

Club News



February 6 Meeting Notes

By Lola Stark

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 by President Charles Wesley with 45 people present. There was a short discussion of the meeting structure designed to have the meetings end by 9:00, although this could require beginning at 6:30 for plant and raffle ticket sales. A motion was made and approved to table the recommendation because of the impact on our nonlocal members.

Our program for the evening was a discussion on Vandas given by Charles Chapman and his son, Charlie, of Chapman Orchids in Apopka. Vandas require lots of air, water and fertilizer. It was emphasized that Vandas need 12 to 14 hours of 4500 to 6000 foot candles of light (45 to 65% direct sunlight) in order to set spikes. If you plan to put them in direct sunlight from a more protected location, do it gradually as the plants cannot take the brightness all at once. Vandas are warm growers. It is best for them to be kept above 60 and the spikes will be negatively affected below 50, possibly preventing flowering.

For fertilizer, he uses a balanced 17-17-17 blend moving to a "Bloom Buster" like a 12-48-8 or 9-45-15 before the spikes start in spring and fall. Bloom Buster will not enhance blooming once the spike emerges. He applies a strong solution 1 to 2 tbsp/gal each time he waters once a day in the winter and switches to a dilute solution when he

waters several times a day in the summer. Charles suggested watering, waiting a bit and then fertilizing to allow the plant to take up the fertilizer more completely. Do not use softened water as it has salt (sodium is the offender) in it that will poison the plant. Well water can be used, but the plants are not very happy with iron, though the calcium will be welcomed.

He also recommended using Epsom salts (2 tsp/gallon) in the spring and fall to prevent magnesium deficiency. He uses Orchid Pro at ½ tbsp/gallon once a month for the trace elements, though you must be careful with it as it is black and will stain clothing, body parts and flowers at high concentrations. Super Thrive will perform a similar function. Cymbidiums, Phalaenopsis and Chinese Paphiopedilums like supplemental calcium such as is in bone meal. Crushed shells can be mixed in your planting medium for them.

Several diseases affecting Vandas were mentioned. Crown rot is when the center of the growing area turns black and rots away. This is caused by letting water sit in the growing crown, often due to watering too late in the day.



Do not water after 2 pm. A fungicide like Funginex, Consan (Physan) or ground cinnamon can be used. The cinnamon can be sprinkled right on the plant. Southern Blight, caused by the fungus *Sclerotium rolfsii* was also mentioned. This looks like white beads on the leaves. The fungicides for control are not available for purchase by homeowners so
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Club News

Upcoming Events

- 4/6-8 Central Florida Orchid Society Show, Central Florida Fairgrounds, Orlando
- 4/13-15 Deep South Orchid Society Show, Savannah, Georgia
- 4/21-22 EPIC Flower and Garden Expo Ag Center, St Augustine
- 4/21-22 Tallahassee Orchid Society Show Doyle Conner Building, Tallahassee
- 4/27-29 Tampa Bay Orchid Society Show, Bayanihan Arts and Events Center
- 5/12-13 Volusia County Orchid Society Volusia County Fairgrounds, Deland
- 5/18-20 2007 Redland International Orchid Festival, Redland Fruit & Spice Park



Thanks to **Watson Realty** and **Jeanette Smith** for the use of their meeting space at **3505 US 1 South**.



Special Thanks to Joyce Hailey for opening the April meeting.

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April SAOS Meeting

The April 3 meeting subject will be growing species orchids, presented by Duncan Bass of Duncan's Flora in Homosassa. Duncan specializes in odd and unusual orchid species with the collector in mind. The species are warm to intermediate growers, suitable for the St Augustine area. Check out his web site at duncansflora.com and email him if there is anything special you would like him to bring.



SAOS New Officers

Gail Marshall Second VP, Charles Wesley President
Lola Stark Secretary, Paul Jones Treasurer,
Sue Bottom First VP



EPIC Flower and Garden Expo

By Lola Stark

The St. Augustine Garden Club's Annual Flower Show is held in conjunction with EPIC's Flower and Garden Expo, on the grounds of the Ag. Center Saturday and Sunday April 21 and 22. Judging of the plants entered in the show is held Friday morning and then the show is open to members from 2 to 4 pm. It is open to the general public on Saturday and Sunday for plant sales and lectures. There will be an informative display called Growing Orchids in St. Augustine and Paul Jones will be giving a lecture on orchid growing. Both Fred and Lynn De Lozier usually set up booths.

President	Charles Wesley
Meeting Chair	wesjr@exis.net
First VP	Sue Bottom
Program Chair	sbottom15@bellsouth.net
Second VP	Gail Marshall
Publicity Chair	gwpb@aol.com
Secretary	Lola Stark
Minutes Chair	seacuter@bellsouth.net
Treasurer	Paul Jones
Raffle Chair	trjones_99@yahoo.com
Newsletter Editors	Sue and Terry Bottom
	bottomt@bellsouth.net
	sbottom15@bellsouth.net



Cultivation



What Orchid To Choose?

By Mike Heinz

With all the spring shows going on and all the plants in the world available to us, we have to decide what plants to buy. Stop to consider, where will I grow these plants, what light source is available, what are my watering habits, how often do I fertilize, what are the temperature requirements, what do I know about the plant I bought?

These questions, and a bunch more, must be considered. Let's start with the question of whether to buy species or hybrid plants. This may not appear to require a long thought process until you stop to question your knowledge about the cultural requirements of the plant you want to buy. A species plant does best if you can duplicate the conditions it grew under in its natural habitat. How much rainfall? Is there a drought period? At what elevation was the plant grown? What are the high and low monthly temperatures in the area? Is the plant an epiphyte, lithophyte, or a terrestrial? Does the plant have pseudobulbs? Is the plant monopodial or sympodial? All these questions need to be at least addressed and understood. The better you are at duplicating the natural conditions of the species plant, the better it will grow for you.

The playing field is leveled out a little bit if you choose a hybrid. The hybrid may be a primary cross (a species crossed with another species), or a complex cross (a hybrid crossed with another hybrid, or a species crossed with a hybrid). A hybrid loses more and more of its species cultural requirements with each non-species cross used. The complex hybrid cross may be so far removed from the original species that the species' cultural requirements no longer apply. This will make it easier for the grower to grow a healthy, beautiful, flowering plant.

Another question, do you buy a seedling, which costs a lot less, or do you buy a full grown adult plant. The seedling is going to require a lot more care, has stricter growing requirements, and it may take years before you see your first bloom. The adult plant has made it through the trying years of guarding against everything that can affect the tender young plant, and is probably blooming when you buy it, but at a higher price.

The next big hurdle is where will you grow. Will you be growing on a windowsill, back porch, pool deck, under trees, or in a greenhouse? Will you grow your plants outside year round or bring them in to the house/back porch when the temperature drops?

Let's say you are going to grow inside on a windowsill all the time. The amount of light will determine what type of plants will grow best under your conditions. Phals and Paphs have a lower light requirement than Cats, Dendros and other hybrids of these groups. What is your source of water? If you have a water softener you will need to provide a different source of water, because the salt used to soften water is a death sentence to all orchid plants. The plant's requirement for water will have to be determined by



trial and error method. You must find a method to determine when your plants need water, ask other growers how they do it until you find a method that works for you. When you do water your plants you can't water too much. One object of heavy watering is to flush all the accumulated salts left over from fertilizing from around the roots, another is to give the roots time to absorb the water the plant needs. The temps inside, for the most part, are well suited for most of the orchids you will see at Florida shows. Orchids hate air conditioning and do like a difference of 10 to 20 degrees between the day and night.

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Cultivation

What Orchid to Grow Continued

The advantage of a screened porch or pool enclosure includes higher humidity than inside, particularly in the pool enclosure if the chlorine is not too high in the air. You will have several different light zones, and you must decide what plant requires what level of light. Talk to your plants, watch them and see if they are doing well in an area, with the amount of water you are giving them, or the temperature they are in. Anybody who has grown orchids knows how a plants tells you that you are not paying enough attention to them, or are not providing long term correct conditions: THEY DIE. The winter temperatures may require you to move your plants, or put plastic up to keep the cold out, but you can't let the plants get too cold.

You may want to grow under your oak trees during the fair months. You may have to water to supplement the natural rainfall. Now you have another choice to make, what plants grow best under trees during periods of wet weather. Paphs and Phals don't do as well as other plants under these conditions, but can tolerate if their pots are angled so as not to catch water in the crown of the plant. Cats, Dendros, Vandas, and many will do great under trees, or in full sun, if you acclimate them to the higher light levels slowly. Rain water will help fertilize and water with wonderful results.

Greenhouses offer the greatest variety of all, but you still need to know what your buying, and what the requirements of the plant are. You will have areas that receive more light, less light, areas that are hotter then others, and areas that retain more humidity.

All things that effect your plants must be considered, and controlled if possible, before making your choice of what plants to buy. There are a wide variety of plants that will grow in all the areas I have listed, but remember, not every plant will grow in every location. The nice thing about growing orchids is that you control how deep you want to sink into the hobby. I know there are some sane people that grow orchids out there, I'm just not one of them.



EpiWeb – New Environmentally Friendly Medium

There is a new product that replaces Osmunda, the roots of the fern Osmunda regalis, that has been used nearly to the point of extinction, and tree fern, the roots of the Dicksonia fern that is now also at the point of extinction and red listed for commercial use. These two products have been used for years to mount orchids as they last a long time and provide excellent bases to which roots can adhere.

A new product, EpiWeb, has been developed and is being produced in China from 70% recycled soda bottles. It is configured to resemble tree fern but is a totally inert product that can be reused indefinitely when sanitized either by boiling or cooking in a microwave for 3 to 5 minutes. It will dry out quickly, but does absorb water so that roots will get moisture for a period of time before drying. It allows for thorough soaking because it will not float when immersed. It is distributed by First Ray's Orchids in the US.

February 6 Meeting Notes Continued

you may have to contact a commercial applicator. If the plant does not recover, discard it. The third disease mentioned was Thai disease, a virus that causes elongated black spots that go through the leaves. This is a virus and you should destroy the plant. Use copper products on Vandas only when they are not in spike or bloom because they are phytotoxic and you will lose both your bloom and your spikes. Good sanitation is important. A charcoal respirator should be used when applying chemicals. Disinfect clippers between each use, preferably by using a butane torch, or diseases can be passed between plants.. A supersaturated trisodium phosphate (TSP) solution is also effective if the clippers are allowed to rest for 20 minutes or so in the solution, which could require you to maintain multiple containers and clippers.

We are all invited to go to the tornado victim benefit day at Chapman Orchids on May 5. Chapman welcomes visitors at all times though visits after the Mother's Day rush are preferable.

Paul Jones brought us up to date on his Phalaenopsis plants that are all spiking. He is now hanging them at an angle to allow the plants their natural tendency to lean. He waters them every other day during the winter and every day after it warms up if it doesn't rain. He pre-waters, then uses Orchid Pro at 1 tbsp/gallon. He uses city water that he has let stand for at least 24 hours to get rid of the chlorine. He left them out during 2 periods when the weather went below 50, and saw that they had all spiked. One of his plants has keikis.



Show Table And More



Jacksonville Orchid Show

The St Augustine Orchid Society took first place in the 25 square foot exhibit category of the 2007 Jacksonville Orchid Society show. There were a total of eight ribbons on our exhibit, most for Mike Heinz' spectacular species and one for Sue Bottom's Phalaenopsis. Society members also won awards in the individual plant entries including several more of Mike's species and Paul's Lc Fire Dance 'Patricia'.



March Show Table

Dick Roth introduced the many entries on the show table, all gorgeous. Mike Heinz brought several of his well grown species, including *Maxillaria sanguinea*, *Den spectabile* and *amethystoglossum*, *Lock minuta*, *Paph malipoense*, and *Dendrochilum cymbiforme*. In the hybrid category, Dick brought *Epc Renee Marques*, *V Pakchong Blue* and *Ascda Ashley Low 'Sweet Beauty'*, Mike brought *Slc Jewel Box*, and Harry, the Cymbidium man, brought his *Cym Pipeta 'Chiquita'*, *King Arthur 'San Diego'* and *Bethlehem Star Bright*. There were some other beauties like *Lc Dan O'Neil* and *Lc Spotted Lady 'Tropic 1' x C aclandiae 'Tropic 1'*, but there were no forms so the growers will remain anonymous.



D. amethystoglossum



Slc Jewel Box

