



February, 2004

**February Meeting
& Plant Auction
Marie Selby Gardens
February 2, 2004
7.30 p.m.
in the Marie Selby
Activities Center**

www.sarasotaorchidsociety.org

Growing Bog Plants

Many of the "rare and endangered" orchids of Florida grow in thousands, even hundreds of thousands of plants. These sites are often on road shoulders where various governmental agencies work very hard to mow, defoliate, salt down, burn, and chop down the vegetation, orchids, included. Intelligent and constructive efforts to save these plants, especially when roads are being widened, should be made by private growers and by research institutions. No benefit to botany, horticulture, education, or conservation results from covering an orchid plant with asphalt. The following growing method generally does keep them alive and makes efforts to multiply their numbers successfully. A number of beautiful terrestrial orchids of the southeastern U.S. have the reputation of being impossible to grow as they are species of sunny wet

acid soils. While they may grow in wet pinelands, bogs, and edges of cypress swamps, their main habitats are man-made roadside, ditches, plowed seedling pine plantations and electric power line savannas.



When considering growing bog orchids, some growers seek to apply the

rule that epiphytic orchids are grown in the smallest pot feasible, to bog orchids. Large containers with many plants in each will be difficult to move about but will stabilize moisture and other factors. Always use plastic containers, such as dishpans, tubs, buckets, childrens' wading pools, or mixing bowls. Never use galvanized metal, terra cotta, wood, or glazed containers. The container should be deep enough for 6"

of medium plus at least 2 more inches above the surface. Narrow knife slits should be made horizontally on the sides. These should be about 1" below the top surface of the medium. For a plastic dishpan, one or two slits should suffice. Small mixing bowls need no drainage if the medium is level with the rim. Tilt them if they become too wet for too long. Wading pools are the best containers for growing bog plants. The drainage must be above the halfway point in the medium leaving a sizable depth and volume of permanently saturated growing medium below the plants. Wading pools are too flimsy to support several hundreds pounds of water unless braced with a sturdy bench. The location of the bench must be in full sun all day or nearly so. Add the medium when the pool is situated. Never enclose these growing areas in any way; fresh air is essential and cold is needed in the winter. The growing medium is 5 parts perlite, 3 parts vermiculite, and 2 parts of northern sphagnum bog peat. A little broken charcoal could be added to the top. Plants should be right at the surface, with the roots spread horizontally just under the surface. Plants can be densely crowded especially if various kinds are intermingled. After the plants are in place, put live sphagnum over the surface, clumping it around each plant, making sure the growing tip is erect.

Carnivorous plants, *lycopodiums*, various bulbs and wild flowers should be mixed with orchids in these artificial bogs. Very small plants such as many *Spiranthes*, *Drosera* and *Pinguicula* species will fit well with these other plants. Acid soil plants do not like fertilizers, metals, lime, fungicides, slug baits, weed killers, brackish, softened, chlorinated, hard or alkaline water. Rain water is excellent. No fertilizers of any kind ever to be used. Minor modifications of this method allow the growing and propagating of "Jewel Orchids", *gesneriads*, *begonias*, *aroids*, and many other tropical plants in the greenhouse.

Courtesy of John Becker, Marie Selby Botanical Gardens

It's Auction Time!

Our February meeting features our **PLANT AUCTION!** The plants that are being auctioned are from our friends and growers who participated in our show in October, 2003. Donation by members is gratefully accepted.... this is our big chance to make money for the Society for our aims in education and conservation. The Auction starts at 7:30 p.m. Monday night, February 2nd and is open to the general public, at the Marie Selby Activities Center, Selby Gardens. Help us by bringing boxes or sturdy bags to help everyone to carry out their plants. No credit cards are accepted. So, if you have any plants to donate, please bring them along.

The 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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Roberta Arcand

President Sam Boyd started the meeting at 7:30 p.m. He asked if there was anyone in the society that had any property available for the society to put up a shed to hold all of the show supplies.

Sam then announced the Venice Area Orchid Society Show and the Manatee River show coming up at the end of the month. He stressed the need for volunteers and blooming plants for the displays. Dan introduced our new members and guests. Jim Cope talked to the members concerning plans for a bus trip to the Miami Orchid Show in March. Jim also announced the success of his first beginners orchid growing class. He had 40 people in attendance.

President Boyd then held the election of the new Board of Directors. Randy Teaf made a motion to accept it as read; Geri

Reed seconded the motion. All members were in favor.

Then he introduced our speaker of the month, Gladys Fehling, who has been a member of our society for many years. Gladys and her husband Ken lived in the Bahamas for 15 years during the 70's & 80's. Gladys went on many orchid-collecting trips while living there. She did an interesting slide presentation on her experiences in the Bahamas and the orchids she found there.

After the refreshment break, Jim Cope & Lousie Teaf an AOS Judge and part time Sarasota resident went over the plant table, Jim announced the Member's Choice winner. Next, Mike Strelec announced the winners of the plant raffle. The meeting ended at about 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Jo Davis, Recording Secretary.

Five Points for Success in Growing Orchids

TEMPERATURE: Orchids such as phalaenopsis, dendrobiums and oncidiums will adapt to normal temperatures of 70 to 90 degrees during the day and 60 to 70 degrees at night. Cooler growing types can be grown outdoors on porches in coastal southern regions or indoors under lights. LIGHT: Phalaenopsis are the most tolerant of lower light conditions. Other orchids will probably need more light to flower freely. Orchids are divided into three groups based on their light needs; low (an east facing window), medium (a well lit west or shaded south facing window) and high (south facing window). Where natural light is limited try placing orchids 8" to 10" beneath fluorescent lights that stay on 12-14 hours a day, at least during the winter. Orchids do not flower when there is a lack of light.

WATER: Most orchids benefit from a thorough watering and allowing the medium to dry out a little between waterings. Remember, overwatering is the most common reason that orchids die.

HUMIDITY: Orchids grow best with at least 50% humidity. In a greenhouse spray the floors with water for extra humidity.

FERTILIZER: Phalaenopsis require fertilizer year round. Most orchids should be fertilized every two weeks from spring until late autumn. A 20-20-20 formula (nitrogen-phosphorous-potassium) works well with most orchids. Some growers give their plants more nitrogen in the spring and potash in the autumn. Overfertilizing is the second most common reason that orchid plants die.

Show Table Popular Voting

All plants on the show table will have a slip of paper indicating the name of the plant. Additionally on this slip of paper there will be the date of the meeting, a plant entry number, and a numerical reference to the owner.

During the meeting, after all plants are on the show table, ballots will be distributed. Each member is entitled to vote for his or her plant selection. There are two types of votes to record. The Member's Choice is whatever plant you see on

the show table that appeals to you. You make your selection and write the entry number for your Member's Choice in the blank provided.

Additionally species plants will be marked as SPECIES, you again make your selection for the species of your choice and mark the Species entry number on your ballot.

You may select the same species plant as both your Member's Choice and Species plant, if appropriate.

Treasurer's Report table with rows for Balance 12/14/03, Receipts, Expenditures, and Balance 1/14/04.

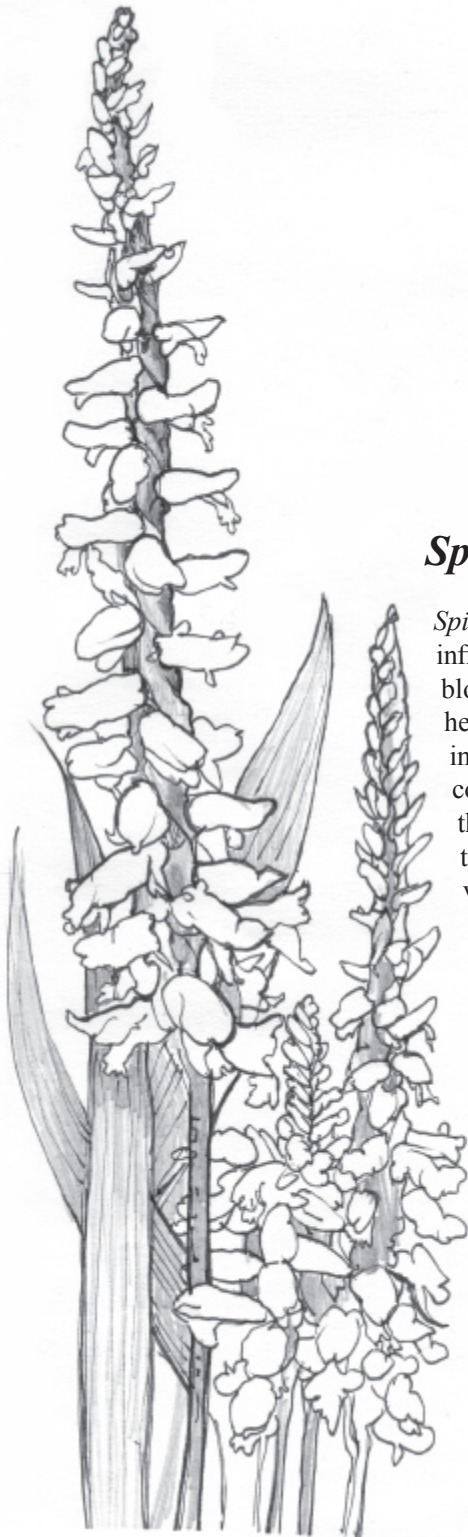
- ◆ Join the American Orchid Society, to receive that really great magazine every month. Email TheAOS@aos.org.
- ◆ Air movement is critical to your orchids health. I cannot say this enough..... air movement is critical to your orchids health!! In the wild, orchids have continual tropical breezes. This helps evaporate water from the crown where if left alone, will stagnate and encourage rot and fungus. It helps keep insect infestations to a minimum as most bugs do not like the constant air flow. Having constant circulating air will also enable your plants to withstand higher light levels than normal without getting burnt leaves.
- ◆ The slide show and lecture given by SOS member **Gladys Fehling** was very interesting and insightful. The subject "Collecting orchids in the Bahamas" was one that we were not too familiar with, and the scenes and different species on Andros Island were quite new to us. Her talk and slides, took us along with her on an educational tour of an area that is geographically the same as Florida, but she certainly pointed out the differences. It was a very pleasant and thoughtful evening. We thank Gladys for the all of her effort, and for putting on such a delightful show. We also had the pleasure of meeting her family from St. Pete, and found that we had lots in common with them, along with knowing Gladys, and her beautiful orchids.
- ◆ Along with my nasty bluejays who are still looking for white tags (which are now wired on), I now have new visitors in my shadehouse. With the cold weather, a big black snake has decided he likes the temperature in there, and comes to sleep once in awhile. That's not so bad, as I know he is a good snake, and not a bad one, but the other night, curled around the pots was a big, fat, yellow one with red spots..... now this really freaked me out and I made a panic call to **Dennis Cathcart** at **Tropiflora** as he is our resident snake expert, and he told me not to worry, it's just a corn snake and to leave it alone. *That's easy for him to say!* Well, it finally crawled away, but I now have to use a flashlight every time I go into my shadehouse..... there is no way that thing is going to wrap around my ankle! (*The Editor*)
- ◆ In the drought of January and February, mites, which affect nearly all genera of orchids, continue to be a serious problem that will only get worse. They will reach a crescendo in March and April but now is a good time to scotch them. *Paphiopedilum* and other softly leaved genera are not particularly susceptible but no genus is free of them. One theory on why deciduous genera such as *Catasetum* lose their leaves hypothesizes that this rids them of mites.
- ◆ Here is a timely question..... I have a screened orchid area attached to my house, there is a floodlight on a nighttime sensor, will this cause a blooming problem? **YES!** All photoperiodic plants rely on uninterrupted dark periods as a means of determining season. If the night is interrupted by a light, it can upset the plant's rhythm and prevent blooming. This is especially noticeable in plants requiring short days and long nights to flower.
- ◆ The staff at Selby Gardens has been recommending our society to visitors. *Thank you, Selby Gardens.*
- ◆ We donated a gift plant to the Silent Auction, Feb. 9th to benefit the Senior Friendship Center.
- ◆ There will be no show table at the auction at the February meeting. Orchid Basics, our session for beginners will resume at the March meeting, at 7:00 p.m. It was a very informative and great success last month. We have many members who are new to our growing conditions and they really enjoyed the session. There were a lot of new faces there, and we know they will be back in March.
- ◆ Selby Gardens is hosting the International Orchid Conservation Conference May 16th to 21st. They are requesting volunteers to help in any way, as Society members we support Selby Gardens and we hope that the members that are concerned about conservation and education, volunteer to help with this conference. Please see **Jim Cope** for more information about this activity.
- ◆ The munchies at the January meeting were provided by **Sandie Nuwaysir, Laurie Stoner, Lucia Almquist, Lenore DuVall, Carmel** and **Melissa Dowling**. Great job!
- ◆ **SHOW TABLE:** The Popular vote and the speaker's choice vote were captured by the *Bllra. Marfitch "Howard's Dream"* grown by **Sunny Birdsong**. The Species award; **Rhy. gigantea**, grown by **Shirley Zimmer**.
- ◆ Our new chairman of the showtable is **Bill Lanius**. He will be helping organize and document the plants as they are place on the table, and will record the results. Don't forget to bring your plants to the showtable, as this is how the fellow members learn about the various kinds of orchids.
- ◆ Our hearing problems will be solved..... we now own our own microphone!



ORCHID SOCIETY, INC.

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Spiranthes Odorata

Spiranthes odorata, common name: Fragrant Ladies' tresses. A terrestrial plant with inflorescences of several ranks of spiraling, creamy white, very fragrant flowers. It blooms from October to March in a wetland habitat. The grow zone is 5 to 9 and is a herbaceous perennial of the orchidaceae family. Best grown in damp, bog, acidic soils in part shade. Plants spread slowly by thizomes to form colonies in optimum growing conditions. This orchid is native to marshes, bogs, swamps, and other wet areas in the eastern United States from New Jersey and Tennessee south to Florida and over to Texas. It features small, very fragrant, hooded, white flowers densely arranged in vertical slightly spiral-like rows on spikes typically growing 9-18" tall. Blooms in late summer to fall, often to first frost. Lance-shaped, linear leaves in basal rosettes, with some leaves extending up the flower spikes. *Spiranthes* comes from the Greek words "spirea" meaning spiral and "anthos" meaning flower. The spiraling flower arrangement is the result of uneven cell growth, which results in a twisting of the flower stems. *Spiranthes cernua* var. *odorata* "Chadd's Ford" is a cultivar featuring slightly taller stems and larger flowers. One of the most distinctive features of *Spiranthes cernua odorata* is its potent, sweet fragrance compared to that of vanilla or jasmine. *Spiranthes* prefers wet feet, however, it will do perfectly well in any rich, moisture-retentive soil in sun or shade. At the time of flowering, up to eight plantlets are grown on the root tips. These can be cut off if there is no flower development. Therefore, never cut the roots! After flowering the plant dies. No known serious insect or disease problems. A classic bog plant.

This lovely Florida native adapts easily to regular orchid culture. Blooms reliably every fall with attractive flowers and multiplies rapidly into a beautiful specimen plant. Naturalized in the garden, it adds freshness to the often dull fall season. These plants are deciduous; foliage drops for the winter but comes back in the spring to bloom in the fall.