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# President's Message

Dear friends:

We had a great meeting last time, not only because of Paul Storm's excellent presentation on Schomburgkias and the many possible combinations with other species, but for the opportunity to see many new and familiar faces. I'm glad you all decided to come.

Believe it or not, two years have gone by since I became the president of this society. Time flies and my term has ended. We are also two years older. What a drag.

I would like to thank you for all the support that you have given me and the board. Even though this is a very large and complex society responsible for coordinating activities such as the Miami International Orchid Show, Speakers Day, and book publication, my job was very easy. When you are surrounded by professionals the job always gets done. I was fortunate to have a secretary like Ellen, who always knows what to do. Mike brought excellent speakers, and Vickie along with Grant was in charge of multiple subcommittees (secretary, photography, set up, judging, shipping of the books and membership). Joan was our careful treasurer. Bob put together our famous Speakers day. Sandy handled education and research, and Dorothy and Richard had the awesome responsibility for the largest orchid show in this country. Julie put together the magnificent third edition of An Introduction to Orchids, while Carol redesigned the monthly newsletter. Marlene made sure that our refreshment table was well supplied every night along with coordinating our Holiday Party. Julia took charge of hospitality. It was so nice to know that these people, even though they are volunteers; they are accountable and will go the extra mile to have the job done.

Well, now it is time to say goodbye. Thank you again, and please give as much support as you can to the new board. I'll see you around.

Your friend, Eduardo Marcellini

# **Program: Awards and Installation**

Be on hand this month for our annual awards and installation meeting. First, we will be installing the newly elected officers:

President-Robert Fuchs

1st VP-Richard Brandon

2nd VP - Michael Coronado

Secretary-Maria Wood

Treasurer - Joan Viggiani

Director (thru 2008) - Julie Rosenberg

Director (thru 2008) - Sandy Schultz

Director (thru 2008) - Tony Viggiani

Director (thru 2007) - Dorothy Bennett

Be sure to be there to welcome them.

The main program for the evening will be a review of the awards presented during the year (June 2004-May 2005). Robert Fuchs, Chairman of the Awards Committee will review the medal winners, the annual ribbon winners, and the present the perpetual trophies to the newest recipients. You'll definitely want to be there to watch as these proud exhibitors take their place in SFOS history.

We will not have judging at this meeting, but should any one have exceptional plants that wish to have considered for medal judging, please call the office to arrange for a special judging session.

Marlene Clark will provide some extra special refreshments for the evening, and I'm sure everyone will have a great time.

Next month we'll be back to our regular schedule for our monthly meeting. We'll have a wonderful presentation by Nina Rach on "Orchids in the Andes of Ecuador". Don't miss it!

As we end our "old" year and start our "new" one, I'd like to thank everyone that has helped us coordinate our programs, most particularly Ellen Hanson. I'm looking forward to another year of terrific presentations!

Michael Coronado VP – Program Chairman

# **Hardy Bletillas**

by Clark T. Riley\*

Bletilla striata, Ble. striata f. alba, Ble. ochracea, Ble. Brigantes

As is the case with epiphytic orchids, a relatively few hardy terrestrial genera hold disproportionate potential for horticultural usefulness. Along with Cypripedium and Calopogon, some of the greatest potential lies in the genus Bletilla. This small genus is represented in cultivation by only three species and their varieties. Bletillas striata. formosana, and ochracea. Of these three, Ble. striata and Ble. ochracea are vigorous and hardy, at least to USDA zone five. Bletilla striata is found in at least 4 varieties, the type variety of bright magenta purple, the white variety alba, a smaller variety with white sepals and petals sporting a pink or pink-tinged lip, and a variety with white variegations in the leaves. The purple and white varieties have long been available in the horticultural trade and can often be found for sale in retail garden centers. This "commoner" presentation may, in part, be responsible for the otherwise surprising lack of interest displayed by the orchid community. The species ochracea possesses bright mustard yellow flowers and has recently been introduced into cultivation from western China through the efforts of the National Arboretum and a network of dedicated fanciers. Bletilla ochracea has proven equally hardy to Ble. striata and hybridizes readily with it.

Bletilla striata and its varieties and Bletilla ochracea are very amenable to cultivation. Both do well in bright light in normal quality soil, planted three to four inches deep. In the author's garden in Baltimore, Maryland, USA, in USDA zone 6.5, both species multiply rapidly growing in full sun. They are mulched with two to three inches of pine straw in the winter to prevent early emergence in the spring as the growing tips are susceptible to unsightly frost damage. Neither species is fertilized, nor has any fungicide or insecticide ever been used on either species. Under these conditions, the leaves of Ble. ochracea are slightly thinner than Ble. striata and the plants are slightly smaller. Other than these minor differences, the plants are very similar in their presentation. Bletilla ochracea blooms about three weeks later than Ble. striata, though there is plenty of overlap in their two month blooming periods. The racemes of both species yield three to ten flowers and, in good years, many of the racemes will be branched. The hybrid between the two species is intermediate in all respects and is very

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attractive, combining the bright rose color of the Ble. striata with a graceful presentation and bright yellow disk in the lip from Ble. ochracea. A bundle of Bletillas is lovely and long lasting. One feature which portends a bright future for the genus is the ease with which the Bletilla racemes can be pulled from the plant, eliminating the need for cutting utensils with their attendant risk of virus transmission.

Bletillas grow rapidly by division under good conditions. Most of the commercial Bletilla striata was surely obtained by propagation of a few clones. In addition, they grow with abandon from seed, utilizing any of the popular media or even on dampened Sphagnum moss, though the latter gives a much lower yield. Given good growing conditions, it is not uncommon to bloom seedlings two to three years from pollination. The prospect of rapid generation turnover and resulting selective breeding is very exciting. The author has second generation U.S. bred clones in the garden already under less than optimal seedling care. Other growers in the network are reporting light pink variants among seed-grown Bletilla striata. Attention can now focus on larger flower size and a more upward facing presentation. Bletilla is known to hybridize successfully with Arundina graminifolia (unregistered) and attempts are being made to cross it with the taxonomically related genus Calanthe, thus far with no reported success. The introduction of other species of Bletilla would be desirable.

#### REGISTERED HYBRIDS

Bletilla striata x formosana = Yokohama (N. Suzuki 1956) Bletilla formosana x ochracea = Coritani (R. Evenden 1994) Bletilla striata x ochracea = Brigantes (R. G. & A. Evenden 1994)

\* an original article by Clark T. Riley

## Neofinetia falcata, The Japanese Wind Orchid

By Terri Lewin

Japanese name: FUU RAN or FUUKI RAN Plant type: evergreen and epiphytic plant Flower: white or slightly pink with fragrance

Habitat: on the branches of trees or on rocks in humid places Blooming season: June-May Height: 10cm

Neofinetia falcata is the only representative of its genus, but there are many forms to grow and enjoy. Native to Japan and to some extent China and Korea, Neofinetias are given the popular name of "The Japanese Wind Orchid" and are a favorite of many growers. The white flowers are of average size in proportion to the plant, but the fragrance is much sweeter and stronger than would be expected from such a small package. Growing in nature, it is generally an epiphyte, grow-

Continued on page 3

ing well on deciduous trees and taking advantage of the bare branches for strong winter light and summer foliage for cover from the sun. This is a monopodial plant that has a similar growth pattern to Vandas. The plant is often seen growing at an angle to prohibit water from collecting at top and rotting the crown.

Neofinetia has been cultivated for centuries in Japan and is closely intertwined with the culture of the samurai warriors. Great acclaim was awarded when these warriors would brave crossing waterways and high terrain to bring one back for all to admire. Some noblemen were also reported to carry their plants with them on long trips, a custom recorded visually in paintings and renderings from the era.

Neofinetias are generally easy to cultivate, even for the beginner. They require a bright light level (1500-2500 foot-candles) and a well draining mix and may be grown on a bright windowsill or under fluorescent/HID lighting. When grown under fluorescents, try to keep the top of the plant within six inches of the tubes.

When potted, a special technique with sphagnum moss may be used. The plant is placed in the pot, but instead of having the base of the plant level with the top of the pot, the base is lifted so it is about %" higher than the top of the pot. Fine quality New Zealand sphagnum moss is carefully packed into the pot and wound around the exposed roots to form a sort of 'upside down cone' of moss upon which the base of the plant sits. In the orient, plants are often potted as a 'landscape' in a tray with drainage; the grower will mound moss on the tray and place the plant on one of the mounds, where it may sit surrounded by rocks and other fetishes.

Neofinetia has been bred with other relatives to produce compact hybrids. Neostylis (Neofinetia x Rhyncostylis) Lou Sneary is a famous hybrid. Certain clones ('Colorful Blue', 'Lea') may be found which retain the size and fragrance of the Neofinetia while incorporating the bluish/lavender tones of the Rhyncostylis.

Another variation is the rare variegated form, which is hugely popular in Japan and is slowly gaining ground in North America. As with all variegated plants, variegated Neofinetia grows more slowly than the all-green form. It is reported that in Japan, some variegated Neofinetias are passed down through five or more generations!

Neofinetias are relatively easy to come by, and most major orchid nurseries have them in stock. Be sure to purchase from a reputable dealer.

#### Phalaenopsis - What Next?

The Phalaenopsis orchid or "moth orchid" is the most common orchid available today. They can be purchased in grocery stores, hardware stores and nurseries. Coming in a variety of different colors for any decorating scheme, they are a wonderful first orchid for most people. The long arching inflorescence (flower stem) holds the flowers which can last for three months or longer.

Since these orchids are so readily available, they are often the first orchids purchased by new enthusiasts. And since they are the first venture into the fascinating world of orchids, one of the most common questions on forums from new orchid enthusiasts is: "What should I do after my Phalaenopsis finishes flowering?"

Essentially you have three choices depending upon the type of grower you are.

First, you can do nothing and wait to see if the plant will continue to bloom on the same inflorescence. Many hybrids will do so—I have one that has been blooming nonstop for over a year and I found new buds starting again at the end of an inflorescence that I was ready to cut off.

Second, you can cut the inflorescence back down to one of the triangular shaped areas on the inflorescence (this is where one of the flower stems was attached previously). Sometimes this encourages the plant to send out new side inflorescences.

Third, you can cut the inflorescence all the way off so that the plant can put all its energy into growing stronger so it can bloom for you next year. This is probably one of the best things to do if the plant is small—unless it's a miniature.

Most Phals will only bloom once per year in the spring. This of course is dependent up on the heritage of the parents of your particular hybrid. Keep the plant in an east-facing window with no direct sunlight, but lots of indirect light, humidity, and provide weekly watering and fertilizing. In about September or October, subject the plant to night-time temperatures in the low 60s for about a month to induce it to form its spike. Once the spike is detected, stop the lower night temperatures.

# SFOS Speakers' Day Program Announced

Speakers' Day has been a highlight of the South Florida Orchid Society's calendar for nearly two decades, and this year's event will again bring a slate of prestigious orchidists to Miami for a daylong seminar on Sunday, October 2, 2005. The event will include lectures from five well-known experts, American Orchid Society judging and a judges' panel discussion, plant sales, continental breakfast and lunch. SFOS Speakers' Day also qualifies for AOS Judge Training credits.

Speakers for the event include:

Joyce Stewart (Great Britain) will speak on Angraecoid orchids

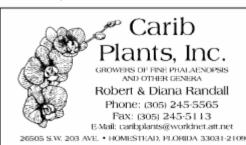
David Banks (Australia) will speak on lesserknown genera in the Sarcanthinae

Alex Hirtz (Ecuador) will speak on habitats and new species in Ecuador

Art Chadwick (Virginia, USA) will speak on large-flowered Cattleyas

Ken Roberts (Florida, USA) will speak on new Paphiopedilum species

The registration fee of \$45.00 includes all lectures, breakfast and lunch, and access to the sales area. Non-registrants may submit plants for AOS judging only. Speakers' Day will be held at the Fire Fighters' Memorial Building, 8000 NW 21 St., Miami, 33122, starting at 8:00am with breakfast; the main program begins promptly at 9:00am. For more information and to register, please contact the South Florida Orchid Society, Inc., 10801 SW 124 St., Miami 33176.



## **Curiously Captivating Catasetums**

by Wayne Warzecha

Curiously Different... Cymbidium Tribe Cousins Commanding Floral Centerpieces... Confusing to Floral Taxonomists... Yet Captivating to Orchid Hobbyists the New World Orchid Genus, Catasetum, is found in Mexico, Central America, and primarily found in South America in the countries of Brazil, Venezuela, and other countries bordering the Amazon Basin.

This unique genus has been so misunderstood by flowers and plant taxonomists alike that there has been relatively little published exclusively on Catasetums. Mistaken identity was responsible for numerous erroneous or redundant descriptions on species after the genus was established by the German botanist C.S. Knuth in 1822. Among those guilty of taxonomic blunders were such outstanding botanists as John Lindley, H.G. Reichenbach and even the venerable Charles Darwin. Darwin studied the genus Catasetum with keen. interest. Infatuated with its pollination process triggered by Euglossine bees. Nowadays, there are still problems differentiating valid true species from natural hybrids. DNA analysis will eventually provide the answers. Approximately 120 Catasetum species are now recognized; dozens of others have been discovered with identification and description still pending. Who knows how many more species lurk in the wild awaiting discovery?

Catasetum Species - highlighting a few of the many outstanding species to cultivate!

Catasetum barbatum - with its heavily fringed lip. Catasetum discolor - with its erect flower spikes Catasetum longifolium - bears pendant inflorescences and leaves that are sometimes more than 6 feet in length

Catasetum macrocarpum - brightly colored flowers from the warmer regions of South America

Catasetum tenebrosum - with its striking raceme of heavy substanced flowers

Catasetum expansum and Catasetum pileatum
- have outstanding lip size and eye appeal

Catasetum kleberianum - is a newly described species with striking colors and heavy substance Catasetum tigrinum - is a rare white flowered species

Catasetum Orchidglade & Catasetum White Magic are two hybrids which are real show stoppers!

#### Basic Anatomy of a Catasetum

Starting at the bottom of a Catasetum plant and working up, their green-tipped roots, whose function is to absorb nutrients and to aid in photosynthesis, tend to form compact or erect aerial rootlets. Catasetum pseudobulbs are moisturestorage organs with conspicuous rings called nodes and are often massive, their size and form tending to reflect the prevailing growing conditions in their native environment. From their apex, Catasetums bear leaves that are typically plicate and sizable. Catasetum inflorescences may be erect, arching or pendant depending on the species and are produced from the base of the pseudobulbs. The flowers that the inflorescence carries (from few to many blooms), represent a departure from the usually perfect (embodying both sexes) orchid flowers; they may be male, female, or hermaphroditic on the same or different inflorescences, and together with the showy pseudobulbs are the outstanding feature of a Catasetum orchid plant. Female flowers, which are more likely to occur under high light conditions, are usually pure green with their large pouch-shaped lips held uppermost to facilitate pollination. These female flowers are no beauty contest winners. Hermaphroditic flowers, when they appear combine some characteristics of the males and the females. It is the male flowers, however, that are often captivatingly ornate and critical to species identification. While the size and form of the floral segments vary the most conspicuous is usually the lip, which is the landing pad for the pollinator bee. Above or below the lip depending on resupination (lip held lowermost or uppermost), is the column, with the pointed anther at its apex, the pollinarium (composed of the pollinia or pollen masses, stipe, and viscidium or sticky disc) near the middle, and the "pseudo stigma" glanced by two "antennae" toward the base.. When one of the antennae is touched, it triggers the almost explosive release of the pollinia, which the pollinating bee carries to the stigmatic cavity of a female flower. The column of the female flower is usually short and stout including only the structure needed for completing pollination. Many Catasetum flowers are distinctively fragrant and their fragrances are distinctively different.

#### Native Catasetum Habitats

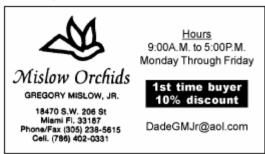
Most Catasetum species grow epiphytically, especially on palms, but many occur on other trees often in forests along watercourses even in areas converted to pastureland, they are largely sun lovers and are rarely found growing in deep, dark forests. Each species can be categorized by the type of climatic and ecological zone in which it originates. Many come from perpetually hot regions with short dry seasons and others from areas with relatively long dry periods. Almost all Catasetums are lowland plants. Most require bright light to light shade. A few species from the southern region of South America grow under cooler conditions and can endure near freezing temperatures in their native habitats in winter.

#### 5 Cultural Needs

Basic cultural needs revolve around the fact that the leaves of all Catasetum species are deciduous giving rise to a growth cycle featuring complete dormancy following leaf fall shared by few other orchid genera. Greenhouse culture is the best although some species and their hybrids do well under lights.

Water - Catasetums need and benefit from heavy watering during their active growing season. For mature plants, the potting mix should be allowed to dry out only slightly between waterings. During their dormant period, Catasetum orchid plants must be kept quite dry with only an occasional misting. As with other orchids, seedlings should be given a more constant supply of moisture.

Fertilizing - Catasetums are relatively heavy feeders only during their active growing period. As growth matures, a fertilizer with higher amounts of Phosphorus should be used to initiate flowering. No fertilizer should be given during dormancy.



Light- is extremely important to Catasetums. Provide as much light as possible in cultivation just short of burning the leaves, always ensuring good air movement. Too strong a light intensity will produce predominantly female flowers, which are not as showy as the male flowers. Temperature - Catasetums generally prefer intermediate to warm temperatures.

**Humidity** - During the active growth cycle, Catasetums prefer 50-60% humidity with good air movement. While they are dormant, low humidity is desirable to prevent pseudobulb rot.

Potting - A relatively coarse bark media mix with New Zealand Spaghnum moss works well when used in plastic pots since it holds moisture longer. Re-potting should be done each year only at the beginning of the growth cycle, when new growth is showing and new roots are forming. Divisions should have at least three pseudobulbs for best results.

Pests and Diseases - While Catasetums can fall prey to some of the insects and pathogens that can afflict other orchids, spider mites can be lethal to Catasetums, especially in hot, dry summer weather. Keep Catasetums well watered and misted in summer to discourage spider mites. Pseudobulb rot can be prevented with good air movement and by keeping the pseudobulbs dry during dormancy.

## Summary

A well-flowered Catasetum orchid plant with its large pseudobulbs can be an eye-catching floral centerpiece commanding attention in a competitive orchid exhibition. Until recently, this intriguing genus has failed to gain widespread popularity, largely due to the unavailability and lack of cultural know-how for successful cultivation. With new cultural information and recent hybridization efforts. Catasetinae hybrids have proven to be easier to grow than most vigorous Catasetum species. Catasetum Orchidglade (pileatum x White expansum). Catasetum Magic (Ctsm.warscewiczii x Ctsm. Orchidglade), and Catamodes Black Magic (Mormodes sinuata x Ctsm. Orchidglade) are real show stoppers! If you want to try an interesting, distinctive orchid genus, then consider Catasetums, whose rewards are flowers of unpredictable sexual persuasion, a unique pollination process, and a captivating air of power conveyed by the conspicuous and often massive pseudobulbs.

#### Catasetum Pink Lemonade

(Catasetum Rebecca Northen x Catasetum fuchsii)



Catasetum Pink Lemonade was registered in 1982 by J.E.M. Orchids. The clone 'J.E.M.' received an AM of 81 points from AOS in 1994. That particular clone had 2 pendulous inflorescences with 30 flowers and 13 buds. The sepals and petals were blush pink with a delicate

overlay of rose-pink striations. The lip was described as having a pink blush exterior, an interior that was cream colored apically and golden yellow basally with very fine fimbriated edges of rose pink. You can use the above picture to identify the orchid parts and coloration described in the awarded clone.

Owner: Diann O'NeilL - Greenhouse Cultivated



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#### "Wildcats" in your Home or Greenhouse

Whether or not you are a feline enthusiast, as an orchid hobbyist you can enjoy "Wilcat" orchids in your home or your greenhouse. The "Wildcats" I am referring to are a specific intergeneric hybrid within the Oncidium Alliance.

In 1963, three different genera, Miltonia, Odontoglossum, and Oncidium were interbred to create a novel new multigeneric group of hybrids called Colmanara. This generic name suitably honors orchid hybridizing pioneer, Sir Jeremiah Coleman, a 19th-20th century Englishman who specialized in breeding yellow orchids.

Colmanara Wildcat was created in 1992 as a multigeneric cross between Odontonia Rustic Bridge by Odontocidium Crowborough. It uniquely combines cool growing Miltoniopsis and Odontoglossum grandparents with the intermediate to warm Oncidium influences. The result is a hybrid with brilliantly patterned, temperatue-tolerant, multifloral, long lasting flowers. Numerous clones of Colmanara Wildcat have been commercially produced. Some outstanding "Wildcats" are clones like 'Leopard', 'Ocelot', and 'Bobcat' to name a few. All of these are stunning for the advanced orchid lover or beginner.

Grow your Colmanara Wildcats at intermediate temperatures (55-75 degrees) avoiding daytime temperatures above 80 degrees. These orchids easily adapt to home culture. They can be grown on medium-light windowsills of any exposure except north. They like night temperatures of 55-62 degrees during the winter. Water them regularly throughout the year; let them dry only slightly in between waterings. Maintain humidity at 40-50% with humidity trays and by grouping plants closely together.

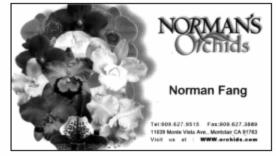
If a Colmanara orchid seems to be languishing, move it, drop the night temperatures a little, and increase the watering. Soon your "Wildcat" orchid will be flourishing!



Colmanara Wildcat 'Bobcat' intensely dark with yellow edging



Colmanura Wildcat 'Ocelot' unique pattern and color combination









#### SFOS Meeting Schedule

Wednesday, June 15th, 2005

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 - Orchid Clinic & Refreshments

9:00 pm - Awarded Plants Discussed

9:15 pm - Raffle



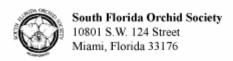
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