



OSGKC
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Orchid Society of
Greater Kansas City

OSGKC News

ORCHID SOCIETY OF GREATER KANSAS CITY www.osgkc.org November 2008

November 9th Program - Phragmipedium Hybridizing at ORCHIDbabies (In Search of Smaller Phrags): Earl Bailey

by Doug Martin

Earl Bailey retired from the University of Alabama in 1991 as Professor of Aerospace Engineering, where his specialty was Airplane Flight Control. He and his wife Phyllis live on a farm on the Little Cahaba River south of Birmingham, AL.

Together they formed ORCHIDbabies, LLC in 2002 after 8 years of orchid hobby growing in a 9 x 12 greenhouse. Another greenhouse, laboratory and office were added in 2001, and the decision was made to specialize in Lady Slippers – both Phragmipediums and Paphiopedilums. They now offer a complete line of new Paph and Phrag species and hybrids.

Earl is the grower and runs their seed lab, and Phyllis runs the bookkeeping and website. So far they have registered about ten new Phrag hybrids, and their customers have received two AOS awards.

Their Phrag breeding program is focused on compact Phrags, and the Paph breeding program on brachypetalum and parvisepalum hybrids. Three years ago miniature

orchids were added to their inventory, and they have many from all over the world available for sale. They have recently purchased a large collection of miniatures from



Phrag. bessea

another vendor that are not all listed on their website. If there is anything you are looking for, call and inquire.

If you would like to pre-order plants please visit the website: www.orchidbabies.com/ or call 205-665-5650.

We will be socializing at 75th Street Brewery after the meeting. Plan to join us.

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AOS Corner

by Melba Butler, AOS Representative

Orchid Trivia: "It is hard to say why, but many who plan to build a greenhouse for growing orchids seem to have the idea that they must have one of special construction. This is not so. Any greenhouse that is well-built and includes all the essential for healthy plant life can be adapted for growing orchids. This includes all of the greenhouses of standard construction. . . .The less expensive, pre-fabricated types, the conventional straight- and curved-eave styles, lean-to-greenhouses and conservatories." Reference: American Orchid Society Bulletin, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 1, 1948: Greenhouses for the Amateur Orchid Grower by Ernest Chabot, Author of "Greenhouse Gardening for Everyone"

As the saying goes, "Some things do not change." That can be said about the orchid trivia above. Because today, in 2008, for the hobbyist, many times a greenhouse becomes a necessity when the orchid collection becomes too many plants to take care of all over the yard and on the window sill and every place that is not already occupied. Many greenhouse owners begin by looking at books, articles

Annual Awards Banquet

December 14, 2008

1:00 PM

Bristol Seafood Grill

5400 W. 119th St., Leawood

\$19.95/person includes juice

Please let me know if you are planning to attend.

Doug Martin

bethdoug@kc.rr.com ~ 913-248-8669

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Beginners' Group

The beginners' group will discuss Oncidiums & Nov. Orchids at the next meeting. Be there at 1:00 p.m. with your Questions.

Fred Bergman

Minutes of October 19th OSGKC Meeting

by Holly Hall

Nominating Committee Slate of Officers:

Pres. Monica McNamara

Vice Pres Beth Martin

Sec Holly Hall

Treas Cindy Hobbs

Board of Directors Julie

Morrison and Tony King

Program for November is Earl

Bailey on Paphs & Prags

December is the holiday banquet. Eat the brunch at The Bristol pay individually.

January - Dr. Scott Stewart, a botanist, is going to talk about Orchid Safari in Florida.

Shows-We are still looking for a site to have our show in February. Our limitations are size of the space and the cost. We would like to find something for around \$1200 for the whole weekend.

We are putting exhibits in the Kansas show in Wichita the weekend of Halloween.

Lincoln show is the following weekend Nov 7-9th.

Tony would like pictures of the plant of the month to put on the website.

We have received donations of plants that will have to be cared for through the winter, and we are looking to have an auction in February or March.

Orchid Digest sent a request for donations.



It's Orchid Showtime!

OSGKC members have two opportunities to show off their fall-blooming orchids in the next two weeks. Please share your plants for OSGKC exhibits in the Kansas Orchid Society and Lincoln Orchid Society shows, and plan on visiting Wichita and Lincoln to see (and purchase) some great orchids! OSGKC will have tabletop exhibits in both shows. This will be a great opportunity to display miniatures and smaller plants!

The Kansas Orchid Society show will be open to the public November 1-2 at Botanica, the Wichita Gardens, 701 Amidon, Wichita, KS 67203. *We need your blooming orchids by Thursday evening, October 30.*

The Lincoln Orchid Society show will be open to the public November 8-9 at Back to the Bible, 6400 Cornhusker Hwy., Lincoln, NE. *We need your blooming orchids by Thursday evening, November 6.*

We will need 20-25 blooming orchids for each show, with a limit of 2-3 plants per member. If you have plants we can use, please contact Beth and Doug Martin, 913-248-8669 or bethdoug@kc.rr.com, or Joy and Mark Prout, 816-478-7087 or paphphal@att.net.

We're always happy to have more society members help with the exhibits. If you're planning to attend either show and want to help set up or take down the OSGKC exhibits, please let us know.

Support OSGKC Sponsors:

Bergman Orchid Farm
Bird's Botanicals
Oak Hill Gardens
r.f. Orchids
Windy Hill Gardens
Whippoorwill Orchids

You're Invited! Come to Lafayette for the 48th Annual Louisiana Short Course sponsored by the Acadian Orchid Society

What:

- Enjoy speakers/vendors:
 - Linda Wilhelm from Woodland Orchids in Charlotte, N.C.
 - John Stubbings from Clown Alley Orchids in Pasadena, TX.
- Enter your plants in AOS-Judged Tabletop Orchid Show
- Buy plants!
- Visit with orchid friends

When: Saturday, Dec. 6, 2008, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Where: Ramada Inn-Lafayette

120 E. Kaliste Saloom Rd. (near intersection of Pinhook and Kaliste Saloom)
Lafayette, LA

Stay: Call the Ramada at 337-235-0858 for a special room rate of \$62.00 and mention the Acadian Orchid Society.

Fees: \$35.00 for the Short Course, with meals on your own.

Send your check, payable to the Acadian Orchid Society, to Janet Gianelloni

Contact: Janet Gianelloni, P.O. Box 134, Church Point, LA 70525

Phone: (337)322-8323

Gender Reassignment on the Prairie... or Sex Change in the Grass

by Doug Martin, written for the Grassland Heritage Foundation newsletter

Most orchid growers know that most orchids have both the male and the female parts in the same flower. A few orchids, like the *Catasetums* for example, produce separate male and female flowers. However, did you know there are orchids whose flowers change sex as they mature? Of the twenty-three species of *Spiranthes* native to North America, seven live in Missouri and Kansas. Most of these orchids grow in open grassy areas such as prairies, fields, stream banks and savannas. They are often called lady's tresses because the small, half-inch to one inch, tubular white flowers are arranged in a spiral around the flower spike and remind some people of braided hair. When these flowers first open they can only function as males, but as they age they change shape so that they can only function as females.

To understand how the flowers change we must first learn a little bit about the sexual biology of orchids. One of the characteristics that makes orchids different from other flowers is that they have the sexual parts gathered together in a single structure called the column. The anther, the male part with the pollen, is located at the tip of the column. The stigma, the female part that accepts the pollen, is located on the underside on the column immediately behind the anther. Many orchids, including lady's tresses, are pollinated by bees that crawl into the flowers, brushing against the anther of one flower and picking up pollen, then depositing it onto the stigma of the next flower.

When a *Spiranthes* flower first opens, the bottom of the floral tube is pressed against the bottom of the

column so that the stigma is covered. When a bee visits the flower it can pick up the pollen from the anther but it cannot place any on the stigma. Thus, the flower is functionally male. As the flower ages, the tube shifts downward so that the anther becomes pressed against the top. Now the bee cannot



contact the anther, but the stigma is open to receive pollen and the flower has become functionally female. The flowers at the bottom of the spike open first, so they are the oldest and have become female by the time the ones at the top open as males.

Like other flower characteristics, this sex change is an adaptation to the behavior of the pollinator. The bees that pollinate *Spiranthes* typically visit flowers at the bottom of a flower spike first and work their way up to the top in a spiral pattern. This explains why the flowers are arranged in a spiral as well as the sex change. When the bee first arrives at the plant, it may be carrying pollen from a previous plant. If so, it will pollinate the

female flowers at the bottom of the flower spike. The last flowers the bee visits will be males, where it can pick up pollen to take to the next plant.

For lady's tresses, having transgendered flowers serves to prevent self-pollination and assure cross-pollination. Maybe we should call them "person's tresses".

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and ads in magazines, or searching the Internet for greenhouse designs that could fit somewhere in the yard or as an attachment to the house. Although, some people choose a greenhouse location that can be visited often, like an empty lot or pasture nearby, with plumbing and electricity.

It would be uncommon to find any two greenhouses that come close to being the same. Even though some hobbyists borrow several ideas from others in the beginning design, eventually they make changes that suit their own growing habits and styles. Somewhere along the way to the finished product, it becomes their own creation. The exception is the person who goes to a greenhouse company and chooses a greenhouse and standard benches. Here there could be duplications.

One way many hobbyists decide how personally to construct a greenhouse for growing orchids is to visit other growers in their particular area of the country – fellow orchid growers, especially. Eventually they get enough ideas to go to a greenhouse designer or to begin the effort themselves.

The important thing is for the greenhouse to function for the good of the orchids and the grower — with proper light, circulation, temperature, and enough conveniences for the grower to feed and water their particular orchid collection. But as Mr. Chabot wrote back in 1948, don't start too small! Orchid collections are more likely to grow than to shrink.

For those interested in building a greenhouse, much research is recommended.