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Orchid Society Of Mauritius

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From the Editor's Desk

Editor:
Serge L'Ecluse

The Orchid Society of
Mauritius was founded
in August 1980

Past Presidents:
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Praveen Nagawa
Gerard Bax
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Chaya Dhawotal
Renaud Lagesse
Agness Chakowa
Christian Bellouard
Gervais Fayolle

Postal address :

Orchid Society of Mauritius.
P.O.Box 10, Quatre-Bornes,
Mauritius.

Secretary

Tel + (230) 5421 8131

Email :

orchidosm@gmail.com

Web site :

<http://>

www.orchidmauritius.org

The Orchid Society of Mauritius held its Annual General Meeting on Tuesday 28th March 2017 and the executive committee for the current year was appointed at a meeting held on Monday 10th April. The office bearers for 2017 are as follows:

President	- Serge L'Ecluse
Vice-President	- Gervais Fayolle
Secretary	- Chetanand (Jay) Ramma
Asst. Secretary	- Armand René
Treasurer	- Youvraj Khorugdharry
Asst. Treasurer	- Christian Bellouard
Members	- Sandhya Devasagayaum, Sydney Catherine.
Co-opted members	- Gerard Leung For Sang, Martine Stephen.

We wish the new executive committee a fruitful year. The declared key objectives for this mandate are to enhance members' interest in the society's activities and to keep promoting knowledge and love for orchid growing in Mauritius.

Programme of activity for 2017

MAY, Sat. 13th - Workshop "Sharing knowledge & experiences on growing Paphios and Phalaenopsis" at Domaine des Aubineaux.

JUNE, Sat 17th - Special Mini Show at Châteaux Labourdonnais.

AUGUST, Sat. 19th - Anniversary celebration (cocktail).

OCTOBER, Fri 6th to Sun 8th , Annual Orchid Show at Audi Zentrum.

NOVEMBER, Sat 4th - Nature walk.

NOVEMBER, Friday 24th—Talk by Dr. M. Duncan, from Australia.

DECEMBER, Sat 2nd - End of year dinner.

May Workshop at Domaine des Aubineaux

This was the first group activity organised in 2017. On Saturday 6th May, Forty-five persons (34 members & 11 guests) attended the workshop at Domaine des Aubineaux in Forest-Side, Curepipe, . The aim was to give the opportunity to members to share their knowledge and growing experiences on two genera, namely *Paphiopedillums* and *Phalaenopsis*.

John Davy and Ronnie Pazot talked on *Paphiopedillums* and Madeline Bellouard and Gerard Leung For Sang shared their respective experiences with *Phalaenopsis*.

Serge L'Ecluse wrapped up the meeting with a general presentation on both genera, highlighting the conditions of growth in their natural habitats. The event took place in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. The feedback from those who attended the workshop was very encouraging.



Serge L'Ecluse



Ronny Pazot



Gerard Leung For Sang



Madeline Bellouard



John Davy

Mini Orchid Show at Château Labourdonnais

On Saturday 17th June a mini orchid show was organized at the Château Labourdonnais, an iconic and a historic place in the north of the island, which has had a rich contribution in the development of



Group photo of all participants



Talk on 'Fragrant Orchids' at Ernest Wiehé Conference Room.



One of the table display

The Orchid Society, in its endeavor to promote interest in orchid growing held a mini show in the north of the island, away from its usual place of meeting, and extended an invitation to orchid lovers in that region. Mr. Bernard Maurice, the Curator of the Domaine gave us as an introduction, an insight of the history of the place. This was followed by a talk on 'Fragrant orchids' by Serge L'Ecluse, the President of the Orchid Society.

In commemoration of this event, the Orchid Society donated a large specimen of *Angraecum eburneum 'mauritianum'* to the Domaine and to reciprocate an indigenous palm, *Hyophorbe lagenicaulis*, was planted by the OSM President in the garden of the Domaine.

Palm tree planting at Domaine Labourdonnais.

The President of the Orchid Society of Mauritius said on that occasion :

« It was a privilege and a great honour to be given the opportunity to have the name of Orchid Society 'rooted' in such a historic place ».



Members' Expression Corner

Orchids' Nature

"There are two types of passions.

The first ones we have and the second ones have us.

It is sometimes possible to overcome the first type ... "

For anybody reading this article, there is no doubt that orchid-growing definitely belongs to the second type of passion.

Orchids, for all of us in the orchid society, surely epitomises the quintessence of beauty in the plant kingdom. Most of us have succumbed to their beautiful shape, intricate colour patterns and fragrance. These three attributes occur in kaleidoscopic proportions across the orchid family known as the *Orchidaceae*. The latter is one of the two largest family of flowering plants, the other one being the *Asteraceae* comprising flowers such as the daisy, sunflower, dahlia etc.

Currently, there are more than 25,000 species of orchids!

How does that number compare to species of other organisms?

What distinguishes orchid flowers from those of other flowering plants?

What makes the orchid world so diverse, so beautiful and so enticing?

Across the ages and different cultures, the very uttering of the word "orchid" has triggered a kind of mysterious reverence and excitement. It is a fact that a huge amount of money has been spent for their collection and highly perilous expeditions have been undertaken in the past two centuries to acquire highly prized exotic orchids.

Sadly, these expeditions were often also accompanied with unashamed plundering, a high human death toll and the destruction of the natural habitat of prized orchids.

What are some of the incredible, at times tragic, stories behind the discoveries of our beloved orchids?

As aforementioned, in the eyes of many of us, these flowers represent the pinnacle of perfection in the plant world.

However, *could it be that such perfection exists only in the eyes of the beholder?*

For many of us, such perfection can only be explained by the skilful hands of God at work in creating these flowers.

But is that the only explanation?

In forthcoming issues of the OSM Newsletter, I shall try to answer these questions and explore the numerous fascinating facets of orchids.

Therefore, if you want to know more about our the object of our obsession, stay tuned for the next issue!!!

Jay Ramma

Jay Ramma joined OSM in 2013. He is the current secretary of the society. He has been avidly growing orchids for the past 15 years. He is an academic in the field of civil engineering.

Culture Notes

***Dendrobiums* dry winter rest. (extracts from Ron McHatton—AOS)**

In general *Dendrobiums* that lose their leaves when the growth is mature need a dry rest to flower.

For some species such as *Dendrobium nobile*, keeping the plants cool may even be more important than dry.

Other species such as *Dendrobium anosmum* (superbum) need a dry rest but not at lower temperatures. In addition to those that lose their leaves, the species that come from Thailand and Burma and all along the foothills of the Himalayas need a dry, cool rest to flower. This includes species such as *Dendrobium chrysotoxum*, *Dendrobium farmer* and *Dendrobium thyrsiflorum*.

You should begin to decrease watering frequency as the growths mature in the fall. After the growths are mature or, if deciduous, the leaves have fallen, water should be given very sparingly and only enough to avoid excessive shriveling of the canes or pseudobulbs.

If your humidity is high enough, you may not have to water the plants at all. The rest period can last for months. You should not increase watering until you can count the flower buds forming in the spring. At this point you can begin to increase watering frequency and return to normal watering as soon as new growth begins.

Notice Board

Calendar of regional and international events 2017

- 1. Orchid Spectacular Conference & Show, Perth, W.A. Australia—5th and 6th August 2017.**
Venue Rendez-vous Hotel, Scarborough, W.A.
- 2. Orchid Society of Mauritius Annual Show -**
Opening ceremony Friday 6th October 2017 at Audi Zentrum Exhibition Hall, Reduit.
Open to the public on Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th October.
- 3. World Orchid Conference in Guayaquil Convention Centre, Ecuador — 8th — 12th November 2017.**