

# VENICE AREA Orchid Society

Newsletter

Visit us on the web at [www.vaos.org](http://www.vaos.org)

September 2020

## September General Meeting on Zoom

**Wednesday September 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6:45pm**



**Speaker:** Dr. Kristen Uthus, New World Orchids

**Topic:** Miniatures: Honey I Shrunk the Orchids

Dr. Kristen Uthus studied both plant and animal ecology and evolution at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) and the Ohio State University (OSU). She then taught biology and ecology at several colleges including VCU, OSU, University of Michigan, and Eastern Michigan University. The daughter of a plant fanatic, Kristen has been growing orchids for over 20 years, and in 2014 she fulfilled her dream of making orchids a full-time commitment by purchasing New World Orchids.

Although she enjoys growing many varieties of orchids and other plants, miniatures remain her passion—the weirder the better. New World Orchids specializes in Japanese species including *Neofinetia falcata*, *Dendrobium moniliforme*, and *Sederia japonica*, but her miniature selection includes many other small species including Pleurothallids, Bulbophyllums, and Angraecums. Although never entirely up to date, you can check out some of NWO's offerings at [www.newworldorchids.com](http://www.newworldorchids.com). Kristen lives in Manchester, MI, about an hour west of Detroit. She is supported in her orchid pursuits by her husband, Dr. Kevin Wehrly, and her two sons, Henry and Gus.

Eventually everyone runs out of room for more orchids—unless they're really small. While their size intimidates some people, miniatures are just as tough as their larger relatives. What makes them so appealing is their variety of form in addition to flower, and they are just plain cute! The fact that they take up so little space means that you can have a lot of different kinds of orchids in a limited area. Bigger definitely is not better.

## September 2020 Events

**All public meetings  
and events have  
been canceled  
through October.  
Please join us on  
Zoom for our  
September 2nd  
meeting**

### Newsletter Quick Links

[VAOS 2020 - 2021 Officers](#)

[Orchid Resources](#)

**Share photos of your  
blooming orchids on  
our Face Book Group**

[https://  
www.facebook.com/  
veniceareaorchidsociety/](https://www.facebook.com/veniceareaorchidsociety/)

# MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT



I hope you enjoyed our first virtual meeting featuring Fred Clark. It was a new experience for us, hosting a virtual meeting but it went really well and we had 85 attendees! We have one for September in the works. We are also going to try a virtual Grower's Clinic on September 10th, hope to see you there!

If you haven't yet joined our Facebook group, please do so. We hope you will feel free to use the group to ask questions, solve plant problems, show us your successes, and even sell or give away some plants. We have had some interesting discussions about repotting and also controlling fungus. We also had our first virtual plant table and the prize for most "liked" plant went to Janet Keown for her stunning specimen of *Oncidium sphecelatum*. Janet won a \$50 gift certificate to one of our show vendors! Maybe next month you will win the plant table! So please feel free to join in! Ask questions, answer questions, post your plants and have some fun!

Speaking of fun, we have some good news about an upcoming live event! On September 12 we will have a VAOS member plant sale from 9-12 at Honey Bee Nursery on Rt 776 in Englewood. Janet, the owner, has graciously offered us a large shaded outdoor space on her lot under a huge stand of live oak trees. It's fully shaded yet the breezes come through the canopy so it's a much safer space for us to get together in person than an indoor space. There is room for 12 tables under the trees including a 6-8 foot buffer between each table so social distance will be easy. I personally have a ton of plants to sell and give away so I will be there. If anyone wants to join me that day selling off some plants, please let us know! I am really looking forward to seeing you all in person!

Have a bloom filled day!  
Joanna Shaw, President

# IN MEMORIA

## DODI SULLIVAN



Our dear friend Dodi Sullivan passed away on August 11, 2020, following complications from surgery. She was 86 and is survived by two of her six children, 14 grandchildren and 18 great grandchildren. She was a special, spunky little tornado! She was larger than life, kind to all, but could tell you what you needed to know in no uncertain terms! Talk to her for a couple hours, and you knew her life's story.

Dodi was a permanent fixture at our monthly meetings, helping out with the refreshment table. She worked all weekend at our annual shows helping Linda Hahn and Jane Hyde in the kitchen. Dodi always brightened our day, made us laugh and left us in a good mood. She touched our lives and will forever be treasured in our memories. Rest in peace Dodi, we all loved you.

## BILL RICH

VAOS member Bill Rich passed away on June 26, 2020. He died suddenly of a heart attack while at home on his computer. Bill was very active in VAOS, always volunteering at our annual show and helping out at our monthly meeting plant table presentations. He was an expert orchid grower and was always willing to share his knowledge with others. Rest in peace Bill, you will be missed.



# *VAOS Member Plant Sale*

**Saturday, September 12, 2020**

**9:00am – 1:00pm**

**Honey Bee Nursery  
2383 Englewood Rd (776)  
Englewood, FL 34223**

Janet at Honey Bee Nursery has graciously offered the space under her Oak trees to have a member plant sale!

- ♦ Do you have plants or divisions you want to sell? If you are interested in a space please contact Joanna Shaw at [orchidpottery@gmail.com](mailto:orchidpottery@gmail.com)
- ♦ Participating members must bring your own table, chair and drinks!
- ♦ Volunteers are needed to be in the orchid shadehouse to answer questions and monitor activity while Janet tends to nursery business. If you can volunteer please let Joanna know.
- ♦ Janet will have orchid supplies for sale including pots, mounts and media and of course there are many plants in shadehouse for sale!
- ♦ Although we will be outside please be mindful of social distancing and wear masks.

# September in Your Orchid Collection

Excerpted from [\*Florida Orchid Growing: Month by Month\*](#) by Martin Motes. *All rights reserved.*

September looms as the only truly dismal month in South Florida. Even without the prospect of the [unspeakable 'H' word](#), September disheartens since it is easily the dampest, dulllest month in the year. Although more inches of rain fall in June, more hours of rain occur in the often slow, seemingly endless drizzles of September. Frequently a day or two can pass without so much as a solid hour of truly bright sunshine to lift our spirits and dry out our plants. Days are growing much shorter also, with long nights when our plants are wet from the frequent rains. Coming at the end of the rainy season when disease pressure has been building, September presents the maximum opportunity for fungal and bacterial diseases to take hold of our orchids. Hopefully careful watering practices and the judicial use of fungicides (as recommended last month) will have diminished the potential for disease in our collections. But even in the best managed collection, September calls for extra vigilance. Keep a close eye out for problems and remove immediately any plant that shows the first sign of fungus to a dry location to prevent the disease being spread by splashing rain drops. Good hygiene is particularly important this month. Clean up growing areas and remove any dead leaves, twigs or other organic debris from the plants and the ground. In September numerous diseases that linger in decaying plant material find the ideal conditions that allow them to jump to the living tissue of our prize orchids. Such problems can develop more quickly in September than in any other month. September is a month to stay home and be there for your orchids. Look at every plant, every day.

September, above all, is the month that the old Florida growers' adage that "One needs a cat to grow good orchids," holds true. By leaving enough space between plants on a shade house bench for a cat to walk around without knocking them down, one provides the good air circulation which is absolutely essential in periods of protracted wet weather. Well spaced plants are much less likely to encounter disease problems this month. Remember that your plants will have grown considerably over the summer and that the space they occupied comfortably in the Spring has now been filled by their own growth as well as their neighbors. Space them out. Now is perhaps the time to decide to hang some of the larger ones where they will dry much more quickly. The small cute ones left behind on the bench will be very appreciative of the extra air and light.

Another excellent way to increase air circulation and enhance rapid drying is by trimming excess (particularly vertical) branches from all trees which support orchids or are near to orchid growing areas. By increasing the light and air flow one will also garner the benefit of reducing the possibility that such trees will be knocked down in a severe storm. Trees trimmed to permit proper air circulation and light for orchids were frequently the only ones which survived upright after Andrew. As there is rarely time to do such pruning when storm warnings are actually posted and creating extra debris is not then wise, now is the time to protect both your orchids and your trees. Days are shortening quickly now and more hours of rain and overcast skies mean that your orchids will benefit from all the additional light that they can get. Beginning the process of "hardening off" our plants by allowing more light to reach them will give them a leg up on the coming cool weather as well.



## September in Your Orchid Collection, continued

As orchids grown outside are so frequently wet in September, it is often difficult to apply fertilizer or fungicides to the plants because they are already damp. Catch 22! — the plants need extra protection because they are wet and because they are wet one can't apply chemicals to protect them. In these circumstances, many growers find Quaternary ammonium compounds useful. Sold as Phytan, Consan, Greenshield or Triathalon these disinfectants dissolve totally in water and can be applied to wet plants. Strengths vary so follow the label. Although Federal regulations say they should not, many growers substitute the cheap and readily available pool algicide which contain the same active ingredient. Home Depot sells a brand called "Pool Time" which could be purchased legally to disinfect walks and pathways at the rate of 1 to 2 tps. per gallon and would certainly do no harm at that rate, if it came into contact with the orchids no more frequently than every 7-10 days.

This month when those brief periods of dry weather permit growers to think of applying other pesticides, they are tempted to think of giving their starving charges fertilizer as well. This is generally not a good idea with any fertilizer containing phosphorous (the second in the numerical series of three numbers). Phosphorus changes the PH of water and tends to interact with many other chemicals reducing their effectiveness. In September we need as much fire power from our chemical arsenal as we can get. A much better strategy in general to add some nutrients employs potassium nitrate (KNO<sub>3</sub>) 13-0-43 at a rate of 1 tbs per gallon of water. One should ask for the type usually referred to as "spray grade". In general sympodial orchids are reaching the end of their growth cycle as September progresses so a reduction in nitrogen from the potassium nitrate substitution or a missed fertilizer application usually does little harm to orchids grown outside in South Florida. Soft cane dendrobiums of the "Nobile" types will actually benefit from the reduction in feeding. It's time to wean these deciduous types before cutting them off entirely from the grub next month. Vandas and *Phalaenopsis* on the other hand can be fertilized as often as weather permits and will bloom all the stronger for this extra attention in the coming months.

Snails can also be a problem again in September. Even if you earlier used the "lightly, frequently" baiting suggested in July, snails can travel long distances on wet ground in the dull, dark weather of September. Chances are your neighbors have not been as good as you on snail control. So, once more with feeling: snail bait "lightly, frequently" to give a warm welcome to any recently arrived mollusks. With an eye to the heavens (or at least to the TV screen), removing any old boards, empty pots or other debris that might fly about in a storm will also render the humble snails homeless. An opportunity to re-double your virtue and save some precious moments in the face of the storm that we hope never comes!

[Florida Orchid Growing Month by Month](#)



## JOIN THE VAOS FACEBOOK GROUP TODAY!

**Join our VAOS Facebook Group at:**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/VAOS.org/>

- ♦ Provides an interactive environment for members
  - ♦ Ask questions, solve plant problems
  - ♦ Share your ideas and techniques
  - ♦ Show us how you grow
- ♦ Sell, swap or give away plants and divisions

Post your orchid plant photo to our Virtual Plant Table – once a month the member photo that receives the most “likes” receives a \$50 gift certificate to one of our local vendors



### **DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS**

We have a board position open for Director, Communications, responsible for compiling and producing our monthly VAOS newsletter. Board members and other members contribute their newsletter input, saved to our Dropbox files. Our newsletter is produced in Microsoft Publisher and distributed to members using Mail Chimp. It takes about three hours a month,

Please contact Carol Wood at [csec@vaos.org](mailto:csec@vaos.org) if you can help.

# NEW TO Zoom?

Like many organizations, the VAOS is moving to Zoom meetings until we can all safely meet together again. We hosted our first monthly meeting on Zoom on August 5<sup>th</sup> with Fred Clarke presenting from California. We had 85 participants. We are working to produce monthly Growers Clinics on Zoom as well.

If you are new to Zoom, here are some instructions to set up to view our monthly meetings and growers clinics.

- ♦ Download Zoom and become familiar with it. Simply go to [www.Zoom.com](http://www.Zoom.com) and follow the instructions to download to your computer. Once downloaded, you will see the icon on your desktop.
- ♦ VAOS will send you a link to our meeting by email. It will also be available through our Facebook Group page or our website.
- ♦ Log on early for our September 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting so that you can learn your way around. Click to test Audio and Video prior to the meeting start. Our host, Jay Loeffler, will mute all participants during the presentation. You may submit questions for the speaker at the end. During the meeting, if you need to step away, you can click Mute at the left bottom corner of your screen.
- ♦ Download Zoom and get familiar with it. It is a great tool and will allow us to continue our meetings and stay in contact until we can get together again.
- ♦ Here is a tip from Jay Loeffler if you experience connection problems during our Zoom meetings:
  - Rebooting your Router/modem can help with internet connections
  - First, unplug your router and broadband modem from power. (If combo just unplug the one)
  - Then wait about 30 seconds, and plug them back in: first the modem, then the router.
  - Wait a few minutes for them to completely power back on. If your equipment had encountered an error, the restart should fix it and your internet should be back up.



# September Culture Tip



Now is the time to apply time release fertilizer to your plants, if you have not already. We recommend “Dynamite” (13-13-13) sold at Home Depot in the red container in the garden section. Apply at the rate of 1 tbsp. per 6” pot. Sprinkle around the perimeter of the pot and push down into the media. This ensures that a small amount of fertilizer is released with each watering and supplements your regular fertilizing routine. For mounted plants you can wrap this fertilizer in a small damp piece of coconut husk fiber and push down between the plant and the mount. Do not use on those plants requiring a “dry winter rest” such as nobile dendrobiums.

## VAOS GROWERS CLINIC TO RESUME ON ZOOM

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup>, 7PM**

The VAOS Growers Clinic will resume in September, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month. The meeting will be held on Zoom with the Growers Clinic Team members available to answer your questions.

This will be a general meeting to discuss problem plants, culture issues and Fall orchid culture guidelines and advice. Have your questions ready and your problem plants to show the group for advice.

Watch for Zoom log on instructions for this meeting on our Facebook Group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/VAOS.org> or in an email that will be sent prior to meeting.

*Jay Loeffler, Growers Clinic Coordinator*

## CULTURAL NOTE - WATER DOES NOT CAUSE ROOT ROT!

*This may be old news to some of you, but as our level of subscribers has grown from 300 to almost 1300, I thought it worth repeating.*

Many new orchid growers fall into the common beginner trap of thinking that over-watering causes root rot. It doesn't - not directly, anyway. Let me explain:

Unlike terrestrial plants, the vast majority of orchids do much of their gas exchange through their roots, rather than their leaves. That gives us the challenge of 1) providing enough water, while 2) still allowing plenty of air to the roots so that gas exchange isn't stifled.

When we water an orchid, most of the liquid just pours right through the potting medium. Some of it is immediately absorbed by the roots and the medium, but some - called "bridging water" - is held in-between the particles by surface tension, and that's the issue.

If the mix is too fine, either due to small particles or because it is old and becoming too compact, that "bridging" water clogs up too much of the airflow, so the roots suffocate and die. In effect, the issue isn't really "over-watering" as much as it is "under-airing". This, by the way, is the origin of the myth that "orchid must dry out between waterings." If you have a poor potting medium that traps a lot of water and risks suffocating the roots, letting it dry opens up those gas-exchange pathways so the roots can "breathe" again. While watering and waiting for the medium to dry *can* work, it really isn't the best for the plant, so let me offer a better alternative: use a coarser potting medium and water it heavily and often. Big potting medium particles means there will be bigger spaces between them, so less bridging water.

A tip for preparing coarse media (especially bark): Before using it, put some in a colander or other freely-draining container and pour boiling (or at least very hot) water over it, wetting it completely. Wait 15 minutes or so, and do so again. The hot water causes the bark structure to soften and "open up" a bit, allowing it to absorb more water. That second wetting moves that process farther along and really saturates the bark. Once it is cool enough to handle, it's ready to use.

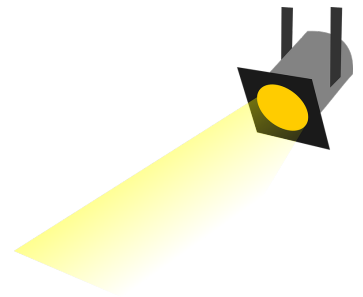
If you did not do this in advance, and have newly-potted plants to deal with, try this instead: put the plant in the sink and really flood the potting medium with lukewarm water. Wait 15 minutes or so and repeat. Water again before the bark fully dries. If you do that for two or three waterings, the bark will have opened up enough to retain more water.

Ray Barkalow, First Rays

[www.firstrays.com](http://www.firstrays.com)

# Show Vendor Spotlight

## Florida SunCoast Orchids



### **2019 AOS Orchid Hybridizer of the Year**

Florida SunCoast Orchids stands for orchid quality, variety and commitment. We have an active hybridizing program and offer many exciting intergeneric crosses. We specialize in growing Cattleya and Encyclia hybrids and we also grow a large number of Cymbidium, Dendrobium, Vanda and Phalaenopsis orchids.

Ebay seller name: FLOrchidsOnline

Greenhouse open by appointment only

<http://www.floridasuncoastorchids.com/>



***Save the date!***

**Florida SunCoast Orchids Open House**

8227 Verna Bethany Rd, Myakka City, FL 34251

October 10th 9a-2p



# Support Our Local Growers and Vendors!

**Honey Bee Nursery**  
2383 Englewood Road (Rt. 776)  
Englewood, FL (941-474-6866)

**Palmer Orchids**  
22700 Taylor Dr.,  
Myakka City, FL 34251(941-322-1644)

**Plantio La Orquidea**  
3480 Tallevast Rd,  
Sarasota (941-504-7737)

**Orchid Envy**  
339 Venice Ave. West,  
Venice, FL (941-266-6351)

**Florida SunCoast Orchids**  
8211 Verna Bethany Rd.,  
Myakka City, FL (941-322-8777)

**Just One More Orchid/Few Of My Favorite Things**  
[www.justonemoreorchid.com](http://www.justonemoreorchid.com)

**Joanna's Orchid Pottery**  
[www.orchidpottery.com](http://www.orchidpottery.com)  
[orchidpottery@gmail.com](mailto:orchidpottery@gmail.com)



## VAOS MEMBERSHIP EXTENDED THROUGH 2021!

The pandemic has disrupted our meetings and activities since March 2020, and it is still unknown when we will be able to get back to normal. Therefore, VAOS will extend membership to all active members through 2021. If your dues are paid for 2020 we will automatically renew your membership through next year.

Please contact Sue Grimmer, Membership Director, if you have questions regarding your membership status. [memb@vaos.org](mailto:memb@vaos.org)

### Treasurer's Report July 2020

<b>Operating Fund</b> Starting July 01, 2020	\$ 3,528.70
+ Income	\$ 20.00
- Payments	\$ 1,366.42
Closing Balance July 31, 2020	\$ 2,182.28

<b>Petty Cash</b>	\$ 75.00
-------------------	----------

<b>Total Operating Fund July 31, 2020</b>	\$ 2,257.28
---	-------------

#### Reserve Fund

Starting Balance July 1, 2020	\$48,172.08
+Interest Income July 31, 2020	\$ 0.40
Closing Balance July 31, 2020	\$48,172.48

Submitted by Judy Loeffler, Treasurer



## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**September 2** (1st Wednesday) - Monthly Meeting via Zoom. Dr. Kristen Uthus Topic: Honey I Shrunk the Orchids

**September 10** (2nd Thursday) - Growers Clinic via Zoom.

**October 7** (2st Wednesday) - Monthly Meeting via Zoom. Tim Culbertson Topic: Laelia purpurata

**October 8** (2nd Thursday) - Growers Clinic via Zoom

**November 4** (1st Wednesday) - Monthly Meeting via Zoom. Alan Koch, Gold Country Orchids. Topic: Angraecums and Their Relatives for the Home Grower

**November 12** (2nd Thursday) - Growers Clinic via Zoom

**December**—No Monthly Meeting or Growers Clinic

**December 13** (Sunday) - Annual Holiday Brunch, Boca Royale Country Club, Englewood. Tentatively scheduled.

## **Ongoing**

**Mentor Program**: help for beginning growers, contact Rick Belisle [Mentor@vaos.org](mailto:Mentor@vaos.org)

AOS Orchid Judging—Check Website for Schedule. **Orchid Judging** takes place at Christ the King Catholic Church, McLoughlin Center – Room C, 821 S. Dale Mabry Hwy., Tampa, FL 33609. at 6:30pm on the fourth Wednesday of every month.

Info: <http://www.fncjc.shutterfly.com/>

**Next Meeting**  
**September 2nd via**  
**Zoom**

## **Contact Us**

**Venice Area Orchid Society**

**PO BOX 443**

**Venice, FL 34284-0443**

## **President**

**Joanna Shaw** [pres@vaos.org](mailto:pres@vaos.org)

## **Membership**

**Sue Grimmer** [memb@vaos.org](mailto:memb@vaos.org)

**Visit us on the web at**

[www.vaos.org](http://www.vaos.org)

**Visit our new Facebook Group at**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/VAOS.org/>

