

## Taking Care of the 'Chids Notes from Alan Koch's Lecture: "Understanding the Brazilian Cattleya Alliance."

by Susie Hanna

At our September meeting, we had the good fortune to hear Alan Koch, Gold Country Orchids share his knowledge of the Brazilian Cattleya Alliance. I have a growing collection of Laelias, and other members of this Brazilian group, so I was quite interested to add his ideas to what I've learned so far.

Here are some highlights of his talk from my point of view.

First, it really is helpful to know about the parentage of hybrid orchids. In the case of mini-Catts for the windowsill or light-garden grower, Alan mentioned *Cattleya luteola* and *Laelia pumila* as two species which are compact and require a bit less light to flower. I've had good success blooming *C. luteola* under florescent lights. *Laelia pumila* is a heart-stopper, with a four-inch, bright magenta flower on a plant that's less than six inches tall. Both of these have been used extensively in hybridizing.

Broughtonia hybrids, he said, have the advantage for the home-grower of not requiring a chill to flower. Also, *Laelia praestens* is a very good choice for windowsill or lights. This amazing little plant produces a four-and-a-half-inch flower on a six-inch plant.

Some species are very difficult for a home grower, and may require some extra knowledge and careful monitoring of conditions to grow well and bloom. *Sophranitis coccinea* is a cool grower and requires good quality water. (RO, distilled, or rainwater). This characteristic may be passed on, to some degree, to its hybrids, but often hybridizers will cross it with a warmer growing species to make it more tolerant. Hybrids are almost always easier to grow than species.

If you have bifoliate Cattleyas, such as *aclandiae*, *luteola*, *nobilor*, *schilleriana*, or *walkeriana*, or a primary cross of one of these species, and the plant insists on growing its roots outside the pot, it isn't just an accident. This group of orchids photosynthesizes through their roots, so let them go.

I'm now fascinated with Rupicolous Laelias, so I was particularly interested in what Alan had to say on this subject. They are small, tough-looking plants that produce amazingly delicate and colorful flowers. Despite their tough upbringing in rocky, harsh conditions, they have a reputation for being difficult, mainly because people over-water them. What I've learned in working with them is to pot very small, in shallow pots, with excellent drainage so that the plant is completely dry within a couple of days of watering. During dull winter days, reduce watering. If you have good humidity, they can be grown mounted. In the wild, they often receive no rain for long periods, only a light misting. But they aren't cactii. Keep the pseudobulbs from shriveling.

*Laelia bradei* and *Laelia briegeri* are bright yellow, while *lucasiana* is a lovely light magenta with a yellow lip. *Laelia milleri* is a spectacular little plant that has short, four-inch leaves, and two-inch pseudobulbs, yet it sends up a 14 inch inflorescence with four to 10 brilliant orange, two-inch flowers. Because they grow in



*Cattleya luteola*

rocky areas, this group needs extra calcium and iron, which can be provided with oyster shell, dolomite or bone meal for calcium, and a liquid iron supplement.

*Laelia johgheana*, Alan's favorite *Laelia*, offers a fragrant, eight-inch pink flower with a frilly white and yellow lip, which lasts eight weeks, all on an eight-inch tall plant. What more could an orchid grower want?

Alan's been working on hybridizing Cattleyas to produce compact plants that are easy for the home-grower, bloom multiple times per year, are fragrant, and colorful. Check out his selection of hybrids and species at [www.goldcountryorchids.com](http://www.goldcountryorchids.com).

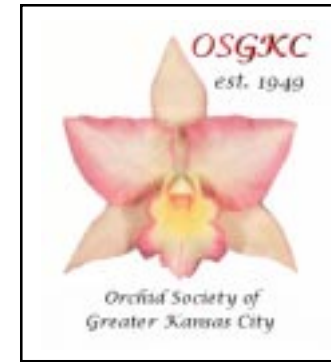
For more information on the native habitat of Brazilian species, go to Francisco Miranda's website: [www.mirandaorchids.com](http://www.mirandaorchids.com).

Minutes - con't from pg.2  
the middle too moist and causing root and crown rot. He shared the idea of using broken pieces of pottery as a core in the center of a potted orchid to create better drainage and aeration in the center of the media. Air cones can be used for this purpose for small pots, but large pots require something greater.

Submitted by Susie Hanna, Secretary



*Laelia johgheana*



# OSGKC News

ORCHID SOCIETY OF GREATER KANSAS CITY [www.osgkc.org](http://www.osgkc.org) October 2006

## A Look Backward:

### Plant of the Month from OSGKC October Meeting:

The *Aerangis splendida*, which won the October "Plant of the Month," was purchased by Monica McNamara from Hoosier Orchids at the OSGKC's November 2005 meeting.

Monica writes, "I had no idea what the flower would look like, but I was attracted by its unusual foliage. When I looked it up after I got home, I was a bit concerned because the Hoosier catalog identified it as a 'difficult grower'."

Monica learned that *A. splendida* is described as a cool to warm-growing epiphyte.

"I grow mine in intermediate to warm conditions," Monica says, "with daytime temps of 80-86 and night temps around 60. It gets medium light - 2000-3500 footcandles - from my moving high pressure sodium lights. I water this plant 2-3 times a week and allow a drier winter rest. I fertilize weekly with the Michigan State formula. The plant is in a breezy spot of my light room with ample air circulation. I also enjoy its pleasant night fragrance."



Note change  
of date for  
October  
meeting!

### OSGKC's Monthly Meeting: October 15, 2006

Roeland Park Community Center  
4850 Rosewood  
Roeland Park, KS  
Beginners' Group: 1:00 p.m.  
Regular Program: 2:00 p.m.

### Book Review -- Native Orchids

**Book:** *The Wild Orchids of North America, North of Mexico*, Written Paul Martin Brown and illustrated by Stan Folson. University Press of Florida, 2003.

by Jami Parkison  
This 237-page encyclopedic reference confirms that, as the inside cover says, "wild orchids bloom in virtually every habitat of every state and province of the

## Inside...

Officers' Reports & Messages: pg. 2

Special Feature: Member Profile pg. 5

OSGKC Sponsors pg. 5

Taking Care of the 'Chids pg. 4

## Fall Orchid Auction Results Are In

by Monica McNamara,  
Auction Chairperson

GOING, Going, Gone...is the Fall Auction of 2006. The new auctioneering format, thanks to Tom Reagor and his able volunteers, was quicker, peppier, jazzier, and more exciting. I found myself buying orchids and having a great time. There were many nice blooming plants and delicious refreshments.

Thanks to all the volunteers who helped this event run so smoothly and efficiently! Also thanks so much to those who supported this event by attending and purchasing plants and items!

Unfortunately we only had 35 buyers - our lowest in recent auction history. Amazingly, though, the unofficial gross total was just under \$2,700! More accurate accounting will be provided at the October meeting.

continental United States, Canada and Greenland.

Beginning with *Amerorchis rotundifolia*, which grows as far north as Alaska and south to Wyo-

Letter from OSGKC President:

Dan Schlozman

We had a great meeting last month, and I regret that I will be absent in October, due to the change of date from the 8th to the 15th.

As those of you who were at the last meeting know, we have a new home at the Broadway United Methodist Church, Wornall at 74th St., Kansas City, Missouri. The room is excellent, the staff is very cooperative, and the cost fits our budget.

I will not insult you by preaching about fall plant care, as this is not the proper venue (and I'm not the proper person.) What I do want to comment on is the closeness of the group and it's cooperative spirit. In spite of the marked diversity of backgrounds and experiences, we are united by our common goal (or maybe by our addiction) of orchid culture. Consensus making, while not always easy, is generally achieved.

Happy growing.



Dan

Program: This month's program was a slide presentation by Alan Koch, Gold Country Orchids, on Understanding the Brazilian Cattleyas Alliance.

Mid-America: Beth Martin reported on the Mid-America meeting held in August in Lexington, KY. She said attendance was good. The Spring '07 meeting is scheduled in Chicago. OSGKC is considering hosting the Fall '07 Mid-America meeting and show. A proposal will be made soon.

Doug Martin announced that audio CDs are available for \$10 on pronouncing orchid names. Proceeds go the Mid-America organization, the producer of the series on educational recordings.

Shows and Exhibits: Beth Martin said OSGKC will have exhibits at two shows this fall. The St. Louis show is September 30-Oct. 1, with set-up on Sept. 29. Volunteers are needed, along with about 50 plants to show. An added bonus to the St. Louis show are the Dale Chihuly glass pieces on display throughout the gardens.

We will also have an exhibit at the Kansas Orchid Society show in Wichita, the first weekend of November.

Publicity: Jason Ward said the September auction will be publicized in the KC area. The KC Gardener is running a free display ad.

Auctions: Monica McNamara said the Fall auction is scheduled for Saturday September 16, with preview and check-in of plants from 1 to 1:30, and the auction from 1:30 to 4:30 at the Roeland Park Community Center. Sellers are asked to contact Monica a week or more before the auction to tell her how many plants they plan to bring. Volunteers to help with the auction are needed, including people to bring refreshments. Please contact Monica.

Raffle: This month's raffle plants were provided by Alan Koch, Gold Country Orchids.

Mentor Program: Frank Serra reported that there's little activity in the mentor program.

Hospitality: Deb Pate, and Doug and Beth Martin provided refreshments.

Plant of the Month: Plant of the Month was Aerangis splendida grown by Monica McNamara.

Point and Comment: Doug Martin discussed the problem of orchid media in a pot drying from the outside in, leaving

A Look Behind: OSGKC Meeting - September 10th, 2006, Minutes

Dan Schlozman, President, called the meeting to order on September 10, 2006.

New Business:

The August 2006 minutes were approved.

Dan said that the monthly book report is being moved to the newsletter. He also announced that our club will be moving to a new venue in January thanks to Jami Parkison. Our new meeting place is the Broadway Methodist Church basement. We will be giving a \$75 donation per meeting. The church has requested that they be allowed to send an outreach letter to our mailing list. Anyone who does not want to receive the mailing may notify Dan.

Doug Martin moved that the club donate 20 percent of the proceeds from the September auction to the International Book Project. The money will be used to help pay for shipping Spanish-language books to schools in Ecuador that were founded by the orchid grower, Ecuagenera. The motion passed.

Doug also moved that we donate \$100 to the Blue Grass Orchid Society, host of the recent Mid-America meeting. The club has traditionally made this donation to the host society. The motion passed.

Doug presented a glass orchid platter to Tom and Joyce Moulis for their many contributions to the club.

Old Business:

Ron Daly moved that the club's constitution and by-laws be changed by adding the title "President-Elect", to the Vice President's title in Article III: Section 1. Beth Martin suggested that we also change the definition of the VP position. Ron withdrew his motion for further study. This issue will come up again at the next meeting.

Committee Reports:

Beginner's Program: Fred Bergman reported that the group discussed low-light orchids. He said the beginner's group is open to anyone, not just beginners, and encouraged anyone interesting in learning more about growing orchids to attend the group.

Beginners' Group

The Novis (beginners) group will meet at 1:00, October and discuss growing high light plants. All new members should try to attend even if arriving late. Fred Bergman

Member Profile: Harold Basye -- Q and A

Phil and Mary Lou Dupes and Geraldine Dusselier will provide refreshments for October's meeting

Q. How many years have you been growing orchids?:

A. I began to grow orchids in the mid 1980's.

Q. How many orchids are in your collection?:

A. My first was a Brassavola Nodosa. Soon afterwards. I met Bob and Doris Polen, who had a greenhouse in Parkville, and a very large selection of orchids for sale. From that day on my collection began to grow. Bob had many cattleya orchids to choose from, and they soon became my favorite.

At this time I have close to 125 plants, most of them being cattleya.

Q. Give a brief description of their growing environment:

A. In 1988 I acquired a small green house, (10 by 10 feet), it has a humidifier and a gas heater, and has been filled to overflowing.

Q. Name one to three in your collection which is a/are particular favorite(s) and why:

A. My favorite plant is C. Angel Bells 'Suzie,' a white with a yellow cup. This plant has been a very consistent bloomer.

Q. Name one to three in your collection that, despite your best efforts, has/have proven particularly difficult to grow:

A. The plant -- or I should say plants -- most difficult for me to grow would be the paphiopedilum family.

Q. Share with readers your best orchid culture tip(s):

A. The best advice that I could give would be not to crowd your plants. They need growing space, and air around them.

Q. What do/did (if retired) you do in life to support your orchid addiction?:

A. I retired from Cook Paint and Varnish in 1988, and was an over-the-road truck driver.



Book review - con't from pg.1

ming, and ending with Zeuxine strateumatica, which grows from Texas to Florida, the first half of Brown's book is an illustrated list of North American wild orchids.

Each entry in the checklist includes a color photograph and a black/white drawing of every orchid. It also includes information regarding each orchid's genus species, subspecies/variety, synonyms, misapplied names, common

name, range, reference and comments.

Following the alphabetized checklist is a 26-page, illustrated (color photos and drawings) list of hybrids in the wild. The full name of each orchid is given.

The third section of the book is a reference entitled, "Using the Checklist as a Field Guide."

Brown points out that more exhaustive field guides exist. His field guide section is an abbreviated reference. He sites other guides which are more extensive in their listings and descriptions of plants.

Brown's book also includes an appendix of "Excluded Species." This is a short, single-page list of

plants, which, according to Brown, "have been reported in the literature, or by word of mouth, from North America (primarily Florida) and appear to have no supporting documentation, that is, herbarium specimens or substantiated photographs."

The book also contains a glossary, an index, a "Personal Checklist," and chapter called, "Additions, Corrections, Nomenclatural Changes, and Comments for Luer (1972), The Native Orchids of Florida, and Luer (1975), The Native Orchids of the United States and Canada Excluding Florida."

For those readers who enjoy tracking down orchids in the wild, this is a easy-to-use, portable and beautifully illustrated guide to our wild orchis.