



Houston Happenings

The Houston Orchid Society's Monthly Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 4, 2003 MEETING

Meeting Time: 7:30 P.M.
Plant Table: Setup 7:00 P.M.
Place: Hermann Garden Center

Speakers: Dennis D'Alessandro
Topic: Orchids of Equador and Bolivia
Plant Sale: Setup at 7:00 P.M.

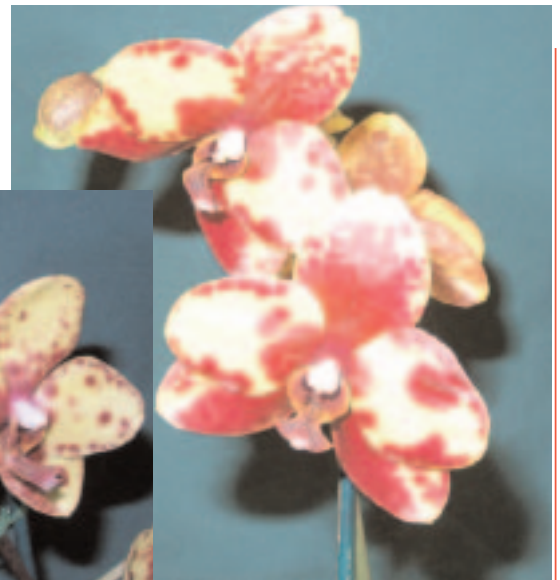
Dennis D'Alessandro (right) began growing orchids over 20 years ago and in 1977 moved to southern Ecuador where he was curator of the orchid collection at Orquideario Predesur, a botanical garden dedicated to the cultivation of the native orchid species of Ecuador.

Since then he has collected and cataloged over 1000 specimens, of which over 80 species were new to science.

Mr. D'Alessandro now divides his time between Ecuador where he maintains an orchid nursery in the town of Vilcabamba, and the United States where he is the owner of Gypsy Glen Orchids in Beaver, Pa.

Expect a very interesting talk, and lots of wonderful species from the tropical climates of South America.

Greg Scott



Three siblings of Phal. (Haur Jin Diamond x Ching Her Golden) were awarded at the recent Workshop held on Aug. 8, 9. See HJC article on pg. 2 for details. Regretably, clonal names for each picture are not available.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

A visit to Longwood Gardens

A few weeks ago I had the opportunity to get a behind the scenes tour of the orchid facilities at Longwood Gardens outside of Wilmington DE. I was up in southeastern PA visiting family and my mom and sister had arranged the tour as a birthday present. Longwood Gardens was founded by Pierre DuPont in the early 1900's and today is one of the premier botanical gardens in the country. Their orchid collection consists of about 9,000 mature plants of all varieties including about 3,500 huge cattleyas, some dating back over 50 years. From this, they have 300-500 blooming plants on public display at all times. The orchid display is a very popular area. When I was there, they had draculas, disas, phrags, bulbos, and a wide range of cattleyas and laelias blooming. About the only plants not in bloom were the phals which completely dominate their displays in the spring. They have 3 orchid greenhouses which are differentiated by temperature. Their warm and temperate greenhouses are similar to what you would find in Houston with a wet wall to keep the day temps around 90 and heaters for the winter to keep the temps in the 70's. The temperate greenhouse is just smaller and shadier and can be kept a bit cooler. Their cool greenhouse uses several large produce chillers to cool the greenhouse down to 60 at night and keep it from getting over 80 during the summer. This allows them to grow draculas, disas (which they grow from seed), and others we can only dream of.... unless you have the luxury of having a produce chiller in your greenhouse!! They spray orthene twice a year as a preventative measure and use alcohol as a local, spot treatment as needed. A pictorial of the visit is included in this issue.

We all have the opportunity over the years to venture to locations both exotic (Hawaii?) and more mundane (like visiting family). But chances are, even in the less exotic locations, there are orchid nurseries, botanical gardens, and other facilities growing wonderful orchids. It's easy to find them with the internet and many of them are very happy to give you a tour and share their knowledge. Search them out when you travel!

Jay Balchan

AUGUST PLANT TABLE

Great selection of summer blooming orchids on the plant table - thanks to all that brought these beautiful plants! We had a total of 19 hybrids and 14 species on the plant table this month. The Hybrid winner was Blc. Toshi Aoki 'Excellent Gold', owned by Denny & Renee Haase. The Species winner was C. aelandiae, owned by Denny & Renee Haase. Andy Easton (August's speaker) announced the hybrids and C J Maciejewski announced the species - thank ya'll very much! Don't forget to fill out an entry form for each plant you bring for the "Plant Table" and PLEASE put your name on the back of the form. Also, vote for your favorite hybrid and species on the plant table each month!

Pam Vinson

CLASSIFIED

I am looking for a division of the following 2 orchids. C.Bow Bells or Lc. Bonanza. If anyone has either of these plants and are willing to divide please contact me either at home or by my new e-mail dfields@wt.net. Thanks, Dolores Fields

For Sale. Hydrofogger. \$300.00. 281-277-4477. Used one week.

HOUSTON JUDGING CENTER

Web site: <http://hjc.houstonorchidsociety.org>

There were 9 plants entered for judging with no awards. There were 11 Accredited Judges, 3 Probationary Judges, 1 Student Judge and 1 Clerk present with a total of 24 persons attending.

The next regular judging will be held on September 20, 2003 at the B. J. & Margaret Bradshaw Wellness Center, 7731 Southwest Freeway (Highway 59 South). It is requested that all plants be entered prior to 11:30 A. M. so that they may be properly researched for judging.

Houston Orchid Society Workshop - August 8, 2003

There were 19 plants presented for judging with 3 provisional awards, all of the same cross, entered by Norman's Orchids, Montclair, CA:

1. Phalaenopsis ___(Haur Jin Diamond x Ching Her Golden) 'Monclair', provisional AM 80 points
2. Phalaenopsis ___(Haur Jin Diamond x Ching Her Golden) 'Marvin Gerber' provisional HCC 75 points
3. Phalaenopsis ___(Haur Jin Diamond x Ching Her Golden) 'FANGtastic' provisional HCC 75 points

Marg Putman

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Oct. 3-5. Central Louisiana OS Hosting SWROGA. Best Western Inn, Conference Center. Alexandria, LA. Contact Byron McGraw (318) 640-4732, email bydor@aol.com.

Oct. 18-19. Oklahoma OS "Falling for Orchids" Show. Will Rogers Garden Center. OKC, OK. Contact Carolyn McCabe, Imccabe@telepath.com or (405) 899-4228.

Oct. 17-19. Galveston OS Show. Nessler Center. Texas City, TX. Contact Larry Baker, lirinb@wt.net. (281) 412-4466.

Oct. 22-26. Sacramento OS Show and Fall AOS Members Meeting. Double Tree Hotel. Sacramento CA. Contact Ida Carter, cadreamin4u@aol.com or (916) 689-1927.

Oct. 31-Nov. 2. Ft. Worth OS Show. Ft. Worth Botanical Gardens. Contact Kathy Baxley kbaxley@academicplanet.net or (817) 551-7363.

Mavis Klehm

SEPTEMBER NEWCOMERS MEETING

The September Newcomers will meet on Sunday, September 21, 2003 from 2 to 4 P.M. at Jay Balchan's to discuss insects and the ways to get rid of them. In addition, a demonstration will be given on how to get rid of scale on plants. A group of plants have been donated for the Newcomers and we will be treating them in a hands-on session (and you will keep the plants you work on). The plants will have been treated with orthene prior to your visit and we will be using alcohol/soap/water to do the final treating. If Newcomers want to participate in the scale removal exercise, they should bring a rubber bucket and a small soft brush or scrubby sponge. Old toothbrushes work well for this. Also, rubber or latex gloves are recommended if you are sensitive to alcohol.

Jay's house is at 1925 Banks, just south of Interstate 59 and Shepherd. Please bring your buckets, toothbrush, and gloves and join us, or your notepad and a pen if you just want to take notes.

Theresa M. Riggs

Selby Vignette: Quest for the Ghost Orchid

The most famous of Florida's native orchids is *Polyrrhiza lindenii* (a.k.a. *Polyradicion* or *Dendrophyllax lindenii*). The Ghost Orchid has a strangely shaped large white flower that seems to float in mid-air, on a long stalk arising from a hard-to-see leafless plant tightly pressed to a swamp tree. At night, the flowers have a pleasant perfume, to attract the pollinating moth. But then, nobody in his or her right mind would be there at night.

So picture a white flower with long streamers, floating at eye level in the dusk, viewed only by people not in their right minds, an unusual perfume spreading in the cool air, when a huge moth, its wings making an audible whir, appears hovering before the ghost. Its tongue – half a foot long – uncoils, then arches out and down into the flower's nectary. A full moon is rising and the distant scream of a panther can be heard. Alas, mosquitoes spoil the spell.

The Ghost Orchid is so famous, so frequently illustrated, so much talked about, that anyone with any interest in Florida plants soon hears of it and yearns to see it in bloom in the wild. I see them first while a high school student. My pal Herb, his grandpa, and I drove down the old Tamiami Trail on a camping trip. We saw very large cypress trees with numerous huge cowhorn orchids and bromeliads in their crowns. Herb and I swam the canal and waded to where pond apples' dark green foliage was obvious in the center of the cypresses. Several of the white flowers were seen at once, mixed in with eight other orchid species. We saw dozens of the *Polyrrhizas* on the trees, perhaps close to a hundred in a small area. Nowadays we hunt all day and see half a dozen plants spread over a much larger area. If lucky, we see one of two in flower, if lucky.

In the 1960s, deep canals were cut across the county. The water table dropped four feet immediately. My original site was bulldozed and is now a vast open farm field. Other places dried up, too. The orchids withered on the trees and winter cold struck, unmoderated by standing water. Pesticides killed the pollinators.

So now we seek these wonderful flowers, hand pollinate them and hope seed eventually will be dispersed. Perhaps future generations will see them in abundance. At least we can hope.

John Beckner, OIC Curator

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Several of us members of the Houston Orchid Society have been discussing the lack of respect shown to our speakers by the audience at our meetings. The behavior of a few reflects on the enjoyment of the meetings for all of us.

Persons should not enter plants for the silent auction, view plants or make bids while our speakers are talking. These actions may not be noisy, but they are a distraction to the speaker and the audience. Also, our members and guests should be very quiet and not serving themselves from the refreshment table during the program, committee reports and plant introductions. Sometimes it is very difficult for people in front to hear because of the noise from the back of the room.

Let's all keep our seats and be quiet and respectful to our fellow members and our guest speakers.

Thank you for your cooperation.
Sincerely,
Concerned Member

DON'T FORGET: Plant Raffle Tickets for Boxtops
www.boxtopsforeducation.com

Reminder: Thank the Following for the August Refreshments Table

Coordinator: John Van Domelen
Punch/Drinks: Claudia Hanson and Theresa Riggs
Sheet Cake: Claudia Hanson and Theresa Riggs
Cookies: Claudia Hanson and Theresa Riggs
Snacks: Claudia Hanson and Theresa Riggs
Snacks: Claudia Hanson and Theresa Riggs

Please volunteer for coming months.

Houston Orchid Society 2003 Officers and Committee Chairs

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President	Jay Balchan	713-942-2298
1st Vice President	Greg Scott	936-447-3232
2nd Vice President	Pam Vinson	281-589-6719
Recording Sec.	Kelly Moseley	713-480-1062
Treasurer	Bill Bartlett	713-523-5031
Membership	Claudia Hanson	281-395-8575

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Happenings Editor	Don Ghiz	713-661-1885
Newcomers Group	Theresa Riggs	281-496-2296
Librarian	open	
Petals and Wings	Jim and Melba Butler	281-492-1437
Plant Raffle	Ted Baenziger &	713-525-3146
& May Sale	Dennis Tomjack	713-789-1748
Refreshments	John Van Domelen	281-464-9245
Silent Auction	Emily Lam-Jones	713-524-3055
August Workshop	Jerry Stephens	713-529-0808
Webmistress	Nina Rach	713-461-8605

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Joe Fields	Dolores Fields
Marvin Gerber	Renee Gerber
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SWROGA Director	Julius Klehm
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Encyclia Enthusiasts	Alice Barrios

Web-site: www.houstonorchidsociety.org

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Houston Orchid Society
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3217 Amherst Street
Houston, TX 77005

FIRST CLASS MAIL

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*Longwood Gardens, view of exterior fountains above. Lwft, one of many orchid displays. Below left, a specimen *L. purpurata*. Right top, one of the courtyards, and right bottom, volunteer worker, Hugo Taraboletti, pounds mixture of redwood and charcoal in prep for cutting.*

