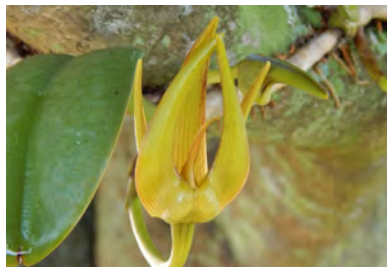


Venice Area Orchid Society News

January 2016

Next Meeting: Wednesday, Jan. 6, 7 pm
Venice Community Center
(doors open at 6:30 pm)
Speaker: Ramnarine John Budree
Topic: Bulbophyllum and allies

Ramnarine John Budree was born in Trinidad and moved to Florida about fifteen years ago. In Trinidad, he grew many different types of orchids and took part in collecting and displaying them at



Bulb. cheiri

many shows. When he came to Florida, he got involved with orchids on a different level. Here, he was able to grow all of those plants he could only read about and even meet all of the growers and experts who wrote the articles that he had read in AOS magazines.

He began to go to many of the shows and what do you do when you go to a show.... YOU BUY ORCHIDS which you know nothing about, in the hope you can grow and flower them. He always liked Paphiopedilum but was told he couldn't grow them. This became a challenge to John and he found these plants very interesting as well. He met some of the biggest and the best orchid growers, Jack Schendowich, Warren Kelly (Orchid World), Bob Skully (Jones & Skully), Frank Smith (Krull-Smith) and Sheldon Takasaki (Carmela Orchids). These people really know how to grow orchids, but not just any orchids, but Paphiopedilum, Cattleya, Phalaenopsis, Dendrobium, and Oncidium and shared their knowledge with John.

At the 19th World Orchid Congress in Miami in 2008, John had an opportunity to work with Frank Smith, an experienced and internationally recognized grower of Paphiopedilum, hybridizer, landscaper and designer. He tried to absorb as much of Frank Smith's knowledge as possible, and did an exhibit on his own. After that, he started to grow many types of Paphs and today he owns over 1750 as well as about 2000 other orchids. Of course, he says he has also lost count of the ones he killed. In

A Message From Your President

This has been a busy social month, which is fortunate as the orchids are beginning to slow down, and there aren't quite as many blooms out there to admire. Let's hope we can still collect a sizable bouquet for the Sarasota Show on New Year's Day. Due to a schedule conflict, the SOS must have it that weekend. It will not be judged by AOS, but plant ribbons will be awarded by teams of society judges.. Please let Jay Loeffler know what you might have in bloom so he can plan his display.



Our annual dinner at Boca Royale was a hit with everyone as Joanna Shaw and her 'elf' helper, Kristin, auctioned off all the available orchids with flair as we enjoyed the music and the great food.

Our plant sale in Centennial Park, which corresponded with the popular 'Chalk Festival', was also a success and

Continued on page 5

short, he has been growing orchids for about 30 years, from flask to flower and has accumulated about 30 AOS awards. He continues to speak at numerous orchid societies and symposiums.

John will have a great selection of Bulbophyllum as well as Cattleya and other genera for sale.

The Show is coming!! The Show is coming!!

Your display team needs your blooming orchids for the Sarasota Orchid Society Show and Sale on January 2nd and 3rd (set-up New Year's Day, Jan. 1)

All plants must be registered via email to Carol Wood at PlantReg@VAOS.org by Wednesday, December 30th, 5pm. Deliver plants to one of two locations by Thursday, December 31st, 5pm. See page 7 for details.



WWW.VAOS.ORG

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

Officers 2015 – 2016

Interim President &

Vice President - Programs

Bruce Weaver, programs@vaos.org

Vice President - Social Affairs

Sharon Kahnoski, social@vaos.org

Vice President - Show Displays

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Judy Loeffler

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John Kahnoski, Raffle Table

Joanna Shaw, Kristin Shaw &

Cynthia Vance, Plant Table

Sue Grimmer, Gary Becker & Jerry

Manegold, Technology

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Kathy Beck, Librarian

Newsletter Production

Barry Zack

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
- Written submissions are appreciated.

Our 50th Show - Just One Month Away - Get Ready for the Main Event! February 6-7, 2016

Just one month to go now to our 50th annual show and sale - our biggest society event and fund raiser of the year! Your show chairs and committee heads have been busy planning for the main event! At our January 6th meeting, we hope to complete the sign up process to fill all positions needed for our show. Here is a list of where we still need volunteers.

Security Monitors - Monitor doors to prevent unauthorized entry or exit. Ensure visitors don't step into displays. A sit down job. More volunteers needed. Sign up for a 2.5 hour shift Saturday or Sunday morning, mid-day or afternoon. Chair: Sharon and John Kahnoski

Clerks - Saturday 7:30am to 10:30am. Work with AOS judges finding and pointing out plants in the exhibits and placing ribbons. A great learning experience as the judges share their knowledge of what makes a quality plant and flower! Eight (8) more clerks needed. Chair: Mary Anne Digrizia

Front Door Admissions - Sell admission tickets and hand out programs Saturday and Sunday. A sit down cashier job. Ten (10) more people needed. Chair: Elaine Ortt

Membership Table - Sign up new members, sell books, distribute culture sheets and answer questions. All time slots filled. Chair: Judy Loeffler

Hospitality/Kitchen and Food - Bring your favorite dish Friday, Saturday or Sunday: hot or cold main dishes, casseroles, pastries, platters, desserts, etc. Saturday is the most important day. Note what dish you will bring and on what day on the sign-up sheet for food or email to Carol Wood. We also need 4 people to assist with reheating food and

Continued on page 4

Treasurer's Report

December 2015

Checking Account

Starting Balance		
11/1/15	\$	10,812.61
Income	\$	5,824.60
Payments	\$	1,461.81
Closing Balance		
11/30/15	\$	15,175.20

Cash Account

Starting Balance		
11/1/15	\$	40.00
Closing Balance		
11/30/15	\$	40.00

Money Market Savings

Starting Balance		
11/1/15	\$	25,051.25
Income	\$	0.82
Closing Balance		
11/30/15	\$	25,052.07

Total Assets

11/30/15	\$	40,267.27
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Submitted by Mary Amos

Newsletter Culture Supplement

For those members who receive their monthly newsletter by email, be sure to check out the Culture Supplement.

Included are culture articles and handouts from our monthly Growers Clinics.

This supplemental information will only be available in our full color email edition of the newsletter.

Preparing Your Plant for the Show

With the Sarasota, Venice, and Englewood orchid shows taking place in the next few months, you should start thinking about the steps you can take to insure that your plants score high in the competitions.

At least a month before the show, take a good look at your orchids and select those that you want to enter. If possible, segregate them from your other plants to avoid last minute disease or insect problems, maintaining their orientation to the light to prevent buds and flowers twisting towards the light. In general, plants with green or white flowers should be placed in a shadier position while pink and red flowers will benefit from a sunnier location.

Orchids that produce tall spikes will normally require the support of one or more stakes made from bamboo cane, strong galvanized wire, or other materials. Ties can be made with floral wire, raffia, soft green string or similar flexible plant tapes; avoid the use of twist ties. The materials should be as inconspicuous as possible to avoid distracting the judges from the plant and flowers. Staking is easiest and most effective if done from the early stages of spike development.

Cymbidium and dendrobium spikes need to be trained as soon as they appear by inserting a cane or wire behind the spike, being careful not to injure close lying roots. Once the spike has reached about a foot in length, a tie should be applied making a figure eight with the knot next to the cane. Once the buds begin to form, place a second tie just below the first bud. If you decide that the spike should arch, an extra cane may be needed. Otherwise, use additional ties as needed to keep the spike straight.

Odontoglossum and their intergeneric hybrids are trained in the same manner. Some arch naturally while others produce an upright spike and those that naturally branch will show their flowers better with the terminal spike erect. Again, use the thinnest wire or cane, snip off excess string from the knots, and trim the support even with the highest point of the spike or flower.

Paphiopedilums only require staking up to the point where the spike and buds have formed. A thin cane should be placed behind the stem and tied once on the stem and once below the flower bud. After the bud has opened, a final tie may be made if necessary to lift the angle of the flower.

Phaleonopsis hybrids benefit more than other orchids from proper staking. Spikes should be trained upright once they reach eight inches and the last tie should be

placed under the first bud. Phaleonopsis are normally allowed to arch from this point, but additional staking may be needed to support the spike as flowers open.

Cattleyas are normally trained to grow vertical pseudobulbs and consequently need less staking. A stake should be placed behind the flowering pseudobulb while the buds are still in the sheath and a single tie made at its base. A second tie is required where the bulb and the leaf join and ties on the flower stem should only be made after the flower has opened and set.

Excellent illustrations are available at www.orchidworks.com/showguide/grooming/groomed.htm and www.orchidworks.com/showguide/grooming/sprays.htm.

Carefully check the plants, pots, and growing medium for any signs of disease or pests and treat as needed. If pests and diseases are severe or widespread, it may be better to wait for a later show opportunity. It's a good idea to place a few pellets of slug and snail bait at the base of the spike to eliminate these pests. Remove the pellets before the show.

Two or three days before the show, remove any dead bracts and sheath remnants as well as discolored and damaged leaves. Leaf tips that have been damaged should be trimmed using a sterilized blade in such a way as to present a natural shape. Any cuts should be treated with a suitable fungicide. The upper and lower surfaces of all leaves should be cleaned using a cotton swab and clean water or a mixture of milk and clean water. In case of water spots caused by hard water, a dilute solution of vinegar and water may be used. Algae, mineral deposits and grime should be cleaned from the pots and all protruding stakes should be trimmed. If allowed, pot covers or moss trimmed baskets may add to the desired effect.

Check the labeling to make sure it is clear and accurate. The genus name is followed by the hybrid name or seedling cross and varietal name, then any award abbreviations. Also, make sure that the pot is clearly labeled with your name and contact information.

Water your plants as needed the day before the show. Your plants may be subjected to low humidity levels and high temperatures during transport and air conditioning during the show. Check to see if your plants need additional temporary staking during transport. Tissue paper can be placed between individual flowers to prevent them rubbing during transit.

-Submitted by Steve Vogelhaupt

Have a Question?

Have a question about your orchid? Has my hybrid cross been named? Has my plant been awarded? What's its parentage? Several VAOS members subscribe to OrchidWiz and will be happy to look it up for you. Email

your orchid name and question to one of the following:

Carol Wood showchair@vaos.org
Ted Kellogg tmkellogg@gmail.com

-Submitted by Carol Wood

Our 50th Show - Just One Month Away! (continued from page 2)

clean up - two on Saturday and two on Sunday. Chair: Linda and Bruce Hahn

Show Take Down - One (1) more is needed on Friday set up day (11:30am - 2pm) and two (2) volunteers are needed for take down on Sunday (arrive Sunday by 3:45pm for take down and hall clean up). Chair: Jerry Daenzer and Carol Wood

Orchid Boutique - No additional volunteers are needed, however greenery will be needed for the floral arrangements. See Orchid Boutique article on P. 5 in this newsletter for details. Chair: Jane Camarota and Karen Mann.

Arts & Crafts - For our artistic members - get your entries ready for the arts & crafts table. Pre-register with Noreen so that we can prepare display signs. Plan to bring them in on Friday set-up day, 2/5/16 between 2pm and 4pm. Don't forget to bring your display stand if needed and mark it with your name. Chair: Noreen Chervinski, email: pgifolks@yahoo.com

Patrons - If you are unable to volunteer at the show or bring food, please become a Patron by donating \$25.00. These funds will pay for beverages and kitchen supplies for volunteers and judges over the weekend. Mail your

check to VAOS, P.O. Box 443, Venice, FL 34284 and mark it as Patron Donation. Your gift will be recognized in our newsletter.

Sponsors - Cynthia Vance and Suzanne Grimmer are working hard on our show sponsorship campaign. If you do business with a local professional, organization or business who you think may be interested in becoming a sponsor for our show, please contact Cynthia at 483-9165.

Sign-up Sheets will be available again at our 1/6/16 meeting. Please be sure to note your t-shirt size when you verify your name on the sign-up sheets at our January meeting. Don't forget to mark your calendar.

VAOS t-shirts will be distributed to all working volunteers at the Membership Table. Members who volunteer their time, bring food or make a patron donation will not be charged admission at the door.

We depend on our member volunteers to ensure a smooth operation and successful show! Thank you for volunteering!

Email Carol Wood at ShowChair@VAOS.org to sign up. Please note your t-shirt size in your email.

*-Submitted by Carol Wood and Judy Loeffler,
Show Co-Chairs*

Winter 2016 Weather Forecast

Most weather forecasters agree that El Nino will bring another wet and colder than normal winter to our area in the coming months. Take this into consideration when you make plans for your orchids. More rain and colder temperatures translate to more fungal and bacterial dis-

eases. Don't fertilize and water based on your calendar. Plants that easily survived outdoors may need shelter this year. Now is the time to plan for the worst so that you'll be pleasantly surprised in the spring.

-Submitted by Steve Vogelhaupt

Last Chance to be included in 2016 Membership Directory!!

Membership Dues Are Due Now

Now is the time to renew your Venice Area Orchid Society Membership. Dues are only \$20.00 per household each calendar year.

Please pay Treasurer Mary Amos at the next meeting or mail your check, payable to VAOS, to:

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

Please don't delay so you can be included in the 2016 Membership Directory. This is also the time to make sure we have your current contact information- address, phone and email address. Please check your current Directory to see if your entry needs editing.

Should your contact information have changed, please notify Judy Loeffler, Membership Chair, at: Memb@VAOS.org

-Submitted by Judy Loeffler

President's Message (continued from page 1)

introduced a lot of new people to orchids. Membership is up over 300 and we are reaching out with the Venice Orchid Project and community talks, so may increase that number even more this year. Thank you, Judy Loeffler, for keeping track of all these folks!

Our big annual show, 50 Shades of Orchids, is coming up in February and we'll need even more blooms for that display, so get out there and talk to those orchids on the lanai and tell them to bloom, bloom, bloom! We've had some great sales at local growers and some private venues this fall, so I'm hoping there will be some colorful surprises for the display team. See if you can amaze them this winter!

Finally, our website team has been busy and Ted

Kellogg and the gang have come up with changes to the format which make our website more attractive, easier to use and compatible with iPhone screens. At the January meeting, we'll get a glimpse of the new site as Ted demonstrates a few of the changes. You'll also learn the secrets of growing great *Bulbophyllum* from our speaker, John Budree. It should be a fun and informative evening! Don't forget to bring some snacks for the refreshment table and some awesome blooms for the members plant table.

Have a great Holiday Season, and I'll see you all next year!

--Bruce Weaver, Interim President & VP, Programs

Culture Tip of the Month Your Dendrobiums in Winter

Funny to say the word "winter" here in South Florida, especially as warm as it has been. However, cooler temps and shorter days have arrived. Here are some guidelines for Dendrobiums that require special attention.

Nobile Type - Stop fertilizing and reduce water until spring. Hang them in high light and apart from your collection to avoid fertilizing which will inhibit blooming in the spring.

Hard Cane - *Phalaenanth*e and *Spathulata* Dendrobiums - continue to water and fertilize throughout winter.

These are the most temperature sensitive type of dendrobiums and resent temps below 55*. Protect them as cooler temps will cause them to drop leaves See Culture Supplement for additional details/resources..

Bring your questions and problem plants to the Growers Clinic for expert help. Our next Growers Clinic will be on Thursday, January 14th, Venice Community Center Room F, 7pm. Topic: Local and Online Resources for Orchids, Supplies and Culture Info. Guests are welcome.

--Submitted by Carol Wood

Our Orchid Boutique

The Boutique crew looks forward to Fifty Shades of Orchids in February. To continue our past success we need your help with the following:

- A few large buckets-- bring to the January meeting or the Friday before the show.

- A mix of greenery to accent fresh cut floral arrangements. Please drop off your items on Friday, February 5 from 9:00 - 4:00. The foliage should be in a container--bucket, gallon milk jug, etc. -- that has some water in it. Any container with a name on it will be returned

- What foliage do we need??
- Short to Medium stalks as most containers are 12" or less

- Types— Hardy, long-lasting greens such as: mini palm fronds, croton leaves, all kinds of ferns, dwarf philodendron, ivy, ti leaves, ginger leaves, papyrus stems.

- Many THANKS to the person who donated her costume jewelry collection. We are set and do not need any more jewelry for this year.

- In case of questions, please contact Karen Mann at sbymanns@earthlink.net.

As always, we thank everyone for their support in our charitable endeavor. Last year, most of our proceeds went to the Venice Orchid Project which adds natural beauty and promotes orchid conservation in this community.

--Submitted by Karen Mann

Orchids Needed for Venice Show

On February 5th, we have the setup for our own 50th Show and Sale, 50 SHADES OF ORCHIDS. The show will be held on Saturday and Sunday, February 6th and 7th at the Venice Community Center.

We're depending on you to enter your finest Blooming Orchids – we need them to create another winning display! Check out the Preparing Your Orchids for the Show article in this newsletter. Plants for our show must be registered with Renee Bynum (PlantReg@VAOS.org)

by Thursday 2/4/16 5pm. Deliver plants to the Venice Community Center on show set up date, Friday 2/5/16 by 10 am. Further details will be provided in our February 2016 newsletter. Bring your plants to:

- South Venice: Carol Wood, 4941 Bella Terra Drive, Venice (Venetia) 497-4995

- Venice Island, Jay and Judy Loeffler, 833 Guild Drive, Venice, 485-9569

--Submitted by Jay Loeffler

Happy Holidays to All Our Members.



Our Holiday Party once again was a beautiful evening of good fellowship and fun. Boca Royale's decorations and food was outstanding. We selected 25 beautiful plants from Palmer Orchids and Robert Palmer donated additional plants for our auction. Once again the bid-

ding was full of fun and laughter and all went home with memories galore and great additions to their collections.

We've already scheduled the event repeat for December 9, 2016, so mark your calendars so you will not miss out.

-Submitted by Sharon Kahnoski, VP, Social

We Would Love To Display Your Orchids...

At our first orchid show of the season, the annual Sarasota Orchid Society (SOS) Show and Sale on January 2 – 3 (Saturday and Sunday).

Your blooming plants are needed to create our 10' X10' display which will be competing with two other societies (SOS and Manatee River Orchid Society) for plant ribbon awards in seven categories.

We will collect and transport your plants to the show and ensure their safe return to you on Monday following the show. Bring your plants to one of two locations by Thursday, December 31st, 6pm:

- South Venice: Carol Wood, 4941 Bella Terra Drive, Venice (Venetia) 497-4995
- Venice Island, Jay and Judy Loeffler, 833 Guild Drive, Venice, 485-9569

Or bring them to the Sarasota Municipal Auditorium on Friday, January 1st at 1pm.

**All plants must be registered
in advance by email by Wednesday,
December 30th, 5 pm**

Email your plant name with bloom size to Carol Wood at PlantReg@VAOS.org. Plants should be cleaned, staked, free of pests and disease and labeled with both the plant name and the owner's name. Flowers should be in prime condition to last through the weekend show.

We need help transporting plants to and from the show on Friday and Sunday. If you can help, please contact Jay Loeffler, 485-9569.

-Submitted by Jay Loeffler

A Visit to Longwood Gardens

During a recent trip to Baltimore, my wife and I had the chance to return to Longwood Gardens for the first time in more than twenty years. Located in Kennett Square, Pa., not far from Philadelphia, the gardens are the legacy of Pierre DuPont who purchased the original farm property in 1906 and were opened to the public in the 1940's. The gardens have meanwhile grown to more than 200 acres of meticulously maintained indoor and outdoor gardens and a magnificent fountain display (under renovation until 2017).

Having only a day, we toured the spectacular conservatory which displayed the Christmas decorations and plant exhibits for which the gardens are famous. We travelled around the world from rain forests to deserts and I made sure that we spent time in the orchid wing. The exhibits seemed to focus on the large, fluffy heritage cattleyas,

although many other genera were well represented. The many knowledgeable guides and volunteers shared many cultural tips and tidbits. We learned that only a very small portion of the orchids were on exhibit as preparations were underway for the Orchid Extravaganza, which will take place from January 23, 2016 to March 27 and is included in the admission.

The gardens have almost daily special events for young and old, miles of outdoor trails, the original DuPont home open to the public, a great gift shop featuring orchids from Waldor Orchids and an excellent restaurant. We gave it four stars and recommend it as a great alternative to big city hustle and bustle.

For further details, simply Google Longwood Gardens for directions, etc.

-Submitted by Steve Vogelhaupt

Support Our 2015 Show Sponsors

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

- Herald Tribune
- Cruise One
- Raleigh & Assoc.
- Venice Regional Bayfront Health
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- RAVE
- Senior Helpers
- Silverstein Institute
- Stanley Dean State Farm
- Bay Village
- Cramer Toyota
- Englewood Bank
- Orchid Envy

Venice Area Orchid Society News

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

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, January 6th, 2016 7:00pm
at Venice Community Center
(Doors open at 6:30pm)

- **Speaker:** Ramnarine John Budree
- Bring your blooming orchids for the Show Table
- Bring plants for the Raffle Table
- Bring treats to share.

Upcoming Events

January 2 - 3, 2016: Sarasota Orchid Society Annual Orchid Show and Sale. VAOS will be having a 10' X 10' display. Set-up January 1, 2016. See article on P.7.

January 6 (1st Wednesday): VAOS Monthly Meeting. Doors open at 6:30pm, meeting starts at 7:00pm. Venice Community Center, Speaker: Ramnarine John Budree, Topic: Bulbophyllum and allies

January 14 (2nd Thursday): VAOS Growers Clinic, 7pm, Venice Community Center, Speakers: Carol Wood and Jay Loeffler, Topic: Local and Online Resources for Orchids, Supplies & Culture Info.

January 15-16 (Fri and Sat): Fort Lauderdale Orchid Society Annual Show and Sale. Info: www.FLOS.org

January 23-24 (Sat and Sun): Tamiami International Orchid Festival. Info: www.OrchidFestival.com

February 3 (1st Wednesday):

VAOS Monthly Meeting, Doors open at 6:30 pm, meeting starts at 7:00 pm. Venice Community Center, Speaker: Roger Hammer, Topic: Hunting Orchids

February 6-7 (Sat and Sun):

VAOS Annual Orchid Show and Sale. Set up Friday February 5th. See articles in newsletter.

February 11 (2nd Thursday):

VAOS Growers Clinic, 7 pm, Venice Community Center, speakers Carol Wood and Richard Amos, Topic: Top Tips from Local Growers

February 26-28: Naples Orchid Society Annual Orchid Show. Info: rpippen@comcast.net

Upcoming

March 4 -5 (Friday and Saturday): Englewood Area Orchid Society Show and Sale. Christ Lutheran Church. Setup Thursday, March 3. Details to follow.

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”

Additional Source for Orchid Culture Information

Many of our members are familiar with the St. Augustine Orchid Society website at www.staugorchidsociety.org and use it regularly to answer their orchid questions. The website is maintained by Sue Bottom who regularly contributes culture articles to the AOS Orchids magazine and grows spectacular orchids. The information provided is easy to find, accurate, and up to date and I use it regularly to supplement our monthly meeting and Growers Clinic presentations.

For example, to obtain additional information on Dendrobium Culture, go to www.staugorchidsociety.org, click on Culture, click on Culture by Genus, click on Dendrobium and select Culture Requirements – Sue Bottom

This will bring up a two page chart of Dendrobium culture, by group and species, covering General Culture, and Water, Fertilizer and Temperature Requirements for both summer and winter.

While there are many other great orchid websites, I personally tend to make the St. Augustine Orchid Society website my first stop.

Steve Vogelhaupt

Newsletter Editor

January in Your Orchid Collection

Reprinted with permission of Dr. Martin Motes, PhD, from his book Florida Orchid Growing: Month by Month

January Climate Data

Average high: 76.5

Average low: 59.6

Average mean: 68.1

Average rainfall: 1.88"

January is somewhat like December but in reverse, with each succeeding day bringing longer hours of sunlight until days are long enough that afternoons return at the end of the month with extra sunshine to warm us after the extra sharp cold snaps. January, like December, is cold and dry, in fact even colder and drier. Dry is good, cold can be very bad. We need to accentuate the positive by especially careful watering in January. By keeping our plants as dry as possible and spacing our waterings as far apart as possible, we conserve our potential to use water to protect our plants from the cold, keeping our powder dry, as it were. In January water early, water thoroughly when you do and do so sparingly. The cooler overall temperatures of January are much less dehydrating even to plants which have received less water. Remember, many of our orchids come from seasonally dry and cool climates not so different from South Florida. Many orchids are equipped already to handle the drier cooler conditions of our Florida January. A good strategy is to "top-up" the light watering that our plants receive with the passing showers that each successive cold front brings. This slight additional artificial irrigation may prove to be all the watering that many genera need. Such parsimony with watering preserves the possibility of using water on truly cold nights to warm our plants.

Water is the only feasible source of heat available to plants grown in the open, under trees, in shade houses or on patios in South Florida. Ground water here (and in most of the rest of the world is about 63 F. (16C). Water out of municipal systems is not far different. On truly cold nights turning on the water can be of great benefit to our plants, provided that they have not been over-watered in the days and weeks preceding, thus inviting the ever present fungi to do more damage than the cold. For this reason as well, in general, orchids are better off dry until temperatures approach frost or freezing. The logic for maintaining plants dry is not only to minimize fungal problems but also because cold air is typically very dry air. If plants are wet in very dry and rapidly moving air say 10 or more MPH, evaporative cooling can take place, chilling our orchids further and faster than they would if dry. When the water goes on it needs to be in heavy volume and it needs to stay on to keep the plants thoroughly bathed in its warmth. Very still air on the other hand, presents a different danger as frost is possible at temperatures higher than is commonly realized. In calm air frost can form at higher elevations and settle in on plants while the surface temperature is only in the upper 30's

(4C). The best forecast for nights when the temperature will hover near 40 is a light wind of 2-5 miles per hour. This light wind mixes the warm air near the surface and draws warm from the earth. Clear, cloudless, still nights with bright shining stars elevate the spirit but harbingers frost.

Forecasts of temperatures below 40 F should stimulate us to action.

If it is not practical to bring all the Phalaenopsis, vandas and hard cane dendrobiums into the house or garage, think of using water to help protect them. Shade cloth or even patio screen like a lacy Mantilla holds in a surprising amount of heat. Under screen, a fine mist head(1/2 gal. per minute) attached to a hose and left running beneath the bench or plant rack will provide several degrees of additional warmth that will often sufficiently temper the chill and ward off any light frost settling in. Growers with swimming pools frequently turn on the re-circulating pump to keep a supply of warm water near the pool's surface where it can add heat to the ambient environment. A few degrees of warmth frequently make all the difference to our sensitive orchids. In more open areas not protected by a permanent irrigation system, an oscillating sprinkler at the end of a garden hose is very effective. These are readily available at Home Depot and garden shops for a few dollars. On frosty nights, start the water at bedtime and let it run until the sun is up. The extra water once or twice in a month will do no harm to orchids that have been properly and judiciously watered the remainder of the month. In fact, these occasions present the opportunity to be sure that excess fertilizer salts have been leached from the pots and medium. A good work can be born of necessity!

Remember that Himalayan dendrobiums and "warm growing" Cymbidium hybrids will positively relish temperatures down to 32F and a light frost is just the ticket for great bloom. Keep the water off these!

In the drought of January, mites, which affect nearly all genera of orchids, continue to be a serious problem that will only get worse. Mite populations will reach a crescendo in March and April but January is a good time to scotch them. Paphiopedilum and other softly leaved genera are particularly susceptible but no genus is free of them. One theory on why deciduous genera such as Catasetum, Calanthe and others lose their leaves hypothesizes that this totally rids them of mites.

Being totally rid of mites is a good thing! Sometimes this is easier said than done because mites reproduce with such voluminous speed. Their life cycle from egg to reproductive adult being is as short as twelve days. In order to control mites one must achieve as total a kill of the population as possible. Total control can only be achieved with two successive sprays. After spraying for mites initially, one must spray again in 7 - 10 days. No single spray is totally effective in killing both adults and eggs and a second spraying is necessary to kill any survivors before they can reproduce. Oil as recommended in the December chapter at 1.5 oz per gal followed in 7-10 days by soap at the rate of 2 oz per gallon is very effective. These treatments are also quite effective against scale and mealy bugs which thrive on drought as well. Be sure your plants are well watered the day before applying both oil and soap and be sure that you cover thoroughly all leaf surfaces especially the lower ones which are mites favorite hide outs.

For those who wish to be more aggressive, the University of Florida IFAS recommended chemicals for mite control are:

Avid 0.15 EC

Kelthane T/O

Mavarik Aquaflow

Talstar Flowable

Always follow label instructions for use. Any of these chemicals can be alternated with the soap or the oil in the 7-10 day cycle.

Controlling mites pays huge dividends! You'll be surprised at the extra vigor your plants display.