



Orchid Society of Western Pennsylvania

June 2021

www.oswp.org

Upcoming Events

June 27

**David Haelterman, Cali Columbia
(Photographer and Nature Guide)**

Orchids of Colombia in their native habitats. A huge richness to conserve in an incredibly biodiverse country

Looking Ahead

Meetings will continue on Zoom for now

July TBA
August NO MEETING
September TBA

" UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES "

OSWP meetings are held at the Phipps Garden Center on Shady Avenue and are open to members, their guests and the general public. Program Calendar is also available at www.oswp.org

HOWEVER, we are on Zoom for meetings , and those interested non members could use the 'contact us ' section of the website to get a Zoom invitation

OSWP Officers

Co-President: Sheila Nathanson and Mike Lyse

Co-First Vice President: Kathleen Arria and David Springer

Second Vice President: Timothy Choltco

Directors: Brooke Decker, Peg Kalupanov, Jinghua Ou, Aaron Vitron, Tamara Wurst.

Secretary : Lance Chevront

Treasurer: Janet Greenberg

What's Blooming Now

Cypripedium reginae

Cypripedium reginae: Showy lady's slipper

The showy lady's slipper occurs from the northeastern seaboard west to Minnesota, south to Arkansas in widely scattered colonies.

Throughout its entire range, it is listed as threatened or endangered in almost every state where it still exists.

Cypripedium reginae is a large, multi-stemmed plant with stems up to 35 in. in length and with 3-5 leaves per stem. The mature plant will have 1-3 large flowers. The flower is mostly white with a rosy lip and white petals and sepals.

Cypripedium reginae grows in hummocky, damp deciduous forests and on rocky outcrops with rich organic soil that may be alkaline or limestone based. Like all other Cypripedium species, requires well-drained soil.

Forest Service Shield U.S. FOREST SERVICE

Caring for the land and serving people



Photo by Jim Yamber

Again another plant in my yard which I bought from Wayne Roberts Flower Supply years ago.

Co-President's Letter May 2021

Well, this week it feels like summer is eager to begin - we went from "too cold" to "too hot" almost overnight. If your orchids are going out for the summer, you may need to increase the frequency of your watering. With most orchids, it is good practice to only wet the leaves if they will have a chance to dry before evening, to reduce the danger of fungal infections . However, if you get to them late in the day and feel you must water, just be careful to wet the media in the pots and the roots and avoid the leaves and crowns. You can also simplify your life now by adding a small amount (1/4 strength or less) of fertilizer every time you water .

I hope to see many of our members at our Member Sale Event on June 6. We have the Montour Shelter on Hundred Acre Drive in South Park. Wayne Roberts is still taking pre orders for supplies, and is also bringing plants. rfs@orchidmix.com.

Members are welcome to bring plants to sell- good opportunity to re-home some extras, divisions, or even things you found unrewarding in your environment.

At our May meeting, Tim Choltco proved he is absolutely indispensable- he gave a wonderful mini class on Habenaria, then jumped right in when our scheduled speaker dropped out with a lecture and slide show on Orchid Diversity, without missing a beat. Thanks for quick thinking on the part of Dave Springer as well. We are a great team ! And, thanks to Kathy Collins for organizing an information session for new members- it won't be too long before we can put a name with a face- I'm really looking forward to welcoming new members at every meeting. Keep those Show and Tell photos coming- I, for one, love seeing pictures of blooming plants. We don't know yet when we will have in person meetings, for now we plan to continue with Zoom. Our June meeting is scheduled for June 27. See you soon, and continue to be safe and think orchids !

Sheila Nathanson and Mike

*** MEMBER SWAP AND SALE ***

Come join us for an all outdoor member sale event. On Sunday June 6 we will be at the Montour Shelter on Hundred Acre Drive, right off Corrigan in South Park, from 11 am to 3 pm. Everyone is welcome to bring plants for sale or barter . Roberts Flower Supply will be there with pre - ordered orchid growing supplies and plants. To place an order, contact him at : rfs@orchidmix.com . Bring cash or checks- credit cards may not work since we will be all outdoors. The shelter will protect us from sun and rain. Vaccinated members may be mask optional, but bring a mask in case we become a crowd.

Current Committees Chairs,

AOS	Nancy Kline	Orchid Gems	Norma Raiff, Pam Horter-Moore,
Culture Corner	Nancy Kline		Cristina Eyler
Facebook	Lance Chevront	Pfun	Nancy Kline
Garden Club/Library Liaison	Karen Gibson	P-OSI	Demetria Marsh
Hospitality	Carolyn Bolton	Raffle	Natalie Turicik
Library	Rosa Graudins	Show	Sheila Nathanson, Tammy Wurst,
Membership	Kathy Collins		Norma Raiff and Janet Greenberg
Mini-class	Tim Choltc	Speaker	Kathleen Arria and David Springer
Newsletter	Jim Yamber	Website	Jinghua Ou

Orchid Gems

A Man of Mystery, Grace, Good Eats, and Splendid Orchids: Steven Christopher

By: Norma Raiff

Back in the mid 1940's Brenda Star – a popular comic strip character that appeared in numerous weekly and Sunday newspapers -- discovered the love of her life. Known as the “the mystery man with the black eye-patch and affinity for black orchids,” readers were enthralled by their tragedy-plagued relationship. And while media interest peaked in the 50's, many orchid growers are still fixated on growing a true black orchid.

I mention this because OSWP has our own mystery man: Steven Christopher. Many of us are aware of Steven through his signature photos of stunning blooming orchids featured on Jim Yamber's Show and Tell emails. These spectacular photos have prompted some members ask, “Who is that guy? Why don't we know more about him?” And what about his email alias: dessertsbysteven? Desserts and orchids? – Heavenly!

Recently I had the extraordinary pleasure of interviewing Steven to find some answers.

Steven Christopher is a long time orchid grower and plant fanatic who lives in Clarksburg, West Virginia, about 40 miles from Morgantown. He and his partner, Gary Alan, live in a 1914 Arts and Craft style home listed in US National Register of Historic Places. The property features English and French inspired gardens and a Japanese garden. Follow their stunning seasonal changes on Instagram @edgewoodmanor1914.

Steven is both a pastry chef and a freelance landscape architect/garden designer. His desserts, cheesecakes, and chocolates are available by special order by phone. You can drool over these delicacies by viewing them on Steven's Facebook or Instagram account, or by searching orchids@stevenchristopherj. As for his orchids, Steven's interests are varied. Of Indian descent, Steven grew up in the U.K and has lived in Thailand, Australia, and the United Arab Emirates. A visit to a relative in Wheeling, West Virginia resulted in Steven's enrolling in WV Northern Community College's culinary program.

Steven's journey to orchid growing took a while. While one of his friend's mother grew orchids, which he admired, it was not until he lived in Thailand and saw orchids in the wild that he was truly “mesmerized and became captive.”

His interest in orchids remained passive until he received his first plant, some 23 years ago. “Once I got that plant, I started getting hooked. I still have my first phalaenopsis, a huge white one.” How's that for a track record!

Steven initially used the AOS to learn about orchid culture; then joined the OSWP in 2007. Although he recognized that his complex work schedule would interfere with his ability to come to our monthly meetings, “It was my way of supporting you and something that I loved and cherished...I need to be part of something, even if I can't be directly involved.”

A regular attendee at our Spring Shows, Steven makes sure to leave time on his calendar. “You have the best shows; the vendors are terrific. Take it from me your exhibits are beautiful. I always walk around and marvel at the displays and the beautiful plants.” While he has visited other out-of-state shows, he grades OSWP as #1.

As for his favorite orchids, well it's hard to tell. His extensive collection includes Phalaenopsis, Vandas, Cattleyas and Lepanthes, but he's especially attracted to “the weirdos.” Take Epidendrum kockii: “Their flowers are weird, not pretty.” As for the Lepanthes, “their flowers are very tiny. When I buy something new, I look at how the leaf looks, what is the flower's shape and texture.”

Steven declines to name his favorite. “I am a person who likes to dabble in everything. I enjoy the weirdos, the unusual, and those that are different. I purchase them to challenge myself.”

Side note: Steven's love of plants is extensively eclectic. In addition some 350 orchids, he also grows Aroids, Alocasias, Anthuriums, Dischidias and Tillandsia. Some 50 houseplants, including tropical, Cit-

rus, Hoyas, Cycads and many Caudiciforms, are displayed throughout his home. “I always say I suffer from CPS (cool Plant Syndrome). It’s so cool. I have to have it.”

However, his interests don’t stop there: birds are yet another of Steven and Gary’s passions. Their collection features about 80 chickens of different species, beautiful Chinese pheasants, Japanese Coturnix Quail, and a spectacular pair of Indian Blue Peacocks.

And speaking of greenhouses, here’s something unique: About 14 years ago, while summering his plants outside, Steven went to check on his orchids’ wellbeing. Suddenly, a frightened tree frog jumped onto Steven’s face, clinging for dear life. You can easily imagine what happened next: Steven’s automatic hard swipe, his contrite reaction to seeing the frog lying on the ground, guilt and remorse. So on the off chance that it was still alive, Steve carried the tree frog inside ... where it recovered and lived as a cherished greenhouse resident for another decade.

Mr. Krooks (a.k.a Mr. Froggy), even he had his own Instagram account... @ mr.Krooks. “He was so tame. He would come to the sink when he was hungry to let me feed him by hand. He loved having his belly rubbed on the sides...I miss him so much.”

However, the story does not end there. A few years later, “two new Frogs actually snuck into the greenhouse on the orchids unbeknownst to me. They startled me too. I had no idea they were in there.” While he has not yet officially named these newest guests (he refers to them as little Krooks and other Krooks), I can report that they also are greenhouse-trained. “I’ve taught them to come to the counter when they want to be fed.”

So who is the OSWP’s mystery man? Steven Christopher: Chef, garden designer, orchid aficionado, rescuer of wild life. Mystery Solved!



continued from page 4



Steven Christopher
no picture



June 2021

While we are not yet permitted to resume our volunteer work helping with the Phipps orchid collection due to pandemic precautions, Margie Radebaugh promises the orchids are being well taken care of. We can still visit Phipps Conservatory's Summer Flower Show, The Hidden Life of Trolls, and see the blooming orchids in the Orchid Exhibition Room in the Conservatory.

Hopefully, in the near future, we will be able to return as volunteers working to repot Phipps orchids, Pfun at Phipps, plus our other cultural and inventory work with the Phipps orchid collection, P-OSI

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P-OSI

A joint initiative between Phipps Conservatory and the Orchid Society of Western Pennsylvania to create and cultivate an orchid collection of note for enjoyment, education and research.

Mini-class 2021 – June 27 1:15pm prior to the O.S.W.P. business meeting.

Potting, Potting, Potting - Timothy Cholteo

Please join myself and the O.S.W.P. for the mini-class for the June, Potting, Potting, Potting. For this month's Mini-class I will discuss some of the various media used to grow orchids and the pots in which to grow them.

Whether a pure bark mix, a bark / perlite mix, bark / charcoal mix, sphagnum moss, or a terrestrial potting mix; the mix in which you plant your orchids is important for success. The majority of commonly grown orchids are terrestrial and epiphytic. These types often require completely different potting mixes. The type of pot is often important as well. Whether plastic with many holes or clay the type of pot can be as important as the media.

Please join myself and the rest of the O.S.W.P. for this presentation prior to the regular O.S.W.P. meeting.

Timothy Cholteo

2nd Vice President and all around decent sentient being.

June speaker David Haelterman

For our last Zoom meeting before the summer break we are thrilled to have David Haelterman speaking on

“The Orchids of Columbia in their Native Habitats “

A native of Belgium where he worked as an agronomist, David has lived in Cali, Columbia for 6 years, exploring the mountains, leading tours, and giving lectures. He is also an avid photographer who posts his pictures of Orchids on Twitter and other web sites. David has been passionate about orchids for more than 25 years, growing many genera with a particular interest in Maxillaria. His center of interest is especially focused on orchid taxonomy, their biogeography and their conservation in the wild.



Chuck Vandyke

It is with sadness that we note the passing, on April 23, 2021, of our friend and long time OSWP member, Charles 'Chuck' Vandyke. He served the OSWP in many capacities over the years, doing several terms as president and co-president. He had a deep knowledge of orchids, and was generous in sharing wisdom and advice. He was particularly known for spectacular Phrags and Paphs.

He will be missed, and remembered fondly.

OSWP 2nd ANNUAL
FREE ORCHID RAFFLE_

To be held 07/04/21

*All Paid members for Fiscal Year 07/01/21-06/30/22
are Automatically entered in the RAFFLE*

OSWP MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Individual: \$20; Family \$25; Add \$15 for mailed newsletter.

Emailed newsletter option is appreciated.

PayPal very easy renewal=No PayPal account needed

Using PayPal to pay via a debit or credit card is very simple.

If your contact info for address, phone, or email has not changed,
there is no need to complete **the membership form.**

DUES PAYMENT OPTIONS:

PayPal -HIGHLY recommended for Ease of Use.

DON'T have a PAYPAL ACCOUNT?

Just sign into OSWP.org. Go to memberships

and Use the selection to pay via PayPal.

OR with own PAYPAL ACCOUNT:

Use email address OSWPtrasurer@gmail.com and
choose "Friends and Family" (no fee assessed OSWP).

Send check payable to "OSWP" and mail to Treasurer,

Janet Greenberg, 150 Ammons Dr. McMurray, PA 15317-3212.

If you are not sure if your dues are paid up for the new fiscal year, beginning
July 1st, please email my personal account: Janetg150@verizon.net



First Class Mail

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The Orchid Society of Western Pennsylvania Inc. is a non-profit corporation organized to advance the propagation, horticulture and preservation of orchid species and hybrids through research, education and scientific endeavors

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Upcoming 2021 speaker

FUTURE PROGRAMS

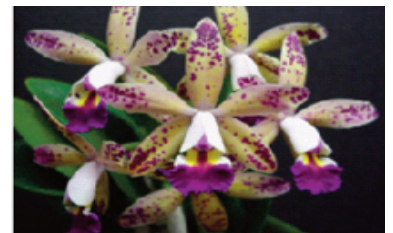
June 27, 2021

Ronald Midgett

Intrgeneric Oncidiinae

New Earth Orchids, Santa Fe NM

More to come for the future programs for 2021



WANTED

The American Orchid Society Judging Program is seeking highly motivated orchid enthusiasts to join the judging ranks.

Work with other such people and help maintain our awards programs and educational efforts.

For more information contact Dave Miller at: 330-307-7189 or demjpsmil@aol