

Home and Backyard Orchid Growing

Courtney Hackney and Rose Ganucheau, hackneau@comcast.net
August 2011



Lc. Higher Ground
(L. anceps x Lc. Clar Hancock)

Make no mistake about it, Courtney is a Cattleya Man. Oh sure, he grows other types of orchids. There are lots of phals, the unusual ones, lots of species, interesting primary hybrids and the like. He calls his multifloral paphiopedilums his weeds. He's got unusual vandaceous orchids like paraphalaenopsis and vandopsis hybrids. But cattleyas are his true love (after Rose, of course).

Courtney is like a bride planning her stroll down the aisle, something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue. For the old, Courtney is always in search of the old heritage cattleyas, the milestones produced by the famous hybridizers of yesterday. His excellent book *American Cattleyas* is a tribute to these incredible bloomers. The new cattleyas include the cattleyas in his



Blc. Serengeti Sands
(Blc. Teresa's Smile x C. leopoldii)



C. Leoloddiglossa
(C. Loddiglossa x C. leopoldii)

breeding program as well as the new hybrids being produced by the dwindling number of hybridizers. Something borrowed? Courtney has a network of cattleya aficionados and they are careful to always exchange divisions of their prized cattleyas so if something should happen to theirs, they can get a piece back. And something blue, the coerulea bifoliolate Courtney has in bloom is a beauty he found at Fred Clarke's nursery. There is only one word for it, Wow!

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Courtney grows his orchid collection in a backyard greenhouse. It is a metal structure similar to a lanai in construction, with screening and exterior polycarbonate panels that can be removed. During the summer, the exterior panels are removed from two walls to



enhance air movement and keep temperatures down. In the winter, the exterior panels are screwed back in and an exhaust vent and two Southern Burner heaters maintain temperatures.

Courtney grows his orchids mostly in lava rock in clay orchid

pots. He loves the lava rock because it allows ample amounts of air around the roots while holding some water and it never degrades so root rot from rotting potting mix is a nonissue. Sometimes he'll place some sphagnum moss under the new lead to protect the new roots from chewing pests. His choice of inorganic potting mix suits his busy, time-limited schedule because he often cuts the lead pseudobulbs growing out of the pot and repots this new growth. The established backbulbs are then candidates for a new home, possibly someone that has admired the plant in the past.

Courtney's fertilizer of choice is the time release Dynamite because the low dose fertilizer simulates the way orchids are fertilized in nature. The pellets are somewhat problematic with lava rock and can easily wash out of the pot. Courtney supplements the Dynamite with fish emulsion at 3/8 tsp per gallon weekly. Once a month he flushes the salts from the pot by watering all the orchids and then watering them a second time.



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If you want to see more of his beauties, check out the show table pages on the website. Whenever his schedule permits, he brings his blooming beauties to the monthly meetings and usually walks away with the Members Choice!



Pot. Martha Dolge
(Pot. Susan Fender x Blc. Newberry Carnival)



C. leopoldii 'Christine'