

Native Orchid News:

THE NEWSLETTER OF NATIVE ORCHID CONSERVATION INC.

Volume 4 Issue 6 November 2002

ISSN 1499-5468



Native Orchid Conservation Inc.
117 Morier Avenue
Winnipeg, MB
R2M 0C8

Rare Plant of the Month
Dragon's Mouth Orchid
(*Arethusa bulbosa*)

NOCI Website:
www.nativeorchid.com

For more information contact
Doris Ames.
Phone: 231-1160
E-mail: adames@mb.sympatico.ca

PRESIDENT'S REPORT - DORIS AMES

As 2002 draws to a close, we can look back on an exciting year, filled with interesting work, fun-filled field trips and gains in our mission to conserve rare and endangered plants. However it was a year when we were faced with some special difficulties that we had to overcome. These relate to the governing of our organization, specifically difficulties at the board level. As mentioned in last month's newsletter, a special meeting was held to seek direction from the membership as to how best these problems could be dealt with.

In spite of the slippery driving conditions, 36 members attended the Special Meeting on Friday, November 22, 2002. In the interest of fairness, the board employed Adrian Challis and Jan Schmidt from Facilitated Solutions to chair the meeting. After all the people, including Bud, had a chance to speak and have their questions answered, a vote was taken on the motion as follows:

To remove Bud Ewacha as an officer and director of NOCI. Yes or No

Results:

Yes 28

No 7

Meeting adjourned 9:30PM

continued on next page

continued from previous page

We are grateful to all the members who came out to help us make this important decision. I wish all of you would have been there. Like the rest of you, I am very upset about the problems we are having in our organization. But most of all, we are sorry that we had to take that kind of action against Bud. We know that without Bud there would be no NOCI and we are grateful for his efforts over the past four years. We all viewed him as a fine friend and wonderful companion in the field. However NOCI is not a fan club and a board member has to work for the good of the organization. For more than a year, Bud has been unable to do that and has let his personal agenda override his duty to our organization. He had moved from being an ambassador for our organization to being a liability. This was putting Native Orchid in jeopardy and we did not want to see it fail. It had reached the point where, because of his dictatorial and abusive behaviour at board meetings and on survey trips, the whole board was about to resign. We spoke to him and asked him to resign voluntarily and he flatly refused. Therefore we took the only option available to us under our constitution. We removed him and called a special meeting to ask the members ratify our decision. They did this on November 22. It wasn't easy for any of us, but we can now move on. We can once again devote all our energies to the conservation of rare and endangered plant species and their habitat. I hope all of you will stay on as members and help us make NOCI a successful organization. We all appreciate Bud's contribution over the past four years and want to thank him for bringing NOCI into being and more importantly for inspiring us to keep his dream alive. I hope he will find time to continue to come with us on field trips so we can enjoy his company and benefit from his experience.

I want to thank the other board members for all the work they did over the past seven weeks and for their wonderful support to me. I especially want to thank Eugene Reimer and John Neufeld for their expertise in helping me plan this special meeting, and Alice Warren for being recording secretary. Peggy Bainard Acheson did a great job as membership chair, helping to determine voting eligibility, as well as taking care of refreshments. Jan Schmidt and Linda Anderson served as tellers and counted the ballots. Al Ames and Bob Joyce did a terrific job with setup and take down for the meeting. Adrian Challis did a fine job chairing the meeting and it is through his patient efforts that we were able to manage this stressful meeting, fairly. Thank you all.

As your new president, I will continue to work very hard to keep this organization running well. I ask for your continued support to help me do this.

This is also the time of year when we need to remind you to renew your memberships and to consider supporting our conservation work with a donation. We rely on your early membership renewals to see us through the year as most of our money is project related. Peggy has prepared a memo which you will find enclosed with this newsletter. Please remember that you may renew or make a donation in a secure manner from our website. We will issue tax receipts for gifts of \$10.00 or more. Thank you to our regular donors. We could not manage without them. Donations do not always take the form of money and I want to thank Dr. John Stewart, former Head of Botany at the University of Manitoba, for his generous gift of botanical books from his extensive library. They will be a great help to NOCI and we have already benefited from one of them, a species guide to Riding Mountain National Park.

I hope to see you all out to our Member's Meeting coming up in January. Peggy Bainard Acheson and John Neufeld are in charge of arrangements for this meeting and you will be hearing more from them in our next newsletter.

Seasons Greetings and Best Wishes for the New Year.

ORCHIDS OF MANITOBA

We have embarked on a new and exciting project to publish a field guide to "The Orchids of Manitoba".

A committee has been formed and we have had our first meeting to decide just what we would like the book to look like and the kind of book it should be. The next step is to make a mock up of a sample species account to take around to printers for estimates and grantors for funds. Dr. Jim Duncan, chief of biodiversity for the province of Manitoba, has offered his support and that of his staff members to assist with the planning of this field guide. This project will help to conserve native orchids as well as raise the profile of our organization. It will also fill a niche in the book market because there is no book available at present on Manitoba orchids. In due course, we will form a sub committee to choose photographs to illustrate the species accounts, and I know I can count on many of you to submit beautiful photographs for possible inclusion. You will be hearing more about this exciting project in the new year.

RARE PLANT OF THE MONTH (SEE COVER PHOTO)

Dragon's Mouth (*Arethusa bulbosa*)

By Doris Ames

This lovely and rare (S2) orchid gets its botanical name from Arethusa, a wood nymph in Greek mythology. She was changed into a stream by Artemis. '*bulbosa*' refers to the bulbous corms. Dragon's Mouth is found in Eastern Manitoba usually at the edge of wet and acidic sphagnum bogs. The plants themselves are usually found atop a sphagnum hummock growing with Labrador Tea and Pitcher Plants and surrounded by black spruce and tamarack trees.

The plant is 10-30 cm tall with bracts sheathing its slender stem. It blooms in June and July. The single, rose-pink to red flower is very showy. It has three sepals that stick up like rabbit ears and a large lip that hangs down like a tongue. The large pinkish-white down-turned lip has purple spots and a crest of yellow hairs. The single linear leaf is not present at flowering time but starts to develop and grow longer when the flower withers. The pod is ribbed and seems large for the size of the plant. The dried flower is usually found still clinging to it. The pod often breaks off and falls to the ground soon after blooming because the stem is so weak.

Dragon's Mouth can be distinguished from the other little pink orchids, Rose Pogonia and Grass Pink, because the leaf is not present at flowering time.

Populations of these plants in bloom vary greatly from year to year. They are often killed by late spring frosts and are susceptible to droughts. Because they prefer habitat that is often very difficult to access, they are seldom seen.

Bees are believed to be the pollinators, attracted to the yellow hairs on the lip. Some sources report that the flower is fragrant but I have never noticed this in our area.