



The Informer

Newsletter of the Greater Omaha Orchid Society

PO Box 241871 Omaha, NE 68124

greateromahaorchidsociety.org

June 2015

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Submission deadline for the

July Informer: June 29, 2015.

Omaha Orchid Society Mem- bership Information

Annual Dues:

Single: \$15.00

Family: \$20.00

Annual dues are paid to the treasurer
by January 1 of each year and are
delinquent the day after the Febru-
ary meeting. Dues for new members
joining after July 31st are one-half
the annual rate.

Dues should be made payable to
G. O. O. S. and may be mailed to
the G. O. O. S. post office box: G.
O. O. S., PO Box 241871, Omaha,
NE 68124.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS MEETINGS

NOTE THE LOCATION CHANGES FOR EACH MEETING BELOW:

**June 10, 2015 Douglas/
Sarpy Extension Office,
8015 West Center Rd.**

**7:00 PM GROWERS
GROUP**

**7:30 PM Program: Mounting
orchids**

Refreshments: Cindy Mass

June 24, 2015

Papillion Library

6:45 PM Board meeting

**July 8, 2015 Douglas/Sarpy
Extension Office, 8015
West Center Rd.**

**6:30 PM Annual Picnic/
Auction**

EVENTS

July 27, 2015

Central Iowa Orchid
Society 27th Annual
Speaker's Day, Camp
Dodge, IA. <http://c-we.com/cios/ciosspk.htm>. See
story page 2

September 25 – 27, 2015

Chicagoland Orchid
Fest, <http://www.chicagolandorchidfest.com/>

August 7 – 9, 2015

Hilo Orchid Society
Annual Show "Orchids
Avant-Garde," Afook-
Chinen Civic Auditorium,
323 Manono St., Hilo, HI
Contact: Rick Kelly, 808-
756-8145, rickkelly@att.net

September 19 – 20, 2015

Wisconsin Orchid Society
Show "Fall In Love With
Orchids," Mitchell Park
Horticultural Conservatory,
524 S. Layton Blvd.,
Millwaukee, WI, Contact:
Bil Nelson, 414-672-6446,
qorchids@att.net

October 17 – 18, 2015

Eastern Iowa Orchid Show
& Sale, Noelridge Gardens
Greenhouse, 4900 Council
St. NE, Cedar Rapids, IA,
Contact: Andy Coghill-
Behrends, 319-512-8076,
mistercoghill@hotmail.com

THIS MONTH'S MEETING

It's experimentation time again. Last month it was with a native terrestrial. This month it will be with an epiphyte. You may have plenty of epiphytic orchids, a large portion of the orchids in cultivation are epiphytes. But a large portion of them are growing in pots, hardly the way they grow in nature – attached to trees (Epiphyte definition: a plant that grows above the ground, supported nonparasitically by another plant or object, and deriving its nutrients and water from rain, the air, dust, etc.).

So Wednesday we will have a selection of young plants and mounting material for you to get involved in mounting them and then take them home and grow them into blooming specimens. We'll give you an assist in your efforts – for the night – and give you some cultural hints to help the plant get situated.

We'd like to hear some progress reports later on to see how you are doing.

So come to the meeting and expand your horizons.

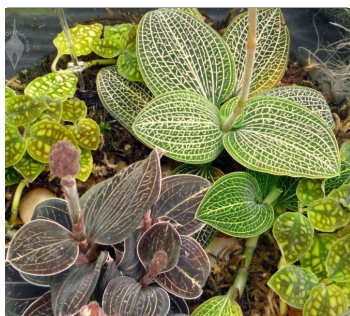
AUCTION & PICNIC NEXT MONTH

Next month's meeting (July 8) is our annual picnic/auction and time to have a little fun, relaxation, and ... bid on some nice plants. The board will provide the main dish for the meal, you should plan on bringing side dishes or desserts. We'll start at 6:30 PM with the meal and start the auction around 7:30 PM. We will have great selection of plants to bid on and there will be lots of good food to eat.

LEON GLEICENSTEIN GUEST SPEAKER JUNE 14 @ OSGKC

Leon Glicenstein will be the guest speaker at the June 14 meeting of the Orchid Society of Greater Kansas City. His series of articles on Jewel Orchids (*Ludisia*, *Anoectochilus*, *Macodes*, etc.) appeared in AOS Orchids a few years ago. He will be giving a talk that he prepared for the World Orchid Congress in South Africa.

OSGKC has graciously invited us to attend the event. The meeting is at 2:15 PM with the speaker at 3 PM. The location is the Lenexa Senior Center, 13420 Oak Street, Lenexa, KS.



The Summer Doldrums: How to Care for Your Orchids During the Wilds of Summer

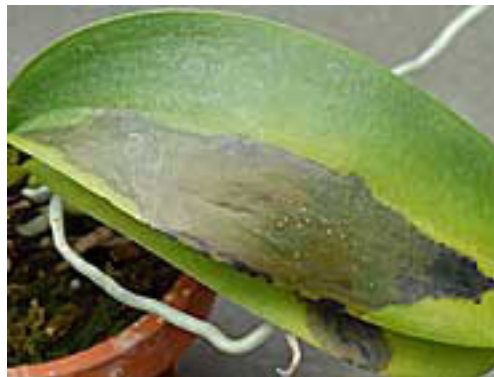
Summer presents challenges in the form of increased pest activity, fungal and bacterial problems in traditionally wet areas and desiccation in those areas with Mediterranean-like climates where summers are typically quite dry. Observation is the watchword for the summer months. Careful observation of your plants is the best way to identify small problems before they become big problems and in the summer, the time between these two events is dramatically shorter due to higher temperatures --- the earlier you catch a problem, the easier it is to control.



Soft brown scale

Pest Control For small collections, the best thing to do is to physically wipe insects off and clean the plant. Isopropyl alcohol and a cotton swab are very effective against most pests and if you want to increase its effectiveness, a drop of Ivory dishwashing liquid added to the alcohol helps wet the typically waxy surface of orchid leaves. If you haven't been watching carefully and the infestation gets out of control, you might have to use chemicals. Few pesticides are specifically rated for use on orchids but you can use any that are labeled for ornamentals. Use care and follow the label directions. This is NOT a situation where if a little is good, more will be better!

In areas with dry summers, mites can be a serious problem especially on phalaenopsis. These creatures attack the surface of the leaves producing a sort of rough, silvery appearance. Mites are not insects and insecticides offer little or no control. Mites do not like humid conditions so efforts to increase humidity are beneficial. Light infestations can be controlled by thoroughly cleaning plants but in hot, dry climates light infestations rapidly become serious and control is best accomplished by the use of a miticide.



Bacterial rot on Phalaenopsis leaf.



Black rot, a fungal disease on Cattleya leaves.

Areas with wet summers Wet foliage and high humidity encourages the spread of fungal and bacterial diseases. Bacterial diseases do not respond to fungicides and vice versa so it's very important to know which disease you are dealing with. Perhaps the easiest way to distinguish between the two is by smell. The most common bacterial disease in orchids produces a foul smell often likened to dead fish. If you've ever had cut flowers stand too long in water you know the sort of smell we're talking about.

Diseases can spread quickly! Bacterial diseases kill plants especially rapidly and time is of the essence. Both bacterial and fungal diseases are spread by splashing water and this includes rainfall. Use a clean cutting tool like a single-edge razor blade, cut off the infected tissue as well as at least an inch of clean, green area and then treat the cut surface with a fungicide. Even if the problem is bacterial, you don't want a fungal infection to start in the wound. Cinnamon, yes the common spice, is effective against fungal diseases and this can be used to coat the cut surface as well. It's perhaps not as effective as a chemical fungicide but it's readily available

and does work.

In wet summer areas, the to control is to keep your plants as dry as possible. Alternatively, provide a lot of air movement. When you water, try to do so as early in the day as possible. This will allow adequate time for the foliage to dry before nightfall.



A desiccated Cattleya note lack of live roots.

Dry summer areas The bane of orchid growers in these areas is extremely low humidity and this leads to two issues. The first of these is an increase in the rate at which plants dry out and the other is the ever-present mite issue.

Orchids in dry summer areas dry out much more rapidly than they did in the winter. Depending on temperature, plants watered every two weeks in the winter may need to be watered every few days in the summer. Here again, nothing will take the place of careful observation. If you have an extensive collection of plants, you might want to consider installing a misting system similar to those used in open-air restaurants in dry areas. Low pressure units that install on hose lines are inexpensive and work reasonably well to raise humidity as well as cool the growing area somewhat.



Sunburn on a Bifrenaria leaf

Summer sun - how does that affect orchids Solar radiation is much more intense in the summer and plants that have been happily in full sun all winter may need a little extra protection (shade) when the sun is the strongest or, often during the late afternoon when the temperatures are highest. Orchids are easily sunburned and you should take care when moving plants around, especially if you are moving plants grown inside during the winter to a spot outside for the summer. Sunburn, while not in itself a serious problem is irreversible and will make your plants look ugly. In serious cases the plant can be killed outright and any leaf damage is an invitation to a secondary infection in the damaged area.

Orchid foliage should be a light yellow-green. The first sign of too much light is often yellow foliage. If left alone, this yellow foliage will eventually turn white and then dark brown and dry as the sunburned area dries out. If the problem is caught before the chlorophyll has been completely destroyed it is often possible to reverse the damage. Once white spots or sunken areas have appeared, the damage is irreversible and the best thing one can do is stop further progression with more shade.

Capitalizing on the high-growth season Because of the increased light and temperatures, your plants will benefit from more fertilizer (increased frequency NOT concentration). This is especially true for those varieties that put out new growth during this time. Avoid fertilizers that contain significant amounts of urea. Urea requires soil organisms to convert it to forms useable by orchids and the process liberates significant amounts of acid. If you are growing in a predominantly inorganic media like rock or aliflor, soil organisms aren't prevalent and these media have poor buffering capacity. If you are growing in fir back media, as the medium ages, it naturally becomes more acidic and less able to buffer the pH shifts caused by metabolism of urea.

Plants will also dry out faster and to avoid root damage, water your plants first before fertilizing. This way the roots will be wet and much less easily damaged by the salts in the fertilizer solution.

If you grow your plants inside during the cooler months, moving them outside for the summer is very often a "shot in the arm" and your plants will respond with renewed vigor. There's something about natural air movement, humidity and rainfall that

just can't be duplicated indoors. Just remember, make the transition slowly. Place them under very heavy shade for a few days, then somewhat less shade for a few days and then move them to their summer homes paying careful attention to the color of the foliage. You'll be glad you did.

Ron McHatton, AOS Director of Education, 2009

American Orchid Society
Collector's Item: *Brassavola cucullata* (L.) R.Br.

Weird and wonderful, *Brassavola cucullata* will add a conversation piece to any collection of orchids. Visitors often comment, "that's an orchid?". *B. cucullata* is the type species for the genus, yet unique with its fringed lip with its long, tapered tip. The species passed through several genera since it was first known as *Helleborine floribus albis, cucullatis* Plum. (1703) based on a drawing of a plant from Haiti. In 1813 this species was used by R. Brown to establish the genus *Brassavola*.

This orchid can be found in the West Indies, Mexico, Central America and Colombia, Trinidad, Guyana and Venezuela. As might be expected with such a widely distributed species, it can be adapted to a wide range of cultural environments and generally, is easy to grow. One would also expect such a widely distributed species to display considerable variation in flowers. Surprisingly *B. cucullata* produces relatively consistent flowers regardless of where the plants originate from. The biggest difference one sees from plant to plant is in the color of the flowers. Although generally concolor white, flowers can have more or less golden petals and sepals and I have seen some examples that have almost reddish flowers. I suspect that these colorful variations might be as much due to cultural factors as genetics because the same plant can produce white flowers one year, and golden ones the next. In any event, there is usually more color on the outside surfaces of the flowers than the insides and the color tends to darken as the flowers age.

Like other members of the genus, *B. cucullata* has terete leaves that are even more pencil-like than its popular cousin, *Brassavola nodosa*. Whereas the latter species produces mostly upright plants, the subject of this essay often displays a semi-erect or drooping nature. This drooping habit makes *B. cucullata* well suited for growing on a mount or in a basket. Not only do the plants droop, but so do the flowers. It is precisely these droopy flowers that draw you to, or repel you from this orchid. Either you like the total departure from the full & round standard, or you find it distasteful.

Relatively little hybridizing has been done with *B. cucullata*. The best-known hybrid is *Rhynchovola* David Sander (*Brassavola cucullata* x *Rhyncholaelia digbyana*). The frilly lip of both parents combines to make a large exotic flower with grace and beauty. A few other successful hybrids are being registered as breeders begin to recognize the species' desirable, although dominant, characteristics. As with other members of the genus, *B. cucullata* has a sweet fragrance at night which is passed on to its hybrids.

Being a low-elevation species from the tropics, *B. cucullata* can be grown within an intermediate temperature range of 55° to 60° F at night and 70° to 85° F during the day. It will easily tolerate higher temperatures during the summer. Here in South Florida our summer daytime highs will be in the low 90's from July into October. Plants will also tolerate occasional low temperatures below 50° F as long as it is not for prolonged periods and plants are dry. If you choose to grow *B. cucullata* mounted you will probably need to water it three or more times per week depending on other cultural factors and seasonal growth patterns. Potted plants will need less water but you will need to contain the long terete leaves with a ring stake. If you apply a half-strength solution of balanced fertilizer every week or two, your orchids will grow and flower better.

References: Withner, Carl. 1992. *The Cattleyas and their Relatives*, Volume V. Timber Press. Portland I. McLeish, N.R. Pearce & B.R. Adams. 1995. *Native Orchids of Belize*. A.A. Balkema. Rotterdam



Brassavola cucullata



Rhynchovola David Sander
(*Brassavola cucullata* x *Rhyncholaelia digbyana*)

UPDATES FOR CIOS SPEAKERS DAY

NOTE: Change in speakers for CIOS Speaker's Day. One of the speakers, Robert Fuchs of RF Orchids, cancelled due to a scheduling conflict. CIOS is looking for a replacement; they anticipate that a replacement speaker will be announced soon. When the announcement is made, we will advise GOOS members via email and in the July newsletter.

Directions to Camp Dodge

Because of road construction on Merle Hay Road, the following is suggested.

From I-80, take exit #129 (NW 86th Street).

Go north approximately 2.4 miles to stop sign at NW 70th Avenue.

Turn east (right) onto NW 70th Avenue.

Go approximately 1.2 miles to stoplight. Entrance to Camp Dodge will be to the left.

Enter Camp Dodge on Maintenance Drive.

Turn right on 5th Street.

Turn left on Main Ave.

Turn right on 7th Street.

Rec. Center is on the left, parking is on the right.

Note: You MUST show a photo ID (driver's license easiest) to get onto Camp Dodge.

Central Iowa Orchid Society

Speaker's Day, July 26th, 2015

Registration Form

To help us plan for Speaker's Day, we encourage you to fill out this registration form and return it to: Central Iowa Orchid Society, c/o Chris Molina, 7647 NE Berwick Drive, Ankeny, IA 50021-9262. We would like these returned by July 11, 2015 if possible.

Please make checks payable to the Central Iowa Orchid Society.

\$30.00 per person (\$35.00 at the door).

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ ZipCode _____

Number of people attending _____

Amount Enclosed _____

Interested in attending a Saturday evening Reception with our speakers and CIOS members _____