



## CLUB NEWS



Terry Bottom

### February Meeting

by Janis Croft

#### Welcome and Thanks.

Tom Sullivan opened the meeting at 7:00 pm with 55 attendees. He thanked Julie, Celia, Dianne, Christine and Dottie for the treats and reminded all to remember to "Drop a Dollar" if you enjoyed them. Tom announced the February Florida orchid shows in Orlando, Boca Raton, Naples, Wellington and Englewood. He advised

all to look at the website for dates and locations.

Club Business. Membership VP Linda Stewart welcomed our five guests and then introduced our new member, Lisa Mesmer which brings our total membership up to 177. Membership renewals are now due. You can give Linda a check at the meeting, renew via Zelle to 904-501-0805, or via the PayPal link online for an extra dollar. As our Sunshine Coordinator also, Linda announced that if you know of anyone in need of a cheering up or a get-well card, let her know by emailing her at [info@staugorchidsociety.org](mailto:info@staugorchidsociety.org). Several attending members with February birthdays were given a free raffle ticket by Dianne.

**Members Choice Voting** - Christine Peterson announced that we are now voting again for Members Choice for the live orchids brought into the meeting and asked all to vote during the break. Winners will be announced at the end of the presentation.

**Virtual Show Table** – is scheduled for Thursday, February 8 at 7 pm. An email invitation will be sent with link and details.

**Repotting Clinics** - The clinics started up this past weekend and had a constant flow of people. Next one will be on March 2 at the SE Branch Library, 6670 US-1 N, St. Aug 32086.



**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](mailto:info@staugorchidsociety.org).

**Beginner Programs** - Jerry Fowler (who was unable to attend tonight) has planned a new beginner's program to help new growers learn the basics. He also has visits scheduled and the first one is the traditional repotting madness event held at the Bottom's residence on March 24. Be sure to save the date.

**Library** - Librarian Howard Cushnir brought in a DVD and two books from the library geared for the beginning orchid grower. If you would like a book or magazine from the Library list on the website, send Howard a request to [info@staugorchidsociety.org](mailto:info@staugorchidsociety.org) and he will bring the item(s) to the next meeting.



**Show Table Review.** Courtney Hackney started the review with the common Jewel orchid, *Ludisia discolor*, which grows under low light and is often grown indoors because of its leaves beautiful variations. Courtney said he had seen many leaf varieties at a recent show. Next was an *Ionopsis utricularioides* from the *Oncidiinae* group. This one is commonly referred to as a twig orchid. Steve brought in a ten year old Phrag. Eric Young that was beautifully grown using rainwater. *Phaiocalanthe Kryptonite* had numerous deep purple flowers. The yellow flowered miniature *Pleurothallis* is a low altitude grower that also requires good quality water like R.O. or rainwater. Next was a *Rhyncholaelia glauca* that likes to grow at high temperatures and is very fragrant. Courtney pointed out the *Lc. Coastal Splendor* with its white flowers and deep purplish lip as being a favorite because of its strong stems. Sue brought in a stunning *C. Bob Betts 'York'* with its large, yellow throated flowers. Courtney finished with a floriferous *Epicattleya Butterfly Kisses* and *Blc. Heather's Gold 'Main Strike'*.

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# CLUB NEWS



## Upcoming Orchid Events

### February

- 8 Virtual Show Table  
Courtney Zooms into Cyberspace  
Invitation Will be Sent by Email
- 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
- 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, 10 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  
Billl Nunez, Orchid Hobbyist  
Growing Specimen Plants
- 9 FL North-Central Judging, 10 am  
Clermont Garden Center, 849 West Ave
- 12 JOS Meeting, Show Update, 7 pm  
Lorraine Conover, JOS Show Chairman
- 14 Virtual Show Table  
Courtney Zooms into Cyberspace  
Invitation Will be Sent by Email
- 16-17 Jacksonville Orchid Society Show  
The Garden Center of Jacksonville
- 22-24 Gulf Coast Orchid Alliance Show  
North Collier Regional Park, Naples

- 23-24 Orchid Society of Highlands County Show  
Agri-Civic Center, Sebring
- 24 Keiki Club Growing Area Tour, 1-3 pm  
Repotting Madness at the Bottoms  
\$5 Donation to Cover Cost of Supplies
- 30-31 Flamingo Gardens Orchid Society Show  
Flamingo Gardens, Davie

### April

- 2 SAOS Meeting, 6:30 pm  
Courtney Hackney, Orchid Hybridizer  
Tolumnias
- 5-7 Apopka Int'l Spring Orchid Show  
Krull Smith Nursery, Apopka
- 6 SAOS Repotting Clinic, 10 am til noon  
Southeast Branch Library

### St. Augustine Orchid Society Organization

President	Tom Sullivan <a href="mailto:tomjs91@gmail.com">tomjs91@gmail.com</a>
Vice President Communications	Janis Croft <a href="mailto:croftie1984@gmail.com">croftie1984@gmail.com</a>
Vice President Events	Dianne Batchelder <a href="mailto:ladydi9907@aol.com">ladydi9907@aol.com</a>
Vice President Membership	Linda Stewart <a href="mailto:linkstew@hotmail.com">linkstew@hotmail.com</a>
Vice President Programs	Sue Bottom <a href="mailto:sbottom15@hotmail.com">sbottom15@hotmail.com</a>
Treasurer	Cathy Mayo <a href="mailto:allatoonalady@gmail.com">allatoonalady@gmail.com</a>
Directors	Leslie Brickell, 2022 <a href="mailto:lesliebrickell@gmail.com">lesliebrickell@gmail.com</a> Charlie Bridgham, 2022 <a href="mailto:tech@burrindustries.com">tech@burrindustries.com</a> Jerry Fowler, 2023 <a href="mailto:jayinville@gmail.com">jayinville@gmail.com</a>
Exhibit Committee Chair	Janis Croft <a href="mailto:croftie1984@gmail.com">croftie1984@gmail.com</a>
Librarian	Howard Cushnir <a href="mailto:hscushnir@gmail.com">hscushnir@gmail.com</a>
Newsletter Editors Webmasters	Sue and Terry Bottom <a href="mailto:sbottom15@gmail.com">sbottom15@gmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:bottom406@gmail.com">bottom406@gmail.com</a>



# CLUB NEWS

Continued from page 1

**SAOS Program.** Sue introduced our guest speaker and her husband, Terry Bottom, who talked to us about "Photographing Orchids." Terry is a graphics artist who has done design, layout and production work. His specialty is digital imagery for artwork and advertising products. He combines years of experience in graphic design and photography with the new technologies in digital software, printing and cameras to create his unique style. His talk focused on how to take better pictures and make pictures that are ready for SAOS publication.

Terry started by asking the audience what device they use to photograph their orchids. A majority use their cell phones but a surprising number also use DSLR cameras. These allow you to switch out lenses, control exposure and focal length and other advanced options when one photographs. Many newer cell phones have similar features also. Terry started by describing the scientific principles of making a photo. First, the Aperture (lens opening) that is defined by F stops. The smaller the number (F4) the larger the lens opening. Second, the ISO that describes the film or sensor sensitivity to light. The lower the ISO number, the finer grain of the image which leads to sharper images. Third, the Shutter speed that controls the sharpness of the image. The longer the speed, the blurrier the image and vice versa.

Next, Terry showed slides of various ways to set up to photograph. First, decide if you are going to shoot in place, e.g. orchid on bench, or move the plant elsewhere. Also, decide on the light conditions. Sunny days produce deep shadows and bright whites on the plant so it can be difficult to control the outcome. Cloudy days provide diffuse light which gives one the best colors and control of outcome. Terry showed an example of moving a plant outside on a plant stand on a cloudy day and the resulting photographs. He brought in devices he uses to help control hot spots and shadows. These included diffusers, reflectors and small lights. Inexpensive white paper or sturdy cardboard can be used to reflect light or cast a shadow to block bright light.

Wherever you photograph, you must think of the background. Try to not include other items or plants that will be distracting from the orchid flowers. Terry also uses a black cloth with a PVC pipe inserted into a hemmed edge to quickly hang up behind the plant. He also showed a stand he built using PVC pipe and right angle connectors that can easily be assembled to hold the backdrop cloth.

By manipulating the focus and adjusting the brightness you can blur out and darken the background. Terry showed examples of different F-stops and how the resulting images showed different areas of the photo in focus or not. The smaller the Aperture (f/14) the sharper all objects appear. If

you focus on one aspect and increase the Aperture (f/8) the other objects will be out of focus. He encouraged all to play around with this to learn the differences. Next he showed a slide with different light sources. He took one photo using filters for each light source to demonstrate how the image is affected. Terry said magenta flowers are the most difficult to photograph and get a realistic resulting magenta.

The SAOS publications include our Newsletter, Website, Facebook page, Virtual Show Table and Calendar. Terry described dots per inch (DPI) which in the digital world is how all images are created. The higher number of DPI, the sharper the image. He advised all to shoot at 300 dpi. He showed a slide of the common aspect ratios which describe the shape of the image (width x height). An image that has an aspect ratio of 1:1 is a square. For SAOS use, a preferred aspect ratio is 3:2. He suggested if you want SAOS to use your photos, then shoot images with an aspect ratio of 3:2, file size of minimum 500 KB but preferably 2 MB at 300 DPI, allow space around the image so cropping can occur later, submit images by deadline and don't put text on images that you submit.

Terry's final hints were double check after taking the photo to be sure you have a good shot, be aware of the background and always check your camera settings to be sure they are what you want.



**Meeting Conclusion.** The Members Choice winners were a three way tie: Sue Bottom's C. Bob Betts 'York', Tom Sullivan's Ludisia discolor and Eric Milstrey's Pleurothallis quadrifida. The evening concluded with the Raffle table. 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 [website](#). Easy Peasy!

## March 5 Meeting

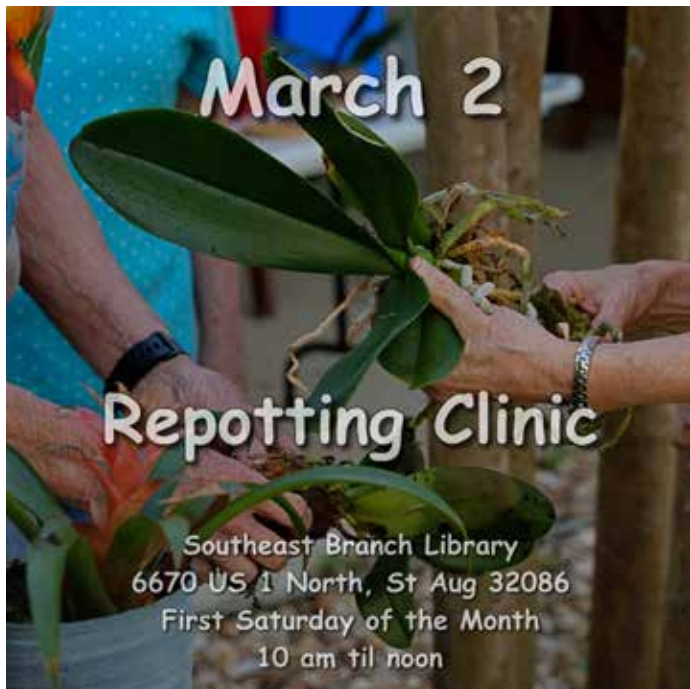
Growing Specimen Plants, Bill Nunez

Bill, who is also known as the Rhizome Cowboy, will talk about how to grow a specimen cattleya. The steps involve picking the proper plant, choosing the right potting materials and growing it to its maximum potential.

Bill has been growing orchids most of his life. He gets a lot of pleasure from making new hybrids, mostly in the Cattleya alliance. He has been fortunate to register his hybrids and receive several AOS awards

**When:** Tuesday, March 5, 6:30 til 9 pm

**Where:** Memorial Lutheran Church  
3375 US 1 South, St. Aug 32086



## American Orchid Society Corner

### Webinars

February 7, 8:30 pm, AOS Members Only  
Phalaenopsis – David Edgley

February 8, 8:30 pm, Everyone Invited  
Greenhouse Chat - Ron McHatton

### Orchids Magazine this Month

Orchids Under Lights – Nicholas Rust  
Red Phalaenopsis – Kay Perry  
Restrepia – Charles Wilson

[Photos of Latest AOS Awards](#)



# INSPIRATION

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*Eplc. (Lc. Koolau Seagulls x Epc. Kyoguchi)*

© Terry Botta



# CULTIVATION

## Orchid Questions & Answers

by Sue Bottom,  
sbottom15@hotmail.com

**Q1.** The leaves on two of my Phalaenopsis plants are getting soggy. What could be the problem?



**A2.** When the leaves on orchids get that accordion look, it means they're not getting enough moisture. You'll have to step up the watering frequency a bit. Good luck!

**Q3.** I separated this one immediately from all the other orchids. The leaves have gray and brown spotting. Would you please tell me what's wrong and what I should do.



**A3.** I think you probably have a mite infestation on that dendrobium. They spread pretty easily, so check your other thin leaved orchids like oncidiums; they also will go after the soft tender phal leaves.

The first step is take it to the kitchen sink and wash all the leaves, top and bottom. Then get a spray bottle of isopropyl alcohol and spray the entire plant, top and bottom. You may have to repeat this weekly for a couple of weeks. Here's a [link to the website](#), scroll down to the mites section for some other ideas.



**A1.** That's bacterial soft rot, caused by *Erwinia* (also called *Pectobacterium*). Cut away the damaged leaf quickly before the infection reaches the crown, and douse with hydrogen peroxide or a copper bactericide. Spray all the surrounding plants too!

**Q2.** My plant's leaves are all crinkled. I water when it seems dry, and it's sitting inside with no direct sun but near lots of windows.



# CULTIVATION



## Orchid Pots by Dr. Courtney Hackney

Nothing is as basic to orchid culture as the orchid pot. There is more to the pot than just a container and selection of the best pot for your orchid plants can mean the difference between success and failure. The choice of growing container depends on the type of orchid being grown and the growing environment, i.e.,

your home or a greenhouse.

One of my favorite pots is the clear plastic type. They are generally produced using the same plastic and process as other orchid pots, but no color is added. Instead, a UV inhibitor is added to prevent sunlight from breaking down the plastic. Occasionally, pots will be made and sold without the UV inhibitor and these pots discolor and disintegrate in just a few months in the sunlight.

Besides additional drainage, many plastic orchid pots have a raised bottom, which allows air to flow below and through the pot. All orchids hate stale air because it is depleted in oxygen. Orchids are now grown in just about every medium from those that retain water well, such as New Zealand or Chilean Sphagnum to various types of rock, including lava rock and Stalite.

The real beauty in a clear pot is the ability to determine the degree of wetness within the pot. I grow paphs in lava rock. Paph roots prefer a constant moisture level. If their roots dry out the orchid suffers. In clear plastic, it is easy to tell when the moisture level drops because the inside of the pot can be easily observed. With lava rock there is never the chance that the medium will get too soggy as long as each rock is  $>1/4$ " in diameter. It is also easy to observe the new roots because they like to grow along the inside of the pot where moisture precipitates from the change in temperature each night. Lava rock retains lots of moisture, but other types of rock typically do not.



Phals are often grown in clear plastic pots with New Zealand Sphagnum as the medium. Phals sold as pot plants often arrive in clear pots, the ones that degrade quickly in the sun. Phal roots will grow along the clear plastic side of the pot and seem to always grow best where the sun strikes the pot. Phals in this type of pot usually have big, fat roots that turn green if moist. If you purchase a phal in this medium and there are



no roots growing along the inside of the pot you can be sure the plant was recently placed in this pot. Water only when the inside of the pot becomes very dry at least until new roots can be seen growing inside the pot.

In clear pots, phal roots, which contain chlorophyll, can generate oxygen and aid root growth if watered properly. When moisture levels are low on the inside of the pot in the morning it is time to water. Often the surface will be so dry by this time that most folks would have already watered; which would have been too soon.

Most hobbyists grow in bark or some other organic medium. Clear pots allow an easy way to determine the degree of medium decomposition, which may vary greatly depending on the medium, fertilizer, and watering frequency.



Finding clear, plastic pots is not always easy and they can be prohibitively expensive compared to other plastic pots. My strategy is to try to have at least one plant of each orchid type, i.e., phal, paph, etc, in a clear pot on every bench to help me monitor the moisture condition in pots throughout the greenhouse. The only group of orchids that does not get this type of treatment is my cattleyas because they are all grown in clay pots. Does anyone know where I can get clear, clay pots? That would be ideal.

*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 February 2009.*



# CULTIVATION

## Revolutionize Your Mobile Flower Photography

by Anna Zverkova, [The Smell of Roses](#)

When you come across a beautiful flower it is more than likely that the only camera you have available is your smartphone. Regrettably, many photographs being taken on phones turn out to be poor. On some occasions, it could be blamed on lower quality cameras – but more often it is a result of poor photographic technique. So how do you take Instagram-worthy pictures with your smartphone? What follows is a list of simple tricks that will take your mobile flower photography to the next level.

Flower photography mostly fails for one of two reasons: terrible lighting or bad composition. While a single blog post cannot turn you into a pro this article will provide you with a list of simple and practical tips that will elevate your results.

### 1. Composition is a deal-breaker

Good composition is the key to a good image and the rules of great composition are the same for all cameras be it a DSLR or a phone camera. Simplify the scene, you need an image with a clear focal point. The viewer needs to be directed towards the main subject. If you have multiple subjects a rule of odds will come handy.



**Rule of Odds:** It is common to have three objects in a frame as they will always form either a line or a triangle, both of which are pleasurable shapes.

**Rule of Odds.** The rule states that an odd number of subjects is more interesting than an even number. It is easy for the brain to organise objects into pairs and therefore pairs will bring symmetry and dullness to your image. If you have one main object, accompany it with two supporting objects, not one. This way you will have one of them in the centre. Rule of odds rule works because human eye will naturally wander towards the centre of a group. If there's empty space there, then that's where the eye will fall. A good photographer makes the viewer look at the subject, not at an empty space. This rule is important when trying

to achieve a visually pleasant composition using several objects. Keep in mind, that the rule of odds works only for small numbers. The rule will not matter with larger groups, though. It does not matter if you have 36 or 37 flowers in your image.



**Rule of Thirds:** Most phones will allow you to turn on a grid, so you don't have to imagine the separation.

**Rule of Thirds.** Placing your flowers right in the centre can be tempting, but most likely will result in a boring image. Try composing with the rule of thirds with the main subject being placed off-centre. This will instantly give your images a professional look. Divide your image into 9 equal parts. This will produce a grid where both vertical lines and horizontal lines are equally spaced in relation to each other. According to the rule of thirds if you place your subject along those lines, or at the intersections, your composition will look more compelling than had you placed the subject in the centre.

**Vertical vs Horizontal.** Another common mistake for mobile photographers would be to compose all shots vertically. Just by looking at your flowers you may be able to tell which composition will work best. Approximately, flowers that are wider than they are tall will be captured the best as horizontal shots and those that are taller than they are wide will look the best as vertical shots. This is just a guide – so keep experimenting with a viewfinder to find the best shot.

**2. Flash and flower photography.** Most phones today have flash and it can be quite tempting to go bananas with it when photographing flowers, but this should be avoided at all costs. In flower photography, as in all photography in general, flash should be used in moderation. If you have an off-camera flash it can be used for side lighting or backlighting, while the built-in flash should never be used to take pictures of flowers.





# CULTIVATION

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**3. Find a great perspective.** As always, we as humans find unconventional points of view to be the most interesting. Flower photographs look the most impressive when they have been taken from the subject's point of view. Another good viewpoint for flowers would be top-down, imagine all the flat lays that you saw on Instagram. If you want a more creative shot you can try shooting from a lower angle. People traditionally look at flowers from a standing position, but if you lie down on the ground to take your image, you are guaranteed an interesting shot.



*Background is a Deal Killer. The background can either make or break your image.*

**4. Background is a deal-breaker.** The background can either make or break your image. Flowers look the best against a soft, uncluttered background as these make them stand out; a cluttered, distracting background can easily destroy all your efforts by taking attention away from the main object. If you struggle to isolate your flower(s) from the cluttered background you can carefully place a coloured card behind the flower and have a simple one colour backdrop. No paper in sight? Why not use the sky. After all, it is nice and clean most of the time. Simply shoot from a low angle, pointing your camera up towards the sky. This trick is especially useful for photographing blooming trees.

**5. Hold your phone correctly.** How you hold your camera is extremely important as it will determine the quality of your images. It is common for people to hold a phone with one hand, this may work for most of the tasks, but not when it comes to photography. You want as much control as possible and no shake, so try holding your phone with two hands. Hold it with both hands and use your thumbs and pointer fingers to set settings.

**6. Pay attention to the weather.** It may come as a surprise but clear blue skies aren't ideal for flower photography. Direct sunlight is harsh and unforgiving, this gives images too much contrast, leads to loss of detail in shadow areas and makes your images flat. The perfect weather for outdoor flower photography would be a bright but overcast day – it's soft and diffused light is much more flattering.

**7. Reflector can save the day.** A reflector will make a huge difference to your images on a bright day. These are typically used to shade the subject from harsh, direct sunlight and/or to bounce light into shadow areas to bring up detail and reduce contrast.



*Zoom In. The best option for a zoom with your mobile phone camera is to use your feet.*

**8. Spray some water.** You can make your image look more interesting just by adding a little water. Use a water spray to add a few drops of water. This will add life and freshness to your photographs.

**9. Zoom in.** Don't like the background? Does the subject look plain on screen? Cropping right in on a flower will let you focus on the detail. Study each flower for colour and detail and identify what makes it unique: only when focusing on a flower's character – a mass of fluffy petals, unusual leaf structure, etc. – you'll be able to produce a pic that shows the true nature of the plant. But don't use digital zoom for getting closer to the flower as this will reduce the quality of your images. Digital zooming gets closer by cutting out the total megapixels used and this, in turn, reduces the overall quality of photos. A digital zoom uses part of the sensor and then crops in-camera. This is different for optical zoom, where the glass is actually moving to create a larger image, while still using the entire surface of the sensor. If needed you can crop image during the editing stage. The best option for a zoom with your mobile phone camera at this point will still be to use your feet.

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**10. Try using mobile phone camera lenses.** Can't capture details perfectly with your mobile phone then why not to try Mobile phone camera lenses? They are cheap and will give your phone images a professional look. A standard kit will come with three lenses: macro, wide angle and fish-eye lens. For flower photography, I found the macro lens to be the most useful, but others may come useful too.

**11. Use natural light.** Don't underestimate the importance of natural light, such light is the most flattering for flower photography. When shooting indoors move your bunch close to the window and only take a single shot.

**12. Flowers as a detail of the image.** Even if we want to photograph a bouquet of flowers to capture the moment and it does not have any specific purpose, it is worth thinking about relevance and proportions. We need to ask ourselves the question: are the flowers in this photo appropriate, do they create a single image with the object of shooting/background? If a bouquet is only a part of the image, the other components should also be carefully selected and follow good design principles. Harmony consists of many elements, frequently a perfect design is a result of trial and error, and there is nothing to worry about: we make several pictures, change elements in places, add and remove something – this is the only way to get the perfect shot.

**13. All good photos have a story!** Flower photography may look easier in some cases: a bouquet in a vase, a single flower, blooms in nature, just because we see such examples more frequently. But in order to get a good photo, it needs a unique angle and a story or it will be another photo vanishing a long photo feed. For example, if you open Instagram, then search for #flowers you will find hundreds of almost identical pictures of bouquets without a story that only have less than ten likes. So, if we face the task of creating something unique, we'll have to work. In order to get photos that get praised, you don't need to be an artist. A bouquet lying on the surface of an old wooden countertop or on a marble surface next to a coffee cup, a bouquet on crumpled sheets in the morning bedroom and a bouquet sticking out of a shopping bag are all examples of photographs telling different stories.

**14. Use apps for editing.** Times when you needed an expensive software and a computer for image processing are now history. All you need is an app to get fantastic results. There are many great apps out there so it will take you a while to try each. In order to save you time here are my favourites. All of those apps have general image settings, but each has a couple of distinct features.

*Snapseed* A free app that has such capabilities as "Healing" which will allow you to remove imperfections from slightly damaged leaves and "Selective" editing that allows you to lighten or darken a certain area of the image.

*ColorStory* Another free app that allows you to save your filters. Want to know more about great photo editing apps then check out my article on [top 10 best mobile apps](#).

## 15. Mobile flower photography and technological progress

Mobile cameras and phone screens keep getting better! So if you just got a new phone you'll need to learn all its capabilities and not be restrained by outdated expectations. Phones with dual cameras can easily produce a bokeh (blurred background) effect. Try to also utilise modern screens they are pretty good these days as they are bigger and have a more accurate colour representation, allowing you more space to build better compositions.



Now go and shoot. And don't forget that the key to getting better in photography is practice. You will never get better without shooting. Make mistakes and learn from them.

*Extracted from an article appearing in the blog The Smell of Roses, accessed online:  
<https://www.thesmellofroses.com/posts/revolutionize-your-mobile-flower-photography-with-15-simple-tips>*



# CULTIVATION

## Peanut Potting – For Healthy Roots

by Greg Allikas

We grow orchids in pots only as a convenience. A pot enables us to better control cultural factors and allows for easy display of a blooming orchid. One of the difficulties of growing orchid in pots is maintaining aeration of the interior of the pot. If we are using an organic medium, insufficient aeration leads to a rapid breakdown of the mix. When the medium breaks down, root loss ensues and plant health declines.

A potting technique being practiced by several Florida growers addresses this problem and has shown promising results. It involves using a deep layer of styrofoam peanuts and a shallow top dressing of medium. This potting technique is suitable for Cattleya, Dendrobium and Oncidium, as well as monopodial orchids such as Phalaenopsis, Angraecum and Sarcocochilus. Vandas and allied genera are still best grown in baskets, although early experiments look promising for using Styrofoam peanuts with these genera. Plastic or clay pots may be used depending on preference and watering practice. The top dressing can be whatever organic medium you are presently using: fir bark, bark mixes, coconut husk chips, tree fern or sphagnum moss. The advantages of using Styrofoam peanuts are they do not break down, provide ample aeration, water clings only to their surface then evaporates and roots readily penetrate them.

- Do not use biodegradable water-soluble Styrofoam peanuts or those treated with antistatic additives such as those used for electronic devices. Generally, white peanut-shaped peanuts are safe, but green, beige and other colors may be unsuitable. If in doubt, toss a peanut in a bowl of water for an hour to see if it dissolves.
- You may prefer to wear latex or vinyl gloves when potting to prevent the spread of disease between plants, or to protect your hands from dirt, injury or infection.
- Adding time release fertilizer will provide a steady stream of nutrients to the orchid. If using Nutncote, mix it into the medium. If using Osmocote, dress the top of the pot.

- Observation will provide the best guidelines for watering. As with other potting techniques, the media should just be approaching dryness before watering again. When potting Phalaenopsis, the top dressing may be kept moister than with conventional potting because the interior of the pot will be drier. Maintain even moisture, and do not allow to dry out.



*This plant of Laeliocattleya Nice Holiday, grown by Joe Bryson, shows the excellent root growth with the Styrofoam peanut method of potting. The critical bottom of the pot receives adequate aeration, does not stay too wet and roots retain good health. Depending on the orchid, Bryson uses either fir bark or coconut husk chunks with some sponge rock added.*

*This article appeared in the American Orchid Society Orchids magazine in March 2003 (Vol. 72:3, p. 214 - 215), reprinted with permission.*



# ORCHID ADVENTURES



**Apopka International Winter Orchid Festival**

Why bother driving all the way down to South Florida for orchid festivals when Krull Smith hosts three major orchid festivals each year at their nursery in Apopka. The orchids available at Krull Smith are incredible. They have a fantastic selection of the major genera including cattleyas, dendrobiums, phalaenopsis, paphiopedilums, vandas, bulbophyllums and more. You name it, they got it. Plus, they invite our favorite Florida vendors like Bredren, Miranda, Springwater and Accent as well as Californians like Gold Country and Sunset Valley Orchids. We like the food trucks too... and hope the pizza truck will be back for the April Show!



# SHOW TABLE



**Grower Courtney Hackney**  
**Bc. Amazing Thailand '#2'**



**Grower Gordon Cromwell**  
**Paph. Norito Hasegawa**



**Grower Steve Dorsey**  
**B. Aristocrat**



**Grower Suzanne Susko**  
**Tolu. Jairak Flyer 'Leopard'**



**Grower Jeff Milkins**  
**Bc. Nell Hammer 'Vee'**



**Grower Gale Hall**  
**Tolu. Lauren Anne Oka**



**Grower Courtney Hackney**  
**Bc. Chelsea Alward**



# SHOW TABLE



**Grower Steve Dorsey**  
*Coel. Unchained Melody*



**Sue Bottom**  
*Ddc. propinquum*



**Grower Gordon Cromwell**  
*Onc. Twinkle*



**Grower Jeff Milkins**  
*Blc. Drew Simon Smith 'Krull's Envy' AM/AOS*



**Grower Keith Davis**  
*C. loddigesii 'A-doribil' FCC/AOS*



**Grower Sue Bottom**  
*Ascda. Memoria Thianchai*

Link to all Submissions: <https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjBd72K>

