

# Venice Area Orchid Society News

Oct. 2012

**Next Meeting: Wednesday,  
October 3rd at 7:00 p.m.**

**Speaker: Fred Clarke**

**Topic: "Today's Mini and Compact Cattleyas"**

Fred has been growing and hybridizing orchids for more than 30 years and is the owner of Sunset Valley Orchids in San Diego, California. He is an American Orchid Society Accredited Judge in the Pacific South Judging Region and his plants have received hundreds of AOS awards. Although developing cattleya hybrids has been his primary interest, he is also actively creating new Aussie Dendrobium and Paphiopedilum hybrids.

He will be bringing a large selection of orchids for sale as well as orchids previously ordered by our members from his website.

**Fred Clarke**

**Sunset Valley Orchids**

760-639-6255

[fred.clarke@worldnet.att.net](mailto:fred.clarke@worldnet.att.net)

[www.sunsetvalleyorchids.com](http://www.sunsetvalleyorchids.com)



*Fred Clarke*

## A Message from your President:

Recently a mentee found a great buy at Home Depot for Spathiglottis Sorbet 'Citrus Cooler' – a terrestrial orchid. It is absolutely gorgeous! (See accompanying photo) In checking around, I found that some terrestrials are sold at our local MRT but more are available in Ft. Myers at Riverland Nursery near I-75. Deliveries arrive every Friday and they have epidendrums (oranges and yellows) and Spathiglottis (purple) quite often among other ground orchids. Though the following website (<http://colorgardenfarms.com>) is only for commercial nurseries you may see some of the many ground orchids available to those nurseries. Besides our regular orchid collection, why not grace our properties with terrestrials?

We are so fortunate to have such fine growers in our society! Please see the article about our excellent showing at the Ridge Orchid Show in Lakeland -- so many awards! Also special thanks to all those who stayed all day to help.

Also in September, both John Masters and the Fenders opened up their greenhouses for wonderful tours and sales. Our members bought reasonably priced



*Cynthia Vance*

*Continued on page 5*

## RIDGE ORCHID SHOW

VAOS participated in the Ridge Orchid Society 50th anniversary show in Lakeland, FL on September 15-16. Our display, consisting of 34 plants exhibited by 10 VAOS members, took the 2nd place award. Tampa took 1st and Ridge took 3rd place. Most impressive - VAOS members took 3 trophies and 25 ribbons for those 34 plants! Trophy winners were:

Roy Klinger - Dana Dombroski Trophy for the Best Cattleya type flower under 5" - Lc. Tropical Pointer 'Spots'

Tony Nacinovich - Ritters Tropic 1 Orchids Trophy for Best Other Cattleya Type Flower - Brassavola nodosa

Bill Timm - Troy Lane Bourne Trophy for the Best Ca-

tasetum Type Flower - Clowesetum Black Jade 'Green Back'.

The following members received ribbon awards (a combined total of 10 Blue, 4 Yellow and 11 Red): Peg Fahrenback, Ted Kellogg, Sybil Levien-Bushell,

Jerry Manegold, Tony Nacinovich, Jim Thomas, Bill Timm, Cynthia Vance and Carol Wood.



[WWW.VAOS.ORG](http://WWW.VAOS.ORG)

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**Venice Area Orchid Society, P.O. Box 443, Venice, FL 34284-0443**

## Officers 2012 - 2013

### President

Cynthia Vance, [pres@vaos.org](mailto:pres@vaos.org)

### Vice President - Programs

Jim Thomas  
[programs@vaos.org](mailto:programs@vaos.org)

### Vice President - Social Affairs

Gerry Thomas

### Vice President - Show Displays

Richard Amos, [disp@vaos.org](mailto:disp@vaos.org)

### Treasurer

Ali Hicks, [tres@vaos.org](mailto:tres@vaos.org)

### Recording Secretary

Peg Fahrenback, [rsec@vaos.org](mailto:rsec@vaos.org)

### Membership

Jay & Judy Loeffler, [memb@vaos.org](mailto:memb@vaos.org)

### Directors At Large:

#### Annual Show Chairs

Barbara Wagner  
Carol Wood  
[showchair@vaos.org](mailto:showchair@vaos.org)

#### Promotion and Advertising

Debra Mattar, [promo@vaos.org](mailto:promo@vaos.org)

#### Immediate Past President

Ted Kellogg, [tmkellogg@gmail.com](mailto:tmkellogg@gmail.com)

#### Volunteers

Donn Smart, Communications  
The Cullens, Raffle Table  
Judy Russell, Plant Table  
Jerry Manegold, Technology  
Bryan Herd, Librarian

#### Newsletter Editor

Steve Vogelhaupt

#### Newsletter Production

Barry Zack

#### Website Maintenance

Ted Kellogg

#### VAOS Printer

Creative Technology of Sarasota

## Venice Area Orchid Society News

P.O. Box 443, Venice, FL 34284-0443

- Published monthly.
- Deadline for submissions is the 15th of the prior month.
- Please direct comments to:  
Steve Vogelhaupt, [newsletter@vaos.org](mailto:newsletter@vaos.org)
- Written submissions are appreciated.

## Growers Clinic

The VAOS Growers Clinic, held the 2nd Wednesday of each month, continues to draw a growing number of beginner growers and guests.

Hosted by Jim Thomas with support from Carol Wood and Richard Amos, this working session is structured to cover the basics of orchid culture, repotting, pests and diseases, specific types of orchids and other topics of interest to hobby growers.

Last month's clinic focused on orchid pests and diseases - identification, prevention and treatment. Seventeen members and five guests joined us for a slide presentation and open discussion on this topic.

This is a great venue for experienced members to share their knowledge with beginner growers and new members. Participants in our Mentor program are encouraged to join us. Bring in your problem plants. Email suggestions for future topics to Jim Thomas.

The next Growers Clinic will be held at the Venice Community Center on October 10th at 7pm. This will be an open question and answer session with growing tips offered by our experienced growers. Guests are welcome.

## Selby Gardens Appoints Curator

Marie Selby Botanical Gardens in Sarasota announced the recent appointment of Dr. Antonio Toscano de Brito, renowned plant researcher, as Curator of its Orchid Research Center. Toscano, a native of Brazil, will be responsible for researching selected orchid species, publishing scientific and popular articles, identifying plants, building Selby's living and preserved collections and giving lectures on plant research. He received his Ph.D. on orchid systematics from the University of Reading/Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew, in England and more recently worked as a visiting scholar at Harvard University.

*Continued on page 5*

### Treasurer's Report September 2012

#### Checking Account

Starting Balance  
8/16/2012 .....\$1,129.43  
+ .Income.....\$90.00  
+ Transfer from Savings. .\$.1,00.00  
- payments .....\$1,580.09  
Balance (9/20/12).....\$639.34

#### Show Checking Account

Balance (9/20/12).....\$1,858.17

#### Cash Account

Balance (9/20/2012).....\$40.00

#### Money Market Acct

Balance (9/20/12).....\$24,006.60

#### Total Assets

9/20/2012.....\$26,544.11

*Submitted by Ali Hicks*

### Support our 2012 Show Sponsors

AAA South  
Center for Sight  
Drs. Davis & Beyer, DDS  
Edgewood Nursery  
Herald-Tribune Media Group  
Jacaranda Trace  
Retirement Community  
Pineapples Island Grill  
Raleigh & Associates  
Silverstein Institute  
Stanley Dean State Farm



Peggy Fahrenback entered a beautifully grown Pot. Susan Fender 'Cinnamon Stick'. The judges liked it so well that they awarded it the **First Place Ribbon**. There were four blossoms nicely displayed. The blossoms were about 4 inches across with deep red lips. It was awarded an 83 point AM/AOS in 1994. A great year, at least for me. That's when my wife, Connie, and I moved here from Dallas.



Pot. Susan Fender 'Cinnamon Stick' AM/AOS

The **Second Place Ribbon** went to Blc. Chunyeah, a first bloom plant, brought in by Judy Russell. The label also listed # 17 on it. As near as we can tell, #17 is probably a number added by a photographer as we can not find any record of it in our research. Anyway, this hybrid of Blc. Tossiebarkera X Blc. Kuan-Mico Chen, had a 5 inch golden blossom with red lip.

Carol Wood brought in a beautiful Blc. Golden Tang (Blc. Waikiki Gold X Bc. Richard Mueller) which took the **Third Place Ribbon**. It had 9 spikes carrying 2 to 4 blossoms per spike. The bright yellow flowers were about 3 inches across. Carol says she got it from



Blc. Golden Tang

Fender's Flora 5 years ago and is potted in 'Epi-Web', a synthetic product made from recycled pop bottles. I'm sorry, Carol, I am not familiar with this medium.

Our Hero of the Ridge Orchid Show, Richard Amos,

brought in the **Species of the Month**, *Cycnoches barthiorum*. The 10 inch long inflorescence holding many blossoms displayed them nicely. I thought it was root beer colored, but was informed the color was tan and maroon. Either way, it was a beautiful plant.



*Cycnoches barthiorum*

The **Speaker's Choice Award** went to a soft yellow Blc. Campobello 'Newberry'



Blc. Campobello 'Newberry' AM/AOS



Blc. Chunyeah

AM/AOS, with its 3 large blooms. The parents of this neat plant are: Rlc. Chatooga River x Rsc. Golden Galleo Campobello. The grower of this plant is the Co-Hero of the Ridge Orchid Show, James Thomas.

The members voted Vanda Jimmy Miller X V. Taweewan, brought in by Jackie Barrett, as the **Members' Choice Award**. It was a well-grown plant displaying 2 spikes with three red 3 inch blossoms on each spike. Jackie said the label

was faded and she had to squint and guess at the name, but between about six of us, we believe her ID to be correct.

The other plants on the Show Table were also great, but there are just so many ribbons to award. I sure am glad I wasn't one of the judges. They do have tough decisions to make.

Thanks for bringing them in and keep them coming.



V. Jimmy Miller x V. Taweewan

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## Minutes of the September 5, 2012 Meeting

Flyers of upcoming events were placed on seats prior to the opening of the meeting. President Cynthia Vance introduced new members and talked briefly with several participants of the Mentor Program. Carol Wood said she has enjoyed being a Mentor and that it takes very little time. Her Mentee, Pauline Adam, cited ways the Mentor Program has helped her to learn to grow orchids.

The upcoming Ridge Orchid Show, "The Golden Age of Orchids", will be at Lakeland, September 15-16th. Richard and Mary Amos, show designers, announced they will need blooming orchids for the display. Set up is Friday, Sept. 14th.

Jim Thomas reported the topic for the September Growers Clinic: "Creepy Crawly and Other Pests." The big screen will be used for illustrations brought to the meeting by Carol Wood. Jim also reported that Fred Clarke, from Sun Valley Orchids, California, will offer 10% off all plants ordered from him prior to the October 3rd meeting. He will bring the plants to the meeting, so there will be no shipping or handling charges. He has Mini and Compact Cattleyas, including the blackest of all, the Catasetum

Fredclarkera.

Bill Timm announced his Plant Safari, which will be at his home Saturday, Oct. 13, beginning at 8:00am. This unique opportunity will offer plant collecting, plant sales, arts and crafts and a Yard Sale. Participants may tromp through a large area of native trees and plantings to find "seeded" bromeliads, succulents, cacti, ferns, orchids and other plants that will be theirs to keep. Cost is \$20 per person. All proceeds will be donated to the American Cancer Society.

Jim Thomas introduced our speaker, Joe Hayden, who presented a program about growing Phalaenopsis orchids. He distributed a handout that outlined recommended growing techniques and offered many tips for growing Phals. Joe offered many blooming orchids for sale, and discussed various fertilizers and supplies.

Joe Hayden and Jimmy Thomas presented orchids from the Plant Table and cited awards.

The meeting was adjourned.

*Respectfully submitted by Peg Fahrenback*

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### Ridge Orchid Show continued from page 1



Our display was constructed using the new Styrofoam blocks built by Richard Amos and Jim Thomas, new black material, live moss and maidenhair ferns.

Special thanks to Richard and Mary Amos and Jim Thomas for constructing a beautiful and artful display and to their support team - Ken Dolan, Carol Wood, Jerry Manegold and Bill Timm.

This was the first of four shows that VAOS will exhibit in. Sarasota is in January, our show in February and Englewood in April. Now is the time to start grooming and staking your orchids for these upcoming shows! A winning display depends on the quality and variety of orchids entered by our members.

## President's Message, continued from page 1

quality plants that have proved they grow well in our area – a great bonus. Most of John's orchids hang in mesh baskets with Orchiata and he swears it lasts 4-5 years. Because they have lots of air space around them, he boasts they never get diseased.

Air was also one of the main topics at both our last meeting and Growers Clinic. At the clinic, Carol Wood gave an excellent presentation on "Orchid Diseases and Pests" with wonderful slides. Actually it was quite scary for some of our new growers! However both she and Joe Hayden, our last speaker, reminded us that moving air

prevents bacteria and fungus forming. To this end, the next morning I bought another large fan to use after every watering no matter what the weather is. The next time someone asks how often you water, you might tell them also how much moving air you use.



*Spathiglottis Sorbet 'Citrus Cooler'*

## A Special Reminder for a Very Special Event Saturday, October 13, "Plant Safari"

Bill Timm will be hosting his Plant Safari at his home on Saturday, Oct. 13, beginning at 8:00am. This unique opportunity will offer plant collecting, plant sales, arts and crafts and a Yard Sale. Participants may tromp through a large area of native trees and plantings to find "seeded" bromeliads, succulents, cacti, ferns, orchids and other plants that will be theirs to keep. Cost is \$20

per person. All proceeds will be donated to the American Cancer Society. Please contact Bill Timm at (941) 426-1133 or [billytimm@verizon.net](mailto:billytimm@verizon.net) to participate or if you desire more information.

Location: 2030 Leryl Ave., North Port, FL 34286, approximately 2 miles off I-75 S at exit 179.

## A New AOS Website

Members are invited to browse the newly created website of the American Orchid Society – Florida North Central Judging Center at [www.fncjc.shutterfly.com](http://www.fncjc.shutterfly.com). There you will find:

- the latest AOS Awards granted in our region, some hopefully belonging to our members
- the current calendar of orchid related events for our region
- orchid education and training opportunities

Ted Kellogg, our immediate past president and long time AOS judge, is the Training Coordinator for the Center.

## AN AWARD FOR A BEGINNING GROWER

Congratulations to Jackie Barrett, one of our VAOS beginning growers. We are proud that Jackie, one of our very first participants in the Mentor Program, was awarded the Members Choice ribbon at the last Plant Table. Her brightly colored V. Jimmy Miller x Taweewan (an unregistered hybrid) dazzled our voters. It was Jackie's first award, and she is delighted. Jackie is being mentored by our busy President, Cynthia Vance. Jackie describes working with her Mentor as an "excellent way to learn about growing orchids". She credits Cynthia for helping her learn to group orchid types for easier care and better sun exposure. Cynthia's suggestion to use Dynamite in a pouch mounted on the Vanda, appears to have helped with blooming. Kudos to both Jackie and Cynthia for good teamwork and great results! Jackie is excited and

motivated to expand her collection. She is having fun with orchids!

**Mentors tell me that it doesn't take much time to be a Mentor.** Hands-on mentoring is usually short term with most of the follow-up done by phone or email. Mentors and Mentees both tell me they have enjoyed getting to know one another and the program often increases their interaction at meetings. Most importantly, it shows that VAOS values beginning growers and wants to support them. Every grower has the potential to be an award winner!

We're pleased to have Past President, Ted Kellogg become our newest Mentor. Some of our busiest VAOS members are volunteering to help others. Thanks, Ted.

**We need more Mentors; please become a Mentor today!** If you would like to be a Mentor or receive Mentoring services, please contact Peg Fahrenback. Bright pink forms are at the Membership Table.

## Selby Gardens continued from page 2

Toscano has made numerous scientific expeditions throughout Brazil to complete plant collections and travelled extensively in Europe visiting herbaria and libraries.

Marie Selby Botanical Gardens is a leader in the display and study of orchids, bromeliads, gesneriads, epiphytes and tropical plants with a focus on botany, horticulture and environmental education. Their lovely and extensive gardens and horticultural classes as well as online Plant Care Guides, Article Library and Video Library provide enjoyment and valuable resources for all ages. For more information, visit [www.Selby.org](http://www.Selby.org).

# Venice Area Orchid Society News

P.O. Box 443  
Venice, FL 34284-0443

## Next Meeting:

Wednesday, Oct. 3, 7:00pm  
at Venice Community Center

- **Speaker: Fred Clarke**  
"Mini And Compact Cattleyas"
- Show table entries welcome
- Bring treats to share

## Upcoming Events

### October 3 -

VAOS monthly meeting 7pm. Venice Community Center, 326 S. Nokomis Ave., Venice, FL **Speaker:** Joe Clarke. **Topic:** Mini and Compact Cattleyas

### October 5-7:

66th Miami International Orchid Show, Coral Gables, FL.  
Info: [www.sforchid.com](http://www.sforchid.com)

### October 10:

Growers Clinic, 7pm, Venice Community Center. Presenter: Jim Thomas. **Topic:** Open Q&A with growing tips from our experienced growers. oct. Bring your problem plants.

### October 13:

Bill Timm's Plant Safari, (see pg. 5).

### November 3, 9am 2pm:

EAOS Members Plant Sale, Christ Lutheran Church, Englewood, FL.  
Info: Ann Baldwin (941) 475-5097

**November 3-4:** 14th International Slipper Symposium, Orlando, FL  
Info: [www.slippersymposium.com](http://www.slippersymposium.com)

### December 6:

EAOS Bus Trip to Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden, Miami. \$45 pp.  
Contact Ann Baldwin, EAOS Pres.  
[AnnMBaldwin501@frontier.com](mailto:AnnMBaldwin501@frontier.com)

### December 7:

VAOS Holiday Party (details soon).

### January 5-6, 2013

Sarasota Orchid Society Annual Show at the Sarasota Municipal Auditorium

Info: [www.sarasotaorchidsociety.org](http://www.sarasotaorchidsociety.org)

### February 2-3, 2013:

**VAOS Annual Show**, "Rhapsody in Hue", at the Venice Community Center.

### Ongoing:

Mentor Program: help for beginning growers, contact Peg Fahrenback, [rsec@vaos.org](mailto:rsec@vaos.org).

Orchid Judging takes place at the Tampa Garden Center, 2629 Bayshore Blvd., Tampa, FL at 7:30pm on the fourth Wednesday of every month.

### Newsletter Supplements

For those members who receive their monthly newsletter by email, look for extra content which began in June. Included are culture articles and handouts from our monthly Growers Clinic. This supplemental information will only be available in our full color email edition of the newsletter.

## Patronize Our Local Growers

Honey Bee Nursery (941-474-6866)  
Jeff Higel  
2383 Englewood Road (Rt. 776)  
Englewood

Plantio La Orquidea (941-504-7737)  
Tina & Rafael Romero  
3480 Tallevast Rd, Sarasota  
[www.plantiolaorquidea.com](http://www.plantiolaorquidea.com)

## GROWING TIPS for October

By

Courtney T. Hackney

Email: Hackneau@comcast.net

Gone are the hot days of summer, but the fall season reminds us that it is time to prepare for the coming cold season. Even those of us growing indoors need to begin planning for the changing weather if we grow under lights.

A large number of hobbyists move plants outside once spring takes hold each year, but it is now time to begin moving them back to their winter growing area. Not all orchids need to come inside right away. Phals can be left outside until night temperatures drop below 55 F as long as day temperatures are moderate. Moving phals inside before they receive a week or so where the difference between night and day temperatures are at least 15 degrees F can delay the initiation of spikes. Once spikes emerge, it is a good idea to move them inside and away from pests that love those tasty flower spikes.

Vandaceous orchids are usually considered the most cold-intolerant, but that is not universal. Neofinitia hybrids are often part of hobby collections, especially where there is limited space. They can survive considerable cold since the natural habitat of the parent is on the cold side. Many vandas and ascocendas with *Vanda coerulea* in the background bloom with brighter color if they are experiencing cool nights. Ideally, however, most strap-leaved vandas don't like it when day temperatures drop below 80 degrees F and nights are below 60 F.

Cattleyas are surprisingly tolerant of cool nights and flower better

with brighter colors when nights are cool and days warm.

The most tolerant orchids for cold are Cymbidiums and most flower best when exposed to near frosting temperatures. Once spikes emerge, it is best to avoid extreme cold, but this group of orchids is cold tolerant. Once spikes begin to form buds there is a risk of bud blast, so move Cymbidiums into warmer areas.

Of course, there are many kinds of orchids with all sorts of requirements during this transitional season. If there are plants in your collection that do not bloom or bloom poorly, but grow well there may be special conditions you need to provide. If the non-blooming orchid is a species, there are likely books that can tell you what you need to do to get it to bloom. Hybrids are usually easier to bloom, but often require conditions similar to species in their background.

If you grow in a greenhouse it is time to check heaters and vents to be sure they are working properly. The first cold usually comes when you have the least time to get ready so do it now.

Not only are you planning for cold, but so are many of the pests that cause problems in winter. If you have your orchids outside and plan to move them in, you need to avoid bringing these pests inside too. Dipping orchids in your preferred pesticide, pot and all, is a way to get rid of pests hiding in pots. For me, large roaches are a real problem that plagues me all year long here in Florida. An old friend introduced me to a new product that seems to be working well. The product is Niban Granular Bait which has orthoboric acid as its active ingredient. So far, I have not put it in pots, but on benches alongside pots. There was no sign that it was working at first, but soon large roaches started

appearing dead on the greenhouse floor. In addition, there is now little damage to new roots and flower buds. Hopefully, this will continue when the greenhouse is closed in winter.

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## October in your Orchid Collection

Dr. Martin Motes

October is a month of change in South Florida. If the Romans had lived here where we do, they would have named this month for their two faced god Janus. Usually around the middle of the month, and certainly by the end of the month, the first strong cold front pushes into South Florida bringing to a close the monolithic heat and damp of summer and ushering in weather as most of the continent knows it, alternating periods of warmer and cooler. Although warm temperatures will persist for another month or so until the technical end of the hurricane season, the tropics are in retreat and the temperate zone in the ascendancy. Each successive cold front foreshadowed by ever lessening rain storms will progressively cool our temperatures and dry our air. But days are shortening too, providing less hours of sunlight to heat the air and slowing the drying process. Nights are longer and cooler which produces the same effect, slower drying. Now we must start to move into the consciousness of winter and take greater care to insure that our plants are thoroughly dry before we water them again. The shorter days of October dictate that we rise even earlier to water if necessary. Each extra hour of daylight is to be cherished by us as well as our plants.

Most of our orchids are well aware of this sea change. The shortening days of late summer have told many genera to finish their growth and prepare to rest. We need to listen too. And look! The last smallest leaves of these highly seasonal plants will have unfolded at the tips of their new growths telling us that their growth cycle is finished for this year. Himalayan dendrobiums of the nobile type and of the section Callista (*D. aggregatum* et al.) now begin their five months of carefree existence in South Florida. They should be put in a bright spot and given no more water and above all, no more fertilizer until after they have bloomed in spring. *Catasetums*, *Mormodes*, *Cycnoches*, *calanthes* and other deciduous types should be treated the same way. Whatever moisture nature provides in the increasingly heavy dew and the passing rains that usher in most cold fronts will be adequate for these plants whose native environment is a seasonally monsoon one like ours. Benign neglect suits these genera just fine and what a relief to the conscience of the ever busy orchidist! The truly devoted will group these genera together, preferably at the edge of the growing area and high up where they will receive the maximum of light and air circulation. Grouped thus, the chance of an accidental watering of these, while taking care of the more thirsty genera, is minimized. Another strategy is to tip the pots of these dormant genera on their sides thus eliminating much natural rainfall and avoiding a misdirected hose spray. Some growers even remove plants that have finished both growing and flowering from their pots entirely. When new growth begins in the spring they will receive a fresh start in new medium.

Many *cattleyas*, *laelias*, *oncidiums* and *Phalaenopsis*-type dendrobiums will be finishing their growths and should be hardened off with reduced water and fertilizer but not the Spartan regime of the deciduous type. Lower nitrogen fertilizer applied at a lower rate and with less frequency will make these genera happy and prevent them from breaking into unwanted off-season growth that frequently hampers flowering as well. Many growers tend to use higher phosphorus, lower nitrogen fertilizers of the "Bloom Booster" type during the cooler weather. But less frequent applications of the recommended 15-5-15 is a better strategy. These applications should be spaced further apart as well, at ten to twelve day

intervals. Less frequent watering will also do for these genera. When the frontal rains pass through, check to see that the pots are thoroughly wet by giving them the "heft" test and if they are not heavy enough "top them up." Let them dry 'hard' before watering again. In cool weather especially, less is more.

Monopodial orchids like Vanda and Phalaenopsis which want to grow continuously, feel the change too. The broad swing of day to night temperature stimulates flower spike initiation in these genera. You can spur them on to greater excitement by giving them a shot of high Phosphorus 'Bloom Booster' fertilizer just before or just after the sudden drop in night temperatures precipitated by the passing of a cold front. For most of the year "Bloom Booster" fertilizer appears to be in fact "Bloom Blocker" but (perhaps from faith rather than science) high phosphorus seems to have the desired effect (perhaps from shock) when the first cold snaps are also halting vegetative growth. We like Miller's Solugro (12-48-8) because it contains none of the ugly blue flower, clothes and hand staining dye. Other brands (with or without dye) are equally effective. Look for a very high middle number and a relatively low first number or ask at your garden center for a 'starter solution' which is the moniker for these fertilizers when used in planting out vegetable or annual seedlings. Because the nitrogen level is lower, you can use a full tablespoon of these or more, per gallon.

Cooler weather calls our attention to our plants' needs for trace elements. Chief among these is magnesium, often described as the 'major' minor element. Magnesium deficiency shows up in orchids as a reddening of the foliage particularly when the plant is stressed. This color change is frequently attributed to cold as it occurs following spells of cooler weather. This observation is the fallacy of post hoc, ergo propter hoc; cold is merely the efficient cause: the material cause is lack of magnesium. Hopefully the new fertilizer regimen outlined in the July chapter will minimize or eliminate the reddening by keeping the magnesium level up in the plants. Epsom salts (MgS) is the best and most readily available source of magnesium. This can be applied with Potassium Nitrate (KNO<sub>3</sub>) at the rate of one tablespoon each per gallon. Potassium Nitrate has the formula 13-0-46. The missing number in the middle is Phosphorus. In combination with our highly alkaline water phosphorus tends to react with magnesium and the other metals of the trace element group. Never apply magnesium and the other trace elements in combination with fertilizers containing phosphorus. A general purpose trace element mixture can be added to the mix of magnesium sulfate and potassium nitrate at the rate recommended on the label. (Concentrations vary). Goodbye red, Hello green.

*(Excerpted from Florida Orchid Growing: Month by Month)*

# Phalaenopsis

## My phalaenopsis is done flowering. What should I do with it now?

- Cut spike on orchid as close to plant as possible.
- Determine if orchid needs to be repotted. (plant size, soil, health)
- Place in a good growing area.

## If my orchids need repotting, what is the best pot and soil?

- Plastic, clay, and ceramic pots with good drainage are fine.
- Use the soil that is best for your growing habits.
- Most soils should last up to 2-3 years.

## Where is the best place to grow my orchid?

- Phalaenopsis need 1100 fc light for growing and reblooming.
- A lanai next to the house is around 900 fc. (good)
- Outdoors and let mother nature grow it. (poor)
- Make sure the location you pick has plenty of ventilation.

## What temperatures are best for my orchid?

- Phalaenopsis like cooler weather for flowering.
- Phalaenopsis grow fastest in the spring and fall.
- In the winter, don't let your orchid drop below 45F.
- In the summer, keep your orchid below 90F. Plants stop growing at 94F.
- Spritzing plants can lower leaf temperatures.
- A fan can lower temperatures by 10 degrees.

## How often should I water my orchid?

- On average, you should water your orchid every 7-10 days.
- Your type of soil will determine how often you should water.
- When it is time to water, give the orchid plenty to drink.
- Spritzing your orchid is for moisture. (when indoor humidity is low)
- City water it contains chlorines and salts which are not ideal for your orchid.
- Check the pH balance in your water. Unbalanced pH can be damaging to orchids.
- Good water contains a pH of 6.5 to 7.0.
- Ice cubes are for drinks, not orchids.
- Rain water is a great source of water.
- Limp, light colored leaves is a sign of under watering.

## How often should I fertilize my orchids?

- Orchids need a well balanced, water soluble fertilizer at least every other watering.
- You can fertilize orchids while flowering. (cut back on nitrogen)
- Epsom salt(magnesium sulfate) is great for orchids. It gives them a nice green color.
- Better-Bloom works well for flowering. It is high in potassium which is great for roots.
- If orchids have root problem, cut back fertilizer until roots are growing again.
- Slow release fertilizer helps, but is not an alternative.
- Do not give your orchid too much nitrogen in growing season.



How do I keep my Phalaenopsis from getting sick?

Leaf loss is a sign that an orchid is stressed.  
Lots of air movement will help prevent fungus and bacteria.  
Keep sick plants separated from other orchids.  
Keep orchids clean. (weeds, old leaves, flower spikes)  
A strong, healthy plant is less likely to get a illness.  
Focus on the roots when growing your orchid.

What can I use on my orchids for insects and diseases?

Over the counter hydrogen peroxide works well on fungus and bacteria.  
Over the counter rubbing alcohol works well on most insects.  
Always brush away insect first with a soft bristle tooth brush.  
Sterilize your clippers and trim away any sick looking leaves.  
Cinnamon can be used on the open wound after trimming.  
A healthy plant is the best preventive defense for insects and disease.

