



Solihull & District Orchid Society

BOC Photograph Competition

At the December meeting we will all have the opportunity to vote for our favourite photographs entered by our members.

We have a tremendous record to maintain with both Ken Johnson and Stan Taylor achieving high honours in the past.

To date I only have 5 entries so please look at the photographs you have taken and select the ones you like the most (Maximum of 5) and send them to me LaeliaM@aol.com no later than the 30th November.

Don't worry about their size; just send them to me as jpeg's and I will resize them for presentation at the meeting.

With lots of entries we will have a most interesting meeting choosing our favourites and hopefully, once again, our choices will result in further honours for a Solihull member.



Christmas show

At our December meeting we will have the Christmas Show (the schedule and entry form is attached to the Newsletter) along with the opportunity to decide on our entries into the BOC Photographic Competition

And if that is not enough we will all enjoy the Christmas Buffet so please, everybody, bring along your cakes, savouries and nibbles so that we can all share the food and enjoy each others company.

In addition, we will be drawing the raffle for the Christmas Hamper and our normal Raffle so this will be a wonderful afternoon.

The room will be open to accept your plant entries from 1.00 until 1.45 when judging will commence.

If you can please email me your entries LaeliaM@aol.com or phone (01295 788159) during the week before but if not please bring along your entries on the day.

We will be very pleased if everybody manages to bring along something.



Library

As announced at the last meeting we intend to dispose of our Library. The first opportunity to purchase some of the books and periodicals will be at the Christmas Meeting.

So if you are looking for an additional Christmas present or for that reference book you always wanted it may be at the meeting on the 3rd December.

Those that are not sold will be publicised in the next Newsletter and then sold at our Spring Show in April.

Subs due at next meeting

Please pay at the next meeting, or send direct to our treasurer, Heike Lilley. Membership is still £10 single, £12 couple; if you receive your newsletter by post please add £5 towards the cost of postage and printing.

On payment you will receive your new membership card with the programme for the year, and also receive your copy of the 2017 BOC Year Book."



You can follow Solihull & District Orchid Society on Facebook and Twitter



**Chairman: Malcolm Moodie
01295 788159**

If you have any pictures or information you would like to put on our website please email: caroline.reid1@blueyonder.co.uk or copy and pictures for newsletter: ballm1@mac.com

November table

Pictures: Ken Johnson



Cirrhopetalum Elizabeth Ann Buckelberry - Lina Smalinske - 31pts



Phal. Sweet Memory - Judy Ralph -31pts



Epidendrum pepperomia - Malcolm Moodie - 32pts



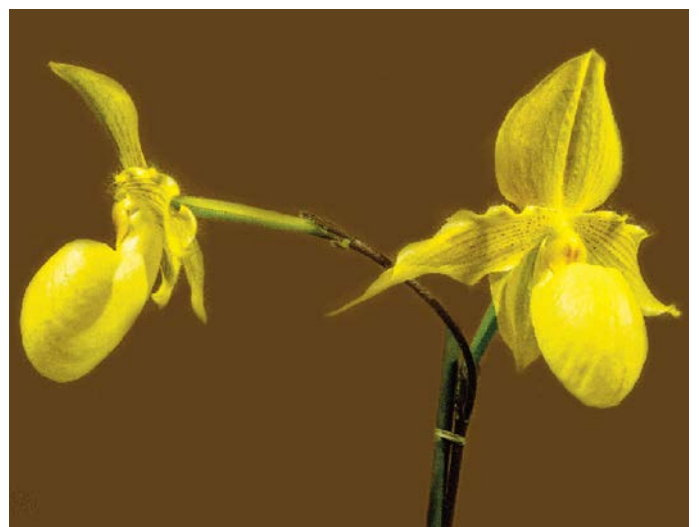
Masdevallia Confetti White - Malcolm Moodie - 32pts



Paph. hybrid - Heike Lilley - 28pts



Cattleya bowringiana - Malcolm Moodie - 31pts



Paph. Hatsue Oksuka HCC AOS - Malcolm Moodie - 29pts

Central Autumn Show

On Saturday 26th November Central Orchid Society hold their Autumn Show at Perton Civic Centre, Church Road, Perton WV6 7PD from 11.00 till 4.00. It should be a great event and look forward to seeing you there.

Masdevallias - Mike Buckingham

Mike started his talk by stating that he is just like every other orchid hobbyist - "It's just an obsession, a hobby" he says. Encouraged by his wife the second orchid he bought was a Masdevallia. After 13 years he now has a large collection and is claimed to be an expert in growing Masdevallias. By saying expert Mike points out that it's the one who made all the mistakes who is now the expert. Therefore, he will share how he grows but there are many other ways to successfully grow these plants.

Masdevallias have characteristic flowers which last from 6 days to many weeks. They are sympodial, meaning that the new growth starts with a leaf at the base of the plant with no pseudobulb, making them different to many other orchids. This kind of growth tells a lot about the conditions these plants require to thrive in their natural habitat. There are no nutrient reserves; therefore these plants should never dry out completely. They have a very wide range of pollinators from wasps to humming birds. Recently, Masdevallias have been divided into 20 different plant groups according to DNA research, but orchid growers have not been keen to adopt these new classifications.

Masdevallias grow from Southern Mexico to South Brazil at altitudes of up to 4000m in cloud forests with most of them being in the Andean mountain range in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.

They can grow on trees with exposure to full sun as well as being semi terrestrial. Most Masdevallias brought to Europe are from cool to cold growing conditions with only a few from the intermediate regions. Therefore, a serious consideration about suitable growing conditions needs to be made prior to purchasing each Masdevallia.

Here are some of Mike's favourite species within this genus:

Masd. antonii, (Discovered in 1999) has a reputation to being difficult in cultivation. Masd. caudata (1831) – regarded as the favourite by all growers, it will melt the heart of any Masdevallia hater. Masd. chaperensis (1978) found in isolated populations. Masd. coccinea (1842) very popular and commonly seen in various colours. Masd. datura (1981) requires huge night day temp variations. Masd. veitchiana 1867 has very large flowers. Masd. uniflora (1794) first species to be found in a wild, flowers in large drifts like bluebells, locals believe it to be a symbol to give babies speech by putting flowers in their mouth.

There is a different group with sequential flowering stems that are triangular shape:

Masd. pinocchio (1976) when moving a flower the lip goes up and down. Masd. tovarensis (1849) is a lovely white species.

Hybrids

It's well worth thinking of making your own hybrids as it only takes around 3 years to get plants to flowering stage and with no other means of reproducing Masdevallias other than seed pods it can be a long time to wait to build up a good collection.

Primary hybrids (2 species - 70% mixture to 30% either of parents)

Masd. Bella Donna (coccinea x datura) Masd. Confetti (strobilii x glandulosa) Masd. Falcata (veitchiana x coccinea) Masd. Gilberts Triangle (coccinea x gilbertoi)

In plants where species are crossed with hybrids it is the species characteristics that dominate.

Mike's own hybrids

Masd. Maeldune Star (Copper Wing x exquisita) Masd. Maeldune Eruption (Falcoe x exquisita)

Complex hybrids (hybrids crossed with hybrids) Masd. Maeldune Candy (Mary Staal x Delma Candy) Masd. Maeldune Bo (Falcons Gold x Tuakau Candy)

One can get unlimited number of variations in colours from same pod.

Growing in UK

Environment: most are cold to cool and need a minimum of 5C to a maximum of 28C day and night temperature difference. Mike uses different coloured labels to identify his Masdevallia growing conditions.

In summer he uses 60-70% shading, vents open most of the year, damping down the floor in the morning, and a fan at night to pull cold air in during the summer. Some people grow Masdevallias outside in the summer quite successfully.

Humidity: natural environment is cloud forest so in UK the problem is maintaining humidity in the summer. Damping floor, pond misters, damp pebble trays or investing in the fogger system all work well.

Light: common perception - damp and dark, but it's not true. Naturally these plants receive 11-13 hours of light every day of the year; the UV rays are also stronger because of the mountain area and being closer to equator. A lot of the cool growing types need most light as naturally they grow high on mountains with little to no shade whatsoever. Mike's tip for understanding if a plant is receiving enough light is to look at the leaves: if they are dark green the plant isn't receiving enough light and will grow lots of leaves, but won't flower. Increasing light for a few more hours a day will induce Masdevallias to flower.

Maintaining light levels (at least 9hrs a day) and keeping them cool at the same time is the biggest challenge for anyone growing Masdevallias in UK.

Air movement: keeping fans and mesh on the open vents at all times is of the most importance. Mike suggests also to never point fans onto the leaves as it does drain the moisture out of the leaves ending up leaving plants unhealthy. It is better to point fans towards the roof to bring the warm air down, this way you will also reduce condensation in the mornings.

Growth medium: Sphagnum moss is Mike's preferred medium with the only down side being yearly repotting is needed. Bark, charcoal, perlite, foam, coconut husk - doesn't work well in a long run for him. When mounted on bark the biggest challenge is maintaining the moisture on a regular basis.

Mike's Tip: On the back of label state the condition of roots, that way you will keep track of your growing conditions from one repotting to another.

Water: Rain water recommended every time or alternatively RO water. He says for Masdevallias tap water would be his last resort. He also recommends only very light feeding or none at all if growing in sphagnum moss.

In summary: Open compost with lots air pockets. Low levels of feed. Summer temperatures should be kept as low as possible. Try to achieve at least 9hrs of light a day.

If you have brown leaf tips the plant is losing too much moisture.

Sudden leaf drop - always down to not enough live roots (there will always be an amount of dead roots same as leaves)

Keeping your growing area tidy and clean it will help to keep pests away, quarantine newly bought plants for 2-3 weeks at all times.

If you are giving all these key requirements you are half way to successfully growing Masdevallias.

By Lina Smalinske

Birmingham show ...



... and Norwich



Stan Taylor's Dendrobium and Monica Johnsons Cattleya, both rosette winners at the Norwich show displayed on the Hinckley Orchid Society stand