



Santa Barbara International Orchid Show Unveils "Orchids Mystique"
72nd annual exhibit opens March 17, 2017

Santa Barbara, CA – Splashes of color, wonder and dazzling horticulture will meet at the **72nd Annual Santa Barbara International Orchid Show** (www.SBOrchidShow.com). The allure of the stunning blooms has only grown over the decades, leading organizers to theme the 2017 event "Orchids Mystique." Orchid experts will demonstrate their knowledge and exhibit mesmerizing specimens at Earl Warren Showgrounds in beautiful Santa Barbara, California, for three days from March 17 - 19, 2017. Save the date!

One of the country's longest-running and grandest celebrations of the orchid family, the Santa Barbara Orchid Show has built a reputation for gathering spectacular living displays of the genus that boast over 25,000 species. The Santa Barbara International Orchid Show promises to put front and center unique attributes of rare species and trend-setting new hybrids. From highlighting orchid growing and display with elegant orchids to the wild adventures of locating exotic plants in nature and scientific tales of their very specific demands to achieve pollination, the show pulls the curtain back on its illustrious and evocative star.

This year's festival poster depicts an orchid with a fascinating story, which exemplifies the profound connection between people and the enchanting flower. The photo chosen for the poster is of a *Mystacidium capense* named 'Carrie Chu,' a species from Africa. Don Brown, a celebrated Santa Barbara orchid hobbyist for decades, captured the image of the prized orchid he named after his wife, Carrie Chu. The American Orchid Society granted the one of a kind cultivar, Carrie Chu, and its cascading sprays of delicate white flowers, its very prestigious First Class Certificate and Certificate of Cultural Excellence for its flower quality, floral display, and exceptional growing achievement.



Growing plants to this pinnacle of performance is considered a lifetime achievement, and opportunities to view such specimens should not be missed.

The three-day Orchid Show highlights bold and beautiful horticultural innovations and feats of evolution represented by more than 50 orchid exhibitors and vendors from around the world.

Santa Barbara has long been an epicenter of domestic orchid collection. During the 1930s and 1940s, residents with sophisticated tastes imported the exotic plants from England. Indeed, during the war years, many collections were sent to the US from the UK for preservation, infusing many with a fascination and admiration of orchids; particularly among the wealthy who owned large estates and maintained private conservatories. It didn't take long before enthusiasm spread to the West Coast, finding an especially well suited climate to live in Santa Barbara, all of which resulted in the launching of the first Santa Barbara Orchid Show in 1945, hosted at the Montecito Grange Hall by the Santa Barbara Horticultural Society. The event grew and moved into venues that gradually increased in size and capacity to meet brimming interest before filling the Earl Warren Showgrounds new rotunda building in the early 1960s. Commercial and hobbyist growers eagerly anticipated the annual event where they exhibited their premier specimens.

It's fitting that such a world-class Orchid Show is set in Santa Barbara. Over the years the region has boasted the largest pocket of commercial orchid growing in the country. Today, many local greenhouses open their doors and host sales during the weekend event as well as throughout the year, to demonstrate how accessible the once rare flowers have become. In the early days of orchid propagation, stud plants sold for tens of thousands of dollars, and orchids were a luxury for the wealthy. Today, thanks to the advent of laboratory orchid cloning and technological advances in cultivation, while there are still one of a kind collector's plants offered at lofty prices, scores of orchid varieties have become easily available and affordable.

Santa Barbara International Orchid Show is open Friday, March 17 through Sunday, March 19 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily at Earl Warren Showgrounds, located in Santa Barbara at Highway 101 and Las Positas Road. General admission is \$14; seniors, students with ID and advance group sales (minimum 25) are \$12; and children 12 and under are free with an adult. Tickets are available in advance at www.SBORchidShow.com/.