

GREATER LAS VEGAS ORCHID SOCIETY

THE ORCHID COLUMN

CAROL SIEGEL, EDITOR



SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2015
1PM LIVE PIANO MUSIC
2 PM MEETING
RAINBOW LIBRARY
SECOND SUNDAY OF MONTH

SPECIAL EVENTS

Sept 13 , 2015 Alan Koch Orchids 101
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"
July 10, 2016 Mark Romansky
"Forgotten Orchids"
Oct 2, 2015 Carol Siegel "10 Ways to
Kill an Orchid"
Nov 6, 2015 Steve Frowine "Growing
Under Lights and In the Home"

ALAN KOCH "MAKING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR ORCHID ADDICTION- ORCHIDS 101 & 102"

Our speaker this month will be Alan Koch of Gold Country Orchids talking about "Getting the Most Out of Your Orchid Addiction". This will be a talk on orchid culture for novice and expert alike and is described as a combination of Orchids 101 and 102. Alan Koch's nursery specializes in miniature and compact Cattleyas – plants suitable for growing on windowsills and under lights. He has been growing orchids for almost 40 years and has moved 5 times to find more growing space for his plants. He now has 10 acres for his 300,000 orchids! Alan Koch is recognized as an expert in the Brazilian Cattleya alliance and a trend-setter in miniature Cattleya breeding. He has published articles in Orchid Digest, Orchids Magazine and the proceedings of the World Orchid Conference and is an internationally known speaker. He is an AOS judge and a past member of the AOS Judging Committee. He is on the Board of Directors for the Orchid Digest and is a trustee of the AOS.



Gold Country Orchids Discount Information

goldcountryorchids.com

We offer a 20% discount on all preorders and free freight when Alan comes to speak at your event. To be able to take advantage of this you need to do the following:

Under discount enter the following code, GCOD(case sensitive)

Under shipping enter ship to a society. Under comments enter the name of your society or event we are to bring your plants.

Often we will send out a limited availability list which also qualifies for the 20% discount and free freight. You can email in your order or call it in. This can be paid for on our paypal account via our email address at gcorchids@aol.com, with your credit card if you phone in your order or at the meeting with cash or check.

At the present time we are re-building our website and it maybe easier to email or phone in your order.

Gold Country Orchids, 390 Big Ben Road, Lincoln CA 95648

916-645-8600(This sounds complicated. I would just call him.)



AUGUST MEETING WAS A BLAST!

The pizza party was great fun for all of us, and the Chocolate Bar was delightfully decadent so we had a great deal of fun! Thanks to everybody for bringing chocolate delights. Thanks to Jean Hill and Cathy Loftfield for the lovely paper goods, and Cathy Loftfield for stepping up for drinks at the last minute. The orchids I got from Hilo Farms sold out making us some money, and Ole and Tony and Joel earned us \$77 with their wonderful hotel plants. Thanks to Jackie Braverman for covering the Welcome Desk when Steve was out sick and Eileen was gone. It is so nice when people step up. Mark Romansky was a big hit with his outstanding talk on growing orchids in the home. At ease in front of a group, he gave excellent tips on how to grow lovely orchids without a great deal of cash and a big greenhouse. We are most grateful to him. So The new sound system my husband bought for us really made a difference and FINALLY all of us could hear. Enough with the lip reading...

We welcomed new members Janet Piroozshad, Julie and Larry Rubin, and Caroline Diaz. We are attracting a lot of new members, and we thank Cathy for advertising for the club.

Steve Campbell, Caroline Diaz's husband, is a professional website builder and has offered to build us a modern, updated website and host it for free. So very generous. We thank Alex McKyton, our website guy, for doing it for so many years. He and Eileen have paid for it themselves, too. Alex is now busy as Deacon of his church on Sunday and is no longer coming to meeting so we are very pleased to have Steve willing to take over this big job. Thank you both. Look us up on www.glvos.org and on Facebook as Greater Las Vegas Orchid Society. Like us. Post a picture. Make a comment. How very 21st century!

We thank our September food team including Cathy Loftfield for paper goods, Marge Redman, Caroline Diaz Campbell, Inga Rossan, Bruce and Wanda LaFollette, Claire Ehram and Shirley Kramer. We still need one more person for November.

Think about letting us see your greenhouse in April. Tell me if you can. A modest greenhouse often is inspiring and instructional.

Hope Leslie is enjoying her RV trip to Alaska. Alaska must be this year's place. Diana had a great time on her cruise to Alaska with her sister. Glad Steve Hochman is doing better. Sorry to hear Mark Romansky was hospitalized but glad he is better.

Hope June Cravenn had a good time in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka is home to 170 native orchids, 74 found nowhere else in the world. Many precious species are found in the Sinharaja Rainforest and Horton Plains. The Royal Botanical Garden is famous for its Orchid House with over 300 varieties of orchids. Lucky June!

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ORCHIDS 101: Basic Orchid Culture

Knowing which orchid you are trying to grow is your key to its cultural requirements. Orchids, like all plants, need a balance of light, air, water and food to grow and flower well. Let's examine each of these elements.



ABOVE: Two Cattleya plants grown under different lighting conditions. The plant on the left was grown in sufficient light to produce abundant flowers. The plant on the right was grown under too little light to flower. The dark green leaf color of the non-flowering plant indicates too little light.

Light

Without enough light, orchids may produce lush looking growths but no flowers. Not giving orchids enough light is the most common reason for failure to bloom. The old notion of orchids growing in dark jungles still persists and it couldn't be further from the truth. In reality, many have evolved as epiphytes to take advantage of brighter light available in the upper forest canopy.

How much light is enough? The answer to this seemingly simple question is "as much as they will take without burning." This means that the foliage should not be a lush, dark green. Orchids grown under sufficient light will have lighter, somewhat yellow-green foliage and strong upright growths. Figure 1 illustrates two cattleyas, one grown under optimum light conditions and the other under too little light to produce flowers.



ABOVE: A ceiling fan provides gentle ventilation for orchids in the home and simulates the breezy climate most orchids come from. A well-ventilated growing area discourages disease.

Air Orchids roots, and eventually the entire plant, will die if they do not get air and this is the reason that, with the exception of a few terrestrial varieties, orchids do not grow in soil. Orchid potting media should be open, with exceptionally good drainage, yet capable of holding sufficient moisture to support the plant's needs. Orchid plants are also intolerant of a stale, stagnant environment. You should strive for a buoyant atmosphere and gentle air movement must be provided at all times. For orchids grown in the home, this can be provided by an overhead paddle fan set on it's lowest setting or a portable oscillating fan directed AWAY from the plants.



When an orchid is overwatered, root loss is the result. Without roots an orchid cannot take up water or nutrients and eventually, will get weak and die.

Water Without question, more orchids are killed by incorrect watering than by any other reason. Proper watering consists of two separate components; quantity and frequency. Orchids should be watered just as they dry out. There's unfortunately no magic formula; i.e., water a plant in a 6" pot every 7 days and you'll be trouble free. This is because your growing area is different from anyone else's. Humidity, air movement, potting medium (type and age) and light levels all play a role. There are several ways to determine when a potted orchid is almost dry: 1) the surface of the potting mix will appear dry; 2) dry pots will feel lighter; 3) clay pots feel dry; 4) a wooden stake or skewer inserted into the potting mix will come out almost dry (Figure 2). If in doubt, a finger inserted into the potting mix is perhaps the best tool to determine the moisture content of the potting mix. It will cause no harm to the plant.

When orchids are watered, they should be watered copiously. Water should be provided until it runs freely from the drainage holes. Not only does this soak the potting medium but it also flushes salts that naturally accumulate. At a minimum, try to thoroughly water your plants at least once a month.

Watering frequency can be controlled by the choice of pot. For those who really like to water their plants or live in humid, rainy areas, clay pots, especially slotted pots are a good choice. Growers in drier climates or those who tend not to water often enough might want to use plastic pots to hold moisture longer.

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ABOVE: Two Vandaceous seedlings illustrate the results of regular fertilization. The seedling on the left was grown without fertilizer while the one on the right was fertilized regularly. The plant on the right will reach flowering size and produce more blooms than that on the left.

Fertilizer Orchids will grow and flower, given that their other requirements are met, for fairly long periods without fertilizer but you'll get better results with some level of feeding (Figure 3). Typically plants are fertilized once a week during the summer and every two weeks in the fall and winter. Regardless of the fertilizer that you chose to use, most experienced growers use no more than $\frac{1}{2}$ the label-recommended strength. Oh, and by the way, it's best to water first to wet the potting medium before you fertilize.

Fertilizers used on orchids should contain little or no urea. This is because soil organisms must first convert the nitrogen in urea to a form useable by plants, and since orchids do not grow in soil, this conversion does not occur efficiently. The old conventional wisdom used to be that orchids grown in bark mixes needed to be fertilized with formulations high in nitrogen, i.e., 30-10-10. We now understand that these high nitrogen fertilizers aren't necessary. For a more detailed discussion of fertilizer and its dependence on water quality see the June 2003 and February 2008 issues of Orchids magazine or view copies of pertinent articles online here at www.aos.org.

Monthly Checklist for September and October



Cycnoches chlorochilon, the green swan orchid.

Cattleya

Despite the shortening days and lowering angle of the sun, September can still be one of the hottest months. Water and fertilizer need to be in balance with heat and light. The alert grower will notice, however, that his or her plants are beginning to slow down a bit. Growths are maturing, and the sheaths are giving the promise of the next six-months' bloom.

Check plants for potting needs for the last time this season. Any in dire need should be potted, even some that may be on the cusp, as there is just enough of the growing season left to allow the plants to establish before the days start to get really short and cold.

This is the month for purples derived from *Cattleya labiata* breeding to flower. If you are short on flowers, look into this group. There is nothing that can quite match this type for beauty and fragrance. They are easy to grow, too.

Plants summered outdoors should begin to be prepared to be brought back into the winter growing area. Clean the plants up and be on the lookout for any pests they may have picked up during the summer. Treat as necessary.

Cycnoches

This little-known and under-appreciated genus, which can have male or female flowers, is at its best in the autumn. Two of the spectacular varieties are *Cycnoches loddigesii*, with its large brown flowers resembling a prehistoric bird, and *Cycnoches chlorochilon*, the swan orchid. This last one has large, fragrant green flowers. The biggest problem, culturally, will be red spider mite infestations that require immediate attention. Plants are quite seasonal, requiring heavy watering in the growing season and then a drier dormant winter season.

Cymbidium

Summer can be the most rewarding season for cymbidiums. Growths should be coming strong now. The leaves of the new growths are best when they are broad and fairly stiff. The color should be a light green to nearly yellow. Early flowering varieties should be showing flower spikes, so move the plants into a cooler area with lower light. For mid-season varieties, lower the dosage of nitrogen to assist in spike initiation.



Dendrobium Burana Stripe is a popular and easy phalaenopsis-type hybrid.

Dendrobium

This is a good season for hybrids of the *Dendrobium phalaenopsis* and *Dendrobium canaliculatum* types. Both are capable of putting on tremendous shows of long-lasting flowers. Fertilize with a low-nitrogen formula to promote the best flowers. *Dendrobium phalaenopsis* can get tall and top heavy, suggesting an attractive and heavy container would be appropriate for this type.

Rhynchostele bictoniensis

Both *Rhynchostele bictoniensis* and its hybrids bloom in this season. *Rhynchostele bictoniensis*, formerly known as *Lemboglossum*, *Odontoglossum*) is a showy species from Mexico that has three different color forms: *sulphureum* (green with white lip), *album* (brown with white lip) and *roseum* (brown with a pink lip). It is a vigorous grower with tall inflorescences of many flowers, and imparts to its progeny (as seen in *Odcdm. Bittersweet* and *Odm. bicross*) ease of culture, warmth tolerance and eye-catching patterns. They make a prime candidate for *odontoglossum* beginners and advanced alike.

Paphiopedilum

Standard, green-leaved paphiopedilums begin to show their bloom sheaths this month. Late-season heat waves can blast these early sheaths, so be observant about proper cooling and air circulation. As with the rest of your plants that may have been summered outdoors, it is time to prepare for their move inside. Clean each plant and implement pest-control practices. Repotting, if necessary, is appropriate.

Phalaenopsis

The bulk of this season's growth is being ripened this month, with growers in cooler climates seeing the first emerging inflorescences. Some night heating may be necessary in the cooler areas. Begin to watch watering more carefully, and reduce feeding proportionately with reduced watering needs. An extra dose of phosphorus and potassium, such as a bloom-booster or high-acid-type fertilizer, is beneficial.

Rossioglossum grande

Once known as *Odontoglossum grande*, this is a spectacular orchid with six to eight flowers up to 8 inches across. Often known as the tiger orchid, it has bright golden yellow flowers heavily marked with chestnut brown barring. The plants are beautiful with a grey-green cast to the foliage, which is borne on succulent pseudobulbs. It prefers hot and wet summers with cooler, even down to 40 F, dry winters. Grow under filtered light. Watch for snails and slugs that eat the flowers, pseudobulbs and leaves.



Rossioglossum grande shows off its large, dramatic flowers.

The AOS thanks Ned Nash and James Rose for this essay.



BLUE RIBBON BEST ORCHID AUGUST OLE BORRESEN CATTLEYA BONANZA



BEST NEWBIE CHERIE LIN PAPH PINOCCHIO



BLUE RIBBON BEST STORY CAROLINE AND STEVE CAMPBELL

