



Hilo Orchid Society Newsletter

May
2025

Next Meeting Note Time is One Hour Later Than Usual

Date: Saturday, May 10, 2024
Time: **2:30** Informal "talk story"
3:00 Meeting starts
Place: Kamana Senior Center,
127 Kamana St., Hilo
Speaker: Challen Willemsen
Topic: Orchid Conservation in
Guatemala

Challen Willemsen is a Guatemalan botanist and educator specializing in the orchids of Guatemala. He studied Environmental Studies at Bates College in Maine, then worked at Harvard's Oakes Ames Orchid Herbarium and volunteered for the U.S. National Park Service. For more than ten years he has served as an ecologist at the El Tular nature sanctuary in Guatemala.

Challen has a personal collection of 2500 rescued orchids, and he oversees the care of thousands more at El Tular.



This year, Challen was the recipient of a Hilo Orchid Society conservation grant to assess a site in Guatemala and get the site designated as a reserve to protect orchids, including the endangered species *Lycaste virginalis*.

Now Challen is visiting us in Hawaii, and he will tell us all about his conservation projects.

If you want to find out what HOS is doing to support orchid conservation, don't miss this meeting!

2025 Hilo Orchid Show Dedicated to Lottie Haspe

The 2025 Hilo Orchid Show will be dedicated to longtime HOS member Lottie Haspe, who passed away earlier this year. We will have a small display at the show to honor Lottie. The Cattleya hybrid Rlc. (formerly Blc.) Auntie Lottie was made by Ben Oliveros and named after Lottie. If you have a photo of Rlc. Auntie Lottie in bloom, or even better, if you have a plant of it that will be in bloom for the show (at the end of July), please let us know. Mahalo!

Article about HOS in Hana Hou

The latest issue of Hana Hou, the airline magazine of Hawaiian Airlines, contains an article about our Orchid Isle project to put orchids in public places on this island where people will see them. If you fly Hawaiian, look for the article, and if possible, get a copy of the magazine for us. Mahalo!



Please Pick Up Your Show Tickets

We're asking all HOS members to buy 15 tickets for the orchid show for \$3 each, and to sell or give them to friends and neighbors. Of course, you're not obligated to purchase tickets, but if you can, it's a great way to help your Society. The \$3 price is a bargain compared with \$6 at the door.

You can pick up your tickets at the meeting. It saves us the cost of mailing them to you.

You don't have to pay for the tickets when you pick them up. We trust you. You can pay online at our website www.hiloorchidsociety.org, or you can mail your payment (\$45 if you use all 15 tickets) to

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

Thank you for helping to make the show a success!

Orchid Stories

What's in a Name, Part 1

Why Do they Keep Changing the Names?

Taxonomists are the scientists we love to hate. They're the ones who assign the names to species and genera. Often they "revise" the work that a previous taxonomist has done, which changes the names. This confuses the rest of us, even if the taxonomist had a good reason for the change.

Name changing is nothing new. It has been going on ever since 1753, when Linnaeus published his two-part naming scheme for species: genus name followed by species epithet (for example, he named the tomato *Solanum lycopersicum*).

In Linnaeus' day, only a few tropical epiphytic orchids were known, and he put them all in the genus *Epidendrum*, which is Latin for "upon a tree", describing the way they grow. But as more and more orchid species were discovered, it became obvious to scientists that they shouldn't call them all *Epidendrum*s. So they started splitting them into multiple genera. For example, *Vanda tessellata* was originally named *Epidendrum tessellatum* in 1795, but by 1820, *Vandas* got split off into their own genus, so the name changed.

The process has continued ever since. When I started growing orchids, *Tolumnias* were called *Oncidiums*. Although their flowers look like *oncidiums*, *tolumnias* are vegetatively different (they used to be called *equitant oncidiums* because their leaves overlap) and hybridizers never crossed them with "real" *oncidiums*, only with other *equitant* species, which was a clue that they were genetically different. In 1986 a taxonomist recognized this and split the genus. That's what taxonomists do.

As a side note, it has been claimed that scientific names are better than common names because they're less confusing and more stable. It's true that common names can cause confusion if the same name is used for two different species. For example, "robin" means one bird in America and a different

bird in England. But I contend that common names are far more stable than scientific names, which can change at the whim of a taxonomist. For example, many gardening books say that geranium is an incorrect name for *pelargonium*. But the plants commonly called geraniums were, in fact, officially named *Geranium* by Linnaeus in 1753. Another

botanist changed the scientific name to *Pelargonium* in 1789, but the common name for the garden plant has remained geranium for over 200 years!

Are scientific names more stable? Don't get me started on *Epidendrum cochleatum* – or is it *Encyclia cochleata*? or *Anacheilium cochleatum*? or *Prosthechea cochleata*? (End of rant – deep breath.)

Let's get back to the process. How do taxonomists decide which

species are closely related enough to be in the same genus, and which ones should be in a different genus? Basically, they look at the characteristics of the plants, especially the parts of the flower, and then use their best judgment to decide how to group them into genera.

For example, they may group them based on the shape of the lip or the number of pollinia. Of course, this is somewhat subjective, so it often comes down to a matter of opinion. *Vanda sanderiana*, the large flat vanda that is the cornerstone of vanda breeding, was split off into its own genus *Euanthe* in 1914 because of some differences between this species and other *vandas*. For the last hundred years, taxonomists have disagreed whether the differences are important enough to warrant a separate genus or not.

Next time, we'll look at the most recent trend in taxonomy – DNA analysis – and why, because of it, there's a whole lotta shakin' going on – and a whole lotta names are changing.

Larry Kuekes



A Monarch butterfly visiting a flower of *Epidendrum cochleatum* – or is it *Encyclia cochleata*, or *Anacheilium cochliatum*, or *Prosthechea cochleata*?

Orchids on the April Show Table

Photos by Dana Culleney



Left: *Grammatophyllum stanleanum* 'Okika', grown by Jeff Fendenz.

Center: Labeled *Cattleya intermedia*, but flowers are too large; may be a *Cattleya intermedia* hybrid. Grown by Glen Barfield.

Right: *Barkeria lindleyana*, grown by Glen Barfield.



Lycaste, grower unknown.



A miniature yellow Lycaste and Lycaste Fire Bird, grown by Sherry Partlow.



Zygopetalum, grown by Glen Barfield.

Certificates of Appreciation



Rick Kelley, left, and Larry Kuekes, right, received American Orchid Society Certificates of Appreciation at the April HOS meeting in recognition for their service to the Hilo Orchid Society. Both are past Presidents of HOS, and both continue to serve the Society in many ways.



Left: *Paphinopea* (*Stanhopea* Shinjik x *Paphinia cristata*) 'Tigerliciously Shogun' AM/AOS, grown by Shogun Hawaii
Right: *Cattleya mossiae* h.f. *semialba* 'Easter Glory' AM/AOS, grown by Orchid Eros



Catasetum De Etta Harris 'Emerald Goddess' AM/AOS, grown by Shogun Hawaii



Left: *Paphiopedilum* Petula's Charm 'Slipper Zone Peacock Parade' AM/AOS, grown by Lehua Orchids
Right: *Rhynchovola* David Sander 'Super Star' HCC/AOS, grown by Orchid Eros



Left: *Dendrobium* (Greg Scott x Tiny Twister) I S O AM/AOS, grown by Island Sun Orchids
Right: *Paphiopedilum hirsutissimum* 'Okika' HCC/AOS, grown by Okika



Rhyncattleanthe Li Hing Mango 'Peachy Pam' AM/AOS, grown by Island Sun Orchids

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