# Odontoglossum Alliance Newsletter

Volume 4

August 2007

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Are Odontoglossums "Hobby Plants"?

by Robert Burkey

Recently a learned AOS judge presented a lecture on new catesetum hybridizing trends. Three First Class Certificates have been given to absolutely black flowers from a cross in the new Fredclarkeara genus. Commercially minded members in the audience asked: are these flowers suitable for mass market sales? The speaker responded that although this cross produces "perfect flowers," the chances of seeing them in Home Deopt are next to nil. The flowers do not last long, the foliage is big and mars easily, the pendulous spike habit makes it difficult to pack/transport, and the color, although novel, is not bright and cheery. Black flowers are not a decorator's dream. Instead, he said, these are highly desirable "hobby plants."

What is a "hobby plant"? Serious orchid collectors have always specialized in hard-to-find varieties, determined by their proclivities for specific types. There are species specialists, botanical specialists, minature seekers, big-flower collectors, antique hybrid collectors, etc. Some, though certainly not all, commercial growers are very conscious of the hobbyist market. Not so long ago, an awarded Paph. Saint Swithin would be happily purchased for a high sum by a collector partial to divisions of the best plants.

But times have changed. Hobbyists are less likely to buy an awarded potanara division or an awarded cymbidium division if they suspect the plant is destined for mass market meristemming. They'll just wait for the meristems to be offered at reduced prices or set their sights on more exotic fare.

A "hobby plant" may be meristemmed also, but in smaller runs owing to the fact that the plant will not have mass market attributes. It might be offered on a commercial grower's website, or ebay, or at orchid shows, or it might be grown in small runs by a commercial grower to sell to selected garden centers as a novelty. It would be a variety which is not something else: namely, an orchid which would be mass produced by one of

several orchid factories that presently dominate the orchid market. As smaller commercial growers, we often hear from our customers: please send us something that's not at Home Depot or Trader Joe's.

So, a "hobby plant" can be defined broadly as something that is "different." It can be the fredclarkeara with its startling dark black color, a whimsically "crippled" peloric cymbidium, or an obscure species not normally seen in cultivation.

But could the criteria of 'different' be expanded to anything that is not mass-produced?

Although oncidiinae intergenerics are common staple in the mass market, we rarely see odontoglossums at Trader Joe's with their other offerings of nicely bloomed plants and a \$14.99 price tag. But why is this? From the early commercial orchid days in England odontoglossums have demonstrated high public appeal. They have large spectacular blooms with exciting color combinations and a high flower count per spike, all on relatively compact plants. Don't these qualities make for a perfect mass-market variety?

There are obvious draw-backs to the commercial exploitation of standard odontoglossums for the mass-market. They are long to grow to flowering, they cannot be meristemed easily, and they require cool temperatures for optimum production. When faced with the decision to grow a phalaenopsis or an odontoglossum as a mass-produced crop, the choice is simple. Why aren't suitable odontoglossum clones available from the 60+commercial orchid labs in Thailand? And even if the stock were available, why would a grower in Florida, Hawaii, or Southern California try to adapt greenhouses for their production? The production cost would make the plants too expensive for the wholesale market.

However, in saying this, we cannot be blind to foreign sources which promise to invade our commercial markets. Although Taiwan hasn't dedicated countless hectares to odontoglossum production as they have with phalaenopsis, they reportedly haven't ruled this out as a future goal. A Japanese grower has been successful in cloning some very nice odontoglossum and odontiodas for the commercial market. With lower growing costs at his nursery in mainland China, perhaps it could be economically feasible to grow large quantities aimed at the American mass-market. And we all are aware of Dutch mass production of Vuyls. Cambria and other odontoglossum types, albeit mostly intergenerics. Given the weak dollar and the USDA's recent rulings to allow potted orchids from Taiwan into the U.S., the time might be ripe for Holland to follow suit.

But even if the 3700 Wal-Marts in the U.S. have a speckling of meristemed odontiodas from Japan or cambrias from Holland, will this change the perception of a large odontoglossum as a "hobby plant"? It probably already has. Which is all the more reason for serious hybridizers to persist in trying to achieve six inch standard flowers and expand the color ranges into more and more exotic types. Including a black flower a la fred-clarkearas. Surely we will not see the quality of odontoglossums like Odm. Black Diamond 'Rustic Canyon' HCC/AOS, Odm. Wine Butterfly 'Patience' HCC/AOS, and Odm. Bruce Cobbledick 'Solar Place' AM/AOS, from three fine members of the Odontoglossum Alliance, published in the December issue of Orchids, anytime soon on the mass market. They have been developed and/or collected by these discerning members of our Alliance because the plants are special. As such, they fit the criteria of being "hobby plants."

But perhaps opportunity lies in elevating the profile of hobby-type odontoglossums. We need more small and medium-sized nurseries to develop and propagate odontoglossums for a public who desires a pretty orchid that

is 'different' and 'special'. This audience could be discerning collectors or neophytes who are bored with mass-marketed fare. We in the Odontoglossum Alliance would do well to promote the unique quality of odontoglossums to new collectors. But we cannot generate new hobbyist customers if the plants are not available to buy both by individuals and niche commercial orchid vendors. This may entail Alliance members leaving their customary insularity and becoming more proactive in producing and presenting our favorite orchid type.

Brightly colored odontoglossums will never lose their innate appeal. Fifteen flowers on a long arching spike with beautifully contrasting patterns of color are aesthetically appealing. They are special like a Gower Ramsey oncidium is NOT special. They are prima donna orchids. They have an exalted history. They have character, and value.

Growing orchids is a rewarding hobby. And if odontoglossums are the consummate "hobby plants," we should encourage others to partake of the enjoyment they give.

### President's Letter

I'm hoping that everyone is enjoying the summer warmth Here in Niagara we have experienced some very hot and humid days, but there have been cool periods in between so the overall effect so far has not been too bad. One of the strange things that I have noticed is that there an incredible number of my Odont. Alliance plants in spike at this time of the year, so many, that I'm sure its well over 100 plants. As usual the flowers that I have allowed to open are not very good and very deformed So with a heavy heart and a hot sterlized clipper I have removed almost all of the summer inflorescences, it was extremely hard to do.

As you have seen in the May Newsletter the Show in Medellin, Colombia is going to be very exciting. There are many things to do and see. Jaun Felipe Posada is very happy to have the Odontoglossum Alliance meeting in conjunction with the show. I have already started getting my required immunizations in preparation of the trip. It would be wonderful to see a large number of Alliance members from all over the globe attend these meetings.

John Miller mentioned a few things that he has noticed in his Alliance plants. After reading this I also realized that I had seen something very unusal for my collection. I have a number of Colmonara Wildcatts (simply because they are easy growers and reliable bloomers and work very well in displays), one of these is a clone 'Lorene' AM/AOS which I took to the last show of the spring season at the end of April. The unusal thing was that the inflorescence that was in bloom at 4' with 4 branches and about 60 flowers was the 4th inflorescence on the same bulb. It had bloomed 4 times each time with a single inflorescence, two spikes were on each side of the bulb between bulb and large leaves, the other two spikes were on either side but between the large innner leaves and the smaller secondary outer leaves. Each inflorescence had been about the same size. The plant had been to at least 3 shows. It had been repotted in March of 2005 and is just now starting a new growth from that very floriferous bulb.

Mario Ferruisi, President Odontoglossum Alliance

## Belated Board Meeting Summary

The Board of the Odontoglossum Alliance held a meeting on February 17, 2007 in conjunction with the annual banquet at the Pacific Orchid Exposition in San Francisco, California. Several topics were discussed.

The main topic of discussion was the proposal to hold the next Odontoglossum Alliance meeting in conjunction with the upcoming show in Medellin, Colombia in August of 2008. This show would be held as part of the annual flower festival and the Pleurothallid Alliance is considering holding their meeting as well, so there will be much to see and do. Additionally, side trips and visits to non-orchid related sites can be arranged. Juan-Felipe Posada brought preliminary programs and brochures about Medellin, discussed the accommodations and some of the logistics. Suffice it to say that this is a highly-coordinated event with lots of people working on it in Colombia and it promises to be an outstanding show and meeting. Several board members took action items to look into inviting speakers, finding travel agents, etc. The critical thing for potential attendees to keep in mind at this point is that Juan-Felipe MUST have a total headcount for Alliance visitors by May 1, 2008 so that he can make hotel and travel arrangements within Colombia. Members must make their own arrangements to get from their home countries to Medellin. More information about this exciting event will be published in the Newsletter in the future.

The Newsletter also received quite a bit of discussion. John Miller is in need of material and suggestions were made to have a review of all past Dugger awards (Steve Beckendorf agreed to write this), an annual review of Odontoglossum-related AOS and RHS awards, and a look at past FCCs. Additionally, it was suggested that we look into sending the Newsletter by email to save money. John currently uses Quark to write the Newsletter and the resulting file is too large to send via email, so this isn't a viable option right now.

We also discussed the web page and what could be done to make it more useful. Suggestions were made to put more photos there along with cultural information, award information, past newsletters, scans of older books with Odontoglossum-related materials, plants for sale, and meeting information. Mario suggested that we look into the cost of having it professionally designed (Tom Etheridge agreed to get quotes for this). Any other suggestions for web content and/or volunteers to maintain the page are welcome.

In other matters, we discussed whether we should expand the Alliance to include all Oncidiniae. Please let the Board know if you would like to see this happen. A question was raised about increasing the endowment for the Dugger Award but we chose not to do so at this time. Finally, we voted to make Gerald McRaith the first Honorary Member of the Alliance.

If there are topics that you would like to have addressed by the Board, suggestions for the Newsletter, ideas for future direction of the Alliance or suggestions for the web page, please send them to Tom Etheridge (tomandlu@rollyridge.com, 541-754-2335).

# Odontoglossum Alliance Meeting

The Odontoglossum Alliance meeting will be held in conjunction with the Orchids, Birds and Flowers Show in Medellin, Colombia 5-10 August 2008. The principal meeting date for the Odontoglossum Alliance is Friday 8 August. A good description of the show and events was published in the May 2007 Odontoglossum Alliance newsletter. We have a contact in Colombia who will coordinate with us on the meeting, organization and information for attendees. She is Victoria Fisher Duque.

I have emailed her with a few questions and I am pleased to provide the questions and her answers. The day of the meeting is a set of lectures, a dinner and a trip to Juan Felipe's greenhouses. Victoria assures us that here will be time to attend to all three events. You could plan on attending the trip to Colomborquideas or one of the other events and still be back in time to attend the dinner later in the evening. The lectures will be at the dinner with two speakers of 30 minutes each for the planned joint dinner with the Pluerothallid Alliance.

The lecture and dinner location is not yet definite, but the thinking is to have it at the Intercontinental Hotel, the official hotel of the event. It will definitely NOT be at the Botanical Gardens.

Juan Felipe Posada, the show chairman, plans on organizing the lectures. Of course he would like any suggestions and members are encouraged to contact him directly. Contact information for both Victoria and Juan Felipe are listed below. Victoria tells me Juan Felipe is thinking of having two Colombian lectures, one on Odontoglossums and the other on the Pluerothallids.

The best choice for the hotel is the Intercontinental. The Orchids, Birds and Flowers Show is always held during the annual Flower festival in Medellin, a time when hotel occupancy is very high, so Victoria suggests that if you are planning on attending you should make your reservation NOW.

Registration for the show is US\$15.00 and it is an additional US\$30.00 to attend the preview party.

I have sent several messages both E Mail and phone to the head of the Pluerothallid Alliance and received no reply. I am happy to coordinate with them, but I must first find an acceptable method of communication. If there are any of our Odontoglossum Alliance members who are also members of the Pluerothallid Alliance, perhaps they could help in this.

Contact information:

Victoria Fisher Duque

vdque@une.net.co

Juan Felipe Posada

JFPosada@estra.com.co

# The Saga of My Continuing Battle with Scale

By John Miller

I have battled soft scale for 4-5 years now. Before that I had an infestation of hard scale. One application of what I remember as Cygon-E and that disappeared never to return again. But then the infestation of soft scale appeared. I started to eradicate it by finding the plant with scale, and then use a toothbrush to remove it. That worked for a time. I would find a plant, clean it up. Things would be fine for a while. Then I would find another plant or two and repeat the process until there were more plants than I could clean.

The weather pattern here in southern Massachusetts is fairly mild with being on the ocean delaying the real warm-up of spring and summer into early July. Then the night temperatures rise into the high 60's and low 70's with the humidity climbing well above 50% day and night. Perfect weather for scale reproduction. While I would clean up the plants each spring, during repotting, taking off all the scale, the warmer weather saw blooming scale again. I tried Cygon-E. I disliked the chemical. I had to dress up in clothing and masks to spray the plants. It seemed to kill the scale. The plants did not like it very much as the odonts ended up with mottled leaves. The scale always returned in the summer. I tried Enstar and thought for a while I had the key to success. No such luck. It held down the scale for a while, but it again returned.

At the San Francisco Orchid Show in February 2007 I told my sad story to Valerie Henderson. She introduced me to Josh Chandler. He proceeded to give me a variety of methods to rid my greenhouse of scale. I took copious notes with a self-imposed resolution to get at it. But during the winter months the scale is very dormant and you are lulled into a complacent mode of believing the problem was solved. Well by June I realized the problem had not gone away. I looked for my notes with no success. Valerie came to my rescue with

Josh's e-mail address. My query to him brought an immediate response. I will quote from his first e-mail to me.

"Good to hear from you. My best recommendation is to use an oil spray. I make my own at home using 3 Tbsp. Oil (vegetable, olive, etc), 2-3 drops dishwashing detergent, and a gallon of water. You will need to shake it up well and keep it shook up while you are spraying. Spray all surfaces on the plant to run off. Take whatever you have left in the gallon jug and use it to water all the mix. Many times scale/mealy bug will hide down in the media. Do this 3 times 7 days apart. It should put them down. One thing is the oil will waste any blooms, so avoid the flowers, or just cut em all before spraying. Another option for the oil spray is to acquire some Ultra fine Oil Spray, or any other all seasons oil spray. These sometimes come with a hose end adapter, which makes coverage easier. Bayer has a product called Tree and Shrub Insect control. It is the same chemical that is in Marathion. Mix it up according to directions and water into the mix. It is taken up by the roots. This should be repeated twice about 2 weeks apart. One other caution is to try these things on a few plants and see how they respond. I try not to apply the oil on a very hot day, although as long as the sun is not direct it should be ok. Hope this helps. Let me know if I can help in any way."

I have a small fruit orchard with about 50 trees. I use oil spray twice a year and so had plenty of supply. The Bayer product sounded interesting to me, as it was a systemic. I thought it might give better coverage and be more effective as a systemic treatment. I called my supplier and asked him about the Bayer product. He said they did not carry it, but they had a product he thought would work, called Tristar. I again queried Josh and here is his reply:

"If you can get Tristar, do it. It is what I use for mealy and soft scale. I hesitate to recommend commercial pesticides, because most people can't get them. Tristar with Talus and a surfactant followed a week later by Tristar and surfactant should do the job nicely. Don't forget however, the mother bugs will also be in the media. Might try drenching with Duraguard or Safari. Duraguard is good for residual control. Tristar is the best chemical in its class for application as a spray. It is not truly systemic, but has translaminar activity. I love it! Sounds like a good plan. Let me know is I can help in any way. Thanks, Josh"

I called my supplier and ordered Tristar. It was a little expensive, but as the supplier said "You spend more than that on your orchids." The price for 8 ounces of Tristar was \$200.00. The recommendation is from 1 to 2 teaspoons per gallon. From a product standpoint I was very impressed. The directions were very clear and attached to the product. They sent a measuring device that was cleverly fitted with the packaging. The product its self was formulated as fine sand. There was no dust, it pours easily or could be spooned out without residual particles left on the spoon. It dissolved easily and quickly. A couple of teaspoons in a cup of water dissolved immediately. I had for my orchard a surfactant, Latron B 1956. So I went to work to spray the greenhouse.

My sprayer for the orchard is a 15-gallon power sprayer, which uses the power-take off of the lawn tractor. It has a 30 foot hose and seemed ideal except I could not get the tractor close enough to the house with the power connection. Building an extension cord was the answer. While the actual spraying took only a few minutes, the preparation, clean up, dressing and undressing took well over an hour. Of course I made a number of mistakes which I corrected on the second spraying a week later. The second time I sprayed, it was over 80 degrees F outside, but much hotter in my suit. When I finished and removed the protective clothes it looked like I had taken a shower with my clothes on.

A week after my first spraying I checked the results. I had picked out a dozen plants, both odonts and cattleyas that had infestations of scale. Every one of those plants had dried and dead scale on them. I was elated. The second spraying, a week later also showed only dead scale. I have followed up with a dose of Enstar. So here it is in the heat and humidity of the summer, the best time for raising scale and I don't see any except

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for dead ones. I have no blotching on the leaves like that I received when I used Cygon-E. (I bought a gallon of the stuff and have plenty left.)

I know Tristar is expensive. Talus is equally expensive at about \$165.00. Safari at 3 lbs is \$362.00 and Duraguard is \$208.00 for 1 gallon, the smallest quantity sold. Enstar is no give away at \$82.00 for 5 ounces. But I can certainly recommend the use of Tristar so far as being expensive, but cost effective. If my green-house remains free of soft scale through the winter I shall be grateful and thankful to both Josh and Tristar.

# Rapid Response Plan

I found during the planning of the Odontoglossum Alliance meeting in San Francisco in February 2007 that the last newsletter that could be reliably received by our members was about 3 months ahead of the meeting. This made recent developments and announcements relating to the event impossible to quickly communicate to those planning on attending. Next year we are planning on the Odontoglossum Alliance meeting to be held in early August in Medellin, Colombia. That date prevents the August newsletter from carrying any recent information since the May newsletter from being distributed to our members. Therefore I am setting up a rapid response and information system that will be used to communicate with those that desire to be included. This will be an E-Mail distribution system. With this newsletter is a form to establish this information distribution system. For those interested in being kept informed this way, please complete the information in the form and either mail it to:

Odontoglossum Alliance PO Box 38 Westport Point, MA 02791

You may if you so desire e-mail the same information to me (John Miller) at <a href="jemiller49@aol.com">jemiller49@aol.com</a>. Please use the Subject: Odont08 Meeting. I get many many e-mails, most of which are unwanted. I make liberal use of the delete function. The use of the Subject title will help me to not delete your message. After a suitable period of time I will send out a trial run on this system. I plan to number the messages sent out so people can tell if they have received all that has been distributed.

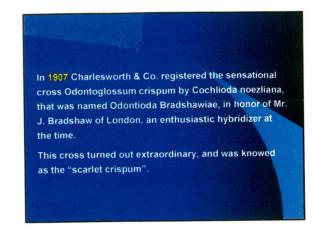
I hope this idea works.

### Odontoglossum HBK

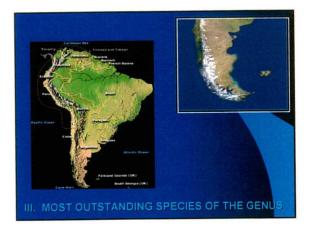
Juan Felipe Posada talk at the San Francisco meeting of the Odontoglossum Alliance, 17 February was one of the highlights of the evening. His talk :Odontoglossums HBK" as presented was a shortened version, shorten because of time constraints. His complete talk is a power point presentation with very interesting color illustrations. There are some 114 slides altogether. With Juan Felipe's permission I shall be publishing his complete talk in a series of newsletters commencing with the May 2007 issue. The slides are printed six per page and the sequence order is illustrated in the table below. Second Installment

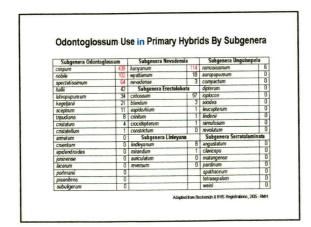
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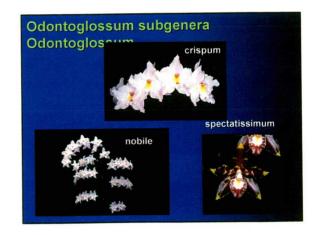














### Odontoglossum crispum Lindl. 1845

#### Synomyms:

- Odontoglossum alexandrae Batem. 1864
- Odontoglossum bluntii Rchb. f. 1864
- Odontoglossum reichenbachianum Lehm. 1883

Discovered in 1841 by K. Theodore Hartweg, near Bogotá, between the towns of Zipaquirá and Pacho, while collecting for the Horticultural Society of London.

The first plants brought to Europe in huge quantities were literally cooked, as in that time everything coming from South America (synonym of TROPICS), required very warm growing conditions. Only some time after, around 1863, the cultural requeriments for these plants were well understood, tropical but from cool climates.

The Odontoglossum crispum is very variable in form and color, its flowers go from pure white to strongly spotted, for this reason it was identified with many different names.

From here the great number of synomyms and varieties described in the past.

Today we recognize three groups or types of Odontoglossum crispum:

Pacho type: has the broader segments that overlap, good rounded flower shapes.

Fusa type: star shaped flowers with narrow segments.

Popayan or Lehmanii type: with smaller flowers and branched inflorescences of many flowers.

The natural hybrid Odontoglossum Andersonianum (crispum x gloriosum) has also been described as variety.

### Odontoglossum nobile Rchb. f 1849

#### Synonym:

Odontoglossum pescatorei Linden 1852

Together with the crispum they are the most variable species of the genus. The flower color goes from the pure white to the yellow and the crimson red markings from a few to strongly striped.

Was discovered by the collectors Funck and Schlim in 1846 in Zuratá, Santander. This specimen with collection number 1429 was sent, possibly via Linden in Brussels, to Reichenbach f. who described it in "Linnaea" in 1849 as Odontoglossum nobile.

The species was described for a second time in 1851, as Odm pescatorei, by Linden in Brussels, when receiving new live specimens. Reichenbach himself forgeting his preceding descripton, used and published in his herbarium the name Odm pescatorei.

In spite of being so familiar to us in literature and cultivation the name Odm pescatorei is a synonym, and the valid name according to the rules is Odm nobile.

### Odontoglossum spectatissimum Lindl. 1852

Synonym:

Odontoglossum triumphans Rehb. f. 1854

The story of this species is somewhat complicated, the first plant was found in the vicinity of Pamplona by Linden in November 1842 and was provided with his collection number 1263. This specimen was sent to England where it was incorrectly identified as Odm hallii and as such placed in the herbarium.

Additional discoveries by Schlim and others suffered the same fate. In 1852 Lindley obtained another specimen from Linden which he recoguized as a new species and described it in "Folia Orchidaceae" as Odontoglossum spectatissimum.

Since the flower which he described had a relatively simple callus, two years later Reichenbach felt obliged to prepare a new description, when he, also from Linden, received a flower with a strongly subdivided callus.

Reichenbach then, explained Lindley's flower as an "anomaly" and described his flower as Odm triumphans in "Bonplandia" in 1854.

The use of this last name became the most common, but the valid one is the first: Odm spectatissimum.

Odm spectatissimum is also a very variable species in the distribution of its markings. The flowers of yellow background can be densily covered with brown spots, scarcely marked with light points or have petals without markings at all.

The structure of the callus varies considerably in the number of lateral teeth. All this is the cause of the different botanical identifications.

### Odontoglossum harryanum Rchb. f. 1886

This species coming from Colombia (Santa Rosa, Antioquia), was introduced in England by the Horsman Co. and passed on to Veitch & Co. without giving the origin. The first plant flowered in August, 1886 and was described in the same year by Reichenbach, who dedicated it to Mr. Harry Veitch.

The few specimens of the original locality were soon exhausted and the species remained lost until the middle of the twentieth century.

The Odontoglossum harryanum shows a variation in the intensity of its color from almost uniformly blackhish-brown to strongly stripped in green.

The number and size of its flowers is also very variable. The most closely related species is Odm wyattianum from Perú, described only in 1928 by Wilson when Reverend Paul Wyatt of Belford, England, presented a flowered plant at the Royal Horticultural Society in London.

I personaly think that the two species Odm harryanum and Odm wyattianum were confused (mixed up) before the description of the Peruvian species in 1928.

The dominant color characters that Odm wyattiamun transmits, very different from those of Odm harryanum, have taken me to think that many of the first crosses or hybrids registered in the early 1900, could have been made with Odm wyattianum instead of Odm harryanum as they appear in Sander's Register.











