

# THE GREATER LAS VEGAS ORCHID SOCIETY

## THE ORCHID COLUMN

CAROL SIEGEL, EDITOR



**2018**

**Sunday, February 11, 2018**  
**Piano music 1:00 pm**

## CLUB EVENTS

Except for June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 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.

February 11 Jason Fischer  
“Growing on a Log”

March 11 Ron Kaufmann  
“Orchids of Tropical America”

March 24, 2018 “A Passion for Orchids” Show

April 8 Carol Siegel “Orchids of Hawaii”

And Luau Dancers and Singers!”

May *Epipactis gigantea* walk  
Calico Basin

May 13 Harold Koopowitz  
“Slipper Orchids”

June 3 Peter Lin “Lovely Laelias”

July 8 Norman Fang “Harlequin Orchids”

August 12 Mark Romansky

September 9 Diana Smith  
Barbecue and talk

Oct 14 Fred Clarke “Modern Cattleyas and How to Grow Them”

Nov 11 Cathy Loftfield  
“Lycaste”

December 9, 2018 Holiday Party

Jan 13, 2019 Tom Mirenda  
“The Orchids of Sicily”

April 14, 2019!! Ketih Davis



DUES ARE DUE!

2018 DUES WERE DUE IN JANUARY. IF YOU HAVEN'T SENT 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, \$45 FOR A COUPLE- TWO PEOPLE RESIDING AT THE SAME ADDRESS. IF YOU CAN SEND AN EXTRA \$5 OR \$10, IT MAKES SUCH A DIFFERENCE. YOU CAN PAY AT THE NEXT MEETING OR SEND A CHECK MADE OUT TO: GLVOS (PLEASE DO NOT MAKE IT OUT TO ME...) SEND TO:

CAROL SIEGEL  
8601 ROBINSON RIDGE DRIVE  
LAS VEGAS, NV 89117.





## **JANUARY MEETING ABSOLUTELY A RIOT!! AND WE MADE \$1300, 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 \$1300 ! In addition, we collected nearly \$900 in dues and over \$100 in contributions as well as almost \$100 from our hotel plants. The LaFollettes donated another six months of our piano player. So generous. 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](http://www.hiloorchidfarm.com))

Santa Barbara Orchid Estate ([www.sborchid.com](http://www.sborchid.com))

Repotme ([www.repotme.com](http://www.repotme.com))

Zuma Canyon Orchids ([www.zumacanyonorchids.com](http://www.zumacanyonorchids.com))

Fred Clarke and Sunset Valley Orchids ([www.sunsetvalleyorchids.com](http://www.sunsetvalleyorchids.com))

Andy's Orchids ([www.andysorchids.com](http://www.andysorchids.com)) allowed us to buy orchids at 50% off for the sale

Peter Lin of Diamond Orchids

Akatsuka Orchids ([www.akatsukaorchid.com](http://www.akatsukaorchid.com))

Calwest Tropical Orchid Supply ([www.calwesttropical.com](http://www.calwesttropical.com))

Orchids Limited ([www.orchidweb.com](http://www.orchidweb.com))

Chadwick Orchids ([www.chadwickorchids.com](http://www.chadwickorchids.com))

Norman's Orchids ([www.orchids.com](http://www.orchids.com)) was little late but donated a case of Megathrive, a great foliage fertilizing spray, which we will sell at the next meeting at a discount!

Everyone else has been very generous, mentioning how much they value our club. I was pleased to get so many orchids donated for the club. **SUPPORT THE GENEROUS FOLKS WHO SUPPORT US IN THESE TOUGH ECONOMIC TIMES, AND TELL THEM THANK YOU WHEN YOU DO ORDER.** Thanks to Ken Summerville and Ole Borresen for selling hotel plants. We made \$530 on that alone. What great guys! I donated four subscription to the great orchid magazine, **ORCHID DIGEST**. Thanks to Mark Romansky who came in at noon to set up all the tables for us old ladies. Hugs and kisses. We are grateful to our White Elephant Captains for helping with the sale including Myra Glassman, Betty and John Williams, Bruce and Catherine Weber, Christina de la Cruz, Phyllis Bond and others. We couldn't do it without you.. Thanks to everybody for being such good sports amid the madness and for bringing in such wonderful treasures for us to buy. Myra and her raffle made \$350. Thanks to Steve Hochman for picking up entertaining the speaker. Despite the insanity of people getting sick, dropping out or going on vacation, we managed to have great food. Thanks Joe and Aline Boisvenu, Hannah Jablin, Carol Siegel, Joe Raba and his friend Mel, Dan Mumau for the delicious food. Hope Joe Raba is recovered from his bout with pneumonia. Thanks to Diana for keeping track of it all and to all the Captains who helped out. It was a blast!

We thank in advance our February food team, Mark Romansky, Claudia Drake, Marilyn Short, Linda Reed, Kathy and Bruce Weber and Shannon Beesley.

A special thank you to Steve Hochman who picked up the January speaker Tom Mirenda (who was fabulous!) in the wee hours of the morning, housed and fed him, and delivered him to the airport—all despite being very ill with a cold. Thank you.

**OUR SINCEREST CONDOLENCES TO JESSE SANDERS ON THE PASSING OF HIS BELOVED SISTER.**

## **JASON FISCHER SPEAKS ON “GROWING ON A LOG AND ALTERNATIVE POTTING MEDIUM ” IN FEBRARY**

**Everybody loves Jason Fischer of Orchids Limited , so we are excited to have him speak to us on February 11<sup>th</sup>. He will be bringing orchids to sell.**

### **Jason Fischer of Orchids Ltd. bio**

Jason Fischer works and helps manage Orchids Limited in Plymouth, Minnesota USA with his father Jerry Fischer. Orchids Ltd. opened in 1978. Orchids Ltd. is a mid-sized operation of 4 greenhouses with 15,000 square feet of growing space, a shade house, and laboratory located in Plymouth, MN.

Jason has had a life-long education in orchids mainly from the opportunity to be raised in a family orchid business. Jason's educational interests were strongly influenced by Japan. He studied the Japanese language and culture for 6 years in high school and at the University of Minnesota. Jason lived in Kyoto, Japan from 2001 to 2003, and upon return decided to import Japanese orchid species and add a new niche to the business.

Having worked for his father since the age of 5, Jason has learned the orchid world from the business and hobbyists perspective. He took interest in orchid hybridization and lab work around 14 years of age, and first started breeding with phalaenopsis, which later on lead to paphs, phrags and miscellaneous hybrids.

Jason's first lecture on *Neofinetia falcata* at the Minnesota Orchid Society in 2004 was the kick-off for an amazing journey of lectures across America and Canada. He has a passion for orchids, and the communication skills he developed in Japan as an English teacher have helped him create interesting lectures that won't put the audience to sleep.

Jason enjoys photographing orchids in situ, and has photographed orchids in situ in Japan, North America, Singapore, Malaysia and Western Australia. His main interests include hybridizing *Vanda falcata* varieties and *Phragmipedium*.

#### **Experience:**

- Has lectured for over 30 different orchid societies in the US, Japan, Canada & New Zealand.
- Speaker for the 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> World Orchid Conferences in Miami & Singapore
- Speaker at 19<sup>th</sup> Australian Orchid Council Conference 2012, Perth
- Speaker for the 7<sup>th</sup> New Zealand National Orchid Expo 2013
- Coordinated the Orchids Limited laboratory from 1998 to 2000
- Currently in management, breeding and marketing for Orchids Limited

# From the Orchids Limited Website, we reprint some of their FAQ's. Thanks to Jason Fischer.

In our continuing efforts to provide education to our website visitors, we have created a list of what are some of the most commonly asked questions for beginners and experienced orchid growers alike.

## Our current topics:

[How do I repot?](#)

[Can I repot when my orchid is in spike or bloom?](#)

[Why do you recommend urea-free fertilizer?](#)

[Why won't my orchid plant bloom?](#)

[How often should I water?](#)

[Why are my plant's leaves wrinkled?](#)

[What is this clear sticky substance I have on the spikes and leaves?](#)

[Why are my buds turning yellow and falling off?](#)

[My Phalaenopsis has stopped blooming and gone dormant. What do I do?](#)

[I'm doing the same things I've always done, but this year my plant didn't bloom. What's wrong?](#)

[Do I cut the spike back when my orchid is finished blooming?](#)

[My orchid has dropped some leaves. It is ok?](#)

[I've got black spots on my leaves, what could this be?](#)

## How do I repot my orchid?

There are several different ways to repot, and different orchid varieties can require different repotting techniques and potting materials. We recommend that you visit our [Orchid Cultural Information](#) section for more specific information on different genus of orchid.

In general, most orchid plants that are growing in pots will break down the medium within one to two years. When repotting, remove the old mix from the pot, being careful not to break or crush too many roots. Hollow or mushy roots to the touch are considered dead and can be trimmed off. Roots that feel solid are generally the living roots. Rinse the root system thoroughly as this makes them more flexible, and cleans off the old potting medium so you can have a clearer look at the roots. [Put the plant in a new pot](#) (plastic or clay, depending on what type of orchid you have) carefully bending the aerial roots into the pot.

All orchids enjoy being rather root-bound, so make certain that there is only an extra inch or so for the roots to expand to in order to become root-bound again. You will likely crack some roots when you tuck them into the new pot and fill in with new medium.

This is inevitable and the plant should recover within a couple of weeks. In the case of using a bark medium ([We highly recommend Orchidata bark](#)), tap on the sides of the pot to help the medium settle into the pot. This reduced how much you need to press down on the medium to stable the plant. Having the plant being stable in the pot is essential for healthy growth. If the plant is loose and/or wobbly, it will most likely not grow well and should be reset into the pot.

For those using [sphagnum moss](#), we recommend using slightly damp moss and wrapping it around the roots lightly before placing it into the pot. This way you don't have to worry about air pockets in the bottom of the pot. After repotting, the plant sometimes needs to adjust from shock. One tip we recommend is not to water the plant for about 3 to 5 days. This will give the roots a chance to recover.

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## Can I repot my orchid when it is in spike or blooming?

Yes and no. It really depends on the condition of the plant and if it is necessary or not. First of all, we must confirm the difference between the phrases "in spike", "in bud" and "in bloom".

If an orchid is "in spike", it has produced a stem that will eventually form buds and flower.

If an orchid is "in bud", flower buds have emerged from the spike and could be anywhere from a few days to a month to bloom. Some orchids form the spike with buds emerging almost simultaneously.

If an orchid is "in bloom", the flowers have emerged and are blooming.

Make sure to remember to [browse our beautiful In-Spike/Bud/Bloom orchids](#).

If your orchid is in spike, you can repot as long as you are careful not to damage roots while repotting. There may be a couple of reasons that you want to repot while your orchid is in spike. These same reasons can apply to plants in bud or bloom.

The plant could be in drastic need of repotting. If this is the case, carefully clean away the old medium and try to avoid damaging roots. If the plant has a very poor root system to start out with and it is clearly suffering from stress, it is best recommended that you remove the flower spike as it is draining energy from the plant that could be used to help it recover.

You might want to repot it into a decorative pot before the plant blooms. If this is the case, to avoid shocking the plant, simply remove the plant and set it into the new pot without removing the old potting medium. This way you will avoid shocking the plant and it will continue its flowering schedule as usual.

If your orchid is in bud, you can repot it for the same reasons as if it was in spike. However, the risk of some (or all) buds being shocked and falling off is high. Orchids are much more forgiving if you repot when the buds have just formed and are "tight". For the most part, you should avoid repotting when in bud if it is not necessary.

If you repot when your plant is actually blooming, it is normal for the flowers to drop faster than normal, sometimes almost immediately. Only repot when blooming if you feel it is absolutely necessary.

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## Why do you recommend urea-free fertilizer?

Urea requires microorganisms to break it down and convert it to nitrogen. Orchids are in soilless mixes so there are not enough microorganisms to do the job. Ammoniac and nitrate nitrogen are immediately available to the plant. Depending on what part of the country you're in, how much sunlight you receive and what your temperatures are, you may be able to get by with a urea based fertilizer. However, people we know who have switched to urea-free have all said they get much better results. (Urea has been linked to pseudomonas disease in Phalaenopsis orchids.)

These days, [we recommend our very own fertilizer called Green Jungle™](#), which has been giving fantastic results and blooms to hundreds of our hobbyist customers!

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## Why won't my orchid plant bloom?

The most common factors are as follows:

- Not enough light
- Poor root system due to old potting medium or over watering
- Not enough temperature fluctuation
- Using a poor water source

Generally speaking, if you are not providing sufficient artificial light ([see our L.E.D. Grow Lights selection](#) or [read about LED lighting technology](#)), plants need to be close to a window, no more than 3' away at most. Plants see light from above, not sideways, and if you grow your plants too far from a window you will notice new growths becoming smaller and the leaves much narrower. They will not be able to store the energy they need to bloom.

Poor root systems are caused by over-watering, or forgetting to repot when the medium is broken down. If this happens you will have to repot as soon as possible in order to re-establish the root system.

Temperatures should fluctuate below 65° Fahrenheit at night (preferable 60°) to above 65-75° during the day. Generally a 7-10°

temperature fluctuation is needed to initiate decent flowering for most orchids.

Water should be clean. We always recommend using rain, distilled or reverse osmosis water. Soften water has too many minerals and will most likely slow down, damage, or kill root growth in orchids.

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## **How often should I water my orchids?**

Orchids need to dry out somewhat between watering. In general, most orchids in a 5" or larger pot size will require to be thoroughly watered once per week. Smaller pots often dry out faster, and can require water two to three times per week. Do not attempt to put your plants on a watering schedule. Check your plants every 2-3 days. Are they dry down in the mix and well as on top? If so, you should water. Every grower's plant environment is different, and you will become familiar with your plants watering needs over time.

One trick to help measure moisture is to take a sharpened wooden pencil and jam it down into the mix. Pull it out, and if the color of the wood exposed at the tip turns dark, you can be assured that there is moisture in the mix. You can also use a plastic label. The weight of the pot becomes lighter as the mix dries out. If in doubt, don't water. Wait a day or two.

If you happen to have an epiphytic plant that is being grown on a slab, you should be watering on a daily basis or have very high humidity in order for it to grow.

We recommend the [MOMET™ Moisture Meter](#), a handy tool that lets you know when to water your orchid plants. There is almost another model that gives even more readings called the [MOMET Plus™ Moisture Meter](#).

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## **Why are my orchid's leaves wrinkled?**

Wrinkled or pleated leaves are caused by a lack of moisture reaching the vegetative part of the plant. This can be caused by not watering enough, or watering too much. If you can't figure out what you've done, tip the plant out of the pot and examine the roots. If they are white or tan, firm, and spread throughout the mix, you need to increase the frequency of watering. If the roots appear brown and mushy, trim them off, repot into a new mix, and decrease the frequency of watering. Always remember, orchids should never stand in water!

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## **What is this clear sticky substance I have on the spikes and leaves of my orchid?**

This is normal for most orchid flower spikes. It is simply a sugary secretion. You can mist it with lukewarm water to dissolve it off.

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## **Why are my buds turning yellow and falling off?**

This is referred to as bud blast, and can be caused by the following conditions:

The plant has been too dry between watering, causing it to withdraw moisture from the buds.

There may be some wide swings in temperature, where it may be too hot in direct sun, or the plant may be too close to an air conditioning or heating vent.

There may be some fumes in the air caused by paint, natural gas leaks, or other chemicals. Flowers naturally create their own methane and collapse after pollination to save energy for seed production. Certain forms of methane or ethylene may trigger bud or flower collapse.

Cattleyas in particular are sensitive while in bud to overwatering, causing the buds to actually turn black in the sheath.

All plants need an adequate amount of light in order to flower correctly. Placing a plant in the center of a room, on a coffee table for example, is fine for display during an evening of entertaining, but to maintain proper growth and flower development it is best to keep the plant in its growing area (near a window or under lights).

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## **My Phalaenopsis has stopped blooming and gone dormant. Now what do I do?**

Phalaenopsis orchids never really go "dormant". When they aren't blooming, they put energy into making new leaves and roots. Continue to provide good light, water, and fertilizer.

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## **I'm doing the same things I've always done, but this year my orchid didn't bloom. What's wrong?**

Things to consider:

Is it time to repot? We recommend repotting every 1-2 years as the mix breaks down, usually in the spring or early fall. See our potting mix and orchid repotting video. Weather conditions? Long periods of cloudy days, cooler or hotter temperatures than normal can change when blooming will occur.

Has the plant been moved to a different location?

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## **Do I cut the spike back when my orchid is finished blooming?**

This is a very common question that really depends on what type of orchid you have. In general, once orchids are finished blooming you can remove the spike with a scissors. If you do not remove the spike, the flower spike will dry up and turn brown over time. There are some orchids that can re-bloom off of the same flower spike more than once.

Certain species of Oncidium such as the papilio can bloom off of a broken or cut back spike. The most commonly re-blooming flower spike is that of the Phalaenopsis (moth orchid). If your Phalaenopsis is of mature size such as 12" or more in leaf-span, cut it half way back just above one of the nodes (the little notches on the flower spike). It should branch out in 90-120 days with a new spike. Generally we recommend trying this only once per flower spike. Trying it a second or third time will result in less flowers. Cutting the flower spike completely off will give the plant more energy in order to produce a new flower spike with more flowers.

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## **My orchid has dropped some leaves. It is ok?**

Almost all orchids drop leaves as they grow. Phalaenopsis orchids bottom leaves will turn yellow and fall off when it starts to produce new growth. Common white and purple Dendrobiums often drop all their leaves on each cane after they have finished blooming. With most orchids, old leaf growth naturally drops once new growth starts to emerge. The only time you should be concerned about leaves dropping is when the new growth or large and mature leaves turn yellow or fall off. This usually indicates a bacteria or fungus problem (you may want to try a bactericide/fungicide spray). [We have a few different Pest and Disease Control products to choose from](#). Unless you have a deciduous orchid that has resting periods where it may drop all of its leaves, if an orchid has no leaves it is most likely dead. Examine the plant carefully if the largest leaves or new growth are changing colors.

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## **I've got black spots on my leaves, what could this be?**

This is generally a leaf rot caused by types of fungi that are commonly classified as Cercospora or Colletotrichum. Many times this rot will start out as yellow spots, gradually turning to a brown or black color. Note that certain plants such as most Oncidium hybrids often get several small black spots on the leaves due to the sun. In this case it is natural spotting and will not harm the plant.

The best kind of treatment for this problem is to use a bactericide/fungicide spray such as [Phyton 27](#). After treatment, examine to see if the spots are increasing in size or number within a week to 10 days. If you have successfully rid of the problem, the spots should dry up and turn brown. If there are still signs of new rot, repeat treatment. Leaves that are heavily covered in rot should be completely removed. Make sure you sterilize whatever tool you may use to remove the infected leaves with as it can spread the disease to other plants.



## MORE NEWSLETTER 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-18<sup>th</sup> century, Englishmen of all classes exchanged gifts and cards on this day. Gradually, printed cards replaced hand-written ones by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> 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.

