

Hospitality

Hospitality Needs Help with Snacks for the Meeting on Tuesday Evening. Cookies, Chips, Fruit, etc.

Special Points of

Interest

- Vanda's—Martin Motes
- Orchids in Philly
- Taiwan Show
- President's Message
- Orchid Yard Sale

Photo and Article

Credits:

- Garland Hanson
- David Sombach
- Nicole Juday
- Matt Satullo
- AOS—Jim Andre

Please Note!!

Due to the Speaker selling plants April is not a Member's Sales Month

The Orchid Keiki



Volume XXIV, Issue XXV

April 2011

“Vandas” by Martin Motes of *Motes Orchids*
Tuesday, April 19th at 7:00 pm in the Robin's Room



Author of *Vandas: Their Botany, History, and Culture*, Martin Motes is a second generation orchidist who has been growing orchids for nearly 50 years. He is president of Motes Orchids, a major breeder of vandas. He has produced hundreds of new hybrids, for which he has received scores of American Orchid Society awards including three FCC's and three Awards of Quality. He is an accredited A.O.S. judge. He has observed tropical orchids growing in the wild and has spoken at orchid conferences around the world. His articles have appeared in *The Fairchild Garden Bulletin*, *The South Florida Orchidist*, *The Orchid Digest*, *The Orchid Review* and *The American Orchid Society Bulletin*.

Martin was an assistant professor of English at Wright State University for several years. He was the director of horticulture

therapy at Grant Center Hospital and was a consultant on horticulture therapy at the Hospital Corporation of America.

He has lived most of his life in Miami, Florida, but also spent 6 years in Ohio and 2 years in Yugoslavia as a Fulbright lecturer. He has traveled extensively in the Mediterranean and has observed orchids in Peru, Ecuador, Panama, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Florida, the Cayman Islands, the Bahamas, Puerto Rico, Belize, Mexico, Guatemala, Venezuela, Malaya, Thailand, and Australia. Martin has been interviewed by both print and TV journalists in topics ranging from community issues in southern Florida to horticultural therapy and orchids. he gives more than 20 lectures a year.

To get away from the orchid greenhouse, Martin reads and occasionally, writes poetry, tends his vegetable garden, and fishes. **Also, *Mary Motes, Martin's wife will be joining us and will be bring her copies of her hilarious novel, *Orchid Territory, the insider's guide to the crazy South Florida orchid scene****



**2009-2010
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President's Message

Spring is finally here! The Catasetums are beginning to awaken from their long winter nap and many of them are showing new growth! Many of the paphiopedilum species and hybrids have already bloomed. The Cattleya species are building strength and many of the large, showy ones will soon be in their full splendor!

For many members, the repotting season will soon be here following blooming and first sight of those new emerging roots! Other members will begin setting orchids outside, along with the rest of their tropicals, around June 1. Many orchids do wonderfully outside in Virginia during the warm months. A

Spring is also Orchid Show time! Ours is one of the first of the season in this area but shows really kick into gear with regularity during April and May. Check out your latest [Orchids Magazine](#) for a full listing of shows sanctioned by the American Orchid Society. It is always fun to travel to the big shows and check out some vendors along the way!

Strange's annual Bloomin' Days celebration was held last weekend at the garden center at the W. Broad Street location. The VOS set up an informational booth and provided orchid repotting services all weekend. A nice blend of experienced and novice growers teamed up to conduct the repotting. There was a lot of public interest in our upcoming club events and many copies of plant care sheets were given out. We collected six sheets worth of people interested in our upcoming events!



Thanks especially to the Sunday participants who worked beyond their shifts to cover holes in the volunteer schedule and to Valerie Thacker who sent

out notice after notice to solicit volunteers.

DON'T FORGET!!!

Lewis Ginter's "Orchids Galore" runs through April 10. The display of over 2,000 orchids in the conservatory has been incredible! Don't forget to take a look at the antique orchid chromolithographs, on loan by Dr. Art Burke, Jr., found along the hallway of the Classroom/Auditorium Building. This area is known as "Ginter Gallery II". The one of *Cypripedium rothschildianum* is stunning! The prints will be on display through April 24.

TRIANGLE ORCHID SOCIETY SHOW

The next volunteer opportunity will be VOS participation in the upcoming Triangle Orchid Society Show in Raleigh, NC. Show setup day is Thursday, May 5 and the show will be torn down on Sunday, May 8. This show will present a nice opportunity for anyone interested in participating in the installation of a club orchid exhibit. Once plants are collected from members, we motor on down to Raleigh and set up our display! The display usually begins with boxes or other staging to provide height then comes plant prep, skirting, placement and final touches. The display is generally taken down around 5pm on Sunday. Typically, an exhibit that takes a few hours to erect, is torn down and packed within 45 minutes! Be thinking about participating if you wish!

ELECTION TIME!

The annual VOS elections are upon us! A Nominating Committee has been selected and they will present a proposed slate of Board Members at the April meeting. Nominations may also be taken from the floor during the April meeting. If you are interested in a board position or wish to nominate someone, please notify any current board member by email or in person at the April meeting. There will be a brief write-up on each of the nominees in the May newsletter and the elections will be held during the May meeting.

Folks, there are a good number of board and committee positions to fill this time around. We can't continue to function and deliver quality events with these positions unfilled. For some time, we have had certain members taking on multiple responsibilities simply because no one else stepped forward to fill them! This isn't sustainable and we need to spread the work around to a larger group of volunteers. Most committee positions aren't time consuming anyway. The VOS can only remain strong with participation of our members and our leadership of our board. A full listing of available board and committee positions will be discussed at our April meeting. If you would consider volunteering for any of the positions, please contact any board member.

HAPPY GROWING!!!

Garland Hanson

Tolumnia variegata (Sw.) Braem in Haiti

Tolumnia variegata exists in large numbers in the Tibonee river valley on the island of Hispanola. There, it is virtually always found growing on the Caribbean Almond tree, *Terminalia catappa*. The Caribbean Almond tree grows extremely fast. A small sprout just three feet high can be a thirty to forty foot tree in less than ten years. The tree has long spreading branches. It is a deciduous tree, but tropical deciduous trees do not necessarily lose all of their leaves and become bare like Minnesota trees, rather they lose their leaves slowly over the whole winter and grow new leaves at the same time so that they maintain at least fifty percent of their leaves even in the winter season. The Almond tree is extremely salt tolerant and will grow close to the ocean where it is exposed to salt spray and probably has its' roots in salty water. Almost every where in the Tibonee river valley that you find a large Almond tree you will find *Tolu. variegata*.

Tolumnia variegata grows in large clusters on the small branches, one half to one inch in diameter in the lower one third of the tree and many Almond trees are loaded with many clusters of *Tolu. variegata*. In this respect it is twig epiphyte. It is seldom found on the trunk or larger branches.



Thus it is shaded about ninety percent in the summer months when the sun is hot and about seventy five percent in the winter when the sun is lower in the sky and not so intense. It exhibits probably the best example of stoloniferous growth habit in the orchid world. *Stoloniferous* refers to "growing away from." Most epiphytic orchids attach themselves and grow close to the tree. *Tolu. variegata* attaches itself very loosely. The very fine seed must find a way to sprout on the small branches and grow long thin, slightly darker roots which are attached to the branch.

Even in a mixed jungle with other trees touching the Almond tree, I have never seen *Tolumnia variegata* on any tree but an Almond tree. I have placed pieces of it on another tree and it survives but does not flourish or spread. Thus it maintains a peculiar symbiotic relationship with the Almond tree. Even when branches of the almond tree break it will continue to grow well on the dead branch. *Tolu. variegata* does grow fairly well on cork bark in the green house, but it can be diffi-

cult to get it established, the leaf clusters are considerably smaller and the blooms are smaller than in the Tibonee valley. The flower is basically white with reddish brown and yellow stripes at the base of the petals. It is said that when it is found growing at higher altitudes it can be lavender in color, thus the name *Tolu. variegata*. I have not seen it growing at altitude.

In the Tibonee valley there is a distinct dry season. From mid-December to April it seldom rains and the orchid can go for three months with no rain of any kind, existing on morning dew and the ambient high humidity. Some time in April the summer rains start. Large cumulus clouds develop late in the afternoon and showers or hard brief rains develop late in the day. The occurrence of these showers increase until mid-summer, when it rains about three out of four evenings. In Haiti *Tolu. variegata* begins to bloom

at the start of the dry season and stays in bloom until the rainy season. The old bloom stems dry up but generally remain attached to the leaflet for a year. In the green

house in Minnesota, it generally blooms later in February or April and the blooms do not last quite as long as in Haiti.

I have tried various methods of growing *Tolumnia variegata* in Minnesota and the method that seems to work the best is placing a piece of the plant on a bed of coconut fiber in a clay pot and placing the pot in a clay saucer. Then put about a half inch of reverse osmosis water in the saucer twice a week. It is not necessary to ever mist or water the plant. It receives sufficient moisture from the water absorbed into the clay saucer and pot. The roots make no attempt to attach them selves to the pot surface just like in nature. The plant then grows in the same topsey-turvey pattern that it assumes in nature. When it out grows the pot, just move it to a larger pot and saucer. It is probably an intermediate-warm grower but tolerates nights in the fifties very well.

— Jim Andre



Schedule of Virginia Orchid Society Events

Tuesday, April 19th

"Vandas"

Dr. Martin Motes
Motes Orchids

Tuesday, May 17th

"Cattleyas"
Fred Clarke

Sunset Valley Orchids

Summer Picnic

When would you like to have the VOS Summer Picnic? - June, July or August? Or would you prefer another activity. Send Valerie an email or give her a call with your suggestion.



Philly Grown Flowers—Even in Winter

It started with one single plant on a windowsill. Lois Duffin had always been interested in houseplants, and in 1981 she decided to give orchids a try.

“At the time I thought that if I could grow an African violet, I should be able to succeed with an orchid,” she recalls.

Within a few years, the windowsill plant led to a thousand orchids under lights in the basement, and around 1990 Lois Duffin Orchids became a business.

Today Lois and her husband Jim are the proprietors of two greenhouses at 1301 E. Mermaid Lane in Wyndmoor, located on the site of Robertson’s Flowers Center of Operations. On one of our many recent cold, cloudy, and icy days, I went to visit the greenhouses. Just walking in I felt like I had been given my happy pills. It was warm, it was light, and it smelled really good. “You should visit on a sunny day,” Jim said. “That’s when it feels really good.”

Orchids always strike me as something midway between houseplants and cut flowers, and in a lot of ways have advantages over both. Many of the most popular orchid varieties will send out flowering spikes that can last for weeks or even months. Actually, these flowers can end up being the house

guests that you adore and appreciate yet still get bored

of. But to my mind it’s better to find a flower tediously long-lived than throw out an expensive bouquet after five days in the vase.

When not in bloom, orchid plants are rarely anything exciting to look at, but with a little knowledge and a small amount of commitment, many types aren’t hard to coax back into flower the following year.

Yes, I know; how many of us are looking to add the extra responsibility of tropical plant culture to our daily lives? I’m with you on that one, and in my more down-trodden moments I will toss away my non-blooming orchids along with the pants that no longer fit in an attempt to man up to certain realities. But reading the

cover story in this month’s Smithsonian magazine gave me a new perspective on my on-and-off orchid habit, which feeds my larger and more serious addiction to flowering plants.

The article goes into detail about the cut flower industry, which is largely centered in Colombia (70 percent of flowers sold in the U.S. are grown there.) Distribution requires a lot of energy, since it is reliant on a “cold chain” of refrigerated trucks and warehouses each step from the Colombian savannah to the final point of sale.

The author points out some sobering facts about the global cut flower industry, like lack of governmental regulations, which allows growers great latitude regarding working conditions and chemical usage. I also learned that a single rose (blossom, not plant) can require three gallons of water, a level of thirst which has lowered the water table over part of Colombia. Back here in Philly, Lois and Jim Duffin are keeping it local. They propagate almost all of their orchids themselves, usually by division. Many take five to 10 years to reach blooming size. Instead of hundreds of the same

plant, they have one or two of hundreds of varieties; all together 10,000 plants in the greenhouses. They try to specialize in plants that aren’t available in the big box stores, like dendrobiums and cymbidiums, but they have a huge variety beyond that. They love to talk shop and will advise on



the best plants for your growing conditions.

“People come in with questions, and we’ll talk with them about their plants,” says Jim.

“Sometimes people will bring their own orchids in and ask us to figure out what’s wrong with them.”

And when I asked Lois if she still thought that orchids were as easy to grow as African violets, she just smiled.

Lois Duffin Orchids is open by appointment. Call 215-450-3592 or email loisduffinorchids@comcast.net

By Nicole Juday for NewsWorks
Photos by Matt Satullo

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Website
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Visit Our Website:
www.vaorchidsociety.org

ORCHID Yard Sale

Saturday & Sunday April 16th & 17th (10AM)

1501 Ethridge Dr (cell 908-6669) glendree@msn.com

Directions .. From I-64W go south on Glenside up the hill & right on Dexter
I block to Ethridge

“THESE ARE KEIKIS & CUTTINGS FROM MY PLANTS”

Vanda's & Ascocenda's *Flowering Size*

VANDA'S, Robert's Delight 'Garnet Beauty' FCC, Robert's Delight Red 2000FCC, Robert's Delight Crownfox Big Red FCC, Robert's Delight Somsri Blue FCC, Sansai Blue 'Aker's Pride' FCC, Pat Delight AM, Tokyo Blue, Somsri (lg red), Dr Anek x Lenavat, Bangyikhan Red x Faye Bennett Blue (lg pink), Boonchoo x Thonglor Sand (lg dk red), Kasem's Delight x Thongchai (lg pink), Gordon Dillon 'Lea' x Dr Anek (lg purple), Golamco's Blue Magic x Dr Anek (4" red tessellated),

Ascocenda's, Boris (Thai Spots x Pranerm Ornette)(4" honey gold), Barbara Hanck (4½" yellow w/ red spots), Princess Mikasa "Rosado, (rose), Princess Mikasa 'Royale Sceptre (dk purple)

Paph's & Phrag's *Flowering Size*

Paph's, Dollgoldi, Gold Dollar, Apache, Transvall, Temptation, St Swithin 'Jim Krull', Susan Booth, Henrietta Fujiwara, Rising Star x Sukhaulii, Kolopakingii x Rthschildianum, Epidemdrum 'Ptavi' & Equireolii

PHRAG'S, Belle Hauge Point, Sgt. Eric, Don Wimber Red, China Dragon, Mont Fallu, Geralda, Paul Eugene Conroy, Socere's Apprentice, Sir Arthur, Calurum syn Aisworthii

Cattleya's Miniature & Compacts,

That Flower 2-3 times a year,

Near blooming size Cattleya's 4"- 5"- & 6' pots

(many with 5", 6", 8" & 9" flowers)

Peter's Cal-Mag Fertilizer (15N-5P-15K-5Ca-2MgAssortment of clay & plastic pots