

## GREATER LAS VEGAS ORCHID SOCIETY THE ORCHID COLUMN

CAROL SIEGEL, EDITOR

SUNDAY OCTOBER 2, 2011  
2 P.M.

### SPECIAL EVENTS:

Peter Lin

"The Three A's

Angraecum, Aeranthes, and  
Aerangis"

November 6, 2011 Carol Siegel

"The Sex Life of Orchids"

December 4, 2011 Holiday Party

January 8, 2012

Jason Fischer "Singapore World  
Orchid Conference"

February 5, 2012

Ron Midgett "20-Year Odyssey in  
Cattleya Breeding"

March 4, 2012 Ron Parsons "Orchids  
Of Philippines"

April 1, 2012 Harold Koopowitz

"All About Paphiopedilum"

May 6, 2012 Potting Workshop

June 3, 2012 Rick Burnett "Seven

Ways to Kill An Orchid"

August 5, 2012

Barbecue

September 9, 2011

Diana Smith talk

### PIZZA PARTY IN OCTOBER-PETER LIN SPEAKS

The club has decided to sponsor and pay for a Pizza Hut pizza party at our next meeting. Rosalie de Guzman will bring specialty desserts. I will bring desserts and salads, and Diana Smith will bring drinks and dessert. Roberta Schechter will bring all the paper goods. Thank you to the kind volunteers who pitched in at the last minute. We still need four more people for November...

Peter Lin, a talented speaker who has delighted us before, will return with a talk on "The Three A's: Angraecum, Aeranthes, and Aerangis." This fast paced PowerPoint presentation will showcase 3 of the main genera in the Angraecoid family of Orchids, as well as some of the lesser genera. Along with the species, we'll also take a look at some of the beautiful hybrids that have been made over the years. in

These African orchids are mainly epiphytic *Aeridinae* and *Aerangidae* from Madagascar which are pollinated by hawkmoths. They usually have white, long-spurred flowers.

According to Nilsson, Madagascar holds the record for extreme orchid spur length with 90 species in five genera having spurs exceeding 8 cm in length (more than 3 inches). Some orchid species even have nectar spurs that are 30-40 cm in length (15 inches!). For this guild of orchids, the hawkmoth generalist *Panogena lingens* is the sole pollinator. Picking up pollinia from many species on different locations on its body, it can deliver the right pollinia to the right species without wasting any genetic material.



Angraecum compactum



Angraecum cucullatum



Angraecum magdalenae

I am an avid orchid hobbyist, hybridizer, and Peter Lin started growing orchids over 25 years ago, but then stopped due to school and starting a career. It wasn't until about 9 years ago that the orchid "bug" came back and he is now heavily involved once again! He is an accredited judge with the American Orchid Society, and a hybridizer of mini-catts. He enjoys meeting with other orchid enthusiasts, and can often be found at various orchid shows and societies around the country.

Due to limited growing space, Peter likes to specialize in miniature orchids, both species and hybrids, and has received numerous AOS awards. His other interests in orchids include Dendrobiums, Angraecoids, and Neofinetias. He maintains a collection of a thousand or more orchids at his home in Southern California in 3 small greenhouses, outdoors, as well as indoors. **PETER WILL BE SELLING HIS PLANTS AT THE MEETING.**

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**CATHY LOFTFIELD DID A GREAT JOB PRESENTING "A PASSION FOR ORCHIDS" IN SEPTEMBER...**

**Cathy did a wonderful presentation on her orchid photography and orchid growing passions, and we thank her so much for her spirited and lovely talk. The food was wonderful thanks to the Tuthills, Wililams, Al de Ricco, the Webers, and Mary King. Ole Borresen brilliantly sold our hotel plants, and we haggled and took home tons of beautiful plants. Thanks to Tony Billitere for getting us the plants and Gail Harris, Ed McCormick and Joel Davidson for lovingly caring for them. A special thank you to Gaia Florists (Main and Charleston) for donating 60 phals to our raffle sale. Members delighted to the double-spiked intergenerics I got from Hilo Orchids.**

Many of the intergeneric hybrids from Hilo Orchid Farms had funny names like “Colmanara” and “Wilsonara,” and members were puzzled.

### ***THE MOST COMMON INTERGENERIC HYBRIDS***

*Aspaia x Miltonia x Odontoglossum x Oncidium = Withnerara (With.)*

*Brassia x Miltonia = Miltassia (Mtssa.)*

*Brassia x Oncidium = Brassidium (Brsdm.)*

*Cochlioda x Odontoglossum x Oncidium = Wilsonara (Wils.)*

*Cochlioda x Miltonia x Odontoglossum x Oncidium = Burrageara (Burr.)*

*Cochlioda x Odontoglossum x Oncidium = Colmanara (Colm.)*

*Odontoglossum x Cochlioda = Odontioda (Oda..)*

*Odontoglossum x Oncidium = Odontocidium (Odcdm.)*

*Cochlioda x Miltonia x Odontoglossum = Vuylstekeara (Vuyl)*

*Brassia x Miltonia x Odontoglossum x Cochlioda = Beallara (Bllra)*

For those who want more, I have attached a more complete list for those who get the newsletter by email.



Wilsonara Jungle Moss ‘Rainforest’



## PHALAENOPSIS SEASON..

About 90% of the orchids sold in the US are phals. I have attached to the newsletter an article by [www.repotme.com](http://www.repotme.com) on this orchid. Remember that in October for about three weeks (or even as late as November), these plants as well as many paphiopedilum require three weeks of chilling at about 60 degrees in order to flower well in the spring. If you grow in the house, be sure to put the plants in an unheated room or to open the window or door a crack. Same for growing under lights... If you have a greenhouse, nature will take care of it. If you have your plants under the same temps year-round, it does not mimic nature. Also, I did a little potting demonstration for phals at the meeting. It took one minute to repot the plant from Gaia into a slightly larger pot with sphagnum moss (We sell for \$5 at the meeting. I donate it! Get some and “change the diaper” of your orchids so they are in nice fresh mix. They will love you and reward you with flowers. Many of us get orchids at the raffle. They have often outgrown their pot or are in old mix. You should repot them when the bloom goes down.



## UPCOMING EVENTS IN THE ORCHID WORLD...

### **53<sup>rd</sup> Annual Santa Barbara Orchid Estate Fall Open House**

Saturday November 5, 8 AM to 5 PM

Sunday November 6, 9 AM to 4 PM

**Summary:** Our Fall Open House celebrates *Laelia* species: diversely colored *anceps*, fragrant *autumnalis*, and vibrant *gouldiana*, and their hybrids. Plus *Cymbidium erythrostylum*, *tracyanum*, and its hybrids. *Stenoglottis*, and *Oncidium*s. View plants offered on our 2011 Silent Auction. Search through the \$7.50 specials and the \$15 mid-season cymbidiums.

*Laelia anceps* Parade – The spikes are up early this year, so there should be lots of beautiful blooms this November. Enjoy the variations! Lavender, white, tinted, blue, striated, and now the PINK of our Pink Perfection Strain. Potted, mounted, or in wooden or plastic baskets. Also enjoy many *anceps* hybrids like the splash-petal LC Miss Wonderful, other Mexican *Laelias*, like fragrant *autumnalis*, vivid *gouldiana*, and their hybrids.

Cymbidium Season Kickoff – The year's best selection of *Cymbidium*s and most are showing spikes! Some mid-season bloomers will be priced at \$15 for one spike, \$20 for two spikes, and \$25 for three spikes. Early blooming *Cymbidium* species like fragrant *tracyanum*, *erythrostylum*, *insigne* v *seidenfadenii*, and their hybrids.

7.50 Specials – Flats, tables, ladders and buckets full of exciting seedlings, bare-root divisions, and sprouted back-bulbs.

Other great Fall Bloomers – stately *Stenoglottis*, and earthy *Oncidium*s

Annual Silent Auction – Your chance to bid on rarely offered orchid species and hybrids, first-time releases of recently awarded plants, select clones from our breeding program, and spectacular specimen plants. View the plants in person before and during the Open House. Many plants will also be pictured on our website along with instructions for bidding. The silent auction opens for bidding in early October and closes at 4 PM on Sunday November 6, 2011.

For more information call (800) 553-3387 or check our website [www.sborchid.com](http://www.sborchid.com)

**September 24 & 25 – The Fascination of Orchids Show & Sale at South Coast Plaza Village in Santa Ana, CA. For more information on the show, click on this link**

**October 1 & 2 – The San Diego International Orchid Fair at the San Diego Botanic Garden, Encinitas, CA. For more information on the show, click on this link**

<http://www.sdbgarden.org/orchid.htm>,

**October 8 & 9 – The Denver Orchid Society Fall Orchid Show & Sale at the Denver Botanic Gardens, Denver, CO. For more information on the show, click on this link**

[http://www.denverorchidsociety.org/fall\\_show.htm](http://www.denverorchidsociety.org/fall_show.htm)

**October 14-16 – The 2011 Southland Orchid Show at the Huntington Botanical Gardens in San Marino, CA. For more information on the show, click on this link**

<http://www.orchidshow.org>

**October 27-30 – The American Orchid Society Members Meeting Show & Sale in San Antonio, TX. For more information on the show, click on this link**

<http://alamoorchidsociety.org/fandango/home>, for preorders for this show, please send by October 23<sup>rd</sup> to [info@andysorchids.com](mailto:info@andysorchids.com).

Have I got an orchid for you... Gorgeous, cheap, reliable and undemanding, phalaenopsis are an ideal plant for the desert grower. I sing the praises of phalaenopsis.. Standing in my greenhouse garage this morning, I was surrounded by dozens and dozens of phalaenopsis, spikes elongating, flowers opening in a riot of color. If you don't grow phalaenopsis, you are missing out on a lot of pleasure. If you can't flower anything else, you probably will be able to flower phalaenopsis.

#### THE STAR OF THE ORCHID TRADE

Phalaenopsis have quickly become America's favorite orchid. In 2002, as much as 90 percent of the \$250 million retail sales of orchids sold in the United States were phalaenopsis, and it is obvious why. Sold in every supermarket and hardware store, phals are inexpensive, beautiful, and long lasting. They require very little light and will thrive in a windowsill or under fluorescent lights. They come in a variety of colors and can easily be re-bloomed in a variety of environments with minimal care. Their reasonable price makes them more affordable than cut flowers, and, although many throw them out after blooming, a little attention will keep them blooming for years. Growers love them, too, since they can often be brought from flask to bloom in just 18 months.

For us, phals are a lot of fun. From the time the spike emerges, three exciting months pass as the flowers form. From the time the first flower opens, the spike remains open for the next two to three months. Then, if you cut the spike above the first, second or third "node" or dormant bud (the rings around the stem), it may often bloom again, a whole new spike to repeat the process. It is a plant that loves to bloom, and we love to buy and grow it.

#### WHERE PHALAENOPSIS COMES FROM

Phalaenopsis grow in a semi-triangle from Sri Lanka to Northern India, across Southern China to Taiwan, then south to the northern Cape York point of Queensland, Australia, and back northwest across Java and Sumatran. They are epiphytes growing on mossy tree branches in warm humid jungles. Want to make a phalaenopsis happy in your home or greenhouse? Give them what they had long ago when they were growing in nature-warmth, humidity, dappled light.

#### WHAT CULTURAL CONDITIONS PHALS LIKE

Phalaenopsis orchids like the same kind of conditions people like. If you feel comfortable in a room, your phals will probably feel that way, too. Give them gentle breezes and moderate, moist air, and they will be happy. These orchids prefer the 50-70% humidity we can provide with misters, misting, humidifiers, foggers although they can be happy in a windowsill sitting on a wet pebble tray. They like to grow on the warm side and prefer not to be much below 60 degrees, even in winter. They don't need a lot of light and do well under fluorescents or in a window-sill that's not too bright- 1000 to 2000 footcandles. Bob Gordon recommends fertilizing them with a balanced fertilizer (20-20-20) at one-quarter strength at every watering although everyone has his own opinion on this subject.

#### POTTING PHALS

You can pot phals in many mixes. Bob Gordon suggests repotting your orchid once a year in fir bark. Norman Fang of Norman's Orchids recommends New Zealand sphagnum moss, changed every 9 months or so. George Vasquez of Zuma Canyon Orchids recommends inexpensive Chilean moss, while many people love coconut chunks, which have been rinsed three times before potting to remove salts. Lately, Aussie Gold, a diatomite mix, has proven very successful for me, a great choice if you don't like to pot or water too often.

#### WATERING PHALS

Because they have no pseudobulbs and can only store a little water in their few succulent leaves, phalaenopsis orchids don't like to dry out completely. In nature, they receive night dew, day mist, and plenty of rain in season. Match your frequency of watering to your medium. Bark, especially new bark, needs to be watered

every few days, while Aussie Gold and sphagnum moss can go a week or more between watering because they are very water-retentive.

Good drainage is essential. Bob Gordon recommends adding drainage holes with a soldering gun or sharp object. Four-inch pots should have drainage holes that total at least one square inch in area. Six-inch pots should have at least two square inches of drainage holes.

### INITIATING FLOWER SPIKES

Although phalaenopsis can bloom at any time, they are in their glory right now. In the fall, in order to initiate blooming, phalaenopsis need to be chilled by 10-20 degrees at night. If you grow in a greenhouse, nature will take care of this change in temperature. If you grow in the house or under lights, a door or window left a crack open will do the trick. A minimum-maximum thermometer, available at such places as Charley's Greenhouse ([www.charleysgreenhouse.com](http://www.charleysgreenhouse.com)), will tell you how cold it got at night. You don't want it to get much below 60 degrees since phalaenopsis are warm-growing flowers, even if they do like a colder time in the fall. George Vasquez of Zuma Canyon Orchids recommends getting the area down to only 60 degrees, but Bob Gordon says to lower temperatures to 55 degrees in the cooling period. Initiating three weeks of cooler temperatures in October will cause nearly 100% of your plants to spike in the weeks afterwards. This temperature drop is essential for reliable blooming. Bob Gordon also recommends an increase in light at this time, too, but I usually decrease my artificial lights at this time, and I have had very good success, too. The lesson? Experiment and see what works for you.

It is common wisdom to give Epsom Salts or magnesium and high phosphorous or blossom-boosting fertilizer in the fall to initiate flower spikes. However, an article in ORCHIDS magazine in August 2004 by Yin-Tung Wang concludes, "There is no need to apply an elevated level of phosphorous to a well-grown healthy phalaenopsis in the autumn for improved flowering... It is clear that applying magnesium at these levels in early-and mid-September did not promote spiking..." It did not seem to do any harm so you can do it if your experience is different from Dr. Wang's. It is always interesting to see if common wisdom meshes with scientific inquiry.

### STURDY-FLOWERED PHALS

Every television interview show has a pot of white or pink phals with long arching sprays on the desk. Luckily, we have many other choices today- many more sturdy-flowered orchids with bright colors, bars, and spots. Today, breeding of species and hybrids has produced improved shape and flower count, especially from Taiwanese firms such as Brother Orchid Nursery and Sogo Orchid Nursery. You might like to have a collection with these hybrids—or just collect the species that are their parents. *P. amboinensis* and *P. sumatrana* have jadelike substance and waxy texture. *P. gigantea*, available from Norman's Orchids for \$500 (!!), has enormous leaves but a compact inflorescence. *P. cornucervi* and *P. lueddemanniana* frequently produce keikis that can be removed to start whole new plants. They are adorable and very special.

### MINIATURE PHALS

Although many phals can get spikes that are several feet high, there are also charming miniature species and hybrids. All phals take up very little space, but these darlings are really space-saving. Producing pretty clusters of ½-2 inch flowers, miniatures can flower in 2-4 inch pots. Those tiny hybrids which have *Phalaenopsis equestris* in their backgrounds are especially suited to growing in bright warm windows or under fluorescent lights. You can grow a dozen of these beauties in the space it takes to grow one big cattleya. They even are said to not require the cool autumn period that most phalaenopsis require. In addition to *Phalaenopsis equestris*, other species that produce charming miniature plants and hybrids are *Phalaenopsis lindenii* (striped flowers with pendent spikes), *Phalaenopsis mannii* (waxy brown and yellow) and *Phalaenopsis amboinensis* (slight larger with brown stripes and waxy texture).

### FRAGRANT PHALS

There are even phals that smell good, too. Many of these are hybrids based on *Phalaenopsis violacea*, (also know as *P bellina* lately) an orchid from Malaysia that is so sweetly scented that natives can locate it in the jungle by following its perfume trail. Although the fragrance is not always inherited from its parent, hybrids are often so fragrant that one flower can perfume a whole greenhouse. In a monograph, Eric Christenson says, “*Phalaenopsis bellina* is probably the most fragrant of all species in the genus. If I were to coin a common name for this species, it would be the ‘Fruit loop orchid’ after the popular breakfast cereal whose fragrance it shares.”

Several other phal species are also fragrant and used in hybridizing. *P. leuddemanniana*, known for its waxy cream and dark pink barred flowers, is fragrant on warm mornings, flowering for several years on the same inflorescence. *P. schilleriana*, from Luzon and other islands near the Philippines has a delicate perfume much like roses. Both these can give their delightful fragrances to their offspring.

If you want to buy a fragrant orchid, Norman’s Orchids has a website ([www.orchids.com](http://www.orchids.com)) which offers lots of fragrant phals.

Choose “phalaenopsis” and then choose “fragrant-yes” and you will have pages and pages of choices. In August of 2004, Norman even offered a fragrance collection in ORCHIDS magazine.

## SPECIES

Some growers prefer a collection with only species. A species represents a population made up of individuals that share a common gene pool. I think of them as the orchids as they grew in the wild. Today, commercially desirable and spectacular plants are bred by crossing species and their hybrids over many generations. Successful crosses have also been made between genera- between *Phalaenopsis* and *Ascocentrum*, *Neofinetia*, *Renanthera*, *Sarcochilus*, *Vanda* or *Eurychone*.

Growing species can be more demanding than growing hybrids. Hybrids are usually selected for the marketplace because of their rapid growth, prolific blooming, ease of culture, and beauty. Species, on the other hand, have been adapted to survive in their native habitat, qualities which sometimes makes them difficult to grow in your home or greenhouse. However, they can be very rewarding and fun to grow, and I have enjoyed watching these natural beauties in my own little environment.

There is much to know about phal species. They are divided in Subgenus and Section with special requirements. The ORCHID DIGEST of October 2002 had an excellent issue all about phalaenopsis species. Make sure you get it from our library or the Orchid Digest ([www.orchiddigest.com](http://www.orchiddigest.com)) if you want to grow species.

For example, phal species in the Subgenus Pashisiana like *P. lobbii* need a dry winter rest with much less water and may even drop some of their leaves. People have thrown this plant out because they thought it was dead or drying. This group produces multiple new growths from the base of the plant which can be removed to start new plants.

Phal species in the subgenus Polychilos, Section Amboinenses like *P. amboinensis*, *P. bellina*, *P. gigantea*, *P. javanica*, *P. luteola* and others rebloom year after year off the old flower spikes. Do not cut off the old spike as it will bloom again!! The important lesson is that you must read about the specific plant you buy to have real success with species.

When I first started growing orchids five years ago, I was not impressed with phalaenopsis. They were too common. They weren’t drop-dead gorgeous like cattleyas, and they weren’t exotic like vandas. Now, sadder but wiser, I adore the phalaenopsis. It’s common because it is a terrific plant for the imperfect grower. Undemanding, dependable, pretty and rewarding, phalaenopsis is a wonderful plant to grow. I sing the praises of phalaenopsis—and you will, too!

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Attached to the newsletter is an article I wrote, "For the Love of Orchids," which appeared in Orchid Digest a few years ago.

Love you and see you on October 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Love Carol