



## BCOS Meeting and Program

March 19, 2015

Churchville Nature Center

501 Churchville Lane

Churchville, PA 18966

Show Table Setup-7:00 p.m.

Meeting 7:30 p.m.

### Program: 12 Orchids Everyone Should Grow!

**Presented by Greg Griffis** orchid grower at Longwood Gardens .

A Dozen Orchids Everyone Should Grow is a talk that explores some of the best clones and plant types available in the market today and why everyone should or can grow them, as well as some culture tips about those plants. From the novice to the more advanced grower, there are plants that will provide the right level of challenge and reward. We'll also discuss some of the more unusual yet available plant groups that those looking to expand their horizons can try.

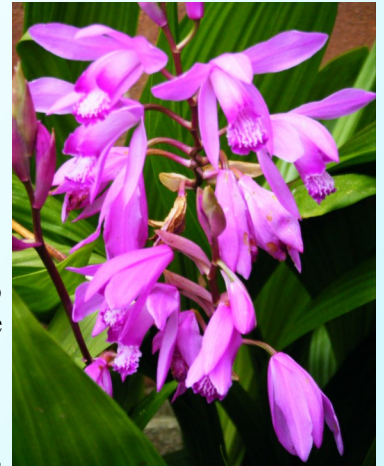
Greg Griffis first became aware of orchids in 2009. He first heard about them through a college friend, who had always admired orchids. Studying at West Chester University, from which he graduated with a degree in Music Education, put him in close proximity to Longwood Gardens. He attended the 2010 Longwood Orchid Show where he purchased his first orchid. One plant quickly became twenty or so, and before long he was hooked. In 2010 he visited Parkside Orchid Nursery for the first time, and by Summer 2011 he was working part time for Tom Purviance and John Salventi. He studied under their tutelage while working for them, and when they sold the nursery in 2012, he was hired by the new owners as the Grower and Manager of Parkside Orchid Nursery. He managed Parkside for one year, before leaving to grow orchids in Hawaii. He worked for Hilo Orchid Farm for more than a year, spending a large amount of time working with Paphiopedilum, as well as Intergeneric Oncidiinae and Miltoniopsis. At the beginning of 2015 Greg began working as the orchid grower at Longwood Gardens, where he remains today.

### Orchid Tip of the Month

#### **Bletilla striata**

*By Carl Gustafson*

Many people think of orchids delicate, tropical plants that need to be protected from our cold winters. Some are aware that there are orchids native to this area that naturally tolerate winter quite well, like our lady slippers, but often realize that North American natives can be difficult to grow unless you can meet their exacting conditions. Fortunately, however, there are hardy orchids that grow quite well in the typical garden. This month's subject is one of these.



Bletilla is a small genus of terrestrial orchid from east Asia, including Japan, Korea, Taiwan, China, and even extending into Vietnam and Myanmar (Burma). Of the species in this genus, Bletilla striata is the most wide-spread.<sup>(1)</sup> The genus is a member of the Calanthe Group<sup>(2)</sup>, and shares many of the physical characteristics of that group, including the terrestrial nature, and often deciduous, plicate (or pleated) leaves.

B. striata grows to about one and a half feet tall, making fairly broad, plicate leaves which ripen and drop in the fall. The flower stem comes from the center of the growth, showing before the leaves are fully-developed. Each stem will have four or five flowers, maybe more, the flowers being perhaps an inch and a half across, in bright pink/magenta. Flowering season is mid to late spring. A good sized clump of these plants make a very

*Continued on page 2*

**Nominations of Officers:** The Nominating Committee has been discussing options for the election of officers at the April meeting. A slate will be presented at this month's meeting. Nominations from the "floor" will be also accepted and evaluated; so if you have suggestions for President, Vice President, Secretary, and Program Chair, please send those names to: [alan\\_block@hotmail.com](mailto:alan_block@hotmail.com).

## Orchid Tip of the Month

*Continued from page 1*

attractive sight.

As I mentioned above, this plant is winter hardy - I've had mine for 25 years now, planted by the front door of my house, against the foundation. According to one article I've read<sup>(3)</sup>, *B. striata* will grow in USDA zone 5 with heavy mulching. We're in zone 6b/7a<sup>(4)</sup>, and I don't mulch (intentionally).

So, what does this species need to be happy? First thing is good drainage. If you have a heavy soil that doesn't drain well, you'll need to fix that. Soggy conditions around the roots/corms in the winter will kill the plant. Heavy snow cover will contribute to these problems, because as the snow melts, it keeps the ground damp. I'm cursed with a heavy clay soil, which doesn't drain that well, so I regularly work compost into the gardens. Planting on a slope will also help. So, the first thing to do is to work on drainage by adding compost, grit/fine gravel, or whatever.

Second, you want some protection from the cold. As I mentioned above, we are in USDA zone 6b/7a, and these species are pretty hardy here, given a minimum of protection in the winter. My plants are right against the foundation of the house, so there's a little extra warmth there. If you try these in the garden, try giving them a good mulching in the fall as the leaves ripen and fall. Don't remove the mulch until warm weather comes - a very late frost could damage new shoots.

Give the plants good light - they don't necessarily need full sun all day long, but do need very bright light; for a long time, mine were partly shaded by a holly tree. Plumbing issues resulted in having to remove the tree (it being right on top of a sewer line that had to be replaced), and last year they got pretty much full sun.

I think that if you could put the plants on a slight slope facing south, lightly shaded by deciduous trees, that would help with drainage and cold protection, as the winter sun will help warm the soil slightly.

Finally, do provide some moisture - although they are found in drier soils, they still need some water, so really dry conditions aren't really to their liking, but neither is a swamp. When the weather's dry in the summer, I do water. I figure if the flowering annuals around them need the water, so do the orchids. Occasional fertilization won't hurt either. With me, fertilizing the outside is a hit-or-miss affair. More regularity wouldn't

hurt, I'd expect.

Now, where do you get these? I obtained mine from Burpee's when they were located in Warminster. You can often find them in retail nurseries in the spring in bags along with other miscellaneous perennial plants, often labeled "Hardy Orchid" or something like that. Once they've gotten established in a situation to their liking, they will often double every year, so you'll soon be able to divide them to share with other gardening friends. Lastly, there are commercial growers that sell via internet, and some of these have a number of cultivars as well as hybrids.

Finally, you might ask, can these be grown in pots? I don't know - in all the years I've grown them, I've never tried. So, this winter, I dug a small one up and put it in a pot, using my regular terrestrial mix (ABG mix, composed of small fir bark, small tree fern, small charcoal, peat and milled sphagnum). I believe this species needs a dormancy period, so when the time comes, I'll probably put it in a basement window, where it'll get a cool, dry period; without leaves, it won't need light. Hopefully, I can encourage it to flower earlier in the year, and I'll be able to bring it in for the show table one of these years.

*B. striata* isn't the only species in the genus you can grow in the garden, either. *B. ochracea* is a species with pale yellow flowers. I bought a flask of these last year, and may try a few outside this summer, with the rest being kept in pots for at least another year. I've also seen these advertised at specialist garden stores.

Finally, the AOS magazine<sup>(5)(6)(7)</sup> has had several articles about *Bletilla* species and hybrids.

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- 1) <http://orchidspecies.com/bletstriatal.htm>
- 2) <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bletilla>
- 3) Weaver, Richard E. Jr., and Warren P. Stoutamire, 2008, How to Grow and Propagate Bletillas, Orchids magazine, May 2008, 77:5, pp 374-375
- 4) <http://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/PHZMWeb>
- 5) Kobayashi, Hideka and Tony Avent, 2015, Bletilla Recent Introductions and Breeding Trends, Orchids magazine, Feb. 2015, 84:2, pp 112-119
- 6) Weaver, Richard E. Jr., and Warren P. Stoutamire, 2008, Bletilla Species, Orchids magazine, May 2008, 77:5, pp 358-365
- 7) Weaver, Richard E. Jr., and Warren P. Stoutamire, 2008, Bletillas in Cultivation, Orchids magazine, May 2008, 77:5, pp 366-373

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## ***SOCIETY NOTES***

### ***Hospitality Table***

The Society is in need of 2 or 3 people to assume coordination of refreshments for the Hospitality Table.. Please contact President Allen Applebaum at [sirapples36@gmail.com](mailto:sirapples36@gmail.com) to volunteer.

### ***Orchid Bark***

The Society has **orchid bark** for sale. Contact **Gary Dunbar** to order at [dragon-kin@comcast.net](mailto:dragon-kin@comcast.net). Med and med/fine are available for \$13 for 1 cubic foot, and \$25 for 2 CF. Gallon bags are \$3.

### ***Plant Clinic:***

You are encouraged to bring in that sick plant for evaluation by the expert orchid growers in our Society. Please, bring the needy plant in a closed plastic bag and we will try to advise you on bringing it back to good health.

### ***Show Table Judging Rules:***

The information for submitting plants for the show table is now located on our website, [www.buckscountyorchidsociety.org/showtables/STRules.htm](http://www.buckscountyorchidsociety.org/showtables/STRules.htm)

### ***Orchid Pickup:***

If you may be available to pick up orchids for the raffle as needed, please send your name and email address to Alan Block at [alan\\_block@hotmail.com](mailto:alan_block@hotmail.com)

### ***Officers, Other Societies and Vendors:***

The list of officers, other societies and vendors is now exclusively available on the BCOS website. [www.buckscountyorchidsociety.org/About.htm](http://www.buckscountyorchidsociety.org/About.htm) for officers and [www.buckscountyorchidsociety.org/Links.htm](http://www.buckscountyorchidsociety.org/Links.htm) for other societies and vendors.

### ***Library:***

Contact President Allen Applebaum at [sirapples36@gmail.com](mailto:sirapples36@gmail.com) to borrow any item in the BCOS Library (See the society's website for a list of books, equipment and videos.) [www.buckscountyorchidsociety.org/](http://www.buckscountyorchidsociety.org/)

## **IN MEMORIAM**

**JOYCE TOBI ROSENBERG** (nee VOGIN), died on February 18, 2015. Born in Philadelphia, she was a social worker, devoted life partner of JERRY SHERMAN; loving mother of SHELBY MAKOWSKY (MATTHEW) and JILL SCHULSON; beloved bubbie of DAVIN, JORDAN, GABRIEL, and SAMARA. She was a long time member of the Society and for several years was part of the group coordinating the hospitality table. She loved growing orchids and will be missed. Contributions in her memory may be made to the Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation, [www.pulmonaryfibrosis.org](http://www.pulmonaryfibrosis.org).

**Volunteers Needed** to work on our display for the SEPOS show coming up in April. Due to low interest from the membership, we are in danger of not having an exhibit this year. We need members for the design of the exhibit, set up, tear down as well as orchids to populate the exhibit. We have been very successful in prior years and as a Society, our exhibit is one that is a reflection of all of us and one that everyone can participate in. Please contact Allen Applebaum, President, [sirapples36@gmail.com](mailto:sirapples36@gmail.com) or Vice President, Bob Gore, [vplaster@comcast.net](mailto:vplaster@comcast.net) to lend your support.

## **DUES ARE NOW DUE**

Dues for calendar year 2015 are now due. Dues are still only \$15 per year and go to support the Society and its educational and charitable activities. See John Kuhlman, Treasurer, at a meeting or send to John at 218 Sandy Ridge Mt. Airy Rd. Stockton, NJ

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Now - March 29, 2015 Longwood Gardens Orchid Extravaganza.** 1001 Longwood Road, Kennett Square, PA 19348 <http://longwoodgardens.org/>

**April 24-26, 2015 SEPOS Annual Orchid Show and Sale** The Academy of Natural Sciences at Drexel University 1900 Benjamin Franklin Parkway, Philadelphia, PA 19103 See <http://sepos.org/annual-show.html> for more information and directions.

**April 16, 2015 BCOS Meeting Speaker:** Dr David Rosenfeld Topic: **“Growing for perfection: secrets shared to help garner cultural awards.”**



**EDITOR'S NOTE** – Contributions to the newsletter will be greatly appreciated.

Please submit relevant news, photos, awards or information relating to the Society, its members, the care and culture of orchids to the Editor at [kapslr@comcast.net](mailto:kapslr@comcast.net). I am also looking for your favorite tip on growing orchids, for the feature, ***Orchid Tip of the Month***. Please submit your copy by the first day of the month.

## **Delaware Orchid Society Auction**

May 2, 2015

Time: 11 a.m.

Location: Emmanuel Presbyterian Church located at 1006 Wilson Road, Wilmington

(Abbreviated directions: Take exit 9 from Route 95 in Delaware. Travel north on Marsh Rd for 1.4 miles, turn left on Wilson Road. Travel 0.5 miles and Emmanuel Presbyterian Church will be on your left).