

# Venice Area Orchid Society News

May 2015

**Next Meeting: Wednesday  
May 6th at 7:00 p.m.  
Doors open at 6:30 p.m.**

**Speaker:** Dr. Antonio Toscano de Brito

**Topic:** New Discoveries in the Highlands of Brazil

We're fortunate to have Dr. Toscano de Brito return and share the latest in his world travels searching for new orchids and studying how they create new species in response to diverse environments. For our newer members, Dr. Toscano received his PhD. from the Royal Botanical



Gardens at Kew, lectured at Harvard University, and participated in the Global Plants Initiative. He continues to be active at the Marie Selby Gardens in Sarasota where he heads the Selby DNA Monitoring Unit and frequently travels to Brazil where he is a "Special Visiting Researcher" at Parana University.

He is the world's leading expert on the more than 4,000 species of Pleurothallids, mainly found in South and Central America. His lively presentation will be illustrated with many photographs from his friend and co-worker,

## A Message From Your President

In just 3 short years, since moving here full time, I have learned a lot about orchids and people growing orchids. It's a toss-up as to which is more interesting. There are over 27,000 species of orchids known and possibly as many types



of growers, but one thing that I am sure of is that we have the very nicest types of people in our group right here in Venice! Everyone has been friendly, motivated, curious and gregarious, which has made being a member enjoyable and fulfilling.

So now I'm the acting president, following John Masters, who had to step down to take care of family and business demands. It's fortunate for me that our schedule is getting a bit less hectic as we go into the hot summer months, when many of our members head north for cooler growing conditions. We just had our annual picnic at Caspersen Park and the Home Tour, but the Redland Bus Trip still awaits on May 16th! Our May 6th meeting will feature Dr. Antonio Toscano de Brito, from Marie Selby Gardens, who will show us some new species from Brazil and "Dr." Jimmy Thomas will continue his series on re-potting on the 14th. So there is plenty to do and see in the coming days.

The weather may be hot, your ventilator fans will be blowing and your garden hose will be spraying, but

*Continued on page 4*

Dr. Wade Collier, who accompanied him on his most recent trip and who also volunteers at Selby. Dr. Collier will provide tips on orchid photography in challenging environments. Following the presentation, Dr. Toscano will entertain questions from the audience and perhaps share a favorite recipe or two from his time in Brazil as owner/chef of the "Orchidarium", a Brazilian/Portuguese restaurant.

Orchid Envy, one of our local supporters and vendors, located on Venice Avenue in downtown Venice, will have an assortment of quality orchids for sale.

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

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

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#### **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 1st, 2015 Meeting

Vice President Bruce Weaver called the meeting to order. He announced that due to many personal and professional obligations, John Masters has offered his resignation as president of the orchid society. Bruce will serve as acting president in addition to serving as VP, Programs, until another president is elected.

Sharon Kahnoski reported on several social events:

1. The beach party at Caspersen was a big success. The weather was perfect and many members enjoyed the delicious food offerings. The members of this society know how to cook!

2. The Spring Home Tours are coming up on April 11; she encouraged members to check the last newsletter for details. These house tours have been very fun and successful in the past.

3. There will be a bus trip to the Redland International Orchid Festival on May 16th. This is one of the biggest orchid festivals in the country. There are 49 spots available and 35 signed up so far. Last year was a great trip! The price is \$35.

Dr. Jimmy Thomas announced that the very next Growers Clinic, on April 8, will cover dividing plants, making pot clips and stakes. A hands-on potting clinic will follow on May 13. This is always a popular fun event.

Bruce took the podium again and announced that we have partnered with the Venice Area Beautification Inc. (VABI) in helping the city of Venice participate in the America in Bloom competition. The city participated last year, and scored four out of a total of five "blooms".

*Continued on page 5*

### **Treasurer's Report**

April 2015

#### **Checking Account**

Starting Balance	
3/1/2015 .....	\$ 25,486.84
+ Income .....	\$ 1,234.00
Payments .....	\$ 3,796.02
Closing Balance	
3/31/15 .....	\$ 22,924.82

#### **Cash Account**

Starting Balance	
3/1/15 .....	\$ 40.00
Closing Balance	
3/31/15 .....	\$ 40.00

#### **Money Market Savings**

Starting Balance	
3/1/15 .....	\$ 25,044.54
+ Income .....	\$ 0.85
Closing Balance	
3/31/15 .....	\$ 25,043.39

#### **Total Assets**

3/31/15 .....	\$ 48,010.21
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*Submitted by Mary Amos*

### **Support Our 2015 Show Sponsors**

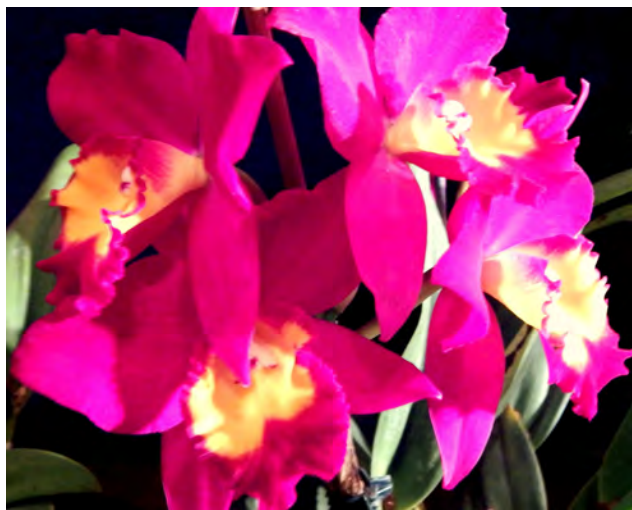
Please support our show sponsors whose financial contributions are especially appreciated.

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- Bay Village
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- Englewood Bank
- Orchid Envy



## Plant Table Awards April 1, 2015

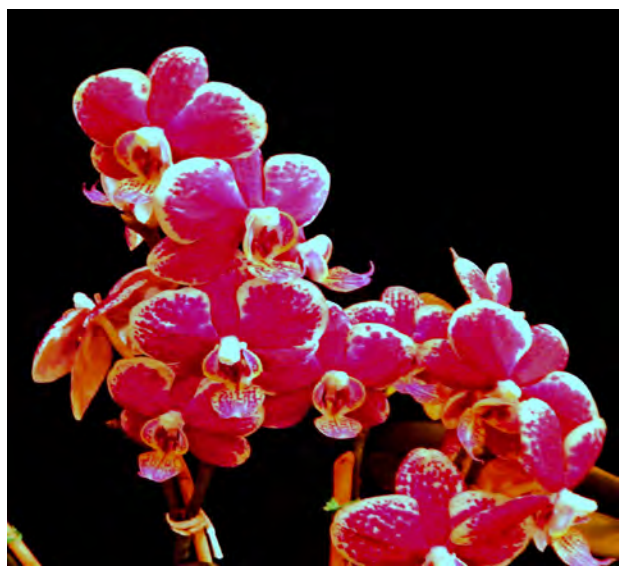
The **First Place** award went to Richard Amos for *Ryncho-laeliocattleya* Hawaiian Prominence 'America'. Its beauty



*Rlc. Hawaiian Prominence*

is due to its sharp well defined colors. It was meristemmed and widely distributed under several different clonal names but they are all fairly similar. Beautiful job, Richard!

The **Second Place** award went to Marilyn Kilbride for *Phalaenopsis* Miva Mini King 'Montclair'. Her beautiful



*Phal. Miva Mini King*

phalaenopsis looked like 2 plants in the same pot with an impressive number of bloom spikes. It was nicely grown with healthy looking leaves. Kudos to Marilyn for her happy looking plant!

**Third Place** went to Judy Russell for Paph. Supersuk 'Eureka' AM/AOS x Paph. Raisin Pie 'Hsinying'. Typically with paphiopedilums, you only see one flower open



*Paph. Supersuk x Paph. Raisin Pie*

at a time but this one was nicely grown with two lovely open flowers. Many of us have difficulty growing paphs, so we're glad that Judy showed us that it IS possible in our climate if we take special care to keep them moist. Thanks, Judy!

The **Best Species** and **Speakers Choice** awards went to Ted Kellogg for his *Leptotes bicolor*, a plant he's had for 7-8 years. The plant is a 4N, meaning double the normal



*Lpt. bicolorce*

number of chromosomes. He finds the flowers might be a little fewer but they last longer and these have been open 3-4 weeks. He said he grows it like a Catt. This species was first discovered in the Organ Mountains near Rio. A stunning specimen, Ted!

The **New Member** award went to Anne Kiley for *Cattleya* New Dawning 'Flowers Galore' – a huge white cattleya

*Continued on next page*

## Plant Table Awards April 1st, 2015 (continued from previous page)



C. New Dawning

covered in blooms. She has had it since 2012 but it has never put out this many blooms for her. Ann attributes the improvement to moving to Florida! Glad you joined VAOS, Ann, and thanks for bringing in your spectacular plant!

**Members Choice** went to Renee Bynum for her gigantic specimen of *Maxillariella tenuifolia*. It filled the room with its coconut fragrance and she states her back yard now smells like a beach with suntan lotion! She told the group she “grows it wrong” because she keeps it moist

and shaded in the summer and dry and sunny during the winter. Whatever works, Renee . . . Congrats!



Mxl. tenuifolia

### Editor's Note:

An excellent article describing the process of meristemming was provided by Cynthia Vance and is published in this month's culture supplement of the newsletter.

-Narrative by Cynthia Vance  
and photos by Steve Vogelhaupt

## Hands-on Potting Clinic on Thursday, May 14th, 2015

Dr. Jimmy will present another hands-on session on May 14 (**second Thursday**), at the **Venice Community Center at 7:00 pm**. He'll explain the supplies, tools, and planting media, demonstrate basic procedures and share his tips of the trade. Participants will then repot their own orchids with the assistance of several experienced growers and helpers. We'll work in teams of 4 to 5 around a table with each person bringing an orchid that needs repotting as well as a suitable pot to replant the orchid and a sterile pair of shears.

With only two hours available and a large turnout expected, it's critical that everyone adhere to the instructions below:

1. Only one plant per person. **All plants must be removed from their pots and all old planting media must be removed prior to the clinic**. Plants should be divided prior to the clinic as only limited assistance will be avail-

able. Please make sure your plant is free from pests and diseases.

2. Media and supplies for Phalaenopsis, Cattleya alliance, and Dendrobium plants will be provided. Please contact Jimmy if you are planning to bring other plants. This is not a Potting without Pots or mounting clinic.

3. If you are a novice and don't have a plant ready to repot, please contact Jimmy at [pis2ces4@verizon.net](mailto:pis2ces4@verizon.net) not later than Monday, May 11 so he can bring a suitable plant and pot for use during the clinic.

Please note that there will **not** be a Tailgate Party before the clinic. Watch your newsletters for the resumption in the fall.

-Submitted by Jimmy Thomas

## A Message From Your President (continued from page 1)

you will be rewarded with beautiful blooms and new growth in your garden. We just started planting orchids in Blalock Park, right next to the Community Center, as part of the 'Venice in Bloom' competition. Win or lose, we will still have our orchids there for all to see in the com-

ing years. Read about this new program and much more in the following articles and be a part of our activities. I'm so happy to be a part of all that this Society can offer, helping you get more from your orchids and keeping the fun in flowers and fellowship. Happy May!!



## What Is the VAOS Mentor Program?

The VAOS Mentor Program was introduced a few years ago to assist beginner growers in learning basic orchid growing skills such as watering, potting, sun exposure, pest control and fertilization.

This program was brought to life by our own Peg Fahrenback, who developed the program and recruited mentors from areas that would be close to where the new mentees live. This idea blossomed to help new growers see what others did for growing their orchids and allowed mentors to see how the new growers were growing orchids.

I personally have to say if it were not for this program, my wife, Judy, and I, might not be a part of VAOS. We were at the annual show four years ago and met Jimmy Thomas, one of Peg's mentors. As I have said before, I would go with Judy for one meeting so she did not walk in alone (I'm a nice Guy like that. .lol).

The program Peg put together caught our attention and gave us a bit of confidence to grow orchids. Honestly, Judy has become much better at growing orchids than I have but that's due to natural talent. But what this program did do was introduce us to a group of people who seemed to fit into our lives at a perfect time.

I am not sure if Peg intended for this program to create friendships that would last over time, but that is exactly what happened during our time in the program. Within a few months, we took over as Membership Directors and found more than 300 new friends of orchids.

I am writing this article not so much about us, but more

about what Peg started a few years back that has snow-balled to Very Strong Part of VAOS. I am very sure you will find many other stories much like ours in VAOS, all because Peg put together a program that went much farther than even she could have imagined.

Peg has turned this program over to another wonderful and capable person. Pauline Adam is now the leader of this successful and innovative program and continues to match mentors and mentees for better growing experiences. Pauline is always looking for members to volunteer as mentors. New members are urged to attend a few of our monthly Growers Clinics before contacting Pauline.

Peg also stayed involved with VAOS during this time as our recording secretary, taking the minutes for the Board Meetings along with our monthly meetings. Our monthly minutes are one of the best resources to review where VAOS has taken us on our orchid journey.

Peg's term on the Board ended in March with her replacement by Joanna Shaw, another very competent person who will do a wonderful job. As Peg has finished her position on the board, I am very sure she will stay active in VAOS. As our Display team knows her as "MRS. MOSS", she will be a part of our team along with her husband, Bill, for quite some time.

On behalf of all VAOS members, mentors and mentees I would like to offer a Special Thank You to a Very Special Person .... PEG FAHRENBACK

*-Submitted by Jay Loeffler*

## Minutes of the April 1st, 2015 Meeting (continued from page 2)

One potential area for improvement was the level of community involvement and the VAOS can really make a big contribution here. Jay Loeffler is heading up this project. If you have any donations in the form of native or Florida friendly orchids, please bring them to the next Growers Clinic. If you would like to be involved in planting, please speak to Jay. Bruce also thanked Palmer Orchids for donating many plants to this project.

Bruce then drew the group's attention to the beautiful Gold Certificate AOS trophy won by our display team at the Englewood show. This was Rich Amos' last official display and one of his all-time best. Because of the great color flow and design, one of the judges commented that "it is as close to perfect as I have seen". Rich will now hand over the reins to Jay Loeffler. Bruce noted that over the last few years, Rich has brought many awards to the society and he thanked him. Rich himself spoke briefly and thanked his great display team. He had them all stand for a round of applause.

Mary Anne DiGrazia, president of the Englewood Area Orchid Society, invited all of the Venice members to the next Englewood meeting on April 13. Our own Dr. Jimmy Thomas will be the speaker and will talk about

key things he has learned in his many years of orchid growing.

Lastly, Bruce introduced our speaker for the evening, Guillermo Salazar. Guillermo gave a terrific presentation on the Stanhopea genus, an unusual group of plants producing very intricate and elegant flowers. This was a rare opportunity to hear an in-depth presentation on a new orchid category for many of us. Afterwards, he answered questions and had many exotic and unusual plants for sale.

After the presentation, Ted Kellogg presented the ribbon winners from the Plant Table and the meeting was adjourned after the Raffle.

*-Respectfully submitted by Joanna Shaw,  
Recording Secretary*



## Venice Orchid Project Getting Established

Over one hundred years ago, South Florida was an orchid paradise. Many orchids covered the branches of oak trees in the areas of South Florida. Early settlers marveled at the intense beauty and fragrance during the springtime orchid flowering season.

In the late 1800s, when the East Coast Railroad extended southward, orchids were among the first natural resources to be exploited. Millions of flowering orchids were ripped from the trees and packed into railroad cars, only to be sold as disposable potted plants in northern flower shops. Our orchid populations dwindled rapidly to devastatingly low levels. Urban growth and agriculture further eliminated most remaining orchid habitat.

VAOS is leading an orchid beautification and conservation project in the city of Venice. We have partnered with Venice Area Beautification and volunteers to plant orchids in trees in downtown Venice, city parks, and surrounding areas.

Blalock Park, behind the Venice Community Center, has been the first recipient of orchids being placed in the trees canopy. One early Sunday morning, Bruce Weaver, along with Ed Wucher, spent hours climbing ladders and mounting 24 orchids around the park. Also planted were terrestrial orchids in an island in the center of the park.



This orchid project got started with the donations of orchids from Matt Rinder, John Roche, Rick Belisle, Jimmy Thomas, Geoff/Bonnie Aldridge and Linda Shaller. Many thanks are offered to them as they were the first to donate for this project. The collection of orchids from

these members includes Encyclia, Cattleya, Schomburgkia, Cymbidium and Epidendrum radicans. As Venice has over 6000 trees within its many parks, we are hopeful of additional orchid donations from our members as well as volunteers to serve on committees and projects. Please contact Jay Loeffler at [disp@vaos.org](mailto:disp@vaos.org) if you can help. Our local vendors have always supported our society and we will also be looking to them for additional plants.

As you enter the park on the northeast corner, you will walk through the Monty Andrews Arboretum. Follow the path and on the right side you will see the "Turtle" picnic area (a big turtle statue on the ground). Up in the oak tree you will see our first orchids. Walk down the path a bit more and on your left you will see the "Island" of native plants, including some of our orchids. Next stop down the path would be the Gazebo, where a few orchids were placed in the trees. It is a short walk back to the southwest corner to the "Panther" area. Look around in the trees to find more of our mounted orchids. The last leg of your "Orchid Walk" will lead you to the "Manatee" area of the park and last but not least, up in the trees are more orchids.



Even as we placed the orchids up in the trees, people walking by would comment on what we were doing. We explained the project and it seemed to be well received by all. As this is a very popular park with many people walking through, this project will give just a bit more for everyone to enjoy.

*-narrative and photos submitted by Jay Loeffler*

### Patronize Our Local Growers

- **Honey Bee Nursery** (941-474-6866)  
2383 Englewood Road (Rt. 776), Englewood, FL
- **Palmer Orchids** (941-322-1644)  
22700 Taylor Dr., Myakka City, FL 34251
- **Plantio La Orquidea** (941-504-7737)  
3480 Tallevast Rd, Sarasota

- **Florida SunCoast Orchids** (941-322-8777)  
8211 Verna Bethany Rd., Myakka City, FL
- **Orchid Envy** (941) 266-6351  
339 Venice Ave. West, Venice, FL

## 2015 Spring Home Tour

If you listened to some of the comments from the many members who toured the featured growing areas last Saturday, you'll be regretting a missed opportunity. Fortunately, we're planning a Fall Home Tour later in the year so be sure to watch the newsletter for dates and details.

Debi Wolfe had her pool cage area filled with beautiful flowering plants as well as many items for sale. Hopefully, you were there in time to purchase some very nice plants. There were even a couple bids on great ones in bloom but Debi would not part with them. She is downsizing her collection as she's in the process of moving.

Helene Gabry's home was another treat and her son guided us along the path for the best views. She and her husband bought this home in 1997 and proceeded to remodel the inside and start to build the landscaping. While on our walk down the path around the house, we saw many different types of foliage with orchids hanging in the trees and sitting on benches or on the ground. Pottery was scattered through out, and along the canal

many Epi. radicans were in bloom.

Peg & Bill Fahrenback's display of orchids took your breath away. The way they were artfully arranged around their pool cage, on tables, and hanging on special racks that Bill designed, kept everyone looking from one area to another. Outside the pool cage were many beautiful varieties of well-arranged plants of many colors. There were even orchids growing in the trees outside the pool area.

Once again, we owe a Special Thanks to our three members for being so generous and allowing us to see how they grow their beautiful orchids.

**REMINDER:** Our bus trip to the Redland International Orchid Festival is on Saturday, May 16th. The deadline for reservations and payment is Friday, May 8th. Seats are limited and filling quickly. Details are in the April newsletter and in the culture supplement of this newsletter.

*-Submitted by Sharon Kahnoski*

### Dr. Jimmy's Culture Tip for May 2015

The worst insect pest we have on our orchids is Scale. They hide under sheaths and leaves and suck the life out of our plants. One of the first things they do is destroy is the eyes of our orchids at the base of the pseudobulbs; so no more growth. Look for yellow spots on the top of the leaf and then look under the leaf. Be sure to check all plants around the infected plant each time. Spray the entire plant with a mixture of 1 table spoon of Dawn clear dish washing soap in 1 gal. of water. Some like to add 1 table spoon of rubbing alcohol to the mix. Recheck the plant and spray in 4 days and again in another 4 days. Use an old tooth brush to remove the old dead scale. Check the plant again in 4 days. The immature scale looks like small white spots that could clump together or be separate. The immature scale can move around and the adult stage cannot. That is why you need to recheck the plant to see if any was missed. If no signs, Yea!! Both the AOS and St. Augustine Orchid Society websites have excellent photos that will help with identification.

Come to the monthly Growers Clinic held at the VCC every second Thursday, at 7:00 p.m. for great orchid growing topics and tips presented by our panel of experts. Bring your questions and problem plants





# Venice Area Orchid Society News

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

## Next Meeting:

**Wednesday, May 6th, 7:00pm**  
**at Venice Community Center**  
**(Doors open at 6:30pm)**

• **Speaker:** Dr. Antonio Toscano de Brito  
**Topic:** "New Discoveries in the Highlands of Brazil"

• Show table entries welcome  
• Bring plants for the Raffle Table

• **Members whose last name begins with K or L**  
**should bring treats to share.**

Refreshments from other members are always welcome.

## Upcoming Events

**May 6 (1st Wednesday):** VAOS monthly meeting. Doors open at 6:30pm, meeting starts at 7:00pm. Venice Community Center, Speaker: Dr. Antonio Toscano, Topic: "New Finds in Brazil" and "Tips for Photography in the Wild." Orchid Envy will have some of their beautiful orchids for sale.

**May 14 (2nd Thursday):** VAOS Growers Clinic, 7:00pm, Venice Community Center, Speaker: Jimmy Thomas, Topic: "Hands-on Potting Clinic", see page 4 for details. Bring your problem plants for advice from Dr. Jimmy's panel of experts.

**May 16 (Saturday):** Redland International Orchid Festival Bus Trip. Sign up early as space is limited. Sign-up deadline: Friday, May 8. See the April newsletter or the

culture supplement section for details.

**June 3, (1st Wednesday):** VAOS monthly meeting. Doors open at 6:30pm. Meeting starts at 7:00pm. Venice Community Center, Speaker: Vern Bloch, Topic: "Encyclias and Epis". One of our local vendors will have a great selection of orchids for sale.

**June 11, (2nd Thursday):** VAOS Growers Clinic, Speaker: Jimmy Thomas, Topic: "Pests You Love To Hate". Bring your questions and problem plants for expert advice.

### Ongoing

Mentor Program: help for beginning growers, contact Pauline Adam,  
[Mentor@vaos.org](mailto:Mentor@vaos.org)

Orchid Judging takes place at **Christ the King Catholic Church, Mc-Loughlin 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/>

### V.A.O.S. On FaceBook



**"Join Us" and Share  
your Orchid Photos  
Search for us as  
"VeniceArea OrchidSociety"**



## **Bus Trip to Redland International Orchid Festival, Saturday, May 16, 2015**

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, we will give you tips on which orchids to purchase that thrive in our area and 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 \$25 or more! **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 all 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 8th;** no refunds after May 8th. You may sell your seat, but please notify Sharon Kahnoski @ 616-581-9131 if you do.
  - Make \$35 check payable to VAOS and mail to Mary Amos, 413 East Lake Drive, Sarasota, FL, 34232
  - **On check write:** *Redland trip - Pick up: \_\_\_\_\_* (write Sarasota, Venice or Punta Gorda)
  - Seating is limited, so send your check early
- Need more info? Contact Sharon Kahnoski by phone or visit [www.redlandorchidfestival.org](http://www.redlandorchidfestival.org)

## Meristem Propagation of Orchids

(<http://www.orchid-care-tips.com/meristem.html>)

Meristem propagation is a laboratory technique to mass-produce clones of a particular orchid cultivar. Commercial orchid breeders often want to produce numerous copies of a particularly beautiful plant, so they use this technique. An apical meristem, or growth tip, is cut out of a new growth on the orchid. (They just want the lump of undifferentiated, rapidly-dividing cells.) It's then put onto agar or a similar in a manner similar to orchid seed propagation and the flask containing the plant tissue is typically agitated, such as by putting it into a machine that constantly shakes it. The tissue is periodically divided, so that it never forms a large enough protocorm that the tissue differentiates and develops into a plant. After splitting the cloned tissue many times, eventually the numerous protocorms are allowed to grow and mature.

If you see a plant for sale that is a named, awarded cultivar, odds are it was propagated this way, rather than being a division or keiki of the awarded plant. Mutations occasionally occur during the propagation process, but are relatively rare; if you see a plant of, say, Onc. Sharry Baby 'Sweet Fragrance' AM/AOS, it will almost certainly look (and smell) like the original.

This is usually not a method of orchid propagation used by hobbyists; it's mostly for commercial growers. Besides, do you really want your plant's growth tip removed? If the plant doesn't die in the process, its growth will at least be slowed down! Of course, if one of your plants receives an award from an organization like the American Orchid Society and someone approaches you wanting to buy the right to put it under the scalpel... **think how many other orchids you could buy with a few thousand dollars!**

*Submitted by Cynthia Vance*

## The Importance of Light in Orchid Flowering

Last month, I was fortunate enough to view a scheduled AOS Webinar, titled: Greenhouse Chat by Ron McHatton, AOS Director of Education. As is always the case, Ron was both informative and entertaining as he touched on many topics of interest to both novice and expert growers.

At the conclusion, Ron answered a number of questions from the webinar audience. By the time I had organized my thoughts and formulated my question, the program was over. This series of emails, almost verbatim, summarize my concern and Ron's response and Ron has graciously given permission for publication in our newsletter.

*I wrote:*

You stated that if orchids, cattleyas in my case, look and are otherwise healthy, yet produce no sheaths, the most likely culprit is insufficient light. How about if the cattleyas consistently only produce empty sheaths which eventually shrivel and dry without any buds inside? I have a number of blooming size hybrids that are way overdue for flower production.

*Ron replied:*

Blind sheaths - sheaths that form but never produce buds - can be the result of typically three factors. One of them could be insufficient light. If your other cats are flowering normally it is not likely insufficient light unless they are yellow-flowered. Yellow-flowered hybrids typically need more light than the other colors and will, if just on the edge of enough, produce sheaths but no buds. This is also seen in winter and spring blooming hybrids where the plants may be getting nearly enough light but not enough to put them over.

If it's not light, the other two factors are day length and temperature. Some hybrids, especially the spring blooming ones, are quite dependent on day length (specifically days getting longer). This dependence was the basis of a huge cut-flower cattleya industry when growers figured out that they could time the flowering of *Cattleya mossiae* and  *trianae*  hybrids by controlling day length. If you are growing under lights, you may need to vary the length of time the lights are on to initiate flowering. I just dealt with a case where a grower in a tropical climate had mounted his cats under the parking lot lights at his resort. They never flower. Sheaths galore but the lights are on from sun down to sun up.

The third factor is usually the least important but the difference between night and day temperature can, in some species and hybrids, be very important. Typically cattleyas need at least a 10F difference.



Beyond these factors there are other less common issues. Some cattleyas, especially those with a lot of *C. dowiana* in the background, need a drier winter rest to set flower buds.

The best way to approach this is to determine if your blind sheaths are seasonal.

*I replied:*

Thank you very much. Your mention of the yellow hybrids was a real eye opener for me. I only had one yellow hybrid bloom since last spring when I had part of the screen roof on our lanai replaced with no-seeum proof screening. The one that did bloom only had one mediocre blossom when it usually has four or five.

I've moved one of my stands out of the lanai and am sure I'll see a big difference. I'm making sure the transition to the stronger sunlight is gradual.

*Ron replied:*

This issue of light is so common. When I first moved to Florida, I gave beginning grower talks at the Home Depots around the state. At one, I had this lady ask why her vandas no longer flowered. The key to that question was "no longer." She had had an arbor built for them and the first year the flowering was almost constant. Then to soften the appearance of the arbor she had a vine planted and allowed it to grow up over it. You know what's coming. As the vine covered the arbor, fewer and fewer of her vandas flowered until, at the time she asked the question, only those on the very south and west edges ever flowered.

Trees in the landscaping can cause the same problem unless periodically pruned to allow more light into the understory and even fiberglass panels can change color over time, filtering out some of the light spectrum required for flowering.

*Submitted by Steve Vogelhaupt*

*Editor's note:* The AOS website is a tremendous resource for beginning and expert growers alike and much of the material is available to members and non-members. I try to watch all of the webinars, some of which require AOS membership, and subscribe to the digital edition of Orchids-the Bulletin of the American Orchid Society. AOS membership has many benefits, outlined on their website, and I urge everyone to consider becoming a member.