

Overtures

A Communication Instrument for Society Members and other Interested Parties

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Stimulating interest in Orchids and their culture as a nonprofit, educational organization...

Special Points of Note

- Growing with Tough Love
- Irene Bergal's Show and Tell
- Tentative Schedule of Events 2006
- On the Slate for February
- Website Updated: Arkansas Native Orchids now Online

The Orchid Society of the Ozarks meets the 4th Sunday of each month. Annual dues: \$10.00 for individual and \$15.00 for joint membership.

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Sometimes, Growing Takes Tough Love...

By Louis Aszod

It's no secret: those of you who know me know that I'm a "nurturer." I'm a "caretaker," one of those bleeding-heart souls who tries to make it his business to ensure that "everything and everybody is okay."

This is a particularly irritating trait of mine I have tried hard over the years to suppress. Nobody really likes to be watched that closely. No healthy person really needs that kind of fanatical devotion. Those people

who do, very often fail to return a satisfying result.

It is no wonder, then, that my first forays into orchid growing met with disaster.

I remember bringing my first plant home years ago: what an exciting prospect! I swore to myself that I would take the most excellent care of it. I placed it in a room whose air no offending breeze would ruffle. Expensive humidifiers puffed and whirred, fog-

ging the windows morning, noon, and night. Lamps of just such a wattage were hung just so, at just such a distance. Water, treated, boiled, decalcified, dechlorinated, then nutrient-infused was provided at a constant rate and misted—tenderly, lovingly—over the leaves.

I visited this plant at least twice a day. I spoke to it and serenaded it with Bach and Beethoven. I waited for a change, some luxuri-

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Show and Tell

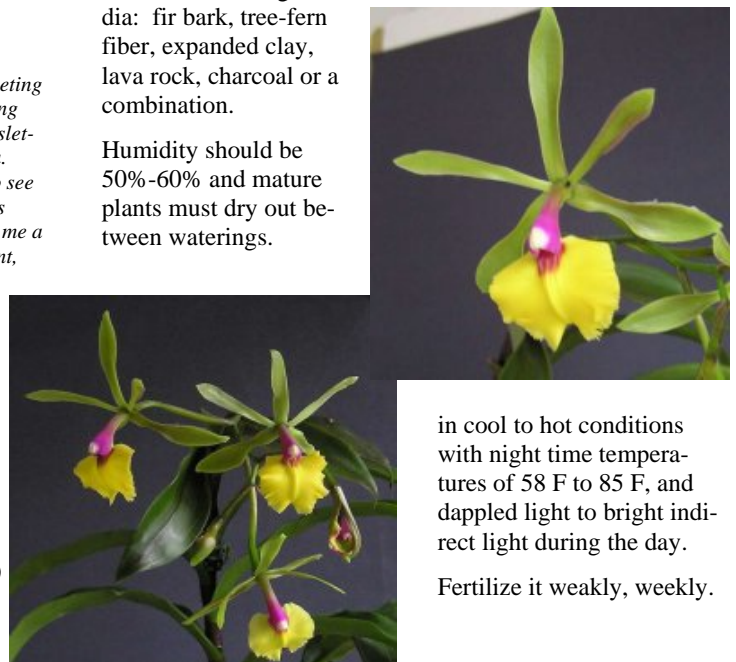
Photos and text by Barbara Chance and Irene Bergal

Editor's Note: Irene approached me at our last meeting with the suggestion of putting Show and Tell into the newsletter. I think it's a great idea. Members who would like to see their orchid-growing efforts exhibited here, please send me a couple pictures of your plant, along with a brief, possibly researched synopsis of its care and needs. Thanks Irene!

Grow this plant in a porous, free-draining media: fir bark, tree-fern fiber, expanded clay, lava rock, charcoal or a combination.

Humidity should be 50%-60% and mature plants must dry out between waterings.

This hybrid grows happily



in cool to hot conditions with night time temperatures of 58 F to 85 F, and dappled light to bright indirect light during the day.

Fertilize it weakly, weekly.

Epc. René Marqués
'Flame Thrower'
HCC/AOS

(Epi. pseudopiden-
drum X C. Claesiana)

Tough Love

(Continued from page 1)

ant burst of growth or bloom whose size and color would make concrete the depth of my devotion.

The plant—horrid, ungrateful thing—did nothing. Soon, humidity peeled the paint from the walls. It lifted the parquet from the floor. Algae on the growing medium, at first charmingly entwined between the interstices of peat and bark, suddenly ballooned into dark, dripping masses as if dosed by alien radiation. I was growing the Sludgepile from Sirius on my tabletop.

After months of an orchidaceous performance decidedly lacking in verve and flair, the plant expired in two days. Two days! Day one saw the leaves turn yellow; day two saw the leaves fall off.

Old habits die hard. A couple of years ago, I brought home a *Cymbidium erythrostylum* that had been donated for our yearly OSO auction by Marilyn LeDoux of Windy Hill. Huge, gorgeous plant.

Mind you, over the past however-many years I've been at this, there has been only one orchid I could not bring to flower; move it, fertilize it, shake it, light it up as I might, no joy came forth, and I've since given the thing to Tom Larkin. Or maybe he bought it at the OSO's last auction; I can't remember.

In any case, I hung this specimen-sized

Cymbidium beside a Golden Elf that bloomed like clockwork in our greenhouse. As winter came on, I moved the plant to receive the chilling drafts that crept in by the greenhouse vent shutters:



a dose of cold to set spikes.

Nothing changed.

Vegetation usually doesn't anger me, but last spring, I put the plant out. "No more mamby-pamby for you," I mumbled at it. I hung the plant from the rafters of the latticework that roofs our deck and covered the lattice with a light shade cloth: clouds, sun, rain, dry, whatever happened, happened. Perfect.

We had somewhat of a drought last summer. Excellent! I took a perverse pleas-

ure in watching a third of those deep green leaves slowly lighten and drop. I brought the water hose to bear haphazardly. I fertilized the medium not at all. Summer turned to fall and fall to winter, and it was only with a grudging surrender to guilt that one evening before a predicted hard freeze, I took the plant back in.

The flowers in the picture have already begun to fade, but they've been open a good six weeks already, and anyway, I need the evidence. They're the last of seven or eight spikefulls we have had the pleasure of thoroughly enjoying.

Tough love. Benign neglect. Sometimes it's hard to give. For a dyed-in-the-wool caretaker like me, giving it inherently doesn't make much sense. It goes against the grain.

But if I think about it, it's the ups and downs in life that provide the richness,

that make the journey worth the travel time. Orchids seem to feel no differently. Maybe we each need to tough it out every once in a

while on our own. Sometimes, maybe that's what it takes to bloom our best.

It might take a while to get up the courage, but boy, once you do.....

"I was growing the Sludgepile from Sirius on my tabletop."

What's On the Slate for February 26th

Last month, Orchid Society of the Ozarks members voiced their preferences about what kinds of programs they would like to see scheduled, and "Grower Discussion Panels" was one of the top items on the list.

February sees the first of such round-table panels, where members can bring up concerns or invite comments about anything related to orchid growing. We expect a good turnout this month, given the number of members who voted strongly

for this kind of program.

Additionally, OSO member Olin Karch, an orchid grower for over 50 years, will be giving a slide presentation of events from the **Missouri Botanical Gardens** show and the **Missouri Orchid Society** show that was held the weekend of February 18th, 2006.



Olin Karch, a native orchid aficionado

Olin has taken some wonderful orchid photographs over the years, and these should prove to be no exception!

The food theme this month will be centered around casseroles, and, as always, we also need side dishes and desserts: salads, pastas, pies, cakes, or, something completely out of the ordinary and unexpected! An OSO meeting makes up the best part of a Sunday afternoon, so let's not go away hungry.

See you all on **February 26th at 1:30 p.m.**, and don't forget to bring your questions and topics for the first 2006 Orchid Society of the Ozarks round-table discussion panel!

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS: January 22—Planning the Year's Events

Most everyone likes games with prizes, and **Orchid Society of the Ozarks** members are no exception, especially when the prizes consist of orchid plants!



Thirty one members attended January's meeting, and after President Steve Marak concluded business with reports from respective committee chairs, the games began.

The program consisted of the year's event planning, and members were asked to write their event ideas down and submit them. Ideas were called out,



and those members whose ideas received the most votes won the prizes. Needless to say, we have a full bucket of programs scheduled for 2006, including an extra May picnic at the home of Olin Karch, along with a hike to see native orchids in bloom near his 25 acre homestead.

Out of a host of suggestions, two of the three speaker programs selected were Dottie Woodson



on Pests and Insecticides, and Gene Crocker from Carter and Holmes. Program Chair Tom Larkin has already firmed up Gene Crocker for our October 28 meeting, and is expecting responses from Dottie Woodson shortly with a date commitment. Tom is still working on the third speaker.

The membership also elected to have several meetings devoted to Panels on orchid culture, where questions related



to all aspects of orchid growing could be freely asked and answered. The first of these Panels will be held at our February meeting. Our tentative schedule for the year is outlined as follows:

February: Orchid Culture Panel

March: Potting techniques with different medias

April: Open until speakers commit

May: Open until speakers commit; possible OSO 10th anniversary celebration

May: (first weekend) picnic at Olin Karch's and a field trip for native orchids to the Buffalo River

June: Open until speakers commit

July: Orchid Culture Panel

August: American Orchid Society Slide Program

September: Annual Orchid Auction

October: Gene Crocker from Carter and Holmes

November: Open until Speakers commit.

December: Annual Holiday Party.

Our event planning game was very well received, so we will more than likely do a similar thing in 2007!



Tom Larkin brought his laptop and digital projector to the meeting and demonstrated a piece of database software called Orchidwiz that may very well be headed for becoming the best orchid educational tool yet devised. Not only does the software list plant parentage and awards, an obvious reference for Judges and serious growers, it contains a growing number of plant photos and some

cultural data which makes it a tool for every grower. A true Encyclopedia. Several members showed interest in purchasing the software: visit www.orchidwiz.com for all the details and pricing.



The meeting closed with many members congratulating President Marak for a job well done: this was the first meeting under his tenure as President!



Many thanks to all of our members who brought food and drink: our meetings wouldn't be half the events they are without you!



Important note: Dues are due! If you have not paid your dues for 2006, please bring a check or cash (\$10.00 for individual, \$15.00 for joint membership) to our February meeting!



ORCHID SOCIETY OF THE OZARKS

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***A non-profit, educational
organization stimulating interest in
orchids and their culture***

We're on the web!

www.osoweb.org

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The Orchid Society of the Ozarks came into existence with the Organizational Meeting of April 28, 1996, in which ten local orchid growers met with the purpose of forming the group. Since then, the Northwest Arkansas based Society's membership has grown considerably and now consists of over 100 members.

The OSO meets on the 4th Sunday of each month. Annual dues are: \$10.00 for an individual membership, \$15.00 for a joint membership.

For more information, please contact Membership Chairperson Lou Jasper at 479-855-4762, or, visit our website at www.osoweb.org and click the "Join" link.

What's Ahead

February 26, 2006, 1:30 p.m.

NTI, 709 S. Old Missouri Rd.,
Springdale AR. Regular Meeting.
Program: Discussion Panel, Or-
chid Show slides. **Food:** Casse-
roles

March 26, 2006, 1:30 p.m.

NTI, 709 S. Old Missouri Rd.,
Springdale AR. Regular Meeting.
Program: Potting Techniques
Food: TBA

Webnotes...

Orchid Society of the Ozarks member **Olin Karch** has submitted quite a bit of material on Arkansas' native orchids, including detailed descriptions and photographs of plants taken in situ. The website has been updated with Olin's native orchid booklet and a link to his Arkansas Orchid web page. Be sure to check out the "Arkansas Native Orchids" link when you visit the OSOWEB.

The website's Members Only area is password protected. If you have forgotten the Society's username and password please email me and I will send you this important information.

This is your society and you should take full advantage of all the special 'perks' included with your membership, such as this "Members Only Area".

The Back Porch: Tips, tricks and tidbits for orchid growers

Watering Vandas: Don't Skimp!

If you grow Vandas (and many of us who grow them mount them inside slatted teak hanging baskets), you're very familiar with their habit of letting their roots grow out between the slats to dangle for what seems miles. Be sure to water a

Vanda's roots thoroughly! The epithelial cells covering their spongy velamen make up a thick layer or barricade to keep their roots from drying up, and it takes plenty of water to open the pores of this layer and let moisture through. When the plants are initially dry, keep a spray of water aimed at the

roots until they turn from a creamy white to light green, so exposing their chlorophyll. Now, wait for about ten minutes, and water again with fertilizer. If you fertilize initially without waiting for roots to green up first, you're just wasting fertilizer: most of it will simply stream off without being absorbed!