

Greater Whorled Pogonia
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The Newsletter of the
AMHERST ORCHID SOCIETY

An Affiliate of the American Orchid Society

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May 2020

The May 17 meeting at Munson Library has been cancelled.

We are still hoping to have our June and July picnic meetings.... More information will be sent as it becomes available.

Online Show Table

The AmOS website is hosting photos of members plants during the social distancing restrictions. Check out the photos here:

<https://amherstorchidsociety.org/member-photos/>

If you have blooming plant photos that you would like to share, send them to Marc Gray at bulbophyllum@myfairpoint.net

May 17 Virtual Meeting on Zoom

Join fellow club members to see what's blooming and chat about orchids. If you would like to receive an invitation, contact Liz Marinelli at

ewmarinelli@comcast.net

My FCC Pink Lady's Slipper

Roger West

Through the woods about 200 yards behind my Conway home, you will find the pink lady's slippers, *Cypripedium acaule*. They bloom around Memorial Day and last about three weeks in bloom. The majority of the pinks are found growing under power lines that run west to east as far as you can see. They are found on the southern edge of the woods that border the power lines and only on elevated drier areas. They grow amongst short blueberry plants, ferns which offer some shade during the summer months and various types of moss. All of them are close to the edge of the woods and get a great deal of sun until mid-afternoon. In good years I have counted 40 blooms in this area. Recently the power company enhanced the dirt road that ran under the electric lines by leveling, straightening and covering with trap rock. They needed to do this so they could replace many of the old poles and large equipment was required. This eliminated a few of the Cyps especially a nice clump of five blooms that was the best attempt of a Cyp specimen. There are a few pinks that grow inside the woods but they come and go. They are present for a couple of years and then gone. Sometimes they reappear in a few years especially if a nearby tree falls. I guess the increase in light brings the Cyp back to life.

This brings me to my FCC pink. FCC refers to First Class Certificate and the AOS awards it too an orchid bloom that has attained a point total of 90 or better. Point total of 75-79 is awarded a HCC/AOS and 80-89 is an AM/AOS. This special pink does not grow with the others that I have described. It grows about 50 yards into the woods under very old, tall pines. It is easy to find growing in a bed of pine needles and not much else in the litter under these pine trees. Why is it a FCC bloom? The two leaves are larger and a darker green than the pinks under the power lines. The bloom is much larger and a real dark pink, almost red. This magnificent bloom sits on a longer, sturdier stem. The shadier growing conditions must contribute to its larger, darker bloom. The pinks under the lines are smaller and lighter in color because of all the sun they receive. I moved to Conway in 1976 and soon discovered the pinks and I knew what they were growing up in Hadley we had a pine forest, now behind Hampshire College, that had some pinks. Back in 1976 before I knew what C.I.T.E.S. was, I dug up some of these pinks and placed them in my garden where I thought they would grow. They lasted all of two years!

This FCC pink has bloomed by its lonesome for 35 years. Some years the bloom or the whole plant disappears after being open only a few days. As I have stated, this plant is easy to see so I'm sure the deer and bears find it just as easy. Many years ago having joined the society, I would take a toothpick on my walks and pollenate some of the pinks. There were a few pinks across

the road and I would use pollen from them and cross it onto the power line pinks. I did see seed pods although it might have been bee sex instead of toothpick sex. I pollinated the FCC bloom a few times and it took although the pod was eaten a few of the times.

I was happy to see this FCC bloom all by itself for many years except for the times when the varmits got ahold of it. Then five years ago there were six blooming pinks surrounding the original plant. Where did they come from and why a whole bunch of them? It must have been that toothpick! I have not figured out how these pinks grow. Some years they are present then gone and back again. What puzzles me the most is the lack of seeing immature plants. You know, a smaller plant with small leaves and then next year it will bloom. It is rare for me to see two Cyp leaves and not a flowering stem coming from the center of these two leaves. Maybe the smaller plants are in the under growth and not seen. Maybe they store up energy in their roots and when enough they send up a bloom. Whatever, the blooms are magnificent and a joy when out for a walk with the dogs.

It was two years in a row seeing the now seven plants in bloom. The original, I think, now has four leaves and two blooms. Then the tornado hit that Saturday night in Late February three years ago. The tornado path went right through the pines where the FCC grew. The damage was quite severe. I figured the pinks were done for it because the uprooted trees and blown apart trunks. But they all came up the following spring although some were bent around the downed limbs.

If this May you are able to get out during this Corona problem and want to see some lady's slippers, here are a few suggestions. Stanley Park in Westfield has a small wildflower garden and there is one clump of yellow lady's slippers. This one plant has usually 8-10 blooms and is quite a sight. The Park used to have many pinks but they built another pavilion and good-bye to the pinks. I guess they never heard of C.I.T.E.S. Another place is the Ledges in Shelburne Falls. It is off route 2 on Patten Rd. There are signs, just head toward Davenport's Sugar House and you see the road. You have to park and walk a quarter mile to reach the pinks which will be on both sides of the road. There are marked trails and on one of them you can find a clump of yellows but can be missed if they are pointing away from you and all that can be seen are the brown backsides of the petals and sepals. This has happened to me twice but I saw them on the way back. There is also a large bunch of wild red columbine that is easily seen. Another place is the Bridge of Flowers in Shelburne Falls. On the Shelburne side are three clumps of hybrid Cyps. The bridge blooms are peek a little before Memorial Day as well as the yellows in Stanley Park. As you have surmised, there is no FCC pink but the one, now others, have brought a great deal of joy when I'm out on my walks with the dogs.

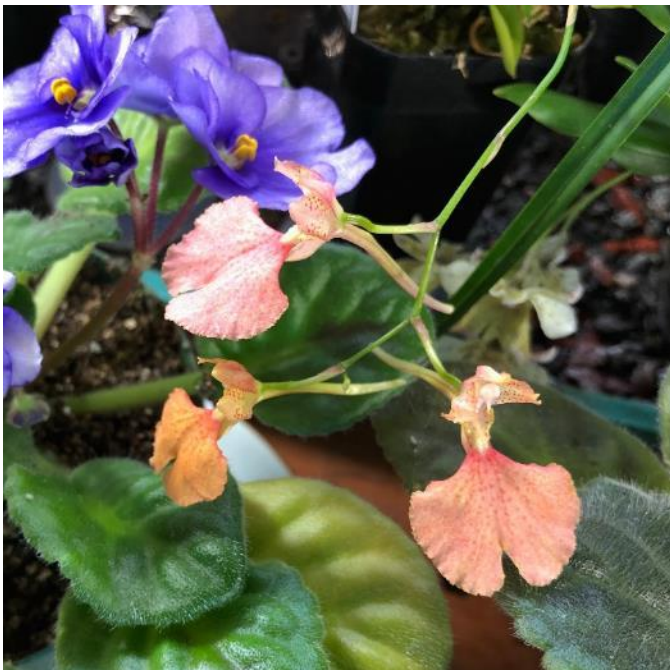
April Virtual Meeting on Zoom

Liz Marinelli

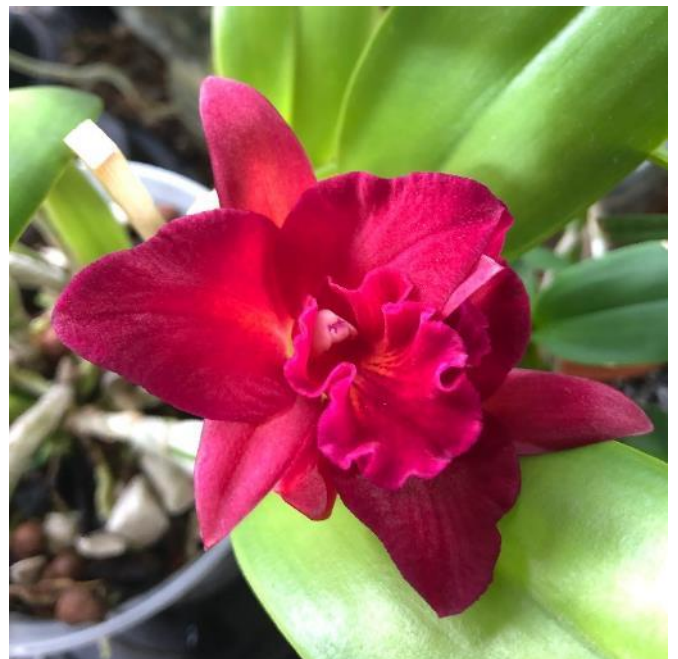
Our April meeting should have been on the 19th- but the coronavirus accomplished what New England weather failed to do many times...cancel the meeting. Several members joined a virtual meeting on Zoom and while it was no substitute for a real meeting, it was fun and allowed us to show off some plants that were annoyingly looking better than ever with no one to appreciate them. There were 7 of us, and it was pretty much an online show table, no club business was discussed. Not only did we see some outstanding plants, we met a few members' pets and caught a glimpse of some growing areas. Joe was able to host so that we were not cut off after 40 minutes (the time limit for a zoom meeting without a membership) and the meeting lasted about an hour and 15 minutes. Some of the plants we saw:

- Betsy Higgins-Lc Toshi's Magic 'Doris', Dendrobium Blue Foxtail, Burrageara Sunkissed 'Buttercup', Epidendrum Max Valley, Maxillaria tenuifolia, Compariattia Higoshiyama
- Maryanne Laukatis- Sarcochilus fitzgeraldii X Hot Santa (membership plant 2018), Leptotes bicolor, Paphiopedilum Coro Beauty (a yellow bulldog), SLC. Hsin Buu Lady "Y.T"AM/AOS, Dendrobium Gold Star 'Orange Royal', Bletilla striata
- Lee Brockman- Sarco. Kulaura Firemist
- Steve Steiner- Scaphosepalum gibberosum, Phrag Quasine, Dendrobium mohilianum, Lycaste campbellii, Dendrobium Victoria regina, Masd hirtzii
- Liz Marinelli- Cym. Wakakusa Delight, Cym. Fairy Wand, Dendrobium Microchip, Oesterdella centradenia, Cym, eburneum
- Dave Marinelli- Camaridium praetans, *Rechingerara* M and D Fliss

The May meeting will also be cancelled, so consider joining the zoom meeting- it will be held late afternoon on May 17. Contact Liz Marinelli ewmarinelli@comcast.net if you would like to receive an invitation. We miss getting a close up look at the plants and enjoying their fragrances, but a virtual meeting is a good way to keep in contact with other club members and chat about orchids for a while.



Compariattia Higoshiyama
Betsy Higgins



Slc Jewel Box 'Scheherazade'
Betsy Higgins

From the online show table:



Dendrobium (Dockrillia) linguiforme
Marc Gray



Paphiopedilum Odette's Desire
Steve Reardon



Scaphosepalum gibberosum
Steve Steiner