

# GREATER LAS VEGAS ORCHID SOCIETY

## THE ORCHID COLUMN

CAROL SIEGEL, EDITOR



**SUNDAY, JULY 13, 2014**  
**1PM LIVE PIANO MUSIC**  
**2 PM MEETING**  
**RAINBOW LIBRARY**  
**SECOND SUNDAY OF MONTH**

### SPECIAL EVENTS 2014

July 13 Alan Kochs "Orchids 101"  
August 3 Diana Smith "Pests and Diseases"  
September 7  
October 5 Greenhouse Tour  
Melanie Long and Dan Mumau  
November 2 Carol Siegel  
"Freaks and Stinkers: Bizarre Orchids"  
December 7 Holiday Party  
January 11, 2015 Fred Clarke  
"Aussie Dendrobium"  
Feb 1 Ron Parsons "Orchids of Ecuador"  
March 1, 2015 Ron Kaufmann  
"Orchids on the Rocks"  
April 12, 2015 Art Chadwick "First Ladies  
and Their Cattleyas"  
May 3, 2015 Tentative barbecue  
June 7 Jason Fischer "7<sup>th</sup> New Zealand  
Orchid Council and Orchids New Zealand  
July 12, 2015 Peter Lin

### JULY 13 SPEAKER: ALAN "ORCHIDS 101" AND POTLUCK

Please note that the July (and August) meetings are the **SECOND Sundays of the month**. On **July 13**, we will be having our **potluck** at our meeting in the library. Everyone who is able will bring a dish with serving spoons for 10-12 people. We have limited space for reheating so food that is ready to go is always a good idea- **salads and desserts** are usually best- things like chicken salad, tuna salad with rolls or bread, vegetable salads, rice or pasta salads, egg salad, Chinese salad, fruit salad, layered salads, sliced meats, sandwiches- like that. You can, of course, bring anything you want! We will make it work. I will be bringing the paper goods, and Jeannie Salles has kindly volunteered to bring the drinks. If you can't bring something for whatever reason, come anyway. We want you.

Alan Koch will speak on "Orchids 101," sharing with us his tips for growing orchids. He has some unusual ideas and is a very fun speaker. All members will receive free shipping on any preorders from the website. It is under construction so it is best to call him at 916-645-8600. He has attached a limited availability list that members will receive a 20% discount from and free freight. Look below for the list.

Gold Country Orchids Limited Availability

Aerangisfastuosa very vigorous mini	\$15.00
Aerangishariotiana 'Gold Country' African mini with orange flowers	\$20.00
Aerangis hyaloids Miniature with small white flowers	\$18.00
Angraecumdidieri Miniature species 2 inch BS	\$12.50
Ascocentrumampulaceum Orange form, India 2 inch BS	\$15.00
Brassavolacuculatta 2 inch BS	\$15.00
Bulb falcatum v. flava yellow rachis and flower 3 inch BS	\$35.00
Bulb falcatum 'Standing Tall' AM/AOS 3 inch BS	\$25.00
Bulb falcatum v. velutina 'GC' CCE/AOS	\$25.00
Bulb lasiochillum Yellow form 3 inch BS	\$15.00
Bulb vaginatum 'Joyce' mini medusa 3 inch BS	\$20.00
Cattleya aaclandiae v. coerulea 2 inch	\$25.00
Cattleyakerrii Miniature species very rare 2 inch NBS	\$20.00
Cattleya lueddemanniana v. alba 2 inch	\$12.50
Cattleya lueddemanniana v. coerulea 3 inch	\$12.50
Ceratocentronfessellii x Tubecentron Niu Girl Orange miniature	
Vandaceous BS	\$15.00
Ctna. Starrlyn Rose and lavender Mini-cat for the home BS	\$15.00
Christensonianavietnamica Mini with green flowers 2 inch NBS	\$15.00
Dendrobiumlamyaiae orange miniature	\$20.00
Dendrobiumolygophyllum Miniature species 2 inch BS	\$12.50
Dendrobiumprentecii Miniature on mount BS	\$20.00
Dendrobiumtannii Miniature related to bracteosum BS	\$12.50
Dyakiahendersoniana Fragrant mini Vanda 2 inch BS	\$12.50
Encycliaboehnkiana Miniature with fragrant green flowers BS	\$15.00
Laeliaflava Superb cross 2 inch BS	\$15.00
Laeliaharpophylla Great cross out of Brazil 2 inch BS	\$20.00
Laelialundii 'Laurelwood' Most vigorous mini I have 3 inch BS	\$20.00
Laeliamilleri Sibling cross of the red form 2 inch BS	\$20.00
Laeliapumila 'Big Ben' AM/AOS BS divisions	\$75.00
Laeliarupestris sibling cross of this pink rupicolous laelia	\$15.00
Leptotespohlitanocoi Mini from Brazil with rose flowers in spike	\$15.00
Meiracylliumtrinasutum Mini species with fragrant rose flowers	\$20.00
Mystacidiumcapense Mini African species with clouds of flowers BS	\$12.50
Oeniellapolystachys BS in spike African species, very fragrant	\$20.00
Podangisdactyloceris Sibling cross 4 inch BS	\$20.00
Pleurothallisgrobyi Mini warmth tolerant 2 inch BS	\$15.00
Pleurothallis leptotifloia 'GC' vigorous mini with yellow flowers	\$15.00
Sobennikoffiarobusta African species 4 inch BS	\$25.00
Zygopetalum Advance Australia 'HOF' AM/AOS fragrant mini	\$25.00

## **JUNE MEETING LOTS OF FUN**

**At our loving, fun, educational June meeting, we enjoyed each other's company, ate great food, listened to beautiful music, wondered at the orchids, and even learned something. Thanks to Wanda La Follette, Claire Ehram, Liz Waters, Valery Godino, and Mieko Magaki for preparing the delicious food. Thanks to Terry Wilsey for the travel arrangements (702 460 2700) and to Steve Hochman for picking up, feeding, and bringing back our speaker. So nice of you all. We loved Dennis Sullivan's live piano music (courtesy of moi) and appreciated the very good air conditioning in the library. (Remember the sweat rolling down at the old Garden Center and the endless promises to fix the air conditioning... You might want to bring a sweater next month though. Honestly... some were a little cold, and they can't adjust the A/C so be prepared to possibly be a little chilly in July... a good thing! I am a grandma. Grandmas tell you to bring a sweater.)**

**Joann Saunderson brought in two orchids for repotting. Everyone was very kind during my little potting demonstration, and several people had good ideas to contribute. I have put a little article on potting at the end of the newsletter which I hope you will find useful.**

**Peter Lin did a presentation that was really appreciated on how to buy orchids that will bloom at different times so that you always have some orchids in bloom. It was a lot of information. Diana wrote down the names of the orchids, and we are reprinting them here for those of us who were too relaxed to take notes.**

**CLUB NEWS:**

**Hoping Marge Redman is on the mend after her surgery. We love you.**

**Hope Liz Waters is having fun with her kids in Oregon.**

**Heard Diana Smith had a great time in Pennsylvania with the family.**

**Happy to have Karen Gambrel, Dennis, our piano player's wife, join us for a meeting. Lovely lady, and we love Dennis.**

**Happy to have Mickee Foster, Jean Hill, Sonia Del Vecchio and Valery Godino join us at the meeting, too. Lovely ladies, all.**

**Nice to have Bettye and John Williams back again from Hawaii.**

**Hope Bruce and Kathy Weber's daughter is feeling better. Our love...**

**Glad to have Esther Gesser join us as a member. Happy Birthday!**

**Hope Myra Lee Glassman is all well now. You are a trooper!**

**Hope Jim Loftfield is recovering from his illness. We send love.**

**Hope Walt, Terry's husband, is recovered and doing fine.**

**Our best wishes to Claudia's husband Ken for a speedy recovery.**

**Everybody—Hope you and your families have a great summer.**

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My *Stanhopea*  
*tigrina* bloomed!  
Lasts one day but  
smells divine!

TWO ARTICLES FOLLOW... Keep going...



## TWELVE MONTHS OF ORCHIDS

PETER LIN, JUNE 2014

### MARCH

*Cymbidiums*

*Phalaenopsis*

*Aerangis fastuosa* – low light (as Phal.), miniature

*Leptotes bicolor*

*Dockrillia linguiforme*

Nobile Dendrobiums – like a dry winter, water only once a month

*Neofinetia* hybrids

### APRIL

*Dendrobium aggregatum* – likes dry winter with no water from November through mid-February

*Dendrobium spectabile*

*Laelia jongheana* – beautiful but cool grower, would probably not survive Las Vegas

*Brassavola digbyana* (now *Rhyncholaelia digbyana*)

*Renanthera citrina*

*Renanthera imschootiana*

### MAY

*Cattleya mossiae*

*Cattleya aclandiae*

*Epidendrum parkinsonianum*

*Epidendrum falcatum*

*Encyclia cordigera* – fragrant

*Sedirea japonica* – Phal. conditions

*Sarcochilus hartmanii*

*Psychosis papilio*

*Paphiopedalum delanatii*

*Mystacidium capense* – night fragrant, from south Africa

### JUNE

*Laelia purpurata* – temperature tolerant

*Cattleya warscewiczii*

*Encyclia radiata*

*Encycliamariae* – cool dry winter, mounted is best

*Encyclia tampense* – from Florida, fragrant

*Neofinetia falcata*

### JULY

Spotted *Cattleyas*

*Encyclia cochleata* (*Prosthecea cochleata*)

*Encyclia phoenicea* – scent of chocolate milk

*Brassavola cucullata*

*Eurychone rothschildiana*

### AUGUST

*Oncidiums*

*Laelia dayana*

*Habenaria rhodocheila* – a brightly colored terrestrial that is dormant 3 months

*Dendrobium laevifolium*

*Dendrobium bracteosum* and hybrids such as Hibiki

*Rhyncostylis coelestis*

#### SEPTEMBER

*Dendrobium phalaenopsis* hybrids

*Laelia pumila*

*Brassavola flagellaris*

*Aerangis luteo alba* var. *rhodosticta* – cream flowers with a red dot in the center

*Pecteilis hawkesiana* – terrestrial

#### OCTOBER

*Cattleya bowringiana* – tall bifoliate

*Bulbophyllum rothschildianum*

*Bulbophyllum longisemum*

*Dendrochilum magnum*

*Dendrobium victoriae-reginae* – blue flowers

#### NOVEMBER

*Laelia gouldiana*

*Laelia anceps*

*Holcoglossum kimballianum*

#### DECEMBER

*Cattleya percivaliana* – big, beautiful, full sized plant

*Cattleya walkeriana* – fragrant, likes to be mounted

*Sophronitis cernua* – likes to be mounted

*Angraecum sesquipedale* – don't disturb roots!

#### JANUARY

*Brassavola nodosa*

*Rhyncholaelia glauca*

*Sophronitis coccinea*

*Rhynchostylis gigantea* – fragrant, likes baskets

#### FEBRUARY

*Dendrobium atrovioleaceum*

*Cattleya loddigesii* – small bifoliate

Mini Cattleyas

*Zygonia Adelaide Meadows* – likes Cymbidium conditions

## The Art of Repotting: What's A Body To Do?

By Carol Siegel

My friend Leslie Doyle makes this great uncooked spaghetti sauce from fresh tomatoes and basil. I, on the other hand, cook my sauce for two hours, adding a little sugar and fresh oregano. Both sauces are good.

Re-potting orchids is like making spaghetti sauce. Everybody swears by his own recipe, and it is fascinating to learn how different growers produce wonderful flowers using totally different methods. Next month, Alan Koch will visit, and I am sure he will talk about pouring peroxide straight out of the bottle on newly-repotted orchids. Who knew? Dan Mumau likes to pot his orchids in clay pots and hang them from the top of the greenhouse. Diana Smith prefers to mount her tiny orchids on sticks and water them every day. Phyllis Bond once did a potting demonstration of cattleyas and said she pots them once every five years and cuts off almost all the roots. They are all great growers. What a body to do? Become informed and experiment for yourself.

At the East-West Orchid show in a few years ago, Dan Dickey did a complete lecture on potting, and it contained many good ideas. Then, our club went on an Orchid Safari to Norman's Orchids and heard Norman, Bob Gordon, and Brandon touch on the same subject saying very different things. I thought I would share some of these excellent (though different!!) ideas with you. Remember that Dan Dickey grows in a wet part of California in a humid environment, watering only every 10 days (!!!) so some of his growing ideas may be too dry for us and may need to be modified.

### POTTING MIX

Dan believes that medium-size fir bark is the best potting material but doesn't believe it should be used straight from the bag. That, he said, is like putting flour in a cake pan and expecting it to be a cake. You have to do things to the flour first. First, you have to sift the bark. There are three layers to bark. You only want the middle layer, so you want to sift out the stringy piece of bark or the light-colored ones. Sieve it through a black nursery tray or colander, shaking to remove the little pieces and then picks out any stones or odd-looking things that might make the material compact.

Next, soak the bark in water in a trash can with a little Physan added as a wetting agent for two or three days. Leave the soggy pieces and dirt that remain at the bottom and keep the bark that floats on the top.

Microwave the refined bark for 10 minutes in a large, covered casserole dish to kill any fungi or mold. Cool and add large perlite (sponge rock) (grade 2) about the size of a pea or a lima bean. Add a six-inch pot of perlite to five gallons of bark. This will help prevent compacting of the mix, allowing air to get to the roots. Sometimes the mix smells a little mildewy, but Dan says that this is okay.

He pots all his plants in bark exclusively, using a finer bark for his paphs (three parts medium bark to one part finer bark with finer perlite). He uses a little styrofoam in the bottom of only his large pots.

I personally don't do any of this sorting, soaking and microwaving of the bark. I just buy New Zealand bark all beautiful and clean from Fred Clarke ([www.sunsetvalleyorchids.com](http://www.sunsetvalleyorchids.com)) and mix it with a little perlite, cork, Alliflor and coconut chips. The idea of something smelling "mildewy" scares me. Different recipes for different people.

Norman Fang, owner of Norman's Orchids, grows his magnificent phals in long-fibered New Zealand Sphagnum moss. He also pots his cattleyas in the moss, although he uses bark in the larger pots if they are going to the East Coast where it is wet. He thinks that moss would be great in the desert for catts. He does not like to mix bark and moss together since the bark disintegrates quickly in the wet moss mix. He soaks the moss



for 24 hours and then squeezes out the excess after which he “fluffs” the moss up again. He sells packages of pre-soaked and fluffed moss for \$4.00. (If you have never checked out his website [www.orchids.com](http://www.orchids.com) you are in for a treat!) He pots his paphs in bark because he says that the PH of moss is too low to grow paphs happily. He repots his plants every one to two years. He waters with tap water once a week BY HAND and fertilizes with one tsp of his own fertilizer to a gallon of water every other week. He NEVER uses pesticides, he says, because he is allergic to the stuff. He handles all his bugs and fungus by drenching his plants, leaves, roots and all, with a solution of one teaspoon of Physan 20 to a gallon of water once a month. (Wear gloves). His plants are very shiny and waxy, and he repots when they look “dark and sad”—a quote!! Norman likes clear pots so that he can see when they are half-dry, which is the time to water them. He says that plants grown in moss have roots that STAY in the pot, leaving more energy to grow better foliage. I, myself, have noticed that my plants potted in moss always have gorgeous roots and seem less shriveled and more healthy than plants in bark. Remember to wear gloves when handling moss since there is a remote possibility of contracting something called sporotrichosis which you don’t need and can prevent. He also double-waters his plants once a month to flush out excess salts. (By the way, he says that it takes FIVE years from the time he clones his phals until they are blooming size...five years of watering by hand, no less. No wonder he charges \$45.) He said that potting in moss is more expensive than potting in bark but really produces better plants.

I don’t soak any moss until the day I pot, and I only soak enough for that potting session. I am always afraid of “growing” something in the moss. I like Fred Clarke’s moss, too.

Bob Gordon felt you could grow in bark, moss, or almost anything. He had a friend who showed him a gorgeous orchid he had blooming in his wife’s underwear! (The underwear was in a pot and not on his wife, I presume) Bob waters moss once a week and bark every three to four days since in the jungle of SE Asia it rains every day and is wet constantly but dries in the breeze. He stressed FANS and air movement over and over. He thought you could fertilize with anything except fish emulsion since in nature all the plants get is a little bird poop and a dead insect or two. He also thought most phals should be repotted in August. To get phalaenopsis to bloom, he suggested a drop in temperature to just below 60 degrees for five weeks in the fall, increased light and a 25% reduction in watering and fertilizer combined with increased air movement. This he said would “scare the sh-t” out of the plant, stressing it into blooming.

#### POTS

Dan chooses pots with drainage holes in the bottom AND sides. Drainage holes allow air to get to the roots which is good. He said to enlarge any small holes with clippers making a little triangle that goes up to the sides of the pot. Avoid pots with small holes or curved sides or little stepped-out areas at the top of the pot. These all make it harder to remove the plant from the pot. Dan does not believe that using clear plastic pots makes any difference in growing success and just uses regular plastic pots. He does use them for phals, however.

Remember that Norman only likes plastic pots. I, too, only use plastic pots. Many orchid roots are green and can do photosynthesis for the plant through the clear plastic pots.

#### REMOVING THE PLANT

Only Dan spoke about how to remove the plant. When the plant is sending out new roots, remove the plant from the pot. Many plants do this after flowering. Water the plant twenty minutes before the procedure. Loosen the plant with a flat knife blade slid around the sides of the inside of the pot, gently flexing the plastic. Make sure the knife has been baked in the oven and then sterilized in a 20% bleach solution for 45 minutes. The speaker was VERY emphatic about cleanliness of cutting and potting materials. Disposable razor blades, at 10 cents a blade, make the cleanest cutting tools to use, making it impossible to spread disease between plants.

Brandon also thinks that razor blades are the ONLY way to sterilize tools. He’s really strict about practicing what he called “safe sex” between plants to prevent the spread of virus. He does not think that the little Scripto long lighters or a Physan solution are enough to prevent virus.

I wrote to the Physan company, and they said that soaking the tools constantly in a solution of their product is a very effective way of disinfecting them and that many nurseries use their product in this way. Although 10 minutes of soaking is optimal, shorter times are also very effective. They suggest using the tools WET with the

solution and constantly soaking them between uses. They thought their method was safer for the plants than bleach and that flaming was very impractical and cumbersome. I like razor blades, but they can be dangerous!!)

I also wrote to the AOS (they are reprinting my question in the Bulletin!) and this was the conflicting answer:

Dear Carol,

I am very pleased to answer your questions. Any torch that gets clippers hot enough to sizzle when they are immediately placed in Physan will sterilize them from any orchid virus. There is probably not too much difference between Clorox and Physan in sterilizing ability but I believe Physan is better. For either to work well they need to be used with shears etc that have all loose organic material cleaned off before dipping and the shears must be allowed to get completely dry between plants. That way the oxidizing reaction is complete and the virus, if present, will be denatured which means it is no longer able to infect another orchid.

In practice, what I do is have 4-5 pairs of clippers and I sterilize them all with a torch before starting dividing. Then I use each one, clean and dip and usually after 4-5 plants when its turn comes around it will be bone dry and I reuse it again in the same cycle. Every hour or so I re-sterilize the shears again with heat to be doubly sure. Additionally I would always heat sterilize the shears after any plant that I divide which I have reason to suspect is virussed.

The same applies to pots. If you wish to reuse a pot then make sure all mix etc is washed out and dip in a diluted solution of either Clorox or Physan, making sure the pots become completely wet. Then leave them to dry completely and they should be safe to reuse. Again if you were potting a very valuable plant then surely it is worth a new pot so no slip up can occur.

Thank you for your kind comments and never hesitate to contact me if I can ever be of assistance to your society. It is, as you say, important to disseminate correct information to orchid hobbyists and particularly so today when there are so many "new chums" that depend on outside knowledge.

Sincerely,

Andy Easton

( I personally do not reuse pots. They are cheap. To me, it is like reusing other people's underwear. Even if you wash it with Clorox, it is still not the same as new. I just give the plant a fresh, new pot. I soak my shears for 24 hours in a Physan solution and never use the same shears on another plant.)

Don notes that roots grow toward the back of the plant and pot so with a new razor blade, he slits the root ball (square?) in the back of the plant. Mainly old roots are there. Dirty beige or white or green means the roots are good. Brown means the root is dead. Remove old bark gently. Vital roots are generally toward the front. Dry the plant (!!!!) for 2-10 days in the air just misting it. Dan says the plant is tough and will survive with just misting. After a few days, you will easily be able to tell which roots are alive and which are dead or damaged. I did this and after two days, my plant looked almost dead. I think this is really too stressful in our desert. Cut off the bad roots with your razor blade. (Try not to cut off your finger. Editor's note....)

Dan reduces the plant to just four bulbs and the new growth. He throws away the rest

(AAAAGGGGGHHHHHH....) Some apply cinnamon or sulfur to the cut place, but he just doesn't water the potted plant for 12 hours to allow it to heal. The other speakers just water the plant after potting.

#### PUTTING IT IN THE NEW POT

Dan does a good job of showing how to put the plant in the new pot. Choose the pot by the size of the roots, not by the size of the leaves. Place the new growth in the center, with the old bulbs against one wall of the pot. Roots should just touch the bottom of the pot. Shake in a little mound of bark first and spreads the roots around the bark. Try to put larger bark in the bottom and any reserved finer bark toward the top of the pot. SLOWLY fill in the bark, gently pressing the bark around the roots and being careful not to cover the rhizome too much. Bark is not placed above the ridge in the top of the pot (or where it would be...) The horizontal line of the rhizome and a few new roots may be visible. If the plant is growing at an angle, place the plant into the pot so that the growths are straight and then angle the BARK around the pot. The bark, therefore, may be an inch higher on one side of the pot than the other to accommodate the angle of the plant. Do not water for 12 hours to allow any plant damage to heal. Water once after 12 hours and then just mist a lot for two weeks or more until the new roots start to grow. Bob Gordon and Brandon felt that this was bad, and they just continue to water their plants with all the others. Dan re-pots only every two or three years (!!!) which is different from most recommendations.

#### PHALS

Dan has some interesting things to say about potting phals. Phals grow in a different way from catts, for example. Catts grow like a snake slithering on the ground (sympodially) and phals grow like a snake slithering UP a tree (monopodially). Sometimes you have to shorten the stem of the phals on the bottom so that it will fit in the pot. You will see that the plant has something like a stick under the roots with no live roots. Just cut that piece off. When you have placed a phal's roots correctly in the bottom of the empty pot, it will look like the spokes of a wheel.

## ROOTLESS PLANTS

An interesting suggestion by Dan to help pot rootless plants is to tape a stake to either side of the OUTSIDE of the pot with masking tape. Then, wrap a twist tie around the stake and then weaving it around the stems of the plant, wrapping at the narrowest part of the growth at the top under the leaves so the twist tie won't fall off. The tape falls off at about the same time the roots start to grow.

All of these suggestions were really interesting. Sift through this information and try to adapt some of them to our conditions. I hope this helps!!

