
ORCHID SOCIETY OF MAURITIUS

Newsletter — March 2022

web site: www.orchidmauritius.org

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Meilleurs vœux pour 2022

Nous espérons qu'en cette nouvelle année nous puissions tous reprendre nos activités, avec des ajustements dans nos habitudes certes, mais avec beaucoup plus de latitudes pour des activités d'intérêt commun en matière d'orchidées. Cette année le Newsletter paraîtra sur une base trimestrielle. Bonne lecture.

In Memoria

C'est avec une grande tristesse que nous avons appris ce matin du 24 décembre 2021, le décès de notre ami de longue date au sein de L'Orchid Society of Mauritius, Francis Montocchio.

Un cœur sensible à tout ce qui est beau, y compris, bien entendu, les orchidées, pour lesquelles il avait développé une réelle passion. Toujours courtois et sympathique, il s'était fait beaucoup d'ami(e)s au sein de notre société.

Son dévouement pour l'avancement de cette association l'avait conduit à se mettre au service du secrétariat en 1986 et en 1988, puis à la trésorerie en 1987 avant d'œuvrer à la Présidence en 1989 et 1990. Un excellent parcours et beaucoup de souvenirs.

Francis a pendant des années, toujours répondu présent, à nos sollicitations pour être juge lors de nos expositions annuelles.

Ses ennuis de santé nous avaient beaucoup peiné, surtout par le fait de savoir que son état le privait du plaisir de ses orchidées.

Au nom de L'Orchid Society of Mauritius, j'exprime toute notre reconnaissance pour son dévouement envers la société et nos vives sympathies à toute la famille.

Members Jewels posted in January 2022



Bulb. fenestratum

Grower: G. Leung



Cymbidiella pardalina

Grower: Jérôme Nieva



Vandaceous Hybrid

Grower: Amrita Vayid



Stanhopea wardii (?)

Grower: Odile Montocchio



Anguloa uniflora

Grower: Gerard Leung



Stanhopea tigrine

Grower: Joseph Sam Soon



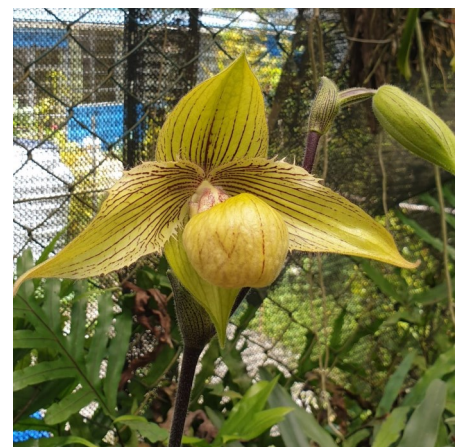
Calanthe triplicate

Grower: Gerard Leung



Aliceara Alice (?)

Grower: Shahrukh Bundhun-Puddoo



Paphiopedillum sp.

Grower:: Dharmen Isari

A Project proposal

Orchid plant reproduction / multiplication for sharing and conservation

The past two years have deprived most of us of the thrill of acquiring new additions for our collections, as a result of the restrictions linked to the Covid-19 pandemic situation. There were no group meetings. People's movements were controlled and there were no prospects for ordering plants from abroad.

Considering the fairly large variety of orchids in our members' private collections, there should be a good potential for some local sourcing of plants. There could be a few interesting avenues to explore along this line of thought.

Some orchids are easily multiplied when repotting (*Cattleyas*, *Dendrobiums*, *Bulbophyllums* etc.). Manual or insect pollination can generate seed pods, which may allow us to breed a large number of some local species, as well as some interesting foreign species and hybrids. As far as local orchid species are concerned, OSM would in so doing, contribute to their ex-situ preservation.

The project could primarily be geared to local reproduction for the benefit of OSM members. In order to kick-start this project, we shall require:

1. The collaboration of members for making available seed pods, keikis, cuttings & divisions.
2. Volunteers adequately equipped for sowing and rearing plantlets.
3. A mean of exclusive communication for exchange of information concerning the availability of plant materials, as well as for their disposal.

This project should not be seen as a commercial project but rather as a 'community self-help' project, whereby plant divisions, keikis and cuttings could be donated to OSM for free sharing among members. In the case of plantlets grown from seeds, there would be a cost, which could, for example, be either borne by OSM or the plantlets could be sold at cost.

Could we have your views on this proposal ? Shall we give it a try ? Please send us a note via SMS or WhatsApp to the Secretary at your earliest.

Keeping records of your plants

As a first reaction, one could say: why bother? Indeed, it can be seen as something that will alter the pleasurable nature of the moments we spend with our orchids. However, it may be very useful if it's done with a clear purpose. What could be the reasons :

- ◆ First and foremost, keeping a record of the plant's name will allow us to restore the name tag when after a while the print fades away.
- ◆ The year of acquisition and the source.
- ◆ The size of the plant then, whether a tiny seedling from flask or a near flowering size. We may with this information know why the plant raised from flask has not flowered yet or else try to understand why the plant near flowering size has not already produced flowers.
- ◆ The month of flowering. This should help us to adjust in a timely manner the feeding and watering practices.
- ◆ To keep a picture of the flower.
- ◆ To be aware whether a particular plant is a natural species or a hybrid. Species may require strict cultural conditions corresponding to their place of origin.

You will have noted that the above-mentioned information are only recorded once, while they may be helpful in providing appropriate care during the whole life of the plant. You may use an Excel file to keep your records or you may download a tailor-made program for that specific use.

Questions & Answers

Members are welcome to send in questions about problems encountered with their orchids and we shall do our best to enlighten them based on our own personal local experience and knowledge.

Q 1 - from Sahil

What's the best environment to place a *phalaenopsis* orchid ?

A 1—

Under our climate a shade house would provide a suitable environment for growing phalaenopsis, with the following essential features:

1. The possibility of varying the amount of light reaching the plants.
2. Being able to maintain a temperature range of 17°C—30°C
3. Ensuring good ventilation
4. Means of maintaining a relative humidity of 50 %
5. Overhead protection for night-time rainfall

Q 2. Does climatic conditions affect *Paphiopedilum* species ?

A 2.

Climatic conditions will have an influence on the success or failure in the cultivation of any orchid. Species are generally more sensitive to the environmental conditions prevailing if their place of origin. Hybrids can be more tolerant to variations in the growing environment. The best advice would be to document yourself on the type of environment where a particular *Paphiopedillum* species comes from to see whether you are in a position to provide similar conditions.

Focus on the genus *Brassia*

The genus *Brassia* comprises 34 species, according to the World Monocot Checklist and originates from the region ranging from Mexico to Costa Rica. They are found in cloud montane forest at 1,000 to 2,000 m elevation. They grow as epiphytes in trees canopy.

Brassias are commonly known as spider orchids because of the thinly elongated sepals, mimicking a spider-like creature.

Some well known species are: *Brs. Maculata*, *Brs. Verrucosa*, *Brs.gireoudiana*.



Brs. Maculata



Brs. Gireoudiana



Brs. verrucosa

A very well known primary hybrid, *Brs. Rex* resulting from a cross between *Brs. Verrucosa* and *Brs. Gireoudiana*. Flower peduncles can be up to 35 cm long with up to 20 fragrant flowers.

Some cultural guidelines:

- Light - bright light; no direct sun exposure. Adequate light is a prerequisite for flowering.
- Temperature - moderate throughout the year. Day 20-24 (max 32°C). Night 16-18°C
- Growing media - Coco chips, bark and medium size charcoal
- Rest period - *Brs. Rex* needs a short rest once the new pseudobulb has matured until the flower peduncle appears.



Brs. Rex

Cultural tips by John Davy

To carry on where we left off last month about “tackle an alternative method of how to deal with scales”

To deal with insects the easiest way is to remove them mechanically dislodge them and flush them down the sink with a spray of water. Use a toothbrush to dislodge the hard brown hat like structure from the stem and rub with a solution of one volume alcohol to one volume of water. Literature always suggest using Iso-Propyl alcohol. Iso-Propyl alcohol is available from Laboratory suppliers but in two litter bottles. I find “alcohol blanc” works for me. Make sure you remove the dried sheaths to get at the scales underneath the sheath. If this fails or if you have a larger collection, you will need to use stronger chemical products. Consult our orchid society’s booklet : “Orchid Pests & Diseases - Guidelines for their control” for more details.

For a healthy environment for orchids, there are six basic requirements:

- 1.) A surface to adhere to.
- 2.) Air
- 3.) Water
- 4.) Light
- 5.) Temperature
- 6.) Inorganic matter to form cellular structures.



You need to fulfil a plant’s needs before you can even think about pests.

“Look at how an orchid grows in the wild,” one of our members told at an annual show and “try to do the same for your own orchids.”

So this month take your time to go out for a walk and observe orchids. Pay particular attention to the roots. Roots absorb water and the majority of nutrients. They are long and often extend further than the top part. Look at how the roots adhere to the tree trunk and how they are so strongly attached to the substrate, in such a way, that the roots are injured when you pull on it. Note the healthy growing root tip that has a shiny surface on up to 10mm. The dead root is dry, feels hollow, and has no moist growing tissue inside. Look at how much sunlight falls on it.

“Pick nothing, leave only footsteps and take a breath of fresh air and memories.”

With those memories, try to reproduce it on your own orchids. Make sure it is securely tied to your media and will not constantly rub against another surface and injure the roots. Tie it down but do not strangle the growing developing stems. For your media you can affix it to a tree or the trunk of a palm tree. If you want to be able to move it when it flowers to your living area there are tree branches (Find a tree that the bark does not detach from the wood for example “Bottle brush stems”), Australian Fandia (and not the endemic Fandia) or cork. For pots use coco chips, woodchips, Charcoal, macadam, perlite. The choice of media will depend on the species grown and how often you are prepared to water it. Ensure that your media is fresh and not older than two years old and airy.

Next month we will delve into the necessity of “air”.

New member

The executive committee has approved the application for membership from Mr. Roodee Mootosamy. We welcome this new member and wish him an enriching experience within the Orchid Society.

Editorial team: Serge L’Ecluse, Shashi Puddoo, Gerard Leung For Sang and John Davy.

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

Executive Committee: - President – Serge L’Ecluse, V. President – Manoj Ramchandrar, Secretary – Shashi Puddoo, Asst. secretary – Loveneesh Beedassy, Treasurer – Youvraj Khorugdharry, Asst. Treasurer Gerard Leung For Sang, Members: Christian Bellouard, Sandhya Devasagayam, Armand René, Bernard Manuel.