

3,000 Orchids Fill Greenhouse And Their Lives

By SETTY FRANKEL
Special Writer

The greenhouses behind Ray McCullough's are crammed with orchids.

There are big, flamboyant purple ones, frilly pure white ones, tiny little green ones, orchids with long arching sprays of vivid orange flowers the size of a thumb nail, and others with maroon flowers smaller than the head of a pin -- over 3,000 in all.

McCullough, a Ford Motor Co. engineer, has been collecting and growing orchids for over 25 years and has one of the most extensive and unusual collections in the country. Although he grows some of the large "Gorist-type" Cattleya orchids, his specialty is the miniature of the species.

HIS HOBBY began when he bought an orchid plant by mail and grew it on a window sill in his house. Soon he bought a few more, and in 1943 he built his first greenhouse.

Since then, he's added more sections to the greenhouse and a second greenhouse plus a small room to house his library of orchid books and his collection of colored slides and photographic equipment.

Although there are orchids native to Michigan, McCullough collects those that grow in the mountain regions of tropical countries. He has made six collecting trips to Mexico, one to Nicaragua, and plans a trip soon to Venezuela.

COLLECTING tools are a fork with a long extension handle and a pair of binoculars. He scans the tree tops for likely specimens and then carefully lifts them from their perch.

The orchids he collects are known as "epiphytes" and are not attached to the trees but merely perch in them. The roots dangle in the air and the moisture needed by the plants comes from the humid atmosphere.

Special permits are needed for collecting and for importing the plants into the United States. Each plant must be inspected at the border and fumigated so that no pests or disease will be brought into this country.

McCULLOUGH keeps careful records on each plant, and as the new specimens come into bloom their identity is checked. Several of the plants collected by Ray McCullough had never been identified or described in the literature before. So he gets the privilege of naming these newly-discovered species.

Mrs. McCullough enjoys the collecting trips, too, and helps take care of the orchids in their greenhouses. The couple tries to duplicate in the greenhouse the natural growing conditions of the orchids.

The plants like cool but not frigid temperatures, lots of moisture, humid air that is well circulated, and a rather high light level but not direct sunlight.

THE McCULLOUGHS are looking forward to the orchid show to be held Oct. 11 and 12 at Northland Center in connection with the annual meeting of the American Orchid Society and the Mid-American Orchid Society.

The floor space in the Northland Special Events Center has been allocated to about 50 growers from all over the country who will bring their treasured orchids to be exhibited and judged. A few of the exhibitors are commercial growers, and some are "societies" or groups, but most are individual hobbyists.

Ray McCullough, who is general chairman for the show, estimates there will be about half a million dollars worth of orchids blooming at the show. He has been working on show plans and scheduling exhibits for the past year and a half.

WITH SHOW TIME drawing near, there are many details to attend to, including long-distance phone calls concerning lectures and guests coming from foreign lands. There's little time left for grooming orchids, and the McCulloughs have not yet decided which of their orchids will be exhibited. It depends on which ones happen to be in bloom.

The show, which will also include 2 1/2 flower arrangements using orchids, is open to the public from 9:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 11 and Saturday, Oct. 12.



RAY McCULLOUGH displays a hybrid Cattleya orchid blooming in his Livonia greenhouse.



THE SWAN ORCHID, *Cynoches chlorochalon*, is a large, waxy green orchid with a long "lip" petal thought to resemble the graceful neck of a swan.



HIS SPECIALTY is growing miniature orchids such as this Epidendrum ceratites, a long arching spray of tiny yellow-green orchids marked with red stripes.

Use Plastic, Foil For Freezing

Practical packaging material for freezing vegetables include plastic bags, special bags made of two different wrapping materials, and rigid waxed or plastic cartons, says Mrs. Ruth J.

Buck, Penn State extension food and nutrition specialist. Sheets of plastic or aluminum foil may be used to wrap corn on the cob or whole green beans. Single

thickness plastic bags need an outside cover, usually a cardboard box, to give packages a uniform shape and to prevent plastic from tearing.

Block Parents Offered Help By Foundation

Assistance to PTA and other organizations interested in forming Block Parent programs to assist children who are lost, ill, injured, frightened or otherwise in need of help, has been announced today by Donald C. Bolton, regional representative of the Allstate Foundation.

A complete "how to do it" report on the Block Parent program prepared in cooperation with Block Parent groups in Chicago, is available from Jack G. Brown, c/o Allstate Insurance Co., 16130 Northland Drive, Detroit.

The Block Parent program is locally coordinated to help insure the safety of children. The program is implemented by volunteers, usually women, who apply for Block Parent responsibility, under the sponsorship of a PTA or other parents group. There are at least two homes per block. The parents are home during the times children are going to and coming from school. Window cards are displayed to show the homes are available for assistance.

"Not only does the child know and recognize the home in which he can find help, but also the window signs act as a deterrent to potential offenders," Bolton said.

"Any group which wants to learn more about the Block Parent program, or which would like to have a speaker discuss

the program at a meeting, should get in touch with me or with Jack G. Brown, Allstate Insurance Co.

"The Block Parent program is popular in many areas of the country. Because of the need for a centralized distribution point, the Allstate Foundation was requested to provide cooperation. This it is pleased to do. But I must emphasize that we cannot set up and operate the Block Parent units. This must be done by the interested PTA or other group. We can supply information on the program and the window posters to identify the homes, and the sponsors must take over from there," Bolton concluded.

Area Food Club Elects Officers

The Norwest Wayne County School Food Service Association installed its 1968-69 officers at a recent meeting held in Franklin Junior High East. They are: Mrs. Albert Loga, of Wayne, president; Mrs. Marie Knapp, of Livonia, president-elect; Mrs. Margaret Steppe, of Dearborn Heights, treasurer; Mrs. Shirley Gaudmes, of Westland, secretary; Mrs. Hazel Bartle, of Westland, publicity and Mrs. Eleanor McEgan, of Inkster, advisor.

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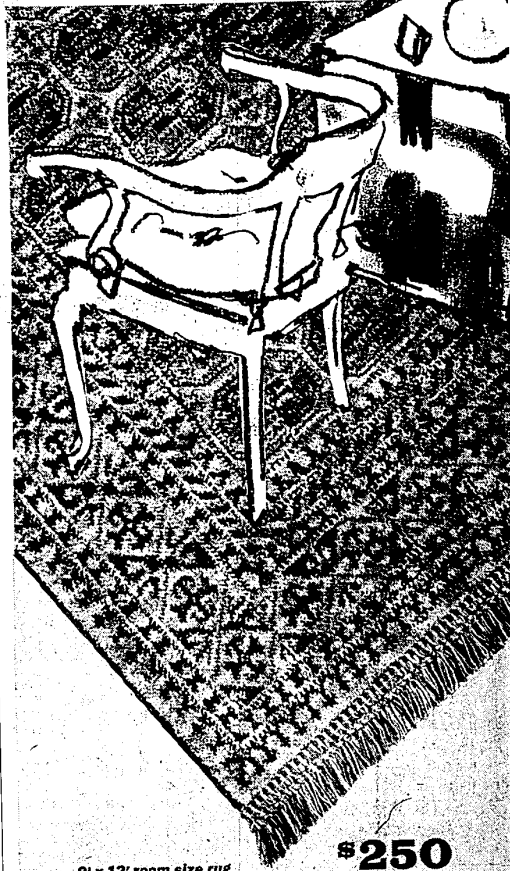
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