



Newsletter

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The First, Original Orchid Society in Connecticut

Affiliated with The American Orchid Society & Orchid Digest

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Next Meeting

Wednesday June 8th, 2020
Farmington Senior Center
321 New Britain Avenue
Unionville, CT

6:30 pm.: Doors open. Socializing.
Come early and help set up.
7:30 pm: Business meeting.
8:00 pm: Featured speaker and/or
presentation.

Please bring a snack for the
refreshments table!
Don't forget to bring your blooming
plants for the show table!

Featured Event

Tim Culbertson will be
our speaker.

The topic: *Parvisepalum*
Paphiopedilums, the very
best group for culture
either outdoors in the
subtropics or on
windowsills due to their
ease-of-growth.

He will be bringing
plants!

Short Bio for Tim Culbertson

Although I teach middle school kids for a living, one of my passions has always been plants. I began growing orchids as an offshoot from working at Longwood Gardens in Philadelphia just after college.

From the very beginning it was all about Paphiopedilums, particularly awarded and select clones of historic importance, of which my collection numbers nearly 3000. While I love finding old, rare stepping stones in Paphiopedilum breeding, I also do a little hybridizing of my own, and growing up my own babies is a blast.

I am an accredited judge with the American Orchid Society, and have served in various capacities with various orchid societies in California and on the East Coast. I love meeting other people who like orchids too, and doing so often finds me traveling to shows, vendors, and peoples' greenhouses to see the latest and greatest in new hybrids and to get the best orchid gossip.

I like to be involved in plants as much as possible: in addition to Longwood, I've worked at the Smithsonian Institution tending to their orchids, and for years for the United States National Arboretum, collecting rare plants and documenting cultivated species and hybrids for their herbarium. In short, I really like plants.

Orchids in the News

Original Article Found Here:

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/apr/01/giant-orchids-found-growing-wild-in-uk-for-first-time>

Giant orchids found growing wild in UK for first time

This article is more than 1 month old

Range typically found in southern and central Europe is expanding north as climate warms



Giant orchids (*Himantoglossum robertianum*) in France. The flowers are typically found in southern and central Europe. Photograph: Hemis/Alamy

[Phoebe Weston](#)

[@phoeb0](#)

Fri 1 Apr 2022 05.47 EDT Last modified on Sat 2 Apr 2022 00.07 EDT

Giant orchids that can reach a meter tall have officially been found growing wild in the UK for the first time, having become established hundreds of miles north of their native range in the Mediterranean.

The “stately” plants were discovered on a grassy slope near Didcot in Oxfordshire by Hamza Nobes, a 29-year-old trainee nurse, who wishes to keep the exact location a secret.

Nobes was out on a walk when he saw the pink flower five meters away from the path and assumed it was a butterbur, but clambered down the steep slope to get a better look, and then realized what he had found. The sweet-smelling orchid has many flowers on its stem, which are purplish-red in color, and the leaves are broad and glossy.

“I was ecstatic. I’ve never really found anything, and I’m not a botanist in any way shape or form,” said Nobes, who has been interested in orchids for two years.

Typically found in southern and central Europe, the giant orchid (*Himantoglossum robertianum*) range is expanding north as the climate warms, with [records showing](#) the plant is able to survive in northern France and the Netherlands.

“It was weird, because a few weeks prior I was looking through my European orchid book and I was looking at the giant orchid and thought that’s such a beautiful orchid, it would be lovely to see one day, maybe in Greece or somewhere, but really it was just 10 minutes from my house,” he said.



One of the orchids found on a grassy slope near Didcot. Photograph: Ian Denholm/Handout

It is not believed these plants arrived naturally, but rather by someone scattering seeds about 15 years ago, a practice discouraged by ecologists as it can result in invasive species. It is believed this is also how the species reached the Netherlands. In both cases, they managed to establish and are now reproducing themselves.

Locals say the plants flowered years ago and then vanished, but no official report was ever made. This year – perhaps benefiting from the sunny spring – there are nine flowering plants and 10 non-flowering plants, reaching a maximum of 30cm tall.

“It’s a very exciting find,” said Prof Ian Denholm, from the University of Hertfordshire, who is one of the UK’s two national orchid referees and visited the site to verify the find. “There was a [giant orchid] seen about 15 years ago, it wasn’t widely reported and it came as news to me in fact ... it was never really made public, and the plant itself presumably didn’t last very long,” said Denholm.

Orchid flowers consist of three outer sepals and three inner petals, and in many species, one of the petals is highly modified as a lip to attract pollinators and give them a place to land. The giant orchid lip has lobes that fancifully resemble arms and legs, says Denholm. “It’s a very stately orchid. It lives up to its name of giant orchid. It’s got quite a long and dense flower spike.”

Orchids are good at telling us about the consequences of global heating, because there are so many orchid enthusiasts out recording changes in their range over time. Given the expansion of its range, experts say it's feasible the giant orchid may have naturally colonized the UK at some point in the future.

There have been [other reports](#) of the tiny seeds of European orchid species blowing over the Channel to the southern counties of the UK, where they are increasingly able to survive. Last year, a colony of small-flowered tongue orchids – thought to be extinct in the UK – [were discovered](#) on the rooftop of an investment bank in the City of London. They are typically associated with central and southern Europe, and it is not known how the seeds arrived there.

“I always welcome new stuff,” said Sean Cole, a field naturalist and co-author of Britain's Orchids. He said the find was another indication that our climate can increasingly support Mediterranean species. “We've got 53 or 54 species of orchids anyway, anything new is nice to have. It's not really going to impede on anything else around it or take over. It comes from the near continent, so it's kind of semi-natural to us, it's not going to take over like Japanese knotweed or something.”

The orchid, which flowers in March, has proven a hit with early pollinators, including bumblebees, which have been seen on the flowers. “Our local bees have welcomed them, so then why shouldn't we?” said Cole.

The Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland has a network of people who maintain local records and has been made aware of the discovery. Giant orchids are a non-native plants, so have no statutory protection. Orchid enthusiasts are now in communication with the owner of the site and are discussing how best to protect it.

Notes from our Previous Meeting

For those new members, normally we host an annual orchid show. Because of COVID we have been unable to hold our annual show. To keep the programs running there is a need to raise funds. The idea of renting a booth at the Elephant's Trunk Flea Market in New Milford was presented and a decision was made to give it a try.

The May meeting was devoted entirely to getting all our sale material ready for that flea market. The meeting was held at Sue Kennedy's outside her greenhouse. Luckily the weather cooperated as it was a beautiful evening to spend outside.

First stop on the way down the path to the greenhouse were the tables loaded with donated plants for sale. A little shopping and orchid discussions = a fun time. Dave Tognalli was leading the plant sale activities, labeling & pricing. Many thanks to all who donated plants for the sale.

Members got busy mixing & bagging potting material to sell. Christian Lesage & team accomplished that task in short order.

Then there was a mountain of pots, dishes & cache pots to be cleaned & sorted. Mike Wicki was kept busy soaking all before they moved to the washing stands.

A group of the ladies were busy scrubbing and drying. Then the fun pricing and packing. What a team as everything was accomplished before dark and packed in Christian's truck.

Some members even toured the greenhouse. It's packed. Sure glad I don't have to take care of it.

Many thanks to Sue Kennedy for the use of her yard & Monty Sabolcik for helping get the tables etc. organized.

A huge shout out to all the donated orchids and everybody who showed up and helped.

For a first time at the Elephant's Trunk it was quite successful. We welcomed two new members, generated interest with new followers on line and some even questioned why we were not selling the orchids for more money.

Cheryl

HAVE IDEAS?

**If you have ideas
about the direction
of the future of the
society, please
consider joining
the board!**

Upcoming AOS News and Events

Click on this link below

<https://www.aos.org/news-events.aspx>

More Orchids in the News

**Find out About Australia's
Subterranean orchid!**

<https://theconversation.com/like-finding-life-on-mars-why-the-underground-orchid-is-australias-strangest-most-mysterious-flower-144727>

Mentor List

The following COS members are available to answer your culture questions and help you with any orchid growing problems you may have.

Sam Hinckley samuelhinckley@comcast.net (860) 688-0943
(After 7:30 pm) Windowsill growing methods: Species & hybrids

Glenn McGeough mcgeough7@gmail.com (203) 482-3973
Specializing in Cattleyas.

Jeffrey Richards jeffrey.richards@snet.net
Greenhouse growing methods: Specializing in Paphiopedilums.

David Tognalli dtog54@sbcglobal.net (860) 521-7249 (Contact Evenings & weekends)
Windowsill & outdoor growing methods: Warm growers, Cattleyas, Dendrobiums, & mixed genera.

Rebecca Schwartz rebecca.r.schwartz@gmail.com
Vivarium growing methods, windowsill Catasetums and species Phaleanopsis



Connecticut Orchid Society is an incorporated non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization founded in 1959. Please consider making a charitable contribution to COS.

Donations made to COS are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.



COS Membership Information

Membership is open to anyone interested in orchids. Members join the Society by payment of annual dues. Memberships may be individual, student, family, life, or honorary. Honorary membership is for life and is made by nomination of the Board of Directors and majority vote of the membership present at a regular meeting. Annual membership includes electronic delivery of the newsletter. The newsletter is published each month except July and August.

COS Membership Dues: \$20/yr. Individual \$25/yr. Family

\$200 Individual or \$250 Family Lifetime Membership (never pay dues again!) Visit www.ctorchids.org to apply for/renew membership. We accept Paypal.

Contact Membership Chairperson Mary Rampone at COSMembership@earthlink.net for details.

2021 Connecticut Orchid Society Officers & Posts

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Connecticut Orchid Society Mission Statement

The Connecticut Orchid Society is an incorporated, non-profit association for the preservation and extension of knowledge concerning the conservation, ecology, science, cultivation, hybridization, appreciation and uses of orchids; and to carry on such activities as may be necessary or desirable to effectuate such purposes.