

Central Illinois Orchid Society Newsletter

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Contact Us

http://ci_orchid_society.tripod.com

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Membership is \$10/person with \$5 for each additional family member. Checks payable to CIOS should be sent to Jerry Steerman, 507 N. Coler, Urbana, IL 61801.

CIOS Officers for 2007

Mitzi Williams, President & News Letter Editor

Jerry Steerman, Treasurer

Nancy Steerman, Secretary

Spring means repotting:

Spring is the season many orchids break out of dormancy and begin growing again. Besides getting a plant to bloom for the first time, nothing is more thrilling than finding a new growth that suddenly bulges out of the base of the plant or the pseudobulb. Before long, the new roots will emerge, and grow over the edge of the pot, so give your plant a new pot, new medium and some room to grow.

If your plant is not showing any new growth, or worse, if the leaves seem to be wimpy and dull in color, the roots of your plant may be dead and unable to take up water. This can happen even if the potting medium is still unbroken. Carefully pull the plant out of the pot and check the roots. If the roots are brown, squishy and/or flat, repotting is critical. Don't be fooled by a lush display of flowers on such a plant. If you are unsure about repotting, bring your plant to the next meeting for consultation with other members. See Notes, tips, Q & A section for information on pots and potting medium.

Pressing flowers:

The following brief presentation was made by Mitzi Williams at the March meeting:

Orchid plants, particularly flowers, can be preserved in the traditional way as done for many herbarium specimens, i.e., using absorbent paper such as newspaper, corrugated card boards, and a plant press. This method will preserve the plants with all their structures so any part of the plant, once hydrated, can be closely studied, often under a microscope.

A quicker method is microwaving, even though this cooks the plant and destroys its structure. Place a flower inside a folded plain sheet of paper, then inside a double sheet of folded paper towels (two sheets folded over once), and then sandwich this between two pieces of smooth surfaced ceramic tiles. Secure the tiles with 2 wide rubber bands. Do not put pressure even if there is space between the tiles. Microwave at high for 2 minutes. Carefully open the preparation as the tiles will be hot. Replace the paper towels with new double folded paper towels, put the specimen back inside the tiles, and microwave at high for 30-60 seconds depending on the moisture of the flower. Remove the tiles and the paper towels, but keep the plant inside the printer paper, and further dry it inside a book. Microwaving allows the color of the flower to remain with little variations from its live state, but how long the color will remain is unknown at this time.

Orchid of the month: 1



Don McClure shares one of not-too-small orchids for this column. One shown at left is *Acriopsis Javanica*, commonly known as chandelier orchid. *Acriopsis Javanica* is a lowlands species from Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia, New Guinea, and the north-eastern tip of Australia. Simple or branching inflorescences can be more than a foot long. The picture at left does not do justice to the dainty, purple-tipped flowers which apparently only lasts 2-4 days.



Above image from:
http://my.opera.com/Chez_Chaton/albums

Next meeting:

The next CIOS meeting will be at 6:30 pm on April 17, 2007 at the Urbana Free Library Conference Room. The program is a discussion orchid pest control, and will focus on home made and/or organic remedies. The discussion will be led by Tim Bowers. Come prepared to share your experience with your favorite products. As usual, bring your plants for show and tell. Problem plants are welcome, too.

Notes, tips, Q & A:

- Intergeneric labyrinth:

Do you know the difference between Degarmoara and Vuylstekeara? They are both mid-sized, easy to grow orchids with long lasting flowers. The two types are difficult to separate because they are both hybrids of *Odontoglossum* and *Miltonia*. The difference is in the 3rd genus. Degarmoara has *Brassia* which is inherited in the long and elegant petal shape of Degarmoara.

Vuylstekeara is an old hybrid developed by a Belgian grower Vuylsteke in the early 1900's. With *Cochlioda* in the mix, Vuylstekeara has rounded petals, and seems to display the features of *Miltonia* more prominently than does Degarmoara.

Into this confusion, throw *Cambria*, which is apparently a commercial name for intergeneric hybrids of *Odontoglossum*, *Oncidium*, *Miltonia*, *Cochlioda* Lindl., and *Brassia*. Mind boggling, isn't it?

- A handy new way to hang your pots anywhere—Check out www.hangapot.com/
- Phalaenopsis: Younger leaves flopping to one side is because of the sun angle being low in winter, but warm temperature. The young growing parts of a plant, except the roots, are phototropic (growing towards the direction of the strongest light). As these leaves mature, they'll return to their normal position. You can use a stick or wire to hold them upright until they mature. (Excerpt from *Orchids Q & A*.)
- Have you come across a book about orchids, either fiction or non-fiction? How about a new “how to” book on orchids? If you have some books to recommend to beginning orchid hobbyists, please send that information to the editor. Even if the book is not a recent publication, one can often find a copy on Amazon at a very reasonable price.
- As a group, we can order high quality potting medium, translucent plastic pots of various sizes, or other orchid growing supplies so that the shipping cost can be shared. Carla Yambert has offered to coordinate such orders, so if you are interested in participating, please contact Carla.

Orchid of the Month: 2



Without flowers, this coconut shell with a few scraggly roots and inconspicuous pseudobulb may not catch one's attention. That may be the reason why some people report difficulty growing this plant, but Mark Uchanski was an exception, and brought the plant at left, *Dendrobium Loddigesii*, to flower this year. The natural habitat of this plant is limited to S. E. Asia, particularly Hong Kong, Laos, and Viet Nam. This plant is considered medicinal in China.

The relatively large pink and yellow flowers of *Dend. Loddigesii* appear in spring, and have slight fragrance. It can be grown in low to intermediate temperature. Mark grows this and all other orchids under fluorescent lights in the basement of his house.

Events in the area:

- Sat. 4/14 (9 am – 5 pm) and Sun. 4/15 (9 am – 2 pm): As part of the UI Horticulture Club's Annual Mom's Day Flower Show, the Illini Orchid Club will be selling various blooming orchids including Oncidium Alliance, Phalaenopsis, Dendrobiums, Miltonias, and many intergeneric hybrids. It is held at the Stock Pavilion, 1402 W. Pennsylvania Avenue, Urbana, and is free to the public. In the past, the plants often sold out in one day, so come early.
- 4/27 – 29, 07. Illinois Orchid Society Spring Show with Mid-America Orchid Congress. For details, see the March issue of CIOS Newsletter.
- Sun. 5/13 10 AM: Bob Szafoni, Illinois District Heritage Biologist, will lead a tour of Orchid Hill located in Vermillion County. Come see the orchids in spring bloom and enjoy some topography! This is a rare chance to explore this natural area which is usually closed to the public. Contact Paul Marcum (pmarcum@inhs.uiuc.edu; 333-8459) to sign up and get directions. Space is limited to 12 people. Meet at the site at 10am or at the Anita Purves Nature Center to car pool at 9:15am.

Editor's note:

- I was invited to give a talk at Prairie Gardens during their Open House on Saturday, March 31, 2007. There were two presentation tables where speakers gave hands-on seminars about many aspects of gardening and plants throughout the day. Despite the fact that the store had many flowering plants and competing events, I was surprised to see a number of very enthusiastic participants at my table. Such a session is a great opportunity for publicizing the CIOS activities. I learned that Prairie Gardens may be interested in hosting an orchid event earlier in March next year.
- Has anyone seen an orchid potting mix by Miracle Grow? I saw it last week for the first time. Without opening the bag, I was unable to tell exactly what made up the mix, but the content felt rather mossy, and unsuitable for potting fat rooted orchids such as Cattleyas. If you have used this product, please share your experience.
- My apologies for somewhat off-focused images for the two Orchid of the Month entries. My camera simply is not good enough to take close-up pictures of plants, even though it was not the cheapest in the line up of digital cameras. So I am already making a wish list for Christmas.
- Mark your calendar for our May meeting on the 15th, and the picnic on June 23 or 24.

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