

Orchid growers show their best

The Michigan Orchid Society is holding its annual show at the Summit Mall, Telegraph and Elizabeth Lake roads, Pontiac this weekend. Summit Mall is the new name for the former Pontiac Mall.

Following the judging in the morning, the displays will be open to the public starting at noon Saturday and Sunday.

Through the ages, the orchid has seduced us with its delicate but fleshy blooms, its mysterious origins and the challenge of its culture. In fact, orchid growers throughout the world vigorously compete for perfection in growing and cultivating both the species found in nature and the hybrids created in the laboratory.

THE ELABORATE and critical judging standards of the American and Michigan Orchid Societies reflect the serious attitude the members have in pursuing their hobby.

Francis Fisher, president of the Michigan Orchid Society, would like to dispel the myth surrounding orchid growing. She said the orchid isn't difficult to grow and that the novice shouldn't be intimidated by an old mystique. To help the beginner, the Michigan Orchid Society conducts local study groups as part of its regular program.

Not all of the 350 members in the organization have home greenhouses, the ideal growing environment. Many grow their plants very successfully under fluorescent light set up in a closet or in the basement of their homes.

THIS LESS expensive method of growing is quite satisfactory according to Fisher, who has a light arrangement.

Plants grown under lights, she said, must have the same number of hours of artificial light as plants growing in nature or in the greenhouse, depending on the time of year.

Plants are coded in such a way that in order to produce bloom, the grower must base the lighting schedule on the plant's individual needs.

MANY Michigan Orchid Show visitors come to simply enjoy the beauty and complexity of the many varieties on display. Others come to learn and to see how the experts grow particular types of plants. Many hobbyists come to buy.

The excitement and satisfaction of selecting plants is part of the pleasure of this hobby. Fisher said that there will be 10 vendors at the show, four local growers as well as growers from Illinois and Ohio.

Majestic Orchids, one of the newest orchid nurseries in our area, will be showing. Owned by a young Vietnamese man, Tam Pham, the greenhouse is located at 1100 East 14 Mile, just past Van Dyke in Warren.

PHAM, WHO has been in this country for only eight years, comes from outside Saigon where his parents are coffee farmers. The hills in Vietnam, Pham said, are full of wild orchids, and the local farmers bring them into the markets each day in huge quantities.

It was here that Pham learned to love flowers and to appreciate the exotic appeal of orchids. He is now ambitiously developing an aspect of the orchid business new in this area but quite popular in California.

He is leasing blooming orchid plants.



greenhouse gardening

Marge Alpern

If you are planning a special event and would like to display few or a dozen white cattleya or phalaenopsis plants, Pham can arrange it.

THE WILLIAMSTON Greenhouses, 14482 W. Grand River in Williamston, another exhibitor, is known to many Detroiters as more than an orchid nursery.

Dennis Banning, owner, always has an exciting collection of tropical plants not generally found elsewhere in our area. So even if one isn't looking for orchids, the selection of ferns, begonias and bromeliads found in the Williamston Greenhouse will make the trip worthwhile.

Incidentally, Williamston, which is only an hour and a half from Birmingham, is a charming community with many antique shops.

ANOTHER RATHER new vendor in our area is Taylor Orchids, on Blossom Lane in Monroe. Ron Ciesinski, owner, who has been a truck driver for 24

years, has also been raising orchids for his own pleasure during these years.

Now, after three successful years in a commercial operation, he is looking forward to parking the truck and devoting full time to orchids. It is the variety of the blooms that enchants Ciesinski and the "mimic" he sees in the flowers. There are blossoms that resemble moths, butterflies, birds, bees or panes.

He has been hybridizing for many years and said he finds it quite remarkable that by crossing a yellow flower with a purple one, the offspring will be a reddish sheen.

An international orchid show and competition was recently held in the United States. More than 40,000 people, admirers, collectors and vendors from all over the world gathered to honor this royal species.

At this show, one of our longest established orchid growers, Great Lakes Orchids, received a silver medal for a

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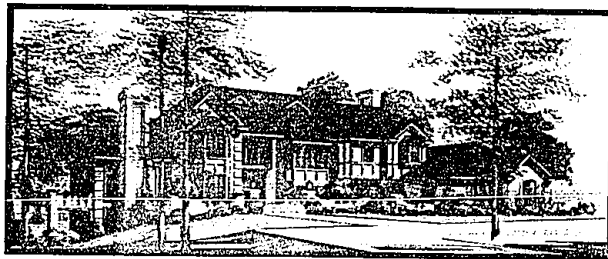
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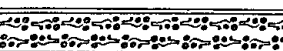
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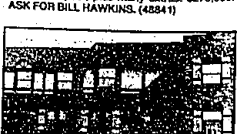
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