

# THE HOUSTON HAPPENINGS

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

## Speaker: Tom Harper, Breeding Trends in Taiwan Phalaenopsis

By John Jamerlan, First Vice-President



Tom began growing orchids on a windowsill in 1967. By 1975, he had registered his first orchid hybrid and founded Stones River Orchids as a business. A long-time supporter of the Mid-America Orchid Congress, Tom served as its President, Vice-President and Mid-American Editor (the MAOC newsletter). He has been an active member in the Orchid Society of Middle Tennessee since 1967 and is a founding member of the International Phalaenopsis Alliance (IPA), where he is a former president and vice-president and is currently 1st vice-president.

Tom assisted in writing and editing the Phalaenopsis species section of the soft cover Ortho book entitled *Complete Guide to Orchids* and he has written several articles on Phalaenopsis for *Orchids*, *Orchid Digest* and the *IPA Journal*. Tom lectured at the 16th World Orchid Conference in 1996 in Brazil, and the 19th WOC in January 2008 in Miami. Additionally, he was invited to speak in March 2005 and again in 2007 at the Taiwan International Orchid Show and Symposium in Hsinying, Taiwan, Republic of China. Most recently, he spoke at the 15th Annual International Phalaenopsis Alliance meeting in the United Kingdom in June 2009.

In 2008, he received his first FCC/AOS on Dtps. Brother Success 'Laura'. (The highest award given by the American Orchid Society) He has been an accredited American Orchid Society judge for over 25 years.

Tom will be bringing plants to sell at the meeting, so watch for some new and excellent orchids to grow and enjoy.

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



## HOS Membership Renewals for 2010

It's that time of year. Memberships to the HOS run from January through December.

Please fill out the enclosed membership form and bring it to the next meeting along with your check to renew.

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## President's Post

By John Stubbings, President

We're sorry you missed it. Attendance was a little over half of normal. We think it was due to the cold weather and that UT game. I did see the lousy game ending. Those that were there had a good time and heard and saw a great presentation on the Orchids of Peru by Manny Aybar. Wonderful pictures of two shows in Peru and lots of species in their habitat. One of the shows had only species, no hybrids of any kind!

We hope that really cold weather didn't create too many problems for you or your orchids. I'm sure your heaters were taxed as were mine. Hopefully your plants didn't suffer. I'm thankful we moved to Houston so we don't have to put up with the Chicago heating bills.

By now many of your Phalaenopsis should be in spike or in flower. Many of mine have made multiple spikes this year. In February you can hear more about this genus from our speaker. I'm also getting lots of buds initiating in the Cattleya alliance and the Dendrobiums. Our greenhouses are starting to flush out with many flowers, hope yours is also.

I hope our flowering season doesn't peak too soon before our show. Our show is April 16 to 18 so plan on being there. It will be in the museum next door to where we meet each month. Admission will be free. Please volunteer to help and have some fun. Holly Miller is our show chair this year so please see her to see what she needs.

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## Houston Judging Center

By Margaret Putman

**HJC Results - January 16, 2010 -.**

There were 13 plants entered and 9 pulled for further consideration with one award:

1. Paph. Hilo Citron 'Tatia Marie' (Hsinying Citron x Alma Gevaert) AM 81 points, owned by Doug George, Magnolia, TX (20105410)

There were 11 Accredited Judges, two Probationary Judges, one Student Judge, and one Clerk present with a total of 23 persons attending. The next regular judging will be held February 20, 2010 at the University of St. Thomas, Jerabeck Center, Room 202. Please bring a sack lunch. All plants should be entered before 11:30 A. M. so that they may be properly researched prior to judging.

## Winners' Tips

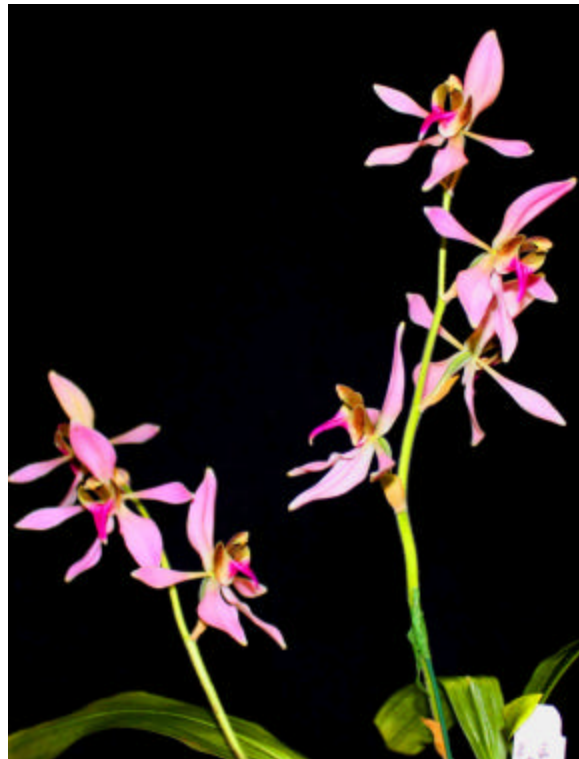
**Hybrid Winner: Bepi Phoenix x B nodosa grown by Debbie Peterson**



*Photograph courtesy of Debbie Peterson*

I grew this plant hanging from my west facing back porch all summer in the most sunlight I could give it, without burning it. And I watered it weekly with a fertilizer of 20-20-20, calcium nitrate and Epsom salt. Debbie

**Species Winner: Ancistrochilus rothschildianus, grown by Judith Neufeld**



*Photograph courtesy of Judith Neufeld*

This was a small, sad-looking plant at the HOS auction and I bid on it and won for \$35. I took it home and "lovingly" placed it in my indoor lighted plant sanctuary. I repotted with Aliflor chips, fed it with Shultz orchid foods once a week and bottle-sprayed with rain water every day. And there she is ----! Judith

## Charles Darwin: More Than the Origin

**ScienceDaily (Jan. 11, 2010)**--Although Charles Darwin is most well-known for his book *On the Origin of Species*, in which he described the process of natural selection, he greatly contributed to many specific fields within biology. As the bicentennial anniversary of Darwin's birth comes to a close, the December issue of the *American Journal of Botany* presents two papers exploring botanical history before the time of Darwin, Darwin's contributions to botany, and what scientists have discovered in the subsequent years following Darwin's first presentation of his many provocative ideas to the scientific community.

In "The 'Sensational Power' of Movement in Plants: A Darwinian System for Studying the Evolution of Behavior," Dr. Craig Whippo and Dr. Roger Hangarter discuss Darwin's research on plant movement. When Darwin first presented his theory of evolution, many opponents of the theory argued that evolution could not account for the acquisition of behavioral traits. Darwin believed that if he could present a materialistic basis for behavior, he could then explain how evolution acted on it. He used plant movements to test his theories of the evolution of behavior, and, as in many other areas of biology, Darwin's plant physiology research contributed to a paradigm shift in our understanding of the biological basis of insect, plant, and microbial behavior.

While studying carnivorous sundew plants, Darwin was shocked to learn that the plant was more sensitive to touch than human skin and could even distinguish between objects. Darwin's many experiments convinced him that plants were actively responding to the environment and that their movements were not a passive consequence of the environment acting on the plant. Darwin attempted to explain all plant movements as modified forms of circumnutation, a process whereby a plant or plant part moves in repeated revolving arcs. He believed that these movements occur as a result of the plant's response to external stimuli, which are sensed in the root and shoot apices. Darwin advanced the notion that these influences are then transmitted to other parts of the plant. Although research has since shown that this explanation of plant movement is not complete, Darwin's idea of a transmittable influence in plants led to the eventual discovery of auxin, a hormone that plays an essential role in many growth processes in plants.

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## AOS Corner

By Carol Holdren

### Innovation in Orchid Societies

Are you an "Innovative Society"? If you have some new methods or ideas which are helping to make your orchid society successful, please share them with us. The American Orchid Society Affiliated Society Committee is gathering these ideas to be distributed at the Affiliated Society Committee Breakfast on April 30 ---during the Oklahoma Orchid Society Spring AOS Members Meeting. This Members Meeting is a wonderful 3 day orchid show which is open to everyone. You are all invited to attend and hear about these innovative societies or you can receive the information from our ASC blog, Facebook page-- or by email or telephone.

Orchid societies are facing a multitude of challenges including the economy, changing demographics and changing communication methods. Our greatest asset is our volunteers who have come up with solutions to these and other challenges and are willing to share their ideas. So send us your best ideas and come to the breakfast.

Examples of what we have in the works are:

Manny Aybar from Dallas is reworking the Deep Cut Orchid Society from New Jersey "Orchid Show in a Box" program which DCOS has so generously shared for years. This program has all of the forms that are helpful when planning and hosting an orchid show.

Richard Brandon from Florida has put "Phalaenopsis Basics" in digital form so any society can use it. This is a great and easy to use educational program. Both of these will be available after the meeting.

Share your successes with other orchid societies!

Come to the breakfast in OKC or we'll send you the information afterward. For details on the meeting go to [www.aos.org](http://www.aos.org) and look under "Events" and then "Members Meetings" or contact me, Carol Holdren, at [affiliated\\_societies@aos.org](mailto:affiliated_societies@aos.org) or 561-212-4876.

## Bromeliad Society/Houston Inc.

Regular meeting third Tuesday  
of month at 7:30 PM

Houston Garden Center

[www.bromeliadsocietyhouston.org](http://www.bromeliadsocietyhouston.org)

## IT'S SHOW TIME FOLKS!!



Our annual spring show, *The Magic of Orchids*, will be April 17 - 18, 2010 in the lobby of the Houston Museum of Natural Science, which is right next door to the Houston Garden Center where we meet monthly. This show will be smaller than those in the recent past because the space is limited, but we are very fortunate to have the opportunity to have it in the Museum at no cost! They are advertising our show in their member's newsletter and on their website. The museum lobby is always very busy - we will have a lot of people walking through the show. In addition, they are planning to let us continue to have our show there if it all works out well for both parties. It's very important that we do our best to make this work - we need a consistent central location for our show!

Set up for exhibits and sales booths is scheduled for the evening of Thursday, April 15<sup>th</sup> and all day Friday, April 16<sup>th</sup>, with judging of the show at 6:30 PM on Friday night.

It's time for you to start thinking about how you want to be involved! If you want to do an exhibit, there are only tabletop exhibits - the limited floor exhibit areas are already taken.

### Contact people are:

Sign up to do an exhibit John

Jamerlan [txjamer@hotmail.com](mailto:txjamer@hotmail.com)

Donate money for a trophy \$35.00

Jim Butler [melbajim@sbcglobal.net](mailto:melbajim@sbcglobal.net)

Security - very important!!

Holly Miller [hollymil@earthlink.net](mailto:hollymil@earthlink.net)

We will have more traffic than we've ever seen - we need people to protect our exhibits and watch the sales booths.

Hospitality - sandwiches and snacks

Holly Miller

I need an organizer for this and contributors

### President's Post (Continued)

We introduced the 2010 officer's, directors and committee chairs at our meeting. For those who missed that announcement you can reference the list at our website [www.houstonorchidsociety.org](http://www.houstonorchidsociety.org) under membership. This is a dedicated group of volunteers all actively helping your society. Sarah Bentley and Carolynne White are our new refreshment chairs. They need your help each month. We all partake of the refreshments before the meeting and during the break. Those homemade and store bought goodies are there only if you help Sarah and Carolynne by bringing them.

## OrchidMap is Growing

OrchidMap.com, a listing of orchid societies, vendors, speakers, private collections and judging centers is now international. This new site which was started by Alex Maximiano of OrchidWiz is going to be one of the more interesting new sites on the web.

The site allows individuals and vendors to add information on an interactive basis. They are hoping for 1,000 entries by the end of January. A new category of "private collections" is there for individuals to put in their information too!

If you have contacts in the orchid world, encourage them to enter their information. This is going to be a great resource for those luck enough to travel around the country and the world to easily find vendors and collections to visit.

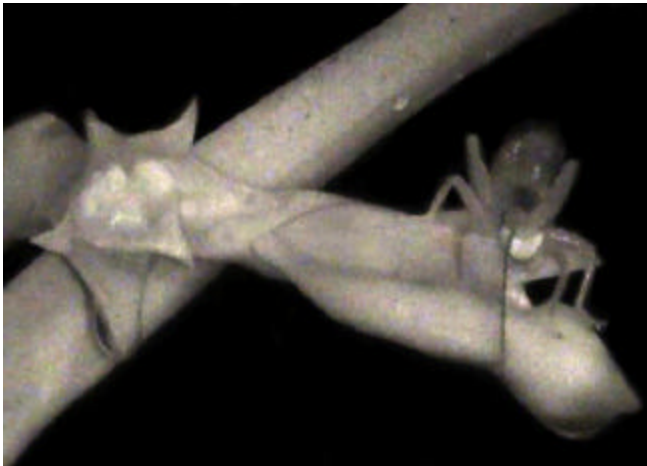
## Get your newsletter notification by email

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. Instead of a paper copy, you will be notified via email when the newsletter is posted at the society website. You will be able to read it almost a week before those who are getting the hardcopy. Best of all, you will see all the pictures in full color -- and you know that orchid are *much* prettier in color!

Just let me know at [sataylor@eastex.net](mailto:sataylor@eastex.net) and I'll add you to the list.

## First Known Instance of a Cricket as an Orchid Pollinator Captured on Film

ScienceDaily (Jan. 12, 2010) – An orchid researcher based on the island of Reunion in the Indian Ocean and collaborating with researchers at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (RBG Kew) has used motion sensitive night cameras to capture the first known occurrence of a cricket functioning as a pollinator of flowering plants. Not only is this the first time this behaviour has been documented in a member of the Orthoptera order of insects -- who are better known for eating plants -- but the 'raspy cricket' is also entirely new to science.



*The raspy cricket (Glomeremus sp) carrying pollen on its head.* (Credit: Micheneau and Fournel) The discovery is revealed in a paper published in *Annals of Botany*.

In 2008 Claire Micheneau, a RBG Kew-associated PhD student studying how the epiphytic orchid genus *Angraecum* has adapted to different pollinators on Reunion Island, and Jacques Fournel, her collaborator, shot the remarkable footage. It shows a raspy cricket (*Glomeremus* sp) carrying pollen on its head as it retreats from the greenish-white flowers of *Angraecum cadetii*.

The genus *Angraecum* is best known for Darwin's study of the comet orchid, *Angraecum sesquipedale* of Madagascar, and his hypothesis that it was pollinated by a bizarre, long-tongued moth pollinator -- a theory that was later proved to be true many years after his death.

Says Claire Micheneau, "We knew from monitoring pollen content in the flowers that pollination was taking place. However, we did not observe it during

the day. That's why we rigged up a night camera and caught this raspy cricket in action. Watching the footage for the first time, and realising that we had filmed a truly surprising shift in the pollination of *Angraecum*, a genus that is mainly specialised for moth pollination, was thrilling.

"The moths that are the main *Angraecum* pollinators on Madagascar are not found on Reunion and until we started our research the pollination of this genus on Reunion had always been an open question."

Micheneau's research also revealed that two other species of Reunion Island *Angraecum* orchids (*A. bracteosum* and *A. striatum*) are pollinated by two species of small white eye songbirds (*Zosterops borbonicus* and *Zosterops olivaceus*).

She continues, "My studies have shown that the raspy cricket is also a surprisingly efficient pollinator with higher rates of pollination and fruit set in *Angraecum cadetii* than those recorded in its bird-pollinated sister-species." (1)

There is a close match in size between the raspy cricket's head and *Angraecum cadetii*'s nectar-spur opening (2). These wingless raspy crickets reach the flowers by climbing up the leaves of the orchid or jumping across from neighbouring plants. They use long very long antenna to explore their surroundings.

Just why the raspy cricket developed a taste for orchid nectar is still a key question for Micheneau. "Although crickets are typically omnivorous and eat both plant material and other insects, we think the raspy cricket has evolved to eat nectar to compensate for the general scarcity of other insects on Reunion."

### Journal Reference:

1. Claire Micheneau, Jacques Fournel, Ben H. Warren, Sylvain Hugel, Anne Gauvin-Bialecki, Thierry Pailler, Dominique Strasberg, and Mark W. Chase. Orthoptera, a new order of pollinator. *Annals of Botany*, 2010; DOI: 10.1093/aob/mcp299

## 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.tgcfernsociety.org/> for more information.

*Charles Darwin (Continued)*

"Plant biologists often cite Darwin for pioneering the study of plant movements and discovering that a transmissible substance was involved in many plant movements, later found to be auxin," Hangarter said. "In researching the material for this paper, we were surprised to learn the extent to which Darwin's predecessors and contemporaries had contributed to the same areas of study with little recognition. However, what struck us the most was to learn that his plant movement studies were largely motivated by his desire to understand how complex animal behaviors could evolve through natural selection."

In the AJB's second article, "'The Orchids Have Been a Splendid Sport' -- An Alternative Look at Charles Darwin's Contributions to Orchid Biology," Dr. Tim Win Yan, Dr. Joseph Arditti, and Dr. Kenneth Cameron explore Darwin's observations on orchids. Jacob Breynius once stated, "If nature ever showed her playfulness in the formation of plants this is visible in the most striking way among the orchids...Nature has formed orchids in such a way that, unless they make us laugh, they surely excite our greatest admiration."

Darwin's book *The Various Contrivances by Which Orchids are Fertilized by Insects*, was his first to be published following *On the Origin of Species*. In this book, Darwin discussed various peculiarities of orchids he observed, and he stated that although some people might use these peculiarities as examples of new organs specially created, a true understanding of these organs shows that they are modified forms of organs found in other plants. Perhaps due in part to the fact that evolution provides the framework that allows us to understand the living world, much of Darwin's research that was not explicitly related to his theory of evolution was nonetheless used to justify evolution by natural selection or was based on the premise of the theories and mechanisms.

Darwin's explorations into orchids also led him to state that orchid pollen has an "injurious and poisonous" effect on flowers. What Darwin did not know at the time was that one of the substances in the pollen that plays a role in the death of the orchid flower is auxin, as noted in the Hangarter article. Not only can much of our understanding of the natural world be traced back to Darwin, but also much of our current botanical knowledge.

"What impressed me about Darwin's work with orchid is how much more he studied and understood about

**Welcome New Members**

Derek Lowenstein  
Cathy Strey

**Welcome Guests**

No Guests for Meeting

**Thanks for Refreshments**

Sarah Bentley  
Allan and Bente Davies  
Elizabeth Fisher  
Ken Gardner  
Al Mowrey  
Tan Tran  
Maureen Tolman  
Carolynne White

orchids than just pollination," Arditti said. "But what amazed me was his prescient statement that orchid seeds depend on a fungus for germination. He made this statement on what seems to have been either deep understanding or little more than a hunch long before the French botanist Noël Bernard actually discovered orchid mycorrhiza."

**Journal References:**

1. Craig W. Whippo and Roger P. Hangarter. The 'sensational' power of movement in plants: A Darwinian system for studying the evolution of behavior. *American Journal of Botany*, 2009; 96 (12): 2115 DOI: 10.3732/ajb.0900220
2. Tim Wing Yam, Joseph Arditti, and Kenneth M. Cameron. 'The orchids have been a splendid sport' -- An alternative look at Charles Darwin's contribution to orchid biology. *American Journal of Botany*, 2009; 96 (12): 2128 DOI: 10.3732/ajb.0900122



## Committee Bulletins

### **Newcomers Group**

Chair: Midge Gorman, [Amermaid2@yahoo.com](mailto:Amermaid2@yahoo.com), 281 484-8388

Due to our recent "arctic blast", it has not been easy to find a place that is able to host our February meeting, considering their growing areas are all wrapped up tight. Fear not, a brave soul has stepped up & welcomed us into his abode. The February 21 meeting will be held at the home of Ron Bayer, located at 1410 Isabella St., Houston, 77004. I have it on good authority that visiting his greenhouse will be a great treat.

Oldtimers....I am in need of donations for the Newcomers meetings. If you would scout around for plants, divisions, etc, we would be ever so grateful. I would be happy to pick up at your convenience. I still need hosts for April, August, September, October and November. Please let me know if you would be interested in having the Newcomers visit. Our meetings are held the 3rd Sunday of the month at 2:00 pm.

Thanks so much, Midge Gorman

### **Intermediate Group**

Chair (temporary): Calvin Starr, [calvin@kr5e.com](mailto:calvin@kr5e.com), 281-482-5589

The Intermediate Group held their January meeting at Calvin Starr's house and made plans for the year. The first part of the year will be dedicated to "Orchid Propagation". We had a hands on example of pollinating flowers and discussed the other methods, such as meristems, divisions and stem props. The following months will cover flasking, deflasking and growing community pots and seedlings. Plans were made for an educational exhibit for the Spring Show.

### **Raffle Table**

Chair: Mary Gunn, [marygunn@pobox.com](mailto:marygunn@pobox.com), 713 627-1083

Co-Chair: Amy Colville, [jcolville@comcast.net](mailto:jcolville@comcast.net), 713 880-2605

In spite of the cold weather and fewer people, we had a good evening for the raffle and made a profit. We'll have a variety of genera again for February. Be sure to wear your HOS name tag and stop by the Raffle Table for 2 free tickets for the Door Prize drawing - one ticket if you don't have your name tag. Raffle tickets are priced at 5 for \$1.00 or 30 tickets for \$5.00. Remember to bring your 'Boxtops for Education' and we'll give you one ticket for each one to use in the special drawing for the Boxtops raffle plant. We pass the boxtops along to HOS members for their children's school.

## Houston Orchid Society 2010 Officers and Committee Chairs

### **Officers**

<i>President</i>	John Stubbings
<i>1st Vice President</i>	John Jamerlan
<i>2nd Vice President</i>	Brian White
<i>Membership</i>	Calvin Starr
<i>Recording Sec.</i>	Eddie Litchfield
<i>Treasurer</i>	Debbie Peterson

### **Chairs**

<i>Conservation</i>	Doug Harris
<i>Guest Hospitality</i>	Allan Davies
<i>Happenings Editor</i>	Susan Taylor
<i>Librarian</i>	Sarah Bentley
<i>Newcomers Group</i>	Midge Gorman
<i>Intermediate Group</i>	Calvin Starr
<i>Parliamentarian</i>	Marvin Gerber
<i>Photography</i>	Malcolm McCorquodale III
<i>Plant Raffle</i>	Mary Gunn, Amy Colville
<i>Refreshments</i>	Sarah Bentley, Carolynne White, Trung Le
<i>Silent Auction</i>	Lee Murdock, Gordon Rowell
<i>2010 Spring Show</i>	Holly Miller
<i>HOS Web</i>	Calvin Starr
<i>2010 Workshop Chair</i>	Ted Baenziger and John Stubbings

### **Directors**

<i>Two-Year Term</i>	<i>One-Year Term</i>
Ted Baenziger	Don Ghiz
Jay Balchan	Joe Fields
Jim Butler	Donna Williams
Marvin Gerber	Loren Neufeld
Malcolm McCorquodale III	

### **Representatives**

AOS Representative	Susan Taylor
IPA Representative	Fra. Ted Baenziger
ODC Representative	Joe Fields
SWROGA Representative	Julius Klehm and Marilyn Holloway

**Houston Orchid Society**  
February 2010 Meeting

**Program:** Tom Harper  
Breeding Trends in  
Taiwan Phalaenopsis

**Date:** February 4, 2010  
**Time:** 7:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

**Place:** Houston Garden Center

**2010 Speakers**

February - Tom Harper, Breeding Trends in Taiwan  
Phalaenopsis

March -

April -

May -

June -

July -

August -

September -

October -

November -

December -

**HOS Website**

[www.houstonorchidsociety.org](http://www.houstonorchidsociety.org)

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**Houston Orchid Society**  
*The Houston Happenings*  
P. O. Box 648  
Ace, TX 77326

