

# Venice Area Orchid Society News

May 2013

**Next Meeting: Wednesday  
May 1 at 7:00 p.m.**

**Speakers: Barry Rossheim and Courtney Kern**  
(Venice High School Zoology Club)

**Topic: "Celery Fields Conservation Project"**

**Speakers: James Thomas, Carol Wood  
and Richard Amos**

**Topic: "Growers Clinic Live"**

Barry Rossheim is the sponsor of the VHS Zoology Club and has been teaching biology and zoology since 1980.

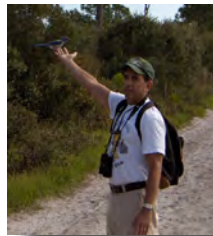
He is a lead teacher for the Costa Rica Global Classroom Project, a co-director of the Life Science Community, a member of the National Audubon Society, and for even more fun, works in the education department at the Lowry Park Zoo in Tampa. Mr. Rossheim hopes to inspire his students to pursue their studies in science and believes he can help save the planet by teaching global conservation.

Courtney Kern is the President of the VHS Zoology Club and a member of the VHS Honor Society.

James Thomas, our Vice President, Programs, perhaps better known as 'Doctor' Jim, has been growing and destroying orchids for 48 years (in his own words). He struggled with orchids for the first three years, until guided and inspired by Brooks Muse, who took him under his wing and taught him the basics he uses today. After losing several hundred orchids during the hard freeze in 1972, due to a rolling electric blackout which killed his electric heaters, he bounced back with his usual resilience and has more than 200 plants at his home in Nokomis. Initially interested in cattleyas and phalaenopsis, he's been expanding into dendrobiums and other orchids, as evidenced by his recent Plant Table Award Ribbons.

Neither Carol Wood nor Richard Amos, Jim's expert co-presenters, need further introduction as both have been active members and board members for a number of years. Carol is presently Co-Chair of the Annual Show and Richard Amos is Vice President, Show Displays.

Jeff Higel of Honey Bee Nursery will be selling beautiful orchids and orchid plant supplies recommended by our Growers Clinic.



## A Message from your President:

Our VAOS exhibit won the Second Place Ribbon at the Englewood Area Orchid Society show. Perhaps we could have received a higher award if I had not rescued a worn-out tree frog lazing in the sand next to a large conch shell in our exhibit. Hope he doesn't start the long walk back searching for the Venice Beach or the orchid collection of one of our members!



Cynthia Vance

I want to especially encourage our new members to take our special bus trip to the Redlands International Orchid Show, Saturday, May 18th. Having lived in Miami for 20 years, I never missed this event. There will be 60 vendors – the best from Florida, California and Hawaii, and also Argentina, Brazil, Malaysia, Peru and Taiwan (look for incredible new phalaenopsis hybrids!) at the magnificent Fruit and Spice Park. You will find unusual orchids you have never seen and Jimmy Thomas will guide you so you purchase those which will thrive in Venice. They also have a lovely shop filled with wonderful preserves and plant books and in addition you may dine on delicious international food.

See information on how you may reserve a seat on the bus in the article on page 5 of the newsletter.

Also we have initiated a "working group" to make our website more user friendly. Ted Kellogg, past president, and retired professor of technology, is taking the lead with Carol Wood assisting. Ted created our first and original website which was converted into a blog by another member in 2010. Now many of us feel it is not working well and are happy that Ted is willing to step up again and re-do the site.

Two new VAOS members with website experience in the private sector have also joined the team: Rich Belisle has beta tested many websites; Sharon Schneider knows HTML programming and has developed websites. So we have the right people in the right place --- and it's wonderful that new members are contributing so soon to our Society!

Finally – our next Wednesday night program: We will have 2 presentations -- a "Grower's Clinic Live" – high-

*Continued on page 7*

[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

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 April 3, 2013 VAOS Meeting

President Cynthia Vance opened the meeting by thanking those who donated to the Raffle Table and encouraged members to purchase tickets. She reported that someone left a bracelet at the last meeting; she is seeking the owner so it may be returned. Guests were welcomed and urged to join VAOS for only \$15. She recognized Carol Wood, who hosted a Mentor/Mentee Reception at her home on March 23, 2013. Over 40 participants attended and “graduates” of the 2012 program received a VAOS pin in recognition of their accomplishments. She also announced that Past President Ted Kellogg is leading a committee that will revise the VAOS Website to be more user friendly. Rick Belisle and Sharon Schneider, who both have technical expertise, will serve on that committee.

Cynthia quizzed the membership regarding several areas. She asked for a show of hands by members who: (1) have a large orchid collection; (2) have Orchid Whiz; (3) like to write about orchids. She noted the names of those who raised their hands.

Jim Thomas reported that the Growers Clinic topic in April will be “Potting without Pots”. Jim will provide a drill, zip ties and coconut husk supplies. Members are to bring their own plant and mounting plaque. A series on “Orchid Pests and Diseases” will begin in May.

Cynthia announced the bus for the May 18th trip to the Redland International Orchid Festival is currently 25% full. A total of 40 seats will be filled, so members were encouraged to reserve early. While traveling on the bus, Jim Thomas will discuss important information about the show. He will offer both suggestions and cautions for purchasing plants from vendors. The \$35 fee includes show admission, the bus, driver tip, snack bag and a \$5 gift certificate for purchasing an orchid. Pick up of

*Continued on page 7*

### Treasurer's Report April 2013

#### Checking Account

Starting Balance  
3/13/2013.....\$3,128.87  
+ Income.....\$710.00  
- payments.....\$1,307.83  
**Balance**  
4/15/2013.....\$2,531.04

#### Show Checking Account

Starting Balance  
3/13/2013.....\$5,043.25  
+Income.....\$0  
- payments.....\$2,013.40  
**Balance**  
4/15/2013.....\$3,029.85

#### Cash Account

Balance (4/15/2013) .....\$40.00

#### Money Market Savings

Balance (4/15/2013)...\$33,018.48

#### Total Assets

4/15/2013.....\$38,619.37

*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 April 3, 2013

James Thomas took both **First Place** and **Best Species** awards for his plant *Dendrobium aggregatum* (syn. *lindleyi*). *Den. aggregatum* is a *Callista* type *Den.* that grows in SE Asia on the trunks and branches of deciduous trees. It is considered by some to be a difficult plant to grow and bloom as it requires a cool dry winter rest to produce its short-lived spring flowers. Nice growing Jimmy!

The **Second Place** ribbon went to Cynthia Vance's plant *Enc. cordigera*, a beautiful, deep purple, highly fragrant species. *Encyclias* are warm growing plants that do well



*Enc. cordigera*

mounted and provide sprays of fragrant flowers in April and May, not long after our cattleyas have finished blooming.

James Thomas took the **Third Place** award for his *Phal. Dung Nguyen*, a well grown plant blooming on seven spikes. All *Doritaenopsis* (*Dtps.*) are now classified as *Phalaenopsis*. This plant is a cross of *Phal. Kelsie Takasaki* x *Phal. Brother Lawrence* and prefers low light and warm temps. Note the small delicate shape of the flower that differs from the larger more common *Phalaenopsis* because of its *amboinensis* background.



*Phal. Kaala Moon* x *Phal. Taisuco Kochdian*

VAOS Mentee Judy Loeffler took the **Speakers Commendation** award for her plant *Phal. Kaala Moon* x *Phal. Taisuco Kochdian*. Nothing is more graceful than a large classic white *Phalaenopsis* and the key to well - arranged

flowers is early staking and not moving the plant once the buds are set. Good growing Judy - congratulations!



*Den. aggregatum*



*Phal. Dung Nguyen*

Tony Nacinovich took the **Members Choice** Award for his nobile-type *Dendrobium Oriental Smile* 'Fantasy' AM/AOS. This plant, a cross of *Den. Fukujyu* x *Den. Yuubae*, is also a challenge to many S. Florida growers as it requires a dry winter rest and cooler temps to bloom.



*Den. Oriental Smile* 'Fantasy' AM/AOS

Submitted by Carol Wood

Photos by: Cynthia Vance, Judy Loeffler, Tony Nacinovich and Jacqueline Nesbitt



## Potting Without Pots Growers Clinic

Although the “Grand Potting Party” presentation last month was a tough act to follow, 62 members and guests attended this outstanding hands-on event. The clinic followed the previous week’s excellent presentation by Michael Polen and provided the opportunity for turning theory into practice. ‘Doctor’ Jimmy Thomas discussed the various mounts, supplies, potting media and tools using a close-up camera to illustrate various techniques. He also provided all the necessary tools and supplies as well as coconut fiber and New Zealand sphagnum moss. Participants brought in wooden baskets, tree fiber plaques, baskets and totems, cypress slabs, and a variety of unique driftwood. After a discussion of several interesting mounts brought in by members and a Q&A session, participants mounted their own plants with the assistance of growing pros and helpers. Orchids ranged from phals and cattleyas to encyclias and vandas and even the stray bulbophyllum.



*‘Doctor’ Jimmy and Pauline Adam*

The venue was great as participants were able to circulate and see the innovative solutions and techniques employed by our more seasoned growers as well as novice members. Many positive comments were heard from the participants who said that they had never realized that there were so many ways to display their orchids.

The event highlighted the importance of the Growers Clinic in the development and retention of our newer members. Once again, thanks to ‘Doctor’ Jimmy and his assistants, Jay Loeffler, Gerry Thomas, Steve Vogelhaupt, and growing pros Carol Wood, Judy Loeffler and all the other helpers for making this a huge success!!

*Article/photo by Steve Vogelhaupt*

## New Guidelines – Meeting Plant Table

1. Members are requested to bring their plants to the Plant Table by 6:45 p.m. so that the selected judging committee has adequate time to properly evaluate the orchids before the start of the meeting.
2. Please prepare your plants as for any show. Clean the pots, remove spent blossoms, broken leaves and water spots, etc.
3. Members should complete a 3 X 5 card with the name of the orchid clearly printed on the front, with parentage (if known) and if species, and the name of the submitter clearly printed on the reverse.
4. All members are requested to vote for the Members’ Choice award either before the start of the meeting or during the early part of the refreshment intermission to allow the votes to be tabulated before the Plant Table presentation.
5. There will be a NEW AWARD/RIBBON for beginning growers (those who have been members for less than two years). To have your plant entered for this award, please place a prominent yellow dot in the upper right hand corner of your 3 X 5 card. Dots will be available at the Plant Table.

## EAOS ORCHID SHOW RECAP VAOS Display Takes 2nd Place and 26 Ribbons!

Eleven members entered 38 plants for VAOS’s final show of the season, the Englewood Area Orchid Society (EAOS) April 12-13 Orchids By Lemon Bay. With few cattleyas in bloom this time of year, our display consisted primarily of Phalaenopsis, Dendrobiums and Encyclias. Richard Amos and his team created a beautiful



exhibit that took the 2nd place award for Best Exhibit. Ten blue, seven red and nine yellow ribbons and two trophies were awarded by AOS judges as follows:

Harrison Fox - 1 blue  
Ted Kellogg - 2 blue  
Judy Loeffler - 3 red  
Tony Nacinovich - 2 yellow

*Continued on the following page*

## 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. 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.

Here is a list of the vendors and tent numbers:

<http://www.redlandorchidfestival.org/VendorTents2012.pdf> and a map of the park and tent locations: [http://www.redlandorchidfestival.org/Map\\_2012.pdf](http://www.redlandorchidfestival.org/Map_2012.pdf)

**\$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

### **VAOS Spring Home Greenhouse Tour**

This year's Spring Home Greenhouse Tour will take place on Saturday, April 27, 2013 from 9:00 am-1:00 pm.

**Note: We will not be able to visit John Masters as we earlier noted in the flyer at the April VAOS meeting. Please remove that listing from your route.**

However, this is an opportunity to see a variety of ways VAOS members grow their orchids. Please be aware of the need to respect the parking in each neighborhood.

**Growing in a slat house under trees:** Bill & Susan Fender, 411 Golden Beach Blvd, on the island of Venice. Bill & Susan were in the nursery profession, and are now enjoying the life of orchid hobbyists. They are happy to share their knowledge.

#### Travel Directions on Venice Island:

Take Venice Ave going west to Harbor Dr., turn left on Harbor, going south.

Travel 1 mile To Golden Beach Blvd, turn right.

### **EAOS ORCHID SHOW RECAP (continued from the previous page)**

and a blue ribbon and Trophy "Most Outstanding Arts & Crafts" for his photo of Den. Oriental Smile 'Fantasy'

Judy Russell - 1 blue, 1 yellow

Linda Schaller -1 blue, 2 red

Bill Timm - 1 blue, 1 yellow

James Thomas -1 blue, 1 yellow

Cynthia Vance - 2 red

Debi Wolfe - 3 yellow

Carol Wood - 3 blue, 1 yellow and Trophy "Most Outstanding Cattleya Alliance" for Ctna. Charlie Schack

**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!

- Bring your own drinking water, juice, etc. for the bus trip. A variety of drinks are available at the festival site.

- **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)

411 is the 4th house on the left. Park on the street and enter through the side gate.

#### **Great growing tips under a screen cage:**

Ted Kellogg, 895 Clear Lake Dr, Englewood

Ted, Past President of our Venice Area Orchid Society, grows his orchids on an extended lanai with a greenhouse section under the cage, housing his collection of over 600 plants. He's built orchid carts to allow easy movement and protection from the weather.

#### Travel Directions from Venice:

Take Tamiami Trail/US 41S to Englewood Rd/FI 776.

Go 7.2 mi

Turn left on Dearborn St. Go 1 mi.

Turn right on Pine St. Go 0.8 mi.

Take left onto Medical Blvd. Turn in the 1st Stillwater gate on the right. The code to enter is 2894. If there's a problem, call the house on the gate phone (475-7029) Once in, continue on Abercrombie to the end, turn left on Clear Lake until it turns to the left, 895 is on the left on the corner. Cell # 661-2701 if all else fails.

Many thanks to the following individuals who contributed their time and energy into preparing for and putting in a winning exhibit: Richard Amos, Jay and Judy Loefler, Peg and Bill Fahrenback, Jim Thomas, Steve Vogelhaupt, Carol Wood, Linda Schaller and Bill Timm. The team had a wonderful time together creating our display. Our next show will be the Ridge Orchid Show in Lakeland in September 2013, so start staking your orchids now – so they'll be ready to present!

*Article and photo submitted by Carol Wood*



# WHAT A PARTY!

VAOS Mentors and Mentees really know how to party! On Saturday, March 23rd, Carol Wood and her husband Doug hosted a reception for the participants of the Mentor Program in their beautiful home in Venetia. Over 40 Mentors and Mentees attended. While they munched on tea sandwiches, fruit, veggies and desserts, they got acquainted with one another. Sliding doors opened onto a lovely pool deck where we were in awe of Carol's collection of over 450 orchids. Her love birds added to the tropical scene. The perfect weather allowed the party to spill out onto the lanai where folks congregated to enjoy the balmy breezes and scent of blooming orchids.

Peg Fahrenback was honored as the founder and Coordinator of the Mentor Program. She thanked all the Mentor Program participants and shared how she pairs up experienced growers with beginning growers. Most are placed together according to the geographic location of their homes. Mentees participating during the year of 2012 were recognized by receiving a VAOS pin. Mentors were recognized for their important service. Jim Thomas spoke about the importance of the Growers Clinic for beginning growers and we all agreed the Mentor Program and Growers Clinic complement one another perfectly. They combine short term, individualized help (Mentors) with long term assistance at monthly meetings. John Masters strongly commended VAOS for supporting beginning growers. He stated that we are only orchid society on the west coast of Florida that offers both a Mentor Program and Growers Clinic.

We all got acquainted with members whom we had

never met. Some Mentees told me the Mentor Program helped them to feel like they belonged at VAOS. Along with the Growers Clinic, it helped them enjoy their orchids and be successful. These relationships make VAOS stronger. Many newer members are already giving back to VAOS, sharing their knowledge and talents. Jay and Judy Loeffler have been our Membership Chairs since last fall. Janice Felski is our new VP Social Affairs. Sharon Schneider is our new VAOS Librarian, replacing Sybil. Rick Belisle and Sharon Schneider are both working with Past President Ted Kellogg to redesign the VAOS

Website. All were Mentees during 2012. We thank them all for their service.

Mentees are also bringing their orchids to the plant tables and shows. In Feb., 2013, many Mentees received ribbon awards. These included Rick Belisle (1 blue); Cindy Czarnomski (1 blue), Dale and Janet Hoy (1 blue); Jay and Judy Loeffler (2 red); and Debi Wolfe (1 red). We give hearty congratulations to all of these

beginning growers who won ribbons. Congrats also go to their Mentors and to the Growers Clinic. Thanks for your many contributions to VAOS.

It was a gathering to remember. I enjoyed every conversation, and walked away feeling gratified that so many good things are happening at VAOS, thanks to good people. However, there is more to be accomplished. We need experienced growers to become Mentors. Please help others learn basic growing techniques. Contact Peg Fahrenback at [rsec@vaos.org](mailto:rsec@vaos.org).

*Article by Peg Fahrenback,  
Photos by Jacqueline Nesbitt*



## The Orchids of Southeast Asia continued from our previous issue

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.



Nurseries are located in an area along the main road that leads to Cambodia, and the wares are amazing! Bonsai, rock gardens, orchid gardens, and flowering landscape trees are everywhere. The traffic and noise

are horrendous, but tucked away in almost every home's corner is a tree or orchid to brighten a balcony or courtyard. The Mekong Delta provinces and the Central Highlands, particularly the city of Dalat, are also prominent production areas. The Northern provinces bordering China and Laos are pretty much untouched by tourists or development and are the source of many unique and previously presumed extinct species.



Bangkok was the last port of call and we sailed up the Chao Phraya, River of Kings, early in the morning. This is a city of 15 million people, but plants are special to the Thai and orchids were hanging from a few trees along the banks of the river and hotel lobbies burst with blooms. I watched in awe as a new installation of 150 huge dendro-

*Continued on page 7*

## The Orchids of Southeast Asia continued from previous page

biums was made in our hotel lobby, pinned to a massive tower of Oasis. The result was a 10 foot tall pylon of yellow blossoms. I tried to figure the cost of that arrangement here, but got dizzy trying, so just sat and admired it for a while.

While in Bangkok, we took a plane for an overnight to Cambodia and the famous temples at Angkor. Siem Reap, the town that has grown up around the temples, caters solely to tourists, so was full of craft shops and bars. The landscape was parched, brown, and dusty in the dry-season heat, but orchids existed in a few nooks and crannies. The temples in the forest are covered with huge trees, and orchids (I'm afraid to speculate



on species as they were mostly new to me) grew in cracks on carved dancers, faces, warriors and serpents. Again, due to low rainfall, we saw few blossoms in the wild, but the shops were filled with flowers. Our hotel was decorated

with oncidiums and dendrobiums.

Our last overseas stop was during a flight change in Hong Kong and sure enough, the airport shops were loaded with orchids, boxed and ready to take home. Fearing the tense security situation at US Customs, I declined to try and bring in anything live, and just sighed and looked

at all the new species lined up in tiny glass cases, begging for a good home in Sarasota County. My wife, also a good photographer, snapped a few pictures of orchids and they will have to suffice to remind me of the wealth of orchids we saw on our trip.



As an American tourist, I'll admit to having some hang-ups about the noise, the traffic, the overcrowding and the poverty we saw during this trip, but would stress that the people we met were friendly, gracious and welcoming. They, of course, enjoy the tourist dollars but were very interested in our lifestyle and were eager to show us theirs. Their love of flowers amazed me and they spend a good portion of their incomes

on brightening homes and businesses with flowers and pretty things. The crowded conditions preclude growing much in the cities, and the dry season landscapes are not the best for growing orchids and flowers on a large scale. The mountains and rainforest areas, however, provide lush foliage, spectacular views and orchids galore. I wondered for a moment why more people didn't live in the beautiful hills, but then realized that the money is in the cities. Since you can't eat orchids, and can't ride them like the billions of motorbikes jamming the streets, the cities will probably continue to be the fastest growing things in Southeast Asia for a long time.

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

## Message from your President continued from page 1

lighting the history of the clinics and major topics presented recently, such as Plant Diseases and Pests, Orchid Culture 101 for commonly grown orchids, and expert advice from experienced member growers. The recent Hands on Potting Clinics will be discussed as well as the use of a close-up camera to illustrate techniques. The members love it! During the most recent clinic, they saw the ant orchid (*Chiloglottis formicifera*) and were able to see the little hole where ants could come in and out. Secondly,

Barry Rossheim, advisor, and Courtney Kern, president of the Venice High School Zoology Club will present their Celery Fields Conservation Project, which VAOS continues to support. The project, directed by the Sarasota Audubon, is to restore the natural fauna and flora to the area, including micro environments which support native orchids. We're eagerly awaiting the discovery of some of the 100 Florida native orchids in such a "wild area".

## Minutes of the April VAOS Meeting continued from page 2

passengers will be in Sarasota, Venice and Punta Gorda. All checks go to Ali Hicks, Treasurer. Detailed information was in the last newsletter.

Cynthia announced the Englewood Show will be Friday and Saturday, April 12-13. Plant registrations may be emailed to Carol Wood. Printed information sheets about the April 27th Spring Greenhouse Tours were placed on each seat prior to the meeting. Cynthia reported that a replacement is needed for one home on the tour. There was a last minute cancellation.

Jim Thomas introduced our speaker Michael Polen, owner of Art Stone Orchids. Jim said "Michael is one

of our great Show vendors; he has high quality plants at reasonable prices." Jim added that Michael even made a special trip to pick-up supply items for use at the Growers Clinic next week. He presented a dynamite demonstration of potting orchids without pots, using a variety of wood, cork and tree fern mounts. Michael had orchids and numerous mounting supplies for sale, including wood baskets produced by high school students.

Plant Table awards were given and the meeting was adjourned after the Raffle.

*Respectfully submitted by Peg Fahrenback*

# Venice Area Orchid Society News

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

## Next Meeting:

Wednesday, May 1, 7:00pm

- **Speakers:** VHS Zoology Club and Jimmy Thomas, Carol Wood, Richard Amos
- **Topics:** "Celery Fields Conservation Project"; "Growers Clinic Live"
- Show table entries welcome (guidelines on p4)
- Bring Plants for the Raffle Table
- Bring treats to share

## Upcoming Events

### April 27, 2013: (Saturday)

Spring Home Greenhouse Tours, 9am to 1pm. See the variety of ways VAOS members grow their orchids. Please be aware of the need to respect the parking in each neighborhood. See Newsletter article for details.

### May 1, 2013:

VAOS monthly meeting, 7pm. Venice Community Center, 326 S. Nokomis Ave., Venice, FL Speakers: James Thomas, Carol Wood and Richard Amos. Topic: Growers Clinic Live. Venice High School Zoology Club students will also do a short presenta-

tion on their Celery Fields Conservation Project which VAOS supports.

### May 9, 13, 2013: (Thursday)

Growers Clinic, 7pm, Venice Community Center. Presenter: Jim Thomas and Carol Wood. Topic: "Diseases and Pests - How to Prevent and Manage them" with open Q & A. Bring your problem plants for expert help.

### Ongoing:

Mentor Program: help for beginning growers, contact Peg Fahrenback, 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/>

### Orchid Hybrid Trivia from the AOS Website

The total number of grex names in the register is currently 154,660. This figure increases daily. Each year The International Orchid Register adds between 3000-4000 new hybrids.

The most popular genera for hybrids are:

Phalaenopsis — 31,382  
Paphiopedilum — 23,871  
Cymbidium — 14,688  
Dendrobiums — 11,910

So far there are about 2,349 hybrid generic names, but not all of these are in use. There are about 5,600 species involved in hybridization.

### Patronize Our Local Growers

- Honey Bee Nursery (941-474-6866)
  - Jeff Higel2383 Englewood Road (Rt. 776)  
Englewood
- Plantio La Orquidea (941-504-7737)
  - Tina & Rafael Romero3480 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.





**St. Augustine Orchid Society**

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## **Orchid Potting Mixes**

by Sue Bottom, sbottom15@bellsouth.net

Selecting the potting mix that is right for you and your orchid depends on so many variables, the amount of free time you can dedicate to your orchids, whether you are growing outdoors or under cover and the orchid's growth preferences.



*Organic vs. Inorganic Potting Materials.* Organic potting materials like sphagnum moss, coconut husk, bark and, to a lesser extent tree fern, can be useful in a mix to increase the amount of water that is retained in a potting mix, as well as provide some pH buffering and hold nutrients to be absorbed later by the plant. If your time is very limited, organic materials may reduce the frequency with which your orchids must be watered. One of the major negatives of organic potting materials is that they will degrade, within a year for premium grade sphagnum and maybe two years for most coconut husk and bark. When your mix degrades, it is rotting and will cause the roots in the potting mix to rot too so you will have to repot more frequently, perhaps every year or two. Inert potting materials like charcoal, stalite, lava rock, clay pebbles (hydroton, aliflor) and to a lesser extent spongerok retain less moisture but they do not biodegrade (though they can accumulate salts). This means you will be watering more frequently but not having to repot your plant until it becomes unstable in the pot, perhaps every 3 or 4 years.

*Growing Outdoors or Under Cover.* The winter and summer homes for your orchids also play into the decision about which potting mix to use. In the winter, if you move your orchids indoors, watering can be difficult so you might be inclined to use a more water retentive mix. In the summer, if you grow outdoors and cannot control the amount of rain your orchid receives, you may worry about extended wet periods during the tropical storm season and be inclined to use a more freely draining mix. If your orchids are grown under cover and you control the amount of water they receive, you can match your mix to your watering habits.

*Your Orchid's Preference.* Different types of orchids have their own preferences as to how much water they like and how intolerant of root disturbance they are. Phalaenopsis can only store moisture in their thick leaves and roots so your tendency would be to use a more water retentive mix. Some orchids simply resent being repotting, like dendrobiums, so your tendency would be to use an inert potting mix.

I use several different potting mixes for different types of orchids. Within a given group, I like them all to be potted in the same material so I can water each group of orchids at the same time. All the cattleyas are in the same mix, all the phalaenopsis are in the same mix,



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etc. Here's a description of the different mixes I use, what orchids I pot in these mixes and why.

**Coarse, Freely Draining Mix.** This mix contains roughly 2 parts clay pebbles, 2 parts sponge rok, 1 part charcoal and 1 part tree fern (tree fern redwood bark is no longer available). This mix is primarily inorganic and the tree fern does not retain much water. During the summer growing season it can be watered every day or three without waterlogging your plants. Even during the tropical storm season, when it may rain 7 days in a row, the mix does not become sour. Cattleyas and dendrobiums thrive in this mix because they can be watered heavily during the growing season and the mix is porous enough for air to surround the roots. You can grow for 3 or 4 years in this mix without having to repot and waiting for the plant to recover from transplant shock, so you'll get more flowers.



Other orchids that resent repotting, like angraecums and psychopsis, also thrive in this mix.

**Coco Mix.** This mix contains roughly 2 parts clay pebbles, 2 parts spongerok, 1 part charcoal and 2 parts presoaked coconut husk (3-24 hour water flushes to remove salt). This mix has a higher organic content and tends to retain some water. During the summer growing season it can be watered every three to seven days, but you will have to protect your plants during the tropical storm season when it rains 7 days in a row, because the mix will become waterlogged. Oncidiums do well in this mix because they tend to like to be more moist than cattleyas or dendrobiums.



**Sphagnum Moss.** Sphagnum moss is a very water retentive mix that orchid growers either love or hate. The haters say the moss stays too wet and their roots rot, the lovers have probably learned to delay watering until the moss approaches dryness.



Sphagnum moss comes in several grades. I have stopped buying the Premium grade because it degrades in less than a year. The AAA grade is much more expensive but will last for at least 2 years, the AAAAA grade is even more expensive but also has more longevity. Sphagnum can be mixed with spongerok, charcoal or other inerts to increase porosity. I use AAA sphagnum on my catasetums, which are repotted annually. Stanhopeas and gongoras are potted in sphagnum in baskets. When the moss in baskets starts to degrade, I water jet the old moss away from the roots and replace it with fresh moss.

Zygopetalums, that tend to like cooler conditions than we can offer, grow very well in sphagnum in a clay pot because the porous clay wicks moisture away from the sphagnum



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and cools the pots providing some relief from the heat. If plants have lost their roots, I put them in a small pot with sphagnum moss to encourage root growth and then repot them after 6 months or so into the mix of choice.



**Soiless Mix.** This mix contains 1 part Promix HP (a sphagnum based peat that is finely milled and mixed with perlite) and 1 part spongerok. This mix tends to be long lasting and water retentive, but not nearly as water retentive as sphagnum moss. All my phalaenopsis are in this mix and growing incredibly well with great root growth. My only complaint is that some of the mix washes out of the pot after watering, so this year I will top dress the pots with a layer of sphagnum to hold the mix in place. Using this mix rather than sphagnum moss or coco mix may obviate the need for annual repotting of the phals so they will be

repotted only when they have lost bottom leaves and become top heavy, probably every two years. This mix works well for terrestrials too like phaius and ludisia.

**Paphiopedilum Mix.** The paph mix is 5 parts fine bark, 3 parts spongerok, 1 part fine charcoal and 1 part Promix HP. This fine mix is used for paphs in 4 inch and smaller pots. For paphs in larger pots, I'll replace half of the fine grade bark and charcoal with medium grade. The quality of bark has decreased over the years so I use a New Zealand Pinus bark. Paphs are repotted every second year after blooming.



You can grow just about any orchid in just about any mix or no mix at all if you adjust your watering habits to match the orchid and its growing conditions. If you were to plant all your orchids in the coarse, freely draining mix, they would do fine as long as you adjusted your watering habits to match your orchids. You might have to water some daily and some every second or third day during the growing season. I tend to water all my orchids at the same time (except the phals may only be watered every second or third time) so the different mixes work for me. You will have to experiment to discover the mix or mixes that will work for you, your orchids and your growing conditions.

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