

Western North Carolina Orchid Society
PO Box 874
Asheville, NC 28802-0874

Calendar of Events

Nov. 12 Field Trip to Atlanta Botanical Garden
and Orchid Show.

Nov. 15 WNCOS Meeting at 7:00PM CAO
Tom Harper, Speaker

Dec. Christmas Social / Covered Dish / Annual
Meeting
at Ginny Honea's
DETAILS COMING

WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA ORCHID SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Volume 11 Issue 11

November 10, 2005



**November 12, 2005
Atlanta Orchid Show Field Trip**

**MEETING
November 15, 2005 7:00 PM
At Community Action Opportunities**

**Speaker
Tom Harper**

"The New Spotted Phalaenopsis - The Harlequins"

Growing Tips for November

By

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November is the month where it is finally necessary to admit that winter is coming. Now is the time for even the worst procrastinators to check heaters, light pilot lights, and acquire gas or oil. This is likely to be a painful proposition given the high cost of energy. Imagine having to heat several large commercial greenhouses this winter. This is what is facing the commercial growers here in the Continental U.S. this winter. Given this fact it is not surprising to see slightly higher orchid prices at my favorite nurseries.

High fuel prices are occurring at a time when a number of well-known orchid nurseries have already ceased operation or are in the process of closing. Lenette Orchids, where many excellent cattleya and Phalaenopsis hybrids were developed, closed its doors this year. Its legacy remains in the fine art-shade cattleyas seen in orchid shows. It was at Lenette Orchids where Ken Griffith line-breed Phal Hilo Lip for five generations until he attained dark pink clones with their contrasting white lips that grows well in our warmer climate. The latest issue of Carter & Holmes fall catalog illustrates one of these clones. Unfinished was Ken's drive to create a pink phal with a bright yellow lip.

Another loss to the Orchid World this year is Everglades Orchids, where warm growing members of the oncidium and cymbidium alliance were developed. The innovative and dedicated work of the owner and hybridizer, Milton Carpenter, remains in many of our greenhouses where cymbidiums and different-looking oncidiums flourish in the heat of southern summers. Rumor has it that much of this line will be continued at Carter & Holmes where an important portion of their stud plants can now be found.

Those of us in the Carolinas were fortunate to get a visit from Sue Fordyce a few months ago. Some did not realize that the plants she brought with her were some of the last ones that would come from Fordyce Orchids. Their lease was lost and there was no location available to move. Frank Fordyce produced some remarkable hybrids during his life, many at his Livermore nursery, including some of the best miniature and compact hybrids available today. One look at his recent hybrids makes cattleya lovers wish that Fordyce Orchids would remain forever. Fortunately, he has not lost his love of cattleyas and hybrids and will retain some of his favorite clones in a backyard greenhouse so he can continue hybridizing.

Breckenridge Orchids was put up for sale last year. Here some of the most remarkable phalaenopsis hybrids produced in the U.S. were made by Mark Rose. Over the years Mark also made some excellent cattleyas hybrids. More recently paphiopedalum hybrids were produced as well. Anyone that attended any of the local shows in the Carolinas or the monthly judging of the Carolinas Judging Center will also attest to Mark's growing skills.

The loss of Kensington Orchids a few years ago and its owner and hybridizer, Merritt Huntington, this year is a reminder that a great generation of hybridizers is ending. Some are speculating that in a few more years, orchids will no longer be grown and hybridized in the U.S. Undoubtedly, there are changes coming in the orchid business that will affect all hobbyists. This comes at a time when orchids are more popular and more available than ever. Will all orchids soon be hybridized,

grown, and shipped from tropical countries? Are commercial growers in the U.S. doomed?

There will certainly be a continuation of what has occurred; well-known hybridizers retiring and leaving the business and fewer large nurseries. However, similar mega-scale changes in the orchid business have happened before. In the 1950s and early 1960s many huge orchid nurseries that had flourished and grown based on selling cut flowers for corsages closed and sold their stock. Many rare and once prized plants were sold for pennies on the dollar. Growers raised in this business thought that the orchid business was over. A few however, focused on hobbyists and thrived. The orchid business of the 21st Century seems to be one based on the mass production of orchids for people that enjoy orchid flowers more than orchid plants. Profit margins are small and nurseries entering this market rely on mass production and marketing, not on flower quality.

Orchid nurseries that remain profitable will need to adapt to these new conditions and exploit these new markets. Unfortunately, the sale of large numbers of previously unavailable clones from nurseries going out of business is flooding the hobbyist market with great orchids at low prices, making profits for those that continue even harder to realize. Many new, niche orchid nurseries are developing that cater to smaller groups of hobbyists. These businesses have always been around, but are likely to become an ever more important part of the orchid growing landscape. These and the traditional orchid nurseries that successfully make the transition will become the new American orchid nursery business, which relies on plants shipped from all over the world as well as local products developed by hobbyists and small nurseries.



President's Corner

Well it's been a busy time for Orchid enthusiasts in Asheville. By the time some of you read this newsletter we will have returned from Atlanta and our field trip to the orchid show. About 30 have signed up for the trip and all are anticipating a great time.

Thanks to everyone who turned out for the Susan Orlean event at the WhiteGate Inn on November 4th. About 35 people enjoyed a beautiful, warm fall day. Guests roamed the gardens and greenhouse and were able to share a glass of wine with Susan who was delighted to visit Asheville and promises to come back. Copies of "The Orchid Thief" disappeared rapidly and Susan was surprised to see the ghost orchid in the greenhouse, stimulating an interesting conversation detailing the research for the book.

Our November 15 meeting promises to be an interesting and informative one. Tom Harper will be talking and showing slides on "The New Spotted Phalaenopsis-The Harlequins". He will also have plants for sale. Tom is an AOS judge and one of the founders of the International Phalaenopsis Society. Tom owns Stone River Orchids in Franklin TN.

Coleman Nagy conducted a very successful orchid sale at the WhiteGate Inn on November 10. About 15 society members appreciated the great plants and incredible bargains and bought over 200 plants he had in less than 30 minutes. If you missed the sale he will be back with another large load of orchids on Monday, November 14 at 4:00 and Friday November 18 at 4:00. Please park on the street. Great plants and great prices!!

Ralph Coffey

Treasurer's Report:

Checking Balance 10 Nov 2005: \$7361.00