



# THE DELAWARE VALLEY INDOOR GARDENER



*Hobby Greenhouse Association of the Delaware Valley*  
*A Non-profit Organization*

## **DEDICATED TO THE INTERESTS OF INDOOR PLANT GROWERS**

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### **MEETING NOTICE**

**Date: September 24, 2005**

**Time: 9:00 AM**

**Place: Horticultural Center  
Fairmount Park, Phila.**

**Agenda: Speaker: Robert Sprague  
"Building a State-of-the-Art Greenhouse"**



Bob Sprague (above) of Douglasville, Pa. is a retired businessman who has grown orchids and other plants in his house for years. After much research and consultation, he recently built the greenhouse shown here and incorporated into it everything that an experienced grower and technophile could desire. His talk will include color slides of the process and the finished product. If you already own a greenhouse you will learn of something that you may want to add to yours. Even if you do not intend to build a greenhouse you will be fascinated with his ingenuity.

**Refreshment Committee for September 24:**  
No sign-ups so bring what you want.

### **President's Notes Ken Helmich**

The June meeting workshop presented by Estie and Bill Franks gave each participant a wonderful herb dish garden. With the extremely changeable weather, watering was very necessary through the drought and dumping off water after the heavy rains, the group of [my] herbs are growing profusely.

Fall brings cleanup time for all the plants we took outside for the summer. Our orchids have many buds and soon we'll be enjoying the full blooming flowers. All plants have grown in size so many will go on the raffle table.

At a meeting of the Executive Board in August we were able to complete the schedule for the 2005-2006 year. We're counting on your participation to make this an outstanding program year. Leading off with Robert Sprague's extensive background in orchid growing and his building of a "state-of-the-art" greenhouse should show us how the pros grow plants in ideally controlled conditions.



Since 1999 Heidi and I have been members of DVC/HGA. Estie appointed Russ Strover and me to the nominating committee. After much discussion and searching, I stepped forward to lead our chapter. To make this year a real success, I'll need your help and support. Participation is contagious.



## Minutes of July, 2005 Meeting

The July meeting was very well attended with a full slate of activities.

Elections were held. The slate of candidates nominated by the nominating committee (Russ Strover and Ken Helmich) was as follows:

President: Ken Helmich  
Vice President: Heidi Helmich  
Secretary: Gail Brewer  
Treasurer: Leonard Pell

The entire slate of candidates was unanimously elected. All of the other positions were filled by the same members who served previously:

Refreshments: Leonard and Rosemary Pell  
Trips: Estie Franks  
Website: Bill Franks  
Publicity: Bernie Wiener  
Raffle Director: Peter Parker  
Flower Show Director: Leo Cooper  
Newsletter and Show 'n Tell: Stuart Hughes

Peter Parker was unable to attend but the raffle was held and a table full of plants was won by members.

The second annual Show 'n Tell awards were handed out with 20 people winning plants. A list of the winners, points garnered and awarded plants was made available.

The mystery plant name was won by Ruth Gisser who got first pick from the raffle table.

It was reported that Tom Eckert was incapacitated and could not make the meeting. Since he had conducted the trough-making workshops in the past, President Estie Franks decided it would be prudent to have a substitute workshop. At great effort by her and Bill Franks, they put together a workshop on herb gardening.

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**Send in Your Membership Renewal Today**  
Please use the form on the last page.

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**Phila. Cactus and Succulent Society**  
Meetings at Hort Center starting Oct. 25 and Nov. 13.

## Mystery Plant of the Month



This one is so easy everyone should try to enter. Just print its scientific name and common name (if any) along with your name on a small piece of paper and give it to Stuart Hughes before the raffle. They will be drawn randomly and if yours is selected and correct, you will get first pick from the raffle table.



The winner of the June mystery plant contest was Ruth Gisser who correctly identified the orchid *Laelia purpurata*.

We hope the raffle table will be full of all the excess plants that you cannot accommodate over the winter or must get rid of to make room for the new plants you will get. Another member will appreciate them. Please be sure they are free of pests or disease.

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## Begonia Society Meeting November 5

Bernie Wiener urges everybody who grows begonias to take advantage of a special meeting, Saturday, Nov. 5, at 10 AM at the Huntingdon Valley Library. The speaker will be Mark Tebbitt, a botanist at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden and author of a new book, entitled *Begonias, Cultivation, Identification and Natural History*.



## Show 'n Tell – June 18, '05

So many people participated and brought so many plants to exhibit that we will have to be brief in our descriptions and hope to not slight anyone or omit a plant.

Please, remember that accuracy will be much easier if everyone follows the rules:

1. Please bring only indoor plants that you have grown for at least three months.
2. The plants must be in flower at the time of exhibition or are plants grown primarily for foliage or some curiosity, e.g., Venus flytrap.
3. You must fill out the prepared forms. In the future there should be a sufficient supply of forms for you to take home to prepare for the next meeting.
4. Always print clearly and use the correct form for scientific names, e.g., *Laelia purpurata* 'Spring Mist'
5. Print your full name.
6. One point will be awarded for doing the above. A second point will be awarded for a clear printing of the features of the plant that you tell us about such as how you got the plant, how to grow it or any other interesting comment.

Stuart Hughes was inspired to bring a specimen of



*Dendrobium cuthbertsonii*, an orchid with tiny leaves, huge flowers by comparison and notorious cultural difficulty that both he and Heidi Helmich had failed

with in the past. It requires cool temperatures, good air movement and high humidity (above 70%). He also showed a *Hoya motoskei*, the spotted-leaved hoyo that took two years to bloom, a Persian shield, *Strobilanthes dyanus* from



Russ Strover's tissue culture workshop, a sensitive plant, *Mimosa pudica*, grown from seed in Russ's seed workshop, and an epiphyllum (epiphyllum) (left) grown from cuttings supplied by

Peter Parker. That plant was donated to the raffle.



Leomar Cooper (left) brought several plants such as the earth star, *Cryptanthus* that she is holding, a crown-of-thorns euphorbia, a gasteria, a maple-leaf cactus (*Cicuss*) and this *Haworthia attenuate*.



Kathleen Harvey exhibited two exotic pitcher plants, *Sarracenia flava* and *S. "Dixie Lace"* at left, above. She also showed a rose that had failed field trials and thus was not put on the market but was yet a good one to grow.

She brought the biggest plant of the day, a voodoo lily, *Hydrosome riverii* (right, above) which, while not in bloom, shows attractive form and spotting.



As always, Sue Gisser showed several fine plants including the *Dendrobium momi* Cummins 'Midnight Blue,' a bromeliad, *Aechmea fulgens* x *A.*

*racemosa*, *Phalaenopsis leudemanniana* 'Redfields,' *Crossandra* sp., and a great *Phragmipedium Grande* 'Surprise' that her mom, Ruth, won 8-10 years ago.





Barry Bush, left, brought a euphorbia cross of unknown parentage that "volunteered" and produced blushed pink flowers. Also, he showed a *Pachypodium rosulatum* var. *gracilis*



at left. He grew it from seed sown in May, '01 and it was just big enough to produce this first flowering. It has an unusual growth on the fluted caudex.

Lee Garner also displayed a different species of that genus, *Pachypodium sandersonii* that he grew in his greenhouse for a year. He also



showed a *Ferrocactus* sp. that he had cut off of a two-foot specimen, allowed it to dry for a month and placed on the growing medium with success. His last offering was *Aloe dorotheae* (above, right) which was also an offspring of a larger plant.



Heidi Helmich got the beefsteak begonia in the picture at left from the raffle table several years ago and found that it bloomed at home but, while it thrived under the office fluorescent lights, the leaves were smaller and it did not bloom.



The bird's nest fern, *Asplenium nidus*, that she also grew in her office under only fluorescents is much better than mine in the greenhouse.

Leo Cooper brought many plants including a spiderwort (*Tradescantia* sp.) which, though it is a local garden plant, can be grown in a pot. Here she is holding one of three begonias that she showed. She also showed a philodendron and an episcia.



Diane Olesik brought a *Haworthia hayashi*, a pregnant onion, *Ornithogalum caudatum* which forms little bulblets that fall into the flower pot and start new plants; two haworthias; an unnamed bromeliad that she got free from a supermarket; and several voodoo lilies that have just started to grow.

Joan Schaller pointed out that the common weed



lamb's quarters, *Chenopodium album* makes a tasty salad green and is as, or more, nutritious than others such as spinach. On the same theme dandelion, *Taraxacum officinale*, is similarly quite edible (though often bitter) and like evening primrose is used in herbal medicine.



Our last contributor was Jennifer Brewer who brought an abutilon or flowering maple which must be kept moist; and an eastern haworthia with white spots. She is grooming it for next



year's flower show. She also showed a gasteria, a begonia "Red Planet" and one of the most beautiful African violets we have ever seen called Bubblegum Charm (above)