



# The Slipper Orchid Alliance Newsletter

Volume 4, Number 2

Summer 2003

## SOA Update

I was recently asked for information about the Slipper Orchid Alliance and how we differ from other lady-slipper groups. As I pulled my thoughts together, I realized that we have accomplished a great deal in our short existence and offer a breadth of activities and services to slipper lovers unmatched by any other organization. I pass these observations along to you, our members, who are the reason for our existence.

We are a slipper lovers' international membership organization based in the United States. The SOA is dedicated to being a resource center to enhance the understanding and growing of all the lady-slipper orchids, to providing information on events and happenings, and to encouraging conservation in natural habitats and artificial propagation of endangered species. In a little over three years we have grown to about 250 members. Many of our founders and original supporting members are recognized experts – Paul Phillips, Norito Hasegawa, Harold Koopowitz, Tom Kalina, Kevin Porter, Jerry Fischer, Bob Wellenstein, Glenn Lehr, Bill Goldner and Sam Tsui, to name several. In addition, we have already been recognized as an educational and charitable 501(c)(3) organization by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service. (To make it easier for slipper lovers from other countries to join, we will soon be able to use Pay Pal

on our web-site, so that members may pay by credit card.)

Another international slipper group is the British Paphiopedilum Society. They have two meetings a year, one usually on the first weekend in December and one in the summer, and they put out a quarterly journal. For more information provided by its President, Paul Phillips, see our Volume 4, Issue 1.

There are two long-standing organizations in the United States that sponsor one meeting a year devoted to slipper orchids, with no newsletter or other activities in-between. The Paph Guild meets in California in mid-January, and the Paph Forum meets in Washington, D.C. in mid-February. These meetings are deservedly very popular and well attended, but one of the reasons for founding the Slipper Orchid Alliance is to sponsor speakers in other parts of the country and possibly overseas so that more slipper growers will have access to a wide variety of knowledgeable speakers.

Despite its name, the Cymbidium Society of America sponsors an annual Congress and has a fine magazine, published six times a year, both of which include slipper orchids as well as Cymbidiums, but the latter seem to predominate. Their judging system does handle both groups of orchids. The CSA also has local chapters which conduct their own meetings.

*The Orchid Digest* has traditionally allotted major space to slippers, but that has been changing, as the mix of articles is being diversified. The Slipper Orchid Alliance has been asked to make a donation toward a special issue on Phragmipediums that will be published later this year, and we have already committed a donation of \$1000. This is the type of project that as part of our mission the SOA should support.

There are some publications in other countries and web-sites that feature slipper orchids, but they do not have members or other activities. In the near future I would like our newsletter to have an article listing the major web-sites of interest to our members.

Our Bylaws spell out our purposes:

- (1) foster understanding of all lady-slipper orchids and their cultivation;
- (2) encourage their conservation in natural

## SOA Membership

Dues are US\$25 for individuals or US\$50 for supporting (commercial) members. Dues can be mailed to Steve Drozda, 661 Harrogate Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15241.

Information about membership in SOA can be obtained from our membership secretary, Jean Metcalf, orchidiva@yahoo.com.

- habitats;
- (3) discourage collection of wild specimens by encouraging the artificial propagation of endangered species *ex situ*;
  - (4) promote scientific and horticultural studies of slipper orchid species and hybrids;
  - (5) exchange information at regional, national, and international forums and meetings;
  - (6) serve as a data and information center.

The Bylaws also state that the Slipper Orchid Alliance shall at all times be operated for scientific and/or educational purposes related to the study of orchids, their propagation, culture, care, and development.

It is evident that our goals and reach are much broader than the above groups, as we aim to be a central resource and network for education and conservation in many ways. Our primary ways of accomplishing this are our quarterly newsletter, which now has color pictures on at least two pages, and our web-site ([www.slipperorchid.org](http://www.slipperorchid.org)), which already has about 1000 pictures of species and hybrids posted, as well as cultural information and a calendar. Many of these pictures have been submitted by our own members. The newsletter includes culture, detailed information about specific species or hybrids, reports on new species, hybridizing trends, judging standards, collecting experiences, reports of talks given that the SOA has sponsored, notice of and reports from symposiums and meetings, personal profiles, calendar of upcoming events, etc. We have a regular column on Phrag species and will be starting one for Paphs. We also feature pictures of very special flowers that come to our attention, such as FCCs, winners at major shows, new directions in breeding, etc. Thus our members can see outstanding plants from all over the country and other countries that they would otherwise not have the opportunity to see. We welcome ideas and submissions from our members for articles and pictures. Because of our focus we can publish articles that would not appear anywhere else.

As mentioned earlier, we sponsor speakers at meetings in various parts of the country, as there are so many slipper lovers who cannot attend meetings on the east or west coasts, and we want to reach as many of them as we can. However, we have found that it is necessary to meet with an existing event or group to make it financially feasible. We have been asked to participate in the World Orchid Conference in France in 2005.

To recognize superior slipper orchids we donate a trophy (currently a beautiful, hand-blown glass Cyp on a wood base) at the two AOS meetings each year and at any shows where we are also meeting. The winners are then written about and pictured in our newsletter. Recently the SOA Board approved making this trophy available, upon request, at cost to local societies who wish to award it. This is an exciting way to get our organization and membership applications

before orchid growers who may not be aware of our existence.

A personal benefit of membership is receiving the annual Directory, which lists all members and Supporting (commercial) members. E-mail addresses and web-sites are included for those who give us this information. This is an invaluable resource for slipper lovers who travel or are looking for suppliers.

In summary, in line with our objectives we have a broader perspective and outreach than any other slipper organization I am aware of. Although we want our newsletter to be a "must have" for slipper lovers, we are far more than a publication. We do not feel that we are in competition with any group or publication that shares our goals, and we want to publish information about other groups, shows, meetings and events that will be helpful to our members. Our aims are to make as much information as possible about slipper orchids available and to increase enthusiasm among all who are interested in this fascinating family of orchids.

We hope that our members will encourage their friends to join us in our endeavors and spread the word to others to improve the understanding and growing of the lady-slipper orchids, and we urge your participation and input in all of our activities. Please let us know how we can better serve you and the general orchid community.

*Barbara Tisherman, President*

**London, 2003**

## **European Orchid Conference**

The 2003 European Orchid Conference was held at the Royal Horticultural Society Lawrence and Lindley Halls, just off Vincent Square in Westminster, London this past March. This was a superb show with great hospitality and excellent displays from the United Kingdom and the Continent.

Slipper orchids were very prominent at the show, with several awards given. There was a superb *Phrag. Jason Fischer* (4N) exhibited by the Eric Young Foundation, that had one of the best displays at the show. The flowers were deep red with broad, flat petals that were very wide. A *Paph. micranthum album* from Germany also received an AM. I was not thrilled by the petals, but it was by far the largest album I had ever seen. It was also larger than many of the standard pink varieties I have seen. The *Phragmipedium* hybrids were excellent and the *Paphs* on display were mostly species with several rare forms like *fowlei album*, *villosum aureum* and *philippinense album*. The displays were in the traditional RHS design, with plants displayed simply over black backdrops. This is a method I prefer, as it displays the plants for what they are, with no Disney-like themes.

There were over 35 vendors at the show, some coming from as far away as Malaysia and Japan. A wonderful

## Upcoming Events

**AOS Members Meeting**  
**October 22 - 26, 2003**  
**Doubletree Inn**  
**Sacramento, CA**  
**Sponsored by the Sacramento Orchid Society.**  
**Contact Nick Burnett (burnetnb@aol.com) or log**  
**on to their website (www.sacramentoorchids.org)**  
**for more information.**

assortment of species and hybrids were for sale, including many plants of *Paph. vietnamense* and several *vietnamense* hybrids. It was my understanding that one could obtain CITES permits for these plants and bring them back to the U.S., but I think the CITES officials in the U.K. were either not comfortable issuing the permits or did not have enough time to check out their legality from German authorities since this is where most of the plants were from. I am told by at least six or seven vendors that the plants were all legal, artificially propagated seedlings from Vietnam and there should be no problems importing them. I will try to do so in the coming weeks and see if indeed they are legal.

I also found a nursery in Peru that is the first to obtain official permission from the Peruvian government to collect *Phrag. kovachii* and grow them out to make new front growth divisions for export. Of course I acted quickly and asked to receive some of these mature legal *kovachii*. In about one year they should be available and I am excited at the prospects from new hybrids.

There were many excellent speakers including Olaf Grüss from Germany who gave a wonderful talk on *Phragmipediums*. Particularly memorable was a slide he showed of a specimen *besseae* that had to have 50+ growths! He has a melodious voice and an easygoing way that is really positive and invites you to learn.

There were several highlights for me including a visit to Kew Gardens and being able to see the living orchid collection behind the scenes. There were many *Paph. rothschildianums* there, and they have one of the most automated greenhouses I have ever seen. I also had a chance to visit the Marianne North Gallery on the grounds of Kew. This Gallery was given as a gift from Ms. North to Kew in the late 1800's. There are about 850 paintings on display, each as brilliant as the day she painted them. She toured the world of the tropics and painted many jungle scenes. Many of her paintings are of orchids.

The Gala event was held at Westminster Palace where Parliament meets. An after-hours tour of Parliament was

conducted of both the House of Lords and the House of Commons. I learned a lot about the history of English government, and it was an honor to stand in a building still being used in which some parts are 1000 years old.

The Gala dinner was superb with excellent food, wine and jovial company. This show was a highlight of orchid shows in my life to present, and I look forward to the next World Orchid Conference in Dijon, France in 2005.

Jerry L. Fischer  
*Orchids Limited*

## The Genus Selenipedium

Of all the slipper orchids, the least is known about the Genus *Selenipedium*. Six species of *Selenipedium* are currently identified. All *Selenipediums* are terrestrials and have bamboo-like foliage covered with fine glandular hair. They are found in the equatorial regions of the New World. Plants are tall, ranging from three to sixteen feet, and require warm temperatures. A raceme of small flowers, which open one at a time, is produced from the crown of each growth. Only one *Selenipedium* has ever been awarded by the AOS. A CHM of 82 points was awarded to *Selenipedium palmifolium* 'Rasheed' on October 8, 1999, in Trinidad. Its flower had a natural spread of only 2.2 x 1.3 cm.

The lack of information regarding *Selenipediums* often attracts the interest of slipper growers. They are scientifically important because they are the most primitive of all the slipper orchids, evident in characteristics that include three stigmata and a triocular ovary. Their growth habit is similar to that of primitive lilies, lending support to speculation that orchids and lilies share a common ancestor. The further scientific study of the genus *Selenipedium* will provide an understanding of the evolution of all orchids, and slipper orchids in particular.

The use of nucleotide comparisons for the study of the phylogenetic relationships between certain plant groups, including the slipper orchids, was published by Cameron, *et al.*, in the *American Journal of Botany*, 86(2):208-224, 1999. These studies confirm the primitive status of *Selenipedium* compared to the other slipper orchids, with the *Paphiopedilums* showing the highest degree of evolution, or separation from the *Selenipediums*. These studies also show that the *Cypripedioids* split from the main group of Orchids

very early in their evolution, with only the subfamily Apostasioideae having split from the tree earlier. This accounts for great differences between the Cypripedieae and other members of Orchidaceae.

### **Culture and Biology**

Selenipediums are rarely found in cultivation and little is known about their culture. Not only do they require a great deal of space because of their height, but their small flowers have not inspired many orchid growers to make the effort. They are also reportedly similar to Cypripediums as they do not transplant well and are difficult to cultivate. Based on their reported habitats, all are warm growers and require moist to wet growing conditions with high humidity.

It is assumed that most species of Selenipedium are not common or rare in their natural habitat because of the lack of descriptions and photographs available. Selenipedium vanillocarpum, originally described by Barbosa Rodrigues about the turn of the century, was only re-discovered in June of 2001. The plants were found in the Brazilian state of Bahia in a mountainous area at a height of 700 meters. The site is being monitored and photographs are expected to be available shortly.

Glandular hairs are reportedly found covering the foliage of all Selenipediums. Glandular hairs usually secrete resins or essential oils that serve to repel pests or attract pollinators and beneficial insects. Glandular hairs may also excrete excess moisture from plant tissues growing in a wet or boggy environment. Foliar hair may also serve as a physical barrier to deter certain kinds of pests. There has been no research to show how glandular hairs might specifically serve Selenipediums.

Selenipediums, like Cypripediums, are believed to rely on bees for pollination. The literature also notes that the seed capsules of most Selenipedium species are aromatic, like vanilla. The scent of vanilla is known to attract fruit bats, and biologists studying fruit bat populations often bait their traps with vanilla. Further study is needed to determine if bats play a role in the pollination or seed dispersal in Selenipediums.

### **The Species**

#### *Selenipedium aequinoctiale* (Garay)

This species is found in Ecuador on the lower slopes of mountains at about 3,400 ft. According to Ecugenera it grows warm and reaches a little over three feet. Sepals and petals are yellowish-green. The pouch is yellowish-green to red, with dark violet blotches on the lateral surfaces. The flowers are 3cm long x 2.5 cm wide.

*Selenipedium chica* (Reichb. f.) The common name is Vanilla Chica (Little Vanilla).

This species is found in the Panama Canal Zone in areas that average temperatures of 80 F and have up to 130 inches

of rainfall annually. This is the tallest of the Selenipediums and reaches up to 17 feet in height. Flowers are green suffused with pale pink with an orange suffused pouch and dark purple blotches on the involute margins. Flowers rarely measure more than 5 cm.

*Selenipedium isabelianum* (Barb. Rodr.) Isabel's Selenipedium.

This species is found in Brazil and grows to 6.5 feet in height. Flowers are pendulous with sepals strongly reflexed and petals curved about the pouch. Flowers are yellow, with strong orange suffusion or spotting throughout pouch.

*Selenipedium palmifolium* (Reichb. f.) The Palm-Leaved Selenipedium.

This is the most widely distributed of the Selenipediums and is found in Brazil, Trinidad, Guyana and Venezuela. It grows up to six feet. In Brazil this species is found in the "Terras Secas" which means "dry lands" – the areas that don't have annual flooding by the Amazon's rivers. Sepals and petals are suffused with maroon; pouch is yellow to red, suffused with maroon with purple blotches on involute margins.

*Selenipedium steyermarkii* (Foldats) Steyermark's Selenipedium.

This species is found in Brazil, Venezuela and Guyana. This is the coolest growing of the Selenipediums, growing in intermediate temperatures on densely forested slopes between 3,800 to 5,800 feet, in loose, sandy, acidic soil. Height is variable (3 to 13 feet), as it grows just high enough so that its inflorescence is lifted above the surrounding vegetation. The Dunstervilles, who studied and photographed this orchid in its habitat in 1980, observed that the dorsal sepal folds down over the pouch in older flowers. Flowers are brick red in color, with the petals greenish-dun.

*Selenipedium vanillocarpum* (Barb. Rodr.) Common names: *Flor de maio*, or Mayflower or *Baunilha*, which is Portuguese for Vanilla.

This species is found in Brazil. Very little is known about this Selenipedium. In 1937, Barbosa Rodriguez appended a comment to his description that as he used a dried specimen he could only determine that the color of the pouch was lilac. This species has finally been rediscovered and more information is expected to be available shortly.

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 125, 1994. (For speculation regarding fruit bats dispersing  
 Selenipedium and Vanilla seeds)

Lois Miller  
 Fremont, CA

**(Below) Selenipedium isabellianum**

Photo courtesy of Telemar, the Brazialian Communications Company



**(Below) Selenipedium steyermarkii**

Photo courtesy of G. C. K. Dunsterville and the Dr. Leslie Garay Archives



**Selenipedium palmifolium**

Photo courtesy of Roberto Takase



**Selenipedium chica**

Photo courtesy of the Kew Botanical Garden

## 2003 Paph Forum

The 2003 Paph Forum was held on February 15, 2003, thanks to the host, National Capital Orchid Society President Ken Meier, who convinced Forum Co-chairmen, Gordon Slaymaker and Bill Goldner, that people would come despite the miserable and potentially dangerous weather. Several inches of snow had fallen during the night and a major storm was predicted, with weather forecasters urging everyone to stay home that day. Ken was right... over 70 intrepid Paph and Phrag growers braved the elements to hear Dr. Leonid Averyanov, St. Petersburg, Russia, give his exciting presentation on the natural history of the Paphiopedilum Species of Vietnam. (See article by Bob Wellenstein.)

The weather prevented the other three speakers from participating, so a unique opportunity was created. American Orchid Society Judging was held at the front of the auditorium in front of the Paph Forum audience. John Dunkelberger exhibited an Oncidium hybrid (where's the pouch, John?) that received an HCC/AOS, and Clive Ateyo, from the United States Botanical Gardens, received a CCM/AOS for his beautifully grown Paph LEEANUM. The highlight of the judging session was a stunning first-bloom seedling of Phrag Jason Fischer. The clone 'Leah Wilkins' received a 92 point FCC/AOS! This was Charles Wilkins' first AOS award (it's downhill from here Charlie)!

Once again the Paph Forum proved itself a worth-while event with over 100 plants presented for ribbon and AOS judging. The SOA People's Choice Trophy was won by Phrag. Noirmont 'Woodstream's Red Raja' AM/AOS, exhibited by Woodstream Orchids.

The Forum closed with the presentation of the show table by Merritt Huntington and Bill Goldner.



**Phrag. Jason Fischer 'Leah Wilkins' FCC/AOS**



**Phrag. Noirmont 'Woodstream's Red Raja' AM/AOS**

## SOA Trophy Winner in Hilo

In the summer of 1997, we bought about 800 plants of Paph. Pink Sky (Lady Isabel x delenatii) in flask from Taiwan. After three and one-half years of growing, some of them started to spike and flowered in the spring of 2001. This cross is fairly uniform. The majority of the flowers have various shades of pink as the base color with darker veins or stripes on petals and pouch. The color of the dorsal sepals and synsepals varies from almost clear ivory white to pink with darker pink stripes.

We have selected a few of exceptional flower quality among the early flowered plants and are growing them for another season to see the potential of full-grown plants.

In March of this year, we presented three exceptional clones from this cross at the Hilo Orchid Society spring show. Two of them received an HCC/AOS.

Paph. Pink Sky 'HOF#2' HCC/AOS (75 points) was the darkest in color from this batch of seedlings I have ever seen. It was dark rose-lavender on the petals and pouch and very large, with a natural spread of 14.5 x 8.6cm; the dorsal sepal was 5.5 x 5.5cm; the petals were 3.0 x 8.3cm. At the time of judging it had only one flower open and one bud. The flower when judged had not quite fully opened and therefore was slightly cupped.

The second awarded clone, 'Sea Breeze,' received an HCC/AOS of 76 points and had two very nice upright spikes with two flowers on each. The dorsal sepals were ivory with

darker raspberry stripes and an overlay of light pink on the back side; the petals and pouch were soft pink with darker raspberry veins. We are honored that it received the Slipper Orchid Alliance trophy at the show.

*James Fang  
Hilo Orchid Farm*



**Paph. Pink Lady 'Sea Breeze' HCC/AOS**

such as Paph. Julius 'San Luis' FCC/AOS (rothschildianum x lowii), and even very vigorous and prolific selfings too. We have customers growing this plant all over the world.

What can I say except that it is an orchid species that should be in every collection. Happy growing.



**Paph. lowii 'Los Osos'**

Photography by Charles Rowden

## SOA Trophy Winner at Santa Barbara Show

Michael Glikbarg of Orchids of Los Osos owns the Paph. lowii that was awarded the Slipper Orchid Alliance trophy at the recent Santa Barbara International Orchid Show and pictured in this issue. The following is his account of its history.

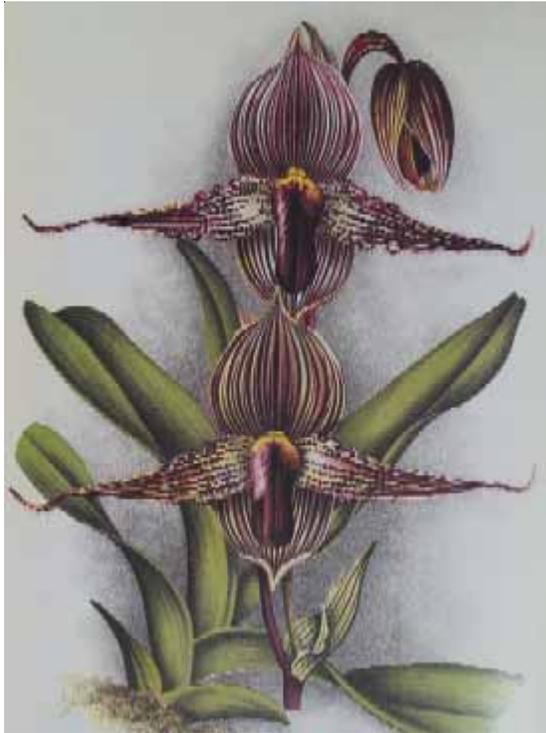
A long time ago, before I started to grow orchids, my father went on an orchid collecting trip. It all started one day when my father told my mother that they were going to Sumatra, but she thought he said "Sinatra" (her favorite singer). Needless to say, my mother decided to stay home after she heard it was Sumatra, not Sinatra. Anyway, it turned out to be a lovely journey, and my father brought back many nice Paphiopedilum species that were being destroyed by the clear-cutting of certain parts of the island by the Goodyear Tire Corporation. My father, who has always been and taught me to be environmentally conscious, collected only a very small number of orchids that had already fallen down.

This Paph. lowii is one of those few plants. It was brought back, nurtured and divided many times over. It is one of the best growers we have, and many years ago even received a cultural award. Since then we have made numerous hybrids,

## Cypripedium Rothschildianum var. Platytoenium

In his detailed description of the establishment of Lucien Linden & Co. of Moortebek, the writer of *The Gardeners' Chronicle* (7<sup>th</sup> May, p. 276) made special mention of the superb Orchid pictured in our annexed plate, and called it "a very striking plant." And that was also the opinion of all the orchidophiles that had the chance of seeing this plant at that time, when it flowered for the first time, and after all, those visitors included the elite of foreign amateurs visiting Brussels during their journey to the quinquennial exhibition at Ghent.

This plant is de facto a very superior and exceptional variety, or better, it is more than a variety, because it differs



so much from the type by the breadth and the colour of its flowers, as is readily appreciated if one compares our lithography with a portrait of an ordinary *C. Rothschildianum*. That species has not yet been figured in the iconography, but we have published the portrait of *C. Elliottianum*, which is fairly identical. Although later flowerings have revealed specimens with broader flowers than the one figured at the time when the two *Cypripediums* under discussion were introduced, it is readily to be seen how distinct the variety, published today, is in respect to its form and colours.

We would be rather tempted to consider it as a natural hybrid, if we knew a plant from its native region from which it could be derived. It seems that *C. Rothschildianum* was intervened with by a plant analogue to *C. barbatum*, for example, and the probability of this hypothesis is supported by the comparison of this plant with *C. x excelsius*, the hybrid obtained by Mr. Th. Statter, that great English amateur, by crossing *C. Rothschildianum* with *C. Harrisianum*. We have not yet had a chance to see this hybrid, but the description of it that has been published at the time of its appearance seems well to indicate, as in our case, *C. Rothschildianum* with very broad petals that are abundantly spotted, and a colour much more brownish-red than is usual to be observed in that species.

No matter what the origin of our plant may be (the future may well bring an answer), it is truly a remarkable specimen. Its flowers are very big and of a superb appearance. The petals are long and well spread and are of an exceptional broadness near the base. They are covered with large, purplish-brown spots arranged in lines, causing a superb effect. The dorsal sepal, as well as the other sepal which is nearly equally large, is more rounded than in the ordinary species. The ground colour, instead of being white is intermixed with brownish-purplish-rose, and the numerous longitudinal stripes, extending to the top, are equally of a brownish-purplish-red. The pouch, at last, is strongly shaded with purplish-brown, showing some reddish reflections, and of much deeper colour than in the typical *C. Rothschildianum*.

All these characteristics show that this nice plant seems to represent an acquisition of very high value.

*Cypripedium Rothschildianum* was dedicated to Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild. It was introduced into England where it flowered for the first time at the beginning of 1888. It was introduced at about the same time into Belgium by Jean Linden, who had named it *C. neo-guineense*; but the first name has prevailed in horticultural usage.

It is one of the most splendid species of the genus, and although its growth may be somewhat slow, it flowers abundantly and regularly, if it is given the proper environment and care.

Lindenia – Iconography of Orchids IV, 1894 – 1898, pp. 441-443

*Contributed by Jerry Fischer  
Orchids Limited*

## Paph Forum Speaker

The following are notes I prepared from memory, from a lecture given by Dr. Leonid Averynov, February 15, 2003 at the NCOS Paph Forum and discussions I was able to have with him after the lecture. Dr. Averynov is a botanist with the Komarov Botanical Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg who has worked on the flora of Vietnam for more than 20 years in collaboration with colleagues from the Institute of Ecology and Biologic Resources of the National Center for Natural Sciences and Technology of Vietnam. The notes are sketchy but I felt may

be of interest to some. I am still trying to recall more of our conversations, *Paph. coccineum* and *Paph. gratixianum* were also discussed, but the details are so far escaping me.

#### Notes on Vietnamese Paphs:

*Paph. delenatii*'s location in central south Vietnam is a granite/gneiss mountain range providing an acidic substrate. Accessibility is difficult because it is crisscrossed by very deep (300-400 meter) narrow ravines, and impossible during the rainy season as the sides of these ravines become waterfalls. Also, it is a very dangerous place from an infectious disease standpoint: he spent a week in the hospital delirious with malaria after a visit. He said he has accessed two populations, but because of the nature of the terrain he expected there were still other populations existing despite the heavy collecting...He said the plants would be collected and held nearby as they would quickly die if sent to (Saigon) Ho Chi Minh City because of the climate, and then would be shipped out at once in large quantities. Survival rate was low for these and other collected Vietnamese Paphs, in some cases possibly as low as 1 to 5%, because the collectors were primarily locals used to collecting medicinal plants for sale, which were to be dried anyway to be processed into medicine, so care was not taken in the collection and storage. He felt based on information given him by the plant brokers that between 8 and 10 metric tonnes of *Paph. delenatii* were smuggled out after initial discovery (pricing was by the kilogram, not by the plant). He said that he would put the average at about 18 - 20 plants per kilogram, so that works out to 144,000 to 200,000 plants, but he felt that the ultimate survival rate was probably just a very small percentage of the plants collected. He did mention the finding of album forms of *Paph. delenatii*, but did not put any credence in the internet photos of the "red" *Paph. delenatii*.

Dr. Averynov showed in situ slides of *Paph. villosum* growing epiphytically high up in trees, as well as on roots and occasionally in the forest litter. He also showed *Paph. hirsutissimum* var. *esquirolei* growing in crevasses on nearly vertical limestone cliffs, with flower closeups revealing very large colorful flowers in the range of 18 centimeter natural spreads. *Paph. chiwanum*, with its diminutive flowers with uncrenillated petals also grows in similar conditions in Vietnam.

*Paph. helenae* was also shown growing in cracks and essentially just adhering to the surface of limestone cliffs. He pointed out that there are different *Paph. helenae* populations with different flower characteristics, one having brightly yellow dorsals with a fine white outline, and others with a slightly less vibrant color scheme. He felt that *Paph. helenae* was probably near extinction in the wild.

In undisturbed forest, *Paph. henryanum* was found in large colonies on south facing steep hill slopes. Where the trees had been cut, only a few remnant plants were to be found on

north facing slopes. In discussing this later he said there is a very interesting dynamic between the *Paph* populations and the forest canopy. In areas in Vietnam where the forest is relatively undisturbed and there are populations of the various *Paphs*, they will have healthy colonies with a varied maturity status, i.e. there are adult flowering plants and plants that have flowered and carried fruit, as well as various stages of immature seedling in the populations. When the forest canopy has been cut, there is a burst of flowering of the mature plants, but the young plants disappear, and the mature plants appear to "age" and decline to a small remnant population here and there. With the advice often seen to grow our plants in as bright a light as possible, which no doubt does improve flowering, one has to wonder if this may be detrimental to the long term health of the plants. As a side note, Professor Averynov said that the time required to regenerate the forests to the state that the *Paphs* thrive in once they were cut would be 200-400 years for the forests in the limestone regions and 1,000 or more years for the forest in the acidic substrate regions.

*Paph. hangianum* was also found on crevasses in steep limestone cliffs, and again he felt this spectacular species was near extinction in the wild, due to collecting and not habitat destruction.

*Paph. vietnamense* was already essentially exterminated by collection by the time he visited the locality where it was discovered. It was found within four kilometers of a major population center. The locals told him the soft limestone and humus bank he visited would have thousands of blooms during flowering season, but within one year the population was collected so that on his visit he found only two small seedlings left. He said that the area was very moist, and the type of other flora present typically existed in only very moist, extremely humid locales.

*Paphs micranthum* and *malipoense* still had several locations where they were relatively abundant, but Averynov pointed out that very nearby over the border in China where they had been discovered a few decades earlier they were now nearly extinct. Again both of these grow in the karst softer limestone cliff areas, with *malipoense* typically growing where there was a bowl-like depression in the limestone that had filled with debris and humus. He showed slides showing the variation in *Paph malipoense* var. *jackii* and var. *hiepii*.

*Paph. barbigerum* was also shown growing in situ on limestone cliffs. Again, different populations showed considerable variation in flowers, in this case particularly in color with a very dark flowered population shown in one slide.

Other *Paph* species shown by Averynov included *Paph dianthum* growing lithophytically on karst limestone cliffs at 1400 to 1500 meters, the plant shown exhibited five flowers, an excellent flower count for this species. Several

slides of quite variable *Paph emersonii* were shown, again growing on karst limestone cliff faces. *Paph purpuratum* grows in several locations primarily in the built up litter of the forest floor and lithophytically in karst limestone forests in northern and central Vietnam. *Paph tranlienianum* was also shown, as well as two very different flowers both identified as *Paph (x)hermannii*, which Averynov felt represented two different natural hybrids with *Paph. hirsutissimum* var. *esquirolei*.

Dr. Averynov's book on Vietnamese *Paphiopedilums* done in collaboration with Dr. Phillip Cribb will be available in approximately one month.

He discussed both in his talk and privately afterward the precarious situation most of these *Paphs* face in Vietnam. Some are in danger due to habitat degradation primarily due to tree cutting. He is encouraged by recent efforts by the Vietnamese government to protect particularly valuable forest habitat and educate the locals, and provide alternatives for work and fuel to cutting the trees. The second threat, and the one that has many of the most desirable species already on the brink of wild extinction, is collection. One gets the impression that Dr. Averynov firmly places the responsibility for this problem on the orchid consumer for creating the demand; until demand was there, these plants existed side by side with the local people for thousands of years, but when poor people who have families to support are paid cash to remove the plants they are naturally going to do so, and there is no way of controlling this in remote areas. To put it in context that may make more sense to us, if we had children who were malnourished and needing medical care, and someone told us they'd pay us to dig up dandelions, we'd dig dandelions like crazy. These *Paphiopedilums* that we find so intriguing are dandelions to the remote rural people in Vietnam. Much as dandelions are considered native weeds with no special attraction in our world, the *Paphs* in Viet Nam are, or were, locally abundant, and no particular thought was paid to their potential extirpation. He said that even flooding the market with artificially propagated plants would take a long time to have an effect, and would have to include all Vietnamese *Paphs* in question, as long as there is a demand for any *Paphs*, all will be collected indiscriminately, hoping that it is the right one that will be rewarded by payment by the brokers. And there is always the problem of those that somehow find the allure of the "wild" plant superior to the propagated plant. Any hope of reintroduction would require completely taking demand for the collected plants out of the picture, then followed by an education program for the locals as well as alternative sources of income to plant collecting and wood cutting. Many of these plants have been found in locales that extend only in the order of 30 to 35 kilometers in any direction, so they are very susceptible to extirpation. Dr. Averynov also said the situation relating to establishing artificial propagation in Vietnam was complicated, and would

require several hours to discuss properly. It revolves around the limited number of some of these plants still in the wild to a certain extent, but more around the deceptions perpetrated already with regard to setting up artificial propagation as a cover to remove huge numbers of plants. The distrust that now exists will be hard to overcome.

Bob Wellenstein  
Antec Lab  
[www.ladyslipper.com](http://www.ladyslipper.com)

## Orchid Digest Phragmipedium Issue

As many of you are aware, the *Orchid Digest* puts out a special issue at the end of each year. We are delighted to report that the subject for 2003 is *Phragmipediums*. It will contain in-depth articles on the species, as well as culture and hybrids. Olaf Gruss is preparing a check-list of all species, which will be illustrated with the superb photography for which the *Orchid Digest* is renowned.

What is less well known is that the *Orchid Digest* is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, and the editorial staff is completely volunteer. Since the cost of the special issue is only partially covered by yearly subscriptions, it needs to raise approximately \$10,000 to pay for the additional color.

As with past special issues, the *Digest* will publish a listing of all donors by category. Patrons donate \$1000 or over; Sponsors give between \$250 and \$999; Donors give between \$100 and \$249; Digest Supporters give less than \$100. Gifts can be made in memory of or to honor specific people. All donations are tax-exempt, and they need to be received before September 1, 2003 in order to be recognized in this special issue. Donations arriving after that time will be recognized in the following issue.

The SOA Board has already committed a donation of \$1000 toward this worth-while project. All donations should be sent to: Editorial Offices, The Orchid Digest, Huntington Botanical Center, 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino, CA 91108.

June 2003

## New Paph Book

**Slipper Orchids of Vietnam: With an Introduction to the Flora of Vietnam**, Leonid Averyanov, Phillip Cribb, Phan Ke Loc, Nguyen Tien Hiep

Vietnam has a remarkable and diverse orchid flora that is still being explored and described. Orchids are the largest family in the flora and may exceed 1000 species, with more being described every year as remoter areas are explored. They are found in every habitat from the coastal mangrove forests to the highest mountain peaks. The slipper orchids, a small but showy part of the flora, epitomize the exuberance of Vietnam's orchids and, at the same time, emphasize their vulnerability. Although almost half have been discovered within the past ten years, many of them are already threatened with extinction by the combined problems of forest destruction and commercial collecting.

This book details the geology, climate, and vegetation of Vietnam in all its remarkable diversity. The main text provides comprehensive accounts of the history, nomenclature, and relationships of each of the 22 slipper orchid species and natural hybrids found within the country. It also provides the first detailed accounts of their habitats, biology, and ecology. On a more urgent note, it also highlights the imminent threat of extinction faced by many of them. Further urgent measures are necessary both within Vietnam and abroad to protect what remains. The results of their field studies, detailed here for the first time in a popular book, provide unique insight into the rich flora of Vietnam where so many of the orchids are found. This book is a significant contribution to our understanding of plant diversity in Vietnam and to the threats to it.

The richness of Vietnam's biological diversity is only now becoming apparent. This book will enthrall the reader with its descriptions of Vietnam, its unique environment, its rich flora, and its endemic plants. It will also serve to alert all of us to the dangers that threaten its unique heritage.

327 pp, 340 color photos, 28 line drawings, 34 maps, 19 graphs, 7 x 10", hardcover  
ISBN 0-88192-592-6 PRICES: US \$49.95; CAN \$69.95 plus shipping and handling

To be published June 2003

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## SOA Meeting in Santa Barbara

Since the activities and speakers associated with our joint meeting with the Cymbidium Society of America on March 29, 2003, were detailed extensively in previous issues, I am not going to repeat them. All in all, it was a most enjoyable as well as educational experience.

I do want to acknowledge contributions to the auction that was held before the banquet. By the generosity of these members and one speaker we were able to cover almost all of the expenses of the speakers we sponsored. The donors were as follows: Stig Dalstrom (prints), Tom Larkin (Whippoorwill Orchids), Glenn Lehr (New World Orchids), Paul Phillips (Ratcliffe Orchids, LLC), Barbara Tisherman, and Sam Tsui (Orchid Inn). This kind of support is vital to making it possible to carry out all our activities to enhance the growing experience and knowledge of slipper lovers and to be a central resource for all aspects of these fascinating orchids.

*Barbara Tisherman*

## New York Times Article

"An Orchid by Any Other Name: An Asparagus?"

This was the intriguing title of an article by Carol Kaesuk Yoon that appeared in The New York Times on May 6, 2003. It expounds an interesting, tongue-in-cheek theory that orchids actually belong in the asparagus group.

If you go to the Times web-site (<http://www.nytimes.com>) stick with the article to the end; lady-slipper orchids are mentioned!

Note: Do a search for articles on orchids published within the last year.

## Supporting Members

In each issue of our newsletter we like to recognize and thank our supporting members. Each one of these businesses continues to support our efforts to have an outreach program for all slipper growers. If you are interested in becoming a supporting member, please contact Jean Metcalf at orchidiva@yahoo.com. We also hope that each of our members will support these businesses.

Antec Labs, Bob and Lynn Wellenstein  
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## SOA DIRECTORY

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