



# Manitoba Orchid Society

For the Love of Orchids Newsletter

**Next Meeting: 8 June 2008**

**Note this is the second Sunday in June,  
one week earlier than usual.**

**Salle Académique, Rm. 1531  
St-Boniface College,  
196 De La Cathedrale Av.**

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## **Novice Programme**

Swap & Shop

**Starts at 1:00PM**

## **Regular Programme**

New Paphiopedilums from Vietnam by  
Olaf Gruss.

**Starts at 2:00PM**

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## **Bring Plants for Show & Tell**

Plant sales by members are encouraged.

Goodies will be provided by Joan Heshka, Horst Hack, Garnet Ward, and Leah Paluch.

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Website: <http://www.manitobaorchidsociety.ca>

Executive email: [president@manitobaorchidsociety.ca](mailto:president@manitobaorchidsociety.ca)

Newsletter email: [newsletter@manitobaorchidsociety.ca](mailto:newsletter@manitobaorchidsociety.ca)

**Submission deadline 21 August for September 2008 Issue**



The Manitoba Orchid Society welcomes Lisa Fehr, Carol Gunvaldsen, Sherry Shellenberg and Jonathon Werier.



**June 8<sup>th</sup> General Meeting:** Olaf Gruss will speak on new Paphiopedilum species from Vietnam and their hybrids.

**Novice Meeting:** Swap & Shop

**Note this is the second Sunday in June, rather than the usual third Sunday!**

**September 21<sup>st</sup> General Meeting:** Jason Fischer will speak on Orchids of Japan

**Novice Meeting:** Topic TBA

**Benefits of Membership**

Manitoba Orchid Society members now receive the following discounts: 15% at Shelmerdine Nurseries, 15% at Schriemer Nurseries, 15% at Village Garden Center & 10% at La Coste Nursery upon presentation of valid membership cards.

**Hearts & Flowers**

If you hear of any good/bad news regarding members or their families, please call Morganne Jerome and let her know.



The Executive encourages all members to provide feedback, comments, suggestions by filling out a comment sheet available from the Secretary at all General Meetings.

All signed comment sheets should be returned to any member of the Executive. They will be reviewed at the next Executive Meeting and you will be informed of follow-up action taken.

**2007/2008 Executive**

**Elected**

- President Dave Moran
- Past President Joyce Jaworski
- 1st V.P. Kyle Lucyk
- 2nd V.P./Show Chair Lorne Heshka
- Treasurer Garnet Ward
- Secretary Morganne Jerome

**Appointed**

- Membership Gary Jaworski
- Social
- Public Relations
- Special Orders Jim Roy
- AOS/COC Rep Kevin Duerksen
- Library Lilianne Foster
- Newsletter Robert Parsons
- Website Robert Kato

Minutes of the May Meeting will appear in the September newsletter, along with the minutes of the June meeting.

## From the President

The last number of years the Manitoba Orchid Society has been in a very enviable position. Our membership was growing, our revenues were strong and our volunteerism was very strong. Unfortunately this trend seems to have reversed itself recently.

Our membership peaked a few years ago at around 200 but has now slipped back to a fairly stable number of about 150 members. That is still a healthy size for a Society such as ours. Hopefully these numbers will continue to hold.

On the revenue front, our show this year resulted in a very small loss, rather than the customary strong positive balance. This was the direct result of the poor weather on the show weekend coupled with the loss of two of our prime sources of advertising for this year only (we hope). Our show announcements on the Assiniboine Park signs were late in going up and were pulled before the show. While we had booked the spaces for two weeks a year ahead, we were only given a very brief time-slot to advertise. In addition, Linda Stilkowski, who usually does a great write-up for us in the Free Press the week before the show was away on vacation and not scheduled to write an article until the week following the show. She did do a wonderful post-show review the following week. It was most unfortunate for the public as well as ourselves because the '08 show will go down as one of the most attractive we have done in recent years. Congratulations to all those who participated in putting on the show. It was a job well done! We received numerous compliments from those who did attend. The number of volunteers who helped stage the show dropped from 90+ in 2007 to 60+ in 2008. Those who did volunteer this year made bigger time commitments. Thank you for the extra effort. With a bit of good fortune we will rebound next year and once again enjoy a very successful Orchid Show.

The success of an organization such as ours is based on the willingness of everyone in the club pitch in and help. All the things we enjoy like the newsletter, the guest speakers, the coffee and cookies, the website, the draw prizes etc. are arranged / purchased / made by dedicated volunteers. Up until recently finding volunteers to fill jobs has not been a problem, however for this past year two positions on the Executive have gone unfilled. Those

positions are the Social Coordinator and the Public Relations Coordinator. The Social Coordinator is the person who organizes the coffee and snacks for each general meeting and the PR Coordinator is the one who ensures we get all the free advertising we can from the local papers. Our thanks to Joan Heshka for filling in as Social Coordinator this past year while we were looking for a volunteer to take over the position. It is hoped that some other members will now step forward and volunteer to fill these two position for the '08/'09 club season, beginning in September.

In 2007 the Selection Committee was unable to find a volunteer to fill the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President/Show Chairperson position. At the last moment Lorne Heshka stepped forward and agreed to tackle the job for a one-year term. That year is now up. Lorne has agreed to stay on for an additional year *under one condition*, that we find someone who is will understudy him during the '08/'09 Club year and will be prepared to take over the job for the '09/'10 and '10/'11 years. If we fail to find a volunteer it is likely that **THERE WILL BE NO SHOW IN 2009**. As the show is the major focal point in our club year, this would be a tragedy. It is critical that we find someone to fill this position before the September meeting, as planning for the '09 show begins early in the fall. For anyone considering volunteering for this position, there is a Show Manual published with a full list of all Show Committee positions. It includes job descriptions as well as a list of tasks to be done and time-lines in which they need to be performed. This provides the Show Chairperson with what amounts to a script to follow in order to produce a successful show.

One other job we need to find a volunteer for is someone to store the club sound system as well as transport it to and from the meetings and set it up and get it running for the meeting.

Please take a few moments over the summer season to consider volunteering for one of the above positions, most importantly that of 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President / Show Chairperson, and contact me if you are willing to help prior to our August Executive meeting, scheduled for Tuesday August 27<sup>th</sup>. If we all take a turn at volunteering, our club meetings will continue to be a great place to gather and socialize as well as gain valuable knowledge about our favorite subject, our Orchids.

Dave

## Breaking Up Is Hard To Do

By Ken Slump

### Tackling the Big Job of Dividing Overgrown Orchids Has Its Rewards

Sooner or later, all successful orchid growers will be faced with the task of dividing a thriving plant that, for various reasons, cannot be moved to a larger container. For the purposes of this discussion, we are talking about dividing orchids with sympodial growth habit, such as cattleyas, dendrobiums and others that produce new growths or leads along a rhizome or creeping stem. Even so, orchids with monopodial growth habit (such as *Vanda* or *Angraecum*) sometimes branch between the leaves and *form* growths that can be cut with a sterilized tool from the mother plant, which is a rather different situation.

**This *Cattleya skinneri* is ready to be divided and repotted, although it would have been better to have dealt with it before the new growths had grown so large. Once the hanger is removed, the roots can be moistened and peeled off the pot surface and the plant decanted from the vessel prior to cutting the plant into several pieces with a sterilized tool.**



Tackling the job of dividing a large mature orchid plant can be daunting, and most of us postpone these big jobs as long as possible, even though we would not hesitate to repot a smaller plant every year. The best advice is to find an ample workspace, assemble a few basic tools, have some clean pots and fresh growing medium at hand, and dive into the chore.

**TO BEGIN** Extracting the plant from its pot or container is usually the most difficult part. Orchid roots often cling tenaciously. Watering down or soaking the root mass may help you to free the plant, but sometimes your only option is to destroy the container to accomplish the task. Slats in a wood basket can be pried apart, while a clay pot can be rolled inside several sheets of newspaper, which are then taped before hitting the paper bundle with a hammer. Once the paper and tape are removed with care, the pieces of the pot can be pulled away. Next, remove all of the old growing medium from the root mass. While this can be time consuming, a thorough job makes subsequent tasks easier. As with routine repotting, a bucket of water can help you loosen vigorous roots from the medium. A friend of mine advocates employing a garden hose with a good spray nozzle for this task. She notes that it helps clean



away scale and other insect pests too. My personal circumstance of keeping primarily an indoor collection has not allowed me to try this technique, but it sounds quick and easy. After the root mass is clean, it is fine to cut away long, dangling roots, as they are not likely to survive and rebranch, and they tend to get in the way as you divide and repot the divisions anyway. Also, cut off any dead roots (which are usually dry or dark-colored and no longer firm when pinched between the thumb and forefinger) and leafless pseudobulbs that are no longer green. This is a good time to peel away the papery sheaths that cover many types of orchid pseudobulbs, too.

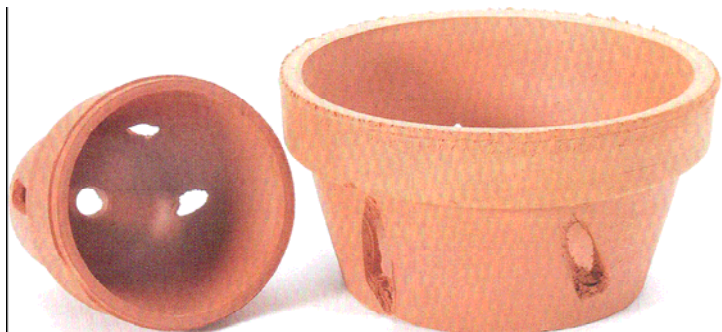
**BREAKING IT APART** Now it is time to examine the plant carefully and determine how it should be taken apart. While each complete pseudobulb has the potential to produce new leads and roots, it will take several years for a plant from such a small division to grow to flowering size. It usually requires a strong new growth with the support of several mature growths behind it for an orchid plant to flower, so each flowering-size division must contain a minimum of three, or preferably four, pseudobulbs with healthy foliage. The choice of whether to create several large divisions or a number of smaller ones is up to you. Be sure to label each division with the name of the plant and the repotting date.

You will find that some orchids are vigorous growers that frequently produce two leads. Such plants can require frequent dividing. You will have others that seldom produce more than one lead annually, and you may wonder how you will ever be able to have a division of such a plant.

**RIGHT** *Dendrobium* Spring Dream 'Apollon' (Constance Wrigley x *Thwaitesia*) is a compact, fragrant-flowered *Den. nobile-type* hybrid with a sympodial growth habit.



**BELOW RIGHT** Clay pots are among the many options to consider when repotting orchids. The orchid pots shown here have slits in their sides to help facilitate drainage as well as promote air circulation around the roots.



If the plant has seven, eight or more healthy pseudobulbs (with or without leaves) you can easily divide it into at least two healthy parts. First, cut and repot the three- or four-pseudobulb section behind the youngest lead. Then do the same with the other half. If the back division lacks living roots, it is often advisable to cut off all but the youngest leaf to avoid desiccation. A dormant bud from the front pseudo bulb of the older division will likely grow and form a new lead for that part of the plant. You can often encourage these dormant buds to sprout by partially cutting through the plant's rhizome between pseudobulbs; you can do this months before you plan to divide the plant.

When repotting the divisions, choose a container large enough to accommodate the remaining healthy root mass of each division. Orchids grow better when their roots are rather crowded. Backbulb divisions may not have much of a root system, so pot clips or staking may be necessary to hold the plant in place until new roots develop. As with routine repotting, the best time to divide a large orchid plant is when you notice that its root system is beginning active growth. This is true even if the plant is in bud or flower. Dividing and repotting during the period of time when roots are active ensures that each division will reestablish itself quickly.

**STERILE TOOLS** Sanitation is extremely important when cutting orchid plants and roots. Virus and disease are easily spread if cutting tools are not sterilized between uses. Some growers dip their knives and pruning shears in sterilizing liquids in between cuts, while others sear the cutting surfaces over open flames. I have tried both and have come to find either option inconvenient at best. There are also debates about the temperature required or length or treatment necessary, whether by heat or chemical, to satisfactorily cleanse cutting blades. For those reasons, I now use single-edge razor blades for all orchid pruning. Every blade is used on just one plant and then thrown away. They are quite inexpensive when purchased in boxes of 100 or more at hardware, paint or home-improvement stores. The blades deliver predictably sharp, clean cuts. The handling and disposal of these blades must be done with extreme caution. Donning leather gloves would provide a margin of safety in handling them. Single-edge razor blades have provided a good solution for a rather small collection such as mine, and my concerns about pruning tools spreading disease problems through my orchid plants have vanished.

Division is, of course, an example of vegetative propagation, so each plant produced by this method will be identical to the one from which it was taken.

**KEIKIS** In addition, some orchids produce offsets or plantlets from their canes or flower stems that can also be divided from their parent plant to grow into an identical plant. The genera *Phalaenopsis* and *Dendrobium* immediately come to mind. Such a plantlet is often called a *keiki*, which is the Hawaiian word for baby. Depending on the stature of the parent plant, the plantlet should have several strong roots of at least two or three inches in length before it is cut from the parent plant and put into a small pot of its own.

Tackling the division of a large orchid plant is often a bittersweet task, perhaps because of the many years it can take to grow an orchid to specimen size, and the bit of sadness that comes with cutting it apart to begin the process anew. On the positive side, you will likely have more space in your collection for other orchid plants, providing you share the divisions you produce with your orchid loving friends.

*Originally published in AOS Orchids Magazine, April 2005 and taken from the March 2008 Newsletter of the Central Vancouver Island Orchid Society*

## NUTRITIONAL NEEDS OF PAPHIOPEDILUMS AND THE CHEMICALS IN THE WATER OF THE CITY OF WINNIPEG

By *Ed Cormier*

The measurements are given in TDS (Total dissolved solids) and in PPM (Parts per million)

Element	Winnipeg water ppm	Paph Min Need. ppm	Paph. Max. Need ppm
Nitrogen	.04	60	100
Potassium	1.31	60	100
Calcium	21.8	30	50
Magnesium	6.01	15	30
Phosphorus	1.88	30	50
Sulfur	2.6	15	25
Boron	0.010	trace	0.8
Iron	0.5	0.5	2
Manganese	0.013	0.2	2
Zinc	0.003	1	2
Copper	0.114	trace	0.2
Molybdenum	0.0001	trace	0.05

The City of Winnipeg has about 120 ppm of TDS with a pH between 6.5- 7.5. It is clear that the water does not furnish the necessary chemicals for the growth of orchids. For Paphs, a low urea nitrogen will have to be added to arrive at N50-100 ppm. Some Paphs will need much more Calcium; mainly the following ones:

Armeniacum, malipoense, micranthum, bellatulum, concolor, godefroye, niveum, philippinense, sanderianum, victoria-reginae, hirsutissimum, insigne, exul, spicerianum.

Yet the following Paphs do not do well with a surplus of Calcium:

delenatii, parishii, gratrixianum, tonsum, callosum, sukhakulii, venustum.

Supplement of Calcium can be given by using Calcium nitrate, dolomite lime, oyster shells, egg shells or crushed limestone.

Paphs do not need an extra supplement of Potassium. Too much Potassium will prevent the absorption of nitrogen, magnesium, calcium, iron, zinc, copper and manganese.

For more information: go to AnTEC Laboratory, Bob & Lynn Wellenstein.

To calculate the amount of Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium the orchids will need, FirstRay Orchids has TDS calculator on his Web Site: [firstray.com/fertcalc](http://firstray.com/fertcalc).

For example if you put N20 P20 K20

Teaspoons per Gallon: .25

Hit: calculate

It will give you the answer: N66 ppm P 29ppm K55ppm

TDS 150ppm

Which means: if you add one quarter of a teaspoon of 20-20-20 fertilizer with micronutrients in the City of Winnipeg water you would have a reasonable dosage of fertilizer for your Paphs, at a total of 270.ppm of TDS.

Your solution should have a pH of 6.6.To find material to measure the pH: check with aquarium stores, hydroponics shops, swimming pool supplies, or buy pH strips. The strips by Machrey-Nagel pH-Fix 0-14 are quite good.

Small and low priced pH meters are both unreliable and non durable.

Good luck with your Paphs!

### Sources:

City of Winnipeg, Water and Waste

AnTec Laboratory

First Ray Orchids



<p>For Sale!</p>	<p>Phal schilleriana \$20  Phal (Hilo Dawn x Culican) in bloom \$15  Phal Nobbys Shadowy in bloom \$20  Phal equestris alba in bloom \$30  Masd coriacea \$15</p> <p>Please contact Kyle at  <a href="mailto:kylelucyk@gmail.com">kylelucyk@gmail.com</a> or call 284-1195</p>
<p>For Sale!</p>	<p>Kimberly has Phal violacea in spike(s)  and Phal bellina (the blue violacea to bloom in  4 months or so.) Both are very fragrant. Large  plants. Only a few left.</p> <p>Email her at <a href="mailto:bamboobaby@shaw.ca">bamboobaby@shaw.ca</a> or  call 632-6177</p>

### **Sobralia macrantha**

By Manuel Pontes



The first impression, at the sight of a *Sobralia*, is that one is before a Bamboo and not an orchid; its long and thin stems, with plicate, pointed, leaves, contradicts the image of an orchid plant. In addition they are cultivated in large pots around the patios of the provincial cities such as Morelia and Uruapan. It is not infrequent to see, from May through July, through the open entrance hall, several large clumps of *Sobralia*, with the large, delicate, flowers at the end of the stems. The colors vary from yellow, white and various tones of lilac to chocolate or bluish. They constitute, to be sure, the pride of the landlord. The more common of these is *Sobralia macrantha*, which has

long stems, sometimes two meters long, and large Cattleya-like flowers, of the labiata type, lilac or purple with large dark labellums marked with yellow and white in the throat, delicately perfumed. The flowers last only a short time, two or three days, but the plant may give two to four in close succession, so that a large old plant can be full of flowers for a longer period.

Its culture is not difficult, they only require patience at first, as they do not take changes lightly, and may take several years to recuperate from transplanting. Once they start to flower, however, they flower more and more every year, so that it is not rare to see plants with 40 or 50 stems, making impressive shows when in flower and quite ornamental when not.

Sobralias grow in loose earth, in large pots, which are covered with the roots, these fleshy and thick, as much as the little finger, translucent and whitish, sometimes covered with velamen, especially where they are in contact with the earth. I have read frequently that watering should never be stopped, but I have seen that diminishing it a little during the winter months, without letting them dry can be helpful. The result will be a few yellow leaves at the base of the stems, but many new growths, and as a result more flowers. The new growths appear from the base, through the soil, taking the form of thick needles until they are about 10 cm long, when the first leaf appears. The stems develop during two or three years before flowering, which explains the time it takes for them to flower after dividing or transplanting them. Once they flower, the spathes, which covered the buds dry, but the stem will remain green, retaining the leaves for several years. Once they begin to flower, the plant should not be moved, and much less divided. They can remain in the pot for over twenty years, if the pot is large enough, and the only thing that should be added is fresh humus every year over the roots. These plants will, with time and patience, become magnificent specimens, both in pots as in the ground.

*Sobralia macrantha* is found wild and, abundant in the cool and humid sierras of the coast of the Gulf of Mexico. There they grow in the crotch of large trees, the roots covered by mosses, ferns and the detritus, which accumulates with time. The roots of the wild plants may be as much as a meter long, in culture they are much shorter. I have also seen them on cliffs, hanging over creeks on rocks where the leaves have accumulated and formed a suitable bed. Curiously, they never seem to form the great masses in nature as can be seen under culture. They are rather smaller, with fewer stems, and the flowers are also smaller. Brought in from the wild, they benefit greatly from the patio and garden. In spite of their beauty, their culture is not very frequent abroad (outside Tropical American that is). This is certainly due to the short-lived flowers which can not be cut. Notwithstanding, they are very popular in our country and adorn the old patios of the cooler regions. A good example is Morelia, the capital of Michoacan, where they import the plants from Chiapas and Veracruz. There is a great variety among them, and, they, reach the highest prices among cultivated plants, ranging from 5 to 300 pesos per growth!

The culture of Sobralias can be as follows:

1. Plant them in loose leaf mould with good drainage.
2. In large pots or in your garden.
3. Water them as any other garden plant, watering can be suspended for two weeks prior to the rainy season.
4. They require good light intensity, but should be provided with shade at midday. They are ideal for patios.
5. Have patience with them, they may take two or three years to bloom. After that, they will bloom ever more abundantly.
6. Do not molest or divide them unless absolutely necessary.

*Originally published in Orquidea (Mexico) Vol. 5 No.5, August 1975 and taken from the Central Vancouver Island Orchid Society November 2007 Newsletter.*