



# Orchid Society of Western Pennsylvania

December  
2021

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

## Upcoming Events

December 12, 2021  
**Holiday Party**

at the Crowne Plaza Hotel Ballroom  
from 2 to 6 with a sit down dinner served at 3pm

## Looking Ahead

**Meetings will continue on Zoom for now**

Jan 2022 TBA

Feb 2022 TBA

March 19 & 20 2022 OSWP Spring show  
"The Joy of Orchids"

### " UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES "

OSWP meetings are held at the Phipps Garden Center on Shady Avenue and are open to members, their guests and the general public. Program Calendar is also available at [www.oswp.org](http://www.oswp.org)

HOWEVER, we are on Zoom for meetings , and those interested non members could use the 'contact us ' section of the website to get a Zoom invitation

#### OSWP Officers

**Co-President:** Sheila Nathanson and Mike Lyse

**Co-First Vice President:** Kathleen Arria and David Springer

**Second Vice President:** Timothy Choltco

**Directors:** Brooke Decker, Peg Kalupanov, Jinghua Ou, Aaron Vitron, Tamara Wurst.

**Secretary:** open

**Treasurer:** Janet Greenberg

### What's Blooming Now

This is the famous Darwin orchid, native to the island of Madagascar, with large white flowers with up to 12-inch long spurs (nectary). Darwin predicted the pollinator to be a moth with a 12" proboscis. Years later, it was discovered to be true. The moth, *Xanthopan morgani praedicta* (named for Darwins prediction of such a moth), was found to be the official pollinator.

*Angraecum sesquipedale* typically flower around the end of December to early January and hence the nickname 'Star of Bethlehem' orchid or Christmas orchid. Grow in medium to high light and water when the potting mix just dries out. When in spike or flower keep slightly more moist at the roots. Fragrant at night.

### *Angraecum sesquipedale*



Photo by Vicke Strodr

## Co-President's Letter December 2021

Here we are again- heading for the winter solstice- the shortest day of the year. The good news is, once it is out of the way, the days begin to lengthen, slowly. There is a reason we crave companionship, sparkling lights and diversions at this time. And a very pleasant diversion was our first in person meeting since February, 2020. Much appreciation to all the intrepid souls who ventured out to Botany Hall despite a Steeler home game and the dire forecast of snow.

Thanks to our very own Man for all Seasons, Jim Yamber, who miraculously tackled all the technical aspects handily, and we were able to enjoy our speaker, Ron Kaufmann, and transmit portions of the meeting to participants at home. And if that wasn't enough, Mr. Yamber treated us to a very informative mini class on Growing Cymbidiums. We truly do have some of the greatest members anywhere!

Another very pleasant diversion will be our Holiday Party on Sunday, December 12 from 2 pm to 6 pm, at the Crowne Plaza Suites ( across from South Hills Village ). Attendees are asked to bring cookies for our Pittsburgh Cookie Table. If you have not made a reservation yet, you have until December 1 to go on our website to choose an entree and pay \$15. per adult, plus dropping an RSVP to Carolyn Bolton. Ms. Bolton has ordered beautiful blooming plants from Hawaii as party favors.

We hope to meet in person on January 16, and Dave Springer is busy working on engaging a speaker, and Tim Choltco is thinking about a mini- class for that meeting. More details will be shared once we work out the logistics.

Stay warm, stay safe, and continue to think orchids - and also give some thought to what you would like to do at the show in March. Once the holidays are behind us, it will be show time all the time! It truly is a group effort, and lots of fun.

Sheila Nathanson and Mike Lysy, co- presidents



**Orchid Conservation Alliance**

**Conserving Orchids by Conserving Orchid Habitat**

The OCA conserves orchids by funding habitat preservation. Since inception in 2005 we have helped with the purchase of over 3000 acres of orchid habitat, protecting hundreds of orchid species in Brazil, Ecuador and Colombia. Many species of rare birds, trees, frogs, mammals also find refuge in these reserves.



*Dracula gigas* (L), *D. triganapetala* (R)  
Dracula Reserve, Ecuador

*Dracula femurella* (L), *Lepanthes escifera* (R)  
La Selva de Ventanas Reserve, Colombia

We hope you will join us in promoting this important work. We invite you to become a member of the OCA, to make a donation, to take a trip with us to see Orchids in the Wild®, and to purchase merchandise through our website. Since we have no paid staff, all proceeds support orchid conservation. The OCA is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation.

For more information: [www.orchidconservationalliance.org](http://www.orchidconservationalliance.org)

## Orchid Gems

I don't know what year it was but I know it was the night before Christmas and I had one last stop to make and then I could go home and get some sleep.

It was a beautiful full moon lite night with the white snow every where. It looked like sugar which made me think of all the cookies I had eaten and I wasn't paying attention to where we were.

Now Blitzen had the sniffles and wasn't feeling well, Donner had a head cold and Rudolph's nose was not so bright from running all night.

We were flying too low and hit some trash cans making quite a racket. As we came up to the last house a window opened and a man stuck his head out to see what all the noise was about. Not knowing what the man was going to do I yelled to the reindeer "on Dasher, on Dancer on Prancer, and Vixen on Comet on Cupid, on Donner and Blitzen to the top of the porch to the top of the wall now fly away all."

Well after that scare, the deer were so excited, they were stomping all over the roof.

I commend the deer down with some of the carrots the kids left for them, and I went down the chimney. I don't think this man had ever cleaned out his chimney because I was in real trouble. Mrs. Claus gave me strict orders to not get so dirty this year. Well, when I went down that chimney my white fur trimmed red suit was covered top to bottom with soot. Boy was I going to get it from Mrs. Claus. Oh well to work.

I picked up my bag of toys and pulled a muscle in my back which made me stand up with jerk. I may be getting too old for carrying all these toys around any more. It was then I saw that man hiding behind a chair. But I didn't have time to talk I had work to do. After I had gotten all the toys put in place I headed to the fireplace. There was something in the air that made me want to sneeze and I put my finger under my nose to stop the sneeze and up the chimney I went. I got into the slay and we road off into the night but I yelled back as we went. "Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night."



**“Merry Christmas to all  
and to all a good night.”**

## OSWP Members Win AOS Awards



At the Niagara Frontier Orchid Society show held in Buffalo on November 13, three OSWP members won all of the AOS awards given at the show.

Carol Panza's plant **Clowesetum Joy Prout 'Green Dragon'** (Clowesia Rebecca Northern x Catasetum semi-circulatum) received an AM-82 award. It had twenty flowers on one spike and a second spike with twelve buds. Her plant came from Sunset Valley Orchids (sunsetvalleyorchids.com).

Carol received another award for her **Paphiopedilum Liberty Taiwan 'Moonbeam'** (Paph. micranthum x Paph. hangianum). It received an AM-80 for its one stunning flower as you can see below. In addition to her AOS quality award, the same plant also garnered "Best Paphiopedilum in the Show". She purchased her plant from Orchid Inn Orchids (orchidinnusa.com)



Dave Miller's **Phalaenopsis Evergreen 'Wilson'** (Phal. Chang Maw Evergreen x Phal. Ho's Kuangfeng Glory) received an AM-80 for its outstanding green flowers which are not very common in the Phalaenopsis world. His plant was purchased from Big Leaf Orchids (bigleaforchids.com).





Edgar Stehli brought a “truck-size” Brassavola to the show for his exhibit. Good thing he travels with his van! Brassavola grandiflora ‘Windswept’s Starry Night’ won numerous awards among which included a CCM-86 cultural award with almost perfect leaves and being densely flowered as well as a quality award of HCC-78 for the flowers. In addition, his plant attained “Best Species”, “Best Specimen” and “Best Plant in the Show” trophies and likely a couple others not listed. An interesting note was the AOS judging team leader for P. Liberty Taiwan and P. Evergreen was none other than AOS President Bob Fuchs who was in attendance for the entirety of the show.

### **Are you willing to help with the Phipps Orchid Collection in some capacity?**

Phipps and the OSWP have partnered since the OSWP’s founding in 1954. Our relationship has strengthened over the decades and while we have not been active during Phipps’ strict COVID protocols, we are making some progress! After a Zoom meeting with Margie Radebaugh, Ben Dunigan, the Collections Manager, Nancy, Sheila and Demetria, Demetria was able to meet in person with Ben and take a tour of the newly renovated orchid exhibition house and then on to the orchid production/growing houses. The orchids have been well cared for by Gary Worthington, Ben and a few others. Great news! It’s a huge amount of work.

Since November, the Phipps team has dismantled the Fall Flower Show and installed the Holiday Show: Holiday Magic, which goes until January 9th. Then they will be preparing for the Orchid and Bonsai Show, plus the Cuban Tropical Greenhouse will be redone to become the Hawaiian Tropical Greenhouse. The Phipps team has lots going on.

Ben is looking forward to having the OSWP back sometime in January or February to help out. Maybe only one or two members at a time, just to be very, very safe as far as COVID is concerned.

Ben has asked for three lists of members:

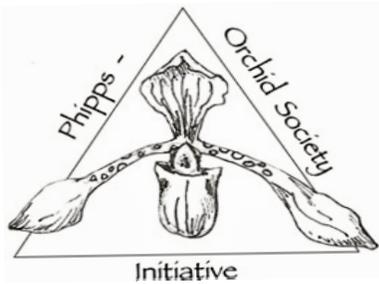
- 1) Workers, to help as needed, repotting, unpacking, cleaning, watering, whatever;
- 2) Team Leaders, to help with inventory, etc. of the Phipps Orchid Collection. The Teams are: Minis and Misc; Vandas and oncidiums; Cymbidiums; Cattleyas and epidendrums; Dendrobiums; Slippers.
- 3) Experts, within each team we need members who are very knowledgeable and successful growing and beautifully blooming certain types of orchids, requiring specialized care.

If you are willing to volunteer for any of the above teams (or all of them) please email or call one of us. We will be delighted to have your help, as will Phipps. We will then pass this information along to Ben to use as soon as possible. For most of us, that will be in the new year, 2022.

Looking forward to getting back to work to help Phipps with their Orchid Collection and as always, learn more about orchids and others.

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## P-OSI

A joint initiative between Phipps Conservatory and the Orchid Society of Western Pennsylvania to create and cultivate an orchid collection of note for enjoyment, education and research.

### November 2021

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Looking forward to getting back to work to help Phipps with their Orchid Collection and as always, learn more about orchids and others.

Happy Holidays!

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### Current Committees Chairs,

AOS	Nancy Kline	Orchid Gems	Norma Raiff, Pam Horter-Moore, Cristina Eyler
Culture Corner	Nancy Kline	Pfun	Nancy Kline
Facebook	Lance Chevront	P-OSI	Demetria Marsh
Garden Club/Library Liaison	Karen Gibson	Raffle	Natalie Turicik
Hospitality	Carolyn Bolton	Show	Sheila Nathanson, Tammy Wurst, Norma Raiff and Janet Greenberg
Library	<b>open</b>	Speaker	Kathleen Arria and David Springer
Membership	Kathy Collins	Website	Jinghua Ou
Mini-class	Tim Cholte		
Newsletter	Jim Yamber		

## Judges Viewpoint by Dave Miller, Great Lakes Judging Center

Issue #11

### **Growing Tolumnias at Home**

Yep, that's right. Today we are going to talk about those cute little Oncidiums known as Tolumnias or more appropriately as Equitant orchids. There are more than just Tolumnias in this group. For the most part, you find Tolumnia (its own genera) and Rodrumnia (Tolumnia x Rodriguezia) as the predominant equitants. There are others but I don't have space today. I talk to home growers and experienced orchidists alike that complain about how to keep these guys alive. Let's take a look at where they grow first and then our answers will reveal themselves.

### **Where Are They From?**

Equitant orchids were first known as Equitant Oncidiums. They do look like their larger cousins, the Dancing Lady orchids.



This group of small orchids are so named due to their leaf structure which shows the base of each lower leaf overlapping the leaf-base above it, straddling or saddle style, hence the name is derived from the greek word for horse which is "equus".



Enough botany for now. This subset of orchids are comprised predominately of complex hybrids giving us better form and lots of colors. There are a handful of hybrids around but most are not readily available.

In actuality, most of these interesting hybrids are coming from only six of the species. The reason, for one, is that Equitant species are either very finicky about culture due to their very localized natural habitat or they carry weird chromosome counts and will not breed with much.

Equitant Oncidiums grow only around the Caribbean basin including countries like Cuba, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, and the Virgin Islands. I think you get the picture here. These guys like wind, heat, and lots of rain. Most of the species do not grow in the same country (habitat). That's why we have mostly complex hybrids because the hybrids breed out the habitat finickiness (hah, knew I could work that in) and make more habitat tolerance a possibility.

### About the Equitants

They will be available to you as mounted or generally in small 1" clay pots or net pots. Either way, they want water and then dry out. Potted this way, there is no way for them not to dry out, quickly, and thus is our problem to grow them successfully.



### Growing Equitants

For most of us, humidity control is the most difficult part of this process. It is easier to grow these in a greenhouse/outdoor situation since daily or nearly that is much easier to do. Because the root mass of these plants is so minimal, they automatically dry quickly which is how they grow in nature. Rain then winds, dry them fast.

At home, it is much more difficult to maintain this cycle. I use terrariums to grow them because I can keep the humidity above 60% by misting twice per week. Not everyone has one though and life becomes more difficult. They have fine roots and die quickly if not watered soon.

I use a double-pot method or close to that and it works quite well. I like to wrap the pot with coconut fiber which I take from plant liners. Wrapping the fiber around the existing pot or root mass then placing in a slightly larger pot, emphasizing slightly to be just enough to put the whole thing in the pot. I like coco fiber because it retains a little more moisture but then dries, just as these guys want.

As soon as I get a new plant, it goes to the potting area for repotting. Here are a couple photos of how I repotted three new plants. Little clay pot or net pot or mount, I place in the new pot after wrapping with fiber. Sometimes they slip right out of the old pot but in many cases they are rooted to or out of the existing pot so pot up including the old pot. It doesn't seem to matter a lot whether I pot up a clay pot into plastic or clay as either will work. The coco provides a buffer for extra moisture but also space for air circulation. I have been doing it this way for a number of years and it still works quite well. Even mounts I place in a pot after wrapping the mount and roots in coco. Here is a gallery of related pics.



Happy Orchid'ing Contact Dave at [dcmjpsmil@aol.com](mailto:dcmjpsmil@aol.com) or 330-307-7189



First Class Mail

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The Orchid Society of Western Pennsylvania Inc. is a non-profit corporation organized to advance the propagation, horticulture and preservation of orchid species and hybrids through research, education and scientific endeavors

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**Upcoming 2021 speaker**

FUTURE PROGRAMS

December 12, 2021

**OSWP Holiday Party**

More to come for the future programs for 2022



**WANTED**

***The American Orchid Society Judging Program is seeking highly motivated orchid enthusiasts to join the judging ranks.***

*Work with other such people and help maintain our awards programs and educational efforts.*

*For more information contact Dave Miller at: 330-307-7189 or demjpsmil@aol*