

EUROPEAN ORCHID COUNCIL



Guidelines
for
Prospective Organisers
of a
EOCCE
European Orchid Council Conference and
Exhibition

www.europeanorchidcouncil.eu

23 October 2011

THE EUROPEAN ORCHID COUNCIL

EOC is a non-profit making organisation consisting of European Orchid Societies and other non commercial European institutions that have an interest in orchids.

The objectives of the EOC are:

CO-ORDINATION OF THE ACTIVITIES AND COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE MEMBERS

- Publication of material of common interest
- Promotion of orchid research
- Communication of information concerning cultivation, research and conservation of orchids
- Organisation of a European Orchid Council Conference and Exhibition every three years

THE RESOLUTION OF PROBLEMS OF COMMON INTEREST

- Protecting endangered orchid species and habitats
- Helping to unify and simplify customs procedures throughout Europe in relation to the movement of orchids
- Answering propositions made by any Member if said proposition is of general interest

PUBLIC RELATIONS

- The EOC should be represented in major international orchid events; to ensure that its activities, including Conferences, research, become widely known within and outside Europe

THE EUROPEAN ORCHID COPUNCIL CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION

A European Orchid Council Conference and Exhibition (EOCCE) is held approximately every three years. Conferences and Exhibitions are hosted and organised by one of the Members. It consists of a large orchid show, sales, lecture series and a social program.

Forthcoming Conferences

2012: The 15th European Orchid Conference will take place in the 15 Pap Laszlo Sportarena, Budapest, Hungary and will be organised by the Magyar Orchidea Tàrsà Elnok.

2015: The 16th European Orchid Conference will take place in the Vienna Exhibition Center, Vienna, Austria and will be organised by the Österreichische Orchideengesellschaft.

Past Conferences

2009	Dresden
2006	Padua
2003	London
2000	Copenhagen
1997	Geneva
1994	Hannover
1991	Rome
1988	Paris
1985	London
1982	Hamburg
1979	Zurich
1976	Amsterdam
1973	London
1969	Paris

Applying to hold a Conference?

For further information on how to apply to hold a future European Orchid Council Conference and Exhibition please contact the EOC Secretary General in the first instance. An application form can be found at the end of this document:

EUROPEAN ORCHID COUNCIL CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION HANDBOOK

These guidance notes are an outline of things to consider for members considering organising a European Conference. Every EOCCE is different and there are no strict rules for the format to be followed; this makes every event unique.

the Working Committee

It is impossible to give specific advice about how best to structure the organisation of a Show and Conference and experience shows that it is not unusual for the organisation to change considerably between the initial decision to submit an application and the actual day of the conference's opening. Individuals may move in or out of the organisation during that time. But the nature of the EOCCE is sufficiently well-established for certain key tasks to be readily identifiable, and the sooner the right people can be found to fill those key places in the organization, with a long term commitment, the better. One of the first tasks of any organising committee should be to identify those key posts, define their functions and allocate clear responsibilities to those chosen to fill them. Key people will include: Chairman, secretary, a person responsible for the show, for the lecture program, for the judging, the social events and a treasurer. It is likely that the team will meet regularly to plan the Conference and Show.

Schedule of Events

The Conference has three main parts: A lecture program, a show and a social program. This framework is a constant feature of all Conferences, whatever local variations may occur. The event lasts a minimum of 4 days, but organisers will need to allow time before and after for setting up and taking down the show.

Finance and Budget

The financial responsibility for the Conference rests entirely with the host organisers. It is impossible to give general advice about how this responsibility is to be handled. Local circumstances, the pattern of local costs, and local resources vary widely. It is very important to have a detailed budget and to monitor adherence to it.

Some general guidelines based on past experience can be given about what the main items of expenditure and income might be and about how the budget might be constructed.

Registrants to the Conference are expected to pay their own way. Looked at from their point of view, there are three main costs: transportation to and from the Conference, accommodation and general expenses. Many people coming from abroad will no doubt make a holiday of it, but that is strictly their affair. However, it is the overall cost that matters to them and will determine whether they come to the event or not.

Conference organisers may be able to help with this by negotiating favourable rates with airlines or hotels. That would be very welcome to the prospective registrants, but it has nothing to do with the Conference budget itself.

Conference expenses are another matter. There is a well-established pattern that divides these into two. There are certain Conference expenses which are effectively independent of registrant choice -- administrative costs, hire of facilities, publicity, printing, *etc.* -- and there are expenses in connection with the more peripheral activities and events (*e.g.* social events, tours) which from the registrant's point of view are optional extras. It has generally been the practice to cost these

optional items separately and to set additional charges for them, so that each event is (more or less) self-financing.

On the revenue side there is, first, a Conference **registration fee**. It is usual to set this fee at a basic rate for early registrants and then to increase it by pre-announced steps as the date of the Conference approaches. The registrant's fee allows entry at all times to lectures and to the show; it provides a full set of Conference documentation; it enables suitably qualified registrants to take part in the judging; it entitles registrants to attend the opening reception and to buy tickets to attend other social events (*e.g.*, the banquet) and to take part in tours.

It may prove easier to get invited speakers to accept if some type of financial assistance is offered. Several Conferences have offered free registration or even accommodation.

Registration fees alone will obviously not cover all the central Conference and show costs. Other sources of income include fees paid at the door by members of the public who visit the show, rental charges in the sales area, commercial sponsorship, donations and public subsidies. Exactly which mixture of these is right is a matter of judgment for the organisers in the light of local conditions.

Health and Safety & Insurance

Organisers should establish procedures for the observance of all local health and safety regulations to ensure the safety of workers and visitors. It is recommended that a Health and Safety Guide is produced and published and made available to all exhibitors and registrants before the event.

It is very important to make clear where responsibility for insurance lies. This should be carefully included in all printed matter sent out to registrants. Arrangements for insurance for the registrants and exhibitors and for any losses by the organisers due to cancellation must also be carefully considered. EOC bears no responsibility for any kind of insurance or refunds under any circumstances whatsoever.

Planning and Publicising the Conference

Organisers should not start the publicity for their Conference until the Conference immediately preceding, but they should plan a major drive at this event since the registrants in attendance are also likely to want to attend future ones. You should have a well-manned and well-staged publicity booth so that information can be given out. Posters, registration forms and other publicity will need to be produced and the opportunity should be taken to start an emailing list of interested people. It is also an opportunity to personally approach potential exhibitors.

The most important tool for publicity and communication to all concerned is probably the use of a unique **Website**, linked to the EOC website and others. Much information can only be given in outline, the general attractions of the host city and country as places to visit can be emphasised, because this is a key point in selling the event internationally

The printed word is also of vital importance for many people. *The Orchid Review* is committed to publicise all EOC Conferences (contact EOC- *Orchid Review* liaison person for this: Johan Hermans: orchids1@btinternet.com).

The **final registration package** should be available on-line and for distribution well before the Conference, a year in advance is not unreasonable. It should contain detailed information that a prospective registrant or exhibitor will want to know about; every aspect of the Conference, including accommodation, social program, tours, all prices and much else. It should contain the registration form, reservation form for exhibitors, and vendors and payment instructions.

The publication and going 'on-line' of this marks the important first stage in the work of organising the Conference. From this time onwards the plans for the Conference are set and the work of the period up to the Conference itself will be the work of completing the implementation of what the 'brochure' promises.

Once the registration pack is available, the work of publicising the Conference should accelerate. Individual mailings should be made to people on the mailing list. Journals should be approached with offers of articles and advertisements. Orchid organisations around the world should be asked to help. If possible, publicity booths should be staged at important orchid events internationally.

Local publicity is a separate matter with an importance of its own, because paid attendance at the show plays a vital part in the success of every Conference.

The registration pack does not need to contain the details of the lecture program, nor of the judging schedule. General indications and their timetable should be given. But the lecture program, in particular, should already be well advanced by this stage, and its completion is a major item of work from now on. Invitations to speakers should go out not less than one year ahead of the Conference -- preferably 18 months. This is especially important in the case of orchid scientists, who will in most cases need at least that length of time to arrange things. It is important to continually update the website. Items such as the judging manual and the lecture program schedule with speakers indicated need to be online well before the Conference takes place.

The Show

The show should be a large one and needs to be carefully designed; it should appeal not only to the registrants, but also to the general public of the host location. The opening of the show to the public -- for a fee -- is in most cases an important element in the overall Conference budget. The show sometimes had to be staged in a separate facility from the lecture program, but it is obviously best if they can be put on, if not under one roof, then at least as close together as possible. This must depend on local circumstances. If the main hotel can be close to the show and to the lectures as well, that is better still. Often there has been a "Conference Hotel" which has provided a location for the program of lectures and other meetings.

The **sales area** is an important part of the show -- of great interest to registrants and visitors. While plants predominate in the sales area, other more or less orchid-related lines of merchandise -- sundries, pictures, books *etc.*, -- can be included at the organisers discretion.

Practice on charging exhibitors for a sales area varies; sometimes exhibitors are charged a flat fee or given a discounted sales space in proportion to the size of their exhibit in the show.

It is essential that the organisers make arrangements with their **Customs, plant health** and **CITES** authorities to facilitate both the bringing in of plants for exhibition and/or sale and their subsequent export (or re-export) by both exhibitors and registrant. Such arrangements should be both made and publicised internationally a long time -- say a year -- in advance. Organisers must realise that exhibitors from abroad, especially those from non-EU countries, will not commit themselves to bringing in plants until they know that proper and reliable arrangements have been made.

It is customary to provide facilities and a space in the show for the hosts of the **following** Conference to meet interested registrants and to promote their event. It is, of course, up to the following hosts to arrange this, but the cooperation of the current hosts will be welcomed.

Judging

There is an important competitive element to the show; the business of judging is traditionally

one of the main features of the Conference as a whole and judges often make up an important proportion of registrants. Details vary, but both **Medal** and **Ribbon** judging of individual plants can be done and there also is judging of **Exhibits**. European Orchid Conference prizes are a major expense for hosts but they are also very suitable candidates for sponsorship. It should be borne in mind that many individuals will have to travel great distances so trophies should not be overly fragile or heavy.

The organisation of judging is a major task, it is also a sensitive one. It is the responsibility of the organisers to decide who should be accepted, but they need to take account of the fact that different countries use different systems for qualifying judges. EOC can put organisers in touch with those responsible for the various international judging groups. It is strongly recommended that clear guidance is given on the qualifications required to judge. It is also wise to check accreditation well before judging starts.

Judges from different countries will be used to differing judging systems, and the system used at European Orchid Conference has to reflect that. While the design of the schedule and the rules are a matter for the organisers and they bear the responsibility for choosing the method to be employed. If the host country has a well known, established judging system, it may well be used “as is” or with slight modifications. In other countries it will be necessary to “borrow” a system or a combination of systems. Where necessary, it could prove beneficial to seek the assistance of experienced people to help formulate the judging system and the judging classes.

It is important that the method of judging and the judging classes be formalised by the host and publicised well before the actual Conference.

Conference registration packages should include a judge’s form that asks for a prospective judge’s qualifications; which judging organization they belong to; particular area of expertise the judge possesses and the level of Conference registration that is needed to be able to judge. The privilege of judging at an EOCCE is expected to be matched by an appropriate contribution to its organization, and, up to now, judges have been happy to pay the full registration fee.

A judging and entry manual should be provided for each judge and exhibitor. Judges often like to read the judging manual well before they arrive at the show. The manual should cover as many details about exhibition and judging as possible such as how many classes a plant, flower, or exhibit may be entered in; a clear definition of such terms as ‘miniature’, ‘novelty’, and ‘standard’; whether plants and cut flowers may be combined in an exhibit etc.

Organization of judging involves a considerable amount of administration and it is important to appoint a committed team of administrators to input data, produce lists, answer questions and keep track of paperwork; a dedicated Judging Secretariat with appropriate data links and equipment are essential.

Lists of judging teams and their assignments should be posted conspicuously at several key locations as soon as possible and no later than one day before judging, preferably on separate lists sorted by judging teams and alphabetically by name. The lists should also indicate team leaders and clerks / stewards.

Hosts normally provide breakfast and/or lunch for the judges and clerks. It is convenient to have the judges’ briefing during this period. Any last minute items can be passed along at this time, people can be reminded of important issues and deadlines, questions can be answered and teams can formally meet up. At this stage judging teams can be given their assignment sheets, which should contain detailed information on groups to be judged, genera included, restrictions etc.

Exhibitors, judges, registrants and the public like to be able to see a list of winning entries. Such lists should be prepared and posted around the show site as soon as possible after the conclusion of judging. Several computerised entry programs have been used quite successfully at major

shows around the world.

Organisers should determine how and when they want to present the major awards that arise from the judging. There are three opportune times to do so – the opening social event that normally takes place the evening of judging day, the Conference closing ceremony (if any) or the banquet. While it is entirely up to the organising group to determine when they want the various presentations to take place, it is vitally important that the recipients be present to accept if at all possible. It might be necessary to invite winners to a function that they have not otherwise signed up for or to present certain awards at the opening ceremony if the recipients are not going to remain at the Conference until the final day.

The Lecture Program

The lecture program -- typically runs for 2 to 3 days. Organisers are responsible for ensuring that the lecture hall capacity is adequate to accommodate all registrants interested in attending.

While some EOCCE's have been able to get by with rooms that held some 100 to 150 seats, others, and certain speakers, have needed more.

Speakers should be chosen because they are good speakers and because they have something valuable or important to contribute, not because (for example) they volunteer to speak or because they have spoken in previous Conferences. The highest standards are required and, at the same time, a good international range of speakers.

Invitations to speak should be accompanied by details of the technical aids (projectors, etc.) that will be available, or speakers may be invited to state their requests. Neither facilities nor requests should be changed after invitations have been accepted. Naturally properly lit lecterns, good sound equipment, remote controls, and back-up facilities should be available.

It has been traditional for the language of the Conference to be English and for all lectures to be given in that language. But there is nothing cast-iron about that. It is quite possible that in some countries lectures could be given in other languages, but then simultaneous translation at least into English should be provided.

It is important that no scheduled presentation start prior to the time set aside for it as well as ensuring that all lectures not be allowed to run over. Many registrants plan their days around the published schedule and are unhappy if it is not followed.

Scientific Posters

Scientific poster displays can present a fascinating variety of research, covering scientific, horticultural, and conservation topics. It is recommended that this is planned as an integral part of the Conference to help accommodate young researchers and groups of workers, as well as offering an opportunity for others, since not everyone can be invited to speak in the lecture program itself. There are always a number of scientists and others who have something interesting to say and who would welcome the chance to participate in this way.

The Social Program

The social program is important. For many registrants this is the occasion for a looked-forward-to holiday and they bring partners with them. It is very much an occasion for meeting up with old friends -- an international get-together, with orchids as the focus and the excuse. Most of this will take place during the event but there is also scope for associated tourism before and after the Conference.

It is usual to have at least two main social events for registrants during the Conference -- an **Opening Reception** on the evening of the day on which judging takes place and a **Closing Banquet**. The Opening Reception should be free of charge for registrants and has often been

hosted (for example) by the local public authorities of the host city. Depending upon the capacity of the site, organisers may allow non-registrants to attend (free or for an appropriate fee). It is good to have other kinds of social events arranged on the other nights as well, but these need not be on the same scale.

Many registrants -- and even more of their accompanying partners-- will not want to spend all their time at the show or at lectures. It is important that arrangements should be varied and provide interesting opportunities for doing other things during the week. In some cases all that the organisers need to do is provide information about local attractions or events which are available in the locality. But they could also arrange a program of **tours** -- whole day, half-day -- tailored specifically to the interest of people attending this particular Conference. These may or may not be orchid-centered. Obviously such things as nursery visits might feature, but visits to such local attractions as historical sites or landscape features of general tourist interest are well in order. The important thing is that these should be "Conference Tours" shared by and confined to those attending the Conference where possible.

Some organisers offer registrants pre- Conference and/or post- Conference tours -- with the latter being the more important. There need not be too many tours offered, as many individuals and groups attending the Conference will in practice make their tourist arrangements in other ways and through operators of their own choosing. Most of these tours should include orchid related itineraries.

Assistance to Registrants

For many registrants, attending the Conference may be their first visit to the host country. Much of the success and subsequent reputation of the Conference depends on how welcome they are made to feel and on how easy and stress-free they find the arrangements during their stay in the country. This should be a prime concern of the organisers. A few tips follow.

A good range of choice of **hotel and other accommodation** should be offered; accommodation should include five-star hotels but should also offer such low-cost accommodation as bed and breakfast rooms and student halls of residence (where suitable ones are locally available) and a range of options in between.

Registrants will expect to be provided at registration with some kind of **delegate bag** containing all necessary documentation. Since this will be taken home by most registrants as a souvenir of the Conference, it should be appropriately designed. Other suitable souvenirs are always welcome.

An Assistance/**Inquiry Desk** should be provided in an accessible place throughout the Conference, manned at all reasonable hours. If the lectures and the show are in separate locations, it is helpful to have such an information point in each.

Depending on the physical layout of the whole Conference, a **delegate lounge** or private space to registrants should if possible be provided at either the site of the lecture program or at the show or at both. It will be appreciated if simple refreshments are available there, even if a charge is made. It is very desirable that restaurant facilities, preferably at various grades, be accessible from these locations.

Transport arrangements for registrants are extremely important. If the show and the lecture program are held in separate locations, regular and convenient transportation between them should be provided. Whether private Conference transportation from main hotels to Conference sites is provided will depend on what other arrangements are readily available. The same considerations make the provision of transportation to and from the main social events (which may well be held at night) a necessity in most cases.

Whether and on what basis any charge is made for such Conference transportation is a matter for the organisers and will no doubt be decided within the general budget framework. It is customary for the cost of transportation connected with main social events to be covered by the fee levied for such events.

Proceedings of the Conference

Some Conference shave produced their own printed Proceedings of the event , sometimes as a substantial and high-quality publication, well illustrated, and covering the full content of the lecture program, together with a record of other Conference proceedings, the show and the social events. These Proceedings need to be carefully budgeted for and can be included in the registration fee or charged for subsequently.

If it is not possible to produce Proceedings *The Orchid Review* may be able to use selected lectures for publication together with short reports on the show, Conference and the social program.

APPLICATION FORM

European Orchid Council Conference and Exhibition

Please return the completed form to Mr. Rudolf Jenny, RJOrchid@gmx.ch

ORGANISATION

Name of Country

Name of City

Name of Hosting Organization(s)

Address

E-mail

Telephone number

Names of any other Supporting Organizations

PERSONNEL:

Name of Chairman (main contact)

Address

E-mail

Telephone number

Names of supporting persons who will be closely involved

(e.g.) Deputy Chairman, Treasurer, Chairman Lectures, Chairman Show, Publicity Manager etc

VENUE:

Name and location of Conference/Exhibition Centre

Will the lectures and Show be at the same location?

HOTELS:

Will there be a designated Conference Hotel?

Other Hotels: please provide details of sizes and price ranges

FINANCE:

Reserves available for Preliminary Expenses

Proposals for Sponsorship/Underwriting

Proposed Registration Fee

EXPERIENCE: in organising large Orchid Shows and/or Conferences:

Give details of recent (last three years) experience of your organization and proposed committee members: