

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:

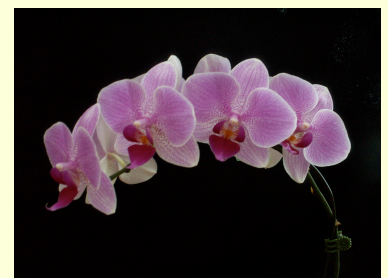
May 25, 2014 September 28, 2014 October 26, 2014
November 23, 2014, January 25, 2015 February 22, 2015

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
Mail Address:	SOS, Box 411 Saskatoon, SK S7K 3L3
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April Meeting

The April general meeting of the Society will be held on **April 27, 2014** at John Dolan School, commencing at 1:30 p.m. The meeting will feature the 3rd annual silent auction in support of the SOS.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

The April meeting will feature the 3rd 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.

Other than the silent auction, there will not be a sale table at the April meeting

The April meeting will have 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 2014-2015 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, 2015, 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 Cal Carter for organizing the display, and to all members who helped him create a wonderful exhibition. We wish to thank all

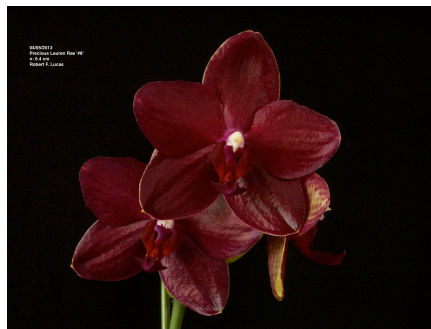
members who brought blooming plants and served as ambassadors during the Show. We have two pages of visitors who signed up for further information on the SOS and we are hopeful that this list will identify new members for the Society.

In addition, Heather Anderson 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 she did.

Heather and Cheryl organized the SOS display at the OSA Show in Edmonton on the first weekend in April. Sherdia, Lori, Pat, Evetter and Karen helped with the set-up and Don packed up the display and returned all the plants. Thanks to all of them and members who provided plants for the display. A detailed report on the Show follows the March minutes

Meeting Agenda

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



Phal Precious Lauren Rae

MARCH 23 MINUTES

Announcements

Cal welcomed everyone to the February meeting.

A variety of blooming and in-bud Miltonias as well as a few Phalaenopsis are available to be won in the raffle today; tickets may be purchased at the library table.

The sale table (plants brought in by members) will be available for sale to members

Cal will give a presentation after the break about judging Pleurothallids

The resource table has clay pots for sale for \$2.00, and free pot trays. Clear pots will be restocked for the next meeting as a couple of sizes are not available today.

The library has a new book available for loan entitled Compendium of Miniature Orchid Species (A-G).

Jan Dougall has made a poster for next year's COC The poster was shown and will be displayed at Gardenscape and with the SOS' display at the Edmonton show.

Gardenscape is coming up next weekend. Please see Cal today for volunteer passes. Please bring plants to Prairieland Park on Thursday, March 27th between 5 and 7 p.m. Tear down of display and pickup of plants will occur Sunday between 5:00 and 5:30. We will not be doing cut flower sales during Gardenscape.

The OSA show is April 4-6th in Edmonton. Please drop off plants for the display at Heather's house between 6:00 and 7:30pm on Wednesday April 2nd, pick up at Don's will be Monday, April 7th,

between 4:00 and 7:00 p.m.

The April meeting will feature our 3rd annual silent auction, as well as the AGM and elections to the Executive. Auction items (orchids or orchid-related) may be donated or proceeds split 50/50 with the SOS.

Early memberships may be purchased in April, and as an incentive, a \$5.00 voucher for the supply table, or a Plal seedling will be offered for renewals

Thank you to Obthavy, Pat, Ellen, Tracey and Lori for bringing snacks today.

Problem Corner

An otherwise healthy Dendrobium in bloom has one cane of differently coloured and shaped flowers. It was suggested that this could be a mutation or more likely two different plants growing closely together.

A Dendrobium has had no new growth, and has lost its leaves. It was suggested that it be watered sparsely for now and then to start fertilizing once it has stopped blooming and new growths have started.

Show and Tell

Bob Lucas, Heather Anderson, Mary Orchard and Jennifer Burgess.

Break

Presentation

Cal presented "Judging Pleurothallids", giving an overview of the different genus in this group through colorful photos, and showing examples of the varied flower characteristics upon which the plants are judged.

Plant Raffle

There were six Miltonias and three Phalaenopsis, all of which were donated by Safeway.

Plant sale

There were twenty-seven plants for sale, including blooming Phalaenopsis and Cattleya hybrids, and Brassavola seedlings.

Adjournment: 3:00 p.m.

REPORT ON THE OSA SHOW BY HEATHER ANDERSON

The 37th Annual Orchid Society of Alberta (OSA) Show was held at Hole's Enjoy Centre April 4-6, 2014 with a record breaking attendance of 3,077. Accredited judges from the American Orchid Society (AOS) judged both plants and displays.

The Show was attended by 14 SOS members. The Enjoy Centre is a unique multi-use facility featuring a greenhouse, café and restaurant, whole foods, deli, bakery and event space.

The SOS display was transported to St. Albert by Cheryl Adamson and Heather Anderson and was set up with the assistance of 5 other Society members. The SOS display contained an impressive 45 member orchids. It was awarded the Martin Nussbaumer Trophy for the best display by a visiting Society.



Members won the following ribbons – Cheryl Adamson two 1st, one 2nd, one 3rd; Heather Anderson one 1st; Bob Lucas one 3rd; Karen St. Marie one 1st; Tracey Thue one 1st, two 2nd, two 3rd. Tracey received a ribbon for every orchid she entered – WOW! 32 plants (out of 495 entries) were nominated for an AOS Award – Cheryl's Phrag. Belle Hogue Point and Heather's Path. chamberlainianum were in the

group nominated. 11 AOS Awards were given out and all went to OSA members.

Throughout the weekend there were potting demonstrations and a series of 10 educational presentations. There were 17 vendors (International, Canadian, and U.S. growers) selling orchids and orchid related material. The Saturday night banquet was also held at the Enjoy Centre and during the evening 33 trophies were presented for various categories/classes.

The 2015 COC hosted by SOS was promoted throughout the weekend and at the banquet. Finally, after all other SOS members had returned home, Don Keith knocked down the display and returned it to Saskatoon Sunday evening. He is our hero!



Zygo Advance Australia Exhibitor: Karen St-Marie

Photo Credits: Pat Randall

A COMPENDIUM OF MINIATURE ORCHID SPECIES, VOL. 1 BYRON PARSONS & MARY E. GERRITSEN. PUBLISHED 2013 BY REDFERN NATURAL HISTORY PRODUCTIONS, POOLE, DORSET, ENGLAND. REVIEWED BY TRACEY THUE.

In this digital age when much of our information is read from a computer screen or electronic tablet, I often miss the slow, tactile experience of flipping through the pages of a bound book. The SOS library has a new book that will satisfy this feeling, while educating you on a wonderful group of orchid species that fall into a category called miniatures. A large, hardcover book with outstanding photos throughout, this first of two volumes describes in beautiful detail miniature species from A – G.

The book begins with a wonderful introduction to the Orchid Family. It includes descriptions of orchid morphology, detailed labeled photographs showing flower parts, wonderful photos comparing growth forms between species: root forms, stem forms, pseudobulb forms, leaf forms & patterns, and inflorescence forms. This chapter was my favorite of the entire book, and is a marvelous resource for all orchid growers, not just those of miniature orchids.

The next chapter of the book describes habitats where miniatures grow, and the conservation of these biomes. Photos & descriptions of habitats include elevations, temperatures, rainfall, and the major plant species (orchid and non-orchid) found growing here. This section will be very helpful for those of us trying to understand what a species needs to grow and flower, so that we can strive to meet those conditions artificially.

Habitat descriptions lead into a chapter on miniature orchid

culture. This includes excellent guidance tables and text describing temperatures, humidity, ventilation, light levels, water, potting & mounting, pests & diseases with suggestions for prevention or treatment. Again, outstanding photos are included showing different styles plant growing areas, and photos of exquisitely grown species are dispersed through the text.

The main part of book lists miniature orchid species alphabetically by genera. Volume

1: A – G (Acianthera to Grandiphyllum).

Each species treatment includes:

- Scientific name
- Who first described it and in what scientific publication [for example, *Acianthera braggae* (Ruschi) F. Barros *Hoehnea* 30: 183 (2003)]
- Etymology (who it was named for)
- Synonyms
- Morphology
- Range, elevation, habitat

- Culture recommendations
- Comments
- Photos

When I reached the last entry on *Grandiphyllum* I was disappointed to find I'd come to the end of the book! I await volume 2 with anticipation and am confident that you too will find volume 1 entertaining and educational.

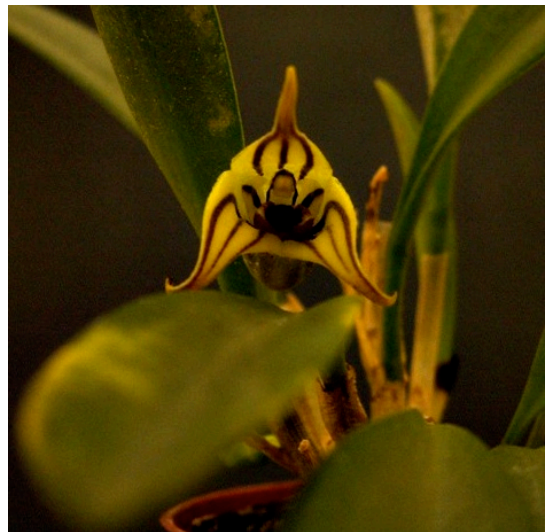
Editor's Note: The book is a new acquisition of the SOS Library, and it is available for loan by members, for one month

SOS MARCH SHOW AND TELL TABLE



Phal. Princess Kaiulani Exhibitor: Bob Lucas

Paph. hirsutissimum var esquirolei Exhibitor: Mary Orchard



Masd. murex Exhibitor: Heather Anderson





Aerangis luteoalba var *rhodosticta* Exhibitor: Jenn Burgess



Phal Bedford Bellissimo Exhibitor: Lynn Campbell

ORCHID FEVER BY SUSAN ORLEAN PART II

EDITOR'S NOTE: THIS ARTICLE IS REPRINTED FROM THE JANUARY 1995 ISSUE OF THE NEW YORKER.

Orchid collecting began in Victorian England as a hobby for the very rich—people with enough land for greenhouses and enough money to sponsor expeditions to where the rarest species could be found. The hobby grew so consuming that it was known in Victorian times as orchidelirium, because a sort of mania seized collectors. Many seemingly normal people, once smitten with orchids, become less like normal people and more like John Laroche.

At an orchid show in New York last year, I heard the same story over and over—how one orchid in the kitchen led to a dozen, and then to a back-yard greenhouse, and then, in some cases, to multiple greenhouses and collecting trips to Asia and Africa and an ever-expanding

budget to service this desire. I walked around the show with a collector from Guatemala. He said, "The bug hits you. You can join A.A. to quit drinking, but once you get into orchids you can't do anything to kick." Collecting can be a sort of lovesickness. If you begin collecting living things, you are pursuing something imperfectible, and even if you manage to find them and then possess them, there is no guarantee they won't die or change. The botanical complexity of orchids and their mutability makes them perhaps the most compelling and maddening of all collectible living things. There are nearly twenty thousand named species of orchids—it is the largest flowering-plant family on earth.

New orchids are being created in laboratories or discovered every day, and others exist only in tiny numbers in remote places. To desire orchids is to have a desire that can never be fully requited. A collector who wants one of every orchid species will die before even coming close.

A calamitous frost in South Florida in 1989 killed off a lot of nursery stock, including some of Laroche's, and then, in 1991, a bad batch of fungicides killed orchids and other plants in greenhouses all around the country. Laroche had barely anything left.

Three years earlier, a drunk driver had run into his car; the accident knocked out Laroche's front teeth, put his wife in a coma for several weeks, and

his mother and uncle. He and his wife later separated, which he says now was because he realized that she could sit through an entire Grateful Dead album and he could not. Then, in August of 1992, Hurricane Andrew struck. At the time, Laroche had his remaining plants in three different greenhouses, in Miami and Homestead. In the storm, two of the three greenhouses vanished entirely. The third more or less exploded. When he went to examine that third greenhouse, he came upon a hash that he recognized as one of his plants; it was in the middle of the road about three blocks from where the greenhouse had been. Salt water carried inland by the storm poisoned the rest. At that point, he had been in the plant business for about twelve years. He had been a famous plant person. Laroche decided then and there that he would die of a broken heart if he ever opened his own nursery again.

The Seminole Tribe of Florida, Inc., didn't have a nursery, but the idea of starting one was among many self-help projects contemplated by the tribe. The Seminoles own ninety thousand acres in Florida. Unemployment in the tribe is nearly forty per cent. The Seminoles' plan was to hire a white man with expertise, let him get the nursery going and teach tribe members as much as possible, and then eventually replace the white manager with a member of the tribe.

The Seminoles ran an ad in the paper. John Laroche saw it, applied, and was hired by the tribe. Of course, he was

temperamentally disinclined to do the job the easy way. He decided to make the nursery something spectacular. He wanted to cultivate exotic things--spinach that grows on vines, pumpkins that can be trained onto a trellis, hot peppers shaped like penises, a hundred varieties of what he calls "weird-ass vegetables." He also wanted to build a laboratory for cloning orchids. He was not interested in corsage orchids: he wanted to cultivate rare endangered species that are now available only on the black market. If he succeeded, he would wreak havoc on the illegal plant trade--a prospect that appealed to him, especially if he could do it by some Laroche-style convoluted means.

After he was hired by the Seminoles, Laroche's new passion became Indian law. He spent hours in the University of Miami law library. He studied the State of Florida's case against the Miccosukee Indians for poaching palm fronds. He learned the tortuous history of the State of Florida v. James E. Billie, in which the government tried, unsuccessfully, to convict Chief Billie, the chairman of the Seminole tribal council, for shooting, skinning, and eating an endangered species of panther. When his research was done, Laroche was convinced he had found a loophole in the state code which exempted Seminoles from laws protecting rare plants.

Orchids first evolved in the tropics, but there are now orchids all over the world, broadcast by air currents. The seeds of an orchid are dark and tiny and as

fine as gunpowder; one hurricane can carry millions of them thousands of miles. A strong enough gust and a few seedpods from South America could export enough prom corsages to Miami to last until the end of time. Winds blowing into Florida drop seeds in swimming pools and barbecue pits and on highways and shuffleboard courts and hotel parking lots and the roofs of office buildings, and also in places that are tranquil and damp and warm, where the seeds can germinate and grow. Many seeds crossing the Gulf of Mexico probably drop and die along the way, but any that stay aloft and then fall someplace like the Fakahatchee have a chance to thrive. At the turn of the century, the Fakahatchee was filled with so many orchids of so many different species that it was like an orchid supermarket.

The last comprehensive survey of the Fakahatchee's plants was done in 1987. It listed forty-five orchid species. One species, known as the Fakahatchee ladies'-tresses orchid (*Spiranthes lanceolata* var. *paludicola*), was first described in the Fakahatchee. Ten species found here exist nowhere else in the United States--the rattail orchid, the crooked-spur orchid, the dwarf epidendrum, the twisted orchid, Gale's orchid, the false water spider, Harris's tiny orchid, the hidden orchid, the small-flowered maxillaria, and the frosted-flower orchid. Most of these are homely, with skinny roots and spindly leaves and puny flowers. People who like the fat, flamboyant orchids would find these plants

enormously disappointing. On the other hand, a real collector--the sort Laroche has come to be and to know--would find them irresistible if he or she were trying to amass a comprehensive collection; they could also be crossbred with greenhouse plants to create something never seen before.

The only really pretty orchid in the Fakahatchee is the ghost. When it is out of bloom, the ghost, which is leafless, looks like flat green straps about the width of linguine. Once a year, when it blooms, the ghost is lovely. The flower is as white as paper. In the center is the intricate lip that is characteristic of all orchids. The ghost's lip is particularly pronounced and pouty, and each of its two corners tapers into a long, fluttery tail. The shape, the delicacy, and the quivery sensitivity of these slender tails makes the flower look like feathers or the legs of a ballerina or two little flags. Because it is leafless and grows on trees, and because the root system blends into the tree or rock it wraps around, the bloom of the ghost can appear invisibly suspended, as if it were a creature in flight. The whiteness of the flower is startling against the gray and green of the swamp.

The species is temperamental, difficult to propagate, rarely seen in cultivation, hard to find in the wild. Once when I was at the Fakahatchee, one of the rangers got a phone call from a woman in Georgia who will spend whatever

it takes to see the ghost orchid in bloom. She wanted to know if the ranger had seen any that were ready to flower. After talking to him, she left work and got on a plane to Florida and rented a car and hiked into the swamp the following day. No amount of money in the world would have made a difference, because the ghost orchid the ranger had seen had by then lost its bloom and was once again just a tangle of roots on a tree. Carlyle Luer, the author of "The Native Orchids of Florida," the definitive guide to the subject, once wrote of the ghost orchid, "Should one be lucky enough to see a flower, all else will seem eclipsed."

On December 21, 1993, Laroche and three Seminole men who were working with him at the nursery--Dennis Osceola, Vinson Osceola, and Russell Bowers--went into the Fakahatchee and walked through the long cypress strands, over the bunchy cypress domes, and through the muck to a deep-swamp section known as West Lake. The twenty-first was a muggy day. The men left their van on William Janes Scenic Drive, a gravel road that forks off State Road 29 a few miles south of Copeland Road State Prison. It was an unusual place to park. When a ranger on patrol saw the van, he decided to stop and wait until its occupants returned. Some time passed. Finally, the four men emerged from the woods. They were carrying several garbage bags and pillowcases. After they were arrested, they opened the bags

and pillowcases, so the ranger could tag and photograph what they had taken from the swamp--a hundred and thirty-six plants, including *Catopsis nutans* (nodding catopsis), *Tillandsia pruinosa* (fuzzy-wuzzy air plant), *Peperomia obtusifolia* (Florida peperomia), and dozens of wild orchids. In the pillowcases were crooked-spur, clamshell, butterfly, brown, night, rigid, twisted, and shiny-leaf orchids, and several specimens of the much admired, highly prized, rare white-flowered species *Polyrrhiza lindenii*--the ghost.

The ranger who wrote up the charges and the prosecutor who filed the official report weren't sure whether the Seminoles were working for Laroche or whether Laroche was working for the Seminoles. On the one hand, Laroche had been hired by the tribe to set up a plant nursery on the reservation, but, on the other hand, Laroche was a nurseryman who had lost his own plants and needed new ones. He knew where to find rare plants for free, and he could have been using the Seminoles to circumvent the law. What was clear was that the plants the four men had collected were rare and valuable, and that they had been harvested carefully. The epiphytic species--the ones that grow attached to tree limbs--had been left on their branches. It was also clear that the person who understood the value of all these plants, and knew what to do with them, was John Laroche.

To be continued