

Home and Backyard Orchid Growing
[Vivienne Rowe, tomvivrowe@comcast.net](mailto:tomvivrowe@comcast.net)
August 2009



Vivienne started with a few phalaenopsis back in June of 2007. Those phalaenopsis went to sphagnum land in the sky, but neighbor and friend Jim Taylor took Viv under his wing, mentored her and introduced her to the St. Augustine Orchid Society. Thanks to Jim, Viv is in the throes of orchid addiction and now has close to 200 orchid plants, mostly

cattleyas, vandas and oncidiums, as well as dendrobiums, phals and paphs and a few more unusual plants. They grow outside in the backyard under tall and stately oak trees getting direct sun during the early morning and late afternoon and dappled light from around 10 til 3.

The vandas are hanging on a metal pole supported by shepherd's hooks. They are in baskets with the roots hanging free. They are watered everyday and then allowed to dry by nightfall in the refreshing breezes.

The phalaenopsis and paphiopedilums are in the shadier gazebo where she brings blooming plants to enjoy with her morning coffee. They are mostly potted in a water retentive aliflor/coco husk mix or in sphagnum moss.



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The cattleyas, oncidiums and dendrobiums are mostly in clay pots hanging off a north facing fence and a 4' x 4' attached by pot clips or hanging in vanda baskets. The cattleyas and dendrobiums are mostly potted in a coarse aliflor/tree fern mix and the oncidiums are mostly in a more water retentive aliflor/coco husk mix. Although Viv says the oncidiums just seem to grow like weeds and don't much care, she has some bare rooted in baskets and some in a coarse mix and there is a lot of spiking going on!



Except for the vandas, she hasn't had to do a lot of watering this summer with all the rain supplied by Mother Nature. Without the rain she would normally water weekly. She has dynamite in little tulle bags tied to her plants, particularly the mounted plants and vandas. When she waters, she adds Orchid Pro (an organic soil amendment, not a fertilizer) and Inoculaid (photosynthetic microorganisms, not a fertilizer). She fertilizes with the time released fertilizer Dynamite by adding it to the potted plants and tying tulle filled bags to the mounted and bare rooted plants. At the end of each month, she fertilizes with Better Gro Bloom Booster mixed with Orchid Pro and Inoculaid.

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Viv and Tom are formulating their winter plans so they won't be hauling plants in and out of the house during cold weather like they did last year. She's looking at getting a plastic covered portable greenhouse she can set up and move the plants into before the cold weather. The greenhouse has several vents she can open and close to provide air to her sleeping beauties on the warmer winter days and then button them up at night. The things we do for our orchids!

