



March 2007 - Volume 4 - Number 3

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President's Message

Dear fellow orchidists,

I hope that everyone enjoyed our wonderful 62nd Miami International Orchid Show! It was certainly a beautiful event and I want to congratulate everyone that helped. We all owe a huge "thank you" to Richard Brandon, our Show Chairman, as well as to the various Committee Chairs and volunteers.

Although our attendance was down after a second move, our new location was well-received by both vendors and the public. The Sheraton exhibition center seems to be a perfect fit for our coming Miami International Orchid Shows, as well as for the 19th World Orchid Conference next year. The hall is being renovated this year and for future events we'll see a brand new look. It should make our future events even more beautiful and appealing.

If you haven't yet done it, don't forget to register for the 19th World Orchid Conference. You may also sign up on-line (www.19woc.com) to volunteer to assist with the show – use the "Registration" "Volunteer" links to put your name and skills on the list and someone from the 19WOC Volunteer Coordination committee will contact you. Don't miss your chance to be an integral part of the biggest orchid event our community has ever seen!

I want to remind everyone that at this season, we begin our planning for the coming SFOS year which begins in July. I have appointed our 2007-8 nominating committee and they will be presenting their report this month. Watch the coming newsletters for the proposed slate of officers and directors and please be present in May for our annual election.

As a final reminder – April is auction month. Start saving now to take advantage of the bargains that will abound thanks to the generosity of our auction donors.

I look forward to seeing you all at the meeting.

Sincerely,
Robert Fuchs
President

March Program: "Native Orchids of Japan"

presented by Jason Fischer

Our February presentation will be a real treat – Jason Fischer, of Orchids Limited, will speak to us on the native orchids of Japan. It will be our chance to learn about some less familiar species, as well as the approach to orchids in another culture.

As a Japanese-American, Jason's educational interests have been strongly influenced by Japan. He pursued Japanese language and culture studies in high school and college, including studies at the University of Minnesota. After 6 years of Japanese language study in the U.S., he moved to Japan where he married, worked as an English teacher, and continued study of the language and people.

Being raised in a family orchid business, Jason has had a life-long education in orchids. He has worked with his father since the age of 5 and, at around age 14, took an interest in orchid hybridization and lab work. At about the same time, he first started breeding with phalaenopsis, later expanded to paphs and phrags, and now looks for anything unique.

Jason has now returned to Minnesota and to the family business where he is hoping to open up the Japanese orchid market to the U.S., as well as the U.S. market to Japan. Living in Japan provided him with important orchid contacts there as well as access to many native Japanese orchids. These plants have a rich culture and history that is little understood outside of their home country. Jason has spent much time studying the culture of Japanese orchids and enjoys sharing his knowledge which was gained through countless hours translating Japanese text and conversing with Japanese growers.

He is now beginning to see his efforts pay off in a great increase in interest in the Japanese orchids.

The plant table for this month will be donated by Richard and Lea Takafuji of Orchid Center in Hawaii. Orchids Limited will supply plants for sale.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the meeting.

Michael Coronado
Program Chairman

THANK YOU KATIE

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Katie Caldwell for the wonderful hands-on program which she provided. It was a big success and everyone loved it. Katie donated several beautiful plants for our raffle and, also, generously donated her speakers fee toward the 19th World Orchid Conference. Katie's donation will help finance a once-in-a-lifetime orchid experience for South Florida's orchidists and it is gratefully appreciated.

Thank you Katie

LITTLE JEWELS

Growing Equitants (Tolumnias) in South West Florida

By Katie Caldwell

Most people associate me with the Vanda alliance, when, I actually have a close second love, Equitant Oncidiums, now officially registered as Tolumnias. I started growing both at the same time in the mid 80's. It was a space issue so they had to survive under the same conditions. The surprising thing was they thrived. This happened because the Vandas were more important and I did not fret over the Equitants. It was pure luck that I stumbled on the right culture. I generally create problems for my plants when I second guess my methods, BUT, this changed when I moved down to Boca Grande, built a bigger greenhouse, really got serious, and I now fret over ALL my orchids. Truthfully, they still thrive.

The beauty of this genus and their hybrids is the full color spectrum they come in. The "show" in the spring is nothing short of spectacular. To understand their requirements, Equitant growers need to look at their native habitat. They are endemic to the Western Caribbean where they grow as twig epiphytes, receiving bright filtered light, warm temperatures, cooling breezes, daily showers or morning dew, and high humidity. The KEY, is they dry out rapidly because of those fabulous trade winds. How can we adapt on this coast of Florida? This is what I do.

I have always grown in a shade house with a roof of plastic in the winter. I now have a permanent roof (clear polycarbonate) and just close up the sides from mid November to mid March opening it up as needed when the heat builds up. I also maintain two portable gas heaters. The Equitants are in the south end of the greenhouse up high with a big fan blowing air constantly. My shade cloth is 60% over the clear polycarbonate roof. The Equitants use to hang on Closetmaid shelving that I hung from S hooks on poles. I became clever a few years ago to maximize my growing lack of space. I bought 30" or 36" wide hardware cloth that I wrapped into a cylinder approximately 12" in diameter connecting it together with electrical ties. The cylinder is hung with a monofilament bridal at the top connected at 4 spots. I hung my plants all the way around. Then I came up with the idea of a swivel attachment connected at the top to enable me to turn the cylinder and make sure they received equal amounts of light. This eliminated the one sided growing aspect of these cylinders.

Now I will address the important details of potting. We all experiment with different containers, mixes etc. with our plants. This group has received the most experimentation from me. I now do all sorts of things depending on the size of the plant. The most important consideration is that they need to dry out quickly or they rot. When I purchase seedlings or compots I put them in tiny clay pots with a small amount of fine to medium grade charcoal, then hang them on my racks. I ran out of space last year and put my babies on a tiered bench. The plants can get big and when I divide them I match the growth habit with potting medium. The clay and charcoal works for some of the divisions, others, I will mount on cork and attach the plant with strips of panty hose. This also works if you want to mount them on driftwood. Lately I have been experimenting with flat wood slat rafts for plants I don't want to divide up. I secure these with bits of wire. One more trick is to set the plant in the tiny pot with no medium. They love it and you can't over water. The little roots just wrap around the inside of the pot. It is very important to remove all dead roots and leaves before repotting or mounting the plants. The key to all these methods is they DRY OUT rapidly even with my frequent watering of the Vandas.

Continued on next column

Continued on page 3

19TH WORLD ORCHID CONFERENCE

My plants get fertilized with every watering and I flush with plain water every week or so. There is no exact formula for how often you water. Environmental factors, humidity, sun, etc. play a big roll. Trust me, mine grow with Vandas. The only pest problems are scale and mealy bugs. Keep your eyes open because pests come on the scene and before you know it, the plant is beyond help. Spray with orthene in granular form and add a little soap as a wetting agent. Several applications can normally take care of it. Never spray with oil based sprays, these plants will die. Fungal problems seem minimal in this group due to the drying out requirements.

Finding plants to buy can be a challenge so I will share some sources. Home Depot used to carry a limited selection in the spring. Anita Aldrich of Sundance Orchids in Galveston TX and The Hollow Orchids and Herbs (ad in Orchids magazine) have been a huge source of plants for me in recent years.

Be brave and try growing Equitants. The reward this time of year is breathtaking. They take up very little space, have a long bloom period due to the secondary branching of the inflorescence and come in every color imaginable. I go in the greenhouse and it just drives me crazy.

Katie Caldwell

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Continued on page 4

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Question: Please contact:
Amy Simons, Executive Director
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WHAT TO EXPECT FROM YOUR ORCHIDS

From Getting the Lowdown on Orchids

MARCH

Finally, signs of spring with longer and brighter days. Be careful that the increased light doesn't heat up too much in your greenhouse or windowsill. Apply shading if necessary. The increased light and warmth of this month will mean an acceleration of growth. Sprouting new roots should be more evident. This month and next are prime times to check our orchid shows in your area.

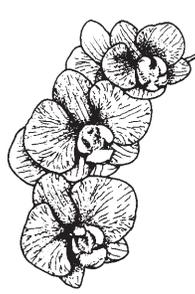
APRIL

In April, many orchids will be in glorious flower. You'll probably have to increase the frequency of your watering because of the new plant growth. As soon as you see new roots emerging in cattleyas this is the time to repot. Do it before the roots grow a few inches. Many other orchids showing new growth can also be repotted at this time. Be on the lookout for bugs. The warmer temperatures cause them to hatch out.



Amy Simons

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SFOS Meeting Schedule

Wednesday, March 21, 2007

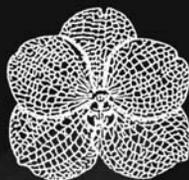
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- 7:30 pm - Registration & Judging of Plants
- 7:45 pm - Announcements
- 8:00 pm - Program
- 8:45 pm - Refreshments
- 9:00 pm - Awarded Plants Discussed
- 9:15 pm - Raffle

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ORCHID GROWING TIPS

From Bella OnLine

Replace tags

The thin plastic tags that come with most orchids will only last about three years under conditions in a greenhouse. Use either metal tags which are indestructible or heavy plastic tags to replace them so that you will not lose the name of your orchid. The best time to replace the tags is when you repot the plant.

Hydrogen Peroxide for Mealybugs

Use 3 percent hydrogen peroxide to spray on mealybugs and soak the pots in the mixture. It will kill both the live bugs and the eggs as well as disinfect a significant portion of the medium at the same time. Use a cotton swab to hold open leaf axils to allow the mixture go get into the smallest creases.

Use a yellow plastic dishpan

When picking out a pan to use as a water reservoir in your greenhouse or growing room, use yellow. Yellow will attract insects to the water and they will drown! This gives you a two for one punch -- water to evaporate and an insect trap at the same time. Be sure to watch out for mosquitoes using your water to breed, any standing water should be replaced every couple of days.

Keep those little pots of miniatures safe

Growers with many little miniatures will tell you that it's hard to keep them on a normal growing shelf because the little pots will keep getting knocked over or tip over on their own. Make your own hanging screen with chicken wire or hardware cloth and clip them to it on the side of your greenhouse or growing area. They will stay safe and secure and out of the way.

Another staking tip

I recently purchased some long-stemmed silk flowers to put in a centerpiece and had to cut off about 12 inches of stem. The resulting pieces seem to make a wonderful stakes for smaller Phals since the color is yellow/green and the end of the stake is already blunted. It provides a stake which is very sturdy and is still relatively unnoticeable due to its natural color.

Paph presentation tip

When Paphs are growing their inflorescences, tip the pot toward the light so that the buds open facing upwards rather than in the more natural po-

Continued on next column

sition facing downwards. When the pot is put back in the natural upright position, the flowers will be facing forward for a more pleasing presentation.

Soak your medium before using it for potting

Sphagnum moss is sold in dried form and must be soaked thoroughly before it is used. Warm water will speed up the hydration process. It will generally take about 30 minutes before the moss is ready to use. Natural growing mediums will take longer, at least two hours. Plan ahead by putting them in water the day before you're planning on potting plants.



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