

# GREATER LAS VEGAS ORCHID SOCIETY

SUNDAY, May 4, 2003 2pm

THE MEETING WILL BE HELD IN THE USUAL PLACE, THE NEVADA GARDEN CLUB BUILDING, WASHINGTON AND TWIN LAKES, TWO BLOCKS EAST OF VALLEY VIEW. BUILDING WILL BE OPEN AT 1PM

**Carol Siegel, Newsletter Editor**

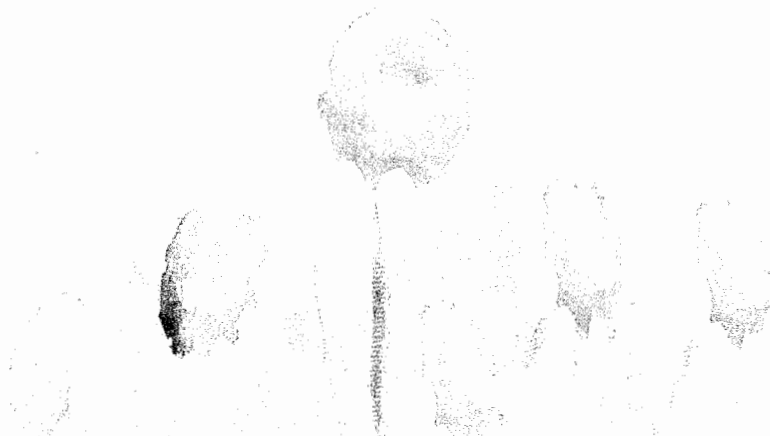
CAROL SIEGEL- PRESIDENT  
CLARICE DEAN - VICE-PRESIDENT  
EILEEN MCKYTON- SECRETARY  
DIANA SMITH- TREASURER

AND...

Dan Mumau, Michael Lawless - Membership Hospitality Chairmen  
Lillian Patterson- Photographer and Historian  
Dan Mumau and Tony Billitere- Raffle Chairmen  
Phyllis Bond, Leslie Doyle, Shelly North and Eileen McKyton- Special Events Chairmen  
Jeri Lee and Tony Billitere- Community Liaison  
Alex McKyton - Building Chairmen and Webmaster  
Tex Severance- Show and Tell Guru  
Tex and Gidget Severance- Judging Chairmen  
Scotty Nogaim- Election Chairman, Raffle Lady  
Liz Leone- Library Chairman Clarice Dean, Assistant Librarian  
Clarice Dean- Trip Chairman  
John Haydukavitch- Video Chief  
Shelly North- Classy Club Apparel Chairlady

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May 4, 2003 Harry Phillips, Andy's Orchids, "Mounted Orchids"  
June 1, 2003 Nick Burnett "Seven Ways to Kill an Orchid"



- July 13, 2003 Virtual Greenhouse Tour  
NOTE THIS IS THE SECOND SUNDAY OF JULY  
THE FIRST IS JULY 4 WEEKEND
- August 3, 2003 Annual Mt. Charleston BBQ
- September 7, 2003 Karen Muir on "Brachy Paphs"
- October 5, 2003 Charles Weckerle-Thrun on "Potting Different Orchid  
Genera"
- November 2, 2003 Mike Glikbarg, Orchids of Los Osos, Topic to be Announced
- December 7, 2003 Fourth Annual International Food Fest/Holiday Party.
- January 4, 2004 John Salvanti, Owner of Parkside Orchids, "A Cultural  
Review of the Genus Dendrobium with Suggestions for  
New Additions to Your Collection"
- February 1, 2004 Carol Siegel "The Sex Life of Orchids"
- March 7, 2004 Sue Fordyce?? "Cattleya Orchids"
- April 4, 2004 Charles Rowland, "Orchid Photography"
- May 2, 2004 Norman Fang, Owner of Norman's Orchids "Phalaenopsis"
- June 6, 2004 Glen Decker, Owner Piping Rock Orchids, "Phragmipedium"
- July 11, 2004 Virtual Greenhouse Tour SECOND SUNDAY
- August 1, 2004 Barbecue
- Sept 12, 2004 Mike Blitz, Exotic Orchids of Maui SECOND SUNDAY
- October 3, 2004 Aaron Hicks, "The Orchid Seed Bank"
- November 7, 2004 The Further Exploits of Bill Bergstrom in Mexico
- December 5, 2004 Fifth International Food Fest and Holiday Party

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We gathered for orchid fun, friendship and food at our very successful April meeting. Matt Swift of Swift's Orchids introduced us to the world of equitant oncidium, called tolumnia, adorable little plants with fan-shaped leaves and a love of drying out between waterings. His culture sheets and potting demonstration were very good, and he provided an exceptionally fine raffle table. We all went home loaded with plants and supplies AND the club made \$120 on the raffle. Kudos to Clarice Dean for arranging the speaker, to Mike Lawless and Dan Mumau for bringing hotel raffle plants, and to Eileen McKyton for doing a great job manning the front desk. Thanks to Cheryl Owens, Chris Bowman, Anne Murphy, and Jeannie Salles for the marvelous food at the meeting. (They brought a baker and his goodies, clever gals...) Our show and tell table circled the room, and Tex Severance, our guru,

enlightened us. John Haydukavitch videotaped the speaker, and Liz Leone, and her crew of three adorable little kids, shared our library with all the members.

We said a sad farewell to Mike and Joni Sielaff and wish them well in Oregon. You will be missed. We welcomed guests May Lepler, Sarah Soeharman, Marge Cordell, Vicki Smith and Sharon Proehl. We were delighted to have you.

Jeri Lee, our community Liaison and cookbook chairman, did us proud by presenting a check to Clementine Coleman of the Crisis Intervention Center for the homeless at the meeting. Channel 8 did a segment at 11pm on our efforts to help the unfortunate in honor of our 30<sup>th</sup> birthday. We are very proud of Jeri—and of our club. Carol Wilkinson of Channel 8, who did our TV interview, joined our club, too. We are thrilled to have this classy lady as our newest member.

Next month, Harry Phillips, owner of Andy's Orchids, will do his famous talk on mounted orchids. Both Clarice and I have heard this talk, and it is really an excellent talk on the culture of mounted orchids. He is bringing a \$250 raffle table of plants and supplies as well as mounted orchids for sale. Andy's Orchids is the premiere mounted orchid grower and takes great pride in its plants and in educating the public. Thanks in advance to Gary Nelson, Grace Takahashi, Tessa Khanh, and Karen Good for the snacks for our meeting. Shelly North assures us that our T-shirts, totes and apparel will be ready for our meeting. We can't wait!!

On July 13 (second Sunday of month!!!) our Annual Virtual Greenhouse Tour will present the greenhouses, growing areas, bathrooms?, and the like where we manage to coax our orchids to bloom (or at least LIVE...) here in the desert. New members and old will learn a lot. We encourage you to take part. It will be more interesting if small, creative ideas are presented. Grow on top of the toilet? In a windowsill? In a corner of the basement? Great!! We will need a roll of 35 mm slides by the May meeting. If you can't take them yourself, Lillian Patterson, our Master Photographer and Nice Lady, will take them for you!! E-mail me or call (254-4168) if you would like to take part. So far, we have the growing areas of Marilyn Worthington, Ester Choi, Clarice Dean, Steven Ninemire, Shelly North, Leslie Doyle, Eileen McKyton, Daniel Vong, Carol Siegel, Mike Levin, Liz Leone, Phyllis Bond, and Gary Nelson. We are also asking a greenhouse vendor to come and talk. Experience

has shown me that we need at least a dozen promises to yield a really good slide show. Each grower will present his own area. I will put together all the slides for you. Do it! It's fun.

The Easter Show at the California Hotel, sponsored by the Torrance Cymbidium Society and contributed to by our society, was just beautiful. Shelly North and Phyllis Bond created a dynamite orchid display for our club, and we received lots of compliments on our gorgeous flowers. Shelly and Phyllis did such a wonderful job!! Thanks to Carol Siegel, Diana Smith, Clarice Dean, Shelly North, and Eileen McKyton for bringing down your orchids for display. Once again, Diana was a big help setting up the plants and display. I love you, Diana. We had a first-rate conservation booth, too, which highlighted native orchids of the SW and orchid conservation issues. So many members contributed to the success of the show and helped educate the public about our club and about orchids. We thank Tex and Gidget Severance and Mike Levin for AOS judging and Clarice Dean, Mike and Joni Sielaff, and Grace Takahashi for serving as clerks. Clarice Dean ran off all the cultural sheets and club information. Jeri Lee, Eileen and Alex McKyton, Marsha Hawley, Steve Ninemire, and Roland Hui were great representatives of the club during the show. We especially thank Alex McKyton for taking AOS award photos for free, saving the club \$200 on a photographer. Two AOS awards were given to members of the Torrance Cymbidium Society, and Mike Levin won a plaque for first place for his Phrag Don Wimber 'Mohave'. I won plaques for second place for Phrag Nitidissim~~um~~ and third place for Paph Lebaudyanum. It is such a pleasure to be in a club where everyone helps and everyone is involved.

Following are two articles I wrote on vanilla and on polyploidy (!), questions and answers from Orchid Limited website, and potting info from Norman's Orchids.

Stay safe. Keep blooming. See you in May. Love Carol 254-4168 [growlove@att.net](mailto:growlove@att.net)

Black Spots in Your Ice Cream  
By Carol Siegel

I took my granddaughter to Mimi's Café, and she refused to eat the ice cream for dessert because it had black dots that looked like ants. "No," I reassured her, "Those are orchid seeds." "You know," she said, "I am only four-years-old, but I know ants from orchids."

However, they really ARE orchid seeds. Honest. *Vanilla planifolia* and *Vanilla pompona* are the only orchids actually grown as edible crops. I once received an adorable little vanilla plant in a 2" pot as a gift, but be warned. This plant may be adorable, but it is not LITTLE. It is an epiphytic vine, with thick, succulent, green stems and greenish yellow flowers climbing into trees and attaching themselves with aerial roots. It grows to be 50 feet high—as high as a five-story apartment building. This is definitely not for the kitchen windowsill. The long green seedpods lack fragrance and taste until they have undergone a complicated curing process for six months. The dried pods or vanilla beans contain hundreds of tiny seeds, the little black specks in real vanilla ice cream

Early Spanish expeditions to Mexico found the Aztecs drinking "*chocolatl*", a drink combining chocolate, vanilla and chili. The people of Central America made extensive use of "*tlixochitl*" or vanilla. The original Aztec word meant "dark pod". Similarly, the English word "*vanilla*", from the Spanish word "*vainilla*", comes from the Latin word "*vagina*" meaning "sheath" or "pod" for the pods that develop on the plant.

Vanilla has always been valued for its aphrodisiac properties. In 1749, Linnaeus asserted that vanilla was a natural aphrodisiac. Records indicate that Emperor Montezuma refused any beverage but *chocolatl*, laced with plenty of vanilla, which he drank fifty times a day from pure gold goblets. He was said to make great use of it before late-night visits to one of his many wives, and later, European young husbands and lovers made liberal use of vanilla, too, for similar visits.

Vanilla was considered a valuable plant for many other reasons. It was used to protect travelers in Mexico, to flavor tobacco in Cuba, to make perfumes, and to treat melancholy, impotence, menstrual problems, rheumatism and convulsions.

Legend has it that when the world was young, the gods mixed with men. A beautiful young goddess, Xanath, daughter of the goddess of fertility, fell in love with a handsome young Totanac warrior. However, they could never marry because she was a goddess, and he was a mortal. To be forever with her lover and his people, she turned herself into a vanilla plant to bring happiness and pleasure to the Totanacs in Hawaii, who call the orchids "Xanath."

It is thought that vanilla was brought back to Europe in 1510. At first, vanilla was used for perfume and not as a flavoring, but there is record of its being used as a flavoring in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I of England. It fell out of favor and was brought into England again in 1800 by the marquess of Blandford. It grows easily from cuttings and was brought this way to Antwerp and Paris and was given, says Luigi Berliocchi, a "rapturous reception."

A difficult plant to fertilize outside its native habitat, vanilla proved a real challenge. The plant is pollinated by a tiny *Melipona* bee indigenous to its native area, and the flower lasts only for a single day. Even in the wild, the flower has only a 30 in 10,000 chance of being pollinated. Finally, it was artificially pollinated in 1841 by Edmund Albius, a former slave from Reunion. Today, it is commercially hand-pollinated and is farmed in Mexico, Madagascar, Reunion, Hawaii, and other areas around the equator.

Whereas most orchids have found a place in our hearts, vanilla orchids have managed to find a place in our businesses, our kitchens, our legends, and, of course, our hearts, too.

#### Bibliography:

Berliocchi, Luigi. *The Orchid in Lore and Legend*. Timber Press. Portland. 1996.  
Zakahi, Carol. "Creating Vanilla in Hawaii", *Orchids*, 71:7, pp.623-627, July 2002.  
"A Celebration of Orchids"- a little brochure put out by the New York Botanical Garden in celebration of its exhibit February 28-March 3-, 2003.

## Did You Know You Were 2N?

By Carol Siegel

Lately, I have developed a passion for phragmipedium orchids. They like growing under my lights, their flowers are gorgeous, and they last for months. Some of the orchids say "Eric Young 4n" as one of the parents. "Is that good," I asked myself. "If 4n is good, is 50n better? Is 2n bad? What is n? What are they talking about?"

When you don't know something orchid, the place to go is the old-faithful best book of all time, Rebecca Tyson Northern's "Home Orchid Growing"—so I went. The whole "N" question deals with something called "polyploidy". A polyploid is a type of plant with one or more EXTRA sets of chromosomes. Most living things get half their chromosomes (the haploid number or n) from one parent and the other half (the other haploid or the other n) from their other parent. They are "diploid"—they have two half numbers of chromosomes or 2n from their parents. You and I are diploid—We are 2n!! Each one of our haploid sets represents the contribution from one of our parents to the unique people we are.

Sometimes, something unusual happens in plants. Instead of two sets of chromosomes, a plant will get an extra set- 3 sets-, and it is called 3n or triploid. Most triploid plants are sterile and cannot reproduce. One with four sets of chromosome is 4n or tetraploid and usually can reproduce. Five sets makes a 5n or pentaploid, and six sets a 6n or hexaploid. In humans, individuals with extra sets of chromosomes don't survive.

Polyploids occur occasionally in nature as a mutation. Sometimes, the extra set of chromosomes carries genes for good things in the orchid, and the plant that results is really superior to normal plants. Tetraploids (4n) are likely to be large heavy plants with large flowers of heavy substance and good keeping qualities. Of course, not all 4n are superior to 2n plants, but they sometimes are really exceptional and make wonderful breeding parents. Unfortunately, although 2n produce 80-90% viable seed, 3n sometimes give as little as 0.5% viable seed. 5n is very rare, and are not usually as good quality as 3n and 4n.

What happens to make a plant have an extra set of chromosomes? Occasionally, a reproductive cell does not undergo normal division to make a haploid cell and

remains with all its chromosomes. This  $2n$  cell will mate with a haploid cell and produce an individual that is  $3n$ . If both reproductive cells don't divide normally into their half number, then one  $2n$  cell and another  $2n$  cell result in a  $4n$  individual. Sometimes, one egg is fertilized by two sperm!

In breeding, sometimes triploid are produced by breeding a  $2n$  with a  $4n$ . Because amateur growers are usually not interested in breeding but just love the big heavy flowers, a  $3N$  sterile plant is sometimes preferred for the Home Depot crowd.

The chemical COLCHICINE has been used for many years to create giant-sized plants and flowers ( $4n$ ) and to make sterile hybrids produce seed. Colchicine produces man-made tetraploids ( $4n$ ) by doubling the number of chromosomes. Colchicine upsets the normal process of cell division by interfering with the division process just at the point when the chromosomes have become duplicated. The chemical is poisonous to plants and humans and must be used in a very weak dilution.

So now I know—and you do, too!

Northern, Rebecca Tyson. *Home Orchid Growing*. Simon and Schuster. NY. Pp.77-82.



## **Q&A (with permission [www.orchidweb.com](http://www.orchidweb.com))**

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

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

1. The plant has been too dry between watering, causing it to withdraw moisture from the buds.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. Cattleyas in particular are sensitive while in bud to overwatering, causing the buds to actually turn black in the sheath.
5. 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).

### **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 reblooming 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 halfway 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 grow.

# BASIC REPOTTING about DIVIDING

## (Courtesy of [www.orchids.com](http://www.orchids.com))

Most orchids need to be repotted once every two years. The bark or moss that the orchids are grown in gradually deteriorates. If repotting is not done, the bark or moss become decomposed and packed. Under these conditions, roots are not properly aerated, drainage becomes blocked so there is too much standing moisture, and the plant eventually dies from asphyxiation and root rot. Ideally, orchids should be repotted immediately after flowering.

### Tools and Supplies

/ pair of clippers	Medium Orchid Bark or Fine Orchid Bark
/ large bucket	Physan 20
/ blowtorch	Alitte
Pots	Rootone (Rooting Hormone) or Dip'n Grow
Bamboo Stakes	Phyton 27
Orchid Ties	Plant Labels
	Norman's Optimal Orchid Nutrients

### Selecting a New Pot

Orchids can be grown in any kind of container that has a hole for drainage at the bottom. Because ventilation around the bottom of the pot is vital to the plant's well being. Water must not be allowed to stand at the bottom of the pot. The same pot may be re-used after the existing decomposed orchid bark has been discarded. However, the used pot must be disinfected with Physan 20. Otherwise, pick a pot that is just slightly larger than the previous one. The pot should be large enough to accommodate for the plant's growth over the next years.

### Potting Mix

The potting mix is determined the size and type of orchid to be grown. Phalaenopsis,

Cattleya, Dendrobium and Vanda should be grown in Medium Orchid Bark Mix. Paphiopedilum, Miltonia, Odontoglossums and Oncidium need to be potted in Fine Orchid Bark Mix.

Disinfect the orchid bark mix with diluted Physan 20, prior to use.

### Removal From Pot

Remove the plant from its pot. This should be done in a manner that will cause the least trauma to the roots.

Shake off and remove all of the old bark from the root mass.

### Sterilize Tools

To prevent the transmission of bacterial and viral infections, sterilize the tools prior to use. Sterilize the cutting tools with Physan 20 or flame the tool with a blowtorch. Let the sterile tool cool down before using it on the plant.

### Trimming

Cut off all dead roots. Dead roots are hollow and soft. Healthy roots are firm and creamy white. The live roots situated outside the pot should be either cut back (Cattleya and sympodial orchids) or retained (Phalaenopsis and monopodial orchids). The live roots located inside the container are preserved.

Cut off any dry inflorescences and dead leaves. Remove any diseased parts from the plant, if possible. Diseased parts are often soft and dark brown or black in color. Paint the wounded area with Alitte.

**Repotting**

If no division is needed, place the plant to be repotted in a pot that is slight larger than the preceding one.

**Dividing**

Sterilize the cutting tools with Phyan 20 or flame the tool with a blowtorch. Let the sterile tool cool down before using it on the plant.

For blooming size plants, a minimum of 3 to 5 bulbs per division should be kept. The rule of thumb is to make the largest division practical, because the larger plants produce the best and most flowers.

Divide the clump by cutting the rhizome with clippers. Two divisions of the plant are now available.

**Rooting Care**

Dip the plant in Rootone (Rooting Hormone) or Dip'n Grow to help stimulate new root growth.

**Positioning the Plant in the New Pot**

Positioning the plant in the new container is not a problem for monopodial orchids such as Phalaenopsis. Simply place the plant in the center of the pot. plant off-center in such a manner that the new growth will develop towards the center of the pot, and the new roots will probe down into the orchid bark. Remember, sympodial orchids need space in front of the bulbs. Otherwise, the plants will escape from the new pot.

Hold on to the plant firmly, while packing the orchid bark mix into the pot. Packing the orchid bark with the use of your hands is less traumatic to the root mass than with the use of a wooden potting stick.

**Staking**

Use bamboo stakes for support. Stakes are essential for sympodial orchids such as Cattleyas. Place the stakes in a position that will not impede the development of the new growth.

Orchid ties should be soft and reinforced with metal strips. Ties are needed to support the plant. However, ties should not be affixed too tightly, otherwise they will damage the plant as it grows.

**Labeling**

Newly potted plants should have plant labels with the name of the plant and date that it was repotted.

**Care After Repotting**

To prevent bacterial and fungal disease, water once with Phyton 27. Phyton 27 is a systemic agent that will protect the plant for the next 90 days.

Place the newly potted plant in a shady location. It is usually best not to water the plant for the next 7 to 10 days. During the second week after repotting, resume a normal watering schedule. After about a month, new roots will appears on the plant. Return the plant to it normal location and begin to reapply Norman's 0 timal Orchid Nutrients as recommended.