



Greater Whorled  
Pogonia

The Newsletter of the  
**AMHERST ORCHID SOCIETY**

An affiliate of the American Orchid Society

Volume 24, Issue 12

December 2016

## November Meeting 2016

**Roger West**

Many members were present on this chilly, dank day-- a foretelling of the next four months. They were here to pick up their plants, and some repotting was also accomplished. The orchids came from Gold Country Orchids out in California. There was a wide variety to choose from, along with photos of all the available orchids. Leftovers were sold for \$7 at the meetings end.

A discussion of opening our February show to a Friday afternoon attendance was presented by board members. This is for future shows, not our upcoming one this February. Pros were: more paying customers, maybe charging the vendors a little extra for more hours. Fridays are for judging but the judging is usually over by lunch time. The cons were, you name it, I don't think many were happy with a Friday afternoon opening. If it would increase attendance then I would be ok with this. Steve Steiner stated only serious orchid people would probably attend on Friday, and they will come regardless. Back to the vendors, Mark said that we have lost two, but hoped to fill those openings.

People that held elected spots still remained in those positions. One brave person, Sheron Tuohey, volunteered to help out Marge in the VP position. This was quickly approved so that Sheron didn't have second thoughts.

The most important topic was future speakers. It is economical suicide to bring in a speaker from outside New England. How many local speakers are there, that have not addressed our club? We need to tap into the New England speaker loop to acquire good speakers at a reasonable cost. There are at least 5 regional orchid societies that bring in outside speakers for a week visiting these societies. You divide the cost 5 ways. Amherst is always a week out of this loop. In other words, this speaker would have to stay in the area an extra week to speak with us-- not happening! Joe and Marc had a possible solution with a Friday night meeting during this speaker loop week. This would happen once or twice during the year with the regular Sunday meeting taking place when the club did not avail itself to a regional speaker. I could see this happening to the October/November months because the weather is good, speakers more available in the fall vs winter weather and shows. Some members grumbled at a night meeting. I remember many years ago we had an evening meeting in January. It was colder than the "Blue Balls of Hell" that evening. Why a PM meeting? At the time, then president Judy Gowdy, heard from a source that Martin Motes had a daughter attending Smith College. He was bringing his daughter back up to college and would be available to talk to our club. Martin is from Homestead, Fla. and is an expert on Ascocendas. His talk was great, he brought plants to sell, downstairs was packed with members and the show table was loaded despite the cold. So an evening speaker couple times a year is a NO BRAINER!! Let's get this done!! Two gals from the New Hampshire society, Jeanne Usereau and Lee Brockmann, volunteered to get us into the speaker loop. This evening meeting would replace the regular Sunday meeting. The club doesn't have a program person, so during your orchid travels check out possible speakers and their availability.

The December meeting is a pot-luck affair, bring in a dish to share and not all deserts. Sign-ups for shirts/sweat shirts and the orchid show pots will take place this month, so bring some cash. The show table was dominated by large cattleya blooms and paphs.

## **A Little Orchid Growing History for Massachusetts** **Maryanne Laukaitis**

Let's take a little trip back in time and get a glimpse of orchid growing in old Massachusetts. I was delighted to find a book in the UMass library, titled "American Orchid Culture," by Edward A. White, copyright 1939 (first edition was 1927).

The earliest orchid growers had private collections, and were wealthy enough to buy exotic species beauties and provide for them. One of the first to own orchids was John Wright Boot, who received a shipment of orchid plants in 1838 from his brother living in England. Mr. Boot lived in Boston, and had a small greenhouse erected in his yard on Bowdoin Square. (The Revere House was later built on that lot.) He soon was enthusiastically importing Western Hemisphere species, Catts, Epidendrums as well as a few Eastern Dendrobiums, from England from the Messrs. Loddiges. He died in 1842 and the orchid collection was bequeathed to John Amory Lowell of Roxbury. He also built a special house for the collection and imported more, becoming the earliest exhibitor of orchids, even before the Massachusetts Horticultural Society.

About 1853, Lowell leased his property and the tenant neglected the orchids. Many plants died, and the rest were split between a Mr. Pratt of Watertown and Edward S. Rand of Dedham.

Mr. Rand was successful in caring for and importing more plants from Hugh Low & Co. in England. By 1856 he owned the most important collection in the United States, frequently exhibiting at Mass. Horticultural Society. His plant of *Cattleya crispa* was said to be "as large as a washtub." Rand at some point donated his collection to Harvard College, where they fared poorly and few survived, though eventually better care was given to the survivors.

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, economic conditions improved and demand for cut flowers increased. Orchids were sold as cut flowers, plants and corsages. Fashionable society ladies wore corsages, or floral headpieces to events. So, it was necessary to grow a range of species so blossoms were available in different seasons. Hybridizing helped to expand the range of bloom seasons and colors.

In the 1930s, the L. Sherman Adams Co. of Wellesley, MA purchased an orchid collection (about 5000 plants) from Seth Borden of Fall River, from Mary House of Chad's Ford Delaware were 20,000 plants, and from Europe came the finest slippers, Miltonias, Odontoglossoms and Cattleyas. Mrs. Adams undertook a breeding program with a modern lab, developed germinating technique, and raised registered hybrids in 30,000 ft of glasshouse.

J. T. Butterworth of Framingham, MA got started as a child apprentice in England, but, recognizing he could not advance there, came to the USA. He worked in Brighton, MA for a commercial florist. He discovered a few pots of *Cypripedium* (Paph) *insigne* which he "peddled" around Boston. He divided the unsold Paphs, grew them out and created demand for them. By 1906, he had his own operation and supplied nearly all the cut orchids sold in Boston. He was honored by the Massachusetts Horticultural Society with a Certificate of Merit in 1924 for his *Cattleya mossiae*, var Mrs. J.T. Butterworth, awarded 95 points, and 9 ¼ inches from petal to petal tip.

Thomas Roland of Nahant, Mass. got his start growing potted plants and roses. He took on slipper orchids and Cattleyas, and after his death his son Robert continued the business with nine glasshouses covering 15,000 square feet. (Dates of production were not given.)

Wheeler & Co. of Waban, Mass started commercial orchid production in 1902 with 3000 square feet of glass and increased to 15,000 square feet. Over 14,000 Catts and 2200 hybrids were grown for market.

The Burrage Collection at "Orchidvale" Beverly Farms, Mass was a private enterprise started by Albert Burrage. After his death in 1931, Mrs. Burrage carried on with a professional manager for the 18 greenhouses (each 75 ft long) and over 30,000 plants of many species and hybrids. As well as plants, she collected a library of orchid publications and illustrations.

The heyday of corsages is gone now, fading out in the 1960s and 70s, although a few events such as proms and weddings demand flowers. I remember in the 1960s at Easter time, my mother would buy an orchid corsage at the grocery store. It came in a white cardboard box with a glassine window on top so you could see what I now know is a Cymbidium. I was never too impressed with them, since the color seemed a little dull to me then. It was worn to church and to dinner and then visited now and then in the refrigerator. I much prefer my Cymbidiums now in a pot, blooming profusely!

These days, it's hard to imagine huge greenhouses in chilly New England being kept heated and staffed adequately to raise orchids competitively to turn a profit. I think we've got a sort of new heyday for orchids with all of those cheap imports pouring in from Asia. Well, maybe a heyday for Phals at the big box stores. They enable the average "Joanne" or "Joe" to take home a blooming plant for the price of a cut bouquet, and if it doesn't live, just buy a new one. Or join the local orchid society and learn how to really grow some show-stoppers!

Do you have an orchid-growing story to tell us, or a helpful-hint? Type a few sentences, or more if you like, and we'd be more than happy to run it in this newsletter.



**Mrs. L. Sherman Adams, orchid breeder, Wellesley, Mass.**

Show Table November 2016**Steve LaValley**

Zootrophion atropurpureum

**Tom McCurry**

Phalaenopsis Connie Moody

**Kathy Puckett**

Cattleya Pole Star x Forbesii

**Karen Steward**

Masdevallia nicaraguae

**Lee Brockmann**

Vandachostylis Lou Sneary 'Bluebird'

**Rebecca Swartz**

Lepanthes astrophora

Gastrochilus obliguus

Pomatocalpa spicata

**Natalie Imbier**

Sigmatostalix radicans

Lepotes bicolor

**Bill Arduser**

Brassavola Little Stars

Brassocattleya Vida Lee

**Leilani and Harold Norman**

Cattleya Goldenzelle 'Passion'

Dendrobium Hilda Poxon

**Donna Petitt**

Paphiopedilum Black Silk x Night Hawk

Habenaria erichmichellii

**Marc Gray**

Phalaenopsis Meen Estrella

Pholidota rubra

Paphiopedilum Avalon Pearl

Epidendrum Porpax

**Marge Tanguay**

Phragmipedium Ainsworthii

Phalaenopsis Magic Art

Paphiopedilum Sorcerer's Love

Paphiopedilum primulinum

Cattleya Misty Girl 'Autumn Symphony' AM/AOS

**Roger West**

Bratonia Charles M. Fitch 'Izumi'

Cattlianthe Blue Box 'Gainsborough'

Rhyncholaeliocattleya Gene Crocker

Cattleya Makie's Flare

Cattleya Mae Hawkins 'Newberry'

Rhyncholaeliocattleya Hausermann's Holiday 'Christmas'

Cattlianthe Chocolate Drop 'Kodama'

Rhyncholaeliocattleya Caesar's Head 'Carolina Autumn'

Cattleya Breen's Jenny Ann

Rhycattleanthe Love Passion

Rhyncholaeliocattleya Odom's Sweet Lemon

**Steve Reardon**

Restrepia xanthophthalma

Paphiopedilum spicerianum

Paphiopedilum Sorcerer's Love

Paphiopedilum Spring Moonbeam

**Steve Steiner**

Epidendrum capricornu

Phragmipedium Ainsworthii

Dendrobium crepidiferum

Epidendrum nocturnum

Masdevallia decumana

Restrepia brachypus

## **A Plea From Your Editor**

This is a call for articles from your friendly neighborhood newsletter editor. If you'd like to see more than blank space here, please think of something you'd like to read. If you have growing tips, you can include them. If you have an interesting story about seeing orchids on a vacation, share it! Did you go to an American Orchid Society meeting or festival? Write about it! Write about how you started growing orchids in the first place. Any articles in the newsletter are fantastic. If anyone wants to write up something about the November re-potting clinic that would be amazing! I know there were bribes being handed out the other month, but I'd like to make the request on a more personal note: I've started growing orchids (damn the peer pressure) and the knowledge I've gained from the newsletter over the years has helped them not yet die. Therefore, the more articles we can produce for the newsletter, the better chance my orchids have at survival. I'm totally selfish that way. It's all about my own personal use and entertainment. I mean, it's bad enough that the orchid collection illness has already taken hold, and I have not only one orchid, but four--how am I expected to keep them alive if you orchid masters don't tell me how?

## **Upcoming Events**

**Next meeting is December 18, 2016 at 2 pm. It's the annual holiday potluck, so please bring a dish to share!**

**Announcing the dates for the Amherst Orchid Society Orchid Show! It will be held at the Smith Vocational High School:**

**Saturday, February 25, 2017 9:00 am to 5:00 pm and  
Sunday, February 26, 2017 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.**