St. Augustine NEWSLETTER Orchid Society January 2024

CLUB NEWS



February Meeting by Karen Ford

Welcome and Thanks. Tom Sullivan President opened the meeting at 6:50pm with 43 attendees. He thanked everyone who attended the December holiday party and brought the food that made the evening meal a great success. He also thanked Dianne, Dottie, Paul, Julie, and Kay for bringing tasty treats for the January

meeting and reminded members to "drop a dollar" to help defray the cost of supplies.

Club Business. Membership VP Linda Stewart welcomed our new member, Richard Walter from Ft. Myers, and returning member, Deborah Green from Ormond Beach. Tom reminded members that it is time to renew memberships, and noted that dues can be paid to Linda at the Welcome Table, via Zelle to 904-501-0805, or via the PayPal link online. Linda asked that if you know of anyone in need of a cheering up or a get-well card, let her know by emailing her at <u>info@staugorchidsociety.org</u>. Several attending members with December or January birthdays were given a free raffle ticket by Dianne.

Members Choice Voting - Member's Choice voting resumed starting this month. Christine Peterson is coordinating this, and members were encouraged to vote for their favorite orchid from the Show Table by identifying the plant and placing their vote in the ballot box. The votes needed to be cast before the speaker program begins, then Christine will tally the votes and the winner will be announced after the program.

Virtual Show Table - is scheduled for Thursday, January

11 at 7 pm. Email invitations will be sent out for the live presentation, and it will be recorded and posted on our website.

Orchid Shows this Month - There are several orchid shows this month: Sarasota,

Fort Lauderdale, Tamiami, Krull Smith Apopka International Orchid Festival, and the Florida West Coast show in St. Petersburg. Check the SAOS website for details.

Repotting Clinics - Tom announced that repotting clinics will begin again the first Saturday in February, Feb 3rd, from 10am until noon at the Southeast Branch of the public library.

Supplies - Supplies for growing orchids were available at the back table, and additional supplies will be brought to future meetings if you request them at info@staugorchidsociety. org.

Library - Howard brought two books from the SAOS library that members are encouraged to borrow: one by Motes on Florida Orchid Growing, and an AOS book on Orchids and Their Culture. He reminded members to check the website and let him know if there are books they'd like brought to the next meeting.



Show Table Review – Courtney Hackney, assisted by Sue Bottom, described numerous gorgeous blooming orchids that members displayed on the show table. Steve Hawkins brought a stunning Angraceum displaying many greenish flowers with white lips and long nectaries; Linda Stewart had a perfectly cultivated Dendrochilum with multiple influorences of flowers arranged in a swirl pattern; and Sue Bottom's Tolumnia had multiple flowers per branched stem. In addition to a couple of Vandas and a Zygo, notable features of several blooming Cattleyas were also described.



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January

- 5-7 Fort Lauderdale Orchid Society Show Charles Dodge City Ctr, Pembroke Pines
- 6 Florida North-Central AOS Judging, 10 am Clermont Judging Ctr, 849 West Ave.
- 6-7 Sarasota Orchid Society Show Sarasota Municipal Auditorium
- 9 JOS Meeting, What's in a Name Phillip Hamilton, Bredren Orchids
- 11 Virtual Show Table Courtney Zooms into Cyberspace Invitation Will be Sent by Email
- 12-14 Tamiami International Orchid Festival Dade County Fair Expo Center
- Florida North-Central AOS Judging, 1 pm Clermont Judging Ctr, 849 West Ave.
- 19-21 Apopka Int'l Winter Orchid Show Krull Smith Nursery, Apopka
- 27-28 Florida West Coast Orchid Society Show Seminole Recreation Division

February

- 3 SAOS Repotting Clinic, 9 am til noon Southeast Branch Library 6670 US-1 N, 32086
- 3-4 Venice Area Orchid Society Show Venice Community Center
- 6 SAOS Meeting, 6:30 pm Terry Bottom, SAOS Orchid Photography
- 9-11 Greater Orlando Orchid Society Show Orlando Garden Club
- 10 Florida North-Central AOS Judging, 10 am Clermont Judging Ctr, 849 West Ave.
- 10-11 Boca Raton Orchid Society Show Safe Schools Institute
- 13 JOS Meeting, Prepping Plants for a Show Eric Cavin and James Arnold
- 15 Virtual Show Table Courtney Zooms into Cyberspace Invitation Will be Sent by Email

- 16-18 Naples Orchid Society Show Moorings Presbyterian Church
- 17-18 Wellington Orchid Festival 11700 Pierson Road, Wellington 33414 23-24 Englewood Area Orchid Society Ann and Chuck Dever Regional Park

March

- 1-3 Martin County Orchid Society Show Martin County Fairgrounds
- 2 SAOS Repotting Clinic, 9 am til noon Southeast Branch Library 6670 US-1 N, 32086
- 2-3 Tampa Bay Orchid Society Show Tampa Sons of Italy
- 5 SAOS Meeting, 6:30 pm Bill Nunez, Orchid Hobbyist

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CLUB NEWS

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SAOS Program Tonight's speaker was introduced by Sue Bottom. Francisco Miranda is a world-renowned taxonomist, naturalist, and orchid grower who travels extensively in the United States and internationally, speaking at orchid-related events and meetings. He started Miranda Orchids in 1999 and specializes in growing and improving select Brazilian Cattleya alliance species

Francisco's talk was titled A Tale of Two Cattleyas, C. walkeriana and C. nobilior. He noted that these are two distinct true Cattleya species, though in the past nobilior was considered a variety of walkeriana. These two species are native to Brazil, and some populations have been completely eradicated by collectors, even though the wild-collected specimens are adapted to the specific conditions they're found in and may not survive the move.

C. walkeriana and C. nobilior have distinct geographic distributions in central Brazil, with C. walkeriana being found in a more mountainous and coastal region. There are two separate ranges of C. nobilior. C. walkeriana's native habitat experiences 3-6 month dry periods, depending on the specific location. C. nobilior experiences a 9-10 month dry period, with the humidity dropping to 5-6% by the end of the warm (85°F) dry season!

C. nobilior is found in central Brazil's deciduous forests. Its beautiful pink or white flowers are nearly 5 inches across and can be found in the open forest on bare Tabebuia trees towards the end of the long dry season. It has extensive roots, often up to 20 feet long, that allow it to access the little water that is available, and can be very difficult to see when not in flower, as its leaves are extremely dehydrated. If the bee-pollinated C. nobilior produces seed pods, much of the plant's energy reserves are consumed when the seeds are released following the next season's dry period.

C. walkeriana grows in semi-deciduous forests closer to the Brazilian coast, and experiences a much shorter dry period. It is also found on deciduous trees with rough bark and has extensive roots that nearly cover trees. Unlike C. nobilior, C. walkeriana flowers at the end of its wet season, in April and May, and holds onto the seed pods until the next rainy season, which begins in September or October. Taxonomically, these two Cattleya species can be distinguished by several visible features. Notably, C. nobilior has two leaves per pseudobulb while C. walkeriana has only one leaf per pseudobulb. There are several floral differences, including the position of the column, and as noted previously, C. nobilior flowers in the Spring and C. walkeriana flowers in the Brazilian Fall.

Orchid hybridizers strive to improve the shape of these Cattleya species' flowers by selecting for rounder flowers with flatter lips. A single seed pod generates lots of genetic variation in its over one million seeds. Many of the selected specimens are vigorous tetraploids. Because C. walkeriana has been in cultivation for 50-70 years, it has yielded many tetraploids with nicely-shaped round flowers in a variety of colors including coeruleas, albas, vinicolors, semi-albas, and albescens forms in addition to the standard light lavender tipos.

When cultivating these species, it is important to try and keep them dryish in winter. C. walkeriana requires a shorter rest period, and can be watered or misted bi-weekly. C. nobilior's requirement for a much longer dry period can substituted with exposure to cold temperatures. Allowing the temperature to drop to 40°F can replace the dry period and trigger flowering.

Francisco ended his program by showing actual plants of the two species and noting the number of leaves per pseudobulb. He also displayed live flowering specimens of C. walkeriana that he plans to cross and select for even more beautiful flowers.



Member's Choice Winner. Christine announced that Steve Hawkin's Angraceum superbum (syn. eburneum) won the Member's Choice Award.

Meeting Conclusion. The formal meeting concluded at 8:50pm and was followed by a Raffle. Thanks to the helpful hands that stayed to help clean and store the tables, chairs and room.



CLUB NEWS



Renew Your Membership

It's that time of year! The dues are \$20 for an individual or \$30 for a family if paid by Zelle or Venmo (904-501-0805) or check (mail c/o Linda Stewart, 1812 Diana Drive, Palatka 32177). For an extra dollar, use the PayPal link on our <u>website</u>. Easy Peasy!

American Orchid Society Corner

Webinars January 3, 8:30 pm, Everyone Invited Greenhouse Chat - Ron McHatton

January 23, 8:30 pm, AOS Members Only Multifloral Paphs – Carol Klonowski

Orchids Magazine this Month Native Orchid Photo Contest – Bob Sprague Rots in Catasetinae – Sue Bottom

Photos of Latest AOS Awards

February 6 Meeting Photographing Orchids, Terry Bottom

Terry will talk about photographing your orchids, whether you use a big camera or the camera on your phone. He'll focus on settings, lighting and backgrounds to get the best images of your orchids.

Terry Bottom is a graphics artist who has



done design, layout and production work. His specialty is digital imagery for artwork and advertising products. He combines his years of experience in graphic design and photography with the new technologies in digital software, printing and cameras to create his unique style, which is a little funky with a dose of the surreal added in.

When: Tuesday, February 6, 6:30 til 9 pm Where: Memorial Lutheran Church 3375 US 1 South, St. Aug 32086



Southeast Branch Library 6670 US 1 North, St Aug 32086 First Saturday of the Month 10 am til noon



INSPIRATION







Orchid Questions & Answers

by Sue Bottom, sbottom15@ hotmail.com

Q1. These Neof. falcata arrived in tiny pots with loose large bark. I just mounted them on cork with sphagnum moss and removed it. Would they be safer in a clay pot? I read that the Japanese mount/

plant them on a sphagnum moss ball they place in a bowl.



A1. I referred this question to Suzanne Susko and Joanne Stygles, who specialize in these orchids. Suzanne wrote: Those Neos look great. The grower you got them from knew how to grow them. I use the traditional Japanese/ Korean style of growing which is a sphagnum ball, but with a twist. The center of the sphagnum ball is filled with a stack of peanuts so the center of the pot gets constant air flow. The roots of the plant are contained in about $\frac{1}{2}$ of sphagnum surrounding the peanuts. They need to dry out between watering, but can be in a moist environment for several days. I water only when the sphagnum is very crispy; you can easily kill Neos by overwatering. You can use two small net pots to achieve the same result. Take a small net pot inserted into the center of the roots at the base of the leaves. Holding it tight, surround the roots with about 1/2 inch of sphagnum. Place the whole thing into a slightly larger net pot leaving the bottom open for air flow.



Joanne added: I grow the majority of my neo's in 3A and 5A New Zealand sphagnum moss. I place the roots on top of a 3A mound created with an air hole using a moss pole, then wrap the 5A around the roots. The effect is similar to Suzanne's method. I also have a few which are attached to cork and wood mounts. Those are not my named varieties, but rather what neo growers call Furan (wind orchids). They do well, however, I find they do not grow as well or as strong. Neo's are not fast-growing orchids for the most part, and some of the named varieties take years to even make what we call a clump.

You can use a regular clay pot with either small bark or loose sphagnum, cork, or traditional method. All will help you enjoy this fascinating species. To us Neo nuts, it's not a vanda, it will always be a Neofinetia falcata. I have attached a link to Jason Fischer's <u>Orchid Limited webpage</u>, he is one of three US based growers of Neo's and is an expert with these beauties.

Q2. Is this a fungus?

A2. I think that's one of the bad ones, Sclerotium or Southern Blight, though I've never seen it on a vanda before. Carefully remove it to the trash, all those little balls that look like mustard seeds are the resting form of the fungus, and will spread the disease readily to nearby plants. I hope that vanda wasn't one of your favorites!



Q3. I misplaced this Dendrobium in a pot with inadequate drainage. It's in half death throws but I don't know if I should

cut anywhere or just leave it out in the air for a bit.

A3. It looks like you've got rot coming up from the roots into the cane, and it looks like it's affecting all but maybe one cane. I



suspect the nobile's days are numbered.





When You Water, Water by Dr. Courtney Hackney

There are some topics that arise over and over again, both in my own greenhouse culture and from questions I receive from readers. The issue this time is water, not water quality, but quantity. One of the mistakes made most frequently by experienced

growers is to not water adequately. This does not mean that the frequency is not appropriate, but the quantity of water delivered to each plant is not adequate.

It is not enough to just wet the orchid plant and surface of the medium, but to make sure water drains through pots. When an orchid is first repotted and water is passed through the medium, there will initially be a small quantity of fine material that exits the pot. Then, very little will exit until either the medium starts to degrade or decaying roots disintegrate. If an orchid is growing well it may outgrow the pot before this happens.

It is important during the time an orchid is in a pot that there is adequate flushing to remove the decomposing organic matter and byproducts, which include organic acids as well as particles of decaying bark and root material. Typically, once the process begins the decomposition of the bark and roots will release nutrients absorbed from fertilizers, which will help nourish the orchid. At some point, however, the buildup of decaying materials can be so great that the medium becomes sour, i.e. lacks oxygen.

When an orchid is first repotted it is important to flush thoroughly to be sure the medium throughout the pot is wetted so that roots will be attracted to the medium. As time passes, the medium will remain wet for a much longer period of time because the medium is degraded by bacteria and fungi. The medium at the surface of the pot may be very dry, but the medium within the pot will remain moist because of the surface buildup of bacteria and fungi. A thorough flushing tends to remove byproducts of decomposition that accumulate on the bottom of the pot.

One of the best ways to tell how decomposed the medium in a pot has become is to flush the pot thoroughly in your sink and note the quantity of fine material that exits the pot. If you repeat the flushing and the same quantity of fine material exits, then your medium is nearing the end of its lifespan and it is almost time to repot.



There is also the "sniff test". Water the pot thoroughly and wait a few minutes. If the pot smells like bark or has a pleasant "earthy" smell the medium is ok. If there is a foul smell, then it is time to repot. While the sniff test may seem arbitrary, most people who try it have little doubt if they sniff a pot full of medium past its prime.

Of course, this does not work if you use an inorganic medium such as Stalite, lava rock, or one of the puffed clay products. It still is necessary to flush thoroughly and most of those who flush a plant in the sink are shocked at the quantity of fine organic particles that exits the pot, especially if the inorganic medium is coarse. If the medium is relatively fine, organics can accumulate in inorganic media and produce the same foul odor that can be found in degraded bark.

One does need to be aware that some fertilizers can also produce an unpleasant odor, particularly organic fertilizers such as fish emulsion. Do not perform the "sniff test" for a week or so after using these fertilizers, because the organic compounds in these products naturally produce a rather foul smelling scent.

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 January 2010.





Cantankerous Cattleyas on Cork by Alec M. Pridgeon

One of the most frequent problems addressed to our "Question Box" concerns the absolute stubbornness of certain bifoliate Cattleya species to adapt to captivity. From the mail received over the years and from talking to growers across the country, *Cattleya aclandiae* seems to be the most recalcitrant of all. The typical response to its culture in pots is cither bacterial or fungal spotting of leaves or a loss of roots followed by general decline.



Cattleya aclandiae 'Dave Congleton' - grown and photographed by Courtney Hackney

Is such decline the result of a centuries-old Indian curse on orchid growers, or is there some scientific explanation for it? Romantically appealing as the former explanation might be, the ecology of these orchids provides a more plausible alternative. Such species as *C. aclandiae*, *C. walkeriana*, *C. nobilior*, and *C. schilleriana* are chiefly lowland epiphytes in Brazil, growing on trees with strongly fissured bark or on moss-covered rocks.



Cattleya walkeriana

Their habitats experience pronounced wet and dry seasons. Data from Fowlie (1977) suggest that C. aclandiae occurs in hot, dry climates with a rainy season from mid-November to January, when it flowers in the Brazilian spring. In the state of Espirito Santo, Cattleya schilleriana experiences a hot, dry summer from January to March but heavy rains from September to November. Cattleya nobilior grows in warmer climates than C. walkeriana with a rainy season from December to April and drought from May to November. The whole point of this is not to tell the hobbyist what months to water (since the seasons are reversed for those of us in the Northern Hemisphere) but to demonstrate the need for a growing medium that: 1) allows roots to attach easily; 2) promotes rapid and thorough drainage of water; and 3) discourages accumulations of salts around the roots. For bifoliate species with relatively short pseudobulbs, cultivation on cork slabs is the perfect solution.

Cork is available commercially in two forms, either slabs or nuggets of various grades by size. Slabs may be sawed or simply broken by hand into the appropriate length and width for the plant to be mounted. Before mounting, make a hole near what will be the top and run a wire hanger through it. (Alternatively, the slab may be hung horizontally as a "raft.") Then locate a crevice on the slab into which the rhizome will fit snugly, preferably near the bottom of the slab to allow for 2-3 years of growth without disturbance. Make a hole in the cork on both sides of the rhizome every

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Mounted orchids





Cork Slabs

3-4 inches, run telephone wire or a similar substitute through each pair of holes, and tie securely on the back of the slab. Until roots form and traverse the cork, keep the plants slightly shaded and misted only. It is important to remember that you should not repot or mount these cattleyas unless new roots are being formed and are less than 1/2" long.

In the event that the plant outgrows its cork slab, and to prevent disturbing the plant any more than necessary, I find it best simply to divide the plant, slab and all, into two or three pieces, and then just attach at least the piece bearing the lead growth to another cork slab with wire.

Those with a heavy watering hand will find it much easier to keep these Brazilian Cattleya species alive much longer, long enough to flower them at the very least.

Further Reading: Fowlie. J. A., MD. 1977. The Brazilian bifoliate cattleyas and their color varieties. Day Printing Co., Pomona, California.

This article appeared in the American Orchid Society Orchids magazine in April 1987 (Vol. 56:4, pp 358-360), reprinted with permission.



Cattleya nobilior 'Fabio Nahas' - grown and photographed by Keith Davis



Temperature and Humidity Monitors

Sue Bottom, sbottom15@hotmail.com

Orchid books discuss orchids that grow in three different temperature ranges, based on the winter nighttime temperatures:

- The cool growers, with nights between 50 and 55°F. Unfortunately, many of the orchids that enjoy cool conditions in winter also enjoy cool summers, so we generally cannot grow these types of orchids here in Florida without making special accommodations.

- The intermediate growers, with nights between 55 and 60°F. This is a typical range for growing cattleyas, although many oncidiinae, dendrobiums, vandaceous and other types of orchids also enjoy intermediate temperatures.

- The warm growers, with nights between 60 and 65° F. This higher nighttime winter temperature is necessary for the best growth and flowering of many phalaenopsis, bulbophyllums and other orchids from lower elevation, warm climates.



Taylor Model 5458 Max Min Thermometer

The simplest and most foolproof way to monitor temperatures in your growing area is to use a max-min thermometer. This is a mercury filled thermometer with a U tube, which will register the current temperature, as well as the lowest and highest temperatures experienced since the last reset. Some have a button reset, others use a magnet to reset the temperature. The mercury travels in a U tube inside the thermometer, rising to the maximum in the channel to the right during the day, and dropping to the minimum in the channel to the left at night. Taylor Scientific has a model 5458 for about \$20. You'll find yourself resetting these thermometer often during the hottest days of the summer and coolest nights of the winter, as you try to protect your orchids from temperature extremes. You can position them in different areas of your growing area to find the microclimates most suitable for growing different varieties of orchids. They work consistently and they don't require batteries that seem to always fail on the coldest night.



Digital vs. Manual Thermoneters

Of course, mercury thermometers don't have all the bells and whistles that some of the digital devices offer, like remote monitoring, alarms and phone notifications. I have a box of failed temperature and humidity monitors, but this year discovered one that seems to work really well: a Govee H5179 thermometer/hygrometer combination that measures both temperature and humidity. This is a battery powered sensor that communicates to your phone via a 2.4 GHz WiFi connection using the Govee Home app, for either Android or Apple devices. You can get the instantaneous readings on your phone using their Widget, as well as view the data from the last hour, day, week, month or year on your phone. You can check the temperature in your

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Govee Model H5179 Temperature and Humidity Sensor

growing area whether you're sitting in front of the TV at home or up in the mountains of North Carolina. You can set high and low temperature alarms, so a notification is sent to your phone in the event temperatures are outside of your preset acceptable range. Another nice feature is the low battery warning light, to let you know it's time to switch out the three AAA batteries. I also have the earlier models 5075 and 5100 that have lesser functionality and range, but the 5179 model is the only one I would buy today.

The temperature information is critical, but this sensor also gives you humidity information and calculates the dew point and vapor pressure deficit. Relative humidity is a familiar term describing the amount of water vapor in the air compared to how much it can hold. Warmer air has a greater water holding capacity than colder air. Our orchids are comfortable in the same humidity range we enjoy, somewhere in the 40 to 70% range. Low humidity air dries out our skin and our plants leaves, so pots dry out much more quickly. Moderate humidity levels are desirable. Too high humidity favors the growth of rots, molds and fungal infections.

Though humidity is a useful and familiar measure, there is a more precise way to express the driving force of water loss from the leaf, vapor pressure deficit. Vapor pressure deficit (VPD) is a measure of the evaporative forces at the leaf surface. A low VPD indicates the air is near saturation so the transpiration rate is negligible. A high VPD means the air is drier, and the moisture gradient between the leaf and the atmosphere encourages a higher transpiration rate.

If you are interested in having remote sensors in your growing area to keep you apprised of the temperature and vapor pressure deficit, try the Govee H5179 sensors, available on Amazon for around \$35. As long as you have a suitable WiFi network, your phone will give you constant feedback of the temperature and humidity around your orchids.



Smart APP Control for A Better Experience



ORCHID ADVENTURES





Christmas Shopping at Bredren Orchids

Phillip and Liz Hamilton opened up their greenhouses for us to go shopping for orchids at our Christmas auction. What a selection, from just potted up seedlings to mature specimen plants. Phillip is well known for his novelty phalaenopsis breeding, and we brought several to the auction that I had hoped to bring back to my greenhouse, alas, bidding got into the stratosphere! Phillip has a lot of his father's plants imported from Jamaica, nodosa and Broughtonia hybrids. These were very popular at the auction as well. Phillip and Liz are a class act. We hope to have a return engagement sometime soon!







SHOW TABLE



Grower Courtney Hackney Blc. (Heathers Gold x Carolina Splendor) 'Carolina Flame'



Grower Steve Dorsey Blc. Yen Corona 'Green Genie' AM/AOS



Grower Suzanne Susko Iana. Aka's Aloha 'Dream Dust'



Grower Suzanne Susko Dendrophylax funalis



Grower Brandon Silvester C. Peckhaviensis 4n



Grower Leslie Brickell Bulb. gracillimum 'Joy's Dancing Spider' AM/AOS



Grower Bev Vycital Bc. Binosa 'Key Lime'



SHOW TABLE



Grower Leslie Brickell Bulb. George Gallipeau



Grower Steve Dorsey C. walkeriana var. semialba 'Kenny' HCC/AOS



Grower Sue Bottom Ddc. formosanum



Grower Bev Vycital Blc. Heaven's Gate 'Crystelle' FCC/AOS



Grower Janis Croft Lc. (Aloha Case x Casitas Spring)



Grower Courtney Hackney Blc. Sharon Forsythe 'Orange'

Link to all Submissions: https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjB8q3W