

# NOOS Newsletter



## President's Message

Prez Sez

Thank you, Max, for hosting our Christmas banquet again. What a great way to finish 2009 and start 2010.

Many heartfelt thanks to Carol and her Board, Vienna, Alice, Ed, Ann, Donna and Charlie, for an outstanding year.

Congratulations to the plant award winners, Carol, Ed Schellhaas, Ed and Ethel Subervielle. And not to be forgotten, thank you to all those who help at meetings and shows to make our club so dynamic and fun.

Let's keep the momentum going as we enter our 59th year!

*Happy, healthy New Year!*

Molly

### OFFICERS

**PRESIDENT** Molly Prokop

**VICE-PRESIDENT** Max Mipro

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### MEETING NOTICE

Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2010

City Park Garden Study Center

7:30pm

### GUEST SPEAKER

"European Orchids"

by Patrick Mannen

### NEWCOMER'S PROGRAM

"Wrapping it up"

by Russel Deroche





## *Minutes to the December/Christmas Social*

Max Mipro graciously hosted the Christmas social at his house on Sunday, December 5<sup>th</sup>. Everyone brought food and drink for all to share. After everyone had a chance to enjoy each others company and partake in the food, outgoing President Carol Stauder called the meeting to order.

Carol turned the meeting over to Debbie Dinwiddie who announced the 2009 monthly plant judging results. At each monthly meeting, plants brought for ribbon judging in the categories of Best Hybrid, Best Species, Best Grown and Best Novice are awarded points for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. Every plant registered gets one point for being entered. The results for 2009 were:

1 <sup>st</sup> place	Carol Stauder
2 <sup>nd</sup> place	Ed Schellhaas
3 <sup>rd</sup> place	Ed and Ethel Subervielle

After the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place winners were awarded a plant. Carol presented Max a gift of a blooming Cymbidium as a token of the society's appreciation for hosting the event which is only one of the numerous things he does for the society. At this point Debbie pulled names from a basket of all of the monthly judging participants. When the name was pulled, the individual picked a plant from a group of blooming, in bud or near blooming size plants. Individuals not present missed out at the chance to get a plant. The following members were awarded plants: Debbie, Donna and Charlie Stange, Lisa, Paul and Lillia Young, Carol Stauder, Alice and Eddie Barrios, Larry Hennessey. At this time, Debbie announced that she will passing on the running of the monthly judging to Jacque for 2010.

Carol then pulled the winner of the OrchidWiz raffle. Donna and Charlie won.

Carol then presented Paul and Lillia Young the honor of Lifetime Members of the Society. The Young's have been active members of the society since 1966. In their 43 years as members, they have held positions on the board and committees countless times. Paul had the thankless jobs of being the society photographer for many years. They have been responsible for the show trophies and the society Library for many years. Carol presented the Young's an engraved glass cube with their names and the Society's logo. Paul took a moment to that everyone and added that they have enjoyed all of the many years they've been members.

As Carol's last official act as President, she thanked all that made her year successful. She thanked the board and officers, all that contributed by putting up exhibits and running the show. And finally she ended her year as president by passing the gavel to Molly Prokop, President elect for 2010.

Molly thanked Carol by passing out the 12 Months of Presidency and having everyone sing along. At the end Molly pointed out that the 12 days of Christmas is valued at \$87,000+ but Carol is priceless and presented Carol with a framed WOC poster as a token of the society's appreciation.

Reminders to end the meeting:

- The January meeting will be 1 week early on January 12, 2010.
- No meeting in the month of February so everyone can celebrate the Saints Super Bowl victory or yeah Mardi Gras
- Dues are now due for 2010. See Larry Hennessey, secretary elect to pay dues.

Also, John Bourgeois graciously gave everyone attending a jar of his wonderful Fig preserves. Thank you John.



Cattleya schilleriana

### *Alan Koch's Miniature Cattleyas Hybrids*

One of the goals in making a hybrid is to pick an area or areas in which you want them to grow and select parents with attributes that complement each other by toning down undesirable characteristics the other may have. Say you want a mini-Catt for this area, and you like one that naturally comes from the snow belt in Brazil. Then you cross it with a warm-loving one and you should get a hybrid that can grow here. Right? That's a good starting point, but genetics being what they are it is not always that easy. But Alan Koch has a knack for getting it right a lot of the time.

For instance, *S. coccinea* kills easily. It naturally lives in foggy (water saturated) and cold habitats. The plant grows in soaking wet conditions and cannot tolerate salts near its root system. It can tolerate a temperature rise for a short period of time, but it cannot tolerate bad water. This knowledge will give a hint as to what conditions their hybrids will need. *C. luteola* grows at 400-600 ft. in wet and warm conditions and requires less light than Phals., growing at the base of trees. This will tell you that hybrids from this parent cannot tolerate the typical Cattleya conditions as pertains to light. This is why it is good to know the parents of your hybrids and what conditions they normally grow in. It may give you a hint as to what to do if your charge is unhappy with what you are doing. Look to the environment to see how they want to be grown.

Another thing that can happen when hybrids are made is the chromosome number can change. The normal diploid (2x) number can double forming a tetraploid (4x). Some tetraploids can have better color saturation, broader petals, broader lip, flatter aspect, rounder flowers and last longer. They can also take temperature extremes better. So, you might want to look at this when ordering flowers.



**Culture Tips** - By-the-way, Cattleyas given too much light are beginning to burn when the leaves begin to show a red pigment. This causes the plant to produce less chlorophyll, causing less energy production needed to dissipate the excess heat, causing more red pigment, causing...well you get the picture. The plant can burn to death if this keeps on too long.

All fertilizer is absorbed into the plant within 20-25 minutes. When fertilizing salt-intolerant plants (or any of them for that matter), come back 25 minutes later and flush out the salts with water. This will keep the root systems healthy.

Give extra Calcium (Ca) and Iron (Fe). It is impossible to give too much Ca! The plant will only assimilate what it needs but it will be there when it is needed. Calcium induces flowering, helps build cell walls, fights diseases due to strengthening the cell walls. You won't need to stake Phals as the spike will be strong enough to support the flower. You can add Ca by using dolomite, oyster shell or bone meal (least favorite as doesn't have Magnesium (Mg)). When you add Ca, add Mg also so it doesn't precipitate out. Also, Mg is at the heart of every chlorophyll molecule. And we all know what chlorophyll does. You may have heard it said that Cattleyas should be pale green. This is not so according to Alan. With proper nutrition, Cattleyas will be dark green because they can make enough chlorophyll. The MSU fertilizer has these already added. If you don't have this fertilizer, add Ca:Mg at a 2:1 ratio.

Black spots on leaves or black tipped leaves are due to salt sinks in the leaves. It is the way the plant gets rid of excess salts. So, if you see black spots, you are overfeeding or you haven't repotted in a timely manner and are causing the plant to relocate the salt.

Plants need Fe, but watch how much they get.

Alan's favorite secret weapon is hydrogen peroxide (H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>). He recommends using a 3% solution (5% can be better but you risk burning some orchids) every time you repot. The released oxygen kills fungus and bacteria in the media. The released oxygen also triggers root-tip elongation. The growing root tells the plant to turn on photosynthesis. This helps the plant come out of transplant shock earlier.



*S. coccinea*

**Growing Tips** - Alan also gave tips on growing two of my favorites.

*C. walkeriana* in nature is a lithophyte or a twiggy epiphyte. If it is on rock, it puts a few roots into the rock and the rest grow on the surface. If it is on a twig, it is 3/4 of the way up in intermediate light but all of the roots run out to the end of the branch because it *photosynthesizes from its roots*. So if you put its roots in media, it will not have enough light to flower. Same with Vandas.

*C. schilleriana* also photosynthesizes from its roots so grow them on mounts, or if you must use a pot, use a plastic one and use a very open media. These also transpire from their roots which is why they do not do well in pots.

His final words on compact Cattleyas was if you want a 6 inch flower on a 7 inch plant instead of a 6 inch flower on a 30 inch plant, then mini-Catts are for you. Just be sure to watch them. The smaller the plant, the more you have to watch for scale and mealybugs as there is less of a plant to fight off the little pests. Also, put them in front so they don't get too shaded and so you forget to water them. Now, who could forget such little beauties?



*C. Mini Purple (C. pumila x C. Walkeriana)*



*Cattleya pumila 'Marcelo Miranda'*



## The Lawn Orchid in Metairie

By Patricia Sander

What is your definition of a weed, or a wild flower? Most people would agree that they are plants that are not usually cultivated or intentionally planted. They just show up one day in gardens, lawns, or pots and they may or may not be desirable. There is an orchid that fits that description, and if you are attentive you might spot one in your yard or in your neighborhood.

Its name is *Zeuxine strateumatica* and it breaks what most orchid growers think of as the usual “rules” for orchids since it grows easily from seed like “normal” plants, grows in soil, and is an annual.

Some NOOS members have brought these plants to meetings in recent years. No one knew what they were. The best guess anyone had was that it was a *Spiranthes* of some sort, but the season was wrong for a native orchid to bloom. I eventually spotted some blooming in a neighbor’s front lawn in January 2008, which was very puzzling. I could not imagine how native terrestrial orchid got there. A little over a year ago, I finally, with a little help, found out what they are. Fortunately, I mentioned what I had seen to Greg Allikas when he presented a program in May 2008.

I saw the orchids again in January 2009, but in the next yard. I took some pictures that time.

*Zeuxine strateumatica* is thought to have been imported from southern China in centipede grass seed. Records indicate that it was spreading inland in Florida by 1936 (1). It is now found all along the Gulf Coast, as far west as Texas, and as far north as South Carolina (2). Fortunately, this introduced species does not seem to be a pest.

According to Paul Brown, in his book on native orchids, this orchid usually blooms between December and March, and the plants are variable in size, from 4 to 25 cm, or about 1 ½ to 10 inches. The height of plants growing in yards is dependent on how often the grass is cut. The plants I spotted in January were only a little taller than the grass. The lawn was slightly neglected or the flowers might have been cut off before they had a chance to open. The sort of weather that discourages the regular use of lawnmowers is your best bet for spotting the orchids in the suburbs. I hope to see plants again in January, and it will be interesting to see if they bloom again in the same yard or if they sprout somewhere else.

### References:

1. McCartney, Chuck. *Orchids* January 2008, “The Orchids of January: A look at South Florida’s Native Species Blooming in Midwinter.” P 47.
2. Brown, Paul Martin. *Wild Orchids of the Southeastern United States, North of Peninsular Florida*. University Press of South Florida, 2004. P 242.



## Orchid Shows



### *The Gulf Coast Show*

Jan. 29, 30 and 31 at the Singing River Mall in Gautier, MS. I have requested a 25 ft 5x5 exhibit space and am looking for volunteers to put it up.



### *NOTES*

There will be **No Meeting** for February due to Mardi Gras. Meetings will resume at their regular date, time and place in March.



*Happy Mardi Gras!!!*

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