



# MHOS NEWSLETTER

[www.mhos.us.com](http://www.mhos.us.com)

April 2010

## Meetings

The Mid-Hudson Orchid Society meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month at 1:30 pm at the Union Presbyterian Church at the corner of Balmville Road and Beech Street in Newburgh (Balmville), NY

Bring your blooming orchids for the show table.

## 2010 Meeting Dates

**April 11** E Diagnosis Day

**May 2** (meeting changed due to Mothers Day)

**June 13**

**July** – no meeting

**August** – no meeting

**September 12**

**October 16 (Saturday)**  
– Fall Show and Sale

**November 14**

**December 12** – Pot Luck Holiday Dinner

## April Meeting - Diagnosis Day

Our April 11<sup>th</sup> meeting will be Diagnosis Day. Bring your problem plants, bring plants that need to be repotted, bring your questions, and get help from other MHOS members.



*Here is the next MHOS Member Profile by MHOS member and journalist Deborah Medenbach*

## Len Ellentuch

Len Ellentuch didn't expect his business meeting on behalf of the Atomic Energy Commission in Thailand to end with his initiation into what would become his passion for the next 30 years.

"We'd finished our business and after tea my host asked, 'Would you like to see my hobby?'" Ellentuch said. He politely followed the man into the back yard, where cattleya orchids grew by the thousands as far as the eye could see under a delicate scree of sun-shielding veils.

"This was something that interested me. I'd always loved plants, even as a kid," Ellentuch said, recalling school educational gardens at PS 26 in the Bronx and later learning the intricacies of raising African violets. Here in the Thai garden, the vision of diverse blooms captured his imagination and he resolved to learn more.

When Ellentuch returned to his home in Wallkill, his first plants were phalaenopsis, or "moth orchids." He refused to read a single book or attend any orchid grower's meetings for several years.

"I was just going to find out what works for me. I wanted to learn, and so just listened and watched and the plants taught me," Ellentuch said. "I killed a few. If you don't lose orchids, you're not growing orchids."

As co-owner of Cabletronics in Newburgh, Ellentuch spent four hours each morning tending plants and then went to the office before noon to conduct the day's business. "I owned the business. I had the luxury to be able to do that," Ellentuch explained.

His windows soon were filled with plants and he expanded into a small greenhouse, where, by the time he had 1,000 plants, he felt he was ready to consider joining the New York Orchid Society. He and some friends founded the International Phalaenopsis Alliance in the 1980s, which is still active around the globe today.

"Then people started telling me that paphiopedilums are too hard to grow. It's a challenge and not just for anyone. Well, having them say it was hard to do bothered me, so I wanted that challenge. You could say, it was a 'growing' hobby!," Ellentuch said, his blue eyes twinkling under bushy white eyebrows and a lion's mane of snowy hair.

He'd already outgrown his small greenhouse and was enough of a dedicated enthusiast with the financial wherewithal to expand again.

"I had a greenhouse shipped over by boat from England and a team of English technicians assembled it in my yard. The English make much better greenhouses than you can find here in America," Ellentuch said. The outer layer was strong enough for a man to walk on and could withstand snow loads. The inner layer kept condensation away from the plants. He installed commercial tables that could be moved with a single finger even when filled with hundreds of orchids.

*(continued on next page)*

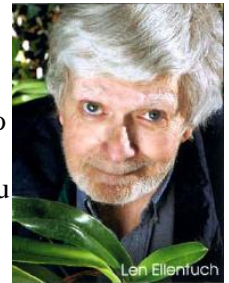


Photo by Dominick Fiorile, from *Orange Magazine* February/March 2010

## MHOS Officers & Volunteers 2010

### President

Dennis Sandberg  
914-954-7132

### Vice President

Ruth Nattras  
845-343-2901

### Membership Secretary

Ruth Nattras  
845-343-2901

### Corresponding Secretary

Holly Read  
845-855-1842

### Program Secretary

Carolyn Sanders  
917-774-1018

### Recording Secretary

Lois Brennan  
845-255-7931

### Treasurer

Bob Phillips  
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### AOS Rep

Lois Brennan  
845-255-7931

### Librarian

Ruth Nattras  
845-343-2901

### Supplies

Carolyn Sanders  
917-774-1018

### Newsletter and Website

Elisabeth Mansfield  
845-294-1000  
[Elisabeth@Mansfield  
Commercial.com](mailto:Elisabeth@MansfieldCommercial.com)

Here is this month's contribution by MHOS member **John J. Rashak**:

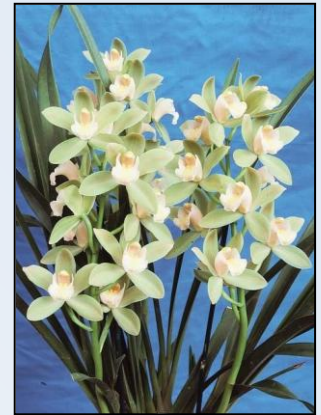
Life begins with a single cell, in the middle of which is the nucleus, which contains chromosomes, which contain genes, the blueprints of life. When pollen fertilizes a seed, the genes from that marriage determine the characteristics of the plant-to-be, including the color of its flowers. In the natural world, the pollination of orchids is mostly done by insects, and sometimes by hummingbirds. Furthermore, large numbers of orchids blooming at the same time ensures successful cross-pollination, since each seed capsule contains hundreds of thousands of seeds, and only a few have to germinate to preserve the species, or perhaps start a new species.

Even though some orchids have been cultivated for over 150 years, their color, size and shape do not change with age. The same holds true for all vegetative propagations from the original plant. However, propagating an orchid from seed enables a grower to change the blueprint and produce a new orchid. The key to making a new and interesting orchid is in knowing the genetic makeup and chromosome numbers of two potential parents. In the laboratory or greenhouse, vigorous seedling growth comes from the cross-pollination of two separate clones or, if the orchid is self-fertile, the same pollen can be used on the flower producing it. When the grower enables the cross-pollination of two different orchids, a new set of genes is created.

The scientific way to count chromosomes is to take root-tip samples, slice them into micron-sized slivers, place them on microscope slides, find a cell in the process of division under the microscope and count the chromosomes in that cell. Most species' clones are diploid, which means that they have an even number of chromosomes, which is good news for the fertilization of that species.

A tetraploid is the occasional plant, more common in the laboratory than in nature, with twice the number of chromosomes. A tetraploid crossed with a diploid produces a triploid. Other multiples of orchid chromosomes are possible in the laboratory, but the bottom line is that orchids with uneven numbers of chromosomes will not breed.

For the grower, diploids are even-growing, free-flowering plants, while tetraploids produce larger, more robust, superior-quality plants. However, even though tetraploids have better-shaped flowers, there are fewer flowers per spike. Nevertheless, tetraploids have produced great advances in the hybridizing of orchids, such as the hybrid *Cymbidium Mini Ice 'Antarctic'*.



*Cymbidium Mini Ice 'Antarctic'*

## MHOS Member Profile: Len Ellentuch (continued)

by Deborah Medenbach

"You spend just as much time taking care of the best orchids as the worst, so why bother growing the worst?" Ellentuch asked. He scouted out the rarest paphiopedilums and spent \$900 on a single Rothschild orchid seed.

"Always, the best of the species were Rothschilds and they bred everything from it, but they didn't reproduce it because it took 18 years to bloom. Nowadays they know more and you can get a bloom in two years if you make a cross," Ellentuch said. A grower brought the seed to a seedling state over the course of a couple of years and sent it to Ellentuch, who grew the baby plant on a windowsill with all his other orchids for nearly two decades, almost missing its long-awaited flowering.

"One day I was out watering the orchids and I saw that it was in bloom. I didn't realize it was getting ready until it was already in bloom," he said. He tried to make some hybrid crosses with the six flowers, but nothing took and the plant never bloomed for him again.

"I gave it away," he said.

## Other Area Societies

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday  
Central NY – Syracuse  
[www.cnyos.org](http://www.cnyos.org)

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday-1 pm  
Northeastern Pennsylvania  
Society – Lakeville, PA

1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday – 7:30pm  
Pinelands Orchid Society –  
Medford, NJ  
[pinelandsorchidsociety.org](http://pinelandsorchidsociety.org)

1<sup>st</sup> Saturday  
North Eastern New York –  
Albany/Colonie, NY  
[www.nenyos.org](http://www.nenyos.org)

2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday  
Greater Westchester –  
White Plains, NY

2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday  
Deep Cut – Tinton Falls, NJ  
<http://deepcutorchids.googlepages.com/>

2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday  
Manhattan, NY  
[www.manhattanorchid.com](http://www.manhattanorchid.com)

2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday  
Connecticut – Hartford or  
New Haven  
[www.ctorchids.org](http://www.ctorchids.org)

2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday  
North Jersey – East Hanover  
[www.njorchids.org](http://www.njorchids.org)

2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday  
Long Island – Valley Stream

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday  
Southern Tier –  
Binghamton, NY  
[www.storchidsociety.com](http://www.storchidsociety.com)

3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday  
Staten Island, NY

3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday  
Matinecock - Oyster Bay, NY

3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday  
Greater NY – Bronx, NY  
[www.gnyos.org](http://www.gnyos.org)

3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday  
Ramapo, NJ  
[www.ramapoorchid.org](http://www.ramapoorchid.org)



**NJOS**  
North Jersey Orchid Society  
Presents  
**Orchids in Wonderland**  
the 45<sup>th</sup> Orchid Show  
April 16, 17 & 18, 2010  
Frelinghuysen Arboretum  
53 East Hanover Avenue, Whippany, NJ  
Orchids sale - Supplies sale - Orchid Art  
Free Admission - Free Parking  
Show Hours: Friday 1:00pm to 4pm  
Saturday and Sunday 10am to 4pm  
[njorchids.org](http://njorchids.org)  
Ron Midgett 973-875-4014  
Kim Feddersen 973-762-8040

Announcing the first annual  
**SHORE ORCHID  
FESTIVAL**  
Friday, July 23 • Saturday, July 24 • Sunday, July 25, 2010  
10:00a.m. - 5:00p.m.  
Held at Silva Orchids

*Guests to include:*

Andy's Orchids	Little Brook Orchids
Arcadia Glass House	Main Street Orchids
Blue Moon Pottery	Oakhill Gardens
Brennan Orchids	Orchid Philie
Cal-Orchid	Parkside Orchids
Canaima Orchids	Piping Rock
Celebrate Orchids	Silva Orchids
Fishing Creek Orchids	Stony Brook Orchids
J & L Orchids	Waldor Orchids
Just Pat Orchids	Woodstream Orchids

Food Vendors: Allenwood General Store  
Pierre Chocolates & Ice Cream

Free orchid workshops on Saturday & Sunday for beginners & experienced growers  
Great food on site • Free admission • Free parking • Rain or shine • All activities tented  
635 Wayside Road • Neptune, NJ • 732-922-2635 • Easy access from major highways  
Visit our web site for more information [www.silvaorchids.com](http://www.silvaorchids.com)

*Come for a day or enjoy a "Jersey Shore Weekend"*

## Events in the Northeast

**February 6<sup>th</sup> to April 11<sup>th</sup> E Orchids: A Cultural Odyssey**, U.S. Botanic Garden, 100 Maryland Ave. SW, Washington, DC. (202) 225-8333

**February 27<sup>th</sup> to April 11<sup>th</sup> E The Orchid Show: Cuba in Flower**, at **The New York Botanical Garden**, 200th St and Kazimiroff Blvd, Bronx, NY. 718-817-8700 [www.nybg.org](http://www.nybg.org)

**April 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> E Genesee Region Orchid Society Show**, Eisenhart Auditorium, Rochester Museum & Science Ctr, 657 East Ave, Rochester, NY. (585) 872-5658 [rutheb1234@yahoo.com](mailto:rutheb1234@yahoo.com)

**April 10<sup>th</sup> E Eastern Maine Orchid Society Plant Sale**, University of Maine, Clapp Greenhouses, Orono, ME. Denis Roessiger; (207) 326-9211; or Green Care; (207) 848-5453.

**April 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> E Toronto Artistic Orchid Association Show**, Chinese Cultural Center, 5183 Sheppard Ave. E, Scarborough, Ont. Contact: John Li, (905) 607-3559; [johnkli@yahoo.com](mailto:johnkli@yahoo.com).

**April 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> E North Jersey Orchid Society Show & Sale**, Frelinghuysen Arboretum, 53 East Hanover Avenue, Whippany, NJ. Contact: 973-875-4014 or 973-762-8040

**April 23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> E Southern Tier Orchid Society Show**, Oakdale Mall Center Court, Reynolds Rd. and Harry L. Dr, Johnson City, NY. (607) 217-5889 [deejanis@yahoo.com](mailto:deejanis@yahoo.com).

**May 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> E Staten Island Orchid Society Fest**, Snug Harbor Cultural Center & Botanical Garden, Staten Island, NY. Patrick Cammarano; (718) 948-6439; [murudy@aol.com](mailto:murudy@aol.com).

**May 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> E Central Pennsylvania Orchid Society Show**, Ag Arena, Penn State Campus, State College, PA. Contact: Cathy Riemer, (814) 353-8741.

**May 8<sup>th</sup> E Northeast Judging Center Symposium**, St. Andrews Episcopal Church, 232 Durham Rd., Madison, CT. Contact: Robert Winkley, (617) 282-7351, [rwinkley@aol.com](mailto:rwinkley@aol.com).

**May 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> E Orchid Society of Northwestern Pennsylvania Show**, JMC Arena, 423 W. 38th St., Erie, PA. Contact: Marion Morton, (814) 838-2522.

**May 22<sup>nd</sup> E "Exploring Native Flora with Uli Lorimer"**, Glynwood, Cold Spring, NY. Contact Anita Barber 845-265-3338, [www.glynwood.org](http://www.glynwood.org)

These events and others around the country can be found online at: [www.aos.org/aos/events](http://www.aos.org/aos/events) courtesy of the AOS. Check this website before traveling to see if there may be a local orchid event at your destination. Everything published in *Orchids* magazine is also on the web page.

