Massachusetts Orchid Society

February: Alvin Kho

Topic: Orchids of Borneo

Upcoming MOS Events

February 8-10 –
NHOS Show & Sale
www.nhorchids.org

February 12 –
MOS Monthly Meeting
Speaker: Alvin Kho
Topic: Orchids of Borneo

February 23 & 24 –
Amherst Orchid Society
Show & Sale
(see page 5)

March 12 –
MOS Monthly Meeting
Speaker: Richard & Eleanor Phillips
Topic: Life in Venezuela and Schomburgkia

Thanks to Brigitte Fortin for coordinating this beautiful exhibit at the CIOAS show!

Many thanks also to Adrienne Giovino and George Baltoumas.

MOS Board

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Show table photography by Brigitte Fortin.

Fredclarkeara After Dark 'SVO Black Pearl' FCC/AOS

Remembering MOS Member Lois N. Steele

Lois N. Steele. age 90 of Reading , MA passed away peacefully in her home, Jan. 30th. Lois led a full life and touched innumerable people with her deep care and joyful smile. She was dearly loved by many in Reading, in her summer community of Island Falls, Maine, and by friends and family in many other places.

As a teachers' aide at the Barrows School for almost thirty years and a volunteer after retirement for many more, Lois was known by generations of Reading children as a warm and understanding adult, with whom they could always share a hug and smile. She spread joy and happiness to everyone she met throughout the school, especially around the holidays when she shared her home-baked treats with the faculty and staff. Lois will remain a lasting example of goodness and kindness to everyone who knew her.

In her iconic role as "The Fried Dough Lady" at Ye Olde Redding Faire at the First Congregational Church, Lois' was the most popular booth for children and adults as well. Her recipe is still used at the Faire each year, served up by succeeding generations, in what is now known as "Mrs. Steele's Fried Dough."

Lois was a faithful member of the First Congregational Church of Reading, United Church of Christ for over 60 years, serving on many committees and commissions, and participating in the Tuesday Bible Study for over 25 years. In 2006, she was named "Woman of the Year" by the Congregational Women's Fellowship.

Lois was a long-time member of the Massachusetts Orchid Society, The College Club of Reading, the "Lois Club" and a neighborhood bridge club. She had a keen sense of horticulture, loved nature, gardening, her greenhouse, and all God's creatures.

Born on August 23, 1922 in Malden, MA, Lois was predeceased by her husband Arthur Steele, and sister Phoebe Rideout of Wilmington. She is survived by her sons, Kenneth Nute of Idaho and Philip Nute Sr. of Alaska, sister Hazel Palmer of Bedford, 5 grandchildren, several great grandchildren, niece Judy Twomey, cousin Betsy Taylor, her husband, Casey, and their daughter, Lois' beloved Laura, cousin Nancy Kennedy, and the members of the Sisterhood of Lois' Daughters.

A Memorial Service and Celebration of Lois' life will be held on Sunday, Feb. 17th at 2 pm., at the First Congregational Church of Reading UCC, 25 Woburn St. All are cordially invited to attend. A private family internment of ashes will be held in Island Falls Maine at a later date. Donations in Lois' memory will gladly be received by her church, First Congregational Church of Reading UCC.

An occasional column answering questions and providing orchid growing information. Some of this information is derived from the AOS member site and some from fellow MOS members. I've been growing orchids for about eight years, still a beginner, and this is a good way to learn and share. To keep the column lively and timely, please contribute your questions and comments to: joan@massorchid.org

Ask Joan

Q: Dear Joan, Tell me about reverse osmosis and the quality of water.

A: I'll do my best to explain. I have constructed this answer from several sites on the net, as I understand the process.

"Reverse Osmosis is a method through which water is purified to remove essentially all dissolved minerals and pathogens. It works by passing the water through a membrane with pores so small that it blocks the mineral ions- almost everything in fact, allowing only the water molecules H2O to pass." That membrane is preceded in the system by sediment and charcoal filters to remove undissolved solids and organic molecules. Since the membrane would quickly clog up with the dissolved minerals it traps, especially with "hard" water sources, part of the water fed into the system is used to flush them away.

Pure water is extremely sensitive to any additive, which suggests that any fertilizers added will have more of a punch. The plus is that the grower can add fertilizer specifically designed to provide minerals in the correct proportions to precisely control the nutrition of the plants. Users of RO water say that their plants have more vigorous new growth and that the roots and leaves are stronger. They find RO to be efficient and very cost-effective. To maintain proper PH balance use fertilizers specifically designed for RO water.

For those of us who cannot set up an RO system, quality water is available via many alternatives.

Rainwater is top of the list; close to what orchids use in habitat. Tap water is next. Your city's water report will help you determine the quality of your tap water. Look at the reports of the Total Dissolved Solids (calcium, magnesium, iron,) The range of parts per million (ppm) of the TDS may be from 0-820. Orchids prefer TDS below 200 ppm. The lower the ppm, the better. Fortunately Boston municipal water typically tests below 100ppm.

Other pure water includes deionized water (DI) and distilled water. Don't use spring water or softened water, which will contain unwanted salts.

Further reading:
www.firstrays.com/RO_Basics
www.enlightenedorchids.com/CultureWaterAndFertilizer.htm

Orchid of the Month: Dendrobium cuthbertsonii

By Wolfgang H. Bandisch

There are so many wonderful orchid species in Papua New Guinea that it is almost impossible to say which one is the most exciting. To me, one of the most remarkable experiences of observing an orchid species in its natural habitat was to see Dendrobium cuthbertsonii at the Tari Gap, approximately 2,300-m above sea level.

It appears to prefer an environment that encounters frequent rain, although the rain does not need to be daily of heavy. On the mountain slopes leading to the Tari Gap temperatures during the day may rise as high as 80 deg F. Night the temperature may go down to about 40 deg F. There is constant air movement along the mountain ridges, and at higher altitudes strong winds prevail throughout most of the day. Humidity is quite low.

The most intriguing characteristic of the species are the 'warty' leaves and ovaries. The purpose of these 'warts' is unclear but it is assumed that they serve as water traps. There is no other orchid known anywhere with a similar leaf epidermis. The flowers have an unusual feature: because of the extreme laxness of the pedicel, the weight of the flower causes it to hand or lie down on the leaves. The flowers appear upside down with the labellum being the uppermost part of the flower.

The most common color one can find is bright red but flowers with any combination of red and yellow in the sepals and petals or labellum are frequent. Other relatively common colors are pink and combinations of pink and white in the sepals and petals.

Along the road from the Ambua Lodge to the Tari Gap one can clearly observe the terrestrial habit of the species. It grows abundantly in full sun on road cuttings nearly devoid of any other plants with its roots buried up to 8 cm in the clay soil. The sight is spectacular as the bright 'electric' red color starkly contrasts with the drab surroundings. Venturing off the road on to the embankments one can find Den. cuthbertsonii growing in the bare soil along the forest edge, often as the only vegetation on the ground. In some places it is nearly impossible not to step on them because of the sheer numbers present. The embankments on the side of the road are often so well-drained that even mosses find it hard to establish themselves.

(continued on page 5)

January Show Table Results

Plant	Owner
Coelogyne Unchained Melody	Joan Gitlin
Paph. Quiberon Bay	Joan Gitlin
Oncidium cheirophorum	George Baltoumas
Den. X delicatum 'Valentines Day'	George Baltoumas
Paph. Lunacy	George Baltoumas
Dend. Andre Millar	Joel Shelkrot
Fredclarkeara After Dark 'SVO Black Pearl' FCC/AOS	Jaroslaw Luciw
Dend. Victoria Blush 'Royal Show 2002' AM/AOS	Linda Abrams
Cym. Pipeta York	Linda Abrams
Masd. Annette Hall 'Haley Suzanne' AM/AOS	Joe Rajunas

In an effort to get our meetings started by 7:30, we kindly request that show table plants be ready for judging by **7:15pm**.

Coelogyne Unchained Melody

New Hampshire Orchid Society
Annual Orchid Show
"Orchid Odyssey"
www.nhorchids.org

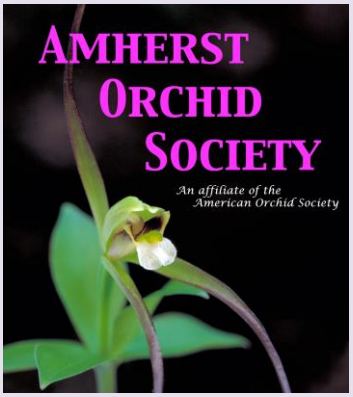
Radisson Hotel
11 Tara Blvd., Nashua, NH
Tel. 603-888-9970

Friday Feb 8: 1 pm to 7 pm

Saturday Feb 9: 9 am to 5 pm

Sunday Feb 10: 9 am to 4 pm

Price:
Adults $10 / Seniors (65+) $6
Over 100 and Children under 12 are Free
3 Day Daytime Pass $15



Amherst Orchid Society
Annual Orchid Show

Smith Vocational School
8 Locust St (Route 9), Northampton, MA

Saturday, Feb 23 - 9 to 5

Sunday, Feb 24 - 10 to 4

Admission: $3, under 12 free

www.larchhillorchids.com/amherst_orchid_society.html

Dendrobium cuthbertsonii (continued from page 3)

Travelling further up the steep road towards the Tari Gap the vegetation changes from dense forest to high altitude marshlands and moss forests. When one enters a patch of moss forest the environment changes dramatically. Outside on the marsh the climate feels inhospitable where only the toughest of plants can survive. Inside the moss forest the lush growth is rather fascinating. The forest floor is covered with fallen trees and branches, thick layers of moss, vines and shrubs make up an almost impenetrable jungle. Everything is dripping wet; the thick water-clogged tangles of moss often get so heavy that they cause the thinner branches to break. The striking fire-red flowers of Den. cuthbertsonii appear almost unnatural in such dreary surrounding. They are like glittering gems, eye catching as they grow anywhere from the forest floor to high up in the tree canopy. Here the plants are not attached to the trees but have their roots entangled in the outer layers of the moss covering the trunks and branches.

Cultivation in climatic zones other than those similar to its natural habitat appears very difficult. Both mounting on slabs of tree fern and pot culture have been successful, although many plants eventually die for no apparent reason. It has been suggested that the plants perhaps flower themselves to death. This does not appear to be a supportable explanation as plants in the wild flower profusely year round. Plants in cultivation are reported to have had individual flowers last for up to eight months.

Plants do best if their roots are constantly wet, while their foliage and flowers are kept dry. This is evident in their habitats, both terrestrial and epiphytic.

Complete article:
http://members.optusnet.com.au/bdobson/Dendrobium cuthbertsonii.html

Upcoming Events

Date & Time	Event	Location
Fri-Sun, February 8-10	NHOS Annual Show www.nhorchids.org	Radisson Hotel , 11 Tara Blvd, Nashua, NH
Tue, February 12, 7:30pm	Monthly MOS Meeting Speaker: Alvin Kho	Arlington Senior Center 27 Maple St, Arlington, MA
Sat & Sun, February 23 & 24	Amherst Orchid Society Annual Show (see page 5)	Smith Vocational School 8 Locust St, Northampton, MA
Sat, March 2, 10:30am	Monthly Regional AOS Judging	Tower Hill Botanic Garden 11 French Drive, Boylston, MA
Tue, March 12, 7:30pm	Monthly MOS Meeting Speaker: Richard & Eleanor Phillips	Arlington Senior Center 27 Maple St, Arlington, MA