

GREATER LAS VEGAS ORCHID SOCIETY

SUNDAY, JULY 13, 2003 2pm

THE MEETING WILL BE HELD IN THE USUAL PLACE, THE NEVADA GARDEN CLUB BUILDING,
WASHINGTON AND TWIN LAKES, TWO BLOCKS EAST OF VALLEY VIEW.
BUILDING WILL BE OPEN AT 1PM

Carol Siegel, Newsletter Editor

CAROL SIEGEL- PRESIDENT
CLARICE DEAN -VICE-PRESIDENT
EILEEN MCKYTON- SECRETARY
DIANA SMITH- TREASURER

AND...

Dan Mumau, Michael Lawless - Membership Hospitality Chairmen
Lillian Patterson- Photographer and Historian
Dan Mumau and Tony Billitere- Raffle Chairmen
Phyllis Bond, Leslie Doyle, Shelly North and Eileen McKyton- Special Events Chairmen
Jeri Lee and Tony Billitere- Community Liaison
Alex McKyton -Building Chairmen and Webmaster
Tex Severance- Show and Tell Guru
Tex and Gidget Severance- Judging Chairmen
Scotty Nogaim- Election Chairman, Raffle Lady
Liz Leone- Library Chairman Clarice Dean, Assistant Librarian
Clarice Dean- Trip Chairman
John Haydukavitch-Video Chief
Shelly North-Classy Club Apparel Chairlady

July 13, 2003	Virtual Greenhouse Tour NOTE THIS IS THE SECOND SUNDAY OF JULY THE FIRST IS JULY 4 WEEKEND
August 3, 2003	Annual Mt. Charleston BBQ Home Eldine Stevens 12:30 POTLUCK
September 7, 2003	Mike Glikbarg Double Topic- "Growing Specimen Plants" And "Growing Zygopetalum"
October 5, 2003	Charles Weckerle-Thrun on "Potting Different Orchid Genera

November 2, 2003 Karen Muir, "Brachypaphs"
 December 7, 2003 Fourth Annual International Food Fest/Holiday Party.
 January 4, 2004 John Salventi, Owner of Parkside Orchids, "A Cultural Review of the Genus Dendrobium with Suggestions for New Additions to Your Collection"
 February 1, 2004 Carol Siegel "The Sex Life of Orchids"
 March 7, 2004 Ron Coleman "Wild Orchids of North America"
 April 4, 2004 Charles Rowden, "Orchid Photography"
 May 2, 2004 Norman Fang, Owner of Norman's Orchids "Phalaenopsis"
 June 6, 2004 Glen Decker, Owner Piping Rock Orchids, "Phragmipedium"
 July 11, 2004 Virtual Greenhouse Tour SECOND SUNDAY
 August 1, 2004 Barbecue
 Sept 12, 2004 Mike Blitz, Exotic Orchids of Maui SECOND SUNDAY
 October 3, 2004 Aaron Hicks, "The Orchid Seed Bank"
 November 7, 2004 The Further Exploits of Bill Bergstrom in Mexico
 December 5, 2004 Fifth International Food Fest and Holiday Party

BECAUSE THE JULY 13, 2003 MEETING IS ONLY TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE AUGUST 3 BARBECUE, THERE IS NOT TIME TO DO ANOTHER NEWSLETTER BEFORE THE BARBECUE. PLEASE NOTE THAT AT THE END OF THE NEWSLETTER THERE IS A MAP TO ELDINE STEVEN'S HOUSE IN MT. CHARLESTON FOR THE AUGUST 3RD BARBECUE AT 12:30. THE CLUB WILL PROVIDE FOOD AND DRINK AND EVERYONE IS ASKED TO BRING A DISH FOR TEN TO TWELVE PEOPLE.

They say that an orchid expert is someone who has killed more than 1000 orchids. Nick Burnett, our clever and entertaining June speaker, regaled us with the subject he knows best- killing orchids. . We howled with recognition as he showed us some of HIS disasters, orchids definitely on the way to the garbage. He showed us the mistakes that growers make in raising orchids. He stressed learning to grow those orchids which fit best into your particular growing area. The seven ways to kill an orchid were:

1. **Mistake water for love.** Don't overwater or leave water in the crown of phals, or allow salts to build up in the soil.

2. **Believe everything everyone tells you.** Question advice that everyone gives you from Home Depot clerks to orchid sellers.
3. **Remain ignorant of plant's growing cycles.** Know your plant and what it needs.
4. **Refuse to understand your growing conditions.** Grow things that like your growing area conditions. Sometimes you can't grow everything you like in your area.
5. **Allow plants to grow autopilot.** Spend time with your plants. They need your attention. Keep your collection to a reasonable size you can take care of.
6. **Tolerate all creatures great and small.** No such thing as one mealy bug. Examine your plants and keep after them.
7. **Buy the most expensive plants.** Sometimes, the expensive plants are expensive because they are rare and difficult to grow. You don't want that!

It was a great talk, and we all had fun and learned something, too.

We thank Scotty Nogaim, Liz Leone, June Cravenn and Gail Harris for providing a Mediterranean feast for us. We also thank Dan Vong for bringing hundreds of blooming plants for sale. The raffle table was extraordinary, full of supplies, plants from Nick Burnett and Dan. We were glad to see Mike Levin, past president and orchid club, at our meeting and loved his sale plants. We missed you, Mike. The show and tell table was so long that both Mike Levin and guru Tex Severance alternated presenting blooming plants to the group. We have come a long way, and the show and tell table is one mark of our blooming success. We welcomed new member Nita Bragg and guest Guy Vignola. We are pleased to have you part of our friendly and caring group.

We thank Clarice Dean for providing TWO Species of the Month as part of our education and conservation program. *Rhynchostylis coelestes*, wide-spread throughout Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, loves to grow in baskets in bright light with its long and numerous roots hanging freely. Fifty or more flowers can be produced on each inflorescence. The other species, *Psychmorchis pusilla* (wrap your tongue around that one...) is a darling miniature from Mexico and South America, with little fans of leaves with tiny yellow flowers emerging from the leaf axles. They seem to bloom all the time. Copies of the culture sheets for these and other species of the month are found in our library.

Speaking of the library, I donated the book, *Botanica's Orchids* in memory of Aileen Randak, the beloved mother of Leslie Doyle, who passed away in June. She was a lovely lady and will be missed. Our sincerest condolences to Leslie and Bill.

Don't forget our "Orchid Mating Club". If you would like to participate, just list your species species on a piece of paper and give it to our matchmaker, Clarice Dean. When your species is in bloom, tell Clarice, and she will try to match you up with another member's same species in bloom. We will even have the "wedding" at the club and give you a reception. At our April meeting, Harry Phillips mated my *Coelogyne mooreana* with Diana Smith's plant and my seed pod is swelling. Clarice and my *Cattleya schroederae* that were crossed in March have big seed pods now. In June, I crossed two of my *Cymbidiella pardalina*; Shelly North and Clarice Dean crossed their *Laelia purpurata v. carnea*. Around December, we will probably have seed to donate to the Orchid Seed Bank as part of our conservation efforts, and we will give flasks of little plantlets to members! At the end of the newsletter is an article by Troy Meyers about how to prepare seed from seed pods that I hope you will find interesting..

Speaking of conservation, seven of our orchid club adventurers ventured into Ash Meadows Wildlife Refuge in June to participate in the Fish and Wildlife Service orchid count of *Spiranthes infernalis*, found only in Ash Meadows and nowhere else in the world. There is an article about our adventure at the back of the newsletter.

I am working on an article on the native orchids of Nevada for the newsletter. So far, I have identified FOUTEEN native orchids in Nevada (I know I said 16 last month, but not all panned out..) VERY EXCITING!! We feel that if we can catalogue our native orchids, we can assist in the conservation of these orchids and spread the word on our treasures. The article is nearly done, and I have been asked to let them put it in the Nevada Native Orchid Newsletter and submit it to the Native Orchid Conference. The herbariums at UNLV and UNR want a copy as do several other conservation groups. I got permission from Paul Martin Brown, author of the excellent book, *THE WILD ORCHIDS OF NORTH AMERICA, NORTH OF MEXICO*, to use his photos from his book. (His book received a rare review in last month's

ORCHIDS magazine) I haven't gotten the CD of the orchid pictures yet, so the article will be out in August.

Ron Coleman, author of four books on native orchids, has given me lots of help and e-mailed me with this compliment for our club:

Carol,

I am on the publishing committee so just send your articles to me and I will get them to the editor. We are planning our first issue for January 2004. Your society's participation in surveying the *Spiranthes* at Ash Meadows would also be a great article for the journal. Please consider it. It is really exciting to see an orchid society so involved with our natives. Most are just interested in those they can grow at home. Keep up the good work.

Ron

Isn't that nice!!

Don't forget that July 13 (second Sunday of month!!!) will be our Annual Virtual Greenhouse Tour presenting the greenhouses, growing areas, bathrooms?, and the like where we manage to coax our orchids to bloom (or at least LIVE...) here in the desert. New members and old will learn a lot. We will present the growing areas of **Marilyn Worthington, Carol Siegel, Mike Levin, Clarice Dean, Steven Ninemire, Phyllis Bond, Eileen Mckyton, Gary Nelson, Leslie Doyle, Christine De La Cruz** and perhaps **Shelly North** and **Liz Leone**. Daniel Vong will sell plants and provide the raffle, and we especially thank the food volunteers who responded to our emergency snack call - **Leslie Doyle, Marilyn Worthington, Esther Choi, Christine De La Cruz, and Lee Heller**. You are angels!! Bring your show and tell blooming beauties to the meeting and show off.

On Sunday, August 3 at 12:30, we will be having our annual barbecue. **Eldine Stevens** has graciously agreed to host it in her beautiful home in COOL Mt. Charleston, and **Dan Mumau** and **Mike Lawless**, professional caterers and owners of **A Catered Affair**, will provide the barbecue. It will be a potluck and all the members will bring a dish for 10-12 people. There will be no formal program, but we will have a raffle and sale plants. **Dennis Dean** will do a little presentation on staking plants, and a representative from **US Filter** will talk on de-ionized water, which I think is the greatest thing for orchids.

Two article follow and a map to **Eldine's** barbecue. Love ya, Carol

AN UNLIKELY PLACE TO FIND AN ORCHID TREASURE
by Carol Siegel

It was an unlikely place to find an orchid—or an orchid club for that matter. Hot and dry, just nine miles from Death Valley Junction, the ground was so thickly covered with salt that it looked like winter snow. Fed by a vast network of underground springs, the ground bounced like foam rubber when we walked on it. On June 25, 2003, seven hardy club conservation enthusiasts braved the intense summer heat to participate in the experience of a lifetime, the orchid count of *Spiranthes infernalis* at Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge. (Mike Lawless, Dan Mumau, Liz Leone, John Haydukavitch, Carol Siegel, Diana Smith, and Steve Ninemire). *Spiranthes infernalis* is found there and nowhere else in the world. We got up at dawn and drove 90 miles to make sure that the population of 10,000 endemic orchids was safe. Invasive weeds, like the Russian knapweed (*Acroptilon repens*), a noxious perennial herb, probably introduced in hay from Eurasia, now covers over 500 acres where there were none in 1990. The fear is that the introduced weeds will squeeze out the rare and exotic orchid.

The 22,000 acres of Meadows are protected as a national wildlife refuge because they contain a greater concentration of unique species than any other location in the United States—13 threatened and endangered species and at least 24 plants and animals found nowhere else in the world- including our orchid. It is one of the few natural desert oases in the Southwest providing habitat for 220 species of migratory birds.

We entered through an unpaved road, dusty and deserted looking. In the distance, Crystal Reservoir, one of 40 springs, sparkled in the shimmering heat of the morning, a blue lake in the crusty earth. We met Gina Glenn of the Fish and Wildlife Service, a charming young lady who led the count. With her were several people from Kew Gardens in England, collecting seed from the unique meadow plants as part of their conservation effort. We walked a half-mile raised boardwalk following a narrow stream filled with Baltic rush, Lizard's Tail and reeds in the midst of the arid terrain. Unexpectedly, the boardwalk ended in a pool of clear, blue-green water, Crystal Spring, with a sand floor and bright green algae. The 85 degree water, flowing at 3000 gallons a minute, was part of a vast underground water system with 30 springs seeping "fossil" water believed to

have entered the water system underground thousands of years ago. At one time, the whole area was an interconnected series of lakes and springs, but the receding glaciers at the end of the ice age left Ash Meadows an isolated oasis in the middle of the desert. Swimming in the water were tiny pupfish, one of four endangered species of fish in the refuge. As we turned around to go back, we saw our first look at our orchid, sticking up like birthday candles in the ground.

Spiranthes infernalis, also called the Ash Meadow's Ladies' -Tresses, was considered *Spiranthes romanzoffiana* until 1989. *Spiranthes* come from two Greek words meaning "coil" and "flowers" for the coiled or spiraled flower spikes of this genus. Because of the supposed resemblance of the spirals to some hair styles, spiranthes are commonly called "ladies'-tresses." *Spiranthes infernalis*, Ash Meadows ladies'-tresses, was named in 1989 by Charles J. Sheviak and is endemic to the alkaline, moist soils of Ash Meadows, meaning it is ONLY found there, making it very special. It is similar to other spiranthes with many small, white, spiraling orchid flowers. In 1990, populations world-wide were estimated at between 730-1160 individuals. Until last year, global counts for species were around 1400 individuals. Surveys last year estimated 10,000 individuals and this year, happily, the survey we took part in found 13,500 plants. Our little orchid is doing okay!

We were given a map and told to each take a 10 feet swath and walk the length and breadth of the area, recording orchids as we went. The morning was spent cutting a path through mesquite and ash groves and saltbush and creosote, the spiky branches crunching as we pushed our way through the brush. Crushed and crunched ourselves, we stopped for lunch, and then Gina took us to another spot, more open and accessible, looking much like the tall grasses of the African savanna. Wending our way along the small meandering stream, we excitedly found our spiranthes, 14 inches tall, slender and spiraled, little birthday candles. We, who live in the shadow of the architectural wonder that is Las Vegas, with its glitz and its glamour, were thrilled to see this little survivor, beating all odds by making it in this strange and exotic environment. Thrilled, too, we were, to have made this effort to save our very special native orchid.

Bibliography

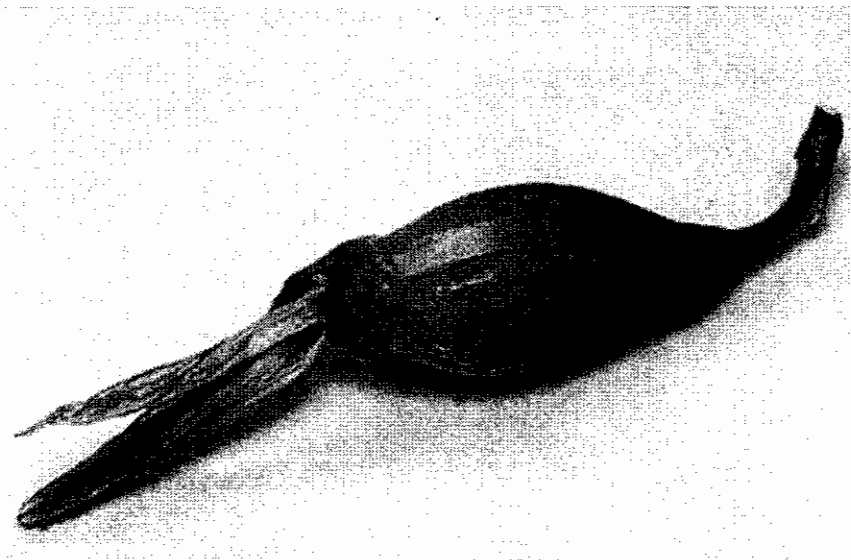
1. Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge. US Fish and Wildlife Service, handout.
2. Nevada National Parks and Tourist Guide- Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge(http://www.americansouthwest.net/nevada/ash_meadows/wildlife_refuge.html)

CAPSULE DRYING AND SEED PREPARATION

BY TROY MEYERS

Seed Harvest and Drying

When a capsule is nearing maturity you need to keep a close eye out for splitting . Caps usually (but not always) split near the column end first. If you can't check daily then you should tie a coffee filter or some such thing over the near-ripe capsule to help catch seed and to help keep airborne contaminants out. You might consider moving a plant with near-ripe capsules out of the greenhouse to a less humid, less pathogen-rich environment, perhaps your house.



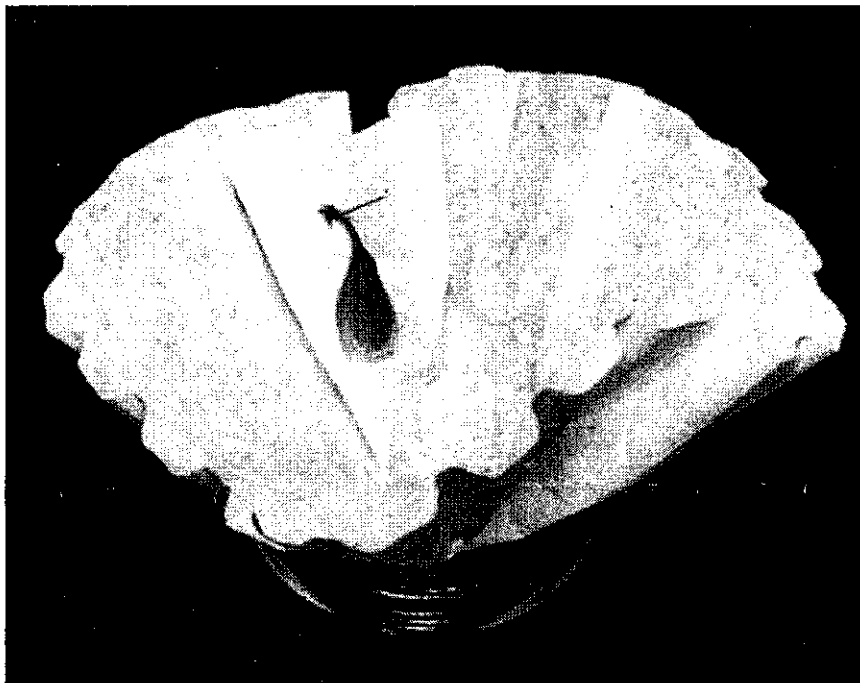
A Capsule that has just split - note the gaps on the column end

When a capsule splits, sometimes it takes days but sometimes only hours for it to open completely. If you remove a split capsule from the plant and lay it on a coffee filter and then cut the column off with a sterile razor blade, the cap will likely spring open a bit and seed will drop out immediately.



Same capsule after cutting off column end with a sterile blade - note how it has sprung open and seed has immediately fallen out

Size permitting, you can staple the stem to the upper edge of the coffee filter. Huge capsules will need to be suspended with appropriate ingenuity on your part.



Capsule is stapled to edge of coffee filter to dangle while drying and opening further

Protect it from blowing air by slipping it into a jar or other container, but DON'T put a lid on the jar as the seed may mold from the humidity from the moisture in the meaty capsule walls.



The filter is tucked into the jar to allow free drying and protect from breezes that would carry away the seed.

Once the capsule is fairly dry (a few days) the good seed will fall out by tapping it lightly. Scraping usually isn't needed, and if done unnecessarily it just adds useless material that complicates the disinfection process.



After two days, in this case, the carpels have dried, and seed has fallen out. Only tapping was needed to get the best of the seed.

Remove the capsule remains, fold up the coffee filter so that seed can't spill, and secure it shut with a little tape or a couple of staples so that we will be able to open it without spilling seed and label it. Good things to put on the label are genus & species of parent(s), whether it is a selfing, outcross, or other, pollination date, harvest date, number of capsules contained, and any identifying number assigned by you or us.

If there is a lot of seed from a huge capsule, further drying may be appropriate, and if so, once the meaty carpels have been removed, the packet can be placed in a closed jar with desiccant. This finishing drying should be done at room temperature still, as drying is retarded if it is placed in a refrigerator.

It is usually best to only put the contents of one capsule in each paper packet even though they are from the same plant and pollen parent. This is because we examine the seed under a microscope and often we find that one cap may have seeds with no embryos or with mold mycelia while another may be good seed... and to mix them together would be a shame.

After the dry seed is out of the cap, it should be sent to us immediately, or if you are keeping it, when fully dry only it should be stored in the refrigerator in a jar with desiccant.