

The Orchid Conservation Alliance
564 Arden Drive
Encinitas, CA 92024



December 13, 2010

Dear OCA Member -

First of all, I hope you have a very happy holiday season this year. I'm still getting ready, as probably are many of you. I was quite surprised to find that several stores here are completely sold out of Christmas lights. I had thought to add a couple of strings to the house decorations, but I guess that will have to wait until next year.

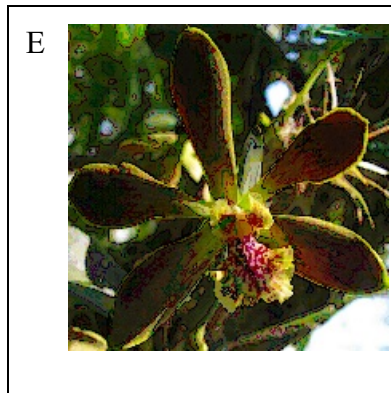
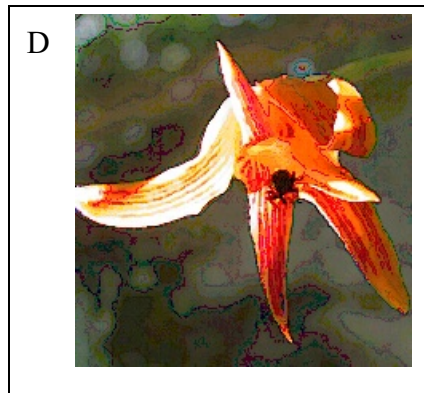
I am happy to report that our OCA Orchids in the Wild trip to Brazil went very well last month. Nine OCA members, Rosario Almeida Braga, our Brazilian Director, and I spent two weeks in the Atlantic Rain Forest in the states of Rio de Janeiro and Espirito Santo. We went to several conservation sites to see the good work that is being done in them. However, we also saw plenty of places that should have been conserved many years ago but are now severely degraded. The utility of reserves was amply demonstrated by the contrasts between the forests of Espirito Santo, just to the north of Rio de Janeiro, and the forest reserves of Macae de Cima (www.riotruster.org), owned and managed by David and Izabel Miller, as well as REGUA (www.regua.co.uk), managed by Nicholas and Raquel Locke. We visited a site in the restinga, a beach dune habitat, just east of Rio de Janeiro city, where *Cattleya intermedia* were in bloom. It is a completely unprotected place where we saw clear evidence of plant collecting. We are trying to find something we can do to protect this site. On a happy note, the trip was a financial gain for the Alliance in the amount of \$6649. Many thanks to the travelers. A report on the trip will be published in *Orchids* sometime this coming spring.

I came across what may turn out to be a happy story for orchids in Arizona. Or not. It seems a little strange to me that a family of plants that does so well in the moist tropics could live in the dry spaces of Arizona, but they certainly do, if not with the same abundance. Ronald Coleman's book, "The Wild Orchids of Arizona and New Mexico," details their presence. A quite rare orchid, *Hexilectris revoluta*, has been found in several sites on property owned by the Rosemont Copper Company. Some believe that the several hundred plants of this species found in Arizona are sufficiently different from other stands found in New Mexico and elsewhere to be a separate species. It's rarity is recognized by the U.S. Forest Service, who are in the process of deciding whether the orchid can be protected when the copper mine opens. If not, the mine may not open. The story is more complicated than that - you should google "Rosemont Mine Orchid Arizona" to get more details. *Hexilectris revoluta* is a coral root orchid. The corallorhizae are saprophytic, that is they lack chlorophyll and rely on fungal breakdown of organic matter in the soil to obtain their nutrition. As such they cannot be transplanted because they and the fungus would be separated. Furthermore, the fungus is probably very susceptible to pollution that might come from copper containing dust or acid mine drainage. The mining company says that they have made all necessary efforts to protect the

orchid, but it is hard to know that for sure. As we all know, extinction is forever and a few hundred plants of a new species in just a few locations is a tenuous existence. The mining company thinks that the loss of their mine will endanger western civilization as we know it.

Everyone should have gotten a copy of our Ecuador/Orchid Calendar for 2011 along with my letter urging renewal of your OCA membership for 2011. Robin Ericksen, one of 2009's travelers to Ecuador, put together a truly gorgeous calendar using pictures from several of the travelers. If you somehow got missed, please let our staff - me - know, and I will get it out to you ASAP. And of course, if you haven't already renewed your membership for 2011, this would be a great time to do it. It's easy through our web site. These calendars make a great Christmas gift and are also available through the web site. I can get one/some to you in a very few days.

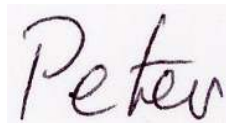
Some pictures from "Brazil 2010." Can you name the orchids ? Answers are below.



(If you're getting this on paper, sorry about the photo quality. It's much better electronically - see the web site.)

Well, that's it for now. I hope all your orchids are thriving and blooming. Maybe Santa will even bring you another if you've been good.

Happy Holidays,



Peter Tobias, OCA President
www.orchidconservationalliance.org

Captions:

- A: *Soph. Coccinea*
- B: *Zygo. intermedium*
- C: *Pabstia jugosa*
- D: *Bifrenaria aureo-fulva*
- E: *Encyclia oncioides*
- F: Two young women at a flower show in Domingos Martins, Espirito Santo.