



St. Augustine Orchid Society

www.staugorchidsociety.org

My Favorite Orchid

January 2013

by Dick Roth, rhroth405@aol.com

My favorite orchid... Wow, that is a hard choice for me. I have been growing orchids for over 50 years and have had so many great ones. Lots were awarded and some were spectacular and all were beautiful. A tough choice. What I really enjoyed most were the seedlings that flowered for the first time. You never really knew what you were getting, but all were exciting to see for the first time.

I have to think that in addition to beautiful I must add rewarding. Once that gets into the equation the choice gets much easier. In making the choice I am not slighting some of the great-awarded plants I had but tend towards one of my most recent orchids.

A few years ago I purchased a small seedling from Home Depot that is native to Australia, *Dendrobium speciosum*. It kept growing larger and larger as I had hoped. Finally the pseudobulbs were almost two feet long and a good two inches thick. I couldn't imagine what it was going to look like when it bloomed.



The first blooming was rather unspectacular with small yellowish flowers. But, on the second blooming it went wild. It not only bloomed on the new growths but on almost all of the old growths, whether they had bloomed before or not. It wound up with 45 bloom spikes and 25 to 30 flowers on each spike. Conservatively that is 1,125 flowers as you can



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see in the picture. It was so big and heavy that I needed the help of Penny Halyburton's husband Michael to get it to the meeting for the show table.

As you can see, each flower in and of itself is not spectacular but as a whole it certainly is. It was so big and cumbersome that I could not get it to AOS judging that weekend but at least I was overwhelmed with it and the society got the chance to enjoy it. I guess you can see why it is my favorite orchid.

