



New Mexico Orchid Guild Newsletter

June 2016

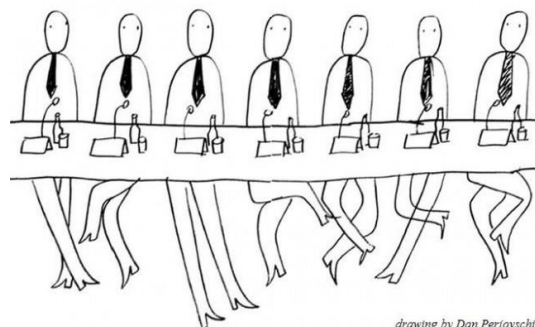
Our next regular meeting will be:

June 12, 2016 at 1:30pm

Albuquerque Garden Center, 10120 Lomas
Blvd NE
*(Just West of Eubank on the South Side of
Lomas in Los Altos Park)*

As usual, please bring something to share.
Cakes, cookies, and other snacks are
appreciated

Members are encouraged to wear their
membership badges, New members will be
able to pick up their badges at the meeting



drawing by Dan Perzovsch

June Program: NMOG's Panel of Veteran Growers

Join us for an engaging talk on four
different genera of Orchids.

Four of NMOG's own growers will
present information on Dendrobiums,
Phalaenopsis, Paphiopedilums, as well
as Terrarium Growing. There will be

plenty of time to ask questions, so come prepared with any you might have!

From the President's Desk:

THANK YOU to all of the volunteers (and shoppers) who helped to make A Fairy Tale Garden such a success. Our annual show and sale is the major fundraiser for NMOG and the proceeds allow us to continue to bring you internationally known speakers and fulfill our day to day operating costs. It will be challenging to top this production next year!

Please join us on **June 12th** when a **panel of our veteran members** will speak about four different genera of orchids and how they successfully grow them here in Albuquerque. There will be ample opportunity to ask questions and share your experiences. We are hoping that many of those expressing an interest in NMOG at the show will be joining us so put on your welcoming hats! **There will be some show related decorations for sale at the meeting.** As always there will be show and tell, quality plants and supplies to purchase, and the raffle.

If it appears Calypso bulbosa will be blooming on the Sandia Crest this year we will hike. It may be on short notice so keep an eye on your email for an announcement.

On **July 10th** we will have an old-fashioned ice cream social. Start looking for those favorite recipes and plan on bringing your home made ice cream. No "official" meeting but we will have show and tell, plant sales and a raffle.

Martin Motes will be speaking at our August 14th meeting. He will accept pre-orders to be delivered at the meeting and will be bringing plants to sell. Martin is an engaging speaker and we welcome his return. Watch the newsletter for pre-order instructions.

Guillermo Salazar, our January 2015 speaker, will be guiding a two week tour of Peru including time in Lima, Ballestas Islands, Colca Canyon, Sacred Valley of the Incas and Machu Pichu. Departure is planned for September 28th and is attractively priced. I have a copy of the complete travel itinerary and costs so if you are interested please let me know.

Keith

NMOG Website: <http://www.nmorchidguild.org/> American Orchid Society

Website: <http://aos.org>

Upcoming

Meetings:

June 12 - Panel of Veteran Growers

July 10 - Ice Cream Social

August 14 - Dr. Martin Motes Speaking on Vandas

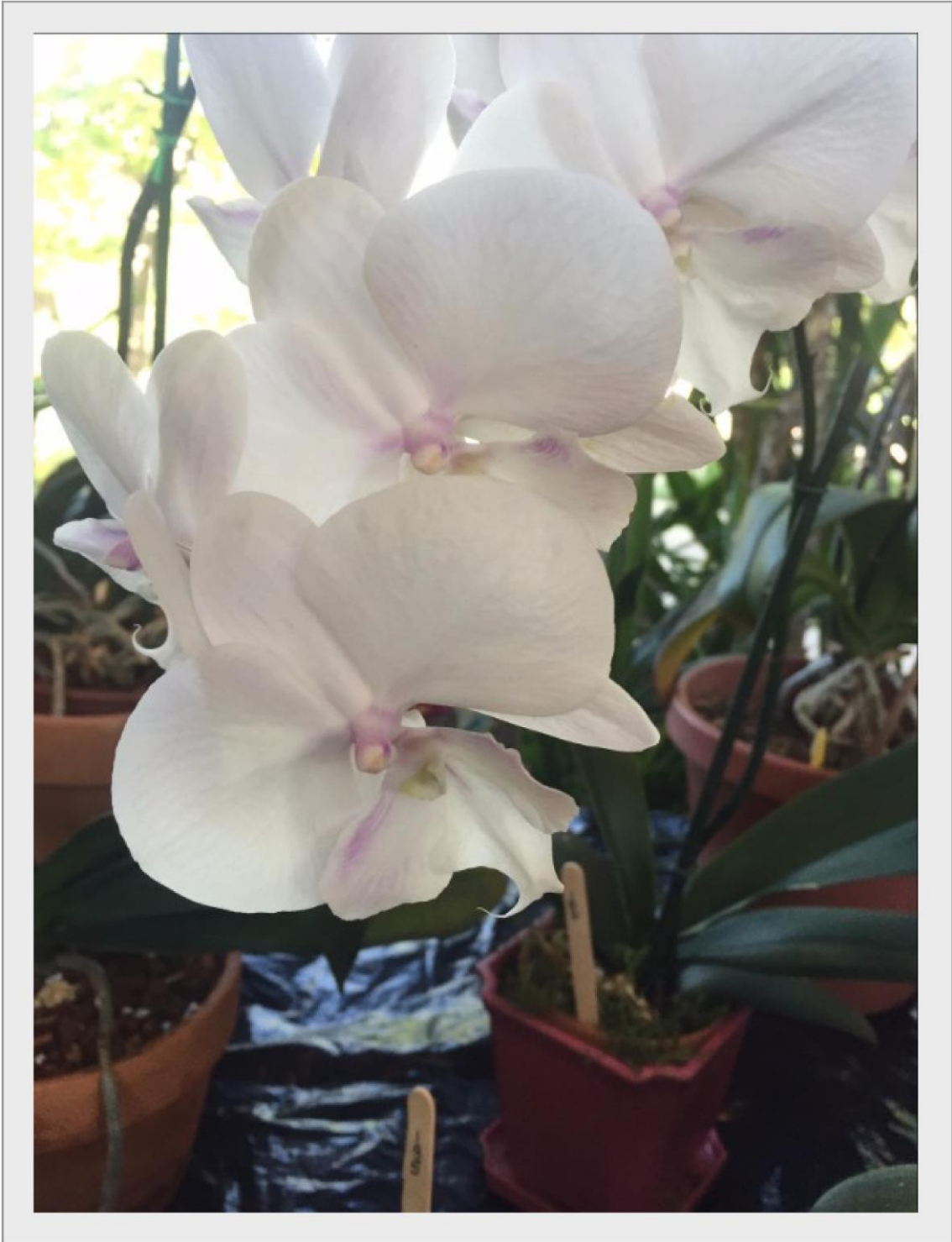
Images of A Fairy Tale Garden Spring Orchid Show

Thank you to Mable Orndorff for contributing images





The Phalaenopsis entries awaiting judging

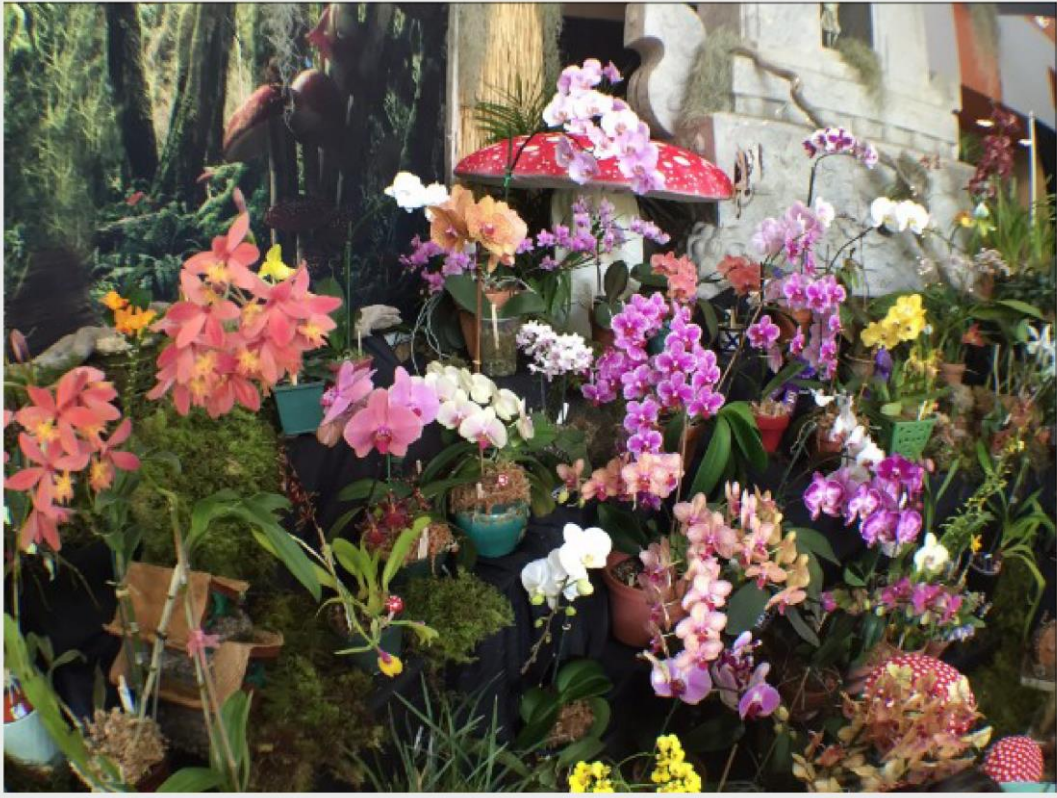




Some very serious judging going on here



Beautiful Marlene bringing her vision to life

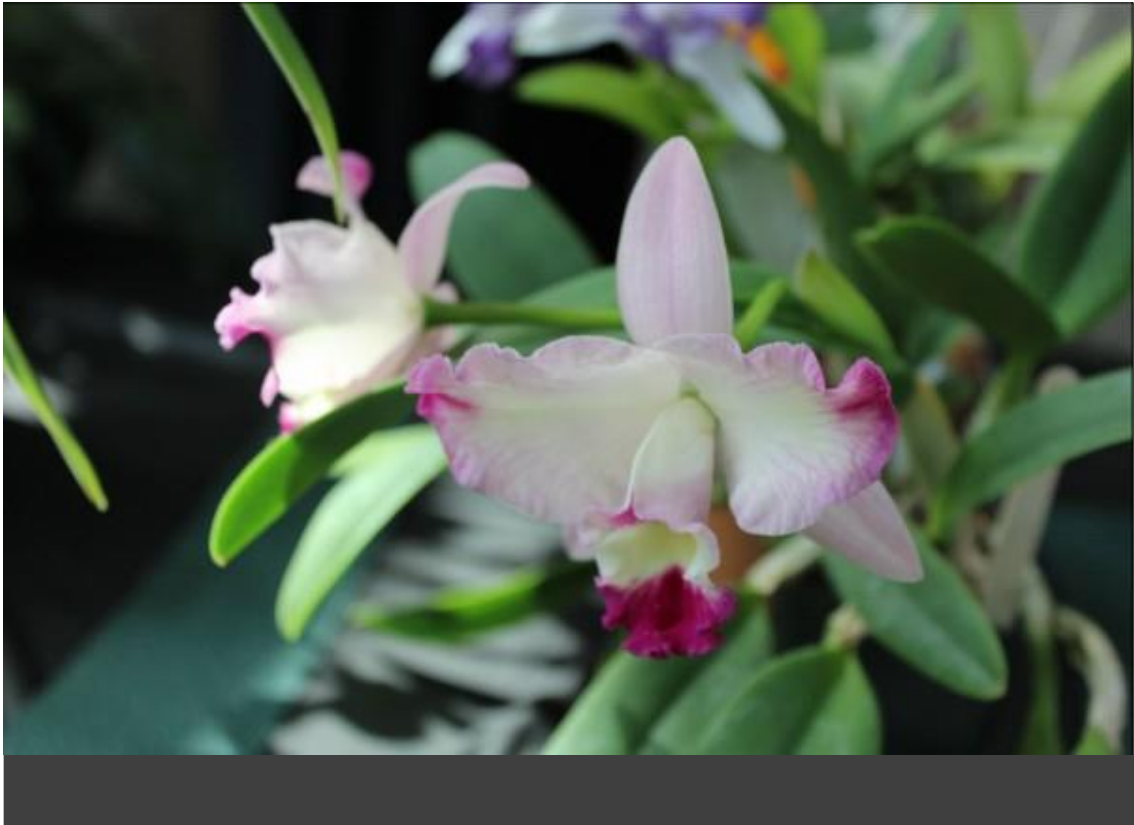


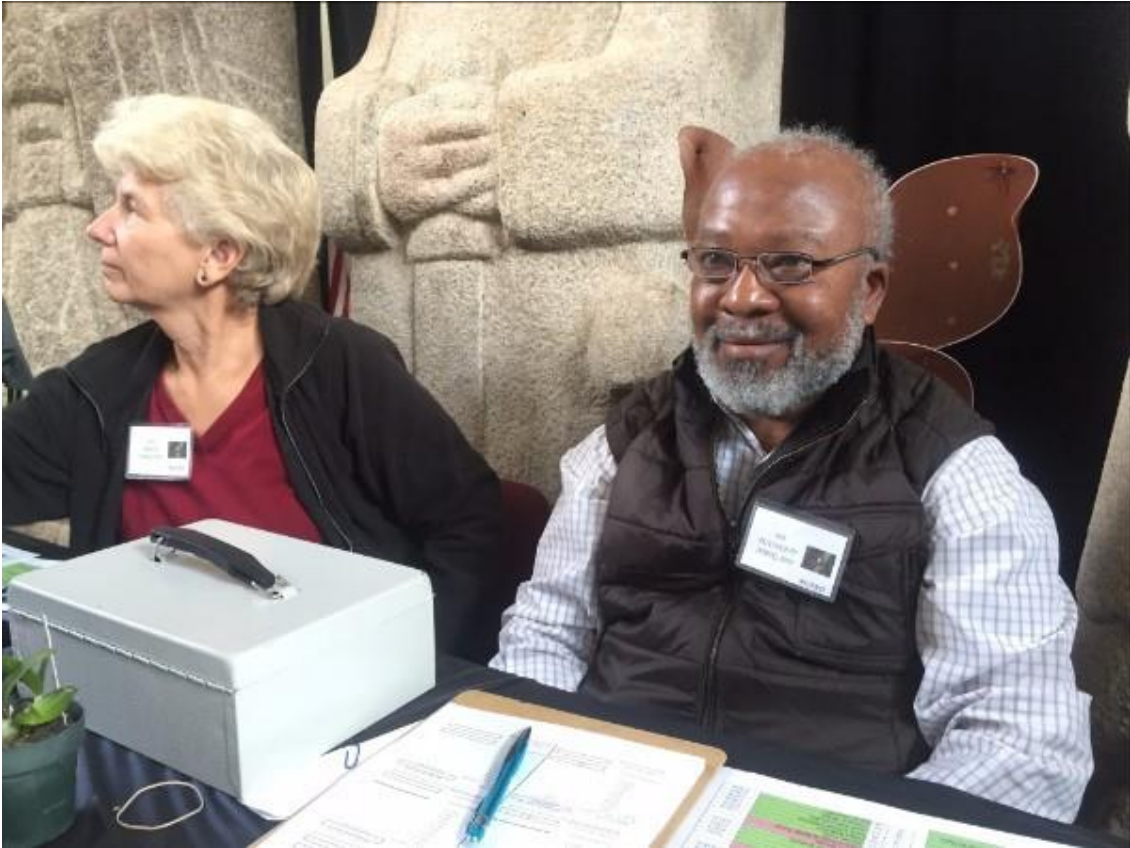


Our tireless President! Keith Mead



The People's Choice winner- NOID Phalaenopss grown by Robert Steinberg





Ed the Financial Fairy





Old Time Farm Crime: The Cutthroat World of Victorian Orchid Hunters

By [Andrew Amelinckx](#) on August 1, 2014

Wilhelm Micholitz was half-starved, his clothing continually damp from the incessant Sumatran rains and he ached from the exertion it took to gather the precious specimens that clung on solitary cliffs and high up on the ancient trees of the deep forest. Add to that the fact that his boss was sometimes slow to send funds and it was no wonder his letters to Frederick Sander, “The Orchid King” back in England were often full of grumbling complaints.

“How long I shall stay up there I cannot tell, I came down here today and I can tell you, only dire necessity has driven me to it, I had nothing to eat, to come down and then to climb again 3,000 feet ... is not like taking a walk on London Road on a Sunday afternoon,” Micholitz grouched to Sanders in a letter sent from Padang in January 1891.

When In 1818 the naturalist William John Swainson sent back the first orchid specimen seen in London, orchid madness was born. Soon rich collectors were sending hunters far and wide into the wild to try and collect new and rare examples, reaching its heights in the Victorian era (mid-1830s to early 1900s). These hunters were a wild bunch who took their work to extremes with many dying in the pursuit.

Besides the treacherous terrain, tropical diseases, angry indigenous populations and vicious animals, they had to worry about their fellow orchid hunters.

Another of Sander's hunters, William Arnold, once pulled a gun on a rival and the two nearly came to a shootout shipboard heading to Venezuela. Arnold was later instructed by his employer to follow the man – who worked for Sander's nemesis, Dr. John Lowe – collect the same type of flowers he did and urinate on the other man's specimens to destroy them.

Even the less irascible hunters followed their rivals and tried in subtle ways to derail their efforts. In July 1876, Friederich Carl Lehmann followed Edward Klaboch around Ecuador in order to collect plants from the same locations and then attempted to poach Klaboch's local assistant.

“Sander, one of the largest employer of these bad boys of horticulture, was an avid orchid aficionado who at the height of his career employed 23 orchid hunters scattered across the world.”

“Lehmann is being a nuisance, he follows me everywhere,” complained Klaboch, yet another of Sander's men, in a letter to his boss. “[Lehmann] went to see [a local man who collects orchids for me] and told him that he would pay one dollar more than we per 100 plants, and he wanted him to collect for him.”

Lehmann got his comeuppance. Klaboch's man refused to help him and ratted out Lehmann to Klaboch. Klaboch promptly confronted Lehmann, who denied the exchange, saying the local man was a liar with the result that no one in the village would give Lehmann the time of day. Klaboch also gloated that he had collected more orchids than Lehmann. Schadenfreude seems to have been a common feeling among these mostly solitary men.

The life of an orchid hunter was far from romantic. Besides the various geographic and meteorological pitfalls, there was the basic problem of getting the plants from where they were found to the base camp. From there they would have to be dried and packed and then carted overland to the coast by hand, horse, elephant or Llama (depending, obviously, on where the orchids were discovered). A long sea journey to England came next. Finally, with a little luck, the plants would have survived the hardships and produce flowers to awe the rich willing to shell out cash, mainly at auctions held to buy and sell the exotic wonders.

“Ten thousand plants may be collected on some remote Andean peak or Papuan jungle with infinite care, and consigned to Europe, the freight alone amounting to thousands of dollars, yet on arrival there may not be a single orchid left alive,” wrote the reporter William George Fitz-Gerald.

Sander, one of the largest employer of these bad boys of horticulture, was an avid orchid aficionado who at the height of his career employed 23 orchid hunters scattered across the world and had a sprawling orchid farm in St. Albans, near London.

There, in 60 greenhouses specially adapted for the specific conditions needed to grow each orchid variety. The company handled between one and two million plants there in the 1880s and 90s. Sander also had space for testing and cultivating hybrids. As the business continued to grow, Sander built a orchid nursery in New Jersey and another in Belgium, which had 50 glasshouses for orchids.

Orchids were big business, with truly exotic plants fetching thousands of dollars each and trading from collector to collector pushing prices ever higher.

Sander told of one such exchange. He and a Liverpool lawyer were walking through one of the greenhouses when a particular orchid plant that hadn't yet flowered caught the attorney's eye. He purchased the plant from Sander for \$12. Five years later he sold it back to Sander for \$1,000, or the equivalent of \$24,390 in today's dollars.

Sander was born in Hanover, Germany in 1847 and at age 20 began working for a London seed company. He soon fell in with the intrepid Czech plant collector and adventurer Benedikt Roezl and went into business. Roezl was a one-handed dynamo who traveled, mainly on foot, across the Americas collecting orchids and other plants. On one trip alone, traveling from Panama to Venezuela, he sent back eight tons of orchids to London.

Roezl turned to orchid hunting after a farm machine he invented to extract plant fiber took his hand during a demonstration in Mexico where he was living. He began hunting orchids after the accident, as he found farming difficult due to his impairment. Fitted with an iron hook, his prosthesis was apparently popular with local Indians, who would bring him plants. His obsession ran in the family. Klabocho, the hunter who was followed hither and thither by a rival in Ecuador, was Roezl's nephew.

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These orchid hunters desire for discovering and collecting, and the insatiable demand for the flowers in Europe and America, was devastating to the native orchid populations as well as the trees on which the epiphytic flowers grew. There are still areas in Central and South America in which the plants never recovered. Today, many countries have laws in place to stop the wholesale stripping of orchids and other plants from their native habitats.

The hunters themselves became a dying breed, literally. Sander, during an interview in 1906, tossed off more than half-a-dozen names of his hunters who had been killed tracking down his flowering treasures. Arnold was killed while on a collecting expedition along the Orinoco River and Klabocho died in Mexico. Micholitz, while surviving the life of an orchid hunter, died in near poverty in Germany.

"All these [men] have met more or less tragic deaths through wild beasts, savages, fever, drowning, fall or other accidents," Sander told Fitz-Gerald.

Leon Humboldt, a French orchid hunter, remarked that after a dinner with six other hunters in Madagascar, four were dead within four years. Two years later, Humboldt was the only survivor.

Orchid mania eventually went the way of these hunters, mainly thanks to the discovery of how to grow the plants from seed, a problem that was on its way to being perfected by the 1920s. These exotic blooms have now become a standard flower shop product and the intrepid hunters who once risked their lives to find them and the inflated prices the wealthy Victorians were willing to pay for the blooms have been resigned to history.

Classifieds

Email Kelly@dunnassoc.net to list orchids for sale or trade, orchid related items, or "In Search Of" posts

For Sale: Two 4-shelf light carts and one table top light cart plus several bulbs for the carts.

Contact Diane Tuska e-mail (MBTDST@comcast.net) or phone number ([505-992-2990](tel:505-992-2990))



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Tour**

Panama
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For More Info Visit:
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