

CLUB NEWS

*St. Augustine Orchid Society*



*Wishing You and Yours  
A Merry Christmas and  
A Happy New Year*





## Upcoming Events

### January

- 3-4 Sarasota Orchid Society Show  
Selby Gardens
- 6 St Augustine Orchid Society Meeting  
Venezuelan Cattleya Species  
Presented by Michael Sinn, Canaima Orchids
- 10-11 Fort Pierce Orchid Show and Sale  
Fort Pierce Community Center
- 16-18 Fort Lauderdale Orchid Society Show  
War Memorial Auditorium
- 17 Keiki Club, Staking Your Orchid Flowers  
1-3 pm, Bottom Residence, 797-4360  
6916 Cypress Lake Ct, St Aug
- 23-25 Manatee River Orchid Society Show  
Manatee Civic Center
- 30-1 Tamiami Int'l Orchid Festival  
Sunshine Pavilion, Fair Expo Center, Miami

### February

- 3 St Augustine Orchid Society Meeting  
Central American Orchid Tour: Costa Rica and  
Panama  
Presented by Shelton Thorne, American Group  
Travel
- 7-8 Venice Orchid Society Show  
Venice Community Center
- 14-15 Boca Raton Orchid Society Show  
Safe Schools Training Institute
- 22 ? Keiki Club – Water Quality and Orchids  
Must Confirm Date and Venue
- 27-1 63<sup>rd</sup> Miami International Orchid Show  
Sheraton Mart Hotel & Convention Ctr

### March

- 3 St Augustine Orchid Society Meeting  
Vanda Hybridizing and Culture  
Jim Sabetto, Former Owner Tropic 1 Orchids
- 7 Master Gardeners & SAOS Members  
Q&A, Repotting & Problem Plant Clinic  
Ace on US 1, 9 am to noon
- 13-15 International Orchid Festival  
Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden in Miami
- 15 Keiki Club, Repotting & Problem Plant Clinic  
Mounting Orchids Demonstration  
1-3 pm, Bottom Residence, 797-4360  
6916 Cypress Lake Ct, St Aug
- 20-21 Englewood Area Orchid Society  
United Methodist Church

- 20-22 Port St Lucie Orchid Society Show  
Port St Lucie Community Center
- 21-22 Jacksonville Orchid Society Show  
Garden Center
- 27-29 Naples Orchid Society Show  
United Church of Christ
- 28-29 Orchid Society of Highlands County Show  
Ag Civic Center, Sebring

### April

- 4 Master Gardeners & SAOS Members  
Q&A, Repotting & Problem Plant Clinic  
Ace on US 1, 9 am to noon
- 7 St Augustine Orchid Society Meeting The 25 Best  
Orchids I Have Seen in the Last 3 Years  
Greg Allikas, Photographer, [www.orchidzone.com](http://www.orchidzone.com)

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



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### St Augustine Orchid Society Organization

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## November Keiki Club at Lola's Winter Orchid Care

A total of 23 people convened for our November Keiki Club get together where we toured Lola and Chuck Stark's greenhouse where Lola keeps her plants during the winter. There were several presentations on winter orchid care. Lola talked about Vandas and their general culture, how they love fresh moving air and frequent watering. During the winter months, they should be protected whenever low temperatures are projected to be less than 50F. As with many plants, their growth slows during the winter so water and fertilizer requirements decrease. Lola waters her vandas every other day while they are overwintering.



Everyone relaxes under the shade during presentation

Sue talked about winter care for other orchids. For Phalaenopsis, they should likewise be protected if temperatures are below 50F. The cold snaps we have during the fall cause the spring blooming Phals to set their spikes, which you should start seeing now at the base of the lower leaves. If all goes well, you should have blooms by Valentine's Day.

The growth of Cattleyas is slowing down now so if you were watering every 3 or 4 days during the summer, you can reduce watering to perhaps once a week. Cattleyas should be protected once temperatures are projected to drop below around 40F. Oncidiums and Phalaenopsis type Dendrobiums have winter care requirements similar to Cattleyas.

There are some types of Dendrobiums that require a cold, dry winter to provide you with abundant spring blooms. There is a link to a spreadsheet on the Culture Page of the website containing detailed cultural instructions. If you are unsure of the type of Dendrobium you have, email your plant tag info to Sue and she'll check OrchidWiz for your plant genealogy.

For catasetums, you should cease all watering and let the plant go dormant and lose its leaves. When new growth begins in the spring, it can be repotted but all water should be withheld until the new growth is 3 or 4 inches tall.



## January 6 Monthly SAOS Meeting

Michael Sinn of Canaima Orchids in Palmetto, Florida will talk about Venezuelan Cattleya species. His presentation will focus on species natural habitat and examples of selected clones from his breeding program. Since 1994, Canaima Orchid's goal has been to produce the finest cultivars of Cattleya species through line-breeding of select parents. By combining superior parents with lesser known species possessing other desirable traits, he is able to create populations of Cattleya species that were only a dream a generation ago. A long list of international awards validates their breeding stock as being the finest available anywhere. Rare and unusual color forms will be available for sale at the meeting. Email Michael if there is something special that you would like Michael to bring to the meeting.

Michael grew up hiking the jungles of South America in search of Cattleyas in their natural habitats. Using his degree in civil engineering Michael worked in the Venezuelan Amazon which afforded him opportunities to further observe habitats and understand the urgency for conservation. Michael's instincts drew him toward breeding Cattleyas and Laelias, eventually starting his own nursery. By 2003, Michael and his growing family moved to Florida where he opened and continues to develop his nursery business known as Canaima Orchids. Through his excursions over the years to habitats in Brazil, Colombia and Venezuela, Michael's vision remains constant: to conserve native species by producing the finest cultivars of Cattleya species. Michael Sinn is a widely recognized top-quality breeder, honored with numerous international awards. A writer, popular lecturer, and Student Judge with the American Orchid Society, he serves as Judging Chairman for the Venezuelan Orchid Association.



## Home and Backyard Orchid Growing Rods, Racks and Sunshine Beth Strate, [strateflush@aol.com](mailto:strateflush@aol.com)

Growing 207 orchids indoors without a greenhouse is a lot of work but the benefits are no slugs, scale or aphids. I check every plant I get before bringing it into the population. Once a raffle plant had a mealybug, my hubby sealed it up in a plastic bag and filled it with carbon dioxide for 24 hours, goodbye bugs!



I have grow-lights in certain places to supplement natural light levels due to the changing angle of the sun throughout the year. Whatever I'm doing, it seems to be working. Most of my plants get 20-20-20 at half strength dilution. Cymbidiums get 30-10-10 mixed with Epsom salts at 1 tbsp/gal from April to July to initiate flower spikes. The Phalaenopsis & Dendrobiums get 6-30-30 every 6 weeks instead of 20-20-20. I have had them blooming for 8 months. Then some take a 3 month break and pop again. Every 4th watering all my plants get flushed with filtered water.



The only orchids I have that grow outdoors are Cymbidiums in an eastern exposure and bare root Vandas hang from a Ligustrum bush during the year when temperatures are over 50 degrees, otherwise they

board inside (with a few tree frogs). The bright but indirect light keeps them blooming, Vandas won't bloom if they don't enough light. Just watch for sunburn, the leaves will get bronze to red depending on their parentage.



I also use invisible mist humidifiers from Target (about \$30). They replace the humidity that a greenhouse provides

but do not make the humidity so high that you have mold, ceiling rot or wallpaper peeling. These are life savers and the plants would actually say "thank you" if they could.

I had the filtered water tested and found the calcium level was 300 ppm – OUCH! I started using rainwater (when available) and distilled water - especially for the exotics (Masdevallias, Draculas, Vandas and other Cattleyas).

I found out at the WOC in Miami that if you ask the same orchid culture question of 6 different vendors you will get at least 6 different answers. If your plant is not blooming, its needs are not being met. Change its location for more light. Don't be afraid to try something new.





Dinner is served



## December 13 SAOS Christmas Auction

Lola Stark, [seacuter@bellsouth.net](mailto:seacuter@bellsouth.net)

President Mike Heinz called the meeting to order and gave us Grace before we served ourselves at our annual Christmas meal and auction. There were 48 members, family and guests at the Moultrie Trails Community Center for the get together. We had no business to conduct except for having holiday fun. Barbara outdid herself (as usual) in her role as southern hostess, coordinating the whole event. The turkeys that Billy Conrad fried were a huge hit, even the turkey bones went home with Leggs to be reincarnated as another meal. The salads, sides and desserts brought by members were quite delicious, so much so that Teddie thinks our next project should be assembling a cookbook. The program was fabulous with many gorgeous orchid plants provided by Fred to auction. Nearly everyone present went home with at least one and some went home with several new orchids. We had a wonderful time, a testament to our members dedication to having fun. The meeting broke up about 9:30 pm.



Everyone is ready to auction



## Growing Tips for December



By  
 Courtney T. Hackney  
 Dept. Biology  
 Univ. North Florida  
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Orchids are viewed by the public and many new hobbyists as very exotic plants; difficult to grow. There are certainly many

orchid species that fit that category. However, most orchids given as gifts designed for the mass market are very easy to grow if one remembers the “KISS” principle. This axiom (keep it simple stupid) works well for those of us that like to think that we have advanced beyond beginner status too. The following is my list of orchid growing rules that follow the “KISS” principle. Pass this list on to friends who receive an orchid gift this season.

**1. Water only when dry.** Even if you under water, your orchid will not die. Over-watering kills roots, degrades the potting medium and attracts insects. All of these problems are difficult to reverse even for experts. Under-water your orchid, and one simply needs to water more frequently and your orchid will grow and flower.

**2. Under-fertilize or don't fertilize.** Every orchid growing manual recommends a particular nutrient formula or brand.

Newly purchased orchids usually come in a medium loaded with nutrients (fertilizer). Many new orchid growers purchase “orchid” fertilizer with their plant and feel obligated to use it regularly. Few orchids die from being under-



Schomburgkia species  
 by Rose Ganuchean

fertilized, but many die from too much fertilizer. Over fertilizing is the second leading cause of death of orchids, often accelerated when the orchid starts to show signs of stress from over-watering.

**3. Repotting.** As soon as an orchid begins to look stressed many growers decide to repot. If over-watering and over-fertilizing have not killed your orchid, this will usually finish the job. Repotting can save an orchid if the first two rules have been violated, i.e. roots are dead, and

the medium shot. Rarely, however, is this effort successful once this stage is reached. There is a greater chance of success if the mistreated orchid and its medium is carefully transferred to a clay pot of the same size and allowed to dry thoroughly. Most orchids come in a plastic pot, often poorly drained, and sometimes have no drainage at all.

**4. Use the water you have!** Buying mineral water or distilled water may make you feel better, but it generally offers no better chance of survival for your orchid than water from the tap. Some folks have even installed water softeners for their orchids; a sure-fire death warrant. Good



Bothriochilus bellus  
 by Rose Ganuchean

water quality is extremely important, but not critical for most orchids. Thoroughly soak your orchid at least once a month. This can involve setting your orchid in a sink full of water for 15 minutes or so or allowing water to run through the pot for awhile. This removes any salts, including excess fertilizer. Use water at about the same temperature as the air.

**5. Humidity** Many beginners insist of misting their plants constantly to maintain a proper humidity and provide water. Often this seems necessary because some aspect of rules 1-4 above have been violated and the orchid appears to be wilting or suddenly drops all of its flowers and buds. If humidity is kept at the ideal for people, 50-60%, your orchids will lose water at an appropriate rate. Consider the location of your orchid and if you would be uncomfortable there, so would your orchid.

**6. Light** Orchid books spend lots of time describing the ideal light environment. All plants need light to grow. However, orchids can adapt to a variety of light conditions and grow and flower there. They cannot grow in the dark. Orchids in windowsills often experience bright light for short periods of time and then low light levels for the rest of the day. As long as leaves do not become hot to the touch, this setting is appropriate as long as one does not violate rules 1-5 above.



## Orchid Questions & Answers

Where Members Share Experiences

Sue Bottom, [sbottom15@bellsouth.net](mailto:sbottom15@bellsouth.net)

**Q.** Courtney was talking about Dynamite at the last meeting. I am thinking about switching to that slow release fertilizer and stop using my water soluble fertilizer. Many of my cattleyas have roots at the surface and I don't know how much of the good root zone is below the surface. Seems to me that the roots at or above the surface of the growing medium will get little benefit from the Dynamite. So, how much of the total root zone is needed to give the plant sufficient nutrients? Also, I have heard numerous times of the importance of flushing the salts out with clear water periodically. How is that accomplished when using Dynamite that has some degree of fertilizer dissolution whenever the plant is watered.



**A.** The Dynamite works by dissolving a small amount of its fertilizer when you water so any surface roots above the Dynamite would not be fertilized. However, I suspect there are sufficient roots in the pot for fertilizer uptake and the occasional aerial root will just seek out water. If all your good green tipped roots are out of the pot, it may be time to think about repotting. When you flush, you are trying to flush the accumulated salts, those salts that have been deposited from multiple previous fertilizing events, out of the root zone. If you reach a steady state by flushing a sufficient amount of water through your pot, even with the Dynamite in the pot, you would have a salt load equal to the salt in the dissolved water in that single fertilizing event, and that salt level should be at an acceptable, low level. After flushing, the salts will begin to accumulate again in the root zone over time until the next flushing event.

**Q.** I am thinking of switching away from coconut husks in my growing medium and going more to a tree fern mix. What are the proportions of aliflor, tree fern, charcoal, etc. that you use for your Cattleyas?

**A.** The freely draining mix I use for Cattleyas and Dendrobiums is about a third aliflor, third tree fern, sixth charcoal and sixth sponge rok, although I probably mix it differently each time around. If you listen to Fred Clarke, he is an advocate of adding organic material (in this mix tree fern and in your prior mix coconut husk) into your potting mix for three reasons, to increase microbial activity, to buffer changes in pH (acidity and alkalinity) and to increase the cation exchange capacity (make nutrients more available to the root zone). You will need to water more frequently with tree fern than coconut husk in your potting mix because the mix dries much more quickly, which is, of course, why the tree fern mix works so well

with the Cattleya and Dendrobium type orchids that have pseudobulbs or canes to store water and food versus the more water retentive coconut husk mix that works so well with Phalaenopsis type orchids that have only a fleshy leaf to store water and nutrients.



Aliflor

Charcoal

Coconut Husks



Spagnum

Sponge rok

Tree Fern

**Q.** One of the first things I read about orchid potting mixes in my Ortho book was to be wary of mixed potting media. The topic was about a small orchid grown to market size in sphagnum and then placed in a larger pot of bark for retail sale. One could not see the sphagnum. If the orchid is watered to keep the bark at just the right moisture level, the sphagnum will stay wet and rot the base of the orchid. Shouldn't the potting media have uniform drying characteristics?

**A.** Absolutely, and I think you have answered your own question. You shouldn't repot most orchids unless you have a good reason to repot them. Once a newly acquired orchid has bloomed out, you can repot it if you find the dreaded mixed potting media situation you describe or if you simply want that orchid in the same mix as you normally use so that all your similar type orchids can be watering at the same time. Other than that, only repot when the mix has broken down or the orchid has become unstable by growing too much out of its pot. The exceptions to this 'repot sparingly' rule would be for your Phalaenopsis that should be repotting by June every year or two or your Paphiopedilums that seem to love being repotted, possibly because they are so sensitive to salt accumulation.



## What's in Bloom

By  
 Paul Jones  
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We've got pictures of blooming orchids from Sue Bottom, Viv Rowe and yours truly this month. Email me the pictures you take of your plants and be sure to include a brief description of how you grow them and any other interesting tidbit you wish to share. Every orchid has a story to tell and a history behind it!

Sue's Cattleyas: When world class orchid growers give you advice, you listen! Ruben Sauleda told us to open up the greenhouse for more air ventilation by ripping out the wall and replacing it with a retractable curtain and to use aluminet for shade cloth. Rafael



**Bc. Mount Anderson 'Snowflake' x  
 C Horace 'Maxima'  
 Grown by Sue Bottom**

Romero told us to use the top vent to set up a natural air flow up and out of the greenhouse. Fred Clarke talked about the importance of air in the root zone. How right they were about the importance of fresh air, not just fan circulated air, but bathing your orchids in fresh wafting air morning, noon and night. Duncan Bass and Harry McElroy told us to start using CalMag fertilizer. Lots of SAOSer's recommended Inoculaid. And then there's the other snake oil: Messenger.

So many things changed in a short period of time and the result is a greenhouse full of bigger and better blooms than ever before. Our speakers have taught me so much about growing orchids. I can't wait to hear what we learn from our speakers in 2009!



**Pot. Makaha Gold x Free Sprit  
 'Carmela' Grown by Sue Bottom**



**Bc. Dana Thomas 'Tong Hising' x  
 Lc. Oriental Splendor 'Golden Dragon'  
 Grown by Sue Bottom**



**Lc. Callistoglossa Alba  
 Grown By Sue Bottom**

Paul's Vanda: This is the lovely V. Manuvadee 'Sky' AM/AOS blooming this morning out in the oleander 'orchid tree'. She is a stunning cross between the hybrid V. Ponpimol and V. coerulea, the famous 'blue orchid' species and arguably the bluest orchid on Earth. Although the coerulea blue



**Vanda Manuvadee 'Sky' AM/AOS  
 Grown by Paul Jones**



seems more to purple in this cross, she is still a stunner and has the awards to back it up. I got her back in January at the WOC in Miami from the world famous Vanda gurus at RF Orchids in Homestead. This is her first re-bloom in my care.



***Blc. Momilani Rainbow 'The Gypsy' HCC/AOS***  
**Grown by Paul Jones**

Paul's Cattleya: This is Blc. Momilani Rainbow 'The Gypsy' HCC/AOS. I got this plant at the SAOS Christmas auction last year and this is her first re-bloom in my care, almost exactly eleven months from her repotting. She is a cross between Blc. Orange Nuggett and Lc. Mari's Song, a very successful cross indeed as evidenced by her HCC, awarded in 2000. She is growing in a six-inch, hanging wooden-slatted basket with no potting medium whatsoever other than a few wine corks for company! She was one of the first of my experiments with growing Cattleyas 'Vanda-style'. Almost every Cattleya I have gotten since is now growing this way and I do not intend to ever grow Cattleyas again with the more traditional forms of potting media (i.e., ceramic pots, bark mix, coconut husk, even aliflor and lava rock).

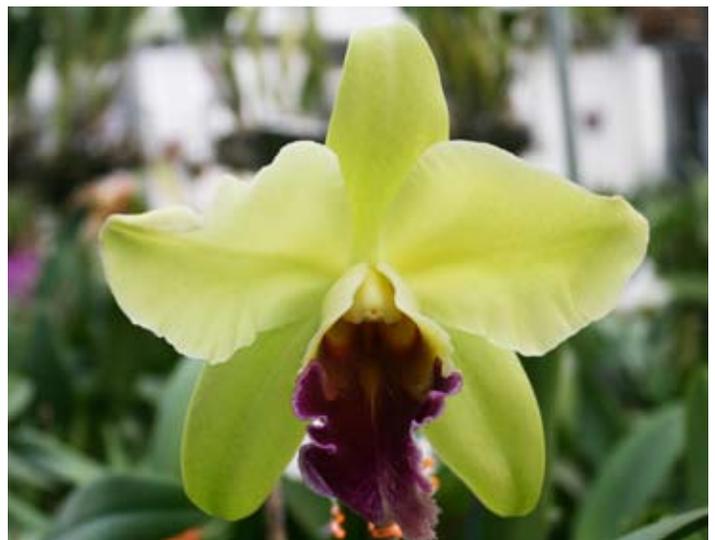


***Slc. Mae Hawkins 'Mendenhall' x Blc. Francis Y Hushino***  
***'Carteira Ruby' Grown By Sue Bottom***



***Phal. amabilis x Timothy Christopher***  
**Grown by Viv Rowe**

Viv Rowe's Phalaenopsis: I got her from NAS Jacksonville last spring. She is planted in sphagnum and in a clay pot and hung on a pot clip on the west side of our fence under a crape myrtle tree where she gets morning sun. I water her about once a week in the summer if she doesn't get any rain and less in the winter months. I feed her Orchid Plus and Inoculaid. Her second blooms are huge and she has been blooming since November.



***Blc. Yen Surprise x Blc. Acapana 'Miles' - Greenwich***  
***'Elmhurst' Grown by Sue Bottom***



# BEST OF SHOW TABLE 2008



Terry Bottom

Grower Marv & Jan Ragan  
*C. mossiae* var *semi-alba*



Terry Bottom

Grower Harry McElroy  
Paph. *Belle Royale* x Phrag *Mem Dick Clements*



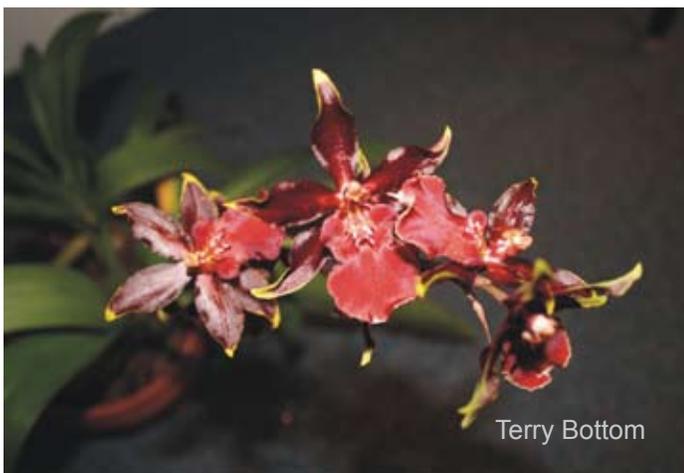
Terry Bottom

Grower Sue Bottom  
*Lc. Lilac Dreams*



Terry Bottom

Grower Mike & Kaycee Hienz  
*Den. Oriental Paradise* (*Evening Glow* x *Valiavilis*)



Terry Bottom

Grower Lola Stark  
*Colm. Wildcat* 'Bobcat'



Terry Bottom

Grower Sue Bottom  
*Diacra Chantilly Lace* 'Twinkle'



# BEST OF SHOW TABLE 2008



Terry Bottom

Grower Courney Hackney  
Blc. Goldenzelle x self



Terry Bottom

Grower Paul Jones  
Encyclia alata



Terry Bottom

Grower Shirley 'Daisy' Thompson  
Paph. appletonianum x  
Paph. wolterianum



Terry Bottom

Grower Sue Bottom  
C. Margaret Hort



Terry Bottom

Grower Mike & Kaycee Heinz  
Stanhopea tigrina



Terry Bottom

Grower Lola Stark  
V. Trevor Rathbone



Terry Bottom

Grower Jeanette Pacetti  
Lc. Color Guard 'Hawaii'



# BEST OF SHOW TABLE 2008



Terry Bottom

Grower Harry & Celia McElroy  
Cym Yellow Candy



Terry Bottom

Grower Sue Bottom  
Blc. Yen Surprise x C Penny Kuroda 'Spot'



Terry Bottom

Grower Marv & Jan Ragan  
C. bowringiana var alba 'Hamlyn'



Terry Bottom

Grower Sue Bottom  
Blc. Ports of Paradise 'Emerald Isle' AM/AOS



Terry Bottom

Grower Mike & Kaycee Heinz  
Blc. Goldenzelle 'Taida'



Terry Bottom

Grower Sue Bottom  
Rhynchostylis coelestis

