



# The Orchidist

## Meet Our Commercial Growers: Jose Exposito of SOROA ORCHIDS

My love with orchids started, like with most people, with Cattleyas, but like the old saying goes “Man propose and God dispose” because it was really Phalaenopsis growing and breeding what gave Soroa Orchids it’s place in orchid history

Today, in the 30,000 square feet of greenhouses the old love, Cattleyas, are the ones gracing the growing benches, and thousands of Soroa new Cattleya hybrids are awaiting their first blooming like some anticipated cosmic event. Phalaenopsis? Well, they are still around and they are still unbeaten as far as grace, longevity and

popularity but I believe that it is our growing of cattleyas what deserves a Blue ribbon!

How we do it? Simple, really

Like with most plants the key to success it is mainly three factors

Water

Light

Nutrition

The easiest way to kill a plant is inadequate watering, do it too much and your plants will DIE..(ok I am being dramatic) not enough and they will struggle and a long, slow, painful trip to orchid heaven may be the end result, when it comes to light, growing your orchids under that beautiful avocado tree that give you the best Hass in the world may be too dark so your orchid plant will grow but



may not flower and like with ice cream, too much of a good thing is really good...I mean bad, truly bad (except for ice cream), so the right nutrition is key, not enough fertilizer and your plants will grow weak and flower poorly, over do it and toxicity, burning of new roots and new growth may occur

In the 1990’s when Soroa Orchids popularity as phalaenopsis grower was at it’s peak, we confronted the problem of many orchid enthusiasts abandoning the idea of growing phalaenopsis in South Florida, the orchid mixes of choice those days like bark or sphagnum

moss were no match for the unforgiving spring and summer rains , populations of phalaenopsis were perishing all around unable to fight fungus and bacteria, We Had To Do Something! We started imitating their natural growing conditions and started growing phalaenopsis in wood vanda baskets, side ways with just a little sphagnum moss to improve humidity on the roots, the leaves cascading



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down so water could run off without depositing in the crown....SUCCESS!!! The America Orchid Society published an article on the phenomenal results But what is the connection to Cattleyas, remember? My first Love?

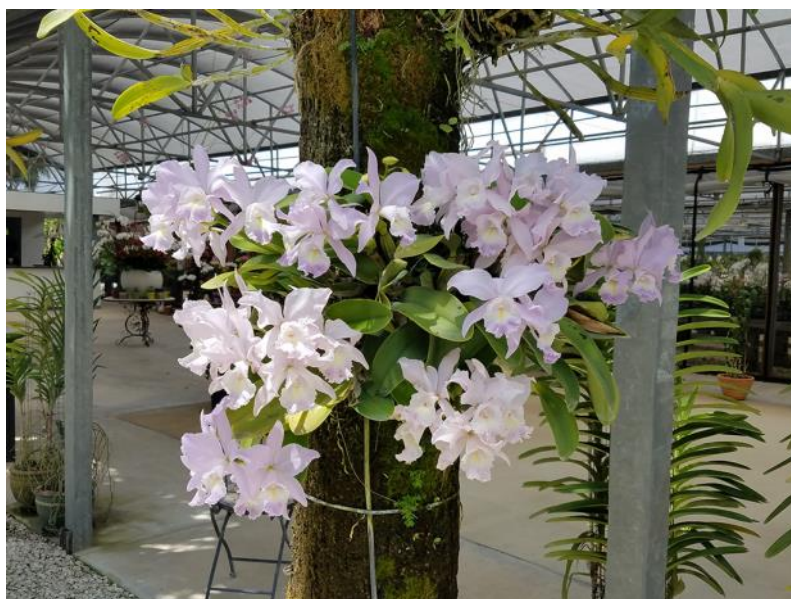
The copious amount of rain in South Florida should be a mayor consideration when selecting potting mixes, type and sizes of growing containers and as with phalaenopsis, cattleyas can also fall victims of those natural weather conditions in our area, we found, barred from growing attached to a tree, that most cattleyas perform the best growing on wood plaques, just a little moss to initiate

rooting and hanging in order to receive natural air all around the plant and the root system, this method will also minimize the damage and stress when you need to transplant because the plant has outgrown its plaque, very simply mount the plant in a larger plaque and with no damage to the roots the plant will flourish

As for fertilizer, that is another chapter, so much can be said about this subject that it will need several pages to explain even in a simple term

If you like to see Soroa Orchids innovative ideas come visit our nursery, we are happy to share with you our knowledge.

Photos Courtesy Soroa Orchids



## President's Message

Greetings to all South Florida Orchid Society Members, As I'm writing this message, we are into another cycle of very hot, rainy wet & windy weather. I hope everyone had the opportunity to read the excellent article last month in the May/June SFOS Newsletter presented by Carlos Cahiz from OFE. He gave a very easy to understand explanation of what to do & suggested products to use to protect your orchid plants during a rainy season. In addition, if you need something, give Carlos a call. You can pick it up in person, or he can have it shipped to you. If you missed his article or want to read it again, you can find it under the Newsletter heading on [www.sforchid.com](http://www.sforchid.com). As a matter of fact you can go back and read many past newsletters as they are all stored there by Year & Month. Maybe a good thing to do on a rainy day when you need to stay inside.

In this month's MEET OUR COMMERCIAL MEMBERS Column, we are presenting a very interesting article submitted by Jose Exposito of SOROA ORCHIDS. His photos of orchids in bloom in his shade house are beautiful. And he shares some of his tips from years of successful cultivation of Phalaenopsis and also his beloved Cattleyas. Thank you Jose, for sharing your knowledge with our Members, and your continuing support of SFOS.

In the CONVERSATIONS WITH OUR SFOS MEMBERS Column, you will read a story submitted Maria Almodovar who was recently voted in as Secretary to our SFOS Board (but has actually been filling that position for a year). Also a story about David Foster, who has just celebrated a

milestone 90th Birthday, written by another SFOS Member Daisy Wortel. Enjoy the stories and their photos. And it's not too late to wish David Happy 90th Birthday.

Remember, you can submit a question to our "Ask our Orchid Doctor" column. We will do our best to post an answer for you in the next SFOS Newsletter. You can remain anonymous if you prefer...no question is too simple or too difficult. And, you won't have to wait to ask in person...simply send me an email at [chris278429@gmail.com](mailto:chris278429@gmail.com) or call or text me at (786)586-4377. I will pass the question on, & Ron will post the answer.

At this moment Miami, & the whole Tri-County area is continuing to experience higher numbers of reported Covid-19 infections & our hospitals are operating under a stressful situation. If any of our SFOS Members, family or friends are in the medical community, thank you for your efforts & your service. The same goes for our essential workers & first responders.

Everyone please stay well...wear a mask...practice safe distancing...wash your hands...avoid crowds. At some point, we will be able to safely resume our SFOS Meetings, but in the meantime must do our best to stay connected thru the use of social media and the hard work of Ron Hunt, the Editor of this Newsletter and our SFOS Website.

Hope to see everyone soon...  
Chris Alger, President  
South Florida Orchid Society



The screenshot shows the website's navigation menu with options: Home, About, Calendar, Education, Judging, Meetings, Membership, Newsletters. The Newsletters dropdown menu is open, showing a list of months from 2019\_06\_June to 2019\_12\_December. The 2019\_08\_August option is highlighted in green. Below the menu, the website header features the South Florida Orchid Society logo and the text "The South Florida Hosts of the 11th and 19th".

### Remember!

You can always find the latest published version of the Orchidist on our website at [www.sforchid.com](http://www.sforchid.com) If it's not there, it hasn't been sent out yet.

You can also find the last twelve issues under this handy dropdown menu.



## Membership Corner

Hello all of you South Florida Orchid Society Members! I guess by now you have all gotten your shade houses cleaned up and all of your orchids repotted and cleaned up too! I'm right - right?

I know that this has been and still is a trying time for all of us. My biggest hope is that all of you and your families are home as much as possible and staying safe. I for one can't wait to go away to a dog show. Staying at home is not my idea of fun.

I'm in the last little bit of doing the Roster for 2020/2021. I'm trying to proof read it and make a few corrections here and there.

As far as getting New Members this past month - well we didn't get any - but I know that as soon as we can safely have meetings again - we will be back on track. If however you have a friend that wants to join the SFOS - just let me know and I'll be happy to take care of it.

Remember that you can also order SFOS T-Shirts - just let me know and I'll get one ordered for you.

Again and above all else, please stay safe! We will be able to get back together sooner and later I hope.

Sally Taylor—Membership Chair



## 74th Miami International Orchid Show CANCELLED!

After serious consideration, the difficult decision was made to cancel THE 74th MIAMI INTERNATIONAL ORCHID SHOW which had been scheduled to be held at The Watsco Center on the University of Miami Campus Oct 3-4, 2020.

As you many of you know, a great deal of preparation is done by our Show Chair Dan Christensen for many many months in advance, planning and attending to a myriad of details, which results in our show being a successful event for both our attendees and our show vendors.

Not only does SFOS need to meet deadlines for deposits on contracts required to produce our show, we also require our Vendors to make advance deposits to participate. The vendors must make advance travel and hotel arrangements for themselves in addition to planning for the shipping and delivery of their plants and booth display equipment

Even with social distancing and wearing face coverings the Coronavirus Pandemic is still being spread in our and other communities and countries. We do not know what the public health situation will be in the Fall. We do not know if Universities will still be conducting classes virtually, or if visitors will be allowed on campus or with what

restrictions. In many cities and states, there is much uncertainty going forward as to even which events should be postponed or cancelled. For SFOS there is no way to guarantee that we would be allowed to hold our SFOS Show, or what restrictions might be placed on our attendees, vendors and volunteers, regardless of all of the advance planning.

Many decisions will be made in the coming months concerning future attendance at large gatherings such as concerts, theater sporting events (and even orchid shows) which for the most part have all been put on hold, or cancelled for the remainder of 2020.

To quote our Show Chair Dan Christensen, "this decision to cancel has been made for the safety of our patrons and vendors". For our members, vendors and visitors that were looking forward to our show, this is a huge disappointment. But, we will get thru this, and as we go thru the different phases of recovery in the coming months, we can look forward to our show being held in 2021. And that will be cause for celebration.

The South Florida Board of Directors

## Conversations With Our Members

### Maria Almodovar

Hi everyone!!

Hope you are all well, staying safe and following all the recommended guidelines. Tony and I miss going to our orchid and bromeliad meetings. We are members of four clubs currently so we keep pretty busy (or used to L). When this whole Covid-19 craziness began, my company asked us to work remotely from home. I thought it would be for a month but it is possible that it may become permanent. Our team started to have weekly Zoom Happy Hour meetings on Fridays at the end of our workweek. It is nice being able to see everyone at least once a week on our computer screens. I am a people-person so I miss not going to work, but not the drive! Tony lost his job in the beginning of the pandemic, but has since been called back to work reduced hours. The good thing is that he got to spend a lot of time with the orchids, yes he is the one that cares for them. I just get to enjoy them when they are blooming.

We had a coupon for \$30 off of \$100 purchase of orchids that was burning a hole in our pockets and would soon

expire, so we went out Orchid shopping in June. We ended up at Soroa Orchids in Homestead. I really like that place, everything is so clean and meticulous and they sell quality plants. I am never disappointed when I go there.

I was born in Cuba and migrated to US when I was two. We flew into Miami, but eventually moved to Los Angeles. In 1972 after one of the big earthquakes, we decided to move back to Miami where at least you get warnings before the Hurricanes hit. Tony was born in Brooklyn but he moved to Miami where we met. We have one son who is currently in the process of applying to medical school and three fur-babies (Ricky, Lucy and Churro). So in about one year if all goes as planned, my son Ryan will probably be leaving us to attend school.....not sure where.

I love all orchids, I especially like the ones that are fragrant!! What a bonus when you have a beautiful flower and a beautiful scent. Below are some of my latest blooms.

Hope to you see you all soon,

Maria Almodovar

Photos Courtesy Maria Almodovar





## Conversations With Our Members

### David Foster

David Foster turned 90 years old on June 21, 2020. David has been growing orchids for over 50 years; In addition to his Orchids, he has a wonderful selection of rare Palms that adorn his garden where he has managed to attach some of the nicest and older species of orchids. David belongs to many Orchid Societies where he is very involved and helps as much as he can. He has won several cultural awards for growing orchids throughout the years. He also won a very special award for his *grammatophyllum speciosom*, which is one of the few *grammatophyllums* that has managed to bloom annually making several experienced growers jealous.



David Foster is a wonderful man who welcomes visitors to enjoy his garden. He willingly shares his knowledge with anyone who is interested.

David is a world traveler. His latest was last year Columbia for their annual Orchid show in Cali. David has two sons and two grandsons who admire and love him very much.

David is an example of a person that absolutely loves Orchids; he has turned me and several of my friends onto genres that he grows well such as

Dendrobiums and Schomburkias. We wish David Foster a Happy Birthday and many more years to enjoy growing orchids and sharing his knowledge with all of us.

Daisy Wortel



Photos curtesy Daisy Wortel & Ron Hunt



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Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33332  
Tel.: (954) 252-8116 • e-mail: [damorchid@aol.com](mailto:damorchid@aol.com)

*Orchids*



## South Florida Orchid Society, Inc.

### Board of Directors

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**1<sup>st</sup> VP:**—Sally Taylor

**2<sup>nd</sup> VP:**—Carlos Cahiz

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**Directors, Term ending in 2022**

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**Directors, Term ending in 2023**

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**Immediate Past President—Chris Alger**

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Meetings are held from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM  
on the third Wednesday of each month.

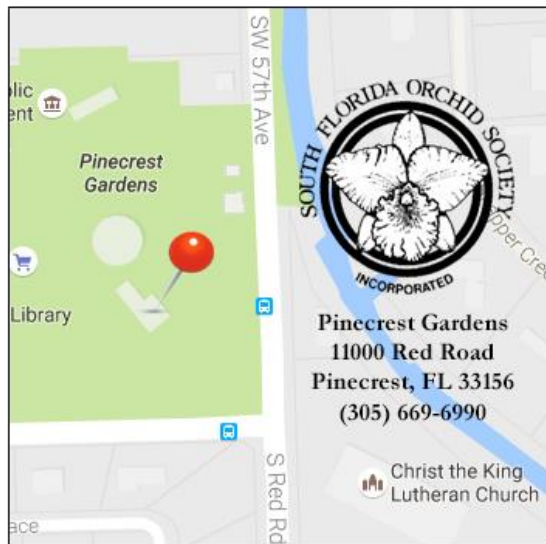
Registration of plants is from 7:00-7:30 PM.  
Program Begins at 8:00 PM.

South Florida Orchid Society, Inc.

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## INTRODUCING ORCHID PRO

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your AOS membership



The Orchidist is published monthly by The South Florida Orchid Society, Inc.

Submissions from members are always appreciated. If you have an orchid growing tip that works for you, we want to know about it. You don't need to send anything fancy. A simple text file will do. If you have photos, send them along too. We'll take it from there. You will, of course, receive credit for your submission.

Please send your submission to ...

[Publications@sforchid.com](mailto:Publications@sforchid.com)

And, be sure to check out our web site at...

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See you next month!

Ron Hunt — Editor, The Orchidist

