

Hilo Orchid Society

Newsletter

April 2015

Next Meeting

Date: Sat., April 11, 2015
Time: **1:30** Informal “talk story”
2:00 Meeting starts
Place: Kamana Senior Center,
127 Kamana St., Hilo
Speaker: Bob Harris
Topic: Cymbidiums For All Climates
In Hawaii

Our speaker in April is our own Bob Harris of OrchidPeople of Hawaii. Bob and his wife Jennifer Snyder are the premier growers of Cymbidiums in Hawaii, with special interest in developing warmth-tolerant varieties of these normally cool-growing orchids. Bob wrote us about his background, so I'll let him tell it in his own words:

“I started growing orchids when I was about 8 years old. My mother wouldn't let me have a dog or a cat so I started breeding Siamese Fighting fish (Bettas) and growing orchids. Back then I was always seeking nice blue/violet Cattleyas. My Dad built me a small window greenhouse out my bedroom window over the first floor family room. I kept Venus Fly traps and Sundews in it as well. So for many years the Catts were my only orchids. I used the profits from selling the Bettas to pay for the orchids.

“Years later I went to grad school in Botany at Univ. of Oregon. I was working in Mycology and also in Plant Morphology (working with plant hormones to tissue culture green plants). There was a genetics group at the end of the hall but I didn't know too much about what they did. At one point in the early fall I needed to use the university greenhouse but it was all full of the large tubs of green plants that had long green leaves and no flowers. They were of little interest to me as there were no flowers and they all looked the same. Funny how later that spring I came in to see all the lovely

flowers and I was hooked on Cymbidiums. The professor who was working with them was the late famous Don Wimber who developed many of the artificially produced tetraploids. He was doing meristem culture of cymbidiums that he'd treated with colchicine to force chromosome doubling during meiosis. This fascinated me so I became interested in his work on cymbidiums.

“After I graduated I moved to the San Francisco Bay area to the small town of Inverness, on the coast on the Point Reyes peninsula. The climate there was perfect for cymbidiums as it was cool and damp during the summer with night temps in the mid 50s and day temps in the 70's. It almost never went below 32F there and rarely above 86F in summer. I heard about Rod McLellan's Acres of Orchids and so went to one of their open houses in the late 1970s, around the time I met my wife Jennifer Snyder. We attended their open houses and tours where we saw our first commercial scale meristem operation of cymbidium culture based on the work I'd see in grad school. The result was we bought orchids from Rod's and then kept dividing them for years afterwards.

“In 2003 we moved to the Big Island, and not wanting to part with our cymbidiums we obtained permits and brought over 50 from the mainland. We were living at 1000 feet so naturally this was too warm for most of what we brought over. But the Big Island has so many different climates we found some friends where we kept our few cool weather cymbidiums while we started learning about the warm tolerant varieties. We still loved the big colorful cool weather types so we would order a few here and there from California growers, and tried to keep it as a small hobby. As we started learning about warm types we met several knowledgeable people, among them was Lloyd DeGarmo. We were able to get some back bulbs from him and carefully nurtured them until they flowered. We were able to find a place to lease in Waimea to grow our cool

weather ones for cut flowers. We now have 30,000 cymbidiums and sell cut flowers and potted plants, both cool weather and warm weather types. We have tested many warm tolerant cymbidiums in Hawaiian Paradise Park.

“We are interested in creating warm growing cymbidiums with good size flowers and high color, and compact leaves. Our efforts to obtain breeding material has led us to laboratories in Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand and of course the mainland. We are also tracking down varieties in the hands of individual collectors in order to continue our work. We welcome all questions and input as this is an exciting opportunity for those of us who live and work in Hawaii to develop our own special cymbidiums.”

Orchid Stories

Ugly Stepsisters

To most beginning orchid growers, if Cinderella is like a beautiful white cattleya, then the ugly stepsisters are paphiopedilums. I certainly felt that way once. Paphs have ugly color combinations like muddy red mixed with brown and green. Some even have warts with hairs coming out of them. To further the analogy, they really are “stepsisters” – hardly related to other orchids. Botanically, orchids are divided into (A) the Cypripedium tribe (“slipper” orchids, including paphs), which have two stamens, and (B) all other orchids, which have one stamen. Some botanists have even argued on this basis that the slipper orchids aren’t orchids at all.

So why do most orchid lovers eventually change their minds about paphs? First, “pretty” paphs do exist. The first one I grew, *Paph. niveum*, has small white flowers unsullied by brown or green. And its leaves, like most warm-growing paphs, are mottled in attractive patterns. Paphs are just about the only orchids that look good out of bloom.

As for the hybrids, “classic” paph hybridizing has produced large, round-shaped flowers in various

combinations of colors. It’s true that, because paphs have never been successfully mericloned, really superior ones are rare and are very expensive, if they’re available at all. When the species *Paph. armeniacum*, which is pure buttercup yellow, was discovered in China in the 1980s, it put the older yellow hybrids to shame (they were mostly pale yellow mixed with tan or green). Hybridizing has come a long way since then, and some of the white and pink hybrids are very nice. But be aware that you’re just not going to get, say, a pure red Paph.

Then again, some people like paphs because they aren’t “pretty”. After all, much of the beauty of a cattleya is in its exotic, irregular form compared to, say, a daisy. *Paph. Chiu Hua Dancer* couldn’t be more dramatic (see photo). It inherits its curly petals from its parent *Paph. sanderianum*. Much modern hybridizing has utilized such dramatic species and gotten away from the traditional round flowers.

Finally, there’s the practical side. Paphs are easy to grow. They like the same temperatures as humans and they don’t need much light. They’re tolerant of overwatering; in fact they like to be on the damp side. Some of them bloom multiple times per year. And the flowers last for months. My *Paph. niveum* bloomed twice a year for three months at a time. After struggling with some other finicky species, paphs start looking very attractive indeed.

Larry Kuekes



CALENDAR OF ORCHID EVENTS

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

- Apr. 11 1:30 HOS meeting
4:00 AOS Judging
- May 4 5:00 HOS Show Committee meeting
- May 9 1:30 HOS meeting
4:00 AOS Judging
- June 13 1:30 HOS Meeting
4:00 AOS Judging
- Aug. 7-9 HOS Orchid Show, Afook Chinen Civic Auditorium

March Members Choice Awards

Photos by Shelby Smith



Left: Hobbyist 1st place (tie) – *Ascocentrum garayi*, grown by Dana Culleney.

Right: Hobbyist 1st place (tie) – *Cattleya skinneri* ‘Casa Luna’, grown by Bill Rawson



Left: Hobbyist 2nd place (tie) – *Dendrobium nobile* hybrid, grown by Jeff Fendentz

Right: Hobbyist 2nd place (tie) – *Paph.* Sorcerer’s Stone ‘Mauna Loa’, grown by Glen Barfield

March Members Choice Awards (continued)

Photos by Shelby Smith



Above: Commercial 1st place – *Vanda tricolor* var. *suavis*, grown by Karen Kimmerle

Top right: Commercial 2nd place – *Epicattleya* unknown hybrid, grown by Karen Kimmerle

Bottom right: Commercial 3rd place – *Phaius* Microburst 'Wild Thing', grown by Karen Kimmerle

March AOS Awards

Photos by Glen Barfield



Left: *Paphiopedilum* (Macabre x California Girl) 'Surprise' HCC/AOS, grown by Hilo Orchid Farm

Right: *Paphiopedilum* Excitingly Wood 'Lehua's Fighting Pickle' HCC/AOS, grown by Lehua Orchids

Treasurer's Annual Financial Statement 2014 Financial Summary

FUNDS RECEIVED

HOS ORCHID SHOW FUNDS RECEIVED	\$76,632.36
SOCIETY FUNDS RECEIVED	
HOLIDAY PARTY	\$2,030.00
DUES/MEMBERSHIP	\$3,960.00
DONATIONS	\$354.23
T-SHIRT SALES	\$1,415.00
NURSERY TOUR	\$390.00
INTEREST INCOME	\$46.09
MISCELLANEOUS INCOME	\$40.00
PLANT SALES	\$5,360.78
TOTAL SOCIETY FUNDS RECEIVED	<u>\$13,596.10</u>
TOTAL FUNDS RECEIVED	<u>\$90,228.46</u>

FUNDS PAID OUT

TOTAL ORCHID SHOW COST	\$57,282.75
SOCIETY OPERATING COSTS	
HOLIDAY PARTY	\$2,774.12
INSURANCE	\$1,084.75
SCHOLARSHIPS	\$5,000.00
MEETING SUPPLIES	\$1,738.86
SOCIETY OPERATING COSTS	\$2,626.98
NURSERY TOUR	\$440.00
PHOTO AWARD	\$765.65
PLANT COSTS	\$1,752.25
POSTAGE AND DELIVERY	\$290.25
SPEAKER COSTS	\$3,529.52
OCA CONTRIBUTION	\$1,000.00
STORAGE UNIT RENTAL	\$1,584.87
GE TAXES PAID	\$101.80
TOTAL SOCIETY OPERATING COSTS	<u>\$22,689.05</u>
2014 TOTAL FUNDS PAID OUT	<u>\$79,971.80</u>
RESERVE FUNDS FROM 2014	<u>\$10,256.66</u>

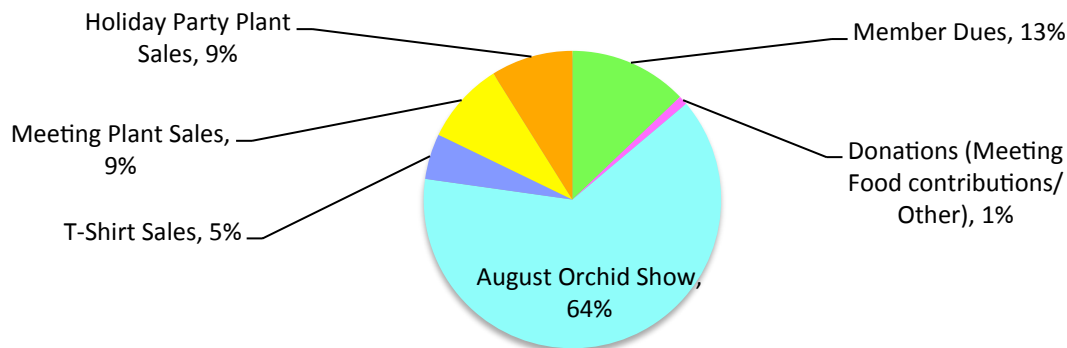
ASSETS

CURRENT ASSETS	
CHECKING / SAVINGS	
CD TROPHY ACCOUNT	\$5,851.09
CHECKING ACCOUNTS	\$34,316.24
SCHOLARSHIP RESERVE	\$13,546.36
SAVINGS ACCOUNT	\$28,687.09
TOTAL CHECKING / SAVINGS	<u>\$82,400.78</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>\$82,400.78</u>

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

LIABILITIES	
CURRENT LIABILITIES	
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE	<u>\$0.00</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>\$0.00</u>
EQUITY	
TOTAL EQUITY	\$82,400.78
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u>\$82,400.78</u>

Sources of Revenues



Hilo Orchid Society Officers and Trustees

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Trustee 2015-2016 – Lillian Paiva

Trustee 2015-2016 – Barry Yamada

Hilo Orchid Society

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