

# NROS News

FEBRUARY 2018

Wednesday, February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Regular Meeting 7:30 p.m.

Holy Rosary Church Hall  
35 Queen Street North  
Thorold

## PROGRAMS

COC Webinar on  
“Showy Lady’s Slipper”



## EXECUTIVE 2017-2018

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Visit us on our updated website link:

[www.cloudsorchids.com/nros](http://www.cloudsorchids.com/nros)

## FEBRUARY SHOW TABLE

### Class 1 Cattleya Alliance

****Lc. Summit View 'Primero'	Phil Hinman	1 <sup>st</sup> .
Blc. Holiday Eye Candy	Charlene & Ted Kretz	2 <sup>nd</sup> .
Bc. Mount Hood 'Mary'	Phil Hinman	3 <sup>rd</sup> .
Potinara Paradise Ruby 'Sweetie'	Pete Van Loon	

### Class 2 Paphiopedilum

Phragmipedium Harbinger's Grasshopper	Phil Hinman	1 <sup>st</sup> .
Paphiopedilum Hamana Spice	Phil Hinman	2 <sup>nd</sup> .
Paphiopedilum Lunacy	Phil Hinman	3 <sup>rd</sup> .
Paphiopedilum spicerianum	Phil Hinman	

### Class 4 Oncidium Alliance

Oda. Red Glow x Rawdon	Charlene & Ted Kretz	1 <sup>st</sup> .
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### Class 6 Dendrobiums

Dendrobium White Rabbit	Astrid Fortin	1 <sup>st</sup> .
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### Class 7 All Others

Phaiocalanthe Kryptonite 'Blood Bath'	Phil Hinman	1 <sup>st</sup> .
Pleurothallis palliolata 'Ecenfels'	Charlene & Ted Kretz	2 <sup>nd</sup> .
Masdevallia Radiance 'Sparkling'	Charlene & Ted Kretz	3 <sup>rd</sup> .

## \*\*\*\*\*PLANT OF THE MONTH

Well, it's that time of year again.....Grower of the Year!! And for 2017, the winner is Phil Hinman. Congratulations, Phil!! The points totals are as follows:

Phil Hinman	223
Charlene & Ted Kretz	134
Rick Rempel	49
Cyndie Moretto	22
Astrid Fortin	14
Peter Van Loon	13
Maria Booy	13
George & Isabel Streeter	13
Ed Pomeroy	13
Susan Yee	5
Carmen Stankewich	5
Laura Van Loon	5

**Points system: 5 points for First  
4 points for Second  
3 points for Third  
1 point for All Other Placements  
10 points for Plant of the Month  
5 points for any number of Plants in a Show**

## **BULLETIN BOARD**

### **Meeting**

**Our February meeting will be a COC webinar titled “Showy Lady’s Slipper. If you interested in and want to learn more about paphiopedilums, please come and join us on Wednesday.**

### **Membership**

**Just another reminder to those members who haven’t paid their dues yet. Please pay your \$20.00 membership to continue receiving your newsletter. The last one will be March. Please see Joanne Madsen at the meeting, or send your cheque to her address:**

**37 Grantham Avenue South  
St. Catharines  
L2P 3B3**

**Thank you.**

### **Opening**

**George Streeter has stepped down as Society Librarian. If any member is interested in this position, please get in touch with one of the Executive and let us know.**

### **SOOS and RBG Shows**

**Ted and Charlene Kretz have kindly volunteered to set up a display for the Society both at the Toronto Orchid Show and the Hamilton Show. An email has already been sent for donation of plants for the SOOS**

**Show this weekend. Ted and Charlene would also need plants for the RBG Show which is being held on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>. of February. If you have plants that will be available at this time, please see Ted at the meeting, or call him or Charlene at 905-735-8381. Thank you.**

### **Goodies**

**This is the reminder for Isabel Streeter and Nicole Therrien that they are signed up to bring the “sweets” for the meeting. Thank you, Ladies!!**

**Orchid Society of the Royal Botanical  
Gardens  
Orchid Show  
February 24 and 25, 2018  
Saturday - Noon to 5:00 p.m.  
Sunday - 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

**Southern Ontario  
Orchid Society Show  
  
11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
February 10 and 11, 2018  
  
Toronto Botanical Garden  
777 Lawrence Avenue East  
Toronto**

## **Growing Oncidiums**

by Gordon Heaps, President, Orchid Society of Alberta, Edmonton

The "Dancing Ladies", "Spider Orchids", "Equitants", "Mule eared" and Pseudobulb Oncidiums all belong to a delightful genus containing over 600 different species of ORCHIDS. This huge group of orchids is as varied in flower, size, color and culture as the many names imply. Don't panic, they can and should be grown by everyone on the windowsill, under light or in a greenhouse. Guaranteed there is a species or hybrid that you can succeed with. You must however give them the required cultural and climatic conditions that are similar to their native growing area.

Did you know that *Oncidium onustum* actually can be found growing epiphytically on prickly pear cactus in the desert of Equador. You can imagine how much water this species requires during the dry months.

Of the 600 species identified to date I have tried growing 60 (10% of the known ones). Through much trial and error and some losses, lots of reading and plenty of luck I have developed the following system and schedule for growing these orchids.

As with any genus of orchids you grow it is essential to try to match the climatic conditions of the native habitat for each type of orchid. The sections that the Oncidiums are grouped in were taken from the Wellington Orchid Society book "Oncidium Orchid Culture". This small reference has been a very valuable guide to my Oncidium growing experiences. Because my experience is presently limited to only sixty species, I will limit the information in this article to those species I have flowered.

Some general guidelines on getting started with *Oncidium* growing before I start with specific details on climatic conditions necessary.

### **Mounting**

Oncidiums are generally epiphytic so mounting will work for most species (all that I have tried). I have grown oncidiums on cork, tree fern slabs, hardwood pieces, and even cedar shingles. If enough moisture is provided the roots will grow extensively. As with any mounting process there are a couple of things to keep in mind. First, it is essential when you try to establish a plant on the mounting slab, the existing roots be in close contact with the slabs. I do not like adding sphagnum moss as it stays top wet for me, but prefer to press the pseudobulbs tightly into the mount with the aid of wreath pins (see line drawing). After mounting the slab should be thoroughly soaked and kept moist till new roots start to grow. This will mean misting at least once per day. Some species of oncidiums must be mounted (rather than potted) as they are climbing types and will simply grow out of the pot. For example, *O. crispum* and *O. flexuosum*. Just a note, curtain hooks (see drawing) work well to hang mounted orchids.

### **Potting**

As with all orchids we pot them for convenience and to make things easier to maintain. Over the last few years I have gradually moved through a wide range of potting media, trying light rock, bark, charcoal, sphagnum moss, tree fern and combinations of the

above. I now grow most of my potted oncidiums in tree fern fiber (the only exceptions are the oncidiums in section *Glanduligera* which I grow in charcoal).

For potting oncidium orchids use the same procedure as with any orchid. Plant at the correct depth (do not bury the crown or pseudobulbs). Firm the media around the roots but do not press hard on any roots. Use rhizome clips to secure the plant till it is established. Water the oncidium in well after potting unless the media is presoaked. (I use dry medium as it is less messy to work with). Treat all newly potted (and mounted) oncidiums with Truban fungicide to prevent root rots from getting established. Better to prevent them than try to cure them.

Choosing species (or hybrids)

Research the growing conditions necessary for the different species before buying. Ensure that you can provide the correct conditions necessary or there will be no flowering. It is very frustrating to purchase and "fall in love" with a specific plant if you can not make it flower, believe me, I know. The oncidiums I have been successful with will be listed later in sections that have specific cultural requirements but for now another grouping according to leaf (or stem) type,

Pseudobulb types - generally are easier to grow than other oncidiums, most will perform well on windowsills or under lights (except section *crispum*). Some will get very large, for example *O. sphacellatum* is measured when the plant reaches one meter across and has three thousand plus flowers. *O. truliferum* has pseudobulbs that are 15 cm plus 30 cm of leaves. There are of course some miniatures in this group like *O. longipes* and *O. harrisonianum* both of which are only 10 cm overall. Beware that some smaller plants like *O. sarcodes* produces flower stems that may reach 2 meters in height.

Equitant oncidiums - you will most likely purchase the hybrids in this group. They are all miniatures, all have brightly colored flowers and are relatively easy to flower. Lots of light and air movement. The actual species in the group include *O. urophyllum*, *O. guianense*, *O. pulchellum* and others. My experience with equitants over the years has been with mainly hybrids.

Mule-eared types - I have found them to be generally harder to flower than the other types, this is probably due to the very high light requirements and diversified conditions they need. Some mule-eared oncidiums are also very large, *O. splendidum* gets to be huge but the rewards are wonderful with 1.5 metre stems of long lasting flowers. There are also some miniatures in this group *O. pumilum* has won me some ribbons for the orchid with the most flowers per stem. This delightful miniature is only 10 cm, the flowers are produced on a 10 cm stem but will have 150 or more 1/2 cm yellow flowers. You may need a magnifying glass to see the individuals but it's well worth it.

Terete leaved types - there are only three or four terete leaved species that I have grown. These are *O. stramineum*, *O. jonesiana* and *O. cellobeta* all require extremely high light. The hottest spot in my greenhouse is reserved for these mounted specimens. All I can say is hot and dry during the summer will reward you with 30 cm spikes of long lasting flowers.

### **Fertilizers**

This article will not go into much detail on fertilizers and their use as that is a very controversial and complicated issue. Let's just say that oncidiums are fairly heavy

feeders especially the mounted orchids. Under normal epiphytic conditions these oncidiums would have lots of decaying leaves around their roots but as we are all good growers, we carefully remove all dead leaves so the plant has virtually no natural nutrition available. I feed using Plant Products fertilizers but Peters, Dynagro and other soluble types will work just as well. Make sure there are trace elements like iron, magnesium and others listed on the label, if they are not listed they are not there. General rules, feed half strength every watering (except the fourth). I feed during foliage growing season with 30-10-10 (of something similar), during root growing season 10-52-10 (or 15-30-15) and in preparation for flowering 7-11-27. Make sure you leach heavily that fourth time. Just a note, the *O. papilio* group is more susceptible to high salts than other oncidiums.

The easy ones - My selection of starter oncidiums

Although I am a *Phalaenopsis* grower, I made the mistake of trying a couple of oncidiums a few years ago. I now have 60 species and many hybrids, that means there are only approximately 540 species I haven't tried. (I hope my wife doesn't read this article.) Start with the easy species (or hybrids) then you will be hooked just like me. There is never a time in my greenhouse that does not have an oncidium or two in flower.

*O. varicosum* (*O. Taka*, *O. Gower Ramsy*, *O. Star Wars* are easy hybrids)

*O. flexuosum* - a delightful mounted oncidium

*O. sphacelatum* - grows like a weed and is very large.

*O. papilio* - actually the hybrid *O. kalihi* is easier.

*O. micropogon* - I have a clone called "Scorpio spider" so you can picture this unique flower.

*O. macropetalum* - large yellow petals on a very small plant.

*O. ornithorhynchum* - an easy pink species

Equitants - if conditions are correct these are wonderful.

Remember as with most orchids the hybrids are generally easier to grow and flower than the species but you must understand the conditions necessary for the species parent before deciding on the hybrids. The intergenerics are also very exciting but that's another story.

I have listed the species as they are grouped in each section ("Oncidium Orchid Culture") followed by the climatic conditions necessary to make each species flower. Do not be put off by the complicated section names, they are just included to help with groups.

### **1. *Oncidium crispum*, *praetextum*, *macropetalum*, *marshallianum*, *curturm*, *sarcodes*, *gardneri*, *enderianum*, *duveenii*, *gravesianum*, *lionettiana* (Section *Crispa*)**

This section grows well in warm, humid conditions for most of the year. When the new growths have reached maturity (fully grown pseudobulbs) gradually dry out the plant with a maximum of one third of the regular watering. During the dry-period the pseudobulbs will (and should) shrivel quite considerably. The plants can also be cooled to 10C for approximately four months. When the flower spike starts to develop, restart the watering, warmer temperatures and regular feeding programs. I have been most successful mounting this group .

**2. *Oncidium cebolleta*, *stramineum*, *jonesianum* (Section *Plurituberculata*) (I didn't think up these names!!)**

When I say high light, I mean very high light for these terete leaved oncidiums. Outside, southside on the drainpipe will not be too much light for this group. They like it hot and dry during the summer months. Never allow them to have wet feet so they are best mounted. I use bark rather than tree fern as it dries out faster. Water daily during the new foliage growing time, but reduce the water to once per week during the hot summer months.

**3. *Oncidium luridum*, *carthagense*, *cavendishianum*, *lanceanum*, *splendidum*, *pumilum*, *stramineum* (Section *Plurituberculata*)**

Same as above but a different type of oncidium. These Mule-eared oncidiums also require high light but not as much as the terete leaved oncidiums. Good Vanda type lighting will do well for them. I use medium tree fern in pots for all oncidiums in this section. Dry slightly after the foliage has completely matured; this will push the flower spikes to start.

**4. *Oncidium papilio*, *kramerianum*, *sanderæ* (Section *Glanduligera*) (Butterfly Orchids)**

The real novelties of the oncidium orchids but you really get interesting comments when they are in flower. DO NOT cut the spikes as this group flowers all the time once it reaches flowering size. The flowers develop from the end of the spike and each new leaf growth produces a new spike. Grow in good light, with medium to high humidity. Mine are always in flower at temperatures of 18° C. This is the exception of the oncidiums for me as I grow them potted and in large charcoal chunks (1"-1 1/2" size). I have found some salt damage so feed lightly rather than too heavy. One hybrid of note is *Onc. kaliki* which I have found very easy to grow.

**5. *Oncidium incurvum*, *sphacelatum*, *lietzei*, *fimbriatum*, *maculatum*, *reichenheimii*, *hastatum* (Section *Waluwewa*) (Section *Stellata*) (Section *Planifolium*)**

A very easy group to grow successfully, best to mount these as they like to be slightly dry for part of the year. They will grow well along with your cattleya orchids and certainly benefit by being dryer and cooler during the summer growing months. Most of this section are small plants so you will have room for more. Always an exception, the two plants in Section *Planifolium* are very large plants (*O. incurvum*, *O. sphacelatum*) and very fast growing but if you have the space well worth the effort as when flowering the flowers are counted in the thousands.

**6. *Oncidium concolor*, *gracile*, *dastyle*, *globuliferum* (Section *Concoloria*) Even I remember this section! (Section *Serpentea*)**

Grow with as much light as you can during the winter. I have my plants mounted and hanging right below the lights in the greenhouse. This group benefits from dry conditions during a 3 month cool period (12-15C). Provide lots of air movement (actually all orchids like lots of air movement).

**7. *Oncidium varicosum*, *spilopterum*, *flexuosum*, *blanchettii*, *williamsonianum*, *paranapiacabense*, *robustissimum* (Section *Synsepala*) (Section *Psivinata*)**

These are the easiest and the most well known of all the oncidium sections (lots of easy hybrids as well). Warm conditions with high humidity mounted or potted they will flower almost anywhere, they are not fussy at all. Some plants can get quite large but are very easy to divide so you can give them away and get other growers hooked on oncidiums as well. By feeding every watering (except fourth) with half strength fertilizers the flowers will develop a couple of times a year. A slight rest period as the flowers fade will set up the next flowering. This simply means less watering for 3 or 4 weeks.

#### **8. Oncidium ampliatum, isthmii, micropogon, orthostates, longipes, tigrinum, barbatum, leucochilum (Section Oblongata) (Section Barbata)**

O. ampliatum is one of my favorites, although the plant gets quite large, the flowers are bright yellow with good substance and very long lasting. Grow all members of this section warm (18-24°C) with good to high humidity. I do not dry my plants out at all but maintain regular feeding and watering year round. As with all oncidiums they do require high light (Cattleya light or better). All my oncidiums are growing at the top of my greenhouse.

#### **9. Equitant Oncidiums, Oncidium lyratum, guianense, caribense, pulchellum, calochilum, urophyllum (Section Variegata)**

Please note these equitant species, I have only grown a couple of them as the hybrids are so bright and easy to grow. If you take note of the leaves of this group, it will immediately tell you the light necessary. Like the terete leaved group the Equitants need lots and lots of light. I grow most of mine mounted on tree fern slabs as they like a fair amount of water but the roots must dry out fast after watering. I have noted that the large growers of equitants grow them in small clay pots and straight charcoal, so you may want to try this. These bright colored miniatures are considered easy provided you can give them enough light.

#### **10. Oncidium onustum (Section Onusta)**

This section contains only one species and as I said earlier O. onusta is found growing on a cactus in the windy deserts of Equador. Just to confuse you, some from commercial cultivation will grow under warm conditions (12-21 C) but all require at least one month of very dry. (Do not water during this period.) This dry period should occur after flowering. Water and feed normally all other times of the year, giving the plant extra air movement and plenty of light. As it is a small species, it will work well on a bright windowsill. A primary hybrid O. onustum x O. orthostates is also a favorite of mine, producing long spikes of 3 cm yellow flowers that last for weeks.

#### **11. Oncidium ornithorhynchum, cheiroporum, raniferum, edwallii (Section Rostrata) (Section Plurituberulata)**

These are cool to intermediate oncidiums growing most successfully between 12-18°C for at least the winter months. I grow most of these species in pots with medium tree fern and keep them quite moist. O. ornithorhynchum is a delightful pink and very fragrant, producing masses of 2 cm flowers on a 50 cm spike. I have found this species to be susceptible to some foliage fungus spots so I'm extra careful about water on the leaves. All members of this group will grow well in medium to high light.

(Article from COC Newsletter January 1993)