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The Newsletter of the  
**AMHERST ORCHID SOCIETY**

An Affiliate of the American Orchid Society

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## **August Meeting of the Amherst Orchid Society**

*~At the Home of Greg and Judy Hudon~*

215 Woodland Way, Russell MA

Cell phone- 413-427-0876

**Sunday, August 20-** arrive any time after 1 p.m.,  
Hamburgers, hotdogs and chili served around 2:00

**Please bring:**

- an appetizer, side dish or dessert
- your own chair

**Parking:** In the driveway and front tree belt

## July Meeting at the Marinellis' House

The July meeting was held at Liz and Dave Marinelli's home, the first time in many years that it was not held in Conway at Roger West's hilltop farm. Rain was threatening but as luck would have it the greenhouse was emptied of plants since Dave was in the midst of constructing an addition, so we set up chairs and a show table in there. The rain never did appear, but we were prepared. We were a small group, only about 9 in all. There were two new members attending- Joanne Skiba and Darcy Johnson. Welcome!

Vice President Marge called the meeting to order, in Joe's absence. Marc discussed the order to Lehua orchids- so far we have 16 plants in the order, we need 30 to make it worthwhile. He reported that Joe is working on the order for new t-shirts, both printed and embroidered styles.

Marc reported that Roger West's wife Beth has donated Roger's remaining plants to the club. Marc and Joe picked them up and are giving them care to make sure they are healthy. A possible plan is to sell them to club members with the proceeds going to a scholarship fund in Roger's memory.

The next gathering will be at the Hudons' home in Russell on August 20. Here are the directions to their house:

215 Woodland Way, Russell Ma. Take exit 41, Westfield, on the mass pike. At the light, take right on Elm St. (Rt 10&202). About 1.4 mi, turn right on Franklin St. ( Rt. 20 ). This will change to Russell Rd. Follow about 1.5 mi. Take a left on Lloyds Hill Rd. At the stop light take a right on Western Ave. After passing Stanley park and Westfield State University. Bear left at the fork and continue into Russell. At the town line this changes to General Knox Rd. Follow about 1.6mi, and take left on Woodland Way. 0.4 mi. on the left is our home. There is parking in the driveway and the front tree belt. Arrive anytime after 1:00 and we plan on eating about 2:00 followed by the meeting. Please bring chairs and a side dish as we will be serving burgers, dogs and chili. Looking forward to seeing everyone. Here is our cell number if needed 413-427-0876.



## Show Table July 2023

<p><b>Darcy Johnson</b> Dendrobium Spider Lily</p> <p><b>Dave Marinelli</b> Bulbophyllum dearei Coelogyne usitana Maxillaria arbuscula Psychopsis Mendenhall 'Hildos'</p> <p><b>Liz Marinelli</b> Cattleya purpurata var. carnea Cochleanthes discolor 'Lil' Cochlioda noezliana Cynorchis gibbosa Encyclia Summer Stars 'Jungle Nights' Pleurothallis pterophora Promenaea Winelight Stenocoryne aureofulva</p> <p><b>Ann Robinson</b> Bllra Big Shot 'Pink Leopard' Oncidiopsis Onolicious 'Vivid' Zygopetalum Arthur Elle 'Tombstone'</p>	<p><b>Steve Steiner</b> Calanthe tripillata Chondrorhyncha lendleyana 'Frisky' Dendrobium crepidiferum(sulawasiense) Dendrobium lawsii Dendrobium purpureum Dracula tubeana Dracula woolwardiae Epi. Capricornu Odontonia Rustic Bridge x Debutante Paph Chia Dancer Paph delenatii x armeniacum Paph rothschildianum x wilhelminiae Promenaea stapeliodes Phal Joy Spring Canary 'Taipei' Phal Tying Shin Fly Eagle 'Wilson' Phal Vin's Black Eagle 'Wilson' Vanda Patchara Delight</p>
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*Cattleya purpurata var. carnea*  
Liz Marinelli



## Spotlight on the Show Table: Draculas Grown by Steve Steiner

There were two unusual visitors to the show table at the July meeting- Draculas from Steve Steiner's collection. They don't usually make the journey to meetings since they collapse in anything but the highest humidity. But in July in Massachusetts the humidity is pretty close to a tropical rainforest, so Steve brought them along. With the day's high humidity and some misting from a bottle, they survived very well. Here's what Steve has to say about Draculas:

The genus *Dracula* was established in 1978 when Dr. Carlyle Luer split it off from the genus *Masdevallia*. Apparently, the name came from the Latin meaning 'Little Dragon' rather than naming them after a Transylvanian count. That being said, many of the species' names seem to be related to the count, including *D. vampira*.



There are about 100 species and several hybrids, including hybrids with *Masdevallias*. Most species occur in the northern Andes. They appear to be pollinated by fungus gnats attracted to the lip which looks like the gills on the underside of a small mushroom. Most *Masdevallias* are bird pollinated. The fungus-like lip of the two minute petals next to the column give it a face like appearance. These are the "monkey face" orchids that scammers try to sell seeds from.

I have grown Draculas for several years. They like to be kept cool and moist like the cloud forests where most of them live. The larger, showier ones will collapse when removed from the greenhouse, or if the greenhouse becomes too hot or dry. There was an excellent article in the AOS bulletin last month on how to grow them. If you are willing to live with some spots on the leaves you need not be quite so particular about growing them. The large flowering Draculas need a greenhouse or a terrarium, the smaller flowering ones seem less picky. The leaves will be prettier if you use rainwater or deionized water, but who grows orchids for their leaves? If you can live with some black spots on some leaves, the Springfield tap water is ok.

I grow them in New Zealand sphagnum moss and perlite (5-10%). Except for *Dracula sodiroi* (which has reverted back to bird pollination), they have to grow in a basket since the flowers grow downward into the medium and out through the bottom. I water them around twice a week, less in the dead of winter





*Dracula woolwardii*

when it's very dark. I mist them daily. I try to water them twice- once to dissolve the salts and 30 minutes later to flush any salts out. I repot them at least every other year, but they would probably do better if I did it yearly. New leaves are spotless for a few months after repotting. I use very dilute fertilizer every other watering.

Draculas are plants that you grow only for yourself- it is difficult to display them since they collapse out of the greenhouse. I brought two to display at last month's meeting since it was muggy. The flowers are almost twice as large in the winter as the summer. If you are lucky enough to own a greenhouse, they are well worth the effort.



*Vanda Pachara Delight*  
Steve Steiner



*Zygopetalum Arthur Elle 'Tombstone'*  
Ann Robinson



*Bulbophyllum dearei*  
Dave Marinelli



*Paph Chia Dancer*  
Steve Steiner



*Dendrobium Spider Lily*  
Darcy Johnson



*Cochleanthes discolor* 'Lil'  
Liz Marinelli



# A Promising Weapon in the War Against Slugs

Liz Marinelli

A year or so ago in Orchids Magazine there was an article about a new bait for slugs and snails that promised to solve the mollusk problem once and for all. It certainly sounded too good to be true- when I had previously interviewed club members about their methods of snail and slug control, everyone expressed frustration with methods they had tried and resorted mainly to nighttime seek-and-destroy missions. The author of the article reached out to commercial orchid growers and learned of a product called Ferrox. It contains chelated iron and is safe to use around people, pets and wildlife. What's more it is not affected by water and humidity like other slug baits which quickly turn into ugly mold balls that persist in the greenhouse for months.

In our greenhouse we don't have a huge slug problem, but when they do strike it is heartbreaking. They take their time and select the bud of the flower on the plant that is about to bloom for the first time in years, destroying it overnight. So we decided that Ferrox was definitely worth a try. But getting a supply of it proved to be a challenge. It is not sold in Massachusetts so Dave contacted the distributor (it is made by a German company) who said it could be shipped to an address in Pennsylvania. Our son who lives outside Philadelphia agreed to receive the shipment once we assured him that his name would not be placed on any terrorist watch lists. We ordered the minimum size and picked it up on our most recent visit.

We sprinkled the blue granules on the floor and benches of the greenhouse, not expecting to see immediate results. I expected to wait several months or a year to see if there was any more slug activity, since their attacks are infrequent. But imagine my surprise...a week or so after we used the product, I saw a dead slug on the floor of the greenhouse! I've never seen that before and I interpret it as a good sign. Then we sprinkled some outside near some pots and the next day saw a few slugs that showed a blue coloration- they had clearly eaten some of the baits. Still, I will not judge until more time has passed without slug damage but the initial results look promising.

Steve Steiner tried some in his greenhouse, and he reported finding noticeably fewer slugs on his nighttime hunting expeditions. Another good sign!

As to the claim that the pellets are not affected by moisture, I found that they do not grow mold as readily as other types of bait, but they do grow a little, and they turn slimy after prolonged contact with water. Still, I would say that they are an improvement in that respect over other types we have tried.

I'm interested to see if there is any effect on the tiny brown snails that sometimes live in orchid pots. I consider them to be a separate problem and I'm not as hopeful that the Ferrox will kill them.

**Mark Your Calendars for the Fall Meetings at  
Munson Memorial Library in Amherst:**

**September 10, October 8, November 12, December 10**