



January 2007 - Volume 4 - Number 1

Published by the South Florida Orchid Society

President's Message

Dear fellow members,

I hope that each of you had a wonderful holiday season with your family, friends and, of course, your orchids. I wish everyone the very best of health and prosperity for the new year.

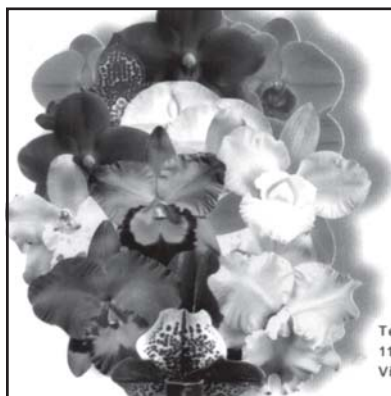
2007 will be a very big year for the South Florida Orchid Society. As you know, we are moving our wonderful Miami International Orchid Show® to its new home at the nearby Sheraton Miami Mart Hotel & Exhibition Center. This is a wonderful venue and very conveniently located near the Miami International Airport as well as the 826 and 836 Expressways. As the momentum builds toward the coming show, we will need your support. Please volunteer to help your society!!

The Sheraton will also be the venue for the coming 19th World Orchid Conference in 2008. I would strongly encourage everyone to register now for this conference. There will be wonderful lectures from international orchid experts which can only be attended by registrants. Similarly the opening night party at the fabulous show will be available only to conference registrants. You may register now on-line at www.19woc.com or by calling the 19WOC office at 786-621-9962.

Excitement will be building throughout the orchid world and 2007 promises to be an incredible year for all of us. So get on board the South Florida orchid train and get ready for the ride of your life!

Sincerely,

Robert Fuchs
President



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January Program: "Ascocenda"

presented by Alex Maximiano

Our featured speaker this month will be our own webmaster, Alex Maximiano who was born in Mozambique of Portuguese settlers. In 1974, while he was in grade school, his family was forced to flee that African country to escape communism. After completing high school in Portugal, Alex came to the United States to pursue a computer degree at the University of Colorado. In 1992, he received an MBA from Thunderbird Graduate School on International Management in Glendale, Arizona, and embarked in a career in software sales.

In 2002, Alex was looking for an orchid present for his mother-in-law on eBay when he came across a flask of orchid seedlings offered by Ruben In Orchids. Within a few months, he began doing his own crosses and researching hybrids and genealogy.

In 2004, Alex started to design a new software program to research orchids, which eventually evolved into "OrchidWiz Encyclopedia", an easy-to-use digital research tool for orchid growers. The first version of the software was released in November of 2005 and became an instant success. To date, Alex has sold copies to orchid aficionados in every U.S. state and 28 countries worldwide.

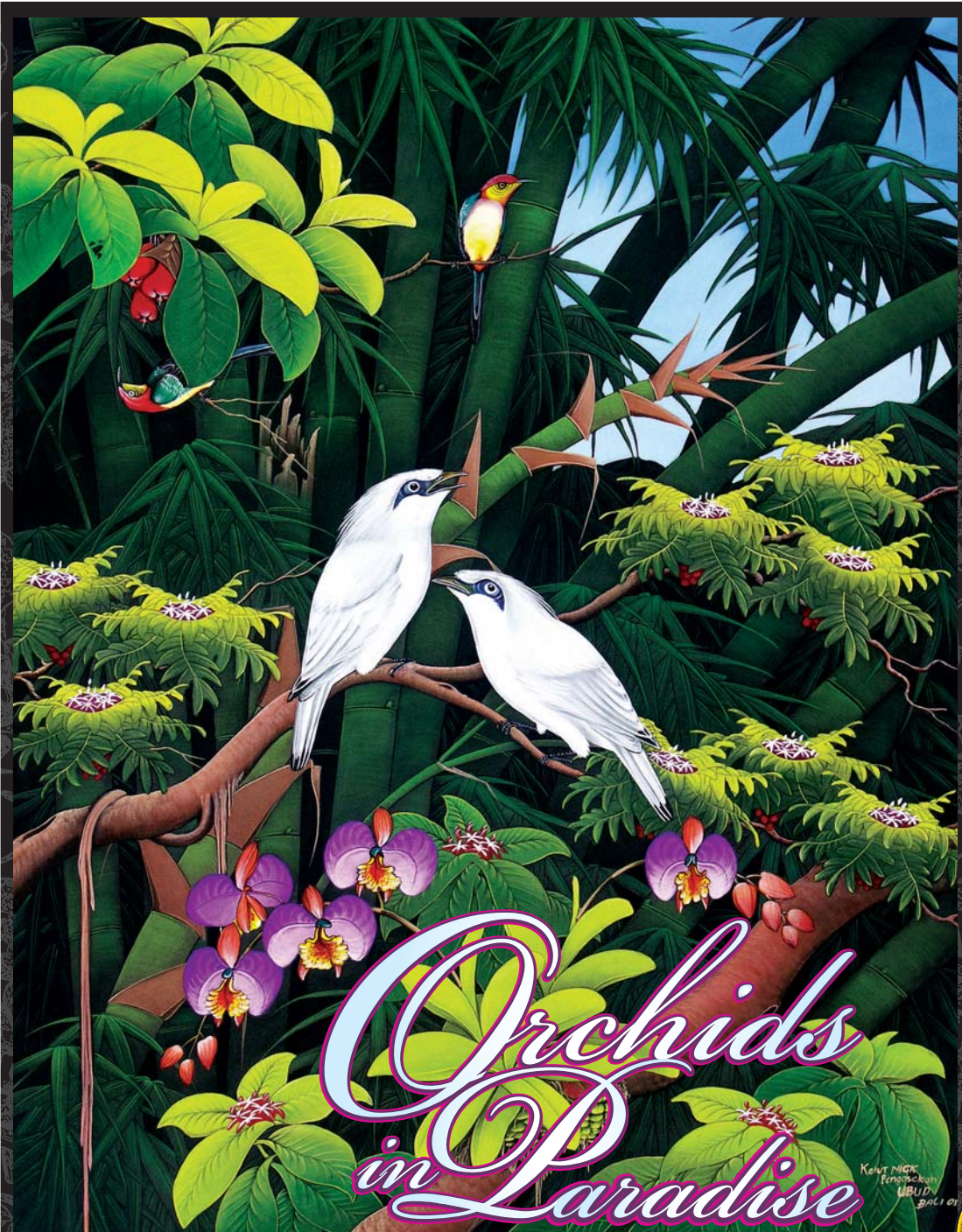
Alex is an AOS student judge with the West Palm Beach Judging Center and a member of SFOS. He has developed several presentations on orchids, including the program about the man-made genus "Ascocenda" which he will deliver tonight. Most ascocendas have been bred right here in South Florida. The discussion will focus on the contributions of both vandas and ascocentrums to this hybrid genus, the primary species used for breeding and the history of Ascocenda hybridizing. The presentation will also include a video demonstrating pollination. Alex lives with his wife, Marianna, three-year old son, Nicolas, and six-month old Nathaniel in Miami Shores.

The plant table this month will be provided by Orchids by Allison and will surely be fabulous! I look forward to seeing everyone at the meeting.

Michael Coronado
Program Chairman

6nd MIAMI INTERNATIONAL ORCHID SHOW

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MARCH 2 - 4, 2007
SHERATON MIAMI MART CONVENTION CENTER
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The 62nd Miami International Orchid Show Premier Party

March 1, 2007
7:30 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.
Sheraton Miami Mart Hotel & Convention Center
711 N.W. 72 Ave., Miami

Please join us for the Premier Party for the 62nd Miami International Orchid Show. This is the first time the sales marts will be open and the first time the public will have a chance to see who won prestigious awards. Tickets for the evening are \$50.00 and can be purchased in **advance only** from the SFOS office. **No tickets will be sold at the door. The deadline to purchase tickets is Friday, February 23, 2007.**

The menu for the evening will include:

International and Domestic Cheese Display with French bread and Crackers

Marinated grilled vegetables display with balsamic vinaigrette

From the carving station: Steam ship round of beef with Dollar medallions, horseradish and Au Jus sauce, Roasted Tom Turkey with Orange Cranberry Relish

Oriental Station: Oriental Stir Fry, Beef and chicken and vegetables with garlic, ginger and soy sauce. Vegetable fried rice and Fortune cookies

Pasta station: Tortellini and Penne pasta served with Alfredo sauce and Marinara sauce. Garlic Bread sticks and parmesan cheese.

Fajita Bar: Grilled Beef and Chicken, sweet peppers and onions served with soft flour tortillas, sour cream and fresh salsas, shredded cheese, shredded lettuce, guacamole

Dessert: Chef's selection of assorted mini desserts and sliced fresh fruits with honey yogurt dressing. Fresh brewed coffee, tea and decaffeinated coffee. Soft drinks are included with reception food items. There will be a cash bar.

Tickets for the evening are \$50.00 and must be purchased in advance. No tickets will be sold at the door. The deadline to purchase tickets is Friday, February 23, 2007

2007 Premier Party Ticket Order Form:

_____ Premiere Party Tickets @ \$50.00 each

_____ Total Enclosed

Please mail tickets to:

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Miami Show News

Dear Fellow Members,

This is the second in a series of letters to inform you about your 62nd Miami International Orchid Show. We will be repeating the successful photography and cake decorating contests. For details and entry forms for these contests you can go to our website www.southfloridaorchidsociety.org or call Ellen Hanson at our office (305)255-3656. One major difference in the cake contest is we are creating a separate division for high school students. The competition will be divided into secondary students, amateurs, and professional categories. Winners will be eligible for cash prizes.

This year we will be introducing a quilting exhibition to further enhance our show. Remember that we will be in a new venue, the Miami Sheraton, and because of space constraints those of you planning to put in an individual table top exhibit please contact me or Ellen Hanson by January 20. It is extra dimensions as these that make our orchid show distinct and a truly special event. We are also providing pre-sale discount tickets as in the past. Your committee is working diligently to provide you with the best possible event and your participation in anyway will be appreciated.

As in years past, we are producing a show program. If you would like to put an ad in the show program the fee

Continued on next column

schedule is listed below. In the show program this year we are also going to have a booster page. The cost to have your name listed on this page is \$20.00 per line. Please contact Ellen Hanson at our office (305) 255-3656 to make your contribution.

Regards,

Richard Brandon
Show Chairman

Prices for 2007 Show Program

Back Cover Full Page (Color) 4 ½" x 7 ½"	\$700.00
Inside Front Cover (Color or Black & White) 4 ½" x 7 ½"	\$500.00
Inside Back Cover (Color or Black & White) 4 ½" x 7 ½"	\$500.00
Full Page (Black & White only) 4 ½" x 7 ½"	\$400.00
½ Page Ad (Black & White only) 3 ¾" x 4 ¾"	\$250.00
¼ Page Ad or Business Card Size (Black & White only)	\$150.00

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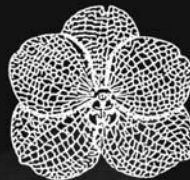
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EDITORIAL -- WHY OH WHY ?

Bracker - I'LL GIVE 10 11 REASONS WHY

Two months ago while I was lying flat on my back with nothing to do but think, I started wondering about things. One of the most fascinating and tantalizing of my thoughts was: "I wonder why there is so much interest, even passion, for orchids?" "Why do people involve themselves with orchids to the extent and with the intensity that they do?" Suddenly, some reasons started rolling out of my brain. I know others have proposed their own lists, but this list is mine:

1) Beauty/Elegance: We are aesthetic beings, since the beginning of recorded history and before. There is ample evidence that humans have a craving to satisfy the need for pleasing the senses, especially the visual senses. The history of art is ample evidence of that. There is no denying that orchids, as a whole, are beautiful and elegant when they are in bloom. Their colors, shapes, sizes, and features deliver to us an overall beauty.

2) Diversity: There is no question that among the families of flowering plants, orchids are the most diverse. That diversity is expressed in their sizes, shapes, colors, color patterns, growth requirements, aromas, complexity, and others. And, with so many species and hybrids to choose from, there is no end to the new and different orchids available to any collector, photographer, painter, or spectator. If you think diversity is not important, can you imagine inviting your dinner party guests to the greenhouse to view a Poinsettia collection? Ho hum. When you have seen one, you have seen them all. Diversity is the spice of life, and orchids show that at all levels.

3) Challenge: Nobody will doubt that orchids are a challenge to keep alive, care for, and of course bring to flower. We tend to get bored when everything in our lives comes too easily. Orchids require a level of understanding and effort so the caretaker can keep them in good health and vigor. There is a pot of gold (flowers) at the end of that rainbow. Along with that challenge, they help teach us a level of patience we might not otherwise learn. Growing orchids is not quite the same as growing radishes in an early summer garden.

4) Biological Interest/Intrigue: Orchids are very complex plants which have evolved some very complicated and interesting mechanisms for reproduction over the eons. For those who have interest in biology/botany there is so much to learn that is fascinating and intellectually rewarding. When we gain understanding from the writings and talks of others we enrich ourselves and expand our own curiosity to learn even more. There is something rewarding about gaining an understanding about the structure, function, development, and inheritance of parts of a plant with such an interesting and complex

Continued on next column

Award Quality Orchids



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biology as an orchid. Also, knowledge for its own sake has a value in expanding our thought processes and leading to formulation of questions and creative thinking. The old adage "Use it or lose it" applies to the brain as well as muscles.

5) Social/Educational: Orchids are one of the few plants that have spawned societies at the international, national, regional, and local levels devoted just to one family of plants. The other one I can think of is roses. Associations of people drawn together by similar interests provide the means to help each other, sponsor educational activities, and conduct the activities that the L.O.S. and others do routinely. That comradeship is itself an attraction for many people who wish to associate with others, make friends, and share social, business, and intellectual interests.

6) Competition: The competitive spirit that drives many people can be found in numerous outlets in our society -- from sports to the arts, state fairs, business, and of course orchids. Choosing and cultivating quality orchids and entering them in orchid shows can provide a sense of achievement and reward, as well as enjoying a wonderful house plant in bloom.

7) Home Decoration: As much as I love growing orchids in my basement facility, when showy orchids that tolerate room conditions come into bloom I love to bring two or three of them into the living room to add color and cheer to the room décor, and to give me something to admire. With some orchids, whose inflorescence lasts 3 weeks to 4 months or more, that longevity alone makes them a bargain after a few seasons. Cut flowers purchased from a florist or a supermarket last only several days, and they still cost the major part of a \$10 bill.

8) Sense of Achievement: While this reason may partly encompass a couple of others, it is a strong reason in its own right. I know from my personal experience there is a strong sense of pride and achievement when walking through one's orchid collection, whether it is a full greenhouse or a dozen well kept healthy plants. One knows that by learning, experience, and persistence the result is success. It is a good feeling which yields a degree of personal pride.

9) Reactions by Others: Let's face it, we all like a pat on the back once in a while. When you have done a good job and have attractive orchids to show visitors, and they compliment the plants and your efforts for growing them, it feels good inside. That is a reward in itself.

10) The "Royal" Factor: Since the earliest written history of orchids, they have been regarded as the aristocrats of the flower world -- the royalty. These are not mere peasants that we are spending our money on, investing time, effort, and care. There is something within us that makes us silently realize, with a touch of pride, that we are not raising dandelions, marigolds, or even roses. We are growing the flower that stands proudly at the top of the pyramid, looking down on all others like the royalty it has been regarded as throughout its history. We secretly like to associate ourselves with such high class status. It is said that we are judged by the friends we keep. Well, we are judged by the flowers we grow too. It somehow makes US a little bit special as well.

So, there they are. Bracker's ten reasons why people like to grow orchids and why they are so attracted to them. But wait! There may be one more too. So I will add an eleventh point.

11) \$\$\$\$\$: It is a good way to spend money. May all of your orchids be prize winners, and may they not drain your bank account.

© 2005 - From the March 2005 LOS Newsletter)

How many is too many orchids?

As part of my thinking on New Year's Resolutions for 2006, I took a hard look at my orchid addiction and how many plants I've amassed. I went a bit crazy the last part of 2004 at orchid shows, sales, nurseries, orchid society sale tables, etc. And I think I've gotten over the optimal number of plants for me. I've run out of room in my greenhouse. My plants are crowded into the space I have and are not getting the attention they once were.

I've read a lot about the hobby, talked to more people who are serious hobbyists and pleasure hobbyists, and looking at personal experience I believe each of us has a number of plants that are right for us. It looks like mine is around one hundred—and this seems to be a somewhat magic number because it's the same number that a lot of people have told me is what they've pared their collections back to.

I grow orchids because I love to see the flowers. I love to mess around in the greenhouse taking care of them. I love to talk to them in the mornings when I take my coffee out there and check them over. I like to watch them grow and exclaim over new growth. I get enthusiastic over finding buds. I wait with anticipation for the flowers to open.

With too many plants I miss those signs that a plant is not doing too well—it gets too much light and the leaves burn. Black rot has taken half a plant before I notice it sitting in the back corner and dying. Repotting is a constant chore that I keep putting off because the thought of all those plants has become overwhelming.

A recent article in *Orchids* talked about paring back your collection and one of the best ideas to me was the

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“WOW Factor.” When the flowers open are you still overwhelmed by the beauty, fragrance or whatever. In other words, do you still say “WOW” when you see it? If not, give the plant away to a novice, sell it at your orchid society plant table. Spend your time with a plant that still inspires you to that “WOW.”

Do you have plants that simply are not really doing anything for you? No blooms, no growth? It's possible that you simply don't have the right conditions for that plant. Can you change conditions for it? A rule of thumb is that if a plant isn't blooming for you, you probably are not giving it enough light. Are you trying to grow an intermediate temperature plant in warm or cool conditions? A *Sophranitis* in a warm climate? If so the plant may not be responding to your conditions. After two or three years, is it worth the space and time to keep trying? Would you be better off trying something that you know grows well in your conditions? Do you have any of those plants that someone else was killing that they gave you to resuscitate that simply were too far gone and are still half dead in spite of better conditions?

My answer to these questions, was “Yes.” I want to enjoy my orchids, not be overwhelmed by how much I have to do!! And I will be paring down my collection to those plants I love and that respond well for me. Content copyright ©2006 by Susan Taylor. All rights reserved.

Ascocentrum Species

Ascocentrum ampullaceum [Lindley]Schlechter 1913
Photo courtesy of Jay Pfahl

Common Name Vein-like *Ascocentrum* [Lip Spur], Flower Size 1/2" to 1 1/4" [1.5 to 2.5 cm]

A great, miniature vandaceous plant, with short, simple, several leafed stems carrying suberect, distichous, ligulate, acutely bifid or truncate and apically toothed leaves that are keeled on the underside and grooved on the top that is a spring through summer bloomer on an axillary, 3 to 8" [8 to 20 cm] long, shorter than the leaves, compact inflorescence that have many small flowers, from Nepal thru Thailand at elevations of 300 to 900 meters often on deciduous trees. Warm to cool temperatures and high humidity as well as bright light are required. It likes wood slat basket culture and needs a slight drying out and cooling in the winter.



Continued on page 7



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Premier party tickets will be available at the
next two meetings and from Ellen at the office
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Ascocentrum curvifolium [Lindley] Schlechter 1913, Plant and inflorescence Photos courtesy of Jay Pfahl

Common Name The Curved Leafed *Ascocentrum*, Flower Size 3/4 to 1 1/8" [2 to 2.7 cm]

It is a medium sized epiphyte with short, often bifurcate, stout, woody below stems covered by leaf bases carrying distichous, narrowly linear, strongly decurved, praemorse or bidentate apically leaves found from Nepal thru China and Vietnam to the south on deciduous trees in semi-deciduous and deciduous dry lowland forests at elevations of sealevel to 700 meters, and has abundant smaller red flowers that occur in the late spring and summer on a crowded, erect, 6 to 10" [15 to 25 cm] long, axillary inflorescence that is shorter than the leaves and densely many flowered.



Ascocentrum miniatum [Lindley] Schlechter 1913, Inflorescence Photo courtesy of Jay Pfahl

Common Name The Rust Red *Ascocentrum*, Text by Andy Phillips

This is a photo of the "true" *miniatum*, a miniature monopodial as its name implies, a very attractive plant with thick fleshy v-shaped 4" leaves rising up to 5" in height, numerous upright spikes up to 10" emerge from between the leaves bearing 30 or more brilliant orange/red blooms, the symmetrical 1/2" flowers have an orange/yellow lip with a bright orange 1/2" spur, very easy grower, drought tolerant, great floral display.



The 19TH World Orchid Conference® Returns to Miami for 2008 Global Conference and Show

Registration Now Open for Most Prestigious Orchid Event on Earth

MIAMI, FL. – Orchids have been revered for centuries for their botanical properties and luscious foliage. To ancient civilizations, these delicate flowers came to represent adoration, luxury, beauty, virility and fertility. Now, the public can witness the timeless appeal of these captivating plants when the 19th World Orchid Conference®, the most prestigious Orchid event in the world, comes to Miami January 23-27, 2008. Hosted jointly by the Ft. Lauderdale and South Florida Orchid Societies, the show's theme is "**Orchids–Nature's Masterpiece®.**" The newly renovated Exhibition Center of the Sheraton Miami Mart Hotel in Miami will house this world-class event that includes lectures, workshops, parties and, of course, one of the largest orchid shows and sales on the planet.

Held once every three years in a different international location, the World Orchid Conference is the biggest and most influential gathering of orchid enthusiasts, growers, hybridizers, and scientists. The Conference draws top local, regional, national and international growers and their most unique and stunning plants. Horticulturists and orchid lovers alike will be dazzled by the array of orchids on display at the conference. Orchids by the thousands, as potted plants and cut flowers, will arrive from every major orchid growing center in the world. Rare species, fragrant floral compositions, and creative hybrids will seduce and impress visitors to this momentous show.

Throughout the Conference there will be extensive seminars and educational lectures on conservation and horticulture. There will also be celebrations, networking events, and sightseeing opportunities to keep the registrants happily and productively involved in the exchange of ideas and appreciation of this engaging plant. Orchid art and related items will be on display and, of course, there will be a large sales mart carrying plants and all things related to orchids.

"The South Florida Orchid Society and the Ft. Lauderdale Orchid Society annually sponsor the two largest orchid shows in Florida, and their expertise and experi-

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Our thoughts and prayers to out to Nick Maniatis and his family on the recent loss of his mother.



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Winter Orchid Growing Tips

ence is exactly the right combination for organizing and hosting a World Orchid Conference,” said co-chairman of the conference Robert Fuchs, president of South Florida Orchid Society. “Indeed, having hosted the 11th World Orchid Conference in 1984 in Miami, the two local societies are looking forward to bringing this event back to beautiful South Florida for a spectacular and successful conference.”

Orchid connoisseurs and novices alike will convene for five days to admire the stunning orchid displays, discuss a variety of topics related to Orchids, and network within the Orchid community. The organizers of this international event expect more than 250,000 people from around the world to attend this hotly anticipated tribute to the plant that has inspired a spectrum of emotions from admiration to infatuation.

“Orchids, with their lively hues, elegant blossoms and vibrant flora, evoke passion and awe among gardeners, collectors and flower aficionados across the globe,” said co-chairman of the conference Col. Kenneth Kone, past president of Ft. Lauderdale Orchid Society. “The lush, tropical setting of South Florida is a perfect place to host the World Orchid Conference. With international vendors and experts attending, this orchid show will be the epicenter of the Orchid world.”

Orchids are the largest and most diverse of the flowering plant families, with more than 25,000 species. The Chinese were the first to cultivate orchids, but Victorian England was obsessed with them — sending explorers to South America to bring back exotic varieties. Now conference attendees will have the chance to see the flower that has evoked such fervent adoration.

Orchids now account for over \$120 million in sales and are the fastest growing segment of the United States’ floriculture industry. The 2008 event will be only the fourth time that a World Orchid Conference has been held in the United States, making this a triumph for Florida orchid devotees. Last year’s conference in Dijon, France, attracted 200,000 visitors and vendors from 30 countries. Other major cities that have hosted this celebrated event include Rio de Janeiro, Glasgow, and Tokyo.

Interested Conference exhibitors and attendees can register online by simply going to www.19woc.com. For those who do not wish to register online, registration packets can be obtained by emailing a request to: director@19woc.com.

If you need more presale tickets, please contact Ellen at the office. 305-255-3656

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Clean up your plants

Use the cooler winter months to spend some time with your plants. Clean off leaves with lemon juice to remove all that messy build up of fertilizer or minerals on the leaves. Remove dead sheaths and sarongs to reduce the number of places that insects have to hide. This attention will really pay off in the long run with plants which have been taken care of.

Check for pests

Make sure that you do a thorough and periodic check of your plants for insects. Warm humid conditions inside or in a greenhouse will attract all kind so of predators. Snails, slugs, ants and other insects will find the conditions as nice as your orchids do. Watch for signs of scale and mealy bugs -- any kind of white fuzzy mass -- or eaten areas on your plants. Spray with a mixture of soap and water and apply Diatomaceous Earth for slugs and snails.

Check for molds

As you clean off your plants (both sides of the leaves) make sure that you keep an eye out for any kind of moldy looking areas. For some reason, as the temperatures stay cooler, molds will start showing up as dark areas usually on the lower surface of the leaf. Spray with Physan or Consan to protect any open surfaces from your cleanup and to reduce the growth of any unwelcome molds or rots.

Practice good sanitation

When working with your plants, be sure to wash your hands between plants and clean off your tools in order to eliminate the possibility of passing viruses between plants. An alternative to this constant hand washing is to use those thin latex gloves so common in doctors offices -- one pair per plant. I often use these when applying any kind of insecticide since it can be absorbed into the skin. The gloves will provide protection for both you and your plants.

Increase your air circulation

Now is the time to add air circulation to your growing area. It is imperative to keep the air circulating around your plants, both to keep molds from forming and to keep the air from getting too hot or too cold in any particular spot. In a windowsill area, those plants nearest the windows can become chilled even when the temperature in the rest of the house is in the 70s. Moving the air will help keep the temperature in any particular place more at an average. Use a small fan which attaches to a curtain rod or other stable object or a small box fan to keep that air moving well.

Check your light levels

Since the sun moves with the seasons it is possible that the perfect place for orchids during the summer gets little or no light during the winter months. This can be important because of the reduced number of sunlight hours as well as the position of the sun. It might be necessary to provide artificial light for a couple of hours in the evening to give your plants enough light to grow and prepare to flower.

The 19TH World Orchid Conference®

ANNOUNCES SPONSORSHIP PACKAGES for 2008 EVENT IN MIAMI

**Corporations, Orchid Societies, Individuals Invited
to Participate in Global Orchid Event**

MIAMI, FL. – Held once every three years in a different international location, the World Orchid Conference® is the biggest and most influential gathering of orchid enthusiasts, growers, hybridizers, and scientists from across the globe. In conjunction with the conference's return to Miami in 2008, the South Florida Orchid Society and the Ft. Lauderdale Orchid Society, co-hosts of the event, have announced sponsorship packages tailored for corporations, orchid societies and individuals who want to become actively involved in this worldwide orchid extravaganza.

Ranging from the \$100,000 "Diamond" title sponsorship to a \$250 "Trophy" sponsorship, the packages are designed to appeal to a wide cross-section of companies and orchid enthusiasts, according to Robert Fuchs, co-chairman of the 19th World Orchid Conference®. Sponsorship benefits include a range of incentives and exposure opportunities for the community at large as well as for the 250,000 anticipated conference goers expected to attend the five-day event. And because the 19th World Orchid Conference® is a 501(c) 3 corporation, there may be additional tax advantages to becoming a sponsor, Fuchs added. "The eyes and pocketbooks of orchid enthusiasts from around the world will be in Miami for this significant event," Fuchs said. "Sponsorships offer an incredible opportunity for branded exposure in front of this influential and affluent community."

19th World Orchid Conference® sponsorships include varying combinations that feature: orchid show tickets, educational conference series tickets, gala tickets, on-site display booths, on-site signage, community wide advertising and promotional packages. Among the sponsorships available are:

Trophy sponsorship -- \$250

Individual sponsorship -- \$500 and \$1,000

Orchid Society sponsorship -- \$1,000

"Amethyst" sponsorship -- \$5,000

"Sapphire" sponsorship -- \$10,000

"Emerald" sponsorship -- \$25,000

"Ruby" sponsorship -- \$50,000

"Diamond" sponsorship -- \$100,000

For a complete list of sponsorship opportunities and benefits, visit the 19th World Orchid Conference® website at www.19WOC.com or contact the conference's executive director at director@19woc.com or (786) 62-19WOC.

About the 19th World Orchid Conference®

WHEN: January 23 - 27, 2008
10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Wed. through Sat.
10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sun.

WHERE: Sheraton Miami Mart Hotel
& Convention Center 711 N.W. 72nd
Avenue, Miami, FL (Immediately south
of Miami International Airport)

THEME: "Orchids – Nature's Masterpiece®"

CO-HOSTED BY: South Florida Orchid Society, Inc.,
and Fort Lauderdale Orchid Society, Inc.

Conference and Registration Information:
www.19woc.com

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Growing Paphs in Windowsills A Full Circle but with New Perspective

By John Atwood, Orchid Curator, Marie Selby Gardens

As of this writing, I can hear the rain beating against the skylights as it glazes our country roads with ice; weather which forecasters predict will turn to snow for the next three days – not a landscape most 24-year veterans to sunny Florida would look forward to. Returning to Vermont presents new challenges, not to mention relearning how to negotiate snow and ice. Still, the winter wonderland is apparent everywhere, and some days are even sunny! In this setting, orchidists really appreciate growing orchids! We are growing just three *Paphiopedilum* as house plants. How do paphs respond to home conditions?

The three paphs we have to start with are: *Paphiopedilum Maudiae* 'The Queen' *P. venustum*, and *P. St. Swithin*. I have seen *Paphiopedilum Maudiae* grown under normal fluorescent light in Michigan and with some success, therefore, this hybrid seems a good choice. *Paphiopedilum venustum* forms a full circle for me having been my first orchid acquired in 1959 (different clone). The most interesting plant for this modest experiment is *Paphiopedilum St. Swithin*., Although a hybrid, both parents (*P. rothschildianum* and *P. philippinense*) thrive in the wild in bright and sometimes full sun. Can a *Coryopedilum* paph thrive as a house plant?

Potting materials for the *Maudiae* and *venustum* consist of locally collected live sphagnum, but I used limestone chat with about 5% compost for the *St. Swithin*. One of the notable differences I note in all three plants compared with growing in Florida is the turgidity of the leaves, which I attribute to water quality. Bending of the leaf, especially of *Maudiae*, can easily result in breakage. I could never acquire such turgid leaves in Sarasota. All three plants are in active growth producing broader leaves. Specific results follow:

Continued on next column

SFOS Meeting Schedule

Wednesday, January 17, 2007

Fire Fighters Memorial Building
8000 N.W. 21st Street
Miami, Florida 33122

- 7:30 pm - Registration & Judging of Plants
- 7:45 pm - Announcements
- 8:00 pm - Program
- 8:45 pm - Refreshments
- 9:00 pm - Awarded Plants Discussed
- 9:15 pm - Raffle

including the ovary which I failed to stake. The plant has four new growths, and a fifth has appeared from the old rhizome.

Paphiopedilum venustum responded to the heat of Sarasota with weak growths sporting dull leaves, but the recent growth is more robust with pronounced patterning on its waxy leaves. It has a single flower on a short scape. It has six new shoots developing, and time will determine if our growing conditions will repeat the success of years ago.

The biggest surprise is the vigor of *P. St. Swithin* now sporting four buds. I would have expected at most two buds at this latitude. Is this light-lover producing one last gasp before expiring? The new growth with broadened leaves suggests a plant in perfect health. Perhaps there is basis for optimism from habitats. In the wild both parents of *St. Swithin* are usually exposed to bright light during midday unlike their mottled leaved forest floor relatives. It is possible that the drier home atmosphere is close to nature? What about light? Many of our days are overcast, yet windows are quite sunny on bright days, and there is supplemental light during the evening from an adjacent lamp. Maybe different aspects of our growing conditions mimic the natural habitat. The sun of a southerly window comes in at a low angle making rooms bright during midday. The maximum of the sun with the earth at our latitude is 23 degrees on December 21 compared with 40 degrees in Sarasota, Florida. Although the days are short, the sun hits the same window at sun-up as well as sundown. There may be another clue from the habitat. *Paphiopedilum rothschildianum* and *P. philippinense* usually grow on the sides of cliffs receiving light from an oblique angle, suggesting that the south window in our latitude may be optimal for these orchids. The only negative aspect of these plants as house plants is their sheer size, but perhaps a more compact clone of *Paphiopedilum philippinense* could be used as a parent. Orchid growing has come a long way since Veitch proclaimed, "Cypripedium philippinense has its home in one of the hottest regions of the world, growing in the blaze of a tropical sun and exposed to the force of the monsoon storms, climate conditions that are simply impossible in the glass structures of Europe" (Manual of Orchidaceous Plants, part 4, 1889). What would Veitch think of growing its hybrids in a sunny window?

Most orchidists would have difficulty restricting themselves to three plants, yet a limited and carefully selected collection allow for more detailed observation. If vigorous growth over the next year confirms my surprise with *P. St. Swithin*, I will encourage growing *Coryopedilum* paphs as house plants!

**Members enjoying themselves at the holiday party.
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