

December 2007

Volume 6 Issue 12 Paph druryi 'Truford'

# *New Mexico Orchid Guild Newsletter*

Next Meeting:

- March 2- 1:30 pm
- Scheduled Program: Ron Coleman and Wild New Mexico Orchids.
- 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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## MEET RON COLEMAN

Born: New Orleans, LA

Ron is a retired electronics engineer living in Tucson, AZ.

Education: BS Physics; MSEE; MSE

Ron has been growing orchids in a green house for over 30 years. His plants have won several American Orchid Society awards such as CCM, HCC and AM. Ron has served as president of the Ventura County and Thousand Oaks Orchid Societies in California. His interest in native orchids dates from a chance discovery of *Corallorhiza mertensiana* while hiking in Olympic National Park in Washington in 1972 and since then has specialized in the study of native orchids of the western and southwestern United States.

Ron is a frequently published author with over 40 orchid articles and book reviews to his credit, most dealing with native orchids. They have appeared in the American Orchid Society Bulletin (now know as Orchids), The Orchid Digest, Fremontia, Selbyana, and Madrano.

Ron is the author of *The Wild Orchids of California*, published in 1995 and *The Wild Orchids of Arizona and New Mexico*, published in 2002, both from Cornell University Press. He co-authored the orchid treatment in *Arizona Rare Plant Field Guide* prepared by the Arizona Rare Plant Committee, and was co-author of two orchid genus treatments in the *Flora of North America*, Vol 2, published in 2002.

Ron's photographs have appeared in the following books:

Shennan, T. J. 2001. *Ultimate Orchid*. American Orchid Society

Bown, P. M. 2003. *The Wild Orchids of North America, North of Mexico*. University of Florida Press

Quinn, M. 2003. *Wildflowers of the Mountain Southwest*. Rio Nuevo Publishers

His photographs were featured in the February 2004 Arizona Highways and the September 2007 issue of New Mexico magazine.

Ron was offered and accepted the position of editor for the orchid section of the planned revision to the Jepson Manual Flora of California and will write major portions the orchid treatment. Ron is on the publication committee for the Native Orchid Conference, responsible for publishing the quarterly Native Orchid Journal. He enjoys searching for wild orchids wherever he may be and has found them in England; Puerto Rico; and Canada, including Newfoundland. Within the US he has searched for orchids in Alaska and Hawaii, as well as in many of the lower 48 states.

## A FEW FACTS ABOUT NM'S WILD ORCHIDS

By Barbara Smith

Did you know that Hawaii has only 5-6 native orchids while in New Mexico, we can boast of 29 since the discovery in 2004 of the latest one which had never before seen in the United States? Twenty-four out of thirty-three counties have one or more orchid species. The only non-native species has been found near the cottonwoods along the Bosque. *Epipactis helleborne* came from Europe or Asia and was first discovered in North America, in New York in 1878. This orchid, or "weed" as it was known has been making its way across the country for over a century. It tends to like calcareous soils in woodland or exposed situations. The reason for its ability to spread is due to self-pollination. Besides the non-native species introduced, there are species that spread from Mexico, the Rocky Mountains, and a few from even the Great Plains.

A botanist from Arizona who was photographing orchids for the U.S. Forest Service late in the summer of 2004 discovered our newest species of orchid. What he discovered was a green stick unlike anything he had seen. Upon taking a lot of pictures, he sent copies to Ron Coleman who immediately left for the Sacramento Mountains to see the orchid for himself. The species was only known to have been found in the Sierra Madre Occidental in Mexico, 270 miles away, and known as *Microthelys rubrocallosa*. This particular orchid has no other name than a scientific one because of its rarity. The spiked inflorescence stands about a foot tall with about 30 mostly green and white flowers with a bit of reddish orange. From seeing only three flower spikes in 2004 to 20 in both 2005 and 2006 Ron became concerned in early 2007 whether the orchids survived after a fierce windstorm in the spring of that year knocked down trees in the area. It is easy to understand why no one had found these gems before, due to the small number of plants and being so "plain". Most of the state's vivid or colorful orchids are found in the mountains at high elevations. The exception, *Epipactis gigantea*, can be found along desert streams and is known as the "chatterbox" with its lower petal, shaped like lip, moving in the wind. This moving lip just may be what attracts its pollinator.

Ron does have some favorite New Mexico orchids. He loves seeing the *Cypripedium parviflorum* and *Calypso bulbosa* because they are beautiful and easy to find. FYI, the Calypso was named for Kalypso, the sea nymph in Homer's *Odyssey*, for her beauty and secretive behavior. Ron's most favorite is the newest, *Microthelys rubrocallosa*, because as of this date, it is the only place it grows in the United States.

"The 51st Sarasota Orchid Show sponsored by the Sarasota Orchid Society was attended by NMOG Vice President, Joanne Bodin while she was in Sarasota visiting friends for the New Year holiday. The show was a huge success. "The exhibits were spectacular, a visual cornucopia of color and scents, with orchid displays that took you breath away."



**SARASOTA FL  
ORCHID  
SHOW  
JANUARY 2008**



Bsn.." Maikai Mayumi  
Owner: Ron/Sue Cosner



Brassoanthe Maikai 'Mayumi' HCC/AOS, a primary cross, was once known as a Brassocattleya listing *C. bowringiana* as one of its parents. That latter orchid has been reclassified as a *Guarianthe* having been separated from *Cattleya* based on phylogenetic studies with DNA sequence data, hence the new name. The other parent is *B. nodosa*. Hirose Nursery of Hawaii first registered it in 1944. The orchid is a compact plant meaning it usually will not grow over 12 inches in height with the flowers towering over the leaves. It produces multiple leads with each lead producing multiple flowers. The 3 in flowers are an overall lilac that fades to a pale lilac as the flower matures. It has a green overtone, sepals and petals that are spotted with a darker lilac, and a spotted lavender lip w/ lilac spots. One can see the spotting showing through to the back of the petals and sepals. Spotting is particularly noticeable on the throat where it is almost solid. The dark spots on the throat of a *B. nodosa* are not always obvious but when used as a parent they always dominate. This plant had over 40 flowers and buds. Ron has had this orchid for 9 years starting out with a 2.5-3 inch pot. It doesn't like to be divided and will "pout" unless its roots are crowded according to Ron. They like bright, indirect light, 68-84 degrees at night, 50% humidity and once mature, like to dry out between watering. Fertilize weekly. It is grown along cattleyas in shade/greenhouse facing the south.



Medicalcar decoratam  
Owner: Lynn Hernandez

*Medicalcar decoratam*, one of 15 species in this genus, is a miniature, mat-forming cool to cold growing epiphytic species found in the high altitude (2300-800 ft) rain forest mountains of Papua New Guinea, as well as some islands east and west of the main island. It has cylindrical pseudobulbs with three to four leaves per bulb resembling the blades of a helicopter. They require humid conditions year round as their roots are thin and quite wiry, almost stilt-like with no velum. It is an evergreen with leathery texture leaves that are succulent-like and will show a slight shriveling if the watering is not consistent. The ¼ inch orange and yellow flowers look like candy corn before they burst open to show their yellow edges. A well-cultivated plant will produce a mass of blooms all over the plant like dribbles of color in a dark sea of green. Growth ceases in the summer, resuming in early autumn with flowering occurring in late fall to early December. Some of these have been known to bloom twice in one year, lasting up to six weeks. They prefer to be mounted but can be grown in shallow clay pots. Lynn grows this in an Edwardian case.

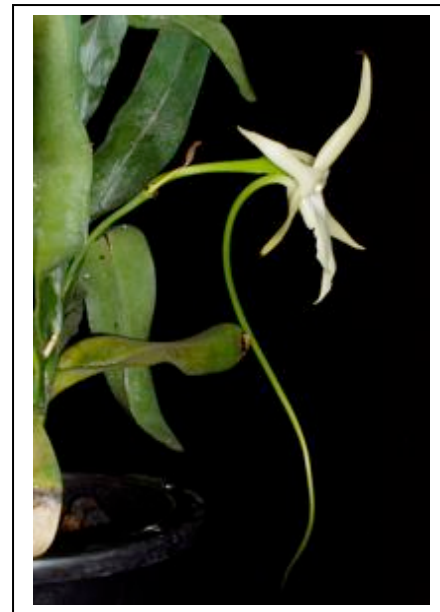


Rhyncholalelai digbyana 'Mrs. Chase' is better known as Brassavola digbyana which is still being used to register hybrids, is a primary cross between Mrs. Chase x sib. The species is found in Mexico, Belize, Guatemala and Honduras often under severe bright light and prolonged dryness. It is a common species in the state of Quintana Roo where Cancun is located. When you come across them growing in the wild, they cover the ground like grass, if the area has not been severely burned. There they are considered a "weed". Plants look like a typical cattleya except for the powdery, silver, fine scaling which covers the pseudobulbs and leaves giving them a whitish-grayish-silvery cast. It is a slow growing and thus a challenge to get it large enough to bloom. It produces one large, waxy, 4-5 inch showy flower that has a strong lemony fragrance at night indicating that a moth is its pollinator. Color is usually a glassine green with a deeply

fimbriated (fringed) lip. It passes its fringed lip and fragrance on to its progeny but the lip has never been reproduced to the same extent in the offspring. It usually blooms in the summer preferring 45 -95 temps. In the summer put in bright shade, meaning full sun in the morning until noon, and does not appreciate prolonged wetness so many are mounted or grown in baskets to allow roots to dry quickly. Fertilize frequently.

The species, Angraecum sesquipedale, or "Comet Orchid", was found on the island of Madagascar by Charles Darwin and was a puzzlement, to how its pollination mechanism worked since its nectar bearing spurs can be more than 12 inches long. Darwin deduced that an insect with a proboscis of the same length of the spur would be able to reach the nectar at its tip and it lived somewhere within the forests of Madagascar. His hypothesis was met with skepticism and those suggested there was no insect pollinator, thus the species might not reproduce sexually. Forty years later, and after Darwin died, he was proven correct, when a night flying hawk moth with the correct length proboscis was discovered. It is the most striking orchid found on the island having been isolated from mainland Africa for 1,000's of years and evolving into an amazing plant. This species is the best known of the large angraecums and produces one of the most majestic of all orchid flowers. In the wild, you will find them growing on trees or rocks where there is good air flow and shaded. Its foliage resembles that of the vandas more closely than other monopodials, the phalaenopsis. However, the vandas are closer in evolutionary terms to the phalaenopsis and these two will hybridize, along with many others that make up this alliance but will look totally different. At present, we are denied a union between the angraecums and phals, and can only speculate what the results might be. There have been a few crosses of the former with vandas but with little results.

Its thick, straplike leaves can grow to over 15 inches tall, 2 3/4 inches wide and the unbranched stems may grow to over 40 inches with the spur reaching 12-14 inches. The inflorescences have about 4 long lasting, fragrant, white, waxy flowers, each 6-9 inches across usually flowering from June through November in the wild. It is an evergreen that is easy to flower and grow as long as it receives good light. If the light is inadequate, flowering will be inhibited and it will produce darker, lush foliage instead. It likes warm houses, moist conditions, protection from full sun and frequent misting. Temperatures range in the intermediate with 55 degrees the minimum in the winter. Water all year long and feed less in the winter, as it takes longer for the plant to dry out.



Angraecum sesquipedale  
Owner: Steve Fischer Div I

The *Laelia anceps* var. *veitchiana* is found in Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras. The word "anceps" means two edged and is known by its common name, "The Bull". In Mexico it can be found growing in the mountains on the Gulf side in warm, oak forests or tropical deciduous trees at 3959-5200 feet and on the Pacific side of the mountains, growing in oak trees, and humid forests from 5200-5900 feet. Occasionally they can be found on rocks. Their habitat is varied and they will grow in higher or lower elevations as well as cooler or higher climates and in shade or sun. This variation indicates an adaptability that explains why this orchid is easy to cultivate. The orchid usually produces 16-24 slender erect stems to gracefully swaying ones emerging from the top of the pseudobulbs. Each stem produces 2-5 large, showy 2.5-4 inch flowers that can last for several weeks if kept cool and dry. You will notice a fragrance on sunny days. Sepals are a pale, rose purple. There is a darker purple border on the outside edges



the lobe. The yellow keel has three ridges located in the center beneath the column. Its throat is marked with branching rays of red-purple. In cultivation it usually blooms December-February. It likes bright conditions, however, light needs to be filtered or diffused to reduce sunburn. Strong air movement is essential. High light will mature your bulb before its dry, rest period in the winter. A reddish tinge on its leaves is a good culture indicator that the light is appropriate. This *Laelia* will also do well outdoors to 32 degrees.

Unknown Tou  
Owner: Sharon Hendrix Div I

*Toulumnia* was segregated from the genus *Oncidium* in 1986 being known as *Equitants* at the time.. The plants are small, usually epiphytic with small or absent pseudobulbs completely covered by leaves and overlapping at the base to resemble a fan and to conserve water. They are named for Tolumnius, a character in Virgil's *Aeneas*. Native to the Caribbean with one species extending into Florida, they grow on small branches needing high humidity and excellent drainage. Mounting is recommended or potting in a very quick, draining media. It is easy to over water them unless mounted. Leaves and roots should not be wet at night or the roots will rot and die. Daily misting is good as they are used to daily showers and trade winds to dry the roots. They are adaptable for light and like to be near *Cattleyas* and *Phals*. Morning sun is good but they don't like the afternoon sun. Therefore red leaves means burning. Lower light will produce fewer blooms. Circulation is very important and helps to dry out the plant and allows the roots to extract moisture from the



air. They can produce blooms 2-3 times a year on delicate spikes. The ideal according to Pete Peters of Whimsey Orchids in Homestead, Fla., in his talk at the WOC, is to have stems as long as possible (12-18"). He also suggests while misting to only mist the area surrounding the plant, not the plant itself. After flowering, **do not** cut back the inflorescence as they can put out side spikes and rebloom. Fertilize twice a month. Temperature ranges from high 60 at night to high 80's in the day. Sharon bought this plant from Mary's Orchids in West Palm Beach around 2004-05. It has bloomed every year, just a few blooms its first couple of years to 7 spikes last year. This year it produced 9 with 15 flowers. It is growing in a south facing window. According to Sharon, "Peters informally titled his talk "How Not To Kill *Tolumnias*." I can see how this could be difficult, but for me this baby has been a breeze!"





Carol got this Phalaenopsis at least 5 years ago at the NMOG Orchid show. It bloomed a couple of times, but the last time (until now) was 2004. It has been growing in her studio, which has windows on three sides, lots of light but not direct sunlight. She runs a fan and humidifier during the day. Daytime temps are between 72 and 80, nighttime low 60's. It gets watered at least once a week, more if it seems dry. "Frankly, this bloom was a complete surprise! Unfortunately, its tag got lost."

February photos taken by Kathy Mancini

## GROWING ORCHIDS IN A TERRARIUM OR WARDIAN CASE

By Susan Taylor Bellonline.com

A decorative idea for growing orchids in the home is the use of a terrarium, conservatory or Wardian Case. The concept behind the use of these items is that you create a mini-greenhouse inside to grow plants. They come in all sizes, colors and shapes to suit almost any décor.

It is important to understand what will and will not work for orchids in this type of environment. The major thing to remember is that we are trying to replicate the growing conditions for the orchids we are putting in the chamber. Thus, high humidity, good air circulation and adequate lighting are required.

Terrariums by definition are self-contained ecosystems designed to live without disturbance for a year or more. The water in the container is constantly re-circulated by evaporating and dripping back into the soil or growing medium. Most orchids will not survive well in this kind of an environment because they need more air circulation or they will rot.

A Conservatory or Wardian Case is actually a mini-greenhouse with air vents, perhaps fans, lights, everything necessary to grow indoors. There are any number of combinations that can be used, depending upon your needs. The Orchidarium site has the most complete information I've seen, including what accessories are available. If you are considering building your own there are several really good articles available. The Do It Yourself Wardian Case article by Prem Subrahmanyam published in the Tallahassee Orchid Society Newsletter is extremely helpful and detailed.

In corresponding with several people who have successfully grown orchids in enclosed gardens, the primary comments were that it is necessary to have fans going 24/7, keep an opening to allow in fresh air, and to choose orchids which prefer high humidity, have lower light requirements and like the warmer end of the growing spectrum. It is extremely difficult to provide cool temperatures in enclosed spaces while using artificial lighting. One lady even mentioned trying to reduce evening temperatures by putting ice in the bottom of the enclosure, but found that that didn't work adequately. And, most importantly do not have pots or plants sitting in water!

It is important to have automated controls on a Wardian Case because it doesn't take much to cause conditions that will kill your plants. In order to keep the humidity up while the lights are on, misters are recommended. It is recommended that lights be used for 12-14 per day. Recommended orchids mentioned were Pleurothallids although Masdevallias don't seem to like it as much as the Restrepias and mini-Dendrobiums. One thing that I didn't hear much about, but I would recommend is that you try mounted plants in a Wardian Case, especially if you are looking for a decorative display. Mounted plants need higher humidity to allow their roots to gather water than those in pots.





### A LITTLE HISTORY OF TERRARIUMS

As early as 500 BC, plants were kept under bell-shaped glass jars for exhibit. But the terrarium in its modern form was invented by accident in 1827 by Nathaniel Ward, a London doctor.

Dr. Nathaniel Ward, a London physician with a passion for botany, discovered the fern case accidentally in 1827. Dr. Ward built a fern rockery in his backyard, but the ferns kept dying, poisoned by the fumes from the city's factories. Ward was also studying moths and caterpillars and, while experimenting with a cocoon in a covered jar for observation, he noticed that several plants had grown in the bit of soil at the bottom of the jar. Among the bottled plants was a fern and, unlike the ferns in his garden, it looked healthy; Dr. Ward concluded that plants could flourish in London if they could be protected from the city's polluted air. Ward pursued his discovery in miniature greenhouses, which he named fern cases, and which are now known as Wardian cases or terrariums.

For the first time, horticulturists were able to bring back sensitive tropical plants in Wardian cases well protected from salt air and changing climatic conditions during the long sea voyage. Ward's terrariums also became popular for growing the plants, and it became, in various guises, almost a domestic necessity. The poor had to content themselves with inexpensive rudimentary versions, but there were no limits for the rich. Wardian cases grew into miniature Taj Mahals and Brighton Pavilions, perfect vehicles for the contemporary love of elaborate ornamentation as well as living plants. The Wardian case was fashionable in the United States in the early 1860s, and hardly a self-respecting Victorian household was without one.

Today's "Wardian Cases", or Terrariums, as we now call them, no longer have the need to keep our plants away from cold, and fouled air, but serve quite another purpose. With the dry air of our modern air-conditioned, and forced air heated homes, many plants have difficulty thriving without a great deal of attention. Terrariums allow us to keep plants easily in our homes in attractive, decorative containers, while creating an environment, which requires very little care. Closed terrariums, happy in their humidity filled surroundings, actually thrive on neglect.

Article By Ron Gladkowski

### THE MAY ORCHID SHOW

Vickie Haskins will give a short update on the upcoming show and will need you to think about ways you can help. She has written up job descriptions and will need a lot of volunteers to make the show a huge success. The committees have been working the last few months to finalize their projects. This year there will be a brown bag lunch and talk prior to the show, given by Diann O'Neill. Steve will also give a presentation on Saturday during the show. We haven't seen the presentations in the last few years. Something new this year is a hands-on exhibit for the children. They will be able to plant their own seedling.



### MEMBERS CORNER

I've had this *Euanthe sanderiana* since Oct 04 and this is the first bloom for me with 9 flowers. I have it in a clay pot with large bark and charcoal. It sits in south window in full sun and gets water every day in summer and much less now. This species is from Mindanao, Philippines and requires greater warmth than Vandas. It is slow growing and only blooms once a year but is desirable parent because of shape and size of flower. Also it has a symmetrical arrangement of flowers on an upright inflorescence.

Steve Fischer

**Keith Mead Treasurer**  
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**PHONE:****(505) 898 0975****Email:****[kjkm@comcast.net](mailto:kjkm@comcast.net)****News Contributions:****E-MAIL:****[smith\\_nmog@earthlink.net](mailto:smith_nmog@earthlink.net)****Board meeting****March 12<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:deblieberman@earthlink.net) or 286 0915 no later than 03/10/08**

**We're on the Web!****See us at:****[www.nmog.org](http://www.nmog.org)****NMOG DIRECTORY AND NEWSLETTERS**

Any changes/additions to the NMOG Directory are to be made to Nancy Overdick who can be contacted at [enchanted93@yahoo.com](mailto:enchanted93@yahoo.com). If your email changes I need to be also informed as well of your address so that you may continue to receive your email/snailmail. I do not have the time to go through the directory to make sure the email or addresses are the same. If there are more than two members in a household and they wish to receive their own copy of the newsletter, I also need to know. The Directory should be updated each time a new member joins and then sent to you with a new date so as not to confuse you about the current directory.

**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 2nd. After that date you will no longer receive your newsletter. This could be your last newsletter!

**ORCHID SLIDE SHOW**

Don't forget to submit those orchids that never seem to be blooming for Show and Tell. They will be featured in a slide presentation. We are also looking for more photographers to take pictures of those orchids that do not win Show and Tell so they can also be in the slide show. A black background cloth is necessary for those taking photographs at the meetings.

**UPCOMING MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES**

April 6th: DVD of last year's show and preparation for the May show.

May Show 2-4: No meeting this month but there will be plenty to do at the bio Park the week prior to the show.

June 1: TBA

July: Date and time to be announced. It's our annual ice cream social.

There will also be a TBA hike in the Sandias and possibly Placitas to look for wild orchids.