



The Rhyzome

Rhi-zome: n., a creeping stem lying, usually horizontally, at or under the surface of the soil...

Jim's Bench

Jim Adamson

Dear Members,

Just as predicted the World Orchid Congress was truly something to see. I am really sorry that we were unable to generate enough interest to justify renting a bus and taking a load of our members down to see it. You simply would have had to see it to imagine the degree of beauty and enormous amount of energy and dollars that went into creating the exhibits that were there.

It is meeting time again and it will be held at the Cocoa Expo at 7 o'clock. (Board members should be there by 6:15). The date is, of course, the second Wednesday, which will be February 13.

Alan Gettleman was at the big congress and took lots of pictures. He has agreed to critique the show which should be most interesting to all. He has indicated he would like to ask for participation by attendees with their comments as well.

We will be having show and tell. We all have had lots of late winter flowers so plan to them to the meeting. Last month we had a wonderful show and tell table which we all enjoyed seeing.

Please be there and help us to get our organization going as we proceed through the New Year.

Jim



Board Members 2008

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Florida's Ghost Orchid

http://www.orchidseeos.com/orchidculture_aos-articles_mccartney_02.htm#fotomaioir

Polyradicion lindenii (Lindley) Garay

There is no mistaking this orchid for either a *Harrisella* or a *Campylocentrum* when it is in flower. This is Florida's legendary ghost orchid, made even more famous by the recent book *The Orchid Thief*.

A spider's web of thick, gray-green roots with bright green tips radiates out from a central hub on the trunks of cypress, pond apple (*Annona glabra*) or popash (*Fraxinus caroliniana*) trees on which this orchid grows, accounting for the orchid's generic name, which means "many roots." The earlier generic name by which this orchid has long been known, *Polyrrhiza*, means exactly the same thing. The ghost orchid even grows on the mossy vertical trunks of native royal palms in the Fakahatchee Strand, accounting for another of its less familiar but still fanciful common names, palm-polly.

This is one of Florida's largest-flowered native orchids, which is all the more surprising considering the minimal plant material from which it grows.

In late spring or early summer, a wiry little inflorescence emerges from the plant's short central stem at the nexus of the roots. It elongates to several inches then produces a green bud that swells into a white flower some two-plus inches across and even longer top to bottom. The sepals and petals may be greenish-white, and the petals fold backward as the flower matures. But the large lip is pure white. Its big mid lobe has two long, slightly twisting appendages hanging from either side, causing some imaginative folk to say the flower resembles an albino frog leaping through the air. The scooplike lip is drawn into a long spur that dangles some three to four inches from the back of the flower.

When in bloom, it is easy to see that this orchid is a relative of the African angraecoids.

Because the ghost orchid is glowing white and night-fragrant, it is assumed to be pollinated by one of Florida's giant nocturnal sphinx moths, and that well could be the primary pollinator. But in June of 1999, a flower was observed being visited in the daytime by a giant swallowtail butterfly (*Papilio cresphontes*). The butterfly appeared to be stuck in the flower, but when it was gently extricated, it emerged with the orchid's pollinarium adhering to its head, raising the possibility that this might be a secondary pollinator for this unique orchid.

The deep, shady pond apple and popash swamp where this observation was made is typical of the orchid's habitat, and it is home to numerous healthy ghost orchids. Seed capsules are encountered there with some regularity. These capsules are long, thin, narrowly terete and curved scimitarlike. They develop quickly over a matter of a month or so after pollination, then remain approximately the same size for nearly a year, until they mature and dehisce their seeds. It is clear that this particular swamp is a happy environment for this orchid.

Although the ghost orchid has been made famous because of its association with the Fakahatchee Strand, the orchid is found in suitable pond apple swamps throughout the Big Cypress. Wading waist-deep into the cool, clear tannin-stained water of these swamps on a hot summer day to see this orchid is an experience to be cherished.

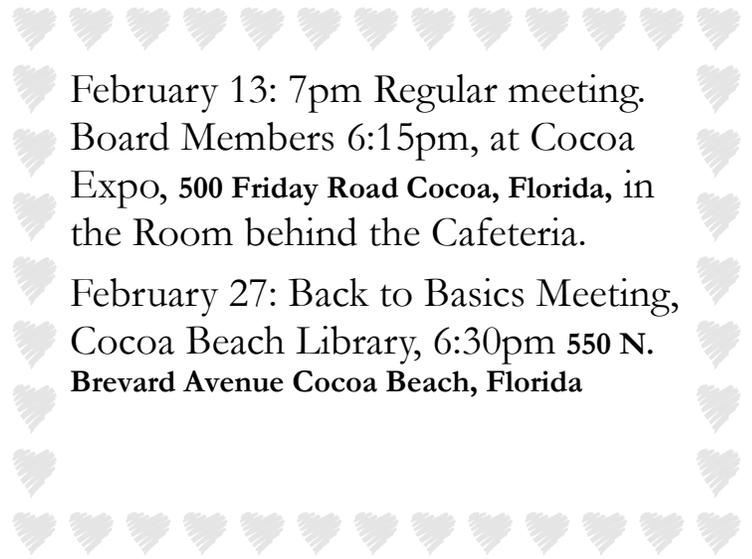


Sunshine

Betty Adamson

Member Brett Miller passed away in January. Brett truly loved growing his orchids and participated in presenting his flowers in exhibits, niches, and pedestal designs with great enthusiasm and spirit, in spite of his physical limitations. The Society expresses its deepest sympathy to his family members.

February 2008



February 13: 7pm Regular meeting. Board Members 6:15pm, at Cocoa Expo, 500 Friday Road Cocoa, Florida, in the Room behind the Cafeteria.

February 27: Back to Basics Meeting, Cocoa Beach Library, 6:30pm 550 N. Brevard Avenue Cocoa Beach, Florida

Congratulations!

The slate of officers for the year was installed by Betty Adamson at the January meeting. Each member of the Board was presented with a large Pot Red Crab "Uncle Wang" in appreciation of their accepting a position for the Society. Congratulations to each of them. We look forward to another great year for PCOS.



Platinum Coast Orchid Society

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