

**Orchid Society  
of Mauritius**

**40<sup>th</sup>**

**Anniversary**



*Cryptopus elatus*

**Commemorative Bulletin**

*August 2020*



Forty years of existence is a good vantage point to take stock of what has been accomplished and to put it on record so that it goes down to posterity.

A big thank you to everyone who has contributed to make it happen.

Some articles in this commemorative bulletin may relate to the same events or situations which have triggered the interest in orchids. It is quite natural. We are very grateful to the National Parks and Conservation Service for highlighting the critical status of our indigenous flora, with emphasis on orchids.

This publication aims at highlighting important milestone in the life of the orchid society and that of its members. A better knowledge of the past may generate a greater sense of belonging among fellow members and inspire the younger generation.



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# Contents

OSM Executive Committee 2020	4
Message from the President of the Republic of Mauritius	5
OSM President's message	6
Past Presidents of the society	10
Orchid stamps and challenge trophies	11
Honorary members - past & present	12
From a Distance - Thomas Mirenda	13
Hommage à Majeed - Viviane Parat	15
Mes Souvenirs D'Une Belle Aventure - Amrita Vayid	17
Un présent avec beaucoup d'avenir - Gerard Bax	19
My very special Love Affair - Allan Puresh	22
Records of past executive committees	26
My Enriching Adventures in the orchid world - John Davy	28
My encounter with the Orchid Society of Mauritius - Chantal Chung Hung Tseung	31
Que de Bons Souvenirs - Cédric Anne	33
My Journey with the Orchid Society of Mauritius - Chetanand (Jay) Ramma	36
My brief history of time with Orchid Society - Jean Marie Sauzier	38
The role of the Native Plant Propagation Centre of the NPCCS in native orchid conservation - Kersley Pynee	40
OSM photo gallery	45



# *Executive committee 2020*

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Serge L'Ecluse

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Christian Bellouard  
Sandhya Devasagayaum  
Armand René  
Bernard Manuel





**REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS**  
**OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT**

**Message of H.E Mr Prithvirajsing ROOPUN, G.C.S.K.**

It is an immense pleasure for me to be associated with the publication of this souvenir magazine on the occasion of the 40 years of the Mauritius Orchid Society.

I seize the opportunity to commend the Society and all the orchid lovers and growers for sharing with us the beauty of this gem of the plant kingdom, while also creating awareness on its genera and respective culture.

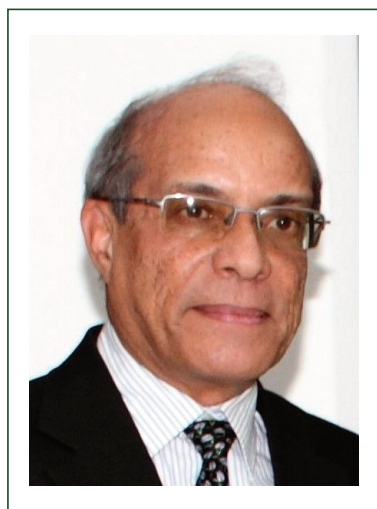
Flowers play an important role in making our lives more cheerful. They help us escape from the stresses of our everyday living and orchids are said to bring peace, love, and happiness to one's life. As Confucius says, "*An orchid in a deep forest sends out its fragrance even if no one is around to appreciate it*". Its vibrant colours, resilience and ability to bloom all year-round even reflect the spirit of our Mauritian diversity.

I understand the Orchid Society of Mauritius organizes various events providing visitors with not only free lectures and basic useful information but also introduces them, as well as young children, on the culture of orchid.

I once again commend the Society and all its members for relentlessly striving to promote the growing of orchids in Mauritius to an increasingly wider audience.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Prithvirajsing Roopun". The signature is stylized and fluid.

**Prithvirajsing Roopun, G.C.S.K.**  
**President of the Republic of Mauritius**



## President's Message:

Serge L'ECLUSE

# The Orchid Society of Mauritius, 1980 – 2020



It's a great pleasure for me to recall the track record of the Orchid Society of Mauritius throughout the 40 years gone by and very happy to note that the passion for orchids has kept us going for so long.

A good start would be to try to put things in their historical perspective. In the late 60's and early 70's several young professionals (Medical Doctors botanists etc.) fresh from University in Europe came back home after having had the opportunity to visit big flower shows. Many of them had been lucky to see some orchids on display and we can imagine today what effect it would have had on them in those days, when orchids were rare and exclusive. No wonder some of them had acquired plants and started to grow them locally. One can easily imagine how after some time, the pride of successful growing would urge them to talk about it in their professional circles and among their acquaintances. In April 1979, a selective group of these fairly new orchid growers decided to organize a private meeting at the Continental Hotel, in Curepipe to show their achievements to other fellow growers and share, their joy and most probably their growing experience. Their collective enthusiasm obviously called for more similar gatherings. That private meeting happened to be the foundation stone of today's Orchid Society of Mauritius. Those present were so thrilled by the experience that they unanimously decided to have a more formal group where more people could join in and get to know and love orchids.

In August 1980, the Orchid Society of Mauritius was registered as an association of orchid growers. The Orchid Society was born. The first executive committee was presided by Dr. Abdool Majeed Khadaroo.

## President's Message

The Orchid Society of Mauritius, 1980 – 2020

The other members were: Dr. France Staub (Vice-President), Ms. Axelle Lamusse (Secretary), Mrs. Chantal Leclezio (Asst. Secretary), Mr. Mustam Currimjee (Treasurer), Dr. Beekram Jhowry (Asst. Treasurer). The group started off with 30 members, all passionate about orchids.

Axelle Lamusse still remembers the day when during a visit to Maccabé forest, with Dr. Majeed Khadaroo, she suggested the idea of organizing an orchid show. We are all so grateful to her today for her brilliant idea, which could only come from someone with a vast knowledge of the flora of Mauritius and passionate about our indigenous orchids. One will remember her regular articles on the local flora, published between 1976 and 1978, in *L'Express* newspaper, and which was later grouped in one publication entitled 'Dans les Jardins de L'Ile Maurice'.

The first public orchid show was held in September 1980 at the Continental Hotel, in Curepipe. The Society is proud to highlight today that there has been an annual public orchid show every single year ever since.

In 1982 the society introduced a set of 20 sponsored challenge shields, to encourage and stimulate its members, who through careful management of their plants, to produce remarkable exhibits.

In 1983 Orchid Society became an affiliated member of the American Orchid Society upon a proposal from Dr. A. Majeed Khadaroo. In that same year it was decided to organize monthly members meetings and the first one was held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1983, at the Continental Hotel in Curepipe, with a talk on *Cattleyas* delivered jointly by Dr. Philip Teckham, Dr. France Staub and Dr. A.M. Khadaroo.

On 29<sup>th</sup> March 1984 we had the visit of Mr. Bob Nicolle of Valley Orchids, Australia, well known *Cymbidium* breeder. In September of the same year we were privileged to have the visit of Mr. Marcel Lecoufle from France. He was on a business trip in the region and managed a week-end stop in Mauritius to attend our annual orchid show. Mr. Lecoufle gave a talk at Bonâme Hall, MSIRI, Reduit during this visit for the benefit of members of both the Orchid Society and the Royal Society of Arts and Science of Mauritius. The following year (1985) Mr. Lecoufle attended once more the annual orchid show and this time he was accompanied by his daughter, Mrs. Genevieve Bert. They brought with them a nice collection of plants in bloom which were displayed at the show, for the pleasure of one and all.

During the following years, we established contacts with other orchid societies. We used to receive the bulletins from Natal Orchid Society, South Africa and from South East Asia Orchid Society. In 1987 Orchid Society of Mauritius was twinned to Les Orchidophiles Réunion de la Belgique and they mailed to us their annual bulletin.

Monthly members meetings around a table display of orchids in bloom has been the mainstay of the society. As often as it was possible there were talks, slide projections during these meetings. The slides were received by post from the Educational Section of the American Orchid Society. Members in attendance were invited to vote for the exhibit which appealed most to them and prizes were remitted to their owners. This last part of the meetings gave the opportunity to everyone to chat with their fellow members while enjoying a drink and some snacks.

## President's Message

The Orchid Society of Mauritius, 1980 – 2020

The Orchid Society has had during the past 40 years 15 Presidents. Each one of them, with the generous collaboration of an executive team, has contributed to carry over the society to this day. All of them, presidents and executive members deserve our gratitude for their dedication to keep it alive and to enhance the passion for orchids. (see annexed list of OSM executives 1980-2020).

In 1985 six active founder members were granted the status of Honorary members in recognition for their commendable service for the society. By year 2010 five of them were deceased and six new deserving members were appointed Honorary Members (see annexed list of honorary members).

In 1986, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October, the General Post-Office Philatelic Bureau of Mauritius issued a set of four stamps featuring indigenous orchids of Mauritius: 25 cents – *Cryptopus elatus*, Rs. 2.00 – *Jumellea recta*, Rs. 2.50 – *Angraecum mauritianum* and Rs. 10.00 – *Bulbophyllum longiflorum* (Synonym *Cirrhopetalum longiflorum*)

In 2005 the society celebrated its Silver Jubilee. A message of congratulation was received from the Chairperson of the affiliated committee of the American Orchid Society. The celebration was graced by the presence of the President of the Republic, as Patron of the Orchid Society of Mauritius.

In 2006 the list of awards was reviewed and the society opted for a new set of challenge trophies and the number was reduced to 12, to reward the best of each of the twelve generic groupings. We are very grateful to all those who sponsored them.

During the past fifteen years there have been many notable events. To name a few:

- November 2011 - A group of 18 members attended the 20<sup>th</sup> World Orchid Show and Conference in Singapore. A very enriching experience of massive displays and attending lectures by orchid specialists.
- August 2013 – launching of the Orchid Society's Web Site.
- September 2014 - Another group of 16 members attended the 21<sup>st</sup> World Orchid Show and Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa. A great opportunity to connect with important personalities of the orchid world.
- June 2017 – Talk and Mini show at Domaine de Labourdonnais. The objective was to diversify the exposure to orchids regionally.
- October 2017 - Introduction of a 'kids' corner' at annual show. The idea came from the American Orchid Society with the objective to create orchid awareness among the younger generation.
- October 2019 – Mr. Tom Mirenda, an accredited judge and also the chairperson of the Conservation Committee of the American Orchid Society, based in Hawaii, was the chief guest at the 39<sup>th</sup> annual orchid show. He delivered several very instructive public talks during his visit. After forty years of presence and regular activities organised by the Orchid Society, it is very comforting to note that orchids have become familiar to a large number of people on the island. What used to be an exclusive and mysterious plant can now be seen in people's homes, gardens and at some nurseries. Many people who are not necessarily members of the Orchid



## President's Message

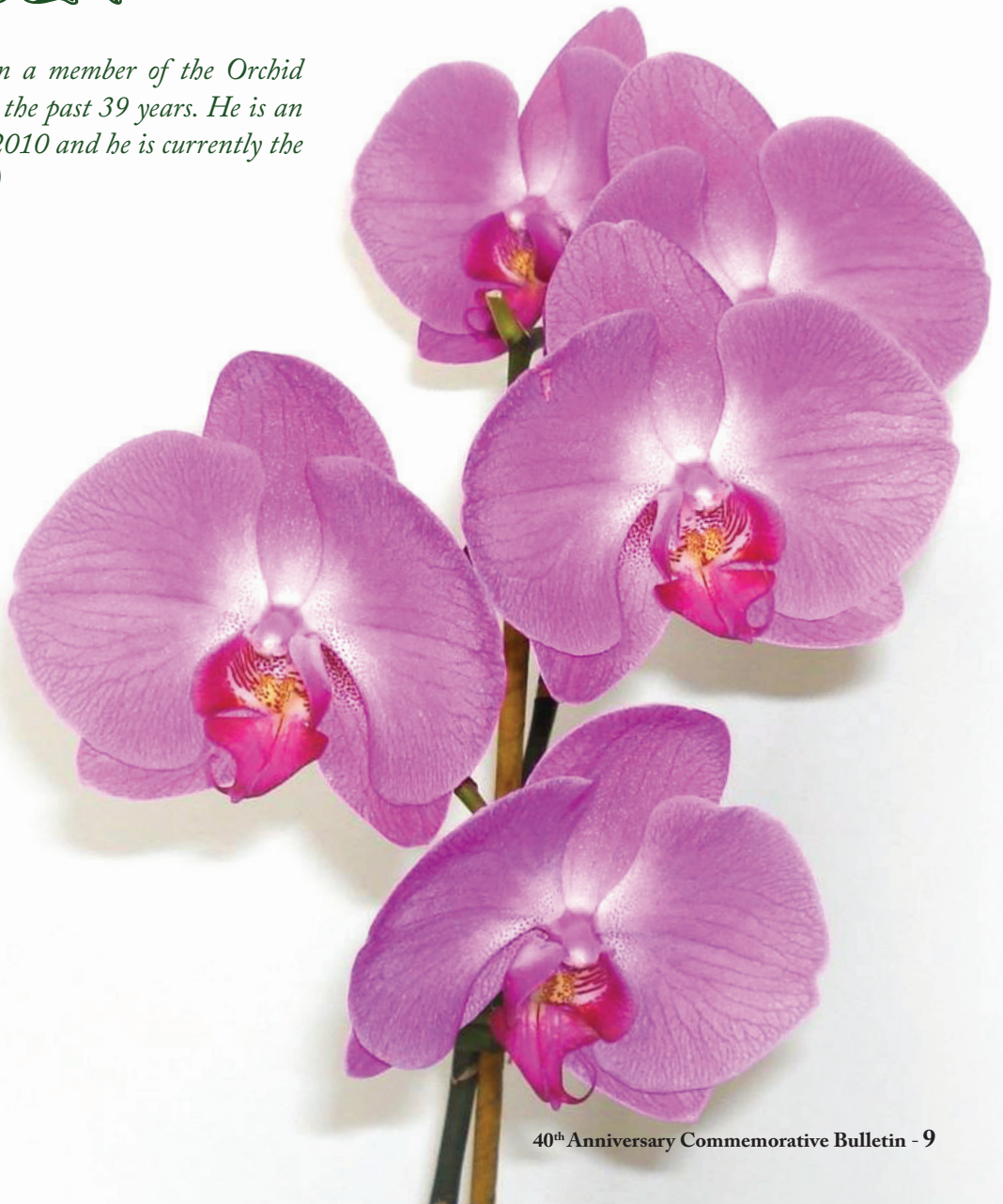
The Orchid Society of Mauritius, 1980 – 2020

Society, nowadays have their own very nice private collections. Orchids are also found very often on sale in Shopping Malls.

I reckon that the Orchid Society has been instrumental in this development and my wish is that orchids will continue to appeal to an ever-growing number of people in Mauritius, more so to the younger generation. May they continue in their own way, the mission of creating awareness and inducing passion for many more years ahead.



*(Serge L'Ecluse has been a member of the Orchid Society of Mauritius for the past 39 years. He is an honorary member since 2010 and he is currently the President of the Society.)*



# 40<sup>th</sup>

Anniversary



*Cryptopus elatus*

## Presidents of the society 1981 – 2020

1981	Dr. Majeed Khadaroo, MSK
1982	Dr. Majeed Khadaroo, MSK
1983	Dr. Majeed Khadaroo, MSK
1984	Dr. Majeed Khadaroo, MSK
1985	Mrs. Véronique Lesage
1986	Mr. Serge L'Ecluse
1987	Mr. Serge L'Ecluse
1988	Mr. Jean Brouard
1989	Mr. Francis Montocchio
1990	Mr. Francis Montocchio
1991	Mr. Roger Espitalier Noel
1992	Mr. Roger Espitalier Noel
1993	Dr. Claude Ricaud, CBE
1994	Dr. Claude Ricaud, CBE
1995	Mr. Praveen Nagawa
1996	Mr. Praveen Nagawa
1997	Mr. Gerard Bax
1998	Mr. Gerard Bax
1999	Mr. Gerard Bax
2000	Mrs. Amrita Vayid
2001	Mrs. Amrita Vayid
2002	Mrs. Amrita Vayid
2003	Ms. Chaya Dhawotal
2004	Ms. Chaya Dhawotal
2005	Mr. Renaud Lagesse
2006	Mr. Serge L'Ecluse
2007	Mr. Serge L'Ecluse
2008	Dr. Agness Chakowa
2009	Mr. Serge L'Ecluse
2010	Mr. Serge L'Ecluse
2011	Mr. Serge L'Ecluse
2012	Mr. Serge L'Ecluse
2013	Mr. Serge L'Ecluse
2014	Mr. Christian Bellouard
2015	Mr. Christian Bellouard
2016	Mr. Gervais Fayolle
2017	Mr. Serge L'Ecluse
2018	Mr. Serge L'Ecluse
2019	Mr. Serge L'Ecluse
2020	Mr. Serge L'Ecluse





Mauritian Orchid stamps – First Day Cover 1986



OSM Challenge Trophy: 1980 model (Left); Current model (Right)

40<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary

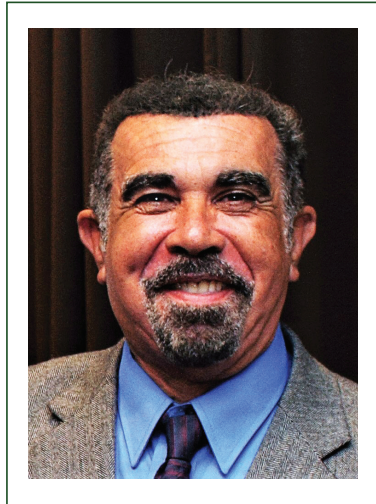


*Cryptopus elatus*

## Honorary members of the society

- 1985 Ms. Axelle Lamusse
- 1985 Dr. Majeed Khadaroo, MSK \*
- 1985 Dr. Philip Teckham \*
- 1985 DR. France Staub \*
- 1985 Mr. Jean Brouard \*
- 1985 Mr. Satterdeo Dabee, MBE \*
- 
- 2010 Mr. Paul Jauffret
- 2010 Mr. Serge L'Ecluse
- 2010 Dr. Claude Ricaud, CBE
- 2010 Mr. Gerard Bax
- 2010 Mr. Francis Montocchio
- 2010 Mr. Allan Puresh
- 
- 2020 Antoine Grenouille
- 2020 Amrita Vayid
- 2020 Chantal Chung Hung Tseung
- 2020 Dr. Agness Chakowa

\* *Deceased*



Thomas MIRENDA

## From a Distance



We may come from two extremely remote volcanic archipelagos, on nearly completely opposite sides of our planet, but, even so, our island homes also share so very much in common. It was beyond astonishing to have the extraordinary opportunity to visit Mauritius last October and celebrate the wonders of Orchids as well as the glories of the natural world that are so vividly on display throughout your spectacular country. Since my childhood, I have held a fascination for Mauritius and was enormously thrilled when the opportunity for a visit presented itself. I am gratified to have made many lovely new friends there and hope our relationships in our increasingly globalized and digitized world will continue for decades to come.

Due to the global pandemic we are in the midst of, our 'new normal' includes various forms of 'social distancing'. While we can all see how this is necessary to save the lives of the most vulnerable among us, it is also true that the world is a far better place when we can travel, visit each other, and share our joys and passions in person. We must consider the undeniably relevant truth that both our islands' economic prosperity depends greatly on eco-tourism. My sincere hope is that we will not forget about each other due to the great distance we share between us. We, in the world of orchids and plant conservation are people of one mind, regardless of our racial, ethnic or socio-economic differences. Despite our geographic distance, we are the same!

It was immediately apparent to me, the minute I got off the plane, that Mauritius is an exceptional place with unique and amazing flora and fauna, diverse ethnic mix, fabulous climate, exquisite and impressive topography and, most importantly a gentle, loving island spirit, very similar to what we call 'Aloha' here in Hawaii.

## From a Distance

Thomas Mirenda

I felt very much at home and cared-for by all the wonderful people I got to meet. The orchid show was a marvelous display of gorgeous plants expertly cultivated by superb local growers. It was an honor and a joy to be a part of the event.

Mauritius and Hawaii share the presence of the divine. The beauty of the land, the spirit of the people, evidence a type of blessing that is often lacking in other places no matter how beautiful they may be. It is said that Mauritius was created before Heaven was, so that it could be used as a model for God's own dwelling. Hawaii has similar connections to the heavens, as some of our peaks are said to be vortexes, or portals to heaven. No matter what your religious beliefs, it is impossible not to feel the loving presence of something beyond our normal senses when traversing our exquisite landscapes. It may indeed be that both our islands are sacred places where God and man may cohabit and interact, shortening the distance between Heaven and Earth.

Our island homes also share a history of Sugar Cane cultivation; a practice that, in another age, brought us great prosperity, but also, a fair amount of ecological devastation to both our islands. While it was shocking to discover how much native forest has been lost, the same is true of Hawaii Island as well. While visiting reserves such as Pétrin, and some other natural orchid populations, it is wonderful to know that so much of Mauritian (and Hawaiian) biodiversity still survives! Your outstanding Botanical Garden, as well as your superb private gardens and plant collection, also proves that it is possible to preserve many species with a minimum of care because of your individual passions, fertile soil and excellent climate. The spectacular and visually stunning new documentary: *Mystic Mauritius*, shows

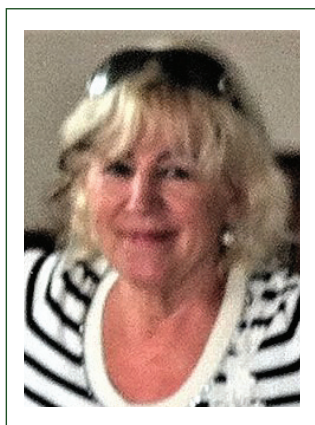
definitively how much beauty and diversity remains! It is thrilling!

I urge you to organize, save and cultivate as many of your unique Mauritian species as possible, there, on your exceptional island oasis. Why? The coming decades may likely be a time of increased extinction due to anthropogenic factors such as climate change and continued deforestation. Let us not allow our precious orchid biodiversity to go the way of the Dodo, nor the Hawaiian Honeycreepers. I am here to help, and hopefully connect the orchid conservationists of the world to do exactly that. I intend to return to Mauritius regularly to establish orchid conservation gardens and additional reserves so that we can begin to protect and heal what is left of our distinctive and cherished orchid heritage. To this end, I look forward to closing the huge physical distance between us and seeing and working with all my great, new Mauritian friends for many years to come.



*(Thomas Mirenda has been working professionally with orchids for over 30 years, He is an accredited judge of the American Orchid Society and is currently the chairman of the Conservation Committee of that organization. Email: biophilialak@gmail.com )*

OGCN (Orchid Garden Conservation Network) new website coming soon.



Viviane PARAT  
*Juge internationale d'orchidées (Suisse)*

## Hommage à Majeed



C'est d'abord la beauté de l'île Maurice et l'extrême gentillesse de ses habitants qui m'ont enchantée. J'étais venue pour passer des vacances avec ma famille et je m'étais promis d'y revenir. A cette époque je terminais ma formation de juge international pour les orchidées et, lors du voyage suivant à l'île Maurice, j'aurais voulu mieux connaître la manière dont on cultive les orchidées sur cette île. J'ai donc pris contact avec l'American Orchid Society qui m'a communiqué les coordonnées du président de l'Orchid Society of Mauritius, Majeed Khadaroo.

Nous nous sommes rencontrés et j'ai tout de suite été charmée par l'accueil chaleureux de cet homme, par cette cordialité, cette ouverture qui me semble être une particularité des Mauriciens. A partir de ce moment, je suis retournée régulièrement à l'île Maurice devenue pour moi le paradis sur terre.

Et à chaque fois je rendais visite à Majeed, à sa collection – elle comptait plus de douze mille plantes – et il m'enrichissait de son expérience ; il me parlait des hybrides qu'il créait et qui étaient enregistrées à la Royal Horticultural Society of London ; il me faisait connaître ses publications, ses livres qui faisaient autorité dans le monde entier. Nous sommes devenus amis. Il m'a introduit dans la société orchidophile dont il était président et j'ai pu suivre ses activités, ses projets, admirer ses expositions, participer avec lui à des jugements.

Cette belle amitié a duré près de quinze ans. Majeed est devenu pour moi une sorte de guide dans le monde magique des orchidées. Comme j'étais fière d'être son amie ! L'étendue de ses connaissances faisait de lui une sommité mondiale, une personne à laquelle se référaient les spécialistes les plus connus.

## Hommage à Majeed

Viviane Parat

Mais cette culture botanique faisait partie d'une culture plus vaste qui était tout simplement humaine. Il avait cette qualité d'homme dont le monde a besoin.

La dernière fois que je l'ai vu, c'était au Congrès mondial de Singapour. J'ai retardé d'un jour mon voyage retour et nous nous sommes rencontrés chez sa fille qui habite Singapour. Nous avons mangé ensemble. Une fois de plus, notre passion commune pour les orchidées a été au centre de notre entretien. Et puis... et puis il me reste ce court poème composé par Majeed :

*Orchids,*

*When I first saw them*

*They were a delight to behold.*

*From that day on,*

*My life has never been the same.*



*(Viviane Parat est une passionnée d'orchidées et vit en Suisse. Après plusieurs années de formation elle est maintenant Juge Internationale d'orchidées.)*



Dr. Majeed Khadaroo with his latest registered hybrid: *Cymbidium Majeed Khadaroo* in 2014





Amrita VAYID

## Mes souvenirs d'une belle aventure



L'Orchid Society of Mauritius a été créé en 1980 par feu le Docteur Majeed Khadaroo et quelques amis, amateurs d'orchidées.

Pour moi le premier contact avec l'orchidée c'était lors d'une exposition publique à l'hôtel Continental en Septembre 1981, date que je n'oublierai jamais car j'ai été émerveillée. J'ai acheté des plantes d'orchidées ce jour-là mais elles n'ont pas survécu tant j'étais une ignorante dans la matière.

Mon ami Angelo Létimier m'a introduit à la OSM et je suis devenue membre quelques années plus tard. Pour moi L'orchidophilie était devenu une passion contagieuse. J'allais passer beaucoup de temps avec Majeed car je voulais en savoir plus. J'attendais les réunions mensuelles car avec fierté j'exposais mes plantes fleuries lors des mini expos. J'en parle avec tous mes aînées car je voulais connaître tout sur l'orchidée.

J'ai été présidente de l'association pendant plusieurs années et je me faisais un Plaisir d'être présente a chaque réunion et de participer à chaque évènement. A l'époque presque tous les membres étaient des amateurs d'orchidées et nous étions une grande famille prête à s'entraider les uns les autres.

Pour les expositions annuelles nous importions des plantes de différents pays. Souvent les plantes étaient livrées chez moi et on se réunissait pour étiqueter les plants avant la vente. On passait des moments agréables. Pendant les expositions annuelles je me faisais un plaisir de donner des explications a ceux qui étaient intéressé.

## Mes souvenirs d'une belle aventure

Amrita Vayid

La OSM a une place spéciale dans ma vie car sans la société je n'aurais pas pu apprendre plein de choses sur ces belles fleurs. La pratique et les bons conseils des amis membres m'ont apporté beaucoup plus que les livres. Je dois aussi dire qu'au cours de mes années actives à la OSM, je n'ai fait que de très bons amis.

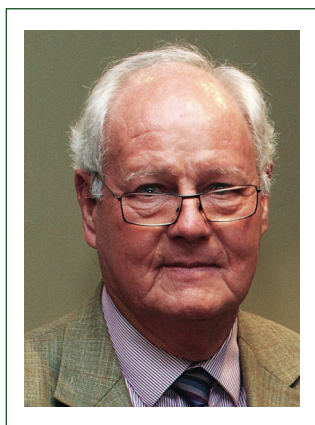
Je souhaite une très longue vie à l'Orchid Society of Mauritius et que les jeunes membres

connaissent autant de bonheur que moi parmi les orchidées.



*(Amrita Vayid est très active dans le social. Elle est actuellement la Présidente de la Thalassaemia Society of Mauritius. Elle a aussi assurée la Présidence de l'Orchid Society of Mauritius de 2000 à 2002.)*





Gerard BAX

## Un présent avec beaucoup d'avenir



**40** ans déjà que notre association existe.

C'est par le pur effet du hasard que je me suis retrouvé associé à cette organisation.

Cela commence par une Orchidée que Geneviève, mon épouse, m'offre pour la fête de Pâques. Je ne me rappelle plus de l'année mais c'était vers les années 1990/1992. Cette plante, un *Dendrobium* au nom de « White Doreen Young Lady »

La plante offerte était une canne avec quelques racines au bas sans plus.

Que faire de cette plante ? Comment la planter ? Quel milieu ? Etc...

Comme le hasard fait bien les choses, Hervé Bonnet, représentant de la Compagnie Roger Fayd'herbe et ami d'université me rend une visite de travail comme il avait l'habitude pour me proposer des produits chimiques que sa Compagnie recevait.

Me voilà lui faisant part de mes problèmes concernant l'installation de cette plante.

Je ne savais pas qu'Hervé était un passionné d'Orchidée. Il me fait un cours sur la culture des Orchidées. On va à la maison et il installe mon *Dendrobium* dans un pot avec du charbon, des macadams etc. Comme je n'avais pas de serre ont suspend la plante à une branche d'un manguier.

Il me fait part de son intention de placer une commande de plantes d'Asie et me demande si je suis intéressé. Il me fait des suggestions de pour démarrer une petite serre et j'accepte. Ce fut le début d'une aventure qui est resté jusqu'au aujourd'hui.

## Un présent avec beaucoup d'avenir

Gerard Bax

En regardant autour de lui, il me signale que l'installation de la petite serre était possible à un endroit qu'il pensait être propice.

Il me parle de la « Orchid Society of Mauritius » dont il est membre.

Il me parle de l'exposition annuelle de l'Association qui se tiendra au Continental Hôtel, qui est aujourd'hui « Arcades Currimjee Jeewanjee »

Je m'y rends et rencontre les membres de l'Association, dont, Majeed Khadaroo, Jean Brouard, Dr Teckham, Francis Montocchio, Paul Jauffret entre autres. Nous sommes en septembre.

Je suis ébahi par cette exposition et par la beauté des plantes exposées.

Je suis sollicité pour devenir membres de l'Association.

Et me voilà parti.

La commande d'Hervé arrive. Ce sont des *Phalaenopsis*, des *Vandas* et des *Dendrobiums*. Cela m'oblige de construire la petite serre. Il me donne des conseils sur la conception de la serre, les produits que je dois avoir en stock et j'en passe.

La plante fleurie donnant une gerbe de dix-sept fleurons d'une blancheur immaculée.

Je n'oublierai jamais cette plante qui me donnait tous les ans une magnifique inflorescence.

C'est sous la Présidence de Claude Ricaud en 1993 que je me joins à l'Association et l'année après je suis sollicité pour devenir membre de l'exécutif de l'Association.

Mon *Dendrobium* "White Doreen Young Lady" participe aux mini-expositions organisées par l'Association et me fait gagner des prix.

Etant membre du comité exécutif, je suis mêlé à l'organisation des expositions annuelles. Cela se passe à la Municipalité de Rose-Hill, puis celle de Quatre Bornes et puis au Audi Zentrum de Réduit. Ce n'était pas une mince affaire.

Une exposition fut même organisée au château du Réduit.

Nos réunions mensuelles se passent à Georges Town dans le bureau de Claude Ricaud, puis à APEXHOM à Moka, puis dans les bureaux de l'Action Familiale à Moka, et enfin au Cercle de Rose-Hill.

Des mini-shows mensuels/conférences sont organisés régulièrement à la Maison Philippe Bonâme au Réduit.

J'assume la Présidence de l'Association en 1997, 1998 et 1999. Je suis Trésorier sous la Présidence de Chaya Dhawotal, puis Secrétaire de 2012 à 2015 sous la Présidence de Serge L'Ecluse.

En 2002 arrive la retraite. Je me retrouve dans un appartement au 6<sup>ième</sup> étage à Curepipe. Fini la serre de Beau-Séjour et son climat ensoleillé. Que faire ?

Je me lance dans la culture des orchidées dans l'appartement. Il y a des plantes partout : dans l'entrée, dans la cuisine et même dans la salle de bain.

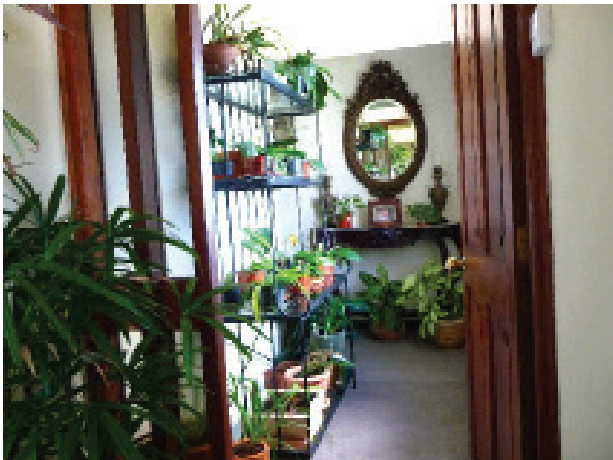
Évidemment, les plantes ne pouvaient plus être les mêmes. Les longues gerbes de *Phalaenopsis* étaient gênantes, les pots ne pouvaient plus être gros et le climat est différent.

## Un présent avec beaucoup d'avenir

Gerard Bax

C'est là que je me lance dans les plantes miniatures et espèces de Maurice et d'ailleurs. Je reste jusqu'aujourd'hui un passionné de ces plantes magnifiques.

En 2005, je reçois la médaille commémorative à l'occasion du vingt-cinquième anniversaire de notre Association des mains de Sir Aneerood Jugnauth, Président de la République et Président d'honneur de l'Association.



Je suis fait Membre honoraire en 2010 pour service rendu à l'Association.

Mon association avec l'OSM m'a donné beaucoup de joies. J'ai rencontré beaucoup de gens que je n'aurai jamais connu.

Visites, Conférences et organisations de promenades/piqueniques dans la nature à la recherche d'Orchidées endémiques furent de grands moments de partages et de convivialités. Les plus marquantes furent:

1. La visite de Pétrin en novembre 2001
2. Visite de l'Exposition Internationale de Dijon, France, du 11 au 20 mars 2005, en compagnie de Viviane Parrat, juge internationale.
3. La visite de l'Arboretum de Sans Souci en 2010
4. Visite à Mare Longue en 2012
5. Visite de l'Exposition Internationale de Johannesburg, Afrique du Sud en 2014
6. Visite dans un Chassé à Midlands
7. Visite à l'Exile, Union Ducray en 2015
8. Visite aux Floralties du Tampon, Île de la Réunion en 2015

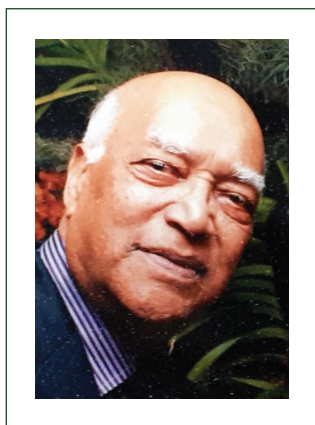
Beaucoup de projets ont été à l'ordre du jour dont un local où nous pourrions conserver nos archives et dispenser des informations aux membres et au public et pour que le comité exécutif puisse se réunir mensuellement. Mais faute de local et de fond ce projet n'a pas abouti. Dommage.

Pour terminer, je voudrais dire un grand merci à Serge L'Ecluse qui assume la Présidence depuis quelques années déjà et souhaiter que nos jeunes se jettent à l'eau pour prendre la relève et assurer la continuité.

Je souhaite encore de longues années à l'Association.



*(Gerard Bax a été professionnellement engagé dans le monde agricole. Sa passion pour les orchidées l'a amené à la Présidence de L'Orchid Society of Mauritius de 1997 à 1999. Il est membre honoraire de l'association depuis 2010. Gerard a aussi été président de la Royal Society of Arts and Science of Mauritius.)*



Allan PURES H

## My very special love affair



When my wife, Rosemary, asked me to take her to the Continental Hotel, Curepipe, for the 1<sup>st</sup> public show of the Orchid Society of Mauritius in 1981, I showed some reluctance, took my Saturday newspapers, and told her that I would look after our two children in the car while she had a tour. On arrival, as women can prove convincing, she told me that the children too would like to look at the flowers. One would agree that I had no choice and could hardly refuse – then it happened – “*it was love at first sight*”.

Indescribable, out of this world!!!

Words will never be able to express what I felt then, and still do. That’s when my orchid journey started - I was mesmerized by the plants with exquisite flowers, and caught the virus immediately.

Within a few weeks they had become a part of my life, and I found myself thinking orchids, reading orchids, dreaming orchids - their beauty, diversity of colours, forms and fragrance.

I then realised I had fallen hopelessly in love and there was no cure for it... So I bid myself:

*Welcome to the wonderful world of orchids.*

Orchids have for long been thought to be mysterious and luxurious, but this is a myth. Of course, orchids carry an aura of mystery, but they are not difficult to grow, and need certain requirements, factors which are a must to obtain those fascinating flowers.

No other family of plants offers such a variety of magnificence, from the exquisite purity of *Phalaenopsis* blooms to the almost sensual brightness of the *Paphiopedilum*.

## My very special love affair

Allan Puresh

Certain flowers will keep for a day or two, some for several days and others a few months. A judicious choice of orchids will decorate a garden throughout the year.

My better half, and my children rightly diagnosed that my passion for orchids had gradually evolved into an obsession. My wife also noticed that whatever I did, had always something to do with orchids, and that when I surfed on the net it was mostly to visit sites dealing with orchids. She also stated that I never complained when dealing with these magical plants, although it could be tiring at time.

I joined the Orchid Society of Mauritius in 1981, and since then have tried not to miss any meeting or event. It has always been a pleasure to meet new friends, admire their beautiful plants and flowers, and discuss orchid culture.

A few years after I joined the Society, I was co-opted as a member of the Executive Committee – an office which I served for practically more than 15 years. I also served as Assistant Secretary and Secretary for a very long time. Records will surely show that I have been the longest serving Secretary of the Society, and in that capacity I met people in different functions including a few Presidents of the Republic, and this has given me more experience and maturity to face all facets of life.

Serving the Society as Master of Ceremony for numerous years at many events, including the Annual Show was a real honour - Time consuming, of course, but how inspiring.

To my great astonishment, I was awarded Honorary Membership for “distinguished contribution to Orchid Culture” on 28<sup>th</sup> August 2010.

Formerly, I spent most of my spare time with Majeed Khadaroo, at times helping him dividing his plants. After enjoying a copious meal prepared by his wife, I was always leaving with a few of his divisions. A little story comes to mind – one Saturday afternoon he phoned asking me to come over to his place and spend some time with him to work on a book he was preparing on Orchid Culture, but to stop at Quatre Bornes market to get some “*gato pima*”. It was later that I discovered that he was not allowed to eat those snacks that he enjoyed.

Here is one other anecdote: I was in a group of orchid lovers and we were supposed to walk a few kilometers through the forest starting at Plaine Champagne, (transport compliments of Mustam Currimjee) and among us was late Lady Yvette Walter who came wearing a black dress and high heels.

There have been so many functions with cocktails and barbecues at the residence of some members, for example, late Noel Brouard, Maurice Espitalier Noel, Marge Poncini, Vic Chakowa, Gérard Bax, Majeed Khadaroo, Amrita Vayid and also at Belle Vue Harel SE, compliments of Gérard Bax, and Rose Belle SE, compliments of late Sylvio Marie-Jeanne. I do hope that I have not left out some other venues.

There have been ups and downs in my orchid world – let me share three instances:

- (1) a prominent doctor, (who boasted that he had been the first one to have started collecting orchids ??) whom I visited one afternoon – the following day, Police was at my door stating that I had stolen a couple of his precious plants. Of course the authorities had to leave empty handed after a thorough check;

## My very special love affair

Allan Puresh

- (2) another one concerns a new member who had just started orchid culture, who came to visit stating that he had an Intensive Care Unit for orchids at his place and that he could take care of some of my orchids which were not in very good shape. I trusted him and asked him to return my pots for which I am still waiting after practically 10 years. I also suggested that he take a few bulbs of a big plant given to me by Majeed. He took it and I am still waiting for “*Reviens*”.
- (3) The 3<sup>rd</sup> instance is a cheat who presented lovely plants with very beautiful rare flowers, and yet, sold the same type, but very ordinary plants of the same structure. This was detected when they flowered at my place.

But love of orchids makes you tolerant and take these people in your stride. Bible quote: “Forgive them for they know not what they do”.

I have met people of all the walks of life; I have also come across lots of generous people who, just like that, gave me a few plants from their collection. At this stage, some names come to my mind, for example, late Majeed Khadaroo, Paul Jauffret, Amrita Vayid, Dharmen Issari, and late Robert de Froberville of whom I should relate this anecdote –

Late Marcel Lecoufle, international figure in orchid culture, brought some of his most beautiful specimens to the 1985 Annual Show, and members were informed that they could choose whatever they liked and that payment would be effected at the end of the show. When I came back at the specified time to collect the plant of my choice, I was

flabbergasted by the price (Rs 800) and told Paul Jauffret, Mr. Lecoufle’s representative, that I could not afford it, and to find somebody else who could. After a small conversation he had with someone I did not know, he introduced me to that same person, Robert de Froberville who insisted that I take the plant and that he would pay for it. He had these very touching and heartwarming words – “I know how you feel, as some time back I was very much like you, not being able to afford what I wanted; today I can do it for you”. That, I believe, is philanthropy at its best.

My first contribution for the Annual Orchid Show in 1982 was an unidentified indigenous species, and also a humble *Phalaenopsis* with 2 white flowers on an inflorescence amidst a multitude of breathtaking fabulous looking flowers. But the best came when, on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2006, I won the best *Phalaenopsis* on show, as well as being awarded the Champion of the Show prize with *Phalaenopsis Vassilli*, plant carrying 52 blooms on one single spike.

Up to now, I can say that it’s a world of its own, where one can get off alcohol, drugs, food and cars, but once hooked on orchids, one is ***finished*** and can never get off orchids.

**Never !!!**

Orchids are subtle, delicate, voluptuous. They are also masters of disguise as they take on the shapes, scents and colours that seduce insects which pollinate them.

Orchid culture is a fellowship in itself, relieving stress, bringing peace of mind, forging bonds of friendship, and fostering



## My very special love affair

Allan Puresh

mutual understanding and tolerance.

I would never have grown orchids, had it not been for my wife, and this enabled me to meet a fabulous group of people, orchid lovers, among whom, two friends and mentors who have always encouraged me and who have always been present for advice (I call them my orchid gurus) – one is Paul Jauffret, famous knowledgeable orchidist, and late Dr Majeed Khadaroo, a walking encyclopaedia and a reference in orchid culture, who once told me:

*“If you want to be happy for a few hours, get drunk,*

*If you want to be happy for a few years, get married; and*

*If you want to be happy for ever, grow orchids.”*



*(Allan Puresh a œuvré comme secrétaire de l'Orchid Society of Mauritius pendant de nombreuses années et un passionné cultivateur d'orchidées. Allan est aussi membre honoraire de l'association depuis 2010.)*



# Orchid Society of Mauritius

## Records of past executive committee members

YEAR	PREDIDENT	V.PRESIDENT	SECRETARY	A. SECRETARY	TREASURER
1981	Dr Majeed Khadaroo	Dr. France Staub	Axelle Lamusse	Chantal Leclezio	Mustam Currimjee
1982	Dr Majeed Khadaroo	Dr Philip Teckham	Serge L'Ecluse	Paul Jauffret	Dr France Staub
1983	Dr Majeed Khadaroo	Dr France Staub	Serge L'Ecluse	Gilbert Forget	Mustam Currimjee
1984	Dr Majeed Khadaroo	Dr France Staub	Serge L'Ecluse	Denise Chan Chong	Mustam Currimjee
1985	Veronique Lesage	Dr Majeed Khadaroo	Denise Chan Chong	Denise Chan Chong	Mustam Currimjee
1986	Serge L'Ecluse	Dr Majeed Khadaroo	Francis Montocchio	Dr Claude Ricaud	Patrick Appadoo
1987	Serge L'Ecluse	Jean Marie Sauzier	Veronique Lesage	John Chung	Francis Montochio
1988	Serge L'Ecluse		Frabcis Montocchio		
1989	Francis Montochio	Jean Brouard	Denise Chan Chong	Roy Maraye	
1990	Francis Montochio	Serge L'Ecluse	Catherine Couacaud	Roy Maraye	Paul Jauffret
1991	Roger Esp. Noel	Dr Agness Chakowa	Praveen Nagawa	Roy Maraye	Prakash Ramhotar
1992	Roger Esp. Noel	Dr Agness Chakowa	Praveen Nagawa	Allan Puresh	Prakash Ramhotar
1993	Dr Claude Ricaud	Roger Espitalier Noel	Chantal Chung	Florence Julien	Roy Maraye
1994	Dr Claude Ricaud	Valerie Espitalier Noel	Chantal Chung	Florence Julien	Roy Maraye
1995	Praveen Nagawa	Dr Claude Ricaud	Chantal Chung	Florence Julien	Ah-Kwet Leung
1996	Praveen Nagawa	Dr Claude Ricaud	Gerard Bax	Florence Julien	Ah-Kwet Leung
1997	Gerard Bax	Praveen Nagawa	Florence Julien	Dr Claude Ricaud	Ah-Kwet Leung
1998	Gerard Bax	Dr. Majeed Khadaroo	Dr. Claude Ricaud	Florence Julien	Philippe Bouchereau
1999	Gerard Bax	Amrita Vayid	Dr Claude Ricaud	Florence Julien	Regis Julien
2000	Amrita Vayid	Gerard Bax	Dr Claude Ricaud	Annie Bellepeau	Dr Regis Julien
2001	Amrita Vayid	Gerard Bax	Allan Puresh	Dr Claude Ricaud	
2002	Amrita Vayid	Gerard Bax	Allan Puresh	Dr Claude Ricaud	
2003	Chaya Dhawotal	Gerard Bax	Allan Puresh	Dr Claude Ricaud	Renaud Lagesse
2004	Chaya Dhawotal	John Davy	Allan Puresh	Dr Claude Ricaud	Gerard Bax
2005	Renaud Lagesse	John Davy	Allan Puresh	Dr Claude Ricaud	Chantal Chung
2006	Serge L'Ecluse	Rashid Khadaroo	Allan Puresh	M.H. Kong Hung Cheong	Chantal Chung
2007	Serge L'Ecluse	Agness Chakowa	Allan Puresh	Francois de Maroussem	Chantal Chung
2008	Agness Chakowa	Serge L'Ecluse	Djalil Khadaroo		Chantal Chung
2009	Serge L'Ecluse	Agness Chakowa	Djalil Khadaroo	John Davy	Gerard leung
2010	Serge L'Ecluse	Dr Claude Ricaud	John Davy	Ronny Pazot	Gerard Leung
2011	Serge L'Ecluse	Martine Stephen	John Davy	Ronny Pazot	Cedric Anne
2012	Serge L'Ecluse	Ronny Pazot	Gerard Bax	Bernard Manuel	Cedric Anne
2013	Serge L'Ecluse	Christian Bellouard	Gerard Bax	Bernard Manuel	Lily Lee
2014	Christian Bellouard	Serge L'Ecluse	Gerard Bax	antoine Grenouille	Lilly Lee Hung Chuen
2015	Christian Bellouard	Serge L'Ecluse	Gerard Bax	evelyne Forget	Youvraj Khorugdharry
2016	Gervais Fayolle	Christian Bellouard	Armand Rene	Bernard Manuel	Youvraj Khorugdharry
2017	Serge L'Ecluse	Gervais Fayolle	Chetanand Ramma	Armand Rene	Youvraj Khorugdharry
2018	Serge L'Ecluse	Gerard Leung	Chetanand Ramma	Armand Rene	Youvraj Khorugdharry
2019	Serge L'Ecluse	Manoj Ramchandrar	Sashi Puddoo	Loveneesh Beedasy	Youvraj Khorugdharry

# Orchid Society of Mauritius

## Records of past executive committee members

A. TREASURER	MEMBERS	2 Co-Opted Members
Dr. Beekram Jhowry	Dr. Philip Tackham, Gilbert Forget	
Gilbert Forget	Gisele Etienne	
Paul Jauffret	Dr Philippe Teckham, Gisele Etienne	
Paul Jauffret	Veronique Lesage, Gilbert Forget	
	Claude Delaitre, Francis Montochio	
Paul Jauffret	Dr Majeed Khadaroo, Dr Philippe teckham	
Jean Marie Sauzier	Dr Majeed Khadaroo, Jean Brouard	Roger Espitalier Noel, Dr Agness Chakowa
Mrs Seeta Thakppr	Dr Claude Ricaud. Francis Montocchio	Dr Majeed Khadaroo, Mrs Michele Leclezio
Annie Bellepeau	Prabha Sibartie, Seeta Thakoor	Serge L'Ecluse, Dr Claude Ricaud
Jean Luc Jaffarally	Valerie Espitalier Noel, Mrs Prabha Sibartie	Dr Majeed Khadaroo, Serge L'Ecluse
Praveen Nagawa	Roger Espitalier Noel, Serge L'Ecluse;	Dr A, Majeed Khadroo, Seeta Thakoor
Roy Maraye	Gerard Bax, Dr Agness Chakowa.	Dr Majeed Khadaroo, Vincent Pougnet
Roy Maraye		
Clifford Dove	Dr Majeed Khadaroo, Amrita Vayid	Sheereen Jauferally, Serge L'Ecluses.
Allan Puresh	Valerie Espitalier Noel, Amrita Vayid,	Clifford Dove, Hughues Johnson
Allan Puresh	Dr Majeed Khadaroo, Serge L'Ecluse,	
Henri Nursimloo	Dr Majeed Khadaroo, Serge L'Ecluse, Nasser Maderbokus, Hughues Johnson	
Clifford Dove	Amtita Vayid, Roy Maraye, Serge l'Ecluse, Jodun Poonith	
Clifford Dove	Edouard Chung Pan Wan, Florence Julien, Rashid Khadaroo, Serge L'Ecluse	
Edouard Chung Pan Wan	Johanne Chong Yew Choy, Helene Kong Hung Cheung, Serge L'Ecluse.	
John Davy	G. Bax, C. Ricaud, Co-op : Agness Chakowa & Anil Buckoreelall	
John Davy	Djalil Khadaroo, C. Ricaud, Co-op : Lily Lee, cedric Anne	
P. Oogarah	C. Ricaud, H. Nursimloo	
Peggy Lam Thuon Mine	Martine Stephen, Cedric Affouye	
Cedric Affouye	C. Ricaud, Gerard Leung For Sang	A. Chakowa; G. Bax
Gerard Leung	C. Ricaud; A. Chakowa.	Y. Khorughdarry; J. Hunman
Gerard Leung	Devi Teeluck, Youvraj Khoruckdharry	Dharmen Isari, Mukesh Rughoo
Youvraj Khorughdharry	Gerard Leung, Martine Stephen	Evelyne Forget, Jean Luc Jaffarally
Antoine Grenouille	sandhya Devasagayaum, Armand Rene	Gerard Leung, Cedric Affouye
Antoine Grenouille	Serge L'Ecluse, Cedric Affouye	Sandhya Devasagayaum, Gerard Leung
Christian Bellouard	Sandhya Devasagayaum, Sydney Catherine	Martine Stephen, Gerard Leung
Manoj Ramchandrar	Sandhya Devasagayaum, Cedric Affouye	Christian Bellourad, No 2nd one
Gerard Leung	Christian Bellouard, Bernard Manuel, Armand Rene	Sandhya Devasagayaum, Sashi Puddoo



John DAVY

## My enriching adventures in the orchid world.



**M**y relationship with orchids is a very long one; orchids have always been present in my life.

My family background is deeply rooted in orchids; my Great-Grandfather's book, 'The Orchid Grower's Manual', published in 1894, sits proudly on the shelf in my own library. In its front cover there is a receipt for orchids he had imported from the firm of Sanders in England. My mother often told me of her grandfather's beautiful orchid collection growing in Curepipe and her memories of going around his garden. I still remember her saying to me "Les orchidées de Grand Père étaient plus jolis que pour toi, John ". It is strange how certain childhood memories are still vivid in our minds.

My own childhood was spent in Vacoas and our neighbour was Valerie Espitalier Noel. Valerie was one of the founding members of the Orchid Society of Mauritius (OSM) and she had an amazing collection of orchids in her wooden slatted orchid shade house where she grew amongst others, a huge yellow *Cattleya* with a red lip. At that time, she would collect "pipi" from her children and their friends to use as fertiliser on her orchids. Fertilisers have evolved since then and I have come a long way from the adage of "fertilise weakly weekly" and we now have available in Mauritius a multitude of water soluble fertilisers to use on Orchids. With my passion for automation, today I have a fully automated irrigation system with inbuilt fertigation dozer pumps which dispenses the fertilisers to the nearest part per thousand.

It was on my return to Mauritius in 1992 that I started my own orchid collection with plants from Vacherot & Lecoufle of Boissy Saint-Leger, Paris. I soon discovered 'K orchids' shop in Quatre Bornes where my first purchase was

## My enriching adventures in the orchid world.

John Davy

a Vanda Robert's Delight with four huge blue flowers. Irresistible! The shop was owned by Dr Majeed Khadaroo where every Saturday I would buy an orchid and I ended up going to his house next door where he showed me his vast private collection. He would explain the ABC of orchids with particular emphasis on tying orchids firmly down. In exchange, I initiated Majeed on how to search for pictures of Orchids and find orchid articles on the internet. A long friendship developed between us and I ended up helping him with the proof reading of his booklet "Orchid Problems in Mauritius".

Very early on, Majeed suggested that if I wanted to know more about orchids I should become a member of the Orchid Society of Mauritius.

In 1996 I took my courage and phoned the secretary at the time, Gerard Bax who explained about the monthly meetings which were held at the club house of the MSIRI in Reduit. At these meetings I was warmly welcomed by the members and was able to make new friends, among them Allan Puresh who even gave me his surplus aluminium hangers, which I still use today. Now that he has restarted his collection, he wants them back! It was Allan who persuaded me to take over the job of Secretary from him. Joining the executive committee led me to meet and know lots more members; each one with his own particular passion and interest in the orchid world.

Through the monthly meetings of the OSM I learnt a lot by talking to people and my most treasured moments have been at our annual shows; my first handling of other member's plants was at the registration table under the stalwart responsibly of Gerard Bax who taught me the orchid naming classification. Then I

learnt how to look at well grown plants from the likes of Dr Agness Chakowa, who would say "look at how the plant grows along the bark and pots". The core one hundred members of the society would form a strong team to welcome the two thousand visitors during the weekend shows.

Another advantage of joining the society has been the possibility of joining overseas trips around the world. The World Orchid Conference taking place every three years is an amazing orchid show, the equivalent of the World Cup for orchids. I was lucky to be able to join the trip organised by the OSM to the World orchid show taking place in Singapore in 2011. There we would not only visit the orchid show every morning but we would also visit the world famous National Orchid Garden at the Singapore Botanical Gardens and guided by Chantal Chung and Lily Lee to the restaurants of Orchard Road in the evenings. Three years later the World Conference took place in South Africa and a group of us went over for a week. On the opening night I bumped into "The man of big *Vandas* in America, Robert Fuchs, who has the stature of an American Football player and had registered Vanda Robert's Delight, my first Vanda! The next day our President Serge L'Ecluse and I had lunch with Mr. Julian M. H. Shaw, who registers Orchid hybrids with the International Registration Authority of the Royal Horticultural Society, London. We participated as delegates and went for whole day conferences given by other authorities of the orchid world like Dr Kanchit Thammasiri, of Thailand. We knew Dr Kanchit Thammasiri well as he had been our chief guest of the weeklong workshop for the OSM 25th Jubilee Anniversary in 2005. More recently, at our own last annual show in October 2019, we had the honour of having Tom Mirenda with us for a week.

## My enriching adventures in the orchid world.

John Davy

Tom is an accredited judge of the American Orchid Society and we had the privilege of his guidance on our judging team. During that weekend Tom gave very interesting lectures and took the time to advise us, individually, with extremely useful tips on orchids.

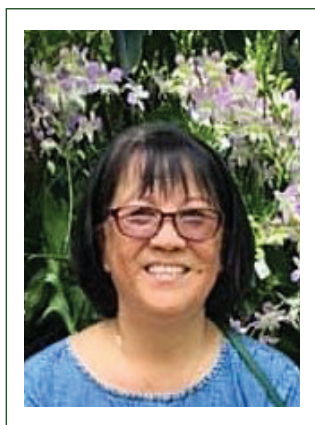
The OSM has not only brought pleasure of growing orchids and increased knowledge of plants and ecosystems but also lasting camaraderie and friendship with people outside my family and work. The orchid world is very enriching and has brought many

memorable moments to me and I would encourage others to join and participate fully in all levels of activity organised by the Orchid Society of Mauritius.



*(John Davy has been a very supportive member of the Orchid Society of Mauritius. He has been an active member of the executive committee between 2006 and 2011. As a passionate orchid grower, John has presided over the Judging Committee of the Orchid Society of Mauritius for several years.)*





Chantal CHUNG

## My encounter with the Orchid Society of Mauritius



Since childhood I have loved flowers and plants and this passion, I owe it to my Godmother, Mrs Nadège Hennequin. I spent part of my school holidays in her garden at Beau Bassin and I was fascinated by the colourful blooms and fragrances. I learned about growing from seedlings and cuttings, watching the plants grow and bloom. The orchid world was unknown to me until one Saturday in September 1981 when my late loving husband, Noel, took me as a surprise treat, to an Orchid Exhibition at the Continental Hotel in Curepipe. It must have been the first Orchid Show open to the public. This was my first formal encounter with orchids plants and blooms. I was amazed: a jaw-dropping experience. I clearly remember the exotic “la caze la paille” set up background decoration where orchid plants with brilliant colourful orchids blooms hanging. I was stunned with my eyes wide open, a neophyte in this (phyto) world of orchids. I learned that all the orchids had specific names & parenting such as *Phalaenopsis*, *Cattleyas*, *Dendrobium*, *Oncidium*, *Vanda*... and all plants were labelled. And my other first encounter with an orchid plant was a cutting of *Arachnis* which Noel bought for me at Rs 25. That was a treat indeed. I had that *Arachnis* in the backyard growing and climbing on my laundry strings as support. It bloomed so generously ; the long stalks of spider-like yellow blooms forming such a natural arrangement... so rewarding !

My passion for orchids grew further when I started travelling : Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, China, Reunion and Madagascar, and in every country I would make sure I visited a flower show or a flower plantation or a flower market. I joined The Orchid Society of South East Asia of Singapore then and met orchidists, hobbyists & commercial growers.

# My encounter with the Orchid Society of Mauritius

Chantal Chung

I remember making a trip to Cameron Highlands in Malaysia to visit an intensive cultivation of cymbidium.

Back home, I decided to join the OSM, to interact with enthusiastic people in my country. Here I wish to express my gratitude to our late member and past President Dr Agness Chakowa who acted as my sponsor and referred and guided me to the Orchid Society of Mauritius. Little did I know about the society at that time. I was working as a medical representative and during my meetings with Dr Agness Chakowa, besides discussing the medical products, we would talk about orchids and he proudly showed me his collections which he would talk about with great passion.

For many years, it was a pleasure for me to hold the post of secretary or treasurer under the successive presidency of Dr Claude Ricaud, Renaud Lagesse & Serge L'Ecluse. Together with other members, we always have a sense of commitment to the Orchid Society for its smooth running and we are always ready to help, especially for the setting up of the traditional annual show.

As a single parent of three children, I always insisted to taking my children along to the different functions of the Orchid Society, such as various talks & mini shows, the annual dinner and the annual show. I knew they were not too keen to follow me thinking that this hobby was for adults only. Recently the Society decided to implement a new idea - a Kids Corner in the Orchid Show. I was glad to be part of this project. It was a good initiative to get children closer to the orchids as I did to my own children. Today my children are adults and thank me for initiating them to the world of orchids.

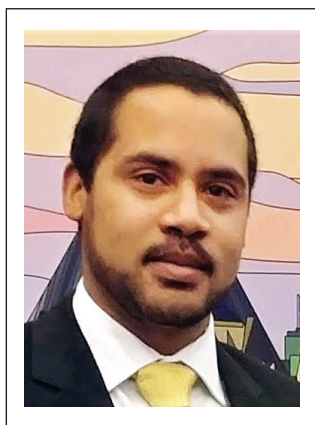
I lovingly keep the nice memories of our overseas

trips to attend the World Orchid Conference, so enriching, and meeting other orchid lovers and growers on a wider scale. My first experience in such a worldwide scale, meeting under one roof, hobby orchidists and commercial orchidists was on the 1991 World Orchid Conference in Singapore. During many Annual Orchid Shows in Mauritius, it was a great pleasure for me to initiate the public to Ikebana, the Japanese art of flower arrangement, using orchid blooms. I shared with the public how with only one orchid stalk or one orchid bloom, one can create an arrangement and bring much joy and happiness which can inspire one's life. For many years now, I have been travelling and living with my children abroad. I have started a thematic collection of orchid stamps. This keeps me in the orchid loop and chasing after the specific orchid stamps issued by countries worldwide. This is a very satisfying hobby and leads to discovering new orchid species as well as making friends with others sharing the same passion. I thank our OSM members who, during these two months of confinement due to the Covid-19 outbreak, generously share online their orchids blooms. They definitely bring colours and positive vibes to our days at home. I thank Serge L'Ecluse, our President for his valuable leadership in OSM, encouraging and bringing out every person's valuable contribution to the Orchid Society of Mauritius. Happy 40th Anniversary to the Orchid Society of Mauritius ! The Shows must go on! Cheers!



*(Chantal Chung has been a very active member of the Orchid Society of Mauritius. She acted a secretary between 1993 and 1995 and as treasurer between 2006 and 2008. Chantal has animated the Kids Corner training sessions at the annual shows in 2007 and 2019.)*





Cédric ANNE

## Que de bons souvenirs...



**M**on premier contact avec l'OSM fut à l'exposition de 2004 à l'hôtel de ville de Quatre-Bornes. J'ai encore en tête l'image de la cascade de fleurs d'un *Dendrobium anosmum* qui n'a fait qu'augmenter en moi la passion pour les orchidées. Bien sûr, il a fallu que je tombe sur la salle des ventes en sortant de la salle d'exposition, choix difficile devant le nombre de plantes en ventes et mon petit budget d'étudiant à l'époque. Finalement je penche pour un *Ascocenda* (maintenant *Vanda*).

*Moi : Monsieur, quel conseil me donneriez-vous pour bien réussir avec ma nouvelle plante?*

*Monsieur : Arrosage copieux les jours où il ne pleut pas et choisir une exposition vers le nord pour bien exposer la plante au soleil.*

*Moi : Merci, Monsieur!*

*Ce Monsieur est maintenant mon ami John Davy.*

Un an plus tard, je rejoins la société qui célébrait alors son 25<sup>ème</sup> anniversaire depuis ce ne fut que de belles rencontres, entourées de passionnés qui n'hésitaient à partager leurs savoirs. Les réunions mensuelles au Bonâme House étaient très agréables et conviviales. Elles nous permettaient de voir les plantes de nos membres, qui ne fleurissent pas au moment de l'exposition annuelle, et de pouvoir discuter de nos succès et échecs de culture. Et les activités hors Bonâme, comment les oublier! La préparation de l'exposition annuelle toujours palpitante et la journée de l'exposition, pour moi qui suis lève-tard, l'adrénaline était toujours au rendez-vous pour que je sois sur pieds à 6hrs du matin. Les soirées d'anniversaires et de fins d'années de la société toujours autour d'un bon et copieux souper qui des fois se terminaient par de la danse ☺ entourées de belles orchidées.

## Que de bons souvenirs...

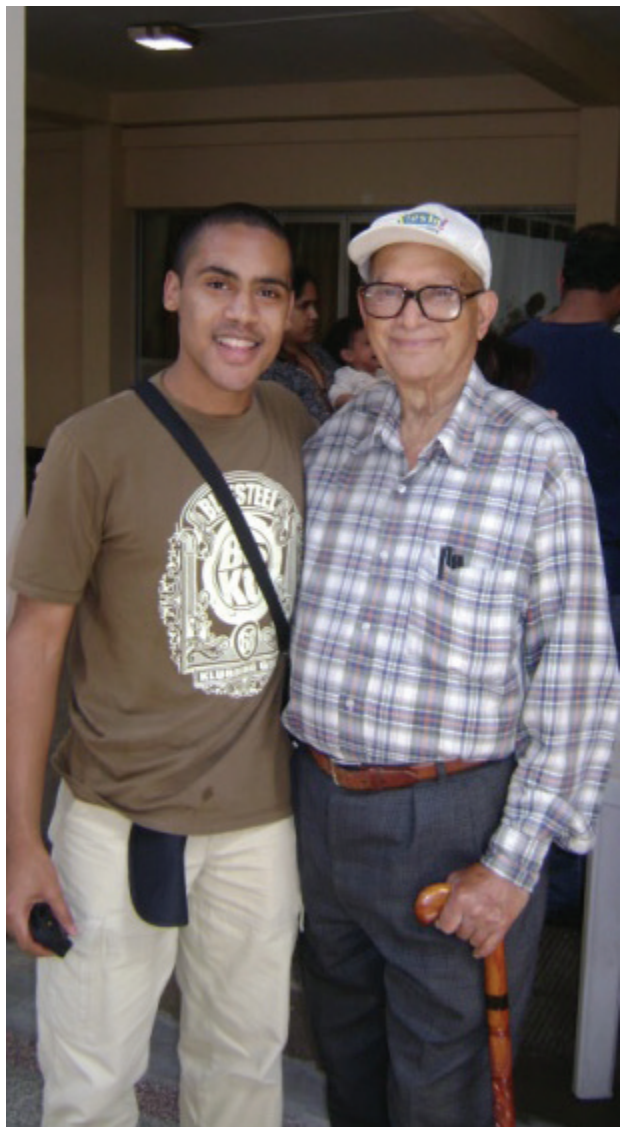
Cédric Anne

Les balades en forêt toujours instructives et qui m'ont rendu doublement passionné de nos espèces locales.

Nos espèces, pour la plupart des miniatures, ont continué à cultiver en moi une appréciation particulière pour tous les genres miniatures et « bizarres » que je cultive encore aujourd'hui à des milliers de kilomètres de Maurice (*Masdevallia, Lepanthes, Restrepia etc..*).

Il serait impossible pour moi de terminer sans faire un hommage au Docteur Majeed Khadaroo, fondateur de la « Orchid Society of Mauritius » il y a 40 ans de cela. Il a toujours partagé ses bonnes pratiques avec moi allant de la documentation sur le semis « in-vitro » jusqu'au maintien de nos espace de cultures. Il a aussi été mon premier tuteur en matière de jugement lors exposition annuelle et cette aspect des orchidées ne s'est pas arrêté à une frontière, en mai dernier j'ai été recommandé pour être un juge probatoire de l' « American Orchid Society ».

Je souhaite à l'OSM encore plusieurs longues et belles années !



## Que de bons souvenirs...

Cédric Anne



(Restrepia trichoglossa)



(Chambre de culture sous néons)



*(Cédric Anne a été un membre très actif de l'Orchid Society of Mauritius. Il a beaucoup contribué dans l'organisation des expositions annuelles. Il a une passion pour les espèces d'orchidées. Aujourd'hui au Canada, son pays d'adoption, il poursuit sa passion et suit actuellement une formation pour être juge, sous la tutelle de l'American Orchid Society.)*



Chetanand (Jay) RAMMA

## My journey with the Orchid Society of Mauritius



It all started with a serendipitous stroll inside a hall to see something that, to my mind at least, conjured up an aura of mystery and exquisitely refined beauty: orchids.

As I stepped inside the hall, my heart skipped a beat. I stood in awe in front of the multitude of shapes and colours on display. Never before had I come across such magnificence in the floral world. I realised that I did not know anything about orchids. I did not even know that each of these flowers on display belonged to different types of orchids. I did notice though that there were some strange, barely pronounceable words like *Phalaeno...*, *Coelog...*, *Onci...* etc. hanging near the plants. Honestly, all that was Greek to me.

Before leaving the show, I bought one orchid, simply because I had the urge to try my hand at one. I came out of the hall a happy man and proud owner of an orchid that will produce the same profusion of flowers I had seen in the show. That is anyway what I thought at that time...

Reality was quite a different story, to say the least. Due to my utter ignorance on the requirements of such plants, I made mine suffer conditions akin to torture. Poor orchid. But with some luck and a fair amount of resoluteness to live, my first orchid survived the ordeal. Happy to say that despite that difficult start at my hands, it is still alive today after nearly twenty years.

Since then my orchid collection has grown by a fair amount and I enjoyed growing them for quite some years. And then, catastrophe befell upon my prized collection. One by one my beloved plants started dying off. I read all available references, scoured the internet for any information that could help and diligently applied the remedies to my orchids, to no avail.

# My journey with the Orchid Society of Mauritius

Chetanand (Jay) Ramma

One by one, they died and a dead stalk was all that was left of them after their many years of vigorous green growth and beautiful blooms. What to do? Whom do I ask for help? I was very upset.

Out of despair, I made the effort to become a member of the Orchid Society of Mauritius. That was not an easy move to make. Being a rather unassuming orchid amateur, I felt overawed to join such a society. I was afraid my rather small orchids would be laughing stock when compared to the majestic flowers I recalled were on display during the numerous orchid exhibitions I visited over the years.

Instead, what I found when I joined the Society were very open and welcoming people who had a deep passion for orchids. I talked about my distressed orchids to some members and upon showing them some photos, the diagnostic fell: spider mite infestation. Solutions and strategies to overcome the mites were enthusiastically proposed to me. I finally had a trusty solution to all my woes with my orchids. And all that in less than 10 minutes. I was impressed.

That day, it dawned upon me that, apart from allowing people of all walks of life to come together and share their passion for orchids, the OSM members represent a formidable repository of knowledge about every aspect of how to grow orchids in the tropical climate of Mauritius. All references on orchids that I had consulted previously, be in printed format or online, were written by authors cultivating orchids in temperate climates. They were hence not readily applicable to the local requirements of orchid growing.

Through my membership with the OSM, I have been able to attend workshops related

to growing requirement for different types of orchid, best cultivation practices, natural pesticides, endemic orchids, get access to the Orchid magazine of the AOS, not to mention participating in its Annual Orchid Show. The latter is the main event in the yearly calendar of activities organised by the OSM. Apart from educational activities, the Society also regularly organises dinners and nature walks. These are always good-humoured socialising events that all members look forward to.

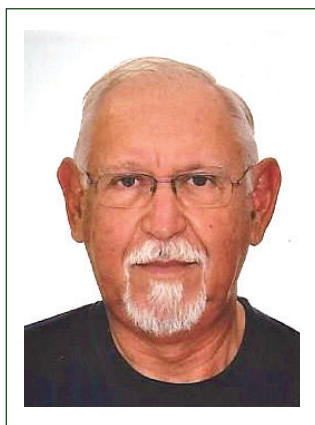
After a few years learning and benefitting greatly from the activities that the OSM organises on a regular basis, I decided to bring my contribution to the advancement of the Society. I took the responsibility to serve the latter as its Secretary for two consecutive years. During those mandates, I relished the opportunity to meet and interact with all members of the OSM. Through these interactions, I have learned a lot not only about orchids, but also about the inner workings of the Society and all the planning and serious work that is required during committee meetings to organise events and activities of the Society.

The OSM has been in existence since 1980. I have no doubt that the enthusiastic dedication from all members has ensured such a remarkable longevity. I can only encourage it to continue on its mission to educate new generations of the Mauritian population about the wonderful world of orchids.

Long live the Orchid Society of Mauritius.



*(Chetanand (Jay) Ramma is Senior Lecturer in Civil Engineering and a keen orchid grower. He has been the secretary of the Orchid Society of Mauritius in 2017 and 2018)*



Jean Marie SAUZIER

## My 'brief' History of Time with the Orchid Society of Mauritius



I came back to live in Mauritius in 1984, 4 years after the foundation of the Orchid Society of Mauritius. I was an avid orchid enthusiast and quickly joined the infant Society. In those days, the monthly meetings were held at the Continent Hotel in the Currimjee Arcades in Curepipe. Most of the founder members were active; we had our Annual Show at the end of September every year. We found out that attendance at the monthly meetings was low. But we soon discovered that sporadic informal Mini Shows at some members' homes, like at the Poncini's in Floréal, the Espitalier-Noel at Bagatelle, and Jean Brouard in Péreybère were extremely popular. Everybody came to these very social evenings which however meant a lot of work for the hosts.

If my memory does not fail me, the very first OSM founder member I met was Dr. AMK as he was known, and Majeed to the members. His knowledge was encyclopedic and I never ever managed to catch him off guard about orchids. We became good friends and he taught me a lot about orchids. We got into the habit of having lunch once a month for about 25 years until two weeks before his death around his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Dr. Khadaroo was officially a dentist, but practiced mainly orchid-growing. You could go to his home, rue Bernardin de Saint Pierre in Quatre-Bornes at any time and you would find him in his orchid-crowded shade houses. He had encountered orchids years before and it was love at first sight for him. His orchids knew it and rewarded him by growing and flowering profusely... Majeed was a pillar of the OSM and many of the committee's meetings were held at his home. He single-handedly won the most prizes of all members and will remain a legendary figure in OSM.

## My 'brief' History of Time with the Orchid Society of Mauritius

Jean Marie Sauzier

Of the founder members, the one I found the most amusing was Dr. France Staub, another dentist turned orchid lover. He was always laughing and had the only 'inverted' laugh I ever encountered. He would inhale whilst laughing. Those who knew him will always remember it.

I might be wrong, but I think that the longest-serving member still active today is our dearest Serge L'Ecluse. He is the most stable and serious orchid lover I have known. Serge is the last supporting pillar left from the old guard. He joined the OSM two years before me, so I have always known him associated with the OSM.

Of the most endearing, dedicated members of that time, I remember fondly Marc de Coriolis who grew stunning specimen plants, Francis Montocchio with his fantastic sense of humour and devotion to the OSM, Paulo Jauffret and his most useful contact with Marcel Lecoufle and his daughter Geneviève. Paulo organized, for the Orchid Society members, several importations of orchid plants from Marcel Lecoufle. Often

the plants would arrive just before the annual show. Someone even managed to win a prize with a 'just imported' Marcel Lecoufle plant to my horror. The feeling in those days was that members genuinely loved orchids for their beauty and rareness and were totally dedicated to them. And their orchids rewarded them.

My own feeling about orchids is that they are like our good wives: they hate when you neglect them, they hate competition and do not tolerate you're having mistresses. If you are willing to play along these rules, they will do fine. But, if like me, you would like to have innumerable mistresses in the horticultural world, then you will unfailingly get into big trouble. And that is exactly what happened to me in my orchid world.



*(Jean Marie Sauzier a professional horticulturist and owner/Director of Exotica Nursery has been Vice-President of the Orchid Society of Mauritius and has been a judge at several orchid shows.)*





Kersley Bruno PYNEE

**Role of the Native Plant Propagation Centre (NPPC) of the National Parks and Conservation Service (NPCS) of the Ministry of Agro Industry & Food Security in native orchid conservation**



The flora of Mauritius has a high level of diversity and endemism due to the island's location, age, isolation and varied topography. Mauritius has been identified as a Centre of Plant Diversity by The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN - [www.iucn.org](http://www.iucn.org)) and the Mascarenes (Mauritius, Réunion Island and Rodrigues) have been included in the Madagascar and Indian Ocean islands biodiversity hotspot.

The status of the flora is as follows:

- The extent of reasonable quality native forest (i.e. that with more than 50% native plant canopy cover) is currently estimated at around 2,600 ha.
- 15 vegetation types (based on vegetation structure and physiognomy) have been classified, ranging from marsh communities to scrub associations to forest communities
- 691 species of indigenous flowering plant have been recorded in Mauritius, of which 273 are endemic, and 150 endemic to the Mascarenes Archipelago
- 89 % of the Mauritius endemic flora is considered threatened (Mauritius has one of the most threatened island floras in the world). 61 of the country's indigenous species are already classified as extinct. 141 of the flowering Mascarene endemic plant species are classified as Critically Endangered (89 taxa are represented by 10 or fewer known individuals in the wild and 5 taxa are represented by only a single known individual), 55 species are Endangered and 98 are classified as Vulnerable
- There are about 200 species, subspecies and varieties of pteridophytes, of which 13 species are endemic, and 40 are extinct.



# Role of the NPPC, of the NPCS, of the Ministry of Agro Industry & Food Security in native orchid conservation

Kersley Bruno Pynee

- There are 207 taxa lower plants consisting of 89 genera of mosses and 59 genera of hepatics.

The flora unit at NPCS is responsible for the conservation and management of the native flora.

## History of native flora in Mauritius

When Mauritius was first visited in the 17th century, it was covered by dense vegetation. Following colonization, the forests of Mauritius have been cleared for agriculture, forestry, villages and towns, and other developments. Today good quality native forests occupy less than 2.0 % of our total area. These forests are found on mountain ridges, on the Offshore Islets and in Black River Gorges and Bras D' Eau National Parks. These forest remnants provide the last habitats for our endemic flora and fauna.

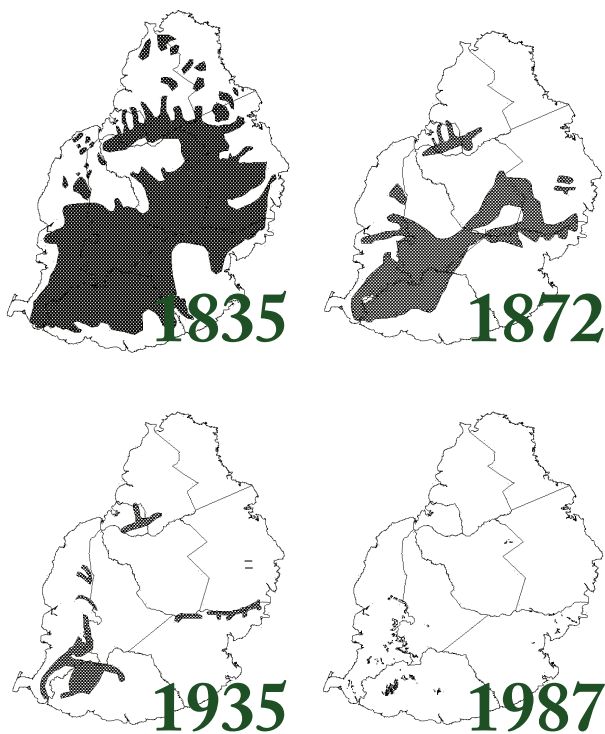


Figure 1: Vegetation of Mauritius (Source: Vaughan & Wiehe, 1937 and Cheke, 1987)

Our remaining native forests are under constant threat of alien invasive plants such as Chinese guava (*Psidium cattleianum*), privet (*Ligustrum robustum* subsp. *walkerii*) and ravenale (*Ravenala madagascariensis*). These exotic plants compete with the native species for space, light and nutrients. Introduced animals also contribute significantly to the degradation process either by physically damaging the plants or helping in the dispersion of the seeds of the exotic plants. Herbivorous mammals such as the rusa deer (*Cervus timorensis*) and the hare (*Lepus nigricollis*) browse young plants and tender shoots. Monkeys (*Macaca fascicularis*) selectively destroy flowers and fruits as well as foliage, wild pigs (*Sus scrofa*) cause extensive damage by roots of plants and disturbing the soil, and rats eat the ripe fruit. Red whiskered bulbul and wild pigs disperse the seeds of the Chinese guava.

## Ex-situ conservation of native orchids of Mauritius



Figure 2: Native Plant Propagation Centre

# Role of the NPPC, of the NPCS, of the Ministry of Agro Industry & Food Security in native orchid conservation

Kersley Bruno Pynee

The Native Plant Propagation Centre (NPPC) is the main *ex situ* facility for National Parks & Conservation Service (NPCS) for the conservation of the native flora of Mauritius. It has been set up in 1996 at Robinson Road, Curepipe to provide necessary facilities for the propagation of threatened native plant species, ferns, and orchids together with a collection of native plants in an arboretum. It comprises of the following amenities:-

## Green House



Figure 3: Green House

The greenhouse is a structure covered with glass that allows sufficient sunlight to enter for the purpose of growing plants. At NPPC the greenhouse consists of three departments namely preparation room, mist chamber & weaning chamber. Propagation of threatened plants is carried out both sexually by seeds and vegetatively by cuttings, spores and

bulbils using specific techniques. During the past, native orchids had been successfully propagated and which include some of the most endangered species such as *Phaius villosus*, *Corymborkis corymbis*, *Bulbophyllum densum*, *Hederorkis scandens*, *Angraecum baideri*, *Beclardia macrostachya* and *Jumellea recurva*.

## Fern and Orchid Collection



Figure 4: Fern and orchid collection at Native Plant Propagation Centre (1: *Jumellea recta*; 2: *Phaius villosus*; 3: *Angraecum mauritianum*; 4: *Bulbophyllum occultum*)

The fernery unit comprises of a fern laboratory & a collection of several species of pteridophytes & orchid species. Propagation of ferns are carried out in the fern lab through spores & bulbils. The project was initiated through the Darwin Initiative Project in 1997. Up to now, a total of 50 species of pteridophytes and 44 orchid species exist in the collection (Fig 5 & 6). A variety of indigenous species including the most threatened endemic are being successfully propagated at NPPC for the safeguard of viable population in the wild.

# Role of the NPPC, of the NPCS, of the Ministry of Agro Industry & Food Security in native orchid conservation

Kersley Bruno Pynee

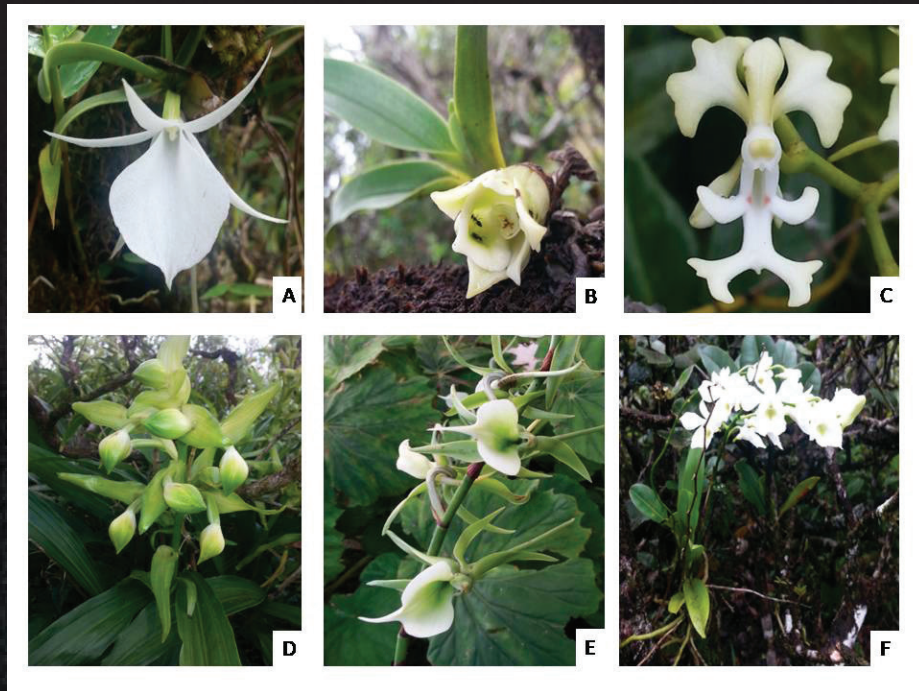


Figure 5: Endangered orchid species propagated at Native Plant Propagation Centre (A: *Angraecum baideri*; B: *Angraecum cadetii*; C: *Cryptopus elatus*; D: *Phaius villosus*; E: *Angraecum eburneum*; F: *Beclardia macrostachya*)

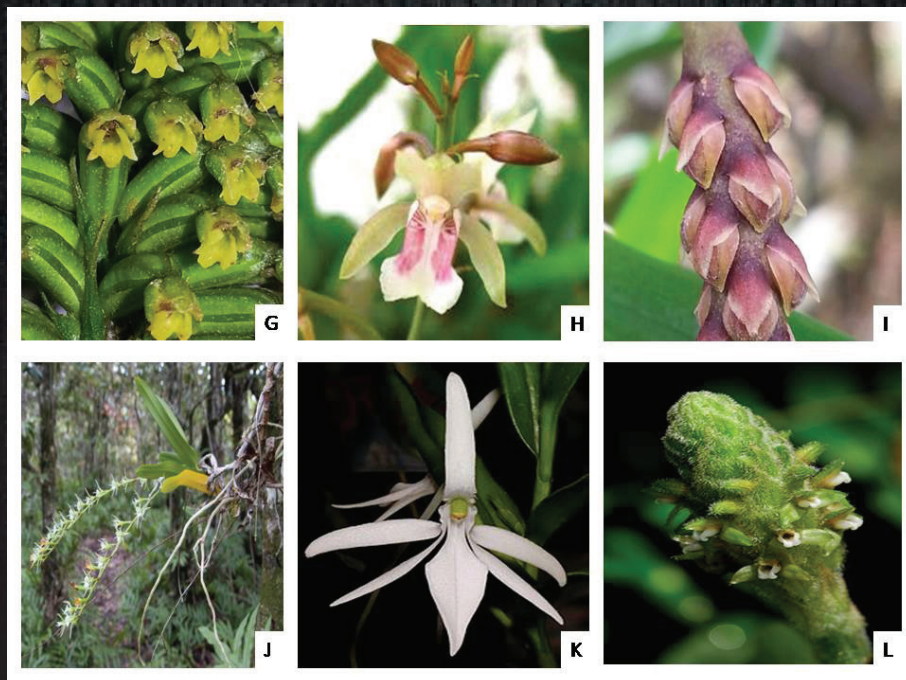


Figure 6: Endangered orchid species propagated at Native Plant Propagation Centre (G: *Benthamia chlorantha*; H: *Oeococlades maculata*; I: *Bulbophyllum densum*; J: *Oeoniella polystachys*; K: *Jumellea exilis*; L: *Platylepis occulta*)

# Role of the NPPC, of the NPCS, of the Ministry of Agro Industry & Food Security in native orchid conservation

Kersley Bruno Pynee

## Robinson Arboretum



Figure 7: Robinson Arboretum

As part of the World Environment Day 2018, Robinson Arboretum of the National Parks and Conservation Service of the Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security, a reserve in Curepipe, was inaugurated on 05 June 2018 by the Minister of Agro Industry and Food Security. It is an area of 5.5 ha which has been earmarked for the development of the extension of the arboretum for the collection of most of the native flowering plant species of Mauritius. The Arboretum is an important tool for conservation education and awareness. It also serves as a field gene bank covering an area of about 3.0 hectare. This site harbours some 597 rare native plants (including orchids) of 160 species. This area is provided with a well laid brick footpath and a kiosk to provide a peaceful environment for any visitors enjoying the beauty of some of the rarest native flora.

## Darwin Initiative funded Seed Bank Project

The storage of material in the form of seeds is one of the most widespread and valuable *ex situ* approaches to conservation. Seed banking exploits the natural dormancy mechanism of seeds. Seed banking has considerable advantages over other methods of *ex situ* conservation such as ease of storage, economy of space, relatively low labour demands and consequently, the capacity to maintain large samples at an economically viable cost.

The seed bank was established in July 2006 at Robinson Road, Curepipe, as part of collaboration between Millennium Seed Bank RBG Kew, National Parks and Conservation Service and the Mauritius Herbarium. Collections and running of the Seed Bank facility started in March 2007. Since the establishment of the seed bank centre, 286 species have been successfully banked up to now. In the future, seeds of more native orchids will be collected and stored at the NPPC.



Figure 8: Seeds of native treated and stored at NPPC



*( Mr Kersley Bruno Pynee joined the National Parks & Conservation Service (NPCS) of the Ministry of Agro-Industry & Food Security in 2018 and is actually working as Acting Scientific Officer (Conservation). He works in the Ex Situ Flora Conservation Team of the NPCS. Kersley started his first job in conservation in 2002 at The Mauritius Herbarium and has participated in different botanical surveys throughout the island (including outer islets), Rodrigues and Madagascar. He is author and coauthor of 20 scientific publications and had the opportunity of two species being described under his name, Syzygium pyneei (Myrtaceae) and Nyungwea pyneei (lichen). Born in Mauritius, Kersley graduated from the University of South Africa with a bachelor of science in botany with specialization in environmental management.)*

# Photos Gallery

Orchid Shows over the years



The first orchid show in 1980 at the Continental Hotel, Curepipe.



2013 Quatre-Bornes, Municipal Hall



Gervais Fayolle's display in 2017 at Audi Zentrum Reudit.



2018 Quatre-Bornes, Municipal Hall



The latest orchid show in 2020 at the Plaza, Rose-Hill.

# Photos Gallery

Some prized exhibits



# Photos Gallery

Some prized exhibits



# Photos Gallery

## Nature Walks



OSM members – nature walk at Domaine D’Auvillars, Midlands, April 2014



Orchid guided tour at Bélouve forest, Reunion island, October 2015



# Photos Gallery

## Talks



Introduction to orchid culture- lecture at annual orchid show 2018



Lecture by orchid specialist, Thomas Miranda, from Hawaii, 2019

# Photos Gallery

## Kids Club



Kids workshop at the annual orchid show





**Orchid Society  
of Mauritius**

**40<sup>th</sup>**

**Anniversary**



*Cryptopus elatus*

**Commemorative Bulletin**

*August 2020*