



# The Orchidist

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## NOVEMBER PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Fall is here, finally! I'm sure you notice the changes in humidity on the days it doesn't pour down rain. The early darkness makes it hard to visit our orchids after work, making weekends more precious.

We welcomed several new members at the October meeting. I am sure both the new members and all our "expert" members benefitted from Jose Exposito's excellent culture presentation and great sense of humor.

Soon the holidays will be here so make sure that you sign up for our Holiday Party on Sunday, December 14, at Signature Gardens. Marlene Clark has planned a wonderful evening for us once again. Not only will you get a fabulous meal, drinks, and entertainment (either dancing or watching the others practice for Dancing With the Stars), you will get a free Hawaiian orchid. Some of my previous Holiday Party orchids have grown into beautiful specimen plants.

The officers and Board of the South Florida Orchid Society wish you and your family a very happy Thanksgiving.

Sandy

## MEETING NOTICE

### SFOS Meeting Schedule

Wednesday, November 19, 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

## NOVEMBER PROGRAM

### MEXICAN ORCHIDS

*Ed Bugbee*

*Featherstone Orchids*

After a trip to the orient where orchids were used in abundance for every day life offerings, Ed and his wife Lyn indulged into the growing of orchids. They utilized a sun room attached to the farm house that they were caretakers for. It was the only room with constant heat ... the rest of the house was woodstove heated. They cut 12 cords of wood and enough kindling annually to supply the farm and a few family member's homes with winter fuel.

By 1992, when the farm owners decided to sell their property, they had about 500 orchids. To move, build a greenhouse and maintain it in New England was prohibitive. So they decided to change careers, pull up roots and move. In the interim they began working for other growers to wet their feet in the commercial doings at shows ... Roy Tokunaga of H&R took them under his wings immediately ... Roy had future plans for us in Florida. In Oct. 1994 they opened Featherstone Orchids in Crystal River Florida.

In the last 12 years the business has grown to 3 greenhouses with 6500 square feet of space, a large potting shed, a large work shed and a small seed lab. They have been exhibiting and selling orchids at over 20 shows a year as well as touring the country to give lectures. They have won their fair share of AOS awards but are most proud of their educational awards and for a display they designed and built for H&R Orchids that won both an AOS gold medal and an artistic award. The Bugbees have been good friends and associates with H&R ... both Ed and Roy were formally trained in marine biology.

Featherstone Orchids will be supplying the raffle table and will have plants for sale.

See you there,  
Carol

**63RD MIAMI INTERNATIONAL ORCHID SHOW**  
**"Secret Orchid Gardens"**  
**February 27 – March 1, 2009**

Once again and to be precise for the 63rd time, the South Florida Orchid Society will present the largest and most prestigious all Orchid Show in America. This year's theme "Secret Orchid Gardens" should inspire very beautiful exhibits. We have several new vendors attending this year as well as many of the vendors that have supported our Show for years. We will also be repeating the successful Orchid Art and Photography Contest. The Show will be held at the Airport Mart Hotel and Convention Center (formerly the Radisson Mart) located at 711 N.W. 72 Avenue. The Show Committee under the direction of our Show Chairman, Paul Wetter, is working very hard to make this a spectacular Show.

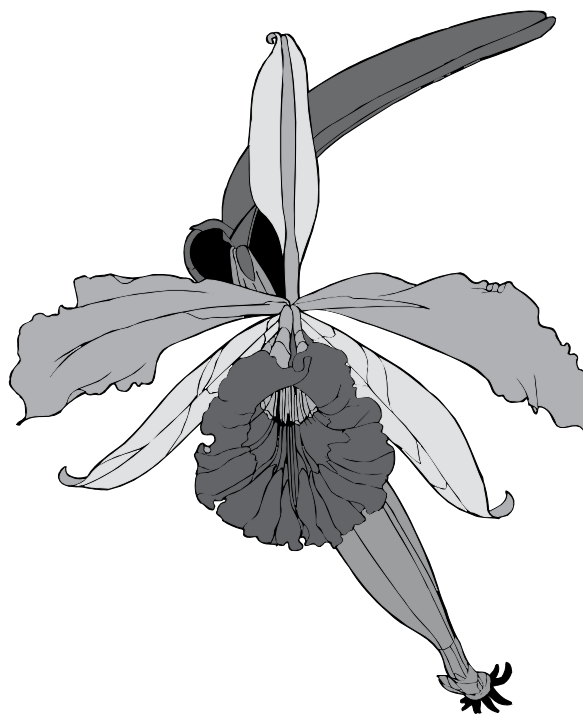
As in years past we will again have pre-sale discount tickets. The price of a ticket is \$10.00 and they are being mailed to our members to sell in advance of the Show. The ticket stub on each pre-sale ticket is a \$5.00 off coupon that you can use on a minimum purchase of \$25.00 at participating Show Vendors. We are asking our members to please help us by selling these tickets to family, friends, and colleagues to help raise funds before the Show, while also encouraging increased attendance. Pre-Sale tickets also make great holiday gifts.

The Show will open with a Premier Party on February 26th from 7:30 - 10:00 PM. This will be a festive party with food and entertainment and of course the sales marts will be open for the first time - so you get first chance on purchasing the orchid plants of

your dreams. The ticket price for the Premier Party is \$50.00 and tickets are available from the SFOS office. You can purchase your tickets by mailing your check to: SFOS, 10801 SW 124 St., Miami, FL 33176. If you would like to charge your tickets, please give Ellen a call at (305-255-3656).

Trophy sponsorships will also be available for our Show. This is a beautiful way to show your support for our Show by honoring a loved one or through a company sponsorship of a trophy. We will have Best in Show Trophies available for \$100.00 or Best in Class Trophies available for \$50.00. If you are interested in sponsoring a trophy please contact Ellen at the SFOS office (305-255-3656 or sforchid@bellsouth.net).

Please mark the Show dates in your calendar now and plan not only to attend but to volunteer to help your Society make the 63rd Miami International Orchid Show the best and most wonderful Show we have ever had.



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**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.

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## A LITTLE HISTORY OF TERRARIUMS

As early as 500 BC, plants were kept under bell-shaped glass jars for exhibit. But the terrarium in its modern form was invented by accident in 1827 by Nathaniel Ward, a London doctor.



**Indoor Wardian Case (from Ward's 1852 book)**

The fern case was discovered accidentally in 1827 by Dr. Nathaniel Ward, a London physician with a passion for botany. Dr. Ward built a

fern rockery in his backyard, but the ferns kept dying, poisoned by the fumes from the city's factories. Ward was also studying moths and caterpillars and, while experimenting with a cocoon in a covered jar for observation, he noticed that several plants had grown in the bit of soil at the bottom of the jar. Among the bottled plants was a fern and, unlike the ferns in his garden, it looked healthy; Dr. Ward concluded that plants could flourish in London if they could be protected from the city's polluted air. Ward pursued his discovery in miniature greenhouses, which he named fern cases, and which are now known as Wardian cases or terrariums.

For the first time, horticulturists were able to bring back sensitive tropical plants in Wardian cases well-protected from salt air and changing climatic conditions during the long sea voyage. Ward's terrariums also became popular for growing the plants, and it became, in various guises, almost a domestic necessity. The poor had to content themselves with inexpensive rudimentary versions, but there were no limits for the rich. Wardian cases grew into miniature Taj Mahals and Brighton Pavilions, perfect vehicles for the contemporary love of elaborate ornamentation as well as living plants. The Wardian case was

fashionable in the United States in the early 1860s, and hardly a self-respecting Victorian household was without one.

Today's "Wardian Cases", or Terrariums, as we now call them, no longer have the need to keep our plants away from cold, and fouled air, but serve quite another purpose. With the dry air of our modern air conditioned, and forced air heated homes, many plants have difficulty thriving without a great deal of attention. Terrariums allow us to keep plants easily in our homes in attractive, decorative containers, while creating an environment which requires very little care. Closed terrariums, happy in their humidity filled surroundings, actually thrive on neglect.

## SETTING UP A TERRARIUM FOR ORCHIDS

Many orchid growers graduate from the windowsill to a terrarium in order to better control environmental conditions, especially humidity, for their plants. An old aquarium can be used for this purpose fairly easily. If it was a fresh water tank, all it needs is a good cleaning with soap and water and an overnight soak in a bleach solution to kill any algae left in crevices. If it was a salt water tank, you will need to fill the tank with water and let it soak for several days, rinse and soak again, in order to make sure that all salt residues have been removed.

Although it is not very natural looking, most experts recommend using egg shell crate (material used for fluorescent light covering available at most hardware stores). This material is approximately ½ inch or 2 centimeters high with openings in squares of approximately ¼ inch or 1 centimeter. The effect when this is used as the substrate is then to keep all materials from the bottom of the terrarium while holding water and allowing it to evaporate up through the spaces.

You will want to choose props much like those used in a fish tank in order to make the whole thing look natural. Drift wood, rocks, cork are all good choices. Be sure that you clean and sterilize anything that you bring in from the wild. Materials purchased from pet stores are probably already sterile and will not need to be treated. Place your props, the largest in the background and smallest in the front before you put in your plants.

Plants should be chosen carefully for size and the larger plants can be placed in the back or growing up


cork. Small plants such as Masdevallia, Pleurothallis and the smaller Paph species are good choices. Jewel orchids should always be considered since their foliage is always interesting when nothing else is blooming. Choose contrasting leaf colors for the best effect. Ferns make very good companion plants and will add a pleasing texture change to the scene.

Place your plants still in their pots and then add sphagnum moss around the plants and cover the egg crate so that it no longer shows. When assembled like this repotting is very simple – just take out the plant and pot, put in new media and then replace. Some orchids will tend to grow into their environment and should not need repotting if they have acclimated such as growing on a cork backdrop.

### MAINTAINING A TERRARIUM FOR ORCHIDS

Once you have your terrarium set up for your orchids maintaining happy and healthy plants is easy if you give them all the elements of their environment they need.

Depending upon the type of plants you have chosen for your terrarium, you will need to provide adequate light. It is important when you set it up to choose plants which require like temperatures and light for best growth. In addition, it is good to try to group your plants by their light requirements throughout the year. Many epiphytes come from equatorial areas which receive equal amounts of light year round with little change from summer to winter. Your lighting requirements are fairly straightforward in this case: 11 to 12 hours of light. If, however, you have plants such as Cattleyas or other light sensitive plants, you will have to follow a spring, summer, fall and winter schedule. In general, spring and fall should require approximately 12-13 hours of light; summer approximately 15-16 hours and winter approximately 10-11 hours.



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Air circulation is a critical factor in maintaining a terrarium. If you do not keep the air moving, you run the risk of encouraging pathogens such as molds which will quickly kill your plants. If you have set up your own aquarium, small computer fans will provide enough circulation to keep your plants happy. If you're lucky enough to have invested in a professional Wardian case or terrarium, then the fans should already be included. You should also have a vent of some sort to allow warmer air to be moved out of the environment and fresh air in.

Temperature is another area which requires control in a terrarium. Artificial lighting causes heat which can quickly rise in the enclosed environment. A minimum/maximum thermometer which also records humidity is an ideal instrument. You will want to keep the temperature in the 75 degree Fahrenheit, or 24 Centigrade, range for cool growers and 85 degrees Fahrenheit, or 30 Centigrade, for intermediate growers. One great challenge for you will be to lower temperatures enough at night to get the diurnal drop that many orchids need at night. Turning off the lights will provide a relief from the heat they produce, but venting out that heat is the only way to really make a difference. Ideally, you will want a 10 degree Fahrenheit, or 5 Centigrade, drop at night. In reality, this is very difficult to achieve. I've even heard of people who put ice cubes in their terrariums at night in order to force this to happen, with mixed results from their efforts.

### 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, November 19th.

## 2008 SFOS HOLIDAY PARTY

December is approaching which means we should take time to be thankful for our health, good friends and family, and of course, our beautiful orchids. Which bring up our next and favorite subjects – Christmas, Chanukah, and everything that goes with December, like our Holiday Party. There will not be a regular meeting/judging this month. Dress code will be semiformal.

The party will be on Sunday, December 14th at Signature Gardens, 12725 S.W. 122 Ave. from 6:30 P.M. until 10:30 P.M. If you've never been there, this will be a real treat for you. Plenty of parking and large banquet rooms decorated beautifully for the holidays. The food is wonderful and there will be an open bar!

The meal will be a buffet and will include: Caesar Salad, Cold Pasta Salad Primavera, Whole Honey Glazed Ham, Roast Vermont Turkey with Old Fashioned Stuffing, Giblet Gravy and Cranberry Sauce, Tender Pork Slices, Sweet Potato Soufflé with Crushed Pineapple and Marshmallows, Steamed Long Grain White Rice, Black Beans with Chopped Onions, Assorted Cakes and Pies, Rolls, and Coffee. Happy Hour will begin at 6:30 P.M. and dinner will be ready at 7:00 P.M.

We will have a D.J. for the evening and they will play music for all generations. We will also have our gift exchange. There is a \$5.00 limit on the gifts and please put tags stating male or female. You don't have to participate; this optional, but fun! There will be a raffle during the evening. All members will, of course, receive a beautiful seedling upon presentation of their membership badge; if you have lost your badge, please notify the office (305-255-3656).

Remember the party is scheduled for Sunday, December 14th and admission is by reservation only. We must know by Wednesday, December 10th if you plan to attend. The price for members is \$20.00 and \$35.00 for nonmembers. Tables of eight can be reserved. If you have any questions, please call the office (305-255-3656) or Marlene Clark (305-253-7627). We invite all of our members, especially our new members, to join us for a delightful evening.

## 2008 SFOS Holiday Party

Please make \_\_\_\_\_  
reservations for the SFOS Holiday Party.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Members @ \$20.00

\_\_\_\_\_ Guests @ \$35.00

Total Amount Due: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail your reservation form along with your check before December 10th, 2008 to:

South Florida Orchid Society  
10801 SW 124 St., Miami, FL 33176

## SAVE THE DATE



# HOLIDAY PARTY

# REMINDER

SUNDAY - DECEMBER 14, 2008  
SIGNATURE GARDENS  
7:00 P.M.



  
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## Growing Orchids in a Terrarium or Wardian Case

A decorative idea for growing orchids in the home is the use of a **terrarium, conservatory or Wardian Case**. The concept behind the use of these items is that you create a mini-greenhouse inside to grow plants. They come in all sizes, colors and shapes to suit almost any décor. It is important to understand what will and will not work for orchids in this type of environment. The major thing to remember is that we are trying to replicate the growing conditions for the orchids we are putting in the chamber. Thus, high humidity, good air circulation and adequate lighting are required.

**Terrariums** by definition are self-contained ecosystems designed to live without disturbance for a year or more. The water in the container is constantly re-circulated by evaporating and dripping back into the soil or growing medium. Most orchids will not survive well in this kind of an environment because they need more air circulation or they will rot.

A **Conservatory or Wardian Case** is actually a mini-greenhouse with air vents, perhaps fans, lights, everything necessary to grow indoors. There are any number of combinations that can be used, depending upon your needs. The Orchidarium site has the most complete information I've seen, including what accessories are available. If you are considering building your own there are several really good articles available. The Do It Yourself Wardian Case article by Prem Subrahmanyam published in the Tallahassee Orchid Society Newsletter is extremely helpful and detailed.

In corresponding with several people who have successfully grown orchids in enclosed gardens, the primary comments were that it is necessary to have fans going 24/7, keep an opening to allow in fresh air, and to choose orchids which prefer high humidity, have lower light requirements and like the warmer end of the growing spectrum. It is extremely difficult to provide cool temperatures in enclosed spaces while using artificial lighting. One lady even mentioned trying to reduce evening temperatures by putting ice in the bottom of the enclosure, but found that that didn't work adequately. And, most importantly

do not have pots or plants sitting in water!

It is important to have automated controls on a Wardian Case because it doesn't take much to cause conditions that will kill your plants. In order to keep the humidity up while the lights are on, misters are recommended. It is recommended that lights be used for 12-14 per day. Recommended orchids mentioned were *Pleurothallids* although *Masdevallias* don't seem to like it as much as the *Restrepias* and mini-Dendrobiums.

One thing that I didn't hear much about, but I would recommend is that you try mounted plants in a Wardian Case, especially if you are looking for a decorative display. Mounted plants need higher humidity to allow their roots to gather water than those in pots.



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# The 63rd Miami International Orchid Show

The largest and most prestigious  
All-Orchid Show in America

“Secret Orchid Gardens”

Friday, February 27 - Sunday, March 1, 2009

Airport Mart Hotel & Convention Center

711 NW 72 Ave., Miami, FL

Pre-sale tickets have been mailed to our members. Please sell them to your friends, colleagues, and family. The ticket price is \$10.00 and includes a \$5.00 coupon off a minimum purchase of \$25.00 at participating show vendors. This is a considerable savings off the at-the-door price of \$15.00. Remember these tickets make great holiday gifts. If you need more tickets please call or email Ellen at the SFOS office (305-255-3656 or [sforchid@bellsouth.net](mailto:sforchid@bellsouth.net)).



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