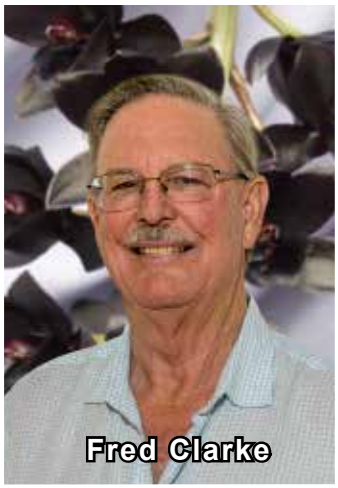
St. Augustine Orchid Society NEWSLETTER
November 2025
Volume 20 Issue #11

Club News



November 4 Meeting

by Karen Ford

Welcome and Thanks. Tom opened the meeting at 6:45 pm with 66 attendees. He thanked Ann, Dottie, Tanya, Julie and Paul for refreshments and reminded all to Drop a Dollar to help pay for coffee supplies. He then announced upcoming Orchid Shows in Deerfield Beach in November and Fort Pierce in December. He reminded all to email info@staugorchidsociety.org to request needed supplies.

Club Business. Linda welcomed 13 guests and two returning members: Marilyn Costanzo and Sue McDowell. Linda then distributed raffle tickets to 5 members with November birthdays. She asked all to please let her know if there are any members having a major life event or needing cheering up, and she will send them a card.

Virtual Show Table - Courtney Hackney will conduct the Virtual Show Table starting at 7 pm on Wednesday, November 12. An email invitation will be sent with link and details.

Christmas Party and Auction - Dianne passed around a sign-up sheet for the December 2 Christmas Party. The club will provide pork fajitas and chicken enchiladas. All were encouraged to bring their own beverage.

T Shirts & Calendars - Sue announced that there are SAOS T-shirts for sale in the back of the room. She also reminded everyone to pre-order a 2026 Calendar and noted they'll cost $20 this year. Prepayment will be accepted for those who can't attend the Christmas Party. We'll be ordering before Thanksgiving, so if you want to reserve a calendar, send a note to info@staugorchidsociety.org.

Elections - She thanked Tom Sullivan for his 6 years of service as SAOS President, noting he has decided it's time to pass the torch. Officers and directors in all other positions agreed to serve another year. The proposed slate of officers and directors was unanimously approved: Eric Milstrey as President, Returning VP Communications Janis Croft, with Karen Ford as her backup; Returning VP Events Dianne Batchelder, with Laura Kissee as her backup; Returning VP Membership Linda Stewart, with Director Rachel Biello as her backup; Returning VP Programs Sue Bottom, with Director Judie Armstrong as her backup, and Treasurer Cathy Mayo, with Director Kay Payne as her assistant. Sue noted that Howard is ready to retire as the club's Librarian and a volunteer for this position is needed.

Show Table Voting - Christine reminded members to vote for their favorite show table orchid following Courtney's review of the submissions.

Library - Howard announced that we are looking for his replacement starting in January. If anyone would like to volunteer to be the club's librarian, please contact Sue Bottom.

Show Table. Courtney, assisted by Eric Milstrey and Sue Bottom, described nearly a dozen gorgeous blooming orchids including: Sue Bottom's Blc. Waianae King 'Orchidheights', which is famous for its beautiful stems; Jonathan Cochrane's Cattleya bowringiana coerulea; Steve Hawkin's C. Portia coerulea 'Sir Jeremiah Coleman', one of the earliest coerulea hybrids; Laura Kissee's Bc. Hawaii Stars and Blc Chomthong Fancy with huge flowers and a great fragrance; Eric Milstrey's Rl. digbyana, with its very fragrant moth-pollinated blooms; Steve Hawkin's 20-year-old Phal. pulcherrima var. coerulea with its very small leaves and flowers on long stems and his Colmanara Wildcat 'Golden Red Star'; Jonathan Cochrane's Angraecum Lai's Star that originated in Africa and has a large fragrant white moth-pollinated flower with a long

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Club News

Upcoming Orchid Events

November

8 Florida North-Central AOS Judging, 10 am
Clermont Judging Ctr, 849 West Ave.
11 JOS Meeting, Winter Prepparations
Panel Discussion
12 Virtual Show Table
Courtney Zooms into Cyberspace
15-16 Deerfield Beach Orchid Society Show
Safe Schools Institute

December

2 SAOS Christmas Auction, 6:30 pm
Memorial Lutheran Church
9 JOS Christmas Auction
Timaquana Country Club
13 Florida North-Central AOS Judging, 10 am
Bob Foster Center, Mt. Dora 32757
13-14 Fort Pierce Orchid Society Show
Riverwalk Center

January

3-4 Sarasota Orchid Society Show
Sarasota Municipal Auditorium
6 SAOS Meeting, Miniature Orchids, 6:30 pm
Luis Ortiz, Orchid Hobbyist
9-11 Fort Lauderdale Orchid Society Show
Charles Dodge City Ctr, Pembroke Pines
10 Florida North-Central AOS Judging, 10 am
Clermont Judging Ctr, 849 West Ave.
13 JOS Meeting, Topic TBA
Speaker TBA
14 Virtual Show Table
Courtney Zooms into Cyberspace
Invitation Will be Sent by Email
16-18 Tamiami International Orchid Festival
Dade County Fair Expo Center
23-25 Apopka Int'l Winter Orchid Show
Krull Smith Nursery, Apopka
31-1 Florida West Coast Orchid Society Show
Seminole Recreation Division

February

3 SAOS Meeting, 6:30 pm
Eric Milstrey and Linda Stewart, SAOS
Tips and Tricks for Growing Orchids
7 SAOS Repotting Clinic, 10 am til noon
Southeast Branch Library
6670 US-1 N, 32086
7-8 Venice Area Orchid Society Show
Venice Community Center
10 JOS Meeting, Topic TBA
Speaker TBA
11 Virtual Show Table
Courtney Zooms into Cyberspace
14 Florida North-Central AOS Judging, 10 am
Bob Foster Center, Mt. Dora 32757
14-15 Boca Raton Orchid Society Show
Safe Schools Institute

St. Augustine Orchid Society Organization

President	Tom Sullivan tomjs91@gmail.com
Vice President Communications	Janis Croft croftie1984@gmail.com
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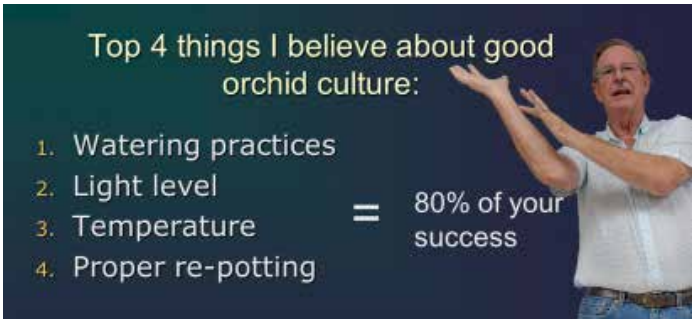
nectary (reminiscent of Darwin's orchid); Bob Schimmel's Fdk. Turning Point with numerous deep green flowers; and Sue Bottom's Bulbophyllum Elizabeth Ann 'Buckleberry' with its many inflorescences that frequently earns culture awards ; and a Fdk. with its green lip and spotted petals and sepals.



SAOS Program. Fred Clarke began his talk by encouraging all to become what he called "80 Percentile Growers" – great growers that do 80% of what is required to grow beautiful orchids. He explained that if you invest 80% of your energy into four things, you'll be able to grow healthy plants that produce beautiful blooms. Those four items require paying attention to 1) watering, 2) light levels, 3) temperature, and 4) properly re-potting your plants.

Because most orchids have evolved an epiphytic growth habit over nearly 15 million years, mimicking the natural epiphytic conditions works well. In nature, these orchids receive frequent low-nutrient "throughfall" rainwater and get lots of air circulation around their leaves and roots so the roots dry-out between waterings. Successful orchid growers adjust their irrigation frequency depending on the porosity of their media, size of containers, the specific type of plant they're growing, and how much time they can devote to watering. Fred recommended the "pick up pot" method to determine when to water orchids, which allows him to gauge the moisture content by the weight of the pot.

He noted that those who irrigate with hard water should leach the excess minerals at least once a month by watering twice, first to solubilize the ions and an hour later to leach the excess salts. He recommended using a fertilizer with 20:20:20 NPK if you are using high pH hard water because the high phosphorus forms an acid that can lower the pH. Orchids prefer water with pH 5.4-6. If using "pure" rainwater, he recommended using a 15-5-15 cal/mag fertilizer at a concentration of ½ tsp/gallon. He also reminded growers that it is not better to use more fertilizer, but to provide the same dilute concentration and adjust the liquid feeding frequency seasonally, watering more often when plants are actively growing.

Fred noted that most orchids in nature receive direct, filtered (dappled) light, which can be mimicked using shade cloth, but the ideal shade level varies with species. He noted that Phalaenopsis orchids like more shade and cooler (but not too cold) temperatures and Vandas prefer more light and warmer temperatures.

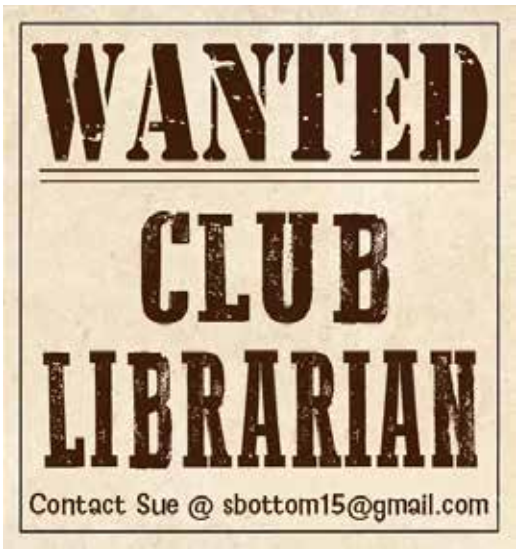
Regarding potting medium, Fred recommended 3 parts bark (organic material) and 1 part perlite, and using larger size bark and perlite pieces with larger pots in order to ensure a uniform amount of air space around the roots.

The best time to repot orchids is when new roots are just beginning to show, which with Cattleyas sometimes occurs before and sometimes after new shoot growth. If you record the dates of new root emergence for a few seasons, you'll be better able to anticipate when to repot your plants. The best pot size will allow about three year's growth. It is important to not damage the new, fragile roots during repotting, so sometimes it is better to not disturb the upper potting media if new roots are growing into it, just remove the lower degraded mix.

Following this advice on growing orchids, Fred explained that growing orchids is an art form that follows Dennis Dutton's Seven Signatures of Art. They must learn about their collection, acquire new plants, rotate their specimens, and discard hopelessly ugly plants. Fred concluded his presentation by showing slides of many beautiful orchid flowers.

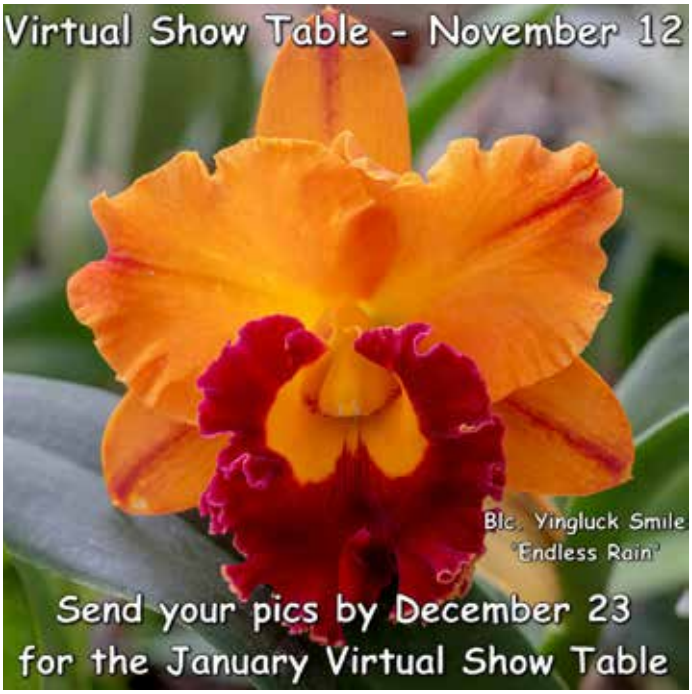
There were questions from the audience on Catasetums, which Fred noted need a dormant period when they are not watered, and can be grown with a shallow layer of sphagnum moss to hold moisture. He noted that when repotting plants that break dormancy in springtime, use sterile scissors to remove most of the old moss and old roots, as the plant will rely on new roots when it resumes growing. When repotting orchids, he also suggested using a net pot in the bottom of larger pots to provide good air circulation.

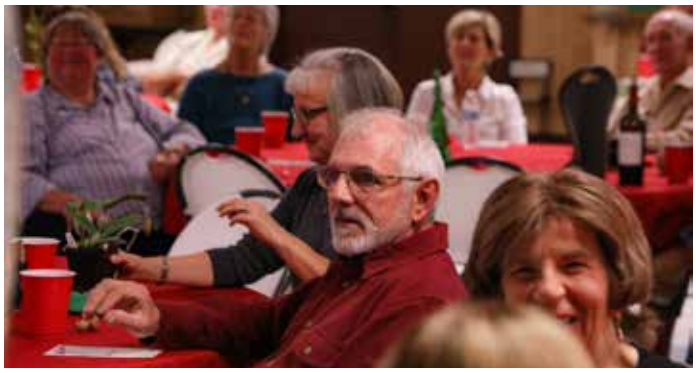
Meeting Conclusion. Christine announced there were two Member's Choice winners: Steve Hawkin's C. Portia 'Sir Jeremiah Coleman' and Laura Kissee's Blc. Chomthong Fancy.



November Culture Notes

Short days and cold nights necessitate adjustments for both plants and growers. Reduce water and fertilizer gradually until you reach your winter target, about half that of the summer levels. Don't fertilize winter dormant orchids (Catasetinae, Callista and Dendrobium section Dendrobiums, Calanthes, etc.) after Thanksgiving. Prepare your plants for their winter home. Inspect them, remove dead leaves and sheaths with a sterile tool, and spray for pests if necessary. Protect them when temperatures are projected to drop below their winter minimum acceptable temperature.





December 2 Meeting

Christmas Party and Auction

We are looking forward to our Christmas party and auction where we get to kick back, have fun and spread holiday cheer with our orchid friends... and come home with orchids. Hope to see you there!

Our Christmas orchid auction is on our normal first Tuesday meeting night. We'll be setting up around 5:30 and start our social hour at 6:30 pm. This will give us a chance to exchange holiday cheer before we hit the vittles. Bring your beverage of choice. The club will provide the low octane water and coffee, but if you enjoy an adult beverage with your meal, feel free!

One thing you can always count on is all the good food. We'll have a Mexican themed meal for our main course, chicken enchiladas and pork fajitas. Bring a dish to round out the meal. Salads, pasta and vegetable side dishes and desserts have been big favorites in years gone by.

We'll have 2026 calendars and orchid seedlings available. We'll finish up the evening with an orchid auction where you can bid on a nice variety of different types of orchids.

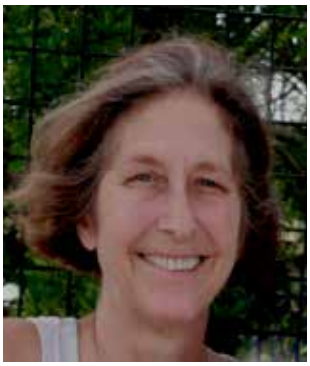
When: Tuesday, December 2, 6:30 til 9 pm
Where: Memorial Lutheran Church
3375 US 1 South, St. Aug 32086

American Orchid Society Corner

Webinars
November 4, 8:30 pm, Everyone Invited
Greenhouse Chat - Ron McHatton
November 12, 8:30 pm, AOS Members Only
Greenhouse Culture – Manny Aybar

Orchids Magazine this Month
Dendrophylax sallei – Richard Wong
Water Your Orchids – Ray Barkalow
Latouria Dendrobiums – Jim Cootes

Inspiration



Orchid Questions & Answers

by Sue Bottom,
sbottom15@hotmail.com

Q1. I just found this in two areas in a small 5" pot of Orchiata. It doesn't look quite like the snow mold I've had before,more like tiny eggs or is it snow mold?

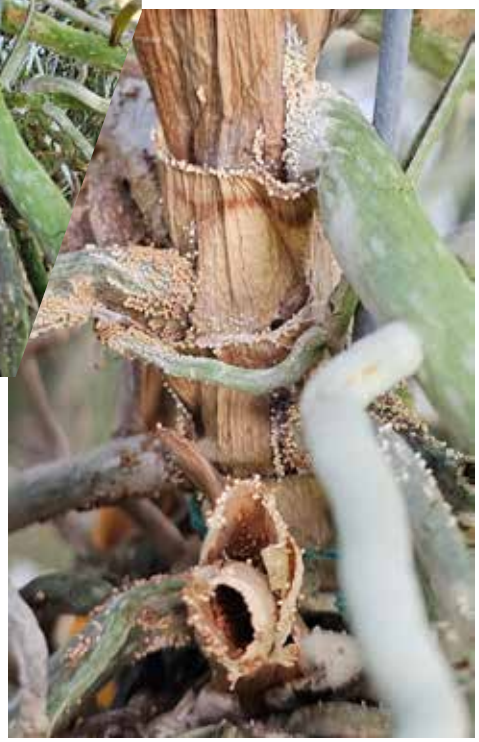
A1. I don't think that's snow mold, maybe spider eggs or some other kind of eggs. I'd repot it just the same as if it were snow mold so you don't have a population explosion on your hands!

Q2. My Maudiae-type Paphs get these brown markings that cripples the leaves and the flower stem while it is developing. Please help.

A2. If I had to guess, I'd guess Erwinia, a bacterial infection. You might think of applying some copper sprays to your paphs.

Q3. What are these little balls that are all over the base and roots of my vanda. I have two plants that have been affected. Leaves rotting and falling off at the base recently. All orchids are routinely treated for fungus.

Q 3



A3. That vanda looks like it is infected with Southern Blight, a disease caused by Sclerotium rolfsii. The main symptom of Southern Blight is a rapid collapse and rotting of the roots, stems and lower parts of the leaves. The disease eventually girdles and destroys the entire basal portion of the plant. Affected leaves yellow, wilt and die. The small yellow or tan sclerotia resemble mustard seeds on the affected tissue. This is the resting form of the fungus. Unless the plant is very valuable to you, discard it and disinfect the surrounding area with bleach. Some of the expensive Frac 7/11 fungicides are reported to be fairly effective, but this plant is probably beyond saving.

Cold Hardiness

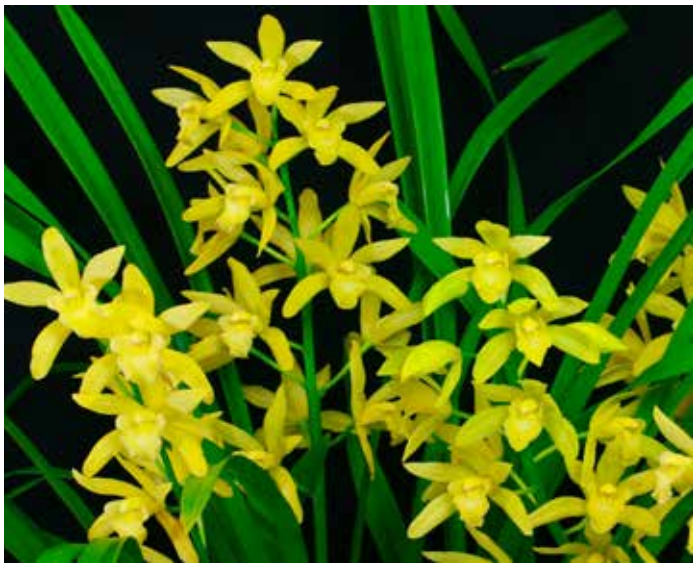
by Dr. Courtney Hackney

Most orchids grown by hobbyists are tropical in nature. That term was once thought to mean "hot and steamy" and tens of thousands of orchids imported to Europe in the 19th Century perished as a result. Many tropical orchids prefer cool nights because they or their ancestors evolved in higher tropical elevations or were subjected to cool breezes during the day. There are some species that do come from hot and steamy places and the challenge for orchid hobbyists is to grow them all in one place, whether it is a windowsill or greenhouse.

Commercial orchid nurseries and large private collections often have individual growing areas devoted to orchids that derive from different tropical habitats. Cymbidiums prefer and even require cool temperatures to flower well. Many claim that they flower best when nighttime temperatures reach near freezing. Laelia anceps also prefers these cool night temperatures and it is common to find them with cymbidiums in California. While L. anceps and members of the Cymbidium genus are not related, they come from similar habitats and so require similar growing conditions.

At the other end of the spectrum are species that come from tropical lowlands. Many phalaenopsis species come from parts of the world where temperatures are always warm to hot and these species not only tolerate, but grow best when both day and night temperatures are warm. There are, however, other members of the phalaenopsis genus that come from the foothills of the Himalayas and do not tolerate hot steamy conditions. Some would grow best with cymbidiums in a cool house. Thus, simply knowing the name of a group of orchids does not always inform one of the best temperature in which to grow an individual orchid.

This time of year most hobbyists are temperature conscious, especially those who grow outdoors for part of the year. How much cold will my orchids tolerate is a common question? Of course, there is no simple answer to that question given the previous discussion. No tropical orchid though should be allowed to freeze or be exposed to freezing conditions. Even those few species that come from climates where freezes are common suffer. In Nature, these species often have protected tubers or bulbs under the soil or dead leaves. A hobbyist in North Carolina once reported finding an equitant oncidium flowering in spring among leaves where it had fallen the previous summer during a hurricane; surviving a winter with temperatures below 20 F protected by dead leaves that had accumulated.



Cym. Hawaiian Gold 'Nugget', Grown by Harry McElroy and Photographed by Terry Bottom

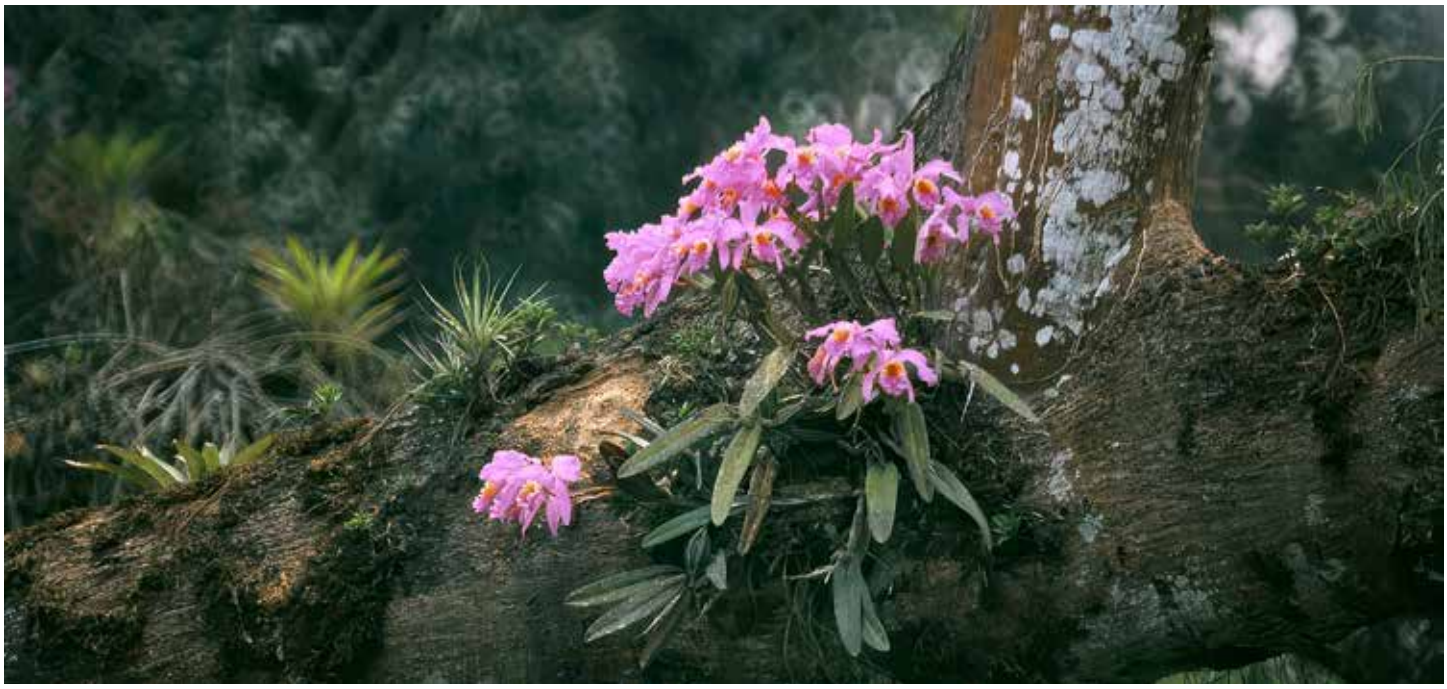
Cymbidiums are often seen with frost on their leaves, but frost can occur at temperatures much warmer than the freezing point. When the temperature within an orchid leaf drops below the freezing point, water in leaves forms crystals that tear plant cells, killing them. The next day when the temperature warms, leaves turn to mush as bacteria and fungi invade the broken cells. Obviously, other types of plants can survive freezing temperatures and do so by adding substances to their cells that either prevent crystal formation or lower the freezing temperature.

The only exception to orchids dying when frozen seems to arise when orchids are dehydrated. Under these conditions sugars and other dissolved materials within the cells are concentrated and prevent crystals from forming. There are numerous accounts of hobbyists returning home, after a sudden emergency to find their orchids still alive, despite no heat in subfreezing conditions. A number of Chinese wholesale nurseries even intentionally dehydrate blooming sized phalaenopsis to the point where they can be rolled up and placed in small tubes for shipping to Europe and the U.S. This not only greatly reduces shipping costs, but almost eliminates the danger of freezing in the unheated cargo areas of jets. Once they arrive, they are potted in sphagnum and rehydrated without damage to tissues.

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 November 2008.

Some Observations of Epiphytic Orchids

by Fred Clarke, reprinted with permission



Cattleya mossiae growing in Venezuela, Photo credit to Greg Allikas.

There are many kinds of orchids, but epiphytic orchids are my favorites and Cattleyas top the list. An epiphyte is a plant that grows on another plant. In nature, epiphytic orchids mostly grow on the sides of trees. Many epiphytic orchids have been growing this way for 15 or so million years. To put this into perspective, Homo sapiens (that's us) appeared around 300,000 years ago, and the most modern human evolution state is now the Orchid hobbyist which appeared about 125 years ago.

Thus, epiphytic orchids have been here for over 14 million years before the first humans even appeared on the planet! Humbling to say the least. Due to their millions of years growing on the sides of trees, orchids have evolved to grow well in these conditions. Even with climatic changes and seasonal weather variances, they continue to prosper and thrive on the sides of trees.

Understanding why orchids grow the way they do will help us make better decisions about how to care for them and allow us to be more successful in our passion, our orchids! Every orchid species has a set of environmental conditions it grows in. Learning about their environmental habitats, including the seasonal rain fall, temperature, and light, and then applying a similar practice in the cultivation of your own plants will help you achieve good plant growth and the better flowering you desire.

For example, I have observed the following about orchids growing on trees:

- Epiphytic orchids live on the sides of trees The sides of trees are well drained
- Orchids roots are well drained
- Orchid roots evolved in the presence of organic matter
- The leaves and roots of the orchid plants get a lot of air circulation
- The tree surface dries out quickly, as do the leaves and roots of the orchids
- There is not a lot of nutrients on the side of a tree: it's a low nutrient location
- Orchid roots have become good at capturing moisture and nutrients.

These observations about life on a tree, coupled with acknowledging their long and successful lifespan on this planet, have inspired me to try and implement this same environment for my own plants' root systems to the greatest extent possible.

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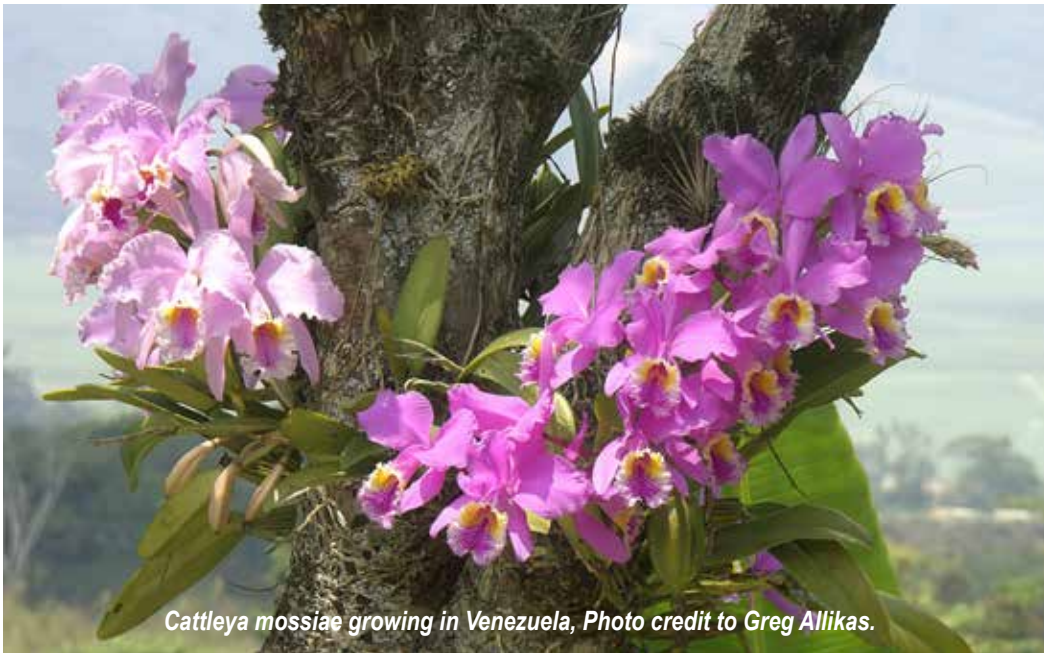

Cattleya mossiae growing in Venezuela, Photo credit to Greg Allikas.

That is why for epiphytic orchids using organic potting media is a good approach, in my case a bark and Perlite mix. A freely draining bark mix can simulate the well-drained nature of the sides of trees. The potting media must allow for air movement around the roots, so the roots dry out quickly. The roots need to dry out like they do on the sides of trees.

Orchids in nature live in a low nutrient environment. The few nutrients that are available are brought to the root system by each rain event. Because of this scarcity and the necessity of water and nutrients to survive, orchid roots have become excellent at absorbing both. Thus, using just a small amount of fertilizer, equivalent to ½ tsp fertilizer per gallon water at every watering will duplicate what happens in nature.

There is something else about orchids and trees. Although the orchid plants themselves are stationary, their roots can extend many feet from the plant in their quest to acquire resources like water and nutrients. The job of the roots is to absorb water and nutrients for the plant. Since the plant is stationary, the roots must find what they need where they are growing, and they have gotten exceptionally good at doing so. I have noticed that roots favor the environment and location they formed in. You may have observed this phenomenon for yourself. Have you taken a plant with healthy air-roots and potted them? How well did those air-roots survive the change? What about transitioning a well-rooted potted orchid plant to a mount? How did those roots that formed in the growing media do when tied to a mount and exposed to the air? Did they thrive? Or decline? Likely, they declined, because an orchid plant has evolved for its roots to stay in the environment they formed in (they don't move from the location they are in). For the roots to do well in a new location (being re-potted), the orchid plant must form a new set of roots in the new conditions (new pot and media).

But what does all this mean? It boils down to the main goal of all of us orchid lovers – raising healthy plants that produce beautiful blooms. Here are some important guidelines based on how plants grow in nature that you can use for when to re-pot your epiphytes. Remember, when you re-pot, you are changing the root zone environment, and we have established that the roots do not like the change. Therefore, we need to find a time when the plant is best able to adapt to re-potting. That time is when new roots are starting to emerge from the rhizome. This is not to be confused with new pseudobulb growth. While some orchids form new roots as the new pseudobulb develops, many orchids grow their new roots after the most recent growth has matured. This requires that you look for new roots rather than new growths. As soon as you see new roots developing from the rhizome, this is the time to re-pot. The newly developing roots will re-establish the plant in the new potting media, enabling it to adapt and taking

A coarse, freely draining potting mix help keeps air around the roots. Bark can be used as the organic matter, with the addition of nonrotting components like lava rock, sponge rock, charcoal, clay pebbles and styrofoam to keep the mix open.

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over from the roots that developed in the previous potting media.

Understanding the timing of when your plants make new roots is important information, it allows you to make good decisions on when is the right time to re-pot. A valuable tip: on the pot tag, write the date when new roots start to emerge. After a while you will have a list of dates on the tag indicating when is the best time to re-pot. After you start this practice of "when roots emerge awareness" it becomes indispensable, and you will soon realize it enables you to predict and make informed decisions on when new or unknown plants will most likely root so they can have the best opportunity to thrive under your care.

A healthy root system is a key component of abundant growth and flowering. Epiphytic orchids are survivors. They can tolerate many harsh conditions, and they are surprisingly adaptable, yet they will fare better and reward you more with their beauty if they are not subjected to a "survivalist challenge." The stability of root zone environment is important to your orchid's health, and you support its health by only repotting with the onset of new roots. When choosing a potting media, be sure that the media has an organic component, has a stable pH over the life of the potting cycle, is well drained, and dries out quickly. As much as possible it should mirror the orchid's favored environment.

It has only taken me 30 years to develop this understanding of why epiphyte orchids grow the way they do. I believe sharing this natural process can only result in making you a better grower.

The ideal time to repot orchids is a week before they form new roots. The months when cattleya species root are summarized here. https://staugorchidsociety.org/PDF/CattleyaBloomingandRootingbyNameRogerson.pdf

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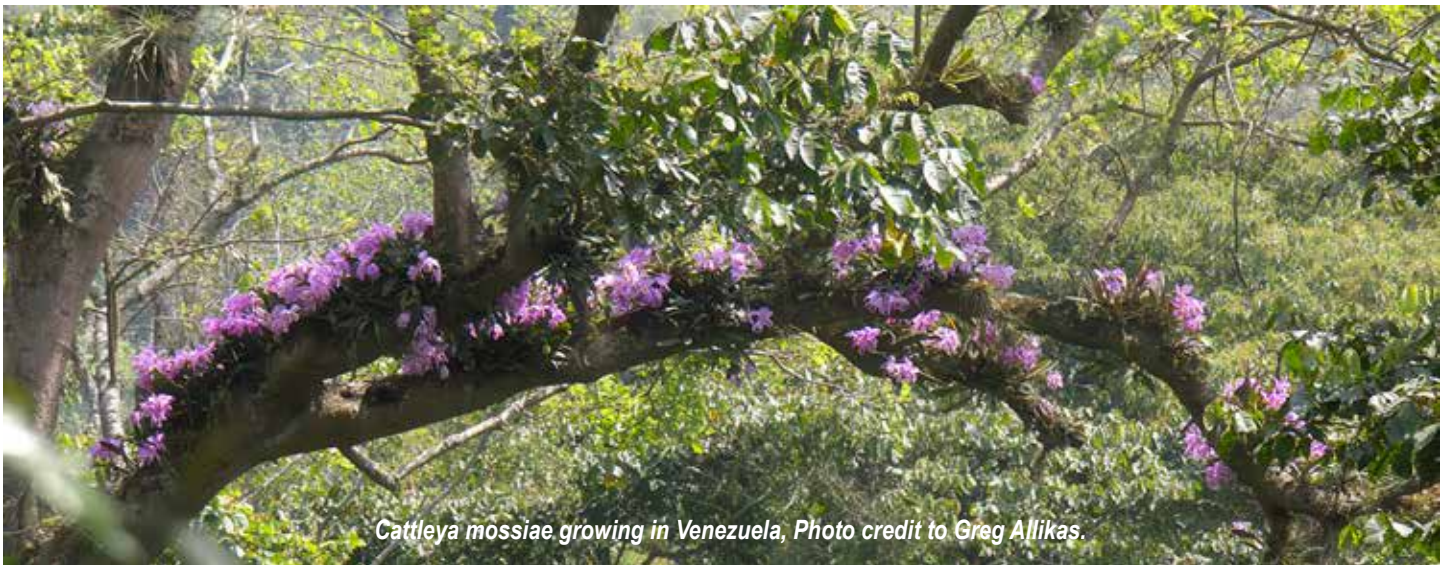
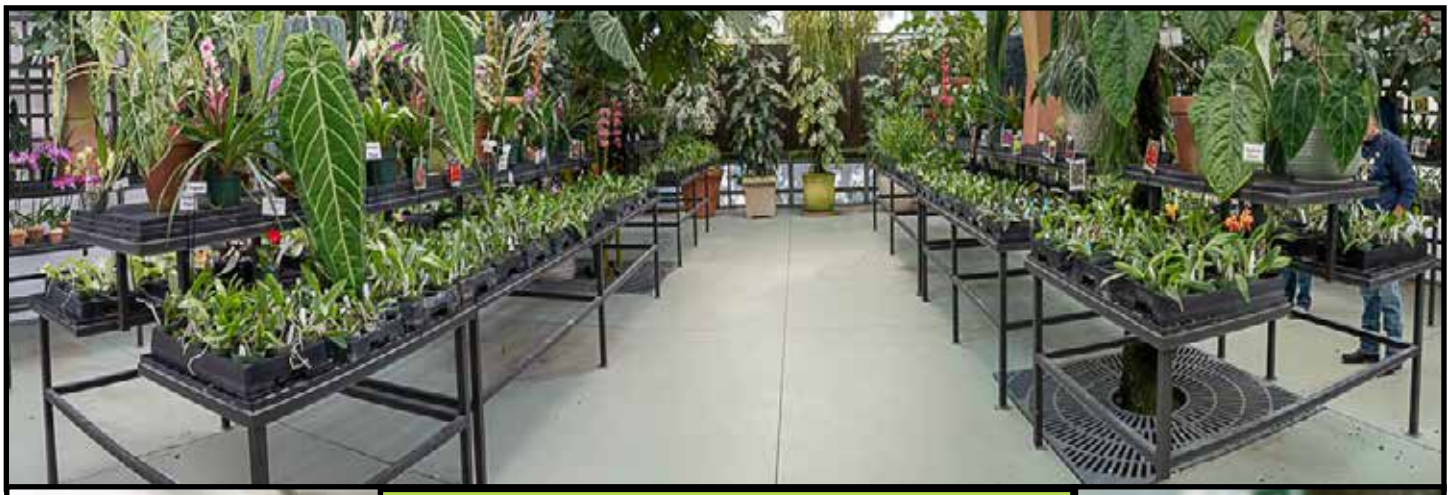
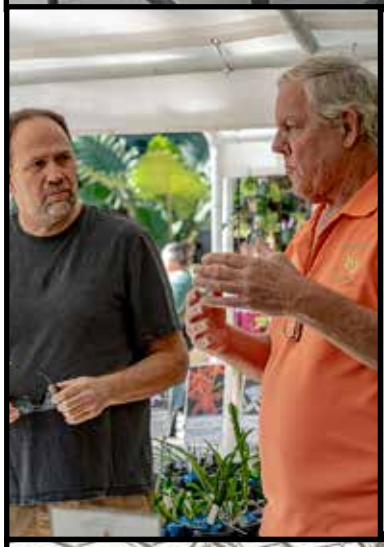
This article appeared in Sunset Valley Orchids September 2025 newsletter, sign up to get on the mailing list.



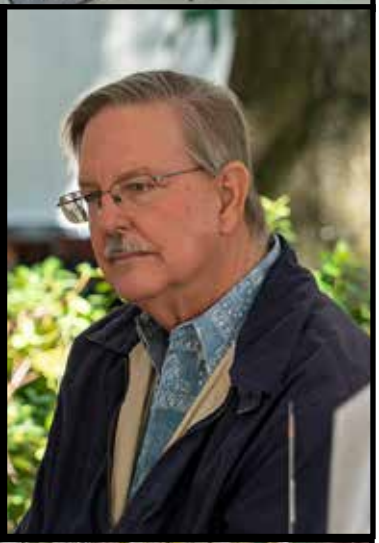
Cattleya mossiae growing in Venezuela, Photo credit to Greg Allikas.

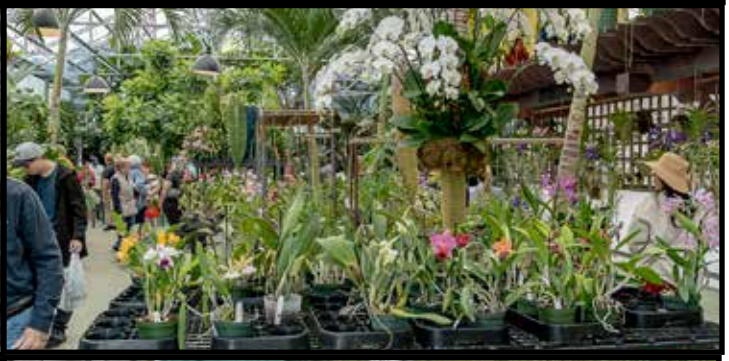




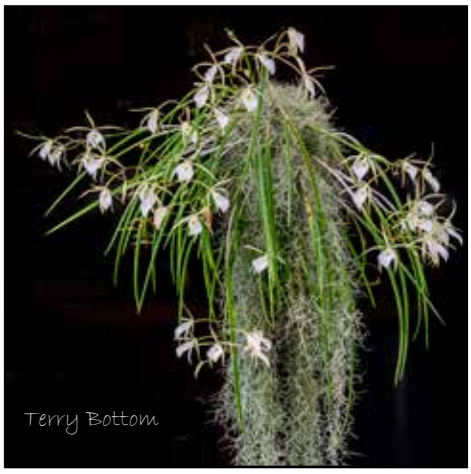
Krull Smith Fall Orchid Festival

The Krull Smith Fall Orchid Festival was held in conjunction with the International Phalaenopsis and Slipper Alliances Fall Symposium in Apopka. Featured speakers include Fred Clarke on Catasetums, Theresa Hill, Olaf Grus and Mike Mims on Phals, and Dave Sorokowsy and Harold Koopowitz on Paphs. Some of our favorite orchid vendors were there, so there was a great selection of orchids to choose from. Parking and admission was free, so all the available cash went towards orchids. What fun!

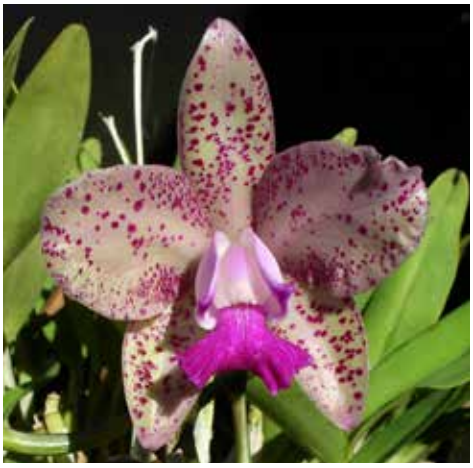




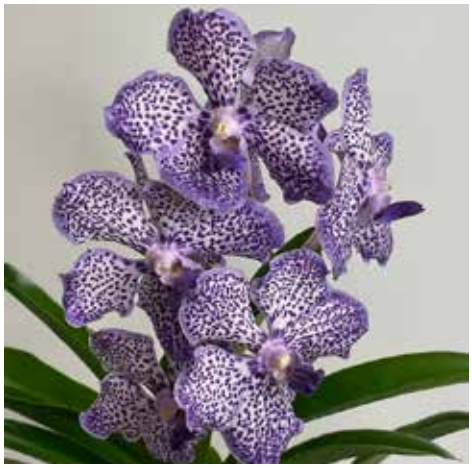
Show Table



Grower Sue Bottom
B. nodosa 'Hackneau'

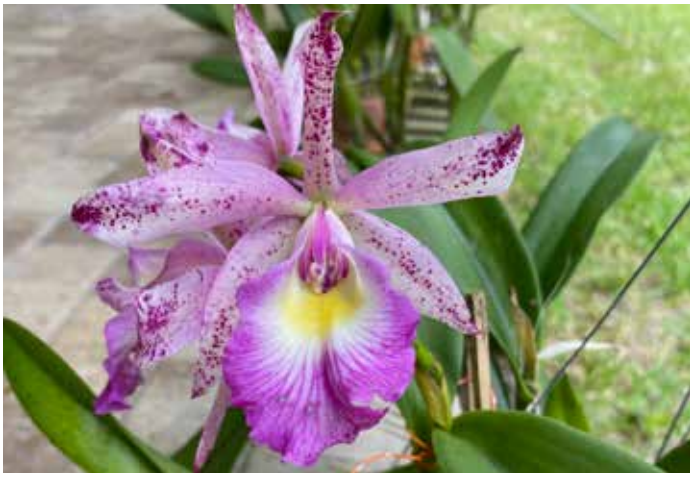


Grower Keith Davis
C. Caudebac 'Autumn's Glory'

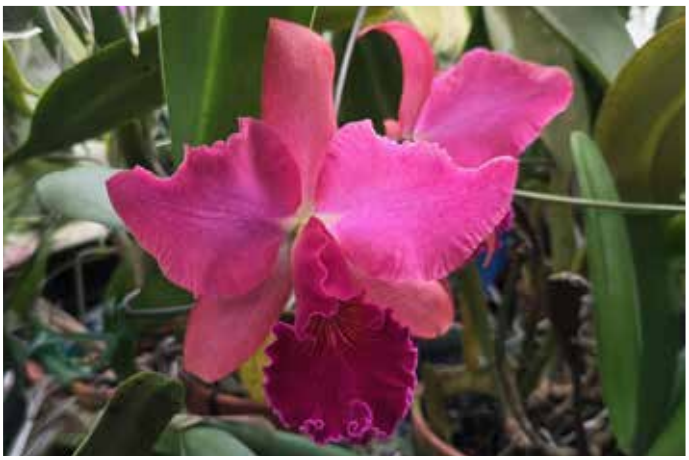


Grower Sheila Nathanson
V. Omar Padron

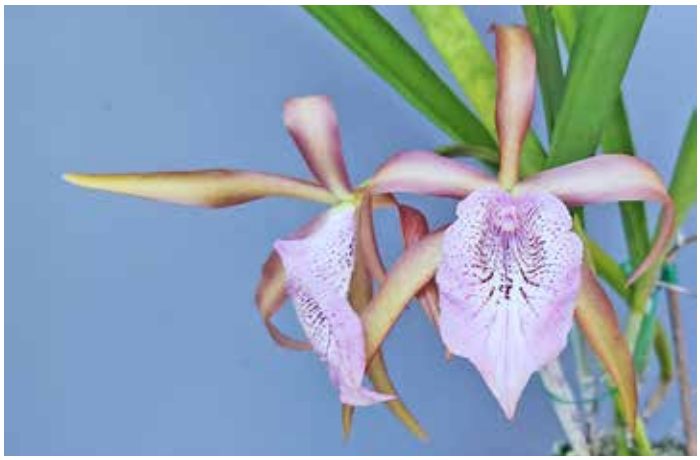
Grower Suzanne Susko
Den. Pop Eye



Grower Eric Milstrey
Blc. Glorious May

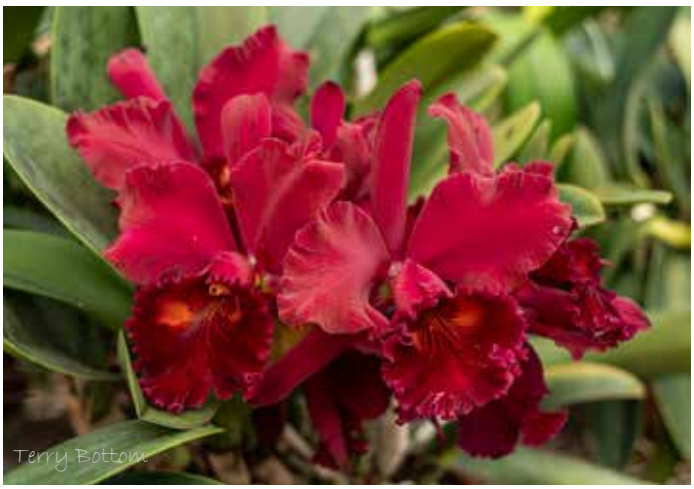


Grower Courtney Hackney
Pot. San Damiano 'Watermelon Gold'

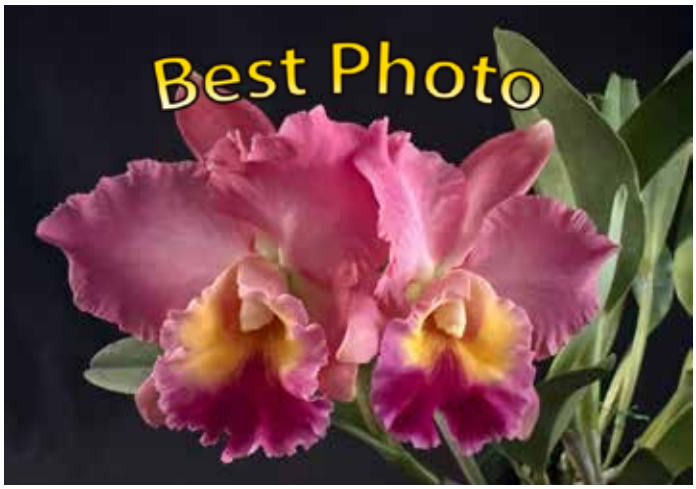


Grower Allen Black
Bl. Memoria Bill Thrall

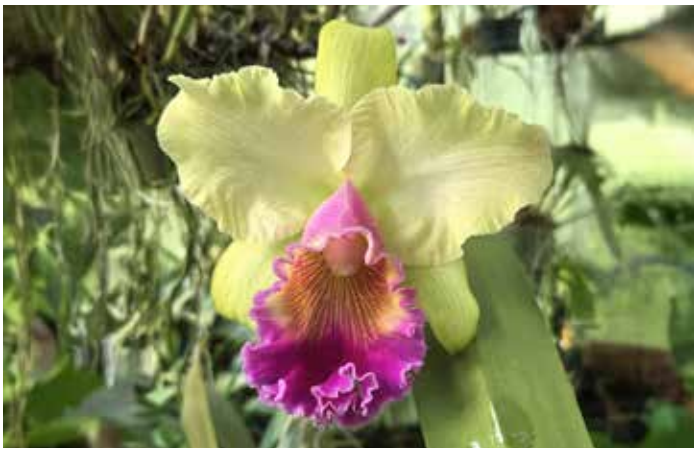
SHOW TABLE



Grower Sue Bottom
Blc. Lucinda S. Seale

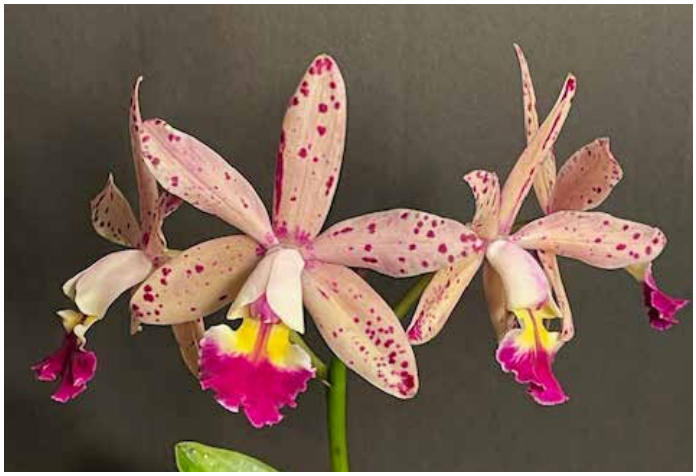


Grower Suzanne Susko
Blc. Goldenzelle 'Orange Pumpkin' HCC/AOS

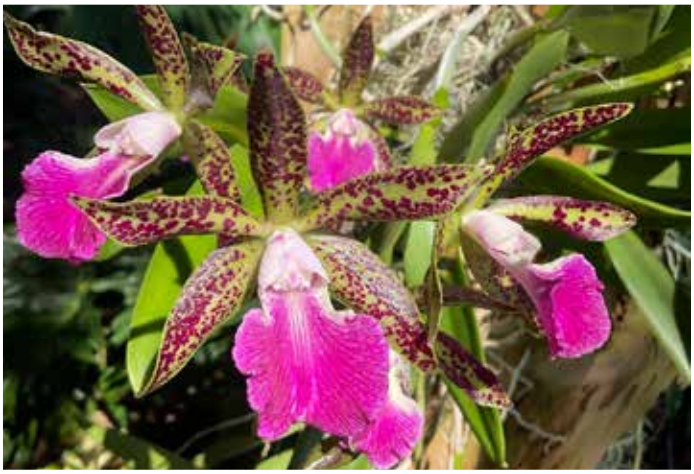


Grower Courtney Hackney
Blc. Goldenzelle 'Green Meadow F3'

Grower Allen Black
C. trianae 'Recanto'



Grower Sheila Nathanson
Lc. Tropical Pointer



Grower Sharon Carter
Blc. Spotted Charm

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