

The BackBulb

C A R M E L O R C H I D S O C I E T Y

August 2018



August Speaker: John OConnell

Orchid Addiction 101, A Brief Overview of the World of the Orchid Obsessed.

It is amazing how often the words orchid is paired with addiction or obsession. Two of my favorite books are: *The Orchid Thief: A True Story of Beauty and Obsession* and *Orchid Fever: A Horticultural Tale of Love Lust, and Lunacy*. The titles say it all, orchid people are nuts. John may be nuts, he is certainly nuts about orchids, which makes him qualified to teach *Orchid Addiction 101*. A brief overview of the world of the orchid obsessed. Topics covered include: orchid culture, and the culture of orchid people, John blames his addiction on his youngest sister who gave him his first orchid as a house warming present. It would be ten years before that first orchid bloomed again. Along the way that first *Cattleya* was joined by a *Phalaenopsis* then, upon discovering the Atlanta Orchid Society Orchid Show, a little *Lycaste*. He didn't know it at the time, but the *Lycaste* was the beginning of a fascination, perhaps obsession with orchids.

At first, the whole collection fit quite comfortably on a windowsill. Then his sister in Ohio became obsessed with them and the race was on, fueled by shared interest, and some sibling rivalry, both their collections took off, doubling then doubling again. Fed by plants available at meetings, and an increasing number of shows, John's collection



John's first growing area

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In order to provide a selection of treats at our meetings, we are asking members with last names that start with the letter **A thru F** to **bring refreshments** to the next meeting.

COS Officers

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John OConnell

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outgrew the windowsill. A 400W metal halide light was obtained, an aquarium was added to give moisture loving, warmer growing orchids a place to grow. Things were getting a little out of hand. The collection outgrew the 400W light, and he couldn't bring himself to buy a second one, the collection was straining his wife's limits. She kept telling him that there was no more room, she didn't understand that there is ALWAYS room for one more orchid. Then they moved to Monterey with it's mild climate, and year around outdoor growing became possible. A simple hoop house greenhouse was bought and quickly filled, a larger, and more expensive, 13' x13' greenhouse followed. The collection reached a steady state, subtractions (deaths and give always) balancing additions, and the comments about not having enough room subsided. The desire to fill every available inch of space with orchids subsided and was replaced by orchid society board duties: newsletter editor (100+ issues), website design/maintenance, President, VP, and even giving presentations for monthly meetings!

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BackBulb Editor & Webmaster

John OConnell

Upcoming Events

August

8/6 7PM Monday COS August Meeting.

September

There is no regular COS meeting in September

9/1 Saturday COS display at the Monterey County Fair

9/8 Saturday 12PM, COS Fall BBQ

9/22 California Orchids Fall Sale! 9am-4pm 515 Aspen Rd.
Bollinas, Ca.

October

10/1 COS October meeting

10/26-27 Friday-Saturday COS Fall orchid Festival

Save the Date: Saturday September 8

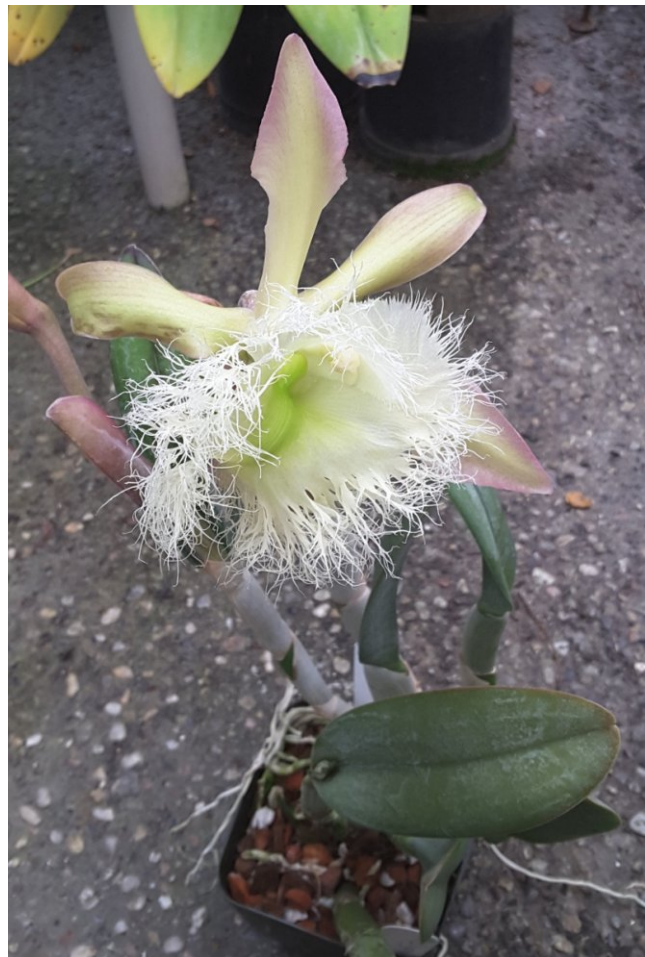
This years COS Fall BBQ is at Cely Cruz's home. 12 PM on Saturday September 8. The Society will provide the main course and everyone is asked to bring a dish to share, either an appetizer, side dish or dessert. Each person should also bring their choice of libation and their cash or checkbook to buy raffle tickets. The Board will be providing an interesting plant table. Watch for more details in September's BB.

COS at the Fair

The Carmel Orchid Society has been invited by the Marina Coast Water District, Water Awareness Committee, to share some booth space at the 2017 Monterey County Fair, Saturday, September 1, 2018. We would like to set up a member plant table display to attract people to the booth. Please let Daniel or Carol know if you have some blooming Orchids for the display. We will have the opportunity to display our banner for the 2017 Fall Orchid Festival, which will be great advertising opportunity for our Festival.



A couple of blooming plants from Carolyn's collection



And How Many Orchids Do You Have?

Do you know what orchids you have? Do you even know how many you have? If you keep an inventory of your orchids you do. Some of us keep records to remind us of what we have so we don't buy duplicates. Some of us hope to learn something by keeping track of when plants bloom and which ones do well and which ones die. Some of us are just compulsive list keepers and statistics gatherers.

Orchid lists take all forms from low tech 3x5 cards in a box to fancy database programs, but most list keepers probably just keep it in a spreadsheet.

The data gathered ranges from bare bones: name and significant dates, to exhaustive: name, description, photos, bloom history etc.

Compulsive record keeps may assign an accession number (unique number assigned to a museum or botanical garden aquisition) when a plant is formally added to their collection.

Frequently there are criteria that must be met before a plant is formally added to the collection: no NOIDs (no id), no rescue plants that will be given away shortly, etc.

Record keeping tends to be time consuming so it

is easier for those of us with more modest collections. I was once told by one of Dan Newman's helpers "If you can keep track of all your plants you don't have enough of them", which seems to be true, there don't seem to be may people with a large greenhouse with several thousand plants that keep track of each one. With the notable exception of Andy Phillips (of Andy's Orchids) who has a large number of his orchids cataloged on his computer (you can see them on his website) but even more amazing is that he can tell you if he has any particular plant in stock and that stock consists of over 5000 species and over a hundred thousand individual plants.

I too keep records of all my orchids. This is a little unusual since I am not a compulsive record or list keeper, nor am I the most organized person (ask

my wife, the professional organizer). I think that the list originated with my day job, computer programming, which means that I wrote a program to keep my inventory. My custom inventory program seems to sit at the intersection of orchid and computer geekdom. It allows me to say that I have exactly 258 orchids in my collection, 40 were acquired in 2017 and 37 either died or were sold or given away. I also try to keep data on blooming, repotting, what the



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original tag said, who I got it from, what it is potted in or mounted on and some cultural requirements, if known. I would like to add pictures and more reports (to satisfy the urge for statistics) but I just haven't gotten a round to it.

I think the most valuable benefit of keeping record of your orchid collection is that it provides a repository for any cultural information you may find on your plants, light requirements, temperature range, the need for a dry winter rest, most of us research our plants requirements soon after we get the plant, but remembering all of that information for years can be difficult once the collection grows beyond what will fit on a windowsill. So if you don't currently keep records, think about starting then you can also tell people just how crazy you are with 258 orchids, believe me the looks on peoples faces are worth the time it takes.



From Carolyn's collection, sometimes the flowers just don't want to display properly

John

C A R M E L O R C H I D S O C I E T Y 2018 Membership Application

Please make checks payable to the **Carmel Orchid Society** and mail to: Carmel Orchid Society - Membership c/o Carol Easton, P.O. Box 223462 Carmel CA 93922-3462

Please print

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ zip _____

Telephone _____

Email address _____

If you were referred by a current member, please provide

his/her name _____

Renewal New Member

Member of the American Orchid Society

Membership Type	Receive Newsletter	
	Via E-Mail	Via US Mail
Single	\$25 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$30 <input type="checkbox"/>
Couple	\$35 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$40 <input type="checkbox"/>
Vendor	\$35 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$40 <input type="checkbox"/>