



## *Central Vancouver Island Orchid Society Newsletter January 2012*

**President:** Bryan Emery 250-294-6478

**Secretary:** Laurie Forbes 250-722-3836

**Membership:** Bev Morrison 250-758-5361

**Treasurer:** Shelley Rattink 250-245-1370

**Editor:** Mike Miller 250-248-3478

**Mailing address:** P.O. Box 1061,  
Nanaimo, B.C.  
V9R 5Z2

**email:** stelmike@telus.net

**web site:** www.cvios.com

Meetings are held September through June on the Saturday before the 4th Wednesday of each month at the Harewood Activity Centre, 195 Fourth Street, Nanaimo, in the hall on the second floor, doors open at 11:30, with the business meeting starting at 12:00 noon.

*Lepanthes calodictyon* 'Miraculous Pudge'  
CCE/AOS 91pts Exhibitor: Chuck Taylor  
Judith Higham, the photographer Dec. 18/11  
Vancouver Judging Center, Richmond

**Coming Meeting Dates:** Jan 21, Feb 18, March 17, April 21, May 26,  
June 16, Sept 22, Oct 20, Nov 17, Dec 8,

**Program for January 21<sup>st</sup>**

**Orchid Culture**  
**Presented by Marilyn Light**

**Coming Events:**

**Vic OS Show and Sale**, UVic Student Union Building, March 1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012

**Van OS Show and Sale**, VanDusen Gardens new building, Vancouver, March 23<sup>rd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup>, 2012

**CVIOS Show and Sale**, Country Club Center, April 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> 2012

**CVIOS Summer Picnic**, at Margaret & Richard Mann's, Summer 2012

**Editorial:**

Well I do hope you all had a Happy New Year and a warm Christmas. The weather was not too awful at least there was nothing to shovel. Rain we can handle on the coast. There seems to be a number of my Cattleya hybrids that are trying to promise me flowers in a while. With three shows coming up I hope some of them hold on until the first of March. Start training your plants.

Cheers Mike

**A note about the goodies**

Thank you to Bob Iddon, Sandra Lathrope, Elizabeth Clark and Dora Glover for bringing goodies in November and to all of our member who contributed to the fabulous feast at our Christmas luncheon.

A Reminder to January contributors who are: Ann McColm, Deborah Ulmer, Mike Miller, Shirley McClare and Sue Christison.

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**Don't Cut That Spike**

**Some orchids flower longer if you do not remove the inflorescence,  
Helen Hersh**

Orchids have been on earth since before the age of the dinosaur, and their unusual ways of survival fascinate the orchid grower. One of the most wonderful traits exhibited by many different types of orchids is their ability to bloom sequentially on the same inflorescence, sometimes for months or even years. Therefore, it is wise to leave inflorescences on some orchids to allow them to fulfill their bloom potential. A varied selection of these both species and hybrids can be grown in the home.

**The Butterfly Orchids**

Perhaps one of the most famous of these orchids is *Psychopsis papilio* (formerly *Oncidium papilio*). Distinctly different on close examination are the other species in this genus, including *Psychopsis sanderae*, *Psychopsis versteegianum* and *Psychopsis kramerianium*. A few of the best-known hybrids are *Psychopsis* Butterfly and *Psychopsis* Mendenhall (registered as oncidiums). The oval pseudobulbs of psychopsis are flat and topped with one rigid, elongated, oval leaf. Depending on the light level, the leaves can be deep matte green to having a delightful overlay of rusty red peppering. The long, wiry inflorescences emerge from the base of mature pseudobulbs. A well-grown plant can bear 10 or more spikes and will bloom every three to five weeks all year for many years until the old spikes die. These orchids require bright light and should be grown in western or southern windows.

*Psychopsis papilio* and the related hybrids suffer from root disturbance and should be kept potbound. Grow them in clay containers so there is no danger of overwatering. When it is necessary to repot, gently break the container with a hammer and ease out the plant, damaging as few roots as possible. After carefully pulling off loose debris and decayed roots, place the plant in a container 1 inch larger than the previous one. A bark mix )

can be placed around the edge and gently worked into place. Watering can begin immediately as before and in most cases the plant will not show any adverse signs of being repotted. Usual watering for this type of orchid is twice a week with a weak fertilizer applied immediately after a thorough watering of ¼ strength solution or as directed on the package. Apply a low-nitrogen fertilizer for the best blooming on all plants grown in the home.



**Psychopsis papilio**  
Photo Wayne Harris



**Prosthechea cochleata**  
Photo Wayne Harris

## The Clamshell Orchid

*Prosthechea cochleata*, originally *Epidendrum cochleatum* then *Encyclia cochleata*, is another plant that is easy to bloom on a windowsill, and it flowers consecutively on the same spike for several months. The glossy oval-shaped pseudobulbs are 3 to 4 inches high, and the foliage consists of two skinny, sword-shaped, medium-green leaves rising from the top of the mature pseudobulb. The sheath emerges from between the two leaves, and the inflorescence takes several months to develop before flowering. A mature clump of *Prosthechea cochleata* can bloom year round. The normal colored form is a deep-purple, almost-black shell top and light lime-green petals radiating from the base of the shell, and there is also an alba form. An added bonus of this plant is the pleasing sweet scent that lasts all morning.

*Prosthechea cochleata* requires bright light, such as that in a western or southern window. Grow in a paphiopedilum-type mix consisting of fine fir bark, fine charcoal and sponge rock. Repotting should be done once a year, but the plants can be left for two years in this mix. A well-grown plant suffers no trauma when repotted, and spikes will continue to bloom even if the plant is disturbed. Watering should be done twice a week and a weak fertilizing, after a good watering, should also be applied, again using only a blossom-booster fertilizer.

## Masdevallias to Consider

There is a group of masdevallias that fits into the don't-cut-that-spike group of orchids. These are a delight to home growers because they can be grown successfully in lower-light areas (a north window or an east window) with success. Hybrids for the home seem to be much easier than species.

To provide enough humidity, place the plants in bowls or trays with some fish-tank gravel on the bottom and then let the bottom of the plants sit in a small amount of water. The plants will absorb the water and some of the liquid will evaporate around the plants. When the bowls become dry, water the plants from the top until a half inch of water rises up out of the bottom of the pot into the bowl. This seems to give the plants enough humidity to keep them in good health. When algae covers the bowls, they can be rinsed out and the plant can be flushed out at the same time. Give fertilizer sparingly; small doses every other month seem to be sufficient. Masdevallias will get leaf-tip burn from too much fertilizer.

### **Masdevallia infracta**

Photo Jake Lefler



Probably the easiest species for the home that blooms again on the same spike is *Masdevallia infracta*, normally with a small purple and white semi-translucent flower with yellow tails. It can be a rather variable species having several color forms. *Masdevallia infracta* grows into a sizeable cluster quickly. For hybridizers, these wonderful traits are imparted to its hybrids. One of these is *Masdevallia* Pixie Shadow, which grows into a clump on a north-facing window, with 10 or more flowers open three or four times a year. Another beautiful *Masdevallia* hybrid that will send out another bud weeks after the first has fallen is the charming *Masdevallia* Red Wing. The intensely colored flowers of this hybrid rise high above the attractive foliage. Both of these hybrids do well when potted in the paphiopedilum-type bark mixture described above.

## Lady's-Slipper Orchids

Phragmipediums also have a group of species that bloom sequentially on the same inflorescence. Some of the easy-to-cultivate species are *Phragmipedium longifolium*, *Phragmipedium pearcei*, the large *Phragmipedium sargenteanum*, and the miniature pink *Phragmipedium schlimii*. Two of the more difficult to grow are the beautiful crimson-red *Phragmipedium besseae* and the bright green *Phragmipedium boissierianum*.

All of the hybrids using these as parents also exhibit the same flowering behavior. A few easy-to-cultivate hybrids that are pink are *Phragmipedium* Sedenii, and the *Phrag. besseae* hybrid *Phragmipedium* Hanne Popow. *Phragmipedium* Eric Young and *Phragmipedium* Dick Clements also have *Phrag. besseae* as one parent, but they are delightful shades of salmon through crimson. All of these can bloom for as long as six months on the same inflorescence.

Phragmipediums require bright light and should never be allowed to dry out. Set them in small amounts of water to prevent this. The mix for paphiopedilums mentioned earlier suits these orchids. They require light fertilizing only once a month to prevent leaf-tip burn, to which they are susceptible when over-fertilized. They have beautiful bright green, sword-shaped foliage that is pleasing even when the plants are out of bloom.



**Phragmipedium Hanne Popow**  
Photo Richard Clark AOS



**Galeandra baueri**  
Photo Jake Lefler

## Consider Galeandra

*Galeandra* is rarely thought of as a windowsill plant, but most of the species bloom again on a branched inflorescence and can stay in flower for long periods before finishing their blooming cycle. The pseudobulbs of *Galeandra* are round and narrow for their height, not more than an inch in width, and more often narrower, with six to eight soft, matte green leaves on each pseudobulb. Once the pseudobulb has matured, the inflorescence rises from the center of the leaves. *Galeandra batemanii* and *Galeandra baueri* are easy to grow and flower.

*Galeandra baueri* can bloom on a small seedling in a 2-inch pot and, with annual repotting, it can remain in that size container for many years. As the plant matures, it blooms consecutively for longer periods, sending out clusters of up to five or six blossoms that have rich caramel-colored petals with some pink flushing at the end of the cream-colored trumpet-shaped lip. The blossoms last for several weeks, and shortly behind a new branch is forming to bloom a few weeks after the first flowers are finished. A well-grown mature plant even in a 3-inch pot can stay in bloom most all the time. When the old pseudobulbs finish blooming, new ones have already started to grow from the base of the old ones. *Galeandra batemanii* has coloring similar to *Gal. baueri*, but with deeper tones, and it becomes a larger plant as it matures. However, *Gal. batemanii* is still perfect for a windowsill.

All galeandras do require bright light for best blooming, but probably would also do well in a bright eastern window. Watering should be twice a week and a ½ strength blossom-inducing fertilizer should be applied after watering, especially as the new growth emerges. Galeandras grow well in a paphiopedilum-type mix.

## Where Space is Limited

A delightful miniature species with sequential-flowering habit is *Kingidium deliciosa*, a small-growing plant that has foliage and growth similar to a small *Phalaenopsis*. It thrives in a 3-inch pot and in the general mix for paphiopedilums previously mentioned.



The inflorescences emerge from the base of the plant and the flowers are small, delicate pinkish white, looking like a miniature phalaenopsis no more than ½ inch across.

The flowers last only a few days, but the buds right behind them are ready to open as the old flowers fall away. It should be grown as a phalaenopsis.

### **Phalaenopsis deliciosa**

Photo Wayne Harris

## Try Phalaenopsis

Several *Phalaenopsis* species (moth orchids) also exhibit this blooming habit. The beautiful and exotic-scented *Phalaenopsis violacea* will stay in bloom for a long time, sending out a bud as the flower starts to fade. *Phalaenopsis cornu-cervi*, *Phalaenopsis amboinensis*, *Phalaenopsis lueddemanniana* and *Phalaenopsis celebensis* are other species that keep blooming, sending out buds long after the first flowers have died.

In the home, phalaenopsis should be watered thoroughly twice a week, and fertilized every time after watering with a ½ strength blossom-booster fertilizer year round. They should be repotted once a year into fresh medium, usually in the spring after flowering has finished.



### **Paphiopedilum Victoria-regina**

Photo Wayne Harris



### **Phalaenopsis lueddemanniana**

Photo Wayne Harris

## Paphiopedilums

Even the genus *Paphiopedilum* has species that will send out a bud after the first flower has fallen off, allowing the plant to stay in bloom for often more than a year. *Paphiopedilum chamberlainianum*, *Paphiopedilum glaucophyllum*, *Paphiopedilum primulinum* and *Paphiopedilum victoria regina*, to name a few. Many of the hybrids used with these as parents will also perform in the same manner. *Paphiopedilum* Pinocchio (*primulinum* x *glaucophyllum*) blooms this way. Paphiopedilums should be watered twice a week and then after watering fertilized with a solution of ½ tablespoon to a gallon of water. Paphiopedilums do best in the home in bright light. To keep paphiopedilums healthy, repot annually.

All of the above-mentioned orchids are easy for the beginner or home grower. There are probably hundreds more orchids that exhibit this flowering behavior. It is a trait that makes certain orchids even more desirable to the grower. After all, who would not like to grow an orchid that will stay in bloom for more than a year. Make sure your plant is not one of those consecutive bloomers before you cut that spike.

**Helen Hersh** raises orchids on windowsills and under lights in her New York City apartment.

AOS Orchids May 1997

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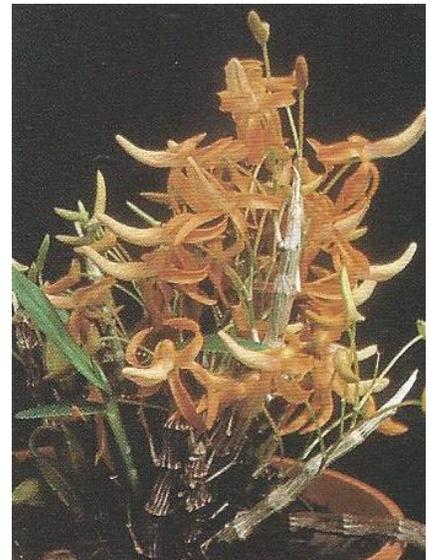
## ORCHID CULTURE

# ON THE CULTURE OF MINIATURE ORCHIDS

Phil Jesup

This article was originally published in *Orchidata*, Vol. XI, No.2, special issue 'Orchid Culture,' 1971, pp. 50-54. Mr. Jesup grew these orchids in the Northeast and though the article was published more than twenty years ago, it is still applicable. Nomenclature updated to current.

I have been asked to write a piece on the culture of miniatures by the editor of *Orchidata*. That is nearly like writing an article on the culture of orchids, and herein (already!) lies the first lesson: the cultural requirements of a collection of miniatures are as diverse as the culture of a miscellaneous group of larger species. The presumably obvious clue is "minis" are simply orchids which happen to be of dwarf stature and are found in as many different types of habitats as "maxis." While defining them, I should further say that most genera have one or more dwarf to minuscule species and, of course, some are composed exclusively (or nearly so) of minis.



**Dendrobium unicum**

Then we get into the problem of what a mini is. To some, it's anything vegetatively smaller than a cattleya (these tend to be beginners in the hobby or those hooked almost exclusively on one or more of the commercial genera); to others, a plant at maturity six inches high or less (these people tend to have a problem categorizing a species with five-inch leaves and a three-foot bloom spike) and, finally, there are those who feel that anything not fitting comfortably into a one-inch pot at maturity wouldn't qualify. Perhaps subclassifications for purposes of clear communication would be "minuscules," "miniatures" and "dwarfs." However, for this article I will be broad-minded and consider any plant vegetatively six inches or less, regardless of whether it may have a thirty-five-foot bloom spike, a miniature.

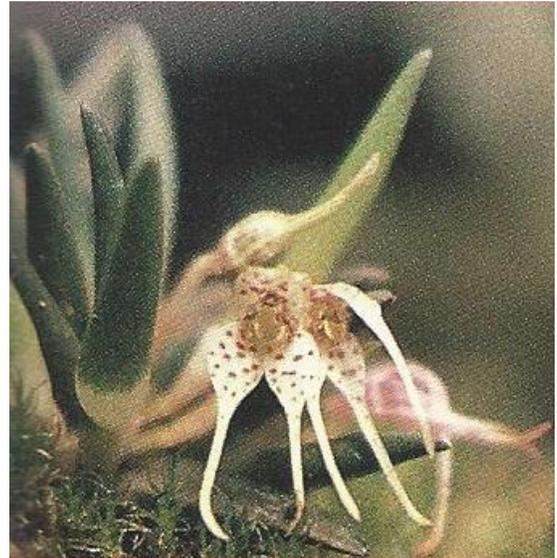
**Now that we know what a miniature is,  
I will admit that there are a few general rules we can apply:**

**1.** A mini needs closer observation, for diseases, insects or pests can demolish a small plant very quickly by contrast with a cattleya or cymbidium. For example: four mealy bugs on a two-inch high *Oncidium haitiense* would severely weaken the plant, whereas the same four on *Encyclia fragrans* would have little effect. The amount of plant juices supplied is the same, of course, but from the minis it comprises a far greater percentage of the whole. In both cases the four mealy bugs will rather quickly become more than four.

**2.** Minis usually require water applied more often and, therefore, need more time spent on them. The clue here is that even those from dry, or seasonally dry regions will be in smaller pots, which will dry out fast, or on slabs or logs, which usually dry very rapidly.

**3.** The same principles of pot size apply to most minis as to larger orchids. Often I have seen a tiny orchid in the center of a four-inch pot "drowning" in rotting potting medium.

**4.** One shouldn't attempt to grow minis (or any other kind of orchid for that matter) unless one is willing to make the necessary adjustments in culture to accommodate them. This is a personal feeling. I have so often seen a fine collection of one or a few types of orchids, in which the grower was obviously particularly interested and which have a well-defined common cultural requirement, with a few other diverse species, often miniatures, stuck here and there, or even, say, a cattleya collection with a few paphiopedilums languishing in a corner-it undermines the whole effect and concept in my estimation.



**Dryadella lilliputana**

With any varied collection of species, large or small, one must put in more time and be a keener observer than with a culturally uniform collection. Microclimates and, above all, proper potting and watering, I feel, are the secrets.

**The culture requirements of miniatures are as diverse as that of larger species.**

At this juncture, a few comments about frequently seen genera, subgenera or tribes with other specialized requirements:

1. Perhaps the group that comes most readily to most hobbyists' minds are the pleurothallids, consisting of *Pleurothallis* itself, *Masdevallia*, *Stelis*, *Restrepia*, *Lepanthes*, *Lepanthopsis*, *Platystele*, *Zootrophion*, *Porroglossum*, *Barbosella*, *Brachionidium*, *Restrepiella*, and so forth. The vast majority of the multitudinous species are dwarf to miniature and, with only a few exceptions, most will thrive best in a cool, moist environment. While pots should have excellent drainage, they should be kept moist at all times, this being even more important than with paphs or phalaenopsis (and incidentally most need similar conditions of shade). Most *Pleurothallis* species and most others will do nearly as well or, in some few cases, better in intermediate temperatures, but with the exception of relatively few low elevation species, masdevallias quite rigidly require cool to cold conditions.

I pot all pleurothallids in a mixture of New Zealand sphagnum and chopped tree fern for no better reason than in early potting stages plants with few roots tend to fall out of loose mixes or bark due to top-heaviness. I feel that a good living growth of sheet moss or other type of moss over the surface of the pot indicates the proper environmental conditions, tends to keep the pot surface from drying out, provides a good medium for surface roots, and looks attractive. If the atmosphere is moist and living moss scarce, a few clippings of moss tips sprinkled on the surface of the medium of a newly potted plant will soon become a verdant blanket.



**Masdevallia limax**

My pleurothallid collection is, for the most part, somewhat underpotted, receives a pot watering every clear day, and is even watered in bad weather if it occurs for more than two or three days consecutively. Where possible, a misting system in operation over and on the plants on hot summer days would be good. I fertilize not at all in osmunda, and presumably dosage as for other plants in bark mixtures would be appropriate for those in bark.

With all of this H<sub>2</sub>O, fungus problems occasionally occur on specific plants. The best antidote is a soaking in a bucket of Cleary's 3336 wettable powder. You will find that in a large collection of pleurothallids, certain species are more subject to diseases than others, although they require just as much water to grow properly. It pays to keep your eye on these.

2. The magnificent orange-flowered *Neocogniauxia monophylla* and *N. hexaptera* require the same conditions as the pleurothallids, since they grow under similar cloud forest conditions and have no thickened stems for water storage.

3. The trichocentrums are all small, with leaves and growth habit resembling a miniature "burro-eared" oncidium. Logically, they require similar conditions, i.e. sun, perfect drainage, and not much water. Their very thick, fleshy leaves are their water-storage organs. The best idea is usually a piece of rough bark or limb or a mexi-fern slab, although in small, perfectly drained pots they usually do well.

4. The dwarf cirrhoptalums, bulbophyllums and megacliniums are a problem to contain in pots due to the wandering rhizomes of most species. A tree fern slab or "totem," or a log or piece of cork bark are good, but these should all have pads of osmunda or living moss to prevent too rapid drying. Warm and damp is the keynote here, because even with pseudobulbs they require frequent watering to really thrive.

Some species require a degree of rest period with less water in order to flower; how long and when must be left to experimentation with individual species (isn't that part of the fun and challenge of orchid growing?). Cattleya light conditions on the darker end of the scale should be right, and if possible, temperatures should be warm for most species.

5. Promeneas are cool section plants, like to be kept quite constantly damp but with a good bit more light than the pleurothallids.

6. Sophronities-cool and damp, but with good drainage, is the key here. Light should be somewhat less than for cattleyas. These requirements are for all species except *S. cernua*, which needs intermediate temperatures, bright light, and does best on logs, cork or tree fern slabs.

This merely scratches the surface. After many years of growing them, I am still having dismal failures and spectacular successes for seemingly contradictory reasons. *Maxillaria sophronitis* I can tell you how to grow a bushel basket of it, but how to flower it...? One year a basket of flowers, the next five, few or none under seemingly identical conditions. And so on.

For the finale, I will list what I would pick, if asked today, as my dozen favorite minis (alphabetically) with the way I successfully grow them. (I) = intermediate temperature; (C) = cool. The list illustrates the wide range of

### **Homalopetalum pumilio**

genera in which minis can be found:

*Ascocentrum pumilum*-bright, average water (I).

*Dendrobium unicum*-as for *Dend. nobile*-dry and cool in winter, wet and warm in summer.

*Dipteranthus planifolius*-average light, small pot, dampish (I).

*Dryadella liliputiana*-small pot, osmunda, fairly bright, dampish (C).

*Epidendrum angustifolium*-bright, small pot, dampish (I).

*Homalopetalum pumilia*-small pot or log with live moss, cattleya light, dampish (I).

*Lepanthes calodictyon*-small pot, osmunda and moss, wet, shade (C).

*Lepanthopsis astrophora*-small pot, osmunda and moss, wet, shady (I).

*Lepanthopsis serrulata*-as for *L. astrophora* except thrives both (C) and (I).

*Macroclinium bicolor*-mexi-fern slab, frequent water but should dry fast, bright (I).

*Oncidium arizajulianum*-bare rough branch, bright, daily watering but dries quickly (I).

*Platystele lancilabris*-small pot, osmunda and moss, wet, shady (I).

*Platystele ornata*-as for *P. lancilabris*.

*Pleurothallis abjecta*-piece of bare wood, wet, shady (C).

*Trisetella triaristella*-small pot, osmunda, shady, wet (C).



**Paphiopedilum bellatulum**



You may have noticed that the list sneaked up to fifteen. You are lucky it didn't reach one hundred.

Orchid Digest, Oct.-Nov.-Dec., 1994