

The BackBulb

C A R M E L O R C H I D S O C I E T Y

April 2024

The April Meeting is on **Saturday April 6th, 2PM** at the Church



April Speaker: Cheri Wagner

Semi-Hydro growing for Orchids

People growing orchids in a semi-hydroponic way claim that they save time by watering less frequently, save money by not throwing away the media at repotting time, save plants by eliminating the problems with over watering, etc. All of this may or may not be true, Cheri has some experience with Semi-hydro and will tell us about her experiences.

Cheri was first introduced to orchids in the early 1990's when the company she worked for started putting orchids (mainly Phalaenopsis) in various locations around the building and gave



Classic semi-hydro culture

them away to interested employees when flowers started to fall off. She was a lucky recipient of one and was hooked. She decided to join an orchid society to learn more about growing them. Cheri has been a member of the Santa Cruz Orchid Society since 1998. Cheri has served on the Santa Cruz Orchid Society Board as a Director, Secretary, and Vice President. She is currently the newsletter editor and webmaster and has held this position for the last 9 years. She has chaired or co-chaired the annual Show and Sale several times.

Cheri grows a variety of orchids. She recently moved from

In order to provide a selection of treats at our meetings, we are asking members with last names that start with the letter **A thru F** to bring refreshments to the meeting.

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Santa Cruz to Royal Oaks and is having to adjust how she grows her orchids. While she is still growing orchids inside using LED lights and terrariums, she has the majority outside in an unheated 'greenhouse' or around the house under the large overhangs and covered patios. Cheri has a MS in Biological Sciences. Her experience working in the sciences has carried over into her orchid growing. She likes to experiment with different growing media and conditions. She currently is having success growing a large number of her orchids semi-hydroponically as well as using traditional media.



Chysis limminghei which John bought at the Santa Barbara show.

Upcoming Events

April

4/6 Saturday 2PM COS April Meeting at the Church

4/6 MEarth Day Celebration 10-4, Hilton Bialek Habitat, next to Carmel Valley Middle School

Saying Goodbye to My Tropical Garden

Rudy and I have lived on a semi-arid island (48" rainfall yearly) in the Caribbean for 50 years. Saint John (part of the U.S. Virgin Islands Territory) Virgin Islands National Park covers 50% of the central part of the island, which is cooler and wetter than our little half acre which is closer to sea level on the dry SW side. The island has 12 native orchids, and is only 90 miles from Puerto Rico where high mountains and damp clouds support many more. Before the island was developed and the National Park was established, vanilla grew on our 1,000 foot high mountain. Iguanas, deer and donkeys all roam and graze freely making it hard to raise food crops or orchids...but, if you tie orchids to a tree on the windward side (SE), the trade-winds and a good tree barrier at ground level may give you a slight edge. Hurricanes regularly wipe out homes and bird populations and bury orchids under masses of debris. Pollinators are here in large numbers: hummingbirds, night moths, bats, bees and wasps visit the regularly. I have two grocery store Phalanopsis growing directly on tree trunks that have 4" seed pods on them this year!

We are saying goodbye, selling our house and inviting our island friends to visit California where I will long for the tropical, hot colors and night fragrances. Our native St John "Christmas Orchid", ***Epidendrum ciliare*** (above right) bloomed 2 months late this year due to a very hot, dry Fall. A friend's same orchid bloomed on Christmas Day but she is at a higher altitude and gets more rain. The ***Dendrobium crumenatum*** I got from the Park Superintendent's wife, blooms after every heavy rain and is called the Pigeon Orchid locally. (bottom, right) It grows on the ground in gravel, on a slope. A 1936 ***Vanda Tessalata***

Top: ***Epidendrum ciliare***

Bottom: ***Dendrobium crumenatum***





Vanda Tessalata



Tetramicra canaliculate

'Josephine Van Brero' has scrambled over rocks and up palm trees and bloomed reliably in hot weather as has the Renanthera I bought at an orchid show in St Thomas in the 1980's. The vendor said it would grow on a telephone pole! The Vanda was given to us by neighbors in 1978 who grew it in the frozen north (Indiana?). It covered their island trees so heavily at sea level that the masses of vines sagged to the ground. (left, top) I have passed divisions to anyone who would take them. It's really fun to discover the little grass orchids, **Tetramicra canaliculate**, that scramble and tumble over rocks and hide in the low grass in the sun. It is a native that has almost been destroyed by deer except in private gardens. (left, bottom) In the 1970's we would hike all over the island looking for stands of **Tolumnia prionochoilla** (our yellow dancing ladies) (next page bottom) and **Psychillis macconnelli**, which grew through the roots and stems of plants on rocky soil. This orchid was named for a St Thomas woman. Today, the bulldozers clear cut what land is left and the landscaping companies try to rescue any orchids they see piled up in the leavings. Home growing and rescuing natives are good ways to keep the species thriving locally.

I have brought warm growing orchids from John O'Connell's and Carolyn Salmon's greenhouses here and given them to friends this week as I am leaving to come back to cooler CA. At Easter, we wait for the huge blooms of the Schomburkia (now Myrmecophila) that was brought to the Virgin Islands from Venezuela by the collector



Myrmecophila sp.

Schomburk and now naturalized. It is called 'cow horn' because children in South America use the dried pods as toy horns. It grows up coconut palm trees from the ground to the top and has colonies of ants that live in the pseudobulbs. (left) Encyclias love living on rocks in semi-shade, around aloes and other succulents, but they are Iguana candy. Cattlyeas and cane Dendrobiums are commonly grown but must have nothing around their roots due to heavy rains from June-December.

Goodbye to all you beauties, thanks for all the fun! We hope you continue to pollinate and spread naturally and with the help of home gardeners.

Irene Patton



Tolumnia prionochoilla

The Santa Barbara International Orchid Show, 2024

I love going to the Santa Barbara International Orchid show the: exhibits, vendors, open houses at Cal-Orchid and SBOE, sunshine and warm temperatures (usually).



The glory days of exhibits at POE are gone with the Fort Mason Center shows, but the extravagant orchid exhibits are still alive in Santa Barbara. Unfortunately there are not as many of them, SBOE (Santa Barbara Orchid Estate) seems to be coasting into the sunset, though it still has many beautiful specimens, several of which were displayed at the show. Cal-Orchid is still putting up grand displays (**top**) with masses of their fabulous reed stem Epidendrums, *Ansellia africana*, and others. The orchid societies of Southern California also put up great exhibits that express the theme of the show (**bottom**) "Floral Gems of Nature". I also loved the specialty societies like the Asian Cymbidium Society of America, who put up this great display of Chinese and East Asian Cymbidiums (**Top of next page**)

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Another highlight of the show is the orchid art exhibit, and the orchid floral arrangements

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The vendor area is quite good (even though Andy doesn't come anymore) I found a bunch of nice plants and this one (left) where I was really taking a picture of the price tag not the flower.



One of the best parts of a Santa Barbara trip is relaxing before the show at **Renaud's Bakery** with a Morning bun and a cup of tea.

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This is what happens when you have a spectacular plant, but the background isn't quite big enough... This great *Dendrobium speciosum* grown by Carolyn Salmon

CARMEL ORCHID SOCIETY

2024 Membership Application

Please make checks payable to the Carmel Orchid Society and mail to: Carmel Orchid Society - Membership, P.O. Box 223462 Carmel CA 93922-3462

Please print

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