

Central Vancouver Island Orchid Society Newsletter

February 2011



CVIOS display from the left in Vancouver Orchid Society Show April 2011 Photo: Mike Miller

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Meetings are held September through June on the Saturday before the 4th Wednesday of each month at the Harewood Activity Centre, 195 Fourth Street, Nanaimo, in the hall on the second floor, doors open at 11:30, with the business meeting starting at 12:00 noon.

Coming Meeting Dates:

Feb 19, March 19, April 23, May 21, June 11, Sept 24, Oct 22, Nov 19, Dec 17

Program for January 23rd

Orchid Seed Propagation
By Don Miklic

Coming Events:

Victoria Orchid Society, March 6-7th 2011, student Union Building U of Vic.

CVIOS 50/50 Auction March 20, 2011

CVIOS Show and Sale, Country Club Center, April 15th – 17th 2011

CVIOS Summer Picnic Date to be announced at Shirley and Ernie McClare's home in Cedar

Editorial:

This is a bit late again as I got confused and buried in preparing for the Vancouver Orchid society Show and Sale last weekend. Sorry but that is life right now!

I would hope that all of you are well and your plants are now in fantastic bloom. The winter is progress it seems quickly or maybe that is just me and things look like they need work in the collection. I guess it is time to get the materials ready and the pots scrubbed for the spring repotting binge that always seems to be way more than I thought I would have to do. Maybe i need less plants in my collection? Never! You always need more! But, seriously now is the time to prepare and have your potting area cleaned out of the drift of 'I just put it down' things that are now covering it well so you can not work there. Or am I only speaking of my space? Don't think so! So lets all be good boy scouts and girl guides and get prepared before the work gets demanding and we miss another year for some plants which will detrimental to the plant.

Cheers Mike

CVIOS General Meeting

Minutes - January 22, 2011

President Bryan Emery called the meeting to order at 12:00 noon with 34 members and 1 guest (Howard) present.

Bryan informed members of the passing of Lynne Cassidy, a long time member of the Fraser Valley orchid society and supporter of all things related to her passion of growing orchids.

1. Dora moved and Bev seconded acceptance of the November minutes as published. Motion carried.

2. Treasurer, Shelley Rattink presented a summary of account balances for November and December.

She moved acceptance of her November report, Don McDermid 2nd and motion carried. Shelley moved acceptance of her December report, Shirley McClare 2nd and motion carried.

Shelley thanked Mike and Shirley for doing the year end audit.

3. The Australian Orchid Review was in the mail along with a notice for renewal. Maureen moved and Shirley 2nd that we do not renew our subscription due to low readership. Motion carried.

National Geographic Magazine had an article on orchids that Don brought for members to read.

4. Bev Morrison indicated that 2011 membership cards were available and the directory of members would be available before the next meeting.

5. Ralph Kirby tendered his resignation as website director. Don Miklic who has been doing this job for some time will continue assuming this responsibility. He indicated the website was up to date and asked if anyone wanted him to research and post specific information for the 'orchid doctor' section, to let him know.

6. Sue indicated our show would be taking place from April 15 - 17 at Country Club Centre. She passed around sign up sheets for volunteers and Anne Hartmann was asking members to consider sponsoring an award.

7. Mike asked members if they were interested in knowing which plants were receiving awards at the Vancouver judging centre each month. Sue moved that all members receive an email with a list of

awarded plant and their pictures. Anne 2nd the motion and it carried. Mike will email the results and Don will also include them on the website. The Floralia order should be arriving in March.

8. Sandra passed around the sign-up sheet for bringing refreshments for February and March. She also suggested that it might be appropriate for us to purchase some extra goodies for our March auction. All were in agreement. There were problems with coffee making equipment at this meeting. Laurie will notify Parks and Rec. of these problems. Thank you to Dora, Sue, Bob, Angie and Elizabeth for bringing goodies this month. **Next month: Linda, Connie, Anne, Mary and Hilding agreed to bring goodies.**

9. There were lots of plants for sale.

10. Mike suggested we make a contribution of \$300 to the Orchid Preservation Fund in Ecuador in Lynne Cassidy's memory. All were in favor.

11. Nancy indicated a speaker from H&R would be coming to our meeting in May. He will be offering us the opportunity to pre order orchids and bringing plants to sale at the meeting.

12. The Vancouver Show: Mike indicated that Elizabeth Clark and Gary Forbes home would be the drop off point for Nanaimo. Plants should be dropped off on Wednesday February 9th, or Thursday the 10th before noon at 2895 Staffordshire Terrace, (250) 729-0093. The Show will take place on February 12 and 13 at VanDusen Gardens. Check our website for forms and plant classes and the Vancouver site for more information about the show.

There was some discussion around show displays which seem to vary based on trends, amount of space available and availability of people to do the displays.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:37 followed by a tour of our extensive show of plants this month guided by Bryan and Donna. Mike followed this up with hints for packing our plants to protect them from the cold on the way to the Vancouver show and tips on using wire to support and help display plants.

Vancouver Orchid Society Show and Sale Report

Our participation in the VanOS Show and Sale, February 11 – 13 was a great success with 57 plants arranged on three 6 foot tables against a curtained wall. Eight members boxed-up their treasures for the chilly transport; Don McDermid, Dora Glover, Donna McDonnell, Maureen Hawthorn, Ann & Rainer Hartmann, Laurie Forbes and Mike Miller. I thank them all well and truly. At center-back was a wispy white painted tree with red and white Dendrobium phalaenopsis flowers in small white vials. A few paper hearts were scattered around the display to connect with Valentine's Day. Our plants were entered in 33 classes some more than one plant in each class and they received nine first place blue ribbons, 9 second place red ribbons and 9 third place white ribbons. Mike's Pot. Mem Harry Johnson was nominated for AOS judging but was not scored, Donna's Masdevallia schroederiana was also nominated but not scored, but her Masdevallia Adrien Kalb 'Dylan' was awarded an AM/AOS of 81 points and took the Best Pleurothallid rosette. Ann and Rainer's Phragmipedium Paol Eugene Conray was also nominated but was scored out, but managed the Best Plant Grown Under Lights rosette, Best Other Cypripedium Class rosette and Grand Champion of the Show. There were only eleven plants nominated and only two awards granted so we did well. To crown it all the display won Best Visiting and was presented with the COC trophy.

Reported by Mike Miller



CVIOS display from front center



CVIOS display from the right end
Photos: Mike Miller

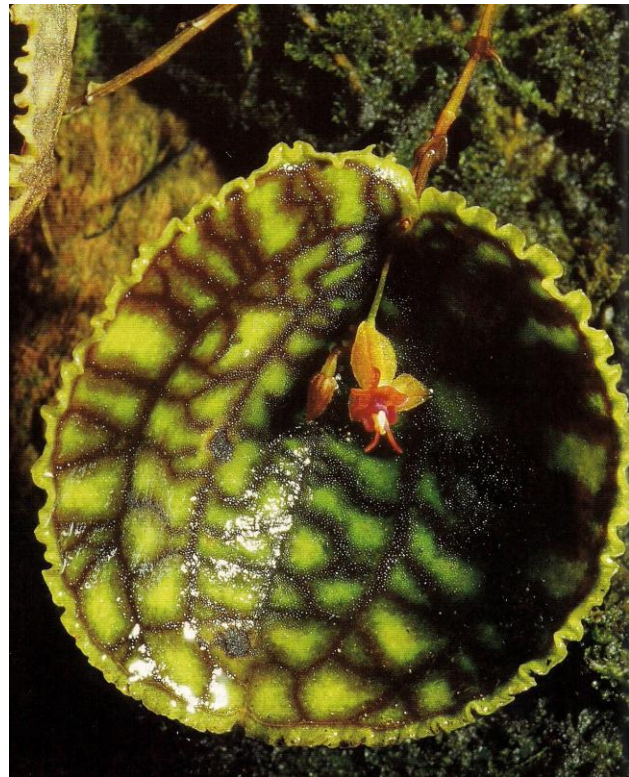
Miniature Orchids; Small but Beautiful

Rob Bock reminds us that orchids do not need to be large to be beautiful

The orchid family, Orchidaceae, is probably the largest family of flowering plants in the world, with between 25,000 and 30,000 species and at least 100,000 formally registered hybrids. It is therefore not at all surprising that orchid-fanciers, who collect these wonderful plants, all too soon run out of space in their greenhouses or on their windowsills. A contributing factor to this problem is that the more successful the collector is, the sooner he will reach the limits of the available space. Orchid fanciers with a large greenhouse in the garden will get their turn later than growers with only a small hothouse or those who keep their orchids indoors on the windowsill.



Sophronitis coccinea



Lepanthes calodictyon

Fortunately, the large orchid family itself provides the solution to this problem. The various species differ in size from giants more than one metre high to miniatures that can only be seen with a magnifying glass. Of course, tastes differ and not everybody appreciates dwarf plants, but there are incredibly beautiful ones among them, if only one takes the time and trouble to pay attention to these little jewels.

Many orchid-lovers, like myself, live in apartments in big cities and know that their choice of orchids is limited to species that can be grown on windowsills or in a small hothouse on the balcony - until they discover the miniatures! For these plants, a small balcony greenhouse or a 'plantarium' in the living room offer new opportunities. I have a friend who keeps more than 100 orchids in his apartment in the heart of the city. His tallest plant is perhaps 10cm high, his

smallest only a few millimetres.

Modern equipment enables accurate control of lighting, heating and humidity. A tiny electric fan, hidden somewhere in a corner of the glass case, takes care of air circulation round the plants and keeps the windows free of condensation. With today's installations, climate control can be perfectly regulated and the costs of installation and running it are not excessive.

Some time ago, I saw three large glass cases (plantariums) next to one another, on a long table at one side of the living room of a true orchid lover. One case had a warm and humid climate inside, the second a moderate one and the third a cool climate. A large tree-trunk, cut in three sections, was placed in the three cases and looked as if it ran uninterrupted through the glass separating the cases. In all three cases only the front window was kept free of condensation by hidden ventilators removed from rejected computers. The trunk was covered with living moss and a large number of epiphytic miniature orchids. The backs of the cases, too, were covered with plants growing on a base of cork. The bottoms of the cases were filled with treated bark that covered and hid the pots of yet another few orchid plants.

The owner told me that he intended to install a small waterfall in one of the glass cases to add to the exotic tropical effect that he had created. I asked him if he would not like also to include a few dwarf ferns, but he replied that ferns consume so much nutrient that they harm the orchids. 'It is not good to have ferns growing together with your orchids, even though I agree that it can look very attractive,' was his advice to me.

Collectors, whose aim it is to have as many different species as possible, often hang their plants in long rows from wires that run from one side of a greenhouse to the other at different heights. The plants are usually on cork or pieces of tree-fern trunk. I do not find this an attractive way of keeping one's plants, but you do get a large number in a small space, particularly if they are miniatures.

The joy of collecting, the vast knowledge of plants, the multitude of good pictures in books, the enormous choice of plants at specialized nurseries, the fantastically beautiful orchid shows, have all contributed to the increased interest in miniature orchids among collectors.

Sometimes I get the impression that the large, showy cattleyas and cymbidiums are out of fashion and that the tiny jewels are 'in'. Full of pride, growers today display plants that you can hold in the palm of your hand. At a recent show, I saw a jury consisting of three tall men and two sturdy ladies judging a tiny flowering orchid. They sat around a table and the plant, in a three-centimetre pot, looked lost on the middle of the table. All six, jury members and plant, were fully grown adults!

Many orchid nurseries offer a large assortment of miniature orchid species, ranging in height from a few millimetres to perhaps 10cm. Bigger than that, I do not consider that orchids qualify as miniatures. These dwarf plants have all the features and qualities that make an orchid so special, only on a smaller and more modest scale. Colour, scent and shape are as remarkable and as beautiful as with their bigger brothers.

Some miniatures produce big flowers. *Sophranites coccinea*, a jewel from southeast Brazil, is a plant 8-10cm tall, but it produces bright red flowers 6-8cm in diameter. Others are less showy *Phymatidium delicatum*, also from Brazil, is a minute plant that is hardly bigger than a finger nail - leaves, roots, flowers and all. For some species of miniatures it helps to use a magnifying glass

in order to admire the unexpected beauty I have noticed that, more and more often, I see one among the greenhouse tools.

The choice of miniature orchids is enormous and so is the joy these jewel-like dwarfs offer their caring owners.



Right:
Maxillaria
juergensis
from Brazil



Bellow:
Dendrobium
cuthbertsonii
from New
Guinea



Above Left: *Ceratochilus biglandulosus* ,
the only known member of the genus, is a miniature orchid from the high mountains of Java and Sumatra.

The orchid Review, September – October 2004

Promenaea guttata

A Little Brazilian Native with Sizzle

By William A. Rhodehamel

Early on, when I was new to orchid growing, I learned an important lesson. I could take that *Cattleya* hybrid growing in an 8-inch (20-cm) pot to my local orchid society's trade table and open up room for 10 or 12 smaller plants in my under-lights set up. I had come to realize the painful truth that every orchid grower soon learns: orchids fill up all available space, and room for more is always at a premium. I grew (pun intended) to deeply love miniature orchids during my period of growing under lights. Now, growing in a greenhouse has opened up opportunities to grow larger plants as well, but I still love miniature orchids.

One of the miniatures I grew under lights was a specimen of *Promenaea stapelioides*. I thought

the plant was so cute, with small ridged pseudobulbs and light green veined leaves, and, when it produced three blooms one spring, I was entranced. I have enjoyed these miniature relatives of the zygopetalums ever since, and have collected all the species and hybrids I could find. This month's contribution to the Connoisseur's Collection is the lovely *Promenaea guttata*, one of my favorites in this wonderful genus.



Promenaea guttata 'Fox Den', CHM/AOS, Photo: John J. Nelson

HISTORY AND TAXONOMY

Promenaea guttata (Rchb.f.) Rchb.f. (pro-men-EE-ah goo- TA-ta) was first described by H.G. Reichenbach as *Maxillaria guttata* in 1852, then transferred by him into *Promenaea* in 1856 (*Bonplandia* 4:323, 1856). The species comes from southeastern Brazil, in the Atlantic Forest regions of the states of Espirito Santo and Rio de Janeiro. The plants occur as epiphytes in moist forests at around 5,000 to 6,000 feet (1,500 to 1,800 m) in elevation. There are no known synonyms for this taxon. The specific epithet *guttata* comes from the Latin word for "spotted." Like most of the species in the genus, *Prom. guttata* has never been widespread in cultivation.

The genus *Promenaea* (abbreviated *Prom.*) was proposed by John Lindley in 1843. The earliest species, *Prom. stapelioides*, was originally described in 1821 as a *Cymbidium*, then later transferred by Lindley into *Maxillaria*. He later realized that *Promenaea* was a distinct entity and erected the new genus to accommodate the few then-known species. During the 19th century, various authors transferred the members of the genus into other genera, primarily *Zygopetalum*, but they finally came to be understood as distinct. The name *Promenaea* comes from the 4th century BC name of *Promeneia*, the eldest priestess at the Greek temple of Dodona, as recounted in the *Histories* of Herodotus. The genus as we now understand it consists of about 20 species restricted to Brazil.

Promenaea is a member of the *Zygopetalum* Alliance of the Zygopetalinae subtribe in tribe Maxillarieae. Other more or less commonly grown members of the alliance include *Aganisia*, *Galeottia*, *Koellensteinia*, *Pabstia*, *Zygopetalum* and *Zygosepalum*. Interestingly, members of this alliance seem to breed freely with many related genera. In fact, *Prom. stapelioides* has purportedly been crossed successfully with *Ansellia africana*, a plant more closely related to cymbidiums.

DESCRIPTION

Promenaea guttata is a miniature orchid with foliage no more than 3 inches (7.5 cm) tall. Most *Promenaea* foliage looks similar, with thin, light-green, veined leaves up to 4 inches (10 cm) tall atop rounded pseudobulbs, but I find that *Prom. guttata* tends to grow a little smaller than most. The species blooms in the late spring to early summer, and generally has single-flowered inflorescences that creep horizontally or hang from the base of the plant, and can reach 3 inches (7.5 cm) in length. The flowers are up to 1 ½ inches (4 cm) across. The sepals and petals are a pale, translucent ivory to light green, and are heavily barred with maroon. The lip is a distinct bright egg-yolk barred with very fine reddish-brown lateral lines to the base. I have not noted a fragrance to the flowers of this, or any other, species of *Promenaea*.

CULTURE

Promenaeas tend to be easy to accommodate, and I find that *Prom. guttata* has no special cultural requirement that separates it from other members of the genus. As with other *Promenaea* species and hybrids, this one does well in intermediate to cool temperatures, with nighttime minimums between 52 to 58 F (11 to 15 C). Extended daytime high temperatures above 85 F (33 C) should be avoided. The plants need bright, but indirect light, with light intensities between 2,000 to 3,200 foot-candles. This light level will produce fairly distinct shadows if one waves one's hand 18 inches (45 cm) over the plants. The plants should be allowed to just dry out between waterings, and watering with low levels of dissolved solids, such as rainwater, distilled or reverse-osmosis (RO) water, will highly benefit the plants. In some northern climates, they may benefit from a slight dry rest in the midst of the winter. Relative humidity above 50 percent is also beneficial.

Promenaeas should generally be potted, although I have seen a few plants mounted successfully. However, the best culture and most natural display is achieved by potting the plants. They have fine roots, no more than 1/16 inch (.2 cm) in diameter, so a fine-textured potting mix is best. I have grown them well in fine bark mixes, high-grade sphagnum moss and some of the soilless mixes favored by some phalaenopsis growers. The plants should generally be repotted every two years into small pots that will just allow a year's growth, although Phil Jesup of Bristol, Connecticut, has stated that he has grown a *Promenaea* in osmunda for more than eight years and the plant still had good roots. Repotting should be done after blooming in early summer as the new growths emerge, although in hotter climates it may be best to wait until fall to repot.

I have not found that many of the pests and diseases that can attack other orchids bother promenaeas. Occasionally the new growths can rot if water gets trapped in them, but this is avoided with care during the spring, and is the only problem I've observed to be common.

HYBRIDS AND AWARDS

There has only been one AOS award to this species, a Certificate of Horticultural Merit (CHM, 83 points) to the clone 'Fox Den', *CHM/AOS*, owned by Phil Jesup. At the time of the award in July 1989, the plant had nine flowers and one bud. Jesup discussed this plant in his article on the genus in the November 1991 *AOS Bulletin* (now *Orchids*) and how he had obtained this clone as an unlabeled division in 1974. Other than Jesup's article, I cannot find any previous discussion of *Prom. guttata* in AOS publications.

To date, three hybrids have incorporated *Prom. guttata*: *Promenaea* Chameleon (Limelight x *guttata*), *Promenaea* Firefly (*ovatiloba* x *guttata*) and *Promenaea* Partridge (*stapelioides* x *guttata*). All of these fine hybrids were made by the late Ben Berliner, MD. Each of these has its own charm, with variously spotted segments with the bright yellow lip of *Prom. guttata* showing in most clones.



Above Right:

Promenaea Firefly 'Hoosier Limeade', AM/AOS (*ovatiloba* x *guttata*).

Photo: James E. McCulloch

Above Left:

Promenaea Partridge 'Little Bit', CCM/AOS (*stapelioides* x *guttata*).

Photo: James E. McCulloch



Bottom Left:

Promenaea Chameleon 'Ben', HCC/AOS (Limelight x *guttata*).

Photo: James E. McCulloch

Some clones of *Prom.* Partridge have a beautiful yellow-orange lip with fine lateral maroon lines. All three of these hybrids have received flower-quality awards from the AOS, and I look forward to seeing more exciting progeny from *Prom. guttata*.

Promenaea guttata has never been widespread in cultivation as far as I can tell, but there have been a few populations of the species grown from seed in the United States in the last 10 years or so. A dedicated search among nurseries that specialize in species should turn up plants of this fine species. It should be more widely propagated and distributed because it is a lovely and easily grown species.

American Orchid Society, 'Orchids', June 2005 Vol.74 No. 6