

71st

SANTA BARBARA INTERNATIONAL ORCHID SHOW

WILD WORLD OF ORCHIDS

FRIDAY MARCH 4 - SUNDAY MARCH 6, 2016

“Wild World of Orchids” arrives March 4 – 6, 2016

SANTA BARBARA, CA (September 21, 2015) – Orchid lovers, flower fans and admirers of all things wild and wonderful, save the dates! On March 4 - 6, 2016, Santa Barbara International Orchid Show (www.SBORchidShow.com) returns to Earl Warren Showgrounds in beautiful Santa Barbara, California. Thousands of blooms in every imaginable shape, color, pattern and texture, will be showcased at the show, one of the country’s largest and oldest celebrations of orchids.

The 71st annual Santa Barbara International Orchid Show’s theme, “Wild World of Orchids,” pays homage to a family of flowering plants that boasts 25,000 species, among which beauty is ubiquitous and uniqueness is commonplace. Some are sexy (One species attracts male bees by mimicking the look, scent and feel of a female bee) while others are secretive (It took scientists years to find a moth with a foot-long tongue for pollinating an orchid that hides nectar 12 inches deep.).

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. A highlight of this year’s event is the vanilla orchid, which will add taste to the list of senses stimulated by the diverse array of plants.

Though each year, the orchid show spotlights the novel and new, the event is steeped in a rich history. In its 71 years, it has grown rapidly alongside the public’s burgeoning attraction and access to orchids. Santa Barbara’s relationship with the exotic beauties was fostered by its well-heeled residents with sophisticated taste, such as Anna Dickinson and Edward and Emily Carpentier, who obtained specimens of the then-rare plants from distributors in England in the 1930s and 1940s.

The Montecito Grange Hall hosted the first orchid show in 1945. It relocated to the Carrillo Recreation Center in downtown Santa Barbara the next year, and then to the State Armory on Santa Barbara’s Eastside before finding its longtime home at Earl Warren Showgrounds when the rotunda building opened in the early 1960s.

Local cymbidium grower Eliot Rogers managed the show in its youth. He brought his keen eye and vast experience to the role. After World War II, Signal Oil magnate Samuel B. Mosher solidified the area’s place in orchid history by investing over \$1.5 million to create one of the world’s most extensive orchid breeding collections at his Rancho Dos Pueblos. Among a citrus farm, carnation nursery, acres of Birds of Paradise, Mosher dedicated eight acres to breeding and growing cymbidiums.

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For Immediate Release

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In those 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, scores of orchid varieties have become easily available and affordable.

“After World War II, a handful of nurseries began to grow orchids on a commercial scale. Now, Santa Barbara County produces more orchids than any region in the country. Many of the nurseries are family businesses that date back several generations,” said John Ernest, laboratory manager at Carpinteria’s Gallup & Stribling Nursery.

Santa Barbara International Orchid Show is open Friday, March 4 through Sunday, March 6 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.

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Santa Barbara International Orchid Show links:

- www.SBORchidShow.com
- <https://www.facebook.com/orchidshow>
- <https://twitter.com/SBORchidShow>
- #SBOrchidShow

Sources:

“Love and Lies” by Michael Pollan, *National Geographic*, September 2009

“Road Trip with Huell Howser,” 2010

“The Big Orchid: The Seduction, Danger and History of Santa Barbara’s Most Famous Flower,” by Ethan Stewart, *Santa Barbara Independent*, March 15, 2007

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