Orchidacea

Newsletter of the Triangle Orchid Society
Associated with Sarah P. Duke Gardens

Speaker for July 9,2007

Walter Orchard "Disas"

Walter (Wally) Orchard grew up in South Africa, where the best-known Disa species originate. He has several degrees from the University of Natal and a Ph.D. in Physical Chemistry from Cambridge, England. He recently retired from a career of chemistry teaching and research at the University of California, Irvine, University of the Witwatersrand, University of Puget Sound, Tacoma Community College and Green River Community College. He has also spent one-year sabbaticals in Athens, Georgia and Knoxville, Tennessee.

Wally first became interested in Disas when his father started cultivating them in the 1980s. He moved to Washington State in 1993, where he took up Disa cultivation in Olympia. He is a member of the Northwest Orchid Society (Seattle) and the Tacoma Orchid Society, but has recently moved to Yachats on the Oregon coast, where the climate is ideal for Disas. He also grows and breeds Stenoglottis, another terrestrial orchid genus from South Africa. Through his association with top growers in South Africa, New Zealand and the United States, and his own breeding program, he has developed a medium-sized collection of high quality Disas. He has bred and registered several new Disa and Stenoglottis hybrids.

Disas are rarely seen in orchid collections, which is a great pity as they are among the most strikingly beautiful of all terrestrial orchids. His talk will cover the main Disa species of interest, all of which grow in a winter rainfall area close to Cape Town, in close association with water. He will discuss the main hybridization lines and describe how to grow these colorful orchids. Color slides are the next best thing to seeing the orchids themselves, and there will be plenty of slides to see in this talk. The slides will show typical Disa habitat as well as Disas growing in both the wild and in nurseries from around the world.

Disa seedling plants will be available for sale, and orders for plants will be taken if necessary. It is recommended that Disa orders be shipped in the fall, to avoid the heat of summer.

Inside this issue:

The Triangle Orchid Society meets at the Sarah P. Duke Gardens, Durham, NC
The Second Monday of the Month
at 7:30 PM

www.TriangleOrchidSociety.org

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Minutes of the Last Meeting

Minutes for the Triangle Orchid Society, June 11, 2007.

President, Michael Wagner, called the meeting to order at 7:33 PM. A motion was made to approve the May minutes as published in the newsletter. The motion was seconded and accepted Announcements: There were 2 guests at Monday's meeting, Bruce & Julie Lowery. They were guests of Miriam & Leo Sagasti. Welcome New Member David Pickett, from Durham

There is a CD available for TOS members. If you have not taken advantage of this new resource, please pick one up.

Most members have paid their dues. There a still just a few stragglers. If you are one of them, please pay your dues. The Society uses up financial resources to provide speakers, the newsletter, periodic international orders, shows and other services to the membership. Dues are necessary to keep those services flowing.

The TOS Library is an excellent resource for the membership. Being able to check out orchid books is a lovely thing. We would like to be able to continue providing this service. In order to continue, people have to RETURN the books. Please take advantage of the library resources, but also please return them when the month is up. Someone else might be waiting to read that book.

Due to the number of plants offered, the raffle was $1/ticket. Congratulations to the lucky winners.

Please volunteer to host our upcoming speakers. A speaker list is available on the TOS website. Hosting a speaker allows individuals time to get acquainted with notable figures from the orchid community. The duties: driving to meetings , pick up at the airport, deliver to meetings scheduling a motel, taking to dinner. The TOS does cover the financial expenses incurred with hosting a speaker. The only personal investment an individual makes is time. We desperately need hosts. Please contact Marie Crock if you are interested in hosting a speaker. Marie can be reached at (919) 479-5069, or bluebirdfield@earthlink.net.

The TOS Spring Auction was a success, even though we were a bit thin on bidders. Over three hundred plants were available for sale, and every single plant was sold.

Grower's Day will be held Saturday, August 4 at Durham Tech from 10 AM to 4 PM. Flyers with specific information will be available with this newsletter. Please post them everywhere. Outreach and education are important TOS functions. The more flyers that get put up, the more people will attend Grower's Day. Directions will be mailed to participants upon registration. The $20 registration will again include lunch and a plant. Please consider volunteering to help out with Growers Day tasks, such as setting up, cleaning up, or handing out plants and information.

Owen's Orchids has kindly sent the TOS coupons for a 25% discount. Please pick them up from the Welcome Table.

The Sandhills Orchid Society has organized a purchase of Chilean sphagnum moss. The cost is $30/bale, plus $15 shipping. If anyone wants a bale, please contact Jack Webster (his contact information is available on the masthead). A bale of moss provides about 11 lbs of media.

Thank you very much to Vicky Brawley for providing the Refreshment table, and thank you to Bob Meyer for covering the Welcome table.

Andrea Niessen, the speaker, did a very thorough job presenting the show table. The show table was followed by a 15 minute break for refreshments, which was in turn followed by Ms. Niessen's presentation.

The Jack Webster awards for best show table plants were selected after Ms. Niessen finished speaking. Congratulations to the following winners.

In the Greenhouse Grown category:

First Place Ribbon went to *Laelia digbyana*

Grown by John Stanton owned by White Tiger

Second Place Ribbon went to *Angraecum magdalenae grown by John Stanton*

:Third Place Ribbon went to *Cattleya leopoldii* grown by Bob Davidson

In the Non Greenhouse grown category:

First Place Ribbon went to *Coryanthes speciosa* grown by Nick Plummer

Second Place Ribbon went to Bl. Citron Star grown by Miriam Sagasti

Third Place Ribbon went to *Ascocentrum curvifolium 'Kalawao',* Grown by Judith Goldstein

The raffle plants were claimed, and the meeting adjourned at approximately 9:30 pm.

Have Dinner with the speaker 5:30 PM, before the meeting, at the Neo China Restaurant, 4015 University Drive, Durham , behind Target's at the South Square Mall.

Call Alan Miller 969-1612 before 5 PM Monday to make your reservations.

Free Raffle tickets ,up to 5 for each Flowering Orchid you bring to the Show Table

Last Month's Speaker

Andrea Niessen on the

Maxillarias of Columbia

Andrea grew up with orchids. Her grandfather was a grower and today she is still growing some of his select clones. She remembers seeing Max triloris while she was still a young girl, an experience that sparked her interest in Maxillarias. Currently she and her husband live in Cali and have two nurseries, one for warm growing orchids, and one for cool growers.

Maxillarias are classified as part of the Maxillarieae tribe, subtribe Maxillarinae. The name Maxillaria refers to the fact that the lip and column of the type species, Max triloris, is said to be shaped like a jawbone. Andrea said that Maxillarieas represent 10% of the epiphytic plants that grow in the neotropics. The subtribe Maxillarinae has roughly 700 species, which are further separated into a number of genera. In the genus Maxillaria there are 250 identified species. According to Andrea there are still numerous unidentified species just waiting to be described. She has a number of these in her greenhouse, as evidenced by the slides she presented. She said that researchers at the U. of Florida in Gainesville are working on DNA identification of a number of species, but most recent classification has been based on physical similarities. Andrea said she anticipates a number of changes in the way species are currently organized once the DNA and molecular studies are complete.

According to Andrea, Maxillarias are hugely variable. The plants may grow as clusters of pseudobulbs that form large "nests". Many have rambling rhizomes. The plants may be large and grow up to 24 inches tall, or they may be miniatures and barely ½ an inch. Foliage is also variable in size and shape. Some varieties may have 2 – 5 leaves per pseudobulb, while others only one. Some foliage is spotted with a white waxy material that Andrea said resembled bird droppings, an adaptation that discourages small animals from chewing on the plants. Most Maxillarias have only one flower per inflorescence, and each has a distinctive lip that helps to differentiate the species. Many varieties are fragrant.

Maxillarias can be found across Central America, as well as south into Columbia, Peru and Argentina. In Columbia they are found in multiple environments ranging from humid tropical forests, to large flat river valleys, to the dry

tableland plateaus of the intermountain regions. Columbia is bordered by both the Pacific and Caribbean Oceans, and has three major mountain ranges that run its entire length. Maxillarieas, therefore, are found all over Columbia, in many different environments, and require markedly different growing conditions.

The largest alliance of Maxillarias is represented by the Grandiflora. This group has long flower stems, large flowers and only one leaf per pseudobulb. The base of the inflorescence is covered with bracts. These plants are easy to grow under intermediate conditions, and do well in baskets which allow the flowers to emerge from under the foliage. One of the most striking of this section is Max striata, which is found from Columbia to Peru. It can vary in color from red to orange to yellow.

The type species of the Lepidota alliance is Max lepidota, a spidery yellow-brown species that is cool growing and requires lots of humidity to be grown successfully. Other species in this alliance include Max longissima and Max fractiflexa. These plants are predominantly yellow, and Andrea says they are excellent bloomers and easy to grow.

The alliance Speciosa is frequently fragrant. These plants can be more difficult to grow. They require very warm temperatures and high humidity and are noted for their rambling rhizomes. Andrea manages their sprawling growth habit by repotted with each new growth, taking care to secure the new pseudobulb well down in the mix. The most notable variety in this alliance is Max splendens, which is white with a distinctive orange lip.

The Parkeria alliance does best mounted. These are warm growers that require high humidity. These plants have short inflorescences, and grow from rhizomes and tend to climb. The best known example from this group is Max luteo alba, one of the showiest Maxillarias. It is an easy to grow plant with short yellow and white flowers clustered around the base of the plant. Eric Christianson recently identified a new species in this alliance and called it Max nissenii, in recognition of Andrea's work with Maxillarias. The Porrecta alliance is the least well understood group of these plants and Andrea believes that there are many undiscovered species still waiting to be identified. The type plant is Max brunnea, which has yellow flowers with a purple flush and dark purple spotting or streaking on the lip. The alliance Densifolia contains a number of “climbers” with very long rhizomes that wrap themselves around tree trunks, forming huge clumps. These become very large plants and are not really suitable for hobbyists because of their size. The flowers are less showy than other Maxillarias, but they bloom readily and frequently.

Another alliance is known as Crassifolia. The foliage on these appears almost grass like. The type species is also called crassifolia. Its flowers arise from the base of the pseudobulbs, and are short lived, lasting only a few days. The flowers are often yellow and may have a lemon like fragrance. They do well in baskets or mounted to show the pendant flowers to best advantage. The Meridensis alliance includes the first group of Maxillarias described in the late 1700s, and forms the basis of the tribal classification. They typically have long flower stems with the blooms held well above the foliage. They are pollinated by hummingbirds so tend to be more colorful than many other varieties. They can grow to be very large plants. The Microphyton alliance is characterized by the type Max wercklel. Typically these plants have one leaf and one flower stem per growth, but the flowers may bloom sequentially from the same inflorescence.

The Acuminata alliance is known for large, climbing plants that do best on mounts or in large baskets. They are fast growing and do well in warm to intermediate conditions. Max rufescens is the fragrant type for this alliance. Andrea said that the fragrance of rufescens is more Coconut-like in Central America, but definitely Vanilla in Columbia. Max camaridii is also part of this alliance. It is from the eastern plains, needs good light, and is a fast grower. The sequentially blooming flowers are very short lived, lasting only a day or two before fading. Andrea believes that this plant is not truly representative and that it belongs in its own genus.

The final alliance is Alpestris, with the type plant Max alpestria. These are small to miniature plants with proportionally very large flowers. When growing these it is critical not to allow them to dry out. Andrea said that there are a number of miniatures in this alliance that have not been studied or classified.

Finally, Andrea said that in their nursery they start their seedlings in sphagnum moss in small plastic net pots, such as the ones on the plants she had for sale. In the nursery they allow the roots to grow out through the moss before moving the plants into a growing medium. When the plants are moved up, the small net containers are left in place to avoid damaging the roots.

Transcription by

Joy Lemieux, Sandhills Orchid Society

Growers Day Saturday, August 4, 2007 10:00 AM to 4:30 PM

Triangle Orchid Society will hold its annual Growers Day seminar series at Durham Technical Community College, 1637 Lawson St., Durham, NC.

Attendees will learn from expert growers how to grow different types of orchids in the home and greenhouse. The program will benefit the windowsill grower, novice orchid collector, experienced growers, and those just curious to know why so many people are growing orchids these days.

Tuition for the Triangle Orchid Society Growers Day is $20.00 and **reservations must be made in advance** due to availability of seats. All participants will receive an orchid seedling and new members will receive a free membership in the Triangle Orchid Society for the balance of 2007. Send checks payable to Triangle Orchid Society, C/O Bob Meyer, 110 Widecombe Court, Cary, NC 27513. Deadline for reservations is July 30th, 2007.

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Jack Webster Awards Non Greenhouse Grown

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Growing Tips for July

By Courtney T. Hackney

Most of us have noticed the change in humidity that comes with summertime heat. What is significant to your Orchids outside or in a greenhouse is that your plants lose less water each day than they did when the humidity and temperature were lower. Most plants open their cells to the outside through microscopic structures (stomates) on the underside of leaves that both cool and allow gas exchange. When the outside humidity is much lower than the 100% humidity inside the leaf, a leaf can lose more water than it can get. This causes stress and may cause stomates to close, thus limiting growth and causing the leaf to overheat. Thus, your Orchids may not require as much water as they did in April and May.

High humidity also provides ideal conditions for both fungal and bacterial rots. Higher humidity means that plants do not dry as quickly. Reducing watering, coupled with increased air movement will minimize rot problems. If you have a small number of plants check for water in the crowns of Phalaenopsis and for water in developing leaves of Cattleyas. Remove any water that is still on plants at the end of the day by either dumping it out or blotting with a paper towel.

Growing inside is also affected by increased humidity because air conditioners run more. Besides cooling the air in your home, these systems also remove water from the air. Thus, plants inside may need increased water and you may need to increase the humidity around your indoor Orchids with trays of water, ferns placed alongside, or by some other means.

Several hobbyists have asked if they could use the water that runs from an air conditioning compressor to water Orchids. This is the water removed from the air in your house and is essentially the same quality as rainwater.

High heat and humidity provides the ideal conditions for one of the most frustrating pests, slugs. These shell less snails seem to appear out of nowhere just before the buds you have watched for the last 3 weeks open leaving just a little nub. Slugs are hard to keep out of the greenhouse and even harder to get rid of outside. They are amazingly quick and will disappear in a minute or two after you turn on the lights. You may not notice them during most of the year as they contentedly consume dead leaves and algae at night. Even if they consume a few new roots you are not likely to spot them. In the summer's heat and humidity they can move six or feet or more in a matter of minutes, finding your most prized and carefully tended buds.

Use pesticides only when you have no other choice. Try other methods first.

My strategy is to look for slugs before they do any damage. On warm rainy nights I check the inside walls of the greenhouse. Often I know where to look because I see their slime trails in the early morning before I water. Typically there will be one or two that are relocated far from the greenhouse. They are not poisonous, only slimy. My daughter kept one as a pet for a couple of weeks. They are interesting beasts as long as they are not in the greenhouse. Shallow plates containing stale beer (any brand) will also attract slugs that can then be removed. This may or may not be toxic to slugs unless they drown. They generally refuse to leave the beer on their own.

Just to be sure my prize buds do not become snacks for slugs I use small quantities of a product called Deadline. I put a few drops of this black gooey liquid at the base of the pot or on the bench nearby. This is more attractive than buds and kills slugs quickly. Rarely do I find dead slugs as the removal techniques listed above seem to be very effective at humanely removing them. Those small bush snails, however, are another problem not as easily managed. They tend to be attracted to moist media such as Sphagnum and do their damage on new growths and new roots. Each one by itself is not a serious problem, but there may be a dozen or more in an individual pot. There are several bait products available that work

well, but the limited mobility of these small creatures and the number of very tiny juveniles that are always present makes it impossible to eliminate them without covering the surface of every pot and surface with bait.

As with all pest control products, be sure you the application recommendations. This is especially important if you have pets with access to your growing area. Many of these products are tasty to your pets and can injure or kill them. Even products now deemed non- toxic may be found to have some toxicity someday. Use pesticides only when you have no other choice. Try other methods first. Be sure that you have a problem and have identified the pest. Consult local experts or your county extension agent.

Triangle Orchid Society Meeting Agenda:

7: 7:30 Set Up Show Table

7:30-7:45 Business Meeting, Announcements

7:45-8:10 Show Table Review

8:10-8:30 Refreshment Break

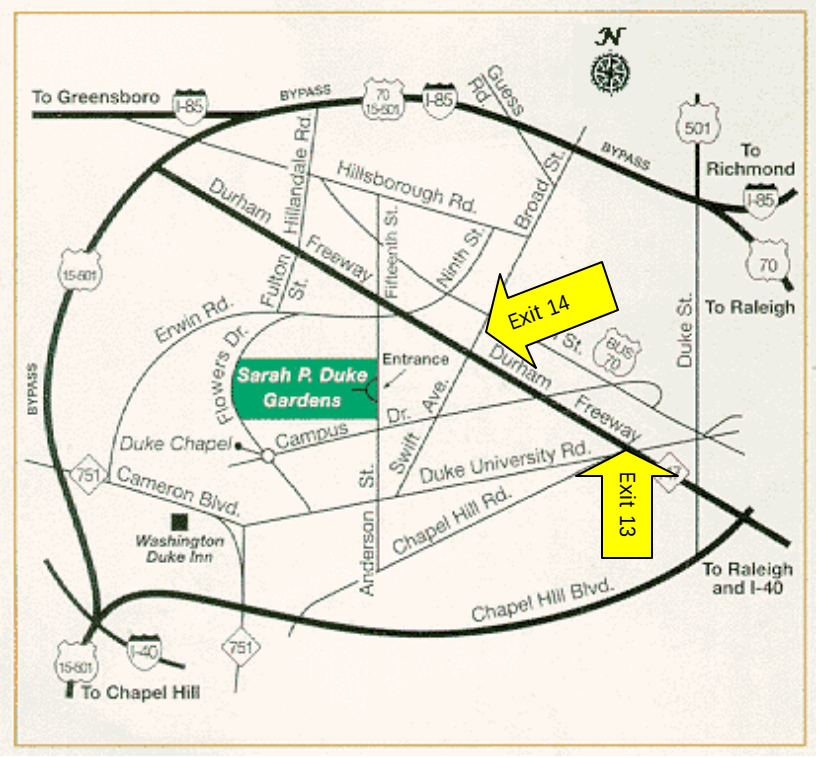
8:30-9:20 Program

9:20-9:30 Show Table Awards, Raffle and Door Prizes

9:30 P.M. Meeting Ends

Calendar 2007	Speaker	Topic
July 9th	Walter Orchard Tumwater WA	Disas and how to grow them
Aug 13th	Ernie Gemeinhart Enlightened Orchids	Cochlopetalum paphs
Sept 10th	Keith Clayton Commercial Grower NC	A Visit to the Taiwan International Orchid Show

Welcome Table	Refreshments
July 9th	Judith Shapiro	Robin and Josh Gurlitz
August 13th		



From the East. **Exit 13 on the Durham Freeway(#147)** South on Chapel Hill Rd. right on Anderson St. Gardens on left.

From the West. **Exit 14 on the Durham Freeway (147)** South on Swift Ave right on Campus Drive , right on Anderson St. Gardens on left.

The Triangle Orchid Society meets at the Sarah P. Duke Gardens, Durham, NC The Second Monday of the Month at 7:30 PM

Visitors are Welcome!

www.TriangleOrchid Society.org

Speaker for July 9, 2007

Walter Orchard

"Disas"

ORCHID SOCIETY TRIANGLE NORTH CAROLINA

Associated with Sarah P Duke Gardens

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Triangle Orchid Society Dues are:

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