

# Diablo View Orchid Society

**October *might* be our last zoom meeting!**

## President's Letter

October 7, 2021

Greetings Orchid Friends,

The newsletter is a bit late this month because I was out of town. We got to visit the red rock country around Flaming Gorge Utah. It was beautiful. It is always funny to me how much the orchids change if you are gone just one week! It was nice to come home and see all of the new flowers open.

We had another wonderful meeting last month with Scott Barrie. It was nice to see how a commercial Cymbidium operation works. I always learn something from Scott about orchid culture. I went out and told all of my Cymbidiums about his business!

Remember to take photos (and share those photos!) of your orchids. We all want to see.

Stay safe, healthy and happy. I am looking forward to seeing you for our virtual trip through Africa with Tom Mirenda on October 14.

Regards,

*Diane*

Now for a few reminders and updates:

There are a couple time sensitive items to cover here. Make sure you don't miss anything!

- Speakers corner
  - See Peters comments later in the newsletter for details
- Show and tell links
  - See details below

## Virtual Show and tell

It is a new month. We need to see what you have blooming in October. Take pictures of your blooms and send them in.

### August Winners

See the photos of the winners we chose below and on the website.

### September Show and Tell Voting

We have a wonderful collection of plants this month. It is great to see everyone's plants!

Vote for your favorite September Show and Tell plants (voting closes October 31):

Novice

<https://forms.gle/Rej9KguhWM9xw9UQ6>

Intermediate

<https://forms.gle/F49UtD1ckTXbWGJA9>

Advanced

<https://forms.gle/LkcHTHs8Cp4gcpA29>

## October Show and Tell Submission

October entries are currently being accepted (thru October 31). I want to see all of those beautiful blooms! C'mon- everybody can take a quick pic to share with all of us. PLEASE REMEMBER- submit photos of YOUR OWN PLANTS, YOUR OWN PHOTOS only.

- Enter photos of your October blooms
- All images should be labeled with the name of the **plant** and the name of the **grower**. This ID can be in the name of the file or you can actually label the photo itself.
- If your plant is eligible for the Lancer Smith award (entire plant is 6 inches or less) please indicate that in the name of the file or on the photo itself.
- Drop your entry into this folder:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1PoTmuQadvTvZryfOK1HLnLpBgb6Tgt7V?usp=sharing>

If you have any problem with this, you can always mail it to me at [bondiane9@gmail.com](mailto:bondiane9@gmail.com).

# ***SPEAKERS' CORNER*** *October, 2021*

**Last month's speaker** Scott Barrie of Barrita Orchids, back for his second visit this year, introduced us to the overall facilities in Kulnara this time with emphasis on his 65,000 square feet of unified greenhouse space dedicated to Cymbidiums. In addition to a much smaller Sarcophilus house the subject of his previous talk, there is also a seedling house, a packing house and a soon to be completed tissue culture facility, making the Kulnara operation fully vertically integrated. To give us an idea of scale Scott showed us the 16,000 unit system of "Niko"[Sic] training wires he uses for every Cymbidium spike being grown as cut flowers. The Cymbidium house is fully computer controlled. Although it has no side vents, he illustrated the automatic system of roof louvers which uses only convection to change the air remarkably rapidly on a hot day.

Barrita is constantly redeveloping its range of Cymbidium colors to meet market demand mostly with new hybrids developed in-house. Their current inventory includes over 250 cultivars mainly in burgundy, orange and green tones, and white. Longevity is not an issue and they still use some commercially floriferous plants which are over 50 years. The care required to do this was disclosed later in his presentation. There is a distinct difference, Scott said, between the flower forms popular in Australia and those cultivated here. Whereas we appreciate and award Cymbidiums with large, flat-petaled flowers often in cascading inflorescences they prefer a more cupped shape with the flower close to an upright stem. We saw many examples of his current range of cultivars which are based on crosses which allow Barrita to have different portions of its inventory continuously in bloom from April through September. Although many Cymbidium species originated in areas with a defined dry period, Scott emphasized they have now been in cultivation so long they continue growing throughout the year. The traditional Cymbidiums he uses must have about 3 months with temperatures at night below 55F in order to set flowers. Species from warmer regions do not need extended cold to set flowers.

Focusing down to individual cultivars Scott explained there are only three base colors of cymbidiums, yellow, white and green with a very fine overlay of cells on the petals giving the color patterns we see. He makes his crosses based on the expected overlay not the combination of the underlying colors of the parents. This topic was illustrated with closeups of various examples where the base and overlay colors were clearly visible.

The second half of Scott's presentation covered his cultivation methods developed over many years of trial and error. He laid strong emphasis on the advantages of allowing Cymbidiums to grow into large clumps and the negative impact of the common practice of frequent division and re-potting. To allow his plants to flourish in one pot for many years or be slip-potted into larger containers over the years, he uses a totally inorganic and fast draining medium which he can routinely water from overhead, usually every second day. Barrita's current media is equal parts rockwool, Styrene and Perlite.

We saw how Scott's watering/feeding regimen is not based on a single commercial

fertilizer but is an in-house recipe of prime and secondary nutrients, mixed in multiple tanks and combined for every watering. His water is put through RO and is balanced to have an EC 0.65 (less if there is less sunlight) and a pH of 5.5. Like the greenhouses themselves, watering and feeding are computer controlled. Scott showed a key chart which laid out the growth stages of his Cymbidiums during a year and explained the nutritional changes he makes at each stage.

The final and perhaps most fascinating part of Scott's presentation was his emphasis on the "maintenance" of his plants, in the sense of maintaining their integrity and health as they increase in size. He showed how Cymbidiums will "mound" by growing pseudobulbs vertically on top of each other while still using the older, lower bulbs as food stores. To maintain this, he is assiduous in removing spent leaves after blooming and giving even very large old plants plenty of open space in the center for light and air. In addition to keeping the plants "open", he generally gives them as much light as possible to maximize flower production. Before taking questions, Scott displayed a closing set of slides that illustrated the temperature control he is able to apply inside his main greenhouse using the specialized ventilation system combined with frequent automatic misting.

**This month's speaker** will be **Tom Mirenda** who will be with us **from Hawaii at 7:00PM PT on October 14**, to lead us through his month long **orchid safari** to many



different locations throughout **Africa**. Tom has been cultivating plants since his early childhood. Originally trained as a marine biologist, he moved to Hawaii in his early 20s where he worked on the trophic [nutritional] relationships between the denizens of coral reefs in the northwestern Hawaiian Islands (Midway and French Frigate Shoals).

Realizing he was better suited to horticultural pursuits he took positions at the New York Botanical Garden, Brooklyn Botanical Garden and at the Greentree [Whitney] Estate in Long Island where he cared for a first class orchid collection. Eventually, Tom accepted the Orchid Collection Specialist position at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC where he cultivated and curated its 8000+ plant collection for 17 years. In better times, the Smithsonian collection was used to create months long educational exhibits visited by millions of visitors each year. Last fall, Tom left the security of the Smithsonian to take a leadership position at the Hawaii Tropical Botanical Garden, a

jewel on the lush Hamakua coast just north of Hilo. What Tom found there was an orchid paradise where myriad spectacular orchids of all types, both lowland and montane, species and hybrids, seem to thrive when simply placed thoughtfully in the trees in the landscape.

Tom has contributed articles to ORCHIDS magazine for many years and has developed an international following as a writer, speaker and advocate for orchid conservation. Three years ago, Tom co-authored "The Book of Orchids" with two scientists from Kew. He has done speaking tours in the British Isles for the last three summers and presented on conservation topics at the last three World Orchid Conferences and several IOC and AOC conventions. Tom was a founding member of the North American Orchid Conservation Center and continues his support of orchid conservation there and around the world.

Tom Mirenda believes that ultimately the concept of growing orchids in a garden settings will be a viable model for orchid conservation world-wide and that it is only with the cooperation of botanical garden professionals, commercial growers, academia and committed orchid collectors and backyard growers, that orchids will survive the vicissitudes of climate change.

To attend Tom's presentation, please follow the steps below. **If you would like to invite a friend** just send me the name and email address and your guest will receive the sign-in information when you do.

- Before the event, please check to be sure you have the latest version of the "Zoom Client for Meetings" from: <https://zoom.us/download>. There have been upgrades since our last meeting.
- RSVP to [padvos@attglobal.net](mailto:padvos@attglobal.net) not later than **October 10**.
- If you RSVP, you will receive the sign-in data and other final information before the meeting. Be sure to look for an email message headed **DVOS-TMINFO**. You do not need to respond to that message.

As usual, there will be a drawing from members present for \$50 gift certificates provided by DVOS to be used this month at <https://www.calorchid.com/> who carry African species in their inventory. The winners will be announced during the evening. If you are a winner, you will receive your certificate and redemption instructions by email.

Some files referred to in past editions of Speakers' Corner continue to be available for members' personal viewing. Should you be interested in any of them, just send me a message. Here is the current list:

- "*Shangri-La*", a documentary on Yunan, China from 2008.
- "*The Judge, the Thief, the Hunter and the Black Orchid*", a 2010 documentary movie directed by Rich Walton featuring Fred Clarke and other orchid luminaries.
- "*The Culture of Hybrid Phragmipediums*", a slide show based on the knowledge of Leo Schordje.
- "*10 Species of Orchids you can Grow Outside*", a slide show by Jeff Trimble.
- "*Fred's Catasetinae Tips*", by Fred Clarke.
- "*How to Grow Happy, Healthy Scale and Mealy Bugs*", by Deborah Dillon-Townes.
- "*What Do Orchids Eat?*", text slides from a virtual presentation by Rick Lockwood.
- "*Honey I Shrunk the Orchids*" a virtual presentation by Kristen Uthus.

As I was editing the summary of Scott's Barrie's latest talk, I could not help visualizing how much easier my orchid life would be with an automatic misting system. Sadly, that is totally impractical for a windowsill grower where the windowsill is in his bedroom. I awoke from my pleasant daydream and remembered that the temperature in that room would be reaching 95F+ again and that I was already late spraying the surface of the media in every pot to raise the humidity level enough for them to tolerate such a temperature. Having a southwest facing window has its advantages in the depths of what passes as winter around here, but in early autumn, even with a fan and adjustable blinds, the temperature inside is often little different from that of summer outside. Of necessity most of my plants *are* warm to hot growing, but then there is still that low humidity thing... Well, I guess those are the realities of trying to grow orchids where they really do not belong!

That's all from Speakers' Corner for this month, I look forward to seeing you all again on the 14th for our virtual trip to Africa.

Stay safe,

*Peter*



## August 2021 Show and Tell Winners

Phalaenopsis Kenneth Schubert

Novice: 1<sup>st</sup> Place

Grown by Kaitlyn Strom



Phalaenopsis Tetra Bell

Novice: 2<sup>nd</sup> Place

Grown by Peter Ansdell



Phalaenopsis LD Bellina

‘Eagle’ x Phal. Prima

Novice: 3<sup>rd</sup> Place

Grown by Peter Ansdell



Catt. Ethel's Paradise

‘In Kalapana’

Intermediate: 1<sup>st</sup> Place

Grown by Henry Shaw







Paphiopedilum Spring Romance  
Intermediate: 2<sup>nd</sup> Place  
Grown by Nancy Lovelady



Phalaenopsis tetraspis  
Intermediate: 3<sup>rd</sup> Place  
Grown by Henry Shaw



Cattleytonia Tonia Rose “TM901”

Advanced: 1<sup>st</sup> Place

Grown by Ted McClellan

Dendrobium Sulawesi x  
Den Cuthbertsonii ‘Bicolor’

Advanced: 2<sup>nd</sup> Place (tie)

Grown by Marcia Hart





*Mormolyca ringens*

Advanced: 2<sup>nd</sup> Place (tie)

Grown by Marcia Hart



*Isochilus major*

Advanced: 3<sup>rd</sup> Place

Grown by Ted McClellan





Dendrobium cuthbertsonii  
Lancer Smith Award  
Grown by Marcia Hart

### **DVOS Officers and Board**

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