

An Introduction to 1% for Orchid Conservation

In situ orchid conservation and habitat preservation are the first line of defense for safeguarding orchid species for the future. Orchids in situ and their habitat are destroyed regularly around the world from illegal collecting, logging, farming and other human activities. With recent discoveries of such orchid species as *Phragmipedium kovachii*, one wonders what other species have yet to be discovered. Will they be discovered before they are destroyed? There is little doubt that orchid species have disappeared before being identified because of habitat destruction. What have we missed?

What orchid species may we miss out on in the future? When an orchid is found at the beginning of the 21st century with the flower the size of a man's hand outstretched and the flower color of a bright red/purple, one can only wonder what else we haven't discovered yet? Our collective action today will determine the state of orchid species for future orchid growers.

1% for Orchid Conservation (1% FOC) is a program of the Orchid Conservation Coalition (<http://www.orchidconservationcoalition.org/>). Organizations that participate in 1% FOC commit to budget 1% or more of their net revenue towards in situ orchid conservation projects of **their** choice. The choice of where a donation should go is not limited to the non-profit orchid conservation organization participating in the OCC. Organizations can invest in their own in situ conservation project. As the coalition membership increases, more orchid organizations will consider participating, thus increasing the donor base for in situ orchid conservation. One of the biggest hurdles for in situ orchid conservation is funding. Imagine if every orchid society budgeted 1% or more of their net revenue towards in situ orchid conservation, funding would increase. It does not matter whether an orchid society's contribution is 1 dollar, 100 dollars, or 1000 dollars. The combination of all donations will positively impact orchid conservation. Orchid growers, societies and businesses actively engaging in donating will make a difference.

The goal is to raise awareness and money for orchid conservation. Orchid societies and businesses worldwide can participate. A participating orchid society's board determines what amount is 1% of net revenue of its society and whether a society has fulfilled its commitment. Part of the net revenue can be non-monetary donations such as volunteering. An important part of the 1% FOC program is networking between societies, businesses and orchid conservation organizations. Through networking we can identify orchid conservation organizations and projects that are effective and worth funding. It is through raising money, awareness and networking that participants in 1% FOC will help save orchids in situ and safeguard their habitats for future orchid enthusiasts.

Currently there are five orchid societies participating: the San Francisco Orchid Society, the Orchid Species Society of Western Australia, the New Hampshire Orchid Society and Bucks County Orchid Society (PA, USA). Four businesses: the Orchid Seedbank Project, Nascent Orchids, Mist Exotics and the Calypso Orchid Company. Listed non-profit orchid conservation organizations: Orchid Conservation Alliance, Orchid Conservation International, Grande Ronde Overlook Wildflower Institute Serving Ecological Restoration (GROWISER), Tropical Research and Education Center (TREC)

and Phytosophy. The American Orchid Society and the Orchid Digest have endorsed 1% for Orchid Conservation.

There is no fee to participate. The Orchid Conservation Coalition accepts no donations and distributes no money.

Mark Sullivan is the administrator of the Orchid Conservation Coalition and its projects. For more information visit: <http://www.orchidconservationcoalition.org/>