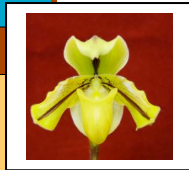


February 2008

Volume 7 Issue 2



Paph druryi 'Truford'

New Mexico Orchid Guild Newsletter

Next Meeting:

- 1:30 pm February 3rd
- Scheduled Program: Slide Show presentation on "Judging Orchids" and a short discussion on The Value of Judging.
- Location: The Bureau of Land Management
435 Montano NW
It's almost a mile west of Interstate 25 (take the Montgomery/Montano exit). Go past Bob Turner's Ford Country but not past the Sonic Drive-In. Turn at the Sonic, one block east of Edith, and you'll see a dark brick building on the north side of the street. The conference room is straight ahead once you enter.
- As always there is a potluck with a plethora of wonderful food.

NMOG offers its members the opportunity to learn about orchids each month!

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WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Part 2

Steve Fischer

Nothing endures but change.

Heraclitus

The more things change, the more they remain...insane.

Michael Fry and T. Lewis

Why the deuce do they keep changing botanical names, anyway? And whom do I complain to about it?

Scientists who first describe a new species by publishing a "diagnosis" in Latin get to do the naming honors. But the new name must follow the rules laid out in the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature (ICBN). The current version is referred to as the Vienna Code of 2006. This new species is in reality a concept that is thrown into a lion's den of botanists to be devoured and digested like a slab of meat. Over time, the species is generally accepted or rejected.

Eventually, when there is enough of a consensus, the name finds its way onto the World Checklist of Selected Plant Families maintained by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, formerly known as the Kew Monocot list. The list is over 2700 pages long but it can be searched online at <http://apps.kew.org/wcsp/home.do>. Although not all botanists agree with the list, both the Royal Horticultural Society and the American Orchid Society have adopted the Kew checklist as a reference for all orchid species.

So what is the problem? Well first, between 150 and 800 new species of orchids are described each year. Changes result from an explosion of knowledge about this popular plant family. In some cases, an earlier valid name is discovered for a particular species, which then has priority under the rules of the ICBN. Such is the case with *Dendrobium aphyllum* that replaced *D. pierardii* as well as *D. lindleyi* in place of *D. aggregatum*.

Finally, molecular technology and DNA sequencing has caused a revolution in plant classification. These technologies allow scientists to determine which plants have a common ancestry and which have independently developed a superficial morphological similarity. The familial groupings are called "clades" and the genetic distances are measured using cladograms, which are like family trees. This results in species being renamed to reflect their common ancestry.

In 2000 the journal *Lindleyana* published the results of a DNA analysis of the *Cattleya* alliance. The authors argue that *Cattleya skinneri* and *bowringiana* should be separated from the rest of the *cattleyas*. More radically, they transfer the Brazilian *laelias* to the genus *Sophranitis*. In 2007, the RHS decided to implement the proposed changes. *Cattleya skinneri* is now *Guarianthe skinneri* while *Laelia purpurata* is now *Sophranitis purpurata*.

These changes have not been met with ringing endorsement and universal agreement. A.A. and Arthur E. Chadwick maintain in their 2006 book, *The Classic Cattleyas*, that the large-flowered Brazilian *laelias* belong in the genus *Cattleya*. It is also interesting to note that not all of the DNA results have been acted on. The authors of the study expressed surprise that *Cattleya lueddemanniana*, *C. lawrenceana*, and *C. maxima* were all placed in the clade alongside the Brazilian *laelias*. Many growers have clearly not been happy with the changes.

But there is as much art in classification as there is science. It is not purely objective because someone still has to decide where the lines separating genera and species are drawn. Alan

Weakley of the University of North Carolina writes, "In the art of plant taxonomy, the 'splitters' have largely regained influence, after a period of several decades in which 'lumpers' were generally in the ascendancy, at least in North America." An example is the huge dumping ground of genus *Pleurothallis* which Carlyle Luer has split into at least 23 genera.

Of course you can decide for yourself whether or not to change the names on your orchid tags. If you do, write them in pencil; they will probably change again.

In the next installment, we'll look at how all of this fuss affects the names of hybrids.

FEBRUARY'S PROGRAM

Sunday's meeting will have an AOS slide program on judging orchids. As an added attraction we will also have Diann O'Neill, one of the founding members of NMOG and the former President, who will give a talk on "What is the value of judging"? It will focus on judging, requirements, benefits, etc.

Dian started as a student judge in the AOS Judging Region of Denver when it first opened, moving to Austin TX where she joined the San Antonio Judging Region. She later transferred to the Houston Judging Center, moved on to the Great Plains Judging Center in Oklahoma from which she eventually resigned. From this experience she was able to exhibit in a variety of AOS and Orchid Digest sponsored shows, judge with individuals from all over the world, judge orchids from some of the world's greatest hybridizers while making many long lasting friends.

ORCHID LIFE CYCLE

By Susan Taylor, Bellaonline.com

Orchids are one of the oldest types of flowering plants on earth. And they are one of the most diverse with an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 separate genera and more species being identified all the time.

They are also one of the most interesting from the point of view that they have among the most fascinating life cycle – starting with pollination strategies. There are orchids that mimic wasps down to the production of pheromones of female wasps to attract the males who pollinate the flowers. Others mimic male wasps to incite male wasps to attack and fight with the flowers, thus pollinating it. There is one orchid whose flower looks like carrion and smells like rotting meat that attracts flies that pollinate it. Charles Darwin was fascinated with *Angraecum sesquipedale* and predicted that it was pollinated by a moth with a proboscis or tongue long enough to reach the end of the nectary. He was never able to see the moth and was ridiculed for the prediction, but it was discovered 50 years after his death and named *Xanthopan morgani praedicta* (the name *praedicta* means predicted).

After the flowers are pollinated, most orchids produce a seed pod which can contain up to three million seeds. The seeds are generally very small and in many cases almost dust-like. Unlike many other seeds, they contain only the growing kernel which will become a new plant. There is no excess capacity to provide the seed the nourishment it needs to grow, so it is imperative that the seeds, when it is dispersed, alight in a location where it can find a specific fungus which will provide nourishment for the seed until it develops into a plantlet and makes roots. Of the millions of seeds from a pod, only a few will succeed in finding the perfect location where they can grow in the wild. It can take from a few years to decades for plants to get large enough to bloom.

Fortunately for orchid lovers, artificial propagation of seeds has allowed for up to 100% germination and very good odds of having those tiny plants grown to flowering size. Seeds are placed in sterile flasks in an agar-like solution which provides the nutrition necessary for the seeds to germinate and grow. They are allowed to grow for a period of time in this sterile environment until they are large enough to be placed in a "community pot" or "compot" where usually 10-15 plantlets grow together. After they have reached the proper size they're either placed in individual pots or into a compot with fewer plants. Finally they are all placed in individual pots to grow to flowering size.

In addition, a process called mericlone has allowed the commercial propagation of clones of awarded plants so that they can be sold to the public. Hybridization has also in many cases shortened the seed to flowering time so that many of today's plants will bloom in three or four years, depending of course on the type of orchid.

ORCHID FLASKING

By Susan Taylor, Bellaonline.com

Until the 1900s orchids were considered rare and commanded prices so high that only the very rich could afford to buy them. This rarity is part of the mystique of the orchid although it is no longer true that the cost is prohibitive.

In the wild, orchids can only germinate in a symbiotic relationship with a fungus called mycorrhiza. As you can imagine, the odds for an orchid seed to land in just the right spot to have the correct fungus available to germinate are very small. Some estimates have been as high as a 1 in 100,000 chance for the seed to germinate. Early growers were only able to get plants to grow by sowing seeds in the same pot as the parent where sometimes the requisite fungus was already growing.

In 1922, when Lewis Knudson was able to germinate and grow orchids in flasks, the commercial propagation of orchids was born. Under sterile conditions in what is called a flask, orchid seeds can now be grown with approximately 90% germination rates for many species. This has allowed the incredible growth in the availability of many orchids as well as reducing the cost of those orchids so that almost anyone can now afford one of these great plants. Flasking involves the sowing of seeds into a special agar solution in a glass bottle or flask and then allowing the seeds to germinate and grow until they are large enough to move to a "compot" or "community pot."

The next step that allowed the industry to provide multiple plants was the advent of mericlone in 1956 when Georges Morel, a French orchid enthusiast, was the first to successfully clone orchids. This involves taking a small piece of a special orchid and then reducing that piece into extremely small pieces and then sowing the resultant mix into a flask. This is most often done with awarded plants of very high quality and is actually a form of cloning or producing an exact replica of the original. In this way, a grower can know exactly what he or she is getting before purchasing a plant since the new plantlet is the same as the parent plant. The flower, which is what is important in an orchid, will be identical.

Watch out when purchasing plants to see if you are purchasing a seed grown plant or a mericlone. With the former, you will not know what the flower is going to look like until it has produced the first one. It can be exciting to grow these, but chances are that the flower will not be of the finest quality, although you may get that one out of the cross that produces an extraordinary flower, which can be awarded.

HOW LOVELY ORCHIDS ENTRAPPED A ONCE-SANE GARDEN WRITER

By Georgia Tasker

Our orchids grow in two shade houses, hang from two specially built trellises and are wrapping roots around nearly every tree and palm in the yard. I am their slave. I serve them meals, fluff their beds (but not nearly often enough), quench their thirst, trim their roots and wipe their little leaves. I shoo away insects and medicate their ills.

When winter arrives, we cover their shade houses with plastic curtains that can be rolled up and down. I climb eight feet up onto the sharp metal mesh roof of our "long house" to spread plastic on top of the lath, bloodying my knees. Just before cold hits, we carry the sensitive vandas and phalaenopsis inside, along with any orchids in bud or flower. When the cold passes, we carry them back out. Lots of the big ones require two people to lift them.

When a hurricane threatens, orchids go on the floor of the shade houses or on the ground beneath the trellises, and we carry those in bud or flower inside. When a hurricane passes, they go back out. My weekends are spent fertilizing them. We never catch up on repotting.

Not so long ago, Sandy Schultz and I went to four orchid meetings a month. Now, Sandy is president of the South Florida Orchid Society, which is co-hosting the 19th World Orchid Conference that begins this week, and we go to fewer meetings.

How did such devotion to these flowers happen? Easy. They're like Shakespeare's Cleopatra: Custom cannot stale their infinite variety. There are 25,000 to 30,000 naturally occurring species, and some 110,000 man-made hybrids. Many of them are exquisite.

There is nothing like walking into the garden in the morning and finding the open flowers of the classic *Laeliocattleya* Mildred Rives. She is white with a purple lip and golden throat, a perfect understated color combination. She is elegant, large, showy without being gaudy, and beautifully perfumed. I have four.

Cattleya leuddemanniana from Venezuela is a rose lavender with darker, trumpet-shaped lip marked with yellow. C. Hawaiian Wedding Song is white. Slc. Hazel Boyd is apricot. Slc. Jewel Box is red. Blc. Ports of Paradise 'Emerald Isle' is green.

Sandy's late mother, Dorothy, created a bright orange *cattleya* hybrid in 1972 called Slc. Swizzle. It still is growing and flowering in our shadehouses, which she had built.

Continued p age 4

We have been through any number of collecting phases, favoring vandas one year and bulbophyllums the next, lady slippers for several years and dendrobiums from time to time. The houses have swelled with plants, and still the collecting itch persists.

But here are some little secrets. When an orchid dies in our collection, I am glad. It opens up space for many plants that have grown large and need air freely flowing around them to stay disease-free.

When an orchid loses its tag -- note that I am pinning the blame on the plant itself -- it is relegated to the outdoors. Nameless orchids may not win prizes; only known entities win prizes.

More secrets: I cannot grow dendrobiums in pots; I put them on trees, where they do fine. From time to time, I mix Epsom salt in a tub of water and soak the vandas or spray them with it; it makes them throw spikes of flowers.

I learned the hard way that cattleya relatives called laelias do not like Aussie Gold potting mix; they stay too wet in it and die. I add extra magnesium and potassium to my fertilizer. When the roots of the vandas get too stiff from calcium in our well water, I put a dollop of muriatic acid in a pump sprayer of water and hose them off. (This appalls most people, but I learned it from my orchid-growing rheumatologist.)

As a part of this orchid obsession, we also travel to the ends of the Earth to see endangered orchids in the wild.

Paphiopedilum Rothschildiana grows only on the slopes of Mount Kinabalu in Borneo. We were there. *Angrecum sesquipedale*, pollinated by a moth with a 12-inch proboscis, grows in Madagascar. We were there. The red-orange *Dendrobium wentianum* grows only in Papua New Guinea, and we saw it.

Secret: We have never seen a ghost orchid flower in the August heat in the Big Cypress Swamp. It's entirely too hot and buggy to make the effort.

Our *Renanthera Mauricette* Brin 'Kiaora' appeared on the cover of *Orchids* magazine two years ago, and thrilled us. It won an Award of Merit from the American Orchid Society. We continue to goad it, hoping it will produce such gorgeous flowers that it may win a First Class Certificate, the highest prize. So far, no luck.

We also were hoping to take her to the WOC, but her flower stem was broken when she was moved during the recent cold snap. Like other orchid hobbyists in South Florida, we are waiting to see what flowers may open this week to know if we have any entries.

The first orchid I bought, in the early 1980s, was a bare root cutting (meaning it was unpotted and came with dried-up roots) of LC Irene Finney 'Chicago,' a cattleya cross with big mauve flowers. Because it had been divided from a larger plant and had to build its strength, it took a long time to rebloom: seven years. When it did, I was beside myself with its glory.

For many years, I kept a log of when my orchids produced buds, when the flowers opened, how many and how big they were, and I even included photographs in the records. That effort has gone by the wayside, because I'd never catch up with the fertilizing and the repotting and all the rest. We have hundreds of orchids.

But here's one final secret. The bond between slave and master is very strong. Many people who grow orchids are as besotted as we. Thousands are gathering in Miami this week for the WOC, which will be the largest orchid show ever held in the United States. The flowers will be triumphant.

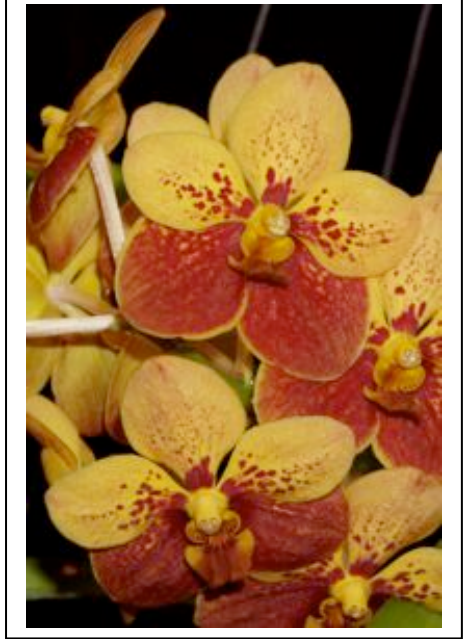
SHOW AND TELL WINNERS

The species, *Dendrobium alexandrae*, was named by Rudolf Schlechter after his wife Alexandra and found in only one or two areas of Papua New Guinea as an epiphyte in low to moderate altitude rainforests on shady, moss covered branches. Rudolf was a German taxonomist, botanist, and author of several works on orchids who explored Africa, Indonesia, New Guinea, South and Central America and Australia. His vast herbarium was destroyed during the bombing of Berlin in 1945 so the *D. alexandrae* was a "lost" species for many years. The plant has three to four elliptic leaves that have a light bluish green coloration underneath. It usually has several inflorescences bearing three to seven 2-3 1/2 inches across flowers. Flowers are long lasting, blooming usually in the autumn and spring. In cultivation, this species requires intermediate to hot conditions, year round lighting and bright indirect light. It can grow into a large plant and like all dendrobiums likes to be crowded within its pot. Steve grows in a sunroom and under lights.



D. alexandrae
Owner: Steve Fischer Div I
Photographer: Kathy Mancini

Ascocenda Motes Burning Sands 'Mary Motes' HCC/AOS is a cross between the species *V. lamellata* and *Ascda. Motes Goldpiece* of which the cross won a bronze medal in 2005 at the 18th World Conference in Dejon France. It was first registered by Motes in 1994 winning its HCC that same year. *V. lamellata* makes up about 50% of this complex cross with the remaining 50% made from 5 other species. Its dorsal sepal and petals are buttercup yellow, spotted with chocolate medially. The lateral sepals are heavily tessalated chocolate while the lip side lobes are gold, shading to chocolate apically. The substance of the flower is firm with a matte texture. Grow this orchid in bright indirect light. It may tolerate full sun. It likes hot temperatures with 60% humidity. Water daily if mounted. Sharon purchased this orchid from Motes Orchids in 2005.



Cym. Baltic Christmas 'Pink Parfait'
Owner: Walter Prahl Div LL
Photographer: Barbara Smith

Cymbidium Baltic Christmas 'Pink Parfait' is an early bloomer with large, peppy, pink flowers. It is a cool grower due to its parentage. Those orchids grew at altitudes as high as 8000 feet and were often subjected to cold nights that dropped to freezing, but since the higher altitudes have thinner air, the frosts did not seem to harm the plant. Walter's beautiful orchid has over 20 flowers. He grows it a temperature range from 40-86 degrees and has found the do best in the summer sitting next to his swamp cooler for the air flow. He believes light is the most important factor in growing cymbidiums so his have bright filtered sunlight. His plants love 55% shade all day or full morning sun to produce the best results.



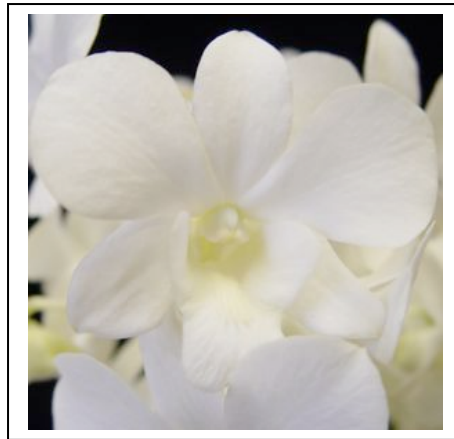
LC. Mari's Song HCC-AOS
Owner: Paul Perez Div II
Photographer: Barbara Smith

Laeliocattleya Mari's Song is a Hawaiian, intergeneric, mericlone hybrid cross between LC. Irene Finney and C. Cherry Chip. It has large, sweet, fragrant yellow, white, and purple flowers with the white portion fading to pink as it ages. The strong perfume also increases as the flower ages. The plant prefers medium to high light or 2500 -5000 foot-candles and can be outside in the summers in the shade. It will not tolerate direct light. Inside, grow in an east or south window. Temperatures in the winter should be around 75-85 during the day and not below 60 at night. Summer temperatures can go 10 degrees higher. It takes a 10 degree drop to bring a Cattleya to produce flower buds. The humidity should be 50 percent or higher. Do not let the plant get bone dry between watering. Paul received this plant from NMOG in 2005 with 2 blooms of which one promptly fell off. It bloomed Dec. 2, 2007 with 3 flowers. You can see how well the flowers have stood up one month later. Blooming season varies with the plant usually blooming in the spring or summer.



The species, *Platystele umbellata* is found in Colombia at 2000 feet and is less than 6 inches in height or known as a mini epiphyte. It likes hot to warm temperatures, light shade, medium air circulation and high humidity. It is an evergreen that will grow indoors. Do not over water this mini and feed it weekly. Lynn mists hers everyday and grows this orchid as well as her other minis in an Edwardian case under grow lights.

This unnamed *Dendrobium* likes high light, moderate temperatures in the low 60's to high 70's and moderate humidity. Pam grows it indoors in an atrium watering it weekly and feeding it every 2nd/3rd week. Like all *dendrobiums*, it likes to be crowded in the pot, becoming root bound before transplanting it to a pot that is only slightly larger. To bloom they need a resting period of no water.



Unnamed *Dendrobium*
Owner: Pam McKenzie Div III
Photographer: Barbara Smith



ORCHID NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

EDMONTON Canada - A breed of orchid that blossomed for the first time ever in a Spruce Grove-area greenhouse 11 years ago will soon be seen all over the United States.

The hybrid flower grown in 1996 by horticulturalist Gordon Heaps and photographed by his wife, Janet Heaps, is one of four Canadian hybrid orchids featured on a set of Canada Post stamps.

Janet said she was delighted to receive a letter from Canada Post in July telling her that her photograph of Gordon's orchid, called the *Potinara Janet Elizabeth Fire Dancer*, had inspired the illustration for the 96-cent U.S.-rate stamp. The colorful blooms of the *Potinara Janet Elizabeth Fire Dancer*, which appear on the U.S.- rate stamp, are influenced in size, color and shape by four different parents. They are characterized by predominantly yellow blooms with magenta lips that help explain the flower's fiery name,



HOMESTEAD, Fla. — The berry-colored buds looked ready to burst. Bob Fuchs tried peeling open the petals, but the hybrid orchid tightly refused to be coaxed into bloom. Fuchs had hung the *Vanda Robert's Delight "Crownfox Big Red"* just inside the door of a 90-degree greenhouse. He hoped the added heat and humidity would force one of the crown jewels of his orchid collection to flower for this week's World World Orchid Conference, the event continued on 7



that established him as orchid royalty more than 20 years ago. Miami hosts the five-day conference this year, starting Wednesday.

A third-generation South Florida orchid grower, Fuchs has registered more than 700 hybrid orchids, but this vanda is the only one he's named after himself. Fuchs remembered seeing the buds unfurl into palm-sized, bright red flowers for the first time. "I was so intrigued by the quality that we named it 'Robert's Delight,' because it truly is my delight."

The orchid went on to win the equivalent of best in breed at the 2002 World Orchid Conference, an event that every three years features exhibits, seminars and prizes for orchid enthusiasts worldwide. Fuchs won the grand champion prize for the best orchid in the world at the 1984 conference with another hybrid with round, fuchsia flowers and a netting pattern on the petals. It encouraged him to stop teaching junior high art classes and make the family passion for orchids a full-time business.

The virgin hammock his grandfather bought to nurture a collection of native Florida orchids is now the 40-acre Fuchs Hammock Preserve in Miami-Dade County. Fuchs' father led orchid hunting trips in the Fakahatchee swamp in southwest Florida and in Central and South America. Fuchs began rebuilding his grandfather's 10-acre nursery in Homestead in 1970. R.F. Orchids became his full-time job after his 1984 victory, and Fuchs, 61, is now recognized as an expert in vandas and hybridization.

In the heated greenhouse, staring at a plant that wouldn't flower for another week, Fuchs said this is most exciting time: the waiting to see what will bloom after two species have been crossbred.

The process can take years, and new orchid species cannot be named until they flower. "Through hybridization, by crossing flowers together, you have something new and exciting happening," Fuchs said. "If you stop making hybrids, we won't have anything new."

NMOG MEMBER PASSES AWAY

Dr. John Joseph Smoker, 77, of Santa Fe died on December 6, 2007. While he has not been an active member in 2007 due to health, John continued in his interest in orchids and NMOG. You may remember in 2006 he sent a picture of one his blooming orchids for publication in one of our newsletters. We just recently heard about his family's loss and extend our sympathy to them.

INTRODUCING THE 2008 NMOG BOARD

At our last Board meeting Adrienne Carroll was introduced and voted in as the last member to replace those old members who had resigned in the last few months. Our Board is now at full capacity.



Front: Adrienne Carroll, Barbara Smith, Jane Cole.
Middle: Jaonne Bodin, Nona Church.
Back: Lillian Zilius, Steve Fischer, Keith Mead, Debby Lieberman

CROWN ROT REMEDY

Crown rot is caused by letting water sit in the folds of orchid leaves, resulting in bacterial or fungal infection, or even both. The key is prevention by watering early in the day so the water has time to dry by nightfall. If you notice water in the folds, take a dry paper towel and carefully draw the water up into the towel. Should you see crown rot, try the following:

1. Pour a liberal amount of hydrogen peroxide in the wound, letting it stand for 5 minutes. This should kill the offending agents.
2. Tilt the plant to allow the hydrogen peroxide to drain out of the crown.
3. Make sure the plant then dries out completely.
4. Sprinkle the crown with cinnamon.
5. Treat the plant normally making sure you don't allow water to stay in the crown, thus keeping the wound dry.

Check out www.firstrays.com for other remedies. Site belongs to Ray Barkalow of First Ray's Orchids.

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Board meeting
February 20th 2008, 6:30
pm at the home of Joanne
Bodin. All members are
welcome to attend. If
you want to express an
opinion, bring up ideas,
etc, you must be on the
agenda.
Contact Debby
Lieberman at
deblieberman@earthlink.net
or 286 0915 no later
than 02/18/08

We're on the Web!
See us at:
www.nmog.org

ORCHIDS FOR SALE

For those of you who missed January's meeting, there are still a lot of Roger's orchids for sale. Diann has moved them to a room at Adobe Computer's to be repotted and isolate them because many have bugs. If Diann is not there, please talk to Jeremy who can direct you to the side room. These remaining orchids are what is left of Roger's collection. He is unable to care for them any longer and all proceeds have been donated to NMOG.

MARCH MEETING

We are proud to present Ron Coleman who will be giving a talk on the wild orchids of New Mexico.. More about this talk will be in next month's issue.

YEARLY DUES ARE DUE

Now is the time to pay your \$25/year for membership, which includes the newsletter emailed 11-12 times a year. Those choosing snail mail at \$30/year will receive a B/W copy in the mail. Please pay at either the meetings or send checks to Keith Mead, PO Box 12938, ABQ NM 87195. Checks should be made out to NMOG. Deadline is March 1st. After that date you will no longer receive your newsletter.