflowers with a bota-

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9)

nist to identify them for us, and a northern leopard frog and a water snake.

Next year, the Native Orchid Conference moves west.

— Denise Baylis

Photographs by Denise Baylis, Ken Cameron and Lorraine Snyder

Cypripedium arietinum (ram's-head lady's slipper)

Cypripedium acaule (pink lady's slipper)

Cypripedium reginae (showy lady's slipper)

Corallorhiza striata (striped coralroot)

Cypripedium parviflorum (yellow lady's slipper or moccasin flower)

Corallorhiza trifida (green coralroot or early coralroot)

Desert Oasis Surprise

As I have noted in past articles, wherever I travel, I try to keep a lookout for orchids. My trip to the high desert of Utah and Arizona was no exception. Everywhere we encountered a reliable source of water—springs, seeps, or other wet places—I searched for them. Although we visited several such sites, I found only mosses and ferns and local wildflowers.

The very last seep we visited was in Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. The hike to the site took place in 100-degree heat under dry desert conditions. It was a 1.2-mile out-and-back trek along a well-marked trail of packed earth, sand, and short rocky climbs. The trail ended at a shaded alcove beneath an overhang of Jurassic-age Navajo Sandstone. Here, constant seepage had created a cool, surprisingly lush oasis in the middle of the desert.

Growing directly on the cliff face and on the ground below were maidenhair ferns, mosses, orchids, and other moisture-loving plants that thrive in this rare, permanently wet habitat. I was delighted to discover an orchid, which Ken Cameron later identified as *Epipactis gigantea* (giant helleborine). This species is native to western North America, ranging from British Columbia south to central Mexico. Finding it in such an isolated desert seep was a memorable conclusion to my orchid search on this trip.

Epipactis gigantea (giant helleborine)

This orchid is available to purchase at native plant nurseries and in fact Ken Cameron has one!

— Denise Baylis

A panorama shot of the seep under a rock overhang. It is at least 100 degrees just outside in the Arizona desert

Upcoming Events

Wisconsin Orchid Society Annual Show, Fall in Love with Orchids

September 12-13, Mitchell Park Domes Horticulture Conservatory, Milwaukee.

A special note to OGG members from Maneki Hill Orchids - We'll be attending the MOS show in September as a vendor and again will offer orchid friends the opportunity for pre-orders with no shipping costs. With the rising cost of shipping, every little bit helps. **The last day for pre-orders is Tuesday, September 8th** to allow us time to pack plants. Orders can be sent by email to:Scottelliottdaylilies@yahoo.com.

Don't use the website to order as it will charge you for shipping

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33rd Annual Chicagoland Orchid Fest

Chicagoland Orchid Fest

September 18th-20th, 2026, hosted by Orchids by Hausermann in Villa Park and Natt's Orchids in Naperville. Free Admission and Free Parking. Special sale items & refreshments available at both locations.

Guest Growers at each location will be offering plants for sale from all over the world. Nursery Gift Certificates valued at $600 will be awarded at the festival's conclusion. A total of five (5) winners will be drawn from participants who have visited both locations during the festival weekend. Winners will be able to choose from which nursery they wish to have their certificate issued. See festival website or contact participating grower for an application form. Look for festival special offers at both locations by visiting the festival website at www.chicagolandorchidfest.com

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The Eastern Iowa Orchid Society Presents:

ORCHIDS ARE A SCREAM 2026

An American Orchid Society Competition Halloween Themed Orchid Show & Sale

October 24-25, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.
Our 13th annual American Orchid Society Competition is a Halloween themed show. It features displays of hundreds of beautiful orchids exhibited by regional orchid societies, amateur hobbyists, and professional orchid growers from around the Midwest. Orchid related crafts and collectibles will also be displayed. Orchids and exhibits will be judged by American Orchid Society judges. A wide variety of orchids and collectibles will be for sale by regional vendors. Volunteers will be present to answer your questions about orchids, the displays and the AOS competition. The show is family friendly and offers an up-close look at some of nature's most exotic flowers – plus a little Halloween fun.

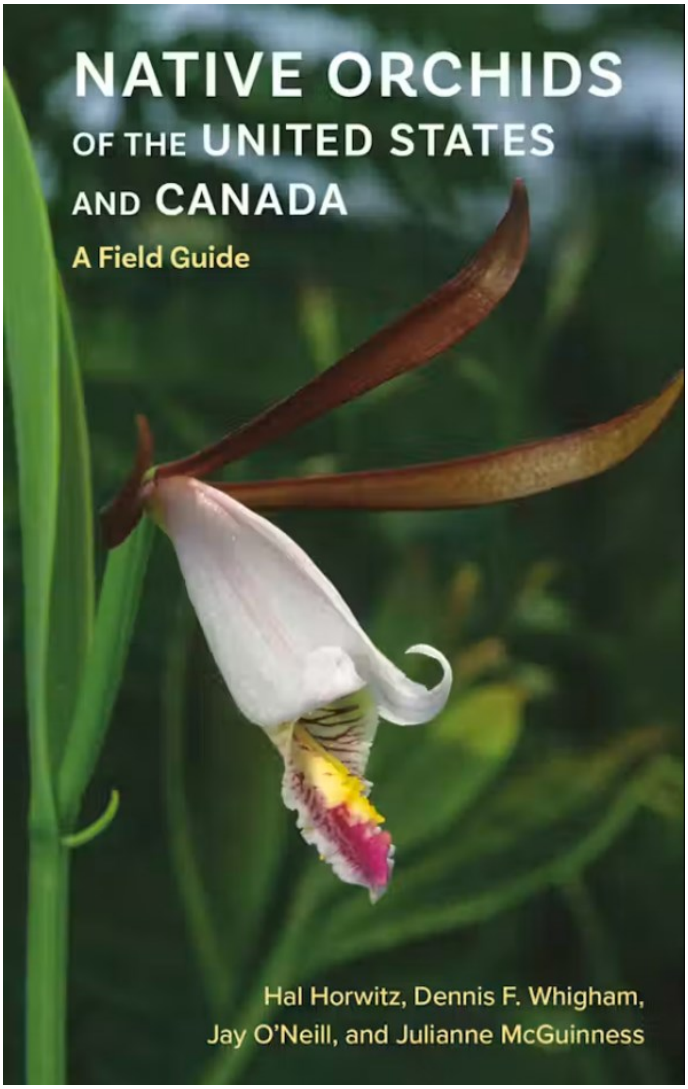
Continue Learning About Orchids

NEW NATIVE ORCHID FIELD GUIDE

Published in August 2026, ***Native Orchids of the United States and Canada*** **is a field guide to the more than 200 native orchids found across the United States and Canada.** From rarer species to orchids that even the casual hiker might stumble across, this comprehensive field guide includes detailed species accounts with distribution maps, conservation status, and ecological information, visual keys for readers new to orchid taxonomy, and traditional dichotomous keys.

Vivid photographs and helpful identification tools make *Native Orchids of the United States and Canada* the definitive resource for enthusiasts of all experience levels to discover this diverse, far-reaching, and colorful family of flowering plants.

Order from Cornell University Press at https://cornellpress.cornell.edu/book/9781501784330/native-orchids-of-the-united-states-and-canada/#bookTabs=1 (discount code 09FLYER)



American Orchid Society
Education. Conservation. Research.

Did you know that the American Orchid Society offers free webinars to AOS members AND nonmembers?

Upcoming webinars in September include:

- September 1—Greenhouse Chat with Ron McHatton. Orchid Q&A. Find answers to questions you did not even know you had.
- September 22—The Fascinating Flora of the Greek Island of Kythira – Including Many Orchids! With Alexander Kocyan. Discover Kythira's rich Mediterranean flora, from nearly 1,000 plant species to 55+ orchids, including highlights of the stunning *Ophrys* genus.

Register for these webinars or check out past webinar recordings at https://www.aos.org/webinars.