



St. Augustine NEWSLETTER Orchid Society

August 2011

Volume 6 Issue #8

CLUB NEWS



Alan Koch

August 2 Monthly SAOS Meeting

by Sue Bottom,
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Welcome and Thanks.
President Jack Higgins opened the meeting at 7:15 pm with 45 people present including 1 guest.

Club Business. Jack thanked Jeanette Smith, Celia McElroy, Barb Conrad and Sandra Taylor for the refreshments and reminded those present to "Drop a Dollar" to help pay for the refreshments. Gail Marshall reminded those with birthdays in July and August to get their free birthday raffle tickets.

Orchid Events. Fred Clarke of Sunset Valley Orchids will be speaking about catasetums at the Jacksonville club on August 9.

Club Business. We have potting supplies available at the side table, coarse mix, coco mix and sphagnum mix for \$5.00 a bag. SAOS will be at Hagan Ace on August 6 from 9 am until 1 pm to help with any problems you have or to just chat. Marv Ragan will be celebrating his 80th birthday this month, Good Golly Miss Molly!

Program. Alan Koch of Gold Country Orchids outside of Sacramento gave a program on Miniature Cattleyas for the Warm Climate. His program focused on learning the species that are the building blocks for the modern miniature cattleyas.

Sophronitis species are present in many of the miniature cattleya hybrids. *Sophronitis cernua* and *brevipedunculata* are both warm growing species that are very low growing. They prefer to be grown mounted so salts don't accumulate around the roots. *Soph. coccinea* is a cool growing species though Alan has line bred them through several generations to produce more warmth tolerant variants (this means

he planted a huge number of plants, most of which died, but those that survived were bred together ultimately producing plants capable of growing in the heat).

There are many *Cattleya* species used in developing the miniature cattleyas. *C. walkeriana* is one of the finest parents because of its long lasting flowers, its propensity to bloom in the spring and fall, its delightful fragrance and diamond dust texture. It likes to grow with the roots exposed because they photosynthesize, so it is best grown mounted or in a basket. Allow it to dry between watering and grow it drier in the winter and wetter in the summer. *C. nobilior* looks somewhat similar to *C. walkeriana* but is grown more extremely. It likes to be grown with its roots exposed to facilitate transpiration and enjoys a dry, bright winter. *C. loddigesii* is the hardiest of all cattleyas and is cold tolerant into the upper teens. *C. intermedia* has many delightful color forms and is tolerant to temperatures dipping into the upper 30's. *C. luteola* is a shadier grower, blooming best in low light and high humidity. *C. schilleriana* transpires and photosynthesizes through its roots so it prefers being grown mounted or in a basket. *C. araguensis* stays short and is easy to flower, such as they are. *C. forbesii* has two color forms, the green which is found at higher elevations



Alan raves about his large blooms



Continued on page 3



CLUB NEWS



Upcoming Orchid Events

August

- 6 SAOS at Ace Hardware, 9 am til 1 pm
3050 US 1 S in St. Augustine
Repotting and Plant Clinic
9 JOS Meeting, 7 pm
Fred Clarke, Sunset Valley Orchids

September

- 3 SAOS at Ace Hardware, 9 am til 1 pm
3050 US 1 S in St. Augustine
Repotting and Plant Clinic
6 SAOS Meeting, 7 pm
Dr. Courtney Hackney
Ask The Professor
10 JOS Meeting, 7 pm
Prem Subrahmanyam
Florida Native Orchids
18 Keiki Club for Orchid Beginners
Fall Preparations: Preparing for Winter
Sue and Terry Bottom's Home
6916 Cypress Lake Ct. St. Aug 32086
18-19 Ridge Orchid Society Show
Lake Mirror Center, Lakeland

October

- 1 SAOS at Ace Hardware, 9 am til 1 pm
3050 US 1 S in St. Augustine
Repotting and Plant Clinic
1-2 Florida West Coast Orchid Society Show
Minnreg Hall
4 SAOS Meeting, 7 pm
Linda Wilhelm, Woodland Orchids
How to Kill Your Orchids
8-9 Fort Pierce Orchid Society Show
St. Lucie County Shrine Club
11 JOS Meeting, 7 pm
TBA
15-16 Gainesville Orchid Society Show
Kanapaha Botanical Gardens

21-23 Orchtoberfest at Powerplant/EFG Orchids
Deland
28-30 Delray Beach Orchid Society Show
Old School Square

November

- 5 SAOS at Ace Hardware, 9 am til 1 pm
3050 US 1 S in St. Augustine
Repotting and Plant Clinic
8 SAOS Meeting, 7 pm
Marv Ragan, MAJ Orchids
OrchidWiz Encyclopedia
15 JOS Meeting, 7 pm
TBA

St. Augustine Orchid Society Organization

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CLUB NEWS

Continued from page 1

growing under cooler conditions and the bronze form which grows under warmer conditions at lower elevations. *C. dormanniana* enjoys a cooler winter becoming semidormant.

The Rupicolous *Laelias* impart an upright growth habit, high flower density, and bright colors to the miniature cattleyas. *L. briegeri* is a bright yellow, very forgiving flower. *L. longipes* is hardy with a sweet and sour fragrance. *L. kettiana* has tiny flowers. *L. sincorana* has star shaped pink to lavender flowers. *L. praestans* likes to dry well between watering. *L. pumila* has dark forms which grow under shady conditions and light forms that enjoy more light. *L. alaorii* has cupped flowers, luckily a recessive trait. These plants all have roots that photosynthesize so they enjoy exposure to sunlight.

Hybridizing with these species results in hybrid vigor, plants that are more vigorous growers than their parents and more forgiving of varying conditions. Alan goes to great lengths to use tetraploids, plants that have a double set of chromosomes so they are bigger, stronger and more able to grow under adverse conditions. He showed us beautiful slides of incredible hybrids having huge flowers relative to their small size.



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



Watson Realty Corp. REALTORS®



Maria, Susan & Nicky enjoying the raffle

Alan finished with some fascinating cultural information regarding our alkaline well water. He has several suggestions to compensate for the high dissolved solids content of our water and prevent toxic salts from accumulating in the root zone. First, fertilizer is absorbed by the roots within 20 or 25 minutes of its application. He recommends that you flush the pots 1/2 hour after fertilizing to flush excess salts out of the pot. He also notes that in warm climates such as ours, the plants need for calcium increases geometrically with increased temperature. The black growths that you may notice in summer are a sign of calcium deficiency, similar to blossom end rot in tomatoes. You can add calcium nitrate available from a feed store, dissolve it in water and flush your plants monthly. The calcium nitrate binds with accumulated salts so the toxic salts can be flushed from the pot. You can also add dolomitic lime or chicken scratch to your potting mix as a source of calcium. The next time we coerce Alan to Florida, he will give us his Cattleya Culture talk and reveal more of his cattleya growing secrets!

Meeting Conclusion. We did have a very nice show table and Sue Bottom's *Myrmecophila brysiana* won the Member's Choice. Fred and Christie dispatched the raffle and auction plants with their normal good spirits and Susan Slater won the grand raffle plant.



Sue, Courtney & Alan chat after presentation



CLUB NEWS



Ace Repotting Plant Clinic

August 6th

The first Saturday of the month from March through November, Master Gardeners and St. Augustine Orchid Society members are available to talk with you, answer questions and help you repot orchids. We will be at the Ace Hardware at 3050 US 1 South in St. Augustine from 9 am until 1 pm. Janet usually has a special orchid sale for SAOS members with big discounts on orchids and orchid supplies and bigger discounts on out of bloom orchids. Don't miss it!



September 6 Monthly SAOS Meeting

Dr. Courtney Hackney, Ask the Orchid Prof

Dr. Courtney Hackney will host a "Ask the Orchid Professor" Question and Answer session at the September 6 meeting. Courtney is our Go-To Guy for answering the tough questions. Now it's your turn. All those questions you've wondered about and been afraid to ask, this is your chance. You can email your questions to Sue at sbottom15@bellsouth.net and we'll assemble the Q and A session for Courtney. This should be a great learning experience!

Courtney is the Director of Coastal Biology at the UNF where he teaches and conducts research in tidal wetlands. He has a lifelong love of orchids and has grown them for almost 40 years. He has written an article about cattleya hybrids and hybridizers for the 'Orchid Digest' as well as the book 'American Cattleyas'. He writes a monthly 'Growing Tips' column that appears in orchid society newsletters around the Southeast including the SAOS. Oh yeah, and he's the guy that always walks away with the Members Choice award for his show table plants.



Keiki Club for Orchid Beginners

Summer Hiatus

With the heat of summer in July and August, we're going on summer hiatus. We'll have the final Keiki Club meeting of the year in September to talk about your fall preparations, getting your plants ready for their winter home and preparing the pendulous dendrobium and catasetum relatives for their deep winter sleep.



Alfred Ng

Growing up in Hong Kong, Alfred's interest in painting was piqued by a teenager neighbor who practiced Chinese brush painting. He was inspired from that moment and learned to paint on his own. He received formal art training in Canada although art school hadn't prepared him for how difficult it is to become an artist. It took many years to learn to balance home and work life, discipline his time, and follow his dreams. After being laid off from his decade long job as a designer, he reassessed what he wanted in life and decided that being an artist is a gift to be embraced. He started working hard as a full time artist, and there were hard times and sacrifices though there were many rewards as well. Check out his [website](#) and [Flickr](#) site for examples of his work.



INSPIRATION



*'Double
Cattleya'*

*'Fusion
Orchid'*

Artwork By:
**Alfred
Ng**



CULTIVATION



Growing Tips for

August

Dr. Courtney Hackney,
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Dept. Biology,
Univ. North Florida

Supposedly, the living should be easy now, for people, and those of us growing orchids. For sure, we

do not have to worry about cold weather or the diseases that come with it. Of course, summer presents another set of issues that must be managed.

If you grow in a greenhouse you must be sure you have proper ventilation and air circulation to prevent an array of bacterial rots. Many greenhouses pull air through wet pads to cool their greenhouse. This can be very effective in avoiding those extreme temperatures. One problem in summer is that the outside humidity gets so high that cooling pads become ineffective and only serve to maintain very high humidity in the greenhouse.



Most orchids we grow thrive in humidity around 60%. When humidity is high, cooling pads maintain a higher than ideal humidity, which promotes bacterial rots. Each summer there are new growths or leaves that suddenly get soft and turn black when temperature and humidity are at their maximum. The key to avoiding these rots is to properly space orchids, have continual air exchange during day and night, and stop fertilizer applications that contain ammonia.

If your orchids grow outside without a roof protecting them, air circulation is not a problem. You will, however, need to watch for rots when there is a stretch of rain every day that keeps the medium in the pots saturated. The only orchids I put outside are those in open baskets, mounted or in lava rock. If you grow in bark, sphagnum or other media that retain moisture, growing outside requires careful diligence.

Many years ago, I purchased a greenhouse that had removable sides. In winter, sides were secured and a warm environment maintained, while in summer air flowed freely through the greenhouse day and night. My greenhouse today utilizes the same approach with the addition of 12' height in the greenhouse and ceiling fans to keep air moving when it is really hot.



At the other end of the spectrum are hobbyists that grow indoors, in windows or under lights. When heat is greatest outside, air conditioners run more to keep your home cool. Unless there is special machinery that maintains humidity at a specific level, the humidity inside becomes extremely low, which causes both your orchids and sinuses to dry out fast. The drying is obvious if one looks carefully at roots along the edge of the pot. Instead of having green root tips, they will be black or brown, indicating that there is not enough moisture in the air even though the medium may be saturated.

There are some solutions. Place your orchid in its pot inside a larger clay pot. Place a few small rocks or marbles in the clay pot first so there is some space between the bottom of the orchid and the clay pot. Sit the clay pot in a saucer of water; enough to wet the bottom of the clay pot, but not the orchid pot. The clay pot will wick water up and maintain higher humidity around your orchid. It is best to use RO, distilled or deionized water. If not, the clay pot will turn white from evaporation of water which leaves the salts behind; the harder the water, the faster this will occur.

It is always surprising to visit a long-time orchid hobbyist whose growing conditions violate all of the basic rules that promote orchid growth. These hobbyists employ the "survival of the fittest" approach. They buy orchids and if they do not grow under their conditions they are discarded and replaced by others. Often, one will find many divisions of the same clone in these collections because they survive. This is a good place to find hardy orchids, perfect for the new hobbyist. Be aware though, the normal progression of hobbyists is to start with a few very hardy orchids slowly adding harder to grow orchids and finally adding impossible to grow orchid species. That is what makes this such an "enjoyable" hobby.



CULTIVATION

Home and Backyard Orchid Growing

Courtney Hackney and Rose Ganuchea

Make no mistake about it, Courtney is a Cattleya Man. Oh sure, he grows other types of orchids. There are lots of phals, the unusual ones, lots of species, interesting primary hybrids and the like. He calls his multiflora paphiopedilums his weeds. He's got unusual vandaceous orchids like paraphalaenopsis and vandopsis hybrids. But cattleyas are his true love (after Rose, of course).



number of hybridizers. Something borrowed? Courtney has a network of cattleya aficionados and they are careful to always exchange divisions of their prized cattleyas so if something should happen to theirs, they can get a piece back. And something blue, the coerulea bifolia Courtney has in bloom is a beauty he found at Fred Clarke's nursery. There is only one word for it, Wow!

Courtney grows his orchid collection in a backyard greenhouse. It is a metal structure similar to a lanai in construction, with screening and exterior polycarbonate panels

Courtney is like a bride planning her stroll down the aisle, something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue. For the old, Courtney is always in search of the old heritage cattleyas, the milestones produced by the famous hybridizers of yesterday. His excellent book American Cattleyas is a tribute to these incredible bloomers. The new cattleyas include the cattleyas in his breeding program as well as the new hybrids being produced by the dwindling

number of hybridizers. Something borrowed? Courtney has a network of cattleya aficionados and they are careful to always exchange divisions of their prized cattleyas so if something should happen to theirs, they can get a piece back. And something blue, the coerulea bifolia Courtney has in bloom is a beauty he found at Fred Clarke's nursery. There is only one word for it, Wow!



that can be removed. During the summer, the exterior panels are removed from two walls to enhance air movement and keep temperatures down. In the winter, the exterior panels are screwed back in and an exhaust vent and two Southern Burner heaters maintain temperatures.

Courtney grows his orchids mostly in lava rock in clay orchid pots. He loves the lava rock because it allows ample amounts of air around the roots while holding some water and it never degrades so root rot from rotting potting mix is a nonissue. Sometimes he'll place some sphagnum moss under the new lead to protect the new roots from chewing pests. His choice of inorganic potting mix suits his busy, time-limited schedule because he often cuts the lead pseudobulbs growing out of the pot and repots this new growth. The established backbulbs are then candidates for a new home, possibly someone that has admired the plant in the past.

Courtney's fertilizer of choice is the time release Dynamite because the low dose fertilizer simulates the way orchids are fertilized in nature. The pellets are somewhat problematic with lava rock and can easily wash out of the pot. Courtney supplements the Dynamite with fish emulsion at 3/8 tsp per gallon weekly. Once a month he flushes the salts from the pot by watering all the orchids and then watering them a second time.

If you want to see more of his beauties, check out the show table pages on the website. Whenever his schedule permits, he brings his blooming beauties to the monthly meetings and usually walks away with the Members Choice!



CULTIVATION



Orchid Questions & Answers

by Sue Bottom,
sbottom15@bellsouth.net

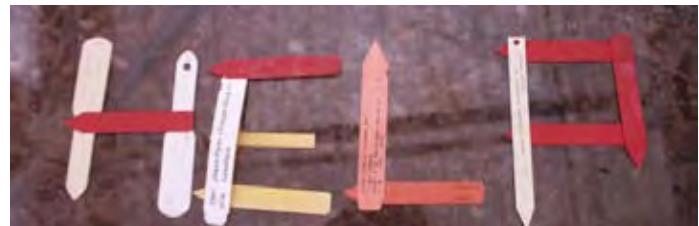
Q. My Phal. Sweet Memory 'Bubbles' is a near primary hybrid (violacea, amabilis, amboinensis) with a summer blooming habit. Conventional practice is to repot phals in the June time-frame, but this plant started blooming in May and has a new 7" spike forming. When should I repot?

A. Summer blooming phalaenopsis should be repotted in February so the plants will be established in time for the blooming season. If you missed the February time frame, let the plant bloom over the summer. When the weather cools in mid September, you can repot the plant if the mix has degraded or make a mental note to repot in February if the mix is fresh enough.



Q. We have a medium size orchid plant that has leaves with brown lines across them, like someone cut them with an exacto knife. What is the cause and what is the solution, we already lost one plant with this.

A. The creased leaf on the left looks like mechanical damage from being shipped or moved or someone brushing against it when they walked by the plant. The crease down the center of the leaf on the right looks like it split when the leaf was very young and tender and it either grew too quickly or the leaf broke from being touched or moved. A disease will not develop in a straight line.



Q. My wife and I have several orchids in our California home. One of the orchids has flowers that look like they are disappearing. The body of the flower petal (the color) is disappearing, leaving an x-ray like image of the flower itself. Then it starts to disintegrate.



CULTIVATION

A. Something is chewing on your orchid flowers, and it looks like slug or snail damage (although it's also possible it is scale/mealybugs). If it's snails/slugs, they must be hiding in the media during the day and coming out at night to feed. A good way to detect this pest is to place a piece of apple, potato or lettuce on top of the pot as bait. Leave it for a day or two then go to the plant at night in the dark with a flashlight, lift the piece of bait you put on the pot and look for the tiny little black slugs underneath. If you find them, use a bait or poison to get rid of them or just bait the slugs with apple, potato or lettuce and squash them until there are no more. If it's not slugs, you'll have to hunt for the scale, or more likely mealybugs, in the phalaenopsis. They'll hide in the crown of the plant and deep in the leaves, you'll see a white cottony mass. You may also see them on the flower spike. If you find them, you can just put some isopropyl alcohol in a spray bottle and spray all the crooks and crevices, repeating once a week for 2 or 3 weeks.



Q. I bought a cattleya orchid at Home Depot marked on the tag as 'LV .25 SLC: Tutakemen 'Pop' red. I bought my 2nd, 3rd and 4th orchid at JAX orchid show this 2011. How do I take care of this orchid?

A. You bought the cattleya orchid Slc. Tutakamen 'Pop' AM/AOS. It is a cattleya orchid, an orchid that likes to be in bright but not direct sun, and watered a day or so after the mix dries out. If it is in a largely inorganic mix without bark or coconut husk, you'll water it every 3rd day or so in the summer and once a week in the winter and only repot after it grows out of the pot. If the plant was in a bark or coconut mix when you bought it, the organic matter will break down about 2 years after it was potted, and because you don't know when it was put in that mix, you'll have to keep feeling the mix. When the mix breaks down, it'll feel like dirt and then it'll be time to repot it. Read up on cattleya culture, they're beautiful!

Ace Repotting Plant Clinic

A photograph showing three people at an orchid repotting clinic. An older man in a cap and light shirt is bending over, focused on a plant. A woman in a white tank top stands to his right, looking at him. Another person is partially visible behind them. The setting appears to be a workshop or greenhouse.

The first Saturday of the month from March through November, SAOS members are available to talk with you, answer questions and help you repot orchids.

Ace Hardware, 3050 US 1 South, St. Aug,
9 am until 1 pm.



CULTIVATION

Your Orchids in August

based on Robert Scully, Ned Nash & James Rose checklists, courtesy of the AOS



General Growing Tips. August is the hottest month so be prepared to work diligently to ensure sufficient humidity and air circulation. Spray water on the floor, benches and outer surface of clay pots one or more times every day during the hottest times. Summer's higher temperatures, brighter light conditions and longer days induce orchids to manufacture the greatest amounts of carbohydrates when provided with enough fertilizer. The warm temperatures also cause insect populations to increase. Observe your plants carefully and spray for both insects and disease when first noticed. It may be necessary to move unsheltered plants into an area protected from torrential rains.

Cattleyas. The extreme heat seems to discourage active growth and flowering, but many plants are either developing buds for their autumn flowering or are ripening growths that will power the winter and spring blooming season. The bifoliates and nodosa hybrids seem best able to bloom during the summer temperature extremes. Monitor water needs and continue to use a dilute fertilizer. Tie up new growths carefully to promote upright development of the pseudobulbs.



Cymbidiums. Use high potassium fertilizer in late August. The potassium level should be at 250 to 300 ppm potassium (K) and zero to very low N. Do this only two times at a two week interval. Wait a month then resume your normal fertilizer schedule.



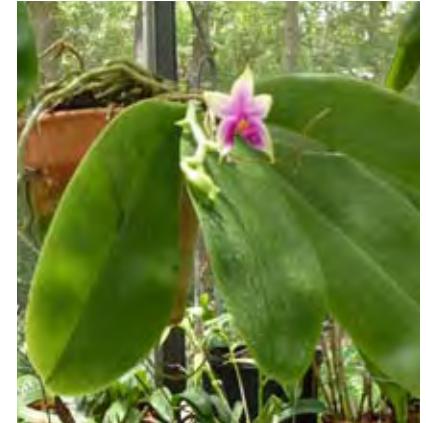
Dendrobiums.

The *nobile* type dendrobiums are popular though some growers find them difficult to flower. In order to promote the gradual shift from active growth to the flowering cycle, start withholding nitrogen now. Some growers report using a bloom booster this time of year on winter dormant plants helps prepare them for their dormancy.



Phalaenopsis.

Current high temperatures are particularly stressful for phalaenopsis. Excess heat and humidity promote bacterial *Pseudomonas* infections on the fleshy leaves. Keep light levels subdued, promote sufficient air circulation and do not splash water from one plant onto another. Keep using a dilute (1/8th strength) fertilizer with every watering to develop the strongest roots and largest leaves prior to the winter flowering season.



Vandas.

Summer growing conditions are ideal for *Aerides*, *Ascocentrum*, *Rhynchostylis* and *Vanda* hybrids. Feed aggressively and provide high humidity. Try placing a rubber-topped plastic flower tube containing stale beer on a rigid, emerging new root (in the evening and remove in the morning so it doesn't burn). Rather quickly, the root will consume the beer and utilize its carbohydrate content, producing some remarkable growth responses.



ORCHID ADVENTURES



Orchid Adventures
RF Orchids Greenhouse
by [Sue Bottom](mailto:suebottom15@bellsouth.net), sbottom15@bellsouth.net

We always stop in to RF Orchids when we're in Homestead to see the beautiful grounds, the blooming orchids in trees and the fantastic greenhouses full of orchids. RF is well known for their vandaceous orchids though they grow a lot of other genera too. Often you'll get there after a new shipment of imports has arrived. There are rows and rows of plants to choose from in the three greenhouse sections.

Continued on page 12



ORCHID ADVENTURES



Continued from page 11

The friendly and helpful folks at RF frequently have drinks and treats for their visitors to enhance the experience. Don't miss an opportunity to visit this tropical delight. The greenhouses will tempt you to buy too much and then the beautiful grounds will reassure you that you've done the right thing because you really did have to have that orchid.



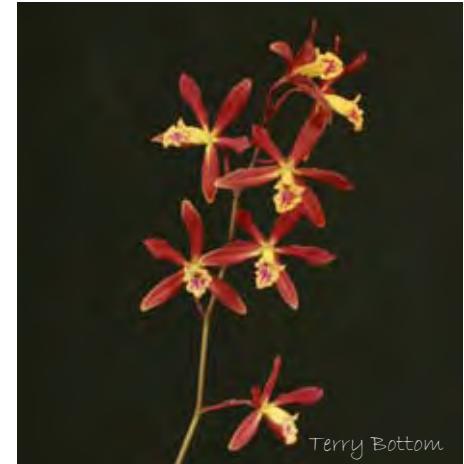
SHOW TABLE



Grower Harry & Celia McElroy
Bc. Little Mermaid 'Janet' AM/AOS



Grower Marv & Jan Ragan
Phrag. richteri



Grower Marv & Jan Ragan
Epl. Peaches McClain



Grower Sue Bottom
C. Pradit Spot



Grower Courtney Hackney
Paph. Helen Congleton 'Hackneau' AM/AOS



Grower Mike & Kaycee Heinz
Phal. pulchra



Grower Mike & Kaycee Heinz
Cadetia collina



SHOW TABLE



Terry Bottom

Grower Courtney Hackney
Lc. Sagarik Wax



Terry Bottom

Grower Sue Bottom
Mcp. brysiana



Terry Bottom

Grower Mike & Kaycee Heinz
Paraphalaenopsis Kimmy



Terry Bottom

Grower Sue Bottom
Wilmotteara Keith Phillips



Terry Bottom

Grower Sue Bottom
Lc. Empress Elizabeth x Lc. American Velvet



Terry Bottom

Grower Courtney Hackney
Paph. Jade Dragon

