THE ORCHID ENTHUSIAST

NEWSLETTER OF THE

CENTRAL NEW YORK ORCHID SOCIETY

Volume 2, Issue 5: January 2001 *Affiliated with the American Orchid Society and the Orchid Digest*

GUEST SPEAKER: ERIC CHRISTENSON TO SPEAK ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 9TH – A TRIP TO PERU

Old Man Winter has been working overtime. With more than 80 inches of snow already, this winter is shaping up to be one of the whitest in recent memory. But doesn't that just serve to sweeten the time we spend with our orchids?! After all, what better way to spend a bitter cold and snowy winter day than by tending to our precious tropical gems. If, however, that is not enough for you, what about a tour of Incan ruins dotted with *Masdevallia veitchiana*, and other intriguing tropical orchids? This month, Dr. Eric A. Christenson, renowned research taxonomist and author, will bring a little bit of South America to Central New York, and give us a tour of Peru including her people, her flora, and the famous Incan ruins of Machu Picchu. And along our way, he will show us some of the fantastic new orchid discoveries that he and colleagues have made. **Please note that in order to accommodate Eric's schedule, our meeting will be held on a special day, time, & place: Tuesday, January 9TH at 6:30PM in the Parish Hall of St. Augustine's Church, located on the opposite side of the parking lot from our usual meeting place.**

Dr. Christenson is a Past President of the Connecticut Orchid Society, and is a strident advocate of conservation by cultivation and artificial propagation of orchids. He is well known for his articles that attempt to bridge the gap between taxonomy and horticulture, as well as for his in-depth book reviews. In 2001, he will complete an Encyclopedia of Orchid Species for the American Orchid Society. And this month, the International Phalaenopsis Alliance will publish Dr. Christenson's much anticipated new monograph of the genus *Phalaenopsis*, the first reassessment of that popular genus in over 20 years. According to the Jan/Feb/Mar 1997 issue of the Orchid Digest (Vol. 61 (1)), Dr. Christenson makes his home in Sarasota Florida, and has a not-so-ambitious goal of learning the entire orchid family (!). His favorite orchid genus is *Phalaenopsis*. **We will be taking Eric to dinner at Lock 24 in Baldwinsville prior to the meeting (at 5:00PM). Please contact Dave Ditz if you're interested in attending, no later than Monday, 1/8 (635-8148).**

IN THIS ISSUE...

DECEMBER MEETING: ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY AT PIER 57

Our Annual Holiday Party was held on December 3RD at Pier 57. Attendance was excellent, with over 30 members participating. Overall, the food was very good, and an enjoyable time was had by all. Despite a good December chill in the air, the show table managed to live up to it's fine reputation of always outdoing itself during the holiday party. There was also a huge raffle table. The prime order of club business was the election of officers. The slate presented by the election committee was unanimously confirmed by the club; all officers remain the same with the exception of our new Vice President and Program Chair, Gary Stensland. In addition, President Dave Ditz made a motion to nominate Elinor Burton, our club treasurer, for Lifetime Membership. Elinor's contributions to our annual show are largely responsible for how well-organized it is every year, and she is entirely deserving of our continued gratitude. Dave's motion was overwhelmingly approved by the club.

MEETING MINUTES FOR DECEMBER 3RD, 2000

The December meeting was our annual holiday dinner, held at Pier 57 in Liverpool. There were about 30 members in attendance, and excellent show table, and elections were held during a short business meeting.

1. Elinor Burton was nominated for Lifetime Membership in the club due to her seemingly tireless efforts on its behalf. The well-deserved nomination was voted on and unanimously accepted.

2. Elections for the new year were held. The elections committee submitted a slate that included Dave Ditz as president, Gary Stensland as Vice President, Barbara Weller as secretary, Elinor Burton as Treasurer, and Jeff Stuart as Newsletter Editor. All of the potential officers accepted their respective nominations. The nominations were confirmed with a unanimous vote by the club.

3. Dr. Eric Christenson will be the guest speaker for the January meeting. Eric is a specialist on *Phalaenopsis* species. To accommodate his schedule, the meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 9TH, in the Parish Hall of St. Augustine's Church--the Parish hall is on the opposite side of the parking lot from our normal meeting place in the Church assembly hall. The meeting time will be 6:30PM.

4. There was a lively discussion on the Flower & Garden Show to be held at the State Fairgrounds this spring. The show has been sold to the organization that holds the Home Show, and it is unknown how this will effect our participation.

5. Milton Carpenter, the President of the American Orchid Society and proprietor of Everglades Orchids in Florida (http://www.evergladesorchids.com/), will be the guest speaker in May, at our regular meeting date and time. He will be bringing a selection of orchids for sale; Everglades Orchids specializes in warmth tolerant *Cymbidiums* and *Oncidiinae.* Members are encouraged to pre-order from the web-site. Our annual auction, usually held in May, will be postponed to a later date.

Respectfully submitted, Barbara Weller
CNYOS Secretary

***IMPORTANT!!!* Pay Your Dues!**

Have you paid your dues? A casual look at our membership list indicates that many of you have not. Most of the courtesy mailings have already been cut off of the mailing list--don't let that happen to you! CNYOS uses your membership dues to cover the cost of the newsletter and bring in both local and nationally known speakers, including this month's meeting by Eric Christenson. These activities are not cheap--on average, the newsletter costs nearly $1.50 per issue (and now the cost of postage has increased). Check the label on this newsletter: if it reads "C" you are a Courtesy mailing. If it reads "M2K," you are a member and owe dues for the new season. "M01" reflects a paid status. "CM" denotes a Commercial mailing (no dues required). These labels may not be entirely up to date, so if you've already paid, your status will be updated by the next newsletter. Annual club dues are $15.00 per person or $17.00 per family, payable to CNYOS. Dues should be mailed to CNYOS Treasurer Elinor Burton, at 301 Sherbrooke Rd., Manlius NY 13104.

CNYOS CALENDAR

January 9, 2001 **January Meeting--Special Date and Time! Eric Christenson**, will be our Guest speaker. The meeting will be held on a Tuesday evening at 6:30PM in the Parish Hall of St. Augustine's Church on the opposite side of the church parking lot from our usual location.

March 16-19 **Central New York Flower and Garden Show.**

April 6-8 **New York International Orchid Show,** The World Trade Center Winter Garden, New York, NY. Contact: Carlos Fighetti, 325 Piermont Rd., Closter, NJ 07624, (201) 767-0621.

April 20-22 **Genesee Region Orchid Society Show**, Eisenhart Auditorium, Rochester Museum and Science Center, 657 East Ave., Rochester, NY. Contact: Mark Gillette, 5190 Beam Hill Road, Marion, NY 14505.

April 27-29 **Southern Tier Orchid Society Show,** Oakdale Mall, Harry L Drive & Reynolds Road, Johnson City, NY. Contact: Patricia Bonamo, 808 Echo Road, Vestal, NY 13850, (607) 748-5314.

May 6 Tentative Guest Speaker, **Milton Carpenter, President of the American Orchid Society** and proprietor of Everglades Orchids. Details to be announced.

May ??? **Annual CNYOS Spring Auction.** Date to be announced.

September 2001 **Guest speaker, Howard Ginsburg**: Proprietor of *Bedford Orchids* (Montreal, Quebec, http://www.bedfordorchids.com/) and AOS Judge (regular at our the CNYOS Show). Howard specializes in *Phalaenopsis* hybrids and will discuss new trends in hybridization of perhaps the most popular of all orchids.

GROS NEWS: NEWS FROM THE GENESEE REGION ORCHID SOCIETY

In January we warmly welcome Dr. Eric Christenson, the renowned research taxonomist and author. Dr. Christenson will take us on a tour of Peru including the famous Inca ruins of Machu Picchu. He will reveal some of the wonderful new orchid discoveries he and his colleagues have made, and will show many aspects of Peru, its flora and its people.

Dr. Christenson is known for his articles that attempt to bridge the gap between taxonomy and horticulture as well as for his in-depth book reviews. In 2001, he will complete an Encyclopedia of orchid species for the American Orchid Society. This month, the International Phalaenopsis Alliance will publish Dr. Christenson's much anticipated new monograph of the genus Phalaenopsis, the first reassessment of that popular genus in over 20 years. We will be taking Eric to dinner at Hogan's Hideaway, 5:30 p.m. on January 8th. If you'd like to join us for dinner, please call Jim Marlow at 889-7083 by January 5th.

Taken with permission from *The Orchid Collection*, Newsletter of the Genesee Region Orchid Society, Vol. 23, No. 4 December 2000, Phil Matt, Newsletter Editor (716) 288-7025.

STOS NEWS: NEWS FROM THE SOUTHERN TIER ORCHID SOCIETY

At the January STOS meeting on Jan. 14, Luis Matienzo will speak on a topic related to small species culture under lights.

In February we will have a slide program entitled Angraecums for Small Places by Fred Hillerman.

In March Greg Martin will speak on various aspects of orchid judging.

Our show this year is April 26 - 29.

Monthly meetings begin at 2:00 PM in the Vestal Public Library. For directions, etc. call STOS president Dave Clemens at 570-879-4244 or e-mail him at <cclemens@epix.net>.

DECEMBER SHOW TABLE

Cypripedium Alliance

Paph. venustum	Ditz
Paph. Landmark (*glaucophyllum* x *sanderianum*)	"
Paph. barbigerum	Cohen
Paph. villosum	Stensland
Paph. Leeanum (*insigne* x *spicerianum*)	Witkin
Paph. Song of Love (*liemianum* x *lowii*)	"
Paph. insigne	Coleman

Cattleya Alliance

B. cucullata	Braue
Lc. Ann Akagi (Puppy Love x *C. walkeriana*)	Bordoni
C. Wilsoniana (*bicolor* x *harrisoniana*)	Capella
C. maxima	"
Hksa. Koolau Sunset (*Slc.* Mae Hawkins x *Ctna.* Keith Roth)	Cohen
Bark. naevosa	Ditz
Lpt. unicolor	Coleman

Vandaceous

Phal. Mini Mark (Micro Nova x *philippinense*)	Kot
Phal. golden Peoker x Baile de Gala	Bordoni
V. coerulea	Capella
Phal. unknown	Lloyd
Phal. equestris	Coleman
Phal. unknown	"

Oncidium Alliance

Onc. Twinkle (*cheirophorum* x *ornithorhynchum*)	Witkin
Onc. Twinkle	Ditz
Ntla. barkeri	"
Mclna. Pagan Lovesong (sic) (*Odcdm.* Tiger Butter x *Brs. verrucosa*)	Kot
Col. Wildcat (*Odtna.* Rustic Bridge x *Odcdm.* Crowborough)	"
Onc. Carnival Costume (Sarcatum x Red Belt)	?
Onc. ornithorhynchum	Capella
Onc. varicosum	"

Dendrobium

Den. Princess (Komachimusume x *moniliforme*)	Coyle
Den. lithocola	Cohen
Den. Memoria Sunwinds Cio-Cio-San (Anna Bibus x *lithocola*)	"
Den. tetragonum	Witkin
Den. unknown	Kot
Den. Nora Tokunaga (*atroviolaceum* x *rhodostictum*)	Coleman

Miscellaneous

Masd. Ken Dole (*coccinea* x *tonduzii*)	Coleman
Pths. minuthallis (sic)	"
Sngl. longifolia	Kot
Max. cucullata	"
Cnths. marginata	Capella
Cirr. Louis Sander (*Bulb. longissimum* x *Bulb. ornatissimum*)	Ditz
Eria coronaria	"
Masd. strobelii	Lloyd

Iris Cohen

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS...

CLUB REMINDERS

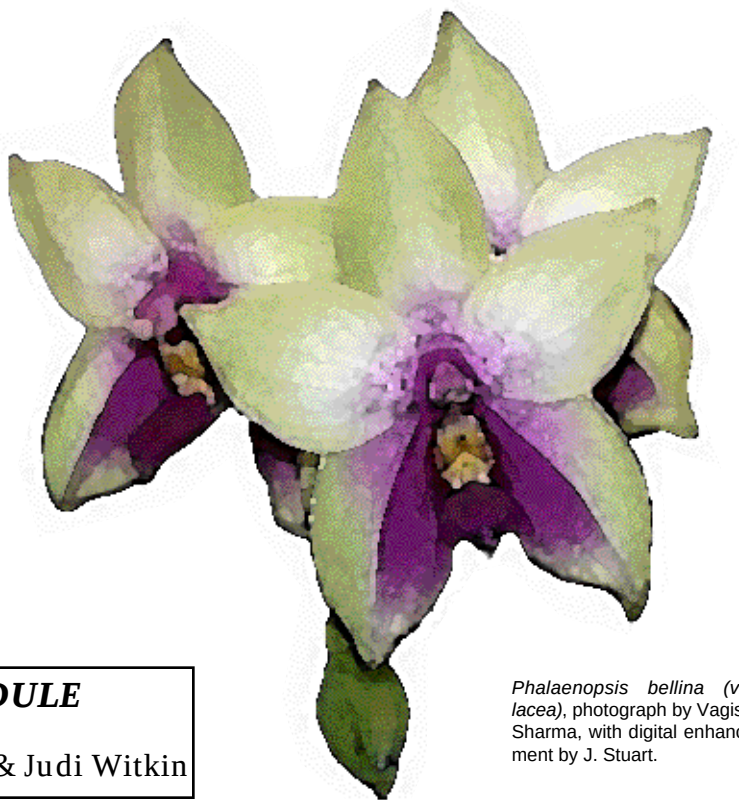
Orchid-Growing Supplies are now available, including fir bark, sphagnum, sponge rock, charcoal, and 40W fluorescent tubes. Call Rich Groll for details on pricing and availability.

The **CNYOS Club Library** is now located at St. Augustine's church. Make arrangements with Dianne Bordoni if you want to borrow an item from the Library.

DON'T FORGET TO BRING YOUR BLOOMING ORCHIDS FOR THE MONTHLY SHOW TABLE!!!

REFRESHMENT SCHEDULE

January 2001 Gary Stensland & Judi Witkin



Phalaenopsis bellina (violacea), photograph by Vagisha Sharma, with digital enhancement by J. Stuart.

MARIE "ANDY" MYERS: OCTOBER 8, 1930 - DECEMBER 28, 2000

Long-time CNYOS member and Past President Marie "Andy" Myers passed away in her home on December 28TH. For the past few months Andy had been battling inoperable lung cancer. I did not know Andy well--I wish I had known her better, and this fact was made even more poignant to me at her funeral. Several members of our society have also expressed this sentiment over the last week, as we remembered her as both a fellow member and a friend. Andy was one of those truly beautiful and genuine people whom only rarely do we have the pleasure and privilege of knowing. Testament to her caring nature was the number of people who gathered to remember her at her funeral last Saturday. I distinctly recall meeting her when I was working with Jim Rice in Homer, NY–-it was a memorable experience, and she immediately impressed me with her sincerity and generosity of spirit. She was always in good spirits, even in the face of her failing health. She had a gift for making people feel comfortable and welcome, especially new members to the club, as well as visitors to her home where she was an incomparable hostess and loved to entertain. Many of us had the opportunity to sample her delicious cheesecake-pastry on those occasions when she brought it to our meetings! Andy was a renaissance woman in the truest meaning of the term–a lover of art, nature and travel, and all things beautiful–and this was doubly true of her wonderful garden and her orchids. She also loved animals. Her dogs brought her great joy, especially her German Shepherd, Jenny, of whom she spoke as if a daughter. As Jenny aged, she decided to adopt another dog to keep her company. And when Jenny died, Andy adopted a third dog to keep the second dog company. They were to her like family, she used to say. It is wonderful for a person to recognize joy in one's life, and this was especially true for Andy, through her friends and her job, her garden, her dogs, and her orchids. Most of all, she was a person who earned the respect and admiration of all who knew her. As one of her friends said, she embraced her life with zest and courage, and met it all with clarity and honesty. Andy's loss will be keenly felt by our society and by all who knew her–she will certainly be missed.

I'd like to offer my thanks to all who offered their remembrances of Andy, several of which are included above. Jeff Stuart

SPOT LIGHT ON... MASDEVALLIAS VEITCHIANA & COCCINEA

Winter is the season for *Masdevallias*, especially in Central New York where summers can be oppressively hot. Like many of the *Pleurothalids*, most *Masdevallias* thrive in cooler temperatures, unlike many of the orchids with which we are familiar. *Masdevallias veitchiana* and *coccinea* are two of the most spectacular of this genus, and are prominent in the background of many hybrids

MASDEVALLIA VEITCHIANA

Masdevallia veitchiana must truly be the king of *Masdevallias*. The large flowers can be 8-inches (20cm) tall and are of the most brilliant orange-red color, and has an iridescent sheen produced by minute crimson-purple papillae which cover the sepals. *Masd. veitchiana* can be found growing among the rocks in and around the ancient ruins of Machu Picchu in southeast Peru. One can only surmise what importance these flowers held in Inca decoration and ritual. Coming from these high elevations, this species requires cool conditions for successful culture. Plants bloom best when well-established.

MASDEVALLIA COCCINEA

Over 100 years ago, Veitch reported, "In the Sierra Nevada de Chita, it spreads in uninterrupted masses covering acres of the upland slopes. When in bloom these masses of *Masdevallia coccinea* present one of the most striking floral sights it is possible to behold." If *Masdevallia veitchiana* is the king of the *Masdevallias*, then *coccinea* must certainly be queen. The large (2-inch, 5cm) brilliant flowers come in an array of fluorescent colors ranging from scarlet to fuchsia, with yellow and white color forms also being known. The species usually grows as a terrestrial at high elevations (2600m and higher) of Colombia and Peru. In its native habitat *Masd. coccinea* experiences an average temperature of about 52°F. (12° C.) making it temperamental under all but cool growing conditions.

Reference: The Orchid Photo Page by Greg Allikas: http://www.orchidworks.com/

USE OF COCONUT HUSK CHIPS FOR POTTING MEDIUM: PART 1

BOB & LYNN WELLENSTEIN

To grow a good root system on a Paph you need to balance a number of things. Roots need adequate aeration, firm anchoring (wobbly plants' roots will have their sensitive growing tips damaged/destroyed), adequate supply of moisture without remaining too wet too long (which eliminates adequate aeration), adequate and properly balanced mineral nutrition without excess, reasonable temperatures, and a suitable pH in their surroundings. Because paphs do depend on root

Paphiopedilum Roots

hairs for water and mineral uptake, it is important to grow new roots frequently as the effectiveness of root hair uptake does diminish with age. I had a discussion on the phone recently with a grower who made the comment "Well, Paphs just don't grow many roots anyway", and then added, "do they?". They can fill the pot with roots when their conditions are met and will do far better for you under these circumstances, as well as be able to weather the occasional problem that may develop. It's entirely possible to grow Paphs, and even flower them with few or even no roots, through foliar feeding and good humidity, but they are much more exacting when it comes to getting them to grow lots of roots. It is also important to maintain new root growth as the root hairs along the roots lose their ability to adsorb water and nutrient as they age, so you need to keep some level of new growth going to maximize uptake. This is why they are "easy to grow, but difficult to grow very well". You need to know what your water quality is and what it means, and then figure out how much and what to feed, and appropriate pH, and what special needs for substrate some may have.

Like many *Paphiopedilum* and *Phragmipedium* growers, we have depended on bark based potting mixes for 20 years. We used small bark, extra coarse horticultural perlite (despite the name, it's pretty small), and chopped New Zealand Sphagnum moss for smaller pots and medium bark, #4 spongerock, and chopped New Zealand sphagnum for larger pots. In more recent years we'd added either #2 or #4 charcoal, depending on pot size. While results have generally been good, there have been a number of problems to deal with. Sequoia brand bark (the only brand we found suitable for Paphs) supply has had some interruptions, and a few years ago the quality was very low, basically being pre-broken down before you received it. This spring

Compressed Bales of Coconut Husk Chips

(2000), after an Executive order setting aside the forest they timbered, Sequoia announced it was ending all orchid bark production mid summer. The #4 sponge rock is only occasionally produced by the manufacturer, so when it became available you would have to scramble to buy as many bags as possible, and the last delivery of 30 bags marked #4 turned out to be #3 and smaller, and extra brittle so that it crumbled into dust when worked with. While the quality of the New Zealand sphagnum moss has generally remained high, there have been periods when it brought along fast growing weed seeds, and the price has gotten quite high. It was also quite labor intensive to wet and cut it into the shorter pieces that were suitable for use in our mixes.

The other major problem associated with bark mixes is their rapid break down. The fine bark mixes are especially prone to this, with noticeable deterioration (with resultant loss of aeration and increase in drying time) in as little as 3 months, and significant deterioration within 6 months under our culture conditions. For a very small collection this is resolvable by very frequent repotting, but in a larger collection this is not feasible. And with the weather conditions found in the Northeastern US where we are located, especially in the winter, we need to maintain a freely draining mix that dries within a few days, when there is

Hydrated Small Coconut Husk Chips

Hydrated Medium Coconut Husk Chips

less sunlight and somewhat cooler temperatures in the greenhouse.

Anticipating the eventual loss of bark supply, or at least another period of bark quality problems, along with the other problems associated with the bark mix components, we began experimenting with various other growing substrates the past few years. We have worked with rock wool, brick chips, vermiculite, pea gravel, coir, sponge rock, and perlite with varying successes. A couple of observations made are that Paph roots appear to be highly adapted to the conditions they are formed in, and a dramatic shift, even into conditions we might assume to be “better”, can cause root loss. If the new medium is indeed better, than you should get rapid new root growth to take over for the ones being lost. Also, if moisture and nutrients are available in “excess” (i.e. in a dense mix), then the plants will grow far fewer roots, as they need less root mass to supply themselves. But, in these denser mixes, they are more prone to root loss, especially if warm conditions are not maintained at the root zone, and having fewer roots to start with, even minimal root loss can be critical. As a result, it is our goal to grow plants under conditions that encourage maximum root mass, as these plants will be far less affected by a problem resulting in the loss of some roots (i.e.

being allowed to go too long before repotting with resultant mix breakdown or a period of overwatering), and in our opinion result in more robust plants and better flowering. In almost all of the components we worked with, there seemed to be a universal constant inverse relationship between the air capacity and the water capacity. In other words, a mix that drained freely and allowed enough air into the mix immediately after watering held insufficient water for Paphs and Phrags, those that held sufficient water allowed for insufficient air. Other aspects of the components that we felt were important were the ability to anchor the plant in the pot without and wobbling when watered or handled, to avoid damage to growing root tips, stability over time both with respect to aeration and water holding and pH.

Two medium components did defy logic and have the capacity to hold large amounts of air and water simultaneously. The first is New Zealand sphagnum moss used alone. NZ sphagnum will simultaneously hold more water and more air than almost any other potting medium commonly available if kept loosely packed, but therein is one problem: overpack it or allow it to pack itself overtime and it holds way too much water and too little air. NZ moss does have some drawbacks: it is also hard to stabilize a plant in its pot with a loose pack of moss, it is hard to rewet if allowed to completely dry out, and does break down fairly rapidly if kept moist, so for some folks its a wonder medium, for most it's not very practical.

The second was coconut husk chips. While holding approximately the same level of air immediately after watering and as it dried out over a 5-day period in 2.5-inch rose pots as the equivalent size bark; it also held substantially more water. After six months under greenhouse conditions, fine fir bark had broken down and dramatically lost its air holding capacity and stayed quite soggy, while the small coconut husk performed essentially as it did when new. We'll discuss some quantitative aspects of coconut husk chips later in this article, but first lets discuss its preparation, use, and some of our qualitative observations.

Washing Coconut Husk Chips

Let's make completely clear what we are referring to, as there are several coconut products for potting on the market. What we are using are chunks of the husk, cut to surprisingly uniform size. The three sizes available correspond quite well with the sizes of Sequoia bark. Other coconut products include coir, which is ground up husk, coconut husk fibers which is a stringy material made by somehow "unraveling" the coconut husk, and coconut husk charcoal. We use the compressed bales of coconut husk chips from Crystal Company of Saint Louis, MO (there are several suppliers of their product in the US). These have been prewashed and pressed by the company a couple of times to reduce the amount of leachable salts contained in the product, which can vary greatly and be quite high from some sources. When hydrated, each bale will swell to about 6 to 7 cubic feet of husk, so we divide each bale into two 32 gallon containers (plastic garbage cans) for hydration. The coconut husk from these bales has been extremely clean with relatively little dust, and quite uniform in size. There will be a small amount of fines after hydration, but the amount has been so small as to present no problems.

Small Aliflor

To prepare the husk we first hydrate the bale in two 32 gallon containers at least overnight, and then transfer the hydrated husk and excess water to a second container that has had a large number of holes drilled into the bottom, and about six inches up the sides. After the husk drains, a steady stream of water is washed through until it appears to run clear from the container. Then the husk is again transferred back to the solid container and again covered with water at least overnight. The draining and washing procedure is repeated for two cycles total for the medium size, and three cycles for the fine husk. At this point measurements have revealed virtually no significant leachable salts and a pH just slightly below neutral. Coconut husk can be somewhat firmly packed in the pots, but not tremendously so, as it has a springy substance, and will change slightly in size as it loses water and then is rehydrated. It hydrates very rapidly, even from the completely dry state, and essentially instantly from the partially hydrated state it would be in your pot when you water it. It contains the water within itself like a sponge: if you squeeze a piece that is even partially hydrated, water will come out of the cut fiber end even when the outside of the husk appears dry. The exterior of the husk chips does dry very rapidly when exposed to air flow, so the tops of the pots appear to dry out very quickly, but just 1/2 inch further down their can still be a considerable amount of moisture. This takes a little getting used to in judging when to water, but has the benefits of discouraging fungus gnats (the larvae tend to live in the top 1/2 inch of the medium and prefer very moist conditions) and lessening the chance of rot starting in the lower leaf fans, especially if they are potted slightly lower than they should be.

We add aliflor and charcoal to the husk, and for Phrags also a bit of heavy aggregate (#1 crushed sandstone). Our formulas, which will probably be tweaked a little over the next year, are listed later in the article. Aliflor is a kilned clay pellet that is roughly round in shape and available in three sizes. It is added to the mixes to open them up a little and to add weight to the mix, which helps to anchor the plants' stability in the pot. It is an additive in a class that is frequently referred to as lightweight aggregates. Other lightweight aggregates that are commonly used are expanded shale and lava rock. We have settled on the aliflor due to its uniformity in size and availability to us. For larger pot mixes, #2 charcoal is added to the mix, for smaller pots #4 charcoal is added to the mix (yes, charcoal size numbers are the reverse of sponge-

Newly Emerging Roots Adhering to the Coconut Husk Chips Just a Few Weeks After Repotting

rock and aggregate numbers). My scientific background makes me wish to be able to give a quantitative or at least sound theoretical reason for the addition of the charcoal, but I do not have one. Lynn's observations have convinced her it is a valuable addition, and I have learned that her observations are uncannily accurate, even when they might go against logic (more on this later).

When we first started experimenting with coconut husk chip mix on some plants, we would unpot a portion of them every week to inspect the roots. We were impressed at both the speed of initiation and the number and substance of new roots on the plants that had been switched. We continue to see this, and have been working to switch all plants, from seedlings to stud plants, over as quickly as possible to this new mix. We have repotted several plants that had lost all of their roots while in our standard bark mix and were "circling the drain" into coconut husk chip medium and have watched them revive and initiate new roots faster than we would have believed possible for a Paph to respond to such improved conditions. A few plants that we feel would have otherwise have certainly died due to their poor root health have been revived using this new mix. We have also seen a similar pattern in our Phrags. While it is much easier to maintain good root systems on Phrags than Paphs, our Phrags seem to have immediately picked up when put in coconut husk, perhaps due to the greatly increased reservoir of water contained within their pots while still maintaining a high degree of aeration. Our *Phrag. besseaes*, which have always suffered with the summer heat and have had to go under the bench for the summer in the past, have spent the entire summer on the bench top in very bright light and heat, and are not showing any of their usual summer stress signs. We have also switched some root distressed Phals (with some different proportions of medium components, including a greater percentage of aliflor) over with the same response as the Paphs and Phrags— near immediate and vigorous root growth. It also appears to be working well with our agar-on compotting technique for both Paphs and Phrags.

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This article will be continued in the February edition of The Orchid Enthusiast. It can be found in its entirety at the AnTec Laboratory Ladyslipper Page, http://www.ladyslipper.com/

BULK SUPPLIES ORDER

CNYOS will soon be making another bulk order for supplies from OFE International (http://www.ofe-intl.com/), including fir bark, coconut husk chips, sphagnum moss, spongerock, and RD-20. CNYOS will continue to offer supplies in hobby-sized bags for only slightly over cost, but If you're interested in ordering your own supplies in bulk as part of this order, please contact Rich Groll for details. Ordering in bulk is often somewhat cheaper--especially in terms of shipping costs, and allows members to experiment with their own orchid-growing mixes.

THE CENTRAL NEW YORK ORCHID SOCIETY
Your local AOS & Orchid Digest Affiliate
351 Kensington Place
Syracuse, NY 13210-3309

Happy New Year!!!

Check your mailing label; if it reads M2K, then you owe dues--please pay up! M01 reflects a paid status.

Next regular meeting: Tuesday, January 9th at 6:30pm.
Note special Date and Time!!! See inside for details.

Central New York Orchid Society

President:	Dave Ditz	635-8148
Vice President:	Gary Stensland	(607) 842-6534
Co-Vice President:	Cheryl Lloyd	689-5017
Treasurer:	Elinor Burton	682-6274
Secretary:	Barbara Weller	468-5039
Newsletter Editor:	Jeff Stuart	471-1404

The Central New York Orchid Society meets at St. Augustine's Church, 7333 O'Brien Rd, Baldwinsville, at 2:00PM on the first Sunday of each month from September through June. Yearly dues are $15.00 per individual, or $17.00 family. Dues should be paid to the CNYOS Treasurer, Elinor Burton.

THE ORCHID ENTHUSIAST

The **CNYOS Newsletter, *The Orchid Enthusiast*,** is a publication of the Central New York Orchid Society and is distributed to the Society's members ten times per year, prior to all club meetings, events, or functions.

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