

GREATER LAS VEGAS ORCHID SOCIETY
THE ORCHID COLUMN **CAROL SIEGEL, EDITOR**
September 10, 2017



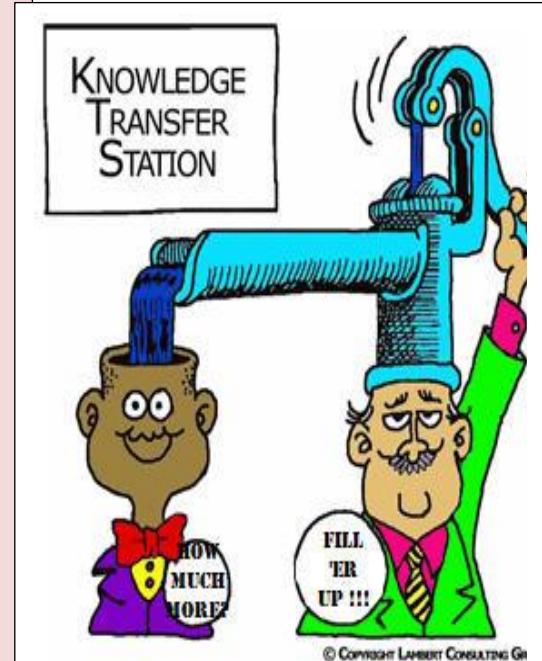
**ORCHIDS OF THE LOST
WORLD
MARY GERRITSEN**

Mary Gerritsen is going to speak on “Orchids of the Lost World” at our September meeting. She has been interested in orchids for over 30 years since her post-doctoral days in the late 70's in San Diego. She has worked in the biotechnology industry for many years, developing drugs for autoimmune disease, cardiovascular disease and cancer. Now semi-retired, she works as an independent biotechnology consultant and in her spare time, travels as much as she can to see orchids in habitat. In the past ten years she has gone on orchid trips/treks to various parts of the US and Canada, as well as Mexico, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela, Brazil, Borneo, Western Australia, Thailand and southern and western China. She has also traveling to various parts of Europe/Mediterranean to photograph the terrestrial orchids there. Mary enjoys writing about orchids, and is a co-author (with Ron Parsons) of two books (Masdevallias, Gems of the Orchid World, and A Compendium of Miniature Orchid Species). She has also written articles for orchid magazines including Orchids and Orchid Digest. She has a collection of mostly miniature, cool growing species. Mary is a past- president of the San Francisco Orchid Society and serves on the board of directors of the Orchid Conservation Alliance.

Mary's talk on the orchids of the lost world concerns the tepuis. They are table-top shaped mountains or mesas found in the Guiana Highlands of South America. The word "tepui" is a Penom word for "house of the gods., and tops of these islands in the sky intrigued the early explorers since their initial discovery. The tallest of them all is Mt. Roraima, located at the border of Venezuela, Brazil and Guana, and it is one of the few that can be climbed without climbing gear or a helicopter. The top of the tepuis are completely isolated from the rainforest below, as well as from neighboring tepuis, and as a result, there are endemic (found only there) flora and fauna not found anywhere else in the world. The mesas are poor in nutrients, but rich in orchids, carnivorous plants, bromeliads and other, often primitive, plant species and are a fascinating place to explore. In April of 2010, Mary joined a small group led by Steward McPherson (author of numerous books on carnivorous plants), that ascended Mt. Roraima and explored this botanical haven. Mary's talk will give you a virtual tour of this floristic adventure. Thanks to Steve Hochman for picking up Mary at the airport.

We will have plants for sale from Fred Clarke Sunset Valley Orchid, mini-catts. Anyone who buys an orchid will get a free bag of potting mix I will donate. Thank you to our food angels for September, Wanda LaFollette, Pat Toth, Blanche York, Shirley Kramer and Marge Redman. We only have three people for October, Diana Smith, Lee Kirschbaum and Cheryl Sago. We need two more!!

We usually meet the second Sunday of the month at the Rainbow Library 3150 Buffalo at Cheyenne at the Meeting Room. Live Piano music at 1. Meeting 2.
Sept 10 Mary Gerritsen "Orchids of the Lost World"
October 8 Keith Davis "Orchid Growing Tips"
November 12 Steve Frowine "Fantastic Phals"
December 10 Holiday Party Home Carol Siegel
January 14, 2018 Tom Mirenda "The Orchids of Costa Rica"
February 11 Jason Fischer "Growing on a Log"
March 11 Ron Kaufmann "Orchids of Tropical America"
April 8 Carol Siegel "Orchids of Hawaii"
And Luau Dancers and Singers!"
May 13 Harold Koopowitz "Slipper Orchids"
June 3 Peter Lin
July 8 Norman Fang "Harlequin Orchids"
August 12 Mark Romansky
September 9 Diana Smith
Oct 14 Fred Clarke "Modern Cattleyas and How to Grow Them"
Nov 12 Cathy Loftfield "Lycaste"
December 9, 2018 Holiday Party



Many thanks to Mark Romansky for his fabulous talk on judging at our August meeting. Who knew judging was so interesting and so complicated. I heard only raves about his great talk! We also loved the pizza and chocolate buffet and all the orchids to buy. Ole and Ken came through again with a terrific selection of plants to buy. Great guys! Such a fun meeting!! Thanks, everybody.

Hope Bettye and John Williams and Kathy and Bruce Weber have a great time in their travels. Hope Leslie Doyle is feeling better soon. Glad to welcome Julia Cichon, Michael Hearn, and Linda Reed as new members. Welcome all!

THE TEN WARNING SIGNS OF ORCHID ADDICTION

Carol Siegel

I have read that growing orchids is like being addicted to heroin, only heroin's cheaper!! Tales of obsession abound from the man who stacked so many light carts in his office that he had to work out of his home to the lady whose broken toilet ran constantly until it turned black with mold so her orchids could have humidity. I thought, "How silly," until I realized that I now park in the street since my three-car garage is full of orchids. Could I have ORCHID ADDICTION? Could YOU? See if you have any of the ten warning signs.

1. You have stopped bathing.

This is an early sign of orchid addiction. You stopped by Trader Joe's and bought one of those \$15 orchids in glorious bloom and liked it so much that now they know you by your first name at that store. They told you to put it in a light, moist room so you put it next to the bathtub. Before you knew it, you had so many orchids that they filled the bathtub. You could no longer take baths. You have now switched to showers and are eyeing the top of the toilet tank. Your mate is nervous.

2. You wear old shoes.

Formerly a lover of beautiful shoes and new clothes, you now spend all your extra money on orchids. This sign is particularly serious in women.

3. You enter your house by way of the garage if your family is home.

Sneaking orchids into the house is universally admitted to be a sure test that you have been bitten by the orchid bug. Previously honest, you now deny that the big red cattleya on the kitchen table is a new acquisition. "This old thing? Nah, I've had it for years..." doesn't fool those who love you.

4. Your orchids are very crowded together.

Orchids of an addict are always very crowded together. That is because no matter how much space you have, you fill it up. Orchid lovers know that the answer to, "How big should my growing area be?" is always wrong - you buy orchids until your growing area is too small.

5. There is styrofoam on your lawn.

Even if you are far from an orchid nursery, you can always order on the phone or the internet, and the plants come in BIG cardboard boxes full of styrofoam. On garbage day, orchid addicts have lots of cartons in front of their house and styrofoam packing blown across the lawn. Cartons and styrofoam are to orchids what needle tracks are to heroin.

6. You plan your vacations around orchids.

You are in Mongolia sleeping in a felt tent, and you wake up in the middle of the night wondering if there are any nurseries in the area. You go to orchid shows, orchid nurseries, and orchid expeditions when you travel.

7. You now speak Greek and Latin.

Despite the fact that you can never find your keys and cannot remember your cell phone number, you can rattle off *Cyrtopodium punctatum* or *Angraecum sesquipedala* every time. You want to know the genus and species of every plant and are now beginning to recognize plants by their Latin names. Seek help.

8. You buy a lot of orchid stuff.

No longer just content with the plants, you have orchid mugs, orchid pictures, orchid books, orchid shirts, and orchid dishes. You spend more money on your orchids than you do on your grandchildren—special water, potting mix, perlite, fertilizer, hoses, and lights. If someone offers you pot, you want to know if it is 4" or 6". You never have any money.

9. More than half of your “FAVORITES” on the internet are orchid sites.

Nobody can ever reach you because you are always on the web doing something orchid.

AND when you are not on the web, you hang out with other orchid addicts to discuss web orchid sites. All your new friends are addicts, too.

10. You want to become an orchid judge.

Wanting to become an orchid judge is the surest sign that your hobby has become a disease. It takes longer to be an orchid judge than it does to become a doctor. After a year of clerking and three to five years as a student judge, they make you a probationary judge for another three to five years before you become a judge. AND THEN THEY DON'T PAY YOU ANYTHING. You just spend money going to shows to judge. They don't even have rehab for judges. They know it is too late to be cured.

If you have recognized any of the warning signs above in yourself, immediately join an orchid society. They probably can't help you, but they sell great orchids!

THANKS TO KELLY MCCRACKEN OF THE NEW MEXICO ORCHID GUILD FOR PERMISSION TO REPRINT HER WONDERFUL ARTICLE.

Does my orchid need repotting?

By Kelly McCracken

**With the upcoming repotting seminar in our September meeting, (THIS WAS A
REFERENCE TO THE NMOG MEETING...)**

I thought our members might enjoy a handy guide for what to look for when you are unsure if your orchid needs to be repotted or not. If you are still unsure, bring your questionable plants to our meeting and NMOG's seasoned growers will help you decide. What to look for

1. Do you see roots poking out of the pot?

Typically, Phalaenopsis plants do tend to produce some roots that grow above the level of the growing media. These are called “aerial” roots. One or two aerial roots will not harm the health of the plant. However, if the entire plant is “crawling” out of the

pot, and it appears that there are more roots out of the media than *in* then it may be time to repot.



A Couple aerial roots. They are silvery white

2. How does the media look?

If the plant is potted in moss, then poke your finger and squish it down a few times. If the moss is springy, light, and not too moist, your plant is probably fine. If your media feels overly damp, is a dark dingy color, or is not springy perhaps it needs rejuvenating.

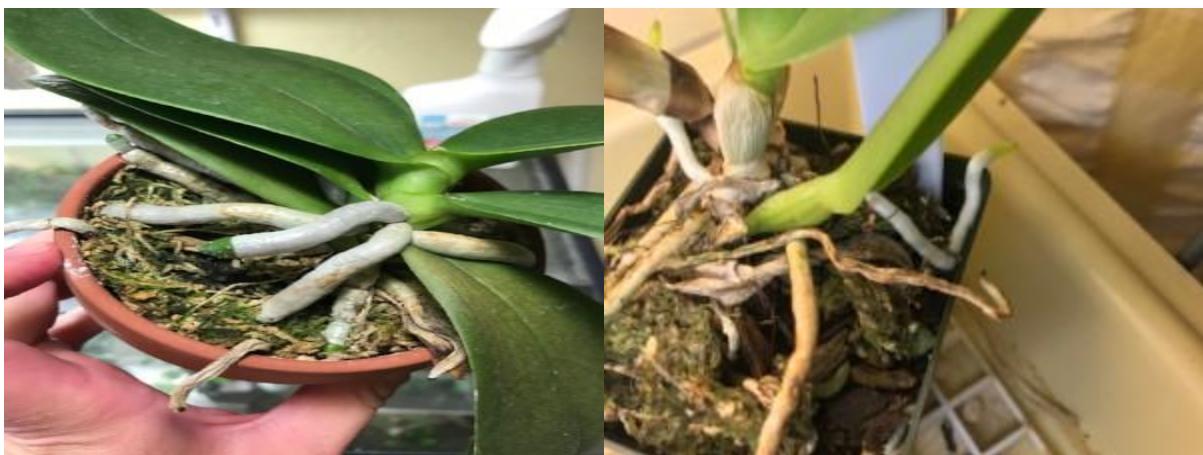
If you are growing in bark, poke your finger down in there and see if you can check on the bark pieces below the top layer. If you can see clearly defined pieces of bark and roots, then you are probably ok. If there are mushy, rotten looking pieces of bark, or the pot takes a long time to dry out between waterings, this means your bark has decayed and you need some new media.



Left: Springy, light colored, fresh media. Right: Dark, dense, old media

3. How do the roots look?

This can be a tough question to answer without taking the orchid out of the pot. You may see lots of rotten looking roots on top of the media, and this usually means there are more rotten ones underneath too. Clear pots are great in this situation. If your plant is looking wrinkly, wilted, or has “pleated” leaves, this can be a sign that the plant has poor roots and could use a repotting.



Left: Healthy, turgid, green-tipped roots Right: thin, wiry, brown dead roots.

4. When was the last time you repotted?

Not all plants need to be repotted every year, but some do. Paphiopedilums prefer an annual repotting. If you have recently purchased the plant, especially from a grocery store or bog-box store, it likely has been sitting in the media it arrived in for around 2 years.

5. What growth stage is the plant in?

This is the trickiest part of knowing when to repot your orchids. Some are very seasonal in when they grow new roots, so if you repot just *after* the plant grows its new roots, it will not grow new roots and establish in its new pot for a whole year. For *Phalaenopsis*, this is less important. They are not so seasonal. Spring is an ideal time to plant these guys, because they are just coming out of their flowering cycle and into the vigorous growth stage. Fall is also a good time, because there is still time to grow before the cold gets here. In general, Spring and Fall are the best times to repot any orchids.



This *Phalaenopsis* is just putting out a new flush of roots. Excellent time to repot, even though it has a spike!

You want to catch the plant just *before* it starts to grow new roots. You can learn this by observing your plants and when they grow what. Cattleyas are particularly tricky. Some grow new roots just after flowering, some grow them just before flowering, some seem to do whatever they please. Dendrobiums, Bulbophyllums, and Oncidiums tend to produce their roots just after a new growth matures. You simply have to watch your plants to learn when they will produce that flush of roots.



This Cattleya roots after the new growth has matured

Don't stress out about catching your plant at the right time if it is truly having issues in its current pot. If your media is too old, its aerial roots offend you, or you're having rot problems, repotting is probably the best option and most commercially available hybrids are not too sensitive to repotting.