



New Mexico Orchid Guild Newsletter November 2017

Our next regular meeting will be:

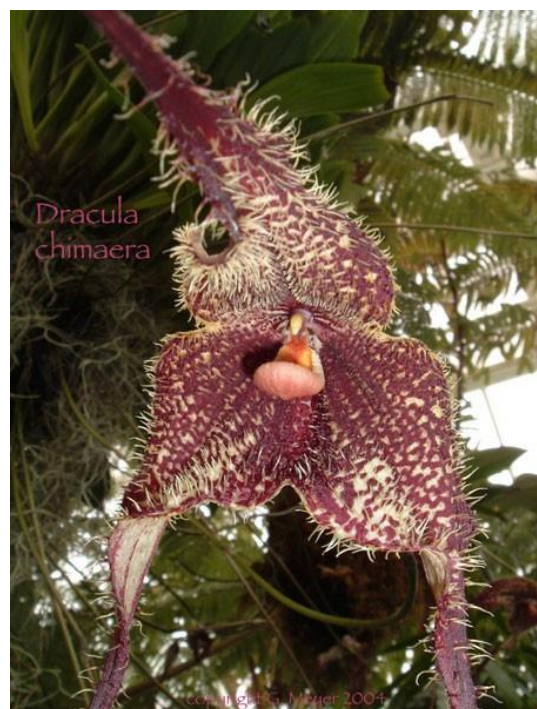
November 12th at 1:30pm

Growers forum begins at 1:00pm

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.
Healthy snacks are appreciated!

Members are encouraged to wear their
membership badges



Main Program: Gary Meyer of the Pleurothallid Alliance will present “Dracuphilia: A Gothic Romance.”

Growers Forum: Importance of Orchid Roots presented by Sean Houtman
Growers Forums begin at 1:00

Photo Courtesy of Gary Meyer, Ph.D.

From the President's Desk:

November 2017

A big THANK YOU to Jane Cole for editing and presenting our October program on orchid pests. I think we all learned something about the “creepy crawlies” attacking our precious plants.

On **November 12th** we welcome **Gary Meyer** from San Francisco. Gary is the president of the Pleurothallid Alliance. Gary’s topic will be “**Dracuphilia: A Gothic Romance.**” The talk focuses on draculas where they grow, their biology and some travelogue of his work in researching these orchids. He will touch on the human impact on orchid habitat and orchid knowledge.

As always we will have some nice plants on the sale and raffle tables.

December 10th is our annual Holiday Party at Season’s Restaurant in Old Town. The good news is this year you do not need to pre-select your entree! You can download the reservation form [HERE](#) or we will have copies available at the November 12th meeting.

Looking ahead to next year (can you believe it, 2018!) our January 14th meeting will be the ever popular orchid plant exchange and the Board will present a “state of the guild” report.

See you on November 12

Keith

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

Show and Tell Winners

October

Photos by Barb Beil



Advanced 1st Place
Fdk. Midnight Lace 'SVO' x Ctsm Frilly Doris 'SVO'
Pam McKenzie



Advanced 2nd Place
Pot. Creation 'Summer Choice'
Sean Houtman



Advanced 3rd Place
Dendrobium Enobi Purple 'Splash'
Daniel Perry



Intermediate 1st Place
Cattleya labiata var. *coerulea*
Dorothy Duff



Intermediate 2nd Place
Dendrobium Burana Green x Trudy Brundt
Ana Benscoter



Novice 1st place
Bulbophyllum levanae
Matthew Polmanter

The *Callista* and *Dendrobium* section *Dendrobium*: An Experiment

by Kelly McCracken

Around the end of October, many kinds of orchids start slowing down their growth or even stop growing entirely. The explosive growth of the warm summer months matures and many plants immediately enter a blooming cycle, while other types require a bit of coaxing in order to bloom. October is generally the month that many growers begin to reduce water to plants that require a winter dormancy. In this article, I will address two such types. Specifically, two sections of *Dendrobium*: *Callista* and *Dendrobium*. In addition to talking about the typical cultural recommendation for blooming these plants, I will include an unusual cultural method that I have had moderate success with. Read on to learn how to bloom these unique and tricky orchids without using any extravagant effort.

Callista section *Dendrobium*s are a group of about ten species native to India, Myanmar, Thailand, Indochina, and Malaysia. They are known for their many grape-like clusters of cascading, colorful, fragrant blossoms that emerge from between the leaves. The canes are bulbous, and carry three to five leaves near the apex. The sheer number of flowers produced make up for the fact that the flowers usually last less than two weeks.



The amazing *Dendrobium thysiflorum* grown by Judith Richey. *Den. thysiflorum* is a member of the *Callista* section

Dendrobium section *Dendrobiums* are the other type of *Dendrobium* that requires a cooler-drier dormancy. They are deciduous and the flowers emerge from numerous nodes along the canes, in bunches of three to five. *Dendrobium nobile* is a *Dendrobium* section *Dendrobium*.



Dendrobium Super Ise, Exhibitor Sean Houtman. Den. Super Ise is a member of the *Dendrobium* section

Culture of these sections is tricky, especially for the windowsill grower. Their native habitats have a drastic difference in seasons, with a very wet monsoonal summer and a dry, cooler winter. As a result, plants cease new growth during the coldest months, canes harden, and those deciduous *Dendrobiums* lose their leaves. (*Callista Dendrobiums* will keep their leaves) Throughout the winter, they require a dry, cool rest period for a number of months to mimic their native habitat in order to bloom. The usual recommendation is to keep plants fairly dry beginning around Oct/Nov through March). Plants should only be watered to prevent profound shriveling of the canes.

Another problematic cultural sensitivity is that *Dendrobium* sections can require a good bit of cold in order to bloom (though some more than others). They prefer to be kept at a nighttime winter temperature of around 40-50 degrees throughout their winter rest and some can take as low as the high 30's; temperatures much too cold for the household grower. The plants want these temperatures all while maintaining bright light, dry conditions, and moderate humidity. When the plants come out of their winter dormancy in spring, they reward faithful growers with cascades of fragrant and delicate blooms. Household windowsills, lacking both monsoonal rains and cold winters, do not provide ideal conditions for these types of orchids to bloom.

Does all this sound daunting and you're about to scroll on and forget about *Dendrobiums* forever? Don't just yet! I assure you a windowsill grower can absolutely bloom these fabulous plants! Read on for my unique culture method.

As a thoroughly stubborn individual, I tend to buy plants I like rather than ones I know I can grow, leading to a fairly numerous collection of *Callista Dendrobium* species. As a windowsill grower, I became determined to find a way to bloom these beauties in my conditions. I first fell in love with *Dendrobium farmeri*. I purchased a plant from Andy's orchids in 2014 as an orchid newbie. I stuck it in

my windowsill and did nothing special to it during winter. When spring came around, surprise, surprise, it didn't bloom. Next year, I kept the plant in my unheated garage from November until March. I would take the plant out of the garage to a windowsill during the day. Unfortunately, I often forgot to put the plant in the garage at night and often forgot to put it back in the light during the day.

Consequently, the plant got neither enough light, nor enough cold, nor enough humidity, not to mention the daily schlep back and forth was an absolute pain. Come spring, surprise, surprise, no blooms.

This last winter I tried something new; I kept the plant warm and watered all through the winter!

I know what you're thinking! "What about the dry, cold rest, Kelly?" Here's where it gets exciting. They still got their rest, but a few months later. I found that if I kept my plants warm and kept watering through October, November, etc. then they kept producing new canes. So, I kept watering until mid-February of 2017, I then reduced the water and when the evening lows were (for the most part) in the mid 40's, I put the plants outside in my unheated outdoor greenhouse. The greenhouse wasn't anything fancy, just a shelf with a plastic cover over it. They got about 2 1/2 months of a cool, dry "winter" rest, they had enough light, and they had high enough humidity from the greenhouse. And wouldn't you know it, THEY BLOOMED!

They didn't bloom so spectacularly as some specimens I have seen photos of, but it was a lot better than no blooms. I believe light to be the next limiting factor in producing a great bloom and I have increased the amount of light my plants receive.



Dendrobium aggregatum grown by Daniel Perry

I have certainly heard of people blooming these without the cold, but never without giving them a dry period of at least two months. NMOG Member Daniel Perry's *Dendrobium aggregatum* (pictured above) bloomed in his heated greenhouse with only a dry period. Judith Richey's *Dendrobium thrysiflorum* bloomed under similar conditions in her heated orchid room. As with any orchid, there are many different cultural methods that may or may not work for individual growers. You might have success while another does not. Remember, less water and cool nighttime temps for at least two months, plus bright light is the recipe for success. If you've had luck with one of these, let us know! Give a winter dormant *Dendrobium* a try, they're not impossible.

Have an interesting cultural note? Bloomed anything unusual lately? Have something to share? NMOG is always looking for interesting articles to publish in our monthly newsletter. Email Kelly@dunn-nm.com with your entries

Classifieds

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



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