



# The Orchidist

September 2006 - Volume 3 Number 9

Published by the South Florida Orchid Society

## President's Message

Dear fellow members,

I'm sorry to have missed our last meeting and regret not seeing all of you. I know we're all looking forward to the end of summer and the beginning of our fall, i.e. orchid event, season.

I want to remind everyone that Speakers Day is fast approaching. This is one of our major events of the year and I know you don't want to miss it. Be sure to buy your tickets now! We have another fabulous line up of world-renowned speakers and I know it's going to be a very enjoyable day.

Of course, our plans are also well underway for our 62nd Miami International Orchid Show™ in March. Our Show Chairman, Richard Brandon, plans to have our beautiful show posters ready for the October meeting. Plan now to enter your plants, place a display and volunteer to help out at the show!

See you all at the meeting,

Sincerely,  
Robert Fuchs  
*President*

### NO REFRESHMENTS THIS MONTH

Marlene and Charlie Clark are taking a well deserved vacation this month. If you would like refreshments at the next meeting, please bring something to share with all in attendance. The Club will not be providing anything.



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## September Program: "Pests and Diseases"

*presented by Dr. Robert McMillan*

This month we will be honored to have Dr. Robert T. McMillan, Jr., Professor Emeritus/Plant Pathologist, speak to us about the various pests and diseases that can attack our orchid plants.

Dr. McMillan was born and raised in Miami. After studying mechanical engineering at the University of Miami, he served in the U.S. Army for two years. He returned to the University in 1957, but as a student of Botany, and received his first degree in 1961. He went on to receive a Master of Science degree in Botany from U of M, followed by a PhD in Plant Pathology from Washington State University in 1967.

Through his research Dr. McMillan has described numerous plant pathogens and their control methods and has become known as a leading authority of diseases of ornamentals, fruits and vegetables in the tropics. He has patented two biological agents which have shown promise for the control of plant pathogens.

As an Emeritus Professor to the University of Florida and Miami-Dade College, Dr. McMillan teaches plant pathology with an emphasis on orchid diseases and other ornamental plant disorders.

He is currently the Director of Research and Development for Kerry's Bromeliad Nursery in Homestead, where he develops disease control strategies and production practices for orchids and bromeliads, and for Twyford International tissue culture laboratory, where he deals with issues of tissue culture advancement and plant contaminants.

Don't miss this opportunity to learn from a true expert in this field. This is a fabulous chance to improve your orchid care expertise. Be there!

The plant table for the evening will be provided by Amazonia Orchids. Please support our sponsoring vendors.

Michael Coronado  
*Program Chairman*

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### WHEN CLASSES MEET

**All Classes are on Saturdays — 10 am–12:30 pm**

### SEPTEMBER CLASSES:

#### September 2 — Orchids A to Z

Instructor: Dot Henley, avid orchid grower since 1976, editor of the Ft. Lauderdale Orchid Society newsletter, volunteer at the AOS Visitors Center and Botanical Garden

There's no better way to explore the fascinating world of orchids than with Dot Henley as your guide. This teacher, whose passion for orchids is contagious, will present the diverse groups that make up the orchid family. From Angraecum to Zygopetalum, students will find out what makes each unique and what they require to grow and flower.

#### September 9 — Orchids 101

Instructor: Bonnie Bellavance, AOS Student Judge and volunteer in the greenhouses at the AOS Visitors Center and Botanical Garden

Newcomers to orchids will value their time spent with Bonnie Bellavance, who makes it easy to grasp the basics of orchid care. Discover how to choose plants, what they need — water, light, fertilizer, temperatures — and how to grow them beautifully.

#### September 16 — How to Grow Phalaenopsis

Instructor: Carlos Fighetti, AOS vice president and founding member International Phalaenopsis Alliance, Puerto Rico

Carlos Fighetti has grown incredible eye-catching specimens of Phalaenopsis — the moth orchid — both in a greenhouse in New Jersey as well as at his new home in Puerto Rico. With experience raising these orchids in both the north and tropics, he's well versed in what's necessary to nurture plants into award-winning specimens. Come learn about the care of phalaenopsis — watering, fertilizing, light, media and more — as well as potting. From seedlings to flowering-size champions, here's the place to learn the secrets of success with phalaenopsis.

#### September 23 — Pedilonum Dendrobiums

Instructor: Greg Allikas, member AOS Publications Committee, professional photographer widely published in magazines and books, including World's Most Beautiful Orchids, West Palm Beach, Florida (Web site www.orchidworks.com)

The Pedilonum section of the genus Dendrobium contains about 45 species scattered across the South Pacific and Southeast Asia. Many of them, such as Den. bullenianum, Den. goldschmidtianum and Den. smillieae, produce dense clusters of colorful flowers on deciduous canes. This class will look at some of the low-elevation species that are suited to the South Florida climate, as well as a few marginal species in the related sections Calcarifera and Calypetrochilus. After the slide survey, Greg Allikas will discuss potting and other cultural considerations for successfully growing these rewarding orchids.

#### September 30 — Orchids in the Garden

Instructor: Nick Ewy, greenhouse manager, AOS Visitors Center and Botanical Garden

In South Florida's subtropical climate, many orchids can be grown in pots on the patio, on a tree or even naturalized in the garden. Join Nick Ewy as he demonstrates how to integrate orchids into your garden. He will present a slide show followed by a walk through the AOS campus to educate and inform participants how to bring orchids into their home gardens.



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## UPCOMING MEETINGS

### October

"Angraecums: Madagascar Specialties"

by Max Thompson

Plant Table: Carmela Orchids

### November

"Basic Orchidology – Growing Dendrobiums, Phalaenopsis, Vandas and Cattleyas" by Matt Godlove

Plant Table: Godlove & Son Orchids

### December

Holiday Party - Sunday Night, December 3rd,  
Signature Gardens

## Platystele Mini-Orchids

*reprinted from Bella Online*

This genus, related to the Pleurothallids, has approximately 50 species of small epiphytic species with paddle-shaped leaves. They grow in the cloud forests of Mexico to Peru and are generally in the micro-miniature or mini-mini size range with tiny flowers. Many of these plants only have one-inch or 3 centimeter leaves and their tiny flowers are sometimes 1/16 of an inch or 3 millimeters across. For this size plant, a magnifying glass is helpful to really enjoy these tiny treasures. Some hold their flowers on long inflorescences above the leaves, and some seem to flower down in the leaves. The one thing they have in common is that the flowers are borne sequentially so that they can be enjoyed for the greater part of the year. We will concentrate here on two of the more popular species *Platystele compacta* and *Platystele stenostachya*.

*Platystele compacta* is the type species for the genus. It is found in mostly in Costa Rica as an epiphyte. It is truly tiny -- the leaves are only about .5 inches or 3-4 centimeters long with the flower spikes holding the .25 inch or 3-4 millimeter yellow flowers about 4 inches or 10 centimeters above the top of the leaf mass. The name was given to draw attention to the fact that the flowers are all held on top of the inflorescence and when it is flowering they look like little tufts. It is a creeping plant and will form nice clumps that flower year long under the correct conditions. It is perfect for terrarium use if you can keep the temperatures cool enough. They should be grown in pots or mounted in moderately shaded areas.

*Platystele stenostachya* is an unusual member of its genus in that there are two forms of the species known -- one from Mexico and Central American and the other from Venezuela, Columbia and Bolivia. Both produce thin inflorescences which begin to flower between the leaves but lengthen and continue to flower above the leaves. The leaves are .5 inches or 4-5 centimeters long with the inflorescences moving above the leaves as the flowers are produced sequentially. The tiny 1/16 inch or 3 millimeter bright yellow, crystalline flowers are produced all year, but most heavily in the late summer and fall. The growing habit of this species, as the one above, is to form dense mounds with the flowers held slightly above the plant. The northern or larger form of the species is a more vigorous grower, but both types flower nicely in cultivation. I've read that this is a hot to cool grower, but most experts seem to do better with intermediate to cool temperatures. These plants should be grown in pots or mounted and would also be good candidates for terrarium use.



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# ORCHIDOPHILOS

By Tom Sheehan

Reprinted from March, 1982 Orchidist

Greenhouse sanitation or cleanliness is one aspect of greenhouse culture that is often overlooked or paid slight attention by many growers. Unlike spring cleaning which comes but once a year, greenhouse cleaning is a continuing operation year round. How often have you walked through a greenhouse and seen dead flowers and leaves on plants or strewn beneath the bench, or even weeds so thick it was hard to find the plants? These situations do exist and can cause a grower untold problems both from a disease and insect aspect. Yet these need not occur as it only takes a few minutes of tidying up every time someone is in the green house to eliminate these problems.

Dead flowers on the plants or under the bench could be and often are literally covered with botrytis spores (that grey mold-like growth) and become a potential source of innoculum for all the rest of the plants in the greenhouse. When you cut such a flower, or even try to pick it up, you scatter a myriad spores throughout the greenhouse. Had the flower been removed earlier as it was going by, the source of innoculum would have been eliminated. The dead leaves are also an excellent source of innoculum, especially if their demise was caused by a fungus. If these flowers and leaves are not removed, every time it rains or you water the plants the splashing water helps scatter the spores to other plants spreading the infection potential around the greenhouse. Bacteria can also be spread by splashing water. Usually. By the time the untrained eye detects the spore masses, the damage may already have occurred, so why wait until you see spores? Get to the root of the problem and nip it in the bud.

When flowers start to go by, remove them. The same holds true for leaves and when they turn yellow, remove them. This not only helps the plants, but also removes potential sites for fungus or bacte-

*Continued on next column*



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rial innoculum to build up. Unfortunately, the debris often winds up in a bucket near the greenhouse door or in a pile just outside of the greenhouse where it often remains for a long period of time and is a readily available source of reinnolulation into the greenhouse.

All debris as it is removed from the greenhouse should be carried off and disposed of. If you live in an area where refuse is collected, place the debris in a plastic bag and let it be picked up to be incinerated with the rest of the trash. If you dispose of your own trash you should burn all your debris. Putting it on the compost pile may only help increase the spore population.

Weeds in the pots or growing under benches often mask insect infestations or even fungus spots on the leaves and the orchid plants may be beyond saving before the problem is discovered. The weeds are also using nutrients at the expense of the plants, thus weakening the plants and making them more susceptible to disease or insect attacks. A good grower will not let weeds build in his pots or even under the benches.

Another potential area often overlooked in all the old roots that remain on the benches or greenhouse walls when plants or pots are removed. These, too, should be removed and the benches fumigated with one of the good disinfectants to eliminate any spores, bacteria or fungi that may be established on debris on the bench.

Pots are another place wherein sanitation is often overlooked. Some growers leave used pots lying around and then reuse them without cleaning. They figure that after being idle a while there is no problem in reusing them. These pots can still be sources of innoculum of a number of pests and should not be used until clean. Pots can be cleaned by soaking over night in a strong Clorox solution, or boiled or steamed in a tank of water. The biggest problem in cleaning pots is the removal of the tenacious roots of the orchids. It often takes a wire brush to remove them and it is important that they be removed. Recently I saw some used clay pots that were extremely

*Continued on page 5*



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clean with no evidence of roots or algae what so ever. When I asked the grower how he did it he said he burns them. He builds a stack of pots, mounds wood around it and lights it. He winds up with clean clay pots and charcoal, too. Not a bad deal!

These steps will not make your greenhouse 100% pest free as spores and insects can blow in from outside, but if proper sanitation is maintained the potential for infestation arising in your greenhouse should be reduced considerably. If we all take a few added precautions we may some day find that viruses and diseases are no longer a serious problem for orchid growers. We may never completely eradicate the problem, but we can minimize it to a point where infestation will become a rarity.

A clean house and clean plants will mean better plants and more flowers to enjoy. - 3823 SW 3rd Avenue, Gainesville, FL 32607



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## ORCHID TRIVIA

*reprinted from March, 1982 Orchidist*

If asked, "What firm was the first commercial American orchid nursery in the U.S.?" ninety percent of the answers would be Lager and Hurrell. Not so! Pitcher and Manda in Short Hills, New Jersey, were the first commercial American orchid growers. John Lager worked there from 1889-1896 before buying Sanders of England and starting the firm of Lager and Hurrell.

In one of Merrill Lynch's TV commercials, their star bull, Merrill, is show walking delicately through a large greenhouse filled with orchids and other plants. Not shown is the bull's fancy for cymbidium orchids. He ate thousands of dollars worth of the plants, some valued at \$500 each! In a later ad the bull is show pawing through a haystack in search of the proverbial needle. Not shown is his lady friend, Sarah, standing directly behind the hay, the clue to his eagerness.

In my favorite TV "soaper", "The Guiding Light", a character, showing off the orchids in his greenhouse, says. "This beautiful phalaenopsis is found in the rainforests of Brazil". Obviously the scriptwriter did not do his homework! -- I. W. V.



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**SFOS Meeting Schedule**  
 Wednesday, September 20, 2006

**Fire Fighters Memorial Building**  
**8000 N.W. 21st Street**  
**Miami, Florida 33122**

7:30 pm - Registration & Judging of Plants  
 7:45 pm - Announcements  
 8:00 pm - Program  
 8:45 pm - Refreshments  
 9:00 pm - Awarded Plants Discussed  
 9:15 pm - Raffle

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## Volunteers Needed

The 19th World Orchid Conference needs your assistance and expertise. Be part of the planning for the prestigious and much-anticipated event which is coming back to the United States for the first time in two decades.

We are looking for volunteers to participate on the Advertising Subcommittee. We want members who know our community and know who we want to reach. We are looking for creative, enthusiastic individuals that can help us create the advertising plan for the 19 WOC. Please contact either Janett McMillan at [jmcmillan@devc.com](mailto:jmcmillan@devc.com) or Amy Simons at [director@WOC19.com](mailto:director@WOC19.com) to let them know you want to be part of the team!

## Roots & Water

*By Alfred W. Ashton*

In cattleya culture we know that healthy plants have healthy roots, but we should also remember that it takes healthy roots to make healthy plants.

One cannot stress enough the importance of roots in successful orchid culture. True, it takes a fresh potting medium and a carefully studied water schedule to produce healthy and vigorous roots. Light, heat, humidity, air circulation cannot be overlooked, but "growing healthy roots" seems to be the basic secret of producing fine blooms.

It has often been said that cattleyas should be watered "when they need it." The general appearance of the plant, the weight of the pot, etc., will tell you when the plant needs water. Remember, however, that water enters the plant through the roots and only when the root system is healthy can the water be absorbed by the plant. Consequently, watering a pot does not necessarily mean that the plant absorbed any water; only if the roots on the plant

are healthy will the plant absorb water. Watering at the right time will keep your roots in water-absorbing condition; watering too often, too copiously or watering a plant in broken-down potting material will rot the roots and thus cut off the possibility of your plant's getting its needed supply of water. Result, shriveling of pseudo bulbs. When this condition occurs, place affected plant in shady spot. Spray overhead to retard dehydration and encourage new root growth.

In mild cases of root-tip rot, stop watering, but spray overhead. This will encourage lateral root breaks. When roots once more 'dig in' resume watering

Schedule, always being careful not to water too freely. When in doubt, do not water. More harm can be done by "over" than by "under" watering. Prolonged under-watering will be evidenced by pseudo bulb shriveling. When this condition occurs alter your watering schedule. Refrain, though, from following the same schedule "Joe Doaks" uses. His growing conditions might be quite different from yours. Your own schedule should be predicated upon the amount of evaporation in your green house; shading, type of heaters, location and use of vents and air circulation will all affect the amount of water your plants require. Definitely refrain from watering every Saturday, simply because it is convenient; this schedule may be followed for mowing your lawn, but would be very detrimental to the welfare of your plants. Frequent spraying of plants, benches, and walks is recommended, though refrain from spraying after 2 p.m.

A good tip to remember: when roots are dry they appear white; when waterlogged they appear greenish, turning white again when in need of moisture.

Form the habit of carefully scrutinizing the roots of your plants. This will pay you handsome dividends. Plants cannot tell you their wants, but close observation will tell you much. Los Angeles, California \* Reprinted by permission. *Orchid Digest*, Vol. 13, No., 2, 1949. September, 1974 *Orchidist*

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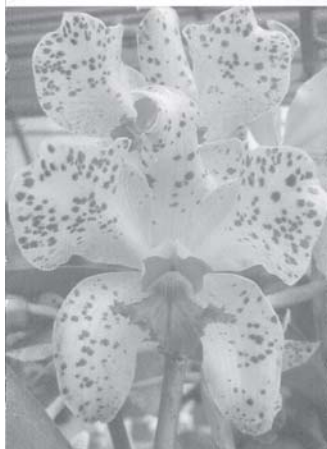
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## “It May, I Think, Be Proved”

by James Dillet Freeman

It may, I think, be proved  
That mountains can be moved  
By faith more quickly than  
Faith by a mountain can.  
What great works has man wrought?  
Not one but was a thought  
First in the mind of one  
Who said, ‘It can be done!’  
A man with faith to try  
Gave man the wings to fly,  
And One with faith to give  
Himself to life and live  
Made even death retreat!  
Man, have you much to meet?  
The victories men win  
Are faith persisted in.  
That thing man can conceive,  
That thing man will achieve.  
Never lose faith! Believe!

This poem first appeared in “The Florida Orchidist”, November, 1958 the premiere issue. The caption below the poem reads “To me, this poem personifies, the spirit with which this publication was begun and will be carried on by those who following in the months and years ahead.” Mary Lou Stoddard

## Ben Franklin’s Almanac of Wit, Wisdom, and Practical Advice

### Keeping Ants Out

- \* If you can tell where ants are coming into your house, plug the hole with petroleum jelly or soft soap.
- \* Surround anthills with used coffee grounds, and the ants will not cross the barrier.

### Notes For Gardeners

- \* Instead of using chemical herbicides, pour boiling water on pesky weeds.
- \* Don't handle plants immediately after a rainstorm, or you might spread fungal diseases.

### Home Remedies For Gardeners

- \* Garden chores leaving you with blisters? Apply calendula ointment (made from the pot marigold) or make an antiseptic wash with two drops of chamomile oil in 1/2 cup water.
- \* For pests, think pesto. Rub basil on the skin as an insect repellent.
- \* Mix together equal parts witch hazel and rubbing alcohol and use it to massage a tired back or sore muscles. This refreshes the skin, too.

## SFOS SPEAKERS' DAY 2006

SFOS will host its annual Speakers' Day on Sunday, October 1, 2006 at the Fire Fighters' Memorial Building, 8000 N.W. 21 Street, Miami. We have a wonderful panel of highly respected speakers presenting an enjoyable and educational program. Speakers' Day also includes AOS judging and SFOS Ribbon Judging (all points for Ribbon Judging will be doubled for this event). Plants for judging must be registered by 10:00 A.M. and can be picked up starting at 12:00 P.M. Speakers' Day has AOS approval for judging seminar credits as well. Several of our speakers will have plants to sell. Sales will be open only to registered seminar participants. This year's speakers are:

**James Rose** (California) will speak on Reed-Stem Epidendrums and standards for judging them. James along with his wife Lauris own Cal Orchids, a world renowned orchid nursery providing one of the largest varieties of orchid species and hybrids in the US. Most recently, the nursery has become recognized for their superior 'Pacific' line of reed-stem Epidendrums. James has published in the AOS, Orchid Digest, and CSA magazines, and is well respected for his vast knowledge as well as his distinctive sense of humor. He lectures all over the world, at orchid shows and World Orchid Conferences. He is a Cymbidium Society of America Judge,

*Continued on next column*

former member of the AOS Conservation Committee, and active member of the Japan Grand Prix Organizing committee where he judges every year at the Tokyo Dome.

**Fred Clarke** (California) will speak on "New Hybrids with Catasetums, Cycnoches and Mormodes". His two programs will feature a widescreen computer slide show on some of the new hybrids and breakthroughs in the hybridization of Catasetum, Cycnoches and Mormodes. Fred has been growing orchids for 29 years and has been hybridizing for 19 of those years. With over 22 years as a professional grower and manager in the horticultural industry, Fred applies these skills at his orchid nursery, Sunset Valley Orchids, located in San Diego, California. His pioneering work in Catasetum intergeneric hybrids led to the development of several notable hybrids, most recently the grex, Fredclarkeara After Dark, which produced "the blackest flower ever witnessed". Fred is a Probationary Judge in the Pacific South Judging Region. His plants have received hundreds of quality awards from the American Orchid Society.

**Andy Easton** (Florida) will speak on warmth-tolerant cymbidiums and standards for judging them. Andy has been a professional orchid grower since 1973, specializing in the hybridization of Cymbidium, Odontoglossum Alliance, Cattleya Alliance and Paphiopedilums. He is currently proprietor of New Horizon Orchids, which generates new orchids for Floricultura in Europe and Mukoyama Orchids in Japan as well as supplying Hatfield Orchids for North American sales. Since arriving in Florida in mid-2000, Andy has worked on a unique line of truly heat-tolerant Cymbidiums that will grow and bloom reliably in the Homestead area and all points further north, and he will share his expertise with these orchids on Speakers' Day. He is an accredited AOS judge in the West Palm Beach Center.

**Patricia Harding** (Oregon) will speak on Encyclias and criteria for judging them. Patricia has an undergraduate degree in Botany, and upon retiring as a physician, decided to pursue her earlier interests in science. Patricia has been growing and collecting orchids, mostly species, off and on for 30 years, intensely for 20 years. Patricia was heavily involved with Carl Withner in his last book, The Debatable Epidendrums, learning a lot in the process, and is currently working on a book covering all the known species of the Huntleya Alliance. Patricia is also an accredited AOS judge in the Pacific Northwest Center.



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## Speakers Day Schedule:

8:00 - 9:00	Breakfast, plant registration (for judging), sales open*
9:00 - 10:00	James Rose will speak on Reed-Stem Epidendrums and standards for judging them
10:00 - 11:00	Fred Clarke will speak on Cycnoches and standards for judging them.
11:00 - 12:00	AOS Judging and Panel discussion, plant sales open
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch
1:00 - 2:00	Fred Clarke will speak on Mormodes and Catasetums, and standards for judging them.
2:00 - 3:00	Andy Easton will speak on warmth-tolerant cymbidiums and standards for judging them.
3:00 - 4:00	Patricia Harding will speak on Encyclias and standards for judging them.
4:00 - 5:00	Plant sales open

\* Plant sales area will also be open during breaks and between speakers

*See Back Page For Order Form*

Tickets for Speakers' Day are \$45.00 per person. The price includes a continental breakfast and a sit-down lunch. This is one of the major orchid events held annually in South Florida! Be sure to register early since tickets are limited and sold on a first-come, first-served basis. Tickets are not available at the door. To register, please send your check and order form to the SFOS office: 10801 S.W. 124 St., Miami, FL 33176. For more information call (305) 255-3656.

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