

Orchids Abloom in Midwinter: 'Orchids: A Cultural Odyssey,' U.S. Botanic Garden



WANT TO ESCAPE the snow and cold plaguing D.C.? Head to the [U.S. Botanic Garden](#) for the annual orchid show it puts on with the **Smithsonian Institution's Horticultural Services Division** to immerse yourself in more than 1,000 colorful blooms and learn about the orchid's history and cultural importance.

Kyle Wallick, a botanist at the Botanic Garden who

helped plan the show, said that this year's theme, "[Orchids: A Cultural Odyssey](#)," explores how orchids feature in the arts, literature and culture.

Wallick said there haven't been many representations of orchids in fine art until recently, so included in the show are botanical illustrations from the early 1800s.

"We know that orchids have been used in popular cultural items like currency, fabrics, fine glassware and silverware, so we have some of that on display as well," Wallick said, adding that the exhibit's organizers will display stamps from countries all over the world that featured the flower.

Also look for a Sri Lankan creature made entirely of orchids and a globe showing where orchids can be found — "from tropical South America to Greenland," according to Wallick. There's also an Asian market that highlights which orchids are found on that continent and the ways they have been traded over the years.

"Orchids" explores the flower's influence in our own backyard as well. You can see works on display by artist and **Manassas** resident [Sunisa Yorgason](#), who sculpts flowers from clay and then paints them.

» [U.S. Botanic Garden](#), 100 Maryland Ave. SW; through April 11, free; 202-225-8333.

Written by Express contributor Amy Cavanaugh; Photo courtesy U.S. Botanic Garden

Posted By Express at 12:00 AM on February 18, 2010