

DIABLO VIEW ORCHID SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER EXCERPTS

July 1998

BARBEQUE and AUCTION

The annual BBQ and Auction as well as the Dinsmore 'Dallion were named in honor of Lancer P. Smith, as it was Lancer's favorite event. As events go it takes a little more effort than most but it is worth it, so read this carefully and plan accordingly.

As already stated, the barbeque and auction will be held on July 18th. In order to insure that you get your choice of meat desired, send in your coupon or call Kathy Barrett to tell her whether you want steak or chicken (the sooner the better!) You may have noticed that you haven't received directions to the well hidden Van Galder home yet. This is because you won't receive them until you officially sign up for the 'Cue. Pack your own place setting, including plate. Prepare your potluck dish according to the first letter of your last name, A-H brings dessert, I-O brings salad, while P-Z brings a casserole or other hot dish. Bring enough for 8 to eat. Next pack the plant you wish to donate to the auction and you are almost ready to go! You won't need to pack your bathing suit this year, as Bob has said there are some problems with the pool. You may wish to pack your camera, however. Now that you have your box of stuff ready, pack your checkbook (you are going to an auction!) arrive by Noon to partake in some great fun!

A word about donated plant quality is in order here. While this is a good time to clear out the growing area, be sure the plants that you earmark for the auction are in good health - virus, fungus, and bug free. If a plant is in doubt, leave it out of the selection. Nothing is more heartbreaking than bidding for a desirable plant only to find it has little chance of survival and, if it does survive, it could infest the rest of your collection. If you believe a plant to be healthy but aren't quite sure ask one of the knowledgeable members to check the plant before making the donation. -Rick Sumner.

ORCHID IMPORTS

With today's strong dollar, there are some great bargains overseas. This is especially true for purchase of plants overseas, such as orchids. The Web has created a truly international marketplace where you might find great plants at a fraction of the cost of purchasing them here. But, before you attempt to purchase some of those great values outside this country, realize that you will need an import permit and perhaps a CITES certification for the plants, in order to take possession of them here in the United States.

Having purchased some flaked orchids babies overseas, it was my turn to experience the trial of dealing with the US Dept of Agriculture in order to obtain the necessary permits to receive my new orchids. Right here I must state that I don't write this to disparage the great institution we call the

US Government. The reason for this article is to make the procedure of receiving import permits quite simple, so that you can do it, if need be.

The first thing to realize is that if you intend to purchase orchids from outside the country, probably the best bargains can be had by purchasing orchids in flask, especially rare orchids in flask.

Secondly, purchasing orchids in flask makes import procedures simpler because you probably won't need a phytosanitary certificate (unless you are purchasing for commercial purposes) and you won't need a CITES Certification since the orchids were obviously not collected from the jungle. What is needed is a Plant Import Permit Number.

The Plant Import Permit application can be obtained from the following address:

USDA, APHIS, PPQ
4700 River Road, Unit 136
Riverdale, MD 20737-1236

APHIS Main phone number is: (301) 734-8896. Or, if you are as patient as I, you can call them at: (301)734-8332. The person who is in charge of all this is Gail Jennings (301-734-7472) but you probably won't be able to talk to her and she doesn't return calls to strangers. However, if you call the first number above and talk to Lea, Gail's assistant, you will be able to receive the permit application that you need in order to receive the flasks and/or plants. If you have purchased plants, Lea can advise you as to what certificates are necessary and how to get them. She is extremely helpful and does return calls! (What a welcome relief after calling at least 20 dead ends before talking to Lea, no kidding!)

Once you have received your permit number, you will need to forward that number to the shipper of your plants who will use it to prepare the shipment documents so that the plants will clear USDA inspection upon entry into the United States. - RS

JULY GROWING TIP

While some members of the Cattleya alliance are in bloom, most are preparing to bloom, so now is the time too examine bud sheaths. By holding the sheath between you and a strong light, you can see what is growing inside. In a few cases the sheaths may be double, one inside the other. In other cases sheaths may leak and be partially full of water. In each of these cases, it is important to open the sheath. Split the sheath from the top and peel it apart to drain the water. In the case of the double sheath, remove the outer sheath. In either case you will probably have just saved the blooms that you cherish. - RS

JULY INTERVIEW

Pauline Brault is another of our original members who has been growing orchids for many years. Today, orchids have not only infringed upon her free time but seem to have taken over her life. Her original love, impressionistic art - mainly oils, has given way to applications of impressionism in artistic displays of orchids. Combining her talents has certainly been successful, because her orchid displays have won the top show trophy for six years in a row. Among her other credits are three

AOS awards and several hybrids which she has developed and registered. Because Pauline has held the office of Vice President or President for either or both of the Oakland or Diablo View Orchid Society, she has been responsible for securing the very talented speakers whom we have enjoyed for the past several years. Pauline manages two greenhouses, one, a 12x19 seedling house and the larger 29x32 greenhouse, each filled with orchids.

DVOS: Pauline, how did you get involved with orchids?

PB: Edward and I stopped in at McLellan Orchids over in San Francisco and Edward bought me a Phalaenopsis in bloom. While loading it into the car, the spike broke off. Edward promised to buy me another, which he did. The plants didn't grow so well out here in Contra Costa because of the weather. Later, I met a man who told me about the Oakland Orchid Society. I went there and bought some raffle tickets. In that raffle I won 8 plants - never won anything before, but I won 8 plants then. After bringing them home they didn't grow so well either, so Edward built me a small greenhouse. For heat in the winter we had an open vented heater. It caused all the buds to drop off the plants. Meanwhile, I had gone over to visit Frank Fordyce and had bought a number of plants from him. Some of the plants needed repotting and during the winter I had repotted them and by spring they weren't doing well at all. It was so frustrating that I decided to give Frank back all his plants and quit trying to grow orchids,

DVOS: Did Frank take back the plants?

PB: Well, I went over to Livermore with that intention and told Frank what happened and showed him all the plants. Frank took pity on me. He spent most of that afternoon showing me how to pick the right sized pot, how and when to repot plants and how to care for them.

DVOS: And now what are your favorite orchids?

PB: I like all orchids, still grow quite a few Cattleyas and others, but now I'm partial to Dendrobiums. I'm still making a few Phalaenopsis crosses but primarily Dendrobium crosses and Cattleya crosses.

DVOS: Do you have any cultural recommendations?

PB: I grow my plants pretty much in clay pots. Clay pots tend to stay upright better because of the weight and my plants grow better in clay for the way I water. For a medium I use bark and perlite, number 3, I think.

DVOS: Any special feeding recommendations?

PB: No, but right now I'm testing Jerry Rodder's Wundergrow.

DVOS: What do you see in your future with orchids?

PB: Oh, I don't know. I want to make a few good crosses and enjoy growing (orchids).

DVOS: Looking through the greenhouse showed the benefits of Pauline's hard work. Each plant looked beautiful. There was no mold or algae growing anywhere, despite the underbench sprayers. There was evidence of dedication and hard work everywhere.

[editor's note] *Leaving Pauline's for home, I began to realize that within our own DVOS we have several people who could put on a program for the group. We all know that Frank does programs on a regular basis, but there are more who have the knowledge. Perhaps in the future we can look for one of our own to present to our group? What a concept!*

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