



The Orchidist

The South Florida Orchid Society Newsletter

SFOS July 15th 2026 Program

“Cattleya Species of Venezuela and South America” Presented by Alex Bello

While mid-summer in South Florida keeps us busy managing the heat and humidity in our grow houses, it is also the perfect time to dive deep into the spectacular orchid habitats of our neighbors to the south.

This month, the South Florida Orchid Society is thrilled to welcome local horticultural powerhouse Alex Bello for a stunning visual and educational journey: “Cattleya Species of Venezuela and South America.” From the dramatic cloud forests to the rich tropical lowlands, Alex will explore the magnificent *Cattleya* species that define South American orchid flora, offering invaluable insights into their history, variety, and unique habits.

About Our Guest Speaker

Alex Bello is an avid collector, grower, and true expert across a massive spectrum of tropical flora, ranging from bromeliads, orchids, and ferns to aroids and beyond. He has been cultivating and collecting tropical plants for over 25 years. While he loves all things green, his botanical journey took off when he was gifted a single variegated *Neoregelia*—sparking a lifelong, beautifully “out-of-control” passion for bromeliads and tropical ecosystems.



Alex Bello

Alex's leadership in the plant community is extensive. He has held high-level positions across several major plant societies, serving as the Southern Regions Director for the Bromeliad Society International, President and Show & Sale Chairman of the Bromeliad Society of South Florida, and Former President of the International Aroid Society.

When he isn't managing a collection or leading plant societies, Alex is a dedicated 24-year veteran of the Miami-Dade County Public Schools, serving as a high school administrative assistant overseeing school operations, budget, and personnel. He is also a passionate outdoorsman with a profound love for the Florida Everglades and local ecology, enjoying fishing, swamp walks, and just about any outdoor adventure.

Alex's deep operational background in the plant world means he knows exactly what growers love. Come out early to browse the plant sales tables, catch up with fellow orchid enthusiasts, and pick up some incredible new additions for your summer collection!

We look forward to seeing you all at 7:00 PM on Wednesday, July 15th at Pinecrest Gardens

Martin A. Rivas, Ph.D.
Program Director
South Florida Orchid Society

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<https://www.sforchid.com>

Acting President's Message

July 7, 2026

Dear South Florida Orchid Society Members, and Orchid lovers!

Happy Summer! The heat and rain are here so expect great things from our orchids!

I've enjoyed, and been so impressed by the displays of beauty, joy, global camaraderie and fun over the last several weeks — Americans celebrating our birthday and soccer fans gathering together here and around the world. (I especially loved the Scottish Army and all the fans who have adopted the Viking Row.)

Martin Rivas, our Program Director, along with other members of the Board have been working to bring valuable programs to our members. In fact, Martin has most of 2026 and 2027 already organized! So please mark your calendars for these important dates and programs for continued learning, camaraderie and fun!

Upcoming South Florida Orchid Society Events

Date	Event
July 15, 2026	Cattleya Species of Venezuela & South America Alex Bello
August 19, 2026	Workshop for Members Bring your challenging plants for show and help, mounting and repotting along with specific questions for our member experts!
September 16, 2026	Aerides Orchids By Juraj Kojš
October 15-18, 2026	Redland International Orchid Festival SFOS Volunteers who work a shift at the festival will be entered in a special free drawing for an Orchid Plant!
December 18, 2026	SFOS Annual Holiday Party!

At the July meeting we will be asking members to vote on a proposal to update the South Florida Orchid Society ByLaws that govern our society.

This proposal has been made to reflect our current times and membership

The changes proposed are to:

1. Reduce the number of Board Members.
2. Limit the terms of Board Members to two years.
3. Change the role of the Past President from a voting board member to that of an advisory position with no voting privileges.

Please read the comparison of the current and proposed language which is included in the newsletter. The Board is most grateful to our Secretary, Nancy Crisler for spearheading this work!

Finally, please bring your fabulous orchids for show and tell and judging. Judging starts at 7:30PM, so you must have your plants registered before then.

Can't wait to see you all on July, 15th!

Sincerely,
Margaret Marshall
SFOS Acting President



Proposed Changes to SFOS ByLaws

Board of Directors – Current 1/9/2025

ARTICLE V Officers and Their Duties

Section 1.

- The Board of Directors is the governing body of the society. All members of the board must be active members in the society when nominated and must maintain an active membership throughout their term. All positions in the organization are unpaid and thus shall receive no compensation for their board responsibilities.
- The Board of Directors shall consist of the **Officers of the Corporation (President, Vice-President, Program Director, Secretary and Treasurer)** and **six (6) Directors** (two directors are to be elected each year for a term of two years each.) The immediate **past President** shall be a director also. This makes a total regular board of 13 members. By a majority vote of the Board of Directors a Special Director may also become a member of the Board of Directors.

Board of Directors – DRAFT Recommendations 6/20/2026

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- The Board of Directors shall consist of the **Officers of the Corporation (President, Vice-President, Program Director, Secretary and Treasurer), four (4) Directors and up to two (2) Special Directors.** This makes a total of 11 voting members.
 - Two directors are to be elected each year for a term of two (2) years each.
 - The Board of Directors may, at its discretion, elect two (2) individuals to serve as **Special Directors**. The **Special Directors** are elected directly by a majority vote of the Board and are selected specifically based on their specialized expertise, skills and/or background. Once in office they shall have full voting privileges and serve a two (2) year term with eligibility of re-election.
 - To ensure continuity and provide strategic guidance, the immediate **past President** also serves as **Director**, but holds no voting rights, acting in an advisory capacity only.

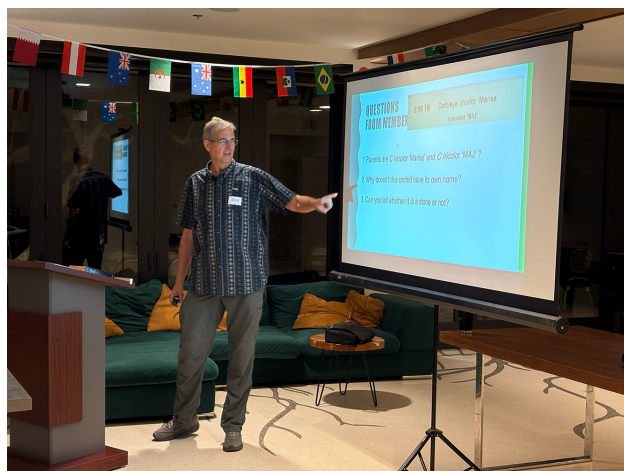
Please review the changes shown above. Members will be asked to vote to accept these changes at the August members meeting.

June Meeting Photos

Rich Ackerman was our guest speaker for June.

Rich give an extremely interesting and informative lecture on how to decipher orchid tags.

I can't speak for everyone, but I think most of us learned a least a few things we didn't know before.



June Meeting Photos



Our Silent Auction table was, as always a big hit!



And, of course, our snack table also saw quite a bit of traffic which is not at all unusual. Especially around the chocolate brownies!

June Meeting Photos



June is also the month when we recognize the people who help make the magic happen each month.

Unfortunately the photographer didn't bring the *big camera*™ and managed to mess up some shots but he was able to salvage a couple from his iPhone.

This month we were very happy to recognize Chris Alger with an Outstanding Service Award for her tireless work over the years. Chris has been a great help to me personally. There have been months when the newsletter might not have gone out except for her. Seriously!

Thank you, Chris!

We were also very pleased to recognize Melissa Alatrasta who managed to snag the award for the most ribbon points this year.

Melissa consistently brings beautiful plants for judging each month. This award is well deserved!

Congratulations, Melissa!

Summer tips for managing pests which can attack our orchids, and other plants too!

Probably the most important advice for pest management is **INSPECTION** and **OBSERVATION**. The life cycles of these pests are relatively short; @ 7 to 12 days; so a massive infestation can occur relatively quickly. At watering time, and in-between waterings, take a look at your plants and check for invasions!!! As they say in Spanish: **HAY MOROS EN LA COSTA!!!**

THRIPS

Damage flowers, buds, and leaves

Thrips can burrow in to leaf tissue, buds, and flowers, as well as cataphylls, papery sheaths, and bracts. When these papery sheaths can be removed without damage to pseudobulbs or emerging tender new growths at base of pseudobulb, remove them. Both thrips and scale love these crevices.

Thrips have 5 stages of life-span. Eggs, larvae, prepupae, pupae, and adult. Because of this, one must make repeated applications of any pesticide being used. This includes organic types and soaps. Eggs and pupae stages are likely resistant to CONTACT insecticides. Become familiar with the terms CONTACT insecticides which kill insects on contact immediately with no or little residual power, and SYSTEMIC insecticides which are stored in plant tissues and DO have residual and continual effect. Systemic insecticides might also need repeated applications.

The University of Florida UF/IFAS recommends the following:

Get numbers down with the use of insecticidal soaps. This is to avoid the eventual problem of a certain number of a large population developing immunity to the insecticide. **Lower numbers of population mean lower percentage of resistance.** Make a few repeated applications about 7-10 days apart. There is a bit of a myth which has circulated for years about using ordinary dish soap for this. Probably better to relay on formulas specifically developed for use on plants. If you need convincing see:

<https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/care/pests-and-diseases/pests/soaps-detergents-and-pest-management>. If you are determined to use your own soap, probably liquid CASTILE soap is the best.

After reducing numbers, then make a choice of an insecticide to apply:



Summer tips for managing pests which can attack our orchids, and other plants too!

Insecticides Labeled for Noncommercial (Homeowner) Use in Florida

Active Ingredient	Trade Name	Chemical Class
Acephate	Orthene Orthene Garden Insect & Disease Control Ortho Systemic Insect Killer	Organophosphate
Bifenthrin	Ortho Bug-B-Gon Max Lawn & Garden Insect Killer	Pyrethroid
Carbaryl	Sevin	Carbamate
Cyfluthrin	Bayer Advanced Lawn Complete	Pyrethroid
Imidacloprid	Bayer Advanced Rose & Flower Insect Killer Bayer Advanced Tree & Shrub Control	Neonicotinoid
Lambda-cyhalothrin	Spectracide Triazicide Once & Done Insect Killer	Pyrethroid
Malathion	Green Light Malathion Ortho Malathion Plus Insect Spray	Organophosphate
Permethrin	Bionide Eight Liquid Hi-Yield Indoor/Outdoor Broad Use Insecticide Ortho Bug-B-Bone Max Garden Insect Dust	Pyrethroid
Potassium Salts of Fatty Acids	Safer Insecticidal Soap	Biorational
Pyrethrins	Bonide Yard & Garden Insect Killer Spectracide Bug Stop Insect Killer Spectracide Rose & Flower Insect Spray	Botanical
Spinoza	Bulls-Eye Bioinsecticide	Microbial

The above list gives several insecticides available. **TRY AND AVOID USING REPEATED APPLICATIONS OF THE SAME INSECTICIDE TO AVOID INSECT POPULATIONS DEVELOPING IMMUNITY.** On the above list Spinosad and Safer Insecticidal Soap are considered organic. Some newer products which are of interest are:

SAFARI (Dinotefuran)

Enstar AQ (IGR) Insect Growth Regulator

You can become familiar with the **MODE OF ACTION** of just exactly HOW the insecticide kills the insects and at what stage of development of the insect. For example, ENSTAR AQ will not kill adult insects, but it eventually renders ALL of their eggs as sterile which prevents new reinfestation after the adults die off at the end of their very short life-span.

SOME OF THESE INSECTICIDES (I.E. Imadoclaprid and Dinotefuran) are toxic to bees and pollinators. If this is a concern, be aware of this, especially at certain times of the year. This would apply particularly at mango and avocado flowering season!!!

PREDATOR INSECTS:

Amblyseius swirskii

Stratiolaelaps scimitus (Hypoaspis miles)

These two above-listed predator insects are listed for control of thrips. They can be ordered from various places. One would be Arbico Organics. If the predator bugs do their job and consume all of your thrips, they will need feeder plants with pollen food source to keep them around. Pepper plants are a fine source of this and an excellent cultivar is Ornamental Pepper 'BLACK PEARL'.



SCALE

As the months become warmer and more humid, invasions of scale can show up in your orchids. The above listed insecticides may be used on scale for systemic type control. However, the first option should be to remove the scale mechanically. Tools for this can be a soft toothbrush, or for more difficult and tight spots, a wooden toothpick. If you are concerned about the toothpick sharpness, file off the end tip slightly with a nail file. Dip your toothpick or toothbrush in alcohol solution (some people dilute to 50/50) or soapy water and scrub away the scale. The reason for this is that scale is covered with a hard, waxy exoskeleton which cannot be penetrated by soaps or insecticides. This means that CONTACT applications may not work. Alcohol seems to destroy and burn off this outer waxy surface so it can be sprayed or rubbed in with toothbrush or Q-tip. Yolanda Cuesta (QUEST ORCHIDS) sprays her plants with alcohol because it is not feasible to try and clean off hundreds of plants. 70% alcohol is fine. Systemic insecticides WILL work as when the scale sucks the juices out of the plant it will ingest the insecticide.

An excellent source for information about pests and orchid diseases can be found in the fine series of articles prepared by Ms. Sue Bottoms of the St. Augustine Orchid Society:

<https://staugorchidsociety.org/PDF/ThripsonOrchidsbySueBottom.pdf>

Chuck Asche put the above together as presentation at a recent meeting, and very graciously consented to allow me to publish it in our newsletter. Hopefully, I didn't mess it up too badly. In shoehorning it in. In any case, a big thank you to Chuck!



South Florida Orchid Society Mini-Auction Series

ALL PROCEEDS from items sold on the **Mini-Auction** go to benefit the South Florida Orchid Society and help defray society expenses.

Members and guests are encouraged to donate plants or other items to help in this fund raising effort.

We Accept Cash, Checks, and ZELLE Only.

Thank you for your support!

South Florida Orchid Society Shirts are now Available.
All shirts are a beautiful shade of Royal Blue!

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

- Sm, Med, L, or XL @ \$18.25
- 2XL @ \$19.25
- 3XL @ \$21.50

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

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



All shirts can be seen at our meetings and orders placed at that time.
All shirts must be paid for when ordered.

Some of the People Who Make The Orchidist Possible



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The South Florida Orchid Society Presents...

"An Introduction to Orchids"

Edited by Julie Rosenberg

Everything you need to know to successfully grow orchids in South Florida.

Pick up your copy today at better orchid sellers or at SFOS monthly meetings!



South Florida Orchid Society Board of Directors

President: Vacant

Acting President: Margaret Marshall

Program Director: Martin Rivas

Secretary: Nancy Crisler

Treasurer: Ariel Girardi

Directors: Terms ending in 2026

Erna Maxwell, Sally Taylor

Directors: Terms ending in 2027

Maggie Echeverria, Charles Asche

Directors: Terms ending in 2028

Charles Flick, Vacant

Immediate Past President: Javier Morejon

Special Directors: Julie Rosenberg & Ron Hunt

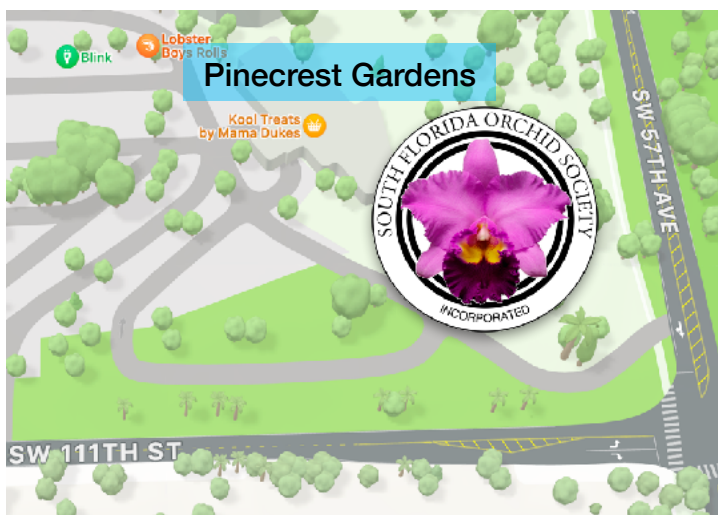
Meetings are held from 7:00PM to 9:00PM
on the third Wednesday of each month at Pinecrest
Gardens

11000 Red Road, (S.W. 57th AVE.)

Pinecrest FL 33156

Registration of plants is from 7:00 -7:30PM

Program Begins at 8:00PM



Become a Member of the South Florida Orchid Society!

- **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!**
- **Orchid Plant 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!

South Florida Orchid Society
Membership Form
(PDF)

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American Orchid Society
Education. Conservation. Research.
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Please direct inquiries to info@sforchid.com.

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