



Central Ohio Orchid Society Reporter



Newsletter Editor: Katrina Heap

February 2015

February Meeting

***Speaker- to be determined**

Thursday, February 19, 2015

Meeting starts 8:00 p.m. @ Franklin Park Conservatory

Mingling and refreshments begin just after 7pm
& Beginner's Corner is 7:30-8pm

President's Message

What the heck is THAT??? (Branching out in orchids)

I began, more years ago than we should mention, with Paphiopedilum, and then Phalaenopsis. Technically, my first orchid actually was a Cattleya. I watered it and watched it closely as it slowly grew and enjoyed its strangeness. It was so different from my other houseplants. I babied it and stared at it day in and day out for several years, even as it finally began to decline and finally died. Unfortunately it was too late for me; I was hooked and had already acquired more orchids. I had a half-dozen or so paphs by then and a few phals. I continued this way for some years. Though I did pick up a couple Cattleya and a Trichopilia or two, I had mostly Paphs - and of course, those few Phals.

So how did I get to where I am now, with a greenhouse and several thousand orchids in many, many genera? It was a gradual process; I didn't plan it, but the paphs are now a minority amongst my orchids. I still have quite a few of them, but there are so many others. Just like my friend who, when I met him, only ate peanut butter sandwiches, steak, and canned green beans. He now enjoys peppers, soups, broccoli and a host of other good foods. So, too, did my taste in orchids branch out and grow. And yours can and



will, too. I remember the early days when my friend Mark, whose two orchids started his and my infatuation with orchids (it's all HIS fault!), acquired Rebecca Northern's book, *Home Orchid Growing* (3rd ed., still the best general orchid book ever published) and a few mail-order catalogs.

THE OOOH! FACTOR

This was long before the internet (it wouldn't be polite to ask HOW long!), so there wasn't much else to go on then. The pictures were marvelous and intoxicating. I remember even now the photograph of *Bifrenaria harrisoniae* and how exotic and fascinatingly beautiful I thought it. It was almost twenty years before I ever acquired one, and when it blooms now it still takes my breath away.

There were Vandas and Epidendrums, strange-looking things called Bulbophyllums (I have nearly a hundred of them now???) as well as mysterious-looking things like Lycastes, Dendrobiums, and Masdevallias, among others. Each had a particular charm and all were intoxicating.

So you grow Phals. And one day, you see a Paph that for some reason, even though you've always thought them kind of ugly, calls to you. And so you pick it up. And at the next show there's a Cattleya, a little mini that just charms the heck out of you. And so you get that, too. And before you know it, you've got 20 different genera going and are actively searching for more.

Branch out - experiment. Leaf through catalogs and books, look through internet sites (if you're sleepless at night as I am, I can highly recommend Jay Pfahl's Internet Orchid Species Pictorial Encyclopedia (<http://www.orchidspecies.com>)). Just pick a letter and look at pics of the species in that genus. Whenever you see a pic or flower that makes you go "oohh!" don't you want to grow your own?? Learn about other orchids and try to grow them. They say the best defense against Alzheimer's is keeping the mind active learning new things. Here's one way, research new plants. Learn about their needs, growth habits, and blooming requirements. Fiddle with your growing conditions. Don't let anybody tell you can't grow one orchid or another. Put your mind to it and learn that you can.

So, look around at shows. Ask at our meetings about new and interesting plants you see. Let your mind wander. Broaden your horizons and pick up one of those plants whose picture has called to you and haunted your orchid dreams. Dive in and pick up a few different things and expand your horizons. The rewards are rich and deep.

Tennis Maynard



Culture Corner

Courtesy of American Orchid Society website – ‘All About Orchids’ section by
Ron McHatton, AOS Director of Education



The How and Why of Water

More orchids are killed by incorrect watering than by any other reason. There are two separate components to proper watering; when and how. The vast majority of orchids grown by hobby growers are epiphytes, growing on trees above the ground where the light is more plentiful. These plants are adapted to having their roots exposed to light and air so in addition to water, orchid roots need air. The central core of an epiphytic orchid root is covered with a spongy material called *velamen* designed to store water. When this spongy material remains wet too long, the central core suffocates and begins to rot. Once the roots begin to rot, the plant can no longer take up water properly and a whole host of problems begin. At worst, root rot will spread upward into the rhizome and cause the death of the plant. In other cases, the loss of roots prevents the plant from absorbing sufficient water to

maintain the plant in good condition and the leaves will take on a wrinkled appearance. Unfortunately, the symptoms of over-watering and under-watering are superficially similar and the tendency is to increase watering rather than inspect the roots. Over-watered roots will be brown and mushy while those on under-watered plants will be white or gray and obviously dry. Let's look first at when to water.

When do I water?

Orchids should be watered just as they dry out. This rule applies to all orchids with slight variations depending on whether your plant has pseudobulbs (thickened stems that are designed to store water) or not. Orchids such as cattleyas and oncidiums should be allowed to just dry completely between waterings while orchids such as phalaenopsis and vandas that have no water storage organs should be watered just before dryness occurs. For vandas, this may mean daily watering during the warm summer months. Vandas and ascocendas that are properly watered will have actively growing root tips at all times. If the root tips on your plants dry up and seal over, you are not watering often enough.

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 when lifted; 3) clay pots feel dry; 4) a wooden stake or skewer inserted into the potting mix will come out almost dry. 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. And remember, fresh potting mix will always dry out faster than the old medium.

How do I water?

How to water is just as important to proper culture as when to water. When orchids are watered, they should be watered copiously. Water should be provided until it runs freely from the drainage holes. This serves several functions. First, thorough, copious watering is necessary to soak the potting medium. In addition, thorough watering helps to flush away the salts that naturally accumulate in the potting medium from the dissolved salts in our water supplies and the fertilizers applied for good growth. Also, this is your opportunity to examine how the potting mix behaves. If you cannot pour water rapidly through the pot, the potting mix is too dense and you run the risk of starving the roots for air. If you see finely divided material that looks like coffee grounds in the water coming from the drainage holes, your potting mix is breaking down and it's time to repot into fresh medium. At a minimum, try to thoroughly water your plants at least once a month.



Finally a couple of notes about mounted plants and those like vandas that are grown in baskets without additional potting medium. First, avoid dunking these plants in buckets of water. This practice very easily spreads diseases. If one plant has a disease, all those dunked in the same bucket of water will have been exposed as well. Also, two short waterings a few minutes apart are much more effective than one long watering. Once water runs off the plant, the roots will have absorbed essentially all they can at that time and excess water simply runs off to the ground. The proper technique is to water your plants and then a few minutes later water them again, always beginning with the first plant you watered. This allows time for the roots of the last plant watered to finish absorbing water before you wet them again. Roots that are completely saturated will be a solid color while those that are not will appear mottled.

Ron McHatton, AOS Director of Education



New Members

I have no new members to report for this month. Folks, we did really well last year in finding other people who “get” our little obsession over these *flowers* (☺) so let’s keep up the great work in 2015 and go find more orchid addicts...errrrr....enthusiasts... to share in the fun. Remember, always, always, always...the more the merrier!

Reminder:

Our membership year is January to December. If you just joined the society and you paid your dues in November or December of 2014, you are covered for 2015 as well. For all of the rest of us, it’s that time again. We had several people renew at the last meeting ~ Thank You! Everyone else... If you have not renewed yet, please support the society by renewing as soon as possible. Your contribution enhances the society and what it is able to do for you. The dues are \$20.00 for Individuals OR \$25.00 for household.

Please fill out the membership form [HERE](#) and include it w/your check made payable to **Central Ohio Orchid Society**. Feel free to bring it to the next meeting OR you can mail it to:

2014/2015 COOS Board Members

Term of Officers – January 1, 2014 through December 31, 2015

President:	Tennis Maynard	
1 st Vice President:	Bill Cavanaugh	Program Chair
2 nd Vice President	Dave Markley	Home Show Chair
3 rd Vice President:	Ken Mettler	Away Show Chair
Secretary:	Justin Pepperney	Recorder
Assistant Secretary:	Katrina Heap	Newsletter Editor
Treasurer:	Edna Markley	Collect/Disburse Monies
Assistant Treasurer:	Tom Bell-Games	Membership Chair
Immediate Past Pres	Tom Franczak	





COOS Trustees

Term of Office Expires December 31st of year shown

Lori Baldwin	2015
Eileen Ansley	2015
Screll Jones	2017
Elly Campbell	2017

Show Table Results

Sorry folks, I had to leave early at the last meeting and I haven't managed to get over to Dave and Edna's to pick up the forms so I'll update this section in the March newsletter.

In the meantime – please remember we have added a “beginner’s” section to our growers contest and anyone who has been growing for 3 years or less will want to make sure you mark your forms appropriately so that you're in the running to win in the new category this year.

2015 COOS Calendar

General Meetings – Third Thursday of the month...excluding July, August and December.

Feb 19th
 Mar 19th
 Apr 16th
 May 21st
 June 18th
 July – picnic – TBD

Aug – No meeting
 Sept 17th
 Oct 15th
 Nov 19th Potluck Dinner
 Dec – No meeting



Board Meetings -Board meetings will be held the second Tuesday of odd numbered months. 7:00- 8pm. All members are welcome to observe.

Mar 10th
May 12th
July 14th

Sept 8th
Nov 9th



Hospitality

We have only 1 volunteer for the February meeting - Brenda Vannoy. We really need 2 more to help out this month! Please email or call Terry and Sandra and let them know where and when you can help out.

We still need volunteers for all remaining months!

Upcoming Orchid Shows

MVOS - Miami Valley Orchid Society
February 14th and 15th @ Cox Arboretum
For more info and direction: [MVOS website](#)

GCOS – Greater Cincinnati Orchid Society
March 21-22 @ Krohn’s Conservatory
For more info and directions: [GCOS website](#)



COOS Spring Show! 😊
Easter Weekend – April 4th and 5th

Please start thinking about where and when you might be able to pitch in and help out.

Stay tuned – we'll be discussing all of this during the next couple of meetings.

I know we are missing several societies' Spring shows and I will update the schedule as more information is made available.



Helpful tip

Transporting Blooming Orchids

By Susan Jones

During this time of year unpredictable and often inhospitable winter weather makes transporting flowering orchids a tricky matter. A shock of cold, dry air can quickly damage and even blast an orchid bud or bloom, a particularly heartbreaking event if one is on the way to have the flower judged. When carrying your flowering plant to a show, home from a nursery, to judging or even to give as a holiday gift, taking a little bit of precaution against potential cold damage can prevent a lot of disappointment later on.



An orchid's flowers and buds, as the most vulnerable parts of the plant, are easily damaged by environmental stress. Some of the more cold-sensitive varieties may even drop leaves if the exposure and shock is of sufficient severity. Phalaenopsis and vandaceous orchids (neofinetias are a bit hardier than most, but their blooms are still sensitive) are among the least tolerant of chills. Other orchids that are most often affected include those with flowers of more delicate substance. The thicker, heavier and waxier an orchid's floral tissues are, the more resistant to cold damage they will be.

Tips from a Pro

Long-time orchid grower, Connecticut Orchid Society member and one of the technical editors of Orchids magazine, Ann Jesup provided the following savvy ideas for ways to minimize disaster en route to an orchid society meeting, show or judging at a presentation to the Society.

Start with a good quantity of packing materials, she advises. Have on hand a variety of boxes of different sizes, including some insulated styrofoam boxes to shelter your plants from inclement weather. Padding is also important. she suggests waxed floss paper (also known as "spaghetti"), shredded paper, polyester batting and styrofoam peanuts as useful materials.

For protection against brief exposure to the elements, the plastic bags in which newspapers are delivered make an ideal sleeve to slip over a smaller plant. Dry-cleaning bags supported by wire hoops can help protect larger plants or those with tall inflorescences from freezing or drying out in winter weather.

Insulating Plants

Newspaper is an effective, easily available and inexpensive insulation material. If plants must remain in an unheated area for any length of time during inclement weather, a cardboard box lined with newspaper will help retain heat around the plant. Foam packing peanuts may be added to stabilize and protect the plant in the box, but provide little in the way of insulation or heat retention.

For extreme situations in which prolonged exposure is anticipated, a heat pack can be placed under protective insulation in the bottom of the box. Disposable chemical heat packs are available in different lengths of effectiveness — the most commonly available last six to eight hours, but other durations are available. They can be ordered on line (enter “disposable heat packs” into a search engine to find a vendor). Some orchid vendors who use them for shipping may also be persuaded to sell some of their stock.

Another consideration is staking your plant’s inflorescences. This can not only improve the overall appearance of the blooms, but will also help keep the spike and flowers stationary and less susceptible to injury during transportation. The proper time to stake an inflorescence is when the flowers are beginning to develop. This helps ensure that the buds are oriented properly once they open. For aesthetics’ sake, Jesup suggests attempting to keep the stake unobtrusive. Placing the thinnest stake possible as close to the foliage as is practical helps to avoid distracting attention from the blooms themselves.

Finally, when the temperature is low, warm up your vehicle in advance of transporting blooming orchids to minimize the length of time your plants will have to endure the chill temperatures. Plan your trip so the plants will spend the shortest possible time in transit, and never leave orchids sitting in a hot or cold car.

Susan Jones was the editor of Awards Quarterly and assistant editor of Orchids. American Orchid Society, 16700 AOS Lane, Delray Beach, Florida 33446

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