



Central Illinois Orchid Society Newsletter

April 2014

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Central Illinois Orchid Society Newsletter is published irregularly. Subscription is through membership in the Society.

Membership is \$15/person and \$25/couple. Please visit our home page for Membership form and mailing address.

CIOS Officers for 2014

Linda Bial, President
Ray Urban, Vice Pres.
Nancy Urban, Treasurer
Bettina Francis,
Secretary

Mitzi Williams, Newsletter
and Webpage content

President's message:

Happy Spring, CIOS members! Well, kind of. Maybe. Our recent annual CIOS orchid sale, held on Saturday, March 15, in conjunction with the University of Illinois Plant Biology Greenhouse's Open House, was a busy and entirely successful event. Although originally planned for Saturday only, there were a number of lovely orchids left at the end of the day. So some intrepid CIOS members returned on Sunday, and the remaining plants were quickly sold out. This year, the repotting service CIOS offers at the sale was especially busy. Numerous people brought their orchids to be repotted, and Mitzi Williams did yeoman's work doing the repotting and explaining the process as she went along, making it an educational service as well.

Many, many thanks are due to all the CIOS members who helped out at the sale in a variety of ways, including especially our treasurer, Nancy Urban, who indicates the Society earned a profit of over \$600 from this year's sale. Thank you, too, to those who supported our sale by buying new orchids to add to their collection. (Seriously, who could resist?) There was quite an array of blooming beauties, including dendrobiums, phalaenopsis, paphiopedilums, miltonias, and oncidium-alliance varieties. There were also a few jewel orchids available.

Speaking of jewel orchids, the Society's April meeting will feature a program presented by Nancy Urban on growing these more-terrestrial type of orchids with the beautiful foliage.

Our annual sale provides an excellent opportunity to visit the orchid room at the Plant Biology Greenhouses. If you missed seeing it then, it's worth a visit at another time during the hours the Greenhouses are open to the public: 8:30-4:30 Monday through Friday. In addition, there is the Conservatory and several other rooms devoted to specific types of plants, such as cacti, ferns, and many others.

Finally, due to unforeseen circumstances, we will **not be participating in the May sale at Lincoln Square** this year. I hope, however, that your own orchids are perking up and thinking about blooming as spring fitfully arrives in east central Illinois.

Linda Bial, CIOS President

Next meeting:

- April meeting will be on April 14 at the Champaign Public Library. Nancy Urban will be speaking on jewel orchids. Two *Ludisia discolor* will be raffled to members.
- Even though, **there is no Sale at Lincoln Square** on May 10, we will have a regular meeting on May 12 at the Champaign Public Library. Program TBA. A blooming *Phalaenopsis* will be raffled out to members.

Also, you can order hardy orchids to be delivered at this meeting. For detail, see Notes and Tips.

Events in the area:

- April 12-13, 2014. Central Indiana Orchid Society Show and Sale. Garfield Park Conservatory, 2505 Conservatory Drive, Indianapolis, IN. www.centralios.org.
 - April 30 - May 4, 2014. The Orchid Society of Minnesota and the Mid American Orchid Congress. Bloomington, MN. www.midamericanorchids.org/meetings/
 - May 11, 2014. Eastern Iowa Orchid Exhibit and Sale. Iowa City, IA. www.orchidmall.com/eios/spike.pdf.
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Last issue for non-members:

This is the last issue sent to the non-members. If you wish to continue being a member, please renew your membership immediately. The 2014 membership fee is \$15 for single and \$25 for a couple. Please make your check payable to CIOS and mail it to Nancy Urban, 22 Dixie Acres Rd, Danville, IL 61832.

Orchid of the month 1: Dendrobium

Dendrobiums are truly amazing orchids. With it's over 1200-1300 species, Dendrobiums are found from the Himalayan mountains to the dense tropical forest of South East Asia to the deserts of Australia and New Zealand. The habitat diversity also brings the varying appearances of this Genus. Some are cane-like; some are viney; some have very stiff leaves, and some have soft leaves. Because of this habitat diversity, some hobbyists find Dendrobiums difficult to grow and flower.

Below are several types of Dendrobiums. The yellow and orange flowered Dendrobiums (hybrid variety unknown) are called Nobile type. They produces multiple flowers up and down the newest cane-like stem. The fat cane can store water and the plant requires a definite cool and dry season in order for the flowers to form. When done flowering, the cane becomes leggy and unsightly, but it can be cut into 3-4" pieces and propagated on wet moss. Each leaf node can bloom, so an old cane may still produce flowers the following year. New growth appear from the base. New hybrids such as shown below are shorter and very floriferous.



Another type of Dendrobiums produces flower spikes at the top or near the top leaf node as shown below. They readily grow keikis which can be removed and planted when their roots become about 2.5" long. New growths may also appear from the base.



A vine-like Den. loddigesii at below left grows in moist soil but can also grow on cork bark as long as it is misted every 2-3 days. Propagation is by stem cutting. Den. kingianum at below right has stiff canes and leaves. It is commonly known as rock orchid in Australia, they can be grown on rocks or bark mix. Both Den. loddigesii and kingianum flower in early spring, and have faint to strong fragrance.



Orchid of the month 2 : Branched Phalaenopsis

Hybridizers are in constant pursuit of orchids that are different. Their efforts are most active with Phalaenopsis. We have seen flowers with stripes, spots, and splashes. Plants with long cascading stalks with large "moth-like" flowers long admired by everyone, seems to be going out of favor. In their place, the smaller plants with many brilliant colored flowers, often with thick velvety petals, are getting attention. Apparently, the most recent trend is "branching" as seen in the images below. Whether standard or compact size, the popularity is gained by plants with multiple branches with a ton of flowers.



If you are interested in a type of orchid to be featured in this column, please let Mitzi know. Your suggestions and comments are also welcome.

Notes and tips:

- April is **National Orchid Month**. Talk to someone about orchids and share your passion.
- **Nature's trick:** One of Noni Graves' Phalaenopsis shown below produced 13 flowers with 3 or so more buds yet to open. In close view, Noni noticed that one of the flowers has a strange shape. Below right, you can see a flower with two conjoined lips and a shared, but twisted column.



- **Hardy orchids:** Hardy orchids can be grown in pots, but if you wish to grow them outside, good location in your garden and ground preparation are critical. The hole for planting should be about 1 foot wide and 2 feet deep, unless the bed can be raised. The easiest to grow in our area may be Bletilla species, commonly known as Asian ground orchids. They can be grown in a sunny spot (up to early afternoon) in your garden. A protected area such as the east side of your house is best. An example of soil mix for them is: 1 part peat; 1 part leaf compost; 2 part play ground (not construction) sand. For planting in pots, one of the growers recommends 1 part soil free mix and 1 part medium perlite.

For Cyripediums or lady slippers, the "soil" should be a mixture of 1 part playground sand, 1 part top soil, and 2 parts medium to large perlite. **Commercial potting soil should not be used** because it has too much fertilizer, and will kill them. Cyripediums prefer mostly shaded, well-drained location, with only several hours of morning sun. Types of plants and prices including shipping and potting cost is as follows:

- ◇ Bletilla striata \$ 10 each. (4 available)
 - ◇ Bletilla stricta \$13 each. (3 available)
 - ◇ Cyripedium parviflorum var. makasin. (small yellow ladyslipper) \$38 each. (4 available)
- If interested, please contact Mitzi to reserve one. They are expected to bloom in 1-3 years.

More information about growing them is available on our website, under "hardy orchids". Please note recommendations for ground preparation varies slightly from grower to grower. □