

GREATER LAS VEGAS ORCHID SOCIETY

THE ORCHID COLUMN

CAROL SIEGEL, EDITOR



SUNDAY, AUGUST 2, 2015
1PM LIVE PIANO MUSIC
2 PM MEETING
PIZZA PARTY
CHOCOLATE BAR

AUGUST 2: DIANA SMITH "ORCHID DISEASES"
PIZZA PARTY AND CHOCOLATE BAR (You bring the chocolate!)

SPECIAL EVENTS

August 2, 2015 Mark Romansky
"Orchids in the Home"

Sept 13 , 2015 Alan Koch "Orchid
Biology"

Oct 4, 2015 Diana Smith "Pests"

November 1, 2015 Cathy Loftfield
"Orchids Around the World"

Dec 6, 2015 Holiday Party

January 10, 2016 Mary Gerritsen
"The Orchids of Borneo"

Feb 2, 2016 Fred Clarke
"Catasetum"

March 6, 2016 Guillermo Salazar
"African Orchids"

April 3, 2016 Greenhouse Tour
Native Orchid Walk

May 1, 2016 Art Chadwick
"Large-Flowered Cattleyas"

June 5 Ron Parsons "Orchids of
Indonesia"

Nov 6, 2015 Steve Frowine "Growing
Under Lights and In the Home"

Mark Romansky, our very own talented member, will be speaking on "Orchids in the Home." Mark has been growing since he was five and has grown everything from Aganisia to Zygopetalum. He is a former judge for the American Orchid Society and has judged nationwide and internationally including two World Orchid Conference. As Mark says of his talk: "The talk will focus on how to grow on windowsills and around the house, and use your (environment) to your best advantage. I will share some of my tricks of the trade for making the most of what you got, good varieties for the home, and maybe a few surprises! Its "a desert out there" but you can still grow orchids!" **The club is paying for a Pizza Hut Pizza Party. Thanks to Cathy for helping order the 15 pizzas and dozens of chicken wings with me. We had to go to three Pizza Huts to make it happen (long story...) I thought it would be fun if we had a CHOCOLATE BAR as well. I saw it at my nephew's wedding, and everybody went crazy! Everyone is asked to bring something chocolate- a chocolate cake, chocolate candy, chocolate cookies, chocolate ice cream, chocolate mousse, chocolate-covered oreos, chocolate-covered strawberries- just about anything. ! Jean Hill has agreed to bring paper goods, and Susan Hochman is bringing drinks, ice and cups. Thank you!! Hilo Orchid Farms has sent their great blooming orchids for the meeting.**

PETER LIN DID A GREAT JOB WITH CATTLEYA SPECIES AND HOW TO GROW THEM IN JULY

Thanks to Peter Lin who showed us how to grow cattleya species. He is a great friend of the club, and we love having him. He sold beautiful plants from Sunset Valley Orchids, too. I am arranging to get him again next year.

We thank everybody for bringing great food our potluck. It was lots of fun. Thanks to Cathy Loftfield for bring paper goods and Jeannie Salles for providing drink. I was very grateful to Mark Romansky for coming in early to help me set up when Diana was out of town. It was such a help. I also thank with all my heart Kathy and Bruce Weber who helped me carry and cart after the meeting. It was so nice of you. Once again, we thank Ole, Tony and Joel. We made \$77 on our hotel plants. We are so grateful to you generous gentlemen.

We are pleased that Liz Waters had a successful outcome to her recent surgery. So thrilled for you.

Hope that Leslie Doyle has a great time in her new RV cruising exploring Alaska.

So glad that Diana Smith is enjoying her retirement. We know she enjoyed Montana and Morro Bay and hope she has a blast on her cruise to Alaska with her sister. You earned it!

Hope that Steve Hochman is all better after his fall. We love you and hope to see you soon.

Hope Bettye and John Williams are enjoying their summer travels.

Congratulations to Pat Holland on her job at UNLV. She is getting closer to her PhD!

I loved going to Atlanta to my grandson Joshua's Bar Mitzvah. It was great to see the whole family. I am looking forward to traveling to Drumheller, Canada to explore the dinosaur fossils there.

So happy that Eileen McKyton is fully recovered. Such marvelous news...

Happy to greet guests Arline Sturgeon, Lucia Cortez and her beautiful daughter, Pat Toth, Nochey(?) Carlino, Barbara Berrios, and Caroline Diaz. We welcomed new members Lila Levine and Connie Jones. We are thrilled to have you. Should any of our guests wish to join in August, we are running a special- \$45 for both 2015 and 2016 for individuals, \$65 for couples. You can, of course, just pay \$30 for this year or \$45 for couples, but the other is a better deal.

AOS VIDEO LIBRARY

THERE ARE TWO TERRIFIC ORCHID MAGAZINES FOR YOU TO SUBSCRIBE TO. THEY WILL TEACH YOU ALL ABOUT ORCHIDS. ONE IS **ORCHID DIGEST**, www.orchiddigest.com. YOU CAN SUBSCRIBE AT THAT SITE. I WRITE FOR THAT MAGAZINE AND AM PARTIAL TO THEM.

THE OTHER IS THE **AMERICAN ORCHID SOCIETY BULLETIN** www.aos.org IF YOU SUBSCRIBE TO THESE TWO MAGAZINES, YOU WILL BE A BETTER GROWER AND REALLY ENJOY THE HOBBY.

THERE IS ALSO ON THE www.aos.org site a wonderful, free video library. Just go on the site and click on “video library.” Here are some of the videos that are available to stream:

AOS Video Library

- [Anthocyanin](#)
- [Boisduval Scale](#)
- [Divide or Repot?](#)
- [Keikis & Air Roots](#)
- [Leaftip Dieback](#)
- [Potting a Keiki](#)
- [Recognizing Mite Damage](#)
- [Recognizing Virus Symptoms, part 1](#)
- [Removing a Damaged Leaf](#)
- [Removing a Keiki](#)
- [Repotting a Cattleya](#)
- [Repotting a Healthy Orchid](#)
- [Repotting an Unhealthy Orchid](#)
- [Root Loss](#)
- [Selecting an Orchid](#)
- [Watering Orchids](#)
- [When to Repot?](#)
- [Where to Cut a Phalaenopsis Spike](#)

IT IS A TERRIFIC RESOURCE THAT YOU WILL ENJOY.



BLUE RIBBON WINNERS JULY

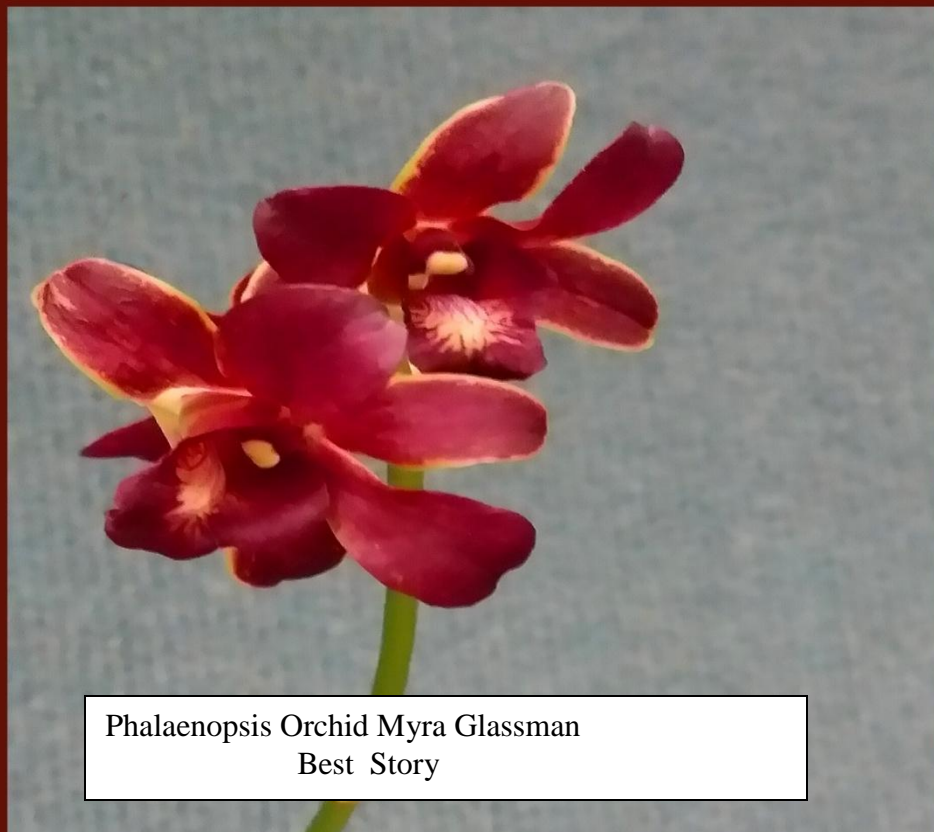
Don't forget to bring your blooming beauties for show and tell in August. You can win a Blue Ribbon and be entered to win a basket of blooming orchids in October, and besides it is fun.



Dendrobium convulutum Cherie Lin
Best Newbie Orchid



Cattleya pulcherrima Jeannie Salles
Best Orchid



Phalaenopsis Orchid Myra Glassman
Best Story

Last month, a member lost her collection due to a cooling failure. Mark had one idea that you might investigate.

Look under “smartphone remote thermostat” on Google. There are a lot of thermostats that you can install that will notify you when you are away from home and the temperature has gotten too high. You can hurry home

Before the damage is done. If you have a greenhouse, this is an interesting article https://hrt.msu.edu/.../Keep_your_greenhouse_... Also interesting”

www.extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.cfm?number
www.builditsolar.com/Projects/Cooling/passive_cooling.htm

Mark Romansky suggests:

https://www.growerssupply.com/farm/supplies/cat1:gs_environmental_controls-gs_thermostats_controllers:gs_alarms_monitors.html

Alarms & Monitors

Sensaphone is a market leader of affordable, easy-to-use devices that monitor your greenhouse, hoop house, garden center, nursery building, home, business, vacation home or computer room for problems such as power outages, temperature fluctuation, water damage and intrusion. In the event that one of the aforementioned issues occurs, the Sensaphone will autodial pre-set telephone numbers to notify you of the occurrence. Remote access also makes it possible to call in at any time with a touch-tone telephone to check the status of all monitored conditions and to make program changes. Sensaphone allows you to detect problems before they become disasters.

View our [Sensaphone Buyer's Guide](#).

A new member mentioned that she was having difficulty getting her orchids to bloom again. I promised her I would reprint my article on this subject. Hope it helps a little.

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 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!

