



# The Orchidist

October 2008 - Volume 5 - Number 9

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## OCTOBER PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

At the September meeting, we enjoyed Dr. Catharine Mannion's close up, very scary photos of orchid pests and her excellent explanations of how they penetrate or chew up our vulnerable orchid leaves. She also showed several beneficial insects.

I remember the first time I saw the larvae of a lady bug on a tree in the back yard, thinking it was an unattractive bad bug and wondering how to get rid of it. I was promptly told to leave it alone as it was soon to be an adult ladybug. And just last week I observed a beautiful bright green three-inch caterpillar munching on our jade vine. It had a red stripe down its sides and tufts of barbs across its back. This caterpillar soon would morph into a beautiful moth, so I let it eat away. The jade vine needs trimming anyway. Before you decide to step on or squish a creature, think about its place in the ecosystem of your yard. Of course, I don't think this way about scales, thrips, mites or mealy bugs when they get on our orchids in the shade house....

Ever notice how the orchids on trees have fewer insects and other problems than the ones you coddle in the shade house? This is a clue about air circulation and overcrowding. Spacing your plants correctly helps them grow better and you can spot problems before they become overwhelming. We put a lot of orchids on trees last spring and they are gorgeous!

And for those of you who purchased the mystery phals for our growing contest: fertilize those babies!

We hope to see lots of members at the October meeting! Marlene and Charlie Clark will be in Hawaii on a two week cruise (lucky them!) Your officers and Board members will be supplying the refreshments for October but we welcome any contributions. I always hear the other societies brag about the fantastic culinary abilities of their members. Now is your chance to show off your favorite recipe!

Happy growing,  
Sandy

## OCTOBER PROGRAM

### General Orchid Culture

By Jose Exposito

Jose Exposito is President of Soroa Orchids, Inc, located in the heart of the Redland Orchid growing area. He is an accredited judge of the American Orchid Society and travels around the world selling and lecturing about orchid breeding and culture, including lectures at the World Orchid Conferences in Rio, Brazil and in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Jose is a founder member of the International Orchid Alliance, past president of the East Everglades Orchid Club, past president of The Coalition for Orchid Species, past member of the Education Committee of the American Orchid Society, Vice President of the Redland Orchid Growers Association and Redland Orchid Festival, Inc, as well as a past board member of the South Florida Orchid Society, where he served for several years.

Soroa Orchids expanded its business to Canada in 2005, opening Soroa Orchids Canada in Toronto. Jose was born in Cuba, and immigrated to the United States in 1980 during the Mariel exodus, in Cuba, he was an accomplished writer, considered to this day the youngest published writer in Cuba, winning National prizes of Literature when he was only 16 years old.

Jose will be speaking about general Orchid Culture. To learn more about Jose and Soroa Orchids, visit them at 25750 SW 177th Avenue, Homestead, FL 33031. Jose will be providing the raffle table.

See you all there!  
Carol

## MEETING NOTICE

### SFOS Meeting Schedule

Wednesday, October 15, 2008  
Fire Fighters Memorial Building  
8000 N.W. 21st Street  
Miami, FL 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

# Fascinating Orchid Myths, Some Since Greek Times, Which Ones Have You Heard?

by orchids-plus-more.com

*Here are some of the popular orchid myths*

## #1 Orchids are Carnivorous.

They are not. However insects of various kinds are important in orchid reproduction. Many orchids pollinate by luring insects to them and then the insects transport the pollen to another orchid. Many orchids have a complex relationship with insects in the wild but they do not in fact eat the insects.

## #2 Orchids come from the Tropics.

Some orchid flowers do come from the tropical climates but they grow in any climate and in any country, even Alaska.

## #3 Orchids are Expensive.

Not anymore. There has been an increased interest in orchid gardening and in the number of orchid growers. Now there are modern reproductive methods for orchids and so orchids are now more reasonably priced. Some orchid flowers last as long as 3 months. That makes them even less expensive than a nice bouquet! And they last longer and you have a plant (an new orchid friend) that can bloom again and again.

## #4 Orchids are Hard to Grow.

This orchid myth is far from the truth. They are not anymore difficult than any other plant. They need the basics, water, light, air and fertilizer. Once you know what they need and meet those needs your orchid will thrive. The plant can last for many years and flower repeatedly.

## *Some Orchid Questions*

### #1 Are all orchids the same?

Contrary to what most florists want you to believe, they come in over 28,000 varieties, they are the largest plant family. There are estimates of 110,000 hybrids today. They grow from thimble size (*Mystacidium*) to over 20 feet tall (*Renanthera storei*)

### #2 What soil do they grow in?

Most orchids require no soil. In nature orchids are divided into 4 classes;

#### **Epiphytes**

air plants (majority of orchids) .....grow on trees

#### **Lithophytes**

air plants.....grow on rock surfaces

#### **Saprophytes**

air plants.....grown on decaying vegetation

#### **Terrestrials**

ground plants.....grow in soil

### #3 Do orchids only last a short time?

On the contrary, most species can last for years if they receive proper care. There are some plants which were propagated in the 18th century and continue to live today.

### #4 How often do they bloom?

It varies according to the variety and hybrid but they can bloom from once to 2 - 4 times a year. The blossoms can last for weeks to months which is a real plus.

### #5 How old is my plant?

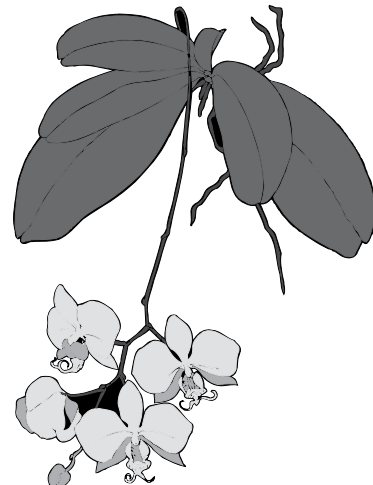
Orchids can take years to come to maturity and bloom. Typically, the plants are anywhere from 5 to 8 years old.

### #6 Is conservation of orchids important?

According to the American Orchid Society conservation is a priority. Threats to orchids come primarily from loss of habitat and collecting. The AOS encourages the purchase of only artificially propagated orchids.

### #7 Should orchids be protected from a draft?

This could be another orchid myth but the answer is no, orchids prefer moving air and good circulation but should not be over a heating or air conditioning vent.



## JUDGING REMINDER

This month we will be holding our usual monthly judging. Please remember to bring your wonderful plants for our panel of judges to award.

## How To Choose An Orchid Pot

by Helen Wall

The choice of orchid pot you use, the potting medium, watering, fertilizing and location will all have an impact on the success of your orchids. Let us have a look at different containers that you can choose from. The choice can be bewildering if you are a beginner to orchid growing. These are most commonly made from either plastic or terracotta clay.

### Plastic Orchid Pot

- A lightweight plastic pot, which may have several drainage holes is more suitable for indoors, where it is far less likely to be blown over.
- The growing medium tends to dry out more slowly than in a clay pot.
- The best plastic pot has a thick wall that does not break easily, it is light in color, and does not heat up too much in strong sunlight. Clear polythene pots are becoming popular as they allow more light to reach the roots.

### Terracotta Orchid Pot

- It is heavier and therefore more stable.
- It has one drainage hole in the bottom, although some specialist orchid pots also have drainage holes on the sides.
- A succulent drought-tolerant epiphytic orchid fares better in a clay pot, as there is less chance of the growing medium becoming waterlogged. Pots or large planters made from terracotta, wood, ceramic or plastic make ideal containers for large spreading orchids such as *Cymbidia*.

A terrestrial like the Chinese *Cymbidium* requires a tall orchid pot which can accommodate the very long roots (up to a meter!) that it can produce. Unrestricted root growth allows the orchid to store nutrients and water that can then sustain the development of superior flowers.

Jewel orchids such as *Ludisia* and *Anoectochilus* should ideally be grown in a shallow, broad pot as they spread over the surface. A glass terrarium would be ideal, where the orchids can wander in whatever way they like. There are also varieties of orchid that are best grown and displayed in baskets at eye level.

### Basket Orchid Pot

- A basket is very suitable for orchids with pendant flowers, or heavy-rooted, sprawling orchids.
- A basket container is made of wire, plastic, mesh, wood or pottery.

- It allows air to circulate around the compost and roots.
- A mesh orchid pot is essential for the successful blooming of *Draculas* because the inflorescences find it easy to grow through the underside of the container.
- Orchids like *Stanhopea*, *Gongora* and *Acineta* should be grown in open baskets so that their pendant flowers can be enjoyed to the full.
- You will need to take care that the orchids do not dry out in a basket.

As an orchid pot, the basket will need support blocks for your orchid. The most suitable materials are cork, or the bark of pine or oak. To do this, place the plant compost in front and behind the roots. Tie the plant to the piece of bark in such a way that no water is able to run into the centre of the plant. You can tie up the plant with strips of ladies tights!

One tip is to be aware that the fine roots of some orchids may penetrate the support block and make it difficult to re-pot your orchid.

When a plant becomes overgrown or begins to fall apart, just tie a new piece of bark to the old one so that the orchid grows onto this. Some orchids like *Oncidium*s have slender roots that rapidly travel over the surface of the bark.

Lady-of-the-Night is the popular name for *Brassavola nodosa*, a night-fragrant white flowering orchid that grows well in a hanging basket. Position it where its night fragrance can be appreciated. It is drought-tolerant, but prefers additional water during dry spells.

The orchid *Cattleya skinneri* Hettie Jacobs can grow to enormous size in a basket and needs strong support. But it does produce clusters of lovely purple flowers between March and May.

The popular Bee orchid, produces a wealth of golden yellow flowers even from a modest plant. A 20inch (50cm) wire basket with substantial pieces of bark will support a large plant of this kind.

You might like to plant a selection of moth orchids in a large basket for a superb show of long-lasting blooms, but these do not like strong sunlight. Or maybe vanda orchids, that provide flowers in all colours of the rainbow with huge blooms, some of which can be the size of a saucer. Vanda will produce a mass of lengthy roots hanging below the orchid pot, which you will need to spray with water daily. Do not be tempted to cut back these roots.

Be aware also that many orchids thrive on being pot-bound. It may look as if the roots are smothering the pot, but it is their thick root system that nourishes spectacular blooms. So do not be in a hurry to re-pot too soon!

Whatever type of orchid pot you want, there is a wide range from which to choose. For anyone who loves orchids, there is immense pleasure to be gained from matching an orchid with an appropriate pot, choosing the right compost, light and temperature, then watering and fertilizing. The careful balance of all these will lead to your ultimate success in orchid cultivation.




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**MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION**

If you move and have a change of address, phone number or email, please let Ellen know at the SFOS office (305-255-3656).

Coming to a meeting! Bring friends and family, get them to join and receive a free orchid seedling.

Don't forget The South Florida Orchid Society Culture book written for growing orchids in this part of the country. The member price is \$15.00

See you all at the next meeting, October 15th.

**SAVE THE DATE**




**HOLIDAY PARTY**

**REMINDER**

**SUNDAY - DECEMBER 14, 2008**

**SIGNATURE GARDENS**

**7:00 P.M.**



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Bonnet House Orchid Fair December 6th & 7th from 9am-4pm

Bonnet House Museum & Gardens will be hosting its second annual Orchid Fair in December! An exciting line up of local orchid and exotic plant vendors will highlight this unique sale in the Bonnet House Grove. There will also be an orchid display judging, orchid supplies, garden art, lectures and a special book signing with Dr. Martin Motes. With free parking and a \$5 entry fee - orchid enthusiasts will have the opportunity to see and buy divisions of the original Bonnet House collection as well as a variety of exotic plants and art! Bonnet House Museum & Gardens is located at 900 N. Birch Road just south of Sunrise Blvd. between A1A and the Intercoastal on Fort Lauderdale beach. For more information please visit us at [www.BonnetHouse.org](http://www.BonnetHouse.org) or call (954) 563-5393.

The lectures include:

#### Saturday:

**10:00 a.m. Orchids 101**  
*with instructor Bonnie Bellavance*

**12:00 p.m. Phalenopsis culture**  
*with instructor Dr. Martin Motes of Motes Orchids*

**2:00 p.m. Irrigation Made Easy**  
*with instructor Vic Fowler of The Orchid Peddler*

**Sunday:**  
**10:00 a.m. Orchids 101**  
*with instructor Bonnie Bellavance*

**12:00 p.m. Vanda culture**  
*with instructor Dr. Martin Motes of Motes Orchids*

**2:00 p.m. Repotting Orchids**  
*with instructor Tom Wells of Broward Orchid Supply*

### October 16 - Volunteer Open House

The American Orchid Society seeks volunteers of various skill types to help in the garden, in the membership office, and at our special events. Full details of opportunities and the volunteer policy will be provided to interested residents at this meeting. Orchid and garden enthusiasts are encouraged to come onboard and train as orchid doctors and garden tour guides. Some benefits of volunteering include learning from the orchid and horticultural experts on staff, a 20 percent discount in the gift shop and an annual award luncheon and holiday party for those who volunteer at least 80 hours a year.

Time: 9am – 11 am

How: Call Enid Torgersen at 561-404-2063 or eMail [etorgersen@aos.org](mailto:etorgersen@aos.org)

### October 18 - Naples Orchid Society's Annual Sale

The Naples Orchid Society will hold its annual orchid sale on Saturday, October 18, from 12pm to 3pm or until sold out. The sale will take place at The Conservancy Auditorium, 1450 Merrihue Drive, Naples. For more information go to the web site at [www.naplesorchidsociety.org](http://www.naplesorchidsociety.org) or call 239-403-7155.

### November 21 – 23 - Fall Orchid and Craft Show

Enjoy more than 30 vendors featuring orchid plants, supplies and garden art and craft items. Shop for the perfect, blooming orchid to begin or complement your home and find the perfect garden accessories to dress up your outdoor living space. The show will feature children's activities, live music, Orchid Doctors and repotting services, educational lectures, and food and drinks for the whole family. Be sure to enjoy a garden tour as well!

For vendor information and fees contact Valerie Smith at 561-404-2052 or eMail [vsmith@aos.org](mailto:vsmith@aos.org)

Time: 10 am – 4:30 pm, Friday, Saturday and Sunday  
Cost: Members, Free; Non Members, \$10. Children 12 and younger, free

### International Phalaenopsis Alliance

This note is to introduce you to the International Phalaenopsis Alliance. A group who is interested in Phalaenopsis. We will have what I would call "mini" Speakers Day on just the Phalaenopsis alliance of orchids two to three times during the year. These meetings are for IPA members only. Are you interested in participating and becoming an IPA member?

We will have our first on November 23, 2008 at the AOS Headquarters in Delray. There will be three speakers, Carlos Fighetti, Frank Smith and Jose Exposito, not necessarily in that order. We will serve a box lunch for the registrants and will have some special plants for auction during lunch.

Please register with Robert Randall @ 305-245-5565 or Joan Viggiani @ 954-434-3791. Room is limited so please register early. The only cost will be the entry fee to enter the show at the AOS Headquarters. Please join us and have a great day.

Remember, you must register. IPA members will be given priority due to the limited space.

**Local Authors Publish  
Marie Selby Botanical Gardens  
Illustrated Dictionary of Orchid Genera**

A must have for orchid lovers - (September 17, 2008 - Sarasota, FL): Peggy Alrich and Wesley Higgins, PhD co-authors of The Marie Selby Botanical Gardens Illustrated Dictionary of Orchid Genera are proud to introduce this extraordinary work of 10 years in the making.

This 512 page full-color dictionary is the most comprehensive collection of orchid genera published to date with more than 3,800 names. The dictionary is an invaluable reference that presents the current status of orchid taxonomy and the history of generic names, making it an important reference for botanists, taxonomists, orchid lovers and horticultural specialists. Easy to read and understand, its color-coded, fact-filled pages are complete with color illustrations or line drawings for each genus.

Each genus description includes the author(s) name and publication name, as well as page number and year of publication. Accepted genera include subfamily, tribe, and subtribe placement. The etymologies have been carefully researched and greatly expanded from other listings. Each entry lists the genus' type species or lectotype, the number of species credited to the genus, and the species distribution. Also included is a brief description of the plants and flowers of the genus. Additionally, the dictionary includes an introductory overview of the orchid family by David Benzing, the well-known epiphyte ecologist.

The appendices include a list of the taxonomists along with their birth/death dates and genera authored, a listing of the standardized publication abbreviations used in literature, and a listing of species illustrations used. Supplementary Material:

A list of book/periodical abbreviations used in the dictionary; A glossary of technical terms used to

describe orchids; The International Code of Botanical Nomenclature (ICBN) rules for naming genera (reprinted with permission); A list of illustrations by species name; A classification of Orchidaceae that accords with the most recent findings from phylogenetic studies; An index of taxonomic authorities; A list of selected reading on Orchidaceae.

What are they saying about it? "Just right for the office or the home library." - Dr. Ken Cameron, University of Wisconsin. "Balances the needs of amateur orchid enthusiasts with those of the professional orchidologist." - Dr. Peter Raven, Missouri Botanical Garden

The dictionary is now available for purchase at Banyan Treasures and The Garden Shop at Marie Selby Botanical Gardens. You can also order online at [www.selby.org](http://www.selby.org).

Call (941) 366-571, extension 315 for further information. Marie Selby Botanical Gardens is a respected center for research and education as well as a famous orchid showplace.



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**CONDOLENCES**

Our thought and prayers go out to Sally Taylor & Family on the recent passing of her father, Ashley Taylor and Judy Mezey & Family on the recent passing of her father, Chester Eugene Paul.



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## Bella-on-Line

by Susan Taylor

### When mounted plants outgrow their mount

If you are growing your mounted plants on cork or tree fern and they have outgrown the mounting platform, take a larger piece of the mount and cut a piece out of the lower portion the same size as the original mount. In effect, you are making a hole to plug the old mount in. Be sure that you make it small enough so that the resulting platform is solid. This allows the plant roots to grow onto the new platform without too much disturbance.

### Snails and Slugs

To reduce the number of snails and slugs on outdoor or indoor plants, apply a mixture of 1 part household ammonia to 4 parts water. Spray each plant thoroughly as well as the top of the media.

### Be careful of when you water

Especially at this time of year when the temperatures are moderating, you need to be careful of the time when you water and/or mist your orchids. With less heat, the water will evaporate more slowly and therefore the chances of fungus and mold developing is increased. It is also a good idea keep your air circulation going rather than reducing it as this, too, will discourage molds.

### Keep new plants in quarantine

I relearned this lesson lately and think it is worth passing it on again. Always put new plants in an area away from your other plants for at least a week, preferably for a month. During that time, spray for insects as well as molds and fungus problems. Watch the plant carefully for other problems. Fall is one of the times when orchid and plant shows encourage us to buy new varieties so don't forget to be careful.

### Badly damaged plants

If you have badly damaged plants after Hurricane Ike, make a paste with ground cinnamon and Elmer's Glue and apply to affected parts of the plant. It can also be applied to cuts after the plant has been trimmed back where you do not think you can save parts of the plant. The cinnamon will keep infection out and the glue will seal the wound.

### Monitor changing light conditions

One thing that is very easy to miss is the changing light conditions, either indoors or outdoors with the change of seasons. Plants which were happy with summer light might be getting too much or too little with fall exposures. Now is the time to check and see if you need to move your plants around in order to give them optimum light for growth, flowering or overwintering.



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# HOLIDAY PARTY REMINDER

SUNDAY - DECEMBER 14, 2008

SIGNATURE GARDENS

7:00 P.M.



**Dated Material - Do Not Delay**

South Florida Orchid Society  
10801 S.W. 124 Street  
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