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Next Meeting: Thursday, April 14th, 7:30pm - 10:00pm
 Contra Costa Water District Building Board Room
 1331 Concord Ave. Concord, CA



The Mysterious Maxillarias presented by Dan Newman

Maxillaria is one of the most widespread and diverse orchid genera of Tropical America. It contains spectacular, large-flowered species, charming miniatures, and many of intermediate size. Plant habit is varied, with some species having clustered, pseudobulbous growths similar to Oncidiums, some with monopodial stems reminiscent of Vandas, and still others with growths held on a rambling rhizome, like many of the Bulbophyllums.

Maxillaria sanguinea

There are hot-growing species from the tropical lowlands, cold growers from the high slopes of the Andes, and many adaptable, intermediate growers from moderate elevations in the mountains of Central and South America.

A few species, such as the coconut-scented *M. tenuifolia*, have long been popular in orchid collections. Many other beautiful members of the genus have only become available within the last decade or two, largely through Central and South American vendors who bring plants for sale to orchid shows in the U.S. Fortunately, most of these recent introductions are now being grown from seed and division, both domestically and by nurseries in Tropical America, enabling hobbyists to acquire plants without fear of decimating wild populations.

Despite the increasing popularity of the Maxillarias, taxonomy of the genus remains poorly understood. The situation is complicated by the large number of species recently introduced to cultivation and the absence of a modern, comprehensive taxonomic treatment, leaving many of us wondering how to label our plants. Perhaps identity of the species will become clearer in time, but meanwhile, the mysterious Maxillarias can add a touch of the unknown to our lives!

The presentation will illustrate some of the diverse forms of this fascinating genus in the context of the regions where they occur, and provide cultural information based on one grower's experience.

Dan Newman started growing orchids in 1982. His first successful subject was a *Dendrobium* hybrid bought as a tiny seedling at a lei stand in the Honolulu Airport. When that plant finally grew up and bloomed a few years later, he was hooked! By 1996 he had 350 orchids in a one-bedroom apartment. That year he moved his plants into a rented commercial greenhouse in San Francisco. He took over the large species collection of his friend and "orchid mentor", Walter Teague, and his hobby evolved into his nursery, Hanging Gardens. Dan started growing orchids full-time in 2000, and moved to a larger greenhouse in Pacifica a few years later. He currently has 12,000 to 15,000 plants, mostly cool to intermediate growers (it's hard to maintain warm conditions in Pacifica!). This number includes a few hybrids, but the great majority are species. He also grows a variety of "companion plants", that share the natural habitats of orchids.

Dan joined the San Francisco Orchid Society in 1987, and served as its president in 1996/97. In recent years, he has spoken on a variety of topics for the Diablo View Orchid Society and other horticultural groups in California and elsewhere.

Plant Table will be provided by Dan Newman.

There will be NO Speaker's Dinner this month.



Dendrobium hainanense
Owner Ken Cook



Dendrobium Berry
Owner Melissa Sadler



Paph. Snowbird 'Opalescence' AM/AOS
Owner Dian Vavrek