

GREATER LAS VEGAS ORCHID SOCIETY

THE ORCHID COLUMN

MAY 4, 2008

Carol Siegel, Newsletter Editor



IT IS WITH A HEAVY HEART THAT I INFORM YOU OF THE PASSING OF OUR DEAR MEMBER SCOTTY, BELOVED WIFE OF JOHN NOGAIM. WE WILL MISS THIS BRIGHT, HONEST, GIVING AND CARING LADY WHO WAS SUCH AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR CLUB AND OF OUR LIVES.

What fun we had at our April meeting as we gathered together once more for good times, good food, good friends, and GREAT orchids.

We welcomed Sarah Alhadithi, a new guest. We were so pleased to have Heather Braverman, Jackie's beautiful teenage daughter, at our meeting again. So glad to have Gary Nelson, a treasured and interesting member, re-join us again. Pleased to have Michelle Baker, star of UNLV Continuing Education, join our club. To add to that, we were thrilled to have Kris Korpi join us again. Aren't we lucky!

Ramona Brunswick, AAA Insurance rep and a new member, graciously distributed sheets waiving the \$17 AAA enrollment fee to club members. Interested? Call her at 416-7916 (cell). That was really nice of you, Ramona.

Special birthday wishes to Fred Schechter. Heard your party was a big success.

A special thanks to Aaron Schave who opened his beautiful home and gardens to us all in April. It was spectacular. How does he grow all those marvelous plants in the middle of the desert? (Need a real estate agent? Think of Aaron (260-8865) Aaron is producing a show to benefit an Aids charity on Sunday, May 4th 3-6pm. You might want to go after our meeting-\$25 for wine and entertainment at the Clark County Library, 1401 E. Flamingo Rd.

We pray for a speedy recovery for Dennis Dean's brother who is ill. Our prayers are with you. Speedy recovery, too, to your dear friend Ann, Clarice.

To honor the memory of our dear departed member Leah Cox, the club added the book, *GROWING ORCHID FROM SEED*. This very well-written and beautiful book, a classic work in the field, is inscribed in her memory. Borrow it from the library.

If there is an occasion that you would like to commemorate, anniversary or graduation or birth, think about donating a book to our library. We will write an inscription, and it is a lovely way to remember someone. We will even get the book for you if you would like.

I won a First Place Certificate and \$20 check at the National Garden Club meeting

for my Nevada Native Orchid brochure. It was prepared with the help of Paula Garrett and the Arboretum at UNLV, and they really deserve the award, too. I will donate the \$20 to the club.

Our April BANQUET was spectacular! We thank Alison Lockwood, Debra Beaupre, Nada Stefanich, Sue Carroll, and Sherry Byrns for our treats. You are all angels. A special thanks to Debbie's husband, a master chef, for the special catering touches. We thank in advance Greg and Lonna Clarke (Lonna is a pro at organizing!), Linda and Joel Davidson, June and Martin Learn and Fred and Roberta Schechter. So nice of you all- and we do love our orchid society food!

In April, we had the pleasure of welcoming once again Mike Glikbarg, owner of Orchids of Los Osos. He presented a slide presentation on "Growing Species." Species, for our new members, are orchids as they are grown in nature, without being hybridized by man. The best thing about Mike Glikbarg is that he brought his orchids to sell and for the raffle, and they were spectacular. His nursery, Orchids of Los Osos, has won numerous awards for its magnificent orchids. Members just loved his dozens of gorgeous blooming orchids.

In May, Ron Parsons, gifted photographer and author, will present a slide lecture on "Dendrobium." This genus of at least 1500 species is a varied and fascinating group that YOU can grow. I have recently fallen in love with dendrobium and have many blooming right now. Ron has contributed his gorgeous photos to ORCHID DIGEST and to some of my articles, and his images promise to be memorable. Thanks to Terry Wilsey (731-2114) who arranged his transportation (He will arrange

YOURS!) and who graciously agreed to pick Ron up on Sunday morning at the airport, take him to lunch at the Preserves, and bring him back to the airport in the evening. Terry, you are so nice.

Since Ron is not bringing plants to sell, I have ordered dozens of dendrobium in bloom from Exotic Orchids of Maui and Carmela's Orchids. There is no meeting unless there are blooming orchids!

We participated in the Easter Show at the Cal once again this year with our dear friends in the Torrance Cymbidium Society. Our display was just spectacular, and we had a great time putting it together. Special thanks to Shelly North who once again lent her artistic talent to making our display unbelievably gorgeous. There is NO ONE like Shelly, and we love her. Thanks to the enthusiastic design team- Carol Siegel, Clarice Dean, Eileen McKyton, Diana Smith, Shelly North, Ed McCormick, Claudia Drake, Tony Billitere and Sandra Swan. It was fun, and you were great! Diana and I enjoyed making all the tags.

We had a very good response to our call for volunteers. We couldn't have done it without Tex and Gidget Severance, our AOS judges. Thank you, thank you, thank you. We really appreciated all our clerks and ambassadors who made us shine- Diane Perry-Brown, Marilyn Short, Christine De La Cruz, Karen and Bill Fields, Claudia Drake, Miles Hoffman, John and Judie Tuthill, and Cathy Loftfield. Thanks to everyone for stepping up and helping us. Special appreciation to Clarice Dean who prepared culture and club information sheets to distribute.

Our Nevada Garden Club reps Myra Glassman, Jeri Lee and Terry Wilsey will

represent us at the Spring Annual Meeting at 12:15-7 on Saturday, May 17, 2008. You can come, too. The club will pay for our reps, but you can go to, if you would like. The speaker is Joleen Hatfield of CSN who will speak on "Native Plants and Heirloom Seeds of Southern Nevada." Call me before May 5th if you want to go.

We are participating in a special garden show for Mother's Day at the Springs Preserve on Sunday, May 11th from 11-4. We will be giving out material on the club. If you want to go, the first 100 mothers get in free. There will be a Mother's Day Brunch at Wolfgang Puck's, and then lots of garden displays in the Trails. Jeri Lee, Becky Biondi and Cathy Loftfield have volunteered to "woman" our table from 11-1:30 and so far Diana Smith has volunteered from 1:30-4.

Come to the Orchid Digest Day. THOSE MARVELOUS MINIATURE ORCHIDS is subject of the ORCHID DIGEST DAY in Huntington Library and Botanical Gardens on Saturday, June 14th. The cost is \$60 and includes a day of lectures, a buffet dinner and drinks, a silent auction and orchid sales. Very fun. Contact Simone Friend at orchidsimonef@aol.com or 562-431-1247.

Myra Glassman recommends Suite Charity, located in the Las Vegas Design Center at the World Market Center (475 South Grand Central Parkway, Building B, Suite B-250. It is open Monday- Friday, 9-5, for a fine selection of home furnishing and accessories. Call 447-0048 first. Money goes to charities like Opportunity Village, Habitat for Humanity, and AFAN. "Do well by doing good," as dear Myra says.

After the newsletter is an article printed with permission from DESERT MAGIC.

Since our speaker Ron Parsons will be speaking on dendrobium, I selected an article by John Law on that genus. In addition, Steve Frowine has graciously allowed me to reprint his fine chapter on dendrobium from his book, ORCHIDS FOR DUMMIES. Enjoy. See you at the May meeting.

With love, Carol growlove@cox.net

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Meetings are held at the Nevada Garden Club Building, Twin Lakes and Washington between Valley View and Rancho, western edge of Lorenzi Park. The meeting starts at 2, but I open the building at 1.

May 4, 2008

Ron Parsons, "Dendrobium"

June 1, 2008

Mike Blietz, "Cattleya"

July 13, 2008

Fred Clarke, "Bulbophyllum"

August 3, 2008 Barbecue

Sept 7, 2008 "Culture Day"

Oct 5, 2008

George Vasquez, "Phalaenopsis"

Nov 2, 2008

Martin Motes, "Vandas"

Dec 7, 2008

9th Annual Holiday Party

Jan 4, 2009

Jason Fischer, "Orchids of Japan"

Feb 1, 2009

Norman Fang, "Harlequin Phals"

Oct 4, 2009

Steve Frowine, "Phalaenopsis"

Jan 10, 2010

Jim Comstock, "3D Orchids"

CLARICE DEAN -VICE-PRESIDENT

EILEEN MCKYTON- SECRETARY

DIANA SMITH-TREASURER

Miles Hoffman- "The Recruiter"

Paula Garrett- University Liaison

Dan Mumau, Michael Lawless, Marsha Hawley - Membership Hospitality Chairmen

Eileen and Alex McKyton and Jackie Braverman-Welcome Desk

Cathy Loftfield-Photographer /Historian

Tony Billitere- Raffle Angel

Diana Smith, Cathy Loftfield, Gail Harris, Pat Holland, Mickey Matthews, Claudia Drake, Jackie Braverman, Tuthills, Dan Mumau, Aaron Schave-Raffle Committee

Marsha Hawley- Fund Raising Chairlady

Leslie Doyle, Shelly North and Eileen McKyton- Special Events

Jeri Lee, Myra Glassman, and Gail Harris- Nevada State Garden Club Representative

Alex McKyton-Building Chairmen & Webmaster

Tex & Gidget Severance and Mike Levin- Show and Tell Gurus and Judging Chairmen

Scotty Nogaim- Election & Raffle Lady

Terry Wilsey- Club Travel Agent

Miles Hoffman- Library Chairman

Clarice Dean-Species of the Month
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THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE IT HAPPEN:

CAROL SIEGEL- PRESIDENT

Dendrobium

John Law

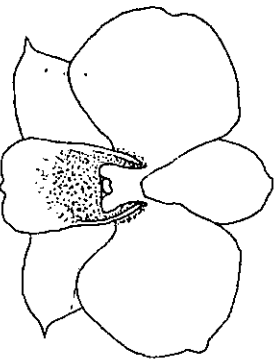
Dendrobium (*dendros*, tree; *bios*, life—something that lives on a tree) is one of the largest genera of orchids. All *Dendrobiums* are Asian, occurring from the Japanese islands in the north to Tasmania in the south, through the islands of the western Pacific and east until water shortage precludes their growth. The splitters have already begun their work and we can anticipate that *Dendrobium* will spawn at least 10 new genera, much as has happened with *Epidendrum* and *Odontoglossum*. Because the genus is so large and diverse, it has been divided into many sections. Those most frequently encountered by the orchid hobbyist are plants in the sections Phalaenanth, Spatulata, Dendrobium, Callista and Formosae.

In Tucson, the hybrids of the section Phalaenanth are most frequently encountered. These are large, robust plants derived from the Australian species *Dendrobium phalaenopsis* (or *Dendrobium bigibbum*, see Baker and Baker, Orchids, January 1997, p. 42). They are commonly referred to as "DenPhals". This name may cause confusion to the novice, who is usually familiar with plants of the genus *Phalaenopsis*, that have large, long-lasting flowers. Phalaenopsis, in fact, means "moth-like", an allusion to the size and shape of the flowers. The only relationship between the DenPhals and the genus

Phalaenopsis is the fact that their flowers share a similar shape. Erase from your mind any idea that DenPhals are hybrids between the genera *Dendrobium* and *Phalaenopsis*!

Breeding in the DenPhals has led to ever larger, flatter and diversely colored flowers. Modern hybrids give exceptional floral displays, especially in the candy stripes and the splash petal "Pandas". Interbreeding with the Spatulata ("Antelope Horn") group produces new color combinations and twisted petals. A recent breeding trend is for smaller plants that will bloom on canes 10" tall, or less.

DenPhals require plenty of light, heat, water and fertilizer when they are actively growing. Don't try to grow DenPhals if your temperatures fall below 50° F in winter or in low light conditions where *Phalaenopsis* thrive. Especially with this group,

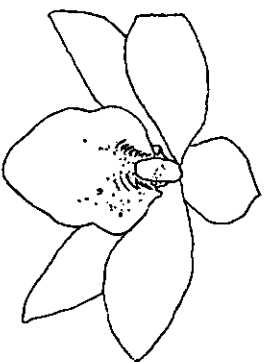


under potting is advised. Use a pot that seems too small for the plant. Since the plants can be very tall, a hanging pot is the obvious choice. Usually the roots grow out of the pot and can often reach 3-4' in length.

What one uses in the pot is not too important—bark, pumice, sphagnum—will all work. Use what you find best for other orchids. Give these plants all the light you can, short of direct Tucson sun. They will thrive at 4000-6000 fc. In summer, they can be watered and fertilized every day, although I find every other day for water and once a week for fertilizer to be quite adequate. I use bark mixed with charcoal and coarse Perlite, and 30:10:10 fertilizer, half a teaspoon per gallon.

As the days cool down and the canes mature after flowering, water and fertilizer can be cut back, but the plants should not become completely dry. Plants of the Spatulata section require essentially the same treatment as DenPhals, although they can take even more light. I have seen several Tucson grown plants of this group growing without benefit of a pot. Mark Dimmitt has some that are about 8' tall. He has distributed keikis of a relatively small hybrid called *Dendrobium Autumn Lace* x Florida Twist.

Many of the DenPhals and Antelopes will form keikis on the older canes. One can also sever the link between older canes and 2-3 of the newer ones, upon which the older canes will often send up new growths. Old canes can be cut and laid in damp



perlite. Keikis will sometimes spring from the nodes.

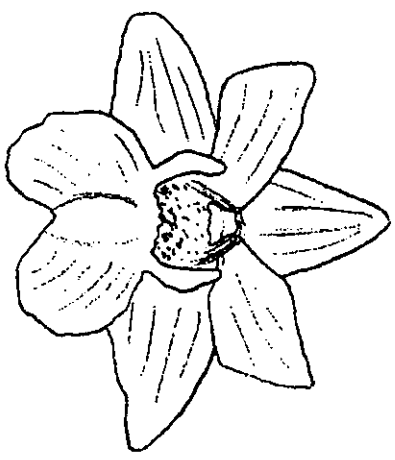
Plants of the sections Callista (e.g., *D. lindleyi*, sometimes known as *D. aggregatum* v. *majus*, *D. farmeri*, *D. thrysiflorum*) and *Dendrobium* (e.g., *D. nobile* and its many hybrids, *D. pendulum*, *D. parishii*, *D. aphyllum*, *D. anosmum*) come from monsoon areas of Asia, where they encounter hot, wet summers and cool, dry winters. For the best flowering (and sometimes for any flowering at all) you need to try to mimic the natural conditions. Give them lots of heat, light, water and food during the summer. When the pseudobulbs are mature in October, move them to a cool, dry, sunny location and keep them dry for 1-4 months, depending on the species. When you bring them back into warmer, wetter conditions after the first of the year, buds should form quickly. Often formation of flower buds or a new growth on the resting plant is a signal that it is time to move the plant to a location where it will get more water and heat.

Dendrobiums of the section Formosae (e.g., *D. sanderae*, *D.*

rewarding. Stick with the species and hybrids listed above.

schuetzei, *D. dearii*, *D. cruentum*, *D. deacons*, *D. cariniferum*, and their hybrids; e.g., *D. Fire Coral*) certainly have some of the most beautiful flowers. In general, these plants need water most of the year and grow under intermediate conditions. However, some of the species need cooler conditions and some drying. My experience with these trickier species in Tucson has not been

For further information, I recommend the book "Dendrobium, an introduction to the species in cultivation", by S. Schelpe and J. Stewart, Orchid Sundries, Ltd., 1990. It can be purchased from the American Orchid Society Bookstore.



Significant Others

Chapter 14

In This Chapter

- ▶ Discovering one of the biggest of all groups of orchids: Dendrobium
- ▶ Finding orchids that are as weird as they get: Bulbophyllum
- ▶ Considering some other orchids

In the previous chapters, I present you with some of the largest orchid groups that are most suitable for home orchid growing. But, as you can imagine, with tens of thousands of different orchids out there, some additional ones in other groups are also prime candidates. In this chapter, I give you a glimpse at some of them.

A Huge and Interesting Lot: Dendrobium

Dendrobium and their close relatives number more than a thousand. They call their homes the old-world tropics, which include New Guinea and the exotic land down under, Australia. Some of these orchids have exacting cultural requirements that are a challenge to provide. The ones I show you here are the easier ones that have basically the same cultural requirements as cattleyas — medium to high light, modest humidity, and intermediate temperatures. Many of the dendrobium naturally undergo a drier winter than summer, so they appreciate the same treatment from you. Some are *evergreen* (keeping their foliage year-round), while others are *deciduous* (dropping their leaves in the fall) as they enter a rest for the winter, then put out their new growth in the spring.

The most popular dendrobium

Here is a small selection of some of the easiest and most readily found dendrobium that are not very demanding. As you become familiar with this huge group of plants, you'll surely find others you'd like to try out.

Dendrobium phalaenopsis

Although the more proper name for this orchid is *Dendrobium bigibbum*, it rarely goes by this in the trade. I list this one first because it is by far the most popular and commonly found dendrobium. Luckily, it is also one of the least expensive and easiest to grow. Hybrids of this type are found in an impressive array of color combinations and are usually about 1½ to 3 inches (3 to 7 cm) across and look much like phalaenopsis flowers (thus, the species name of phalaenopsis). Figure 14-1 shows an example of a *Dendrobium phalaenopsis*. The most common flower colors are white, shades of pink, and purple, but some of the newer offerings have contrasting sepals, petals, and lips in a whole range of pastels.

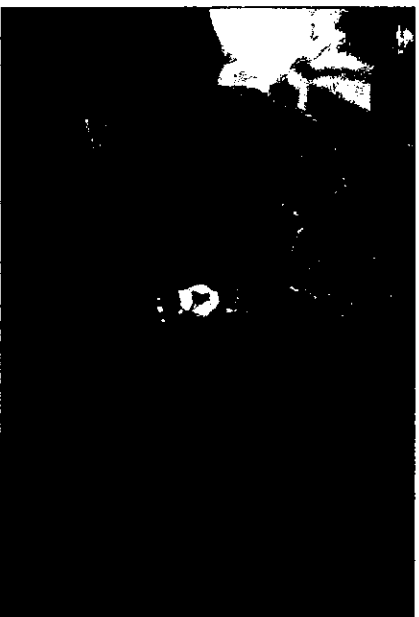


Figure 14-1: The *Dendrobium phalaenopsis* flower looks much like a phalaenopsis orchid (see Chapter 10).

Dendrobium phalaenopsis, which are evergreens, differ dramatically in their growth habits — some are very compact, about 6 inches (15 cm) tall while others can reach 3 feet (1 meter) or more in height (see Figure 14-2).

Like most dendrobiums, the *Dendrobium phalaenopsis* prefers to be pot-bound, so it's content to stay in a small container. It requires a modest drying-off period during the winter and early spring to promote flowering. You can resume regular watering when new growth appears in the spring until after flowering.



Dendrobium phalaenopsis hybrids, sometimes referred to as “cane” dendrobiums because of their upright stems, can vary tremendously in their growth habits from dwarfs to giants. Figure 14-2 shows one of the larger forms.



Figure 14-2: A larger *Dendrobium phalaenopsis* hybrid.

Dendrobium nobile

Another one of the most popular dendrobiums, the *Dendrobium nobile* (shown in Figure 14-3) has been hybridized extensively so that today's varieties come in a carnival of bright colors.



The *Dendrobium nobile* is deciduous, so when winter approaches, keep it on the dry side. Only water it enough to keep its pseudobulbs from shriveling. Let the evening temperatures get down around 50°F to 55°F (10°C to 13°C).



Figure 14-3: *Dendrobium nobile* var. *virginale* is a white form of this popular dendrobium.



Some people have described the fragrance of these orchids as being like honey or musk during the day and mown hay at night.

Dendrobium kingianum

This dendrobium is wonderfully tough — it can withstand temperatures down to 35°F (1.6°C) — and easy to grow, and it's just starting to get its due. This Australian native was once considered a "weed" among some orchid growers, because it is such a rapid grower. Now it's getting new respect as more people are becoming aware of how easy and forgiving it is to grow and bloom and as many new flower color forms are appearing.

The usual flower is small, up to about 1 to 1½ inches (2.5 to 4 cm), in shades of pink, borne in 8-inch (20-cm) sprays of about a dozen flowers (see Figure 14-4). The newer selections include dark purple, purple-blue, white, striped, and a whole range of combinations of these. This orchid varies considerably in its growth habit from a few inches (5 cm) to almost 16 inches (50 cm) tall.

This orchid has a range of fragrances from hyacinth to lilac to honey.



Dendrobium kingianum requires a dry, cool winter to bloom dependably. It's an evergreen orchid that has attractive compact, thick, dark green foliage. It readily forms *keikis* (baby plants); refer to Chapter 8 to see how to handle them.



Figure 14-4: *Dendrobium kingianum* has small crystalline flowers that are found in various shades of purple and pink.

Some other Dendrobiums worth considering

After you've cut your teeth on the easier dendrobiums mentioned in the previous section, try some of these:

➤ ***Dendrobium aggregatum*:** This orchid and its cousin, *Dendrobium jenkinsii* (shown in Figure 14-5) are dwarf plants that produce showers of 1-inch (2.5-cm) golden yellow, honey-scented flowers with broad, almost heart-shaped lips. The flowers appear in groups of two or three for *Dendrobium jenkinsii*, more for *Dendrobium aggregatum*, in the spring. The pseudobulbs are small, 1 to 2 inches (2.5 to 5 cm). These plants are frequently grown on slabs and are best not transplanted or divided often. They make their most spectacular display when they become large-sized plants.

➤ ***Dendrobium bellatulum*:** This is another miniature plant only reaching about 4 inches (10 cm) tall with one to three 1½-inch (4-cm) white flowers with orange and red markings in the lip. The flowers have a fresh lemon fragrance.

➤ ***Dendrobium chrysotoxum*:** This orchid has butter-yellow, pineapple- or mango-scented, 1-inch (2.5-cm) flowers with fringed lips and a darker orange throat that are displayed on a 12-inch (30-cm) flower spike (see Figure 14-6). The plant is evergreen and a compact grower.



Figure 14-5: *Dendrobium jenkinsii* is a miniature grower that blooms best if it's transplanted very infrequently.



Figure 14-6: *Dendrobium chrysotoxum* produces sprays of golden flowers with the scent of tropical fruit.

✔ ***Dendrobium loddigesii*:** This is a compact grower that reaches about 6 inches (15 cm) tall. It's covered in the spring with 2-inch (5-cm) light-pink flowers with light-yellow lips that last about three weeks. It has a rambling habit, so it's most suited for mounting on a slab (see Chapter 7 for more information).

✔ ***Dendrobium scabrilingue*:** This miniature, growing only 3 to 5 inches (8 to 15 cm) high, has been in bloom for me for months! Its starry white 1-inch (2.5-cm) flowers have a touch of light yellow in the center with a pleasant sweet fragrance that reminds me of the white paste we used to use in elementary school for our art projects.

✔ ***Dendrobium lauesii*:** This is a screamer from the jungles of New Guinea with 1-inch (2.5-cm) bright red-orange, waxy flowers, tipped in yellow that are borne on leafless stems. It's found in several color forms and its floral brilliance and sweet scent make it in high demand. It needs a drier rest period during the winter. See the color photographs in the center of this book for an example.

Thousands of *dendrobium* hybrids exist, but many of them are best suited for a very cool greenhouse. In the following list, I focus on a few that are particularly easy and are a reasonable size to handle:

✔ ***Dendrobium André Millar* (frequently misspelled "Miller"):** Exotic green 1½-inch (4-cm) flowers, with lips prominently lined in dark maroon, make this orchid a standout (see



Figure 14-7). It apparently comes in two forms: one very compact, about 6 to 8 inches (15 to 20 cm) tall, and the other about twice or more this height. So if plant size is important to you, be sure to ask which form you're buying.



Figure 14-7: *Dendrobium André Millar* has flowers that have an almost alien look.

✔ ***Dendrobium Iki*:** A great miniature that rarely grows higher than 7 inches (20 cm), this orchid has attractive dark green, glossy, evergreen foliage and charming 1-inch (2.5-cm) creamy white flowers with red and orange in the lip. It has the sweet fragrance of licorice.

✔ ***Dendrobium Desmond Gem*:** This *dendrobium* is merely representative of the many new hybrids that are coming into the United States from Australia. They're usually tough plants that can survive temperatures approaching freezing and, in fact, will usually bloom best if given a very cold period in the neighborhood of 40°F to 49°F (4°C to 8°C). If you have a very cool bright spot, be on the lookout for these fine hybrids. *Jesmond Gem* has pristine white, 2-inch (5-cm) sweet-smelling flowers with purple specks on the lips and yellow stripes down the center of the lips. It grows about 18 inches (45 cm) tall.

