

❖Odontoglossum Alliance❖

Newsletter

August 1998

Talk at the 16 WOC Vancouver, Canada

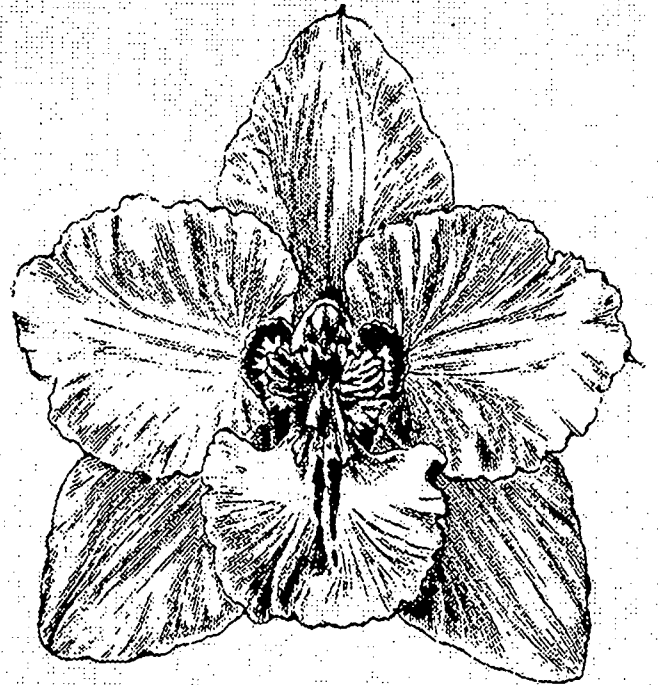
by Juan Felipe Posada

The Colombian territory is located in the tropical equatorial zone at both sides of the Equator, between the geographic coordinates: 12° 27' latitude north and 4° 13' south, and between 66° 50' and 79° 01 longitude West. The total surface is of 1,141,748 Km and a total population around 35 million.

When Alexander von Humboldt arrived to America in 1799, 200 years ago he really found something unbelievable, natural habitats of such beauty and diversity, that it was almost impossible to realize the different feelings experienced. He traveled through coasts, rivers and forests in Venezuela and Colombia, discovering and describing plants and animals of this new world. His collected specimens arrived in Europe together with marvelous reports that revealed this great treasure: the real discovery of the Americas. Humboldt also visited Ecuador and Mexico before returning to Europe in 1804.

Since those days of discoveries and systematic descriptions, a great number of Colombian and foreign scientists have devoted to study the plants and animals of America. In spite that two centuries of work have passed, our knowledge of the biodiversities is still incipient, to such a point that we probably only know about 10% of the different animal and plant species found in Colombia. At the same time the transformation processes and the environmental damages are leading to the disappearance of many forms of life, with which our own existence is threatened.

From every point of view Colombia is considered as one of the countries in the world, with the broadest diversity. With only 0.7% of the worlds continental surface, Colombia accounts for about 14% of the described fauna and flora species. And of these plant species 1/3 is considered endemic to Colombia. 15% of the classified orchid species are present in our country. The multiplicity of ecosystems in Colombia is related with its great variety of climates, its geography and its history. The location



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of our country in the tropical equatorial region, with a stable climate, has allowed the great diversification of species and forms of life. Colombia, located in the northern part of South America serves as a bridge where elements from the north and the south converge. In the same way, the appearance of the Andes in the way of three mountain ranges, brought with it the great diversity of climates, that go from the very cold and freezing snow capped peaks, to the terribly hot and humid Pacific forests (Choco) and the warm dry northern deserts (Guajira). Rain precipitation is also very variable through out the country.

With the help of modern technology, combining satellite and on site inventories, 62 different terrestrial and marine ecosystems have been recognized. The largest part of Colombia's continental territory is covered by tropical rain forests, in the Amazonian region and in the Pacific coast, conserved today in about 70%.

The Andean Region that represents around 25% of the total area in Colombia, has the highest population density, the biggest cities and 75% of the inhabitants. This Andean Zone presents the largest variety of climates and landscapes.

In the Andes Mountains we find the cloud forests, that today conserve only 27% of its original covering. And it is in this Andean Region where the greatest biodiversity is found. *Odontoglossums*, *Miltoniopsis* and many *Oncidium* come from this area.

The transformation of the natural ecosystems caused by the human activities is one of the main direct causes of the biological diversity loss. Deforestation and construction of public works can transform complex habitats in biologically simplified neighborhoods. In the case of deforestation, its main cause is the transformation associated to agricultural and farming systems, followed by the consumption of lumber and firewood.

During the last decades another important factor in some regions is the deforestation associated with illegal cultures, cocaine and heroine.

The drug producing area is increasing every day mainly because the peasants find this type of agriculture, as the highest income alternatives to survive. The expansion of narcotics has represented to Colombia the destruction of 1,074,500 hectares of original habitats specially in the rain forests. (that is more than 2.5 million acres.)

In these particular cases growers need fertile land without any trees giving shade. Consequently the top of the mountains where many rivers originate are deforested to allow for these plantations. Illegal growers need to add all types of fertilizers, insecticides and fungicides so that these plants can grow fast and resist at the most the eradication fumigations. Then comes Police control using strong herbicides trying to destroy completely the plantations. At the same time that herbicide fumigation takes place, the farmers just move a step forward, inside the forest to prepare new land for new plantations. Refining and processing the drugs from the leaves and flowers demands also a great amount of other chemicals, that are after usage, dumped in the water fountains and in the soil. All this concentration of so many kinds of chemicals is really introducing a big disorder in the natural habitats and environment.

The guerrilla or subversive movements have found in the narcotic industry the best possible deal. Acting as guards and helpers of all this forbidden business they are receiving huge amounts of money. As a consequence, entry or visits to these zones is extremely dangerous and study or classification of many possible new species is postponed for the moment.

All of the above will affect the biodiversity or even take to the local extinction of species through two main features the reduction of the available habitats and the isolation of populations, affecting their reproduction possibilities.

Another agent that can lead to the loss of biodiversity is the over exploitation of species for living or for commercial purposes.

Introduction and transplantation of foreign species is another factor that has received minor attention, but that equally can produce changes and/or losses in the biodiversity. Pollution and contamination are other reasons for natural habitat changes. In front of the global problems that biodiversity faces, it is necessary to adopt urgent steps, that will allow its conservation and sustainable use. And this is why most of our nations are celebrating and signing different Biological Diversity Agreements: The Convention of Rio de Janeiro in 1992

and the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 are some examples.

The Alexander von Humboldt Institute in Colombia promotes, coordinates and realizes investigations contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of the biodiversity. In their list of extinction endangered plants, the orchids are heading the list with approximately 270 species in danger; obviously the classics and most beautiful: masdevallia, draculas, Cattleya, Miltonopsis, Odontoglossum, and so forth.

A study from Harvard University states that 20% of the world's biodiversity will already be disappeared by the year 2000. And we only some days away from that date.

The future of our biodiversity depends on our capacity to conserve it, through the establishment of protected areas, genetic banks, restoration of ecosystems and species, and by stopping the deterioration processes. In the same way, reduction of environmental damage caused by certain types of development, has to take place.

Not all can be bad news, in order to protect ecologically important areas, Colombia established in 1977 the National Park System. Today this system counts with 46 protected areas, with an extension of 9.2 million hectaresequivalent to about 10% of our territory.

But in order to cover all the different ecosystems and have a good coverage, Colombia should have under protection 35% of its territory, and keep a better control, as even though these areas are controlled, 18% of their area has already been affected by the colonization process.

A Marshall Plan with the help of the international community for a social development with different alternatives as growing oil palms, rubber, tropical fruits, reforestation or even cattle, is probably the only real way to find a solution to this very serious problem.

To show you the evolution that has just been described, I have chosen some examples that show this in our Odontoglossum Alliance: Let us first take *Odontoglossum crispum*. Here are some paintings of the original species as it was massively introduced to Europe in the 18 hundreds. Thanks to the beautiful paintings for those days' artists and through the descriptions of the plants and flowers brought to the shows and meetings, we can see today the original specimens that covered our forests before human intervention or destruction.

Many of these flowers are comparable to the new day hybrids that are being presented here in our show.

I am sure that many hybridizers would be very happy to work with some of these varieties if they were still available.

Odm. pescatorei - (now *nobile*) shows perhaps less change.

Miltonopsis vexillaria: here the change since the early years is also not as dramatic as in the *crispum*'s case.

Odm. nevadense has not changed except that it is now extinct in its natural habitat. Here are some other examples of species that need our help: conservation through propagation in our greenhouses is essential so we can see them again.

Two centuries after Alexander von Humboldt's voyages, scientists continue their work to document the biodiversity in Colombia. If you could once again go through Humboldt's route, you could find that many of the marvels described in his diary have disappeared without us not even having known them. Now we have to content ourselves with the text descriptions and images of those day's artists. This fact reminds us an irrefutable truth:

EXTINCTION IS FOREVER

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Editors Note:

Juan Felipe Posada delivered this talk at the 16th World Orchid Conference in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada in April 1999. The pictures in the newsletter are an important part of the lecture. Unfortunately the pictures became wet during shipment from Colombia to the US. Since these were the only ones available, I decided to go ahead with printing them. I apologize for their condition.

By_Laws and Election Results

The Revised By-Laws were approved by all those that voted with only one dissenting vote. The vote was 46 to 1 in favor of adoption. I will now submit the By-Laws to Registry of Charitable Trusts in California to replace the original by-laws. Notice will be given in the newsletter when this process is complete. In the meantime the Alliance will continue to operate under the original By-Laws.

Board of Directors

All nominees were elected to be directors. The Chairman is Helmut Rohrl. The following is the current Board of Directors

Helmut Rohrl, Chairman
Juan Felipe Posada
Roger Williams
Mario Ferrusi

Robert Hamilton
Tom Perlite
James Rassmann

Odontoglossum Alliance Compendium

The Odontoglossum Compendium which is a collection of material from the Odontoglossum Alliance newsletters, was printed and available for sale at the 16th World Conference in Vancouver. 100 copies were printed and these sold out completely on the day they were offered. The previous newsletter asked members to indicate an interest in obtaining a copy. The results of that survey were that a sufficient number indicated interest that the Compendium will have a second printing. When this is completed a notice will be put in the then current newsletter. These will be sold to our members at a price under the same circumstances as the sale in Vancouver. This was a price sufficient to cover the production costs and mailing with a very small margin. Following a reasonable time of offering to members, the unsold Compendiums will be sold to the American Orchid Society Book Store where they will be available at a significantly increased price. The Alliance is very pleased by the response the Compendium received.

Thanks to Russ Vernon

At the 16th World Orchid Conference, Russ Vernon offered for sale T-shirts with Odontoglossums featured in a bold presentation. Russ generously contributed the results of the sale, less his production costs, to the Odontoglossum Alliance. Our thanks go out to Russ.

Carl Withner Contribution

Carl Withner has made a very interesting and worthy contribution to the Odontoglossum Alliance. He purchased a number of years ago a small book, printed in French, a handbook entitled Les Odontoglossums by Léon Duval, printed in 1900. He has authorized the Alliance to use the material to re-copy and make it available to our members. Our current plan is to translate the chapters and run the translated chapters in the newsletter. When we have completed translation and printing we will reproduce the handbook in its original form (in French) along with the English translation and make it available for sale to our members.

To quote Carl Withner; "The information is clear, concise and to the point. There is a lot of history; the illustrations are fine and numerous; and the tables at the end detailed and helpful. Also the book was passed over by Bockemühl - I presume because of its rarity and purely horticultural orientation."

The Alliance is delighted with the contribution. Our members can look forward to seeing the chapters in the forthcoming newsletters and eventually a complete book with the reproduced illustrations.

Several Proposed Odontoglossum Alliance Projects

The Odontoglossum Alliance undertook the establishment of an American Orchid Society Trophy to be awarded each year for the Best Odontoglossum Awarded that year. This endowment fund now is established with the American Orchid Society and presently has an endowment of \$6000.00. In addition contributions continue to come to be made and an additional \$670.00 will shortly be added to the endowment fund. The name of the award is The Robert B. Dugger Odontoglossum Award.

There is some thought that we have now established this award and that the Alliance should undertake some other worthy project associated with the Odontoglossum Alliance.

Two such projects have been suggested and a third has been mentioned as a possibility.

Importation of Bolivian Odontoglossum species.

Roberto Vasquez gave a fascinating talk at the 16th World Orchid Conference. His talk will be published in a subsequent newsletter. He illustrated in his talk a number of the 16 known odontoglossum species indigenous to Bolivia. Unfortunately Bolivia does not grant CITIES and therefore there one cannot import these lovely plants. The project would be for Roberto to produce seed of these plants in Bolivia, sow and re-plate the plants. Then since CITIES are not required for flasks, these could be transported out of Bolivia and grown where the plants could easily be distributed. The Alliance would undertake the cost of producing species of a size that would have a high measure of survivability. We would then make them available to members at a nominal cost, sufficient to recover our investment and perhaps an amount more. Roberto reported that there were 16 known odontoglossum species in Bolivia. Also Stig Dalström, who has traveled to Bolivia and seen many of them reports that there are some really lovely and striking flowers. When Roberto's talk is published in an upcoming newsletter it will be accompanied by pictures, in color, of a number of these striking species.

Stig Dalström Proposal**Oncidium Research Program**

The Marie Selby Gardens in Sarasota Florida has established an Oncidium Research Program dedicated to taxonomic research in the subtribe Oncidiinae. While this program is established, it does not have a separate funding source other than from the Marie Selby Gardens. Stig Dalström has proposed that a separate and distinct endowment fund be established devoted solely to the conduct of this program. Included with this newsletter is the material Stig has provided.

The proposal would be for the Odontoglossum Alliance be the lead in the establishment of the endowment fund. The Alliance would solicit contributions from its members as well as supporting efforts to obtain other funding sources. The establishment of such an endowment fund would provide that the funds income would be expended only towards the objectives of the Oncidiinae Research Program. To give members some order of magnitude of the desired fund would be to have the fund income support about a man year of activity. Please read carefully the material enclosed as submitted by Stig Dalström. This proposal for an Alliance activity will be carefully considered by your board of directors as well as the other projects proposed.

John Day Sketch Book

John Day in 1889 completed his sketch book of oncidiniiae plants. These are beautifully done. The original book is in the library of Kew Gardens. It has been suggested that this sketch book be reproduced and available to our members as well as other interested parties.

From time to time suggestions as to activities of the Odontoglossum Alliance are proposed. The above three suggestions are the ones known to the editor. It is planned that the Board of Directors examine each of these proposals and come to a recommendation as to what further action would be taken by the Alliance.

New Zealand Odontoglossum Alliance Newsletter

We have not received the New Zealand Odontoglossum Alliance newsletter at this time. When it arrives I will include it with the next mailing of this letter.

MARIE SELBY BOTANICAL GARDENS ONCIDIINAE RESEARCH PROGRAM.

The **Oncidiinae Research Program (ORP)** is dedicated to taxonomic research in the subtribe *Oncidiinae*; *Orchidaceae*. Its mission is to provide the increasing number of orchid hobbyists, as well as professional botanists, with general information and scientific systematic treatments for this large and horticulturally important group of plants. The ORP is administrated by Marie Selby Botanical Gardens (MSBG) and directed by the Orchid Identification Center together with **Stig Dalström**.

ORP works closely with other leading orchid authorities representing MSBG and Missouri Botanical Garden (Calaway Dodson, Robert Dressler), Kew Gardens (Mark Chase) and University of Florida (Norris Williams and Mark Whitten)

Plans for the ORP are...

an illustrated guide to *Oncidium* and allied genera in Colombia. Checklists and Taxonomic treatments of genera in *Oncidiinae* in general and to the *Odontoglossum* and the *Cyrtorchilum* alliances in particular.

Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, Sarasota, Florida, is a non-profit institution, open to the public and specializing in epiphytic plants through programs of Research, Conservation, Education and Display. The scientific facilities include an extensive live plant collection focusing on orchids and bromeliads, a public display house, library, herbarium and an active Research and Conservation Department. The Selby Gardens Herbarium (SEL) contains over 78 000 specimens, of which 1500 are Types, most of these being orchids.

The Orchid Identification Center, directed by John Atwood, PhD, and Curator John Beckner, Accredited Judge of the American Orchid Society, focuses mainly on identification of orchid specimens sent by institutions, growers and collectors throughout the world. The OIC also undertakes research projects in orchid taxonomy and conservation with a focus on Central American and Andean orchids in general and species of *Oncidiinae* and *Maxillariinae* in particular. The OIC files contains a majority of all available information on the subtribes, genera and species of *Orchidaceae*, and constitutes a world leading source of orchid information.

Benefits for donors:

Donations to the ORP are tax deductible.

Donors will be credited in publications resulting from the donations.

Donors will receive copies of any published material resulting from the donations.

Stig Dalström...

works for MSBG as an artist, botanical illustrator and orchid researcher. He does poster motifs, scientific line drawings, vignettes, logos etc. He also manages the Museum Shop where his botanical Art is exhibited and sold. His research is mainly orchid taxonomy in the *Oncidiinae*, specifically the *Odontoglossum* alliance. A number of scientific papers and popular articles have recently been published. Currently (April, 1999), two papers are in press for *Lindleyana*, describing three new *Odontoglossum* species. A revision of the Genus *Solenidiopsis* is accepted for publication and will be featured in the next issue of *Selbyana*. The genus *Odontoglossum* for the Catalogue of Vascular Plants of Ecuador (Jørgensen & León, in press. Missouri Botanical Garden) was finished in 1998. An illustrated treatment of the genus *Odontoglossum* for Flora of

Ecuador, compiled by Calaway Dodson, is being prepared. A CITES Orchid Checklist of the genus *Odontoglossum*, compiled by staff at Kew Gardens, England, is currently reviewed.

works in cooperation with several other orchid taxonomists, mainly Carlyle Luer, Missouri Botanical Garden, and illustrates the publications, including one volume per year of *A Treasure of Masdevallias* (fifteen life size water color illustrations per volume), and one or two volumes of *Icones Pleurothallidinarum* with numerous line drawings. A major contribution in the past was the more than 100 life size watercolor illustrations of the genus *Dracula*. For the same Institution he did the poster for the upcoming Aroid Conference in August-99.

does scientific line drawings for MSBG staff John Atwood, Calaway Dodson, Robert Dressler, Harry Luther, Bruce Holst and others on a continuous basis, mainly for new species descriptions. Various illustration tasks are also performed for the American Orchid Society on an irregular basis.

designed an etched glass image of an *Odontoglossum crispum* for an award to be presented at the World Orchid Conference in Vancouver, 1999.

plans field trips to South America in search for Oncidiinae and Pleurothallidiinae species, on a yearly basis. Numerous new orchids in many genera have been discovered and described in recent years, including species of *Dracula*, *Masdevallia* and *Odontoglossum*.

spends several weeks annually in various herbaria, including Brussels, Kew, Stockholm and Vienna, studying and photographing orchid types and important specimens. All journeys are privately funded.

is an invited speaker for the World Orchid Conference in Vancouver and will give a presentation of the taxonomical status of the genus *Odontoglossum*. He is also a busy speaker for Orchid Societies all over United States and travels extensively.

John Beckner...

is an Accredited Judge of the American Orchid Society since 1963. He is the author of numerous scientific papers on orchids, fern, Florida weeds etc.

is a Research Associate of the University of South Florida Herbarium, Tampa, FL, and the coauthor of a book length History of Botanical explorations in Florida (in press).

has a main interest in orchids of Florida and the West Indies, but also leafless orchids and species of Oncidiinae. He is currently engaged in a project dealing with the genus *Oncidium* in Colombia, together with Dr. Mariano Ospina. He also works with associates, students and volunteers to carry out ecological and conservation projects on orchids.

John T. Atwood...

has completed work with Dora Emilia Mora de Retana on the Oncidiinae of Costa Rica and has also analyzed collections of *Oncidium* from Colombia.

M A R I E S E L B Y B O T A N I C A L G A R D E N S
8 1 1 S O U T H P A L M A V E N U E S A R A S O T A , F L O R I D A 3 4 2 3 6 - 7 7 2 6
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RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT
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23 April 1999

To Whom It May Concern:

Stig Dalström has been developing his vision of the Oncidiinae Research Program as an outgrowth of momentum developed at Selby Gardens in recent years and contacts made with institutions in the tropics, Kew Gardens and the University of Florida. Specifically we have produced a treatment of the Oncidiinae for Costa Rica through Dora Emilia Mora de Retana scheduled to be issued at the time of the World Orchid Conference in Vancouver. John Beckner and I have analyzed all available specimens of *Oncidium* (broad sense) from herbaria in Colombia as well as the extensive collections of Andean specimens largely amassed by Calaway Dodson, Roberto Vasquez, and others. This initial work funded by Fundación Mariano Ospina Perez produced many notes on the diversity of Oncidiinae in Andean South America. Stig Dalström after many years of studying types has developed an impressive knowledge of *Odontoglossum* and alliances including the still undefined genus *Cyrtochilum*.

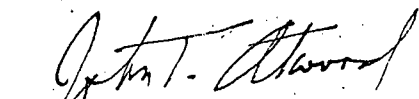
The interest in forming the Oncidiinae Research Program stems in part from needs to produce regional floras limited unnaturally by national boundaries. Funds in the past have been forthcoming separately from National Science Foundation and private individuals, but each source addresses areas limited by political boundaries. As few species respect a national boundary, it is always important to understand the total variation throughout the range of a species, and to understand how the species responds in areas or sympatry with similar species. The Oncidiinae Research Program will allow us to coordinate these separate sources thereby maximizing the effectiveness of funding. We envision a long range goal of the production of a complete illustrated revision of subtribe Oncidiinae. Short range goals include notes and revisions of small groups often addressing questions in need of field work.

The OIC at Selby Botanical Gardens will serve to foster research interest in Subtribe Oncidiinae in particular and to co-ordinate productivity among researchers in Oncidiinae in such a way that species treatments cover the entire range of the subtribe, not just areas within political boundaries. Coordination will be fostered with University of Florida and Kew Gardens particularly with regard to establishment of genera based on analysis of DNA. Research in Oncidiinae will nicely complement current research in the Maxillariinae.

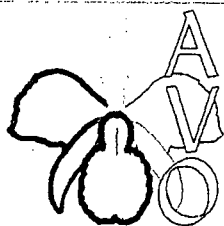
The Marie Selby Botanical Gardens is a logical center for this activity. The research facilities include a current library, rare book collection, herbarium, and nearly complete set of orchid species files (OIC) within the organization of the Department of Research and Conservation. Also, available is an extensive live plant collection featuring orchids and bromeliads. Selby Gardens is located proximally to the neotropics where the Oncidiinae occur minimizing travel costs.

Funding needs include travel to field sites, production of illustrations, research time by unsalaried personnel, and travel to critical herbaria. We look forward to working with everyone interested in seeing a complete revision of the species of Oncidiinae.

Sincerely yours,


John T. Atwood, Director
Orchid Identification Center

Cc: Meg Lowman, Director of Research



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30 July 1999

Odontoglossum Alliance
John Miller, Secretary
P.O.Box 39, Westport Point, MA 02791, USA

Dear Friends:

We take pleasure in announcing the creation of a duly registered Foundation, called "Asociación Venezolana de Orquideología" (A.V.O.), which with a membership of over sixty members and its Board of Directors carries a long tradition of work and efforts on behalf of the orchid development in Venezuela.

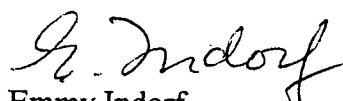
A.V.O.'s prime objective is to sponsor the development of orchideology in our country and within its programs is has established the following:

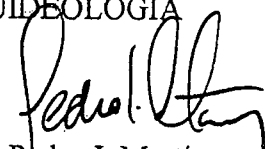
1. To maintain and perfect its judging system and the formation of new judges
2. To grant Certificates under the name of A.V.O. to awarded plants and continue to publish these In the ORQUIDEOPHILO magazine
3. To present basic courses on orchideology
4. To present courses of assymbiotic orchid seed sowing
5. To present workshops on orchid seed sowing and repotting of orchid plants
6. To carry out monthly membership meetings with presentation of orchid conferences.
7. To present an annual International Show
8. To present Orchid Festivals
9. To take part in national orchid shows and in some of the international orchid shows of other countries.

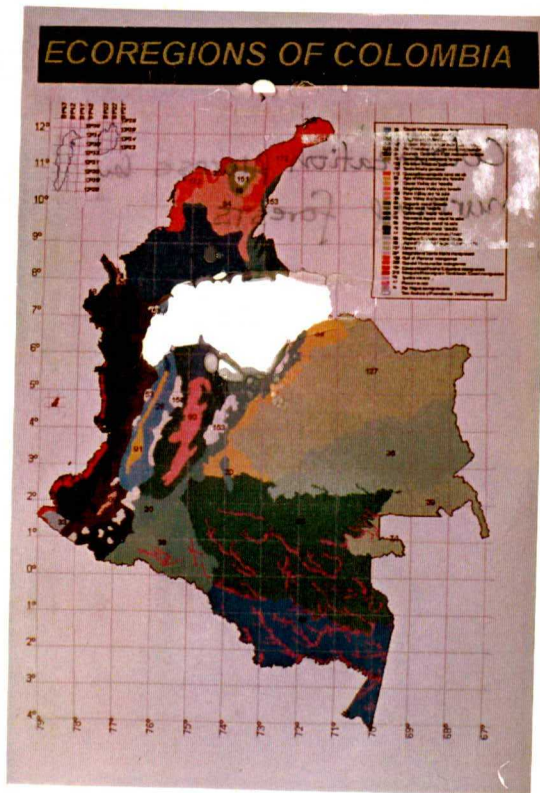
We want to take this opportunity to extend our most cordial invitation to take part in our I International Orchid Show "ORQUICARACAS 2000", which will be presented March 29th through April 2, 2000. We hope you will be able to join us in this event contributing to a better future for our new organization: A.V.O.

Thanking you in advance for your support, we are,
Cordially yours,

ASOCIACIÓN VENEZOLANA DE ORQUIDEOLOGÍA


Emmy Indorf
President


Pedro J. Martínez
Executive Director



Regions of Colombia



Probably Humboldt Traveled This Way



Colonization Process by Burning Forest



Forest Destruction Along the Panamanian Highway



Odm. crispum var. 'Ami Charles'



Odm. crispum var. 'Citratum'



Odm. crispum var. 'Fastuosum'



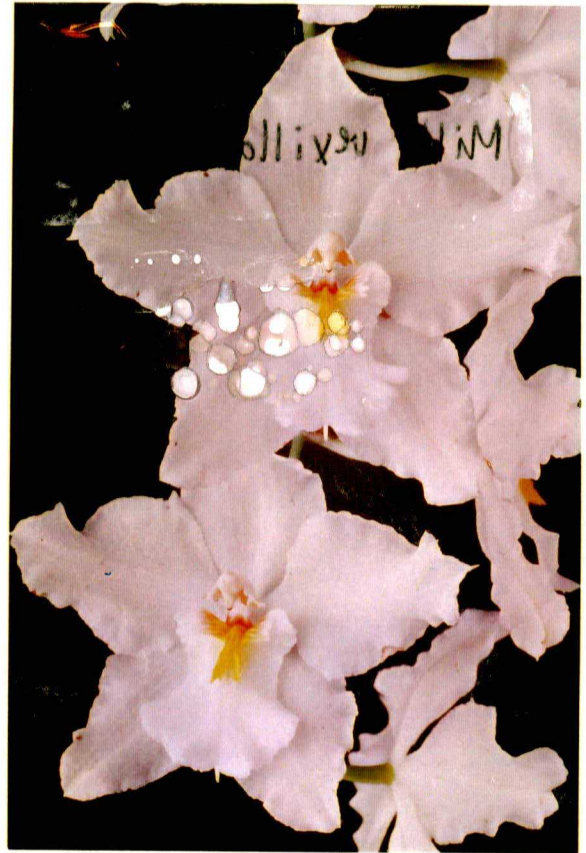
Odm. crispum var. 'Auriferum'



Milt. vexillaria var. 'Carolina'



Odm. pescatorei var. 'Lindeniae'



Odm. nobile



Milt. vexillaria



Odm. nevadense



Odm. ramosissimum



Cyrtorchilums Grown in
Colomborquideas



Odm. crispum var. 'Rayon d'Or'



Odm. crispum