



The Greater Whorled Pogonia

Official Flower of the Club

Newsletter of the

AMHERST ORCHID SOCIETY

An affiliate of the American Orchid Society

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ANNUAL HOLIDAY POTLUCK DECEMBER 16

From the President's Corner

Since I blathered (see plant of the month) on endlessly about plants, this will be short and sweet. I haven't heard from anyone regarding the show. Here's to hoping that this is an oversight in this busy holiday season. If everyone pitches in, the show will run itself, rather than resting on the shoulders of a very few. For this month, think about low cost methods of getting the word out, other flower clubs, painting/photography groups, and other interested folks.

We also need people to sponsor the trophy pots. I have already sponsored the AOS trophy in memoriam to my father. The vendor for the pots will be at the January Cape and Island Show, so it would be most convenient to settle this before that show. (So I can pick up the pots.) Nancy Goodman will be handling the money for this transaction, please make checks out to her.

The other issue is that many of you have signed up for shirts, or expressed interest, but very few have ponied up. I really cannot personally bear the cost – again – of purchasing the shirts out of my own account. If we would like to have colored shirts for the show, with some to sell at a profit, we need to make a decision.

Please also consider if you would be willing to speak at the show. Topics such as re-potting, mounting, growing on windowsills, a beginner orchid, and setting up your own greenhouse are all favorites at other orchid shows. You all have something to share!

With regards to the club, we still need a Librarian, and someone who is interested in taking over the newsletter. I hope to hear from a few of you soon. Thank you again for your support and smiling faces, Ellen



Questions for “ASK BILL” can be given to me at the monthly meetings. If possible write them out. If you prefer you may call me at 413-253-7036, write me a 52 Jeffrey Lane, Amherst, MA 01002-2532 or reach me via e-mail at >wa.hutchinson@comcast.net<. Answers to written questions may take one or two months to appear. The e-mail questions I nominally will answer within 24 hours or less. Keep in mind that if you are puzzled by a growing problem, etc. someone else is too.

Go to> www.larchhillorchids.com<, click on AmOrch and go directly an Amherst Orchid Society Web page. Additional information may be found on the Larch Hill pages. The web page now has the newsletter posted as a PDF file and most of them for the whole year are available.

Q. I recently bought a plant labeled *Bolopetalum* Midnight Blue ‘Cardinal’s Roooel’. What or where does this name come from?

A. The name comes from a cross of *Bollea* X *Zygopetalum*.

Q. Is there any indication that greenhouse structures of pressure treated southern yellow pine have any deleterious effects on orchids?

A. I’ve come across an article or two which suggested that leachite from such lumber can be harmful and at least one other that indicated some growth impact from fumes but I routinely use it for bench construction, repairs and in two cases the entire structure of a greenhouse. I have not noticed any damage to plant. I believe the trade off between constant repair of the same element to be more harmful than anything that PT yellow pine causes. I’d use it.

Q. Besides *Masdevallias* what other kind of orchids are cool growers?

A. There is an endless list of cool growers. Part of the source of such plant are those from high mountains and cloud forests such as *Dracula*, *Pleurothallis*, *Dendrobiums*, *Miltoniopsis*, *Miltonia*, *Cymbidia*, *Mexicoa*, *Pleione*, *Oncidia* and on and on. At the next show table note what the growing conditions are suggested and you can keep adding to the list.

Q. What would make *Masdevallia* flowers wilt before they are open?

A. There are several possibilities which can explain premature wilting. One explanation is that the ethylene gas comes from an improperly vented heater; a fungal attack on the floral scape; excess water and soggy media. Smell the media, if it smells like old, stale dirt it needs to be replaced. Even a bright sunny day can cause wilting if the roots are overwatered. Part of the solution is to play detective and try and narrow it down. Does it happen to all of your *Masdevallias*? Does it happen on bright sunny days? Does it happen to warm grown plants, etc. etc. While this is not the nice clear cut answer you’d like it is all I can do playing sleuth from a distance. Let me know if you solve it.

Q. Does a plant need more water when blooming. Sometimes the blossom looks as if it were wilting and when I water it, it wilts completely.

A. Flowering plants generally do not need more water when blooming than when being brought to bloom. The overall physiology of a plant depends upon not only a reasonable supply of moisture which can come from the pseudobulb but also the roots getting enough oxygen to carry on respiration. If too much water is applied you may actually be causing wilting by depriving good oxygen availability at the roots. If your blooms are wilting before you

think they should then you have another problem such as a virused plant.

Q. What does the word “grex” mean?

A. You are talking about orchid hybrids. Orchid species do not have grex names. If instead of two species names on an orchid tag with an ‘X’ between them, there is a name following the initials for the plant such as Blc, Epicl, etc. and a capitalized name following then it is a hybrid and a grex. The hybrid name is known as a grex. Often included are such as “Mem.” and are plants named “in memoriam” such as Blc. Mem. Gen’l Patton.

Q. How big does a *Boneata* have to be before it blooms? Is there any information on culture?

A. I can find no reference to the maturity of the plant to achieve flowering but have the culture information. *Boneata* are terrestrials from South to East Africa. Culture is as for tropical *Habenarias*. Grow intermediate (55 - 65°) to warm (65 - 70°). They do well outside for the summer, in bright light, kept moist and fertilized weakly weekly. Stop moisture and fertilizer when the leaves show decline and allow the medium to dry out so the tubers can ripen. Water the plant just enough to keep it from turning to dust.

Plant of the Month: *Rhynchostylis*

By Ellen Kennedy

Rhynchostylis is a genus currently described by four, or possibly three species. It is a monopodial, meaning that its growth is upwards out of a single stem. Related to *Vanda*, these plants have similar leaves, described as ‘straplike.’ The leaves grow in ranks of two out of the thickened stem.

These plants are found widely distributed across India, Indonesia, the Philippines and the Malay Peninsula. They grow at low to moderate altitudes, so require hot, humid conditions with bright light. (Guess that means I will not be keeping any of the seedlings, or at least not blooming them!) *Rhynchostylis* is epiphytic, preferring basket culture. If mix is used it must be free draining. The thick fleshy roots rot swiftly in close conditions.

Rhynchostylis coelestris (*Vanda pseudocoeulescens* syn.) is at home in Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam. This species is short and fat, usually 20 cm (8”) in height, with leaves also 20 cm (8”) in length, and 2 cm (4/5”) in width. The leaves are thick and wide. The inflorescence is erect and should carry many tightly packed flowers. The waxy flowers range from lilac to slate blue-grey. The flowers are 2 cm (4/5”) in diameter and are fragrant. Summer to autumn flowering.

Rhynchostylis gigantea (*Saccolabium gigan-*

teum, *Vanda densiflora*: syn.) hails from China, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam. It is similar in height to the previous species, but has fewer, and much longer leaves. The leaves occur at the top of the stem, and may be over 30 cm (1’) in length and up to 7 cm (2 3/4”) in width. The flowers vary from rose-purple to white, with some forms being conservative while others are wildly splashed. The plant boasts multiple pendant inflorescences up to 35 cm (14”) long. The flowers are larger, at 3 cm (1 1/4”) in width. Autumn to winter flowering.

Rhynchostylis retusa (*Rhynchostylis praemorsa*, *Saccolabium blumei* syn.) lives in India, Sri Lanka, and parts of Southeast Asia. This one is different, preferring a more varied climate. It grows at altitudes from sea level all the way up to 1500 m (5000 feet.) This plant will tolerate larger swings in temperature than the other species. It is also a beast, at 60 cm (2’). Similar to the previous plant, *retusa* will usually carry living leaves only on the top portion. Leaves are 25-50 cm (10-20”) long. The plant has a pendulous inflorescence up to 45 cm (18”) long. The flowers are waxy and fragrant, consisting of varying shades of pink and white. Summer to autumn flowering.

Rhynchostylis violacea is the suspicious species. Some books consider it a stand-alone; others describe it as a subspecies of *Rhynchostylis retusa*, which is far more common. It has several synonyms, including *Vanda violacea*, and *Rhynchostylis retusa subspecies violacea*. It is significantly shorter than *retusa*, with a height of 18 cm (7”) and a few thick leaves up

to 50cm (20") in length. It also has a pendulous inflorescence, with flowers described as 'loosely packed.' This is different from the other three, all of which are described as 'densely packed.' Flower size is similar, at 2 cm (4/5"). The flowers are pale pink with a deep fuchsia lip. Similar to the others, *violacea* is fragrant. Winter flowering.

The flasks Keith auctioned off at the last meeting were labeled *Rhynchostylis gigantea*. On the other hand, the photo on the flask was of *Rhynchostylis retusa*. Of course, on the web, all the most striking pictures are of *retusa*, so I don't blame them. Assuming any of them survive- hey I usually do okay with flasks, but these guys are crazy- I guess we will be able to decide which plant they are by size. I am hoping that they are actually *retusa*, as it seems like a more reasonable plant, despite its size. In other words, it isn't dead set on hot, humid, and sunny. Of course that doesn't mean it will live in my alternately chilly and unbearably arid home.

Several people have asked what I used as a growing medium for the recently deflasked infants. I emailed a bunch of folks who know more than I, and kept getting the same vague answer. "Grow them in a basket," "Use no media," "Keep them in low light." All good, but in my house, note, not a greenhouse, plants without media have a way of dying instantly. Mounted plants and certain privileged plants (read *kovachii*) get to live around my sink. It sounds cruel, but there was no room around the sink for 48 babies.

I elected to try four different potting methods. I deflasked the plants into warm water spiked with superthrive. The first home is a glass baking dish full of sterilized wine corks. On top of these I sprinkled rooting hormone, placed the plants and lightly covered them with live sphagnum. The second group went into a basket, largely naked, just a sprinkle of moss. That set is over the sink. The last two groups went into pots containing traditional small bark mix consisting of tiny fir pieces, charcoal, perlite, and limestone chips.

The limestone is my new favorite friend. Glenn Decker suggested it to Marc, who told me, with regards to the *kovachii* loving limestone outcrops. Because I can't help myself I put it in half of my phrags, and amazingly enough they are all perking up. My *schlimii* is actually blooming for the first time. The phrags without the limestone are still looking haggard, their usual state during the wood stove time frame. On a lighter note, if you recall the infamous mouse experiment of last summer, the second 'mouse' Cattleya is blooming, with one more blossom

than last year! That makes two plants, and the third 'mouse' orchid is carrying multiple sheaths. The non-'mouse' cats are carrying on as usual. No one else in my house is pleased with the results. It will be interesting to hear what happened with the other two flasks, and to hear how they were planted. Happy Growing! EK

For the program in December, in addition to our annual 'Holiday Party', we shall view flowers from the insects view. We shall bring our UV light so bring in your plants in bloom and we shall look at the 'runways' that the insects see.

Lani

Orchid Trivia (from Norman's Orchids Web site Orchid Tips): **Use Yellow Cups to Catch Insects-** smear plastic yellow cup with regular Vaseline and place in your greenhouse. The yellow color will attract all kinds of insects and they will be caught in the Vaseline. This works for aphids and mites.



Dendrobium

Show Table November 2007

Verda Dale
 Intermediate greenhouse
 Dendrobium linaly ?
 Den. Caroteni

Marc Gray
 Intermediate warm greenhouse
 Maxillaria striata x luteu alba
 Spiranches cerunia

Karen Howat
 Cool, lights
 Restrepia cuprea
 Pleuro. Prolifera
 Intermediate windowsill, sunspace
 Bc Hippodamia "hunabu"
 Laelia aurea (in case)
 Restrepia brachypus

Bill Hutchinson
 Intermediate greenhouse
 Encyclia fragrans
 Dendrochillum wenzellii
 Warm greenhouse
 Dendrochillum tenellun
 Coilostylus falcatus (Epi. parksonianum)

Ellen Kennedy
 Cool windowsill
 Lc Nippon x Lc Man. Robert Strait "Carmela"
 Cochleanthes Amazing flabeliformis x amazonia

Phal. heiroglyphia

Maryanne Laukaitis
 Cool greenhouse
 Zygopetalum "Kiwi Geyser"

Alex Loss
 Windowsill
 Paph "Voodoo Magic"

Joe Maciaszek
 Warm greenhouse
 Stelis allenii

Leilani & Harold Norman
 Intermediate greenhouse
 Neos. Lou Sneary "Blue Moon"


Holly Rainand
 Windowrack
 Eria hyacinthoides

Marge Tanguay
 Intermediate greenhouse
 Paph. henryanum sp.



Bl/Rce Mortitub "Howards Dream"

Zygo, Kiwi Geyser "Mendenhall"




Dracula cordobae "Big Flower"

Steve Steiner
 Cool to intermediate greenhouse
 Ascocentrum aurantiacum
 Restrepia contorta
 Tubolurium sp.
 Cool greenhouse
 Odontoglossum harryanum

Keith Tibbets
 Intermediate greenhouse
 Den. Thysiflourm
 Gastrodulus obilgus

Roger West
 Intermediate greenhouse
 Blc Hawaiiian Avalanche "Aiden"
 Cattleya labiata "Sherwood Forest"



To find the bylaws of the Amherst Orchid Society go to: www.larchhillorchids.com and click on Amherst Orchid Society and then bylaws.

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Amherst Orchid Society
2007 Upcoming Events

- Dec 16:** Annual Holiday Potluck
Jan. 12-13 Cape and Island Orchid Show
Jan. 23-27 19th World Orchid Conference
Miami, Florida
Feb 7-10 New Hampshire Orchid Society:
A Symphony of Orchids
Feb 21-24 Amherst Orchid Society Annual Show

Note to Members: Submissions for the January, 2008 newsletter must reach the editor by December 28, 2007 to be printed.

AMHERST ORCHID SOCIETY
MONTHLY MEETING

Our monthly meetings are held the 3rd Sunday of each month except the month of August. Most of the meetings (except June and July) are held at the Munson Memorial library in South Amherst at 1046 South East St. next to the Congregational church. Meetings start at 2 pm with beginner programs some months at 1:30 pm.



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NEXT MEETING:

Sunday, December 16th at the Munson Library, Amherst.

This is our Annual Holiday Potluck. Bring your favorite dish to share.

In addition we shall be looking at our blooms from an insect's eye view. Bring your blooming orchids.