

NOVEMBER  
2024

# The Orchid Grower

Orchid Growers Guild of Madison

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



## Meeting Dates

- November 17
- December 15

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

## Up-Coming Events

- February 1-2, 2025 OQ
- March 1-2 Milaeger's Show
- March 8-9 Illinois show
- March 22-23 Batavia show

## Officers and Committees

### President:

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## NEXT MEETING, November 17th

**Better Water, Better Orchids! &**

**Erica Hannickel on "DIY Orchid Spaces for Cold Climates"**

### Better Water . . .

The Members Programming Committee (MPC) in conjunction with Erica Hannickel's November 17th program on "DIY Orchid Spaces for Cold Climates" will be doing a brief presentation on water quality.

Demonstrations will include how to measure pH, TDS (Total Dissolved Solids) and hardness (alkalinity) with the intent for members to learn how to test their water any-time at home. A printed handout will also be distributed to members

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### Orchid Spaces . . .

We are please to welcome back the author of The Orchid Muse, **Erica Hannickel**. Barring really bad weather she will be joining us in person.

Whether we call it a Wardian Case, terrarium, orchidarium, cart, or miniature orchid cabinet, a modified glass box with lights and a few other tools can help your orchids thrive in a dry, cold climate. With inexpensive and repurposed materials, you can DIY an orchid oasis

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hi OGG members,

Our orchid show season is over until Orchid Quest in February! Enjoy a breather as we get organized for our new venue!

I hope you all have sent your orders in for Peter Lin and have had a chance to view Guido Braem's lecture sponsored by the MAOC. If not you do have until **November 5** to view it.

Here is the link to the recording of Guido's talk from **Sunday**. The link will be live until **November 5th**.

[https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/ctsDRB2oroGHJG7p2XSACH\\_ESlhA7QqUq8f2pjooxZdqfWFDx4aaQ349jUInWa8s.2u8Ch\\_FKKpBM2tln](https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/ctsDRB2oroGHJG7p2XSACH_ESlhA7QqUq8f2pjooxZdqfWFDx4aaQ349jUInWa8s.2u8Ch_FKKpBM2tln)

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**Web Master:**

Jason Berry  
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**Liaisons:**

AOS: Nancy Thomas  
MAOC: Lynn West

## NOVEMBER PROGRAMMING NOTES TIMES APPROXIMATE

12:00	Doors open for plant setup, water prep and socializing
1:00-2:00	Announcements; Member Programming: Water quality
2:00-2:15	Break, orchid viewing, socializing
2:15-3:15	Speaker Erica Hannickel
3:15	Door prizes

(Continued from page 1) **WATER**

to take home for future reference on this topic.

Interested members are asked to bring approximately 1 cup of the water used for their orchids (without added fertilizer or other supplements) in a clean plastic or glass container. If there is not enough time to test all the samples brought in, Chuck will take the labeled water samples home and return the results to each member via email. Looking forward to seeing you all soon!

— Chuck Acker, Meredyth Graham & Ken Cameron (MPC)



(Continued from page 1) **SPEAKER**

attractive enough to display in your home.

**Erica Hannickel** is a master gardener, nonfiction author, former professor of history, and current grant writer for Ashland County, Wisconsin. An orchid enthusiast for more than 20 years, she currently grows about 150 orchids at home on two baker's carts and in a miniature orchid cabinet. Her most recent book *Orchid Muse: A History of Obsession in Fifteen Flowers* (W.W. Norton & Company, 2022) chronicles little-known stories of orchids involving empresses, artists, enslaved people, and naturalists from around the world. The book was long-listed for the 2023 PEN/E.O. Wilson Literary Science Writing Award, short-listed for the 2023 Wisconsin Library Association Non-fiction Award, and won the 2023 Council on Botanical and Horticultural Libraries Literature Award."

(Continued from page 1) **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Passcode: Maoc2024!

I am also able to have recordings of our recent meeting available for a few weeks. But only the recent ones. If you are interested in a later speaker zoom presentation, If I know the date I can download it to your memory stick.

I greatly appreciate all who help out at the meetings and who have taken charge of various parts of the meetings.

Chuck's challenge plants are a great addition as well as the Ken's discussion on the orchids brought in to the meetings. Our meetings are very busy and I hope enjoyable for all.

See you at our next meeting November 17th at Olbrich!

— Sue

*Congratulations All!*

*Here are the results from the EIOS 2024 judging. Lots of ribbons and a few VERY Special Awards. Special congratulations to Brook who took home not only a Best of Class but the People's Choice Award as rewards for sending plants to a show for the very **First Time**! And Chuck, I love that we can almost count on you to garner an AOS Award, and this time two of them--Fantastic! Thanks to everyone for sending your plants. Our displays are looking so good recently because of your plants--and this one got a First! — Nancy Thomas*

## **EASTERN IOWA ORCHID SOCIETY RESULTS**

**Set/Up and Take/Down: Jim Wasser, Jeff Metcalf, and Ken Cameron**

### **Best of Class, Special Award: Peoples Choice, First Place**

Brook Johnson      *Paph. Reverend Canon Mari (Kolosand x philippinense fma. Alboflavum)*

### **Award of Merit/AOS, Certificate of Cultural Merit/AOS, Second Place**

Chuck Acker      *Phragmipedium Mem. Ann Stuckey (Silver Eagle x pearcei)*

### **First Place**

OGG      Exhibit  
Christina Keeley      *Phalaenopsis* (Unknown hybrid (pink))  
Jeff Baylis      *Paphiopedilum* (Hampshire Cocoa Bean '11-12' x *fairrieatum*)  
Jeff Metcalf      *Bl. Yellow Bird (B. nodosa x Bc. Richard Mueller)*  
Jeff Metcalf      *Cymbidium dayanum*  
Ken Cameron      *Paphiopedilum philippinense alba* 'Green Tea' AM/AOS  
Ken Cameron      *Habenaria* Galah 'Full Moon' (*carnea* x *janellehayneana*)  
Ken Cameron      *Galeandra greedwoodiana* 'SVO Purple Lips'  
Ken Cameron      *Masdevallia erinacea*  
Meg Graham      *Paphiopedilum* Song of Love (*liemianum* x *lowii*)

### **Second Place**

Brook Johnson      *Paph. Philip's Song (Hsinying Anita x philippinense fma. Roebelini)*  
Christina Keeley      *Vanda Siriporn Pink 'Tony' (East More x Fuchs Delight)*  
Chuck Acker      *Phragmipedium* Jordan's Peach Tango 'Acker's Sunray' AM/AOS  
(Acker's Sunbeam x *d'alessandroi*)  
Chuck Acker      *Phragmipedium besseae* 'Peruvian Sunset'  
Ken Cameron      *Habenaria* Jiaho Yellow Bird (*rhodocheila* x *medusa*)  
Ken Cameron      *Habenaria xanthocheila*  
Ken Cameron      *Galeandra dives*  
Ken Cameron      *Phal. Jordon Winter* ('Ft. Lauderdale' x 'AQ Group') (Citrus Candy x Krull's Red Bird)  
Ken Cameron      *Porrovalia* Eva's Pacificadora (*Masdevallia coccinea* x *Porroglossum nutibara*)

### **Third Place**

Chuck Acker      *Phragmipedium* Acker's Meredyth 'Chuck's Muse' AM/AOS (Priscilla's Pirouette x *kovachii*)  
Chuck Acker      *Phragmipedium* Bubble Gum 'Windy Hill' AM/AOS (Hanne Popow x Silver Eagle)  
Gerald King      *Phal. FANGtastic News (bellina f. coerulea* x Mituo Golden Tiger)  
Jeff Baylis      *Phrag. dalessandroi* ('Acker's Flamenco Dance' x 'Firefly')  
Ken Cameron      *Paphiopedilum* Hsinying Alien (Supersuk Eureka x Raisin Pie)  
Ken Cameron      *Alcra. Hilo Ablaze* 'Hilo Gold' HCC/AOS (*Mtssa Olmec* x *Onc Mantinii*)  
Ken Cameron      *Vanda falcata* 'Meiouden'  
Ken Cameron      *Porroglossum sororcula*  
Meg Graham      *Phragmipedium* Silver Eagle 'Pink Frost' AM/AOS (*schlimii* x *czerwiakowianum*)



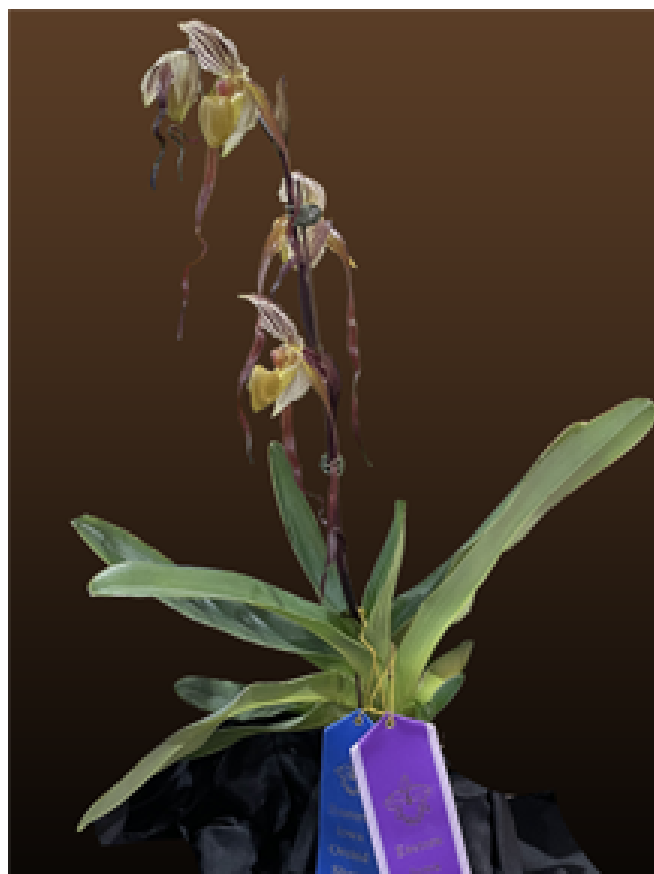
OGG Exhibit  
at the Eastern Iowa Orchid Society Show



Jeff Baylis' *Paphiopedilum*  
(Hampshire Cocoa Bean '11-12' x  
*fairrieatum*)



Chuck Acker's orchids post-show. *Phragmipedium* Mem.  
Ann Stuckey (Silver Eagle x *pearcei*) [the white one] earned  
two AOS awards



Brook Johnson's *Paph.* Reverend Canon Mari (Kolosand x  
*philippinense* fma. *Alboflavum*) won Best of Class, Special  
Award: Peoples Choice, and First Place



# OCTOBER OGG RIBBON JUDGING

## First Place

Amy Holt  
Susan Reed  
Gary Lensmeyer  
Nancy Thomas

Susan Reed  
Amy Holt

David Niven  
Jeff Baylis  
Susan Reed  
David Niven  
Wanda Buckingham

*Bulb* Elizabeth Ann 'Buckleberry' (*rothschildianum* x *longissimum*)  
*Dracula amaliae*  
*Galeandra dives*  
*Ionocidium* Popcorn 'Highland' (*Gomesa flexuosa* x *Ionopsis utricularioides*)  
*Lycaste Macrophylla*  
*Oncidium* Sweet Sugar 'Emperor' (*Oncidesa Aloha Iwanaga* x *Gomesa varicosa*)  
*Phrag* (*sargentianum* x Sorcerer's Apprentice)  
*Phrag* Fritz Schomburg (*kovachii* x *besseae*)  
*Phrag* Fritz Schomburg (*kovachii* x *besseae*)  
*Phrag* Harold Koopowitz (*rothschildianum* x *malipoense*)  
*Vanda* Jairak

## Second Place

Lynn West

Lc. Bowri-albida 'Pink Lady' (*Cattleya bowringiana* x *Laelia albida*)

## Third Place

Wanda Buckingham  
Wanda Buckingham

*Cymbidium* unknown  
*Encyclia* unknown

## For Display

No Slip  
Lynn West  
Alice Peterson  
Unknown

*Phal* Kenneth Schubert 'Hualien Blue Wave' (*pulcherrima* x *violacea*)  
*Phal* no ID not for judging  
*Phal* no ID not for judging  
*Vanda* Nana



Vanda Nana



Susan Reed's *Dracula amaliae*



David Niven's *Phrag* Harold Koopowitz (*rothschildianum* x *malipoense*)

# Gomesa Challenge Recap and Congratulations

Thank you to everyone who brought their *Gomesa* Jiaho Queen 'Jia Ho' FCC/AOS for the final judging. What a great turnout and learning experience! Congratulations to Ken Cameron for 'First to Bloom', Lisa Bane for 'Most Robust Grown' and Kathy Johnson for 'Most Interestingly Grown' plant.

I summoned Liz Barlow and Sean Stake to assist me with the judging of the 'Most Robust Plant' and 'Most Interestingly Grown Plant.' Their input, reasoning and conversation with the members involved all the aspects of why we made the choices that we did. Thank you Liz and Sean for your assistance and input!

Other plants of interest that caught my eye were grown by Gary Lensmeyer who brought in the only mounted plant. This was a well grown specimen and was a prize contender as well. Thank you Gary for your effort in mounting and growing your plant! Damon Smith brought a plant that was grown semi-hydroponically in a tall clear glass vase which was also unique and caught my eye for a contender as well. Way to go Damon!



The many other plants brought in ranged from perished to others grown in very unconventional media. I was very pleased to see all of those plants and could have easily taken another hour to talk about them!

Your initial response and participation to this challenge as well as your participation in the results is exactly what I am seeking for these challenges. I'll be looking forward to seeing many of your *Gomesa* Jiaho Queen 'Jia Ho' FCC/AOS on the Show & Tell table throughout the coming year. Thank you everyone! Happy growing,

— Chuck Acker

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## 'FIRST TO BLOOM'



Ken Cameron, "I alerted Chuck that my *Gomesa* challenge plant was in flower on April 20. I had been in China the two weeks before and knew that it would open while I was away. It produced six flowers. I am growing it in long fiber New Zealand Sphagnum moss in a plastic pot slightly larger than what it arrived in. The plant was watered once per week with RO water and occasional dilute fertilizer. It quickly grew long thick roots that were poking out of the drainage holes. I grow my orchids under inexpensive LED bright white shop light tubes in my basement on a 12 hour timer. Daytime temperatures reach the upper-70s and nights drop to the upper-50s. A fan circulates air in my grow tent which maintains relative humidity of ca. 70%."

## 'MOST ROBUST GROWN'



Lisa Bane, "I was excited to participate in my first Chuck's challenge. In Spring, upon seeing that several members had blooms, overheard the "bloomers" say they had their plants in pure sphagnum moss. When I got home, I decided to repot from pure orchidata to moss. When I brought my Gomesa Jiaho Queen to the October meeting, I did notice a small root popping up and a sprout, but still thought my plant was just coming along. I took solace in that it didn't die nor did its leaves look shabby in any way. I was shocked to hear Chuck announce #20, my plant, as the most robust grower. Now I am encouraged and excited to see whether she'll shoot up a lovely dancing lady!"

## MOST INTERESTINGLY GROWN'

Kathy Johnson, "I grow a large variety of plants and I need them to fit into my life. I did use rainwater this year, and Osmocote plus time-release fertilizer. I do get plant lights when there is a deal on Amazon so maybe not the best and my sunroom sits at the south-east corner of my house (where I also do Yoga, Tai Chi, puzzles and anything to do with the computer.) There are short periods of bright light but mostly dappled shade (there are 11 100-yr old white pines across the back yard). I do talk to my plants and sing along to music that is playing."



## MOUNTED PLANT ALSO INTERESTINGLY GROWN



Gary Lensmeyer, "After receiving the Oncidium challenge plant last year, I decided to experiment with mounting the orchid rather than putting it into a pot. My rationale was to minimize root rot and provide greater aeration of the roots. The mounting material was a plastic sheet full of evenly-spaced holes (purchased from Natt's orchids). The holes supposedly hang on to water drops that slowly evaporate and provide humidity to the plant. Small zip ties were used to secure the orchid to the plastic mount. A small amount of wet sphagnum moss was wrapped around the roots and the plant was tied to the plastic. After about a month, I noticed that the leaves were shriveling a bit, even though the mount was watered daily. In order to supply moisture that can be held on the mount for a longer time, I surrounded the mount with a plastic mesh with little bit of added bark placed inside, leaving the moss intact. Up to now, the mount was receiving a lower level of light (30 PAR) as evidenced by leaves that were too green. Recently, I moved the orchid to a higher level of light (125 PAR) provided by LED lights on for 12 hours. Stay tuned for the results!"



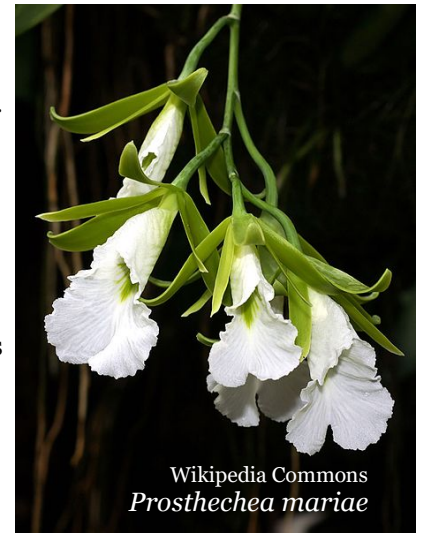
# Chuck's Challenge: *Prosthechea mariae*

For those not aware, Chuck's challenge plant this time is unusual and has a complex history to match.

Our challenge plant was first described in 1937 as *Epidendrum mariae*. At the time, *Epidendrum* was still something of a catch-all genus for New World epiphytic orchids. It has since been known as *Encyclia mariae*, and recently placed in *Prosthechea*. Most recently, it was placed in a new genus, *Euchile*, based on genetic evidence. However, it is most commonly known as *Prosthechea mariae*. The proposed genus *Euchile* has only two species, *mariae* and its sister species, *citrina*.

*Euchile mariae* and *Euchile citrina* were placed in their own genus based on genetics. However, they share a number of characteristics that set them apart from other *Prosthechea* that made them hard to classify in the past. *Euchile citrina* was first described and classified as a *Cattleya* in the 19th century. It remained as a *Cattleya* until fairly recently. Both have pendent flowers of similar size and shape. Both are fragrant. Both have a pendent growth habit, and grey-green foliage at high light levels. Both are exclusive to Mexico, and are found in dry oak forests in the Sierra Madre. *E. mariae* is found in northern Mexico on eastern mountain slopes between 1000 m and 1200 m. *E. citrina* is from central and southern Mexico, found on the western slopes of mountains between 1300 m and 2600 m in elevation. Of the two, *citrina* has the more in-

teresting flower but I found it harder to grow. Way back when, I had both plants I bought from Andy's Orchids, mounted as *Euchile*. I grew them hanging in a south facing window; both bloomed several times but over the years I lost them. Back then, I did not have a misting system. Both tend to want to grow pendent with both leaves and flowers. In high light, the leaves turn grey-green with a matte finish.



Wikipedia Commons  
*Prosthechea mariae*

I always liked both, but they are very hard to find; credit Chuck's connections for making them available to us!

Growing advice online is that they want high light levels, brighter than *Cattleyas*. Water well when actively growing, and give them a cool, dry rest in winter but high light levels. They may drop their leaves. The rest is necessary to produce blooms.

Cheers-Jeff Baylis

## October Meeting Summary

Peter T. Lin, owner of Diamond Orchids, was the speaker for the October member meeting. Peter has generously offered a 10% discount to OGG members and the Guild will pay shipping costs for members who participate in the group order. This offer is valid for about 2 weeks after the October meeting. Orchids will be shipped to Lynn West and the plants will be brought to the November meeting for pickup. If it is not possible to pick up plants at the meeting, arrangements will be made for an alternative pickup.

Peter specializes in mini orchids, primarily mini Catts, many of which are from his own breeding program, as well as vandas, dendrobiums, and neofinetia. Mini Catts are less than 6 inches while micro-minis are about 3 inches. In addition to taking up far less space than standard *Cattleyas*, some can bloom two to three times per year with relatively large flowers. They come in many of the same colors as standard *Cattleyas* although white varieties are not common. They generally grow to blooming size in three to four years from unflasking. Since mini Catts are mostly seed grown, each seedling will be unique.

Peter's advice for growing mini Catts:

1. Fertilize with a general orchid fertilizer from spring through fall at a rate of ¼ tsp per gallon of water.
2. Use seedling bark mixed with 25% perlite. For temperamental varieties, sphagnum moss in a clay pot may improve growth. Mini Catts can be mounted, but this will require more frequent watering and higher humidity.
3. Repot plants when new root growth has started but is still small. Mini Catts seem to do best when potted in 3-inch pots. In pots larger than 3 inches the center medium may stay too wet leading to root rot. It may be advisable to divide a large plant rather than upsizing the pot for the whole plant. Gently shake off the old bark and avoid damaging the roots. Each division made with a sterile cutting tool should have at least three bulbs. Even if the plant is in bud, it's better to sacrifice the bud than to repot at the wrong stage of root development. Do not bury the rhizome. Dry bark is easier to settle into the pot, but wetting the perlite will lower the dust.



# Orchid Quest Update

Orchid Quest 2025 is February 1-2 with set-up on Friday, January 31. Please plan to take off work or be available on some or all those days.

Lots of ideas are being discussed and you could be part of the discussion.

**Our next planning meeting will be on Tuesday, November 12 at 7 pm on Zoom.**

At that time, I would like to discuss the list of vendors that committed to coming, (we cannot discuss layout until vendor list is complete) the speaker list thus far, promotional items to be purchased:

1. Magnets to be given away & contest to pick the photo on them
2. Stuff to sell with logo: like bags, magnets with pad of paper, or pots, mini bag chip clip
3. Items for display in Monona Terrace like a huge orchid poster for posing for photos in front of, fabric to hang or orchid baskets to hang. OGG table budget & purchases (like purchasing items w/o logo to sell at OGG table).

Do we need to rent a truck this year?

Please Help:

I still need someone to be in charge of ticket-taking. (You would NOT have to be at that table all the time, just set up the procedure of taking tickets and check in once in a while). Auction/Raffle items procurement - someone to help Lisa Linde collect items from donating businesses.

Do you have some business to approach to get some donations from? Let Lisa Linde know. It could be restaurants, novelty shops, or other businesses.

Do you have other thoughts or ideas. Contact:

— Terri Jozwiak

608-592-7906 or [lodijoz@charter.net](mailto:lodijoz@charter.net)



# Orchid Quest 2024 - Silent Auction

Please bring your donations to the November/December/January OGG meetings along with the completed donation form. Judy Williamson and I will be accepting donations at the club meetings. If you cannot attend the meeting, we can also make arrangements to meet up with you to accept your donations.

We are looking for the unique items you think would be desirable for the Silent Auction such as art pieces, pictures, clothing, jewelry, or anything else that you would like to contribute to this major fundraiser for the Orchid Guild.

Donation forms providing information on the name of the item, special information describing the item, and how much the minimum bid should be will need to be filled out for each item and will also be available at the club meeting. If you have any questions about filling out the forms or possible donation items, please feel free to ask Judy or myself.

We will also need volunteers to help set-up and run the silent auctions on Saturday and Sunday. Jobs that we need help with include setting up the auction tables on Friday, running the auction on Saturday and/or Sunday, and teardown on Sunday. One thing we did discover last year is that we will need **A LOT of help** to close down each auction on Saturday and Sunday. This will require people who can help identify winning bids, wrapping items, organize items according to the highest bidder, and help collect money from the winners. The more people willing to help make this event a success will make the work lighter, the event more fun, and enable everyone to enjoy the show.

— Carrie Wiesman

The editor would like to thank everyone who helped make this newsletter possible including but limited to Carrie Wiesman, Chuck Acker, Cynthia Wadsworth, Jeff Baylis, Jeff Metcalf, Ken Cameron, Lynn West, Meredyth Graham, Nancy Thomas, Sue Reed, Terri Jozwiak, Amy Holt, and Brook Johnson.

# Orchids in Oz

By Ken Cameron



In early September I attended the 8<sup>th</sup> International Orchid Conservation Congress held in Perth, Western Australia. I have participated in several of the prior congresses (e.g., in Costa Rica, England, and Reunion), but was especially looking forward to this one because September marks the start of

spring in the Southern Hemisphere and Western Australia is a global biodiversity hotspot with a rich and unusual flora represented by plant families, genera, and species found nowhere else on Earth. The orchid flora of the SW corner of Western Australia is especially diverse, with at least 451 different species documented.

As you can imagine, travelling to Perth is an exercise in stamina involving a 3 hour bus trip from Madison to Chicago, then a 5 hour flight to Los Angeles, 15 hour flight to Sydney, followed by a 5 hour flight to Perth, with several hours of layover between stops. The congress, itself, was held on the campus of Curtin University not far from the King's Park Botanical Garden in downtown Perth, where historically there has been a strong and active program in ex situ conservation of native orchids (involving seed germination and re-introduction of young plants back to the wild). The theme of this congress was "A Minute to Midnight" which emphasized the fact that the clock is ticking and time is running out for so many orchids around the world. Habitat loss, poaching, invasive species, and climate change, among other threats, continue to grow year after year. Many orchids are threatened with extinction. Nevertheless, the majority of keynote speakers and other conference presentations showcased both warnings and examples of success in the area of orchid conservation. My talk, on day three, focused on my lab's work

at the UW-Madison to protect native *Vanilla* species in the Florida Everglades. It was uplifting to hear about the innovative research being done around the world – from Kenya to Canada – to help protect native orchids in a rapidly changing world.

The real highlight of the trip, however, was a three day fieldtrip organized by Andrew Brown, author of "The Complete Orchids of Western Australia" to dozens of protected sites around the region. The day before the fieldtrip bus was scheduled to depart, however, was free, and I was determined to use it in order to check something off my personal life list, knowing I might never have the chance again. Endemic to just a few swamps in this tiny SW corner of Australia is a rare and truly bizarre carnivorous plant – the Albany pitcher plant (*Cephalotus follicularis*). I grow it under lights at home, but I have always dreamed of seeing this plant in its native habitat. With a bit of trepidation and excitement, I rented a car in Perth and drove 5 hours on my own south toward Albany on the coast, checking myself constantly to remember to stay on the left side of the road! Local botanists had given me GPS coordinates of a few possible sites. The first place where I pulled over was in the middle of nowhere and I gazed across a vast landscape of strange trees and shrubs that had

(Continued on page 11)



Albany pitcher plant  
(*Cephalotus follicularis*).



(Continued from page 10) **OZ**

burned several months earlier. 15 minutes after I started hiking I thought to myself, “how in the world am I going to find this needle in a haystack? This is crazy.” But, I did not give up and just as I got to far side of the property I looked down and there it was! I really can’t convey to you the joy of discovery I felt in that moment (I may even have shed a little tear). I could have stayed at that place for hours studying the sundews, orchids, and other weird flora, but sunset comes early at that time of year and I had been warned repeatedly not to attempt driving the rural roads after dusk because of kangaroos that will jump out in front of your car and cause extreme damage. Indeed, on the way home I saw half a dozen ‘roos, but the only thing that ever ran out in front of me was an big emu bird! – I’m not kidding.

The next morning I met up with about 30 orchid enthusiasts from every corner of the world as we started our exciting bus tour. I don’t have space

here to recount what we saw at each stop along the way, but can give an example. On day one, alone, driving from Perth to Hyden and making four stops we saw 39 different orchid species! Known locally by their common English names, these included various spider orchids, jug orchids, greenhoods, sun orchids, and the incredibly glossy and beautiful purple enamel orchid (*Elythranthera brunonis*). Each day of the trip was better than the one before.

What a privilege over three days to make new friends, spend time with old ones, and to see orchids in every color of the rainbow. Did I mention the black cockatoos? Incredible! As I look back at my photos I am reminded of Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz when she asks, “Do you suppose there is such a place, Toto? There must be. It’s not a place you can get to by a boat or a train. It’s far, far away — behind the moon — beyond the rain — Somewhere, over the rainbow.” That’s Australia. That’s Oz.



an assortment of native orchids  
from Western Australian