



# news

**Volume 21.2 - March 2009**

## **From the COC President**

As I write, the COC information package is being assembled and should be in society hands in early March - please use it to publicize the work of the COC to your members and use it as an information item at upcoming shows. At the trial run of the display, the public was very interested in the COC and over 130 cards advertising the COC web site were picked up. There is an interest!!!

The proposal for the expansion of the awarding of the COC medal has been sent to Society presidents for approval. If approved, the proposal will be implemented immediately, thus giving all societies in good standing an opportunity to annually award a COC medal. As well, provision has been made for a new COC award to recognize outstanding contributions and service to Canadian orchidology at the national level. This provides a welcome new opportunity to honour those who deserve our thanks and recognition. Our thanks to Peter Poot who developed the draft, then revised it based on comments received.

By now, each society and speakers currently on the COC speakers list should have been contacted by COC Education Chair Mark Elliott regarding updating and expanding the list of speakers available to make presentations to society meetings. The revised list and topics will be published on the web site and we hope societies will make

use of it. This was one of the priority requests made through the questionnaire. As well, Mark has also taken on the task of coordinating updates and expansions of the plant culture sheets posted on the web, another priority you requested. Send him your priorities and keep tuned for the list. Volunteers to help write specific sheets would be appreciated.



The Board is making some progress on developing the policy on COC funding for speakers. This is controversial and feedback has been diverse. Some societies have indicated they do not support this kind of funding by the COC, whereas other societies have embraced the concept and want it as soon as possible. Hence we will be circulating a new draft for additional comment before we bring any proposal to

the COC AGM in October for approval.

Congratulations to SOOS, and RBG, and the Alberta OS on recent successful shows. More to choose from in March: Victoria, Halifax, London, Winnipeg and Montreal. Welcome back to those on South American and Caribbean tours and conferences. Please consider sharing your experiences in the newsletter. To all, happy growing and showing.

*Jean Hollebome and your COC Board*

# Notice Board

## Surplus Books?

Does your society have books or journals in your library that are no longer needed? Is your society new and small and in dire need of reference material? You need to talk to one another. The PEI Orchid Club is just one example of a new society looking for material. If you have material to offer, email the list to me and I can post it in the newsletter for any society that might have an interest. The societies then can make out the arrangements.

*Jerry Bolce*

## FVOS Show and COC Annual Meeting

Fraser Valley Orchid Society is putting on their annual show and hosting the 2009 COC AGM in Langley, B.C. October 15-18, 2009. Mark these dates on your calendar. Join the show as an exhibitor or vendor. Let your voice be heard at the COC Annual Meeting. Visit as a spectator.

Check out their website at

<http://www.orchidbc.ca/page4.html>

for details on show times, meeting times, events and the Fraser Valley Show poster. Enter the Photographic Competition. Vendors and exhibitors should register before Friday May 1- registration details are on the website. Details on symposium speakers are being worked on.

Show Chair is Chris Ostenstad at [costenstad@shaw.ca](mailto:costenstad@shaw.ca)

*Oncidium  
macranthum*



Front Photo: *Telipogon andicola*, AM-AOS

Material in this newsletter or on the COC website may be reprinted in society newsletters - just make sure you attribute the author and the COC.

## Education

I am currently working on updating the Speaker's list. There are currently 18 speakers on the new list which can be viewed on the COC Website. Updates to the list will be posted as I receive them. I would like to thank everyone who responded to my email requesting the names of possible speakers from your areas. I would also like to thank all of the speakers got back to me with regards to whether they were willing to be listed. The response has been terrific. If there is anyone who I have not contacted, yet would like to be included in the list, please email me and I will add you.

In addition, I am working on updating the Culture Sheets which we currently have listed on the Website, as well as generating new ones on topics/species which are not represented currently. If there are any topics for which you would like to see new sheets, please send me the list and we will see what we can do. We are also looking for people who would be willing to help in writing/editing these Culture Sheets.

Thanks for your co-operation.

*Mark Elliott, Education Chair*

## Orchids through Darwin's Eyes

### Smithsonian Exhibit

Charles Darwin used orchids to help prove his theories of natural selection and evolution. Scientists today follow in Darwin's footsteps and use orchids to learn more about how plants have evolved and adapted to live in almost every type of environment around the world.

Darwin's theories and research have become the foundation of modern biological science. And research on orchid evolution continues still. Orchids through Darwin's Eyes introduces visitors to some of the current research on orchid evolution from around the world.

<http://www.mnh.si.edu/exhibits/orchids/index.html>

Joyce Edyth Bain passed away at the Ross Memorial Hospital Lindsay on Wednesday, February 4th, 2009. Wife of Malcolm James Bain. Mal and Joy owned Orchidhaven and were a regular vendor and exhibitor at our shows. Joy took particular interest in educational exhibits.

# COC Awards Review

At the Annual General Meeting in Ottawa in April 2008 it was proposed that the rules for the COC medal needed to be reviewed with the objective of making the medal more widely available especially to smaller societies that were not in a position to have a show at which the medal might be awarded. We have now completed that review. We have received and considered various suggestions. It is clear that the medal is a coveted object and not just another show trophy.

We propose that as an alternative the medal be also made available to member societies to recognize achievement in orchids outside of the show format. There is precedent for this as the medal was awarded to the key organizers of the Vancouver WOC.

We also propose that COC use a certificate to recognize individuals or groups for outstanding service to the Canadian orchid world.

To ensure Canada wide recognition of the recipients of all of these awards we propose that the awards be published on a timely basis in the COC news.

Your societies are being asked to vote on these proposals so that we can put them into practice as soon as possible.

## Proposed Awards Policies

The COC has two distinct awards:

1. The COC Medal to be awarded by member societies.
2. A certificate for outstanding service to the Canadian orchid world.

The following are the rules and guidelines for each award:

### COC Medal

One medal per member society per year, unless exceptional circumstances warrant additional awards in the opinion of the President of COC. The medal can be awarded **either** for excellence in orchid exhibition at an annual show **or** for outstanding achievement or service at a special society event.

**COC medal for meritorious orchid exhibition** at COC member society orchid shows. It is awarded by judges (Lay orchid judges, Flower judges or AOS orchid judges) to a meritorious orchid exhibit on the basis of criteria set by the local organizing society. Its purpose is to encourage orchid

exhibition at public orchid shows. The award criteria should be different from those in use for the AOS show trophy.

**Publication:** Societies shall report the winners for publication in the COC Newsletter.

**COC medal to individuals or groups by member societies.** This award is available to member societies for awarding to a person or group of their choice for a service or achievement they deem worthy of recognition. The selection to be done by the local society.

**Criteria:** To be awarded to individuals or groups for one or more of the following:

1. Outstanding service to the local Orchid community in organization, promotion or leadership.
2. Outstanding achievement locally in orchid research.
3. Outstanding achievement locally in orchid hybridizing.
4. Outstanding achievement locally in orchid conservation.
5. Outstanding achievement locally in orchid culture.

**Selection Process:** by a local committee established by the local society board. Final selection to be approved by the local society board.

**Publication:** The member society shall report back on the recipient of the award for publication in the COC newsletter.

### COC Certificate

Awarded in recognition of individuals or groups for outstanding service to the Canadian orchid world. To be awarded by the COC on the basis of well supported proposals by member society(s) or individuals.

**Criteria:** To be awarded to individuals or groups for one or more of the following:

1. Outstanding service to the Canadian Orchid community in organization, promotion or leadership.
2. Outstanding achievement in orchid research, hybridizing, culture or conservation.

**Number per year:** No limit, based on merit.

(continued over)

**Selection Process:** Well supported proposals by member society(s), or individuals. The COC President may wish to establish a committee to research and propose candidates, but this should not preclude others to make submissions.

**Approval process:** By majority vote of the COC executive to be ratified at annual meeting.

**Publication:** To be awarded, celebrated, and published in the COC newsletter with appropriate commentary.

*Peter Poot.*

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## COC Program Help

Over the years volunteers have produced a number of interesting programs for COC member societies. These are available for the cost of postage and handling to help your club put on interesting, informative meetings.

The latest addition, produced by Valerie Tribes, deals with the 2008, 19<sup>th</sup> World Orchid Conference in Miami, Florida. There are 65 Powerpoint format pictures of the major exhibits and trophy winners, and an accompanying text. An excellent program to relive the 2008 WOC for those who were there and a teaser for those who were not to start thinking about Singapore in 2011. In any case this presentation provides an excellent overview of what a major orchid exhibition can offer, including wonderful paphs, phalaenopsis, cattleyas, vandas etc.

Another new program in Powerpoint on CD has come to us from Robert Lucas in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. This program describes Robert's phalaenopsis culture under lights. It covers all of the essentials in text and pictures. It goes into light intensity, watering, growing media, fertilizing, and temperature. In addition there are sections on deflasking seedlings, hybridizing, and seed sewing. Thank you Robert for sharing your expertise.

You will have noticed that these new programs come in digital format and will require a digital projector and computer to run. We hope to digitize all COC programs in the future. This should make the collection more durable and easier to distribute and duplicate. Anyone willing to assist with this, please contact me.

*Peter Poot.*

## Share Your Brew

In 1959 Mr. J.P. Simmonse of Indonesia reported, In the Malayan Orchid Review, diluted beer solution to vandas, renanthera and aerides seedlings both foliar and root feeding. Subsequently, others have experimented and have reported some interesting advantages, as reported in Home Garden In December, 1968.

Beer was found to act as a cleanser, algae remover and a growth stimulator. These were the conclusions of Mr. Yap Chong Beng who applied a recipe of one quart of beer to ten gallons of water to plants at five day Intervals.

Dr. Yeoh Bok Choon, editor of the above Review, reported good root growth, stem growth and an increase in the rate of flowering.

An article by Jeffery Shigezawa reported on Mr. Joe Yasuda's repotting demonstration before the Honolulu Orchid Society involving Phalaenopsis plants grown in shallow clay pots. He boasted thick robust leaves with a span of well over 15 inches and producing roots that were fat and healthy.

The secret was an enzyme added to his regular foliar feedings. This enzyme was more potent than the commonly known primary enzymes, and it was traced to beer applications. The disappearance of the black-green algae was also noted. This plus the antibiotic factor may be responsible for a gratifying drop in seedling mortality. Gone too were the soluble white encrustations of fertilizers and chemicals on pots that could burn sensitive root tips seeking anchorage on the pots.

Beer is a fermentation product containing carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins and minerals all beneficial to plant growth. Beer also contains the enzymes diastase, maltase, protease and xymase.

Over the last year my phalaenopsis have shown a surprising amount of vigorous growth and root formation over previous years. The only change I have effected has been adding a small amount of beer to the occasional watering. If you have tried this "sharing the brew", maybe you could report on your findings. I have used Labatts Blue - a pilsener beer. Is there a better brew for orchids? They haven't complained so far!

*By E.A. Speers [From Orchidian V5N1]*

## The Newly Formed P.E.I. Orchid Club

Congratulations to Orchid enthusiasts Marcelo Bosco of Mount Stewart and Andrea Studzinski of St. Peters for their newly formed P.E.I. Orchid Club.

Andrea and Marcelo met about 4 years ago at the Charlottetown Garden Club, where they had a guest speaker from the Nova Scotia Orchid Society. At that time, several people signed up and a club was to be formed but never was.

Andrea and Marcelo reconnected in 2008 and decided that this was the year to move forward with the club. Their first meeting was in December, 2008 at Andrea's home with eight new members. "We will probably meet mostly in each other's homes" said Andrea, but will let members decide as the club grows.

Their key focus at this time is to garner an interest in the club, which Andrea and Marcelo have succeeded in doing. Last month they hosted a free information night, at the West Royalty Sobey's Community Room, Charlottetown. There were orchids to view, a slide show, information and demonstrations on how to pot an orchid, and also a door prize. They did a great deal of advertising for this, including the CBC. As a result of their hard work about 35 people attended and they received 20 new members. In addition the club will have a booth at the P.E.I. Garden Show in Crapaud, April 18-19. Andrea and Marcelo will set up a display, and arrangements have also been made for a guest speaker from New Brunswick.

Marcelo began his hobby when he moved to P.E.I. eight years ago; he remembers being fascinated by his grandmother's orchids in Argentina when he was a child. Marcelo's own orchid bounty has topped 150 to 200, growing in a heated detached greenhouse.

Andrea bought her first orchid 17 years ago (which she still has). When she moved from Ontario back to P.E.I., the rental truck was packed with orchids. Her collection of more than 100 now reside in her specially built sunroom

The P.E.I. Orchid club is looking for books to start a library, their greatest need will be information for new orchid growers, so any books or literature addressing basic orchid care would be greatly appreciated.


Getting to Know You  
Carole Gert COC Secretary



First meeting of the P.E.I. Orchid Club with Andrea showing her *Brassidium* Fly Away "Miami", *Oncidium* Gower Ramsay "Hawaii" and *Vanda* *coerulea* x *Ascocenda* Fuch's Joy.

Fraser Valley Orchid Society  
2009 Show and Sale  
Host of the Canadian Orchid Congress Annual Meeting & Symposium

# ORCHIDS



George Preston  
Recreation Centre  
20699 42nd Ave  
Langley, BC

Saturday October 17th  
9:00am to 5:00pm  
Sunday October 18th  
10:00am to 4:00pm

www.orchidbc.ca      Admission \$7.00

# Quito

Photos are from the Conference and show in Quito, Ecuador thanks to Peter Poot.



*Stanhopea connata*



*Aclanthera sonderana* 'Gigi'



*Oncidium gutfreundianum*, CHM AOS



Best  
Cattleya



*Masdevallia angulata* x  
*Dracula vampira*



*Pontieva* sp.

## The Madagascar Star Orchid, or "Darwin's Orchid" (*Angraecum sesquipedale*)

Darwin suggested that this species and its hawk-moth pollinator provide one of the most striking examples of how plants and their pollinators can influence each others' evolution.

In Latin, sesquipedale means one and a half feet, the amazing length of the nectar spur. In his study of orchid cross-fertilization during the mid-1800s, Darwin noted that a moth that could pollinate it would need to have a proboscis that would equal the length of the nectar spur. In 1862, he wrote "... in Madagascar there must be moths with probosces capable of extension to a length of between ten and eleven inches!" The problem was that no one had ever seen such an insect anywhere before, and Darwin was mocked for his unusual idea. Darwin died in 1882, but 40 years later, a Sphinx Moth, a type of hawk moth, was found on Madasgar-- with a tongue that averages a full 10 inches. Called *Xanthopan morgani* subsp. *praedicta*, the praedicta recognized Darwin's prediction that it indeed existed.

<http://faculty.washington.edu/jrw/110/darorch.htm>



## Orchid Deception

The Australian orchid, *Chiloglottis trapeziformis* attract pollinators purely by deception. To a male wasp this orchid's appearance is remarkably similar to that of a female wasp. Not only is the appearance of the Australian orchid deceiving, it also tricks male wasps by producing an odor that smells like a female wasp. The male wasp is totally fooled and engages in a behavior known as pseudocopulation. For the flower pollination is achieved. What a surprise for the wasp!! He leaves dumbfounded and in search of another mate, but little does he know he has been used only to make reproduction successful for another species. If the wasp is smart he will not be tricked by another orchid, but some aren't so bright. When deceived again by another orchid the wasp will land and fertilize this orchid.



This behavior is an example of coevolution. The orchid is very specific in terms of choosing pollinators so they must be able to adapt to the changes that occur in the wasps. After being deceived a few times the "smart" wasps will learn to avoid orchid patches. Also, mutations may occur that help the wasps better distinguish between the orchid odor and the female pheromone giving them an advantage over their counterparts. Since the wasps are evolving to learn how to avoid the orchid's trickery the orchid must also adapt. At one time the orchids produced a flowery aroma, but in order to benefit from sexual deception the flower must continually develop an odor that is harder to tell apart from the wasp pheromones.

# COMING EVENTS

## 2009

**March 7-8:** Victoria Orchid Society Spring Orchid Show will be held in the Student Union Building, University of Victoria. Contact Nancy Miklic (250)642-7626 nmiklic3@telus.net. "http://victoriaorchidsociety.ca/"

**March 14-15:** The Orchid Society of Nova Scotia at the Spring Garden Place at 5640 Spring Garden Rd, Halifax.

Show Chair, Gail Schwarz. email rschwarz@hfx.eastlink.ca.

"http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Recreation/OrchidSNS/"

**March 21 - 22:** London Orchid Society at the North London Optimist Community Centre, 1345 Cheapside Street at Highbury, London, Ontario For show information: "http://los.lon.imag.net/shows.asp"

**March 27-29:** The Manitoba Orchid Society Annual Show and Sale at the Assiniboine Park Conservatory. For more information, please email: secondvp@manitobaorchidsociety.ca

"http://manitobaorchidsociety.ca/index.php"

**March 28-29:** Les Orchidophiles de Montreal Orchidexpo 2008

College de Maisonneuve, 2700 Bourbonniere St., Montreal, Quebec. For information: Andr e Poliquin TEL/FAX: (450)653-9590 e-mail: mor-pol@sympatico.ca "http://orchidophiles.qc.ca/"

**April 4-5:** The Regina Orchid Society Show and Sale will be held at will be held at Wascana Place, 2900 Wascana Drive, Regina, Saskatchewan. For more information, please contact c.eisbrenner@yahoo.ca.

**April 11-12:** The Annual Toronto Artistic Orchid Association Show, Chinese Cultural Centre, 5183 Sheppard Ave., East (Markham Road) Phone: 416-292-9293 Email: Louisa Fung louisafung@rogers.com "http://www.taoa.ca/"

**April 17-19:** Central Vancouver Island Orchid Society, Country Club Center, Nanaimo, BC. Contact: Sue Christison, 250-246-2447 or email orchidlady@telus.net "http://www.cvios.com/"

**April 18-19:** Les Orchidophiles de Quebec at the Pavillon Evirotron, 2480 Blvd. Hochelaga, Sainte Foy. "http://cf.geocities.com/orchidophilesqc/"

**April 25-26:** The Ottawa Orchid Society show at the Nepean Sportsplex, 1701 Woodroffe Avenue, Nepean, Ontario. Contact Rick Sobkowicz, at ricksobkowicz@rogers.com "http://www.ottawaorchidsociety.com"

**May 15-17:** The Vancouver Orchid Society Annual Show will be held at the Richmond Winter Club, 5540 Hollybridge Way, Richmond BC. Contact: Wayne Riggs Email: riggskw@interchange.ubc.ca "http://www.vancouverorchidsociety.ca/"

**May 29, 30:** The Bruce Peninsula Orchid Festival  
http://www.orchidfest.ca/index-1.html

**October 16-18:** Fraser Valley Orchid Society Show & Plant Sale and COC AGM, will be held at the Langley Civic Centre, 20699 - 42nd Ave., Langley, B.C. "http://www.orchidbc.ca/"

## Officers of the Canadian Orchid Congress

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## COC News

The purpose of COC news is to inform members of the meetings, policies of the COC, to profile members, and to provide technical information regarding happenings, trends and techniques in orchid cultivation across the country and around the world.

We welcome your suggestions and contributions. Deadline for each issue is one month before the issue dates previously announced.

Recipients of this newsletter are strongly urged to pass a copy on to other members of their society

**COC Web Site - <http://www.CanadianOrchidCongress.ca/>  
This newsletter may be found there.  
Please send in your show information: date, location, contact, etc.**