

NEWSLETTER



Editor's Note: The newsletter will be distributed electronically to all members for whom we have an email address. If you wish to switch from paper to electronic delivery, please notify me at robert.lucas@usask.ca.

Future Meeting Dates:

May 26, 2013 September 22, 2013 October 27, 2013
November 24, 2013

SOS Executive

- President:** Cal Carter
- Vice-President:**
- Past President:** Sherida Gregoire
- Secretary:** Jennifer Burgess
- Treasurer:** Cheryl Grummett
- Social:** Shirley Keith
Lori Pozniak
- Plant Orders:** Heather Anderson
Cheryl Adamson
- Resources:** Yvette Lyster
Pat Randall
- Librarians:** Tracey Thue
Jan Dougall
- Newsletter:** Bob Lucas
- COC/AOS Rep:** Eugene Kucey
- Speakers:** Don Keith
- Webmaster:** Jennifer Burgess

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April Meeting

The April general meeting of the Society will be held on **April 14, 2013** at John Dolan School, commencing at 1:30 p.m. The meeting will feature an auction of orchids and orchid related items to raise funds for the Society.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

The April general meeting will be held on April 14th because the venue is not available to us on the previously scheduled date.

The April meeting will feature the 2nd annual silent auction in support of the SOS. Members are asked to bring orchids and orchid-related items (loosely defined) for the auction. Members have the right to specify the percentage of the sale price that will be donated to the SOS, (either 50 percent or 100 percent). The auction is open to all including nonmembers, so if you know of someone who might be interested in purchasing plants, please invite them to the meeting.

The April meeting will feature a raffle of plants donated by Safeway. Be sure to purchase your tickets from Tracey or Jan at the Library table, \$1 for one, \$2 for three.

Elections to the Executive will occur at the April meeting. If you would like to serve or wish to nominate someone, contact Cal prior to the meeting.

Membership renewals for 2013-2014 will be on sale at the April meeting. An incentive for early registration, members will be eligible for either a \$5.00 gift certificate which can be redeemed at the resource table until the January meeting, 2014, or a Phalaenopsis seedling. Since there are a limited number of seedlings available, they will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

The Society display at Gardenscape was well received. Kudos to Yvette Lyster and Pat Randall for organizing the display (including

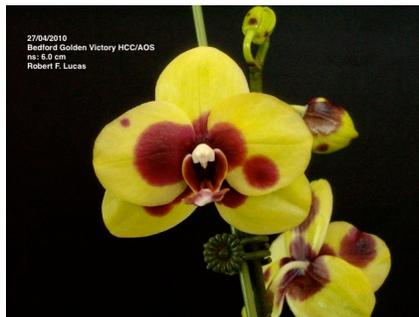
giving the display tables a new coat of paint), and to all members who helped them create a wonderful exhibition. We wish to thank all members who brought blooming plants and served as ambassadors during the Show. We have two and one-half pages of visitors who signed up for further information on the SOS and we are hopeful that this list will identify new members for the Society.

In addition, Heather Anderson and Sherida Gregoire volunteered to design and oversee the construction of an Orchid Garden for Gardenscape. Those of you who attended the Show will know what a great job they did.

Chuck Taylor of Edmonton will be the guest speaker at the May meeting. He will speak on his culture habits and he will bring plants for sale. Don't miss this chance to purchase great plants.

Meeting Agenda

- Announcements
- Problem Corner
- Show and Tell
- Executive Elections
- Coffee/Supplies
- Silent Auction
- Plant Raffle
- Adjournment



Phal Bedford Golden Victory

MARCH 17 MINUTES

Announcements

Cal opened the meeting by extending a welcome to returning members, new members and guests.

Thanks to Lori and Shirley for supplying the treats for today's meeting.

The April meeting will be held on April 14, 2013.

The resources table has a limited number of hydroponic pots (useful for Phrags) and baskets for sale.

Thank you for all who participated in the OSA in Edmonton. Over half of the plants in the SOS display (17) won ribbons.

An Orchid Garden will be set up at Gardenscape with 45 blooming orchids and these will be auctioned off on Sunday night, starting at 6:00.

The April meeting will feature a silent auction in support of the SOS. Orchids and orchid-related items may be brought and proceeds will be donated to the SOS or shared 50/50.

Michael Ali was unable to come this month as our guest speaker. In his stead, Don Keith has volunteered to present the Orchid Digest powerpoint on Masdevallia orchids.

Chuck Taylor will be visiting the Society in May. He will discuss his growing practices and he will bring some wonderful orchids for sale

Problem Corner

A keiki on a Dendrobium has approx. 5" of roots. When will it be safe to repot? The recommended rule of thumb is for the plant to

have at least 6” of roots to sustain the new growth. It can also be kept as part of the parent plant, as it is close to the growing medium.

A mystery plant, possibly a *Zygopetalum*, was displayed. Can it be identified, and how should it be grown? It appears to be an *Oncidium* and it was suggested to give it more light and to grow it warm. The plant has just recently been given warmer temperatures, which may improve growth and encourage flowering.

Can poplar chips be used as a growing medium? They could be used, it was suggested to try only a

few plants first, as well as to sterilize the chips prior to use by baking them in the oven. As a soft hardwood, they should not break down too quickly.

Show and Tell

Plants were shown by Bob Lucas, Tracey Thue, Cody Hamilton, Cheryl Adamson, Sherida Gregoire, Merle Ward, Don Keith and Heather Anderson.

Presentation

Don Keith gave an informative presentation about *Masdevallia* orchids, written by Sandra Svoboda and acquired through the *Orchid Digest*. There were many photos

and information on cultural requirements for cold, cool, intermediate and warm growing plants of the genus, with Don contributing much knowledge from his own growing experience.

Plant Raffle

There were a dozen *Phalaenopsis*, that were donated by Safeway.

Plant Sale

There were over 30 plants on the sale table, including blooming Phals, *Brassovola* seedlings, and *Oncidium*s.

Adjournment

Approximately 3:30p.m.

SOS MARCH SHOW AND TELL TABLE



Paph. Miyabi New Genji Exhibitor: Cheryl Adamson



Phrag. Jason Fisher Exhibitor: Bob Lucas



Phrag. schimii Exhibitor: Heather Anderson



Pot. Paradise Ruby Exhibitor: Sherida Gregoire



Phrag. Schroderae Exhibitor: Tracey Thue



Phal parishii Exhibitor: Cody Hamilton



Maxillaria tenuifolia Exhibitor: Merle Ward

2013 GARDENSCAPE DISPLAY Photo Credit: Pat Randall



CYCNOCHES: THE BEWILDERING SWANS Text by Thomas Miranda /

Photographs by Eric Hunt

Editor's Note: Reprinted from the June, 2012 issue of the Newsletter of the Fraser Valley Orchid Society

Have you ever gotten that eerie feeling that orchids might be laughing at us, perhaps conspiring in some way to beguile, befuddle and bewilder us for their own amusement or nefarious purpose? While such anthropomorphisms annoy biologists, it is often hard to avoid attributing playful or even mischievous characteristics to certain types of orchids.

In the case of the genus *Cycnoches* and the plants' early history in cultivation, it certainly seemed as if they were playing practical jokes on the premier growers of the day.

R.A. Rolfe in his revision of

Cycnoches (1909) recounts some hilarious, if somewhat vexing, experiences growers had with the genus in the 1830s and 40s. *Cycnoches loddigesii*, the first species described and imported to England from Guyana, impressed all who gazed upon its large and exotic blooms with an elongated column that is curved like the neck of a swan (from which the name *Cycnoches* is derived), as well as its enchanting vanillaesque scent.

Another species, *Cycnoches cucullatum*, a seemingly identical plant, but, with its short column and lack of fragrance, surely it was something else entirely.



With its extremely large and exotic fragrant flowers, *Cycnoches loddigesii*, is a personal favorite of many. Grower: White Oak Orchids

But when flowers of both alleged species appeared on the same plant, growers and botanists alike were left scratching their heads. What appeared to be a new species, *Cyc. cucullatum*, was nothing more than *Cyc. loddigesii* with female flowers.

Similarly and perhaps even more vexingly, *Cycnoches ventricosum* proved to be roguish in its growing behaviour. This species was well known in cultivation by the 1840s, with its large greenish flowers. A new different plant from Guatemala was touted by G.V. Skinner, a British trader and plant dealer based in Guatemala, as having the "habit of *Cycnoches* joined [with] the long pendulous stems of a *Gongora*" (Rolfe 1909). Such a bizarre novelty of a plant was eagerly imported and grown with great loving care, but on blooming proved to be more plants of *Cyc. ventricosum*.

Assuming a mistake had been made, more plants were imported, but with the same disappointing result. Finally, Skinner elected to personally escort a plant back to England with him by ship. Blooming with the long pendulous inflorescence while in transit, he was certain that this "new species" would finally be recognized and cultivated.

Nonetheless, when it bloomed again the next season, it made the shorter *ventricosum*-type inflorescence, much to its owner's dismay. But shortly thereafter it made a completely different stem that did bear the coveted, pendulous blooms. This behavior may have totally

mystified the botanists of the day, even Charles Darwin, but soon after it was realized that the genus creates separate inflorescences that can bear strikingly different, sexually dimorphic flowers.

Cycnoches is a genus of 34 species of low-elevation, warm to hot-growing epiphytes from seasonally dry forests occurring as far north as southern Mexico and as far south as northern Argentina. Plants grow rapidly in their summer growing season and require warm temperatures - 80-90 F (27-32 C) days and 65-70 F (18-21 C) nights - lots of fertilizer and a well-draining but moisture-retentive medium. Their elongated, leafy, cigar-shaped pseudobulbs can grow quite large in a single season and will usually continue to grow as long as they are given warm temperatures. Flower spikes usually appear in the autumn from near the apex of these large



Cycnoches chlorochilon is a commonly cultivated species that grows larger than most. The gracefully curved columns of the male flowers are reminiscent of the necks of swans, hence the genus name.

pseudobulbs just prior to plants entering their dormancy as the cooler weather and shorter days approach. The pseudobulbs are deciduous during the dry season and growers must be vigilant about keeping them as dry as possible while they are dormant.

Some growers actually remove the leafless pseudobulbs from their pots, and even detach the previous years' roots to prevent them from rotting during dormancy. Care must be taken when these plants start active growth again, usually in February or March, as they rot easily if watered heavily before extensive new roots have formed. Usually it is best to wait until late March or April before repotting, watering and fertilizing sprouting pseudobulbs.



Cycnoches barthiorum bears many exotic fragrant blooms on dangling scapes.

Aside from the species originally imported during the early years of orchid discovery and explorations in the New World, such as *Cycnoches maculatum*, *Cycnoches chlorochilo*, and *Cycnoches pentadactylon*, some exciting species have more recently entered cultivation.

Some of the most notable are the chocolate-scented and hued *Cycnoches cooperi*, the astonishing *Cycnoches barthiorum* with its 3-inch (7.5 cm) flowers and the yellow flowered *Cycnoches herrenbusanum*. All of these have captured the hearts of orchid growers and hybridizers. These species are a wonder to behold when well cultivated and bloomed.

The first time I saw *Cyc. barthioru*, with its large, fragrant earth-toned flowers displayed on a cylindrically arranged inflorescence at the Greater New York International Orchid Show in the 1990s, I finally understood what "orchid fever" was. I still get that blissful feeling of wonder every time I see this species in

bloom. Even though I do suspect it is "laughing" at me, I don't care. That's how cool they are.



Swan' is another species bearing large and fragrant green flowers. The female flowers are shown.



Cycnoches, like those shown on this *Cyc. cooperi*, are produced in fewer numbers on shorter less pendulant spikes, but are generally larger and last longer than the male flowers.



Cycnoches cooperi makes rather large flowers which are variable in hue and many forms exist now that they are being plentifully produced from seed.