

Central Vancouver Island Orchid Society Newsletter
October 2010



Rhyncholaeliocattleya Hawaiian Satisfaction 'Romantic' HCC/AOS 76pts, September 11, 2010
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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: Oct. 30, Nov. 20, Dec. 18

Program for October 30th

A New Age – Growing Under Lights
By Geoffrey Haywood

Coming Events:

Victoria Orchid Society, March 6-7th 2010, student Union Building U of Vic.
CVIOS 50/50 Auction March 20, 2010

Editorial:

Well fall has come with colder nights and even some frost I hope you are getting your plants ready for the winter and the flower spikes are elongating nicely. It seems life is getting busier and I am not even gathering nuts for the winter, well maybe a few seeds, but they are for the spring.

Our speaker Geoff Haywood will talk about looking at growing orchids under the new compact fluorescent lights, how to use them, and how to understand and optimize the light output from them - with particular emphasis on growing orchids in apartments or confined spaces. There will also be some considerations given to the conditions that often go along with growing orchids in apartments or on windowsills.

I do hope to see some of you over at the Fraser Valley Show on Saturday or Sunday. It is always a great showing of fall bloomers. I nearly forgot the Newsletter in my flurry of getting ready to go over on Thursday, but I did send the show notice out reminding everyone about the change of date for the meeting. Fraser Valley is trying out a new computer assisted registration system this time with the regular system as a back-up and it will be interesting to hear how that goes.

Remember to bring in your Floralia orders to this meeting.

Cheers Mike

Central Vancouver Island Orchid Society General Meeting, September 18, 2010

President Bryan Emery called the meeting to order at 12:07 with 24 members present and two guests, Debb Ward and Keith Temple.

1. Hilding Franson moved the minutes of our June meeting be accepted as printed, Sue Christison seconded the motion and it was carried.

2. Correspondence included the usual periodicals and summer Lea Valley catalogue. Periodicals are placed in the library.

3. Treasurer Shelley Rattink presented the month end balances as of August 31. Mike Miller moved acceptance of her report and Nancy Miklic seconded; motion carried.

4. Reports:

- Nancy Miklic outlined topics and presenters of upcoming programs. In October Geoff Haywood will speak on 'Growing Under Lights' and in November Mario Faruso from Ontario will be coming and he will be bringing plants for sale.

- Bev Morrison reminded us that annual memberships are due.

- Plant Sales; there is a fantastic selection of plants for sale this month.

- Mike asked us to each take a bundle of past AOS bulletins with us. He also reminded us that our orders for Floralia plants needs to be to him at or before our next meeting. He suggested we check the new shelves and organized storage are we now have. Thanks to Mike and Bob Iddon things are in much better order than they have ever been in the past.

5. Budget (2010/11):

- President Bryan Emery presented the draft budget developed by the executive at our summer meeting. Mike Miller moved acceptance of the budget as presented and Bev Morrison seconded. All were in favor and motion carried.

6. Refreshments:

- Sandra Lathrope thanked those who brought goodies including Laurie, Shelley, Bob, Sue, Maureen and Nancy. Next month Nancy Miklic, Margaret Mann and Shirley McClare agreed to bring goodies. Due to the change in date of the meeting, we have fewer people signed up than usual, so if anyone else would be willing to bring something, please let Sandra know (250) 722-3277.

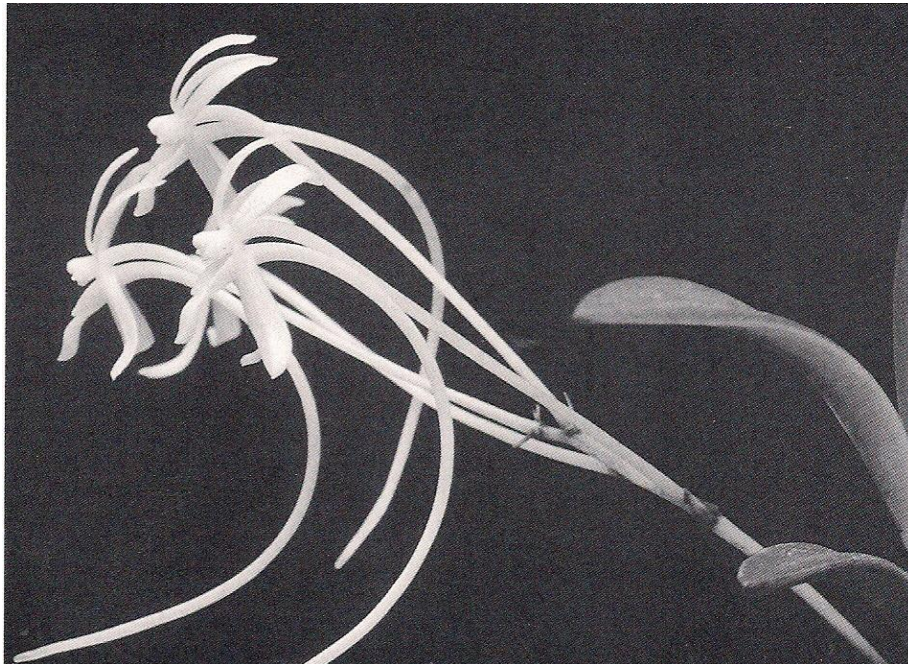
Our guest speaker Debb Ward along with Bryan, did a great job of talking about the plants on our unusually small show tables, followed by a substantial snack (including Nancy's chowder). Debb's informative presentation on AOS judging followed and gave us all the opportunity to all give judging a try.



Orchids of Japan - Furan and Fukiran

Masakuni Odakura introduces the world's most costly orchid –
a diminutive, white-flowered epiphyte treasured in Japan for centuries.

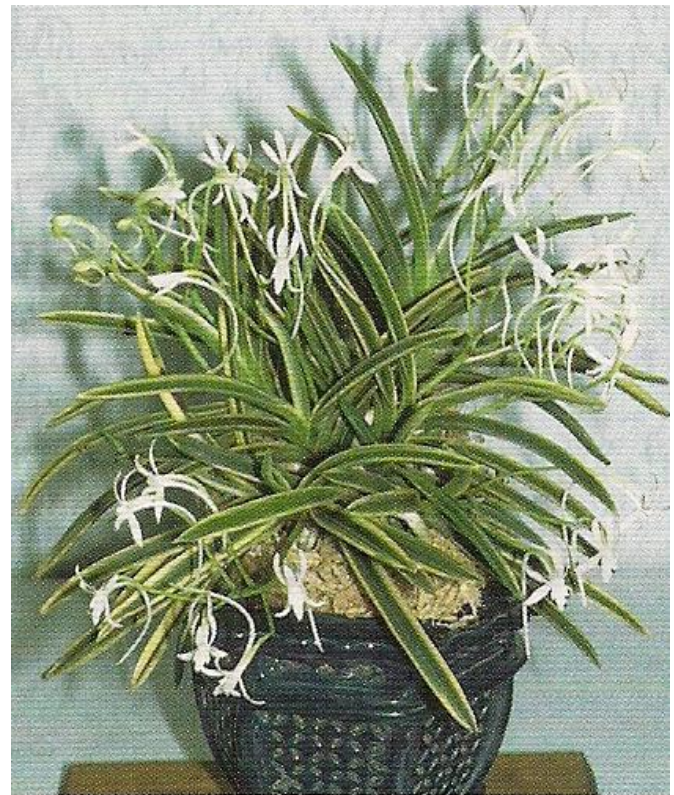
The genus *Neofinetia* consists of a single species, *N. falcata* (Thunberg) S.Y. Hu, an epiphyte native to Japan. The plant is monopodial and rarely exceeds 15cm in height. Its short, tufted stems are clothed with two-ranked leaves arranged in a loose fan, and are supported by stout stilt-like roots below. Strap-shaped and dark green, the leaves are fleshy,



Neofinetia falcata a typical example showing the characteristically long spurs.
Photo: Malcolm Perry

rigid and often recurved in a scimitar-like fashion; their margins are folded upwards, giving the leaves a central groove or gully. Appearing chiefly in summer, the flowers are carried on axillary racemes and are remarkable for their sweet perfume, long, arching ovaries (stalks) and their slender, curving spurs which may be as much as 8cm long. The tepals themselves are typically about 1cm long, spreading to reflexed, strap-shaped and pure white. There are also forms with flowers that are tinted or solid cream, amber, yellow, rose pink and magenta. Some of these variants are named: for example, *N.* 'Shutenno' (King of Crimson'), with pale candy pink tepals and bright crimson spurs.

The plant received its first Latin name, *Orchis falcata*, in 1784 from that pioneer of Japanese botany, Carl Pehr Thunberg (1743-1828). John Lindley next placed it in *Angraecum* - a genus that, with its hallmark white, starry and fragrant flowers, seems a not unnatural home for our plant. Then the German orchidologist Rudolf Schlechter variously assigned it to the genera *Angraecopsis* and *Finetia* (1918). The latter genus commemorates the French botanist Achille Finet (1862-1913), who had an interest in Japanese orchids (*Cremastra unguiculata* (Finet) Finet, for example). In 1934, Genkei Masamune recognized this orchid's distinctiveness, placing it in a genus of its own named - appropriately enough - *Nipponorchis*. But Masamune was ten years too late. Achille Finet is also remembered in the epithet *Neofinetia* (from neo - 'new, different from', and *Finetid*), which this much-named plant received in 1925 from the Chinese botanist Shiu-Ying Hu. This is the name it still bears today. Centuries before these taxonomic squabbles, the Japanese - at least from a horticultural viewpoint - were in no doubt as to the status and classification of this exceptional orchid. By the seventeenth century, it was already the darling of the ruling classes. Daimyo (feudal lords) cradled these tiny plants all the way from their provincial fiefdoms to Edo (Tokyo) when required to attend on the Shogun there every third year.



**Right: Neofinetia "Gojo-fukiran, Left: Pink-spurred Fukiran
Photos: Henry Oakeley**

In Japan, *Neofinetia* is divided into two categories - Furan and Fukiran. Furan (from *fu* 'wind', and *ran*, 'orchid' - a reference to its scent travelling on the breeze) covers typical forms of *Neofinetia falcata*. Compact, with a lovely fragrance and easy to cultivate, this native epiphyte is very popular in Japanese horticulture. In the wild, it is distributed throughout south-western Japan, but its numbers have been decreasing as a result of collecting and deforestation. According to the *Red Data Book* published by Japan's Ministry of Environment in July 2000, *Neofinetia falcata* is vulnerable to endangered. Certainly many Furan were taken from their mountain habitats in years past, and more still have been collected only recently. Nevertheless, the mechanical and ethical problems of collecting wild orchids mean that most Furan supplied to the market are now artificially propagated.



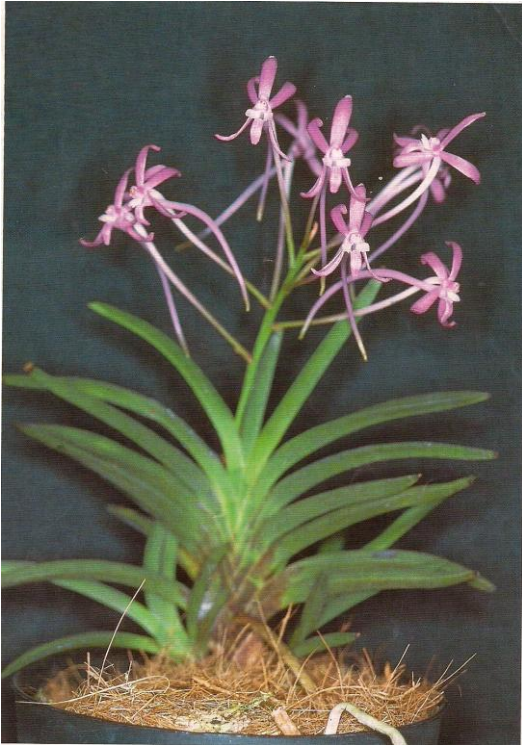
Left: A pale lemon-flowered selection at this year's Tokyo Dome Orchid Show.

Right: A prize-winning Fukiran complete with cloisonne pot. Photos: Henry Oakeley

At present, most young plants of Furan sold in Japan are produced asymbiotically in Korea, where facilities and labour are cheaper than in Japan. Another charming Japanese miniature orchid, Nagoran (*Sedirea japonica*) is similarly raised there in quantity.

Furan are not difficult to grow. They need cool to intermediate conditions (minimum temperature 10°C) with bright but indirect light or dappled sunlight and good ventilation. Although they appreciate high humidity levels, Furan are so small that they are easily micro-managed (given a daily misting, set on a tray of damp gravel, placed in a sheltered position outdoors in summer, etc) and are excellent orchids for the home. Although they respond well to life in baskets, on rafts or in small pans, in Japan Furan tend to be grown in glazed cylindrical pots that taper toward feet at their bases. The potting medium should be open and suitable for thick-rooted epiphytes, but these orchids dislike dryness and should be kept moist (but never waterlogged) at all but the coldest times. In addition to watering, this can be achieved by misting and by top-dressing the plants with sphagnum moss. In Japan the

roots and base of the plant are wrapped in moss which is built up, layer-by-layer, to form a cone. This is set in the pot with the plant itself astride the raised mound of moss and its roots encouraged to descend into an inert growing medium such as clay granules below. Propagation is best accomplished by rooted offsets which these plants produce, slowly but regularly, at their bases.



Neofinetia 'Westfield's Rose' a crimson flowered pure-bred Furan raised in Japan and first exhibited in Great Britain by Malcolm Perry. Phot: Malcolm Perry

In Japan Furan attract a wide following of gardeners and orchid growers. Their most committed and discriminating devotees, however, confine themselves to the second category of *Neofinetia* - Fukiran. Meaning 'orchid solely for the enjoyment of noble and wealthy people', Fukiran are clones of *Neofinetia falcata* (Furan) that exhibit variegation or other types of foliar or floral peculiarity. A variegated Furan was first found growing wild in the 1690s. Its discovery triggered a hunt that spread throughout Japan. The plants the hunt yielded were not only rare but, by their very nature, unique. Prized accordingly, they became the preserve of the rich and powerful: abnormal Furan became elite Fukiran. Since then Fukiran have remained the classic symbol of over three hundred years of Japanese horticultural tradition.

Today there are numerous Fukiran associations in Japan, all of which hold exhibitions. Foremost among them is the Japan Fukiran Society (Nihon Fukiran Kyokai), which is responsible for registering plants. Only plants assessed and registered by this society can be styled 'Fukiran'. A variegated or otherwise mutated Furan that lacks the Japan Fukiran Society's approval is merely that. The Fukiran List is a record of all the clones registered up to the present and is published every year. The fee for registration is 200,000 yen (£1,100). The inspection process is very exacting, and only three or four new Fukiran will be approved each year. At the time of writing (spring 2001), there are 175 registered Fukiran in total, of which 5% (9 clones) show distinguishing variations in flower colour or shape, or have leaves that are twisted or dwarf or rigidly erect, fused, extra narrow, very broad, and so on, while the remainder is variegated.

As this statistic makes plain, variegation is the classic hallmark of Fukiran and the rarity and slowness to increase of a variegated clone are what ultimately determine its value. Plants that are easy to propagate or which exist in quantity as a result of having been in cultivation for many years are inexpensive - a single-stemmed plant of such a clone could cost as little as 1000 yen (£6.00) and would consist of five to six leaves and a flower shoot. On the other hand, plants that are difficult to grow or rare are extremely expensive: 'Higuma' ('Brown Bear') costs 8-10 million yen (£47,000-£58,000), 'Hakubotan' ('White Peony') 2 million yen (£11,000), and 'Kotonishiki' ('Brocade of the East of the Lake') 1.5 million yen (£8,800). All of these are variegated.

At Japanese shows only Fukiran are entitled to be entered for judging. The criteria differ

from those applied to Yoran (orchids not originally native to Japan). At the Japan Grand Prix International Orchid Festival held in Tokyo this year, the judging categories for Fukiran were Hanamono (the class concerned with flower colour and form, assessed as for non-Japanese orchids); Torahan ('tiger-patterned', the section for the cross-banded leaves); Shimahan (striped leaves); Fukurinhan (leaves variegated either at the margins or along the inner blade or midline of the leaf), Mujihagei (variations of the shape or quality of the leaf with no patterns); and Sonota (Fukiran which do not belong to any of the above).

Neofinetia 'Seionishiki' ('Brocade of the Blue King'),
perched atop a cone of sphagnum moss.

Photo: Henry Oakeley



In Japanese horticulture, classic plants have their own exclusive containers. Fukiran are no exception: as shown it is the rule that they should be exhibited in Fukiran pots. These are ceramic, often glazed and sometimes even enamelled, sculpted or painted with patterns and reliefs. They are basically circular in section with straight or gently tapering sides, feet and sometimes a pronounced rim. If it is planted in the wrong pot, a Fukiran forfeits its right to be judged.

Of course, plants with the cachet of Fukiran are not without their problems - whether, for example, it will ever be possible to mass-produce them. While it is usually impossible to increase variegated plants by seed, some of the non-variegated Fukiran variations can be reproduced sexually, and variegated clones can be micropropagated - although seldom with stable results. In the end, the only reliable way to increase variegated Fukiran is by an offset that is judged a true likeness of the plant that produced it. The desirability of mass Fukiran production is much debated. Orchid lovers welcome the idea of these living Japanese treasures supplied in quantity and at a reasonable price. Conversely, some Fukiran breeders are concerned that the value (both aesthetic and commercial) of their plants will decrease with over-familiarity and availability. Meanwhile, there are Fukiran fans who fear that their clones may suffer a loss of kudos with the appearance of numerous new plants that are very similar (but not identical) to them and to each other - as would happen with modern mass-production techniques. On the whole, however, the majority seems to be in favour of sharing the treasure.

Neofinetia has also been hybridized with other genera, including *Ascocentrum*, *Rhynchostylis* and *Luisia*. The varied and colourful offspring of these crosses still show the demure grace of their Furan parent. But, for all their charm, they will never be recognized as Fukiran.

Masakuni Odakura specializes in Japanese native orchids and writes prolifically on the subject. His publications include *Wild Orchids of Japan* (Shufu to Seikatsusha), *Concise Dictionary for Breeding Wild Orchids* (Nihon Bungei Sha), *Wild Plants Near You* (Shufu no Torno Sha), *Wild Orchids* (Fujin Seikatsu Sha), *Enjoy Propagating Native Orchids* (Ikeda Shoten), *How to Enjoy Wild Orchids* (Asahi Shimbun). He is a member of the AJOS.

Acknowledgements:

Warmest thanks are due to Yoko Otsuki who translated this article and drew the character 'ran Corchid' for its heading; thanks also to Dr Toshinori Tanaka for his work in coordinating this series.

The Orchid Review, may-June 2001

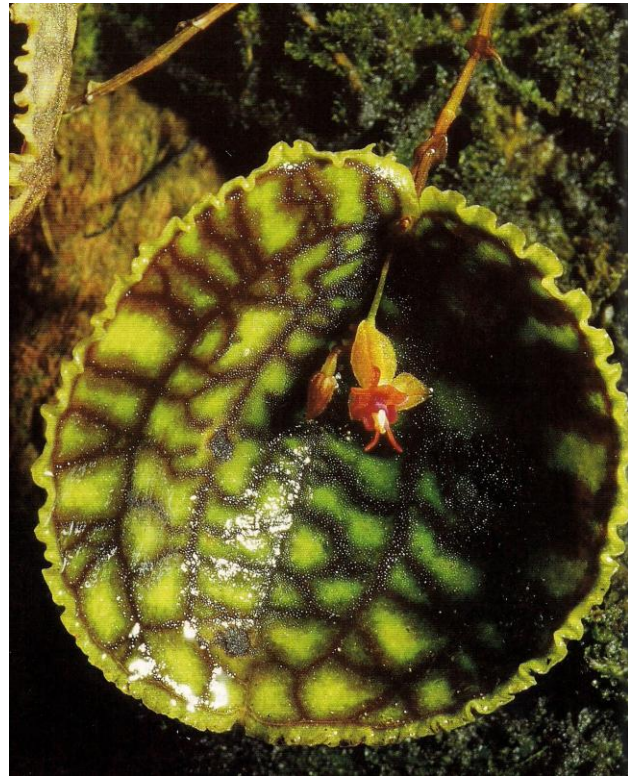
Miniature Orchids; Small but Beautiful

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 'plantariurn' 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.

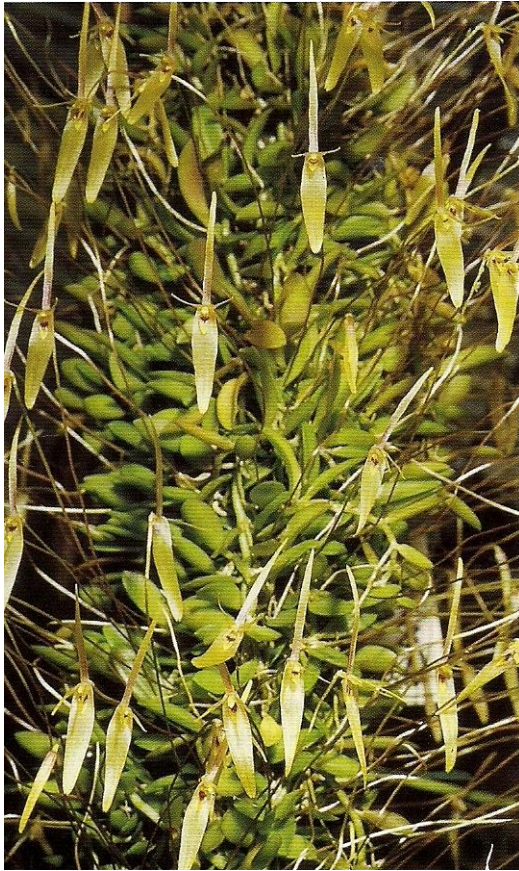
The joy of collecting, the vast knowledge of plants, the multitude of good pictures in books, the enormous choice of plants at specialized nurseries, the fantastically beautiful orchid shows, have all contributed to the increased interest in miniature orchids among collectors.

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!

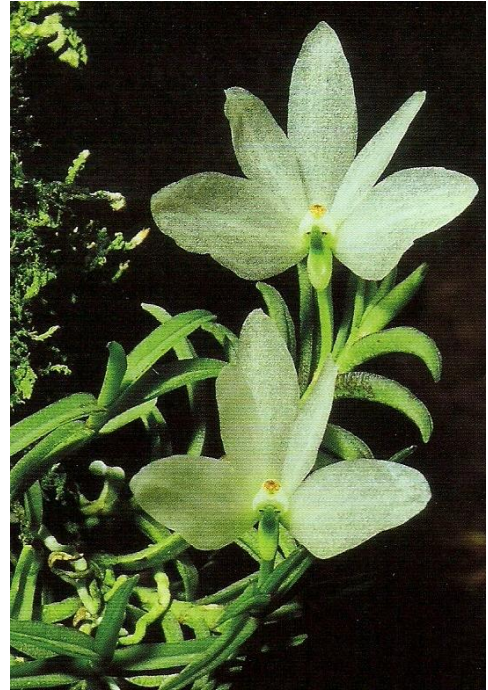
Many orchid nurseries offer a large assortment of miniature orchid species, ranging in height from a few millimetres to perhaps 10cm. Bigger than that, I do not consider that orchids qualify as miniatures. These dwarf plants have all the features and qualities that make an orchid so special, only on 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: *Ceratochilus biglandulosus*, the only known member of the genus, is a miniature orchid from the high mountains of Java and Sumatra.



Left: *Barbosella parishii* from Central America

Bellow: *Dendrobium cuthbertsonii* from New Guinea

Bellow: *Maxillaria juergensis* from Brazil

