



### CLUB NEWS



**Fred Clarke**

**Nov. 6, 2018 Monthly SAOS Meeting**  
by Janis Croft

**Welcome and Thanks.** Bob Schimmel opened the meeting at 7:05 pm with 72 attendees, including 9 guests. Bob thanked Dottie and Loretta for their goodies as well as Jeanette and Shirley for organizing the refreshments. He then reminded all to drop a dollar in the basket while enjoying their refreshments. Bob

encouraged all to vote for their favorite orchid.

**Club Business.** Fort Pierce and Deerfield Beach Orchid Shows are this month, check the SAOS website for more details. The 2018 Ace Repotting Clinics and Keiki Club activities will resume in the new year. Our new Keiki Club coordinator Doug Smith is working on next year's schedule and would like program ideas from our new growers. Contact Doug at [info@staugorchidsociety.org](mailto:info@staugorchidsociety.org) with your suggestions.

Bea Orendorff, our new Club Librarian, highlighted the book Greenhouse Gardening For Fun as a good read during our colder days. Send library requests to [info@staugorchidsociety.org](mailto:info@staugorchidsociety.org) and Bea will bring the item(s) to the next meeting. The library collection is listed on our [SAOS website](http://staugorchidsociety.org).

Our Sunshine Coordinator and Membership VP, Linda Stewart announced that she had a get well card for Mary Ann Bell who has been missed from our meetings due to a recent injury. She then asked for hands of all who have birthdays in Nov. and Dec. and Dianne Batchelder delivered 14 raffle tickets to the lucky people. If you know of anyone in need of a cheering up or get well card, let Linda know by emailing her at [info@staugorchidsociety.org](mailto:info@staugorchidsociety.org).

Sue Bottom announced that the By-Laws had a title change for the Secretary position to VP of Communications and a few other housekeeping edits. These



are posted on the website and she asked for a vote to approve the changes which was received and passed. Next the Nominating Committee presented the new Board and the membership again voted their approval. The 2019 Board Members are Tom Sullivan, President; Bill Gourley, Treasurer; Sue Bottom, VP Programs; Linda Stewart, VP Membership; Janis Croft, VP Communications; Dianne Batchelder, VP Events and Susan Smith, Bob Schimmel, Doug Smith, Directors at Large.

Dianne Batchelder announced that our Dec. 4 Holiday Party (starting at 6:30) will again be held at The Lutheran Church on U.S. 1. Remember to drive around to the back of the church to park. She also passed around a sign-up sheet for side dishes to accompany the Chicken and ork tenderloin dishes.

Sue Bottom showed the latest issue of Orchids from the AOS which had a substantial article by Courtney Hackney and was illustrated with the cover photo by Terry Bottom.

**Show Table.** Courtney started the Show Table by commenting on the variety of species on these two tables. He started by pointing out the old lineage of several plants including the St. Louis Botanical Garden's Cattleya bowringiana 'Tower Grove', an albescent form. He then had Art show his Epi. ciliare, a specimen from a plant that is almost 50 years old. Courtney pointed out the variety of cattleya flower colors from the blues, to yellow oranges, reds, and intense deep purples.

The table had fragrant Zygos and several summer blooming phalaenopsis which are fragrant. They do not like to be below 60 and will rebloom on the same inflorescence. There was a striking Angraecum leonis, a flower with a long nectary requiring a pollinator with very long tongue.

There were two Paphipedilums whose flowering season is almost over. This genus does not like high mineral content in their water, preferring rain water and frequent repotting.

**Continued on page 3**



# CLUB NEWS



## Upcoming Orchid Events

### November

- 10 Florida North-Central AOS Judging, 1 pm  
Clermont Judging Ctr, 849 West Ave.
- 10-11 Fort Pierce Orchid Society Show  
Fort Pierce Shrine Club
- 13 JOS Meeting, Catasetsums, 7 pm  
Fred Clarke, Sunset Valley Orchids
- 17-18 Deerfield Beach Orchid Society Show  
Safe Schools Institute, Boca Raton

### December

- 2? JOS Christmas Auction, 5:30 pm  
Orange Park Country Club  
2525 Country Club Blvd, Orange Park
- 4 SAOS Christmas Auction, 6:30 pm  
**We're meeting on our normal Tuesday night at a different location!**  
Memorial Lutheran Church  
3375 US 1 South, St. Aug 32086
- 8 Florida North-Central AOS Judging, 1 pm  
Clermont Judging Ctr, 849 West Ave.

### January 2019

- 5-6 Sarasota Orchid Society Show  
Sarasota Municipal Auditorium
- 8 JOS Meeting, Topic TBA, 7 pm  
Speaker TBA
- 9 SAOS Meeting, 6:30 pm  
**Changed meeting date from the 1st Tuesday to the 2nd Wednesday to accommodate Dave**  
Dave Off, Waldor Orchids  
Collecting Cattleyas
- 11-13 Tamiami International Orchid Festival  
Dade County Fair Expo Center
- 12 Florida North-Central AOS Judging, 1 pm  
Clermont Judging Ctr, 849 West Ave.
- 25-27 Fort Lauderdale Orchid Society Show  
War Memorial Auditorium

### February

- 2 SAOS at Ace Hardware, 9 am til 1 pm  
3050 US 1 S in St. Augustine  
Repotting and Plant Clinic
- 2-3 Venice Area Orchid Society Show  
Venice Community Center
- 5 SAOS Meeting, 6:30 pm  
Judging Plants on the Show Table  
Courtney Hackney and Eric Cavin
- 8-10 Greater Orlando Orchid Society Show  
Riverbanks Zoo&Botanical Garden  
Orlando Garden Club
- 8-10 South Carolina Orchid Society Show  
Riverbanks Zoo&Botanical Garden  
West Columbia, SC

### St. Augustine Orchid Society Organization

President	Bob Schimmel <a href="mailto:schimmelr55@bellsouth.net">schimmelr55@bellsouth.net</a>
Vice President Events	Dianne Batchelder <a href="mailto:ladydi9907@aol.com">ladydi9907@aol.com</a>
Vice President Membership	Linda Stewart <a href="mailto:lindstew@hotmail.com">lindstew@hotmail.com</a>
Vice President Programs	Sue Bottom <a href="mailto:sbottom15@gmail.com">sbottom15@gmail.com</a>
Secretary	Janis Croft <a href="mailto:croftie1984@gmail.com">croftie1984@gmail.com</a>
Treasurer	Bill Gourley <a href="mailto:wgourley@bellsouth.net">wgourley@bellsouth.net</a>
Directors at Large	Susan Smith <a href="mailto:2manysmiths@comcast.net">2manysmiths@comcast.net</a> Tom Sullivan <a href="mailto:tomjs91@gmail.com">tomjs91@gmail.com</a> Suzanne Susko <a href="mailto:suzsusks0@bellsouth.net">suzsusks0@bellsouth.net</a>
Exhibit Committee Chair	Janis Croft <a href="mailto:croftie1984@gmail.com">croftie1984@gmail.com</a>
Librarian	Penny Halyburton <a href="mailto:phalyburton@comcast.net">phalyburton@comcast.net</a>
Newsletter Editors Webmasters	Sue and Terry Bottom <a href="mailto:sbottom15@gmail.com">sbottom15@gmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:bottom406@gmail.com">bottom406@gmail.com</a>



# CLUB NEWS

---

## Continued from page 1

Bc. Windward Flare had white flowers with a purple lip that was quite striking. The Blc. Copper Queen has a beautiful lip with myriad of maroon spots. Courtney said as the flowers age they change color so a well grown plant will have flowers of many shades of color while in bloom.

A well grown Bulbophyllum Elizabeth Ann with numerous dangling inflorescences was stunning. Check out the photos of our show table examples at the end of the newsletter and on the SAOS website.

**SAOS Program.** Courtney introduced our evenings speaker, Fred Clarke from Sunset Valley Orchids who spoke on "Becoming an 80 Percentile Grower." The two met when Fred came to talk to the North Carolina Orchid Societies. Courtney said he has always been fascinated by Fred's hybrids, including his black flowered Fredclarkeara After Dark. Fred thanked Courtney and then passed around a sign up sheet for those that want to be on his mailing list to receive special announcements and random newsletters.

Fred then proceeded to explain to us the top four things he believes are essential in growing orchids: watering (most important), light, temperature and proper repotting. These four items together are responsible for 80% of your orchid growing success. He proceeded to tell us that the things he was going to tell us we probably already know but perhaps have not focused on. First truth about orchids: they live on sides of trees which means the orchid is well drained, the roots are well drained and dry out fast, leaves and roots are accustomed to lots of air movement, the plants don't receive a lot of nutrients from the side of a tree, and therefore the roots are quite good at capturing moisture and nutrients quickly.

Fred stated that watering and fertilizing are the same thing to the orchid plant. The first watering practice is irrigation frequency which one determines by water holding capacity of potting media, size of the pot and the plants requirements. It's best to pot in similar media throughout your growing area so your watering occurs for most of your plants at the same time. The quantity one uses to water depends upon how fast the pot drains. You want to flush 30-35% of the container's volume through the pot rapidly or at a rate that is faster than the water drains out. This pushes the air around your media out and then when drained allows air to come back in. He also fertilizes every time he waters using a weak solution of 1/2 tsp/gal. The first water an orchid receives in nature is loaded with nutrients so your first water should have fertilizer. Once a month, irrigate your plants heavily, wait an hour, then water heavily again with no fertilizer. Another obvious truth: plants in active growth get more watering and those in a rest period get less (water and fertilizer).

The type of fertilizer he recommends depends upon your water quality. If you have a high pH, then you would choose 20-20-20. Pure water sources would be a 15-5-15 or 13-3-15 Cal Mag fertilizer.

Orchids grow in filtered, and direct sunlight with seasonal changes. In the summer, the light is usually 10,000 foot candles where in the winter it drops to 7,000 fc. Fred uses 75% shade cloth in the summer and changes to 55% in winter. He makes his shade cloth changes in May and October. If you are growing indoors, it is best to use growing lights and to change duration they are turned on to simulate the day length outside. Someone in the audience suggested downloading an application for your phone that is a light meter.

Fred uses orchid bark and perlite as his media. The bark provides organic matter, and also pH buffering. It improves cation exchange and supports microbial activity. Orchid bark and perlite are relatively inexpensive and don't decay rapidly (in California). He matches the bark size to the pot size, e.g. smaller pot, smaller bark. Fred normally mixes bark to perlite in a ratio of 3:1 but if the plant requires more water he increases the ratio to 4:1.

Repotting occurs when new roots are showing (not two weeks later). He showed a photo where the roots were barely 1/2" long as an example of when to repot. Select a pot size to allow for 3 years growth. Do not damage the new roots with rough removal of old media either by using hands, forceful flushing, or poking with chop sticks. Green root tips damage easily and need to be gently placed in pot and filled with media using a gentle tapping to get the media to settle around the roots. Don't push down. Last thing to do is date the new plant tag with the date the roots first appeared so you will know about when you will need to repot again.

Fred closed by reminding us all that we are curators of our orchid collections. As curators we have the multi-tasking job of being responsible for the care, selection, organizing and display of our art (orchids). It also means we have the responsibility of discarding plants we no longer enjoy. Once we do this, we will have more space to rearrange, showcase our favorites and find new orchids to grow.

**Meeting Conclusion.** Tom Sullivan announced the Member's Choice Award as Steve Hawkin's Bulbophyllum Elizabeth Ann. The evening concluded with the Silent Auction winners and Raffle table. Thanks to all the helpful hands that stayed to reset the tables and chairs and clean up the room.

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





# CLUB NEWS



## December 4 Monthly Meeting Christmas Orchid 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. Hope to see you there!

- Our annual Christmas orchid auction is scheduled for our normal first Tuesday meeting night, December 4.
- We will meet at the Memorial Lutheran Church (where we held our picnic). Drive around to the back of the church and park, close to the doors to the dining hall.
- We will 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 sodas, water, iced tea and coffee, but if you enjoy a cuppa with your meal, feel free!
- One thing that has not changed is all the good food. Dianne is planning chicken and pork tenderloin main courses.
- Bring a dish to round out the meal. Salads, potato and pasta side dishes, vegetable side dishes and desserts have been big favorites in years gone by.
- We will finish the evening with an orchid auction where you can bid on a nice variety of orchids, most of them handpicked by Courtney on his recent trip to Hawaii.

**When:** Tuesday, December 4, 6:30 til 9 pm

**Where:** Memorial Lutheran Church  
3375 US 1 South, St. Aug 32086

### American Orchid Society Corner

November 7, 8:30-9:30 pm, Everyone Invited  
[Greenhouse Chat Orchid, Q&A - Ron McHatton](#)

November 14, 8:30-9:30 pm, Everyone Invited  
[Los Pleurothallidinae y sus polinizadores](#)

November 15, 8:30-9:30 pm, Everyone Invited  
[The Orchids of Ecuador - Niles Dusdieker](#)

*Orchids* Magazine this month: [request free issue](#)

Genus of the Month: *Corybas* by Tom Miranda

Blue Cattleyas, Courtney Hackney

History of McBean's Orchids, Norbert Dank

Novice: Leaf Spotting Fungi, Sue Bottom

[Photos of Latest AOS Awards](#)

## October Keiki Club Get Together Bob and Yvonne Schimmel's House

We had a dozen familiar faces at the Keiki Club get-together talking about fall preparations.

**Clean Up your Plants.** Use the delightful fall months to spend some time with your plants: clean them up, remove dead flower spikes, etc. - **Check for Critters.** You want to make sure that you are only bringing in your plants, and no critters. Spray them with a hose end sprayer set to flat to give them a bath and clean off leaves with lemon juice or white vinegar to remove that messy build up on the leaves. **Ants, Snails and Cockroaches in Pots.** You don't want to introduce ants and roaches into your porch or home for the winter. Mix up a jug of liquid Sevin and water (1 tsp/gal) and pour through all your pots to eliminate these pests. **Sucking Insects.** Remove sheaths to reduce the number of places that insects have to hide. Watch for signs of scale and mealy bugs, any kind of white fuzzy mass. You can treat small spots with rubbing alcohol or spray all the plant surfaces with an insecticide. Better yet, add 6 tsp of Tree and Shrub (1.47% imidacloprid) to your Sevin jug and pour through the potting mix. The systemic imidacloprid will be absorbed through the roots and kill scale and mealybugs from within.

## Keiki Club on Holiday Hiatus

The days are getting shorter and cooler and your orchids are thinking about taking a winter nap. Make sure they are protected in the event of cold winter weather and then focus on enjoying this glorious thing we call life. Enjoy your friends and family during the holiday months. We will start talking about orchids again in the new year. Until then, enjoy every moment!

## Nature Scapes Grand Reopening featuring The Orchid Specialist, Steve Hawkins

Come meet the new owners and join the fun! Steve Hawkins, The Orchid Specialist, will be giving a talk on basic orchid culture at 2 p.m. followed by an orchid raffle, personal consultations and a repotting clinic until 4 p.m. The orchid program will repeat on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of each month for continued support. Naturescape will have unusual orchids for sale in bloom and some out of bloom specials. Also featuring live music from several genres, "Light Yoga" session with Eric Grant, artists, assorted vendors and face painting. Any proceeds will go to help the Baiata Bird Sanctuary, a nonprofit organization located at Nature Scapes. For more information visit [NatureScapesOnline.com](#).

**Where:** 313 Old Brick Rd., Bunnell, FL 32110, **When:** 2 - 4 pm



www.aos.org

# ORCHIDS

THE BULLETIN OF THE AMERICAN ORCHID SOCIETY

VOL. 87 NO. 11 November 2018



*Lc. Indigo Mist 'Cynosure' HCC/AOS*

© Terry Botto





# CULTIVATION

## Orchid Questions & Answers

by Sue Bottom,  
sbottom15@gmail.com



**Q1.** I bought this orchid on eBay. Is this anthracnose on the leaf, and if so, what should I use. I don't want to spend a fortune on chemicals.



**A2.** The roots look fine, and I'm guessing you can pick up the plant by the cane with no wobble in the pot, so the roots are nicely established. If water doesn't drain easily from the pot, the sphagnum is probably packed tight and perhaps is getting older, so just be careful with watering until it is time to repot. I would let it bloom out and then wait til you see the beginnings of new roots, and then put it into your mix of choice. You could pull it out of the plastic pot now and just drop it into a slightly larger clay pot too, until it is time to do the real repotting.

**Q3.** I can't identify this strange growth at the growing medium level. I have been growing orchids for several years, but this has stumped me. Can I still properly mount it and regrow the roots?



**A3.** That looks like a mushroom growing on some decaying bark, and the orange spores are sitting on top of the media. I suspect it is time to put that cattleya in some fresh mix!

**Q 1**



**A1.** Yes, that's anthracnose, you can tell by the little dark dots between the darker bands, they are the fungal spores. Cut the discoloration off the leaves about an inch below the discoloration with a single edged razor blade. If the eBay seller sent this plant with obvious anthracnose, don't buy from them again.

**Q2.** I got a dendrobium last week from the local farmers market. It has lovely blooms! But the root/pot is packed tight with sphagnum moss, and I worry it will lead to root rot if it's not repotted soon. Water is definitely not draining easily from the pot, it just gets sucked into the medium like a sponge.

However, I understand that dendrobiums are sensitive to repotting and it should only be done when new shoots are sprouting. The plant is currently in full bloom. What would you suggest in this situation?

**Q 2**



# CULTIVATION



## Natural Pest Control

Courtney's Growing Tips

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



*Pest chewed on orchid bloom*

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?

*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 2010.*





# CULTIVATION

## Beginners Start Here

by Ken Slump, reprinted with permission  
courtesy of the American Orchid Society

If you are new to the orchid hobby and perhaps feel you are not enjoying the success with your plants that you had hoped for, read through these suggestions and see if you can find an idea or two that will help you turn your hobby in the right direction.

1. Start accumulating an orchid library. If you do not already own some, find books on growing orchids. Purchase them and read them. You can shop for new titles at a local bookstore or on line at [www.aos.org](http://www.aos.org), the Society's site that offers links to Amazon.com and OrchidsBooks.com.

The best book choices for beginners are often the comparatively inexpensive paperback volumes that are frequently part of a series produced by garden supply manufacturers. You are looking for books that will introduce you to the major groups of orchids, and briefly explain the general growing conditions that they need to be successfully cultivated in a home environment or hobby greenhouse. Such books usually include chapters explaining how different types of orchid plants grow, how and when to repot them, and some basic information about watering, fertilization and pest control.

Do not overlook a visit to your nearest local used book store as well. Or visit used-book shops on line and travel afar from the comfort of your own home. Many useful books written on orchid growing in recent decades are now out of print. The techniques for growing orchids have not changed much of late. Nomenclature, however, has changed. There may be some unfamiliar and outdated plant names encountered in some of the older titles, particularly if you are enough of an orchid newcomer to be familiar only with the orchid nomenclature of the last couple of years. Still, many of these books contain much valuable information, and some of them are, to me, irreplaceable.

It is possible that books have become obsolete for some who may prefer to gather their information via the information super highway known as the Internet. I am sure that can work just as well, but I wonder if hopping between Web sites and jumping in and out of various chat rooms and forums provides the clarity and focused point of view that a good author or editor can lend to a well-written book, especially if you are a beginner.

2. Establish a good and sensible basic cultural regime for your orchids. By reading and gathering information, you should gain an appreciation for the environment necessary to grow orchids and should determine how you will supply those conditions for your plants.



*Orchid shows provide good opportunities to view flowering plants and meet others with a passion for orchids.*

I would recommend that you make a decision about the growing medium you intend to use for your plants. Most growers favor some type of mix. The best growing medium for you will depend to a large extent on your environment for growing orchids. The type of pot you use, how you care for your plants, and even the area of the country in which you live also affect which type of growing mix, and what ratio of ingredients is best for you.

Start with a basic or standard medium that can often be purchased premixed. Vary it only as you add orchids with special growing requirements or determine a problem with your plants that you feel certain is related to the conditions in the root zone.

When getting started, it is a good idea to make a schedule for routine tasks such as watering and fertilizing. Good growers eventually come to appreciate when it is time to give their plants an extra watering or skip a day or two, but in the early stages, you will probably avoid the disasters associated with overwatering if you stick to the calendar. At the risk of overgeneralization, I would suggest that watering twice a week is sufficient.

3. Check your plants frequently. If you are like most who are bitten by the orchid bug, you will find yourself spending time with your plants daily. This is a good habit to develop. Resist the temptation to water your plants on your daily inspections or you will soon be looking forward to buying new plants. Instead, take time to carefully look over the plants and you will learn much from them. You will begin to appreciate when the plants are in active growth and when they are resting. You will learn to marvel at the development of orchid roots and the formation of new leads, leaves and flowers.

Keep a vigilant eye out for signs of pests and disease. Be sure to periodically examine the underside of foliage and

**Continued on page 9**





# CULTIVATION

Continued from page 8



*Spending time with your orchid collection allows you to go over the plants to make sure they are receiving the proper care needed for growth and flowering.*

turn plants to examine the parts that are turned from your view — that is where the pests always seem to hide. Learn to recognize the signs of a plant under stress and try to determine how to modify the environment to alleviate that stress. At the same time, appreciate which of your plants are thriving, and consider why they are doing well.

4. Do not overcrowd your collection of orchid plants. Crowded plants suffer for sufficient light and the good air movement that produces healthy orchid plants. They are more prone to diseases, and pest problems spread more quickly among them. I am not saying that your plants should never touch, but you should be able to recognize each of your orchid plants as an individual when you look upon them. Plants with sufficient space around them are not only healthier, but are also easier to examine and maintain.

5. Avoid acquiring too many different types of orchids too quickly. The orchid family is a huge one, unquestionably with something for everyone. When starting out, stick with some of the more popular and basic types. These are the ones you will find discussed in your beginner orchid books. After you gain success with those you can branch out into some of the more unusual and esoteric types. For the first year or two, it is a good idea to learn to grow the popular sorts and thus gain an appreciation for what might be called “basic orchid culture”

6. Let your orchid success lead you to new orchid acquisitions. As your experience with orchids accumulates, you will likely observe that some plants in your collection are out-performing others. Each grower seems to have a knack for cultivating certain kinds of orchids. When you discover yours, go with it. Seek additional orchid species or hybrids of the same or similar type. You may want to research a hybrid orchid’s lineage and look to its parents or descendants for compatible plants. Although this approach to building a successful collection may seem simple and

obvious, far too many doggedly insist on attempting to grow orchids that do not succeed for them and eventually reach the point of being sufficiently discouraged to give up the hobby entirely.

7. Purchase blooming-sized orchid plants whenever possible. Small, young orchid plants may take several years to reach flowering size, and it is likely that flowering will occur only if growing conditions are ideal. In most cases, it is easier to sustain a mature plant than it is to nurture a young one and you will not have to wonder if your plant is failing to bloom because it is immature or whether growing conditions are unfavorable.

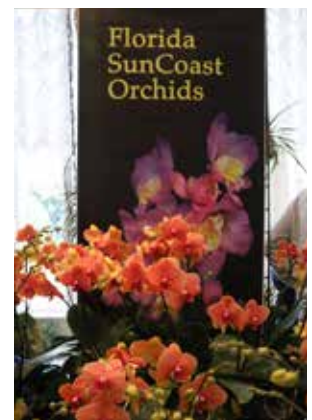
The best way to know a plant is flowering size is to purchase it in flower, although a mature plant that has bloomed will often bear evidence of that. Buying a plant in bloom also guarantees that the flower you get is the one you are expecting, as some orchid species and hybrids exhibit considerable variability.

Blooming-size orchid plants are unquestionably more expensive than their juvenile counterparts, but I think they are worth it. This is particularly true for beginners who may not have the patience to wait for a few years for their orchids to start producing flowers.

8. Keep some records on your orchid collection. It is the best way to help monitor your progress and assist you in keeping up with routine tasks.

Record keeping does not have to be extensive or involve a lot of technology to be useful. A few basic bits of information kept on a pot label often suffices. Most importantly, you need to have the name of the plant written legibly and indelibly. Other useful data might include the date the plant was acquired, where it was purchased, when it was in flower, the number of flowers it produced and the date the plant was last repotted. Some growers also like to keep track of the fertilizer schedule for their plants as well as any treatments the plant may have received for pests and diseases.

This may seem like a lot of information for a plastic pot label, so some growers maintain card files or small databases on the plants in their collections. The amount of information you record is a personal decision, but at the very least, in addition to the plant’s name, you should keep track of its repotting date to help prioritize your efforts at repotting time.



*Buying plants in flower lets you see the quality of the flower.*

**Continued on page 10**



# CULTIVATION

## Continued from page 9

9. Admit your failures. Cull your collection regularly of those plants that are struggling and slowly dying. Many declining orchids seem to be able to cling to life for months or years, yet I do not think I have ever seen anyone bring one back from the brink of death to become a thriving, healthy specimen. Do not try to pass off such plants to a friend or unsuspecting novice, or worse yet, donate them to the divisions table at your orchid society to resell or give away.

These plants need to go to the trash or compost heap, but try to learn from your mistakes. Attempt to determine why the plant declined. Perhaps it was a cultural problem that you have now solved so that you might succeed in the future with the same or a similar orchid plant. If, on the other hand, you suspect that the orchid failed due to limitations of your growing environment or some inability on your part to understand how to grow it, you would perhaps be well advised to avoid adding that sort of orchid to your collection in the future, at least until you are able to learn more and modify your cultural practices.

10. Join your nearest orchid society, one of the best places to learn about growing orchids. There you should find all levels of orchid growing expertise and experts who can advise you on how to grow orchids well in the particular area in which you live. You can find a list of affiliated societies on line at the AOS Web site ([www.aos.org](http://www.aos.org)) under "Affiliates."

Do not be discouraged if your first visit to an orchid society meeting feels a bit like a visit abroad. Orchid growers speak their own language and it takes a bit of time to understand and appreciate some of the terminology and nomenclature.

Orchid societies vary in their operation and organization, but most are welcoming of new members. Be sure to arrive a bit early when you make your first appearance at an orchid society meeting. Make sure you introduce yourself and let some of the members know you are new and interested in learning more about how to grow orchids successfully and are interested in how their organization might enhance that effort.

Thriving societies usually have a variety of activities that occur during the course of their meetings. Many have special events and sessions for novice members, too. As you become better acquainted and involved in the organization, you will likely make lasting friendships and find opportunities to participate in activities such as orchid shows and visits to orchid growers, both commercial and private.

While it seems harder and harder in today's world to find time to join and participate in a special interest club such as a local orchid society, most who join and get involved will tell you it is a thoroughly rewarding experience. If you are not already a member, you should also join the American Orchid Society ([www.aos.org](http://www.aos.org)).

11. Seek answers to your questions and solutions to your problems. People can and do successfully grow orchids in residential environments in an amazing variety of ways. If you are not enjoying success, there are individuals and groups out there that should be able to help. Look to orchid societies, libraries, greenhouses and garden centers, botanic gardens and the Internet for help. Gather information and try to sort out the best of it, being aware that too much information can be more confusing than too little. Perhaps the best advice for a struggling orchidist might be to simplify things as much as possible, both in the number and kinds of plants being cultivated, as well as to simplify their cultural practices. Many orchids, indeed, thrive on neglect.

12. Visit an orchid show. You can locate one near you by checking the calendar in Orchids magazine or looking on the AOS Web site. A bit of a drive will be worth it. At the show you will have opportunities to meet and learn from orchid enthusiasts, to see and acquire beautiful orchids and to be inspired. It is virtually guaranteed to renew your enthusiasm for your orchid hobby.



*Inspecting plants enables growers to watch for signs of pests and disease as well as other ailments, such as desiccation.*

*This article appeared in the American Orchid Society Orchids magazine, in March 2007 (Vol.76-3, pp. 178-180).*





# CULTIVATION

## Transition to Winter

by Sue Bottom,  
sbottom15@gmail.com



The shorter day length, less intense sunlight and cooler temperatures typical of fall cause changes to the growth rates of your orchids. Many orchids rest during the cool weather, so they enjoy being watered only a third to a half as frequently as during the growing season. Let the pots dry out an extra day or two between watering, checking the mix a few inches into the pot before watering to see if the mix is approaching dryness. The need for mineral nutrition is likewise reduced, and some growers discontinue fertilizing altogether during the winter months while others apply fertilizer at half the summer rate. Most orchids resent repotting during these periods of slower growth and will not quickly reestablish. Delay repotting until you notice active root growth unless there are extenuating circumstances such that the plant might not survive without an emergency repotting. This general approach to orchid care during the cooler months works for most of the more commonly grown orchids, like cattleyas, the oncidium intergenerics, bulbophyllums, many dendrobiums, phalaenopsis and vandas.

Some orchid varieties may not survive or bloom for you if you water and fertilize them the same way as you do the majority of your orchids. Catasetums and some dendrobiums, lycastes, calanthes and habenarias transition into a period of dormancy during which they require no or almost no water to sustain themselves. These types of orchids hail from regions with a decided wet and dry season. They endure extended periods of drought by shedding their leaves, surviving on the energy stored in their pseudobulbs and corms until the rainy season returns.

Many new catasetum growers wonder how to care for their plants during the fall transition to winter. A simple guide is to reduce watering frequency and fertilizing starting with the fall equinox. The obvious sign of impending dormancy is leaf yellowing and dropping. If leaves are still green by Thanksgiving, restrict all fertilizer, and if they are still green by Christmas, discontinue all watering to force dormancy.

Once all the leaves have dropped, move the plants to a place where they will not receive any water. If you intend to repot the plant, make it a habit to look at it every week during dormancy.

The ideal time to repot a Catasetum is the moment you see the beginning of new growth at the base of the plant. The location of the new growth tells you how to orient the plant in the pot so it will have the maximum amount of space to grow. If you delay repotting until the growth gets larger, you risk knocking off the tender new growth or breaking the new roots during the repotting process. After repotting, resist the urge to water until the new growth is about 5 inches tall. The plant will be fine living on its energy reserves, you will not have to worry about water getting into the whorl of new growth and rotting it, and the back bulbs will plump up when you resume watering.



Many of us grow dendrobiums, a diverse genus of orchids with varying cultural needs. Some can be grown with your cattleyas while others require a coolish, dryish winter. It is helpful to segregate or use colored tags to identify the ones requiring different winter treatment. As a gross simplification, the spring blooming dendrobiums often enjoy a winter rest while the summer and fall bloomers grow well next to your cattleyas. For the ones that enjoy a deep winter rest, eliminate fertilizer after the fall equinox and cut back watering after Thanksgiving to perhaps twice a month.

The website contains links to specific cultural recommendations for a variety of orchids. The Seasonal Tips page addresses watering during each season and the fall preparations for winter. The Culture by Genus page addresses the specific needs of a variety of orchids. Feel free to ask any questions you may have. Simply send emails with descriptive pictures to [info@staugorchidsociety.org](mailto:info@staugorchidsociety.org).





# ORCHID ADVENTURES



## Orchtoberfest at EFG Orchids

George and Paula Hausermann had the nursery decked out for Halloween and George Sr. cooked brats and German potato and cucumber salads for the shoppers. George has an incredible variety of unusual tropical plants to tempt you as well as a good selection of orchids. There were plenty of blooming phals and oncidium intergenerics, along with some nice cattleyas and unusual species. We also enjoyed the new Koi pond. George 'the Toolman' is always building something!

Link to all Pictures. <https://flic.kr/s/aHsmpteF2C>





# SHOW TABLE



**Grower Linda Stewart**  
*Pleurothallis allenii*



**Grower Suzanne Susko**  
*Phal. Tassanee Jongpamkerng*



**Grower Sue McDowell**  
*Rodrumnia Bravo 'Nalo Beauty'*



**Grower Steve Hawkins**  
*Cym. Milton Carpenter*



**Grower John Van Brocklin**  
*Paph. Cherry Cider x*  
*Paph. Raingreen's Arrow*



**Grower Glo MacDonald**  
*Rhrds. Memoria Suranaree*



**Grower Art Russell**  
*C. intermedia f. sanguinea*



# SHOW TABLE



**Grower Courtney Hackney**  
*C. patinii*



**Grower Steve Hawkins**  
*Bulb. Elizabeth Ann 'Buckleberry' FCC/AOS*



**Grower Sue Bottom**  
*Habenaria rhodocheila 'Nora'*



**Grower Tom & Dottie Sullivan**  
*Phal. KS Happy Eagle*



**Grower Gail Turner**  
*Z. Advance Australia 'H.O.F' AM/AOS*



**Grower Sue Bottom**  
*Pot. Jessie Lee 'Hawaii'*

Link to all Pictures. <https://flic.kr/s/aHsmvtR27H>

