



# Orchidaceae

Newsletter of the  
Triangle Orchid Society

Associated with  
Sarah P. Duke Gardens

Speaker for February 9, 2009

Patricia Harding - Debatable Epidendrum Prosthechea

Patricia is retired from the workforce and now focuses on orchids, as a traveler, observer, photographer, and writer, with a little orchid growing on the side. When she's not traveling she lives in Oregon.

Patricia studied Botany as an undergraduate, but the economy at the time provided no jobs in Botany, so she became a medical doctor. She started growing orchids at age 21, killed them all, started again at 25, killed them all, and again at 30, but this time she started by going to orchid society meetings to learn how to do it. At the first meeting, someone had a *Dendrobium thyrsoiflorum* with three massive inflorescences. They had collected the plant years before and they were selling it because it was too big. Patricia sat on her hands and let the thing go to someone else for \$20, as she vowed not to buy an orchid till she knew how to grow them. She felt so frustrated by this that she never sat on her hands again, buying every orchid she reasonably could get her hands on. This led to one greenhouse, two and now three greenhouses and about 5000 plants and of those there are 1500 different species.

She retired from medicine ten years ago, and decided to return to Botany, especially the part of Botany she found the most fascinating - taxonomy. She started the AOS judging program in the PNW region and had the good fortune to meet with Carl Withner. She volunteered to help him with some "projects". The first project ended up being the book "The Debatable Epidendrum" covering a group of orchids Carl had loved and had ideas of how they should be segregated but had never put it to paper. Patricia's part was to put it to paper.

She learned a lot doing the book and enjoyed sorting out the problems such a book presents. She decided to do the next work on her own. She decided to study the *Huntleya* group, which includes *Pescatorea*, *Chondrorhyncha*, *Kefersteinia*, among others. The result is the book "Huntleyas and their Relatives" which has just been released November 2008. Along with writing books about orchids, she writes the occasional article for orchid magazines and in her travels she photographs orchids which seem to be all over the internet.

Patricia has been fortunate that as an AOS judge, she has fallen into the small group of judges who judge international shows. This is not an elite group and yet it is surprising how few judges take advantage of these opportunities to judge internationally. Usually the cost to the judge is airfare and the rest is provided by the society so that the judge's in-country expenses are minimal. With a little effort one can arrange for some local people to take the judges to see orchids in the habitat, which is the part Patricia likes the best.

Patricia no longer buys orchid plants, she does take the occasional gift plant, but she now considers the greenhouses of collectors around the world as part of her own collection. Besides her greenhouses are full.

Patricia may be contacted at:

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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

### President

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## Minutes of the Last Meeting 1/12/2009

The January meeting of the Triangle Orchid Society was held on the 12<sup>th</sup> at Sarah P. Duke Gardens, Durham, NC. The meeting was called to order by President Phil Warner at 7:30 PM. The minutes of last month's meeting and the Treasurer's report were approved. President Phil Warner expressed his appreciation to Past President Paul Virtue and Treasurer Leo Sagasti for his smooth transition into the 2009 presidency, and announced the December mini-auction has receipts of \$1,661.

### Current Business:

1. Michael Wagner has a membership information update form at the Welcome Table.
2. Dues of \$18 for single & \$24 for family memberships for 2009 are due. Checks payable to TOS can be given or mailed to Treasurer Leo Sagasti, 2306 Damascus Church Rd, Chapel Hill, NC 27516.
3. Frank Hyman donated several books to our library.
4. 2009 AOS calendars are available from John Myhre for \$10.
5. Heather Schneider is our new Newsletter Editor and can be reached at [liflnc@yahoo.com](mailto:liflnc@yahoo.com)
6. 2 new members were in attendance: Pat Alt and Nila Godwin.
7. Our thanks to Bob Molter and Lori Chapman for staffing the Welcome Table this month.
8. For the first time in years, there was not a Hospitality Table at our monthly meeting. A volunteer is needed to coordinate the staffing of the Hospitality Table, along with monthly volunteers. For information about this position, please contact Robin Gurlitz at 929-9717 or [robing@i-gga.com](mailto:robing@i-gga.com).

### Future Business:

1. Alan Miller spoke about the Triad Orchid Show in Greensboro from 30 January to February 1st. The TOS

will be putting in a 50 square foot exhibit and we will need orchids to display. Plants can be brought to Orchid Trail in Morrisville, ATTN: John Stanton 362-1062, to Marie Crock in Durham: 479-5069, or to Judith Goldstein in Hillsborough: 732-7622. Plants can also be brought to the TOS Board Meeting on Monday, 26 January in Sarah Duke Gardens at 6:30 PM. Please stake your plants, put your name or an address label on the pot, and include a list of your plants for Alan Miller to help with show registration.

2. Judith Goldstein spoke about the TOS Orchid Show at Northgate Mall, Friday March 20<sup>th</sup> – Sunday March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Our theme will be "At Home with Orchids". ***This show has been postponed until further notice.***

The Show Tables were presented by Bob Davidson and Paul Feaver. After a short break, Marie Crock introduced our speaker, Dr. Bill Mathis, who gave his talk, "Growing Hardy Perennial Orchids", and also donated a copy of his book with the same title to our library.

Following Dr. Mathis's talk, the Jack Webster Show Table plants were awarded.

### Non-Greenhouse category:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place: Masd. Aquarius by Lee Allgood,  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Odontonia Memoria 'Martin Orientstein' by Melissa Bullard,  
 3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Phrag Sorcerer's Apprentice x bessiae by Marie Crock.

### In the Greenhouse Grown category:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place: Dend. corbium by Rick Cavallaro,  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Brassavola Little Stars by Olivene Virtue,  
 3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Lc Summit View by Bob Davidson.

Raffle plants were awarded and the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 PM.

Minutes submitted by Bob Meyer, Secretary, Triangle Orchid Society.



## Transcript of Last Month's Speaker

Bill Mathis received his MA from the University of Arkansas in 1970. His thesis topic was a study of *Cypripedium parviflorum*, var. *parviflorum*, the small yellow Slipper Orchid found through much of the Midwest and Eastern US. Bill went on to earn a PhD in agronomy and worked in that field for thirty years. Eight years ago, when the company where he was working was sold, he took early retirement and changed his focus to his true passion - the growing of hardy, perennial orchids. He began his own business, The Wild Orchid Company, based in Carversville, PA. He soon realized that the general public was enamored of the large showy tropical orchids, but had very limited information about the hardy orchids they could grow in their own yards. In 2004 he wrote a book explaining how to grow these terrestrial orchids.

A plant is considered "hardy," Bill explained, when it is able to withstand not just the cold each winter, but the extreme heat in summer as well. It is critical for hardy orchids to have the ability to "vernalize" which is the over-wintering process required by perennials to stimulate various growth processes, especially to flower. To do this successfully, most hardy orchids require "mulch" or a covering of chopped up leaves and pine needles to protect them during the extreme cold of winter. Orchids, said Bill, are harder to propagate from seed because they lack the large endosperm sac, or nutrient source, found in typical monocots (single leaved plants). Orchid seeds are very, very small, with small immature embryos and no stored energy source. Typically they require a fungal symbiotic relationship to germinate. While Bill propagates a number of hardy plants from seed, he stated that Slipper Orchids are easier and faster to reproduce vegetatively. Unfortunately, we still do not have the technology to tissue culture Slipper Orchids.

To grow terrestrial orchids successfully, the soil you provide is critical. It must have good drainage, which can be achieved by using 50 - 75 % sand. There must be good moisture retention, which is achieved through the addition of organic matter. Bill adds 25 - 50% peat or compost to his soil. And finally, there must be good, accessible nutrients, such as leaf or wood chip compost that is at least 3 - 4 years old.

Hardy orchids grow in three very different environments. First there are the upland species which like to be damp but not wet or boggy. Then there are Wetland species that must be kept constantly wet, and finally there are some transition species that can be grown damp or wet. Generally, with Transition species, the seedlings like to be kept very wet while the mature plants can be drier.

Most Lady Slipper Orchids are considered upland species. They like well drained soil that is 75% sand and 25% compost. They required a neutral pH, and in this area would grow best in shade. They like to be covered with leaf mulch year round. Examples of these North American Lady's Slippers include *Cyp pubescens*, *parviflorum*, *kentuckiense*, *Regina and acaule*. There are also several Asian slippers that are considered upland plants, including *Cyp macranthos*, *tibeticum* and *jaconacum*. Several species of *Calanthe* also fit into this category, especially *C discolor seiboldii* and *tricarenata*. *Bletilla striata*, *formosana* and *orchracea*, *Cymbidium goeringii* and *farberi* also fit into this category. Bill grows these upland species in raised beds filled with sand and compost and covered with mulch to control evaporation. He says that it is critical to build the beds in such a way that water drains away from the bed rather than pooling around it.

*Speaker's Notes Continued from page 3*

Transitions species include *Piranhas*, *Calopogon tuberosus* (known locally as Rose Calopogon or Grass Pink), *Pectoris* (sin *Habanera*) radiate (the Egret Flower), *Dactylorhiza* (or European Marsh Orchid), *Epipactis palustris* and *gigantea*, and *Platanthera ciliaris*. These transition plants need to be planted close to the surface and mulched with pine needles.

Wetland species include *Pogonia ophioglossoides*, or Rose Pogonia. These reproduce vegetatively with runners. They need to be kept very wet, so do well in raised beds close to a pond. Bill grows them with a plastic liner to retain moisture. He puts them into raised beds in which the bottom 3 - 4 inches is pure sand, and then adds 25% peat and 25% compost mixed with sand or perlite. Bill cautioned that tree roots like to migrate into this type of bed so it is important break up the soil below the bed and cut off any visible tree roots.

When growing these hardy perennial orchids Bill said it is important to dead head the developing seed pods in order to shift nutrients to root growth. Mulch is critical to stabilize root temperatures summer and winter, and is particularly critical in our area where it serves a cooling function in summer. Mulch also helps to control weeds, and reduces moisture loss. Additionally, mulching material continues to decompose providing nutrients directly to the plant. Bill only uncovers plants, or removes mulch, in early spring when new shoots are emerging.

*Transcript of the speaker by Joy Lemieux,  
Sandhills Orchid Society*

## TOS Announcements

The speaker for February, Patricia Harding, will have only books for sale. John Stanton from Orchid Trail will be bring plants for sale.

Next months' speaker, Weyman Bussey, offers his book/cd, *Mexican Orchid Species* for \$100, (reg. \$145) see [www.abundaflora.com/book1.htm](http://www.abundaflora.com/book1.htm) for review. Also, Andy's Orchids is offering a 20% discount (plants not on special), please mention "Weyman" when ordering. See: [www.andysorchids.com](http://www.andysorchids.com) or his catalog. All orders need to be placed *by February 27th* for delivery at the March 9th meeting.

Please remember to submit your membership dues for the coming year to Leo Sagasti. \$18 per year single, \$24 per year for 2 persons living at the same address. Your membership dues help support the programs the society brings you.

We still need a volunteer for Refreshments. Please let the Board know if you can help. We have no volunteers for the new year.

John Myhre has a few remaining 2009 AOS Orchid Calendars for sale. They are \$10 each and will be available for pick up at the next meeting.

We are cataloging a TOS inventory of items that are stored at various locals. Please email Phil Warner, if you have any TOS items, so we may log their location.

### Have Dinner with the Speaker

5:30 PM - before the meeting at the  
Neo China Restaurant, (969-1612)

4015 University Drive, Durham  
behind Target's at the South Square Mall.

Call Ann Myhre (919-740-4030)  
before 4:45 PM Monday  
to make your reservations.



## Triad Orchid Society Show Greensboro, NC January 30- February 1, 2009

The Triangle Orchid Society won 1st place in the 50' square foot exhibit, which was put in by George Bizub, Marie Crock, Judith Goldstein, Alan Miller, and Heather Schneider. Our plants won 2 blue ribbons and 14 others for a total of 16 show awards. A complete list of TOS member awards is on the right. Take down of the exhibit was done by George Bizub, Marie Crock, Bob Meyer, Robin and Josh Gurlitz.

### Cattleya Alliance

Class 14: B Little Stars, 3rd place: Lee Allgood

Class 16: Dial Mizoguchi, 2nd place: George Bizub

Class 16: L praestans x L sincorana, 3rd place: George Bizub

Class 20: Blc. Momilani Rainbow x Orange Nugget, 2nd place: Leo Sagasti

Class 23: Blc Bouton Dor 'Lewis' AM/AOS, 2nd place: Bob Davidson

Class 24: Bc. Binosa 'Wabash Valley' AM/AOS, 2nd place: Lee Allgood

### Cypripedium Alliance

Class 34: Paph kolokopangi x moquetiamum, 3rd place: Lee Allgood

### Phalaenopsis Alliance

Class 63: Phal Wedding Promenade, 3rd place: George Bizub

### Oncidium Alliance

Class 77: Brs. Chieftain 'Golden Falls' AM/AOS, 3rd place: Marie Crock

Class 85: Onc Sweet Sent, 2nd place: Heather Schneider

Class 88: Odtna Memoria Martin Orenstein, 2nd place: Melissa Bullard

### Cymbidium Alliance

Class 91: Cym Aydado Tanka, 3rd place: John Stanton

### Dendrobium Alliance

Class 95: Den superbum, 1st place: Bob Meyer

Class 97: Den Star Sapphire 'KOS' HCC/AOS, 2nd place: Robin Gurlitz

### Misc Genera

Class 102: Masd Aquarius, 2nd place: Lee Allgood

Class 111: Coel flassida, 1st place: Alan Miller







**1st Place Ribbon:**  
Masdevallia Aquarius  
grown by Lee Allgood

**Jack Webster Awards  
Non Greenhouse Grown**



**2nd Place Ribbon:**  
Odontonia Memoria 'Martin Orienstein'  
grown by Melissa Bullard



**3rd Place Ribbon:**  
Phrag Sorcerer's Apprentice x bessiae  
grown by Marie Crock

**Jack Webster Awards  
Greenhouse Grown**

**1st Place Ribbon:**  
*Dendrobium cobbianum*  
grown by Rick Cavallaro



**2nd Place Ribbon:**  
Brassavola 'Little Stars'  
grown by Olivine Virtue

**3rd Place Ribbon:**  
Lc Summit View 'Primero'  
grown by Bob Davidson





## Growing Tips for February

By Courtney T. Hackney EMAIL at [Hackneau@comcast.net](mailto:Hackneau@comcast.net)

Nothing is as basic to orchid culture as the orchid pot. There is more to the pot than just a container and selection of the best pot for your orchid plants can mean the difference between success and failure. The choice of growing container depends on the type of orchid being grown and the growing environment, i.e. your home or a greenhouse.

One of my favorite pots is the clear plastic type. They are generally produced using the same plastic and process as other orchid pots, but no color is added. Instead, a UV inhibitor is added to prevent sunlight from breaking down the plastic. Occasionally, pots will be made and sold without the UV inhibitor and these pots discolor and disintegrate in just a few months in the sunlight.

Besides additional drainage, many plastic orchid pots have a raised bottom, which allows air to flow below and through the pot. All orchids hate stale air because it is depleted in oxygen. Orchids are now grown in just about every medium from those that retain water well, such as New Zealand or Chilean Sphagnum to various types of rock, including lava rock and Staylight.

The real beauty in a clear pot is the ability to determine the degree of wetness within the pot. I grow Paphs in lava rock. Paph roots prefer a constant moisture level. If their roots dry out the orchid suffers. In clear plastic, it is easy to tell when the moisture level drops because the inside of the pot can be easily observed. With lava rock there is never the chance that the medium will get too soggy as long as each rock is  $>1/4$ " in diameter. It is also easy to observe the new roots because they like to grow along the inside of the pot where moisture precipitates from the change in temperature each night. Lava rock retains lots of moisture, but other types of rock typically do not.

Phals are often grown in clear plastic pots with New Zealand Sphagnum as the medium. Phals sold as pot plants often arrive in clear pots, the ones that degrade quickly in the sun. Phal roots will grow along the clear plastic side of the pot and seem to always grow best where the sun strikes the pot. Phals in this type of pot usually have big, fat roots that turn green if moist. If you purchase a phal in this medium and there are no roots growing along the inside of the pot you can be sure the plant was recently placed in this pot. Water only when the inside of the pot becomes very dry at least until new roots can be seen growing inside the pot.

In clear pots, Phal roots, which contain chlorophyll, can generate oxygen and aid root growth if watered properly. When moisture levels are low on the inside of the pot in the morning it is time to water. Often the surface will be so dry by this time that most folks would have already watered; which would have been too soon.

Most hobbyists grow in bark or some other organic medium. Clear pots allow an easy way to determine the degree of medium decomposition, which may vary greatly depending on the medium, fertilizer, and watering frequency.

Finding clear, plastic pots is not always easy and they can be prohibitively expensive compared to other plastic pots. My strategy is to try to have at least one plant of each orchid type, i.e. Phal, Paph, etc, in a clear pot on every bench to help me monitor the moisture condition in pots throughout the greenhouse. The only group of orchids that do not get this type of treatment are my cattleyas because they are all grown in clay pots. Does anyone know where I can get clear, clay pots? That would be ideal.



## Upcoming Orchid Events

The Triangle Orchid Society is planning the following events for this year, specific dates & times will be announced soon.

Spring Orchid Crawl, Spring Auction in April,  
 Grower's Day: August 8th - JC Raulston Arboretum  
 Fall Auction in September, State Fair in October

*Note: the TOS Orchid Show in March at Northgate Mall has been postponed until further notice.*

Orchid Spectacular at the Orchid Conservatory  
 Daniel Stowe Botanical Gardens , Belmont, NC

Jan. 9th thru Feb. 15th, 2009 see: [www.dsb.org](http://www.dsb.org)

Western NC Orchid Society, Asheville, NC:

March 27 - 29th see: [www.wncos.org](http://www.wncos.org)

Virginia Orchid Society, Richmond, VA: Feb 20 - 22

see: [www.vaorchidsociety.com](http://www.vaorchidsociety.com)

63rd Miami Int'l Orchid Show: Feb 27 - March 1st

see: [www.sforchid.com/miami.php](http://www.sforchid.com/miami.php)

<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>February 9th</b>	<b>Patricia Harding</b>	<b>Debatable Epidendrums Prosthechea</b>
7:30-7:45 Business Meeting Announcements			
7:45-8:10 Show Table Review	<b>March 9th</b>	<b>Weyman Bussey</b>	<b>Mexican Species: Where they come from &amp; how they grow</b>
8:10-8:30 Refreshment Break			
8:30-9:20 Program			
9:20-9:30 Show Table Awards, Raffle & Door Prizes	<b>April 13th</b>	<b>Jeff Bradley</b>	<b>Classic Cattleyas</b>
9:30 P.M. Meeting Ends			

### Welcome Table

### Refreshments

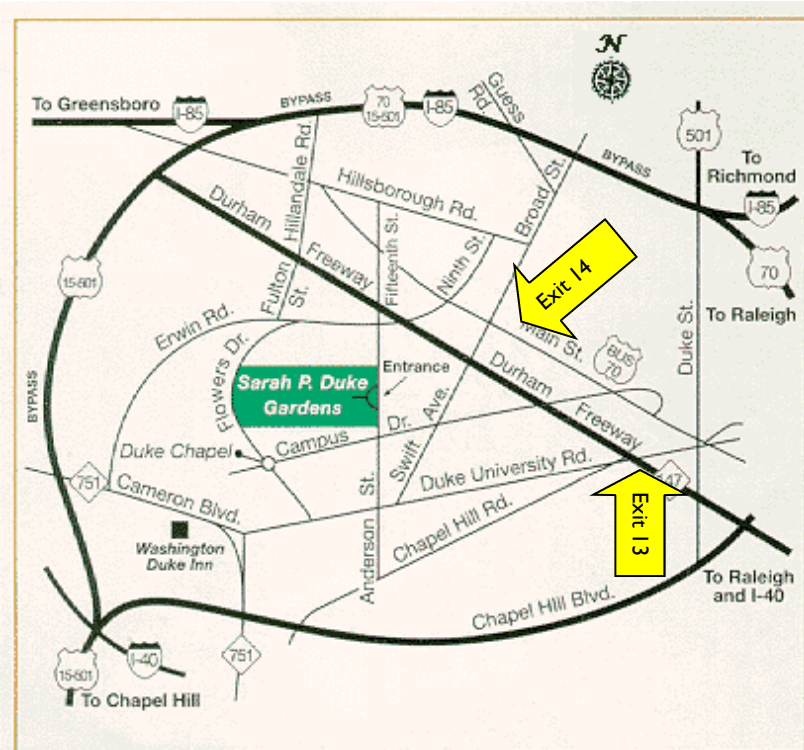
<b>February</b>	<b>Augustine &amp; Jeff Baldwin</b>	<b>To be determined</b>
<b>March</b>	<b>Melissa Bullard</b>	<b>Need volunteers</b>



**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