

MASSACHUSETTS ORCHID SOCIETY



April 8th

Potting Workshop

At our April meeting we will have a potting workshop, in which Linda Abrams, Brian Leib, and Bob Richter will demonstrate their methods of repotting orchids. Linda will probably be repotting mini-catts, Bob will be repotting Phals, and Brian will surprise us all. Beginners, especially should find answers to many of their repotting questions, but experienced growers will probably be able to pick up some new tips.

A Tour of R.F. Orchid Gardens By Laura Eschenroeder

While attending the Miami World Orchid Conference in January, I was fortunate to be able to tour R.F. Orchids and to visit the gardens where I snapped some pictures to share with you. The plants in Bob's exquisite gardens represent three generations of a family of orchid lovers living on the ten acres. These are happy, well-established plants that take your breath away with oh's and ah's as you glance from one magnificent specimen to the next. Then there is the discovery of Wally, the alligator, sun bathing next to the fish pond. Wally's size makes him almost ready to move on to an alligator farm.

I had planned to share some of the great stories that we heard during the tour, but discovered the definitive article has been written about the gardens and appeared in the New York Times on February 7, 2008. The article (Reigning Trowel in a Kingdom of Orchids by Nancy Beth Jackson) comes complete with a slide show of interiors as well as Wally, the alligator. The article is well worth reading about this heavenly paradise right here on earth.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/07/garden/07orchid.html>

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Brassavola glauca

As long as this is an interactive article, try www.rforchids.com to tease your desires for more plants. The best part of ordering from R.F. Orchids on line (other than receiving superb plants that bloom!) is opening the box. The plants are numbered and wired into the box. There are drawings and instructions on the inside of the box top telling which plant to unpack first, second, etc. What more joyful way could you welcome spring?



Monthly Checklist

March and April

CATTLEYA

Although March is, in many parts of the country, still a cold and blustery month, the lengthening days and warmer temperatures allowed by increased light are long-awaited harbingers of the coming change of season. Some of the best standard cattleyas of the year will be in bloom, or will be blooming soon. The last of the winter-flowering hybrids will join the earliest of the spring hybrids in a wonderful display. Be on the alert for senescing sheaths that need removal. If these yellowing sheaths are not removed, the moisture they trap can lead to bud rot. Careful removal of the sheath will allow the buds to develop, although they will need additional support. Changing light conditions can also be a problem in March and April. An exceptionally bright day, especially immediately following a rain, can lead to sunburn of the foliage if shading is not attended to properly. There can still be periods of dull days where spikes can be weakened owing to the lower light. Lengthening days will mean increased metabolic rates necessitating increased water and fertilizer. The plants will indicate needs by drying more rapidly, which means more frequent watering and fertilizing.

With the passing of the season for winter bloomers, and the beginning of the season for spring bloom, it is also the time to be on the lookout for plants that will need potting after they bloom. Immediately after blooming has proven to be the best time to repot winter- and spring-flowering cattleyas. In most cases, they will be ready to grow roots, so if potted at this time, they will root right into fresh mix with little or no setback.

CYMBIDIUM

Plants should be putting on a spectacular show this time of year. Adjust all staking and twist-ties and be on the lookout for aphids, slugs and snails. Give adequate water because flowering strains the plants. As new growths appear later, increase the nitrogen level in the fertilizer. Should a plant look healthy but

not be blooming, try increasing the light during the next growing season. The number-one reason for no flowers is lack of light.

DENDROBIUM (AUSTRALIAN)

These hard-cane dendrobiums will be at their flowering peak now. It is not unusual to see a specimen of this type in an orchid show boasting 1,000 flowers. The secret with this group -- bred primarily from *Dendrobium kingianum* and *Dendrobium speciosum* -- is to provide ample water, fertilizer and light during the growing season.

LYCASTE

This genus of superb orchids will be coming to the end of its flowering season. Soon you will see the beginning of new root growth, which is an excellent time to repot into fresh media. As new growth emerges, provide ample fertilizer and water. A sign of good culture is an increase in the size of pseudobulbs with each successive year.

MILTONIOPSIS

This marks the beginning of the flowering season. Amazing displays of color will dazzle the grower over the next few months. Prepare your plants for optimum display by staking spikes (if needed) and cleaning off the older yellow foliage. Do not miss the wonderful fragrance as the flowers unfold.

PAPHIOPEDILUM

March is the beginning of the season of heaviest potting for lady's-slipper orchids. However, it is a month where the volume of plants needing attention is still small. It is an excellent month to take the time to work with your paphiopedilums before the pressure of other potting prevents your doing the thorough job you should. Look at each plant: Is it clean of dead and dying foliage? Is it weed free? Does it need potting? Is it in spike? Does it have an insect problem? Cleaning and restaging your paphs is one of the most satisfying tasks of the orchid year. Cleaned and potted paphiopedilums look happy.

The summer-blooming types will be showing the

first of their buds in March and April. Be on the lookout for the buds, as well as any insect pests that may have found their way into the crowns of your plants. It is especially difficult to clean mealybugs, in particular, once they have become established in the plant. Better to get to them before they get a good toehold.

Increasing light levels should give emerging spikes the strength they need to grow straight and strong. Do not be too anxious to stake the spikes, because if they are staked too soon, the flowers may develop a "nodding" stance, where the dorsal will not stand upright. If the spikes seem to develop at an angle, let them, and stake after the flower has hardened for best carriage, especially on the hybrids with fairieanum background.

PHALAEOPSIS

In most of the country, March is the peak blooming month for phalaenopsis. Staking needs to be carefully attended to, so that the flowers will be displayed at their best for orchid shows and judging -- even those intended for your home will look best if properly staked. One of the most decorative aspects of phalaenopsis spikes is the way they gracefully arch. If not staked properly, the spike will lack this grace and will not be as pleasing. Most growers like to have the final support just below the first flower, allowing maximum support, without sacrificing the beauty of the arching spike.

Rapid-growing spikes and open flowers place extra demands on the plant. Careful monitoring of watering and feeding will give the plants the energy they require to give their best floral display. Remember, too, that the lengthening days will also increase the frequency at which plants need water.

Beware of the invasion of sucking pests that accompany the flowering season. Flowers and spikes are favorite targets of mealybugs and scales. Be on the look out for their presence, often indicated by the appearance of sooty mold resulting from the exudate of the bugs, and treat before flowers or buds are too advanced. If flowers and buds are too far along, the chemical treatment may damage or abort them.

PLEUROTHALLIDS



Members in this large and increasingly popular group will be looking their best now. If plants are not in flower, the next few months provide an excellent time to divide if needed or repot into fresh mix. Taking care of these tasks now will allow enough time for your plants to become established before the hot weather arrives.

The AOS thanks Ned Nash and James Rose for this essay .



Cypripedium acaule

Carved in jewelers' wax, cast in silver and gold, shown here in 18k gold. This piece (in the silver version) won the first prize at the 19th World Orchid Conference and the second prize in the Jewelry category at the 2007, Mass Orchid Show (in gold). It only won second prize, Dr. Silverman reports, because his carved ivory 'ghost orchid' won first. This orchid is one of over 50 taxa that he has currently in stock as pendants, pins, and earrings. www.orchid-jewelry.com

Newsletter Editor Needed

Due to increasing family obligations (birth of second child in June), my last newsletter will be the May 2008 edition. If you have experience with Microsoft Word and Outlook, please consider this opportunity to serve the Society. With my assistance, I can assure you that the transition will be simple. Please contact me (Steve Kirincich; skirincich@comcast.net; 978-369-5375) if you are interested

MOS Monthly Show Table March 2008

Judges: Bob Richter, Bob Hesse, Lee Soule

Scribe: Linda Abrams

20 Plants Displayed; 11 Plants Awarded

Basket of Orchids

Bulbophyllum sulawesii

Laura Eschenroeder

Paph. Tree of Godwin x Moto Enmuvar

Peter Tishler

Restrepia antennifera

Aerangis fastuosa

Ceratochilus biglandulosus

Ralph & Chieko Collins

Megatclinium flactum

Jim Ayer

Brassavola Little Stars

Cymbidium Lillian Stewart "St. Sherlie"

George Baltoumas

cochleanthes aromatica

Besty Opitz

Dendrobium Angel Baby

Lois Steele

Common Orchid Questions

#1 Are all orchids the same?

On the contrary o what most florists want you to believe, they come in over 28,000 varieties, they are the largest plant family. There are estimates of 110,000 hybrids today. They grow from thimble size (*Mystacidium*) to over 20 feet tall (*Renanthera storei*)

#2 Do orchids only last a short time?

On the contrary most species can last for years if taken care of. There are some plants which were propagated in the 18th century and continue to live today.

#3 How often do they bloom?

It varies according to the variety and hybrid but they can bloom from once to 2 - 4 times a year. The blossoms can last for weeks to months which is a real plus.

#4 How old is my plant?

Orchids can take years to come to maturity and bloom. Typically, the plants are anywhere from 5 to 8 years old.

#5 Is conservation of orchids important?

According to the American Orchid Society this is a priority. Threats to orchids come primarily from loss of habitat and collecting. The AOS encourages the purchase of only artificially propagated orchids.



Vanda Greenhouse - RF Orchids

Tricks of the Trade – Plant Tags From an Ink-Jet Printer

Dave Tribble, Contributing Editor
Illinois Orchid Society

If you have a Laser printer, then you can make permanent plant tags for your plants. There are many advantages: the info is printed directly on the plastic tag and will not wash off. What can you do if you do not have a Laser printer?

We use an InkJet printer and print on clear Ink Jet labels [Avery 8667]. These are ½" x 1 ¾". We print them using Word (go to 'Envelopes & Labels' under Tools). They can be printed one at a time, or a bunch if you are using a Database. After placing the label on the tag, cover it with clear Scotch tape. While not permanent, they generally last about a year, sometimes longer.



While there are clear disadvantages, there are also some advantages. We include the last report date on the tag. Hence, we have to reprint tags every year or so anyways. Also, the labels can be removed with a razor blade and the tags can be reused. The tag shown is 5" long with the print area 1" wide. They were obtained from Cal-West <http://www.orchidsupplies.com/>



The Front Door - RF Orchids



Specimen vanilla plant



Can you find Wally?

Upcoming Events

Saturday, April 5 May 3	Northeast Judging Center Boylston, MA, Tower Hill Botanic Garden, 11 French Dr., Boylston, MA, Robert Winkley, rwinkley@aol.com . Presentations begin @ 10:00 AM. Judging begins at 12 PM. Directions
Tuesday, April 8 May 13	MOS Meeting, Suburban Experimental Station, 241 Beaver St., Waltham, MA, 7:30PM
April 18-20	North Jersey Orchid Society Show, Frelinghuysen Arboretum, 53 East Hanover Ave., Morristown, NJ. Contact: Ron Midgett, 193 CR 628, Sussex, NJ 07461; (973) 570-3930; ron@newearthorchids.com .
All photos from Laura Eschenroeder's visit to RF Orchids	
www.massorchid.org newsletter editor: Steve Kirincich mailto:skirincich@comcast.net ; 978-369-5375	

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