



# Gulf Coast Orchid Society Newsletter

January 12, 2014

**Happy New Year Everyone!** The January meeting will be held Sunday, January 12, 2014 at **2:00 P.M.** at the **Jeff Davis Community College** located at the corner on Runnymede Rd just off Debuys; north of Pass Rd. We will meet in the **cafeteria** meeting room. The Orchids 101 meeting led by Glen Ladnier will precede the meeting at 1:30. The topic is 'bud blast'. If you don't know what that is consider yourself lucky! The photo below left is serious bud blast!



**JANUARY PROGRAM:** Our resident orchid judge, Robert Stanton will give a short program. He says it may have something to do with lizard urine? We'll also have plants donated by Harvey Brenneise for sale. The proceeds will fund our 2014 show art contest.

**REFRESHMENTS:** January's refreshments will provided by Sydney Dyche and Cynthia Oetker. Joy Lorens will provide February's refreshments. If you'd like to bring refreshments or to change your assigned date; call Andra Mladinich at 228-365-0640.

**SALE PLANTS:** The plants are all donated plants by Harvey Brenneise and Jo Ann Vaz. Harvey donated the plants this summer when he moved to California and Jo Ann has been tending them. She will supplement Harvey's plants with some of her own. There will be a nice variety with some new stuff some of you may not have in your collections. The plants will be available for sale during the break only. Please don't call and email wanting lists or to preorder.

## FUTURE PROGRAMS:

**February 9, 2014** The February meeting is one week before our show. We will spend that time working on our show and planning for the Mobile Area Orchid Society show just two weeks after that!

**March 9, 2014** This will be our "Thank You" meeting for our show workers. Everyone who supports our Feb 14-16 show will get a free plant. We hope to have extras left over for sale. Also some of our board members are working on an orchid surprise. We have to plan for the Pensacola show the following weekend and the Terrebonne show the week after that!

**April 13, 2014** We will have a special speaker, Weyman Bussey, a well known grower and importer of Central and South American orchids will talk to us about these plants. He will bring plants to sell.

**May 18, 2014** This is our covered dish orchid auction. This meeting will start at 1:00pm and go on until we run out of plants or money.



**LAST MONTH'S MEETING:** There were 40 members at our December meeting. Everyone left with at least one free plant. The food was awesome. Thank you Vicki Sells, our bingo caller, thanks Glen for arranging such wonderful plants and thanks to our hospitality chief, Andra, for coordinating all that delicious food. Special thanks go to everyone who brought in dishes, moved tables, loaded plants, and cleaned up. Every little thing added up to make the event wonderful!

Congratulations also to our Show and Tell winners, Armand Scurria got most points followed by John Bridges and Janice Fabo. They all got a free plant. Armand also got the 'Ladnier Best New Grower' award given by Glen Ladnier. That's Armand and Val with their winning plants at our 2013 show above left.

**UPCOMING SHOWS:** Here's a list of local shows

**Feb 14-16 2014 Gulf Coast Orchid Society Show,** Gautier Convention Center

**Feb 28-March 2 2014** Mobile Area Orchid Society Show and Sale, Mobile Botanic Gardens

**March 14 -16, 2014 Greater Pensacola Orchid Society Show**

**March 21-23, 2014** Terrebonne Orchid Society Show, South Land Mall, Houma, Louisiana

**Sept. 10-14, 2014** World Orchid Conference Johannesburg, South Africa

**2014 SHOW UPDATE:** With the show less than a month and a half away we all need to get busy talking about the show to our friends, families and co-workers. Now is the time to start hanging flyers. One is attached to this newsletter. Marilyn had an article in Mississippi Magazine. Attached is a press release for our 2014 show. If there is a local newspaper in your area consider sending them an article about the show.

**DUES ARE DUE:** It's time to renew your dues for 2013. Dues are \$10 for single and an additional \$5.00 for each other member living at the same address. First time members get only one free plant per address; not one per person. There is no free plant for renewals. Dues can be paid at the meeting or you can mail them to Marilyn Ladnier, 15559 Village Dr., Biloxi, MS 39532. **We will not accept dues at the show.**

**NAME TAGS AND SHIRTS:** It would be wonderful if all our members wore a GCOS name tag or shirt during our show. If you want a GCOS name tag; see Marilyn at the meeting. See Chip Lechner if you want his Mom to make you an orchid shirt. Cost is \$15.00 for an orchid and the society name and \$3.00 for your name. You supply the shirt.

**DISPLAY TABLE/SHOW AND TELL/BEST PLANT:** January is the start of the year for acquiring points on our display table. Each time you bring in a plant for show and tell you get one point. Depending on the ribbons you win you get more points. At the Christmas meeting the top three point winners get blooming size plants, then we draw from the names of those who brought in plants during the year and are present at the Christmas meeting for more blooming size plants.



left is Robert discussing plants on the show and Tell table. Bich Tran is to his left.

While you're at our meetings our Best Plant coordinator, Tina Torguson will hand out a small ballot, that is for all members and guests to vote on the plant they consider the best grown and bloomed plant on the show and tell table, Each plant has a small white label with a number written on it. All you have to do is write the number from your favorite plant and hand the ballot to Tina. At

**NATIVE ORCHIDS:** Glen Ladnier sent in the article below and asked if anyone would like to make a road trip to the Weeks Bay Preserve. If you are interested please contact Glen at the meeting or [gladnier@yahoo.com](mailto:gladnier@yahoo.com).

### **The Bog Men Help Preserve Alabama's 50 Rare Orchid Species by Ben Raines**

The orchids glow like Chinese lanterns in the early morning light, white heads bobbing gently under the pattering rain. The bog men, a loose group of mostly retired biologists, move through the mist slowly, carefully counting each nodding cluster of snow white flowers. Once somewhat common, but now so rare that this field in south Baldwin County may be the last stand for the species in all of Alabama, the white-fringed orchid (*Platanthera blephariglottis* var. *conspicua* at left) is as showy and delicate as a flower could be. Each stalk supports 20 or more individual flowers. At a glance, their provenance is unmistakable, each bearing the distinct and ancient open-face pose characteristic of orchids.



While most people associate orchids with the large, sometimes spray-painted, tropical rainforest specimens for sale in the garden departments at grocery stores and Home Depot, Alabama is an orchid paradise. The state is home to more than 50 native orchid species, scattered from the hills of Huntsville to the bogs of the Mobile-Tensaw Delta.



The natives are dainty and intolerant of the changes we've made to the landscape. For the most part, they persist only in undisturbed habitats, like pitcher plant bogs. One species, the green fly orchid (*Epidendrum conopseum* at left) lives only in the tops of trees, typically nestled among the resurrection ferns growing in live oaks, an entirely arboreal existence. But all of the orchids are becoming rarer by the year. Some, like the rose pinks, are fairly common, occurring in most bogs all across the state, while others, like the white-fringed and closely related orange-fringed orchids are almost unknown.

Fred Nation, one of Alabama's top botanists and author of *Where the Wild Illicium Grows*, said there were records for about five populations of white-fringed orchids in the state in recent years, but this small, three-acre site may be the last one left. The orchids' history on this piece of land explains much about the plight of the species, and of orchids in general, in Alabama.

Many of the orchid species are known as "fire followers," meaning they bloom most prolifically in woods that are burned regularly, and disappear from woods if fire is suppressed. The presence of the white-fringed orchid here is testament to the role fire once played in Alabama's forests and meadows.



When this small bog near Fish River in Baldwin County was donated to the Weeks Bay Foundation about 10 years ago, botanists were stunned to see a few of the orchids appear in late August. That first year, there were 20 of them. The following year, after a mid-winter burn in the bog designed to clear out a lot of woody plants that had grown up, 40 orchids showed up. Another burn the next year produced 80 orchids. And so it has gone, with the population roughly doubling year over year. This year, there were 1,200 orchids in the small bog, crowded together by the dozens. "We've gotten a few really good burns and the orchids really responded. You can see the results," said Patrick Waldrop, recently retired from the Alabama Forestry Commission. "But we don't know much about the ecology of the orchids. How often do we need to burn? How hot a fire do we want? Last year was probably the lightest fire, and of course they really responded well."



From big species like the grass pink (*Calopogon tuberosus* above left), to the tiny fragrant ladies' tresses (*Spirantes odorata* at left), the array of orchids in the Alabama woods is among the largest in the country. "There are all sorts. We actually have some epiphytic orchids, species that live in trees. People want to look for them at their feet, but they are over their heads in the trees," said Bill Finch, chief science and horticulture advisor at the Mobile Botanical Gardens. "By the time you put them all together, there are some really fabulous orchids, and just an unusually large number of species." The orchids, sporting names like Snakemouth, long-horned, shadow witch or downy rattlesnake, vary so much in appearance some are scarcely recognizable as orchids. "Nearly all of our species are terrestrial, and most of our flowers are small. The largest are probably the grass pink orchids. The flowers are a couple of inches tall," Nation said, describing a large, bright pink orchid that blooms in the beginning of the summer. All 54 species in the state are rare, he said, in large part because the orchids are often dependent on specific bacteria in the soil to survive.



"That's what makes them impossible to transplant. If you transplant an orchid, you can almost bet 95 to 100 percent it will die, primarily because of the associations the orchid has with the soil bacteria," Nation said. "That makes them dependent on their location, but they are also quite habitat specific. They like a narrow range of conditions." The orchids are also limited because many of them have evolved in such a way that only certain species of bees or flies can pollinate them, further tying them to specific habitats. And, Nation noted, rodents love to eat the root structures of orchids.

"We're lucky to have so many species," Nation said "They're really all around us here."

*Ben Raines is the executive director of the Weeks Bay Foundation, a non-profit land trust dedicated to preserving coastal Alabama. Email him at [Ben@weeksbay.org](mailto:Ben@weeksbay.org), or follow him on Facebook and Twitter @BenHRaines. From the editor: All photos of native orchids were taken from the internet without permission; this article is for a good cause to inspire people to act to save our native orchids. Photo of one of the walkways at Weeks Bay above left.*

**GCOS OFFICERS:** With our Valentine's show fast approaching many of you might need to know who to call to volunteer for certain tasks or you may have questions. Here's a list of officers and show Committee:

President/Show point of Contact/Exhibit Chairman: Becky Jolly-Wood, [bjwzoo@aol.com](mailto:bjwzoo@aol.com)

Vice-President/Chairman of clerks for show: Dave Perry, [Doc11@cablone.net](mailto:Doc11@cablone.net)

Treasurer/Chairman of Advertising for Show: Marilyn Ladnier, [weebill@aol.com](mailto:weebill@aol.com)

Secretary/Show organizer: Jo Ann Vaz, [joannvaz@bellsouth.net](mailto:joannvaz@bellsouth.net)

Board Member/Hospitality Coordinator for meetings and show: Andra Mladinich, [andrajmladinich@gmail.com](mailto:andrajmladinich@gmail.com)

Board Member/Photographer: Chip Lechner, [chiplechner@gmail.com](mailto:chiplechner@gmail.com)

Board Member/Show Awards: Janet Olier, [ddolier@att.net](mailto:ddolier@att.net)

Board Member/Accredited AOS Judge/Head Judge for show: Robert Stanton, [Poln8r@cablone.net](mailto:Poln8r@cablone.net)

Orchids101, GCOS Plant Buyer: Glen Ladnier, [gladnier@yahoo.com](mailto:gladnier@yahoo.com)

Raffle for Show Beryl Davis: no email address and Janis Zuleeg, [janiszuleeg@yahoo.com](mailto:janiszuleeg@yahoo.com)

### **AOS CORNER by Lynn Fuller, Chair AOS Affiliated Societies Committee**

The Trustees and Members meeting was held in Coral Gables with most of the meetings being held at Fairchild Botanic Gardens (the new home of the AOS). It was a great opportunity to get to know Fairchild and for Fairchild to see what the AOS is about. A nice show was arranged by the Coral Gables Orchid Society and at the AOS judging, awards were given to many local orchidists. In conjunction with the meetings, a number of AOS awards were presented. The Distinguished Affiliated Society Award (DSSA) was given to the Orchid Society of Western Pennsylvania for their volunteer commitment to Phipps Conservatory in Pittsburgh. An article will be forthcoming in *Orchids* about their joint project whereby they will be assisting in the establishment of an historic slipper orchid collection. An AOS Gold Medal was given to Harold Koopowitz for his dedication to orchids in conservation, biology, hybridizing and publishing; **Two AOS Silver Medals were bestowed upon Aileen Garrison and Jose Izquierdo in recognition of their service to the AOS judging**

**system.** Leon Glicenstein was recognized with an AOS Fellow for his outstanding scientific, horticultural and hybridizing in addition, Leonid Averyanov was recognized with an AOS Fellow for his work on Vietnam orchids. Two Hybridizing awards were presented to Milton Carpenter for his work with Oncidiinae and warmth-tolerant cymbidiums and to Gene Crocker of Carter and Holmes for his art-shade cattleyas.



Anyone wishing to be considered for judging at the 21<sup>st</sup> WOC in South Africa, must submit their application to do so by December 31, 2013. There will be no late registrations considered. In addition, discounted registration ends on December 31, 2013. For more information or to register, go to [www.woc21.org](http://www.woc21.org).

Save the date for the Spring Members and Trustees meeting to be held in Minneapolis, Minnesota, April 30 through May 4, 2014 in conjunction with their show – Orchids – A Growing Obsession. This event will be held in conjunction with meetings of the Mid-America Orchid Congress, the Slipper Orchid Alliance, the International Phalaenopsis Alliance, Pleurothallid Alliance and Angracoid Alliance.

**Congratulations to Aileen Garrison on her AOS Silver Medal. For all she does for us and others she should get a Platinum award!** That's Aileen above left working at one of our shows. Below is Aileen talking to other judges, Charles and Susan Wilson with James Newsome in background.

