Manitoba Orchid Society
For the Love of Orchids Newsletter

Next Meeting: 16 January 2011
Salle Antoine Gaborieau
Franco-Manitobain Cultural Centre,
340 Provencher Blvd. (at Rue Des Meurons)

Novice Programme	Regular Programme
Question & answer	**Slide presentation from C.O.C.**
Starts at 1:00PM	**Starts at 2:00PM**

Plant sales by members are encouraged.

Bring Plants for Show & Tell

Goodies will be provided by Sheila Pilgrim, Lilianne Foster and Phyllis McCaskill.

Website: http://www.manitobaorchidsociety.ca
Executive email: president@manitobaorchidsociety.ca
Newsletter email: newsletter@manitobaorchidsociety.ca

Submission deadline 20 January 2011 for February 2011 Issue

January 16: M.O.S. Novice & General Meetings

February 12 & 13: <u>Ever Spring Open House</u>
Always a fun event with a chance to see lots of orchids in bloom, add to your collection, some good deals, refreshments and an opportunity to talk orchids!

Details of our February club meeting, including when or where it will be held, were not known at press time. Ideally, January will be our last time at Franco Manitobain. With the membership expressing dissatisfaction, as well as the prohibitive costs, the executive is exploring the feasibility of other venues.

Hearts & Flowers

The MOS lost a valued member in Ed Cormier who passed away shortly before Christmas. He was quick to mentor new members and sold them plants that he knew they could grow. His greenhouse was open to everyone at any time.

Ed gave many presentations at meetings throughout the years.He seemed to particularly enjoy the novice meetings and was readily available.
He also gave many presentations outside the society and encouraged participants to join the MOS.

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

To Wendy Chaytor, Horst Hack, Marianne Hack, Dave & Elaine Moran and Garnet Ward for bringing flowering plants to the December Show & Tell.

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.

2010/2011 Executive

Elected
President Dave Moran
Past President Joyce Jaworski
1st V.P. Kyle Lucyk
2nd V.P./Show Chair Rob Kato
Treasurer Garnet Ward
Secretary Phyllis McCaskill

Appointed
Membership Gary Jaworski
Social Eva Slavicek
Public Relations
Special Orders Darlene Stack
AOS/COC Rep Kevin Duerksen
Library Lilianne Foster
Newsletter Robert Parsons
Webmaster Robert Kato

2011 Manitoba Orchid Society Show & Sale "Orchid Celebration"

Our annual show will be here soon and it's not too soon to be thinking about contacting vendors to see what they have available. Some of them have websites and catalogues to peruse. Remember inclusion of plants in them does not guarantee they will bring all those plants. Space constraints limit what they can bring and the only way to be 100% certain a plant will be there is to pre-order. Having said that, one can sometimes find better plants by looking at what was brought! Listed below are all confirmed vendors at press time. Kevin Duerksen may have details of additional vendors by the time you're reading this. He can be contacted at kevind76@mts.net or 633-0314.

Confirmed Show Vendors:

Orchids in Our Tropics - Doug and Terry Kennedy
Gormley ON
Phone/Fax: (905) 727-3319
Web site: http://www.orchidsinourtropics.com/

Mike Gabrielson - Sherwood Park, A.B.
Phone: (780) 410-1571
e-mail: mikegab@telus.net

Ever Spring Orchids - Winnipeg, MB
Phone: (204) 338-2340
Web site: http://www.everspringorchids.ca/
e-mail: grking@shaw.ca

Paramount Orchids - Calgary, Alberta
Phone**:** (403) 686-7021
Fax: (403) 686-6270
e-mail: info@paramountorchids.com
web site: http://www.paramountorchids.com/

Monica de Witt – Edmonton, Alberta
e-mail: monicadwt@gmail.com

The Genus Dracula Part III

By John Leathers, Gary Meyer, Joe Parker and Kenneth Cameron. (Reprinted with Permission from the Orchid Digest, Vol. 72-4, Oct. Nov. Dec. 2008.) Taken from the March 2010 issue of the SOS Newsletter and reproduced here with a few editorial changes.

Water: As epiphytes in wet cloud forests, Draculas are adapted to water of high quality, i.e. virtually pure, without significant levels of minerals and salts. The water supply in the authors' Pacifica greenhouses is relatively good, with conductivity of around 120 ppm total dissolved solids (200 uSiemens as measured on a conductivity meter). The municipal water quality at John's Berkeley greenhouse is excellent, with typical values of approximately 45 ppm (75uSiemens). In both locations the major components are salts of calcium and magnesium, which are tolerated by Draculas. In areas where the water supply has a higher concentration of salts, some method of reducing salts should be employed for successful cultivation. A reverse osmosis (RO) filtration system or use of ion exchange resin (for deionized, or DI water) will significantly improve water quality. For small plant collections, rainwater can be collected and stored for later use. While daily watering is not absolutely required, Draculas do not fare well when the potting mix (substrate) is allowed to completely dry out between watering.

Medium: Draculas are usually grown in hanging teak or plastic baskets. It is important to use a basket that provides a path for the flower spike to emerge, as many species bloom with pendent flower spikes. It is essential to pot them in a material that provides them with both moisture and air at the root system.

Sphagnum moss makes an excellent substrate. It is imperative that it not be packed too tightly or the air space will be lost. Sphagnum moss can be very difficult to rewet if allowed to go completely dry. All organic substrates eventually break down, resulting in a loss of air space, the ability to nourish the plant, and hydrating properties. Draculas should be repotted annually, and react well to repotting at virtually any time of the year (even during blooming) if other conditions are under control. While sphagnum moss is the medium of choice by most growers, other successful options include the use of fir bark mixes and mounting on cork and tree fern slabs, and using fir bark mixes. Maintaining the proper ratio of air and moisture at the root system is more important than the particular medium used.

Pests: The most serious threat to any Dracula collection is Bean Yellow Mosaic Virus (BYMV), a potyvirus that infects a wide variety of plants, including most leguminous plants. Unfortunately, masdevallias and Draculas are included as well. Humans, through unsterile pruning tools, and aphids, by transferring infected plant fluids to healthy plants, are the primary vectors for transmission of BYMV. Many species of aphids exist; a particular black-colored aphid, associated with milkweed, and which seems to prefer Draculas to any other group of orchids in the greenhouse, can be very difficult to eliminate. The pesticide Orthene is an old standby for the control of aphids, but other chemical and non-chemical options can be used as well. Slugs and snails are a problem in

any cool, wet, greenhouse, but not nearly the threat to Draculas as that presented by BYMV. If a virused plant is replaceable, for the sake of your own investment and the investment of your friends, it is best to destroy it, along with the container.

Fertilizer: Draculas benefit from regular application of low strength fertilizer with each watering. One-quarter strength of any single 'Acid' fertilizer will do. Current research indicates fertilizers balancing ammoniacal and nitrate nitrogen and that contain levels of phosphorous of about one-third to one-half the nitrogen and potassium levels closely meet the needs of orchid plants potted in a soilless substrate. The authors typically use 17-5-24 (the numbers referring to nitrogen, phosphate, and potassium) at approximately ¼ teaspoon per gallon. As with all potted plants, liberal amounts of water should be applied to every watering to make sure the substrate is well wetted and flushed so salts do not accumulate. A wetting agent, such as Aquagro, can also be added to help the water 'sheet' off the leaves of plants. This is helpful in wintertime to promote the drying of leaves, thus reducing the risk of fungal damage.

During exceptionally hot weather, it's a good idea to skip or reduce fertilizer applications to every other watering.

Black Leaf tips: Leaf-tip dieback occurs more commonly when the substrate is broken down. Repotting usually resolves this problem. The new leaf growth of freshly repotted Dracula plants is usually clean and spot-free. When the substrate is old and decayed, baskets and pots tend to dry more quickly, an indication the substrate has lost its hydrating properties.

Dracula Species

For this article, we want to highlight the species we most enjoy growing, and which we think will be especially rewarding additions to any collection with suitable growing conditions. This is by no means a complete list of Draculas that can be successfully cultivated.

1) Small and Compact

Dracula sergioi – discovered in 1974 in Colombia at an elevation of 6,000 ft, this charming species bears relatively small flowers. The inflorescences point downward, so the colorful back surface of the flowers is seen first; the furry white face is visible without turning the flower over.

Dracula lotax – found in Ecuador at 3,000 ft, this is one of the warmer-growing species, making it easier to grow in warmer areas of the country. In fact, it fares less well in typical cool Dracula conditions. Since the leaves are short (2-3 inches) and the plant itself is compact, it makes a great specimen in short time, taking up little space.

Dracula xenos – described originally as a Dracula, it is probably a natural hybrid of Dracula and Masdevallia (Dracuvallia). Another small colourful species that makes a beautiful specimen in a small space.

2) Colorful

Dracula vespertillo – grows in a wide area from Nicaragua and Costa Rica in Central America to Central Ecuador in South America, at elevations from 3,500 to 6,000 ft. Its cream-colored flowers are covered with red to purple spots. This is a rewarding plant for someone beginning to grow Draculas.

Dracula psyche – originally collected in northwestern-most Ecuador between 4,800 and 6,500 ft, this species has a small purple striped, bell-shaped flower on an upright inflorescence with dark purple tails – an amazing flower. Clones are also seen in cultivation whose purple stripes are reduced to a few scattered dots.

3) Wonderful and Weird

Dracula soderoi – this grotesque species from Colombia, discovered in 1879, is one of the strangest in the orchid world. The green sepals reflex and are covered with small, black warts. If that weren't enough, its huge lip resembles a mushroom with red gills.

Dracula cochliops – one of the smallest species in the genus, it grows epiphytically in remnants of cloud forest between San Francisco and El Pepino in Southern Colombia at an elevation of 7,100 ft. Its purple and white flowers bloom just above the foliage with long petals resembling insect antennae.

Dracula andreettae- can't be described any better than Luer did in the Thesaurus Dracularum: "Although not vegetatively distinct, the unique flowers resemble some character from a horror novel. From the center of the twisted, gaping, verrucose, purple-blotched flowers, a pair of warty eyes protrude on s stalks above the inverted, mushroom-like lip." The medium size flowers, about 6 inches across, are found in the cloud forest of Northern Ecuador and Southwestern Colombia at elevations of 4,800 to 6,500 ft.

4) Big and Flashy

Dracula hirtzii – name in honor of Alexander Hirtz, of Quito, Ecuador, who discovered the species in Northern Ecuador at an elevation of 6,500 ft. It has since also been observed growing in Southern Columbia as well at a slightly lower elevation, 5,800 ft. One of the largest of the genus, its flowers vary in color from deep red to dark brown. Flowers with a natural spread of 14 inches are not uncommon.

Dracula chimaera - the first of the Draculas to be discovered, in 1870, by Roezl at Choco in Colombia growing at 7,400 feet above sea level. It is quite variable in color, size and shape. While there are a number of large, red/brown splotched Dracula flowers covered in long hairs, chimaera can be easily distinguished by its immobile lip. Even when the flower is held upright, the lip continues to jut forward from the center of the flower. Flowers can range in size from 12 to 16 inches in natural spread, but the tails on some specimens can reach two feet from tip to tip.

Dracula vampira – considered the queen of the Dracula, it is widely known for its large, impressive, striking green and black flowers that range from striped to almost solid black.

It was first collected in 1977 in Northwestern Ecuador at 6,500 ft. Dracula vampira can have flowers as large as 18 inches in natural spread; the normal range is between 12 and 16 inches.

5) Xanthic Draculas
Plants that carry genetic mutations leading to production of pure yellow flowers are among the most stunning and sought-after of the Draculas. The terms alba and xanthina are used interchangeably when describing these forms; no truly alba Draculas have been identified. Rather, in xanthic/alb plants, the ability to produce most or all red pigments is lost, and what remains is a yellow color. The overall distribution of the colorations stays the same, but is yellow instead of red. The pigment loss can also be seen in the inflorescences: yellow Draculas have pure green inflorescences with no brown markings.

Dracula levii – the only known Dracula species where being xanthic is 'normal', the flower is white with greenish yellow tails, and the inflorescence has no brown coloration. *Dracula levii* has been recorded and collected relatively frequently along the Ecuadorian/Colombian border.
To be continued

Minutes - Manitoba Orchid Society General Meeting, December 12, 2010

Recorder: Phyllis McCaskill

1. **Call to order:**
   Dave Moran called the meeting to order at 3:20 p.m.

2. **Minutes of the last meeting:**
   Motion to accept the minutes of the last meeting as published, moved by Phyllis McCaskill,

3. **Financial report: - Garnet Ward**
   Garnet presented the November financial report and moved that they be accepted as presented. Seconded by Gary Jaworski – carried.

4. **Programs: - Kyle Lucyk**
   The January 2011 show will be an Orchid Digest slide show. The February program is not confirmed at this time. And there will be no meeting in March due to the Orchid show.

5. **Show Chairperson and Website Report: - Rob Kato**
   Nothing to report regarding the show. If anyone has pictures of orchids that they want published on the website, please send them to Rob.

6. **AOS/COC Representative: - Kevin Duerksen**
   Today is the last day for A.O.S. calendar orders. They will cost approximately $15.00

7. **Hospitality: - Eva Slavicek**
   Nothing to report.

8. **Library: - Lilianne Foster –**
   Nothing to report.

9. **Public Relations:** - Position vacant, still looking for someone.

10. **Membership: - Gary Jaworski**
    Gary reports the membership is 102.

11. **Newsletter: - Rob Parsons**
    Nothing to report

12. **Special Orders: - Darlene Stack**
    Absent. No report

13. **Unfinished business:**
    None

14. **New business:**

    Volunteers for goodies for the January meeting are Sheila Pilgrim, Lilianne Foster and Phyllis McCaskill.

15. **Raffle draw:**

    A large special Christmas draw was held with many, many prizes going to members and their spouses being winners so names were therefore not recorded.

16. **Show & tell:**
    Kyle Lucyk showed the plants that were brought in and talked about each of them and described them.

17. **Adjournment:**
    Motion to adjourn by Robert Kato at 3:26 p.m.

Note: Minutes of the Executive Meetings are available to be picked up at General Meetings on request from the Secretary.