

THE GREATER LAS VEGAS ORCHID SOCIETY

THE ORCHID COLUMN

CAROL SIEGEL, EDITOR
MARCH 12, 2017



OUR PROGRAMS

MEETINGS 2ND SUNDAY EXCEPT JUNE 4

March 12, 2017 Carol Siegel

“The Sex Life of Orchids”

March 25, 2017 A Passion for Orchids

Show W Charleston Library 10-4

April 9, 2017 Peter Lin “Brassavola

Species and Hybrids”

April or Beginning May depending on

bloom time *Epipactis gigantea*

Wildflower Walk

May 14, 2017 Ron Parksons

“The Orchids of Columbia”

June 4, 2017(1st Sunday)Art Chadwick

“The Great Cattleya Species of the
Cut Flower Era”

July 9 Barbecue Diana’s house

“Setting Up a Rainforest”

Aug13Mark Romansky“Judging orchids”

Sept 10 Mary Gerritsen “Orchids of the
Lost World”

Oct 8 Keith Davis”Orchid Growing Tips”

Nov 12 Steve Frowine TBA

Dec 10 Holiday Party

Jan 14, 2018 Sandra Tillisch

February 11, 2018 Jason Fischer

March 11, 2018 Ron Kaufmann

April 8 Greenhouse Tour



DUES ARE DUE!

2017 DUES WERE DUE IN JANUARY. IF YOU HAVEN'T SENT YOURS IN YET, PLEASE REMEMBER THAT WE RUN AN EXTRAVAGANT, INFORMATIVE AND EXPENSIVE SPEAKER PROGRAM WITH ONLY THE BEST AND THAT TAKES \$\$\$ (WHAT DOESN'T?) WE HAVE NOT RAISED OUR DUES IN YEARS SINCE SOME OF US HAVE HAD TOUGH TIMES. DUES REMAIN \$30 FOR SINGLE, \$45 FOR A COUPLE- TWO PEOPLE RESIDING AT THE SAME ADDRESS. YOU CAN SEND AN EXTRA \$5 OR \$10, IT MAKES SUCH A DIFFERENCE. YOU CAN PAY AT THE NEXT MEETING OR SEND A CHECK MADE OUT TO: GLVOS (PLEASE DO NOT MAKE IT OUT TO ME...) SEND TO: CAROL SIEGEL 8601 ROBINSON RIDGE DRIVE LAS VEGAS, NV 89117.

I will be speaking on the Sex Life of Orchids at the March meeting. Orchids will stop at nothing to get pollinated. They will lie; they will cheat. They will promise and not deliver. If they deliver, they give as little as possible. Join me to learn of the fascinating sex life of orchids.

FRED CLARKE TEACHES US TO BE GOOD GROWERS IN FEBRUARY

Fred Clarke of Sunset Valley Orchids delighted us in February with a wonderful talk on becoming a good grower. He said that there were four factors that determined 80% of your growing success- water, light, temperature and repotting. He stressed watering quantity and feeding should vary with the seasons with more water and fertilizer during periods of growth and warmth. For our tap water conditions, he said we should use fertilizer with a high middle number like 20-20-20, the middle number representing phosphorous. More phosphorous corrects our alkaline water and makes it more acid. Orchids, he said, should have acidity Ph between 5.5-6 although some say 5.5-6.5. For deionized or R/O water, the middle number should be lower such as 15-5-15 since alkalinity does not need to be corrected. He said that you should fertilize at ½ tsp per gallon at all waterings and that the fertilizer should have trace elements. He said that we generally need 3000-3500 footcandles of light and that the need for light varies with the kind of plant. Temperatures, too, were specific to each plant. He used shade cloth in the summer since the footcandles of light can reach 10,000, and then you would need 70% shade cloth to get 3000 footcandles on your orchids. This is not a problem in the home or under lights. Phalaenopsis can grow in the house because they like the low light and high temperatures that we have in our homes. He stressed repotting just when the new roots are ½ inch long. Select a pot to accommodate three years growth, and mark on a tag when the new roots emerged and when you potted. Don't press too hard on new roots- just shake the mix into place in the pot. Good roots are round. Roots to be removed are flat. He likes to use three or four parts of bark for one part perlite- less bark keep the mix dryer. Water brings oxygen to the roots and he said to water enough to flush out the pot, leaching once a month. Remember that bright and warm means more water, more food and that cool and dark means less. You can order potting mix from Fred at www.sunsetvalleyorchids.com. You will get a BIG bag.

THANKS TO KATHY AND BRUCE WEBER FOR PAYING FOR OUR INSURANCE FOR THIS QUARTER. SO NICE OF YOU!

WE GOT LOTS OF NEW MEMBERS AND GUESTS AT OUR MEETING!

Thanks to our new publicity chairman **Steve Hochman** and his press releases and to **Cathy Loftfield**, our Vice-President and her beautiful posters, the word is getting out about our club. We welcomed Bonnie Hall, Dinah Hafen, Donna Sanborn, Joe and Aline Boisvenu, Annie Cochran, Dan and Maureen Lewish, Valerie Lenz, Elizabeth Fairhurst, Marilyn Mamao, Robert Freeman, Blanche York (who joined), Lorraine Martinez, Marie Pacheco, Tammy and Margaret Ofek (who joined), and Lillian Alsdurf. We were thrilled to have you and hope you will return and join our club.

GREAT FOOD FROM OUR FOOD TEAM...

Many thanks to Kathy Weber for organizing our food team and worrying about it all. Thanks to Randa Stice, Claudia Drake, Shirley Grieg, Marilyn Short, Jenny Kremer, Judy Holgren, and Dan Mumau, Liz Waters and Wally Eastman for the delicious soups, salads and desserts in February.

The club bought 2017 club calendars for Valentine's Day to give to members. The calendar featured the art work of talented member Sandra Swan who got them printed and delivered them to me. Thank you!

Thanks to Steve Campbell for updating our website. We appreciate it!

Hope Dan Grieg is feeling better. So glad that Claudia Drake is recovered. Glad to see Cathy Loftfield well after her cataract surgery.

A

Passion

Orchids

FOR

With its hot summers, dry air, and hard water, the desert is an unlikely place to grow orchids. Join the Greater Las Vegas Orchid Society for a magnificent display of fresh orchids and informative lectures.

Saturday, March 25

10 a.m.

West Charleston Library

Lecture Hall, Art Gallery

6301 West Charleston Blvd.

Free and open to the public. For more information, please call 702.507.3964.

I just returned from Hawaii. Thought I'd share this on their orchids...

PITY POOR HAWAII by Carol Siegel

Pity poor Hawaii! Contrary to its image as the lush orchid capitol of the world, Hawaii has only three native orchids, the least of any state in the United States. Yet, orchids are a big part of life in Hawaii, and they are for sale everywhere. I recently visited the Big Island of Hawaii, and I came down the escalator at the airport, and our friends greeted us at the foot of the steps holding out purple leis of beautiful *Dendrobium Sonia*. The orchid industry in Hawaii amounts to more than 24 million dollars year, and orchids, leis and orchid plants are for sale everywhere. As Ted Green says in ORCHIDS IN HAWAII, "Even a ditch digger might be wearing a lei he got at a party the night before." Let's explore the orchid world that is Hawaii.

Hawaii would seem an ideal place to find native orchids. The Hawaiian islands sit in the northern tropics, about twenty degrees latitude, and the temperature usually stays between 75-85 degrees F, which is just ideal for orchids. Orchids love fresh moving air, and reliable trade winds blow fresh air against the northeast shores of all the major islands. That air has travelled thousands of miles across the open ocean, making it cool and moist, laden with rainfall and humidity in the ideal range of 50-80%. There are many different microclimates in Hawaii, and just a short drive will take you to rain forests, deserts, bogs, dryland forests, alpine peaks, and parched coastal dunes. Surely, an orchid would find a home somewhere in all that variety. In addition, there is excellent drainage in the volcanic rock and plenty of forest for epiphytic orchids to find a niche. Orchids of every type should just be growing wild everywhere. All the islands around the Pacific Rim like the Philippines and Indonesia, for example, are laden with orchids. Not Hawaii. There are just three native orchids. What's the problem?

As Paul Wood says in ORCHID ISLES: THE STORY OF ORCHIDS IN HAWAII, "For orchids, though, getting to Hawaii was no more likely than getting to the moon... From a terrestrial point of view, Hawaii is the remotest land on Earth." To get to Hawaii, an orchid would have to cross at least 2500 miles of sea. The majority of plants on Hawaii arrived in the feathers or intestines of birds, but orchid seeds don't do that. Some plant seeds bob on the water, but orchid seeds are like dust and do not float, and they can't survive being submerged in salt water for months on end. The only thing they could do was to float on the wind, suspended for days, weeks, or months.

Three orchids managed to do that out of the 25,000 or more orchid species. It is thought that they must have blown along on the jet stream of the Earth's northern hemisphere. The jet stream is a high-speed, continuous band of easterly wind that goes faster over Southeast Asian and slows as it passed over Hawaii. If the seeds got up to 30,000 feet in a turbulent storm, the jet stream would get them to the islands in a few days. Even if two seeds did get there at the same time in the right habitat, the right kind of bee would have to ride the jet stream over there, too, in order to have a pollinator for continued survival. Amazingly, three orchids managed to do just that against staggering odds.

You probably would never find one of these native orchids unless you were with a botanist and hiked into the mountains. They are found only in remote areas, far from roads, and are rare, endemic, and endangered. The most common one is *Liparis hawaiiensis*. In Hawaiian, it is called 'awapuhi a Kanaloa, the ginger flower of the sea god. With two broad leaves that cup around the pseudobulb, the flower spike shoots straight up, a foot tall, with 3-7 inconspicuous flowers with narrow cream-green petals and a broad flat white lip. Growing in moss and leaf litter in wet forests from 2000-5000 feet in elevation, it flowers from May to November.

The second most common orchid is *Anoectochilus sandvicensis*, which also grows in wet forests, forming flimsy, spreading colonies on shaded moss or tree trunks. The most showy of the endemic orchids, its flowers are green outside, cream inside, with a bright yellow lip.

These two species occur on all the major islands, but *Platanthera holochila*, the third orchid, is truly very rare, known by only a few specimens. Most are found in a single population in the Alak'i Swamp on Kauai. It is three feet tall, with its flowering stalk, laden with tiny flowers, towering above the foliage. *Platanthera* and *Liparis* are single-growth plants, but the *Anoectochilus* creeps and spreads and looks like Wandering Jew.

There are, however, four more orchids growing wild along roadsides in the lower forests and lava fields. There are introduced orchids that have gone wild. *Arundina graminifolia*, the Bamboo Orchid, is five-feet tall, hardy, and cane-like. It is a terrestrial plant growing 3-6 feet tall with grassy leaves a foot long. The flowers are showy, almost like little cattleya, occurring at the end of tall stems, 2-inches long and pink with a reddish-purple lip. I walked outside the Visitor Center at the Volcano National Park, and I thrilled to finding dozens of them growing along the path. You can find acres of these in Pahoia on Hawaii. A sun-loving plant, they produce lots of keikis (baby plants) that readily root if twisted off. Native to Southeast Asia and Pacific islands, nobody is sure how these beauties came to Hawaii in the 20th century. There are pioneer plants on lava fields.

A second introduced orchid is the Nun's Orchid, thought to be brought in by Chinese workers imported to work the sugar plantations in the late 1800's. One escaped into the wild and established itself in the Hawaiian landscape. *Phaius tankarvillae*, the Nun's Orchid, is a two-foot tall plant with heavy pleated leaves growing in wet places. The flower stems can be up to five feet tall with gold, maroon and white flowers. You can find it growing on disturbed soil on Oahu, Kauai, Lanai and Hawaii.

A third introduced orchid is an *Epidendrum* hybrid created in 1888 (a cross between *E. ibaguense* and *E. secundum*) which was popular as an outdoor landscape plant with its copious small scarlet, orange and mauve flowers. It has naturalized in dry places on nearly all the major island, spreading from small plantlets along the older stems.

Finally, the Philippine Ground Orchid, *Spathoglottis plicata*, is found in grassy fields on most islands. An erect terrestrial orchid, it grows to over four feet tall; it has conspicuous long

pleated or plicate leaves and dark purple to pink flowers. . You can find this orchid at most highway cuts.

However, Hawaii does not get its name of “the Orchid Isles” from its native or naturalized orchids. Over the past fifty years, orchid culture in Hawaii has grown into a huge agribusiness. The orchid industry is on the rise in Hawaii. Total annual sales of potted orchids was \$2.2 million in 1980. By 2003, the number had risen to \$19.7 million dollars and is now thought to be \$24 million. Cut flower sales increased from \$0.2 million in 1970 to \$4.6 million in 2003.

I was lucky enough to visit the nursery of Wei and James Fang while in Hawaii. They are the owners of Hilo Orchid Farm, where we get our holiday plants and plants throughout the year at a tiny price. Wei came in especially to give me a tour on Saturday, and she said that we are the only club she sells plants to at a wholesale price (She likes us). Usually, they sell hundreds of dozens of plants to nurserymen in the US for sale as vendors at shows. Her operation is state of the art, totally automated, with automatic sprinklers, fertilizing, moving tables, and temperature and humidity control. I saw five enormous greenhouses, with pristine plants, totally clean and green, with nary a brown leaf or bug. She has 20 employees, most of whom do the packing of plants for shipment. She said that the intergeneric hybrids are grown from meristemming (cutting off a piece of the growing tissue of the plant) in Thailand. They send her back the flasks, and they grow them from there. Her husband particularly likes breeding slipper orchids (*Paphiopedilum*), and she had beautiful tables of yellow paphs in bloom. Each year, they send their plants to a laboratory to find out what nutrients they need and what fertilizer to use for optimal growth. It certainly is working! You can't buy from her since she is only a wholesaler, but she will sell to the club.

I also was invited to lunch by Graham and Charlene of Lehua Orchids (www.lehuaorchids.com) where we get our slipper orchids. They are the most lovely people, with a warm and friendly operation, with Graham doing his beloved hybridizing. A former banker, he came to Hawaii to grow orchids, and he is famous for his *Paphiopedilum*. He likes them especially since you can't meristem them, and each cross is an adventure. He waters his plants by hand rather than being automated and has four employees. Orchids are his love, and he says he tries not to make a profit. His prices are sensational. You do have to buy a box or half-box (15 orchids), but you will be pleased.

Orchid folk are so nice. A few years ago, I visited Mike and Carol Blietz of Exotic Orchids of Maui (www.mauiorchids.com info@mauiorchids.com) at their gorgeous little nursery. Mike has delighted us with a talk in the past on the cattleyas he grows. He spent over an hour with us, graciously showing us his magnificent orchids. *Dendrobium*, *Phalaenopsis*, *Laelias*, *Mormodes*, acres of *Cattleyas*, and *Epidendrum* were all happily growing in sun-lit greenhouses. He modestly referred to the glorious Hawaii rain and sunshine as “my natural advantage.” (Annoyingly, *Vanda* and *Sobralia* were vigorously growing on shrubs outside his nursery. To Las Vegas desert growers, this seems profoundly unfair! Natural advantage, indeed!) Mike is a very successful orchid breeder and proudly showed-off his seed pods (which he harvests green to avoid contamination) and his sterile set-up with its many growing flasks of

orchids. He picks the best of his seedlings to grow on and has won many awards with his crosses. He sells to what he calls “the black hole” of the orchid world, the Home Depot and Lowe’s and Walmarts who buy tremendous amounts of his orchids and to the public. I have bought orchids from Mike, and they are inexpensive and just beautiful.

There are many other nurseries in Hawaii. In Oahu, you find, among others, Kawamoto’s, H&R Nurseries, Puanani Orchids, Marty’s Orchids, Hawaiian Floral Nursery, Orchid Center, Kodama, Hawaii Pacific Orchids, Honolulu Orchid Co, and Olomana. In Maui, there are I.N. Komoda, Exotic Orchids of Maui, the Tropical Orchid Farm, and Haiku Maui Orchids and on Kauai, you find Hanalei Orchid and Kaua’i Orchids. The Big Island of Hawaii has the greatest number of commercial growers with Carmela Orchids, Bergstrom Orchids, Hilo Orchid Farm, Cloudforest Orchids among many others. You can type the name of the nursery into Google and have hours of fun looking, learning and buying.

Two really good books on the orchids of Hawaii are

Paul Wood, ORCHID ISLES; THE STORY OF ORCHIDS IN HAWAII. Hawaii: Island Heritage Publishing, 2006

Ted Green. ORCHIDS IN HAWAII. Mutual Publishing. 2005



LIPARIS HAWAIENSIS

ANOECHTOCHILUS HAWAIENSIS



PHAIUS TANKARVILLAE



ARUNDINA GRAMINIFOLIA



SPATHOGLOTTIS PLICATA

