

The Mid-American

Newsletter of the Mid-America Orchid Congress

November 2003

President's Message

For those of you that were not able to attend the Speaker's Forum and Orchid Sales Weekend in August, you missed a truly wonderful experience. The Galt House Hotel was a gorgeous venue located within walking distance of the riverfront. Committee meetings were held Friday night, as usual, with the orchid sales area open to all registrants. A scrumptious buffet was also provided.

Saturday morning breakfast was hosted by the Affiliated Societies Committee then AOS judging took place. The Speaker's Forum started at 10 a.m. and continued until 4 p.m. We had a terrific lineup of speakers with topics ranging from Eurasian Cyripediums to Trends in Ascocenda Breeding.

Our typical, fun-filled auction was held Saturday evening where we raised in the neighborhood of \$3,000.00. The evening concluded with a River Boat Cruise and Dinner. This was probably one of the best Mid-America banquets we have ever had. The weather couldn't have been better for a cruise on the river, the food was great and company even greater. I know I'll remember this one for a long time. Another breakfast was held on Sunday morning and then we had our business meeting followed by more great lectures. The membership voted at the business meeting to hold another Speaker's Forum and Orchid Sales Weekend to be held in the spring of 2004 since this is an open date. Be on the lookout in the next issue of The Mid-American for more details on where and when this will be held.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Tim Brooks for all his hard work in making this such an outstanding event. When you try something new like this, you are never quite sure how well it will be received. This one was a real winner! Just hope we can repeat it next spring. All of you Mid-America Reps remember to encourage your members to come to our Mid-America Shows and Speaker's Forums. Let them know what a great time we have and encourage them to get involved. Hope to see lots of you in the Spring!!

Pat Cleveland



Future Mid-American Orchid congress Dates

Spring 2004, OPEN

Fall 2004, Orchid Society of Middle Tennessee, Nashville, Tennessee

Spring 2005, Orchid Society of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Fall 2005, Greater Cincinnati Orchid Society and Miami Valley Orchid Society, Cincinnati, Ohio

Spring 2006, Greater Omaha Orchid Society, Omaha, Nebraska

Fall 2006, OPEN Spring 2007, OPEN

Fall 2007, OPEN Spring 2008, OPEN

Pot Culture of Native Orchids of North America by Dr Wilford Neptune, transcribed by Inge Poot

This is a summary of portions of the excellent talk given by Dr Neptune as part of the MAOC Speaker's Forum, Sunday, August 24, 2003. Dr Neptune is a retired thoracic and cardiovascular surgeon who has been growing a mixed collection of orchids (155 genera) since 1972. Since 1982 he has received 102 awards, one from the RHS and 101 from the AOS, of which 20 were for cypripediums ! Challenged by Dr Carson Whitlow's success story with calopogons he has spent the last ten years perfecting his pot culture of native North American orchids.

Dr Carson E. Whitlow published "Fun Flowers" on the culture of Calopogons in the September 1992 issue, pages 860-865 of the Bulletin of the American Orchid Society and the information should help with attempts at culture in pot.

Calopogon, Grass Pink is grown by Dr Neptune in 50% peat moss and 50% perlite. In spring, he uses a 5 inch (10cm) pot with drainage material on the bottom, plants the tuber two times its width deep, and places the pot in a saucer of water in full sun. He fertilizes once a week with one quarter strength fish and seaweed fertilizer. After the first frost he digs up the tuber, puts it into peat moss and over winters it in a 30 to 35 degree Fahrenheit (minus one to plus two degrees Celsius) fridge for its dormancy period.

There are some interesting hybrids being developed with the species in this genus. Crossing the sequentially flowering *C. tuberosus* that has one to two flowers open at a time, with the small flowered, but simultaneously opening *C. multiflorum* results in a hybrid with large sequentially opening flowers where 2 or more flowers are open at the same time. (Source of plants: Carson Whitlow, see 1. below)

Dr Neptune also mentioned that the October blooming **Spiranthes odorata 'Chadds Ford' CCM-AOS** is grown like the Calopogons, but unlike the Calopogons should be wintered in the fridge **in the pot**. (Sources of plants: Barry Glick, see 2. below, Roslyn Nursery, see 3. below). Charles Sheviak, the taxonomist for the state of New York feels that it is not necessary to place calopogons and spiranthes in the fridge for dormancy.

A **Rose Pogonia, Pogonia ophioglossoides** collected in a Florida swamp was grown in an artificial bog. To grow it in a pot, the roots should be wrapped in live sphagnum, the pot should be set into a saucer of water, it must not receive any fertilizer and the undisturbed pot should be over wintered in the fridge. The plant grown this way, produced one leaf the first year, two leaves the second year, three leaves and one to two flowers the third year, while in the fourth year the flowers were fewer, but larger and darker. Owen Robinson of Jacksonville VT has an artificial bog in which he grows pitcher plants and white and pink Rose Pogonias.(He sells wholesale only)

Ladyslippers:

Cypripedium formosanum a native of Formosa, now called Taiwan, is the easiest to grow and has been in pot culture for over 100 years in China, Japan, Germany and England. Dr Neptune is puzzled by the fact that it has not caught on in North America. It is hardy outside to WI and VT but because of January and February thaws tends to die in the New England states. With a rise in temperature this plant will start to grow and can flower in 14 days. Unfortunately, the thaw only lasts for 5-7 days, during which time the flower bud is up out of the foliage. With the drop in temperature the bud is destroyed, the plant survives, but there will be no flower for that year. A few growers are successful growing it outside by mulching it and this seems to work out well on Long Island, NY.

Cypripedium mix:

1. 3 gallons of woods soil taken from the top two inches (5 cm) of a mixed forest, mostly white pine. This is hand rubbed through a 1/4 inch (0.5 cm) wire screen. The result is a light, fluffy, fairly fine soil which does not compact even when wet. To this add:
2. 8 cups fine peat moss for water retention
3. 8 cups fine perlite and
4. 4 cups medium perlite for aeration
5. 1/2 cup oyster shell and
6. 1/4 cup pelletized lime to buffer the mix to a pH of 7.2 to 7.4
7. Use a one inch (2.5 cm) layer of marble chips as drainage in the bottom of the pots.

Most commercial sources of cypripediums ship the plants bare root after they are dormant in the fall. In contrast to most other orchids a generously sized pot is used. For a single growth plant a two gallon (8 litre) pot is used, with the one inch (2.5 cm) layer of marble chips on the bottom for drainage. Fill the pot two thirds full with the mix described above, then make a mound up to about one inch from the top and wind the roots around the mound and leave the eye for next year's growth at the centre of the mound. Fill the rest of the pot and water thoroughly with pure water (water from an RO unit supplies enough water for all of Dr. Neptune's the North American native orchids) and set aside to drain over night. The next day place the pot inside a double plastic bag, to guard against drying out, and then put it into a refrigerator at 35 to 40 degrees Fahrenheit (3 to 4 degrees Celsius) for a minimum of 10 -12 weeks of cold dormancy. This period is frequently called vernalization, a term which is now being accepted in horticulture; however, this is technically incorrect. In botany, vernalization, by definition, means to initiate a flower bud by exposure to cold, as in a lily. None of the cypripediums need vernalization as the flower bud is in the eye for next year's growth when it becomes dormant in the fall. All cypripediums do, however, need a period of cold dormancy to initiate growth and leaf production when the temperature rises in the spring. When the plants are brought out in the spring, Dr Neptune grows them in the cool house with a minimum night temperature of 46 degrees Fahrenheit (8 degrees Celsius) through their period of flowering, and then they go outside on a wall beside the east side of Dr Neptune's greenhouse until fall dormancy. Depending on the location Dr Neptune can vary the amount of sunshine the plant receives. He tries for between 1500 and 2500 foot candles of light. They are kept evenly moist with pure water and fed 1/4 strength fish meal and sea weed until August and then no more fertilizer. After they enter dormancy, or by November, all foliage is cut off and the plants are again place inside a refrigerator. He has used a cold frame for the period of cold dormancy, but the temperature outside is so erratic in the spring that he prefers the refrigerator with better control of the temperature.

Of the 11 Cypripedium ladyslippers that Dr Neptune has in cultivation at present, about 10 do fine with the same treatment as *C. formosanum*, but *C. acaule* needs special treatment. **Cypripedium acaule's** accepted method of transplanting according to Scott Durkee was, that it should be collected with a huge earth ball to have even a 10% success rate. The theory was that one would thus get the micorrhiza it is associated with in nature, as the latter grows along the surface of the soil within the evergreen or deciduous tree duff. One would thus get both the undamaged roots and the micorrhiza containing soil. Scott Durkee of VT Ladyslipper Farm worked out how to get a 90% success rate with this species. The micorrhiza is essential in nature for the germination of the seed, but after the plants have developed roots they usually are infected with the micorrhiza, but don't need them anymore. Scott Durkee has grown plants of this species from seed to flowering in flask without any exposure to micorrhiza . Furthermore the plants are not truly terrestrial as the roots grow out radially from the base of the plant and are on the surface of the soil and covered over with one or two inches (2 to 5 cm) of duff.

To transplant a plant with a 90% success rate, fork it out with a manure fork in the fall after it has become dormant, by sliding the fork under the duff along the soil surface and lifting up. The duff will fall through the tines and the roots will remain on top of the fork. Place the plant flat onto moist newspapers and move to a suitable new location. There, remove the duff, scarify the soil surface, lay the plant flat onto the bed, add one to two inches of duff plus for this first year a mulch of one to two inches (5 cm) of wood chips and water in. Continue watering when needed for the whole first year to prevent the stress of drought. Once established the plant can tolerate severe drought and nutrient poor soil. However, a pH above 5 kills it. Therefore use pure water acidified to a pH of 3.5 to 4 with cider vinegar for watering. For pot culture use all duff as the medium, do not feed and keep it evenly moist with pH 3.5 to 4 pure water. Over winter in an unheated garage or cold frame and cover with oak leaves. Success with this cypripedium cannot be claimed until one has grown and flowered it for at least three successive years.

Cypripedium macranthos does not like the conditions that Dr Neptune is able to give them and of the three different plants he tried from three different sources he flowered one, but all three were dead at the end of two years. The other cypripedium species Dr Neptune grows like *C. formosanum* are :**C. calceolus C. pubescens, C.**

parviflorum, C. kentuckiense (3 foot stems with flower size 2x that of C parviflorum, hardy to VT & WI) **C. Gisella** (C. ventricosum x C. parviflorum) **C. cordigerum** **C. tibeticum, C. montanum, C. reginae**

Sources for hardy terrestrials:(recommended by Dr Neptune or the Conservation committee)

1. Carson Whitlow, slipperguy@aol.com , seedling cyps and rescued plants, calopogons
2. Barry Glick, Sunshine Farm, Renick, WV, www.sunfarm.com , Spiranthes and a few others at times.
3. Roslyn Nursery, 211 Burrs Lane, Dix Hills, NY 11746 , www.roslynnursery.com , Spiranthes cernua 'Chadds Ford', occasionally S. sinensis and Cyp. calceolus.
4. Dr Heinrich Beyrle, Postfach 1129, 86316 Friedberg, Germany, www.myorchids.de , Extensive list of European hardy terrestrials.
5. Bill Steele, Spangle Creek Labs, www.uslink.net/~scl/ , Only seedlings out of flask.
6. Scott Durkee, VT Ladyslipper Co., www.vtladyslipper.com , Cyp. seedlings and flowering size plants.
7. Tom Nelson, Woods End Nursery, 807 College Street, Northfield, MN 55057, (507)663-1544
8. Werner Frosch, (Cyp hybrids), Hohenweg 8, 63303 Dreieich, Germany, www.w-frosch.onlinehome.de/menue_e.htm
9. Owen Robinson, Raising Rarities, Jacksonville, VT, wholesale only. Dr Neptune feels he would be remiss if he did not mention Owen Robinson, since in his opinion he has superb plant material. Unfortunately he no longer deals with retail, but his plants are now sold by a number of garden centres such as #10 below.
10. White Flower Farm, CT. May have C. kentuckiense.

Dr Neptune can be reached at wneptune@aol.com

MID-AMERICA ORCHID CONGRESS, 8/22-24/2003, LOUISVILLE, KY

REPORT TO MID-AMERICA AFFILIATED ORCHID SOCIETIES

The Mid-America Orchid Congress made history when we met at the beautiful (big!) Galt House in Louisville, KY, in that the Congress was held not in conjunction with an orchid show but with a speaker's forum and orchid sales weekend. This was the first time since the MAOC was formed in St. Louis in October, 1959 that the Congress did not meet in conjunction with an orchid show. The Galt House was an excellent venue for our activities; conferees were pleased and surprised at our huge suites. All of our meals, the judging, the meetings, the sales, and the lectures were held in close proximity to each other, which was very convenient.

More than 100 registrants enjoyed the orchid sales pavilion gala on Friday night featuring abundant, delicious hors d'oeuvres and the opportunity to get a first look at the sales tables provided by Ecuagenera (Ecuador), H&R Orchids (Hawaii), RF Orchids (Florida), Autre Vie Orchids (Texas), Oak Hill Gardens (Illinois), AnTec Laboratory (New York), Orchid Inn (Illinois), Hilltop Orchids (Indiana), Paphanatics (California) and Celebrate Orchids (Virginia). The twelve Mid-America committees held their working meetings after the party.

The Affiliated Societies Committee hosted the breakfast on Saturday morning, where Chair Doris Asher led a discussion on the future of the Mid-America. There was concern since there were no invitations from societies to host the Congress at this time nor upcoming next spring and since the Eastern Orchid Congress voted to disband a couple years ago that the member societies might want something very much different from the offerings of the past. Hopefully the members of the Executive Committee left the meeting with many ideas, criticisms, and suggestions for Mid-America's agenda for the future.

Immediately after the breakfast, Judging Chair Stephen Benjamin organized the 51 judges, who evaluated orchids which had been submitted for AOS judging. Of the 19, seven were successful in garnering awards:

Pleurothallis coffeicola 'Free Spirit' CBR Lynn O'Shaughnessy Howell MI.

Pleurothallis gelida 'Free Spirit' CEE 94 pts Lynn O'Shaughnessy Howell MI.

Paphiopedilum Mount Toro (stonei x philippinense) 'Emily' HCC 79 pts Steve Helbling Cincinnati OH.

Eulophia alta 'Don Weber' CBR Don Weber Columbus OH.

Paphiopedilum Temptation (kolopakingii x philippinense) 'Malingham' HCC 75 pts Orchid Inn Ltd. Downs, IL

Paphiopedilum sukhakulii 'Gigantic' HCC 78 pts Orchid Inn Ltd. Downs, IL

Paphiopedilum (sukhakulii x Makmaster) 'Green Delight' AM 80 pts Orchid Inn Ltd., Downs, IL

The Mid-America Speaker's Forum, featuring eight hours of talks by five speakers, opened on Saturday morning with Dr. Leonid Averyanov speaking on Eurasian Cypripediums. Dr Averyanov's new book, Slipper Orchids of Vietnam, was available for sale at the Congress, and many of us were fortunate enough to get the author's autograph in our copies. A botanist with the Komarov Botanical Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg, Russia, Dr. Averyanov spoke on Sunday on Vietnamese Paphiopedilums. Other guest lecturers included Nina Rach, Drilling Editor for the Oil & Gas Journal from Houston (Sobralias; Stanhopeas), Roy Tokunaga, owner of H&R Nurseries in Hawaii (mini-Catts; Dendrobiums), Robert Fuchs, proprietor of RF Orchids in Florida (Ascocendas), and Dr Wilford Neptune, a retired surgeon, who gave a fascinating talk on how he grows numerous species of native orchids in pots, and wins AOS awards on the results!

Dick Wells served as auctioneer at the Mid-America auction on Saturday night, chaired by the Chair of the Ways and Means Committee, Mark Van der Woerd from Huntsville, AL. The auction raised \$3,200, which included \$62 from "orchid nuts" sold on board the Spirit of Jefferson, which was chartered for our exclusive use. Saturday night's dinner was delicious, voluminous and served on board the river boat, the Spirit of Jefferson, which took conferees on a cruise of the Ohio River, which forms the boundary between Ohio and Kentucky. It was fascinating to see the large "convoys" of barges plying the very wide river. The boat dock was a short stroll from the hotel.





At the Sunday morning Business Meeting, these officers for next year were elected: Pat Cleveland (President), Dick Wells (1st Vice President), Doris Asher (2nd Vice President), Beth Martin (Secretary) and Karen McBride (Treasurer).

“Friends or places that I have visited because of orchids” is the topic of this year’s Mary Lou Dundon Essay Contest, 750 words or less. Send your manuscripts via either e-mail or regular mail by 2/01/2004 to Carolyn Butcher, CJButcher1@aol.com or 2822 Dorchester, Birmingham, MI 48009. Prizes are \$100 (1st prize), \$50 (2nd), and \$25 (3rd).

Also at the Business Meeting, Tim Brooks took a vote to have the Executive Board arrange a meeting for the Spring of 2004 (again, there is no host society for the Mid-America Orchid Congress for next spring). The delegates voted overwhelmingly for the Executive Board to do so. The location, date, and exact format will be announced. Check with your Mid-America rep or access the Mid-America website to learn the plan for the spring (www.midamericanorchids.org). If the program in the spring is **anything** nearly as good as the event in Louisville, you must do yourself a favor and attend!

If the Affiliated Societies Committee specifically or the Mid-America Orchid Congress in general can help your society in any way, I hope you’ll contact us. If we can’t solve your problem directly, we’ll refer it to someone you can!

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