



THE KEIKI



Volume 35
Issue 6
June 2026

Next Meeting:

Meetings held at the: **Homosassa Lions Club, 3705 S Indiana Ave, Homosassa, FL 34448, on the FOURTH Saturday of the month, unless otherwise noted. 11:00am to 12:00pm social hour
12:00PM Meeting starts**

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June 27- Harry McElroy - 'Mr. Cymbidium Man' comes by way of Arkansas & then California. He began growing Cymbidiums in California in 1979. When he moved to Jacksonville in 1991 with 200 Cymbidiums he set out to prove that Cymbidiums can thrive in warm weather. Now he's up to 4000 Cymbidiums & will share his secrets with us. Harry will bring orchids to sell.

President's Message



Hi everyone!

This will be my final message to you all, pending our new board taking over in June. It's been a great four years leading you all and I feel like we've done great things with the club. I'm especially proud of continuing to enhance the reputation of our organization as being very welcoming, helpful and friendly one. We hear that all the time from visitors and speakers. That's mainly because

of all of you, so give yourselves a pat on the back and keep up the good work!

I'm very excited about our future with Susan Kimmel leading us. She has done a wonderful job getting us interesting and fun speakers and I know she'll continue to have great ideas for us to have fun together and learn more about our favorite flowers. She'll need your support and ideas, so don't be shy. I'm not going anywhere and will continue as Susan's first V.P.

Speaking of new fun ideas, we've been doing visits to members' houses and that has been very fun and successful so we'll continue it. Judy Armstrong and Kathleen East will be working on those going forward. We already have the following trips being set up:

June 20th – Bob East and Rachel Herter

July 18th – visit to Accent Orchids and Art Stone Orchids in St. Petersburg. Bret and Ruth Ullery at Accent Orchids will provide lunch

August – just an idea - cocktail evening at a local restaurant?

Watch your email for further details and instructions on how to sign up for these trips.

We also have some great meetings coming up:

June 27th – Harry McElroy "Mr. Cymbidium Man" comes to us by way of Arkansas & then California. He grows over 4,000 Cymbidiums & will share his secrets with us. Harry will bring orchids to sell.

July 25th – Dr. Craig Hegel has 34 years of experience with native plants, education & gardening. He is a Lead Curator for the USF Botanical Garden. Members can bring orchids to sell.

August 22nd – Our annual auction, which looks like it should be a great one this year. We will have lots of very special plants, many of which are donated by growers in our group.

Note that starting in June we'll be at our new location in the Homosassa Lions Club.

Finally, a note on culture. We're entering our wet season, which is desperately needed. But remember that the conditions at this time of year are conducive to fungal and insect infestations. Make sure that water doesn't stand in the crowns of your plants, especially Phalaenopsis. If you do encounter crown rot then you can try to treat it with a product like Physan 20, or you can also use powdered cinnamon. Mites really seem to love hot and humid weather so keep an eye out for them and be prepared to treat with a miticide. Insecticides that you're using for other infestations won't work well on mites because they're not insects.

Keep working on re-potting orchids that need it, so they can have a chance to establish in their new environments. If you make any divisions please consider donating them to us for the auction. I know I have a bunch already.

Best wishes, everyone, and I'll be seeing you all soon!

Matt

EXECUTIVE BOARD

OFFICERS

<u>President</u>	Susan Kimmel
<u>Past President</u>	Matt Riesz
<u>1st Vice President</u>	Matt Riesz
<u>2nd Vice President</u>	Payton Millican
<u>Treasurer</u>	Gertie Messenger
<u>Executive Secretary</u>	Sheri Stipp
<u>Recording Secretary for meetings</u> (not an elected position)	Sheri Stipp
<u>Trustees</u>	Jeff Rundell
	Jeanne Montgomery

NCOS speaker schedule through December 2026

Updated as of 6/1/2026

July 25- Dr. Craig Huegel the USF Botanical Garden Director will be talking to us about Florida's Native Orchids. Dr. Craig Hegel has 34 years of experience with native plants, education & gardening. He is a Lead Curator for the USF Botanical Garden. In addition he has an online blog on native Florida wildflowers & has published several books. Members can bring orchids to sell.

August 22- Our Annual Auction! Orchids of every size, shape & color will be on the auction block. This is a great opportunity to purchase rare & unusual orchids at a discount price. The Orchids are available for viewing at 11:00 & the auction starts promptly at 12:00. Free admission & parking. This is our largest fundraiser for the year & everyone is welcome. Not only is this a fun event but you will learn a lot about orchids. A list of the orchids available for sale will be on our website before the auction.

September 12- Phillip & Liz Hamilton of Bredren Orchids specialize in growing Broughtonia Species & high-quality novelty Phalaenopsis. Their's is a family owned & operated nursery in central Florida & have been in operation since 2012. They're coming to teach us how to grow & flower the Novelty Phalaenopsis. These are different than what you find at your local store. These Phals are bred with long inflorescence, have large flowers & are fragrant. Phillip & Liz will be bringing plants to sell but are offering a 10% discount if you pre-order your orchids online 1 month prior to the meeting.

October 24- Keith & Dina Emig 'Winterizing Your Orchids' Keith is a very entertaining speaker & this is the perfect time to start getting ready for the cold weather ahead before the temps drop. He'll talk to us about which orchids need to be kept drier so they'll bloom in the spring. Which orchids need shelter at which temperature & which orchids actually bloom better if they get cold. He'll answer these questions & more in this talk. Keith & Dina will be bringing plant to sell to us.

November 14 - Jim & Melana Davison from Jim-N-I Orchids will be talking to us about 'Growing & Blooming Australian Dendrobiums'. This is a beautiful group of Dendrobiums that take special growing conditions to bloom. Jim & Melana who are members of the Nature Coast Society, will share the secrets to the success of this unique group of orchids. Between the 2 of them they have over 60 years of growing experience. They're both AOS judges & grow all genera of orchids but specialize in Cattleyas, Dendrobiums, Phalaenopsis, Bulbs & Catasetums. They will be bringing plants to sell.

December 12 - Holiday Dinner

EXECUTIVE BOARD

COMMITTEES

<u>Auction Chair</u>	Susan Kimmel
<u>Show Chair</u>	Melana & Jim Davison
<u>Bulletin (The Keiki)</u>	Denise Provencher
<u>E-mail Coordinator</u>	Judy Armstrong
<u>Historian</u>	Nancy Huff
<u>Membership</u>	Kay Stephenson & Allyson Utter
<u>Merchandise</u>	Carol Kirk
<u>New Members & Visitors</u>	Kathy and Lacy Shawver
<u>Publicity</u>	Sacha Fenimore
<u>Refreshment Table</u>	Annie Aierstock
<u>Refreshment Reminders</u>	Annie Aierstock
<u>Show Table Report</u>	Matt Riesz
<u>Sunshine Greetings</u>	Jeanne Montgomery
<u>Speaker Segment Writer</u>	Denise Provencher
<u>Activities & Trips</u>	Judy Armstrong & Kathleen East
<u>Webmaster</u>	Bob East
	(Website set up by Ken Dunn)
<u>AOS Representative</u>	Matt Riesz

May's Member Home Orchid Garden Tour

The Club's next Orchid garden tour was on May 9th, and it was awesome. Many thanks to our garden hosts who graciously allowed members to view their gardens, and answer endless questions. Many thanks to Susan Kimmell for planning yet another great opportunity for members to learn from other members on how to grow orchids.

Our first stop was Tiffanie Swigart's oasis. Set in a beautiful country location, her home is also a farm complete with turkeys, chickens, a very friendly pig, and lots of fruit trees and raised garden beds. The orchid house is a one-of-a-kind amazing structure built by her husband Caesar, using lumber right off the land.

There were many varieties of orchids, but clearly Tiffanie's fav, the Cattleyas, took center stage. The orchid wall was most impressive, and the whole structure was climate controlled with fans and an evaporative cooler. Guests could picture themselves there sitting with a glass of wine!

Photos: Bryon Provencher, unless otherwise noted



Above: Tiffanie (Right) and her husband Caesar (Left)

Below: The walk under the vegetable arbor to the orchid greenhouse.





Top L: View of the orchid house and surrounding gardens.

Top R: Exterior side of orchid house.

Left: The front of the orchid house.

Right: Climate control systems fan, heater and evaporative cooler.

Bottom: The orchid wall.



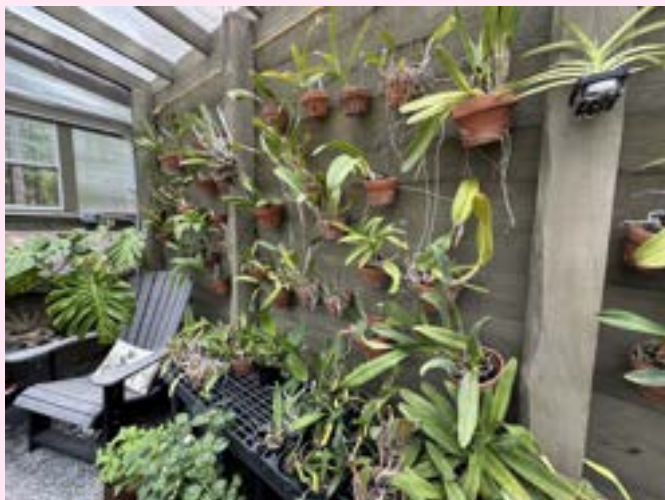


Photo: Nancy Huff



Photo: Nancy Huff

Top L: The orchid wall.

Top R: Inside the orchid house.

Right: Raised beds for vegetables

Bottom left: Tiffanie amid the abundant harvest in the raised beds.

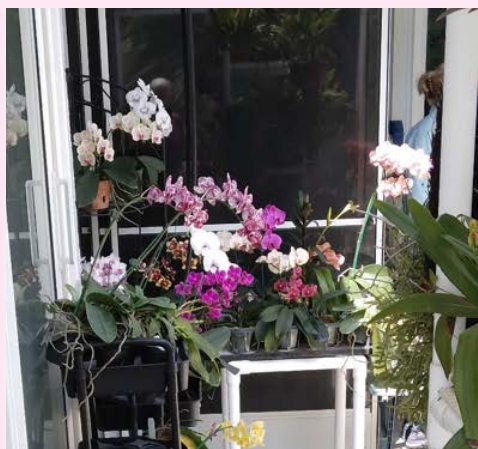
Middle: The Turkeys were certainly strutting their stuff, gobble, gobble!

Bottom right: Isn't he cute? A very friendly pig.

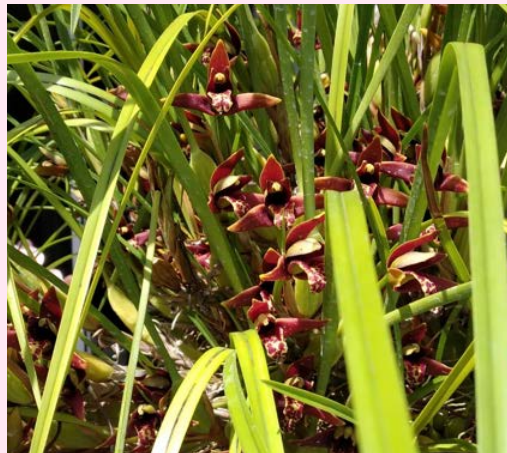
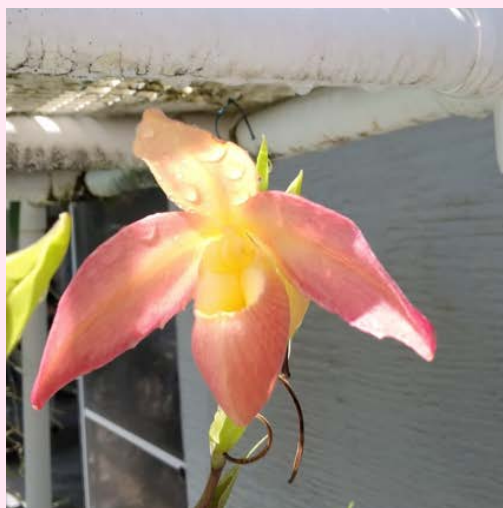


Photo: Nancy Huff





The next stop on the tour was Club President Matt Reisz, and his wife Maurita, to view his poolside orchid oasis. For members who have never been there before, it is a real treat to see such incredible orchid diversity! For those members who have been there, it's different for every visit, as different plants are in bloom at any given time, so it's always exciting.



Photos on this page: Nancy Huff



A riot of colorful flowers always.



Wish you could smell this coconut orchid!

Pesticides, Fungicides and Fertilizers—Organic and Nonorganic

Mike Sands

Photo: Nancy Huff



At May's meeting, Mike Sands of Tangled Roots Nursery in South Florida spoke about pesticides and fertilizers. He covered both organic and non organic types, emphasizing that organics are safer for the homeowner than using harsher chemicals. In fact, for many chemicals you may need training, a license, and full body and breathing protection just to apply them. They are also very expensive. Most of us don't want that.

Whatever products you use, always follow directions to the letter. Using too much product, for example, can certainly hurt your plants.

One product he recommends is Essentria iC3, a combination of herbal oils so safe you can apply them to your pet, or to your plants even in the middle of the day.

Many of us use Neem oil, but that product cannot be applied in the sunny midday or it can burn your plants. Other safer pesticides include: Neem, PyGanic, Captain Jacks, Dr. Earth, and Garden Safe. Some of these are readily available even at big box stores. These products should work well on aphids, thrips, whitefly, mealy bug, and scale.

Important point: If you use lady-bugs, don't use pesticides! Those products will kill your ladybugs.

Use pesticides only when necessary. Isolate where you need to spray, do not spray the entire greenhouse. Always be sure to get under the leaves, that's where the bugs hide.

Mites are very tiny, you may need a magnifying glass. To confirm a suspected case of mites, hold the plant over plain white paper, tap the leaves, and if present, you can see their tiny bodies moving on the plain paper. Use a miticide.

For fungus:

Always remove any plant parts affected with black or brown rot. Cut past the affected areas. Treat the cuts with cinnamon. If allowed to continue growing, rot will kill the plant when it reaches the crown. Remove affected plants from the media and hang upside down. This stops progression of the fungus.

Rotate between 3 different fungicides. Fungus, like insects, become resistant too.

Zinc and copper are used for fungus control, but a simple application of 1 teaspoon of baking soda to a gallon of water works great, and is safe to use. Use once per month

Fertilizers:

One of Mike's favorite's is from Fox Farms, and Superthrive, Miracle grow, Seaweed, Schultz, and Southern Ag are also good options.

And remember: if your water system uses reverse osmosis , the water is stripped of it nutrients and min-

Some Informative Slides from Mike's Presentation

Photos: Nancy Huff

Macronutrients	Micronutrients
Carbon (C)	Iron (Fe)
Hydrogen (H)	Manganese (Mn)
Oxygen (O)	Boron (B)
Nitrogen (N)	Molybdenum (Mo)
Phosphorus (P)	Copper (Cu)
Potassium (K)	Zinc (Zn)
Calcium (Ca)	Chlorine (Cl)
Magnesium (Mg)	Nickel (Ni)
Sulfur (S)	Cobalt (Co)
	Sodium (S)
	Silicon (Si)

Plant's needs

- Look for well balanced fertilizer
- Read labels
- Don't over exceed label rate

Fertilizers (liquids)

- Fox Farms Products
 - Superthrive
- Miracle Grow
 - Seaweed
- Southern Ag
 - Schultz

Fertilizer (water soluble)

- Fox farms
- Miracle grow
 - Jacks
 - Peter's
- Southern ag

Fungicide Organic

- Bonide 775 Copper Fungicide
 - Fung-onil
- Dr. Earth Ready to use
 - Grower's Ally
 - Garden safe
- Southern ag products
 - Bonide Mancozeb
 - Manzate

May's Raffle Winners

Photos: Bryon Provencher



May's raffle winners! Left: Susan Kimmell - winner of the Facebook raffle. Vince Giunta, (right) winner of the member's raffle.

Facebook Picture Raffle Information

Each month there will be a contest to get a free orchid at each meeting.

Here's how it works:

1. Take a picture of yourself holding one of your orchids. YOU must be in the picture with the orchid.
2. Send the picture to Barbara Brown at ranbar03@verizon.net including your name & the name of the orchid.
3. Barbara will make a raffle ticket for your entry, and also put your picture on our Facebook group page.
4. We will draw from the raffle tickets at the next meeting to see who wins the raffle orchid.

That's it! There is no limit to the number of pictures of you with an orchid. Each one will entitle you to another raffle ticket. Watch our Facebook page for the posts, and feel free to put up your own posts of orchid pictures (we all love to see them!!)

Member's Raffle Information

To be entered into the member raffle at each meeting, simply sign-in on the members attendance sheet at each meeting.

	A	B
1	NCOS Show Table 5/23/2026	
2	Name	Grower
3	Den. parishii var. petaloid X Den. Hsinying Sweet Scent	Payton Millican
4	Max. tenuifolia 'Yamada' AM/AOS	Matt Riesz
5	Prosthechea cochleata	Payton Millican
6	Renanthera philippinensis	Lacy & Kathy Shawver
7	Vanda louvillei	Payton Millican
8	Vanda Suwannaphum Sunshine	Nancy Huff
9	Aeridea Hybridum (Aerides rosea x Aerides multiflora)	Herb May
10	Vanda Wirat Gordon (V. Wirat X Vanda Gordon Dillon '#655')	Herb May
11	Brassavola perrinii	Matt Riesz
12	Rlc. Yen Surprise 'Seiko'	Bella Roberts
13	Encyclia Sol De Esperanza	Bella Roberts
14	Cattleya purpurata	Bella Roberts
15	Rlc. Hawaiian Prominence 'America'	Lacy & Kathy Shawver
16	Paphiopedilum Hybrid (yellow)	Herb May
17	Phalaenopsis Hybrid	Jackie Morse
18	Phalaenopsis Hybrid	Jackie Morse
19	Encyclia Summer Stars 'Jungle Night'	Bella Roberts
20	Rmy. Suncoast Summer Cooler	Susan Kimmel
21	Grammatophyllum scriptum var. dwarf	Payton Millican
22	Dendrobium Caesar (Green)	Payton Millican
23	Brassidium Kenneth Bivin 'Santa Barbara' AM/AOS	Matt Riesz
24	Epidendrum magnoliae	Payton Millican
25	Rhyncholaelia digbyana 'Alpha' AM/AOS	Matt Riesz
26	Paphiopedilum Greyi	Matt Riesz
27	Bulbophyllum bicolor	Matt Riesz
28	Restrepia striata	Ashley Price
29	Dendrobium Sakol Blue	Nancy Huff

May's Show Table

Photos: Bryon Provencher



Epidendrum magnoliae



Rhyncholaelia digbyana 'Alpha' AM/AOS



Paphiopedilum Greyi

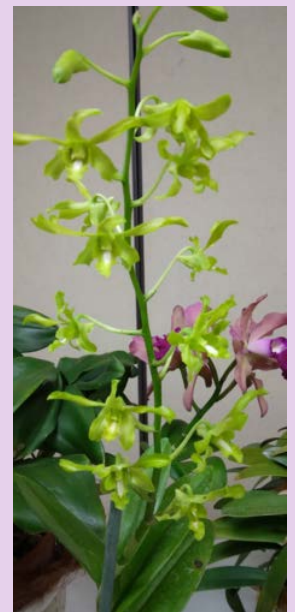


Brassidium Kenneth Bivin 'Santa Barbara' AM/AOS



Above: *Bulbophyllum bicolor*

Below: *Grammatophyllum scriptum* var. dwarf



Above Left: *Restrepia striata*

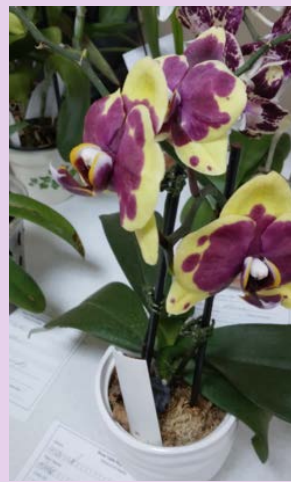
Above Right: *Dendrobium Caesar* (Green)

Left: *Rmy. Suncoast Summer Cooler*



May's Show Table

Photos: Bryon Provencher



Phalaenopsis Hybrid



Phalaenopsis Hybrid



Paphiopedilum Hybrid (yellow)



Rlc. Hawaiian Prominence 'America'



Cattleya purpurata



Rlc. Yen Surprise 'Seiko'



Above: Brassavola perrinii



Vanda Wirat Gordon (V. Wirat X Vanda Gordon Dillon '#655')



Left: Encyclia Sol De Esperanza

May's Show Table

Photos: Bryon Provencher



Aeridea Hybridum (Aerides rosea x Aerides multiflora)



Renanthera philippinensis
Den. parishii var. petaloid X Den. Hsinying Sweet Scent



Vanda louvillei



Prosthechea cochleate

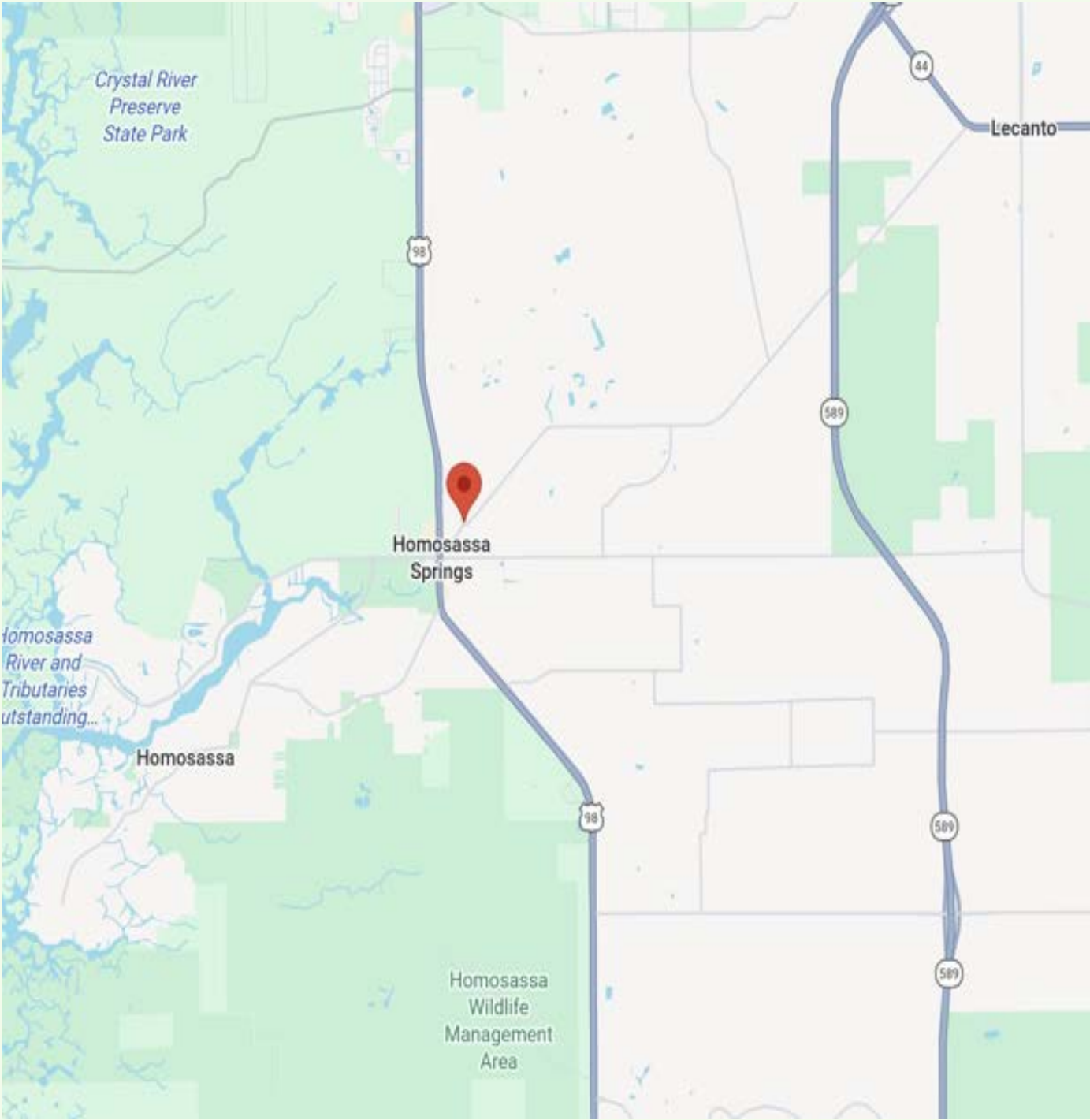


Max. tenuifolia 'Yamada' AM/AOS



Dendrobium Sakol Blue

Map of the new meeting location



Webinars - Coming Attractions!

REGISTRATION IS EASY www.aos.org/webinars

Cannot make it on the scheduled date and time? No need to worry.

Register now and view on your time schedule.

Send Your Greenhouse Chat Questions and Photos to: greenhousechat@aos.org
Greenhouse Chat webinars are recorded and summarized by topic for future viewing.

When	May 05, 2026 Tuesday 8:30 pm EDT	June 11, 2026 Thursday 8:30 pm EDT	All Greenhouse Chats	Future Webinars
Topic	<u>FREE Live</u> Greenhouse Chat Orchid Q & A Answers to your questions about all things orchid. <i>Send in your Photos and Questions by May 02</i>	<u>Members Only Live</u> Hybridizing and Growing Catasetums Learn from the experienced growers with approximately 145 registered hybrids.	<u>FREE Recorded</u> Greenhouse Chat Orchid Q & A Search answers to your questions about all things orchid. View twelve years of Greenhouse Chats.	In Search Of Webinar Presenters You are invited to share <i>your</i> orchid knowledge with an enthusiastic audience of thousands. Contact webinar organizer for details. greenhousechat@aos.org
Presenter	Ron McHatton AOS Chief Education and Science Officer	Scott Elliott Hybridizer Maleki Hill Orchids	Ron McHatton AOS Chief Education and Science Officer	Expert Growers, Hobby Growers, AOS Judges, Scientists, Biologists and YOU!



Webinar announcements are posted on the AOS website,
on Facebook and Instagram,
and in the AOS Corner of your Affiliated Society's newsletter.

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WEBINAR
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Flowers, memories and blue ribbons: Orchid grower Charles Thomas treasures plants — and the people connected to them

By **NANCY KENNEDY** Chronicle Reporter (reprinted with permission)

May 27, 2026 Updated May 27, 2026

Every evening, Charles Thomas enters his greenhouse to visit his friends — some he's had for 50 years. They're from Thailand, the Philippines, South America and other faraway places. Ferns and violets, begonias and plants with giant leaves. And hundreds of orchids. White and buttery yellow, blood red, every shade of pink and purple imaginable. Spotted and speckled — some so strange-looking they almost don't look like flowers.

"They say flowers are God's autograph — Nature smiling," Thomas said as he gave a tour of his greenhouse. "Flowers are part of our special occasions — weddings, funerals, love gifts. "Flowers make you feel good. Maybe it's the oxygen."

Thomas especially loves his orchids. He recently brought home 26 first-place blue ribbons from the county fair. This is a *Paphiopedilum* orchid, commonly known as a "lady's slipper." These orchids are highly prized by collectors for their remarkably long, dark and spirally twisted petals, which can reach up to 36 inches in length.

"My grandmother grew orchids and African violets — she was a great grower," he said. Thomas inherited her green thumb. "I actually wrote a paper in eighth grade about being a fern expert," he said, laughing. "When I was in dental school at the University of Florida, my wife and I grew plants in our apartment on the porch — a collection of 300 ferns."

A fellow dental student gave him a wild Florida native orchid plant, and shortly after that he bought 25 "very cheap" orchids at a garage sale. "One was a wild one from Costa Rica," he said. "I fell in love with it when it bloomed and am still growing that species 50 years later."

More than plants

As Thomas walks through the rows in his greenhouse, plucking dead leaves or blooms, he pauses to comment on his "friends." "This is one of my very favorites," he said. "It's not especially colorful. But I've had this plant for 49 or 50 years. My kids are 44 and 40, so I had this before I had my kids." He stops at another plant. "This — see the dots and stripes? This is the parent of these dotted little ones." He knows the lineage of his plants and can tell parents from children, talking about brothers and sisters.

"This one was a gift. It's a wild vanilla from the pineapple family."

He points out the lady slippers — orchids that actually look like a lady's slipper.

One orchid looks like a giant yellow-and-crimson-striped insect. Others look like clusters of colorful children singing.

An average orchid plant blooms once or twice a year, and each bloom usually lasts two to four weeks, Thomas said.

With so many plants, there are always dozens in bloom at any one time.

"I don't sell them anymore," he said. "They bloom and go to my dental office in Homosassa and my church. We give small orchid flower arrangements to all our lady dental patients at each visit."

Remembering people

Thomas said many of his plants have special meanings to him.

"I have plants from my grandmother and some given to me by so many patients," he said. "I raised plants from seed crosses that I made." When he waters them, he says thanks to each person who gave him a plant. "I say, 'Thank you, Bob. Thank you, Alex. Thank you, Doris.'" "When I get to my grandmother's plants, I say, 'Thank you, Ya Ya — I love you.'"

Photo: Nancy Kennedy



Member's Home Orchid Garden Tour June 20th

The next Member's Home Orchid Garden Tour will be on Saturday, June 20th 10am to 2pm. Visit 2 very unique tours in Sugarmill Woods and Homosassa.

RSVP Judy below to sign up to attend. She will forward you the addresses and details on both locations. You don't want to miss the opportunity to see these grower's gardens!

Bob & Kathleen East

Bob's been growing orchids for 40 years and his current collection includes an eclectic assortment of 100 orchids on a small, 20ft x 22ft screened patio. An avid DIYer, Bob has installed an overhead sprinkling system and uses bakers shelving to wheel his orchids around in inclement weather. Using a homemade cover and simple heating elements, his orchids remain on the patio in cold weather [unless it drops below freezing]. Just simple, inexpensive solutions for orchid gardening.

Rachel Herter

Rachel is an artist as well as an orchid collector and when you enter through the front door, her artwork surrounds you. [She will even show you her studio, if you ask.] She artfully mounts and displays her orchids on her lanai, but the bulk of her 200+ orchid collection is outside under a partially covered pergola, near a large, open deck. While dendrobiums are her favorites, she also grows epidendrums, cattleya's, phalaenopsis, and cymbidiums

Light snacks and lots of ice-cold water will be served at both locations.

Please RSVP By June 12. Details will be provided upon receipt of your attendance request.

Judy Armstrong

727-410-6635

NCOS0920@gmail.com



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 **Jeanne Montgomery** curlyhs@gmail.com.

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.