



Central Ohio Orchid Society
Reporter



Newsletter Editor: Katrina Heap

March 2015

February Meeting

Ken Mettler – Orchid Viruses

Thursday, March 19, 2015

Meeting starts 8:00 p.m. @ Franklin Park Conservatory

Mingling and refreshments begin just after 7pm
& Beginner's Corner is 7:30-8pm

Sooner or later in our orchid hobby, the topic of orchid viruses is bound to come up. Some growers think about viruses a lot of the time. Other growers would rather not think about them at all. So, what are orchid viruses? Do my plants have them? How can I tell? What does a virus infection mean for the plant? Is there a cure? What should I do if I think or know that a plant of mine is infected? How can I prevent my plants from becoming infected? Should I not bring my plants to a meeting or show for fear of them catching a virus?

These questions and more will be discussed. This will also be something of a workshop. COOS has purchased a number of test strips that detect the two most important viruses found in orchids. Each member will be able to have one plant tested (free!) at the meeting. It's kind of like a lottery, but with negative results. Remember Shirley Jackson's short story "The Lottery"? Kinda like that.

You need to bring the plant that you want tested, or a piece of it. One advantage of bringing the whole plant is that we can all look at it, and make guesses before testing. If you can't bring the whole plant (or don't want to), you need to bring a tissue sample, usually a piece of a leaf, but roots and pseudobulbs can be used too. The test needs a piece of a live leaf (of average thickness, think Cattleya leaves) about the size of a quarter—this doesn't have to be round, I prefer to cut a leaf tip about this size. I cut a tip from the oldest growth or one of the oldest growths. These are better for testing than new growth, and are more expendable. If the leaves are thinner, you need a proportionately bigger piece, if very thick, a smaller piece is needed. Bring any cut leaves in a plastic bag, write your name and/or plant name on the bag with a sharpie, and WASH YOUR HANDS AND CUTTING TOOLS BEFORE AND AFTER CUTTING!

As we will discuss, most orchid viruses are spread during repotting. Since we are about to begin the best time of year to repot, this is a great time to understand what you can do to prevent spreading viruses to or among your orchids.

Lastly, prior to past virus workshops, some members asked if they shouldn't bring their plants for the showtable. They were concerned about virus transmission at the meeting. My tongue-in-cheek answer is, "Plants don't sneeze, and plant viruses aren't spread that way!" We will be discussing how viruses are and aren't spread. Sitting on the showtable is not a risk.

After the workshop, COOS will be selling the remainder of the test kits to members for \$6.00 per test. If you bought a few (less than 25) of these test kits, they would cost \$8.40 per test. COOS buys them in bulk, and

passes the savings on to you! The test strips are good for at least a year if they're stored properly (dry and refrigerated).

Ken won't be bringing plants for sale so it will be a members' plant sale night! Bring your plants for the show table...the extras you want to get rid of...and don't forget your checkbooks or cash. Also, please remember...we ask that you give 20% of your sales \$ back to the society.



President's Message

Who will be next?

A puzzler, indeed.

It is 2015, and spring is around the corner. One of the duties of the President is to appoint anominating committee in July to propose a slate for the next board. While the election won't be held until this fall, there's no time like the present to start thinking about it.

Who will be next.....as President of COOS? As Show Chair? Program Chair? Treasurer?

The business of COOS is conducted by a board elected to represent YOU, the membership. But the pool of nominees has to come from that same membership. Got an itch to have an impact? A wish to serve a greater cause? Curiosity to learn about the workings of the society's governance?

Time to get off you duff and do something about it! Apprentice yourself to a board member or committee chair and learn the ropes. Step up and volunteer to learn and to serve on the next board.

I will need volunteers to serve on the nominating committee and THEY will need people to take the open slots for the next board to serve 2016-2017.

Want to make a difference? Step up today!!

Tennis Maynard



THE HYBRIDUM POLLENTI
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Culture Corner

Orchid Culture: The Proper Approach

Stephen R. Batchelor

The following is an excerpt from an essay that first appeared in the American Orchid Society BULLETIN (what later became the current Orchids Magazine) in February 1981 launching a many-part series on orchid growing for the beginner. While much has changed in the intervening 28 years the general message remains the same.

I must confess that I underwent a crisis of confidence when the Editor asked me to write a series of cultural articles for the beginner. Had that much time really passed since that day I enthusiastically purchased my first orchid (a Cattleya hybrid, of course) - only to have it reject my loving attention soon thereafter? Had I in these dozen years or so, overcoming at least the initial difficulties, grown every species and hybrid, absorbing like velamen (that spongy covering on orchid roots) all the knowledge necessary to grow orchids, and to grow them well? The answer to both of these questions is no - not really.

If I have seemingly discredited myself, and the reader is on the verge of flipping the page in annoyance, let me come to my own defense. The truth of the matter is that, although we rather arbitrarily define such terms as "beginner" and "connoisseur", we are all, to some extent, "ignorant" about orchids. Indeed, some of the fascination with the orchid family is the constant challenge of its complexity. We can never know it all. Rather than claiming complete knowledge, the orchid expert, I suspect, is one who casts a keen and critical eye over all he or she grows, combining this questioning sense with a motivation to find the missing answers.

My intention here and in subsequent articles is to provide the newcomer to orchids with some direction in his first attempts at growing: what questions to ask, and where and how to find the answers. As always, it is up to the individual to provide the essential motivation.

Initial Steps

Though I may very well be biased, joining the American Orchid Society is a proper beginning and a good introduction to orchid growing. Nevertheless, being an A.O.S. member and receiving the BULLETIN (now Orchids Magazine) does not a good grower make. An issue of the AMERICAN ORCHID SOCIETY BULLETIN left unread is naturally of very little help to anyone, other than providing the visual stimulus of lots of colorful pictures. At this point I would like to forewarn every new member: You are not going to find everything you need or would like to know in one issue or even in an entire year's worth, of the BULLETIN. It is too much to expect of any periodical, much less one appealing to a diverse membership, that it meet your individual needs all the time.

Consider, then, how you will approach this and every issue of the AMERICAN ORCHID SOCIETY BULLETIN, or any other periodical on orchids. If you open every contents page anticipating all the articles to be directly applicable to you, and neglect every article that is not, you will be constantly disappointed. On the other hand, if you approach every written page with a detective-like determination to extract and distill important information, I think you will be pleasantly surprised to find relevance in nearly every article and issue of the BULLETIN - no matter how different the topic is from what you are growing, or think you can grow.

For example, even if you live in a warm climate and fail to grow the cooler-growing genera successfully, an article on their culture might yield some facts of which you were not aware and which you might use to adapt the plants to your different situation. A recent instance of this could be Ned Nash's excellent article, "Colombian-Type *Miltonia* Culture" contained in the May issue of last year's BULLETIN (49(5): 479-485). Here Mr. Nash attempts to dispel the popular notion that *Miltonias* are strictly cool-growing orchids similar in temperature tolerance to *Odontoglossum crispum*-type hybrids. He makes a very important distinction that night temperature is not as critical a factor as day temperature, finding in both his private and commercial experience that *Miltonias* grow successfully with temperatures as high as 65-68F at night, but are more inclined to suffer under high daytime temperatures. Pointing out that *Miltonias* are tougher than generally supposed, he suggests conventional cooling and humidifying systems for warmer regions. Strict *Odontoglossum crispum* hybrids do indeed present a challenge in all but the coolest growing conditions, but a thorough article on their culture, such as "The Culture of *Odontoglossums*" by Dr. J.W. Thomas (Amer. Orchid Soc. Bull. 49 (7): 721-728) could possibly spell out a principle that might make the difference between failure and some success in growing these hybrids; e.g., the importance of air movement, ventilation and humidity, and how these factors, when well provided, can enhance temperature (and light) tolerance. So be leery of the conventional attitudes and categories we all use with respect to orchids. A skeptical and probing mind can, if at all possible, find a way to grow any orchid well.

Beyond the information contained in the articles of each issue of the BULLETIN, don't forget the less obvious "clues". By this I mean the references or bibliographies frequently appearing at the end of articles. These do more than take up space or give an article credibility. They are valuable sources of yet more relevant information.

Local societies are vital to all hobbyists. There is often nothing more helpful or educational as a meeting where you can talk about a common interest with others. Demonstrations of techniques in orchid growing, whether at the frequently-seen plant tables, or in the special cultural programs geared to the beginner and prevalent at local societies, are invaluable instruction. If you find that your local society is not helping you in quite the way you had hoped, then ask about it. Better yet, muster up your nerve and get involved! [Editor's note: Local Orchid societies affiliated with the American Orchid Society can be searched in the Affiliated Societies section of our website.]

Local orchid societies put on local orchid shows, which are nothing less than Bacchanalian feasts to the senses of anyone interested in orchids. A list of shows hosted by AOS affiliated societies can be found in the Events section of our website.

In whatever way you first start growing orchids, the best approach is to read, see and do as much as possible involving orchids. Active participation, after all, is the best instruction.

Those First Plants

Though it may be nothing short of heresy on my part to say this, I do feel that the beginner should try, for a while, to cultivate a certain productive disregard for the lives of orchids, in spite of the tenderness and attachment we all feel for our first plants. I don't mean that you should merrily purchase orchids, bring them home, set them down, wherever, to grow, and wish them all the best of luck. I am suggesting, however, that a little indifference towards the ultimate fate of those first plants might free the novice from the paralyzing fear I know I felt when I found my first orchid declining rapidly. Terrified of doing further damage, irrationally wishing that the plant might recover by itself, I watched aghast as a fungus unfamiliar to me made orchid mush out of my cherished first plant. I learned from this experience not to be reluctant to try. It is never pleasant to replace a plant, but without experimenting, without learning why a plant declines, we cannot hope to become more proficient in the future.

The beginner, I believe, needs to overcome - or ignore - the preconception that orchids are delicate or enigmatic. They are particular, without a doubt, but then most living things are. Orchids, in general, must be quite adaptable, if they can be grown successfully under such diverse conditions as are prevalent in orchid culture today. Like other living things they respond to their surroundings, whether adverse or favorable. The observant eye of the capable grower detects these responses and attempts to interpret them. Orchids do indeed "talk"; the trick is to learn their language. To be fluent in "flourish", like Spanish or English, takes a study of the written word and the nerve to go out and try, many times only to err, sometimes to fail, with those that speak the language.

As for language: no doubt many beginners and experts alike have been bewildered by the Latinized language we all use to communicate with each other on the subject of orchids. Without a basic understanding of the terminology involved, confusion and embarrassment can result. Imagine my embarrassment, and the grower's amusement, when I was first asked which orchids I was growing, or hoped to grow, and I responded, after a moment's confused thought, "Catalinas", - which is not to say that I had an affinity for an island off the California coast, or for the swimwear named thereafter! Gordon W. Dillon, previous Executive Director of the American Orchid Society, Inc. and Editor of its BULLETIN for many years, working constantly with this curious language, created Orchidist's Glossary (note: the glossary will be published here online in 2012. Also, see Basic Orchid Glossary) for the purpose of better communication between orchid enthusiasts. Listed in alphabetical order are botanical terms, major genera and orchid personages, accompanied by pronunciation keys, concise definitions, and frequent illustrations. So if you find yourself drawing a blank, for example, when someone approaches you and asks, "Do you grow any species or intergeneric hybrids of that Far Eastern genus of monopodial, usually epiphytic orchids typically bearing conduplicate, linear (occasionally terete) leaves with mucronate or erose tips, and axillary racemes of resupinate flowers frequently brightly colored and spotted or tessellated?", consider studying An Orchidist's Glossary so that you can more easily understand that the person in question was asking about vandas!

Where to buy your first plants? At the risk of offending those commercial orchid firms that may be located at some distance from you, I would suggest that the beginner, at least with an initial purchase, stick as near to home as possible. Go through the experience of selecting your first plants yourself. Search out any commercial orchid growers at your local orchid society meetings and make appointments for a visit, or ask other members for their recommendations. Visiting other growers' establishments, whether to buy orchids or not, is an eye-opening experience. "Seeing how others do it" will give you a host of new ideas. Most people in the retail orchid business need, and frequently have, the patience of Job. Don't be afraid to request the help of the owner or salesperson in selecting plants suitable for your growing environment and your experience. Try to avoid the more expensive plants, but select plants of flowering size initially. We all need the assurance of flowers in our first, tenuous efforts in orchid culture. If you run into problems, go back to the firm and ask for help, or bring the plant to the next orchid meeting for consultation. The thing to remember is that you are never alone in your mistakes; any seasoned grower will tell you this!

After you have achieved success at growing your first "easy-to-grow" plants, the seemingly unlimited world of orchid species and hybrids will begin to open up to you. Catalogues packed full of temptations, advertisements lurking within and behind text sections of magazines, all offering green for green, will be scratching at your growing-area door. Beware! No one person can hope to grow everything equally well. Experiment, but with some restraint. Just one or two "guinea pigs" of a genus unfamiliar to you is far more economical (if the experiment fails) than many! For your own sense of pride, concentrate on what you like and grow well (unfortunately, all too often the two are not the same!).

Once purchased and brought home, where should you grow your orchids? The possibilities are not limited to a greenhouse, which might be a more suitable proposition when you become more experienced - and hooked. There are other alternatives for the beginner, and the next article for this series will review some of these possibilities. - 84 Sherman Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02140.

Membership

Reminder to all ~

Our membership year is January to December. If you recently joined the society and you paid your dues in November or December of 2014, you are covered for 2015 as well. For everyone else...it's time! If you have not renewed yet, please support the society by taking care of this as soon as possible. Your contribution enhances the society and what it is able to do for you. The dues are \$20.00 for Individuals OR \$25.00 for household.

Please fill out the membership form [HERE](#) and include it w/your check made payable to **Central Ohio Orchid Society**. Feel free to bring it to the next meeting OR you can mail it to:



2014/2015 COOS Board Members

Term of Officers – January 1, 2014 through December 31, 2015

President:	Tennis Maynard	
1 st Vice President:	Bill Cavanaugh	Program Chair
2 nd Vice President:	Dave Markley	Home Show Chair
3 rd Vice President:	Ken Mettler	Away Show Chair
Secretary:	Justin Pepperney	Recorder
Assistant Secretary:	Katrina Heap	Newsletter Editor
Treasurer:	Edna Markley	Collect/Disburse Monies
Assistant Treasurer:	Tom Bell-Games	Membership Chair
Immediate Past Pres	Tom Franczak	



COOS Trustees

Term of Office Expires December 31st of year shown

Lori Baldwin	2015
Eileen Ansley	2015
Screll Jones	2017
Elly Campbell	2017

Show Table Results

January Show Table results – at last! February meeting was cancelled due to weather so that month is a blank on the contest tally.

Plant of the Month

Dave and Edna Markley

Alca Pacific Nova ‘Pacific Heights’

Cattleya Species and Hybrids

Dennis Eifel
 Dave & Edna Markley
 Dave & Edna Markley

Slc Hazel Boyd ‘Debbie’ AM/AOS	1 st
Lc Richard Degenhardt ‘Lynette’ x Lc Persepolis ‘Splendor’	2 nd
Blc Pisgah Royal ‘Pisgah Heights’ x Blc Apricot Flan	3 rd

Oncidiae -Species and Hybrids

Dave & Edna Markley
 Dave & Edna Markley
 David & Edna Markley

Alca Pacific Nova ‘Pacific Heights’	1 st
Wilsonara Tigersetete ‘Wild Court’	2 nd
Brsdm Golden Gamine ‘White Knight’	3 rd

Paphiopedilum -Species and Hybrids

Tennis Maynard
 Dave & Edna Markley
 Tennis Maynard

Paph armeniacum	1 st
Paph Wallcrest ‘Charm’ x fairrieanum ‘Album’	2 nd
Paph (No Name Bulldog)	3 rd

Phragmipedium -Species and Hybrids

Dave & Edna Markley
 Tennis Maynard

Phrag Jason Fischer ‘Red Diamond’	1 st
Phrag Don Wimber	2 nd

Dendrobium - Species and Hybrids

Tennis Maynard
 Tennis Maynard
 LaRioja Vannoy

Den moniliforme	1 st
Den moniliforme Raizan	2 nd
Den microchip	3 rd

Phalaenopsis

Gary Walker

Gary Walker

Phal (unknown)

Phal (unknown)

1st

2nd

2015 COOS Calendar

General Meetings – Third Thursday of the month...excluding July, August and December.

Mar 19th

Apr 16th

May 21st

June 18th

July – picnic – TBD

Aug – No meeting

Sept 17th

Oct 15th

Nov 19th Potluck Dinner

Dec – No meeting

Board Meetings -Board meetings will be held the second Tuesday of odd numbered months. 7:00- 8pm. All members are welcome to observe.

May 12th

July 14th

Sept 8th

Nov 9th

Hospitality

We need volunteers, folks! Please email or call Terry and Sandra and let them know where and when you can help out.

Terry and Sandra's contact info -

614-261-9978 / tlstohr@hotmail.com.



Upcoming Orchid Shows

GCOS – Greater Cincinnati Orchid Society

March 21-22 @ Krohn's Conservatory

For more info and directions: [GCOS website](#)

MAOC Nashville TN - Orchid Society of Middle Tennessee

March 20-22 @ Franklin Marriott Cool Springs Franklin, TN

For more info and directions: [Orchids in Rhythm](#)

COOS Spring Show! ☺

Easter Weekend – April 4th and 5th

We need your help!

We'll go over everything at the meeting this month so, please, step up and volunteer w/whatever you can do to pitch in. If we all do a little...no one has to do a lot.



More Orchid Growing Info

Courtesy of American Orchid Society – website – Beginner's Newsletter Archives

FEED ME!

If their other requirements are met, orchids will grow and flower for fairly long periods without fertilizer. Witness the many people in tropical areas such as South Florida who grow them mounted on trees and let nature do the rest. Indeed, that is how epiphytic orchids grow in nature! But orchid hobbyists generally try to give their orchids more than bare minimum so that the plants flower at or above their potential.

There are many different points of view on how to fertilize orchids and what fertilizer to use. Everyone has a favorite fertilizer or supplement. There are so many variables that how and when you fertilize depends on what kinds of orchids you grow and how and where you grow them. This newsletter will offer a brief explanation and general guidelines on fertilizing orchids. For more specific application, join your local orchid society and ask someone there who grows the same kind of orchids as you. It is unlikely that you will kill any orchids with orchid fertilizer so following the recommendations here will provide your plants needed nutrition.

If you are a gardener you are probably familiar with the N-P-K listings on fertilizer bags. Orchid fertilizers have them too! Let's go over these three elements and see how they affect plant growth. "N" stands for nitrogen. Nitrogen helps make plants green, and helps them grow faster. It is the element responsible for vegetative growth – the leafy parts. "P" stands for phosphorus which is good for root growth, disease resistance, seed and fruit growth, and especially for blooming and flowering. "K" is for potassium which helps with increasing root growth, drought resistance, and disease resistance.

There are three main types of fertilizers used for orchids: balanced, high nitrogen and bloom booster. Balanced fertilizers have been traditionally recommended for use with orchids potted in inorganic potting media such as lava rock and Aliflor, and tree fern (which has fallen out of favor due to conservation concerns). Plants mounted on cork bark or other substrates also benefit from using a balanced fertilizer. An example of a balanced fertilizer would be represented by the numbers, 20–20–20. High nitrogen fertilizers have long been recommended for use with orchids potted in fir bark or fir bark mixes. The reason for extra nitrogen is that the bacteria which cause the bark to



decay use up much of the available nitrogen, thus depleting the orchid. This practice has recently come into question. Nonetheless, using a high nitrogen fertilizer, especially in spring at the beginning of the growing season, can promote strong vegetative growth under ideal growing conditions. An example of high nitrogen fertilizer would be 30–10–10. Bloom, or blossom booster formulas are high in phosphorus. Typically, high phosphorus fertilizers are applied every other week for 4–6 applications the season before expected bloom. For winter-spring blooming orchids bloom booster is usually applied in the fall. Vandaceous hybrids and other orchids that bloom throughout the year can be given bloom booster every third or fourth feeding. An example of a bloom booster would be 10–30–20. Fertilizers used on orchids should contain little or no urea. This is because soil organisms must first convert the nitrogen in urea to a form useable by plants, and since orchids do not grow in soil, this conversion does not occur efficiently.

How fertilizer is applied varies as much as orchids themselves. Typically, plants are fertilized once a week during spring and summer and every two weeks in the fall and winter. Regardless of the fertilizer that you choose to use, most experienced growers use ½ the label-recommended strength. Remember, in nature epiphytic orchids' roots are exposed and the only nutrients they get are bird and animal droppings, decaying insects and detritus. The old saying fertilizing orchids is: feed them weekly weakly. Fertilizer is best applied in the morning on sunny days. For mounted orchids, or orchids with their roots exposed such as vandas in empty baskets, many growers routinely pre-water the plants and then follow with fertilizer a half hour later. The pre-watering prepares the spongy velamen of the orchid roots to better utilize the fertilizer. Orchids in pots are usually not pre-watered but some growers have their own techniques.



There are requirements specific to certain orchids. For instance, do not fertilize nobile dendrobiums after early autumn. This rule actually applies to all orchids that have decided rest periods and all deciduous orchids. Fertilizing them while in their rest period keeps them in continual growth instead of resting before producing flowers. In other words, you may get a lot of growth and no flowers.

There are also many "secret recipes" growers use that supposedly produce stronger plants or more flowers. Certainly vitamins and micro-nutrients are as essential as the building blocks of plant growth mentioned above. Elements such as magnesium, boron, calcium, carbon etc. are required for strong plant growth, but their discussion is beyond this newsletter. All in all, although there are certain practices that are documented as being helpful, it has not been proven that supplements actually contribute to improved growth in orchids...but it probably doesn't hurt to use them!

*Greg Allikas
April 2010*

