



GREATER LAS VEGAS ORCHID SOCIETY

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 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

Steve Ninemire Library Chairman Clarice Dean, Assistant Librarian

Clarice Dean- Trip Chairman

John Haydukavitch-Video Chief

Shelly North-Classy Club Apparel Chairlady

November 2, 2003 Karen Muir, "Japanese Grand Prix of Orchids"

December 7, 2003 Fourth Annual International Food Fest/Holiday Party.

January 4, 2004 John Salvanti, Parkside Orchids, "Dendrobium"

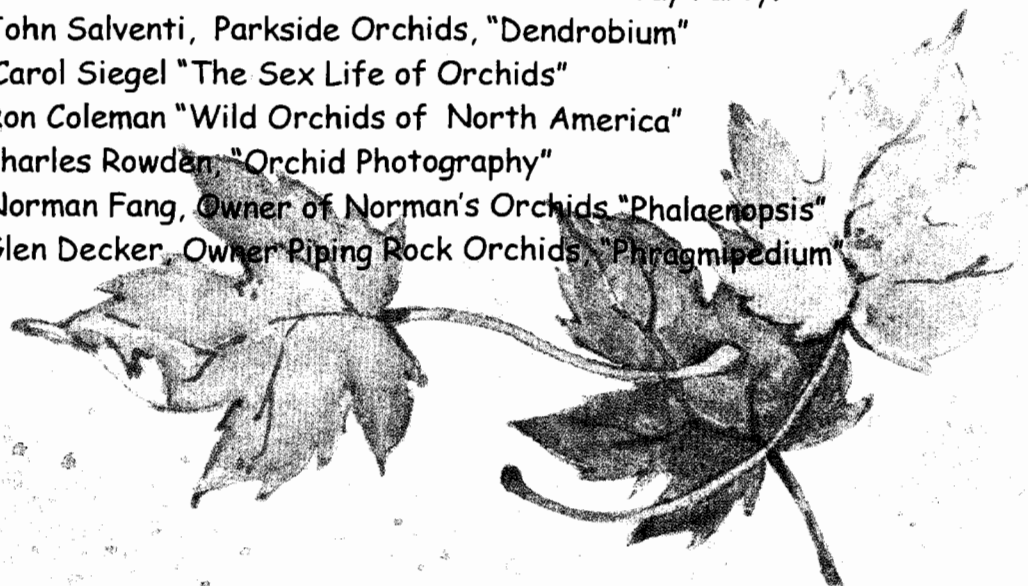
February 1, 2004 Carol Siegel "The Sex Life of Orchids"

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
 January 9, 2005 Mike Glikbarg SECOND SUNDAY

Bill White, president of the Southern Nevada Garden Clubs, says that our orchid club makes a joyous noise, and we were certainly noisy and joyous in October. We delighted in fun events every day of the month, At our October meeting, we welcomed back Daniel Vong and his wife. Congratulations are in order since they are expecting a third child. Welcome back, Daniel. We were glad to have our dear Scotty Nogaim and Jean Gordon back at the meeting and on the mend. Marsha Hawley ran our silent auction on lovely cattleyas I got from Marty's Orchids, sold potting supplies, and gave out pencils with the club name on it. Steve Ninemire, Club Librarian, generated excitement with our hundreds of books and magazines, free to borrow. Thanks to Aaron Schave, Roland and Norma Hui, and Steve Ninemire for the wonderful food at the meeting. Mike Levin and Tex Severance did an informative and educational "guru thing" on the show and tell plants, and Butch, our speaker, sold gorgeous orchids and provided more for the raffle. (Me—I was just delighted that there weren't any more fiestas in the park...)

Butch aka Charles Weckerle-Thrun taught us all the things we were doing wrong in potting our plants. He set up a potting bench and did a hands-on demonstration. If you discuss potting with ten different people, you will get ten different right answers on potting. I spoke in San Diego last month (the "sex" thing...), and the vice-president told me at dinner that he never fertilizes his plants, uses only diatomite and lava rock, and waters every day—AND his plants are just lovely. The lesson? Find out what works for you with your watering habits, growing environment, and plant preferences. Butch manages the Rowland Collection and is a master grower and has great success. A few of his ideas were:

1. Wear two pairs of latex gloves. One is not thick enough. Change gloves often and certainly after each division.
 2. Cover your potting bench with clean newspaper. Change the pages until you get a dry page after each potting job.
 3. Buy LOTS of clippers and sterilize them with a propane torch until the blade turns blue. Spray Lysol on the plastic handle until it is wet. Place clean ones in a box marked "clean" and used ones in a box marked "dirty". (I have found good clippers for \$1 in the dollar store! I bought ten pairs...) If you must use Physan, soak for at least 30 minutes.
 4. Use sequoia bark with perlite and charcoal- his personal favorite.
 5. Soak bark and sort sizes discarding pieces of "white wood".
 6. Use DRY media to pot since wet media will shrink.
 7. Crack vanda roots (!) slightly to get them in the pot.
 8. Add some of the old media to sobralias to keep the fungus sobralias need.
 9. Don't use styrofoam. Use a pot that fits the roots.
 10. Firm media of cattleyas with a blunt stick. Don't use this on phals as it will break the roots.
 11. Use a fresh pot. If you must reuse the pot, soak it in nine parts water and one part Clorox. Remove all the old media from the plant.
 12. To catch slugs and snails, cut up grapefruit and orange peel. Place on top of media. Come back in half an hour. Pick up the grapefruit peel and the slugs. Throw out. YUK. (This is probably good for your diet...)
 13. Pot paphs in early spring through October. Repot annually after flowering, Don't firm with stick.
 14. Look for new root growth before potting cattleyas. Pot tight. Rhizome should be just on surface. Attach the cattleya top and bottom of stem to a stick BEFORE putting the new media around the plant. This makes for a very steady plant.
- INTERESTING! Thanks, Butch.

Clarice Dean presented our Native Species of the Month *Epidendrum ciliare* and sold plants. (More will be available at the November meeting). This easy-growing epiphyte is a fragrant tropical American native that can bloom twice a year. It produces up to 12 slender, graceful flowers of yellow-green with a dainty white lip. Found throughout Mexico, this "fringed star orchid" looks like a cattleya and can grow to be more than three feet wide!!

At the Nevada Garden Club Fall State meeting, Terry Wilsey and Leslie Doyle served as our delegates, and the club provided the morning snacks. We are sure they did us proud.

At the last moment, Phyllis Bond, our legendary orchid display artist, had to work and couldn't do our display at the Fall Garden Show. Dennis and Clarice Dean, Diana Smith, and I responded to my emergency call and ran down to create our display. Shelly North lent us props and fabrics, and we used art work, orchids, green plants (and two of John Keller's wonderful orchid creations), and strong backs—and we won a big pink ribbon for our display. We were sure proud. Hope you got to see it. Clarice took a picture, and we will bring it to the meeting. (Like proud parents...) We thank Tex and Gidget Severance for getting up at dawn to judge the event, Esther Choi for clerking, and Marlin Davis and Dan and Marsha Hawley for serving as our club ambassadors at the event. . A special thanks to Dennis Dean and his son Sam for taking down the orchid display and making it easy for us to pick up our plants. Dennis did a great job on the display, by the way. We have such wonderful people in our club, don't we! Congratulations to all the members who won ribbons at the show.

While poor Dennis and Sam were schlepping the plants, Clarice Dean, Jeri Lee, Alex and Eileen McKyton, Steve Ninemire, Sandra Swan, Diana Smith and I were partying our way to the New Otani Orchid Show on our Orchid Safari. We all had a ball, talking, laughing, eating, buying and learning. We came back in the dark with light hearts, gorgeous orchids, and empty wallets. Thanks to Clarice and Alex for driving us safely and to Clarice for organizing the whole thing. We are planning another safari in the spring. Plan on coming. It is fun!

In addition to all the other October events, we had a booth at the Day with the Experts at the Desert Demonstration Gardens where we answered questions about our club and growing orchids and distributed culture sheets with club information. Thanks to Jeri Lee, Roland Hui, Claudia Theriot and Scotty Nogaim for manning the booth. You are the greatest for helping out.

At our November meeting, we will be holding elections for 2004. The current board has had so much fun and success that they are willing to run again for 2004- Carol Siegel for President, Clarice Dean for Vice-President, Eileen McKyton for

Secretary, and Diana Smith for Treasurer. It has been a joy working together. We encourage members who would like to run for office to call our nominating Chairlady, Scotty Nogaim, 363-3991. You can't lose in this club. If you don't win, we will make you Chairman of any committee you want. This is all about having fun, learning, and making friends. If you want to participate in any way, give me a call (254-4168). We want you and your unique talents.

At our November 2nd meeting, back by popular demand, Karen Muir, Pacific Regional Chairman of Judging, will delight us with a slide lecture on the premiere orchid show in the world, The Japanese Grand Prix. I have heard that the top prize is \$50,000 and a new Mercedes. Now THAT'S a prize. (How come I just got a ribbon..) Her slides are wonderful, and it is a delightful talk. We thank Christine De La Cruz, Nita Bragg, and Becky Biondi in advance for the snacks for the meeting. Daniel Vong will provide the raffle plants and supplies and promises to bring lots of plants to sell. (YAY). Remember that if you bring in a plant for show and tell, you will get a free raffle ticket.

Don't forget that on December 7th, we will be having our Holiday Party and International Food Fest at my house at 12:30 with great food, music, margaritas (ah, the margaritas..), certificates of appreciation, and our annual tradition, the Christmas Orchids. It is almost time to renew your orchid club membership. The price is still \$25 for singles, \$35 for couples (defined as two members at the same address). We hope you feel, as I do, that it is a really good value.

Looking over the newsletter, I am overwhelmed to see that 31 members are mentioned in the newsletter - that's one-third of the club doing EXTRA stuff for the club. That's what makes our club special- you and your enthusiasm and good hearts.

I have asked Clarice to write an article on great nurseries she has visited in California. Following is the first installment of her three-part series. It is so well-written and informative that I am sure you will be thrilled. We are really lucky to have her in the club. I have also included a little article I wrote on the many uses of orchids with information from Luigi Berliocchi's THE ORCHID IN LORE AND LEGEND FROM Timber Press in Portland, Oregon 1996.

See you on November 2nd. Keep safe! Keep Blooming!! Love, carol

Touring California Orchid Growers

Part 1: San Diego by Clarice Dean

Shopping for orchids in Southern California can be delightful and eye-popping. Whether you are looking for blue *Cattleyas*, awarded *Paphiopedilums*, or exotic species, Southern California has it all! The opportunities for finding rare orchids as well as the commonly sought after orchids are many and varied. The venues for searching out your favorite orchids include: marvelous orchid shows, astounding orchid nurseries, and numerous and diverse backyard orchid growers. The problem sometimes can be finding all these varied sources. In this series of articles, I'll attempt to make your orchid search easier by listing growers, their location, how to get there and the types of plants available. Additionally, at the end of each article will be a list of orchid shows and resources that you won't want to miss. Have fun!

Pacific Orchid Inc., 29837 Valley Center Road, Valley Center, CA 92082, www.pacificorchid.com, (760) 749-8411, FAX (760) 749-7848. Importer, grower and wholesaler of a wide range of genera including *Vanda*, *Cattleya* and *Dendrobium*. Their *Vanda* and *Mokara* selection is excellent with most stock imported from Thailand. They import frequently, so they often can order anything special that customers may want. Ask for Todd Banks or Jose Payan. A catalog is available at their webpage. Mail order is available. Excellent prices! Hours: Monday through Friday 8 A.M. to 4 P.M., Saturday 9 A.M. to 3 P.M. Approximately 300 miles from Las Vegas and 10 miles east of I-15. This is one of my favorite stops on the way to San Diego.

Vista, California has a wealth of orchid growers. It's easy to spend an afternoon visiting all the growers in this area that are amazingly quite close to one another.

G & B Labs, 2426 Cherimoya Dr., Vista, CA 92084, www.orchidsource.com, (760) 727-2611, FAX (760) 727-0017, (888) 727-2760, orchidsourceone@aol.com. Flasking products, custom flasking services, miscellaneous seedlings and compots, Ecuadorian and Mexican species. Large selection of Trader Joe-type orchids, who they routinely sell to. They have a catalog online and offer mail order. They have three large greenhouses in an industrial area that is hard to find. 21 miles from Pacific Orchid via CA-78. It's best to call them for directions, there are lots of twists and turns. Call to make sure someone is there before visiting.

Sunset Valley Orchids, 1255 Navel Place, Vista, CA 92083, (760) 639-6255, fredclarke@worldnet.att.net. Wide range of plants including *Cattleya*, *Phalaenopsis*, *Paphiopedilum* and others. He is also a supplier of the new potting media, Diatomite. Open by appointment only. Saturdays are best. Be sure call or email well in advance. Fred is an excellent grower. His plants have earned many AOS awards. The best place to see him is at any of the San Diego Orchid Shows.

Ontario Orchids, 703 Pomelo Dr., Vista, CA 92083, (760) 631-0098, FAX (760) 631-0228, www.taida-orchids.comtw/, ontarioorchids@aol.com. Wholesale/retail supplier of a wide range of genera, Trader Joe-type orchids. I've not been to this nursery, but I understand they have very good prices. Hours: Monday through Saturday 8 A.M. to 5 P.M.

Walter Anderson Nursery, 3642 Enterprise, San Diego, CA, (619) 224-8271. Near downtown San Diego off Pacific Coast Highway. This is a wonderful general nursery that carries a wide range of nursery stock, house plants, a few orchids and orchid supplies. There is a varied selection of staghorn ferns and the best selection of Japanese maples that I've ever seen. Most of their orchids are supplied by Dave Reid Orchids of Escondido. Well grown orchids, but priced a bit on the high side. From I-5 take the Rosecrans exit, take the 2nd left Kurtz, take a right on Pacific Coast Highway.

Andy's Orchids Inc., 734 Oceanview Ave., Encinitas, CA 92024, (760) 436-4239, (760) 632-8991, www.Andysorchids.com, speciesnut@Andysorchids.com. By appointment only! Thursdays and Fridays are best, sometimes Saturdays are okay. Andy has several greenhouses (cool, intermediate & warm) that he will show you though. His specialty is "Orchids on a Stick." Mail order catalog and online catalog is a great resource for information about species of all types. His fantastic webpage is informative and authoritative. Even if you aren't purchasing orchids, his online site is useful as a resource. He now features an "Orchid of the Day" provided at reduced prices. 30 minutes north of San Diego on I-5.

Bird Rock Tropicals, 6587 Black Rail Rd., Carlsbad, CA 92009, (760) 438-9393, FAX (760) 438-1316, www.birdrocktropicals.com, info@birdrocktropicals.com. Wholesale/retail sellers of species, hybrids, intergenerics, *Miltonia*, *Odotoglossom*, *Phalaenopsis*, *Paphiopedilum* and *Dendrobium*. Monday through Saturday, 9 A.M. to 4 P.M. Be sure to call first to make sure they are available. North of San Diego. I-5 to Poinsettia Lane, go east until it ends, then right onto Black Rail Rd., at the water tank turn right onto un-named dirt road, go to the end.

Cal Pacific Plant Farm, 1122 Orpheus Ave., Leucadia, CA 92024, (760) 436-0317, FAX (760) 436-3549. Retail store with a wide range of genera including *Phalaenopsis*, *Dendrobium*, *Oncidium*, *Cattleya*, *Paphiopedilum*, and supplies. Five minutes south of Legoland on I-5. Their greenhouse manager, Juan, will help you find whatever you are looking for and show you around the greenhouse. Be sure to ask for him. Very nice staff! Hours: Monday through Friday 8 A.M. to 4 P.M., Saturday 9 A.M. to 3 P.M. This is a "must stop" for me. Take the Leucadia Blvd. exit, turn right, turn right again onto Orpheus, watch for their sign on the left. It's easy to miss the sign.

The Orchid Connection, Jerry Boyd, PO Box 86808, San Diego, CA 92138, (619) 258-2169, www.orchidconnection.com, info@orchidconnection.com. Wholesale/retail supplier of Mexican species. The majority of his plants will be established on mounts. The best place to see his plants is at any of the Southern California Orchids Shows. Check his webpage for schedules and orchid sales.

Crest Orchids, Edith & Leno Galvan, 1367 Horsemill Rd., El Cajon, CA 92021, (619) 441-7503, ECGalvan@aol.com. Backyard greenhouse growers of *Vandaceous*, *Cattleya*, *Cymbidium*, *Dendrobium*, Philippine and Thailand species. By appointment only! The best place to see their plants is at Southern California Orchid Shows. Call them for their schedule. El Cajon is located east of San Diego, take I-8, then take the Greenfield exit.

Dave Reid's Orchids, 31970 Rockinghorse Rd., Escondido, CA 92026, (760) 728-7996, reidsorchids@msn.com. Very well grown plants, *Cattleya*, *Cymbidium*, *Dendrobium*, *Zygopetalum*, species and more. He has monthly specials that can be viewed at the San Diego County Orchid Society newsletter webpage: www.sdorchids.com. By appointment on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday.

Located near I-15 and CA-78.

Del Mar Orchid Ranch, George Huang, 4343 Carmel Valley Rd., San Diego, CA 92130, (619) 794-0774. *Phaleanopsis*, *Cattleya*, *Dendrobium*, *Oncidium* and others. You can walk through his nursery and look at the plants. However, most of the plants do not have tags! He waits until they bloom before he knows what they are. He has good connections in Taiwan because he'll have the newest imports in bloom long before anyone else offers them for sale. Hours: Tuesday through Saturday 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. Off I-5, take the Carmel Valley Rd. exit, left on Carmel Valley Rd., take the CA-56 east ramp, merge onto Ted Williams Parkway, then turn on Carmel Valley Rd., go about 1/2 mile. He sometimes goes out during the lunch hour. It's a good idea to call him first to make sure he's there or just take a chance. Sometimes he doesn't answer the phone if he's busy.

Elusive Orchids, Marilyn and Cliff Lanoue, (619) 267-3172, (866) 281-5750. Wide range of genera. By appointment only. The best place to catch them is at the La Jolla Farmer's Market on Sundays or the San Juan Capistrano Farmer's Market on Wednesday. California Farmer's Markets are great fun. They usually do the orchid shows in San Diego also. Be sure to call for their Farmer's Market schedule and directions.

Granite Hills Orchids, Tom Biggart, 1894 Dehesa Rd., El Cajon, CA 92019, (619) 441-9874, Nbiggart@aol.com. Backyard greenhouse grower of a broad range of orchid species, many mounted. Excellent selection of *Cattleya* and *Schomburgkia*. Fantastic plants, fantastic prices. The best place to see Tom and his plants is at the San Diego orchid shows. El Cajon is east of San Diego.

J & M Orchids, Nar Daguia, 1291 Leaf Terrace, San Diego, CA 92114, (619) 262-0149, jmorchids@aol.com. Exceptional *Vandas*!!! Also, *Dendrobium*, *Cattleya*, *Epidendrum* and other species. You'll find him and his wife at ALL the California orchid shows, just look for the best looking *Vandas*. By appointment daily. South San Diego area, take I-5 to Division St.

Leucadia Orchids, Ralph Smith, 1660 Burgundy Rd., Encinitas, CA 92024. (760) 436-3797. Wide range of hybrids of all kinds and some species in his backyard greenhouse. He does many of his own crosses and is willing to sell flasks. Ralph is a retired jockey that grows orchids for the fun of it. He is always willing to talk about orchids. He is available 7 days a week 9 A.M. to 5 P.M., just call first.

Encore Orchids, Don Wolfe, 1055 Buena Vista Dr., Vista, CA 92081, (760) 726-8343, ENCORE DON@aol.com. Backyard greenhouse grower with a wide range of genera including *Phragmipedium*. From I-15 take CA-78, take Mar Vista Dr. exit, turn left, go to Buena Vista turn right. He always sells at the Costa Mesa Show in February.

Casa de las Orquideas, Loren & Nancy Batchman, 170 S. Nardo Ave., Solana Beach, CA 92075, Phone & FAX (858) 755-7572, www.orquideas.com, casa@orquideas.com. Southern California's leading source for *Cymbidium* and *Zygopetalum* seedlings. Blooming size, seedlings and flasks. Open by appointment only! Solana Beach is north of San Diego on I-5.

Peterson Orchids, Carol Bostwick, 851 Lincoln Ave., El Cajon, CA 92020, (619) 244-6696, www.petersonorchids.com, orchidlady@juno.com. She carries a variety of orchids including species and hybrids of *Cattleya*, *Oncidium*, *Dendrobium* and *Epidendrum*. Also potting mix and supplies. Open

by appointment only. You can also see her orchids at the Poway and Hillcrest Farmer's Markets on Saturday and Sunday mornings. Call or email for directions. El Cajon is east of San Diego.

Some Other Resources:

San Diego County Orchid Society, www.sdorchids.com. Check out their webpage for online newsletters, an extended vendor list, and informative articles. Also, links to other orchid societies and helpful resources.

San Diego Zoo, San Diego CA. The zoo orchid collection is open every third Friday from 10am to 2pm. I understand the collection is quite varied and well worth the visit. Call (619) 231-0251 for more details. Sometimes the SDCOS arranges guided tours, watch the newsletter for details.

Quail Botanical Gardens, 230 Quail Gardens Drive, Encinitas, CA, (760) 436-3036, www.qbgardens.com, info@qbgardens.com. Quail Botanical Gardens is dedicated to the conservation of rare and endangered plants from across the globe. San Diego visitors and residents are invited to experience this spectacular collection of flora. Tours, nature walks, lectures, landscape advice and instructional programs are offered to advance public awareness of plant diversity. Monthly AOS judging is also held at the gardens. Located north of San Diego, from I-5 take Encinitas Blvd., go east 1/2 mile to Quail Gardens Drive, the entrance is on the left.

Pacific South Judging Center, Quail Botanical Gardens, Ecker Building, 230 Quail Gardens Drive, Encinitas, CA . Contact Karen Muir, 28152 Bluebell Dr., Laguna Niguel, CA 92677. The judging is at 7pm. Contact Karen for dates or check *Orchids* for the current judging dates.

San Diego International Orchid Fair, www.orchidfairsandiego.com. Located in the Activity Center of the Del Mar Fairgrounds every year about the second weekend in October. This is a "must see" show where you'll see orchids from all the area orchid growers, plus many international growers. The show is sanctioned by the AOS and includes AOS and Cymbidium Society of America judging. Additionally, the SDCOS provides ribbon judging. The show was established solely for the benefit of the Quail Botanical Gardens.

San Diego County Orchid Society Show, Scottish Rite Center, 1895 Camino de Rio South, San Diego, CA. Located near Hotel Circle. The 2004 show theme is "Orchids, California Style." Check the SDCOS newsletter for show dates in March. This is a AOS sanctioned show with AOS judging.

This is only a partial listing of San Diego area orchid growers and resources. Please keep me updated if you know of others you would like to add to the list. Clarice Dean, 5540 Santa Margarita, Las Vegas, NV 89118, 876-2729, CCDEAN@aol.com.

ORCHIDS FOR MAGIC, RELIGION, AND DINNER—OR THERE ARE THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH THEM EVEN IF THEY DON'T BLOOM

BY CAROL SIEGEL

The object of our obsession, the orchid, has captured the imagination of peoples of every culture in every age. Far from being merely gorgeous flowers, they have been a combination kitchen-pharmacy-Home Depot-church. They have been used in magical potions, religious rites, medicines, and edible treats, proving useful to ward off evil spirits, cure diseases, increase sexual desirability, and even kill off enemies.

People have long eaten orchids. The Aborigines of Australia were thought to have harvested the tubers of some 500 different orchids, and Mexicans used *Stanhopea tigrina* to make tortillas. From Asia Minor to the Balkans, salep is still made from orchids and eaten as ice cream, soup and wine. From the time of first European settlement, there are records of the culinary use of tubers from the terrestrial species of *Caladenia*, *Cryptostylus*, *Dipodium*, *Diiuris*, *Geodorum* and *Prosopphyllum*. Roasted tubers of *Gastrodia sesamoides* in Tasmania were called the "native potato" by early settlers, and pseudobulbs of *Cymbidium* and *Dendrobium* were also consumed by native Australian and European explorers.

The first orchid to be brought back to Europe in 1510 was vanilla, which the Aztecs called tlilxochitl. The Aztec emperor Montezuma refused any beverage but chocolatl, made with vanilla pods, which he drank fifty times a day. He was said to make great use of it as an aphrodisiac before visiting one of his many wives. A difficult plant to fertilize outside of its habitat, vanilla was finally artificially pollinated by Edmund Albius, a former slave from Reunion. Vanilla was used to flavor tobacco, make perfumes, and to treat melancholy, impotence, menstrual problems, rheumatism, and convulsions.

The innocent orchid has not only been eaten but has been used in deadly potions. In Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, Australia, the witch doctor would smear his arm with the juice of their native orchid before killing the victim, and tubers of *Habenaria* orchids were mixed with other ingredients to make a lethal potion.

Some peoples used orchids not to kill but to prevent death. Ancient Chinese texts like Pen Ts'ao Kang Mu (1590) stated that negative forces could be banished by using orchids. So strong was the orchid's association with protection that the Chinese term for orchid, *lan*, was pronounced like the word for protection.

In India, carrying around the dried pseudobulbs of *Eulophia* orchids was thought to prevent the deadly bite of snakes, and in Mexico, the common kitchen orchid *Vanilla planifolia* was used to protect travelers. In Central Europe, treasure hunters carried orchid tubers in their pockets, and in Scotland, the tubers of *Orchis mascula* were used for protection. Tubers of *Dactylorhiza maculata* were buried at the threshold of a house on the Eve of Saint John to banish the evil eye.

Dendrobium orchids were thought to be especially strong magic. A broom, made from the pseudobulbs and foliage of dendrobium orchids and used to sweep the house after a death, was believed to prevent death from claiming any other members of the household. Tribes in the Solomon Islands placed dendrobiums on their heads for safety when entering a dangerous place. Another odd story from New Guinea claimed that a ghostly, sexy young woman, called *duruagle*, (also the name for Dendrobiums) would wander naked and sexy along the river banks. If she were not satisfied, she would strike the young man with a plague of venereal diseases- which only dendrobium orchids could cure!!

Dioscorides , born in Asia Minor about 50 AD, believed that because the *Orchis* orchids had twin tubers that looked like the male testes that orchids could be used for protection against infertility, impotence and venereal disease. In tropical and southern Africa, tribes use *Ansellia africana*, known as the leopard orchid, to make a contraceptive bracelet for unmarried women. It was made from the leafy parts of the plant smeared with a paste from the pseudobulbs. Leaves placed under a suitor's armpits supposedly led to an increase in ardor. (I have one of these plants and am willing to let you try, though not on me.)

Other orchids have been used to snare women. In Southeast Asia and Polynesia, men added *Grammatophyllum scriptum* seeds to a woman's food to

make her fall in love. In Papua New Guinea, baby girls were wrapped in the leaves of *Habenaria* orchids to encourage good health, strength—and a capacity for drudgery, qualities much valued in a wife. (Gloria Steinem, where were you?)

When Christianity came to supplant the pagan earth religions in the jungle and forest, the orchid was still thought of as very special. In Costa Rica, there was a legend of a young native boy named Jose who tended a garden that held a golden crucifix. When the conquistadors came to steal the cross, Jose ran bleeding through the forest carrying the cross. When his blood made a trail for his pursuers, Flora, goddess of the flowers, turned the blood into a carpet of scarlet flowers, *Epidendrum ibaguense*, a flower with a little cross-like lip. Jose died of fear and shock, but the flowers were always associated with Christ.

Other orchids as well came to be associated with Christianity. *Epidendrum radicans* came to be known as the crucifix orchid because of its red flowers which recalled the shape and color of the cross. *Peristeria elata* was called Espiritus Santo because the column of the flower resembled a dove, *peristeria* meaning "Dove" in Greek. *Oncidium tigrinum* is known as the flor de los muertos and is used to dedicate graves on All Souls Day and *Cattleya skinnera* is known in Guatemala as flor de San Sabastiano and used to decorate the church on that feast day.

Not only have orchids been used in magic and religion, but 400 of the 25,000 orchid species have been thought to be used regularly in medicine. Some of the uses were just placebo, but science has found that orchids have a number of useful active ingredients. At the beginning of the 19th century, *Dactylorhiza maculata* orchids were used to cure TB in Europe. In North America, *Epipactis* was used for nervous disorders and gout, and *Cypripedium* was used to cure inflammation and skin ailments. *Goodyera pubescens* was called the "cancer weed" by native Indians and settlers and was used to treat cancer.

In China, wide use of orchids in medicine was common. *Dendrobium nobile*, from SE Asia, yielded the drug shish hu, known to the Han dynasty in 207BC. It was farmed for commercial use in drugs, favoring the YIN in the body and leading to long life. Its use as an aphrodisiac was well-known. Unfortunately,

research has shown the presence of numerous alkaloids, which can lead to poisoning in large doses.

To add to all these, orchids also have other commercial uses. The root of *Aplectrum hyemale* is used in North America for cementing china and glass, and shoemakers in South America still use glue made from *Catasetum* and *Cyrtopodium*. Dried yellow stems of *Dendrobium utile* have been used in Indonesia for ages in basketry and weaving as well.

Next time you water your orchid, know that from table to medicine cabinet to witch's amulet bag, orchids have uses that go far beyond the dining room table.