



The Keik



Volume 21 December 2012 Issue

December 7, 2012

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Don Grill

In 1980 my career called me to Miami. Leaving the ice and snow of Chicago for balmy breezes and palm trees was not too hard to appreciate. I had always gardened in Illinois, but soon found out that things weren't the same in Florida. Then my neighbor gave me an orchid plant, and then another, and of course I was hooked. Build a shade structure, took lessons, and acquired more orchids. The next logical thing was to join an Orchid Society. I became a member of the Pan American Orchid Society, went through the ritual of volunteer jobs and untimely became President for a couple of years. Did the same thing with The Coalition for Orchid Species. Of course, my collection, continued to grow. After a period of time, I worked in a commercial orchid/bromeliad nursery, tried my hand at being a plant broker, and finally had my own orchid maintenance company. I provided my clients with routine maintenance, fertilization, repotting, irrigation, and other necessary services.

Then I moved to Middle Georgia, building a greenhouse, re-locating the orchids, and also re-learning about cold weather. I did join the Mid-Georgia Orchid Society and again became President after awhile. Still addicted to taking classes, I had the oppor-

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Treasure's Report

By

Helen Battistrada

Balance 10/20/12	\$ 2139.19
Receipts	\$ <u>359.00</u>
Total	\$ 2498.10
Disbursements	\$ <u>299.68</u>
Balance 11/17/12	\$ 2198.42

(Continued from page 1)

tunity to become a Georgia Master Gardener. These experiences gained me many friendships and appreciation for the work these organizations accomplish. I have been honored to speak about orchids to various garden clubs, The Master Gardeners of Central Georgia, The Georgia National Fair, and the R.P.O.G. show in Miami.

I'm back in Florida (Beverly Hill) again, close to children and grandchildren, acquired a dog (Bella), and still have a few orchids left that have shown their appreciation for Florida weather by blooming for me. Orchids have been a large factor in my life for over thirty years and I plan on continuing the experience.

Upcoming Speaker Program



By Ed Bugbee,
Program Coordinator

January

T. B. A.

In Appreciation.

Our club wants to "thank" the following members and one past member for their donations to our orchid auction on November 17th, 2012: Yvonne Allen, Barbara Brillinger, Delia Dunn, Pat Dupke, Jerry Hart, Linda Meyer, Linda Roderick, Judy Smith, Dale Story, Eleanor Szarzynski, and Chuck Willis. It was a very successful event and as everyone knows it's our main fund raising event for the year. The following growers donated orchids to our auction: Joy Orchids, Inc., Touch of Orchids & More, Louis Del Favero Orchids, Inc., & Featherstone Orchids of Crystal River.

Membership



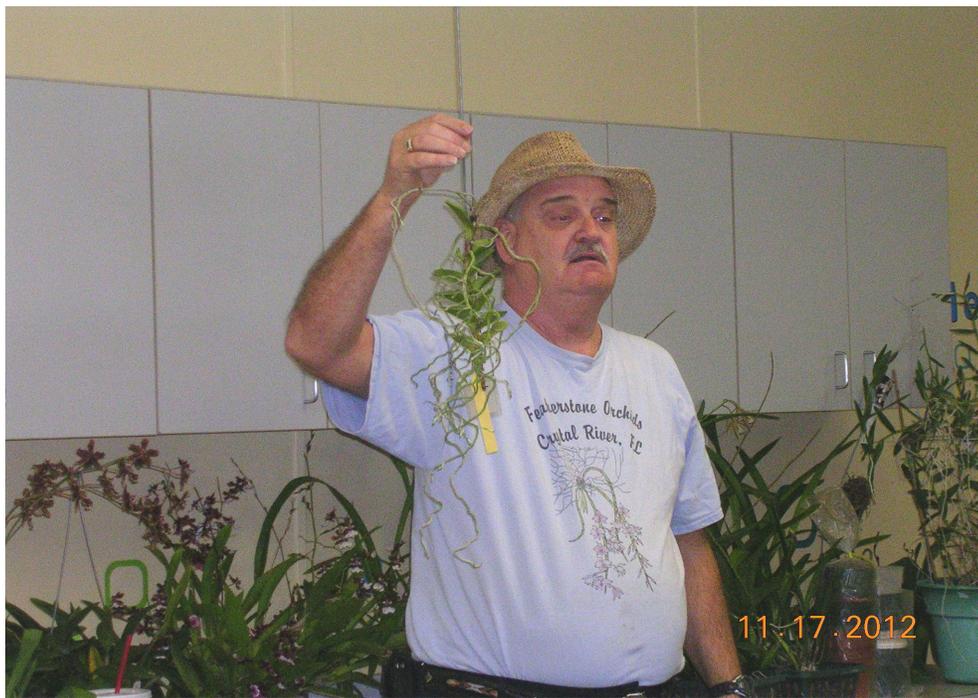
By Linda Meyer & Sarah Hart
Membership Coordinators

73 Paid members.

November Meeting Attendance

33 Members.

16 Guest,



Newsletter Deadline is the 1st of the month. Forward newsletter submissions to:

The.Keiki@tampabay.rr.com

Or

Judy Smith, Editor

7918 W flight Path Ct

Crystal River, FL 34429

Who'll give me a five dollars? Five dollar bid, now six, now six, will ya give me six? Six dollar bid, now seven, now seven, will ya give me seven? Seven dollar, seven and a half, seven-fifty, How about seven-fifty? fifty? fifty? fifty? I got it! How about eight? eight?

(Continued on page 3)

Our meetings are held the 3rd Saturday of each month starting at 1:00 P.M. We usually have an informative speaker at each meeting, a show table of orchids grown by our members and orchids for sale. We meet at the Partners Club of Oak Hill Hospital, 11375 Cortez Blvd., Spring Hill.

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eight? I've got eight, now nine? how about nine? nine? nine? Sold for eight dollars to number 23."

Saturday, November 17, 2012, the Orchid lovers Club of Spring Hill held its 15th annual Orchid plant auction. This is our major event to raise funds for expenses and special programs throughout the remaining year and next. Your support helped us to continue to do so.

Ed Bugbee was once again be the auctioneer and did a great job as he has in the past.

There were be a wide variety of Orchids including but not limited to: Cattleyas, Dendrobiums, Oncidiums, Phalaenopsis, Species & Vandas.

Refreshments and snacks was provided by the monthly volunteers during the auction.

Doors was open at 12:00 PM for plant and supply viewing and the auction started promptly at 1:00 PM. and concluded shortly after 3:PM.



Refreshment Reminder

By
Eleanor Szarzynski,
Refreshment Coordinator
352-688-3887

December

Santa Clause

New Member (s)

Please welcome as our newest club member (s);

Louise Kersten
14025 Scrub Oak Lane
Brooksville, FL 34613

Rianda and Richard Schultz
11926 Bayonet Lane
New Port Richey, FL 34654

Gary Gethen
6223 Nodoc Rd
Brooksville, FL 34609

Upcoming Biography's

January

Me

Things My Mother Taught Me.

My mother taught me about BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION...

"Stop acting like your father!"



As for the goodies on the refreshment table, the following members brought the following: Dale Story brought in chocolate chip cookies, Sarah Hart brought a pumpkin walnut icing sheet cake, Barbara Brillinger brought in a carrot cake, Thomas Govin brought in chocolate brownies, and Pat Dupke brought in vanilla cup cakes.



The Presidents Message

By Geary Harris

As we come to the end of another year, we can look back to a great orchid show and, to our 20th anniversary of our club. We've had some great speakers with topping off a successful orchid auction in a year of bad economy. From all of our board members, we want to wish you and yours a Merry Christmas and a prosperous new year.



Auction Results By Helen Battistrada

Our November 2012 plant auction turned out pretty much as it has for the last few years. The club cleared \$1135. after expenses that will help pay for the programs we have throughout the year. Club dues, the raffle, and other activities also contribute to these programs as well. About 6 to 7 years ago, the club generally made \$1500 to \$1600 at our auctions then started fluctuation between \$1300 and \$1100 with \$1100 being the norm for the last three years. This is most likely due to loss of membership for one reason or another.

Thanks to all who donated and then bought plants ensured another year of club activities.

Helen Battistrada



Checking them out before the sale are;
Judy Smith, Carol Monroe, and Linda Roderick



Clerks of the works
Sarah Hart Helen Battistrada

****NOTICE****

**There will not be a club meeting in December.
See you on January 15, 2013.**

A Reminder To All Club Members

Helen Battistrada reminds all club members that the 2013 club dues are due in January and will be collected at the January 21, 2013 meeting.

Dues: Single membership \$17.00 Joint membership \$25.00

December In Your Orchids

Based on AOS monthly checklists by Robert Scully and Ned Nash & James Rose, adapted to St. Augustine by local growers. Reprinted by permission of the St. Augustine Orchid Society

General Orchid Growing Tips

Winter's cool days and nights have already affected most collections; if all plants are not already indoors, they soon may be. Concerning daylight intensity and its duration, the seasonal change must be obvious by now. Don't allow daytime temperatures to rise too high before ventilating the growing area. Fresh air is important for healthy plants and their owners. Just remember that if the grower can be reasonably comfortable with the temperature and humidity conditions in the growing area, the plants are likely to be satisfied too.

Cattleyas

Plants are responding to the shorter, cooler days and less intense sun by slowing and ripening their growth. This means a reduced frequency of watering as the plants dry out more slowly and have a lesser need for fertilizer. *Cattleya skinneri* should be pushing its buds up into dried sheaths for a January flowering; do not cut the sheaths off or open them. *Cattleya trianae* and its hybrids ought to be blooming for several months beginning now. Many *Sophranitis* hybrids typically flower this season. *Laelia anceps*, the Christmas orchid, will have well defined buds just waiting for nature's signal to open.

Dendrobiums

Generalizations are hard within this very diverse group. The winter resting deciduous dendrobiums of the *Dendrobium* (*Nobiles* and *Seminobiles*) and *Callista* sections (email us if you're not sure) can be kept dry and cool this month. Shoot for minimum temperatures of 40 F. *Nobile* type dendrobiums may show some swollen nodes on their leafless pseudobulbs and flowers may appear by the month's end. Your other dendrobiums will also be resting up this month though not dormant. You'll water these half as often as you did in the summer. Shoot for minimum temperatures of 45 to 55 F and 55 to 60 F for the *biggibum* types.

Oncidiums

The mule-ear oncidium, *Oncidium splendidum*, and the popular thin-leaved type, *Oncidium maculatum*, should be producing inflorescences. Stake the oncidium inflorescence as it grows upward, but do not allow the tip to droop as you would for a *phalaenopsis*.

Paphiopedilums

Some of the mottled leaved species like *Paphiopedilum fairrieanum* and *sukhakulii* bloom now. Keep their potting medium moist and avoid getting water in the pouch.

Phalaenopsis

Groom and stake each *phalaenopsis* spike. Avoid excess plant movement while the buds are developing or the buds may blast (wither). High humidity in a closed house can lead to flower spotting caused by *Botrytis*; provide supplementary air circulation with fans and/or increase temperatures above 60 F.

Vandas

Vandas are starting to rest now. You can gradually reduce your watering to every other day and cut back on fertilizer. *Ascocentrum aurantiacum* may have some beautiful orange to yellow flowers in bloom by the end of the month.

Miscellaneous Genera

The *Catasetinae* (*catasetums*, *clowesia*, *cynoches* and *mormodes*) are going dormant now and their leaves have been yellowing and dropping. Once the leaves yellow, restrict watering until the spring growth is a few inches tall. The jewel orchid *Ludisia discolor* will begin to develop inflorescences soon. Clean the foliage now before the inflorescences grow.



Desire and Destruction By Jeff Rundell

I have to admit that, on my first visit to Glen Decker's Piping Rock orchid business, I could never have imagined a tale would emerge that would rock the orchid world to its foundation. Our little orchid club had to travel several hours south to Glen's greenhouses in Galway, NY (near Albany). They were as immaculate as any I had ever seen. Compared to Florida, there was little evidence that this was even an orchid business, since it was located in a quiet suburban neighborhood without a sign of the tropical features that identify our local growers. He was well spoken and clean cut, exactly what you'd expect after seeing his modern setup with benches sliding gracefully on rails, computer controls, new to the business then, and not a single dead leaf in sight. But what attracted my attention even more, and frankly made my jaw hit the floor, were a few rows of seedlings to one side of his potting benches labelled Phrag. Kovachii - \$150.00!

My trip, with other members of our tiny Adirondack Orchid Society, never expected to encounter an orchid entrepreneur and one of the most controversial plants on the planet in the same place in rural northern New York. I had visited slipper orchid growers before and there was no doubt in my mind that they were, shall we say, an unusual subset of orchid growers in general. Close to my childhood home in Rochester, NY, I used to visit Bloomfield Orchids run by a fellow named Joe Kunisch, who chain smoked while he followed me through his collections. After I selected a few plants, he insisted we sit down on some lawn chairs and drink a few of his favorite beer, Grolsch, in those fancy swing top stoppered bottles. His knowledge of the slipper orchid trade and the characters that populated it convinced me that I would be better off starting with something less demanding. But Glen Decker was much more laid back and spoke confidently, almost matter-of-fact, about those \$150. plants. While he addressed the group, I actually wondered if he had surveillance cameras on them or had ever had to deal with orchid shoplifting. It was also the first time I was exposed to the advancing frontiers of orchid exploration. Phragmipedium kovachii was the newest, most coveted orchid in the world then and initially sold for thousands of dollars.

In order to understand how this orchid tsunami dragged under some of biggest names and institutions, some background is essential. The best source is a book by Craig

Pittman, who writes for the former St. Pete Times and has authored other books on Florida's natural history. I'm sure, when he wrote "Scent of a Scandal - greed, betrayal and the world's most beautiful orchid" earlier this year, he never thought the cast of characters would number over 40. Most of us are familiar with C.I.T.E.S. treaty (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) and that member countries must regulate and enforce restrictions on the international movement of designated species and that includes most orchid species. In the early halcyon days of orchid collecting, explorers were hailed as heroes for bringing home ship loads of plants soon to die in overheated victorian glass houses. Growers had not learned the secrets of orchid seed germination and were a century away from mericlone propagation. Many of the scientific names we apply to our species honor these intrepid people that are seen today by indigenous people in the countries they "visited" more as pirates than patrons. Forgive this digression from the story but I think, as orchid lovers who appreciate the natural world, we all need to decide who this "bioprospecting" is most likely to benefit. Cases in point include the little Rosy Periwinkle from Madagascar (source of the cancer drug Vincristine), Hoodia, Enola bean and Neem tree. All of these were the biologic property of the countries and people they are indigenous to, but found their way into commerce with little, if any, benefit to the those that originally cultivated them. To take this a step further (and out of the orchid realm) the effect that the explosion of wealth in China has had on many species has been devastating. Elephants slaughtered by the thousands for the carved ivory trade, tigers and rhino horns ground up as phony medicine and Rosewood trees almost eliminated for game tables. There is a good chance your grandchildren will never see any of them except on film or in a zoo.

Orchids are a \$40 billion dollars business world wide and, believe it or not, \$20 billion of it finds a home in Florida.

Long ago I recall visiting a place south of Miami called Redland Spice park. It was filled with all sorts of exotic trees, herbs and spices that would grow no where else in the country. Then along came hurricane Andrew in '92 to wipe the slate clean. It now is the home of the largest orchid show on earth with such a powerful attraction that it has even drawn some of our members out of their beds and onto a bus at hours favored only by my backyard armadillos. But back in May 1992 the word spread around the show, that a new and spectacular plant from Peru had

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secretly surfaced. The “word” continued that the new plant would even out shine that beautiful red Phrag. bes-seae that originally sold for over \$1,000. Remember that the plant named for Libby Besse was immediately, and almost completely, stripped from its home in Peru. Among the people most anxious to see the new star were those from the most venerable orchid institution in the USA - Selby Gardens in Sarasota. Big discoveries can bring in big contributions to research centers like Selby. It just happened that a couple of Selby people were at that show and got wind of the new discovery hiding under a table amongst the hundreds of booths. One was John Beckner, who never located the table, but the other was Bob Scully. Some of you may recall he was a major grower in Miami until Andrew came along. He moved to Sarasota to become Selby’s Chairman and infused his demanding nature on all he met.

If you have never been to Selby you are missing something special. I wish I could go once a month, every month, because their display is always changing. Some things you will see nowhere else, like a giant strap leafed pleurothallid that looks like an elephant tongue hanging down with a bouquet of flowers in its mouth. I have written to Selby before with questions about orchid genetics, but never have received anything more than a polite: “Our research scientists are too busy to answer public questions”. Well, okay, but as we’ll see, there is no one beyond the long green thumbs of the law.

Mr. Kovach, for whom the orchid is named, is not at all like the intrepid explorers of the past. He is the sort of person I would have liked to have met, providing my hand was firmly grasping my wallet. He seems to be a God fearing ex hippie with a penchant for taking a gamble and a belief that he was ordained to discover something marvelous. After all, he lived in Goldvein Virginia, the former center of a long played out gold mining industry. It’s not completely clear to me how he met Manuel Arias and wandered into Peru. But it is clear that the sometime importer eventually turned into a fugitive smuggler. It was he that introduced Kovach to a farmer named Faustino Bautista with ten hungry kids, who knew the location of an orchid that Kovach would see twice. The first time, the plant looked ordinary, but the second time, it was blooming and sent shivers up and down their backs, not just from the deep rich color, but also the fact that, as each day passed, the bloom got bigger and bigger - sometimes over 8 inches across.

Of course the plot thickens from there, and frankly, I have trouble keeping all the players straight, but that’s a story for the next Keiki.



About Sphagnum Moss

*Printed with permission from rePotme.com Orchid Suppllies
(www.repotme.com 302.855.5859)*

Sphagnum moss comes from bogs and is harvested, compressed and imported for use in the floral industry. There are many graded levels of sphagnum moss. The quality of sphagnum moss is relative to the length of the strands, how fluffy each strand is, and how much debris is packaged in with the moss. Lower quality moss obviously costs less. The sphagnum moss that is used by the floral industry to line hanging baskets and package seedling plants for transport is typically of a much lower grade than we would choose for use as a media to grow orchids in.

In the growing of orchids we are looking for top quality sphagnum moss with long, fluffy, open strands and good capillary action for moisture. In Taiwan, the largest exporting country of Phalaenopsis orchids, virtually all Phalaenopsis are grown in Sphagnum moss. In cooler climates and in cultivation in the home, sphagnum moss can present some challenges with over watering. The good news is, sphagnum moss as an orchid medium is highly adaptable. Packed tightly in a pot it will retain a lot of moisture. Packed lightly in a pot it will dry out rapidly. But here is where the quality of the moss really comes in to play. Standard floral-quality sphagnum moss, available from nurseries and box stores and even sometimes advertised as 'orchid moss' is not suitable for growing orchids. Orchids grown in this lesser grade of sphagnum moss will not thrive as they could in a higher grade of moss as this moss compacts and

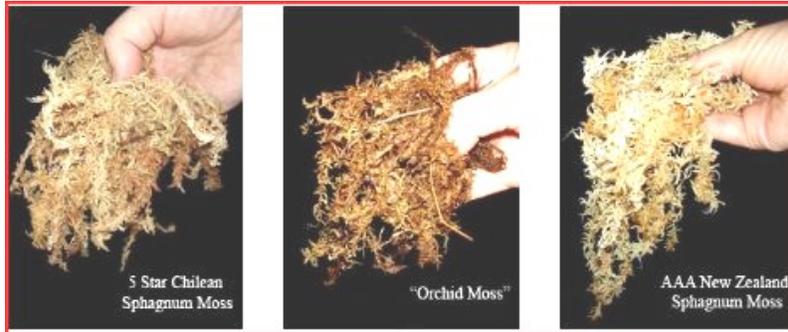
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quickly becomes sodden in all but the most arid environments.

For orchids we recommend AAA New Zealand Sphagnum Moss or 5 Star Chilean Sphagnum Moss only. The quality of the two is fairly comparable though AAA New Zealand Sphagnum Moss is fluffier. These two products will be labeled as such, the lesser grades of sphagnum will be labeled as 'orchid moss' or simply 'sphagnum moss'.

It is important to clarify the difference between sphagnum moss and sphagnum peat moss, also called just 'peat moss'. Sphagnum peat moss is not the same thing as sphagnum moss. In a sphagnum bog the sphagnum moss is the living moss that floats on the top of the bog. Sphagnum peat moss is the dead moss that falls to the bottom of the bog. Upon harvesting, the top layer of live sphagnum moss is taken first and then the bottom layer of peat moss is harvested. Peat moss is then processed into a soil amendment that is also a media used with orchids but it is markedly different in appearance and texture. Most of the sphagnum moss and sphagnum peat moss we see here in nurseries and big box stores comes from Canada.



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