

What is the COC ?

The Canadian Orchid Congress (COC) is an association of Canadian orchid societies dedicated to serve the Canadian orchid-growing public. It is registered federally as a non-profit society. The COC promotes the cultivation of orchids through a website, publications and educational material; it supports the conservation of orchids and it makes awards in the form of medals or trophies for excellence in the development and culture of orchids.

The COC Directors are elected from the member societies and reside across Canada. Each year the COC holds an Annual General Meeting, hosted by a member society in conjunction with the show, providing an opportunity for the COC Board of Directors and representatives from the member societies to discuss their concerns. This special event brings orchid hobbyists together to share their hobby. Several talks on orchid related subjects are presented during the course of the convention.

There are 28 member societies, one foundation and three judging centres in the COC, representing about 3,000 orchid hobbyists. Each member society supports the COC with annual dues, proportional to their membership.

The COC does not sell orchids or orchid supplies and does not



represent orchid vendors.

The Monthly Newsletter

The monthly newsletter is a very large part of the communications with the member societies. Published five times a year, it is free to all orchid enthusiasts who access the COC website. It contains articles on orchid culture, conservation, new developments in pest control and notes from the COC executive about current projects and upcoming events.

The COC Website

For just about any information you would care to learn about orchids, look up the COC website at www.canadianorchidcongress.ca.

It has a wide variety of information on culture, orchid shows, Canadian societies, lists of Canadian vendors and links to other information and resources world wide. Particularly, beginning orchidists will benefit immensely from the how-to knowledge gathered by enthusiasts that have been there before. There is a wealth of information on growing orchids in the Canadian climate, on taxonomy, conservation, importation and export.

The Slide Show Program

This program is another service



provided by the COC, making top-notch video and slide presentations available that can be loaned to member societies. These range from demonstrating know-how with practical solutions to difficult problems, to just showing the multitude of species making up the 23,000 members of the orchid world, from the indigenous plants of the Canadian North to the gorgeous examples growing in the equatorial regions. Some show the ever growing numbers of hybrids created by growers using the selective pollination processes to produce seeds and plantlets that become new orchids that may win international awards and leave the beholder breathless...

The COC Speaker Tours

In the past, the COC provided support to the much appreciated speaker tours that cover regions where member organizations shared the travel costs of an expert with the COC, thus making it possible in less populated locations to have the benefits of a live speaker. Given the rising costs of travel, the COC is currently examining how to best sustainably offer service to smaller societies.

Conservation

One of the key goals of the



COC is conservation of native orchid species. To encourage conservation activities, the COC and its member societies are involved in various conservation groups both at a local and international level.

Group Insurance

The COC offers group insurance to member societies at rates well below the costs that individual societies would be required to pay. As most show venues require insurance against someone falling and hurting themselves at your organization's orchid display, the COC group insurance program has proven a boon for many societies. If yours has not signed up, you may wish to raise this with your society's executive and compare it with your current coverage. With COC's group coverage you can relax – your society is protected.

Importing Orchids

There are many hurdles for hobbyists who wish to bring orchids into Canada from another country. The COC works with the responsible government agencies, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Environment Canada to clarify the import rules and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) requirements and to



document these on the COC website for the use of those planning to bring orchids back into Canada. The COC also works with the government agencies to voice concerns of Canadian growers and hobbyists on issues affecting orchid conservation.

How to join the COC

COC members are the orchid societies of Canada. The COC website has a listing of affiliated Canadian societies. Find out if there is an orchid society in your community, or start one up yourself. Look up your local society and call the contact person for meeting times and schedules of events in your area. Once you join a society, you will be part of the COC and your membership benefits will be automatic.

Notes



Canadian Orchid Congress



*The symbol of the COC:
Yellow Lady's Slipper
Cypripedium parviflorum*