



Next Meeting:
July, 1

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HOW TO GROW ORCHIDS IN THE HEAT

Dotty Woodson has been growing orchids since 1973. She started with a 120 sq. ft. greenhouse and now has a 3,000 sq. ft. greenhouse on one acre garden at D & B Orchids, 5608 Boat Club Road, Fort Worth, TX.

Dotty has presented orchid programs to orchid growers and gardeners in many states and countries. She has written articles about orchid culture for many newspapers and magazines, appeared on television and radio shows, produced orchid videos and contributed orchid material and photographs for several books. Woodson's DVD "Growing Orchids Made Easy with Dotty" is available through the Texas A&M AgriLife Bookstore.

Woodson is an Extension Program Specialist for Water Resources for Texas A&M Extension. Woodson started with Extension in May 1995 as a County Extension Agent in Tarrant County. Woodson has a B.S. and M.S. horticulture degrees and a doctoral degree in Agricultural Education, Communication, and Leadership. She is a Certified Nursery Professional, Licensed Irrigator, Certified Pesticide Applicator, and a Rainwater Harvesting Professional and Inspector.

Dotty appears weekly on NBC DFW Sunday Morning News to discuss water and landscape issues, and, of course, orchids.



DALLAS JUDGING CENTER

Nancy Cropp

AOS Dallas Judging Center June 9, 2018

Eleven plants were entered for consideration, no awards given.

At this Semi-Annual Business Meeting the Center voted unanimously to recommend to AOS the elevation from Student to Associate for Tim Carr and from Associate to Accredited for Daniel Callahan. The AOS will vote on these at its Fall Meeting. Congratulations Tim and Dan!

ORCHIDS 101

*Kathi McKenzie
& Lorna Kissling*



Orchids 101 classes are tailored to the beginning orchid grower. Our topic this time:

“Q&A”

We will meet in the greenhouse at 2:00 for 30 minutes so we can discuss that and also get all questions answered in time for the meeting at 2:30.

WHERE HAVE ALL THE POLLINATORS GONE?

July is fast approaching and the Hexalectris survey at Cedar Ridge is in full swing. The Citizen Scientist survey (led by Stephanie Varnum, North Texas Master Naturalists) is a rare opportunity for local orchid lovers to participate in orchid conservation efforts. Developing a love and respect for nature's wonders is the bedrock of conservation. We protect and preserve what we love and understand, so it is vital to develop an awareness of the world in which these unique plants thrive.

Here in Texas we are fortunate to have several local species, such as the *nidita*, *spicata*, and *arizonica*. During this, the third week of the survey, the *Hexalectris warnockii*, perhaps the most beautiful of Texas orchid species, is taking center stage. Our team of 7 who participated in the survey on Jun 19 tagged over 75 individual spikes, ranging from 1 cm to 25 cm tall. Just one short week ago, we tagged only 40, so we can see they are starting the most visibly

active part of their life cycle, rapidly emerging from the limestone-rich soil which is their habitat.

The sight of an open *Hexalectris warnockii* flower is enough to remind us of why this species is the symbol of our South West Regional Orchid Growers Association, centered in Texas. This species was named after Dr. Barton Warnock, who collected it in 1937 in what is now called the Big Bend National Park in West Texas. We are fortunate to have this beautiful orchid here in Dallas County, as there are only 8 other counties (according to Joe Liggio's *Wild orchid of Texas*) where the *Hexalectris warnockii* is found. Needless to say, it is considered rare. The limestone soils and the cedars of Cedar Ridge combine to make an ideal habitat for this little gem of a plant.

This year (2018) the mission of the Citizen Scientist Survey has an additional emphasis, which is to look for pollinators, particularly now as the blooms start to open. Only one of the spikes tagged today had open flowers, meaning that they are just now starting to show their beauty and appeal to pollinators.

Finding and observing the pollinator of this species is no easy task. Recent history from Stepha-



Hexalectris warnockii

ORCHID CONSERVATION UPDATE

by Charles
and Trudy Hess

nie Varnum's documentation shows pollination having occurred on only 2% - 3% of the emerged spikes. One would expect that as the flowers open, the pollinators would appear, but to my knowledge, the identity of the actual pollinator is not known. Patience is the name of the game here. In time a survey participant will catch a pollinator in the act, and with luck, will have a camera at the ready. Then we will have more complete knowledge of this orchid's life cycle.

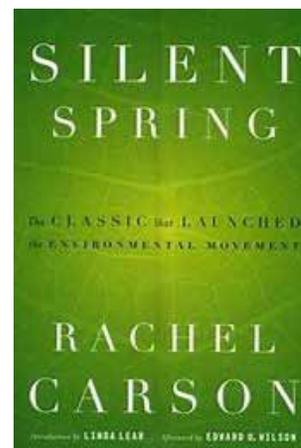
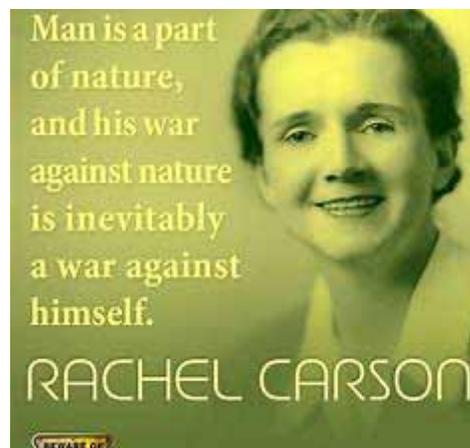
In the orchid world, a classic example of patience was finding the pollinator for the "Darwin orchid", or *Angraecum sesquipedale*. It was unknown for decades how this orchid was pollinated. But finally, with the development of low light photography, a dedicated scientist was able to capture the *Xanthopan morgani praedicta* moth feeding at night, using its 12-inch proboscis to reach the nectar in the equally long nectary of this Madagascar orchid.

The plight of pollinators is much in the news these days with the recently alarming reports from Germany that the insect population count is down 40%. (<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/insect-ldquo-armageddon-rdquo-5-crucial-questions-answered/>)

This is an alarming development. Insects are an essential part of a healthy ecosystem. As an analogy, imagine what would happen if 40% of the gears in your grandfather clock disappeared. Would you expect that clock to function? Nature works the same way; all the parts must be in place, for life to go on. If the insects perish, birds will lose their food supply. And on it goes. A frightening prospect, to say the least.

Along with the example of the grandfather clock, we have a 50-year old classic book, still entirely relevant today. It is Rachel Carson's 1962 classic *Silent Spring*, which first introduced the world to the interconnectedness of all the "gears" of nature. Carson first alerted us to the danger of the rapid development and use of new lethal biocides. These products, which initially promised to be the panacea for all agricultural pest control, far outstretched the chemical industry's research on their detrimental effects on our ecosystem. It was through Carson's research and writing that the world became aware of the destructive impact of DDT on our planet's ecosystem. As a result, DDT was eventually banned in most countries.

Unfortunately, just like the grandfather clocks, Carson's warning chimes for the destruction of our environment have been silenced to the point of being forgotten. The



Rachael Carsons of today are still risking life and career to sound environmental alarms, particularly

on matters critical to protecting our food crop pollinators. A recent interview¹ with Andrew Kimbrell, Executive Director of the Center for Food Safety, explains the dangers to our food supply, particularly the endangerment of pollinators, and the prevalence of genetically modified crops, which make up a huge proportion of our agricultural products.

Kimbrell explains how former food crops have been turned into commodities by the agricultural industry. These crops, grown for feeding cattle, hogs and chickens, are routinely sprayed with vast amounts of pesticides and herbicides. In the process of applying these poisonous substances, many important elements of the food chain also perish, including the plants which attract and feed the pollinators. It is not an over-simplification to say that without the work of pollinators, humans cannot survive.

¹ The entire interview can be heard on *The Ralph Nader Radio Hour*, June 16, 2018, available on iTunes, Stitcher and other formats.

ORCHID GROWING TIPS

by
Courtney Hackney

A monthly growers
advice column by
Courtney Hackney.
Hackneau@comcast.
net

This column was written in humid coastal North Carolina and Florida, and the advice given should be adjusted to our climate.

DRY HEAT AND THE ROACH TRICK

Once again, we have high temperatures and low humidity. Window-sill growers and those with greenhouses are experiencing the same phenomenon as air conditioners strip moisture from the air to keep us cool inside, while daily heating outside lowers humidity in greenhouses. July is also the month when light intensity peaks.

How well your orchids tolerate this time of the year depends on how well you have prepared them over the previous winter and spring. A good root system allows your orchids to absorb and store water making extremes tolerable now. Pay careful attention to small seedlings or newly repotted orchids, which have the least tolerance for extremes. Placing orchids with potential water stress in lower light can help them tolerate the lack of water as they grow new roots. A little extra water might also be necessary, but high heat can encourage rots of various kinds.

A problem last summer that left some of my favorite cattleyas vulnerable to desiccation this summer was finally solved with a simple trick. The problem was

most acute on cattleyas newly repotted or on those that only get new roots once a year, e.g. many bifoliate cattleyas. Large, roaches (Palmetto bugs if you are from Florida) were eating new roots at night as they emerged from new growths, effectively killing the root growth for the year.

Growing in lava rock has been a success except for this issue. Attempts to kill roaches by drenching with a solution of liquid Sevin were only moderately successful, since the large spaces between chunks of rock provided a refuge for at least a few roaches.

The only obvious alternatives were to either switch to a finer medium or use a very strong pesticide that might damage orchid roots too. What worked was to squeeze all of the water out of a handful of damp New Zealand sphagnum and to shove the moss under the newest growth before new roots emerged. Not only did this prevent roach damage to new roots, but roots, once in the sphagnum, branched and quickly grew out of the moss into the rock below. It has the added benefit of providing an easy way to know when to

water. When the moss is very dry it is time to water.

The plan will be to remove the moss next year as I curate my collection and decide which orchids to repot, which to keep, and which to discard. Curating one's orchid collection is one of the most difficult facets of orchid growing. Hobbyists new to growing orchids often do not have to deal with this until they figure out how to grow and multiply their orchids and also run out of space, which happens quickly once the first problem is solved.

Extra divisions and spare orchids are never hard to get rid of, especially if they are in good shape. Even backbulbs are welcomed by new hobbyists, especially if they are something special. I put backbulbs from great cattleyas under benches to see if they will sprout from an old eye. If they do, I check to be sure the front lead is doing well and if it is, find a good home for the backbulbs.

Repotting this time of year is still fine as long as care is taken to be sure that newly repotted orchids are not overly stressed by heat and lack of water.

SOCIETY HISTORY

The history of the GNTOS goes way back. In the mid-40s there were only three orchid growers in town: Eli Sanger of Sanger Brothers, which was Dallas' biggest department store at that time; Roy Munger, known for Munger Place and Munger Street, and Percy Larkin.

Margie Corn, a garden columnist, was the source of any orchid information they could find and she gave their names to a woman running Hardy's Seed Company, Mrs. Moses. They gathered at her house one day in 1946 and it was Mr. & Mrs. Polhemus, Mr. & Mrs. Roy Carter, Homer Baldwin, Percy Larkin and a young man from Waxahachie named Costalanus. They decided they would apply for AOS membership and started receiving the Bulletin and meeting monthly. More and more people started to show up and they elected Percy Larkin, Jr. their first president in 1947. This was the North Texas Orchid Society.

They held their first show in 1950 at the Marsh Kaiser Fraiser automobile agency on Ross Avenue. Jack Morris was president of the society and Homer Baldwin sent out invitations to everyone who grew orchids in Dallas. Invitations also went to the big orchid firms who would send representatives from around the country to the show. They had everyone sign a book that came to that show.

There was an incident

that year that upset several members of the North Texas Orchid Society, so several members chose to leave and form another society calling themselves the Dallas Orchid Society. Percy Larkin was one of the members who left to form the Dallas Orchid Society. This society was never sanctioned by the AOS.

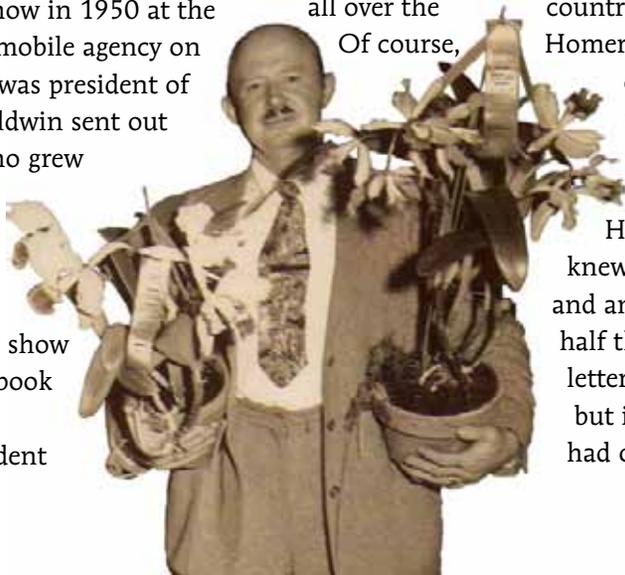
The following year with much encouragement from Homer Baldwin, most of the members from the Dallas Orchid Society came back to join the original society.

Later, they decided to become affiliated with the American Orchid Society so they wrote a Constitution and Bylaws for the society. On March 19, 1954, they were issued a charter by the AOS as the Greater North Texas Orchid Society.

They put on a show in the Dallas Garden Center but there weren't enough plants in the area so the bulk of the show was made up of boxes of blooms sent to them for free from commercial growers. They'd get five, six, or seven boxes of flowers from different growers from all over the country - even overseas.

Of course, Homer had mailed cards to everyone who had an ad in the Bulletin to achieve this.

Fortunately for Homer, Lena Baldwin knew how to type and she and another woman spent half the night writing letters on two typewriters but it worked and they had orchids for the show.



MEMBERSHIP DUES

GNTOS membership dues are paid yearly by January 31, in order for you to be listed in the published Yearbook.

- \$30.00 - New or Renewing Member (individual)
- \$15.00 - Additional Member (each additional person in same household)

Please mail completed form with payment to:

Kathy Halverson
1922 Baylor Drive
Richardson, TX 75081

Make check payable to GNTOS.

New Member Renewing Member

Name (#1): _____

Name (#2): _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail (#1): _____

E-mail (#2): _____