

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 (blind copy so your email address remains private), please notify me at thues@sasktel.net.

Future Meeting Dates:

Saturday, Mar 23, 2019
Saturday, May 25, 2019

Saturday, Apr 27, 2019

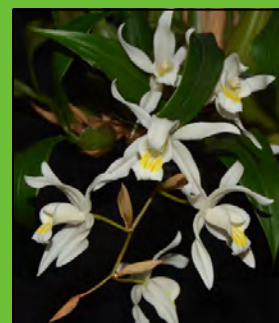
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Past President:	Sherida Gregoire
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COC/AOS Rep:	Tom Kondra
Speakers:	Heather Anderson
Webmaster:	Calvin Lo
Facebook:	Sara Thue
Mail Address:	SOS, Box 411 Saskatoon, SK S7K 3L3
Web Address:	www.saskorchids.com
facebook:	https:// www.facebook.com/saskorchidsociety?

February Meeting - Saturday, Feb 23, 2019

The general meeting will be held at
LUTHERCARE VILLAGE AT STONEBRIDGE,
beginning at 1:30 p.m.

Our guest, Calvin Wong from Tropical Gardens Orchids, will present
"Coelogyne, the classics, the new, and how to grow".



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Meeting Agenda:

Announcements

Presentation - Calvin Wong

Plant Sale - Offerings from
Tropical Gardens Orchids

BREAK:

Treats/Supplies/Library

Problem Corner

Show and Tell

Plant Sale - Member's plants
Adjournment

SOS GENERAL MEETING

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2019 @ 1:30PM

LUTHERCARE VILLAGE AT STONEBRIDGE

SOS Members are welcome to bring plants for sale to fellow society members, even when a guest speaker is attending with plants to sell.

We will have 2 separate plant sale tables, one for the guest vendor's plants, and one for the SOS members' plants.



COELOGYNE, THE
CLASSICS, THE NEW
AND HOW TO GROW

Calvin Wong
Tropical Gardens Orchids
Canadian Orchid Congress
AOS Western Canada Judging Center

JANUARY MEETING MINUTES

Recorded by Donna Carlson-O'Keefe

Announcements

Bob Lucas, President, welcomed members and guests to the meeting.

Memberships can be renewed today for the 2018-19 season. A single membership is \$25; a family membership is \$30.

Tickets for the plant raffle can be purchased at the library, 1 ticket for \$1, 3 for \$2. Plants this month were donated by Save-On-Foods.

Today's presentation is a webinar from the American Orchid Society about Orchia bark. The SOS has just purchased a shipment of Orchia bark, so it was thought that this would be a timely topic.

There are plants available on the sale table. Access is by lottery, so leave your membership number at the front table. When your number is drawn, you may choose one plant. If there are any left over, you may choose others at that time.

There is an option for selling plants. If a member has a nice blooming plant, it can be sold by silent auction, with 50% of the proceeds going to the SOS. Usually the SOS gets 10% of plant sale proceeds. Just let Bob know at the beginning of the meeting that you have a plant for silent auction.

Our February speaker will be Calvin Wong of Tropical Gardens Orchids in Richmond, BC. He will be bringing

plants for sale. Pre-orders are encouraged, and orders should be emailed to Heather Anderson by February 17.



Coelogyne marmorata
Photo by Sara Thue

Gardenscape will be March 29-31, and the society is entering a display, so we are looking for plants and volunteers. Volunteers to work shifts at the display will get a free one-day pass to Gardenscape, which will be distributed at the March meeting, or at the time of display set-up. A sign-up sheet is being distributed.

We will be entering a display in the Orchid Society of Alberta Show in Edmonton April 7 - 9. This is an AOS-judged show.

Heather Anderson reported that Ecuagenera, Ching Hua

Orchids, Ten Shin Gardens, and Forestview Gardens will be attending the show and will

be taking pre-orders; the deadline for pre-orders to be submitted to Heather or Cheryl is March 11. There will be more information in the newsletter, and plant lists will be posted on our website.

Treats today were brought by Yvette Lyster, Becky Janzen, Lori Poszniak and Donna Carlson-O'Keefe See Shirley to sign up to bring treats to future meetings.

Resources

We have Orchia bark available in Classic, Power and Power+ sizes, with lesser amounts of Precision. The price is \$6 for 3L. There will be more coming in 2 months.

Library

The missing Orchids magazines from last April until current are now available in the library.



JANUARY MEETING MINUTES, CONT.

Problem corner

A member has a wonderful *Phalaenopsis* plant with healthy leaves and roots, but the centre leaf has dried out completely.

She was advised to leave it for a while, giving it the same culture as before, and hope that it produces a keiki. If it doesn't, discard the plant. If the centre of the plant is dead, it will not produce another leaf and the plant will eventually die.

Show and Tell

Thirteen plants were shown by Lori Pozniak, Heather Anderson, Pat Randall, Vicky Wiley, Mary Orchard, Calvin Lo, Lynn Campbell, and Bob Lucas.

Break

Presentation

The presentation today is an American Orchid Society webinar, *Orchiata*, by Garry Clark of the New Zealand company, Besgrow, which produces *Orchiata* bark.

The presentation will cover: (1) where it comes from; (2) the real facts on production; (3) what makes it different and better than other bark and bark-based products.

Orchiata has been produced for more than thirty years, being used extensively in Japan in the early years. It is the bark of the *Pinus radiata* (Monterey Pine), a fast-growing pine that was introduced to New Zealand in the 1850s. There are now about 3.7 million acres of pine plantations in New Zealand.

Sustainability Story

P. radiata matures in 25-30 years. Mature trees have a stem of about 2.5 feet in diameter. Once harvested, the land is replanted by hand. The company operates on a sustainable planting plan of 60 years.

Why *P. radiata* bark?

95% of forests in New Zealand is *P. radiata*. Therefore, the bark is plentiful, but was once considered a waste product. Now it is used for such things as growing media, furnace fuel, and landscaping. The bark is thick and hard, and does not delaminate, so has a long life.

Production

The raw product is obtained from ports and timber mills. It is stockpiled to condition over several weeks. Rain runs through it and washes out some of the tannins.

The raw bark is chopped up and screened. It is then placed into huge windrows, about 700-800

cubic meters each, in covered sheds, to age. Through the aging process the internal temperature of the bark can reach 170F, so the bark

is turned over to get air in and cool it. The heat is generated through the reaction of natural sugars, moisture and organisms. In summer it is sometimes necessary to add water to facilitate the aging process. This process destroys pathogenic fungi in the bark, while retaining beneficial fungi. A minimum of 8 weeks of aging is required.

Processing begins only when a clear test for pathogenic fungi is obtained. The bark is screened and cleaned to reduce contaminants such as wood pieces, stones, and fines. It is then separated into five different sizes.

Dolomite is added to the bark, primarily to increase pH, and to add calcium and magnesium to the finished product. The finished product is bagged by machine, and the filled bags are stacked and wrapped. It is sold based on volume, not weight, because it might contain more moisture in summer.



Dendrochilum
Photo by Sara Thue



JANUARY MEETING MINUTES, CONT.

Orchiata Sizes

Precision: 1/8" - 1/4" - very high water-holding capacity, good for *Phragmipediums* and other genera liking constantly moist media

Classic: 1/4" - 3/8" - excellent water-holding capacity. Widely used in Japan for Cymbidiums and orchids that need higher water holding capacity, also for orchids with fine roots.

Power: 3/8" - 1/2" - good all-round size with excellent water holding capacity and more air porosity than the smaller sizes. Often used for Phalaenopsis.

Power+: 1/2" - 3/4" - great all-round size for many orchid genera.

Super: 3/4" - 1" - plants that don't like wet roots, e.g. *Cattleya*, *Vanda*

As the size increases, the water holding capacity decreases and the air porosity increases.

Rumours

- Orchiata is composted - not true. Composting would break down the internal structure of the bark.
- Other chemicals are added during the aging process - not true. Only water is added during aging.
- A white powder forms on the bark - this is the dolomite that is added to the aged bark.
- Other products need to be added to increase air or water holding ability - not true. Just use a different size of Orchiata to vary air or water requirements of the plant roots. Other products will decompose at different rates and may necessitate more frequent repotting than if using Orchiata alone.
- A high nitrogen fertilizer is required, as for fir bark - not true. A good balanced fertilizer is best. Orchiata breaks down very slowly, and doesn't use nitrogen for breakdown.

What Makes Orchiata Better?

- Orchiata is long lasting, taking several years to break down. Orchid plants should be repotted when they start to grow out of the pot.

- It is available in five different sizes, so size can be matched to plant needs, and your growing environment.
- The aging process breaks down the outside surface of the bark so it holds water better.

- It can be used straight from the bag - no soaking, no sterilization, no prickles or excess wood or fines.

- The pH is adjusted to 5.5-5.6 by dolomite, which also adds calcium and magnesium.

- The high temperature achieved during the aging process kills pathogenic fungi while retaining beneficial microorganisms.

- It rewets easily and dries evenly and consistently.

Mr. Clark showed slides comparing plants growing in Orchiata to those growing in a regular bark mix. Those growing in Orchiata appeared stronger, with better root growth. The flower spikes were stronger with bigger blooms.

Following the webinar, Bob suggested that if you're interested in trying Orchiata, don't repot all your plants at once; try a few plants and observe their growth for 6 months or so. If you're happy with the results, then start repotting your collection into Orchiata.

Plant Raffle

There were 3 plants donated by Save-On-Foods. All were claimed.

Plant Sale

There were 27 plants on the members plant sale table. Nearly all sold.

Meeting Adjournment

Approximately 3:00pm

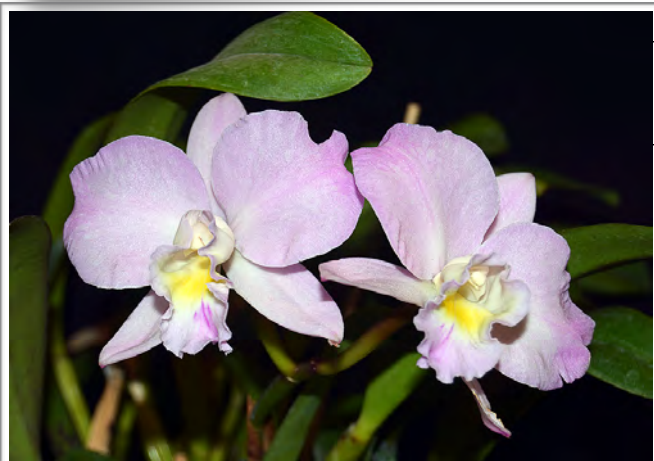


Restrepia brachypus
Photo by Sara Thue



JANUARY SHOW & TELL TABLE

Photos by Sara Thue

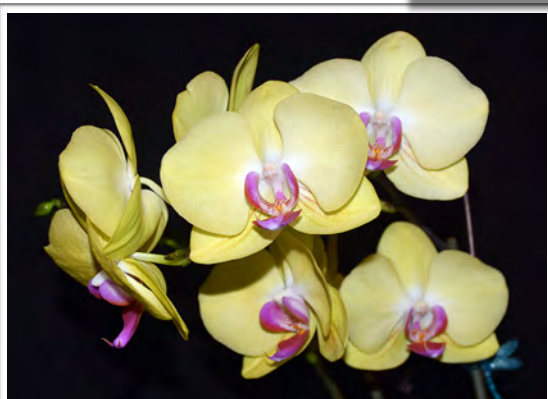


Cattlianthe Doris & Byron 'Christmas Rose'
Grower: Pat Randall

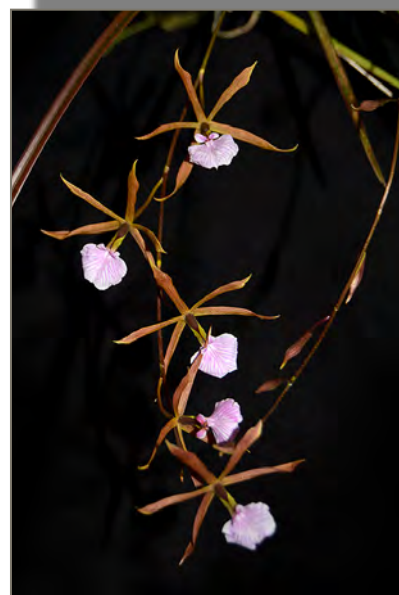


Dendrobium Angel Love 'Vivid'
Grower: Vicky Wiley

Paphiopedilum
(Color My World 'Shocker' x
Jenna Marie 'Sparkle' AM/AOS)
Grower: Lynn Campbell



Phalaenopsis
Grower: Merle Ward



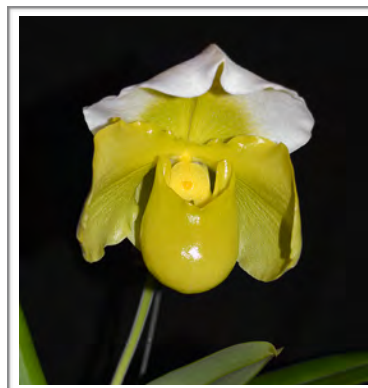
Encyclia bractescens
Grower: Calvin Lo



Phragmipedium Jason Fisher
Grower: Bob Lucas



Phragmipedium humboldtii 'Fortuna'
Grower: Heather Anderson



Paphiopedilum Sorcerer's Stone
x Green Gem
Grower: Lynn Campbell



Paphiopedilum schlimii 'Wilcox'
AM/AOS
Grower: Heather Anderson



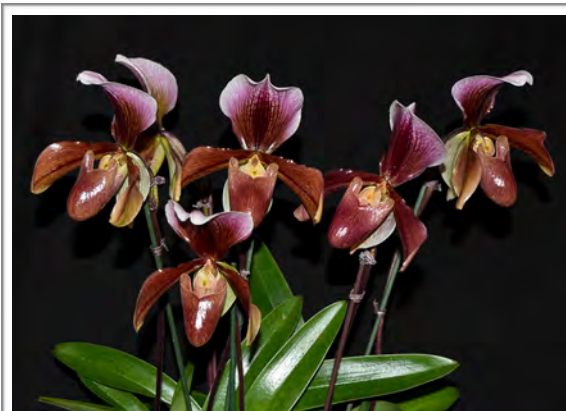
Cattleya Jumbo Beat
Grower: Pat Randall



Paphiopedilum Valiant Red
(Orchilla x Valwin)
Grower: Lori Pozniak



Rhyncattleanthe Hawaiian Discovery
'Fluorescent Orange' HCC/AOS x
Rhyncholaeliocattleya William Farrell
'Native Son'
Grower: Pat Randall



Paphiopedilum King Arthur
Grower: Lori Posniak

Winter Thoughts on Orchids in the Rockies

Part One

Tobi Fenton
Jasper, Alberta

True northern winter weather, with days-long snow storms followed by clear bitter cold, has been rare in Jasper this year. You wouldn't believe that from today's thermometer not budging from -25C, or from the depth of shovelled snow which, after yesterday's blizzard, is rising ever closer to the bottom of the bird feeders hanging in the garden. One more good storm and the pileated woodpecker won't have to launch herself onto the peanut feeder from the adjacent pine stump; she'll be able to stand imperiously on the snow bank and feast.

This is the time of year when I think about the resilience of birds. And plants. Perennial roots and crowns frozen in the earth under all that snow, yet *alive*. Plant dormancy is one of the invisible mysteries of the world - like electricity and gravity - a botanical truth to be believed because of the physical proof in spring when plant shoots emerge from the soil and erupt into green visible life.

I find myself frequently looking at a patch of my garden where I know lies a pair of two year old *Cypripedium* 'Gisela', a hybrid between the Chinese *C. macranthos* and the North American *C. parviflorum*. Planting these was a supreme act of faith that this orchid can grow (and hopefully thrive) in my zone 2-3 garden. Barring too many warm sublimating winds later in the winter, the current blanket of snow should keep them well-insulated and, in spring, watered.

Pondering the *Cypripedium* in the garden leads me to think about native orchids of the Rocky Mountains, and how extraordinary it is that a family of plants that is mostly represented by tropical species also has many species that have adapted to the harsh conditions of a cold mountain climate. Plants of the Rocky Mountains, by Kershaw, MacKinnon and Pojar (1998), lists 10 genera and 21 species of orchids in the Canadian and U.S. Rockies. Four of these genera are common in Jasper National Park: *Amerorchis*, *Calypso*, *Cypripedium*, and *Platanthera*. The others, including the saprophytic *Corallorrhiza* (Coral-root) and *Listera* (Twayblade), seem to be more difficult to find whether because they have become rare in the park, are fleeting in their flower season, or simply lurk quietly in the deep mossy woods where only the most intrepid flower hunters go.

The first orchid to bloom in spring is Venus's Slipper, *Calypso bulbosa*. Once you've seen this orchid you never forget it. The lure of its joyful candy pink flowers unfailingly draws out the local flower spotters; I like to think about all the people, from Whitehorse to Aspen, wandering in a post-winter daze to their favourite trails where *Calypso* grows.

A denizen of mature montane forest, *Calypso* lives in coniferous woods in mountains and foothills between 800 - 3,000 metres elevation (1,800 - 5,000 feet), depending on latitude; it does not venture into the subalpine zone.

In Jasper National Park, the montane forest is a lodgepole pine - white spruce - trembling aspen community with a shrub understory of buffaloberry (*Shepherdia canadensis*), common juniper (*Juniperus communata*), Kinnikinnick (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*), and common snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*). In more open sites, and along streams and moist ravines, you will find wolfwillow (*Elaeagnus commutata*), Scouler's willow (*Salix scouleriana*), red-osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*), prickly rose (*Rosa acicularis*), and northern gooseberry (*Ribes oxycanthoides*).



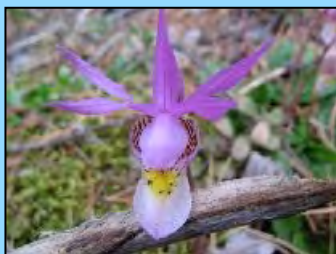
Montane zone plant communities
Photos: Tobin Fenton

Riverine habitat in montane zone
Photo: Tracey Thue

Shady pine forest
Photo: Tracey Thue

The corms and fleshy roots of *Calypso* grow in organic soil made of decomposed leaves, wood, and plant roots. They are further protected by thick mats of Knight's plume feather moss (*Ptilium crista-castrensis*) or Kinnikinnick, twinflower (*Linnaea borealis*), and wild strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*). Flowers emerge in early May. The length of bloom depends on temperature and soil moisture; after snowy winters, or during a cool, rainy spring, *Calypso* can be found in enormous patches on the forest floor even into June. In dry years the patches are fairly small and mostly in the cool shade at the feet of common juniper, buffaloberry, or wolfwillow.

Venus's Slipper is a sly little flower. Its colour and scent mimics those of other flowers that are pollinated by bumblebees. But *Calypso* produces no nectar. Early-flying female golden northern bumblebees (*Bombus fervidus*) visit the orchid, expecting to find nectar, find none, but during their search pollinate the orchid anyway. Eventually the bees catch on to this deception and stop visiting, but not before enough successful pollination has occurred to reproduce the local *Calypso* population.



Venus's Slipper
Photos: Tobin Fenton



Venus's Slipper in Knight's plume feather moss
Photo: Tobin Fenton



Venus's Slipper in Kinnikinnick
Photo: Tracey Thue

Next in the flush of orchid bloom in the Rockies, and most years overlapping with *Calypso*, is the beloved Yellow Lady's Slipper, *Cypripedium parviflorum*. (Some references call it *C. calceolus* or *C. calceolus* ssp. *parviflorum*.) If Calypso orchid delights you with its shy delicacy, Yellow Lady's Slipper will provoke a drop-to-your-knees scramble for the camera. It is the largest and most dramatic orchid found in Canada with a startlingly yellow inflated lip and three long, twisted, purple-striped tepals. The flowers are usually solitary on the tall leafy stem but sometimes there is a pair. In Jasper, the fragrant flowers start emerging in early to mid June and, like Calypso orchid, provide an important early food source for Golden northern bumble bees.



Yellow Lady's Slipper

Photos: Sara Thue

Yellow Lady's Slipper is astoundingly adaptable; its range extends from high arctic fens to sultry southern Texas woodlands. Within that huge range are several natural varieties and hybrids, complicating exact identification. Different varieties have slightly different sized pouch openings - which allows entrance to different sized bee pollinators - and variations in the colour of the tepals, from dark reddish-purple to pale greenish-yellow.

In the montane zone of Jasper National Park, Yellow Lady's Slipper grows in seasonally wet meadows, moist forest openings, and stream-fed fens and bogs. Some years, it can be found blooming well into July if a rhizome has serendipitously grown into the cool shade of a buffaloberry or wolfwillow.

In the Canadian prairie, Yellow Lady's Slipper thrives in extraordinarily open scrubland, shaded only by tall grasses and scattered willows. This toughness reminds me of *Brassavola* growing in full Central American sun on exposed sea-side rock, and serves as a memo of the importance of seasonal water. In prairie scrubland, as in the montane forest, boreal forest, and arctic tundra, this water source is primarily melted snowpack.



Yellow Lady's Slipper in seasonally boggy prairie scrubland, Saskatchewan.
Plant associations include creeping juniper, yellow buckwheat, and marsh violet. Photos: Tracey Thue

More snow melt means longer-lasting bogs and fens and a stronger growing season for *Cypripedium parviflorum*. This thought sends my gaze once more out the window to the snowpack in the garden where *Cypripedium* 'Gisela' is sleeping. For, as I mentioned, one of its parents is Yellow Lady's Slipper and, much as I yearn for spring, I shouldn't be hoping for an extended warming period just yet. Wiarton Willie's prediction for an early spring notwithstanding, here in the northern Rockies we're assured of another nine to ten weeks of winter, so my horticulturist heart had better be hoping the snowpack holds until April.



C. parviflorum
Photo: Sara Thue



C. macranthos
Photo: orchidspecies.com



Cypripedium 'Gisela'
Photo: Tobi Fenton

Golden northern bumble bee, the most common bee in Jasper National Park, found foraging in montane and subalpine forest glades and meadows.

Photo: Rich Kelly, Bug Guide



Part Two of this article will be included in the next issue of the SOS Newsletter.

Upcoming Events

March 29 - 31, 2019: Gardenscape, Prairieland Park, Saskatoon

The SOS will be entering a society display again this year. Set up is Thursday, Mar 28, details to be announced. Please consider entering your flowering orchids in the display! Also consider volunteering for a 2-hour or 3-hour shift at our display talking about orchid growing with interested Gardenscape visitors. You don't have to be an experienced grower; at least 2 people are assigned to each shift and new growers are paired up with a more experienced grower. Volunteers are given a free pass for Gardenscape for the day of their shift. A signup sheet will be circulated at the February general meeting. If you can't attend this meeting, but are interested, please email Tracey (thues@sasktel.net). This is an event that introduces people to our society, and some of them even become members of the SOS!

April 5 - 7, 2019: Orchid Society of Alberta Orchid Fair 2019, Enjoy Centre, 101 Riel Drive, St. Albert, AB. <https://orchidsalberta.wildapricot.org/page-18132>

The SOS will be entering a society display in this AOS-judged show. The display plants and materials will be taken by car by Bob Lucas and the display set up on Thursday, Apr 4. Details about plant entries and drop off to Bob's house will be announced during upcoming general meetings. For more information about sending plants for the display, or if you're interested in attending the show, please contact Bob or Heather.

A Look Ahead to Future SOS Meetings

Mar 2019 - To be determined

Apr 2019 - Annual Silent Auction Fundraiser

May 2019 - Jean Ikeson, Dundas, ON

Sep 2019 - To be determined

Oct 2019 - Fred Clarke, Sunset Valley Orchids

Feb 2020 - Terry Groszeibl, Forestview Orchids

May 2020 - Sergio Garcia, Olompali Orchid

Sep 2020 - Sam Tsui, Orchid Inn

Oct 2020 - Alan Koch, Gold Country Orchids