

*Richmond Orchid
Alliance*

We are all about Orchids!

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January 2007

*Upcoming ROA
Events:*

January 14

Ken Meiers

Orchids of Thailand and culture

February 11

Hal Horwitz

Orchids of North America

March 11

Tom Mirenda

*Hardy Orchids of the Mid-Atlantic
Region*

April 1

Auction

All ROA activities and speakers will emphasize the how-to and hands-on aspects of growing orchids.

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ROA Bulletin

ROA Welcomes Ken Meier

Our speaker for January 14, 2007 is Ken Meier of Orchid Enterprise in Alexandria, VA. He will speak on Orchids of Thailand as well as including a number of general culture tips for the orchid grower.

Ken, or Andy as he may go by, established Orchid Enterprise Inc. (OEI) in April 2004. OEI was originally established to help reduce the number of orchids in Ken's collection, but somehow this backfired and his collection just seems to have grown. He now manages a 33'x20'x13' greenhouse, a laboratory, and a grow-room with four 1000 watt HID lights that run on moving tracks over benches of seedling and various *Catasetenae*.

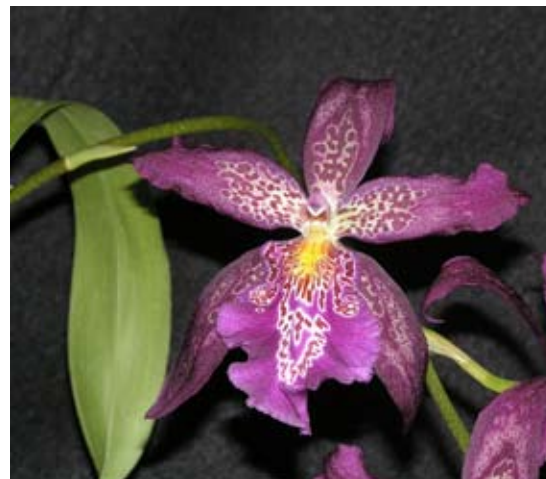
Like most internet businesses, OEI started as a hobby gone wild. It all started about 20 years ago with a seedling *Cattleya* orchid from a local nursery. Placed on a windowsill in a Northern Virginia townhouse it put on a new growth and that was all it took. Ken was hooked.

Ken learned much from Merritt Huntington whose greenhouse was just a short drive from his place. He later joined the National Capital Orchid Society (NCOS), the American Orchid Society (AOS) and the Hollin Hills Orchid Society (HHOS).

Are You the Key?

The other day I heard it said that the key to being a vibrant organization is the active participation of its members. ROA has a decent number of members, many of whom are the keys to where we will be going in the coming years.

I hope that one of your New Year's resolutions was to become more involved with those organizations that you belong to, and that ROA is one where your continued work and efforts will be a part of your ongoing activity.



Billra. Marfitch 'Howard's Dream'

He ultimately became president of HHOS, NCOS and also became an accredited AOS orchid judge.

Ken has a Bachelor of Science degree in Protozoology and was formally trained in microbiology while working on his Masters Degree, studying sulfur-oxidizing bacteria along volcanic rifts in the Pacific Ocean. His training has given him the knowledge necessary to establish a laboratory where OEI germinates and grows orchid seed under controlled conditions.

He annually travels to South America where he now takes fellow explorers to Ecuador and Peru. In addition to orchids, Ken has taken an interest in the African violet. ✨

Let's see a lot of keys in the coming months, not the skeleton type that are all alike and only open the older type doors, but those new shiny ones that open doors to opportunity.

Look not only to what ROA is doing for you, but ask what you can do for ROA. There are a number of opportunities coming up in the near future that you can be a part of, and have fun doing it. ✨



Onc. Red Twinkle

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Reading Moisture

Many of us have difficulty determining if a plant needs watering. Some of the media looks dry when it isn't and some is light weight and doesn't change with watering so you cannot tell by the weight of the pot.

There is a new product that can measure the amount of moisture in bark mixes. It is a two pronged instrument that you can switch the read out from bark to soil and back depending on your need.

The "Momet" moisture meter has LED lights that indicate when to water your orchids.

The LED lights will tell you whether the potting mix is wet (green), dry (red) or approaching dryness (yellow). It is easy to use and not expensive.

It is manufactured by: Jermic LLC, 4630 Fernbrook Lane North, Plymouth, MN 55446.

Those growing in Aussie-Gold may find it difficult to determine when the plants need watering since it doesn't change color and the weight stays about the same. It is helpful to use a moisture wand that can be purchased at many places where plants are sold to help you learn the differences in growing in this media vs. bark.

I have found that two plants growing next to each other can be very different. One may be wet and the other dry a few inches from the top. ✨

2007 Dues Change

When ROA was formed in June 2005, it was anticipated that the society year would be the calendar year, however the dues were later changed to be payable on the month that you joined and run for twelve months thereafter.

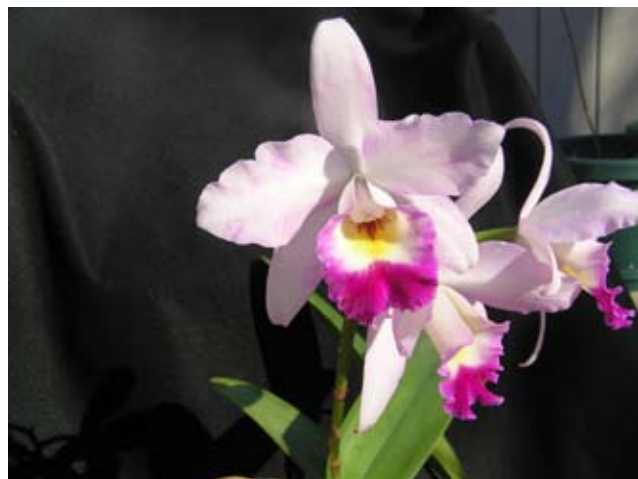
This has proven to be a cumbersome system, requiring constant monitoring and could generate a problem with the general operations of the Alliance. To simplify the record keeping, and to stay up to date with just where we really are for our budget needs, the Board approved dues being payable on a calendar year basis, starting with 2007.

Each member will receive a renewal notice that will give several options. Please review your specific notice, as you will not lose any benefits compared to where you presently are. The renewal notice will provide details on

where to call with questions. If you do not receive this notice, then you have probably paid for 2007. If any questions, please contact our treasurer, Sue, at 378-0999.

Remember, Richmond Orchid Alliance is an Internal Revenue Service 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization and your dues are tax deductible should you itemize your income tax deductions. ✨

Lc. Frosty Pink "H & R"



The Richmond Orchid Alliance meets at the Science Museum of Virginia, 2500 W. Broad Street, Richmond, at 2:00 P.M. of the second Sunday of each month from January through November. Yearly dues are \$20.00 per individual, or \$25.00 for a joint membership. Dues should be paid to the ROA Finance Director, Sue Akin, P.O. Box 8682, Richmond, VA 23226.

The Richmond Orchid Alliance is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. We are affiliated with Orchid Digest and a member of the American Orchid Society.

The ROA Bulletin is a publication of the Richmond Orchid Alliance and is distributed to the Society's members monthly, prior to all club meetings.

Submissions to the Bulletin should be sent to the editor early enough to arrive by the 15th of the month prior to a meeting. Unless otherwise credited, all images in this publication were by the editor.

Growing Tips for January

Courtney T. Hackney

EMAIL at Hackneau@bellsouth.net

Hardly a month goes by without an email from someone asking what the best orchid is. Often the individual asking the question has limited space and wants to spend their money wisely. If you have been one of those asking the question, then you know that my answer has been somewhat evasive. In fact, you likely got more questions than answers. The following is how I approach the question.

My collection is a real mix of genera and reflects my personal taste, available space, and growing conditions. About half of my plants are my permanent collection, i.e. mature plants. Because there is no space for new plants, every new addition to the permanent collection requires getting rid of a plant.

New hybrid and species seedlings are acquired each year to see what various parental combinations will produce. In most cases, once they bloom, I take a photo and sell or give the plant away, hopefully creating new orchid addicts in the process. Some seedlings become mulch or are occasionally so interesting or different that I cannot part with it. Often this new discovery replaces a similar orchid that is not as good with respect to flower quality or growth characteristics. My goal is to have a collection of vigorous orchids with at least one of each color combination, especially in cattleyas and phals.

My interest in classic [old] hybrids and clones of cattleyas continues, and these are added at the expense of new hybrids. Most orchid hobbyist gravitate towards some



Onceda. Charlesworthii 'Mishima'

group, color, etc of orchid. Getting to see what types of orchid each orchid hobbyist likes best is what makes club meetings so much fun.

So what are the characteristics of some of my favorites? In phals, Dtps Newberry Parfait 'Picotee' has a unique picotee around the edge of each well-formed white flower, which is an unusual combination. It grows like a weed, will remain in flower all year long, and can easily be grown into a specimen plant. Phal Baldan's Kaleidoscope 'Golden Treasure' or 'Orchidheights' is another unique orchid. It is a non-fading, relatively large yellow flower with stripes that is extremely vigorous. Virtually all other similar hybrids grow poorly and fade as the flower ages. These have both been made available through cloning and are inexpensive. Similarly, Dtps Martha Dolge is an easy growing white with stunning red lip with flowers as large as most standard white phals. Best of all, it is also very easy to grow, unlike many semi-alba phals. There are also clones with a unique orange lip. There are many different clones of Dtps Anna-Larati Suekarde in a variety of colors and all are desirable. This true miniature phal produces multiple spikes each year and the plant itself multiplies in the pot. After a few years a plant may produce 10 or more spikes in a 4 inch pot. Sadly, I have not seen this one available as a (continued on page 4)

If you have moved, changed your telephone number or email address, please email Richmond Orchid Alliance with the change at OrchidAlliance@aol.com or to P.O. Box 8682, Richmond, VA 23226.

We don't want your Bulletin to be delayed or not received at all by your. This is an important part of your membership.

Growing Tips for January

(continued from page 3)

mericlone yet.

There are also orchids in my permanent collection that I would maintain even if the flowers were not beautiful because of their fragrance.

Many, such as *Phal lueddemanniana* and *pulcra*, are extremely fragrant for months. There are also some I love despite their

fragrance, such as *Bulb Elizabeth Ann 'Buckelberry'*, which produces whorls of unusual flowers covered with tufts of tiny hairs, and *Bulb echinolabium*, with spidery red-orange striped flowers almost 30 cm in length that is almost always in bloom.

Stay tuned next month for my "A-list" of cattleyas that should be in every collection.



Judging Rules

Everyone is requested to bring blooming plants to the Showcase for judging at our meetings this year. There will be six display categories. *Cattleya*; *Paphiopedilum* and *Pragmipedium*; *Phalenopsis*; *Vandaceous*; *Oncidium*s, *Dendrobium*s and other; Novice for the less experienced grower.

Points for year end awards will be earned by winning one of the monthly ribbons in the category (blue: 3 points; red: 2 points; yellow: 1 point) or by bringing plants to the Showcase (1/2 point per plant). For a

plant to be eligible for ribbon awards, the grower must have owned and cared for it for at least six months.

Selected plants may be chosen for discussion during the meeting. Your participation will help others know who grows plants they also like as well as provide a source to go to for help with culture questions. This helps others to know what plants grow well under our conditions here in the Richmond area. Grow, learn and enjoy your orchids.



Onc. Sweet Sugar 'Emperor'

