

CLUB NEWS



Courtney Hackney

April 2, 2019 Monthly SAOS Meeting

by Janis Croft

Welcome and Thanks. President Tom Sullivan opened the meeting at 7:00 pm with 69 attendees. He asked Carolyn to announce our seven guests, including the young Sabria and Zevi. He also welcomed our new members Alicia & Susan Callis, Marta Hudson and Andre Mallegol. Visitors, new members and April

birthday people all received their free raffle tickets. Tom thanked Dianne, Shelly and Dottie and for bringing in desserts and Dianne for organizing the refreshments covering for Jeanette while she recovers from knee replacement surgery. He then reminded all to drop a dollar in the basket while enjoying their refreshments. Tom reminded all that the Best of Show voting would occur after the Show Table discussion and the Silent Auction would end before the presentation. He encouraged all to vote for their favorite orchid on the Show Table.

Club Business. Shows in Florida this Month - Tallahassee, Pan American, Flamingo Gardens and Vero Beach Orchid Societies have shows this month. Check out the website under [Calendar of Events](#) for details.

Ace Repotting Clinic will be on April 6, 2019 from 9 - Noon at Ace Hardware, 3050 US 1 South.

- Catasetum Raffle – Sue held up several catasetum plugs that members brought in to show how the competition is growing. Some have been watering and their growth is taller but Sue warned all to carefully water as catasetums are more vulnerable to crown rot than Phalaenopsis orchids. She will continue to update us monthly on what to expect.



-Supplies–email info@staugorchidsociety.org if you need supplies.

- 2019 Dues are Due – see Membership Veep Linda and Treasurer Bill at side table to pay dues or use the PayPal link online.

This is the last month to pay before Linda updates the membership list.

- Annual Orchid Picnic, April 28, 4-6 pm at the Memorial Lutheran Church, 3375 US 1 South. We'll be enjoying barbecued hamburgers and hot dogs. Bring a side dish to round out the meal and your liquid libation of choice, and join in the fun. If you have extra divisions or a plant or two you want to share or sell, bring them and see what you might be able to get in trade. If you don't have plants to barter with, cash works. We may have a few plants to auction too! Please let Events Veep Dianne Batchelder know if you plan on attending (ladydi9907@aol.com or 436-5618) to ensure there is a hamburger and/or hot dog for you.

- Birthdays this Month - Our Sunshine Coordinator and Membership VP, Linda Stewart announced that if you know of anyone in need of a cheering up or get well card, let Linda know by emailing her at info@staugorchidsociety.org.

Library – Librarian Bea Orendorff brought in three books with beautiful photos of orchids for people to borrow. If you would like a book, send a request to info@staugorchidsociety.org and Bea will bring the item(s) to the next meeting. The library collection is listed on our [SAOS website](#).

Show Table. Courtney Hackney started the Show Table by stating that there will be a few plants he won't discuss until the Program section begins. Courtney started with the hybrid Iwanagara Apple Blossom 'HR Yellow Star' by saying most have pinkish coloring but the 'HR Yellow Star' hybrid is unusual because it blooms a bright yellow. The Lc. Blazing Treat with its vibrant red orange color had plenty of flowers on each stem and Courtney said as the plant matures, it will become even more floriferous.

There were several Phalaenopsis orchids with no names that were well grown. One purple/white one showed different pattern colors on several of its flowers. He then discussed the "shingling" quality that is highly admired by judges and others. This is when the flower petals as well as the individual flowers are overlapping each other in a waterfall effect. Next was the miniature Phal. Tassanee Jongdamkerng with its small purple flowers, bred from one of the species that sometimes drops its leaves in winter so don't throw it out thinking it has died. Phal. Kuntrarti Rarashati is a primary hybrid that produces an abundance

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Upcoming Orchid Events

April

- 7 SAOS at Ace Hardware, 9 am til 1 pm
3050 US 1 S in St. Augustine
- 9 JOS Meeting, Potting Session, 7 pm
JOS Members
- 12-14 Pan American Orchid Society Show
RF Orchids, Homestead
- 13-14 Tallahassee Orchid Society Show
Doyle Conner Agriculture Bldg
- 13 Florida North-Central AOS Judging, 1 pm
Clermont Judging Ctr, 849 West Ave.
- 20-21 Flamingo Gardens Orchid Society Show
Flamingo Gardens, Davie
- 21-22 EPIC Celebration of Spring
Annual Flower and Garden Expo
Ag Center, St. Augustine
- 27-28 Vero Beach Orchid Society Show
Riverside Park
- 28 Picnic and Orchid Swap, 4 pm
Memorial Lutheran Church
3375 US 1 South, St. Aug 32086

May

- 3-5 Platinum Coast Orchid Society Show
Kiwanis Island Park Gymnasium
- 4 Repotting at Ace Hardware, 9 am til 1 pm
3050 US 1 S in St. Augustine
- 5 JOS Picnic
3611 Richmond St., Jax 32205
- 7 SAOS Meeting, 6:30 pm
Vern Bloch, prior nursery owner
Laelia purpurata and its Hybrids
- 11 Florida North-Central AOS Judging, 1 pm
Clermont Judging Ctr, 849 West Ave.
- 11-12 Volusia County Orchid Society Show
Volusia County Fairgrounds
- 17-19 Redland International Orchid Festival
Fruit and Spice Park, Homestead
- 26 Keiki Club Get-Together, 1 pm
Growing Area Tour – Repotting
Sue and Terry Bottom's Home
6916 Cypress Lake Court, St. Aug 32086

June

- 1 Repotting at Ace Hardware, 9 am til 1 pm
3050 US 1 S in St. Augustine
- 1-2 Central Florida Orchid Society Show
Nat'l Guard Armory, Orlando
- 4 SAOS Meeting, 6:30 pm
Allen Black, Allen Black Orchids
Novelty Breeding – Stars & Stripes
- 8 Florida North-Central AOS Judging, 1 pm
Clermont Judging Ctr, 849 West Ave.
- 11 JOS Meeting, Dendrobiums, 7 pm
Mark Reinke, Marble Branch Orchids
- 22 Keiki Club, leave at 9 am for 11 am arrival
Field Trip to Krull Smith Orchids
2800 W. Ponkan Rd, Apopka, FL 32712
If you want to carpool or caravan:
email info@staugorchidsociety.org

St. Augustine Orchid Society Organization

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of keikis growing with flowers. This plant had 6 keikis. Green phalaenopsis are rare and the table had a very pale green Phal. Creme de Menthe 'Newberry' as an example along with the paler Phal. Green Mist. There was a tangerine colored Phalaenopsis that Courtney said will stay in bloom all through the summer and then there was a Phal. Roman Tawny which was grown in sphagnum and will bloom 12 months out of the year.

Among the unusual was the *Aerangis harioitiana* which has many minute flowers lined up on the over 28 inflorescences. A magnifying glass was nearby so one could actually see the flowers. *Dendrobium lichenastrum* var. *prenticei*, another miniature, was grown on wood and is tolerant of salty mist as it is found in trees near oceans. The unusual *Sarcophilus Kulnura Dazzel* with its fleshy leaves is in the Vandaceous family but has similarities to miniature Phalaenopsis. Check out the photos of our show table examples at the end of the newsletter and on the SAOS website.

SAOS Program. Courtney Hackney talked about Quantifying Orchid Beauty and the process of judging orchids. He reminded all of us that it is a human process and inherently does have flaws. For some perspective, he reviewed the history of judging which started with the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) over 100 years ago when they first started defining 'superior quality' awards. The First Class Certificate (FCC/RHS) recognized an outstanding cultivar or clone. An Award of Merit (AM/RHS) was awarded for an excellent clone. After each award was given, the flower was painted as documentation. He has seen some of these paintings and was amazed at how detailed and accurate they still are even though they were painted quickly in one day.

What is the definition of beauty? In the world of orchids, it falls between natural form vs idealized form. The Royal Horticultural Society acknowledges natural form. The American Orchid Society developed standards that focused on idealized cut flowers (the predominant orchid industry in the USA during this time) which valued round and flat flowers. AOS judging was initially done in the Northeast but then moved throughout the country so standards were needed for use in all locations.

Who can be an Orchid Judge? Anyone that wants to volunteer to offer their time and resources to do ribbon judging and evaluate orchids at monthly meetings and shows. It does require at least six years of training. Courtney's mentor was a woman who never grew orchids. Her husband did so she decided to judge in order to have something in common. Courtney thought she was an excellent judge because she did not have any preconceived notions or favorite species and was more fair due to that.



Ribbons are awarded at AOS sanctioned events. Quality and Culture Recognition awards occur at AOS sanctioned events as well as at judging centers. For these awards, one's plant competes against all plants around the world. In the recent Jacksonville Orchid Show, there were many ribbon awards but only six Quality and Culture awards. A Quality Award (FCC, AM, HCC) is given to a clone based on the flower. A Culture Award (CCE and CCM) is given to a grower of a quality plant as a whole. A Botanical Award (CHM and CBR) is given to unusual or exemplary species or natural hybrid. Awards to a hybridizer include Award of Distinction (AD) for a unique combination and/or Award of Quality (AQ) for a grouping of 12 clones or more. For a clone to get an award, it must be superior to other clones of the species/hybrid or represent an improvement over parents. This shows how the standards keep improving year after year. There is an AOS Handbook of Judging that lists the rules and Courtney also showed a Judging Form with all of its individual categories scored with points. To be awarded a plant must have 75 points or higher. An HCC award falls within 75-79 pts, an AM award required 80-89 pts and the highly coveted FCC is given for 90-100 pts.

Then Courtney, with help from Sue Bottom, showed us how judging actually happens by having Sue measure the size of her *Lc. Luminosa* flowers. This plant was registered in 1901 and has 3 HCC awards (1989, 2005, 2011) as well as 11,722 progeny as of Sept. 2018. Sue measured her flower's dorsal sepal, lateral sepal, the natural spread, petal and lip. All of the measurements were smaller than the last awarded plant's measurements. All of the award information is located in OrchidsPlus and OrchidWiz. Courtney and Sue passed around a signup sheet for anyone interested in going to a Judging Center in Clermont, Florida on April 13 to learn more about the process and see actual plants being judged.

Meeting Conclusion. Sue Bottom announced the Member's Choice Award as Leslie Brickell's gorgeous and huge *C. skinneri* 'Casa Luna' AM/AOS, an unusually tall plant with strong flower stems holding the flowers well. The evening concluded with the Raffle. Thanks to all the helpful hands that stayed to reset the tables and chairs and clean up the room.

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



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May 7 Monthly SAOS Meeting

Laelia purpurata and Its Hybrids

Vern Bloch is returning to St. Augustine to talk to us about Laelia purpurata and its hybrids. Laelia purpurata, which some now call Cattleya purpurata, has many color forms from the typical purple lip, the pink carnea lip, the blue werkhauseri lip, and more. It is also one of the mostly commonly hybridized cattleya alliance plants.



Vern can only carry about 20 different hybrids when he does a program, but he will send us a preorder list of plants in 4 inch pots, blooming size or near blooming size.

Bring your flowering orchids to exhibit on the Show Table. We will have our normal raffle at the end of the meeting. Friends and guests are always welcome!

Catasetum Competition Grow

In January, we raffled off 20 plugs of this new hybrid, with the understanding that prizes will be awarded (1) the first to bloom, (2) the best bloom, and (3) the best grown plant. Each month we'll talk about what to do with your catasetum and show you how the plant is progressing. Let the contest begin!



In April: It seems like it is taking forever for that new growth to grow up. Never fear, once it hits its stride it will grow very rapidly indeed. Just be patient a little bit longer. Keep the plants warm and in bright light, but don't water until the roots are close to the bottom of the pot and the new leaves are 4 or 5 inches tall and unfurled.

American Orchid Society Corner

April 9, 8:30-9:30 pm, Everyone Invited
Greenhouse Chat Orchid, Q&A - Ron McHatton

April 18, 8:30-9:30 pm, AOS Members Only
How to Grow Habenarias – Jim Heiling

Orchids Magazine this month: [request free issue](#)
Annual Judging Results Issue
FCCs of 2018 - Carol Klonowski
2017 Year End Special Awards, Nile Dusdieker
Form and Function, Tom Mirenda
Adaptations to Epiphytic Lifestyle, Sue Bottom
The Art of Small Displays, Skoropads

[Photos of Latest AOS Awards](#)



April 28 Picnic and Orchid Sale/Swap

Our annual SAOS picnic and orchid sale/swap will be on April 28th. We will be grilling hamburgers and hot dogs for all. Feel free to bring a side dish and adult liquid libations, and join the fun. The picnic will replace the keiki club get together this month. Please let Events Veep [Dianne Batchelder](#) know if you plan on attending (436-5618) to assure there is a hamburger and/or hot dog for you.

Bring any extra plants you would like to swap with other members. If you do not have plants to barter with, cash works too! We may have some silent auction plants for you to bid on.

Where: Memorial Lutheran Church
[3375 US 1 South, St. Aug 32086](#)

When: April 28, 4 to 6 pm



SAOS Exhibit at JOS Show

Janis Croft organized the SAOS exhibit at the JOS show and was responsible for the artistic color flow. Bob and Yvonne Schimmel, Susan Smith and Lucinda Winn all helped prep and arrange the plants, install plant tags and wrap pots with cloth. Looks like we took first place in our class. Everyone got ribbons, 6 blues and 4 reds, congrats to Janis Croft, Susan Smith, Tom and Dottie Sullivan, Bob and Yvonne Schimmel and Courtney Hackney for their beautiful plants. Great job!



INSPIRATION



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B. Aristocrat

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CULTIVATION



Orchid Questions & Answers

by Sue Bottom,
sbottom15@gmail.com

Q1. I have a *C. percivaliana* that has black, pitted spots on the old leaves and I'm concerned this will spread to the new growth. The plant is flowering now with 4 beautiful lavender blooms and I don't

want to upset it. It had a couple of bad years and just now seems to be recovering. Should I remove the tips of the leaves and treat them?

A1. That looks like bacterial brown spot, a slow moving bacterial disease in mature cattleyas. I wouldn't cut anything off. When it's done blooming and you get ready to repot it, you can cut off all the old ugly stuff and pot up the front half. It'll look brand new!

Q2 I've had this phal for 20 years and don't want to lose him. The problem started with one leaf and now has quickly spread to multiple leaves. Any ideas?



A2. It looks like it started with sunburn, that's the circular dark spot. Then maybe a secondary infection kicked in and spread into the leaf. Also looks like it hasn't been repotted in a while so I would wonder about the condition



of the roots. I would cut off the extremely damaged leaves about an inch below the discoloration with a single edged razor blade. Then I think let it keep blooming and enjoy it. Somewhere in the June time frame, it'll be time to cut off the blooms, repot the plant, allow it to recover from the transplant shock, grow new roots and then bloom for you next year. Your local orchid society can help you.

Q3. This cymbidium is over 10 years old, repotted once, and now huge! It's growing more spikes and bigger flowers this year than ever before. It grows outdoors by the pool inside screen enclosure full sun. I'm wondering if I can just find a bigger pot and repot without breaking it up?



A3. What a show your cymbidium is putting on! Harry, the Cymbidium expert, had this to say: If most of the bulbs have leaves, consider potting up to a bigger pot. Best not to over pot so get a pot with one to two inches of growing room all around the pot. Pull the plant out of the pot and inspect the roots. If the roots look healthy just wash out as much of the old media as you can if it is an organic media. If it's hydroton or some other inorganic media, just pot up without washing out the old media.

If there are a lot of leafless backbulbs, you should divide it before repotting. If you find a lot of dead roots you will need to dry the plant so you can separate the roots easily (maybe easier is the word), cut off 1/2 of the root ball. It sounds drastic but the rot will continue and is not good. Cymbidiums grow new roots quickly. It may destroy the plant if the rotten roots are not cut off. Remove as many of the rotten roots in the remaining root mass as is practical. Spray the cut area with a fungicide (Daconil or Thiomy) and repot.



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Orchids in Spring Courtney's Growing Tips

Spring is one of the busiest times of the year for orchid growers. Many genera are beginning their growth cycles with new leaves and roots, while Spring Cattleyas and Phals are in full bloom. In addition, those that have harbored their orchids in windowsills and bathrooms are ready to move them outside and

reclaim their living space. Be careful not to shock your orchids with sudden increases in light or dramatic changes in temperature. Spring may have sprung, but nights can still be cold.

Phalaenopsis begin to put out new roots, even while bearing flowers, when day length reaches 12 hours and temperatures are warm. A decline in night temperature caused by moving them outside or turning off the heat in the greenhouse can induce Phals to stop growing and spike again. This can lead to long spikes with a few flowers, with the corresponding cessation of growth. Summer blooming Phals exposed to cool conditions may abort both flowering and growth as they come from climates that are warm all year long.

Spring is an excellent time to repot because most orchids are in a growth mode, quickly replacing roots lost during repotting. Another reason is that media can sour or degrade in winter when gloomy days and low temperature allows media to stay wet and turn mushy. This is especially true for soil-less mixes and even for dense media containing a high proportion of fine bark. Paphs and Phals are especially susceptible, as they do not like to have their roots dry completely, so are more likely to be over watered. For these two genera, more frequent repotting is better than waiting too long. Other genera typically potted in coarse media that is allowed to dry thoroughly between watering will usually grow out of the pot before requiring repotting.

Vandas are generally considered warm growing, even though they tolerate cool conditions in winter. Their growth comes largely when temperature is high and nights warm. If they cool down too much each night, Vandas will often cease both root growth and the production of new leaves. Avoid prematurely placing them outside. Wait until night temperature is 60 degrees F or higher.



Most of us leave flowers on plants as long as possible for maximum enjoyment. If, however, an orchid has been weakened by losing part of its root system or by having dealt with disease or pests, removing flowers early can enhance growth and perhaps the survival of the plant. Flowers will not last as long, but removing them will prevent a tremendous drain of energy from the plant and lead to new growth. Each year mites cause damage, especially on thin-leaved Dendrobiums and similar-leaved orchids in my collection. By the time they are recognized in May the damage is done. This pest thrives on low humidity and can be prevented simply by keeping humidity high. If this is not feasible, a light spray of oil (Ultra-fine or Sun-oil) on the leaf, especially the underside, will limit the damage. Be sure to apply oils (and all pesticides) when leaves are cool. Leaves should be dry before they are exposed to bright light.

This year several Phals in my collection had cold water dripping into the crown each night, a sure way to develop crown rot. Not a single case developed on these or any other Phal in my collection during the past growing season despite not using any fungicide or bactericide. The only cases occurred on three newly purchased Phals. I have long believed that genetically weak plants and plants that have deficiencies in certain nutrients get rots. Avoiding excess nitrogen fertilizer, excess micronutrients, and providing more Potassium, Calcium and Magnesium is the key. If rots plague your Phal collection cut back on nitrogen and phosphorus and grow a year. Your plants will not grow as fast, but there will also be fewer rot problems.

Note: Dr. Courtney Hackney wrote a monthly column of his orchid growing tips for about 20 years; we are reprinting some you might have missed, this one from April 2002.



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Judgement Day

by Ken Slump, courtesy of the American Orchid Society

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Most of us remember the first orchid we brought into flower and, at that time, it probably seemed to be the most beautiful blossom we had ever seen. Yet, as orchid experience accumulates, you begin to appreciate that, among orchid types and hybrids, some are more beautiful than others.

For better or worse, humans have a seemingly insatiable thirst for competition and evaluation that pervades every facet of Western society. As individuals, we are graded or rated on our academic and physical achievements from our earliest school days. It seems that every sport, hobby or leisure pursuit has its awards for top achievers, too. Even books, movies and television entertainment are rife with prizes, best sellers, top dollar earners and top 10 lists.

It should come as no surprise then, that systems and procedures for evaluating superior orchids have been developed. But there are different orchid-judging systems and different types of orchid judging.

First, in ribbon or show judging, orchid flowers, plants or exhibits are evaluated against each other within classes that are defined in a show schedule prepared by a hosting orchid society or group. Typically first-, second- and third-place awards are given in each class and corresponding blue, red and white ribbons are commonly presented to the winners. These are the awards you will likely notice first when attending an orchid show.

The other sort of judging evaluates flowers, plants or exhibits against a hypothetical ideal for the type of orchid or display. This is usually referred to as award judging. The largest system for granting orchid awards is provided by and under the jurisdiction of the American Orchid Society.

The AOS judging system currently includes more than 30 regional and supplemental judging centers across the country. Every AOS judging center meets on a monthly basis. About 850 orchid judges across the nation and in Canada volunteer their time toward this effort; some travel hundreds of miles each month to meet their commitment.

These judges not only meet at their centers 12 times a year to provide regular opportunities for orchid evaluation, but also furnish ribbon and AOS award judges for all orchid shows in their region that request it.

Getting Certified. Becoming an accredited AOS judge is not easy. To become such a judge, an experienced orchidist must participate in a training program lasting a minimum of six years. Evaluations of prospective AOS-accredited judges are regularly made and, once they are accredited, continuing participation both in attending and presenting educational programs on topics related to orchid judging is expected. Every AOS-accredited judge is required to attend a minimum of eight orchid-judging events in his or



her region each year. Most attend many more, all at his or her own expense.

Flower Quality Awards. At orchid shows and monthly judging events, AOS judges evaluate entries for several types of awards. The most familiar are flower-quality awards: HCC, AM and FCC. HCC stands for Highly Commended Certificate, AM for Award of Merit and FCC for First Class Certificate. A flower deemed of superior quality that scores more than 75 out of 100 points on a hypothetical scale may receive one of these awards: HCC if it scores 75 to 79 points, AM for scores of 80 to 89 points and FCC for scores of 90 points or more.

Much of a judge's evaluation for a flower-quality award is based on theoretical ideals for the particular type of orchid under consideration. Factors that are evaluated include the shape, color and form of the flower. The size and number of flowers also enter into the formula. How multiple flowers are arranged and displayed on the inflorescence is important as well. In the case of hybrids, judges often consider whether the flower is an improvement over its species or hybrid parents. Judges compare the entries in front of them against the same or similar orchids that have previously received AOS awards.

Orchid judging is performed by teams that minimally consist of three judges, but often include many more. An entry's flower quality score is the mathematical average of the individual scores by certified judges who are on the team assigned to evaluate it. Standards for different types of orchids, as well as procedures and rules for nomination and scoring, can be found in the American Orchid Society's Handbook on Judging and Exhibition.

Once the AOS processes a flower-quality award from one of its judging centers, that plant and all of its vegetatively produced descendants carry the award. Each plant receiving a flower-quality award must be given a cultivar name by its grower to distinguish it from others. The cultivar name is listed in single quotation marks following the genus, species or grex names of the plant. Award abbreviations are listed in capital letters following the cultivar name of the plant, accompanied by the initials of the organization that made the award. For example, AM/AOS and HCC/AOS indicate flower-quality awards presented by the American Orchid Society.

Some other organizations and orchid societies present flower-quality awards roughly equivalent to the AOS awards, and you might encounter some of those in your

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orchid readings. Gold medal, silver medal and bronze medal are often used by other groups and roughly correspond to the American Orchid Society's FCC, AM and HCC awards, respectively. These would be abbreviated GM, SM or BM following the plant's name. Some of the organizations that make such awards include the Japan Orchid Growers Association (JOGA), Honolulu Orchid Society (HOS) and South Florida Orchid Society (SFOS). Therefore, a plant label with the award designation GM/SFOS would have received a gold medal from the South Florida Orchid Society.

Gold, silver and bronze medals are also used to designate flower-quality awards presented at World Orchid Conferences by teams made up of judges from orchid-judging systems around the world. A plant carrying the award abbreviation SM/18WOC would have received a silver medal at the 18th World Orchid Conference in Dijon, France. An RHS suffix designates awards given by Great Britain's Royal Horticultural Society. CSA are the initials of the Cymbidium Society of America.

Other Awards. While flower-quality awards are the most numerous and familiar of the American Orchid Society's awards, other types of awards may be given to worthy entries. It is also important to note that it is possible for one orchid entry to receive more than one award at a single judging event. For example, it sometimes happens that an entry receives a flower-quality award as well as a cultural award at the same judging. The coveted AOS cultural awards are given to the growers of orchid specimen plants of outstanding quality. The Certificate of Cultural Merit (CCM) goes to plants scoring 80 to 89 points, and the Certificate of Cultural Excellence (CCE) to plants scoring 90 points or higher. Because these awards go to the grower and not the plant, vegetatively produced descendants do not carry the award.

Orchid species that have not previously been evaluated at an AOS judging event often receive either the Certificate of Botanical Recognition (CBR) or the Certificate of Horticultural Merit (CHM) award. The Judges Commendation (JC) is an award given to flowers or plants with unusual characteristics that the judges may value but are not able to score. There are additional AOS awards that may be given for such things as superior directions in orchid breeding and awards that are available for several types of meritorious orchid exhibits.

The judging process at orchid shows is typically closed to the public. Indeed, often only the judges and a few clerks provided by the host society participate in the process. Understanding the ribbon awards at most orchid shows is often challenging, as the competing flowers or plants in any particular class are usually scattered throughout exhibits across the room.

At many orchid shows you are also likely to see paperwork displayed that acknowledges a new AOS flower-quality award winner that was presented at that show. Sometimes you may think that the awarded flower is inferior or at best, no better than other orchids of its type that are exhibited at the same event, but seemingly did not receive consideration. It is likely that if you look at the names on the labels identifying those better flowers, you will learn from the abbreviations following their names that they are vegetative propagations of orchids that have already received awards.

AOS judges do not give the same flower-quality award to a particular cultivar more than once, although a higher award may be given if the current flowering is deemed by the judges to be superior to the one that earned the earlier award.

If you are sincerely interested in the process of orchid judging, try to volunteer to clerk at an orchid show hosted by your local society. Know, however, that depending on the orchid society or particular event, clerks usually have some responsibilities in the judging process that you should understand and be able to perform before you sign on for the job.

Another instructive way to become familiar with the judging process is to attend an AOS monthly judging session. Judging centers welcome observers. If you attend an orchid judging, keep in mind that you are not there to participate in the judging process. The schedule for upcoming AOS orchid judging sessions and sanctioned shows is printed monthly in *Orchids*.

If You Go. When you attend your first judging session, you will likely hear considerable discussion among the judges over the entries they have to consider. Some of it may sound a bit nitpicky or critical, but that is an important part of the exercise. Orchid judges must recognize the qualities that separate poor orchids from good ones as well as those characteristics that define the really great ones. Hopefully, you will hear some of the merits and strong points of each entry as well as its weaknesses, and will begin to gain an appreciation for the process.

Unfortunately, any activity that generates awards, even if they are simply placement ribbons, produces the perception of winners and losers, and sooner or later it seems that feelings are hurt or egos are bruised. Not unlike other types of evaluations and competitions, orchid judging has certainly had its detractors. Yet the AOS strives for fairness and consistency throughout its judging system, and as one who has participated in orchid judging in many locations across the country, I honestly feel that, for the most part, it is a job well done.

This article appeared in the American Orchid Society Orchids magazine, in February 2007 (Vol. 76:2, pp.98-100).



Reflections on Potting Orchids

by Andy Easton, courtesy of the American Orchid Society
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Whole books have been written on the subject of potting orchids, which inevitably provokes vigorous discussion whenever orchid enthusiasts gather. Variances of opinion and technique can coexist harmoniously and what is right in one set of circumstances may very well be completely wrong in a differing situation. Emphasizing that these broad comments essentially reflect my own experience with orchids, I hope that readers will feel comfortable taking from this article that which they find useful and forgetting suggestions that they know have little relevance in their own growing environment.

When to Repot For many beginning growers, knowing when to repot can be quite traumatic. Here are some suggestions to make the process easier. Some media have a much shorter pot life than others and the situation is further complicated by water quality and the fertilizing regime. For example, good New Zealand sphagnum moss lightly fertilized with superior water will maintain its qualities for 12 to 18 months. Lower-grade Chilean or Chinese moss, heavily fertilized with water containing excessive levels of dissolved salts will have seriously broken down within six months. Artificial media like Rockwool may be affected by the buildup of salts, which is something of a management problem, but the basic material is everlasting.

Genera like *Paphiopedilum* and *Phragmipedium*, many members of the *Odontoglossum* Alliance and *Phalaenopsis* thrive on regular repotting and mix freshening. Timing is still important, however. Never repot plants, if you can avoid it, in the six-week period leading into the shortest day of the year and shy away from hot summer weather, too. At both extremes, orchids will be shocked and recover slowly from repotting at the wrong time.

Most genera, among them *Cattleya*, *Cymbidium* and *Dendrobium*, will often flush in growth right after the flowering season and repotting can be tailored to this sequence. In the case of *Cymbidium* and temperate *Dendrobium*, the growth cycle is closely linked to monsoon rains in their native habitat. *Cattleyas* and their relatives are usually repotted when they have new growths at or beyond the pot rim when it is easy to see the new roots developing. Do not rush this process; if you damage very short incipient roots they will wither, whereas longer roots can branch and regain momentum quickly.

Enthusiasts should always look for media that will give them the longest normal time interval between pottings for the genera they grow. Most successful media for *Cattleya*, *Cymbidium* and *Dendrobium* should have a two-year life when used in larger pot sizes.

A maxim for young plants that is widely-accepted is to pot regularly. It is important that juvenile plants never lose their

momentum and the early spring and autumn periods are typically when they are handled and moved to larger pots in fresh potting mix.

How to Repot If you read orchid books from 50 years ago, potting was indeed a laborious process. However, that did not stop the students in Professor White's book *American Orchid Culture* lining up in their best garb to participate in the exercise. In the days of osmunda and little, if any, fertilizing, the potting ritual was detailed and slow. However, no one paid any attention to virus prevention. Consequently, whole collections of mature plants that had been previously divided on several occasions became largely infected. Virus is an increasing problem today and good potting techniques are vital in preventing its spread. Among these are using sterilized tools for making cuts, and, when repotting, putting down a stack of newspapers and then removing a sheet each time an orchid is repotted.

I enjoy the spectacle of rows of neatly potted plants placed on benches, but I am fairly certain that the roughly potted plants that emerge from the potting machines at orchid factories in Holland grow at least as well or better than any of my efforts. Consequently, I am forced to accept that the actual mechanics of the potting process are probably unimportant for hybrids of mainstream genera. Some general rules do, however, apply. When dividing, always handle plants dry, if possible, seal cut surfaces and never incorporate dead mushy root material into the new container. Experienced growers will often construct roots from twist-ties which they curl tightly around the rhizome rather than leave dead roots in place. For sympodial orchids, such as *Cattleya* and *Dendrobium*, pot divisions small enough so they will reach the pot margin in two growth cycles or less. With plants that are particularly overgrown and will be shocked when they are divided, it is often advisable to pot allowing space for only one growth cycle and then pot up or "slip pot" when they have reestablished themselves with an active root mass. Be sure that this slipped plant is in a medium that is either coarser or no finer than the new mix to protect against having the rootball of the plant potted up stay soggy and wet while the more porous surrounding medium is relatively dry.

Many enthusiastic growers criticize commercial producers of blooming orchid plants for the media in which they are sold. This is unfair for a number of reasons, not least of which is that the wider public in many cases will throw the orchids away after the flowers have faded. Some of these commercial orchid-potting media may not suit the typical hobbyist but those with the slightest green thumb should be able to manage to keep the plants alive for the duration of their initial flowering and often much longer.

One golden rule ignored by legions of enthusiasts is to have all plants of the same genus and pot size in the same potting mix. This does not mean that every plant

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purchase, even those sneaked in by subterfuge, must be immediately repotted if they are in full bloom, but you should have a transition area in your growing facility where new plants reside. It makes sense from a disease prevention perspective too, because giving new arrivals a few weeks in quarantine can help avoid introducing pests and diseases into your collection. But then, when the blooms are spent, or when you have given new arrivals the thrice over, pot them in the same pot type and mix as their benchmates: plastic with plastic, clay with clay and 6-inch pots with 6-inch pots. It is also recommended that you resist the temptation to cram smaller pots into the spaces between their much larger companions, unless you are an experienced and painstaking grower.

Potting Media Again, there is no perfect mix for any or all genera of orchids. Maybe the closest are the wires or mix-less baskets we see in the tropics on which epiphytes like *Vanda* and its cousins are often grown and thrive. But with the fresh-air medium, growers are forced to make the daily commitment of watering and feeding necessary for optimal results, a process many enthusiasts are unable or do not wish to make.

Many orchid references say orchids do not grow in garden soil, but do not tell anyone about the *Spathoglottis* growing wild in Hawaii or indeed the various terrestrials like *Phaius* and *Arundina* that thrive in sandy soil. In truth, I'm sure it would be possible to grow lovely *Phalaenopsis* in the same soil, in pots, providing it had been sterilized and great attention was paid to the watering process. Of course, this is an extreme case, but what usually happens is that we seek a medium that provides the qualities necessary for the orchids we grow, at an acceptable price, with a reasonably long useful life. The orchid-growing hobby should not normally involve taking the most difficult options - something to which the orchid growers of yesteryear seemed oblivious. Maybe most of them had gardeners to do the tedious work.

You need not justify your choice of medium; the results will either have your fellow growers envious or smugly smiling. Around the world, fir bark and other barks are still widely utilized. In Europe, the change from peat to inorganic mixes is widespread, yet at Floricultura, ever the leaders, finely milled sphagnum from New Zealand is still the highest percentage substrate in the medium used for plantlets just removed from flasks. Inert materials like Aliflor (artificial) and Scoria (natural) are popular in some parts of the world and ignored in others. Many *phalaenopsis* in Japan are still finished in sphagnum moss, not least because this gives the grower or florist an opportunity to make up multiple plant pots with ease, whereas, in the United States, coconut fiber has rapidly become the preferred medium for many growers because of its ready availability, competitive

pricing and longevity.

If you are not growing *phalaenopsis* on tree-fern slabs or cork mounts, current cultural knowledge encourages growers to plant them in clear pots so the roots can contribute their photosynthetic output to increased growth and flower quality. Commercial growers have been quick to see the benefits of this process and in just a few years, clear pots have become the norm for growing pot-plant *phalaenopsis*.

There will always be someone hyping a new container, new growing media or new fertilizers. Given a short test of time, most of these new wonder materials will disappear into oblivion. With the exception of Rockwool (and even it was once head to head with Oasis as the preferred inorganic potting medium), there have been few fundamental changes in media in the past several decades. *Osmunda* has gone, except for the flat-earth types, but bark, moss and tree-fern fiber are, have been and will likely continue to be used. That's not to say we cannot come up with a better growing medium and growers are ever innovative — but do not hold your breath waiting for the next phenomenon.

General Guidelines By all means, make testing and experimentation part of your orchid hobby but start somewhere and work forward in a systematic manner. Change one variable at a time and be patient. Many media grow good plants for six to nine months, but it's in the last few months of the life of a medium that the flaws rapidly appear. Be aware of the dynamic between what additives you blend into your potting mix and what you apply as fertilizer. Understand too, that few, if any, orchids have ever died from too little fertilizer or too little water but countless millions have perished from the reverse.

While this is not an article about fertilizing, I realize with each year how little we really know about nutrition of the major genera of orchids - or maybe how little I know. However, I tend more and more to the philosophy of some experts that a 3-1-2 ratio (N-P-K or nitrogen-phosphate-potash) is probably closest to that of nature and that growing orchid plants will perform well if this regime is followed. More research is needed on flower induction preconditions for the major genera but in North America such research is becoming more popular and we have an interesting decade ahead. Some exciting research activity into orchid growing media probably will unfold over the next few years.

Note: Andy has been a professional orchid grower and hybridizer since 1973. He is the former owner of Geyserland Orchids in New Zealand and the former Director of Education for the American Orchid Society. This article appeared in the American Orchid Society Orchids magazine, in February 2002 (Vol. 71:2, pp.130-133).



CULTIVATION



Coastal Georgia Botanical Garden Savannah

Any excuse to go to Savannah, birthdays, anniversaries, the sun is shining... you get the idea! We stopped into the Coastal Georgia Botanical Garden on the way up. On our way into the orchid greenhouse, we met up with Jaime Gyu, a member of the Deep South Orchid Society in Savannah who gave us a guided tour. Jaime was especially proud of his Lycastes, the beautiful cool growing large flowered ones that were doing very well by the wet wall. Jaime gifted us seedlings of a cattleya hybrid he was potting up, can't wait for it to bloom!



SHOW TABLE



Grower Suzanne Susko
Phal. Tassanee Jongdamkerng



Grower Harry & Celia McElroy
Cym. Devon Fire



Grower Linda Stewart
Aerangis harioitiana 'Gold Country'



Grower Bob & Yevonne Schimmel
Epi. ciliare



Grower Bob & Yvonne Schimmel
Phal. Creme de Menthe 'Newberry'



Grower Sue Bottom
Iana. Appleblossom 'HR Yellow Star'



Grower Debra Brandt & Jim Woodward
Phal. Zheng Min Anaconda



SHOW TABLE



Terry Bottom

Grower Linda Stewart
Pleurothallis grobyi



Terry Bottom

Grower Leslie Brickell
C. skinneri 'Casa Luna' AM/AOS



Terry Bottom

Grower Janis Croft
Slc. Jewel Box 'Scheherazade' AM/AOS



Terry Bottom

Grower Harry & Celia McElroy
Cym. Eburneo-lowianum



Terry Bottom

Grower Sue Bottom
Lc. Luminosa (bronze form)



Terry Bottom

Grower Gail Turner
Den. Spring Bird 'Kurashiki' AM/AOS

Link to all Pictures. <https://flic.kr/s/aHskTuWrLY>

