



# San Fernando Valley Orchid Society Newsletter

November 2013

Volume 53 Issue 11

Meetings are the 1st  
Wednesday of the  
month @ 6:45pm

The Sepulveda Garden  
Center  
16633 Magnolia Blvd.,  
Encino, CA 91436.

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All articles must be submit-  
ted by the 15th of each  
month.



## November 6th Guest Speakers Charles and Norma Jean Johnson

### Topic: The "2008 Chelsea Flower Show"

Charles Johnson retired in 1989 after 35 years as an electrician in the construction industry. Charles, and his wife Norma, became interested in flowers at that time. Not knowing much about orchids, they attended the Santa Barbara Orchid Show in 2002 and shortly thereafter joined the San Gabriel Valley Branch (SFVB-CSA) to learn more about orchid plants. They now have a greenhouse and three shade houses with about a thousand orchids which they have purchased from growers all over the United States.

The Johnsons became board members of the SGVB-CSA, which led Norma Jean to become the President and Charles the Treasurer and Membership Chairman. About that time, they also became interested in the Orchid Society of Southern California (OSSC), and they then joined and served on the Board of Directors for a year. Charles is presently the President of the SFVB - CSA. They enter their beautiful orchids in Orchid Shows all over Southern California.

The Johnson's love to travel. In 2008 they traveled to London, England to see the Chelsea Flower Show. At our November SFVOS meeting the Johnson's will share their photographs and interesting stories about their experiences at the Chelsea Flower Show. Please join us to see their slide show presentation.



## **GIFT ORCHIDS**

The SFVOS was contacted by a family estate in Eagle Rock to see if we could find homes for about 100 orchids, mostly cymbidiums. Millie thought they would make a fine addition to our P.O.T. Pam Aitchison, and her husband John, made arrangements to pick up the orchids on the first Sunday in October. They borrowed a truck and set out to Eagle Rock early in the afternoon. The Orchids had been growing on a steep hillside at a home with a beautiful view of the San Gabriel Mountains. There were so many orchids they would not all fit in the truck, so Pam had to go back the next day for another truck load. The orchids were taken to Ned Daniger's Greenhouse. Many were in need of a lot of care. Ned took care of the orchids until Millie and Pam decided to care for them until they were healthy enough to go out for adoption. Thanks a million Ned for taking care of the orchids when they arrived.

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## **The Southland Orchid Show at the Huntington**

The SFVOS had four members participate in the Orchid Show which was held at the Huntington Library and Botanical Gardens in San Marino. The show was held from October 17th through October 20th. Juana Williams and our new member, Sonia Villarroel went together to the Ribbon Judging on Thursday. Marcia and David Melcombe worked at the Plant Hotel at the show on Friday. The show was wonderful, and displayed a variety of exotic and rare orchid plants, cut flowers and artwork. Thanks to all those who were able to participate and represent our society at the show.

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## **Plant Forum Judges Needed**

Two Volunteers are needed to assist with the Ribbon Judging for the Plant Forum at our Monthly meetings. If you are interested in helping out with this easy task, please contact Pam Aitchison at the next meeting, or call her at (818) 406-5734.

## **REFRESHMENTS**

Refreshments for the November meeting will be provided by members whose last names start with "A" through "D". Healthy snacks are refreshing as well as sweet treats. Of course, all members may also contribute at any meeting. Thank you.





## 2013 Holiday Party

Our annual Holiday party will be held on **December 4th this year**. We anticipate it to be a fun and interesting evening. It will be a Pot Luck Dinner with the SFVOS providing the main entrees.

As a way of saying "Thank-You" for participating in the San Fernando Valley Orchid Society, the SFVOS will be giving away an Orchid Plant to each "Membership". There will also be a \$10.00 Gift Exchange led by a member. If you wish to be a part of the gift exchange bring a gift, valued at or around \$10.00. Tickets will be issued to those who bring a gift and wish to participate.

**Centerpiece Contest:** We will be giving a prize for the best Centerpiece decoration. You may decorate as you wish, and use plants, flowers or any other holiday decorations that you may have.

I hope you have signed up to bring your favorite salad, vegetable or dessert. Also, if you have not already chosen your entrée (Beef, Chicken or Vegan) please contact Millie Peskay to let her know your preference. We hope to see you all there.

### **REMINDERS:**

Bring your own plates, cups and silverware.

Bring serving utensils for the dish you are bringing.

No cooking is allowed in the Center Kitchen (Heat up only)

No Beer, Wine or Alcohol is permitted.

Each member is responsible for their own cleanup.

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### **ORCHID BOOKS FOR YOU!**

One of the Northridge Libraries made a contribution of 2 boxes of Orchid reading materials. Marcia Melcombe is storing them for us. We plan to have them available for purchase at the November meeting.

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### **OUR NEW SFVOS MEMBERSHIP BOOK**

Our new Membership book should be ready by our November Meeting. Its colorful cover makes it easy to find and the new print is bold and easy to read. The information is up-to-date and "new members" names can be recorded on the blank pages at the end of the book as needed.

Our Editor is Nancy Copsy, who is the daughter of members Kent and Melissa Lovelady. We are all looking forward to using our new books. Thank you Nancy!

## ORCHID JUDGING

**Date: October 2nd, 2013**

Divisions (Alliances)		Plant Name	Exhibitor
<b>Cattleya Alliance</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>Laelia pumila</b>	<b>Ed Saraffian</b>
<b>Cattleya Alliance</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>Wils. Firecracker 'Red Star'</b>	<b>Ed Saraffian</b>
<b>Bulbophyllum</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>Bulbophyllum frustii</b>	<b>Ed Saraffian</b>
<b>Grammatophyllum</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>Grammatophyllum: Green</b>	<b>Sonia Villarroel</b>
<b>Phalaenopsis</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>Unknown - White/Purple</b>	<b>Bill Miller</b>
<b>Oncidium Alliance</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>Psychopsis</b>	<b>Pam Morse</b>

### *Orchid Hybrid Trivia*

The total number of grex names in the register is currently 154,660 (as of now). This figure increases daily. Each year The International Orchid Register adds between 3000-4000 new hybrids. The most popular genera for hybrids are:

- Phalaenopsis – 31,382
- Paphiopedilum – 23,871
- Cymbidium – 14,688
- Dendrobium – 11,910

So far there are about 2349 hybrid generic names, but not all of these are in use. There are about 5,600 species involved in hybridization.



*Lycaste x micheli* 'Everglades Amarillo' CHM/AOS grown by Everglades Orchids.

Photo © G. Allikas

# Monthly Checklist for November and December

## Cattleya

Growers of just about every level of expertise will have begun to notice autumn conditions by now. Days are becoming shorter, hence cooler; the sunlight has less intensity as a result of the sun's lowering angle, nights are longer and generally cooler. Plants are responding by slowing and ripening their growth in preparation for winter.

The first cultural change noticed should be a reduced frequency of watering, as the plants dry out more slowly. This is a function of both the reduced day length and lower temperatures, as well as the plants' slowing growth rate. Reduced water needs signal a reduced need for fertilization. Note that the key word is reduced, not eliminated. Feed less frequently and at lower dosage, but feed. Growths, made during summer's heat, and relatively soft and green, will be ripening -- hardening -- in preparation for a brief period of rest (in many cases).

Many of these ripening growths will have a sheath, presaging the coming winter or spring flowering season. In some cases, these sheaths will have been evident since as early as July. (Early sheath development does not mean early flowering on plants with winter-spring seasons.) You may notice that some of these sheaths are showing signs of yellowing. This is not abnormal. Autumn's more pronounced temperature fluctuation can lead to water condensation inside the sheath, hastening the normal process of senescence, so yellowing sheaths can be left on the plant only so long before they must be carefully removed to preserve the bud primordia within. Water condensation left unchecked can rot the bud primordia. The sheaths can be safely removed by slitting open and peeling down toward the pseudobulb.

## Cool-Growing Orchids

One can almost hear a sigh of relief from all of the cool-growers, from masdevallias to odontoglossums. As day temperatures decline, one can see a noticeable improvement in these plants. Shorter days and lower light levels do not seem to bother them. Repot before winter arrives.

## Cymbidium

Finally we begin in earnest the main cymbidium season. *Cymbidium ensifolium* can give some early and fragrant hybrids, but it is now that the bulk of the crop will be flowering. The season lasts for about seven months, adding color to any collection. Miniature varieties will peak for the next three to





four months. There are three important things to do: stake inflorescences ramrod straight for best presentation, watch for slugs and snails (especially just after a rain), and fertilize with a mild balanced formula regularly.

## **Oncidium crispum Complex**

This is the season for plants in *Oncidium* section *crispum* from Brazil to shine. Extremely vigorous hybrids come in wide varieties of markings dominated with chestnut and brown and butter yellow. Give plants high light to produce strong upright inflorescences. The pseudobulbs should be plump, so do not let the plants dry out while they are in bloom. Later, plants will enter a dormant period.

## **Paphiopedilum**

The flowering season for the "toads" or "bulldog" paphs is just getting underway. These cannot be grown everywhere, but where cooler summer nights allow their growth, there is no longer-lasting or more exotic display than these. Paphiopedilums are, in general, not heavy feeders, and it is especially important with this type to reduce nitrogen levels now for best flowering and spike length. Be watchful for water accumulating in the growth around the sheath, or for the late-season warm spell, either of which can lead to the sheath's rotting. As the spikes emerge, do not change the orientation of the plant toward the light, as this can lead to a crooked or twisted spike.

While paphiopedilums rarely like to dry out entirely, water needs are significantly reduced beginning now. Overwatering at this time of year can quickly lead to root rot or erwinia problems. Now is the time to practice good sanitary practices in your greenhouse or growing areas, as pest and disease problems have a way of multiplying rapidly in the darker and more crowded conditions that generally mark the winter growing area. With paphiopedilums, especially, "cleanliness is next to godliness" and if the growing area is littered with old foliage, weeds and dying flowers, keeping the plants alive and flowering will be next to impossible.

## **Phalaenopsis**

Shortening days and cooler nights are the signals for inflorescence initiation in phalaenopsis. In more northern climates, or on the west coast, growers have already begun to see the early inflorescences that may be ready for Christmas. In the eastern areas, nights in the greenhouse will now be in the low to mid 60s, depending on the thermostat setting, so the first of our phalaenopsis will not begin to bloom until Valentine's Day at the earliest.

A reduction in nitrogen levels will go a long way to giving the best possible spiking, as will a boost in potassium and phosphorus. In other words, a "bloom booster"-type fertilizer is definitely indicated in the next few months. Disease and pest problems are best dealt with now, especially as mealybugs hide in the bracts and flower buds. Once they have established themselves, they are difficult to eradicate, and flower damage or crippling results. Potential disease problems can be dealt with by the application of a copper-based compound to control/

alleviate rot problems before they start. There is nothing more frustrating than to have shepherded your plants through a growing season, only to have them decline before your eyes.

## Vandaceous Genera

Whereas the general decline in temperatures is beneficial to cool-growing orchids, it is not for vandaceous plants. The only cold-hardy member is *Neofinetia falcata*. Orient your plants in such a way as to take advantage of as much light as possible. This can be a problem in northern latitudes. Reduce watering and feeding schedules.



*Neofinetia falcata* will thrive in cooler temperatures and produce graceful vanilla-scented flowers.

## Photo of the Month



### *Zootrophion argus*

*Zootrophion* is a small genus of about a dozen Pleurothallid species characterized by fused segments. The pollinator must enter the flower through openings in the bud-like flower. Found in the American tropics.

**Photo © Wiel Driessen**



**SFVOS Newsletter**  
**Millie Peskay**  
**11175 Broadview Drive**  
**Moorpark, CA 93021**

## Announcements

**Please bring plants or anything else you care to donate. If you have extra fruit (oranges or the like) bag them in small quantities, so we can sell each bag for a dollar. Thank you for supporting your Orchid Society.**



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