

December 2008

Volume 7 Issue 12 Paph druryi 'Truford'

# *New Mexico Orchid Guild Newsletter*

## Next Meeting:

- December 6th 12 pm
- Holiday Party at The Savoy.

NMOG offers its members the opportunity to learn about orchids each month!

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## REMEMBERING NMOG IN 2008

By Steve Fischer

What a year! For me, an all-consuming election season that seemed to last 20 years instead of 20 months plus a greenhouse no closer to being finished than when the year started. And more orchids than ever! How did all this happen?

It all started with the World Orchid Conference in Miami at the end of January. Now that wasn't exactly a NMOG event, but nine NMOG members went. We had a wonderful time but no one did anything to help restrain each other's orchid obsessions. And how could we? The show was nothing short of spectacular, the talks world class, and the vendor booths from around the world overloaded with stuff we had only seen in pictures. All of us returned to the hotel with tell-tale green leaves protruding from shopping bags. We each recreated orchid gardens under the small fluorescents in the kitchen or in hotel windows or under bedside lamps until we carefully wrapped them up and carried them homeward on the plane, trying not to smash any of them in crowded overhead bins. George Gibson created a fantastic DVD of the experience for those NMOG members who didn't go. Set to Cuban music with his breathtaking photos, it really captured the flavor of the 19<sup>th</sup> WOC.

Author Ron Coleman graced us with native New Mexico orchids in March. He and his wife Jan were delightful. And he was so impressed that an orchid society would be interested in native species! He returned mid-summer for a hike to see *Cypripedium parviflorum* in the Pecos Wilderness. This trip, which I was lucky enough to attend, was the springboard for NMOG's first conservation project which will begin in 2009.

Vickie Haskins and her show committee organized an excellent spring show titled Orchid Fascination. With an emphasis on education and involvement, we had outstanding participation from NMOG members. The public loved it. A highlight was milk jug orchid greenhouses which we helped kids create and then allowed them to take their orchid home. We're planning on expanding that theme next year.

We lost a great friend and board member at the end of May when Roger Easton succumbed to cancer. He generously donated the proceeds of the sale of his entire orchid collection to NMOG. Future NMOG shows will include a slipper orchid award given in Roger's honor. Long time member Verena Bastian also passed away at age 90.

In October we enjoyed a homegrown presentation on the orchids of Peru from three of NMOG's world travelers—Louis Wilcox, Jane Cole and Debby Lieberman. Louis is no doubt still trying to design the perfect cool, wet environment for growing *Telipogons*. All of the unusual South American species for sale at that meeting were gone before the meeting started. Hopefully, someone will have a *Sobralia* in bloom on just the right day for show and tell next year.

One of the highlights for me was Fred Clarke and his presentation on *Catasetum*, *Cycnoches*, and *Mormodes* in October. Fantastic photos, beautifully grown plants, and a great guy. His talk is among the best we have ever had.

There are lots of other memories—ice cream at Nona and Don's, our Sandia orchid hike, a State Fair exhibit, the joy on new members faces as they potted and mounted baby orchids. They are all made possible by you and your participation, because without you, NMOG would not exist. I personally want to thank you from the bottom of my heart.

## HOME FLASKING – PART 2

By Steve

**Pollination:** The pollination of orchids is fairly easy once you know what you are looking for. I won't go into crosses here, just the basics of pollination. Hybridizing will be left up to your imagination.

To pollinate a plant, all you need is a pencil, toothpick, or a piece of bamboo, and of course...the flower! Take the "tool" and hook it under the anther cap. Pull it towards you. The cap will fall away, and the pollen will be stuck to the tool. Do the same process on another flower. Take the pollen from the second flower, and press it onto the stigmatic surface of the first flower. Pull away, and the pollen should be stuck in place. If not try again until it sticks. There! You have a pollinated flower! Now all you have to do is wait for the capsule to form.

**Pod Times:** The time that it takes for seed to ripen in the capsule varies from genera to genera. I have included a table for the various orchid species.

**Medium:** The medium is what's used to sow the seeds on. It has a number of ingredients to promote growth, and agar to make it jell, so the seeds stay on top of the medium.

There are a number of companies that have ready mixed mediums. All you do is mix in distilled water, and follow the instructions. My favorite companies are:

**G&B Orchid Labs...**Has a fine general purpose medium. Just add water.

2426 Cherimoya Dr.

Vista, CA 92084

(619)757-2611

**Phyto Technology Labs...**Plant media, biochemicals, equipment, growth regulators.

P.O. Box 13481

Shawnee Mission, KS 62282

1-888-749-8682

**Sigma Chemical Co....**Has everything from media, to equipment.

P.O. Box 14508

St Louis, MO 63178

1-800-325-3010

**G&S Labs...**Has a very good media. Very high germination rates.

645 Stoddard Lane

Santa Barbara, CA 93108

(805)565-0298

**Flask/Medium Sterilization:** The flasks & media need go be sterilized before they can be used. A simple pressure cooker works fine for this. Caution: Using a pressure cooker is potentially dangerous, so fully read manufacturers instructions before using. Prepare the flasking media per instructions, and pour into flasks. How much depends on what type of flask you are preparing. For sowing, 1/2 inch (~12.7 mm) of medium will do. For replate flasks, 1 inch (~25.4 mm) would be better, as the plants will be in these flasks for a longer period and use more of the medium for growth.

Prepare pressure cooker. Pour 1-2 inches (25.4-50.8mm) of water into the bottom of the cooker. Lightly place the lids on the flasks, and set them into the cooker. Secure the lid of the cooker and place on high heat until the pressure relief valve activates. Lower the heat and sterilize for 15 minutes @ 15 psi. Let the cooker cool, or carefully release the pressure and carefully remove the lid. If any of the lids have fallen off the flasks, carefully put them back on and **secure them**. **Remove** the flasks from the cooker and let cool. After cooling, they are ready for use.

**Seed Sterilization:** Once the pod has split or opened, the seed must be assumed to be contaminated. Before it can be sown, it has to be sterilized. To do this, take the seed and place it in a vile, or test tube inside the flasking case. To this add a 5% bleach solution with a drop of dish soap as a wetting agent and agitate continuously for 10 min. Just before the end of this time, decant off the bleach solution and add some sterilized distilled water. Agitate for about 1 min, and then decant once more. Repeat this step one more time. If you don't use a pipette, pour off all but a small amount of water, so you can pour the remaining water and seed into the flask. If a pipette is used then just leave the water in the vial, and let the seed settle to the bottom. I prefer to use a pipette, as it offers more control.

**Seed Sowing:** There are two procedures for seed sowing. One is the green-pod method. This is the easiest, as you don't have to sterilize the seed. The second is the dry-pod method, done with the above procedure

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First you must prepare the case for your work. Place all the tools, flasks, and other equipment you will be using during the flasking process inside the case. Spray a fine mist of 10% bleach solution all over the inside of the case, including the flask tops. Let set for 5 min for it to take effect. Using the pipette, suck up a small amount of seed and some water. Crack open a flask, insert the pipette into the flask without touching the sides. Eject the seed, and water into the flask. Re-stop the flask, and swirl the mixture to spread the seed around. Do the remaining flasks.

Green-pod sowing involves taking a seed capsule that hasn't opened up yet for the sowing process. Put the pod in the glove box, and soak it in the 5% bleach solution for about 5-10 min. Scrub the outside with a toothbrush during this time. Rinse in sterilized distilled water. Slice open the pod, and scrape the seed into the flask. Or you can scrape the seed into a vile of sterilized distilled water, and use a pipette to put the seeds into the flask. This will eliminate much of the fibrous material that's in the pod getting into the flask.

**Flask Care:** After the flasks have been sown, place them under fluorescent lights for 8 hours per day. Do not try to simulate daylight hours. This creates problems with the growing seed. Seeds should start to green in about 4-6 weeks. Some seed may take longer. If mold, or other contaminates start to grow, it's best to just throw the contents out. But if the seeds are of particular value, you can go back in and remove the contaminates. Remove the spot, plus 1-2mm surrounding it. Place a drop or two of 5% bleach in the hole that's left. Keep in mind, that every time you go back into the flask, you increase the chance of contamination.

**Replating:** After the protocorms have reached a workable size, it's time to replate them onto the final medium. Place inside the case both the mother flasks, and the replate flasks, replating tools, a container of 10% bleach solution, and one of sterilized distilled water, a spray bottle of 10% bleach solution. Place the re-plating tools in the bleach solution, and let soak for 5-10 minutes, and then rinse them in the distilled water. Remove the stopper from the mother flask, and the flask to receive the replate. Scoop out a small amount of protocorms with one of the clean tools, and place them in the replate flask. Don't spread them too heavy, as the young plants do not do well competing for the same space. Sterilize the tools often to prevent contaminating the replate flasks. I use a new tool for each flask I re-plate. After you are done, replace the stoppers tightly. Place them back under the light, and watch them grow up!

**Deflasking:** When the plants have grown to 5-6cm, and have 3 or more roots, they can be set out. Once your plants are ready to be removed from the flasks, open them and let them become acclimatized for 24 hours before removing them. The easiest way to remove them may be to break the flasks. This will reduce the chance of damage by being pulled through the neck of the flask. Wrap the flask in a towel, and gently break it open. Gently pull the plants apart and place in a bowl of luke-warm water to wash off any bits of glass, and medium. Place the seedlings in a mixture of sphagnum and perlite. Spray with a fungicide/bactericide, such as Physan 20 or RD-20. The seedlings do better if grouped together, so put 5-10 per 3" pot. It's best to not fertilize them right away, but give them a solution of Superthrive for the first week, or two.

**Seedling Care:** The young plants will take from 3-5 years before their first flowering. To get them to that point, requires special care. To start out, put them in 70% shade for 2-3 weeks, and then move to 50% shade for the same time. At this point, they may still need a little more shade than a mature plant, and need to watered more often, as they don't tolerate drought as well as mature plants. You'll just have to experiment with them. I have several Cattleya seedlings that I put in very bright light, and they're doing fine. Fertilize every two weeks with a balanced fertilizer, and repeat spray with a fungicide/bactericide every 3-4 weeks.

## FACTS YOU SHOULD BE KNOW ABOUT HUMIDITY TRAY FOR ORCHIDS

As an orchid lover and grower you would be familiar with the importance and uses of the humidity tray for orchids. However, there is always scope to discover something new even when you read or learn about something you are familiar with. Sometimes, going through something you are well versed with can provide new insights, when you find that time has moved on and these have brought about developments, which you are not aware of yet.

### The General Rules About Humidity Tray For Orchids

Humidity is not an aspect that can be considered on its own. There are other factors such as the intensity of light, the general weather and the temperature that needs to be taken into account before deciding on how humid would be the best for your orchid. As a rule you should never water your orchid anytime during afternoon or evening, more so if you are a beginner at this occupation.

The reason for this is that any drops of water that might remain trapped on the leaves would condense and hang onto the leaf long enough to lead to gradual rotting. The best time to water the orchid is early in the morning before dawn so the orchid would have enough time during the day time to use up the water and be on the dry side in the night when the temperatures drops.

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### The Ideal Humidity Tray For Orchids

When shopping for the ideal humidity tray for orchids keep in mind that this flower thrives when the level of humidity is around 50-70% during winter and a little higher during the summer. The easiest way to increase the humidity level of the orchid plants is to place the pots in humidity tray for orchids which are artistically but functionally created with the help of medium sized pebbles and a shallow water film.

Maintain the quality of the water you provide for your orchid by removing the pebbles every two months or so and having them washed thoroughly in weak bleach solution to clean them. This would easily remove the algae and salts residue that has accumulated over the time. Do not even think of adding algacide in the tray directly as this would impact the orchid negatively.

Many people combine the beauty of fancy arrangements of a group of potted orchids with the practical humidity trays to create a beautiful and fully functional microclimate with just the right humidity. This can be breathtakingly beautiful while at the same time provide the required humidity to all the contributing plants. Remember to keep them spaced comfortably or it would constrict the air circulation and kill them.

## YOUNG ORCHIDS REQUIRE SPECIAL CARE

Orchids have been associated with love, luxury and beauty throughout history. Growing orchids from young plants is an excellent way to fill your home with these special flowers. Purchasing young orchid seedlings will start a hobby that will give you a lifetime of pleasure. To successfully start these young plants, take a few minutes to acquaint yourself with these important tips.

### Watering Your New Orchids

When you first purchase young orchids you may think the plants are too dry. That's probably not the case. A reputable garden center, orchids grower or even an online nursery will deliberately keep the growing medium around young orchids on the drier side. This is done to inhibit the growth of mold or fungus. Upon receiving your young orchids, don't heavily soak the plants. It will be best to gradually moisten the growing medium, making sure it doesn't get too wet. If by chance, you notice a small amount of fungus or mold, you may use a plant fungicide that is available at garden centers. Orchid growers usually start young plants in moss just like they would be in their natural environment. It will be best for the tender plants to remain in the growing medium that you receive them until they are acclimated to your home.

### Potting Young Orchids

It is not necessary to immediately move your young orchids to a new pot. In fact, doing so may harm the newly developing roots. You will know that your orchids are ready for a larger pot when the plant produces new growth that cannot be contained in its original living space. When choosing the new size pot, select the smallest possible one that will accommodate the plant. Orchids do not grow well in oversized pots and other problems may develop.

### The Right Light

Young orchids don't need the same level of light intensity that a more mature plant requires. That's because an older plant has different needs since they are in the flowering stage. A quick way to determine if you are providing your orchids with enough light is to check the color of the leaves. The normal color is a light green, but if the new growth remains dark green, increase the lighting around the plants.

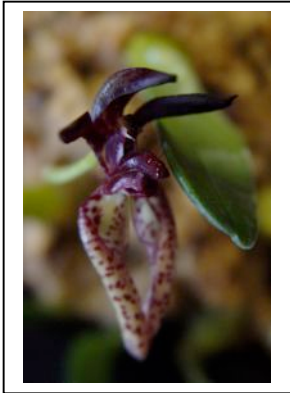
Orchids are available in a variety of species and have been cultivated to thrive in homes. Starting off with young orchids is a wonderful way to begin a hobby that will give you years of beauty.





Cynoches haagii "Golden Glow" x sib  
 Owner: Steve Fischer Div I  
 Photographer: Kathy Mancini

The Cynoches haagii species is found in Northern South America. It is unusual that its flowers are upside down with the petals and sepals chartreuse to green with a lip a pale pink. In Golden Glow one can see spots of pink on its lip. When in active growth, the plants need bright light and a warm, humid atmosphere and then a rest period with less water after flowering. It usually blooms for Steve in August/September and this year it threw out a third spike which is what we are seeing now.



Owner: Adriene Carroll Div II  
 Photographer: Barbara Smith

Sorry, I deleted Adrienne's email with the name of her orchid. I have not been able to reach her so this orchid will be in February's newsletter.

Paphiopedilum (Procal x Magic Flame x Paph. fairianum) is made up of somewhere between 6-8 species. It produces one flower and a bud at time. Its sepals are heavily veined as well as the petals, both having a touch of apple green and burgundy colorations. It gets its down swept petals from the fairianum. The blooms last 3-5 days and this is the seventh bloom in the series.



Paph (Procal x X Magic Flame) x Paph. fairianum  
 Owner: Barbara Kennemuth Div II  
 Photographer: Kathy Mancini

Miltassia Shelob Web Master is a complex cross between Miltassia Olmec and Brassia Edvah Loo comprised of 3 species of Miltonia and 4 species of Brassia. The fragrant flowers are chartreuse, with the sepals and petals, a dark chocolate brown interspersed with chartreuse bars with pink tips. Its lip is a dark muted rose with yellow haloes brown spots and you will also see a chartreuse anther cap. It prefers bright indirect light with temperatures in cool to hot conditions or 58-85 at night. Humidity should be around 30-60%. Watering depends on the thinness/thickness of roots. If thin, water more frequently. It has bloomed several times for Vicki.



Mtssa. Shelob Webmaster  
 Owner: Vicki Ventura Div III  
 Photographer: Debby Lieberman





Rsc. Hausermanns Holiday 'Christmas' AM/AOS  
 Owner: Walter Prah! Div I  
 Photographer: Barbara Smith

Brassolaeliocattleya Hausermann's Holiday 'Christmas' AM/AOS has been renamed to Rhynchosoprocattleya which is complex cross produced by "Orchids by Hausermann" of Illinois, between Rsc. James Hausermann and Rsc. Lisa Irene. There are 9 different species making up this hybrid which the largest 4 being C. dowiana, C. warszewiczii, C. mossiae and C. trianae. It is a very fragrant flower with rose lavender sepals and petals that are heavily ruffled and velvety. These are the 1<sup>st</sup> flowers since Walter bought the plant in fall 2007. It has developed lots of new growth and will be divided in spring 2009. It thrives in intermediate temperatures, likes moderate humidity and a weak fertilizer applies every time he waters.

The species Cattleya bicolor is found in three distinct habitats of Brazil growing from 2000- 6000 feet on vertical branches 50-75 feet in the air. Their pseudobulbs can be from 10-30 inches with subspecies growing to 5 feet. Flowers are fragrant ranging in size to over 3 inches. Sepals and petals are a bright copper green to green-brown. The lip has a deep orchid lavender overlay becoming more intense towards the center. This has been a finicky plant for Steve when it comes to repotting. New roots are just starting to emerge. This is the first time it has bloomed in 3 years. It likes cool to warm temperatures with just a little frost in the fall.

C. bicolor  
 Owner: Steve Fisher Div I  
 Stock Photo



### ORCHIDS: NATURE'S BEAUTY

A tall, slender stalk leads to an exquisite flower composed of three inner petals, three outer petals, and a cupped petal distinct from the rest. The whole exotic composition is almost alien in appearance, extravagant in the extreme, yet possessed of a delicate intricacy. Orchids are arguably the most stunning and elegant family of flowering plant known to humans. Have you ever wondered how people can grow these beauties in our desert climate? Have you ever passed one in a flower shop and thought, "If only I could keep it alive." Come to this exciting lecture offered by an expert from the New Mexico Orchid Guild and you will find out

answers to all of your orchid questions. Your presenter will cover basic orchid genera and care for each of them, as well as answer all of your questions about repotting, maintenance, trimming, etc. Anyone can grow orchids – it just takes a little knowledge! The NMOG is the premier Orchid Association in our state. Their motto is "The more you know, the better you grow" and they continually strive to offer education throughout the year to orchid growers, both old and new. NMOG has meetings once a month along with fabulous field trips, great guest lecturers, and a wonderful spring show every year.

Instructor: Adriene Carroll

Thursday 4/16/09 1:00 - 2:30

\$6 1 Session Location: Albuquerque OASIS

OASIS is a unique educational program for mature adults who want to continue to learn, grow and explore new ideas.

Membership is free. Members receive a catalog of opportunities three times a year. If you are not already a member, you can join now. We offer a broad range of exciting educational classes - from the arts and humanities to wellness, fitness and travel.

Walk-in Winter/Spring Registration is Wednesday, January 7th.

9:00am - 3:00pm, First Floor Mall Entrance at Macy's.

On-Line Registration opens January 14th.

We offer convenient online registration for OASIS classes through MyOASIS. You can also mail in your registration form at any time with a self-addressed stamped envelope for your receipt.



## ORCHID SUPPLY GIFT IDEAS

By Susan Taylor, Bellaonline.com

Supplies are always appreciated by orchid growers and here are some ideas which are inexpensive and useful. The meters are good tools to help growers make sure their plants are receiving the appropriate environmental conditions for good growth; BotaniWipe is a new product that can be appreciated by any gardener; and humidity trays are a must for any indoor orchid grower.

I discovered this product at the World Orchid Congress in January where the inventor Andrew O'Brien was giving out free samples of his new BotaniWipes. They are essentially a disposable wipe impregnated with lavender and Neem Oil designed to clean plant leaves and leave them shiny. They work amazingly well and have been incorporated in the plant programs at Disney World Animal Kingdom and many other commercial institutions. The lavender makes the scent pleasant and the Neem Oil will kill any insects it touches as well as providing a natural deterrent to new insects.

The product may be purchased through many online vendors, but I recommend Quarter Acre Orchids since I know they provide great service. While you're there, check out the Ultrasonic Fogger which can be used either in a greenhouse or in the home. At this price it would make a perfect gift for the holidays!

A light intensity meter is an excellent gift for both the experienced and novice grower. Light is one of the most difficult cultural requirements to gauge properly, especially for the windowsill grower. This meter from Carter & Holmes orchids would be a welcome gift.

Another great help for growers is the Momet™ Moisture Meter. This item is especially designed for orchid growers and will tell you when you need to water your plants. It is really helpful in the spring and fall when watering can be difficult to figure out since the seasons are changing and your plants don't need watering and feeding on a regular schedule.

Humidity trays are also a gift that any indoor gardener would appreciate. They range from inexpensive plastic trays to plant tables and solid wood trays. Humidity trays are the best way for the indoor gardener to keep humidity around plants.

## ORCHIDS: SHOULD YOU TRY TO KEEP THOSE HOLIDAY PLANTS FOR THE LONG-TERM?

By Judy Wells, The Times-Union

Throw it away unless you are addicted to lost causes, advised George Schudel, point man for the local Orchid Society.

"These were designed to be throwaways, just like the poinsettia and Easter lily," he said, citing advice from the researcher who developed mass production of phalaenopsis, the flat orchids. "In most cases, those orchids have been pushed very hard and will never look that good again."

Not so with phalaenopsis grown the natural way, said Shung Kwon Kim, owner of Jaxma Greenhouses outside of Green Cove Springs, the largest commercial grower of orchids between Orlando and the Carolinas and a specialist in phalaenopsis. Pushed phalaenopsis have been made to bloom in one year and flowers last only for two to four weeks. Allowed to develop over a two- to three-year period, they will bloom annually, with flowers lasting up to four months, for 10 to 15 years. Pushed phalaenopsis have elongated leaves, narrower stems, thinner blossoms and usually cost less than slow-grown plants.

Kim has four rules for maintaining happy orchids.

- Place in bright but indirect sunlight; by a window is good.
- Keep the temperature between 65 and 85 degrees.
- Don't over-water; once or twice a month is enough.
- Ignore them.

"You try to care too much, they don't like it and die," Kim said.

Orchids don't like being moved, but they do like being near one another. Once the last flower has dropped, cut the stem down to just under the first node and leave the plant where it is.

Fertilize - Kim recommends Peter's 20-20-20 - in spring and fall, water seldom and don't repot until roots are climbing out of the pot and in the way.

Flower power -Phalaenopsis and oncidium will bloom for 2-4 weeks if they've been pushed, 90-120 days if grown naturally. Cattleya, dendrobium, vanda, lady slipper will bloom for 30-45 days.



**NMOG CORRECTION TO THE WEBSITE**

I was wrong with the information with the new updated website in last month's newsletter. The website is [www.nmog.org](http://www.nmog.org). Sorry about the mix up.

**JANUARY MEETING**

Our next meeting will be held January 4<sup>th</sup> at The BLM. The program will be a slide presentation on Dendrobiums provided by AOS.

**NMOG DUES ARE DUE FOR THE 2009 YEAR**

Yearly dues can be paid either by mail or in person at the January meeting. There will be a form with January's newsletter. Dues are 25.00/year for an email newsletter and 30.00/year for snail mail.

**Keith Mead Treasurer**

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**Board meeting**

**January 7<sup>th</sup> 2008, 6:30  
pm at the home of Joanne  
Bodin. All members are  
welcome to attend. If  
you want to express an  
opinion, bring up ideas,  
etc, you must be on the  
agenda.**

**Contact Debby**

**Lieberman at**

**[deblieberman@earthlink.net](mailto:deblieberman@earthlink.net)**

**[net](mailto:deblieberman@earthlink.net) or 286 0196 no later  
than 01/05/09**

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