



THE KEIKI



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Next Meeting



January 24, 2026 - Ryan Kowalczyk will teach us 'How to Groom & Prepare Your Orchids For The Best Presentation'.

This will help us get our orchids ready to display for the March Show. Ryan has spoken at our society before and is an excellent speaker. He is an AOS judge and has been growing orchids for 30 yrs. He often is a judge at our show so he'll definitely be able to give us tips and tricks. Ryan will be bringing plants to sell.

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Hi everyone,

HAPPY NEW YEAR!! After a cold few days between Christmas and New Year's Day, the weather finally looks like it's warming up a bit. One more orchid shuffle completed.

We have some really great speakers coming up this year. Our January meeting will feature Ryan Kowalski, an AOS judge and terrific orchid grower. Extra info on Ryan is he grows hybrid hibiscus as well as orchids. Ryan will tell us about how to prep plants for display in shows and for AOS judging. This is timely since our show this year is in March and **NOW IS THE TIME** to start prepping your plants for their best showing.

At our January meeting we will also have lots of clay pots that were donated to us by Jim and Melana Davison and kindly picked up by Dee and Bryon Provencher. For anyone who asked me to order fertilizer for them from Norman's Orchids, I will have it with me at the January meeting. I may have a few extra at \$20 per container.

February will feature Bill Nunez talking to us about growing orchids from seed to bloom. If we're very nice he might also give a live demo of how to pollinate an orchid. Make your plans now to join us at our meetings! That reminds me: dues are due now. You can come to a meeting and pay with either check or cash. You may also send a check payable to "Nature Coast Orchid Society" to:

Marita Riesz
404 Silas Ct.
Spring Hill, FL 34609

Dues are \$20 for an individual or \$25 for a couple at the same address. I will TRY to have our Square account working such that we can accept payment by card, but I can't promise anything. If you pay by card it'll be slightly more since we would have to cover the Square fees.

Keep your eyes on the weather and be ready for the Orchid Shuffle. My rule is:

Plants like Phal-type Dendrobiums (AKA hard-cane) come inside if the temps will drop below 60 degrees. That means they spend the entire winter indoors for me.

My Vandaceous orchids come indoors if the temps will drop below about 50 degrees overnight.

Everything else (Cattleya, Encyclia, Phalaenopsis, Oncidinae, etc.) come inside if the temps will drop below about 42 degrees.

The Nobile (AKA soft-cane) Dendrobiums and Cymbidiums stay outside unless we're expecting a hard freeze below 32 degrees.

Good luck this year. Make a resolution to try growing something new, just to see if you can do it. Find cool plants at any of the many shows that will happen in the next few months.

Matt

EXECUTIVE BOARD

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NCOS speaker schedule through December 2026

Updated as of 1/1/2026

February 21, 2026 - Bill Nunez, also known as the 'Rhizome cowboy', presents '*Growing Seedlings from Flask to Bloom*'. Bill is such an entertaining speaker, you won't want to miss this. He'll also, by request, do a short overview about how to grow Vanilla. Bill will be bringing plants for us to buy.

March 20-22- Annual Show—The theme is: 'Orchid Artistry' More details to come!

April 25- Repotting Clinic & Picnic at Crews Lake Park. There will be a repotting & mounting demo. Bring 1 or 2 orchids you'd like to repot and get guidance while you're doing it.

May 23- Mike Sands will talk about 'Organic & Inorganic Pest & Fungal Control. Mike owns Tangled Roots Nursery. This is a topic we've all had questions about and Mike will be able to give us some guidance.

June 27- Harry McElroy 'Mr. Cymbidium Man' will come talk to us about growing & blooming warm growing Cymbidiums. Harry has been growing orchids since 1979. He started growing in Ca. and now lives here in Jacksonville.

July 25- Dr. Craig Huegel the USF Botanical Garden Director will be talking to us about Florida's Native Orchids.

August 22- Our Annual Auction

September 12- Keith & Dina Emig 'Winterizing Your Orchids'

October 24- TBD

November 14 - Jim & Melana Davison from Jim-N-I Orchids

December 12 - Holiday Dinner

EXECUTIVE BOARD

COMMITTEES

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<u>Speaker Segment Writer</u>	Denise Provencher
<u>Trips</u>	Volunteers please
<u>Webmaster</u>	Bob East (Website set up by Ken Dunn)
<u>AOS Representative</u>	Matt Riesz

Remind people to bring a box to put any clay pots in



Holiday Party photo: Bryon Provencher

Maurita and Matt both receive AOS Appreciation certificates

Photo: Nancy Huff





Cookies! Everyone got to take home some goodies.

The raffle plants. Huge raffle plants!

Photos: Bryon Provencher



Photos: Nancy Huff



We have a new plaque at our pergola in the Botanical Garden.

Photo: Jeff Rundell



Propagating endangered orchids: some vanishing native orchids are being resurrected in labs

Perhaps no other plant provokes such strong emotions as the orchid. People go to great lengths — some legal, some not — to possess them, with often disastrous results for wild populations.

Although orchids grow throughout the United States, we are lucky in Florida to foster some of the most beautiful, showy and rare examples. Starting in the late 19th century, however, we began loving them to death.

Collectors and plant lovers reaching South Florida tore orchids by the wagonload from live oaks, pond apples, cypress and anywhere else they could reach. They were shipped to buyers looking for pretty, exotic houseplants.

Natives to the sub-tropics, the orchids were not likely to survive for long in a cold, dry city dwelling. So being plentiful and inexpensive, they were simply thrown away when the flowers faded.

Eventually the seemingly endless supply began to run out, so that nowadays you might be hard pressed to find many native orchids in the wild. Habitat destruction for agriculture and housing and cypress logging only compounded the dire situation of our orchids.

Sadly, their scarcity today makes them a target for poachers who sell the now-rare plants at high prices. Consequently, finding wild native orchids is nearly a thing of the past. Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden wants to change that as part of our mission to conserve the world of tropical plants. Fairchild is dedicated to reintroducing species of our native orchids by propagating them in our lab.

Carl Lewis, Fairchild's director, explains why these orchids are not likely to recover on their own: "In the natural process, an orchid produces a seed pod containing thousands of tiny seeds, as small as grains of sand; when the pod opens, the seeds are meant to be carried by the wind to suitable locations for them to germinate.

"An orchid seed's journey on the wind must take it to the perfect location, lodging it on a suitable host tree. The lighting, humidity and temperature must be ideal. They also need to form a symbiotic relationship with a specific fungus to provide the necessary energy to germinate."

However, by growing orchid seeds under idealized laboratory conditions, each seed pod can be nearly guaranteed to produce thousands of offspring.

"Scientists at Singapore Botanic Gardens have been propagating several native orchid species for several decades," Lewis relates. "They've re-established orchids on trees in urban areas. It's been so successful that they are now reproducing naturally on trees in downtown areas in Singapore.

"We are aiming to reintroduce propagated native orchids in urban and suburban areas in South Florida, starting with the butterfly orchid, *Encyclia tampensis* and the cowhorn orchid, *Cyrtopodium punctatum*, both of which grow at Fairchild. Our goal is to produce one million orchids in five years' time to be reintroduced onto suitable trees in these areas."

Growing a million orchids in five years seems mind boggling, but it adds up: One seed pod can produce approximately 12,500 seeds. The Fairchild lab harvests about 16 seed pods a year, which will generate a million plants in five years.

Harvesting and growing the dust-like seeds is no easy task. Susie Lau and Julie Berlin, volunteers in Fairchild's Micropropagation Lab, know this well. They and other volunteers in the Paul and Swanee DiMare Science Village's Jane Hsiao Laboratories have been trained in laboratory procedures and micropropagation, and are attentive to painstaking detail.

First, the orchid seed pod exterior is sterilized to ensure no bacteria, mold, or fungi are introduced that might contaminate and destroy the seeds.

Following a very specific recipe, the volunteers mix the growing medium and pour it into sterile glass bottles.

The seed pod is carefully opened with a scalpel, exposing the seeds, which can then be sown in a bottle. Each bottle is sealed with a foil wrapper, colored to indicate when the seeds were sown, and placed on racks under grow lights.

"It takes about three to four months to actually see something green start to grow inside the bottles," Berlin says.

Every two to four months thereafter, as the tiny grass-like seedlings fill their containers, they need to be gently but quickly removed with a forceps and transferred to a different bottle. The transfer is performed in a sterile cabinet to ensure that nothing contaminates the process.

The lab has about 150,000 individual orchids at different stages of development growing in 1,200 bottles.

"From seeding to the time they can live out of the bottle depends on the species, but it takes about 18 months," Lau said. Just recently, the first seedlings to outgrow their bottles were removed and taken to Fairchild's nursery to continue maturing, she said.

The project is yielding more than rare plants: Fairchild researchers are taking the opportunity to study under what conditions our native orchids grow best, including variables like different growing media and types of lighting. This research will further benefit future conservation, including Fairchild's plans to restore populations of the native dollar orchid (*Prosthechea boothiana*) and cockleshell orchid (*Prosthechea cochleata*).

Since these orchids eventually will be transplanted into public places, engaging the local community is an important aspect of the program. Last October high school students at Terra Environmental Research Institute in Miami received a visit from Fairchild staff, along with a delivery of stainless steel racks, lighting and bottles containing butterfly orchid and cowhorn orchid seedlings. Their task is to raise them, monitoring the ideal amount of light exposure required for healthiest growth.

These students are getting hands-on experience in what it takes to conserve and restore a community of plants. Appropriately, many of these orchids will ultimately be attached to host trees at this and other local schools.

"At about six to nine months after leaving the bottles, the orchids can go back into trees they would naturally inhabit," Lewis says. "We are partnering with local South Florida communities, schools and municipalities to get the orchids into trees in urban and suburban areas. The community will play a large part in the reintroduction."

Researchers hope that growing these orchids in populated areas will support wild populations by providing a source of genetic diversity, as well as supporting the bees and other pollinators these plants will need to reproduce naturally.

It's not too late to restore some of our most vulnerable plants, one million orchids at a time.

To learn more and become a supporter of the Million Orchid Campaign, visit: www.fairchildgarden.org/The-Million-Orchid-Campaign/ or attend Fairchild's Orchid Festival, March 7-9.

This article was written by Kenneth Setzer and originally published on 2/22/14 in the Miami Herald. Minor changes from the print version of this article were introduced to improve readability in a digital format.



Thriving at Fairchild: Orchid seedlings grow in the laboratory. Kenneth Setzer/FTBG.

Webinars - Coming Attractions!

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Greenhouse Chat webinars are recorded and summarized by topic for future viewing.

When	Jan. 08, 2026 Thursday 8:30 pm EST	Jan. 14, 2026 Wednesday 8:30 pm EST	Feb. 10, 2026 Tuesday 8:30 pm EST	Feb. 12, 2026 Thursday 8:30 pm EST
Topic	Greenhouse Chat Orchid Q & A Answers to your questions about all things orchid. <i>Send in your Photos and Questions by Jan. 05</i>	The World of Phragmipediums Part 2— Following decades of hands on research, find out what nature can teach us about growing Phrags.	Greenhouse Chat Orchid Q & A Answers to your questions about all things orchid. <i>Send in your Photos and Questions by Feb. 07</i>	Happy Roots Happy Orchids Get to the root of the matter to help you grow healthy orchids. How to create the ideal orchid root ecosystem.
Presenter	Ron McHatton AOS Chief Education and Science Officer	Frank Cervera Biologist, well established in the Phrag community	Ron McHatton AOS Chief Education and Science Officer	Harvey Brenneise Orchid grower with success in many different environments



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If you haven't paid your annual dues (January through December) yet, please remember to do so. Yearly dues are due by January 1st. Your dues covers not only administrative costs, but also allow the Club to provide wonderful speakers at monthly meetings, the annual picnic and holiday party, as well as other educational opportunities and events, such as the show and auction. Annual dues is \$20 for single individual, or \$25 for household. You may bring your dues to the next meeting. Cash or check.

Current membership is 126.



Editor submission information:

Please send all your regular monthly Keiki contributions to: deemail@tampabay.rr.com by the end of the month to be included in the next month's Keiki. All members are welcome to send items to the editor. Send photos of your orchids, go ahead, show them off! Let us know of any shows or events that members would be interested in attending. Tips, hacks, and great ideas on orchid growing are always appreciated.

Sunshine Messages

Know of a NCOS member needing a little sunshine in their life? Contact Gertie Messenger at choclabs@att.net.

Member Name Tags

If you would like one of the wonderful name tags available to members, please contact Carol at: corvalor21@gmail.com

Cost per name tag is approximately \$9.00 per tag. Exact cost to be determined when the order is put in.