

ORCHIDIST

GREATER NORTH TEXAS
ORCHID
SOCIETY

JUNE

Next Meeting:
June 5th
Jim Williams

WHAT IS A “GOOD” ORCHID?

Jim Williams holds a degree from The Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, and retired from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service after 37 years. He currently works at the Garden Center at Lowe’s in Sherman. Married with two children and three grandchildren, he and his wife make their home in Sherman with a large yard and two greenhouses. Horticulture has been his avocation for a lifetime.

He has been growing (and killing) orchids for 47 years, and has been a member of AOS for 44 of those years. He has pursued his hobby in California, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Virginia, and of course, Texas. He has had experience (not all positive) growing both indoors and outdoors. Greenhouses are a huge help in succeeding, but he still manages to kill orchids.

He is an accredited judge for AOS, and grows a wide variety of genera. Cymbidiums and species are a particular interest.



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Hi all of you GNTOS orchid fans, What is a good orchid to you? Our speaker this month, Jim Williams is going to talk on that subject. Take a minute and think a little bit about that before the meeting.

What appeals to you? Is it the color? Is it the shape or size? What about, can I bloom it? Or how long it blooms? What past influences shaped your opinions?

My Mother, my biggest influence, really got me started.

Big showy cattelyas of any color were her favorites and have been mine since I first discovered orchids. They aren't always easy to bloom but I love the blooms! I can't walk by one at a show now, without wishing I owned it!

Our AOS Judges have been trained to know what a good orchid is. Their decisions are more exact as they compare against others of the same type. If you are interested in the judging program, talk to Jim or any of our officers. They can point you in the right direction.

For those of you who are just starting, once you grow and flower your first orchid, you are hooked. Then try another genera and keep on going!

Bloom on,
Mike

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

MINUTES

Barb McNamee

Our meeting got under way with 27 people, 2 visitors and 1 new member.

Mike introduced our speaker Gerry Darver, past President and current member of GNTOS who walked us through the ins and outs of building a greenhouse "50 Years and 7 Greenhouses Later". He talked about size, type, maintenance, site, style, materials, etc. Thank you Gerry for an excellent talk and lots of really useful information.

The North Haven get-together on April 30 included a fair amount of people, several gardening groups attended.

Mary Cash had nice pairs of plant hand pruners for sale at \$10 each. Nancy mentioned some of Cecilia's plants will be donated for auction.

Nancy announced the plant table winners.

Mike conducted the plant raffle. Thank you to Kathy Halverson and Mike Beber for refreshments.

Meeting adjourned at 4:30.

Respectfully submitted, Barbara McNamee



ORCHIDS 101

*Kathi McKenzie
& Lorna Kissling*

Orchids 101 classes are tailored to the beginning orchid grower. It will be an informal discussion so come bring your questions.

We meet in the greenhouse at 2:30 for 30 minutes so we can get all questions answered in time for the meeting at 3:00.

ICE ON YOUR ORCHID?

At our many informational talks at local nurseries, we've had an increasing number of questions about whether or not it's a good idea to put ice on your orchids to water them. Because all of the people that asked this question had dead orchids after they attempted to do this, we felt that it was an important enough issue to address before talking about general orchid culture. If you want our basic advice regarding, "Should I water my orchids with ice?" here it is: "No". Orchids that are sold with this advice are grown in mass quantities in greenhouses the size of football fields. These orchids, to save costs, are potted in the least expensive "pots" possible which have little to no drainage. Furthermore, they are planted in dense moss which is conducive to being grown in these large greenhouses where they are misted every few hours rather than watered. You may have

heard that the main way people kill orchids is by overwatering them. This is really not true! Orchids that are potted in the proper media, with well draining pots, will have the wet-dry cycle that they want. In the cheap pots and dense moss that comes with mass-produced orchids even minimal watering makes the pot become overly soggy and will kill the orchid in short order. The ice cube idea is to provide minimal water in the orchid's suboptimal conditions. The problem is, even though this might mimic the amount of water that the orchid had in their upbringing, misted hourly in mass greenhouses, over time the plant will die from being cramped in suboptimal conditions. If you want to keep your orchid alive for years, the solution is regular watering with room-temperature water after repotting the orchid into proper orchid mix (usually bark) and a good, well-draining pot.

Oregon Orchid Society

PLANT TABLE

Nancy Cropp

May 1, 2016

Judges: Jim Williams & David Gould

CATTLEYA ALLIANCE - 10 plants

Blue - C. Hawaiian Prominence
- Kathi McKenzie
Red - Encyclia alatium (?) - Charles Hess/
Cecelia Pinson
White - Encyclia cordigera - Judy Cook

DENDROBIUMS & OTHERS - 8 plants

Blue - Microterangis harrotiana
- Sarah Hardesty
Red - Bub. falcatum - Judy Cook
White - Den. Fire Wings - Sarah Hardesty

ONCIDIUMS - 5 plants

Blue - Milt. Anne Warne - Judy Cook
Red - Catatante 'Sunspots'
- Kathi McKenzie
White - Brass. Sakata - Mike Beber

PAPHS & PHRAGS - 3 plants

Blue - Paph. Paul Eugene Conroy
- Judy Cook
Red - Paph. Moon Stone
- Kathi McKenzie
White - Paph. Druid Spring - Judy Cook

VANDAS & PHALS - 18 plants

Blue - V. tricolor - Judy Cook
Red - Asctm. miniatum - Judy Cook
White - Phal. unknown - Gerry Darver

SPECIES OF THE MONTH

Encyclia fowleri - Judy Cook
Microterangis harrotiana
- Sarah Hardesty
V. tricolor - Judy Cook

PEOPLES CHOICE

Asctm. miniatum - Judy Cook

Only 44 plants this month - a few less than we've been having.



DALLAS JUDGING CENTER

Nancy Cropp

Dallas Judging Center May 14, 2016

Eighteen plants entered,
seven awards given:

1. Phal. David Lim 'Big Leaf Orchids'
(amboinensis x gigantea)

AM 83 points

and CCM 86 points

Owner: Big Leaf Orchids, Southlake

2. Phal. K S Super Zebra 'Pylo'
(K S Red Zebra x K S Tetra Jewel)

AM 80 points

Owner: Big Leaf Orchids, Southlake



DALLAS JUDGING CENTER

Continued

3. Phal. Mituo Gelb Eagle 'Pylo'
(Zheng Min Muscadine x LD's Bear King)

AM 80 points

Owner: Big Leaf Orchids, Southlake



4. Phal. violacea f. alba 'Jayne Garrison'
(H.P. x self)

HCC 79 points

Owner: Dr. Olie Garrison,
Nacogdoches



5. Phal. speciosa 'Jordan Juliet'

HCC 76 points

Owner: Dr. Olie Garrison,
Nacogdoches



6. Encyclia Rioclarense 'Samson' (cordigerum x randii)

AM 81 points

Owner: Jerry & Ronnie Brandenburg,
Dallas



The Dallas Judging Center meets on the second Saturday of every month.

The next meeting is June, 12 at the Garland Senior Activity Center
600 West Avenue A,
Garland, TX 75040

11am. Everyone is welcome to bring plants or to just watch and learn.

MYRMECOPHILIA

The plants in the myrmecophilia genus were once known as schomburgkias, named after Richard Schomburgk, a German collector. Schoms have now been reclassified into laelias and myrmecophilias, however. The name of this genus comes from “myrmex” (ant) and “philos” (friend) and refers to the nature of these plants to form a symbiotic relationship with ants. These plants are indigenous to Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Venezuela.

M. tibicinis is probably the best-known, although it is not often grown in greenhouses due to its large size (it is used as a landscape plant in some areas of Florida). *M. tibicinis* is sometimes called the cow-horn orchid, or the trumpet orchid, due to its large hollow psuedobulbs.

These hollow banana-like bulbs are often homes to colonies of ants.

While the ants harvest nectar and venture out to forage on neighboring plants, they return to pack the empty bulbs with their refuse, such as dead insects (including dead ants), bits of plant leaves and seeds, grains of sand, and other such prizes. *M. tibicinis* uses the extra nutrients to fuel its growth. Although it will grow well without ants, in its habitat it is normally is found occupied.

Others in the genus are *M. brysiana* (another very large plant), *M. thomsoniana* (often used in breeding with cattleyas), *M. humboldtii*, and *M. wendlandii*.

In general, these orchids require care much like cattleyas: bright light, a freely draining mix (or mounting), and warm temperatures.



Myrmecophila tibicinis 'Midnight'



M. tibicinis

ORCHID OF THE MONTH

Kathi McKenzie



M. wendlandii



M. humboldtii

A SECOND LIFE FOR ORCHIDS

ORCHID CONSERVATION UPDATE

by Charles and Trudy Hess

Vanda Miss Joaquim



In some areas of the world orchids reappear in or near their original natural habitat after having been severely eradicated by “civilization” a hundred years earlier. While this process can occur natu-

rally over time, it is exciting to learn about projects where nature is being given a lot of help. One such project is the *Million Orchid Project* being driven by the *Fairchild Tropic Botanical Garden* and the city of Coral Gables in south Florida. They are literally flasking over a million seedlings to be planted by volunteers all around south Florida, particularly in Dade County.

Until the late 1800s in areas like Biscayne Bay, orchids grew on every tree and limb, particularly on oaks, mahoganies, pines and buttonwoods. But when the Florida East Coast Railroad opened up this area, virtually every orchid was removed and shipped north for the floral trade. Whatever the scavengers didn’t get was eventually destroyed by urbanization and agriculture. Fortunately, with the help of volunteers and students in local schools, this huge experiment is now underway to help a few species, once common in the area, to make a comeback in what is now an urban environment. Oaks and mahoganies are also returning, which is fortunate, because these trees are needed to provide a habitat for the orchids.

On Earth Day 2014 the first round of orchid seedlings were planted on trees in downtown Carol Gables They are expected to be flowering within 2-3 years. The question now is, will they thrive and propagate? If they do, we will know the project was a success. For now, we have to be happy with the fact that someone is making the effort to restore the beauty of orchids in the area.

The seedlings are being raised in the new Micro-propagation Laboratory at Fairchild. One fruit pod may produce 10,000 to 15,000

microscopic seeds that are initially distributed into 10 flasks. After sprouting, they are re-flasked into 50 and eventually into 250 bottles. The entire process takes about 18 months. The seedlings will then spend 6-9 months in the greenhouse on what looks like burlap bag lined trays before being introduced to the “wild”. By replicating this process for 16 fruit pods a year over 5 years, one million seedlings will be grown. This is a very labor-intensive job, and would be very expensive, were

Flasks of orchids under LEDs



it not for an army of dedicated Fairchild volunteers who care enough about orchids to devote the time to bring the project to fruition.

And what about the enormous amount of space such a project requires? Fortunately, this turned out to also not be a problem. As part of their educational programs, about 30 high schools in south Florida will house and monitor the growing conditions of the orchids, and will eventually plant seedlings in their surrounding areas.

Finally, to help cover some expenses, the AOS Research and Conservation Committee is supporting the research involving LED lights used to propagate the seedlings. Those who attended the last SWROGA members meeting in Oklahoma City will recall Ron McHatton men-



tioning briefly AOS's involvement in the project.

The inspiration and model for this urban reintroduction was the successful project by the *Singapore Botanical Gardens* to conserve native species along their local roadsides, as well as in parks and nature reserves. To begin their project, Singapore introduced the *Grammatophyllum speciosum* in 1999, and had their

first blooms in February 2013. Other species successfully propagated and reintroduced were the *Bulbophyllum vaginatum* and the *Bulbophyllum membraceum*.

None of this work was going on when I worked in Singapore in 1979 at Texas Instruments Singapore. All I remember seeing were the *Vandas* in Botanical Gardens and the famous *Vanda* 'Miss Joaquim'. According to my much used Singapore Guide which I just can't seem to part with, *Vanda* Miss Joaquim is a natural hybrid that first appeared in Singapore in 1893 and is the national flower of Singapore. *Vanda* 'Miss Joaquim' is a cross between the Burmese *Vanda teres* (now called *Papilionanthe teres*) and the Malayan *Vanda hookeriana* (now called *Papilionanthe hookeriana*). What a wonderful thought it is to imagine orchid species growing in my old neighbor-

Grammatophyllum speciosum in Singapore

hood.

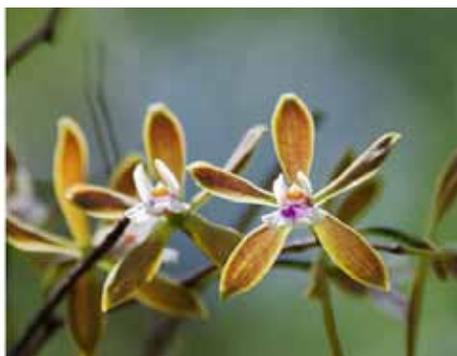
Even though Singapore is situated only 95 miles north of the equator, and has a climate much more tropical than that of Florida, the Fairchild Project planners nevertheless decided that Singapore's example could be duplicated and made successful in Florida. Some of the first orchids to be part of the project are the Florida butterfly orchid (*Encyclia tampensis*) and cowhorn orchid (*Cyrtopodium punctatum*), which happen to be found naturally in the Fairchild gardens.

We can all be proud that our subscriptions and donations to AOS helps the AOS fund efforts such as the *Million Orchid Project* in Florida. I am personally gratified that I am able to use my art to help promote conservation and reintroduction of orchids throughout the world. Every little bit helps.

An old Chinese proverb tells us, "It is better to light a single candle, than to curse the darkness." The projects in Singapore and Florida are fine examples of just how true and wise that proverb is.



8 *Cyrtopodium punctatum*, the cowhorn or cigar orchid



Encyclia tampensis, the Orchid Butterfly

ORCHIDS THROUGH THE YEAR 2016

by Ned Nash
and James Rose

MONTHLY CHECKLIST FOR MAY AND JUNE

Cattleya The last of the spring-flowering types – those that flower from a ripened hard pseudobulb – will be finishing, while the first summer-blooming types will be showing buds on their rapidly growing, soft pseudobulbs. Both may need potting, as signaled by deteriorating mix, this month. The spring bloomers present no problems, as you will be dealing with fully ripe, well-hardened pseudobulbs. They will be ready to root on the mature front pseudobulb and will establish quickly. The summer bloomers, will be brittle and may be in bud. Nonetheless, experienced growers know that unless potted now, they may not root later, as this type tends to be seasonal in its rooting behavior. Stake the lead growth to avoid breakage. May can still present some changing light conditions that can lead to burning of the foliage if the plants have not been properly acclimatized. Allow them to build up their tolerance to higher light gradually. Changing light and temperatures can also be the source of some frustration when trying to determine when plants need watering. While *Cattleya* will be entering into a period of rapid growth starting this month, they have still not built up sufficient momentum to be significantly slowed by

your missing a day or two of watering owing to dark weather. As always, it is safer to err on the dry side than on the wet. It is important, though, especially to the summer bloomers. Too much shade will cause rapidly developing inflorescences to droop unattractively.

Paphiopedilum The *Paphiopedilum Maudiae* types will be well into their season now, so a careful eye should be used toward staking. Do not be too anxious to stake, however. Many of this type, if staked too soon, will develop nodding flowers that do not face the observer. It is better to allow the flowers to ripen naturally, then support the spike right below the ovary for best display. This is especially common in *Paphiopedilum fairrieanum*-derived hybrids. If you have to do something when you first see the emerging spikes, just put the stake in the pot next to the spiking growth. Not only will this help you, but you will be able to see where the spikes are, so you can continue to pay attention to their develop-

“AS ALWAYS,
WHEN WATERING,
IT IS SAFER TO ERR
ON THE DRY SIDE
THAN ON THE WET.”

ment. The multiflora types will be entering their most active growth phase, so lots of light, water and fertilizer are called for to mature their large growths. Many will be spiking in the next couple of months, so



Pylo's Perfume'
(Ba-Shi Redsun x
LD's Bear Queen)
AM 84 points
Owner: Big Leaf Orchids
Southlake

be on the lookout for the emerging inflorescences. These may benefit from earlier staking than most, as the inflorescences grow so quickly in some cases that they can be quite soft. Again, best support is right below the ovary of the first flower. This will allow the most natural presentation of the blooms.

Phalaenopsis Except for the latest-spiking plants, all Phalaenopsis should be ready for potting or already potted. Because Phalaenopsis are tropical plants, they tend to be seasonal in their rooting behavior. The critical point for potting is when new roots emerge from the base of the plant. This is absolutely the best time to repot a Phalaenopsis. The summer-flowering types, based on Doritis background, have ideally already been potted and are becoming freshly established, ready to support their soon-to-emerge spikes for the summer season. Phalaenopsis potted at the right point in their growth cycle will reestablish almost immediately, with fresh roots growing into the new medium nearly uninterrupted. As soon as the flush of new root growth is seen, begin regular watering and fertilizing to make maximum use of the major growing season. Do not get over-exuberant with your watering, though, allowing water to splash between plants. This can be a source of infection for both water-borne pathogens and viral contamination. Phalaenopsis are much more susceptible to virus than was previously thought. Take extra care to keep your collection free of bacterial and viral problems, which you can accomplish by maintaining a clean growing area.

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.

GROWING ORCHIDS UNDER LOW HUMIDITY CONDITIONS. (LIKE OUR TEXAS SUMMERS)

I have always been curious about what it would be like to grow orchids someplace where the humidity was very low. Extreme drought and low humidity these past three months have provided me with an experience that taught me a great deal about my normal culture and the importance of water to orchids.

Initially, I tried to outlast the drought and occasionally misted lightly with the limited water supply in my cistern. Not only did bulbs shrivel and roots die, but there was a covering of salt on the medium that continued to buildup. Eventually, it was necessary to try something different. The key has been to water extremely thoroughly and often, which would not be possible in the normal summer's heat and humidity. Under drought conditions, which have included very low humidity, the medium dries very quickly allowing more frequent, but time consuming watering, which works to

keep my orchids alive, at least until the rains come.

Clearly, it is extremely difficult to grow orchids well without good water. Good water contains few dissolved solids; these are mostly salts. The amount of dissolved solids are measured with a simple instrument that measures the amount of current water will carry; i.e. more dissolved stuff in the water equals more current. Pure rainwater or distilled water contains 0 parts per million (ppm) dissolved stuff, while seawater contains 35,500 ppm.

Recall that most orchids in your collection are derived from ancestors that grew attached to trees, so their only water source was rainfall, and their primary nutrient source was dust that falls on the leaves of trees and drips down with each rainfall.

Most orchids evolved in this nutrient poor environment, which is why

ORCHID GROWING TIPS

they are very intolerant of water with lots of dissolved minerals. When we add fertilizer to our water we raise the dissolved solids in the water because fertilizers are nothing more than nutrient salts. Most commercial orchid growers try to add 100 ppm of nitrogen when they fertilize. Fertilizers typically also contain other nutrients, e.g. phosphorus and potassium, further raising the dissolved nutrient levels. My primary water source is normally rainwater collected from the greenhouse roof. There are always a few dissolved solids, but rainwater flowing into my underground cistern is still very pure, usually between 10-20 ppm dissolved solids. When I add fertilizer, my water contains about 280 ppm dissolved solids.

Under the present weather conditions my rainwater already contains 250 ppm dissolved solids because less than 1 inch of rain has fallen over three months, and numerous ocean storms have caused heavy surf, putting lots of salt in the air and on my roof. Worse yet, these salts are mostly sodium chloride, both of which are very toxic to orchids. What is an orchid grower to do?

The only other source of water available to me is from a community well, which is 360-380 ppm. Fortunately, most of the stuff dissolved in this

water consists of calcium, magnesium, and iron. These salts are not toxic at these levels but do leave unsightly residue on leaves. This water is also extremely basic, which severely limits the ability of orchids to absorb nutrients.

Some orchids in my collection have surprised me and thrived because they are not epiphytes and instead were derived from orchids that grew on the ground, notably Paphs. Many paphs grow in limestone rich soils and have thrived in the basic well water. Others have done very poorly, most notably phrags and some pleurothalids. They need very pure water and could not tolerate hard water.

Much to my delight, and surprise, almost all the cattleyas, phals, and vandas are growing extremely well despite the high dissolved solid content of the water using the following process. First they are watered thoroughly with well water. This dissolves any salts that have accumulated on the medium since that last watering, but does render the medium surface basic. Then the surface of the medium is misted lightly with my very limited supply of rainwater to which fertilizer had been added. Most high nitrogen fertilizer is acidic, neutralizing the well water. This does, however, take a lot more time.

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.

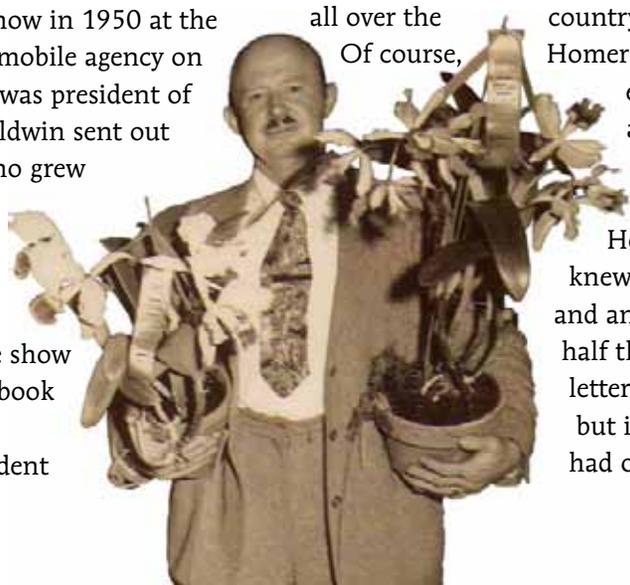
The following year with much encouragement from Homer Baldwin, most of the members from the Dallas Orchid Society came back to join the original society.

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): _____