

# Gulf Coast Orchid Society

## August 2020

With the virus raging all around us and with the director of the McHenry library sick, and with no place else to meet, we will not have an August meeting. We hope to have a September meeting back at Jeff Davis. Jeff Davis may not be available to us for the rest of 2020 and they are not taking reservations for 2021 so if the virus comes under control, we'll need to find another facility to meet. We ask all of you to investigate possible meeting places, centrally located to the coast; near I-10 or hwy 90, that we can use or rent. A room big enough to hold 40 people spaced out, show and tell plants, sale plants and refreshments. An extra room for Orchids 101 and a kitchen or place for food would be great.



**Glen talking about plant quality using show and tell plants**

Cymbidium Golden Elf which won the blue ribbon for Cymbidiums. Joy donated the plant to our raffle. Thanks Joy! Gayle provided some great refreshments, some individually packaged food for those that are extra cautious and a scrumptious, homemade, fresh strawberry cake! Thank you, Gayle! Door prizes were won by Janice Fabo and Sydney Dyche. Emily Boutwell brought in a container of divisions of Cattleya skinneri. Many members got a nice division. Thank you, Emily!

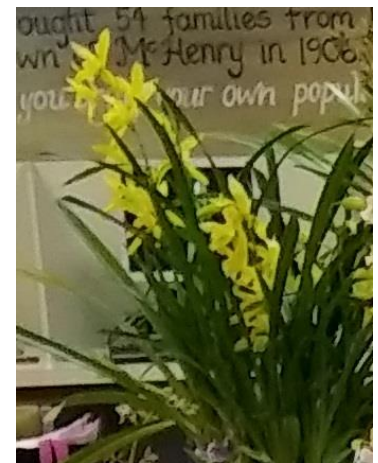
**Last Month's Meeting:** Our second meeting back was a success due 100% to the efforts of our President and all 21 of our mask wearing members! Glen Ladnier presented a wonderful program on **"What Judges Look for in Orchid Flowers"** using the plants on the show and tell table as examples. Glen also judged the show and tell table and presented the winners. Best grown plant was a tie between Glen's Blc. Yen Surprise, a big green flower, and Joy Lorens Eplc Volcano Trick 'Paradise' a small yellow and orange burst of happiness. Joy also brought in a fabulous



**Glen Ladner's Blc Yen Surprise**



**Eplc. Volcano Trick 'Paradise'  
grown by Joy Lorens**



**Joy Lorens donated this  
Cymbidium Golden Elf to  
the raffle**



Guarianthe skinneri photo courtesy AOS

**Cattleya skinneri:** This is a species plant first discovered in the 1880's, it was named after famous orchid collector and trader, Rev. John Skinner. The Cattleya family was recently changed. New genera or divisions were made and some already established divisions were changed. Cattleya skinneri was recently put into a new genus in the Cattleya family. This new genus is Guarianthe which holds many other long established Cattleyas like aurantiaca, bowringina, patinii and now skinneri. Those who need to make a label for their division should label the plant Guarianthe skinneri. The abbreviation for Guarianthe is 'Gur.' if you would rather use the abbreviation. Gur. skinneri is still in the Cattleya family and is still grown the same way as always. On both our show and tell table and in shows it is judged with the Cattleyas.



An assortment of photos of Emily's actual plant before dividing

According to the website, **Orchidspecies.com**, this plant is the national flower of Costa Rica. It's found growing naturally from Chiapas, Mexico to Costa Rica in humid forests on tree trunks or branches and also found growing on granite cliff banks at altitudes of 200 -2300 meters. They like a dry winter rest and will bloom from brown or green sheaths formed the previous summer. Colors range from the most average type of bright magenta to glistening rose to rich lavender and then to lighter versions of lilac-blues, pinks to sparkling whites with a spot of yellow or purple in the throat.

**Here's some tips and the history of the plant from Emily as she remembers:** "I purchased the original plant in bloom at one of our (Mobile's) orchid auctions in 1977 for \$15.00. It has bloomed faithfully in March ever since (except one year when it bloomed on February 29). I have divided, given away or sold divisions, and re potted it many times over the past 43 years. There was no date on the huge pot I divided on the 17<sup>th</sup>, so I have no idea when I last divided and repotted it. Only a note in my logbook saying, "huge 3/15".

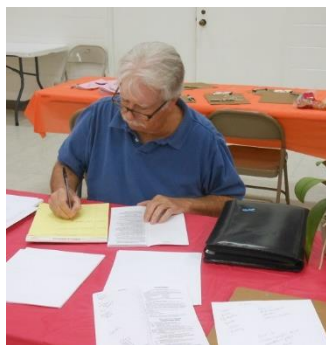
I have always thought skinneri was a Cattleya, and it is often listed as such. I have discovered it is now considered a Guarianthe but is judged along with the Cattleyas and has been crossed and recrossed with them (confusing to all of us non judges). I grow it just like the Cattleyas, warm, lighting like the Cattleyas, twice weekly watering, fertilize weakly weekly (when I remember). Very, very easy to grow and very forgiving of neglect! It will have multiple new growths on all sides. ONLY advice I really have, is to remember the sheaths DRY UP and then the buds come out. I have torn them open numerous times and ruined the flowers checking to see what's going on. The pictures I brought to the meeting are misleading. I don't think this plant is a blue.

The plant was tested by CRITTER Creek Lab in June of 2018. Joe Paine told me about Critter Creek, and I went on a real testing for viruses frenzy. Over the past two years I have had 232 tested of which 59 were virused. Many of the virused ones were among my favorites, some of the oldest (of course) and/or most expensive and I tossed them with tears in my eyes!! My green house is not large enough to segregate them. Any that had not bloomed at all, or in several years, or looked remotely suspicious, I sent leaves off. (I was, as I said in a frenzy)! Some had shown no visible signs of being infected!! Several that I just knew were bad

were fine!! I can and do recommend Critter Creek most highly!! One of my most gorgeous and most prolific Oncidiums I had tested twice--same results. VIRUS. I know my early sloppy repotting methods were most often the cause of the problem. I wonder though about some of my newer acquisitions. Oh well, more space, more purchases to be made--help the economy etc.!"

**Upcoming Orchid Event:** Some of you have attended the annual orchid short course given on the first Saturday in December in Lafayette. This year it is scheduled in Baton Rouge on Dec. 12 at the conference room at the LSU Botanic Garden on Burden Lane. Let us pray the virus is under control at that time and many of us can attend. This is usually an all-day event with speakers, AOS judging and lots of plants for sale! More details later!

**Members in touch:** Many of our members don't feel safe leaving their homes at this time with COVID spreading like wildfire and have missed the June and July meetings. Some have just been busy working; others may not want to drive to McHenry. Those that do attend the meetings often ask if we've heard from this person or that so here's your chance to catch up on a few.



**Robert working on judging for a show**

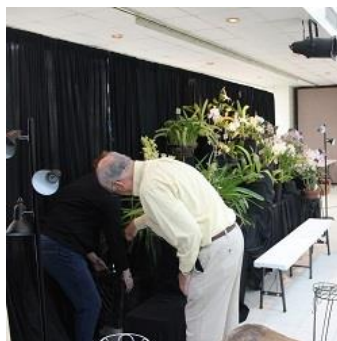
**Robert Stanton:** Robert is our only accredited AOS judge and he's been a member of the society since the 1980's. Many of you are concerned because he hasn't been in great physical health. Here's Robert's own words. "I am the healthiest, strongest I have been in many years. I have lost over 55 pounds, there are good signs that my liver has healed but I'm hoping for a scan next month to confirm that, I walk 2.4 miles every morning in 45 minutes, I am doing pushups and working with a 20 lb. dumbbell for upper body strength, and I've even gone surfing a couple of times and have no plans to stop now. I actually feel GOOD every day. It's an amazing transformation which I feel is nothing short of a miracle, considering how sick I was year ago. Life is good!"

**John and Janet Bridges and Lexie:** We've really missed our Carriere gang. They are all fine, just being careful and depending on family for errands. Lexie has her driver's license. Time does fly!

**Trey and Kourtnie Thigpen:** Trey reports that they have been busy. With more people at home and with the rainy weather more and more people need his services. Kourtnie, if she hasn't already, will be starting a new job soon.



**John, Lexie and Janet entering plants for our 2016 show**



**John Tate is always working here he's helping with our 2016 exhibit!**

**John Tate:** One of our nicest hardest working members, John, his wife, and son who lives in another state are all fine. John reports he feels good, but his doctor thinks otherwise. He hopes that we all stay healthy.

**Armand and Valerie Scurria:** Armand and Val are from Picayune; these are his own words. "Thank you for thinking of us. We are doing good just laying low taking all the precautions. At our age we have to take more precautions than most. We keep social distances where we go. Sorry to say we know at least 6 people that died. We miss the meetings and look forward to



**Trey and Kourtnie**



**Armand and Val taking a break at our 2016 show**

returning. Tell everyone to stay safe, and we shall return when the virus gets under better control. **BETTER SAFE THAN SO RRY."**

**Earl Young:** We haven't seen much of Earl since he moved to Pearl, Miss. He is doing well and like others laying low. He is online now and still buying orchids. He called not long ago searching for another rare beauty. He wishes everyone well!



**Earl Young**

Finally, we wish all our members we haven't seen in a while the very best. We know you are with us in spirit and we hope to see you one day soon. Hopefully at our January 29 –

31, 2021 show! Also please don't shoot me for using your emails and info from phone calls and pictures. You guys are what makes the society – We love you!



## **Even our U. S. Postal Service Loves Orchids**

By Gayle

OK, call me old fashioned, but I love getting, receiving and sending mail, not electronically, but by the so-called "snail mail" route. I love orchids, but I also collect stamps from around the world, so I was just ecstatic when the Postal Service issued the *Wild Orchids Forever Stamp* on 21 February of this year. It took me some time to locate these rather elusive beauties, but for me the effort was well worth it. The idea behind issuing these delightful images is to celebrate the beauty of wild orchids with stamps of flowers that grow in the United States. The stamp art highlights photos taken by photographer Jim Fowler.

Each stamp features a photograph of one of these nine species: *Cypripedium californicum*, *Hexalectris spicata*, *Cypripedium reginae*, *Spiranthes odorata*, *Triphora trianthophoros*, *Platanthera grandiflora*, *Cytropodium polyphyllum*, *Calopogon tuberosus*, and *Platanthera leucophaea*. Within the booklet, each stamp design is featured twice. The Wild Orchids stamps were issued with 10 stamp designs in booklets of 20 and coils of 3,000 and 10,000 (for the real mail fanatics). In case you are wondering; no, I didn't spring for the big bonanza pack, but I did load up since they are good indefinitely even when postage rates go up.

The dedication ceremony was even held at the American Orchid Society Library at the Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden in Coral Gables, Florida. The Postal Service decided on these designs because orchids are so beloved by both plant experts and casual flower lovers due to their gorgeous colors, unusual look and delicate features. They also wanted the public to appreciate the largest family of plants on each with more than 30,000 species of wild orchids in the world and more than 100 species native to North America. Additionally, many orchids native to North America are endangered or threatened, making sightings in their natural environment increasingly rare. These striking flowers are native to damp woodlands and numerous organizations across the country such as our own Crosby Arboretum in Picayune are working to preserve their habitats.

These very pretty stamps might just perk up your "all things orchid" collections. They are not easy to find, but the larger post offices carry them if you ask. If not, you can order them through The Postal Store at [usps.com/shopstamps](https://usps.com/shopstamps). I intend to put some aside to savor at a later date, but what better way to dress up your cards and letters than adorn them with a tribute to your beloved plants? They are self-adhesive so you don't even have to lick them to stick them. My husband fears that Santa Claus or the Virgin Mary will be replaced this Christmas by orchids, but who says you

always have to follow the rules of social etiquette? Even if you are not a huge patron of the Postal Service these might be valuable some day in the future and worth a small investment. Enjoy!

