

ORCHIDS IN COSTA RICA

The days are getting noticeably shorter, the nights noticeably cooler, and we find ourselves faced with the end of summer. And what a summer it was! Marked by mild days, cool nights, and plentiful rainfall, this summer has been the best for outdoor orchid growing that we've seen in several years. But with the inevitable onset of autumn, it will soon be time to bring our orchids back inside. However, this time of year also marks the beginning of a new season for the Central NY Orchid Society, which will be filled with invited speakers, plant sales and auctions, local greenhouse visits, our upcoming annual show, our biennial mounted orchid clinic, and all the spring shows! But we're getting a bit ahead of ourselves...

Sunday, September 7TH at 2:00^{PM} marks the first meeting of the 2003-2004 CNYOS season. And to start our season out right, CNYOS is privileged to have Lena Parker as our invited speaker, who will be discussing the orchids of Costa Rica, and the International Costa Rican Orchid Show, held last March. **To accommodate Lena's schedule, she will be giving her talk at 2:00^{PM} SHARP!** Costa Rica is home to almost 1400 different orchid species occurring naturally, with approximately one third of them endemic only to this small Central American country. Our speaker, Lena Parker, has been growing orchids for more than 30 years, and has been an accredited judge for some 20 years. Among her other qualifications, she is a member of the American Orchid Society

where she recently completed eight years on the Board of Directors and has served on various committees

(presently a member of the Task Force on Membership). Lena's full biography is shown on Page

2. We will be taking our speaker out to lunch at Lock 24 in Baldwinsville—see page 2 for details.

Other society business to be discussed this Sunday include our upcoming fall show (October 11-12), elections, supplies, and future activities. So come join CNYOS and get our season off to a good start!

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POSTPONED PICNIC WORTH THE WAIT

After having to postpone the annual summer picnic by one week due to threatening weather, about 15-20 CNYOS members were able to make it out to the home of Co-President Dianne Bordoni for what turned out to be a very pleasant day. The selection of food was astonishing, and the show table was excellent. Before the meeting started President Deb Coyle held a short meeting to discuss our plans for this fall. Unfortunately, the attendance was a bit below normal years, presumably because it was rescheduled. But those who did make it were treated to a great time, and Dianne's beautifully landscaped back yard was filled with blooming trees and perennials enough to be the envy of any gardener!

**JOIN CNYOS FOR LUNCH WITH OUR
 SEPTEMBER SPEAKER**

Prior to our meeting this Sunday, CNYOS will be taking our speaker, Lena Parker, out to lunch at **Lock 24 in Baldwinsville**. If you're interested in joining us, please call Judi Witkin no later than **Friday, September 5TH** (422-0869) so she can make reservations. Those interested should meet at St. Augustine's at 11:30 Sunday morning, so we can car-pool to the restaurant. Hope you can join us!



Several members look on while President Deb Coyle holds a short meeting at our summer picnic.

MEETING MINUTES FOR JUNE 8TH, 2003

1. The minutes from the May meeting were read and approved.
2. Treasurer's report given. The Flower and Garden show income was \$ 504.99 & the May auction was \$1883.
3. Dave Ditz volunteered to be show chair. Five Vendors will be at the Oct. 11TH and 12TH show.
4. Oswego County Fair is looking for a small display to provide information and display orchids. It was decided not to participate in this.
5. Holiday Shoppes by the Junior League application will be sent. Ideas are needed for the display.
6. Request for next year's programming should be directed to Judi Witkin.
7. A feast of wonderful food and great company were enjoyed by all.

**Respectfully Submitted,
 Deb Coyle, CNYOS Secretary, pro tempore**

SEPTEMBER SPEAKER: LENA PARKER

Professional: Owned Living Interiors, Inc. for 18 years. At the beginning of 2002, when she sold the company, it was the leading interiorscape company in the Shreveport area. She has done both TV and radio appearances and spoken before many groups to discuss culture of interiors plants, as well as their value in cleaning the air in interior spaces. Lena is a licensed Louisiana Horticulturist, and holds certifications as both a Horticultural Technician and an Interior Landscape Professional from the Associated Landscape Contractors of America.

Orchid Background: Lena has been growing orchids for more than thirty years. She is a member of the American Orchid Society where she recently completed eight years on the Board of Directors and has served on various committees; at present she is a member of the Task Force on Membership. In addition, Lena is the Past President of the Shreveport Orchid Society and presently serves as Treasurer. She is Past President of the Southwest Regional Orchid Growers Association and is presently serving on the Publications Committee.

Distinctions: American Orchid Society's distinguished Achievement Award; accredited American Orchid Society Judge for more than 20 years; and presently serves as Training Coordinator for the Shreveport Supplemental Judging Center

- September 7** **First Meeting of the 2003-2004 Season: Begins PROMPTLY at 2:00^{PM} with our speaker, Lena Parker** (see pages 1-2 for details).
- October 5** **Regular Meeting:** Program to be announced. Planning for the show.
- October 11-12** **CNYOS Annual Fall Show & Sale!** Set up on Friday, October 10. Shoppingtown Mall, DeWitt. Contact Dave Ditz, Show Chair, for more information (315/635-8148). **Volunteers are needed!**
- November 2** **Invited Speaker: Glen Decker of Piping Rock Orchids.** Phragmipediums; orchids will be available for sale.
- November 7-9** **CNYOS to participate in the annual Holiday Shoppes,** Price Chopper Horticulture Bldg, NYS fairgrounds. Free parking. Admission \$6 at the door. Reduced advanced sale tickets available at Peter's Grocery in Syracuse. Contact Deb Coyle or Dianne Bordoni for more info.
- December 14** **Tentative Date: Annual Holiday Party** at the home of Deb Coyle.

CNYOS ANNUAL FALL SHOW & SALE: OCTOBER 11-12

Our annual show is only a month away, and we'll need your help! CNYOS will need volunteers for advertising, floor lay-outs, display designs, courtesy greeters, display monitors, show set-up, show break-down, clerking, and for the information table. We've confirmed at least 4 vendors (Bloomfield, Jim Marlow, Frier's, and JustPat Orchids), and both STOS & GROS societies will be participating. And, of course, we will need your blooming orchids for the club display. All this will be discussed at the next two meetings.

GROS NEWS: NEWS FROM THE GENESEE REGION ORCHID SOCIETY

The Genesee Region Orchid Society kicks off its new season by welcoming Lena Parker, AOS Judge and interior landscape professional to speak to the club on orchids in Costa Rica.

Taken with permission from *The Orchid Collection*, Newsletter of the Genesee Region Orchid Society, Vol. 26, No. 1, Sept 2003, Phil Matt, Newsletter Editor (716) 288-7025.

STOS NEWS: NEWS FROM THE SOUTHERN TIER ORCHID SOCIETY

After taking the summer off, STOS will start their year out in style by having their annual auction on September 21. The action will start at about 1:15^{PM}.

Monthly meetings begin at 2:00^{PM} in the Vestal Public Library. For directions, etc. call STOS president Kenneth Lattimore at 570-553-2753 or e-mail him at <klatt@epix.net>.

Orchids for Sale!

New member Don Davis has a large number of divisions for sale from his collection, including the following: *C. aurantiaca*, *C. forbesii*, *C. harrisoniae*, *C. unk.*, large white flower, purple lip, *C. unk.*, McLellin Cross # M-1090, *C. harrisoniae*, *C. skinneri*, *C. White Christmas*, *Coel. cristata*, *Coel. flaccida*, *Coel. mas-sangeana*, *Laelia anceps*, *Laelia unknown*, jungle collected by Grossman 1980's, LC (Bonanza Las Vegas x LC Kashmir Ruby), SLC Jewel Box-Scheherezade AM/AOS, and Unk. Sweet Mustard x *digbiana*. There are multiple divisions of each, some currently in bloom. Price will range from \$5-\$20. The sale can be any time, by appointment. Please call 635-3786—Don lives in Baldwinsville, right off of Rt 370, really easy to find. All plants are healthy and may bloom within the next year.

ABOUT THE COVER: Costa Rica is a biodiversity success story, and has an especially rich collection of native orchids, with approximately 1400 different species. Of those, nearly a third are endemic only to Costa Rica. The national flower of Costa Rica is the floriferous *Cattleya skinneri* (right)—this wonderful species is featured along with *Cattleya dowiana* in an article on page 7. Another resident of Costa Rica, as illustrated on the front page with *Cattleya dowiana*, is the miniature *Oncidium cheiroporum* (Andy's Orchids). **Graphics references:** Image of Costa Rica courtesy <http://plasma.nationalgeographic.com/mapmachine>, with digital manipulation by Jeff Stuart. Photographs of *Cattleya dowiana* and *Cattleya skinneri*, © Greg Allikas, The Orchid Photopage, (<http://www.orchidworks.com>), with digital manipulation by Jeff Stuart. Photo of *Oncidium cheiroporum* © Andy's Orchids, <http://www.andysorchids.com/>, with digital manipulation by Jeff Stuart.



CYPRIPEDIUM ALLIANCE

<i>Paph. lowii</i>	Stuart
<i>Paph. Lyro Bellissima (niveum x wilhelminiae)</i>	“
<i>Paph. William Ambler (rothschildianum x wilhelminiae)</i>	“
<i>Paph. Hideki Okuyama (malipoense x wilhelminiae)</i>	“
<i>Phrag. warszewiczianum</i>	“
<i>Phrag. caudatum</i>	“
<i>Phrag. wallisii</i>	“

CATTLEYA ALLIANCE

<i>C. (sic) intermedia</i>	Braue
<i>Encyclia mariae</i>	Ditz
<i>Epi. pseudepidendrum</i>	“
<i>Encyclia guatemalensis</i>	Witkin
<i>Slc. (sic) Jungle Beau (Sc. Beaufort x Lc. Jungle Elf)</i>	Rossler
<i>Mrclm. trinasutum</i>	Ufford
<i>Prosthechea cochleata</i>	Coleman

VANDACEOUS

<i>Phal. Golden Buddha x Miniflash</i>	Boronczyk
<i>Phal. Brother Girl (Brother Canary x Cindy Danseuse)</i>	“
<i>Phal. equestris</i>	Churchill
<i>Phal. sanderiana</i>	Ufford
<i>Phal. taenialis</i>	“
<i>Phal. fasciata</i>	“
<i>Phal. violacea</i>	“
<i>Phal. fimbriata</i>	“
<i>Phal. corningiana</i>	“
<i>Trichoglottis pusilla</i>	Braue
<i>Sedirea japonica</i>	“

Aër. fieldingii Ditz

ONCIDIUM ALLIANCE

<i>Mtdm. Pupukea Sunset (Onc. fuscatum x cheiroporum)</i>	Rossler
<i>Milt. Michael David Lawless (Miltoniopsis santanaei [sic] x Pearl Ono)</i>	Ufford
<i>Onc. Mendenhall (Butterfly x Psychopsis papilio)</i>	Ditz
<i>Wils. Susi (Onc. tigrinum x Oda. Feuerglut)</i>	Coleman
<i>Ornithocephalus inflexus</i>	“

DENDROBIUM

<i>Den. Green Lantern (Dawn Maree x cruentum)</i>	Witkin
<i>Den. unicum</i>	Rossler

PLEUROTHALLID ALLIANCE

<i>Platystele ximenae</i>	Witkin
<i>Platystele stenostachya</i>	“
<i>Stelis argentata</i>	Coleman
<i>Physosiphon tubatus</i>	“

MISCELLANEOUS

<i>Pes. cerina</i>	Witkin
<i>Kfst. tolimensis</i>	“
<i>Cochleanthes speciosa</i>	Coleman
<i>Cyc. cooperi</i>	Stuart
<i>Angcm. florulentum</i>	“
	Iris Cohen

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CLUB REMINDERS

Orchid-Growing Supplies are now available, including fir bark, sphagnum, sponge rock, charcoal, and 40W fluorescent tubes. Call Dianne Bordoni for details on pricing and availability (446-3836).

The **CNYOS Club Library** is now located at St. Augustine's church. Make arrangements with Val Introne (682-8595) if you want to borrow an item from the Library.

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

CNYOS Treasurer Elinor Burton has an assortment of orchid growing supplies, including pots & baskets, that she'll be bringing to the September meeting. Some will be placed on the raffle table, but the rest will be free for the taking.

CNYOS & ORCHID SUPPLIES YEA OR NAY???

For several years now CNYOS has provided orchid supplies for purchase by members or visitors to our meetings and public events. Do we still want to do so? Supplies are becoming more and more available at local retail outlets, which are even now carrying specialized potting mixes. They are also much more widely available through the internet (e.g., see ad on p. 4).

Handling supplies through the club is a lot of work, which usually falls on the person who stores them from month to month. If we are to continue this practice, we need someone willing to take over for Dianne Bordoni, who no longer has the space to store the club's supplies.

We'll be discussing our options at Sunday's meeting. If you're willing to help out, please let us know. Otherwise we'll discontinue selling supplies once our current inventory runs out.



Phalaenopsis bellina (violacea),
photograph by Vagisha
Sharma, with digital enhance-
ment by J. Stuart.

REFRESHMENT SCHEDULE

September Deb Coyle & Dianne Bordoni

Good with a recipe???
**Volunteers for our refreshment schedule
are needed!**

SILENT AUCTION THIS JANUARY

After the success of the silent portion of our auction last spring, CNYOS is planning a totally silent auction as a fund raiser for this January. The current plan is for each member to bring a disease-free plant or orchid-related item to donate; a donation will be needed in order to participate in the auction—so keep this event in mind when repotting & dividing orchids in your collection! We're still working on the details, but that's the general plan. Since CNYOS may lose its spot at the Flower & Garden in March, the silent auction will be another way we can raise money for our activities. Got any other ideas?
Let us know!

ENCYCLIAS PRISMATOCARPA & BRASSAVOLAE

Since our speaker this month will be talking to us about orchids from Costa Rica, it seems fitting to focus the Spot Light on a few Costa Rican native *Encyclias*, the spectacular *Enc. prismatocarpa* and the striking *Enc. brassavolae*.



Encyclia prismatocarpa is found in Costa Rica and Panama at altitudes of 1200-2500 meters in lower montane cloud forest, as a large branch epiphyte. The boldly colored and spotted flowers make this species one of the most showy of the genus. It is a larger orchid with 4-6" pear-shaped pseudobulbs topped by 6-12" leaves. Long lasting, fragrant, flowers are loosely arranged on an approximately 15" inflorescence, and are about 2" in diameter. The waxy flowers are variable in color, ranging from an ivory or pale yellow to a deep sulfur yellow, and marked with bold dark-brown spotting and a narrow violet-purple lip. *Enc. prismatocarpa* enjoys moderately bright light and intermediate temperatures. Because of the plant's size and affinity for moisture, pot culture is recommended for the home grower with a moisture-retentive but well-drained medium. Flowering occurs most often in late summer and autumn.

Enc. prismatocarpa, above, and *Enc. brassavolae*, below. Both species generally require the same cultural conditions.

If *Enc. prismatocarpa* is one of the most showy of the genus, it's certainly not for a lack of competition! The striking flowers of *Enc. brassavolae* should give pause to any orchid hobbyist. Reaching a size of about 3" in diameter, the fleshy flowers are greenish on the inside and olive tan on the outside, and the spectacular spade-shaped lip is white overall, but looks as if it were dipped in grape juice. As one might guess, it's name derives from the floral similarity to species in the genus *Brassavola*. The plant itself is similar in size to *Enc. prismatocarpa*, being perhaps a bit smaller. Native to Nicaragua and Costa Rica, the species occurs at altitudes of 900-2500 meters in wet evergreen forests as a large branch epiphyte, in shady to moderately bright locations. Like its cousin above, it appreciates intermediate temperatures and will tolerate the extremes. Flowering occurs during spring, summer, and autumn.



Reference: Photos © Andy's Orchids, <http://www.andysorchids.com/>. Text by Jeff Stuart, adapted from the following references: <http://orchidculture.com> by Charles & Margaret Baker, Andy's Orchids (see above), and Jay Pfal's Internet Species Orchid Encyclopedia, <http://www.orchidspecies.com>.

CATTLEYAS SKINNERI & DOWIANA:

TWO OF COSTA RICA'S MOST RECOGNIZABLE AND REWARDING ORCHIDS

Jeff Stuart

Central NY Orchid Society Newsletter Editor
jastuart@syr.edu

When one thinks of Costa Rica, images of a jungle paradise come to mind with an incredible diversity of both flora and fauna—a true oasis. Indeed, Costa Rica is perhaps the most successful of all countries to embrace ecotourism, and in doing so has managed to protect its natural heritage as one of its most valuable assets. Unlike some of its neighbor countries, Costa Rica has had only two brief periods of political violence that have interrupted its democratic development since the late 19th century [1]. And while it remains largely agrarian to this day, technology and tourism have become major economic forces resulting in a high standard of living with widespread land ownership [1]. As such, Costa Rica is a glowing example of a successful country in Central America.

Included among that rich biodiversity is a large population of orchid species, ranging from diminutive Pleurothallids to large-flowered Cattleyas. Several locations around the country specialize in orchid horticulture and propagation, including Lankaster Gardens, near Cartago, and the Orchid Project, located in Monteverde. Despite some 1200-1400 different species, two Cattleyas are almost instantly recognizable as Costa Rican species: *Cattleya skinneri* and *Cattleya dowiana*. These two spectacular species have both made strong impacts on orchid horticulture, the former through ease of culture and floriferousness, the latter through its unique and striking coloration and value in hybridization. And then there's the obvious—they're both quite beautiful!

Perhaps no other orchid is as closely associated with its country of origin as *Cattleya skinneri* is with Costa Rica. Known throughout Central America as Flor de San Sebastian, it was, in fact, designated the National Flower of Costa Rica on June 15, 1939 [2]. Referred to by the locals as "Guaria Morada," it makes its home growing not only as tree epiphytes, but also on buildings and roofs [2]. The flower is valued for its beauty and has always been symbolic of the beauty of Costa Rican women. For centuries, the "Guaria Morada" has been central to Costa Rican homes and tradition, often believed to be a harbinger of good will, bringing with it fortune and good luck, family togetherness, and evoking peace, love, and hope for the future. It is even attributed with giving the Costa Rican people an aesthetic appreciation of the beauty of nature; the flower's lack of any significant fragrance is because "it is filled with dreams to be accomplished," according to the traditions of the Costa Rican people [2].

Cattleya skinneri is named for George Ure Skinner (1805-1867), an explorer and orchid collector of some note, who discovered the species [3]. A member of the mercantile firm Klee, Skinner and Co., Guatemala, he was a devoted amateur

Courtesy of Greg Allikas, <http://www.orchidworks.com>



botanist with a profound interest in orchids. In fact, he more thoroughly described the orchids of Guatemala and Mexico than any of the botanists who preceded him [4]. The formal description of *C. skinneri* came from the English botanist James Bateman in 1837, based on plants and plant material provided to Bateman by George Skinner. It can easily be argued that Bateman's career would have been far different were it not for his working relationship with Skinner: Bateman had never been to either Mexico or Guatemala, but managed to become the world authority on orchids from these countries through George Skinner's remarkable efforts [4-5]. So many specimens arrived on such a regular basis that the commercial orchid company James Veitch dedicated an entire greenhouse to Central American Orchids, all collected by George Ure Skinner [5]. When commenting on his incredible zeal for orchid collecting, Bateman said the following (as quoted from [5]): "In pursuit of this object, there is scarcely a sacrifice which he has not made, or a danger of hardship which he has not braved. In sickness or health, amid the calls of business or the perils of war, whether detained in quarantine on the shores of the Atlantic or shipwrecked on the rocks of the Pacific, he has never suffered an opportunity to escape him of adding to the long array

of his botanical discoveries.” Bateman, who maintained a lifelong friendship with Skinner, always felt that the most spectacular of the orchids he collected was *C. skinneri* [5]. Skinner continued to collect orchids until his death in 1867. It is likely that a collaborative team such as Skinner and Bateman will never again be possible, given the restrictions imposed by the well-intended CITES (Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species) and the economic situation in most tropical third world countries.



A 1965 STAMP FROM PANAMA DEPICTS *C. SKINNERI*, BELIEVED AT ONE TIME TO BE THE ONLY *CATTLEYA* FOUND IN THAT COUNTRY [6].

Cattleya skinneri belongs in every orchid collection. Grown properly (which isn't hard to do), it will reward the grower with abundant blooms every spring, right around Easter. One AOS judge in Florida was heard to comment that a well flowered *skinneri* should “look like an azalea bush.” Indeed, the flowers of a well grown *skinneri* do nearly hide the leaves [7]. Most forms are pink or rose-lavender on the petals and sepals, with a deeper lavender lip and a white throat. The ~4” flowers are produced in clusters atop each pseudobulb, and have a glistening crystalline quality [8]. Out of flower the plants stand about 20” tall. The species is widely distributed through Southern Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica, where it is one of the most common orchids. Plants are typically found in wet mountain forests up to 4100 feet (1250 m) [8]. Intermediate to warm temperatures will suit it well (60-64°F for evening low, 77-82°F days), along with strong air movement and bright light, especially in winter when the sun is the strongest in the native habitat [8]. At this time of year it may look yellow-green and the older pseudobulbs may shrivel, but this is somewhat typical of the many orchids that come from deciduous forests where they are subject to brighter light in winter [7]. Frequent watering is needed while growing during the warmer months, with a reduction after growths have matured in autumn. It is critical that the potting media not stay too wet for a long time after watering to avoid rotting the roots. Mounted plants, however, will require multiple daily waterings during hot weather in order to thrive [8]. Clusters of 4-12 lavender-pink flowers emerge in spring from dried sheaths, although a number of different colored variations are known. The pure white alba variety is particularly attractive, but coerulea and semi-alba forms are available as well.

Its habit of sending up multiple leads from one growth allows *C. skinneri* to quickly form specimen plants under the right conditions. Although used frequently in hybridization, one of the earliest hybrids remains a favorite, *C. Guatemalensis*, with the best having flowers of the *skinneri* form, but retaining some of the orange coloration from the second parent, *C. aurantiaca* [5].

Although not as steeped in legend and tradition as *C. skinneri*, *Cattleya dowiana* makes up for that imagined deficiency in sheer magnificence! Also called Dow's Cattleya, Gauria de Turrialba, or Guaria Reina, it was described by Bateman in 1865, once more based on plant material provided by George Ure Skinner. However, its history goes back a bit farther than that, in that individual plants had been collected by Josef von Warszewicz, another well-known orchid collector of that era, and shipped to the botanist H. G. Reichenbach in Germany. Unfortunately none of the plants survived, and consequently never made it to Reichenbach, thereby casting doubt on whether the plants described in letters sent by the collectors ever actually existed [9]. Finally in 1865, a naturalist in Skinner's employ collected the plants in Santa Clara and San Carlos, Costa Rica, that eventually made it to Bateman. Upon Skinner's request, the plants were named in honor of Captain J. M. Dow, who worked for the American Packet Service that transported by ship the first plants of this species to later bloom in Europe (1866) [10]. A group of similar plants were later discovered in Colombia (1868) by the German Gustav Wallis and collected for the Belgian orchid grower Jean Linden [11]. Denoted as *Cattleya aurea* by Linden in 1881, the British firm James Veitch and Son, which had received the first plants of *Cattleya dowiana* (recall that Veitch had set up a separate greenhouse to maintain all of the orchids coming out of Central America through Skinner for Bateman), disagreed with this nomenclature and renamed it as *Cattleya dowiana aurea*. Several other British firms agreed with this change, including Sanders, and by 1894 it was accepted that the preeminent feature that separates *C. dowiana aurea* was the absence of lavender in its clear yellow sepal and petals [12].

The two disparate populations of *C. dowiana* make the species unique—one in Costa Rica and the other, 600 miles distant, in Colombia. However, the yellow color alone makes the species unique, and the most yellow forms still originate in Colombia [12]. To this day, the name *C. aurea* persists in the literature and in horticulture, but as Art Chadwick (Chadwick & Son Orchids) has recently observed, the problem with dividing the two populations into separate species is that not all the yellow clones originate from Colombia, and among the Colombian population exists clones that are typical of the normal *dowiana* coloration [12]. The species exhibits a remarkable range of coloration, from reddish purple through tan and into various mixtures of yellow suffused with lavender, to clear pale yellow-green, to clear yellow and even yellow-orange for the sepal & petals, and lip color that varies from dark crimson-purple with and without gold veining, to mixtures of medium crimson with large yellow eyes, to virtually all yellow (as described by Chadwick, 1998 [12]). And that variation can be seen from year to year, and even

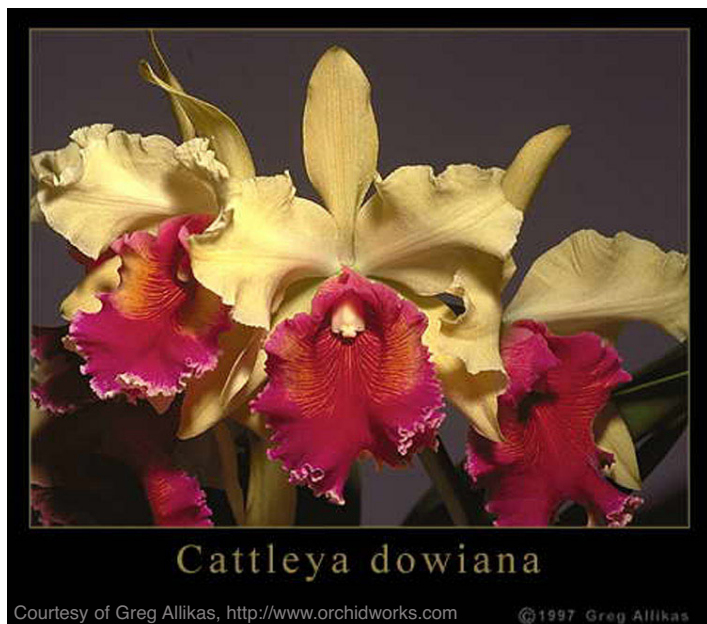
from flower to flower on the same plant. Generally speaking, taxonomy based on color differences alone is often not reliable—with the possible exception of floral & vegetative size, distinct morphological differences often make for more solid taxonomical derivations. However, such differences are lacking between the two populations of *C. dowiana* [12]. Nonetheless, the concept of *C. aurea* persists to this day, and as recently as 1992, in a book of the paintings of Alexander Brun, Phillip Cribb, orchid curator at the Kew Royal Botanical Gardens, identified the subject in one of Brun's watercolors as *C. aurea* [11]. As a side note, Alexander Brun was a remarkable botanical illustrator who painted orchids in the collection of the Parisian collector Emile Libreck in the late 19th and early 20th century. The book, "The Forgotten Orchids of Alexander Brun," is a wonderful compilation by Cribb of many of Brun's vivid and striking watercolors—well worth having if you can find it. His painting of "*C. aurea*" is reproduced below.

Growing *Cattleya dowiana* has been frequently represented as being somewhat challenging. However, with its bold crimson lip contrasted against yellow petals & sepal, it remains one of the most spectacular of the labiate *Cattleyas*. In its native habitat it is found in tall trees, frequently growing in full sun. The region is very humid (75-85% relative humidity), and the temperature varies from a high of 75°F (May through November) to a low of 63°F (December through April) [9]. Matching these conditions—i.e., high light levels and relatively mild temperatures—can be difficult. However, in a recent article on *C. dowiana* hybridization trends, Art Chadwick reports that this species will grow most vigorously, given that a few key conditions are met [13]. Perhaps the most important factor is to grow *dowiana* such that its roots always dry out quickly, especially in the cooler months—the potting medium must be open, airy, and well drained. Slatted baskets and clay pots that are roomy enough



CATTELYA AUREA, AS PAINTED IN WATERCOLOR BY ALEXANDER BRUN, CIRCA 1894 (AS IDENTIFIED BY PHILLIP CRIBB). REPRODUCED FROM [11].

to accommodate just one new growth work well [13]. High light levels will give better flower yields, and strong air circulation will help to keep the plant cool under the bright conditions. In the cooler months *dowiana* experiences a resting period when growth is not as active, at which time quick drying is absolutely essential; simple misting may be sufficient [7,13]. The extreme root sensitivity to moisture, and its consequent susceptibility



to pseudobulb rot, are most likely responsible for the fact that most of the best old collected clones of *C. dowiana* are no longer in existence [13]. Given that these simple needs are addressed, *dowiana* will thrive—in fact, it seems that this is one orchid that will thrive on neglect, and is most often killed by kindness!

The *Cattleya* species *skinneri* and *dowiana* are but two of the spectacular and diverse selection of orchids that Costa Rica has to offer. The impact that these two species has had on *Cattleya* horticulture can only be imagined. By 1946, over 400 *Cattleya dowiana* hybrids had already been recognized by Sanders [9], and growers are still trying to work out what traits are dominant or recessive [13]. And although not used as prolifically in hybridization, the reputation of *C. skinneri* as a floriferous, and easy-going (& growing!) orchid ensures demand for both the species and its hybrids for years to come.

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It's arguable that the modern orchid growing hobby has its general origins late in the Age of Enlightenment and the early Industrial Age, especially in England. During this time, collectors were exploring the globe in search of new and exotic plants, especially orchids, to be introduced into European horticulture. Other cultures certainly cultivated orchids, especially in Asia, but the orchids grown were predominantly local varieties—not species collected world-wide from the tropics. Take for example *Neofinitia falcata*, also known as the Samurai Orchid, cultivated for generations in Japan more for the foliage than for its flowers. England

played a central role, where many orchids were first imported, described, and introduced—many times unsuccessfully—into both commercial and hobbyist horticulture. The Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew had recently been established in 1759 by Princess Augusta, mother of George III, and its first curator was Sir. Joseph Banks. When the first catalog of species being grown at Kew was published, it included 15 orchids, brought to Kew by none other than Admiral William Bligh, of the HMS Bounty.

The prevailing thinking at that time was that orchids—all orchids—originated from dark, hot, steamy jungles, drenched in humidity and stale, motionless, air. With that in mind, many were kept in victorian stove houses, where wood or coal burning stoves were used to keep the temperature high. The result was a hot, humid environment with little or no air movement; in other words, death to most orchids! No-one seems to have bothered to ask the actual collectors what the climate was like in the actual habitats. In England

[152]

EPIDENDRUM COCHLEATUM. TWO-LEAV'D

EPIDENDRUM.



Class and Order.

GYNANDRIA DIANDRIA.

Generic Character.

Nectarium turbinatum, obliquum, reflexum.

Specific Character and Synonyms.

EPIDENDRUM *cochleatum* foliis oblongis geminis glabris striatis bulbo innatis, scapo multifloro, nectario cordato. *Linn. Syst. Vegetab. ed. 14.*

Murr. p. 819. Ait. Hort. Kew. V. 3. p. 303.

HELLEBORINE, *cochleato* flore. *Plum. Sp. 9. u. 185. fig. 2.*

Plants which draw their support from other living ones, of which there are numerous instances, are by Botanists termed parasitical, and of this kind are most of the present family; deriving their generic name, which is of Greek extraction, from growing on trees, into the bark of which they fix their roots; some of them are also found to grow on dead wood, as the present plant, which is described by Sir HANS SLOANE, in his history of Jamaica, *V. 1. p. 250. t. 121. f. 2.* as not only growing plentifully on trees, but also on the palifadoes of St. Jago de la Vega.

Instances of these plants flowering in England are very rare; Commodore GARDNER, in the year 1789, presented to the Apothecaries company some roots of this plant, taken up in the woods of Jamaica with great care, and which being successfully treated by Mr. FAIRBAIRN in their garden at Chelsea, one of them threw up a flowering stem last February, from whence our drawing was made.

Mr. FAIRBAIRN planted the roots in pots of earth, composed of rotten wood and decayed leaves, plunging them into the tan-bed of a pit of considerable size.

In its fructification, the *Epidendrum* obviously agrees with the *Orchis* tribe, but differs essentially in the œconomy of its roots; in the *Orchis* the roots spring from the crown of the bulb, which is formed in the earth; in the *Epidendrum* the bulb, or the part which appears to be analogous to a bulb, though of a green colour, is produced above ground, while the roots or fibres proceed from below it.

however, Sir Joseph Banks was the first to discover the key to orchid horticulture, based upon his voyages to the South Seas with Captain Cook in 1768 where he observed orchids growing in trees. Banks started growing his orchids in hanging baskets made of rot-resistant wood—his plants prospered and bloomed, but sadly, it was another few decades before this practice was widely embraced. Practically-minded growers finally started to take heed the comments of the collectors, and successful methods for growing orchids were developed.

With almost as much fervor for orchid horticulture, taxonomists sought to describe collected species in detail.

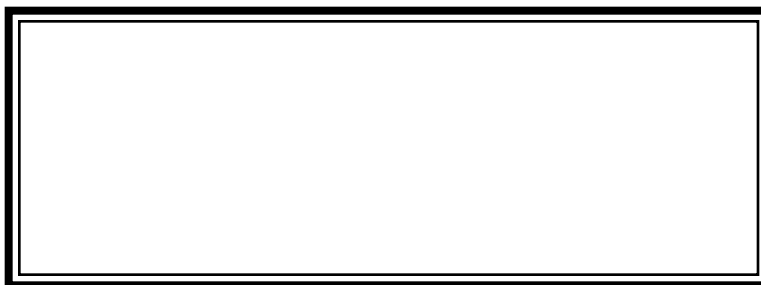
Descriptions were published, often with beautiful hand-painted plates. The description on the opposite, and the color plate on the right, is of "*Epidendrum cochleatum*" from Curtis's Botanical Magazine, April 1791—one of the original 15 species collected by Admiral Bligh. The plant was later correctly identified as *Epidendrum fragrans*, which we now commonly call *Encyclia fragrans*, and less commonly (as of yet), *Prostechea fragrans*. This was the first epiphytic orchid to bloom in the UK—an exciting event, to be sure! These images were provided courtesy of Peter Fowler, of the Wessex Orchid Society (<http://www.wessex-orchid-society.org.uk>), who was able to examine the originals, stored in archival quality polyester sleeves in an acid-free, box ring binder. Take heed to beware the letter "s," which occasionally masquerades as something that more resembles an "f" in this somewhat amusing description, written in Old English.

General Reference: Cribb, Phillip, "The Forgotten Orchids of Alexander Brun," 1992, Grove Press, NY.



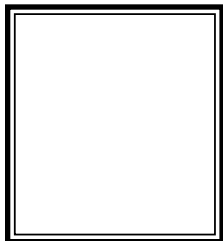
Orchids in Costa Rica

Meeting starts at 2:00^{PM} SHARP: Guest Speaker Lena Parker



Welcome Back!!!

Next Meeting: Sunday, September 7!



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THE ORCHID ENTHUSIAST

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Jeff Stuart, Editor

351 Kensington Place
Syracuse NY 13210-3309
(315) 471-1404

e-mail: jastuart@syr.edu

