ORGHIDIST

GREATER NORTH TEXAS
ORCHID
SOCIETY

JULY

Next Meeting:
July 2

GNTOS is blessed with many members that are very knowledgeable about orchids. At our July 2nd meeting, bring your questions about orchids – could be about growing, blooming, potting material, taking care of pests, or whatever you have wondered about.

Remember our new starting time of 2:30. You don't want to miss the first few questions. I hear that they are really really good.

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June Meeting

Photos by Forest Shipp

Nancy Cropp

DALLAS JUDGING CENTER

AOS Dallas Judging Center June 10, 2017

Eleven plants entered for consideration, one award given:

Paph. Mount Toro 'Venice'
(stonei #2 x philippinense #44)
HCC 77 points,
owner: Vinh T. Du, Coppell

Vinh has been officially accepted by AOS as a student in the judging program.

MEMBER NOTES

Got this email from Jeannie Thomson, a long time member who moved to Florida a few years ago:

Back in 2015 in June someone donated a previously-bloomed Cattleya dowiana to our auction and I won it. The tag had a nursery name from somewhere in Wisconsin, no clonal name or color variety description. I love the species but I had killed two already and was not willing to watch this large one turn to compost in my care so I put it up on eBay but got no takers, so reluctantly I decided to keep it and do my best by it. It went into a wooden vanda basket to allow it to drain and dry out quickly and hopefully avoid the rot that seems to be a problem for these. It put out a lot of roots and a new growth the following spring. This spring it made two more large growths and both developed sheaths and buds and it bloomed last week, one with two flowers and one with three – markings were not the typical dowiana but var. rosita.

Yesterday my boss John Odom (of Odom's Orchids) and I drove down to the judging center in Miami with several plants, including the C. dowiana. At the end of the session, C. dowiana var rosita 'Sym's Pure Delight' was given an 81 point AM.

I don't know if it was a division, but if so and someone there has another piece of it, it would be great to let them know so they can update their tag information.

Please tell everyone I said 'Hi!' I'm doing well here in Florida but I do miss you all!

Remembering Richard Poole

Some of our current orchid society members knew of Dick Poole from a GNTOS tour of his beautiful greenhouse, or from one of his rare visits to our Sunday society meetings.

I met Dick at a GNTOS meeting in 2000 when he announced that he had a greenhouse heater for sale. I paid him a visit, looked at the heater, and bought it on the spot. But much more valuable than the heater was the 17-year close friendship that developed as a result of that transaction.

Today, many of our society members have orchids from his collection, received when he elected to retire from the demands of home ownership and move to a senior living center. The family asked me to see that his plants found good homes, so many of you now have plants from his beautiful collection of cattleyas, dendrobiums, cymbidiums and catasetums. The money we raised from the sale in February 2014, was donated to the Orchid Conservation Alliance. Full disclosure, I kept the Catasetums. These were the same plants I had bought for him at an orchid show years ago when he said, "Here's $200. Buy what you think might do well in the greenhouse."

I learned a lot from Dick over the years of our weekly lunches at the Fish City Grill. Dick always had interesting stories to tell, and he knew something about any topic that came up. And he usually had a personal story to go along with it. His obituary in the Dallas Morning News, listed one of his experiences as having been part of the first atomic test at the Bikini atoll when he was in the Navy.

His other most interesting stories were from his years with Club Corp. At the time we met he had already been retired from the board. He mentioned to me at one point that his employee number at Club Corp had been #2. I asked who had the honor of being #1, to which he responded with a smile, "Ross Perot".

At Dick's memorial service one of the speakers was a son-in-law, who joked that rumor had it Dick was the actual inspiration for the beer ads featuring "The most interesting man in the world". No one in the congregation knew if they should laugh, because we all thought that he certainly could have been.

He certainly was the most interesting man I have ever met. I shall miss him.

Charles Hess

Hexalectris spicata
photo Alan Cressl

LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND. WHO KNEW?

ORCHID CONSERVATION UPDATE

by Charles and Trudy Hess

Little pencil-like stalks are just starting to emerge from the leaf litter under certain cedar trees. Yes, that's right, we have orchids growing in the parks around Dallas. This is the time of year when the local terrestrial orchids make their annual appearance.

The Master Naturalists Citizen Scientist Orchid Project meets mornings twice a week at Cedar Ridge Preserve south of Dallas beginning in early June and continuing through the end of July. Participants will tag each sighting along two different trails. The count is taken each year and has been tabulated for more than 10 years already. Anyone who loves orchids is encouraged to take advantage of this program by joining the Master Naturalists on one of these outings.

A typical survey takes about three hours, with up to 10 people taking part. Orchids most commonly found are the Hexalectris varieties of nitida, arizonica, and our own symbol of our society, the Hexalectris warnockii. Also, sighted in the past have been the Hexalectris spicata, which is the model chosen by our own society and SWROGA to sponsor for the Smithsonian's educational Orchid-Gami project.

For many in the naturalist group, and for most of us orchid society enthusiasts, this is the only time of year to go orchid hunting. This experience is very different from the orchid hunting we are most familiar with, where the plants are labeled and have price tags on them. Here, the only tags are the ones we place, and the plants do not go home with us. These plants are best viewed and enjoyed in the wild. These are able to thrive only in the fungi-filled habitat associated with the roots of the cedar trees. This habitat is virtually impossible to re-create in a home or greenhouse. If that fact is not enough to discourage someone from digging up one of these orchids, there is the added factor that it is highly illegal to remove one of them from their location in the wild.

If you are interested in volunteering for orchid preservation and research, but tromping around in the woods is not exactly your cup of tea, there is another possibility.

The Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT) in Fort Worth is doing some fascinating and valuable work on orchid preservation. Their building is located on the grounds of the Fort Worth Botanical Gardens, and is a modern facility with temperature and humidity controlled storage of herbarium records of plants from all over the world. I have been training as a volunteer, learning skills that range from mounting plant specimens, applying stick-on bar codes, to database entry. The work is not difficult, and they have an excellent staff to train and supervise volunteer activity. As an added

bonus, the BRIT is accessible via public transportation. A single DART day-pass will take you all the way to the Brit, and then home again when your volunteer work is finished for the day. All you have to do is take a DART train or bus to Union Station in Dallas, ride the Trinity River Express (TRE) to Fort Worth, and then catch the #7 bus, which takes you to the BRIT. What could be easier?

Hexalectris arizonica.

And think of all the good reading you can enjoy on the way, without worrying about traffic.

I love to learn new things, and I like the feeling of contributing as a volunteer, as time permits. For these reasons, volunteering at the BRIT is an ideal match. Not only does the BRIT benefit from the hours I volunteer working on botanic specimen conservation, the BRIT also gets a matching monetary donation for these volunteer hours from Texas Instruments, where I was employed during my entire career.

I am especially excited at the prospects of working with the BRIT's treasure trove of Philippines orchid herbarium records. During a tour of the facility, a senior botanist revealed that they have acquired a collection which they are planning to put online with an indexed database. Such a project requires either substantial funding, or the efforts of some willing volunteers. Only then will these botanical specimen sheets be readily available to researchers. Currently these records can be seen only by researchers who are able to visit the BRIT in person. Such valuable information should be available to the outside world, where researchers from anywhere can access it via the Internet.

Hexalectris nitida

One of the recently completed projects is the online database of the Andes to Amazon Biodiversity Program (AABP). Attached is an example of a Stelis breviracema collected in 2005 and annotated by the late Eric Christenson, the well-known orchid taxonomist. This program contains more than 10,000 herbarium specimens of Ecuadorian flora and can be viewed at atrium.andesamazon.org. The samples were collected during an inventory taken between 2004 to 2012 in an area ranging from the high Andes to the Amazonian lowlands. In this modern age of research, digital photos of the flowers are included along with the traditional specimen sheet documentation.

Whether or not you delve deep into the wooded forests of Cedar Ridge Preserve, or become lost in the archives at the BRIT, perhaps the most important takeaway is that we expand our appreciation of the botanical treasures all around us, and realize how diverse and complex the world truly is. We all share the responsibility to protect and preserve this ecosystem, not only for the beauty of orchids we grow and show, but for the survival of the entire Earth's ecosystem, which includes the human race.

ORCHID GROWING TIPS

by
Courtney Hackney

A monthly growers advice column by Courtney Hackney. Hackneau@comcast.net

This column was written in humid coastal North Carolina and Florida, and the advice given should be adjusted to our climate.

THE TRUTH ABOUT LIGHT

Once upon a time I spent a great deal of time trying to understand both the light requirements of the many orchids in my collection and the light levels in my growing space. This is no longer a priority for me because I have discovered how adaptable most orchids can be if given half a chance.

When Mark Rose, formerly of Breckenridge Orchids, allowed me to measure the light levels in his greenhouses, I was surprised to find that he did not worry about light levels. All areas of his greenhouse received the same amount of shading (40%) year round. While most of his orchids were phalaenopsis and paphs, there were also large sections of cattleyas and even a few vandas as well. All of his orchids looked great and flowered well!

What was apparent within the greenhouse was that there were still zones, but they were arranged based on temperature, not light levels. “Cool loving” or at least “high temperature hating” orchids were located close to the cooling pads, while those that thrived in heat were at the other end of the greenhouse away from the cooling pads. The lesson is that the heat in the leaves is far more critical than the light itself. Each little leaf is essentially a little greenhouse that can only be cooled by direct convection (dissipation of heat) or by opening the little stoma under the leaves and allowing water to evaporate, which cools the leaf.

The key to the successful technique for Breckenridge Orchids was not just that there was extensive air movement in the greenhouse or the use of cooling pads, but that Mark allowed his orchids to adapt with the seasons.

Orchids and most plants have a variety of mechanisms through which they change with the seasons. Under lower light levels, chloroplasts are closer to the surface than under higher light levels.

The plant on the left has received enough light to produce flowers while the one on the right has not. Note the difference in leaf color.

ORCHID GROWING TIPS

In high light, leaves also decrease heat absorption by changing the color of their surface from deep green to yellow green. Most hobbyists notice the difference in the color of orchid leaves when they bring a new orchid home and it is different in color from the rest in a collection. One only has to worry when the new plant is darker than other plants in your collection, which makes it susceptible to burning.

Ideally, most orchids should have light green foliage.

Orchids can acclimate and grow just as well with less light or more light if given time. Commercial growers know that to obtain maximum growth, they need to produce conditions where the growth is maximized and the potential damage from leaf burn on an extra hot day is minimized. There is also a real important phenomenon called photo inhibition, when heat and light levels are so high within the leaf that photosynthesis is inhibited.

Seedlings have less potential for handling heat stress and generally are grown under lower light levels. Their thin leaves are more susceptible to over heating just as a small greenhouse heats up more quickly than a large greenhouse with more volume.

If light levels are monitored continuously in a greenhouse there will be a peak at mid-day with light and heat levels lower before and after the peak. An orchid may be photo inhibited near mid day, at optimum just before and after that time and not reaching maximum photosynthesis for most of the day. This is where growing under lights has a real advantage. Light can be optimized for the entire day. It is not surprising that many indoor growers are able to grow under lights so well that they receive AOS awards.

Today's lighting systems are far superior to what was available a couple of decades ago, with lights that generate exactly the

Too much sunlight will burn an orchid's leaves.

correct wavelengths of light for plant growth. Some hobbyists add lights to their greenhouse and augment light early in the morning and in the evening to maximize the light delivered to their orchids. A lighting system can also be a useful way of augmenting the afternoon or morning shading in your greenhouse from a nearby tree or house.

Lights on early in the morning and in the evening can maximize the light delivered to greenhouse-growing orchids. A lighting system can also be a useful way of augmenting the afternoon or morning shading in your greenhouse from a nearby tree or house.

SOCIETY HISTORY

The history of the GNTOS goes way back. In the mid-40s there were only three orchid growers in town: Eli Sanger of Sanger Brothers, which was Dallas' biggest department store at that time; Roy Munger, known for Munger Place and Munger Street, and Percy Larkin.

Margie Corn, a garden columnist, was the source of any orchid information they could find and she gave their names to a woman running Hardy's Seed Company, Mrs. Moses. They gathered at her house one day in 1946 and it was Mr. & Mrs. Polhemus, Mr. & Mrs. Roy Carter, Homer Baldwin, Percy Larkin and a young man from Waxahachie named Costalanus. They decided they would apply for AOS membership and started receiving the Bulletin and meeting monthly. More and more people started to show up and they elected Percy Larkin, Jr. their first president in 1947. This was the North Texas Orchid Society.

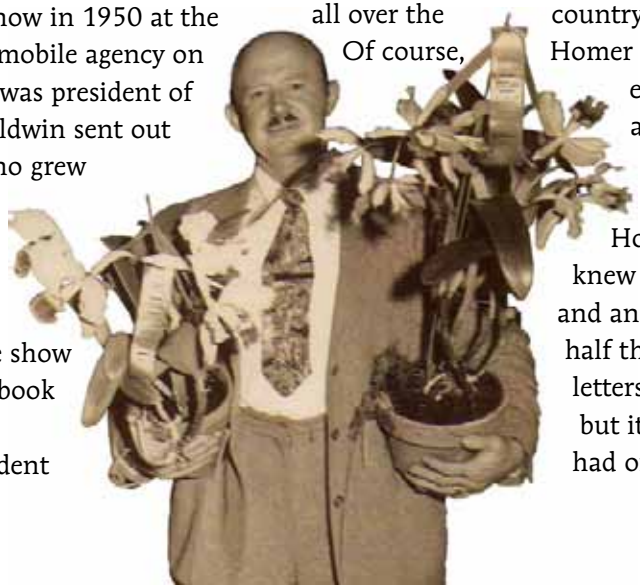
They held their first show in 1950 at the Marsh Kaiser Fraiser automobile agency on Ross Avenue. Jack Morris was president of the society and Homer Baldwin sent out invitations to everyone who grew orchids in Dallas. Invitations also went to the big orchid firms who would send representatives from around the country to the show They had everyone sign a book that came to that show

There was an incident that year that upset several members of the North Texas Orchid Society, so several members chose to leave and form another society calling themselves the Dallas Orchid Society. Percy Larkin was one of the members who left to form the Dallas Orchid Society. This society was never sanctioned by the AOS.

The following year with much encouragement from Homer Baldwin, most of the members from the Dallas Orchid Society came back to join the original society.

Later, they decided to become affiliated with the American Orchid Society so they wrote a Constitution and Bylaws for the society. On March 19, 1954, they were issued a charter by the AOS as the Greater North Texas Orchid Society.

They put on a show in the Dallas Garden Center but there weren't enough plants in the area so the bulk of the show was made up of boxes of blooms sent to them for free from commercial growers. They'd get five, six, or seven boxes of flowers from different growers from all over the country – even overseas. Of course, Homer had mailed cards to everyone who had an ad in the Bulletin to achieve this. Fortunately for Homer, Lena Baldwin knew how to type and she and another woman spent half the night writing letters on two typewriters but it worked and they had orchids for the show.



MEMBERSHIP DUES

GNTOS membership dues are paid yearly by January 31, in order for you to be listed in the published Yearbook.

- $30.00 – New or Renewing Member (individual)
- $15.00 – Additional Member (each additional person in same household)

Please mail completed form with payment to:

Kathy Halverson
1922 Baylor Drive
Richardson, TX 75081

Make check payable to GNTOS.

☐ New Member ☐ Renewing Member

Name (#1): _____

Name (#2): _____

Address: _____

_____

City: _____

State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail (#1): _____

E-mail (#2): _____