

Orchid lady

Local woman's avocation became her vocation

By KATHLEEN WEST
Reporter



Photo by P. CHEVRETTE

Kathy Jordan with a just few of her 10,000 plants

Jordan said her interest in orchids and her business cause her to travel to orchid shows around the area.

She said among the things judged at orchid shows are displays and the quality of individual plants.

"It's usually a good place to

learn about and see a lot of kinds of orchids," Jordan said.

One of the biggest orchid events Jordan has attended is the World Orchid Conference, held once every three years, when commercial orchid growers, individual growers and scientists from

all over the world meet for about five days of seminars, lectures, shows and sales.

The last conference was held in Miami, but the next one will be in Tokyo. Jordan said she plans to attend it, too.

What was first a hobby has boomed into a thriving business for Kathy Jordan, owner of Jordan's Orchids.

Jordan said she became interested in orchids when she received an orchid plant as a gift.

"I had a couple of orchid plants but only because I had a lot of plants anyway. But I was given some of the little weird ones from Mexico and that's what got me started," Jordan said.

Jordan said her business started as a job in her home. "It was just a little part-time thing selling a few plants here and there out of my greenhouse in our house and then it grew into this," she said.

"This" is a nursery of over 10,000 plants.

Jordan also is the president of the Brazos Valley Orchid Society. The society sponsors lectures and workshops that help people learn more about how to grow plants.

In addition, Jordan helps the botany department at Texas A&M study endangered plant species.

Drug halts young girls' early puberty

United Press International

HOUSTON — Young girls showing signs of puberty before the age of 8 are being treated by doctors at a Houston hospital, where a drug administered in a nasal spray has halted and reversed the embarrassing physical changes which occurred.

Dr. John Kirkland, a pediatric endocrinologist and associate professor at Baylor College of Medicine, said the results since January on seven little girls with precocious puberty have been remarkable.

The girls being tested showed signs of puberty from young as a year old. Their breasts began developing, some began menstruating before they began kindergarten and other showed signs of drastic personality changes.

Kirkland said the condition occurs less frequently than other childhood diseases. Most pediatricians would not see more than a couple of children in their practice with the condition.

The research program, sponsored by the National Institutes of Health and the Texas Children's Hospital Research Center, has been testing nafarelin acetate to treat precocious puberty. The drug became available a few weeks ago for clinical studies of early sexual changes, although it had been used previously for other purposes, such as treating men with prostate cancer.

No tests are being done yet in Houston on boys with the condition, although Kirkland said plans are to begin a program soon.

tered daily in a nasal spray, stops the maturing process.

The drug is chemically produced in the laboratory to resemble a natural hormone produced by the body. The natural hormone stimulates and regulates the sex glands in normal doses, but in larger amounts — as in the quantities given nasally — it causes the glands to stop producing altogether.

Kirkland said other drugs in the past had successfully halted and reversed breast growth, but none of the other compounds stopped the child's bones from maturing and growing.

The result of failing to halt bone development would be a child who is very tall for her age, but whose body would stop growing within a few years the way it would if she were a teenager. Therefore, as an adult, she would be much shorter than other women.

"These children also suffer psychological problems," Kirkland said. "They are made fun of by their classmates. It is very hard to explain their problem to them."

Precocious puberty occurs with the premature release of a hormone in the brain, responsible for the sex organ changes. The hormonal release could be triggered by several childhood diseases, such as meningitis, encephalitis or a concussion.

But Kirkland said not all cases can be traced to the diseases. In fact, in more than 90 percent of the cases involving females, the reason for the condition is never known.

"There are known causes in 50 percent of the cases of boys with precocious puberty, such

as a disease of the adrenal gland or a tumor in the brain," he said.

Similar studies are being conducted in Boston and San Francisco on children with the problem, but only Kirkland is utilizing the drug through a nasal spray administered daily. The other centers inject the drug.

To date, no negative side ef-

fects have been noticed in the study, which is open to children nationwide suffering from the condition.

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Creative financing: Helping customers afford luxury cars

United Press International
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Mercantile Vice President Beckie Ray said, "It's a way for people to buy a car they probably would not be able to afford otherwise."

Ms. Ray used as an example the popular BMW 318i which lists for \$16,430.

A 20 percent down payment of \$3,286 is made. Under a conventional loan, the monthly payment for 36 months would be a hefty \$453.

Under the Asset Master system, the payment would be \$244, or about the payment for a mid-size Ford or Chevrolet on a conventional loan. After 35 months, the buyer has the op-

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