



St. Augustine Orchid Society

www.staugorchidsociety.org

My Favorite Orchid

November 2012

by Harry McElroy, cymbidiuman@msn.com



C. Irene Holquin

When we search our minds to name our favorite orchid it soon becomes apparent that we are searching for a moving target. My first favorite orchid, like most orchid lovers, was a cattleya. It was C. Irene Holquin. Someone told me that I would progress through different genera until I came to Paphiopedilums. Of course that person was a Paph. Lover.

One could speculate about what my favorite orchid means. Is the one plant that at any given time gives us the most pleasure? The new seedling that we have nurtured and now has buds ready to bloom for the first time? We wait and wait for what seems an eternity, visiting the plant often and resisting the urge to help it open. It can be torture. But we must resist that urge because it will only spoil nature's plan and the flower.

Some of us are lucky enough just to find one genus and stick with it. We can love all orchids but many find one genus that responds well to their culture and really concentrate on learning all they can about that one genus. Some stick with that first genus and are perfectly happy.

I like variety but know that my main interest is my cymbidium collection. My circle of enthusiasts includes some really knowledgeable people that share cutting edge plant breeding information. Knowing why some plants succeed and why some fail is important to me. Why are crosses made? The answer is more complicated and involved than I ever imagined when my study of the cymbidium genus began. With each answer come thousands more questions and a desire to try as many of the new creations as I



Cym. Honey Bunny



St. Augustine Orchid Society

www.staugorchidsociety.org

My Favorite Orchid

November 2012

by Harry McElroy, cymbidiuman@msn.com

can. It is the waiting and anticipating when the plant spikes for the first time that turns me on, odd chap that I am!



Cym. John William Easton

A few months ago I put Cym. John William Easton (Fifi x Spring Beauty) on the show table. This is probably my best cymbidium. It lasts for months both as a cut flower and on the plant whereas many warmth tolerant cymbidiums only last three or four weeks. It is a new breeding line that comes from the tetraploid Cym. Fifi 'Harry'. I appreciate the plant so much partly because of my many years of study of its parentage, understanding how each species influenced the great characteristics of Cym. John William Easton.

The luck of the draw also got me something special. It is great to go to a show and find a new treasure in bloom but try buying and growing unbloomed seedlings. Most growers will not knowingly sell you their best plant but if you buy seedlings you could get their best and like me you will know the joy in waiting and anticipating something new and great. It rewards all the study you put into learning the plants you grow.