



Orchid Society of Western Pennsylvania

March 2021

www.oswp.org

Upcoming Events

March 21, 2021
Mary Gerritsen
Orchids of New Guinea

Looking Ahead

Meetings will continue on Zoom for now
April 18 Fred Clarke - How to be an 80th Percentile Grower
May 16 TBA
June 20 TBA
July 18 TBA

" 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

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 : Lance Cheuvront

Treasurer: Janet Greenberg

What's Blooming Now

. These orchids are prized for their long-lasting sprays of flowers, used especially as cut flowers or for corsages in the spring. There are two main types of cymbidiums - standards and miniatures.

Light is important for growing cymbidiums. Coming from cool and bright areas in Asia, they need high light but cool temperatures. The maximum amount of light possible, short of burning, should be given to the plants. Leaves should be a medium to golden green in color, not dark green.

Temperatures Optimum temperatures in winter are 45° to 55° F at night and 65° to 75° F during the day. When plants are in bud, temperatures must be as constant as possible, between 55 and 75 F. Miniatures can stand temperatures five to 10 degrees higher than standards and still flower.

Water to provide a constant supply of moisture to cymbidiums, which are semiterrestrial plants.

Humidity Keep humidity at 40 to 60 percent during the winter, especially if plants are in bud. Keep the air moving to prevent fungus (Botrytis) from spotting the flowers.

Fertilizer at the proper time to help cymbidiums flower. During the growth season (spring through late summer), high-nitrogen fertilizer (such as 30-10-10) is used. In late summer, use a high-phosphorus, blossom-booster fertilizer (such as 10-30-20), to help form bloom spikes. Fertilize at full strength every week to two weeks. In winter, fertilize once a month.



Photo by Jim Yamber

Cymbidium King Arthur

Co-President's Letter March 2021

After a cold, snowy February, here we are entering March when we should be able to glimpse signs of spring if we can dig through the ice. I am seeing new growth on many plants, especially in the *Oncidium* and *Cattleya* groups. Some things seem the same- the cycle repeating itself reliably. As much as some things stay the same, this year is very different. We would have had two "Clipboard Sundays", when we beat the bushes for more hands-on-deck for The Show. We'd be fussing with slow bloomers, trying to beg, urge and threaten them into blooming for The Show. We'd be looking forward to seeing hundreds of people interested in seeing what this orchid growing thing is all about. And maybe enticing some of them to join us. Thanks to Covid, we're not having The Show. But as orchid growers, we can perform the ordinary and necessary duties of orchid caretakers- and look forward to when we can meet in person and have a show. I'm hoping it's soon. We will be having a Zoom meeting on Sunday, March 21 from 1 to 4 pm. Tim Choltco will demonstrate repotting of *Phalaenopsis* in a mini class at 1:30, and we are very fortunate to have Mary Gerritsen, an accomplished orchid grower, world traveler and author as our guest speaker. Her topic will be 'Orchids of New Guinea.

As usual, we will have Show and Tell. If anyone is inspired to create an exhibit, we could have a tiny virtual show.

Stay warm, stay safe, stay well and think orchids (and Spring)

Sheila Nathanson and Mike Lysy, co-president

March speaker Mary Gerritsen

We are thrilled to have Mary Gerritsen Ph.D. zooming into our meeting this month to talk about the Orchids of New Guinea.

Mary is an independent biotechnology consultant who has been growing orchids (mostly species) on and off for more than 30 years, and since relocating to the San Francisco Bay area in 1997 started a collection of small cool growing miniature species such as *Masdevallias*, *Porroglossums*, *Lepanthes* and other assorted tiny gems. She also has a second intermediate greenhouse, filled with larger species such as *Angraecoids*, *Dendrobiums*, *Oncidiums*, *Laelias*, *Phalaenopsis* and *Bulbophyllums*. She loves to see orchids growing in situ, and has made it her mission over the last few years to see as many as possible, with trips to see and photograph orchids (and other flora as well) in Canada, many parts of the USA and Mexico, and countries in Central America (Costa Rica, Panama), South America (Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela), South East Asia (Borneo, southern and southwestern China, Sulawesi, northern Thailand, Papua New Guinea), western Australia, Europe (Crete, Cyprus, Germany, Mallorca, Rhodes and Sicily) as well as South Africa and Madagascar.

She is the co-author of several botanical books: *Masdevallias*, *Gems of the Orchid World*; *Calochortus*, *Mariposa Lilies and their Relatives*; *A Compendium of Miniature Orchid Species*; *A Bay Area Guide to Orchids and their Culture*; and the *American Orchid Society Guide to Orchid and their Culture*, with fellow San Francisco Orchid Society Member and well known photographer, Ron Parsons.

Mary frequently lectures to orchid societies in the San Francisco Bay area, and on occasion, nearby Southern California, Oregon, Nevada, Arizona and sometimes even further afield (Missouri, Kansas, Canada). She is on the board of directors of the Orchid Digest, the chief operating officer and treasurer of the Orchid Conservation Alliance, and is also a member of the American Orchid Society, the San Francisco Orchid Society, the Peninsula Orchid Society and the Pleurothallid Alliance.

Orchid Gems

An Enthusiasm for Beautiful Blooms: Kathy and Mike Collins

by Pam Horter-Moore

When Kathy and Mike Collins exhibited a photograph of their Paphiopedilum “Octavius” for Show & Tell, I immediately recognized it as an orchid from my husband Chris’ collection. That spurred me to ask them more about their orchids, and I was delighted to learn that Chris’ Paph has done well, having a glorious 4-½-inch bloom.

Kathy and Mike Collins came to southwestern Pennsylvania from California, where she was a legal secretary and he was an airplane mechanic for US Airways. When US Airways closed their San Diego maintenance facilities, Mike was transferred to Pittsburgh. They have lived in Independence Township, Aliquippa for the past 29 years, and have a 21-year-old son. Mike has a 40-year-old son from a previous marriage.

Their interest in orchids came naturally. Kathy’s family grew orchids outside in California, and Mike has a knack for growing things. Their first orchids were Phalaenopsis purchased at Giant Eagle, and they had four or five specimens when they heard Demetria Marsh’s presentation at Phipps Conservatory two years ago, which initiated their interest in OSWP.

Although their collection contains several Phalaenopsis, they no longer have to buy them. Their Phalaenopsis specimens come to them as plants rescued from friends and family. They now have 38 orchids which include Cattleyas, Habenarias, Tolumnias, and Paphiopedilums.

When they first caught orchid fever, they grew them in a kitchen garden window which was deep enough to accommodate several plants. As their fever advanced, they set up a table and artificial lighting system in the basement. Their enthusiasm has expanded to two tables and a workbench which holds their orchid supplies. “Thanks to the workbench, I now know how to use the tools it took to build it,” Kathy says. Mike also installed a deep sink to facilitate the watering of the orchids, which are grown in bark medium.

The basement provides the temperature range which is an inducement to blooming. Warmth in the daytime naturally gives way to cooler temperatures at night. Although the basement can get hot in summer, temperatures can drop to 55 degrees at night. Otherwise, the plants are naturally heated from the ducts in the house. They are also careful to monitor the humidity of their environment.

Because they still want to preserve some space in the basement for other purposes, they are resisting the temptation to expand their collection to the point of letting the orchids take over.

Although there is a lot to learn and much to go wrong when it comes to growing orchids, they have been remarkably successful. “We are happy when we get an orchid to bloom. We then place it in the garden window in the kitchen where it can be seen and appreciated by our friends and neighbors,” says Kathy.

Kathy continues to be the adopted parent for homeless orchids abandoned by friends and co-workers. She inherited three from a retiring co-worker and another from a friend who was on the verge of killing the one she had.

If Kathy can be called the orchid procurer, Mike can be called the orchid nurturer, taking pleasure in repotting, watering, and caring for the orchids.

He has a natural green thumb, although he admits having trouble with the Habanera he bought in a flask from Tim Cholteo. He is hoping the plant is going through a dormant stage and will revive at a later time.

“There is a lot of experimentation involved with orchid growing,” Mike says. “We are learning what will work with our lighting environment and what won’t.”

They have mounted two Tolumnias on cork and have set them on a tray. Although one has bloomed and the other hasn’t, the other is multiplying in a way that is encouraging. The blooms were impressive enough that the tray was used as a table centerpiece when they had guests over.

Mike would like to have a hanging garden, as seen in the magazines. "I was always interested in photography, but now I am learning how to photograph orchids in order to properly show off their natural beauty," Mike says. He gets satisfying results with his phone camera and enhances the photos by using a dark background at night, highlighted by spotlights.

In the future, Kathy and Mike plan to have less *Phalaenopsis* and more variety, but right now they are just eager to see what will bloom for them.

"I find myself spending more time than I expect puttering around in the basement with my orchids," says Mike. "There is always something that can be done while I am down there."

They had visited Carolyn Bolton's home and were very impressed with her growing environment and the effort she takes to care for her orchids. They note the dedication that OSWP members have in preserving and enhancing their collections.

Although it seems that it is Kathy who does most of the orchid acquisition and rescue, and Mike who does most of the repotting and watering, they both have their ideas about what they want to grow. Mike looks for size and shiny green leaves, while Kathy is considering compact orchids that can be accommodated in their limited space and growing conditions.

The pandemic has curbed the number of shows this year, but Kathy and Mike have grown their collection, thanks to rescues, gifts, and those purchased at the OSWP Swap & Shop event that was held last summer at South Park.

They both enjoy interacting with OSWP members. Kathy is now the Membership Chair, although the pandemic has put a damper on many of the OSWP activities.

"The Zoom meetings were a bit awkward at first, but we have now reached a comfort level, and Jim Yamber's emails and Show & Tells have been a godsend," Kathy says. "I would love to see another Swap & Shop as we had last year. We are eager, though, to resume normal meetings and activities once this pandemic is behind us."

They have advice for new orchid growers. "Try a vegetable garden first," quips Mike. "Then consider keeping an orchid journal. It's helpful to record when you buy an orchid, when you repot it, and how often you spray and maintain it."

Kathy began the journal, using a form *Demetria* provided at the Swap & Shop, and Mike adds to it. Between the two of them, the journal provides a record of their successes and gives valuable information for maintaining and building upon their collection and the beautiful blooms they proudly display in their garden window.



Mini-class 2021 – March 21 1:15pm prior to the O.S.W.P. business meeting.

Phalaenopsis Demonstration – Timothy Choltco

Please join myself and the O.S.W.P. for the mini-class for the March 2021 meeting. The speaker will be me, Tim Choltco. I will have a zoom Phalaenopsis repotting demonstration.

I will discuss potting media and proper potting techniques while having a live repotting demonstration. While this presentation will include the repotting of only Phalaenopsis, many of the techniques covered also pertain to other orchid groups such as Cattleya, Dendrobium, Oncidium, etc.

Please join me and the rest of the OSWP for this presentation prior to the regular O.S.W.P. meeting.

Timothy Choltco

2nd Vice President and all around decent sentient being.



Pfun at Phipps Still Watching and Waiting

Phipps Policies for Volunteer Admissions

For Phipps OSWP volunteers from Deb Knorr, Volunteer Coordinator:

The volunteer name tag gets you in for free whether you are volunteering at that time or just visiting. If you are visiting with a guest, you would use the nametag for yourself and a comp pass for the guest. The Admissions Desk has a list of active volunteers. I don't think each Orchid Society volunteer name is listed in Volgistics. You would fall under the umbrella of "Orchid Society volunteers" I was unsure about this after reading the email that I posted earlier today so I checked on the procedure. Hope most if not all of you have a name tag. If not, we can work on that when we return. Stay safe! Deb Knorr also indicated that, with your name tag, you receive the 20% discount at the gift shop. However, the cafe discount is only available on the day you volunteer.

Nancy Kline nancyk412@gmail.com 412-367-1556

Pfun @ Phipps

This picture is worth 1000 words for our volunteers



Judges Viewpoint by Dave Miller, Great Lakes Judging Center

Picking the Right Orchid Cut Orchid Flowers

For this issue, I am departing from the “judgy” stuff you might normally expect every month. It occurred to me as I cut the spike from my Phrag. Sorcerer’s Apprentice that you may enjoy a part of orchid growing that many do not know or even talk about and that is “**Displaying Cut Orchids**”. In the end, I was tired of five months of slipper flowers and so was my plant, so after forty-some flowers, I cut off the spike. I have done this in the past, just to let the plant recuperate. Besides, the plant was five feet tall and I do not have a lot of that kind of space indoors with good light.

Did you know that cut flowers may be exhibited in an AOS-sanctioned orchid show? Or did you know that cut orchid flowers can be AOS judged as well? Some of you may say “Yes

Dave, I did know that cut orchids can be displayed in exhibits because I create orchid arrangements and have exhibited my arrangements at past shows”.

Showing Cut Orchids Well, the previous statement is probably the most generally utilized rule of orchid exhibition at sanctioned shows but it isn’t the only rule in play.

The AOS Handbook for Judging is very clear on the exhibition of cut orchid flowers.

Section 6.1 in the Handbook declares this in a very straight forward manner, I think. It states “AOS awards are designed to encourage and to recognize meritorious achievement in all fields of orchid endeavor. To accomplish this, awards are granted to individual persons, individual orchid plants, groups of orchid plants, cut flowers and orchid arrangements, all in accordance with established rules.” So, you see, cut orchid

flower spikes are held in the same status as individual plants, groups of plants and orchid arrangements.



In addition to AOS rules of exhibition, most local orchid societies also publish exhibition rules for their shows. In most cases, the important rules pertaining to cut orchids would be simply described as a) no cut orchids in live orchid displays, b) no live orchids in cut orchid displays, and c) no orchid arrangements in either kind of display. There are several ways to handle these rules. First, most societies will designate an exhibit space named “Overflow” for such items that aren’t in a themed exhibit but the owner still wants to show it off. The Overflow table is a great place for individual cut orchid sprays.

If more than one plant’s flowers are to be exhibited then I would recommend a personal exhibit space if your society allocates space for personal displays. Most societies also offer exhibit space for orchid arrangements. Although orchid arrangements are quite artistic, we are done talking about them.



Back to the Sorcerer's Apprentice. Off with his head, I believe someone in history said and so it was. There were three really good flowers remaining on the branched inflorescence so I trimmed the growing tips and put them in a small vase (really a champagne bottle but that too is another story). You can see how nice these look in their tiny vase and the good news is the flowers lasted eight days, almost ten for one.

Take off any leaves that might be in the water as they will rot. I like to add a teaspoon of Hydrogen Peroxide for good measure and I also like to put a cotton ball to plug the top. The plug dramatically reduces evaporation. And I use good quality water, seldom tap water.

This kind of mini-display could not be judged however, as judging requires that a "complete inflorescence including the first leaf" be included when judging cut orchids. The purpose is that even though we may be judging orchid flowers, they are always in the context of a complete inflorescence.

There are a number of orchid flowers that hold well after being cut, the best coming to mind are many Dendrobiums, the Phalaenopsis section, and Phalaenopsis flower spikes. Surprisingly, slipper orchids are good candidates including Cypripediums.

I will close with a little story. About five years ago when I started growing Cyps in my garden, I had a stunning little clump in late bud two weeks before judging. I watched it every day and only four days from judging, when I inspected in the morning there was a nibbled hole in the pouch made overnight by a pesky rabbit. So, the next year, I put a huge pot around the clump starting two weeks before judging. Five days before judging I cut the inflorescences and "vased" them. And sure enough, the flowers held beautifully and on the right you see Cypripedium Philipp 'Mevad' HCC/AOS proudly displayed and judged in its mini-vase which was formerly holding soy sauce. I have used this method a number of times and also have other Cyps that were awarded having been judged as cut flowers and they remained grandly displayed in the show's Overflow exhibit.



Contact Dave at dcmjpasmil@aol.com or call or text to 330-307-7189.

Current Committees Chairs,

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

The Paph Forum & The Paph Guild Present
An International Speakers Day: A Virtual Experience
March 20, 2021 12:30-5:30 pm EDT
\$30 Register here to join!

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/3375512105204310544>

Can't stay for the whole day? A recording will be available.



Michael Tibbs, Exotic Plant Company, the Netherlands

An Update on Paphiopedilums in Europe Michael's orchid career started in the early 1980s in the UK with McBeans Orchids and the Eric Young Foundation. He is an accredited judge for both the American Orchid Society and in Kenya and South Africa. He has lectured world-wide and is the author of 15 books on various orchid subjects. Michael currently heads the Orchid Conservation Project in Rwanda for Singita.



Wenqing Perner, Hengduan Mountains Biotechnology, China Saving China's Slipper Orchids Through Sustainable Conservation Wenqing and her husband Holger moved to China in 2001, working as consultants, and then developed their own company focused on propagating Chinese slipper orchids and many other orchids. Wenqing, after Holger's passing, has continued running the company. She travels extensively, lecturing worldwide, and leads two to three botanical tours in China each year.



Frank Cervera, Biologist, New York Phragmipedium schlimii, a New Look at an Old Species Frank's presentation results from a 25-year sojourn to the jungles of Mexico, Guatemala, Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela, Guyana, and Brazil, studying the genus Phragmipedium, its taxonomy, ecology, and culture. Frank has had the unique opportunity of going straight to the source and examining the plants and flowers. Frank currently works in the financial services industry in New York.

Ross Hella, Deerwood Orchids, Minnesota
Breeding Miniature Paphiopedilums

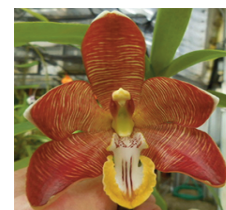
After growing a variety of orchids for 25 years, in 2001, Ross decided to begin hybridizing paphs, concentrating on smaller-growing plants. In 2010, with orchids literally growing in every room, Ross and his wife, Julie, built a greenhouse and started Deerwood Orchids. They have received numerous flower quality and culture awards.

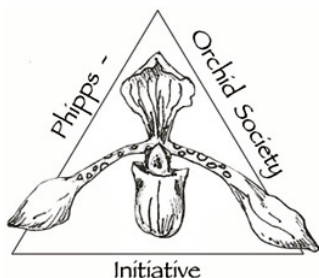


To Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Wheeler Orchid Collection and Species Bank, the Three Rivers Orchid Society and the Central Indiana Orchid Society Invite You to a Zoom Education Day!

The event date: March 20, 2021 Expected time of events: 10 AM to 3 PM Eastern Time

Mr. Courtney Hackney "Orchid Triage-How to Save Your Dying Orchid". Courtney is a longtime expert grower and hybridizer, especially of Cattleyas. A live presentation, "Growing Orchids Under Lights and Equipment to Consider". A live video tour of The Wheeler-Thanhauser Orchid Collection and Species Bank at Ball State University hosted by its Curator, Cheryl LeBlanc. Registrants will also receive via e mail links to other culture programs and orchid garden tours. Registration price for your society/organization is \$50 which includes all your members, or individuals can register separately for \$5. Funds after expenses will benefit the Wheeler-Thanhauser Orchid Collection and its work. Visit the Central Indiana Orchid Society web site (centralios.org) to register for this fun and educational event. More information on program contents will be updated on the site.





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.

March 2021

While we are not permitted to continue our work with the Phipps orchid collection due to the pandemic precautions, we can still visit Phipps Conservatory's beautiful show(s).

The Phipps Annual Spring Show, "A Canopy of Color," opens on March 13th. Celebrate Spring and enjoy the warmth and beauty of Phipps Conservatory in full bloom!

And, you may still have a day or two to see "A Splash of Brilliance," this year's Orchid and Bonsai Show at Phipps 1/23 – 2/28.

Enjoy orchids and other plants as well and Celebrate Spring!!!!

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DUES INFO:

Although it is the beginning of a new calendar year, it is NOT our OSWP fiscal year, which is 07/01/20-06/30/21.

All new members, who joined from March 2020 thru June 2020, were given those extra four months, and are considered paid thru 06/30/21.

All memberships are paid up thru 06/30/21.

Therefore, **NO DUES PAYMENT SHOULD BE MADE NOW**, by anyone, except those just joining OSWP. Dues payments may be made, beginning May or June and will cover the new fiscal year, 07/01/21-06/30/22.

Per the bylaws, members have 3 months, from July 1st, to submit dues payment, to continue their membership.

New Members Corner Kathy Collins Membership Chair

We would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest member(s) to OSWP:

Debi and Charles Drummond- joined 1/10/21

Nancy Cooper-Bergman, joined 12/26/20

Janette Gomez, joined 11/25/20



First Class Mail

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The Orchid Society of Western
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corporation organized to advance
the propagation, horticulture and
preservation of orchid species and
hybrids through research, education
and scientific endeavors

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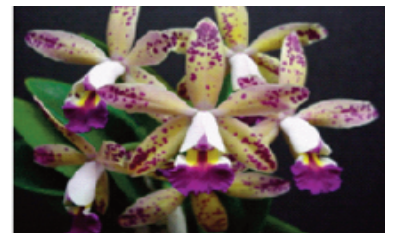
Upcoming 2021 speaker

FUTURE PROGRAMS

March 21, 2021

Mary Gerritsen
Orchids of New Guinea

More to come for the future programs for 2021



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
dcnjpsmil@aol*