

Triad Orchid Society

June 2014

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Triad Orchid Society meets the second Sunday of each month at the Greensboro Council of Garden Clubs Building on the campus of the Natural Science Center 4301 Lawndale Dr. Greensboro, NC 27455 at 1:00

June Program

One of our members is the speaker for this month. Charlie Wilkins is an avid orchid hobbyist who does real estate consulting to support his orchid habit. Charlie has been growing orchids, mostly in home environments, for 40 years. He has grown orchids on windowsills, under fluorescent lights, under high intensity lights, and in greenhouses.

After spending 18 years in the Washington DC area, where he was active in the National Capital Orchid Society, Charlie and his wife Leah relocated back to Greensboro, their home town. They moved into their new home in the spring of 2007. It includes a large greenhouse that currently holds around one thousand orchid plants.

Charlie has received four AOS flower quality awards, including an FCC. He also received a CCM and a CCE. He has published two articles in the Slipper Orchid Alliance newsletter.

Charlie grows a wide variety of orchids. His talk covers “**Orchids You Should Consider Growing**” – **Dendrochilums, Phragmipediums, Gongoras, Stanhopeas!**

There will be a Farmer’s Market.



L. purpurata

May Show Table

Cattleya Alliance Species

1. *C. skinneri* 'Cherokee' Richman
2. *L. purpurata* v. *Werkhauserii* J. Curtis
3. *C. aelandiae* G. Sharpe

Small Cattleya Hybrids

1. Slc. Jewel Box 'Dark Waters' Brogdon
2. Epi. Summer Rose 'Woodlands' Brogdon

Large Cattleya Hybrids

1. Blc. Greenwich 'Kilnarney' Kepley
2. Bc. Digbyana-mossiae Kepley

Phalaenopsis

1. Phal parishii Goldberg
2. Phal Tsay's Evergreen Goldberg
3. Phal KV Beauty Kepley

Paphiopedilum

1. Paph. Pinocchio x primulinum Goldberg
2. Paph. Bernice Kepley
3. Paph. Bel Royal Kepley

Phragmipedium

1. Phrag Suzanne Decker Kepley
2. Phrag Lucy Robbins Brogdon

Dendrobium

1. Den. wassellii Goldberg
2. Den. spectabile Kepley
3. Den. unicum Brogdon

Oncidium

1. Onc. Mendenhall x papillio Richman
2. Onc. Popopki Goldberg
3. Rrm. Orchidom Orange Delight Richman

Vandaceous

- Nakamotoara Newberry Apricot G. Sharpe

Miscellaneous

1. Pleur. tribuloides G. Sharpe
2. Masd. infracta Goldberg

Best Species

Den. wassellii **Goldberg**

Best Specimen

Paph. Berenice **Kepley**

Best Flower

Paph. Pinocchio x primulinum **Goldberg**

Phal. parishii



Den. wassellii

Speaker's Notes – Lucinda Winn

Lucinda began her talk about growing miniature orchids with a brief discussion of the culture required by these amazing miniature plant. She recommends a pebble tray for those of us who grow on windowsills. She pointed out that because these plants are small they can be grown in groups – four or five tiny plants on a single tray. She pointed out these tiny plants need more water than larger established plants because smaller pots dry out faster. As many of these species also come from extremely humid cloud forest conditions, they require an extremely humid environment. Pebble trays help to maintain a higher level of humidity as the water in the trays continuously evaporating. You just need to remember to replenish the water supply on a regular basis. Lucinda stressed that the flower pots should not sit in the water as they will wick up the moisture and saturate the root system. Over time, the root system will rot from the constant saturation. Keeping the bottom of the pots (and therefore the roots) above the water level ensures that the environment remains humid while still maintaining the integrity of the roots.

Lucinda also recommended building an “Orchidium” utilizing a fish tank. I have always referred to this type of setup as a terrarium, but I think I like Lucinda’s nomenclature better. At any rate, I have personally used one for years as a “hospital” for sickly or weak plants and can personally attest to their effectiveness. These function just like a Wardian case and can be put together with a minimal investment. A Wardian case is a manufactured unit that can cost several hundred dollars, depending upon the size, while my little Orchidium was practically free. Lucinda described setting up a fish tank with water in the bottom and the plants sitting on pieces of egg crate material that keeps the pots above the water. You can also line the bottom of the tank with sphagnum moss and nestle pots into the moss for a more natural look. Small computer fans, from Radio Shack and relatively cheap, mounted on the inside panels of the tank create the air movement that Orchids require. Additionally, a pane of glass, available for less than \$5 from the local Lowe’s hardware, helps to maintain the moisture within the tank. I wrap the edges of the glass with Duct tape, and slide it back and forth across the top of the tank to control the humidity. A small fish tank set up this way can hold a surprising number of plants, especially if you hang some of the plants on the walls of the tank with suction cups. The nicest part is that you can keep the tank anywhere – in a bathroom, on the kitchen counter, or in any corner of the greenhouse. Lucinda also recommended hanging glass balls, not unlike Christmas tree ornaments, for single plants. These are available from Kelly’s Korner, an orchid supply company in New Hampshire. I just checked them out and these are available for \$3.50 each! Just type in Kelly’s Korner, they will happily ship directly to you.

Lucinda talked about Old World species, namely orchids from Asia and Africa. She pointed out that of the 4,000 identified Dendrobiums species, there are multiple miniatures. Several that are easy to find include *D cuthbertsonii* (available from Golden Gate orchids, Tom grows the best!), *D laevifolium* or *D unicum*. These are all warm growing plants that bloom profusely and can be grown in 3" pots. Similarly, *Bulbophyllums* such as *B tingabarinum*, *B ambrosia*, or *B auratum* all do

extremely well in terrariums. All remain under four inches tall. If you like Angaecoids, you should try *Aerangis fastuosa*, *A. biloba* or *A. hyaloides*. These African species all do well mounted and would do well in the small glass terrariums from Kelly's Korner. Similarly, Angraecums such as *A. dideri*, *A. chevalieri* or *A. compactum* are miniatures native to the hot tropical jungles of Madagascar. They do well mounted and love the high humidity of a terrarium environment.

Other miniatures Lucinda discussed include *Amesiella monticola*, a small monopodial plant from the Philippines which she said was a "MUST HAVE" for any serious miniature grower. . The plant itself is barely four to five inches across, but it can carry five to six crystalline flowers that measure two inches across. Lucinda was also enthusiastic about the leafless *Chiloschistas*, *ramifera* or *trudellii* from SE Asia. The *Chiloschistas* consist of a root system, a very short stem and usually no leaves or under developed leaves. Their robust, well developed root systems radiate outwards and adhere to just about any material that you may wish to use for mounting. Similarly, *Haraella retrocalla*'s flowers has a fringed lip and looks remarkably like a honey bee. It has a distinctive lemony scent and once established can bloom almost continuously whether mounted or potted. These are native to Taiwan. The plants lack pseudobulbs but are remarkably resilient. Tom and Shan Nasser, who own Carolina Orchids, had these for sale last year when Tom spoke to our society. Another easy to grow to grow variety that isn't quite so miniature is *Sedirea japonica*. This is a fragrant species from Japan. It blooms as a very small plant when only six inches high. Lucinda said that its flowers can exceed five inches across though I personally have never seen any anywhere close to that size. And speaking of Japan, don't overlook the *Neofinetia falcatas*. These are known as the Samurai orchids as they were grown and prized by the Japanese nobility. Although known collectively as *Neofinetia falcatas* here, in Japan the names are heavily nuanced depending on the color and patterns of the foliage. They can bloom white, yellow, or pink, but in Japan are judged on the uniqueness of their foliage and the careful arrangement of their roots on mounds of sphagnum moss. They are often displayed in priceless antique pots.

New Word species Lucinda likes include the *Pleurothallis*. This is an incredible genus in that they are so diverse, growing from the lowlands to the higher elevations all over tropical South America. Many grow in cloud forest conditions and love the high humidity of an enclosed terrarium. *P. lanceola* grows to only three inches and is another great candidate for the glass balls, as is *P. wagneri*. Lucinda said *P. endotrachs* is easy to grow, as is *P. grobyi*. These are from Panama, and like it hot! Should do well in our climate!

There are far too many *Pleurothallis* to generalize, but if you like miniature any things, this is the genus for you. The same applies to *Masdevallias*. They grow from Mexico through Central and South America, many at significant elevations. It is not surprising therefore that they generally prefer a coolish environment with lots of humidity. I grew these really well in northern California, but lost them all when we moved here as it is so much warmer. If you can keep them cool (ie in cool clay pots) they offer an incredible diversity of color and forms. Of course you can't discuss *Masdevallias* without also discussing *Draculas*, their wonderful monkey faced cousins. Lucinda noted that they are native to cloud forest regions, with constant high, high humidity. The best I have ever seen were grown in Wardian cases, and displayed in the cases as they dry out so very quickly. Try *D. ligiae* or *D. sodiroi* if you can provide the right environment!

Lucinda stated that *Leptotes* also do well in terrariums. She feels they are harder to grow as they have no pseudobulbs and need a great deal of water. I grow my *L bicolor* mounted, with my vandas, so they get watered daily. This past spring I was rewarded with an outstanding display. *Encyclia polybylbon*, from Central America, is easy to grow on a mount or in a pot. On a mount it quickly forms a thick fibrous mat. *Sophrenitis cernua*, from Brazil is not to be confused with its cooler growing cousins *S coccinea*. *S cernua* is definitely warm growing and much more tolerant of our climate conditions. Another miniature that grows well in our conditions is *Onc. Cheirophoum*. This little charmer is also from Central America and loves high humidity.

Lucinda concluded her presentation with a short discussion of culture for miniature plants. She reminded us that miniature orchids require frequent watering as they dry out very quickly. She waters three times a week, using a light fertilizer. She uses a 20-20-20 or MSU fertilizer. She avoids fertilizers with a high nitrogen content, noting that the nitrogen produces lots of green growth, but not blooms.

Many thanks to Joy Lemieux for these notes.

