

FEATURED MEMBERS' HIGHLIGHTS



Karlene & Mark Sanborn

Our featured members this month are Karlene and Mark Sanborn. They live in El Dorado, Kansas where they own Prairie Orchids. They grow beautiful plants of high quality. Both have contributed much to our society and have put their teaching skills to work helping other members.



1. How long have you been in the Kansas Orchid Society?

17 years

2. How did you start growing orchids?

They taught night classes in Kansas City for Friends University. Since there was nothing to do during the day after they had arrived, they visited with various people, discussing orchids. They found Orchids by Vi-Cli, (Vivian and Clifford Walters) in Kansas City.

After buying plants, Vivian recommended they join KOS. Then, at the first KOS auction they "just kept buying and buying orchids like idiots".

3. What do you like about growing them? And what do you dislike?

Like They don't talk back, and they are grateful for everything we do for them (grateful meaning they grow & bloom!)

Dislike: The fact that you have to wait a year for them to bloom. Some of our purchases were corms and it took them eleven years to bloom.

4. How many orchids do you have and where do you grow them?

We have a commercial grade greenhouse, 24 feet x 36 feet, in which we grow approximately 2500 plants. We built the greenhouse from scratch. It has triple ply polycarbonate walls, an automatic fog system, and the waterlines run so there is access to water on each isle as well as sprayers, when needed. The rolling benches are 18 feet. We built it in 2004. Mark got up in the tall ceiling on pipes to set up the hanging apparatus for plants and misting system. This was a tremendous asset to us becoming professional growers and selling at orchid shows in our region.

5. What do you particularly favor? and why?

Mark-- Cattleyas

Karlene – Whatever is in bloom, they are calming.

6. Which orchid is the most difficult for you to grow?

Disa are orchids that seem to be the most difficult. They are from Africa and grow at the edge of streams in a marsh environment. We paid huge bucks for a compot. We set them in a pan of water and put ice cubes in the water to keep them cool. They grew to a good size but never bloomed. We lost them all when they were rotted.

7. Do you have a bloom of which you are particularly proud?

Phragmipedium Fritz Schomberg 'Sanborn'
(see picture to the right).

8. Any experiences you would like to share with others? words of wisdom?

Karlene – Don't over tend and they will bring lots of joy.

Mark – Buy as much as you can and your greenhouse is never big enough!

9. What are your other passions?

Karlene – Reading non-fiction. with footnotes and sources, grandchildren.

Mark – Learning to play the guitar.

10. Please tell us one thing we do not know about you.

Karlene – When I was a kid, I picked cotton with a cotton sack, and did pole bending and barrel racing in Rodeos. I love to do hand embroidery and paint with water colors.

Mark – Does leather tooling of leather. Also good at photography.

