

Orchid Research Newsletter No. 51 (January 2008)

We purposely delayed publication of this issue so that we could relay on-the-spot news from the 19th World Orchid Conference, held in Miami, Florida, 22-27 January 2008. Such a conference had not been held in the United States since 1984, when the 11th WOC was also held in Miami. It was the best-attended WOC in recent memory, as 1700 full registrants and an equal number of one-day registrants converged at a hotel near the Miami International Airport to marvel at the magnificent show and attend four days of talks. Phillip Cribb delivered one of the keynote addresses, titled "Orchids in a Changing Climate", to a packed ballroom. On each of the following three days, there were concurrent sessions on science, horticulture, and conservation.

The International Orchid Commission convened on Friday, 25 January, and designated a new Chairman, Johan Hermans, following the resignation of Joyce Stewart, who had served as Chair for 24 years and guided the IOC through some major changes in the orchid world and also orchid nomenclature. A resolution thanking her for her years of unrelenting service and leadership drew applause, and we reiterate our respect and gratitude here also. The main item to come before the Commission was the issue of orchid hybrid registrations involving the new circumscriptions of *Cattleya*, *Laelia*, and *Sophranitis* as published in volume 4 of *Genera Orchidacearum*. Cassio van den Berg presented taxonomic options that might end the disgruntlement, especially among hybridizers and hobbyists, but still be consistent with the available molecular and morphological data. The IOC adopted one of those alternatives unanimously. A short paper will soon be published with new combinations, and there will be an addendum in volume 5 of *Genera Orchidacearum* to amend relevant portions in volume 4.

There were several bids to host the 21st WOC in 2014: 1) Joinville, Brazil; 2) Guayaquil, Ecuador; 3) Pretoria, South Africa; 4) Taipei, Taiwan; and 5) Lima, Peru. All made impressive presentations, but at the Closing Ceremony Mr. Peter Furniss of the World Orchid Conference Trust announced that it was the bid from Pretoria that had been successful. In the meantime we look forward to going to Singapore in 2011 for the 20th WOC, one of the most exciting and beautiful cities in the world and also the hub of everything to do with orchids in south-east Asia. More details will be available here as they are released.

Alec Pridgeon

News from Correspondents

Please submit any news about newly completed research, future research plans and needs, change of address, upcoming or recent fieldwork, etc. to David Roberts (d.roberts@kew.org). Graduate students are especially encouraged to share the subjects of their thesis or dissertation with the international community. We will print submissions in the format used in prior issues of the *ORN* (sample below from January 2001).

Oakeley, Henry F. (77 Copers Cope Road, Beckenham, Kent, BR3 1NR, UK) has finished his revision of *Anguloa* and is on the verge of completing a revision of *Lycaste*. He will make a field trip to Venezuela in 2001. Toward work on these two genera, he would like plant material and data on herbarium specimens held. He offers to identify same.

Upcoming Conferences

We welcome any news about future conferences for promotion here. Please send details to David Roberts (d.roberts@kew.org) as far in advance of the event as possible, remembering that the *Orchid Research Newsletter* is published only in January and July of each year.

The Third Scientific Conference on Andean Orchids will be held 4-8 February 2009 in Quito, Ecuador. Three days of world-class talks on orchid systematics, ecology, and conservation science will be complemented by poster sessions, roundtable programs on a variety of subjects, a spectacular orchid show in the Itchimbia Cultural Center, and special evening dinner events. As for prior, highly successful Conferences in this series, there will be local tours and orchid tours operated by Ecuagenera, but what makes this event special is also the link for tours to the Galapagos. The Conference website (www.quitoorchidexpo2009.org) should go online in February 2008 to supply more information.

Recent Orchid Nomenclature

New orchid names may now be accessed on the IPNI website: (www.ipni.org/ipni/plantsearch?request_type=search&output_format=query&ret_defaults=on) Click on "Show additional search items" on the right-hand side of the screen. After the search page appears, type in **Orchidaceae** under family name and (for example) **2005-11-30** under "Record date" and "Added since." This will pull up a list of all names added to the IPNI database since 30 November 2005.

Recent Literature

We are grateful to Ann McNeil, compiler of the Kew Record of Taxonomic Literature, and to Anna Lynch and Margaret Ramsay for drawing our attention to the following publications from 2 July 2007 to 3 January 2008.

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Book Reviews

Pedersen, H. Æ. and Faurholdt, N. 2007. *Ophrys: the Bee Orchids of Europe*. Kew Publishing. Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. 297 pp. + 226 colour photos + line drawings and distribution maps. ISBN 978-1-84246152-5. £33.00.

The genus *Ophrys* is truly an iconic group of orchids, having inspired scientist and dedicated amateurs alike. Darwin had spent much time puzzling over the function of the flowers of *Ophrys*. However, he was probably at a slight disadvantage with the abundant, self-pollinating *O. apifera* in the United Kingdom. It was not until the work of Pouyanne in the early twentieth century that pseudocopulation was confirmed.

The considerable interest ever since has created a taxonomic nightmare through unwarranted splitting. Recent field guides to European orchids have recognized over 200 taxa from the genus. Pedersen and Faurholdt managed to whittle this down to a more reasonable 19 species and numerous subspecies. Although there maybe some debate over this number (plus or minus a few species), I think this account is the most accurate that exists thus far. The authors back up their arguments with a chapter on evolution, hybridization, and classification.

The book covers everything you could possibly want to know about the genus, with eight chapters covering origin and systematic position, structure, biology, ecology, distribution, evolution, hybridization, classification, systematic accounts, conservation, cultivation, and suggested excursions.

Each species account starts with a short introduction followed by habitat, flowering time, distribution, and description. This format continues for taxa at lower taxonomic levels with all synonyms listed. They are all illustrated with copious photos and as well as distribution maps. This is a thoughtful book; you can tell that the authors have carefully considered what should go into it. The small details, such as the Notes section after the keys, make this book stand out from many other guides to European orchids.

Few publications are perfect, and perhaps my minor criticisms are attributable to personal preference. The heading and subheadings of each species are not in bold print, but my biggest gripe has to do with the distribution maps, which seem to before coloured in various, strange tones of maroon-grey. What is wrong with having a normal black-and-white distribution map?

I wholeheartedly recommend this book. If you are interested in looking at orchids in the field or just want to know more about this fascinating genus, it is a must-have. And with the excursions listed in Chapter Eight, I know where I'll be spending my holidays!

David Roberts

Perner, H. and Luo, Y-B. 2007. *Orchids of Huanglong*. Sichuan Art Press, Chendu. 221 pp. ISBN 978-7-5410-3346-9. 198 Yuan RMB. (in English and Chinese).

China is on my top five countries I want to visit, and when I do go I am definitely going to make a beeline for Huanglong. Huanglong is situated in Sichuan and has become a must-see for eco-tourists with its incredible scenery. The deep valleys and the high mountains (over 5,500 m) have created a remarkable gradient of species diversity with orchids as a prominent component of the flora. Huanglong is home to 69 orchid species and an additional 30 species in the surrounding region, including numerous species of *Cypripedium* and well as many curious genera not found in the West.

The book starts with an introduction to Huanglong National Park and its biological diversity, followed by an account of early botanical expeditions and a short introduction to orchid names. This leads you into page after page of species accounts. Each consists of a short description, interesting notes on the discovery or ecology of the species, and the flowering time (the best time seems to be late May-June). What is remarkable about the book is the number of photographs accompanying each account; some species are illustrated by 10 photos. This book is truly a feast for the eyes.

My only minor criticisms would be the lack of a key (even to the genera) and also the size. Although

it would fit in my backpack, it isn't a field guide, more of a coffee table book or a book for delving into while doing research. I hope that as the number of tourists visiting the region increases the authors will bring out a pocket-guide version.

I certainly recommend this book to anyone going to China. Even if you're not, you'll enjoy compiling a wish list of orchids to see.

David Roberts