

# Bud Blast and Flower Blighting

SAOS Beginners Culture Class - 2020-02 February

**Recently Purchased Plants.** Bud blast on plants that have just been brought into your growing area is probably the norm rather than the exception. Plant uprooted, jammed into box, sat on shelf and brought home, Every environmental cue an orchid uses to adjust to its environment was confused by its journey. It should not be surprising that these jet-lagged plants drop some or all of their buds.

When developing buds become yellow, shrivel, dry up and ultimately fall off instead of blooming, there is a problem with the environment, pests or plant health

**The Problem of Too.** . If the plant has been in your care for several months and the buds drop, there may be a problem that usually involves “too”, i.e., too hot, too cold, too wet, too dry.

Too hot: - too sunny window? too close to a heating vent? left in a too hot car?

Too cold: too close to window? air conditioner vent? taken to Society meeting on a cold night?

Too wet: watered too frequently? potting mix old such that the roots die due to lack of air?

Too dry: too low humidity environment inside home? Too little water?

**Flower Sheaths.** Watch the color of the developing flower sheaths to make sure they are healthy. As long as the sheath is green, a healthy yellow or dried brown color, the sheath is fine and will continue to protect emerging buds. There is no reason to remove a dried sheath unless it starts to rot. Sometimes, when there are big temperature and humidity swings in your growing area, moisture will condense in the sheaths and ultimately cause the bud primordium to rot. If the sheath turns an unhealthy yellow or wet looking brown color, gently pull the sheath apart to allow air movement and drain any condensation away from developing buds.

**Pests.** Small sucking insects like aphids and thrips can damage developing buds and flowers. For any of these flower targeting pests, you will have to spray the flowers being attacked, so choose your chemicals carefully and be careful to make sure your application rates are proper.

**Chemical Damage.** Chemicals sprayed onto flowers can damage them causing a burnt appearance, with browning around the edges or dry spots on the buds. As the water in the chemical solution evaporates from the flower, the previously dissolved chemical is concentrated on the tender flower.

**Premature Aging.** If present at a certain level, ethylene gas can cause floral problems. Ethylene is a byproduct of incomplete combustion, so it can be found its way into your growing area from an unvented fuel fired heater, a leaky vent line from the heater, a nearby internal combustion engine, a leaking gas line or automotive exhaust fumes.

**Botrytis.** Flowers can be marred by the ever-present fungus Botrytis cinerea, particularly when cool and damp conditions favor its growth. Moisture on the flowers is required for Botrytis to grow. Water early in the day, increase air movement and provide warm (>60F) nighttime temperatures to help keep the flowers dry. If your budget does not allow you to keep your growing area this warm, try spraying the flowers with Daconil (chlorothalonil) or Medallion (fludioxonil) on a regular basis.

## Additional Links:

[Eliminating Botrytis](#), Courtney Hackney

[Bud Blast and Flower Blighting](#), Sue Bottom

[Botrytis](#), Susan Jones, American Orchid Society

[Bud Blast](#), Susan Jones, American Orchid Society

[Thrips](#), Susan Jones, American Orchid Society