



Ottawa Orchid Society  
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This month's meeting...

**Sunday, April 20th, 2008 @ 1:30 p.m.**  
**Tom Brown Arena, 141 Bayview, Ottawa**

**"Orchids of the Ottawa Region" with Henry Steger**

Did you know there are orchids on every continent except Antarctica and there are several in our very own region. With the exception of the Lady Slippers, however, our local orchids are not as showy as the orchids we enjoy growing and most of us would easily pass by them on a nature walk.

Henry Steger, a former president of the Ottawa Orchid Society, has made it his mission to find and photograph all the orchids within a 50 km radius of Parliament Hill. This endeavour was completed in 2006 after 25 years of searching in woods, swamps, bogs, fens, river banks and so on. Henry's presentation will focus on the results of his explorations and will include some information on blooming times and types of habitat, when known, as well as tips on the best locations to observe orchids in situ.

Henry's interest in orchids dates back to 1976 when he purchased his first three orchids, one of which, a Cattleya, is still thriving. He is one of the early members of the Ottawa Orchid Society, #15 in fact. His interest in photographing native wild flowers, particularly orchids, was sparked by a family vacation near Fitzroy Harbour in 1981 and he has pursued it across the world, in Europe, the Caribbean, Mexico, South America and South Africa.

So come in April and see that you don't have to go far to see new orchids.

Marilyn Light will be giving her **Orchids 101** presentation at 12:30 to 1:00 pm. The presentation will be "WHAT IS IT? - ORCHID NAMES and IDENTIFICATION. This topic should be useful to those wanting to enter plants in the show.

Don't forget to bring your blooming orchids to our monthly show table.

**The Ottawa Orchid Society meets every third Sunday of every month from September to May inclusive at 1:30 P.M. at the Tom Brown Arena, 141 Bayview, Ottawa. Guests are welcome.**

**MEMBERSHIP: \$25 from September 1 - August 31.**

## ***A Note from the President (and Editor)***

This month's presentation provides a timely introduction to Canadian native orchids found growing close to home and in many other parts of Ontario. Attend Henry's talk and learn what you can find in your own "back yard" in the months ahead when these orchids begin to bloom. The image on the right is that of *Cypripedium parviflorum*, a Canadian orchid species bearing a close resemblance to another Canadian orchid species, *Cypripedium calceolus*. Which of these is found locally? Henry knows. He will tell you.



*Cypripedium parviflorum*

Well, in just a couple of weeks, the Ottawa Orchid Society will be holding its 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Show as well as playing host to the Canadian Orchid Congress (COC). We have a lot of exciting speakers, vendors, and other events planned for this occasion. It will be an exciting, busy and fun packed weekend with a lot of things happening. Lost track of what is planned? For details on what will unfold on April 26<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>, visit the Society web site at [www.ottawaorchidsociety.com](http://www.ottawaorchidsociety.com) and click on the link "Orchid Shows" and then click on the link "Orchid Show April 2008 Show Information". This link has all the information, forms, schedules, COC Symposium Brochure information and posters connected with our show. All the details on the show are found on the Show Schedule. Want to know what is planned for the Saturday night banquet and the COC Symposium Speakers? Click on the link "[Please click here for information on the COC meeting and events.](#)" and go to the COC Symposium brochure. Need a show poster? We have it in English, French and Chinese. Want to give coupons to friends and others that will give them \$1 off on the regular admission price? This is on the web site!

We still need volunteers to help out with the show. We are also looking for higher end items to auction at the Saturday night banquet. Because of time restraints, we will not be auctioning off the more common and less expensive articles normally included in our annual auction. If you have plants (divisions or otherwise), orchid paintings or orchid photographic work that you can donate for the auction, this would be just great. We will have select plants donated by participating show vendors for the Saturday night auction so there will be some great things to bid on. 50% of the funds raised at the Saturday night auction will be turned over to the Canadian Orchid Congress to help pay for future speakers attending COC sponsored events. The other 50% of the money will be turned over to our Society. Whichever way you look at it, it is a win-win situation for our Society and members. Jean Hollebhone is co-ordinating everything to do with the COC, including the COC Symposium and banquet. If you need or want more information on the COC related activities, contact Jean (her phone number and e-mail address is on the front of Spike) but please check the information on our Society web site first before contacting her.

On a more somber note, we are saddened with the sudden passing of Gary Schreiber of Schreiber Orchids on April 6th, 2008. Margaret and I attended the funeral service held in Uxbridge, Ontario April 12<sup>th</sup> to pay our respects and be with Yvonne, their daughter, Sarena, their son, Christopher, and her family during this time. Gary was a great orchid grower who put together beautiful displays at our annual show year after year after year. His orchids won many prestigious awards. Many of us looked forward every year to his and Yvonne's coming to see what he had for display and sale. He and Yvonne will be missed. We conveyed our deepest condolences to Yvonne and her family from everyone in the Society.

Hope to see you all at the April meeting where we will have volunteer sheets should you wish to sign up to help with the show. You don't have to sign up for the entire weekend. If you can't make it to the monthly meeting, see you at our show the following weekend! Remember, volunteers and show participants enter for free. Everyone else pays to get into the show.

Rick Sobkowicz

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# ***Society Bulletin Board***



## ***MEMBERS' CORNER - Theresa Lafleur***

A hearty welcome to the following new members:

- 1157 Brendon & Jirina Bulger
- 1158 Elizabeth Armstrong & Denis Croux
- 1159 Lilian Wong & Willie Chan
- 1160 Adeline Jeejeebhoy



## ***THE OTTAWA CHALLENGE - do we have a winner?***

You will remember that last May, the Society sold seedlings of Phal. (Haur Jin Diamond 'Ching Her' x Sogo Thomas 'Bedford Gold'), which should flower in shades of yellow with bright fuschia splotching. The plants had been purchased in flask from Howard Ginsberg of Bedford Orchids, and they were amazing, large and with nice, long roots. The first few members to flower it had been promised gift certificates from Bedford Orchids. A little birdie recently told me that their Ottawa Challenge plant is in spike. Do we perhaps have a winner? How is your plant doing? If you have a flower, let Julie Mertens know. Julie's contact information is on the front of Spike.



## ***NOTE FROM SOCIETY LIBRARIAN – Jane Thompson***

As we are now nearing the end of the present season of monthly meetings, I will not be bringing any books from the library to loan out. This will give me a chance to check all the books and get everything in order for September.

I would like to just jog the memories of all who have books on loan to please be sure to return them at the April Meeting. If you are unable to do so could you please contact me so that other arrangements can be made.



## ***ORCHID WORKSHOP AT THE WESTBORO SUPERSTORE (90 Richmond Street at Kirkwood) on April 22, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.***

Orchids are one of the largest plant families around, with a wonderful variety of plant shapes, colors, textures and even fragrances. Many of these can even be grown at home! On April 22, we'll take you through some of the more popular types of orchids, with a detour through some of the odder members of the orchid family, all with culture tips thrown in. There is no cost for the workshop. To register, please call Pat Wilson at (613) 722-9599.

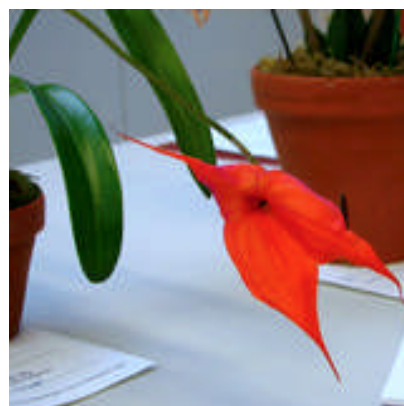
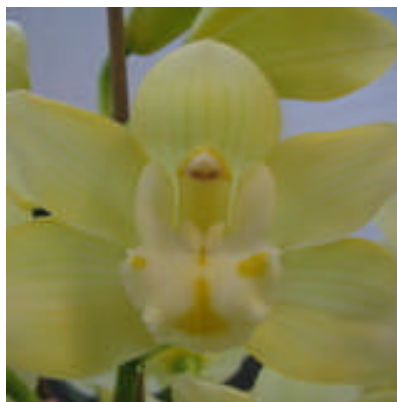
## MARCH SHOW TABLE JUDGING RESULTS – March 16, 2008

Alliance	Prize-winning plants	Grower
CATTLEYA, judged by Michael Lum	1 <sup>st</sup> prize: <i>C. Fruit Salad</i> ( <i>C. aurantiaca</i> x <i>Cherry Chip</i> ) 2 <sup>nd</sup> prize: <i>Slc. Morning Glow Nice Day</i> 2nd prize: <i>Epi. Candy Dandy 'Lo-Cal'</i>	Marilyn Light Geraldine Hebert Marilyn Light
CYMBIDIUM, judged by Michael Lum	1 <sup>st</sup> prize: <i>Cymbidium</i> no grex name. Clonal name: 'President's Choice'	Margaret MacNamara
LYCASTE, judged by Henry Steger	1 <sup>st</sup> prize: <i>Lyc. Concentration 'Lemon Ice'</i> ( <i>Lyc. cruenta</i> x <i>Lyc. Auburn</i> )	Maria Martins
ONCIDIUM, judged by Michael Lum	1 <sup>st</sup> prize: <i>Odontonia Memoria Dale Lawless</i> 2nd prize: <i>Howeara Lava Burst 'Puanani'</i>	Angèle Biljan Geraldine Hebert
DENDROBIUM, judged by Michael Lum	1 <sup>st</sup> prize: <i>Den. Big Alex (alexandrae x bigibbum)</i>  2 <sup>nd</sup> prize: <i>Den. kingianum</i>  2 <sup>nd</sup> prize <i>Den. tetragonum</i>  3 <sup>rd</sup> prize: <i>Den. Ioddigessii</i>  3 <sup>rd</sup> prize: <i>Den. Pamela 'Angel Smile'</i>	Angèle Biljan  John Gaskill  Linda Schopf  Terez Paksi  Angèle Biljan
PLEUROTHALLID, judged by Jean Hollebone	1 <sup>st</sup> prize: <i>Masd. veitchiana</i>	Linda Schopf
PAPHIOPEDILUM, judged by Michael Lum	1 <sup>st</sup> prize: <i>Paph.</i> No grex name 2 <sup>nd</sup> prize: * <i>Paph. delenatii</i> 3 <sup>rd</sup> prize: <i>Paph. Limidolly (?)</i>	Maria Martin Angèle Biljan Terez Paksi
PHRAGMIPEDIUM, judged by Michael Lum	1st prize: <i>Phrag. Twilight 4n (?)</i> 2 <sup>nd</sup> prize: <i>Phrag. conchiferum</i> 3 <sup>rd</sup> prize: <i>Phrag. Sedenii 'Blush'</i>	Angèle Biljan Angèle Biljan Angèle Biljan
PHALAENOPSIS and DORITAENOPSIS, judged by Henry Steger	1 <sup>st</sup> prize: <i>Phal. Rainbow Chip 'Lee'</i> 2 <sup>nd</sup> prize: <i>Phal. Timothy Christopher 'SS' x Phal. Ho's Amaglad 'Bryan' HCC/AOS</i> 3 <sup>rd</sup> prize: <i>Phal. Happy Girl 'Shelden' AM/AOS</i> 3 <sup>rd</sup> prize: <i>Phal. Karl Jeans Anne (?)</i>	Michael Lum Sue Bowering  Mike Woods Sue Bowering
MISCELLANEOUS, judged by Henry Steger	1 <sup>st</sup> prize: <i>Coelogyne speciosa 'Alan Salzman'</i> ? prize: <i>Cochleanthes amazonica</i>	Terez Paksi Maria Martins
PEOPLE'S CHOICE, judged by Michael Warren	<i>Phal. Happy Girl 'Sheldon' *</i>	Michael Woods
Best of SHOW TABLE	1 <sup>st</sup> prize: <i>Cymbidium</i> no grex name. Clonal name ('President's Choice')	Margaret MacNamara

Show table coordinator: Jean Hollebone. Thanks to Michael Lum who checked the accuracy of the plant names and provided the show table results for publication.

Thanks to Arlene Lang and Yanick Champoux, our two Society show table photographers. We have, for the first time, photographs of all the show table winners. These images can be found on the Society's web site. The link is <http://www.ottawaorchidsociety.com/society/meetings/2008-03> .

For those few members who do not have a computer, here are a few images of our show table winners. The image on the bottom left is *Cattleya Fruit Salad* grown by Marilyn Light. The second bottom image in the middle is *Odontioda Memoria Dale Lawless* grown by Angèle Biljan. The bottom image on the right is *Epidendrum Candy Dandy 'Lo-Cal'* HCC/AOS grown by Marilyn Light.



The orchid on the bottom left is *Phrag.* (Twilight 4n x *besseae* 'Cow Hollow' FCC/AOS) grown by Angèle Biljan. The orchid in the middle (bottom row) is a *Cymbidium* (no grex name) (clonal name *President's Choice*) grown by Margaret MacNamara. This plant was purchased a while back at a local grocery chainstore and grown beautifully by Margaret. It was selected as the Best of Show Table and subsequently won a 1<sup>st</sup>. place ribbon at the recent Montreal Orchidexpo show. The orchid on the bottom right side is *Masd. veitchiana* grown by Linda Schopf.

Congratulations to all our table winners and many thanks to all the members who brought their blooming orchids to the monthly show table.

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### ***How about a fall weekend at the Royal Botanical Gardens?***

As we mentioned in the last Spike and during the March meeting, after the smashing success of the visit to the Montreal Botanical Gardens in February, we are now planning a trip to the Royal Botanical Gardens in Hamilton, Ontario for a weekend in September, from Friday, September 12, 2008 to September 14, 2008.

The cost for the trip will be \$200 per person, which includes your transportation to Hamilton and to the planned activities, your entrance to the Royal Botanical Gardens, lunch at the Royal Botanical Gardens, two dinners (a BBQ at Orchids in our Tropics and a gourmet three-course dinner at Inn on the Twenty, one of the finest restaurants in Canada) and several snacks on the bus. Each person will also be responsible for paying their own breakfasts on Saturday and Sunday, their lunches on Friday and Saturday, their alcoholic consumptions on Saturday night, and their own hotel. (The Holiday Inn Burlington is offering us a rate of \$120 per night, plus taxes, and has several rooms with two double beds if you'd like to share with another member. Once we have confirmed all the details, members who have registered for the trip will be provided with the necessary information to book their rooms.) Therefore, the total cost will be approximately \$550 per person if rooming alone or \$850 for a couple.

The following is a tentative schedule for the weekend:

Friday, September 12, 2008:

8:30 a.m. Departure from the Ottawa Train Station (overnight parking is available here for a relatively low cost)  
9:00 a.m. Departure from the Chapters store at Pinecrest (overnight parking is not available here, so participants must be dropped off)  
11:15 a.m. Early lunch stop at Tim Hortons on Division Street in Kingston  
12:30 p.m. Departure from Kingston  
3:30 p.m. Arrival at Orchids in our Tropics for a special tour of their greenhouses  
5:30 p.m. BBQ at Orchids in our Tropics  
7:30 p.m. Departure for Holiday Inn Burlington  
8:30 p.m. Arrival at hotel and check in

Saturday, September 13, 2008:

8:30 a.m. Departure from hotel for Royal Botanical Gardens  
9:00 a.m. Beginning of one-hour guided tour of the Royal Botanical Gardens' Mediterranean House focussing on the orchid collection housed there  
10:00 a.m. Free time to visit the Royal Botanical Gardens on your own  
11:30 a.m. Buffet lunch at the Royal Botanical Gardens (participants can drop in anytime before 12:45 p.m., should you want a bit more time visiting)  
1:00 p.m. Departure for afternoon visits to Marsh Hollow Orchids and Cloud's Orchids  
1:30 p.m. Drop off in Jordan of participants who prefer wine-themed activities over orchids (we will all meet here for our dinner)  
2:00 p.m. Arrival at Marsh Hollow Orchids for guided visit  
3:45 p.m. Departure from Marsh Hollow Orchids  
4:15 p.m. Arrival at Cloud's Orchids for guided visit  
6:00 p.m. Departure from Cloud's Orchids  
6:15 p.m. Arrival at Inn on the Twenty for dinner in the Vintners Cellar  
8:30 p.m. Departure for hotel  
9:00 p.m. Arrival at hotel

Sunday, September 14, 2008:

10:00 a.m. Departure for home  
12:30 p.m. Arrival at Tim Hortons on Division Street in Kingston for lunch  
1:30 p.m. Departure for Ottawa  
3:30 p.m. Arrival at Chapters store at Pinecrest for drop off  
4:30 p.m. Arrival at Ottawa Train Station for final drop off

We will start taking registrations at the April meeting and the 50 spots will be assigned on a first come, first served basis. The full \$200 will be required for your registration. Only \$125 of that amount will be refundable. Spots can also be transferred to any other person. We will also be inviting members of the Kingston Orchid Society to join us.

For additional information, please contact Julie Mertens by e-mail at [julie\\_mertens@videotron.ca](mailto:julie_mertens@videotron.ca) or by phone at (613) 323-0460. Hope you'll be able to come!

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## **RESULTS FROM ORCHIDEXPO, THE ORCHID SHOW IN MONTREAL , Mar.29-30, 2008**

### **1<sup>st</sup> Place Ribbons**

*Cymbidium* No Grex Name (clonal name 'President's Choice) – Margaret MacNamara

*Dendrobium* Brazil – Terez Paski

*Laelia* Tropical Sunrise 'Patience' HCC/AOS - André Couture

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Place Ribbons**

*Burrageana* Killanea 'Hawaii' – Jean Hollebhone

Cattleya Fruit Salad – Marilyn Light

*Dendrobium draconis* – Michael Kum

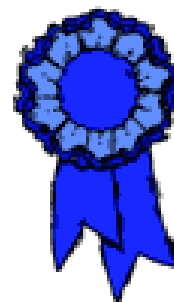
*Dendrobium* Himezakura 'Sanokku' – Terez Paski

Paph. Berenice – Janet Johns

Paph. *Limidolli* – Terez Paski

Paph. *spicerianum* – Steve Levick

Paph. Vanda M. Pearman – Janet Johns



### **3<sup>rd</sup> Place Ribbons**

*Dendrobium aphyllum* – Michael Lum

*Epidendrum* Candy Dandy – Marilyn Light

*Phal.* Rainbow Chip 'Lee' – Michael Lum

Visiting Society Exhibit - André Couture and Marcel Carriere

Many thanks to André Couture and Marcel Carriere for organizing all the work picking up and dropping off plants and putting together a beautiful Society display at the Montreal Show. Many thanks to everyone who donated plants to the Society exhibit, including Helgi Fatovic for her plant Paph. (Red Shift x Pulsar) and for being a drop and pick up center for members' plants. This helped André and Marcel quite a bit. Congratulations to all the ribbon winners!

### **ANGEL ORCHIDS (Angèle Biljan)**

A number of Ottawa Orchid Society members participated at the Montreal show as vendors and erected their own personal displays. Only one such member shared with your editor the results of her effort. We are pleased to share this information with you for Angèle Biljan. Thank you, Angèle, for sharing this information with us. Congratulations Angèle on your ribbons!

1st - *Cymbidium* Evening Star 'Pastel Princess' Am/AOS

2nd - *Lc. schilleriana*

2nd – *Lc.* Purple Cascade 'Beauty of Perfume'

2nd - For a 'Cross-stitch' exhibit featuring orchids

3rd - *Cat.* Harris Beat

3rd - *Dendrobium* Pamela Angel Smile'

3rd - *Dendrobium printicei*



## **RESULTS FROM QUEBEC CITY ORCHID SHOW IN MONTREAL, April 12-13, 2008**

Marilyn Light and Michael MacConaill left Ottawa amidst snowflakes and arrived in Québec City to sunshine and mild temperatures. Unloading the plants went like clockwork and they soon found their table upon which a grey fabric divider was placed by the host society to serve as a backdrop. Their exhibit theme was 'Le printemps est arrivé'. They used a hand painted mural painted by Marilyn's late father, Gordon WT Light, in the 70's and which was used once in a Montreal show in the 80's depicting the St. Lawrence in spring. Marilyn and Michael brought wood and fresh cut yew as foliage, as well as pebbles to set it all off. White flowers brightened the scene. Ten plants of six genera were entered for judging and a few others used as props. Of the 10, seven plants received ribbons. The exhibit was entered in the 6 to 15 plant category and as a visiting society for which Marilyn and Michael received 3rd place for each category. Saturday was a very snowy day with about 15 cm of heavy wet snow falling all day but large numbers of city folk came to see the show and to buy plants. Sunday saw even more visitors and also brief but heavy snow showers. By Monday when Marilyn and Michael returned to Ottawa, the sun was out making it a safe and uneventful return.

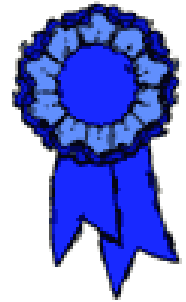
Many thanks to Steve Levick, Janet Johns and Marilyn Light who provided flowers and thanks to Marilyn and Michael for all their work putting the Ottawa Orchid Society display together. Great work!

**Ribbons:**

- 1<sup>st</sup>. Lc. Mildred Rives 'Orchidglade' FCC/AOS - Marilyn Light
- 1<sup>st</sup>. Epi. Candy Dandy - Marilyn Light
- 2<sup>nd</sup>. Paph. Vanda M. Peraman - Janet Johns
- 2<sup>nd</sup>. Epc. Fringe Festival - Marilyn Light
- 2<sup>nd</sup>. Epi. calanthum - Marilyn Light
- 2<sup>nd</sup>. Masd. virgo-cuencae - Marilyn Light
- 3<sup>rd</sup>. Phal. Cool Breeze - Marilyn Light

Exhibit - 3rd prize  
Visiting Society - 3rd prize

Here is a picture of the Society's exhibit at Quebec city:



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**ORCHIDOPHILIA – OTTAWA ORCHID SOCIETY'S 27<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SHOW**

Linda Schopf will be co-ordinating and erecting the Ottawa Orchid Society exhibit. In last month's Spike, she asked for certain materials for her display. Members are reminded that this display is representative of what our members grow. To have a beautiful display, Linda will require your blooming orchids. If you have plants suitable for our exhibit, please bring them to the Nepean Sportsplex anytime on Friday afternoon (April 25<sup>th</sup>) or during the early evening hours before the plant registration ends (8:30 pm). Please be sure your orchids are free of pests and a little clean up of the foliage and pot will help Linda immensely. Members are advised to make sure there is something on the pot to identify the plant as yours as this will help to quickly return all the plants at the end of the show to the rightful owners. There will also be a registration sheet where Linda will be set up for members to print the information concerning their plants (ie. plant name and owner). Please be sure to check with Linda before depositing your plant and leaving the Sportsplex as there may be something further required of you. We thank you ahead of time for your help with the Society display. If you should be unable to come with your plant(s) to the Friday set up, you may wish to bring your blooming orchis(s) to the April monthly meeting where Linda will be happy to take your plant for the Society display. All plants will be returned to owners after 5:00 pm on Sunday, at the close of our show.



One of the big events at the Show will be the raffle and auction at the banquet. We are looking for good quality raffle and auction items. Anna Bilsky and Janet Johns are collecting items now. If you have some orchid books or photographs, an orchid vase, a quality plant, some orchid related linen or orchid related jewellery, or some special grow equipment that you no longer need, consider donating the item(s) for the raffle and auction. We are looking for around 30 to 40 unusual, interesting and fun items. Our target is to raise around \$1000 which would be split between the Society and the COC. Please bring these items to the April meeting. You can also make your donation on Friday of the show set up or anytime on Saturday (April 26<sup>th</sup>) before 5:00 p.m. Anna and Janet will be pleased to receive your donation.

**A detailed listing of all participating vendors can be found on the Society's web site with contact particulars should you wish to contact anyone one of them with a special request. Many of our vendors have thousands of plants, flasks, and community pots in their greenhouses and grow areas and can only bring a representation of what they have. If you have a special request, do not hesitate to contact any one of our participating vendors. They will be happy to fill your request if at all possible.**

**Volunteers are still needed.** If you can help out with any aspect of the Show please sign the volunteer sheets that will be at the back of the room at the April meeting. All volunteers are admitted free of charge to the show and enjoy numerous other benefits such as some great food and an advance peek of what vendors will have for sale.

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## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**April 19-20,2008**      **The Annual Toronto Artistic Orchid Association Show**, Chinese Cultural Centre, 5183 Sheppard Ave. East, (Markham Road), Contact person: Louisa Fung, [louisafung@rogers.com](mailto:louisafung@rogers.com), telephone: 416-292-9203. Website: <http://www.taoa.ca>.

**April 26-27,2008**      **ORCHIDOPHILIA, 27th Ottawa Orchid Society Annual Show and Sale** in conjunction with the COC Annual Meeting and Symposium, Nepean Sportsplex, 1701 Woodroffe Ave., Ottawa, Ontario. For detailed information on the show and all related events, see the Society web site at <http://www.ottawaorchidsociety.com> . Show Chair: David Cooper, e-mail: [orchidae@allstream.net](mailto:orchidae@allstream.net) . Show times: Sat. 12:00-5:00 pm; Sunday: 9:00-5:00 pm.

## **NATIVE ORCHIDS IN ONTARIO**

Of over 30,000 kinds of orchid species known, more than any other family of plants, over 60 kinds are found in Ontario with 18 species found in the Windsor-Essex region. The Ojibway Prairie Complex is a good area to look for several species. Orchids of tallgrass prairie include Great Plains Ladies' Tresses, Ragged Fringed and Prairie White-fringed Orchid while oak woodland provides habitat for Purple Twayblade and Yellow Lady-slipper orchids. Mature deciduous forest remnants in the county support several orchids including Putty-root, Showy Orchis, Spotted Coralroot and Three Birds Orchid.

**MAY:** Showy Orchis: *Galearis spectabilis*; Yellow Lady-slipper: *Cypripedium calceolus*

**JUNE:** Purple Twayblade: *Liparis liliifolia*; Fen Twayblade: *Liparis loeselii*; Putty-root: *Apectrum hymale*; Shining Ladies' Tresses: *Spiranthes lucida*; Tubercled Orchid: *Platanthera flava*; Tall Northern Bog Orchid: *Platanthera hyperborean*; Ragged Fringed Orchid: *Platanthera lacera*; Showy Lady-slipper: *Cypripedium reginae*; Eastern Prairie White-fringed Orchid: *Platanthera leucophaea*

**JULY:** Helleborine Orchid: *Epipactis helleborine*

**AUGUST:** Orange-fringed Orchid: *Platanthera ciliaris* extirpated; Spotted Coral-root: *Corallorhiza maculata*; Three Birds Orchid: *Triphora trianthophora*; Nodding Ladies' Tresses: *Spiranthes cernua*

**SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER:** Oval Ladies' Tresses: *Spiranthes ovalis*; Great Plains Ladies' Tresses: *Spiranthes magnicamporum*

**Orchids 101**  
**March 16, 2008**

**Guidelines to Purchasing Orchids**

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There are two types of orchid purchase. We buy blooming orchids at the supermarket and use them as decoration, as a hostess gift, or even to add to our collections. Such orchids will likely be *Phalaenopsis* and purchased already in bloom. Pest and disease risks aside, we still should ask some questions before making our selection. Is the root system healthy? Are the roots in active growth with green tips in evidence? If the roots cannot be seen, are the leaves firm? Many plants are in excellent condition but there may be some in dire need of repotting.

The other common purchase is at a show. We may hear someone saying – “I wonder if the exhibitor has any for sale?” – “Where did you buy it?” – “I just have to get one of those plants for my collection.” but more rarely do we hear the potential buyer posing the question – “Can I grow this plant well under my conditions?” If we wish to ever see a new plant bloom, thrive and maybe even win a show table ribbon or perhaps, an award, we really should pose that last question first.

**Learning about what can grow well for you** – Your orchid society has a wealth of experienced members ready to share knowledge with you. Your personal experience can also guide you but experience takes time to accumulate and you need the information – now! So what to do? Learn about the conditions (light, temperature, space) you can provide before making a purchase. Thus armed with information, you will be able to ask good questions about the potential success of a particular plant in your growing environment.

**Learning how to pick a healthy vigorous plant** – After checking for bugs, the next place to check is the root system. Without healthy roots, you are already facing an uphill battle to keep the plant alive. With permission of the vendor, touch the plant to be certain that it is firmly rooted and on its last legs – root wise. Next check the leaves and pseudobulbs. Firm unblemished foliage is a sign that the plant has been cared for. Pseudobulbs should be firm, plump, and show signs that growth has been progressively better. Bulbs will be getting bigger or remaining the same size rather than getting smaller with each subsequent growth. The odd nick or tear during transport is normal but stay far away from blemished leaves. Spots, concentric rings, dark blotches, and flecks can spell big trouble which you do not need. Notice that I have left flower quality last – on purpose. Look for flowers that please you. A healthy plant is more likely to provide more of your favourite flowers under your tender loving care.

**Planning for the new arrival** – If it is very cold, windy, sunny, or hot, have a plan to get that precious plant home. Heat can be just as deadly as cold. Support the plant so that it cannot topple during the drive home. Shelter the leaves from direct sunlight. At home, have a place where the plant can both be admired and cared for and away from air conditioner or heater drafts, pet temptation and small children.

**Learning from the experiment** – Take pictures, keep notes, and look up the name on the web. Watch how your plant likes its location. Does it begin to bend toward the light? If so, move it a bit closer. Watch the roots. Those especially will indicate whether your conditions suit this plant. Be patient. Your plant will need to adjust and this may take some time. If in doubt, please ask. Your orchid society is ready to provide advice.

Happy orchid growing!