



The Arizona Orchidist

Published monthly by
The Orchid Society of Arizona, Inc.
Founding Editor- Clarence S. Lindsten,
1966
Volume 41 March 2004 Number 3

NEXT OSA MEETING

Meetings are held at the
Encanto Park Clubhouse
2605 N. 15th Ave., Phoenix, Arizona
North of Encanto Blvd., on 15th Ave.
Phone (602) 261-8993

The next regular society meeting will be
Monday, March 1, 2004 at 7:00 p.m.
OSA meetings are open to all
plant enthusiasts

Refreshments will be provided
This month beverages will be furnished
by: Ann Cherny
Edibles will be provided by:
Norma Kafer and Bob MacLeod

Refreshment Coordinators:
Julie Langston
Ramona Jungwirth

NEXT OSA BOARD MEETING

The next OSA board meeting will be
Sunday, February 29, at 1:00 p.m.
Hosted by Norma Kafer
Please contact Norma
for directions to her home,
if you plan to attend
The meeting is open to all OSA members

GROWER ON CALL

Wilella Stimmell
wilellas@worldnet.att.net

March Program

LET THERE BE LIGHT

Ever wonder what it is about light that plants need?
Why not just stick them in the closet?

Monday night, we'll be discussing light- what makes it so important,
what makes "quality" light for plants, and artificial lighting.

Look forward to an illuminating evening.

Aaron Hicks

SILENT AUCTION

There will be a silent auction of OSA owned plants at the **March 1st** meeting.
Please note that when OSA holds a silent auction at a meeting, member plant
sales are **NOT** permitted.

editor

ARIZONA STATE VETERAN HOME

**Please remember to bring a "12 pack" of soda with you
to the meeting for the gift shop at ASVH.
The residents would also welcome individual size bags
of chips and candy bars. Willie will make the delivery
and you will feel good !**

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From the President's Desk

Norma Kafer

We were busy in February and it will get busier.

A special plaque was given to the members who donated their time to the January 24th Equestrian Special Olympics. Thank you Fred and Julie Rathbun, Barbara Parnell, and Willie Stimmell.

Julie Rathbun and Willie Stimmell traveled to Landers, CA. to buy orchids for the Chinese Festival. Chris Gubler has been very good to OSA, letting us pick and choose which plants we would like to buy. We appreciate him tremendously.

We were pleased to have Paul Storm , owner of Meke Aloha Orchids, give us a nice program on Schomburgkias. I still have trouble pronouncing that word, but he refers to them as Schoms which is much easier. He brought over thirty plants for the silent auction.

The 6th, 7th, and 8th of Feb. was the Chinese Festival held at the Chinese Cultural Center. The following members who donated their time to make the Chinese Festival another success for OSA , are listed in alphabetical order: Wayne Baker, Marleny Castillo, Teddy Cohen, Joe Frasier, Julie Langston, Kathleen Luther, Tatiana Macias, Julie Rathbun, Lou Ann Remeikis, Jennifer Schmitt, Willie Stimmell, and me.

Some of our orchids can be viewed at :

<http://www.askdan.com/ChineseWeek/>

<http://www.abctechconsultants.com/ChineseWeek/>

A special thanks to Jennifer Schmitt for buying vandas to sell at the Chinese Festival.

On February 20th a number of us will travel to San Francisco for the Orchid Exposition. We go for fun, food, and to buy for the March meeting. We always have a fun packing party Sun. night. We take over a room and packing crates, bubble wrap, cotton, newspapers, and plants are strewn about. Often it takes us way into the night to have all the plants packed just right for the trip home.

Monday March 1st will be our next meeting and Aaron Hicks will present us with a lighting show. He will discuss and show us different types of lighting that can be used to grow plants. It will be a good opportunity for some of the newer members to see what is available and to ask questions.

Hope to see you there.

Norma

Welcome New Members

Teddy Cohen
Tatiana Macias
David Nunamacher
Connie Skinner

Seek them out next meeting and make them welcome.



The editor has a new email
address : kjkm@comcast.net

If you would like to receive your newsletter via
email.....just drop me a note.

IT'S NOT TOO EARLY !

2004 SHOW CHAIR SHARON DAVIS HAS
SCHEDULED A SHOW PLANNING MEETING
FOR SUNDAY, MARCH 14TH, 1 P.M. AT HER
HOME, 5332 WEST PERSHING AVENUE
602-843-3288 FOR DIRECTIONS
ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME.

International Orchid Conservation Congress II Registration Forms Available

At each of our monthly meetings from June, 2003
through April, 2004, registration forms for the In-
ternational Orchid Conservation Congress II, will
be available on our raffle ticket sales table. The
Congress will be held at Selby Gardens, Sarasota,
FL, May 16-21, 2004.

OSA was the FIRST orchid society to donate
funds for the IOCC! The goal of the organizing
committee is to have funds available so that scien-
tists from Third World countries will be able to at-
tend the congress. Your OSA Board of Directors
voted unanimously at our March 2 Board Meeting,
to donate funds for the IOCC

The *Arizona Orchidist* is published monthly by the

Orchid Society of Arizona, Inc.
Direct Inquiries to our website at:
[Http://welcome.to/orchidsocietyaz](http://welcome.to/orchidsocietyaz)
Or to any of the Board Officers or Trustees

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ganization dedicated to community service and the study of or-
chids. It is affiliated with the American Orchid Society, The Orchid



FEBRUARY RAFFLE TABLE DONATIONS

THANKS TO: Pamela Albright, Mary Alice Baumberger

Liz Greenwood, Chris Gubler, Santa Barbara International Orchid Show Committee,

Lou Ann Remeikis, Bob MacLeod, Cynthia Schnitzer, Wilella Stimmell and OSA



COMMUNITY SERVICE REPORT

by Wilella Stimmell, CSP Coordinator

On **March 1**, at 10 AM, we will be presenting an Orchids 101 program for the members of the **Sun Lakes Garden Club**, Sun Lakes, AZ. The Sun Lakes Program Chair has advised us that the club has approximately 70 members. Although the garden club meets on the same day as OSA's meeting, we couldn't pass up an opportunity to expose a new group (to us!) to orchids!

We have combined the programs for the **Master Gardeners** in Bullhead City, Lake Havasu City, and Kingman, into one program which will be presented in **Kingman** on **March 11**. This means less traveling for us and less time away from home, but the same number of Master Gardeners will benefit from our hands-on presentation. The **March 12** Orchids 101 program at the **Mohave County Home & Garden Expo, Kingman**, remains as scheduled and announced in our February newsletter.

Do Our Plants Perform Calculations Like Computers Do?

There is a fascinating article included in the online edition of Nature Science Update. If you missed reading it and are interested in finding out how your plants might be acting like computers, read the article at

<http://www.nature.com/nsu/040119/040119-5.html>

According to David Peak and his fellow researchers at Utah State University, plants appear to "think" and solve problems with regard to the opening and closing of stomata in leaves. Preliminary research using a cellular-automaton model seems to explain how plants regulate their uptake of carbon dioxide for photosynthesis, by opening wide their stomata, and closing them to prevent loss of water vapor. The researchers postulate that plants are limited in how well they can open and close stomata, and leaves are often divided into patches: some stomata are open; some are closed. The scientists who have studied stomata behavior, have examined the distributions of these patches. Individual stomata appear to respond to what their adjacent stomata are doing. This is what has led the researchers to compare what plants do, to computer calculations. The plants figure out how wide to open their stomata.

HOT OFF THE PRESS: The 2004 Hawaii Show Schedule will be available at our March 1 meeting. Copies will be placed on our raffle ticket sales table. Thanks to Wilbur Chang for sending us the schedule!

Betty Stephens, Lead Recreation Therapist at the Northern Arizona VA Health Care Systems, Prescott, has requested 4" pots for the greenhouse. Some of the patients who use the greenhouse as part of their therapy, would more readily agree to adopt a plant (not necessarily an orchid because there are many other plants in the greenhouse) if the pots would fit on the windowsills in their rooms. The pots need NOT be clean. Betty stated: "We can wash pots!" There is no urgency to deliver the pots to NAVAHCS. We will do that this summer. This is simply an alert so we have plenty of time to start saving our smaller pots.

Tip of the Month: Do you have trouble using your Hozon Siphon Mixer? Several members have mentioned that their siphons don't work. After the first time you use a siphon, if you will pinch the hose closed so that no air gets into the siphon until the next time you use it, the siphon will have suction capability the next time you use it. A clothes pin works well for blocking air from getting into the siphon. After each use, following removal of the siphon from the bucket, immediately reposition the clothes pin on the siphon.

Arizona Agriculture Plant Inspection Zealousness: Be aware that if you order plants from a state, such as New Mexico, where citrus is NOT grown, the shipment might still be held by Arizona Agriculture. (In January, 2004, Arizona Plant Inspection held a shipment from New Mexico to AZ for 12 days because of the risk to Arizona-grown Meyer lemons. The plants were released when the NM grower pointed out to AZ Plant Inspection that citrus is NOT grown in NM!)

From the Archives of the AOS BULLETIN

Volume 63, Number 5, May, 1994, pages 522-528:

"Not by *the Book*"

by Ed Wright.

(This article has been included because a longtime OSA member indicated on his 2004 membership renewal form that he wanted to hear "speakers who wrote the book [on dendrobiums]". Unfortunately one author, Margaret Baker, who co-authored the outstanding tome, *ORCHID SPECIES CULTURE: DENDROBIUMS*, with her husband, is deceased. We DO read the renewal forms that are submitted with your membership dues!) "Not by *the Book*" was the winning article submitted for the 1993 AOS Gordon Dillon/Richard Peterson Memorial Essay Competition.

"*THE BOOK - COMPANION* and guide in our early studies of orchid culture; paperweight and doorstop to the later years of the same pursuit. When, where, why, and how do we draw away from this composite of all that is true and trite? It's a long trail toward orchid independence and it starts in the greenhouse.

The first glimmer of insufficiency is when we realize it's hard to raise orchids by *The Book* because orchids aren't avid readers. One may, of course, go into the greenhouse and read selected orchid literature aloud to the plants for an hour or so every day, but one must be prepared for strange looks from the neighbors and 'I told you so' from a relative-in-law or two. In addition, we just flat have some reservations about *The Book* when it comes down to growing plants.

For starters, *The Book* tells us the world is composed of fauna, flora and orchids. Evidently *The Book*, specifically and collectively, has a primary purpose to convince us that orchids are entirely different from all other plants. Don't believe it. Orchids were plants a long time before they discovered people, and that was some little time before orchid people discovered orchid books. Orchids are first, last and always plants and have many characteristics in common with other plants. They have a few peculiarities, both individually and as a group, but most ornamental-plant characteristics are common to orchids. When *The Book* quotes some expert to prove orchids are completely different in a major aspect, forget *The Book*, forget the orchids and analyze the expert. Axiom number 1: an orchid expert is someone who has killed a thousand plants.

Withdrawal from dependency upon *The Book* might progress to a line of study entitled: 'In the Jungle'. Orchids in nature will be found growing on trees, rocks or shrubs, but rarely on bare bark. Rather, plants grow in debris that collects atop branches and in innumerable little fissures and depressions on trees and rocks. It makes sense when you think about it from the orchid's standpoint. Orchid seeds have no stored food, so they must establish themselves in an area where food and moisture are retained. Such natural delicatessens support not only orchids but the fungi that are essential to

seed survival during those critical first few months of orchid life. Orchids seem to do best when we're a bit less sterile, a bit less inert, perhaps, in potting. A little organic material in the medium will help cure homesickness for the jungle and will make orchids grow better.

While we're on that subject, even *The Book* lacks any account of an orchid established naturally on fir bark. Personal recollections of the early days of fir bark go something like this: A lumberman named Woody something or other, up in the Pacific Northwest, found his lumber mill inundated with bark from the fir trees being processed. Not knowing what to do with the material, he employed an expert (see above). After study, the expert found the material really was pretty useless, so he told Woody to put it in large bags, paint an orchid picture on the front and ask a good price for it. Orchids always mean high quality, so the reasoning went, and people would be embarrassed if they didn't know a good use or two for a high-quality product. In due course, an orchid grower noted the picture and asked a salesman if the material was something for potting orchids. The salesman had no more idea than the lumberman, the expert or the customer, so he said, 'Yes!' in his heartiest salesman voice. The rest is legend. Right after the establishment phase, orchids need a good meal. Food to an orchid is liquid nutrient. Natural orchid food is composed of soluble nutrients washed off supporting and surrounding surfaces into the orchid's feeding zone. We recreate and augment this process in the greenhouse by adding soluble plant food to irrigation water. We apply such water only in the morning, for to water later in the day will cause one's thumbnail to turn blue - perhaps that is confused with something else, but whatever happens is pretty awful. *The Book* says so! Funny thing, though, in the jungle it never rains in the morning unless a storm is near.

Each day, the sun rises and begins to heat the land, water and plants. As more heat is absorbed, water vapor begins to form and, as it continues to warm, it rises. On through the day, more heat, more vaporization, more water rising to greater heights.

Finally, the water vapor gets high enough to lose heat so it condenses into water droplets and falls back to earth as rain. Not at 10 in the morning, but at four in the afternoon. For most of an hour, tropical rain comes down like nobody's business, then the all-clear is blown and a wonderful, refreshed world is at hand.

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During these rains, civilized people of the world have tea; American businessmen scurry about getting soaked to show how hard they work; orchids get fed and orchids get wet. They not only get wet, they stay damp most of the night, slowly soaking up nutrients and water they will need for another day of active growth. Next morning, Kipling wins again; the sun comes up like thunder and water vapor begins to rise, with plants perfectly positioned to enjoy the good life and the promise of another liquid extravaganza in the afternoon to come.

Let's not leave tropical rain precipitately. Based on a few samplings, runoff from tropical rain seems to contain very weak levels of fertilizer. The orchid in nature probably receives 15 to 20 parts per million of nitrogen, plus proportional amounts of other nutrient elements, with each rain. That makes it hard to rationalize The Book's mandate to feed 'one teaspoon per gallon of 20-20-20' or even half that amount. Sure, we want to feed our plants well, and we realize competition in nature is such that almost no living entity has an optimum diet each and every day. Even so, a teaspoonful of a 20 percent fertilizer is a lot of food: about 240 parts per million of each of the main elements or some 12 to 16 times the level found in nature. Plants say the material on feeding was written by people who sell fertilizer, not by people who are trying to secure the best possible growth from orchids. Put another way, the only one happy when you feed the bark is Rin Tin Tin.

To compound the matter, we feed plants with 20-20-20 or some other formulation without giving much thought to what the numbers represent. The Big Three shown on all fertilizer containers indicate the available percentages of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, or the N-P-K percentage. It says so on the bag; it says so in The Book: This is the good stuff the plants must have. 'Feed Blue Marvel to win a blue ribbon.' Okay, but the plants go right on building basic structure with C-H-O, or Carbon, Hydrogen and Oxygen, just like most other living beings on this planet. Granted, some essential chemical reactions won't occur or will not be accomplished effectively or efficiently if key fertilizer or trace elements are missing. Orchid growth still consists primarily of helping the plant do what it is already expert at doing: using sunlight and chlorophyll to convert water and carbon dioxide into starches and sugars suitable as energy sources to the plant. The great thing is, plants freshen the environment as they absorb carbon dioxide, release oxygen and do all kinds of photosynthetic chemical magic.

Which leads us into the secret of the ages. *The Book* won't tell you this, but the greatest change an orchid must accommodate in the transition from natural to greenhouse

growing conditions is the flower pot. More significant than a childhood switch from summer's barefoot anarchy to school-time's cowhide confinement, a pot causes profound changes in the life of an orchid. For practical purposes, a pot is the universe of an orchid in cultivation. Even slabs and wooden baskets constrain plants. We put orchids onto and into containers for our convenience - certainly not because it is going to improve growing conditions for the orchid. Pots do many things for and to our orchids. They confine plants so more of them can be crowded into a growing area of given size. They hold tags just long enough to generate a feeling of false confidence. They break on the way to orchid shows. They hold salts against the roots.

Chemical-salt buildup is an inevitable companion to pot culture. The stronger the nutrient solution, the more rapidly pots accumulate salts. Salts in an irrigation solution come from many sources. Most water supplies contain salts derived from calcium, carbon, sodium, chlorine, several metals and traces of chemical wonders perpetrated upon the environment. We add primary fertilizer salts from the nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium groups, then sprinkle in a few trace elements just for good measure. Like a good Mulligan, the more ingredients, the better. Unfortunately, most of these ingredients remain in the pot long after the plant has absorbed all the nutrient it can. Water evaporates from this soup and what remains is a highly condensed and 'thirsty' sludge. Nearest source of water? Plant tissue. Result? Dehydration.

This situation is not unique to plants. It is the same situation found when a shipwreck survivor drinks sea water to alleviate thirst. Moisture is taken from the area of lower concentration and is released into the area of higher concentration. Sea water is more concentrated than body fluids, so the survivor dehydrates no matter how much sea water is consumed. Same with plants: If we feed high concentrations of nutrient salts, let them concentrate through evaporation, then fail to flush them completely with very heavy water flow at each irrigation, our plants will dehydrate no matter how often we spritz, spray, dribble or otherwise moisten the medium. The cure is almost too simple: Adopt nature's plan of constant feeding with a weak nutrient solution and put plenty of it through the pot to flush the medium and irrigate the plant at each water.

Maybe we should just feed orchids chicken soup. At least we see a lot of orchids that seem in danger of catching a cold. *The Book* tells us orchids are, for the most part, tropical plants. Great, except there is no such thing as a tropical plant because there is no place properly called 'the tropics'.

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We use that term to refer to that portion of the earth between the Tropic of Cancer on the North and the Tropic of Capricorn on the South, then mistakenly say, 'the tropics'. The two official Tropics are located at 23 degrees 27' North and South of the equator because that represents the northernmost and southernmost points at which the sun will be directly overhead at some time during the year. It seems our wobbly old earth sort of meanders around a rough circle and isn't even perpendicular to its own orbit. The amount of tilt: 23 degrees 27'. That's what is meant by the expression, 'What goes around comes around.'

Properly, the area bounded by the two formal Tropics should be called 'The Torrid Zone', and we'd grow better orchids if we remembered that. Sure, a few cool-growing orchids are different, but most of the common 'tropical' epiphytes have a zone of compensation that evolved in the Torrid Zone: torrid like in hot. 'Whoa', you say, 'zone of what?' Compensation is that hypothetical level of plant function above which plants grow and below which they decline and die. The zone of compensation, the area in which plants are in balance, depends on many things, but temperature is a primary factor. 'Tropical' plants do not evolve a good system for dealing with drastic changes in temperature for the simple reason that they are rarely exposed to them. Then orchid plants shut down due to extreme heat or cold, they have a severely limited capacity to restart and resume normal functions. Thermal dormancy just isn't practiced in the Torrid Zone.

Based upon empirical observance only, one might guess the compensation or balance line for the orchids most commonly grown is around 40 to 45 F, because most orchids seem to barely hold their own if temperatures fall into that area. It then seems that plant activity doubles for every 15 to 20 F rise in temperature, at least to the area around 85 F. While empirical for orchids, such data hold true for many plants. This means that plant activity is about four times as great near 85 F as it is in the low 40 F range. We also observe that above 95 F, orchid plants begin to shut down due to heat stress. This is probably a defense mechanism common to most plants that shuts down plant activity when loss of water approaches or exceeds the capacity of the plant to raise water to its segments.

Due to their great mechanical strength, orchid plants do not easily wilt, but they give definite signs of drastically curtailed activity as temperatures approach 100 F. In measuring plant temperature, we do not measure the ambient air surrounding the plant. Leaf temperature is always higher than the surrounding air because the leaf is absorbing energy from light radiation. Take the temperature of the plant just as you might take the temperature of a sick child. Shake the mercury or other indicator all the way down in a

regular sick-room thermometer - preferably one calibrated down to 90 F, as many are. Place the thermometer on a leaf for several minutes and read the result. If the reading is below 90 F, we're not concerned. Leaf temperatures above 95 F rapidly become critical, but temperatures in the 80- to 90-degree range during the hottest part of the day, when coupled with plenty of rapidly moving fresh air, will produce a happy plant that is about as active as it physically can be. Makes it easier to tolerate smarties from the high desert who brag about keeping temperature down in the 70s on fine summer days when plants should be packing in strength and energy for flowering. Our plants sweat it out right along with us, thank you.

Just to get the last bit of mileage from this session, let's toss the calendar out with *The Book*. Early astronomers and scientists developed a number of solar/lunar calendars and refined them over centuries of observation into accurate tools. In 46 BC, Julius Caesar appointed a symposium that consolidated the best features of many calendars into the Julian calendar that became the standard of the world for 1,600 years. That's a long enough period for a lot of little errors to develop a massive effect, so, beginning in 1582, our current calendar was established to make things right. This calendar was finally adopted as a world standard in 1923. That's great, but no one told the orchids.

Today's calendar opens for business on January 1 every year, but orchids are still asleep January 1. They are much more in tune with the old calendars that started the new year around March 21. The year is just off to a better start when September, October, November and December again become the seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth month, in keeping with the Latin roots for their names. Spring is certainly a more physically pleasant time for awakening than January.

Finally, March coincides with the wanderings of the earth in relation to the sun, as we discussed earlier. With a natural order to awaken them, orchid plants will start each year near March 21. For the most precise start date, adjust that date by the number of days, + or -, that Easter varies from April 1. To track this, get an old desk calendar, the book type that everybody gives and nobody uses.

Use the same one for several years, disregarding the day of the week and using only the date each month. Make brief notes every few days about changes you see in the greenhouse. Over a period of several years, the rhythm of the universe will be reflected in this plant diary. You'll also develop the best and most accurate guide possible for your personal growing program - what blooms when; when to take preventive action against a seasonal pest; which plants are productive and which just signed up for the free lunch

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Good information, good fun and just a little bit awesome when you see a bit of the cosmic record take form on your pages. Our little microuniverse in a greenhouse is not galactically insignificant; we're part of a design so grand it goes unnoticed unless we learn where and how to look. Our plants know, and they can teach us.

To grow orchids, one must also study a bit of math. *The Book* teaches us the great mathematical rule of orchids: to multiply, you must divide. In practice, results are not always on the plus side. To get the picture, pull up to a hobbyist's house for a visit. He tours you through the front garden, the *piece de resistance* being a narrow path skirting a specimen plant of the Aunt Molly rose. He bought this in 1939 for 29 cents and a coupon from a package of facial soap. It has never been trimmed or restrained in any way and now is suspected of devouring sundry small animals and a meter reader who disappeared on this street three or four years ago.

You pass through to the back via an arbor covered with strangler fig, and only your good Swiss army knife saves you from a first-person testimonial. Next, it's through the back garden where the first tomato is 7 feet off the ground on this vine that looks like Tarzan just left. Now enter the greenhouse. The biggest plant there has two pseudobulbs and a tiny new growth that looks scared when it sees the Swiss army knife still in your hand. You put your knife away, then carefully button the flap on your pocket when the hobbyist starts telling you he has all these plants and none of them ever bloom. Answer to the unwritten quiz: Little plants spend all their time and energy growing. Big plants, having little else to do, bloom. Plants bloom to reproduce, not to enter orchid shows. Mature plants have the capacity to reproduce, so mature plants bloom. We've all seen the seedling blooming for the last time, but we're talking about Bloom.

We're going to lose the faint-hearted now because we are going to talk about *the chapter that is never in The Book*. Parental discretion is advised. This chapter, to be blunt, discusses 'Conversing with Orchids.' Most of us engage in this practice but we do it in a furtive, clandestine way because the subject is never included in *The Book*. In fact, this subject is

not always considered proper for discussion in mixed company. Not because orchid conversation is X-rated. We simply are inhibited by a culture that teaches us from earliest childhood that plants cannot communicate with people. Well, if we mean orchid plants cannot engage in conventional speech, there may be a little truth to this one. But then we'd have to say that instrumental music can't convey meaning. Even the bang-bang stuff the kids listen to seems to be saying something - at least to them. You'd have to lay it on the Native Americans, too, because the Indians were sending messages with smoke and mirrors long before politicians found out they could convey massive public debt the same way.

If you're still not convinced, here's the clincher. Did you ever see a new grandmother with her first grandbaby? Newbaby is only two hours old and Newgranny can tell you exactly what it likes, doesn't like and what it thinks of Uncle Charlie's strange habit - all with no margin for error.

So now tell me orchids can't communicate. Of course they can. And they do, if we stop making it hard for them. We must establish an empathic relationship with our plants that will let them be part of our lives just as we are part of theirs. We need to forget a lot of old myths, toss away some old books and open our minds to the world as seen by an orchid plant. When in doubt, learn to do it the way the orchid does it. After all, an orchid plant is a competitor all its life. If it is alive, it is winning, so listen to it, be a part of it and think for yourself when you read or listen to the experts expound the latest orchid legend.

When you're one with your orchids, you won't have to go by *The Book*; you'll know."

About the author of the above essay: Ed Wright is a longtime orchid grower and has lived for many years in San Antonio, Texas. He has written many articles for American Orchid Society publications and managed the orchid collection at the San Antonio Botanical Gardens. In 1942 he got a job as a pot boy in a commercial greenhouse, and that is where he was introduced to orchids.

Equestrian Special Olympics Barbara Parnell

The Equestrian Special Olympics were held on January 24 at the Western Saddle Club. OSA members Julie & Fred Rathbun, Wilella Stimmell and myself were among the many volunteers. Participants ranged in age from small children to adults, and the events rotated throughout the morning so that everyone had a chance to participate in each event. The events included an equestrian competition for those riders who had been receiving lessons, an obstacle course for those who just wanted to ride, a hay ride, square dancing and arts and crafts.

Julie, Wilella and myself worked with the obstacle course riders. Each rider had 3 volunteers - one to lead the horse and 2 to steady the rider on either side. The riders could complete the course more than one time if they chose to, and many went through two or three times! Another group of volunteers well worth mentioning was from Luke Air Force Base. They were especially appreciated when a rider who was usually confined to a wheel chair needed to be helped on or off the horse. The "MC" for this part of the days events was our own Fred Rathbun, who announced each rider's name, and kept the event moving along.

This was my first time as a volunteer for OSA, but it will definitely not be the last! I hope more of our members will give a little of their time for these very deserving projects.

FEBRUARY PROGRAM RECAP

Lou Ann Remeikis

Paul Storm was our guest speaker at the February meeting. Paul and his wife, Mary, own Meke Aloha Orchids in Sarasota, FL. Meke Aloha means "Warm Hello" in the language of Hawaii, a location they love to visit. The interactive presentation was casual, fun, and educational.

Paul's love of orchids center around the genus Schomburgkias, both species and hybrids. His presentation on "Schoms" made me a believer in being able to grow this genus of orchids. It seems they are much more forgiving of temperatures than most other orchids – a big help when Arizona is the state we have chosen to live in. As with all orchids in Arizona, no direct sunlight is tolerated. There is quite a range of Schoms that like everything from a lower light to a very bright light, average humidity, and (of course) typical feeding regime, so I am sure there are several varieties that you can grow – whatever your growing environment may be!

There are 23 species of Schomburgkias (give or take a few) and 33 intergenerics in existence. The slide presentation Paul put together was proof of some beautiful flowers found in this group. I particularly liked the waxy looking flowers – they looked like they glowed with shine!

Paul brought some wonderful plants for our Silent Auction and everyone seemed anxious to win the plant of their choice so they could try this orchid variety! If you were unlucky and didn't get a plant, or want one that Paul didn't bring to the meeting, check out his website: www.mekealohaorchids.com and contact him at mekealoha@comcast.net.

NOTE OF THANKS:

I want to personally thank the Orchid Society of Arizona's membership for the gorgeous orchid-engraved crystal paperweight presented to me at the January meeting. I know this was presented to me for my service to OSA as President. I truly enjoyed the experience of being "your" President and my only hope was that I kept a feeling of unity within the membership. Our group is very culturally diverse and I always tried to respect everyone's differences as we celebrated our common passion of orchids! I am realistic in knowing that one person cannot make everyone happy considering the size of our group, but I honestly believe everyone feels like they are part of the "OSA Family". Your support was always appreciated.

My hopes for OSA's future are that you give Norma Kafer the same courtesies you have provided me. With Norma's leadership and knowledge, and your support and cooperation, OSA will continue to thrive in the efforts to educate the members on orchids in a fun and friendly environment!

**Happy Growing –
Lou Ann Remeikis**



OSA March 2004 Calendar



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 OSA Meeting 7:00 PM Alan Ladd Sara Heberling Sun Lakes Garden Club	2 Gene Koonce Kathy Clifton	3	4 Wilella Stimmell	5	6
7	8	9	10	11 Kingman area Master Gardeners	12 Chris Gubler Mohave County Home & Garden	13
14 Joe Civello Show Planning Meeting	15 Tatiana Macias	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23 Sean Bacik	24	25 Steve Grass	26	27 Sally Grass
28 Julie Rathbun	29	30	31 Jarka Kazda			



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