



# The Orchidist

*The South Florida Orchid Society Newsletter*

SFOS January 21, 2026 Program

## Dr. Jason Downing: The Million Orchid Project!

### - Kicking Off 2026 -

**Happy New Year, SFOS Members!** I want to wish each of you a wonderful start to 2026. I hope your holidays were filled with joy and, of course, many beautiful blooms. We have also just navigated our first real "winter" test; I sincerely hope that your collections remained safe and undamaged during the chilly days of this past week. It is always a relief to see the mercury climb back up to our usual South Florida temperatures!

**January Guest Speaker: Dr. Jason Downing.** I am incredibly excited to announce our first speaker of the year, Dr. Jason Downing, who will join us on Wednesday, January 21st, at 8:00 PM at Pinecrest Gardens.

Dr. Downing is the Director of Research at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden and a leading voice in global orchid conservation. Originally from Kansas City, where he earned his B.S. in Biology at the University of Kansas, Dr. Downing moved to Miami to pursue his M.S. in Environmental Science and a Ph.D. in Biology at Florida International University (FIU).

During his presentation, Dr. Downing will share the latest research and conservation efforts surrounding the more mysterious species of our region. With over a decade of experience working across Florida, China, Southeast Asia, and the Caribbean, he brings deep insight and powerful field stories about the challenges these orchids face—even after being rediscovered.

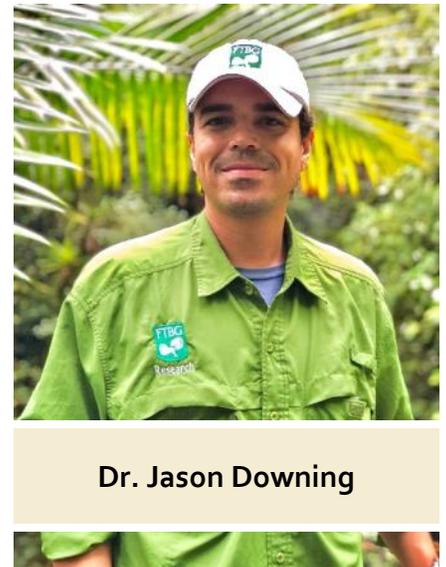
Dr. Downing is most notably the architect of The Million Orchid Project, the largest citizen science and public outreach program focused on orchids in the world. Through his leadership, over 40,000 students have helped replant more than 600,000 native orchids back into the South Florida landscape. His work has been featured in National Geographic, NPR, and In Defense of Plants. This is a program you won't want to miss!

**January Events & Reminders.** Beyond our monthly meeting, January is a major month for orchid lovers in our area. Don't forget that the **Tamiami International Orchid Festival** is happening from **January 16th to 18th**. It is one of the premier events of the year—a perfect place to find new additions for your collection and see world-class displays.

I look forward to seeing you all at **Pinecrest Gardens in the Cypress Hall on January 21st** as we begin a vibrant new year for the South Florida Orchid Society!

Warmly,

**Martin A. Rivas**  
Program Director  
SFOS



Dr. Jason Downing

## President's Message

### Dear SFOS Members and Friends,

As we begin a new year, I want to take a moment to reflect on what makes the South Florida Orchid Society truly special, its members. Looking back on 2025, I am incredibly grateful for the knowledge, generosity, and sense of community that continue to define SFOS.

Month after month, we come together to learn, share, and grow, no matter where we are on our orchid journey. That spirit of openness and curiosity is our greatest strength, and it sets the tone for an exciting year ahead.

### January Guest Speaker: Dr. Jason Downing

I am especially excited to announce our first speaker of the year, Dr. Jason Downing, who will join us on January 21st.

Dr. Downing is the Director of Research at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden and a global leader in orchid conservation. He is also the visionary behind The Million Orchid Project, which has helped reintroduce over 600,000 native orchids into South Florida with the support of more than 40,000 students.

During his presentation, Dr. Downing will share fascinating insights into the conservation of some of our region's most mysterious orchids, drawing from his work across Florida, Southeast Asia, China, and the Caribbean. This promises to be an inspiring and memorable start to our year.

### January Highlights & What's Ahead for 2026

January is a big month for orchid lovers. The Tamiami International Orchid Festival (January 16th–18th) was one of the premier events of the year, and I thank the members who volunteered their time representing SFOS. It made a meaningful impact as the SFOS received \$65 per member's time slot.

### Looking Forward

The SFOS is strengthening its digital presence across **Facebook, Instagram, and our SFOS Website**, with the goal of making it easier for members to participate, share their orchids, and feel connected. This is about showcasing you and building pride in our Society, locally and globally.

We are also pleased to share that **Zelle and credit card payments will be available in 2026** to make participation even easier.

### Annual Membership Dues Reminder

Annual dues are now due and remain unchanged at \$30 for individuals and \$40 for two family members. Payments can be made directly to Margaret at the January meeting. Your dues directly support our speakers, programs, and continued growth.

SFOS can only grow when its members are engaged. This year, we will be launching a **Membership Drive with Rewards**, and I encourage everyone to take part.

Please also remember our **Silent Auction**, which is essential to our financial health. If you can, bring a cutting or plant to donate or if you have a large or overgrown orchid, please let us know and we'd love to work together to turn it into something that benefits many members.

I truly look forward to seeing you on the 21st as we begin a vibrant new year together. SFOS is more than a meeting; it's a shared passion and a community built by its members.

**Here's to a bloom-filled year ahead.**

**Warm regards,  
James Furst  
President  
South Florida Orchid Society**

## MEETING NOTICE!

**The South Florida Orchid Society meeting scheduled for Wednesday, January 21st, will be held in Cypress Hall at Pinecrest Gardens.**

**Meeting begins at 8:00 PM. (Plant Registration & Judging is from 7 - 8pm)**



## **SOUTH FLORIDA ORCHID SOCIETY MINI-AUCTION SERIES**

**ALL PROCEEDS** from items sold on the **MINI-AUCTION** go to South Florida Orchid Society for the benefit of the Society.

Members and guests may donate plants or other items to be auctioned off for this fund-raising effort.

**WE ACCEPT CASH OR CHECKS ONLY.**

Thank you for your support,  
The South Florida Orchid Society Board of Directors

### **South Florida Orchid Society**

Membership Shirts Available in beautiful Royal Blue!

**Ladies V neck cotton (a little lighter in color, but still blue)**

- Sm, Med, L, or XL at \$18.25
- 2XL at \$19.25
- 3XL at \$21.95

**Ladies or Men's -Polo- in either Polyester or Cotton**

- Sm, Med, L, or XL at \$25.75
- 2XL at \$26.75
- 3XL at \$28.00



Shirts can be seen and ordered at our meetings. All shirts must be paid for when ordered.

Remember to wear your shirts to our meetings for a special perk!

Photos From Our Annual Holiday Party at Montgomery Botanical Center!



Photos From Our Annual Holiday Party at Montgomery Botanical Center!



All Holiday Party Photos  
Curtesy of Charles Flick.



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The South Florida Orchid Society Presents...

*"An Introduction to Orchids"*

Everything you need to know in order to successfully grow orchids in south Florida.

Pick up your copy today at better orchid Growers or at SFOS Meetings!



## South Florida Orchid Society, Inc. Board of Directors

**President:** James Furst

**V.P. (Membership):** Margaret Marshall

**Program Director:** Martin Rivas

**Secretary:** Nancy Crisler

**Treasurer:** Ariel Girardi

**Directors, Terms ending in 2026**

Erna Maxwell, Sally Taylor

**Directors, Term ending in 2027**

Maggie Echeverria, Charles Asche

**Directors, Term ending in 2028**

Charles Flick, Vacant

**Immediate Past President:** Javier Morejon

**Special Directors:** Ron Hunt & Julie Rosenberg

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

Orchid registration begins at 7:00PM.

No plants will be registered after 7:30PM

Program begins at 8:PM

## Become a Member of the South Florida Orchid Society!

### MEMBER BENEFITS AND PRIVILEGES

- **MEETING AND MIXING** with many friendly and helpful orchid “neighbors”, amateurs, advanced collectors and commercial growers.
- **WELCOME KIT** includes a copy of “*An Introduction to Orchids*” our book that covers just about everything you need to know to successfully grow orchids in South Florida.
- **MONTHLY MEETINGS** with lectures by leading local and national orchid authorities.
- **FREE REFRESHMENTS!**
- **MONTHLY SILENT AUCTION!**
- **ORCHID JUDGING** each month by qualified regional and national judges.
- **MONTHLY NEWSLETTER** that includes awards given and timely meeting notes.
- **FESTIVE HOLIDAY PARTY!**
- **AIR CONDITIONED** spacious conveniently located meeting hall with ample **FREE** parking.

**CLICK THE ICON BELOW TO DOWNLOAD AN SFOS  
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION. (PDF)**



The South Florida Orchid Society, Inc. is affiliated with  
the West Palm Beach judging center of the  
American Orchid Society.



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