



Volume 28
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December 2020

CONTENTS

Page 2

Officers, Committees
Treasurer's Report

Page 3

From The Desk of Steve
Mattana

Page 4

Membership Notes
NCOS Quiz

Page 5-7

Phalaenopsis article

Page 8

Member pictures

Page 9-10

Water and pH article

Page 11-12

AOS Webinars & News

Page 13

NCOS library
Book of the month
Quiz Answers



Please note: Dues will be due in January.

Dues are \$20 for a single member, or \$25 for a family living at the same address.

Happy holidays, everyone! We hope you're all staying healthy and safe.

This month we have two articles that we hope will be interesting to you. For the newer growers among us, there's "The Beginner's Guide to Keeping your Phalaenopsis Orchid Alive and Blooming". For those wanting to take their growing to the next level we have "Water and pH" which is good information on how to get some extra performance out of your orchids. We thank HereButNot.com and RepotMe.com for graciously allowing us to share these articles. Please visit their websites for lots more good information.



EXECUTIVE BOARD

OFFICERS

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<u>Past President</u>	Jeff Rundell
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<u>Bulletin (The Keiki)</u>	Julie Smolka and Matt Riesz
<u>E-mail Co-ordinator</u>	Matt Riesz
<u>Historian</u>	Mary Lou Mattana
<u>Librarian</u>	Celeste Ogden
<u>Membership</u>	Arlene Appelbaum, Carol VanderLaan
<u>Publicity</u>	Mary Lou Mattana
<u>Refreshment Table</u>	Volunteers please
<u>Refreshment Reminders</u>	Volunteers please
<u>Show Table Report</u>	Matt Riesz
<u>Speaker Segment Writer</u>	Kara Ramsey
<u>Trips</u>	Sonia Terrelonge
<u>Webmaster</u> (Website set up by Ken Dunn)	Bob East
<u>AOS Representative</u>	Matt Riesz

TREASURER'S REPORT

By Yvette Lewis

Current Report as of 11/17/2020:

Prior balance as of 10/23/2020:	\$9,651.93
Total receipts (raffle, etc.)	-
Total disbursements	<u>(50.00)</u>
Balance as of 10/17/2020	\$9,601.93
Outstanding Checks	<u>(\$190.00)</u>
Cash On Hand 10/31/2020	<u>\$9,411.93</u>



President's Message

From Steve Mattana

Good day everyone

I trust everyone had a happy and fulfilling Thanksgiving holiday with friends and relatives.

After our last windstorm some of us did have some damage on our greenhouses and plants blown around the yard. Hopefully no one experienced any serious damage. I hope everybody's had enough time to re-pot their plants. Now is the definitely time to repot any Phalaenopsis.

If you have greenhouses, be sure to get them ready and start wrapping up in plastic to keep your plants warm for this winter.

We are rapidly approaching the new year. And hopefully by golly it's a better year than 2020. The vaccines will be available shortly for COVID-19 which will be a big relief for everyone.

By the time you read this Hanukkah and Christmas will be knocking at our door. Be sure to protect yourselves while you're out shopping unless you're buying online like we are doing, which is a lot less stressful. We all have to do our part to be safe during Covid.

Get ready for the January meeting that our second vice president has lined up for us with a speaker that we have not seen yet! I am and truly looking forward to seeing Jim Roberts. This will be highly informative plus he's going to bring some nice plants.

Please start thinking about our show. It is scheduled for the last weekend of March. Volunteer sign-up sheets will be at the January meeting. I would love to see everyone's name on them. If you can't make the meeting in January and are interesting in volunteering for the show, please email Mary Lou (lidosmom@gmail.com) with what you would like to do. We are contemplating doing the food a little less cumbersome, we will discuss that at our next board meeting and then check with you in January.

Until next month stay healthy and stay happy stay safe

Steve



Membership Notes for December

By Arlene Appelbaum

For a complete membership list send a message to

ncos2gether@gmail.com.

Also, DUES ARE DUE IN JANUARY. Please come to the January meeting and bring your checkbook. Dues this year are \$20 for an individual member, or \$25 for a family all living at the same address.

MEMBERS:

Arlene has graciously taken over sending get-well cards and sympathy cards to members. If you know of any members who are ill or grieving, please send her an email

to let her know at fluffy2cats@gmail.com

THANK YOU!



NCOS ORCHID QUIZ

Answers on page 13

1. *To bloom, standard cymbidiums require temperatures*
 - A. *Hot in summer*
 - B. *Remain constant*
 - C. *To drop below 8 degrees in winter*
 - D. *Non of the above*
2. *Examples of heat tolerant hybridized cymbidiums are*
 - A, *Cymbidium ensifolium*
 - B. *Cymbidium aloifolium*
 - C. *Cymbidium canaliculatum*
 - D. *All of the above*
3. *One of the most important factors of heat tolerant cymbidiums is*
 - A. *Potting in moss*
 - B. *Light*
 - C. *Mounting*
 - D. *Humidity*
4. *Cymbidiums are commonly known as*
 - A. *Moth orchid*
 - B. *Boat orchid*
 - C. *Slipper orchid*
 - D. *Coconut orchid*

The Beginner's Guide to Keeping Your Phalaenopsis Orchid Alive and Blooming

For people who have never had an orchid (or have already killed a few)

April 22, 2019

By Dustin, at <http://HereButNot.com> : Care Tips for Orchids Aroids & Houseplants

I've spent a LOT of time researching orchid care, but I've found most of the intro advice lacks detail and isn't very helpful for indoor growers. In this post, I am presenting the underlying details for successful orchid care that I use, so that others might experience similar success with their plants.

About my conditions: I live in Canada and grow in a condo that often has very dry air (under 50%)—if you live somewhere humid, take the advice in this site with a critical eye as the conditions I grow in, are not the same as yours.

Nutrients



Plants need food to grow big and strong—but it doesn't have to be complicated. As a starting point, adding fertilizer at 1/4 strength during each watering (that's generally 1/2 tsp/gallon of water) is a good baseline. Any balanced fertilizer will do (20-20-20); but be aware, many orchid ferts are generally geared toward blooming (and less toward growth); MSU Orchid fertilizer is an ideal balanced fertilizer made for orchid growth—but again, “regular fertilizer” (20-20-20) at 1/4 ratio works well too.

A Good Potting Mix

I recommend “Orchid Bark” and a bit of sphagnum moss (if you can find it). A ratio of about 80% bark to 20% sphagnum moss is good because bark allows for good air flow while the sphagnum moss keeps the mix moist a little longer. If you can't find any sphagnum moss, you'll likely have to water more often. It's even better if you can add an additional 30% of perlite or pumice (but if you can't find any, that's okay, just repot every 8-12 months). I also recommend top-dressing each pot with a thin layer (1/8-1/4”) of sphagnum moss; this layer helps keep the base of the plant (where new roots are starting) moist and a little less harsh.

Knowledge is power: I'm big on understanding the overarching concepts in life; it means I don't have to remember every single detail—my brain just doesn't have the space for every little detail...

The takeaway for creating an ideal potting mix (FOR ANY PLANT not just orchids) is to balance organic (water-retentive) media with inorganic (porous) additives and encourage a wet-to-dry cycle where the mix is evenly moist and approaches dryness, but is never allowed to go BONE DRY.

Your goal is to achieve an ebb and flow of water and oxygen through your potting mix and keep the medium evenly moist while also open/well-oxygenated. Stagnant and compact conditions in the mix are bad because it kills roots—when oxygen is low, anaerobic bacteria thrive and that causes problems. Organic media (bark, sphagnum, peatmoss) are more ideal because they hold water and release it over time (increasing humidity around the roots). Organic ingredients also promote beneficial bacteria which can aid in the breakdown of some types of fertilizers into usable compounds. Too much organic media can result in compacting as the medium breaks down over time, so you want to add inorganic and porous additives. Inert or inorganic compounds (such as perlite, pumice, volcanic rock, and charcoal) are helpful because they prevent the media from collapsing around the roots and they promote air circulation and good water flow even if the media starts to degrade.

Some growers use only inert / inorganic potting media (no bark/ no moss), but that **creates challenges** if you're growing in a home where the humidity isn't ideal (under 65% rH). Most orchids aren't lithophytes (plants that grow on rocks); they have adapted to grow better in less-harsh conditions...that's why I'm a proponent of a blended mix over an inorganic mix alone. You need a blend of both organic and inorganic compounds to keep the roots well-hydrated but also oxygenated and healthy – It's a tricky concept, but once you get it, it's pretty much a guaranteed success.

As you get better with understanding each extreme, you'll be able to adjust the ratio of organic and inert materials to customize the drying rate of your media and better-tailor your media to each individual orchid species. For faster drying, add more inert materials. For more evenly moist conditions, add more organic media. Understanding how to adjust these ingredients in your orchid potting mix gives you the ability to ensure the “quick-dry” orchids get an ideal media, while also offering what the “always moist” orchids need, even though you may be growing them side-by-side on the same shelf.

Light

“Low light” doesn't mean “no light”—if you can, place your plant at an East window where it will get some direct sun during the first 4-5 hours of the day (while the sun isn't so hot it will burn the leaves). You want light shining on your leaves where possible, but ensure the leaf-temperature is cool (touch the leaf – if it feels warm, that's not good and you should put up a sheer cloth to reduce the sun's intensity). If you have poorly insulated windows, direct sun can be very hot. Keep in mind, just because you move the plant away from the window (and out of the heat), does not mean it's getting enough light. It's a tricky balance and you need to find the “just right” area where it's bright enough, but not so hot it burns the leaves. When in doubt, use a sheer curtain or UV filter between your window and your plant to screen the sun's intensity; this way, rather than moving them away from the windows into the 100% shadows of your roof, you can actually provide “dappled sunlight” like they would receive in a forest.

A story: I have nearly all my plants directly at the windows. There are 4 plants that are about 6 feet away from the windows – the room is still visibly bright...but those orchids deeper in my room grow much slower and flower less. So my lesson to you: light is the most important aspect of orchid culture. Make sure you provide enough of it, but avoid burning the leaves.

Some growers use artificial lights like LEDs and fluorescents to really drive their plant health forward. It's definitely more than an intro topic, but if you want to know more about lighting for orchids, [check out this post](http://herebutnot.com/tips-for-buying-measuring-evaluating-led-grow-lights-for-orchids-aroids-houseplants/) at <http://herebutnot.com/tips-for-buying-measuring-evaluating-led-grow-lights-for-orchids-aroids-houseplants/>

Hydration

Saving the best for last; the most important aspect of caring for orchids is keeping them hydrated. If your humidity is low, it's not the end of the world provided you can water them at consistent intervals. This doesn't mean you water them more often, and this doesn't mean you let them sit in water for days either. You want the plant's roots to approach dryness at every watering cycle, and THEN you want to water liberally. Wet, then approaching dryness. Wet, then approaching dryness. Get into a regular routine of this wet/dry cycle and you'll have a better chance at success; just make sure the potting media is nearly bone dry in the lower layers before you water again.

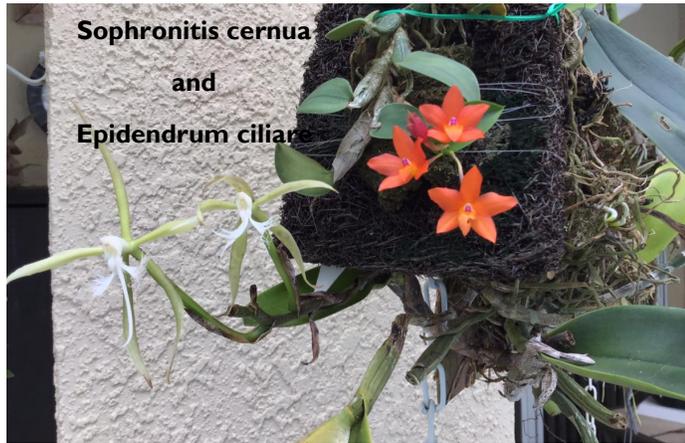
If your potting mix is good (as outlined above), once a week is generally sufficient for a good watering; sometimes smaller plants, or newly potted orchids will need to be watered more often and occasionally old media, or on cool winter weeks you'll have to water even less often. If you're finding the mix is always drying too quickly, you can soak (yes SOAK) your orchid in a bowl of that quarter-strength fertilizer water (mentioned in point #1) for 5-15 minutes. If it's taking too long to dry and it's been a while since you repotted...consider repotting your orchid. Always make sure you drain all the water before you put them back on the shelf.

It's a good idea to thoroughly rinse the bark/pot either before or after you fertilize with regular water. It's a process called, "leaching" your pots. The act of drenching and flushing your orchid pot with "regular water" (no ferts) will continuously get rid of any remaining fertilizer, or salts that otherwise would progressively build up in your mix. If you want to alternate the soaking of fertilizer water one week, to regular water the next, that can also help to reduce the buildup of salt in the mix—I've done both; the trick is to soak the whole pot, then drain. After you've let the plant soak and you've drained it, let it drip-dry for another 10 minutes, and discard any additional water (do this twice for safe measure – you don't want any remaining water sitting in the bottom of the pot); then put it back by the window.

The Nature Coast Orchid Society thanks Dustin and the folks at HereButNot.com for this article. For more details and some great information check out their site at www.herebutnot.com. You can also find them on Facebook



This is a selection of members' pictures from our Facebook page. Look there for more beauties to brighten your day, and please post some of your own!



Water and pH

The following article is reprinted with permission from the wonderful folks at RePotMe.com. Go to their website at www.repotme.com for more informative articles, and [excellent](#) orchid supplies of all kinds.

Water quality is one of the key components of successful orchid growing, and yet many discussions of the issue become very technical very quickly and become virtually incomprehensible. We're going to try here to discuss the issue of water without delving too deeply into the science behind it. First off, there are 4 types of water in general use: rain, RO, tap, and well. We'll discuss each separately as they each present their own unique issues and challenges to the orchid hobbyist. The simplest water to understand is pure water, in the form of rain water or reverse osmosis (RO) water. Water that comes from the municipal water supply, tap water, and well water will have many different dissolved solids and chemicals in it.

The quality of water has a direct relationship with the quality of the fertilizing solution we use on our orchids. We mix fertilizer and water and hope to feed the plants. Unfortunately, if the pH is too high or too low, the orchids will not be able to consume all the nutrients we are giving them in the fertilizer. This can result in nutrient deficiencies even as we are pouring nutrients on the plants! The type of water and the type of fertilizer both have an effect on the pH of the resulting fertilizer and water solution. By far the simplest thing to do is to test the pH of the fertilizing solution. You can get a pH meter but unfortunately those require calibration to be certain the results are accurate. The simplest way to test pH is with pH test strips, simple, accurate, low cost with no calibration required.

There are two primary factors at play when it comes to pH, the pH of the fertilizing solution and the pH of the orchid mix. Once orchid mix has been in a pot with an orchid for a while there is a lot happening that

can have an effect on the pH of the orchid mix. The orchid mix breaks down over time and has fertilizer and water added to it which have their own pH and that leave behind residue. There are several good methods for testing the pH of the orchid mix and commercial growers of all types of crops, not just orchids, typically will test the pH of the mix in the pot every few weeks. One method we are particularly fond of is the "pour-thru" method, since it does not involve disturbing tender orchid roots. About an hour after orchids have been watered, take a plant and pour RO water (or distilled water) through it until a couple of ounces come out the bottom of the pot. This water, called the "leachate" is then tested for pH using a pH test strip.

At the end of the day, it makes sense to keep both the pH of the fertilizing solution and the pH of the orchid mix within the optimal range for nutrient absorption. For most orchids we recommend a pH between 5.5 and 6.0. To lower pH, use Citric Acid. To raise pH use Lime or Oyster Shell. If the orchid mix pH is too high, micronutrient deficiency can occur. Conversely, if the pH of the orchid mix becomes too low, micronutrient toxicity can occur.

Rainwater

Rainwater is what orchids receive in their natural environment. It is a form of pure water in that it has no dissolved solids. Because it has no dissolved solids, it doesn't have anything to "buffer" the effect of fertilizer added to it. This is why when rainwater is used with orchids it is very important to use a fertilizer designed for use with pure water such as our FEED ME! MSU Orchid Fertilizer. Fertilizers that contain Urea as a nitrogen source when used with pure water will become too acidic and will tend to drive the pH of the orchid mix down.

Reverse Osmosis (RO) Water

Reverse Osmosis is a form of water purification which removes dissolved solids from water. Because it has no dissolved solids, it doesn't have anything to "buffer" the effect of fertilizer added to it. Our FEED ME! MSU Orchid Fertilizer is the original fertilizer that was used by Michigan State University in the study of orchid fertilizers. RO water is a form of pure water just like rainwater. Fertilizers that contain Urea as a nitrogen source when used with pure water will become too acidic and will tend to drive the orchid mix down.

Tap Water

Tap water varies greatly across the United States and the world. In some states the tap water is pretty good, low in dissolved solids and quite suitable for use with orchids. In many states, however, tap water has too many dissolved solids. One advantage with municipal water is that many water companies must publish their water quality reports online. Ours is online, our water comes from the Potomac river. In looking at this report we can see that our tap water tends to be hard, it has 120-130 PPM of solids, while our neighbors to the east get the less hard Patuxent water that is softer, around 60-65 PPM. When we measure our tap water it varies from day to day and goes as low as 100 PPM and as high as 200 PPM. As a general rule of thumb water that has less than 100 ppm of solids is good. If water is too hard, one way to reduce the effective hardness of the water is to add Citric Acid. Tap water also may contain high levels of fluoride and chlorine. Levels above 1 PPM are too much and in the case of chlorine, levels above 1 PPM are commonplace. From our water report we can see that our water contains acceptable levels of fluoride but not of chlorine. Luckily Chlorine will evaporate over time or

can be removed with a filter. This is why many folks choose to fill their watering containers and then let them sit for a day before using the water on the orchids. This accomplishes two goals, the chlorine evaporates and the water reaches room temperature.

Well Water

The chemical composition of well water is unique to the well it is drawn from. In order to determine what is in well water, it should be tested before being used on orchids. Once the makeup of the water is understood, the same rules as tap water apply.



Den. Enobi Purple 'Splash'

The American Orchid Society Webinars

Webinars are online video presentations. You can register for an upcoming webinar or watch the recorded webinars any time. Some webinars require you to be an AOS member.

Webinars-Coming Attractions!



When	December 02, 2020 8:30pm EST Wednesday	December 16, 2020 8:30pm EST Wednesday	January 07, 2021 8:30pm EST Thursday	January 13, 2021 8:30pm EST Wednesday
Topic	Greenhouse Chat (Orchid Q&A) <i>Send in your Questions!</i>	Orchid Conservation Projects in Florida and Cuba	Greenhouse Chat (Orchid Q&A) <i>Send in your Questions!</i>	Mounting Your Orchids Best Practices
Presenter	Ron McHatton Chief Education and Science Officer	Lawrence Zettler Biology Professor, Illinois College	Ron McHatton Chief Education and Science Officer	Michael Coronado Production Manager & VP, RF Orchids

Just click on: <http://www.aos.org/orchids/webinars.aspx>
and you can watch these videos at your convenience.



AOS Awards

This month I have chosen a selection of three very different award types from across the USA.

LEFT *Bulbophyllum sanguineomaculatum* 'Irene' CBR | AOS (0 points)

Award No: 20204887 Date: Oct 17, 2020

Northeast Judging Center

Exhibitor: Al & Irene Messina, Photographer: Maurice Garvey

CENTER *Masdevallia minuta* 'Kristen P' CCM | AOS (85 points)

Award No: 20202303, Date: Nov 01, 2020

California Sierra Nevada Judging Center

Exhibitor: Douglas Kubo, Photographer: Ramon de los Santos

RIGHT *Fowlieara Rhizome Cowgirl* 'Little Heifer' FCC | AOS (91 points)

(Brassocatanthe Jack Sloniker x Rhyntonleya Sugita Spots)

Award No: 20201067, Date: Nov 14, 2020

Florida North-Central Judging Center

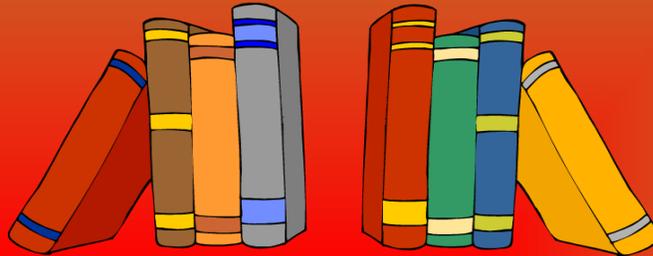
Exhibitor: Bill Nunez, Photographer: Wes Newton

AOS awards are a recognized measure of quality the world over and coveted by hobbyists and commercial growers alike. An AOS flower quality award adds value to an orchid in its own right, and as a parent for creating hybrids. Review the definition of each award here: <https://www.aos.org/orchid-awards-judging/aos-awards.aspx> The diversity of orchids seen in the judging system is awe-inspiring. Check in frequently to view the 100 most recent awards. Orchids are a continuing education.

YOUR ORCHID LIBRARY

By Celeste Ogden

<http://www.naturecoastorchidsociety.com/library-checkout-books.html>



How do I get a book from the Club's Library?

1. Just Click on: www.naturecoastorchidsociety.com/library-alphabetical-list-books.html
2. Select Books or CD's you think would be useful and order right on the web page.

Select any number(s) that you would like to spend some time with and then you can sign them out at the next Members' Meeting Keep them for 1 month and return them at the following meeting and remove your name from the list.

If you have any questions about our Library Books, my email address is: c1948ogden@gmail.com



**Nature Coast
Orchid Society**

The Society meets on the 3rd Saturday of each month, at 1pm, at the Spring Hill VFW Post 8681 18940 Drayton St. at County Line Rd

Enjoy great speakers, fantastic raffle prizes and beautiful orchids on display.

www.naturecoastorchidsociety.com

Answers to quiz

1. C. To drop below 8 degrees in winter
2. D. All of the above
3. B. Light
4. B. Boat orchid

