



Central Illinois Orchid Society Newsletter

June-July 2015

Vol. 9 no. 6-7 June-July 2015

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CIOS Officers for 2015

Joanne Miller, President

Bettina Francis, Vice Pres. /Secretary

Mark Williams, Treasurer

Mitzi Williams, Editor, Newsletter & Webpage content.

From the President:

As the summer months are upon us, and my orchids are mostly growing, instead of blooming, I thought I would suggest a few companion plants you could grow indoors to add color in your home. It's nice to use a few other plants that are not orchids, to make the environment more varied and interesting to the eye. Keep them to a minimum however, so it won't look too busy and less natural. Choose plants that are short and very slow growing and that love humidity like our orchids do. Some good choices are begonias, African violets, epiphyllums, bromeliads, hoyas, tillandsias and pitcher plants.

Begonias are my favorite! I love the 'China Curl' rex begonia. Its deeply twisting curls in the center of the leaves along with the band of silver and chocolate-brown on its edges make a very interesting plant. Another one I like is the fibrous begonia called 'My Special Angel'. It has long angel wing type leaves with silver spots all over them, and pretty pink drooping flowers when in bloom.

African Violets are another plant I like to grow. They are in bloom almost year round. The wives tale is if you can grow African violets, then your conditions are right for orchids. Temperature, humidity and air circulation play a critical role in the plants performance.

Epiphyllums, or orchid cacti, are nice plants also, and includes Christmas cactus. There are many other kinds of epiphyllums with many varieties of flowers and leaves that bloom in the summer.

Bromeliads are another favorite companion plant for orchids. These are known for their colorful reddish tones in the center of their thick foliage. They bring an exotic touch to the home and a sense of the tropics. They also bring interesting texture and color to the indoor atmosphere. Their wide leaves are scoop-like and catch water in the plant's habitat.

These are just a few varieties you can grow in your home while you anxiously wait for your orchids to bloom again in the fall and winter/spring months. Have fun trying some of them!

Hope to see you at our annual picnic July 12 at my house. Details follow.

Joanne Miller
CIOS President

Next meeting:

- The July meeting is a pot-luck picnic at Joanne and Jim Miller's house (1914 Oak Park Dr., Champaign) on **Sunday, July 12, 4pm**. Spouse/significant other are welcome. The main course (BBQ and grilled Portobello), drinks and table wear are provided. Please let Joanne know if you are coming, and what dish or items you might be able to bring. (Ph: 359-7876 or millersn6shn@aol.com).
- There is no meeting in August so the next **regular meeting will be on Monday, Sept. 14th**, and will feature Sam Tsui of Orchid Inn. He is an internationally known expert on Paphiopedilums and Phragmipediums, so this is one meeting you don't want to miss. He will also have plants to sell. Details will be in the next issue.

Orchid of the month 1:

If you thought this is not a plant, but a dog-chewed stuffed bear, you are not alone. This is Linda Biel's monster which she bought at Hill Top. Linda posted these image on her Face Book page as well as on Central IL Orchid Society's. The image at below left shows the golf-ball size pseudobulb (reddish round mass on top) and the flowers just opening up, while the image at below right shows the fully opened flowers. Here is what Linda had to say about the plant: "my *Bulbophyllum phalaenopsis* now that the blooms are fully open. I haven't noticed it smelling bad unless you put your nose close and sniff, but I did notice a fly hanging around on it yesterday." *Bulbophyllum* has the most number of species among all orchids, and are found in the equatorial rain and cloud forests, particularly in New Guinea. The 'fragrance' is typically described as rotten meat, dung, or simply unpleasant, though the level of intensity varies significantly.



Bulbophyllums are truly the plants that suit the description "beauty is in the eyes (and the noses) of the beholder."

Events in the area:

- August 22, 2015, Saturday, 9am - 3 pm, Prairie State Orchid Society Annual Seminar. Rochester Public Library, Rochester IL. The guest lecturer is Alan Koch, owner of Gold Country Orchids in Lincoln, CA, and specializes in miniature and compact Cattleyas. The cost of registration is \$20 and includes breakfast and lunch. Registration deadline is August 14. For more information, contact Erin Vasconcelles (evasconcelles@aol.com).
- AOS Webinars: The American Orchid Society provides webinars (web-accessible seminar) on various topics. You will find the link to free, recorded webinars at AOS.ORG under "webinars" link at the top. Greenhouse chats for various months of the year often cover basic information as well as little, useful tips that will enhance your orchid growing experience and success. You will be asked to register, and there are some moderator interactions at the beginning, but once the seminar begins, it moves on smoothly.

Notes and tips:

- When a plant is cloned or reproduced from meristems (or by cloning), the offspring is exactly the same as the parent, while seeds from different parents can have many varieties of appearances and characteristics. Slipper orchids have been difficult to clone and have not reached the acceptable volume level until now, when a Taiwanese grower introduced several flasks of meristemed slipper orchids to the First World Slipper Orchid Conference in Hilo, Hawaii in January 2015 (Koopowitz, H. Orchid Digest, April-June, 2015, p. 66-67). Even though it may take a while for the mass-market to see the meristemed slipper orchids, the news is certainly interesting and worthy of further attention.
- During the June meeting, some people asked what kind of insecticides to use. For indoor use, it is best to look for the products which are designated as such, and most people use biological soap. Below is the picture of three kinds of insect control products which are safe for **indoor use**. They are locally available at nurseries and some big-box stores and are very effective for controlling mealy bugs and soft scales, but need to be applied once a week for about 5 weeks in order to kill all stages of the insect.



- Pruners--For fine pruning orchid roots, fine tip pruners or small garden shears are better than bypass pruners. Fiscars and many other companies offer fine tipped pruners which make it easy to remove dead roots. Bypass pruners are useful for cutting 1/2" or larger woody roots and stems, as well as dead Cattleya pseudobulbs, but not the best for cutting out the dead roots or leaves. (Image at center: Titanium precision snips from Charlie's Greenhouse Supply. Image at right: Fiscars 1-7/8" Microtip pruning snip).

Orchid of the month 2: *Eulophia petersii*



An orchid that likes desert-like environment? One of such species, *Eulophia petersii*, is in flower at the UI's Conservatory and Green Houses, but you will not find it in the orchid room because it is in the cacti room! The foliage is no more than 12-15 inches, but with the flower spikes, the plant is well over 6 feet tall. Its leaves are stiff and prickly like those of an Agave (century plant), and it thrives in extremely hot and dry conditions.

The genus consists of about 165 species with its habitat ranging from South East Asia, Australia, the Americas, the Arabian peninsula, and Africa. *Eulophia petersii* is found in the arid areas of the world such as the coastal side of Kenya and Somalia, northern South Africa, and the Arabian Peninsula (mostly current Yemen).

