

# Kingwood Orchid Society Newsletter

January 2007



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## Rambling from Vine

Here's hoping that the Holiday season was nice to everyone. Here at least, the work at the hospital is finished until April.

I would like to ask once more for articles from the membership, I can only make this your newsletter, if I have articles from you.

The above is *Isabella virginilis*, an eastern Brazilian small sized creepy, epiphytic, cool to hot growing species growing in debris filled crevices on eroded sandstone outcroppings, with a basket like weave of flowers covering the clustered, ovoid globose pseudobulb with a single, apical, erect, needle like, curved and floriferous, blunt leaf, that is best mounted on tree fern slabs, so that it will bloom on a short, terminal inflorescence with a spatheaceous bract, that has 1 or 2 waxy, long lived, Cattleya like flowers, occurring in late fall or winter.

## Christmas Orchid

Cattleya percivaliana is one of two



orchids that is called the "Christmas orchid"

It has a deep purple coloring and an aromatic fragrance.

Cattleya percivaliana was a late arrival on the orchid scene compared with most of

the other important Cattleya species. It took 46 years after the discovery of *Cattleya mossiae* and more than 20 years after the discovery of *Cattleya trianaei*, *Cattleya warscewiczii* and *Cattleya lueddemanniana* before someone found *C. percivaliana*. By the time it appeared, the orchid world was more than ready to receive it. Growers were desperate to



find a cattleya to fill the flowering gap between *Cattleya labiata*, which finished blooming in November, and *C. trianaei*, which did not begin flowering until January. *Cattleya percivaliana* flowered during the December period.

*C. percivaliana* produces flowers that were only half the size of the other major Cattleya species.

*C. percivaliana* was named to honor Mr. R.P. Percival of Birkdale, Southport, England.

As a Cattleya species, *C. percivaliana* is distinct and easy to identify, because its fragrance is unique and you have only to smell it once to be able to identify it.

*Cattleya percivaliana*'s fragrance is usually described as "spicy" and most people like it. But, not everyone does, and it is the only Cattleya species about which there is any doubt at all about the fragrance's being pleasant and desirable. Another important identifying feature of *C. percivaliana* is its lip color. The lip typically has an intense deep orange color in the throat that seems to underlay even the deep purple of the lower labellum.

*Cattleya percivaliana* was not much of

a success in the cut-flower market of the 1930s, 40s and 50s because a single flower was too small to make a good corsage. Only a few fine clones with large flowers like *C. percivaliana* 'Summit', AM-FCC/AOS, were grown for cut flowers.

As a pot plant, however, *C. percivaliana* is ideal. It is a relatively small plant that produces two or three flowers per lead and a plant in a 5-inch pot made a



beautiful display for the holiday season. Although *C. percivaliana* is thought of as a small cattleya, there have been clones that had a 7-inch petal spread, but these have been very rare. The typical flower is about 4 1/2 inches across.

The lavender forms of *C. percivaliana* have lips that vary in color from almost black-purple to medium orange-purple, and there are, of course, pale lavender albescens and concolor. The lip is usually narrow except in the Grandiflora forms. The most famous lavender clone is undoubtedly 'Summit', AM-FCC/AOS, which has a squarer shape than most other clones of *C. percivaliana*. Even the very dark, narrow-lipped *C. percivaliana*, however, are wonderful flowers.

## How to Grow Cattleya Percivaliana

*Cattleya percivaliana* is one of the easiest members of the Cattleya genus to grow and is normally a vigorous, trouble-free plant. It begins growing in late winter to

early spring in the United States and will usually make two growths in succession. Both growths will flower at the same time in late November into December. A sturdy, well established plant will stay in flower at least four weeks.

*Cattleya percivaliana* grows in nature at relatively high altitudes from 4,000 to 6,000 feet. It is often a lithophyte found on rocks and receives considerable exposure to the sun. Under greenhouse conditions at sea level, however, it will require at least 30 percent shade in the summer to prevent the leaves from burning.

*Cattleya percivaliana* requires lots of sun and air to obtain the best growth and the most flowers. Repotting should be done in the spring before the plant is in active growth.

Because of its vigorous growing habit and small size, about nine inches, *C. percivaliana* makes a great exhibition plant if potted into the next larger pot without disturbing the rootball. Under these circumstances, you can have a plant in a 6-inch pot with 10 or 12 flowers for Christmas.

Parts of this article from A.A. Chadwick dated 1999, pictures also from Chadwick

### Christmas Party

Didn't get a count on the number of members at the Christmas dinner, but the turn out was a good one.

Our speaker, was Edger and Kim Stehli, of Windswept in Time Orchids. A slide show and talk on the new greenhouse they built. I must say, it brought back some memories of when I built mine. Seems that "problems" are fairly universal.

For those of you that don't remember Kim and Edger, They were our speaker a couple of years ago, Kim then demonstrated, how to make orchid corsages.

Drawing was held for paid members to receive an orchid.

Before leaving, everyone was able to visit the sale table that Kim and Edger had available.

Vicky Sitterly and her crew did a great job of sitting up the dinner. From the "staff" here at the "newsroom" a Big thumbs up and Thank You.

### General Information

Reading on AOS site, need to put in the information about the Officer's and

staff on the Kingwood Orchid Society.

The Officers are listed at the top of this.

Mr. Dale Musilli is our auctioneer, legal advisor and rep. for AOS.

[musillid@earthlink.net](mailto:musillid@earthlink.net)

Mrs. Vicky Sitterly is the Sunshine Committee Chairperson.

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Vicky is the one to contact for persons that get sick, Etc.

Mr. Ken Lehner, is the Rep. For the Mid-America Orchid congress, the editor of this newsletter, (also does the research, rewrite, picture research, cutting, cropping and layout), and is the contact person for Kingwood Orchid Society.

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(One thing nice about this, when I call a staff meeting, everyone shows up)

Mrs. Shyla Wies is another contact person for the King Orchid Society.

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### January Meeting

Date.....January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2007

Place.....Kingwood Center

Time.....10 AM

Refreshments.....Dan and Linda Pitzen

Program.....No Information

Sale Table.....BL Golden Glory

LC Newberry Skies

Colm. Wildcat "Bobcat"AM/AOS

BPL. Golden Spice "Red Peppers"

### Things to Do for January

January starts the flowering cycle for *Phalaenopsis*, good air circulation, care that blooms don't get wet. Fertilize lightly only when media is damp.

Some *Dendrobium* need a rest period to flower in the spring.

Humidity must be high for *Cymbidiums*, keep cool as possible. Now here is the problem, if growing in the greenhouse, temperature for *Dendrobiums* must not fall below 60 degrees, or you could lose the buds.

*Vandas* should be fertilized a couple of times this month, when media is moist, any signs of inflorescences, need to be helped away from the main stem, increase the light level, high humidity

around the roots, misting wouldn't hurt.

*Paphiopedilums* should not dry out, increase the humidity, inside, use pans with pebbles in water, do not let stand in the water.

*Cattleya* need pseudobulbs tied up. And the sheathing removed, around the pseudobulbs, not the flowering ones.

As always, **watch** for the creepy crawlers, Spider mites, scale, mealy bugs and possibly thrips.

This is the time I start looking at the plants that will need repotted this year, buy media, get up pots, wash and sterilize.

One thing I have to do that I would guess none of the rest of you do, keep an eye on "Miss Piggy", and buy her food for the rest of the year. "Miss Piggy" is the watch turtle here at our greenhouse.

She knows I am the one that cleans and feeds her, but, she don't like me! She does try to bite if you attempt to pick her up.

### November Show Table

Vicky and Doug Sitterly

*Rodriguezia secunda*

Dan Pitzen SC Dorea Tropical

Dale Musilli *Paph niveum X concolor*

*Phrag Demetria X besseae*

*Dendrochilum latifolium*

### Last but not Least

Hope your Holidays were safe and enjoyable.



### *Pulchritudinous Georgie*

Is this a new species? Can anyone describe it's culture?

Photo submitted by Dale Musilli