



Hilo Orchid Society Newsletter

March
2021

Online Meeting

Note: the normal meeting scheduled for Sat., February 13, 2021 has been replaced by an online Zoom meeting.

Date: Saturday, March 13, 2021
Time: 2:00 p.m.
Place: On your computer or phone
Speaker: Molly Gearin
Topic: Rescuing Hawaiian Native Orchids

All of the orchids that you see in Hawaii are non-native. Even the ones that grow wild, like the bamboo orchid *Arundina graminifolia*, were brought here from somewhere else.

But there are three native Hawaiian orchid species. They're rare, they're not showy, and they grow in inaccessible places like high-elevation bogs. The rarest one, *Peristylus holochila* (right), was nearly extinct, with only 33 plants surviving in the wild: 25 plants on Molokai, 7 on Maui, and one on Kauai.



Molly Gearin is a senior at Illinois College who has been working on a project to save this endangered Hawaiian species under the direction of Dr. Lawrence Zettler. One of the conservation donations that we made last year was to Illinois College to help fund this project. Molly will tell us all about the project, including the problematic process of germinating and growing the seeds and plans for reintroducing the seedlings into the wild back in Hawaii.

Join our meeting to find out how we're helping to save native Hawaiian orchids.

See you on Zoom!

Please Pay Dues – Last Chance!

Your membership dues for 2021 are due by March 31. If you have already paid, thank you.

New members who joined in September 2020 or later are considered paid through 2021 and do not have to pay.

For the rest of you, if we don't receive your dues by March 31, we have to drop you from our membership list. Please don't make us do that!

Dues are still only \$20 for individual membership or \$25 for family membership. In return, you get a year of interesting speakers, newsletters, and activities, plus the chance to get together with folks who share your interest in these beautiful and fascinating plants.

Please fill out the form on page 7 and mail it in with your payment (address is on the form). Thanks!



2021 Hilo Orchid Show Cancelled

With great regret, the HOS Board has voted to cancel the 2021 Hilo Orchid Show. The show has to be planned months in advance, and there is still too much uncertainty around what the pandemic situation will be, and even whether the County will permit such a large gathering. The County has changed the date of the show (which we thought we had reserved) twice already, and there is no guarantee that they will not change it again, or that they will not cancel it at the last minute. Under such conditions, planning for the show is impossible.

We know that many of you will be deeply disappointed that we had to do this. To make up for it, the Board is looking into holding other orchid events, possibly including online orchid auctions and orchid sales events by local vendors.

President's Message

Dear Hilo Orchid Society Ohana,

East Hawaii has been exceedingly wet this winter. The combination of dark clouds, travel restrictions, and concern over Covid hover over us and affect all we do. But the rain also brings the incredible lushness and exceptional beauty we enjoy in our very special part of the world. The magic of our Islands and the resplendent beauty of our orchid plants sustain our spirits though any hardship. I send this message in the hope that you are surrounded by the Aloha of this amazing place and the magical flowers so freely produced in our superb climate.



All of us look forward to our biggest Orchid event of the year: our annual Show at the Edith Kanaka'ole Stadium and sharing the joy and wonder of orchids with each other and an adoring public. As this spectacle and the outreach we accomplish through its creation is a major part of our mission, the decision to postpone it yet again was a really difficult one for our board of trustees. But I'm sure it was the right one. If it were to happen, so much would have to be arranged by now and much too many details are still clouded by uncertainty. Rest assured we are looking at other, smaller, but still awesome orchid events this summer and fall and it may be, when it's practical, the stadium show will re-emerge.

In the meantime, we hope all of you will attend our upcoming Zoom meeting where one of our conservation grant recipients will tell us of her work with the exceedingly rare native Hawaiian species. As you know, native ecosystems are fragile and already deeply compromised. It is wonderful to know that deeply committed individuals like Molly have the knowledge and energy to do everything it takes to preserve these rarest of rare plants for future generations. This is a presentation everyone who loves native plants shouldn't miss. See you there!

Tom

CALENDAR OF ORCHID EVENTS

Mar. 10 7:00 pm Honolulu Orchid Society meeting
Mar. 13 2:00 pm HOS Meeting via Zoom

In Orchids Magazine



Ben and Mirtha Oliveros at our 2015 HOS holiday party. Photo by Sheryl Rawson.

The December issue of *Orchids* magazine took a long time to get to Hawaii, arriving after the January issue. One of our members speculated that the Post Office must have sent it by sailing ship around Cape Horn.

But it was worth the wait. In addition to his monthly column, Tom Miranda wrote an article about our own Ben Oliveros and his nursery, Orchid Eros. Ben has specialized in the *Cattleya* alliance, producing award-winning hybrids and superior line-bred varieties of many species.

Orchids is the magazine of the American Orchid Society and is sent to AOS members. For more information about AOS or to join, visit their website www.aos.org.

New Corresponding Secretary



Amy Friesen has joined the Board of Trustees as Corresponding Secretary, replacing Dorothy Imagine. We thank Dorothy for her outstanding service, and we welcome Amy to the Board.

Members' Photos

We love to share photos of our members' orchids, so please send them in. Here are some recent photos.



Cattleya lueddemanniana 'Haydee' x 'Orchid Eros Picotee', grown by Lou Rhoades.



Left: *Masdevallia veitchiana* 'Bolin' x 'Pacific Giant', grown by Thane Pratt.



Center: *Blc.* Yen Corona 'Green Genie', grown by Kathy Gollaher.



Right: Yellow Vanda, grown by Julie Goettsch.



Top left: *Cattleya aclandiae* 'Marilyn Manson' AM/AOS, grown by Orchid Eros

Top right: *Cattleya inermis* h.f. *coerulea* 'Cherry Kay Houck' AM/AOS, grown by Jungle Mist Orchids

Left: *Dracula chimaera* 'Jungle Mist Mindflyer' AM/AOS, grown by Jungle Mist Orchids

Right: *Dracula Ecuagenera* 'Memoria Cecelia Houck' AM/AOS, grown by Jungle Mist Orchids

Bottom left: *Cattleya lueddemanniana* 'Shogun's Beast' HCC/AOS, grown by Shogun Hawaii

Bottom right: *Cattleya violacea* h.f. *carnea* 'Isabel Rosalia' CHM/AOS, grown by Orchid Eros





Left: *Paph.* Fred Fantastically 'Slipper Zone Last & Least' HCC/AOS, grown by Lehua Orchids
 Center: *Paph.* Graciously Hawaiian 'Slipper Zone Good Grief' AM/AOS, grown by Lehua Orchids
 Right: *Paph.* Majestic Fred 'Slipper Zone Spot Prominence' HCC/AOS, grown by Lehua Orchids



Left: *Paph.* Petula's Distinction 'Slipper Zone Dark Matter' AM/AOS, grown by Lehua Orchids
 Center: *Paph.* Petula's Distinction 'Slipper Zone Kopa Kai' AM/AOS, grown by Lehua Orchids
 Right: *Paph.* Petula's Distinction 'Slipper Zone Petal Darkness' HCC/AOS, grown by Lehua Orchids



Left: *Paph.* Petula's Distinction 'Slipper Zone Sepal Glow' AM/AOS, grown by Lehua Orchids
 Center: *Paph.* Petula's Distinction 'Slipper Zone Size Matters' AM/AOS, grown by Lehua Orchids
 Right: *Paph.* Petula's Valentine 'Slipper Zone' Valentine's Eve' AM/AOS, grown by Lehua Orchids



Left: *Paph.* Petula's Distinction AQ/AOS, grown by Lehua Orchids



Right: *Paph.* Petula's Pink Delight 'Slipper Zone Vivid Pink' AM/AOS, grown by Lehua Orchids

Orchid Stories

Line Breeding



Left: *Laelia anceps* 'Mirtha Isabel' FCC/AOS, grown by Orchid Eros. Photo by Glen Barfield.

Center: A wild form of *Laelia anceps*

Right: Another form of *Laelia anceps*

She is descended from a long line that her mother listened to.

Gypsy Rose Lee

Last time, I wrote about the large amount of variation that can result from a hybrid cross of two different orchids. Breeding orchid species is a little different from breeding hybrids, because there's much less variation to start with. Most plants of the same species closely resemble each other.

Nevertheless, some variation does occur within each species, and orchid breeders can take advantage of that fact to create improved flowers.

Consider the flowers of *Laelia anceps* pictured above. The center photo is a wild form of the species. Its petals are rather narrow. The photo on the right is another form. It has larger, wider petals, but its color is rather pale. Perhaps, generations ago, an orchid breeder might have crossed two plants like these. Out of hundreds of seedlings, some might have had both darker color and wider petals. By selecting seedlings with the darkest color and the widest petals, and by crossing these plants with each other or with other slightly superior forms of *Laelia anceps*, gradually, generation after generation, the flowers become better and better in the characteristics that the breeder is selecting for. This process is called *line breeding*, and it typically takes many generations of plants.

Compare this to Darwin's principles of natural selection and survival of the fittest. In this case the selection is artificial (by the breeder), not by Mother Nature, and the "fittest" plants are the ones with the characteristics that the breeder is looking for. Only those will be used to produce the next generation. Natural selection can take millions of years, but artificial selection is much faster: a few generations can make a difference. Nevertheless, by human standards it's still a slow process, especially for orchids such as Cattleyas where it may take up to 7 years for each generation to reach flowering size.

Line breeding, generation after generation, can span an orchid breeder's entire career and more. Some lines of orchid breeding have been going on for hundreds of years and are still continuing.

But thanks to the work of those dedicated breeders, we now have specimens of many orchid species that are bigger, better shaped, and more colorful than anything to be found in the wild. Case in point: *Laelia anceps* 'Mirtha Isabel' (photo at left). Compare it to the wild *Laelia anceps* in the center photo. What a difference! Bred by Ben Oliveros, owner of the Orchid Eros nursery, it richly deserves the FCC/AOS award that it was given, the highest award for flower quality bestowed by the American Orchid Society.

Larry Kuekes

HILO ORCHID SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

Please print this form, fill it out, and mail with your dues payment to:

Hilo Orchid Society
P.O. Box 4294
Hilo, HI 96720

Dues are \$20 for individual membership, \$25 for family membership.

Please print clearly:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email for receiving newsletter: _____

Check one:

Individual membership (\$20)

Family membership (\$25)

Check one:

I grant permission to publish this information in the Hilo Orchid Society Directory.

I do not grant permission to publish this information in the Hilo Orchid Society Directory.

Signature: _____

Optional:

Are you interested in volunteering to help with any of the following activities? Check as many as you like.

Monthly meetings

Annual Orchid Show

Orchid Isle Project (mounting orchids on trees in public spaces)

Orchids at the Zoo

Serving as an officer

Hilo Orchid Society Officers and Trustees

President – Tom Mirenda biophiliak@gmail.com
Vice President – Ben Oliveros 345-1371
oliveros@orchideros.com
Treasurer – Larry Kuekes 860-380-7964
lkuekes@me.com
Recording Secretary – Lise Dowd lisedowd@aol.com
Corresponding Secretary – Amy Friesen

President-Elect – Karl Mendonca
Past President – Dana Culleney 430-6653
hilo.okika@gmail.com
Trustee 2020-2021 – Ingrid Mendoza
Trustee 2020-2021 – Shelly Nowaki
Trustee 2021-2022 – Matthias Seelis
Trustee 2021-2022 – Ellen Train

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