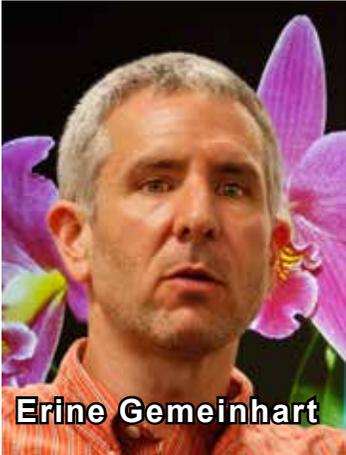




### CLUB NEWS



**Erine Gemeinhart**

#### September 1 Meeting

by Janis Croft,  
secretary@staugorchidsociety.org

#### Welcome and Thanks.

President Bob Schimmel opened the meeting at 7:15 pm with approximately 50 attendees. Bob welcomed our guests and reminded members that if you bring a first time visitor to the meeting, both of you will receive free raffle tickets.

He also thanked Penny Halyburton and Jeanette Smith for the refreshments. Bob reminded all to enjoy the coffee and treats while dropping a dollar in the jar. Linda Stewart recognized our birthday people with free raffle tickets and Bob reminded all to vote for their favorite orchid on the show table.

**Club Business.** SAOS Librarian Penny Halyburton brought in the authoritative book, "Cymbidiums" for borrowing. Remember to email SAOS Librarian Penny Halyburton if you want to borrow a book (see our website) and she will bring your requested book(s) to the next meeting.

The next Keiki Club on Sept. 20 will be about "Fall Preparations – Getting Ready for Winter". Join us at 1 pm at the home of Carolyn and Eric Smith, 239 South Matanzas Boulevard, St. Augustine, FL 32080. There will be no repotting, come to Ace this weekend if you have orchids needing repotting..

Some potting supplies are available on the side table. If you need potting supplies, email Sue at [veep-programs@staugorchidsociety.org](mailto:veep-programs@staugorchidsociety.org). Thanks to Wes Dean for volunteering to help with the sales table.

**Orchid Events.** Ridge Orchid Society show is in September. Check website for details and shows in other months.

**Show Table Review.** Courtney Hackney started his review of the Show Table by reminding us that this is the "shoulder



season" marking the end of the summer bloomers and the beginning for the fall bloomers. He started by pointing out a beautiful flowering *Cattleya labiata* that represents the first *Cattleya* discovered in South America, thus the reason that unifoliate cattleyas are referred to as the labiata cattleyas. There was a wide variety of hanging plants including a well outside grown *Neofinetia falcata* on a mount with very tiny flowers. Courtney brought in an example of a *Cattleya Day Tripper* that he hadn't watched carefully as the flowers tried to open. Turns out it is the type of plant, like some vandas and others, whose buds exude a lot of honeydew for the purpose of attracting ants, an adaptation designed so the ants will keep the caterpillars from hatching and from eating the buds. When grown in a greenhouse, one must remember on these types of plants, to wet the buds daily to wash off the dried sugar, otherwise it acts as a glue and holds the bud closed, so the flower will not open up fully. We again had two beautiful examples of *Catasetums* from Sue Bottom. Courtney reminded us to resist watering them in winter or you won't get beautiful blooms like these. Check out the photos of all our show table examples.

**SAOS Program.** From Orlando, our guest speaker was Ernie Gemeinhart of [Enlightened Orchids](#) speaking about Gorilla Growing your orchids in the back yard. Originally from the cold north (Pittsburgh and then Chicago), he moved to Orlando and started growing his collection outside of his home rather than indoors under lights. He started growing in the back yard and learned over time what did and didn't work for growing orchids outdoors. He also needed to grow

**Continued on page 3**



# CLUB NEWS



## Upcoming Orchid Events

### September

- 5 SAOS at Ace Hardware, 9 am til 1 pm  
3050 US 1 S in St. Augustine  
Repotting and Plant Clinic
- 8 JOS Meeting, Topic TBA, 7 pm  
Thanh Nguyen, Springwater Orchids
- 19-20 Ridge Orchid Society Show  
Lake Mirror Center, Lakeland
- 20 Keiki Club for Orchid Beginners, 1 pm  
Fall Preparations  
Carolyn and Eric Smith's Home  
239 S Matanzas Blvd, St. Aug 32080

### October

- 3 SAOS at Ace Hardware, 9 am til 1 pm  
3050 US 1 S in St. Augustine  
Repotting and Plant Clinic
- 6 SAOS Meeting, 7 pm  
Green with Envy: Green Cattleyas  
Ron Midgett, New Earth Orchids
- 10-11 Fort Pierce Orchid Society Show  
Fort Pierce Shrine Club
- 13 JOS Meeting, Topic TBA, 7 pm  
Speaker TBA
- 16-18 East Everglades Orchid Society Show  
RF Orchids, Homestead
- 17-18 Gainesville Orchid Society Show  
Kanapaha Botanical Garden
- 23-25 Orchttoberbest at EFG Orchids  
4265 Marsh Road, Deland 32724
- 24 Keiki Club for Orchid Beginners, 11 am  
Field Trip to EFG  
Call Mary (669-8760) if Interested
- 30-1 Delray Beach Orchid Society Show  
Old School Square Gymnasium
- 31 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Slipper Symposium  
Sheraton Orlando North, Maitland

### November

- 3 SAOS Meeting, 7 pm  
Roots! It's All about the Roots!  
John Salventi, ,Everything About Orchids

- 7 SAOS at Ace Hardware, 9 am til 1 pm  
3050 US 1 S in St. Augustine  
Repotting and Plant Clinic
- 10 JOS Meeting, Topic TBA, 7 pm  
Speaker TBA

### December

- 1 SAOS Christmas Auction, 6 pm  
**We're meeting on our normal Tuesday night but at a different location and starting earlier!**  
Moultrie Trails Clubhouse  
121 Crooked Tree Trail, St. Aug 32086
- 6 JOS Christmas Auction, 5:30 pm  
Orange Park Country Club  
2525 Country Club Blvd, Orange Park

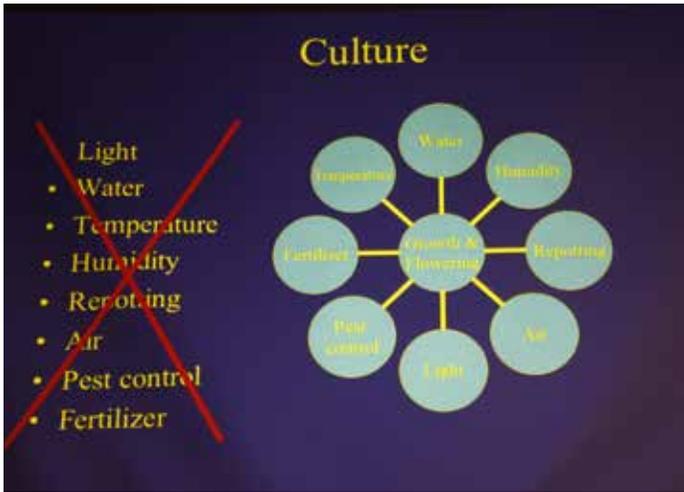
## St. Augustine Orchid Society Organization

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| President                     | Bob Schimmel<br><a href="mailto:schimmelr55@bellsouth.net">schimmelr55@bellsouth.net</a>  |
| Vice President Programs       | Sue Bottom<br><a href="mailto:sbottom15@bellsouth.net">sbottom15@bellsouth.net</a>  |
| Vice President Membership     | Linda Stewart<br><a href="mailto:lindstew@hotmail.com">lindstew@hotmail.com</a>   |
| Vice President Publicity      | Yvonne Schimmel<br><a href="mailto:yrs58@bellsouth.net">yrs58@bellsouth.net</a>   |
| Secretary                     | Janis Croft<br><a href="mailto:croftie1984@gmail.com">croftie1984@gmail.com</a>   |
| Treasurer                     | Bill Gourley<br><a href="mailto:wgourley@bellsouth.net">wgourley@bellsouth.net</a>  |
| Directors at Large            | Dianne Batchelder<br><a href="mailto:ladydi9907@aol.com">ladydi9907@aol.com</a><br>Mary Colee<br><a href="mailto:mcolee4@gmail.com">mcolee4@gmail.com</a><br>Lola Stark<br><a href="mailto:seacuter@bellsouth.net">seacuter@bellsouth.net</a> |
| Exhibit Committee Chair       | Harry McElroy<br><a href="mailto:cymbidiuman@msn.com">cymbidiuman@msn.com</a>   |
| Librarian                     | Penny Halyburton<br><a href="mailto:phalyburton@comcast.net">phalyburton@comcast.net</a>  |
| Newsletter Editors Webmasters | Sue and Terry Bottom<br><a href="mailto:bottomt@bellsouth.net">bottomt@bellsouth.net</a>  |
| Operations Committee Chair    | Jeanette Smith<br><a href="mailto:jesmith@watsonrealtycorp.com">jesmith@watsonrealtycorp.com</a>  |



# CLUB NEWS

Continued from page 1



under minimal controls to reduce his labor (watering and repotting) and resource use (electricity, fuel, water). Ernie stated that if you adopt his techniques for Gorilla Growing, the size of your “gorilla” will vary based upon *you*. Can you grow in extreme conditions? These include a wide spectrum of temperature, water quantity, humidity, light and air movement. You will need plants that can handle the extremes in all of these areas. The advantages are easy, the hang and forget treatment requires little day to day care. You will see seasonal variations and your orchids will have a natural look. Your plants will not be pristine and there will be days when emergency type care will be needed. Ernie noted that nothing is totally “that easy” all the time but growing your orchid collection in your back yard can be much easier than in a greenhouse.

He proceeded to share how he grows outside with slides of his equipment including an inline fertilization injector; infrared heater with thermostat control on plants moved together when cold; and a very large pump sprayer. He also shared slides of the chemicals he prefers. He puts 20% algacide (used in swimming pools) in his rain barrel to prevent algal growth, it can also be used as a fungicidal spray on your plants. He recommends time released fertilizers like Dynamite, Epsom salts for extra magnesium, Dyna-Gro Pro-Tekt for silicon, crushed oyster shells for extra calcium, and mild dish soap and Cutter’s Bug Free Back Yard for pest control. Next he challenged us with a group of slides to identify which were the bad or the good bugs and animals one might encounter while Gorilla Growing including beetles, frogs, anoles, squirrels, and cats. Some are beneficial, others not, and the larger animals chasing smaller ones have upset many an orchid in his garden.

In order to develop a collection amenable to both our summer heat and occasional winter cold, you should try

to select orchids that come from extreme geographical locations such as Madagascar, China, Vietnam, Himalaya Mountains or any mountains with tropical/subtropical climates. Pick plants you plan on growing outside based on their toughness traits to handle extremes of light, temperature, drought and nutrients. A few he recommended are Laelia anceps, the blue vandas like *V. coerulea* (but not the two toned large vandas with sanderiana in the background), rupicolous laelias (like *C. sincorana*), hardy terrestrials like *Bletillas* and *Spathoglottis*, reed stem epidendrums like *Epi. secundum* (but not *cinnabarina*), *Neofinetia falcata*, *Schomburgkias* and *Myrmecophilas*, the bamboo orchid *Arundina graminifolia*, terete vandas called *Papilionanthe*, *Angraecoids* like *Angraecums* and *Aerangis*, and *Catasetinae*.

He closed by reminding all of us that these recommendations are how he grows in his particular location and that if we want to start Gorilla Growing our orchids, to do so in moderation. Alter one or two variables at a time and experiment with a small number of plants—particularly during our cold spells.

**Meeting Conclusion.** Dick Roth announced that there was a tie for the Member’s Choice Award. Both Bob and Yvonne Schimmel’s *Cattleya Blc. Double Whammy* and Sue Bottom’s *Catasetum Portagee Star ‘Brian Lawson’s Sunrise’* HCC/AOS shared equal votes. The raffle table was the final event of the evening with Dianne Batchelder and Christie Peppard presiding. Thanks to all of those that volunteered to stay and clean up the room.



Thanks to Watson Realty and Jeanette Smith for the use of their meeting space at 3505 US 1 South



# CLUB NEWS

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## September 20 Keiki Club Fall Preparations

The Keiki Club for orchid beginners will be Sunday afternoon on September 20 from 1 to 3 pm. It may not feel like it, but winter is coming and it's time to start your fall preparations. Spend some quality time with your orchids to get them ready for their winter home. We'll talk about fall preparations and the minimum night time temperatures your plants can tolerate in winter. We'll also talk about those orchids that require special winter care, like the deciduous or soft cane dendrobiums and the catasetinae. Call Mary at 669-8760 if you have any questions.

Where: Eric and Carolyn Smith's Home  
[239 South Matanzas Boulevard, St. Aug 32080](#)

When: Sunday, September 20, 1 to 3 pm



*C. Orchidom Brabant "Ocelot" by Ron Midgett*

## October 6 Monthly SAOS Meeting

Green with Envy: Origins of Green Cattleyas

Ron Midgett of New Earth Orchids in Santa Fe will be talking about the species used in modern green flowered cattleyas at the October 6 meeting. Ron had his first encounter with orchids about 40 years ago when he saw some "strange" plants in Santa Barbara, California – they were Cymbidiums. The orchid bug bite had hit its target. He started an orchid business in 1990, the New England Orchid Company, to support an extensive breeding program. Ron Midgett began growing orchids in 1969 in the orchid rich environment of Southern California. Since then, he has grown orchids in many different regions of the US and in the Caribbean for 3 years. Currently, he lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico where he continues his orchid breeding with an emphasis on Cattleyas, Paphiopedilums, and Oncidiinae.

## August 16 Keiki Club Staking Your Orchids



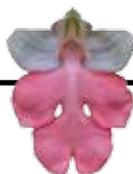
Almost 20 folks braved the heat for the August Keiki Club Get Together where we met in the air conditioned splendor of the Garage Mahal at Mark and Kathy Young's home. Terry Bottom talked about getting your orchids ready for photo ops, including staking them for their best presentation.

The first step in prettying up your orchid is to remove any spent flower spikes with a sterile tool. Leaves can be cleaned of white spots using lemon juice, milk diluted with a little water, vinegar and a whole host of other substances, though it may be best to rinse with fresh water afterwards so molds don't grow on the residue. Outgrown metal halos should be removed so as not to distract from the plant.

Then, the blooms should be staked. Metal stakes are good because they often have a smaller diameter than bamboo stakes so they can be pushed into the potting mix more easily. The stake should be cut to fit the bloom spike so the stake does not loom above the flower. Then using twist ties, attach the top of the pseudobulb to the stake for stability, and then tie the flower stalk to the stake with the flower oriented in the best position for viewing.

The earlier a plant is staked, the better because ultimately the lignins in the flower stalk will solidify. The flowers can be manipulated before the lignins harden, if you wait too long you can easily snap the bud and then you may have to wash your mouth out with soap. Flower buds can be separated and reoriented using splints cut from Styrofoam vegetable/meat trays or wadded up plastic bags such as those housing your morning newspapers. Terry demonstrated his technique on a number of cattleyas.

We then had an open discussion on different orchid topics. We had some phalaenopsis brought to the meeting and the group gave recommendations on watering and repotting. Some observations on spider mites were offered in which catasetums growing in a greenhouse where the air was hot and dry had spider mites while those growing outside where daily condensation on the leaves preventing the spider mites from blighting the catasetum leaves. We had a nice time talking about orchids with our members, guests and visitors.



# INSPIRATION



*Phal. Yu Pin Easter Island*

© Terry Bottom '15



# CULTIVATION

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## Your Orchids in September

based on Robert Scully, Ned Nash & James Rose  
checklists, courtesy of the AOS



**General Growing Tips.** The welcome transition to fall is upon us. Once the temperature and humidity mediate, you'll notice many of your plants putting on a second growth spurt, reward them by watering a little more frequently with dilute fertilizer. You can expect the emergence of buds on many orchids from the cattleyas, evergreen dendrobiums and vandas to cycnoches, catasetums and miltonias. Select the ideal spot for the plant and place pendulous bloomers atop an inverted pot. Support the inflorescence as it emerges and open the sheath to prevent the accumulation of moisture around the developing buds.

**Cattleyas.** Despite the shortening days and lowering angle of the sun, you will see a flush of new root tips. Keep water and fertilizer in balance with heat and light. Check plants for potting needs for the last time. Any in dire need should be repotted as there is just enough of the growing season left for plants to establish before the days get short and cold. The spectacular, multiflowered *C. bowringiana* should be in sheath. Observe the puffy sheath structures often, they may need to be opened at the tip to encourage evaporation of condensation that forms around the buds. *C. labiata* and its hybrids will begin to flower this month along with the spectacular and fragrant forms of the species *C. percivaliana*.

**Cymbidiums.** Through diligent breeding programs, the cymbidium season gets stretched longer and longer. *Cym. ensifolium* hybrids will bloom first with the winter blooming standard sized hybrids soon to follow. Stake inflorescences and move plants to a shadier location to help the flowers develop.

**Dendrobiums.** This is the season for the phalaenopsis and canaliculatum type dendrobiums. The long, arching sprays of flat dark red-purple to white or pink saucer-like

blossoms provide weeks of satisfaction. Fertilize with low nitrogen fertilizer for the best flowers. *Nobile*-type hybrids should continue to be maintained on a nitrogen free fertilizer program. You can start to gradually reduce watering frequency on the winter dormant dendrobiums.

**Oncidiums.** Of the three popular pansy orchids *Miltonia xbluntii*, *roezlii* and *spectabilis*, the latter is probably the most showy. The reddish purple flowers of *Milt. spectabilis* var. *moreliana* usually appear singly and last for weeks.

**Paphiopedilums.** Standard green-leaved paphiopedilums begin to show their bloom sheaths this month. Late season heat waves can blast these early sheaths, so provide proper cooling and air circulation.

**Phalaenopsis.** The bulk of this season's growth is being ripened this month. Begin to watch watering more carefully and reduce feeding proportionately with reduced watering needs. *Phal. hieroglyphica* flowers reliably in the autumn. Its fragrant pale yellow flowers are distinctively marked with well defined brown lines on the sepals and petals. *Phal. equestris* and *Phal. lindenii* may also show their best now, the former may be everblooming through spring and the latter will arouse curiosity with its attractively striped lip.

**Vandas.** This is the principal blooming season for *V. sanderiana* that is the foundation for large flowered modern vandaceous hybrids. Position plants so the inflorescences will grow out of the leaves toward the light. Help uncooperative types by placing a thin bamboo stick between the emerging inflorescence and the flattened form of the leaves, thereby forcing the raceme outward.

### Other Genera: Catasetum Relatives.

Autumn is typically the end of the growing season for the catasetum relatives. Plants may produce flowers from pseudobulbs with leaves, or in some instances, from bulbs that have already lost their leaves. Watch the undersides of the leaves to control spider mites which seem to find these delicacies just as the foliage reaches its prime or plants are about to bloom. Support the basal racemes of catasetums as they emerge and consider placing the pots on inverted pots to provide room for them to hang freely.



# CULTIVATION

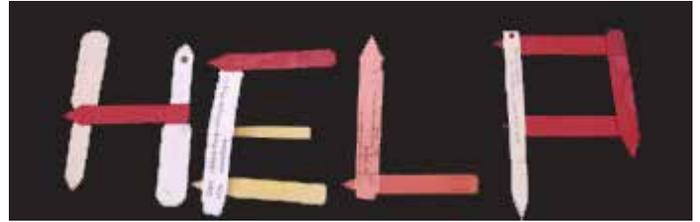


## Orchid Questions & Answers

by Sue Bottom, sbottom15@hotmail.com

**Q1.** Can you identify this orchid?

**A1.** Our best guess is *Sobralia macrantha*. It's beautiful.



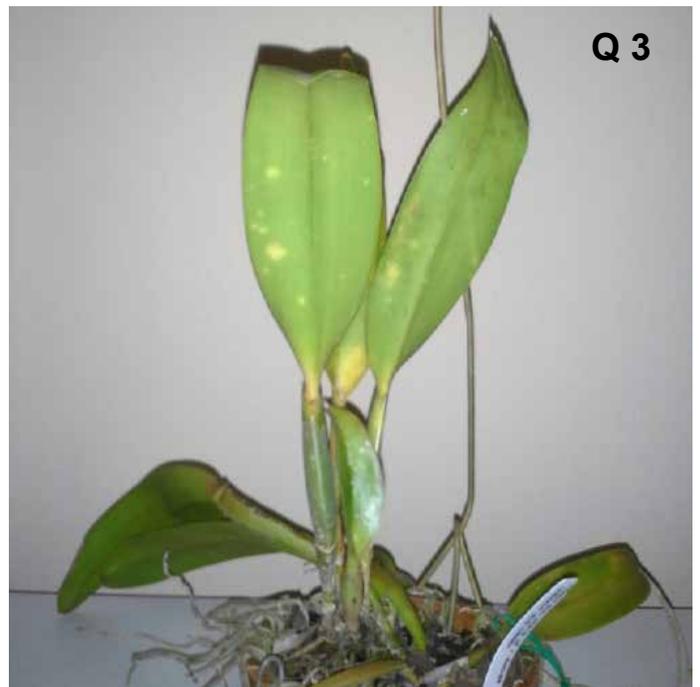
The new growth also looks good, it wants to produce a new lead that will also hopefully bloom. Orchids can send out more than one pseudobulb at a time and bloom from many pseudobulbs at one time. Some tend to grow along a line like an iris, some branch and form multiple leads. You would think that the multiple pseudobulbs that bloom simultaneously would be forming at about the same time, but you'll just have to wait. Keep doing whatever you're doing, and hope you'll get blooms from both at the same time!

**Q3.** What should I do about the yellow spots on the leaves?

**Q2.** My cattleya has grown a new pseudobulb and sheath for the last few months, though I don't see any trace of a bud in the sheath. Now I notice that another old pseudobulb has sprouted a second pseudobulb. Does this mean that the first one is not going to develop a flower, or can there be two flowering pseudobulbs at the same time? I thought that cattleyas only send out one pseudobulb at a time.



**A2.** Your plant looks great! Some cattleyas bloom from a green sheath, which just means the flower bud emerges from the sheath soon after it forms, and some bloom from a dried sheath, which just means the orchid takes a rest after it forms the sheath and the flower bud will start growing a few months after the sheath forms. It looks to me like a flower will be produced from that healthy growth, so just be patient unless the sheath starts to turn a sickly yellow or brown in which case you may have to slit it so the bud will not rot from inside due to condensation from day night temperature changes.



**A3.** Whenever you see yellow chlorotic spotting on leaves, turn the leaf over and look at the undersurface. If you see a patch of scale you have your answer. Then you'll have to look for signs of scale on other parts of the plant, particularly on the pseudobulbs under the papery sheath, in leaf axils, etc. You can spray the entire plant with isopropyl alcohol though you'll have to retreat weekly for several weeks. Check out the orchid pests page on the website for other home remedies as well as insecticides that are effective on scale.



# CULTIVATION

## Purely Organic Fertilizer – Interim Update

by Sue Bottom, sbottom15@hotmail.com

When Keith Davis talked to our club, he introduced us to Purely Organic Fertilizer and showed us the impact the fertilizer had on his cattleyas. Turns out the rose growers have been using this fertilizer for a long time and many serious gardeners have long known about organic fertilizers.

The Purely Organic (PO) fertilizer is produced by Jim Young of H.L. Shealy Company in South Carolina. It is a proprietary blend of a number of organic ingredients, as outlined in Table 1. There are some components that quickly release nutrients but the majority of them slowly release nutrients, most as a result of enhanced microbial



### Purely Organic Fertilizer Constituents

|                         |  |                                     |   |
|-------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Alfalfa Meal</b>     | Alfalfa meal is milled or ground up alfalfa that is primarily used by organic gardeners to increase organic matter in the soil. It is rich in carbohydrates and proteins and it acts as a biostimulant for the microbial life in the root zone. It offers nutrients and a high availability of trace minerals, along with trianconatol, a natural fatty-acid growth stimulant. | <b>Streamed Bone Meal</b>           | Bone meal is made from steamed animal bones that have been ground into a fine powder. It provides slow release phosphorus and calcium and tends to have a mildly basic reaction in the root zone.                                       |
| <b>Cotton Seed Meal</b> | Cottonseed meal is the end product after oil is extracted from cotton seeds. It is usually used for animal feed but also by organic gardeners. It has a relatively high nitrogen content that has a slow nutrient release rate and tends to have an acidic reaction in the root zone.  | <b>Soybean Meal</b>                 | Soybean meal is a by-product of the soybean oil manufacturing process. It is relatively high in slow to release nitrogen.   |
| <b>Fish Meal</b>        | Fish meal is the ground up remains from fish processing facilities. It is a general-purpose, organic fertilizer that contains a rich supply of all the major elements and the trace minerals that is slow to break down.   | <b>Finely Ground Rock Phosphate</b> | Rock phosphate is a mined product that is a source of phosphorous and calcium as well as iron, silica and trace minerals.   |
| <b>Feather Meal</b>     | Feather meal is hydrolyzed poultry feathers. It is high in slow to release nitrogen forms that become available due to microbial action.   | <b>Sul-Po-Mag</b>                   | The mineral Langbeinite is composed of sulfate of potash magnesia, sold under the Trade Name Sul-Po-Mag. It is quick release form of potassium that also supplies ample amounts of magnesium and sulfur.                                |
| <b>Blood Meal</b>       | Blood meal is made from dried slaughterhouse waste. It is high in quick to release nitrogen forms that can burn plants with excessive ammonia, and also delivers trace minerals including iron.  | <b>Kelp (seaweed)</b>               | Kelp meal is harvested from the ocean, dried, desalted and ground. It is a rich source of trace minerals, plant growth regulators, vitamins, hormones, amino acids, enzymes and chelated nutrients.                                     |
|                         |  | <b>Greensand</b>                    | The mineral glauconite, also called green sand, is an iron-potassium silicate mined from natural seabed deposits. This mineral is rich in soluble potassium, iron, silica, and magnesium and also has traces of over 30 other elements. |

Continued on page 9



# CULTIVATION

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## Continued from page 8

action in the root zone. Many of the components contain secondary nutrients like calcium, magnesium and sulfur as well as the micronutrients. Some of the components, particularly the kelp, contain plant growth hormones and other growth stimulators. The fertilizer has a tendency to wash through the pot with coarse, porous orchid mixes that cattleyas like, so Keith recommended placing some over the top of the pots and creating a crust by spraying it twice with a Fog It nozzle.

Keith has been experimenting with this product for about two years, and he writes *"It is best used to promote new growths on poorly growing plants that lack a good root system. The extra new growths will all produce a new flush of roots to exponentially increase the root system. I find that it works best as a light dressing on top of the plant just as the normal season's growth starts. Application at this time really promotes back eyes to break and grow. Application at other times does not seem to make growths just magically start, timing is critical. I have found one plant that it has no effect on, so it does not work on all plants. But other than that one, it has worked every time I tested it.*

*I have experimented with PO on yard plants and they respond unlike anything I have ever seen on plants growing outside. I have a large lemon tree in a 20 inch pot that has always had problems with chlorosis on leaves that are symptoms of iron deficiency. I would apply iron and it would go away but return in a few weeks. This year when I took it out of the greenhouse to spend the spring and summer outside, I put a cup of PO in the pot and it is the healthiest I have ever seen and the chlorosis has not returned. It has bloomed nonstop since March and looks lush. So there are a lot of nutrients in the PO that are released over a long time.*

*I have also found that light top dressings on orchids basically have vanished by the next growing season. Those I treated last year show normal growths this year with no extra eyes on the back breaking. Plants are vigorous from the extra root systems that they put out last year. I think the loose mix basically lets most of it wash out and the majority of the hormones are short lived.*

*My most recent two examples of using PO are on this C. mossiae alba 'Longwood Gardens' and two 4" pots of C. bicolor coerulea that I got from Francisco Miranda. On the bicolors, both in 4" pots and almost identical plants as to size and number of bulbs, I put about 1/2 teaspoon as a top dressing on top of the mix as soon as I saw the first new growth back in May and to the other plant I added nothing. They hang in my burn zone in high light with good wind from the fans. The untreated plant has two new growths that look good. The treated plant has 7 new growths.*

*Then on the C. mossiae alba, this plant came to me from Art Chadwick Sr. and he told me that it is what he considers*

*the best alba mossiae in existence. Coming from him, that says a lot. When I saw it bloom on a small back bulb plant in a 4" pot, I had to agree with him. I got the plant 3 years ago and it has only put out one growth each year, each a shade larger than the previous, but the root system really was lacking for the plant to explode in growth. So this year, I treated it with PO and you can see the results in the pictures below. I expect next year for this plant to explode with a couple of new growths that will show what the blooms can look like on a vigorously growing plant."*



**Keith's Experiment with Purely Organic Fertilizer on C. mossiae alba 'Longwood Gardens'**

I've tried several experiments with the Purely Organic fertilizer, including spreading some on the surface of recently repotted cattleyas, particularly the bifoliate. The treated bifoliate cattleyas sprouted new growths from backbulbs, though one recently repotted bifoliate lost the new growths to rot (it has since sprouted additional new growths from backbulbs). I applied some to the habenarias growing in ProMix. They're growing great guns but I also noticed some fruit flies or gnats in the first few weeks after treatment that probably were feeding on some decomposing organic matter.

I also tried making an organic tea for application with my regular water soluble fertilizer. First I dropped about 2 cups of the Purely Organic fertilizer in a 5 gallon bucket and then filled it with water. I added 2 or 3 cups of the tea to my concentrated fertilizer bucket feeding the Dosatron injector set at a 1:100 ratio, but the Purely Organic fertilizer bucket bubbled and stank to high heaven. So I tried adding 2 cups to a knee high stocking and dropped that into the Dosatron bucket and used it for a month. Some of the material in the knee high dissolved but most didn't. I noticed lots of

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# CULTIVATION

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## Continued from page 9

new growths on my cattleyas this summer, but also noticed an increase in flower blighting, mostly molds and bacterial blighting on flowers and a higher incidence of leaf rotting where the cataphyll formed a pocket, so I'm guessing the bacteria flourished in the trapped water quickly causing rots. The Dosatron also fouled much more quickly. I think the organic tea experiment was probably a failure and I have discontinued it, though the tea may have some value as a foliar spray when trying to rehabilitate plants that have lost their root system.

I noticed someone wrote on a bonsai blog about filling empty tea bags with organic fertilizer and placing the tea bags on the soil surface of their bonsai trees. I checked out Amazon.com and found a great price on large empty tea bags, only later realizing that they were being shipped on a slow boat from China and wouldn't be here for a month. Whenever they arrive, Terry and I will have a tea party filling them and placing them on pots in time for the spring growth spurt.

Courtney Hackney gave this interim scorecard: *"I have put the PO on a variety of orchids and the only place I think I can see a direct, positive effect is on my phals in ProMix. I suspect that is because of the fact that it cannot wash through. I think I saw the same effect you saw with the new growths dying on some seedlings, but others seem fine, so not sure. My real experiment was on plugs where I could really do side by side comparisons, but not able to judge yet. I think by the end of the growing season I will know."*

Harry McElroy is trying out the Purely Organic fertilizer on his cymbidiums, he reports *"I have put it on top of cymbidium pots and sprinkle it lightly with water- it forms a cake and stays on top of the pot. It seems to be moldy at first and gnats come but leave after a few days. The plants grow well, no problems. When I pot new cymbidiums seedlings I incorporate a little into the new mix I am using plus a 1/2 tsp. just underneath the top layer, no gnats and no problems. Seedlings are growing surprisingly fast. Older seedlings that were languishing were transplanted using the new mix and Purely Organic and are beginning to flourish. Although using it as a top dressing seems to work, incorporating it into the mix or covering it with a layer seems to be the best way to use it."*

Mary Ann Bell shared her preliminary experience *"Just finished 100 little sachet bags of fertilizer, did about 60 last week. I ordered the bags on eBay, sheer little drawstring bags like you would use at a shower or wedding for favors. Previously I placed a tsp in each plant at the base; that took time and patience. It didn't take much time to make the sachets, I just sat on my patio watching the hummers play at the feeders, was really fun. The fertilizer I placed on the plants in April is showing good results. Where normally*

*I would get 1 new lead, now I'm getting 2 or 3. So many of my orchids that were barely thriving have rallied, now with new growth and often with flower sheaths. My less than ideal growing conditions have been improved with better results. The PO has to be the reason. Some plants have already bloomed with more blooms than usual. I am greatly encouraged and will continue to use it."*

Optimum application rates are a guess. For top dressing, use perhaps ¼ to ½ teaspoon per inch of pot diameter. Use the lower rate for the lighter feeders like cattleyas and the higher rate for heavy feeders like cymbidiums and the winter dormant Catasetinae. For incorporation into a ProMix mix, something on the order of ½ cup per gallon of mix seems reasonable. I plan to use the PO as a supplemental feed, and will continue to use a dilute water soluble fertilizer with Epsom salts with each watering.

Preliminary conclusions from these first hand reports are:

1. For plants growing in a coarse, freely draining mix, use as a light dressing on the top of a potting mix just as the normal season growth begins. Either spread some on top of the mix and sprinkle or mist it to form a cake that will slowly dissolve, or fill mesh/tea bags and lay them atop the mix to slowly dissolve.
2. For plants growing in ProMix, incorporate some of the Purely Organic directly into the potting mix prior to repotting.
3. For plants growing in sphagnum moss, the Purely Organic can be spread atop the moss surface without fear that it will wash through the moss.
4. Target poorly growing plants and those without a good root system for treatment, either with the granular product or an organic tea sprayed on the plant surfaces. The foliar spray may be particularly effective for those plants lacking a good root system for absorbing nutrients.
5. Seedlings are good candidates for the Purely Organic fertilizer. The seedlings have no stores of nutrients in reserve so the combination of quick and slow release nutrients and trace elements as well as growth stimulators should facilitate fast growth.
6. Apply a light top dressing on the pots of just repotted plants, particularly if the plants have been repotted when new root growth is being initiated. This will help stimulate growth and help your plant reestablish after undergoing transplant shock. Bifoliate cattleyas may benefit in particular from top dressing after repotting.

As you experiment, observe your plants carefully. Watch for the expected benefits like strong new growths, sprouting back bulbs, an energized root system and enhanced flowering. Also watch for any negatives, like soft new growths susceptible to disease, rotting new growths and mold on plant and flower parts. As you experiment, you will fine tune which plants and which situations benefit the most from applications of the Purely Organic fertilizer.



# CULTIVATION

## Terrestrial Orchids for Perennial Gardens

by Dennis Carey and Tony Avent,  
Plant Delights Nursery, Inc., [www.plantdelights.com](http://www.plantdelights.com)  
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Everybody knows and loves the exotic, tropical orchids (e.g., phalaenopsis, and cattleya), but wouldn't it be nice to have an orchid that lives outside in temperate zones? It might surprise you to know that there are many beautiful terrestrial orchids for temperate zones 5-9 that are actually very easy to grow such as *Bletilla* and *Calanthe*. Other genera worth experimenting with in temperate climates include *Aplectrum*, *Pogonia*, *Calopogon*, *Cephalanthera*, *Cymbidium*, *Epipactis*, *Goodyera*, *Habenaria*, *Pleione*, *Spiranthes*, and *Tipularia*.

**How to Grow Orchids in Your Garden.** Most hardy orchids are woodland, grassland or forest edge species, with only a few tolerating direct sun. As a general rule, hardy orchids like well-drained, cool, moist soils. The combination of well-drained and moist soil often confuses gardeners. Imagine a sponge that has been squeezed out. It is both well drained (lots of air in it) and moist (lots of water in it). In order to provide well-drained, cool, moist soil it is best to mix compost with your native soil. We recommend a nutrient rich soil with a pH between 6.2 and 6.5, in which not only orchids, but most garden plants tend to thrive. As long as the soil is nutritionally balanced, no additional fertilizers should be needed unless directed by a soil test. If needed, an all organic blend is recommended.

Once your bed is finished, carefully plant your hardy orchid so that you do not break any of the fragile roots. Spread the roots out as widely as possible. It is best if the crown of the plant is at ground level or just slightly below since planting it too deep invites crown rot. Provide a covering of mulch to keep in moisture and keep the soil cool. If your soil is organically active and not unbalanced by chemicals, slugs and snails should be kept in check.

Hardy orchids require a period of cold winter vernalization, but the roots do not like to freeze and thaw repeatedly. Place 2-4 inches of mulch on the bed after the first hard freeze to insulate and even out the temperature swings. Keep other more aggressive plants that may compete for nutrients away from hardy orchids. Small or medium sized hostas are good companion plants, as well as clump forming ferns, epimediums, helleborus, cyclamen, trillium and other woodland dwellers. Since orchids are usually shallow rooted, do not use hoes for weed elimination.

**Bletilla (Chinese Ground Orchid).** In climates where they are winter hardy, *Bletilla* is the easiest hardy orchid to start with because it is very adaptable to a wide range of environments. The genus contains 8 species that are native to Asia. Three species, the pink flowered *Bletilla formosana*, the yellow flowered *Bletilla ochracea* and rose-purple flowered *Bletilla striata* are common in horticulture. Mature *Bletilla* form a series of inflorescences (racemes) for up to 10 weeks in the spring or early summer. Each inflorescence arises at the tip of a stem and has 3 to 10, 1.5" wide, nodding florets.

*Bletilla* also have shallowly pleated (plicate), narrow leaves that are attractive even when the plant is not in flower. The plants are deciduous and grow to about 1.5' tall. In their native environment, they grow in dappled shade under a canopy of tall grasses but they adapt well to a wide range of woodland sites. In the garden, *Bletilla* prefer evenly moist, well-drained soils and a position in half-day sun or light shade. *Bletilla* are fairly drought tolerant, but the growth rate slows dramatically when they aren't kept moist. When they are growing well, they quickly form large clumps.

At the northern end of their hardiness range *Bletilla* need a winter covering of mulch to protect the roots. At the southern end of their range they may emerge early during warm spells, and are thus susceptible to late freezes. When possible, plant them in a cooler spot in your garden to delay their spring emergence.



# ORCHID ADVENTURES

## 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Cattleya Symposium

'Orchids in the Mist' by Rose Ganucheau

### Orchid Adventures 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Cattleya Symposium

The annual Cattleya Symposium is a two day event where cattleya nuts meet in Fort Pierce to talk about cattleyas. It was fun to talk with old and new friends and put faces to names. Joanna Shaw's pots were a big hit and several jumped into our car. The speakers at the Symposium were great, sharing pictures of Brazilian cattleya orchid habitats and the results of line breeding of *Cattleya mossiae* in Venezuela. Gene Crocker of Carter and Holmes fame gave a fabulous talk on standard cattleya species and their hybrids and Keith Davis recounted some of his tips for growing cattleyas. Wonder what they're gonna do for an encore next year?



# SHOW TABLE



**Grower Suzanne Susko**  
*Neofinetia (now V.) falcata*  
*f. Amami Island*



**Grower Courtney Hackney**  
*Pholidota imbricata*



**Grower Sue Bottom**  
*Ctsm. Orchidglade*



**Grower Sue Bottom**  
*C. Mrs. Mahler*



**Grower Christie Peppard**  
*Blc. (now Rlc.) Yen Surprise*



**Grower Linda Powell**  
*Onc. Sherry Baby*



**Grower Sue Bottom**  
*S. (now C.) cernua x Bc. Star Ruby*



# SHOW TABLE



**Grower Sue Bottom**  
**Ctsm. Portagee Star 'Brian Laeson's Sunrise'**  
**HCC/AOS**



**Grower Yvonne & Bob Schimmel**  
**Blc. (now Rlc.) Double Whammy**



**Grower Suzanne Susko**  
**Den. convolutum**



**Grower Courtney Hackney**  
**C. labiata f. rubra 'Schueller'**



**Grower Yvonne & Bob Schimmel**  
**Bc. (now Rlc.) Cynthia 'Lilac Gem' AM/AOS**



**Grower Linda Stewart**  
**Vasco. (now Var.) Crownfox Magic**

