



**Special points of interest:**

- VOS Show
- Orchid Sexual Trickery
- A Cultural Odyssey
- Paph Forum

***NOTE:  
FEBRUARY AND  
APRIL MEETING  
DATES HAVE BEEN  
MOVED!!!!!!***

**Photo and Article**

**Credits:**

- Garland Hanson
- Jerry Rogers
- Allen Black
- Michael Fine

***ANDY WILL NOT BE  
BRINGING PLANTS  
SO MEMBERS ARE  
WELCOME TO BRING  
PLANTS FOR SALE***

# The Orchid Keiki



**Volume XXVIII, Issue XXI**

**February 2010**

## **“Phragmipediums and Their Culture” by Andy Phillips**

*Sunday, February 14 at 2:00 pm*

“I live in a large town in the south of England called Basingstoke, situated in the county of Hampshire. I have been growing Phrags for over twenty-five years or more as an amateur grower. I am a past chairman of the British Paph Society and past-president and chairman of the North Hampshire Orchid Society which is my local orchid group. I have lectured all over the UK and also in America, I am a British Orchid Council Judge and have a small lab in which I spend time hybridizing Phragmipediums.”

Mr. Phillips will be one of the speakers featured at the 2010 Paph Forum held in Washington D.C. at the National Arboretum on February 13, the day before our general meeting. A number of his fine copper orchid sculptures will be for sale at our meeting! VOS members may bring plants to sell as they wish to this meeting.



## **“Orchids in Paris”**

### **The “REALLY BIG SHOE” is right around the corner!!!**

One of the finest orchid shows in the land will be hosted by the Virginia Orchid Society February 26-28! Our annual show has become the signature event of the Virginia Orchid Society. EVERYONE, including exhibitors, vendors, AOS judges and the general public look forward to our show!

**\*Our show is held in a GREENHOUSE with fabulous natural lighting! (The plants love it too!)**

**\*We will have 20 wonderful orchid exhibits and displays!**

**\*We have a special Show Gala on Friday night with catered hors d'oeuvres, wine-tasting, entertainment and a silent auction second to none!**

**\*Five plant vendors from three states will be selling gorgeous blooming orchids!**

**\*Other vendors will be featuring paintings, photography, life-like orchid sculptures, and glassware!**

**\*Artisans will be plying their craft during the show!**

**\*The VOS will have a booth featuring members' merchandise!**

**\*There will be potting seminars, culture talks, and other topics presented by the vendors and featured**

guests on both Saturday and Sunday!

**\*LOTS of free parking and it is FREE to attend!**

As a member of the VOS, you will have ample opportunity to take part in the show! You can put together an exhibit with some friends or place your own exhibit with as little as three plants. Small table tops or MEGA-exhibits are all possible! **You may also wish to contribute plants and participate in erecting the VOS exhibit.**

One of the best ways to learn about orchids is to volunteer to be a **judging clerk** during the American Orchid Society judging process! As a clerk, you are privy to the inside scoop and hushed banter of the judges and the judging process. This is one of the most coveted volunteer opportunities at our show and spots fill up FAST!!!

The **front desk/greeting area** is one of the most important areas and functions of the show. This is where the public first meets the VOS and it is important to have smiling faces that greet warmly and inform attendees of the days' special events.

**Look for more information about our show during the upcoming general meeting on February 14. There will be ample opportunities to take part.**

Please contact Valerie or Garland if you would like to participate or assist with the VOS Show in any way. Any assistance small or large is appreciated.

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## Orchids: A Cultural Odyssey



Take a journey through the U.S. Botanic Garden (USBG) as we explore the many ways orchids have permeated the lives of people around the world. Discover orchids in the arts, literature, exploration, jewelry, and commerce. Travel the globe within our Conservatory and discover how influential orchids have been throughout history. As in previous years, the exhibit is a collaboration of the collections of the U.S. Botanic Garden and the Smithsonian Institution Horticultural Services Division.

"Orchids: A Cultural Odyssey" will include a fantastical Sri Lankan creature made entirely of orchids and a living wall of hundreds of phalaenopsis. Also

included are exhibits on orchidologist John Lindley, and the new techniques that have made possible the mass production of orchids. Orchid representations in the visual arts, textiles, and stamps as well as orchids' medicinal and culinary uses will also be on view. A timeline of orchid history will put it all into perspective.

Throughout the exhibit's run, the USBG will display blooming selections from its collection of 5,000 orchid specimens.

"We are pleased to share our spectacular collection of orchids in this biennial celebration of one of the world's favorite flowers," said Holly H. Shimizu, executive director of the United States Botanic Garden.

The United States Botanic Garden is one of the oldest botanic gardens in North America. The SBG informs visitors about the importance and fundamental value of plants, and highlights the diversity of plants worldwide, as well as their aesthetic, cultural, economic, therapeutic, and ecological significance. The U.S. Botanic Garden is accredited by the American Association of Museums.

The U.S. Botanic Garden Conservatory is open to the public, free of charge, every day of the year from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. It is located at 100 Maryland Avenue, SW, on the west side of the U.S. Capitol.

**Visitors are encouraged to take Metrobus and Metrorail. Call (202) 225-8333 or visit [www.usbg.gov](http://www.usbg.gov) for more information.**

## PAPH FORUM in Washington D.C.



Our sister society to the north will be hosting the 30<sup>th</sup> annual Paphiopedilum Forum at the National Arboretum on Saturday, February 13! This is a premier show that focuses exclusively on Paphiopedilums, Phragmipediums, Cypripediums, and Mexipediums; the Slipper Orchids!

A number of VOS members will be carpooling up for the show. You are welcome to ride up!

See Garland Hanson if you want to go. There will be a special competition for the slipper orchid with the most beautiful foliage and a category for the "ugliest paph"!

This is an event that has become so popular that attendees must register and pay in advance. They have limited seating and cap the attendance. See [www.ncos.us/ncos/paph.htm](http://www.ncos.us/ncos/paph.htm) for complete information.

## Hospitality for the VOS Show

One of the important but seldom seen areas of the Orchid Show is the hospitality area. The VOS provides breakfast and lunch for the VOS helpers, vendors and the AOS judges throughout the setup on Thursday and the three days of the show. This entails a significant amount of food as well as setup and organization.

What typically works well for the judges and vendors are soups and sandwiches as opposed to a "meal". This allows both to nibble while they "work".

We need two different soups for all four days along with sandwiches items such as bread, meat, cheese, lettuce, tomato and onion along with the appropriate condiments. Chips, cookies and fruit would also be welcome.

It would be great if some of the members would contribute or even make a deli, fruit or vegetable tray.

Betty Jo Fulghum is the chair for this area of the show and not only will she need contributions of food but assistance with setup. Below are the times and days required.

- Thursday -Breakfast (8am to 10am)  
Lunch (11:30 am to 1:30pm)
- Friday - Breakfast (8am to 10am)  
Lunch (11:30 am to 1:30pm)
- Saturday -Breakfast (8am to 10am)  
Lunch (11:30 am to 1:30pm)
- Sunday -Breakfast (8am to 10am)  
Lunch (11:30 am to 1:30pm)

Please contact her at the email or phone numbers below to volunteer your time and/or culinary skills.

[jofulghum@comcast.net](mailto:jofulghum@comcast.net)

H—379-1274  
C—627-3619

## Scientists have found out why orchids resort to sexual trickery to lure in male insects - it leads to a more efficient pollinating system.

The international study, involving Zurich University's Florian Schiestl, is published in the January edition of *The American Naturalist*.

"Orchids are special. They are maybe the world champions in having evolved diversity of pollination systems," Schiestl, a professor at the university's Institute of Systematic Botany, told [swissinfo.ch](http://swissinfo.ch).

Most flowering plants reward pollinators, such as bees, wasps and flies, with nectar. Some, including certain orchids, resort to what is called food deception, producing flowers that look or smell like food, to lure insects in.



Other orchids, however, resort to sexual deception, in which the flower mimics a female insect, thus encouraging

the male to attempt to mate with it. The males thus collect the pollen on their bodies and fertilize the next orchid they visit.

But scientists were puzzled about the sexual strategy. "It is unusual in many respects as it only involves male pollinators, no females, and it is very specific, so these plants only use one or a handful of pollinator species, which is in a contrast to other reproductive systems," Schiestl said.

### Limiting its chances?

This means an orchid mimicking a female mining bee is only going to attract a male of that species rather than many insects. This would seem to be limiting its reproductive chances.

"We know the evolutionary direction - that food deception evolved from food reward and sexual

deception from food deception... so the key question is what is the advantage of sexual deception over food deception?" said Schiestl.

**Continued on next page**

### Schedule of Virginia Orchid Society Events

Sunday, February 14th  
*Note Change of Date!!*

**Virginia Orchid Society**  
*Phrags and Their Culture*  
**Andy Phillips**  
**2pm**  
Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens Robin's Room

February 26th, 27th & 28th  
**Virginia Orchid Society**  
**AOS Orchid Show**

Strange's Greenhouse and Garden Center

Sunday, March 21st  
**Virginia Orchid Society**  
**Gordon Slaymaker**  
**AOS Judge**

"2009/2010 Awarded NCOS and VOS Show Plants"  
**2pm**

Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens Robin's Room

Saturday and Sunday  
March 27th and 28th

**Strange's Bloomin Days**

**Virginia Orchid Society**  
**Orchid Repotting**  
**Volunteers Needed**

Sunday, April 11th  
*Note Change of Date!!!*

**Virginia Orchid Society**  
**Spring Auction**  
**1pm**

Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens Robin's Room

Sunday, May 16th  
**Virginia Orchid Society**  
**Leon Glicenstein**  
**AOS Judge**  
"Jewel Orchids"  
**2pm**

Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens Robin's Room

**Virus testing continues to be available at minimal cost at each of the general meetings. Bring plants to the meeting for testing or purchase your own testing kits. See Mike Mealy for additional information and testing.**

#### VOS Committee Chairs

**Affiliated Societies**  
Empty

**Newsletter**  
Valerie Thacker

**Website**  
Jerry Rogers

**Continuing Education**  
Empty

**Programs**  
Valerie Thacker/Shannon Reber

**Endowment**  
Charles Gardner

**Hospitality**  
DJ and Jerry Merski

**Membership**  
Betty Jo Fulghum

**Librarian / Archives**  
David Sombach

**Publicity**  
Shannon Reber

**Show Committee**  
Valerie Thacker

**Judges Forum**  
David Sombach

**Auctions**  
Garland Hanson

**Ad Hoc**  
David Sombach  
Dick Burch  
Valerie Thacker

**Visit Our Website:**  
[www.vaorchidsociety.org](http://www.vaorchidsociety.org)

## *Sexual Trickery continued*

To find out, the professor and his colleagues investigated patterns of pollen removal and deposition in 31 orchid species of various reproductive strategies in Italy and in Western Australia.

They were able to do so, explained Schiestl, because orchids offer their pollen in little packages called pollinia, which can be counted. The scientists then calculated the “pollen transport efficiency” between the orchids.

“We found that the sexually deceptive orchids are significantly more efficient than the food deceptive orchids,” Schiestl told [swissinfo.ch](http://swissinfo.ch).

### **“Sexy” triumph**

This means that a higher percentage of pollen taken from the “sexy” orchids made it back to another orchid of the same species.

Orchids with many pollinators had more pollen taken away, but more was lost between flowers – through being dropped or being taken to the wrong plant.

In sexually deceptive orchids only five to ten per cent of plants in a population become pollinated, which seems very low, said Schiestl.

But as they are perennials, living up to ten years, these orchids have multiple chances of becoming fertilised.

“Although pollination happens rarely, it is efficient and that works for plants that live a fairly long time,” he explained.

### **Rarity**

Orchids resorting to sexual trickery are quite rare. Of the 30,000 species of orchid known, around one-third are deceptive, mostly using food. An estimated 1,000 use sex. There are, however, still many orchids whose pollination system remains a mystery.

Switzerland has five sexually deceptive orchids of the genus *Ophrys*.

Schiestl says further investigation is needed to find out just what causes the “sexy” orchids’ good performance.

“One hypothesis is that it is this high specificity that drives the good performance in pollen export because if you only involve a few pollinators, it seems more likely that your pollen moves to individuals of the same orchid species.”

It seems that by using sex, an orchid ensures that an insect makes a more direct beeline to the next flower.

“Pollinator fidelity” has also evolved many times in other plant families, said the academic.

“So it would be very nice to really identify what drives the evolution of highly specific pollination systems.”

**One of Switzerland’s 580 species of wild bee has been chosen as Pro Natura’s animal of the year, the nature protection organisation announced on Tuesday.**

*Eucera nigrescens*, whose German name translates as long-horned bee, is described by Pro Natura as a “furry pollen taxi”. It plays a vital role in pollinating the *Ophrys holosericea* orchid.



The orchid, named in German after the bumble bee, fools the insect by imitating the shape and smell of the female. The male bee comes along to mate, and receives a load of pollen instead, which it passes on to the next plant it visits.

Pro Natura said the choice of the long-horned bee with its highly specialised relationship with the orchid was designed to illustrate the importance of millions of insects for biodiversity.

It said 45 per cent of all wild bees are on the red list of endangered species in Switzerland. If they were to disappear, many plant species would disappear too.

The United Nations has declared 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity. Pro Natura has launched its own campaign under the slogan: Biodiversity – every species counts!

### **A New Resource! Orchidmap.com**

Check out Orchidmap (<http://www.orchidmap.com>), a site where you can go to look up orchid resources in your vicinity. You can find shows, meetings, vendors and special events for any area you select. The results are shown on a map and you can see an icon for each hit. Hover over the icon for a description of it.

This is a great tool to use when traveling to see where events and vendors are! Check it out!