Central Vancouver Island Orchid Society Newsletter
October 2011

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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.

***Jumellea confusa* 'Margaret' CBR/AOS Awarded Sept. 10, 2011**
Exhibitor: John S. Taylor
Judith Higham, the photographer

Coming Meeting Dates: Oct 22, Nov 19, Dec 10

Program for October 22nd

Maxillaria
With David Morris
Of Clackamas Orchids

Coming Events:

FVOS Show and Sale, George Preston Rec. Center Langley, November 5th – 6th, 2011
Vic OS Show and Sale, UVic Student Union Building, March 1st – 4th, 2012
Van OS Show and Sale, VanDusen Gardens new building, Vancouver, March 23rd – 25th, 2012
CVIOS Show and Sale, Country Club Center, April 13th – 15th 2012

Editorial:

Well it is time to start removing shade cloth and cleaning the glass etc. to let the most light it we can get over the winter months. Heating is now on I would think and all the plants you maybe summered outside should be debugged and returned to their favourite spots. This is when you not just how much they have grown because some do not fit anymore.

I will be sending out a separate instruction email for the 'pre' order from Clackamas very soon so you can visit his website and drool.

Please get your developing buds in order and clean up your plants for Fraser Valley show the first weekend of November. I will be taking the display over and things for under the plants are coming along. Hopefully the weather will stay frost free for that weekend but you might consider gathering deep boxes just in case. We don't want any super-chilled plants in bloom.

Cheers Mike

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Central Vancouver Island Orchid Society General Meeting
September 24, 2011

1 The meeting was called to order at 12:00 noon, with 32 members present. Mike Miller moved that the minutes of the June 18 be accepted as printed, Connie Gordon-Webster 2nd and motion carried.

2. Correspondence received over the summer including 3 AOS Bulletins, an Orchid Digest and a Sarcochilus Supplement will be added to our library.

3. Treasurer Shelley Rattink gave her report including bank balances to the end of August. Dora Glover moved acceptance of her report and Bev Morrison 2nd. Motion carried.

4. The Judging Centre page on the Website has been updated. Please see Don about topics to include in the "Orchid Dr" section.

5. Nancy and Don have prepared thank you cards with pictures of orchids on them that are available for members to use for orchid related business.
- In October, David Morris from 'Clackamas Orchids' in Oregon will be our speaker. He will take pre orders and bring them to the meeting, but will not be bringing other orchids for sale at the meeting.
[**Ed. Note: He will not be bringing the plants to the meeting because his export permit will not be ready in time. They will be shipped**.]
- Marilyn Light is a possible speaker for January.
- Don and Nancy are looking into the possibility of organizing a Hawaiian plant order. News on this to follow.

6. Two new books have been purchased for our library - 'Floras Orchids' and 'Four Seasons of Orchids'.

7. Refreshments: Thank you to Rosemary, Mary, Anne, Gerry and Sue for bringing goodies in September. The following people signed up to bring snacks in October. Linda Regnier, Connie Gordon-Webster, Bev Morrison, Juliane Thunander and Maureen Hawthorn.

8. Memberships are due and 2011 cards are available.

9. The draft Budget for 2011/2012 was presented and discussed. The main question was how the executive had arrived at the budget figures. We were assured that they were projections based on expenses over the past year and a knowledge of what was planned for this year. Following the discussion Mike moved that we accept the budget as presented, Rainer 2nd the motion and motion carried.

10. This summer Victoria Orchid Society members visited some of our green houses and spots in our homes where we grow orchids. We would like to offer the same opportunity to our member. We will canvas our members for a day convenient for most and offer this opportunity before winter sets in.

11. The Fraser Valley show set up is Nov. 3 with the show to follow Nov. 5 and 6. Mike will provide more details at our next meeting.
There is also a Victoria show and plant sale at the Hillside mall on October 8 and 9.
Following our tour of the show table and a refreshment break we had an informative presentation on orchid culture by Terry Groszeibl of Forestview Gardens.

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Dracula is Coming !!!

Halloween is fast approaching and rest assured, Draculas will be making an appearance at the October meeting. Bring your cheque books as there will be many species to choose from.

Have you ever grown a Dracula? Some say they are difficult to grow, not so. Cool to intermediate temperatures, low light (400 to 1000 Ft Candles), and moist at all times.
Before you come to the meeting google up Dracula and look at some of the beautiful, unusual flowers. If you can grow Phals and Masdevallias you can grow Draculas.

Advertisement for Don McDermid

***Masdevallia* Prince Charming 'Yodiehead' CCM/AOS 85pts (*Masd. angulata* x *Masd. veitchiana*)**
September 10, 2011, Richmond Center, Exhibitor: Tom Hobbs Judith Higham, the photographer

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Miltonia moreliana

By Peter Taylor

Miltonia spectabilis var. *moreliana* 'Atrorhbens' Photo: Peter Taylor

One of the most spectacular Brazilian orchid species is that which we have long grown as Miltonia spectabilis var. moreliana. It is the type species of the genus Miltonia established by John Lindley in 1837 and dedicated to Earl Fitzwilliam (Viscount Milton) of Yorkshire described by Lindley as "one of the oldest and most zealous friends of Natural Science in this country".

Miltonia species are closely related to Oncidium, Odontoglossum and Brassia and have caused considerable confusion for the taxonomists. After much splitting and separating I believe that the genus Miltonia is now limited to the Brazilian species, *M. spectabilis*, *M.flava*, *M.flavescens* and *M. regnellii*. Other Brazilian 'miltonias' such as *M. clowesii* and *M. cuneata* have been assigned to the genus Oncidium.

Miltonias are generally epiphytic plants,

which grow in humid mountain forests in Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay. The selected species for this month, which you may have labelled 'Miltonia spectabilis var. moreliana' but which now has been separated as Miltonia moreliana, is found in the state of Espirito Santo, North East of Rio de Janeiro at an altitude of about 800 metres.

Veitch (1894) described Miltonia spectabilis var. moreliana as "one of the most remarkable colour deviations from the typical form to be found among orchids" and his succinct but accurate description of the flower is "flowers larger than the type and very distinct in colour; sepals and petals plum-purple; lip bright rose-purple with deeper veins and reticulations". The accompanying photograph clearly reveals the beauty of the species. Early descriptions of the flowers also note that the petals are often reflexed and the photograph, taken some years ago, shows this characteristic. Modern cultivars of the species are superior in shape and size and some wonderful tetraploid 'morelianas' are commercially available in Australia. Perhaps the most outstanding 'moreliana' to date is Miltonia moreliana 'Harford's Ebony Star' FCC/ AOS.

Miltonia moreliana has been extensively used in hybridising with mixed results - flower size and colour of its hybrids are generally outstanding but the number of flowers is reduced and the species also impacts it rather rambling growth habit and short inflorescences. I prefer the species to any of its hybrid offspring.

Culturally, Miltonia moreliana is a very accommodating plant to grow and suited to either the beginner or the experienced grower. Its basic requirements are as follows - in its natural habitat this species experiences relatively high rainfall and humidity. It does not have a really 'dry' season as warm moist air lifting over the mountains cools and provides humid conditions in which 'moreliana' thrives. Therefore, in summer copious water can be given and in winter plants should not be left dry for long periods.

Its light requirements are flexible and I have seen well grown plants with lush, dark green leaves and also plants which have been grown in much lighter conditions with leaves of pale green/yellow. My plants flower better with higher light intensity.

A balanced fertilizer should be used. I prefer to fertilize often but weakly. Some authorities (Charles & Margaret Baker) recommend the use of a higher phosphate fertilizer in late summer and autumn to improve flowering and encourage new growths to harden before winter.

The rambling growth habit of Miltonia moreliana makes pot culture difficult; it is perhaps better to use baskets (a sphagnum/perlite mix seems to work well) or mount the plants on good sized pieces of tree fern and then grow either vertically or, if you cannot keep the tree fern moist, horizontally. Miltonia moreliana is a rapid grower and each pseudobulb generally produces two growths, hence its ability to quickly ramble out of a pot.

There are some other very beautiful varieties of Miltonia spectabilis (if you still look on 'moreliana' as a variety of the species). These are often difficult to locate in nurseries but keep an eye open for these.

Miltonia spectabilis var. alba: a beautiful white with some yellow on the callus of the lip.

Miltonia spectabilis var. bicolor: similar white flowers, but with a large purple area at the base of the lip.

Miltonia speetabilis var. rosea: a handsome plant with large flowers, which have white sepals and petals tinted with rose and a white lip striped with dark rose.

However, the variety (or species) 'moreliana', first sent in 1846 to Morel in Paris by an M. Porte from Brazil, is to my eye at least, the most outstanding of this group of miltonias. It is, B. S. Williams (The Orchid Grower Manual 1885) wrote, "A handsome and desirable plant and should be in every species enthusiast's collection". [Orchids Australia, August 2005]

SUCCULENT ORCHIDS

Something New for the Amateur

By Clarence Kl. Horich

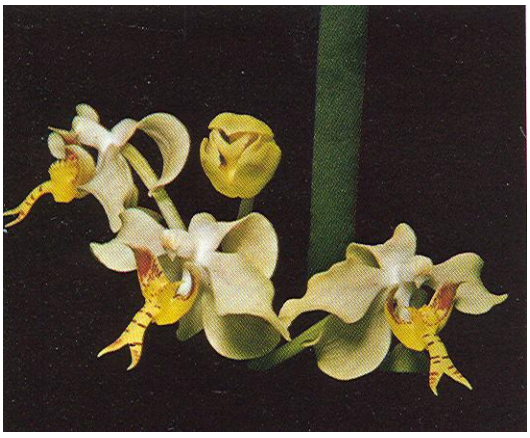
***Catasetum pileatum* var. *aureum* 'Rotundum.' Some orchid species of the new world are elaborately evolved as succulents to live in desert environments, where the evaporation per year exceeds the precipitation. Notably exceptionally successful genera with showy flowers include *Catasetum, Cycnoches,* and *Mormodes.* These plants have stout pseudo bulbs, armed with sharp spines when the leaves drop in *Catasetum,* which discourages foraging animals in the dry season, being amongst the most protected succulent orchids.**

Unless you are a downright, rootin'-tootin' cactophile whose plants *MUST* be prickly and spiny, else you throw them on the garbage pile, your eyes must also appreciate the beauty of other plants and flowers. As far as succulent plants are concerned you must admit that only a portion is made up of true cacti. The rest are found in many different families that have nothing in common with cacti, except for

the fact that they are also partly succulent. Here, then, are representatives of a family of plants usually associated with life environments directly opposite to those of usual succulents, namely, the *orchids,* an ordinary proto-representative of the humid, tropical jungle.

***Oncidium staceyi* Garay. Terete leaved and mule ear oncidium species are other showy examples of successful succulent orchids. Frequently, they grow in such barren, hot regions as to be overlooked except during the short period of flowering, as in the present species, only discovered in Bolivia recently xl.**

If we generalize, orchids are as much jungle plants as succulents and cacti are natives of arid deserts; however, there always is an exception to the rule. Since there are more than 20,000 different species of orchids native to the five continents, we find some desert plants among them. We also find quite a number of cacti *(Epiphyllum, Cereus, Rhipsalis, Witti, Pseudorhipsalis, Disocactus,* etc.) in the humid jungle under conditions that are definitely adverse to desert plants. Even so, we must distinguish between desert orchids and succulent orchids, because one thing does not necessarily mean the other.



***Paraphalaenopsis serpentilingua* (]. J. Smith) Hawkes. This terete-Ieaved species occurs in Borneo. Originally described as a member of the genus *Phalaenopsis,* present evidence demands its transfer. A succulent orchid with terete leaves from Borneo.**

If we search through the tropical areas of America, we will very often meet, in semi-arid stretches with a pronounced dry season, orchids that match the drought with a special adaptation to the climatic seasons. Most orchid species found on the Pacific slopes of Mexico, Central America and a few from South America, have to put up with six months of continuous dry season. During this time, the trees of these regions shed their leaves; and while some orchids with tough, leathery leaf structure simply "go to sleep" and shrivel considerably, others store water in exaggeratedly fat pseudobulbs or in their terete leaves to withstand this drought.

The first group contains a number of lovely *Cattleya* species, such as C. *aurantiaca,* C. *skinneri* and C. *deckeri;* in Central America and Mexico, *Schomburgkia tibicinis* and *Sch. wendlandi;* in Central America, *Laelia acuminata, Epidendrum atropurpureum* and *E. alatum, Diacrium bivolvatulum,*

Epidendrum stamfordianum, ete. Plants of this group are very ornamental and like a warm, rather dry climate during their dormant period.

***Mormodes maculata* (Kl.) L. O. Wms. A succulent species from eastern Mexico (Rybaczyk collection).**

The second group, the one with fat, deciduous bulbs, which serve for water storage, fits better into our conception of a 'succulent' plant. The bulbs of *Cyrtopodium punctatum* look like a huge club. It is an orchid which grows much like a cactus in rockwalls along with a xerophytic vegetation such as *Hechtias, Agaves, Cereus, Mammillarias, Echeverias,* etc. The fantastic 'Swan Orchids' *(Cycnoches)* pertain to this group of succulent orchids as do *Mormodes* and *Catasetum,* which all have bird-like flowers.

A swift glance "down yonder" to Australia proves that quite a number of *Dendrobium* species are native to the *Eucalyptus* forest savannas, and it is no wonder that very many outstanding *Dendrobium* species are deciduous, half-succulent orchids that punish frequent watering with rotting rather than prospering! Their bulbous stems are fleshy and store great quantities of water. The Central American "twin" of *Dendrobium* is *Chysis,* with slender, but heavy, succulent bulbs and whose flowers also closely resemble those of *Dendrobium.*

***Vanilla planifolia* Andrews. The *Vanilla* species are a world-wide group of succulent orchids which survive in desert environments by their thick, succulent leaves and vinelike growth.**

Now, the friend of succulent plants will still object, "Okay, all fine 'n' dandy, but while there is a soft leaf on the succulent bulb, the plant ain't no succulent!" Granted! And now to the third group! Succulent orchids with terete foliage! You must have heard of the "Airplane Orchid," you know, the one they give to their wives or daughters in the states in all the bargain, one dollar, or "slaughter" sales of the big department stores. This cute orchid flower is the secret curse of the florist, for it has managed to put the local greenhouse orchid sale unfavorably off balance. . . but what can you do if they grow the "weed" by the acres and fly-in a million flowers from Hawaii, each week! It must be quite an orchid

that can be planted out by means of millions of cuttings on a tropical field and live by nothing more than burning sun and the odd rain, as though it were a cactus. . . her name is *Vanda Agnes Joaquim,* a hybrid with parentage of *Vanda teres,* the original terete *Vanda,* and unless you saw the flowers, you would think it a distant relative of a tall *Crassula.* It is a *truly* succulent orchid and so is, of course, *Vanda teres.* Actually, all terete orchids are succulents and most of them are inhabitants of very dry savannas of half-deserts.

The genus *Oncidium* is particularly nice. Flowers of all its members resemble little dancing dolls or insects, but the terete species are quite singular. The most important terete *Oncidiums* are O. *teres,*. O. *stipitatum,* O. *panamensis,* O. *ascendens,* and O. *cebolleta (O. longifolium),* all of them epiphytes of hot savannas and semi-deserts. The leaves of these orchids are terete and almost cactus-like in their individual construction. O. *cavendishianum,* O. *splendens* and O. *carthaginense,* natives of Guatemala, Honduras and Costa Rica, respectively, have fleshy, but broad leaves. Keep them humid, and they will rot! Give them full sun, keep them dry, and they will love it! Several species of *Brassavola* also are terete, among them, *B. nodosa, B. cucullata* and *B. perrinii.* Semi-terete are the Chiapan *B. glauca* and marvelous, Honduran *B. digbyana.* All are natives of the sun-torched savanna flats and companions of many desert cacti in their native countries. *Hexisea bidentata* with bushels of scarlet red, star-shaped flowers topping a regular chain of pseudobulbs actually lives in savanna country among other xerophytes and the climbing cactus *Hylocercus costaricensis,* enduring and almost "requesting" full sun. In other words, quite a few orchids can be grown together with cacti under dry desert conditions; some even grow epiphytically on Organpipe species of the Genus *Cereus* in Mexico and Guatemala where one would least expect them. But, of course, there are also epiphytic cacti native to the wettest rainforest which can only be cultivated under conditions prevailing in the "typical" orchid house, and which would immediately burn and dry if exposed to desert plant conditions; *Wittia amazonica,* a true cactus, is one of these strange rainforest inhabitants.

In only one respect do orchids differ from soil plants. They want to be planted in a different material than earth or sand. Most orchids are epiphytes and while they can be grown even in pure gravel, their roots were meant to serve as anchors to fasten the plant to the tree bark, and they want to breathe. Placing them in soil would invite fungus and a quick death. Therefore, treefern, Osmunda fiber or even tree bark must be used as planting material, and the orchid plant must be potted firmly into this material. In choosing orchids native to dry areas, we have no troubles if we treat these as though they were desert plants. In fact, many of them are. The collector of succulent plants will find, in these terete or otherwise "dry" orchids, a very lovely addition to his desert plants.

Orchid Digest, September-October 1977

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IS AIR MOVEMENT REQUIRED IN GREENHOUSES?

By Frank Fordyce

Without doubt there are technical advisors who could answer this question far better than I; however, as a grower who has observed greenhouse conditions for some time I have certain theories I feel justified in discussing.

Frequently, new hobbyists will complain about the lack of growth and flowers in their collection. Perhaps they had purchased a beautiful Cattleya in bloom and it ,has never again produced the same quality of size of blooms remembered.

It is my opinion that frequently these conditions are caused by a lack of air circulation within the glasshouse. Perhaps, plants are crowded together because of a lack of bench space, thereby reducing air movement at plant level. Some houses are so heavily shaded the temperature seldom rises to the point where the hobbyist feels the need of ventilation for its cooling effect and therefore runs a closed house with little or no fresh air movement. Rebecca Northen, in her excellent book *Home Orchid Growing,* covers the subject of plant respiration and growth in a simple direct manner that all can understand. We quote from the chapter on Adult Cattleyas, Temperature, Humidity and Light:

"Plants do not keep accounts, but if balance sheets were published for them, they would be quite similar to those you receive from the bank each month. If you spend more than you earn, you end up in debt. If you earn more than you spend, you have money left over for savings, and philosophically savings mean better living. The earning of plants is the food they make, and their spending is the food they use for energy. Their savings go into growth and flower production, with a reserve kept over toward launching the next season's growth.

During the day a plant carries on three activities: the making of food (sugar) for which light is necessary, the use of food (respiration, similar to our own use of food for energy), and growth. At night no food is made, but respiration and growth continue, drawing on the food made during the day.

Temperature regulates the rate of the plant's activities. Low temperature slows down the processes; rising temperature speeds them up, although not all at the same rate and not indefinitely. The reason behind what we call an optimal temperature range is that within this range the plant can carryon all of its life processes in a normal way, with no one activity out of balance with the rest.

The ideal night temperature chosen for a particular kind of orchid is the temperature at which growth and respiration are in good balance so that the plant makes good growth without using too much of its food reserve. For Cattleyas this is between 55° and 60°. At lower temperatures growth is slowed down; at higher temperatures there is a tendency for respiration to exceed growth and for the plants to become depleted.

With abundant light, food making increases as the temperature rises up to about 85 °. The day temperature should ideally be about ten degrees higher than it is at night. In the winter and in cool weather, this is easy to maintain. Problems come with hot weather. The plant's activities remain in pretty good balance up to about 85 °, but over this the equilibrium is upset. With higher temperatures there comes the danger of burning and finally death. Plants can tolerate 95 ° for a few hours, and 100° for shorter intervals, but when the temperature rises above this the situation rapidly becomes critical, for the lethal point is not far off.

There are ways to modify the greenhouse conditions with shading, ventilation, humidity, and air circulation, so that we can pretty well control the environment. We don't wait for extremes to arrive, we anticipate them, and we use the various means in coordination with each other throughout the year so as to give the plants a good balance of the various factors; a balance between day and night temperatures, between the amount of light and the day temperature, and between humidity and all the other factors."

Air circulation is vital to the growing of healthy plants for they absorb the carbon dioxide through the leaf stomata that in turn is made into sugar, which can be literally called the food of the plant. If no air circulation is provided the carbon dioxide immediately surrounding the surface of the leaves is depleted and the plant, starving for carbon dioxide, is literally gasping for air, its respiratory balance upset.

Every day, winter and summer the air in your greenhouse should be kept in circulation. During the night it prevents the layering of hot and cold air and prevents build-up of dead air pockets in the corners. During the day, when carbon dioxide is needed to manufacture food, fresh air that normally contains at least some carbon dioxide should be introduced into the house with fans circulating and exhausting the air.

The more crowded your glasshouse becomes, the more important air circulation becomes.

Let's all put air back into circulation!

Orchid Digest, November 1968