



St. Augustine Orchid Society

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My Favorite Orchid

October 2012

by Mike Heinz, mgheinz@comcast.net



C. Bow Bells

When I was asked to do this article I had several ideas as how to answer the question. The first answer might have been “my first orchid” which I believe was C. Bow Bells.

My second idea was “the last orchid I bought”, which was a paphiopedilum Kaycee admired (and as any smart grower knows, when your spouse admires a plant, you buy it). Now if I get specific, and list genera, then I have a bunch of choices. My favorite Cattleya is C. walkeriana, my favorite coelogyne is Coel. cristata and my favorite paphiopedilum is Paph. sanderianum.

I could go on this way for a long time, and never pin myself down, so I'll just go right to what I believe is my favorite orchid. Those that know me know that bulbophyllums are my favorite genus, and Bulb. phalaenopsis has to be my favorite Bulbo.



Bulb. phalaenopsis



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I find this plant fascinating because it has two ways of attracting its pollinator. The first way is by sight. The blooms resemble a piece of rotting meat, with maggots crawling out of the meat, which is just too much temptation for a fly to resist. Then when the fly touches the



cilia on the flower, which resemble maggots, an overpowering stench of rotting meat is released. This is one of the only plants I know of that uses two means of attracting pollinators to itself. The smell is probably why Kaycee refers to my Bulbos as “Little Boy Plants”, because only a little boy could love something that smells so bad.

Bulb. phalaenopsis Flower

I hope this gives you the idea that you are the only one who has to understand why you love one plant over all others, and that your reasons don't have to be the workings of a logical mind.