

Native Orchid News:

The Newsletter of Native Orchid Conservation Inc.

Vol. 4 Issue 3 May 2002



Native Orchid Conservation Inc.
35 St. Michael Road., Winnipeg, MB
R2M 2K7

Board Meetings:

First Wednesday of every month
7:30 P.M.

Location: Powerland Computers
170 Marion Street
(No meeting July and August)

Orchid of the Month

Yellow Lady's-Slipper
(*Cypripedium calceolus*)

NOCI Website:

www.nativeorchid.com

For more information on NOCI,
please contact Bud Ewacha at 253-4741
or email <bud_ge@escape.ca>

Annual General Meeting

On April 10th we held our Annual General Meeting. At that time elections to the board took place and the results were as follows:

Doris Ames, Bud Ewacha, Eugene Reimer, and Alice Warren were elected to the board of directors by acclamation for a two year term. Subsequently, the board elected them by acclamation to the executive for a one year term as follows:

Bud Ewacha	President
Doris Ames	Vice President
Alice Warren	Secretary
Eugene Reimer	Treasurer

Thanks to all the board members for agreeing to carry on. Most of them have been doing the work since the beginning. We are lucky to have the continuing help of these busy and talented people. They have been doing a terrific job and NOCI owes its continuing success to them. Board members have to work hard and take responsibility but it can be very rewarding to see our conservation goals being met. I'm sure we would all rather be "out in the field" but there is much administrative work to do with running an active organization of this kind. If any of you have a few hours to spare, please respond when we ask for volunteers at displays etc. P.S. We are still looking for a volunteer coordinator. Phone Bud, if you can help.

Heather Gill-Robinson gave an interesting talk on her work with the mummified remains of ancient people found in European bogs. She showed us slides showing some of the beautiful sacrificial offerings made by the Celts and other ancient tribes that were thrown into the bogs thousands of years ago. The bodies themselves and the computerized reconstruction of their faces were marvellous. The high acidity preserved

some of them extremely well but not others. Heather is studying them to find out the reason for these differences, while pursuing her PhD at the University of Manitoba. Thank you Heather for a rare glimpse at your unusual line of work.

Raffle Draw

The raffle draw was held on April 10, 2002 and the winners were as follows:

#1)	Fishing trip donated by Peterson's Reed Lake Lodge	Jason Nazar	ticket #1839
#2)	Bird bath donated by R. Paul Greenhouse	M. Clancy	ticket #2113
#3)	<i>Orchids of Minnesota</i> book donated by Bud Ewacha	Walter Slobozian	ticket #011
#4)	Floral Arrangement donated by Top Hat Florists	Doris Waselka	ticket #239
#5)	Phalaenopsis orchid donated by E. Maza	Marc Lynch	ticket #1630
#6)	Bottle of Perfume donated by A. Ewacha	Dennis Coly	ticket #2337
#7)	Meal Certificate donated by Pine Ridge Hollow Rest.	Peggy Bainard Acheson	ticket #1901
#8)	Water wand donated by A.J.Lacoste Greenhouse	Debbie Dew	ticket #3278
#9)	Gift Certificate donated by St. Mary's Nursery	Tracy Houston	ticket #2230

Thanks very much to all the people who bought and sold tickets and especially to our generous sponsors. Special thanks to Bud Ewacha and Bob Joyce, who ran this lottery. They did a terrific job and approximately \$2,700.00 was raised, to help us with our conservation work.

New project aims to establish *C.acaule* (Moccasin Flower) populations

Establishment of new populations of orchids may be desirable for many reasons, including the utilization of already-protected lands as orchid habitat, an insurance against destruction of existing populations and to escape disease pressures in existing sites. There is little other than anecdotal information on the ability of northern terrestrial orchids to establish when seeded into suitable habitat.

In the summer of 2001, Bud Ewacha, Carla Zelmer and Tony Szumigalski began a scientific study to determine the feasibility of seeding *C.acaule* into an area of appropriate habitat that does not presently support *C.acaule* plants (Cat Hills MB). This seeding project has been funded by several sources including the Federal and Provincial Governments.

To aid in tracking the seedlings, an unusual darkly coloured variant of *C.acaule* was used as the seed source for this study. This plant was hand pollinated with its own pollen, resulting in large capsules containing thousands of viable seeds.

Split plots were set up in replicate at the site and marked for relocation over many growing seasons. Half of each split plot was planted with a known weight of *C.acaule* mixed with sand (to help distribute the tiny seeds). Only the sand was added to the other half as a check for existing seedlings.

The sites will be monitored for the next five years for the appearance of seedlings. For the first to several years of a northern terrestrial orchid's life, the seedlings live underground, provided with food by a symbiotic relationship with fungi. Eventually a leaf is produced above ground, and the plants begin to photosynthesize. Monitoring seedling emergence is therefore a long term proposition. Little is known about the time to emergence in suitable wild habitats because date of seeding is usually not known.

Although the site appears to be favourable for *C. acaule* growth at this new site, the presence of the symbiotic fungi is not assured. To our knowledge, this study is the first of its kind with *C. acaule*, which can be germinated in culture but rarely survives planting out in the natural environment. Correspondence with researchers in the USA and Europe indicate that there is interest in undertaking similar studies in several countries.

(Extracted from a report by Carla Zelmer, March 2002)

Rare Plant of the Month (see cover photo)
Yellow Lady's-Slipper (*Cypripedium calceolus*)

The name comes from the Greek "Cypris" the goddess of love and beauty and "pedilon" slipper. "Calceolus" means little shoe, referring to the lip.

The Yellow Lady's-Slipper complex is considered by many to consist of three main varieties; the Large Yellow Lady's-Slipper, the Small Yellow Lady's-Slipper and the Flat-Petaled Lady's-Slipper.

The Large Yellow Lady's Slipper (*Cypripedium calceolus* var. *pubescens*) is perhaps the most common. *Pubescens* comes from Latin meaning downy and refers to the very fine hairs covering the entire plant. This showy plant is 18 to 24" high and has 3-6 ovate, broadly-veined leaves. There is one and often two waxy, yellow flowers in June or July. The sepals are usually twisted and either brownish or greenish-yellow. The inflated yellow lip is over 1" long and often streaked or spotted on the inside. The shallow roots are thick and grow horizontally along the ground. Plant grows singly or in clumps.

The Small Yellow Lady's-Slipper (*Cypripedium calceolus* var. *parviflorum*) grows in large clumps and blooms in May and June. The variety name comes from Latin "parvis" meaning small and "flos" meaning flower. This little plant is usually 8-15" high. The small yellow flower has a lip no more than 1" long and twisted dark sepals. Some plants are very fragrant.

The Flat-Petaled Lady's-Slipper (*Cypripedium calceolus planipetalum*) derives its name from the Latin "planus" flat and "petalum" referring to its flat untwisted petals. All the Yellow Lady's-Slippers start out with flat pointy petals but then they twist up. The petals on this variety don't twist, they stay flat and are blunt. The lip is greenish-yellow, narrow, and slightly pointed. The plant is large, 1 to 2 feet tall and blooms in June and July. This variety is fairly common in Newfoundland but very rare here.

As well as the three varieties listed above, there are hybrids, as both the Small and the Large Yellow Lady's-Slipper cross with the Small White Lady's Slipper producing some strange and lovely flowers and the different Yellow's also cross with each other.

Seedpods are large and brown and remain all winter, with leaves often still persisting on the stems. The Large Yellow Lady's-Slipper often has a bit of the old dried flower clinging to the pod. Bees are believed to be the pollinators.

Clumps of Yellow Lady's-Slippers can be found growing everywhere; on the edges of bogs, in the ditches alongside the highways, in meadows and along railway tracks. Everywhere, in fact, where their fine seeds can get a toehold in disturbed ground. Some of these clumps are more than 50 years old. Lady's-Slippers take a long time to mature in the wild, sometimes 12-15 years before they flower. They prefer clayey soil with a neutral pH. Unfortunately, because they are so easy to spot, some people like to dig them up and transplant them into their gardens. However, although they seem to do very well at first, if the fungi that support them do not survive the vast majority will fail within 5 years. Even if they do survive you are removing another plant from the breeding population. Many people do not realize that Lady's-Slippers cannot stand to have their roots cut or broken. This will always kill them. Picking them is not a good idea either because as well as preventing seedpod production you are removing leaves with the flower. The plant needs these leaves to perform photosynthesis and manufacture its food. For these reasons, the sale of orchids dug from the wild should be strictly prohibited. If you want to grow these plants, lab propagated specimens can be ordered from nurseries in Canada. They will sell you mature plants of many species. Please see our website <<http://www.nativeorchid.com>> for the addresses of reputable greenhouses.

Field Trips 2002

Saturday, May 4th - Come with us out to the southeast, Richer, Hadashville and East Braintree to see Crocus, Three-flowered Avenas and Trailing Arbutus. We are sure to see early over-wintering butterflies and birds too. Native orchids will be sprouting at this time. See the Pipsissewa or Prince's Pine in the Jack Pine forests.

Saturday, May 25th - This is the time to see Fairy Slipper Orchids, Early Coral Root, and possibly Moccasin Flowers in bloom. With luck we should also be able to see the beautiful, pink Bog Laurel along the #308 and the shy Goldthread flowers as well.

Saturday, June 15th - Out to a cedar bog near Woodridge, this time to see the Ram's Head Lady-Slippers, Yellow Lady's-Slippers and Small Round Leaf Orchids. There will be Paintbrush and other interesting plants blooming at the same time.

Saturday, June 22nd - Our first trip of the year to the Gull Lake Wetlands to see the early orchids, sedges and insect-eating plants there. The Showy Lady's-Slippers should be blooming at this time as well as many other orchids. We can make a side trip to see the Moccasin Flowers in Belair Provincial Forest.

Saturday, June 29th - Back out to the Woodridge area to see the orchids we missed last time and anything that's new. The show of wildflowers in the country should be getting better and better.

Saturday, July 20th - Back out to the Gull Lake wetlands to see more orchids including the three little pink ones; Dragon's Mouth, Rose Pogonia and Grass Pink. The carnivorous plants should be at their bug-eating best.

Monday, July 29th - Here's one for all you unlucky people who have to work weekends! We will head out to the Whiteshell to see the halcyon-blue Viper's Bugloss and Vervain. The beautiful White Water Lilies floating on Lily Pond are a photographer's delight. Relict populations of strange old Ironwood trees and majestic White Pine are just some of the many attractions in this special park. Join us for the last field trip of the season. If it's hot, we'll stop for ice cream!

Bob Joyce is our field trip coordinator. Please contact Bob at 256-8113 if you would like to join us on one of these trips. We take a limited number of members to some of the rarer and more delicate habitats, so register early. There is a charge of \$10.00 per adult to cover costs and you will be required to sign a liability waiver. You must be a member of NOCI to join us on these trips. Please use your discretion as to whether you are able to participate depending on the degree of difficulty walking. Bob can advise you. Most trips are suitable for any healthy adult. Our trip leaders are all amateur naturalists with field experience. We cannot guarantee that you will see every plant we mention in bloom, but we can guarantee that you will see many different plants and animals and you will certainly meet interesting people.

Please dress suitably for the weather as we intend to go rain or shine. Hats and drinking water are strongly recommended. You will be notified if a trip has to be cancelled for some reason.

Editor's note: If you have any comments about anything in this newsletter or suggestions for further articles, please contact Doris Ames, 117 Morier Avenue, Winnipeg MB R2M 0C8 or phone 231-1160 or e-mail <adames@mb.sympatico.ca>