

THE GREATER LAS VEGAS ORCHID SOCIETY

THE ORCHID COLUMN

CAROL SIEGEL, EDITOR



2014

Sunday, February 2, 2014
Piano music 1 pm
Meeting 2

SPECIAL EVENTS 2014

February 2 Diana Smith

"Orchids 101"

March 2 Sean Abbott

"Growing Phalaenopsis"

March 29 "A Passion for Orchids" Club Show at the W Charleston Library

April 6 Ron Kaufmann

"Orchids at the Beach"

May *Epipactis gigantea* walk

May 4 Barbecue home of Shelly North

June 1 Peter Lin "Orchids for Every Day of the Year"

July 13 Alan Kochs "Orchids 101"

August 3 Diana Smith

"Coelogyne"

September 7 Harold Koopowitz

"A Fantastic Paph Journey"

October 5 Greenhouse Tur

November 2 Carol Siegel

"Tools of the Orchid Grower"

December 7 Holiday Party

January 11, 2015 Fred Clarke

"Aussie Dendrobium"

February 1 Ron Parsons

"Orchids of Ecuador"

June 7 Jason Fischer

"7th New Zealand Orchid Council and Native Orchids of New Zealand"

DUES ARE DUE... DO IT! SEND IN YOURS..



2014 DUES WERE DUE IN JANUARY. IF YOU HAVEN'T SEND YOURS IN YET, PLEASE REMEMBER THAT WE RUN AN EXTRAVAGANT, INFORMATIVE AND EXPENSIVE SPEAKER PROGRAM WITH ONLY THE BEST AND THAT TAKES \$\$\$

(WHAT DOESN'T?) WE HAVE NOT RAISED OUR DUES IN YEARS SINCE SOME OF US HAVE HAD TOUGH TIMES. DUES REMAIN \$30 FOR SINGLE, \$40 FOR A COUPLE-TWO PEOPLE RESIDING AT THE SAME ADDRESS. IF YOU CAN SEND AN EXTRA \$5 OR \$10, IT MAKES SUCH A DIFFERENCE. DIANA SMITH, GLORIA HOFFMAN, HELEN WELLS AND I HAVE GIVEN A LITTLE EXTRA, AND YOU CAN TOO (IF YOU ARE ABLE...)

YOU CAN PAY AT THE NEXT MEETING OR SEND A CHECK MADE OUT TO: GLVOS C/O CAROL SIEGEL 8601 ROBINSON RIDGE DRIVE LAS VEGAS, NV 89117.

FEBRUARY TALK:

DIANA SMITH WILL PRESENT AN ORIGINAL POWER POINT PRESENTATION IN FEBRUARY: ORCHIDS 101. SHE WILL TEACH YOU HOW TO KEEP THE MOST POPULAR ORCHIDS YOU BUY AT HOME DEPOT OR TRADER JOE'S HEALTHY AND BLOOMING. WITH 35 YEARS OF GROWING EXPERIENCE, THIS PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR CAN SHOW YOU HOW YOU CAN DO IT, TOO.

Mark Romansky has created a Facebook page for us. Type in "Greater Las Vegas Orchid Society" or click on <https://www.facebook.com/glvos>. Be sure to write a comment or tell us about you, your orchids or the club. People really do take the social media seriously, and, even if you are not a big fan of Facebook, at least visit it once to give us a bigger presence on the web. Alex McKyton, our webmaster, maintains our website. It has a new address www.glvos.org. Take a look. It has information about our club and copies of our newsletters. Many members have told us they have found us from our website.

JANUARY MEETING ABSOLUTELY A RIOT!! AND WE MADE \$1600, TOO!

What fun we had at our January meeting! Part carnival, part rummage sale, our Annual White Elephant Sale was a huge success netting us over \$1600 ! We had such a good time haggling over the classy clutter that others foolishly discarded. To cries of, "But what is it?" we delightedly carted out more stuff than we carted in. Thank to everyone for the enthusiasm and generosity. I wrote to a lot of orchid nurseries, and they kindly donated really gorgeous orchids to us. (We offered to pay the postage. Among our generous friends:

The Hilo Orchid Farm (www.hiloorchidfarm.com)

Santa Barbara Orchid Estate (www.sborchid.com)

Repotme (www.repotme.com)

Lehua Orchids (www.lehuaorchids.com)

Cal Orchids (www.calorchid.com)

Zuma Canyon Orchids (www.zumacanyonorchids.com)

Fred Clarke and Sunset Valley Orchids (www.sunsetvalleyorchids.com)

Andy's Orchids (www.andysorchids.com)

Norman's Orchids (www.orchids.com) He gave us a case of our beloved Megathrive.

Carmela's Orchids (www.carmelaorchids.net)

Peter Lin of Diamond Orchids

Everyone has been very generous, mentioning how much they value our club.

SUPPORT THE GENEROUS FOLKS WHO SUPPORT US IN THESE TOUGH ECONOMIC TIMES, AND TELL THEM THANK YOU WHEN YOU DO ORDER. Thanks to Tony Billitere and Ole Borresen for the hotel plants and Joel Davidson, too. They deliver NO MATTER WHAT. What great guys! We are grateful to our White Elephant Captains for helping with the sale- Cathy and Jim Loftfield, Myra Glassman, Bettye and John Williams, Bruce and Catherine Weber,

Barry and Mary King and others. We couldn't do it without you. A special thank you to Myra Glassman who brought what remains of the library for us to sell. Members loved getting great orchid books for a couple of bucks. Thanks to everybody for being such good sports amid the madness and for bringing in such wonderful treasures for us to buy.

Ron Parsons did a great job speaking on the orchids of China. We have invited him back for February of 2015 to speak on the orchids of Ecuador. Lots of learning, lots of fun- without the expense, schlepping, and packing of an actual trip. Ron just published a book on miniature orchids. It is a two-volume set that weighs 17 lbs! I find a very big book on miniatures amusing... I sent all the information and the publisher's press release to you in an email in case you would like to buy one. He is a wonderful writer and photographer and a great friend to me. He provides images for all my articles in Orchid Digest, and I am most grateful.

We had marvelous food thanks to the culinary genius and generosity of Nita Bragg, Rae Kurtz, Kathy Lindsay, Stella Charvet, Lee Kirshbaum, and Sharon Proehl. We thank in advance our February food team, Jeri Lee, Wanda La Follette, Liz Waters, Claire Ehrsam and Mieke Magaki.

I have included an article I wrote on "Ten Questions to Make Your Orchids Bloom" in the body of the newsletter. I have also attached an article on "How Orchids Were Named," that I wrote for the current issue of ORCHID DIGEST.

Sending you love, Carol 254-4168 growlove @cox.net

TEN QUESTIONS TO MAKE YOUR ORCHIDS BLOOM

By Carol Siegel

Orchids are the royalty of the flower world. They do as they darn- well please. Sometimes, they just drive us crazy by refusing to bloom. They just sit there looking all big and green, full of LEAVES but not even a trace of a flower.

When you ask your orchids, “Why? Why won’t you bloom?,” these are the questions your orchids might ask YOU. The answers to these questions will help you to more blooming success

1. AM I HEALTHY ENOUGH TO BLOOM?

Healthy plants bloom. Dying plants just try to stay alive. (Of course, there is always the martyr mother orchid who blooms right before she dies, but this is not the usual case.) If your orchid thinks it is in a concentration camp, it is not going to be willing to invest energy in flowers and seeds. It may not trust you yet. There are four stages of orchid growing: keeping the plant alive, making the plant bloom, making the plant bloom spectacularly, winning awards. Maybe you are not ready to make an orchid bloom; maybe you are at stage one. Just not killing your orchid may be an accomplishment for you. If your plant has no roots, droopy leaves, and shriveled pseudobulbs, you need to improve your culture. Make sure you have 50% or more humidity. Use a pot that is not too big and has good draining and make sure your potting medium is fresh. Give your orchids that right amount of water for the potting medium you use. Water bark more than moss, for example. Use reverse-osmosis, de-ionized , or potassium-softened water. Read the AOS Bulletin. Get the Orchid Digest. Go online to websites that discuss orchid growth. Ask questions at meetings. Buy or take out some books on orchid growing. Ask questions at our Virtual Greenhouse meeting. Improve your growing techniques, and blooming may soon follow.

2. AM I OLD ENOUGH TO BLOOM?

Okay. So your orchid is healthy. However, there are other considerations. You would not expect a two-year-old girl to date, marry and have children. She is just too young. Your plant may be too young to bloom no matter how good you are at raising orchids. Orchid plants have a long childhood: they take from four to twelve years to reach their adulthood- their “blooming size”. Smaller, less expensive plants are often a good value, but don’t expect them to bloom for a long time. If you are like me and like instant gratification, then you need to buy larger, blooming size plants (BS). If you buy a plant in bloom or with old spike stubs showing, then you will be sure your orchid is old enough to bloom.

3. AM I GETTING ENOUGH LIGHT?

Judy White in her important article from the June 1990 AOS Bulletin (“Beginner’s Series- Part VI Why on Earth Won’t It Bloom?”) says that the leading reason orchids don’t bloom is that they are not getting enough light.

There are all sorts of fancy ways to tell if your plant is getting enough light, but leaf color is a really good guide. Dark green leaves mean that your plant is not getting enough light. It is

making extra chlorophyll to manufacture food in the poor light so it is deep green. Moderate to light green leaves usually mean that your plant is getting the right amount of light to bloom. Have you ever noticed that your houseplants are really dark green? We think that that color is pretty, but houseplants almost never bloom!! Dark green is the wrong leaf color for blooming. How many of us say that we have a ton of houseplants, why can't we grow orchids? We mean why can't we BLOOM orchids. Well, keep them a deep green in poor light and you will have the yards of foliage that houseplants have and no blooms. More light means more blooms.

4. HOW COULD I GET MORE LIGHT?

Think of ways to get more light in your growing area. If you grow under lights, use grow-light fluorescent or T5 bulbs which mimic sunlight and not regular bulbs. Make sure you are replacing your grow-light bulbs at least once a year and more if you can afford it. The light output drops dramatically in fluorescent bulbs long before they burn out. Put high-light requiring plants like cattleyas closer to the middle of the bulbs since light falls off dramatically at the ends of the bulbs. Increase light by bringing the top of your orchids closer to the lights. Dust your fluorescents. Clean your orchid leaves on a regular basis. Increase the amount of time your lights are on with a timer. More time equals more light. Make sure your plants are not so crowded together that leaves are blocking other plants' leaves from getting light.

If you grow on a windowsill or greenhouse, make sure your window or glass is clean! Bring the plant closer to the window of your house or glass of your greenhouse for more light. Buy a light meter and see if your window or greenhouse is getting enough light. It might be too dark to bloom orchids. You can add artificial lights to your window or greenhouse to supplement your natural light. You can make your growing area more reflective with white paint, mirrored tiles or Mylar.

5. AM I GETTING DIFFERENT AMOUNTS OF LIGHT ACCORDING TO THE SEASON??

Your orchid is genetically programmed to bloom in response to certain signals from the rainforest or jungle or mountaintop where it evolved. Your living room may be missing these signals. Your job is to reproduce the signals that tell your orchid that all is well in the environment, that it is safe to bloom as it has for aeons. One of the most important signals that some orchids (like cattleyas) need is a variation in light and darkness according to the seasons.

If you are growing in a greenhouse, Mother Nature will take care of varying the amount of light with the seasons giving you less light in December and many more hours of light in June. Your orchid will be happy. If you supplement your greenhouse light with artificial light, you will have to put your artificial light on a timer to mimic the light that nature is giving- no light on at 1am when it is otherwise dark in your greenhouse.

If you are growing in a windowsill in the living room, and light is always on for the same number of hours while you conduct your normal life, your orchid will be missing its signal to bloom. You need to block the living room or TV light with a screen or sheet or such or put the orchid in a room that is seldom-used and can be dark when it is dark outside.

If you grow under lights in a garage or basement or bathroom, you need to turn on and turn off your lights with a timer. I set my timer for 12 hours of light and 12 hours of darkness in December gradually increasing to 18 hours of light and 6 hours of darkness in June and gradually decreasing to 12 hours of light and 12 hours of darkness in December, just as in nature. This fools my orchids into thinking that all is well in their garage-rain forest, that that there is day and there is night, that there is winter and there is summer. Ah, they can bloom!!

6. AM I GETTING LOWER TEMPERATURE IN THE WINTER AND AT NIGHT?

As important as shortened day length is, it is equally important that nighttime temperature drop. If the temperature is the same day and night, buds will not initiate as well. Most plants require that it get at least ten degrees cooler at night than in the day for spike development. Some plants like cymbidium and phalaenopsis need a twenty-degree drop to initiate buds. Some plants like paphiopedilum require a temperature drop in the winter more than a change in day length to spike. *Paphiopedilum* with *rothschildianum* or *stonei* in their background and phalaenopsis in general like three weeks at just below 60 degrees on winter nights to initiate a spike.

If you grow in your living room, opening a window will often do the trick. Turn the thermostat down at night. If you grow under lights, temperature will drop about 5 degrees when the lights are off at night. I grow in my garage and lift my plastic insulation and open the garage door for a few minutes to let in some cooler air. (Be careful not to have cold air blowing directly on your plants). Open the door in your greenhouse a crack. Get a minimum-maximum thermometer (available at many places including Charley's Greenhouse) to see just what a variation you have in temperature. You MUST have a temperature difference at night. Warm growing orchids like phals like winter nights of about 60 degrees. Intermediate growers like winter nights about 55 degrees. Cymbidiums and some odontoglossums like it around 50. However, just dropping temperature 10 degrees at night will go a long way to making your plants bloom.

7. AM I GETTING GOOD AIR MOVEMENT?

Sometimes, buds are produced and they "blast", the dreaded bud blast, scourge of the orchid grower, little brown stubs that were meant to become flowers. There are a million reasons for bud blast (I think some buds are just mean...), but moisture around the bud is a prime one. Invest in a lot of fans, on low, gently swaying your orchid leaves, drying out the moisture around the buds, making good air movement, preventing fungus and rot and bacteria from getting your bud. I take a straw and blow away the moisture around my paph buds, sometimes using a Q-tip, too. Take special care not to get the little buds wet. Sue Fordyce recommended that we cut the tip off cattleya bud sheaths to let in a little air and dry out the inside of the sheath.

8. IS THIS THE RIGHT TIME FOR ME TO BLOOM? ARE YOU JUST IMPATIENT?

Most orchids bloom once a year, often at the same time every year. For example, *Cattleya* Irene Holquin 'Brown Eyes' always blooms for Mother's Day. If you buy it in June, you will probably have to wait until next May to have it bloom. There is no point in lamenting about your poor blooming record in December. December is not the right time for your plant to

bloom. The plant is behaving just the way it was meant to. If you buy six plants in December, and they are all in bloom, don't expect any blooms (if these are your only plants) until NEXT December. Orchids do not bloom all the time. Cattleyas are gorgeous, but their blooms only last 2-4 weeks. The rest of the time they will be leaves. Paph blooms last from 1-3 months. The bloom, to some, is not as showy, but it will bloom for a long time. Some phals seem to be in bloom most of the time. Stanhopea and sobralia blooms last only days. Know your plant and don't expect it to do what it was not meant to do.

Some growers recommend a little Epsom salts (one or two tablespoons) in a gallon of water for phals to coax them to bloom. Many believe that switching to a "blossom booster" fertilizer at the time when buds are starting to form (often fall) helps initiate buds and produces better flowers. Blossom booster are lower in nitrogen and higher in phosphorus and potassium which are needed more for flowers. You might try these.

9. AM I THE RIGHT PLANT FOR YOUR GROWING AREA?

Matching your plant to your growing setup is very important. There are 25,000 species and countless hybrids of orchids. Some you will not be able to grow in your little growing area no matter what you do. Some will flourish with great care, and some will just love your combination of benign neglect and inexperience.

If you keep killing one type of orchid, try another type. If one type of orchid likes your set-up, buy more of these! Use the period when you are struggling with your plants to learn the kinds of orchids you want to specialize in. I personally specialize in anything that does not die, first, and that blooms often and well, second. My growing area is too small to be a hospital. It is certainly not a REST home. If you bloom, you are in. If you don't, well, then you are not right for my area. You are a GIFT. And it is funny. My zygopetalum just sulked under my grow lights. I gave them to my friend. Under HER grow lights, they did fabulously well. Go know! If you don't have lots of light, try paphs and phals. If you have LOTS of light, try dendrobium and catts. Move stuff around. Sometimes, one spot is cool and wet and another just a few feet away is hotter and drier. Experiment.

10. AM I SUFFERING FROM PURCHASE SETBACK?

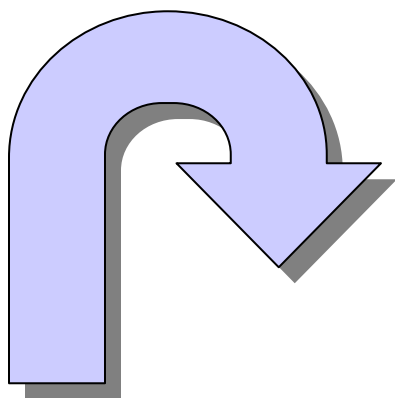
It is quite common for plants that you have just purchased to go through a period of sulking after you get them. They have been ripped from their wonderful home in Hawaii or some such with swaying breezes, ideal humidity, and morning mists, stuffed in a dark box, and plunked down in your desert living room with nothing but your enthusiasm to sustain it. It may be in shock. It may not know what it did to deserve such a horrible fate. It may miss a whole blooming cycle. That's right. It may skip a year of blooming and not bloom for TWO years. Don't take it personally. The plant is just saving its energy; it doesn't want to invest in seeds and flowers unless it knows they have a chance of surviving. If you persist, your orchid will adapt, relax, and produce great blooms for you.

In fact, if your plant missed blooming on a new growth this year, it can still bloom on that growth next year. Our speaker Sam Tsui showed us a slide of an award-winning paph that had 18 blooms! When I asked how he got so many blooms, he said the plant had not bloomed on its new growths in a long time. Moving the plant to a new location sparked all the unbloomed new

growth to spike, making a fabulous display. All is not lost!! In fact, your plant may just be saving up to win a great AOS reward for you. Smart plant!

So listen to your orchids. Increase your light. Varying the light with the seasons. Make it cooler at night. Buy a fan. Be patient. Most important, don't give up!! You can get your orchids to bloom!

MORE BELOW



Getting to the Heart of Valentine's Day

Carol Siegel

I was born on Valentine's Day, and I married a heart doctor, so this particular holiday has always had a special meaning for me. How did this Valentine's Day begin? Its origins are shrouded in mystery, but it takes us back to both pagan Roman and early Christian days. The roots of the holiday are steeped in sex and fertility. For 800 years,, the ancient Roman spring festival of Lupercalia was celebrated on February 15. It was dedicated to Faunus, the Roman god of agriculture as well as to Rome's founders, Romulus and Remus. Priests of the Luperci order gathered at a cave where the twins Romulus and Remus were thought to have been raised by a she-wolf or "lupa." A goat was sacrificed for fertility and a dog for purification. Boys sliced the goat's skin into strips, dipped it into the sacrificial blood, and went around slapping ladies with the goat hide to make them fertile. Later, all the ladies' names were placed in an urn, and gentlemen would choose a name. The couple would be paired sexually for a year, which, happily, often led to marriage. Needless to say, it was a very popular holiday.

In 498, the Pope Gelasius decided that it was a little TOO popular. He declared the lottery system "unchristian" and decided to recast it as a Christian holiday dedicated to St. Valentine. Men and women would choose the names of saints from an urn, instead. They would emulate the lives of the saints for the year. (We can only imagine the disappointment of the young Roman men.) Old habits die hard, and Roman men continued to send notes of affection to women on this day.

According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, there are at least two St. Valentines, according to legend. Archeologist recently unearthed a Roman catacomb and an ancient church dedicated to St. Valentine, who apparently was a real person. We just don't know which "Valentine" Pope Gelasius had in mind. Both were third-century Christian martyrs who were put to death on the same day, one an Italian priest and physician and the other the Bishop of Terni. Butler's *Lives of the Saints* tells both stories in an almost identical manner.

Legend tells us that the Roman Emperor Claudius II declared that married men were too emotionally involved and made poor soldiers. He, therefore, outlawed marriages for young men. Valentine, taking pity on young lovers, married them in secret despite the edict. Claudius had the young priest arrested and threw him into prison. His jailer, Asterius, had a blind daughter, and begged Valentine to cure her. Miraculously, Valentine restored her sight with the depth of his faith. When

Valentine refused to give up his religion, Claudius had him beaten with clubs and beheaded on February 14, 270. Before he died, he wrote a last letter to the jailer's daughter and signed it, "From Your Valentine," the traditional signature we use today. So Valentine wrote the very first valentine.

The day of Valentine's death was decreed by Pope Gelasius as Valentine's Day, a day of religious devotion. However, sex and love continued to stick to the holiday. It was traditionally the day that birds started to mate, and the custom arose to exchange letters, gloves and gifts on this day to one's beloved. According to UCLA medieval scholar, Henry Ansgar Kelly, it was Geoffrey Chaucer who first linked Valentine's Day with romance. In 1381, he wrote a poem in honor of the engagement of England's King Richard II and Anne of Bohemia. By the mid-18th century, Englishmen of all classes exchanged gifts and cards on this day. Gradually, printed cards replaced hand-written ones by the end of the 18th century. Postage was cheap, and people began mailing their notes. In 1840's, American Esther Howland, the Mother of the Valentine, made the first mass-produced valentines in America of lace, ribbons and colorful pictures, known as "scrap" and the American tradition of sending greeting cards was born. Today, one billion valentine cards are sent every year, 25% of all cards ever sent. In 1969, the Catholic Church dropped Valentine's Day from the official calendar of Catholic feasts, but some parishes still celebrate it.

Steeped in history and mystery, Valentine's Day continues to delight young and old with the chance to express our love and affection.

