



## **This "Judges Profile" for Alex Challis appeared in the July 1999 issue of the Score Sheet.**

Alex is a life-long Ann Arborite.

Growing up, he always had an interest in gardening and horticulture as shown by the picture of him holding the zucchini. The smaller one on the left is his brother Peter who's an astronomer. At about the age of four, he helped his father in the garden by pulling out the tomato plants. Skipping a few years: He went to the University of Michigan and earned a BS in Botany and then a MS in Biology in 1986. One of his big influences then was Professor Warren H. Wagner .

Around 1981, Alex developed an interest in orchids, primarily in orchid species, and he began to visit Great Lakes Orchids and Taylor Orchids. He joined the American Orchid Society in 1983, and became a life member in 1984. In 1985, he began working at Great Lakes Orchids, and then in 1989 at Hoosier Orchids in Indianapolis. He made numerous hybrids while working Great Lakes and Hoosier in various genera, especially *Masdevallias*. Some were actually thought out - while others were crossed just to see what would happen with two "interesting" parents.

Some of the wild crosses he attempted that never took were *M. caudivolvula* (corkscrew caudae) x *M. enc*  
*ephala*  
(balloon-shape) and  
*M.*  
*glandulosa*  
{clove scented) x  
*M.*  
*fractiflexa*

{foul smelling - but very strong). Crosses that did come out nice were M. Orange Ice (M. strobilii x M. medozae) which received an Award of Quality from the AOS in 1995 and M. Tangerine Dragon (M. mendozae x M. veitchiana). A cross that could have been - but grew poorly in the flask was an Angulocaste x Zygocolax, which could have been a Challisara by now, rats!

Coming back to Michigan, he worked for a hobby shop for a few years (a bad thing to do when model trains is your other big hobby), then got back into orchids with New World Orchids - Ecuadorquideas. Alex became a student judge while at Hoosier Orchids, and was just elevated to Accredited this spring. He is a member of the Ann Arbor Orchid Society, where he is active in various activities.

Other interests: softball, volleyball, golf and all malt beverages.