

Venice Area Orchid Society News

June 2015

**Next Meeting: Wednesday
June 3rd at 7:00 p.m.
Doors open at 6:30 p.m.**

Speaker: Vern Bloch

Topic: Encyclias and Epidendrums

Vern Bloch is a retired Navy pilot who first became interested in orchids after leaving the service in 1987. Two years later, Vern, and his wife, Helen, became owners of the Palm Bay Orchid Range and participated in many orchid shows around the state. They sold the nursery in 2004 but continue to do business on a small scale. For the past twenty years, Vern has conducted programs for numerous orchid societies ranging from the Florida Keys to North Carolina.



Vern's main interest has always been in the cattleya alliance and his presentation will focus on the Epidendrums, Encyclias and Prothecheas genera. Many orchids were originally misclassified as Epidendrums and Vern will show you how to differentiate between them and provide culture tips on how to grow them here in Florida. All are members of the cattleya family and their hybrids, Epicatts, have become very popular in recent years. They are easy to grow in Florida, providing us with a wide range of colors and shapes.

Vern will be happy to answer questions and will have an assortment of fine species and some Epicatts for sale.

5th Annual Cattleya Symposium

Odom's Orchids, Inc. has invited our members to join them for their very special 5th Annual Cattleya Symposium. The symposium will be held on Friday and Saturday, August 7-8 at the Indian River Research and Education Center in Ft. Pierce, FL from 8 am – 5 pm. The check-in date for our host and participating hotels is Thursday, August 6, starting at 3 pm.

The event will include an amazing lineup of eight

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A Message From Your President

Two months on the job and overwhelmed already! The life of an orchid fancier is never dull and this month's America In Bloom competition has made it even busier. Several of our members spent a lot of hours hanging orchids in the trees around Venice city parks. Blalock Park, the site of the Monty Andrews Arboretum, got the most plants hung as well as several terrestrials planted in the ground. We are well on our way to having a garden area totally devoted to orchids, complete with irrigation and signage. The trees in Heritage, Centennial, Biehl and Blalock Park should be alive with blooms in coming years if the squirrels don't eat them all. It seems those cute little rodents like Encyclia bulbs almost as much as peanuts!



The Venice Orchid Project is the basis for all of our efforts, and we want to thank Jay Loeffler for originating the idea. His talented wife, Judy, has been busy making signs, designing shirts and organizing the acquisition of plants. Ed Wucher continues his invaluable help hanging orchids, developing our tool kit and faithfully watering the orchids thru this current dry weather. Also, many thanks to those who donated orchids for the project, and Rich and Jimmy, who turned out for the formal AIB judging on the 7th of May. Finally, a huge thank you to Dusty, from Orchid Envy, who donated several beautiful blooming orchids in time for our crew to hang in the park just as the judges were walking through. His timing and his generosity cannot be matched! If you get a chance, please visit him or Natalie in their shop on West Venice Avenue and thank them. Better yet, maybe even buy an orchid!

The Redland Festival has come and gone by the time you read this, and even though we may be having 'buyer's regret', we have even more beautiful orchids to play with. Thanks to Dr. Jimmy and the great vendors at the festival, we've all learned more

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WWW.VAOS.ORG

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

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Acting President &

Vice President - Programs

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Vice President - Social Affairs

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Immediate Past President

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Cynthia Vance, [Plant Table](#)

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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
- Written submissions are appreciated.

Minutes of the May 6th, 2015 Meeting

Bruce Weaver called the meeting to order at 7 PM by asking “Who has dirty fingers from potting orchids?” He reported that the America In Bloom competition will be judged tomorrow. He encouraged anybody who lives in town to “put your orchids out”. He thought that the judges might be driving around town in a 1920s fire engine named “Old Betsy” and to be on the lookout for it. He also reported that the people in orange Venice Orchid Project T-shirts have been working very hard on the project, which was Jay Loeffler’s “big” idea. There was a round of applause for Jay. He also thanked Ed Wucher for single-handedly watering more than 50 orchids planted in various parks around the town. He noted that Ed does need some help with this task and to please call Jay if you were willing to help with watering the orchids in our community.

Sharon Kahnoski then took the podium. She was happy to report that the Redland bus trip is sold out and answered questions about the upcoming trip. She reported there will be no dinner stop on the way home; however water and snacks will be provided. There are food carts on the grounds of the festival. The admission ticket is included with the cost of the trip, and a five dollar coupon will be given towards any orchid purchase of \$25 or more. She suggested bringing a wagon or a shopping cart for all your purchases. All wagons and carts can be stored under the bus. Most of the vendors take credit cards; she encouraged bringing cash for food. She also asked people to be alert to the weather as sometimes it’s hot, sometimes it’s cold, and sometimes it’s rainy. It will be an approximately three hour trip. On the way, Dr. Jimmy will give pointers and things to look for when making purchases. On the

Continued on page 4

Treasurer's Report

May 2015

Checking Account

Starting Balance	
4/1/15	\$ 22,924.82
+ Income	\$ 1,337.00
Payments	\$ 906.38
Closing Balance	
4/30/15	\$ 23,355.44

Cash Account

Starting Balance	
4/1/15	\$ 40.00
Closing Balance	
4/30/15	\$ 40.00

Money Market Savings

Starting Balance	
4/1/15	\$ 25,045.39
+ Income	0.82
Closing Balance	
4/30/15	\$ 25,046.21

Total Assets

4/30/15	\$ 48,441.65
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Submitted by Mary Amos

Support Our 2015 Show Sponsors

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

- Herald Tribune
- Cruise One
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- Keye Wong, MD
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- RAVE
- Senior Helpers
- Silverstein Institute
- Stanley Dean State Farm
- Bay Village
- Cramer Toyota
- Englewood Bank
- Orchid Envy

Plant Table Awards May 6th, 2015

The **First Place** award went to Joanna Shaw for *Cattleya* Quinquecolor. The delightful plant was displayed in a basket. Thanks, Joanna!



C. Quinquecolor

Cynthia Vance garnered the **Second Place** award with her beautiful *Phalenopsis* Surf Song, displaying five inflorescences on its branches.



Phal. Surf Song

Joanna Shaw also received the **Third Place** award for *Ryncholaeliocattleya* Hawaiian Wizard 'Volcano Queen'. The striking colors were a delight and exceptionally well displayed. Another winner!



Rlc. Hawaiian Wizard

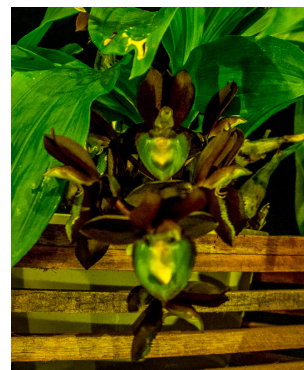
The ribbon for **Best Species** went to *Cattleya gaskelliana*, entered by Debi Wolfe. Debi said this was the third blooming in two years and that the plant blooms twice a year. Beautiful job, Debi!



C. gaskelliana

The **New Member** award went to Charlie Rogg for *Catasetum* Black Knight displaying lush dark blooms.

The sepals and petals are a chocolate brown and have a velvety texture giving them an almost black appearance. The lip color is usually in a shade of green. The hybrid is the result of crossing *Ctsm. tenebrosus* with *Ctsm. expansum* and displays the best of both species. Found in Peru and W. Brazil, the male flowers have a remarkable technique for the ejection of the pollinia. Sack-shaped *catasetum* (*Ctsm. saccatum*), another tropical S. American species, actually launches its viscid pollen sacs with explosive force when an insect touches a seta. A marvelous display, Charlie!



Ctsm. Black Knight

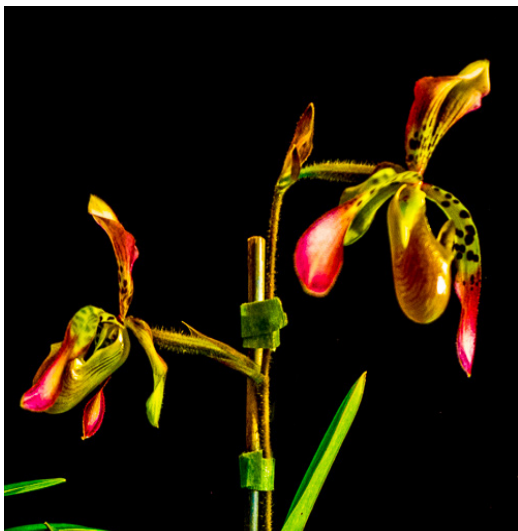
Rick Belisle entered *Dendrobium* Thongchai Gold 'Viroj' and the stately and well-staked plant received the **Members Choice** award. Thanks, Rick!



Den. Thongchai Gold

Continued on next page

**Plant Table Awards May 6th, 2015
(continued from previous page)**



Paph. haynaldianum

Michele Glenback, a guest from the Englewood Area Orchid Society, received the **Speakers Choice** award for her darling *Paphiopedilum haynaldianum* 'Orchid Inn Jeanie' which dazzled with wonderful colors. Way to go, Michele!

Narrative and photos by Cynthia Vance

Minutes of the May 6th, 2015 Meeting (continued from page 2)

way home, there may be a movie. She also reported pickup times for Sarasota, Venice, and Punta Gorda. She encouraged anyone who has already paid and who would not be able to attend to please call her ahead of time to eliminate guesswork and worrying.

Carol Wood reported that we have a contract in place for our next winter show. The show dates will be February 7-8, 2016 and we are already in the planning phase. This will be our 50th show!

Bruce went on to note that Orchid Envy is the vendor for this evening's meeting and he encouraged us to buy some of their beautiful orchids. He also encouraged people to check out the Raffle Table and to vote for their favorite plant on the Plant Table.

Bruce introduced the speakers for the evening by noting that a split bill was planned. First we heard from Dr. Toscano De Brito, and later from his collaborator at Selby Gardens, Wade Callier. They recently travelled to Brazil, an area of the world with some of the most diverse and unusual orchid species. Dr. Toscano De Brito discovered

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

about the mysterious plant world. For those who have headed North for the Summer, keep growing! For those still here in steamy Florida, keep watering! The rains of August and September are on the way, as well as some great speakers at our meetings. There is always something exciting on the horizon as an orchidist!

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

and described many new species on the recent trip and Wade Collier was the expedition photographer.

Dr. Toscano De Brito is the curator of the Orchid Research Center at Selby Gardens. He is doing DNA research to formulate DNA fingerprinting for every orchid. He travels all over the world collecting diverse species of orchids. His presentation covered new finds in the orchid world, their environment, and how their environment defines the flower shape. The talk was entitled "Botanizing in Brazil" and he discussed two major groups of orchids: ornithocephalids, and pleurothallids.

Wade Callier is a Venice resident and a retired biologist who is currently a Selby volunteer. He has the task of being the official photographer of "The Living Collection" at Selby Gardens and he discussed some of the challenges in creating detailed photographs of some very tiny and intricate flowers. He described the process of using a computer to stack 26 images of the same flower, each with a slightly different focal point, to get the entire image in perfect focus. Some of the examples he showed us were stunning and actually allow biologists to view the flower in more detail than they might otherwise have.

After the presentation, Jimmy Thomas presented the Plant Table, items on the Raffle Table found their new homes, and the meeting was adjourned.

*-Respectfully submitted by Joanna Shaw,
Recording Secretary*

Jardin de Orquideas

Two glorious orchid gardens in Costa Rica, plus much more!

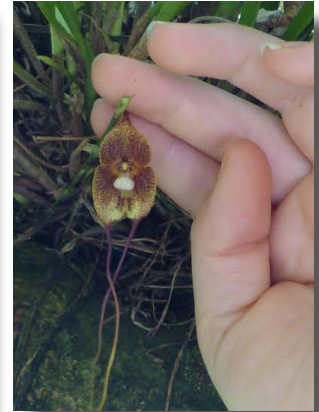
On a recent trip to Costa Rica, my husband, Bob, and I were enchanted by everything in the country, especially by the orchids. Depending on whom you ask, there are over 1300 species of orchids to be found in this small Central American country, located between Panama and Nicaragua.

Our first exposure was in the town of Carrizal, northwest of the capital, San Jose. There we visited a family-owned Botanical Orchid Garden. Our host shared his “recipe” for an all-in-one organic pesticide and fertilizer. He put some cut-up bananas, papayas, and an apple in a bucket along with a few sprigs of rosemary and whatever other leaves were handy. He then added molasses and patted down the mash with a roughly cut round wooden top. The mixture is left alone for a week and then one cup of the mixture is added to a five gallon sprayer. The sprayer is filled with water and sprinkled on the plants weekly.

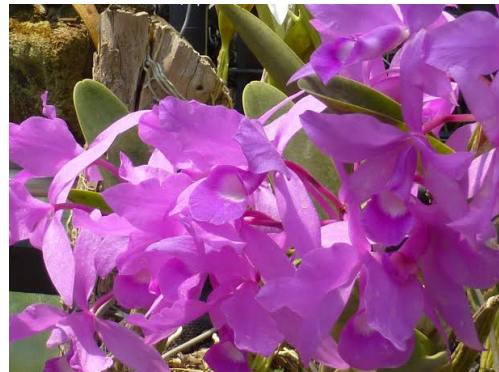
In the rainforest itself, it was an eye opener to see the many, many orchids just hanging from the trees and on the ground. At first I was disappointed, thinking there weren’t many to see. Our tour guide started pointing them out and they were everywhere. Many were miniature orchids, so I needed to be shown what they looked like. Here’s one example of the lushness in the areas of orchid growth. Can you see the tiny orchid plants on the branch?



At the Monteverde Orchid Garden in Santa Elena, we were given a guided tour of 450 of the 520 species endemic to the area. The collection, which included the smallest orchid in the world, was best viewed with a magnifying glass, since many were miniatures that only showed their small flowers on the bottom of the leaf. Many also had unusual fragrances, not all pleasant. One smelled like a wet dog, another like citrus.



In the greenhouse, *C. skinnerii*, the national flower of Costa Rica, was in all its glory. These orchids usually grow in wet mountain forests from near sea level to about 4100 feet, but they also occur on rocks at higher elevations where rainfall is greater and evaporation is less. It is no longer found in the wild due to poaching, but isn’t it a beauty? Carol Wood shared a cutting of her *skinnerii* plant with me and I sure hope I can get it to bloom. I also found the national flower on the colon, the Costa Rican currency.



If you haven’t been there, put Costa Rica on your bucket list. It’s all about the orchids, sure. It’s also all about the culture, the people, the birds, the tropical food, the hanging bridges, and even the bats, the monkeys and the butterflies.

Narrative and photos by Pauline Adam

5th Annual Cattleya Symposium (continued from page 1)

speakers, although there will be a total of nine presentations, who will take us through the history of this very royal family of orchids. This year's lineup will include:

Keith Davis (Keith Davis Orchids, North Carolina):

- Growing cattleyas

Jeff Bradley (Texas):

- Pre-World War II hybrid cattleyas

Dr. Aaron Palmateer, Ph. D (IFAS, Florida):

- Orchid Diseases and Pathology

Armando Mantellini (Florida):

- *C. mossiae*

Gene Crocker (Carter & Holmes, South Carolina):

- "Cattleyas of the Andes"

Ed Skvarch (IFAS, Florida):

- Greenhouse management and fertilizer

Alek Zaslawski (AWZ Orquídeas, Brazil):

- *C. eldorado*

- *C. guttata*

Makoto Hanajima (Thai Hanajima's Orchids/Blumen Insel's Orchids, Japan)

- Older cattleya hybrids

The cost of the symposium is \$150.00 per person. Due to the limited seating capacity, there are only enough openings for 140 people so make sure you don't miss the deadline to sign-up. Everyone must be registered by August 1st in order to have everything prepared in a timely fashion for each attendee. Odom's has also made arrangements for special pricing at certain hotels. Complete details are in the culture supplement to this month's newsletter and at <http://www.odoms.com/cattleya-symposium-august-7-8-2015/>.

A number of our members have attended the event in previous years and all speak very highly of the symposium.

Dr. Jimmy's Culture Tip for June 2015

Just in case you hadn't noticed, it's HOT and we're headed for even HOTTER weather for the next few months. During this time of stress, our orchids depend on us for two main things. The first is adequate air circulation around and through the plants which helps prevent diseases and pests and provides optimum growing conditions. You can help by providing adequate spacing between your plants. Remember your catts!!

A cat should be able to walk around on your shelves without knocking over one of your prized specimens. Secondly, portable box fans and overhead lanai/pool cage fans can make a dramatic difference in the air flow.

The second critical need is water. The plants will dry faster in the heat and we need to be vigilant that our orchids don't become dry for an extended period. Don't rely on a set schedule for watering; use the finger or pencil test to probe the upper two or three inches of potting media. Get used to lifting your pots and containers when dry and when wet so that you can easily feel the difference in weight.

This is our main growing season and our orchids need water and air circulation to thrive.

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.



Redland Tour Recap

Our 2015 bus trip to Redland once again was a fun filled day of travel with a great group of orchid enthusiasts. It is a trip that needs to be experienced by all.



We had a full bus and I think we had more participants than on any other trip. Dr. Jimmy shared his past experiences and tips with us and advised us about a very few

questionable vendors. The snacks were great and the time flew by while we organized our mental shopping lists. Even though it was very warm, there was a nice breeze and some shady areas to seek shelter and enjoy a cool beverage or ice cream. While most of us rushed off to the vendor sales areas, some took advantage of the various



food offerings and gathered strength for the frenzy ahead. As always, the vendors had the most beautiful display of plants for sale with many varieties of hybrids and species. We found a great selection of potting and mounting supplies and gathered many ideas for our displays. The AOS tent was particularly interesting and the quality of the entries and ribbon and trophy winners was dazzling.

As our departure time approached, our members straggled back to the bus, laden with bags, boxes, carts and other trophies. The bottom luggage compartments were soon filled to overflowing, but we managed to find a place for the last purchase. The ride home was much quieter than the trip down, as exhausted members shared tales of great buys, almost buys, and the one that got away. To make the day complete, we showed the movie "Frozen" which helped everyone unwind after a great day.

We had suggestions from our members how we could improve on our fabulous trip. We'll look into changing the trip next year to a Friday in order to have a better selection of plants, supplies and vendors. So keep a look out for our posting next season for further information.

Thank you all for making our trip a success and it was a pleasure to put it on for you!

-Narrative and photos by Sharon Kahnoski



Venice Area Orchid Society News

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

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, June 3rd, 7:00pm
at Venice Community Center
(Doors open at 6:30pm)

• **Speaker:** Vern Bloch
• **Topic:** "Encyclias and Epi's"

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

• **Members whose last name begins with M or N**
should bring treats to share.

Refreshments from other members are always welcome.

Upcoming Events

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 Epi's". Vern will have a great selection of species and Epicatts for sale following the presentation.

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.

July 9, (2nd Thursday): VAOS Growers Clinic, Speaker: Jimmy Thomas, Topic: "Orchid Diseases and Treatment, Part 1". Dr. Jimmy has great illustrations and handouts and this is certainly a meeting you won't want to miss. As always, Dr. Jimmy and his experts will provide expert advice for your problem plants.

July 13, (2nd Monday): Joint EAOS/VAOS monthly meeting. Doors open at 6:30pm, Christ Lutheran Church, 701 N. Indiana Ave., Englewood. Speaker: Rafael Romero, Plantio La Orquidea, Topic: to be announced. A fine selection of orchids will be available for purchase.

Mark Your Calendars

August 5th, (1st Wednesday): Joint VAOS/EAOS monthly meeting. Doors open at 6:30pm, Meeting starts at 7:00pm. Venice Community Center. Speaker: Jesse and Dee Vance, Topic: "Nature's Relics". One of our local vendors will have a great selection of orchids for sale.

August 7th & 8th, (Friday and Saturday): 5th Annual Cattleya Symposium, Indian River Research and Education Center, Fort Pierce, Florida. The event will include an amazing lineup of expert speakers who will take us through the history of this very royal family of orchids.

Seating is strictly limited, so register as soon as possible. Details begin on page 1.

Ongoing

Mentor Program: help for beginning growers, contact Pauline Adam, 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"**

Summer Meeting Schedule

June 3 (1st Wednesday) - Monthly Meeting at the Venice Community Center

June 11 (2nd Thursday) – Growers Clinic at the Venice Community Center

July 1 (1st Wednesday) – No Monthly Meeting

July 9th (2nd Thursday) – Growers Clinic at the Venice Community Center

July 13 (2nd Monday) – Joint EAOS/VAOS Monthly Meeting at Christ Lutheran Church,
701 N. Indiana Avenue, Englewood. Doors open at 6:30 pm

August 5th (1st Wednesday) – Joint VAOS/EAOS Monthly Meeting at the Venice
Community Center

August 13th (2nd Thursday) – Growers Clinic at the Venice Community Center

5th Annual Cattleya Symposium

Hello Venice Area Orchid Society,

We, here at Odom's Orchids, Inc., would like to welcome you to join us for our very special **5th Annual Cattleya Symposium!** The check-in date for the hotels is Thursday August 6th, starting at 3pm. The symposium will be held on Friday August 7th and Saturday August 8th at the Indian River Research and Education Center in Fort Pierce, Florida from 8 am – 5pm.

Our event will include an amazing lineup of eight speakers (although we will have nine total talks) who will take us through the history of this very royal family of orchids. This year's lineup will include:

Keith Davis (Keith Davis Orchids, North Carolina):

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Jeff Bradley (Texas):

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- Orchid Diseases and Pathology

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- *C. mossiae*

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- "Cattleyas of the Andes"

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- Older cattleya hybrids

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The Holiday Inn Express & Suites will be our host this year's symposium. They have agreed to give us a rate of \$69 for a single king bed room, \$75 double queen rooms, and suites available on request. They have guaranteed to hold 40 rooms for us under Odom's Orchids until July 30th (a week before the check-in date, August 6th). So the quicker you have signed up, the more likely you will be guaranteed a spot in the host hotel, as well as our participating hotels. The (guaranteed) cut-off date for the Holiday Inn is July 30th, Fairfield Inn and The Hampton Inn are both on July 23rd. We ask that

you please sign-up with us and book your hotel using the codes provided (below) as quickly as possible.

The **IFAS** center has been kind enough let us host our symposiums with them every year. As some of our previous attendees know, some things we cannot control such as the temperature. It has been known to be on the colder side in the building so please bring a sweater or jacket just in case.

As a reminder for everyone and for all of our new people, we will be providing lunch for everyone on Friday and Saturday. There will be an auction Friday night and we would like everyone to meet at the Holiday Inn Thursday evening so that we can start passing out name tags as well as give a chance for everyone to meet the other attendees. (See attached schedule)

Attached is the schedule of events, hotel info, and our flyer. It will include the times of the speakers, lunch time and other events. A final schedule will be provided in everyone's books which will be received in person at the Holiday Inn Thursday evening.

Holiday Inn Address:

7151 Okeechobee Rd, Fort Pierce, FL 34945

IFAS Address:

2199 S Rock Rd, Fort Pierce

Odom's Orchids, Inc. Address:

1611 S Jenkins Road, Fort Pierce, FL 34947

<http://www.odoms.com/cattleya-symposium-august-7-8-2015/>

Please forward to all of your society members.

John Odom

Odom's Orchids, Inc.

Hallie Russell

Project Manager

June in your Orchid Collection

By Dr. Martin Motes from his monthly newsletters and book "Florida Orchid Growing"

June Climate Data

Average high: 89.5

Average low: 75.2

Average mean: 82.4

Average rainfall: 8.54"

June is the most dramatically tropical month in South Florida. As the southeast Trade Winds blow cool moist air off the Gulf Stream daily, as surely the heating effect of the center of the peninsula percolates up massive thunder heads. The increased cloud cover drawing a veil across the afternoon sun provides much cooling relief for our plants late in the day. Because of this additional cloud cover, our plants are less stressed than in the brightest of May sunshine. The increased humidity makes June feel hotter to us, but this humidity brings blessed balm to our plants from the unrelentingly dry heat of late spring. The shading clouds are also the harbinger of the almost daily rains that arrive like clockwork with the thunderstorms that re-circulate the moisture laden air back toward the ocean in the afternoon. These showers can drop the temperature 10-12 degrees in almost no time, again bring our plants relief when they need it most in the peak heat of the day. In June, such soaking rains that can sometimes be an inch or more an hour are the norm rather than the exception. For orchids grown outside in South Florida this month, how to dry them out becomes more the question than how or when to water them. For most sympodial genera (cattleyas, dendrobiums, oncidiums, etc.) the natural rainfall of June is sufficient. Only in those rare once or twice times during June when no rain falls for nearly a week is it necessary to think of watering sympodial orchids in June. Even then it usually is a thought that can be dismissed. A thorough, "hard" drying in this first month of the rainy season is usually of much more overall value to sympodial orchids than the slight extra push of additional water. Harder plants that have not been pushed with extra water are much more disease resistant than softer more lushly grown orchids. Vandas and other high water requirement plants may still need periodic watering in June but remember that these types too relish occasional "hard" drying and the heavy often lingering, rains of June are just the nostrum for re-hydrating them even when they have become as dry as the cork in a wine bottle dry. When watering in June, remember at no season is the standard 'water early in the day' rule more relevant; those extra hours of drying are crucial. If your vandas or other orchids really need water, water early in the morning to allow time for them to dry not merely by night but by the time the all too likely afternoon thunderstorms arrive to soak them again. Be sure when you water that the roots of the vandas are saturated until they turn overall dark green. This will still take two applications of water spaced a few minutes apart. June is the archetypical month for careful but totally thorough watering. For those of us committed to sloth, this month is one in which benign neglect becomes a virtue.

With an eye to efficient drying which the season demands, June is an excellent time to review the spacing of our plants. Always give your plants sufficient space to allow for good air circulation to permit rapid drying. Crowded plants stay wetter longer encouraging fungus and bacteria. Scale and mealy bugs also thrive on the soft lush growth generated by overcrowded, overshadowed plants. Mites too love the extra protection from dislodging rain that overgrown plants provide. When looking at the spacing of your plants also allow some extra space for the new growth that will be rapidly developing in the new growing season. Remember your well grown plants will be much larger at the end of the rainy season when the fungi are savagely on the prowl. Plants and trees in your yard also will have grown in the past year and will be growing more in the rains of summer. June is a good time to think of pruning vegetation that is blocking light and air from our orchids. Come the true heart of hurricane season in September you will be glad that you did! Tree pruning alas, slips to a low priority in the face of an approaching storm. Your orchids will be glad right away that you pruned, rewarding you with harder, healthier growth sure to produce yet more lavish blooms in season.

A persistent problem in June is how to apply liquid fertilizer to our plants under these often persistently wet conditions. As all of our orchids are in rapid growth in June they need to be fed, ironically this comes in the face of super abundant moisture. While rain contains minute quantities of nitrogen, heavy persistent rain can in fact strip nutrients from our plants by reversing the normal osmotic process. To a degree this effect of the heavy rains can be positive leaching away any excessive fertilizer salts that have accumulated over the dry season but overall the rain leaves them needier than before. Those of us who have kept our plants well nurtured in May will be ahead of this curve but we all must keep our plants fat and happy at the onset of the heavy growing season. For orchid grown in pots with media, the relatively new, slow release fertilizer widely sold as "Dynamite" (i.e. Nutri-cote) is of especial value at this time of year. Other brands of slow release fertilizer have not proven to be as reliable (neither consistent nor durable) under the hot humid conditions of South Florida. In general, a good rule in June is that when some opportunities to water present themselves, think rather of applying liquid fertilizer instead of just water. Remember too, the oft repeated bad advice to water your plants before fertilizing them is particularly erroneous in June when over-watering can quickly have negative consequences. In June, as always, replace a watering with an application of the proper concentration of liquid fertilizer. Another frequently sought strategy is to apply fertilizer in conjunction with fungicidal sprays. In general it is not advised to combine balanced fertilizer (20-20-20, 18-18-18) with sprays because with South Florida's highly alkaline water. Any phosphorus in the fertilizer tends to bind up most of the trace elements when conjoined to South Florida ground water. Phosphorus (a very active metal) can also have adverse reactions to the fungicide itself, lessening or abnegating its effectiveness. The solution to this dilemma is to use a fertilizer without phosphorus when a bit of nutrition is desirable. The best source is potassium nitrate 13-0-44 (available at farm supply stores in 50lb. bags) which provides the additional potassium our plants crave. 1 Tbs. per gal can be added to the spray solution. Be sure to use "Spray Grade" not "Prilled" which would need to be dissolved in hot water. Thiophanate Methyl, Cleary's 3336 or its combination Banrot or Duosan should be applied prophylactically in June. Keep a sharp eye on your plants for

any signs of black rot (*Pythium*). Should soft black or brown spots appear, they should be excised immediately using a sterile knife as this disease can spread quickly in wet conditions. Banrot gives good control but Alliette is the best fungicide to control this disease if it persists.

To minimize the need to apply fungicides, June is an excellent time to review our overall sanitation and cultural conditions in the growing area. It is always important to keep the growing area as clean as possible. In June, cleanliness becomes even more essential because water is the chief vector of most orchid diseases. Dead leaves, roots or other dead orchid tissue frequently harbor diseases that can be loosed upon our orchids by the heavy rains of June. Weeds (dead or alive) can hamper air flow and also harbor disease. This month whatever one can do to enhance air circulation is a plus. Under cover, fans to move air are of great value to Phals and other genera. Hopefully, if we have been doing a good job, our plants will have grown significantly since last year's rainy season. They all may well need more space. Remember that old time orchid growers would say one needs a cat to be a good grower in South Florida because a cat should be able to walk orchid benches without knocking plants down when they are properly spaced.

Snails and slugs will have the whole world as their stage in June and can travel considerable distances to eat our tender orchid shoots. Baits containing metaldehyde are very effective if applied evenly and often. Remember, bait draws the pests; spread it thinly but repeat weekly for thorough control. Snails and slugs always require multiple applications. Overly heavy applications of bait will merely waste in the heavy rain.

Although mites and to a degree Thrips are washed away by the heavy rains of June, the warm conditions of summer speed the growth of scale and mealy bugs. At the first sign of either of these pests spray with soap at 2 oz. per gal or an appropriate insecticide. Oil is no longer an option in the heat of summer. If the soap doesn't prove effective enough, try something stronger but apply with care early in the morning or late in the evening as the high temperatures of mid-day in June can exacerbate phytotoxic reactions.

June is still a great month for top cutting strap leaf vandas, teretes (papilionanthes) and reed stem epidendrums. Most sympodial orchids are already in growth and unless their media is totally broken down are probably best left undisturbed till their new growths have matured and they have flowered. If you have not gotten your Phalaenopsis out of last year's sphagnum moss wait no longer! Phal roots in soggy medium in June are a receipt for "Fails".

For those of us so in love with Florida that we would never think of insulating ourselves with air-conditioning, the rains of June provide pleasant relief from the harsh Mediterranean sun of late spring. As my son Bartholomew at age two so aptly said "Rain sweet as honey". Enjoy! Our orchids do.

