

# 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 [thues@sasktel.net](mailto:thues@sasktel.net).

## Future Meeting Dates:

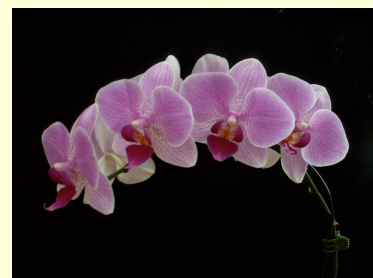
September 28, 2014	October 26, 2014	November 23, 2014
January 25, 2015	February 22, 2015	March 22, 2015

## SOS Executive

<b>President:</b>	Bob Lucas
<b>Vice-President:</b>	Sherida Gregoire
<b>Past President:</b>	Cal Carter
<b>Secretary:</b>	Jennifer Burgess
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Cheryl Grummett
<b>Social:</b>	Shirley Keith Lori Pozniak
<b>Plant Orders:</b>	Heather Anderson Cheryl Adamson
<b>Resources:</b>	Yvette Lyster Pat Randall
<b>Librarians:</b>	Jan Dougall Debby Huciliak
<b>Newsletter:</b>	Tracey Thue
<b>COC/AOS Rep:</b>	Eugene Kucey
<b>Speakers:</b>	Don Keith
<b>Webmaster:</b>	Jennifer Burgess
<b>Mail Address:</b>	SOS, Box 411 Saskatoon, SK S7K 3L3
<b>Web Address:</b>	<a href="http://www.saskorchids.com">www.saskorchids.com</a>

## May Meeting

The May general meeting of the Society will be held on **May 25, 2014** at John Dolan School, commencing at 1:30 p.m. The meeting will feature a presentation on paludariums for orchids by Michael Ali of Edmonton.



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

The May meeting will feature a visit by Michael Ali of Edmonton. Michael will talk on the construction of paludariums for orchid growing. Anyone who has been to the OSA show in the past few years will have seen Michael's wonderful handiwork on display. **Although Michael will be bringing a few plants for sale, you are also encouraged to bring your own divisions for the sale table.**

A big thank you is extended to all members who brought items for the 3rd annual auction at the April meeting and who bought items in support of the SOS. The auction was a great success and it raised \$692.50 for the Society.

The May 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.

Membership renewals for 2014-2015 will be on sale at the May meeting. An incentive for early registration, members will be eligible for a \$5.00 gift certificate which can be redeemed at the resource table until the January meeting, 2015.

The Show and Tell draw will be conducted at the May meeting. Each time you bring a plant for the Show and Tell table throughout the year, you are entered into the draw. The winner will receive an orchid.

Since the May meeting is the last meeting for the year, be sure to pick up any supplies you might need over the summer from the resources table.

Meeting Agenda

Announcements

Problem Corner

Show and Tell

Elections to the Executive

Coffee/Supplies

Silent Auction

Plant Raffle

Adjournment



Phal Precious Lauren Rae

## APRIL 27 MINUTES

### Announcements

Cal welcomed everyone to the April meeting.

Membership renewals for 2014-2015 will be on sale at today's 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 from Bob Lucas. Since there are a limited number of seedlings available, they will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

Resources has potting mix from Forestview, selling for \$6.00 /bag, as well as a pro-silicate product for use with fertilizer.

A Compendium of Miniature Orchid Species, Vol. 2, will be available to borrow from the library next month.

Thank you to Karen, Irene, James, Ruth and Bernie, Donna and Levina for bringing snacks

Thank you to those who helped with Gardenscape and with the Edmonton show, and to Heather who set up the orchid garden at Gardenscape.

The Best Visiting Society Display award was given to the SOS at the Edmonton show; ; Thanks to Cheryl Adamson, Heather Anderson, Sherida Gregoire, Lori Pozniak, Pat Randall, Yvette Lyster and Karen St Marie for setting up; and to Don Keith for single-handedly taking down and bringing back the display and plants. The Award will be given to him to keep in recognition for his work.

Silent Auction bids are to be in \$1 increments, bidding will continue until later in the meeting, at which point bids will be stopped one table at a time. Proceeds of the auction assist the society by providing funding for guest speakers who most often come from out of province to speak and who also bring plants for sale.

Mishaal Ali of Edmonton will be coming next month to speak about paludariums. A paludarium is a type of vivarium that incorporates both terrestrial and aquatic elements. Michael has applied this technique to the culture of orchids.

Problem Corner

No issues were reported.

Show and Tell

Plants were shown by Cheryl Adamson, Heather Anderson, Merle Ward, Lynn Campbell, Ellen Ross, Tracey Thue, Sherida

Gregoire, Don Keith, Jennifer Burgess, Bob Lucas, and Cal Carter

Break

Award Presentation

The Third Annual Wilma Nykiforuk Memorial Award is given to the 'best plant' on the Show Table at the April Meeting. Sarah Nykiforuk and Don Keith served as judges. Tracey Thue received the award for her Iwanagaara 'Apple Blossom'. She was awarded a mini cattleya in bloom.

Elections

Cal presented a slate of nominees for the Executive of the SOS for 2014-15. Dave Robinson moved that nominations close and the motion was seconded by Lynn Campbell. The vote was unanimously in favor. The Executive for 2014-15 is as follows:

President – Bob Lucas

Vice President – Sherida Gregoire

Past President – Cal Carter

Secretary – Jennifer Burgess

Treasurer – Cheryl Grummett

Plant Orders – Cheryl Adamson, Heather Anderson

Social Directors – Shirley Keith, Lori Pozniak

Librarians – Jan Dougal

Resources – Yvette Lyster, Pat Randall

Newsletter – Traey Thue

AOS/COC rep – Eugene Kucey

Speaker Co-ordinator – Don Keith

WebMaster – Jennifer Burgess

Constitution

Cal Carter moved the following changes to the SOS Constitution: that the "AGM

shall *normally* be held in April," and that "*Guests may purchase plants, resource material and raffle tickets on the invitation of the Executive.*" Bob Lucas moved that the changes be accepted as presented, Karen St. Marie seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor.

Plant Raffle

There were over 20 plants available, mostly blooming phalaenopsis of various colours, all donated by Safeway.

Auction

There were approximately 50 orchids, and an assortment of other items including orchid-related clothing, pots, a hygrometer and a terrarium.

Adjournment: 3:30 p.m.

**A COMPENDIUM OF MINIATURE ORCHID SPECIES, VOL. 2 BYRON PARSONS & MARY E. GERRITSEN. PUBLISHED 2013 BY REDFERN NATURAL HISTORY PRODUCTIONS, POOLE, DORSET, ENGLAND. REVIEWED BY TRACEY THUE.**

Volume 2 of this marvelous compendium has arrived from England and I've been enjoying it immensely. Volume 2 picks up where volume 1 ended, with descriptions of species from H – Z (Haraella – Zygostates). The format is so easy to navigate, and photography so spectacular it's easy to forget the educational aspect of this text, that of scientific plant description, classification and habitat!

I was flipping slowly through the book, enjoying photographs of species familiar

and new to me, when I stopped with an exclamation at a set of 3 photos showing glistening white flowers, looking sugar-coated, with a bright green spot on the lip. The species pictured was *Hymenorchis javanica* – what an interesting genus name, to what does that refer, I wondered? The etymology entry says it is "from the Greek hymen (fine membrane) and orkhis (testicle, meaning orchid by extension), a reference to the fine texture of the flowers". The habitat

description tells us that it is an epiphyte from western Java and culture recommendations indicate intermediate to intermediate-cool temperature with light to medium shade and high humidity. Wow, this is one I could grow on my kitchen windowsill with my other miniature cool growers – add it to my wish list! Yes, beware: browsing through this book could result in your wish list growing considerably

Another interesting discovery for me was the entry for *Specklinia grobyi*, a species

that I have in my collection under the synonym *Pleurothallis grobyi*. The comments section indicates that this species has more synonyms than most orchids – there are 22 synonyms listed here! The entry for species *Isabelia virginalis* interested me since I have a plant that I obtained from J&L Orchids at the 1999 World Orchid Congress in Vancouver. It's been a sporadic flowerer for me, so I was keen to read the culture recommendations. I'm reminded to let it dry between watering, something I struggle with since my quality time with the plants includes a watering wand in hand! But the photo of a large tree in Brazil carpeted with *Isabelia virginalis* plants, completely covering the

trunk and main branches reinforces the idea of dry!

A second page-stopper was the entry for genus *Penducella* (synonym *Lepanthes*) with photographs of plants growing in situ in Columbia. The plants grow as chains of leaves like beads or coins on a string, suspended from moss-covered tree branches, with tiny red or red and yellow flowers. My daughter pointed out the full-page photo of *Phalaenopsis gibbosa*, its white flowers with yellow-orange markings looking like a deranged Pokémon character!

Four appendices follow the section of species descriptions. Appendix I lists species not covered in this compendium which can be classified as

miniatures. Appendix II lists species that are nearly miniatures at 15 – 20cm tall, as well as species that have both small and large forms that would otherwise be listed in Appendix I. Appendix III is a list of orchid sources, Appendix IV a list of supplies and additional information.

This volume finishes with a glossary, bibliography, index of plants covered in both volumes, a general index as well as introductions to authors Mary Gerritsen (a native of Calgary, AB!) and Ron Parsons.

This compendium is an absolute treasure that will have beginner and experienced orchid growers lining up to borrow it from the society library! ENJOY!

## **SOS MARCH SHOW AND TELL TABLE**



Rescue Phal Exhibitor: Merle Ward



Phrag. Hanna Popow Exhibitor: Tracey Thue





Brass. digbyana Exhibitor: Ellen Ross



Onc. Sherry Baby Exhibitor: Pat Randall

Aerangis luteoalba var rhodosticta Exhibitor:  
Cheryl Adamson



Den. Rainbow Dancer Exhibitor: Heather  
Anderson



Angraecum fastuosa Exhibitor: Don Keith





Paph. Honey Exhibitor: Lynn Cambell



Paph. (Yosemite Amanda x Cinnamon Moon)  
Exhibitor: Cal Carter



Paph. farrianum Exhibitor Sherida Gregoire

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## ORCHID FEVER BY SUSAN ORLEAN PART III

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

One day after the arrest, I drove to the headquarters of the tribe, which is in Hollywood, on the second-smallest Seminole reservation in Florida. At the north end of the reservation is

Santa's Magical Village Holiday Theme Park. Nearby is a statue of a Seminole wrestling an alligator. The sculptor had used an acquaintance of his as a model for the statue, even

though the acquaintance wasn't an Indian--the sculptor just happened to think the man had a good Indian-like build. The statue was made in the fifties, and the model was John



Laroche's father.

The biggest trailer at the Seminole headquarters belongs to Buster Baxley, the tribe's director of planning and development. Baxley is a husky man in his early forties. He has brown eyes, silky jowls, and hair the color of a basketball. He took me to Seminole Gardens, the tribe's nursery, which is a few minutes from the tribe headquarters and down the street from the Independent Bible Baptist Chickee Church.

Laroche's office is in another flimsy trailer, on the edge of the nursery property. Except for the trailer, nothing had yet sprouted at Seminole Gardens. As Baxley and I pulled into the lot, Vinson Osceola and two other men were standing near the trailer, looking at a pile of metal hoops and nylon netting. There was little else in sight except a stack of sawhorses and cedar planters, and some plastic bags bursting with mulch. Laroche was inside at his desk, reading a postcard he had just received from a friend of his named Walter. He said that Walter is crazy about water lilies, and will travel anywhere in the world at a moment's notice if he hears about a rare one.

Sometimes Walter collects the plant, to grow at home, and sometimes he just takes a look at it. The postcard was from Botswana. Laroche held it up and read it. "He says, 'Plants are good. See you soon.' " He put down the card and said, "Walter's pretty crazy." Baxley stood in the doorway of the office and ignored Laroche's reading of the card. He waved his hand toward the

window and said, "John, how're those boys working out?" Laroche said, "Fine, Buster." He put his feet up on the desk and started rocking back and forth in his chair.

He was wearing camouflage pants, a Miami Hurricanes hat, and a Chicago Blackhawks T-shirt. Baxley said, "Everyone thought John was exploiting those Indian boys so he could do his poaching and set his own nursery up. Well, I was the one who authorized it. I told them to go out and gather what they needed. John brought me the Florida statute he found saying Indians were exempt from the laws about plant gathering, and we thought that the nursery should have some of the wild plants for propagation and a display. I questioned him about it several times, because I wanted to be sure about it, and I put him off for about a month, because I wanted to do the research myself." Laroche pulled his face into an expression of mock horror and said, "Buster! You didn't believe me?" Baxley said, "Then, at first, when they were all arrested, we thought it was discrimination against us and against the tribe. Now I think that if those rangers had just caught the Indian boys, they would have let them go. They don't want to mess around with us, with Indian rights. We hold nature close to us! We're not like the non-Indian who strips the land just to make a buck. We don't hunt just to hunt. We hunt to survive! The State of Florida better not mess around with what's my right." He puffed his

chest and said, "Otherwise, I'll go in there and take every single thing in the Fakahatchee that's alive." Laroche stopped rocking in his chair and crashed forward onto the desk. He frowned and said, "Aaaaaw, come on now, Buster." Baxley looked at him and then looked back at me and said, "The rangers didn't want those Indians. It's John here they wanted to skin alive."

Baxley decided to go back to his office and do some paperwork on a joint citrus-growing venture between the Seminoles and some Japanese investors. Laroche and I went out to his van. Laroche wanted to go visit some plants of his that had survived the hurricane and had then been sold to a nursery called Tropical Paradise. Outside, the sky was gauzy and the air felt like glue. The workmen had staked up some of the metal hoops for potting areas. Vinson Osceola came over to us, carrying a spade. He is a young man with long, glossy hair, meaty shoulders, and a shy, slightly tearful gaze. He and Laroche talked for a few minutes about the construction project. He mentioned that Dennis Osceola had been injured and wasn't doing nursery work for the time being, and that Russell Bowers, the other defendant in the orchid poaching, was currently "off the res." "I'm not going to talk to you too much," Osceola said to me. "It's not personal. It's the Indian way."

Laroche talked while we drove. "Originally, the Indians just wanted to dig up some stuff on the reservation and sell it. So I explained the nursery business to

them. I said, "You can dig stuff up and sell it, but it's better to propagate." I explained to them that you can tissue-culture orchids, clone them, and from one you can get billions. I've always been into propagation. I was big on plant mutation, too—mutating for fun and profit. You expose seeds to radiation or chemicals and you get cool stuff that's never been seen before on earth. It's a great little hobby, plant mutation. You compress the evolution of life into one or two years. I think it's good for the world to promote it as a hobby.

There are a lot of wasted lives out there, and people with nothing to do. To me, mutation is the answer to everything. Have you ever wondered why some people are smarter than other people? It's because they mutated when they were babies. I think I was one of those people. I got exposed to something that mutated me, and I'm now incredibly smart. I'm one of only five or six people in the entire country who know how to propagate the ghost orchid in a plant laboratory.

My plan is to take some orchids out of the wild, sell some now, cultivate the rest in the laboratory we're building at the nursery, and in a few years have thousands to sell. Right now, there's a black market in these orchids, especially the ghosts, because you can't get them. There's big money in it. They have a huge value in places like Australia, where people love orchids and can't get these varieties. The price would come down on each individual plant,

but we'd be able to sell millions of them once we got them into cultivation, so we'd still make a ton of money.

My plant friends used to say, "If John ever gets some land and some money, watch out." Well, the Indians needed a nurseryman, and I needed some land and some money, and I researched the law and realized that it was really vague about the Indians' taking things out of state preserves. I think the law is messed up and it ought to be changed because I don't think you ought to have a bunch of Indians just running through the Fakahatchee pulling up plants, but in the meantime someone's going to get the benefit of the law being the way it is now, and I figure it might as well be me."

We drove down a gravel road lined with chubby palm trees. A steamy breeze was blowing past my open window. The sun coming through the palm fronds painted stripes across the road. He said, "I figured that we'd get what we needed out of the Fakahatchee and at the same time we'd bring so much attention to the law that the legislature would change it. I timed it so that it would be in time for the legislative session. That's what I want to say in court. I want to say that the state needs to protect itself." He raised an eyebrow at me. "I'm planning to protect myself, too." We banged across some railroad tracks. Laroche turned toward me and said, "I'm working for the Seminoles, but I'm really on the side of the plants. The law shouldn't let anybody go out there and pull up the damn plants. Is

what I did ethical? I don't know. I'm a shrewd bastard. I could be a great criminal. I could be a great con man, but it's more interesting to live your life within the confines of the law. People look at what I do and think, Is that moral? Is that right? Well, isn't every great thing the result of that kind of thinking? Look at something like atomic energy. It can be diabolic or a blessing. Evil or good. Well, that's where the give is. The edge of ethics. And that's where I like to live."

At Tropical Paradise, Laroche tried to persuade the owner, Joseph Fondeur, to let him buy back the plants he had sold to Fondeur after the hurricane. The plants in question were huge hoyas with rubbery leaves and long, snaky vines. Fondeur said he was not interested in selling the hoyas back to Laroche. Laroche pointed out that he now had a large nursery on the reservation and was able once again to give the hoyas a suitable home. "Not interested," Fondeur said, stroking a hoyia leaf. "I'm coming back for them," Laroche said. "Come on, Joseph." Fondeur stroked another leaf. "No. I love them now. At this point, they're really mine, not yours." They talked for a moment. Fondeur agreed that when the plants reproduced he would give some of the little ones to Laroche. Then Fondeur mentioned that he likes a wide variety of plants and was keeping the orchid inventory at his nursery to a minimum. "Orchid people are too crazy," he said. "They buy the orchid and they kill it. Fern people might even be the worst, but the orchid



people too--oh, you know. They think they're superior." He looked at Laroche and said, "You collecting anything now?" "No," Laroche said. "I don't want to collect anything right now. I have to watch myself around plants. Even now, I still get that feeling. I'll see something and I'll get that feeling. I'll think to myself, Jesus Christ, that's interesting. Boy, I'll bet you could find a lot of those."

The American Orchid Society was worried about the orchid-poaching case; if Laroche and the Seminoles were found innocent, it could start a run on orchids growing on public land everywhere. The society's headquarters are in West Palm Beach, just about a hundred and fifty miles from the Collier County Courthouse, down a highway called Alligator Alley. Before Chief Billie shot his panther, the last panther to die of unnatural causes in South Florida had been hit by a speeding vehicle on Alligator Alley. The society has almost thirty thousand members.

At the office, you can sign up for an Orchid Society Visa card, which is imprinted with a picture of a yellow *Brassolaeliocattleya* with a reddish lip as full and shapely as a handbag. You can also look at fifty thousand color slides of award-winning orchids, including slides of the most valuable orchids in the world -- for instance, a *Phragmipedium besseae* lady-slipper, with slim blood-red petals and a crimson lip. If you desperately wanted this lady-slipper orchid, you might be

able to buy one for several hundred dollars; ten years ago, before anyone had propagated it in a nursery, this *Phragmipedium* was extremely rare, and it cost five thousand dollars.

The orchid-poaching case was eventually resolved not on the matter of the orchids but on the matter of the trees, which everyone -- Laroche, Baxley, the prosecutor, and the rangers in the Fakahatchee -- knew was not the real question but the only clear one left once you sorted out the law. As the law is currently written, Indians are arguably immune from statutes protecting endangered plants anywhere -- in state preserves, in private back yards, or on a Seminole reservation. If Bowers and the Osceolas had taken only endangered plants, they might have been able to claim complete immunity, and the charges might have been dropped. But most of the orchids Laroche wanted were growing on trees, and he wanted to take them out attached to the branches so their roots wouldn't be damaged. The trees orchids love to grow on -- pond apples and common swamp growth -- are not endangered.

At the hearing, Judge Brenda C. Wilson refused to dismiss the entire case on the grounds of immunity, but the Seminoles were not charged with possession of an endangered species. In that sense, Laroche was right -- he had uncovered a basic contradiction in the law. His only mistake was that they had been too painstaking in the way they removed the orchids. A few weeks later, the three Seminoles decided to plead no

contest to Florida Administrative Code 16D-2.003 (6), which forbids removal of plant life from state parks, for cutting up trees and taking plants from the state preserve.

Laroche was granted no immunity -- the Judge ruled that Indian immunity does not extend to non-Indian tribe employees -- so he either had to go to trial or plead no contest to removing both the flowers and the trees. He took the plea. He had to pay a fine and court costs and he was placed on six months' probation, during which he is not allowed into the Fakahatchee Strand. He had won and lost. He had found the loophole in the law but lost the case; found the orchids but lost the right to keep them; and found himself famous but slightly disgraced. He told me that he thought he had been crucified. He seemed animated by the tension of the events, and by the fact that he was right and wrong simultaneously. This put him on the ethically narrow ledge that he considers his favorite place. The one other thing he lost, for now, is the Fakahatchee, which is another favorite place of his.

You have to want something very badly to be willing to go looking for it in the Fakahatchee. The Fakahatchee Strand is a preserve of sixty-three thousand coastal lowland acres, about twenty-five miles southeast of Naples, in that part of Collier County where satiny lawns and golf courses give way to wild saw grass with edges as sharp as scythes. Part of the Fakahatchee is deep swamp, part is cypress stand,

part is wet woods, part is estuarine tidal marsh, and part is parched wet prairie. Over all, the Fakahatchee is as flat as a cracker. Ditches and dents fill up fast with oozing groundwater. Bumps and wrinkles are easy to see. Most of the land is at an elevation of five or ten feet, and some of it is dead even with the sea.

The Fakahatchee has a certain strange, wild beauty. It is also an aggressively inhospitable place. In fact, the hours I spent retracing Laroche's footsteps were probably the most miserable I have spent in my entire life. The swampy part of the Fakahatchee is hot and wet and buggy, and full of cottonmouth snakes and diamondback rattlers and alligators and snapping turtles and poisonous plants and wild hogs and things that stick into you and on you and fly into your nose and eyes.

Crossing the swamp is a battle. You can walk through about as calmly as you would walk through a car wash. In the

middle of the swamp, the sinkholes are filled with as much as seven feet of standing water, and the air has the slack, drapery weight of wet velvet. Sides of trees look sweaty. Leaves are slick from the humidity. The mud sucks your feet and tries to keep a hold of them; failing that, it settles for your shoes. The water in the swamp is stained black with tannin from the cypress trees, which is so corrosive that it can cure leather.

Whatever isn't wet in the Fakahatchee is blasted. The sun pounds the treeless prairies. The grass gets so dry that the friction from a car can set it on fire, and the burning grass can engulf the car in flames. The Fakahatchee used to be littered with burned-up cars that had been abandoned by pan-fried adventurers. A botanist who travelled through the Fakahatchee in the forties recalled in an interview that he was most surprised by the area's interesting variety of squirrels

and by the number of charred Model T's.

Before I left Florida, I went into the swamp with the rangers, who had replanted the orchids Laroche had wanted so badly. Some of the plants were tucked into rock crevices and tree crotches. The sections of branches the ghost orchids were attached to had been wired onto the sides of trees. Orchids are slow to grow and slow to die. It will be some time before anyone can tell which of the purloined plants, if any, will survive. These ghost orchids were not blooming, so I went back out the next day and walked for hours to try to find one that was more than a green strap on a tree. I saw some roots, but it seemed as if the moment of their bloom had passed. I called Laroche to tell him this, and he said, "That's not true. They're out there. I know it. I know where they are." The phone was silent for a moment, and then he cleared his throat and said, "You should have gone with me."