



Central Jersey Orchid Society Newsletter

September 2021

September 2021 President's Message

BIG NEWS! We are taking a step toward some semblance of normalcy and breaking our year-long, pandemic-induced isolation. Our first hybrid meeting of the year (both, hosted in-person and virtual) will be Wednesday, October 6th at the D&R Greenway. And, because we are still dealing with Covid-19, masks will be required for all in-person participants.

If you haven't noticed, the days are getting shorter now, with temperatures dipping quite low in the evenings. For your Hot- and Intermediate-growing plants, you should consider bringing your plants in from outdoors soon. I found that the plants I had outdoors this summer bloomed unusually late, possibly due to the very mild temperatures we had, compared to years prior. In any case, check for bugs before bringing your plants inside and if necessary spray them.

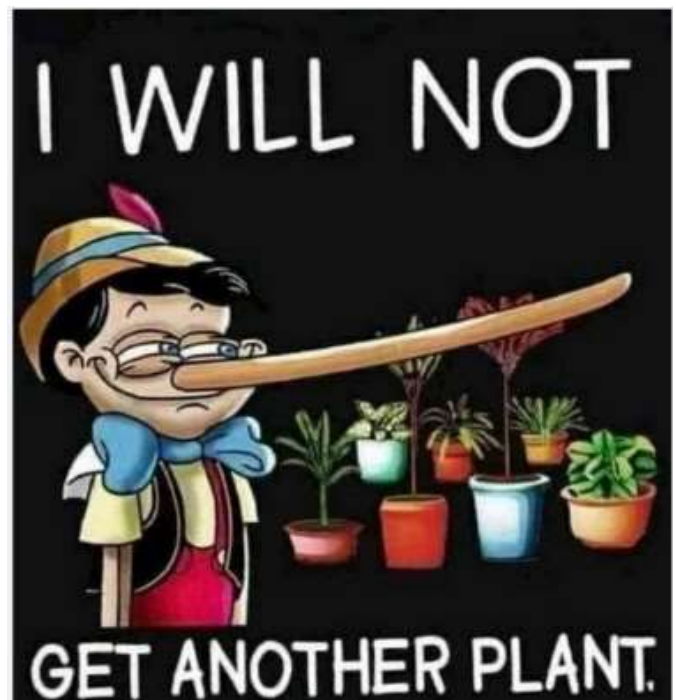
Those of you who have not paid your dues, please do so by the November meeting. You can bring a check to our CJOS meeting and we'll happily collect it, OR, if you'd prefer, you can use our newly created PayPal account to pay electronically (details are on our website). Your membership dues allow us to plan for the year, including, the December Holiday Party, guest speakers, and other expenses that allow us to provide an enriching experience as we share our love for orchids. So, please consider renewing your membership and remitting payment as soon as possible. The fee is \$30 for an individual and \$35 for a family membership.

Our speaker for the month is **Beth Off**, from Waldor Orchids. Again, our next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 6, 2021, at 6:30pm. Additionally, I will open the virtual

meeting room at 6:15pm, for those that want to log on virtually.

I look forward to seeing everybody on October 6.

Jaymie



But please do get another Plant or two, when we have our Auction in November.

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Meetings and Events 2021

Meetings, 7:00pm, In person and Zoom
Meetings are held the first Wednesday of the month.

**Johnson Education Center,
1 Preservation Pl, Princeton, NJ 08540,
USA**

CJOS October Meeting / Beth Off (Easy-to-Grow Orchids)
Time: Oct 6, 2021 06:15 PM Eastern Time
(US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86872177276?pwd=RU5wNWx3N0V0NUQ2YWV0MzhlMWc0Zz09>

Meeting ID: 868 7217 7276
Passcode: 485281

Sept: Bill Thoms. He will be speaking about the largest orchid genera, *Bulbophyllum*.

Oct: Beth Off (Easy-to-Grow Orchids)

We will list this year's speakers in the next newsletter

Nov:

Dec:

Jan:

Feb:

March:

April:

May:

June:

Officers and Committees:

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Members Virtual Show Table

No plants submitted

However, after the in person Oct meeting, the Show Table photos should continue.

So that we have a few plants in the newsletter. Here are a few of our plants that bloomed in August.

Ed and Pam Frankel



NOID



**Aliceara Sweetheart Jonel
'Everglade' AM**



**Ctna Why Not 'Roundabout' C. Aurantiaca x Bro.
Sanguinea**



American Orchid Society
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Upcoming Webinars

Public Member-Only



Greenhouse Chat October 2021

Ron Mohrston

Tuesday, October 5th, 2021
8:30 PM EDT

Orchid Q&A

REGISTER NOW

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The Story of Black Orchids

Leslie Ee

Thursday, October 21st, 2021
8:30 pm EDT

Black Orchids

REGISTER NOW

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A Tour of the Huntington Orchid Collection

Brandon Tam

Tuesday, November 9th, 2021
8:30 pm EDT

Visit the Huntington

REGISTER NOW

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How Do You Grow?

Each month, I would like to show a members growing methods/conditions. We started with ours. Please send me pictures of your growing conditions (summer/winter)

edsharkf@yahoo.com No submission this month. Let's get some pictures of your growing space.

CULTIVATION



Orchid Questions & Answers

by Sue Bottom,
sbottom15@gmail.com

Q1. All six divisions I made of Rlc. Volcano Spring have 1 to 3 new leads. What do I do, if anything, with the floppy leaves and shriveled pseudobulbs? I presume they are nourishing the new growth, but not sure.



A1. You can stake them or use a wire halo to improve the appearance of the plant. Don't remove the pseudobulbs. If they look dehydrated, they probably are from the disruption to the root system. Use seaweed or root stimulators to get the plant reestablished faster.

Q2. This cattleya only opened a bit more than this a few days ago and now is dying. Do you have any idea what happened?

A2. The flower stem looks like it is yellowish and soft rather than firm and green. I'm wondering if the flower sheath was also that sickly yellow, in which case I would guess the flower started rotting in the sheath. When I see a sheath



with that coloration, I slit it open so the bud is open to the air. Otherwise, condensation inside the sheath can cause rotting.

Q3. I had this *Renanthera coccinea* where it gets bright, but not direct sun and every other day misting. What is happening?



A3. It looks like crown rot and bacterial blighting on the tender new leaves, particularly if it happened quickly. If the crown of the plant withers, perhaps it will form keikis at the base. I stopped using the overhead misting system in the greenhouse because I had too many rot problems, particularly in the summer.

CULTIVATION

Cattleyas for Beginners - The Challenges

by Ned Nash, courtesy of the AOS

To paraphrase an old saying, all cattleyas are good, some are just better than others. Admittedly, some are bad growers and there are those that are downright ugly, if only to the un-trained eye. Human nature dictates that as experience is gained, greater challenges are sought. That is, as a person learns more about growing and appreciating the *Cattleya* alliance, he or she naturally begins to seek out particular aspects that will continue to be both interesting and challenging. For some, it may be collecting the finest possible examples of the species and hybrids. For others, it may be the acquisition of the newest and/or most obscure members of the alliance. Still others find the greatest reward in growing and flowering their plants to perfection. If the plant(s) happen to be known as "difficult" so much the better. Thus do *Cattleya* growers show the true instincts of collectors everywhere.

In this last section of the series, we will discuss some of these aspects that represent the challenges in growing cattleyas. After all, it is the degree of difficulty that makes things interesting in this life. Part of the challenge in any new endeavor is to discover just what avenues are open to provide the stimulation desired.

Hybrid Seedlings. So many people start out with hybrid cattleyas that they can be thought to be almost mundane. This feeling is helped out by the fact that there really are a lot of mediocre hybrid cattleyas around. Why is this?

Just as in any population, in any given hybrid there will be a high percentage of clearly average flowers, some good only for compost and some few really worth keeping, propagating and breeding with. Think of a bell curve.

In the days before tissue culture, these rare beauties commanded hundreds or thousands of dollars on the infrequent occasions that a division could be spared. Today, efficient meristemming techniques bring the very finest examples of the hybridizer's art well within reach of just about any interested orchid grower. Indeed, "good" cattleyas are so common now that even the best are rendered "average" simply because they are seen so often at shows, in nurseries or on society show tables.

There is a type of *Cattleya*, however, that is just as rare today as it ever was, if not rarer. It is to this type that the real hybrid *Cattleya* lover aspires and will spend some great amount of time, money and effort to procure. "What is this rare beast? Where can I get one?" you are asking. This type of *Cattleya* is available from reputable hybridists, whether working with a nursery or on their own. It is available through mail-order orchid nurseries, at the nurseries themselves, at shows or at your society meeting.



*Beauty is, indeed, in the eye of the beholder. To the Cattleya connoisseur who favors the challenge of collecting and growing unusual species, the seldom-seen *Cattleya araguaiensis* may be the loveliest of orchids. For others, the more classic features of *Brassolaeliocattleya* *Triumphal Coronation* 'Seto' may be preferable. It is this diversity of forms that makes the hobby of orchid growing so fascinating.*

In fact, this type of *Cattleya* is available just about anywhere cattleyas are sold - if you know what you are looking for!

Yes, quality *Cattleya* seedlings are widely available and relatively inexpensive. What is the challenge in that? Studying and researching the background of today's complex hybrids is the only way to make the well-informed decisions necessary to acquire that most unique of cattleyas - the good one you flowered yourself that no one else has. Although few will admit it, there is an immense satisfaction in growing and flowering a hybrid seedling that is of sufficient quality to garner an award from the American Orchid Society, the more so if you are the only one in possession of this gem.

There are many published sources of information on

the latest trends in *Cattleya* hybridizing, not the least of which are the *AOS Bulletin* and the *Awards Quarterly*, where the hybrids that are actually getting the awards are listed. The *Bulletin* provides two great sources of data. The articles often deal with what the growers themselves feel are the "happening" crosses and the advertising shows what is currently being offered for sale. Unfortunately, both the editorial section of the *Bulletin* and the awards in the *Awards Quarterly* often are outdated by the time they are published. This is not to say that they are not published in a timely way but that the information is out-of-date by the time it is submitted.

How can this be? In the first place, no one (despite what advertisers may say to the contrary) can really say whether or not a particular hybrid is going to be a winner. For the most part, claims for the quality of a hybrid are speculation. In some cases, especially when dealing with a long-established breeding line and parents that have proven themselves, the speculation can be very close to the actual results.

In the second place, by the time a hybrid has begun to bloom and prove itself on the show table and these records have begun to be published, it generally is too late to obtain unflowered seedlings of the same cross. *Cattleya* seedlings from any given cross will usually flower over a two- or three-year period, with those coming later being less desirable, if only owing to their lesser vigor. If there are unflowered seedlings available, you can be sure that they have been well picked over by the grower, his regular customers and, in the case of the larger and better-known nurseries, by other growers.

How do you go about second-guessing the sources to obtain the newest and most desirable *Cattleya* hybrids? It is of primary importance to know your sources and their "track record." Know what parents they have used with the most success and what particular lines of breeding they are best known for. Know when to listen to their recommendations and how to sort through the inevitable advertising hype to get to the core of information necessary to make the right selection. And don't be afraid to gamble. Remember that for the price commanded by a single selected variety, you can purchase more than a few seedlings and flower them yourself. It has been my experience that if a cross has any merit at all, it will give at least one keeper out of 10 seedlings. That gives you a good one and some giveaways with which to wow your friends and relatives.

Remember that the most highly awarded cultivars do not always make the best parents but that the parents consistently making the awarded crosses will. In researching any firm's offerings, certain parents will show

up time and again. These are the ones that the firm knows give consistent results and the ones you should look for in your potential acquisitions.

Finally, don't wait until your friends have told you about a new cross or until you see it on the society show bench. Make your choice and obtain the plants when first offered. You then will be getting the best growing plants - and getting the jump on the others who have waited. Time is of the essence in the acquisition of any orchid. (Remember that one you saw at the nursery yesterday and didn't buy, only to find on your return that someone else had as good taste as you and had gotten it?)

There are many dedicated amateur hybridists across the nation. These folks aspire to making their own winners. They provide a valuable service to the *Cattleya* world because they can grow on and flower crosses of unusual appeal or limited germination that a commercial grower could not afford to grow. From these dedicated hobbyists comes yet another source of the unique available only within their limited circle of acquaintance. Yes, it is one thing to flower the best out of a widely available commercial hybrid but quite another to flower that one good one to come from the largely unknown breeding of a friend.

You also may wish to create your own hybrids. This is something that every hobbyist owes to himself or herself to do at least once. Many of the most successful parents are available relatively cheaply. Or you may wish simply to experiment with your own unique varieties. A caution here is in order, though, because it often is forgotten in the heat of hybridizing that it will take some years before those plants begin to flower. Will you want to see them when they do? Your tastes will become more sophisticated as the plants mature and by the time they eventually do bloom, will you consider the space they take up to have been wasted?

Alternately, many choose to buy flasks of seedlings from reputable sources and grow these on to flowering. Growing seedlings from flask is not difficult. It just requires a bit of additional care. As long as you take into consideration that plants coming out of flask are accustomed to a very close, shady and humid environment and take care to introduce them gradually to the "outside world," there should be no major problems.

One of the best methods I have found to begin the acclimatization of seedlings from a flask is to bend a wire loop (from a coat hanger) of approximately 8'-12" and insert it into the newly planted community pot then place a clear plastic bag over it after watering. This will create a sort of terrarium that can be placed in a shady spot in your growing area until the plants begin to show signs of establishing, which generally takes 4-8 weeks.

Another handy hint with seedlings is to "push" them a bit when young by giving additional heat, moisture and fertilizer. As they grow and near their flowering size, begin to move them into the same conditions as your mature plants, where they will flower. You probably will not see the flower to full potential on its first bloom but it generally will give enough of a showing for it to be judged as a keeper or not. To give its best, a *Cattleya* needs to be grown well and should be fairly mature.

Species Lovers. Diametrically opposed to the "hybrid people" are the "species nuts." These people feel that the hybridists' efforts have succeeded only in robbing a basically beautiful group of orchids of their charm and God-given distinction. Those who share this view vie with each other not for the biggest and best but for the newest and most unusual or most rare. Here we see the greatest appreciation for those flowers that might be considered "ugly" by the untrained. I must admit that I don't always appreciate the intrinsic beauty of some of the newer *Cattleya* alliance species but readily admit that they have their place, if only for contrast.

The search for the rarest and most recently discovered species can be a frustrating one. Especially so since the search was made so completely around the turn of the century, when most of the readily accessible areas and their *Cattleya* species were found. Rare color forms and geographic races of the commonly known species are still being discovered — but understandably with decreasing frequency.

It is important to point out that, in an evolutionary sense, there are reasons for the rarity of any given organism. Relictual populations, specific ecological needs and basic genetic weakness are just a few. What this means to the potential grower of this type of plant is that they probably will prove more difficult to grow and will require more specialized and careful attention to their usually very specific needs.

The only general hint that can be given here is to study the plant's native habitat and unique needs and try to duplicate these in your particular growing area. Also, whenever possible, obtain only the strongest undivided plants available, even if it means spending a bit more money. Bringing a weak plant "back from the dead" can be a long-term and frustrating task, the more so when dealing with a plant that may be genetically weak to begin with.

On a conservationist note, often the very best way to obtain and maintain the more difficult species is to be a little patient and purchase nursery-raised selfed or sibbed seedlings of the species. Not only does this save the plant from potential overcollecting but it almost always will give



Specimen plants need not take up vast amounts of space. A stunning display can be achieved in a very small space if you choose such Cattleya-alliance groups as Sophronitis or the rupicolous laelias. Sophronitis mantiqueira 'Cookie' AM-CCM/AOS proves the point. It was grown by Larry M. Heuer and photographed by Richard Clark.

a better and stronger plant than a collected one because it has been cultured in captivity. I would hope from a selected good-growing and good-flowering cultivar. Also, while it is true that collectors sometimes can save a new species from extinction by rescuing it from a forest area due for logging or slash-and-burn agriculture, it is more often the case that overcollecting of a new and desirable species is a real danger to its survival in the wild. The demand for collected plants is what determines the vigor with which unscrupulous collectors will pursue the most isolated habitats.

Specimen Plants. To me, the most personally gratifying pursuit in hobby growing is to cultivate plants into magnificent specimens. I feel that hobbyists almost always should grow their plants better than the commercial grower because they can give the individual attention that a commercial grower cannot. A commercial grower also generally is loathe to grow a good variety into a large plant because of the space it takes and because he cannot sell divisions from an undivided plant. Hobbyists, on the other hand, suffer from no such constraints and so should be able to grow their plants easily into big, beautiful specimens.

The quest for cultural excellence is really no more difficult than following some of the very basic guidelines set down earlier in this series. Careful observation of your plants and their needs and proper response to those needs will practically guarantee success.

What are some of the traits to look for when deciding whether a plant is a candidate for a specimen? Really, the same traits you look for when selecting any *Cattleya* are those used in this selection: compact and branching habit of growth, freedom of bloom and retention of foliage, among others. You also should take into consideration your own space limitations when making these choices.

CULTIVATION

Hybrid Hype

by Ken Slump, reprinted with permission

The first orchid hybrid was artificially pollinated in 1852. John Dominy, foreman at the English orchid firm of Veitch and Sons, performed the hand pollination with the assistance of a surgeon named Dr. Harris. That hybrid, *Calanthe Dominyi* (*nuisuca* x *jureata*) was named for him and flowered in 1856. The early orchid hybrids created considerable excitement at orchid exhibitions of the time. Nevertheless, the practice of orchid hybridization got off to a rather slow start. Dominy was the only orchid hybridizer for almost 20 years, during which time he created about two dozen hybrids.

Fortunately, the early hybridizers recognized the importance of good recordkeeping on the hybrids they made. Beginning in 1871, new orchid hybrids were published in the English magazine *Gardeners' Chronicle*. The *Orchid Review* also ran the listings when it began publication in 1893. However, Frederick K. Sander created the most comprehensive publication on the subject. It was simply titled *Sander's List of Orchid Hybrids* and was first printed in 1906. Numerous volumes of addenda were published at intervals by the Sander family until the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) assumed the orchid registration duties in 1961.

By 1890, 200 hybrid crosses had been registered. When the RHS began maintaining the registrations, the number of hybrids totaled about 35,000. By 1990, the number had climbed to nearly 100,000, and today there are more than 120,000 registered hybrids. It is invaluable that we have records of this important effort, but it should be understood that it is no more accurate than the humans who created it. Stories exist of hybridizers who misrepresented their breeding work in order to keep the key to their results a secret.

The myriad changes in orchid nomenclature through the decades can make it difficult to decipher a hybrid orchid's lineage in contemporary terms. Still, it is amazing to study various orchid pedigrees with the goal of appreciating how a particular hybrid came to be and what characteristics it received from the various species that created it.

First we should clarify what, exactly, is a hybrid. In its simplest terms, a hybrid is a cross between two species, a species being the basic unit of taxonomy. Each species is a group that appears to have common ancestry and characteristics that separate it from other groups.

A cross between two species is known as a primary hybrid. Such hybrids often manifest characteristics that are attributable to each parent. When primary hybrids are crossed with different species or hybrids, the progeny are

then known as complex hybrids. After several generations of such breeding, it may be difficult indeed to discern the contributions of the various species involved.

It is fair to ask why one would want a hybrid orchid over a species plant. The goal of most hybridizing is to blend desirable characteristics of each parent to produce a plant or flower that is an improvement over either parent. Such a goal might be to combine the size of the flower of one parent with the color of the flower of the other parent. Whether the resulting offspring are actually an improvement over their parents may be quite subjective. In many cases, only a small percentage of the offspring, perhaps one in ten, will be of superior quality.

Another benefit of the hybrid plant is that it is often easier to grow than its species ancestors. This is because a particular species has often evolved to thrive in a unique ecological niche, while hybrids may inherit the ability to tolerate a broader range of climatic conditions based on the combination of genetic material received from its unrelated parents. Indeed, the concept of hybrid vigor is a reality.

Hybrids are usually easier to flower than their species parents as well, because they may not have the genetically programmed response to bloom only when the conditions of a unique habitat are favorable. In fact, it is through hybridization that we have been able to produce orchids that reliably grow and flower more than once a year. Such orchids have usually lost the requirement for a dormant period in their growth cycle.

Grex. To provide some clarity to the plethora of hybrids, orchid nomenclature employs the concept of grex, a Greek word that means flock or herd. All of the offspring of a particular hybrid cross (and any subsequent crosses using the same parents) use the same grex name. In some cases, the individuals of a grex are quite similar in appearance, in others they may look very different from one another. The hybridizer who registers the cross has the right to name the grex.

Grex names are listed after the genus name. When in print, the genus is italicized, the grex is not. When a plant represents a unique cultivar of a grex, the cultivar name is listed following the grex name in single quotation marks. Awards may be listed after the cultivar name. For example, in the name *Cattleya Porcia* 'Cannizaro' FCC/AOS, *Cattleya* is the genus, *Porcia* is the grex, 'Cannizaro' is the cultivar, and FCC/AOS is the award it received.

This is excerpted from an article that appeared in the American Orchid Society Orchids magazine in July 2006 (Vol. 72:7, pp. 498-

Morris Arboretum Online Orchid Class

<https://experience.morrisarboretum.org/Info.aspx?EventID=31#botany>

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Botany

Tika Suti: Orchids of the Andes

Emily Conn, *Horticulturist and Plant Care Specialist*, Grow, Sip, Repeat Houseplant Boutique

Virtual Class

Travel the Andes in this online class with former intern and houseplant specialist, Emily Conn! Tropical America contains approximately 20% of the world's orchid biodiversity, and the Andes Mountains of Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia are home to many native plants and indigenous peoples. Indigenous languages present meaningful contributions to the world of plant science by preserving knowledge of plants, places, and living landscapes. Learn about the etymology and botanical history of 'tika suti', or 'flower names', as we explore 10 orchid species named in Quechua, the indigenous language of the Andes Mountains, as well as the stories and folktales behind some of the indigenous common names.

Tuesday, November 9 | 5:00pm - 6:00pm

Members: \$20 | Non-members: \$25

Morris Arboretum morrisarboretum.org is located at: 100 E Northwestern Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19118.