



March 2010

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## MARCH PROGRAM

Wednesday, March 17, 2010

Fire Fighters Memorial Building, 8000 NW 21 St., Miami, FL 33122

7:15 PM Registration and Judging of Plants

8:00 PM Program beings

This month our program will be presented by a long time SFOS member Betty Eber. The program is titled "The Orchids of Cuba". The program consists of some background on the climate and a general natural description of the island. Betty will show selected orchids from the book "The Orchids of Cuba" written in collaboration with Juan A. Llamacho, Julio A. Larramendi and James D. Ackerman.

Betty has been growing orchids as a hobby for over 20 years and has been teaching orchid culture classes at Fairchild Tropical Botanical Gardens for years. She has lectured on orchid culture at several clubs and in the past taught the "Get Growing" classes at the Miami International Orchid Show. She is a member of the Orchid Society of Coral Gables, COS, and SFOS.

Orchids by Allison will be providing the raffle table for the meeting.

## PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Dear South Florida Members:

As our newsletter is going to print, we are all preparing for the 64th Miami International Orchid Show which begins this week. Next month I will give a detailed report of the show, but now I would like to thank all the people who worked so hard to put this show together. I would like to thank Christa Collins and Marlene Clark for being hospitality chairs; thank you Marlene for also arranging wonderful food for the Premier Party and the Judge's breakfasts and lunch. A big thanks to Barbara and Danny Lutz for their help with individual entries and trophies; a big thank you goes to Eduardo Marcellini for his help with security; Dorothy Bennett for her help with registration of plants and organizing the box office; Michael O'Dea for arranging walking tours and lectures, and Ellen Hanson, our secretary, for doing an extraordinary amount of work. Thank you, too to all the volunteers who manned the box office or served as supervisors. A big thank you goes to Bob Fuchs, who served as our Show Chairman, for your insight and persistence. The floor plan looks great, and it will be exciting to have other plant societies join our show.

I hope you, our members, are also busy cleaning and staking your plants for the individual entries. Just think how proud you will feel when you see you plant and your name displayed for everybody to see. Our meeting in April is our annual plant auction. Bring your friends and your checkbooks.

But until then, good growing and see you at the show!

Judy

# THE 64<sup>TH</sup> MIAMI INTERNATIONAL ORCHID SHOW

I want to thank everyone that participated in the 64<sup>th</sup> Miami International Orchid Show. It was a beautiful Show that was well attended. The exhibits were spectacular and the individual entries plentiful. All of the volunteers did a wonderful job and we could not have done it without them. South Florida Orchid Society can be proud of another great Show!

Robert Fuchs  
64<sup>th</sup> Miami International Orchid Show Chairman

## RECIPIES

### Vanilla Sugar

There are a number of recipes for making vanilla sugar. The simplest is to place whole or split vanilla beans into a jar of granulated or confectioners sugar. Seal the lid tightly and allow the beans to remain at least one week before using the sugar. Shake the jar one or twice a day to circulate a fragrant sugar, but with minimal vanilla flavor.

To make a more richly flavored vanilla sugar, use one of the following two techniques:

1. Split a vanilla bean in half, then scrape the seeds of the two halves into 3 cups of granulated sugar, or 1 box

of confectioners sugar. Place the vanilla sugar into a jar with a good seal. Add the sliced pieces of the bean, and then close tightly. The sugar will be flavorful in about 1 day and will continue to grow in flavor over the next week.

2. The other technique is to put sugar into a blender or food processor. For each cup of sugar, use approximately 2 inches of the vanilla bean, split in half and cut into small pieces. Whirl through the blender or pulse in food processor until the pieces of bean have been pulverized. Store as above. Before using sugar treated this way, pour it through a sieve.

Beans that are used to flavor custards or other liquids (except for chocolate) can be stored in the sugar jars. This will keep the beans well protected and will add additional fragrance to the sugar.

Beans stored in sugar will keep indefinitely, but the fragrance will slowly wear away with time. The beans will probably need replacing within a year or so. Beans used to flavor liquids will lose their flavor and scent more rapidly.

## JUDGING

### Bring Your Orchids in for Judging!

You can win with your orchids by bringing them in at our next meeting March 17th. Dress your plants up and bring them in.

## SPECIES

*Laelia esalqueana* by Susan Taylor

[Laelia esalqueana](#) is one of the star-shaped Laelias known as "Rupicolus Laelias" due to their unique habitat growing in almost full sun in rocky mountainous terrain, sometimes on the rocks themselves in pockets of poor soil. This species was named in 1973 after the Escola Superior de Agricultura in Brazil where it is found in the state of Sao Paulo.

As may be expected their culture is determined by this habitat. They need a lot of sun, good humidity, and a dry winter rest with only occasional misting and intermediate temperatures with 55 degrees Fahrenheit, or 13 degree Centigrade, at night and 70 degrees Fahrenheit, or 21 degrees Centigrade, during the day. In their native habitat they will endure much cooler temperatures at night without harm.

These plants are true miniatures, growing to only 3 inches or 8 centimeters high. The two to five bright yellow-gold flowers are held just above the plant on a stout inflorescence for a nice presentation. The plant itself has squat, fat pseudobulbs with thick fleshy leaves all of which provide storage for water in a dry environment. They need a rest after flowering until the new growth starts when watering should be resumed. A drop of temperature at night is almost a requirement to get these little plants to bloom well. Some growers recommend temperatures in the 50 degree Fahrenheit, or 10 degrees Centigrade if normal intermediate temperatures do not induce blooming.

As may be noted from the description of their native habitat, these orchids need high light to flower. They require 2500 to 3500 foot candles of light for at least several hours each day. If you are growing under lights, place them close to the middle of fluorescent lights and only about 4 inches below the lights. The middle of the lights provides the brightest light at the highest intensity.

*Laelias* are closely related to *Cattleyas* and they have been extensively interbred with them to produce smaller plants and bright flowers, especially in the yellow flower range. This particular

species is one of the parents of a very well known mini-catt called Lc. Jungle Elf ((L. esalqueana x C. aclandiae) and figures in the background of more than 80 hybrids. The small size as well as the nice number of flowers have made this one of the species used extensively in the new breeding for smaller size orchids in the Cattleya alliance.

## **Orchid Growing Tips**

(AOS Forum, Orchid Dreams Forum and the Houston Orchid Society for the tips they contributed)

**Orthene will prevent thrips.** A preventative spraying of Orthene 75%, wettable powder or in aerosol, on maturing flower buds will prevent thrip damage, as well as aphids and ants. If insects are found on the open flowers, the same chemical can be used to eradicate the infestation, without damaging the flowers. Other insecticides WILL damage the flowers and should not be used. Use Orthene spray as recommended on the label. If using the aerosol, spray from at least a foot away from the flowers. In addition, Orthene 75% does not leave any unsightly residue.

**Remove dried sheaths from Cattleya Alliance orchids.** Always remove the dried sheathing from pseudobulbs to prevent buildup of moisture, and as a hiding place for insects. This also provides more surface for photosynthesis activity. Insects, particularly scale insects, find Cattleya Alliance plants attractive.

**Cut open bud sheaths to eliminate flower bud rot.** Bud sheaths often collect water inside causing the new buds to rot. Cut the top off the sheath will to eliminate this problem. Sometimes, a sheath will form without a bud ever forming, or due to breeding some orchids, will form a sheath, then many months later form the flower buds.

**Soak used pots in water and bleach to kill viruses and diseases.** Recycle used pots by soaking in a strong bleach solution for at least twenty minutes to kill any viruses or diseases. Use ½ cup bleach per gallon of water.

**Take problem plants out of their pots and put in an empty clay pot.** Water and fertilize as normal. This will force any eyes that are on the plant to grow and make new roots. Then the plant can be repotted. This will save you the time and expense of using mix on a plant that will never make it.

## **Mounting Orchid by Annie Mezaros**

I was apprehensive to say the least; the first time I decided I wanted to mount one of my orchids. I had realized that none of the directions or advise I had been following to grown my Tolumnia Raph Yagi were working for me and I had decided upon mounting it as a last ditch effort to save it's life. I didn't think I had anything to lose except the plant itself, which was well on its way to plant heaven already. It was the best decision I could have made for that plant and I'm now successfully growing 7 Tolumnias as well as a lot of other miniature orchids on

mounts. I do not grow any large plants of slabs, but only because I don't have the space to hang them anywhere. Making the decision to mount an orchid if you are a windowsill or under lights grower should take into consideration a number of different factors, such as whether you have enough humidity to keep the slab moist long enough for the roots to absorb water; are you willing and able to commit to watering the mount as often as it may require, even if that turns out to be everyday? Do you have an appropriate place to hang the plant where it will receive sufficient light? If you can provide the humidity (60% or more is ideal), space and commitment; growing orchids this way is very rewarding. Not only does mounting mimic the way orchids plants grow in nature, in many ways it's actually easier to grow plants this way because you can see the condition of the roots and whether or not the plant needs to be watered. More orchids meet their maker due to the loving application of too much water than any other reason. This takes the guesswork out of whether or not to fetch the watering can.

1) Select the plant to be mounted taking into consideration its growth habit, ie. Does it sprawl out or stay compact, grow quickly or moderately? Does it need to stay moist or dry out quickly?

2) There are many materials you can use to mount your orchid on. The most common mounts used today are tree fern slabs, virgin cork bark and sticks. Paramount has tree fern slabs in various sizes and sticks are easy to come by, but it's important to make sure to buy any online products from various suppliers in Canada and the US. I have used non-virgin cork bark with

good results too. It's sometimes available at pet stores where reptile supplies are sold. Just be sure to clean the cork very carefully if you buy it from a pet store. 3) Make you decision on what material to use based on what is available to you and the watering needs of the plant. Tree fern stays moist a lot longer than sticks and cork bark. If tree fern is not available, you can still use sticks or cork by attaching some moss under or on top of the roots.

4) Soak the mount and a small amount of moss overnight before using. Be sure to attach wire hooks or other material that will be used to hang the mount up before attaching the plant.

5) Carefully un-pot the plant removing as much growing medium as possible. Remove all dried up or mushy roots with a mild fungicide or dust them lightly with cinnamon if I have done any trimming to prevent rot or infection. Once again taking into consideration the growth habit of your orchid, lay the plant onto the mount, spreading the roots gently out on the surface. If you are using moss place a thin layer either under or on top of the roots. The great thing is that if you decide you have too much moss or too little, you can easily add or remove with little damage or disturbance to the plant. You will need to use some type of material initially to hold the plant onto the mount until the roots grab and hold on naturally.

Some of the things I have seem people use include fishing line, thin strips of nylon hosiery, wire, twist ties, staples, elastic bands, and even hot glue. Whatever you decide to use, just make sure that you don't tie the roots to the mount so tightly that they are damaged. Use the minimum amount of tie-down that will hold the plant in place. Once the plant is established on the mount, you can remove whatever you used to hold it in place or leave it on if you want.

Don't forget about the tag! If it doesn't already have a hole in it, make a hole and using a piece of wire or fishing line, attach it to the mount. I usually hang: from the hook or you can drill a small hole in the mount and thread the wire for the tag through it. Place your newly mounted plant in shadier spot for the first 2 weeks while it adjusts to the new conditions. Water it

carefully, making sure it doesn't stay too wet or too dry. Only you will know through careful observation of the leaves and 6 roots, what is too wet or dry while the plant is getting used to its new growing condition. Then slowly move it every few days closer to its final destination until you have it where you want it to be.

Equitant oncidiums (Tolumnias) are great plants to try mounting for beginners. These plants like to dry out quickly and require a lot less humidity than many other types of orchids. A tip for overgrown mounts is that it's unwise to even try removing the plant from its mount. It's easier on both you and the plant to attach the whole works to a new mount in its entirety. The plant will soon cover the edges of the old material anyway. I've had some success prying off roots from sticks but I would only attempt to do that when there is plenty of new root growth just commencing.

AOS

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