



CNYOS Auction 2004!!!

The daffodils are blooming, tulips are coming up, and recent weather has even given hints of summer—it must be spring in Central NY!

And the month of May means only one thing to most CNYOS Members, it's time for our annual Spring Auction! **To be held Sunday, May 2ND at 2^{PM}**

sharp, this most anticipated event remains our most profitable fund-raiser, and allows the club to continue to fund programs and other benefits for you, our members. Request for donations have gone out to a number of reputable orchid vendors, including **Andy's Orchids, AnTec Orchids, Bloomfield Orchids, Carter & Holmes Orchids, Everglades Orchids, Exotic Orchids of Maui, Hoosier Orchids, H&R Orchids, J&L Orchids, JustPat Orchids, Marlow Orchids, Mountain Orchids, Oak Hill Gardens, Petite Plaisance, Piping Rock Orchids, Santa Barbara Orchid Estate, Woodstream Orchids, and Zuma Canyon Orchids.** Although donations cannot be guaranteed, many of these vendors have been very generous in the past. Furthermore, you can auction off some of your own plants! Are you finding your space more and more limited? Are some of your orchids not performing as well under your conditions as you had hoped? Perhaps it's time to clear out some space to make room for a few new friends—all we ask is that any orchids you donate to the auction block be generally healthy and pest & disease free. You have the choice of retaining 50% of your plants proceeds, or donating all the profit to the club. And if you do decide to auction off some of your orchids, please get their names and descriptions to Jeff Stuart as soon as possible so he can include them on the master list (471-1404, jastuart@sy.edu). The format of this year's auction will be much the same as last year's—a number of plants will be handled through a silent auction, while others will be handled in the usual way.

IN THIS ISSUE...

April Meeting & Minutes	2
CNYOS Calendar	3
GROS Show	3
Show Table	4
Miscellaneous Business	5
GROS / STOS News	5
Spot Light... ..	6
Feature Article	7
Caring for Mounted Orchids	10

Please Arrive Early—You will need to get registered to receive an auction number, and you'll probably want a chance to check out the plants as well! During the auction, members are strongly encouraged to keep track of their purchases and / or sales. Your friendly newsletter editor will be acting as auctioneer, hopefully with an additional volunteer or two to step in to save his voice.

*APRIL MEETING: BIENNIAL MOUNTED
ORCHID CLINIC*

One of our most popular meetings was held on April 4TH—our annual Mounted Orchid Clinic sponsored by Andy Phillips of Andy's Orchids. Andy selected a number of orchids to supply to our members at very reasonable prices, along with all the necessary supplies to mount them (sticks, moss, and instructions!). After a short business meeting, Jeff Stuart introduced members to the advantages of growing mounted orchids. Instructions followed for each variety of orchid, and members went to work. Thanks go to all of the CNYOS members who volunteered their time in making the clinic go well, everything from helping to distribute the orchids to members, to providing hints to other members for mounting their plants. Now lets hope we can all keep them alive! An article later in this newsletter offers hints on how to do just that.

JUNE MEETING: ANNUAL PICNIC

June 6TH will mark our annual end of season picnic, to be held again this year at the home of CNYOS member Dianne Bordoni. The annual picnic is a covered dish affair, and if past years are any indication, CNYOS has a number of excellent cooks! Full details will be in the next newsletter, including directions and a rain date. Hopefully the weather will be a bit more cooperative than last year. There will be a short meeting to cover any end-of-season business (the Herb Festival and our Fall Show). The annual picnic is a great opportunity to relax and socialize with all of your orchid-obsessed friends, and perhaps make a few new ones—all in the privacy of Dianne's wonderful gardens. So mark your calendars, and we hope you can join us!

Photo Credits: *Phal. Maritea* (page 2) © Greg Allikas (The Orchid Photo Page, <http://www.orchidworks.com/>), with digital manipulation by Jeff Stuart.

Old Business

1. **Proceeds from the Home and Garden Show** are at \$250, although not all profits have yet been reported. Kim thanked everyone who stopped by and participated in the Show.
2. **The CNYOS Display took 3RD place at the GROS Show** in Rochester. The plant awards will be published in the next newsletter.
3. **Plants for Sale:** leftover plants from the Home and Garden Show were sold at the April meeting. Any left over will be auctioned off in May.
4. **The STOS Show** in Binghamton will be April 23-25. The set-up team is Judi Witkin, Nancy Loveland, and Barbara Weller. Gary Stensland and Iris Cohen volunteered to help with registration. Please e-mail Iris with your information for registration.
5. **Herb Festival:** Rick Braue circulated a sign up sheet for help. Directions to the facility will be published in the June newsletter.
6. **The May Meeting** is our annual auction. Jeff Stuart is sending out donation requests.
7. **The June Picnic** will be at the home of Dianne Bordoni on June 6TH.

Respectfully Submitted,

Barbara Weller, CNYOS Secretary

Mark Your Calendars!

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

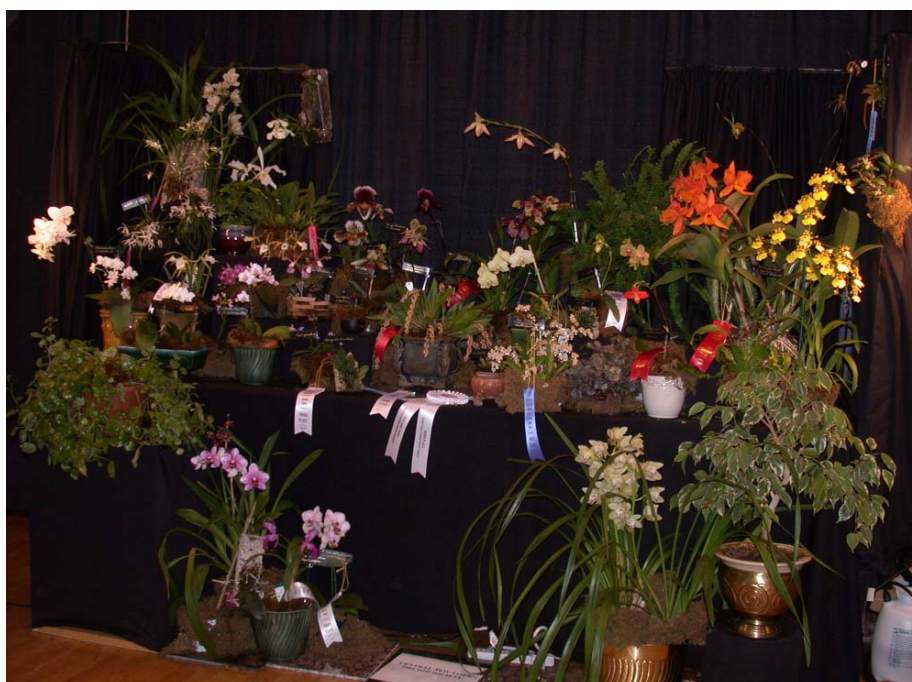
Featured will be Lots of Displays,
Judging by the American Orchid Society,
Tons of Orchids, & Vendors!



- May 2** **Annual Orchid Auction**
- June 6** **Annual Summer Picnic: Details to be announced.**
- June 24** **Herb & Plant Show: Details to be announced.**
- June 25-July 4** **J&L Orchids Annual Summer Sale!** 15% discount on J&L plants and special J&L bargain tables. There will be two guest vendors on the first weekend: Jim Rose of Cal-Orchid and Carrie Raven-Reiman of Orchidphile. Meet the owners of these nurseries and learn about their plants from the experts. More info: <http://www.jlorchids.com/>, (203) 261-3772
- July 31-Aug 1** **Parkside Orchids Summer Orchid Fest 2004:** See website for details: <http://www.parksideorchids.com>
- October 1-3** **CNYOS Annual Fall Show & Sale, Shoppingtown Mall, DeWitt**

CNYOS DOES WELL AT GROS SHOW

CNYOS entered a well-received display at the recent Genesee Region Orchid Society Show & Sale late last month, including orchids from at least a half dozen members. The display, set up by Judi Witkin & Gary Stensland, took a third place ribbon—good work! Thanks go to all the members who donated their plants for the display, and especially Judi and Gary. Special thanks go to Iris Cohen for her efforts in getting all the entries registered. Once again, GROS managed to put on a good show. The CNYOS display is shown below. Awards that went to CNYOS members are listed below.



Central NY Orchid Society			
Orchid Society Exhibits, Class B	3 RD	Cliff Rossler	
		<i>Paph. victoria regina</i> x <i>bellatulum</i>	3 RD
		<i>Phal.</i> Golden Gift x ([Suntan x Spring Silk] x Dtps. Dalyan)	3 RD
		Jeff Stuart	
Donna Coleman		<i>Paph.</i> Transvaal	1 ST
<i>Onc.</i> Twinkle 'Fragrance Fantasy'	1 ST	<i>Oberonia setigera</i>	1 ST
<i>Physosiphon tubatus</i>	3 RD	<i>Lc.</i> Little Oliver x <i>Encyclia cordigera</i>	2 ND
<i>Max. variabilis</i>	3 RD	<i>Paph.</i> Lyro Glorious Magic	2 ND
		<i>Phrag. besseae</i>	2 ND
Dianne Bordoni		<i>Trpla. tortilis</i>	2 ND
<i>Lpt. bicolor</i>	2 ND		
		Charles Ufford	
Kim Boronczyk		<i>B. nodosa</i>	3 RD
<i>B.</i> Little Stars	2 ND	<i>MrcIm. wendlandii</i>	3 RD
Dave Ditz			
Pot. Douglass North	2 ND		
<i>Dendrochilum bicallosum</i>	2 ND		
<i>Paph. primulinum</i>	3 RD		

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL!

Please note especially all names and abbreviations in boldface, and make the appropriate corrections to your labels.

Cypripedium Alliance

<i>Paph.</i> Valley Girls (Mill Valley x Fire Girl)	Capella
<i>Phrag.</i> Saint Ouen (Hanne Popow x <i>besseae</i>)	Stuart
<i>Paph.</i> Transvaal (<i>chamberlainianum</i> x <i>roth schildianum</i>)	“
<i>Paph.</i> <i>haynaldianum</i>	“
<i>Paph.</i> Prime Child (<i>primulinum</i> x <i>rothschildianum</i>)	Ditz
<i>Paph.</i> <i>villosum</i> (?)	Wilson

Cattleya Alliance

<i>Mrclm.</i> <i>wendlandii</i>	Ufford
<i>Slc.</i> Jewel Box (<i>Gur. aurantiaca</i> x Anzac)	Braue
<i>C.</i> <i>intermedia</i>	“
<i>Lc.</i> Mari's Song (Irene Finney x <i>C.</i> Cherry Chip)	“
<i>Lc.</i> Mandarin (Canhamiana x Hyperion)	Ditz
<i>E.</i> <i>brassavolae</i>	Capella
<i>C.</i> <i>maxima</i>	“
<i>E.</i> <i>bractescens</i>	Coleman
<i>Lc.</i> Bryan Wheeler (Irene Finney x Harold Carlson)	Bordoni
<i>C.</i> Caribbean (Margaret Stewart x <i>Gur. aurantiaca</i>)	Pace

Vandaceous

<i>Ren.</i> <i>imschootiana</i>	Stuart
<i>Phal.</i> <i>aphrodite</i>	Ufford
<i>Phal.</i> <i>maculata</i>	“
<i>Phal.</i> <i>stuartiana</i>	“
<i>Phal.</i> Venimp (<i>venosa</i> x Malibu Imp)	Capella
<i>Dtps.</i> Raspberry Delight* (Taisuco Candystripe x Kittyhawk)	Tupper

<i>Phal.</i> Brother Pico Pink (Ho's Amaglad x <i>equestris</i>)	Bordoni
<i>Phal.</i> Golden Peoker x Wataboushi	“

Oncidium Alliance

<i>Mps.</i> † <i>santanae</i> x ?	Ufford
<i>Milt.</i> † Dale Lawless (Linda Marie Sellon x Lorene)	Bordoni
<i>Burr.</i> Nelly Isler (Stefan Isler x <i>Milt.</i> Kensington)	Capella

Dendrobium Alliance

<i>Den.</i> <i>rhodostictum</i>	Stuart
<i>Den.</i> <i>falcorostrum</i>	Ufford
<i>Den.</i> <i>aphyllum</i>	Witkin

Pleurothallid Alliance

<i>Lths.</i> <i>manabina</i>	Stuart
<i>Ste.</i> <i>argentata</i>	Coleman
<i>Psn.</i> <i>tubatus</i>	“
<i>Sppm.</i> <i>swertifolium</i>	Witkin
<i>Lpths.</i> <i>astrophora</i>	“

Miscellaneous

<i>Jatropha</i> <i>podagrica</i>	Coleman
<i>Aërgs.</i> <i>modesta</i>	Capella
<i>Aërgs.</i> <i>citrata</i>	Pace
<i>Jum.</i> <i>arachnanthe</i>	Witkin

*The cross *Phalaenopsis* Big Cheeks x Brother Wildcat has not been registered. Check with your supplier.

†Contact me if this requires further explanation.

Iris Cohen

THE AFRICAN VIOLET SOCIETY OF SYRACUSE ...

...Will have its Annual Show & Sale, the second weekend in May: Show hours are Saturday, 5/8, 2 - 9^{PM} & Sunday 5/9, 11^{AM} - 5^{PM}. Sale hours are Friday, 5/7, 2^{PM} - 9^{PM}, Saturday, 5/8, 10^{AM} - 9^{PM} & Sunday, 5/9, 11^{AM} - 5^{PM}, in Shoppingtown Mall, DeWitt.



African Violets and their relatives (*Gesneriads*) often make great companion plants to orchids. Plants & supplies will be sold (African

Violets, other gesneriads, from Ralph Robinson, Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses, Ethel

Champion, & more). You all know the old adage, “If you can bloom a *Phalaenopsis*, you can bloom an African Violet!” Or something like that... Anyway, stop by and see what this wonderful and diverse family of plants has to offer!



CLUB REMINDERS

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!!!

HAVE YOU JOINED THE TWO PREMIER ORCHID GROWING ORGANIZATIONS IN THE WORLD?

JOIN THE AMERICAN ORCHID SOCIETY (WWW.AOS.ORG) AND THE ORCHID DIGEST (WWW.ORCHIDDIGEST.COM)!



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

Coconut Husk Chips will be available at the June Picnic. The club has purchased several bales of CHC for members to purchase. CHC makes great potting media, as long as it is properly rinsed of salts. Instructions will be available.

REFRESHMENT SCHEDULE

SPRING, 2004

May

David Ditz & Pat Cotter

STOS NEWS: NEWS FROM THE SOUTHERN TIER ORCHID SOCIETY

The May STOS program is Sunday, May 16 at 2:00^{PM} at the Vestal Public Library. It is a repotting and orchid care clinic. We usually repot several overgrown orchids and most people go home with a piece of a plant. We also encourage people to bring in any orchid that needs repotting and we have materials available to do it. Our most experienced members are available to answer all questions. This is one of the most successful programs that we have, is very helpful to beginners and is fun for everyone.

Monthly meetings begin at 2:00^{PM} 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

After a very successful Spring Show, at their next meeting (May 3, 7^{PM}) GROS members will have the opportunity to hear from one of their regular vendors and exhibitors, Joanne Molenock of The Hollow, Orchids & Herbs of Ithaca. Nearly everyone in the area knows Joannes talent for growing and blooming those wonderful equitant Oncidium (Tolumias)—those ephemeral “dancing-lady” flowers that waltz along with the smallest breeze. Perhaps Joanne will share some of her secrets of success with GROS members!

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.

PHRAGMIPEDIUM BESSEAE & TRICHOPILIA TORTILIS

It was somewhat surprising when I looked at the archives to see that I had not covered previously two very desirable orchids in the spot light; *Phragmipedium besseae* & *Trichopilia tortilis*. These are two very beautiful orchids which do well in the home, provided the correct conditions are met. The first one is somewhat more challenging, although the second is very amenable to growth on the windowsill or under fluorescent lights.

Phragmipedium besseae made a huge splash in the orchid world upon its discovery in 1981 by Elizabeth Besse on an expedition in Peru for the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens. Thinking that they had found a previously unknown location for *Phrag. schlimii*, there was quite a surprise when the first of the collected plants came into bloom. It was immediately clear that they had a new species on their hands, with a color completely atypical in the entire world of slipper orchids!

After all, how could flowers of such vibrant red and red-orange go overlooked? Soon hybrids began to be made, and commanded extremely high prices. Some of the most notable include Hanne Papow (*besseae* x *schlimii*), Memorial Dick Clements (*besseae* x *sargentianum*), and Eric Young (*besseae* x *longifolium*). Perhaps one of the most anticipated was the cross with the wonderfully long petaled *Phrag. caudatum*,

given the hybrid name Ruby Slippers (*besseae* x *caudatum*). Unfortunately the latter hybrid failed to meet expectations, although still are to a certain extent stunning. The predominant quality of all *besseae* hybrids, however, is that the red color predominates in the progeny. Second, third, and fourth generation hybrids are now being produced, and with the advent of the yellow and orange/peach color forms, *Phragmipedium* hybridization has never been more promising, producing plants of greater ease of culture than the parent species! Growing *Phrag. besseae* requires bright light, temperatures on the cool side of intermediate, and very clean water. It is critical to make sure the roots stay cool, which can be a challenge during the summer. Bob & Lynn Wellenstein of AnTec Orchids (<http://www.ladyslipper.com>) have adopted a method using diatomite with great success. Plants are potted in pure diatomite in clay pots, which are set in about an inch of fresh water. The clay and diatomite work together through evaporative cooling to keep the roots cool. Using this method requires a balanced fertilizer regimen to ensure that all micronutrients are provided. I grew plants of *Phrag. besseae* for many years with limited success. Upon trying this method, I saw almost immediate results—the *besseae* pictured above flowered within four months of changing to the diatomite medium.



Trichopilia tortilis may lack the stunning color of *Phrag. besseae*, but it makes up for that imagined deficiency with fascinating form and ease of culture. The genus *Trichopilia* is part of the Oncidiinae and is distributed through Central & South America. The species name *tortilis* is derived from the tight cork-screw like petals and sepals that radiate out from the flower. The petals are red-brown with an irregular yellow-green margin. The large lip is crystalline white with red spots that are more concentrated down the lip's tubular "throat." This species, one of roughly 30 in an amazing and oft overlooked genus, benefits from intermediate temperatures and bright shade. This Mexican species enjoys being moist, and blooms in winter through spring. A well-grown specimen will have flowers completely skirting the pot. Very little has been done in *Trichopilia* hybridization, as compared to other more popular genera.

Hoosier Orchids regularly advertises several hybrids, which are proving to be easy to grow and bloom. Several of the species, including *Trichopilia fragrans*, *suavis*, and *laxa*, are remarkably fragrant.



CATTLEYS FOR THE HOME GROWER

By Alan Koch

Growing orchids in your house should be a fun and rewarding hobby, but not all orchids are right for the home. When considering which plants to grow in the home, you should take a lesson from nature. There are more species of orchids than any other plant family. The diversity is tremendous since orchids are found everywhere in the world except Antarctica. An orchid that grows at 10,000 feet elevation in Peru is not an ideal candidate for the home grower, unless you live at 10,000 feet above sea level!

Orchids for the home need to be able to flower without a chill and with a lower light level. Some orchids require a drop in temperature of 25°F at night to be able to flower and you do not get this variance in most homes. Modern hybridizers take this into account and use certain species of orchids to make it easier to flower plants in the home.

Over 30 years ago I started to look at making Cattleyas easier to flower in the home. Prior to 1975, all breeding was done with parents that added bright color to the cross, without paying much attention to



CATTLEYA WALKERIANA: MORE DEMANDING THAN MOST WHEN IT COMES TO LIGHT, BUT SPECTACULAR WITH 4" FLOWERS.

the temperature at which the plants had to be grown so they could bloom. Some of the first miniature cattleyas I purchased didn't flower well unless they had two weeks below 55°F—not a very friendly environment for the home grower. Many of the



LAELIA PUMILA; A WONDERFUL MINIATURE SPECIES WITH FLOWERS THAT ARE PROPORTIONALLY LARGE AS COMPARED TO PLANT SIZE.

miniature cattleyas I first purchased flowered only once a year. I set out to find parent plants that needed less light, would flower at least twice a year, and did not require a chill to initiate flowering.

Some plants that seemed obvious to start this project included *Laelia pumila*, *Cattleya luteola*, *Cattleya walkeriana*, and *Laelia alaorii*. All of these fit the above criteria, except *Cattleya walkeriana*, which requires high light. It turned out that when used in hybridizing, the light requirement of *Cattleya walkeriana* is recessive. I discovered that as long as the hybrid contained 25% of one of the above species, people could flower them easily in the home. Other plants were discovered through experimentation and were added to the breeding program.

So what should you look for when purchasing an orchid for home growing? The most important factor is to get a healthy, well-grown plant. Look for one that is robust with bright foliage. Ask the seller for the parentage of the plant, as many generations back as possible. Determine if there are any of the species discussed earlier in the family tree. If the person doesn't know, ask someone else. If no one knows, you might consider another source for your plant.

I also suggest that when you purchase your first orchid you get one that is in flower or in bud. In the



SL. ORPETII: ONE OF THE FIRST HYBRIDS FOR SOPHRONITIS COCCINEA

trade we call this instant gratification. My first choice for any miniature *Cattleya* for the home is to have *Laelia pumila* somewhere in the background. This species comes from Brazil and at least one variety grows in very low light. It flowers twice a year and doesn't need a chill to bloom. We have used it to make several crosses that do well in the home, and are excellent parents in their own right. Most of these hybrids are in the rose to deep lavender color range, but there are a few fuchsia-pink and red hybrids too. The two most important hybrids to look for in breeding are *Laeliocattleya* (Lc.) Mini Purple, a cross of *Laelia pumila* with *Cattleya walkeriana* and *Sophrolaelia* (Sl.) Orpetii, which is *Sophronitis coccinea* crossed with *Laelia pumila*. We use Sl. Orpetii 'Bonanza' AM/AOS in many of our crosses because of its large, flat, full-round flowers on very compact growing plants. This plant was the 'Best Orchid in Show-



CATTELEYA LUTEOLA IS PERHAPS THE BEST MINIATURE CATTELEYA SPECIES, GROWING WELL IN LOW LIGHT & INTERMEDIATE CONDITIONS WHILE BLOOMING SEVERAL TIMES PER YEAR.

This species comes from

Grand Champion' in the 2000 New York International Orchids Show and was featured in a public television documentary. Hybrids from Sl. Orpetii are very free-flowering, have long-lasting flowers, and are above average quality.

Another favorite species for breeding for the home grower is *Cattleya luteola*. It grows and flowers in lower light than 99 percent of the orchids found in nature. Since it grows at low elevation on the equator, it doesn't need any drop in temperature to flower well. It is also a fantastic plant for growing in the home since it flowers several times a year. For the home orchid grower, the most important hybrid from *Cattleya luteola* is *Sophracattleya* (Sc.) Beaufort, a cross of *Sophronitis coccinea* and *Cattleya luteola*. Sc. Beaufort imparts vigor and disease resistance to its offspring.



BROUGHTONIA SANGUINEA: A CATTELEYA RELATIVE THAT BRINGS VIGOR AND BROAD FLAT LIPS TO ITS PROGENY.

Another group of plants suited to home growing is the Genus *Broughtonia* from the island of Jamaica. The species *Broughtonia sanguinea* grows at sea level and is used the most in hybrids. It is a vigorous grower, flowers at least twice a year, and has the ability to bloom well without a drop in temperature. The most famous of this line of breeding is *Cattleytonia* (Ctna.) Why Not, a cross of *Broughtonia sanguinea* and *Cattleya aurantiaca*. This brilliant red-flowered plant has been used to make hundreds of hybrids for the home. Second generation hybrids are producing



LAELIA ALAORII: NOT COMMON IN CULTIVATION UNTIL RECENTLY, *LAELIA ALAORII* IS A FREQUENT AND FACILE BLOOMER.

some fantastic yellow and orange flowers on compact, vigorous plants.

A new species we are starting to work with is *Laelia alariorii*. It is color recessive, which means it will

produce a range of color in its progeny based on the plant with which it is bred. It is easy to grow, warmth tolerant, and does well in lower light. One of the drawbacks of the use of this plant is its cupped flower, but if you cross it with a flat flower you tend to get flat flowers. The other important reason for using *Laelia alariorii* in our breeding program is the fact that it is flower 8 or 9 months out of the year. The hybrids do not produce as many flowers, but still bloom at least twice a year. One of our favorite hybrids from *Laelia alariorii* is with *Sophranitis coccinea*, creating *Sophranitia* (Sl.) Coral Orb. These plants flower three times a year with long lasting salmon-pink to coral flowers.

Hybrids are easier to grow than species and usually flower more often. As a group, most Miniature *Cattleyas* like to dry between watering. Always use a balanced fertilizer such as 20-20-20, since a high nitrogen fertilizer tends to promote growth but inhibit flowering. It is a good idea to add extra iron to your fertilizer since plants flower better this way. Never mist your orchids for humidity, but you can use humidity trays.* Make sure the plant is not sitting in water since orchids don't like "wet feet." Since proper light is crucial for plant growth and flowering, we recommend that you grow in a south or east facing window, since the western sun can be too warm and the north generally does not have enough light. Orchids don't require a lot of tender, loving care, but

they cannot be treated like the common houseplant either. I am thankful that I started this hobby those many years ago, and hope that these tips will help you discover the joy of home orchid growing.

Alan Koch is the owner of Gold Country Orchids in Lincoln California, and has been growing orchids for fun and profit since 1969.

*Editor's note: An article published several years ago in the AOS Magazine, Orchids, determined that this is an inefficient and generally ineffective method of raising humidity for your orchids.

This article was originally printed in the program for the 24TH New York International Orchid Show at Rockefeller Center, and reproduced with permission from the author.

Photo References:

All photos were used with permission from the original sources, as indicated.

Cattleya walkeriana and *Cattleya luteola* © Greg Allikas, 2001, 2000, respectively (<http://www.orchidworks.com>).
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SOPHRANITIS COCCINEA: INCREDIBLE RED COLORATION WITH LARGE FLOWERS IS TYPICAL FOR THIS SPECIES, BUT IT NEEDS COOL CONDITIONS TO DO WELL.

Note from the Editor: The article below was first published in the May 2002 issue, and is reproduced below with some modification.

OK, so you came to last month's clinic on mounting orchids, and you mounted a few that you ordered from Andy's Orchids for the meeting: moss, fishing line—the whole works. You got them home and promptly found a proper location for them, one that provides sufficient light and air circulation, the right temperature, and the right humidity. And you've been watering them several times a week, in the morning, so they stay moist enough to allow those tender sensitive root tips to start emerging, so your new orchid can secure itself to that stick or cork plaque you tied it to...

Was that a collective “Huh?” that I just heard???

So I guess it's time for a brief follow-up on how to care for those orchids. Most of you should have gotten one of Andy's cheat sheets at the meeting—this is a summary of that sheet, with a little of my own experience thrown in. What I'd like to do here is to first talk about establishing your newly mounted plants, and then discuss the culture they'll need once they are established.

Initial care for your newly mounted orchids is critical, and there are a lot of fallacies that have been bantered about when it comes to the best approach. The key now, no matter which orchid you mounted, is plenty of water. Water those orchids frequently, several times a week! One fallacy is that they should not be watered until you start to see roots, for fear that you'll rot the plant—nothing could be farther from the truth! Even the old roots that look dead can passively take up water to help your orchid establish. The worst think you can do is to withhold water, weakening the plant, making its job of putting out roots all the more difficult! Frequent watering will help keep the pseudobulbs nice and plump, and the roots will surely follow.

First of all, the best thing you can do to foster a positive relationship between you and your new orchid friend, is to familiarize yourself with what its needs are with respect to light, moisture, temperature, and

humidity. Do not try and treat that neat little *Masdevallia zahlbruckneri* like your *Dendrobium aggregatum*! Check the March Supplemental issue of *THE ORCHID ENTHUSIAST* for some basic guidelines for each species, but better yet, check your books and the web to find some more detailed cultural information. Once you know what your orchid needs in order to prosper, then you've won half the battle! The other half—often the harder of the two—is following through with the appropriate action to keep the orchid growing and (we hope) blooming. Here are a few guides to help steer you on the right track.

Temperature: Most of the orchids from the clinic fall into the intermediate temperature growing group, needing winter night temps around 60°F, plus or minus 5°, and summer day temps at about 85°F max. The best way to select orchids for your home is to know how your temperature varies, and choose accordingly. Here in the Northeast, most of our homes will generally fall under the category of the intermediate temperature range, and it's probably easier to err on the cool side of intermediate.

Light: With few exceptions, orchids like light. Even plants that are listed as shade loving probably need more light than you'd think; shade outdoors is a far sight brighter than shade indoors! If you ever have access to a light meter you'll quickly discover what I mean. A simple test may help to determine whether you're orchid is getting enough light; hold your hand over the plant. If little or no shadow is cast, there's certainly not enough light. An indistinct shadow indicates that there is probably enough light for shade-loving orchids. A slightly diffuse shadow indicates light levels adequate for orchids that enjoy bright conditions, and a distinct shadow will be found if you have enough light for those that enjoy full-sun (rarely found indoors). But remember, these are just guides and there are other factors; temperature and air circulation play critical roles. Leaves that are kept cool by a breeze can handle higher light levels. A hot stagnant environment in full sun is likely to damage almost any orchid, sun-loving or not. Those that grow in a greenhouse usually use shade-cloth in the summer and always have lots of air circulation to prevent sun-damage. All plants will grow better with a slight breeze, which will help to strengthen the plant

and make for sturdier flower spikes. Adding a fan to your growing area will help prevent disease and result in overall healthier plants.

Water: Here lies the single most misunderstood aspect of orchid culture—watering—including water quality, frequency, and duration. And it is one of these aspects that gets new hobbyist into the most trouble. Let's examine them one by one. (1) *Water Quality:* Because very few orchids are truly terrestrial, they are not accustomed to the presence of large amounts of dissolved salts in the water. Salts are seldom good for orchids roots, although some orchids have a higher tolerance than others. How many of you who use tap water can successfully grow a *Masdevallia* or *Pleurothallis*? *Dendrobium cuthbertsonii* anyone? For these sensitive orchids, build up of salts almost certainly means weakened growth, failure to bloom, and ultimate death. New roots can often be damaged by residual salts. Collecting rain water or using some sort of purification method (reverse osmosis, deionization, etc.) is usually a better alternative. **But NEVER use softened water, which is high in sodium and will KILL your plants!** (2) *Frequency:* It is very difficult to over-water a mounted orchid (!), but easy to do so in a pot. Orchid roots

must be able to breath and potted orchids must be occasionally repotted to ensure that the medium does not break down and suffocate the roots. Mounted orchids need more frequent watering—sometimes once per day, depending on the variety. In times of reduced humidity, you may have to increase your watering frequency to compensate. Pay close attention to your plant—it can often tell you if it's getting enough water. (3) *Duration:* Give your plants a good soaking rain storm! The roots—all of them—need to get thoroughly wet. Misting your orchid with a little bottle seldom provides enough water; it will evaporate before the roots have a chance to absorb all they need. Fertilization is often over-emphasized by the hobbyist; orchids don't get much food in the wild, and using fertilizer at quarter strength or less every time you water will probably be enough. Some orchids will want a dormant winter period where they get little or no water at all.

There you have it, a **quick** guide to caring for your mounted orchids. This is only a guide, as there can often be lots more to consider (pH, for one). But master the key elements—temperature, light, water, and air circulation—and your orchids will reward you year after year! **JAS**

A NOTE FROM YOUR NEWSLETTER EDITOR...

Finding content for these pages is always a challenge, and sometimes things don't fall together until the last minute. When I find a good article from whatever the source, I will generally use it as long as it is well-written and of general interest. Content generally comes in several forms for this newsletter, including material picked up from the internet and/or other newsletter editors (always used with permission), original material written by me, or that contributed by other members. **The latter is sorely lacking!** We have some wonderful growers in our society, and it would be great to see some original contributions from you all! So far, only a few members have taken the time to submit something to the newsletter—I know some of you out there can contribute! Perhaps you know something about growing a specific orchid species or genus, or you have a unique way of growing them. Or perhaps you're

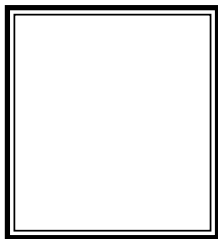
familiar with native orchids and can put something together on their habitats and the best time to catch them in bloom. Other topics could include visits to orchid greenhouses, putting together an orchid display, pulling off an orchid show, or the finer points of grooming your orchids for exhibition. *Surely you are tired of me spouting off about my various interests in growing orchids!* Let's hear from you! *Oh, and by the way*—I have a pretty good idea of who knows how to grow various orchids better than others... You may find me beating on your door sometime soon!

And while I'm at it, please give me some feedback on what you would like to see in future editions. At the very least this will give me an idea of what type of content to be on the look-out for—and knowing what members are interested in always helps. Any kind of feedback is appreciated, be it on format, content, or otherwise; suggestions and constructive criticism are always welcome! **JAS**

Annual 2004 Orchid Auction!!!



Next Meetings: Sundays, May 2ND, 2PM



THE CENTRAL NEW YORK ORCHID SOCIETY
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The Central New York Orchid Society meets at St. Augustine's Church, 7333 O'Brien Rd, Baldwinsville, at 2:00^{PM} 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

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