



# Orchidacea

Newsletter of the  
Triangle Orchid Society

Associated with  
Sarah P. Duke Gardens

## Speaker for August 10, 2009

### Mario Ferrusi - Mario's Orchids A to Z

Mario started growing orchids just after his daughter Ilia was born in 1980. Just as everyone else, he started with a hybrid Phalaenopsis. This soon escalated when he purchased a hobbyist collection of 23 plants and florescent light setup. He quickly learned to like the weird and unusual, i.e. Masdevallias, Draculas and everything in the cool range.

Before long, he joined the local orchid society and almost immediately became their membership chair. Mario took over the show chair's job shortly afterwards, which lasted for about 10 years. Just recently he became past president of Ontario's largest society, the Southern Ontario Orchid Society. Mario joined the AOS judging program in 1992, was accredited in 1998, and chaired the Toronto Judging Center for 5 years.

Mario is a hobby grower. He now has 2 greenhouses, the smaller one (15 X 20) is for intermediate to warm plants where as the larger (24 X 32) is for all his cool beauties.

Mario has concentrated mostly on hybridizing Masdevallias, Lycastes, Odontoglossums, and a few other scattered genera. He particularly enjoys exhibiting and competing for the AOS Show Trophy, but next to AOS quality awards for his plants, he cherishes cultural awards the most.

### 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 at  
(919) 969-1612  
before 5 PM Monday  
to make your reservations.

### Speaker Information

Mario will be bringing plants  
for sale.

He may be contacted at:

1129 Cream St., Fenwick,

Ontario LOS 1Co

Phone: 905-892-4187,

Email: mferrusi@sympatico.ca

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

**www.Triangle  
OrchidSociety.org**

## TOS Officers and Board Members

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## Minutes of the Last Meeting 7/13/2009

The July meeting of the Triangle Orchid Society was held on Monday, July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009 at Sarah P. Duke Gardens, Durham, NC. The meeting was called to order by President Phil Warner at 7:30 PM. The June meeting minutes were approved.

Thanks to Susan Morand for hosting the Hospitality Table and to John Myhre for hosting the Welcome Table. Phil & Frances Brindle and Albina Giardino were welcome as new members at the meeting.

Special thanks to Maria Crock for organizing the Orchid Crawl. Held over 2 weekends in May, TOS members were able to visit 10 sites, to see how other members grew their orchids. Thank you to Miriam & Leo Segasti, Robin & Josh Gurlitz, Jeanne & Michael Wagner, Judith Goldstein, Nick Plummer, Marie Crock, John Stanton, Paul Feaver, Olivene & Paul Virtue, Jeff Bottoms & John Martin, and Candy & Michael Joerhendt who opened their homes & greenhouses.

On July 18<sup>th</sup>, the Museum of Natural Sciences in Raleigh will be presenting an exhibit titled "A Day in the Tropics" from 9 AM until 5 PM. The TOS will have an 8 foot table to display orchids, answer questions, and talk up the society. Display orchids and volunteers will be needed. Please contact Phil Warner at [pwarner@fminet.com](mailto:pwarner@fminet.com) for more information or to help out.

The TOS's annual Growers Day symposium will be held on Saturday, August 8<sup>th</sup> from 9:30 AM – 4:30 PM at the

Education Center of the Raulston Arboretum in Raleigh. The registration fee of \$25 includes five lectures on growing orchids, lunch, and a blooming size souvenir orchid.

The Show Table was presented by Bob Davidson and Paul Feaver, followed by a refreshment break.

This month's speaker Tom Nasser was introduced by David Devine. Following the talk, the Jack Webster Show Table plants were awarded.

In the Non-Greenhouse Grown category,

1<sup>st</sup> Place: *Habenaria rhodocheila* grown by Melissa Bullard,

2<sup>nd</sup> Place: *Rnthps.* Kathy Burks grown by Heather Schneider, and

3<sup>rd</sup> Place: *Paph.* Magic Lantern grown by Nolan Newton.

In the Greenhouse Grown category,

1<sup>st</sup> Place: *Encyclia alata* grown by Michael Wagner,

2<sup>nd</sup> Place: *B nodosa* 'Susan Fuchs' grown by Phil Warner, and

3<sup>rd</sup> Place: *V. tessellate* x *V. loke* grown by Olivene Virtue.

Anyone who feels qualified and is interested in teaming up to do the plant table for the monthly meeting, please get in touch with Bob Davidson, at [bob@cattleya.us](mailto:bob@cattleya.us).

Raffle Plants were awarded and the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM. Minutes submitted by Heather Schneider, Editor.



## Transcript of Last Month's Speaker

Tom Nasser has become a familiar figure to those of us who attend orchid shows throughout this region. His sales booth is always chuck full of weird and wonderful species that you just don't find anywhere else. And, because he actually grows these plants, he knows and understands them. So when Tom gets up to talk about a particular genus, he knows what he's talking about. I personally found his lively presentation to be much more informative and useful than all the books I've been slugging through on Angraecoids.

Tom divided the genus into 4 sections – Angraecums, Aerangis, Aeranthes and Others. Angraecums are native to Madagascar, the eastern coast of Africa, the islands of the Indian Ocean and part of Sri Lanka. There are about 200 species, most of which have white, cream or pale green flowers. The genus is highly variable in that the plants can be huge, up to 4 - 5 feet high, or they can be tiny miniatures. Most are best grown on a mount and need a brief dry dormancy in winter.

Sesquipedaleis the best know of the Angraecums. This is the flower that Darwin postulated was pollinated by a moth with an incredibly long tongue. He pointed out that the long, narrow spur of the flower required a specific pollinator with a very long tongue in order to reach all the way to the bottom of the nectary where the nectar is stored. Because the flower is white, and fragrant, Darwin postulated as well that the flower is pollinated at night. In 1862 when Darwin first put forward this theory, he was ridiculed and made fun of. It wasn't until many years after that the actual moth was found, and Darwin was vindicated. Today, Angrecum sesquipedale is known for its incredibly large white flowers. It is not uncommon for the flower to be up to 10 inches or more across. The nectary or spur can be up to 14 inches long. The blooms can last up to 3 weeks or longer. It is however, hard to grow and it does not like having its roots disturbed. Repotting may cause it to cease blooming for up to 5 years or more.

Most of the other Angraecums on Tom's list are easy to grow but need bright light to bloom. Nearly all have white or cream colored flowers, and are night fragrant. Generally they are very long lived flowers. Angrecums do best when mounted, growing with their roots exposed and getting good air circulation. They tend to like to be kept fairly wet. All of this makes sense, if one thinks of the daily rain and high humidity on the island of Madagascar where they are found.

Aerangis are also white or cream colored and night fragrant. Most of the flowers have short stems and long inflorescences. Like Angrecums, they required a hot, humid environment. However, unlike Angrecums that thrive in high light conditions, Aerangis prefer dense shade. Most are considered miniatures. One particular species, Aerangis luteo-alba is particularly appealing as is white with a bright red center. Aerangis are generally fairly easy to grow if they are watered regularly and allowed to dry out between waterings. They generally do best if mounted.

Aeranthes also come primarily from Madagascar and surrounding islands. These are smallish to intermediate sized plants that form tight fans with their foliage. The inflorescences tend to be long and pendant. Some of the flowers are very large, given the size of the plants that bear them. Most are sequential bloomers and their spurs are significantly shorter than others in this genus. Aeranthes do well on a mount of a basket. They require humid conditions and intermediate to warm conditions. They grow in shaded areas with filtered light. Many of the Aeranthes species have pale apple green flowers. They tend to be found along the eastern coast of Africa and inland, rather than on the outer islands.

Other species in this genus include Calanthes, and Jumella. Calanthes are well known to us here in the Sandhills area as we have several growers who bring them to our plant table every Christmas. These are terrestrial plants that range from Africa to Tahiti. They have large pleated leaves that are deciduous in some species and evergreen in others. The two Calanthes on Tom's list, *C. sylvatica* and *C. repens* are not deciduous. Both open blue and fade to pink as the flower ages.

Jumella are found on Madagascar and surrounding islands. They too are white, but less star shaped than the Aerangis flowers. The foliage grows into fan-like shapes. The inflorescences develop from the base of the plant, and most bear only one flower. Some Jumella have very short stems and bloom at the base of the plant. Others have longer stems and the inflorescences intermingle with the foliage. These plants also do well on a slab, or if grown in a basket they need a well drained mix. Most require a short dormancy after flowering.

*Transcript by Joy Lemieux, Sandhills Orchid Society*

Anyone who feels qualified and is interested in teaming up to do the plant table for the monthly meeting, please get in touch with Bob Davidson, at bob@cattleya.us

**1st Place Ribbon:**  
*Habenaria rhodocheila*  
grown by **Melissa Bullard**



**2nd Place Ribbon:**  
Renanthopsis Kathy Burks  
grown by **Heather Schneider**

**Jack Webster  
Awards  
Non Greenhouse  
Grown**



**3rd Place Ribbon:**  
Paph. Magic Lantern  
grown by **Nolan Newton**







**1st Place Ribbon:**  
*Encyclia alata*  
grown by Michael Wagner

**Jack Webster  
Awards  
Greenhouse  
Grown**



**2nd Place Ribbon:**  
*B. nodosa* 'Susan Fuchs'  
grown by Phil Warner



**3rd Place Ribbon:**  
*V. tessellate x V. luke*  
grown by Olivene Virtue

## Growing Tips for June

By Courtney T. Hackney EMAIL at Hackneau@comcast.net

An acquaintance recently asked me what I found so intriguing about orchids that made me continue growing them for over 40 years. As I thought about the question, I realized that there were several answers. Mostly, the unending variety of species and hybrids offer a challenge to even the most accomplished horticulturalist. Most long-term orchid hobbyists began with a relatively easy-to-grow orchid and after we mastered growing that one, wanted more of a challenge. Learning to provide the environment for an exotic species from another part of the world must be a rewarding experience for those of us engaged in this hobby because we continue to do it.

Most remarkable is the fact that each year the challenge is a little different because it is hotter, colder, or new pests show up. Recently, the pest du jour for me is the juvenile stage of crickets. These appear as pale versions of the adult. They leave damage that looks like slugs, but they also really like new roots. After several nights of looking, I decided to un-pot a damaged plant or two. There were 2 or 3 of the little beasts. Once I knew what to look for, I found them on my new phal leaves and on cattleya roots in the dark of night.

These little beasts are quick, and difficult to catch. Several readers have asked about similar damage on orchids they were growing outside in summer and I suggested that the damage was done by slugs. It is not clear if very dry weather promotes this pest or my conversion to large lava rock for a medium. Lava rock provides large spaces where the juvenile crickets retreat during the daylight and makes killing them by hand difficult. Apparently, my small army of frogs that feed at night has not been able to control these pests and I will soon have to resort to liquid Sevin.

Sevin is an old pesticide widely used in gardens, but not usually for orchids. Most scale, the primary insect pest in orchids, are resistant to Sevin, but it works well on other insect pests. Just follow the

directions and drench the pot. This kills most insects hiding in pots and seems to also be disliked by bush snails and slugs as well.

I never experienced many insect pests, except scale, until recently. My suspicion is that pesticides, such as Orthene, previously used to kill scale, also killed these other pests. Now that I control scale with an infrequent application of a hormonal pesticide, crickets and other insects have appeared.

Most standard cattleya pseudobulbs are maturing now, which means its time to cease fertilizing heavily. Smaller cattleyas with lots of sophonitis in their background can grow all year long and bloom several times a year. This type of cattleya, popular among windowsill growers, can be fertilized all year long.

It seems that many orchid growers in the area now use Dynamite (also known as Nutricote) slow-release fertilizer [13-13-13] and had lots of flowers last winter and spring. I first saw this product in seedlings I purchased from Carter & Holmes a few years ago and after trying it I was hooked. It provides an even dose of fertilizer for 6 months. This is ideal for hobbyists since mixing fertilizer is time consuming and typically results in over-fertilizing. Use about a half teaspoon for a 5" pot.

Recently, a new formulation appeared alongside the standard 13-13-13 formula. While available for some time in bulk, it is now being sold under the trade name Dynamite at Home Depot. It has also appeared from time to time in Big Lots stores at a reduced price. The chemical formula is higher in Nitrogen [18-6-8] and contains minor nutrients as well. It is labeled "All Purpose", comes in a green tube, and provides nutrients for nine months. It delivered too much Nitrogen for cattleyas, but was great for phalaenopsis and paphiopedalums, which are faster growers. About ½ teaspoon per 5" pot worked well. Apply the fertilizer when the orchids begin to grow in winter. There is enough residual fertilizer incorporated into the medium to provide the orchid with nutrients for an entire year.

## Announcements & Upcoming Orchid Events

The Triangle Orchid Society is planning the following:  
 September 26<sup>th</sup>: TOS Fall Orchid Auction, at the White Oak Pavilion, Lake Crabtree County Park, Morrisville, NC. A Member Potluck luncheon starts at noon, with the auction following at 1 PM. Volunteers are needed to help.

October 15<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup>: Flower & Garden Show, at the NC State Fair, Raleigh, NC. Volunteers are needed to help.

Carolina Judging Center, Natural Sciences Center, Greensboro, NC, Judging & Business Meeting, Aug 15<sup>th</sup>: Stan Hutto: "Phragmipedium kovachii and Its Hybrids". In Sept., Tom Wise: "Coelogyne species and hybrids" See: [www.carolinajudgingcenter.org](http://www.carolinajudgingcenter.org) for info.

For a complete list of all orchid shows, see: [www.aos.org](http://www.aos.org), click on "Events" & "Show Schedules"

<b>Triangle Orchid Society Meeting Agenda:</b>	<b>Calendar 2009</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Topic</b>
7:00-7:30 Set Up Show Table and Chairs	<b>August 10th</b>	<b>Mario Ferrusi</b>	<b>Mario's Orchids A to Z</b>
7:30-7:45 Business Meeting Announcements		<b>Bringing Plants For Sale</b>	
7:45-8:10 Show Table Review	<b>September 14th</b>	<b>Fred Clarke</b>	<b>Mini - Cattleyas</b>
8:10-8:30 Refreshment Break		<b>Bringing Plants For Sale</b>	
8:30-9:20 Program			
9:20-9:30 Show Table Awards, Raffle & Door Prizes	<b>October 12th</b>	<b>Nolan Newton</b>	<b>Recognition and Control of Insects and Pests of Orchids</b>
9:30 P.M. Meeting Ends			

### Welcome Table

### Refreshments

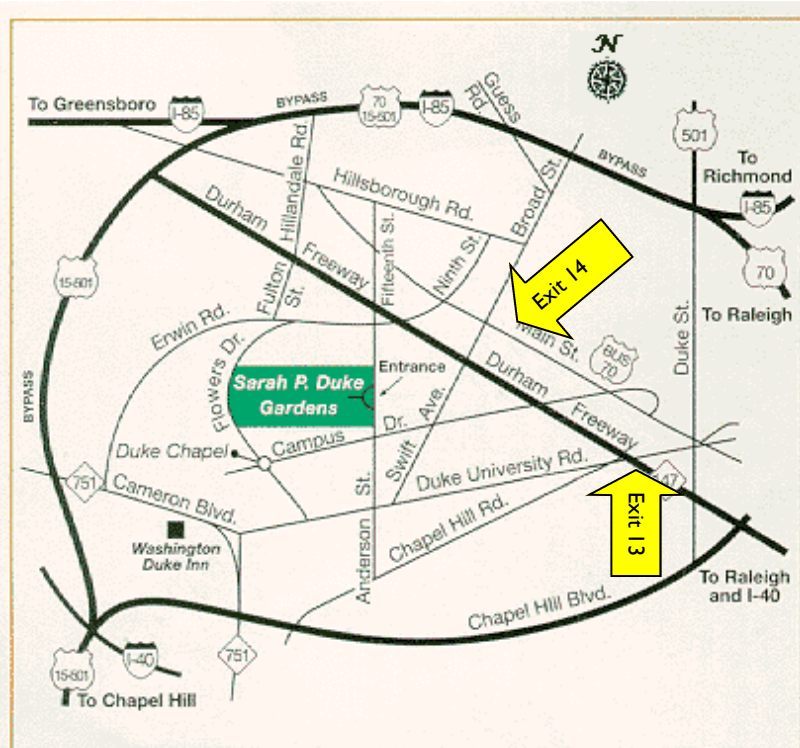
<b>August</b>	<b>Need volunteers</b>	<b>Marlene Kinney</b>
<b>Sept</b>	<b>Need volunteers</b>	<b>Gerry Bowater</b>



**Associated with Sarah P Duke Gardens**

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**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.TriangleOrchidSociety.org](http://www.TriangleOrchidSociety.org)**

From the East. **Exit 13 on the Durham Freeway(#147)**  
Head South on Chapel Hill Rd. Turn right on Anderson St.  
The Gardens are on the left.  
From the West. **Exit 14 on the Durham Freeway (147)**  
Head South on Swift Ave. Turn right on Campus Drive ,  
Turn right on Anderson St. The Gardens are on the left.

**Triangle Orchid Society Dues are:**

\$18 per year single, or \$24 per year for two persons living at the same address.

Mail to: Leo Sagasti, Treasurer    2306 Damascus Church Rd    Chapel Hill    NC    27516