

Greater Cincinnati Orchid Society

Environmental Policies

Greater Cincinnati Orchid Society (GCOS) observes a number of environmentally sensitive policies in its operations.

Orchids and Their Habitat

GCOS is so concerned about the preservation of orchids that it incorporates orchid preservation in its mission. We believe the main threat to orchids results from the loss of natural orchid habitat. To preserve orchid diversity for future generations, we focus on fostering orchid diversity in cultivation (ex-situ) as well as protecting natural orchid habitat (in-situ).

Our programs provide information and education that permit our membership and the public the following opportunities:

- To learn non-commercial, home-based orchid cultivation, propagation and protection of orchid biodiversity as a means of preserving orchids in the face of habitat destruction
- To become informed about and connected with efforts to protect and preserve natural orchid habitat
- To take other actions to advocate for orchid and orchid habitat preservation
- To collect, care for, and facilitate the exchange of ex-situ cultivated orchids in ways that augment orchid biodiversity

CITES

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), of which the United States is a participant, prohibits the commercial collection of orchids from wild places and limits the importation of undocumented plants. GCOS supports CITES; we do not support the collection or exhibition of orchid specimens in violation of CITES.

We believe that CITES has several deficiencies, particularly in:

- a) its enforcement in countries that do not participate, or cannot enforce compliance, which results in unfair disadvantages to those who collect ethically
- b) its ineffectiveness in preventing illegal collection by desperately poor people, which creates destructive black markets for orchid species and the covert stripping of plants from fragile environments
- c) the lack of affirmative measures to protect the habitat of rare species
- d) difficulties in educating enforcement officials, sometimes resulting in CITES-certified or extremely rare plants being confiscated and destroyed

GCOS is very interested in improvements in CITES and further measures that will preserve and protect orchids and orchid habitat.

Carbon Emissions

GCOS is aware that its own activities generate carbon emissions which endanger the environment, including both nearby and distant orchid habitats. GCOS will strive to reduce its own waste generation by reducing the use of non-biodegradable disposables and by speeding its transition to electronic (versus paper) communications. We will also attend to energy saving measures that may be used by orchid enthusiasts to operate home greenhouses and orchid growing areas as responsibly as possible.

Dissemination of Various Orchid Species among Hobbyist Growers

GCOS believes that the ex-situ cultivation of orchids is an essential measure to protect them from the current overwhelming habitat destruction that threatens them. Consequently, we disseminate orchid plants among our members and the public, first, to help hobbyist growers to learn orchid cultivation (which creates orchid preservation capacity), and second, to achieve the broadest possible dissemination and protection of orchids.

Other

GCOS will undertake other activities from time to time, including such things as collaboration with groups fostering environmental protection, collaboration with organizations that protect orchid habitat, and other activities that support our environmental agenda.

Adopted by the Board on April 7, 2009