



**CLUB NEWS**



**Fred Clarke**

**November 2 Monthly SAOS Meeting**

by Lola Stark,  
seacuter@bellsouth.net

*Welcome & Thanks.* The meeting was called to order by President Jack Higgins with 38 people present including six guests. We have one new member who entered by mail: Doug Deese. This was election night and many stayed

home to watch results. They missed a great meeting. Jack thanked Jeanette Smith for the refreshments and reminded those who snack to please help defray the cost with a silent donation. Gail Marshall welcomed everyone and reminded them that if they have a birthday this month they are eligible for an extra raffle ticket. We have two members who need cards, Beverly Stuart had hip replacement surgery, and Trudy Endy has had surgery following an accident. If you know of a member who needs a card, please get in touch with Gail. Jack also reminded everyone to vote for their favorite orchid on the show table.



**Jo & Steve Anderson enjoying Fred's question & answer session**

*SAOS Club Business.* Rae Coletti from the Nominating Committee read the following nominations for next year's officers: Jack Higgins President; Sue Bottom First Vice

President; Vivienne Rowe Second Vice President; Lola Stark Secretary; Bill Gourley Treasurer; Terry Bottom Third year Director; Mike Heinz Second Year Director and Bob Martin First Year Director. The election of officers will be in January with them taking office in February.

Waverly and Dot Fant, long time members of our sister society in Jacksonville have donated many books to the SAOS library. Many thanks!



**Fred's slideshow was full of great pictures**

Sue reported that our website is receiving 800-1300 hits a week, with the cultural notes being the most popular part, along with the pictures. The hits come from all over. As to the United States, the most hits come from California, Washington State, New York, Florida and Arkansas in that order and as far as foreign countries, we get the most hits from the US, China, Russia, Sweden and Australia. What a compliment to Sue and Terry! Fantastic! (As Jack put it!)

*Upcoming Events.* Sue Bottom announced that the Keiki Club will meet at her home on Nov. 21 from 1-3 for a discussion on understanding your plant label. All are welcome, member of SAOS or not!

The SAOS will be joining with the Master Gardeners at Hagan Ace on US 1 on Saturday, November 6 from 9 to 1.

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## Upcoming Orchid Events

### November

- 6 SAOS at Ace Hardware, 9 am til 1 pm  
3050 US 1 S in St. Augustine  
Repotting and Plant Clinic
- 6-7 [13th Annual Slipper Symposium](#)  
Clarion Hotel&Conference Ctr, Tampa
- 7 Annual Fall Open House - Del-Rei Orchids  
Noon to 4; Bring a Xmas Toy for the  
Kids of Hastings  
4270 Cedar Ford Blvd, Hastings 32145  
Call 386-325-4845 for directions
- 19-21 American Orchid Society Show  
AOS Headquarters, Delray Beach
- 21 Keiki Club – 1 to 3 pm  
Reading Your Plant Tag  
Sue and Terry Bottom's Home  
[6916 Cypress Lake Ct. St. Aug 32086](#)

### December

- 11 SAOS Christmas Auction, 7 pm  
Moultrie Trails Clubhouse  
[121 Crooked Tree Tr, St. Aug 32086](#)

### January

- 4 SAOS Meeting, 7 pm  
Ed Bugbee, Featherstone Orchids  
Orchids of Mexico
- 11 JOS Meeting, 7 pm  
Topic TBA  
Francisco Miranda, [Miranda Orchids](#)

### February

- 1 SAOS Meeting, 7 pm  
Prem Subrahmanyam, [FI Native Orchids](#)  
Native and Naturalized Orchids
- 8 JOS Meeting, 7 pm  
TBA
- ?? Keiki Club for Orchid Beginners  
How to Select an Orchid  
Date and Venue to be Determined

### March

- 1 SAOS Meeting, 7 pm  
Ernie Gemeinhart, [Enlightened Orchids](#)  
Semi-Hydroponic Orchid Culture

[www.staugorchidsociety.org](http://www.staugorchidsociety.org)

- 5 SAOS at Ace Hardware, 9 am til 1 pm  
3050 US 1 S in St. Augustine  
Repotting and Plant Clinic
- 8 JOS Meeting, 7 pm  
Growing Vandas in Northeast Florida  
Ed Cavin
- ?? Keiki Club for Orchid Beginners  
Repotting and Potting Mixes  
Sue and Terry Bottom's Home  
[6916 Cypress Lake Ct. St. Aug 32086](#)

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



### St. Augustine Orchid Society Organization

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Operations Committee Chair	<a href="#">Jeanette Smith</a> jesmith@watsonrealtycorp.com



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They will be repotting orchids for the public and generally talking about orchids. Everyone is invited to go by!

Fred Keefer is having an Open House at his nursery on Sunday, Nov 7. Those coming are asked to bring a toy for the children in Hastings. There will be lots of good food and drink and many gorgeous orchids, so take your toy and your pocketbook!

SAOS will have their Annual Christmas Auction and Dinner at the Moultrie Oaks Community Center on December 11 at 7 PM. Dick Roth is in charge of it, along with Lola Stark. There will be about 25 Orchids to auction, courtesy of Fred Keefer who will make the trip to find them for us. A sign-up sheet was passed around so those going could let us know what they will bring. Looks like we'll have a wonderful meal. Do plan to come!



**Lots of nice blooming orchids heading home from the 2009 Christmas Auction.**

*SAOS Monthly Program.* Our speaker for the evening was Fred Clarke of Sunset Valley Orchids in Vista, California. Fred has spoken to us twice before and is always great. His program tonight was about "Mini and Midi Cattleyas", his personal favorite orchids.

Why do folks grow these cattleyas? Well, first of all, they are space saving. Where you have to have a lot of room for regular big cattleyas, these can be grown in half the space. They have been bred for the hobbyist who doesn't have a lot of room to grow their orchids. There is a wide range of colors and forms and they bloom more frequently than their larger cousins. They have also become much more adaptable to different conditions of light and temperature.

Growers started with small species and went on to make primary crosses that have improved all the strains. They also have taken the diploid parent and made them tetraploid

by treating them with colchicine. The colchicine allows the plant to widen its sepals and petals as it enlarges slightly the flower itself, making a much more desirable plant whose genes can be passed on to its children.

The species used for mini and midi cattleyas include *Sophronia coccinea* that has a smooth, large petal form which grows where it's bright, but cold and is hard to grow, but makes an excellent parent; *Cattleya walkeriana* has a dominant spade lip, is very light looking and airy with veins on the petals that slant upwards; *C. walkeriana* also has an *alba* variety, a *semi-alba* variety, a *flamea* variety, and a *coerulea* variety, all of which are easy to cross. *Laelia pumila* has a dark purple lip that is prized, is only 4-5" tall, but has "donkey ears" for petals, meaning that the veins slant down; *Cattleya luteola* grows where it's hot and humid, but likes the shade and can be grown like you grow phalaenopsis. *Laelia alaroi* is a species found not too long ago that has tiny flowers that bloom on and off all summer, has lots of blooms and has a wide lip. *Cattleya aclandiae*



**Fred Clarke's lecture on Mini & Midi Cattleyas was a great one to end the lecture year with.**

has 4" flowers on a 4" plant, comes with varieties of *alba* and *coerulea*, but is still quite rare. *Cattleya intermedia* is a tough, very tolerant species that will grow where ever it's put, and has a variety, *aquinii*, that is peloric (meaning that the color in the lip is carried to the tip of the petals) and a *coerulea* variety that has the prized blue lip and will occasionally cause flaring on the petals. *Laelia briegei* is one that grows on rocks, so it will put up with hot, bright days and cold, dry nights and winters, and has the upward mid line on the petals and comes with 5-9 blooms. These species were all involved in the process of getting the mini and midi cattleyas that we all now enjoy.



Continued from page 1



**Artist Ted Mikalsen donated some beautiful canvas prints for the Christmas Auction**

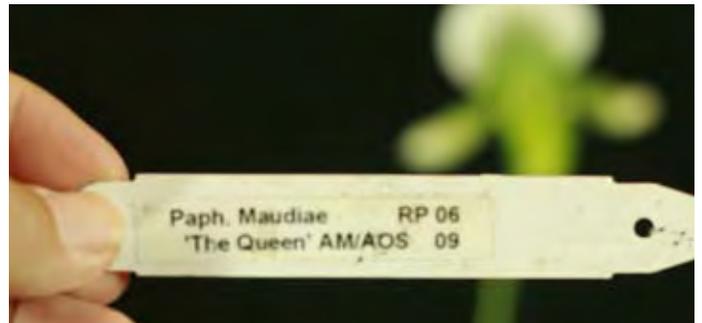
The species above have contributed to the following primary hybrids that are the backbone of the breeding program for Fred. Since they all grow in different conditions, they have passed their best qualities on to the primary. Sc. Beaufort is a cross between *Soph. coccinea* and *C. luteola*; Lc. Mini Purple is a cross between *L. pumila* and *C. walkeriana*; and Sl. Orpetii is a cross between *L. pumila* and *Soph. coccinea*. The advantage of using the primary hybrids in a breeding program is that the breeder can pick and choose the best qualities of the parents passed on to the next generation. They can develop size, color and shape. Often, to reinforce a certain trait of a parent, the primary will be crossed back to the parent species. The plants that are chosen of the progeny include good growth habits, small stature and bloom stems that do not have to be staked! From cross to bloom may take up to five years, so this is a project to plan ahead! Fred went on to show us many, many of his slides, comparing the parents to the offspring, showing us how the plants improved. The colors and forms of the plants were dramatic and compact.

Fred then went on to tell us how to grow these great plants. The most important key to growing good orchids is watering. Good irrigation is the key. Do not water too much or too little. When the surface of the plant starts to dry out, water. These particular cattleyas probably need watering more frequently than the larger ones. When you water, he recommends that you fill the pot to the top with water and then let it drain, coming back 1 hour later and watering the same way again. You can grow them wherever you want to. He recommends that if you are on well water, that you use a general fertilizer as 10-10-10 or 20-20-20. If you are on city water or some other form of water, he says use 13-3-5 Cal Mag fertilizer. This is because the city water doesn't have the calcium and magnesium the plants need and the well water probably does.

He recommends 3 parts bark with 1 part perlite as media for the cattleyas. Since they are small plants, you must use smaller media. If you use sphagnum, make a ball of it around the roots, but leave space around and below the sphagnum to allow the water to drain properly. Aliflor can be used, but always have at least 15 to 25% organic materials with your media. It helps balance the pH and allows the plant to hold some nutrients and water for future use.

As for repotting, do so when the plant shows new roots. Some say new growth and that doesn't do the job. You must wait for the new roots. And you do not have to remove every last bit of the old media. Leave the last 5-10% of the old media, as getting it out will probably injure the new growth around it. Select a new pot that will allow 3 years growth, and don't worry about that part of the plant that seems to be too low when you repot. It's the oldest part of the plant and will be just fine if low. Position the back of the plant against the edge of the pot. Add a bit of media at a time, not all at once. Shake the pot before adding more. This will allow the media to surround the roots without crushing them. Lastly, tamp down with your thumb, not a stick! And always make a new tag for your newly repotted plant. He puts the date of the repotting on the tag to tell him when the plant starts to put out new roots. a handy reference for future years.

*Meeting Conclusion.* Following the break we had our usual auctions and raffle. The show table "Members Choice" was Bulb. rothschildianum 'A-doribil' FCC/AOS brought in by Mike and Harriet Wright. The Grand Raffle was won by Jeannette Smith.



## Keiki Club for Orchid Beginners

November 21<sup>st</sup>, 1 to 3 pm

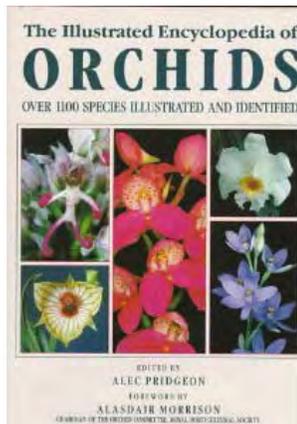
Your orchid plant label can be intimidating to read and interpret. We'll teach you how to unravel the mystery of a plant name so you'll understand what the information on your plant tag is telling you. We're meeting at Sue and Terry Bottom's home at [6916 Cypress Lake Court, St. Aug 32086](#) on Sunday afternoon from 1 to 3 pm. Bring a folding chair. Call 797-4360 with any questions.



## Illustrated Encyclopedia of Orchids

by Alec Pridgeon

Dot and Waverly Fant, members of our sister society in Jacksonville, have donated many books to the St. Augustine Orchid Society. Some of the beginners books will be given to new members, some of the coffee table books will be auctioned and some books will be added to our library. The *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Orchids* encompasses a wide spectrum of orchid genera and species. The introductory section features a number of pertinent topics: orchid habitats, distribution, classification, hybrids, pollination, cultivation and conservation. The alphabetical "Orchids A-Z" section includes descriptions, taxonomy, currently accepted names and synonyms, geographic distribution, notes on culture and hundreds of color photographs of the best-known species in cultivation. Thank you Dot and Waverly for your wonderful contribution!



## December 11 Christmas Auction Monthly SAOS Meeting

We will be holding our annual Christmas orchid auction at 7 pm Saturday night, December 11<sup>th</sup>, at the Moultrie Trails Clubhouse located at 121 Crooked Tree Trail. We'll have rotisserie chicken and honey baked ham main dishes and all members are encouraged to bring a dish to round out the meal as well as your beverage of choice. Salads, potato and pasta side dishes, vegetable side dishes and desserts have been big favorites in years gone by. You will be bidding on a nice variety of different types of orchids. An advance listing of the plants will be distributed to whet your appetite. Note that the **meeting date has changed** (from the first Tuesday to Saturday, December 11<sup>th</sup>) as has the **meeting location** (Moultrie Trails Clubhouse instead of Watson Realty). We'll see you there!

## Artist Mike May

### [Art for Orchids](#)



Mike May started painting while studying botany at the University in Edinburgh, Scotland and particularly enjoyed painting in the greenhouses at the Botanic Garden when everything else was frozen outside! After an eclectic career that took him all over the world, he realized it was time to relax more. On the insistence of his wife, Olga, he took up painting again.

His first picture of a *Paphiopedilum* hybrid was a real challenge after 15 years, and it took forever. In the end, there was more paint than paper. But it lit the spark, and on his move to Northern Spain, he found himself surrounded by wild orchids everywhere, which Olga photographed and he painted. He tried to develop a certain style, and each painting was a steep learning curve in observation, interpretation and technique such as the spectacularly bizarre *Ophrys scolopax* and the more serene *Neotinea ustulata*. Their orchid hunting trips locally showed just how extraordinarily diverse the region of Catalunya is in orchid species – probably because it is where the Pyrenees Mountains meet the Mediterranean Sea. To share this with orchid enthusiasts, they will be running 4-5 day orchid hunting vacations next May and June, on which 40 plus species can be found with ease. Guests would also be able to learn the basics of painting orchids, and enjoy the wonderful food and scenery of the area.

From all of that, Art for Orchids was born, to support orchid conservation projects around the world. One project is ready to go in Brazil that will be financed by the sale of the original and prints of *Laelia purpurata*, and others are possible in Panama and Ecuador. His latest study is of *Cypripedium calceolus*, developed from studies made at a site in the Pyrenees Mountains not far from where he lives. It was a real privilege to be taken to see the remnant of what was once a much larger colony.

He takes a simple approach to combine education with conservation. The aim is to build awareness of the need for conservation and at the same time nurture the inherent bond we all have with nature. The plan is to finance everything through sale of his paintings and prints – it may take some time before things really start to happen.





*Laelia purpurata* by Mike May



*Ophrys scolopax* by Mike May



*Paphiopedilum* hybrid by Mike May



*Neotinea ustulata* by Mike May





**Members discuss Fall Preparations**

## October 24 Keiki Club for Orchid Beginners Fall Preparations-Getting Ready for Winter

About 10 orchidists came to the fall Keiki Club get together to discuss fall preparations, how to get your orchids and your growing area ready for winter. There are [seasonal suggestions](#) on the new growers section of the website. Lola Stark summarized the major points:

**Prepare the Protected Area** – Come up with a plan for where you will keep your orchids over the winter to protect your plants from the cold.



**Lola's Outdoor Growing Area**

**Clean Up Your Plants** – Inspect your plants checking for pests and fungus and treat where necessary. A liquid Sevin flush (1 tsp in a gallon of water) will help rid your pots of hidden pests like ants, roaches, slugs and snails.

**Minimum Temperatures** – Protect your phals, vandas and phalaenopsis type dendrobiums when temperatures drop to 55 to 60 F and your other plants at 40 to 50 F.

**Isolate Those Plants that Need Winter Rest** – Group plants together that require similar water and fertilizer during the winter. Separate the catesetum relatives from your other plants because they need no water during their winter

dormancy. Group the deciduous dendrobiums, calanthes and other plants that enjoy a dry winter with no fertilizer. Grouping your plants by their winter care requirements will help prevent your inadvertently watering/fertilizing these plants and potentially disrupting their bloom cycle.

Terry Bottom also talked about winterizing your structure. He recommended:

**Flexible Visqueen/Greenhouse Film** – If you enclose your growing area, use a durable greenhouse film or thick visqueen. Try to design a system that you can open and close to encourage ventilation during warmer periods, using U channel and wiggle wire.

**Heat Source** – If you are using an electric heater for supplemental heat, be sure to use heavy duty extension cords. He recommended using two heaters on separate circuits so the heaters can each be set to medium rather than high to reduce the potential for tripping a breaker in the middle of the night.



**Lola's over winter orchid storage structure**

The American Orchid Society  
presents  
**Color Your World**  
**Orchid Show and Sale**  
November 19-21, 2010 10 am-4 pm

**Featuring**  
Orchid Displays and Sales  
Art \* Jewelry \* Gifts \* Orchid Supplies  
Educational Lectures \* Repotting Service  
AOS Judging \* Free Parking \* Food

**Admission**  
General — \$10  
AOS and Garden Members — \$5  
Children under 12 — Free

AOS Visitors Center and Botanical Garden \* 16700 AOS Lane, Delray Beach, FL 33446 next to the Morikami Museum  
For more information visit [www.aos.org](http://www.aos.org) or call 561-404-2031





## Growing Tips for November

Dr. Courtney Hackney,  
[hackneau@comcast.net](mailto:hackneau@comcast.net)  
Dept. Biology, Univ. North  
Florida

Have you ever considered growing your orchids using natural controls for disease and pests. There are a number of articles in orchid growing magazines suggesting various ways to use natural mechanisms in managing an orchid collection, but they are difficult to use and certainly not 100% effective.

Commercial greenhouses typically go the other direction, trying to maintain as sterile a growing area as possible; no pests, weeds or disease. Their goal is to produce perfect looking plants that can pass any inspection when shipped. Most do a great job, but use many different control measures that are not always the best for the environment or people. They succeed largely because they only grow the orchids for a relatively short period of time and then they start over with new seedlings.



Those of us who maintain collections and plants, some of which may be a 100+ years old, do not have the luxury of starting out with pest or disease-free plants every season. We get whatever comes with the plant when we acquire these old clones and divisions. On the other hand, we are not in business to grow plants quickly or to produce perfect looking plants for sale to the public.

A few decades ago, farmers in the U.S. adopted a strategy of not using pesticides or

herbicides until the problem reached the point where not treating cost more than letting the problem continue. As a result, pesticide and herbicide use declined and farmers made more money; a perfect win-win for farmers and the environment.

This has been my approach for many years. My greenhouse is home to several dozen anole lizards (brown

and green), Mediterranean geckos (nothing like the GEICO one), hundreds of cricket frogs that are just a 1/2" in size, a few green tree frogs, 3 or 4 toads that frequent the damp areas under the benches, and a snake or two (which may explain where one of the toads went).

The fact that these predators seem to maintain a healthy population suggests that they have plenty to eat. When I visit my greenhouse at night, I find a few insects on the surface of the media, but not many. My predators feed on any small insect they find during the day and night. None of these predators impact cattleya scale at all, so I use a hormonal pesticide (Distance) for control. This spray doesn't seem to impact any of my predators.

An orchid-growing friend asked me if I ever had problems with thrips. In the past, there have been one or two incidents, but the thrips just disappear fairly quickly. I found some on a Camellia flower bud last week and decided to try an experiment I hope I do not regret. I placed the flower bud, thrips and all, in my greenhouse in a flower tube. When I came back in 15 minutes or so one of the Carolina anoles (green ones) was on the bud and not a thrip was to be found. The lizard looked happy too.

The only other pest problems my natural predators seem unable to handle are roaches (huge roaches, called palmetto bugs here in Florida) and slugs. While toads will eat slugs, toads tend to stay on the ground, while slugs love to get in the bottoms of pots. Both of these beasts love to eat new roots and flowers. Looks like I need to find just one more predator to add to my menagerie; one that is not afraid of palmetto bugs and slugs that feeds at night. Any ideas?





## Your Orchids in November

based on Robert Scully articles,  
courtesy of the AOS

**General Growing Tips.** 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 and most dendrobiums 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. Consider removing shading from the greenhouse to allow more light during the winter months.



**Cattleyas.** Retie your cattleyas to support the new growth and orient the new growth toward the sun. Bloom sheaths may be showing signs of yellowing. Autumn's more pronounced temperature fluctuation can lead to water condensation inside the sheath, hastening the normal process of

senescence, so yellowing sheaths should be carefully removed to preserve the bud primordia within to prevent water condensation from rotting it. The sheaths can be safely removed by slitting open and peeling down toward the pseudobulb. New growths of *Cattleya skinneri* may have dried sheaths, do not remove them.



**Dendrobiums.** For the commonly available dendrobiums, protect them when temperatures are projected to drop down to 55 or 60 F. The winter dormant dendrobiums (nobiles, seminobiles and callista section) should be separated from your other plants so you can easily reduce the water and fertilizer they receive through Thanksgiving. Try bloom booster fertilizer in the fall to prepare them for the winter. Shoot for minimum temperatures of 40 F.



**Oncidiums.** This is the blooming season for the Brazilian Oncidium section crispum with their chestnut and brown and butter yellow markings. Give plants high light to produce strong upright inflorescences. The pseudobulbs should be plump, so do not let the plants dry out while they are in bloom. Later, plants will enter a dormant period. Stake your inflorescences as the spike grows for best presentation. Protect them when temperatures are projected to drop down to 40 or 50 F.



**Phalaenopsis.** Phals are starting to spike now. Stake the inflorescence loosely once it gets around 10 inches long about 4 inches below the growing tip and move your tie upward as the spike elongates. Remember the flower will grow toward the light. If you move the plant, the flower spike will twist seeking out the sun so you won't get graceful pendulous blooms. Some people put a spot of nail polish on the pot so they know which direction the pot should face. Shoot for minimum temperatures of 55 to 60 F.



**Vandas.** Vandas should be in their winter homes in the brightest location possible and you can reduce watering and feeding. The only cold hardy member is *Neofinetia falcata*. Shoot for minimum temperatures of 50 to 60 F. If you have *Rhynchostylis gigantea*, look for inflorescences that are emerging now for January flowering.





***Phal. Peppermint Striped by Carter & Holmes***

## **Candy Striped Phalaenopsis**

by Susan Taylor, BellaOnline.com

One of the most exciting upgrades in phalaenopsis breeding has been the introduction of [candy striped](#) flowers named for their lighter backgrounds with darker stripes. The first ones were white with pink to purple stripes. Then pink background with darker stripes, sometimes with spots in the middle of the flower appeared. A real breakthrough appeared with [Phal. Baldan's Kaleidoscope](#) which has a yellow to golden background with bright orange/red stripes. This particular cross is a vigorous grower and many varieties will produce multiple spikes with side spikes. A well grown mature plant is spectacular.



***Phal. Baldan's Kaleidoscope  
By Bill Kruczynski***

These phals are grown the same way as the regular phals and require cool fall evenings to induce the spikes. Temperatures between 50 and 60 degrees Fahrenheit will encourage spiking and once the spike is about 2 inches in height the plant can be returned to regular conditions.

For best presentation of the flowers, phals should be grown facing one direction to the light. Put a marker on the side of the pot to show which side should be facing the main source of light so that if you move the pot for watering or checking for insects you can correctly place it back. Start staking the inflorescence when it is about inches high giving yourself enough height on the stake for that particular plant. Attach at about 2 inch intervals. Then when the buds start to appear, allow the spike to turn toward the light and bend slightly so you will have the nice arching spray of flowers that make such a great show.



***Phalaenopsis facing the light at Pine Ridge Orchids  
In the Redlands***

Once your plants have started to produce buds, you must guard against bud blast. This is the sudden drying up of the buds all at one time after they have formed. Bud blast is most commonly caused by low humidity or air pollution. In the home environment, put your phals on a humidity tray and make sure that they are away from any source of gases. Even ripening fruit close to the plant will affect the buds. Gas from ovens should also be avoided and cigarette smoke can cause problems.

When purchasing a new plant, be sure to get a healthy one. If you are purchasing from a non-orchid nursery, only buy the plant if there is already a flower open so you can see exactly what you are getting. Look for a plant with healthy leaves and roots so that you will be able to enjoy it for years to come.



## Orchid Questions & Answers

by Sue Bottom,  
sbottom15@bellsouth.net



**Q.** Some of our speakers recommend that we water our orchids before fertilizing them and other speakers say not to water before fertilizing because the wet root is saturated and can't absorb

the fertilizer. Which approach is correct?

**A.** Both, depending on the orchid specifics. First, let's think about the orchid roots. Orchid roots are a wiry filament cortex surrounded by a sponge-like velamen that actually stores water. During periods of dryness, the surface of the root is hard and stiff to help prevent water loss. After wetting, the



root become soft and pliable and acts like a permeable sponge soaking up water and fertilizer. If the root is saturated with water dripping off it, of course it can't absorb any more fluid. But the

idea behind prewatering is to get the velamen to be open to absorbing the fertilizer after the root begins to dry.

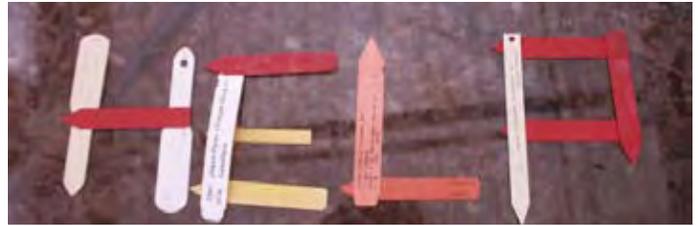
Now to the specifics:

- If you have an orchid in a water retentive mix like sphagnum moss, you don't need to prewater before fertilizing because the mix itself will stay wet for about a week and the roots will absorb the water and fertilizer from the sphagnum.



- The opposite extreme would be an orchid mounted or in a basket without any mix such as a vanda. It is almost impossible to overwater a vanda where you saturate the roots to the point of dripping and they are mostly dry an hour later, so you can repeat this multiple times a day. Clearly you could fertilize the vanda in lieu of one of the waterings.

- Somewhere in between is an orchid planted in a freely draining mix. In the summer when plants require an abundance of water, watering at night will allow the roots to remain moist all night and you can fertilize early the next



morning when the roots are still receptive to fertilizer. Perhaps in the winter, you would water and fertilize in a single step in the morning or an hour apart.



**Q.** I live in the coastal northern plain in Puerto Rico. My vandas are in baskets hanging under trees. Their roots are exposed to the elements always. All

the root tips are dying. They look shriveled and brown like something sucked their juice out. They are losing the lower leaves and a black dust, like coffee



grinds, is collecting in the axils. The stem is turning black and is covered by a black dust very similar to sooty mold. I cut the stem of one of the worst ones and found purple markings inside. Could it be fusarium? Please answer, my beloved vandas are dying fast.

**A.** Fusarium. Vandas do get fusarium and the purple ring you found confirms your fear. You can start cutting away the infected stem in short sections (sterilizing your cutting tool after each cut) from the bottom up until the purple ring is gone and then soak the plant in a good fungicide like Banrot, Subdue or Cleary's 3336. According to David Grove's book *Vandas and Ascocendas*, to prevent conditions favorable to fusarium, use only fertilizer with the nitrate form of nitrogen rather than blends containing urea or ammonia nitrogen. You can also make up a lime solution (1 tbsp per gallon) and after you soak the roots, spray with the lime solution (shaking the sprayer to keep the lime dissolved) every two weeks or so.



- Root Damage. If the roots look like they are girdled, you may have thrips. You can spray with Orthene,

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## Continued from page 10

Conserve or the systemic Bayer product containing imidacloprid. If it's not thrips, it may be a cultural issue, perhaps too much fertilizer (fertilizer burn) or too dry.

- Losing Leaves. As vandas age, they will lose the bottom leaves and ultimately you'll get keikis at the base and can top the plant. However, it sounds like yours are dropping due to some problem. Normally you would think it is caused by a cultural problem (too dry or too cold) or plant illness. The leaf drop may be related to the fusarium infection.



- Sooty Mold. If it looks like sooty mold, it probably is sooty mold. Get some physan or 10% pool algacide and spray the plants (2 tsp/gal).

- Nursing Stressed Plants. Grove has some good advice for handling stressed plants. He recommends several weeks of hanging the plant upside down in a shady humid location having air movement. This will prevent fungus and bacteria from lingering in the leaf axils and reverses what he calls apical dominance. Hanging the plant upside down reverses the internal flow of hormones that normally inhibit root and lateral shoot growth to direct more energy to the top of the plant.

As a consequence of hanging upside down, the energy is diverted from the production of new growth at the old top of the plant to producing new roots in what is now the uppermost section. To do this, bareroot the plant, wash the roots (try a spray nozzle set to flat) and cut off any dead roots, remove the fusariumed section of stem, soak in the fungicide solution for say an hour and then suspend it upside down in a shady spot. Once new roots have emerged from the stem and are an inch long, you can rebasket it and gradually increase the light to which it is exposed until you can return it to its normal location.



## SAOS Website – Orchid Photographs

We have a dizzying number of photographs on the St. Augustine Orchid Society website, orchid photographs organized by alliance, orchid photographs from the monthly show table and links to photographs from orchid events, all taken by Terry Bottom who never goes anywhere without his camera.



**Orchid Photographs** – of orchids brought to the show table from 2008 through the present are catalogued here, [organized by alliance](#) and then subcategorized by genus, section, etc. There are pictures of cattleyas, cymbidiums, dendrobiums, oncidiums, paphiopedilums, phalaenopsis, vandas and collector's items.



**Show Table Plants** – are posted to the website each month and there is an [archive](#) of show table photos dating back to 2008 organized by month. Stroll down memory lane and see the plant selected as the Member's choice each month as well as the other beautiful plants in bloom each month of the year.



**Links to Orchid Event Slideshows** – are [compiled](#) for 2008 to the present. Photographs from the monthly meetings, keiki club get togethers, orchid society shows, orchid festivals and greenhouse tours are all here from 2008 to the present. You'll see pictures of plenty of orchids, good friends and your smiling self!

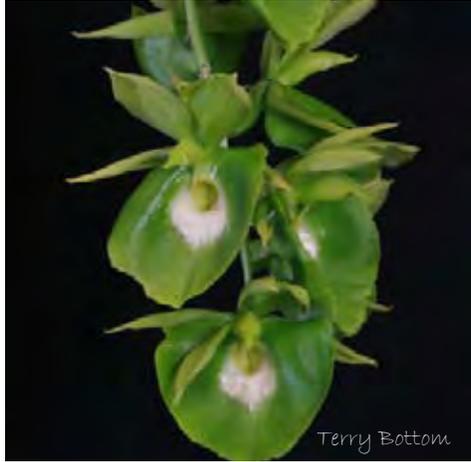


# SHOW TABLE



Terry Bottom

**Grower Marv & Jan Ragan**  
**Bulb. rothschildianum**



Terry Bottom

**Grower Sue Bottom**  
**Ctsm. Orchidglade**



Terry Bottom

**Grower Harriet & Mike Wright**  
**Bulb. Wilbur Chang**



Terry Bottom

**Grower Marv & Jan Ragan**  
**Pot. Coral Gold**



Terry Bottom

**Grower Mike & Kaycee Heinz**  
**Coel. fimbriata**



Terry Bottom

**Grower Marv & Jan Ragan**  
**Slc. Love Castle**



Terry Bottom

**Grower Harriet & Mike Wright**  
**Paph. helenae**



# SHOW TABLE



**Grower Mike & Kaycee Heinz**  
*Bulb. phalaenopsis*



**Grower Harriet & Mike Wright**  
*Bulb. rothschildianum 'A-doribil' FCC/AOS*



**Grower Mike & Kaycee Heinz**  
*Coel. fuliginosa*



**Grower Harry McElroy**  
*Cym. England's Rose 'Camilla' 4N x*  
*Gordon Gibbs 'Camilla'*



**Grower Harriet & Mike Wright**  
*Paph. barbigerum*



**Grower Sue Bottom**  
*Blc. Bryce Canyon 'Splendiferous' AM/AOS*

