SUMMER HAS ARRIVED

The weather this year has been unusual, to say the least. Typical hot and humid August weather arrived in May and June, leaving us all wondering what July and August will bring!

Most of us don’t think of a greenhouse as a ‘go-to’ place in the summer. Yet the Rinard Orchid Greenhouse is actually a nicer environment than outside on many of the hot summer days. Stop by to enjoy the flowers!

The hot humid days of summer are exactly what the vanilla orchids need to grow and thrive. Finally, after four years in their new home, the vanilla orchids have recovered from the relocation and are beginning to produce flowers (see photo above). Getting vanilla bean production is an entirely different story, however, since the flowers only last a single day. Pollination must take place by human hand in both the greenhouse and in commercial vanilla plantations to help ensure pod formation. So now you know why vanilla beans and real vanilla extract is so expensive!

Our May program, ‘Tropical Creatures’ was an educational opportunity for all who visited. Dr. Gary Dodson presented an insightful comparison of moths and butterflies. Visitors learned about various mammals, birds and reptiles common to the Central American tropics.

Our June “Hummingbirds, Butterflies and Muncie Ballet” was a new program enjoyed by many, and a merging of our July Midsummer-Night event. Conflicts in July schedules prompted the merger. It seemed a perfect partnering – do you agree?

Our summer Social Media intern, Nikki DeGroot (Journalism...
major, 2019) joined the greenhouse team in late May and she has been busy learning about orchids and posting to Facebook and Instagram. You can follow Nikki’s very informative posts on Facebook or Instagram!

Since June, we have raised and released eighteen Black Swallowtail butterflies. Their favorite food is parsley, and the caterpillars gobbled up lots of it before pupating in early July. We now have two monarch caterpillars as our temporary summer insect exhibit. Stay tuned and stop by to see how quickly they grow. We anticipate their pupation date to be near the end of July and emergence as adult monarchs in mid August.

Our cacao plant is blooming! Chocolate comes from the seeds within the cacao pods, and the tiny flowers bloom right on the main stem of the plant. Although our cacao tree is still a small tree, we are hopeful that we may have a cacao pod or two this year. Stay tuned!

Don’t forget, if you or a friend are interested in volunteering, please contact us for training. Training is held throughout the year. Or if you prefer to support the greenhouse in other ways, consider becoming a Friend of the Rinard Orchid Greenhouse.

ORCHID GREENHOUSE EXPANSION PLAN

Beginning in September, we will begin a fundraising effort to help expand the orchid greenhouse to include a community nature education center. As you may know, there is limited space for our educational outreach programs, and nature education is our passion. With this expansion, we hope to bring more quality programs to our local schools, as well as to our community. We will share more information in a special newsletter soon. If you are interested in helping us make this expansion happen, please contact us for details!

Contact Curator, Cheryl LeBlanc: cleblanc@bsu.edu or (765) 285-8839
Dr. Joe and Alice Rinard Orchid Greenhouse
Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306

HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday – Friday
10:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Saturdays
10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Visit us on the web:
www.bsu.edu/orchids
www.facebook.com/WOCSB/
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http://greenhouse.iweb.bsu.edu/files/Membership%20form%20FINAL%202016.pdf