

Alan's Bench

Well into our summer sun, heat, and humidity, I find a simple task such as walking outside has me looking for the cooling shade whenever I can find it. Even the shade from a single palm tree is welcome. With this weather plants quickly come into bloom. I have a plant labeled as *Dendrobium densiflorum*, but it is probably *Dendrobium farmeri* Paxton, 1849 with a nice cluster of pink flowers and beautiful yellow throat that seemingly spiked and came into full bloom overnight.

Although I have seen orchids in the tropics growing in nearly full sun, most of the epiphytic orchids I find *in situ* grow in quite shaded habitats. Even some terete *Oncidium* that could tolerate a full sun condition were happily growing in shaded locations. I think the purpose of the heavy terete leaves was more to conserve moisture in an area with extended dry periods than for a preference for full sun. My first encounter with *Tolomia* and what looked like *Brassia* in Jamaica were in a shaded location at about 1600' elevation. So it is not surprising that most of us who do not grow orchids under the shade tree use 50-55% shade cloth. The other non-surprising observation is how well drained the plants are. The *Brassia* was growing up, although attached to a tree limb it had long since grown straight up with aerial roots not attached to any supports. The *Tolomia* and most other epiphytes were on bare tree branches. The tree was there only for support. We often try to fit a plant into a flowerpot and the rhizome grows up, not neatly laterally across the potting medium as we would prefer. When putting plants in flowerpots do consider any potting medium should have excellent drainage. I do not have a lot of plants mounted but that method provides for the best drainage if you supply sufficient moisture and nutrients.

Thank you to all who brought in the beautiful plants at the June meeting. I forgot to put the photo disk in the camera so I apologize for the lack of pictures. One spectacular plant of note was a large (what used to be *Brassavola*) *Rhyncholaelia digbyana* (Lindl.) Schltr (1918). The plant grown in a wooden basket had four large flowers grown by Sally Pancoast. Usually you see only one or possibly two flowers of this large green flower with the fantastically fimbriated lip which has been used extensively for breeding.

The upcoming 4th of July Holiday is the 233rd anniversary of our nation's independence, so to all of you- happy birthday, America.

July Events

July Business Meeting: Wednesday, July 8th, 7:00 pm at the Cocoa Expo cafeteria.
Executive board meeting at 6:30 pm. July Program: Part 2 of Florida Delicate Blossoms, native Florida orchids.

Back to Basics Meeting: Wednesday July 23rd, 6:30 pm at the Cocoa Beach Public Library

Board Members 2009

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

The Rhizome



Cooling Greens

Alan Gettleman

Several lime green Cattleya crosses bloom this time of year due to crosses with some of the Brazilian Cattleyas and our numerous Encyclias. Lime green seems a very cooling color - does it remind some of lime sherbet and others of frozen Margaritas? I don't know but the color is refreshing.

Eplc Mae Bly 'Ely' has two to five flowers that are almost six inches across. In the cladistic revisionism we are undergoing, the new 'correct' intergeneric cross is no longer an Epidendrum X Laelia X Cattleya but is a Sophroprosleya (abbreviation Shy). Former *Encyclia marie* (Ames) Hoenhe 1952 is now *Prosthechea marie* (Ames) W.E. Higgins 1997 which was crossed onto (now) Sophrocattleya Ann Follis. The cultivar has been used in three subsequent crosses including a cross with *Encyclia tampensis* Lindley (Small). The fun part about nomenclature revisionism is the plant is now Shy Mae Bly, a rhyming name that will be easy to remember.

SLC Tatarown 'Chase' is an almost 4" wide cluster of 4-6 flowers. It is now a RSC Rhynchosophrocattleya cross of Rhynchosophrocattleya Memoria Helen Brown x *Cattleya guttata* Lindley . It has been used once as a parent.

Shy Mae Bly has bloomed easily each May-June since I obtained it in 2007. I just bought SLC Tatarown but presume that will also be an easy grower. Both plants were obtained from Adamson Orchids.



There For an FCC

Alan Gettleman

The First Class Certificate (FCC) is the highest award of the first the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) of Great Britain and currently of the American Orchid Society (AOS). AOS estimates approximately 1% of the awards they give are for FCC's. So to see a plant as it receives an FCC is a great treat.

Our club put in a display at the Central Florida Orchid Show in April. After setup, there was time to see what others are displaying. Krull-Smith, the well known Apopka grower had several plants entered for judging. One beautiful large flowered pink/light lavender Cattleya received the coveted FCC with 90 points. The flower was definitely spectacular and stood out among many plants on the individual plant table.

BLC Doris Dukes 'Krull Perfection' (BLC Spring Dawn X BLC Pastoral) resembles its Pastoral parent. The AOS judges noted, in part "two stunning flat full flowers on one strong inflorescence. . . sepals very pale lavender pink, petals somewhat darker lavender pink; lip full broad, ruffled, impressive. . . substance very firm, texture crystalline."

Most orchids are beautiful, some are impressive. FCC's are often the combination of both and it was exciting to see this newly awarded outstanding plant.

