

RHS Orchid Awards

CLARE and JOHAN HERMANS describe the best plants submitted to the RHS Orchid Committee for judging



Paphiopedilum
Le Noir Pre 'Saint
Helier', Award of Merit

David Redfern

RHS Awards

11 August 2009 The RHS Orchid Committee met at the RHS Council Chamber, Vincent Square, London. Two plants were exhibited; one Award of Merit and one Certificate of Cultural Commendation were recommended.

Award of Merit

■ For *Paphiopedilum* Le Noir Pre 'Saint Helier', raised and exhibited by the Eric Young Orchid Foundation, Jersey **1** and **2**. The parents were *Paphiopedilum* Vicard Point and *Paphiopedilum* Shillianum; it was registered by the Foundation in 2009. The cultivar 'Saint Helier' had a good shape and substance.

Paphiopedilum Le Noir Pre 'Saint Helier', Award of Merit. The hairs on the petal margins are clearly visible against the blue background



David Ridgway

2



3

Maxillaria
molitor
'Sinead', Cultural
Commendation



David Ridgway

4



David Ridgeway

5

The flowers had a large, attractive dorsal sepal which was striped deep red on a green-white background, the synsepal was similarly coloured. Both contrasted with the deep burgundy red pouch and the red striped and spotted petals, which had hairy margins.

The plant exhibited had one 30cm tall spike with two open flowers and one bud. Overall flower size was 110 x 180mm. The dorsal sepal was 60 x 70mm; synsepal 60 x 45mm; petals 100 x 30mm; pouch 40 x 25mm, 70mm deep; staminode 12mm wide.

Cultural Commendation

■ To Barry Openshaw, Lancaster for *Maxillaria molitor* 'Sinead' ³ and ⁴. The plant measured 98cm across, and was grown in a 15cm diameter pot. It had 28 flower spikes with 17 open flowers and 11 buds. The species

Above and below *Habenaria medusa* 'Blackwater', Botanical Certificate



David Ridgeway

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was awarded a Botanical Certificate in 1906, for a plant owned by Sir Trevor Lawrence. *Maxillaria molitor* grows as an epiphyte or terrestrial on steep embankments in Ecuador and has yellow-orange flowers. It was first described by Reichenbach f. in 1887.

Grower's advice

Maxillaria molitor 'Sinead'

“ This orchid is grown in a cool house and watered heavily during the spring and summer. Phostrogen powder feed is given throughout the wet period at half strength. During the winter, watering is reduced and then stopped to initiate flowering for the following summer. Heavy watering is resumed in the spring, to the point of the plant being totally saturated. This induces very

fast vigorous growth, which in turn induces profuse flowering. Maxillaries of this type need to have quite a few growths behind them to flower well as the pseudobulbs are very small. The plant has never been repotted and being totally pot-bound induces profuse flowering in combination with the very dry period and the contrasting very wet period.” Barry Openshaw

RHS Awards

15 September 2009 The RHS Orchid Committee met at the Lawrence Hall, Vincent Square, London. One plant was exhibited; no awards were recommended.

RHS Awards

13 October 2009 The RHS Orchid Committee met at the RHS Lawrence Hall, Vincent Square, London. Two plants were exhibited; one Botanical Certificate was recommended.

Botanical Certificate

■ For *Habenaria medusa* ‘Blackwater’, exhibited by Plested Orchids, Crawley, Sussex ⁵ and ⁶. The Botanical Certificate was awarded to encourage further cultivation and exhibition of the species; the striking feature of the wispy flowers was the large white deeply fringed lip. The species comes from Thailand and Southeast Asia where it grows terrestrially in open woodland and forest margins. The species is still sometimes known as *Habenaria myriotricha*, but this name is a synonym. *Habenaria medusa* is very similar to *H. trichosanthes* and *H. beccarii*.

The plant exhibited had one 46cm spike with 14 open flowers and more than eight buds. Overall flower size 50 x 75mm. Dorsal sepal green, 5 x 5mm; lateral sepals green, 5 x 5mm. Petals white, 5 x 1mm; lip white, much divided with central red blotch, 45 x 75mm, spur white with green tip, 35mm long.

The annual George Moore Medal was awarded to E-F Horn, exhibitor of *Paphiopedilum Wössner* China Moon ‘Bärbel’



Grower's advice

Habenaria medusa ‘Blackwater’ (syn. *Habenaria myriotricha*)

“The name refers to the radiating filaments, which are in fact spreading side-lobes of the lip. Medusa was a mythical creature with snakes on her head while *myriotricha* means ‘many hairs’. The species occurs in Thailand, Malaysia, Laos, Java, Sumatra, Sulawesi and Borneo.

Habenaria medusa is a terrestrial orchid, the tuber looks like a small hairy potato. The shoot starts growing from the end of the tuber at the beginning of spring. We pot them up in a mix of 20 percent chopped sphagnum moss rubbed through a sieve, 20 percent coarse Perlite, 20 percent fine bark and 40 percent milled light Finnish sphagnum moss peat. The tubers are potted up when the shoot is about 3cm long into a 9cm standard clear pot. Using a clear pot allows you to monitor the

progress of the roots and new tuber. This is normally done in February or March. They are watered sparingly until the first adult leaves develop and then they are watered and fertilised with the rest of the orchids. Once growing they should never be allowed to go dry. To induce healthy flowers you should maintain a day temperature of 18–25°C and a night-time drop to about 16°C. We grow them in the intermediate greenhouse which has one layer of 50 percent shading. Plants can also be cultivated on an east or west facing windowsill.

Plants develop a flowering stem with leaves on it. The growth can be quite rapid as we have flowered plants from flask in six months. In general, the plants will flower from mid-August to late November. The buds take a long time to open, then the flowers open sequentially, each one lasting three to four weeks.

At the end of flowering the



Sarah Brooks

leaves will start to turn brown, this is the signal to reduce watering. The old tuber will die off but will have produced new offset tubers. When the leaves have died, let the soil go bone-dry. The tubers can now be removed from the compost, cleaned and stored in loose peat kept slightly damp at around 16°C for re-potting in the spring. The tubers will shrivel if kept too dry.” Ian and Janet Pleased

Annual RHS Medals

13 October 2009 The recipients of two annual medals were also decided.

George Moore Medal 2008/9

The George Moore Medal is awarded annually to the exhibitor of the best cultivar of a grex of *Papbiopeditum*, *Selenipedium*, *Phragmipedium* or intergeneric hybrid between these genera. The medal was awarded to E-F Horn of Bittersfeld, Germany for his plant of *Papbiopeditum* Wössner China Moon ‘Bärbel’ ⁷. The cross parents are *Papbiopeditum bangianum* and *P.armeniaceum* and it was first registered by Franz Glanz, Germany, in 2005 (see *Orch. Rev.* June, p114).

Above Part of Burnham Nurseries’ display at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show in 2009, which won them their 20th Chelsea Gold Medal

Below In 2007 Burnham Nurseries celebrated 50 years as exhibitors at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show



Johan Hermans

Westonbirt Medal 2008/9

This year the Westonbirt Medal is awarded ‘for any scientific, literary, or any other outstanding personal achievement in connection with orchids.’ It has been awarded to Wilma and Brian Rittershausen. They are the most prolific writers on orchids in the UK; since the

1970s they have authored more than 30 books on the subject, many have been translated into different languages. As authors and through the family business of Burnham Nurseries they have greatly contributed to making orchids the popular plants they are today.

Wilma was editor of *The Orchid Review* from 1978 to 1985 and from 1993 to 2000, while Brian was a driving force behind the British Orchid Growers Association. Burnham Nurseries have exhibited at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show more than 50 times ⁹ as well as at numerous other RHS shows. Their display in 2009 earned them their 20th Chelsea Gold Medal ⁸.

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RHS AWARDS

For details about future meetings of the RHS Orchid Committee and entering plants for awards, see Forthcoming events on p236.