

Hilo Orchid Society Newsletter

January 2015

Next Meeting

Date: Sat., January 10, 2015
Time: 1:30 Informal "talk story"
2:00 Meeting starts
Place: Kamana Senior Center,
127 Kamana St., Hilo
Speaker: Heather Forester
Topic: Little Fire Ants
plus Orchid Show Video

If Hawaii is a paradise, then there's a serpent in our garden. It's not a snake; our agriculture inspectors have done a good job of keeping snakes out of Hawaii. No, the villain here is an ant, and an incredibly tiny one – the Little Fire Ant. These stinging pests first appeared in Puna in 1999 and have been spreading ever since. If they're not in your area yet, just wait. They're especially bad news for commercial plant nurseries, since infested plants can't be sold.

But there's some hope. Although little fire ants can't be eradicated, they can be controlled. This month, Heather Forester from the Hawaii Ant Lab will tell us how to find out whether you have little fire ants on your property, and if you do, what you can do to control them.

Heather came to Hawaii in 2002 to attend the University of Hawaii at Hilo. Before joining the Hawaii Ant Lab, she worked as an environmental planner in a variety of development, transportation, and public involvement projects. Outside of work, she enjoys snorkeling, hiking, and snowboarding on Mauna Kea.

Want to know more about what you can do about these pests? Don't miss this meeting!

North Korea Strikes Again?

First there was the controversy about *The Interview*. Now the weasels at Sony Pictures have bowed to North Korean threats and pulled independent

filmmaker Beth Owen's controversial documentary, *The 2014 Hilo Orchid Show*, from its scheduled holiday theatrical release. White House sources were puzzled as to what Kim Jong-un is so afraid of, since the video has absolutely nothing to do with North Korea. But it does have some nice footage of our show. We will have a special screening at the January meeting just to annoy North Korea.

Dues Are Due

Your membership dues for 2015 are due. 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 page 5 and mail it in with your payment (address is on the form), or you can pay at the meeting. Thanks!

Holiday Party

Our holiday party had record attendance this year. We're sorry if you weren't able to sign up at the last minute, because we sold out, but those who attended had a good time. After an hour of talking story at the scenic oceanfront Hilo Yacht Club, we had our official swearing in of the officers and trustees for 2015, followed by a delicious buffet lunch. Then we had our annual fund-raising auction of donated orchid plants, supplemented by a silent auction.

Special thanks to Rayna Armour, who organized the event, to Sandy Song for so ably performing as auctioneer, and to the following nurseries for donating plants for the auction: Island Sun Orchids, Hilo Orchid Farm, Gines Orchids, Orchid Eros, Seven Rocks Orchids, The OrchidWorks, Hawaii Hybrids, Carmela Orchids, Newman's Orchids, and Alawaena Orchids.

December AOS Judging Awards

Photos by Sherry Partlow



Left: *Paph.* (Acclamation x Gridlock) 'Little Jaguar' AM/AOS, exhibited by Hilo Orchid Farm

Center: *Paph. praestans* 'Honolii' AM/AOS, exhibited by John Jusczak

Right: *Paph. spicerianum* 'Lehua's Green Glow' AM/AOS, exhibited by Lehua Orchids



Left: *Paph.* (Petula's Song x Love Song) 'Lehua's Contrasting Glow' HCC/AOS, exhibited by Lehua Orchids

Right: *Paph.* Hilo Spotter 'New Star' AM/AOS, exhibited by Hilo Orchid Farm



Left: *Paph. spicerianum* 'Dyamically Lehua' HCC/AOS, exhibited by Lehua Orchids

Right: *Rlc.* Pseudo McDonald 'Gabriel' AM/AOS, exhibited by Orchid Eros

2015 Officers and Trustees



Officers and Trustees for 2015 were sworn in at the holiday party. From left: Vivian Ueoka, Lillian Paiva, Barry Yamada, Bill Rawson, Larry Kuekes, Rick Kelley, Lisa Steinmeyer, Shelby Smith, Joe Bush, Ben Oliveros.

Orchid Stories

What Is a Species?

You may have heard that the orchid family has more species than any other family of plants (most sources cite over 20,000). Even more impressive, over 150,000 orchid hybrids have been made to date, with more on the way. But what exactly is the difference between a species and a hybrid?

A species is a variety of plant or animal that originally lived in the wild and was not produced artificially by man. A hybrid is a variety that was produced by crossing different species, and is almost always man-made (out of the 150,000 orchid hybrids, only a handful occurred naturally). That is, a hybrid has two or more different species in its ancestry. A species only has the same single species in its ancestry.

Another definition of species is one that I remember learning in school: a group of organisms that are capable of interbreeding. For example, a horse and a dog can't produce offspring, but a pit bull and a poodle can, which proves they're the same species.

That definition works fine for animals, but not so well for plants, and definitely not for orchids. Different orchid species are routinely crossed – that's what hybridizing is all about. For example, all the hundreds of orchids in the Cattleya alliance, containing all the Cattleyas, Laelias, Encyclias,

Epidendrums, Brassavolas, etc., can interbreed with each other.

A better definition of species is not a group of organisms that can't interbreed, but that don't interbreed in nature. Why not? For orchids, perhaps they live in different geographical areas, or they bloom at different times of the year, or they attract different insects as pollinators, so the pollen of one species never finds its way to the other species.

Of course, in the greenhouse these barriers don't exist. So, for example, a hybridizer can cross *Brassavola nodosa* (from the Caribbean) with *Laelia purpurata* (from Brazil) and produce the lovely hybrid Bl. Morning Glory. And aren't we lucky that they can?

Larry Kuekes



Bl. Morning Glory, a hybrid cross of two species.

President's Annual Report to Members

Aloha, HOS Members

According to our Bylaws, the Society President must present a yearly report to members on how the Society is faring. I'm pleased to report that we're doing well. Specifically, here's what we've done in the last year and how we have helped achieve our Society's goals:

Goal #1: Information: promote the culture of, knowledge about, and appreciation of orchids.

- **Monthly meetings.** Our meetings in 2014 featured interesting and informative presentations on the following subjects:
 - Orchid Conservation in the Wild
 - Landscaping with Orchids
 - Orchid Sex
 - Species Habitat, Hybrid Culture
 - Long-Lasting Orchids
 - Basics of Orchid Culture
 - Neofinetia falcata and its hybrids
 - Paphiopedilums
 - A Breeding Program for Paphs

In addition, each meeting featured a show table where you got to see the amazing things that fellow members are growing.

- **Monthly newsletters.** We try to provide a newsletter that you'll enjoy reading. In addition to photos of members' orchids and orchids awarded by the local AOS judging center, in 2014 our newsletters featured articles about "members of the month" Rick Kelley, Shelby Smith, Josh Black, and Ruth Robison; an orchid story by H.G. Wells, and articles about Darwin's orchid, taxonomic name changes, orchid virus, "imperfect" orchids, "blue" orchids, and Cattleya percivaliana, not to mention an April Fool's article on GMO.
- **Spring Nursery Tour.** We held another of our ever-popular nursery tours. Attendees got to visit and buy from five local orchid nurseries. Thanks to Jerome Siebenrock for arranging this.
- **Orchid Show.** In terms of our impact on the public, our annual orchid show is by far our biggest event. This year it was bigger and better than ever, giving over 4000 attendees the chance to see thousands of orchids on

display as well as buy from more than two dozen vendors. Thanks to everyone who volunteered to help with the show, but special thanks go to show chair Sheryl Rawson and to Shelby Smith, who designed our award-winning HOS display.

- **AOS Judging.** By giving awards, the American Orchid Society's judging program encourages growers to keep improving the quality of orchids. Our Society supports our local AOS judging center.

Goal #2: Conservation

- As tropical orchid habitat disappears, orchids are increasingly in danger of extinction in the wild. We donated \$1000 to the Orchid Conservation Alliance, one of the principal organizations that protects tropical orchid habitat from development.

Goal #3: Education

- **Scholarships.** We give scholarships named in honor of Yasuji Takasaki, a strong contributor to our Society and to orchid growing on this island, who believed in the power of education. In 2014 we awarded two \$2500 scholarships to two deserving University of Hawaii at Hilo students.

Goal #4: Community Service

- **Donation.** The Ku'ikahi Mediation Center put on the Preview Party at our orchid show, and in return we donated the proceeds, \$7697, to them, as a way of giving back to the community. Ku'ikahi helps people resolve disputes at little or no cost, avoiding lawsuits and court battles.
- **Orchid Isle Project.** This new project aims to make our island live up to its nickname "the orchid isle" by placing orchids in public places everywhere around the island. The result will make the island a more beautiful place for both visitors and residents.

In 2014 we really got going, planting orchids in trees in Kalakaua Park and outside the Tsunami Museum in Hilo, as well as in planters outside Hilo's bayfront shops, with assistance from William McKnight of the Downtown Improvement Association and his Americorps volunteers. Project leader Julie Goettsch has been working with the Kona and Daifukuji orchid societies to make this an island-wide effort.

Goal #5: Membership

- One key measure of the health of an organization is whether it's growing. Our membership has been steadily growing, and we currently have more members than at any time in the several years that I've been keeping records.

Goal #6: Financial Health

- I won't go into details here, because our Treasurer will publish his report in a coming newsletter, but we've never been in better financial shape, due largely to a very successful 2014 orchid show.

Hilo Orchid Society is a volunteer organization. Our success is due to the efforts of all of you who

helped us to make 2014 such a good year. I'm confident that with your help, 2015 will be even better.

Mahalo,
Larry Kuekes

CALENDAR OF ORCHID EVENTS

Hilo Orchid Society meetings and AOS Judging are held at Kamana Senior Center, Hilo unless otherwise specified.

Jan. 10	1:30 HOS meeting
	4:00 AOS Judging
Feb. 14	1:30 HOS meeting
	4:00 AOS Judging
Mar. 14	1:30 HOS meeting
	4:00 AOS Judging

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: _____

Hilo Orchid Society Officers and Trustees

President – Larry Kuekes 860-380-7964

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Vice President – Ben Oliveros 345-1371

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Treasurer – Bill Rawson 934-0552

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Corresponding Secretary – Joe Bush

Past President – Julie Goettsch 333-5989

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Trustee 2014-2015 – Vivian Ueoka

Trustee 2014-2015 – Shelby Smith 408-966-5924

skelatenphish@yahoo.com

Trustee 2015-2016 – Lillian Paiva

Trustee 2015-2016 – Barry Yamada

Hilo Orchid Society

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