

# DIABLO VIEW ORCHID SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER EXCERPTS

November 1998

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### Importing Orchids - Part 2

Last July we wrote Part 1 of Importing Orchids where we discussed the benefits and some of the difficulties of purchasing orchids overseas. In the July newsletter it wasn't called part 1 because we never expected to have to write a Part 2. Unfortunately, the story didn't end after surmounting the difficulties of obtaining import permits. Once the permits were obtained, unbeknownst to me, I was only half way there. The problems that I would experience trying to pay for the plants, purchased from a grower who did not yet accept Visa/MasterCard, were yet to be realized. The reason that so much time has elapsed since writing part 1 is that I just managed to obtain the plants last month! The original intent to purchase began last April, and the entire process was completed in October - talk about long term shopping!

In order to pay for the orchids, which were being purchased from Australia, the original idea was to determine the exchange rate and do some arithmetic and simply send the grower a check. Unfortunately, he claimed that his bank would not accept such payment and recommended a wire transfer. I checked with my bank and found that a wire transfer would cost \$40US and an additional \$20US for the currency exchange. Because this seemed too expensive a way to pay for about \$200US of orchids, I sought other means.

Becoming quite creative, I even tried to have the grower's personal Visa Card credited with an amount equal to the purchase price. Unfortunately, I couldn't get a merchant or bank to do this transaction for me, and when I called Visa about the idea, they told me to forget it.

Finally, a banker told me about foreign drafts. A foreign draft is a check that a regional or commercial bank can create, much like a cashier's check that is accepted internationally as representing a country's currency. The exchange rate will already have been calculated and the amount prepaid. Unfortunately, my bank was neither a regional bank nor a commercial bank. Bank of America is one of the area banks that can create foreign drafts, but up until recently I didn't bank at BofA. You can rightly assume that I bank there now.

The story has a happy ending, but one that only perseverance can obtain. this is why I would recommend that if you decide to shop overseas for orchids, begin early, obtain the requisite permits and also be sure you bank can create foreign drafts (cost was \$5). If your bank cannot create foreign drafts, open an account at BofA just for the purpose of making foreign payments. -RS

### November Grower's Tip

Do you have pests in your greenhouse? How about spider mites on your Phalaenopsis? Ants in your Cattleyas or anywhere else in the greenhouse? If this is a problem that has plagued you and yet you

don't like to use chemical sprays, then a flea bomb may be the perfect solution for you. Yes, the active ingredients are pretty nasty, but you won't have direct contact with them and they do kill most of the pests that are so difficult to eliminate from the greenhouse. the active ingredients are methoprene and permethrin and, while they are quite toxic to difficult pests (and humans), will not harm the plants. Be sure to use in an enclosed greenhouse area when you are not in the area. Never use around any area where food is present and do read the label before using. The editor has tried this in his greenhouse with very satisfying results. - RS

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