



January 2011

Special points of interest:

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President's Message

Dear COS members,

I want to wish you a very Happy, Healthy and Great New Year 2011.

We at COS have experienced tremendous growth in the last few years and for that we are most proud. I am happy that I will be your President this year.

At this time I invite you to participate more in all of our Society's activities – and to volunteer for and participate in the programs that our Board and tireless workers organize for you. We have grown because of our members' enthusiasm and willingness to make COS

grow. Come to all meetings, volunteer to work at shows and programs, participate in all raffles, brings refreshments for our meetings, and most important welcome our new members.

Let's show everyone why we have been called "the friendliest society around".

Let's have a good start for the year. The best start is to not miss our initial meeting. Alan Kosch from [Gold Country Orchid in California](#) will be presenting "Understanding the Brazilian Cattleya Alliance". Get a clear picture of the diversity of this species, and how to

coax them into growing. His talk will cover where the many varieties are found in the wild, and how to use this information to grow them well here.

I will see you at the meeting. In the meantime: Keep Growing Your Beautiful Orchids!

Your President,

Mirta



This Month's Speaker - Alan Koch of Gold Country Orchids

Alan Koch owns and operates Gold Country Orchids where he specializes in miniature and compact Cattleya's.

Alan started growing orchids in 1969 with 3 Cymbidiums given to him by an aunt. While in college he became interested in other orchids and discovered many would grow outdoors in Southern California.

He has moved five times as his orchid obsession has led to the need for more growing space. With the last move, he purchased 10 acres of

land in Lincoln, California for his 300,000 orchids.

He is recognized as an expert in the Brazilian Cattleya alliance and a trend setter in miniature Cattleya breeding. Alan has been published in the Orchid Digest, and the American Orchid Society magazines. He has also been published in the proceedings of the World Orchid Conference.

An internationally known speaker, he is a past member of the AOS Judging Committee, and the Research Committee, as well as an Accredited Judge and

is Vice-chair and Training Coordinator for the California Sierra Nevada Judging Center.

Alan also served two terms on the Orchid Digest Executive Committee and Board of Directors, and is one of the current directors, as well as a Trustee for the AOS.



Other Notes

Expressions of sympathy:

Jean Wilson, our COS Photographer, on the loss of her mother on December 14th

Ketty Bergouignan, a member of our Board of Directors, on the loss of her father who died on December 25.

REFRESHMENTS

Remember to bring refreshments for our January meeting – and pick up your ticket for Special Raffle at the Hospitality table.



COS POLO SHIRTS

COS Polo shirts will be on hand for sell at our meeting. The polos are \$20 each, and you may select your favorite color. See Mirta to order yours.

BERT PRESSMAN

SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

We will be awarding the Bert Pressman Scholarship this year. There will be full information in the February Newsletter. Our COS member, Dr. Rene Izquierdo has volunteered to advertise the scholarship in colleges and to help select the winner.

The proceeds of the raffle that we will have at the

Bits and Pieces

We are beginning this year with two shows in January, the Fort Lauderdale Show and the Tamiami Show. Please see both advertisements in this Newsletter for details.

For the Tamiami Show we will be setting up a display so we are going to need plants from among your orchid species that are in bloom. Even one plant will help us. We also will have a table to inform the public about COS and from which to recruit. A raffle will be part of our activities. We will raffle an orchid collection benefiting our Bert Pressman

Scholarship fund. On top of all this, we are going to feature our Orchid Hotel. So you can see how many opportunities you have to sign up to play a part in this show.

We need volunteers to set up the display on Friday, January 28 and to take it down on Sunday, January 30, the show's end.

During the Tamiami show we will need helpers to sell raffle tickets and recruit new members. Last year Bill Capp did a great job operating the Orchid Hotel, but he needs volunteers for Saturday and Sunday. This task is easy

.... and fun to boot.

All volunteers will gain free admission, but your name has to be published in a special list at the door. See Mirta to sign up.

Hot to learn? Take advantage of Jim Davison's Newcomers' Class that we hold at 6:30 before each COS meeting. Learn from his many years of experience and meet other friends who are orchid lovers just like you.

Keep protecting your orchids from "Siberian" weather.

See you at our Meeting!

Chuck McCartney - Notes on Orchid Names - *Laelia rubescens*

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Laelia rubescens generally flowers from autumn into winter, and even into June according to one source. Because plants in Guatemala bloom near Christmas, the plant is known there as *Flor de Jesus*, or Flower of Jesus.

Typical of Mexican laelias, the flowers of *Laelia rubescens* are clustered at the end of a thin stem up to three feet long. The flowers, with as many as 12 or more per inflorescence, can be up to two and a half inches across. However, despite their beauty, the flowers are not long-lasting.



Although Lindley called *Laelia rubescens* flowers "wholly scentless," another, more contemporary, source calls them "very fragrant," and still another describes them as "slightly fragrant to odorless." Again, the wide distribution of the species could account for this variability – as could the olfactory sensibilities of the describers.

The plants also vary, with the flattened pseudobulbs ranging from oval to slightly pear-shaped. Each is topped by a single leathery green leaf.

Although native to Mexico and Central America, *Laelia rubescens* appears as though it might be naturalizing in Florida. A specimen was seen in bloom high in an oak tree in the vicinity of Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden south of Miami. Also, photographs of what appear to be sun-shriveled plants of this species growing in the wild in the Florida Keys have circulated in e-mails among some South Florida botanists and orchidists.-- CHUCK McCARTNEY

Tamiami Show will go to the benefit of the Bert Pressman Scholarship fund.

Chuck McCartney - Notes on Orchid Names - *Laelia rubescens*

Laelia rubescens is the little brother to Mexican its bigger, showier siblings like *Laelia anceps*, *Laelia autumnalis* and *Laelia speciosa*. However, those species generally come from higher altitudes. *Laelia rubescens*, on the other hand, occurs naturally over a wide geographic area from Mexico to Panama, where it often grows near sea level, although one source says plants may be found at elevations as high as 5,400 feet. The plentiful plants from the lower elevations, therefore, are adaptable to warm lowland areas like South Florida, making this species easy to grow in such places



The genus *Laelia* has been the source of much confusion over the years, even more so in recent times in light of DNA-based genetic studies. Traditionally, two groups of widely separated, rather anatomically different species have been lumped together in the genus, primarily because they shared the characteristic of having eight pollinia (pollen masses) under the anther cap at the tip of the reproductive column in the center of the flower. But to determine generic limits based solely on that single feature is what the great contemporary orchid scientist Dr. Robert L. Dressler derides as “one-character taxonomy.”

The two groups in the traditional genus *Laelia* are the Mexican species and the South American species centered in Brazil. But DNA studies have shown that the latter group is actually closer to *Cattleya*, so, after briefly being placed in the genus *Sophranitis*, the so-called “Brazilian laelias” have now been lumped into an expanded genus *Cattleya* (along with the traditional small-flowered red *Sophranitis* species). Thus, species such as the large *Laelia purpurata* in section *Cattleyodes*, smaller *Laelia pumila* in section *Hadrolaelia* and rupicolous (rock-dwelling) species like *Laelia cinnabarina* are now considered cattleyas.



Because of the taxonomic rule of priority, where the earliest validly published name is the correct name for a species or genus, the name *Laelia* belongs to the Mexican-centered group of species, including *Laelia rubescens*. But to confuse things just a bit, the DNA research shows that the so-called “true schomburgkias” (that is, those with solid, narrow-based stipitate pseudobulbs) also belong to the genus *Laelia*, thus extending the range of the genus into northwestern South America – and basically voiding the genus *Schomburgkia*. (The species with hollow pseudobulbs, like the popular *Schomburgkia tibicinis*, had earlier been segregated into the genus *Myrmecophila*.)

The genus *Laelia* was created by the great English orchid taxonomist Dr. John Lindley in 1831 in his *Genera and Species of Orchidaceous Plants*, based on *Laelia grandiflora*, which is now considered a synonym of *Laelia speciosa*. Lindley’s genus name most probably derives from the name of one of the six Vestal Virgins of ancient Roman religion.

Laelia rubescens was described by Lindley in the *Botanical Register* in 1840. He called it the “Blushing Laelia.” (Lindley was conscientious in thus translating the meaning of the Latinized epithets for species he described.) The species name comes from the Latin word meaning “reddish,” and, by extension, “blushing,” probably referring to the pinkish color of the first flowers of this orchid Lindley saw. That is the typical color for *Laelia rubescens* flowers, but there are also white color forms. Almost all color forms, however, have a maroon blotch in the throat of the lip. A rare yellow color form now has been segregated as a separate species, *Laelia aurea*. Because of variability in the color and shape of the flower parts, Lindley also described the species *Laelia acuminata* and *Laelia peduncularis*, but these are now considered synonyms of *Laelia rubescens*. This variability is easy to understand, considering the wide geographic distribution of the species.

Lindley’s original publication of *Laelia rubescens* states: “This pretty species of *Laelia* the smallest flowers of any yet discovered, and they are wholly scentless. It was bought at the nursery of Mr. Joseph Knight, in the King’s Road, by Mr. [George] Barker of Birmingham [England], whom I am indebted for a specimen. No wild specimen has yet been seen, and I am unacquainted with the source from which Mr. Knight obtained it.”



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Lindley later determined that the plant was from Mexico. George Barker is the same Victorian gentleman orchidist honored by the genus *Barkeria* and the species *Notylia barkeri*.

Cont. on pg 2

SILENT AUCTION!

Each month, in addition to the raffle, COS has a silent auction of plants that COS members have brought in to share. This is a great way to acquire new plants and benefit COS at the same time. So clear off your orchid benches and bring in your offshoots, keikis, and divisions!

Cynthia White runs the silent auction at each meeting, and will kindly provide you with everything you need to auction your plants!



Other Notes (Cont.)

postage charges when you purchase your calendar from COS. They are only \$12 a piece.

THANKS MELANIE!!

The COS Board of Directors would like to thank Melanie Trexler for her continuing effort over the past two years in putting together an outstanding Newsletter for our organization. This has been a Newsletter of which make all COS members can be proud.



On top of this, Melanie helped us find the right person to get our beautiful webpage created and posted, all the while serving as Webmaster. WOW!

It gets even better: Melanie also worked for over three years as our Librarian. She has not only organized our books but has served our members' needs for study and research.

She is stepping down from these accomplishments due to family priorities, yet has agreed to carry on as our Webmaster.

For all her work for COS we are most grateful.

Again thanks Melanie!

We want to thank Javier for stepping in to get this month's Newsletter together and out to all of you.

Thanks, Javier. We all love you!

MIRTA

The Fort Lauderdale Orchid Society presents
A HEAVENLY ECLIPSE

Orchids

Day and Night

January 14-15-16 2011
 10 AM to 8 PM Friday
 10 AM to 8 PM Saturday
 10 AM to 6 PM Sunday

Admission \$10.00
 War Memorial Auditorium
 800 NE 8th Street - Fort Lauderdale
www.flos.org

Tamiami International Orchid Festival

S. Florida's Winter Orchid Extravaganza
 Beautifully Staged Orchid Exhibits
 Incredible Variety of Plants for Sale
 Numerous Offshore Growers

2011
 Saturday 29th January 10 am - 8 pm
 Sunday 30th January 10 am - 6 pm

50 National and International Orchid Vendors | Orchid Arts, Crafts, Supplies | Classes and Lectures by International Experts | Fully Air Conditioned with Ample Convenience Free Parking | For further information Call (305) 247-4398 or E-mail info@miamiorchidfestival.com Web site miamiorchidfestival.com
 Handicapped Accessible **ADMISSION ONLY \$7.00** | Dade County Fair and Expo Center - 10901 Coral Way (SW.24th St.).

**DON'T MISS THESE
 UPCOMING SHOWS AND
 EVENTS AROUND OUR
 AREA! SEE YOU AT THE
 MEETING!**

BOCA RATON ORCHID SOCIETY

Orchid Show & Sale

February 12-13, 2011
 10 am - 5 pm

...Featuring...
 ORCHID DISPLAYS & SALES
 FREE EDUCATIONAL LECTURES
 REPOTTING SERVICE
 AOS JUDGING

Valentine's Day Weekend

Also featuring - Tropical Landscape Plant Vendors

Admission \$5.00

For Additional Information Contact Jackie Wood
 561-703-0278 - bocasorchidsociety@aol.com

Safe Schools Institute • 1790 Spanish River Blvd. Corner of Military Trail and Spanish River Blvd.

**Coalition of Orchid
Species**

Fairchild Tropical Botanic Gardens
10901 Old Cutler Rd
Coral Gables, FL

WWW.COSSPECIES.COM

AOS JUDGING

**The Florida –Caribbean Regional Judging
Center of the American Orchid Society**

invites you to bring your orchids in flower to be judged by our teams of experienced American Orchid Society judges, or just come to learn more about orchids and the process of judging orchids. We meet the **THIRD Saturday of each month** at the beautiful Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden, Corbin Bldg., 10901 Old Cutler Rd., Coral Gables, FL. Judging begins promptly at 1:00pm.