



May 2010 - Volume 6 - Number 26

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear South Florida Members:

Did you have as much fun at the auction as I did? Have you ever seen so many blooming plants at an auction? Much thanks go to Carol DeBiase for collecting so many beautiful plants and organizing such a great event! Thanks also to Dorothy Bennett, Sally Taylor, Ellen Hanson, Michael O'Dea, Javier Morejon, Ralph Hernandez, Carlos San Martin, Debbie Karge and Marlene Clark Florida members for your beautiful donations that helped make our event so successful. I thought our auctioneer, Michael Guyer, did a great job getting everyone in a betting mood!

Don't forget that May is our annual election month. Please be present when we hold our election of officers and directors. Show your support for our society and vote.

It feels like summer is just around the corner, so remember to give your plants the extra water and food they require when they are in active growth. Don't forget to repot the plants in need; this is the time to give them more space as they grow.

Our deepest sympathy goes to Gene Stevens who lost his wife, Mary last month. I know our hearts and prayers are with him during this difficult time.

Oh, by the way. I finally bloomed a Paphiopedilum! I think the plant just got tired of my whining! Never give up.

Good growing.  
Judy



**Membership Note from Sally Taylor – The first member bringing 5 first time visitors to one meeting will receive a \$100 gift certificate to Carmela Orchids.**

## PROGRAM

### ***Mirta Russis-Heineman*** ***The Beautiful World of Encyclias***

This month our program will be presented by Mirta Heineman. Her presentation will be on her favorite genus – Encyclias. The title of her program is “The Beautiful World of Encyclias”. Mirta bought her first orchid some 20 years ago. After that she bought many orchids – but with very little luck in keeping them healthy until she started taking classes to learn how to take care of them. After she retired she joined six different orchid societies and attended just about every class that she heard about. She has traveled many times to many cities and countries to attend shows, conferences and classes – and to rescue orchids. She has been a president, a vice-president and has occupied almost every board position in many orchid societies where she is a member. Her enthusiasm for orchids has taken her to many of our local societies to make presentations and attend orchid shows. We are fortunate to have her as our speaker. The plant raffle table will be presented by Gold Country Orchids.

See you all there

Sincerely,

Carol

### **SFOS DATES TO REMEMBER**

- **Wednesday, June 16<sup>th</sup>** – Greg Allikas will present our program “Jewels of Oceania and we will also have our Annual Awards presentation and Installation Ceremony

### **2010 - 2011 SLATE OF OFFICERS**

Sandy Schultz, chairman along with Marlene Clark, Joan Viggiani and Michael O'Dea present the following Slate of Officers for the 2010 - 2011 year.

President	Judith Mezey
1st Vice President	Sally Taylor
2nd Vice President	Carol De Biase
Secretary	Javier Morejon
Treasurer	Dorothy Bennett

Director's term expiring 2011--Christa Collins, Julie Rosenberg, Tony Viggiani

Director's term expiring 2012 --Marlene Clark, Ralph Hernandez, Bonnie Riley

Director's term expiring 2013 -- Dan Christensen, Maria Wood

Special Directors -- Immediate Past President: Sandra Schultz

## THANK YOU

I would like to send out a real big *Thank You* to the following vendors, members and friends who donated so generously to the South Florida Auction last month. Without these wonderful folks our auction could not have been such a big success. Thank you all very much. The following are the generous donors: StelMar Gardens Inc, Hennington Farms, Ruben In Orchids, The Orchid Center, Sally's Alley Orchids, Dan & Margie Orchids, Coconut Orchids, Cal Orchids, Oak Hill Gardens, H & R, J & L, Norman's Orchids, Silk Synergy, Mound Builders, Fiorell Designs, Woodland Orchids, Odom's Orchids, Agidia, R.F. Orchids, St. Germain Orchids, Water Orchids, EFG, Carmela's, Orchis Floriculturing, Ching Hua, Taida Horticultural, Carib Orchids, Soroa Orchids, OFE, Judy Mezey, Whimsy, New Vision Orchids, Orchids by Allison, Mickey's Orchids, Georgia Tasker and Sandy Schultz, Betty Eber, Barbara & Danny Lutz. If I have forgotten anyone please forgive me and know that we really appreciate all donations.

## JUDGING



Regular monthly judging will resume this month.

## AOS

### THE AMERICAN ORCHID SOCIETY

For \$60.00 year, you reap the following benefits:

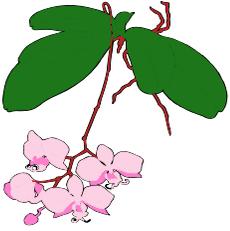
- Monthly subscription to Orchids magazine
- Free and discounted admission to more than 200 botanical gardens and arboreta
- Receive the annual Orchid Source Directory detailing orchid suppliers worldwide
- Access to Members-Only section of the Web site, [www.aos.org](http://www.aos.org)
- 10% discount on purchases in the Orchid Emporium or on-line at [www.aos.org](http://www.aos.org)
- Discount on back issues of Orchids magazine and on American Orchid Society published books
- Reduced processing fees for American Orchid Society judged plant and flower awards
- Discounts on orchid class fees at the American Orchid Society Botanical Gardens
- Free admission to the American Orchid Society Botanical Gardens and 50% off admission for any guests. JOIN TODAY!

## SFOS

The next regular meeting of the South Florida Orchid Society will be Wednesday, May 19th. Monthly judging will resume on this date.

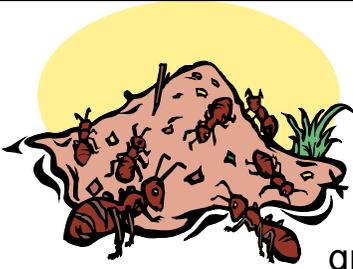
## SFOS DATES TO REMEMBER

- **Wednesday, June 16<sup>th</sup>** – Greg Allikas will present our program and we will also have our Annual Awards and Installation ceremony



Fire Fighters Memorial Building  
8000 NW 21 St., Miami, FL 33122  
7:30 Judging begins  
7:45 Announcements  
8:00 Program begins

## ORCHID INFORMATION



### **Ants in Orchid Pots**

For those of us who grow outdoors part of the year or in a greenhouse, ants are a nuisance in our orchid pots. In addition, they farm aphids, mealy bugs and caterpillars which can seriously damage tender new growing parts of the plant, especially buds and inflorescences. The honeydew which is left from these insects allows mildews to grow and provides another place for attacks on our plants.

The ants themselves do relatively little damage to the plants, but if you've ever picked up a pot with ants in it, especially fire ants in the southern United States, you know how the ant bites will feel to the plant grower! Spring and summer tend to be the times that ants are attracted to orchid pots. It is a great home for them -- they can move right in without digging through soil and removing it for their tunnels.

If the pot is seriously infected and the ants come swarming out when you try to pick it up, mix up a gallon of water with a cup of insecticidal soap or dishwashing liquid and pour about half of it slowly through the pot. It will not kill all the ants, but will kill any that it comes directly in contact with. If you have a spray bottle, spray the plant with the solution to kill any that escape the pot and swarm on the foliage. It is best to do this in a shady location or when the plant is in the shade since you don't want to allow sun to burn the leaves through the water. Allow the pot to stay in the same location for about an hour without disturbing it.

Put the rest of the solution in a bucket and fill with water. If it's large, then add more detergent. Pick up the pot carefully and submerge in the water. This will kill the rest of the ants as they come in contact with the soap. Leave in the water for about 15 minutes and watch out for any pests that come out of the media and climb up the foliage. Remove from the water and then drench thoroughly with water from a hose to remove all residue of the soap and to eliminate the chemicals which ants secrete when they make their nests. Be sure to allow the plant foliage to dry completely before returning to a sunnier location and the media to dry before watering the plant again.

Fortunately ants are more a nuisance to us than a danger to our plants. Removing them is relatively simple once you know what to do!



## Grow Native Orchids in Your Garden

Believe it or not, you can grow native orchids in your gardens if you pick out those which grow in your area and you can provide them the right conditions. The most important point to remember is that you should **never** dig up wild orchids. It is virtually impossible to keep a dug up orchid alive once it is removed from its native environment and when it is done another rare and beautiful plant gets closer to extinction. This is one of the biggest dangers to our native plants. When wild populations are found they are often kept in strict secrecy because of the chance that they will be poached by those who want to sell them. Only buy from reputable dealers and ask to make sure that they are grown from seed in laboratory conditions.

There are a number of nurseries which now grow native orchids from seed to sell to those who can provide them a home. It is hoped that more and more people will become interested in trying to grow these natives so that the gene pool can be expanded and keep the plants from disappearing entirely.

Unlike hybrids which are bred for ease of growing and flowering, it is necessary to do a lot of research into which natives might work in your garden. One of the best groups in North America is [Native Orchid Conservation Inc.](#). A very active group with a lot of knowledge is the [Slipper Orchid Alliance](#) which has information about the *Cypripedium* orchids which are one of the most showy and widely distributed of the wild orchids. Australia has a large organization, the [Australian Native Orchid Society](#), which provides information and conservation materials to those interested in their native orchids.

Florida, which has most species of native orchids in the United States, has its own site with information on their native orchids [Florida's Native and Naturalized Orchids](#) and [The Florida Native Plant Society](#) which has a great database of plants, including orchids, which grow in the various counties in Florida. Many of the descriptions include sources for plants.

If you are both a gardener and an orchid grower, this is a great way to help out our native plants as well as introduce new and interesting plants to your garden. Many orchid societies are working with their state forestry organizations to grow and reintroduce native orchids to locations which have lost their original native populations. Growing these natives is a great way to help out and introduce friends, neighbors and families to the fact that orchids are not only tropical plants.



# Spring Orchid Growing Tips

## Watch for changing light conditions

It is especially important to watch for changing light conditions in the spring. Many growers depend upon deciduous trees to provide shade to their plants during the majority of the warm weather growing season. Unless you are careful, your plants may get too much light as the sun moves before the leaves are all the way out. If leaves seem to be turning yellow or red in the case of Cattleyas, then apply shade cloth on a greenhouse, or sheer curtains on a window.

## Get your outdoor growing areas ready

Get your outdoor growing area ready to move your plants when the weather in your area allows you do to so. Getting the growing area ready will allow you to move your plants as soon as possible and also allow you time to do things correctly. Add new space, replace broken items, and clean up the space from winter debris. Inside, clean up the space that you have been using all winter. Use Physan or Chlorox to kill mold, mildew and bacteria on surfaces.

## Clean up your plants

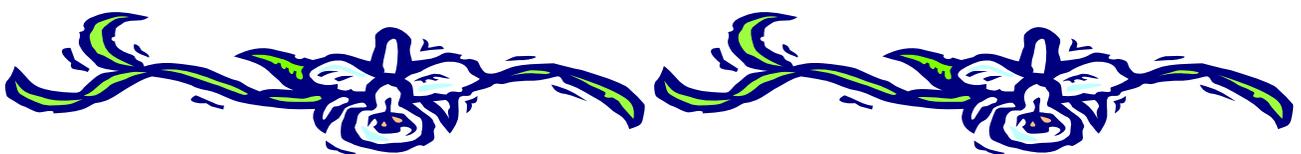
Start your plants in their new growing season all cleaned up and ready to go for the new year. Clean the leaves using vinegar or lemon juice to remove all built up mineral and fertilizer deposits. Check for pests and spray with a good systemic insecticide and also with an algicide and fungicide. Remove old sheaths and reposition your plants in their container. Stake the plants if necessary. Mark those that need repotting and do so as soon as new roots are about 1/2 inch long.

## Spring is repotting time

Spring is the time to repot many of your orchids. One important note is that, with the exception of Paphs and Phrags, plants that are blooming or in bud should not be disturbed. Repot the plants as soon as they have finished blooming. Species and hybrids of Brassavola, Cymbidium, Oncidium, Paphs and Phrags, and most seedlings should be repotted at this time.

## Phal Inflorescences need staking

In many parts of the country, Phals are getting ready to bloom. Be sure to stake the inflorescences when they are about 6 inches, or 15 centimeters, high to produce well displayed flowers. Some growers recommend turning pots 180 degrees at this time to force the inflorescence to grow up and over the plant rather than out and away. If you turn your plants, be sure that you only do so once or the flower arrangement can be ruined.



## Growing Orchids in a Fishbowl



If you have having trouble growing orchids indoors, especially if you like the tiny ones, you can try growing in a simple fishbowl. My first trial came when I purchased a Masdevallia I couldn't resist at an orchid show. These are generally rather cool growing orchids and we live in southern Texas where it gets very hot during the summers. Most of my orchids grow in the greenhouse and must be able to survive temperatures up to 100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius. Once I got the orchid home I realized that it would never survive outside. Mind you, this is completely against one of the most important orchid tips I espouse: only buy orchids that will grow in your conditions! But it was so cute I simply couldn't resist.

These little orchids need quite high humidity to grow well so I decided to try growing in a fishbowl near a north window indoors. The ball-like fishbowl was about six or seven inches, or 15-18 centimeters in diameter. I put white gravel in the bottom, about one half inch or 2 centimeters deep, then placed the plant in the middle and then used rainwater to just below the surface to increase humidity. Do not put anything over the top of the container. Your orchids need air circulation as well as high humidity.

The only problem I've found with this system is that the plants grow so quickly, and flower so much that I keep having to find larger and larger fish bowls so that the flowers do not stick to the sides. Also watch the leaves to make sure the plant is not getting too much light. The leaves will turn very light green. Try to keep the leaf color about the same as the leaves when you purchased the plant. Do not cut off the inflorescences if they stay green because they will develop new buds on the live growth. I'd recommend finding out how large a plant the orchid will be before starting this project – I'm on my third fishbowl for one of them (I now have three since I had to fill up the empty fishbowls). Garage sales are good sources for glass containers that can be used for this. They're decorative looking and the orchids love the humidity.

## SAVE THE DATE

The South Florida Orchid will again be having their annual Speaker's Day on Sunday, October 3, 2010. More information to come next month.

## REFRESHMENTS

### The Refreshments have been Great!!



I want to thank everyone that has been bringing refreshments to our meetings. The selection has been great and everyone has been enjoying all of the good food. I want to also thank Bob Fuchs for donating the raffle plant that everyone who brings refreshments has a chance to win.

Marlene Clark

## REMEMBERING

Our deepest sympathy goes to Gene Stevens who lost his wife, Mary last month. I know our hearts and prayers are with him during this difficult time.

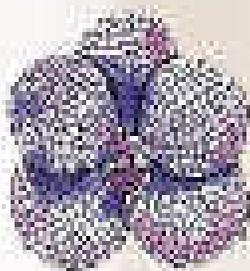


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