

August 2009

MASSACHUSETTS ORCHID SOCIETY



*Save the Date! MOS Annual Orchid Auction - Tuesday, September 15th

August 11th

Learn about the “Fragrance of Orchids” from
Dr. Harold Hills

Dr. Hills has been studying orchid fragrances for over 30 years.

Dr. Harold G. Hills, better known as Hal, received his PhD from Univ. of Miami. His fragrance work has been mostly on Euglossine Bee pollinated orchids including:

Stanhopea, Gongora, Coryanthes, Catasetum, Clowesia, Mormodes and Dressleria.

Hal retired in June 2008 from University of Massachusetts Medical School where he had been director of the DNA Sequencing Facility and the Enzyme Freezer Program. Orchid floral fragrances of Euglossine pollinated orchids are made up of common perfume substances that occur in many other floral fragrances such as narcissus, roses, lilacs, and even household products such as turpentine, cough medicine and chewing gum. Come here more about this fascinating subject.





Catasetum

kat-ah-SEE-tum

This unusual group of orchids offers fascinating, waxy flowers that often have the peculiar habit of discharging their pollen masses (pollinia) onto pollinators. Almost always deciduous, the pseudobulbous plants have strict growing and resting periods. Most flower before entering a dormant period when they drop their leaves.

Light should be strong, especially near the end of the growth period. Early in the annual growth cycle, plants will tolerate less light, from 1,500 to 3,000 foot-candles. Plants grow best with light levels of 3,000 to 6,000 foot-candles, or one-half to three-fourths full sun. As pseudobulbs mature, harden them by giving slightly more light.

Temperatures reflect the fact these orchids are native to hot tropical areas and grow during the rainy summer months. During this growing period, day temperatures of 80° to 100° F and night temperatures of 60° to 65° F are beneficial. After growths mature, temperatures can be reduced to 55° F at night, with day temperatures of 70° to 85° F.

Water is a critical factor for the production of large pseudobulbs that result in best flowering. A great quantity of water must be stored by the plant in a relatively short growing season. Water heavily as new leaves are forming. As the pseudobulb matures, gradually reduce watering frequency. Leaves will yellow and drop. At this time, watering should be stopped completely until new growth begins. Water during this dormant period only if the pseudobulbs shrivel severely.

Humidity should be 40 to 60 percent. This can be provided in the home by placing the plants on trays of gravel, only partially filled with water so that the plants do not sit in the water. Air should always be moving around the plants to prevent fungal or bacterial disease, especially if high humidity or cool temperatures exist. In the greenhouse, the humidity is best increased by use of a humidifier. Evaporative cooling increases humidity while cooling the air.

Fertilize and water regularly to produce strong pseudobulbs. Use a high nitrogen formulation (such as 30-10-10) while plants are in active growth, slowly tapering off as pseudobulbs form. A blossom- booster formulation (such as 10-30- 20) should be used in the autumn, except for plants that normally bloom in the

spring. Frequent applications of dilute concentrations of fertilizer are more effective than occasional applications of strong concentrations.

Potting should be timed to coincide with the initiation of new growth, usually in the spring. New roots will be produced quickly at that time, and plants will experience minimal setback. These plants have vigorous root systems and require a rich, moist potting medium during the growing season. Many growers bare-root their plants during the resting period to ensure dryness at that time. Fine-grade media are common for smaller pots; medium-grade media are used only in larger pots. Sphagnum moss is used successfully for plants in many areas, as it provides tremendous water- and fertilizer-holding capacities. Some plants can be grown on slabs of tree fern or other material, which makes it easier to keep them dry during dormancy; however, it is harder to keep them moist while growing. When well grown, these orchids can be divided down to one mature pseudobulb and will then flower on the next mature growth. Spider mites are a common pest of these orchids when in leaf. Control spider mites by keeping humidity high or spraying with recommended miticides.

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WET SUMMER WEATHER ALERT!



Snails and Slugs

By Susan Jones

Snails and slugs, ubiquitous orchid pests, can inflict a great deal of damage to virtually every part of an orchid. They wait for the cover of night to wreak their havoc. Snails and slugs, left unchecked, can infest a collection and kill your orchids fairly quickly.

If you grow orchids outdoors or in a greenhouse, these pests are likely to be found in the vicinity of your growing area. Indoor growers may introduce them with a new plant, which can harbor snails, slugs or their eggs unseen in the growing medium.

Snails and slugs eat mostly flowers, roots and tender new growths, although, if those are unavailable, they will consume any plant part. Because they do their damage primarily under the cover of darkness, they can be difficult to detect and eradicate. (courtesy of AOS July, 2009)

MOS Annual Orchid Auction Tuesday, September 15th

Hi folks! It's time for our annual auction. This year it is the **THIRD TUESDAY**, September 15. There is no meeting September 8th. As usual, the meeting will start at **7:00 pm**.

[If you can come early to help set up, please do.](#)

If you have plants to donate, please email me with the list so I can post plants. bleibume@gmail.com

All donations are tax deductible and any purchases above the fair market value are also tax deductible.

Thanks! Let me know if you have any questions.

Brian Leib

MOS MONTHLY SHOW TABLE RESULTS

July 14th, 2009

Judges: Betty Levine, Brian Leib, Jody Maggio

Scribe: Susan Flier

Total plants shown: 11

Total awards: 6

Awarded plants:

Blc. Three Suns – Bob Richter

Blc. Everything Nice – Bob Richter

Cirr. tingabarinum – Bob Richter

Laelia lucasiana – Sasha Varsanofieva

Blc. Lime Cooler 'Kruss Smith' HCC/AOS – Brigitte Fortin

Enc. alata X Enc. mooreana – Jim Ayer



Betty Levine, Jody Maggio, Brian Leib

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| First Saturday of Each Month | Northeast Judging Center Boylston, MA , Tower Hill Botanic Garden, 11 French Dr., Boylston, MA, Robert Winkley, rwinkley@aol.com . Presentations begin @ 10:00 AM. Judging begins at 12 PM. Directions |
| August 11 | MOS Meeting , Suburban Experimental Station, 241 Beaver St., Waltham, MA, 7:30PM |
| September 8 | NO MEETING |
| September 15 | MOS Annual Orchid Auction + regular monthly meeting |
| mos@massorchid.org newsletter editor: Susan Johnston susan.johnston3@comcast.net | |

UPCOMING EVENTS

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

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