

NROS News

DECEMBER 2017

Wednesday, December 13th., 2017

Festivities Starting at 6:30 p.m.

Holy Rosary Church Hall
35 Queen Street North
Thorold

PROGRAMS

CHRISTMAS PARTY



EXECUTIVE 2017-2018

President	Rick Rempel	905-734-1588
Past President	Colin Burns	905-684-9705
Secretary	Isabel Streeter	905-682-7792
Treasurer	Colin Burns	905-684-9705
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Librarian	George Streeter	905-682-7792
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Hospitality	Barbara Berry	905-227-4307
Program Co-Ordinator	Rick Rempel	905-734-1588
AOS/COC Rep	Rick Rempel	905-734-1588

Visit us on our updated website link:

www.cloudsorchids.com/nros

NOVEMBER SHOW TABLE

Class 1 Cattleya Alliance

**** Blc. "unregistered orchid"

(Cattleya Ruth Gee 'Whillikers'

X Blc. Mary Tuavera 'Icfe Age')

Potinara DiCiommo Patricia

Blc. Hawaiian Wedding Song

Phil Hinman 1st.

Phil Hinman 2nd.

Phil Hinman 3rd.

Class 2 Paphiopedilum

Phragmipedium Paul Eugene Conroy

Phil Hinman 1st.

Class 9 Vanda Alliance

Vanda ???

Phil Hinman 1st.

*****PLANT OF THE MONTH

BULLETIN BOARD
Meeting/Christmas Party

Our annual Orchid Society Christmas Party will be held on Wednesday, December 13th. The festivities will start at 6:30 p.m. and they will take place in the small hall again this year. Just a reminder that it is a **NON-ALCOHOLIC** party. Please bring your own dinnerware and cutlery. Small paper plates will be supplied for desserts. So come on out, bring your spouse, and join in the celebration. And you can still bring your orchids for the Show Table! We would also like to remind everyone to help clean up after the party. Also, if there are leftovers from the dish that you brought, please take it home with you..... Thank you.

Donations for Raffle Table

If you have an item at home that you could spare as a donation for the raffle table, it would greatly appreciated. More items on the raffle table make for a little nicer Christmas Party for all the attendees. We would also like to remind members that if they wish to donate any items that they find no longer useful, we would be happy to accept it as a raffle table item for any of our meetings. Thanks.

Membership and Draw

Please be reminded that to continue receiving the newsletter, your \$20.00 membership fee needs to be paid. Please see Joanne Madsen at the meeting or send your cheque to the following address:

Joanne Madsen
37 Grantham Avenue, South
St. Catharines, ON
L2P 3B3

Thank you. Those members who have paid their dues by the November 30th date, will have their names entered into a draw for an orchid. The draw will take place at the Christmas Party and winners must be present to receive their prize. You can also buy a NROS membership for that "person that has everything" for Christmas.

Library

Just a reminder to our membership that we have an extensive library of wonderful orchid books. Please feel free to take advantage of this free resource for extensive orchid information. See George Streeter if you wish to sign out a book.

Picnic Item

Cheryl Maurice has a red lid from a container that was forgotten at the picnic in July. Cheryl will bring it to the Christmas Party, so if someone is missing their red lid, please see Cheryl.

Since Christmas is just around the corner, and most of us are going to be starting our Christmas baking, I thought a little story about vanilla would be appropriate.



THE FLOWER: A vanilla orchid

Until the late 19th century, Mexico had the monopoly on growing vanilla plants, but now Madagascar and Indonesia grow the majority of the world's crop. A 12-year-old slave named Edmond Albius came up with a hand-pollination method on the island of Réunion in 1841 to enable it to grow in places other than its native region.

By Aney Mathew

When you think 'vanilla' the mind may immediately picture a delicious cone of vanilla ice cream, with a dollop of chocolate sauce drizzled above, topped with crunchy nuts and scrumptious caramel chips. But the point is, we can as easily come up with several other delectable desserts and appetizing savoury dishes, which include vanilla as the main flavouring ingredient, regardless of the country we hail from. It's become such an indispensable flavour that there can't be too many spice cupboards of serious cooks in any part of the world, which don't contain vanilla flavouring in some form.

What's more? The popularity of vanilla is not limited to just food and beverages or even the perfume industry. From vanilla-scented garbage bags that promise to neutralise the stench of rubbish, to perfumed tennis balls, light bulbs and bug spray, you can even find vanilla-fragranced pacifiers that claim to help comfort new-borns.

Vanilla has even found its way into the world of comic books — most kids will be familiar with Vanilla the rabbit — a 'Sonic the Hedgehog' character; and guess what Obelix's mother (of Asterix fame) is called? That's right — Vanilla!

Despite the rich variety of competing choices out there, vanilla still reigns as the most preferred flavour in ice creams, beating even chocolate to second place; in fact it is the 'default' flavour. Besides being a prized flavouring agent on its own, it is also used to enhance the taste of other flavours, to which its own essence is often complementary — such as chocolate, custard, caramel and coffee.

Its use is so widespread and universal that the term 'vanilla' has come to be used as an adjective to signify something that's considered common, regular or even plain. But there's nothing plain-Jane about vanilla; in fact there are quite a few superlative aspects

to this mundane-looking bean. Dating back to Cortez's conquest of the Aztec Kingdom in 1519, it's one of the most ancient flavours known to man. Moreover vanilla is the second costliest spice in the world — next only to saffron.

In Madagascar, the largest producer of vanilla, extraordinary measures have been taken to protect the crop from theft. Some plantation owners go to the extent of branding each vanilla pod with small pin pricks — much like cattle branding, while it is still attached to the vine! Similarly in other equatorial countries where vanilla is grown, producers have been known to lock up the dried pods in safety deposit lockers!

By the way, there's nothing vanilla about the flavour of this precious cooking ingredient; as a matter of fact there's no true substitute to its taste. The flavour of real vanilla is made up of over 250 components, which gives it great depth and complexity, compared to artificial vanilla, which contains only one flavouring component — vanillin.



Vanilla Tahitensis in cultivation

Because vanilla is so much in demand, and because it's so expensive, synthetics are often used instead of natural vanilla. It will come as a disappointment for serious cooks to know that 97% of vanilla fragrances and flavours sold are actually synthetic. Even in Qatar, the vanilla flavouring available is mostly either a blend of pure and imitation vanilla or is completely artificial. But as more women — local and expatriate — turn to baking as a hobby, the demand for pure vanilla in the form of extracts, paste and beans, is rising. Here's a hint for the serious cooks in Qatar — the price you pay is a pretty good indication of the quality.

Remember pure vanilla is a true amber colour, while clear vanilla essence is synthetic; a dark murky colour is also synthetic vanillin. A word of caution though, nowadays even vanilla that originates from the vanilla-producing countries is synthetic; so look for 'pure vanilla extract' rather than vanilla flavouring, when you shop.

As with all things highly-prized, fables and myths surround the origin of vanilla too. The Totonac people, who inhabit the East Coast of Mexico in the present-day state of Veracruz, were the first to cultivate vanilla. According to Totonac mythology, the tropical orchid was born when Princess Xanat, forbidden by her father from marrying a mortal, fled to the forest with her lover. The lovers were captured and beheaded — where their blood touched the ground, the vine of the tropical orchid grew.

The Totonaca people of the Gulf coast of Mexico were probably the first people to

cultivate vanilla plants. They taught many other indigenous people how to grow vanilla plants during Meso-American times, and they continue to cultivate the fruit that they consider was given to them by the gods.

Many attempts to re-locate the vanilla plant failed initially, because those locations did not have the Melipone bee, which was responsible for the natural pollination of the flower. However, a simple and efficient artificial, hand-pollination method introduced by a 12-year-old slave named Edmond Albius on the island of Réunion in 1841, has resulted in the cultivation of vanilla in other equatorial regions.

Until the late 19th century, Mexico had the monopoly on growing vanilla plants, but now Madagascar and Indonesia grow the majority of the world's crop.

It is said, the preference for vanilla appears to form before birth, helped by mothers using and eating so many things that contain it. As a result, flavours like vanilla can be found in amniotic fluid and breast milk. By adulthood most humans have had so many experiences with it that nostalgia drives even more preference for the scent and flavour.



When it's all said and done, the last word in vanilla really seems to be ice creams. The world's most expensive ice cream sundae, "The Golden Opulence Sundae" from Serendipity 3 in New York City, is made using rich Tahitian vanilla bean ice cream, infused with Madagascar vanilla and covered with 23k edible gold leaf. Served by special order and eaten with an 18-carat-gold spoon from a special crystal goblet, it is sold for a whopping thousand US dollars.

All this talk about vanilla means one thing right now — it's time for your own version of the Golden Opulence Sundae. You can make it as extravagant as you want, but remember it is vanilla!

Made from the finest Tahitian Vanilla ice cream infused with Madagascar Vanilla to intensify the flavour, the decadent dessert is then wrapped in edible gold leaf.

Drizzled with the world's most expensive chocolate, Amedei Porcelana, and topped with chunks of rarest Venezuelan Chuao chocolate, it is no wonder that Executive Chef Joe Calderone calls it 'iconic'.

Almonds coated in gold and candied fruit from Paris soaked for many months that cost \$100 per pound, are sprinkled upon the delicious frozen vanilla cream.

Resting neatly on top is a small glass ramekin of sweet Grand Passion Caviar infused with passion fruit, orange and Armagnac.

To complete the masterpiece, the sundae is embellished with a gilded sugar flower that takes eight hours to create, chocolate truffles and marzipan cherries.

For such a precious treat, only an equally valuable serving dish will do, of course, which is why the Opulence Sundae is presented in a \$300 Baccarat Harcourt crystal goblet.

As a memento of the one-of-a-kind experience, the goblet is the customer's to keep.