



sarasota orchid society **view**

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

December 6th—Annual Auction

January 3rd—Setting up an Orchid Show

January 8-9th—Annual Orchid Show

February 7th—Bob Scully – tentatively titled “What’s New in Asia”

Meetings are on the 1st Monday of each month. Doors open at 6:15 pm. Cultural Study Group starts promptly at 6:30 pm. Regular meeting starts at 7:30 pm.

**Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, 811 South Palm Avenue, Sarasota, Florida
www.sarasotaorchidsociety.org**

Show sign up plea

We need all of our members to participate in at least one committee to make our show a great success. Please sign up!

Front door—1 volunteer to collect \$5.00 from each person entering show, 1 volunteer to hand out 1 free raffle ticket to each person who paid the entrance fee, and 1 volunteer to place a wrist band on anyone who wants to come back in the show. Volunteers are asked to work only 2 hours each Saturday or Sunday.

Hospitality—People are needed to work 11:00 to 3:00 on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday to serve food for volunteers and vendors on the stage behind the curtain and to help keep that area clean.

Saturday & Sunday—a Chairman is needed to

start each day at 8:30 and help your volunteers for those days.

Plant Hotel—Volunteers are needed to sit in the plant holding area and place tickets on plants held for people while they are enjoying the show.

Show Hall set up and tear down—more people are needed to help set-up tables, laying plastic on floor, and set-up pipe and drape dividers.

Everyone is asked to bring in a covered dish to help feed show workers on Saturday and Sunday.

You may put your name down in the show volunteer book at the upcoming meeting, or you can call me:

Jo Davis @ 228-5501.

December in your Orchid Collection

December Climate Data

Average high: 77.5°F
Average low: 62.2°F
Average mean: 69.9°F
Average rainfall: 2.18"

December marks the beginning of the serious dry season in South Florida. While this additional dryness provides relief from the autumnal rains that can bring so many fungal problems, December is also the month of shortest day lengths. This contracted period of light, on the contrary, reduces severely the drying potential for our plants. Nature thus both gives and takes

See "December" on page 5

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ORCHID VIEW is published monthly by the Sarasota Orchid Society and is available to members in either printed or digital format.

December

SUPPORT OUR VENDORS AND SUPPLIERS

American Travel Group, Shelton Thorne,
813-282-4510 or 800-266-0755

Byrd's Orchids, Bill & Wanda Byrd
863-859-5060

Canaima Orchids, Michael Sinn
941-773-2940 (Mon-Sat 10:00 am-4:00 pm)

Chapman's Orchids, Charlie Chapman
407-619-1907

Featherstone Orchids, Ed & Lyn Bugbee
352-795-4614

Fender's Flora Orchids, Bill & Susan
Fender, 941-412-1355 (Mon-Sat 9:00 am-
2:00 pm)

Florida SunCoast Orchids, Jim Roberts
941-544-6831 (By appointment only)

Hicks Orchid Supplies, John & Lois Hicks
407-493-3064

Krull-Smith Orchids, Jim Krull & Frank
Smith, 407-866-4134

Nature on the Rocks, Guy & Janice
386-437-6832

Odom's Orchids, John & Louise Odom
772-467-1386

Orchid Art, Joné Ritchie (Orchid Paintings)
941-922-3434 By appointment only

Orchid Art, Judy Robertson (Ceramic
Orchid Art) 941-926-1819 (By appointment
only)

Orchids Etcetera, Jeff & Walter
941-921-9138 (Tues-Sat 9:00 am-5:00 pm)

Palmer Orchids, Robert Palmer
941-322-1644 (Mon-Sat 9:00 am-4:00 pm)
Call for Appointment

Plantío La Orquídea, Rafael Romaro
941-504-7737 (Mon-Sat 9:00 am-5:00 pm)

So Nursery, (401) 928-0831

The Orchid Specialist, Steve Hawkins
407-889-3138 or 321-279-3003

Wayne Hibbs Farm & Garden, Jeff Hibbs
941-366-4954 (Mon-Sat 9:00 am-5:00 pm)

The Sarasota Orchid Society Inc.

(SOS) meets on the first Monday of each month at Selby Botanical Gardens, 800 South Palm Ave., Sarasota, FL. The SOS Inc., 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 \$20; \$25 for family. Deadline for the newsletter is the 15th of the previous month.

Contributors to this newsletter give reprint rights of their work to newsletters and other affiliates of the American Orchid Society.

www.sarasotaorchidsociety.org

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Monroe Kokin
941-445-4789
orchidpix@comcast.net

VICE PRESIDENT:

Laurie Stoner
941-358-8537
laurissas@msn.com

TREASURER:

Roberta Arcand
941-400-0775
arcand1173@gmail.com

RECORDING SECRETARY:

Jo Davis 941- 228-5501
srqjd@verizon.net

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY:

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941-445-4789
mkorchid@comcast.net

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One North Tuttle Avenue
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941-906-1480

JOIN THE AOS

If you are not a member of the American Orchid Society, let me briefly tell you about the premier organization devoted to our hobby. The AOS is the world's largest specialty horticulture group and offers information not available elsewhere. The monthly magazine, *Orchids*, is the most highly-regarded orchid periodical in the world. The photography and articles are outstanding. Membership entitles you to a 10% discount on publications and your dues support conservation and educational programs. As a new member you will receive a copy of *Your First Orchid*, a book chock full of advice and an *Almanac* listing all affiliate organizations (Florida has the most with 58), growers, special interest groups, descriptions of awards, and many more resources. Membership forms are available at the sign-in table for anyone who needs one.

The AOS also publishes the *Awards Quarterly (Now on CD AQ Plus)*, with detailed descriptions of 200-300 awarded orchids with color photographs. I eagerly await mine every three months.

Dues are U.S. single membership \$65.00; for a 2 year membership \$125.00. American Orchid Society, 16700 AOS Lane, Delray Beach, Fl. 33446

Monroe

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UPCOMING SHOWS

October, 2010

22-24—Tampa Orchid Club "Orchid Expo", University of South Florida, 12210 USF Pine Dr., Tampa, FL

29-31—Delray Beach Orchid Society Show, Old School Square, 51 N. Swinton Ave., Delray Beach, FL.

January, 2011

8-9—54th Annual Sarasota Orchid Society Show and Sale, Sarasota Auditorium on US 41

14-16—Ft. Lauderdale Orchid Society Show

<<http://www.flos.org/>>, War Memorial Auditorium, 800 NE 8th St., Ft. Lauderdale, FL.

22-23—Manatee River Orchid Society Show, Manatee Convention & Civic Center, 1 Haban Blvd., Palmetto, FL
Setup Friday, Jan., 21st between 9-6. Judging Sat, the 22nd at 9. Open to public 1/22-10-5 and 1/23 from 1-4. *The SOS needs help with setup and teardown.*

February 2011

5-6—Venice Area Orchid Society Show, Venice Community Center, Venice, FL.

12-13—Boca Raton Orchid Society Show, Safe Schools Institute, 1790 NW Spanish River Blvd., Boca Raton, FL.

March 2011

4-6—Martin

County Orchid Society Show, Martin County Fairgrounds, 2616 SE Dixie Highway, Stuart, FL.

11-13—Orchid Society of Coral Gables Show, Fairchild Botanical Gardens, Coral Gables, FL.

12-14—Port St. Lucie Orchid Society Show, 2195 Airso Blvd, Port St. Lucie, FL.

19-20—Jacksonville Orchid Society Show, Garden Club of Jacksonville, 1005 Riverside Ave., Jacksonville, FL.

25-27—Naples Orchid Society Show, First Presbyterian Church, Naples, FL.

25-26—Englewood Area Orchid Society Show, Englewood United Methodist Church, 700 East Dearborn St., Englewood, FL

For members who are receiving the newsletter by mail, you are missing out on some wonderful color pictures taken during the year in our newsletter.

If you have computer access and are getting the newsletter by snail mail, you can switch and save the Society \$7.00 per year per person.

Please contact me and I'll be glad to add you to our e-mail list.

Monroe
orchidpix@comcast.net

Newsletter advertisements are \$120.00 per year. Checks payable to Sarasota Orchid Society may be sent to:

Roberta Arcand
8727 53rd Terrace East
Bradenton, FL 34211

LET'S TALK ABOUT SALES
The vendors who lecture at our meetings take their valuable time and effort to educate us on orchid culture. In turn, they ask us to buy their plants which they bring to sell at our meetings.

We know that there are lots of places to buy orchids in our area but as members of SOS, we should really make a point of patronizing the speakers and advertisers when we buy new plants.

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HELPING HAND HOME SERVICES

"December" from page 1

away from us in December. We must make sure, therefore, that we do not aid the dark side of the force by improper watering. In December, above all, one must stick strictly to the two cardinal principles of orchid watering: water early in the day so your plants have as many hours as possible to dry, and water heavily when you water, allowing longer intervals between watering to dry plants thoroughly. This practice maximizes the benefit of the dryer air of December and minimizes the adverse effect of the shorter day lengths.

When nature has delivered a light overnight or early morning rain as she so often does in December at the leading edge of a cold front, add to her efforts by watering thoroughly that same morning and skip out watering for an extra several days afterward. With this method you can

use the general dryness of December to give yourself much of the advantage of a greenhouse in terms of controlling watering. As in all aspects of orchid culture, keen observation is the key to success. In cooler weather your plants need much less water. Moreover cool air even at the same relative humidity, strips less water from your plants because cool air has less water holding capability. Always be sure that your plants really need water before you roll out the hose in December. Remember to use at least one of the standard tests for dryness: the finger dug slightly into the media test or the newly sharpened pencil coming dry like a knife from a well cooked custard, or test by hefting a pot that you know the weight of, both wet and dry and be sure that it has attained sufficient lightness. When you are sure they are dry, water them until you are



Blc. Greenwich Elmhurst

Photo by Monroe Kokin

sure they are very wet, then let the drying air of December do its magic to ward off leaf spotting diseases.

Himalayan dendrobiums of the nobile and Callista (*D. aggregatum*, *chrysotoxum*, etc.) Sections require no additional water (beyond rain) in December. Remember, those of you who water (or, even worse, fertilize) these dendrobiums in December, will be punished by having your flowers taken away in the Spring. Some growers who have the space, isolate these dendrobiums along with other types that want hard drying such as *Catasetum*, *Cycnoches*, *Mormodes*, and *Calanthe*. Another strategy is to hang these plants high or at the edges of the collection reminding oneself to neglect them and also to avoid watering them by mistake. Some growers achieve the same result effect by turning the pots of these genera on their side in November or Decem-

ber, to avoid catching water from whatever source. Plants of some of these genera that have finished flowering can even be removed from their pots and stripped to bare roots in anticipation of re-potting them in new media when they break growth in the spring.

Most sympodial orchids are resting in December and require less fertilizer. Biweekly or even monthly applications of a balanced fertilizer or 15-5-15 are still desirable. Nitrate nitrogen is the most readily absorbed in cooler weather; therefore at least one more application of the potassium nitrate/magnesium sulphate (at 1tbs. each per gal.) recommended in November is still a good idea. It's good stuff! *Vandas*, *Phalaenopsis* and other monopodial orchids should be fertilized right through the winter although both the amount of fertilizer and the frequency of application can be reduced.



C. labiata 'morado de Sal' x ('Marina' x venosa) Photo by Monroe Kokin

"December" from page 5

Remember reddening of the foliage is not natural, nor is it a response to the cold per se but rather a symptom of nutritional deficiency. The plants are asking for more potassium and magnesium. Give them the groceries.

December can be cold. Frost has occurred in the first week of the month and unforgettably, the coldest temperatures ever recorded in South Florida were registered on December 25, 1989. If you haven't taken some of the precautions outlined in the November Newsletter, get busy! Keep a close eye on the forecasts during this volatile month.

Remember that hard cane dendrobiums of the sections *Spathulata* and *Phalaenantha* are the most sensitive of commonly cultivated orchids. They resent temperature much below 60 degrees F. *Phalaenopsis* are next most sensitive, then *vandas*. Protect all these genera more carefully.

If you are getting a jump on Spring potting chores by repotting sympodial orchids that have finished blooming, it is particularly important that you take extra care in securing them in their containers. These plants may not be sending out new roots for several months, enough time for them to be shaken loose from insufficient staking. Passing cold fronts can bring brisk winds in December. When new

roots start to form on insufficiently secured plants, wind moves the plant and chafes the new root tips off. Improperly secured plants are never able to root properly and slowly pine away. If you love them you must tie them up, tie them down. This is also especially true of mass produced orchids sold in Home Depot, K Mart etc. The soft, peat based media used to grow these commercially produced plants in the controlled environment of a greenhouse often does not provide sufficient purchase to secure the plants in the rough and tumble of a South Florida orchid collection buffeted by harsh winter winds. You probably should have already re-potted these into more durable medium but until you do, tie 'em up!

Keep those *vandas*, *phalaenopsis* and hard cane dendrobiums as warm as you can. Merry Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanza!

Tasks for December

1. Water judiciously and well
2. Protect cold sensitive genera
3. Provide extra potassium and magnesium
4. Repot flowered out plants—be sure they are secure.

Bonnet House Museum & Gardens 4th Annual Orchid Fair

Saturday and Sunday,
December 4 & 5, 2010
10:00 am to 5:00 pm

An exciting line up featuring 30+ local orchid and exotic plant vendors, including garden art and orchid supplies will highlight this unique sale in the Bonnet House Grove. There will also be orchid displays, a silent auction and great food vendors. Wine and cheese tasting from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. each day. Walking tours available. \$10 admission to tour the house.

Lectures:
Saturday—12:00 pm
Orchids 101
2:00 pm Repotting Or-

chids
Sunday—12:00 pm
Orchids 101
2:00 pm Mounting
Orchids

Bonnet House Museum & Gardens is located at 900 N. Birch Road just south of Sunrise Blvd. between A1A and the Intracoastal on Fort Lauderdale beach. Visit their website at www.bonnethouse.org <<http://www.bonnethouse.org>>

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Announcement :

Freda Tanner, 45 year member of our Society passed away Saturday, November 6. She was about 87 years old. Freda was very active in our Society. She served on the Board of Directors for many years, did the advertising for the show for many years in the past, and worked on the Refreshment Committee for a long time. She is survived by her son Tom,

and her Grandson, Jared who both live in Sarasota. Memorial service to be held at a later date. She was dearly loved by many and very much missed.

A former member of our Society, **Ray Collins**, passed away early in October this year. He is survived by his wife Gloria, who lives in The Villages, Fl. Our Society received a donation of \$25.00 in his memory.

Monthly Checklist for November and December

Cattleya

Growers of just about every level of expertise will have begun to notice autumn conditions by now. Days are becoming shorter, hence cooler; the sunlight has less intensity as a result of the sun's lowering angle, nights are longer and generally cooler. Plants are responding by slowing and ripening their growth in preparation for winter.

The first cultural change noticed should be a reduced frequency of watering, as the plants dry out more slowly. This is a function of both the

reduced day length and lower temperatures, as well as the plants' slowing growth rate. Reduced water needs signal a reduced need for fertilization. Note that the key word is reduced, not eliminated. Feed less frequently and at lower dosage, but feed. Growths, made during summer's heat, and relatively soft and green, will be ripening -- hardening -- in preparation for a brief period of rest (in many cases).

Many of these ripening growths will have a sheath, presaging the coming winter or spring



Blc. Sunset Gold x C. George Angus

Photo by Monroe Kokin

flowering season. In some cases, these sheaths will have been evident since as early as July. (Early sheath development does not mean early flowering on plants with winter-spring seasons.) You may notice that some of these sheaths are showing signs of yellowing. This is not abnormal. Autumn's more pronounced temperature fluctuation can lead to water condensation inside the sheath, hastening the normal process of senescence, so yellowing sheaths can be left on the plant only so long before they must be carefully removed to preserve the bud primordia within. Water condensation left unchecked can rot the bud primordia. The sheaths can be safely removed by slitting open and peeling down toward the pseudobulb.

Cool-Growing Orchids

One can almost hear a

sigh of relief from all of the cool-growers, from masdevallias to odontoglossums. As day temperatures decline, one can see a noticeable improvement in these plants. Shorter days and lower light levels do not seem to bother them. Repot before winter arrives.

Cymbidium

Finally we begin in earnest the main cymbidium season. *Cymbidium ensifolium* can give some early and fragrant hybrids, but it is now that the bulk of the crop will be flowering. The season lasts for about seven months, adding color to any collection. Miniature varieties will peak for the next three to four months. There are three important things to do: stake inflorescences ramrod straight for best presentation, watch for slugs and snails (especially just after a rain), and fertilize with



Blc. Memoria John Odom

Photo by Monroe Kokin

a mild balanced formula regularly.

Oncidium crispum Complex

This is the season for plants in Oncidium section crispum from Brazil to shine. Extremely vigorous hybrids come in wide varieties of markings dominated with chestnut and brown and butter yellow. Give plants high light to produce strong upright inflorescences. The pseudobulbs should be plump, so do not let the plants dry out while they are in bloom. Later, plants will enter a dormant period.

Paphiopedilum

The flowering season for the "toads" or "bulldog" paphs is just getting underway. These cannot be grown everywhere, but where cooler summer nights allow their growth, there is no longer-lasting or more exotic display than these. Paphiopedilums are, in general, not heavy feeders, and it is especially important with this type to reduce nitrogen levels now for best flowering and spike length. Be watchful for water accumulating in the growth around the sheath, or for the late-season warm spell, either of which can lead to the sheath's rotting. As the spikes emerge, do not change the orientation of the plant toward the light, as this can lead to a crooked or twisted spike. While paphiopedilums

rarely like to dry out entirely, water needs are significantly reduced beginning now. Overwatering at this time of year can quickly lead to root rot or erwinia problems. Now is the time to practice good sanitary practices in your greenhouse or growing areas, as pest and disease problems have a way of multiplying rapidly in the darker and more crowded conditions that generally mark the winter growing area. With paphiopedilums, especially, "cleanliness is next to godliness" and if the growing area is littered with old foliage, weeds and dying flowers, keeping the plants alive and flowering will be next to impossible.

Phalaenopsis

Shortening days and cooler nights are the signals for inflorescence initiation in phalaenopsis. In more northern climates, or on the west coast, growers have already begun to see the early inflorescences that may be ready for Christmas. In the eastern areas, nights in the greenhouse will now be in the low to mid 60s, depending on the thermostat setting, so the first of our phalaenopsis will not begin to bloom until Valentine's Day at the earliest.

A reduction in nitrogen levels will go a long way to giving the best possible spiking, as will a boost in potassium and phosphorus. In other words, a "bloom booster"-



Ascda Fuchs Sunkist x Ascda Fuchs Sunset Photo by Monroe Kokin

type fertilizer is definitely indicated in the next few months. Disease and pest problems are best dealt with now, especially as mealybugs hide in the bracts and flower buds. Once they have established themselves, they are difficult to eradicate, and flower damage or crippling results. Potential disease problems can be dealt with by the application of a copper-based compound to control/alleviate rot problems before they start. There is nothing more frustrating than to have shepherded your plants through a growing season, only to have them decline before your eyes.

daceous plants. The only cold-hardy member is Neofinetia falcata. Orient your plants in such a way as to take advantage of as much light as possible. This can be a problem in northern latitudes. Reduce watering and feeding schedules.

Vandaceous Genera

Whereas the general decline in temperatures is beneficial to cool-growing orchids, it is not for van-



Bulb. Valley Isle Queen Red MaJiK AM-AOS 83 points

Kokin awarded at the Slipper Symposium in Orlando FL on Saturday November 6, 2010

Photo by Brian Monk

54th Annual Orchid Show

The Sarasota Orchid Society will present their 54th Annual Orchid Show & Sale on January 8th & 9th, 2011. This American Orchid Society sanctioned show will be held at the Sarasota Municipal Auditorium, 801 N. Tamiami Trail, US #41, Sarasota, Florida 34236. Show hours are Saturday and Sunday 9 am to 5 pm. Admission charge is \$5.00 children under 8 are free.

“Wild About Orchids” the theme for Sarasota Orchid Society’s 2011 Celebration, will showcase thousands of award-winning orchids in the displays created by orchid vendors and local orchid societies. A variety of orchids and orchid related accessories will also be available for purchase from expert orchid growers and artists from



the state of Florida, including American Group Travel, Byrd Orchids, Canaima Orchids, Chapman’s Orchids, Featherstone Orchids, Florida SunCoast Orchids, Hicks Orchids Supplies, Jone’ Ritchie Artist, Judy Robertson Orchid Ceramics, Krull-Smith Orchids, Marie Selby Botanical Book Store, Marie Selby Botani-

cal Garden, Nature on the Rocks, Odom’s Orchids, Orchids Etcetera, Plantio La Orquidea, Stig Dalstrom Botanical Art, The Orchid Specialist, and much more. Breathtaking displays of orchids will be showcased by Sarasota Orchid Society, and many other local orchid societies and Marie Selby Botanical Gar-

dens. Throughout the two show days, visitors will have the opportunity to interact with the growers, purchase orchids and related items, and to immerse themselves in the beauty of orchids. There will also be educational classes given by our local growers.

Hibbs Farm & Garden Supply & Marie Selby Botanical Gardens are proud sponsors of the Sarasota Orchid Society 54th Annual Orchid Show.

For more information, please contact 2011 Orchid Show Co-chairs, Jo Davis at 941-228-5501, email srqjd@verizon.net or Monroe Kokin at 941-586-7795, email orchidpix@comcast.net

We welcome your visit at www.sarasotaorchidsociety.org.

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November minutes of SOS

President Kokin called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm. Jo Davis, working for Carolyn Langdon, introduced our guests which included many members from both Venice Area Orchid Society and Englewood Area Orchid Society, who all came to hear our esteemed speaker, Fred Clarke from Sun Valley Orchids. President Kokin welcomed all the guests who came to our meeting.

Minutes of the October meeting were approved as printed in the newsletter and seconded.

The Treasurer's report was posted on a cover letter for members receiving their newsletter by email and an insert for those receiving it by mail. A motion was approved and seconded. President Kokin thanked Fred Bigio for the great November newsletter. President Kokin added that he has been getting nothing but praise about the newsletter from other Societies. He also wants to thank Bob Scully for volunteering to proof read the newsletter before going to print.

New Business: The 54th Annual Show will be January 8th and 9th 2011. Set up will start on Wednesday and Thursday before. President Kokin and Jo Davis are asking for more volunteers to sign up to fill the various jobs.

Laurie Stoner has a sign-up sheet for people

to sign-up for our Wine & Cheese Party to be held Saturday January 8th from 6-8 PM.

Selby Gardens will be holding their Garden Festival on February 26 & 27, 2011 and will give SOS a table. This is a great opportunity to promote our Society. The Society will be handing out information and answering questions. President Kokin asked for volunteers to sign up to man the table from 9 am to 5 pm on Saturday the 26th and 10 am to 5 pm on Sunday the 27th.

The Library is open during the meeting for members to sign out books for the month. See Patti Quinnelly to check out books.

Vice President Laurie Stoner introduced the speaker of the night, who was Fred Clarke of Sun Valley Orchids in California. The topic of discussion was Hybridizing *Catasitinae*. Fred sold many *Catasetums* and other plants in the back of the room.

Roy Krueger went over the plant table that members voted on. See pictures of the winners in this newsletter. Leroy did the raffle.

The meeting was adjourned about 9:30. Respectfully submitted,

Jo Davis,
Recording Secretary.

Winners from Monday November 1st meeting



Bc. Edisto 'Newberry'— *Speakers Choice*—Owner: Monroe Kokin



Masd. floribunda— *Species of the Month*— Owner: Laurie Stoner

All photos by Monroe Kokin



Den. Emma White— *Members Choice*—Owner: Jack Knuese

Wine and Dine among the orchids

Join us on Saturday night, January 8th, 2011, from 6:00-8:00 PM, for our annual wine and dine among the orchids. This year, be prepared to sip wine and nibble on luscious appetizers, fine cheeses, and delicious desserts as you mingle with your fellow orchid society members after the show. There will be 14 different wines to taste, paired with an equal amount of unusual and

tempting hot and cold items. What a wonderful way to relax among the beautiful orchid displays... and all for the amazingly low cost of only \$15 per person. Don't miss it!

Please RSVP to Laurie Stoner at laurissas@msn.com or 358-8537 by December 20th. Payment must be received by January 3rd. Checks made payable to Sarasota Orchid Society.

The Genus *Gongora*

Rudolf Jenny, PhD, offers an introduction to this interesting genus Of Neotropical Orchids.



Gongora grossa, which was described in the *Gardeners' Chronicle* in 1877, is native to Ecuador, Colombia, and Venezuela.

Photo by Greg Allikas

The history of the first-known *Gongora* species — *Gongora quinquenervis* Ruiz and Pavon — coincides with its first truly scientific treatment in *Flora of Peru* by Hipolito Ruiz Lopez, Antonio Pavon y Chimenez and Joseph Dombey during the last quarter of the 18th century. The incentive to start the scientific exploration of the territories that belonged to the Spanish properties in South America in those days (Peru and large parts of what are now Bolivia, Chile, Argentina and Ecuador) did not come from the Spaniards themselves, but from the French. Indeed, it was A.R.J. Turgot, prime minister of Louis XVI, who, in 1775, decided to launch a scientific

expedition to Peru to replace the lost collections of Joseph de Jussieu. De Jussieu himself recommended Joseph Dombey, a botanist and medical doctor who had been one of Joseph de Jussieu's brother Bernard's students, as tentative expedition leader. However, Spain, at the time ruled by Charles III, uncle of Louis XVI, would only agree to the expedition on a number of special conditions. Dombey was to be accompanied by two Spanish scientists, and the overall command

had to remain in Spanish hands. Dombey had to agree to turn all herbarium materials that were to be collected during the expedition to the botanical gardens in Madrid. Of each collected object, three herbarium specimens had to be made. Dombey was to receive one of them, but only after examination in Madrid. Furthermore, he had to agree to supplement those materials of which only one herbarium specimen could be made by botanical drawings and descriptions, which, of course, had to be deposited in Madrid.

The Spanish government chose two pharmacists, Ruiz and Pavon, neither of whom had any training in botany, and two artists to accom-



Rudolf Jenny described *Gongora sphaerica* in his book *Monograph of the Genus Gongora* Ruiz & Pavon, which was published in 1993. This species is native to Colombia.

Photo by R. Jenny.

pany Dombey. Ruiz, junior to Dombey by 12 years was appointed commander. Upon arrival in Peru, Dombey had to obtain and pay for his equipment himself, whereas Ruiz and Pavon got the full support of the Spanish administration. Furthermore, as the Spanish artists refused to make any drawing for Dombey, he had no choice but to illustrate all his materials himself.

The Journey Begins

The expedition left Europe in October 1777 and reached Lima in April 1778. In the same year, Dombey sent a first, small collection to Europe, and in March, 1779, a large collection followed. The ship transporting this large collection, however, was captured by the English (at the time at war with France and Spain) and the materials were auctioned off in Lisbon. Spanish representatives purchased the entire collection as well as a number of Dombey's personal belongings. Originally, the expedi-

tion was to last four years, but the continuing war made a scheduled return impossible. Finally, on April 4, 1784, Dombey left Peru by himself and, after a delay of several months in Rio de Janeiro, reached Cadiz on February 22, 1785, with his part of the collections.

The materials that were to be turned over to the Spaniards remained in Lima and were shipped together with the collections of Ruiz and Pavon to Spain in 1785. The ship carrying these materials was lost off Portugal with all collections on board. The only materials from the expedition that were left, therefore, were what was brought home by Dombey himself. That material was retained by the Spaniards. At the end, Dombey obtained only one third of "his" materials and had to agree to publish nothing, nor to describe any plants before the return of Ruiz and Pavon. Of course, the Spaniards carefully copied all Dombey's notes and descriptions. At last, Dombey reached Paris with the poor remnants of his collection on October 13, 1785.

Gongora Enters the Picture

Ruiz and Pavon stayed in Peru, and in 1785 they were collecting around Huanuco. Again, catastrophe struck and the collections of several months as well as extensive diaries and the great majority of the plant descriptions were lost to a fire at the base camp. The materials of *Gongora quinquenervis* collected in 1779 were part of



Native to Colombia, *Gongora gratulabunda* bears 10 to 12 flowers along its 20-inch-long inflorescences at wide intervals.
Photo by Greg Allikas

the shipment that accompanied Dombey on his voyage home. After about nine years in Peru and Chile, Ruiz and Pavon left Peru on April 1, 1787 and reached Spain in the spring of 1788.

Five more years would pass before Ruiz and Pavon had a chance to do any extensive work on the plants they and Dombey had collected. For that reason, they first published a single volume entitled *Flora Peruviana, et Chilensis Prodomus* in October 1794. The distribution of that volume, however, was limited. The "complete" *Flora Peruviana, et Chilensis* followed in 1798 (volume 1), 1799 (volume 2) and 1802 (volume 3). Although the flora was intended to comprise eight volumes, only three were published by Ruiz and Pavon. Two more volumes were published by other authors at a much later date (volume 4 in 1957 and volume 5 in 1959).

All orchids collected by the expedition were first published as genera in the 1794 *Prodomus* and later (1798)

in Ruiz and Pavon's *Systema Vegetabilium Florae Peruviana et Chilensis*. In the flora, no orchids were included.

The fact that the majority of this publication is based on the collections, descriptions and notes of Dombey and not on any material definitely originating from Ruiz and Pavon is often overlooked and neglected. Dombey did not get credit on the title page and his name is merely mentioned in the preface. Ruiz died in 1815



Gongora sanderiana is easy to identify, due to its broad, round hypochile when seen from above.
Photo by R. Jenny

and Pavon in 1844. Parts of the herbarium containing the collections of the expedition to Peru and Chile were obtained by Lambert. They are now in the collections of the British Museum of Natural History in London. Another part, containing the type material of *G. quinquenervis*, remained in Madrid. The three herbarium specimens related to that species that are now in Madrid contain only vegetative parts of the plants, and inflorescences with seed capsules, but no flowers. The drawing of *G. quinquenervis*, published by

Ruiz and Pavon in their *Systema Vegetabilium*, however, is detailed enough to allow for a clear classification of the taxon.

Ruiz and Pavon indicated the type location as being Pozuzo (Peru) and the flowering time as September and October. Whether the plants were found by Ruiz and Pavon, Dombey or all three collectors together, will most probably remain uncertain. However, as the herbarium specimens of *G. quinquenervis* were part of the collections brought home by Dombey, it is logical to assume that he was at least present at the time of discovery. The original publication of the genus *Gongora* appeared in the *Prodomus* of 1794 with a drawing of the flowers of *G. quinquenervis* (t. 25) but without any description of these parts. The valid description of the type species of the genus *Gongora*, *Gongora quinquenervis* - followed in the *Systema*, which was an addendum to the first volume of the flora. It is, indeed, somewhat confusing that the authors apparently published what they considered to be the important parts of the flora in their 1794 *Prodomus*, which, as stated above, had but a limited distribution, and that the publication of the actual flora did not begin before 1798. The generic names published in the *Prodomus* are, however, considered to be valid and effective and, therefore, have to be cited accordingly. The genus *Gongora* was named in honor of Don Antonio Caballero y Gongora.

The Story Continues

In 1830, a plant originating from Mexico came into flower in the collection of Conrad Loddiges (England). The plant was described as *Maxillaria galeata* by John Lindley in 1831. In 1833, Lindley created the genus *Acropera* and redescribed his *Maxillaria galeata* in honor of Loddiges as *Acropera loddigesii*. In 1858, the genus *Acropera* was included in Ruiz and Pavon's genus *Gongora* by the younger Reichenbach, who renamed the species as *Gongora galeata* (Lindl.) Reichb.f. The name "Acropera" has been retained as a subgenus of *Gongora*, comprising six species, all originating from Central America. Of this subgenus, *G. galeata* is the type species, and at the same time the species most common in cultivation. It is considered to be a true "beginner's plant."

The Genus Gongora

The *Gongora*, as far as systematics is concerned,



Gongora galeottiana is named after Henry Guillaume Galeotti, a Belgian botanist and former director of the Botanical Gardens in Brussels. Collected in Mexico, this species occurs at elevations between 1,640 and 3,940 feet above sea level.

Photo by R. Jenny

belongs in the subtribe Stanhopeinae Benthham (according to Dressler's classification) or Gongorinae (according to Schlechter's system) together with about 20 other closely related genera such as Coryanthes Hooker, Stanhopea Frost ex Hooker, Sievekingia Reichb. f. and Cirrhaea Lindley. It now comprises about 55 species, subspecies and varieties.

The distribution of the genus *Gongora* is limited to the Neotropics (Central and South America). Two species (*Gongora atropurpurea* and *Gongora maculata*) are found on Trinidad (which is floristically similar to South America). No species are found on any of the other Caribbean Islands. The distribution in South America is on both sides of the Andes from Colombia to Ecuador and on the eastern slopes as far south as Peru and Bolivia. The floras of Venezuela, the Guyanas and Brazil are poor in respect to gongoras.

The habit of the *Gongora* species, and especially

the fact that the pendent inflorescences originate from the base of the pseudobulbs, indicates that they all are true epiphytes.

The genus is furthermore characterized by a complex pollination system. They are pollinated by male solitary bees of the Euglossinae family only (a feature they share with the stanhopeas.) The bees are attracted by a strong floral fragrance, and pollination occurs when the insect attempts to reach the source of the fragrance inside the flower structure. As the composition of the fragrance differs from one species to another, it may be assumed that each fragrance is intended to attract few or even one single kind of bee, indicating a more or less clear-cut reproductive isolation. Specific studies, however, have revealed quite distinct qualitative as well as quantitative variation in the composition of the fragrance of plants within one single population. The fragrance also varies in respect to the time of the day and



Gongora pseudoatropurpurea is among those species from which growers can choose when selecting a plant to cultivate.

Photo by R. Jenny

the relative age of the flowers. These results show that fragrance analysis, although possibly a useful taxonomic tool, cannot replace "classic" taxonomy and should not be used isolated from other criteria. Indeed, a difference in fragrance does not necessarily indicate a difference in species.

Growing the Plants

The species of the genus *Gongora* are not exceptionally rare in cultivation, notwithstanding the fact that their flowers last just a few

days and that the plants do require some extra space. Many species of this genus show extensive morphological affinities and are, therefore, often difficult to tell apart, thus just as often causing mislabeling in the collections. Most *Gongora* species are easy to cultivate and quickly grow into large and showy plants. They do best when mounted on blocks of cork or tree fern or grown in hanging baskets. The important criteria for the successful growing of *Gongoras* are a warm environment and constant high humidity with, however, continuous ventilation. All species of this genus (and here they do not differ from most other orchids) are "allergic" to stagnating moisture, and are, under adverse conditions, readily targeted by fungi. Although *Gongora* species can also be found in areas with temporary dry seasons, none of the species really needs a distinct resting period in cultivation, thus, the watering schedule can be continued throughout the year. The *Gongoras*, however, require regular applications of fertilizer. Large specimens should be divided, preferably when the young growths are a few inches in size, but still without roots. Each division should have at least three backbulbs.

Gongoras offer something for every orchid grower, although those with greenhouses are more likely to have the space to develop impressive specimens of this New World genus of orchids.

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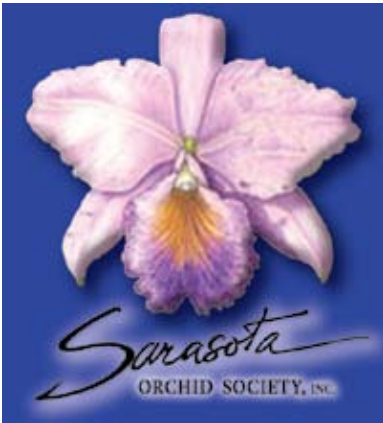


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