



St. Augustine Orchid Society

www.staugorchidsociety.org

Try New Things – 2026 Tricks

by Sue Bottom, sbottom15@gmail.com

Orchid addicts are always searching for some new trick or snake oil that will make their orchids grow better and bloom more profusely. When Alan Koch of Gold Country Orchids was in town, he gave me some suggestions for cleaning up my growing area: pool shock to remove algae and molds from walkways and 30% vinegar for weed control.



Pool shock for an easy way to remove algae and mold from under benches and along walkways.

Pool Shock. You can use a pump up or battery operated sprayer to spray bleach or pool chlorine under benches and in walkways, and it works although you inevitably end up with bleach stains on your clothes. Alan suggested an easier fix, pool shock which comes in 1 lb bags of a granular product with the active ingredient sodium dichloro-s-triazinetriene (dichlor). Do comparative price shopping, Amazon had the best price. In addition to removing algae and mold, I suspect latent virus and fungal and bacterial spores will be suppressed if not eliminated.

Alan suggested wetting the floor, then putting a very light sprinkling of pool shock over the affected area and spreading it around with a broom. It can be washed away with water after 15 minutes and voila, clean concrete walkways. It is a respiratory irritant, so be careful when applying it to avoid inhalation. It works great on the concrete, particularly after spreading with a broom. Harder to get even applications on gravel so multiple spreads are required for good coverage, perhaps spreading around with a rake would help. George Hausermann said he applies it with a whirl hand-powered spreader.



Pool shock and a broom on a prewetted surface cleaned up walkways, no slipping hazard!



It's hard to spread evenly on a gravel surface, so multiple spreads may be required.



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30% Vinegar. Alan also suggested spraying weeds with a high strength vinegar as a more organic way of eliminating weeds from your growing area than using herbicides that can be harmful to pets. Using a pump up or battery operated sprayer makes it easy to distribute the vinegar, although try to stand upwind because that high strength vinegar is also a respiratory irritant. This high strength vinegar is available from Home Depot and Lowe's by the gallon.



Less toxic alternative to herbicides for killing weeds



Weeds the day before and the day after spraying with vinegar

Our speakers have lots of hands on experience growing orchids and they are always willing to share them. When speakers spend the night at our place after a meeting, we get plenty of one on one time, and talk orchids into the wee hours of the morning. We ply them with wine and soon their secrets are ours!