

# SOUTHERN ONTARIO ORCHID SOCIETY

## NEWS

*September 2017, Volume 52, Issue 8 Meeting since 1965*

**Next Meeting Sunday, September 3, Floral Hall of the Toronto Botanical Garden,**

- ★ **Cultural snapshots** at noon on the stage by Alexsi Antanaitis.
- ★ **Member and Vendor sales** noon to 1pm
- ★ **Program at 1 pm:** Inge and Peter Poot will present their program on growing Stanhopea. They have been growing Stanhopeas for over 50 years and have presented their program across Canada and the USA.
- ★ **Member plant table review.** Show your plants, win points.
- ★ **Raffle**

### TOUR OF ORCHID GROWERS September 9th—10<sup>th</sup>, 2017

<b>Name</b>	<b><u>Address</u></b>	<b><u>Contact</u></b>	<b><u>Growing situation</u></b>	<b><u>Date &amp; time open</u></b>
Allan Gardens	19 Horticultural Ave. Toronto M5A 2P2	Lynda Satchell	Greenhouse	<b>BOTH</b> days 10am — 5pm
Heinz Ernstberger	336 Osiris Drive Richmond Hill Ont., L4C 2P7	Heinz 905 884-4361	Greenhouse	<b>BOTH</b> days 10am — 3pm
Peter and Inge Poot	330 Wagg Rd. Goodwood, Ont. L0C 1A0	905 640-5643	Greenhouse Lights Windowsill Veranda	<b>BOTH</b> days 10am — 4pm
Crystal Star Orchids	20815 2 <sup>nd</sup> Concession East Gwillimbury L9N 0G9	Eric and Ellen Lee 905 478 8398	Greenhouse	<b>Saturday ONLY</b> 10am—5pm
Alla Linetsky	104 Allingham Gdns Toronto Ont M3H 1Y2	Alla 416 567-5529	Windowsill Living walls	<b>Saturday ONLY</b> 10am—4pm
Synea Tan	28 Torrens Ave. Toronto, Ont., M4K 2H8	Synea 416 421-7805	Windows Lights Outdoors	<b>Sunday ONLY</b> 10am—3pm
John Vermeer	820 Parkland Ave. Mississauga L5H 3G8	John 905 823-2516	Outdoors	<b>Sunday ONLY</b> 10am—3pm

**Please note that this will be a self-directed tour.**

You decide which growers you wish to visit, and when. You can use Google, MapQuest, your GPS or an old-fashioned map book to get you there. **Please respect the conditions, i.e Dates, and hours the growers have indicated that they would be available.**

A couple of members and former members are offering opportunities for plant acquisitions:

**Peter Micha** is now offering his plants for free as follows:

To members of the Southern Ontario Orchid Society:

Peter Micha 106 Hillview Dr. (2nd Drive Way), Richmond Hill ( West off Bayview, North of 16th Ave. & South of Major Mackenzie) Tel: 905-770-1200 10am / 12am

I am retiring from growing plants in my greenhouse and offer my Orchid and other Greenhouse Plants app. 500 + plants as is for free pick up, first come, first get , from September 1st to 17th, by growers of the Ontario Orchid Society and others. Please telephone first a day or so before coming as my parking space is limited. Early afternoon visits - 2 to 4 PM would be best.

Former member **Clair Brown** is closing her lily pond. The water lilies and other water plants are for sale at \$10 to \$15 each. Free fish. Phone 905-430-7975.

**President's Remarks** Welcome Orchid Enthusiasts. The days are getting shorter, the evenings are getting a little cooler and children are dreading the end of their summer vacation, but all is not lost, as we resume our regular meetings again on Sunday Sep. 3. Inge and Peter Poot will intrigue you with their talk on Stanhopeas, a genus in the Stanhopinae the members of which often have "spicily fragrant", "incredible flowers with intricate, complex structures and mechanisms for pollination, ranging from channeled walkways for insects to buckets of a watery solution" (according to the AOS).

We had a wonderful turnout on August 7 for Orchidfest, including a healthy attendance from members of other societies in Ontario and Northern New York, for what is arguably the orchid event of the summer in the region. Andrea Niessen of Orquídeas del Valle in Columbia gave two entertaining and educational talks, one on Columbian orchid habitats and another on Miniature orchids. She brought many plants, and they were well picked over by the end of the day. Special thanks go out to Terry and Doug Kennedy of Orchids in our Tropics, for helping facilitate the importation of the plants that Andrea brought, and for hosting her at their home. Orchidfest 2017 reflects the legacy of one of SOOS's most extraordinary members, Mario Ferussi, who back in 2015 arranged for Andrea's attendance this year. Thank you Mario, you will forever be in our hearts.

Members whose names begin with the letters **N through R** will be supplying the treats for the September meeting.

Our future speakers are as follows:

- **September 3<sup>rd</sup>**: Inge and Peter Poot, Stanhopeas
- **October 1<sup>st</sup>**: Marilyn Light Topic: Secrets of our Wild Orchids
- **November 5<sup>th</sup>**: To be announced
- **December 3<sup>rd</sup>**: Annual auction and pot luck

Our cultural snapshots will continue to take place on the stage at 12:15 pm, starting in September. The first session will be ??????. Alexsi Antanaitis will be running these sessions. Everyone is welcome to participate. Remember, if there is a topic you would like us to cover, please let us know.

We have finalized our fall growers tour for the weekend of September 9th and/or 10<sup>th</sup>. Please see the schedule in the Summer newsletter for the locations, times and dates, which do vary, so please check carefully.. Participants are;

Allan Gardens  
Heinz Ernstberger  
Peter and Inge Poot  
Alla Linetsky  
Synea Tan  
John Vermeer  
Eric and Ellen Lee (Crystal Star Orchids)

Thank you to these members for allocating their precious time to share their growing setups, and experiences with our members. We know that there is extra work involved in tidying up your growing areas for public presentation.

The fall shows are just around the corner, with the first one being COOS in Cambridge on Saturday and Sunday Sept 23 & 24. Both Don Wyatt and Laura Liebgott will be seeking your plants for the SOOS displays at the various shows.

Happy Orchiding, John Vermeer for  
Laura Liebgott  
Questions or comments: Please contact  
me at:  
[lliebgott@rogers.com](mailto:lliebgott@rogers.com) or 905 883 5290

## Coming Events 2017 August

19, Monthly Montreal AOS judging, Jardin botanique de Montreal

### September

2, TJC Monthly AOS Judging at TBG.

3, **SOOS meeting, Toronto Botanical Garden, sales**

**12 noon, program 1 pm**, Floral Hall

9-10, SOOS Growers Tour

16, Monthly Montreal AOS judging, Jardin botanique de Montreal

23-24, Central Ontario Orchid Society Show, Hespeler Recreation Center, Cambridge, Ontario.

30, Central NY Orchid Society Show, Syracuse, NY.

### October

**1, SOOS meeting, Toronto Botanical Garden, sales**  
**12 noon, program 1 pm**, Floral Hall

7, TJC Monthly AOS Judging Toronto Botanical Garden

14- 15, Eastern Canada Orchid Society Show + TAJC Monthly Judging, Montreal

21-22 Windsor OS Show, Windsor, Ontario.

### November

4, TJC Monthly AOS Judging Toronto Botanical Garden

**5, SOOS meeting, Toronto Botanical Garden, sales**  
**12 noon, program 1 pm**, Floral Hall.

**8-12, 22<sup>nd</sup> World Orchid Conference, Guayaquil, Ecuador**

18, TJC business meeting and TAJC Monthly Judging, Jardin botanique de Montreal.

### December

2, TJC Monthly AOS Judging at TBG.

**3, SOOS meeting, Toronto Botanical Garden, sales**  
**12 noon, program 1 pm**, Floral Hall

9, , Monthly Montreal AOS judging, Jardin botanique de Montreal.

## AOS Judging Results

### SOOS Orchidfest, August 6

Promenea Conni 'Memoria Mario Ferrusi' CCM/AOS 81points, Joyce Medcalf. AM/AOS 83points, Vandachostylis Pine Rivers 'Pink FoxTail' Doug & Terry Kennedy

Encyclia navarroi '? 'CHM/AOS 82 points, Faye Menzies  
Catasetum Frank Maine 'B-C' HCC/AOS 76 points, B.

Butts- C Lefavre

Cattleya araguaiensis 'Fayeze and WaterBoy' AM/AOS 80 points, Faye Menzies

Vanda John de Biase 'Tanzanite' HCC/AOS 79 points, Dwane Levy

The next judging will be held Saturday, September 2 at the Toronto Botanical Gardens at 1 pm. AOS Judging is a service of the American Orchid Society and is open to all! Bring us your flowering orchids,

## Colombia's Orchids and Their Habitats, by Andrea Niessen

transcribed by Inge Poot (photos graciously supplied by Andrea Niessen)

Colombia is located in North-western South America and shares its border with many other countries. It is traversed north to south by three mountain ranges of the Andes and as a result has very diverse habitats. Not surprisingly it is a hotspot of biodiversity. So far about 5000 orchid species have been described as occurring in Colombia and many more have yet to be discovered. Extensive areas used to be too dangerous for explorers and are still harboring many new orchid treasures that are slowly being discovered. Habitats found in Colombia include deserts, swamps, tropical dry forests, rain forests and cloud forests.

The first habitat Andrea discussed was a portion of Colombia running along the **north-west Atlantic coast**. It contains the three-sided Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta Mountain, one branch of which extends to Santa Marta (located in the middle of the Caribbean Sea coast), the oldest Colombian town founded by the Spanish. Ten percent of the area is protected by the establishment of the **Tayrona National Park**.

There Andrea photographed a huge plant of *Rossioglossum (Oncidium) ampliatum*, its turtle shaped pseudobulbs clinging to a palm trunk. At the proper time (September to May, but mostly March to April) it produced its showy branched inflorescences of yellow

flowers in abundance. The flowers open in succession and allow the plant to be in bloom for two months.



*Encyclia cordigera* (synonym *Enc. macrochila*) makes its home there too. Its inflorescences of leathery, olive-brown flowers high-lighted with a white lip, the latter decorated with short purple lines emerging from under the yellow anther cap, are rather fetching!

*Brassavola nodosa*, the Lady of the Night orchid can also grow on palm trunks and perfumes

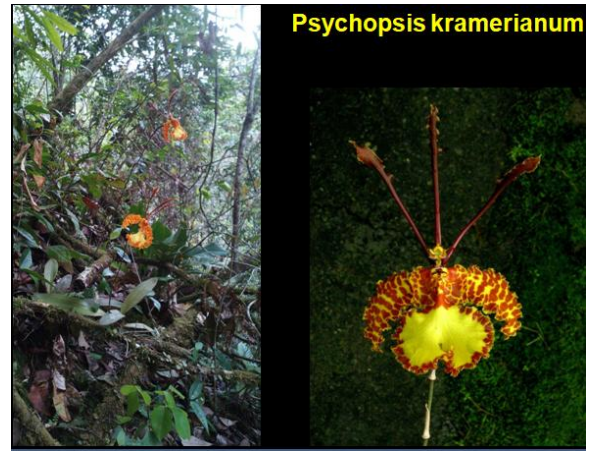
the night air of Tyrone Park. The flowers have thin chartreuse sepals and petals and a large white heart-shaped lip.

You can now also walk up the mountain in the park. It takes five days to reach the summit. The Cogi Indians live in that area. It takes a three day hike to reach the lost city, Ciudad Perdida, a sacred place for the indigenous population. The little rust-red *Pleurothallis endotrachys* was spotted in the vicinity.

On the **other side of the Sierra Nevada** is Minca(?) and along the road to it while travelling by bus one can see on the trees the species *Maxillaria (Heterotaxis) crassifolia* (on the sides and bottoms of horizontal branches bearing pretty yellow and chartreuse flowers), *Oncidium (Odontoglossum) auriculatum* (growing terrestrially on a mossy roadside and bearing sprays of star-shaped chartreuse flowers with bold red-brown spots, set-off by a narrow white lip with a magenta tip), *Oncidium (Odm.) nevadense* (on the side of a vertical tree trunk and bearing starry cream flowers heavily blotched red-brown and decorated by a fairly wide, white frilly lip), *Onc. (Odm.) naevium* (shown growing on the side of a vertical tree trunk and sporting sprays of white starry flowers that are spotted red-brown and have twisted segments- looking like wild dancers! This species does not seem to take its own pollen and Andrea was happy to be able to get some from a plant found on this expedition so that they could use it to propagate their own lone plant on returning home).

The next area covered by our speaker was the **strip of land between the Pacific Ocean and the western-most mountain range, the Cordillera Occidenta**. This is the rainiest area of Colombia and receives 10m of rain per year! The northern portion, the Choco has the highest biodiversity of Colombia as well.

*Psychopsis kramerianum* grows with the plant shaded by fallen branches, but the gold and rust-red flowers reach into the light.



*Cattleya aurea* is not easy to grow. It loves warmth, moisture and lots of air movement. However it has been line-bred to be easier to grow and the large golden flowers with their luridly striped large lips can now be enjoyed on more easily grown plants.

*Phragmipedium longifolium* will cover whole hillsides in some very rainy places. Their greenish flowers, borne in succession, have a red picotee on their stiffly held long, narrow petals and some brown shading on the pouch. A species with a quiet elegance and beauty!

*Phragmipedium andrettae* and *fischeri* grow in the same areas as the above species. This tells you that they too need lots of humidity and water. They have relatively small flowers, but the flowers have wide petals. The flowers are white and are variously shaded pink.

There are also several species of *Vanilla* found in this stretch of coastline, of which *Vanilla planifolia* is the best known due to its use in commercial Vanilla production. This species has pale green sepals and petals and a white, yellow-marked lip- on quite large flowers, but the flowers only last a few hours and must be pollinated before 10AM to set a seed pod.

*Selenipedium chica* is a plant whose relatively small flower requires a ladder to be viewed on top of its very tall plant.... The stem has alternately arranged plicate leaves and successively produced flowers with chartreuse sepals and petals, a large yellow lip and lots of red-brown shading around the opening of the lip.

Speaking of giant orchid plants, *Arundina graminifolia* is a non-native orchid that can cover whole fields! The plants can get to be 8 feet tall and successively produce short-lasting lovely pink *Cattleya* -like flowers. The image shown had a hummingbird sitting in its nest which was glued to the *Arundina* stem and a leaf. I wonder if it wanted to be close to the purple trumpet shaped lips of the flowers?

The National flower of Panama does not respect borders and can also be found in the Choco. *Peristeria elata* flowers with a short spray of heavy white flowers in whose centre we find the flying-dove-shaped lip.





On tree branches can be found *Gongora gratulabunda* with cream to yellow flowers marked with red-brown, as well as *Gongora fulva* with similarly coloured flowers. *Gongora* flowers do not last very long, but most plants when grown in the right conditions will produce lots of inflorescences – to the point that you have to be careful to not let them flower themselves to death. The flowers are pollinated by green male Euglossine bees, who as with Stanhopeas are trying to perfume themselves to impress a female into mating with them.

*Stanhopea annulata* is another resident of this warm and very wet area. The short-lived fragrant flowers are produced in pairs and come in white to yellow.

*Epidendrum ilense* with its beige flowers and gaudy huge white fringed lip is hard to establish in cultivation. It has a pendulous growth habit and the plant shown grew on an upright tree trunk about two meters above the ground. So contrary to popular belief it is not extinct in its native habitat.

*Houlettia odoratissima* is found there as well and is very striking in bloom with its shiny red-brown blooms highlighted with an intricate white lip and yellow anther cap. Cover the bulbs with moss to facilitate growing this species.



Not surprisingly warmth tolerant pleurothallids such as *Restrepias* are found in this wet environment too. In cultivation they should be grown in moss with lots of humidity.

One slide showed a toilet installed sitting right beside a path with no toilet cover on either the bowl or the water tank. Presumably the rain collected in both bowl and tank helps flush the leavings of passer-bys who are overcome by the call of nature....

Since the rivers contain gold, a certain amount of traffic is expected. But most of the gold is in such minute pellets that no one is going to get rich panning for gold there. Andrea herself had no luck at all!

The road-sides denuded of trees had lots of reed-stem epidendrums competing for space with grasses.

*Maxillaria carolii* has large graceful white flowers with a yellow and red lip. It is warm growing.

*Pescatorea klabochiorum* grows with the mature growths hanging downward to prevent rotting. The examples shown in situ had large single white flowers whose segments were tipped magenta.

Another enticement to visit the area is the sightings of the hump-backed whales that congregate there to breed during August to September.

**Gorgona Island** is 56 miles away from shore and has a unique flora, an example of which is the large white-flowered *Sobralia macrophila*. Unfortunately it also harbors a lot of snakes so visitors have to come appropriately dressed. Capuchin monkeys have taken over the island as well. They were cute but not always friendly....

*Polystachia concreta* was found there on a tree trunk at about eye-level. The up-side down little hat shaped cream flowers were arranged around an upright inflorescence and opened in succession.

*Epidendrum aporum* looked just like a *Dichea* vegetatively, but had a terminal short inflorescence of crowded ice-green flowers with a cream picotee.

**Back on the mainland** there were interesting orchids to be found on palm trunks. There are many *Dichea* species that are yet undiscribed.

Two species of *Polycynis* occur there, *muscifera* with dense inflorescences of delicate beige flowers with red-brown dots and a hairy pale green lip and the similar species *lepida* with a white hairy lip.

*Coeliopsis hyacinthosma* charms with its basal cluster of white flowers marked gold and black in the throat and then two ethereal species of *Sievekingia*. *Sievekingia suavis* has wide white sepals and smaller peach coloured petals and lip. *Sievekingia reichenbachiana* has white segments, but the edges of the petals and lip have long peach hairs forming a halo around the segments.



*Catasetums* need a dry rest in the winter and don't occur in this rain forest. But we do find *Mormodes* in this rainy area, as well as *Cycnoches herrenhusanum*. Its pendant inflorescences of densely arranged golden flowers are

beautiful, but- unfortunately it is hard to grow. Separate the bulbs that form to prevent losing the whole plant. Also found there is *Cycnoches barthiorum* (similar to the previous species, but in shades of copper- also easy to kill...).

The next region to be covered was the **Andean or Central region** traversed north-south by three mountain ranges. It contains 95% of the population. The snow on the mountain tops gets less with every year due to global warming. The habitats in the mountains vary from dry forest to cloud forest.

The cloud forest contains an abundance of species. The *Schlimia jasminodora* shown looked like a miniature Stanhopea, but had an upright inflorescence with 4 non-resupinate flowers, in white with red speckles and orange in the lip.

*Cyrtochilum (Odontoglossum) ramosissimum* has long branched inflorescences of usually white flowers dotted with red-brown and highly undulate edges on all segments. Other species of this genus are found there as well.

The *Maxillaria speciosa* shown had elegant spidery flowers of gold with red-brown bar-like spots.

*Telipogon* are abundant and in cultivation do best in baskets or mounted with a bit of sphagnum moss on an upright twig.

*Oncidium (Odontoglossum) crocidipterum* has dense inflorescences of spiky white flowers spotted red-brown.

*Oncidium alexandrae (Odontoglossum crispum)* one of the foundation species of *Odontoglossum* breeding and the other smaller flowered but better shaped related species *Oncidium (Odm) nobile* are home in the cloud forest. Both usually have white flowers spotted red-brown.

Another pair of similar species found in the cloud forests are *Oncidium luteopurpureum (Odontoglossum luteopurpureum)* and *Oncidium lehmannii (Odontoglossum cristatellum)*. Both species usually have cream flowers spotted red-brown, but the latter species usually has a fuller shape and more intense colour.

The picture of a banana-eating green toucan livened up the presentation, especially since its green colour shaded with purple around the eyes and beak made it hard to spot in the picture!

The *Maxillaria luteograndiflora (triloris)* shown had lots of elegant white, gold and red flowers whose shape reminded me of a dancer.

*Bollea coelestis* is a stunning plant when given rain forest conditions.



*Anguloa clowesii* one of the tulip orchids, produces yellow, tulip-shaped flowers. The plant shown grew terrestrially.

*Prosthechea sceptra* was illustrated with a large plant just covered with upright inflorescences of yellow *Epidendrum*-like flowers.

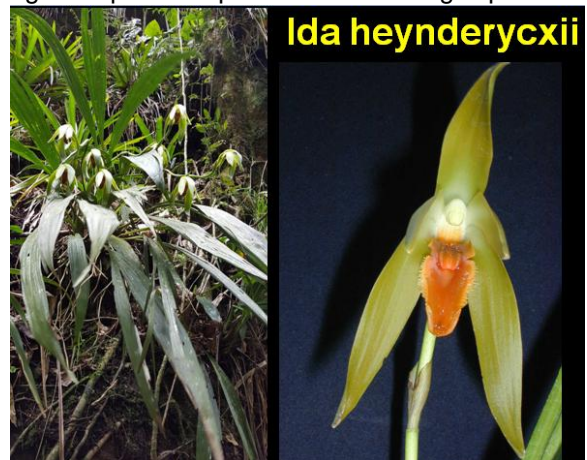
Andrea digressed at this point to mention that the use of tree-fern is prohibited. She also mentioned that they use dried cow manure as a fertilizer by diluting it in water.

With all this orchid abundance in the close-by jungle, it is not surprising that quite a few people in the adjacent towns grow orchids on their exterior window ledges and balconies. We can only envy them their abundance of blooms!

Road-sides contain an abundance of orchid treasures such as *Sobralia* and a 81cm (32") tall *Dracula chimaera*, spotted by the late Mario Ferrusi. An *Otoglossum coronarium* was spotted in a back yard and had a beautiful spray of shiny red-brown flowers with a yellow lip.

There are also lots of interesting birds in the area and for those with this interest there is a bird fair in April. Another noteworthy tourist destination is the Santa Rosa Cascade, a very picturesque series of tall and short waterfalls tumbling down a mountainside. A tree trunk near the falls supported what looked like *Epidendrum medusae*.

The next area to be explored was the Cocora Valley at a 2000m altitude. Access is via a horseback ride. The group on this tour spotted a tree just covered in epiphytes containing such orchids as a *Xylobium* and *Idas*, such as *Sudamerlycaste (Ida) heynderycxii*, a showy species illustrated with a clone that had light olive-gold sepals and petals and an orange lip.



A house along the way had white reed-stem epidendrums in a flower bed. Reed stem epidendrums can be used as an indicator for altitude in Colombia. The yellow *Epis* occur at 1000m, orange ones at about 1500m, pink ones at 2000m, and white ones at 2500m. So we know the plant at the house came from 2500m!

This house also sported a prolifically flowering *Pleurothallis phalangifera* hanging under the eaves. The drooping off-white flowers were most attractively arranged on long sprays.

A *Pleurothallis (Acronia) marthae* growing low on a tree beside a foot path had so many light red flowers on it



that it even challenged Doug and Terry Kennedy's skill with this group of *Pleurothallis*. This group has a lot of giants in it and this species is one of them. The huge heart-shaped leaves produce clusters of red clam-shaped flowers from the base of the leaf and lie on top of the leaf right at eye level for a little girl!



**(Acronia)  
Pleurothallis  
marthae**

Other treasures spotted were about 30 different species of miniature *Lepanthes*, such as *Lepanthes calodyction* – famous for its frilly beautifully marbled leaves. Another beauty as yet unnamed *Lepanthes* had short sprays of flowers with wine-red sepals and peach petals and lip. A *Masdevallia racemosa* was growing in the brick-red volcanic soil. This soil is acidic, meaning that this species would be hard to grow in cultivation! Its two flowers looked like two red birds in flight.

On a hike to some sulphur springs, discovered by the late Ray McCullough a highly pregnant *Fernandezia ecuadorensis*, formerly in the genus *Raycadencia* was encountered that had Oncidium-like yellow and light brown flowers plus a lot of large-winged seed-pods!

The sulphur springs themselves were so serene with colourful, rounded, mossy areas interspersed with small shallow ponds and the odd higher plant. In this high altitude, low oxygen environment grows a short form of *Epidendrum fimbriatum* with light pink flowers. To mimic this environment in cultivation would be a huge challenge!

On the same hike the group also encountered a strange looking *Espeletia*. A non-orchid, mind you, that had a growth habit like a Joshua tree but flowers that looked like furry mustard-coloured pipes emerging bowl first from an upright main stem.

**San Agustin** was the next habitat to be explored. It is again in the north-east of Colombia. It has cultural attractions as well in the form of stone monoliths carved to look like Inca kings and soldiers and holding up a stone platform on their heads. Nearby is the long Magdalena river valley which is the habitat of *Cattleya trianae*, the national flower of Colombia. Its home is a dry forest at 800-1500m elevation. The clone 'Andrea' is a fairly flat, rich rosy purple. The texture seems crystalline and velvety. Lovely! The species has been line-bred and selected so much that it now comes in hybrid quality full forms and in colours such as white, white with coloured lip, pink, deep mauve and even bluish tones. In cultivation the species can suffer from lack of enough calcium, which manifests itself in great susceptibility to blackened new growths.



The next habitat is the **Cauca Valley** in the south-west of Colombia.

*Cattleya quadricolor* is found in this valley at about 900m elevation. The trees in the area are short and stunted and overgrown with other vegetation, but the odd *Anacardium excelsum* towers over its short brethren. The area is swampy and therefore is not dry even during low rainfall periods. It is hot and tropical. The plants can be grown at temperatures of 60-62F nights and 70-77F days (Orchid Wiz). The plants grow in spots that have bright light conditions but no direct mid-day sun. The most attractively coloured clones are white with a very colourful lip: lilac eyes on each side of the column, an orange band emerging from below the column, widening into a yellow blotch and the distal portion of the lip magenta.

The nomenclature of the species is confusing since it is known and still sold by such synonyms as *ruckeri*, *chocoensis*, *candida* and *caucaensis*.

Other species found there are (*Schomburgkia*) *Laelia splendida* whose enormously long inflorescences lift the ball of gorgeous shiny red-brown and purple flowers out into the light. The crisped edges of the sepals and petals heighten the glossy effect. They can be grown in full sun, if the humidity is high enough.

Another beauty from this area is *Miltoniopsis roezlii*. This species has short inflorescences of white flowers whose petals have a large purple eyespot covering the proximal half of the petals. Forms lacking this spot have been found as well. The lip has a small yellow waterfall-type crest. The variety *xanthina* is all yellow with a darker yellow lip crest.



**Miltoniopsis roezlii var xanthina**

Cali, located in the northern part of the Cauca Valley is Andrea's hometown. And lo and behold on the ledge of a brick-sided multi-storied parking garage in Cali was perched a *Cyrtopodium paniculatum*, the lovely species whose cigar-shaped pseudobulbs are topped by branched inflorescences of yellow and orange flowers. Not far north from Cali is Calima Lake, the largest artificial lake of Colombia. It is 70 square kilometers in size and is meant as a water reservoir. But it is not surprising that lots of orchids took advantage of the proximity of water to the hills around the lake to find a home there. *Sobralia virginalis* is one of them. It has large white, crisp Cattleya-like flowers that last only one day, but are produced in succession – after a storm.



*Chondrorhyncha chestertonii* is on the same hillsides about the lake and its yellow flowers with their beautifully fringed lips are charming.

The hills also hold *Phragmipedium lindenii* the cream and dusty pink, lip-less slipper orchid. It grows in wet gravel in a very humid spot. But beware! Snakes also hide in the underbrush so boots are a must!

Another more open hillside harboured lots of white *Habenarias*.

*Oerstedella (Epidendrum) wallisii* was on a tree trunk, growing in a shaded spot. Its tall canes and yellow, red-speckled flowers whose lips are heavily over-laid magenta, were brightening the shade.

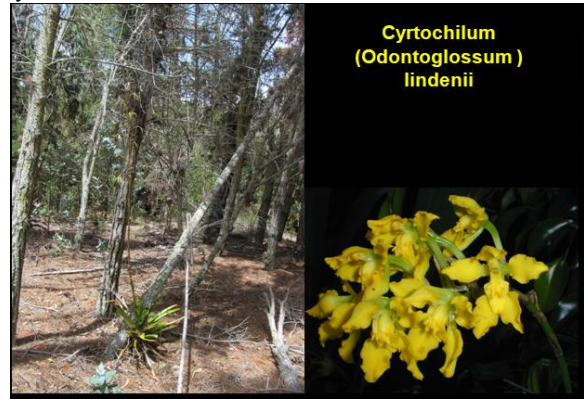
The **Chicamocha Canyon**, about 50km from Bucaramanga (a city in the **north-east of Colombia**) is a steep sided canyon carved by the Chicamocha River. This river flows through the departments of Boyacá and Santander, where it reaches its maximum depth near the outskirts of Bucaramanga. (Wikipedia) One part is protected by the Chicamocha National Park. It contains the Mesa de Los Santos, a spot where the flat highlands beside the Canyon are bisected by a river that plunges into the canyon.

There is a serpentine road from the canyon bottom to the top which allows good viewing of the vegetation on the mountain side. Some people might wish to take the more adventurous gondola ride up the mountain and maybe even go back down via a zip-line!

Part of a piece of mountainside was covered with plants of *Encyclia cordigera* var. *rosea* in full bloom. The inflorescences have many showy flowers with brown sepals and petals and magenta lips.

In a somewhat open forest a yellow-flowered *Cyrtochilum lindenii* with its huge pseudobulbs was

spotted almost at ground level on a tree trunk. This was a dry area.



At the edge of a coniferous dry forest were found about six foot tall pink-flowered reed-stem Epidendrums. Further in the forest were found a less exciting *Govenia* with a cluster of muddy little white flowers and a *Cyclopogon* - not in bloom, but that would also produce the kind of modest flowers that we are used to from most of our own native orchids- other than *Cypripediums* and some *Habenarias*! A more exciting find was a *Stenorhynchus speciosum* whose inflorescence of fiery orange flowers was almost outshone by the rosette of white-spotted leaves.

Near Cata Tabulare, on a broad-leaved tree branch in full sun was a pink flowered *Rodriguezia secunda*. In the same dry area grows *Cattleya warscewiczii* (gigas). The plant shown was in the crotch of a tree branch. It can have 5-7 flowers per inflorescence and the flowers are very variable.

*Cattleya mendelii* is very feminine with pale pink flowers and a lip overlaid magenta on the distal half. Yellow veins on a red blotch connect the area under the column with the magenta portion.

In all, six species of *Cattleya* can be found at elevations above 2000m in this area. In all of Colombia 11 species of *Cattleya* can be found. *C. rex* is native in the Amazon Basin, *C. violacea* is found in the eastern plains.

El Penon a hill in Guatape is known for its 750 stairs leading to the summit— sure to test your level of fitness. The almost vertical sides of the hill are covered with mostly orchids! The town of Guatape is in north-west Colombia. It is a series of islands – very picturesque! Huge Cattleyas can be found on various trees in the town proper! Looks so exotic with some trees just covered with purple Cattleya blooms!

The **Eastern Plains (Orinoco)** are our next destination. They are east of the three mountain chains. They have a wet and a dry season and thus



are perfect for *Catasetums*.



Other species found there are *Catasetum macrocarpon* (pale green flowers with heavy purple spotting on the lateral sepals) and *Catasetum discolor* (cream flowers with a gold or purple-red large lip).

*Cycnoches chlorochilon* with its green up-side-down swan-shaped flowers was found in the shade in the crotch of a tree.

The yellow-flowered *Maxillaria camaridii* and *Camaridium ochroleucum* (both with lovely white flowers with a yellow lip) grow there in lots of sun.

A quite colourful yellow and red-brown unnamed *Pleurothallis* species is waiting to surprise the visitor.

Another little beauty makes its home in the plains, the yellow and white *Maxillaria parkerii* (*lanasterii*)

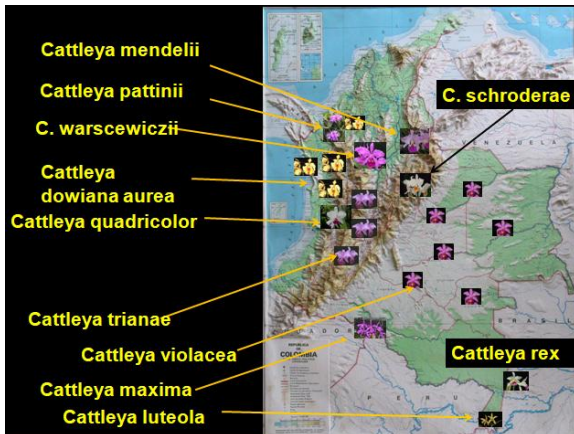
*Coryanthes mastersiana* lives on an ants nest hanging in a tree. It is pollinated by a green male Euglossine bee.



As mentioned above *Cattleya violacea* can be found here too, but it is mostly native in Venezuela.

*Cattleya warscewiczii* grows on trees here as well, in many varieties.

Below is a distribution map of all 11 Colombian *Cattleya* species:



**CAÑO CRISTAL** is famous for the colourful algae that coat the riverside during August and September. They form patches of colour in all colours of the rainbow on top of the wet soil. Spectacular!

The last región discussed was the **Amazon Region**, the south-eastern portion of Colombia. If you are lucky you might catch a snake handler in Kapax wrestling with a huge constrictor in the wáter – and hopefully winning! *Victoria amazónica* and *Victoria cruziana* the huge waterlilies of the Amazon river are also a stunning sight even though they are not orchids!

Orchids to be found there are the White-flowered *Chaubardia klugii* and the gold and brown flowered *Braemia vittata*.



*Vanilla pompona* with chartreuse flowers and a gold blotch in the frilled lip twines up into trees.

*Scuticaria steele*'s pencil-shaped leaves hang from branches reaching over a river and have pretty golden flowers with red-brown blotches on the sepals and petals and redder short veins on the paler lip.

*Warczewiczella amazonica* with its snowy white flowers and purple veins on the large lip is a striking sight. Some of the places where orchids will grow include even the tops of wooden telephone or hydro poles!

Andrea encouraged us to practice conservation both in situ and ex situ, using an example for the latter a glass bowl planted with several high humidity requiring miniatures.

In Colombia itself people can grow many native orchids right on the trees or in the flowerbeds of their back gardens, thus saving many species with their attentive care. A white *Lycaste* or *Ida* grown in a garden looked much healthier than it would have in the wild. Similarly an *Epidendrum ciliolare* grown on the edge of a walkway was full of its hanging clusters of white flowers – produced in great abundance.

A horizontal tree branch in a forest had a huge plant of the yellow flowered *Encyclia grammatoglossa*, a piece of which made itself happily at home on a piece of wood on a mound of earth in the middle of a patio in Cali.

A *Prosthechea* (*Encyclia/Anacheilon*) *fragrans* growing on a stump in the middle of a lawn was just covered with white flowers.

And last but not least: there is an orchid show in Cali the



week before the World Orchid Conference to be held in Ecuador this year (2017). If you go to the WOC that would make a wonderful side trip!



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**Annual Show: February 10-11, 2018.**



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orchidées japonaises  
japanese orchids and orchid species

Terry Kowalczyk

24 Rockvale Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario  
M6E 3A9

416.828.8023  
[info@florapeculia.ca](mailto:info@florapeculia.ca)  
[www.florapeculia.ca](http://www.florapeculia.ca)



