



# MHOS NEWSLETTER

[www.mhos.us.com](http://www.mhos.us.com)

July 2008

## Meetings

The Mid-Hudson Orchid Society meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month at 1:30 pm at the Union Presbyterian Church at the corner of Balmville Road and Beech Street in Newburgh, NY (Balmville).

Bring your blooming orchids for the show table.

**July 13<sup>th</sup>** meeting will include an ice cream social, plus a discussion of mounting orchids and growing orchids in baskets.

**August** – no meeting

**September 14<sup>th</sup>** meeting, a representative from J & L Orchids will speak on pleurothallids, and they will also have a large selection of plants for purchase.

**October** meeting to be replaced by the Fall Show and Sale on Saturday, October 11<sup>th</sup> (setup on October 10<sup>th</sup>).

**November 11** - We are hoping that Carri Raven-Riemann will come to speak on phalaenopsis.

**December 9** - Pot Luck Holiday Dinner



## July 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting: Ice Cream Social

Come and enjoy some ice cream, along with a discussion of mounting orchids and growing orchids in baskets. See you there!

## No MHOS newsletter next month.

We're on vacation then. Next newsletter will be in September.

## Orchid Culture: Longevity of Orchids

### *How long will an orchid plant live?*

Often, the first question asked by someone just given their first orchid is, "How long will this grow for me?" What determines the life expectancy of an orchid plant? From a theoretical standpoint, an orchid plant can live forever. Orchids are perennials. If kept in good health, you can just keep dividing them. It is quite possible that in their native habitats, there are some orchids which are hundreds of years old, perhaps older. There are accounts of enormous masses of orchids collected in the early part of the 20th century that were so large it took many men to cut the clumps out of the trees and carry them off. Often they would have to cut the clumps into even smaller portions for transport back to the purveyors.

In nature, plants are not subjected to disease, neglect or obsolescence to the same extent as orchids in cultivation may be. Under cultivation, orchid plants are far more subject to the conditions that shorten their life than are the jungle plants. There are some highly regarded breeding plants which are known to have been in cultivation for 75 to 100 years. The average life expectancy of a plant in cultivation is 15 - 20 years.

Let us go beyond our first question - "How long will this grow for me?" - to assume we are thinking of someone who has a small orchid collection. The three factors which determine an orchid plant's life are disease, neglect and obsolescence. Under greenhouse conditions, orchid plants are often packed together "pot to pot." The conditions which are maintained for their growth are also ideal for diseases: high temperature, high humidity, close proximity.

Diseases thrive under what are considered to be "good cultural conditions." An excellent illustration is the soft brown rot of *Phalaenopsis*. This is a water-borne bacterial disease which thrives under high humidity and temperature. The dangerous thing is that it spreads rapidly merely by water being splashed from a diseased plant onto a clean plant! The prevention? Good circulation of air, immediate separation and treatment of infected plants, keeping the leaves of the plants dry at nightfall, and maintaining proper night temperature, 65-70° F.

Of *curable* diseases there are fungal and bacterial types. There is a generous literature on the identity of these two types and on prevention and treatment. Virus is the third type of disease; it is separate from fungus and bacteria. With the first two types, you can effect a cure. With virus, there is no cure - only prevention. This is why everyone should learn aseptic technique to prevent the spread of virus. Virus is spread via mechanical means. This refers to infected cutting tools, pots which have contained virus-infected plants, virus-infected plants commingled with roots growing over each other in the greenhouse, and sucking and chewing insects which go from plant to plant, such as aphids, cockroaches and red spider. Virus on your hands can be spread if you have handled an infected plant and then come in contact with a wound of some kind on another orchid plant.

The second major category affecting orchid longevity is simply - neglect. An illustration would be the person who does not repot his plants until there is nothing in the pot for the plant to grow on. Neglect is letting a plant that has lost its roots go unpotting. Learn something about pest control and how to identify a few of the major insect pests, such as scale, red spider mites, and other "wee small beasties" which are so easily eradicated by the perceptive grower. Here is an illustration of this: a neighbor had a fine *Cymbidium* collection. All year he carefully tended his

*(continued on Page 2)*

## MHOS Officers & Volunteers 2008

### President

Dennis Sandberg  
914-962-1541

### Vice President

Ruth Natras  
845-343-2901

### Membership

#### Secretaries

Ruth Natras  
845-343-2901  
& Betty Gilbert

### Corresponding

#### Secretary

Angie Collini

### Program Secretary

Isabel Lopatin  
845-265-9057

### Recording Secretary

Lois Brennan  
845-255-7931

### Treasurer

Bob Phillips  
518-784-9403

### AOS Rep

Janet Jozwiak  
845-298-8735

### Librarians

Ruth Natras  
845-343-2901  
& Marian Kent  
845-561-8558

### Supplies

Georgette Martin  
845-473-6276  
after 6 pm only

### Newsletter and Website

Elisabeth Mansfield  
845-294-1000

(continued from page 1)

plants. Fall and winter came, the flower spikes developed, and he was ready for the best crop ever next spring. Recently he lamented, "My *Cymbidium* flowers are full of holes, even the stems are eaten." The cause? Slugs and snails which came out at night. The prevention? A few pennies' worth of slug and snail bait sprinkled around on the surface of the potting mix, and around the pots, and on the ground when the spikes are developing, to save a whole year's effort. Neglect can also be killing plants with "kindness." Watering plants too often at certain times, or not enough at other times can lead to poor growth. Neglect can be trying some cultural practice on one's entire collection which that orchid-growing friend of yours has told you about - without conducting a small-scale experiment on just a few plants first. I'm sure that everyone can add a few personal illustrations of neglect or bad culture.

The last of our three categories is obsolescence. This is probably the easiest to understand. Will you love every plant in your collection next year or five years from now as you do today? No, you will not. Your tastes will change. If you actively engage in building a collection, invariably you will develop preferences. Not only that, but you will find certain plants do not flower well for you or you may no longer want to give them space because you like others more. A beginner will say, "Throw an orchid plant out? Never!" Still, obsolescence is real and plants go out of collections for many reasons. Perhaps some divisions of the variety which grows well for you but of which you have an oversupply will be "seed plants" to help a beginner get started. If you have divisions of a plant that does not grow or flower well, maybe you know someone else who might want to give them a try.

Yes, orchid plants are perennials. In theory, they can live forever. However, "there is many a slip twixt the cup and the lip." Just try to keep in mind some of the things that can shorten the life of your treasured beauties.

- by Ernest Hetherington from the Fraser Valley Orchid Society Newsletter

Here is this month's contribution by MHOS member **John J. Rashak**:

The orchids classified as **epiphytes** live on trees, which, I suppose, is the human equivalent of living in a tree house. This gives epiphytic orchids more air and light than the flora below. In addition, there is abundant insect life in the tree canopy, which helps the epiphytes with their pollination needs.

Epiphytes are not parasites, since their nutrition comes from the water vapor in the air, as well as the debris generated by neighbors such as ferns, mosses and bromeliads. However, even an epiphyte can inadvertently damage a tree. For example, *Grammatophyllum speciosum* is a heavy, two-ton orchid that can cause a tree to collapse.

While some epiphytes grow close to or on the tree trunk itself, twig epiphytes cling to the extremities of branches. Some twig epiphytes, like *Psygmorchis pusilla*, take it a step further and grow on the leaves of certain Central American trees.

An epiphyte tends to mimic its host tree. When trees shed leaves at the start of the dry season, many epiphytes do the same. Their aerial roots stop growing and the tips of their roots become covered with white velamen, a spongy epidermis that protects the roots from dehydration. During this period of dormancy, epiphytic orchids will rely upon moisture stored in their pseudobulbs to survive until the rainy season begins. This cycle of adapting to the dry season after each rainy season works so well that epiphytes will generally live as long as the host tree remains upright.

**Saprophytes**, unlike epiphytes, live on the soft tissue beneath the bark of decaying trees. A saprophyte does not live long, maybe a few years, because dead trees are also food for termites and fungi. As a result, saprophytes, like the *Catasetum* species, are fast-growing. They produce seed quickly so that the next generation of saprophytes can find a suitable, though decaying, home elsewhere.



*Psygmorchis pusilla*



*Grammatophyllum speciosum*

## Other Area Societies

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday  
Central NY – Syracuse  
[www.cnyos.org](http://www.cnyos.org)

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday-1 pm  
Northeastern Pennsylvania  
Society – Lakeville, PA

1<sup>st</sup> Saturday  
North Eastern New York –  
Albany/Colonie, NY  
[www.nenyos.org](http://www.nenyos.org)

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday  
Mid-Hudson – Newburgh,  
NY [www.mhos.us.com](http://www.mhos.us.com)

2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday  
Greater Westchester –  
White Plains, NY

Deep Cut – Tinton Falls, NJ  
<http://deepcutorchids.googlepages.com/>

2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday  
Manhattan, NY  
[www.manhattanorchid.com](http://www.manhattanorchid.com)

Connecticut – Hartford or  
New Haven  
[www.ctorchids.org](http://www.ctorchids.org)

2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday  
North Jersey – East  
Hanover  
[www.njorchids.org](http://www.njorchids.org)

Long Island – Valley  
Stream

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday  
Southern Tier –  
Binghamton, NY  
[www.storchidsociety.com](http://www.storchidsociety.com)

3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday  
Staten Island, NY

3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday  
Matinecock – Oyster Bay,  
NY

3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday  
Ramapo, NJ  
[www.ramapoorchid.org](http://www.ramapoorchid.org)

4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday  
Greater NY – Bronx, NY  
[www.gnyos.org](http://www.gnyos.org)

Check for date changes.  
Many do not meet in  
July or August

We recently received this via email:

To All Orchid Aficionados,

February 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009, we are having an event in Quito,  
Ecuador, that we hope you will decide to attend:

### Quito Orchid Expo 2009

Quito Orchid Expo promises to be a major international event.  
To learn more about what is being planned, please go to

[www.quitoorchidexpo2009.org](http://www.quitoorchidexpo2009.org)

Questions? Just e-mail Harry Zelenko at [zzz@uio.satnet.net](mailto:zzz@uio.satnet.net).

Hope to see some of the members of your society! Do join us.



### Supplies

If you would like supplies brought to an MHOS meeting, please call Georgette Martin before Friday preceding the meeting at 845-473-6276. Please call **only after 6:00 pm**. For a list of supplies, check the back pages of your Member List or refer to the Members section of our web site. Supplies purchased through MHOS are at very reasonable prices, with no shipping charges.

### From our AOS Rep, Janet Jozwiak:

Since I've not been as active in both the Mid Hudson Orchid Society and the AOS as I was in the past, I was thinking that I should probably pass the torch of being the AOS representative for the Mid Hudson Orchid Society to someone who is more active in either or both groups. The position is appointed by the president and should be a person who intends to hold the position for some period of time for continuity. There is not much work required of the position - updating contact information to the AOS, forwarding various information to the MHOS from the AOS and Orchid related vendors. But there is opportunity to be more involved in the Affiliated Societies group and get additional resources from the AOS.

At present I am willing to continue as the AOS rep for the remainder of the year, but I just wanted to let you know so you can start the search for potential volunteers.

Thanks, *Janet*

### Events in the Northeast

**July 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>** – Parkside Orchid Nursery Annual Summer Orchid Fest, 2503 Mountainview Drive, Ottsville PA. Contact: John Salventi, 610-847-8039, [www.parksideorchids.com](http://www.parksideorchids.com)

**July 26<sup>th</sup>** – Open House/Repotting at the Greenhouse, 9am to 4pm, New Earth Orchids, 193 County Rd 628, Sussex, NJ 07461. Call 973-875-4014 or visit [www.newearthorchids.com](http://www.newearthorchids.com)

**August 10<sup>th</sup>** – Central Pennsylvania Orchid Society Summer Symposium, W. Hanover Township Recreation, 7441 Allentown Blvd., Harrisburg, PA. Contact: William Wertz, PO Box 1726, Harrisburg, PA 17102; (717) 234-1073; [williamwertz@hotmail.com](mailto:williamwertz@hotmail.com).

**September 14<sup>th</sup>** – Amherst Orchid Society Plant Sale, Hadley Garden Center, Route 9, across from Buffalo Farm, Hadley, MA. Contact: Harold Norman, (413) 267-5124; [leilani.norman@verizon.net](mailto:leilani.norman@verizon.net).

**October 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>** – CNYOS Show and Sale, Beaver Lake Nature Center, 8477 East Mud Lake Rd., Baldwinsville, NY. Contact: Nancy Loveland, 2046 Recreation Ln., Baldwinsville, NY 13027; (315) 638-4741; email [nloveland@tweny.rr.com](mailto:nloveland@tweny.rr.com) or visit [www.cnyos.org](http://www.cnyos.org)

**October 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>** – AOS Members Meeting hosted by Longwood Gardens at The Hotel DuPont, Wilmington, Delaware. Contact information to be determined.

**November 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>** – Fourth Annual Merritt Huntington Memorial Symposium, Virginia Beach, Va. Contact Dot Pierce [pierce.db@verizon.net](mailto:pierce.db@verizon.net)

These events and others around the country can be found online at: [www.aos.org/aos/events](http://www.aos.org/aos/events) courtesy of the AOS. Check this website before traveling to see if there may be a local orchid event at your destination. Everything published in *Orchids* magazine is also on the web page.

## **AOS Judging**

The Northeast Judging Center holds two monthly orchid judging sessions:

**1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of each month** at Tower Hill Botanic Garden, Boylston, MA. New contact for directions: Robert Winkley (617) 282-7351.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month** at Hampton Inn, 200 Tarrytown-White Plains Rd (Rt. 119), Elmsford, NY (at I-287, exit 1). Slides or presentations at 10am, judging begins around 12pm; bring your lunch.

### **Attention**

#### **Award-Winning Members**

We would like to give recognition to MHOS members when they receive any award. If you have been honored with an award, please notify us so we can include it in our correspondence on our website. And if you have a picture of the award-winning orchid, we'd love to include it! Email [Elisabeth@MansfieldCommercial.com](mailto:Elisabeth@MansfieldCommercial.com)

## **Mid-Hudson Orchid Society**

2624 NY N<sup>o</sup> Goshen  
3 Hatfield Lane, Suite 3A  
c/o Elisabeth Mansfield



**Directions to AOS Judging at the Hampton Inn in Elmsford** (Note: there may be construction at the I-287 exit to Route 119 so keep your eyes open for lane closures or slight changes.)

FROM ORANGE, ULSTER COUNTIES, NEWBURGH, KINGSTON:

South on the NYS Thruway, to I-287 East (toward White Plains), go over the Tappan Zee Bridge. Continue on Thruway to second exit: Exit 8 – Cross Westchester Expressway (Route 287 East). Take 287 East to first exit on your right – Exit 1. Take the fork on your right to Elmsford. At the end of the ramp, turn right on Route 119. Hotel is on your left. Go to the second light, make U turn and go onto the Hotel ramp to the parking lot.

FROM NORTHERN WESTCHESTER, PUTNAM, DUTCHESS COUNTIES: South on I-684, to Cross Westchester Expressway Route I-287

West. Stay on 287 West to Exit 1 make left turn at light – Hampton Inn is a short distance on right. OR South on Taconic Parkway to South/West Sawmill to I-287 West to Exit 1, make left turn at light – Hampton Inn is a short distance on right. OR South on Route 9 to 9A to Rt 119 Elmsford, NY, turn right on Rt 119, go about 2-3 long blocks. See Hampton Inn on left, make U turn at light, and turn into Hampton Inn on right.