# Massachusetts Orchid Society

P.O. Box 1041 Medford, MA 02155



Jan 2024

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Just when you thought you had growing orchids all figured out, along comes a new orchid worry; viruses! Find out why orchid growers and orchid viruses are a bad mix at this month's meeting. Mike, Steve and Anne will teach you how to ID, test for and protect your orchids from this scourge affecting breeders and hobbyists accross the globe. The meeting promises to be informative and highly interactive with workshops and Q&A's on the subject.

If you have suspicious-looking symptoms, like unexplained leaf or flower abnormalities, email pics of your plants to the speakers and they will discuss possible virus infections at the meeting. Email your photos by January 8th to annep@massorchid.org, stevek@massorchid.org or mikeb@massorchid.org.

If you wish to enter your blooming orchids in the Cape & Islands show, please contact **Brigitte** to register them. Plants must be registered by Tuesday evening, January 16<sup>th</sup>.

Upcoming show dates:

Cape & Islands - Jan. 20th - 21st. Amherst - Feb. 24th-25th. NHOS - Mar. 1st - 3rd · Nutmeg - March 16th-17th

Become a contributor and share your orchid knowledge with others in the newsletter! Post orchid-related articles, sell your extra orchid supplies, growing equipment or arrange swaps. Email Anne at <a href="mailto:newsletter@massorchid.org">newsletter@massorchid.org</a> Submissions are due 14 days prior to monthly meetings.

Have orchid related articles you want to share? Interested in reading about a specific topic? Email your thoughts to mos-board@googlegroups.com. We welcome suggestions for speakers, topics, and special programs for upcoming general meetings.

> Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/massorchid, Friends of Massachusetts Orchid Society at www.friendsofmassorchid and Instagram at www.Instagram.com/massachusettsorchid.

# Message from the President

I begin this month's letter by extending my congratulations once again to Brigitte and Mike for their respective Diamond Award and the Charles H. Briggs, Jr. Memorial Award, recognizing their long-term and continuing service to MOS.

The Holiday Party was an enjoyable success, and we are stepping into a new calendar year. Our speaker program is just about complete for 2024. We have speakers coming in from California, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey and Minnesota. We have scheduled our usual annual BBQ, Auction and Holiday Party, and the Board is open to ideas for an additional social event.

January's program will teach us how to test and identify viruses in our plants. Orchid collections have been decimated by unchecked viruses. There will be live demonstrations of testing. It's sad to lose a plant to a virus, but it's worse to lose a large part of a collection to a spreading virus.

Happy New Year to you all, and I look forward to seeing you on January 9th.

Ralph DiFonzo, President



Welcome To Our New Member



Moss Cohan-Diaz, from Malden.

Moss is looking forward to becoming actively involved in MOS activities

The Massachusetts Orchid Society was proud to honor Brigitte Fortin with the 2023 Orchid Digest Diamond Award of Excellence. MOS is also proud to honor Mike Badia with the Charles H. Briggs Jr. Memorial Award.

# Congratulations to you both!

#### **ABOUT BRIGITTE**

A member since 1991, she has served on the Board in several capacities for more than a decade. She been an active Show Table committee member for years and has also served as scribe.

Brigitte has led our annual Orchid Show for years as chairperson and travels to the other New England Society Shows frequently every year to design and set up the Mass Orchid Display. An excellent grower in her own right, she has been showered with awards for her orchids, designs and displays. Brigitte puts the Mass Orchid Society in the public spotlight several times each year.

### **ABOUT MIKE**

Mike has been an MOS director for several years and is currently the Vice President, responsible for the 2024 speaker program, co-chair of the show table, and responsible for many tasks at the annual Show. He spends half his days going back and forth to the MOS storage unit and is the first member of the board to say "..I'll take care of that..." We consider him "Mister Everything."

Thank you, Ralph, for presenting the awards!



## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

Monthly AOS Judging at Tower Hill

06 Jan 2024 10:30 AM Tower Hill Botanic Garden, 11 French Dr., Boylston, MA

Please visit our website: nejcaos.org

### Monthly Meeting

Detecting Viruses with Mike, Anne & Steve

09 Jan 2024 7:30 PM SOI, 117 Swanton St., Winchester MA

# <u>Cape & Islands Orchid Society Show</u> and Sale

20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> Jan 2024 35 Scudder Ave, Hyannis, MA

## Monthly AOS Judging at Tower Hill

03 Feb 2024 10:30 AM Tower Hill Botanic Garden, 11 French Dr., Boylston, MA

Please visit our website: nejcaos.org

## Monthly Meeting

A Cymbidium Story, Jerry Kessler 13 Feb 2024 7:00 PM SOI, 117 Swanton St., Winchester MA

# 2024 MOS Meeting Program

**Feb.** Jerry Kessler from NHOS: A Cymbidium Story

Mar. TBD

**Apr.** Cordelia Head, J&L Orchids

May Beth Davis - Waldor Orchids

June Alan Koch from Gold Country
July Kristin Uthus - New World Orchids

Aug. Summer Social or Speaker

Sept. MOS Annual Auction

Oct. Kim Feddersen - Fair Orchids

**Nov.** Dave Sorokowsky - Paph.

Paradise

**Dec.** Annual Holiday Party!

This month MOS members Anne Pfaff, Steven Kirincich and Mike Badia will give a presentation on orchid viruses. They will describe symptoms of infected plants, how viruses are spread and virus prevention strategies. Afterwards there will be demonstrations showing how to use two commercially available orchid virus test kits to detect viruses. Tests will be available for purchase (at cost) to members during the meeting. Please be prepared for an interactive discussion and bring your questions!

### AOS 5th CULTURE DAY "ORCHIDS FOR ENJOYMENT"

March 3, 2024, 11:00 am – 4:00pm Eastern Standard Time This Event is Available to the public.

For \$35 you'll receive an all-day seminar with four great speakers and programs. Eric Sauer, a prominent Maxillariologist from River Valley Orchids will talk about Maxillarias, George Hatfield from Hatfield Orchids will talk about growing prize winning Cymbidiums in an era of global climate change. Lourens Grobler from AfriOrchids, will talk about Angraecoids and growing them in the home. Last, Julien Baruch from Krull Smith will talk about their beautiful Phalaenopsis breeding and culture.

Enjoy a day with these delightful speakers and learn about these four fabulous genera, their history, hybridizing and of course **Culture!** 

Join us for fun and some LOVELY prizes! To register click here.

## Schedule (All times EST)

11:00-11:45 am - Eric Sauer "It is not Just tenufolia Anymore."

11:45 -12:00 pm - Q & A

12:00 -12:15 pm - Coffee Break

12:15 -1:00 pm - Lourens Grobler "New African Species in Cultivation and How to Grow Them."

1:00 - 1:15 pm - Q & A

1:15 - 1:30 pm - Refreshment Break

1:30 - 2:15 pm - George Hatfield "Growing Award-winning

Cymbidiums"

2:15 -2:30 pm - Q & A

2:30 -2:45 pm - Refreshment Break

2:45 - 3:30 pm - Julien Baruch "Phalaenopsis Culture and Breeding"

3:30 - 3:45 pm - Q & A

3:45 - 4:00 pm - Spin the Wheel of Orchid Fortune for a prize

Remember to pick up your raffle ticket at the membership table before each meeting. Members receive one ticket and get another for bringing in treats for the hospitality table. You'll also get a ticket for each orchid you bring in for the Show Table!

**JAN 2024** 

# Nine Ladies Dancing (Oncidiums) By Ken Slump

THE GENUS ONCIDIUM IS AMONG the largest in the orchid family. Various authors list the number of species anywhere from 300 to more than 600, depending on the taxonomic treatment. Name changes within the genus have occurred regularly in recent years, which is not surprising with such a large group.

As taxonomists grapple with the problems of sorting and making sense of this group, more than a few sections have been created that include but one genus. It will undoubtedly be some time before consensus is reached, in part because Oncidium is also closely related to several other genera in the Oncidium alliance with which it hybridizes, such as Odontoglossum, Miltonia and Brassia, to name just three.



An Oncidium by Any Other Name Is Still a Delight to Grow and Flower

Familiarly, Oncidiums are known in the orchid world as dancing lady orchids, a nickname given for the appearance of the flowers. To generalize in the extreme, Oncidiums' often yellow and brown blossoms are frequently small and occur in sizeable, branched sprays. Their most distinctive feature is usually a broad lip or labellum that dominates the flower and often resembles the full, flowing skirt of an animated dancer. The dancing ladies belong to a remarkable and diverse group of orchids. We will take a brief look at nine types for examples.

As noted, the Oncidium species are a variable lot, and all are native to the tropical Americas, stretching from Florida through Mexico and Central America to Brazil and Argentina. They occupy a variety of habitats and grow in a wide range of elevations. Most species are epiphytic, although a few are terrestrial.

It is difficult to offer cultural guidelines for such a large group. Many thrive in intermediate to warm conditions. Some, from higher elevations, need cooler situations. They can be grown potted or on mounts of cork or tree fern. Most have noticeably active periods of growth when they require ample water and nutrients, as well as dormant periods when watering should be withheld a bit.

A number of its species can grow in a general collection. Many require good light to thrive and may become sizeable plants. I will never forget an Oncidium specimen that was brought to an orchid judging I attended a number of years ago. It sported clouds of flowers that reached for several feet in nearly every direction. The plant received a well-deserved cultural award, and perhaps the real marvel of it was that the exhibitor was motivated enough to devise a way to transport the monstrous flowering plant to the event. As I remember, he had suspended it from the roof of a somewhat large panel truck and had driven cautiously.

Many Oncidium species have been cultivated and perhaps each grower has a favorite. Some produce rather upright panicles of flowers, yet others are more arching. While yellow with mahogany patterning is the coloration most often associated with an Oncidium blossom, you will find Oncidium flowers sporting shades of pink, orange, white, burgundy and other colors.

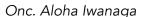
A STARTING POINT As a first example of a more or less typical species, *Oncidium sphacelatum* will suit as well as any. It is a rather vigorous grower with a native range from Mexico to El Salvador and Costa Rica. The branched inflorescence may carry many 1-inch (2.5-cm) flowers that are bright yellow spotted red-brown. This would be a good choice if you want to produce a specimen plant in a short time. Each pseudobulb produces one or two narrow leaves that can reach 1–2 feet (30–60 cm) in length. The foliage is of the sort that in this genus is termed "soft," i.e. not succulent or rigid.

MULE'S-EAR ONCIDIUMS Another type of dancing lady, *Trichocentrum* (syn. Oncidium) caven-dishianum, produces a different foliage popularly called mule's ear. This species can also become a large plant and carries a flower stem that may extend 3 to 6 feet (90–180 cm). It is unifoliate, having but one stiff, thickened leaf per pseudobulb. The fragrant, waxy, 2½-inch (6.25-cm) flowers are yellow to yellow-green with red to brown spots or blotches.

The mule's-ear types grow well mounted on bark or planted in baskets. Because of their succulent foliage, they can withstand less water, but they do best with warmth, humidity and plenty of light.

COOLER GROWERS While the petals and sepals are often of reduced size in many of the more familiar Oncidium species, there are plenty of examples with wider segments. These could make up yet a third type of Oncidium species that are often found at higher elevations, thus doing best under cooler growing conditions. Oncidium crispum, Oncidium praetextum (syn. enderianum) and Oncidium gardneri are among them.

POPULAR HYBRIDS As a fourth example, it is important to acknowledge the multitude of hybrids among the Oncidium species, those cheerful, primarily yellow sorts that are most frequently encountered. Many have wide, ruffled, yellow lips. Sprays of these blossoms create an effect unlike that of any other orchid and it is hard to imagine creating an orchid display without including at least one. A few of this sort include Oncidium Gower Ramsey (Goldiana × Guinea Gold), Oncidium Sweet Sugar (Aloha Iwanaga × varicosum) and Oncidium Aloha Iwanaga (Goldiana × Star Wars).







Oncidium sphacelatum



Trichocentrum cavendishianum



Oncidium pretextum



Onc. crispum



Onc. Gower Ramsey



Onc. gardneri



A FRAGRANT FAVORITE Another Oncidium hybrid, Oncidium Sharry Baby (Jamie Sutton × Honolulu) probably deserves a solo spot on the dance floor. The hybrid was registered in 1983 and traces its roots to four species: Oncidium altissimum, Oncidium ornithorhynchum, Oncidium anthocrene (syn. powellii) and Oncidium leucochilum.

I have heard that the immensely popular hybrid has been mericloned in larger numbers than any other orchid. The flowers are primarily a dark shade many describe as burgundy. The lip is white to pale pink with purple splashes near the center and back edges. If it is the color that first catches your attention, it is the fragrance you will not forget.



Onc. Sharry Baby

Oncidium Sharry Baby has a scent that has been compared to that of chocolate. I am not certain that I concur but have noted in my experience that the sense of smell seems to differ considerably between individuals. While some find this orchid's perfume irresistible, others find it overpowering.

This grex is an example of a successful hybrid that was produced from comparatively ordinary parents. Oncidium Sharry Baby has garnered 10 AOS awards, yet neither parent has received one. The cultivar Onc. Sharry Baby 'Sweet Fragrance', AM/AOS, is most frequently encountered. One award was made to a mutation of Onc. Sharry Baby 'Sweet Fragrance', AM/AOS, about a decade ago, to a plant with variegated foliage. That plant, Onc. Sharry Baby 'Pacific Paradise', JC/AOS, verifies that genetic changes can and do occasionally occur with mericloned orchids.

**TOLUMNIAS** If you desire the Oncidium-type flower but do not have room for large plants, the species and hybrids of the genus Tolumnia may be the answer. These are frequently called equitant Oncidiums and were included in the genus Oncidium for many years. Equitant refers to the arrangement of the leaves, which are arranged fanlike in a single plane, similar to that of bearded iris.

There are about 20 species in the genus Tolumnia. They grow as small epiphytes and lithophytes and differ from Oncidiums in lacking any but vestigal pseudobulbs. Most grow on twigs and some produce a somewhat tufted, stoloniferous habit. They range from southern Florida through the Caribbean.

The flowers of these plants are surprisingly large for the size of plant and are often borne on a long flower stem that extends well away from the foliage. The color range and patterning available on Tolumnia hybrids is remarkable, ranging from dark burgundy and purple through fiery reds, yellows and oranges. Many of these trace their ancestry to the successful grex Tolumnia (syn. Oncidium) Golden Sunset (Stanley Smith × Tiny Tim) of a few decades back.

Culture of Tolumnia species and hybrids can be a bit tricky. While they benefit from regular watering, their root system demands excellent drainage and must not stay wet too long. They are perhaps best grown mounted or in small baskets and appreciate warmth and high humidity.



Tolu. Genting Volcano





Tolu. Jairak Rainbow Firm ' Pink Lady'

BUTTERFLY ORCHIDS Another fascinating genus, closely related and previously included in Oncidium is Psychopsis, popularly known as the butterfly orchid. Four or five species occur in Central and South America. They have some of the most interestingly patterned foliage among orchids. It is reddish brown in color with spots and blotches of green.

But it is the flower and flowering habit of Psychopsis that is remarkable. The dorsal sepal and two petals are narrow and extended, resembling an insect's antennae. The winglike lateral sepals are much wider; but it is the lip that is most prominent. Much like those of the smaller dancing ladies, it is full, round and ruffled. The flowers may reach 4 inches (10 cm) from top to bottom and are of typical Oncidium coloration — yellow with red-brown bars, spots and blotches.

The most popular species, Psychopsis (syn. Oncidium) papilio and Psychopsis (syn. Oncidium) kramer-ianum, bloom successively from the same flower stalk for many months, usually producing one flower at a time. These thrive in good light and do best with high summer temperatures. For best results, keep them somewhat pot-bound in a freely draining mix, or try growing them mounted.

ROSSIOGLOSSUMS The eighth dancing lady is more a tigress than a kitten and is more closely related to the allied genus Trichocentrum than it is to Oncidium. Still, the genus Rossioglossum bears the coloration and patterning typical of many of its Oncidium cousins, although it was previously classified as Odontoglossum.

The genus includes about six species of which Rossioglossum grande is perhaps the most notable. A well-grown flowering plant of this species is always a showstopper. The inflorescence carries four to eight waxy flowers that may each reach a 6-inch (15-cm) span. The sepals are yellow with bold red-brown barring; the petals are typically bright yellow, red-brown at the lower half. The lip is pale yellow or whitish, sometimes flecked with brown.



Psychopsis krameriana



Rossioglossum grande

Rossioglossum grande thrives in a rather dense growing medium that might contain a bit of sphagnum moss for moisture retention. Intermediate conditions and bright light are recommended. Water generously when in active growth but restrict water when dormant. Flower spikes develop in late summer to Autumn.

Colm. Wildcat



INTERGENERICS Finally, it seems important to mention at least one from the abundance of Oncidium alliance hybrids popularly grown today, and Colmanara Wildcat will get the

Colmanara Wildcat, which is now placed in the genus Odontocidium, traces half of its lineage to two Oncidium species, Oncidium fuscatum (syn. Miltonia warszewiczii) and Oncidium leucochilum. The award winners of Colmanara Wildcat generally have flat, waxy flowers. Coloration varies from yellow with subtle mahogany markings to burgundy and other nearly solid colors, including some with rich patterns. Indeed, there are so many examples that a favorite is hard to choose.

If none of the Colm. Wildcat cultivars catches your fancy, look to other intergeneric crosses such as Brassidium (Brassia × Oncidium), Withnerara (Aspasia × Miltonia × Odontoglossum × Oncidium), Wilsonara (Cochlioda × Odontoglossum × Oncidium) and Burrageara (Cochlioda × Miltonia × Odontoglossum × Oncidium), and others. Among them you are sure to find ladies that, far from being wallflowers, are ready for the dance.





# New York Botanical Garden Presents THE ORCHID SHOW: FLORALS IN FASHION

February 17-April 21, 2024

The 21st edition of NYBG's iconic and beloved Orchid Show will be a fashion-inspired celebration of all-things orchids, featuring the unique designs of Collina Strada by Hillary Taymour, Dauphinette by Olivia Cheng, and FLWR PSTL by Kristen Alpaugh. Visitors will be invited to get up close to a variety of diverse orchid species amidst dramatic, picture-perfect installations created by these three featured designers and inspired by the captivating nature of these flowering plants. On-site activations and ongoing public programs will allow visitors to "walk the orchid runway" and show off their own personal style, their love for orchids, and their fashion-forward connections to the natural world.



# HILLSIDE NURSERY Time to place orders for spring! At this time last year, all the plants were tucked away for the winter and the ordering was in full swing, but this fall has been a lot more hectic. But we're getting there and I still managed to get the website updated more or less on time! Spring is still the smaller of our shipping seasons, so we have a limited selection of Lady Slippers and Arisaema bulbs available and we expect items to sell out quickly. Our gift certificates make great holiday gifts for that special gardener in your Wishing you all a happy and healthy holiday season and a restful winter. -Amy





# ·THE AOS CORNER.



## **Greenhouse Chat with Ron McHatton**

Orchid related questions, answered by AOS experts.

Click here to watch now.

Note the specific times below if you wish to watch or listen to those topics.

4:42 yellowing foliage on Dendrobium

6:53 edema on Phal. leaf

11:20 Phalaenopsis leaf spotting

15:00 troubleshooting failed hard cane Dendrobium

18:09 more troubleshooting hard cane Dendrobium culture problems

22:30 deformed flower causes for Rlc. Triple Love

27:22 possible causes for sticky black substance on Phal leaves

31:12 possible causes for Cattleya pseudobulb spotting

33:07 Miltoniopsis culture needs (suggested article by

Rosenfeld in Orchids Magazine)

36:36 Recommendations for Cal-Mag use

38:37 Cattleya root rot --- causes and troubleshooting

41:58 troubleshooting indoor Cymbidium culture

48:16 troubleshooting culture and leaf spotting for Onc.

Sherry Baby

52:30 Phragmipedium culture requirements

53:30 sterility of Dracuvallia hybrids

59:16 Houlettia wallisii ID

1:03:07 discussion of problematic culture conditions in lowa orchid room (60F 24/7)

1:07:10 difficulties with plants near heat registers

1:08:08 Thiomyl dilution recommendations

# Seasonal Orchid Care January/February

Click here for Checklist

Organizing orchid culture and its chores by season is a convenient way to make sure that your orchids get the proper care at the right time. Becoming in tune with your plants' growth cycles creates a connection with the natural world and makes you a better grower.

# Officers, Directors & Committee Chairs

#### Officers

President Ralph DiFonzo ralphd@massorchid.ora Vice President Mike Badia mikeb@massorchid.org Past President Dina Deresh dinad@massorchid.org

Steve Kirincich stevek@massorchid.org Secretary amandal@massorchid.org **Treasurer** Amanda Larson

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#### **Committee Chairs**

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# Orchid Digest Rep.

**Orchid Show Postcard** 

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