

THE HOUSTON HAPPENINGS

The Monthly Newsletter of the Houston Orchid Society, Houston, Texas

Speaker: Ray Barkalow Semi-Hydroponic Growing

I have been surrounded by houseplants my whole life, and I suppose that I was "destined" to grow orchids, as I have had some pretty close contact with well-know orchid establishments without even knowing it.

My orchid growing began when I was a Ceramic Engineering student at Georgia Tech. After about a year of volunteering my time at the public greenhouses in Piedmont Park - now the Atlanta Botanical Gardens - the orchid grower there gave me a big, "floofy" purple cattleya.

It took me about two years to kill it via the typical root rot-desiccation cycle torture, and at the time, I simply "did not kill plants," so I was determined to learn more and got addicted like everyone else. Needless to say, in the 30+ years since, I've learned that I am a very effective plant killer... (Isn't it true that you're not an orchid-growing "pro" until you killed your weight in plants?)

During my professional career, I have had many opportunities to travel internationally, and put together an extensive collection of orchids from around the world. That travel schedule (averaging 13 flights a week for three years at one point) led to a great deal of experimentation surrounding keeping plants healthy and happy during my absences, and that's what led to the development of Semi-Hydroponics.

First Rays Orchids came into being by accident - literally - courtesy of a greenhouse heater and alarm failure on a 7° F night in January of 1994. That 20-year collection of plants from around the world was a total loss. After a few months, a new heater and alarm were purchased and written off as business expenses, even though I had no idea how I'd make a business out of orchids.

Shortly thereafter, I divided the first couple of replacement plants I had purchased, created a text-only web page listing them, and offered the extra divisions to the internet orchid community via a post to the rec.gardens.orchids newsgroup. Within three hours I had two orders, and I knew how I'd make it a business.

The best part about the exposure that First Rays Orchids has given me is the ability to communicate with folks from around the world on the fascinating subject of orchids. Sharing the obsession is second only to growing the plants.

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The Houston Orchid Society was established in 1945 and is a recipient of the AOS Distinguished Affiliated Societies Service Award.



AOS 2010 Calendars - Get them at the HOS meeting!

The 2010 Calendars will be for sale at the AOS booth at a savings -- **\$10 each**. The AOS is selling them, too, but they are \$12.95 (AOS members get a 10% discount) plus shipping and handling. The \$10 price from HOS is less than you would pay if you order directly from the AOS. As a convenience to you, HOS makes an order from AOS each year. The profit for the HOS is very minimal but it saves members time and money.

Get them now because they usually sell out before Christmas. They make wonderful gifts - Christmas or just because.

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President's Post

By Holly Miller, President

I hope all of you who attended the Summer Workshop had a wonderful time. Many thanks to Ted Baenziger and John Stubbings for putting together an outstanding workshop! The group of volunteers they assembled did a remarkable job and everything seemed to flow effortlessly. The workshop was well-attended, the speakers had excellent programs and the food was great. Each speaker received a certificate from the World Land Trust organization. The HOS purchased and donated acreage for conservation through the World Land Trust on behalf of each speaker. They each received a certificate for the purchase of one acre in their name.

At the September meeting, those attending will be selecting the nominating committee for the coming year. You will be furnished a ballot and asked to vote on three members from the roster of eligible members. Those selected will determine who to nominate for you to consider for next year's officers and board members. Please put some thought into your selections.

On the weekend of September 12th and 13th we will have a huge orchid sale of the Brizendine collection at Clown Alley, 3119 Lily Street, Pasadena 77505. See the ad in this newsletter for the times. James Brizendine's orchid collection was donated to the HOS by his wife, Kitten. There are almost 1000 orchids to be sold and they will be priced to sell - ranging from \$1.00 to \$30.00. There is quite a variety but there are a large number of Phalaenopsis and Cattleyas and quite a few very large plants, which could be divided into many. Come on out and take a look!

The 67th Annual Bulb and Plant Mart will be held Thursday through Saturday, October 8, 9 and 10 at Westminster United Methodist Church, 5801 San Felipe at Bering, just west of the Galleria area. This is a fund raising event for the HOS - it's the first year they are letting us order the orchids and make a good percent of the profit. Deana Roberts is coordinating our involvement and she needs volunteers to help sell the orchids. It's actually quite fun and you get to have a great lunch and shop for other interesting plants while you're there.

Entrance is free for those who work. Contact Deana at droberts@intropa.com to see what time slots still need to be filled.

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Houston Judging Center

By Margaret Putman

HJC Results - August 15, 2009

There were 8 plants entered for judging with no awards. There were 12 Accredited Judges, 2 Probationary Judges and 1 Student Judge present with a total of 25 persons attending. The next regular judging will be held September 19, 2009 at the Jerabeck Center, Room 202, University of St. Thomas, corner of W. Main and Mt. Vernon, Houston, TX. Please bring a sack lunch. It is requested that all plants be entered before 11:30 A. M. so that they may be properly researched prior to judging.

Winners' Tips

Hybrid Winner: Vanda kamprananda x Ascda Seechange 'Starburst' - Owner Rick Kelly



Photograph courtesy of Malcolm McCorquodale

I grow vandas outside under a 50% shade cloth in either empty baskets or simply hanging from a piece of electrical wire. I water thoroughly every morning, several times during the day on weekends, and frequently throw the entire plants into my fish pond or a large bucket of water for a hour or so to become completely hydrated. I fertilize with 20-20-20 at the recommended concentration several times a week during the summer and several times a month in the winter. I stretch plastic sheeting over my growing area from Nov 1 through early April and run an electric heater on cold nights. The night temperature routinely falls to 50 for months, occasionally in the 40s. I never use any pesticide on vandas, instead relying on the abundant anole lizards who patrol the plants.

Species Winner: Cattleya guttata grown by John Jamerlan



Photograph courtesy of Malcolm McCorquodale

I purchased this plant from Ned Nash (Cal Orchids) when he was a speaker for the HOS workshop. It took a couple of years for it to establish itself as a blooming sized plant. I found it to grow best on the south bench where it gets very bright filtered (60% shade) light for most of the day and direct light after 4:00 pm. I sprinkle Nutricote pellets (20-20-20) into the pot once a year, and feed it heavily during spring. Watering depends on ambient temperature and but I usually let the top inch of the medium dry out before watering again.

Bent innards give orchid its kick

By Susan Milius

SNOWBIRD, Utah — Like so many people, *Catasetum* orchids get rough because they're bent out of shape.

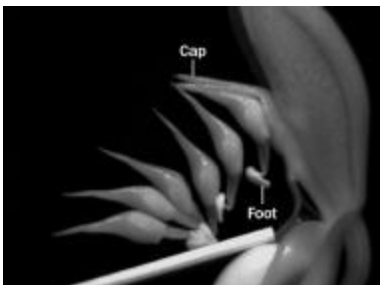
Male flowers in this tropical genus don't wait for a visiting bee to load up on pollen by nuzzling against it, explains Daniel Fulop of Harvard University. When a bee lands, brushing a flower's long trigger hairs, a floral structure slams a pollen mass onto the bee's back.



The orchid *Catasetum saccatum*, like other members of its genus, slams its pollen (with glue) onto a visiting bee's back. Researchers have now figured out how the pollen-hurling mechanism works. Credit: www.larsen-twins.dk

After studying 16 species in the genus, Fulop and Harvard colleague Jacques Dumais have now figured out how the pollen smacker works. Its power comes from the sudden release of a bent strip of tissue attached to the pollen mass, Fulop reported July 27 at the Botany & Mycology 2009 meeting.

"It was just wonderful to see this mechanically complex problem dissected and explained," said meeting organizer Wendy Silk of the University of California at Davis. She notes that the work is appropriate for the 150th anniversary of Darwin's *On the Origins of Species*, in which he wrote briefly about *Catasetum* pollen delivery.



Violent sendoffA composite image shows a male flower of the *Catasetum tabulare* orchid firing its elongated pollen-holding structure. The energy for the pollen shot comes from the sudden unbending of tissue at the bottom. Jacques Dumais and Daniel Fulop.

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AOS Corner

By Carol Holdren

It is Fall Orchid Convention time - or at least time to plan to go the Fall Orchid Convention! The Southland Orchid Show Committee and the Huntington Botanical Gardens, outside Los Angeles, invite you to Arcadia, California on October 14 - 17, 2009.

You can get the details from the AOS web site: www.aos.org under "Events" and then "Members Meetings" although you do not have to be an AOS member to attend. All orchid people are welcome! You can also call Simone Friend at 562-431-1247 for a registration packet.

This is a great orchid show at a fabulous botanical garden where you will be able to listen to orchid lectures as well as tour the gardens. The Huntington has 150 acres with 12 specialized gardens so it is worth going for the gardens alone but even better when there is an orchid show. If you are an AOS member you will want to attend the AOS Town Hall Meeting on Saturday morning.

You can wear your AOS pin to show your support - if you don't have one they can be purchased for \$25, postage included, from the AOS web site. If you are wishing for a fall orchid trip - consider California!

Orchid Sales Definitions

Robust: The orchid will survive 4 years before a slow decline.

Strong: The orchid will survive 4 years before a rapid decline.

Delicate: The orchid will start to decline on the way home.

Tricky: The plant starts to decline as you sign the check.

Easy: Everyone will grow it better than you.

Reprinted from the 1984 Fort Lauderdale Orchid Society Newsletter.

Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society

Meets the Third Sunday of each month at the Houston Garden Center at 2:00 PM. Come join us and learn more about growing ferns in the Houston environment. Visit the website at <http://www.tgcfersoc.org/> for more information.



Culture Q&A

HOS Culture Q&A Panel: Ted Baenziger, Jay Balchan, Dolores Fields, Joe Fields, Marvin Gerber, Renee Gerber, Doug Harris, Rick Hepler, Julius Klehm, Nina Rach, and Greg Scott.

Q: Because I'm such a quick learner, it has dawned on me after only three years now that several genera and species need a period of low nighttime temperatures in order to bloom. I know about phals, but which other types should be allowed to get into the fifties or lower (and how much lower) in order to "set the clock" for blooms? I realize you probably can't list them all, but perhaps you could name the most commonly cultivated ones.

A: I won't try to get into it because there are too many and it differs depending on the parentage of some hybrids and it even varies as to which are the pod versus pollen parents. Of course, Cymbidiums need a good cooling off in the fall months. I have never been successful with them. I know people that put ice cubes on them every night outside to cool them in the fall months. Some Paphs even grow cooler and the mottled leaves ones are the warmer growers but I'm not sure how much that effects the setting of blooms but the growing temperature will affect whether or not they bloom. Hopefully you get better answers from the others as most of my orchids all get the same conditions and I try to get those that will grow that way. - Julius Klehm

A: Most orchids grow best with at least a 20 degree difference between the high in the afternoon and the low the next morning. Plants that are called "cool" or "intermediate" are mostly referring to the low morning temperature. With greenhouse highs running in the nineties, and morning lows in the eighties, it is a miracle we can grow anything in our climate. Several of the plants mentioned as easy to grow species at the workshop are not easy in Houston. These include Rhyncostylis coelestis, Oncidium onustum, and any of the Columbian miltonias, which are now known as Miltoniopsis. Another genus which must have cool morning temperatures is Cymbidium. The standards need the cooling by the end of September which almost never happens here. The minatures are not as demanding so they can be grown and bloomed successfully here. - Marvin Gerber

President's Post (Continued)

The HOS Annual Picnic will be on Saturday, October 24th at Clown Alley. I will start a sign up sheet at the September meeting for food, drinks and paper goods.

As you can see, we have a lot going on - get involved and enjoy your orchid hobby with us!

Orchid Videos on UTube

By: Susan Taylor

There is a video on UTube at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMVN1EWxfAU> showing the *Xanthopan morganii praedicta* moth getting nectar from *Angraecum sesquipedale* in Madagascar. It was filmed by Philip DeVries from the Biological Sciences at the University of New Orleans.

David Attenborough has one on wild orchid wasp mimicking and the bee orchids of northern Europe.

See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-h8l3cqp gnA&feature=fvw>

Orchid Bees - Euglossa, an interesting view of pollination of Mormodes <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gEcv3dBuOe4> and the website of the producers, <http://www.hiloroad.com/orchids> which features other videos on orchids and bees. They have a listing of interesting links on the web including link to the Complete Works of Charles Darwin Online which includes his "Fertilisation of Orchids."

WEEKEND ORCHID PERSON NEEDED

I need to hire someone who would like to get out of Houston for the weekends. I would have them stay at BlissWood B&B and provide their meals in exchange for working in the greenhouses and gardens (keeping up with fertilizing, weeds, general care of plants/pot plants, orchids, ferns, bromeliads, etc.) This has to be somebody that could commit their weekends to my place, someone who does not have a lot of other responsibilities, and would just love to get out of Houston to the country, in a peaceful relaxing atmosphere.

Contact Carol Davis at: 713-301-323 or by email at carol@blisswood.net

Catasetum (Continued)

Based on Fulop's calculations, if the blow a bee receives from the floral structure were scaled up to human size, it would be equivalent to getting hit with a lump weighing 6 to 16 kilograms, the heft of one or two bowling balls, moving at up to 8 kilometers per hour.

Bees seem to grow wary after such a thumping and avoid similar blossoms, according to earlier research. In *Catasetum*, helmet-shaped greenish female flowers don't look like the flashy and wildly diverse male flowers, so the bees are still willing to deliver pollen to the female flowers.

Only a small percentage of orchid species fling their pollen, and the 150 or so species of *Catasetum* do so with particular finesse, Fulop reported.

A *Catasetum* flower attracts male bees with floral scents that the bees collect for mating displays. Near the male flower's pocket of volatile perfumes, along the middle axis of the bloom, lies a long, multipart structure holding two pollen balls. At one end of the structure lies a sticky foot and a broad strip of tissue, called the stipe, which curves over a bump in the middle of the flower and connects to the two balls and their long cap at the other end.

When a bee lands and follows the scents, it brushes a pair of long trigger hairs beside the pollen-holding structure. Fulop and Dumais found that the hairs react when displaced as little as 0.1 millimeters. And, with high-speed video, the team found that male flowers of *C. pileatum* need only 20 milliseconds to react before hammering the bee, which takes about another 25 milliseconds.

As soon as the hairs detect a touch, the pollen structure starts ripping loose from the flower at the end with the foot and the stipe, Fulop reported. The stipe abruptly unbends from the curved surface of the flower underneath. Pollen balls and stipe swing out and away from the plant.

Both would somersault beyond the bee, though, if it weren't for a refinement at the other end of the structure. The last part to break loose, the end with the cap, gets pushed back against a floral spur. The spur gives a bit at first and then springs back, batting the departing structure – pollen, stipe and all – toward the bee. The sticky foot on the structure fastens the pollen balls in place.

What puts the zing into the action is the stipe, according to Fulop and Dumais. When it finally tears loose from its bent position in the flower, it powers the pollen shot.

With the precise targeting ability of this pollen flinger, a flower does not need all the contours and other devices that some other orchids use to guide bees to rub against pollen. Fulop proposed that this method of pollen delivery could help explain how the genus has evolved such an extraordinary diversity of male flower shapes.

Reprinted from Science News Daily, Web edition : Thursday, July 30th, 2009.

http://www.sciencenews.org/view/generic/id/46006/description/Bent_innards_give_orchid_its_kick

Brizendine Orchid Collection Sale



Clown Alley from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM on Saturday, September 12th and from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM on Sunday, September 13th.

Plants will be priced to sell - \$1.00 to \$30.00.
All proceeds to benefit the Houston Orchid Society.

CLOWN ALLEY ORCHIDS

**Celebrating our 4th Anniversary in Pasadena
Special Sale September 12 and 13, 2009**

Saturday 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Sunday 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM

**All plants 20 % OFF
Supplies 10 % OFF**

**A great selection of species
John and Sandy Stubbings**

**3119 Lily Street, Pasadena, Texas 77505
Phone: 281-991-6841 FAX: 281-991-3909**

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Spring Orchids Summer Sale

Now through November 1st, we are discounting many plants to clear greenhouse space. Take advantage of additional discounts listed below. Please call ahead. We are open when home.

Spring Orchids
22332 Gosling Rd
Spring Texas 77389

Renee 832-326-5080 Denny 713-898-4411

ADDITIONAL DISCOUNTS

Over \$100 additional 10% OFF

\$200 additional 15% OFF

\$300 additional 20% OFF

Thanks to Those Who Helped Move Plants

By: John Stubbings

Thanks to everyone who helped!

We had a great crew of 16 HOS members help move over 1,000 orchids from Friendswood to Pasadena. Kitten Brizendine donated them to the HOS after her husband James suddenly passed away. Bill Tippit contacted the HOS on her behalf since she didn't think she could properly care for them. Bill and John Stubbings inspected the collection and tagged a few dozen for Kitten to keep or distribute as mementos to family. On Saturday, July 25, we all spent the day moving and transporting plants and some supplies. HOS members John Stubbings, Marvin Gerber, Jay Balchan, John Jamerlan, Don Ghiz, Bill Tippit, Mary Bahn, Mary Gunn, Jean Schwenke, Ted Baenziger, Joe Fields, Calvin Starr, Debbie Peterson, Brent Arnspiger, and Richard Bauman all pitched in with the move and cleaning up Kitten's greenhouse. Kitten has expressed her sincere thank you to all for the great job done in her time of need. Brent and Jean took some plants for cleanup, treatment and distribution to the newcomers. Debbie took some for the intermediate group.

The remaining approximately one thousand plants are for sale as is at Clown Alley Orchids. They are priced at \$30.00, \$20.00, or \$10.00 for blooming size plants. Seedlings are \$1.00. All proceeds go to the HOS.

Welcome New Members

Paula Abraham
Cleide Aitken
Rhoa Brown
Joanie and Don Haley
Don Maples
Steven and Karen West

Welcome Guests

Larry Callison
Beverly Robinson

Thanks for Refreshments

Anonymous Donation
Sarah Bentley
Bente Davis
Phillip and Jane Free
Doug George
Cherie Lee
Susan Lindsey
Nina Rach
Deana Roberts
Miriam Sicilia
Carolyn White

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Get your newsletter by email and save the society printing and mailing costs as well as helping reduce the use of paper in the environment. New members will be added to the email list automatically. If you wish to get a printed version, please let me know.

Just let me know at sataylor@eastex.net and I'll add you to the list.



Committee Bulletins

Newcomers Group

Chair: Jean Schwenke, schwenke@atlascsusa.com 832-746-1003

We had a tremendous turnout for our August Newcomers meeting at Dave Hunt's place. Everyone marveled at Dave's spectacular greenhouse, and he was happy to let us in on some of his special techniques. His love and enthusiasm for orchids is a great motivator for us all. We had a bounty of plants donated by so many kind friends, and the group is extremely grateful to all our benefactors.

Our next meeting will be September 20th at 2:00 PM at the home of Jeff Bradley. Jeff has dedicated a lifetime to appreciating what you might call "historic" orchids, those that were nurtured for decades in the collections of our hobby's pioneers. It will be a delight to have him acquaint us with these illustrious beauties."

Intermediate Group

Chair: Debbie Peterson,
dpeterson@avalonadvisors.com 281-890-0811
 Co-chair: Calvin Starr, calvin@kr5e.com 281-482-5589

The HOS Intermediate Group meets on the 4th Sunday of each month at 2PM and you must have been a member of HOS for more than 2 years. The meeting in September will be on the 27th and held at Father Ted's house 4019 Yoakum Blvd., Houston, TX 77006 713-444-9116. We will be discussing growing orchids outside in your yard and Cattleya's and their culture. Study up and be ready to discuss and participate in a round table type discussion.

Our August meeting was held at Eddie's house. Thanks Eddie for your warm hospitality. We had a lot of fun checking out her orchids and greenhouse and we learned a little more about Epidendrums and greenhouse ventilation. Check out the HOS website for our meeting notes.

If anyone wants to join our group please email us or see Debbie or Calvin at the next HOS meeting to get on the email list. This group is a great way to learn just a little more about orchids.

Raffle Table

Chair: Mary Gunn, Sylvia Dekmezian, Amy Colville

Be sure to stop by the Raffle Table to get your free ticket for the Door Prize drawing, and get 2 tickets if you are wearing your HOS name tag. Raffle tickets are priced at 5 for \$1.00 or 30 tickets for \$5.00. We have a nice variety of orchids from multiple sources.

Remember to bring in your Boxtops for Education, you will get one raffle ticket for each box top you bring in. We donate these to a local school.

Houston Orchid Society 2009 Officers and Committee Chairs

Officers

<i>President</i>	Holly Miller
<i>1st Vice President</i>	John Stubbings
<i>2nd Vice President</i>	John Jamerlan
<i>Membership</i>	Katherine Brown
<i>Recording Sec.</i>	Claudia Hanson
<i>Treasurer</i>	Debbie Peterson

Chairs

<i>Guest Hospitality</i>	Allan Davies
<i>Happenings Editor</i>	Susan Taylor
<i>Librarian</i>	Sarah Bentley
<i>Newcomers Group</i>	Jean Schwenke, Judith & Loren Neufeld
<i>Intermediate Group</i>	Debbie Peterson, Calvin Starr
<i>Parliamentarian</i>	Marvin Gerber
<i>Photography</i>	Malcolm McCorquodale III
<i>Plant Raffle</i>	Mary Gunn, Sylvia Dekmezian, Amy Colville
<i>Refreshments</i>	Noreen Tolman, Ken Gardner, Eddie Mitchell, Will Litchfield
<i>Silent Auction</i>	Lee and Gordon Rowell
<i>2009 Spring Show</i>	Melba and Jim Butler
<i>HOS Web</i>	Calvin Starr
<i>2009 Workshop Chair</i>	Ted Baenziger and John Stubbings

Directors

<i>Two-Year Term</i>	<i>One-Year Term</i>
Donna Williams	Jeff Bradley
Joe Fields	Greg Scott
Ted Baenziger	Dave Hunt
Don Ghiz	Johnny Williams
Calvin Starr	Sandra Higham
Doug Harris	Dolores Fields
Loren Neufeld	Marvin Gerber

Representatives

AOS Representative	Jim Butler
IPA Representative	John Stubbings
ODC Representative	Joe Fields
SWROGA Representative	Julius Klehm and Marilyn Holloway

Houston Orchid Society September 2009 Meeting

Program: Ray Barkalow
Semi-Hydroponics

Date: September 3, 2009
Time: 7:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

Place: Houston Garden Center

2009 Speakers

September - Ray Barkalow

October - Julius Klehm, Live AOS Judging

November - Fred Clarke ,Mini and Midi Cattleyas

December - Christmas Party and HJC Auction

HOS Website

www.houstonorchidsociety.org

Houston Orchid Society
The Houston Happenings
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