

IT'S HERE! THE BIENNIAL MOUNTED ORCHID CLINIC!

**E**piphyte (ep'ə fīt'), n. a plant that grows above the ground, supported by the structure of another plant or object, and deriving its nutrients and water from rain, the air, dust, etc.: air plant (Random House Webster's College Dictionary, 1998, 2<sup>ND</sup> ed.).

**A**fter a two year absence, it's time once again for one of our most popular programs, the **Mounted Orchid Clinic**. Over the last few weeks, members have had the opportunity to pre-order from a number of orchids provided by **Andy's Orchids** of Encinitas California. This will be the 4<sup>TH</sup> clinic Andy has sponsored by providing CNYOS with a wide selection of orchids at very reasonable prices. Members will be taught the basics of mounting orchids and how caring from them differs from their potted companions.

**W**hy mount orchids in the first place? At the risk of sounding a bit redundant, let me expound on the benefits. Most orchids are epiphytes—they are air plants as defined above. In nature, they are found clinging from trees, growing atop rocks, hanging off cliffs, and on occasion, growing terrestrially—orchids are often found covering trees along with bromeliads & other epiphytes to such an extent that the tree's bark & branches are barely visible. *As amazing as this may seem, they are seldom, if ever, found growing in pots!* How orchids grow in nature gives us clues on how to grow them in our homes; epiphytes need a nice buoyant atmosphere with plenty of light & air circulation that allows the roots to dry. So in a sense, we are growing many of our orchids in a very un-naturalistic manner. Most orchids like to get wet & dry off fairly quickly, otherwise rot may occur. The convenience of growing in pots is balanced by the need to repot them once the media starts to sour, which can adversely affect the roots by cutting off their air supply. This problem is eliminated by mounting. Some orchids will not thrive otherwise. Furthermore, they are displayed much more naturally, & never have to be repotted!

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**MARCH MEETING: CLARK RILEY ON  
CYPRIPEDIUMS & SELENIPEDIUMS**

Our March meeting gave CNYOS members a rare glimpse into two uncommon topics, *Cypripediums* in outdoor gardens and the uncommonly cultivated genus *Selenipedium*. Clark Riley gave a very well received presentation that covered both topics. Clark grows a good number of *Cypripedium* hybrids and species in the gardens around his Baltimore home. To protect some of the rarer ones from deer and rabbits, he moves many of them indoors during the winter and keeps them dormant in their own refrigerator. He grows dozens of varieties this way, and in his talk dispelled some myths about these orchids that have kept even the best gardeners at a distance. For instance, *Cypripedium acaule* is reportedly one of the most difficult to grow, and failure to thrive is often attributed to the lack of specific symbiotic fungi. However, it turns out that it may have much more to do with pH—this species needs a low pH water to thrive, often between 4-5. No fungi needed (please, however, purchase these orchids at reputable dealers and do not transplant them from the wild!).

It also turns out that Clark is one of only two people in the US to successfully grow and bloom a *Selenipedium*—under fluorescent lights, no less! He showed a number of pictures of his plant, as well as other species in the wild. For those of you who missed the meeting, *Selenipedium* can reach 6 feet tall in the wild! Clark is actively trying to propagate the species by seed, as well as create hybrids with closely-related *Cypripediums*. He brought orchids (tropical ladyslippers) to sell and enjoyed a lunch at Lock 24 with about 10 other club members prior to the meeting.

**Photo Credits:** *Dendrobium primulinum* (page 1) and all photos on pages 7-10 © Jeff Stuart, 2004. Mini-Cattleya background image page 11 © Jeff Stuart, 2003. *Phal.* *Maritea* (page 4) © Greg Allikas (The Orchid Photo Page, <http://www.orchid-works.com/>), with digital manipulation by Jeff Stuart.

**Old Business**

1. Rick Braue discussed CNYOS participation in the Herb and Plant Show, to be held on 6/25/04. Please drop off your blooming plants by 6/24 to Deb Coyle and Dianne Bordoni. Rick will provide directions to be published in the newsletter. Plants for sale will be obtained through Mary Carol Frier. We will order less than 50 plants. Frier's Orchids has been sold to Mary Ann Garaco. The Club's insurance is up to date.
2. Home and Garden Show: we have guest passes for 5PM – 9PM, Thursday only. Help will be needed with set-up between 8AM – 3PM.
3. GROS Show in Rochester: Iris will do the registration, please get names to her by the Tuesday before the Show.
4. Carol Haskell presented the Treasurer's Report: The club has \$6,041.50 in the bank.

**New Business:**

1. Jeff Stuart discussed receiving the newsletter via e-mail as a pdf file. Downloading over a standard phone line will take ~10-15 minutes. Members were encouraged to give it a try save the club the cost of postage.
2. Members need to make selections for the April mounted orchid clinic by March 28, and notify Jeff Stuart of their choices.
3. Our guest speaker, Dr. Clark Riley, presented the Show Table.
4. Thanks to Valerie Introne & Cliff Rossler for the refreshments.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Barbara Weller, CNYOS Secretary**

**Mark Your Calendars!**

*Our Annual Fall Show & Sale is scheduled for **OCTOBER 1-3** in Shoppingtown Mall, DeWitt.*

Featured will be Lots of Displays, Judging by the American Orchid Society, Tons of Orchids, & Vendors!



- April 4**                    **Annual Mounted Orchid Clinic!**
- April 14-18**                **Greater New York International Orchid Show**, Rockefeller Center, New York, NY. Contact: David Horak, 25 Parade I. #5K, Brooklyn, NY 11226; daveh4742@aol.com.
- April 22-25**                **Southern Tier Orchid Society Show & Sale:** Oakdale Mall, Johnson City, New York **CNYOS Members are invited & encouraged to attend!**
- May 2**                      **Annual Orchid Auction**
- June 6**                     **Annual Summer Picnic: Details to be announced.**
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## *SOUTHERN TIER ORCHID SOCIETY SHOW & SALE*

STOS will host its annual spring show on **April 23-25**, in the Oakdale Mall in Johnson City. This is one show that seems to get better & larger every year. Expect at least 5-6 vendors to attend. Nancy Loveland (638-4741), Barbara Weller (468-5039), & Judi Witkin (422-0869) have volunteered to set up the CNYOS display. And as you might guess, we will certainly need your blooming orchids. Set up is scheduled for Thursday, April 22, followed by judging on the 23<sup>RD</sup>. If you have orchids that you'd like to send to the show, please contact the set-up committee by Tuesday April 20 to make arrangements—PLEASE follow the directions shown below!. We currently do not know if pre-registration will be possible. Volunteers will be needed to help with break down on the 25<sup>TH</sup>. STOS is a regular participant in our annual fall show, so now we need to do our best to reciprocate! Please consider donating your orchids to our display, which in the past has been very well received. Last year CNYOS took home a national award on its display, and member Dave Ditz came away with a national AOS award on one of his plants! *But no pressure, folks...*

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### *ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR ENTERING ORCHIDS AT THE STOS SHOW*

If you plan on sending blooming orchids from your collection to the Southern Tier Orchid Society Show, please do the following:

1. Make sure that your plants are free from pests that could spread to other orchids in the displays.
2. Flower inflorescences must be properly staked for display, if necessary.
3. Groom your orchid by trimming off any old, damaged, or dead leaves. Browned leaf tips can often be trimmed to mimic the natural shape of the leaf, only shorter.
4. As detailed above, please provide all relevant information for registration purposes. This includes the plant's proper name, and the parents if it is a

hybrid. Include clonal names and award type for previously awarded plants. If you're unsure on the details, provide as much information as you're able and we'll track down the rest.

5. We want to make sure that your plants are properly labeled, so make sure the label is readable, or, better yet, label the pot. Please be careful about spelling.
6. We also want to make sure that you get all your plants back, so please include a list with all the plants you're sending. Label both your box and all pots with your name.

Finally, we cannot over-emphasize how much we will need orchids for the display—a large variety of orchids will not only make setting up the display easier, but will reflect very well on the club and especially the especially fine orchid growers that are our members!

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**Please note especially all names  
and  
abbreviations in boldface.**

**Kindly read the show table list. If someone else brings a hybrid that you also own, update your own label and records, so we won't have to look up the same cross again.**

**Thank you.**

**Cypripedium Alliance**

<i>Paph. malipoense</i>	Stuart
<i>Paph. Lyro</i> <b>Bellissima</b> ( <i>niveum</i> x <i>wilhelminiae</i> )	"
<i>Paph. primulinum</i>	Ditz
<i>Paph. Winmoore</i> ( <i>Farnmoore</i> x <i>Winston Churchill</i> )	Witkin
<i>Paph. sukhakulii</i>	"
<i>Paph. Master Henry</i> ( <i>henryanum</i> x <i>mastersianum</i> )	Cohen
<i>Paph. Limelight</i> ( <i>Maudiae</i> x <i>Chiara</i> )	"
<i>Paph. crossii</i> var. <i>sublaeve</i> *	Ufford

**Cattleya Alliance**

<i>Epi. nocturnum</i>	Ditz
<i>Slc. Whodunit</i> ( <i>C. Chocolate Drop</i> x <i>Sl. Psyche</i> )	Capella
<i>C. intermedia</i>	"
<i>Blc. Spring Dawn</i> ( <i>Malibu Gem</i> x <i>Lc. Boudoir</i> )	Braue
<i>Slc. Hazel Boyd</i> ( <i>Jewel Box</i> x <i>California Apricot</i> )	Cohen
<i>Lc. Fire Dance</i> ( <b><i>Gur. aurantiaca</i></b> x <i>Fire Island</i> )	Kot
<i>B. nodosa</i>	Ufford
<i>B. Little Stars</i> ( <i>nodosa</i> x <i>subulifolia</i> )	Boronczyk
<i>Epi. porpax</i>	Lowell
<i>C. luteola</i>	Stuart
<i>Lc. Little Oliver</i> x <i>E. cordigera</i>	"

**Vandaceous**

<i>Phal. Golden Gift</i> x ( <i>[Suntan</i> x <i>Spring Silk]</i> x <i>Dtps. Dalyan</i> )	Rossler
<i>Dar. Charm</i> x <i>Vf. Virgil</i>	Braue
<i>Echn. galeandrae</i> x <b><i>Aërgs. somalensis</i></b>	Capella
<b><i>Aërgs.</i></b> <i>Rhodotrata</i> ( <i>citrata</i> x <i>luteoalba</i> )	"
<i>Phal. Brother Sophia</i> ( <i>Super Stupid</i> x <i>Brother Mirage</i> )	Kot
<i>Phal. Aurelia Franklin</i> ( <i>Golden Bells</i> x <i>Golden Circles</i> )	Cohen
<i>Phal. Mistral's Pixie Prelude</i> ( <i>Pacific Prelude</i> x <i>Carmela's Pixie</i> )	"
<i>Hal. retrocalla</i>	"
<i>Phal. amboinensis</i>	Ufford
<i>Phal. lueddemanniana</i> x <i>hieroglyphica</i> §	"
<i>Phal. Gemstone's Winged Beauty</i> ( <i>aphrodite</i> subsp. <i>formosana</i> x <i>Cloud of Butterflies</i> )	Pace
<i>Ame. monticola</i>	Stuart
<i>Holc. subulifolium</i>	Churchill

**Oncidium Alliance**

<i>Dgmra. Flying High</i> ( <i>Mtssa. Jet Setter</i> x <i>Odm. McNabianum</i> )	Ditz
<i>Orcp. bicornis</i>	Boronczyk
<i>Odm. nobile</i>	Stuart
<i>Odm. cirrhosum</i> †	"
<i>Onc. Twinkle</i> ( <i>cheiroporum</i> x <i>ornithorhynchum</i> )	Coleman
<i>Onc. crista-galli</i>	Cohen
<i>Orpha. radicans</i>	Pace

**Dendrobium Alliance**

<b><i>Den. farmeri</i></b>	Lloyd
<i>Den. Candy Cane</i> ( <i>Aussie Green</i> x <i>Penang Stripe</i> )	Cohen
<i>Den. Iki</i> ( <i>christyanum</i> (?) x <i>cruentum</i> )	Coleman
<i>Den. Montrose</i> ( <i>Ainsworthii</i> x <i>Thwaitesii</i> )	?
<i>Den. Memoria Margery Ummer</i> ( <i>Nagasaki</i> x <i>Yukidaruma</i> )‡	Busic-Snyder
<i>Den. christyanum</i>	Churchill

**Pleurothallid Alliance**

<b><i>Pths. ornata</i></b>	Coleman
<i>Masd. attenuata</i>	"

**Miscellaneous**

<i>Phaius</i> <i>Don Rosenberg</i> ( <i>tankervilleae</i> x <i>tuberculosis</i> )	Churchill
<i>Coel. sp.</i>	"
<i>Bulb. plumatum</i> Photo	Ditz
<i>Ddc. bicallosum</i>	Ditz
<i>Kefst. parvilabris</i>	Stuart

\*Contact me if this requires further explanation.

§See Christenson, P. 134.

†Unfortunately, Lindley was spelling-challenged. The root *cirrho* is from the Greek, meaning orange. The species epithet should have been spelled *cirrosom*, from the Latin, meaning wispy, which is obviously what was intended. *Cirrhopetalum* has the same error.

‡*Dendrobium* *Yukidaruma* 'King' has an AM. *Dendrobium* *Memoria Margery Ummer* has never been awarded.

**Iris Cohen**

**A Note from the Editor on Plants donated to the Raffle Table...**

Our monthly raffle table is a great way to move plants out of your collection which you are not interested in keeping for any variety of reasons. However, when considering donating a plant to the raffle table, please be sure that it is at least relatively healthy & bug free. The raffle table should be used as a means by which orchids not thriving or blooming under your care, or not of your liking, can be passed on to another grower. It should not be used as a repository for orchids in need of serious care or on death's door-step! JAS

## CLUB REMINDERS

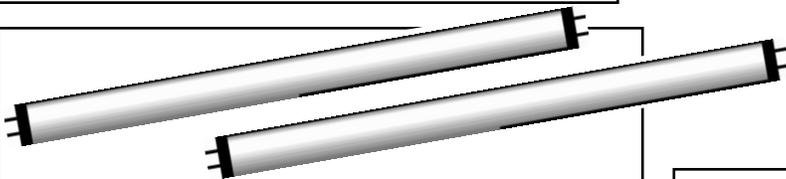
**Orchid-Growing Supplies** are no longer available through CNYOS. However, the club will be placing group orders from time to time. Keep in mind what you might need, and bring it up at the next meeting..

The **CNYOS Club Library** is now located at St. Augustine's church. Make arrangements with Val Introne (682-8595) if you want to borrow an item from the Library.

***DON'T FORGET TO BRING YOUR BLOOMING ORCHIDS FOR THE MONTHLY SHOW TABLE!!!***



*Phalaenopsis bellina (violacea)*, photograph by Vagisha Sharma, with digital enhancement by J. Stuart.



**Fluorescent light bulbs** are now available! Most have already sold, but there are a few left. They can also be purchased in bulk through the club. Price is \$7.50 each.

## *REFRESHMENT SCHEDULE*

*WINTER-SPRING, 2004*

April  
May

Monica Kot & Donna Coleman  
David Ditz & Pat Cotter

## **STOS NEWS: NEWS FROM THE SOUTHERN TIER ORCHID SOCIETY**

Although no specific program information for the April 18<sup>TH</sup> meeting was available by the time of this printing, it's a safe bet that our friends in the Southern Tier will be taking care of some last minute planning for their fast approaching show to be held the following weekend. CNYOS Members are invited to attend.

Monthly meetings begin at 2:00<sup>PM</sup> in the Vestal Public Library. For directions, etc. call STOS president Kenneth Lattimore at 570-553-2753 or e-mail him at <klatt@epix.net>.

## **GROS NEWS: NEWS FROM THE GENESEE REGION ORCHID SOCIETY**

GROS is pleased to have Dr. Glenn Lehr as its invited speaker for April. Dr. Lehr started growing orchids in 1993, and took on the challenges of growing commercially in 1996—New World Orchids. He regularly does shows internationally, has made many trips to Central & South America, and regularly imports plants, mostly species, from Costa Rica, Ecuador, Columbia, and Peru. At one time he had a nursery in Ecuador which was destroyed by a volcano. He has a marked fondness for Japanese orchids and orchid culture, and has recently returned from his 7<sup>TH</sup> trip to see the Tokyo Grand Prix—about five years ago he started bringing plants back from Japan. Dr. Lehr's lecture will be on Japanese orchid shows, plants & culture. Plants will be for sale, and preorders can be done at [www.NewWorldOrchids.com](http://www.NewWorldOrchids.com).

Taken with permission from *The Orchid Collection*, Newsletter of the Genesee Region Orchid Society, Vol. 26, No. 7, April. 2004, Phil Matt, Newsletter Editor (716) 288-7025.

*DENDROBIUM PRIMULINUM* & *RENANTHERA IMSCHOOTIANA*

The transition from winter into spring never fails to produce blooming orchids in our collections, which perhaps explains why there is no shortage of orchid shows this time of year.

These two orchids are no exception, being regular spring bloomers, and are always anticipated.

*Dendrobium primulinum* is a delightful species from Vietnam that sends its flowers out in pairs from nodes on leafless canes. Part of the *Dendrobium* section of the genus, *primulinum* appreciates cool nights and warm days, with a pronounced dry season during the winter. The canes are anywhere from 6-18" in length, with alternate 2-3" leaves. The 1-2" flowers are variable, but generally hued pink with yellow in the throat of the broad lip. Flowers are nicely fragrant. Like others in the *Dendrobium* section, this species is deciduous in winter. Generally speaking, they should be given lots of light, warmth, and fertilizer when in active summer growth, but once the plants go dormant in winter, cooler temps and utter negligence serve them well! This species thrives mounted, which makes it easier to provide the dry winter conditions necessary for a good spring bloom.



The *Renanthera* genus contains roughly 15 species, but today we focus on one of the most spectacular. *Renanthera imschootiana* is a vandaceous orchid that is found in China, Vietnam, Philippines, Laos, and other countries in southeast Asia. It boasts branched inflorescences of bright red flowers in late spring and early summer, with large broad ventral sepals. These sepals dominate the flower, in contrast to its rather small lip. In full bloom it is a site to behold. En masse, the unusual flowers are reminiscent of a swarm of large winged insects. A relative of the *Vandas*, this species can get by with less light and cooler temperatures (intermediate range, on average). Unlike many of the *Vandas*, *Renantheras* as a group are more graceful in flower and tend to flower more heavily. In my collection, I grow *Renanthera imschootiana* outside in the summer and under lights in the winter. Until I started putting it outside during the warmer months, growth was fairly slow and it never showed any sign of blooming. However, growing it outdoors during the last two summers in a semi-shady location made the difference, resulting in the plant doubling in size. At about 16" in height I'm now enjoying its first bloom.



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## GROWING MOUNTED ORCHIDS UNDER FLUORESCENT LIGHTS

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by Jeff Stuart  
CNYOS Newsletter Editor  
[jastuart@syr.edu](mailto:jastuart@syr.edu)

Growing mounted orchids in the home poses a few unique challenges that aren't issues in the greenhouse or conservatory. There are two primary concerns that arise—will they get enough light and water? For the sake of this article, temperature can be dismissed because as orchid hobbyists, we of course purchase only those that will do well in the conditions provided in our homes... Most of the orchids we grow are in pots. For the home grower, potted orchids are convenient and can be placed on the windowsill or under lights, and most of the collection grown in this manner benefits from this “community,” in that nearly all receive equivalent light and water. This is a nice, convenient, arrangement that works well for many orchids. However, there are many wonderful reasons to mount orchids—growth is in a much more natural manner, providing air circulation is easier, the plant & roots dry out more quickly so rot is less of a problem, and some very desirable orchids just won't do well in a pot. But caring for mounted orchids outside a greenhouse poses a number of challenges for the home grower, especially from the standpoint of light. How does one provide enough light while still being able to conveniently care for and admire mounted orchids?

As our first source of inspiration, let's consider windowsill growing. Potted orchids will typically be arranged around the bottom of the window, so there's a lot of unused space up above. Mounted orchids could be hung from the ceiling or rods in front of the window, and moved to the sink with the other orchids for watering, or dunked in a bucket of water. For small collections this is a perfectly reasonable solution. It is, however, not without problems—many mounted orchids require daily watering, and a little misting just isn't going to cut it. Even for one mounted orchid, it would be easy to overlook that daily drink it needs. And how do you admire your mounted orchids when they're blooming, if they're all facing the window pane? Clearly, although windowsill growing is easily done for mounted orchids, it is not without its problems.

Then there's the option of growing mounted orchids under lights—after all, many of us ran out of windowsill space a long time ago, and were forced to go that route for our potted collection. Now we have no shortage of light and can water them along with the rest of the collection, but we need some mechanism for securing the mounted plants so they remain upright. If the light stands have drainage trays, caring for the collection could not be easier. However, it's still not the ideal situation for viewing the mounted orchids, and keeping them upright might be a problem. Having said that, this is exactly how I grew my mounted orchids for several years.

This is the situation I faced in my collection a number of years ago. I had become fond of growing mounted orchids, but growing a mixed collection under lights was posing a problem. Having them spread out made watering them on a frequent—sometimes daily—basis very inconvenient. But then



STAND DESIGNED & BUILT FROM PVC PIPE FOR GROWING MOUNTED ORCHIDS. THE LIGHTS SWING BACK IN FRONT OF THE ORCHIDS.



THE UPPER CORNER OF ONE OF THE GATES, SHOWING THE TWO TYPES OF COMMONLY AVAILABLE PVC PIPE JOINTS, AS WELL AS A VERTICALLY-MOUNTED LIGHT FIXTURE.

a conversation with fellow orchid grower and CNYOS member Rick Braue provided inspiration. Rick was describing how he cared for his mounted orchids in his plant room, which has several large south-facing windows that provided adequate light for most of his collection. He had mounted a metal gate on the side of one of the windows, on which he hung his mounted

orchids. The gate usually faced the window, but could easily be swung away from the window for watering and inspection. That was the solution! At least, in a sense... The question for me was how to adapt this solution to using fluorescent lights. The solution lay in having the orchids stay in one place, and having the light source move—the fluorescent lights could be mounted on the moveable gate. The lights would be mounted vertically, and swing out of the way when working with the orchids. Now all I had to do was figure out how to build the stand.

After considering several options, I decided the best route was to build the stand using PVC pipe. PVC pipe is easily available and cheap, and has the advantage of holding up well to water (!). Building structures out of PVC requires little in the way of special skills, and only a few special tools. A PVC pipe-cutter is a must, and will make the construction go much faster. Other than that, the most critical piece of equipment is a tape measure. Of course, a solid, well-thought-out design is also needed.

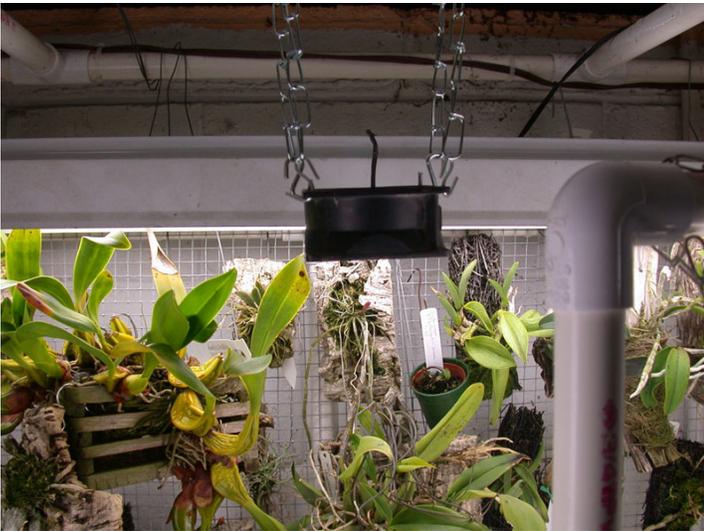
The design I came up with featured a four by four foot area consisting of a 3/4" PVC pipe frame stretched with 1/4" hardware fabric (wire mesh with 1/4" spacing). These dimensions would be an appro-

priate area for 4 – 2 tube shop light fixtures to illuminate at a distance of about 1 foot. Around this framed area, was constructed a frame to provide structural support, including a base, shelf, top, and two gates to support the fluorescent fixtures. The “hinged” gates were constructed as part of the left and right front corners of the open cabinet structure. When closed, the gates would meet in the middle, allowing all lights to face the hardware cloth, upon which the orchids would eventually hang. The “hinges” were simply 3-way “T” fittings used in the vertical front supports—the verticals, therefore, provide not only critical structural support, but also allow the gates to swing back and forth freely. The accompanying photographs show the overall structure of the mounted orchid stand that resulted.

PVC pipe fittings were used in the design to form the final structure—all fittings were purchased at Home Depot. Unfortunately, using such fittings requires a little imagination in the design, because no



THE CENTER AREA OF THE STAND SHOWING ORCHIDS HANGING ON THE HARDWARE CLOTH



A MUFFIN FAN HANGS FROM THE TOP OF THE STAND TO HELP WITH AIR CIRCULATION.

3-way or 4-way 90° corners were available; the only components I could find were 2-way right angles and 3-way “T” pipe fittings. Therefore three-way corners—where three pieces of pipe could be joined in a corner—were not possible. After all, there is little or no such need in your average plumbing project. I have since discovered that such specialty components are easily available from sources on the internet, and I have purchased enough for two new light stands that I’ll describe in a future article—one particular vendor, Patios to Go, Inc., located in Clermont, FL, sells a wide variety of specialty PVC fittings for use in construction of sturdy patio furniture. I’ll also add that their prices are much better than any other vendor I found on-line. The availability of specialty fitting will make construction of future light gardens much, much, easier.

The 1/4” hardware cloth was purchased as a four x six foot roll, and was affixed to the PVC frame using plastic tie wraps (sometimes called zip ties, see figure). I decided to wrap the hardware cloth around the right and left sides as well, to maximize the space available to hang orchids. Tie wraps were also used to affix a power-strip to the unit at the top, to provide power for all the light fixtures and a fan.

Mounting the fluorescent light fixtures vertically required the purchase of a drill-bit that could be used on metal, so that chains and hooks could be used to attach the fixtures to the PVC gates. An additional light fixture was mounted horizontally across the top of the unit to provide additional overhead light for

brighter light orchids. Metal s-hooks and short lengths of chain were also used to hang a muffin fan at the top to provide air circulation.

Finally, specialized PVC glues can be used to permanently connect the parts. These glues are often volatile liquids that seep into the joints and bind the pieces together, such that applying the glue can be done once the entire stand has been built. Of course, one would not want to glue any joints designed to be moveable, such as the hinged gates. My original intent was to glue only specific joints, allowing for easy break down if the stand ever needs to be moved. However, after assembly was complete, I found it to be sturdy enough that it required no adhesive—at least that’s what I would say if anyone ever asked... The truth is that I was probably too anxious to load the stand up with orchids!

I have used this set-up for roughly five years now, and have been very pleased with the results.



THE UPPER LEFT HAND CORNER OF THE STAND, SHOWING *DENDROBIUM RHODOSTICTUM* IN BLOOM.



THE GHOST ORCHID, *POLYRRHIZA LINDENII*, GROWING IN A SHELTERED AREA OF THE STAND, RECEIVING INDIRECT LIGHT.

Having all of my mounted orchids in the same location has made caring for them much easier. I use a pump-up pressure sprayer to water the orchids by thoroughly spraying them several times a week (4-6, on average, with pure water and very light fertilizer levels). Higher light orchids are hung at the top near the horizontal fixture, thereby getting light from the top and side. On the shelf

below, lower light orchids such as Pleurothallids are placed where they can benefit from falling mist and water dripping from above. A pair of trays catches the water that drips through the shelf. This shelf, which is constructed of plastic fluorescent light egg-crate, has also proven handy for potted orchids that may need some extra vertical space for inflorescences, such as the blooming *Renanthera imschootiana* shown in the photos. The sides and back corners are also used for lower-light orchids. Some orchids benefit from the micro-climates created among other, larger, orchids—one such species is the ghost orchid, *Polyrrhiza Lindenii*, two of which have been growing in the stand for over two years now. This leafless orchid is reportedly difficult to grow, although both of my plants have thrived (?) in my stand—neither has not flowered yet, so I cannot say that they are fully happy (although they may not be of flowering size yet). Other orchids that bloom regularly in this stand include *Dendrobiums glomeratum* and *primulinum*, *Cirrhopetalum tingabarinum*, and numerous Pleurothallids, among others. Something is always in bloom!

Having the benefit of hind sight, there are a few things I will do differently when I build my next mounted orchid stand. Of course I will use specialized PVC fittings to avoid the awkward aspects of design and construction without them. More air circulation would also be helpful—one muffin fan is not enough. The back and sides of the stand will be

wrapped in plastic to help keep up the humidity around the plants, and to prevent stray spray from ruining the paint on the (cinderblock) wall behind. Only a lack of free time has prevented me from making some of the latter changes to my current stand.

There are certainly many other ways that mounted orchids can be grown indoors in the absence of a greenhouse, but this solution has worked very well for me. The mounted orchid stand has several advantages, including the ability to keep all of my mounted plants together in a way that they can be easily cared for and inspected. And exposing the orchids to light from the side might even be somewhat more akin to what epiphytic orchids experience in nature, where they are shaded to some extent by the tree canopy above, and therefore might receive at least as much light from the side. Furthermore, another advantage is that the fixtures never come into contact with water, and can be swung closer or farther away depending on the plants' needs. All in all, this stand has proven to be a unique and effective approach for growing epiphytes, including both orchids and air plants (Tillandsias, which make great companions and add visual interest). And finally, from the stand point of aesthetics, this way of displaying my mounted orchids can't be beat! It's a great thing to visit this light garden on a bleak winter day and see growing and blooming orchids. As you can see, space is getting limited so I may just have to build that new stand sometime soon!



THE BOTTOM SHELF LOADED WITH PLEUROTHALLIDS AND OTHER SHADE LOVING ORCHIDS, AS WELL AS A RENANTHERA THAT WOULD NO LONGER FIT IN ITS USUAL GROWING AREA.

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While looking through the used bookstore in St. Augustine this past vacation I found the March 1984 edition of *The Florida Orchidist*. I just had to buy it as the cover was a copy of a painting by Marion Ruff Sheehan that I have hanging on my dining room wall. The publication contained an article by Shell Kanzer on growing mini-cats that I would like to share with you.

Mini-cats are hybrids of the Cattleya Alliance using the smaller species, especially *Sophronitis*, to shrink down plant size. All those funny little letters (*Slc.*, *Lc.*, *Bc.*, *Sc.*, & *Sl.*) you've seen in front of even funnier names are used to denote the hybrids. Mini-cats are great for growing in your house, as they are compact growers with flowers in proportion to the size of the plant. A Mini-cat can bloom in a 3-inch pot, sometimes even a pot as small as 2 inches. This is important for those who grow orchids in their home because the smaller plant size means you can grow more of them. Mini-cats can bloom more than once a year, sometimes three or four times per year. If you select the right crosses, you can have them in bloom all the time. Some of the ones I grow are *Lc.* Mini Purple 'Blue Hawaii,' *Bc.* Petite Stars, and *Sc.* Crystelle Smith 'Rosalie.'

## LIGHT

Mini-cats need lots of light to grow and flower well. If you have a light meter, 2,000 to 3,000 footcandles is satisfactory. Without a light meter go for the maximum amount of light the plant will take, short of burning or bleaching the leaves. Under light growers should use a minimum of four-40 watt fluorescent tubes. Set the timer for sixteen hours of light and make certain they get eight hours of darkness.

## TEMPERATURE

The plants will be comfortable where you are comfortable. Typical home temperatures of 55 F to 65 F at night and between 65 F to 80 F during the day are fine. The drop in temperature is important for proper flowering of mini-cats. You will find these temperatures are easier to accomplish in the late fall, winter, and spring, than during the summer.

## HUMIDITY

Try to keep the humidity around 50 to 60%. You may find that a gravel tray will help you achieve this humidity range. Clustering orchids together also helps.

## AIR MOVEMENT

Air movement is essential to good orchid culture. You don't need a storm, but it's nice to see the leaves move every now and then on the windowsill or in the greenhouse. I operate some

of the fans in the greenhouse 24 hours a day. In the house, I have small clip-on fans that are connected to the timer. When the lights are on so are the fans.

## WATERING

The roots of mini-cats like to undergo a rapid and regular cycle of wet and dry. No one can tell you when to water or how often. You have to experiment with a watering schedule that fits the environment you are providing. Your watering schedule will depend on the temperature and the amount of air movement you provide the plants. Remember that even when growing orchids inside the house, the watering schedule will have to be adjusted depending on the season. This is due to your air conditioning versus your furnace operating. A simple rule of thumb is to water once or twice a week. If you let mini-cats go 10 to 12 days without water the leaves tend to dehydrate. Do not try to recover the plant by drowning them with water. This will only cause the roots to rot. If you let them dehydrate, simply get back on a regular watering program and they should recover. I grow mini-cats in Aliflor or other clay products. This helps with my over watering problem.

## FERTILIZER

It is suggested that you use a fertilizer with a slightly higher phosphate number such as 20-30-20 at a 1/8 teaspoon per gallon rate each time you water. Flush with clear water about every third watering. If you decide that fir bark is what you like to use a potting medium, use a fertilizer with a higher nitrogen level such as 30-10-10.

Photo © Mike Clark, 2003.

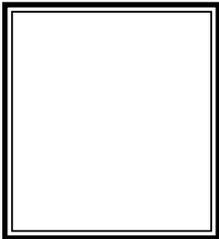


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The Central New York Orchid Society meets at St. Augustine's Church, 7333 O'Brien Rd, Baldwinsville, at 2:00<sup>PM</sup> on the first Sunday of each month from September through June. Yearly dues are \$15.00 per individual, or \$17.00 family. Dues should be paid to the CNYOS Treasurer, Carol Haskell.

## THE ORCHID ENTHUSIAST

The **CNYOS Newsletter**, *The Orchid Enthusiast*, is a publication of the Central New York Orchid Society and is distributed to the Society's members ten times per year, prior to all club meetings, events, or functions.

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