



CLUB NEWS



Steve Hawkins

March Meeting

by Janis Croft

Welcome and Thanks.

President Tom Sullivan opened the meeting at 6:45 pm with 56 attendees. He said we were starting a bit early because the live show tables were filled with even more blooming plants than last month much to everyone's pleasure. Tom stated that the Silent Auction plants would conclude before tonight's presentation

began, and asked all to "Drop a Dollar" for the treats which were provided tonight by Dottie Sullivan, Ann McKenna, Julie Smith and Charlie Bridgham.

Club Business. Our long time member and friend Marv Ragan passed away on Feb. 23. An AOS judge and encyclopedia of orchid knowledge, Marv's commentaries will be missed. Tom asked if anyone had any words to say and Courtney spoke first. He said that besides being the "Orchid Guy", they traveled many miles together to events. During those travels he learned that Marv was in the Navy and covered the Pacific Fleet as one of only two Master Chiefs, the highest ranking non-commissioned officers (NCO). Then Gary Orendorff, who worked on Titan II missiles, added that Marv had told him many amazing stories of his time in service but the best one was the fact that Marv was one of the last NCO's to ride in the back seat of the vigilante aircraft before the rules changed and only allowed officers in that seat.

Welcome. Membership VP Linda Stewart welcomed our four visitors and then introduced our new members, Robert Lank from Baton Rouge and Debra Grace-Johnson from Indiana.



Renew Your Membership. See Membership Veep Linda at Welcome Table to pay your 2023 dues. You may send via Zelle at 904-501-0805 or use the PayPal link online if you prefer. Linda then asked the four March birthday people to raise their hands

for their free raffle ticket. Linda asked that if you know of anyone in need of a cheering up or a get-well card, let her know by emailing her at info@staugorchidsociety.org.

Virtual Show Table. Tune in Wednesday, March 15 at 7 pm. Email invitations will be sent out for the Virtual Show Table with Zoom link. Each month's Virtual Show Table is recorded and posted on our website.

Orchid Shows. Jacksonville Orchid Show will be on March 18 and 19 at the Mandarin Garden Club, 2892 Loretto Rd. In Mandarin. Check out the SAOS calendar for more shows.

Keiki Club. Repotting Madness will be held at the Bottom's on March 19 from 1-3 pm. There will be plant divisions, keikis and seedlings. Remember to bring \$5 for the donation jar to help offset costs for supplies. We'll have mounts, baskets and plastic pots, bring clay pots if you want to pot in those.

Supplies. Email info@staugorchidsociety.org if you need supplies.

Library. Librarian Howard Cushnir brought in Orchid Species Culture in the Oncidium Odontoglossum Alliance to complement on speaker's topic. He encouraged all to use the library collection listed on our SAOS website. If you would like a book or magazine, send a request to info@staugorchidsociety.org and he will bring the item(s) to the next meeting.

Recognition. Howard commended Courtney Hackney who wrote the beautiful book, American Cattleya. Courtney has been an AOS judge and Professor of Biology, Emeritus at UNF. He spontaneously educates us about the plants on the Show Table as well as researching all the variety of orchids submitted for our Virtual Show Table. All applauded Courtney in appreciation of all he does for our club.

Show Table Review. We had many plants and filled up three folding tables plus a hanging rack. Courtney started with the Cattleya group which were mostly oranges and reds at this time of year showing off their aurantiaca parentage. Often the colors start off as yellowish then turn a deep orange. A C. Magic Delight had 8-9 flowers on one stem. Other hybrids from aurantiaca, were C. Chit Chat, C. Yellow Button and C. Blazing Treat. Next he moved on to C. Lake Tahoe coerulea which is smallish and can

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Upcoming Orchid Events

March

- 11 FL North-Central Judging, 1 pm
Clermont Garden Center, 849 West Ave
- 14 JOS Meeting, Show Update, 6:45 pm
Lorraine Conover, JOS Show Chairman
- 15 Virtual Show Table
Courtney Zooms into Cyberspace
Invitation Will be Sent by Email
- 17-19 Gulf Coast Orchid Alliance Show
North Collier Regional Park, Naples
- 18-19 Jacksonville Orchid Society Show
Mandarin Garden Club
- 18-19 Nature Coast Orchid Society Show
VFW Post 8681, Spring Hill
- 19 Keiki Club – Repotting Madness
Bottom Home (\$5 donation)
6916 Cypress Lake Ct, St. Aug 32086
- 24-26 Gulf Coast Orchid Alliance Show
North Collier Regional Park
- 25-26 Orchid Society of Highlands County Show
Agri-Civic Center, Sebring

April

- 1 SAOS Repotting Clinic, 9 am til noon
Southeast Branch Library
- 1-2 Port Saint Lucie Orchid Society Show
Port St. Lucie Botanical Gardens
- 4 SAOS Meeting, 6:30 pm
Dotty Woodson, D&B Orchids
Harvesting Rainwater
- 8 Florida North-Central AOS Judging, 1 pm
Clermont Judging Ctr, 849 West Ave.
- 8-9 Flamingo Gardens Orchid Society Show
Flamingo Gardens, Davie
- 11 JOS Meeting, 6:45 pm
Hands On Meeting and Show Recap
- 12 Virtual Show Table
Courtney Zooms into Cyberspace
Invitation Will be Sent by Email
- 14-16 Apopka Int'l Spring Orchid Show
Krull Smith Nursery, Apopka

- 14-16 South Carolina Orchid Society Show
Garden Clubs of Greater Columbia
- 16 SAOS Orchid Swap and Picnic, 4 to 6 pm
Memorial Lutheran Church
3375 US 1 South, St. Aug 32086
- 22-23 Vero Beach Orchid Society Show
Riverside Park

May

- 2 SAOS Meeting, 6:30 pm
Habenarias
Nicholas Rust, Rusty Exotics Orchids
- 5-7 Platinum Coast Orchid Society Show
Kiwanis Island Park Gym, Merritt Island
- 6 SAOS Repotting Clinic, 10 am til 1 pm
Southeast Branch Library
6670 US-1 N, 32086

St. Augustine Orchid Society Organization

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be grown indoors on a window sill, *Cattleya intermedia* x *Brabantiae* showed off numerous flowers on one stem. C. Gene Crocker is a small plant named after Courtney's friend. Blc. Colorama was one of the first large flowered *Cattleyas* with color flare on the lip.

Next Courtney moved to the opposite table and started with the *Dendrobiums*. There were two *Den. aggregatum* and a *griffithianum*, along with a similar variety, *Den. Chattanooga Sunrise*. These orchids need a dry spell in the winter but when buds appear, start watering. The next orchid was a *phalaenopsis* potted in a moss ball which had some wiring around it. The NoName Phal grown in it was spectacular and many agreed it was probably Phal. Bataan. A multi-flowered Phal. Sogo Gotris was in full bloom. This plant grows better with less watering than regular Phals. There was a spectacular *Cymbidium Dorothy Stockdale* with deep, deep red to purple pendulous flowers grown by Harry McElroy. He also brought in a first bloom seedling, *Cym. La Marida* from Colombia. There were at least four *Paphiopedilums*, which was unusual for our club. Courtney said that by looking at the leaves, one can tell if the flower will be dark or not. Most Paphs are grown indoors here because they don't like to be too hot. An unusual *Stenosarcos Vanguard* was on the table though it was quite tall. This orchid is a terrestrial and had numerous grass like inflorescences filled with feathery, orange flowers that made a beautiful display.

SAOS Program –Growing Oncidium Alliance Orchids.

Sue Bottom introduced our guest speaker, Steve Hawkins, who is also a member. Steve worked at Rod McLellan's "Acres of Orchids" in San Francisco, first as a grower and later as hybridizer and sales manager. He moved to Florida in 1988 and began his own nursery, The Orchid Specialist, in Apopka. Now retired he continues to grow orchids on a smaller scale, propagate selected species, create new hybrids for sale as well as offering consulting services. *Oncidiums* in general like *Cattleya* like conditions.

The smallest variety are the *Tolumnias* from the Caribbean. They prefer temperatures from 50-90 degrees, need to be misted daily and watered 1-2 times a week, preferably with rain water and a 1/4 strength of Cal-Mag fertilizer. If you don't have rain water, use reverse osmosis water. They can grow mounted, in pots with charcoal or hydroton or in empty clay pots. They like to dry out quickly. He reminded us to not cut the spikes after blooming because they rebloom on the same spikes. One tip he offered is if you have to use well water, use Peters Professional 20-10-20 Peat-Lite Special fertilizer that lowers the pH from the well water salts at the rate of 1/2 tsp/gallon. As we Floridians head into the dry season, Steve advised using,

if necessary, well water on your *cattleyas* and good water (rain, RO or distilled water) on all others.

His next slides were of the "Mule Ear" *Oncidiums*, known as *Trichocentrums*. They prefer intermediate to warm conditions and like to dry out between waterings and grow best in clay or mesh pots. They like *cattleya* light or even brighter, up to 3,000 ft candles. Steve then told us he uses an Apple App for a light meter.

The next slides showed a *Psychopsis* (or butterfly) *Oncidium*. It too likes intermediate to warm conditions but grows best in lower light similar to Phals. One needs to allow the plant to dry between waterings and remember to never cut the spikes while green. This plant can continuously bloom. Best to pot in hydroton because they don't like to be repotted.

Thin leafed *Oncidiums* and related genera are the most common. It is hard to generalize their growing conditions so check OrchidSpecies.com and look for warm/hot growing species for our Florida area. For hybrids another site to use is TheOrchidworks.com. Steve looks for clones with *Brassia* in parentage but avoids the seedlings with *Brassia* as direct parents because they can be reluctant bloomers, as he know from the experience of throwing out many that didn't bloom. He also advised avoiding *Miltoniopsis* unless you are an experienced grower. They need a cool environment, 65-75 degrees and water to keep moist.

Oncidiums can be repotted in spring to early summer or later. He recommends *Rexius* medium except for *Tolumnias*. *Rexius* is a heat-treated Douglas Fir specialty bark. He mixes 80% bark to 20% sponge rock. For the thin leafed types, he adds sphagnum fibers to keep on the same watering schedule as his other plants. As for pests, he uses a strong stream of water or *Imidaclopid* for aphids. Scale/mealy bugs are generally not a problem. However, he learned from experience, do not put pesticides on *Tolumnias* as they won't tolerate it. For his other plants, he does a drench every 3 months with *Banrot* or a mix of *Subdue* and *Clearys 3336*. Afterwards, there was some discussion in the audience of finding less expensive substitutes. The consensus was to look for the active ingredient on the label then run a search for other products with that ingredient. Not all will say you can use on orchid plants because they haven't been tested as such. Courtney suggested using your virused plants as test subjects.

Steve ended his presentation by reminding us that he offers consultation and repotting services at your location. Visit his site: <http://www.orchidspecialist.com>.

Meeting Conclusion. The evening concluded with the Raffle table. Thanks to the helpful hands that stayed to help clean and store the tables, chairs and room.



CLUB NEWS

Renew Your Membership

Thanks to the many of you who have renewed your membership for 2023. We try to finalize renewals by March so we can clean up our email lists. If you haven't had a chance to renew but wish to remain a member, the dues are \$20 for an individual or \$30 for a family if paid by Zelle (904-501-0805) or check (mail c/o Linda Stewart, 1812 Diana Drive, Palatka 32177). For an extra dollar, use the PayPal link on our [website](#).

Keiki Club – Growing Area Tour

Repotting Madness at the Bottom's

The marathon orchid repotting season is beginning. We will have orchid seedlings, keikis and divisions for you to mount, basket or pot up. We have lots of materials for mounts, and Tom will bring his special metal baskets. We have plastic pots and a limited supply of clay pots. Bring a wooden basket or clay pot, if that's your preference.

To cover the cost of supplies, make sure to drop \$5 into the donation jar. If you have more than 1 or 2 of your own plants that need repotting, please bring them to the repotting clinic. The repotting crew is available to give you hands-on tips on repotting at the monthly clinics at the SE Branch library.

When: Sunday, March 19, 1 - 3 pm

Where: Sue and Terry Bottom's Home

[6916 Cypress Lake Court, St. Aug 32086](#)

April 4 Meeting Rainwater Harvesting

Dr. Dotty Woodson from Fort Worth, Texas will talk about rainwater harvesting. Rainwater is a great alternative to well water and public water supplies that are often laden with dissolved salts. She was with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service for over thirty years, disseminating a wealth of knowledge about sustainable landscapes and gardening. Her focus was on water resources and landscape horticulture, reaching audiences through television, print and the internet.



American Orchid Society Corner

Webinars

March 9, 8:30 pm, Everyone Invited
Greenhouse Chat - Ron McHatton

March 16, 8:30 pm, AOS Members Only
Draculas – Tom Etheridge

Orchids Magazine this Month

Soaps and Detergents – Raymond Cloyd
The Genus Catcycilia – Carol Butcher
Epidendrum mainauanum – Judith Rapacz-Hasler

Photos of Latest AOS Awards



INSPIRATION



Enc. steinbachii

© Terry Botta



CULTIVATION



Orchid Questions & Answers

by Sue Bottom, sbottom15@hotmail.com

Q1. This plant was brought into the house for the cold spell. There is a new bulb and some roots starting to grow. Should I repot it now? Should I trim up the roots or just leave them alone and put it in a

bigger pot with fresh media?

A1. If you are going to repot it, this is the time to do it. I normally repot the catasetums every year into fresh long fibered New Zealand sphagnum moss. I typically discard the older pseudobulbs, particularly if they have any soft spots or reddish or brownish discoloration, and keep the youngest and perhaps the second year bulbs in the pot, cutting away most of the roots in the process.



Q2. I've got my coconut orchid in a 16" hanging basket with coco fiber, bark chunks and charcoal. She blooms every spring and grows out, filling the basket nicely but this is the first time she's grown so tall in places and starting to arch out. Time to trim when weather allows?

A2. I think they just like to grow up like that. I have two, one is an unruly mess and the other has a neater plant habit. Yours looks good, it looks like the mix is still in good shape, in which case maybe next year you can think about chopping it up, but for now I think I'd leave it be.



Q3. I have a *Trichoglottis atropurpurea* (syn. *Brachiata*) that I have had for 6 years. Nothing has changed in its growing conditions and it gets less light than my Vandas and has always liked it. Since November, I have leaves that regularly turn brown at the base then fall off and I have 3 areas where several leaves fell off and the stem is brownish/black but not mushy at all, no smell. Strangely enough, those black area generate growths of a new keiki and they seem to grow fine. Now I have the top leaf of every stem that has a brown marking. It is dry to the touch. Any ideas?



A3. My best guess is that moisture pooled between the leaf and stem, maybe from heavy dews in the fall when the nighttime temps cool off, and started a localized rot. The blackened stem looks pretty rough, but perhaps it won't kill that section of the plant, from what I can see the roots still look good coming off that stem. The keiki forming at the leaf node makes sense, that's a survival mechanism. The brown marking at the top of the plant may have happened as that leaf was forming. For a bacterial problem, copper is your friend, but remove any severely affected leaf like the one in your first pic. Surprising that this happened suddenly if nothing else has changed, of course, who knows what was blown in from the Sahara from the Hurricane in October.





Repotting Orchids with Pseudobulbs

by Dr. Courtney Hackney

Once again, it is time to repot many kinds of orchids. For new orchid hobbyists, repotting can be a scary task. Once it is done successfully a few times, this gets to be more of a chore than something to be dreaded. Most orchids with bulbs, e.g. cattleyas, dendrobiums, oncidiums, etc. should be

potted as soon as they start their new growth, which is now. Many species and hybrids have or are about finished flowering, another good time to repot. The biggest issue for many new hobbyists is "How do I know it is time to repot my orchid plant?" Orchids are not like other plants in that they prefer to be left alone and not repotted constantly if the medium they are in is in good shape and not turning into something that looks like garden soil. The following is some basic advice.

Carefully grab the plant (not the pot) and lift gently. If the plant starts to come out of the pot it has either lost its roots or was not well established. Either way, it needs repotting. If the medium has turned to "mush" or looks like potting soil, it is time to repot. If the plant has bulbs that are out of the pot and the medium looks like soil it is time to repot. Never repot because you want to divide the orchid. That may be a consequence of repotting, but never repot for that reason. The larger the plant, the better flowers you will see next year. The following is the process I follow for any orchid that has bulbs.

First, I remove the orchid from the old pot and cut the roots about 2-3 inches from the rhizome. Few roots survive repotting and cutting these off now avoids potential rots later. All roots that are black and clearly dead are removed entirely. Next, I use a fine jet of water to remove any particles of the old medium from the remaining roots. The same jet of water is used to wash any brown tissue from the bulbs.



If you have scale on an orchid, a fine jet of water removes scale and does not harm the plant or spread disease. Be sure to wash under the rhizome, too, because scale can hide there and reappear later on your newly repotted orchid. This is a very effective way to get rid of scale in a small collection. If the rhizome was cut or there are any cut surface, sprinkle the wound with cinnamon or other topical fungicide and let it dry. Set the orchid plant in its new pot without medium and sit it in a relatively dry shady place for a week or two. After your orchid has dried thoroughly, place it in its new pot and add medium. Most growers put some large material, e.g. lava rock, plastic peanuts, etc, on the bottom of the pot to enhance drainage and then add the medium.

The new pot should allow your orchid to grow for two years without growing out of the pot, so place the old growths at the pot edge and new growths in the center. It may seem like the pot is too small for dendrobiums if you follow the two year rule, but dendrobiums like to be pot bound and will grow best if new roots quickly contact the side of the pot. Small wires that attach to the side of the pot (pot clips) and hold the rhizome in place may be necessary if the orchid does not have many roots. My preference is to use a stake and tie one of the bulbs tightly to it and then fill the medium around the orchid and roots, pressing down on the medium to be sure there is tight contact of the orchid with the medium. This is a necessity if your orchid is to grow. If the rhizome wobbles, roots will be damaged each time the plant moves when watered.

Mist the plant lightly until new growth appears. If your timing is right, new roots will begin to appear soon, indicating that your orchid is ready to grow and that it is time to return to your regular regimen of fertilizing and watering. The rule of thumb is; if you are not sure of the proper size pot for your orchid, err on the side of the pot being too small.

Phalaenopsis, paphiopedilums and phragmipediums do not have pseudobulbs and are treated differently. Repotting orchids without pseudobulbs will be discussed in the next column.

Note: Dr. Courtney Hackney wrote a monthly column of his orchid growing tips for about 20 years; we are reprinting some you might have missed, this one from March 2012.



CULTIVATION

Psychopsis papilio
grows well alongside
phalaenopsis and other
warm growing orchids.



Psychopsis

Every Collection Should Have One
by Thomas Miranda, reprinted with permission

Do you need therapy for your psychopsis? Don't despair, you're not alone. I've encountered many an orchid grower, myself included, who've displayed borderline psychoses. I've found the acquisition of a psychopsis or two to be highly satisfying and recuperative for my psyche and soul. I couldn't be without one. These outstanding orchids are so startlingly different from anything else in the orchid family that they evoke immediate responses, usually gasps of disbelief, from the casual observer when they first see one of the large, vivid and outlandish flowers bouncing vigorously at the apex of a 2 foot long inflorescence. As if this weren't enough distinction, the plant's leaves exhibit an unusual reddish brown spotted pattern that make a plant remarkably beautiful, even when out of flower. Once experienced, an orchid collection can't be considered complete without one of these beauties. One might predict that such an exotic, wild looking flower would be too difficult to grow, but actually, they are great subjects for cultivation and can be grown successfully, even on windowsills, once their cultural needs are understood.

Psychopsis is not a disease of the human mind, although historically this plant has made people crazy, most notably the Duke of Devonshire, who in 1833 declared it "love at first sight" with *Psychopsis papilio* (then called an *Oncidium*) and proceeded to maniacally squeeze innumerable new species orchids into his greenhouse. We can only wonder what Warszewicz thought when he first encountered *Psychopsis* (syn. *Oncidium*) *kramerianum* while exploring the Ecuadorean cordillera: perhaps he thought he was hallucinating? Actually, *Psychopsis* refers to Greek mythology, specifically a girl, Psyche, of such startling beauty that she inspired jealousy in Aphrodite and adoration of the god Eros. From her legendary story, one of hardship and transformation, Psyche became the Greek work and symbol for both "butterfly" and "soul."

From chapter 11 in Bulfinch's *Mythology: The Age of Fable*: "There is no illustration of the immortality of the soul so striking and beautiful as the butterfly, bursting on brilliant wings from the tomb in which it has lain, after a dull, groveling, caterpillar existence, to flutter in the blaze of day and feed on the most fragrant and delicate productions of the spring. Psyche, then, is the human soul, which is purified by sufferings amid misfortunes, and is thus prepared for the enjoyment of true and pure happiness." So, just as *phalaenopsis* means "like a moth," *psychopsis* implies that the flower is like a butterfly.

Psychopsis plants exhibit
beautifully patterned foliage.



CULTIVATION

Interestingly, *Psychopsis papilio* and its hybrids thrive under phalaenopsis temperatures - warm 80 to 85 F days and 62 to 65 F nights - and will reward growers with tall spikes bearing those bizarrely beautiful flowers successively for years at a time. *Psychopsis* spikes should never be cut until the entire stem turns brown. Eventually, as plants mature, they will develop multiple spikes with synchronous blooms providing an extraordinary dazzling show. *Psychopsis* plants are all intolerant of overpotting and sour mix (wood chips decompose and break down, holding too much moisture and allowing for increased fungal and bacterial rots; unused fertilizer salts contaminate, insect activity). This is a quandary, in that the plants are set back when disturbed. It is best to pot them in small clay pots with excellent drainage and use a mix composed of ingredients that won't break down too easily, such as tree fern and Aliflor. That way you will need to repot only as the plant outgrows its container, rather than rescue it from a rotting sour mix.

While some of the other species, such as *Psychopsis kramerianum* and *Psychopsis versteegianum* are a bit more demanding and somewhat cooler growing, their smaller flowers exhibit vibrant patterns of exceptional beauty. Hybridization and line breeding in this group have produced flowers larger and flatter than those in the species. Hybrids such as *Psychopsis Kalihi* (*papilio* x *kramerianum*) and *Psychopsis Butterfly* (*sanderæ* x *papilio*) have led to remarkable awarded progeny, such as *Psychopsis Mendenhall* (Butterfly x *papilio*), *Psychopsis*



Carter and Holmes has been a leader in line breeding psychopsis. Its efforts have led to flowers larger, flatter and more vigorous than the original species, like this Psychopsis Mendenhall 'Hildos' (Butterfly x papilio) grown and photographed by Steve Dorsey.

Memoria Bill Carter (*Mendenhall* x *papilio*) and *Psychopsis Magnolia Bulloon* (*papilio* x *Memoria Bill Carter*). There are also lovely yellow forms of the species that are more difficult than the regular forms. Finally, there is an anomaly of their miniature relative *Psychopsiella* (syn. *Oncidium*) *limmingheii*. With small, handsomely patterned imbricating leaves (regularly arranged, overlapping edges, as roof tiles or fish scales), this diminutive creeping plant is clearly related to *psychopsis*, but its mat-forming habit and more recognizably oncidoid flowers vary considerably from its larger cousins. This strange plant requires mounted culture to grow properly.

There are many theories about how these amazing flowers evolved. It is likely that the flower is engaging in some kind of mimicry to attract a pollinator, perhaps imitating a female insect (as does *Ophrys*) or a prey insect (similar to the ecology of *Brassia*, the spider orchid), but the truth is, no one really knows for sure what is going on as a pollination strategy for this group. It seems improbable that no naturalist would have yet observed a pollination event for this super showy and distinctive group of orchids, but this just goes to show how much we still don't know about even the most avidly cultivated orchids. Maybe if you visit their natural habitat - wet tropical forests from the West Indies, Costa Rica to Peru and can climb into their high canopy environment, you will solve this mystery.

Excerpted from an article that appeared in the American Orchid Society Orchids magazine in January 2009 (Vol.78:1, pp.18-20).



With upright narrow sepals resembling antennae and petals spread like wings, Psychopsis Mariposa 'Green Valley' AM/AOS lives up to its namesake, Mariposa, the Spanish word for butterfly.



CULTIVATION



Phalaenopsis Get a Bad Rap

by Sue Bottom

Some orchid growers look down their noses at phalaenopsis, as if they were second class citizens. It's hard to understand, given the diversity in their sizes, shapes, colors and blooming habits. Perhaps they considered common because they are so widely available. The flip side of that coin is they are widely available because they are so easy to cultivate and hold their blooms for so long.

For many of us, our first orchid was a phalaenopsis, probably one of the big standard phalaenopsis with long arching inflorescences that last around 3 months. The commercial growers have learned how to trigger flowering at will by chilling them, so you can find them in bloom during any month of the year at the grocery and big box stores. Once they are in your growing area, they will revert to their more natural growing and blooming habit. They can be summered outdoors in a shady area protected from rain, where they get buoyant air and a drop in nighttime temperatures. When our first cold fronts come through around Halloween, let them get a little chill as long as temperatures don't drop below 50 or 55F. This will trigger them to flower next spring. By mid-November they should be in their winter home and you can expect them to start spiking around Christmas and blooming around Valentine's Day. If you are going to repot them, cut the flower spikes and get them situated in their new home by Independence Day, so they can reestablish and be ready to do it again next year.

The species native to warm and humid habitats from the subgenus Phalaenopsis are easiest to grow and most commonly found in cultivation. They include the species *amabilis*, *aphrodite*, *philippinensis*, *sanderiana*, *schilleriana*, *stuartiana*, *equestris*, *lindenii*, and *pulcherrima* (formerly *Doritis pulcherrima*). These plants are also the basis for the majority of white, pink and purple hybrids available today in many grocery stores and gardening centers.

You might become enamored of the multifloral phals, originally called sweetheart phals. The multiflorals were developed in California by Herb Hager using the phal species *equestris*, *stuartiana*, *lindenii* and *amabilis* var. *formosana*. The flowers are smaller than their standard sized cousins, but there are so many more flowers often on branching stems. They may come in smallish pots when purchased, but they will grow into larger plants, although maybe not as large as a standard phal. You can find in all the same colors and patterns as their standard sized cousins.



Phal. equestris 'Sunkist', by Suzanne Susko
An influential species in multifloral phal breeding

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Phal. amboinensis, by Terry Bottom
An influential species in novelty phal hybridizing

There is a second group of species from warm and humid equatorial regions at lower elevations that are used in novelty phalaenopsis breeding. These brightly colored phals from the Polychilos subgenus include the species *amboinensis*, *gigantea*, *lueddemanniana*, *venosa*, *bellina*, and *violacea*. Many of the novelty phalaenopsis are summer blooming, with green waxy foliage that makes them attractive plants, even out of bloom. As an added bonus, some are delightfully fragrant. The flowers tend to be star shaped, with fewer flowers on the stem than a standard phal, but the stems can produce blooms for several years so you should not cut them until they wither and turn brown. These warm-growing plants do not benefit from the cool winter temperature dip that triggers blooming in standard phalaenopsis. Instead, they need warmer temperatures and really thrive when kept just above 80 F during the day and in the mid 60s at night. If repotting is necessary, it should be completed by February so they will have a chance to recover from transplant shock prior to initiating summer blooms.



Phal. Kuntrarti Rarashati 'Copperstate' HCC/AOS
(*equestris* x *venosa*), by Terry Bottom
A hybrid between a multifloral and a novelty phal

The quest for brightly colored novelties started when a standard white or pink flower was crossed with a brightly colored species to produce brightly colored flowers. First came the yellows in the mid 80's, with the heavy influence of *Phalaenopsis amboinensis*. Then came the reds, where a yellow flowered phal was bred with a purple to produce shades ranging from orange red to deep lavender burgundy. In the mid-90's, breeding with a mutated form of *Phalaenopsis Golden Pecker* gave rise the Harlequin type phals, that typically have a white or yellow base color and randomly distributed blotches of color. They vary in size and shape and can be different from flower to flower, creating very unusual patterns.



Phal. bellina var. alba, by Leslie Brickell
A summer blooming novelty with a delightful fragrance

There is a third group of miniature species that are the most difficult to grow. From the subgenera *Parishinae* and *Aphyllae*, the species *gibbosa*, *lobbii*, *parishii*, and *wilsonii* grow at higher elevations in seasonally cool and dry areas. Some are deciduous and growers have mistaken them for dead during the winter, when they are simply dormant.

You can go so many directions in collecting phals. Whether you start with the large, shingled white phals or branch into the colorful novelties, their ease of growth and long lived blooms will give you great pleasure year after year.

Additional Reading:

Advanced Phalaenopsis Care: Summer vs Winter Blooming Phals, <https://herebutnot.com/phalaenopsis-spikes-like-hot-need-cool/>

Phalaenopsis, Carlos Fighetti, <https://www.bbg.org/gardening/article/phalaenopsis>



IN MEMORY

Marv Ragan August 1931 - February 2023

Marv Ragan departed this earth on February 23rd after an extended bout with pneumonia. Marv and Jan met in California and raised their children while he was on active duty in the navy. Together they trekked into the jungles of South America and the Philippines. Always a team, she and Marv opened MAJ Orchids in 1969, MAJ being an acronym for Marv and Jan. Jan ran the booths while Marv judged for the AOS. It was a sad day when Jan departed this earth on Christmas Eve in 2015.

Marv was a wealth of knowledge, others often calling on him when questions arose. He was fun, with a playful sense of humor. Our meetings won't be the same without him.

Rest in Peace Marv, and say hi to Jan for us.



SHOW TABLE



Grower Suzanne Susko
Tolu. Jairak Flyer 'Big Bang'



Grower Suzanne Susko
Dendrophyllax [Dlax.] funalis



Grower Sue Bottom
Ddc. glumaceum



Grower Bev Vycital
Blc. Bill Krull 'Krull's Primavera' AM/AOS



Grower Leslie Brickell
Epi. cillare



Grower Charlie Rowell
Yam. Redland Sunset 'Palmer Orchids'



Grower Keith Davis
B. digbyana 'Summit Limefizz'



SHOW TABLE



Grower Leslie Brickell
Bc. Lily Marie Almas



Grower Steve Dorsey
Pot. Carmen Cortes



Grower Sue Bottom
C. maxima var. coerulea



Grower Linda Stewart
Bulb. vaginatum 'Joyce'



Grower Courtney Hackney
Bc. Suzanne's Hallelujah 'Paradise' AM/AOS



Grower Jimmy Brouard
Lc. Alarcon 'Gran Jeanne Marie' AM/AOS

Link to all Submissions: <https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjAu1xm>

