

**Home and Backyard Orchid Growing**  
Jim and Linda Taylor, jtaylor3577@bellsouth.net  
July 2011

Jim and Linda Taylor became fascinated with orchids while living at Homestead AFB near Miami in 1976. Their orchids came from Orchid Jungle, a privately owned park and nursery complete with exotic birds and plants. When the Air Force transferred Jim to Germany in 1977, they drove home to St. Augustine, distributing orchid farewell gifts to family and friends along the way. Until 2004, one of those cattleyas lived a healthy life at the Vilano Beach home of Jim's aunt, Patricia Longo. More proof that orchids can live a long and happy life!



After returning to St. Augustine in the 1990's, the Taylors grew their orchids outside on benches under oak trees in their St. Augustine South home. Last year they decided it was time for a greenhouse to help the orchids get through the winter, so Jim and Linda spent almost a year designing and building (and rebuilding) their greenhouse.

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The greenhouse is a wooden structure located under oak trees so it is shaded from the direct sun. It is located on a north south axis where the north end faces the road and is made of solid wood. The other three walls are clear polycarbonate and the roof is a smoky polycarbonate. The bottom and top sections are screened so air is drawn in through the bottom and exhausted out through the top for ventilation. In the winter, Jim staples plastic on the inside walls to create an insulation barrier and a portable electric heater keeps the plants warm.

There is a gravel floor base inside the greenhouse with four tiered benches filled with mostly cattleyas, though there are oncidiums, phalaenopsis, dendrobiums and other types of orchids too, particularly if they are fragrant like his Coconut Orchid or chocolate smelling Oncidium Sharry Baby. There are PVC pipes so orchids can be hung high in the greenhouse and eye hooks outside the greenhouse for the vandias to get the natural ventilation they crave during the summer.



Just because they have the greenhouse doesn't mean they don't grow their orchids outside during the summer months. Their orchids enjoy a summer respite in the wafting breezes off the marsh and shifting sun under the trees. The greenhouse just makes the winter care a little more carefree for the orchids and their other tropical plants.

