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#### FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our annual holiday party was once again spectacular. Thanks to Mary Harte for her hospitality and to all her elves for their hard work. There was enough food for a second party. Thanks to everyone who brought the delicious goodies.

The calendar has turned and another year is upon us. January starts with the Sarasota show on January 8 & 9. We need all of the plants we can gather for our display. Bring them to Roger's on Wednesday evening. The crew will set up the display on Friday morning. We can always use helpers. Even if you've never helped with a show before, there is something that you can contribute. Judging is Friday evening and the show is open from 10-4 on Saturday and Sunday. The teardown crew will go to work as soon as the show is over. Join us for fun and education.

January is also our first meeting of the year. Megan Wilkinson of Ritter/Tropical 1 will be our speaker on January 11th. Ritter is one of the premier Vanda growers in the central Florida area. Megan is also a fine arts photographer.

February will be hands on potting and splitting session. March will feature Michael Sinn of Canaima Orchids. His topic will be the 2010 Tokyo Orchid show.

Other than Cymbidiums, which thrive on a few cold nights, your plants need warmth and protection. Cloud cover and wind help as does high humidity, but harsh north winds hurt.

More Roy page two>>>>>

#### Cultural Notes for January 2011

By now I hope you've wrapped up your growing area nice and tight to keep the icy fingers of old man winters' wind from entering your growing area. This is all well and good, but there is a caveat. Interspersed with the cold we have warm days. When this happens, the temperature can escalate to dangerous levels in a short time. Be vigilant! Open up on those warm days. Boiled orchids make poor dinner fare. As you can see by observance most everything has completed the growth cycle and is resting. During January and February I fertilize only the phals at two week intervals. They never seem to completely stop growing. I'll start fertilizing again in March as the weather permits. The details on that will be in the February newsletter.

It's time now to watch for thrips. These little fellows look like specks of pepper, and if given the opportunity, will suck the life out of your flowers. They seem to especially like the phals. They are so small that sometimes you will see the damage before you see the thrips themselves. I usually spray the area as buds begin to appear, and then keep a vigil as the flowers start to open. I then spray as needed. There is one other bogie we need to discuss here. In the cool humid nights that we have at this time of year, Botrytus, a fungus, finds a way to proliferate, leaving tiny black spots all over your flowers. Especially the Phals. If you haven't done so already. Do a thorough job with your favorite fungicide and enjoy the fruits of your seasons hard labor. Roger

>>>>> More Roy. Remember, if you lose leaves, you lose the ability of the plant to produce flowers next spring and summer. By now, we should have survived the second cold snap of the year. This one featured a hard freeze in many areas.

The Miami International Orchid Show scheduled for the end of the month has been canceled. If you absolutely need to go to a show that weekend, go to the Gulf Coast show in Gautier, Mississippi. Then there is the Minnesota Winter Carnival Orchid Show in Minneapolis on the 29th & 30th. Send pictures!

Good growing and we'll see you at the Sarasota Show. Roy

### Species of the Month, Doritis

The Genus *Doritis* was established by Lindley in 1838. The name was formed from *dorion* which translates to lance or spear, in reference to the shape of the front lobe of the lip. While it resembles *Phalaenopsis* in some ways, it can't be included here because it differs in many ways. Its inflorescence is upright and the plant is terrestrial. (growing in the ground or in moss covered rocks.) The shape and structure of its flowers is distinctly different. At this time only one species is recognized by taxonomists. *Doritis pulcherrima* and its variety *buysoniana*. Its natural habitat ranges from India, Thailand, and Indonesia to the Philippines.

Its small widely variable flowers, twenty to twenty-five per stiff upright stem, bloom sequentially, are quite pretty, and long lasting. It's not uncommon to have a well grown mature plant in bloom for three or more months. It's a species that is worth growing.

When *Doritis* is crossed with *Phalaenopsis*, the new entity becomes *Doritinopsis* often producing progeny with red lips.

### ORCHIDS WE SHOULD ALL GROW *CATTLEYA DECKERII*

The only thing more difficult to do than find a *C. deckerii* to grow is to find information about it. Synonyms for the plant include *C. patinii* and the genus *Guariaethe deckerii* and *patinii*.

The plant by any name is only found in a few isolated locations in southwest Costa Rica, Panama, and Columbia along both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, and the Yaracuy province of Venezuela. Most sites consist of only a few plants except in Venezuela. Unfortunately, that site is in hostile territory and not safely visited by collectors.

The plant is a relatively small bifoliate that is closely related to *C. skinnerii*. The main difference is that *deckerii* is a fall bloomer and *skinnerii* is a spring bloomer. Cultivation is the same. Plants produce clusters of 4-8 typically pink/lilac flowers from newly matured pseudobulbs. Color variations can range from pink to a semi alba form.

The plant is seldom found in cultivation or collections. Native clusters are endangered, and may not even exist in the wild in some of the areas where it was once found. Its survival probably depends upon cultivated growth. Outside of Panama, the plant is rare.

If you ever find one, buy it, grow it with loving care, and do your part to ensure survival of a delightful and rare species.

### Back cutting

Back cutting is an old method of propagating sympodial orchids. On a large plant the rhizome is notched or severed about three or four bulbs from the front to encourage the plant into producing a back growth. A fungicide or Rootone is applied to the wound to discourage disease.

Approximately forty orchid lovers and their guests gathered at Mary Harte's lovely home on Terra Ceia to celebrate friendship at the annual MOS holiday party. A warming fire, holiday decorations and a sparkling tree greeted the celebrants on an unusually chilly night. Mary's elves, Dorothy Hyde and Lucille Negin, kept the food dishes filled with hearty food and luscious desserts including Janet Orr's chocolate mice. Added warmth was provided by Chris O'Grady's margaritas, Yvonne Alfonso's sangria and various wines.

Several new members were overheard to say that they wanted to learn how to repot orchids. Fortunately, next February's meeting will be devoted to repotting. Some of the remaining bare root, blooming-sized divisions of Michael Sinn's show plants found new homes that night; others will be looking for permanent homes at the January meeting when Megan Wilson of Tropical One will be the guest speaker.

### Question Box

**Question**---Several cattleyas blooming in my growing area have needed their blooms supported due to weak stems. What is the problem?

**Answer**---There are several reasons for weak stems in Cattleya type orchids, Dull short days can prevent the hardening of the stems. Over fertilization with nitrogen fertilizers cause weak stems. The lack of/ or a short sheath coupled with a long stem is sometimes a problem. Crosses with *Brassavola digbyana* are sometimes so large that even a strong stem can't support them. Advice---Stake them up.

Because both male and female reproductive organs are united in one structure, [the column in most species.] a method must be found to avoid self pollination. Under most circumstances out crossing [cross pollination with a different individual of the same species] is preferable to self pollination. The desired cross pollination is effected when the proper insect, moth, bee, bird, or whatever, is lured to the flower. The pollinator is attracted to the flower by it's scent, color, nectar, or some other lure that the flower provides. The manner in which orchids select the pollinator that is right for them is often times extremely ingenious.

In the next few months we'll explore a few of these tricks and ploys. Here is trick number one. The trick is so simple, it is surprising that the orchids even bothered to invent other more complicated ones. In this trick when the pollinator removes the pollen from the flower, the rostellum [a slender beak like appendage just ahead of the stigma] depresses its self over the stigma, thus blocking access to the area where the pollen needs to go to complete pollination. By now our pollinator has taken his load of pollen and gone on his way. After a prudent length of time, the rostellum lifts again readying the flower to welcome a visit from a new pollinator. hopefully, one that is loaded with pollen it brings from another flower. In so doing, the cross pollination is achieved. Trick number two next month.

### There are Four Basic Types of Orchids

Epiphytes---air plants, grow on trees etc;

Lithophytes---grow on rocks;

Saprophytes---grow in decaying organic matter on forest floors;

Terrestrials---send their roots into the soil.

The key to growing orchids it to match the orchid variety to the environment it needs to grow well.