

# Venice Area Orchid Society News

Apr. 2013

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

**Speaker: Michael Polen**

**Topic: "Repotting Orchids Without Pots"**

Michael Polen is the owner of Art Stone Orchids in St. Petersburg, a premier supplier of orchids and potting supplies since 1986. He has twice been past president of the West Coast Orchid Society and continues to participate in numerous orchid shows, including numerous appearances at our Venice Show.



Art Stone Orchids/Palmer Orchids won both the AOS Show Trophy for the Most Outstanding Exhibit and the VAOS Most Outstanding Exhibit Class I Trophy as well as the Best in Show Trophy at our February show.

Michael will have supplies, mounts and orchids for sale and will be glad to answer any questions.

With Jimmy Thomas already planning a future Hands-on Mounting Growers Clinic, this will be a perfect time to purchase cork bark slabs, tree fern poles and baskets, and other supplies.

## **Plants Needed for VAOS Exhibit at Englewood Show**

The Englewood Area Orchid Society (EAOS) Show, "Orchids By Lemon Bay", on April 12-13, is the last show of the season in which we participate. Your blooming plants are needed for Rich Amos and his team to create a winning display.

Set up is Thursday April 11th, 9am to 4pm and the show is 10am to 5pm on Saturday and Sunday, April 12-13. The show will be held at the Englewood United Methodist Church, 700 East Dearborn St., Englewood, FL.

All plants must be pre-registered! Please email

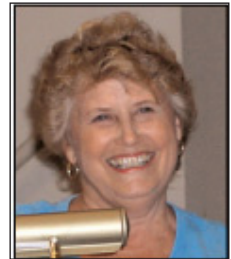
*Continued on page 5*

## **A Message from your President:**

We've had several wonderful events in the past 6 weeks, besides our fantastic show, and even more coming up soon.

Our most recent Growers Clinic, aptly named a "Grand Potting Party", is featured in a separate article. We presented

our first Jack Severson Memoria Trophy at our 2013 Orchid Show to honor our first VAOS president as we had decided at our April's



*Cynthia Vance*

50th Anniversary in 2012.

The winner was Krull-Smith for Most Outstanding Small Cattleya: Slc. Jungle Gem x C. Mark Jones.

Jimmy and Gerry Thomas and I hosted a "Table Top" at the Venice

Chamber of Commerce "After Five" networking event attended by 250. We advertised our Show and the VAOS both at the table and the mike. Our 1-year experiment of being part of the Chamber has reaped for us many new members and 25% of



our Show sponsor money. Our Chamber membership will keep VAOS a strong presence in our area!

We'll have our annual "Home Orchid Greenhouse Tours" on Saturday, April 27 from 9 am

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

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

## Officers 2013 – 2014

### **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**

Janice Felski, [social@vaos.org](mailto:social@vaos.org)

### **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 & Mentor Coordinator**

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

### **Corresponding Secretary & Newsletter Editor**

Steve Vogelhaupt, [csec@vaos.org](mailto:csec@vaos.org)

### **Membership Chairs**

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)

### **Immediate Past President**

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

### **Volunteers**

Bill Timm, Plant Table Award Descriptions

The Cullens, Raffle Table  
Judy Russell, Plant Table  
Jerry Manegold, Technology  
Sharon Schneider, Librarian  
Jacqueline Nesbitt, Photographer

### **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, [csec@vaos.org](mailto:csec@vaos.org)
- Written submissions are appreciated.

## Minutes of the March 6, 2013 VAOS Meeting

President Cynthia Vance started the meeting by welcoming the many new members who have joined since our annual show. Judy Loeffler announced that we now have a total of 297 individual members. Cynthia announced that five members who are mentees in our Mentor Program received ribbons for their plants in the VAOS show display and had them stand for applause. Carol Wood announced the final show profit was \$14,000. and presented Cynthia with a check. Jim Thomas announced that the monthly Growers Clinic date has been changed to the second Thursday of each month, 7pm, Venice Community Center. The March 14 clinic will involve hands on repotting and he requested attendees bring a cleaned bare root plant and pot, with VAOS providing the media and stakes.

Cynthia announced that Carol Wood will host a Mentor/Mentee Reception at her home on March 23 to celebrate the success of the program. (New members interested in mentor support can sign up at our regular monthly meetings and Growers Clinics).

Cynthia suggested that VAOS members sign up to clerk at the Englewood Area Orchid Society's 2013 annual show, 'Orchids By Lemon Bay' on April 12, 8am - 12pm, at the Englewood United Methodist Church. Contact Sybil Levien- Bushell to sign up.

VAOS will sponsor a bus trip again this year to the Redlands Orchid Festival on Saturday May 18th. The cost is \$35 pp and includes the \$10 park admission fee as well as snacks on the bus. Jim Thomas and Janice Felski will host the bus trip. Mail your check to reserve your seat to Ali Hicks, Treasurer, and watch for more details.

The March meeting is our annual meeting to elect new directors. Cynthia presented the slate of Directors for election. They included

*Continued on page 7*

### **Treasurer's Report March 2013**

#### **Checking Account**

Starting Balance

2/15/2013.....\$2,537.68  
+ Income.....\$2,405.00  
- payments.....\$1,813.81

#### **Balance**

3/13/2013.....\$3,128.87

#### **Show Checking Account**

Starting Balance

2/15/2013.....\$17,108.29  
+Income.....\$170.00  
- payments.....\$12,235.04

Balance

3/13/2013.....\$5,043.25

#### **Cash Account**

Balance (3/13/2013).....\$40.00

#### **Money Market Savings**

Balance (3/13/2013)....\$33,016.08

#### **Total Assets**

3/13/2013.....\$41,228.20

*Submitted by Ali Hicks*

### **Support our 2013 Show Sponsors**

#### **Platinum**

- Advanced Window Concepts
  - Edgewood Nursery
- Herald-Tribune Media Group
  - Raleigh & Associates
- Stanley Dean State Farm

#### **Gold**

- AAA Auto Group
  - Burgundy Square Cafe
    - Center For Sight
    - Daiquiri Deck
  - Dr. Frederick Bloom
  - Drs. Davis & Beyer, DDS
    - Happy Puppy Pet Spa
    - The Ramada Venice
  - Silverstein Institute
    - Jacaranda Trace
- Retirement Community

#### **Silver**

- Valenti's Allegro Bistro
  - Scottie's Dawghouse
- And Catering Co.



## Plant Table Awards March 6, 2013

The **First Place** ribbon was awarded to Hank Irvine for his Lc. Fire Dance 'Patricia' AM/AOS. Fire Dance is a cross of aurantiaca and Lc. Fire Island. Hank's plant was huge, grown horizontally on a large tree bark piece and in full bloom. Beautiful plant Hank, thanks for bringing it in!



*Lc. Fire Dance 'Patricia' AM/AOS*

Carol Wood's plant, *C. amethystoglossa*, took three ribbons **Second Place**, **Member's Choice** and **Speakers Commendation**.



*C. amethystoglossa*

Carol's plant had over 80 flowers on 12 inflorescences. Carol recommends this plant to anyone interested in growing Cattleya species - it is easy to grow, grows into a large plant quickly, and best of all does not require staking!

The **Third Place** award went to Jane Camarota's Phalaenopsis, a beautiful striped pink Phal with multiple blooms. Congratulations Jane!



*Phalaenopsis*

The **Best Species** ribbon went to Shirley Hoffman for her plant *Den. nobile* var. *rotunda*. Nobile dendrobiums can be a challenge for SW Florida growers. They require a cooler winter with no fertilizer and reduced watering to come into bloom in the spring. Shirley's large plant was covered with flowers. Good growing Shirley!



*Den. Nobile* var. *rotunda*

*Narrative by Carol Wood  
Photos by Jacqueline Nesbitt*

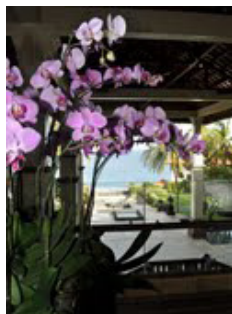
## The Orchids of Southeast Asia

My art historian spouse first suggested the cruise to the temples of the Far East. She was interested in the ancient art and architecture of the region as she could use the first-hand experience to enrich her classroom lectures. I went along to see the temples, but also in hopes of seeing orchids in their natural habitat. As a horticulturist, I've always made it a priority to visit botanical gardens, but as a VAOS member, orchids have become important because they live outdoors here and I don't need an expensive greenhouse!

We had three days in Bali where we started our cruise and we toured several Hindu temples, but also travelled high into the rainy mountains where bulbophyllum and cattleyas grew in the trees. Blooms were spotty, but appeared all over, in front yards and shop fronts. Vandas and phaleonopsis were used extensively as decoration, especially in hotel lobbies. Oddly, marigolds were the favored offering to the Gods Vishnu and Shiva, and not the glorious orchid. We arrived in the dry season, so in

the drier lowlands, flowers were few, and many of the decorative plants were shipped in from other Indonesian islands.

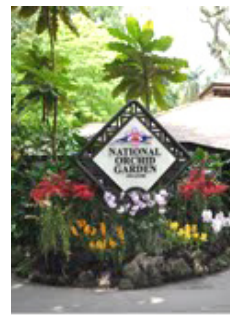
The UNESCO listed temple of Borobudur in Central Java was our next stop and was quite impressive. The huge dark-gray stonework was massive and the park like setting helped make it a bit more cheerful.



Orchids grew in many trees on the grounds, but flowers again were few due to the limited rainfall. Shops along the route from our ship were loaded with vandas, however, and they are often used as fences between homes. A five foot vanda is common in Java.

Singapore was the next port of call and I was excited as we were due to tour the National Orchid Garden at the Singapore Botanical Gardens. The gardens have been famous for collecting and propagating local plants and sending them around the world since its founding in 1859. In 1888, Henry Ridley took over and began a program that developed many new orchid hybrids and methods to grow healthier orchids. He started the orchid collection and vastly improved communication with orchidists around the globe.

The first collection contained Cattleyas and Vandas, but also Bulbophyllum, Sarcocylus, Eria, Neuwiedia, Apostasia, Bromheadia, Clathra, Paphiopedilum, Liparis, Nephelaphyllum, Angraecum, Stanhopea, Peristeria, Leptotes, Rodriguezia, Brassia, Oncidium, Podochilus, and Arundina, among others. Not a bad start for guys who were essentially volunteers! By 1924, the garden had 675 species in its collection!



*Continued on page 5*

## Judy Russell Receives AM/AOS Award

I had thought about taking an orchid to Tampa for their monthly AOS judging since last fall. So this February I made the drive up and chose an orchid that I thought was SOMETHING SPECIAL. Not knowing how the judging was done, I was apprehensive but found out everyone there was very nice and supportive. They registered my orchid and gave it a number, with none of the judges knowing the identity of the grower when they did the judging.

There were eight orchids entered, some by judges there that night. However, the registrar made sure that those were judged by other judges. There were three tables of about 5-6 judges. They judged each orchid individually and the judges had laptop computers to look up the names of the orchid to see if that particular one had won any awards. The entered orchid was compared to it and they discussed if this orchid had the same look and color as the awarded one on the website. They studied each flower and each judge marked a score card noting the points given to flower form, color, and size and other characteristics. The total points were added up for all the judges at that table and then divided by the number of judges. Entries had to receive 75 points or better to receive an

award.

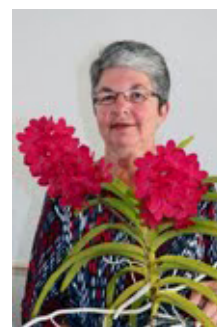
Out of the eight orchids, only 3 were given awards. The other plants were not special enough, according to the judges, to get the total points needed for an award. What the grower thinks is SPECIAL may not be what the judges think is special.

As my orchid received 80 points, I was lucky enough to receive an AM/AOS, which is "Award of Merit" given by the American Orchid Society. I even had the chance to name my orchid! I named it "Judy's Crimson Sun". My orchid was a Vascostylis Roll on Red which is a cross of Vascostylis Crownfox Red Gem and Ascocenda Peggy Foo and now is named Vasco. Roll on Red 'Judy's Crimson Sun'.

This same orchid, although not fully opened, took a second place ribbon at our show in February.

I had a great time and would certainly recommend the experience to all our members. Details on the judging are under Upcoming Events, last page.

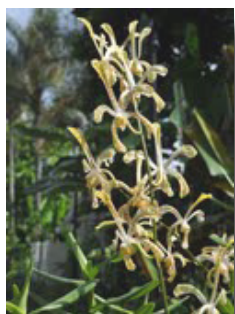
*Submitted by Judy Russell*



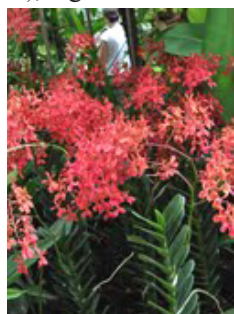


## Orchids of SE Asia continued from page 4

Dr. Richard Holttum took over in 1925 and began looking for ways to increase production of seedlings. Prof. Hans Burgeff from Würzburg arrived in 1928 with a new method of asymbiotic orchid seed germination using a prepared mix of nutrients and agar. Familiar today, it was revolutionary then and was a breakthrough in Holttum's breeding program. His first try was with *Spathoglottis* spp. and the results were spectacular. Holttum tried other lowland orchid species and in the early '30s created famous crosses such as *Aranthera* James Storie (*Arachnis hookeriana* x *Renanthera storei*), a great cut flower



*Arachnis Maggie Oei*



*Renanthera* spp

for many years. He also created the first *Arachnis* cross, *Arachnis Maggie Oei* (*A. hookeriana* x *A. flos-aeris*), which became a symbol for Singapore orchids in commerce.

In 1939, the Golden Shower, or Dancing Lady *Oncidium* was produced which became so popular that production soon spread to places like Hawaii and Java. Breeding continued at a rapid pace until the Japanese invasion during WWII put it on hold. During the war, Holttum was not held as prisoner but allowed to continue working in the garden and used the time to write the monumental 'Orchids of Malaya', which has been used by scholars and enthusiasts ever since as a basic guide to Asian

orchids. I remember scanning through this in 1965 as we actually had a copy in the Horticulture Building library. If you want to see the best in orchids, head for Singapore, the Lion City.

Vietnam came next on the itinerary and it was here that we saw large scale orchid production. In the countryside, large shade houses stretch for hundreds of yards thru the flat dry landscape filled with 5 and 6 foot tall vandas. The Vietnamese have flowers everywhere and use mostly these vanda crosses to decorate homes and shops. Saigon, now called Ho Chi Minh City, has a whole district of flower sellers and orchids (*Oncidium*, *Miltonias*, *Dendrobiums* and the ubiquitous *Vandas*)



are massed in front to tempt buyers.

Stay tuned! More of this story in next month's edition of the VAOS Newsletter.

*Article submitted by Bruce Weaver  
with photos by Victoria Weaver*

### Plants Needed continued from page 1

your plant name with the size and color description of the flowers to Carol Wood, showchair@vaos.org no later than Wednesday, April 10th, 5pm. Linda Schaller will make plant labels.

Bring your plants to the show on Thursday, April 11th, between 9am and 10am. All plants should be cleaned, staked, free of pests and diseases, and labeled with the plant name and the owner's name. Flowers should be in prime condition to last through the weekend show. You may also drop your plants off at Carol Wood's home in South Venice before Thursday (497-4995).

Please contact Rich Amos at disp@vaos.org if you would like to help set up our exhibit. Please contact Sybil Levien- Bushell at 485-0979 if you would like to volunteer to clerk for the show.

*Submitted by Carol Wood*

### Reminders for the Monthly Meeting

The Raffle Table is continuing to set monthly records for ticket sales. Thanks are owed to the Cullens and the many members who support the table by buying tickets and especially the members who bring plants in for the raffle.

We had a great turnout for the last meeting with many new members in attendance and need additional items for the Refreshment Table.

**Be generous and share your favorite snacks and drinks!**

# Grand Potting Party

More than 50 members and guests attended our recent hands-on Growers Clinic and Extravaganza at the Venice Community Center. Beginning with an explanation of supplies, tools and media, Jimmy Thomas demonstrated basic procedures as well as tricks of the trade for repotting our orchids. He also provided all the supplies necessary as well as orchid plants for new members just starting. Participants then repotted their own phals, cattleyas, dendrobiums, encyclias, vandas and other orchids with the assistance from several growing pros and helpers who circulated among the tables.



Cynthia received an email from Pauline Adam, a new member, which read: "The clinic tonight was extraordinary. Thank you, thank you!! The hands on help at each table really clarified the right way to pot. It was terrific to have all the supplies available and handy. I'd like to thank all the generous members who put this clinic together and all the helpers who made it happen. It was a big gift to the members". Thanks to 'Doctor' Jimmy Thomas, 'Assistant Nurse' Jay Loeffler and growing pros Carol Wood, Judy Loeffler, Richard Amos, and all the other helpers for making this outstanding event possible. It was a huge success and everyone is hoping for a repeat performance!!

*Photos by Jacqueline Nesbitt*



## Bill Timm Receives "Rising Star Award"

Bill Timm was recently honored with the "Rising Star Award" from the North Port Relay of the American Cancer Society for the highest yearly donation. As most will remember, Bill, best known for his holiday auction spectaculars, chameleon, and miniature orchids and magnifying glass, organized and hosted a very successful Plant Safari last October during which visitors had the opportunity to collect orchids, bromeliads, ferns, succulents and other exotic plants from his three acre plot in North Port. The Plant Safari also included refreshments, plant sales and a garage sale.

Bill was able to donate more than \$2000 to the American Cancer Society and hopes for at least \$3000 for a possible upcoming event later in the year



## **Bus Trip to Redlands International Orchid Festival, Saturday, May 18**

Here's the event you won't want to miss!! The annual festival is held at the beautiful Fruit and Spice Park, Homestead, FL. More than 60 orchid vendors come from all over the world. During the ride and the event, Jimmy Thomas will give you tips on which orchids to purchase that thrive in our area and Janice Felski will make sure everyone is comfortable and having a good time.

**\$35 Per Person:** Includes \$10 festival admission, bus trip, gratuity for driver and snack goodies for the ride – and a \$5.00 discount ticket if you purchase an orchid! What a deal!!!!

**Departure Times and locations:** (Arrive 15 minutes before departure times)

- 7:00 am – South Sarasota – Bank of America parking lot at Gulf Gate Drive & Route 41
- 7:30 am – Venice – Venice Community Center (south parking lot)
- 8:30 am – Punta Gorda – Wal-Mart Supercenter, Taylor Road

**Arrival time at festival:** 11-11:30

**Return trip:** Bus will leave festival at 4:00 or earlier if riders are ready to leave. There is room inside the bus to keep your new orchids safe and healthy on the trip home.

- Bring a hat and sunscreen; also a jacket or sweater for bus with A/C and a small cooler since the bus doesn't stop for dinner on the way home. Lovely international food is for sale at the park!

- **Payment by Friday, May 10th;** no refunds after May 10th. You may sell your seat, but please notify Jimmy Thomas at [pis2ces4@verizon.net](mailto:pis2ces4@verizon.net) or 966-2479 if you do.

- Make \$35 check payable to VAOS and mail to VAOS, PO Box 443, Venice, Florida, 34284

- **On check write:** Redlands trip - Pick up: (write Sarasota, Venice or Punta Gorda)

- Seating is limited, so send your check early

- Need more info? Contact Jimmy Thomas or visit [www.redlandorchidfestival.org](http://www.redlandorchidfestival.org)

### **Message from your President continued from page 1**

– 1 pm. Mark the date on your calendar as this is a wonderful opportunity to view members' collections and growing styles (more info to come). Also our annual bus trip to the Redlands International Orchid Festival is on Saturday, May 18 with details in a separate article. Jimmy Thomas and Janice Felski will make sure that a good time is had by all!

VAOS continues to receive great coverage from

our local media, the latest being an article titled "Fifty Years of Flowers: The Venice Area Orchid Society", written by the Historical Society of Venice, in the March 2013 issue of the Venice Gulf Coast Living magazine. The two page article highlights our society's history and presents a comprehensive overview of our activities. Complimentary copies of the magazine are available throughout Venice in retail shops.

### **Minutes of the March VAOS Meeting continued from page 2**

Directors who have agreed to serve a second term as well as Directors chosen mid-term to fill vacancies:

- Janice Felski, VP Social Affairs
- Rich Amos, VP Show Displays
- Peg Fahrenback, Recording Secretary
- Steve Vogelhaupt, Corresponding Secretary (and Newsletter Editor)

A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously by the members. Cynthia acknowledged those Directors who are continuing to serve out their terms: Cynthia Vance, President, Ted Kellogg, Immediate Past President, Jim Thomas, VP Programs, Ali Hicks, Treasurer and Carol Wood and Barbara Wagner, Show Co-chairs and Directors at Large.

Cynthia requested a volunteer for VAOS Librarian - Sharon Schneider graciously volunteered. Cynthia requested a volunteer to photograph our plant table ribbon winners; Jacquelyn Nesbitt graciously volunteered. Cynthia

thanked and acknowledged the following committee chairs and volunteers who have agreed to continue their responsibilities:

Judy and Jay Loeffler, Membership, Jerry Manegold, Technology; Judy Russell, Plant Table; Charlie and Margaret Cullen, Raffle Table, and Bill Timm, Plant Table Award descriptions.

Our speaker tonight was Dr. Hal Hills presenting "Orchid Fragrances", an interesting talk on how orchid fragrance production is affected by light, duration of light and temperature and how hybrid scents are based on the fragrance chemicals of their parents.

Ted Kellogg and Jim Thomas presented the plant table. Judy Russell was honored for receiving an AM/AOS award for her Vascostylis "Roll On Red" at the AOS judging center in Tampa.

The meeting was adjourned following the Raffle.

*Respectfully submitted, Carol Wood*

# Venice Area Orchid Society News

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

## Next Meeting:

**Wednesday, April 3, 7:00pm**  
**at Venice Community Center**

- **Speaker:** Michel Polen
- **Topic:** "Orchid Potting Without Pots"
- Show table entries welcome
- Bring Plants for the Raffle Table
- Bring treats to share

## Upcoming Events

### April 3, 2013:

VAOS monthly meeting. See page 1 for details.

### April 6-7, 2013 (Saturday and Sunday):

Central Florida Orchid Society Spring Show and Sale, Maitland Civic Center, 641 S. Maitland Ave., Maitland, FL. Info: Joselito Tolentino, 407-884-2950.

### April 11, 2013: (Thursday):

Growers Clinic, 7pm, Venice Community Center. Presenter: Jim Thomas. Topic: Orchid Pests with

open Q & A. Bring your problem plants for expert help.

### April 12-13, 2013 (Friday and Saturday):

Englewood Area Orchid Society Orchid Show and Sale: "Orchids By Lemon Bay" 10am-5pm at Englewood United Methodist Fellowship Hall, 700 East Dearborn St., Englewood. Admission \$3

### April 27, 2013, Saturday:

"Home Orchid Greenhouse Tour", 9am-1 pm. Details to follow.

### May 18, 2013 (Saturday):

Bus trip to the Redlands International Orchid Festival, Homestead, FL. \$35 per person that includes \$10 festival admission, bus trip, driver gratuity, snack goodies for the trip, and a \$5 discount ticket with orchid purchase. Reservations and payment NLT Friday, May 10. Details in newsletter.

### Ongoing:

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

Orchid Judging takes place at the **Christ the King Catholic Church – McLoughlin Center – Room C, 821 S. Dale Mabry Hwy., Tampa, FL 33609** at 6:30pm on the fourth Wednesday of every month. Info: <http://www.fncjc.shutterfly.com/>

## 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)

## 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.



# April in your Orchid Collection

**Dr. Martin Motes**

April Climate Data

Average high: 83.8

Average low: 67.6

Average mean: 75.7

Average rainfall: 3.36"

Far from the cruelest, April is the kindest month to South Florida orchid growers. The weather in April is definitely settled into warm, even deliciously hot, with passing cold fronts only adding the delight of a pleasant change in temperature. The clean, bright days brimming with abundant sunlight and the low relative humidity create the high drying potential that orchids love. Now we can get our orchids off to a great start on the growing season by practicing our very best watering skills under ideal conditions. Water heavily when you water and allow the plants to dry thoroughly before watering heavily again. Drying 'hard' in the spring will produce benefits all season. We want to get our plants well launched while leaving all the fungi high and dry.

The new shoots of *Oncidinae*, *grammatophyllums* and *dendrobiums* forming now are quite cup-like; care must be taken that water does not stand too long in these immature growths. Water these types very thoroughly with two or three applications of water spaced 10-15 minutes apart. Water should run freely through the pot on each application. Saturated thoroughly in this fashion the plants will need only weekly watering. Even more care should be taken with the soft plicate leafed genera like *Catasetum*, *Mormodes*, *Cycnoches*, *Gongora*, *Calanthe* and *Thunia*. The new growths of this type are rolled together (the fancy word is convolute) like a collapsible drinking cup. These should be grown in water retentive media that should be saturated at each watering to permit the developing roots to have abundant water but allow the vulnerable new growth extra time to dry. Feel the weight of a pot when you have finished watering. Be sure it is heavy with water. If it's not, water one more time. With plants properly spaced, good drying should not be difficult in the hot dry air of April. But do be careful to water early enough in the day to allow the tender new growth to thoroughly dry by twilight.

With vandaceous orchids grown in slatted baskets, most growers find that they dry altogether too well in April. Vandas can be watered almost every morning in April. Indeed, a second light watering or misting in mid-afternoon in April and early May is often beneficial provided the crowns and leaf axils of the plants have time to dry completely by nightfall. Another strategy under high drying conditions is to bend the rules, at least occasionally, and water heavily in mid to late morning. Late waterings on weekend mornings (you didn't want to get up early, any way) provide relief for plants that are more stressed on week days with their owners absent. Very occasionally, one needs to break the rules absolutely and water thoroughly (not just mist) in the mid to late afternoon so the plants can slowly absorb the water across the cool hours of the night. This is the season that one must be sure that *Vanda* roots have turned overall dark green when we have finished watering. Two applications of water to the point of runoff spaced several minutes apart should accomplish the required color change from white to totally green. Saturated roots are absolutely necessary to provide the plants the moisture the plants need to withstand the heat and dry air typical of April. Sometimes, particularly at this season, the roots will not change color even after the second or third application of water. This lack of response to water is

because the roots have become so dry that they are repelling rather than absorbing water. They are behaving like a cork in a wine bottle. The grower must exert special effort to re-saturate the roots. Often this will require 4 or 5 waterings to the point of run off spaced 15 minutes apart. Once the roots have been changed to the healthy overall green, normal applications of water should bring them around in future.

With increased heat and light and the onset of growth, fertilizer becomes more crucially important to the plants. Balanced time release pellets (13-13-13) can still be applied to potted plants provided the duration is 180 days or less. Most time release fertilizer breaks down faster under South Florida conditions and should be exhausted by October when we will want our plants to slow down. The brand marketed at retail as "Dynamite" is generally considered by professionals as superior in reliability to other types. In April, 15-5-15 can be applied to most genera at the rate of 2 tsp. per gal every two weeks. Vandas, ascocendas, Aerides, et al will benefit from a full tablespoon of 15-5-15 weekly during this high energy period. One can also apply high phosphorous 'Bloom Booster' fertilizer once or twice at this time to stimulate them to flower for Mothers' Day or failing that to win those trophies and A.O.S. awards at the Redland International Orchid Festival the next weekend. High phosphorous (we use Millers' Solugrow 8-48-12) also stimulates root action and is important in getting all genera off to a good start on the growing season. This is one of the few times that high phosphorus is perhaps beneficial. During the rest of the year it is to be avoided particularly with our alkaline water. Current science recommends fertilizers lower in nitrogen, much lower in phosphorus and higher in potassium, magnesium and calcium. Peter's Excel 15-5-15 is now the standard for year round use.

The warmth of April, alas, stimulates the growth of bugs as well as plants. Both Thrips and mites thrive in the dry heat of April. Liquid dishwashing soap (at 2 oz per gal) will control both but be mindful that soap should not be applied to plants that are suffering from drought stress. Be sure that your plants are well hydrated before you apply soap. Water them extra hard the day before. To be effective soap must be used profusely. The plants should be washed in the solution to the point of wetting every nook and cranny of both the plant and its container. Only such thorough treatment can reach the reclusive Thrips and be sure to touch all of the ever prolific mites. A second treatment at 7-10 days is necessary to control mites and a miticide such as Kelthane might be advised. Orthene which is the insecticide of choice for Thrips (because of its residual action) is compatible with many miticides. Check with your county agent if in doubt.

April is the classic month to catch up with all the re-potting which you meant to do across the winter. New roots form fast in April; don't rot them off by over-potting or break them off by allowing the plant to wiggle in the pot. Tie them up; tie them down!

April is a month for great moral decisions. When turning on the air conditioner for the first time, consider how much better an orchid grower you would be if you set the thermostat 2 or 3 degrees higher. You will find that you spend more time with your plants when you are accustomed to slightly higher temperatures and it is the master's shadow that makes the plants grow. Besides spending more time enjoying your orchids, when the FPL bill arrives, you can celebrate with some splendid additions to your collection.

April is a great month for naturalizing orchids in the garden. Perhaps it's time to think of new homes for some of our burgeoning collection on trees or elsewhere. The space emptied in the growing area will soon fill with the healthy new growth of those plants which remain to enjoy their additional light and air.

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