



Newsletter

March 2025



Spring Show 2025

The Spring Show takes place on Saturday 22nd March 2025 at Bentley Heath Community Centre (same venue as 2024 and 2023).

This is the club's biggest fundraising event of the year so please do come along and support the club, socialise and buy some orchids for your collection.

The last two years have been particularly successful so hopefully we can keep that up this time. It would be great to try and achieve our highest number of guests through the door so do encourage any family and friends to attend.

Many of you have donated prizes for the tombola and have signed up to cover volunteer slots on the day.

We are very grateful to everyone that has volunteered. Without the time and efforts of the society's members, the show could not run to thank you in advance for all of your efforts.

If you have not yet had the opportunity to sign up and would like to volunteer, please email Show Secretary David Wray and he will let you know which slots are still available.



Please find attached the show schedule. So if you are planning to enter then please contact Malcolm Moodie via email (laeliam@aol.com) or phone on 01295 788159) who will let you know which slots are available.

It would be lovely to see as many club members as possible with entries on the table so please don't be discouraged from taking part – the more, the merrier.

Attached is also the show leaflet and map. Looking forward to seeing everyone at the Show!

Next Meeting

Please be reminded that there is no meeting in April so our next one will be on Saturday 3rd May 2025 when Francis Quesada-Pallares will be speaking on 'Growing Orchids Indoors'.

Francis will also be bringing a plant table so this will be a lovely opportunity to add some interesting specimens to your collections.

You can follow Solihull & District Orchid Society on



If you have any pictures or information you would like to put on our website please email: lina_sala@yahoo.co.uk or copy and pictures for newsletter: ballm1@mac.com
Society email address: www.solihullorchidsociety.co.uk

MARCH TABLE



Hybrid Lymbidium by Monica Johnson - 27 pts



Hybrid Phalenopsis by Carol Evans - 27 pts



Gold Digger Cattleya by Steve Wade - 27 pts

Hybrid Phalenopsis by Carol Evans - 29 pts

Hybrid Phalenopsis by Carol Evans - 27 pts

The Evolution of Orchids: From Simple Cells to Modern Marvels

Roy Bailey-Wood

Introduction

The story of orchids is a captivating journey—from the first simple cells to one of the most diverse flowering plant families. Pioneering work by Darwin and Wallace laid the groundwork for understanding natural selection, while modern DNA analysis refines our insights beyond traditional morphology.

approximately 800 genera, ranging from tiny tropical blossoms to robust temperate varieties.

1. The Origin of Life

- **Simple Beginnings:** Life began with single-celled organisms that evolved into more complex forms, setting the stage for all plant life.
- **Photosynthesis:** Early cells developed the ability to photosynthesize, harnessing sunlight for energy—a breakthrough that fuelled plant evolution.

4. Insights from Darwin and Wallace

- **Darwin's Contribution:** In *On the Various Contrivances by which Orchids are Fertilised by Insects*, Darwin explored orchid reproduction, revealing how natural selection drives complexity.
- **Wallace's Insights:** Wallace, who independently developed the theory of natural selection, further demonstrated how environmental pressures shape species, including orchids.

2. The Rise of Flowering Plants

- **Angiosperms Emerge:** During the Cretaceous period, flowering plants evolved innovative reproductive strategies—vibrant blooms attracted pollinators.
- **New Evolutionary Path:** Among these, orchid ancestors developed unique traits that set them apart from other plant families.

5. Modern Classification: DNA Analysis

- **Beyond Morphology:** Traditional classification relied on physical traits, which can sometimes obscure true evolutionary relationships.
- **Revolutionary DNA Analysis:** Molecular techniques—examining chloroplast and nuclear DNA—now reveal hidden connections, prompting more accurate phylogenetic trees and reclassification.
- **Impact:** These methods have confirmed earlier theories and uncovered unexpected relationships, leading to a classification that mirrors orchids' true evolutionary history.

3. The Orchid Explosion

- **Unique Adaptations:** Orchids evolved intricate flower shapes, vivid colours, and enticing scents to attract specific pollinators, thriving in diverse niches.
- **Monocot Heritage:** As monocots, orchids share an ancient lineage with plants such as onions. Their characteristic parallel leaf venation and scattered vascular bundles highlight this common ancestry despite their striking floral diversity.
- **Diversity Today:** The Orchidaceae family includes over 29,000 species across

Conclusion

Orchid evolution encapsulates life's grand narrative—from simple cells to a dazzling diversity of flowering plants. Darwin and Wallace's foundational work, combined with modern DNA analysis, continues to reshape our understanding, revealing a remarkable journey of adaptation and diversity in one of nature's most exquisite plant families.