



August, 2003

# OrchidView

Sarasota Orchid Society

Sarasota Orchid  
Society Meeting  
Monday, August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2003  
Marie Selby Botanical  
Gardens Activities Center

Jeff Higel, Cultural  
Session, 6:30 p.m.  
Harry Luther, of Selby  
Gardens, Speaker, 7:30 p.m.

## Cymbidiums

While the cattleya orchid used to universally grace wrist and gown at weddings, a far sturdier orchid has taken its place. The floriferous cymbidium has become the orchid mainstay of the cut flower industry beloved for its spikes of white, green, yellow, rose, and red flowers that sometimes last up to two months in water. The home grower who can give the cymbidium plant the cool treatment will be rewarded with astonishing winter and spring bouquets. Researchers claim cymbidiums are the oldest cultivated orchids. Grown in China. For more than 2,500 years, their graceful grassy leaves and flowers have been depicted in classic oriental art for centuries, and Confucius (551-479 B.C.) called them the "king of fragrant flowers". Today, many of the Oriental species are highly prized in the perfume industry. The 44 species of *Cymbidium* are native to China, Japan, Southeast Asia, Indonesia, India, and Australia.

Depending upon their native habitats, cymbidiums are generally divided into two groups; the high altitude cool growers that thrive in temperate climates with cool nights, and the more tropical species that prefer warmer conditions. Most of the large flowered hybrids widely grown today have cool Himalayan and Southeast Asian species in their lineage, so cool growing conditions still dictate success. While some species, such as *Cymbidium goeringii*, *C. lowianum* and *C. tracyanum*, are hardy enough to withstand temperature of 26 degrees F. when grown outdoors, most hybrids require night temperatures of no lower than 45 degrees F. especially in autumn when buds form, and not more than 85 degrees F. in the heat of summer days. However, many will tolerate temperatures of 95 to 100 degrees for short durations if given plenty of water and good air circulation. Crucial, however, is

the drop in temperature below 70 degrees F at night, even during the summer, or else buds will not initiate. Some growers contend that by delaying exposure to colder temperatures until winter months, cymbidiums bloom later. If cymbidiums do not form spikes before winter, they usually will not bloom at all, due to the lower light and shorter days of winter. People living in tropical climates may have difficulty getting cymbidiums to bloom but those living in colder areas will find a cool greenhouse, sun porch, or bright garage, just the spot for a big pot.



Cymbidiums need lots of light. To determine the amount, consult their grassy leaves. A light green shade sometimes tinged with red indicates the plant is getting the 3,500 - 4,000 footcandles of light intensity necessary for optimum bloom. Couple the high light with regular fertilizer. While most orchids are not heavy feeders, cymbidiums are exceptions and benefit from 20-20-20 fertilizer applied at ¼ strength with each watering, flushing out with plain water once a month. During bud development switch to blossom booster formula of 10-30-20 until flowering. Humidity of 50 percent or more also helps, as does an extremely well-drained potting medium.

Of 50 percent medium bark, 30 percent chopped sphagnum moss, and 20 percent perlite with a layer of stones or styrene foam on the bottom of a deep pot. Repot just after flowering and keep the plant a bit dry for several weeks to ward off fungal disease and afterwards keep the plant evenly moist. After active growth has ceased, slightly decrease water and fertilizer until activity resumes. Smaller flowered species are becoming popular in collections and many tropicals grow well alongside

intermediate and warmer orchids. Two of these species include *Cymbidium dayanum* and the highly awarded *Cymbidium canaliculatum* variety *sparkesii*, which is known as the elusive "black orchid" because of its deceptive appearance from a distance. Courtesy of Judy White, Taylor's Guide to Orchids.

**T**he Sarasota Orchid Society (SOS) meets on the first Monday of each month at Selby Gardens, 800 South Palm Ave. Sarasota, FL. The SOS, an affiliate of the American Orchid Society, is a nonprofit association with the aims of promoting the development, improvement and preservation of orchids through the dissemination of information concerning the culture, hybridization or development of orchids; and generally to extend the knowledge of orchids. Annual dues are \$15. Deadline for the newsletter is the 15th of the previous month. *Contributors to this newsletter give reprint rights of their work to newsletters of other affiliates of the American Orchid Society.*

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**Illustrations**

Verona Warkentin Simmons


**Cleaning and Sterilizing Clay Pots**

**I**n case the members want to follow-up on the "Pot Sterilizer" option that I mentioned at last months meeting, here is the contact detail. They will do an entire kiln lot for \$30, but can manage smaller lots if necessary. I have no idea what they will charge for smaller quantities. I did an analysis to the re-firing costs vs. the cost of new pots and find that on average, the cost for re-firing is about 15-18% of replacement cost (new pots). Obviously, as one does fewer pots and consequently at higher re-firing batch costs, that percentage will rise. Just so you will know, there will be additional costs too...in terms of your own labor. You must take the pots to the kiln's location


and pick them up when they have been processed. And then, you'll need to brush and/or rinse off the powdery residues remaining after the pots exposure to 1100° F treatment. On the other hand, new pots do not arrive via an angelic courier either; one still needs to fetch. So on balance, re-firing makes sense when you are dealing with more than just a few clay pots that need to be made ready for the next occupant. Contact: Joe Pizzo at Box of Rocks Creations • 6578 Gateway Avenue • Sarasota FL 34231 • 941.929.1457

I hope you will be as pleased with this service as I have been. I've had four full loads processed already!

Best regards, ☺ Bob Scully



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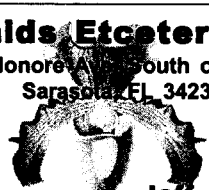
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**Treasurer's Report**

Balance 06/17/03 ..... \$8923  
Receipts ..... \$360  
Expenditures ..... \$862  
Balance 08/20/03 ..... \$8421

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## Bits and pieces odds and ends...

- ◆ The September meeting is our Annual Labor Day Picnic. September 1st falls on the first Monday of the month so we will make it a fun meeting. The society will supply the BBQ chicken and ribs, along with coffee and tea. Members whose last name starts with A to C will supply sodas and drinks; D to M will bring salads or pasta; N to Z will bring desserts. If you can't cook or don't cook, Publix has lots of items, or send us a donation. By all means, if you have a specialty you would like to share with us, please bring it along, no matter where your last name initial places your donation. Plan on at least 60 people at the meeting. Please bring your favorite family members.... Everyone is welcome, should be lots of fun!
- ◆ In the absence of the Refreshment Chairman, **Marie Duffy** and **Carol Vartanian** made arrangements and set-ups for our July meeting. Many thanks! **Lucia Almquist**, **Brenda Holm**, and **Roberta Arcand** also provided food and we thank them for their contributions. On August 4th, **Leone Levy**, **Mecky Kreissle**, and **Marty Cooper** will be providing the munchies. (I have been told that every member is expected to help on the refreshment committee at least once a year....I pass it on...Editor)
- ◆ The following plants were displayed on the July show table...*Blc. Mem. Vida Lee "limelight"* by **Jo Davis**, *Bulb. Lepidum* by **Betty Strelec**, *Vasco. Pretty Girl "Aileen"* by **Jim Cope**.
- ◆ Thanks to **Marty Cooper** for his divisions of *Enc. Antropurpurem* ... a nice gesture...dividing your large specimens to share with everyone at the meetings.
- ◆ Welcome to new members.... **Suzanne Williams** and **Adine Kaufman**. Glad to have you aboard!
- ◆ Also we welcomed new guests... **Alexandra Bell** and **Frank Forney**. There were 47 people attending the July meeting as lots of people were on vacation or else were very tired from the long July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend.
- ◆ A suggestion box and form are now available on the sign in table. Please use these to make your suggestions, wishes, comments (good or bad) known so that the Board of Directors will have a better feel for what the membership wants and needs.

- ◆ *If you obey all the rules, you miss all the fun.*
- ◆ We have a new supplier available to us.... **Lisa and Bob Smith** operate **Ellenton Growers**. They are there every weekend, but if you want to go there during the week, please call Lisa at 722-9308. They have been growing orchids for 18 years and have decided to go into the business of selling orchids. Directions: Leave expressway at the Ellenton outlet exit, go west on 301 to 36<sup>th</sup> Ave E (called Ellenton Gillette Road, traffic light there, Bank of America on the corner, turn right and drive 2 to 3 miles and you will notice a big sign that says ORCHIDS on the right hand side.... the address is 3605 61st St. E. Ellenton.
- ◆ **Sue Williams** is our new Publicity Chairman and we are sure she will do a great job!
- ◆ **Freida Tanner** will be decorating the lobby of the Convention center for the Orchid show. As usual, she does it so well!
- ◆ Lots of exciting idea for your new SOS webpage... member profiles, activities, information, minutes of meetings, pictures of shows and plants, awards...more to come on this news.
- ◆ Big thanks **Bill Byrd** of **Byrd's Orchids** for July's raffles plants to.
- ◆ We have a new department... **A HELPING HAND Department**... members will be volunteering to help other members to repot and divide their collections. In turn, the member will keep one half and the other half will go to the society's raffle table. **Monroe Kokin** is the Chairman of this department and if you need help in repotting and dividing those large specimens that are taking up so much room, please call him and he will help you. We benefit by receiving a plant for our table and the plant's owner gets the help and expertise.
- ◆ **SHOW AND TELL TABLE**... Every month we will now vote for our favorite orchid on the table. At the end of the year, the member with the most votes will receive an award of a really nice orchid and a picture on the web page. There will be three categories; 1. member's choice, 2. Speaker's choice, 3. Species. So bring in your plants and accrue some points! Member's choice winner will be featured in the newsletter every month.

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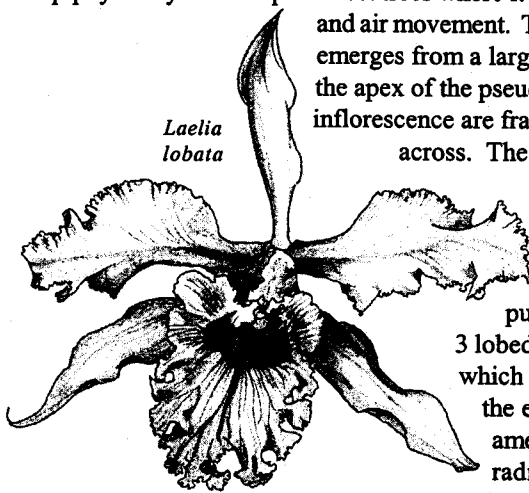
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## Laelia lobata

A 20" sympodial plant that grows lithophytically. It sometimes grows epiphytically in the tops of host trees where it is exposed to maximum sunlight and air movement. The 12-14" long flower spike emerges from a large sheath that is up to 6" long at the apex of the pseudobulb. The 2 to 5 per inflorescence are fragrant and long lasting and are 5" across. The wavy petals are crinkled along



*Laelia lobata*

their edges. The sepals are pointed with corrugated edges near their base. Sepals and petals are generally a pale rose-purple with darker veins. The lip is 3 lobed with a wide spreading midlobe which is very wrinkled and scalloped at the edges. The bright purple amethyst lip is marked with veins radiating from the center. Alba forms

are not uncommon in nature. Allow to dry slightly

between waterings. Water should be reduced to an occasional misting or light watering, and fertilizer should be eliminated for about 2 months in winter. Water and fertilizer should be gradually resumed when new growth starts. Many growers consider this species difficult to flower away from its natural habitat. This is probably because most growers do not provide sufficient light and air movement. When light is high, humidity and air movement should be high enough so that the leaves do not burn. Since *L. Lobata* normally grows in exposed locations on east facing cliffs, full morning sun with afternoon shading is indicated.



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